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THE PLACE OF DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY IN THE POST-CONQUEST SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE NORTH-EAST

Alexandra Naomi Mary Luff

Submitted for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Durham,
Department of History, 2001

Abstract

This thesis has arisen from the conviction that the life of a religious community in all its variety can only be fully studied if an attempt is made to understand the spiritual ideals, concerns and difficulties which motivated it. It takes as its case-study Durham Cathedral Priory in the eleventh and twelfth centuries because exceptionally good source materials survive for this priory and various other aspects of its life have already been studied extensively, which provides a firm context for this research. In addition, the post-conquest period is exciting to study because of the effect of Norman influence on the English church, and because it was a time of profound spiritual change in all levels of church and society across England and the continent. Moreover, it was a crucial time in the history of Durham because it was in 1083 that the priory was founded.

The thesis investigates the complex relationships conducted by Durham Cathedral Priory with its neighbouring religious houses. The first part considers the priory's foundation in the context of the northern monastic revival. It also examines the foundation and development of Durham's cells and the impact of the arrival of the Cistercians and Augustinians in the region. The second part investigates Durham Cathedral Priory's contribution to the character and development of spiritual life in the region through an examination of its involvement in the cults of saints, historiography and eremitism. The wider spiritual issues of these themes are explored before attention is given to Durham's own contribution to the field. This then provides the context with which to compare the developments of other religious houses in the region. It is concluded that whilst the priory was highly influential in some areas of the region's spiritual life, there were certain aspects in which it was unable to dominate.

The Place of Durham Cathedral Priory in the Post-Conquest Spiritual Life of the North-East

by

Alexandra Naomi Mary Luff

Submitted for the degree of Ph.D.
in the University of Durham

Supervisor

Professor David. W. Rollason
Department of History

2001

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2 6 APR 2002

In Memoriam

Chris Martin

1908-1997

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List of Abbreviations

AA	*Archaeologia Aeliana*
AND	*Anglo-Norman Durham 1093-1193*, ed. D. Rollason, M. Harvey and M. Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994)
ANS	*Anglo-Norman Studies* (Proceedings of the Battle Conference)
BIHR	*Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*
BL	British Library
BP	Borthwick Papers
Capitula	*Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus Sancti Cuthberti*, in *SMOO*, I, pp. 229-61 and II, pp. 333-62
Cart. Riev.	*Cartularium abbathiae de Rievalle*, ed. J. C. Atkinson, SS 83 (1887)
Cart. Whit.	*Cartularium abbathiæ de Whiteby*, ed. J. C. Atkinson, SS 69 (1878)
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DCL	Durham Cathedral Library
DCM	R. A. B. Mynors, *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1939)
DEC	*Durham Episcopal Charters 1071-1152*, ed. H. S. Offler, SS 179 (1968)
De sanctis	Ailred of Rievaulx's *De sanctis ecclesiae Haugustaldensis, et eorum miraculis libellus*, in *The Priory of Hexham* I, ed. Raine, SS 44 (1863), pp. 173-203
De statu	Richard, Prior of Hexham's *Brevis annotatio bonae memoriae de antiquo et moderno statu Hagustaldensis ecclesiae, et de pontificibus eiusdem ecclesiae*, in *The Priory of Hexham* I, ed. Raine, SS 44 (1865), pp. 1-62
DR	*Downside Review*
DUJ	*Durham University Journal*
DUL	Durham University Library
EHR	*English Historical Review*
EYC	*Early Yorkshire Charters*, ed. W. Farrer and C. T. Clay, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, extra ser., 12 vols. (Edinburgh, 1913-65)
HE	Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969)
HR	*Historia Regum* in *SMOO*, II, pp. 3-283
HSC	*Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* in *SMOO* I, pp. 196-214
HSJ	*Haskins Society Journal*
JEH	*Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
JMH	*Journal of Medieval History*
LDE	*Symeon of Durham,* Libellus de exordio atque procusu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis, ecclesie*: On the Origin and Progress of this Church of Durham*, ed. and trans. D. Rollason (Oxford, 2000)
LV	*Liber Vitae Ecclesie Dunelmensis nec non Obituaria duo eiusdem ecclesie*, ed. J. Stevenson, SS 13 (1841)
MA	W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (London, 1655-61), epitomized in English by J. Wright (London, 1693). A new edition by J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, 6 vols. (London, 1817-30; Farnborough 1970)
MAADC	*Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*. ed. N. Coldstream and P. Draper, British Archaeological Association

	Conference Transactions for 1977, 1980 (London, 1980)
Mem. Fount.	*Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains*, ed. J. S. Walbran, SS 42 (1863)
Mem. Whit.	*Memorial of Foundations and of the Earlier Benefactions*, in *Cart. Whit.*, pp. 1-7
MOY	J. Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire 1069-1215* (Cambridge, 1999)
NH	*Northern History*
n.s.	new series
PMLA	*Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*
Reg. Lib.	*Reginaldi monachi Dunelmensis libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti virtutibus quae novellis patrae sunt temporibus*, ed. J. Raine, SS 1 (1835)
RS	Rolls Series
SCCC	*St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to AD 1200*, ed. G. Bonner, D. Rollason and C. Stancliffe (Woodbridge, 1989)
SCH	Studies in Church History
SHR	*Scottish Historical Review*
SMOO	*Symeonis monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. T. Arnold, 2 vols., Rolls Series 75 (1882-85)
SS	Surtees Society
Symeon	*Symeon of Durham: Historian of the Durham and the North*, ed. D. Rollason (Stamford, 1998)
TAASDN	*Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*
TCWAAS	*Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
Vita Barth.	*Vita Bartholomæi Farnensis*, in *SMOO* II, pp. 295-325
Vita S. God.	Reginald of Durham's *Libellus de vita et miraculis S Godrici heremitae de Finchale*, ed. J. Stevenson, SS 20 (1845)
Vita Osw.	*Vita Oswini Regis* in *Miscellanea Biographica*, ed. J. Raine, SS 8 (1838), pp. 1-59

Declaration

No part of this thesis has previously been submitted for any degree in this or any other university, and no part of it has previously been published.

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INTRODUCTION

Historians have long been fascinated by the tumultuous changes which ricocheted through all levels of society and through all corners of the country following the Norman conquest. Military, economic, political, social, linguistic, geographical and ecclesiastical historians have all found the period rich in developments and rewarding to study. From wide-scale trends to narrowly-focused incidents, the evidence is continually producing fresh discoveries and interpretations as to the nature of the transition from an Anglo-Saxon to an Anglo-Norman identity. One particular case-study through which this investigation can be pursued is that of Durham Cathedral Priory, a vast spiritual, political and economic institution which not only underwent significant internal redefinition in this period, but was also involved in some of the most significant transformations which the Norman occupation brought about in the north.

As a consequence of these historical credentials, the origins and early history of Durham Cathedral Priory have been the focus of much academic activity for over two centuries. In the late eighteenth century a group of London antiquaries confounded local opinions and plans in the cathedral precincts when they campaigned for the preservation of the west end of the cathedral in the face of the Dean and Chapter's plans to demolish the Galilee chapel in order to create a new entrance to the church.[1] The public outcry against such unwitting vandalism marked a turning point in historical perceptions of the cathedral. A renewed and heightened sensitivity towards the past and its importance for the future prepared the way for the research of such men as the nineteenth-century scholars James Raine, both father and son, J. Stevenson, W. Greenwell and J. T. Fowler. All of these published extensively in the Surtees Society, which is an invaluable resource for scholars through its editions of such texts as Reginald of Durham's *Libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti*,[2] the *Liber Vitae*,[3] *Foedarium Prioratus Dunelmensis*[4] and the *Rites of Durham*[5] which supplements accounts such as Raine's own *Saint Cuthbert*.[6]

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[1] See D. Matthew 'Durham and the Anglo-Norman World', in *AND*, pp. 1-22, at p. 1.
[2] *Reginaldi monachi Dunelmensis libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti virtutibus quae novellis patrae sunt temporibus*, ed. J. Raine, SS 1 (1835).
[3] *Liber vitae ecclesiae Dunelmensis nec non obituaria duo ejusdem ecclesiae*, ed. J. Stevenson, SS 13 (1841). See also *Liber Vitae ecclesiae Dunelmensis*, ed. A. Hamilton Thompson, SS 136 (1923).
[4] *Foedarium prioratus Dunelmensis*, ed. W. Greenwell, SS 58 (1872).
[5] *Rites of Durham*, ed. J. T. Fowler, SS 107 (1903).
[6] J. Raine, *Saint Cuthbert: with an account of the state in which his remains were found upon the opening of his tomb in Durham Cathedral, in the year MDCCCXXVII* (Durham, 1828).

The scope for research on this remarkable church was by no means exhausted by the Victorians, however, as the more recent record of publications on the subject testifies. The excellent preservation of the medieval archives, coupled with the evidence still standing in stone, has enabled detailed analysis and lively discussion of the economic and political issues raised by the cathedral's high status and vast landed wealth, and the literary and architectural developments which determined and revealed its cultural achievements. Studies such as R. A. B. Mynor's *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts*,[7] Frank Barlow's authoritative *Durham Jurisdictional Peculiars*,[8] G. V. Scammell's *Hugh du Puiset*[9] and H. S. Offler's *Durham Episcopal Charters 1071-1152*[10] have provided a backbone for research in this area for over half a century. In more recent years various conferences have provided a setting for numerous high quality papers focused on a range of very specific areas, thus broadening and deepening our knowledge of all aspects of the church's medieval existence. The art and architecture of Durham was studied from an archaeological perspective in the late 1970s,[11] and from an engineering perspective in 1993,[12] while in the same year the *Anglo-Norman Durham*[13] conference brought together distinguished scholars commemorating the 900th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the cathedral. The range of studies in this collection is wide, probing into almost every available aspect of the church's Norman history and, in the process, unearthing for the benefit of future scholars further areas requiring detailed research. Papers on the architectural quality and influence of the building are accompanied by studies of the Prince-Bishops and their contribution to the character of the institution, the nature of the priory and the monastic community and the rich subject of manuscripts and intellectual achievement. The foundation ceremony in 1093 was given a remarkable dimension through the attendance of the otherwise hostile King Malcolm III of the Scots who, with his wife Margaret, was entered into the church's *Liber Vitae*. The conference echoed this Scottish dimension by providing a forum for discussion of the extremely complex issues of border relations and Durham's position as an English regional centre which was considerably closer to the enemy lines than to its own monarch.

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[7] R. A. B. Mynors, *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts to the End of the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1939).
[8] F. Barlow, *Durham Jurisdictional Peculiars* (London, 1950).
[9] G. V. Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset, Bishop of Durham* (Cambridge, 1956).
[10] *Durham Episcopal Charters 1071-1152*, ed. H. S. Offler, SS 179, (1968).
[11] *Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions for the Year 1977, ed. N. Coldstream, and P. Draper (London, 1980).
[12] *Engineering a Cathedral*, ed. M. Jackson (London, 1993).

The political aspect of this collection has been continued by W. Aird's *St Cuthbert and the Normans*,[14] which emphasises the bishop and community's roles in the determination of northern political and military events, especially in connection with the frequent Scottish threat. In addition, this study challenges some of the previously stated interpretations of the monastic origins of the church, such as the nature of the changeover from a secular to a monastic chapter, which are of central importance to the present thesis.[15] The historiographical, palaeographical and intellectual aspects of Durham's achievements were pursued in much greater depth at the Symeon of Durham conference in 1995[16] and this has been followed by David Rollason's edition of Symeon's *Libellus de exordio*, which is a vital tool in any study of the early church of Durham.[17] Later twelfth-century writings received close attention in 1999 at the Lawrence and Reginald of Durham conference.[18]

This is not to say, however, that the specifically spiritual aspect of the church's existence has been neglected. The late Anglo-Saxon and Conquest years brought destruction and decay to spiritual life all over England and although there are exceptions, such as Edward the Confessor's Westminster Abbey, very few churches were founded or redeveloped in the central years of the eleventh century.[19] The half-century following the conquest, however, witnessed a renaissance of spiritual life on a remarkably widespread scale. The north-east of England offers fascinating opportunities to study this, in part because the transformation from spiritual desert to spiritual hot-house can be so clearly traced.[20] The 'new' orders of the twelfth century - principally the Augustinians and Cistercians - were especially attracted to the north and in numerous ways they transformed their adopted landscape; spiritually, economically, politically, socially and topographically. Their arrival and development in Yorkshire has been treated extensively by Janet Burton[21] and her research provides a clear context

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[13] *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093-1193*, ed. D. Rollason, M. Harvey and M. Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994).
[14] W. M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans: The Church of Durham 1071-1153* (Woodbridge, 1998).
[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 100-42.
[16] *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North*, ed. D. Rollason (Stamford, 1999).
[17] *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*, ed. and trans. D. Rollason (Oxford, 2001).
[18] *Lawrence and Reginald of Durham: Latin Writing in Twelfth-Century Durham and its Context*, held in Durham, April 1999.
[19] See E. Mason, *Westminster Abbey and its People c. 1050-c. 1216* (Woodbridge, 1996).
[20] See L. G. D. Baker, 'The Desert in the North', *NH* 5 (1970), 1-11.
[21] *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire 1069-1215* (Cambridge, 2000), but see also her 'Monasteries and Parish Churches in Eleventh and Twelfth Century Yorkshire', *NH* 23 (1987), 39-50; and 'The Foundation of the British Cistercian Houses', in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, ed. C. Norton and D. Park (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 24-39.

from which to approach their spiritual interaction with Durham, which will form a major part of the present study.

A number of studies have emerged dealing with various aspects of the episcopal and monastic authorities in Durham. For example, papers on the composition and identity of the monastic community have been produced,[22] while specific aspects of the church's spiritual interests, such as its connections with hermits, have also received attention.[23] Possibly the most pervasive and visible element of the spiritual record, however, is the cult of St Cuthbert. C. F. Battiscombe's volume concentrates on the objects of the cult of St Cuthbert, especially those items discovered in the coffin itself, and on the liturgical developments which accompanied devotion to the saint.[24] Another collection of conference studies, *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community*, provides a more recent focus on the Anglo-Saxon cult and its influence on the community with some attention given to its post-conquest effects and developments.[25] The corpus of miracle literature has received increasing attention in recent years which has facilitated a much greater understanding of the cult itself, and also the priory which supported it.[26] Victoria Tudor

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[22] See D. Rollason, 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century', in *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. C. Hicks (Stamford, 1992), pp. 183-98, B. Meehan, 'Outsiders, Insiders, and Property in Durham around 1100', in *Church, Society and Politics*, ed. D. Baker, SCH 12 (1975), pp. 45-58, A. J. Piper, 'The Cathedral and its Monastic Community', in *St Cuthbert and Durham Cathedral: A Celebration*, ed. D. Pocock (Durham, 1995), pp. 95-102, T. Johnson-South, 'The Norman Conquest of Durham: Norman Historians and the Anglo-Saxon Community of St Cuthbert', *HSJ* 4 (1992), 85-95 and A. Dawtry, 'The Benedictine Revival in the North: The Last Bulwark of Anglo-Saxon Monasticism?', in *Religion and National Identity*, ed. S. Mews, SCH 18 (1982), pp. 87-98.

[23] For example, V. Tudor, 'Durham Priory and its Hermits in the Twelfth Century', in *AND*, pp. 67-78 and 'St Godric of Finchale and St Bartholomew of Farne', in *Benedict's Disciples*, ed. D. H. Farmer (Leominster, 1980), pp. 195-211, J. Burton, 'The Eremitical Tradition and the Development of Post-Conquest Religious Life in Northern England', in *Eternal Values in Medieval Life*, ed. N. Crossley-Holland, *Trivium* 26 (1991), 18-39; D. Alexander, *Hermits and their Hagiographies in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of London, forthcoming). Also useful for comparison with Durham is H. M. R. A. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse', *History* 60 (1975), 337-52.

[24] *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, ed. C. F. Battiscombe (Oxford, 1956). Also M. Baker, 'Medieval Illustrations of Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978), 16-49.

[25] *St Cuthbert, His Cult and Community to A.D. 1200*, ed. G. Bonner, C. Stancliffe and D. Rollason (Woodbridge, 1989); see especially in this context the final two papers: A. J. Piper, 'The First Generations of Durham Monks and the Cult of St Cuthbert', pp. 437-46 and V. M. Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century: the Evidence of Reginald of Durham', pp. 447-67. See also T. Johnson-South 'Changing Images of Sainthood: St Cuthbert in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*' in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*, ed. S. Sticca (New York, 1996), pp. 81-94 and B. Abou-El-Haj, 'Saint Cuthbert: The Post-Conquest Appropriation of an Anglo-Saxon Cult', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts*, ed. P. E. Szarmach (New York, 1996), pp. 177-206.

[26] The most significant hagiographical literature produced at Durham in the period consists chiefly of the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* (in *SMOO*, I, pp. 196-214); the *Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus Sancti Cuthberti* (in *SMOO*, I, pp. 229-61 and II, pp. 333-62), Reginald of Durham's *Libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti* and his *Libellus de vita et miraculis S Godrici heremitae de Finchale*, ed. J. Stevenson, SS 20 (1845). For discussion of some of these texts see, for example, B. Colgrave, 'The Post-Bedan Miracles and Translations of St Cuthbert', in *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe*, H. M.

has considered the cult of St Cuthbert and its development throughout the twelfth century, through a detailed examination of Reginald of Durham's *Libellus de admirandis* and a thorough knowledge of the neighbouring cult of St Godric which was a powerful force in the Durham area towards the end of the century, supported and controlled by the priory itself.[27] During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, St Cuthbert was considered one of the three most powerful intercessors with God from these islands, sharing this honour with St Edmund from Bury and St Etheldreda from Ely.[28] Etheldreda's place was usurped by the meteoric rise into sanctity experienced by Thomas Becket after his murder in Canterbury cathedral in 1170. Scholars have shown considerable interest in these cults and their findings are often of enormous significance in the examination of the comparative use and abuse of Cuthbert's cult throughout the period.[29]

The scholarship to date on the subject of Durham Cathedral Priory in the post-conquest period is therefore substantial and, within that, the spiritual aspect of its existence and influence has by no means been neglected. The present study is, however, designed to offer something new and valuable to this area of scholarship which will complement the current spectrum of research. The church of Durham existed, first and foremost, for the worship of God, and its inhabitants, the monks, were attracted to the cloister for a variety of reasons, though primarily in order to live a life of holiness and devotion to their creator.[30] However, the essential spiritual purpose of this church, as with many

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Chadwick Memorial Studies (Cambridge, 1950), and, more recently, W. M. Aird, 'The Making of a Medieval Miracle Collection: The *Liber de Translationibus et Miraculis Sancti Cuthberti*', *NH* 28 (1992), 1-24.

[27] See 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century'; *Reginald of Durham and St Godric of Finchale*, (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Reading, 1979); 'Reginald of Durham and St Godric of Finchale: Learning and Religion on a Personal Level', in *Religion and Humanism*, ed. K. Robbins (Oxford, 1981), 37-48 and 'The Misogyny of St Cuthbert', *AA* 5th ser., 12 (1984), 157-67.

[28] *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 19, 112 and 115.

[29] See, for example, E. Cownie, 'The Cult of St Edmund in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: The Language and Communication of a Medieval Saint's Cult' *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 99 (1998), 177-97. A number of more general studies on aspects of the wide-ranging subject of cults have been of particular use in the preparation of this thesis: S. J. Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*: Post-Conquest Attitudes to the Saints of the Anglo-Saxons', *ANS* 9 (1986), 179-206, I. G. Thomas, *The Cult of Saints' Relics in Medieval England* (unpubl. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of London, 1974), P. A. Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives in Post-Conquest Hagiography and English Resistance to the Norman Conquest', *ANS* 21 (1998), 67-93, B. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event 1000-1215* (Aldershot, 1982) D. Bethell, 'The Making of a Twelfth-Century Relic Collection', in *Popular Belief and Practice*, ed. G. J. Cuming and D. Baker, SCH 8 (1972), pp. 61-72, J. Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (London, 1975), R. C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London, 1977) and his 'The Use and Abuse of Medieval Miracles', *History* 60 (1975), 1-10.

[30] As Vauchez points out, the liturgical element of the monastic life was not foremost in St Benedict's vision. His idea of a monk was as a penitent who entered religious life 'to weep over his sins' and submit himself to the authority of the abbot. The principal importance of prayer as an act of praise, intercession

others, was soon obscured by administrative, political, intellectual and other concerns. The issue is further complicated for modern historians by the fact that evidence for these 'secular' interests is often much better than the evidence for the spiritual life of religious houses and so it is tempting to conclude that they were also of greater importance to the religious men and women themselves. Southern writes that 'the monasteries did not exist solely or even mainly for the sake of the monks who sought within their walls a personal salvation. This motive could never have filled more than a small proportion of the numerous monasteries of the period, nor could founders and benefactors have been induced to part with a large proportion of their wealth to make provision for the aspirations of the few. In the period of their greatest expansion Benedictine monasteries were founded and filled for political, social and religious purposes of which we hear nothing in the Rule'.[31] Whilst these comments do reflect the diverse nature of medieval religious orders, they could be interpreted to suggest that spirituality had little meaning or value for the monks. This sort of attitude leads to the details of the spiritual life of medieval monasteries being assumed, overlooked or ignored. Indeed, no full-length study has attempted to deal with the spiritual life of Durham Cathedral Priory (or any other English religious houses) in its own right and the above-mentioned research, while extremely useful, deals only in aspects. This thesis therefore adds a crucial dimension to the existing research on Durham in the Norman Age in so far as it treats as a whole, for the first time, the range and depth of spiritual life in Durham during the formative years of the late-eleventh and the twelfth centuries. It also seeks to establish Durham's role within the broader context of spiritual life in the north-east through its relationships with other local spiritual centres, and to investigate the mechanisms by which its spiritual influence was transferred. The research will be set within the context of eleventh and twelfth-century spiritual developments. The limitations of time and place are deliberately not too rigid since the concern is not so much with events but with processes and expressions which cannot be given finite delineations. The period chosen covers the developments which took place over the conquest and in the following century when old traditions and new practices came face to face. Broadly speaking, therefore, the thesis focuses on almost a century

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and petition, and the role of the monk as a spiritual warrior acting on behalf of society as a whole was not formulated until the Carolingian era, and was greatly developed and elaborated through the practices of Cluny from the tenth to twelfth centuries. A. Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West from the Eighth to the Twelfth Century*, translated by C. Friedlander (Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA, 1993), pp. 41-4.

[31] R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London, 1970), p. 224.

and a half of development from the late Anglo-Saxon period to the late twelfth century. For the purposes of this study, the area designated as 'the north-east' consists of the modern counties of Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland and the disputed Border region, with a specific emphasis on those places in close proximity to Durham itself. Unfortunately the limitations of this project do not permit a detailed study of the north-west, or of the spiritual relationship between the church of Durham and the kings and church of Scotland, though it is hoped that this thesis will prove useful in such a study in the future.[32] For the sake of brevity and focus, the research in this thesis is also confined to an examination of communities of monks and regular canons, rather than including nuns[33] and colleges of secular canons,[34] with the exception of the community at York Minster which is often mentioned because its episcopal connections often warrant comparison with Durham's.[35] However, there is a pronounced emphasis throughout the thesis on Durham's relationship with the church of Hexham. It is possible, thanks to the industry of twelfth-century Augustinian writers at Hexham and the fortunate survival of so much of their work, to reconstruct much of the priory's eleventh and twelfth-century history.[36] This provides many fascinating parallels and comparisons with developments at Durham, in terms of ecclesiastical reform, the cult of saints and historiography. Consequently Hexham is used as the major case-study in the consideration of Durham Cathedral Priory's spiritual influence in the north-east. An appendix is provided to supply the background information necessary to appreciate the full extent of the connections between the churches.

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[32] Works have been produced which explore the spiritual life and developments of other churches within a more general context, and many of these have proved valuable in the construction of this thesis. For example, D. Nicholl, *Thurstan, Archbishop of York (1114-1140)* (York, 1964) has highlighted much useful comparative material about the influence of bishops in monastic affairs; P. D. Johnson, *Prayer, Patronage, and Power: The Abbey of la Trinité, Vendôme, 1032-1187* (New York, 1981), examines the social impact of the monastery, assessing its religious, economic and legal influence, its networks of patrons, friends and clients and its substantial input into the social, economic and spiritual welfare of its county; E. Mason, *Westminster Abbey and its People c. 1050-c. 1216* (Woodbridge, 1996), is a study focusing on the working relationships between the inmates of the church and on their dealings with neighbours, tenants and other associates. N. Hunt, *Cluny under Saint Hugh, 1049-1109* (Notre Dame, Illinois, USA, 1967), provides comparison with the developments at Cluny.

[33] For studies of northern nunneries see, for example, J. E. Burton, *The Yorkshire Nunneries in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, BP 56 (1979).

[34] See, for example, A. Hamilton Thompson, 'The Collegiate Churches of the Bishoprick of Durham', *DUJ* n.s. 5 (1944), pp. 33-42.

[35] See C. N. L. Brooke, 'York Minster from the Ninth to the Thirteenth Centuries', in *Churches and Churchmen in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), pp. 37-68.

[36] The twelfth-century works associated with Hexham which receive the greatest attention in this thesis are Prior Richard's *Brevis annotatio bonae memoriae de antiquo et moderno statu Hagustaldensis ecclesiae, et de pontificibus eiusdem ecclesiae*, in *The Priory of Hexham: Its Chroniclers, Endowments and Annals*, ed. J. Raine, 2 vols., SS 44, 46 (1863-1865), pp. 1-62 and Ailred of Rievaulx's *De sanctis ecclesiae Haugustaldensis, et eorum miraculis libellus*, in *The Priory of Hexham*, I, pp. 173-203.

One of the possible reasons for the lack of broad-ranging research in this area is the difficulty of defining and quantifying something as amorphous as 'spirituality' or 'spiritual life'.[37] In modern terms, one's spiritual life is a highly personal matter concerned with conceptions and expressions largely divorced from and 'higher' than the material world, the scope of which is wide and the judgment of which is the business of no-one other than the individual and God. Contemporary spirituality is therefore largely an interior, individualistic matter which can result in a wide range of beliefs or practices, not necessarily orthodox or Christian. Modern approaches to the assessment of spiritual life are therefore of limited value when dealing with the Middle Ages. Spiritual life, as with so many other aspects of medieval life, was a communal rather than personal matter to a far greater extent than is now the case and so to learn about popular as well as formal devotion it is to the church institutions that we must turn. For the sake of clarity, to define what is meant by 'spiritual life' within the scope of this thesis, we might suggest 'religious, devotional and faith-based, as opposed to political, economic or social, concerns and practices', that is, issues concerning the Christian life, traditions and mission of the church, as opposed to the church's involvement in secular affairs. Such a definition is seriously flawed since it is impossible to isolate the spiritual life of a major land-holding institution from its territorial, feudal and financial concerns, but the concept points towards a consideration of those aspects of the priory's internal life and its relationships with the outsiders which were principally concerned with prayer, the living out of the Gospels and the Rule of St Benedict and the acceptance of movements evolving from such processes. Thus, for example, the thesis is concerned with the development of the cult of St Cuthbert on Lindisfarne, but not with the community's exploitation of its estates adjacent to the island. The thesis will also consider the priory's relationship with local land-holders, not to describe the

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[37] For definitions of 'spirituality' and discussions of the developing meaning of the term, see G. S. Wakefield, ed., *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (London, 1983), P. Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History: Questions of Interpretation and Method* (London, 1991) and Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*. Vauchez usefully sets out his definition of spirituality as 'the dynamic unity between the content of a faith and the way in which it is lived', p. 8. More particularly in this context, Benedicta Ward's paper, 'The Spirituality of St Cuthbert', in *SCCC*, pp. 65-76, attempts to define 'spirituality' in relation to St Cuthbert's own life and Bede and the anonymous biographer's depictions of it. She suggests that the modern usage of the word is similar to 'mentality', while a nineteenth-century usage was more akin to 'ascetic theology and/or mystic prayer'. She chooses to combine these meanings and consequently understands the term as 'what Cuthbert himself thought and said and did and prayed in the light of the Gospel of Christ'. She goes on to suggest that Bede and the anonymous biographer in the writings 'placed over Cuthbert's life the Bible', meaning that they used the Scriptures as a lens through which to look at Cuthbert. This view serves as a helpful reminder that the study of spirituality is not the study of a quantifiable sequence of events, but of the by-products of religious ideals.

political balance of the region but to investigate what were the determining factors in the choice of location and order when a patron decided to found a religious house.

The individuals from whom we do learn anything about personal devotion or expressions of faith were almost always connected with a church or monastery, since their memory was preserved through the literary records of that community which valued them in some way.[38] This study therefore approaches the institution of the cathedral priory confident in the hope that as representative a picture of eleventh- and twelfth-century spiritual life as possible can be gauged, both through the policies initiated by the institution and through the personal vignettes which frequently peep through the sources recording the spiritual history of the house. In addition to peeling back the layers within Durham itself to discover the quality and intensity of religious observance, this study will view this major ecclesiastical force within its regional context. Many of the studies mentioned above have proved the decisive role which the church of Durham played in the political and economic life of the region through its wealth, possessions, contacts and semi-regal powers. Like a spider at the centre of a web, the monolithic building on the Durham peninsula was the centre of an extensive network of social, economic and political relationships in which the cathedral church more often than not held the upper hand. But what of the spiritual relationships which Durham enjoyed? We can trace the relationships based on ownership of land and property between Durham and other religious houses, but what can be learned of the relationships based on prayer,[39] the veneration of the saints,[40] religious ideals such as eremiticism[41] or participation in reform movements?[42] Was Durham dominant in these areas too, or were its monks merely builders and administrators rather than intercessors and servants of the Lord? What was the spiritual currency in the Norman north-east? What mattered to those who prayed, and how did the church of Durham impinge on the level and quality of the spiritual rather than material developments of other north-

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[38] Other examples of religious individuals from the period whose were lives were recorded by neighbouring religious include Christina of Markyate and Wulfric of Haselbury. See *The Life of Christina of Markyate, A Twelfth-Century Recluse* ed. and trans. C. H. Talbot, (Oxford, 1959) and *Wulfric of Haselbury by John of Ford*, ed. M. Bell (Somerset Record Society 47, 1932).

[39] Such relationships are often recorded in confraternity agreements in the *Liber Vitae*. These agreements show that the Durham monks undertook to pray for a monk or number of monks and say a certain number of masses for their souls, often recording that they are to be treated in the same way as a Durham monk would be. These agreements reveal a whole network of monastic friendships and connections covering not only the north-east of England, but the whole country and numerous houses on the continent as well.

[40] See below, ch. 4.

[41] See below, ch. 6.

[42] See below, ch. 1.

eastern religious centres? These are the sorts of major questions with which this study is faced. The length of the work dictates that decisions must be made about the range and extent of spiritual expression which will be explored and it is hoped that the final choice will provide a representative range of issues from which to draw valid conclusions about the state of Durham's own spiritual health and its place within the spiritual life of the region. Other areas could have been included or expanded upon, such as matters of liturgy,[43] theology,[44] architecture and music,[45] but the areas chosen do focus on those aspects of spiritual life in which Durham's interest and contribution can be studied and appreciated with reasonable clarity.

The first part deals with spiritual life within an institutional context. It begins by examining the processes by which Durham and the other religious houses of the north-east were founded in the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries, and proceeds by examining the means and nature of the contact between those houses. Chapter one explores the eleventh-century movement known as the 'northern monastic revival' and the religious foundations which resulted from it. This process of foundation and refoundation is set both within the broad context of the European spiritual trends of this period and the more focused context of local circumstances which produced idiosyncratic characteristics. This chapter therefore indicates the spiritual nature of the Benedictine establishments with which we are dealing and highlights the natural affinities and concerns which developed through the circumstances of their foundation.

Chapter two provides an examination of Durham Cathedral Priory's spiritual relationships with its cells. The purpose of this study is to consider why, where and how the priory chose to develop its cells and how important to the spiritual life of the mother house the possession and exploitation of these centres were. Durham's development of its cells will then be contrasted with its troublesome relationships with the churches of Tynemouth and Hexham. These churches were closely connected to Durham on a number of levels, but the monks of Durham were unable to maintain control of them in the twelfth century. The lengths to which the monks went in order to

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[43] See, for example, C. Hohler and A. Hughes, 'The Durham Services in Honour of St Cuthbert', in *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, ed. Battiscombe, pp. 155-91.

[44] The mid-twelfth century prior of Durham, Lawrence, who was also a poet and theologian, enjoyed considerable literary acclaim. This thesis, however, is concerned not so much with intellectual achievement as with expressions of spirituality and devotion.

[45] See, for example, A. Hughes, 'Medieval Polyphony at Durham', in *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, ed. Battiscombe, pp. 192-201 and *The Music of Aldwyn's House at Jarrow and the Early Twelfth Century Music of Durham Priory*, Jarrow Lecture 1972.

retain or regain these possessions, and the apparent hostility which ensued, are discussed in order to provide a full picture of the range of spiritual relationships conducted by the priory.

Chapter three examines the foundations of the 'new' orders in the north-east in the twelfth century, principally the Augustinian canons and Cistercian monks. The character and purpose of these orders are considered in order to establish an appropriate framework within which to contrast them with the Benedictine priory of Durham. Specific points of contact are considered, such as the personal connections of Maurice and Ailred, in order to establish how the monks of Durham reacted to this transformation in the region's religious life. Finally, the geographical spread of the new orders in the north-east is considered in some detail in order to investigate whether Durham Cathedral Priory exerted any influence over the location of their foundations.

Thus the first part of the thesis provides a pattern for contacts between Durham and its cells and neighbours which demonstrates how ideas and influence could be exchanged and/or imposed. The remainder of the thesis concentrates on an exploration of certain specific influences and examines how great an influence Durham was able to cast through the example and/or enforcement of its attitudes and policies. The exploration begins in chapter four with what was arguably the most visible element of the church's spiritual life: the carefully nurtured cult of its patron saint, St Cuthbert. Although there were numerous saints in the north-east who could have been venerated, St Cuthbert was promoted as the protector of the whole region, and, through his incorruption, was shown to be particularly favoured by God. He was also intimately identified with the community who tended his shrine. The dominance of St Cuthbert's cult in the north-east was therefore remarkable and, through an examination of the neighbouring cults, including detailed case-studies of the cults of Sts Acca and Alchmund at Hexham and St Oswin at Tynemouth, the reasons for this are explored.[46]

The subject of the fifth chapter is historiography. In the medieval world there was often little distinction between the spiritual history of a house and what we might usefully describe as its political or constitutional history. When a saint embodied the essence of the identity of the church and community, as in eleventh- and twelfth-century Durham, it was natural that the members of the church should produce an account of their history

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[46] For Hexham's hagiographical literature see above, p. 14, n. 35. For Tynemouth, see *Vita Oswini Regis* in *Miscellanea Biographica*, ed. J. Raine, SS 8 (1838), pp. 1-59.

which accorded due attention to the miracles of the saint which had ensured the church's preservation. The Durham literature provides us with an excellent example of such a mixed genre in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, a compilation which recorded the community's land-holdings and St Cuthbert's miracles as two sides of the same coin.[47] For our purposes the historiography produced by the Durham monks will be examined in the light of that produced by some of the other churches of the region, most particularly Hexham, to assess not only what role Durham played in the twelfth-century development of history in the north of England, but also to attempt to gauge how these churches tried to record and present their spiritual identity and influence.

Chapter six considers the role of asceticism and eremiticism within the European church at this period and their significance for the post-conquest foundations of the north-east. Durham's interest in these ideals, especially through its sponsorship of individual hermits, is explored in some depth in an attempt to ascertain what the priory hoped to gain through a close relationship with these solitaries. The results of this enquiry are then set within the context of the wider region to determine what contribution the priory made to the development of eremitical life in the north-east throughout the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries. Finally, conclusions are drawn about the importance of Durham Cathedral Priory in the development of spiritual life in the eleventh and twelfth-century north-east.

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[47] *SMOO*, I, pp. 196-214. Also essential in a Durham context is Symeon of Durham's *Libellus de exordio*, the *Historia Regum*, printed in *SMOO*, II, pp. 2-283, and the various tracts and pamphlets which were produced to argue or prove specific issues, for example *De iniusta vexacione Willelmi episcopi primi, per Willelmum regem filium Willelmi magni regis*, in *SMOO*, I, pp. 170-95.

Part One

FOUNDATIONS

Chapter One

THE NORTHERN MONASTIC REVIVAL 1069-1088

INTRODUCTION

The Community of St Cuthbert had had its home in Durham since 995 when Earl Uhtred of Northumbria permitted the bishop and clerks, with their families, to settle on the wooded peninsula.[1] This community traced its origins and identity back to the pre-Viking monastic settlement on Lindisfarne and had managed to survive through the upheaval of multiple moves around the north of England over several centuries with its precious relics and extensive land-holdings intact.[2] In 1083, however, as a result of the northern monastic revival, this local, loosely-knit community of semi-monastic, semi-canonical guardians of the sacred body was refounded as a formal monastic community with close ties to the contemporary foundations at Whitby and St Mary's, York, and with constitutional links throughout the whole of the Benedictine order. It is the spiritual life and influence of this new community which forms the basis of this study and so it is appropriate to begin by examining the spiritual character of the northern monastic revival and the network of relationships which it created.

Sources

The source materials for the monastic revival movement are fraught with inconsistencies and omissions. Symeon's *Libellus de exordio* provides the majority of our information on the beginnings of the movement, the monastic developments at Jarrow and Monkwearmouth and then, of course, the move to Durham.[3] The *Historia Regum*, which is a compilation of sources associated with Symeon but, as its title suggests, is a secular history, also includes some account of the movement.[4] The Yorkshire strain is particularly complex and is recorded in three remarkably partisan sources. The Whitby text, *Memorial of Foundations and of the Earlier Benefactions*, is

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[1] *LDE*, III, 1-2.

[2] The pre-monastic community recorded their history and land-holdings in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*. For the community at this time see E. Cambridge, 'Why did the Community of St Cuthbert Settle at Chester-le-Street?', in *SCCC*, pp. 367-86; G. Bonner, 'St Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street', in *SCCC*, pp. 387-95; L. Simpson, 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert Episode in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*: Its Significance for mid-tenth-century English History', in *SCCC*, pp. 397-411; D. Rollason 'The Wanderings of St Cuthbert', in his *Cuthbert: Saint and Patron* (Durham, 1987), pp. 45-59 and his 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century'.

[3] The *LDE*, which covers the history of the Community of St Cuthbert until 1096, was completed in 1104x1107, by which time the monastic community was reasonably well established.

[4] *SMOO*, II, pp. 3-283.

a brief narrative compiled a century after the events, though almost certainly using near-contemporary material.[5] It provides information on Reinfrid and some indication of the events at Hackness, but makes no mention of Stephen or Lastingham. Further details of the temporary move to Hackness are to be found in the Dodsworth Fragment,[6] while Stephen of Whitby's account of the foundation of St Mary's also includes his self-justificatory version of the Whitby-Lastingham episode.[7]

Durham's Place in the Revival

These various sources, with their differing concerns and agendas, present a somewhat confused picture of events. It can be stated with confidence that the revival began when Aldwin, prior of Winchcombe, arrived in Monkchester (Newcastle) in 1074 with Ælfwig and Reinfrid, his two companions from Evesham, and that the eventual outcome of their activities was the refoundation of some level of religious life at Jarrow, Monkwearmouth, Hackness, Lastingham, Whitby, York and Durham, the last three places housing major monastic communities which were to develop as significant players in the balance of spiritual life in the north-east. The basic outline of these events can be represented in a simple plan.

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[5] *Cartularium Abbathiæ de Whiteby*, ed. J. C. Atkinson, SS 69 (1878), pp. 1-7. See J. Burton, 'The Monastic Revival in Yorkshire: Whitby and St Mary's York', in *AND*, p. 42.

[6] The text remains only in a seventeenth-century transcript of two Dodsworth manuscripts; Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Dodsworth 159, fol. 115v and MS Dodsworth 9, fol. 130r. *Cart. Whit.*, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

[7] The text of *De Fundatione Abbatiæ Sanctæ Mariæ Virginis Eboraci Anno ab Incarnatione Domini mlxxxviij*, appears in the twelfth-century BL MS Additional 38816, fols. 29v-34v and is partly printed in *Cart. Whit.*, pp. xxxiv-xxxvii. The full account is to be found in *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. W. Dugdale, rev. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, 6 vols. (London, 1817-30), III, pp. 544-6. See also Burton, 'The Monastic Revival', p. 43.

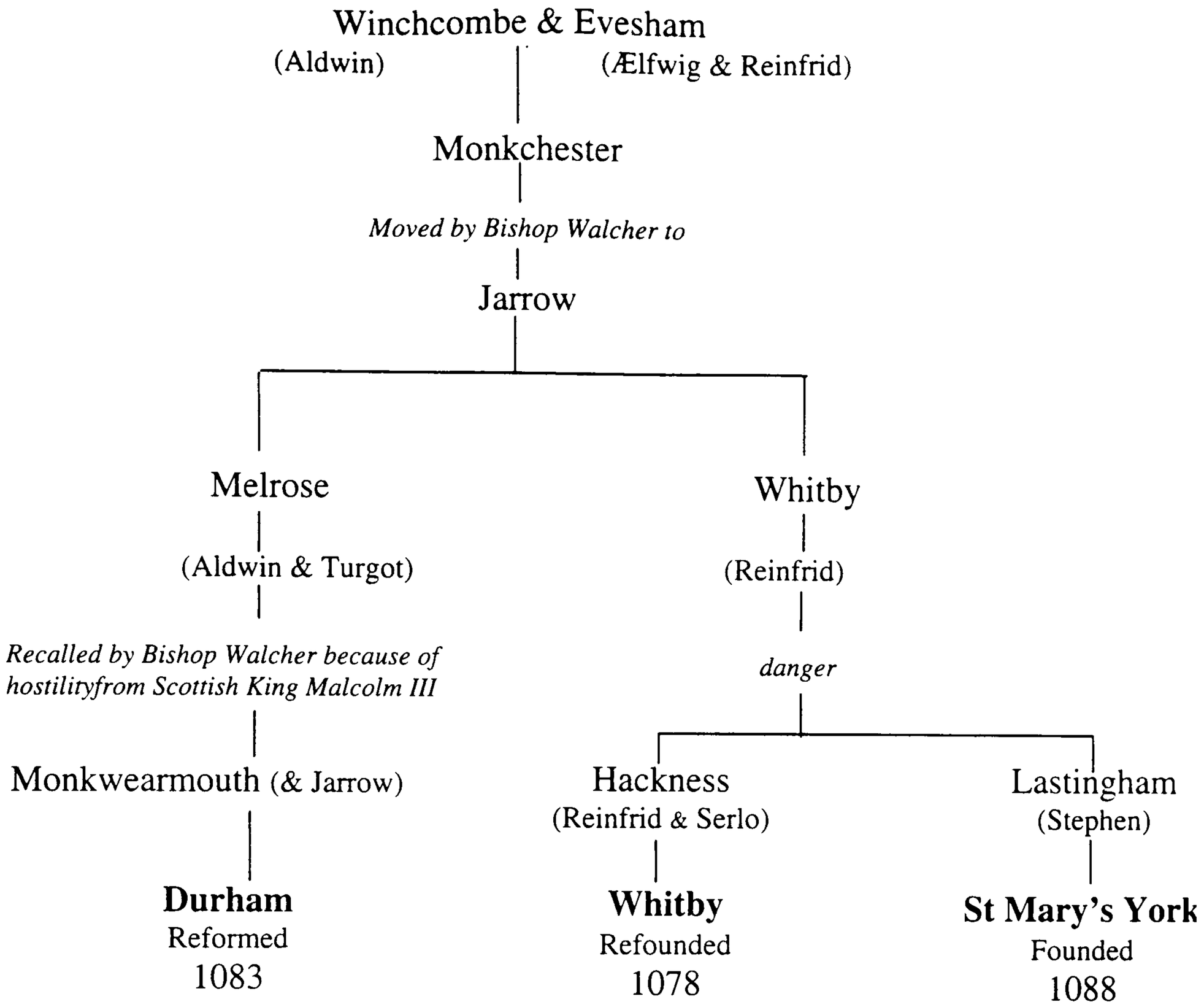


Fig. 1.1 The Northern Monastic Revival

As this plan demonstrates, the Durham community was not only derived from some of the smaller religious houses in the region, which it was later to develop as its own cells, but it also shared a common root with its more major Benedictine neighbours, one of which (St Mary's) was in turn to develop close ties with the Cistercians in the twelfth century.[8] It was centrally placed, therefore, in the network of north-eastern monastic relationships in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In addition, by replacing an existing community rather than founding a new house, the Durham community was able to draw on a wealth of social and economic resources which were unavailable to the other religious foundations of the region. This therefore gave the priory of Durham a significant advantage in its ability to establish and develop its identity and influence. A cursory glance at the outcome of events, such as the above plan provides, therefore suggests that from its beginnings Durham Cathedral Priory was well placed to dominate the spiritual developments in the region. However the simplicity of the plan disguises the fact that the processes by which these developments took place, and the reasons behind them, are far from clear. The sheer number of other foundations involved in the

revival, some permanent and others not, and the confusion of details in the sources hints that there is a complex history behind the story of Durham's emergence and relationships which might challenge the view that Durham's position was either inevitable or assured. Why, for example, did the monks settle in Monkchester, Jarrow, Melrose and Monkwearmouth before arriving in Durham? Why were there so many divisions within the movement? And to what degree does this puzzling multiplicity of religious sites actually represent an expansion or transmission of spiritual life and ideas? To appreciate the nature of the Durham foundation, therefore, it is necessary to question the peculiarities of its foundation history.

WHY DID THE REVIVAL HAPPEN?

Aims

Bede and a Nationalist Agenda

The most pressing question to explore is why these three men travelled to the north. Were they seeking something particular in a chosen location, or were they attempting to leave behind something unsatisfactory in their native houses? Were they seeking spiritual advancement, or were their motives inspired by social, political or economical considerations? Symeon's explanation is that Aldwin was inspired, after reading Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, to retrace the monastic footsteps of the northern saints and to live a life of poverty in imitation of them in their ruined houses.[9] Symeon's testimony, however, as the following discussion will highlight, is not necessarily straightforwardly factual, since he presents a version of events which is in accord with the policies and concerns of his community at the time of his writing. At that time, the community was taking great pains to establish its pseudo-credentials as the legitimate successor of the Lindisfarne community; that is, as the most recent manifestation of a venerable Anglo-Saxon lineage.[10] To be able to appeal to an 'ancient' Anglo-Saxon authority and to claim that the refoundation had come about through the inspiration of Bede would fit exactly Symeon's localised, nostalgic agenda, but the reality may well have been considerably more complex than his single answer

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[8] See below, ch. 3.

[9] *LDE*, III, 21. See also A. Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', *JEH* 32 (1981), 397-425; rept. in her *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp. 1-29, at pp. 7-8.

[10] See D. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 197-202.

would suggest. Even the issue of Bedan inspiration carries with it deep implications, since Bede's work would probably only have been available to the reformers through continental manuscripts, as knowledge of Bede had become extremely limited in ninth and tenth-century England.[11] This, of course, does not invalidate the suggestion that Aldwin was inspired by Bede's account of the Anglo-Saxon past; indeed it is highly likely that he had read the *Historia Ecclesiastica* before setting out.[12] However, it does compromise the purity of the Anglo-Saxon heritage, of which Symeon was so proud, which was available to the English only through continental channels. As this example indicates, Symeon's portrayal of events may well therefore be superficial and ignore the complexity of the issues at stake.

However, even if Symeon's explanation about Bede is essentially factual, further questions remain. Why and how was Aldwin interested in Bede and the ancient Christianity of the north? Aldwin had been prior of Winchcombe Priory, a daughter house of the monastery of Evesham. Evesham was ruled by Abbot Æthelwig (1059-77) who was retained by William after 1066 because of his use in the government of the southern midlands region.[13] In neighbouring Worcester the famous Bishop Wulfstan similarly weathered the Conquest. Evesham and Worcester survived largely intact through the turmoil of the Conquest, therefore, and were not immediately transformed to meet the requirements of Norman monastic practice.[14] Knowles has drawn attention to the fact that Evesham and Worcester represented a bastion of Englishness in the Conquest period, and were 'peculiarly national in outlook', partly due to the fact that many of the dispossessed English survivors gravitated towards them.[15] The quality of English learning in these houses was noteworthy and Aldwin and Ælfwig can be expected to have had a good knowledge of their cultural inheritance (though Reinfrid as an illiterate Norman newcomer could not be expected to share the same education). It is

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[11] See B. Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (London, 1998), p. 136 and R. H. C. Davis, 'Bede after Bede', in *Studies in Medieval History for R. Allen Brown*, ed. C. Harper-Bill, C. J. Holdsworth and J. L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 103-16. It is striking in this context that one of the books given to the priory by William of Saint-Calais should have been Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*: DCL, MS B.ii.35. See *DCM*, pp. 41-2.

[12] See below, p. 26, n. 16.

[13] *Chronicon Abbatiæ de Evesham*, ed. W. D. Macray, RS 29 (London, 1863), pp. 87-96. See also R. R. Darlington, 'Æthelwig, Abbot of Evesham', *EHR* 48 (1933), 177-98. Æthelwig's position required co-operation and compromise with the new Norman regime, which must inevitably have brought a conflict of loyalties. He seems to have combined an integrity to his past and to the identity of his community with a realistic approach to survival. He thus demonstrated an adaptability to changing circumstances which could well be ascribed to Aldwin himself. It is possible, therefore, that Abbot Æthelwig's pragmatism greatly influenced Aldwin's own approach to leadership in fast changing circumstances.

[14] Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 159-63. See Baker, 'The Desert in the North', 1-4.

[15] Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 162-3.

certainly possible, therefore, that the works of Bede were available in Evesham, and that the cultural and intellectual atmosphere of the house would have been conducive to a sympathetic, even nostalgic, reading.[16]

In view of Symeon's claims about Bede, the nationalist character of midlands monasticism and the proportion of Anglo-Saxons among Aldwin's companions,[17] some historians have seen the northern revival as something of a reaction against the increasing Normanisation of the English church, a process which has traditionally been viewed as hostile to the saints and customs of the Anglo-Saxons.[18] This view leaves many questions unanswered, however, not least since Susan Ridyard has argued so effectively that the incoming Normans did not universally attempt to displace or destroy native traditions.[19] If Bede's *Historia* was Aldwin's primary inspiration, he would presumably have made efforts to trace the themes and follow the monastic example recorded in it. The most obvious starting place for that would have been a marked veneration for the relics of the saints whom Bede loved and revered, especially Cuthbert's, and the places associated with them. Almost all of the places visited by the monks were mentioned in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. This suggests that the influence of Bede was significant, but it must be compared with the remarkable fact that in Symeon's account of the earliest days there is nothing to suggest that the pioneers were attracted to any site by connections with St Cuthbert's incorrupt body, or indeed by any other relic of the numerous northern saints mentioned by Bede. Their arrival at Monkchester, rather than either Jarrow (to claim a Bedan interest) or Durham (to establish contact with the bishop) is perplexing. Later, Aldwin chose to leave Jarrow and travelled to Melrose which, while firmly connected with St Cuthbert's history, was nonetheless some distance from Jarrow and was complicated by difficult political connections, while other equally important sites were closer. The decision to move to Melrose must therefore have had more to it than simply a desire to follow Bede. Similarly, when Walcher, in his capacity as Earl of Northumbria, gave to the monks the church at Tynemouth which was associated with St Oswin and mentioned by Bede, this

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[16] Knowledge of Bede had been revived in the midlands region as a result of the tenth-century monastic reform movement. Bede's name was included in calendars from Worcester and Evesham among other places, and Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, had a strong interest in him. Not only is Bede mentioned in the sanctorale, homilary, passional, psalter and antiphonal in the *Book of Wulfstan*, but in 1062 Wulfstan's first act after his consecration as bishop was to dedicate a church in Worcester to Bede. See Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 139.

[17] See below, p. 47, n. 90.

[18] See especially D. Knowles, 'Essays in Monastic History 1066-1215, II. – The Norman Plantation', *DR* n.s. 30 (1931), 441-56, especially 455-6, and Baker, 'The Desert in the North'.

[19] Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*'.

would have presented an ideal opportunity for monastic expansion for a group concerned to recreate the monastic life of old. However, the monks seem to have entirely neglected the site, removing the relics to Jarrow and thereby showing no intention to revive the church.[20]

Symeon's portrayal of the course of events attempts to present the refoundation of the monastic community in Durham as a fulfillment of aims, a final achievement in the course of the revival movement. From his perspective it was entirely right and proper that the principal relic of the north should be served by monks, and so it is especially surprising that he gives no hint that the reformers shared such a view of the relics in the early days of their activities. This reluctance to blend the aims of the reformers with their eventual achievement in founding the priory in Durham, an event which was fundamental to the *Libellus* as a whole, is striking in a writer who had a very clear view of how he wished to present history. To have made this connection could have strengthened yet further the new community's claims for legitimacy, so his alternative presentation strongly suggests that the allure of the Durham inheritance was not within the scope of their original intentions.

It is also surprising that no mention was made of this northern expedition in the Evesham Chronicle.[21] This omission is particularly striking when we note that Durham formed confraternity agreements with Evesham and Winchcombe, showing that contacts were still publicly acknowledged.[22] It is also to be expected that the southern houses would demonstrate some concern or pride in their offspring, especially if there was a nationalist Anglo-Saxon element to the revival. The lack of recorded interest from Evesham strongly points towards the expedition being a personal and individual one, stemming from Aldwin's own aspirations and not necessarily following a broader agenda, nationalist or Bedan. Although sanctioned by Abbot Æthelwig,[23] it was not planned by Evesham as a conscious policy of expansion, but was Aldwin's personal project, comparable with Benedict's foundation of Selby discussed below.

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[20] Bede refers to King Oswin in *HE*, III, 14. The grant was made 1075x1080; *LDE*, IV, 4. The reluctance to develop Tynemouth may also, of course, suggest a lack of resources at that time. See ch. 3 below.

[21] *Op. cit.*, see above, p. 25, n. 13.

[22] The Durham *Liber Vitæ* records, *Pro Ælfrico priore Eoueshamiæ, sicut pro nostro monacho*, and with Winchcombe, *Conventio inter Dunelmensem et Wincelcumbensem ecclesiam .VII. officia plenaria in conventu* in Stevenson, *Liber Vitæ*, pp. 32 and 137 respectively.

[23] Symeon records that Æthelwig insisted that Aldwin should be appointed as superior over his companions before he would give his approval to the expedition. *LDE*, III, 21.

Finally, Durham Cathedral Priory evolved, as Anne Dawtry has indicated, into a thoroughly Anglo-Norman institution, not into a museum for Anglo-Saxon nostalgia. She cites as evidence for this conclusion the facts that despite its continued liturgical devotion to the saints of the Anglo-Saxons, Durham did not adopt the popular English interest in the cult of the Virgin Mary, especially the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and that the vast library at Durham (and the library at Whitby) reveal the Norman taste for classical and patristic texts, rather than the vernacular texts to be found at Evesham and Worcester.[24] Had the impetus for the revival truly, or wholly, been a concern with Bede and the Anglo-Saxon past, the priory in Durham would surely have retained more of those characteristics, at least in the early days.

Therefore, whilst it is not unreasonable to believe that the works of Bede did have a part to play in the inspiration for Aldwin's northern expedition, his decisions and actions once he arrived in the north-east were not consistent with the aim of reviving Bede's 'Golden Age' of Anglo-Saxon monastic life, which suggest that the Bedan theme was emphasized by Symeon mainly to give authority and precedence to his account. Other influences must therefore be sought.

Eremitism

Aldwin's discreet and personal expedition with only two companions, his choice of deserted spots on which to settle, and his repeated departures from the small communities which gathered around him were clearly not the actions of a man planning large-scale refoundation. This apparent search for solitude and anonymity, a trend evident even more strongly in the sources' depiction of Reinfrid, points instead to the motivation provided by the contemporary fascination with eremitism.

Eleventh- and twelfth-century Europe saw a tremendous flourishing of spiritual life on a more personal and individual level than had been experienced since the days of the Desert Fathers.[25] This 'movement' within the medieval church provided a legitimate outlet for those who desired to live strict, ascetic religious lives but for whom, for

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[24] Dawtry, 'The Last Bulwark'.

[25] See below, chapter 6 and D. Baker, '"The Surest Road to Heaven": Ascetic Spiritualities in English Post-Conquest Religious Life', in his *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World*, SCH 10 (1973), pp. 45-57, at p. 51 and H. Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe 1000-1150* (London, 1984), pp. 15-37. In the context of the northern revival, Baker has argued that this contemporary movement for spiritual revival was not a major factor since Aldwin and his companions were influenced by custom rather than ascetic inspiration, their monastic settlements were not sited in inaccessible places and their life was not strictly eremitical. Leyser, however, refutes these suggestions, placing the events in the north directly in the context of the 'new monasticism'.

whatever reason, the prospect of belonging to an established monastic house was not an option. Hermits, who could be from all levels of society but who were more frequently common people without an education, began to appear throughout Europe, Scandinavia and England, living on the margins of society where they were often self-regulating, not necessarily adhering to the explicit authority of any particular ecclesiastical figure. Eremitism fundamentally involved a withdrawal from the world, and the embrace of poverty and solitude, though not necessarily individual solitude, often corporate solitude.[26] In rejecting the world, hermits usually felt the need to travel away from their homes in search of the 'desert', as these northern pioneers did. By definition such groups and individuals are difficult to trace, but as the period progressed more and more such hermits joined or formed monastic or canonical communities which not only represented a change or compromise in the expression of spiritual ideals, but which also brought their existence into the sphere of official, recorded history. The reasons for the emergence of this ascetical, eremitical trend are numerous and complex, but its appeal was strongly and widely felt and found a response from large numbers of people across the West. Within the northern monastic revival therefore, evidence that the eremitical ideal had a powerful influence on the unfolding of events would suggest that, for all its idiosyncratic details, the movement was in line with mainstream European spiritual developments. However, as the traditionally institutional houses of Durham, St Mary's and Whitby indicate, whatever eremitism was involved must have come into contact with the apparently opposing impulses of cœnobitical interest and ecclesiastical ambition which produced decidedly non-eremitical results. Consequently the aims and aspirations of the reformers cannot be assumed to be clear-cut, but must, to some degree, have been held in tension between the two ideals. This conflict of purpose in such a formative stage of development is likely to have had a direct influence on the shaping of the spiritual identity of the houses, and so could provide the key to unravelling the mysteries behind these puzzling foundations.

Symeon is not explicit as to whether Aldwin's original intention was to live a solitary life with his few companions, or whether he envisaged the re-establishment of monastic communities. The fact that he sought out companions to accompany him and then further companions once in the north, and that he wished, according to Symeon, to imitate *crebris ... choris monachorum*,[27] is suggestive of a desire for communal and

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[26] 'The Monastic Revival', pp. 46-7.
[27] *LDE*, III, 21.

institutional rather than solitary life, though this impression is perhaps created by virtue of the fact that Symeon was writing with the benefits (or hindrances) of hindsight well after the foundation of Durham Cathedral Priory. The background of the reformers does not strongly suggest either direction: they came from well-established monastic communities where, as Symeon tells us, they could have remained in comfort and plenty,[28] but these communities were nonetheless closely associated with a number of hermits. There is little recorded about hermits in England in the pre-conquest years of the eleventh century, but almost all those known to have existed in the period had connections with the see of Worcester or with Evesham.[29] The example of eremitical life may well have been personally familiar to the three pioneers, therefore, even if it was not their ultimate ideal. Its importance in the revival will now be examined through a detailed assessment of the sources.

THE EARLY SETTLEMENTS

Monkchester/Newcastle

In Symeon's account of their arrival, the three present a picture of holy simplicity, setting out on foot, 'unum tantummodo secum ducentes asellum, quo libri necessarii et uestimenta sacerdotalia ad diuinum celebrandum mysterium ferebantur'.[30] They took those things necessary for communal worship, but not items necessary for church building or decoration. Their first resting place was Monkchester (Newcastle), which seems an unlikely destination if they were really following Bede, and indeed the *Historia Regum* remarks that they left 'cum nullum antiquæ servorum Christi ibi congregationis reperirent vestigium'.[31] Their sole concern, it would appear, was to look for a monastic precedent, and in their eagerness they were simply misled by the name of the place.[32] Monkchester belonged to the bishop of Durham and the monks rapidly came to the attention, and under the patronage, of the most significant ecclesiastical power of the region. At this point in the story, refoundation of a communal nature, although inspired by the strong contemporary eremitical movement, seems to have been

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[28] *in monasteriis que reliquerant, omnem rerum affluentiam habere poterant. LDE*, III, 21.
[29] Baker, 'The Desert in the North', 2.
[30] *LDE*, III, 21.
[31] *HR* s.a. 1074, p. 201.
[32] Monkchester became known as Newcastle after Robert Curthose's construction of a castle there in 1080, but how it came by the name Monkchester originally is unclear as there is no record of any monastic settlement there. See Rollason, *LDE*, p. 202, n. 77.

their intention. The *Historia Regum* reinforces the impression of region-wide reformation since as soon as the narrative reaches the point at which the three had moved to Jarrow, a digression about the results of their efforts is entered into.

> Ex his tribus tria in regione Northymbrorum instaurata sunt monasteria. Unum Dunelmi, apud patris Cuthberti sacrum et incorruptum corpus ... . Aliud Eboraci ... ubi de ecclesiola factum nobile cœnobium. Primum abbatem habuit Stephanum; ... quintum Clementum, qui et in præsenti. Tertium autem in ... Witebi. Ibi sedit primus abbas Willelmus, ... iiii. Ricardus, qui nunc superest.[33]

This approach to the presentation of the material sees the events of refoundation almost as a foregone conclusion and does not question whether the original three pioneers intended to found monastic houses, rather it presents the histories of those houses, with their lines of abbots up to the time of writing, as a fulfillment of endeavours. This impression is enhanced by the fact that these comments occur at the beginning of the passage dealing with the information about the refoundations, which does not actually include any of the details of the individual circumstances of those events. The reader is therefore faced with the presentation of these refoundations as entirely inevitable and straightforward events, without an appreciation of the complexities behind them.

Walcher

One of those complexities was the relationship between the monks and Bishop Walcher. Walcher's initial reaction to the three is hard to gauge. For Symeon, he was a figure who foreshadowed the work of William of Saint-Calais and was a devoted supporter of monastic reform, yet there is good reason to believe that Walcher did not share Symeon's view of the role of monks in the diocese. As is well known, Symeon was concerned to portray an unbroken line of monastic support for St Cuthbert and to that end he wished to present Walcher as a monk in the making, planning a whole monastic community in his cathedral church.[34] Walcher himself was not a monk, though, and his Lotharingian roots were firmly in the tradition of canonical cathedral chapters.[35] He

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[33] *HR*, s.a. 1074, pp. 201-2.

[34] See *LDE*, III, 18: 'uite laudabilis conuersatione religiosum preferebat monachum', and *LDE*, III, 22: 'Hic quoque si diuturniora sibi huius uite tempora extitissent, monachus fiere et monachorum habitationem ad sacrum corpus beati Cuthberti stabilire decreuerat'.

[35] Walcher was from a noble Lotharingian family, and had spent his formative years in Liège which, in the mid-eleventh century, provided one of the most impressive schools in northern Europe. The whole region of Lorraine had, by the early eleventh century, become a forceful centre of church reform, concentrating largely on attacks on simony and clerical marriage, as well as the contentious issue of lay ownership of churches and church lands. See M. Scott, *Medieval Europe* (London, 1964), p. 88. Walcher seems to have been firmly established within the canonical tradition, attempting to reform the community of St Cuthbert according to a canonical rule and receiving a grant from King William I of a

also attempted to reform the Durham community in order to observe proper canonical practices and was investing in their future through the provision of new buildings, indicating that he felt proper canonical life to be appropriate for their function.[36] There is therefore no reason to believe that Walcher envisaged a monastic chapter in Durham and Symeon's views should be seen in the light of his monastic-continuity agenda.[37] However, we need not therefore assume that Walcher had absolutely no interest in monks or any support for their development in his diocese. He might not have wished for a monastic community in his church (indeed he could have invited Aldwin and his companions to join and reform the cathedral community had he so wished, as Bishop Edmund had done with the Peterborough brothers, Æthelric and Æthelwine, in the 1020s),[38] but there is no reason to suppose that he did not consider a monastic presence to be important and useful elsewhere in the diocese.

Jarrow

Symeon presents the move to Jarrow as wholly Walcher's initiative, an action prompted by his deep concern that such holy men should be constrained by living under secular rather than ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Whether or not Walcher really displayed such spiritual sensitivities cannot be proved, but that he might display territorial sensitivities is certainly possible and by moving the monks onto his own land he may well have hoped to exert a measure of authority over them.

The early settlement at Jarrow was, according to Symeon, a picture of holy humility and service. Not even the ruinous state of the buildings could deter the monks who were content to make only a rough shelter before beginning the purpose for which they had come: *diuine seruitie ... officia ibidem celebrare*,[39] in other words to live a monastic life. Grand buildings or elaborate preparations were unnecessary for their purposes since prayer and worship were of paramount importance, it would seem, for Symeon's earnest band of religious who were seeking to follow the *vita apostolica*. Perhaps to Symeon writing in Durham where a substantial amount of the grand and ornate fabric of the cathedral building had already been completed but where work was still continuing,

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second house of regular canons at Waltham. See Rollason, 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century', pp. 192-3.

[36] *LDE*, III, 18.

[37] See Rollason, 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century', A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c. 550-c. 1307* (London, 1974), pp. 114-21 and Johnson-South, 'The Norman Conquest of Durham', p. 92.

[38] *LDE*, III, 6.

[39] *LDE*, III, 21.

this was a rose-tinted view of the simplicity of the past which represented the ideal of a life of prayer and also helped to emphasize the sheer extent of the monastic achievement in that period. This presentation of the ascetical aspect of the venture contrasts with the accounts of Stephen of Whitby's actions, which will be discussed below. Such a denial of the world and contentment with so frugal a lifestyle seems to have been less than satisfying for Stephen who had grander ambitions.

The Jarrow community soon attracted new recruits. Symeon says that 'multi exemplo illorum prouocati, seculo abreuntiantes monachicum ab eis habitum susceperunt, et sub discipline regularis institutione Christo militare didicerunt'.[40] Whilst not being explicit as to exact numbers, Symeon does add that a few of these men were local Northumbrians, while most were from the south of England, which presents an interesting balance of origins.[41] The expedition was, as we have seen, a small, humble, personal affair and publicity of the event in the south was probably, therefore, minimal. In addition, southerners wishing to pursue a monastic life had a choice of monasteries in their own region and therefore had no need to travel to the north-east. On the other hand we would expect that northerners, who had virtually no monastic provision, would have been able to produce some candidates for monastic initiation. Perhaps this surprising ratio of northern and southern recruits suggests that Aldwin's mission was one with which many in the south felt sympathy, adding credence to the suggestion that there was a nationalist element to it and emphasizing the eremitical rather than cœnobitical attraction of this particular group of monks. To the northerners, however, this small group of individuals perhaps represented outsiders whom it would take a long time to trust.[42]

The size and rate of growth of the community can be estimated from the fact that when the Monkwearmouth and Jarrow communities were amalgamated and brought to Durham in 1083 they numbered twenty-three individuals. Reinfrid of course left Jarrow, and quite possibly took some of the brothers with him, but nonetheless it is unlikely that the numbers far exceeded this. Archaeological evidence pertaining to the building of Jarrow church in the 1070s and 1080s shows that the central tower of the

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[40] *LDE*, III, 21.

[41] *HR* also notes that: 'Sed hic pauci ex comprovincialibus, plures vero de remotis Angliæ partibus fama illorum acciti eis adjungebantur unanimes'. *HR*, s.a. 1074, p. 202.

[42] The outsiders brought in by Bishop Walcher to assist him in his episcopal and comital duties were disastrous for inter-racial relations, so it is not to be wondered at if his other protégés, these southern monks, were treated with some initial suspicion, even though Aldwin and Ælfwig were Anglo-Saxon rather than Norman.

church at Jarrow seems to date to the period of Aldwin's community's occupation which indicates that there must have been sufficient numbers to make the building worthwhile.[43] It also, importantly, suggests that although Aldwin and Reinfrid soon moved to new sites, the remainder of the community had intentions to stay and develop the site as a cœnobitical institution, which is certainly how Walcher viewed it. He endowed the monks of Jarrow with certain portions of land when he witnessed their dedication to the monastic life in order, so Symeon says, that *opera perficere et sine indigentia ipsi possent uiuere.*[44] We might query, however, whether this was Symeon projecting back his own ideas about monastic land ownership and wealth rather than truly reflecting Walcher's attitudes towards the small community which, as the subsequent moves to Melrose and Whitby suggest, was not deterred by lack of wealth and status.

Melrose and Monkwearmouth

Symeon mentions only the bare details of the first wave of expansion in the movement: Aldwin's move to Melrose with his protégé, the new recruit Turgot, and Reinfrid's relocation to Whitby. If all was going as well in Jarrow as Symeon implies, it is difficult to see why so many of the small party should have wished to leave, and to do so separately to different locations. Symeon's apparent lack of interest in these events is also suspicious. Why was he so reticent? One explanation is that he felt that the expedition to Melrose was of limited importance since it was short-lived, and the branch extending to Whitby was, by the time of writing, so entirely separate from the Durham development that no further details were required. Alternatively, he may have been attempting to conceal other issues which could have detracted from his version of events. The departure for Melrose is puzzling. Symeon's explanation is that Aldwin 'ad alia quoque loca cogitauit transire, et simile opus Domino adiuuante perficere'.[45] This suggests a conscious policy of expansion and renewal, a natural progression in a plan which had always intended revival on a multiple rather than a single basis. However no explanation is given for the choice of location. It was at some distance from Jarrow, in hostile Scottish territory and although it had associations with St

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[43] See Rollason, *LDE*, pp. 202-3, n. 78 and E. Cambridge, 'Early Romanesque Architecture in North-East England: A Style and its Patrons', in *AND*, pp. 141-60, at p. 149.
[44] *LDE*, III, 21. The lands were the vill of Jarrow with Preston, Monkton, Heworth, Hebburn, Westoe and Harton. No charter remains for these grants, though it is significant that throughout the land-disputes of the following century these estates were always considered to be monastic property rather than episcopal, which verifies their status as part of the original endowment. See *DEC*, p. 3.
[45] *LDE*, III, 22.

