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Grimbald of St. Bertin's

A PART from Asser, the most famous of the scholars who came to England in the reign of King Alfred was Grimbald of St. Bertin's.¹ The sources for his life are very meagre. On the Flemish side there are a few contemporary charters, the tenth-century *Gesta monasterii S. Bertini* of Folcuin, the fourteenth-century chronicle of John of Ypres, and the information contained in the lections for the feast of St. Grimbald in the medieval breviary of St. Bertin's. On the English side Grimbald is mentioned in a number of contemporary sources—Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, the preface to Alfred's translation of the *Pastoral Care*, a letter from Archbishop Fulk of Rheims to the king, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—and he naturally played a part in the traditions of the abbey of New Minster (Hyde), where his body was piously preserved. Only two medieval biographies of the saint have hitherto been known. One is the fourteenth-century summary of his life by John of Tynemouth which was incorporated by Capgrave in his *Nova legenda Angliae*, and which is too late to be of any value. The other is a *Vita S. Grimbaldi* which survived the middle ages but has since disappeared; its contents are only known to us through an analysis made by Leland in the sixteenth century. An examination of this shows that the *Vita* must have belonged to the twelfth century; it was based either on the traditions current at Hyde or on an earlier biography of the saint, and it was provided with a more or less adequate historical background with the help of material taken from Florence of Worcester and William of Malmesbury. It has always been regarded with great suspicion by historians, more especially since Bale attributed it to Goscelin, the Flemish hagiographer who

¹ Amongst the older scholars who have dealt with Grimbald's life, one may mention particularly J. Mabillon, *Acta Sanctorum ordinis S. Benedicti*, v. (Paris, 1685), 3-6; *Annales ordinis S. Benedicti*, iii. (Paris, 1706), 240-4, 258, 319, and the Bollandist *Acta Sanctorum*, 8 July, ii. 651-8. Amongst the moderns, there are valuable studies by Stubbs in the introduction to his edition of William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum* (Rolls Series: London, 1889), II, xlv-xlviii; by W. H. Stevenson in his edition of Asser, *Life of King Alfred* (London, 1904), pp. 307-10; by W. Hunt in his article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.n.; and by J. M. Toll, *Englands Beziehungen zu den Niederlanden bis 1154* (Historische Studien, Heft 145; Berlin, 1921), pp. 13-18.

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worked in England in the second half of the eleventh century. Any serious *Quellenkritik* was rendered difficult by the fact that the work was only known through a brief analysis made by a learned but not always accurate scholar of the sixteenth century.

This difficulty has now disappeared. Leland's manuscript has not been found, but the fourth volume of the medieval breviary of Hyde, which has recently been published, contains, not the twelfth-century *Vita* used by Leland, but the earlier *Vita* on which this was based. This *Vita prima* forms the eight lections for Matins on the feast of St. Grimbald, 8 July.¹ It relates how Grimbald was born at Théroutanne,² and how when seven years old he adopted the religious life and was dedicated to God and St. Peter in the abbey of St. Bertin's.³ Here he acquitted himself so well that he was chosen prior, in which office he showed himself assiduous in looking after the welfare of visitors to the cloister. When the young Alfred was sent by his father Ethelwulf to be crowned king by Pope Leo, he and his companions were hospitably received in the abbey, and the boy determined that when he became king he would bring Grimbald to England. So in time, when Alfred had succeeded his father, he sought the advice of Archbishop Ethelred of Canterbury, and sent a deputation to St. Bertin's to ask the abbot and monks to permit Grimbald to come to England. With great grief they consented to part with him, and the *Vita* gives a long speech by the abbot expressing the feelings of the community on the matter. Grimbald was received in England with the greatest honour, and Alfred built for him a *monasteriolum* at Winchester as a temporary residence until he could find him a bishopric. When Ethelred died, Alfred, with universal approval, offered Grimbald the see of Canterbury, but he resolutely refused it, and on his advice it was given to Plegmund. When Alfred died, Grimbald was so overcome with grief that he wished to return to his own abbey in Flanders, but the new king was anxious not to let him

¹ *The Monastic Breviary of Hyde Abbey, Winchester*, iv. (ed. J. B. L. Tolhurst: Henry Bradshaw Society, t. lxxviii, London, 1939), 8 July (fos. 288r-290v). The Breviary is printed from two manuscripts, both dating c. 1300.—I am only for the moment concerned with the *Vita* in the narrow sense of the word; the *Vita secunda* used by Leland incorporated a *Translatio* and a series of *Miracula*, the texts of which are found elsewhere in the Hyde Breviary; see below, pp. 558-9.

² The phrase used in the *Vita*, 'urbs Morinorum quondam ampla et antiquis titulis opum ac bellorum inclita', was in one form or another a recognized circumlocution for Théroutanne; cf. Folcuin's *Vita S. Folguini* (written 968-90), which refers to the population of this region as 'apud historicos Morini, nunc a Taruenna, urbs eorum quondam opulentissima, sed modo diruta et pene exinanita, vocantur Taruennici' (*Mon. Germ. Hist., Scriptores*, xv. 427). Théroutanne is mentioned by name in the early eleventh-century *Liber Vitae* of Hyde, but in a clumsy phrase which seems to imply that St. Bertin's was actually at Théroutanne; see below, p. 555, n. 6.

³ At the modern town of Saint-Omer, in the Pas-de-Calais. The village of Théroutanne, the seat of a bishop during the middle ages, lies a few miles to the south.

go, and he agreed to remain if Edward would build for him at Winchester a monastery where the service of God could be maintained. The king gladly consented, and within two years the building of New Minster was completed. It was dedicated by Plegmund to the Virgin and the Apostles Peter and Paul in the presence of a great assembly of dignitaries of Church and State, and quickly became the recipient of valuable benefactions from the English magnates. It was at New Minster that Grimbald died in the odour of sanctity on 8 July 903.

Before going on to discuss the *Vita secunda* used by Leland, it may be as well to say a word on the material provided by the Breviary of St. Bertin's. The references to Grimbald in this Breviary¹ are reproduced by Molanus² and Malbrancq.³ The account of Grimbald by Molanus was put together from four sources: the Breviary (*ex officio Bertiniensis monasterii*), the *Chronica monasterii S. Bertini* of John of Ypres, the short *Vita S. Grimbaldi* in Capgrave's *Nova legenda Angliae*, and a note from Bale's *Catalogus*. The first of these is the only one that concerns us at the moment. Since Grimbald was very much less interesting to the monks of St. Bertin's than to those of New Minster, the lections on his life are proportionately shorter; they correspond roughly to the *lectiones i*, *ii*, and *xii* for 8 July in the Hyde Breviary, covering only the saint's life at St. Bertin's and his exemplary death and omitting entirely his career in England.

¹ I have been unable to examine any manuscript breviary of St. Bertin's, though several exist and contain appropriate services for the feast of St. Grimbald—e.g. Arras MS. 269 (937) and Saint-Omer MS. 392, two breviaries of the early twelfth and the fourteenth centuries respectively (cf. V. Leroquaix, *Les bréviaires manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France* [Paris, 1934], i. 43-5; iv. 138-9), and Bourges MS. 37 (32), a late twelfth-century sacramentary (see Leroquaix, *Les sacramentaires et les missels manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France* [Paris, 1924], i. 105-7). But there was no independent tradition at St. Bertin's regarding Grimbald's life (see below, p. 543), and from the silence of John of Ypres (see below, p. 543, n. 4) it is clear that the Breviary contained nothing that is not reproduced by Molanus.

² J. Molanus, *Natales Sanctorum Belgii* (Louvain, 1595), fos. 141^v-143^r. Although Molanus expressly declares (see below, p. 540, n. 1) that he has not seen the *Vita* ascribed to Goscelin (the *Vita secunda*), it is curious that in his *Indiculus Sanctorum Belgii* (Louvain, 1573), p. 38, published over twenty years earlier, Molanus was in a position to give one detail—Grimbald's refusal of the see of Canterbury—derived from it, no doubt at second-hand, which he does not mention in the *Natales*. He also makes the erroneous statement found in several late Flemish sources, that Grimbald was born in Tournai instead of Thérouanne (reading *Tornacensis* for *Teruanensis*; another alternative sometimes put forward was Tournehem).

³ J. Malbrancq, *De Morinis et Morinorum rebus*, ii. (Tournai, 1647), 230, 231, 438. Malbrancq professes to be quoting Goscelin's *Vita*, but in fact he is only quoting the Breviary of St. Bertin's, and there is no reason to suppose that he himself ever saw the *Vita*. His extracts from the Breviary are almost identical with those given by Molanus, but must have been made independently (see next note), a fact which proves that the Breviary contained nothing that one or other of these authors does not give. His account of Grimbald (pp. 230-1, 401-2, 427-9, 436-9) is put together mainly from John of Ypres, Molanus, and William of Malmesbury, with occasional references to Florence of Worcester, Pseudo-Ingulf, Matthew Paris, and other sources.

