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Continental influence at Bath monastery in the seventh century

PATRICK SIMS-WILLIAMS

Referring to the reign of Eorcenberht of Kent, 640–64, Bede writes:

At that time, because there were not yet many monasteries founded in England, numbers of people from Britain used to enter the monasteries of the Franks or Gauls to practise the monastic life; they also sent their daughters to be taught in them and to be wedded to the heavenly bridegroom. They mostly went to the monasteries at Brie, Chelles and Andelys-sur-Seine. . .¹

Although Bede mentions a few Kentish, East Anglian and Northumbrian noblewomen who were associated with Brie and Chelles,² his treatment of the English connections of the Frankish monasteries remains tantalizingly brief. In an article directing the attention of English historians to the importance of studying the links between English monasticism and the Columbanan monasticism of northern Gaul, James Campbell concludes that ‘it is probable that the relationships between England and Gaul were of much more importance in determining the progress of the church in England in the seventh century than emerges directly from Bede’s text’.³ New evidence of these relationships comes from the early history of Bath abbey.⁴

The assertion in the late-eleventh-century *Life of St David* by Rhigyfarch that David founded monasteries at Bath, Crowland, Repton and other places⁵ is obviously invention. The true history of the monastery at Bath begins with the twelfth-century copy of the foundation charter in the Bath

¹ Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (hereafter *HE*), ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969) III.8. The three monasteries lay in the Seine and Marne valleys in the vicinity of Paris. Other abbreviations used in the course of this article are: *BCS* = *Cartularium Saxonicum*, ed. Walter de G. Birch (London, 1885–93); *EHD* = *English Historical Documents c. 500–1042*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock (London, 1955); Sawyer = P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography* (London, 1968). *BCS* and Sawyer are cited by number not by page. ² *HE* III.8 and IV.23.

³ ‘The First Century of Christianity in England’, *Ampleforth Jnl* 76 (1971), 16.

⁴ I have in hand a study of the monastic culture of the West Midlands and the Welsh border. I am indebted to Mr David Rollason and Dr Hunter Blair for two references. Dr H. M. Taylor referred me to the article by Beat Brenk cited below and very kindly lent me his copy of the Marquise de Maillé’s *Les Cryptes de Jouarre* (Paris, 1971).

⁵ Ed. J. W. James (Cardiff, 1967), c. 13; discussed by A. W. Wade-Evans, *Life of St David* (London, 1923), pp. 80–3.

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cartulary, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 111. According to this, the land for the monastery was granted by Osric, king of the Hwicce (the Mercian sub-kingdom subsequently served by the bishopric of Worcester¹) to an abbess Berta ('Bertanae abbatissae') on 6 November 675.² Editors have not noticed that *Bertanae* is the oblique form of *Berta* (not 'Bertana'), which is a continental, not an English, name;³ the only other women of this name mentioned in pre-Conquest English sources⁴ are Æthelberht of Kent's queen (late-sixth-century), who was, of course, a Frank, and a *berchtae* commemorated in the ninth-century Durham *Liber Vitae* in the list of queens and abbesses,⁵ who may be the same or, less likely, the Bath abbess.⁶ No one regards this foundation charter as genuine as it stands. Professor Finberg, noting a similarity with a regnal style first found in a West Saxon charter of

¹ A. H. Smith, 'The Hwicce', *Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honor of F. P. Magoun, Jr*, ed. J. B. Bessinger and R. P. Creed (London, 1965), pp. 56–65.

² BCS 43; Sawyer 51 – best edited by William Hunt, *Two Chartularies of the Priory of St Peter at Bath*, Somerset Record Soc. (1893), no. 1.7, pp. 6–7. 'Bertanae' in M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912) is an error. Quotations have been checked against the manuscript. Abbreviations have been expanded. Kenneth Harrison ('The *Annus Domini* in some Early Charters', *Jnl of the Soc. of Archivists* 4 (1970–3), 553) has established the date of Osric's charter; previous writers had thought the AD dating and the indiction disagreed. I regret that I had already completed this article before noticing Mr Harrison's valuable discussion of BCS 43, in which he concludes that 'there is a case for thinking that a genuine charter underlies it' (p. 554). To demonstrate the authentic basis of BCS 43, he also notes the similarity between the sanctions and attestations of Leuthere in this charter and in BCS 107, without, however, extending the comparison to other charters. His comparison of the dispositive clauses of the two charters and his defence of the *anno recapitulationis Dionysii* dating clause of BCS 43 deserve especial mention. His defence of the verbose, quasi-historical proem of BCS 43 is more questionable, particularly the argument based upon the suggestion that 'the text of the charter implies a fairly recent relapse into heathenism' (p. 553). Charles Plummer (*Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica* (Oxford, 1896) II, 247) suggested that this proem was inspired by the text of Bede.