Cuthbert recorded by Bede, it was nonetheless not one of the most obvious locations to choose for a second refoundation. Surely in view of the good relations with the bishop/earl which Symeon describes, a move to Monkwearmouth, Tynemouth or Lindisfarne would have been more appropriate. Possibly the reason for this strange plan lay in less cordial relations with the bishop than is elsewhere portrayed. It might therefore represent a real attempt to escape his jurisdiction, so forcefully demonstrated by his gift of lands in Jarrow which had set up a dynamic of authority and dependency between bishop and monks. Walcher's gifts may have precipitated the departures therefore, or there may have been otherwise unrecorded splits within the community which necessitated the imposition of some distance between members. There could have been tension between Ælfwig, one of the original pioneers, and Turgot, one of the earliest recruits who possibly usurped Ælfwig's natural position of leadership. We know little about Ælfwig's background, except that he was a deacon from Evesham who later became a priest, though he was possibly the least dynamic of the three pioneers, since no specific reason is offered for his desire to join the little group and when the others began to look for new sites, he was the one to stay put in Jarrow.[46] Symeon describes him somewhat typically as 'uirum simplicitatis et innocentie merito predicandum, orationibus et lacrimis iugiter intentum',[47] whereas he describes Turgot's rapid rise to prominence as Aldwin's right hand man with enthusiasm. Turgot had been sent to Aldwin at Jarrow by Bishop Walcher whom he had visited on first arriving in the area. He became Aldwin's *comitem itineris et propositi*, and it was Turgot who 'in locum magistri uidelicet Aldwini succedens, hodie in hac id est Dunelmensi ecclesia ... prioratum tenet. Hic magistrum ... secutus, indiuiduo illi comitatu semper adherebat'.[48] It would appear that it was only the two of them who travelled to Melrose, and in Monkwearmouth soon afterwards *Aldwinus Turgoto monachicum habitum tradidit.*[49] Turgot was clearly the favoured recruit, marked out from early on as Aldwin's potential successor.[50]

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[46] It should be noted that Symeon's account of Reinfrid's contribution is similarly small and we are only able to elaborate on that with the use of other sources. The meagre account of Ælfwig may therefore only represent Symeon's own agenda, rather than Ælfwig's contribution.
[47] *LDE*, III, 22.
[48] *Ibid.*
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] In the *Liber Vitæ* of Durham, Turgot's name is in a position of prominence: 'Gualger*us* epi*scopus*, Guillelm*us* epi*scopus*, Rannulf*us* *epi*scopus, Alduuinus Turgodus, (Gosfrid*us*), Ælfuuius Reinfredus'. See A. J. Piper, 'The Early Lists and Obits of the Durham Monks', in *Symeon*, pp. 161-201, at p. 178.

Symeon's description of their time in Melrose again brings to the surface the tension between a desire for eremitical solitude and institutional expansion. Symeon notes that the former monastery at Melrose was deserted and that the seclusion of the place delighted the two companions, which suggests that the growing numbers at Jarrow were changing the solitary atmosphere which they craved.[51] Here on their own they began to revive the monastic life, apparently happily, until the king of Scotland, Malcolm III, began to persecute them, demanding fealty from them. If Symeon's account is accurate in this respect, however, they preferred to stay in Melrose in the face of Malcolm's attacks than return to the bishop who was recalling them, until the greater threat of excommunication forced them into submission. It is this reluctance to return which most strongly hints that they were unhappy to submit to Walcher's episcopal authority, or that some rift had formed in the community back in Jarrow. This latter suggestion gains credibility from the fact that when they did return the bishop 'quibus *statim* monasterium beati Petri apostoli in Wiramuthe donauit', and there is no mention that they returned to Jarrow, or that any of the Jarrow community moved across to Monkwearmouth, rather that they sought out new recruits. In the dilapidated ruins they 'quoscunque poterant "artam et angustam uiam que ducit ad uitam" secum ingredi docere studebant', receiving land from Bishop Walcher 'ut cum his qui secum erant fratribus sine magna difficultate ibidem in Christi famulatu possent perseuerare. Nam etiam de remotis Anglorum partibus illuc aliqui aduenientes, monachicam cum eis uitam agere'.[52] Here Symeon states their desire to attract new companions, and depicts the development of their financial security, reinforcing the tension between the semi-isolation of eremitical life and a communal monasticism.

THE REVIVAL IN YORKSHIRE

Whitby

The element of the revival which possibly reveals the strongest eremitical interest is Reinfrid's departure, c.1077, for Whitby.[53] Symeon, writing only a generation after the events, must have known in some depth what happened and how, but he writes only: 'Tercius uero illorum socius, uidelicet Reinfridus ad Streoneshalch (quod Hwitebi appellatur) secessit, ubi aduenientes suscipiens monachorum habitationem instituere

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[51] 'ad Mailrosense quondam monasterium tunc autem solitudinem pervenientes, secreta illius loci habitatione delectati'. *LDE*, III, 22. Baker, 'The Desert in the North', 6.
[52] *LDE*, III, 22, my italics.
[53] For further discussion of this point, see below, pp. 226-8.

cepit, qui post eius obitum migrantes Eboracum, monasterium in honorem sancte Marie semper uirginis quod nunc abbas Stephanus strenue regit, construxerunt'.[54] This skeletal description gives no hint of why or how two very significant moves were made and once again Symeon leaves the reader guessing about a wealth of crucial details. Fortunately, although the three Whitby sources are incomplete and often confusing, when pieced together it is possible to construct a whole drama of which Symeon gives no hint. In the *Memorial of Foundation and of the Earlier Benefactions* we learn that Reinfrid was one of the Norman soldiers involved in the terrible devastation of the north of England in 1069. While there he saw the ruins of the ancient monastery at Whitby where St Hild's community had previously flourished, which, the text leads us to believe, explains his desire to join Aldwin's mission and to branch out on his own and settle at Whitby very soon after arriving in the north-east.

> Cum vero cognovisset quod sanctus ille locus a crudelissimis piratis Ingwar et Ubba, ... feroci depopulatione esset devastatus; ... ac deinceps per ducentos, et eo amplius annos, vacabat religio monachorum et sanctimonialium in eodem loco, compunctus est corde. Deinde apud Evesham (in provincia Merciorum) monachus factus est, et monasticis disciplinis bene instructus, divino instinctu cum Aldwino Priore de Winchecumbe, et Elwino monacho, regressus est in provinciam Northanymbrorum ad suscitandam monachicam religionem venitque ad Willielmum de Perci, et ab eo honorifice susceptus est.[55]

The story of Reinfrid's 'conversion experience' on seeing the state of Whitby may well be a topos which disguises the close connection which Reinfrid had with the lord of the Whitby land, William de Percy, in whose service Reinfrid had been a knight.[56] Reinfrid may well have been attracted to Whitby because of the prospect of favorable patronage and protection as much as by its historical resonance, but in what spirit was the move effected? Was it an attempt to seek greater isolation and ascetical challenges, or was it intended as an attempt to refound another institution? The account in the *Memorial* immediately establishes the monastery of Whitby as the foundation of William de Percy, given by him to Reinfrid and his companions, *ad suscitandam monachicam religionem*.[57] The writer records that Reinfrid travelled from the south with Aldwin and 'Ælwin', but makes no attempt to mention other parts of the revival movement, giving the impression that all three pioneers went to Whitby. The intention ascribed to

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[54] *LDE*, III, 22.

[55] *Mem. Whit.*, pp. 1-2.

[56] Reinfrid's son, Fulk, continued the connection by becoming steward to the Percy family. For a family tree and biographical details, see Early Yorkshire Charters, vols. I-III, ed. W Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914-16); vols. IV-XII, ed. C. T. Clay, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, extra series, (1935-65), XI, pp. 92-4 and Burton, 'The Monastic Revival', 45.

Reinfrid of reviving monasticism is also highly significant. Reinfrid's departure from Jarrow, and then again from Whitby to Hackness, seems to represent a search for a stricter eremitical life away from the concerns and society of monastic houses. This comment, however, clearly states that he wished to revive monasticism, which, if it is correct, illustrates that the two desires were not necessarily mutually exclusive and that while Reinfrid favoured isolation for himself, he was willing to instruct others in the ways of monastic observance.[58]

Hackness

The relationship between Reinfrid and William de Percy is a vital clue in understanding why Reinfrid went to Whitby and it also marks out Reinfrid's intentions and methods as significantly different from Aldwin's. Reinfrid is often characterised as the most strongly eremitical of the pioneers, and yet strangely he was the one who actively sought out lay patronage, whereas Aldwin, who was to become prior in Durham, had no lay patron and, in moving to Melrose, possibly even attempted to escape his ecclesiastical patron. The relationship between founder and patron was always of great significance for the future of a monastic house and a strong bond between powerful landowner and idealistic monk, as would seem to be the case here, should bode well for the financial and spiritual survival of the house. William de Percy seems at first to have been a generous and encouraging patron and progress was steadily made in the process of refoundation.[59] The *Memorial* deals somewhat formulaically with the establishment of the community: 'Suscepto ergo Reinfridus monasterio, ad idem habitandum vel regendum cœpit regulariter conversari cum sociis suis, in humilitate, patientia, paupertate, et caritate exemplum omnibus tribuens ad bene agendum, et ad Deo serviendum: ita ut, infra breve tempus, prudentissimos viros ad monachicum habitum suscipiendum socios sibi aggregaverit'.[60] Once again, therefore, the presence of these monks attracted followers. One of these recruits was Serlo, brother of William de Percy, and it would appear that once Serlo joined the community William's generosity increased yet more and he added *villas, terras, ecclesias, et decimas* to the original endowment. The narrative then moves on until the time of Reinfrid's accidental death, in the account of which is included what seems like a

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[57] *Mem. Whit.*, p. 1.

[58] Burton suggests that Reinfrid's aim was to live as a hermit, and that he was prepared to be the leader of a group of other such hermits, so long as he was not overwhelmed by them. Stephen may have dwelt on Reinfrid's eremitical aspirations, therefore, in order to justify his early election as abbot in Reinfrid's place. *MOY*, p. 33.

[59] William donated the monastery and two carucates in Prestby.

chance reference to Hackness: 'cujus corpusculum perductum est ad Hachanos, sepultumque in cimiterio Sancti petri Apostoli'.[61] For Reinfrid to have been buried there, Hackness must have held some significance for the community, but strangely no explanation is given in this source. The Dodsworth fragment, although it refers to the slightly later events of King William II's reign, can help to fill some of the gaps.[62] Firstly it begins by describing the *magna tribulatio et angustia et persecutio* which arose for the monastery of Whitby under Prior Serlo (Reinfrid's successor) at this time. The attacks of land robbers and sea pirates oppressed the community so much that Prior Serlo and the monks besought William de Percy's mercy and asked him to provide them with a place of safety at Hackness. Hackness, where St Hild had once had a small religious house,[63] therefore seemed to be a natural refuge for the threatened community and William was prepared to agree to their request, on the condition that when the danger was over they would return to their original site. Here the good relationship between community and patron was working at its best for the preservation of the religious life in the area. However, that bond was more fragile than it seemed, since the monks' security was shattered in a land-dispute between the two brothers: 'Voluit vero Will'mus de Percy aufer[r]e Serloni fratri suo omnes terras et villas quas dederat præfato monasterio de Whitby'.[64]

What went wrong and what bearing does this have on the spiritual developments of the region? The source portrays the community as entirely innocent and vulnerable in the face of William de Percy's apparently capricious attitude to patronage. His primary concern was his land, not the community, and even close family ties were not enough to protect the monks from the severity of his decisions.[65] The monks only secured their rights with the support of the king which shows that the prior felt the matter urgent enough, and had the relevant contacts, to take the case against his brother to the highest authority in the land. This action immediately took the spiritual life and work of the monastery out of the purely eremitical mould and straight into the heart of institutional, political life, which transformed the attitude and simplicity of Reinfrid's example.

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[60] *Mem. Whit.*, p. 2.
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] The authenticity of this fragment has been challenged, but it is possible to construct a plausible context in which its evidence can play a full role. See *MOY*, pp. 23-44.
[63] Bede, *HE*, IV, 23.
[64] *Cart. Whit.*, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.
[65] William de Percy seems to have viewed Whitby as a family church, since his brother Serlo followed by his nephew William were leaders of the community and Reinfrid's son became steward to William's son. *Cart. Whit.*, pp. xxviii-xxx and liv.

Nonetheless, this still does not explain why Reinfrid was buried at Hackness, or indeed what happened at Whitby between the time of his arrival and death. The final source for these events, Stephen of Whitby's account of the foundation of St Mary's, furnishes us with some of these crucial details and provides some clues as to how we might use the later information from the Dodsworth Fragment to elucidate these earlier events.

Stephen of Whitby

Stephen's narrative is unashamedly concerned with his own experiences and he states his aims clearly: 'ad posterorum memoriam literis mandare curavi, ut sciant præsentes et futuri posteri nosteri, qui vel quales hujus nostræ Ecclesiæ fundatores, de quantis invidorum turbinibus impulsa sustinuerit perturbationes'.[66] Stephen's writing is thus a piece of self-justification and consequently mentions only those places, people and events which impinge upon his own story. Thus he mentions Reinfrid, to whom he made his profession, but does not refer to Reinfrid's companions, or to their achievements elsewhere in the north-east. He informs the reader that in 1078 he renounced the world and accepted the monastic habit at Whitby where Reinfrid was the head of a small but growing community and he adds the vital information: 'Eo namque in loco quidam fratres, tunc temporis heremiticam vitam ducentes, ipsum locum in melius renovare cupiebant'.[67] Reinfrid and his fellows, according to Stephen, were living as hermits, but their intention was the recreation of community life, as the *Memorial* had suggested.

Stephen goes on to praise the holiness of Reinfrid, whom he appears to have held in respect and affection, and mentions his time at Jarrow. He describes a solitary life which was transformed as recruits came to join him. This is essentially the same story as we heard from Symeon, with the exception that Stephen here completely omits to mention Aldwin and Ælfwig, so the story reads as though the whole revival in the north was the result of Reinfrid's own endeavours. Reinfrid decided to leave Jarrow, Stephen tells us, 'cum fratres qui cum eo morabantur in disciplinis regularibus instructos vidisset religionis monasticæ præceptis inhærere',[68] again suggesting that the work at Jarrow of recruitment and expansion was entirely Reinfrid's achievement. Then, 'deputans labores vitæ præsentis parvissimos ad comparationem æternæ retributionis, ipsis

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[66] *De Fundatione ... Sanctæ Mariæ*, *Cart. Whit.*, pp. xxxiv-xxxv.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.
[68] *Ibid.*

mærentibus valedicens, solitariam vitam ducendi gratia Wyttebeiam venit'.[69] Here again Stephen is stressing Reinfrid's eremitical interests, and love of solitude.

It was after Reinfrid had moved to Whitby that Stephen, in 1078, joined the small community and, according to his own version of events, 'evolutis autem paucis diebus, totius Monasterii procurationem, Renfridus pariter omnisque congregatio ipsius annuens consilio et imperio, mihi imposuerunt'.[70] Stephen claims to have felt repugnance for the appointment for some time, but was eventually reconciled to becoming abbot when the king and archbishops commanded it. As is obvious from later passages of his account, Stephen was extremely concerned about his status and that of the monastery and was constantly attempting to promote its interests. It seems highly unlikely that a man of his ambitions and talents would have been truly unwilling to accept such responsibility. What is more surprising is that he should have been selected for such a position so soon after his arrival.[71] This might well reflect the two very different personalities involved. Stephen, whom Symeon describes as a *strenue* head of St Mary's,[72] had the skills necessary for managing a community while Reinfrid seems to have retreated to Whitby to avoid such a task, so it was perhaps an arrangement to everyone's satisfaction. At a later point in his narrative Stephen describes how he petitioned the king and the justices of the kingdom when he was faced with the hostility of William de Percy. Those actions suggest that Stephen was a man of stature who was known in some of the most powerful circles, which would also help to account for his otherwise remarkable appointment.[73] There is no hint of an acrimonious division between Reinfrid and Stephen, indeed Stephen describes his predecessor as 'bonis pollens moribus, virtutum cœlestium dote insignitus, qui cujus meriti apud Deum fuerit testantur ejus opera, multis ejus vestigia sequi volentibus in ævum profutura'.[74] It is perhaps best, therefore, to see the shift in rule as one which was to everyone's advantage.

Lastingham

Very soon after his appointment came the aforementioned trouble from William de Percy. Stephen's version is that William, 'videns locum nostrum nuper desertum in

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[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *Ibid.*, p. xxxvi.
[71] Whilst *paucis diebus* may be a turn of phrase rather than a precise measurement of time, it surely points to a short period.
[72] *LDE*, III, 22.
[73] Stephen's name suggests that he was of Norman origin.
[74] *De Fundatione ... Sanctæ Mariæ*, *Cart. Whit.*, p. xxxv.

multis meliorari, multa adversa, ... nobis ingerebat'.[75] William harrassed the monks, removing from them all that he had previously given to them, and Stephen exerted himself vigorously, even travelling to Normandy to solicit the king's help, in his attempt to seek justice for the community from William's oppressions. However, the crisis for the young community came when an attack of pirates forced them into flight. At this point Stephen decided to lead his community to the safety of a more sheltered spot, namely Lastingham, 'tum nimirum vacans, sed olim monachorum in eo habitantium frequentia et religione egregius'.[76] Surprisingly, though, the narrative indicates that they did not move immediately, but waited until preparations had been made on their new site.[77]

Stephen's actions in this respect seem to have been planned on a scale far larger and more political than anything which had gone before, and his intentions seem to have had no connection with the eremitism of the others. The actions of Aldwin and Reinfrid, for example, were reasonably localised and when Aldwin and Turgot felt threatened they were prepared, so Symeon tells us, to endure persecution and possible death at the hands of King Malcolm, being recalled by Walcher only through the far more serious threat of excommunication. To them, the material aspects of their circumstances were apparently of little concern; all that seemed to matter was the living of a monastic lifestyle in ancient holy places. For Stephen, more ambitious and politically-minded than his colleagues, claiming and maintaining possessions and status and fighting for justice was an absolute necessity before he or his community could settle down to a religious life. Stephen, like Serlo, even went so far as to travel to Normandy and to seek an audience with the king, an extreme in which the original three showed no interest. Their repeated concern was a search for a model of monastic living in the ancient sites; Stephen's agenda was of an entirely different sort, one concerned with rights, possessions and status. He may also have been deeply concerned with spiritual matters, but that is not reflected in the source material, even that which he himself produced.

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[75] *Ibid.*, p. xxxvi. Baker describes the splits in the community as being related to differing ways of life as much as to the interference of William de Percy. 'The Desert in the North', 6.
[76] *Ibid.* Stephen's narrative does not mention Hackness, so the impression is given that he took the whole Whitby community with him to Lastingham.
[77] A. Hamilton Thompson suggests that Stephen moved his community to Lastingham c.1080, and that their building work was completed there c.1084/5. 'The Monastic Settlement at Hackness', *YAJ* 27 (1924), 388-405, at 394-5. This delay is interesting since the other moves seem to have been made straight away, whatever the state of the buildings, but Stephen seem to have waited for improvements to have been made before he was prepared to move.

Stephen also mentions Lastingham as a place of refuge, but not Hackness. When he felt threatened, his response was to move to the inland site associated with St Cedd.[78] Why should this be? One possibility is that there was already a community at Hackness which he did not wish to join. Stephen makes no mention of what happened to Reinfrid after his own election, but we do know that he was buried at Hackness, so it is perfectly possible that the eremitically-minded Reinfrid sought the greater seclusion of Hackness as soon as he was released from his responsibilities at Whitby in 1078. The fact that Serlo later gained permission from William de Percy to move to Hackness indicates that it belonged to William, which would be another reason for Stephen choosing not to go there, but to go instead to the royal possession of Lastingham.

St Mary's York

Stephen's independence and ambition, along with his royal protection, eventually led him to make a bold move away from the remote and isolated monasticism of Whitby, Hackness and Lastingham, towards a grander, more public monasticism which turned its back on the search for the desert and instead embraced the heart of society. He moved to York in 1086 and became the first abbot of St Mary's in 1088. By this time, as will be discussed below, Aldwin, Turgot, Ælfwig and their companions had been moved to Durham by Bishop William of Saint-Calais who saw their role as intimately linked with the grandeur of his cathedral church. This transformation may well have served as a partial model for Stephen's plans. Nonetheless, even without their example, Stephen appeared to have the desire, ability and connections to effect this dramatic transformation. He was a close friend of Count Alan, who took pity on the struggling Lastingham community and promised them his church of St Olave which he had built on the edge of the city of York. King William I was very pleased at the news, Stephen tells us, even though the land on which they were then living was his own grant to them, because he recognised that *in eadem civitate iniquitas super habundaverat*[79] and that the presence of holy men would be of great benefit to the people. This suggests that both the king and Stephen perceived the role of the monastery as being one of wider moral reform rather than as an inward-looking spiritual hothouse. The move to St Olave's had taken place by 1086 but, following another dispute over the ownership of land, this time with the Archbishop of York, the king made an exchange and thus in

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[78] Bede, *HE*, III. 23 and 28.
[79] *De Fundatione ... Sanctæ Mariæ*, *MA* III. p. 545.

1088 St Mary's was founded. This grant was soon augmented by King William II and a foundation ceremony was held, attended by a multitude of dignitaries.

This was a dramatic change from the splinter group which Reinfrid had led just the decade before. Stephen had originally been drawn to Reinfrid's eremitical band and his introduction to monasticism was through the mould of this solitary-minded man. His earliest companions in the monastic life, some of whom were presumably still with him, were also attracted by the same model. Here, however, just eight years later events were unfolding which, like the Durham foundation in 1083, represented developments entirely different in character from the solitary, ascetical settlements of the previous decade. In the tension between eremitism and cœnobitism, these monks seem to have foregone their interest in the desert in exchange for an active role in society. Royal patronage, noble witnesses and court gatherings were all integral to the foundation of the city-based monastery, and, in some ways, represent something of what the original three monastic pioneers of the previous decade were attempting to escape. Stephen, however, was actively drawn by this social, urban model for living. He made his decision to accept, perhaps he even solicited, Count Alan's offer of the church of St Olave in York when he already had the house at Lastingham, on royal land, where a large amount of construction had taken place. This presumably indicates that when the community moved to Lastingham, it envisaged settling there,[80] but that Stephen had a good eye for an opportunity and was prepared to take risks and change plans in order to promote the community's interests. He took active steps to change his position and make his house an establishment of some importance with noble and royal connections.[81] He was working on an institutional rather than an eremitical model.

Symeon's account condenses these events into just one sentence,[82] which not only fails to communicate the complexities of the issues, but consciously projects a false image of a successfully expanding movement in which progress was smoothly made. Symeon was concerned with the flow of tradition and this offshoot of the major element of the revival (as he would have seen it), was thus made to fit neatly into the greater whole. Symeon's account is therefore greatly misleading as he attempts to portray as inevitable those events and processes which were closely connected with developments both in the turbulent region and the wider European church. The move of the monks from Jarrow

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[80] *Mem. Whit.*, p. 2.
[81] Dawtry, 'The Last Bulwark', pp. 92-3.
[82] See above, p. 37, n. 54.

and Monkwearmouth to Durham in 1083 perhaps demonstrates most clearly of all both Symeon's view of events, and the vulnerability of the monks in the face of external pressures and powers.

THE FOUNDATION OF DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY

Symeon provides little information about the Jarrow community in these years, apart from the details about the gift of Tynemouth,[83] while of the Monkwearmouth community we know that Turgot became a monk soon after arriving there and that he and Aldwin enjoyed a position of some importance within the diocese, as advisers to the bishop.

> Quos episcopus familiari caritate amplectans, sepius ad colloquium suum euocauit, et interdum suis adhibens consiliis, libentissime illorum dictis dignatus est obedire. ... Igitur episcopo protegente placidam et quietam uitam monachi duxerunt, quos ille ut pater benignissimus toto affectu fouere, et sepius per semetipsum dignatus est inuisere, et ea quibus indigebant largius prebere.[84]

Symeon, therefore, describes the monks as living peacefully, but the troubles of the area, caused in part by Bishop Walcher's tenure of the earldom and his favoritism of certain advisers over others, alongside the racial tensions which existed once the Normans imposed their rule over the region, would surely have been sufficient to ensure that the monks' lives were not, in fact, tranquil. Nonetheless, Symeon makes no mention of the monks again until his narrative reaches the time of the bishop's violent death at the hands of discontented northerners. He relates how the monks of Jarrow (those of Wearmouth are not mentioned, or at least not separately) 'ascendentes nauiculam ad locum nauigarunt, et corpus patris sui et antistitis uix propter uulnerum frequentiam agnitum et penitus omni tegmine spoliatum, cum graui luctu impositum naui ad monasterium detulerunt; quod Dunhelmum inde perlatum'.[85] The monks were clearly identifying very closely with the murdered bishop and not fearing to acknowledge him as their patron, even though, presumably, that put them in a vulnerable position considering the attitude of his murderers and the riotous atmosphere of the Durham area at that time. It is striking that the monks, rather than the canons from Durham, were the ones to collect the corpse and return it to Durham for burial. Possibly the canons' allegiances were with the Northumbrians who protested against the

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[83] *LDE*, IV, 3. Cf. *DEC* nos. 2c and 5, pp. 4-6 and 39-47.
[84] *LDE*, III, 22.

bishop's policy, though the involvement of the monks might instead have been due to the location of Walcher's death at Gateshead near Jarrow. Nonetheless, this public display of allegiance perhaps reflects the close relationship which the monks had with the bishop and marks them out as episcopal servants rather than totally independent individuals living an eremitical life away from the concerns of the wider world.

The Community of St Cuthbert

The circumstances of the amalgamation of the Jarrow and Monkwearmouth communities around the body of St Cuthbert in Durham forms the climax of the *Libellus*.[86] The initiative for the move is portrayed as coming entirely from the new bishop, William of Saint-Calais, independently from, but in fulfillment of, the purported plans of the late Bishop Walcher which, as we have seen, were probably an invention of Symeon's.[87] But what did the bishop think he would gain by bringing Aldwin and his monks to Durham?

William's motives were probably varied and wide-ranging, concerned with both local and national politics, and with European ecclesiastical trends. One of the primary reasons for Walcher's murder had been the tense relationship between the local Northumbrians who strongly resisted subjugation, and the foreigners who represented the new ruling power.[88] The experiment of combining the roles of earl and bishop had been an expensive and disastrous mistake and so the new bishop needed to tackle the problems of race and rule immediately. His attempt at a solution was to have wide-reaching implications throughout northern society. He chose to diffuse and redefine one of the most potent symbols of Northumbrian identity, the community of St Cuthbert. The guardians of the incorrupt body were members of some of the oldest local families who had acquired a certain prestige through their years of service to the saint.[89] They were emotive representatives of the old order in the north, as well as the undisputed landowners (through their association with St Cuthbert) of vast tracts of

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[85] *LDE*, III, 24.
[86] *LDE*, IV, 2.
[87] See above, pp. 31-2.
[88] See Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, pp. 90-9 and W. E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and its Transformation 1000-1135* (London, 1979), pp. 137-41.
[89] The cult of St Cuthbert had been carefully cultivated since the community's departure from Lindisfarne, with special attention being given to the relationship with the kings of Wessex. See Simpson, 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert Episode' and D. Rollason, 'St Cuthbert and Wessex: The Evidence of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183', in *SCCC*, pp. 413-24. Through this manipulation of the cult, the community had gained in status, security and prestige as is shown by the text recording the complex relationship between saint and community, the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*.

land. By removing them from their honoured position, William of Saint-Calais was taking a significant step in advancing the power of Norman control over an independent and rebellious people. The monks were largely southerners and so were not deeply connected with the northern past, but were probably less unpopular with the locals than foreigners would have been since some of them were native Anglo-Saxons and a few even northerners themselves.[90] They were also close to hand and already dependent upon the bishop for their welfare, so were well placed to fulfil William's aims. It was a masterful move by William which ensured that his cathedral chapter was not only loyal to him and the regime he represented, which was crucial for a bishop who was frequently absent from the area on matters of national importance,[91] but was also well-educated and a part of the international Benedictine community with strong links with other English and Continental houses.[92]

William may also have been keen to replace the canons on ecclesiastical as well as political grounds as the Gregorian climate promoted vigorous reform of church structures and abuses. Married clergy were one of the Gregorian movement's most persistent problems and to that end monks and reformed canons were highly favoured over hereditary priests, whose married status was considered to be a sign of thorough laxity.[93] Many major English churches, such as Winchester and Worcester, had experienced a purge of secular canons in favour of monks during the tenth-century monastic reforms, but Durham had been somewhat out of touch with contemporary developments and reforms within the church during this period. Consequently it had been largely unaffected by these changes, remaining rather old-fashioned. The Norman attitude towards the English church led to numerous reforms and reorganizations designed to improve the standards of what was considered to be a lax and superstitious church,[94] and the Durham reforms of William of Saint-Calais, who was himself a monk,

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[90] Aldwin, Ælfwig and Turgot were all of Anglo-Saxon origin, and the names listed in the *Liber Vitæ* after them suggest more of the earliest community were of similar ethnic origins. At least one of the early Durham monks came from the court of King Malcolm where he had been Queen Margaret's priest. He told the story of her death to Turgot. See Piper, 'The Early Lists and Obits'.

[91] W. M. Aird, 'An Absent Friend: The Career of William of St Calais', in *AND*, pp. 283-97.

[92] The large number of confraternity agreements made between Durham and other houses in the early years shows the range and extent of Durham's links within the wider monastic community.

[93] See, for example, C. Brooke, 'Gregorian Reform in Action: Clerical Marriage in England, 1050-1200', in his *Medieval Church and Society: Collected Essays* (London, 1971), pp. 69-99.

[94] Many of the major English churches underwent extensive reforms in the early Norman period. Rochester experienced a transformation very similar to Durham's when the secular chapter, which consisted of five canons, was replaced in 1080 by twenty-two Benedictine monks. Numbers grew rapidly and by 1107 there were sixty monks. See D. Knowles and R. N Hancock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales* (London, 1971), p. 74.

may have been in part an element of this programme of reorganization and Normanisation.

But what of the monks' own attitude towards this move? These events took place only nine years after Aldwin's arrival in the north-east and they must surely have marked a significant moment of transition for the monks: a committed break from the eremitism of the past and an acceptance of institutionalisation. Were they cajoled into accepting a change of circumstances which suited episcopal purposes? Were they conveniently forgetful of Aldwin's original aims in the face of the attractiveness of economic, social and political security? Did they see the move to Durham and the establishment of a new community as the ultimate fulfillment of a decade's work? It is striking that nowhere in Symeon's account does he indicate the monastic viewpoint, whether the monks prompted the plans, agreed with them, tolerated them or reluctantly obeyed them. However, the move did represent a significant departure from the monks' actions thus far. Were they to have re-established the Lindisfarne community, this would have been more akin to Symeon's explanation of reviving monasticism in the ancient places described by Bede, but Durham was relatively modern, less than a century old. It was also, as the episcopal seat, a centre of social, economic and political activity which hardly conformed to the ideals of eremitical existence which appear repeatedly throughout this story. In addition, architectural evidence from Jarrow and Monkwearmouth suggests that the two communities were firmly establishing themselves there and not anticipating any further moves.[95] The move to Durham must, therefore, have represented a very dramatic change of direction and purpose for the monks, which in turn suggests that they might well have approached their new existence from a standpoint of simplicity and obedience to episcopal commands, rather than personal ambition. If the monks of Jarrow and Monkwearmouth really were strongly influenced by the eremitical ideal, more concerned with the *vita apostolica* than with the formality of ecclesiastical institutions, then it is unlikely they would have lost this spiritual focus entirely in their move to Durham.

It is also striking in this connection that no mention is made in the sources of the monks' attitudes towards their predecessors, the canons, who were, it is believed, evicted on their arrival.[96] Symeon's intention was to present the move as the right and

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[95] See above, p. 34.

[96] Symeon says that all the canons except one left. Opinions differ as to whether they were immediately dismissed, or whether the changeover was a more gradual process. It is not possible to tell whether there

natural progression in the history of the Community of St Cuthbert, and he ratified this by stressing at some length that the move was entirely approved of and encouraged by the bishop, archbishops, king, queen and pope.[97] He claimed that the attraction for the monks was the privilege of serving the body of St Cuthbert, but it is striking that the moment of decision to move the monks to Durham where they would be able *pristinum ad illius sacrum corpus restaurare ... seruitium,*[98] is the first occasion on which the attraction of any individual saint is mentioned. Later in the *Libellus* St Oswin at Tynemouth is mentioned in reference to this period, but the separation of this detail from the narrative about the reform process decreases the connection between relics and foundations. At no other point in any of the foundation narratives is a specific relic or cult mentioned or referred to, in spite of Symeon's statement that Bede's writings were the inspiration for the movement. There is no attempt made to suggest that St Cuthbert himself was the attraction for the monks in travelling north, nor that they had even visited the shrine at Durham at any point.[99] Within a short time of being established at Durham, the community had completely accepted their responsibility towards St Cuthbert and made considerable efforts to promote his image, and theirs in relation to him, but this seems to have been a response to their changed environment rather than a sought-after goal.

The Cuthbertine Inheritance

One of the features of the move to Durham which contrasted with all of the other foundations, even Stephen's in York which shares so many similarities, is the fact that Durham was already a well-established centre of spiritual activity with its own traditions and history. In replacing the hereditary canons of St Cuthbert, the monks were not only entering a new phase in their own history, but were also taking upon themselves the weight of four centuries of Cuthbertine history. All of the other monastic settlements in this movement, except St Mary's, came with ancient associations, but none had an immediate history to worry about. The Durham foundation was unique in that the monks acquired a living organism with wealth, power

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was any significant contact between the canonical and monastic communities before 1083. We can discern the attitude of the Durham monks towards their predecessors once they were becoming established in their position, but their feelings before they took upon themselves the new persona of the 'The Monks of St Cuthbert' are difficult to gauge. See M. Foster, 'Custodians of St Cuthbert: The Durham Monks' View of their Predecessors, 1083-c.1200', in *AND*, pp. 53-65.

[97] *LDE*, IV, 3.

[98] *LDE*, IV, 2.

[99] Symeon does note that Aldwin and Turgot were advisers to Bishop Walcher, which probably means that they travelled to Durham to see him. *LDE*, III, 22.

and prestige and steeped in traditions. This is what ultimately made the priory of Durham so distinct from its neighbours and what endowed it with an enormous degree of potential for dominance. The advantages of the inheritance brought constraints and responsibilities though. The legitimacy of the monks' position as the new Community of St Cuthbert was clearly tenuous and, if they were to remain secure in their role, they needed to prove themselves worthy and capable servants of the saint. The monks' privileged position therefore carried with it a challenge to justify themselves which was to be a motivating force behind much of their public activity in the following generation. The monks needed to be skilled in the exploitation of their inheritance which was rooted deep in a past in which they had played no part. If they could do this, then their new community could not only achieve a gravitas and stability which would otherwise take years to develop, but they could also automatically locate themselves deep within the fabric of local society. The issue of their Cuthbertine inheritance therefore both constituted the monks' greatest challenge and provided the ultimate tool for their survival.

THE FOUNDATION OF SELBY

These developments in northern spiritual life were a remarkable phenomenon which in a short space of time and from humble beginnings had produced some of the most significant religious houses in the country. However, it must be remembered that this revival was not the sole monastic venture to take place in the region at this time, nor indeed was it the first, since the Benedictine house at Selby, near York, was founded in 1069. When the foundation stories of Selby and Durham are compared we can begin to appreciate which features were common and which unique to the ventures, and it is hoped that a brief assessment of the Selby narrative will help to put into perspective the issues of the revival movement just discussed. A dismissal of this event and a concentration purely on the strain of revival associated with Aldwin, would present a distorted picture of the Durham Benedictine achievement and its context, which would be in danger of overplaying Durham's uniqueness while underestimating its dominance.

The beginning of religious life at Selby was an unobtrusive affair, and, while it shared numerous features in common with the foundations described above, the inspiration behind its foundation and the process of its creation appear to have been entirely separate from the northern monastic revival. The major source for the foundation of

Selby is the *Historia Selebiensis monasterii*,[100] which was written in 1184, over a century after the events it purports to record. Its factual detail may well, therefore, be open to question, but it is nonetheless of great value for this discussion because it records what the later community felt *ought* to have happened, and therefore points to those issues, concerns and motifs which can be compared with the writings of Symeon and the other historical writers who wrote from the perspective of institutional security.[101] As the narrative records it, Selby was founded by a continental monk called Benedict, who fled his house in Auxerre, taking with him a relic, the finger bone of St Germanus, which he hid, as the saint had commanded him, by cutting open his arm and secreting the bone inside. Benedict's flight was dictated by the saint's wishes and he finally reached Selby, after many setbacks and mistakes, in 1069. The text contains many typical foundation features, such as visions and commands from the saint, determination in the face of danger and hostility, miraculous happenings, the desire to serve a relic and the call to a stricter, purer monastic (possible eremitical) life. Many of these motifs have parallels in the foundation stories of the other northern monastic houses and an appreciation of the shared features helps to place the foundations associated with Durham within the mainstream of eleventh-century English and Continental monastic foundations.

The *Historia Selebiensis* depicts Benedict's motive for his departure from Auxerre as saintly inspiration and divine predestination, as statements such as 'Egredere ... de terra tua, et de cognatione tua et de hac domo patris tui, et veni in terram quam monstrauero tibi. Est locus in Anglia, vocaturque Selebia, meo prouisus honori, meæ laudis prædestinatus obsequijs, mei nominis titulis celebris futurus et Gloria',[102] and 'hic, ... hic, ad terras reducite, quia hic locus quem elegit Dominus',[103] make explicit. The three-fold apparition of the saint, caused by Benedict's refusal to act on his command, is a common motif, designed to impress upon the reader that the removal of a relic was done entirely in accord with the saint's wishes and not just on a human whim.[104] It is also an attempt to explain the seemingly inexplicable fact of Benedict's foundation at

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[100] *The Coucher Book of Selby* I, ed. T. J. Fowler, 2 vols., Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association. Record Series 10, 13 (1891-3), vol. I, pp. 1-54. For discussion of this source and the place of Selby in the context of the northern monastic revival, see *MOY*, pp. 23-31.

[101] See R. B. Dobson, 'The First Norman Abbey in Northern England: The Origins of Selby', in his *Church and Society in the Medieval North of England* (London, 1996), pp. 29-45.

[102] *Hist. Seleb.*, pp. 6-7.

[103] *Hist. Seleb.*, p. 12.

[104] See, for example, the account of the discovery of St Oswin's bones at Tynemouth. *Vita Osw.*, ch. 4, pp. 12-14.

Selby, an unknown place in the north of England far from anywhere connected with the mother house or history of the saint, which might be compared with Symeon's neat but insufficient explanation of Aldwin's dependence on Bede. No plausible suggestion has been made for the choice of Selby, though an alternative reading of the source material might suggest that Benedict was little more than a common thief who disliked the authority of his monastic house and therefore decided to escape, travelling as far from his home as he could and consciously choosing a remote and unknown place to settle where he would feel safe from repercussions.[105] Nowhere is it suggested that Aldwin was inspired by saintly visions, but such appearances and signs do play a very great part in the later hagiographical tradition from Durham and associated places, and indeed had a role in the story of the original Durham foundation in 995.[106]

Throughout the account the writer presents Benedict's central concern as a desire to serve the relic, and to travel into the unknown, both literally and metaphorically, in order to do so. The source does not indicate any dissatisfaction with his present home in Auxerre, as could later be seen in the case of Stephen at Whitby, or the founders of Fountains at St Mary's, York. Rather, it suggests the positive pursuit of a higher ideal, as can be observed in the case of Aldwin, Ælfwig and Reinfrid. However, as Benedict's example emphasises, it is highly significant that the desire to find or serve a relic is strikingly absent from Symeon's narrative, even though later Durham writings stress above all the importance of obedience and service to the saint. As presented in this account, therefore, Benedict showed no interest in founding a new house for its own sake; his most pressing concern must have been to fulfil the wishes of the saint and venerate his relic. As Benedict began to develop a community and a house with land-holdings, the importance of the relic became even more visible. As was the case with St Cuthbert's lands, gifts were made directly to the saint, whose relic proved his presence on the site, rather than to the community which served him.[107] Closely related to relics, of course, was the working of miracles, and the narrative includes mention of a number of St Germanus' miracles, which help not only to establish his prestige as a saint close

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[105] Later evidence suggests that he was a less than saintly figure, since he was evicted from his own foundation by the monks who felt that he had acted unnecessarily severely in his gruesome punishment of two dissident monks.

[106] See *LDE*, III.1 where St Cuthbert's body became too heavy to move, signifying his desire to remain in Durham and not return to Chester-le-Street. In Durham's hagiographical material there are numerous references to visions of the saint, and a three-fold command by or on behalf of the saint is also common, as in Turgot's repeated instructions to the monks at the 1104 examination of the body.

[107] 'ita volo, vt terras suas Sanctus Germanus quietas habeat, sicut Sanctus Petrus de Eboraco habet suas', *Hist. Seleb.*, p. 19.

to God, but also help to confirm Benedict as the chosen instrument of the saint, and the location as chosen and hallowed by the saint's approval.[108] All these factors were important to the community of St Cuthbert once they moved to Durham, in order to establish and legitimise their position in the face of opposition and challenge. However, the connections with saints, relics and miracles did not play a part in the earlier stages of the foundations in Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, which promotes a human rather than supernatural image of the pioneers' endeavours.

One of the major questions of the Selby foundation, which mirrors the major issues in the Durham material, is the question of whether Benedict was attempting to escape the world and live an eremitical life, or whether he had always envisaged building up a community to serve the relic. His lonely departure from Auxerre and his choice of location in a deserted and unknown part of the country point to a sympathy with the contemporary continental and English interest in eremitism.[109] On the other hand, however, although Selby (*Selebeia*) was an unknown place to Benedict, so much so that he originally mistook the name and went to Salisbury (*Salesbyria*),[110] it was not in the 'desert', and the writer of the *Historia* takes pains to describe its location, its proximity to York, its situation on the river and its good communications.[111] Benedict also sought out companions; 'quos Benedictus aduenientes prudenter excipiens, sed et alios, maximeque illos, quos indole bona pollere callebat, plurimis exhortationibus alliciens, infra breue tempus conuentum sibi fratrum congregauit'.[112] Within a few years, like Stephen at Whitby, Benedict was quite happy to be responsible for a reasonably well-established and appropriately managed Benedictine house.[113] There is in the story of Benedict and Selby, therefore, the same tension which we observed in Aldwin's

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[108] The miracles include the visions to Benedict, the cutting of his arm to secrete the relic with no pain or blood, the curing of a dumb man, the punishment of a thief and the curing of a sufferer of epilepsy. See *Hist. Seleb.*, pp. 6-7, 10-11, 13-14, 16 and 17.

[109] We are told that in his youth Benedict had been faced with the choice of being either a monk or a soldier, and he chose the former (*Hist. Seleb.*, p. 6), which was a positive embracing of the monastic life, rather than a sombre denial of the joys of the world. He lived among a community in a monastery before setting out for Selby, at which point he accepted the eremitical lifestyle of poverty, rejection of the world, migration away from home to an unknown destination and near solitude. He arrived unobtrusively and settled on a spot of land where he began to live out his holy life without worrying about elaborate church building. *Hist. Seleb.*, pp. 12-13.

[110] *Hist. Seleb.*, p. 10.

[111] *Hist. Seleb.*, pp. 12-13.

[112] *Hist. Seleb.*, p. 16. Benedict made some effort to publicise the relic, and the miracle of the healing of the dumb man which occurred very soon after his arrival at Selby, made him personally famous on a level equal with the saint ('Hoc deinde per regionis amplitudinem vsquequaque diuulgato miraculo non minus in Benedicti, quam in beati Germani reuerentiam et amorem omnium comprouincialium affectus', *Hist. Seleb.*, p. 14).

[113] *Hist. Seleb.*, pp. 16-19.

mission, between the eremitical and cœnobitical life and so while it cannot be proved whether or not it was Benedict's intention to settle permanently as a hermit, this might well have been a necessary, temporary stage on the way to institutional leadership in an area which was so lacking in recent monastic experience.

Throughout the story of Benedict's travels and his arrival and settlement at Selby, one of the persistent themes is that of support and patronage from those in authority, as indeed the relationships with the bishops of Durham, William de Percy and the king had been important for the other monastic foundations. In Salisbury, where Benedict first settled, a local sheriff, Edward, generously provided for Benedict, as did Hugh fitzBaldric, sheriff of York, when he finally arrived in the north. It was Hugh who engineered a meeting between Benedict and King William which was to prove extremely beneficial to the fledgling monastic community. Negotiation with the authorities was therefore a crucial part of Benedict's early activities and he positively embraced these opportunities, rather than denying all the structures of the world and seeking solely the freedom of the spiritual desert. Benedict's was a pragmatic approach, realistic rather than idealistic both about his own venture and the environment in which he was pursuing it.

It is also striking that although only a few miles from York where there was a large church with a bishop and chapter, no other ecclesiastical organization intruded upon Selby, coveting its lands, personnel or religious prestige. Selby was a virgin site in so far as religious endowments and communities were concerned, so there was no issue of defending or claiming rights in the face of another hostile community, as the Durham monks experienced once they displaced the secular canons. Selby was a self-contained foundation, and while this independence limited its influence, in contrast with the mushrooming effect of the revival movement, it also preserved its strength. The decided limits which can be discerned in the foundation and early development of Selby contrast clearly with the rapid expansion which was undertaken by Aldwin and his companions. The example of Selby should help to show that the nature and extent of Aldwin's influence was by no means inevitable, but reflected the local circumstances and individual aims and personalities of both the reformers and their patrons.

These events in Selby all took place before the northern monastic revival and there seems to have been surprisingly little connection between the two in these early days.[114] It is nonetheless in the context of the foundation and development of Selby that the northern monastic revival must be viewed. It should be acknowledged that the revival was neither the only nor the first sign of renewed religious interest in the region, and that its concerns and expressions were not necessarily unique, but may well have been common features of the religious life of the period. Nonetheless, the comparison highlights those features of the revival movement which were unique and remarkable. The numerous foundations of the movement spread the influence of the monks much further than Benedict's single house, and the royal and political connections of Durham and St Mary's in particular drew those houses into the heart of social, economic and political activity from a very early stage, helping to define them as major ecclesiastical institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

This examination of the northern monastic revival demonstrates how very varied and even contradictory the source materials are and therefore how difficult it is to derive a clear idea of the inspirations, aims and influences relating to the reformers' actions. Symeon, in particular, has been shown to be partisan and unreliable but his bias very usefully highlights some of the concerns of the Community of St Cuthbert in the opening years of the twelfth century. His portrayal of the pioneers' lack of interest in the cult of St Cuthbert, for example, especially in the light of the priory's relationship with the saint, raises questions not only about the monks' original intentions, but also about his own representation of them. Nonetheless, despite unsatisfactory suggestions about the part played in the revival by the influence of Bede or a nationalist reaction, one formative element in the revival does seem to emerge. Almost all of the sources point towards the strong influence of the eremitical ideal on the early monastic communities. This tendency highlights two crucial issues. Firstly, the northern monastic revival of the 1070s was a typical expression of the reform movement which was affecting contemporary spiritual life across Europe. Secondly, the impulse which

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[114] Despite the apparent lack of contact in the foundation process, there is evidence of contact in the early twelfth century. It is known that Hugh, Abbot of Selby, attended the opening of St Cuthbert's coffin in 1104. See *Capitula*, ch. 18, §11, *SMOO*, I, pp. 258. There are also strong similarities between the

inspired the original reformers to revive religious life in the north-east was not an expectation of the institutional splendour which followed, but a genuine concern for spiritual ideas and standards.

Within this context, the foundation of Durham Cathedral Priory offered something rather different. Whitby struggled into the twelfth century as a poor priory, plagued by difficult relations with William de Percy. St Mary's took a different course under Stephen who actively sought out royal patronage and created an urban power centre. In being required to take over the well-established and well-connected Community of St Cuthbert, the Durham monks found themselves removed from their spiritual endeavours in their small priories and had to reconcile their modern enthusiasm for the *vita apostolica* with the maintenance of a highly political institution which enjoyed a range of privileges and responsibilities. A new, almost all-consuming passion for St Cuthbert had to be learned, and the management of extensive estates had to be arranged. No longer were the monks pioneers; now they were representatives of an ancient local line with a carefully recorded history and a symbolic identity. The early monks of Durham therefore had a unique, dual strength in the combination of their current spiritual zeal with the depth of their adopted history. It was with these characteristics that they were to develop their role in the spiritual landscape of the north-east.

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architecture of Selby and Durham. See E. C. Fernie, 'The Architectural Influence of Durham Cathedral', in *AND*, pp. 269-79, at pp. 269-71.

Chapter Two

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY AND ITS CELLS

INTRODUCTION

The relationships described above ensured that, from the earliest days of post-conquest monasticism, Durham Cathedral Priory held a key position in the Benedictine life of the north-east. By the middle of the twelfth century, however, the network of monastic relationships had become greatly enlarged and significantly more complicated as numerous houses of different orders, were founded by a variety of patrons. The purpose of this chapter and the next is to examine the range and depth of the spiritual relationships which the priory conducted with these other north-eastern centres of religious life. This chapter will concentrate on those individual religious houses most closely connected with Durham, while the next chapter takes a broader view of Durham's relationship with the new orders.

The history and connections of the Cuthbertine community which Aldwin's monks inherited, along with their own recent foundations, meant that the new Durham community was ideally placed to support and nurture spiritual life in a number of additional locations throughout the region. In the course of the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries the community developed several small cells and in the first part of this chapter the spiritual relationship between these cells and their mother-house will be examined. This study will provide an insight into the spiritual interests, resources and policies of Durham Cathedral Priory and give some indication of the depth of the priory's direct influence in the region. The second part of the chapter will continue the theme of Durham Cathedral Priory's spiritual links with local religious houses by examining its troublesome relationships with two houses which were not, or were no longer, cells of the priory. Both Tynemouth and Hexham had strong historical connections with the Community of St Cuthbert but had not remained in the community's possession. The evidence pertaining to the priory's reaction to its loss will be examined. Thus this chapter will explore a range of local spiritual relationships going some way towards establishing how Durham Cathedral Priory viewed itself in the context of the network of north-eastern religious foundations. This will provide a basis from which to approach the broader survey in the following chapter.

CELLS: IDEAS AND PRACTICE

The Benedictine dependency system was well established by the eleventh century. Many major monasteries possessed dependencies of some kind. and the range and variety of possible relationships was extensive: there were dependencies, cells, daughter houses, obediences and, with the arrival of the Cistercians, granges.[1] Although all of these terms essentially describe a subordinate house which was connected with its mother-house through economic and possibly other ties, there were numerous ways in which cells could be acquired and developed. Cells could be founded as small independent houses by a lay patron, and given to a larger monastery to administer. perhaps as a gift, or because they were too small to survive without help, or for various other reasons.[2] The issue of lay ownership of churches was also significant: nobles wishing to found churches felt that it was inappropriate, in the age of Gregorian reforms, for them to retain their ownership, so they gave them to monasteries.[3] Alternatively, cells could be founded by the mother-house on its own land as a secondary centre of activity. Either way, after their foundation cells were usually developed and operated by the monks of the mother-house, who were often rotated regularly to maintain good contact, as an extension of that monastery's activities in that area. They could vary from tiny establishments which only just maintained a subsistence level of spiritual observance,[4] to priories with a small community,[5] but they would not usually undertake the full spectrum of monastic activities such as professing or training novices. In many cases, cells were seen by the mother-house as a resource to supply its own needs, and so they were often used as an effective means of managing distant estates and accommodating a surplus number of monks. In practice, however, as David Knowles has commented, they could sometimes prove to be more of a liability

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[1] See Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 134-6, 432-4, 596-7 and 676-7. He notes that 'cell' came to be used as the generic term.

[2] For example, Robert de Todenei began to build a church to Our Lady near his castle of Belvoir c.1076, but was too busy to finish it. Lanfranc advised that he give it to St Albans as a cell and Abbot Paul sent out four monks. *MA*, III, p. 284.

[3] Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 596-7.

[4] St Mary's York had a small cell at Sandtoft, staffed by only one monk. In time it became attached to another of St Mary's cells, St Mary Magdalene in Lincoln. *MA*, III, p. 616.

[5] Richmond, another of St Mary's' cells, had nine or ten monks. *MA*, III, p. 601. Great Malvern, one of Westminster's cells, probably had about thirty monks by the 1120s-1140s. Mason, *Westminster Abbey*, pp. 237-8.

than an asset, though his judgment on their total lack of a spiritual dimension will be challenged in the case of Durham Cathedral Priory's cells.[6]

There was a great deal of diversity across the order in the way in which cells and dependencies were developed and maintained. This reflected wider ecclesiastical trends such as an interest in reform movements, the rise of the cult of saints, or economic and demographic expansion, as well as local circumstances. In the tenth century, for example, the great reforming abbey of Cluny was enjoying its rapid rise to prominence, leaving in its wake a trail of reformed daughter-houses. Cluny did not found new houses, nor did it perceive the function of daughter-houses to be a means of managing distant estates: the family of monasteries associated with Cluny came into being through the reforming impulse. Cluniac monks revived ailing spiritual houses and took them out of the hands of their lay patrons, dedicating them to the Cluniac pattern of direct allegiance to the papacy.[7] By the twelfth century the Cistercians had developed their system. The family structure was the means by which the order expanded: daughter-houses were founded by a patron, often lay, and staffed by monks from the mother-house with which the new monastery would always maintain close links. In time the daughter house would expand and operate independently, often spawning daughter houses of its own, but the family connections remained crucial in the governance of the Cistercian order. In addition to this natural process of expansion, the Cistercians also developed a system of granges: small centres located on the monastery's estates where brothers overseeing the management of the land could be accommodated.[8] Elsewhere different models emerged. In the ninth century, for example, the continental monastery of Fulda built a number of new churches to house the cults of Roman martyrs which were rapidly growing in importance. This resulted in the creation of a liturgical network centred on Fulda which discernibly extended Fulda's spiritual influence over the region. The spiritual function was complemented by an economic one as the monks posted to these churches were also responsible for the monastery's estates in those areas.[9] Elsewhere in France, in 1047, the abbey of la Trinité, Vendôme, purchased the site of l'Evière and it was so well endowed that it was able to become a sister rather

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[6] '... save for a few of the larger priories, they served no religious purpose whatever, and were a source of weakness to the house that owned them.' *The Monastic Order*, p. 136.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-9 and 154-5 and Hunt, *Cluny under St Hugh*, pp. 124-85, especially pp. 131-41 and 154-61.

[8] Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 215-6.

[9] This example was drawn to my attention by Jannecke Raaijmakers, in her paper 'Texts, Buildings and Identities. Fulda, from its Foundation to the Middle of the Ninth Century', delivered at the workshop *Conceptions and Representations of Space in the Early Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 25 November 2000.

than a daughter house. In time Vendôme developed an entire 'priory system'. By 1109 it had twenty-four obediences and five priories while fifty years later there were forty different establishments. Monastic policy at Vendôme had become decentralized by the early twelfth century and for as long as the rate of recruitment of monks continued to grow, the priory system remained administratively vital. When numbers fell in the thirteenth century, the role of the cells altered accordingly.[10] In addition to these general patterns, individual cells and dependencies could occasionally be used in very specific ways. Some were used by the monks of the mother-house for rest from the routine and responsibilities of their monastic duties. St Albans' monks used their cell at Redbourn in this way.[11] Other cells could be used for banishment or punishment of dissident monks. St Albans used their disputed Northumbrian cell at Tynemouth for this purpose, whereas Bury St Edmunds, which did not have any cells of its own, organised confraternity agreements with other houses which allowed for the distant accommodation of dissident monks.[12] Elsewhere cells evolved from or developed into hermitages, such as the hermitage at Goathland, which became a cell of Whitby's, or Coquet Island, which was given to Tynemouth as a hermitage.[13] Monasteries could therefore use additional, subordinate houses in a variety of different ways, and, as the map and table below indicate, by the end of the twelfth century there was an extensive range of Benedictine cells and dependencies in the north-east of England.

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[10] Johnson, *Prayer, Patronage and Power*, pp. 54 ff.

[11] In 1178 the bones of St Amphibalus and his companion martyrs had been discovered at Redbourne and after Abbot Warin came to office in 1183, it began to be used as a place for relaxation for monks. See Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, p. 74.

[12] See A. Gransden, 'Legends and Traditions concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *EHR* 100 (1985), 1-24; reprinted in her *Legends, Tradition and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp. 81-104, at p. 97, and R. B. Dobson, *Durham Priory 1400-1450* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 302-3. The dangers of sending dissident monks away from the discipline of the mother-house, however, almost outweighed the benefits of punishing them in this way.

[13] Whitby's cell of St Mary's, Goathland was probably originally a hermitage granted by Henry I to the priest Osmund and his brethren (1109x1114). Later the king allowed the hermits to transfer the site to the abbot and convent of Whitby when they adopted the Benedictine Rule and were received into the community themselves. *MA*, IV, p. 544. Coquet Island, off the Northumbrian coast near Warkworth, was granted to Tynemouth as a cell by Robert de Mowbray, Earl of Northumbria. A Danish hermit, St Henry (d. 1127), lived here for a time. See R. Midmer, *English Medieval Monasteries (1066-1540): A Summary* (London, 1979), pp. 118-19. Other examples include Beaulieu, founded c.1140, which had been a hermitage and was given to St Albans by Robert d'Albini and his mother Cecily. *MA*, III, p. 274. The pre-conquest site of Great Malvern Priory in Worcestershire had supported as many as three hundred hermits. Subsequently they formed themselves into a group, decided to follow the Benedictine Rule and elected a superior. It became a cell of Westminster in 1083. *MA*, III, p. 440.

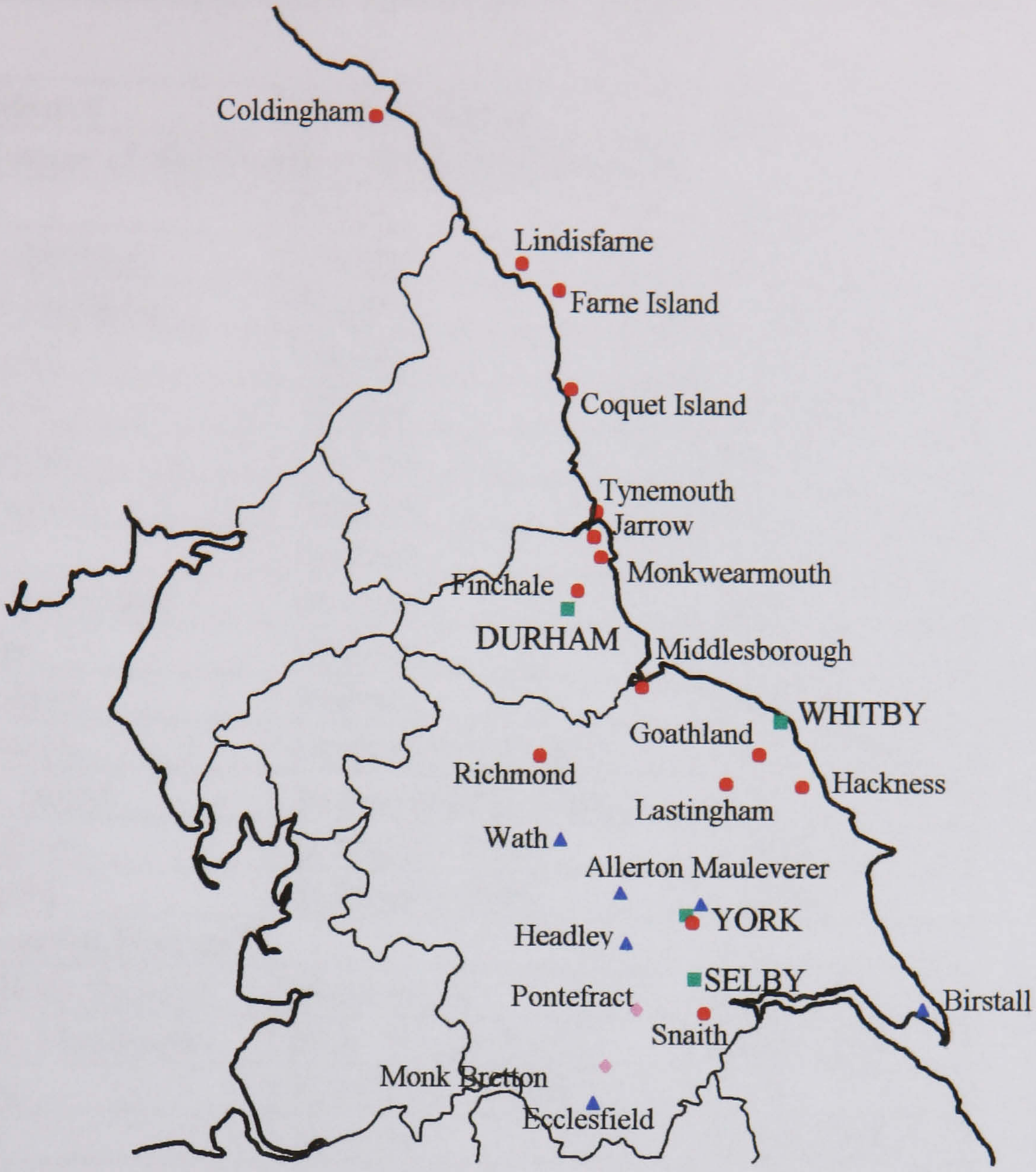


Fig 2.1 Benedictine Foundations in the Post-Conquest North-East[14]

Key to map

■ INDEPENDENT HOUSE

● Dependency or cell of a local independent house

▲ Dependency or cell of a foreign house

◆ Cluniac house

—— County boundaries

(YORK houses consist of: ■ St Mary's, ▲ Holy Trinity and ● All Saints', Fishergate)

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[14] This map is based upon the Ordnance Survey Map of Monastic Britain (North Sheet), 2nd ed. (1955) and the 'The Black Monks' map in Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, following p. 387.

The following table indicates to which mother-house the dependencies belonged.

Dependency	Mother-house	Date
Houses of the Northern Monastic Revival		
Snaith	Selby	c.1101
Middlesborough	Whitby	c.1120
York (Fishergate)	Whitby	-1100
Goathland	Whitby	-1109
Hackness	Whitby	c.1100
Lindisfarne	Durham	1090s[15]
Farne Island	Durham	Early 12thc.
Jarrow	Durham	1083[16]
Monkwearmouth	Durham	1083
Finchale	Durham	1130s[17]
Coldingham	Durham	+1095[18]
Tynemouth	Durham/St Alban's	c.1075/1089
Coquet Island	Tynemouth/St Alban's	-1125
Lastingham	St Mary's York	c.1080
Richmond	St Mary's York	c.1100
Foreign Houses[19]		
York (Holy Trinity)	Marmoutier	c.1089
Allerton Mauleverer	Holy Trinity York	1109x1114
Headley	Holy Trinity York	-1170
Birstall	Aumale	1175x1195
Ecclesfield	St Wandrille	-1130
Wath	Mont St Michel	?c.1156
Pontefract (Cluniac)[20]	La Charité sur Loire	1090x1099
Monk Bretton	Pontefract	1153/4

Fig. 2.2 Table showing the Benedictine Dependencies in the Post-Conquest North-East

Durham Cathedral Priory clearly developed a relatively large number of cells in the area.[21] What sort of spiritual value they held for the priory in Durham will now be examined.[22]

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[15] Dates for Durham's cells refer to the earliest evidence for activity of Durham monks at each site.
[16] Jarrow and Monkwearmouth remained in the possession of the Durham monks in 1083, even though they did not receive official status as cells until the late-twelfth/early-thirteenth century.
[17] Durham monks began to take an active interest in spiritual life in Finchale while Roger was prior (1138-49). It became a cell soon after Godric's death in 1170. See below, p. 66.
[18] In 1095, the Scottish king, Edgar, issued a charter confirming to the monks of Durham Coldinghamshire, Berwickshire and their lands in Lothian: *Early Scottish Charters to A.D. 1153, ed. A. C. Lawrie* (Glasgow, 1905), no. 15, pp. 12-13. Although the foundation of the priory cannot be ascribed solely to Edgar it was this grant, and six subsequent ones, which confirmed Durham's interest in the region.
[19] For Marmoutier's foundation of Holy Trinity, and the cells of the continental abbeys of Aumale, St Wandrille and Mont St Michel, established to administer their Yorkshire estates, see *MOY*, pp. 45-55.
[20] Founded by Robert de Lacy. See *MOY*, pp. 55-67.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY'S CELLS

Cells as Cult Centres

Lindisfarne and Farne

Lindisfarne, the seat of St Cuthbert's bishopric, and Farne, the site of his greatest spiritual endeavours and his death, were enormously symbolic possessions for the new monks of St Cuthbert, as they were attempting to understand and assert their role as the guardians of St Cuthbert's legacy. These locations, even more than Durham, provided a cultural and spiritual link with the origins of the community (and the core of its most ancient estates in Islandshire and Norhamshire). The monks' exploitation of their spiritual resources on the islands could therefore usefully promote their claims to be the true restorers of St Cuthbert's line. It is consequently not surprising that Lindisfarne was probably the earliest site which the new Durham community chose to develop as a cell.[23]

Architectural evidence shows that the rebuilding of the elaborate church and simple priory on Lindisfarne began at a very early date.[24] The architectural style of the church suggests that it was carefully planned by the monks of Durham to support their claims to be the true Community of St Cuthbert. With its geometrically decorated pillars, three-storey nave, stone vaults and twin-turreted west front, it is strikingly similar,

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[21] In addition to those discussed below, the priory also developed cells at Stamford, Lytham, Warkworth and Durham College, Oxford. The locations and/or dates of their foundations do not, however, allow them to be included in the present discussion. There were other sites, however, to which the priory might also have pushed its claims, such as Jedburgh, Tyningham and Melrose, all of which are recorded as having strong Cuthbertine connections in the *Historia Regum*. Perhaps the fact that all of these places were in Scotland, some distance from Durham and politically difficult to handle, may explain why the Durham monks did not press nearly so hard for their rights in these churches as they did in Tynemouth and Hexham, for example. See J. Donnelly, The Lands of Coldingham Priory 1100-1300 (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 1989), p. 256, n. 2 and C. D. Morris, 'Northumbria and the Viking Settlement: The Evidence for Land-Holding', *AA* 5th ser. 5 (1977), 81-103.

[22] All the cells played a valuable role in managing their adjacent estates, and some had other specific economic, political or social functions. For example, Coldingham's principal purpose was to oversee the priory's Scottish estates (Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, p. 168), while Lindisfarne and Farne were used by the inland priory at Durham for fishing, trade and communication. This is reflected in the miracles recording the problems of catching enough fish to feed the community during Lent, or pirates ravaging the coast and destroying the monastery's own trading vessels (*Capitula*, chs. 12 and 18), or divine or saintly aid preserving sea-farers in harsh weather conditions (*Reg. Lib.*, chs. 23, 30-3). In the following discussion of the spiritual relationships between the priory and its cells it must therefore be remembered that spiritual concerns constituted only one aspect of the wider picture.

[23] The exact date of the foundation of the cells on these two island sites is unclear; Lindisfarne was definitely a cell during the twelfth century whereas Farne was not officially recognised as such until the thirteenth, but both were valued and cultivated by the priory much earlier.

[24] The work seems to have been carried out largely under the auspices of a Durham monk, Edward, sometimes known as Edward of Coldingham (see *DEC*, p. 93), who must have lived on the island at least semi-permanently. He was certainly active in the 1120s. E. Cambridge, 'The Medieval Priory', in

though on a much smaller scale, to Durham Cathedral itself.[25] The key feature of the church which clearly points to its function as a cult centre was the presence of an empty tomb for St Cuthbert. The function and chronology of the building work is unclear and has been variously interpreted. Alan Piper suggests that the grand church, containing an empty tomb for St Cuthbert, was built in the 1090s as a secondary cult centre and that the rather more basic provision of claustral buildings was added when the Durham monks changed their perceptions and use of the site.[26] Eric Cambridge, however, while accepting that the cenotaph would suggest the importance of the cult, considers that St Cuthbert's hermitage on Farne was a more popular place for pilgrimage. He believes that the elaborate church with its multiple altars was therefore intended from the beginning as the priory church to serve the needs of a small community, which grew as the twelfth century progressed.[27] He concludes that the unusual emphasis on the building and the magnificence of the church rather than the monastic buildings, as is common elsewhere, only reinforces the very special spiritual significance of the site to the Durham monks. Either way, the parallel architecture, and especially the two tombs, emphasised that historically Lindisfarne and Durham were two phases of the same monastery, the first and last resting places of St Cuthbert. By recreating Lindisfarne as a miniature Durham, the community was publicly establishing the nature of the relationship between the two and this, in turn, served to emphasise the legitimacy of Durham's claims to the cult of St Cuthbert. Lindisfarne, therefore, was a smaller, northern, version of Durham where pilgrims could experience the power of the saint. Tudor has argued that it should not been viewed as a poor man's Durham, because plenty of wealthy and influential pilgrims approached the shores, but it did seem to attract a large number of northern, especially Scottish, pilgrims, for whom it was closer than Durham.[28]

English Heritage Book of Lindisfarne Holy Island, ed. D. O'Sullivan and R. Young (London, 1995), p. 67.

[25] Cambridge, 'The Medieval Priory', pp. 67-9.