There are only slight variations in the wording of the text in the two breviaries, though phrases are omitted or abbreviated in the St. Bertin's version. But there is one addition which is found neither in the Hyde Breviary nor in Leland's analysis, a sentence to the effect that the mildness of Grimbald was such that he preferred to tolerate the evil morals of certain *domestici* than to eject them, and that they were eventually taken in hand by Bishop Ethelwold.¹ This must refer to the replacement of canons by monks at New Minster in 964 or thereabouts. It cannot be said that its insertion is of any assistance to us in attempting to decide whether the lections in this Breviary were taken from the *Vita prima* or from the *Vita secunda*. The verbal agreement between the texts in the two breviaries counts for little, since they only include those sections—Grimbald's youth and his death—in which the author of the *Vita secunda* would have no fresh material to incorporate and therefore would be least likely to tamper with the wording of the *Vita prima*. The fact that the reference to Ethelwold does not appear in the Hyde Breviary is also not decisive. In the first place, we cannot be sure that this exactly reproduces the *Vita prima*, and there may be slight omissions which we cannot trace;² in the second place, the passage is also omitted in Leland's analysis of the *Vita secunda*. It does not seem possible to solve the problem decisively either way, and in any case it is not of very great importance, but the balance of probability is in favour of the lections in the Breviary of St. Bertin's being derived from the *Vita prima* rather than from the twelfth-century biography.

We can turn now to the analysis of the *Vita secunda* given by Leland in his *Collectanea*.³ The manuscript which he used was a collection of *Vitae sanctorum*,⁴ dating probably from about the

¹ 'Tam benigna vero erant in eo paternae charitatis viscera, ut domesticorum quorundam mores tolerare maluerit, quam eos ejicere, commendans Domino tempus dispensationis, qua corrigeret ecclesiam suam. Quod per beati praesulis Adewoldi instantiam factum esse constat' (fo. 142^r). Owing to his omission of the word 'Wintoniensis'—which occurs in Malbrancq's text—a few lines higher up, Molanus wrongly makes this reform take place at St. Bertin's instead of at Winchester. Another possible addition in the Breviary of St. Bertin's is the statement that Grimbald was in his eighty-third year at the time of his death; this is given both by Molanus and by Malbrancq, but is not included by the latter in the part quoted from the Breviary. It does not appear in any of the English sources, and it is not certain whether Molanus derived it from the Breviary. It is certainly of no historical value.

² The date 885 for Grimbald's arrival in England appears also to have been in the *Vita prima*, though it is omitted from the Breviary of Hyde; see below, pp. 536, 547.

³ J. Leland, *De rebus Britannicis collectanea* (editio altera, London, 1770), i. 18-19: 'Ex vita Grimbaldi'.

⁴ The view that the works analysed on pp. 18-22 of the first volume of Leland's *Collectanea* formed a single manuscript is an assumption, but a very probable one; on pp. 1-18 Leland is dealing with works relating to Peterborough, on pp. 22 ff. with manuscripts from St. Mary's, York, and the intervening pages appear to refer to a single volume of the lives of saints. This view is confirmed by the fact that Bale,

middle of the twelfth century; its other contents were Osbern's *Vita et Translatio S. Elphegi*,¹ which was composed in c. 1080, the anonymous *Vita* and *Miracula S. Erkenwaldi*, of which the latter part at any rate was composed in c. 1140,² extracts from Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* concerning St. Ethelburga and St. Etheldreda,³ and an anonymous *Vita S. Swithuni*, usually ascribed to Goscelin, of uncertain date.⁴ The story of Grimbald's life at St. Bertin's is told in much the same way as in the Breviary of Hyde,⁵ but Leland mentions Alfred's second journey to Rome, and states that John the priest and Asser the scholar were on the deputation that invited Grimbald to Britain. The date of his arrival is given as 885, and the *Vita* declares that he was one of the most distinguished teachers of the king, who translated into English Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, and other works (*narrationes diversae*). Alfred, it is stated, also made the monk John abbot of Athelney and Asser bishop of Sherborne, and built a house and chapel at Winchester for Grimbald, who lived there as a monk. The story of Ethelred's death, the offer of Canterbury to the saint, and the appointment of Plegmund, is told in the same way as in the Breviary. Alfred planned, in conjunction with Grimbald, the foundation of New

who was using Leland's library, also groups the biographies of SS. Grimbald, Erkenwald, and Swithun together (see below, p. 539, n. 6). Leland's summaries are headed as follows: 'Ex vita Grimbaldi . . . Ex vita S. Aelphegi, autore Osberno Cantuariensi . . . Ex vita D. Erkenwali . . . Ex libello de miraculis Erkenwaldi . . . Ex vita Ethelburgae . . . Ex libello de vita Etheldraedae . . . Ex vita D. Swithuni episcopi Ventani . . .'

¹ *Acta SS. Bolland*, 19 April, ii. 631-42.

² The *Vita* is printed in W. Dugdale, *History of St. Paul's Cathedral* (ed. H. Ellis, London, 1818), pp. 289-91; the *Miracula* are unpublished. Cf. T. D. Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland* (Rolls Series: London, 1862), i, i. 293-5.

³ Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, iv. 6-9, 17 (ed. C. Plummer, Oxford, 1896, i. 219-24, 243-6). The reference to Ethelburga was no doubt made because she was the sister of Erkenwald, and once he had referred to Bede the copyist went on to the life of Etheldreda.

⁴ Leland's analysis shows that this was identical with the longer *Vita* printed from an Arundel MS. by J. Earle, *Gloucester Fragments* (London, 1861), pp. 67-72, but that it had attached to it a full-length series of *Miracula*, which are omitted entirely in the Arundel MS. and only appear in a shortened form in the others. The *Vita* analysed by Leland was attributed to Goscelin by Bale, but there does not seem to have been any manuscript evidence to justify this, and it was probably only a conjecture. Cf. below, p. 540, n. 2.

⁵ Leland, whose summary was rather carelessly made (cf. below, p. 535, n. 3, and p. 559, n. 1), makes the absurd mistake of saying that Grimbald became a monk under St. Bertin and that Alfred was received by Grimbald and Bertin on his journey to Rome ('Monachatum coluit [Grimbaldus] sub Bertino . . . Alfredus . . . Romam petens a Bertino in itinere et Grimbaldio liberaliter acceptus est'). He has misunderstood the involved and pompous phraseology of the *Vita*, which (following the text in the Hyde Breviary) describes Grimbald's entry into religion as follows: 'Sic traditus [est] Deo suique clavigeri Petri patrocinio, susceptusque primo sinu eximii confessoria domini Bertini ac cenobiali gremio'. This does not imply what Leland supposes, since St. Bertin died two centuries before.

Minster, and after his death it was built by his son Edward, who made Grimbold its abbot. Edward's brother Ethelweard, Archbishop Plegmund, and Bishops Denewulf of Winchester and Asser of Sherborne were the *testes et fautores* of the new foundation, which was constructed under Grimbold's directions in two years and consecrated by Plegmund. Edward transferred to New Minster the bodies of King Alfred and his wife Elswitha, the foundress of Nunnaminster, and it was at New Minster that Grimbold died and was buried on 8 July 903. To the testimony of Leland regarding the *Vita secunda* may be added that of Bale, the only other scholar of modern times who is known to have seen the work.¹ He gives its *incipit*, which Leland does not mention, as *Urbs Morinorum quondam ampla*,² the same words which begin the series of lections for the feast of St. Grimbold in the breviaries of St. Bertin's and Hyde.

If we try to summarize the details which appear in the *Vita secunda* and not in the *Vita prima*—the reference to Alfred's second journey to Rome, the names of the envoys sent to St. Bertin's, the account of Alfred's writings, the statement that John became abbot of Athelney and Asser bishop of Sherborne, the assertion that Alfred planned the foundation of New Minster, the names of those who witnessed the foundation, the reference to the removal of Alfred's and Elswitha's remains to the new abbey, the fact that Elswitha founded Nunnaminster³—it will be seen at once that most of these are really irrelevant to Grimbold's career. This at once suggests the possibility that we have not to do with two separate *Vitae*, but only with one, the lections in the Hyde Breviary being simply extracts from the *Vita* whose analysis is preserved by Leland.⁴ This, however, seems to be impossible on structural grounds. The lections in the Hyde Breviary form a coherent biography, complete in itself; a few details may have been omitted, but it seems impossible that

¹ It was known to none of the great English Catholic historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who wrote on the early ecclesiastical history of England, and who, although they worked much of their time on the Continent, had access to many manuscripts in this country; cf. the accounts of Grimbold in Nicholas Harpsfield's *Historia ecclesiastica Anglicana* (Douai, 1622), pp. 169-70, Michael Alford's *Fides regia Anglicana, sive Annales ecclesiae Anglicanae*, iii. (Liège, 1663), a. 885, 886, 901, 904 (pp. 160-9, 204-6, 210-12), and Serenus Cressy's *Church History of Brittany* ([Rouen], 1668), pp. 770, 774-8, 784, 797, 799-800. The basis of all these accounts is the *Liber de Hyda*, helped out with Asser, William of Malmesbury, Higden, Capgrave, the Pseudo-Ingulf, etc.

² See below, p. 539, n. 6.

³ I have omitted from this enumeration the date (885) assigned to Grimbold's arrival in England, since although it does not occur in the lessons in the Hyde Breviary it was probably in the original text of the *Vita prima*; see below, p. 536.