³ See the forms quoted by Ernst Förstemann, *Altdcutsches Namenbuch* 1: *Personennamen* (Bonn, 1900), cols. 281–2, and Christopher Wells, 'An Orthographic Approach to Early Frankish Personal Names', *TPS* 1972, 101–64 (Index Nominum, 153). Marie-Thérèse Morlet (*Les Noms de Personne sur le Territoire de l'ancienne Gaule du VI^e au XII^e Siècle* (Paris, 1968–72) I, 55) says that the element BERT- 'est très fréquent dans les noms franciques, mais selon Meyer-Lübke, *Rom. Nam.* 1, 20 [W. Meyer-Lübke, *Romanische Namenstudien*, Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse 149.2 and 184.4 (Vienna, 1905–17)], il est rare dans les noms gotiques'.

⁴ William Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum* (Cambridge, 1897), pp. 88, 104 and 543.

⁵ *The Oldest English Texts*, ed. Henry Sweet, Early Eng. Text Soc. o.s. 83 (London, 1885), 154.

⁶ Thorvald Forssner (*Continental Germanic Personal Names in Old and Middle English Times* (Uppsala, 1916), p. 46, n. 5) equates her with Æthelberht's queen. He also comments that 'the occurrence of this name in England will mostly be due to its having been borne by [her]' (p. 47). This hypothesis does not seem very likely. If the Anglo-Saxons named their children according to fashions of this sort – and Forssner advances no evidence that they did – one might expect more occurrences of the name than one, and occurrences nearer to Kent than Bath is. Moreover we should not assume that the queen was famous outside Kentish circles because she appears historically significant to us as readers of Bede. (The Durham entry is, of course, later than Bede.) The names of the other women cited by Forssner occur in the post-Conquest portions of the Durham *Liber Vitae*, in post-Conquest contexts, and are obviously OF *Berte*.

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801, suggested that it reached its present form early in the ninth century;¹ this argument does not, however, seem to exclude any *later* date up to the twelfth century. Nevertheless, two considerations discourage one from explaining away the name of the first abbess as a late invention. Firstly, since the cartulary contains at least one late-seventh-century charter of undoubted authenticity,² which presumably refers to Bath,³ it is clear that some records did survive from the earliest period and might have been available to the compilers of the foundation charter. Secondly, in this genuine charter the name Folcburg appears, which is attested otherwise only on the continent.⁴ According to this charter, which must be dated by its indiction and witness-list to 681, a certain Æthelmod, with the consent of King Æthelred (of Mercia) granted twenty hides by R. Cherwell (Oxfordshire) ‘Bernguidi uenerabili abbatisae et Folcburgi et per uos monasterio uestro’. The editor suggests that Folcburg ‘was probably the *decana*, or, as she would be called later, the prioress, of the convent’.⁵ The name of her abbess is English, Beorngyth.⁶ The spelling *ui* for *y* preserves an early orthography.⁷

From the two charters taken together, then, we see a monastery founded at Bath in 675 by a sub-king of the Hwicce with a continental abbess at its head, who by 681 had an English successor, although the foreign element continued in the person of Folcburg. It was probably a ‘double monastery’ at first, no houses for women only being recorded at this date.⁸ An exact parallel for these events occurs in the Life of Bertila, abbess of Chelles (c. 658–c. 705⁹), one of the Frankish monasteries mentioned by Bede:

¹ H. P. R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands*, 2nd ed. (Leicester, 1972), p. 174, citing BCS 282, Sawyer 268. The significance of this similarity is minimized by K. Harrison, ‘The *Annus Domini* in some Early Charters’, p. 553.