[26] By 1093 there is some evidence of this church being built: one of Reginald's miracles refers to it and mentions the monks Edward and Edred. *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 21, pp. 44-7, see esp. n. 1. It has been suggested that the lands granted to Lindisfarne by the church of Durham would not have been sufficient to maintain a normal priory at this time, but could have supported a popular pilgrimage site. See, for example, R. A. and D. B. Cartwright, *The Holy Island of Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands* (Newton Abbot, 1976), p. 63.

[27] The architectural evidence seems to support an increase in numbers, since by the 1160s the principal apse had been demolished and the chancel doubled in size, though this might also reflect liturgical developments. The west end of the claustral buildings is also of a late-twelfth-century date, possibly indicating that by then numbers had grown to such a point that a full complement of prior and twelve monks was anticipated. Cambridge, 'The Medieval Priory'.

[28] 'The Cult of St Cuthbert', p. 465.

Although the island of Inner Farne was not developed to the same degree as Lindisfarne in a material sense, with an elaborate church, there is evidence that it too was highly valued by the monks of Durham as an additional cult centre for St Cuthbert. It is a small, rocky island, seven miles north-east of Lindisfarne, on which it would have been extremely difficult to build a church of any size or grandeur. Its use by St Cuthbert as a remote hermitage meant that it was appropriate for the monks to leave the island uncultivated so that it echoed the saint's own experiences there. The hermits who lived on the island throughout most of the twelfth century served as guardians and stewards of the cult there and through their own experiences and visions of the saint actively contributed to the development of the cult, its intimate association with the monks of Durham, and its location on the island.

At least four hagiographical sources also support an early interest in the association of these islands with St Cuthbert, both past and present: the *Capitula*, Reginald's *Libellus*, the *Vita Bartholomæi Farnensis*[29] and the Miracles of St Cuthbert at Farne.[30] It is clear from the number of miracles attributed to St Cuthbert on these islands, compared with the numbers attributed to him in Durham and elsewhere, that Farne and Lindisfarne were very definitely considered to be, after Durham itself, cult centres of the first importance.[31] One of the most significant themes to emerge from the miracle literature of Durham, that of the supposed misogyny of St Cuthbert,[32] was extended in a slightly diluted form to the Lindisfarne and Farne churches, though not to any other Durham church.[33] The cells on Lindisfarne and Farne were therefore viewed by the monks of Durham as extremely valuable spiritual assets in their promotion of St Cuthbert's cult. The monks' investments on the islands, especially their building on Lindisfarne, reveal that the islands' contribution to the cult was a substantial aspect of the monks' interest in them.

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[29] *Vita Batholomæi Farnensis* in *SMOO*, I, Appendix II, pp. 295-325.

[30] This text appears in just one manuscript, Harleian MS. 4843 and was probably written by one of the Farne monks.

[31] Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert', pp. 461-2. Reginald even records a miracle in which St Cuthbert would not heal a man in Durham, but did so when he went to Farne, suggesting that Farne was a favourable place for miracles. *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 103.

[32] See Tudor, 'The Misogyny of St Cuthbert'.

[33] Although punishments on women who approached these churches were not as severe as in Durham, where women could not even enter the graveyard, the saint still made his displeasure felt. When a group of people were stranded on Farne because of bad weather, St Cuthbert appeared to them, but only the men in the group could see him. *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 31.

Finchale

Although Finchale had no connection with St Cuthbert, the monks of Durham in the later twelfth century were still keen to develop it as a cult centre, and indeed they carefully attempted to lay the foundations for this from a very early stage. The focus of the cult was St Godric, the hermit who had been granted the site in the early twelfth century by Bishop Flambard, and had later become closely associated with the priory.[34] As will be discussed below, Godric had gained a reputation for sanctity and miracle working during his lifetime, and the monks were alert to the possibility that this could be continued and enhanced after his death through a cult.[35] Monks were therefore dispatched to the hermitage to live with Godric and begin the process of claiming possession of the site and the legacy. A church was subsequently constructed and, through the recording and publicising of Godric's life, devotion and miracles, a cult was nurtured.[36] The monks were almost certainly strongly attracted to the potential cult because of its material value, especially once the popularity of Thomas Becket's cult, who was murdered the same year as Godric died, began to affect the strength of St Cuthbert's own. Finchale was therefore developed into a cell with the express purpose of providing a popular, local cult centre for the priory's carefully nurtured new saint which was not closely enough associated with St Cuthbert to cause undue competition, but was nonetheless firmly in the possession of his church.[37] Finchale probably enhanced Durham Cathedral Priory's overall provision for pilgrimage, especially for

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[34] The dates of Godric's arrival in Finchale and of the priory's subsequent interest in his activities and lands are unclear. Tudor suggests that Godric arrived in 1112/1113; see her *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, p. 370. See also *DEC* no. 10, pp. 68-72 and ch. 6 below.

[35] One of the reasons for offering patronage to Godric was probably the desire to possess his land which had been an episcopal gift. See Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, p. 370. Tudor compares the Durham convent's attempts to gain possession of the lands of another hermit, John, at Yearhaugh, and suggests that the presence of Durham monks at Finchale during Godric's life was intended publicize that the hermitage was developing into a monastic possession. The monks' ownership was confirmed in a charter of Pope Alexander III, 1171x1181.

[36] Reginald of Durham was the monk sent to befriend Godric and compose his *Vita*. His account reveals how unwilling Godric originally was to co-operate with the proposed project of compiling material for a biography (*Vita S. God.*, ch. 166) but as he mellowed and became more pliable to the priory's wishes, he furnished Reginald with details about his history and his spiritual struggles. The work was probably completed sometime after 1177 and may well have been intended to support the formal canonization process, though it no doubt also had the added purpose of attempting to prove that Godric was as powerful as his rivals, principally his contemporary, Thomas Becket. Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, pp. 83-5.

[37] After Godric's death Bishop Hugh seems to have been unwilling to concede the site of Finchale to the prior and monks, despite the intimate relationship between the hermit and the priory. Clearly Hugh felt that he had to assert his rights and rather than completely handing over the site to the priory he took the unusual step of granting the site to the two individual monks, Reginald and Henry, who had been living there with Godric, and to the later monks whom the prior should appoint to replace them. The grant dates to 1170x1174. See Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, p. 372. A forged charter purporting to record this grant in the time of Prior Algar (1112-1116) probably reflects the type of arrangement made in the 1170s. See *DEC*, no. 10, pp. 68-72.

local people, since the women who were barred from St Cuthbert's church found themselves most welcome at the tomb of St Godric instead.

Coldingham

Durham's Scottish cell of Coldingham, dedicated to St Mary, St Æbbe and St Cuthbert, was the largest of Durham's dependencies, though twelfth-century evidence for its development is scarce.[38] The origins of Durham's interests in Coldingham go back to the time of the Lindisfarne community when it acquired the estates which had belonged to the double monastery founded by St Æbbe.[39] St Cuthbert himself was known to have visited and advised the community, and it was rumoured that the laxity of the nuns was responsible for his dislike of all women throughout the centuries to come.[40] To the new Cuthbertine community which was trying to justify its position as guardian of St Cuthbert's body by promoting an impression of his misogyny, Coldingham's monastic history was therefore extremely significant. Indeed in the eleventh century it was claimed that the relics of St Æbbe were carried to Durham to join the various other spiritual treasures which had been collected by the community over the years.[41] This transportation of relics was a way of publicizing the priory's ownership of the saint, cult and church and it must have been particularly significant for the priory's possessions in Scottish territory where matters relating to landholding were delicate.[42] Durham monks seem to have been stationed permanently at Coldingham from at least 1136 when Edward, the monk who had been active on Lindisfarne, was addressed by King David in a writ.[43] There are records of other monks serving the church in Coldingham in 1139 and 1140/1, although the first prior of Coldingham, Henry, is not recorded until c.1147.[44] In the mid-twelfth century the prolific Durham

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[38] It was proposed c.1235 that there should always be thirty monks (besides the prior) at Coldingham, though the figure was soon well below this. *Historiæ Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres*, ed. J. Raine, SS 9 (1839), Appendix, p. xliii. See R. B. Dobson, 'The Last English Monks on Scottish Soil', *SHR* 46 (1967), 1-25, at 2-3. The size of the priory can be gauged by the fact that the priors, at least in the thirteenth century, were assisted by three major obedientaries, a Sacristan, Almoner and Terrar, and also a Sub-Prior. Coldingham was run by some of the ablest monks who occasionally went on to become priors of Durham, for example Prior Bertram (1151) and Prior Thomas Melsonby (1233). See Donnelly, *Coldingham*, pp. 257-9 and *The Priory of Coldingham*, ed. J. Raine, SS 12 (1841), p. xvi.

[39] The monks of Lindisfarne claimed the estates of many defunct religious houses in Northumbria after destruction by the Danes. See Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, p. 246.

[40] Bede, *HE*, IV, 25 and *LDE*, II, 7.

[41] *LDE*, III, 7.

[42] Donnelly, *Coldingham*, p. 256.

[43] The writ was preserved in the Durham *Liber Vitae*, fol. 47; see also *DEC*, nos. 18-9, pp. 89-93.

[44] See G. W. S. Barrow, 'The Kings of Scotland and Durham', in *AND*, pp, 311-23, at p. 319 and his *The Kingdom of the Scots: Government, Church and Society from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century* (London, 1973), p. 168 and I. B. Cowan and D. E. Eason, *Medieval Religious Houses in Scotland*, 2nd ed. (London, 1976), pp. 55-6. However Donnelly says there was a prior in 1131x1139: *Coldingham*, p. 256.

hagiographer, Reginald, wrote a *Life* of St Æbbe which, as was the usual purpose of such *vitae*, must have been intended to promote a cult of the saint.[45] In Durham, therefore, there was interest in the spiritual value of Coldingham's history and connections and an attempt was made to strengthen the relationship between the two with a local cult, though the lack of compelling evidence for its success would suggest that Coldingham never became a significant cult centre.[46] The need to establish strong enough links to maintain possession of this vulnerable cell was no doubt one of the primary reasons for attempting to revive the cult, which highlights the priory's use of spiritual interests to deal with more material issues.

Jarrow and Monkwearmouth

Thus far it has been shown that cults were used by the monks of Durham, whether successfully or not, as a significant aspect of their relationship with their cells. Even in Coldingham where it might be argued that the primary focus of the relationship was to preserve Durham's landed interests in a politically sensitive area, a cult had a potentially vital role to play because the spiritual ties it demonstrated could greatly strengthen a legal claim. When we consider Durham's relationship with Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, those monastic settlements colonised by Aldwin and his companions in the 1070s and historically associated with Bede, whose bones the priory claimed had been taken to Durham in the early eleventh century, it is most surprising that a cult was not developed here.[47] Indeed, very little has been recorded of either church in the twelfth century and it would appear that both were wholly lacking in the miraculous occurrences which Reginald's accounts seem to suggest were an accepted part of the spiritual life of many other places connected with Durham.[48]

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[45] See below, p. 159.

[46] It should be noted, however, that the nature of the evidence surviving from each cell is varied. Thus the extensive *Life* of St Godric focuses our attention on the priory's relationship with the hermit of Finchale rather than political and economic issues which may have been of equal importance to the monks. Similarly, the lack of evidence for a successful cult at Coldingham does not prove that Durham did not actively pursue its spiritual as well as material interests there.

[47] The churches and the vills surrounding them came to be associated with the community of St Cuthbert in 883. *HSC*, § 13. See also Morris, 'Northumbria and the Viking Settlement', 92. Little is recorded about either place until Aldwin's arrival. Bishop Walcher made a gift of the vills of Jarrow, Wearmouth and North Wearmouth to the monks and these possessions remained undisputed with the monks after their removal to Durham. *LDE*, III, 21; *DEC*, no. 2a-b, pp. 3-4.

[48] The only reference made by Reginald in his *Libellus* is to the flight of Bishop Æthelwine through Jarrow in 1069, ch. 16.

Jarrow had clearly held some importance as a cult centre for the secular Community of St Cuthbert, as the evidence for the transfer of Bede's relics to Durham suggests.[49] Symeon recounts how the relics attracted visitors to Jarrow until the 1020s and that the sacrist of the Durham community, Alfred Westou, who removed the bones to Durham, attended the church every year on the anniversary of Bede's death, which might well suggest that some sort of annual festival was observed.[50] The monks' lack of interest in developing a cult centre in either place, as could surely have been achieved if they had been prepared to divert the necessary resources towards them, is therefore striking, especially in view of the community's admiration for Bede revealed through Symeon's account of the monastic revival. The reason for this neglect of a potential cult centre cannot be wholly ascertained, but it is possible that it was simply not deemed necessary. The monks' possession of both churches and their vills was in no doubt, so there was no need to promote their connection with the claims of a cult. Similarly, the cult in Monkwearmouth or Jarrow could not greatly assist the new monks' claims to be the heirs of the Community of St Cuthbert – indeed it might only emphasise their former existence. This neglect of Bede's spiritual potential at Jarrow and Monkwearmouth suggests that the decision to develop spiritual initiatives was intimately connected with issues of a non-spiritual nature.

Cells as Hermitages

Farne Island as a Hermitage

Durham's other major spiritual use for its cells, which contributed to its interest in cults, was as hermitages. Indeed the island of Inner Farne seemed to receive little attention even as a cult centre, until the twelfth century when it became home to a succession of hermits associated with the priory in Durham.[51] Farne was well-placed to accommodate those within the community who wished to pursue the eremitical lifestyle

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[49] An attempt had been made by Cuthbert, Abbot of Jarrow to publicize Bede's sanctity after his death, but this had enjoyed only limited success. Kalendar evidence shows that Bede was only commemorated from the first half of the eleventh century which may reflect an renewed interest in Bede's writings on the part of continental reformers. See Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, pp. 134-43 and below, p. 58-9. The interest from the Cuthbertine community therefore coincided with a wider interest in Bede and his writings.

[50] *Westou* might indicate that Alfred and his family were 'of Westoe', an appurtenance belonging to the vill of Jarrow, which would help to account for Alfred's profound veneration of Bede. Benedicta Ward, however, argues that the connection between Alfred and Bede's bones was a later fabrication: *The Venerable Bede*, pp. 139-43.

[51] See ch. 6 below.

because it had provided such a retreat for St Cuthbert himself.[52] It was even rumoured that the purity of life to which his incorruption bore witness was based largely upon his experiences as a hermit on Farne.[53] The community's willingness to sponsor some of their members in this way might reveal once again their interest in publicizing their links with the saint and his approval of them. The hermits' lives were based around the usual monastic pattern of prayer, reading and manual labour, though they existed on a far more primitive level than their brothers in Durham who operated as a body with a number of lay servants.[54] In the mid-thirteenth century the nature and status of Farne in relation to Durham Cathedral Priory changed: it was made into an official cell which was to be occupied at all times by two Durham monks, a master and a fellow.

St Godric at Finchale

Finchale only came into the sole possession of the priory after Godric's death when it had ceased to be a hermitage. However, the monks' efforts to associate themselves with Godric while he was living there as a hermit merit its inclusion in this survey of its cells. In addition to the monks' desire to acquire the site of Godric's hermitage at Finchale in order to control any cult which might arise on his death, the monks of Durham also demonstrated an interest in Godric's eremitical life itself. As will be discussed in chapter six below, in the early twelfth century, when Godric first settled at Finchale, he was a wild, eccentric figure who, in his asceticism, pushed himself to the utter limits of endurance. The monks of Durham recognised his innate spiritual strengths but despised, even feared, the lack of control and discipline in his life. They wanted association with the holy man for his spiritual qualities (and for their part took assiduous care in providing for his spiritual needs, sending out priests every feast day so that Godric could hear mass and make his confession),[55] but that association had to be on their own terms. Consequently they exerted some pressure on the hermit to conform to Benedictine ideas of obedience and moderation. Godric eventually succumbed to the priory's wishes, but the lengthy process by which this happened indicates that the monks were not simply open to any and every spiritual

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[52] See C. Stancliffe, 'Cuthbert and the Polarity between Pastor and Solitary', in *SCCC*, pp. 21-44. Other hermits were also associated with St Cuthbert or Inner Farne, revealing a strong interest in eremitical experiences within the seventh and eighth-century community. Cuthbert was especially friendly with Herebert, a hermit at Derwentwater (*HE*, IV, 29), and three members of his own community followed him on Farne: Æthelwald, Felgild and Bilfrith.

[53] *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 102.

[54] See Tudor, 'Durham Priory and its Hermits in the Twelfth Century', p. 69.

[55] 'Et quia consuetudo talis inoleverat quod omni die festo aliquis sacerdotum de cœnobio Dunelmensi viro Dei Missas celebrare debebat ...'. *Vita S. God.*, ch. 192, p. 202.

contact or relationship which presented itself, but that they had strict criteria about with whom and in what way they would conduct their spiritual relationships.

Other Uses of Cells

Pastoral Care

Although there is no evidence that Jarrow and Monkwearmouth were valued by the Durham monks as potential cult centres, there is evidence to suggest that the quality of the spiritual life at the two churches was of concern to the monks. A forged bull of Pope Gregory VII, followed by a forged charter of Bishop William of Saint-Calais, concerning the foundation of Durham Cathedral Priory, include a stipulation that Jarrow, Monkwearmouth and Lindisfarne should always be served by monks.[56] This requirement must represent a later gloss on events, and it certainly contradicts Symeon's claims that one of the reasons for Bishop William bringing together the Jarrow and Monkwearmouth monks in Durham was that the bishopric could not afford to support three separate monastic houses. It does, however, reflect the special place all three sites held for the Durham community as the places of origin of the Community of St Cuthbert and the reformed monastic body. Alan Piper suggests that this clause was added to justify a situation which had developed by the time of the forgeries and which had otherwise come under criticism from ecclesiastical authorities, namely that Durham had for some time been sending out individual monks, as chaplains, to serve in these churches.[57] These monk-chaplains would presumably have been responsible for the spiritual and possibly pastoral needs of the local population, but were members of the monastery of Durham and obedient to the prior.[58] They fulfilled the functions elsewhere performed by local, secular parish priests, though unfortunately it is not possible to gauge for how long this arrangement had been carried out, nor even broadly whether it was a recent development before these forgeries or a legacy from the early days of the monastery. Since the Lateran Council of 1123, monks had been forbidden to carry out pastoral care for local people and this sort of interaction was severely frowned upon.[59] The stipulations in the forged charters were probably therefore a

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[56] Offler, following Scammell, dates the forgeries to c. 1190. See *DEC*, no. 7, pp. 53-63, at p. 61.
[57] A. Piper, *The Durham Monks at Jarrow*, Jarrow Lecture 1986, pp. 4-5.
[58] They were not necessarily monks of the highest calibre: they may sometimes have been miscreants and were rarely the most able and well educated of the brothers. Piper, *The Durham Monks at Jarrow*, pp. 19-21.
[59] For further discussions of this issue see J. Godfrey, *The English Parish 600-1300* (London 1969), p. 74. M. Chibnall, 'Monks and Pastoral Work: A Problem in Anglo-Norman History', *JEH* 18 (1967), 165-72. B. R. Kemp, 'Monastic Possession of Parish Churches in England in the Twelfth Century', *JEH* 31

response to criticism of this system; an attempt to justify the arrangements and possibly to reform them too, ensuring that monks working away from the priory always had at least one companion to reduce the temptation to lapse. Throughout its later history as a cell of Durham, Jarrow maintained its responsibility for the parish, though it is not clear whether this was also the case in Monkwearmouth. The accounts show that no resources were spent on a vicar so the monks themselves must have continued take upon themselves the spiritual and pastoral concerns of the parishoners.[60]

There is also evidence that the monks on Lindisfarne and Farne played some limited and unofficial part in the pastoral care of the people. Although they probably had the responsibility for the appointment and maintenance of the parish priest, some of the miracle stories give evidence of the hermits and other monks carrying out liturgical and pastoral work, as they are recorded praying, preaching, celebrating mass, hearing confession or being sought out for advice.[61] Even the visions of the saints revealed St Cuthbert and others similarly involved in prayer and sacramental duties. In addition, though, the church of Lindisfarne, because of its connection with the saint, did enjoy the valuable privilege of sanctuary rights.[62] However, the monks' involvement in the spiritual life of the local population was not matched by the importance given to the development of their own spiritual concerns. In Coldingham, too, although there is evidence that the spiritual aspects of monastic life were not neglected, there is little evidence of how much an impact it had on the spiritual life of the surrounding area.[63]

Retreat

Finchale, by contrast, did not serve any significant function as a pastoral centre, but it did serve other spiritual needs of the Durham monks. In time it became one of the most popular cells with Durham monks who did not wish to be far from the activity of the mother-house, but appreciated the cleaner air of the rural setting. Finchale became used for retreats for tired monks from Durham who would spend short spells there enjoying rest and recuperation.[64] The full monastic offices were maintained at the

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(1980), 133-60 and J. E. Burton, 'Monasteries and Parish Churches in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Yorkshire', *NH* 23 (1987), 39-50.

[60] See Piper, *The Durham Monks at Jarrow*, pp. 5-6.

[61] For example, *Capitula*, chs. 10, 12, 19 and 20 and *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 78.

[62] See, for example, *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 105 in which a poor man sought to escape his tyrannical overlord. His wife suggested fleeing to Lothian, which was closer to home, but St Cuthbert commanded him to seek the protection of his name on Lindisfarne. D. Hall, 'The Sanctuary of St Cuthbert', in *SCCC*, pp. 425-36.

[63] Three service books and a list of vestments, ornaments and fifteen (mainly liturgical) books survive. See Donnelly, *Coldingham*, p. 264.

[64] See Dobson, *Durham Priory*, pp. 310-11.

priory, but the four monks who were on holiday at any one time alternated their choir duties in pairs each day so that they could have several days when they were not required to maintain the full monastic schedule.[65]

Conclusions

This brief survey of the spiritual aspect of the relationships which Durham Cathedral Priory developed with its cells indicates that, despite David Knowles' opinion that cells 'served no religious purpose whatever,' these cells did in fact fulfil a variety of spiritual uses, encompassing most of the functions observed in other Benedictine cells. The monks therefore seemed to have looked upon their cells as extensions of the priory itself, rather than as separate or independent establishments. The spiritual function of each of the cells was to promote, extend or strengthen the range of activities and ideas which were based within the priory church in Durham. However, the cells were in no way merely peripheral to the priory's spiritual aims and practices: despite their supportive role they were vital to the strength and variety of the monks' spiritual experiences. The use of the cells to promote the cults of various associated saints enhanced the monks' development of their major cult in Durham. Their use as hermitages was essential if individuals within the community with a calling to solitary and ascetic life were to be able to pursue their vocation. In the case of both hermitages, the link with Durham can be seen to have been paramount: only Durham monks became hermits on Farne and, at Finchale, Godric, whose spiritual achievements brought him to the attention of the monks, was carefully wooed into accepting the spiritual authority of the prior of Durham. For all that the daily life of the hermits was lived away from the gaze of the community of monks, the cells' attachment to the mother-house was strongly enforced, and the two-way nature of their spiritual relationships was fundamental to their existence. Clearly, therefore, one of the aspects of the priory's relationship with at least some of its cells was that the cells provided specific points of focus for various important elements of the monks' communal spiritual interests. In fact it might almost be questioned whether the monks in Durham viewed these cells as surrogate spiritual centres. Did they, for example, consider that since the extremes of religious observance were being carried out elsewhere, especially by the community's hermits, those monks who remained in the mother-house could enjoy a greater freedom

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[65] By 1196 there were eight monks and a prior, Thomas, a former sacrist of Durham, living there. The position of prior of Finchale was possibly the most desirable position in the whole of the Durham

to pursue other aspects of monastic life without the danger of being accused of spiritual negligence, especially when compared with the reformed orders? Such a question is impossible to answer, but it is nonetheless plausible that the spiritual function of the priory's cells (with their various assets such as Cuthbertine associations, links with the early community, and present-day hermits) was to provide concentrated attention to specific issues without the distractions of the large, busy, urban monastery at Durham.

This study has also demonstrated that the spiritual potential of cells could be developed by monks of the mother-house as a response to decidedly non-spiritual issues. The putative cult of St Æbbe in Coldingham suggests such a response to the uncertain circumstances of Durham's ownership of land in hostile Scottish territory.[66] Whilst this blending of interests could be interpreted as evidence that the monks had a healthy attitude towards their spiritual resources, always looking to spiritual solutions whatever the issue, the reverse could also be suggested. Faced with the potential for a Bedan cult in Jarrow, nothing was done, possibly because an additional cult centre there would do nothing to promote or consolidate any of the priory's other concerns. The spiritual link between the priory and its cells was therefore crucial to the relationship as a whole, but it was not conducted in isolation, being intimately linked to a range of other issues.

The cells therefore provided an extremely valuable spiritual resource for the Community of St Cuthbert, helping to shape the character of the priory's spiritual life and extending its influence in the region. The cells were probably also places of spiritual importance for the local communities who looked to the monks and hermits, or their vicars, for spiritual advice, pastoral care and the administration of the sacraments. The power and presence of the saints were also made more immediate to the people through additional regional cult centres. The cells were significant, albeit localised, spiritual centres and they helped to maintain the community's traditional place deep within the fabric of northern society. However their contribution to the priory's spiritual influence in the wider community should not be over-estimated. As dependent houses maintaining only aspects of the full monastic life, they did not conduct

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network and was treated as a reward for the most distinguished monks on their retirement. E. Roberts, *On Finchale Priory*, p. 72 and Dobson, *loc. cit.*

[66] See below, p. 159.

independent relationships with other religious houses in the region: all contact of this nature was directed through the priory in Durham.[67]

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY'S SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH TYNEMOUTH AND HEXHAM

The Durham cells discussed above were all, with the exception of the newly-cultivated Finchale, on ancient sites associated with the Community of St Cuthbert and Anglo-Saxon religious life. They were churches with a venerable spiritual history which was attractive to, and highly valued by, the new Benedictine community. Tynemouth and Hexham, two other religious houses in the north-east with similar antecedents and connections, were also crucially important to the monks of Durham in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These churches, however, became the subject of very different, even hostile, relationships, when they gained independence from the Durham monks' control. Their spiritual relationships with the priory in Durham must be examined if we are to gain a true picture of the range and quality of Durham's spiritual links with the other religious houses of the north-east. Detailed studies of how these relationships found particular expression through the cult of saints and the writing of history will form a major part of chapters four and five. The following discussion will explore the spiritual context in which to view the churches' relationships with Durham, both before and after their independence, and the circumstances in which the losses took place.

Tynemouth

The case of Tynemouth presents a fascinating insight into the way in which the Durham community exploited its spiritual assets for the purpose of furthering its legal and economic interests.[68] The church of Tynemouth was a comital possession and had been given to Aldwin's community at Jarrow by Bishop Walcher, acting in his capacity as earl (1075-80).[69] Tynemouth offered significant spiritual potential to the monks as it had not only been the home of an Anglo-Saxon monastic community recorded by Bede, but was also the resting place of the saintly King Oswin. Oswin's bones had been

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[67] The cell at Coldingham, which owed its foundation partly to the kings of Scotland, who saw the advantages of having a self-contained daughter-house of Durham established within their kingdom, may have conducted independent relations with the Scottish royal house.

[68] See P. A. Hayward, 'Sanctity and Lordship in Twelfth-Century England: Saint Albans, Durham, and the Cult of Saint Oswine King and Martyr', *Viator* 30 (1999), 105-44.

[69] *DEC*, no. 2c, pp. 4-6. See also *LDE*, IV, 4. See also below p. 78.

rediscovered in 1065 by a priest called Edmund, who may have been a member of the pre-monastic Community of St Cuthbert.[70] The monks clearly appreciated the spiritual value of the gift, taking the bones of the saint to Jarrow where they could care for them properly, even though they did nothing to the church itself, possibly for the simple reason that their resources were too limited to care for an additional site at this stage.[71] Some time later, though the date is not recorded, the bones were returned to Tynemouth and one of the monks, Edmund,[72] began the tradition of serving the church of Tynemouth and providing for the pastoral needs of the area. In the *Historia Regum* Durham monks recalled how individuals were sent from Jarrow and later Durham to provide for the spiritual needs of the church:

> Ab hoc, inquiunt, tempore nostri fratres monachi Gyrwenses curam illius loci susceptam gesserunt, Edmundo ac postmodum Eadredo, monachis illorum, ipsi ecclesiæ deservientibus, cum presbytero Elwaldo, qui et canonicus Dunelmensis ecclesiæ fuerat, unde et ad Dunelmum, quotiens suæ vicis ebdomada missas transire consueverat. Wlmarum quoque, nostræ congregationis monachum, aliosque per vices fratres, qui ibidem officia divina peragerent, illuc de Girwa transmissos meminimus.[73]

When the Monkwearmouth and Jarrow communities amalgamated in Durham and replaced the canonical community there, arrangements clearly had to be made for the care of Tynemouth and a certain monk called Turchil was sent out to make repairs and improvements to the roofless church.[74] It is not stated explicitly but, in view of the tasks of his predecessors, Turchil was probably also responsible for the provision of spiritual care too. Perhaps these developments signalled an intention that a small group from Durham would eventually inhabit the site, as happened at Lindisfarne for example: it certainly indicated that the Durham community felt a sense of responsibility towards the church at Tynemouth. Any such plans were forestalled, however, after Robert de Mowbray had become earl and Tynemouth became the centre of a controversy in which the monks fought fiercely to retain, or regain, their rights to the site.

The problem had occurred in 1089 when, following some dispute with Bishop William, Earl Robert had deprived the Durham monks of Tynemouth, evicting Turchil and

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[70] *Vita Osw.*, ch. 4, pp. 12-14. According to Symeon, Alfred Westou took Oswin's relics to Durham. Although Symeon may not be accurate on this point, it is nonetheless significant that he was claiming an eleventh-century Durham interest in Tynemouth. Edmund's origins are not explained in the *vita*, but since the work was written by a monk of St Albans it is not surprising that details which might point to an early Durham interest in the priory should be omitted. See *LDE*, III, 7 and below, p. 145.

[71] *HR*, s.a. 1121, p. 261. See also H. H. E. Craster, *A History of Northumberland*, vol. VIII, *The Parish of Tynemouth*, Victoria County History (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1907), p. 45.

[72] This was possibly the priest who had discovered the relics, now become a monk.

[73] *HR*, s.a. 1121, pp. 260-1. See also *DEC*. no. 5, p. 40; Craster, *Tynemouth*, p. 362.

gifting the church to the monks of St Albans for use as a cell.[75] The Durham monks were naturally outraged at this theft and launched an active campaign to regain the church.[76] The initial quarrel was so great that the king had to step in to re-establish peace, though he did not restore the church to the Durham monks. This clearly did not solve the issue to Durham's satisfaction and the monks continued their fight for their property. In the early years personal pleas were made to try to persuade the St Albans' party to renounce their claims,[77] though when this was unsuccessful the monks used their spiritual weapons too. In a story ostensibly recounting a miracle of St Cuthbert, the monks tried to portray both the death of Paul, Abbot of St Albans (1077-93) and the later downfall of Earl Robert as a divine punishment directly linked to their abuse of St Cuthbert's property.[78] Whether or not this approach had any significant effect on the monks of St Albans, a period of improved relations followed, which was again symbolised by the miraculous intervention of St Cuthbert. When Abbot Richard d'Aubeney (1097-1119), successor of Abbot Paul and devoted to St Cuthbert, attended the opening of St Cuthbert's coffin, and his translation, in 1104, he was shown enormous favour by Prior Turgot who allowed him to handle the body, and by St Cuthbert himself who healed a serious deformity in his hand which had even prevented him from celebrating the eucharist.[79] Abbot Richard's grateful response was to dedicate a chapel on the eastern side of the cloistral buildings at St Albans to St Cuthbert.[80] Possibly the monks of Durham had hoped for a gesture of thanks closer to home in the restoration of Tynemouth, but even Richard would not make that concession.

In 1110 the monks at Tynemouth staged another translation of St Oswin's relics which Ranulf Flambard, bishop of Durham, attended. The event was probably also the occasion of the opening and consecration of the new church. The architecture of the

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[74] *HR*, s.a. 1121, p. 261.
[75] *Ibid.* A prior, Remigius, was appointed by 1092. See Craster, *Tynemouth*, pp. 51-2. Lanfranc had agreed to Earl Robert's plans, possibly because his nephew Paul was the abbot of St Albans. The archbishop's support for the grant may have been one of the reasons for St Albans' successful possession. See also the fourteenth-century passages printed as *De Patronatu Prioratus de Tynemutha* in *Chronica Monasterii S. Albani: Registra quorundum abbatum monasterii S. Albani*, ed. H. T. Riley, 2 vols., RS 28 (1872-3) I, pp. 448-50.
[76] The monks' unhappiness probably stemmed not only from their loss of property and cult, but also from the implications of this loss in terms of a challenge from the powerful abbey of St Albans to Durham's dominance in the north-east, and the possibility that the patronage of the local aristocracy would be substantially diverted away from Durham. Hayward, 'Sanctity and Lordship', 116-9.
[77] *HR*, s.a. 1121, p. 261.
[78] *HR*, s.a. 1093 and 1121, pp. 221 and 261. *Capitula*, ch. 13.
[79] *Capitula*, ch. 20. For the St Albans account of Richard's cure, see *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, ed. H. T. Riley, 8 vols., Rolls Series 28 (London, 1867) I, p. 70.
[80] The dedication of this chapel, which was performed by Bishop Hugh du Puiset, did not take place until the abbacy of Simon (1166-83), *Gesta...S. Albani*, p. 190.

church, like that of Lindisfarne, reveals a close relationship with Durham, supporting the suggestion that relations between the churches were good for at least a time.[81] Flambard was to be found again at the consecration of the new abbey church at St Albans in 1115.[82] Flambard's presence at these occasions has been interpreted by some as tacit acquiescence in St Alban's possession of Tynemouth.[83] However it could also merely reflect Flambard's position as diocesan,[84] especially since his relationship with the priory in Durham was poor. It is consequently not to be expected that the monks' concerns should have affected his policy in any significant way. The storm broke out again in Lent 1121 and, at a meeting presided over by Thurstan, Archbishop of York, the Durham monks presented their case to King Henry I. The monks even went so far as to reinvent the history of the matter, claiming the gift not from Walcher, but from Earl Waltheof (1072-5) in return for the education of his nephew, Morcar;[85] a story which was soon repeated in the *Historia Regum* account of the dispute.[86] Once again the Durham monks were unsuccessful, and King Henry even took the step of issuing a writ declaring that Tynemouth should be free of interference from St Albans as well as Durham. He achieved this by claiming to have taken Tynemouth into his own hands and to have given the monks there permission to elect their own prior who would have authority to accept new members to the community, a right which cells did not as a rule possess.[87]

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[81] See E. Cambridge, 'Early Romanesque Architecture in North-East England: A Style and its Patrons', in *AND*, pp. 141-60, at pp. 159-60 and M. Thurlby, 'The Roles of the Patron and the Master Mason in the First Design of the Romanesque Cathedral of Durham', in *AND*, pp. 161-84, at pp. 181-3.

[82] *Gesta ... S. Albani*, pp. 70-1.

[83] Craster, *Tynemouth*, p. 57.

[84] That this was a potentially fractious arrangement is shown by a similar event in Bury St Edmunds. In 1095 the body was translated into a new church by Bishops Walkelin of Winchester and Ranulf Flambard. In this case, however, the diocesan, Herbert Losinga of Norwich, was not invited lest the abbey's rights of episcopal exemption be compromised. See Thomas, *Relics*, p. 159.

[85] *DEC*, 5a, pp. 54-6.

[86] 'Monachi Dunelmenses, facta de ecclesia quæ est in Tynemutha proclamatione..., hanc sui juris fuisse conquesti sunt ex concessione Waltheofi comitis, quando consobrinum suum, scilicet materteræ suæ filium, Morkarum puerum parvulum eis ad nutriendum Deo in Gyrwensi monasterio contradidit'. *HR*, s.a. 1121, p. 260. Offler argues that the original grant to the Jarrow monks was made by Walcher, but that in the following years Walcher's reputation as earl deteriorated whereas his 'martyred' predecessor, Waltheof, began to be venerated as a cult figure and wonder-worker. Manuscript evidence shows that the monks falsified their records, claiming that the grant came from Waltheof rather than Walcher, presumably because this presented better credentials. *DEC*, no. 2c, pp. 4-6, Rollason, *LDE*, IV, 4, pp. 234-7 and F. S. Scott, 'Earl Waltheof of Northumbria', *AA*, 4th ser. 30 (1952), 149-211, at 200-1.

[87] Craster, *Tynemouth*, pp. 57-8. St Albans' claim in 1174 to forty years unbroken possession of the church suggests that this arrangement did not last for more than about a decade. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-6.

Even though more amicable relations seem to have been restored for a while,[88] discontent in Durham was not silenced by this measure. In 1156 an injunction from Pope Adrian IV, son of a former monk of St Albans, addressed to Bishop Hugh du Puiset ordered that St Oswin's feast should be observed and that the laity should be especially encouraged in its celebration.[89] This indicates that some in the diocese, most obviously the cathedral priory, had been neglecting it. It was not until 1172 that the matter was publicly raised again, however, this time before Pope Alexander III through his representatives in England. Part of the reason for renewing the struggle at this time might have been that Bishop Hugh du Puiset was already engaged in a controversy with St Albans over the exercise of episcopal authority in Tynemouth.[90] A number of forged charters were created at this time to support the Durham monks,[91] but Hugh's actions probably damaged their case irreparably. The situation was finally resolved in 1174 when a delegation ruled entirely in favour of St Alban's claims, compensating Durham with the gift of the two small churches at Bywell in Northumbria.[92] St Albans went on to use the cell as a punishment house for disobedient monks.[93]

The relationship between Durham and Tynemouth was characterised by the dispute over ownership though, if the account in the *Historia Regum* is to be believed, it does also afford us a valuable insight into how the early priory in Durham maintained spiritual care for its churches. The predominant feature to emerge, however, which will be further examined in chapter four, is that the hostility which developed as a result of matters of ownership and patronage came to have a very significant influence over the nature of the spiritual relationship between the houses. The monks of Durham were

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[88] There is, for example, evidence for manuscript exchange between the two houses. See A. Lawrence, 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', in *AND*, pp. 451-69, at p. 457, and ch. 4 below.

[89] 'In episcopatu siquidem uestro apud Tinemudam … ecclesia in honore sancti Oswini regis et martyris fabricata est … . Vobis igitur per apostolica scripta mandamus, ut eiusdem martyris festiuitatem tam in ipsa ciuitate Dunelmensi quam in singulis parrochiis uestris deuotissime celebrandam denuntietis et populum uobis commissum adhibita diligentia moneatis, ut et ipsius festiuitatem debita reuerentia celebrare.' *Papsturkunden in England*, ed. W. Holtzmann, 3 vols. (Göttingen, 1930-52), III, no. 111, pp. 252-3. See also Hayward, 'Sanctity and Lordship', 119-20. For the pope's connections with St Albans, see R. W. Southern, 'Pope Adrian IV', in his *Medieval Humanism and other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 234-52 and B. N. Gordon-Taylor, *The Hagiography of St Alban and St Amphibalus in the Twelfth Century* (unpubl. M.A. Dissertation, Univ. of Durham, 1990), p. 37.

[90] Hugh had been acting inappropriately in consecrating a number of chapels and cemeteries which had come into the possession of Tynemouth. As an exempt house Tynemouth should have had a choice over which bishop performed these ceremonies, but Hugh pre-empted this choice. He also treated Prior Turgisius of Tynemouth badly, at one point excommunicating him and prohibiting burials at Tynemouth. This caused a major disruption to spiritual life in Tynemouth and at least one chaplain refused to celebrate mass in the presence of the prior. See Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, pp. 156-7.

[91] See *DEC*, nos. 5, 5a and 5b, pp. 39-47.

[92] Craster, *Tynemouth*, pp. 63-6.

willing and able to make use of spiritual issues and resources to fight their case and it is clear that there were no aspects of monastic life in which they felt they could not include the power of St Cuthbert. Consequently it appears that they were happy to express any type of relationship at least partly through spiritual channels.

Hexham

Durham's dealings with Hexham raise some very similar issues.[94] There had been links between the bishop and community of St Cuthbert and the church of Hexham since the seventh century and in the aftermath of the Viking attacks the diocese of Hexham was absorbed into the Cuthbertine diocese based in Chester-le-Street. When the bishop and community moved to Durham at the end of the tenth century, a new relationship with Hexham was initiated, whereby one extended family within the community assumed responsibility for the spiritual maintenance of the church. The development of this Durham family's interest in the church of Hexham is complicated, but highly important for an understanding of the broader relationship between the two churches. It has therefore been traced in detail in the following appendix, though some of the most important aspects of that discussion can be presented in a family tree.[95]

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[93] *Gesta*, pp. 222 ff. Abbot John (1195-1214) sent the troublesome William Pygun to Tynemouth. Craster, *Tynemouth*, p. 70

[94] For a detailed appraisal of the source materials pertaining to Durham and Hexham in the eleventh century, see the following appendix.

[95] See also W. H. D. Longstaffe, 'The Hereditary Sacerdotage of Hexham', *AA* n.s. 4 (1860), 11-28, Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. l-lii and Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, pp. 117-21 for other attempts to reconstruct this family's lineage.

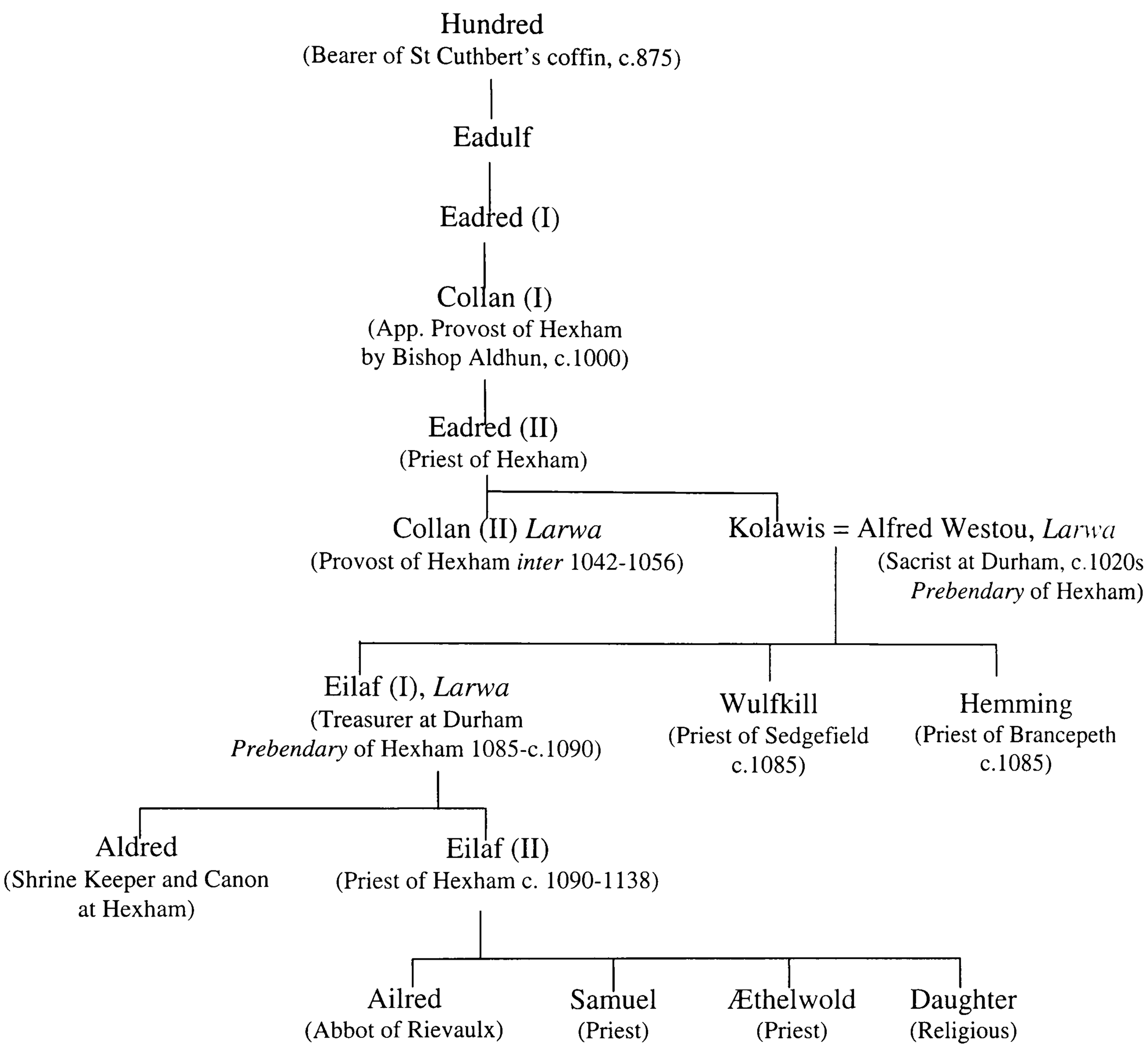


Fig. 2.3 Family Tree showing the Cuthbertine connections of the Durham-based family of Alfred Westou, and the responsibilities of individual members for the Church of Hexham

Alfred Westou, the sacrist of the Durham community, and his family seem to have acted as prebendaries, appointing vicars to carry out the spiritual and pastoral care of the people. Soon after the conquest, however, when Bishop Æthelwine fled the Norman advance of 1069, Durham's links with Hexham were damaged. The vicar of Hexham at the time, Uhtred, approached the Archbishop of York for protection, thus initiating the strange circumstances in which Hexham in Northumberland became a peculiar of the diocese of York. When the secular canons were evicted from Durham in 1083, Alfred's son, Eilaf, sought a future for himself and his family in Hexham since they had not only already become well-entrenched there, but also because it was safe from the influence

of the disliked Bishop of Durham. Eilaf further developed links with York and in 1113 his son, Eilaf II, was persuaded by the archbishop to allow Augustinian canons to reform the church, though it was not until 1138 that he finally transferred ownership to them. They rapidly transformed Hexham into a flourishing priory which enjoyed high spiritual and intellectual standards and had good links with other reformed churches of the region.

Although the Durham monks never formally relinquished their claims to Hexham, their interest in this small and relatively unimportant church in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries was negligible, possibly because it was home to one of the community whom their arrival in Durham had dispossessed. The priory clearly still wished to retain at least its nominal claim to Hexham, though, as Symeon's record of Alfred Westou's transfer of Acca and Alchmund's relics to Durham shows.[96] However, there is little evidence that anyone within the church of Durham took a more active interest in the church at this time: it was only when the Augustinians began to transform it into a lively spiritual centre that the Durham monks' interest was truly reawakened and they realised its value. The canons, like the monastic community in Durham, proved themselves adept at maintaining and embellishing the veneration offered by the previous inhabitants towards their relics,[97] and they also appreciated the need to establish an identity and historical credentials in order to provide for their future. Talented Hexham writers not only began to rival Durham's achievements in hagiography and historiography, but were also keen to stress the house's independence from Durham and its close relationship with York.[98] The success which Hexham was beginning to enjoy, right on Durham's doorstep, made it all the more desirable, but difficult, for Durham to exert its claims, and it is striking that the twelfth-century Durham sources maintained an inscrutable silence on the subject of Hexham, even though many links and contacts were recorded elsewhere, from which Durham's policy must be reconstructed.[99] Hexham's strategy was to diminish Durham's predatory interest by exerting itself as an equal, and in this it achieved some success in the 1150s to 1170s. By this stage, though, the monks of Durham seem to have experienced a change of heart, perhaps learning from their unsuccessful experiences in Tynemouth. They seem to have realised the futility of continuing to threaten the by now well-

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[96] *LDE*, III, 7.
[97] See ch. 4 below.
[98] See ch. 5 below.
[99] See chs. 4 and 5 below.

established church, seeing instead how a positive approach could further other more pressing aims. Bishop Hugh's interference in both his own monks' and Hexham's affairs caused deep resentment in both parties. The Durham monks went on the offensive, constructing an elaborate argument for their autonomy and, relinquishing their hopes in Hexham, they used the example of his unsuccessful interference there to suggest that he should not meddle in other people's business.[100]

Durham Cathedral Priory's spiritual integrity may seem to have been somewhat bruised in its dealings with these fiercely independent churches, since it has been shown that, for example, the cult of the St Cuthbert could be manipulated to form a weapon against the monks' adversaries. However, whilst the disputes with Tynemouth and Hexham proved not to be to the Durham monks' credit, or even advantage, their use of spiritual matters to fight non-spiritual causes does highlight the fact that their spiritual interests were at the very heart of their institutional life and that even in matters which appear to have been predominantly political or economic, the spiritual dimension had a vital part to play.

CONCLUSION

This survey has shown that Durham Cathedral Priory's relationships with its cells and other associated houses was varied, reflecting the particular circumstances in which the connections had evolved. Even though one of the fundamental reasons for developing cells was the maintenance of distant monastic estates and, as Knowles remarked, cells did not usually have any religious function, it has been seen that Durham Cathedral Priory was nonetheless keen to nurture the spiritual life of its cells where such action was advantageous to the greater interests of the mother-house and the community. However, the example of its relationships with those houses which had been removed from, or were challenging, the priory's influence shows that issues of control and possession could motivate the community to prolonged and extremely hostile action.[101] Spiritual concerns were only one aspect of the priory's relationships and existed alongside matters of ownership, wealth, influence, status and so on, but they were vital and, for better or worse, could be integrated into all of these issues.

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[100] See C. Norton, 'History, Wisdom and Illumination' in *Symeon*, pp. 61-105 and below, ch. 5.
[101] Later the priory was to face similar challenges to its ownership of Coldingham, which resulted in 'a century-long and almost ruinously expensive campaign to retain their control'. Dobson, *Durham Priory*, pp. 297 and 316-27.

Appendix

HEXHAM'S RELATIONSHIP WITH DURHAM AND YORK IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

The episcopal see of Hexham, founded by St Wilfrid in the late seventh century, came to an end in the early ninth century.[1] At the time of Hexham's demise the neighbouring bishops of Lindisfarne were still able to maintain at least some of their status and wealth. In the upheaval which followed the departure of St Cuthbert's body and community from the exposed island of Lindisfarne, and their travels around their northern estates, resulting in their settlement at Chester-le-Street in 883, Bishop Eadulf managed to absorb into his own sphere of jurisdiction the vacant bishopric of Hexham. The twelfth-century Hexham writer, Prior Richard, recorded this amalgamation of the two strands of Northumbrian episcopal succession, and in the process tried to claim for the younger and poorer church of Hexham some of the prestige and reputation which surrounded the church and community of St Cuthbert. Richard claimed that 'Haugustaldensis episcopatus apud Cestram restauratur', though it is likely that this statement reflected Richard's own historical agenda.[2] No other source refers to the re-establishment of the see of Hexham, and it is much more likely that in fact the diocese of Hexham was simply absorbed within the diocese of Lindisfarne/Chester-le-Street and ceased to have an identity of its own. Another source, *An Account of the Early Provosts of Hexham*,[3] suggests a more precise take-over. It claims that the bishopric of Hexham was given to St Cuthbert, for the enlargement of his bishopric, by King Alfred (871-899). No other source claims that King Alfred was responsible for the transfer, but the two accounts may easily be two versions of the same basically plausible story that in the ninth century the diocese of Hexham was absorbed into the former diocese of Lindisfarne. The decay within religious life in the north caused by the Viking invasions easily explains both the cessation of the bishopric of Hexham and the somewhat meagre

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[1] Richard of Hexham, followed by the *Breviarum Chronicæ Hexham*, gives the succession of the twelve bishops of Hexham, with the lengths of their episcopates. The last bishop to be named is Tydferth or Tilferth, whom Richard claims died on a journey to Rome in the early ninth century. *De statu*, II, 1. See H. S. Offler, 'A Note on the Last Medieval Bishops of Hexham', *AA* 4th ser. 40 (1962), 163-9.

[2] *De statu*, II, 2. The following chapter states explicitly that while associated with Durham, Hexham was nonetheless fully independent of it. Richard was concerned to portray Hexham as an autonomous religious house with its own independent identity and would not therefore have wished to describe Hexham merely being swallowed up by a more successful neighbour. See ch. 5 above.

[3] See Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, appendix pp. vii-viii. This brief account is found in a late-twelfth-century Durham manuscript of the *Life of St Cuthbert*, MS BL Yates Thompson 26 (formerly MS BM Add. 39943), on fol. 149v. The mention of Eilaf II as priest in Hexham (+1083), and Cospatrick as sheriff

and confused existence of the church in the years which followed. The bishops and community of St Cuthbert did manage to survive this uneasy period and, it would seem, actually emerged with their estates not only intact but enlarged.[4] That the diocese of Hexham should become associated with the only successful religious institution in the region is therefore entirely reasonable. The period in which Richard suggests this happened (soon after 883) coincides with King Alfred's reign and it has been established elsewhere that Alfred and his successors perceived many advantages from patronising the cult and community of St Cuthbert.[5]

It is therefore highly probable that Durham and Hexham had formed a close association between the ninth and eleventh centuries, though it is not clear what exactly was the nature of the relationship between them. There are no contemporary charters or documentary sources referring to the connection, and so we must try to decipher the link from the narrative sources, some of which are extremely fragmentary. The most helpful information for assessing the nature of the actual relationship between Durham and Hexham is that referring to the priests and provosts of Hexham, which occurs mainly in *The Early Provosts.*[6] Many of these individuals had close associations with Durham and the ancient lineage of the community of St Cuthbert and so if we can ascertain in what capacity they exercised authority, or fulfilled their appointments, in Hexham, we might be better able to discern the nature of the relationship between the two churches.[7]

The earliest mention of a provost in Hexham actually appears in a brief notice given in the *Chronica Monasterii Dunelmensis.*[8] This individual, Collan, was appointed by Bishop Ealdhun of Durham, c. 1000. His identity will be discussed below, but what we need to consider here is why a provost was deemed necessary for the running of

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(*vice-comes*) of Teviotdale (1114x1124/27), means that the account can be dated to 1083x1124/27. See Walterspacher, *The Church of Hexham*, p. 23.

[4] The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* records that the Viking king, Guthred, gave the community of St Cuthbert all the land between the Tyne and Wear. The gift is portrayed as the result of a vision of St Cuthbert who prompted Abbot Eadred to help to appoint Guthred as king. Yet this *de facto* takeover of another episcopal see is not made explicit in any of the Durham sources. See *HSC*, especially ch. 13 at p. 203; Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 198-200, T. Johnson-South, 'The Norman Conquest of Durham: Norman Historians and the Anglo-Saxon Community of St Cuthbert', *HSJ* 4 (1992), 85-95 and J. R. E. Bliese, 'St Cuthbert's and St Neot's Help in War: Visions and Exhortations', *HSJ* 7 (1995), 39-62.

[5] See *HSC*, chs. 14-28, pp. 204-12. Simpson, 'The King Alfred/St Cuthbert Episode'.

[6] In this text the record of the priests and provosts follows the information that Durham received the bishopric of Hexham from King Guthred. The following list of people is therefore almost a confirmation of Durham's rights over Hexham. These details, in addition to the information about the ratification of the grant, suggest that this brief but critical source may have had its origins in a charter.

[7] For what follows, see Walterspacher, *The Church of Hexham*, pp. 12-21.

[8] See Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. 219-20. This source occurs in the Cottonian MS, Titus, A, ii., 160-1 and is a fifteenth-century compilation dependant largely on Prior Richard's *History*.

Hexham church at this time. It might well be that for as long as the bishopric was based at Chester-le-Street the bishop and community were close enough to Hexham to administer and organise it themselves. When they left Chester-le-Street and settled in Durham in 995, Hexham may have been too far away to administer on a personal level and so appointees who could live on site were required. There is no explanation for the choice of Collan to fulfil this role, though his hereditary position within the community of St Cuthbert,[9] may have made him a suitable candidate for greater responsibility.

The Early Provosts records a line of succession in Hexham from Collan's successor, Ulkill, who was appointed as provost by Bishop Edmund (1021-41),[10] to Eilaf (II) who succeeded to the church of Hexham on the death of his father in 1090. The writer of this source was keen to stress Durham's legal control of Hexham from the time of King Alfred, whom he introduces through a royal genealogy extending backwards from 'Edwardus, qui regnavit ante Willelmum'. This royal line emphasises the importance and solemnity of the grant to Durham, as does the fact that the writer refers to ratification of the exchange by the people, written confirmation of the transfer and dire threats to any who should presume to alter the arrangement. The opening paragraph of the source refers to the enlargement of the bishopric of St Cuthbert with the bishopric of Hexham, beginning 'Post illud tempus episcopi apud Sanctum Cuthbertum illum locum tenuerunt, et ibidem, scilicet, in Hagustald', suos presbiteros statuerunt, et præpositus'. This indicates that the bishops were spiritual and temporal overlords of Hexham who administered through their appointed representatives. The names of the individuals who were appointed as provosts of Hexham (Ulkill, Collan (II), Ulkill (II), Uhtred) under bishops Edmund (1021-41), Æthelric (1041-56) and Æthelwine (1056-72), mean little in themselves, but the fact that the writer includes their fathers', and often grandfathers', names points to the fact that these provosts were people of some local standing whose families were well-known and respected. Ulkill (I) was the son of Arkill, the son of Wincune who was a brother (or brother-in-law) of Ealdhun, the bishop who moved the see from Chester-le-Street to Durham in 995. We know from other sources that Ealdhun had at least one daughter for whom he contracted an advantageous marriage contract.[11] Collan (II) is not given a pedigree in the *The Early Provosts*, though he can be traced through Symeon's *Libellus de exordio*. He was the son of Eadred (II), who

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[9] See below.
[10] This is also mentioned in the *Chronica*.
[11] The daughter was married to Earl Uhtred, who later divorced her in order to contract a more advantageous marriage. See the tract *De Obsessione Dunelmi, et de probitate Uchtredi comitis et de*

was the son of Collan (I), the earlier provost of Hexham appointed by Bishop Ealdhun, who was the son of Eadred (I) (reputedly a very holy man), the son of Eadulf, the son of Hundred, bearer of St Cuthbert's coffin.[12] Collan (II) also had a sister, Kolawis,[13] who married Alfred Westou and continued the family line with her sons Eilaf (I), Hemming and Wulfkill. Ulkill (II), whose father was Ilving, was himself father of the next provost, Uhtred, who in turn is described as the father of Cospatric who was *vicecomes* (sheriff) of Teviotdale at the time of writing.

The church of Hexham was therefore treated by the bishops of Durham as a significant holding which was to be administered through carefully chosen men, quite possibly those who had some experience in or association with the organisation of local affairs. Hexham was not merely a run-down back-water which could be administered by any minor official. Quite what the 'administration' provided by the provost entailed is not clear however. 'Provost' (*propositus* or *praepositus*) in a religious sense usually means the head of a community, whether secular canons or monks, though it can also be used in a non-religious sense as one who presides as an appointed leader. In the case of these individuals at Hexham, they might have been purely secular officials who administered the church's lands, but since they were episcopal appointees within the church itself (and Collan at least came from a family long associated with St Cuthbert) there was probably a religious element involved too. The provost, then, was the bishop's representative who took care of any organisational or administrative duties associated with the building, lands and people of the church.

After mention of these four provosts, the writer states that 'Eluredus Westou sune, secretarius Dunelmensis ecclesiæ dono domini sui Edmundi episcopi, tenuit ecclesiam de Hagustaldaham'. The above-named individuals were appointed by the bishops as provosts while Alfred 'held' (*tenuit*) the church 'as a gift' (*dono*). Alfred's status within the church of Hexham would therefore seem to have been rather different, more important and autonomous than the provosts who were presumably subordinate to him. Alfred's son and grandson are also mentioned in succession as 'holding' the church, rather than as being provosts, while Uhtred, son of Ulkill, is still referred to as being provost c.1070 when Bishop Æthelwine fled the bishopric. Alfred's appointment would seem to have been at a similar time to that of Ulkill and he would also have overlapped

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comitibus qui ei successerunt, in *SMOO* I, pp. 215-20 and Morris, 'Marriage and Murder in Eleventh-Century Northumbria'.

[12] *LDE*, III, 1. See above, p. 81, for a comprehensive family tree.

[13] This name is provided by Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, p. 121.

with Collan (II). While these provosts oversaw the temporal side of affairs, Alfred appointed priests to act as vicars to take care of the spiritual needs of the place. Alfred appointed Gamel the Elder and Gamel the Younger,[14] and Eilaf, Alfred's son, after he had succeeded his father, sometime before 1056, appointed a priest called Sproh.[15] Since Alfred's family held the church from the bishop, who continued to appoint provosts, it was not entirely in their own possession, but their appointment of vicars must have replaced any active interest of the bishops in the spiritual life of the church. Perhaps Hexham should be viewed as a sort of semi-prebend of Durham at this time, whereby temporal affairs remained within episcopal control while spiritual affairs were dealt with by a senior member of the community/chapter acting as a prebendary.

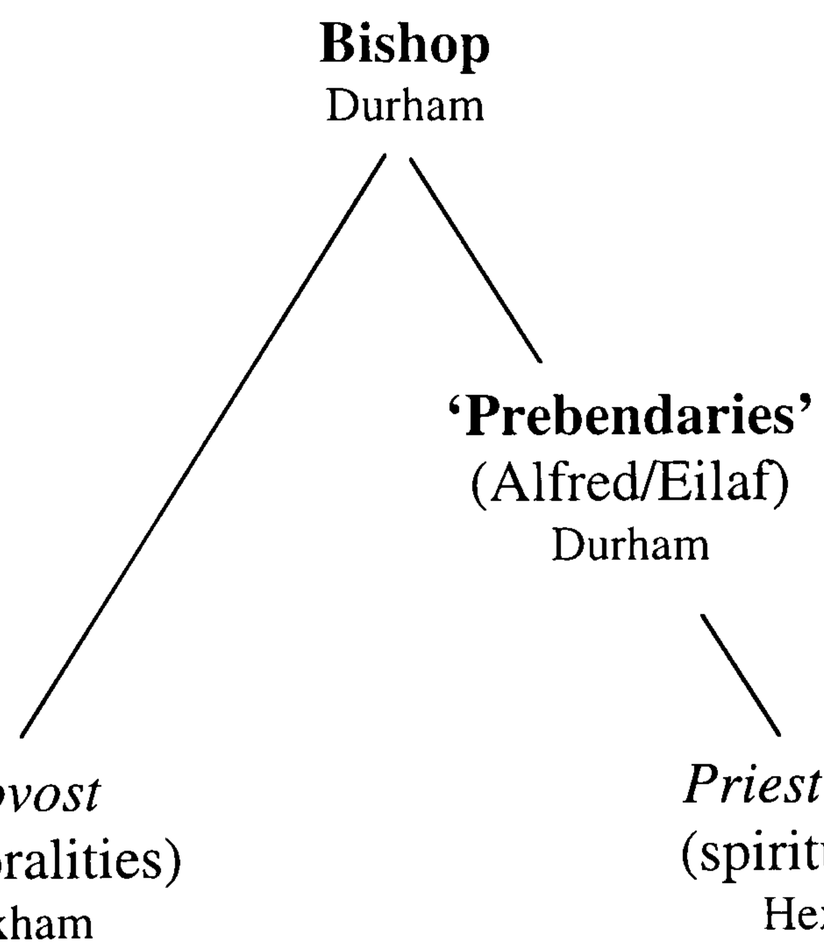


Fig. 2.4 Durham's Administration of Hexham in the Eleventh Century

What prompted this change in administration which meant that not only were provosts responsible for Hexham, but an even more senior individual also had responsibility, thus reducing episcopal involvement in the church? Alfred was the sacrist of Durham, a position of considerable importance and trust, while Ailred tells us that his son, Eilaf, at the time of Bishop William's reforms, 'presided over the others' (*cæteris præerat*).[16] The granting of this 'prebend' may well have been a recognition of and reward for his services to the church. Alfred was, as we know from more than one source, a zealous

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[14] See Ailred's *De sanctis*, ch. 12 in which this priest of Hexham was directed by St Alchmund to seek out Alfred in Durham.

[15] In some of the stories told by Reginald of Durham there is an individual called Sproich who was employed to build a bridge over the River Tyne at Bellingham. Sproich's daughter marries a man called Eilaf, who is here referred to as the earl's bailiff. The village priest is called Samuel. Could these individuals be the same as Sproh and Eilaf? Or, could the Samuel be the son of Eilaf who became a priest? See *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 108-9.

[16] *De sanctis*, ch. 11.

collector of relics which he relocated to the church in Durham where they supplemented the body and relics of St Cuthbert.[17] Alfred was certainly interested in the plentiful Hexham relics, though stories differ as to whether he removed any of them, and, if so, whether he later returned them. The church of Hexham may, then, have been a suitable reward for Alfred since he had shown such interest in the place. Finally, Alfred married Kolawis, sister of Collan (II), who was one of the provosts in Hexham while Alfred had responsibility there. Whether the marriage or the gift happened first is unknown, but Alfred's interests in Hexham were considerable and he clearly went to some effort to cement his connections with the church. The fact that Alfred's son, Eilaf, succeeded him, despite being treasurer rather than sacrist of the church, points to the fact that the 'gift' was a family matter, not simply a part of the sacrist's duties or privileges.

The constitutional relationship between Durham and Hexham in the first half of the eleventh century would therefore seem to be as follows: at first the bishop retained control of the church as he had always done since Hexham came into his possession in the late ninth century, but in order to facilitate its management after the episcopal move to Durham, the bishop appointed provosts. Within a generation, possibly less, the system had become more sophisticated and not only was there a provost, but a senior member of the community of St Cuthbert had received the church, possibly as a prebend, and had therefore taken over responsibility for its spiritualities. He was not resident in Hexham, but appointed vicars who fulfilled the necessary spiritual duties. This system continued until upheaval was caused by the Norman arrival.

All of the sources therefore agree that Hexham had been a Durham possession. They also concur that in time it became a peculiar of York, but the circumstances in which that transfer took place are far from clear. The earliest date at which it has been suggested that the church was taken into the care of the archbishop of York is at the time of Bishop Æthelwine of Durham's flight in 1069-70. The latest is the turn of the century when Bishop Ranulf Flambard and King Henry I had a major disagreement. The other possibility is the time of Durham priory's foundation and the departure of Eilaf and his family from Durham (1083-5). The circumstances in which the change of allegiance took place will, if ascertained, help to illuminate the precise nature of the relationship between Durham and Hexham, both before and after the split.

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[17] *LDE*, III, 7 and *De sanctis*, chs. 11 and 12.

The Early Provosts devotes a considerable proportion of its short length to describing the devastation which befell the north when William I punished the rebelliousness of the local people. In the ensuing chaos 'Egelwino episcopo, propter timorem regis Willelmi, episcopatum fugiente, per duos pæne annos pastore vacabat ecclesia.' It was in these circumstances that Uhtred, the provost, approached Thomas, the new Norman archbishop of York, asking him to fill the place of protector and leader left vacant by Æthelwine. Thomas would have been a particularly desirable protector since he was on the side of the victors and the destroyers, and so patronage from him might well also result in liberation from some of the atrocities perpetrated by the Normans. The archbishop duly *intravit Hagustalham*, persuaded that 'locum tale facile illum posse sub dominium suum redigere'. These few sentences do not make explicit exactly what the archbishop's role in Hexham was, but it would seem reasonable to suppose that he treated the church in the same way as the bishop of Durham had, leaving the actual administration of it to the provost, but becoming in essence the overlord. No attempt is made to suggest that any charter or written confirmation changed hands, just that the necessary measures were taken in a time of crisis. Nor is any mention made here that Eilaf supported the move; in fact his approach to the archbishop a little later suggests that at this point he did not feel the need of new episcopal oversight and did not answer to the archbishop in spiritual matters as he might have done to the bishop of Durham. However, it might also suggest that at that troubled and violent time Eilaf was showing little interest or involvement in the church, which would help to explain why the vacancy in Durham caused such difficulty to Uhtred the provost, and why Eilaf received the church anew in the 1080s.

The complete transfer to York came, according to this source, when Eilaf (I) refused to join the new convent in Durham after Bishop William of Saint-Calais' reforms, and 'ad Thomam archiepiscopum abiit, et tunc ab eo Hagustaldensem ecclesiam recepit quam quondam ab Egelwino episcopi acceperat.' The family then became fully resident in Hexham. Ailred, the grandson of Eilaf I, records the departure more specifically: 'Successit Walchero Guilelmus habitu monachus, qui clericos ab ecclesia Dunelmensi eliminans, monachos subrogavit: et aliis quidam possessiones extra ecclesiam ordinavit, alios id suscipere contempnentes expellere non cunctavit. Inter quos prædicti Aluredi filius qui cæteris præerat, cum nihil ab episcopo suscipere dignaretur, adiit venerabilem archiepiscopum Thomam, qui primus Normannorum Eboracensem rexit ecclesiam,

rogans ut ei Haugustaldensem ecclesiam concederet reædificandam.'[18] The archbishop clearly felt that he had the authority and right to grant the church of Hexham to Eilaf. After the priest Sproh and the provost Uhtred we hear no more mention of such individuals and it is most likely that Eilaf took over sole responsibility for the church which was, following the Norman attacks, in a desolate and depopulated area and so would be in reduced circumstances. In several Durham charters Eilaf appears as one of the witnesses, referred to in one as *Eilaui + preost de Exsteldesham*,[19] and in another as *Æi+laui presb(i)teri*.[20] This suggests a demotion for Eilaf, who had been treasurer of the community of St Cuthbert in the relatively civilised and urbanised Durham and had been used to appoint others to such a post. However, he clearly considered such a change of circumstances preferable to joining the new, usurping, monastic community. What, though, was his relation to Durham after his move, and to his new overlord, the archbishop of York?

The archbishop in effect reconfirmed Eilaf in his existing position in Hexham, revealing that he felt that he had the authority to ratify such a decision. However the fact that this had not happened when Thomas first 'entered' Hexham at the request of Uhtred, presumably demonstrates that it had not been necessary for Eilaf to make this public change of allegiance. The fact that he did so at this moment therefore points to a public display as much as to a legal necessity. Eilaf approached Thomas, and in doing so publicly declared that he was deeply unhappy with the church in Durham and no longer wished to be officially associated with it. By receiving Hexham again from the archbishop he was reinforcing his dissociation from Durham and his new connections elsewhere. In addition there must also have been some legal necessities since Eilaf's position in Hexham had changed now that he was resident and had suffered a reduction in his status.

