

THE AFTERLIFE OF ST CUTHBERT

This ambitious book presents the first sustained analysis of the evolving representation of Cuthbert, the premier saint of northern England. The study spans both major and neglected texts across eight centuries, from his earliest depictions in anonymous and Bedan vitae, through twelfth-century ecclesiastical histories and miracle collections produced at Durham, to his late medieval appearances in Latin meditations, legendaries and vernacular verse. Whitehead reveals the coherence of these texts as one tradition, exploring the way that ideologies and literary strategies persist across generations. An innovative addition to the literature of insular spirituality and hagiography, The Afterlife of St Cuthbert emphasizes the related categories of place and asceticism. It charts Cuthbert's conceptual alignment with a range of institutional, masculine, northern and national spaces, and examines the distinctive characteristics and changing value of his ascetic lifestyle and environment – frequently constituted as a nature sanctuary – interrogating its relation to his other jurisdictions.

CHRISTIANIA WHITEHEAD is an Honorary Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick, and a Swiss National Science Foundation-funded Senior Research Fellow at the University of Lausanne in Switzerland, specializing in medieval religious literature. Her books include Castles of the Mind: A Study of Medieval Architectural Allegory (2003), and the co-edited The Doctrine of the Hert: A Critical Edition (2010), Saints of North-East England, 600–1500 (2017) and Middle English Lyrics: New Readings of Short Poems (2018).



CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Founding Editor
Alastair Minnis, Yale University

General Editor
Daniel Wakelin, University of Oxford

Editorial Board

Anthony Bale, Birkbeck, University of London
Zygmunt G. Barański, University of Cambridge
Christopher C. Baswell, Barnard College and Columbia University
Mary Carruthers, New York University
Rita Copeland, University of Pennsylvania
Roberta Frank, Yale University
Marissa Galvez, Stanford University
Alastair Minnis, Yale University
Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Fordham University

This series of critical books seeks to cover the whole area of literature written in the major medieval languages – the main European vernaculars, and medieval Latin and Greek – during the period c.1100–1500. Its chief aim is to publish and stimulate fresh scholarship and criticism on medieval literature, special emphasis being placed on understanding major works of poetry, prose, and drama in relation to the contemporary culture and learning which fostered them.

Recent titles in the series

Orietta Da Rold *Paper in Medieval England: From Pulp to Fictions* Jonathan Morton and Marco Nievergelt *The* Roman de la Rose *and Thirteenth-Century Thought*

George Corbett Dante's Christian Ethics: Purgatory and its Moral Contexts Andrew Kraebel Biblical Commentary and Translation in Later Medieval England: Experiments in Interpretation

Robert J. Meyer-Lee *Literary Value and Social Identity in the Canterbury Tales*Glenn D. Burger and Holly A. Crocker (eds.) *Medieval Affect, Feeling, and Emotion*

Lawrence Warner *Chaucer's Scribes: London Textual Production, 1384–1432* Katie L. Walter *Middle English Mouths: Late Medieval Medical, Religious and Literary Traditions*

Thomas A. Prendergast and Jessica Rosenfeld (eds.) Chaucer and the Subversion of Form

A complete list of titles in the series can be found at the end of the volume.



THE AFTERLIFE OF ST CUTHBERT

Place, Texts and Ascetic Tradition, 690–1500

CHRISTIANIA WHITEHEAD

Universities of Warwick and Lausanne





CAMBRIDGEUNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108490351 DOI: 10.1017/9781108780766

© Christiania Whitehead 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data NAMES: Whitehead, Christiania, 1969– author.

TITLE: The afterlife of St Cuthbert : place, texts and Ascetic tradition, 690–1500 / Christiania Whitehead, University of Warwick.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Series: Cambridge studies in medieval literature | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2020024847 | ISBN 9781108490351 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108780766 (ebook)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: Cuthbert, Saint, Bishop of Lindisfarne, approximately 635–687 – In literature. | English literature – Middle English, 1100–1500 – History and criticism. | Latin literature, Medieval and modern – History and criticism.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PR255 .W49 2021 | DDC 820.9/001–dc23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2020024847

ISBN 978-1-108-49035-1 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.



Contents

List	of Abbreviations	<i>page</i> vii
Ack	nowledgements	xi
	Introduction	I
I.	Blessings on Pregnant Seals: Constructing Cuthbert's Asceticism in His Anonymous and Bedan <i>vitae</i> and the <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> , 690–740	12
2.	Travels with My Coffin: The Dislocation and Defence of the Community of St Cuthbert in the <i>Historia de Sancto Cuthberto</i> , 793–1050	34
3.	The Bishop in the Rain: Celebrating the New Order in Symeon of Durham's <i>Libellus de exordio</i> , Old English <i>Durham</i> and the <i>Capitula de miraculis et translationibus sancti Cuthberti</i> , 1066–1140	48
4.	Expansions and Contractions of Saintly Space in Two Cuthbertine Miracle Collections: Reginald of Durham's <i>Libellus de admirandis</i> , and <i>De mirabilibus</i> , 1150–1210	75
5.	Godric of Finchale, Bartholomew of Farne and the 'Irish' <i>Libellus de ortu Sancti Cuthberti</i> : Three Eremitic Responses t St Cuthbert, 1150–1210	o 99
6.	Delimiting Sanctity in Two Meditations from Farne Island: The <i>Exortacio ad contemplacionem</i> and the <i>Meditaciones</i> of the Monk of Farne, 1210–1370	ie 139



vi	Contents	
7.	Vernacular Epitomes and Encyclopedias: Southern Legendaries and the Metrical <i>Life of St Cuthbert</i> , 1270–1500	173
	Conclusion	224
	Notes	
Bibliography		299
Ind	ρ_X	312