² Hunt, *Chartularies*, no. 1.8, pp. 7–8; BCS 57; Sawyer 1167; EHD no. 57. The other seventh-century charter (Hunt, *Chartularies*, no. 1.6, p. 6; BCS 28; Sawyer 1168) contains internal contradictions and seems in part to be modelled on the genuine charter. If ‘*loco . . . Slaepi*’ in it is rightly identified with Islip on the Cherwell (*Preparatory to ‘Anglo-Saxon England’, being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton*, ed. D. M. Stenton (Oxford, 1970), p. 225; Sawyer 1168), it may have been produced as a geographically more specific version of the Cherwell grant. At a synod held in Bath in 864 Burgred of Mercia granted land at Water Eaton to the bishop of Worcester (BCS 509; Sawyer 210; cf. Sawyer 402). Water Eaton adjoins Islip on the Cherwell. If Burgred was in fact disposing of some Bath estates along the Cherwell, this might be the occasion for fabricating the Islip charter in its present form.

³ Since it occurs in the Bath cartulary. The agreement of the names Berta and Folcburg noted below confirms this presumption.

⁴ Förstemann, *Personennamen*, col. 549.

⁵ Hunt, *Chartularies*, p. xxxvi.

⁶ Searle, *Onomasticon*, p. 99. The name *Burnegundis*, for which Förstemann (*Personennamen*, col. 269), found two examples in the early-ninth-century Polyptych of St Germain-des-Prés, is hardly this name; nor, as Forssner (*Continental Germanic Personal Names*, p. 282) points out, is *Bernoidis* in the ninth-century Polyptych of Rheims (Förstemann, *Personennamen*, col. 272).

⁷ Cf. A. Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford, 1959), §§42 and 199.

⁸ Stenton, ‘St Frideswide and her Times’, *Preparatory to ‘Anglo-Saxon England’*, p. 228, and Philibert Schmitz, *Histoire de l’Ordre de Saint Benoît* (Maredsous, 1942–56) VII, 47–8. On double monasteries in general see *ibid.* I, 298–300 and references.

⁹ *Vita Bertilae*, ed. Wilhelm Levison, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Script. Rer. Merov. 6, 96.

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Such great profit for the good of souls did the Lord bring to pass through her that even those faithful kings from the parts of Saxondom across the seas would ask her through trusty messengers to send them some of her followers for teaching or sacred instruction (which they had heard she possessed to a marvellous degree), or even those who might establish monasteries of men and women in that region. For the good of their souls, she did not refuse this religious request; rather, with the counsel of the elders and the encouragement of the brothers did she send, with a thankful heart, chosen women and very devout men thither with great diligence, with both saints' relics and many volumes of books, so that through her the yield of souls increased even in that people and, by the grace of God, was multiplied.¹

Levison dates the Life to the end of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth;² but he and others treat this passage as reliable.³ It would be wrong to jump to the possible conclusion that Bath was one of the monasteries established by Bertila's followers, for other Frankish houses besides Chelles may have played a similar rôle; but it suggests the sort of reality which lies behind the two charters.

In view of Bath's position on the West Saxon border of the Hwicce,⁴ it may be significant that in 675 the West Saxon bishopric had been held for a quarter-century by three bishops of whom the first and third (Agilbert and Leuthere) were Franks and the second (Wine) had been consecrated in Gaul,⁵ while the Hwicce had no bishop of their own as yet.⁶ Leuthere (670–6) in fact appears second in the column of episcopal witnesses in the foundation charter, after Archbishop Theodore. The consistency of this witness-list has been defended by C. S. Taylor, and by Finberg, who regarded it as being drawn from a shorter, authentic version of Osric's charter.⁷