⁴ But it will be noticed that not all the details are irrelevant to Grimbold's life; if the *Vita* used by the adaptor of the lections in the Breviary had suggested that Alfred had planned the foundation of New Minster, the lections would scarcely have omitted to notice this fact.

the *Vita* from which the lections are derived can have contained all the points noted by Leland. Of one in particular is this true. According to Leland's summary, John and Asser were amongst the envoys sent to St. Bertin's to invite Grimbald to England.¹ This does not appear in the Breviary;² and it can, I think, only be explained on the supposition that Leland's *Vita* contained a paragraph based on the account given by Florence of Worcester of the arrival of Grimbald, John, and Asser in England, an account which, if read quickly and carelessly, might give rise to such an idea.³ The presence of such a paragraph in Leland's *Vita* indicates that the whole account of the embassy must have been drawn up in it in a manner quite different from the form in which it appears in the Breviary, and proves conclusively that we have in fact to deal with two separate *Vitae* and not with one.⁴

The additions in the *Vita secunda* are for the most part derived either from Florence of Worcester or from local sources. The former class comprises the reference to Alfred's second journey to Rome, the misunderstanding which caused John and Asser to be described as envoys to St. Bertin's, and the statement that John was created abbot of Athelney and Asser bishop of Sherborne.⁵ These must have been taken from Florence and not from his chief source, Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, since Asser does not mention the dignities attained to by John or himself, and the mistake regarding the envoys could not have been made directly

¹ *Alfredus rex . . . oratores ad monasterium S. Bertini de accersando Grimbaldo misit, inter quos et Ioannes presbyter et Asserus, viri eruditissimi et vivacissimi ingenii, praecelebant.*

² *Lectio iv* reads: 'destinavit [rex Aluridus] cum regis muneribus honoratos regni sui legatos ad monasterium beati patris Bertini'.

³ Florence of Worcester, *Chronicon*, a. 872 (ed. B. Thorpe, London, 1848, i. 91): 'Legatos etiam ultra mare ad Galliam direxit, indeque sanctum Grimbaldum, sacerdotem et monachum, venerabilem virum, cantatorem optimum, ecclesiasticis disciplinis et in divina scriptura eruditissimum, omnibusque bonis moribus ornatum, Johannem quoque, aequae presbyterum et monachum, acerrimi ingenii virum; Asserum etiam de occiduis et ultimis Britanniae finibus, e monasterii Sancti Dewii advocavit'. A careless reader might take this to mean that John and Asser were the *legati* sent to Gaul. Florence's account is taken from Asser, but the last part of it is much abbreviated, and such a mistake could not have been made by a reader of Asser's original text. It is of course possible that the mistake is Leland's, for whose carelessness we have other evidence (see above, p. 533, n. 5, and below, p. 559, n. 1), but this does not affect the argument, since the fact that it could so be made would imply that the *Vita* contained a section verbally identical with the paragraph of Florence. C. Plummer in his *Life and Times of Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1902), p. 18, is apparently prepared to admit the possibility of Asser having been sent to St. Bertin's. But quite apart from the worthless character of the evidence for it, it is scarcely possible on chronological grounds, since Grimbald and Asser came to the court at about the same time, and Grimbald's arrival probably preceded the permanent settlement of Asser in Wessex.

⁴ The very confused order in which—to judge by Leland's summary—events were related in the *Vita secunda*, suggests that the expansion of the *Vita prima* with material from Florence and elsewhere was very clumsily done.

⁵ Florence, *Chronicon*, a. 855, 872, 883, 887 (ed. Thorpe, i. 74–5, 91, 98, 104). Some of these also figure in William of Malmesbury, whose *Gesta regum* was used as well by the author of the *Vita*.

from his text. The only difficulty in this view is that the long digression in Asser's *Life* under the year 884 (*recte* 885), in which the arrival of Grimbald is mentioned, is transferred by Florence to the year 872, and one would therefore expect this date to be given in the *Vita secunda*. The explanation of this anomaly must be that the date 885 is not an addition of the *Vita secunda*, but—although it does not appear in the Hyde Breviary—came from the *Vita prima*; whether in this work it was derived from Asser or represents an independent tradition is a point that will be discussed in a moment. As for the local sources of information used in the *Vita secunda*, the removal of the bodies of Alfred and Elswitha to New Minster and the foundation of Nunnaminster were matters of common knowledge at Winchester, and require no explanation. The names of Ethelweard, Plegmund, Denewulf, and Asser as the *testes et fautores* of the foundation of New Minster were taken from one of the early charters of King Edward to the abbey, and probably from the charter of 903, in which the king declares that in founding the abbey he is only fulfilling a vow of his father.¹

There remains, amongst the additions of the *Vita secunda*, the reference to Alfred's writings, and this raises at once the question of the relation of the *Vita* to William of Malmesbury. This is difficult to determine, partly because the actual text of the *Vita* has not survived, partly because William preferred to rewrite in his own words the material which he used instead of reproducing the exact phraseology of the original.² His information regarding New Minster was drawn partly from Edward's foundation charter of 903³ and partly from one or other of the *Vitae S. Grimaldi*, but which of the latter is not clear. Any theory seems to involve certain difficulties, but the probability is that William used the

¹ The charter is printed in W. de Gray Birch, *Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester* (Hampshire Record Society: Winchester, 1892), pp. 214–17; Edward describes himself as 'patris voti non sequis exsecutor'. Cf. also below, p. 557.

² William of Malmesbury, *Gesta pontificum*, ii. 78 (ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton; Rolls Series: London, 1870, p. 173): 'Est in eadem civitate [Wintonia] monasterium, quod quondam rex Elfredus edificaverat, et in eo canonicos posuerat, Grimbaldus quodam Flandrensi suadente, qui ibidem magna gloria humatus, sanctus praedicatur et creditur. Sed beatæ memoriæ Athelwoldus canonicis expulsis monachos posuit. . . . Ad huius monasterii officinas instruendas, sufficiens terræ spatium ab episcopo et canonicis temporis mercatus, ad unumquemque pedem mancæ auri publico pondere pensavit [i.e. Elfridus]'; *Gesta regum*, ii. 122 (ed. Stubbs, i. 130–1); '[Monasterium construxit Elfridus] in Wintonia, quod dicitur Novum Monasterium, ubi Grimbaldum abbatem constituit, qui, se evocante, et archiepiscopo Remensi mittente, Angliam venerat, cognitus quod se puerum olim, ut ferunt, Roman euntem benigno hospitio confoverat. Causa evocationis ut litteraturæ studium in Anglia sopitum et pene emortuum, sua suscitaret industria'.

³ The reference in the *Gesta pontificum* to the purchase of the site and the price paid for it is taken verbally from Edward's charter of 903 (ed. Birch, *Liber Vitae*, pp. 214–17), where it is rightly referred to Edward and not to Alfred.

Vita prima, and that his *Gesta regum* was in turn used by the author of the *Vita secunda*. From the *Vita prima*, William derived the story that Alfred became acquainted with Grimbald when on his journey to Rome as a child; he then went on to deduce from the reference in the *Vita* to the *monasteriolum* at Winchester that Alfred was the real founder of New Minster, and he applied to him the story of the purchase of the site that in the charter of 903 was rightly referred to Edward. He also wrongly described Grimbald as abbot of New Minster, and it seems likely that he also obtained from the *Vita prima* his reference to the reforms of Ethelwold.¹ However that may be, the fact that the author of the *Vita secunda* mentions Alfred's translations of the *Pastoral Care* and the *Consolation of Philosophy* seems to indicate that he had the use of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum*,² and the suggestion in the *Vita* that Alfred planned the foundation of New Minster is perhaps an attempt to compromise between William's reference of the foundation to Alfred and the account in the *Vita prima*, which ascribed it to Edward.³ The only difficulty is that the *Vita secunda* does not appear to have mentioned the intervention of the archbishop of Rheims in the negotiations for bringing Grimbald to England; one would expect him to have made something of the reference to this by William.⁴ The explanation is perhaps that since the *Vita prima* gave a full account of the negotiations between Alfred and St. Bertin's, the author of the *Vita secunda* preferred to follow this instead of pursuing the vague hint thrown out in the *Gesta regum*. Later in the twelfth century, as we shall see, when the letter of Archbishop Fulk became known at New Minster, an elaborate attempt was made to correct the errors and amplify the narrative of William in the copy of the *Gesta* that the abbey possessed.⁵

¹ On this point we are reduced to guess-work pure and simple, since the lessons for the feast of St. Grimbald in the Hyde Breviary make no reference to Ethelwold. I am inclined to believe that the *Vita prima*, which probably dated from the period after Ethelwold's reforms in the second half of the tenth century (see below, p. 538), made it plain that the original foundation of New Minster was for secular clergy, and that these were only replaced by monks in the time of Ethelwold. This was reproduced by William of Malmesbury, but was omitted both by the *Vita secunda* and by the Hyde Breviary—it may be noted that there is also no reference to it in the lessons for the feast of St. Ethelwold (2 August) in the latter—perhaps because it was felt that tolerance of secular clergy was a blot on Grimbald's reputation. The Breviary of St. Bertin's softened (or perhaps misunderstood) the references in the original *Vita prima* to ill-behaved *clerici*, and applied them to the *domestici* of the abbey instead.