Abbreviations

AND David W. Rollason, Margaret Harvey and

Michael Prestwich (eds), *Anglo-Norman Durham*, 1093–1193 (Woodbridge, 1994)

Bishopric of Durham Christian Liddy, The Bishopric of Durham

in the Late Middle Ages: Lordship, Community and the Cult of St Cuthbert

(Woodbridge, 2008)

BL British Library
Bodl. Bodleian Library

Cambridge Companion Scott DeGregorio (ed.), The Cambridge

Companion to Bede (New York, 2010)

Capitula Capitula de miraculis et translationibus

sancti Cuthberti, in Symeonis Dunelmensis Opera et collectanea, Vol. 1, ed. John Hodgson-Hinde, SS 51 (1868), 158–201

CCC Gerard Bonner, David W. Rollason and

Clare Stancliffe (eds), St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200

(Woodbridge, 1989)

CCCM Corpus Christianorum Continuatio

Mediaevalis

'Community of Cuthbert' D. J. Hall, 'The Community of St

Cuthbert: Its Properties, Rights and Claims from the Ninth Century to the Twelfth' (unpublished DPhil dissertation,

University of Oxford, 1983)

CUL Cambridge University Library
DCL Durham Cathedral Library

vii



viii List of Abbreviations

De admirandis Reginald of Durham, Libellus de admiran-

dis beati Cuthberti virtutibus, ed. James

Raine, SS 1 (1835)

De mirabilibus H. H. E. Craster (ed.), 'The Miracles of St

Cuthbert at Farne', Analecta Bollandiana,

70 (1952), 5–19

De ortu Libellus de ortu Sancti Cuthberti, in

Miscellanea biographica, ed. James Raine,

SS 8 (1838), 61-87

Durham Priory R. B. Dobson, Durham Priory, 1400–1450

(Cambridge, 1973)

EETS Early English Text Society
EHR English Historical Review

Exortacio Richard Sharpe (ed.), 'An Exortacio ad con-

templacionem from Farne Island', Medium

Aevum, 54 (1985), 159-77

GL Gilte Legende

HE Bede, Ecclesiastical History of the English

Peoples Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford,

1969)

'Hermits, Hagiography' Dominic Alexander, 'Hermits,

Hagiography, and Popular Culture: A Comparative Study of Durham Cathedral Priory's Hermits in the Twelfth Century' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Queen

Mary University of London, 2000)

HSC Ted Johnson South (ed. and trans.),

Historia de Sancto Cuthberto: A History of St Cuthbert and a Record of His Patrimony

(Cambridge, 2002)

JEGP Journal of English and Germanic Philology
Kalendre The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of

Englande, ed. Manfred Görlach (Heidel-

berg, 1994)

LDE Symeon of Durham, Libellus de exordio

atque procursu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis ecclesie, ed. and trans. David W. Rollason

(Oxford, 2000)



List of Abbreviations

ĺΧ

Meditaciones David H. Farmer (ed.), 'The Meditations of the Monk of Farne', Analecta Monastica,

4 (1957), 141–245

Metrical Life The Life of St Cuthbert in English Verse, ed.

Joseph Fowler, SS 87 (1891)

MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica

'Miracles of Farne' H. H. E. Craster (intro. and trans.), 'The

Miracles of Farne', Archaeologia Aeliana,

4th series, 29 (1951), 93–107

'Misogyny' Victoria Tudor, 'The Misogyny of St

Cuthbert', Archaeologia Aeliana, 5th series,

12 (1984), 157–67

NLA Nova Legenda Anglie, ed. Carl Horstmann,

2 vols (Oxford, 1901)

North-East England Margaret Coombe, Anne Mouron and

Christiania Whitehead (eds), Saints of North-East England, 600–1500 (Turnhout,

2017)

ODNB Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

online

Oswald Clare Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge (eds),

Oswald: Northumbrian King to European

Saint (Stamford, 1995)

PL Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols

(Paris, 1842–80)

Relics C. F. Battiscombe (ed.), The Relics of Saint

Cuthbert (Oxford, 1956)

'Rewriting History' Sally Crumplin, 'Rewriting History in the

Cult of St Cuthbert from the Ninth to the Twelfth Centuries' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of St Andrews, 2004)

Rites of Durham, ed. Joseph T. Fowler, SS

107 (1903)

Saints and Animals Dominic Alexander, Saints and Animals in

the Middle Ages (Woodbridge, 2008)