¹ *Ibid.* c. 6.² *Ibid.* p. 99.³ Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), p. 132, n. 2; Finberg, *West Midlands*, p. 209; and J. Campbell, 'First Century of Christianity', p. 21. (On the abbess Liobsynd(a) in 'St Mildburg's Testament' mentioned by these last, cf. D. Whitelock's caution (*ASE* 1 (1972), 12): 'nothing is known of this abbess'.) Jean Guerout ('Les Origines et le Premier Siècle de l'Abbaye', *L'Abbaye Royale de Notre-Dame de Jouarre*, ed. Yves Chaussey *et al.* (Paris, 1961) 1, 48, n. 9) believes that the writer of the *Vita Bertilae* used earlier documents.⁴ On the shifting boundary see C. Hart, 'The Tribal Hidage', *TRHS* 5th ser. 21 (1971), 149–50; but note that the reliability of many of the charters used is doubtful.⁵ *HE* III.7. On the chronology see Plummer, *Beadae Opera Historica*, II, 144–8.⁶ No bishop of Worcester attests the 675 charter. The date 679 for the foundation of the see is first given by two related sources, the Appendix to Florence of Worcester, ed. Henry Petrie and J. Sharpe, *Monumenta Historica Britannica* (London, 1848), p. 622 (cf. Arthur Haddan and William Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 1869–71) III, 127–8) and an early-twelfth-century tract, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, ed. William Dugdale, re-ed. J. Caley *et al.* (London, 1846) 1, 607.⁷ C. S. Taylor, 'Bath, Mercian and West Saxon', *Trans. of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeol. Soc.* 23 (1900), 135–6; Finberg, *West Midlands*, p. 173. Bishop Hæddi who succeeded Leuthere in 676 also attests. Taylor suggests that both signatures appear because arrangements for the foundation spanned the change of bishop; Finberg suggests that 'Hædde may well have been consecrated as an assistant bishop while Leutherius was still alive'. (For early parallels see Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils* III, 301, and Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede*, 'HE', p. 144, n. 2; for

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Leuthere is the only witness who uses the style of humility: 'Ego Leutherius acsi indignus episcopus subscripsi.' Comparison with two other witness-lists suggests that this style was characteristic of him.¹ A dubious Malmesbury charter, which may have been based in part on a genuine charter, has 'Ego Leutherius acsi indignus episcopus rogatus a fratribus hanc donationis cartam subscripsi'² and a similar attestation recurs in a probably authentic Dorset charter (undated) surviving in the fifteenth-century Shaftesbury cartulary: 'Ego Leutherius, quamvis indignus, episcopus hanc cartulam donationis subscripsi.'³ Levison demonstrated from the presence of a Frankish formula⁴ that the latter charter should be associated with Leuthere himself, who may have more or less dictated its wording, and his point has been accepted by Professor Whitelock and Sir Frank Stenton.⁵ There seems to me to be a close similarity between its sanction clause and that of the Bath charter:

[*Shaftesbury*] Si quis vero episcoporum seu regum contra hanc definitionis cartulam propria temeritate, vel potius sacrilega debacacione venire temptaverit, inprimis iram Dei incurrat. a liminibus sanctæ ecclesiæ *sit* (MS et) separatus, et hoc quod repetit, vindicare non valeat.

[*Bath*] Si quis uero quod absit succedentium episcoporum seu regum contra hanc nostræ diffinitionis cartulam propria temeritate presumere temptauerit, sit sequestratus a communione corporis Domini nostri Ihesu Christi et a consortio omnium sanctorum in aeuum priuatus.

I have found no other seventh- or eighth-century English charter which resembles the Shaftesbury charter's wording so closely. In particular, the word *definitio* is rare in sanctions. It does occur, however, in the Malmesbury

later ones see Pierre Chaplais, 'The Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diplomas of Exeter', *Bull. of the Inst. of Hist. Research* 39 (1966), 27–8.) Another possibility is that *episcopus* after Hæddi's name was added later from hind-sight. This is also suggested by Harrison, 'The *Annus Domini* in some Early Charters', p. 553. The possible connection suggested by Harrison between Bishop Wilfrid, who attests, and the use of AD dating is another point in favour of the witness-list; cf. Nicholas Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters: the Work of the Last Twenty Years', *ASE* 3 (1974), 225 and n. 1.

¹ Cf. 'quamuis indignus' in the autograph of St Willibrord, *The Calendar of St Willibrord*, ed. H. A. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Soc. 55 (London, 1918), 39v, and E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (Oxford, 1934–72) v, no. 606a. On the frequency of *indignus* in scribal signatures see P. Meyvaert, *RB* 71 (1961), 283–4; for examples of *indignus* in documents not concerning Leuthere see Harrison, 'The *Annus Domini* in some Early Charters', p. 554, n. 20.

² *BCS* 37; Sawyer 1245; *Aldelmi Opera*, ed. R. Ehwald, MGH, Auct. Antiq. 15, 507–9.