² Alfred's translations of these two works belong to the last years of his life, and they are consequently not mentioned either by Asser or by his copyist, Florence of Worcester. Both are referred to by William in the *Gesta regum*, ii. 122, 123 (pp. 131, 132); in the *Gesta pontificum*, ii. 80 (p. 177), he mentions only the *Pastoral Care*.

³ The 'Golden Charter' of Edward declares that the foundation was made in fulfilment of a vow of Alfred's; see above, p. 536 and n. 1.

⁴ William seems to have found Fulk's letter somewhere in Somerset; it was quite unknown to the New Minster tradition; see below, p. 548, n. 2.

⁵ See below, p. 560.

Since the *Vita secunda* made use of Florence of Worcester, it must be dated after 1117, when Florence's *Chronicon* ends, and probably after 1131, since the circumstance that all the surviving manuscripts of the *Chronicon* contain a continuation to this date suggests that the work was not in circulation at an earlier period.¹ The fact that the *Vita* used William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum* also points to a date later than 1125, when the *Gesta* were completed.² There is no reliable *terminus ad quem*, but one can be fairly sure that the *Vita* was written before the text of Fulk's letter to Alfred was known at New Minster, or it would have been incorporated in the work.³ The probability is that it can be assigned to the second quarter of the twelfth century, and it is more likely to belong to the period before than that after the great disaster of 1141, when the abbey and a great part of Winchester were burnt during the civil wars of the reign of Stephen.⁴ In a general way, its production may be connected with the renewed impetus that was given to the cult of St. Grimbald by the migration of the monks in 1110 from their old site in Winchester to new and more spacious buildings outside the city at Hyde,⁵ and which would find a natural expression in the composition of a new and more elaborate biography of the saint.

The date of the *Vita prima* is very much more difficult to determine. Its lack of personal details, and the fact that it gives the date 903 for the death of Grimbald, prove that it is not a contemporary document, for the date, as we shall see later, was taken from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and the date was altered in the chief manuscript of this work from 902 to 903 at some moment between 955 and c. 1025.⁶ The *Vita* must therefore belong to the second half of the tenth or to the eleventh century. The earlier date seems the more probable of the two. The obscure and involved style of the work, and the use of curious words of Greek derivation such as *holocaustamata*, are reminiscent of the literary conventions of this period, and we know that the

¹ See the account of the manuscripts in Thorpe's edition of Florence's *Chronicon*,

t. ii. pp. xi-xii.

² See Stubbs' introduction to his edition of the *Gesta*, i. p. xlv.

³ Fulk's letter was known at New Minster before the end of the twelfth century;

see below, p. 560.

⁴ On the great fire of 1141 and the consequent destitution of the abbey, see E. Edward's introduction to his edition of the *Liber monasterii de Hyda* (Rolls Series: London, 1866), pp. xlv-li.

⁵ The abbey is referred to as the 'monasterium Sancti Grimbaldi' in the *Annales Wintonienses*, a. 1110 (ed. H. R. Luard, *Annales Monastici*, ii. [Rolls Series: London, 1863], 43), when describing the migration, and this denomination seems to have become quite common; thus in a late twelfth-century Mortuary Roll from Hedingham we hear of the abbey of 'SS. Peter and Grimbald of Hyde' (*Fifth Report of the Historical MSS. Commission* [1876], Appendix, 322).

⁶ Cf. below, p. 554, and J. A. Robinson, *The Times of St. Dunstan* (Oxford, 1923), pp. 18, 20.

monastic revival of the reign of Edgar did in fact result in a certain amount of hagiographical composition.¹ There are two details which suggest that the author, like Grimbald himself, may have been connected with St. Bertin's. One is the description of Théroutanne as *urbs Morinorum*,² which would hardly have come naturally to an English writer, or at any rate to an English writer who had never been abroad. The other is the statement that Grimbald dedicated himself to God and St. Peter at the abbey of St. Bertin's,³ for although the abbey was in fact dedicated to St. Peter, this title was almost never used, and would scarcely have been known to anyone who had not been at the place. This at once raises the question whether the author may not have been Goscelin of St. Bertin's, who came to England in 1058 and made many contributions to English hagiography between that date and the close of the eleventh century.⁴ It was in fact to Goscelin that Bale ascribed the *Vita Grimbaldi* analysed by Leland. The latter expressly described the work as anonymous,⁵ and Bale in his notebooks at first classified it under the heading of *Libri anonymi*.⁶ But Bale later attributed it doubtfully to Goscelin,⁷ and finally, in his published *Catalogus*, assigned it to this author without reserve.⁸ From Bale the ascription was copied by

¹ On the other hand, if the *Vita* was in existence before 1016-20, one would expect it to have been used in the introductory portion of the *Liber Vitae* of Hyde (see below, p. 555), which dates from this period and which certainly shows no trace of having been influenced by it. But this cannot be regarded as decisive, since the Introduction makes mistakes so gross as to render it practically certain that a large part of it was written from memory without recourse to any written records at all.

² See above, p. 530, n. 2.

³ See above, p. 533, n. 5.

⁴ The most useful study of Goscelin is still that in the *Histoire littéraire de la France*, viii. (Paris, 1747), 660-77; cf. also the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and Dom A. Wilmart's article, *Eve et Goscelin, II*, in the *Revue Bénédictine*, l. (1938), 42-83. A modern study of his work and that of his contemporary Fulrad of St. Bertin's is much to be desired.

⁵ In his *Collectanea*, Leland simply designates it as a *Vita Grimbaldi*, and makes no reference to an author, but in his *Commentarii de scriptoribus Britannicis* (Oxford, 1709), i. 156, he describes it as anonymous: 'cujus autor mihi de nomine incognitus [est]'.

⁶ J. Bale, *Index Britanniae Scriptorum* (ed. R. L. Poole and M. Bateson, Oxford, 1902), p. 482. He gives the following works with their incipits *Ex bibliotheca Ioan. Lelandi*:

'Vita S. Swithuni li[b]. i "Glorioso rege Anglorum Egberto".
Vita Grimbaldi li[b]. i "Urbs Morinorum quondam ampla".
Vita Erkenwaldi li[b]. i "Post passionem ac resurrectionem".'

From the fact that both Leland and Bale mention these works together, I have concluded that they were contained in a single volume; see above, p. 532 and n. 4. Of the other three works that appear from Leland's analysis to have formed part of the same volume, Bale had already classified Osbern's *Life of St. Elfege* elsewhere, and he presumably omitted the biographies of St. Ethelburga and St. Etheldreda because they were only extracts from Bede.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 98: 'Fertur quoque scripsisse vitam S. Swithuni episcopi, vitam Grimbaldi, vitam Erkenwaldi. *Ex Bibliotheca Ioannis Lelandi*'.

⁸ J. Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Brytannie Catalogus*, ii. (Basel, 1559), 128.

Molanus¹ and most other modern writers. But it seems doubtful if it ever had any manuscript authority behind it, or was anything more than a conjecture of Bale, who frequently made such ascriptions on quite insufficient evidence. In any case, Goscelin,² who died in or about the year 1100,³ can scarcely have written the *Vita secunda*, which, as we have already seen, dates from the second quarter of the twelfth century. It is not altogether impossible that he should have written the *Vita prima*, for we know that he had relations with New Minster; his name is found on the list of those for whom the prayers of the community had been asked,⁴ and he dedicated his *Life of St. Ives* to Herbert Losinga, abbot of Ramsey (1087-91) and later bishop of Norwich (1091-1119),⁵ who was also abbot of New Minster in the last decade of the eleventh century.⁶ But on the whole the authorship is unlikely. The style of the *Vita prima S. Grimbaldi* is quite unlike that of Goscelin's genuine works, and suggests that the *Vita* was written in the second half of the tenth century and not in the eleventh. If this was the case, the author was probably an Englishman who had visited Flanders, and not a monk of St. Bertin's who was visiting England,⁷ since the cult of St. Grimbald did not penetrate to Flanders till the late eleventh or the early twelfth century.⁸

In attempting to assess the value of the two biographies of St. Grimbald, it is clear that we can neglect the *Vita secunda* and concentrate on the *Vita prima*. It is also clear that a different value must be attached to the traditions of Grimbald's life in so

¹ In his edition of the *Martyrologium Usuardi* (Louvain, 1573), fo. 113^v, Molanus noted from Bale: 'Grimbaldi vitam, ut habet Catalogus Brytanniae, scripsit Gotzelinus Morinensis, monachus Sancti Bertini. Incipit, *Urbs Morinorum quondam ampla. Claruit anno 1110.*' In his *Natales sanctorum Belgii*, fo. 142^v, after quoting from the Breviary of St. Bertin's, he continues: 'Hactenus ex officio Bertiniensis monasterii quod ex Gotcelino desumptum est. Caeterum quia Gotcelino auctore integra historia a nobis visa non est, ex Chronicis Bertiniensium adjicio.' Molanus no doubt made the perfectly correct assumption that the lessons in the Breviary were drawn from the *Vita*, from the fact that their incipit was identical with that given by Bale for the *Vita* which he ascribed to Goscelin.

² It may be noted that the ascription of the *Vita S. Swithuni* to Goscelin rests on precisely the same doubtful basis as that of the *Vita S. Grimbaldi*.