The Early Provosts gives little further information, except that Eilaf's son, Eilaf II, succeeded to Hexham on his father's death. The other (predominantly Durham) sources referring to Hexham, some of them late in date, are similarly unhelpful, except for the statement in the fifteenth-century *Breviarum Chronicæ Hexham* and Prior Wessington's

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[18] *De sanctis*, ch. 11.
[19] This is the forged charter purporting to record the confirmation by Bishop William of Saint-Calais in 1085 of the gift of Tynemouth to the Durham monks by Earl Waltheof. Eilaf is the first witness after the bishop. *DEC*, no. 5, p. 40.
[20] This is a charter purporting to confirm a grant in 1091/2 of churches in Allertonshire. *DEC*, no. 6, pp. 48-53. Note, however, that Eilaf was clearly valued by the Durham community, at least in retrospect, if he was included in charters as a principal witness.

addition to the *Chronica Monasterii Dunelmensis*[21] that Hexham was lost to Durham when King Henry I took it away from Ranulf Flambard on the bishop's disgrace. This story does not appear in the earlier sources and was clearly a later version. Perhaps it reveals genuine ignorance of the real cause of the transfer, or perhaps it was an attempt to cover up the fact that Durham-appointed personnel were so dissatisfied with Durham's rule that they sought out alternative patronage. Symeon's *Libellus de exordio* does not provide any further information and the *Historia Regum* only mentions that in 1112 the Archbishop of York decided to introduce canons, indicating that Hexham was under York's jurisdiction by that time, but not detailing how or when that came about.

The only further information to be gleaned about how, when and why Durham lost control of Hexham comes from the Hexham-based sources themselves. Richard of Hexham refuses to give precise details of the changes, but, as discussed below,[22] his mention of Hexham's independence from Durham is, in itself, very interesting. Having claimed an ancient connection with the church of Lindisfarne in the opening chapters of his work, Richard then abruptly states Hexham's independence from Durham and new connection with York, pursuing this argument vigorously throughout the following chapters. The point is emphasised in ch. 5 in which Richard records how Eilaf received the church from Archbishop Thomas of York and soon afterwards it was absorbed into a prebend for Richard de Maton.[23] With no distinct explanation the Durham church has become a York church. Richard's refusal to give details may well in fact reflect that the transfer to York was, as the sources suggest, a protracted affair which happened in several stages and had no clear decisive conclusion. It might even have had some final stage at the time of Ranulf Flambard's disgrace.

The constitutional relationship between the churches of Durham and Hexham in the eleventh century was not at all simple, as the confusion in the historical record reflects. An appreciation of the intricacies of the associations and hostilities is nonetheless crucial to an understanding of the complex spiritual relationship which developed between the monks and canons in the twelfth century.

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[21] See H. H. E. Craster, 'The Red Book of Durham', *EHR* 40 (1925), 504-32. Craster's reconstructed chronicle was believed to date from 1072x1083, with an interpolation from the time of Henry I.

[22] See ch. 5.

[23] Prior Richard informs us that Richard de Maton, a canon from the church of St John of Beverley, received Hexham as a prebend of York, along with Holm. *De statu*, II, 2. Hexham was therefore greatly reduced if it was now considered only to be a part of a prebend, rather than the complete one which Alfred Westou held. Eilaf, too, is shown here to be considerably less important than he once was if a prebendary has been appointed above him. He seems to have combined the roles of provost and priest, thus being Richard de Maton's deputy in Hexham.

Chapter Three

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY AND THE NEW ORDERS OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

As the discussion of the spiritual developments at Hexham has indicated, the early twelfth century saw the arrival of the new orders of canons and monks in the north-east.[1] These new religious were characterised and motivated by their desire for spiritual and ecclesiastical reform, and their zeal in this respect was to have a thoroughly transforming effect on the spiritual life of the north-east. Their reforming tendencies inevitably carried with them a criticism, whether explicit or implicit, of the traditional Benedictine monasticism which they were challenging. How, then, did the established Black Monks of the north-east react to their arrival? Did they feel hostility towards their critical neighbours, and perceive them as spiritual competition? Or did they welcome them as colleagues in the religious life? In this chapter these issues will be explored through an examination of the Durham monks' response to the new orders.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE NEW ORDERS

By the early twelfth century the reformed orders, which were in the vanguard of contemporary religious thought and practice, were gaining tremendous popularity and support throughout the continent and England. Their 'newness' lay in the fact that they promoted a new spirituality based upon a desire to return to the original purity of Christianity (the *vita apostolica*), as it was then understood, which involved a commitment to simplicity and a rejection of custom and tradition.[2] This shift in outlook was most starkly represented in the rise to prominence of the ascetic Cistercian order, which eclipsed the liturgy-focused Cluniacs and demanded a return to the true penitential, rather than liturgical or priestly, basis of Benedictine monasticism.[3]

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[1] Of the different orders which founded houses in the north-east of England in the twelfth century, the Augustinian canons and Cistercian monks were the most prominent. The following discussion will therefore refer mainly to them. Other orders included the Gilbertine and Premonstratensian canons and (in Scotland) the Tironensian monks. The Gilbertines were a double order, founded by Gilbert of Sempringham. The Premonstratensians were known as the White Canons because, like the Augustinians (the Black Canons) they followed the Rule of St Augustine, but they augmented this with the governmental and constitutional framework derived from Cistercian (White Monks) practice. See *MOY*, p. 88-9 and H. M. Colvin, *The White Canons in England* (Oxford, 1951). The Order of Tiron was another order of reformed Benedictinism. Although not popular in England, it had a significant impact on the Scottish church. See Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, pp. 208-9.

[2] See below, pp. 199-206.

[3] Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 81-2, 88, 100-2.

Monastic Reform

The Cistercians' lifestyle was characterised by simplicity and isolation. Cistercian founders often looked for bleak deserted spots on which to found their houses, emulating the search for the desert which was such a strong influence in contemporary spirituality. The magnetic appeal of their simple, reformed way of life was instant and powerful, indicating that the traditional orders had only appealed to a certain type of religious and manifestly did not provide for the full range of spiritual needs or practices.[4] Another reason for the Cistercians' popularity was their invitation to the masses to take a valid and valued place within the religious life of the monastery. This contrasted with the Benedictine model of the labourers being servants rather than monks. The vast expansion of Cistercian houses included a large number of illiterate lay brothers from the servile classes, who joined the monastery and took part in an abridged version of the daily offices within a day of manual labour, to whom a religious life had previously been denied. Those whose vocations traditional institutions such as Durham Cathedral Priory had failed to provide for therefore flocked in large numbers into the cloisters of the reformed orders and developed a spirituality quite distinct from the traditional Benedictine pattern. The Cistercians could therefore play a specialized but widespread spiritual role throughout society, as well as having a significant impact as a reforming force within religious movements whereas, by contrast, traditional Benedictine spiritual influence tended to be localised, institutional and political.

Clerical Reform

The secular clergy also underwent change, having experienced the force of the eleventh-century Gregorian reforms. A new ideal of purity and separation permeated the ranks of the clergy and three basic requirements emerged for the reformed priesthood: chastity, common life and liturgical service. There was strong resistance from some clergy, as the example of the family of Hexham priests shows,[5] but the reforms eventually

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[4] The criticism implied by the Cistercians was heard clearly in Cluniac quarters at least. In March 1132 a large meeting of Cluniacs was convened by the abbot, Peter the Venerable, in order to assess the need for reform within the order in the light of Cistercian pressure. See Nicholl, *Thurstan*, p. 155.

[5] In Hexham, the process of reform and reconstitution in 1113 carries an added poignancy, even tragedy, for Eilaf's family had arrived in Hexham thirty years earlier as a result of a similar process of reform and eviction in Durham. Eilaf escaped the call to monastic life in 1083, but his son finally made a death-bed profession to the monks of Durham in 1138. How many other such hereditary clergy took this course of action when their livelihood was taken away cannot be known. Many who were unsuited to monastic life may nonetheless have been attracted to the canonical life in which they could continue their priestly functions within a more regulated lifestyle, or indeed they may have become hermits, but others must have resented and refused all such changes. The displacement of clergy throughout the church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries must, therefore, have been widespread and this would have had an effect

prevailed in most places. In practice this meant that the spirituality of the monastic cloister exerted a transforming influence over that of the wider clerical community.[6] Most of the canonical communities adopted the Rule of St Augustine, though interpretations of it varied widely, and in the course of the early twelfth century the identity of these new priestly communities began to develop and crystallise. By the time that the Augustinians were exerting a significant influence in England, the pronounced emphasis on chastity and separation from the world was beginning to take second place to their concern for the cure of souls through preaching and pastoral care.[7]

Through personally serving in parish churches, rather than appointing vicars, as monks were obliged to do, the Augustinians began to exert a widespread, grass-roots influence, transforming spiritual life in the lower levels of society.[8] In providing so thoroughly for the pastoral needs of the local population, rather than concerning themselves with re-shaping the political balance of power among the religious institutions, the canons were highlighting the limited involvement of Benedictine institutions in the wider spiritual life and work of the world. Pastoral care had never officially been a concern of the Benedictines: their focus was rather the worship of God in the choir and intercession on behalf of the people,[9] but the issue of monastic pastoral care had nonetheless been controversial for many years. Some argued that monks who undertook no cure of souls held their tithes unlawfully: Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny (1122-56), however, claimed that monks accomplished as much for the salvation of the faithful by their

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on the development of the reformed religious life which took its place. (See Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 90-3). The unusually good source materials for Hexham help to highlight that alongside the institutional foundations which followed such reforms there existed dispossessed and displaced individuals whose religious service was largely unvalued and criticised. These were the victims of reform who usually disappeared from history, but who may well have continued to have a significant impact on the early development of a reformed house's identity and the extent of its influence.

[6] Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 52-4, 83. The differences in the spirituality of the two orders were significant, though. Whereas the Benedictines prized a rigid framework for their communal life within which the development of spiritual life was an individual journey, the Augustinians paid less heed to the external structures but emphasised the creation of communal relationships. See Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, pp. 120-1.

[7] The understanding of what was required of the *vita apostolica* was changing. Monasticism was seen in some circles as a negative rejection of the world, whereas a new reading of the Acts of the Apostles demonstrated that the apostles' primary role was the preaching of the Gospel. Thus the model of the early church came to involve not only a common life of poverty, but also the care of souls. Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 84, 95-9, J. C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England* (London, 1950), pp. 214-41 and D. M. Robinson, *The Geography of Augustinian Settlement in Medieval England and Wales*, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 80, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1980), I, pp. 175-6.

[8] See J. E. Burton, *Kirkham Priory from Foundation to Dissolution*, BP 86 (1994), pp. 3-4. Guisborough, for example, was founded 1119x1124, probably 1119, and was endowed with ten churches. See Robinson, *The Geography of Augustinian Settlement*, p. 179 and *MOY*, pp. 77-9.

[9] Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 43-4.

divine service as clergy did by their pastoral work.[10] Nonetheless, some houses did continue to carry out pastoral functions as an integral part of their monastic service. La Trinité at Vendôme, for example, had a policy of feeding numerous paupers, not only on a daily basis, but also in accordance with the liturgical pattern of the year, so that they were particularly generous on days such as Maundy Thursday and All Saints' Day. In addition to these services, the monks also cared for the sick, had almshouses, provided for the burial of local people, offered hospitality to travellers, housed relics for the faithful and offered prayers on behalf of the people.[11] The prohibition issued by the Lateran Council in 1123[12] (at a time when the Augustinians were gaining widespread prestige and support in this field) forbidding monks to serve as parish priests would suggest, however, that some monks had become distracted by the need to provide pastoral care and were taking upon themselves the duties which should have been deputised to a vicar.

Popularity with Founders

The rapid rise of the reformed orders was also due to the fact that they appealed so strongly to potential founders and patrons, because of both spiritual and economic conditions.[13] Houses for the reformed orders were less expensive to endow than Benedictine monasteries because they sought, at least initially, communal as well as individual poverty.[14] The quest for the desert, which characterised the actions of many eleventh and twelfth-century religious, meant that orders such as the Cistercians and Augustinians would happily settle on land which was considered too remote or barren for a Benedictine house. The parochial nature of Augustinian work also meant that Augustinian priories could be founded in an existing parish church, for example at Guisborough (c.1119),[15] Kirkham (1121),[16] or Bridlington (1114)[17] or an ancient

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[10] Hunt, *Cluny under Saint Hugh*, p. 196, n. 1.
[11] Johnson, *Prayer, Patronage and Power*, pp. 157-64.
[12] See above, p. 71.
[13] For a comparative study based upon Ranulf de Glanville's Premonstratensian foundation of Leiston Abbey in the 1180s, see R. Mortimer, 'Religious and Secular Motives for some English Monastic Foundations', in *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*, ed. D. Baker, SCH 15 (1978), pp. 77-85. See also A. Lawrence, 'A Northern English School? Patterns of Production and Collection of Manuscripts in the Augustinian Houses of Yorkshire in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', in L. R. Hoey, ed., *Yorkshire Monasticism: Archaeology, Art and Architecture, from the 7th to the 16th Centuries*, Conference Transactions of the British Archaeological Association 16 (1995), pp. 145-53, at pp. 145-7.
[14] On the modest needs of Augustinian foundations, see Southern, *Western Society and the Church*, pp. 240-50, though note Burton's comments that in Yorkshire many of the endowments given to Augustinian foundations were extremely generous, so the impetus to found Augustinian houses was probably not just the relatively low cost. *MOY*, p. 94.
[15] Founded by Robert de Brus, who appointed his brother William (d.1139) as prior and made generous provision for the canons. See above, p. 95, n. 8.

minster church, such as at Hexham (1113), or a hermitage, as at Nostell (c.1120)[18]. This practice was much less costly than founding a new church from nothing. The parochial interests of the regular canons made them more attractive to potential founders and patrons on spiritual grounds too. Not only were they representatives of the spiritual and ecclesiastical reform which was so vibrant in this period,[19] but they were renowned for their work in the parishes, especially their pastoral care.[20] For all of these reasons Henry I was particularly impressed by the work and ideals of the Augustinian order, and he took the lead in providing for and supporting Augustinian foundations.[21] Many of the 'new men' whom he brought into power deemed it advisable to follow his example, thus producing a significant number of foundations during his reign.[22]

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[16] Founded 1119x1124, possibly 1121/2, by Walter Espec, who later founded Rievaulx. There are unverifiable stories about Walter's motive in founding Kirkham, but it does seem likely that at least one influence was his own uncle, William, whom Walter subsequently appointed as Prior of Kirkham. Kirkham was a well-endowed Augustinian Priory which had responsibility for a number of churches in which its canons were expected to serve personally. See *MOY*, pp. 79-80.

[17] Bridlington was founded by Walter de Gant with the advice of Archbishop Thomas II of York and the support of King Henry I. It had been a parish church served by a group of clergy and they adopted a regular way of life under the influence of the archbishop. See P. S. Purvis, 'The Foundation of Bridlington Priory', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 29 (1929), 241-2 and *MOY*, pp. 69-70.

[18] The foundation history of Nostell in south Yorkshire is obscure, but it would seem that a chaplain of Henry I joined a group of hermits there and transformed the hermitage into an Augustinian priory. See T. N. Burrows, 'The Foundation of Nostell Priory', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 53 (1981), 32, *MOY*, p. 71-7, and below, pp. 231-2. Nothing particular is known about this group of hermits: they appear to have been an independent group of individuals with no affiliation to any of the major religious institutions of the region. However, Burton suggests that this group was sufficiently large and well organised to have received endowments and to challenge the nearby Cluniac monks of Pontefract over rights in the neighbouring parish of Featherstone. *MOY*, pp. 71-7.

[19] See Mortimer, 'Religious and Secular Motives', pp. 83-4.

[20] See Burton, *Kirkham Priory*, pp. 3-4 and *MOY*, p. 93.

[21] Henry was also influenced by issues of political control and these motives should not be confused with spiritual aspirations. For example, in his support of Nostell it is likely that he was addressing the challenges to royal authority in the honour of Pontefract, in which Nostell lay (see J. Herbert, 'The Transformation of Hermitages into Augustinian Priories in Twelfth-Century England', in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. W. J. Shiels, SCH 22 (Oxford, 1985), pp. 131-45, at pp. 140-2). Pontefract was in the possession of the Lacy family, but when Robert de Lacy went into exile and forfeited his lands in the early 1100s, Henry gave the land to Hugh de Laval, who prudently made further benefactions to the church (*EYC*, III, no. 1488, pp. 182-3). The estates were restored to the Lacys in c.1135, but it has been suggested that the continued royal interest in Nostell was a way in which to ensure royal presence and influence in an area known to be potentially troublesome (*MOY*, p. 76).

[22] See Dickinson, *Austin Canons*, pp. 125-30, M. Brett, *The English Church under Henry I* (Oxford, 1970), p. 138-9 and, for comparison, C. N. L. Brooke, 'Princes and Kings as Patrons of Monasteries: Normandy and England, 1066-1135', in *Churches and Churchmen in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), pp. 139-58.

THE NEW AND THE OLD ORDERS IN THE NORTH-EAST

St Mary's and Fountains

When the new orders arrived in the north-east of England in the early twelfth century, how were they received by the existing religious houses? One very vivid example of the encounter between old and new provides a starting point in answer to this question. The Cistercian monks on their way to Rievaulx in March 1132 passed through York.[23] In the few days of their stay, their inspirational influence precipitated a major division in the Benedictine abbey of St Mary's.[24] The example of their lives and devotion awoke a spiritual desire in the hearts and minds of a section of the younger monks in the Benedictine house who were no longer satisfied by their present observance and earnestly desired the greater discipline and sacrifice which they observed in the Cistercians. The group approached their aged abbot, Geoffrey, seeking a reformation of the house to match these higher ideals.[25] The abbot was indecisive and asked for a detailed plan of the proposed changes, but he and older members of the house were reluctant to implement the changes requested by these younger monks who had, as they saw it, the audacity to criticise the monastic life which had been lived out faithfully for many centuries.[26] Relations between the two sides broke down and the reformers, who now numbered eight,[27] made plans to depart. They solicited Archbishop Thurstan's support and, when he visited the abbey on 6 October in order to hear the case, the differences of opinion were so great that a riot broke out[28] and he was forced to beat a

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[23] Rievaulx's foundation came about through the joint initiative of Bernard of Clairvaux, King Henry I and Walter Espec, the local landholder, with the support of Archbishop Thurstan and Pope Innocent II. See *Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains*, ed., J. S. Walbran, SS 42 (1863), p. xxiv. Rievaulx was something new in the area, not only because of its Cistercian allegiance, but because it was consciously planned and imposed on the region, rather than evolving naturally from local circumstances.

[24] The events can be pieced together from two complementary sources: the letter written by Thurstan to the Archbishop of Canterbury, William of Corbeil, while the turmoil was in progress, and the later narrative account of the foundation (*Narratio*) dictated by the aged Serlo, by then a monk at Kirkstall, seventy years after the events. The letter is to be found within the *Narratio* printed in *Mem. Fount.*, pp. 11-29. The letter is the more reliable and detailed of the sources, though Derek Baker advises using both with extreme caution, since the letter exists in two versions; 'The Foundation of Fountains Abbey', *NH* 4 (1969), 29-43, at 30-5. See also 'The Genesis of Cistercian Chronicles in England: The Foundation History of Fountains Abbey', *Analecta Cisterciensia* 25 (1969), 14-41 and Nicholl, *Thurstan*, pp. 151-91.

[25] Dennis Bethell suggests that the type of reforms requested probably included such measures as the relinquishing of monastic tithes and the increase of manual labour. 'The Foundation of Fountains Abbey and the State of St Mary's York in 1132', *JEH* 17 (1966), 11-27, at 22-3.

[26] Nicholl, *Thurstan*, p. 157.

[27] Richard the sacristan, Walter the almoner, Ranulf, Thomas, Gamel, Hamo, Robert and Gregory. These were later joined by Richard the prior, Gervase the subprior, Geoffrey, Radulph, Alexander and two monks from Whitby: Robert (later abbot of Newminster and a saint) and Adam. See *Mem. Fount.*, p. 9.

[28] The traditionalists issued a rallying call to houses in which they expected to find sympathy (the Benedictines of Holy Trinity, York and the Cluniacs of Pontefract) and representatives from these houses turned up for Thurstan's visitation to lend their support. It is likely that the reformers did the same since William de Brus, the prior of Guisborough, also attended. See Nicholl, *Thurstan*, pp. 170-1.

retreat, taking the reformers with him. On 27 December he gave them land near Ripon on which to settle, which became in time the remarkable house of Fountains.[29]

How would we expect the Durham monks to react to the arrival of the Cistercians? Would they echo the sentiments of the conservatives in St Mary's, or the radicals who founded Fountains? The priory in Durham was, by the early 1130s, half a century old. It had originated from the simple religious life lived out by Aldwin and his companions, but it had rapidly acquired the weight of an ancient history, and the responsibility for a vast inheritance. These characteristics must surely have constrained the flexibility of the priory's development, causing it to veer at an early stage towards conservatism and institutionalisation. The events at St Mary's would have been known at Durham,[30] and we might expect that the Durham monks, like their Benedictine colleagues of Holy Trinity and Pontefract, would feel defensive about their traditions and status and hostile in the face of this new, implicitly critical group which was posing a clear threat to the continuity of the old-style monasticism in the north-east. We have, after all, already seen how they had the ability to conduct powerfully hostile relations with those who threatened their position. Surely the Cistercian arrival posed a similar challenge?

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEW HOUSES IN THE NORTH-EAST

How can we set about examining the relationships which existed between Durham Cathedral Priory and the various houses of the new orders in the north-east? The limits of space demand a selective approach. We will therefore begin by pursuing the subject of individual personal contacts, focussing mainly on Ailred and Maurice of Rievaulx's connections with Durham, moving on to consider the evidence of intellectual exchange and, finally, land issues.

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[29] See Baker, 'The Foundation of Fountains Abbey'. Fountains therefore developed entirely from a spiritual initiative, not, like many other houses, from ideas about patronage, institutional development and expansion, or indeed, as in the case of some of the eremitical foundations, from the need to extend episcopal authority over independent religious. This response highlights the polarity of spiritual experience in the north-east. The Fountains monks appear to have been zealous in the desire for spiritual rigour and authenticity, prepared to risk everything for the pursuit of appropriate divine service. The rapid growth of the northern Cistercian houses throughout the twelfth century echoes this enthusiasm. However, the monks' former colleagues at St Mary's, who resented their criticism and departure, appear to have been ultra-conservative and interested only in the preservation of their traditions and status, not in spiritual advances. If, therefore, reform was possible in the north because of the number of enthusiasts, it was also necessary because of the corresponding number of conservatives.

[30] Richard Sharpe points out that Thurstan's letter to William of Corbeil is most likely to have been read at Durham too. 'Symeon as Pamphleteer' in *Symeon*, pp. 214-29 at p. 220.

Ailred

Durham's relationship with Ailred (1110-67) is an absolutely crucial aspect of the wider Durham-Cistercian picture. Ailred, in his family background, his remarkable personality and his brilliant career, symbolised more than anyone else in the north-east of England at that time both the continuity of tradition and the excitement and originality of the most modern developments within the church. As discussed above, Ailred's family was firmly rooted in the ecclesiastical power structures of the past and gave way to modern developments only when forced beyond resistance.[31] They were conservative Northumbrians of considerable local status[32] who had been shown on more than one occasion that their rights and observances were insufficient and unsatisfactory for the new order of ecclesiastics whose reforms were largely aimed at families such as these. The paths of his ancestors were no longer open to Ailred. Rather than accept a defeat which had taken generations to effect,[33] he stepped beyond these limitations and actively sought out the newest form of religious expression available and did much to leave his indelible stamp on that development.[34] He was not faultless and he had his limitations, but these throw his achievements into relief.[35] In Ailred's life tradition and reform were held in 'an amicable dialogue'.[36]

Ailred was brought up in Hexham, receiving some initial education at Durham before completing his training in the Scottish court of King David. It was while he was on an errand for the king, in 1134, that he first visited Walter Espec's castle at Helmsley and neighbouring religious foundation at Rievaulx, and decided to stay.[37] The fact that

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[31] See ch. 2 and appendix above.

[32] The social, and possibly political, influence which the family possessed is indicated by the fact that Ailred was taken into King David's court and given a position of responsibility and friendship. Powicke, *Vita Ailredi*, p. xxxv.

[33] M. Dutton, 'The Conversion and Vocation of Aelred of Rievaulx: a Historical Hypothesis', in *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 31-49, at pp. 34-7.

[34] Powicke, *Vita Ailredi*, pp. xlii-xliii.

[35] See Powicke, *Vita Ailredi*, p. xxx.

[36] 'In a time of change, when self-awareness was an asset, Aelred was by family and birth intimately connected with the still vital traditions of the past, while in politics and religion he was identified with all that was new. In his personal development old and new conduct an amicable dialogue.' A. Squire, *Aelred of Rievaulx: A Study* (London, 1969), pp. 3-4. This synthesis of past and present, which in Ailred emerges as something new and engaging, is exemplified in his work on Edward the Confessor. In the prologue he set forth his view that the two royal houses, Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman were finally and legitimately combined in Henry II in a manner which was satisfactory and complete and allowed for confident moves into the future rather than struggles relating to the past. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-7.

[37] Nicholl, *Thurstan*, pp. 206-7. Dutton challenges the impression given by Walter Daniel, Ailred's biographer, that the move to Rievaulx was the result of a sudden 'conversion' experience. She describes it as the fulfilment of career plans: 'it was not a radical turn from the life that had preceded it, but its consummation'. 'The Conversion and Vocation of Aelred', p. 32.

Ailred spent some time at Durham is of interest when studying his family's fortunes.[38] Durham had been the family's central location from its arrival with St Cuthbert's body in 995 until the eviction of Ailred's grandfather, Eilaf I, in 1083. Relationships must have been sour for some years while Eilaf I and his son Eilaf II were forced to scratch a living for themselves in the desolate region of Hexham while their usurpers at Durham were enjoying greater comfort and rapidly growing reputation and power. In 1113, after the family had begun to recover some of its status, it was evicted again, this time by the archbishop of York in favour of a priory of Augustinian canons. Family feelings and resentment must have then been running high, but it was perhaps at this point that relations between the family and Durham were in some measure healed. In the early days of the convent in Durham, there was a clear need for the new monks to justify their position in the place of their predecessors and this they did by denigrating the standards of the clerks, particularly their married status. By the second decade of twelfth century, when their position was more stable, the monks would have been more receptive to contact with representatives of that old order and may even have welcomed it, if it was on their own terms, as a means of reasserting the line of continuity among the guardians of St Cuthbert. Ailred's relatives, on the other hand, for all their apparent resentment towards Durham, now found themselves faced with a new injustice at Hexham which might have caused them to look once again to Durham as a potential source of support. Aldred, Ailred's uncle and a former shrine-keeper at Hexham, became a monk at Durham[39] and many years later, in 1138, Ailred's father, Eilaf II was also to die in the convent. The events of 1113, therefore, may well indicate the moment when the tide in the relationship between Ailred's family and Durham turned. Ailred's time in Durham re-established his family's long connection with the ancient church and brought him into close contact with St Cuthbert, for whom he retained a lifelong veneration. He also formed a lasting affection for Durham itself. We might well question, in the light of this improving relationship, why Ailred chose to pursue his vocation in Rievaulx and not in Durham itself. In choosing a new and forward-looking life which superceded the limitations of his family background, Ailred seems to have chosen the very pinnacle of religious expression available to him. His love of the churches and saints of Durham

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[38] Dutton suggests that Ailred studied under Prior Lawrence because a letter from Lawrence to Ailred while the latter was in the Scottish court suggests a teacher-student relationship. 'The Conversion and Vocation of Aelred', pp. 32, 37-8. The correspondence suggests a close and co-operative relationship with Ailred's father, Eilaf, whom he describes as *amicus meus*. A. Hoste, 'A Survey of the Unedited Work of Laurence of Durham With an Edition of his Letter to Aelred of Rievaulx', *Sacris Erudiri* 11 (1960), 257-65, at 260.

[39] Dutton, 'The Conversion and Vocation of Aelred', p. 37.

and of Hexham, his 'family seats', is immediately evident from his writings, so there can have been no sense of spite in not choosing to join the Benedictines of Durham, or indeed the Augustinians of Hexham.[40] Rather, his choice of the Cistercians of Rievaulx, embodying the newest and most challenging call to religious life, seems to represent Ailred's search for a new place in which he could move forward, unencumbered by, but in association with, his past.[41] The newer orders were personally well-known to Ailred as his close friend Waldef, step-son of King David, had recently joined the Augustinians at Nostell, whence he moved to Kirkham as prior. A further explanation of Ailred's choice of Rievaulx has been offered by Marsha Dutton who describes Ailred's 'vocation' as a thoroughly planned experience, in which Archbishop Thurstan, Prior Asketill of Hexham, King David of Scotland and Walter Espec each played a part. She suggests that Ailred was a promising youth with a remarkable pedigree and he attracted sponsorship from these rulers and leaders, the chief of aim of which was to establish Ailred as a spiritual ruler and leader himself. In Dutton's interpretation, the choices were largely made for Ailred, who followed the career path mapped out for him by others.[42]

The close association between Ailred and Durham continued and developed throughout his career.[43] In 1138 Ailred appears to have stayed in Durham while accompanying Abbot William of Rievaulx north to the siege of Wark. In 1147 he was involved in the settlement of the dispute between the Prior Roger and Archdeacon Wazo concerning precedence in the church of Durham.[44] At some point before 1154 Ailred received a letter from Lawrence, Prior of Durham, revealing that there was a friendship between the two men.[45] A friendship also developed between Ailred and the young Durham monk Reginald. Ailred collaborated with Reginald in the latter's work on the life and miracles of St Cuthbert, supplying information from his own recent knowledge as well

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[40] Ailred wrote about the saints of Hexham and contributed to Reginald's work on the miracles of St Cuthbert. His Anglo-Saxon heritage was also brought to the fore when, on 13 October 1163, a grand translation ceremony of King Edward the Confessor's remains took place in Westminster Abbey. The abbot of Westminster, his own kinsman Lawrence, asked Ailred to rewrite the 'Life of the Confessor' written in 1138 by Osbert of Clare, a previous Prior of Westminster, as well as to preach at the ceremony itself, which was presided over by the new archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. The invitation to Ailred to perform on this occasion indicates that his influence and native symbolism were not merely confined to the north, but had meaning for the Anglo-Saxon past throughout the country. See P. Dienier, 'St Ailred of Rievaulx', in *Benedict's Disciples*, ed. D. H. Farmer (Leominster, 1980), pp. 175-94, at pp. 185-6 and Squires, *Aelred of Rievaulx*, pp. 92-7.

[41] See Powicke, *Vita Ailredi*, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

[42] 'The Conversion and Vocation of Aelred', pp. 38-47.

[43] See P. Dalton, 'Scottish Influence on Durham', in *AND*, pp. 339-52, at p. 343.

[44] *DEC*, nos. 36 and 36a, pp. 142-151

[45] See above, p. 101, n. 38.

as from the family store of tales reaching back through the centuries.[46] Although Reginald is known for his misogynistic views, he did not air them in the context of the married status of the pre-monastic community which perhaps reflects the respect in which he held Ailred. He depicts this community instead as 'well-intentioned guardians of St Cuthbert's cult'.[47] Along with Prior Thomas, Ailred persuaded Reginald to write about the hermit Godric, and the two visited the old man together.[48]

Ailred was one of the key figures in the ecclesiastical life of the twelfth-century north-east, and he formed a vital link in relations between Durham and the Cistercian order through his own personality and career and through the deep and significant connections of his family. Ailred was someone whom the Durham monks could easily recognise and respect, yet in rising as he did to a position of such importance in his order, he also offered a relationship with the Cistercians of Yorkshire at their highest level. His friendship opened the door for contact between Durham and the Cistercians almost from the time of Rievaulx's foundation.

Maurice

An examination of the somewhat elusive figure of Maurice gives an even more direct focus to the nature of this contact. Maurice, who migrated to Rievaulx in 1139, was unique amongst the twelfth-century monks of Durham in so far as he is the only one of their number known to have joined the Cistercians. We noted above the St Mary's and Whitby monks who were responsible for the foundation of Fountains, but no Durham monk joined the enterprise at that early stage, indicating that from the outset the Durham monks' attitude to the Cistercians was different from those of St Mary's.[49] Maurice was therefore something of an exception to the rule, but in examining the circumstances of his life and career we will perhaps be able to determine not only his own ideas and intentions, but the prevailing attitude at Durham towards the Cistercian appeal. We need to consider why Maurice left Durham to become a Cistercian, why he chose Rievaulx, and why Durham allowed the transfer to take place.

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[46] *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 1, 2, 16, 83-4 and 88. See Powicke, *Vita Ailredi*, pp. xxxviii and Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, pp. 87-8.
[47] M. Foster, 'Custodians of St Cuthbert', in *AND*, pp. 53-65, at p. 63.
[48] *Vita S. God.*, ch. 77 and Powicke, *Vita Ailredi,* pp. xxxviii and xcii.
[49] See Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 706-7. Other monks are known to have left Durham, though not in the same context. Lawrence, a relative of Ailred (Walter Daniel calls him *cognatus*) became Abbot of Westminster. It is possible that this was connected with two unsuccessful attempts to make him bishop of Durham. See F. M. Powicke, trans., *Walteri Danielis Vita Ailredi Abbatis Rievall'*, *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx by Walter Daniel* (London, 1950), p. xxxvi, n. 3, p. xlviii and below, p. 107.

Maurice was by any measure a talented and able monk.[50] He was a gifted scholar and known among his contemporaries as a second Bede.[51] He had become sub-prior of Durham before his departure, rapidly rose to the position of Abbot of Rievaulx (1145-47), where he succeeded William, the first abbot, and soon after his resignation was appointed Abbot of Fountains (1148), where he succeeded Henry Murdac, who had just been made Archbishop of York. Maurice's appointments in the Cistercian houses and the speed with which they happened, especially in view of the position he had held in Durham earlier, must therefore be seen as evidence for a man of sought-after ability.[52] But was that ability of the spiritual or administrative kind? Was Maurice a Reinfrid or a Stephen? Maurice resigned from three crucial positions in Durham, Rievaulx[53] and Fountains,[54] the latter two posts after only a short time in office, because he disliked the responsibility.[55] This would suggest that his taste was not for management, but that his quest was for spiritual perfection rather than worldly status, in a manner reminiscent of Reinfrid.[56] John of Hexham describes Maurice's departure for Rievaulx as a search for the greater rigour to be found in the Cistercian life.[57] Maurice therefore seems to have been attracted to Rievaulx as a more vigorous spiritual environment than Durham in which to explore his vocation. In view of the Cistercian ideals and the newness of the house, this is only to be expected, though the apparent satisfaction of the remainder of the Durham monks suggests that this discrepancy was not as large as at St Mary's and that Maurice's move was largely an individual rather than an institutional matter.

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[50] Even after Maurice had resigned from his last senior post, that of Abbot of Fountains, and returned to Rievaulx in retirement, he was still regarded with respect and petitioned for advice and support. He attended the great meeting of monks and abbots to discuss the dispute between Savigny and Furness and his advice was also sought by Thomas Becket after the latter's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162. F. M. Powicke, 'Maurice of Rievaulx', *EHR* 36 (1921), 17-29, at 21-3.

[51] Walter Daniel records this information. Maurice is also credited with writing the 'anonymous' account of the 1104 opening of St Cuthbert's coffin. See Powicke, 'Maurice', 19-20, *Vita Ailredi*, p. 33.

[52] Whilst the number of northern Cistercian houses in the 1130s was very few, and the number of candidates for the top positions was correspondingly small, those candidates seem to have been of high quality. Of the original thirteen monks who founded Fountains, nine became abbots of Cistercian abbeys and showed great skill in their management over a period of rapid formation and expansion. See Bethell, 'The Foundation of Fountains Abbey and the State of St Mary's York in 1132', 19-21.

[53] John of Hexham gives a short notice of Maurice's brief career as head of the house. 'Præfuit pro eo Mauritius, a puero educatus in claustro Dunelmensi monachus, et ad disciplinam rigoris Cisterciensis voto perfectionis se transferens. Quo post modicum officio abbatis eodem fervore perfectionis renuntiante, substitutus est pro eo Ethelredus abbas....' Raine, *Priory of Hexham*, pp. 149-50.

[54] Serlo's *Narratio* informs us: 'Fontes, interim veniens, monachum quendam Rievallis, Mauricium nomine, in abbatem creavit. Hic Mauricius, non tres plene menses, apud Fontes, faciens, resignata cura, in manu archiepiscopi, rediit ad locum unde assumptus est'. *Mem. Fount.*, p. 104.

[55] Walter Daniel notes that Maurice resigned the abbacy of Rievaulx because he felt irked by the burdens of the pastoral care, 'moleste ferens inquieta onera cure pastoralis portare', Powicke, *Vita Ailredi*, p. 33.

[56] Nicholl notes that one reason for Maurice's remarkably short tenure of his position as Abbot of Fountains was that the Archbishop of York, Henry Murdac (1147-1153), a former Abbot of Fountains, was always looking over his shoulder. *Thurstan*, p. 161. Maurice's successor, Thurold, who also came from Rievaulx, only lasted for two years as Abbot of Fountains before returning. Powicke, 'Maurice', 18.

[57] See above, n. 53.

In this context, Maurice's choice of destination may also be significant. Rievaulx was originally populated by monks sent by Bernard from Clairvaux;[58] Fountains by the monks of St Mary's and Whitby. Both houses had been in existence for five or more years by the time Maurice joined them, so more local recruits were no doubt resident,[59] but the circumstances of their foundations must still have had a profound effect on the character of the houses. Both houses were young and vigorous, but in view of their respective histories, one might imagine that Fountains would have had a greater appeal to a Benedictine who was leaving his house to join the Cistercians. Yet Maurice chose Rievaulx. It is possible, though unverifiable, that Maurice and William, Abbot of Rievaulx, himself a Yorkshireman, might have been known to each other, which would account for this choice.[60] Possibly Maurice was persuaded to make this choice by Ailred who had joined the house in 1134.[61] Alternatively, since it would seem that Maurice was seeking a quieter, more anonymous position in which to pursue his search for Christ, he chose the house which was more stable and less controversial in its origins. Fountains may well have acquired an early character of criticism of the pre-existing monastic life more pronounced than that of other Cistercian houses. If Maurice moved because of a personal desire for greater freedom in his vocation, rather than an overt criticism of the spiritual standards at Durham at the time, his choice of Rievaulx rather than Fountains would seem logical.

Why, though, did the priory at Durham allow their sub-prior to resign his position and pursue his vocation in a house of a different order? This is a real puzzle when we consider how jealous the priory was of its assets, both material and spiritual.[62] Perhaps this issue is best viewed in the context of Durham Cathedral Priory's attitude towards individual vocations. Most of the monks of Durham in the twelfth century are known to

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[58] *Mem. Fount.*, p. xxiv.

[59] The most notable northern recruit had been Hugh, Dean of York, who retired to Fountains, with his wealth and his library, in 1134. *Mem. Fount.*, pp. 51-3.

[60] Nicholl presents the whole episode of the foundation of Rievaulx in the light of a gift from Bernard and Clairvaux in gratitude for the Yorkshire recruits of the past fifteen years, many of whom were of a high calibre. Nicholl lists among these recruits the Rievaulx monks William, Ivo and Richard; see *Thurstan*, p. 151. See also Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 228-9.

[61] Although considerably younger than Maurice, Ailred already had some stature and authority, by virtue of his family background and position in the Scottish royal court.

[62] The Durham monks carefully exploited the cult of St Cuthbert and the spiritual influence which it could exert (see below, ch. 4). The evidence of the cult in the 1130s is not quite as plentiful as for certain other decades in the twelfth century, but it would seem to have been a time when the monks were feeling rather more certain of their ownership of it and confident in its dissemination. By the 1140s and 1150s, as Reginald's *Libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti virtutibus* indicates, the cult had spread far beyond Durham's immediate influence and was attracting great support from various parts of the country. See Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century'. At the time of Maurice's departure, therefore, the monks' grasp on their principal spiritual asset was perhaps felt to be secure and the priory was relaxing into a phase of greater confidence in its spiritual position.

us as individuals only through the entry of their names into the *Liber Vitae*. Only a few are known in any real detail, and these are mainly priors or writers. One further group of individuals can be identified and studied, however, and these are the hermits who began their religious life at, or developed some sort of association with, Durham. In the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries many individual hermits or loosely-formed eremitical groups were to be found all over the north-east and Durham's involvement with a significant number of them will be discussed below. Here it is sufficient to note simply that Durham Cathedral Priory was large enough, and open enough to the input and desires of its individual members, to accommodate such independence of spiritual life and to be prepared to sponsor those individuals who felt that their call to serve God should be lived outside the walls of the monastery. It might have been that the priors were pragmatic enough to realise the spiritual kudos which could attach to Durham if it supported such obvious examples of holy and God-fearing men, and this might have acted as a balance to other more worldly concerns which were dealt with within the main house. However, it is rather more likely that the spiritual standards of the house were sufficiently good that we can understand this sponsorship of individual vocations as a genuine spiritual concern of the house. We cannot be certain that Maurice's transition to Rievaulx took place with the active encouragement of the Durham community which was thereby losing its sub-prior, but perhaps it happened with the same understanding and support which characterised Durham's other dealings with individuals who followed their calling beyond the walls of Durham. Maurice's departure for Rievaulx could perhaps be interpreted, therefore, as evidence that Durham Cathedral Priory was capable of recognising the spiritual strengths and attractions of the Cistercians and, even if it did not actively endorse Maurice's decision, it did not prevent him from moving, which suggests that in their dealing with the new orders the Durham monks exercised a spirit of toleration and co-operation.

The examination of Ailred's Durham connections and Maurice's career suggests that the priory of Durham maintained a mature and healthy attitude towards the Cistercians, recognising their achievements and importance. This suggests an openness and willingness to communicate on the part of the priory which contrasts with the insecurity and hostility which might have been expected both from the comparable situation at St Mary's and from Durham's own attitude in other challenging circumstances.[63]

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[63] This impression is strengthened further by the evidence relating to the exchange of manuscripts between the priory and north-eastern Cistercian foundations, discussed below in ch. 5.

Other incidences of personal contact suggest a similarly cautious welcome to the new orders. William of Ste-Barbe, Bishop of Durham (1143-52), had close connections with the reformed orders. William was not a Cistercian himself, but was familiar with and sympathetic to the aims and ideas of the Cistercian and Augustinian reformers, though he was rather more moderate than, for example, Henry Murdac or Bernard of Clairvaux.[64] William's knowledge of the reformed orders went back to his early career which had been spent in the priory of Ste-Barbe-en-Auge in Calvados which had originally been a Benedictine house but became Augustinian in 1128. He came to Durham from York where he had been Dean under Archbishop Henry Murdac and had seen at close quarters how the Cistercians were able to exert great pressure in certain areas of the church. William's election to the bishopric was strongly supported by the Durham monks at a time when the bishopric was being harassed by the Scottish-supported usurper, William Cumin.[65] He was also acceptable to the reformers, but he was not their first choice. Bernard of Clairvaux and Abbot William of Rievaulx wished to see the Durham monk, Master Lawrence, who was a friend of Maurice, relative of Ailred and well known in Cistercian circles, promoted to the episcopal see.[66] Ste-Barbe's spiritual concerns were no doubt attractive to the Durham monks at the time of his election, but it is quite possible that the attraction waned as his interests came into conflict with those of the priory which sensed, in his generous support of the reformed orders, a threat to its own position and lands.

William of Ste-Barbe died on 13 November 1152 and the issues involved in the next episcopal succession provide an interesting contrast with the circumstances in which he had been elected. The priory backed Hugh du Puiset, the traditional rather than reforming candidate. It is possible that Henry Murdac and the Cistercians wished to try to promote Master Lawrence again, but in this they were unsuccessful. Nonetheless, Murdac refused to sanction the Durham chapter's choice of Hugh.[67] The choice of

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[64] See Nicholl, *Thurstan*, p. 118.
[65] The Durham electors chose William *uno animo, una voce*. See A. Young, A 'The Bishopric of Durham in Stephen's Reign', in *AND*, pp. 353-68, at p. 362, n. 60.
[66] Young, 'The Bishopric of Durham in Stephen's Reign', p. 363. This Lawrence later became Abbot of Westminster.
[67] Young, 'The Bishopric of Durham in King Stephen's Reign', pp. 362-4. A comparable election dispute took place in York in 1141. William Fitz Herbert, the royal candidate, was supported by the Benedictines at St Mary's and Whitby, and Henry Murdac, the reformers' candidate, was supported by the Cistercians of Rievaulx and Fountains and the Augustinians of Guisborough and Kirkham. When William was elected, feelings ran so high among the reformers that at least one could not bear to remain within the diocese: *Rodbertus quoque Biseth, Prior Hagustaldensis, audita electione ejus, statim domum suam*

Hugh is difficult to fathom. He probably represented a strong military and political figure with the ability to bring some much-needed stability to the church of Durham.[68] There was also possibly a Scottish dimension to the support as Henry Murdac was a close supporter of King David, while Hugh du Puiset and Durham were keen to promote English crown interests. However, one further reason for the priory's support of Hugh may well be the fact that the convent at this time actually preferred a bishop who had concerns and interests other than religious reform, and therefore interfered with them less. It might also signify a desire to reject the overbearing metropolitan authority which Henry Murdac of York had been attempting to exert over Durham, especially since Hugh du Puiset had been one of Henry's most committed opponents. Hugh was consecrated in 1153 and within the year three influential Cistercians, Pope Eugenius III, Bernard of Clairvaux and Henry Murdac died. This signified a decline in the intensity of Cistercian intervention in northern ecclesiastical affairs and it lessened the threat to the Church of Durham that the Cistercians would make significant inroads into its diocese and therefore challenge its spiritual and temporal influence.

Land Issues

Under William of Ste-Barbe, the reformers had been able to extend considerable influence into Durham's affairs. The dispute between Prior Roger and Archdeacon Wazo, over their respective rights and privileges, was an extremely contentious issue and was only solved once a commission was called in to judge the matter in 1147. This commission consisted of Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx and Robert, Abbot of Newminster along with Cuthbert, Prior of Guisborough, Richard, Prior of Hexham and Germanus, Prior of Tynemouth.[69] This group, with the exception of Germanus of Tynemouth who was obviously another Black Monk from St Albans, represented the highest level of the reformed movement in the north-east and the monks of Durham cannot have been unaware of the implications of such a group sitting in judgment on them.[70] Not only were the new monks and canons invited to influence the organisation of the church, but under Bishop William they began to acquire gifts of land. William seems to have acted under the influence of the Cistercian Pope, Eugenius III (d. 1153),[71] in granting land to

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exposuit et fratres, et sub Bernardo abbate Claræ-vallis monachatui se contradidit (John of Hexham). Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, p. 139.

[68] Young, 'The Bishopric of Durham in King Stephen's Reign', pp. 364-7.

[69] *DEC*, nos. 36 and 36b, pp. 142-51.

[70] Perhaps this was one of the reasons for the monks' overwhelming support for Hugh du Puiset, rather than another reform candidate following Bishop William's death.

[71] Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, p. 20.

the Augustinian canons of Guisborough (1144x1152)[72] and the Cistercians of Newminster (c.1148). There is also evidence, in the form of a confirmation issued by Prior Germanus (c.1162-89), that in 1152 Bishop William had made a grant of three carucates of land in Crosby to the monks of Rievaulx,[73] and further grants were made to Rievaulx under Bishop Hugh du Puiset.[74] William's grant to the monks of Newminster holds particular interest, however. It consisted of a forest clearing at Wolsingham and of the areas of *Fetherstanesfeld* and *Almescroft*, from the River Wear to Thornhopeburn. The land was intended to be used as a grange.[75] The grant appears in several forms with varying degrees of liberties attached. One form makes explicit that the grant was made *ex mandato domini pape*,[76] while another indicates the approval of the prior (Lawrence) and convent.[77] It would seem as though the Durham monks felt distinctly uneasy about this grant since the charter shows signs of amendment, with the addition of the phrase *ita ut non faciant ibi Abbatiam*.[78] The monks feared, therefore, that these grants of land might be used not as sources of income for houses at some little distance from Durham, but as initial endowments on which a new house could be founded.

Baxterwood

This fear on the part of the Durham monks concerning the encroachment of the reformed orders is all the more significant when viewed in the context of the uproar heard in the priory at Durham some few years later when, in 1196, Henry, son of Bishop Hugh du Puiset, attempted to establish an Augustinian priory, staffed by canons from Guisborough, first at Haswell and then Baxterwood, virtually on the outskirts of Durham.[79] The bishop confirmed the move, Stephen, a canon of Guisborough, was made prior and further donations were made. The monks of Durham, however, lost no time in quashing this scheme which would have placed a rival religious order, which was totally beyond their jurisdiction, under their very noses. At a hearing before the Abbot of Meaux, the Prior of Newminster and the Precentor of York, Stephen promised to surrender his lands and possessions to Durham priory. This apparently took some

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[72] The grant was for land at Trimdon, which is only about seven miles from Durham. *DEC*, no. 46d, p. 176.
[73] *EYC*, nos. 952-5, pp. 288-91; *DEC*, no. 39b, p. 175; *Cartularium abbathiae de Rievalle*, ed. J. C. Atkinson, SS 83 (1887), nos. 240 and 260, pp. 174-5 and 193-4.
[74] *EYC*, nos. 956-60, pp. 291-94. *Cart. Riev.*, nos. 49-54 and 236, pp. 27-30 and 172-3.
[75] *DEC*, nos. 38, 39, 39a, pp. 155-62. Wolsingham was possibly a significant gift to make to the ascetic Cistercians since it was a site inhabited by some of the hermits who were connected with Durham. See below, p. 225.
[76] *DEC*, no. 39, pp. 158-161.
[77] *DEC*, no. 39a, pp. 161-62.
[78] Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, p. 20.
[79] Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, p. 110.

time to happen as in 1198 Pope Celestine appointed judges to look into the matter and the compact between Durham and Guisborough was not ratified until 1201.[80] The endowments of the putative house were then transferred, to the monks' satisfaction, to the priory of Finchale which was securely within their authority, thereby inflating rather than depleting the resources and influence of the convent.[81] Several elements differ between the Baxterwood episode and the Newminster grant, such as the intention that Baxterwood should be a daughter-house of a renowned priory, whereas the earlier grants were explicit about the land being used solely for a grange, that is, as a physical resource and not as a centre of influence. Also of importance was the fact that while the other lands were fairly close to Durham, Baxterwood was in the immediate vicinity and was thus an affront to the monks. Nonetheless, a small but decided shift in attitude seems to have taken place in Durham in the middle decades of the twelfth century, resulting in a greater reserve towards the reformed party.

In general, therefore, the twelfth-century monks of Durham seem to have shown a surprising degree of interest in and co-operation with the new religious in the region. Occasional incidents, however, show that they were deeply suspicious of any suggestion that the new monks and canons should establish themselves close to Durham. The final part of this chapter will pursue further this issue of the geographical location of the new foundations in relation to Durham.

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[80] Anon., *Finchale Priory* (Durham, 1887).
[81] See Robinson, *The Geography of Augustinian Settlement*, p. 83.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE NEW ORDERS



Fig. 3.1 **Augustinian and other Regular Canons' Foundations in the Twelfth-Century North-East**

Key to map

- ■ Augustinian house
- ● Augustinian cell
- ▲ Gilbertine house
- ◇ Augustinian houses dissolved or moved soon after foundation

—— County boundaries

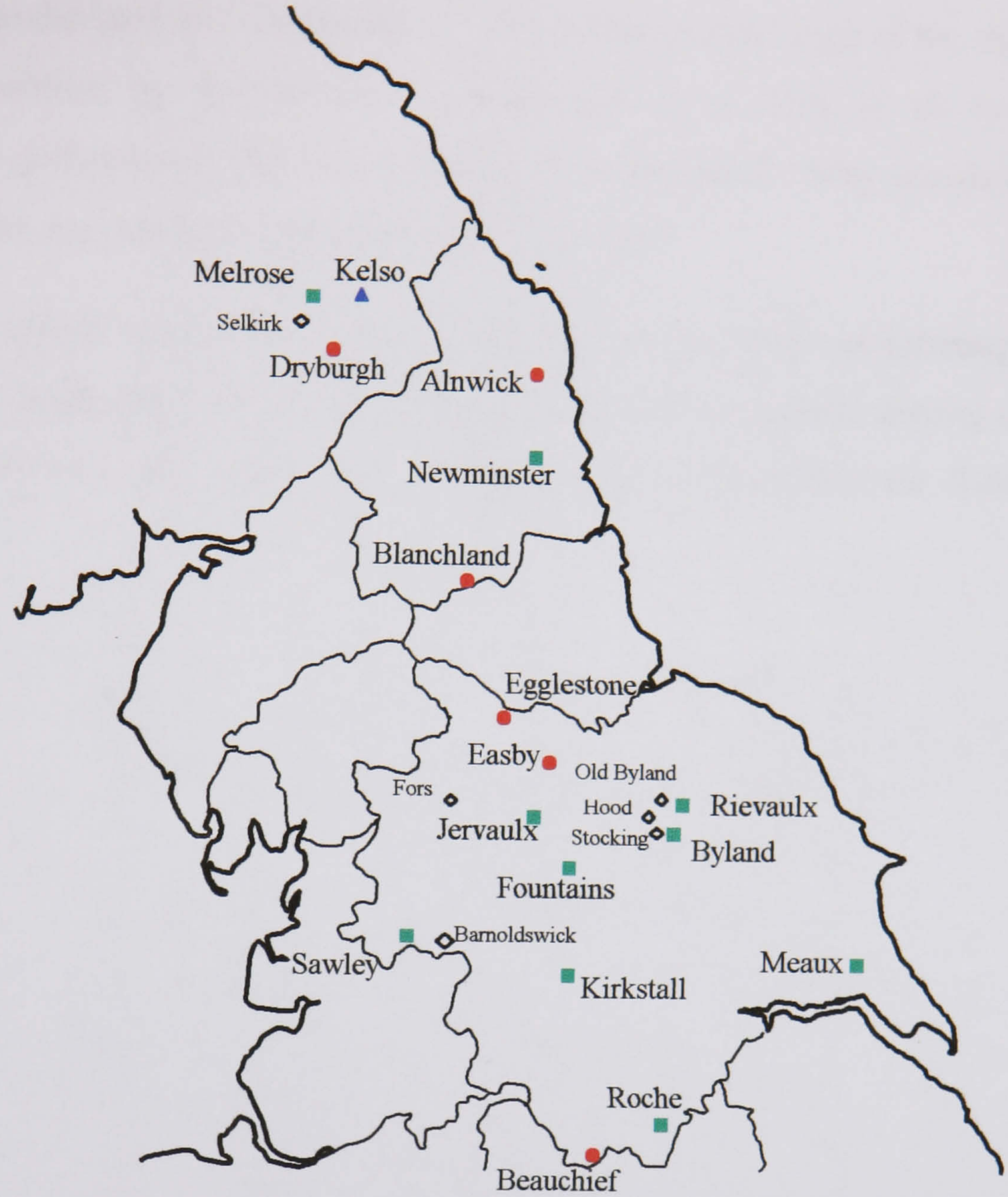


Fig. 3.2 **Cistercian, Premonstratensian and Tironensian Foundations in the Twelfth-Century North-East**

Key to map

- ■ Cistercian house
- ● Premonstratensian house
- ▲ Tironensian house
- ◇ Houses dissolved or moved soon after foundation
- —— County Boundaries

The maps above demonstrate very clearly that the vast majority of the twelfth-century foundations belonging to the new orders in the north-east were in Yorkshire, with a small number in Northumberland and the Borders.[82] The religious landscape of the area of modern County Durham, by comparison, is noticeable by its lack of all new foundations, except the ill-fated and short-lived attempt at Baxterwood. Why was there such a discrepancy in the geographical spread of the foundations?

In order to answer this question we need to explore the motives for religious patronage in the region. We can begin with Yorkshire, since it contained the highest density of twelfth-century foundations. The table notes the individuals responsible for those foundations.[83]

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[82] The maps are based upon the Ordnance Survey Map of Monastic Britain (North Sheet), 2nd ed. (1955) and those in Knowles and Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses*, following p. 387.
[83] Much of the information contained in the following tables comes from *MOY*, pp. xvii-xix and 182-210.

Founder	House	Date	Order
William of Aumale	Meaux	1151	Cistercian
Robert de Brus	Guisborough	c.1119	Augustinian
Bertram de Bulmer	Marton	-1154	Augustinian
Richard de Busli & Richard Fitz Turgis	Roche	1147	Cistercian
Walter Espec	Kirkham	c.1121	Augustinian
Walter Espec	Rievaulx	1132	Cistercian
Walter de Gant	Bridlington	1113/1114	Augustinian
Akarius Fitz Bardolf	Jervaulx (Fors)	1156 (1145)	Cistercian (Savigniac)
Eustace Fitz John	North Ferriby	c.1140	Augustinian
Eustace Fitz John	Malton	1150x1153	Gilbertine
Eustace Fitz John	Watton	1150 x1153	Gilbertine
Geoffrey Fitz Pain	Skewkirk	-1114	Augustinian (cell of Nostell)
Geoffrey Fitz Pain	Warter	1132	Augustinian
Robert Fitz Ranulph	Beauchief	c.1175	Premonstratensian
Robert de Lacy	Nostell	1109x1114	Augustinian
Henry de Lacy	Kirkstall (Barnoldswick)	1152 (1147)	Cistercian
William Meschin, Cecily and Alice de Rumilly	Bolton (Embsay)	1155 (1121)	Augustinian
Roger de Mowbray	Newburgh (Hood)	1145 (1142-3)	Augustinian
Roger de Mowbray	Byland (Calder/Hood/Old Byland/Stocking)	1177 (1135/1138/ 1142/1147)	Cistercian
Ralph de Multon	Egglestone	-1198	Premonstratensian
William Paynel	Drax	1130x1139	Augustinian
William de Percy	Sawley	1147	Cistercian
Roald, Constable of Richmond Castle	Easby	1151	Premonstratensian
Thurstan, Abp of York	Fountains	1132/3	Cistercian
William de Warenne, Ralph & William Lisle	Woodkirk	-1135	Augustinian (cell of Nostell)

Fig. 3.3 Table showing the Founders of Cistercian Abbeys and Houses of Regular Canons in Twelfth-Century Yorkshire

What motivated these individuals to found and endow religious houses? One factor was personal piety. The spiritual advantages to be gained from religious benefaction were extensive, both for the donor and his or her family, and the *pro anima* formula to be found in many records of donation points to this concern.[84] Walter Espec, founder of Rievaulx and Kirkham, gives an illuminating example of these pious intentions. The

record of his gift of Rievaulx notes that he was acting for the love of God and for the souls of kings William and Henry and their kin, of his own parents and his wife's parents, of their kin and ancestors, and of an individual called Hugh Wildecher.[85] Tradition suggests that he founded Kirkham in memory of his son who died in a hunting accident.[86] Other motivations for founding religious houses may have included personal contacts. In the case of Walter Espec's foundations, Bernard of Clairvaux was certainly involved with Rievaulx[87] and Walter's uncle, William, who was rector of Garton and a canon of Nostell, probably persuaded him to found Kirkham. William then became the first prior.[88] The early Yorkshire foundations also offer one more major factor: the involvement of Thurstan, Archbishop of York (1114-40). Thurstan was a key figure in the spiritual life of the twelfth-century north, whose guiding influence and unrivalled support was a major factor in the sudden and extensive rebuilding of spiritual life in Yorkshire. The exact nature of his contribution in each of the foundations is unclear, especially since he spent most of the first six years of his archiepiscopate in Normandy. Many foundation charters refer to his advice, support or approval,[89] but his material generosity towards new foundations in his diocese must also have been great since they even incurred severe criticism from some quarters.[90] His support for religious foundations, especially those of the Augustinian order, should probably be seen in the context of his duties as diocesan. He was responsible for a large diocese with a scattered population and, at the time of his accession, very little formal religious life. The need for ecclesiastical reform and revival was very great and the canons in particular were ideally placed to serve the parish churches and contribute to the spiritual life of the diocese at grass-roots level.[91] The irony of Thurstan's dedicated support of reform throughout his diocese is that he himself was the product of a clerical marriage

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[84] See E. Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England 1066-1135* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 151-71.
[85] *Cart. Riev.*, no. 42, pp. 16-20.
[86] See *Cart. Riev.*, no. 370, pp. 263-5.
[87] Bernard wrote to Henry I, voicing his plans and seeking approval. *Mem. Fount.*, p. xxiv. See also D. Baker, 'Patronage in the Early Twelfth-Century Church: Walter-Espec, Kirkham and Rievaulx', in *Traditio-Krisis-Renovation aus theologischer Sicht: Festschrift Winfried Zeller*, ed. B. Jaspert and R. Mohr (Marburg, 1976), 92-100.
[88] Burton, *Kirkham Priory*, p. 2. William's presence as a canon indicates that this form of religious life, as well as that of the Benedictines and Cistercians, held an attraction for those of noble birth.
[89] For example, in founding Guisborough, Robert de Brus, acted *consilio et ammonitione Calixti Papæ secundi, et Turstini Ebor. Achiepiscopi.* See W. Brown, ed., *Cartularium Prioratus de Gyseburne*, SS 86 (1889), p. 1.
[90] Roger of Pont l'Évêque, Archbishop of York (1154-81), considered that Thurstan had never committed a graver error than when he built Fountains because of the consequent depletion of diocesan resources. Dickinson, *Austin Canons*, pp. 125-30. See also Nicholl's comments about the number of churches in the possession of religious houses and the comparative poverty of the secular clergy, *Thurstan*, pp. 211-12.
[91] *MOY*, p. 93.

and a family which dealt in hereditary benefices which he was seeking to eradicate.[92] Like Ailred after him, Thurstan managed to rise above the circumstances of his background to project a new vision for religious life within the sphere of his influence.

A real concern for the spiritual welfare of the region can be discerned, therefore, in the history of the foundation of these Yorkshire houses. However, tenurial interests also had a very significant part to play and recent research on the religious orders in Yorkshire by Janet Burton has explored this. Burton has shown that the earliest founders, active during the reign of Henry I, were frequently, though not always, those individuals whom we identify as Henry's 'new men', who had received rapid promotion from the king and who were correspondingly dependent directly on him, rather than on ancestral connections, for their position. She notes in this context the rise to power of figures like Robert de Brus, Walter Espec and Eustace Fitz John whose families in time became the established aristocracy of the region. Burton's analysis of their activities shows that these men saw the foundation of religious houses, especially of the king's favoured order, the Augustinians, as an effective means by which to consolidate their landholding: they used their foundations 'to signal their arrival to the baronage, to provide a visible sign of their elevation, and to lay claim to their lands'.[93] In the middle years of the century during the political instability of Stephen's reign, patronage patterns broadened, as founders emerged from the lower baronial ranks. Tenants and sub-tenants of the founders of the previous generation were no longer content merely to patronise the houses of their superiors; they aspired to be founders themselves.[94]

These factors explain the sudden and intense interest in twelfth-century Yorkshire in the foundation of houses for the new orders, but why were there so few foundations further north?[95] The details of the most northerly foundations are set out below.

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[92] Nicholl, *Thurstan*, p. 5.
[93] *MOY*, pp. 188-90. See also Colvin, *The White Canons*, p. 38: 'it was only the latest recruit to the ranks of the feudal baronage who needed to build an abbey on his newly acquired estates'.
[94] *MOY*, pp. 190-3.
[95] Although outside the scope of the thesis, it should also be noted that, with the exception of Carlisle (founded as an Augustinian priory by Henry I in 1122, becoming a cathedral in 1133) there were few foundations of any note in Cumbria either. Wetheral (1106) and St Bees (1120) were small Benedictine cells of St Mary's York, founded by the Meschin family. Three Augustinian houses were founded: Lanercost, c.1166, by Robert de Vaux; Conishead by Gamel de Pennington; Cartmel, 1188, by William Marshall in 1188. Three small Cistercian houses were also founded: Holmcultram, by Earl Henry, son of King David, as a daughter of Melrose; Furness, 1123, by the future king Stephen as a Savigniac foundation, amalgamated into the Cistercian order in 1147; Calder was colonized by Furness monks in 1135, but they then went on to found Byland and were replaced by new monks in 1142. See R. K. Rose, 'Cumbrian Society and the Anglo-Norman Church', in *Religion and National Identity*, ed. S. Mews, SCH 18 (Oxford, 1982), pp. 119-35, at pp. 127-8.

House	Founder	Date	Order
Scottish Borders			
Dryburgh	Hugh de Moreville	1150	Premonstratensian
Jedburgh	David I & Bishop John of Glasgow	1138	Augustinian
Melrose[96]	David I, King of Scotland	1136	Cistercian
Selkirk/Kelso	David I, King of Scotland	1113/20	Tironensian
Northumberland			
Alnwick	Eustace Fitz John	1147	Premonstratensian
Bamburgh	Henry I	1121	Augustinian (cell of Nostell)
Blanchland	Walter de Bolbec	1165	Premonstratensian
Brinkburn	William Bertram I	-1135	Augustinian
Carham	Walter Espec	1131	Augustinian (cell of Kirkham)
Hexham	Abp. Thomas II	1113	Augustinian
Newminster	Ranulf de Merlay	1138	Cistercian (from Fountains)
Durham			
Baxterwood	Henry du Puiset	1196	Augustinian

Fig. 3.4 Table showing the Twelfth Century Foundations of Religious Houses in the Scottish Borders, Northumberland and Durham

It is clear from this table that the religious foundations in the Borders were the result of royal initiative, since King David was directly involved in three of them and the other lay founder, Hugh de Moreville, was his Constable of Scotland. These foundations were therefore closely tied to issues of Scottish royal and ecclesiastical policy.[97] By contrast, the foundations in Northumberland were clearly more closely tied to those in Yorkshire, since two of the Northumbrian founders, Eustace Fitz John and Walter Espec, were also significant founders in Yorkshire. The relatively small number of Northumbrian foundations must in part reflect the simple fact that Northumberland is smaller than Yorkshire, and its population more sparsely scattered. It was also further from the influence of Archbishop Thurstan who played such a vital role in persuading the Yorkshire landholders to support ecclesiastical growth and reform. Our discussion must focus, however, on the area where the starkest contrast lies: the complete lack of successful foundations in the area of modern County Durham.

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[96] Melrose had belonged to Durham, but was lost to the Cistercians through an arrangement made with King David in 1136 whereby Durham received the church of Berwick instead. G. W. S. Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots: Government, Church and Society from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century* (London, 1973), p. 168.

[97] C. N. L. Brooke, 'King David I as a Connoisseur of the Religious Orders', in *Churches and Churchmen in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), pp. 159-74 and Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots*, pp. 173-211.

What factors might have contributed towards this difference? Burton's study of the Yorkshire houses revealed that many founders were members of the new ruling class, keen to establish themselves in the region. Were circumstances in Durham comparable?

Much of the land between the Tweed and the Tees, especially that south of the Tyne, was, of course, the ancient patrimony of St Cuthbert.[98] Before the refoundation of the church of Durham in 1083, this land was held jointly by the bishop and community. The process of its division in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries was the cause of continued disagreement between the bishop and priory,[99] but the estates nevertheless remained in the ultimate possession of the church and not, as was the case throughout most of the rest of the country, in the possession of the king. Most of the individuals who held land in the region were therefore tenants of St Cuthbert, and only a few of them were tenants-in-chief of the king. These land-holders and the circumstances in which they acquired their estates and power have recently been studied in some detail by Aird.[100] He has traced the rise to prominence in the early twelfth century of a number of Norman families, many under the patronage of Bishop Ranulf Flambard (1099-1128). By the time of Hugh du Puiset's accession in 1153, many of the episcopal estates had been apportioned to individuals who became known as the *barones et fideles sancti Cuthberti*, or Knights of St Cuthbert. These men were of roughly equivalent rank to the baronage in Yorkshire and Northumberland who founded religious houses. Why did these men not act in the same way on these lands?

If reasons of personal piety motivated the Yorkshire founders, could it be that these individuals were less pious than their southern neighbours? Such a difference is unlikely, and there was at any rate some overlap between the land-holders of the two counties. The Brus family, which held lands on the Durham coast around Hartlepool, was responsible for the Augustinian priory of Guisborough and Whitby's cell of Middlesborough. The Bulmer family, which held estates at Brancepeth, very close to Durham itself, founded the Augustinian double house of Marton. In addition, donations were made by many Durham tenants to a number of neighbouring houses, including Rievaulx, Fountains and Guisborough in Yorkshire, and Newminster, Brinkburn,

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The Scots also gave generous support to Newminster, Hexham and Brinkburn. See Young, 'The Bishopric of Durham in King Stephen's Reign', p. 364.

[98] See Craster, 'The Patrimony of St Cuthbert', *EHR* 69 (1954), 177-99.

[99] F. Barlow, *Durham Jurisdictional Peculiars* (Oxford, 1950), pp. 1-16 and Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, pp. 142-83.

[100] *Ibid.*, pp. 184-226, especially the map on p. 210. See also J. Green, 'Aristocratic Loyalties on the Northern Frontier of England, c. 1100-1174', in *England in the Twelfth Century*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 83-100.

Alnwick and Blanchland in Northumberland.[101] However, this patronage only makes the lack of local foundations more striking.