³ *BCS* 107; Sawyer 1164; *EHD* no. 55.

⁴ 'Et hoc quod repetit, vindicare non valeat.' Pierre Chaplais ('The Origin and Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma', *Jnl of the Soc. of Archivists* 3 (1965–9), 55) describes the clause as 'of continental and probably Frankish origin'. He notes that it occurs elsewhere in England only in a grant by Edward the Confessor to Leofric (Sawyer 1003), where it may be attributable to Leofric's Lotharingian upbringing ('Diplomas of Exeter', p. 26).

⁵ *England and the Continent*, pp. 226–8; *EHD*, p. 441; and F. M. Stenton, *The Latin Charters of the Anglo-Saxon Period* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 23–4. Chaplais ('Origin and Authenticity', pp. 55–6) is non-committal.

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charter witnessed by Leuthere¹ and in a charter of Ine² written by Winberht, the scribe who wrote the Shaftesbury charter – he names himself in both according to continental practice.³ An Abingdon fabrication referring to the eighth century in which the word occurs⁴ seems to me to be based on the Ine charter. This leaves only one seventh- or eighth-century sanction independent of Leuthere's circle containing the word, a charter of Offa in favour of the bishop of Rochester in 764.⁵ The resemblance between the Bath charter and the Shaftesbury one leads me to conclude that the later compiler(s) of the Bath foundation charter used at least the sanction and witness-list of an earlier charter which had been not only attested by Leuthere but also drafted by him or by one of his circle. We can, therefore, associate the Frank Leuthere with the beginnings of Abbess Berta's monastery at Bath.

There is no direct information about Leuthere, except for the little in Bede. Yet, as Bede states that he was the nephew of Agilbert, his predecessor but one, about whom there is further evidence in continental sources,⁶ one may gather the sort of background and contacts he had. According to the *Généalogie des Fondateurs*, whose accuracy in details is controversial, Agilbert was the cousin of Adon, who founded the monastery of Jouarre c. 635,⁷ and the brother of Telchilde (d. 664 + ⁸), who later became its first abbess.⁹ The family was a noble one with connections with le Soissonnais.¹⁰ After a long

¹ 'Quodsi quis haec scripta et decreta nostrae definitionis [*variants: diffinitionis; et definita et decreta nostra*] irrita facere nitetur sciant se ante tribunal Christi rationem redditurum' (*Aldelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald, p. 509).

² 'Si quis vero contra haec nostrae diffinitionis decreta propriae temeritatis pertinacia fretus violenter venire nisus fuerit. noverit se in tremendo ultimae discussionis examine coram iudice Christo aequa discretionis lance singulorum facta librante rationem redditurum' (*BCS* 100; Sawyer 239). Chaplais's comment on this charter is mistakenly quoted under Sawyer 243.

³ Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 227–8; *EHD*, pp. 341–2; and Chaplais, 'Origin and Authenticity', p. 55 ('probably to be also attributed to continental influence').

⁴ 'Si quis ergo diffinitionem hanc a me factam una, concorditer, canonicè et ecclesiasticè a rege Ini, necnon ab episcopo Daniele roboratam, irritam facere temptaverit, sciat se coram Christo rationem redditurum' (*BCS* 29; Sawyer 1179).

⁵ 'Quicumque uero sequentium regum aut principum aut aliquis seculari fretus potestate hęc nostrę definitionis scripta irrita facere quod absit nisus fuerit. sciat se in presenti uita domini benedictione esse priuatum. et in nouissimo maledictione subiaccere. ut a consortio sit separatus sanctorum et cum impiis et peccatoribus flammis ultricibus esse damnandum. excepto si digna satisfactione emendare curauerint quod iniqua temeritate deprauarunt' (*Charters of Rochester*, ed. A. Campbell, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* 1 (London, 1973), no. 6, pp. 7–8; *BCS* 195; Sawyer 105). Stenton ('The Anglo-Saxon Coinage and the Historian', *Preparatory to 'Anglo-Saxon England'*, p. 381) notes that 'it contains ancient formulas which we get in earlier Kentish charters – formulas brought, as I would think, by Archbishop Theodore from the continent'.