³ Cf. Wilmart, *art. cit.* p. 44, n. 3, and p. 51, n. 1; he is arguing against the views of Liebermann, who held that Goscelin was still alive as late as 1107. There is no foundation for Bale's opinion that Goscelin was brought to England by Anselm and was writing c. 1110. In any case, the internal evidence pointing to a connexion between the *Vita* and the abbey of St. Bertin's applies to the earlier *Vita prima*, and not only to the *Vita secunda*.

⁴ Birch, *Liber Vitae*, p. 30: 'Gocelinus monachus'. The date of this entry is the second half of the eleventh century.

⁵ *Acta SS. Bolland*, 10 June, ii. 288 (Prologue to the *Vita S. Irenis*). It was written while Herbert was still only abbot of Ramsey.

⁶ Birch, *Liber Vitae*, p. xxxvi. The precise dates are uncertain.

⁷ There was a good deal of intercourse between Flanders and England at this period, so that there is nothing unlikely in either of these possibilities.

⁸ See below, p. 544.

far as they concern England, and in so far as they concern Flanders. The *Vita* was written long after Grimbald's death, when nothing was likely to have been known of the saint's early life or the circumstances of his coming to England, so that there is a strong presumption that any details on these points may be fabulous. The traditions regarding his life in England command more respect, though not perhaps a great deal, since it must not be forgotten that Grimbald was not living in an already existing community with continuous and vital traditions; New Minster was apparently founded only in the last year of his life, and not consecrated till after his death, so that its inmates were not likely to have been particularly well informed about his earlier career.

The information in the *Vita prima* regarding Grimbald's life at St. Bertin's is confined to the statements that he entered the abbey at the age of seven, that he became prior, and that he received the future King Alfred on his journey to Rome. The first of these cannot be tested, but seems to be no more than a pious invention; the second is almost certainly incorrect;¹ and the third is probably a legend. It is true that Grimbald became a monk at St. Bertin's between 834 and 844,² so that if Alfred did visit the abbey on his journey to Rome in 853³ he would have been there at the time. But it is unlikely, in the first place, that Alfred, who was then only four years old,⁴ would have remembered Grimbald, as the *Vita* alleges that he did, and summoned him thirty years later to England, and it is, in the second place, unlikely that pilgrims travelling to Rome in 853 would have passed through Saint-Omer. The normal route was still the one by Quentavic, at the mouth of the Canche, which a century and a half earlier had been described as the *via rectissima* to Rome.⁵ It was not till after the final destruction of Quentavic by the Vikings at the close of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century that a new route had to be found, and that by Wissant and Saint-Omer is found in regular use only from the middle of the tenth century onwards. Since for several centuries to come a traveller to Rome would naturally pass through Saint-Omer, one can conclude with fair assurance that the author of the *Vita*, wishing to explain how Alfred came to know of Grimbald's existence, simply made the natural deduction that he had met him many years before when on his journey as a child to Rome.⁶

¹ In the contemporary documents from St. Bertin's, Grimbald is never given the title of *prepositus*, but *levita et monachus* or (later) *sacerdos et monachus*. We have no information as to who was prior in the middle decades of the ninth century.

² See below, p. 542.

³ Asser, *Vita Alfredi*, c. 8 (ed. Stevenson, 7).

⁴ He was born in 849 (*ibid.* c. 1, p. 1).

⁵ See Eddi's *Vita S. Wilfridi*, c. 25 (ed. B. Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, Cambridge, 1927, p. 50), which was written c. 710.

⁶ The author of the *Vita* probably derived his knowledge of Alfred's pilgrimage from Asser; see below, p. 547.

For reliable information regarding Grimbald's early life we must therefore turn to the Flemish sources. According to the thirteenth-century chronicler, John of Ypres, Grimbald became a monk of St. Bertin's in the first year of the abbacy of Hugh I, i.e. in 834-5.¹ Since registers were often kept of the monks who entered religion under each particular abbot, and this statement is presumably drawn from such a register,² it can be accepted in so far as it declares that Grimbald became a monk in the days of Abbot Hugh (934-44); but it is unusual for such a document to mark the exact year of each monk's profession, and it is therefore possible that the precise date is an embellishment of John of Ypres. We have no reliable information as to Grimbald's age,³ but he was probably born between 820 and 830. He was already in deacon's orders by 867, since he drafted a diploma of 28 November 867,⁴ and another of 868,⁵ with the style of *diaconus et monachus*, and he is presumably the same person as the *Grimbaldus senior* who witnessed a charter of 27 July 868 for one of the subordinate churches of St. Bertin's.⁶ He was ordained priest between 868 and 873, for in 873,⁷ and again on 8 September 885,⁸

¹ John of Ypres, *Chronica monasterii Sancti Bertini*, xii. 1 (*Mon. Germ. Hist., Scriptores*, xxv. 767).

² It is possible that we have in the manuscript Saint-Omer 815 an eighteenth-century copy of this register, extending up to the time of Trudgaud, who was abbot in the second half of the tenth century. But I have not seen the manuscript in question, and it may equally well be no more than a catalogue of names derived from the lists of witnesses to the charters of the abbey. If it is a copy of a lost register, it has been unwisely interpolated by some later student of Grimbald's career, for, according to H. de Laplane, *Les abbés de Saint-Bertin*, I. (Saint-Omer, 1854), p. 60, n. 4, the list of those who became monks under Hugh is given in it as follows: 'Sanctus Grimbaldus abbas Wintoniae in Anglia. Alardus. Amalbertus. Ioannes diligens abbas in Anglia. Beatus Asserus episcopus Schireburnensis. [Bavo]. Morus edituus.' The names of Grimbald, Alard, Amalbert, Bavo, and Morus are known to us from the charters of the abbey; John and Asser have evidently been inserted by some scholar who had read about them—perhaps in Rous; cf. below, p. 561, n. 1—in connexion with Grimbald.

³ The statement, which possibly comes from the Breviary of St. Bertin's, that he was in his eighty-third year when he died (see above, p. 532, n. 1), even though it may be derived from the *Vita prima*, can scarcely be regarded as trustworthy. Nor is the fact that Grimbald became a priest between 868 and 873 of any assistance, since he must by then have exceeded the minimum age of 30 required by canon law.

⁴ B. Guérard, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Bertin* (Paris, 1840), pp. 113-14: 'Ego Grimbaldus diaconus et monachus scripsi et subscripsi'.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 118: 'Grimbaldus diaconus et monachus scripsit et subscripsit'. The text of the charter is not given.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 167. The qualification of Grimbald as *senior* perhaps indicates that he was then in charge of the church.

⁷ D. Haigneré, *Les chartes de Saint-Bertin* (Soc. des Antiq. de la Morinie: Saint-Omer, 1886), I. no. 48, pp. 15-16: 'Grimbaldus presbiter recognovit'. The text of this charter is not in Folcuin's cartulary as printed by Guérard.

⁸ Guérard, *op. cit.* pp. 127-9: 'Grimbaldus sacerdos et monachus scripsi et subscripsi'. This charter is dated by both Guérard and Haigneré as 883 instead of 885. The formula used is 'anno primo Karoli magni imperatoris'. The year cannot be calculated from Charles' Imperial coronation (12 February 881), or from the date of his becoming king in Lotharingia (Louis the Young † 20 January 882), for the charter

we find him drafting diplomas as *presbyter* or *sacerdos et monachus*. After this date we have no certain clues as to his identity. On 28 March 889 a monk named Grimbald, without any indication of his ecclesiastical rank, witnessed a diploma of Abbot Raoul,¹ and in January 892 a monk Grimbald, again without any indication of rank, was sent to the king on the death of Raoul (5 January) and secured the appointment of Archbishop Fulk as his successor.² It was assumed by John of Ypres that this Grimbald was identical with the monk who migrated to England, and—since the appointment of Fulk in 892 had been made in opposition to the wishes of Count Baldwin II of Flanders, who desired the abbey for himself—John believed that Grimbald was forced to take to flight when Baldwin was granted the abbey after the murder of Fulk in June 900.³

A theory such as this has in its favour its own inherent probability. But it must be noted, in the first place, that John can have derived it from no genuine tradition current at St. Bertin's as to what had happened to Grimbald. His sources for Grimbald's life were the monastic register already referred to, the *Gesta S. Bertini* of Folcuin, and the lections concerning Grimbald in the Breviary of St. Bertin's.⁴ After Grimbald had left the abbey

was granted to Raoul, who did not become abbot till after the promotion of his predecessor Fulk to the archbishopric of Rheims in March 883; in any case, St. Bertin's was situated in the West Frankish kingdom, and not in Lotharingia. The date must therefore be reckoned from Charles' accession in West Francia after the death of Carloman (12 December 884), which means that the charter was granted on 8 September 885.

¹ Guérard, *op. cit.* pp. 130-1.

² Folcuin, *Gesta S. Bertini*, c. 98 (in *Mon. Germ. Hist., Scriptores*, xiii. 624 = Guérard, *op. cit.* pp. 134-5). Folcuin describes how the monks sent 'Grimbaldum quendam ex ipsis monachum' to the king. His account is reproduced in John of Ypres' *Chronica*, xx. 1 (omitted in the *Scriptores* edition; see that of E. Marteno and U. Durand, *Thesaurus novus Anecdotorum*, iii. (Paris, 1717), 533-4), but with the title of *prepositus* applied to Grimbald. This title, which is used again in c. xxi, 1 (see next note), was derived by John from the lections in the Breviary of St. Bertin's; see below, n. 4.