Saints and Relics David Rollason, Saints and Relics in Anglo-

Saxon England (Oxford, 1989)

SEL The South English Legendary, ed. Charlotte

D'Evelyn and Anna Mill, 3 vols, EETS 235,

236, 244 (1956–9)

Rites



> List of Abbreviations \mathbf{x}

SHRScottish Historical Review

SRM Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum

SS Surtees Society

Symeonis monachi Symeonis monachi opera omnia,

Thomas Arnold, Rolls Series, 2 vols

(London, 1882–5)

Symeon of Durham David W. Rollason (ed.), Symeon of

Durham: Historian of Durham and the

North (Stamford, 1998)

Transactions of the Cumberland and **TCWAAS**

Westmorland Antiquarian and

Archaeological Society

VCA Anonymous Vita Sancti Cuthberti, in Two

> Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1940), 60-139

Bedas metrische Vita Sancti Cuthberti, ed.

VCM

Werner Jaager (Leipzig, 1935), 57–133

VCPBede, Prose Vita Sancti Cuthberti, in Two

> Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1940), 142-307

Vita Bartholomaei Geoffrey of Durham, Vita Sancti

Bartholomaei Farnensis, in Symeonis mon-

achi, Vol. 1, 295-325

Vita Columbae Adomnán's Life of Columba, ed. and trans.

Alan and Marjorie Anderson (London,

1961)

Reginald of Durham, Libellus de vita et Vita Godrici

> S. Godrici, miraculis heremitae Finchale, ed. Joseph Stevenson, SS 20

(1847)



Acknowledgements

This book laboriously acquired its present shape over several years, and there are a number of institutions and individuals whose help and generosity have proved indispensable along the way. Earlier versions of the chapter-sections on the Meditaciones of the Monk of Farne, the Metrical Life of St Cuthbert and the Carlisle Cathedral wood panel paintings, were published in, respectively, E. A. Jones (ed.), The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England 8 (Cambridge, 2013), 125-40; Antoinina Bevan Zlatar and Olga Timofeeva (eds), What Is an Image in Medieval and Early Modern England? (Tübingen, 2017), 17–39, and Catherine Batt and René Tixier (eds), Booldly bot meekly: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages (Turnhout, 2018), 115-32. I am grateful to these editors and their readers for their illuminating comments and insights. The first half of this book was written alongside the preparations for a related conference, co-organized with Margaret Coombe and Anne Mouron, North of England Saints, 600–1500, held at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, in 2015, and followed by a co-edited volume of essays arising from the conference entitled Saints of North-East England, 600–1500 (Turnhout, 2017). These contexts sharpened and improved my thinking about Cuthbert's cult on Lindisfarne and at Durham immeasurably, and I am very grateful to Margaret and Anne for their collaboration on these projects.

More recently, my work on Cuthbert in his northern context has been facilitated by a three-year research grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation for the team project *Region and Nation in Late Medieval Devotion to Northern English Saints*, based at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. I am tremendously grateful to the staff of the English Department at Lausanne, who offered me a warm welcome and have gone out of their way to support my research; to my team colleagues, Hazel Blair and Denis Renevey, for lively, thought-provoking conversations on northern sanctity, and to the Department of English at the



xii

Acknowledgements

University of Warwick, who have supported my research over many years, and were kind enough to arrange the secondment that enabled me to take up this research grant. In particular, I would like to thank Peter Mack for his encouragement, belief in me and invaluable practical advice at every stage of this project; also, the postgraduate organizers of the Medieval Research Seminar at Warwick, Louise Campion, Liam Lewis and Jane Sinnett-Smith, for keeping the medieval fires burning, and helping me to think in new ways about sanctity, space, materiality and ecology. Snippets of research from this book, and sketches of its overarching shape, have been presented at a number of international conferences and workshops over the last six years. I am grateful for all the good ideas and insights I have received from those audiences, and would particularly like to mention the Research Days in Medieval English Studies, organized annually at the Universities of Péter Pázmány, Budapest, Padua, Lausanne and Warwick, by Tamás Karáth, Alessandra Petrina and Denis Renevey, which offered me several opportunities to discuss the shape and direction of this book at length, and to receive invaluable advice.

As the project drew to a close, certain individuals have come to the fore. I am enormously indebted to Ruth Tuschling for working closely with me on the translations of a number of Latin passages. The benefit of her time and expertise has been incalculable. The two anonymous readers at Cambridge University Press and the series editor, Daniel Wakelin, scrutinized my book manuscript with great care, wrote extremely helpful reports and made recommendations which have undoubtedly improved the final version. Denis Renevey, my professional and personal partner, also read portions of the manuscript and provided me with detailed feedback. To be able to discuss my ideas with him on a daily basis has been both a privilege and a pleasure. My daughter Sophy has put up with her mother's retreats to her study and strange enthrallment to academic writing over several years with infinite good grace. I dedicate this book to my father (d.2016), a selftaught polymath in the fields of literature and history, who spent much of his adult life in the North East, and whose love of 'old books' first taught me the charm of turning to the past. He knew this book was underway, and would have been proud to see its final accomplishment.