⁶ P. Grosjean, 'La Date du Colloque de Whitby', *AB* 78 (1960), 250–2 and 269–71; Guerout, 'Les Origines', pp. 38–9, 45 and 51–3; and Marquise de Maillé, *Les Cryptes de Jouarre* (Paris, 1971), pp. 74–7.

⁷ Guerout, 'Les Origines', pp. 11 and 33 and Marquise de Maillé, *Les Cryptes de Jouarre*, p. 70.

⁸ Guerout, 'Les Origines', p. 52.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 11 and 47 and Marquise de Maillé, *Les Cryptes de Jouarre*, pp. 77–8.

¹⁰ Guerout, 'Les Origines', pp. 23 and 38.

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period spent in Ireland, probably in the south in view of his 'Roman' stance on the Easter question at the Synod of Whitby,¹ Agilbert came to England. He was bishop to the West Saxons from 649 or 650 until 664, when he quarrelled with King Cenwalh (who had decided to divide the diocese, wanting an English-speaking bishop, Wine, at Winchester), and returned to Gaul, where he became bishop of Paris in 668 or earlier.² According to what has been regarded as reliable tradition he was responsible for building the crypt of St Paul at Jouarre, the mausoleum where he himself was buried.³ Bede states that Cenwalh invited Agilbert to return but that he sent instead his nephew, the priest Leuthere, who proved an acceptable alternative.⁴

Jouarre is less than twenty miles from Chelles, whose influence on English monasteries has already been mentioned. The two monasteries must have been more than geographically close. Both were double monasteries and Columbanan in character.⁵ Balthild, the English widow of Clovis II, had introduced the abbess Bertila and the other nuns from Jouarre in the course of refounding and enlarging Chelles between 657 and 664 (in 658 or 659 according to Levison); she lived at Chelles herself from her retirement (before 667) until her death (after 677).⁶ Her presence may have encouraged an English orientation of both houses. Through his family ties with Jouarre, Leuthere must have been familiar with both. His participation in the foundation of a continental monastery in the kingdom of the Hwicce, outside his own diocese, can plausibly be related to this background. It may be concluded, at least, that the Bath nuns Berta and Folcburg probably came from the group of Frankish monasteries in the Paris region.

For an impression of the possible effect of the cross-Channel connection

¹ So Grosjean, 'La Date du Colloque de Whitby', p. 270. He thinks Agilbert may have been consecrated bishop in Ireland, but it is equally likely that he had already been consecrated 'évêque *pèlerin*' in Gaul as Guerout ('Les Origines', p. 45 and n. 54) thinks.

² See HE iv.1 and Guerout, 'Les Origines', p. 51.

³ Guerout, 'Les Origines', pp. 51 and 38–9; Jean Hubert, *Les Cryptes de Jouarre* (Melun, 1952), pp. 4 and 7. The doctrine that the present crypt is a twelfth-century enlargement of a Merovingian original has been questioned by Jean Coquet, *Pour une Nouvelle Date de la Crypte Saint-Paul de Jouarre* (Ligugé, 1970). Dom Coquet argues that the crypt was constructed in Carolingian times, in part from Merovingian materials whose provenance cannot be proved. 'Certes [les chapiteaux] peuvent avoir appartenu, ainsi que les colonnes, à un décor plaqué de l'ancien sanctuaire... mais ils peuvent tout aussi bien avoir des origines diverses et partant des temps d'exécution différents' (p. 31). His scepticism is not shared by the Marquise de Maillé, who argues that the crypt is an eighth-century enlargement of the original mausoleum built by Agilbert (*Les Cryptes de Jouarre*, esp. pp. 145, 151, 267 and n. 1, and 274–5).

⁴ HE iii.7.

⁵ Guerout, 'Les Origines', pp. 6, 34–9 and 46, and Levison, *Vita Bertilae*, pp. 96–7.

⁶ Guerout, 'Les Origines', pp. 38 and 47–8; Levison, *Vita Bertilae*, pp. 95–6 and c. 4; Marquise de Maillé, *Les Cryptes de Jouarre*, pp. 49–50 and 72–3; and *Vita S. Balthildis*, ed. B. Krusch, MGH, Script. Rer. Merov. 2, 475–508, cc. 7–8. On Balthild see Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 9–10 and references.