³ John of Ypres, *Chronica*, xx. 3 (*Scriptores*, xxv. 739-70): 'Beatus itaque Grimbaldus, . . . memor evangelici consilii: Si vos persecuntur in civitate ista, fugite in aliam, timore comitis [Balduini] inductus, et quia sciebat res ecclesie per suam presentiam in melius deduci non posse, sed potius et verisimiliter timens propter eum in deterius ire, transfretavit in Angliam et ibidem usque in finem vite sue permansit'. After relating how Baldwin ill-treated the abbey out of hatred for Fulk and Grimbald, John continues (xxi. 1, p. 770): 'Sanctus Grimbaldus monachus noster et condam prepositus, qui timore huius comitis in Angliam confugerat, . . . et sic non plane martirium, insidias tamen et pericula tandemque exilium pro defensione religionis et libertatis ecclesiasticæ perpassus, in Anglia civitate Vintonia, migravit ad Dominum anno Domini 903'.

⁴ These are indicated when he writes (*Chronica*, xii. 1, p. 767) of Grimbald: 'qui qualiter et quantum profecerit, testatur eius legenda, quam de ipso canimus in ecclesia Dei'; cf. also the *Prologus secundus* (p. 758). As we have seen already (above, pp. 531-2), the lections in the Breviary of St. Bertin's contained singularly little information, and John has taken from them nothing more than the statement that Grimbald was prior (see above, n. 2) and the date of his death. Holder-Egger (*ibid.* p. 741, and p. 770, n. 1) was mistaken in asserting that John had used a *Vita S. Grimbaldi*.

nothing appears to have been known by the community regarding his subsequent career; not even his reputation for sanctity crossed the Channel from Winchester to Flanders. Although from the middle of the tenth century onwards he was widely revered as a saint in the south of England,¹ no hint of this seems to have reached St. Bertin's; Folcuin, writing his *Gesta* in 961-2, makes no mention of the matter, and the saint's name does not appear in an eleventh-century sacramentary of the abbey.² It was apparently not till the twelfth century that his cult was observed at St. Bertin's,³ and then the lections for the appropriate services had to be taken from the *Vita* current in England. One can only conclude that there can have been no genuine tradition at St. Bertin's as to the circumstances in which Grimbald left the abbey, and that John's story is no more than an ingenious conjecture.

There remains the question of its probability, for on the face of it the story is reasonable enough. It is true that the date (900) given by John is impossible, since Grimbald was certainly in England by 893-4.⁴ But John's date is based on the view that Baldwin did not become master of the abbey till after the murder of Fulk in 900. This is derived from Folcuin, who says quite truly that it was only after this that Baldwin was granted the abbey by the king.⁵ But it is scarcely conceivable that either King Odo or Fulk, who were not strong enough to prevent Baldwin from seizing Raoul's other abbey of St. Vaast's of Arras in 892, would have been any more successful in keeping him out of St. Bertin's, and it is probable that Fulk's abbacy was a nominal one; Baldwin was master of St. Bertin's *de facto* but not *de jure* from 892-3 to 899, and could easily have expelled Grimbald if he had so wished.⁶ For this reason some scholars have denied any weight to the evidence that suggests that Grimbald came to England before 893-4,⁷ and assume that he arrived in this year;⁸ others believe that he came in 885 or thereabouts, but suppose that Alfred allowed him, as he allowed

¹ See below, pp. 557-8.

² Paris, Bibl. Nat., MS. lat. 819. Cf. Leroquais, *Sacramentaires*, i, no. 43, pp. 105-7.

³ The feast of St. Grimbald appears in a Breviary of St. Bertin's of the early twelfth century; see above, p. 531, n. 1.

⁴ He was already in England when Asser's *Life of King Alfred* was written in this year; see below, p. 546.

⁵ Folcuin, *Gesta*, c. 98 (*Scriptores*, xiii. 625): 'Baldwinus autem, post haec [i.e. the murder of Fulk], abbatiam optinuit regia donatione'.

⁶ I have discussed this question in an article, *La maison d'Evrard de Frioul et les origines du comté de Flandre*, in the *Revue du Nord*, xxiv. (1938), 256-7. One of my main arguments in favour of an usurpation of St. Bertin's by Baldwin in 892-3 was precisely the fact that Grimbald was already in England in 893-4. This argument I now regard as fallacious, though the fact of the usurpation seems to be true enough.

⁷ This evidence is discussed below, pp. 546 seqq.

⁸ This was notably the view of Stubbs; see the introduction to his edition of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum*, i, pp. xlvi-xlvi. It is followed by Miss B. A.

Asser, to return at intervals to his native country, and that it was on such a visit that the events of 892 took place.¹ But we do in fact know of the existence of a second monk named Grimbald at St. Bertin's at about this time; he witnessed a charter of 938,² and is described as being a very old man in 944.³ There can be very little doubt that the monk who appears in our records without any ecclesiastical status in 889 and 892 is this second Grimbald,⁴ and that the *Grimbaldus sacerdos et monachus* who drew up the charter of 8 September 885 is the one who went to England.⁵ We do not hear of him in Flanders after September 885, and for information as to his further career we have to turn to the English sources. The principal of these are Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, the *Vita prima*, and the letter to Alfred of Archbishop Fulk.

The brief reference⁶ to Grimbald in Asser's *Life* is tantalizingly vague. It occurs in the section describing how Alfred obtained helpers from other lands for his cultural projects. After relating how the king summoned Werferth, Plegmund, Athelstan, and Werwulf from Mercia, and made them teach him and read aloud to him, since he could not yet read himself, Asser continues: 'But the royal greed, which was yet worthy of praise, in this

Lees, *Alfred the Great* (New York, 1915), pp. 267-8, and Toll, *op. cit.* pp. 16-17, while Plummer, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 137-9, though without coming to any definite conclusion, favours it also.

¹ This was the view taken in the *Acta SS.* 8 July, ii. 654-6, and it seems to be that of Mr. R. H. Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (Oxford, 1935), ii. 633, 635, though the latter admits that the Grimbald who appears in 892 is only 'possibly though not certainly the same monk who had been sent to help Alfred in England'. The statement of Stubbs, Hodgkin, and others that the monks of St. Bertin's wished to elect Grimbald as their abbot in 892 is not supported by the texts.

² Guérard, *Cartulaire*, p. 142. Unfortunately there are no charters of the abbey between 889 and 938, for during all but four years of this period it was in the hands of lay abbots.

³ Folcuin, *Gesta*, c. 107 (*Scriptores*, xiii. 629): 'Reliqui autem monachorum . . . ad proprium reversi sunt monasterium: Engelandus videlicet loci huius antea propositus, Grimbaldus cum Drohtuino, ipsa senectutis canitia venerandi . . .'. This Grimbald is mentioned again, together with a still younger namesake, in the list of monks (in c. 111; p. 633) whom Folcuin had known since he entered the abbey in 948.

⁴ It was Stevenson, in his notes to Asser's *Life*, pp. 308-9, who first called attention to the existence of this second Grimbald. He gives no clear indication of his own views as to the date of Grimbald's arrival. Mabillon (*Annales*, iii. 240-1) had earlier postulated the existence of two Grimbalds, one who came to England in c. 884, and another who came in 900, but this opinion was wrongly based on his acceptance of the interpolated passage in Asser and the story of Grimbald's exile as given by John of Ypres.

⁵ It may be noted that this Grimbald has the same title of *presbyter* (or *sacerdos*) *et monachus* in both the charters of St. Bertin's and the English sources, Asser and the letter of Fulk. Toll, *op. cit.* pp. 15-16, denied the possibility of the Grimbald who was still alive in 944 being identical with the Grimbald of 892, since the latter was prior at this date and therefore a person of some seniority. But it is John of Ypres and not Folcuin who calls Grimbald *propositus* in 892; he was nothing of the sort, and Toll's argument is therefore invalid.

⁶ Excluding, of course, the interpolated chapter 83b recounting Grimbald's relations with Oxford; see below, p. 561.

matter was still unsated. And he sent messengers beyond the sea into Gaul to fetch masters, and summoned thence Grimbald, a priest and monk, a reverend man, an excellent singer, very learned in every kind of ecclesiastical discipline and in the Holy Scriptures, and adorned with every good quality.'¹ Asser goes on to describe the coming of John the Old Saxon and his own arrival from Wales.