We might if whether the social impetus for founding houses, which Burton has shown to be such a strong motive in the Yorkshire foundations, was somehow lacking in Durham. If many of the Yorkshire landholders saw the foundation of a religious house as a significant gesture, a signal of their arrival as men of substance in the region, could it be that the process of gaining and maintaining a position of influence on the estates of St Cuthbert was different, meaning that such a motive was absent from the policies? There is not the space here to rehearse the procedures traced by Aird by which such men acquired their lands, but many of them were in a similar position to the Yorkshire landholders in terms of their relative newness to the baronial class, and so there is no apparent reason for believing that their attitude towards their lands and status should have been substantially different. The difference probably lies, therefore, not in the spirit of the gesture, but in the identity of the recipient. A great many of these baronial families, such as the Amundevilles, Percys, Humets, Escollands, Gants and Brus, made gifts to Durham which may similarly have been intended to consolidate their positions as tenants of St Cuthbert and assure a good relationship with the church.[102]

These gifts made to St Cuthbert may contain the key to understanding why there is no trace of anyone, apart from Henry du Puiset, attempting to found a new house close to Durham. Landholding tenants may have felt constrained in their donation of pious gifts by ties of loyalty to the church. Showing themselves generous to distant houses on other parts of their estates may not have been deemed disloyal, while attempting to bring 'rival' institutions into Durham's immediate sphere of influence may have seemed unduly provocative, as the case of Baxterwood proved. Landholders may also have been strongly affected by the monks' propaganda concerning their own status as the servants, even the embodiment, of their supernatural patron saint. The monks owed their landed wealth to the gifts made to St Cuthbert and they were the guardians of his estates. It was the saint, therefore, in their portrayal of the situation, who would be most displeased if he suffered any harm or loss to his possessions and he as well as his monks might retaliate. The monks carefully cultivated this theme of St Cuthbert's possessiveness and anger in an attempt to keep hold of their ancient estates. Numerous miracle stories, especially from the early period of the priory's existence, record how

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[101] Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, p. 192.

[102] Members of these families were remembered by the monastic community in the *Liber Vitae*. See *LV*, fols. 22b, 35, 42b and 45, pp. 16, 35, 51-2 and 63.

the saint was swift to punish those who disregarded his presence, commands or possessions.[103] Many landholders may have interpreted this as a warning that to donate any land which they held from the bishop to a rival church would be to incur not only the displeasure of the monks, who had proven that they could pursue hostile campaigns based on land issues, but the wrath of this vengeful patron. It is possible, therefore, that in other circumstances some of the gifts given to St Cuthbert by these landholders might have formed the nucleus of a new religious house, but that the donor, under the influence of the bishops and monks, instead diverted his generosity towards the priory.

There may also have been a positive spiritual aspect to the power of St Cuthbert to deter rival foundations. If one of the advantages of founding a religious house was that the monks or canons within it would pray for the soul of the founder, then the spiritual advantages of supporting an institution as well-established and influential as Durham Cathedral Priory may have persuaded landholders that supporting St Cuthbert was more than equivalent to founding another religious house. On a wider scale, there may not have been quite the same urgency as in Yorkshire to provide for the spiritual welfare of the wider population through the establishment of Augustinian priories at parish churches since the bishop and priory had direct control of many of the churches in the area and so it was within their power to influence the level and quality of pastoral care there themselves. In addition, the lack of other foundations might be an indication that the spiritual leadership provided by the priory was felt to have a strong impact throughout the area. In contrast, in Yorkshire no clear spiritual leader had emerged, meaning both that the need for new religious centres was all the greater, and that patrons did not feel tied in an inflexible relationship with any one house in their choice of benefaction.[104] Landholders wishing to provide for their spiritual as well as material advancement may therefore simply have felt that the value of their religious foundations would be higher in an area of greater need, and that they had a greater choice in the matter on their Yorkshire estates. For those wishing to make a pious donation in the Durham area, even a very substantial one, the choice of recipient may never have been in doubt because the spiritual influence exerted by St Cuthbert's church and community was so great that it both attracted support and threatened the disloyal.

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[103] For example, *Capitula*, chs. 3-5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16 and 21.

[104] Many landholders continued to make generous donations to St Mary's, even if they had founded other houses in the region: '... the charter of confirmation issued by Henry II in 1155, indicates that the rapid expansion experienced by St Mary's did not abate, even in the face of the popularity of the Cistercians, and there was scarcely a noble family which was not involved in some way with the York Abbey, scarcely a corner of Yorkshire that was untouched by its expansion.' *MOY*, p. 43.

The factors involved in the decision to found, or not to found, a religious house were many and varied and depended upon a combination of wide-scale spiritual trends and localised circumstances. In the case of the religious foundations in the post-conquest north-east, it is very difficult to distinguish single factors, but plausible suggestions can be made based on the evidence available. The dearth of alternative religious houses in the area closest to Durham Cathedral Priory, including on lands held by individuals who had shown an interest in founding and endowing religious houses elsewhere, may well reflect the actions and attitude of the church of Durham itself, not just the individual landowners. The prestige of the church was so significant that many landholders may have felt that greater advantage could be gained from associating themselves with it than from founding another, inevitably smaller, establishment. In addition, the bishop, and especially the prior and monks, were eminently capable of making a concerted effort to dissuade spiritual competition and to divert potential patronage towards their own advantage. The spiritual dominance of Durham Cathedral Priory in the north-east was no mere accident, therefore, but a jealously guarded privilege.

CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to determine how the monks of Durham reacted to the arrival in the north-east of the new, reformed orders which, by definition, embodied criticism of traditional Benedictine life. It would seem from this general survey that, despite anticipating that they might have felt hostility towards the new monks and canons, the Durham monks, broadly speaking, welcomed the presence of the new orders, especially the Cistercians, and were capable of conducting deep and amicable relations with them on many levels. What evidence there is to the contrary, that relating to land, patronage and location, points to a specific aspect of the Durham monks' attitude. Whereas they were happy to forge connections with other houses at some distance from Durham, the monks were also capable of acting with considerable force to prevent the encroachment of the new orders into their immediate sphere of influence. This has led to the conclusion that the priory may well have taken an active role, using the range of resources available to them, in discouraging patrons from founding new religious houses in the vicinity. We can conclude, therefore, that the monks of Durham extended a cautious welcome to the new orders which demonstrated, to their credit, their spiritual maturity and vibrancy, but also revealed the fine geographical line which separated this co-operation from possessive, almost paranoid, hostility.

Part Two

SPIRITUAL INTERESTS

Chapter Four

THE CULTS OF SAINTS

Throughout the middle ages the veneration of the saints, especially through a focus on their relics, constituted a very significant element in the spiritual life and devotion both of those within the ecclesiastical hierarchies and of the masses. Although there would have been enormous differences between the educated feretrar and the common peasant on issues such as the level of access to relics, or the theological understanding of the power of the saints, the cults of saints were a common feature of Christian devotion which potentially provided a form of access to the divine realm for all, regardless of age, sex, wealth, status or education. It is the universality of the appeal of the cults, and the traceable effect of them on the spiritual lives of so many different groups of people, which renders it appropriate to begin the second part of our investigation of Durham Cathedral Priory's role in the spiritual life in the region with an examination of its cults and their influence.

THE SPIRITUAL VALUE OF THE CULT OF SAINTS

For society in general, the spiritual value embedded within the cults came from a number of factors which evolved over the generations and were sometimes very localised to the particular saint or the community which venerated his or her relics. One of the most universal factors, however, was that the physical relics of the saints represented contact with the divine and therefore presented a tangible focus for the devotion of the faithful.[1] This was true whether the relics were whole bodies, as in the case of St Cuthbert, St Edmund or St Ætheldreda, or just bones, as was very common, or material objects associated with the saint, as often in the case of the holy family. The relics themselves did not reveal any divine mysteries, but they did mark a place of meeting with the celestial realm. Sometimes credibility was stretched too far when churches claimed impossible relics, such as the physical remains of Christ,[2] and when

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[1] See P. Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981); Rollason, *Saints and Relics*; Thomas, *Relics*; P. J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1978; revised 1990) and 'Humiliation of Saints', in *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. S. Wilson (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 123-40; Bethell, 'The Making of a Twelfth-Century Relic Collection'.

[2] Guibert, the Benedictine Abbot of Nogent, wrote a treatise *de Pignoribus sanctorum*, c.1120, prompted by what he saw as the outrageous claims of the monks of St Medard of Soissons that they had a milk tooth

numerous churches claimed identical relics.[3] Disbelief was neither uncommon nor unvoiced, especially if it could be used to discredit an opposing ecclesiastical body.[4] Much scholarly debate has focused on the attitude of incoming Normans towards the saints of the Anglo-Saxons. Traditionally the new Norman abbots and bishops have been characterised as hostile to their adopted traditions. This view is based largely on the evidence of the recorded views of Paul, Abbot of St Albans (1077-1093), who despised the Anglo-Saxon saints,[5] and Lanfranc's denigration of the Canterbury saints Alphege and Dunstan.[6] Ridyard has argued for a more intricate assessment of the situation, refering to the 'myth of Norman scepticism' and drawing distinctions between Anglo-Saxon *saints* as opposed to merely *predecessors*, and whole cults as opposed to specific elements within a cult. Her conclusion is that individual saints were necessary for the proper functioning of their churches and religious communities, and that the new Norman leaders were active in exploiting their symbolic and actual uses.[7] However, despite areas of dissent, the vast majority of church and laymen had a strong belief in the authenticity and power of the relics.[8]

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of Christ and some of the Virgin's milk. Guibert was not a sceptic as he firmly believed in true relics, but he reflects how the fraudulent exploitation of relics was viewed by intelligent contemporaries. See *Patrologiae cursus completes, series latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844-64), CLVI, cols. 607-80; C. Morris, 'A Critique of Popular Religion: Guibert of Nogent on *The Relics of the Saints*', in *Popular Belief and Practice*, ed. G. J. Cuming and D. Baker, SCH 8 (Oxford, 1972), pp. 55-60; Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 12-22 and R. and C. Brooke, *Popular Religion in the Middle Ages: Western Europe 1000-1300* (London, 1984), pp. 14-30, especially 17-18. Cf. Reading also claimed a number of improbable relics associated with Christ and various Old and New Testament figures. See Bethell, 'The Making of a Twelfth-Century Relic Collection', pp. 67-71.

[3] St Oswald's right arm was claimed by Peterborough, even though Bede, the Anglo-Saxon tract on the resting places of saints' relics, Symeon of Durham and William of Malmesbury all maintained that it was in Bamburgh. See D. Rollason, 'St Oswald in Post-Conquest England', in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (Stamford, 1995), pp. 164-77, at 168 and Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 18 and 200-1. Christ Church, Canterbury also claimed St Wilfrid's relics, as did Ripon; Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 59-61.

[4] Guibert tells how Bishop Odo of Bayeux was duped into thinking he had bought the body of St Exupéry from Corbeil, but had in fact received the body of a peasant of the same name. See Morris, 'A Critique of Popular Religion', p. 57. Similarly Ely claimed to have the true relics of St Alban and claimed that St Albans' relics were fake. See Thomas, *Relics*, p. 210. The St Augustine's writer Goscelin wrote a *Life of St Mildred* which was aimed at discrediting St Gregory's claims that Lanfranc translated her relics to its priory in 1085. Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 218-19.

[5] *Gesta ... S. Albani*, I, p. 62.

[6] Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 117-19. Canterbury's relic collection raises interesting issues of nationality, however, since its twelfth-century list claims 400 saints, which is more than any other house, but of these fewer than twenty are English. Thomas comments that this reflects Canterbury's position as the senior archiepiscopal see in the land and its role in the ecclesiastical affairs of Europe. *Relics*, p. 70.

[7] See Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*', 204.

[8] 'There is little evidence that faith in the authenticity of the relics preserved in the abbeys and cathedrals of Europe ever faltered.' Thomas, *Relics*, p. 18.

A further aspect of the power of relics, which acted almost as proof of the particular saint's intimate proximity to God, was the working of miracles.[9] Although miracles were often attributed to saints, the actual deed was of course the work of God, but achieved through the intervention of the saint. The working of miracles for the faithful therefore had a powerful impact in displaying the interest taken by the saints in the plight of individuals, thus valuing the faith and indeed the life of ordinary mortals, even those who were not otherwise especially valued within the church structures. The promotion of cults, especially through the oral and written publication of miracles, therefore actively encouraged ordinary people to believe that through devotion to the saints and their relics their lives could be improved in all manner of ways. Cownie has recently contended that the written accounts of saints and miracles often reached a much wider illiterate audience than might be expected, and that preaching (often in the vernacular), public prayers and visual displays all contributed to the dissemination of cult-generated material.[10] Assessing the evidence pertaining to the cult of St Edmund in Bury, she has enumerated ways in which this carefully developed cult achieved a strong influence over the spiritual lives of local people, which reflects a much more widespread pattern. She records how the cult provided spectacles, often through the public display of relics, and festivals to mark occasions or anniversaries in the saint or relic's history; it afforded hope and excitement; it provided access to the divine; it produced the occasion and subject matter of much of the lay person's experience of preaching; it was spiritually (and socially) edifying, providing a record of the saint's miracles.[11] Elsewhere many of these themes are echoed. Many hagiographical texts and house histories reveal that the monks engaged in relic and preaching tours from time to time, generally in order to raise funds for their building projects. Although the purpose behind such tours may have been practical, the spiritual opportunities for the local people may still have been significant. 'Managers' of other cults also undertook such tours, for example, at Evesham[12] and Laon,[13] but by the thirteenth century there

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[9] See Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims* and 'The Use and Abuse of Medieval Miracles', and Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*. Compare an examination of the extensive miracle collection from the abbey of Fleury: D. Rollason, 'The Miracles of St Benedict: A Window in Early Medieval France', in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. H. C. Davis*, ed. H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (London, 1985), pp. 73-90.

[10] Cownie, 'The Cult of St Edmund in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries: The Language and Communication of a Medieval Saint's Cult', 178-81.

[11] Cownie, 'St Edmund', 178-82.

[12] After Abbot Walter of Evesham (1077-1104) had questioned and been satisfied as to the authenticity of the Evesham relics, `he dispatched the relics of St Ecgwin on a fund-raising tour to finance the rebuilding

was such great concern about the authenticity of relics that Pope Innocent III insisted that the bearers of the relics should carry letters guaranteeing their authenticity at the same time as requiring that papal approval be sought before newly-discovered relics could be venerated.[14] Possibly the most significant way in which individuals experienced the cults and relics of saints, especially those at some distance, was through pilgrimage.[15] Although the presence of relics and the possibility of receiving healing from them formed the ultimate attraction for pilgrims, other ambitions and interests contributed to the popularity of pilgrimages. Many pilgrims undertook their journeys as a form of penance, punishment or exile, or for reasons of curiosity.[16]

The cults of saints also had a highly important part to play in the administration of justice since the ancient right of sanctuary granted to some churches was closely associated with the relics which resided in those particular churches.[17] Individuals escaping the onslaught of the aggrieved victims of their crimes had cause to be grateful to the saint or the relics which afforded them a certain respite from penalties while arrangements could be made for peace or exile. Those who presumed to violate the laws of sanctuary were usually dealt with extremely harshly. In this respect the power of the relics permeated even the fabric of social life and legislation.

Cults, with their spontaneity and individuality, therefore carried with them the potential for a far greater impact on the spiritual lives of ordinary people than many of the formal liturgical expressions of faith used by the clergy, especially if the saint was perceived to be more approachable because he or she had been of a simple background in life, for example, St Godric, rather than a royal or episcopal dignitary. Ordinary lay people often had a strong sense of identification with their local saint and experienced a relationship of mutual protection. In some cases this sense of belonging and identity could be pushed to extremes and the saint could be perceived as the figurehead in a political

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of the abbey church', Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*', 204-5. Evesham's relics of St Odulf also toured Winchcombe for the same purpose. Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 163-9.

[13] See Guibert of Nogent, *Patrologia Latina* CLVI, cols. 938-42 and J. P. S. Tatlock, 'The English Journey of the Laon Canons', *Speculum* 8 (1933), 454-65.

[14] J. Sayers, *Innocent III: Leader of Europe 1198-1216* (London, 1994), p. 135 and Thomas, *Relics*, p. 17.

[15] See Sumption, *Pilgrimage*.

[16] Stouck suggests that some people went on pilgrimage because they had fallen out with their parish priests and wanted entry into a different but still legitimate spiritual jurisdiction, while others were curious or wanted to escape a domestic situation. *Medieval Saints: A Reader*, ed. M. A. Stouck (Peterborough, Canada, 1999), p. 295.

[17] See Hall, 'The Sanctuary of St Cuthbert', T. A. McGoldrick, 'The Medieval Right of Sanctuary', *TAASDN* 10 (1946-53), 165-78 and G. Rosser, 'Sanctuary and Social Negotiation in Medieval England', in *The Cloister and the World: Essays in honour of Barbara Harvey*, ed. J. Blair and B. Golding (Oxford, 1996), pp. 57-79.

struggle, as at Ely following the conquest when the body of St Ætheldreda became a rallying point for the rebels.[18] For the vast majority of lay people, therefore, the saints provided an example for holy living, while their relics offered an approachable, if nevertheless still distant, contact with the mysterious world of the spiritual.

For the possessors of the relics, who were usually monks, canons or collegiate clergy, these factors were also important. Although they enjoyed a much more privileged position than the ordinary lay person in their access to the sacraments, Scriptures and teachings of the church, the power of the saints, especially through their relics and manifested in their miracles, was an awe-inspiring phenomenon which was usually treated with the greatest respect and reverence.[19] However, for these guardians of the relics, the cults had another layer of significance which was very closely associated with the community's sense of collective spiritual and historical identity. By the eleventh and twelfth centuries there were many religious communities across the Christian world which took the name of 'their' saint and dedicated their communal life to the service of his or her relics and associated concerns.[20] Land, property and rights were not uncommonly granted to the saint rather than to the community and the pilgrimage 'trade' which the guardians of the shrine took active steps to develop for both spiritual and commercial reasons, became a significant part of the church and region's life and economy.[21] The close identification with their patron saint gave many communities strong grounds for pressing their claims to ancient rights and customs as an inheritance which was bequeathed with the relics themselves; this also extended to matters related to identity and legitimacy. A new community brought in to reform a older corrupt community would find the approval of the patron saint, manifested in the continued presence of his or her relics and their increased power in producing miracles, an

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[18] Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*', 182.

[19] The compiler of a late-fourteenth-century St Albans' relic list, possibly Thomas Walsingham, claimed that relics provide a house with spiritual defence against invisible enemies and with protection against the machinations of visible enemies. *Gesta ... S. Albani*, III, pp. 539-40; see also Thomas, *Relics*, p. 41.

[20] Cownie's comments on the cult of St Edmund have a much wider relevance:

> 'For the monks and pilgrims alike the saint was a real, sometimes very physical, presence in their lives. The cult acted as a focus for a sense of community for the monks and laity alike, fulfilling a vital function in providing social cohesion: the saint gave the monks their identity as servants of St Edmund, and a focus for their shared, but constantly evolving, memories.'

'St Edmund', p. 191.

[21] The most striking example of this development is at Santiago de Compostela which in the ninth century was a fairly insignificant church, but after the discovery of the relics of St James was intensively developed as a pilgrimage centre and an ecclesiastical power. By the twelfth century, under Bishop Diego Gelmirez, it had become one of the most significant European pilgrimage sites. It had spawned numerous other pilgrimage churches throughout Spain and France on the various routes to Compostela, and a

extremely convincing tool in the struggle to establish and consolidate their claims to credibility and acceptance. It was therefore very often in order to strengthen a community's claims about its identity and spiritual status that relic- and cult-centred events such as inventions and translations into new shrines were staged,[22] relic lists were produced and preserved with other significant texts[23] and *Lives* of saints[24] and accounts of their miracles were composed, all of which could be repeated or renewed at different times in the church and community's history as new needs and opportunities arose.[25] These events and their written and pictorial records[26] provided the building blocks for the future development of a cult and in many cases helped to determine the architectural form and function of new church buildings which housed the relics and served as the focus for pilgrimage. Elaborate shrines could require a large amount of space, both for the structure itself and, at the most popular shrines, to allow for a constant flow of pilgrims.[27] They could also influence the development of liturgical and musical rites, both for festal and ordinary days.[28]

Of all the saints' cults in England in the post-conquest period, one of the most classic examples of the phenomena discussed above is the Durham monks' cult of St

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metropolitan see. See R. A. Fletcher, *Saint James' Catapult: The Life and Times of Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 78-101.

[22] See comments on Durham, Hexham and Tynemouth below.

[23] Relic lists survive in a variety of manuscripts and were clearly treated differently in different houses. Eleventh- and twelfth-century lists from York, Exeter, Thorney and St Augustine's were copied into Gospel books, which emphasises both their value as devotional aids and the need to preserve them at the heart of the churches' spiritual treasures. At New Minster a contemporary relic list was preserved in the *Liber Vitae*, while at Abingdon and Peterborough lists were added to chronicles and at Reading and Winchester they were among the miscellaneous contents of cartularies. Durham's relic lists appear as appendices to manuscripts of Bede while Tynemouth's is bound with hagiographical material. See Thomas, *Relics*, p. 43.

[24] The purpose of saints' lives in the context of supporting the community which supported the cult, is expressed by Paul Hayward: 'The saint's Life is not strictly speaking a biographical genre so much as a "history" of [the] triangular relationship between a community, its saint and God, all three of whom are central to the narrative and its meaning.' See his 'Translation-Narratives in Post-Conquest Hagiography and English Resistance to the Norman Conquest', *ANS* 21 (1998), 67-93, at 68.

[25] For example, Emma Cownie describes St Edmund as 'a fluid symbol with a chameleon-like capacity for periodic reappraisal and renewal'. Abbo of Fleury wrote his popular *Passio Sancti Edmundi* in 985x987. It was translated into Old English by Ælfric in the 990s. A century later the Norman monks required additional texts and so not only was Abbo's work interpolated, but Hermann produced a new text, *De miraculis Sancti Edmundi*. By the mid-1120s, these texts were accompanied by a pictorial cycle of thirty-two full-page miniatures of Edmund's kingship, passion and posthumous miracles. See 'St Edmund', 177-8 and B. Abou-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 151.

[26] For the artistic element of cults see especially Abou-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints* and 'The Audiences for the Medieval Cult of Saints', *Gesta* 30 (1991), 3-15, and M. Baker, 'Medieval Illustrations of Bede's 'Life of St Cuthbert', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtald Institutes* 41 (1978), 16-49.

[27] See B. Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 1998).

[28] See C. Hohler and A. Hughes, 'The Durham Services in Honour of St Cuthbert' in *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, pp. 155-91.

Cuthbert.[29] When the new Benedictine monks inherited the cult in 1083, they were faced with both a major challenge and a major opportunity. The weight of tradition, and of responsibility to the saint, must have been a daunting prospect to the small, young community, but the potential for developing and using the cult was also extensive. Before considering the influence of this cult in the region, we will explore the means by which the monks of Durham carefully managed and extended the widespread veneration of their patron saint.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY'S MAJOR CULTS

At the heart of the Community of St Cuthbert's identity lay the figure of the saint himself. From him the community took its name and purpose, as well as its wealth and status. The possession of his body and the continued incorruption of his flesh, were potent symbols both of the saint's approval of the community and of God's approval of the saint. The body was the community's most precious relic and it was this, rather than location or personnel, which represented tradition, continuity and legitimacy.[30] It was therefore towards the adoption and development of the cult of St Cuthbert that the late-eleventh-century Benedictines of Durham directed a large proportion of their time, energy and resources. The community's use and development of the cult altered significantly during the period in question - indeed specific phases of its development can be identified,[31] but its importance in both concrete and abstract terms remained undiminished.

The monks were keen to establish from the earliest opportunity both that the cult had its principal centre in Durham and that they were the principal servants to, indeed intercessors with, the saint. These ends were achieved through a variety of means, including the rebuilding of the church on Lindisfarne as a *secondary* cult centre (despite it being the place where the cult originated).[32] The writing of accounts of miracles performed through the saint also helped to locate the cult both geographically and

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[29] See, for example, Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind,* pp. 56-66; Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, 196-214; Thomas, *Relics*, 76-88; Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*', pp. 196-200 and Abou-El-Haj, 'The Audiences for the Medieval Cult of Saints', 4-7.

[30] See above, ch. 1.

[31] See Aird, 'The Making of a Medieval Miracle Collection'; Abou-El-Haj, 'Saint Cuthbert: The Post-Conquest Appropriation of an Anglo-Saxon Cult'; Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century'.

[32] See above, pp. 63-4.

personally with the monks.[33] The early Norman miracle accounts record events almost exclusively in Durham and Lindisfarne and in each of them the presence and prayers of the monks was essential for the working of the miracle.[34] It has been noted that St Cuthbert in his Norman persona had a fierce dislike of women which is reflected in the miracle accounts and which conveniently served the agenda of the new celibate monks.[35] St Cuthbert, in this presentation, championed the cause of the monks. In turn, especially in the early days, they guarded and protected the saint. Spiritual access to the saint was not open to all, but was closely associated with the personal intervention of the monks.[36] Physical access to the saint mirrored this pattern, since the shrine was deep within the monks' part of the church and was continuously guarded by a monk.[37] The spiritual and physical proximity which the monks' developed and promoted between themselves and the saint resulted in an unusually strong identification between the two: any crime against the community was a crime against the saint and would be punished by him. The distinction between saint and community was thus very blurred and this instilled the monks, both individually and collectively, with some of the holy aura surrounding the saint. In some cases contact with the monks but not the saint was sufficient to produce a miracle.[38] The community of St Cuthbert was therefore not merely the community which served the shrine of St Cuthbert, but the living embodiment of the saint himself.[39] The implications of this presentation are even more dramatic when the miracle-working power of the saint is examined. The reader of many Cuthbertine miracles could be forgiven for imagining that the saint himself, rather than God, worked the miracle since the writers were keen to ascribe to the saint semi-divine status and power.[40] Distinctions were once again blurred in order to exalt the saint and

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[33] The main miracle collection from this period is the *Capitula de Translationibus et Miraculis Sancti Cuthberti*, but other miracles were included by Symeon in his *LDE*. See Colgrave, 'The Post-Bedan Miracles and Translations of St Cuthbert'.

[34] Of the twenty-one miracles in the *Capitula*, eleven take place in Durham, six on Lindisfarne, one in Tynemouth, one in Chester-le-Street and two in the south. The majority of people mentioned were in some way associated with the monastery.

[35] See Tudor, 'The Misogyny of St Cuthbert'.

[36] For example, *Capitula*, chs. 11 and 21.

[37] Later, when the monks' attitude towards their control of the cult had matured, the relics were taken out on fundraising tours, as was typical in other cults. See, for example, *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 35 and 53 and also chs. 97-8, in which the relics of St Cuthbert are taken on a procession in Scotland with those of St Margaret.

[38] See *Capitula*, ch. 11, in which a miracle took place in an unidentified place in the south.

[39] This intense identification was not usual in other cults where it was possible to present the monks or canons as the guardians of their relics, rather than as the living embodiment of their saint. For the Durham monks this personal identification was necessary because St Cuthbert's body had travelled so extensively that he could not be historically located in one place.

[40] For example, *Capitula*, ch. 10 and Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century', p. 452.

overawe the suppliant with the extent of the spiritual power to be experienced at Durham. The image and reputation which the monks acquired from their cult, through this portrayal of themselves as the inheritors and embodiment of all the traditions of St Cuthbert, must have strengthened their impact on the wider spiritual life of the region.

Victoria Tudor has demonstrated that certain developments which took place within the community of St Cuthbert in the twelfth-century are reflected in the miracle literature produced by its members. She has shown that as the community became more settled and faced fewer challenges to its legitimacy and security, its possessive attitude towards its guardianship of the saint and his miracles relaxed, to be re-tightened only when Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered and, overnight, became an extraordinary miracle-working saint and martyr.[41] Reginald's lengthy work on the life and miracles of St Cuthbert was compiled over a number of years and Tudor's analysis of the text has shown that the composition not only spanned this critical period, but also gives a strong indication of how the Durham cult was modified to meet the challenge of St Thomas.[42] At the same time the Durham monks were in a position to promote the cult of another saint, the hermit Godric. Preparation for this secondary cult had begun at the height of St Cuthbert's twelfth-century influence.[43] The monks carefully cultivated a relationship with the eccentric holy man in an attempt to bring him into the sphere of the monastery's influence,[44] so that when he died, if a popular cult sprang up around him, the monastery would then be well-placed to appropriate and develop it. A *Life* was produced by the Durham writer Reginald, who had spent much time with the hermit,[45] and his reputation was soon spread far and wide. The machinery for promoting and maintaining a cult was already well-established in Durham and it was therefore possible for the monks to manage St Godric's cult on a reasonably large scale from the beginning, producing accounts of miracles, building a church and cell at Finchale, and guarding his relics. This cult did not damage St Cuthbert's cult as there was no suggestion that Godric should be venerated in Durham and Cuthbert had no particular connection with Finchale, though occasional miracles in which they both played a part

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41 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century', pp. 450, 456 and 459. See also Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, pp. 105-6.
42 Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century'.
43 See Tudor, 'Godric and Bartholomew'.
44 See 'The Campaign of the Durham Monks to Gain Control of Finchale and the Role of Reginald's *Life of St Godric*', in Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, pp. 370-5.
45 *Libellus de vita et miraculis S. Godrici, heremitæ de Finchale*, ed. J. Stevenson, SS 20 (1845). See also F. Rice, *The Hermit of Finchale: The Life of St Godric* (Edinburgh, 1994).

reveal that St Cuthbert could be effective where St Godric could not.[46] In turn, Godric was also willing to help women, which meant that he could fulfil a need for which St Cuthbert could not cater.[47] The geographical proximity of the two places also ensured that the Durham monks had few difficulties maintaining their control over the growth and development, both spiritual and otherwise, of the site.

The cults of these two saints were, as has been noted, extremely well documented and their various manifestations and aspects have received extensive scholarly attention and comment. This chapter will therefore proceed from the dual premise derived from this body of research that the Durham-based cults were extremely influential, and that this was due, at least in part, to the skilfulness of the Durham monks in their management of the cults. Working from this position, the chapter will not attempt to explore any further the nature of these cults, but will attempt to expand the field of vision to investigate how the Durham cults affected, or were affected by, the development of other saints' cults in the region.

Although the monks of Durham had proved themselves so adept at the promotion and development not only of their principal cult of St Cuthbert, but also of a secondary cult of St Godric,[48] few other churches in the post-conquest north-east seemed interested or able to do the same for any of the multitude of other Anglo-Saxon Northumbrian saints who might have provided the focus for comparable cults. Indeed beyond Durham and its network of cells, the only really comparable major cult centre was at Hexham, where strenuous efforts were made in the mid-twelfth century to build up a collection of cults, thus displaying a desire on the part of the canons to define their character and purpose as closely associated with the preservation of relics. Although it was promoted to a lesser extent, the cult of St Oswin at Tynemouth was also developed through the same recognisable channels of invention, translation, *vita* and miracles which are comparable in type and/or scale with the Durham monks' efforts. This study will therefore continue with an examination of these cults and their possible connections with the Durham cults.

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[46] For example, *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 126.
[47] See Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, pp. 126-7 and 166-9.
[48] See also the comments below, pp. 156-60, about Durham's other cults.

HEXHAM: THE CULTS OF STS ACCA, ALCHMUND, FRITHUBERT, TILBERT AND EATA

Hagiographical Sources

In 1154 the Augustinian canons of Hexham staged a major translation ceremony during which they translated into new shrines within the church the relics of their former bishops, Sts Acca (709-32), Alchmund (767-81), Frithubert (734-66) and Tilbert (781-9). This multiple translation was a symbolic statement by the canons that they were not only fully established within the church following the eviction of the secular priests in 1138, but also that they perceived themselves to be an integral part of the spiritual traditions of the church and the region. In order to consolidate this highlight in their spiritual achievements, the canons invited Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx, to preach at the ceremony. He then reworked his sermon and it was preserved as the priory's main hagiographical text, known as *De sanctis ecclesiæ Hagustaldensis, et eorum miraculis libellus*.[49] This forms the principal source for our understanding of Hexham's cults, but it can be supplemented with the information derived from the interpolations concerning Hexham in the *Historia Regum*[50] and from Prior Richard's history, *De statu*.[51]

Ailred's text immediately presents many exciting possibilities for a comparison with the cult material emanating from Durham. Ailred's family connections with both Durham and Hexham were deeply significant.[52] His great-grandfather was the Durham relic collector, Alfred Westou who, according to Symeon, had taken to Durham the relics of the Hexham saints, Acca and Alchmund.[53] Ailred's grandfather, Eilaf I, had been one of the hereditary clerks serving St Cuthbert who refused to accept William of Saint-Calais' reforms. The family consequently moved to Hexham, where it remained until 1138. In 1113, during the time of Ailred's father, Eilaf II, Archbishop Thomas of York had founded the Augustinian priory in spite of, or perhaps because of, Eilaf's continued presence. However, shortly before his death, and much to the canons' delight, Eilaf

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[47] See Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, pp. 126-7 and 166-9.
[48] See also the comments below, pp. 156-60, about Durham's other cults.
[49] See Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. 173-203. The claim that this work is a rewriting of the sermon is made on the basis that some of the chapters are clearly additions to an original work since they interrupt the flow of the narrative simply in order to include certain miracle stories which need to be recorded. This is most clear in the digression about the miracles of St Alchmund which sits unhappily in the middle of the translation account, and the chapters about St Eata which are simply attached to the end. Similarly, the inclusion of material about St Wilfrid whose relics were not being translated, perhaps reflects a desire to create an inclusive account of all the Hexham saints.
[50] *HR*, s.a. 740 and 781.
[51] Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. 1-62.
[52] For a fuller discussion of this subject, see chs. 3 and 5 and the appendix.

surrendered his property and became a monk of Durham. Ailred himself was born in Hexham and educated in Durham and continued to enjoy close relations with the convent and its monks even after he chose to pursue his vocation in the Cistercian order.[54] Despite the dislike of relics and cults voiced by Bernard of Clairvaux, which permeated the order in the twelfth century, Ailred maintained his family's traditional veneration of the saints, especially those associated with the north-east. He provided Reginald with some of his hagiographical material about St Cuthbert, and was also an active hagiographer himself, producing *Lives* of both St Ninian and King Edward the Confessor in addition to his Hexham work. For our purposes, however, the most striking aspect of Ailred's hagiographical consciousness is the fact that he was extremely knowledgeable about the writings produced by Durham's monks. Ailred's interest in St Cuthbert and Durham would ensure that he had read the most important Durham works, such as the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, Symeon's *Libellus de exordio* and the anonymous *Capitula de miraculis et translationibus Sancti Cuthberti*. Indeed parts of this latter work have been attributed to Prior Maurice whom Ailred would have known as both prior of Durham and abbot of Rievaulx.[55] Lawrence of Durham, the prior, scholar and writer, was one of Ailred's tutors and he produced a *Life of St Brigit* for Ailred's father, while Reginald of Durham, that most prolific of twelfth-century Durham writers, seems to have been a friend of Ailred and highly influenced by him. In the light of these deeply significant connections with Durham's hagiography, Ailred's own writings in this genre cannot have failed to be influenced by the prevailing literary style and spiritual traditions of Durham. The following discussion will therefore focus on the text of Ailred's *De sanctis* and its relationship with the traditions about St Cuthbert preserved at Durham.

Relationship with Durham's Cult

Explicit Subordination of St Cuthbert to St Wilfrid

Early in the work, Ailred makes an explicit statement about St Cuthbert which is designed to promote the image of the Hexham saints' power at the expense of the Durham saint.[56] In an account of how Hexham was protected from the ravages of the Scots by St Wilfrid, who sent a fog followed by a flood to the region, Ailred describes how the people, when they learned about the Scottish advance, resolved to seek the

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[54] Squire, *Aelred*, pp. 1-22.
[55] See Powicke, 'Maurice of Rievaulx', pp. 18-23.
[56] Ch. 2. Cf. *HR*, s.a. 740.

protection of the saints, and so fled to the church.[57] The priest, who may have been one of the Eilafs, though the date is not recorded, tried to sue for peace, sending some clerks to the king with the relics, but the king scorned the relics. As in the Cuthbertine miracle stories, we see that the one who showed disrespect to the relics was punished severely.[58] The priest and people, meanwhile, were praying earnestly not only to Wilfrid, but also to Cuthbert, Acca and Alchmund, and this was followed by a vision for the priest. He saw two men mounted on horses and dressed splendidly, 'tonsura et habitu pontificalem speciem præferentes'.[59] After dismounting and praying in the church, one of them asked why the people were so wretched and the priest explained. Ailred then records that the saint who was *sereniore vultu* offered words of encouragement and comfort and on being questioned as to his identity said: 'Wilfridus vocor, et ecce hic mecum est Sanctus Cuthbertus, quem transiens per Dunelmum adduxi, ut simul ad fratres nostros, qui in hac ecclesia requiescunt, venientes, servemus simul locum istum et gentem.'[60] Ailred is unapologetically subordinating Cuthbert, in person and purpose, to Wilfrid: even his appearance suggests greater importance. The Durham miracles always show Cuthbert as supreme and whenever other saints are involved, their presence only boosts Cuthbert's own profile.[61] In this miracle Cuthbert does nothing: his only value is the added kudos which his presence confers. Ailred changes perceptions and dares to suggest that Cuthbert can play a merely supportive role, acting only as an unnecessary accessory to Wilfrid. This is a direct and pointed comment which not only reveals that the canons of Hexham wished to approach the issue of saints and cults in a competitive spirit, but also emphasises that the cult of St Cuthbert was the major cult of the north-east against which to measure all others. Such a conclusion is strengthened through comparison with the *Historia Regum* version of this event, in which the miracle is attributed solely to St Acca.

Incorruption of St Acca's Clothing and the Power of St Wilfrid

The direct contrast between the Durham and Hexham saints is not confined to St Wilfrid, but reappears in the middle section of the work which concerns the life, deeds and miracles of St Acca. Although the content of most of these chapters is fairly

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[57] A similar story is told in the Durham material in which the people tried to escape the Scottish menace by sheltering in the church. *Capitula*, ch. 10. The church was an obvious retreat at times of danger, but the similarities in the stories are nonetheless clear.
[58] Cf. *Capitula*, chs. 3, 5, 9, 11.
[59] *De sanctis*, ch. 2, p. 179.
[60] *Ibid.*
[61] See, for example, *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 112, 114, 115 and 126.

standard,[62] chapter six, which describes the history and relics of St Acca, stands out. Ailred describes the close connections between Wilfrid and Acca, both in terms of companionship and episcopal succession, which prepares the way for proof of Acca's extreme sanctity. This proof comes in the form of his relics: his incorrupt grave clothes in which his bones had been wrapped and buried underground for three hundred years. Ailred clearly endorses the belief that incorruption was a sign of an immaculate life,[63] but he takes care to distinguish between the incorruption of clothes, which he claims is clear for all to see, and the incorruption of flesh, which he pronounces as impossible in this world. 'Sed cur, ait aliquis, ob carnis meritum vestibus adseris præstitum, quod ipsi carni novimus esse negatum? Non enim caro, sed in pulvere ossa in ipsis indumentis sub terra inventa sunt involuta. Sed absit ut hoc carni dicamus esse negatum. Non est certe negatum, sed dilatum. Carnis enim incorruptio non est hujus mortalitatis, sed futuræ æternitatis.'[64] Bearing in mind the widespread belief in St Cuthbert's incorruption, such a statement would appear to be at the least controversial, at most inflammatory. Ailred had an obvious remit to publicise and popularise the cult of the Hexham saints, and making a claim about incorruptibilty had already been proven, most significantly in St Cuthbert's case, as an effective means by which to do this.[65] However making such a direct challenge to the credibility of the Durham cult would seem to be going to unnecessary lengths. Ailred could have drawn attention to the highly successful cult of St Cuthbert and the importance of his incorruption and made the comparison with Acca in an attempt to increase Acca's prestige through association with Cuthbert. Therefore his decision instead to criticise Durham's major claim would appear to be very deliberate. The only explanation can be that Ailred really was, as we saw in the Wilfrid and Cuthbert episode, intending to rival the Durham cult.

Ailred hints at a similar theme in his treatment of Wilfrid in the prologue. Wilfrid was the founder of Hexham and Ailred claims that it was therefore right and proper for mention of him to be made at such an important time even though his relics were not

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[62] In these Acca is responsible for the healing of blindness (chs. 7 and 8) and a tumour of the throat (ch. 9) and an individual who shows him no respect is punished (ch. 10). In the *Capitula*, St Cuthbert performs very similar miracles of healing (chs. 14, 17, 19 and 20) and punishment (chs. 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 21).
[63] 'Habemus interim in vestimentis ejus indicium sanctitatis illius, signum incorruptionis, pudicitiæ innocentiam.' *De sanctis*, ch. 6, p. 185.
[64] *Ibid.*
[65] Amongst the most well-known and powerful saints in England at the time, both St Edmund of Bury and St Ætheldreda of Ely shared with St Cuthbert a legend of incorruption. Ailred was perhaps making a conscious effort to place Acca not only on a par with Cuthbert, but very firmly within the same category as these other major saints.

among those being translated.[66] In his description of the lasting power and influence of St Wilfrid, Ailred echoes many of the popular beliefs held about St Cuthbert and his role in the region's history.

> accidit ut post mortem quoque ejus plebs universa ita ad eum in hac ecclesia, quasi ad viventem, confugerent, in omnibus necessitatibus suis quasi præsentem consulerent, in tribulationibus et angustiis ejus auxilium non tam peterent quam exigerent. Quorum devotioni ac fidei favens præsul sanctissimus, semper invocantibus præsto fuit, petentibus largiens, mœstos consolans, subveniens laborantibus, opem ferens miseris: adeo ut subtracta præsentia corporali, uberius illis gratia profluerat spiritalis.[67]

The Cuthbertine miracle collections had carefully worked towards creating an image of the saint as always present within the community, both a representation of, and represented by, the mortal monks. Cuthbert had the power to intervene in the fortunes of others and, most important of all, the presence of his undecayed body, which resembled a sleeping rather than a dead man, was the proof of his continued blessedness amongst them. Ailred's description of Wilfrid quoted above captures these familiar ideas in a few short sentences, and includes a pointed reference to the body. Wilfrid's power was identical to Cuthbert's, so the text between the lines reads, but he had the added ability that he could exercise that power even without the strange phenomenon of an undecayed body, or indeed any evidence of his body at all, since none of his relics remained at Hexham.

Alfred Westou's Translation of Sts Acca and Alchmund and Attempted Theft of Relics

Ailred reveals his knowledge of the Durham traditions concerning his family's interest in relics in his chapters dealing with the translation itself. Symeon had claimed that Alfred Westou had translated the relics of St Acca and St Alchmund to Durham in the early eleventh century,[68] but in ch. 11 Ailred, while commenting that Alfred did translate many other relics, refutes this particular claim and, in the process, makes a much stronger claim for the continued presence and protection of the relics in Hexham. Ailred states that Alfred raised Acca's relics but, rather than taking them to Durham, relocated them more honorably in the church in preparation for the time when the church of Hexham would flourish once more, for this holy man foresaw the future

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[66] 'Unde non immerito hujus sacratissimæ festivitatis eum credimus esse participem, quem tot indiciis probamus nos habere præsentem.' *De sanctis*, p. 176.
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] *LDE*, III, 7.

strength of the church.[69] He then recounts the story of his uncle Aldred, an enthusiastic youth, who was overcome with desire for the relics during the translation, but was frustrated in his attempts to steal them. In the following chapter about St Alchmund, a long story is told of how Alfred, having dug for hours to find the relics, even when everyone else had given up, was rewarded by the discovery of a complete skeleton. He removed a finger of the skeleton in the night, with the intention of taking it to Durham, but the saint revealed his displeasure in a vision to the priest and refused to allow his body to be moved further. Alfred was forced to own up to his theft and return the finger, whereupon the saint allowed his body to be moved.[70] Although such happenings were a standard topos in the accounts of saints' relics and miracles, Ailred's purpose in including the story has particular pertinence.[71] For the purposes of the translation in 1154, it was not strictly necessary to record any of these earlier episodes, but their inclusion helps to establish the traditions and continuity of the saints in Hexham, and, most importantly, the fact that the relics were never removed from the church. Ailred describes his venerable great-grandfather in glowing terms, yet he also records how he was prevented from taking away the bones, as Aldred was also prevented. Both of these individuals were, in Ailred's opinion, holy and venerable (Aldred later became 'in hac ecclesia optimæ vitæ et bonorum morum canonicum')[72] whose motives were essentially praiseworthy, and yet their efforts failed. One of Ailred's reasons for describing both individuals so favourably, apart from a desire to praise his own family, was to impress upon his hearers how no part of the relics had ever left Hexham. If individuals as holy as these two men could not remove any part of the relics even for an honourable purpose, there was no chance that anyone else had removed anything either. The effect of stressing the unbroken presence of the relics in Hexham was to emphasise the sense of mutual belonging, and thus of identity, between the saints and the church. This is one of the most crucial ideas developed by the community of St Cuthbert in their expert development of the cult in Durham. The Durham monks obviously could not claim St Cuthbert's unbroken presence in Durham, but they could and did describe his unfailing presence within the community and worked hard to ensure that the identity of the saint

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[69] '... cum sanctissimi Accæ reliquas sustulisset, prævidens forte in spiritu (nam et spiritum prophetiæ dicitur habuisse) quid religionis, quid honoris ea ipsa ecclesia erat habitura; sacras illas reliquas absportare noluit, vel non potuit...' *De sanctis*, ch. 11, p. 190.

[70] *De sanctis*, ch. 12.

[71] See Geary, *Furta Sacra*, especially pp. 113-14. These Hexham motifs are very similar to that in the Tynemouth literature concerning the finding of the relics of St Oswin, and to St Cuthbert's own refusal to be moved on the way to Durham. *Vita Osw.*, ch. 4 and *LDE*, III, 1.

[72] *De sanctis*, ch. 11, p. 192.

and his community became so closely entwined as to be almost indistinguishable. In his emphasis throughout his work on the relics' perpetual location, Ailred demonstrated that he too understood the power of tradition and continuity.

Translation accounts of St Acca and St Alchmund

The passages dealing with the translation itself are, although shorter, strongly reminiscent of the earliest Durham account of St Cuthbert's translation in 1104, probably produced by Maurice.[73] All the Hexham canons entered the church in a state of humility, with bare feet, and then after extensive prayer and chanting of psalms, the relics were unwrapped and placed on the high altar where their sweet odours and gleaming appearance were noticed, both of which were considered to be sure signs of sanctity. Both the procedure and the finding are remarkably similar to those experienced by the Durham monks in 1104 when, following extensive prayer, fasting and chanting of psalms the coffin was approached. With each step closer to the revealing of the body, more prayers were offered. St Cuthbert's body, as with these relics, was lifted from its coffin and then its grave clothes needed to be removed. This lengthened the process and helped to increase the sense of anticipation. Finally, when the body was reached, its odour and appearance gave all the traditional signs of sanctity.[74] In the Durham account this is the climax, and the actual translation is described only briefly. In the Hexham account, when the relics were revealed, they were found to have labels on them identifying that they were Acca, Alchmund and Frithubert, whilst the fourth bundle of bones was unmarked, but known to be Tilbert. An altar was erected in which the new cases containing the various relics were placed.

The similarities between the Durham and Hexham accounts might be explained in part by the fact that they reflect common practice across all cults,[75] but there are good reasons for conjecturing that the Durham material formed a source for Ailred in his writing. Apart from the geographical proximity of Durham to Hexham, which made it the most local house from which to borrow literary works and ideas, the nature of the two houses' attitudes towards their translations was extremely compatible, which makes borrowing more appropriate. St Cuthbert's translation occurred at a time when the monks were keen to raise the profile of their cult. The community was well established

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[73] *De sanctis*, chs. 11-13, cf. *Capitula*, ch. 7.
[74] *Capitula*, ch. 7, § 4.
[75] See, for example, Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, pp. 22-3, 27-8, 131 and B. Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 27-33.

after twenty-one years, but still trying to consolidate its position, and had reached a significant point in its building projects, whereby the choir, the monks' part of the church, was complete. The translation of the body, with the carefully engineered 'discovery' of its incorruption, was a significant event which marked the monks' progress to date and inaugurated a new phase in their future which was to see the power of St Cuthbert rise to new heights. The Hexham translation happened at a slightly later point in the Augustinians' history, but in terms of their progress it was contemporary. The Augustinians had spent the first twenty-five years of their time in Hexham under the restrictions imposed by Eilaf.[76] They were, in addition, a new community which developed over time and had to create its own structures and institution, rather than a ready-made community which could inherit its predecessor's wealth and organisation in one swift manoeuvre. The translation therefore took place at approximately the same time in its development as had been the case at Durham. The community was sufficiently established to create a big event out of the translation, but was still in need of a significant boost to, or overhaul of, its cult management, perhaps because of the increased interest in it which followed in the wake of Richard's *De statu*.[77] Throughout the work Ailred makes strong connections between the refoundation of the church, the relics themselves, their translations (including the earlier ones) and their cults. The aim of these chapters, and of the work as a whole, was therefore very similar to that of the Durham *Capitula*.[78]

Final Chapters on Eata

The similarities with the Durham sources might help to explain further why the translation, and renewed impetus of the cults, was required at this stage. The evidence of Reginald's miracle collection suggests that the cult of St Cuthbert was enjoying enormous popularity in the mid-twelfth century with an increasing number of cures, recorded for a greater range of people than before, in a geographically expanding area.[79] By this stage Hexham was well-enough established to want to develop its cults further, but in addition to this internal interest, there may well have been an awareness, and possibly resentment, of Durham's monopolistic success in this area. Hexham felt that the time was right in the 1150s to launch its counter-attack, and it made use of every shred of saintly ammunition it could muster. The final chapters of Ailred's work are

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[76] See below, p. 175.
[77] See below, p. 181.
[78] See, for example, Aird, 'The Making of a Medieval Miracle Collection'.

highly suggestive of an all-out attempt to compete with Durham. The two chapters concern St Eata (678-86), who, it would seem, was completely unknown to Ailred's audience since the first chapter contains no miracles but is merely an explanation of who he was, taken largely from Bede, which relies heavily on stressing his connections with other very well known and important individuals.[80] Eata, at the time of writing, was therefore a 'new' saint, rediscovered solely for the purpose of promoting Hexham's attempts to become a major relic and cult centre, and his only action, with which the work ends, is the prevention of the theft of his relics by the Archbishop of York, which reinforces once again the importance of the place for the saints themselves.

There is further evidence to suggest that the cults thus initiated did engender devotion and continued to spread. In addition to this work there are accounts of three more miracles attributed to St Acca which appear in one of the early manuscripts of the work in a hand only slightly later than Ailred's chapters.[81] The miracles involve two healings and one punishment, and are located in or around Hexham, though interestingly they refer to local people, not to the canons of the priory. This mirrors the development of the cult of St Cuthbert as the community gained in strength and confidence.[82]

Hexham could not compete with an incorrupt body, nor with the extensive land-holdings which St Cuthbert's body represented, but it could challenge in a number of ways. Hexham could promote six saints, all associated with the earliest days of Christianity in the region, and amongst those they could boast of one whose incorrupt clothes and another whose complete skeleton could rival some of St Cuthbert's uniqueness. It could venerate as its founder a saint who considered St Cuthbert to be merely a travelling companion, and could provide evidence of the saints' unbroken

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[79] See Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century', pp. 454-67.

[80] Another short *Life of St Eata* was also produced. See *Miscellenea Biographica*, ed. Raine, pp. 121-5.

[81] The Savile Manuscript. See C. J. Bates, 'Three Additional Miracles Attributed to Saint Acca of Hexham', *AA* 20 (1899), 289-94.

[82] In the early days of the Durham cult, the miracles tended to be extremely localised and concerned individuals connected in some way with the church. Many of the miracles involved the protection of the church and relics from would-be violators and thieves. As the cult became more successful, the miracles took place further afield and the presence of a monk or member of the church was no longer necessary. A greater proportion of beneficent miracles were also included as there was no longer such a need to defend the status of the cult church. When the cult became threatened in the 1170s by the success of Thomas Becket's cult, the patterns showed a tendency to revert to those of the earlier years of the cult, focusing intensely on the church in Durham again. See Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, pp. 56-66. The Hexham miracles were all located in Hexham itself and involved the same spread of individuals (brothers from the church and potential criminals) and miraculous happenings (healings, punishments and protections). These last three miracles of St Acca point to a stage of development in the cult. See Aird, 'The Making of a Medieval Miracle Collection', and Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century'.

presence and interest in the fortunes of the church. Through all of these features Ailred shows an awareness not simply of Durham traditions about St Cuthbert, but also of the deeper implications of those claims and their role in the development of the community as a whole.

Evidence of Hexham's Influence on Durham

If, then, Ailred was writing with the intention of promoting Hexham as a rival centre to Durham, how did Durham react to this policy? Firm evidence is hard to ascertain, but certain elements in the later Durham hagiographical tradition suggest that the Hexham claims did not go unnoticed, while cautious conjecture can point to credible connections. On the most fundamental level, Hexham had completely succeeded in establishing its ownership of the crucial relics over Durham's claims voiced by Symeon in the first decade of the twelfth century. Even before the translation ceremony, in the 1140s when a relic list was drawn up in Durham, the monks may have dropped their assertion that they possessed the relics of Sts Acca and Alchmund.[83] By the mid-thirteenth century, however, Durham was once again claiming relics from Hexham, though this time with no apparent claim to the church itself. In the Durham relic-list of this period,[84] there is mention of the burial robes of St Acca and a tooth of St Frithubert. These relics may possibly have been given to the monks of Durham at the time of the translation in 1154.

Specific elements within the cult can be seen to have had a bearing on developments in Durham. One of Ailred's most pointed comments was his statement accompanying the discovery of Acca's incorrupt grave clothes that mortal flesh cannot remain incorrupt. Durham hagiography produced prior to Ailred's writing had laid little emphasis on the incorruption of clothes, since the miracle of the body was more important. Reginald, however, writing in the 1160s after the publication of the *De sanctis*, departed from

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[83] For the relic list, which is found in three manuscripts of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the earliest dating from the time of Bishop William of Sante-Barbe (Cambridge, Trinity College, 0.3.55, f. 2r-v), see Battiscombe, *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, pp. 112-14. Although the absence of the Hexham relics in this list suggests that Durham had dropped its claim, it may also merely reflect the fact that this was an abbreviated list, omitting a number of other relics known to have belonged to Durham. Nonetheless, even if it was an abbreviated form of the list, one might expect that the Hexham relics would be included if they were a contentious issue for the monks at the time that the list was drawn up.

[84] In York Cathedral MS. XVI.I.12 and printed in *Historiae Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres*, ed. J. Raine, SS 9 (1839), pp. ccccxxvi-ccccxxx. See also Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 81-2 and 342-3.

Durham precedent in his *Libellus de admirandis* and included lengthy passages on this subject, which might reflect a Durham response to the Hexham comments.[85]

The development of the two cult centres may have been connected in a more complex manner than has so far been suggested. Although it was noted that Durham's mid-twelfth-century strength as a cult centre may have acted as an incentive to the canons to build up their own rival cult centre in Hexham, there is of course the possibility that the process was one of mutual competition. The nature of the developments taking place in the cult of St Cuthbert at this time meant that the miracles recorded included a much wider group of people than in the earlier miracle accounts, and that they were located over an enormous geographical area in places which had no apparent connection with the saint, or the saint's representatives, the monks.[86] This expansion not only reflects the greater influence of the cult, but also the increased confidence of the monks in no longer feeling the need to maintain absolute control over its development. The spur for this development may, therefore, have been both the natural development of the cult's popularity and also the perception that local competition was beginning to develop. If the monks of Durham wanted their cult to remain dominant in the north-east when new saints were rising to prominence, they would need to prove that St Cuthbert could be powerful all over the region and preferably beyond, not just in Durham and Lindisfarne, and especially in those places which might naturally fall under the jurisdiction of rival saints. If this was their aim, then they were highly successful. Twelfth-century devotion to St Cuthbert and records of his miracles occur throughout the north, into the midlands and even in the south. The only significant place in this context in which the Durham monks did not record any miracles of St Cuthbert was Hexham itself. To have done so would have been an overt and aggressive challenge to the Hexham canons and their saints, which was not at all in keeping with the more subtle campaign which we have observed them following. The Hexham saints, by comparison, never achieved more than local importance, and the same was true for the majority of other cults to be discussed below. Although claims to parity could be made on a local level, such as have been noted in Ailred's account of the translation, the sheer geographical scale of St Cuthbert's cult indicates that his cult was of an altogether different order from those surrounding it.

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[85] *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 42, 54 and 96. See Walterspacher, *The Church of Hexham*, p. 50.
[86] See above, p. 141, n. 82.

Other differences, for example in the management of the cults, should not be overlooked. To cite just one example, Durham chose to expand its cult of St Cuthbert through the development of additional cult centres at Lindisfarne and Farne. Almost all of the community's other relics were housed in its main church at Durham and were not treated with as much attention or importance as St Cuthbert, who was therefore exalted as the single most powerful saint. Hexham, by comparison, made much of housing its multiple saints under one roof in a high concentration of saintly power. As the joint translation and consequent narrative show, the canons sought to promote each of the saints to a strong cult status through association with each other.[87]

Conclusions about Hexham's Cults

Hexham's cults therefore appear to have been very carefully managed, presented and recorded, clearly in an awareness of the Durham cult of St Cuthbert. It has been shown that, in developing their cults, the Hexham canons were attempting to compete against the dominant force of St Cuthbert's cult and they had some success in influencing the continuing Durham development. The two cult centres were therefore closely connected, both in subject and management but, despite the canons' best efforts, the Hexham saints never seriously threatened the pre-eminence of St Cuthbert in the north-east.

TYNEMOUTH: THE CULT OF ST OSWIN

Although the evidence relating to the cult of St Oswin at Tynemouth is not as extensive as that relating to the Hexham saints, the late-twelfth-century *Vita Oswini Regis* provides ample scope for examining connections with the cult of St Cuthbert in Durham. These connections are most firmly based upon the discovery of St Oswin's relics in 1065 and the near-contemporary translations of the two saints in the first decade of the twelfth century. These should both be seen within the context of the intricate and sensitive relations which existed between the two houses in the post-conquest period which were discussed above.[88] It is therefore against this background of Durham's thwarted hopes and Tynemouth's threatened independence that the

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[87] Other patterns of cult development were possible. In the ninth century, for example, the relics of thirty-eight martyrs were taken to Fulda, but instead of rebuilding a larger church to contain them as his predecessors had done in comparable circumstances, Abbot Hraban built thirty or more further churches to house them. See above, p. 59.

development and management of St Oswin's cult, and its relationship with the cult of St Cuthbert, will be considered.

Hagiographical Source: Vita Oswini Regis

The principal hagiographical source for the St Albans/Tynemouth monks' development of their cult is the *Vita Oswini Regis*. The work, probably produced in the 1180s or 1190s although some of the miracles recorded date from much earlier, consists of forty-five chapters.[89] It begins with some details about Oswin's life and death, then describes the invention and translation of the saint in 1065 by the priest Edmund, under the supervision of Æthelwine, bishop of Durham, and concludes with a long list of the miracles subsequently performed. The author was a monk of St Albans who had been prior of Wymondham, another of St Albans' cells, before arriving at Tynemouth in 1111.[90] Although he moved to Tynemouth just after the second translation of 1110, he would have been well-versed in the all the details of the cult and his work expressed the official Tynemouth view of events. His background and hagiographical interest would presumably have ensured that he was also knowledgeable about the cults of St Albans' and their literature.[91] As a literary monk living in the north-east of England in the twelfth century, the author must also have read Symeon's *Libellus de exordio* and the *Historia Regum*, which included further details about Durham's attempts to reclaim Tynemouth, s.a. 1121. He may also have been familiar with Hexham's hagiography.

Durham, St Albans and the Cult of St Oswin

The writer of the *Vita* must have had a thorough knowledge of the Durham traditions concerning Tynemouth, both through the ongoing dispute and through the subsequent literature produced at Durham. Consequently, a sensitive reading of his work reveals a clear Durham-conscious agenda. For example, Symeon claimed that in the early eleventh century Alfred Westou removed the relics of St Oswin from Tynemouth to Durham.[92] The writer of the *Vita*, however, omitted any mention of this transfer. He

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[88] See Ch. 2.
[89] The latest date mentioned in the text is 1184, though it is likely that there were three main periods of writing: soon after 1110, the 1160s and the 1180s/1190s. Other texts in support of St Oswin's cult were also produced. For these and details on the writing and compilation of the manuscript sources, see Hayward, 'Sanctity and Lordship', 120-1 and 137-44. In addition, a twelfth-century relic list from Tynemouth has been printed by Thomas in *Relics*, pp. 528-9.
[90] See *Vita Osw.*, chs. 14 and 26.
[91] See Gordon-Taylor, *The Hagiography of St Alban and Amphibalus*. For details about these cults see the *Gesta ... S. Albani*, pp. 85-92 (the translation of St Alban in 1129), 175-7, 189 and 192-3.
[92] *LDE*, III, 7.

also gives no hint of the fact that Edmund, the individual responsible for the finding of the body, may have been in any way connected with the monks of Durham, preferring instead to describe him as a solitary, secular priest,[93] despite the fact that the Durham monks had claimed that their predecessors had enjoyed close links with Tynemouth, regularly sending priests to celebrate mass there.[94] Similarly, whereas the Durham sources go on to make a clear assertion that the Jarrow monks took the bones of St Oswin to Jarrow for better care, returning them to Tynemouth at some unspecified later date ('Ossa Sancti Oswini etiam, ut placuit, pro tempore ad se in Giruum fratres nostri transtulerunt, indeque in priorem locum cum voluerunt reportarunt'),[95] the *Vita* makes no mention either of the Jarrow/Durham possession of the church, or of the removal of the relics. Such movements of the relics were surely an important part of the saint's posthumous history, and so the omission of these details from the Tynemouth account must hold some significance. Claims to the possession of relics were very often, if not always, associated with claims to possession of the land and churches associated with those relics.[96] Durham's keenness to stress their temporary possession of these relics, and Tynemouth's refusal to acknowledge it, should therefore be read not solely as a confusion over distant historical events, but as pertinent to the contemporary dispute over claims to the possession of the church. Both parties saw the value of arguing their case in spiritual as well as legal terms, and the cult of St Oswin was perceived as a legitimate, perhaps the best, forum in which to do this, with the primary focus lying in the possession of the relics.[97]

This interpretation is strengthened through consideration of the value of Oswin as the basis of a cult.[98] There was little to recommend him as a saint, apart from his association with St Aidan recorded by Bede. There was even less to associate him with Tynemouth, since he had been a king of Deira, not Bernicia, and had been killed at Gilling in North Yorkshire where his queen had founded a monastery in his memory. Even his death in 651 was lacking in the requirements for martyrdom, or even heroism, being the result of the treachery of a thegn. Oswin was not, therefore, an obvious saint for Tynemouth and his cultivation there and in St Albans can be seen as an attempt to

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[93] *Vita Osw.*, ch. 4, p. 12. Hayward, 'Sanctity and Lordship', 130.
[94] See above, p. 76.
[95] *HR*, s.a. 1121, p. 261.
[96] See Thomas, *Relics*, p. 328.
[97] Hayward, 'Sanctity and Lordship', 119.

assert claims to spiritual jurisdiction over the church. The St Albans' relic list accorded St Oswin a particularly prominent position: first in the list of martyrs and ahead of the apostles.[99] For a major southern abbey with a great number of relics, this unlikely positioning was extremely pointed. It was a public declaration that the monks of St Albans considered both the issue of Tynemouth to be extremely important, and the use of relics to be a significant means through which to consolidate their interests there. The lack of any relics associated with St Albans in the Tynemouth relic list may also be evidence that attention was focused mainly on using St Oswin as a means to claim ownership, and not on developing a range of associated cults.[100] That ownership of Tynemouth was the principal reason for St Albans' interest in the cult is evident in the fact that once the ownership of the church had been settled, the monks of St Albans seem to have lost their interest in the church and cult, using the cell as a place of exile and punishment for dissident monks from the mother-house, rather than continuing their early efforts to develop it into a cult centre.[101] Perhaps the fact that the complete *Vita* was produced by a monk of Tynemouth in the 1180s or 1190s, once this security had been achieved, is significant. While the mother house was taking an active interest in the cell and its cult, the monks of Tynemouth themselves did not need to promote their saint in this formal way. Even though stories of St Oswin's miracles were circulating, it was not until St Albans had shown signs of losing interest that the Tynemouth monks felt the need both to consolidate and continue veneration of the saint, and to remind their distant mother house that they did not wish to be forgotten.

Within those aspects of the saint's history which were included in the *Vita*, certain motifs stand out as bearing a strong resemblance to the Durham traditions. Naturally many of the elements in the cult were typical topoi to be found in a variety of otherwise unconnected cults and, in the case of a Tynemouth writer, the influence of St Albans' traditions might also have been a strong factor. Nevertheless the nature of the comparable evidence, in addition to the other connections with Durham and its hagiographical traditions, is highly suggestive of a tangible link. One clear example of

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[98] This observation is taken from W. Aird's paper on 'The Life and Cult of St Oswine' at the *Lawrence and Reginald of Durham* conference held in Durham in April 1999. See also Hayward, 'Sanctity and Lordship', 106-12.

[99] The list is undated, but is found in Thomas Walsingham's late-fourteenth-century manuscript of the *Gesta Abbatum*. See *Gesta ... S Albani*, III, pp. 539-45 and Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 214-15.

[100] In addition to St Oswin, the Tynemouth relic list mainly includes relics from the Holy Land. Thomas, *Relics*, 528-9.

[101] See H. H. E. Craster, *A History of Northumberland*, 15 vols. (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1907), VIII, *The Parish of Tynemouth*, pp. 70-3.

this is the account of the invention of the body of St Oswin in Tynemouth by the secular priest, Edmund, on 11 March 1065.[102] The discovery is described with a good range of typical motifs, such as a vision commanding the priest to dig for the bones, difficulty and discouragement in fulfilling the task, lack of belief by the bystanders, prayers and tears, the eventual discovery of the coffin, its opening and the emission of a wonderful fragrance, reluctance to touch the precious body, its washing, dressing and relocation in a more honourable position in the church. As with Ailred's account of the Hexham translation, the content of this account is strikingly similar to the Durham version of the events of 1104, suggesting that that piece had become something of a standard by which other such events should be assessed and recorded.[103] The only significant variation in this account is that in Tynemouth the priest needed a vision to command him to undertake the project and to inform him where to dig. This variation could support the point made above about Tynemouth's denial of Durham's connection with the saint and church. If Alfred Westou had taken the body to Durham, it would either not have been in Tynemouth to be found, or, if it had been returned, its whereabouts would have been known. The version of events in the *Vita* claims that the body had lain undisturbed, and almost forgotten about, since its burial several centuries earlier.[104]

The next translation of St Oswin took place in Tynemouth almost fifty years later, on 20 August, 1110.[105] As in the case of Durham's translation in 1104, this was nineteen years after the community had been established and it was a symbolic step in the attempts by that community to publicise the legitimacy of its claim to the church in the face of opposition from some quarters. The translation ceremony was also part of a larger event which included the consecration of a new church building. This associated the cult with the physical location of the community, and endorsed its claims to possession, credibility and acceptance in the wider religious community.[106] Although the events and their meaning echo the similar spectacle in Durham just six years earlier, it is difficult to gauge what the reaction of the Durham monks was. Ranulf Flambard was known to have attended the Tynemouth translation, though his presence probably reflects his concern to exert his diocesan authority, rather than indicating any change of

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[102] *Vita Osw.*, ch. 4.
[103] See above, p. 139.
[104] *Vita Osw.*, ch. 4, 'Jacuitque per multa annorum curricula gleba sancti corporis sub abjectiori cespite tumulata, et usque ad tempora Thostii Comitis et Ægelwini præsulis Dunelmi, incuriæ pariter et ignorantiæ neglectu, debita veneratione est fraudata' (p. 12).
[105] *Vita Osw.*, ch. 11.
[106] *Ibid.*

heart on the part of the monks.[107] The only fact of which we can be certain is that the monks of Durham would have been well aware of the translation and consecration, and of the effect this would have in strengthening the claims of the St Albans' monks. However, this event was not sufficient to make the Durham monks renounce all claims to Tynemouth, as their plea to King Henry I in 1121 shows. It was probably their defeat at this later stage which was the trigger for a change of policy. The papal injunction of 1156 ordering observation of St Oswin's feasts is a strong indication that the Durham monks had ceased to recognise or venerate Oswin as a saint.[108] This neglect of Oswin was no doubt carefully thought out. If St Oswin was refusing to support the Durham claims to Tynemouth, as the St Albans' propaganda seemed to prove, then the Durham monks would not accept Oswin's sanctity, thereby calling into question the strength of the St Albans' claim.[109]

Miracles

Many of the miracles accorded to St Oswin in the *Vita* are of a very standard nature. About thirty refer to healings of some sort and eight to punishments, and all are located in the immediate vicinity of Tynemouth. Research by Aird and Tudor on the Cuthbertine miracle collections has shown that a localised spread of miracles often indicates the early stages of the cult, and that there tends to be an increase in beneficent miracles as a cult becomes more established.[110] Following this pattern, we can interpret the high number of healings in St Oswin's miracles as evidence that the Tynemouth monks felt fairly confident in their possession of the cult. The local nature of the miracles could indicate a cult in its early stages but, in this case, the age of the cult and lack of subsequent development suggests instead a cult which only reached a limited level of development. Despite these indications that the cult of St Oswin never attained a wide geographical influence, there are elements in the miracles which point to a strong desire to challenge the dominance of the Durham cult. The first miracle recorded after the invention and translation of 1065 was again one which is typical of a number of saints, but which was particularly reminiscent of a famous story told about St Cuthbert.[111] The author tells how the saint's bones and hair had remained intact (though

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[107] *Ibid.* See also above, p. 78.
[108] See above, p. 79, n. 89.
[109] See Hayward, 'Sanctity and Lordship', 119-20.
[110] See Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century' and Aird, 'The Making of a Miracle Collection'.
[111] *Vita Osw.*, ch. 6. Cf. *LDE* III, 7.

there is no suggestion of incorrupt flesh as with St Cuthbert), and how when the hair was placed in a flame it did not burn. Other aspects are also significant for Durham. Although most of the miracles refer to men, three refer specifically to women from Durham who received healing from St Oswin.[112] In view of the misogynistic image of St Cuthbert propagated by the monks of Durham, this can be seen as an attempt to provide in Tynemouth for those who were unvalued in Durham. These two examples reveal how specific elements in St Cuthbert's cult could have a discernable influence on neighbouring cults. Other miracles resemble those in the Cuthbertine collection quite closely, in content if not in style. Paul Hayward has demonstrated that the miracle relating to St Oswin's liberation of prisoners may have been heavily influenced by comparable accounts of St Cuthbert.[113] Here the theme of competition which occurs in a number of the Durham miracles is reversed, and St Oswin, like St Wilfrid in Ailred's story, is shown to be the more powerful saint.[114]

It was not only Tynemouth which expressed its attitude towards Durham through its miracle collection; the early-twelfth-century Durham *Capitula* include a chapter which explicitly deals with the issue of Tynemouth. In a miracle in which St Cuthbert intervened to indicate his displeasure at St Albans' continued occupation of his church at Tynemouth, the death of Abbot Paul and punishment of Earl Robert de Mowbray were intimately linked with their interests in Tynemouth.[115] In view of this presentation of events, it is most interesting to note that later in the collection, in the section concerning the translation of St Cuthbert's body, another miracle deals with the following abbot of St Albans, Richard d'Aubeney (1097-1119). In this miracle the abbot was not merely treated favourably but accorded the highest honour possible: he was asked by Prior Turgot to assist with the movement of the body and through this contact received a miraculous healing of his deformed hand. Richard was known to have had a great reverence for St Cuthbert and he subsequently dedicated a chapel in St Albans to the

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[112] *Vita Osw.*, chs. 13, 16 and 28.