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on cultural life at Bath it may be noted that Chelles was a source of books and teachers in Bertila's time, as her Life mentions,¹ and continued in importance for manuscript production and biblical study into Carolingian times;² Jouarre's history immediately after the early eighth century is obscure, but for the earlier period it may be relevant to refer to Agilbert's stay in Ireland *legendarum gratia scripturarum*³ ('école d'exégèse autour de Lismore était alors à son apogée', comments Père Grosjean⁴), to his standing with such men as Wilfrid, Alhfrith and Theodore⁵ and to the magnificence of the crypt of St Paul and its tombs, if these indeed belong in part to Jouarre's Merovingian period.⁶ Comparisons have in fact been made between the remarkable relief work on Agilbert's own tomb and that of the sculptured crosses he could have seen in the British Isles,⁷ though M. Hubert would rather consider that both are manifestations of a common renaissance, of which the Anglo-Frankish links mentioned by Bede are a part.⁸

There is no sign of a continental connection after the 681 charter, though it is inherently unlikely that this would have been dropped immediately. But various internal and external changes affecting the monastery in the eighth century probably did not encourage a permanent relationship. The next charter is dated 808 but must belong to 757–8: the West Saxon king Cynewulf grants North Stoke 'fratribus in monasterio Sancti Petri', Offa confirming.⁹ This implies that Bath had now become an all-male community.¹⁰ By the time of the next document, the report of a synod in 781,¹¹ the monastery is seen to have passed into the possession of the see of Worces-

¹ See above, p. 4.

² Levison, *Vita Bertilae*, pp. 96–7; Bernhard Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Studien* (Stuttgart, 1966–7) I, 16–34; and Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores* vi, xxii.

³ HE III.7.

⁴ 'La Date du Colloque de Whitby', p. 270.

⁵ HE III.25 and IV.1.

⁶ See Jean Hubert *et al.*, *Europe in the Dark Ages (L'Europe des Invasions)*, trans. S. Gilbert and J. Emmons (London, 1969), pls. 77–91.

⁷ E.g. M. Aubert, *L'Abbaye Royale de Notre Dame de Jouarre*, ed. Chaussy *et al.*, p. vii. The Marquise de Maillé (*Les Cryptes de Jouarre*, pp. 213–15, 273–4 and 281) speculates on contact between Agilbert and Theodore as a possible channel of influence between Jouarre and England.

⁸ *Les Cryptes de Jouarre*, p. 7. Beat Brenk ('Marginalien zum sogenannten Sarkophag des Agilbert in Jouarre', *Cahiers Archéologiques* 14 (1964), 106): 'Mit diesem orientalischen Impuls stehen auch die angelsächsischen Steinkreuze von Ruthwell und Bewcastle in engstem Zusammenhang.' The doubt implied in Brenk's title is dispelled by the Marquise de Maillé (*Les Cryptes de Jouarre*, pp. 201–3). Francis Salet (*Bulletin Monumental* 128 (1970), 136) mistakenly quotes Dom Coquet as redating Agilbert's tomb to the ninth century. In fact Coquet does not question the traditional dating; the redating concerns the tomb of *Agilberte*. A seventh-century date for Agilbert's tomb is supported by Brenk and by the Marquise de Maillé (pp. 203–6).

⁹ Hunt, *Chartularies*, no. 1.19, pp. 23–4; BCS 327; Sawyer 265.

¹⁰ It has been argued that the charter has suffered 'improvement', Cynewulf of Wessex being confused with Cynewulf of Mercia (as in the abstract in Hunt, *Chartularies*, no. II.808, p. 153), because of the date given; see Hunt, *Chartularies*, p. xxxiv and Sawyer 265. However the date is more simply explained as a misreading of DCCLVIII as DCCCVIII.

¹¹ BCS 241; Sawyer 1257; EHD no. 77.