The difficulty is to determine at what date all these events took place. Owing to Asser's habit of breaking up the chronological framework of the *Life* by long sections of biographical material, his chronology is very confused. The paragraphs dealing with the foreign scholars form part of a long digression on Alfred's family and marriage and character inserted between the annalistic notices for 884 (*recte* 885) and 886, but one cannot really say with any certainty that any particular part of the digression is intended to belong to these years. In strictness, perhaps, the *terminus ad quem* of Grimbald's arrival should be taken as 893-4, the date at which Asser was writing the *Life*.² But, on the other hand, the author implies quite distinctly that the arrival of Grimbald and John from the Continent occurred after the Mercian contingent had been for some time at Alfred's court, and at about the same time (*his temporibus*) as his own arrival from Wales. The date of the coming of the Mercians is unknown,³ but that of Asser's arrival can be calculated with some confidence. In chapters 87-9 Asser tells how Alfred first began to read with him, and to compile his *Enchiridion*; this took place in 887, and Asser mentions Martinmas (11 November) as the day on which the king first began to master the Scriptures.⁴ It seems fairly clear that this must have been while Asser was on his first prolonged visit to Wessex, and from chapter 81 we know that this visit lasted for eight months and ended on Christmas Eve or a few days afterwards.⁵ In chapter 79 Asser tells us that when he was first summoned to Alfred's court he stayed for only three days, and that his return to it was delayed by an illness that lasted for a year and a week.⁶ Putting these facts together, we may conclude that Asser's first visit of three days took place

¹ 'Sed, cum adhuc nec in hoc quoque regalis avaritia, sed tamen laudabilis, grata esset, legatos ultra mare ad Galliam magistros acquirere direxit, indeque advocavit Grimbaldum, sacerdotem et monachum, venerabilem videlicet virum, cantatorem optimum, et omni modo ecclesiasticis disciplinis et in divina scriptura eruditissimum, et omnibus bonis moris ornatum' (c. 78; ed. Stevenson, p. 63). The translation I have used is that of Mr. L. C. Jane, *Asser's Life of King Alfred* (London, 1926), p. 58.

² Chapter 91 was written while the king was in his forty-fifth year, i.e. in 893-4 (Stevenson, *op. cit.* p. 76; cf. p. lxxiv).

³ Werferth seems to have preceded the others by many years, since he was bishop of Worcester since 873. Plegmund had presumably been with Alfred for some considerable time before his appointment as archbishop in 890.

⁴ Stevenson, *op. cit.* pp. 73-5.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 67-8.

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 63-6.

in February or March 886, and that his first prolonged stay in Wessex was from March to December 887. If one can attach any value to the phrase *his temporibus*—and there is no valid reason for neglecting it—Grimbald's coming to England must be placed in 886 or early in 887.¹

This brings us back to the *Vita prima*. Although the date does not occur in the lections in the Hyde Breviary, I have said already that there is some reason to believe that the *Vita* gave 885 as the year of Grimbald's arrival.² Since Grimbald was still in Flanders in September 885, this can scarcely be correct, and it does not seem likely that it even represents an independent tradition; the references in the *Vita* to Alfred's pilgrimage and the date of Grimbald's coming suggest that the *Vita* simply made use of Asser, who mentions the pilgrimage, and from whose text the date 885 could easily be deduced.³ Our suspicion that the *Vita* preserved no genuine tradition as to the date or circumstances of Grimbald's migration is confirmed by its account of Alfred's embassy to the abbot of St. Bertin's asking for his permission for Grimbald to come to England. This seems to be a pure fable from beginning to end.

Our primary source is here the letter to Alfred of Archbishop Fulk of Rheims. The original of this has not survived, but two copies of it are known, one in a tenth-century Evangelary,⁴ the other—apparently a copy of this—in the fourteenth-century *Liber de Hyda*.⁵ It has sometimes been regarded as a forgery,⁶

¹ It will be noted that this calculation does not depend on the fact that the account of the coming of the scholars occurs in a digression placed by Asser between the annalistic notices for 884 (885) and 886; the virtual coincidence of the dates seems to be accidental. Stevenson (pp. lxxi-lxxiii) does not really attempt to solve the problem of the date of Asser's arrival, which is generally given as 884 or 885.

² See above, p. 536.

³ Stevenson, who assumed that the *Vita* obtained the date from Asser, observed that the author must have used 'some copy that was free from the error in the Cottonian MS. by reason of which the events of 885, the last date mentioned previous to this chapter, appear under 884' (p. 309). This is not necessarily the case, as the author may just as easily have read onwards, and finding the next recorded date to be 886 have assumed that the event that interested him occurred in 885; he would actually have had to turn over fewer pages—in Stevenson's edition, five as against twelve—to reach 886 than to go back and find 884.

⁴ See Sir T. D. Hardy's description of this manuscript, in the library of Crowcombe Court in Somerset, in the *Second Report of the Historical MSS. Commission* (1871), Appendix, pp. 74-6. The letter was printed from it by Francis Wise in an appendix to his edition of Asser (*Annales rerum gestarum Aelfredi Magni auctore Asserio Menevensi*, Oxford, 1722, pp. 123-9).

⁵ *Liber de Hyda*, xiii. 2 (ed. Edwards, pp. 31-5). Both Edwards and Birch (*Cartularium Anglo-Saxonicum*, ii. 1887, no. 555, pp. 190-4) give the variant readings from Wise's edition.

⁶ It was regarded as highly suspicious by the Bollandists (*Acta SS.* 8 July, ii. 651-2, 656), by Plummer (*Alfred the Great*, pp. 138-9), and by R. Pauli (*König Aelfred*, Berlin, 1851, p. 195, n. 2; transl. B. Thorpe, London, 1853, p. 152, n. 1), but the great majority of scholars—Stubbs, Stevenson, Hodgkin, etc.—have accepted it as genuine.

but there is no justification for this view. There is nothing against the letter on internal grounds. The early date of the first copy of it is in its favour,¹ and there could have been no conceivable motive for forging it, since Fulk played no part in the tradition of Grimbald's life that was current at New Minster, where it was assumed that Grimbald came to England direct from his Flemish abbey of St. Bertin's. If the letter were a forgery, it is precisely this connexion with St. Bertin's that would have been mentioned, while Fulk in fact says nothing about the abbey where his protégé had been a monk. The probability is that the letter, or at least the tenth-century copy of it, was preserved not at New Minster but at some abbey in the west of England,² and only became known at Winchester during the twelfth century.³ It had certainly been seen by William of Malmesbury, who states in his *Gesta regum* that Grimbald came to England *archiepiscopo Remensi mittente*.⁴ Flodoard, who in the middle of the tenth century analysed a great part of the correspondence of Hincmar and his successors in his *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*, makes no mention of this particular letter, but he analyses other letters of Fulk to Alfred and Archbishop Plegmund,⁵ and mentions a letter to him from Pope Stephen VI about English pilgrims passing through Gaul.⁶

Fulk's letter was written in answer to one from Alfred that has not survived, and its contents imply that it was not carried by Grimbald himself but was sent off in anticipation of the arrival of a deputation to invite him formally to England. It opens with some general remarks in praise of the king and his achievements, a reference to the mission of St. Augustine, and some lengthy and not very tactful remarks on the state of the Church in England. Only when this is over does the archbishop reach the point of the letter. He thanks Alfred for the present that he has made him of some wolf-hounds, and in return says that he will comply with his request to send him Grimbald, a

¹ The copy is described in the *Second Report*, p. xiii, as 'contemporary, or nearly so'.

² The manuscript containing the tenth-century copy was owned in Wise's time by Thomas Ford, rector of Banwell (Somerset) and prebendary of Wells, which points to a connexion with Somerset. Perhaps the letter was preserved at the abbey of Athelney, which was founded by Alfred and filled with foreign monks under the care of John the Old Saxon, or at Glastonbury, where William of Malmesbury is known to have worked.

³ See below, p. 559.

⁴ See above, p. 536, n. 2.

⁵ Flodoard, *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*, iv. 5, 6 (*Mon. Germ. Hist., Scriptores*, xiii. 566, 568). The letter to Alfred congratulates him on the appointment he has made (of Plegmund) to the archbishopric of Canterbury, and refers in unflattering terms to the standards of clerical morality in England; the letter to Plegmund congratulates the archbishop on his studies and his endeavour to root out abuses. The former letter must be dated 890, the latter 890-900, but nearer the earlier date.

⁶ *Ibid.* iv. 1 (p. 556): 'Item pro quorundam susceptione Anglorum'. The letter must be dated 886 or 887 (cf. P. Jaffé, *Regesta pontificum Romanorum*, ed. W. Wattenbach, i, Leipzig, 1885, no. 3424), since the letters are classified by Flodoard according to the recipient in rough chronological order.

priest and monk, one of his most valued assistants and one who in the normal course of events would be destined to high office in Gaul.¹ Grimbald is described as a person in every way suited to episcopal rank, and it is clear that Alfred must have suggested that a bishopric would be awaiting him in England. Fulk makes the somewhat arrogant demand that the members of the embassy which is sent to fetch him² should make a public declaration in the presence of the whole church of Rheims that they will receive him with due honour and respect, and will keep the rules of the church as they are made known to them by himself (Fulk) and Grimbald. The archbishop finally suggests that he should perform Grimbald's consecration himself.³

There is nothing in the contents of this letter to throw any light on the date at which it was written; the limiting factors are the consecration of Fulk as archbishop in March 883 and the certainty that Grimbald was already in England before 893-4. There is certainly nothing against its being dated 886-7, which we have deduced from Asser as being the likely year of Grimbald's coming. The question whether there was a suitable see vacant in 886-7 for Grimbald to fill is one which, in view of our lack of precise knowledge of the chronology of a number of Anglo-Saxon bishoprics, cannot be solved.⁴ It is in any case irrelevant, since, although Fulk clearly looks forward to an immediate appointment for his protégé, this may not have been Alfred's intention at all.⁵

¹ 'Unum a nobis specialiter deposcitis, nomine Grimbaldum, sacerdotem et monachum, ad hoc officium destinandum, et curae pastoralis regiminis praeficiendum. Cui utique testimonium perhibet universa ecclesia, quae eum ab ineunte aetate nutrit in vera fide et sancta religione, et quae illum per singulos gradus ecclesiastico more promovit, usque ad sacerdotii dignitatem, dignissimum esse illum proclamans pontificali honore.' Fulk goes on to say how useful he has found him, and how much he regrets parting with him.