[113] Compare *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 46 and *Vita Osw.*, ch. 42 and see 'Sanctity and Lordship', 132-4. Hayward suggests a number of other examples in the miracles of St Oswin where a direct comparison might be made with the Cuthbertine material, though his arguments are not always convincing. He claims that the Countess Judith appears in St Oswin's miracles merely because she had been included in the Cuthbertine collection, and that her absence at Oswin's translation may have been due to St Cuthbert's prohibition on women entering his church in Durham, though he does not explain why that should have had any effect on the church in Tynemouth (p. 131). He also claims similarities between Oswin's (*Vita Osw.*, ch. 10) and Cuthbert's (*Capitula*, ch. 10) miracles of the protection of the local people from royal military campaigns (pp. 131-2). However, the content of the two miracles is very different and the similarity seems to lie only in the fact that the local people sought hiding places from the armies.

[114] See above, pp. 134-5.

saint,[116] but St Cuthbert's change of heart is nonetheless striking. Clearly relations between the houses were much improved during his time and only deteriorated again after his death, when Durham renewed its claims to Tynemouth. The shared features of these miracles reveal the versatility of cults and their potential application to all manner of issues. Although the direct impetus for these Cuthbertine miracles was not the cult of St Oswin, but the political ownership of the house at Tynemouth, it is telling that the Durham monks should choose to express themselves on this issue through their cult, claiming spiritual rights even where their economic and legal rights were being ignored.

Conclusions about Tynemouth's Cult

The cult of St Oswin, and its management by the St Albans monks placed in Tynemouth, therefore give some important insights into the influence and development of the Durham monks' cult of St Cuthbert. It has been shown that although the Tynemouth monks would have been knowledgeable about cults from their time at St Albans, it is very likely that aspects of the cult of St Cuthbert had a direct influence on their development of the cult of St Oswin. In addition, wider issues of ownership and control had a clear effect on the nature of some of the miracles recorded in both cults. Perhaps the most significant comparison, however, is that the monks of Tynemouth attempted to support their claims to legitimacy through the use of their cult, and especially a translation ceremony, in exactly the same way as the monks of Durham had done with their cult and, six years earlier, with their translation. Both communities were keen to stress their patron saint's active interest in, and defence of, their rights and position. The grand ceremony of translation associated with the consecration of a new church building - the focal point of a monastic settlement - attended by numerous ecclesiastical dignitaries, publicised these claims in both cases. Despite the Tynemouth monks' southern origin, their connections with Durham were varied and strong enough to exert a decisive impact on their cult.

OTHER CULT CENTRES IN THE NORTH-EAST

Elsewhere in the eleventh and twelfth-century north-east, as part one has shown, other new churches were being founded, or old ones revived. If the two ancient sites of Hexham and Tynemouth could be refounded and become the focus of active cults, surely similar transformations may have taken place elsewhere? It is striking, however, that no

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[115] *Capitula*, ch. 13; *HR*, s.a. 1093, p. 221.
[116] See above, p. 77.

other church in the region supported anything more than a localised cult. In order to understand the limited extent of other cults in the region we must explore the criteria necessary for the development of a cult, and consider how and why the churches of the north-east failed to fulfil these requirements.

Criteria for the Development of Cult Centres

The first requirement for the development of a cult was obviously the possession of relics. This was probably the most significant reason for York Minster's lack of a cult in the twelfth-century.[117] In fact, Archbishop Thomas II felt the lack so acutely that he made a vain attempt to steal, or translate, the relics of St Eata from Hexham.[118] The next requirement was the possession of sufficient financial resources. Cults were expensive, at least in the early stages when considerable efforts had to be made to publicise the powers of the saint and to encourage individuals to visit the cult church when their inclination would have been to go to somewhere better known or closer. A suitable shrine and church were also necessary accessories to a successful cult. Since improvements to existing facilities were often not made until the cult itself had generated enough income, it was crucial that the church should be wealthy enough to sustain at least the beginnings of the cult. Durham was in a much better financial position than almost any other eleventh and twelfth-century church in the north-east because of its inherited wealth. Hexham received considerable support from the endowments of the archbishops of York and, once he had left, through Eilaf's bequest. Tynemouth, being the cell of one of the wealthiest Benedictine houses in the country, was well provided for by its mother-house. Few other north-eastern churches in the twelfth century enjoyed such wealth and this prohibited the successful development of major cults. For example, in the tenth century, Oswald, Archbishop of York, had attempted to revive Ripon by elevating some of St Wilfrid's bones and translating the relics of some other Ripon saints.[119] Although these relics provided excellent potential for a cult, the church was not sufficiently endowed to allow this to take place. Another factor which may have affected churches' abilities to promote cults was the lack of skilled hagiographers or historians whose records could document and publicise the cult most effectively.[120]

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[117] Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 143-8.
[118] *De sanctis*, ch. 15. York eventually found a saint when their twelfth-century archbishop, William, was canonized in 1222.
[119] Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 59-60.
[120] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

All of these criteria were clearly necessary for the development of a cult, but the key factor must surely have been an interest in cults and a desire to devote the necessary resources to their development. The lack of other successful cults in the north-east must therefore reflect the fact that interest in the development of cults was lacking in some quarters of north-eastern spiritual life. This can easily be accounted for in the case of the reformed orders. The Augustinians' primary focus was pastoral work, so that the cult of saints was not a priority for them. The Cistercians rejected many of the Black monks' traditions and customs and initially this included their enthusiasm for cults. Later in the twelfth century their resistance lessened, however, and there was an increased interest in this area of spiritual life.[121] Why should some of the other churches have lacked interest in the cult of saints? One reason may have been that they chose to develop their spiritual life, and economic resources, differently. Whitby, for example had connections with many Anglo-Saxon saints, principally St Hild[122] and St Edwin,[123] though at least one miracle of the elusive St Bega was also recorded there. Whitby's lack of interest in pursuing this route may have been based upon limited economic resources but might also have reflected the fact that the abbey was more concerned with its eremitical interests.[124] St Mary's in York, like its neighbouring minster, did not possess any major relics, though, unlike the minster, this does not seem to have troubled the monks. St Mary's was an important church because of its royal patronage and political connections, so possibly the monks felt that it did not need any additional boost to its prestige.

Some churches, however, revealed a keen interest in developing cults, but still did not manage to achieve much success. For example, in the 1180s the monks of Selby recorded a colourful foundation story in their *Historia Selebiensis*, which could have provided the potential for a rich and active cult, with its plentiful hagiographical motifs, such as visions, thefts and miracles.[125] At Melrose, a daughter-house of Rievaulx, an attempt was made to develop the cult of St Waltheof, step-son of King David of Scotland and close friend of Ailred of Rievaulx. After his death in 1159 a *Vita* was written by the prominent northern Cistercian hagiographer, Jocelin of Furness (c. 1173-

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[121] Bernard of Clairvaux was particularly scathing. See Abou-El-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints*, p. 17 and Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 273-4.
[122] The monks of Glastonbury also claimed the relics of St Hild through a gift of King Edmund. See Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 172-3.
[123] *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[124] See ch. 6.
[125] See above pp. 50-5.

1215).[126] This Jocelin had also written *vitae* of St Patrick, St Helen and St Kentigern,[127] thus revealing a strong interest in local and Irish saints.[128] The interest of the monks in Melrose in a number of other regional saints and the writing of this *Vita*, does suggest that they were not only informed about the spiritual history and traditions of the region, but were also keen to take an active role in forging the continuing traditions by developing a cult of St Waltheof. However, in the case of both Selby and Melrose there is nothing to indicate that these hagiographical works supported active and influential cults: in fact, there is very little evidence to suggest that any other northern church enjoyed anything more than the most localised interest in their saints. Even among those churches in the north-west which fall outside the scope of this thesis, none managed to produce a cult of anything more than local interest.[129]

Why did so few other churches attempt to express, or succeed in expressing, their spiritual hopes, interests and endeavours through saints' cults?

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY'S DOMINANCE

I would suggest that the most convincing explanation for this lack of cults in the north-east is not the lack of resources in the other churches, but the strength of Durham itself, with its network of cells, as a successful cult centre: the fact that the cult of St Cuthbert was universally recognised as the major cult of the north would have rendered it almost pointless and impossible to attempt to compete, unless other pressing concerns required it, as at Hexham and Tynemouth.

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[126] See D. Baker, 'Legend and Reality: The Case of Waldef of Melrose', in his *Church, Society and Politics*, SCH 12 (Oxford, 1975), pp. 59-82.

[127] Dedicated to another Jocelin, Bishop of Glasgow (1174-99), a former abbot of Melrose. The later twelfth century saw an increase in hagiographical writing across the country (See Cownie, 'St Edmund', 183-4), so these northern hagiographical texts were not an isolated phenomenon.

[128] This interest is revealed elsewhere in the northern hagiography of the later-twelfth-century, especially that connected with Melrose. Everard, Abbot of Holmcultram and a former monk of Melrose, is credited with writing *vitae* of Adomnan and Cummene Ailbe, early abbots of Iona. See R. Bartlett, 'Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints in Twelfth-Century England', in *Britain and Ireland 900-1300: Insular Response to Medieval European Change*, ed. B. Smith (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 67-86, at pp. 81-3.

[129] At St Bees an anonymous *Life and Miracles of St Bega* was composed in the late twelfth century. Although Bega was probably a fictional character, elements of her story are closely connected with the Northumbrian Christian past. By the end of the century there were copies of her *life* at the Cistercian house of Holmcultram. A cult of St Bega clearly existed at this time, and it was apparently long-lived, but it was neither widespread nor very influential. At Whithorn, some efforts were made to venerate St Ninian, whose *Life* was written, at the abbot's request, by Ailred. See Bartlett, 'Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints', pp. 70-2 and 80-3.

The Strength of St Cuthbert's Cult

There were two aspects to the Durham cult's dominance. The first was that the cult of St Cuthbert was so widespread and deeply rooted in the region that there was no spiritual need for a proliferation of other minor cults. Cuthbert's body was the principal source of his spiritual strength, but many other relics associated with him made him more accessible throughout the region.[130] Many stories associated with St Cuthbert or his community recorded by Reginald point to the breadth and depth of Cuthbertine devotion throughout the region. The very large number of places mentioned indicates the extent of Durham's claims to spiritual influence in the north-east. Reginald records devotion to the saint, or his miracles, close to Durham at Foxden and Yarm,[131] in Yorkshire at Nostell, Rievaulx, Rudby, Thirsk and Thorp,[132] in Northumberland at Bedlington, Bellingham, Berwick, Bruntun, Embleton, Farne, Lindisfarne, Middleton, Mitford, Newcastle, Norham and Tuggall,[133] in the Borders and Scotland at Dunfermline, Furness, Haddington, Kirkcudbright, Perth, St Andrews, Steintune, Slitrith,[134] and elsewhere at Newton and Plumbeland (Cumbria) and Lytham (Lancashire).[135] Cuthbert's range of miracles, especially in the twelfth century, was so extensive that he had been shown to be effective in any and every situation. In a great number of his miracles Cuthbert healed the sick and injured and punished wrongdoers and trespassers. However, Reginald's collection shows that he also rescued those in danger at sea, averted fires, released prisoners from their chains, and protected the faithful against their enemies. He acted on behalf of individuals, groups and the whole region. He was also shown to be more effective than many other saints.[136] There was therefore no *need* within the spiritual life of the region for a greater saintly presence, since St Cuthbert was capable of fulfilling expectations and requirements. This would have made it very difficult for other churches to build up a significant following for their saints, which might well explain why the *vitae* mentioned above do not seem to have engendered significant cults. However, it is not entirely clear whether the extensive variety and location of St Cuthbert's miracles were the cause or effect of his popularity. It is probably best to view the success of the cult, at least in the twelfth century, as in some ways self-generating: the more popular and well

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[130] *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 35, 39, 53-4, 57, 66, 80, 91, and 97-9.
[131] *Ibid.*, chs. 123 and 17.
[132] *Ibid.*, chs. 24, 83, 126, 106 and 124.
[133] *Ibid.*, chs. 16, 108, 20, 124, 62, 23, 59, 105, 53, 103, 47, and 16.
[134] *Ibid.*, chs. 98, 55, 99, 84, 97, 98, 48 and 136.
[135] *Ibid.*, chs. 113, 129 and 132.
[136] *Ibid.*, chs. 29, 46, 79, 103, 108, 112, 115, 117, 126 and 130.

known St Cuthbert became, the greater the number of miracles he performed, and the more miracles he performed, the more popular he became. The root cause of the strength and popularity of the twelfth-century cult may lie, however, not in the range or type of miracles performed, but in the fact that his community could, and did, trace a continuous history of their devotion to the saint. Although it was not uncommon for communities which had recently rediscovered an ancient relic to claim that the saint had always played a part in the church's history even if he or she had not been widely recognised, the Durham monks could genuinely claim an active relationship with their saint. Despite many upheavals, the community had never lost knowledge or possession of St Cuthbert's body and through records such as the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* it could prove its continuous relationship with its patron. By the time that other local post-conquest churches had developed sufficiently to begin building up a cult, the church of St Cuthbert had firm possession of an unbroken, four-hundred-year-old cult.

Other Durham Relics and Minor Cults

The second reason for Durham's dominance was that it enjoyed a near monopoly on ancient northern saints' relics.[137] The consequence of this was that although many, if not all, of the saints claimed by Durham had strong connections with other churches in the region, there were very few significant relics available to form cults in those churches. Many of these acquisitions had been made by Alfred Westou in the eleventh century, and the later Durham monks capitalised on this wealth of relics, declaring a strong enough interest in the saints in question that although they did not develop significant cults for most of them, their relationship with them was firmly established.

Possibly the most significant of the saints adopted by Durham in this way is St Oswald. Oswald more than any of the other saints of the north-east, enjoyed significant popularity both in the north *and* the south of the country.[138] His cult, which was widespread and

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[137] Symeon mentions that in the early eleventh-century Alfred Westou brought to Durham the relics of Balthere, Billfrith, Acca, Alchmund, Oswin, Æbbe, Æthelgitha, Boisil and Bede. See *LDE*, III, 7 and notes and Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 76-88. Three medieval relic lists survive from Durham Cathedral Priory. The earliest dates from the episcopate of William of Saint-Barbe. The second was compiled in the thirteenth-century and the third in 1383 (DCL MS B.II.35, printed in *Extracts from the Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham*, 3 vols., ed. J. T. Fowler, SS 100 (1899), II, pp. 425-40). See above, p. 142, nn. 83-4, Thomas, Relics, pp. 342-3 and Battiscombe, *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, pp. 63-73 and 112-14. Thomas notes that Durham showed little interest in southern saints, confining its devotions to northern saints (which shaped its identity) and European saints (which affirmed its place in the universal church).
[138] There were numerous relics of St Oswald in England and over sixty churches or chapels dedicated to him. He appeared in many post-conquest calendars and copies of his *lives* circulated in many churches. See Rollason, 'St Oswald', pp. 164-70.

disparate, therefore tests the assertion that the monks of Durham maintained such a strong grip on the development of northern saints' cults that other local churches were effectively rendered incapable of supporting comparable cults. Durham possessed the primary relic of St Oswald, his skull, which still retained evidence of the axe wound which killed him. This was rediscovered at the time of St Cuthbert's translation in 1104 and it alone of all the other relics found with it was replaced in St Cuthbert's coffin, the most sacred place of the Durham relic collection. It was possibly this event which reawakened devotion to this saint, though there had been considerable interest in the martyred king before the conquest.

Other churches, some of them influential, also became centres for the cult of St Oswald. In the south, the most prominent of these was St Oswald's, Gloucester where a translation of his left arm and hair took place 1108x1114 in the presence of Archbishop Thurstan. In the north-east, two prominent churches were also closely associated with the saint. The Augustinian canons at Nostell had their origins in a loosely-connected group of hermits who were granted land in 'St Oswald's wood' in c.1100.[139] By 1119 they had become regular canons and, unusually for an Augustinian foundation, retained their dedication to St Oswald. They received considerable royal and archiepiscopal support and soon acquired a number of other smaller churches, one of which was Bamburgh, which was not only wealthy but also closely associated with Oswald, being the place of his original burial.[140] David Rollason has suggested that devotion to St Oswald in these churches was strongly encouraged by Archbishop Thurstan.[141] The fact that neither of these north-eastern churches was able to supplant Durham as the major focus for St Oswald's cult, despite the archbishop's support and Bamburgh's ancient connections with the saint, suggests again that the strength of Durham's cults prevented the successful growth of other cults.

In Durham itself it was evident by the association of relics that St Oswald was the community's second most important saint. Reginald informs us that an altar in the north transept was dedicated to Oswald.[142] Artistic representations on stone, glass and parchment associate Oswald with St Cuthbert and St Aidan as a founder of the church of Lindisfarne, and by the late-twelfth century the Durham seal was refashioned to include a

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[139] See above, pp. 231-2.
[140] Rollason, 'St Oswald', pp. 173-4.
[141] *Ibid.*, p. 174.
[142] See Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, p. 164.

representation of Oswald.[143] Two lives of St Oswald were produced. The first was probably composed in the late-eleventh or early-twelfth century and relied heavily on Bede,[144] while the second was written by Reginald in the 1160s, at the request of Henry, a former sub-prior. It was an attempt to produce an original piece of work and so avoids using Bede; the result is not very inspiring. Tudor has commented on how it was not one of Reginald's more accomplished writings, appearing to be an amalgamation of pieces of information rather than a coherent, polished work.[145] Despite the quality of the writing, the need for it may indicate the increasing volume of stories circulating orally about the saint, and the Durham monks' desire both to honour him and to maintain some control over the enthusiastic devotion to him.[146] However, the lack of contemporary miracles also suggests that there was no active cult of St Oswald in Durham at the time and that Reginald, along with the artists, was involved in generating one.[147]

The other major relics to be honoured in Durham were those of St Bede, whose home had been at the double monastery of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, which had become a cell of Durham priory. There is liturgical evidence of a pre-conquest cult of St Bede, but it was fairly limited, possibly due to the fact that Bede died on 26 May, the feast of St Augustine.[148] However, Bede's popularity increased during the late-eleventh-century reform period.[149] The Community of St Cuthbert claimed to possess his relics, due to Alfred Westou's activities, and the account of the opening of St Cuthbert's coffin in 1104 reaffirms their presence there.[150] After the opening, Bede's relics were placed in a separate container and later in the century Hugh du Puiset placed them in a shrine decorated with gold, silver and jewels.[151] The location of Bede's relics in a fine shrine, at first next to St Cuthbert's (which included St Oswald's relics), and later in the Galilee Chapel, signalled the reverence in which Bede was held by the monks. Sometimes his

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[143] The seal actually incorporated a head of Jupiter but was inscribed with Oswald's name. See Rollason, 'St Oswald', pp. 174-6.

[144] *Ibid.*, pp. 165-6.

[145] Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, pp. 94-7 and 'Reginald's *Life of St Oswald*', in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (Stamford, 1995), pp. 187-94.

[146] See Tudor, 'Reginald's *Life of St Oswald*', pp. 183-4.

[147] Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, p. 96.

[148] Bede's name was included in calendars from New Minster, Worcester, Evesham and Sherbourne. See Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, pp. 136-9 and above, p. 26, n. 16.

[149] See Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', pp. 7-23.

[150] *LDE*, III, 7 and *Capitula*, ch. 7, § 5. Ward, however, disputes the veracity of the sources on these points. *The Venerable Bede*, pp. 139-43.

[151] *Capitula*, ch. 7, § 8. See Geoffrey of Coldingham, *Liber de Statu Ecclesiæ Dunhelmensis*, in Raine, *Historia Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres*, ch. 7, pp. 11-12. Bede was moved in the Galilee Chapel in 1370. See *Rites of Durham*, ed. J. T. Fowler, SS 107 (1903), pp. 44-5.

relics were taken in procession with St Cuthbert's,[152] but it is interesting that no miracles were recorded in which he took a major role. Bede was a crucial figure for the Durham monks since it was his writings which gave such historical legitimacy to the image of St Cuthbert and his community, however, he was never perceived as a wonder-worker like his biographical subject, St Cuthbert, nor did he rival him in terms of cult popularity: his name was not even included in any calendar drawn up at Durham before 1170 and his feast only became part of the liturgical life of Durham in the thirteenth century.[153]

Another north-eastern saint adopted by the monks of Durham was the patron of their most northerly cell at Coldingham, St Æbbe. She had been a seventh-century abbess of the double monastery at Coldingham and was a close relative of Oswald and friend of Cuthbert. Coldingham was developed by the Durham monks as a cell maintaining their Scottish estates from about the 1130s. Following the discovery of St Æbbe's tomb by some shepherds who were blinded when they tried to open it, it became a cult centre, with a double focus on the empty tomb and the shrine. A Life of St Æbbe was written in c.1188, possibly by Reginald, though the work is in more of a sermon style than was usual for him.[154] The miracles in this *Life* reveal a fascinating pattern when looked at in the context of Durham cathedral priory's cult interests. The majority of the people involved in the miracles were locals from Northumbria, often of the lower classes, and an unusually high proportion of them (45%) were young people or children. Forty-two healings were recorded and of these, almost two-thirds (62%) of the recipients were female.[155] This is striking when we note how widespread was the cult of St Cuthbert, how many nobles and local dignitaries he helped and how strong was his apparent dislike of women. The trends noted in this miracle collection might well signal the monks' desire to develop the cult of St Æbbe as a focus of devotion for ordinary northern people, especially women and children. Despite this, the monks' concerns about the sanctity of the church building were upheld in so far as all six of the healings that took place within the church at Coldingham were of men. Underlying these developments may well have been a sense of insecurity on the part of the monks about their Scottish possessions. Through their development of the cult, the Durham monks were able to exert a greater hold over the cell as a whole, while by keeping control over the growth of

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[152] Fowler, *Rites of Durham*, pp. 105-6.
[153] Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 142.
[154] See Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, pp. 97-102.
[155] These observations were made by R. Bartlett, in his paper 'Reginald of Durham's Life and Miracles of St Ebbe', at the *Lawrence and Reginald of Durham* conference in Durham, April 1999.

the cult they were able to ensure that St Cuthbert would always remain the most dominant saint in the region, thus emphasising the importance of the church of Durham.

Oswald and Æbbe can each be seen as the focus of an active secondary cult developed and nurtured by the monks of Durham. Other saints were also of importance to the Durham monks, however, and efforts were made to publicise Durham's interest in them. The Irish saint, Brigit, enjoyed popularity throughout England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but Durham took an active role in promoting her cult.[156] In 1130x1134, Prior Lawrence wrote a *Life* of St Brigit, for Ailred of Rievaulx, in order to modernise and improve an eighth or ninth-century *Life* which his father Eilaf had possessed.[157] Lawrence's *Life* did not add much to the original, in so far as there were few recent miracles to be included, but he did significantly alter the tone of the earlier work, adding much biblical information and ignoring many of the pagan or otherwise unworthy aspects of the saint's life, for example her illegitimacy.[158]

Interest in other north-eastern saints was also promoted in Durham in the twelfth-century through the copying and circulation of their *vitae*. Late-twelfth-century Durham scribes are known to have made copies of a *Life* of St Aidan, for example.[159] Aidan's cult was not widespread, with relics located only at Bamburgh and Durham in the north.[160] Adomnan's Life of St Columba was also copied in Durham in the late twelfth century.[161] It is very hard to determine whether these Durham writers were working with the intention of building up secondary cults of these figures, in which case they were no more successful than the monks of any of the other houses mentioned, or whether they were simply trying to reinforce the ownership of these relics by Durham, thus promoting the image of Durham Cathedral Priory as the home of the northern saints. In either case, their activities would have rendered it very difficult indeed for another north-eastern church to promote a cult of any of the many saints claimed by Durham.

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[156] Bartlett, 'Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints', pp. 74-5.
[157] See Bartlett, 'Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints', pp. 74-5 and 84.
[158] These observations were made by P. O'Riain in his paper 'Lawrence of Durham's Life of St Bridget', at the *Lawrence and Reginald* conference.
[159] Aidan's connections with the church of Lindisfarne, now in Durham, were undeniable, though many sources suggest that at least some of his relics were given to Glastonbury in the tenth century by King Edmund along with those of Hild and Ceolfrith. See Thomas, *Relics*, pp. 172-3. Five of the 14 twelfth-century copies of Bede's *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* associated with Durham Cathedral Priory also contain passages drawn from the *Historia Ecclesiastica* to form *lives* of Aidan and Oswald. See Piper, 'The First Generation of Durham Monks', p. 443 and *DCM*, pp. 62 (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS 0.3.55), 74 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud. Misc. 491) and 76 (DCL, MS A.IV.35).
[160] Bartlett, 'Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints', p. 68.

CONCLUSIONS

The inability of so many churches in the north-east to develop successful cults for their saints is a striking feature of post-conquest spiritual life in the north-east. By comparison, the achievements of Tynemouth and especially Hexham are all the more striking. Both of these churches successfully reasserted their claims to relics which Durham had physically or notionally appropriated. Through the same well-attested channels as Durham had followed: translations, *vitae* and miracles, they developed cults which, while not as widespread or powerful as that of St Cuthbert, were nonetheless recognisable as comparable enterprises. The enormity of the effort required by the canons and monks of these two houses to promote their saints in the face of a cult as dominant and well managed as St Cuthbert's, as well as the fact that they only acted in this way because of the strained and sometimes hostile nature of their relationship with Durham, proves quite how extraordinary and difficult it was to challenge the supremacy of the principal saint of the north-east.

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[161] The Durham writer Geoffrey of Coldingham records that the monks of Durham also dedicated a chapel on Lindisfarne to St Columba. *Vita Barth.*, p. 322.

Chapter Five

HISTORIOGRAPHY

THE SPIRITUAL PURPOSE AND VALUE OF HISTORIOGRAPHY

The study of the historiographical output from a religious house can provide an index to the spiritual, as well as purely intellectual, interests and standards within that house.[1] To a large extent the history of a religious house was the history of the spiritual past of the community of that house. Although a record of land-holdings might form a major part of a house history, the central theme was usually the story of the creation and development of its spiritual identity. For example, as we have already noted in the case of Selby's foundation narrative,[2] such works often centred upon the presence of miracle-working relics, which gave a name and purpose, as well as protection, to the community in question. For that reason many hagiographical details are to be found in house histories, while many hagiographies likewise contain useful information about local history. To draw too sharp a distinction between the two genres is therefore to misunderstand the nature not only of monastic writing, but of monastic thought, belief and identity in the middle ages. In addition to foundation narratives and house histories, many monastic scriptoria, at some point in their existence, often when under threat, discovered the value of tracts written for specific occasions or circumstances, which focus entirely on the issues closest to the community's security and well-being at that time. The propagandist nature of these texts merely emphasises the mentality behind the production of much medieval historiography, which was a desire to explain or justify the present with reference to the revered customs of the past.[3] Historiographical works, along with hagiographical texts, were consequently considered a useful tool in the preservation of a community's rights and position, as they provided written evidence of spiritual credentials and history. Such local interests can also be observed in those monastic historical writings which were ostensibly wider in scope, such as annals or general histories of the kingdom. These works often revealed a partisan viewpoint, reflecting the spiritual and ecclesiastical concerns and aspirations of the writers and their brethren, rather than providing an objective account of national events.

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[1] For the connection between historical writing and intellectual standards, see J. Taylor, *Medieval Historical Writing in Yorkshire*, St Anthony's Hall Publications (later Borthwick Papers) 19 (1961), p. 25.

[2] See above, pp. 50-5 and *MOY*, pp. 23-31.

[3] Piper, 'Historical Interests', pp. 301-5.

The value of historical writing for establishing a spiritual identity and legitimising widespread and fundamental changes was very well appreciated by those abbots and monks who were active in England following the Norman Conquest.[4] Durham was not the only church to feel the effect of such a change and Symeon's *Libellus* is not unique in its attempt to justify the position of a new, Norman-inspired monastic community. Evesham in its history, written during the time of Abbot Walter (1077-1104), was similarly concerned to prove the continuity of its present community with the long-established Anglo-Saxon one.[5] Throughout the history a passion for relics is apparent, which provides the key to understanding the force of such claims: if the saints, through their relics, could be shown to have approved of the changes, then that was proof that such changes were legitimate and sanctioned by the highest authority.[6] Other less successful attempts help to demonstrate how desperately certain communities sought the security represented by good history writing. The monks of Glastonbury were plagued by a lack of undisputed relics or a convincing foundation story, and they did not have a competent enough writer within their midst to rectify their problems. In c.1129 they turned to William of Malmesbury, who had recently published his major work, *Gesta Pontificum*. In this he had stressed the continuity of the contemporary church with the Anglo-Saxon one, thereby proving his ability to present history from a standpoint attractive to the insecure monks.[7] William produced both a history of the house, *De Antiquitate Glastoniensis Ecclesiae*, and a Life of St Dunstan, but neither achieved the monks' ambitions of securing for themselves a *bone fide* patron saint.[8] Elsewhere monastic writers used the histories of their houses and patron saints to further their cases in disputes with hostile bodies. The monks of Bury, for example produced a narrative, based around the history of St Edmund, to justify their position in

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[4] Appeals to the authenticity of the past were crucial means of validation: 'in an overwhelmingly tradition-based culture … in which "new" was rarely equated with "better", change had to be explained very carefully in order to incorporate it within a greater sweep of continuity and tradition'. E. Freeman, 'Meaning and Multi-Centredness in (Postmodern) Medieval Historiography: The Foundation History of Fountains Abbey', *Parergon* 16 (1999), pp. 43-84, at p. 61.

[5] The history only survives as part of Thomas of Marlborough's early-thirteenth-century chronicle, though the earlier material can easily be detected. See *Chronicon Abbatiæ de Evesham* and Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 89-90 and 111-14.

[6] Evesham's hagiography was also expanded to include historical details about the abbey. See Prior Dominic's *Life and Miracles of St Ecgwin*, written in the first quarter of the twelfth century, in *Chronicon Abbatiæ de Evesham*, pp. xi and 1-67.

[7] See A. Gransden, 'The Growth of the Glastonbury Traditions and Legends in the Twelfth Century', *JEH* 27 (1976), 337-58; reprinted in her Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England (London, 1992), pp. 153-74, at pp. 155-65.

[8] Neither Dunstan nor Patrick, the other Glastonbury saint, proved successful as patron saints and in 1191 the monks exhumed the bodies of Arthur and Guinevere in the hope that their cults might assist the major

their conflict with their diocesan bishop.[9] Other monasteries channelled their historical writing into biographies of their spiritual leaders. The monks Osbern and Eadmer of Christ Church, Canterbury, produced lives of the archbishops,[10] and Goscelin at the neighbouring St Augustine's produced lives of St Mildrith and St Augustine with an account of the other Canterbury saints, Mellitus, Justus, Honorius, Deusdedit, Theodore and Hadrian.[11] The writing of history, closely associated with the production of hagiography, was clearly therefore a potent expression of spiritual identity, spiritual needs and spiritual defence.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY'S HISTORIOGRAPHY

Libellus de exordio

The extent of Durham Cathedral Priory's twelfth-century library is proof, if such were needed, of the intellectual strength of the community.[12] One reflection of that intellectual and cultural vigour was the production, within the priory, of historical works. Durham's historiographical output in the post-conquest period was dominated by the two lengthy histories traditionally associated with the monk Symeon.[13] The *Libellus de exordio et procursu istius, hoc est Dunelmensis ecclesie*, was completed by Symeon in the first decade of the twelfth century, probably 1107.[14] Symeon's principal agenda was the justification of the position of the new monastic community of St Cuthbert.[15] In order to do this effectively he described the long tradition of monastic

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rebuilding of the abbey. *Ibid.*, p. 165. See also J. P Carley, *Glastonbury Abbey: The Holy House at the Head of the Moors Adventurous* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 87-144.

[9] See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 125-7 and her 'Legends and Traditions concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury of St Edmunds', *EHR* 100 (1985), 1-24; reprinted in her *Legends, Tradition and History*, pp. 81-104, at pp. 88-94.

[10] Osbern wrote a *Life of St Elphege, Life of St Oda, Life of St Dunstan* and *Miracles of St Dunstan*. Eadmer wrote a *Life of St Anselm* in addition to his *Historia Novorum*. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 127-31 and J. Rubenstein, 'The Life and Writings of Osbern of Canterbury', in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars 1066-1109*, ed. R. Eales and R. Sharpe (London, 1995), pp. 27-40.

[11] See R. Emms, 'The Historical Traditions of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury', in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 159-64, D. Rollason, 'Goscelin of Canterbury's Account of the Translation and Miracles of St Mildrith (*BHL* 5961/4): An Edition with Notes', *Mediaeval Studies* 48 (1986), 139-210 and A. G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066-1422* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 20-1.

[12] The library contained over 700 volumes. See *DCM*, and Victoria Tudor's comments in *Reginald of Durham and Saint Godric of Finchale: Learning and Religion on a Personal Level*, in *Religion and Humanism*, ed. K. Robbins, SCH 17 (Oxford, 1981), pp. 37-48, at p. 41, n. 24.

[13] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 115-23.

[14] Rollason, *LDE*, pp. xlii-xliv.

[15] See A. J. Piper, 'The Historical Interests of the Monks of Durham', in *Symeon*, pp. 301-32, especially pp. 301-2. Rollason, 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century', p. 183.

service to the saint, which led to an inevitable though implicit criticism of his secular predecessors and a discrediting of their service. By contrast, his own community could then be portrayed as reinstating the long but temporarily suspended tradition of monastic guardianship of St Cuthbert.[16] His other significant but tricky theme was a criticism of the interference of hostile, especially non-monastic, bishops as a means by which to warn the current bishop, Ranulf Flambard, to cease from his persecution of the community.[17] This was complicated by the desire to portray the 'outsiders', Bishops Æthelric and Æthelwine poorly, despite their monastic credentials, and to praise Bishop Walcher for his monastic sympathies despite his secular status.[18] Symeon's manipulation of his material gives a valuable insight into the importance of historical writing for the establishment of spiritual identity for a young, insecure monastic community. Just as revealing as his presentation of the story, however, were his omissions of significant information, such as details of the tense but vitally important relationship between the community of St Cuthbert and Scotland.[19]

Historia Regum

The *Historia Regum* on the other hand is a very different type of historical production.[20] It is a complex compilation of sources which had gone through numerous amendments before it reached its present form in the mid- to late-twelfth century.[21] It is a 'national' history in the sense that it attempts to record events and developments throughout the kingdom, but unlike some of the other post-conquest monastic histories, such as John of Worcester's chronicle,[22] it has a strong northern interest, not least from the nature of its

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[16] Rollason, *LDE*, pp. lxxxii-lxxxv and Piper, 'The First Generation of Durham Monks', pp. 438-41.
[17] See Rollason, *LDE*, p. lxxxvii, Piper, 'The First Generation of Durham Monks', pp. 442-3 and W. M. Aird, 'The Political Context of the *Libellus de Exordio*', in *Symeon*, pp. 32-45, at pp. 42-5.
[18] *LDE*, III, 11 and 17, cf. III, 18.
[19] Piper, 'Historical Interests', p. 303. For the relationship between Durham and Scotland, see, for example, Barrow, 'The Kings of Scotland and Durham', Wall, 'Malcolm III and the Foundation of Durham Cathedral', in *AND*, pp. 325-37 and Dalton, 'Scottish Influence on Durham 1066-1214'.
[20] *SMOO*, II, pp. 3-283.
[21] There is only one complete manuscript edition of the text in CCCC 139, ff. 54^{r}-131^{r}. For some of the extensive discussion of this crucial manuscript and the composition of the text, see D. Baker, 'Scissors and Paste: Corpus Christi, Cambridge, MS 139 Again', in his *The Materials, Sources, and Methods of Ecclesiastical History*, SCH 11 (Oxford, 1975), pp. 83-123; B. Meehan, *A Reconsideration of the Historical Works Associated with Symeon of Durham. Manuscripts, Texts and Influences* (unpubl. Ph.D. Thesis, Univ. of Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 178-246; P. H. Blair, 'Some Observations on the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham', in *Celt and Saxon: Studies in the Early British Border*, ed. N. K. Chadwick (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 63-118 and H. S. Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', *TDNAAS*, n.s. 2 (1970), 51-62.
[22] John of Worcester was engaged in writing his *Chronicon ex Chronicis*, a continuation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, until the 1140s. See *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. R. R. Darlington and P. McGurk, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1995) and A. Gransden, 'Cultural Transition at Worcester in the Anglo-Norman Period', in *Medieval Art and Architecture in Worcester Cathedral*, British Archaeological

source materials.[23] As with Symeon's *Libellus*, however, one of the most revealing aspects of the text when used as a barometer of spiritual interests and concerns, is the silence maintained on certain key issues. Some of the most significant insecurities, even hostilities, suggested in this manner by the *Historia Regum* concern Hexham. Hexham is little mentioned by any of the Durham sources, which in itself is not remarkable because many of them, for example the political tracts, would have had little cause to do so. The *Libellus de exordio*'s reticence may be explained because at the time of Symeon's writing Hexham was not a significant player in the spiritual life of the region and so would not have merited the mention which might have been expected later in the century. The situation with the *Historia Regum* is different, however, because it is a compilation of older sources intended to cover events throughout the kingdom even at the peak of Hexham's Anglo-Saxon fame and influence. The virtual silence about the ancient church and bishopric is thus more striking than in the other texts, and is further highlighted by the mid- to late-twelfth-century additions of Hexham details which were made when a copy found its way into the scriptorium at Hexham.[24] These interpolations stand out starkly from the earlier compilation since they have been added during the entries for the eighth century yet contain information about the twelfth. They thereby not only include the necessary information, but also emphasise the previous lack of it.

Other Durham Works

In addition to these major works, a number of shorter chronicles and tracts were produced. The *Historia post Bedam* (1148x1161) reflects an early stage of the *Historia Regum* blended with elements drawn from work of Henry of Huntingdon.[25] Its influence on later Durham historiography was limited, though it was taken up by Roger of Howden and formed the basis of the first part of his Chronicle.[26] A further chronicle

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Association Conference Transactions for the year 1975, I (1978), pp. 1-14; reprinted in her *Legends and Traditions*, pp. 107-23, at 116-20.

[23] For discussion of source materials, see Blair, 'Some Observations on the *Historia Regum*'; C. Hart, 'Byrhtferth's Northumbrian Chronicle', *EHR* 97 (1982), 558-582; M. Lapidge, 'Byrhtferth of Ramsey and the Early Sections of the *Historia Regum* Attributed to Symeon of Durham', *ASE* 10 (1981), 97-122 and Walterspacher, *The Church of Hexham*, pp. 52-8 and 67.

[24] See below, pp. 183-6.

[25] Piper, 'Historical Interests', pp. 302-3, Walterspacher, *The Church of Hexham*, pp. 53-5 and Taylor, *Medieval Historical Writing in Yorkshire*, p. 6.

[26] *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols., RS 75 (London, 1868), I, pp. xxv-xxxiii and 1-210.

up to 1072, now lost to us, has been identified and traced through later sources.[27] It is of particular value in those places where it challenges the views put forward by Symeon and others, for example its positive verdict on Bishop Æthelric. A number of pamphlets or tracts were also produced which focused on the particular needs and concerns of the community at specific points in their development. The *De obsessione Dunelmi, et de probitate Vhtredi comitis, et de comitibus qui ei successerunt*, traces the connections between the earls of Northumbria and the bishops of Durham in the eleventh century.[28] Underlying this narrative framework, its purpose was to establish the community of St Cuthbert's claim to ownership of certain estates.[29] The *De iniusta vexatione Willelmi episcopi primi, per Willelmum regum filium magni regis*, is a justificatory tract defending the position of William of Saint-Calais who was accused of treason in William Rufus' court.[30] Views differ as to the date of composition, but its purpose for the monks was to exonerate the monastic bishop who had founded their priory.[31] The Durham monks produced a different type of historical text in the *De primo Saxonum aduentu*.[32] This is a series of histories of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, which gives particular prominence to the bishops of Durham. The earliest version of the text can be dated to the episcopate of Ranulf Flambard, though evidence of updating shows that the process of composition did not end then.[33] Another historical product of Durham's scriptorium was the pamphlet propounding Durham's rights over Carlisle, which was probably produced in the 1120s.[34] Carlisle had been under Durham's jurisdiction until Bishop Ranulf went into exile, when jurisdiction was apparently transferred to York.[35] Evidence of an erasure in the *Libellus de exordio* supports the theory that the Durham monks were attempting to claim the rights for their own church, though the establishment of an independent see in Carlisle in 1133 effectively ended such

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[27] See H. H. E. Craster, 'The Red Book of Durham', in *EHR* 40 (1925), 523-9. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 114-5.
[28] *SMOO*, I, pp. 215-20.
[29] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 122. For discussion see Morris, C. J., 'Marriage and Murder in Eleventh-Century Northumbria: A Study of *De Obsessione Dunelmi*', *BP* 82 (1992), pp. 5-27.
[30] *SMOO*, I, pp. 170-95.
[31] See 'De iniusta vexacione Willelmi episcopi primi per Willelmum regem filium Willelmi magni regis', ed. H. S. Offler, revised for publication by A. J. Piper and A. I. Doyle, in *Chronology, Conquest and Conflict in Medieval England: Camden Miscellany xxxiv*, Camden Fifth Series, 10 (1997), pp. 53-104, especially pp. 60-8, H. S. Offler, 'The Tractate "De Iniusta Vexatione Willelmi Episcopi Primi"', *EHR* 66 (1951), 321-41 and Philpott, 'The *De iniusta uexacione Willelmi episcopi primi* and Canon Law in Anglo-Norman Durham', in *AND*, pp. 125-37.
[32] *SMOO*, II, pp. 365-84.
[33] Rollason, *LDE*, pp. lxxix-lxxx.
[34] R. Sharpe, 'Symeon as Pamphleteer', in *Symeon*, pp. 214-29.
[35] *LDE*, Continuation, pp. 274-5.

aspirations.[36] Finally the twelfth-century monks of Durham demonstrated a strong interest in handling and collecting historical writings and then reshaping the purposes of those texts to voice a message of their own, as can be seen in the case of the historical compilations of MSS CCCC139 and CCCC 66/CUL Ff.i.27.[37] Durham's involvement in creating, preserving and transmitting a wide variety of historiographical materials was, therefore, extensive. The purpose of this chapter is to explore to what extent the historical writings produced throughout the period elsewhere in the north-east reveal a relationship with Durham's historiography and the ideas propounded through it.

OTHER HISTORIOGRAPHY FROM THE NORTH-EAST

Various historical texts were produced at other centres in the north-east in the twelfth century and the following works, listed in chronological order, are important for our discussion.[38] A brief account of the foundation of St Mary's was produced by Stephen of Whitby.[39] At York Minster, Hugh the Chantor (c.1133-39) wrote a *History of the Church of York*, covering the years 1066-1127.[40] Two further chronicles concerning the church of York were also produced; the *Chronica Pontificum ecclesiæ Eboracensis* (c.1127)[41] and the much shorter *Chronica de Archiepiscopis Eboracensis*.[42] In 1155x1157 Ailred of Rievaulx wrote his account of the battle of the Standard, the *Relatio de Standardo*.[43] At Hexham a number of historical works were produced during the twelfth century. Prior Richard (1141-c.1163) wrote his *De Gestis Regis Stephani, et de bello Standardii*, c.1139x1141.[44] This was followed by his *Brevis annotatio bonae memoriae Ricardi, prioris et de antiquo et moderno statu Hagustaldensis ecclesiae, et*

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[36] *LDE*, II, 5. The erasure is in the earliest manuscript of the text. See D. Rollason, 'The Making of the *Libellus de exordio*: The Evidence of Erasures and the Alterations in the Two Earliest Manuscripts', in *Symeon*, pp. 140-56, at pp. 148-50.

[37] See discussion below, pp. 184-5.

[38] Although outside the scope of this thesis, in the 1140s Alfred, the sacrist of the minster of secular canons at Beverley, wrote his *Annales sive Historia de Gestis Regum Britannie* from the British period to 1129. This work built upon northern traditions and sources, making use of Bede and Symeon in addition to Geoffrey of Monmouth. See Taylor, *Medieval Historical Writing in Yorkshire*, p. 8.

[39] *De Fundatione Abbatiæ Sanctæ Mariæ Virginis Eboraci Anno ab Incarnatione Domini mlxxxviij*, in *MA* III, pp. 544-6 and partly printed in *Cart. Whit.*, pp. xxxiv-xxxvii. See above, p. 22.

[40] *Hugh the Chantor, The History of the Church of York 1066-1127*, ed. C. Johnson, 2nd ed., revised M. Brett, C. N. L. Brooke and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1990).

[41] *The Historians of the Church of York and Its Archbishops*, 3 vols, ed. J. Raine, RS 71 (London, 1886), II, pp. 312-87.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 513-30.

[43] *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, 4 vols. RS 82 (London, 1884-9), III, pp. 181-99.

[44] *The Priory of Hexham*, ed. Raine, I, pp. 63-106.

de pontificibus eiusdem ecclesiae, in 1147x1154.[45] Ailred, whilst a Cistercian at Rievaulx, was also, as we have seen, closely associated with Hexham and his piece about the translation of Hexham relics in 1154, *De sanctis ecclesiæ Haugustaldensis, et eorum miraculis libellus*, can be considered alongside the Hexham sources. Although hagiographical in nature, it incorporates some valuable historical information which illuminates the details provided elsewhere by other historical sources.[46] Additions were made to the *Historia Regum* text while it was at Hexham, and these can be dated 1155x1165.[47] In addition, Prior John of Hexham (c.1160-c.1209) wrote a continuation to the *Historia Regum*: his *Historia Joannis, Prioris Haugustaldensis Ecclesiæ, xxv annorum*.[48] The short account of the foundation of Whitby in the 1070s, the *Memorial of Foundations and of the Earlier Benefactions*, was compiled a century after the events, though almost certainly using near-contemporary material.[49] Selby's foundation narrative, the *Historia Selebiensis monasterii*, was also written over a century after the events it purports to record.[50] Towards the close of the twelfth century, and in the early years of the thirteenth, several Cistercian foundation narratives were written[51] and William of Newburgh wrote his highly-respected *Historia Rerum Anglicarum.*[52]

There is clearly not the space here to undertake a comprehensive study of all of these texts, so a selective approach must be taken. This is facilitated by the fact that, as this list indicates, the church whose interest in historical writing most closely rivals Durham's in both volume and content was none other than Hexham, which received scant mention from Durham's twelfth-century historians, yet which we know from the previous chapter was intimately related. A detailed case-study of some of the most relevant aspects of Hexham's historiography therefore forms the basis of this study. In order to develop the research of the previous chapter, this discussion concentrates again on Prior Richard's *De statu* and Ailred's *De sanctis* and consequently does not include a detailed appraisal of Prior Richard's account of the Battle of the Standard, or Prior John's *Historia xxv annorum*.

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[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 1-62. For comments on its dating, see below, p. 181.
[46] Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. 173-203.
[47] See below, p. 183.
[48] *The Priory of Hexham*, ed. Raine, I, pp. 107-72. Raine dates the work to the reign of Henry II.
[49] *Cart. Whit.*, pp. 1-7. See above, pp. 21-2.
[50] *The Coucher Book of Selby*. See above, p. 51.
[51] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 287-95 and *MOY*, p. 288. See below, p. 196.
[52] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 263-8. *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, 4 vols., RS 82 (London, 1884-9), II.

HEXHAM'S HISTORIOGRAPHY

Two lines of enquiry need to be followed. The first is to pursue a detailed analysis of the relevant texts to determine how and to what extent Hexham writers were influenced by Durham's historical perspectives. The second is to question what this historiographical relationship reveals about the spiritual interchange and concerns of the two churches.

Prior Richard's History of Hexham

Prior Richard's *Brevis annotatio bonae memoriae de antiquo et moderno statu Hagustaldensis ecclesiae, et de pontificibus eiusdem ecclesiae* embraces the whole history of his house. The first of its two books covers events from its Anglo-Saxon foundation until the destruction by the Danish king Haldan, while the second covers the flight of the Lindisfarne community with St Cuthbert's body in 875 until the refoundation of Hexham in 1113. As is obvious even from the manner of presenting the material, Richard was quite openly associating the history of his church with the history of St Cuthbert's church. In the first two chapters of Book II Richard traces the story of the Lindisfarne community's departure from their island home, the amalgamation of the dioceses of Lindisfarne and Hexham, and the founding of the church of Durham. A close partnership between the churches is thus emphasised, including the claim that the church of Durham actually embodied the bishopric of Hexham: 'Hoc igitur modo, cum sancto corpore, episcopalis sedes, quæ apud Hesteldesham fuerat, per successores Lindisfarnensium episcoporum, primo apud Cestram, deinde apud Dunelmum usque ad præsens permansit'.[53] However, in ch. 3 Richard abruptly changes his theme and states that such a relationship no longer existed: 'Quod Hagustaldensis ecclesia ... prærogativa hanc libertatem optinet, quod nec propter sinodus, nec propter crisma, nec propter aliquam causam, episcopo Dunelmensi aliquod debitum debet'.[54] While carefully avoiding all concrete dates and details, Richard claims that Hexham was absolutely independent of Durham in the area of ecclesiastical dues and was entitled to look to York as much as Durham in jurisdictional matters. His primary concern in this chapter was to stress that the choice lay with Hexham as to with which episcopal centre it should be associated. From this point onwards, Richard uses every opportunity to stress Hexham's autonomy in relation to Durham and its close dealings with York. One of

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[53] *De statu*, II. 2.
[54] *De statu*, II. 3.

Richard's primary purposes in writing his *De statu*, therefore, was to state that although the priory of Hexham acknowledged and celebrated its early connections with St Cuthbert and his bishops and community, it now considered itself to be entirely independent of the church of Durham and, indeed, closely related to the church at York. This is a bold thematic move on Richard's part, but when the details of the text are examined in depth, it can be seen that he supports his aims through a number of more subtle means which both stress the substance of his argument and also reveal further the connections between the churches of Hexham and Durham and their historiography.

Prior Richard's Presentation of the Relationship between Hexham and Durham

Status

Throughout the text Richard strives to portray the church of Hexham as separate from and equal, perhaps even superior, to the church of Durham in Durham's own particular areas of spiritual renown such as the cult of saints and the provision of sanctuary. He maintains that even through the years of desolation, the saints of the church never deserted their relics, thus ensuring an unbroken history of sacred protection and favour. He also records that Alfred Westou elevated the relics and translated them to places of prominence around the altar, thus appropriating for Hexham's benefit the story told by Symeon for Durham's benefit.[55] In the final chapters of the book, Richard records the privilege of sanctuary awarded to the church in ancient times, including details of the various fines imposed for different levels of transgression of the sanctuary.[56] He thus ends his work with a strong claim to ancient inviolable rights which would have reminded any northern reader of the extensive sanctuary associated with St Cuthbert's church in Durham. In this way Richard described a relationship between equals, rather than between a major and a subordinate church. He therefore avoids any suggestion that Durham's importance and influence might have been in any way greater than Hexham's own.

Restoration

Symeon had presented the foundation of the monastic community in Durham in 1083 as the refoundation of the monastic community of Lindisfarne, and this approach contributed to his disregard of the intervening clerical community.[57] Richard was even

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[55] *De statu*, II, 4. For comparison with Symeon's version of the same events, *LDE*, III, 7.
[56] *De statu*, II, 13-14. Cf. Hall, 'The Sanctuary of St Cuthbert', pp. 426-30.
[57] See above, pp. 164-5.

more explicit. He presented the new foundation as a revival of the standards of the abbey in its Anglo-Saxon 'Golden Age', thereby relegating the contribution of Eilaf and his family to little more than a regrettable interlude in an otherwise glorious history. In his brief description of the involvement of the two Eilafs and Richard de Maton, the canon from Beverley,[58] Prior Richard comments that the church was *in hoc miserabili statu*. He laments that the church 'quondam inclita, et multiplici cultu possessionis et religionis magnifica, sed tunc, ob incolarum perfidiam, et malitiam gravem sæcularium et carnalium hominum, oppressione divulsa ac pessumdata'.[59] From this condemnation of the worthlessness of the church's religious leaders, Richard enters into a eulogy for Archbishop Thomas II who began the transformation which led to the institution of an Augustinian priory.[60] His many graces and virtues are in stark contrast to the *malitiam gravem* just recorded, which paves the way for the arrival of a new community which similarly eschewed such low standards and embraced a true regard for the sanctity of the place. Richard records how the archbishop wished to restore the former grandeur of the church, and then he describes the hand-over of responsibility to the canons as a freeing of the church: 'de manu prædicti Ricardi de Maton præfatam ecclesiam Haugustaldensem liberavit'.[61] In Richard's account the canons then patiently suffered hardship at Eilaf's hands with no complaint, until divine justice prevailed to establish their rightful position: 'Unde Divina pietas, apud quam suorum patientia nunquam periit, tandem illorum inopiæ miserta, absque omni scandalo, et cum magno honore illis sua restituit'.[62] After the canons' full establishment in the church Richard then records only the succession of Archbishop Thurstan (whom Richard felt was a worthy successor to Thomas because of the favour he showed to the reformed orders), the extensive list of lands, properties, tithes and rights given to the canons, and the ancient rights of sanctuary. The choice and presentation of this material creates the impression that not only did the priory suddenly begin to prosper as soon as Eilaf was removed, but also that the canons were restoring the traditions of the ancient church, the rights of which Richard returns to in the final chapters. His work thus comes full circle with the

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[58] See above, p. 92. n. 23.
[59] *De statu*, II, 5.
[60] *De statu*, II, 5-7.
[61] *De statu*, II, 7-8.
[62] *De statu*, II, 8.

Augustinian canons re-embodying the glorious past of the church which had been described in the opening chapters.[63]

Celibacy

One of the most visible and widely acknowledged signs of the restoration of the old monastic order was the emphasis on celibacy. This issue alone could act as a short-hand for wider reform in the Gregorian church. Symeon had broached the issue tentatively: although he was cautious about condemning the clerical community outright for its married status,[64] he did portray St Cuthbert as a misogynist and Victoria Tudor has argued that his purpose in doing so was to discredit the married clerks whom his community was replacing.[65] Richard, however, took a stronger stand than Symeon. He devoted a considerable passage to the praise of Archbishop Thomas II's chastity.[66] In a long digression designed to extol his virtues Richard detailed how he preserved his virginity even against the advice of the doctors. This seemingly strange addition to Hexham's foundation story had a direct message, however. Richard was attempting, as Symeon had done before him, to present his own celibate, regular, community as the true inheritors of the original celibate, monastic, community. One way in which they both achieved this was to focus on celibacy which distinguished their communities from the hereditary communities they sought to replace. In providing such a praiseworthy picture of Thomas, Richard was implicitly criticising Eilaf, and preparing the way for the account of urgently needed reforms. Richard considered his community to be the rightful and worthy heir of the original Anglo-Saxon community. Through his work he not only justified the position of his community, but also aligned its actions and the circumstances of its foundation with those of the Durham community, thereby implicitly suggesting that its foundation credentials were equally valid and significant.

Dating Clauses

Richard enhances his major theme of Hexham's independence from Durham in his literary style, through the construction of elaborate dating clauses which reveal

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[63] This technique can also be observed in the manner of presentation in ch. 4. The chapter begins with a comment about the refoundation in 1113, which, chronologically, is out of place, because the narrative is there concerned with the early eleventh century. Richard's point in this chapter is that, despite all the ravages, the saints never deserted the church, which leads to the obvious conclusion that any move to honour them is therefore entirely appropriate. The Augustinian refoundation is therefore presented as most pleasing to the saints themselves.

[64] See Rollason, *LDE*, pp. lxxxii-lxxxv and 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century', pp. 189-90.

[65] *LDE*, II, 7. Tudor, 'The Misogyny of St Cuthbert', 158-9.

[66] *De statu*, II, 6.

significant points of reference for the events he describes.[67] In the clause in Book II, ch. 1 he refers to Christ, Lindisfarne, St Cuthbert, the bishopric of Hexham, the priory of Hexham and Bishop Eadulf of Lindisfarne. This construction places the bishopric and priory of Hexham within the context of Lindisfarne, its principal saint and its bishop, which highlights the point which Richard wishes to make at this stage in his work, that the bishopric of St Cuthbert only survived after the Danish attacks through amalgamation with the bishopric of Hexham. The beginning of ch. 3 emphasises this point even more clearly as it mentions Bishop Aidan and his line until Bishop Ealdhun, then St Cuthbert, then St Wilfrid and his line until the same Bishop Ealdhun. This construction, pivoted around the key saint, presents Bishop Ealdhun as the successor to both the Lindisfarne and Hexham traditions. By ch. 8, however, by which time Richard has demonstrated the church's independence from Durham and close association with York instead, Richard is using very different elements in his dating clauses. In a seven-element dating formulae following extensive praises of Archbishop Thomas, the references to Lindisfarne and Cuthbert and his community have been replaced by the foundation of the archiepiscopal cathedral of York as a chronological landmark. By moving the points of reference in Hexham's history Richard suggests that the history of the community and church of St Cuthbert is only one marker amongst several in the passage of time and events, and that other connections have a more immediate importance for the Hexham canons.

Alfred Westou and Eilaf

Richard was also highly selective about which items of information concerning Durham, and Durham-related matters, he chose to include. Matters which might have reflected poorly on Hexham's standing in relation to Durham were therefore sometimes omitted or heavily glossed. One of the key points of contact between the two churches in the eleventh century was realised through the work and interests of the Durham sacrist, Alfred Westou, and his son, the Durham treasurer, Eilaf.[68] Richard maintains a noticeable silence on the precise nature of this relationship, however, thereby avoiding the need to record any of the details which can be found in certain other sources, such as *An Account of the Early Provosts of the Church of Hexham*, which present Hexham as a

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[67] Cf. K.-U. Jäschke, 'Remarks on Datings in the *Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis ecclesie*, in *Symeon*, pp. 46-60.

[68] Opinions differ over Alfred's precise role in Hexham and his actual involvement with the relics there. For a discussion of his family's activities, see the appendix above.

subordinate church belonging to the bishop of Durham.[69] Where Richard does include information about Alfred, though, he does so to Hexham's advantage, describing him as *strenuus*, and recording that he was led through a *Divino ... oraculo* to elevate the relics and translate them to a more honorable position within the church.[70] This association would seem to have been entirely to Hexham's benefit since it displayed a virtuous man recognising the importance of serving the relics appropriately, and it avoids giving any hint of the story told by Symeon that the relics were actually removed altogether from the church in Hexham and taken to Durham.[71] It was important for the church's claim to independence that there should be no lingering doubt on this matter. The community of St Cuthbert possessed numerous relics and some of them acted as proof of possession of certain lands and churches associated with those relics.[72] It was Richard's concern to refute the suggestion that any of the Hexham relics had found their way into Durham's collection because of this added legal significance.

Richard also provides very little information about Eilaf II's deathbed entry into the priory of Durham in 1138,[73] choosing again not to elaborate any further on the nature of the family's Durham-Hexham relationship. In contrast, he pays considerable attention to the details of his handing over of Hexham property to the canons, including the crucial fact that Eilaf's sons witnessed the deed,[74] and therefore could not subsequently make a counter-claim. He states that Eilaf had treated the canons harshly, but that they treated him as a father.[75] This not only reflects well on the humble patience of the canons, but also serves to strengthen their claims to be Eilaf's heirs in terms of the Hexham property.

The Transfer of Hexham to York

Richard is also vague about how the transfer of Hexham from Durham to York took place, how it became part of a prebend, and how Eilaf therefore slipped into a junior position beneath the York prebendary, Richard de Maton.[76] This information would have fitted appropriately in ch. 5, but it was forfeited in favour of a lengthy passage of praise about the archbishops, which supported Richard's claim of Hexham's total identification with York. Despite the chapter heading indicating that the subject

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[69] See appendix.
[70] *De statu*, II, 4.
[71] *LDE*, III, 7.
[72] For example, the relics of St Æbbe from Coldingham. See above, p. 159.
[73] *De statu*, II, 10.
[74] 'et duo filii ejusdem Æillavi, Samuel et Ethelwoldus'. *De statu*, II, 9.
[75] *De statu*, II, 8-9.

matter was 'Quomodo illa ... Hagustaldensis videlicet ecclesia, ecclesiæ Eboracensi, ... in præbenda sit data', Richard avoids mention of the reasons for the transfer or the process by which it took place, nor does he include mention of Eilaf's Durham connections and how he came to be associated with the archbishop of York. He merely comments that 'Hujus ... ecclesiæ ... sub Primo Thoma, Eboracensi archiepiscopo, quidam sæcularis presbyter, nomine Æillavus, curam egit' and then that after Richard de Maton was given the church as a prebend with the vill of Holm, Eilaf's son, another priest, *eidem ecclesiæ sumministravit*. He then offers fulsome praise of the archbishops of York.[77] A glance at some of the Durham charters indicates that throughout their lifetimes both Eilafs were still considered to be closely connected with Durham, which makes Richard's omission of these significant details more pointed.[78]

Conclusion

Richard's work as a whole, with all its omissions and glosses, pointedly presents Durham's connection with Hexham as purely historical and of no significance in his own time and, furthermore, suggests that Hexham was independent from and equal to the church of Durham in terms of status, jurisdiction and spiritual life. The early chapters of Book II, which claim that the bishopric of Hexham was restored through the bishop of Lindisfarne at Chester-le-Street, help to give substance and respectability to a depressed period of Hexham's history and present the story as though it was St Cuthbert's bishop and community which gained through association with the traditions of Hexham, rather than *vice versa*. Richard seems to have been extremely wary of Durham interest and so only allowed a connection to be evident at a period which could not present any renewed threat to Hexham's status or identity. He does not detail how Durham lost Hexham, thus avoiding any possible claim on Durham's part, but he does make it clear that such interest as Durham once held in Hexham had been superseded by the involvement of York. However, Richard has possibly overstretched himself since throughout his work his most effective means for describing Hexham's independence was through references, whether explicit or implicit, to the history and status of Durham

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[76] See above, p. 92.

[77] *De statu*, II, 5.

[78] The forged charter purporting to record the confirmation by Bishop William of Saint-Calais in 1085 of the gift of Tynemouth to the Durham monks by Earl Waltheof includes as the principal witness after the bishop *Eilaui + preost de Exsteldesham*; *DEC* no. 5, p. 40. Similarly a charter purporting to confirm a grant in 1091/2 of churches in Allertonshire also names *Æi+laui presb(i)teri* as a witness; *DEC* no. 6, pp. 48-53. Even the grant made by Eilaf to the monks of Durham in 1138 of the vill of Cocken describes Eilaf as holding the vill by hereditary right from the bishops of Durham: '... villam que dicitur Cokene, quam idem Æillauus presbiter antiquo patrimonii iure de me et meis predecessoribus tenebat'; *DEC* no. 28, pp. 119-21.

itself. Even his literary style has been shown to derive in part from Symeon's *Libellus de exordio*. This was not an isolated phenomenon, since his *De Gestis Regis Stephani, et de bello Standardii* also shows a strong thematic relationship with Durham's historiography.[79] Ironically, Richard's best attempts to escape from Durham influence have, in fact, only emphasised the connection.

Ailred's De sanctis ecclesiae Haugustaldensis

Richard's agenda seems, therefore, to be very forcefully presented, but in the absence of corresponding Durham sources, how can we verify or criticise the substance of his claims and determine how exactly the church of Durham viewed and acted towards his priory? One might expect that other Hexham sources would support the same view as Richard, who was the prior and spokesman of the house. Fortuitously there is one particular piece of writing connected with, but not entirely emanating from, Hexham whose independence in this respect provides a very useful measure by which to judge the claims and concerns of Richard's work. Ailred of Rievaulx who wrote the tract *De sanctis ecclesiae Haugustaldensis, et eorum miraculis libellus* for the translation of the Hexham relics in 1154, was a writer with rather different sympathies and purposes.[80] Despite his Cistercian allegiance, his family background meant that he had a vested interest in exonerating those former priests of Hexham whom Richard wished to criticise, or at least ignore, whilst his education in Durham would have made him familiar with the Durham historiographical and hagiographical writings. Ailred's interest in the saints in Hexham, along with his good relations with the canons, demonstrated most clearly in the fact that he was invited to preach at the translation ceremony, means that he must also have known Richard's *De statu*, which was probably completed not long before his own writing.[81] In the prologue and chs. 11 and 12 Ailred treats the issues of his family, their removal from Durham to Hexham and their care of the Hexham relics, and this can be compared with Richard's account.[82]

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[79] In this work Richard stressed the power of the Hexham saints and their determining role in history, in much the same way as St Cuthbert was portrayed by Symeon and others as intervening in his community's history. For Richard's sources, see Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. cxlv-cxlvi and Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 287-8.

[80] See above, pp. 100-103.

[81] Ailred certainly shows great respect for Richard, of whom he writes 'qui etiam cum esset in sæculo, ob insigne castitatis et sobrietatis fere monachus putaretur', which was praise indeed for a Cistercian to make of a canon. *De sanctis*, ch. 11.

[82] Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. 173-6 and 190-9.

Alfred Westou and Eilaf

Ailred's view of his great-grandfather, Alfred, is most revealing. His praise of Alfred echoes the Durham view, while his statement that Alfred took no relics away from Hexham supports the Hexham argument.[83] Even in this respect, though, he manages to present Alfred exceptionally well. Rather than being prevented from removing Acca's bones, as he was with Alchmund's, Ailred claims that Alfred, who had the gift of prophecy, foresaw the future splendour of Hexham and so did not wish to diminish it.[84] This is clearly an excuse on Ailred's part, but it suggested that the current, and future, success of Hexham was all part of a divine plan in which Alfred's family played a valuable role. For our purposes, it also shows a very different view from that given by Richard of Alfred's involvement in Hexham (that is, *Durham's* involvement, since Alfred represented the Durham community).[85]

Richard's writing also made virtually no mention of Eilaf I, except to say that he acquired the church from Archbishop Thomas. Ailred finds cause to describe in some detail how Eilaf struggled with very few resources to support himself and his family in his early years in Hexham and how much loving care he invested in the cleaning, rebuilding, and decoration of the church.[86] Ailred had possibly felt stung by the accusations levelled at his father by Richard of hoarding the church's revenues for himself rather than sharing them with the canons[87] and this description of the service and dedication of his grandfather might have been an attempt to redress the balance in his family's favour. For Ailred, the principal purpose of his sermon was to build up the cult of saints in Hexham church and he was keen to commemorate his own family's contribution to this.[88] Richard, of course, had mentioned no such thing. Even when Ailred recorded an incident which should have reflected badly on his forebears, such as Alfred's attempted theft of some of the relics of St Alchmund to take to Durham, which was prevented by the saint himself, he did so with such sympathy and affection that both the family and the saints' reputation was actually enhanced.[89]

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[83] *De sanctis*, ch. 11. Cf. *LDE*, III, 7 and *De statu*, II, 4.
[84] 'prævidens forte in spiritu (nam et spiritum prophetiæ dicitur habuisse) quid religionis, quid honoris ea ipsa ecclesia erat habitur ; sacras illas reliquias absportare noluit ...'. *De sanctis*, ch. 11, p. 190.
[85] See above, pp. 174-5.
[86] *De sanctis*, ch. 11.
[87] *De statu*, II, 8.
[88] See Squire, *Aelred*, pp. 112-14.
[89] *De sanctis*, ch. 12. In ch. 11 Ailred also described how his uncle Aldred was tempted by their awesomeness to steal the relics - only to find that the saints would not allow it. The story should reflect badly on the thief, but Ailred presented Aldred as an impetuous youth overcome by the power of the relics and thus the reader feels indulgent towards him.

The Arrival of the Augustinian Canons

A crucial part of Ailred's account of his family's connection with Hexham is the episode concerning the Augustinian arrival. Richard, like the writer of the *Historia Regum* text,[90] placed the initiative for the foundation solely with the archbishop, while Richard de Maton and Eilaf were merely dealt with as troublesome impediments.[91] Ailred presents a whole new scenario in which Eilaf himself, in his deep concern for the welfare of the relics, realised his own shortcomings and suggested to the archbishop that he bring in canons.[92] With the archbishop's approval Eilaf, according to Ailred, set about building wooden dwellings for the canons with his own hands and then he, not the archbishop, introduced two canons, one from York and the other from Beverley.[93] Ailred therefore transformed the advent of the canons from an occasion when the unpopular family of priests was ejected to a laudable decision and sacrifice, for the greater good of the saints, made entirely on the initiative of the priest himself. Ailred did not wish to suggest that his family was forced out of its position, so he has made a conscious effort to present his family members as actively involved in some of the most venerated aspects of Hexham's recent history. This is in pointed contrast to Richard who avoided mentioning the family as far as possible and, when details of them had to be included, kept them to a minimum. Ailred's view in respect of his family is personal rather than representative of any particular church, but his work helps to highlight what Richard was intentionally hiding and therefore which aspects of the Durham-Hexham relationship were difficult for the Hexham canons to handle.