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Continental influence at Bath monastery in the seventh century

ter, as many of the early foundations did. This, however, was now reversed. Offa maintained at the synod that the church of Worcester was holding the inheritance of his kinsman, King Æthelbald, without hereditary right, including Bath and various other ‘places’, most, and perhaps all, of them monasteries. There is no evidence, in fact, that Æthelbald had possessed any of the places claimed, except for Stour-in-Ismere,¹ and Offa himself had consented to the reversion of this property to the see.² Stubbs’s suggestion that Offa, with his eye on Bath, was claiming more than he expected to get as a matter of strategy is therefore plausible.³ The synod’s decision allowed him only ‘that most famous monastery *æt Baþum*’, but he was also compensated by the church of Worcester with ‘thirty hides on the south side of the river nearby, which is called Avon, which land we bought at a proper price from Cynewulf, king of the West Saxons’. These transactions involving Bath could probably be explained if more were known of the political situation. Taylor pointed out that Offa defeated Cynewulf at Bensington in 779⁴ and suggested that Offa wished to secure personal control of Bath and its lands because of its strategic importance on the West Saxon border.⁵ Professor Whitelock comments that ‘the purchase by the church from Cynewulf of Wessex on Offa’s account of a stretch of land on the West Saxon side of the Avon is of great interest. It suggests that Offa is strengthening the southern boundary of his kingdom, and one wonders whether Cynewulf, who at times admitted Offa’s overlordship, was an entirely willing party to the transaction.’⁶ It must be noted, too, that the subject of Cynewulf’s 757–8 grant, the estate of North Stoke, included Little Down Camp, a fort with obvious military possibilities four miles from Bath on the *north* side of the Avon.⁷ The changing fortunes of Bath monastery may, therefore, mask some irrecoverable political adjustments. These manoeuvres do not seem to have led to the end of monastic life at Bath, for in 796 Ecgfrith of Mercia issued a charter ‘in celebre monasterio quod Saxonice nominatur *æt Baðun*’,⁸ but they did make Bath a royal *Eigenkloster*. The transference of Bath from

¹ BCS 154; Sawyer 89; EHD no. 67. Cf. Sawyer 1826.

² BCS 220; Sawyer 1411. Cf. Taylor, ‘Bath, Mercian and West Saxon’, p. 139.

³ W. Stubbs, ‘The Cathedral, Diocese and Monasteries of Worcester in the Eighth Century’, *ArchJ* 19 (1862), 250.

⁴ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, EHD, p. 165.

⁵ Taylor, ‘Bath, Mercian and West Saxon’, pp. 138–9.

⁶ EHD, p. 466.

⁷ On the bounds of BCS 327 see G. B. Grundy, *The Saxon Charters and Field Names of Somerset* (Taunton, 1935), pp. 230–2. For the ‘prehistoric promontory fort’ see *The Victoria County History of Somerset* II (1911), 480–1, and I (1906), 302 for Roman remains in the vicinity. For Bath’s possession of North Stoke in the twelfth century see Hunt, *Chartularies*, nos. 1.49–50, pp. 49–51.

⁸ BCS 278; Sawyer 148. BCS 277, which reads *vico* for *monasterio*, is merely a poor copy of BCS 278 and can be ignored; cf. N. R. Ker, ‘Hemming’s Cartulary’, *Studies in Medieval History presented to F. M. Powicke*, ed. R. W. Hunt *et al.* (Oxford, 1948), pp. 65–7. On allegations that Offa refounded Bath see Taylor, ‘Bath, Mercian and West Saxon’, p. 138 and Hunt, *Chartularies*, p. xxxvii.

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Mercia to Wessex in the tenth century¹ does not seem to have altered its status as such. Athelstan was supposed to have endowed the monastery;² the surviving charter is under suspicion,³ but a book survives with a tenth-century inscription recording Athelstan's gift of it to St Peter's, Bath.⁴ In 944 the monastery was in the gift of his successor, Edmund.⁵ It was fitting, though Edmund may not have realized it, that he chose to give it to monks from across the Channel, from St Bertin's in Flanders.

¹ Discussed at length by Taylor, 'Bath, Mercian and West Saxon'. See also Joseph Armitage Robinson, *The Saxon Bishops of Wells*, Brit. Acad. Supplemental Papers 4 (London [1919]), 5.

² Cf. Hunt, *Chartularies*, no. 11.808, p. 152, on the celebration of his anniversary.

³ *Ibid.* no. 1.9, pp. 8–11; BCS 670; Sawyer 414.

⁴ BM Cotton Claudius B. v. Cf. P. Grierson, 'Les Livres de l'Abbé Seiwold de Bath', *RB* 52 (1940), 101, n. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 104 and n. 3; *EHD*, p. 318 (*Gesta Abbatum S. Bertini*).