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 vita, 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
Contents

List of Abbreviations  page vii
Acknowledgements  xi

Introduction  1

1. Blessings on Pregnant Seals: Constructing Cuthbert’s Asceticism in His Anonymous and Bedan vitae and the Historia ecclesiastica, 690–740  12

2. Travels with My Coffin: The Dislocation and Defence of the Community of St Cuthbert in the Historia de Sancto Cuthberto, 793–1050  34

3. The Bishop in the Rain: Celebrating the New Order in Symeon of Durham’s Libellus de exordio, Old English Durham and the Capitula de miraculis et translationibus sancti Cuthberti, 1066–1140  48

4. Expansions and Contractions of Saintly Space in Two Cuthbertine Miracle Collections: Reginald of Durham’s Libellus de admirandis, and De mirabilibus, 1150–1210  75

5. Godric of Finchale, Bartholomew of Farne and the ‘Irish’ Libellus de ortu Sancti Cuthberti: Three Eremitic Responses to St Cuthbert, 1150–1210  99

6. Delimiting Sanctity in Two Meditations from Farne Island: The Exortacio ad contemplacionem and the Meditaciones of the Monk of Farne, 1210–1370  139
### Contents

7. Vernacular Epitomes and Encyclopedias: Southern Legendaries and the Metrical *Life of St Cuthbert*, 1270–1500  
   Conclusion  

*Notes*  
*Bibliography*  
*Index*
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


CCC Gerard Bonner, David W. Rollason and Clare Stancilage (eds), St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200 (Woodbridge, 1989)

CCCM Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis


CUL Cambridge University Library

DCL Durham Cathedral Library
List of Abbreviations

De admirandis Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti virtutibus*, ed. James Raine, SS 1 (1835)


EETS Early English Text Society

EHR English Historical Review


GL Gilte Legende


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*


List of Abbreviations

Meditaciones

Metrical Life
The Life of St Cuthbert in English Verse, ed. Joseph Fowler, SS 87 (1891)

MGH
Monumenta Germaniae Historica

‘Miracles of Farne’

‘Misogyny’

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

Relics

‘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
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

SEL
The South English Legendary, ed. Charlotte D’Evelyn and Anna Mill, 3 vols, EETS 235, 236, 244 (1956–9)
List of Abbreviations

SHR Scottish Historical Review
SRM Scriptores rerum Merovingiarum
SS Surtees Society
TCWAAS Transactions of the Cumberland and 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
VCM Bedas metrische Vita Sancti Cuthberti, ed. Werner Jaager (Leipzig, 1935), 57–133
VCP Bede, 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 monachi, Vol. 1, 295–325
Vita Godrici Reginald of Durham, Libellus de vita et miraculis S. Godrici, heremita de 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
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 self-taught 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.