Spiritual Relationship between Durham and Hexham

So, how has this investigation of certain aspects of Hexham's historiography furthered our understanding of Durham's place in the spiritual life of the north-east? It has opened a window on Durham's complicated relationship with a church which had been subordinate to it during the eleventh century but which rapidly grew into a source of spiritual 'competition' in the twelfth. The Durham sources' silence about Hexham suggests that there was little meaningful contact between the two churches. However, the detailed and partisan nature of the Hexham sources, which in themselves show a thorough knowledge of Durham's literary and historical output, provide us not only with information on the Augustinian canons' view of the relationship, but also with

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[90] *HR*, s.a. 1112.
[91] *De statu*, II, 5. See above, pp. 171-2.
[92] *De sanctis*, ch. 11.

enough information to try to reconstruct the position held by Durham which they were attempting to challenge. Hexham's historiography has therefore shown us that during the late-eleventh century the church of Durham lost control of the church of Hexham,[94] possibly at the very time that the new monastic community at Durham evicted its secular predecessors. During the twelfth century when the Augustinian community was establishing itself, it had cause to perceive the church of Durham as a threat to its independent development.[95] How that threat was manifested is not entirely apparent, though Richard's *De statu* indicates that at least part of the problem was Hexham's anomalous position as a jurisdictional peculiar of York in the diocese of Durham.[96] The measures taken by Hexham to cope with the threat entailed reviving its ancient areas of spiritual strength, which happened to be some of Durham's most important spiritual attributes: cult and rights of sanctuary. Hexham also, perhaps somewhat pointedly, developed a new area of expertise in order to further its claim, and, possibly, to challenge Durham's own supremacy: the writing, or rewriting, of history. Durham's silence about Hexham may be a sign of its irritation that it could not take a more active role in determining Hexham's development. Alternatively it may indicate the monks' jealousy as the canons became established and accomplished in those areas of spiritual life in which Durham itself excelled. Whatever the reason, Richard's defiant tone suggests that Durham's attitude was predatory rather than disinterested, and it was in reaction to Durham's lead that Hexham was responding. The Durham community's greater age, wealth and political influence had given it a headstart in its development, which meant that it was only natural that as the Hexham canons flourished they should do so in an awareness of Durham's strengths and weaknesses. However the canons of Hexham had a sense of their own importance which meant that they would rather compete than merely follow. Thus Prior Richard wrote a history which, while steeped in an awareness of Symeon's *Libellus de exordio*, is yet shaped by an agenda which demanded that he intrude, at almost every convenient opportunity, evidence of Hexham's complete and official independence of Durham's control. The prior, perhaps, protests too much; his insistent claims suggest a desperate attempt to deny any relationship rather than a confident reflection of the mature development he is asserting. Ailred's work also shows a thorough knowledge of the Durham miracle and translation literature. This in itself is not surprising, but the writing seems to be a Hexham version

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[93] *Ibid.*
[94] See above, pp. 170-1 and also pp. 89-92.
[95] See discussion about claims to relics above, pp. 174-5 and also pp. 137-42.

of the same rather than an independent piece of literature. The Hexham writers, in an attempt to prove their equality with, and independence of, Durham, seem in fact to define themselves in terms of the all-pervading influence of Durham which they sought to deny.

Hexham's Independence of Durham

The *De statu* and *De sanctis* therefore support the theory that the Hexham canons in the early to mid-twelfth century felt insecure in their relationship with Durham. However, other evidence permits us to refine that view. As noted above, the absence of any Hexham relics from the Durham relic list from the time of Bishop William of Ste-Barbe may suggest that the Durham monks had, in fact, dropped all claim to relics from Hexham by the middle of the century. It is certainly striking that even in an abridged version of the list they did not include mention of the controversial relics.[97] The list is contemporary with Prior Richard's history[98] and while the precise dates of neither can be ascertained, the two may very well be connected. If the list were later than the *De statu* this might suggest that the Durham monks had finally conceded the point when Richard's work was circulated, while if the list were earlier, this might suggest that Richard was emboldened to write by the Durham community's admission that it did not possess the Hexham relics. Either way, both communities seem to have acknowledged c.1150 that Durham no longer had a claim to Hexham's relics and, consequently, to any form of rule over the church.[99]

What can have precipitated this change of attitude? One landmark occasion which might signify a change in relations between the two priories, may well have been the entry of Eilaf II into Durham Cathedral priory in 1138.[100] At this point the canons may have felt that they had finally achieved their purpose of evicting the person whom they perceived to be an impediment to their progress both through his physical presence and through his historic and continuing relationship with the overbearing church of Durham. On his return to Durham they may have felt that a symbolic tie had been cut. The Durham monks may also have viewed the admission as a significant, if tacit, acknowledgement of the beginning of a new, more independent, phase in Hexham's history. Within five years another change had taken place in Durham which could have

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[96] *De statu*, II, 3.
[97] See above, p. 142, n. 83.
[98] *De statu* can be dated to 1147x1154. See above, p. 169, n. 45.
[99] See above, p. 180, n. 95. Cf. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 196-214.

had major implications for the attitude of the Augustinians towards the cathedral church. The arrival of Bishop William of St Barbe, formerly Dean of York, signified a temporary change of attitude in the Durham episcopacy as William was a well-known supporter of the reformed orders.[101] In fact it is highly likely that Prior Richard of Hexham supported William in his struggle for the bishopric against William Cumin, which reveals close co-operation between the canons and the cathedral church at this crucial period.[102] It also, significantly, indicates that there were occasions on which the Durham-Hexham relationship postulated thus far could be reversed, and Hexham could be in a vital position to affect the balance of power in Durham.

By the mid-1140s, therefore, the Augustinian canons had strong reason to feel much more confident of their status in relation to Durham Cathedral Priory. It was perhaps this increased confidence that led to Prior Richard writing such a clearly-angled history of his house at this particular time. Other developments at Hexham may also have been directly influenced by events at Durham, notably the translation of relics in 1154. Richard had publicized the relics and the church well, which had prepared the way for such a major event, but the exact moment chosen may well reflect a conscious decision to avoid a potential clash with the next, less-well-disposed bishop of Durham. On 3 March 1154 when the translation took place, the Bishop-elect, Hugh du Puiset, and the archdeacon and prior, were safely out of reach of Hexham: they were returning from Rome where Hugh had been consecrated by Pope Anastasius IV.[103] Hugh's presence might have raised unwelcome questions and conflicts over episcopal jurisdiction during such an important event, and the canons achieved something of a coup in staging such a magnificent event at exactly the right time to avoid the great potential for controversy.[104]

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[100] *De statu*, II, 10.

[101] See above, pp. 107-9.

[102] Prior Richard witnessed an early charter of William of Ste-Barbe's as Bishop of Durham; *DEC* no. 34, pp 135-7. For the affair with Cumin see A. Young, *William Cumin: Border Politics and the Bishopric of Durham 1141-1144*, BP 54 (1978).

[103] Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, pp. 14-16 and *LDE* Continuation, pp. 321-3.

[104] The fact that the translation took place within the existing church and was not associated with the consecration of a new church, nor was it specifically a statement about legitimacy (as was often the case with relic translations), supports the theory that the timing of the translation was well calculated. See Walterspacher, *The Church of Hexham*, pp 43-6. The comparison with Tynemouth's translation of St Oswin in 1110 is instructive here. As a cell of St Albans in the diocese of Durham, Tynemouth presented similar difficulties to the bishop of Durham as did Hexham, a jurisdictional peculiar of York. However, Bishop Flambard attended the Tynemouth translation. Although his presence might have appeared to approve the St Albans' monks position, it was nonetheless the only way in which he could emphasise that he was still the diocesan bishop. See *Vita Osw.*, chs. 4 and 11 and above, pp. 148-9.

Hexham's position as an independent church of some significance therefore received a tremendous boost in the mid-twelfth century. In this context Richard's *De statu* can be seen as a successful attempt to consolidate a fragile but rapidly improving situation, rather than a lone bid for recognition in an otherwise oppressive environment. The final piece of evidence to be added to the investigation strengthens the pattern yet further as it shows that as the twelfth century progressed, and Hexham's status continued to improve, Hexham's historical writers grew bolder in their attempt to reshape the historiographical traditions concerning their house. The evidence relates once again to the crucial issue of the location and power of the Hexham relics, and is to be found in the interpolations added in the period 1155-1165 to the text of the *Historia Regum*.

Hexham's Interpolations in the Historia Regum

The *Historia Regum*, although it comprised a wide range of source materials, was essentially a Durham text, being compiled at Durham and receiving a major reworking there in the 1170s.[105] Two interpolations about Hexham in the entries for 740 and 781 raise questions about its transmission, however, and reveal something of the evolving attitude of Hexham and Durham towards each other.[106] The interpolations concern the relics of Sts Acca and Alchmund, which Symeon had claimed were in Durham, the later Durham relic list had omitted, and Richard and Ailred maintained were in Hexham.[107] Other than these interpolations, the *Historia Regum* contains very little information about Hexham, so why were these passages added? We have already noted Richard's concern to establish that his house enjoyed a position of independence from Durham and a close relationship with York.[108] The interpolations fit comfortably with this agenda, but they emphasise even more strongly one of Richard's other aims: the attempt to set Hexham's present position within the context of an historical continuum, and it is here that the importance of historiographical works can be appreciated most clearly of all. It was not enough simply to claim a present position or status, nor even to do that through appeals to the past which could be forgotten once the end was achieved. It was of the utmost importance to the members of religious communities to have a collective history which could continue to be cherished as a model for the present and future.[109]

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[105] For a Durham origin of MS CCCC 139 (1164x1175), which includes the text, see Meehan, *A Reconsideration of the Historical Works Associated with Symeon of Durham*, pp. 115-20 and 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts in Cistercian Houses', pp. 440-2.
[106] Walterspacher, *The Church of Hexham*, pp. 52-7.
[107] *LDE*, III, 7; *De statu*, II, 4; *De sanctis*, ch. 11, and see above, pp. 137-9 and 174-5.
[108] See above, pp. 176-7.
[109] Cf. above, pp. 162-4.

The Hexham interpolations in the *Historia Regum* boldly blend the past and present by placing twelfth-century claims within the context of eighth-century history in an attempt to prove the continuity of the saints' involvement with the faithful church. That these interpolations were made after the translation of 1154, after Prior Richard's history had been published and after some of the tensions with Durham seem to have been resolved,[110] is, however, significant. To make such alterations to another text, and a Durham text at that, is a rather different matter from creating an entirely new house history, and can be treated as a sign of how far the Hexham community felt that it had progressed in establishing and confirming its spiritual and historical credentials.

We must explore what these additions reveal about the evolving spiritual relationship between the two houses and how this evidence can be reconciled with the earlier conclusions. The choice of the *Historia Regum* as the vehicle by which these claims could be made is rich in significance. Beyond the obvious reason for using this text – that it was a semi-local history covering the appropriate time-frame – the *Historia Regum* was also, predominantly, a Durham text, on which Durham historians were still actively engaged. It received a major re-working there in the late 1170s, after the text had travelled to Hexham where the additions had been made.[111] Hexham's message, incorporated into the text of the *Historia Regum*, was therefore conveyed directly to its mark. What is really strange is how and why Durham allowed those changes to happen and subsequently included them in its own version of the text in MS CCCC 139. To understand these problems it is helpful to examine another major historiographical project being handled in the Durham scriptorium in the later twelfth century: a lavish illustrated manuscript of mainly historical texts, produced c.1188, which is now divided into CCCC 66 and CUL Ff.1.27.[112]

From a detailed examination of the pictorial and thematic evidence of this manuscript, Christopher Norton has established a very attractive case for the apparently disparate collection of texts actually having a precise structure. This structure starts with the creation of the world and gradually narrows its focus to the church of Lindisfarne and so Durham, thus placing Durham 'within a divine schema of salvation history stretching from the creation to judgment', and thereby impressing upon the reader that the church

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[110] See above, pp. 181-3.
[111] *Ibid.* Walterspacher has commented that the interpolations were possibly only 'by-products' of the opportunity to make a copy of the *Historia Regum* to be joined to Prior John's continuation, the *Historia xxv annorum*. See *The History of Hexham*, p. 56.
[112] See Norton, 'History, Wisdom and Illumination'.

of Durham, with its saints and possessions, had a precise and significant role to play in the spiritual history of the world.[113] He has also shown that the monks of Durham used this manuscript as a complex historiographical tool in the struggle over authority and interference in which they were engaged with Bishop Hugh du Puiset.[114] The importance of Norton's work for this thesis is that it demonstrates very clearly that the Durham monks had experienced an almost complete change of heart and policy towards Hexham by the second half of the twelfth century and that they skilfully manipulated this changed relationship in the worsening tensions between themselves and Bishop Hugh du Puiset. Norton has demonstrated how the manuscript reflects a subtle and pointed agenda on the part of the monks who produced the book, as a gift for the bishop, in order to impress upon him the danger of meddling in their affairs. The bishop had persistently encroached upon the priory's rights, resulting in increasing resentment amongst the monks. He had also pursued a similar policy elsewhere, including Hexham where, in the 1160s, he had come to blows with the canons when he attempted to exert his episcopal jurisdiction in the matter of an election, which had angered both the canons and the archbishop of York.[115] By ending this impressive production about the rights, relics, privileges and possessions of the Church of Durham with a copy of Prior Richard's *De Statu*, the monks 'may have felt that a suitable way of rounding off their defence of the rights and privileges of the church of Durham was to remind the bishop of another church associated with St Cuthbert where his attempts to assert control had come to nought.'[116]

This argument for the Durham monks' flexibility of attitude and ability to reassess their position and relationships may provide the answer to why they allowed the Hexham-produced interpolations to be incorporated within their own text of the *Historia Regum*. The middle years of the twelfth century clearly saw a dramatic improvement in the relationship between Durham and Hexham as the Durham monks accepted the Hexham canons' claims for independence. The arrival of a reforming bishop, William of Ste-Barbe,[117] in the 1140s probably represents something of a high point in Durham-Hexham relations. Durham's policy towards Hexham continued in its improved state despite, or perhaps because of, the deterioration in episcopal relations with both

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[113] *Ibid.*, pp. 89-102, at pp. 97-8.
[114] *Ibid.*, pp. 99-101.
[115] Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, pp. 169-70; see also Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, III, p. 80.
[116] Norton, 'History, Wisdom and Illumination', p. 100.
[117] See above, pp. 107-9.

religious bodies which followed the accession of the powerful Hugh du Puiset.[118] The inclusion of Hexham versions of its history in Durham's own *Historia Regum* compilation therefore reflects both the improved relations between the two houses and, as Norton's argument for the inclusion of Prior Richard's work in the manuscript intended for Hugh shows, the new, subtle and sophisticated Durham agenda in dealing with the unwelcome attention of the bishop. Hexham's prestige and influence grew steadily, therefore, in the second half of the twelfth century and the very fact that so many key Hexham writings and details came to be included in Durham texts is a measure of how important to the monks of Durham the Augustinian priory had become. The evidence of Prior John's *Historia xxv annorum* adds to this.[119] It is not necessary to examine the content of the text in great detail to note its significance in this context. The continuation of Durham's *Historia Regum* in Hexham is the most vivid sign that by the late-twelfth century the impetus for writing history was at least as strong, if not more so, in Hexham as in Durham. The evidence of the *Historia Regum* and its continuation should therefore warn against the assumption that Durham was always in a position to exert influence, whether spiritual, historiographical or otherwise, over its junior neighbour rather than to receive it.

THE INFLUENCE OF DURHAM ON OTHER HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE NORTH-EAST

York Minster and the Benedictines of St Mary's, Whitby and Selby

When we consider how great was Durham's historiographical influence over Hexham, and then remember Prior Richard's strenuous assertions of close connections with York following his plea for independence from Durham, we might expect that York's historiography would have exerted an even stronger influence over Hexham's than Durham's did. However, York's historiographical output was very limited. Hugh the Chantor's *History of the Church of York* has very little in common, in content or style, with either Hexham or Durham's historiography, being essentially a series of biographies of the archbishops, closely concerned with the issues of the metropolitan see. Hugh's main theme was the contest with Canterbury for the primacy,[120] and his

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[118] *Ibid.*
[119] See Raine, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. cliv-clvii.
[120] Brett, *Hugh the Chantor*, pp. xxx-xlv

secondary interest was the effort of the Scottish church to escape the metropolitan of York and become a separate province under St Andrews.[121] Likewise, as is to be expected, the chronicles of the archbishops of York were localised in their scope.[122] Intellectual and literary horizons at York in this period appear to have been limited, therefore, with interest resting solely in the history and claims of the archiepiscopal see. There may, however, have been good cause for this narrow outlook. Symeon of Durham's letter to Hugh, Dean of York (1130-32) concerning the archbishops of York,[123] suggests that historical knowledge, even about its own past, was exceedingly poor at York. It is not surprising, therefore, that York Minster was not a significant contributor to the wider historiography of the north-east.[124] What is important, however, is that in redeveloping its historical awareness, the church of York turned to Durham for assistance. Not only was Symeon asked directly for information on the archbishops, but the compiler of the *Chronica Pontificum* made use of his *Libellus de exordio*.[125] Furthermore, the surviving copy of the *Chronica de Archiepiscopis* is in DCL, MS B.II.35 (ff. 265-81), the famous copy of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* given to the Durham community by William of Saint-Calais. The *Chronica* is in a twelfth-century hand, showing that it was copied into the Durham manuscript soon after its compilation, reinforcing the historiographical link between York and Durham.[126] Perhaps, having turned to Durham for information, York allowed the text of the finished shorter chronicle to travel to the priory so that a copy could be made for the monks' own records.

York Minster's neighbour, the Benedictine monastery of St Mary's, failed to produce any historiographical work until its chronicle in the thirteenth century[127] except for Stephen of Whitby's account of its foundation, discussed in detail above.[128] This is a very short piece, concerned with justifying Stephen's actions in founding St Mary's. Its form is therefore akin to the various polemic tracts produced at Durham during the

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[121] *Ibid.*, pp. xlv-liv and Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 123-5.
[122] The *Chronica Pontificum* also dwells upon the desire of the York clergy to prove their independence from Canterbury, and in doing so it relies heavily upon Hugh the Chantor's *History*. The *Chronica de Archiepiscopis* is much shorter and contains no further original material. Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, II, pp. xx.
[123] *Ibid.*, pp. 252-8.
[124] See Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', p. 439.
[125] Bede and Folcard were also used. Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, II, pp. 20-2.
[126] See *DCM*, pp. 41-2 and Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, II, p. xxxi.
[127] *The Chronicle of St Mary's Abbey, York, from Bodley MS 39*, ed. H. H. E. Craster and M. E. Thornton, SS 148 (1934). Taylor, Medieval Historical Writing in Yorkshire, p. 14.
[128] See above, pp. 40-5. J. Taylor (*loc. cit.*) has speculated that this lack of interest in historical writing arose either from the absence of a 'literary abbot', or from the failure to endow a scriptorium.

period, but there is nothing more specific to link it with Durham's historiographical traditions. Whitby's contribution to twelfth-century historiography is similarly negligible. The only historical text to be produced there was *Memorials of Foundations*, also discussed above,[129] which is a very short text, and, apart from an introductory narrative, is simply an account of who gave which lands to the priory.[130] St Mary's and Whitby therefore contribute little to our discussion, apart from the fact that the monks of these houses, which had so much else in common with Durham Cathedral Priory,[131] clearly had little regard for the importance of writing history. This, in turn, indicates that Durham's attitude was not necessarily typical of all Benedictine houses.

The narrative concerning the foundation of Selby has been discussed in some detail above. Janet Burton has described it as a 'conventional monastic history',[132] suggesting that it is typical of the wider genre, and not specifically influenced by local interests. Indeed, there are indications that the late-twelfth-century *Historia* was considerably less concerned with establishing for the community its place in the spiritual life of the region than some of the other works produced at the time. The emphasis placed by the author on the edificatory function of the miracles and visions recorded suggests that the work was composed for 'expressly didactic purposes, presumably for reading aloud as well as private meditation'.[133] This narrative records the community's close identification with its patron saint, as Symeon's *Libellus de exordio* did for the community of St Cuthbert, but unlike Symeon's text, the *Historia* did little to associate the foundation of Selby with the other churches and communities of the region. It is perhaps indicative of this somewhat inward-looking and isolated attitude that the twelfth-century manuscript of the *Historia* is closely related to those known to be produced at the same time at Auxerre, Benedict of Selby's mother-house.[134] The scriptorium of Selby, it would seem, had not been active in assimilating or adding to local traditions and practices.

The North-Eastern Cistercians

The other major area in which to seek evidence of the influence of Durham's historiography in the north-east is in the rapidly growing Cistercian monasteries. The

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[129] See above, pp. 37-40.
[130] *Cart. Whit.*, pp. 1-7. The narrative only occupies pp. 1-2.
[131] See above, ch. 1.
[132] *MOY*, p. 23.
[133] *Ibid.*, p. 289.
[134] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Cistercian houses will be treated collectively rather than individually because they had such a strong sense of their collective Cistercian identity that in matters of policy or outlook they often acted uniformly. The family structure of Cistercian foundations also provided a ready-made network for the exchange of texts and manuscripts. Moreover, in the specific issue of twelfth-century historiography, all Cistercian houses were affected by the same centrally-issued directives which severely limited the creative outlets which might otherwise have produced a number of historical texts. At some time between 1119 and 1151 the Cistercian General Chapter issued a prohibition on unlicensed creative writing: 'SI LICEAT ALICUI NOVOS DICTARE LIBROS: Nulli liceat abbati nec monacho nec novicio libros facere, nisi forte cuiquam id in generali capitulo abbatum concessum fuerit'.[135] Although this did not restrict the reading or copying of existing historical texts, it did prevent the actual composition of new narrative histories,[136] although, as Anne Lawrence points out, the writing of chronicles and saints' lives does seem to have continued.[137] It must also have affected the methods of and purposes for reading history. As a result there is obviously not the same wealth of Cistercian-produced historiography with which to make comparisons as there was in the case of Hexham. Nonetheless, valuable information can still be gleaned which adds to our understanding of Durham's historiographical influence.

The starting point for this enquiry must be those texts and manuscripts which were the key transmitters of ideas and opinions. We have already seen how two twelfth-century historical writers, Maurice and Ailred, bridged the gap between Durham and the Cistercians of the north-east,[138] and it is not unreasonable to suppose that Maurice at least may have been personally responsible for the transmission of some texts and manuscripts into Fountains and Rievaulx since no titles exist for him in the Durham book-list, while there are a number for his contemporary, Prior Lawrence, for example.[139] We must examine which Durham manuscripts the Cistercians acquired, what their historical significance was, and why (especially in view of the prohibition)

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[135] See C. Norton, 'Table of Cistercian Legislation on Art and Architecture', in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, ed. C. Norton and D. Park (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 315-93, at p. 325, Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 263 and Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 643-4. In 1175 this ruling was extended to include treatises and collections of sermons: Norton, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

[136] For the English Cistercians' interest in building up libraries, see A. Lawrence, 'English Cistercian Manuscripts of the Twelfth Century', in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, ed. C. Norton and D. Park (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 284-98, at pp. 287-9 and 296.

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 289.

[138] See above, pp. 100-6.

[139] A. Lawrence, 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', in *AND*, pp. 449-69, at p. 459, n. 37. Hugh, Dean of York, took his library with him when he moved to Fountains in 1134.

any Cistercian should have been interested in local historiography. Fortunately much valuable work has already been done on identifying the provenance and history of a number of key manuscripts, from which it is possible to build a profile of which texts and manuscripts travelled between Durham and the Cistercian houses.[140]

Durham Manuscripts in Cistercian Houses

It is clear that a number of Durham manuscripts were received, copied and sometimes altered in Cistercian houses. Of the books given to Durham by William of Saint-Calais, at least two, the minor works of Jerome[141] and Raban Maur's commentary on Matthew,[142] can be traced as the exemplars for Rievaulx's copies.[143] Such books would have been essential in any good monastic library, but there is ample evidence for the transfer of historiographically important manuscripts too. Durham's version of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*[144] was used as an exemplar for, amongst others, Newminster's copy,[145] while a copy of a *Vita S. Godrici* was used at Fountains.[146] *Ex libris* marks help to identify the history of certain manuscripts, and by this method it has been noted that an early copy of the *Libellus de exordio*, was in the possession of Fountains.[147] The above-mentioned manuscripts CCCC 139, which, as the marginalia indicate, was used as an exemplar, and the more lavish CCCC 66 (which was originally bound with CUL Ff.i.27), both deeply significant volumes full of historical texts, found their way from Durham into Fountains and so into the small Cistercian house of Sawley, a daughter of Newminster, and it was long believed that they had actually been produced there.[148]

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[140] See *DCM*, Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', A. Lawrence, English Cistercian Manuscripts of the Twelfth Century', in *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, ed. C. Norton and D. Park (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 284-98 and her 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts'.

[141] DCL, MS B.II.11. See *DCM*, p. 38.

[142] DCL, MS B.III.16. See *DCM*, p. 40.

[143] York Minster Library, MS XVI.I.8 and CCCC 86. Lawrence has elaborated on the intellectual links between Durham and Rievaulx and suggests that the link between Durham and Fountains arose naturally through Fountains' early dependence on Rievaulx. 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', pp. 459-62.

[144] DCL, MS B.II.35. See *DCM*, pp. 41-2 and above, p. 187.

[145] BL, MS Add. 25014. The Durham manuscript was also copied at, or for, the St Albans' monks at Tynemouth and the Augustinians at Worksop. It may also have been the original for the copies at Selby, Jervaulx and Kirkham. See Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', p. 440, n. 7 and Lawrence, 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', p. 453.

[146] See below, p. 196, n. 169.

[147] BL, MS Cotton Faustina A.V.

[148] Dumville has asserted this view vigorously: see, for example, his 'The Corpus Christi "Nennius"', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 25 (1972-4), pp. 369-80 and 'Celtic-Latin Texts in Northern England c.1150-c.1250', *Celtica* 12 (1977), pp. 19-49, especially pp. 46-9. Norton claims a Durham

It is therefore clear that the Cistercian monks did have an active interest in Durham's historical manuscripts, but why should these 'new' monks have been interested in the spiritual history of the region prior to their own arrival? In the comparable case of Hexham, the Augustinian canons were attempting to associate their own recent history with the ancient history of their church. However, the Cistercian houses, with the exception of Melrose, were all new foundations with no prior history, so it is to be expected that the reasons for their interest in history were different. A consideration of the implications of CCCC 66 passing from Durham into Cistercian hands can illuminate this issue. The manuscript was a product of a scriptorium and an intellectual community which saw in the various texts available to it a way to safeguard and promote its interests. The compilation of the texts in the manuscript was every bit as significant as the content of the texts themselves[149] and was loaded with meaning for the personnel of Durham and the religious houses of the north-east who would have understood the full depth of the presentation. That Durham manuscripts travelled into Cistercian hands, and at such an early stage (just a few decades after production), and that they were able to exert such a strong influence over the character of contemporary Cistercian manuscripts,[150] is a potent example of the nature of the intellectual communication which was taking place between Durham and the Cistercian houses.[151]

But is there any significance in the fact that CCCC 66, which served such a specific and important purpose for the community in Durham, was sent to the Cistercians?

The Cistercians must have recognised Durham as the foremost literary, intellectual and cultural house of the region,[152] (Maurice and Ailred at least would have had first-hand knowledge of the quality and breadth of the Durham library) and asked the monks there for texts relating to local ecclesiastical history. Why should these new monks, who were rejecting the old order, have been interested in the spiritual history of the region?

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provenance; see 'History, Wisdom and Illumination', pp. 78-89. Meehan, however, suggests that only certain sections can safely be attributed to Durham. 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', pp. 442-6.

[149] Norton, 'History, Wisdom and Illumination', pp. 101-4.

[150] Many Rievaulx texts seem to derive from Durham exemplars, while many artistic features from Fountains have a Durham origin too. Lawrence, 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', pp. 459-66.

[151] These manuscripts are 'a reminder of the strength of the local ties felt in the Yorkshire monasteries of an Order European in its extent and appeal'. Squire, *Aelred of Rievaulx*, p. 74.

[152] York's intellectual and cultural status was so poor that any northern house wishing to develop its own literary life had to turn to Durham for the relevant materials. See Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', p. 439. Lawrence adds that relations between the Cistercians and St Mary's probably continued to be fairly poor, at least until the 1160s. She points out that St Mary's had a substantial network of Confraternity agreements with other religious houses, but at this stage the list included no Cistercian houses other than Byland. 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', p. 462, n. 43.

By the late twelfth-century, when these manuscripts entered Fountains, the Cistercians in the north had seen a phenomenal expansion with Fountains in particular sending out numerous colonies to form new Cistercian houses. The number of monks and lay brothers was vast and Cistercian influence had been keenly felt throughout the region. With this degree of importance and success, it is not surprising that the monks should have sought to establish their own credentials and place in the local spiritual traditions. To try to understand how and why they did this takes us back to the themes discussed in chapter one. Although the Cistercians came from the Continent, they could still legitimately claim a share in the tradition of reform which had taken such a strong hold on the north-east. The original Benedictine reformers of Bishop Walcher's time had been southerners engaged in the eremitical quest for God in a barren landscape. The Cistercians entered a region in which Benedictines and Augustinians had made a significant impact at different levels, but which, to a Cistercian who believed the true Jerusalem was to be found through the Cistercian way, was still an area crying out for reform. This was most clearly exemplified in the circumstances of Fountains' foundation. St Mary's had been the end of one of the lines of reformed monasticism and in the worldly sense had appeared to be a successful product of that movement. For the rebel monks and their successors, however, St Mary's was corrupt and therefore only one step on the journey to perfection. The line of reform in which the northern Cistercians perceived themselves to be the final word, therefore stretched back not only to the foundation of Rievaulx, but to Aldwin's revival of spiritual life in the 1070s. In establishing their historical place in the region the Cistercians therefore looked to Durham for assistance. This reliance on Durham's scriptorium was also to be expected since it was during the early years of Cistercian influence in the region that Durham emerged as the true leader of intellectual developments in the region, with a wide network of contacts in both the old and the new houses.[153] However, Durham may also have been an important point of spiritual reference since the Durham monks had shown themselves to be eminently capable of justifying the present through a careful interpretation of the past.

The question remains as to why CCCC 66 in particular was sent out by Durham. As Christopher Norton has demonstrated, it had a specific historical intention behind its production. By the time it reached Fountains it had served its purpose of informing

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[153] Lawrence, 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', p. 469. Durham was also sometimes the recipient in this relationship, as its early possession of some of Ailred's writings in DUL, MS Cosin

Bishop Hugh du Puiset on the rights and status of the monks of Durham, and it might well have been felt that it could be used to further Durham's interests elsewhere in a similar manner, if it were circulated among the Cistercian houses. Here the manuscript would emphasise what Durham perceived as its own intellectual, spiritual, political, and indeed God-given, supremacy in the religious traditions of the region.

In addition, the Cistercians in the north from the earliest days had a strong sense of their own high spiritual standards and the influence they wished to have in reforming this spiritual 'desert'. New houses were rapidly founded and expanded and leaders of remarkable character and ability were to be found in them.[154] If these houses were to constitute a defining element in the spiritual life of the region, the monks within them had to have a sense of the spiritual environment around them. In the case of Fountains this was particularly pertinent since although it was a new foundation, it had derived from a disaffected group of reformers whose attempts at spiritual renewal within their own Benedictine house of St Mary's had been thwarted. In this context the reasons for Cistercian interest in CCCC 139, which contained both Ailred's *Relatio de Standardo*, and Archbishop Thurstan's letter concerning the exodus from St Mary's, are clear. Elsewhere too, many of the other northern Cistercian recruits were themselves local men whose spiritual lives would, hitherto, have been shaped by the saints of the north and the major churches which served them. The historiography of the existing religious houses would therefore have held a strong interest to the educated monks in the new orders. The Fountains pioneers were not alone in having very specific links with certain of the older houses as a number of the first generation northern Cistercians had originally made their profession elsewhere. Three examples are well-known: Hugh, dean of York, joined the Fountains community in 1134, Maurice, prior of Durham, became abbot of both Rievaulx and Fountains, and Ailred, closely connected with both Durham and Hexham, became abbot of Rievaulx.[155] All three were prominent men of books, and Maurice and Ailred were both influential hagiographical writers. Their presence in Cistercian houses must surely have been formative in the interest taken by their new communities in the wider historiographical tradition of the region, fostered especially at Durham.[156]

V.II.2 indicates.

[154] See above, p. 104, n. 52.

[155] See above, p. 105, n. 59 and p. 100-6.

[156] It is striking that Ailred should have devoted such time to writing local history and hagiography when he was at the height of his administrative career and suffering from severe ill-health. This is testimony to

Durham's Influence on the Cistercians

What influence did historiographical and hagiographical texts from Durham have on the expression of the spiritual life of the Cistercians of the north-east? Historiography produced by the Cistercians themselves was, as noted above, very limited. What texts there are, though, do reveal a relationship with the Durham material. Other than Ailred of Rievaulx's *De sanctis*, discussed above in its Hexham context, the most significant was Ailred's *Relatio de Standardo*, which he completed in 1155x1157,[157] for the composition of which he presumably gained the permission of the General Chapter.[158] Although it was probably based upon Prior Richard of Hexham's work on the same theme, both works are closely connected to the Durham historiographical tradition.[159] Ailred shows his thorough knowledge of Durham literature, revealing stylistic similarities with some of the tracts produced there earlier in the century, particularly the *De Obsessione Dunelmensis* and the *De Iniusta Vexatione*.[160] Ailred, for example, makes much greater use than Richard of personal details and he therefore devotes a significant amount of his work to a description of Walter Espec. This is similar to the character studies undertaken in Durham texts, like *De Iniusta Vexatione*.[161] After Ailred's writing, no more local Cistercian texts of this sort were produced until the very late-twelfth century, when a series of foundation narratives was composed.[162]

If the Cistercians were not creating their own texts during the intervening period, how can it be shown whether the Durham texts, which can be traced into Cistercian possession and were known to be read and copied, had any meaningful influence on the monks' sense of spiritual identity, history and perspective? Clearly a different approach must be taken to investigate the effect of this contact. The evidence of Durham's influence to be found in many manuscripts, especially those from Fountains and its family, lies in the area of artistic decoration and it is here that the blending of ideas and expressions must be pursued.[163] Certain distinctive Durham decorative motifs, most importantly the 'split-petal' and 'clove-curl' decorations, have been identified and the process of the transmission of these motifs from particular Durham exemplars into a

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the perceived importance of such matters in Cistercian circles. See Lawrence, 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', p. 459, n. 37.

[157] See above, p. 168, n. 43.

[158] See above, p. 189.

[159] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 213.

[160] See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 213-14 and Piper, 'Historical Interests', pp. 304-5.

[161] See above, p. 167.

[162] See below, p. 196.

[163] See especially Lawrence, 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', pp. 454-66.

range of Cistercian productions can be clearly traced.[164] Numerous examples suggest that the twelfth-century Cistercians in the north-east looked towards Durham rather than towards other Cistercian houses for artistic inspiration. A further dimension is added by an examination of the content of these particular manuscripts. At least two of the Durham manuscripts with these decorative motifs contained Cistercian texts: DCL, MS B.IV.22 includes Bernard of Clairvaux's Sermons on the Song of Songs,[165] and DUL, MS Cosin V.II.2 includes Ailred's treatise 'de undecim oneribus Ysaiae'.[166] This remarkable openness and exchange is 'a reminder of the strength of the local ties felt in the Yorkshire monasteries of an Order European in its extent and appeal'.[167] Examples of these Durham decorative styles can also be found in contemporary Augustinian manuscripts from Bridlington, Kirkham and Guisborough,[168] and although it is unclear whether the influence came directly from Durham itself, or through the medium of Cistercian manuscripts, it is evident that innovations and idiosyncrasies developed at Durham could be absorbed into other scriptoria throughout the region. These examples cannot in themselves reveal the same sense of spiritual identity, history and perspective which came from the textual comparisons in Hexham's case. Their value is that they show that the Cistercians had a thorough, detailed knowledge of Durham's manuscripts and were willing and able to absorb into their own developing identity and traditions the influences which defined Durham's own creative identity. Although it would be rash to speculate on what sort of historiography the twelfth-century Cistercians in the north-east could have produced had they been at liberty to do so, it is nonetheless clear that the spiritual, cultural and artistic influences which travelled through the region through the medium of Durham's manuscripts were readily received and assimilated.

The evidence of the artistic decoration in the manuscripts produced in Durham and Cistercian houses, can take us even further in understanding the transmission of influence. Not only can we note a Cistercian willingness to accept a Durham style, but also a confidence on the part of those same artists about sending their own work back to Durham where, apparently, it was happily received. The most striking example of this

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[164] Lawrence notes that these decorative motifs occur in some of Durham's lower quality manuscripts, 'English Cistercian Manuscripts', pp. 292-3 and 297 and 'The Artistic Influence of Durham Manuscripts', pp. 454-69. See also *DCM*, pp. 6-9, 64 and 71-5; and Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', p. 449.
[165] *DCM*, p. 71.
[166] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[167] Squire, *Aelred of Rievaulx*, p. 74
[168] See Lawrence, 'A Northern English School?', pp. 149-52.

is to be found in a story told by Reginald in his *Vita S. Godrici*.[169] This records how the monks of Fountains had borrowed an earlier version of a life of Godric from Durham in order to copy it. Finding that the illustrations had not yet been executed, the cantor, at the request of Prior Nicholas, began to decorate the exemplar with bright colours.[170] As in the case of Durham's acceptance of Hexham's texts, here we observe a willingness to accept Cistercian influence, and to engage in exchange rather than solely exportation.[171]

Although rather beyond the scope this thesis, there is much to be gained by glancing ahead to those foundation narratives produced by Cistercians at the turn of the thirteenth century for the houses of Byland,[172] its daughter Jervaulx,[173] Fountains[174] and its daughter Kirkstall.[175] So far this chapter has presented a strong case for Durham's almost undisputed priority in the field of historiographical influence, but these texts nonetheless provide us with a glimpse of a different and independent influence, which might act as a marker of the limit of Durham's influence. In comparison with Hexham, which was very tightly bound to, even restrained by, Durham's sphere of influence, the Cistercians' vision, being essentially continental, retained a certain broadness even in those houses which fully accepted and assimilated northern influences. Gransden has observed how these foundation narratives represented a combination of Bedan tradition with Cistercian religious enthusiasm.[176] The earliest Cistercians on the Continent had produced foundation documents, histories and biographies and these, as well as local historiographical traditions, were influential on the northern foundation histories.[177] Whilst this in itself is not particularly surprising, it is notable that by the early thirteenth century currents of influence were shifting and the Cistercian background began to exert

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[169] See above, p. 190.
[170] *Vita S. God.*, pp. 466-8. See Lawrence, 'English Cistercian Manuscripts', pp. 287-8.
[171] Meehan suggests that this indicates 'that a cross-current of artistic influence went back and forwards between Durham and the Cistercian houses.' 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts', pp. 448-9.
[172] *Fundatio Domus Bellelande*, in *MA*, V, pp. 349-54, written 1197. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 290-1.
[173] *Historia Fundationis*, in *MA*, V, pp. 568-74. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 292.
[174] *Narratio de Fundatione Fontanis Monasterii* in *Mem. Fount.*, pp. 1-129. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 292-5 and Baker, 'The Genesis of Cistercian Chronicles in England'. Baker suggests that the *narratio* was produced over two decades, c.1205/6-c.1226, *ibid.*, pp. 34-40.
[175] *Fundacio Abbathie de Kyrkestall* in 'The Foundation of Kirkstall Abbey', ed. and transl. by E. K. Clark, in *Miscellanea*, Thoresby Society 4 (1895), pp. 169-208 and *MA*, pp. 530-2. See Taylor, *Medieval Historical Writing in Yorkshire*, pp. 8-9 and Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 295. These texts were probably part of 'a broader historiographical imperative to assert origins at a time when the first flush of English expansion was over and the Cistercians were being challenged by Benedictine and other orders for land and patronage.' Freeman, 'Meaning and Multi-Centredness', p. 65.
[176] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 287. The Cistercians were producing something new, but claimed to be reverting to tradition rather than innovating. Freeman, 'Meaning and Multi-Centredness', pp. 60-3.

an influence within a wider sphere, even back into Durham itself. The idealism of the Cistercians was one of the inspirations not only for the writing of Walter Daniel's biography of Ailred, but also, in Gransden's view, for the continuation of the historiographical tradition at Durham itself.[178] This new Cistercian tradition, as well as Durham historiographical traditions, had a major influence on the contemporary Augustinian historian, William of Newburgh.[179] William's chronicle, the *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, which covers events in England from the Norman Conquest until 1197, was begun in 1196 at the request of Ernald, abbot of Rievaulx, who had been a pupil of Ailred and seems to have inherited his love of history.[180] The Durham-centred historical style was not replaced but, by the end of the century, was becoming altered as it accepted the characteristic influence of Cistercian writings. The near-total dominance which Durham had enjoyed was beginning to fade as the twelfth-century drew to a close.

CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapter argued that Durham Cathedral Priory was not only the major cult centre of the north-east, but also exerted a decisive influence over the development of neighbouring cults. The conclusions of this chapter slightly modify that impression of all-pervading influence. Durham Cathedral Priory emerges from this study as an important, but not the only important, influence in the production of eleventh and twelfth-century historiography in the north-east. The detailed study of its historiographical contacts with Hexham has given a clear example of how pervasive and revealing such contacts were, especially in matters such as spiritual identity, independence and influence. This has a bearing on our understanding of what the monks of Durham perceived their place within the wider spiritual community of the

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[177] For example the *Exordium Cisterciensis Cenobii*, the *Exordium Magnum Ordinis Cisterciensis* and the Life of St Bernard. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 289-90, but compare with Baker's comments in 'The Genesis of Cistercian Chronicles in England', pp. 21-4.

[178] Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 308-9.

[179] See Lawrence, 'A Northern English School?', p. 150. See above, p. 169, n. 52.

[180] William made good use of local sources, such as the *Historia Regum*, and provided general information about the archbishops of York, bishops of Durham and kings of Scotland but he also gave detailed accounts of the foundations of Newburgh, Fountains, Rievaulx, and Byland. However, although William had an interest in northern affairs and used northern sources, he was an excellent historian and did not allow his local interest to dominate the chronicle. See Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 247, 263-7 and Taylor, *Historical Writing in Yorkshire*, pp. 10-12.

region to be. However, the evidence also shows that later in the twelfth century the historiographical leadership of the region was passing from Durham to Hexham.

The nature of the evidence from the Cistercian houses leads to a different type of examination. Durham's historiography was clearly read in Cistercian houses, but it is not possible to discern its influence in the same way as we can for Hexham. What does emerge is a creative link between Durham and the Cistercians, and evidence of wider intellectual relations in which the Cistercians were not merely recipients but were able to blend their own traditions and styles into the pervading intellectual culture of the north-east. Durham's role in this process was one of reception and assimilation as well as determination, especially later in the twelfth century. This accords with the evidence of the historiographical initiative passing from Durham to Hexham at this time.

In sum, the historiographical thought and writing emanating from Durham held very considerable sway over the historical and cultural consciousness of other religious houses in the region until the second half of the twelfth century, and the study of its influence provides an entry into the exploration of the spiritual identity of those communities. The extent of Durham's historiographical influence was not as great or as lasting as its influence over the cults of saints in the region, but it was still significant. The acceptance by Durham of newer influences perhaps marks the limits of its own initiatives: it certainly indicates an openness and maturity in spiritual and cultural communication. However, any conclusion about the extent of Durham's historiographical influence in the north-east, must take into account the apparently low level of interest in writing history in certain religious centres in the region, such as York Minster, St Mary's and Whitby. This indicates that the writing of history was a select activity which was not supported by all religious communities. Consequently, conclusions about spiritual relationships drawn from historiographical evidence should only be applied more widely with great caution. There is not space in this thesis to explore any further the rich areas of Durham's literary, intellectual and theological influence but the emphasis on the historiographical issues arising from Durham's spiritual and intellectual traditions has at least allowed an exploration of one highly significant aspect of its interaction with other religious communities and spiritual ideas, and has, I hope, provided a context in which further studies could be pursued.

Chapter Six

ASCETICISM AND THE EREMITICAL LIFE

THE SPIRITUAL PURPOSE OF ASCETICISM AND EREMITISM

From the earliest days of Christianity, asceticism had been valued as the highest spiritual ideal. By renouncing the cares and temptations of this world, as the Sermon on the Mount instructed, the believer could find the spiritual freedom necessary for eternal life.[1] The Desert Fathers of third and fourth-century Egypt explored the utmost extremes of asceticism, which included not only the negative denial of the comforts of this world, such as marriage, companionship and sufficient food and sleep, but also the positive embracing of the spiritual battle against the assaults of the devil. By the fifth century, under the influence of men such as Benedict of Nursia (c.480-547), solitary asceticism was beginning to give way to communal asceticism and monastic communities emerged. Inevitably the development of monasticism brought other modifications to the ascetic life, placing 'less emphasis on ascetic feats and more on moderate means of discipline'.[2] While monasticism remained essentially an ascetic experience, it was 'an asceticism which stressed communal rather than individual aspects.'[3] St Benedict's Rule eventually gained the widest popularity in the west, but this was variously interpreted to suit changing needs and aspirations through the ages.[4] A cycle of vigorous enthusiasm, followed by complacency and laxity, followed by dissatisfaction and reform leading once again to renewed vigour, can be observed throughout the history of Christian monasticism, and it is by one of these waves of reform that our period is characterised.

The renewed emphasis given to ascetic practices and ideals in the eleventh and twelfth-century church coincided with, indeed was intimately related to, the increasing popularity of eremitical endeavours.[5] The life of Christian *ascesis*,[6] worked out through severity and suffering, was closely inter-twined with the life of simplicity and renunciation of worldly structures inherent in the life of a hermit. Both represent a

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[1] See 'Asceticism', in *A Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. G. S. Wakefield (London, 1983), pp. 24-8.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 26.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] See 'St Benedict of Nursia' and 'Benedictine Spirituality', in *idem.*, pp. 40-2, and O. Chadwick, *Western Asceticism* (London, 1958), pp. 25-30.
[5] See above, pp. 93-6.
[6] See 'Asceticism'.

total, all-consuming commitment to the search for spiritual perfection in the working out of individual and corporate religious life. To a certain extent, therefore, the vitality of such ascetic practices can be read as an indicator of spiritual standards within the church. However, care must be taken when applying judgements of this sort as not only is firm evidence of such individual and interior ideas and practices extremely difficult to find, but also the presence of hermits or the prevalence of particularly ascetic practices in any area may in fact indicate a reaction against a prevailing atmosphere of spiritual lethargy. Indeed, in inflicting extreme physical suffering on himself (or occasionally herself), a hermit was treating his body as a surrogate for society in the hope that the scourging and purification of his flesh would bring about a rebirth in society.[7] Investigations into such delicate and subjective matters must necessarily, therefore, be handled with extreme caution, yet the potential to glimpse into the very heart of the spiritual passions, ideals and commitment of the period is too valuable to be ignored. In the religious life of eleventh and twelfth-century England these trends were as visible as in any other part of the western church. The north-east of England in particular provides ample scope for investigation through the evidence relating to the foundations of religious houses and the documented exploits of numerous hermits. Durham Cathedral Priory's recorded involvement with such ideals and individuals is again substantial, although modern scholarship on the subject is fairly limited.[8] This chapter is an attempt to broaden the research in this important area of Durham's spiritual life and to assess how significant was the priory's contribution to the wider regional experience of ascetic and eremitical ideas and practices.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASCETICISM AND EREMITISM IN MEDIEVAL SPIRITUAL LIFE

Asceticism in the Eleventh and Twelfth-Century Church

Monks

By the mid-eleventh century the traditionally dominant role of the monasteries in the spiritual life of the West was beginning to change. The fixed liturgical worship offered in the peace of the cloister had provided the formal structure for the spiritual

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[7] See B. M. Bolton, '*Paupertas Christi*: Old Wealth and New Poverty in the Twelfth Century', in *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History*, ed. D. Baker, SCH 14 (Oxford, 1977), pp. 95-103.
[8] The most direct treatment of the subject is Tudor, 'Durham Priory and its Hermits'. See also her 'St Godric and St Bartholomew'.

offering of the whole of society,[9] but developments both within and without monasticism were redefining the nature of religious life.[10] Although the outward structure of monastic orders in the period underwent only relatively minor changes, the spiritual ideals offered by the 'new' orders differed profoundly, with a shift away from community worship and liturgical intercession towards a new search for evangelical perfection and individual salvation.[11] The origins of the Cistercian order represent, in some ways, the epitome of the spiritual ideals of the eleventh and twelfth-century West. The order began with a group of hermits in Burgundy who became a monastic community at Molesme in 1075. Discouraged by the distractions of institutional life, twenty of these monks, led by their abbot, Robert, moved to the secluded site at Cîteaux in 1098.[12] The order which developed placed enormous emphasis on a return not only to the example of the early, apostolic church, but also to the purity of the Benedictine Rule, relinquishing all the customs and additions which had subsequently softened its impact.[13] Above all, the early Cistercians' lives were characterised by simplicity and rigour. Decorations, comforts and privileges were kept to a minimum, while a harsher, more ascetic, lifestyle was prescribed for all. Those attracted to a regular, ascetic life could therefore find fulfilment within the Cistercian order, while those who still preferred solitude were sharply criticised since the Cistercians believed that independence led to laxity and that it was therefore better to belong to an order which could provide the discipline necessary for spiritual growth.[14]

Clergy

Alongside the institutional developments within monasteries, another demand began to emerge. The clerical orders and lay people desired a deeper and more widespread spirituality which would provide opportunities for them to take a more active part in corporate and individual religious life.[15] The papal reforms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries led to a new perception of, and role for, the priesthood,

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[9] See comments about the concerns of monks at Fulda and Cluny in G. Constable, 'From Cluny to Cîteaux', in 'Georges Duby. L'écriture de l'Histoire', ed. C. Duhamel-Amando and G. Lobrichon (Brussels, 1996), pp. 317-22; rept. in his '*Cluny from the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries* (Aldershot, 2000).

[10] See above, ch. 3.

[11] Constable, 'From Cluny to Cîteaux', p. 320.

[12] Knowles, *The Monastic Order*, pp. 198-200.

[13] Constable, 'From Cluny to Cîteaux', p. 319.

[14] St Bernard was a vocal proponent of this view. See his letter dissuading a nun of Troyes from leaving her convent for the desert in *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. and trans. B. S. James (London, 1953), no. 118, pp. 179-80. The Cistercian attitude must have contributed to the twelfth-century trend towards the transfer of hermitages to religious houses, which reflects an institutionalisation and distrust of the freedom of eremitism. Burton, 'The Eremitical Tradition', p. 34.

characterised by chastity, common life and liturgical service. Some clergy retired to the desert where they sought to follow an ascetic life, while others were attracted to the monastic model of regular communal life.[16] In time most adopted the Rule of St Augustine, but there were two forms of this. The first, which was the more moderate, emphasised common life and the absence of property. The second, observed by the more ascetically-minded clergy and often connected with eremitism, emphasised fasting, silence, poverty, manual work and simplicity in dress. The emergence of Augustinian canons in the eleventh and twelfth centuries thus represented an evolution in clerical life rather than the explicit inauguration of a new order. In spite of the wide divergence of practice among them, the regular canons, contributed a distinctive spirituality to the medieval West, which placed a much higher value on the priesthood than previously. Action was valued over contemplation, the cure of souls over the liturgy, and this was reflected in the structure and duties of canonical communities. Canons tended to live in small communities in close contact with the world where they were responsible not only for worship, but also for a range of social duties such as education and the care of the sick.[17] Canonical life tended not to be as rigid as monastic life, but both the new canons and the new monks shared a desire for simplicity, authenticity and individual responsibility in their spiritual life over and above the formality and ritual of the older orders.

Laity

This radical reshaping of clerical life was echoed by the increased opportunities for lay people to articulate their spiritual needs and desires. For lay people, whose place in the spiritual hierarchy of the church was miserably low, the only perceived way to seek spiritual perfection was through a rejection of their worldly concerns and values, namely power, sex and money.[18] The route to salvation which the laity chose to follow was therefore that of the asceticism which lay at the heart of the Benedictine ideal. Since the glory of martyrdom was no longer an option in most of the medieval West, voluntary suffering was adopted as an alternative. The rejection of physical comforts and sensual pleasures was perceived as a means for individuals to free themselves from the sin inherent in the world and therefore to grow closer to God.[19] Such practices had

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[15] Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 40-7.
[16] Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 52-5.
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 95-9.
[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 55-7.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

previously been the preserve of monks,[20] but in the eleventh century individuals from all walks of life wishing to strive for greater spiritual perfection saw the pursuit of ascetic disciplines as a direct and personal means by which they could take full responsibility for their attempts to achieve the promised salvation.

The development of asceticism as a route through which to develop one's spiritual life was therefore an organic process within the church of this period, but there were other contemporary spiritual ideals which helped to shape this process more specifically. These developments were characterised by three features: growing dissatisfaction with the institutional church; new interest in simplicity and evangelical piety; growth in individualism and a move away from the authority of the cloister.[21] In all, this led to a rejection of many of the accumulated customs of the previous centuries and a new 'back-to-basics' approach with a strong emphasis on imitating Christ and the apostles as revealed through the New Testament, hence the term *vita apostolica*. This ideal resulted in a thirst for utter simplicity and so the phrase *nudus nudum Christum sequi* became descriptive of earnest attempts to recapture the enthusiasm of the earliest Christians.[22]

Within the organised structures of the church this spontaneous and powerful movement was to have a radical effect through the emergence of whole religious orders committed to the popular ideal.[23] For society as a whole the movement was to have transforming effects as it opened up the possibility of a valid religious life for those vast sections of the population whose spiritual potential had hitherto been stifled or ignored.

The Circumstances which led to the Popular Expression of Asceticism through Eremitism

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[20] The Benedictine Rule prescribed physical moderation, demanding spiritual rather than physical asceticism, though this balance had shifted over time. See Chadwick, *Western Asceticism*, pp. 25-30.

[21] See Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, pp. 144-5. In her appraisal of new religious movements in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Caroline Bynum has identified in them the following common values: concern for an affective response; penitential asceticism; an emphasis on Christ's humanity; an emphasis on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; a bypassing, to different degrees, of clerical authority. 'Religious Women in the Later Middle Ages', in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. J. Riatt (New York, 1987).

[22] Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 83-8 and Constable, 'From Cluny to Cîteaux', p. 319.

[23] Two of the most influential orders were the Carthusians, who arrived in England in 1178, and the Cistercians. Later, of course, other orders and movements, both orthodox and heretical, appeared, such as the mendicant friars, Beguines, Humiliati, Waldensi, Cathars and so on. See, Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History*, pp. 141-67.

These developments provided the context in which the widespread eremitism of late-eleventh and twelfth -century spiritual life could be fostered. These circumstances were to produce a new, redefined type of hermit whose profile and function within both the church and the wider society was to have a profound effect on spiritual ideals and practices.[24] Originally hermits were solitaries in the desert living geographically, physically and spiritually at the very limits of human existence. They sought to distance themselves from the world, yet the aura of sanctity which this drew down upon themselves resulted in the world coming out to them, seeking the wisdom with which such 'apartness' endowed them.[25] From the earliest times, therefore, the life of the hermit was viewed both as one of immense difficulty and hardship through its physical renunciations and spiritual trials, and also one of extreme holiness. Here on the borders between this world and the next the hermits were protagonists in dramas of an epic scale in which they did battle, for the sake of humankind, with the forces of evil which assailed them in tangible forms; often demons, wild animals or tempters. St Benedict himself spent some time in the wilderness as a hermit before becoming abbot of his community in Monte Cassino and in his Rule he made provision for those monks desiring to pursue the spiritual battles of the eremitical life.[26] However, Benedict makes it clear that such a life is not for everyone, but rather for extraordinary monks 'who, no longer in the first fervour of their reformation, but after long probation in a monastery, having learned by the help of many brethren how to fight against the devil, go out well armed from the ranks of the community to the solitary combat of the desert.'[27] By the early middle ages a model had been set for the hermit being a rare but accepted genre of monk, one who had usually excelled in the rigorous standards of the cloister and yearned for a greater challenge.[28] Such an individual would often continue to live on the monastery's lands under the jurisdiction of the abbot and would remain a part of his community. His role on the front-line in the battle against the forces of evil complemented the efforts towards salvation made by the monks in the cloister through their constant prayers. Eremitism was thus not seen as a criticism of cœnobitism, rather as an extension of it open only to the select few. Indeed a church which was sincere in

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[24] See H. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse', *History* 60 (1975), 337-52.
[25] Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism*, pp. 12-13.
[26] See 'The Life and Miracles of St Benedict' from Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, in *Medieval Saints: A Reader*, ed. M.-A. Stouck (Peterborough, Canada, 1999), pp. 167-203, at 171-4.
[27] *St Benedict's Rule for Monasteries*, trans. L. J. Doyle (Collegeville, Minnesota, U.S.A., 1948), Ch. 1, p. 6.
[28] St Cuthbert himself, though of course not a Benedictine, could be seen as a particularly apt seventh-century example of this.

its desire for high spiritual standards would have welcomed association with such individuals and there must have been a certain amount of kudos involved in supporting hermits.

The changing sentiment in the Gregorian church of the eleventh-century brought about an upheaval to this pattern however, both encouraging an interest in and providing the opportunities for the pursuit of this ideal on a much wider scale. This process is known as 'the crisis of cœnobitism', pointing to the decisive developments within organised monasticism which were accompanied by a spontaneous outburst of popular interests.[29] At this time, urban centres in the West were experiencing a rapid expansion and social values were adjusting to cope with this. Many of the lay people who were yearning for greater access to the mysteries of religious life were also those who were becoming dissatisfied with these changes within society. The contemporary developments in spiritual thought and ideals which veered away from the institution and instead valued the individual encouraged these people for the first time to consider the eremitical life as a realistic opportunity for the full expression of these deeper desires. Many across Europe accepted this challenge. Sometimes they would acquire the patronage or protection of the church or monastery on whose lands they lived, other times they would be independent. The lack of formality which their status carried allowed them much greater variety in their ministry than was permitted to cloistered monks. The severity of their lives meant that they were of necessity active rather than strictly contemplative. Many hermits were mobile and, despite their rejection of the values of the world, were involved in the lives of other people, from ordinary locals to archbishops and kings, who valued their wisdom and prayers.[30] The hermits of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were of a new type. Whereas the hermitage of the early middle ages had complemented the cloister, a rift was beginning to emerge in which the new hermit criticised the established monastic traditions, pushing a more aggressive agenda for spiritual purity and excellence.[31] The irony of this development was that the drive for renewal which this lifestyle reflected was so popular that hermits were often joined by so many followers that they, who had rejected society and institution, became the centre

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[29] J. Van Engen, 'The "Crisis of Cenobitism" Reconsidered: Benedictine Monasticism in the Years 1050-1150', *Speculum* 61 (1986), 269-304.

[30] Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, pp. 90-2. Cf. Constable, 'From Cluny to Cîteaux', p. 320 who writes: '"The myth of the desert", as it has been called, symbolized separation from the secular world rather than personal solitude'.

[31] Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism*, pp. 13-16; B. Ward, 'The Relationship between Hermits and Communities in the West, with special reference to the Twelfth Century', in *Solitude and Communion*, ed. A. M. Allchin (Oxford, 1977), p. 57.

of new communities and foundations. Thus, implicit within the history of religious life in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, was a tension between eremitical and cœnobitical ideals.[32] Hence Vauchez's comment that 'eremitism in those days was more of a mindset than a form of life. It could well be described as cœnobitism on a small scale, free and rural, as opposed to the disciplined and often urban cœnobitism of the old orders.'[33]

Eremitism in Post-Conquest England

By their very nature individual hermits are difficult to trace as it was usually only when they came into contact with religious institutions that the details of their lives, indeed notice of their very existence, would be recorded. Post-conquest English sources, however, allow us many glimpses of individuals or groups of hermits.

One area in which occasional references to hermits appear to point to a much wider network of individuals is the Midlands. Knowles noted that the area represented a centre of Englishness at the time and as such acted as a magnet for many of the dispossessed English survivors of the conquest.[34] Perhaps this is the best context in which to view the hermits who were noted in the region after the conquest. At least three named individuals, Wulfsig, Basing and Ælfwig, are known to have belonged to the abbey of Evesham, while others had connections with Worcester.[35] If, as Knowles' observation on the political character of the region would suggest, many of these hermits were Englishmen who no longer enjoyed their former place within society, then eremitical life within post-conquest England was not only accommodating the spiritual ambitions and experiments of the time, but also carried with it strong overtones of political exile.

The national, social and political associations of these English hermits were not restricted merely to this region. Two of the best documented hermits of twelfth-century England, Christina of Markyate near Huntingdon[36] and Wulfric of Haselbury in Somerset,[37] like Godric of Finchale who will be discussed below, were also of English descent. The *vitae* written to commemorate their remarkable lives indicate that in many

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[32] Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism*, pp. 13-16.
[33] Vauchez, *The Spirituality of the Medieval West*, p. 92.
[34] *The Monastic Order*, p. 162.
[35] *Chron. Evesham*, pp. 83-5 and 321-3 and Baker, 'The Desert in the North', 2.
[36] See *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, ed. Talbot.
[37] See *Wulfric of Haselbury by John of Ford*, ed. Bell and Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse'.

ways they fit the pattern of hermits who reject both contemporary society (in Christina's case this was represented by the marriage she escaped, and in Wulfric's by his anchoritic cell) and the structures of the institutional church. Christina's associations with a wide network of other hermits is indicative of the popularity of this way of life and of the active social aspect which it entailed.[38] Many hermits lived together or in close proximity and were solitary in their search for God rather than their daily living arrangements. Wulfric, by contrast, was a recluse, enclosed in a cell next to the parish church and in this state he was both removed from the rest of the world and permanently at its very heart. Here he was deeply involved both in the affairs of the local community and with members of the upper social and ecclesiastical classes.[39] His life indicates the remarkable degree of power and influence which a hermit, who ostensibly stood outside all the structures of church and society, could wield within those very institutions.

Hermits in post-conquest England were numerous, fulfilling varied functions, aims and ideals. Many are totally hidden from the modern eye, but the occasional few whom we can identify clearly seem to have commanded a position of extraordinary prominence and individuality. With this variety and potential in mind we will now examine the connections between Durham Cathedral Priory and its twelfth-century hermits.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL PRIORY'S INVOLVEMENT WITH EREMITISM

The Community's Eremitical Heritage

The Northern Monastic Revival

One of the most consistent, yet difficult to interpret, of the themes running through the story of the northern monastic revival, is the importance of the eremitical ideal. It was argued in chapter one that eremitism strongly motivated Aldwin and Reinfrid at least.[40] At the same time, however, it is known that Symeon, through whose interpretation we acquire a substantial part of our knowledge of the events, had a vested interest in emphasising the importance of Benedictine authority in order to support his claims for the legitimacy of his monastic community.[41] For example, he includes the

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[38] *The Life of Christina*, pp. 80-8.
[39] See Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse', p. 344.
[40] See ch. 1, especially pp. 28-30.
[41] See, for example, Rollason, 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century'.

detail that before Aldwin and Reinfrid's departure for Melrose (one of the actions which most strongly reflects the eremitical ideal), Aldwin established matters in Jarrow appropriately, appointing as prior Ælfwig, the monk who had been freely elected by the community. Even when the call of the hermit was strongest, therefore, Symeon notes the importance of fulfilling correct Benedictine procedure.[42] In view of Symeon's agenda, therefore, it is all the more notable that he does allow such considerable space to the description of eremitical actions and ideas. His willingness to include such details strongly suggests that they did indeed have an important part to play in the early days of the movement, and that the established Durham community reflected upon their recent origins as appropriate to their new, carefully-constructed identity.[43] The frequent oscillation between eremitical and cœnobitical elements in the story can be understood in two ways: firstly, as part of the cyclical nature of eremitism, whereby the solitary attracts so many followers that he becomes the centre of a new community and needs to flee to the desert once again to pursue his eremitical life;[44] secondly, as a way to make sense of the otherwise incomprehensible move to Durham. Aldwin and his companions' eventual foundation in Durham was not at all foreshadowed in their earlier movements, in fact it seems to be the epitome of what Aldwin, at least, was trying to avoid.[45] This suggests that the initiative for the foundation came entirely from Bishop William who was, after all, not only an extremely energetic prelate, but also the monks' patron who could presumably put significant pressure on the monks to accept his plans for them. It is perhaps here that Symeon's bias is most clear as he tries to suggest that despite the fact that the monks had led a simple, eremitical life up to this point, the bishops had been planning their move to Durham for some time, and it was only the untimely death of Bishop Walcher which prevented the plan from being implemented earlier.[46]

As we have shown, therefore, the contemporary eremitical impulse probably did play a formative part in the aspirations and early developments of the revival. The emergence of larger, well-structured communities, most particularly at Durham, was a result both of the popularity of the ideals and of the particular circumstances surrounding these

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[42] *LDE*, III, 22. This comment should perhaps also be understood in the context of the priory's relationship with Bishop Ranulf Flambard. Symeon may have been using this opportunity to claim a precedent for electing a prior from within the community rather than having one imposed.
[43] For the suggestion that one of Aldwin's companions may have become a hermit see below, p. 226, n. 122.
[44] See above, p. 208.
[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-9.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 31, n. 34.

endeavours. The strong eremitical characteristics of the earliest monastic community in Durham may well therefore provide the key to understanding how and why the twelfth-century monks showed such intense interest in the lives of the hermits associated with the priory.

St Cuthbert

In addition to the recent eremitical heritage of Aldwin's community, there were strong eremitical roots in their newly adopted history which could also be exploited by the monks. St Cuthbert himself achieved great fame and respect for his experiences as a hermit on the island of Inner Farne, off the Northumbrian coast.[47] This precedent must have been important to the priory because when individual members of the community expressed a desire to live as hermits it was to this island, where they could live in St Cuthbert's own hermitage, that they were sent.

THE HERMITS OF THE INNER FARNE ISLAND

The tiny island of Inner Farne, which can sustain little life and is at the complete mercy of the elements, provided the perfect location for the pursuit of the eremitical life. Not only would it have held an obvious appeal to an individual of ascetic temperament, but it would also have held strong connotations for the community at large. It was, paradoxically, both the most difficult of the priory's possessions to reach, and yet also culturally, spiritually and emotionally at the very heart of the priory's existence through its intense connections with St Cuthbert's ascetical, eremitical life.[48] The priory's placement of hermits on the island was therefore not just an obvious matching of vocation and location but it was a strong indication that the community as a whole wished to remember and integrate this aspect of its origins into its new existence and identity. Indeed the majority of the eleventh and twelfth-century monks from Durham who are known to have become hermits pursued their vocation on Inner Farne, while no non-Durham hermits are known to have lived there. The island and its hermits can therefore be studied as an example of what Durham Cathedral Priory valued in a hermitage and the hermits within it.

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[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.
[48] *Ibid.*

The first hermit known to have lived on the island was Ælric, who was resident in the first half of the twelfth century.[49] Few details are known about Ælric, apart from the fact that his nephew, Bernard, was a sacrist of the Durham community. This must have strengthened the link between this remote hermit and the rest of the community in Durham.[50] One of Reginald's stories about Ælric refers to how St Cuthbert miraculously revealed to the hermit that his servant had killed one of the saint's birds.[51] The story has significance because it reveals that the solitude of the hermits even in this remote 'desert' was not absolute, and that some of the most difficult aspects of survival were mitigated by the services of others.

Ælric was followed by an individual named Ælwin about whom the contemporary sources present a somewhat confused and contentious image. He is known to us almost entirely through his association with the next Farne Island hermit, Bartholomew. Reginald records that when Bartholomew, arrived on the island, the two were not easy companions. Although their probable presence together in several stories suggests that they were did share the hermitage for a time,[52] Ælwin eventually left the island and returned to the community in Durham.[53] However, Bartholomew's biographer, the Durham monk Geoffrey, wished to show Bartholomew's extreme sanctity under all manner of oppressions. In Geoffrey's account, therefore, Bartholomew not only coped with harsh living conditions and the assaults of the devil, but also, in the manner of Abel and Job, with the trials of his fellow hermit, Ælwin, who is made to appear, like Cain, as a wicked persecutor.

> Invenitque ibi fratrem Elwynum, qui, ut ejus desiderium agnovit, invidit et adventum moleste tulit. Cœpitque antiquus hostis per eum temptando Christi militem aggredi, suggerens in ipsum plurima congerere, quibus vel iram incuteret, vel a loco penitus ejiceret. At ille fraternas patienter contumelias excepit, sed innocentiam Abel malitia Chaym non dejecit.

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[49] *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 27-28 and 78.
[50] *Reg. Lib.*, chs. 27 and 74. For a record of Bernard in the *Liber Vitae*, see Piper, 'The Early Lists and Obits', no. 68, p. 180.
[51] *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 27, pp. 61-3.
[52] The two are named and referred to as *fratres* in chs. 29 and 30. Two unnamed *fratres* are also mentioned in chs. 31-4, 102 and 117-18. One must be Bartholomew, the other either Ælwin or Thomas, though since Thomas is known to have spent only a short time on the island before his death, Ælwin is the more likely. This point was suggested by Dominic Alexander in his paper 'Wonderful and Excessive Asceticism: Durham Priory's Hermits and Popular Culture in the Twelfth Century' given at the *Lawrence and Reginald of Durham* conference.
[53] *Reg. Lib.*, ch. 58.

> Ad exemplum enim beati Job in omnibus non peccavit labiis suis, videlicet stultum quid contra fratrem suum locutus est.[54]

In view of the fact that Geoffrey had a clear remit to publicise the virtues of Bartholomew, who proved on other occasions to be a very difficult living companion, Geoffrey's portrayal of Ælwin here was probably more of a narrative ploy designed to enhance Bartholomew's reputation than a realistic description.

Almost nothing would be known about the hermit life on Inner Farne were it not for Bartholomew, who inspired the community in Durham to commission a biography, the *Vita Batholomei Farnensis*, from the monk Geoffrey.[55] This detail alone points to the fact that the priory community saw Bartholomew as a remarkable individual whose spiritual endeavours in the tradition of St Cuthbert marked him out as a contemporary figurehead. Bartholomew's biographical details are well known.[56] His birth at Whitby and worldly youth, followed by gradual conversion and ordination in Norway, before his return to Northumbria where he served as a parish priest for some time, provide the prelude to his association with the priory of Durham and his eremitical life. His vocation was shaped in part by visions of Christ, the Virgin and apostles, and St Cuthbert. These prophetic tendencies developed during his time on Inner Farne, being interpreted by contemporaries as signs of his own sanctity and association with the saints. Bartholomew was admitted to the priory while Lawrence was prior (1149-54) and his biographer takes care to note how, as a member of the community, he carried out his monastic duties fully and properly, learning the essential Benedictine virtues of humility and obedience.[57] His departure from the priory for the hermitage happened with extraordinary speed, however. Within a year he had experienced a vision in which St Cuthbert showed him around the island, and he sought permission to leave Durham soon afterwards.[58] Prior Lawrence was not keen to allow his departure after so short a period in the mother-house, but finally relented and Bartholomew arrived on Inner Farne in 1150. Following the displacement of Ælwin, Bartholomew remained on the island alone until 1163 and his life was characterised by extreme austerity in matters of food, clothing and prayer.[59] Bartholomew had a love of poverty, as was typical of many hermits, but he also showed a deep concern for the poor, publicly criticising those who

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[54] *Vita Barth.*, chs. 8-9, p. 300.
[55] *SMOO*, I, Appendix II, pp. 295-325.
[56] *Ibid.*, chs. 1-5 and Tudor, 'Godric and Batholomew`, pp. 207-11.
[57] *Vita Barth.*, chs. 6-7.
[58] *Ibid.*, ch. 7.
[59] *Ibid.*, chs. 9-10.

oppressed them.[60] Even allowing for the hyperbole of his hagiographer, Bartholomew's public role was greater than might have been expected from one in such a remote spot, since people came to him, attracted by his holiness, to seek advice.[61] His sanctity was not untroubled however, since the devil appeared to him in many guises to tempt him. Bartholomew was always a match for his adversary, however, using holy water or the sign of the cross to reveal its true demonic identity.[62] His efforts were rewarded with visions of saintly visitors.[63]

Bartholomew appears in the *Vita* as a figure on the very edges of human existence. His island home was surrounded by the vicious North Sea, so his physical survival was difficult. However, he pushed himself even closer to the limits of survival through his voluntary asceticism, while his spiritual and psychological experiences were most extraordinary. His peculiarities are most noticeable when compared with a moderate man, such as Prior Thomas (1158-62), who arrived on the island in 1163. Bartholomew was so difficult to live with that they fell out and the disagreement, which centred on the timing of meals, was so bad that Bartholomew returned to Durham for a year (no doubt only because Thomas' exile prevented him from doing so) and was only persuaded to return to the island, where he then remained until his death in 1193, by the insistence of the priory community.[64] Bartholomew was a man of extremes, but he inspired the Durham community to produce a *vita*, which shows that he held a deep fascination for them and that he was held up amongst them as an example of great sanctity. Did Bartholomew represent, therefore, the highest spiritual ideal of the monks of Durham?

Prior Thomas' experiences on the island in the 1160s were very different indeed from those of Bartholomew. He arrived on Inner Farne following his spectacular dispute with Bishop Hugh du Puiset.[65] For him, eremitical life on Inner Farne was not a choice, but an exile from society, status, responsibility and comfort. As well as being a spiritual battle-ground, the hermitage could also, therefore, be a place of punishment. In the *Vita Bartholomæi*, however, efforts were made to prove that Thomas too was a holy man

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[60] *Ibid.*, chs. 10-11.
[61] 'Multi quoque ad eum, quos fama sanctitatis ejus attraxerat, tam de remotis quam de vicinis partibus confluebant, quibus ipse consilium salutis, et, si qua consolationis responsa expeterent, reddebat.' *Ibid.*, ch. 11, p. 304.
[62] *Ibid.*, chs. 12-14, 22 and 30, pp. 305-8, 314 and 320-1.
[63] *Ibid.*, chs. 26-8.
[64] *Ibid.*, ch. 14.
[65] Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, p. 133.

through whom miracles could be performed,[66] though this might well have had as much to do with the monastery's views of the bishop's involvement in their affairs, as a recognition of a holy man in a holy place. The final hermit known to have lived on the island in the twelfth century was William, who seems to have been a companion to Bartholomew in his old age and about whom little is known.[67]

The Relationship between Durham Cathedral Priory and the Hermits

These members of the community, with the exception of Prior Thomas, obviously had a particular vocation for this way of life, but why was Durham Cathedral Priory prepared to tolerate and even support their solitary departure from the discipline and authority of the cloister and what sort of relationship was maintained with them?

One reason for Durham Cathedral Priory's willingness to maintain hermits on Farne Island was probably the cult of St Cuthbert.[68] Supporting contemporary Durham hermits who lived in St Cuthbert's own hermitage was a clear example of the legitimacy of the community's guardianship of St Cuthbert's body, cult and lands. It was an emotional tie linking the spiritual aspirations of the twelfth-century community with the heart of its seventh-century origins. The hermits were also well placed to deal with pilgrims wishing to pray at the site of St Cuthbert's hermitage, and indeed their presence gave a unique resonance to the stories of St Cuthbert's own days as a hermit on the island. The hermits were also sought out for advice in their own right, providing a valued pastoral role, which of course reflected well on the priory which had nurtured and supported them.[69]

Another reason for the priory's support of these hermits, which is considerably more difficult to assess and interpret, was spiritual. The Benedictine Rule allowed individual monks, after a period of training within the cloister, to leave their monastery in order to face the greater spiritual battles of the desert as hermits.[70] These individuals, in a reckoning of the monastic hierarchy based upon spiritual merits, were at the pinnacle of achievement. Their practices and witness on Farne, as recognised members of the priory community, represented an intensification of the religious life maintained elsewhere in Durham's priory and cells. The departure from the mother house to the

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[66] *Vita Barth.*, ch. 15.
[67] *Ibid.*, chs. 27, 33 and 45-6; also chs. 2, 16 and 28.
[68] See above, p. 65.
[69] *Ibid.*, pp. 71-2.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 204.

hermitage, far from suggesting a lack of stability, in fact fulfilled exactly the traditional Benedictine model for hermits, thus emphasising, rather than challenging, the strength of the Benedictine tradition within the Durham community. Tudor has commented that the succession of hermits associated with the priory was a symptom of the community's continued ascetic strain.[71] However, less edifying traits also appear in the priory's treatment of these spiritually prestigious individuals, which suggests that its close associations with the hermits was designed to give the priory the upper hand in the regulation even (or especially) of this extreme aspect of spiritual life.

Control

The *Vita Bartholomæi* gives many indications of how the priory sought to establish its authority over that most extreme of hermits, Bartholomew.[72] Geoffrey begins his work with a standard preface, explaining that he has gone to great lengths to secure reliable witnesses, but adds the tantalising comment that this thoroughness now means that he can present a pure and safe (*securus*) version of the facts to his audience.[73] This suggests that he not only feared that the memory of Bartholomew might have been lost if not recorded, but that if not controlled, an 'unsafe' memory might have developed. This rather unexpected fear is reinforced by a comment made by Prior Lawrence in his *Dialogi*. In praising St Cuthbert's exemplary life as boy, youth, monk and cleric, Lawrence laid particular emphasis on his example for hermits ('hic eremi cives jus eremita docet'), thereby indicating that there were right and wrong ways to be a hermit.[74] The monks of Durham therefore had a keen appreciation of the qualities and lifestyle required of a hermit and of the dangers inherent in such a life and in Geoffrey's account we can learn about how they wished Bartholomew's eremitism to be remembered.

Bartholomew's membership of the priory community was very important in Geoffrey's view. Having been given the name Tostig at birth, Bartholomew later changed it to William. However, when he joined the monastery the other brothers chose the name Bartholomew for him.[75] His abiding identity, therefore, was that imposed by the priory, which eradicated the signs of his previous life. This pattern is reinforced throughout the

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[71] 'Durham Priory and its Hermits', p. 78.
[72] Many of the following points about authority were suggested by Alexander in his paper, 'Wonderful and Excessive Asceticism'.
[73] '... totus purus totusque securus ad communes hominum prodire non erubescat aspectus'. *Vita Barth.*, ch. 2, p. 296.
[74] 'Excerpta quædam ex hypognostico Laurentii Dunelmensis', in *Dialogi Laurentii Dunelmensis monachi ac Prioris*, ed. J. Raine, SS 70 (1880), p. 69.

narrative. The freedom and mobility of Bartholomew's secular life[76] stands in stark contrast to the record of his profession into the Durham community and the obedience and stability which ensued in his monastic life.[77] It is immediately after these monastic virtues have been described that Bartholomew received a vision of St Cuthbert, thereby endorsing the value of submission to authority, as well as affirming Bartholomew within the traditions of Durham's monastic identity. However, Geoffrey's work shows that purely professing to be Benedictine is insufficient, as attention to the spirit as well as the letter of the Rule is held to be of paramount importance. Thus in the description of Bartholomew's eremitical life on Farne, the broad chronological framework of the *Vita* is interrupted as Geoffrey moves backwards and forwards in time in order to contrast Bartholomew in two states: when he first became a hermit and when he was more experienced. This arrangement of material helps Geoffrey to make the point that the excessive zeal in physical asceticism with which Bartholomew embarked on his eremitical life is not the route to salvation. The true journey is an interior one, to be made in humility and obedience of spirit, which are, of course, Benedictine virtues. To this end, in Geoffrey's portrayal, the crucial event which causes Bartholomew to develop into a truly holy man is the encounter with the ex-prior, Thomas.[78] Here, in his direct contact with the most senior authority figure in the priory, Bartholomew is forced to curb his outward excesses: to renounce his hair-shirt which was black with sweat and too unbearable for his companion to endure, and to accept responsibility for the breakdown of their relationship.[79] Thus Bartholomew's asceticism is transferred from the physical to the spiritual plane, where it can be truly effective: 'Non in veste scilicet sed in corde monachi omnem vigere consummationem mandatorum Dei'.[80] That this transition was successful can be seen by the fact that at the end of his life when he was physically weak, Bartholomew no longer had any difficulty in banishing the devil whenever he appeared.[81] In Geoffrey's estimation he had, finally, become a holy man.

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[75] *Vita Barth.*, ch. 3, p. 296.
[76] *Ibid.*, chs. 4 and 5.
[77] *Ibid.*, chs. 6 and 7. Bartholomew's status and virtues are strongly emphasised: 'Cum monachis habitans, monachi mores et vitam æmulari studuit, et ea maxime quæ monacho proficiunt, verum etiam monachum faciunt, humilitatem et obedientiam excoluit'. *Ibid.*, ch. 7, p. 299.
[78] *Ibid.*, ch. 14.
[79] 'Superveniente ... Thoma priore, lectum mutavit, cilicium deposuit, ne sudor et fæteor qui ex eo exhibant cohabitantem offenderet, aut etiam hanc in eo continentiæ virtutum novus hospes deprehenderet, laudabilem proferens de religione sententiam'. *Ibid.*, ch. 9, p. 301.
[80] *Ibid.*, ch. 9, p. 301.
[81] *Ibid.*, ch. 30.

The *Vita Bartholomæi* therefore indicates that the priory considered the memory and influence of hermits to be very potent, even potentially dangerous. The monks clearly wanted to gain from the spiritual prestige attached to such holy individuals, and so they ensured that their portrayal of the close association between priory and hermitage reinforced their view of the dependent status of the hermits. In the case of Bartholomew, whose practices were known to be excessive, it was crucially important that the priory should offer an official and authoritative interpretation of how and why some extremes were praiseworthy while an excess of them could not be tolerated. By describing the 'taming' of Bartholomew through contact with Prior Thomas, Geoffrey suggested that the priory retained the ultimate authority over all expressions of spiritual asceticism, even those which were attempted only by extreme individuals who lived outside the cloister. In other words, there was no area of the community's spiritual life, however remote or exclusive, which was exempt from the priory's authority.

Conclusions

From the evidence above it is clear that the twelfth-century monks of Durham took an active interest in the eremitical life of Inner Farne. The island's hermitage combined contemporary initiatives with the all-important claims to the past to produce a vibrant spiritual focus for the community. Channels of communication with the hermits were facilitated by visits, and knowledge of the eremitical life on Farne must have been common in the priory at Durham, from which place measures of control could be enforced.[82] It would therefore appear that the Farne Island hermitage was viewed as an extension or outpost of the priory of Durham where the community's ascetical and eremitical yearnings were given full expression. It requires some investigation, therefore to establish why the priory's most famous twelfth-century hermit was not a monk on Farne, but a layman, St Godric, on the episcopal estate at Finchale.

ST GODRIC OF FINCHALE

Godric's Background

Godric was an Englishman born c.1065 in Norfolk to a pious family.[83] He became a merchant and in the course of his career travelled widely.[84] His own spiritual life steadily developed over the years, aided by the pilgrimages to holy places such as

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[82] Tudor, 'Godric and Bartholomew', pp. 210-11.
[83] *Vita S. God.*, chs. 1-2. See also Tudor, 'Godric and Bartholomew', pp. 195-207.
[84] *Vita S. God.*, ch. 4, pp. 28-30.

Jerusalem, Compostela and Rome, which he included in his travels.[85] Eventually he decided to give up his secular life and, selling all his goods, began an extraordinary penitential career first as a pilgrim and then as a hermit. One of Godric's earliest eremitical experiences was at Wolsingham in Upper Weardale, where he joined a hermit, named Ælric who acted as a mentor and guide in the early stages of Godric's endeavours. In turn, Godric nursed the old man in his final days.[86] Through Ælric, whose youth had been spent in Durham, Godric had his first experience of the structures and authority of the nearby priory and this, along with a vision of St Cuthbert, may have influenced him, after his final pilgrimage to Jerusalem c.1108, to move to Durham.[87] There he undertook a variety of tasks, including learning some basic Christian texts with the youngsters at the song school of St Mary's church, and praying in the cathedral, which was then under construction.[88] His final move, c.1112, to Finchale, which was part of the bishop's hunting ground three and a half miles downstream from Durham, had been initiated by his earlier vision of St Cuthbert who had commanded him to proceed there. When eventually he reached Finchale, he was delighted by the desolation of the place which was overgrown and inhabited by snakes and wild beasts, and gaining permission to settle there, he thus established the Finchale hermitage.[89]

Godric's Association with Durham

These biographical details were recorded by Reginald of Durham, who spent a considerable amount of time with Godric and, on the advice of Ailred of Rievaulx and Prior Thomas, collected information and wrote a life of the saintly hermit.[90] The *Vita*, which is an immense work of 170 chapters with an additional twenty-four miracle stories, has many imperfections and was the subject of criticism at the time.[91] This suggests the need for caution in using the source. Reginald is not explicit about the criticisms levelled at his work, but clearly his portrayal of the hermit did not impress all

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[85] *Ibid.*, chs. 5-9 and 14-15.
[86] *Ibid.*, chs. 10-12. It seems to have been common practice for 'apprentice' hermits to serve some time with an elderly hermit in a mutually beneficial relationship in which they provided for each other's physical and spiritual needs. This happened with Bartholomew and William on Farne and in Godric's old age he was served by two Durham monks, Reginald (his biographer) and Henry, who were afterwards put in possession of his hermitage. See Tudor, 'Godric and Bartholomew', pp. 195-207.
[87] *Vita S. God.*, chs. 13 and 16. Godric spent a short while in a hermitage at Eskdale near Whitby on his return from Jerusalem. He left and moved to Durham after harassment by local landowners.
[88] *Ibid.*, ch. 16 and Tudor 'Reginald and Godric: Learning and Religion', pp. 42-3.
[89] *Vita S. God.*, chs. 19-22. See above, pp. 70-1.
[90] See above, p. 12, n. 25; Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, and her 'Reginald and Godric: Learning and Religion', pp. 37-48. Two other Durham writers produced *Lives* of St Godric: Prior Germanus and the monk Geoffrey. See *Vita S. God.*, pp. vii-ix.
[91] Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, pp. 85-6.

of the monks in the priory. Our view of Godric has therefore been filtered through the eyes of one learned but prejudiced observer and we should be wary of ascribing his opinions to all at Durham.[92] Nonetheless, the work does provide much detailed and anecdotal information about the hermit and his ascetic lifestyle which makes it a useful basis for study. It also reveals how the priory in Durham viewed and acted towards this unconventional figure: a layman whose spiritual prestige was immense and who, despite having no formal connection with priory, nevertheless chose to locate himself almost on the priory's doorstep. From this work, and in the light of the issues concerning the Farne Island hermits, three related aspects of Godric's relationship with the priory of Durham will be discussed in an attempt to discover more about the priory's attitude and policy towards its hermits.

Ascetic Extremes

Godric, possibly even more than Bartholomew, lived at the limits of human experience, both through his eremitical vocation and his ascetic practices. His topographical location was not as remote as Inner Farne, but it was still, in social terms, on the edges of, or even beyond, society. The site had been uninhabited for a long time and he had not only to contend with the wild creatures but also to reclaim much of the land on which he lived. Although his seclusion was interrupted by the visits of people anxious to seek his advice or healing, he often hid from visitors or kept communication to a minimum in order to preserve, as far as possible, his dislocation from the world.[93]

Physically, like Bartholomew, Godric's ascetic practices took him to the very limits of human endurance. His fasts were extreme, and his diet when not fasting was sparse. He often made what food he did eat even more unappetising, for example by making his bread with ash and not eating it until it was mouldy.[94] He performed vigils in which he prayed constantly without sleep for days at a time, and when he considered these practices insufficient penance for his sins, he would seek to mortify his flesh further through feats such as spending the night up to his neck in cold water praying,[95] or subduing the desires of his flesh with nettles and brambles.[96] These punishments must have been the more difficult to endure on account of his advancing age.[97] Like

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[92] Tudor has discussed Reginald's prejudices and their effect on his writing. *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer.*
[93] *Vita S. God.*, ch. 58.
[94] *Ibid.*, chs. 23, 27 and 29-31.
[95] *Ibid.*, chs. 33-4 and 37.
[96] *Ibid.*, chs. 27-8, 36 and 82.
[97] He was approximately 105 years old at his death in 1170.

Bartholomew, Godric also reached the limits of human experience in spiritual terms. His gift of prophecy and his numerous visions took him into the world of the supernatural.[98] Godric's saintliness was derived in part from this dual existence both in this world and the world to come, though his experiences also made him a wild and dangerous figure singled out for the tricks and torments of the devil[99] as much as for the blessings of the holy family and the saints.[100] His ability to communicate with and subdue wild animals, especially snakes, was another sign of his extraordinary powers.[101]

Godric the hermit was truly living on the margins of society on all levels. In his lonely dwelling his ascetic exertions took him to the limits of human endurance and to the psychological fringes of human experience. He was a typical, but striking, example of the new kind of lay hermit of the twelfth-century who carved for himself an individual life based around an ascetic, penitential impulse.[102]

Authority: Civilisation and Control

These extreme practices elicited a strong response from Durham Cathedral Priory. Godric's reputation reached Prior Roger (1138-49) who eagerly sought contact with the hermit.[103] This fact alone is noteworthy since it reveals something of the priory's attitude towards lay piety and spiritual ideals. Godric's extreme asceticism proved him to be a truly holy individual totally committed to a life of penitential service and the priory was prepared to recognise and value this, even though Godric was an uneducated lay-man of humble background. This suggests that the priory in the early twelfth century was well attuned to contemporary trends in the wider church and was not afraid to take decisive action to be involved with them, even though that might involve supporting and esteeming individuals who stood outside the monastic tradition.

This pro-active interest in contemporary expressions of extreme spiritual commitment was not wholly lacking in self-interest, however, nor did it necessarily mean that the priory was happy to accept such expressions entirely as they were. In its dealings with

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[98] Godric saw the souls of various deceased family members and friends; *ibid.*, chs. 54, 62-4, 66 and 75-6. He could also 'see' places many miles away, chs. 56, 89 and 95, and knew of events before he was told, chs. 78 and 86. He issued prophetic warnings, chs. 59, 74, 77, 80-1 and 96 and had the power to heal, even to restore life to the dead, chs. 57, 84 and 101.
[99] *Ibid.*, chs. 34-5, 38, 44, 46, 72 and 90-1.
[100] *Ibid.*, chs. 41, 50, 69-70, 93 and 98-9.
[101] *Ibid.*, chs. 18, 21, 39-40 and 51.
[102] Cf. A. Vauchez, 'A Twelfth-Century Novelty: The Lay Saints of Urban Italy', in *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practices*, ed. D. E. Bornstein, trans. M. J. Schneider (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1993), pp. 51-72.
[103] See below, pp. 222-3.

the independent hermit, the priory sought to impose its discipline over him, curbing what it saw as excesses in his asceticism, and moulding them to fit the priory's notions of spiritual decency. Reginald's depiction of Godric before he had had strong contact with the priory suggests an almost beast-like figure who rejected nearly all aspects of human civilisation and reduced himself to the lowest level of human existence.[104] This was clearly distasteful to the learned, literary monk, but the character of the hermit was gradually brought under control, and his wildness tamed, as contact with the priory was increased, most especially when Godric submitted himself to the rule of the prior and became an 'associate monk'. Most of Reginald's descriptions of his extremely ascetic practices occur in the chapters before the account of his acceptance by the community, after which Reginald concentrates more on Godric's prophecies, visions and miracles. This process of exerting control over the hermit came early in the priory's association with him. Prior Roger formed a friendship with Godric and then made an arrangement which was of mutual benefit to both sides. Anyone wishing to speak to Godric had first to gain the prior's permission. If he agreed to the interview he gave the visitor a small wooden cross to show to the hermit. If visitors arrived at the hermitage without this pre-arranged sign Godric would know not to speak with them. This arrangement allowed Godric some of the solitude he wanted, while giving the priory a considerable measure of control over who was allowed access to 'their' holy man. These physical signs of control were complemented by a more subtle process of spiritual civilisation which was enacted on a liturgical level. Before Godric had come into direct contact with the priory he had had no access to formal, liturgical offices. Through his elementary education and time spent with Ælric of Wolsingham, Godric devised his own form of the office, but he still had no consistent access to the sacraments. Increased contact with the priory civilised Godric in so far as monks visited him and provided him with a more regulated approach to worship, making the sacraments of the eucharist and penance available to him.[105] This not only created in Godric a spiritual dependency on the priory, but it helped to redefine him in the image of a monk performing known and approved rituals. Godric's spiritual efforts were thus allied with those of the monastic community, both making him a more acceptable role model and also validating the practices of the monks who shared a common spiritual routine with the renowned holy man.

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[104] He actually chose to live amongst wild animals, *Ibid.*, ch. 10. This motif parallels the *Life* of St Benedict, who was mistaken for a wild animal during his eremitical period. See 'The Life and Miracles

This need to control Godric's asceticism reflects the priory's attitude towards Bartholomew. However, the impulse to tame, control and contain was widespread amongst religious houses. It was not uncommon at the time for established monastic houses, whether of traditional black monks or the zealous new Cistercians, to voice questions about authority and control in respect to the eremitical life. This should not be seen as criticism of the eremitical life *per se*, but as an awareness of the dangers inherent in a life which, by definition, cannot be fully regulated by a community. For the individual hermits whose purpose had been to escape some of the strictures of the church, however, this created a real problem as powerful monasteries wished to contain these spiritual men, but could only do so by forcing a heavy compromise on them.[106]

Durham Cathedral Priory's Claims to St Godric

Finally, the priory's control over Godric was extended to an attempt to gain control over his spiritual and material legacy. During his long eremitical life Godric came to the attention of many notable people, including kings, archbishops and even popes and he was loved and honoured by ordinary people who had more in common with him than with the privileged monastic class. He was a powerful popular figure, therefore, and the monks could not afford to alienate him, or indeed to allow his reputation to be associated with another, rival, institution. The many miracles performed through Godric in his life, quite apart from the prophecies and visions he experienced, suggested to them that after his death he would be well-remembered as a wonder-worker, and that a cult could be developed around his body at Finchale. The church of Durham, accustomed as it was to the administration and benefits of a successful cult, quickly realised Godric's potential and wanted to make absolutely certain that all the benefits, spiritual and material, associated with him should be tightly under its control. In this matter the monks were highly successful, but they had to work extremely hard to achieve this, both before and after Godric's death. In this way Godric can be compared with Wulfric of Haselbury, a similar figure in twelfth-century Somerset.[107] Wulfric was also regarded as a holy man and gave visible evidence of this through his life as an anchorite. He too was called upon for advice by a range of people, both common and noble, and was similarly believed to have worked miracles.

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of St Benedict', in *Medieval Saints*, ed. M.-A. Stouck, p. 173.

[105] See Tudor, 'Godric and Bartholomew', pp. 204-5.

[106] Ward notes the danger for hermits posed by the institutional church which was trying to remove their solitude and tame them with education and ordination: *High King of Heaven: Aspects of Early English Spirituality*, (London, 1999), p. 67.

[107] See Mayr-Harting, 'The Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse'.

Yet Wulfric never became the object of a cult.[108] The stark difference between the two men is that Godric had the whole machinery of Durham Cathedral Priory behind his cause and, whether or not he was willing, the priory wished him to become the focus of their cult. Wulfric had no such patronage and consequently his image was not promoted as aggressively.

The principal task faced by the Durham monks was to ensure that there could be absolutely no doubt that the Durham community was the rightful heir to Godric's legacy, and this they did by very carefully and intricately associating themselves with Godric during his life so that by the time of his death he should be thought of as an extended part of the Durham monastic community.[109] The first method by which the priory sought to do this was through the subtle association of Godric's eremitical vocation with the example and explicit command of St Cuthbert. Godric had visited Lindisfarne and St Cuthbert's hermitage on Inner Farne in his trading days.[110] This experience had made an impact on him, though it was not until he had already committed himself to pursuing a religious life that St Cuthbert intervened directly. According to Reginald, St Cuthbert appeared in a vision to Godric, directing him to become a hermit at Finchale. This claim closely associated Godric with the monastic community, indicating that he was one of St Cuthbert's chosen servants, and that although he lived away from Durham, he was nonetheless a privileged member of the community, rather than a stranger. Reginald's account, however, reveals that Godric did not immediately act upon St Cuthbert's advice which suggests that either Godric was not as impressed with the vision, or that the command was not as explicit, as Reginald would like us to believe. This further suggests that the theme of St Cuthbert's patronage of Godric was particularly important to Reginald, and possibly even a pious invention on his part to consolidate a relationship which he felt was crucial. Godric had also had other, less intense, contact with the priory. Servants had come to Wolsingham to collect Ælric's body for burial,[111] and Godric himself had spent some time at churches in Durham. Although this contact was only slight, Reginald includes the details to help to provide continuity in the theme of Godric's links with Durham.

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[108] *Ibid.*

[109] Tudor argues that Reginald's *Life* was not a significant element in the attempt, but it does give many clues as to how the monks went about making their claims. See Appendix V in Reginald and Godric: *A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, pp. 370-5.

[110] See Tudor, 'Godric and Bartholomew', p. 196.

[111] *Vita S. God.*, chs. 11-12.

Secondly, once Godric was established at Finchale, the community began to assert its influence through the cultivation of friendship. Prior Roger sought out Godric and gained his trust and a fruitful relationship developed. Godric accepted Roger as his religious superior and thereby learned about monastic authority and obedience. After Roger's death Godric then submitted himself to the authority of future priors and thus he was formally assimilated into the community. Other friendships with members of the community followed, the best known of which was with Reginald. Initially this was difficult because there was little in common between the old, irritable and almost illiterate lay-man and the civilised, educated monk, but in time mutual respect and affection developed, no doubt facilitated by Godric's own increasing civilisation. Another monk, Henry, spent time at the hermitage and other monks travelled out frequently too.[112]

These personal contacts were further developed when the chapter made Godric an associate monk.[113] The significance of this acceptance by the priory should not be underestimated. Godric did not fit into the usual profile of a Benedictine monk of Durham. He was poor and uneducated and, as his early ascetic practices indicated, offensively uncivilised. A striking comparison can be made with his mentor, Ælric, at Wolsingham. Godric joined Ælric and learned from him the rudiments of simple, solitary eremitical life and although Godric was probably more extreme than Ælric, their lives as hermits were probably very similar. Ælric, however, although he had been brought up in the monastery at Durham became a hermit partly because he was not allowed to join the full community as an adult. His companions who stayed in Durham did so in the position of servants.[114] Godric, therefore, who was in the same social and educational strata of society, was treated totally differently and allowed a special dispensation which not only recognised him as a member of the community, but also allowed him to continue his lifestyle away from the focus of authority within the priory itself. Part of the reason for this difference in treatment might reflect a change in policy over time, possibly due to the influence of the Cistercians who accommodated those whom the Benedictines had previously ignored. Part of the reason must have rested with the fact that Godric was unusual even for a hermit and his spiritual powers were recognised by the monks. They wanted to ensure that they would benefit from that influence. By accepting Godric into the community, even in this unconventional way,

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[112] Tudor, 'Reginald and Godric: Learning and Religion', pp. 44-7.
[113] *Vita S. God.*, chs. 58 and 169. Tudor, 'Reginald and Godric: Learning and Religion', p. 40, n. 19.

the priory had very greatly strengthened its claims to spiritual and material possession of the hermitage at Finchale.

The final policy exercised by the monks in order to establish their claim to Godric's legacy was through the actual occupation of the site and constant attendance on the aged man. During Godric's lifetime many Durham monks visited the hermitage and Tudor has commented that these visits were intended to publicise the notion that the settlement was developing into a conventual possession, over which the monks had proprietorial responsibilities.[115] In time, these regular visits became lengthier stays and Reginald and Henry were eventually sent to live at the site to nurse Godric when he became infirm and unable to care for himself. By this stage Godric was totally dependent upon the Durham community and they were the active administrators of the hermitage and its land. On Godric's death, the bishop (who had granted Godric the land in the first place) took the unusual step of confirming these two individual monks in possession of the site. No other individual or ecclesiastical body could have issued any claim to Godric's body or land at this point, and the monks had secured their position as Godric's inheritors. Their task then was to promote the cult, for which process Reginald's life, which had been in preparation for a long time, must have been a valuable tool.

Conclusion

Durham Cathedral Priory clearly viewed its association with Godric of Finchale as a worthwhile investment through which the priory could benefit, both spiritually and materially. The priory eagerly initiated contact with the eccentric hermit and was actively involved in supporting him in his endeavours. Ascetical practices performed by hermits were applauded and respected by members of the community, but the strict concern for order and discipline which flourished in any vibrant Benedictine house, meant that those in authority considered it vital to mediate carefully between admirable extremes, which led to salvation, and abominable excesses, which led to sin. The priory was therefore concerned to contain the potentially dangerous and excessive elements in this illiterate layman's experience, and so it embarked upon a protracted attempt to tame and civilise him with as many monastic ideas and practices as possible. It was therefore determined that the relationship should be one in which the priory defined the spiritual limitations and maintained the ultimate authority. In its relationship with Godric of

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[114] See Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, p. 181.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

Finchale, Durham Cathedral Priory showed itself to be alert to contemporary spiritual interests and active in the pursuit of the highest spiritual standards. However, it also carefully engineered a campaign to ensure not only that the relationship should be enacted on its own terms, but that it should also be one through which the priory could gain substantially. Admiration and acquisition seem to have played an equal part in the priory's motivation to adopt the eccentric holy hermit.

CONTACT WITH OTHER HERMITS

Hermits Elsewhere on Durham's Lands

Although Durham Cathedral Priory concentrated its attention and resources on Godric and those hermits who lived on Inner Farne, there were other less prestigious hermits living in the north-east of England who also had close connections with the community. Ælric of Wolsingham has already been mentioned.[116] His association with the priory came from his upbringing, and some contact was clearly maintained since servants of the monastery carried his body back to Durham for burial.[117] Nothing more is known of the hermitage at Wolsingham after Ælric's death, when Godric also left, though the area may well have continued to attract hermits: in c.1160 Hugh de Puiset made a grant of land at Landieu at Wolsingham to an individual called Ranulph, who may have been a member of the Durham community, and his companions.[118] Another hermit named Godwin may have been one of those companions,[119] and another called John also lived nearby.[120] Hugh du Puiset granted land at Yearhaugh to another hermit called John, a descendent of Ranulf Flambard. This land, where hermits had previously been known to live, was intended for the foundation of a small cell. John decided to give the land to the priory and shortly before his death the sub-prior received possession of it. Immediately after his death a monk from Durham was sent to occupy the land, as

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[116] See above, p. 217 and *Vita S. God.*, chs. 11-12. He is known to have been resident at Wolsingham c. 1106; Tudor, 'Durham Priory and its Hermits', p. 70.

[117] An obit on vii Kl Mart*ii* (23 February) exists in a late-eleventh-century copy of Usuard's *Martyrologium* in DCL, MS B.IV.24 which includes *Æilric*us *herem[it]a*, though it is not clear to which Ælric this refers. See Piper, 'The Early Lists and Obits', p. 191.

[118] See Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, pp. 110 and 192.

[119] There is an obit for *Godwinus heremita* on *iii Nonas Octobr*is (5 October), but Piper suggests that this Godwin might, in fact, be the same person as the Wolsingham Ælric. 'The Early Lists and Obits', pp. 191 and 199.

[120] Hugh du Puiset granted John land at Satley, between Wolsingham and Lanchester. *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis*, p. 240. Tudor, 'Durham Priory and its Hermits', p. 73.

Reginald and Henry did at Finchale.[121] Two other names which occur in Durham sources and may refer to hermits are Wulsi and Columbanus.[122] None of these hermits appear to have been considered particularly noteworthy by the community, as references to them are scarce, but their existence is nonetheless extremely important. They suggest that the priory did have an interest in supporting the eremitical life for its own sake, and not just because of the prestige which could be gained through association with certain famous individuals. If the actual number of hermits supported by the house seems small, it should be remembered that this was typical since hermits were the exception rather than the rule.

Other Benedictine Hermits in the North-East

Whitby

As discussed above, the northern monastic revival was strongly shaped by the desire of the leaders and their early companions to live simple, eremitical lives. This has been particularly noted in the case of Reinfrid, who left the small Jarrow community in about 1077 in order to live on the cliff-top site of the ruined Anglo-Saxon monastery at Whitby. Abbot Stephen's narrative records that this move was prompted by a desire to follow the eremitical life (*solitariam vitam ducendi gratia Wyttebeiam venit*).[123] This information, along with the account of a succession of moves away from developing centres of monastic life, emphasises Reinfrid's eremitical aims. Soon after Stephen joined the Whitby community, Reinfrid probably moved away to another desolate and lonely spot at Hackness, leaving the administration of the community in Stephen's capable hands.[124] Reinfrid probably moved back to Whitby again after Stephen and the community had left for Lastingham, and then York.[125] Reinfrid's actions have generally been interpreted as clear evidence that he wished to live a simple life as a hermit either alone or with a small number of companions, rejecting the authority and

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[121] John was given 90 acres at Yearhaugh, which was on the Derwent near Ebchester. *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis*, p. 277. See Scammell, *Hugh du Puiset*, p. 110. Tudor notes how the monks were ultimately unsuccessful in their attempt to secure Yearhaugh. See Tudor, *Reginald and Godric: A Study of a Twelfth-Century Hagiographer*, p. 371.

[122] The dates of these individuals are not clear, but obits appear for *Wlsin[us] anachorita* on *vii Kl Mart*ii (23 February) and *Columban*us *anachorita* on *xiiii Kl Octobr*is (18 September). A Columbanus occurs ninth in Symeon's list in Cosin V.II.6, so within the original twenty-three names of the first Durham monks who arrived from Monkwearmouth and Jarrow on 26 May 1083. Piper, 'The Early Lists and Obits', pp. 178, 191 and 198. Tudor, 'Durham Priory and its Hermits', p. 73. See the comment above, p. 208, n. 43.

[123] *Cart. Whit.*, p. xxxv; *MOY*, p. 33.

[124] *Cart. Whit.*, p. xxxvi.

[125] See above, pp. 42-3.

responsibility of organised, conventual life.[126] His desire is thrown into sharp relief by contrast with his successor, Stephen, whose extensive political connections. administrative skill and ambition led him to a very different sort of life. His move away from Whitby and Lastingham into the urban centre of York, where he readily co-operated with important secular powers, suggests a much greater interest in the life of the monastery than the hermitage. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that St Mary's has left only a trace of interest in hermits: its Cumbrian cell of Wetheral had acquired a hermitage at Kirkandrews by 1147.[127]

The eremitical basis of the eleventh-century foundation at Whitby is therefore just as strong, if not stronger, than Durham's. How did this relate to its twelfth-century character and interests? The foundation account records that the endowments of William de Percy and his son Alan included the hermitages of Eskdale, where St Godric lived for a short time early in his eremitical career, and Mulgrave, to which Alan's nephew added Westcroft by the River Derwent.[128] The hermitage of Goathland was founded 1109x1114 by a group of hermits under the leadership of one Osmund whose mission had concentrated on caring for the poor. The hermitage was later turned into a cell of the abbey.[129] Charter evidence also shows that the abbey acquired other hermitages including Hood and Saltburn (though not until the early thirteenth century). Whitby therefore had a number of hermitages and, although they were not all continuously occupied, it appears that the abbey did have a significant number of hermits. However, none of the hermits seem to have been as renowned as those associated with Durham. This difference might be explained partly by the difference in wealth and resources between the two houses. Durham was fortunate to house a number of talented writers with proven hagiographical skills, and the community was well practised in sustaining and increasing veneration of their principal saint. It was well within the priory's ability, therefore, to produce writings recording the holy lives of their hermits and engendering a wider veneration. Whitby, on the other hand, did not enjoy such wealth of talent or resources and so it is possible that their hermits were equally remarkable individuals, but that the lack of written records prevented their reputation from spreading and influencing others at the time, and also almost eradicated them from the historical memory. There is also no evidence for significant contact

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[126] *MOY*, p. 33.
[127] Burton, 'The Eremitical Tradition', p. 30.
[128] *Mem. Whit.*, pp. 1-7. See Burton, 'The Eremitical Tradition', pp. 27-9.
[129] *MOY*, pp. xvii and 246.

between the hermits of Whitby and those of Durham. It is, however, possible that our limited sources failed to record the relationships between individual hermits, and between hermits and other religious houses: the only trace we have is that of Godric's brief stay in a hermitage connected with Whitby, though that was long before his relationship with Durham began. We have no evidence that the hermits connected with Durham took any part in training new hermits, nor are there signs that Durham tried to impose either its hermits or eremitical ideas on Whitby's hermitages, or tried to persuade any of Whitby's hermits to move to Durham.

Selby

The questions about eremitical or cœnobitical intentions surrounding the evidence for the foundation of Selby by Benedict of Auxerre in 1069 are similar to those concerning the northern monastic revival.[130] Historians have been perplexed as to Benedict's motives. Did he wish to live as a hermit or was his intention always one of foundation? Burton's analysis of the evidence leads her to suggest that his flight from Auxerre should be seen in the light of the Benedictine tradition of a monk leaving his house in pursuit of the eremitical life of the desert, the north of England at the time seeming an appropriate place in which to do this.[131] Such an explanation might account for his early aims, but not for their development. Benedict appears to have been willing to accept royal, aristocratic and ecclesiastical patronage, and to attract followers to join him.[132] In fact, after the actual foundation of the house, which developed into a traditional, wealthy, Benedictine institution, there is little to suggest that eremitical ideals received much attention at Selby apart from Benedict's own departure. Benedict was unpopular with his monks and was eventually forced out by them. He resigned his abbacy and is reported to have ended his life as a hermit near Rochester.[133] This might be taken to support the theory that Benedict's primary aim was to live as a hermit, but the circumstances in which his departure took place point instead to a flight from danger. If Benedict's interests had been more directly concerned with eremitism, one would expect a number of hermitages to be associated with the monastery, but only one, at Holme, on Spalding moor, was acquired (1185x1210), and this did not feature significantly in the monastery's activities.[134] Selby's eremitical interests were therefore

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[130] For the foundation of Selby, see above, pp. 50-5.
[131] *MOY*, p. 29.
[132] *Hist. Seleb.*, pp. 16-18.
[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.
[134] Burton, 'The Eremitical Tradition', p. 30.

only very slight and once again there is no evidence that the monks or hermits of Durham had any significant influence on them.

The only other hermit known to have been attached to a Benedictine house in the north-east at the period was Henry (d. 1127), who lived at Tynemouth's cell of Coquet Island. Nothing, apart from his Danish origins, is known about him.[135]

Conclusions

Durham Cathedral Priory in the twelfth century undoubtedly displayed an active interest in supporting the eremitical life. There was a historical precedent for it doing so in both its ancient and more recent history, and the Durham monks managed to combine this with both the traditional pattern of Benedictine eremitism and the strong currents in contemporary spiritual life. The community demonstrated, through its provision for hermits and the value it placed on recording their lives, accomplishments and miracles, that it took seriously this type of spiritual work, which was not something in which all members of the community could readily participate. However, the patronage offered to hermits was strictly on the priory's own terms. It was expected that hermits would practice extreme asceticism, but the priory anxiously sought to contain and re-channel that contemporary enthusiasm which could so easily lead to excess. Intimately connected with these issues of authority was the priory's view of the hermits as providers of spiritual prestige. As well-known and well-respected holy men, the hermits' spiritual strengths reflected well on the house which supported them – but it was in the priory's interests to ensure that those spiritual attributes remained strengths and did not degenerate into liabilities through a neglect of the Benedictine virtues of obedience and moderation. Impossible to separate from these spiritual interests were the priory's economic concerns. It is clear that the priory was eager to gain the land of those hermits supported by the bishop. Tudor has expressed this in terms of the priory's 'grasping' nature, noting that one reason for its adoption of these individuals was the fear that if Durham did not do so, another religious house would and Durham would have missed a chance for enhancing its spiritual control, influence and prestige.[136]

Comparisons with other Benedictine institutions in the north-east are illuminating. It has been shown that Durham Cathedral Priory's involvement with hermits was more concentrated, purposeful and sustained than any of its neighbours'. However, the priory

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[135] See Craster *A History of Northumberland*, V, pp. 316-18.
[136] See 'Durham Priory and its Hermits', p. 78.

does not seem to have viewed its hermits as vehicles for the imposition of Durham influence in other hermitages or religious houses. In fact, Durham seems to have exerted remarkably little influence over Benedictine eremitical developments elsewhere in the north-east. The spiritual dominance of the monks of Durham, which has been noted repeatedly in the previous chapters, did not extend, therefore, to their interest in ascetical and eremitical matters. The management and preservation of the priory's eremitical concerns seem to have been internal matters, although the end product (the association with a holy man) was something to be publicised widely. The comparison also highlights the fact that the original transition from eremitical settlement to conventual institution was necessary to cope with contemporary pressures and expectations and that the later historians who belonged to a well-regulated organisation felt that it was beneficial to their historical identity that they should record the eremitical basis of their development.

Nonetheless, it should be remembered that Durham's hermits constituted, numerically, only a fraction of the priory's population and that their activities represented only a part of the busy monastery's occupations. Although the hermits would have been known to the whole community, their existence would not have affected every monk to the extent that, for example, the cult of St Cuthbert would have done. Hermits were thus a tiny part of the monastery as a whole, an almost invisible presence tucked away in isolated spots, but they were representatives of a powerful and pervasive ideal which was promoted and endorsed by those responsible for the priory's public image and spiritual status. Eremitism in Durham Cathedral Priory in the twelfth-century is a difficult subject to quantify, but its impact was demonstrably strong.

OTHER ASCETICAL AND EREMITICAL INFLUENCES IN THE NORTH-EAST

As the early part of this chapter demonstrated, the traditional Benedictine context was not the only, nor indeed the most popular, forum in which ideas of asceticism and eremitism were explored. The Benedictine Rule provided a regulated framework in which individuals could be supported by the institution in their personal quest for the desert, and the contemporary enthusiasm for such ideals meant that Benedictines in the twelfth-century took a much greater interest in that element of their spiritual life than previously. However, the Benedictine order was a select recruiting ground and a great

many individuals interested in pursuing such a vocation were prohibited as they did not have easy access to monasteries. The contemporary rejection of traditional ecclesiastical structures and embrace of the newer orders and a freer, non-regulated religious life, meant that even those individuals who were eligible to join the Black Monks could make other choices instead. It was through this change in direction that the 'new' orders rose so rapidly to such a great influence.[137] Although these orders adopted or developed rules, within these formal structures they gave particular prominence to simplicity and asceticism, largely in opposition to the great emphasis on custom which had crept into traditional Benedictinism. In the twelfth-century north-east these ideas had an enormous impact, mainly through the influence of the Cistercian and Augustinian orders.

The strength of the ascetical and eremitical interests of these orders was occasionally given a very visible expression in the nature of their foundations. The most dramatic example in the north-east of England of the dichotomy between the stifling formalism of Benedictine traditionalism and the vigorously ascetic approach of the Cistercians was the exodus of monks from St Mary's, York, in 1132, following the arrival of the Rievaulx monks in the area.[138] Although these circumstances were almost unique, resembling only the foundation of Cîteaux itself, other foundations provide clear evidence of the contemporary eremitical impulse which inspired them. Although it was not considered 'normal' practice for either the Cistercians or Augustinians to found a house on the site of a hermitage and to absorb the hermits into the new, regulated community, it did happen on occasion. Two of their earliest and most influential houses in the north-east came into being in just this way. Moreover, the details of their foundations provide significant clues to the more widespread and less well-documented incidences of independent eremitical communities in the twelfth-century north-east.

Eremitical Origins of Augustinian and Cistercian Foundations: Nostell and Kirkstall

The early history of the Augustinian house at Nostell, in south Yorkshire, as with so many religious houses, presents considerable confusion between fact and legend. It does seem clear that it was founded by a chaplain of Henry I (possibly Ralph Adlave) with the king's active support.[139] The foundation account[140] records that Ralph had

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[137] See above, p. 94.
[138] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-9.
[139] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

accompanied Henry I on a trip to Scotland but, falling ill near Pontefract, had remained in the area while the royal entourage moved northwards. During his convalescence Ralph met a group of hermits from nearby Nostell where there was a chapel dedicated to St Oswald. Ralph wished to join them and on Henry's return was granted permission to found a priory of Augustinian canons there, which was dedicated to St Oswald (1114x1119). It was, like so many other houses of eremitical origins, soon transformed into a major ecclesiastical centre, probably because of the royal interest in it. Its prior was granted a prebend in the York Cathedral chapter, Prior Æthelwold became the first bishop of Carlisle in 1133 and the first Augustinian house in Scotland, the former Culdee church at Scone, was converted by canons from Nostell.

The foundation of the Cistercian abbey of Kirkstall came about through fairly similar circumstances. A group of hermits were living on the site under the leadership of a certain Seleth, a southerner who, rather like Aldwin and companions, moved to the north in order to lead a solitary life, though Seleth had been moved not by the past glory of the region, rather by a vision. This group was approached by Alexander, abbot of Barnoldswick, a daughter of Fountains which had been founded in 1147. Barnoldswick was not proving to be a successful foundation due to poor terrain and climate, so Alexander was seeking a new site to which he could move his community. On discovering the hermitage at Kirkstall he decided that this should be the spot. Alexander shared Bernard of Clairvaux's views on the dangers of unregulated eremitical life[141] and sought to persuade Seleth and his companions that it was much better for them to live as Cistercians under obedience to a rule than under their own free will. Some of the hermits accepted Alexander's arguments and were accepted into the Cistercian community which then moved onto the site from Barnoldswick, while others were paid to leave.[142]

The Popular Attraction of the New Orders

These two examples illustrate that there were independent groups of hermits in the region with no affiliation to any of the major religious institutions and whose presence was not recorded until they became involved in the development of a more formal

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[140] Prior Robert Quixley (1393-1427) wrote the *De Gestis et Actibus Priorum Monasterii Sancti Oswaldi de Nostell*. See Burrows, 'The Foundation of Nostell Priory', 32; *MOY*, pp.71-7 and W. E. Wightman, 'Henry I and the Foundation of Nostell Priory', *YAJ* 41 (1963-6), pp. 57-60.

[141] See above, p. 201, n. 14.

[142] See *Fundacio Abbathie de Kyrkestall*, Baker, '"The Surest Road to Heaven"', p. 50 and Burton, 'The Eremitical Tradition', p. 24, n. 21.

community. They were not alone, however, as numerous other groups or individuals have been recorded in a similar way. How many such individuals existed cannot be ascertained, but there were almost certainly many more than can now be traced.[143] The presence of these hermits indicates a degree of fervent and committed religious observance in the region which was not organised along formal, institutional lines and which has been recorded almost by accident, but which should not be overlooked.[144] It also emphasises quite how strongly the attraction of the eremitical life was felt in this region. There were clearly northern individuals who felt a powerful calling to follow some sort of dedicated religious life but who, for whatever reason, were not pursuing that vocation in one of the existing monastic houses. The Augustinian priories represented opportunities for such individuals to commit themselves to more regulated lives, while not making the same demands as a Benedictine monastery would, which perhaps explains why several of the Augustinian priories had their origins in the loosely formed eremitical groups of the region.[145] The Cistercians, on the other hand provided a more rigorous and disciplined framework in which the ascetic could pursue his vocation, but they combined with this an invitation to individuals from all classes and backgrounds to take a valid and valued place in the spiritual life of the monastery, in contrast to the Benedictine model of the labourers being servants rather than monks.[146] The vast expansion of the Cistercian houses[147] therefore included an equally vast proportion of illiterate lay brothers from the servile classes to whom a religious life had not previously been available. These took part in an abridged version of the daily offices which fitted into a day of manual labour. It is perhaps in these occasional and incidental references to hermits that we gain a hint of the background of many of the new monks and canons.

CONCLUSIONS

The increasing popularity of asceticism in the eleventh and twelfth-century church found one means of expression through eremitism. Much of this shift in spiritual

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[143] For examples, see Burton 'The Eremitical Tradition', pp. 24-31.
[144] Burton suggests, however, that the group of hermits centred on the chapel or church of St Oswald at Nostell was sufficiently large and well organised to have received endowments and to challenge the nearby Cluniac monks of Pontefract over rights in the neighbouring parish of Featherstone. *MOY*, p. 74.
[145] J. Herbert, 'The Transformation of Hermitages into Augustinian Priories in Twelfth-Century England', in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, SCH 22, ed. W. J. Shiels (Oxford, 1985), pp. 131-45 and Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons*, p. 143.
[146] See, for example, Ælric of Wolsingham mentioned above, p. 225.
[147] For example, during Ailred's abbacy, Rievaulx had 400-500 lay brothers. Squire, *Aelred*, p. 180. Growth in the existing Benedictine monasteries was far more modest.

temperament reflected broader trends away from the authority of ecclesiastical institutions. Tensions arose, therefore, between the merits of eremitical and cœnobitical life. These were clearly demonstrated in the north-east of England where established Benedictines, individual hermits, Cistercians and Augustinians, all promoting different, and sometimes conflicting, ideals, came into contact with each other. Durham Cathedral Priory, an institution which emphasised its traditional Benedictine character, was eager to recall its strong, if somewhat ambiguous, eremitical roots. Although the actual number of hermits associated with the house in the twelfth century was relatively small, a great deal of attention was accorded to some of them and the ascetic nature of their spiritual practices was, within certain very carefully controlled limits, held up for approval. Eremitism was cultivated, therefore, as an important part of the priory's eleventh and twelfth-century spiritual identity. Other Benedictine churches in the north-east do not appear to have shared this interest, or at least not to the same extent. This may, however, reflect a discrepancy in resources (Durham, unlike Whitby, had a number of talented writers to celebrate its hermits) as much as in inclination.

The level of Durham's involvement with hermits should not be over-estimated, however. While the priory successfully publicised its interests in eremitism, its hermits remained exceptional individuals who lived a very different life apart from the rest of the community. The fragmentary evidence from the charters, foundation accounts and other narrative sources for the houses of the new orders suggests that the eremitical life in the north-east was very much more widespread and varied than we can now assess. Those who lived as independent hermits and then decided to attach themselves to an organised church did not usually choose association with Durham, or its Benedictine neighbours, but with the new orders, who took the contemporary thirst for asceticism more seriously and incorporated the ascetic and eremitical ideals of the age into the heart of their communal life.[148] The Cistercians in particular encouraged those inclined towards the eremitical life to join their order rather than to live independently, promoting communal asceticism as 'the surest road to heaven' and denigrating the solitary life as open to the dangers of laxity. The Augustinians provided an organised structure through which clergy who sought rigorous spiritual standards could fulfil their pastoral functions while living a celibate, communal life. Neither order made the

[148] A notable exception to this pattern is Robert of Knaresborough who as a hermit of the early-thirteenth century falls beyond the scope of this thesis. He was associated with the Cistercians, but had a chequered career living both within and without religious communities. See B. Golding, 'The Hermit and the

individual, solitary hermit redundant, but they provided the cohesion and support of major religious orders for an intensely personal and individual spiritual journey.

How significant, therefore, was Durham Cathedral Priory's involvement in the development of ascetical and eremitical ideas in the north-east? Whilst it is evident that, within the priory itself, such ideas were taken extremely seriously and had a significant impact on the priory's own character, the evidence from other houses of the region, Benedictine or otherwise, suggests a powerful, if somewhat circumstantial, argument for the limitations of Durham Cathedral Priory's influence. The study of Durham's most famous hermits, Bartholomew and Godric, shows that their lives reflected many of the developments of the previous century in lay and monastic spirituality, and so in this way they are clearly products of their time. Yet there appear to have been few other solitaries in the region at the time who were similarly associated with major institutions. Whilst this situation partly reflects the nature of the surviving evidence, it also points to the fact that the nature of Durham's eremitical policy was not widely influential. Durham's prominence in the extant selection of source materials should possibly therefore be viewed as an anomaly, but one which is somewhat typical of this prestigious and self-conscious institution. The priory's eagerness to record its sponsorship of notably ascetic hermits was perhaps a reaction to the new orders which naturally enjoyed a more ascetic reputation on a wider scale. Durham Cathedral Priory was successful in promoting and publicising its involvement with hermits, but north-eastern interests in asceticism and eremitism were wider than solely those defined by the priory and they appear to have grown and flourished with no discernable reference to the influence or ideas of Durham.

This conclusion alters the pattern of dominance emerging from the previous chapters. Ascetical practices and eremitical endeavours are, however, in a different category of spiritual experience from the promotion of cults and the writing of historiography, being more of an attitude than a tangible product of an ideal.[149] It was, after all, an area of spiritual life developed by and catering for individuals rather than large groups. In this way it contrasts with the promotion of saints' cults which relied upon the active interest of large numbers. Similarly, asceticism and eremitism required only spiritual aptitude. Education and the political and financial qualifications needed both for the successful

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Hunter', in *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in honour of Barbara Harvey*, ed. J. Blair and B. Golding (Oxford, 1996), pp. 95-117.

[149] Cf. Vauchez's comment above, p. 206.

promotion of cults and the pursuit of intellectual interests were not pre-requisites. Asceticism and eremitism were therefore areas of spiritual life which were much more accessible to small, new churches and in which total dominance could not easily have been achieved by any individual church. Consequently, while Durham Cathedral Priory revealed strong ascetical and eremitical interests, this constituted only one aspect of the whole range of its spiritual and ecclesiastical concerns. In this area of the spiritual life of the north-east, Durham Cathedral Priory was a participant rather than a leader.

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has investigated both the spiritual interests of Durham Cathedral Priory and the nature of its spiritual contacts with neighbouring religious houses. Various conclusions have been drawn, but connections between them, and with the wider field of medieval church history, remain to be made. In the following pages I will therefore draw together the findings of each chapter, which will enable a judgment to be made as to the place of Durham Cathedral Priory in the post-conquest spiritual life of the north-east, and will then evaluate the importance of this study for future research.

The Place of Durham Cathedral Priory in the Post-Conquest Spiritual Life of the North-East

Part One of this thesis not only provided the necessary historical background for the study, but also defined a number of the themes which characterised spiritual life at the time. It also established the range of religious foundations in the region and the nature of their associations with Durham Cathedral Priory. In chapter one it was shown that whilst the inception of a monastic chapter at Durham was largely, if not totally, prompted by the delicate political position of a Norman bishop in a rebellious region, the individual monks who formed that priory were motivated by considerably stronger spiritual ideals than the circumstances of their foundation might at first suggest, and these concerns cannot have been totally erased by their change of status. I have argued, therefore, that from the earliest days of the priory's existence, strong spiritual interests lay at the heart of the community's identity. What made the monastic community of Durham unique, however, was not only its additional status as a cathedral chapter, but its sudden acquisition of a four-hundred-year-old inheritance of political, economic, social and spiritual importance. It was the monks' identity as the 'Community of St Cuthbert', an identity which endowed them with extensive resources and a dedicated purpose, which most profoundly shaped their development in the years to come. This inheritance also set the Durham priory apart from the other religious houses of the region which, with the exception of Hexham, had no recent background on which to build. The symbolic importance of the Cuthbertine inheritance was a heavy weight for the young community to bear, though, and it must sometimes have constrained the monks. Not only were they charged with a massive institutional responsibility, but this was done at the expense of their predecessors' eviction. Their inheritance was not at first, therefore, entirely secure, and so their energies had to be directed towards proving their worthiness for a position which was imposed upon, rather than chosen by, them.

The Durham monks' strong awareness of their spiritual responsibilities, derived both from their own history and from their acquired associations with St Cuthbert, had a distinctive effect on their development of the priory's resources, as chapter two has shown. Whilst it is true that the priory's cells served strategic political and economic functions typical of most monastic cells, the pronounced focus within them given to the cult of St Cuthbert and the development of hermitages shows that, for the Durham monks, their cells were certainly not the 'source of weakness' which 'served no religious purpose whatever' of Knowles' description.[1] For this community, its cells were a vital spiritual resource which received extensive attention and development. We should not forget that there were also other concerns involved in the monks' decision to develop their cells, such as border issues in Coldingham, but this study has shown the importance of taking full account of the monks' spiritual interests alongside their practical concerns. The brief examination of Durham Cathedral Priory's struggles for ownership of Tynemouth and Hexham support this view, as it has shown how important a role spiritual issues played in legal and jurisdictional matters. I suggest that this should not be viewed as a subordination of spiritual life to baser secular or material goals, but as proof that the spiritual ideals of the monks had a profound influence on the way in which they ordered their affairs, informing them on all aspects of their policy, even in those areas which seemed far removed from the liturgical life of the choir.

Chapter three's investigation of the effect of the arrival of the new orders on the existing religious life of the north-east shifts the focus away from the internal workings of the priory towards an examination of the Durham monks' attitude towards their independent religious neighbours, which provides a context for the second half of the thesis. In the first place, it should be noted that the mere fact that so many other houses belonging to new orders were founded in the north-east in the twelfth century is a strong indicator that no matter how influential the church of Durham was, it did not fulfil all the spiritual needs of the region. In addition, since the Benedictines of Durham did not share the same ideology or sense of mission as the Cistercians or Augustinians they should not always be compared directly. However, having noted the implicit criticism of traditional Benedictinism which these new orders embodied, it is surprising to observe how tolerant, even friendly, the Durham monks were in their dealings with their new neighbours. Studies of individual monks and their connections have been enormously informative about the spiritual aspirations and social contacts of the

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[1] See above, p. 58, n. 5.

religious and lay aristocracy of the time. Whilst firmly embedded in the context of the north-east, the ideals, connections and actions evaluated in this chapter will have applications in comparable studies located in other regions.

The examination of the geographical location of the new orders in the north-east, and the various motives behind the foundations of the new houses has cast Durham's friendliness in a rather less altruistic light, however. Indeed, it seems as though Durham Cathedral Priory could only maintain an open exchange of interests and influences when dealing with establishments some distance away. Further, noting the lack of foundations in the area corresponding to modern Durham, I have argued that the priory was instrumental in ensuring that no religious house, except those firmly under its own control as at Finchale, should be founded in the vicinity of Durham. Clearly, therefore, other abbeys and priories were perceived not simply as colleagues in the religious life but as rivals in religious influence. Toleration of, and co-operation with, their religious neighbours were important to the Durham monks, but very strict boundaries dictated how far this could go before they felt defensive of their position and reacted with decisive, even harsh, vigour.

The second part of the thesis has allowed these relationships to be examined in much more detail through specific spiritual issues. Chapter four's analysis of the effect of the cult of St Cuthbert on the region has supported the findings of part one that Durham Cathedral Priory had both the capacity and the will to dominate, showing that it could do so within the less tangible sphere of spiritual interests as well as within the more unambiguous sphere of foundations and endowments. Although there is no evidence that the priory actively attempted to quash other cults, the regional, national and even international importance of St Cuthbert, along with the priory's financial and literary resources, ensured that the monks of Durham operated the only truly major cult of the region. Other local communities which still wished to develop a cult, most importantly Hexham, could only imitate.

This evidence for the overwhelming influence of Durham Cathedral Priory in the development of the region's spiritual life, receives further support from the study of historiography. Chapter five has shown that the priory was immensely important in the early twelfth-century for defining a version of local history, especially local spiritual history. The work of Symeon in particular provided a blueprint in both style and content for much that was written throughout the north-east in the following century, while the evidence of manuscript transmission reveals that Durham's manuscripts were

read throughout the region. However, Durham's role in the development of the region's historiography also provides an interesting contrast with its role in the development of cults, since the early twelfth-century historiographical dominance did not withstand challenge. Although our sample of historiographical texts was small, it was sufficient to demonstrate how Durham's role changed. Towards the end of the century, when other churches were building up their own historiographical traditions, Durham Cathedral Priory's own output reduced, leaving the way clear for the writers at Hexham and the Cistercian houses to flourish uninhibited. The contrast with its dominance in the area of cults is not simply that its leadership did not last, but that the priory's extensive production of historiography did not seem to deter other religious houses from producing their own works too.

The final chapter of the thesis has modified the impression of Durham Cathedral Priory's spiritual dominance still further. In examining the eremitical interests of the twelfth-century community it has been shown that the priory had a lively sense of its eremitical inheritance and appreciated contemporary, European-wide spiritual trends. However, the evidence of the priory's sponsorship of hermits, most especially Bartholomew of Farne and Godric of Finchale, does not point to a widely influential policy or ideal. Rather, the evidence suggests an inward-looking obsession with controlling the ascetical extremes of hermits so that they might reflect the pinnacle of Benedictine achievement without threatening the all-important Benedictine ideal of obedience. Consequently this study has shown that Durham Cathedral Priory considered issues of asceticism and eremitism to be internal matters which, while they might bring spiritual prestige to the community as a whole, were not major aspects of the priory's relationship with other houses. Indeed many other houses in the region, most especially those of the 'new' orders, had worked out a far more comprehensive approach to asceticism and eremitism which integrated these ideals into the lives of all the monks or canons of their communities. Perhaps here it is wise to remember that since Durham Cathedral Priory was a traditional Benedictine house, direct comparisons with the Cistercian and Augustinian orders, which were by their very nature more ascetical and eremitical, are not always justified. What can be gained from the comparison, however, is the certainty that even though Durham Cathedral Priory was as committed to eremitism as a house of its order could be, it was no more influential in this respect than any other religious house in the region.

What can we conclude about the state of Durham Cathedral Priory's own spiritual life? This study's survey of the numerous religious houses of the region revealed a range of spiritual experiences and standards, from the sluggishness of St Mary's in the 1130s to the exuberance of Rievaulx under Abbot Ailred. The depth of detail concerning Durham Cathedral Priory's spiritual life has shown that the monks there took their spiritual responsibilities very seriously indeed. They were both aware of wider spiritual developments within contemporary Europe and concerned to maintain high spiritual standards within the priory itself. Whilst the rapid expansion of the Cistercians in the north-east rather overshadowed the priory's spiritual achievements, and the departure of Maurice for Rievaulx shows that there were some monks in the priory who were alive to the spiritual shortcomings of traditional Benedictinism, the fact that there was no mass exodus from Durham to the Cistercians as there was at the closely-related monastery of St Mary's in York, suggests that spiritual standards at Durham were good. As time went on, however, and the community's various interests, both spiritual and otherwise, grew, the priory became more of a monolithic institution. This favoured the steady management of the cult of St Cuthbert, which required a great deal of support and maintenance from the community. It also provided sufficient space for some toleration of individual needs and eccentricities within the community. However, the institutional needs of the priory meant that a very tight control was kept over its spiritual assets, just as was the case with its economic assets, which meant that the community as a whole could not be nearly as dynamic as its most interesting individuals. The most significant conclusion to emerge, however, is that the monks of Durham in the eleventh and twelfth centuries placed a very high value on the quality of their spiritual life. Whatever else pre-occupied them, and no attempt is being made to deny the value of any of their other concerns, such as economical or political responsibilities, the state of their individual and collective spiritual life remained of central importance.

What, therefore, was the place of Durham Cathedral Priory in the post-conquest spiritual life of the north-east? It has been shown that Durham Cathedral Priory's energetic commitment to its spiritual interests, combined with its ancient history and connections, enabled it to dominate certain parts of the region's spiritual life. In matters of spiritual jurisdiction, and in the pre-eminence of Durham's patron saint, Durham Cathedral Priory could act with decisive, even oppressive, force to preserve this dominance. The priory played a defining role in not only shaping the character of other religious houses' spiritual interests, most notably in the cults of saints and hagiography, but also, to a certain extent, controlling in what ways it was possible for these houses to

develop at all. The priory continued throughout the twelfth century to build on its strengths and was immensely successful at keeping out most of the potential 'competition' from its local sphere of influence. In other areas, such as the writing of spiritual history, the priory enjoyed a leading position for some time, but lost its influence as other religious houses developed their own expertise. It is clear, however, that there were some areas of spiritual life in which Durham Cathedral Priory did not dominate: developments in the reformed orders nearby, for example, show that the traditional Benedictines of Durham were not at the forefront of ideas of spiritual renewal. Other churches in the region therefore had much greater impact in some areas of spiritual life, such as asceticism and eremitism and the wide-scale provision of pastoral care or for religious vocations. Whilst these limitations should cause us to be cautious about over-emphasising Durham's role in the evolution of spiritual life in the north-east, it should nonetheless be noted quite how extraordinarily pervasive Durham's influence was – in a way which no other religious house could match. The detailed comparisons between Durham and Hexham across a range of issues have been extremely valuable in this study since they have helped to bring out the complexity of institutional contacts and personal relationships which we can no longer trace in Durham's connections with other religious houses. It is, indeed, unfortunate that it is not possible to pursue such comparisons for many of the other religious houses in the region. For example, detailed research into the twelfth-century history of St Mary's, along the lines of the present study, would greatly enhance our understanding of Benedictinism in the north-east during this period of challenge. Some of the comparisons with Hexham have served to show where there were limitations to Durham Cathedral Priory's influence, because Hexham itself challenged Durham's dominance, for example in historiography. However, these exceptions reveal the interesting fact that even when Hexham attempted to challenge Durham's influence, it did so through the very same means that Durham had itself used. Indeed in the comparison between the historiography of the two houses, Durham makes virtually no mention of Hexham, whilst Hexham's attempts to establish its place within the spiritual community of the north-east were almost entirely done through reference to Durham. Similarly, Hexham's attempts to establish and develop its cult were based upon the example and methods of the Durham monks' management of the cult of St Cuthbert. This is in itself evidence of the extent of Durham's influence; it had defined the terms in which spiritual ideas should be expressed. It should also be noted that Hexham, which tried to rival Durham in so many ways, was only able to challenge on a regional scale. The priory of

Durham, by contrast, through its adopted history and cathedral status, was always of national importance and had widespread contacts throughout the country and beyond with which Hexham could never have competed.

This thesis has helped to re-evaluate attitudes towards the spiritual function of religious houses such as that implicit in Southern's comment quoted above.[2] While it is perfectly true, as Southern stated, that other considerations played a very major part in the life of any religious institution, it has been the aim of this thesis to show how crucial it is that the spiritual aspect of religious life should not be dismissed. The spiritual life of individuals and institutions is a very difficult subject to study, both because solid evidence is hard to come by, and also because, once acquired, it can be extraordinarily difficult to evaluate and quantify. However, a study such as this is all the more valuable as a result. The findings of this thesis support the impressions gained from other studies on the church and monks of Durham that both institution and individuals were able to exert a profound influence on the region as a whole. The nature of this study is even more important, though, since it goes right to the heart of the priory's ideals, which are so difficult to record. It also acknowledges how close was the relationship between spiritual and non-spiritual concerns. It is well-known that secular concerns, such as power or wealth, could have an influence over spiritual concerns and that it is impossible to separate the two entirely. This thesis, especially in its examination of Durham's dealings with Tynemouth and Hexham, has shown that the connections between these concerns were also significant the other way around: spiritual matters could play a vital part in the promotion of other interests. It is therefore hoped that this thesis has shown that spiritual concerns were an absolutely vital part of the priory's existence and that studies of other aspects of the priory's life must also take full account of the nature of the spiritual life lived within it.

The thesis adds an important dimension to the existing research on Durham Cathedral Priory. It has provided a sustained examination of a difficult, under-researched but crucially important aspect of the priory's history, thereby supplementing existing scholarly knowledge. It also has wider applications. This research has demonstrated the value of studying religious communities from the inside out, through giving due attention to their spiritual interests. It is hoped that it has thereby made a valuable contribution to the study of the religious orders in the middle ages. The impact of the Norman conquest on the Anglo-Saxon church, and then the arrival of the reformed

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[2] See above, p. 13.

orders approximately half a century later, provide two crucially important catalysts for change within English spiritual life. Their effects can be studied either on a large-scale or in a more focused examination of a single church, region, or spiritual theme. In placing this study of a single, well-documented and highly-influential church within its regional context, and in providing very detailed examinations of specific threads of its spiritual development, a precedent has been set for further research within this important but often under-valued field. This thesis can provide a model for the study of other medieval religious communities in England and elsewhere too, since the dearth of such spiritual studies is not confined to Durham or the north-east. Above all, I hope that this study has shown that the spiritual ideals and practices of a religious community should be given full attention because they are a vital, possibly the vital, aspect of the community's identity and life.

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