² The *electores* mentioned as part of the deputation were presumably those who were to elect Grimbald as bishop; they were to come 'cum nonnullis regni vestri proceribus vel optimatibus, tam episcopis scilicet, presbyteris, diaconis, quam etiam religiosis laicis'. Fulk was clearly determined not to allow Grimbald to be undervalued.

³ 'Quod cum fecerint [i.e. when the deputation had concluded its undertakings], divina benedictione, et beati Remigii auctoritate, per nostrum ministerium, et impositione manuum, more ecclesiastico decenter ordinatum, et in omnibus plenissime instructum, accipientes illum sibi cum debito honore deducunt ad propriam sedem.'

⁴ Any one of at least six bishoprics (London, Selsey, Sherborne, Cornwall, Hereford, Leicester) may have been vacant in 886-7, though there is no proof that one of them was so. If London was the see intended for Grimbald, it might be possible to explain why he never received it, for in 886 the city was placed in charge of the ealdorman Ethelred of Mercia, and the appointment of Heahstan as bishop might be interpreted as a sop to Mercian interests. But there is no particular reason for believing either that Heahstan was a Mercian or that he became bishop in 886.

⁵ One can exclude the hypothesis that Alfred never made any promise of a bishopric, and that the assumption that Grimbald was to be given an English see was no more than a piece of cool effrontery on the part of Fulk. Although this would be by no means incompatible with what we know of the archbishop's character, it is ruled out by the wording of Fulk's letter, and there is the independent evidence of the *Vita* to the same effect.

The king was not likely to offer a bishopric outright to a man whom he did not know personally, whatever favourable reports he might have heard of him; his promise cannot have been intended for immediate fulfilment, but must have been conditional on Grimbold's proving himself satisfactory after some years of residence in England. This still leaves one with the difficulty of explaining why the promised bishopric never materialized; Grimbold was still only a 'mass-priest' when he died. The idea that he showed himself unfit for the office is unlikely. The suggestion has been made¹ that Alfred would have been reluctant to appoint a foreigner, and may have feared a repetition of the same linguistic difficulties that had led to the Frankish Bishop Agilbert losing the see of Dorchester in c. 360.² But this does not explain why the king should have made the offer in the first place; in any case, Alfred does not seem to have been much influenced by nationalist prejudices, since he appointed John, an Old Saxon, to be abbot of Athelney, Asser, a Welshman, to be bishop of Sherborne, and Plegmund, a Mercian, to be archbishop of Canterbury. The simplest explanation, that Grimbold did not wish to be a bishop, is probably the true one. This is at least the story of the *Vita prima*, which relates how Alfred gave Grimbold a home at Winchester until some bishopric fell vacant for him, and how when Archbishop Ethelred died (30 June 889) he offered him the see of Canterbury.³ It has been pointed out already that the traditions preserved in the *Vita* concerning Grimbold's life in England are worthy of more respect than those concerning his life in Flanders, and the concurrence of the *Vita* and Fulk's letter, two entirely independent sources, on the question of a bishopric affords a strong presumption that the tradition preserved in the *Vita* is true.⁴ If Grimbold had been in the country since 886 or 887, Alfred would have had time to satisfy himself as to his capacity by 889. Plegmund seems to have been a popular candidate,⁵ and Grimbold's reluctance to take the see appears natural enough. I am inclined to accept the New Minster tradition, and to regard the offer of Canterbury in 889 as the fulfilment of the promise referred to in the letter of Fulk.

¹ By Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, ii, 633-4.

² On the Agilbert affair, see Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, iii, 7 (ed. Plummer, i, 140-1). As a matter of fact, Grimbold came from a region where the language differed considerably from ordinary Frankish, and must have approximated to the dialects spoken in England.

³ See above, p. 530.

⁴ The offer of Canterbury to Grimbold was accepted by W. F. Hook in his *Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury*, i. (London, 1860), 322-3, but was denied by Plummer, *Alfred the Great*, p. 139, who regarded the mention of a bishopric in Fulk's letter as sufficient to discredit the authenticity of this document. It is unfortunate that Fulk's letter to Alfred congratulating him on Plegmund's appointment has only survived in a brief analysis; one does not know what may not have been omitted, and the complete letter might have thrown some light on the transaction.

⁵ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a. 890 (ed. Plummer, i, 82).

We may then not unreasonably suppose that Grimbald came to England in 886 or early in 887. The precise circumstances are not very clear. According to the *Vita*, Alfred sent an embassy to St. Bertin's to invite him to this country. This is in conflict with the evidence of Fulk's letter, which shows that the embassy was in fact sent to the archbishop of Rheims. The two accounts were reconciled in the *Liber de Hyda*, composed after Fulk's letter had come to the knowledge of the monks of Hyde, by the supposition that the appeal to the archbishop was intended to override any scruples the abbot of St. Bertin's might have had over parting with Grimbald,¹ and the fact that Fulk had himself been abbot of St. Bertin's from 878 to 883² goes far to support this view. But in fact it is unlikely; Fulk's letter seems to imply that Grimbald had left his monastery and was at the time a trusted servant of the archbishop,³ who must have known him since the days when he himself had been abbot, and we can assume that the embassy to St. Bertin's was simply a guess, reasonable enough but in fact incorrect, on the part of the author of the *Vita*. There is one rather curious piece of evidence that may perhaps be connected with Grimbald's departure from St. Bertin's. By a charter of 28 March 889 the monks of St. Bertin's consented to the grant of some property to Hucbald, the great scholar from St. Amand's, who had come to their community with the permission of his own abbot Gozlin 'ad erudiendum domnum abbatem Rodulfum senioreni nostrum'.⁴ Now Gozlin, who was also bishop of Paris, died on 16 April 886; Hucbald must therefore have obtained his abbot's permission before this date, and probably before the great siege of Paris opened on 29 November 885, since after this date the blockade would have made communication between St. Amand's and its abbot difficult if not impossible. Grimbald may well have resented being supplanted by a scholar ten or twenty years his junior,⁵ and Fulk have summoned him to Rheims in 886 in order to preserve the peace of the abbey. However that may be, it seems clear from Fulk's letter that it was from Rheims and not from St. Bertin's that Grimbald passed to England. How he became known to Alfred, who asked for him by name, we do not know. Possibly some English pilgrims passing through Rheims⁶ had made his acquaintance and brought

¹ *Liber de Hyda*, xiii. 1 (ed. Edwards, 31).

² Folcuin, *Gesta S. Bertini*, c. 88 (*Mon. Germ. Hist., Scriptores*, xiii. 622-3).

³ Fulk says that Grimbald is 'ministerii nostri consors, et in omni utilitate ecclesiastica fidissimus adiutor'. This description would scarcely be applied to one who was still a simple monk at St. Bertin's.

⁴ Guérard, *Cartulaire de Saint-Bertin*, p. 131.

⁵ Hucbald was born in 840 or 841.

⁶ It may be noted that it was precisely in this year (886-7) that the Pope wrote to Fulk asking him to receive some English pilgrims returning from Rome; see above, p. 548, n. 6.

the story of his position to Alfred, and the king had seen the opportunity of inducing a scholar of some distinction to come to his court. But this is only conjecture, and the true story will probably never be known.

The *Vita* and the letter of Fulk show themselves chiefly interested in the possibilities of Grimbald's ecclesiastical promotion; his contemporary, Asser, speaks of him mainly as a scholar. On this point our information is unfortunately very meagre. In the preface to his translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, Alfred tells how 'I began . . . to translate into English the book which is called in Latin *Pastoralis*, and in English *Shepherd's Book*, sometimes word by word, sometimes according to the sense, as I had learnt it from Plegmund my archbishop, and Asser my bishop, and Grimbald my mass-priest, and John my mass-priest'.¹ The precise date of the translation is unknown, but since it is not mentioned in Asser's *Life* it presumably belongs to the last years of Alfred's reign, and was composed between 893 and 899. Although there is no direct evidence that Grimbald assisted in the other literary labours of the king,² it would be rather surprising if he did not do so, and to his influence and that of other foreign scholars is usually ascribed the high proportion of entries in the *Chronicle* from 880 onwards relating to Frankish affairs.³ It has been suggested⁴ that it may have been Grimbald who brought to England the manuscript known as the Utrecht Psalter. This was written at Hautvillers in the neighbourhood of Rheims sometime between 816 and 835,⁵ and was almost certainly in England

¹ H. Sweet, *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care* (Early English Text Society: London, 1871), p. 7.

² According to the twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis*, i. 39 (ed. D. V. Stewart, 1848, p. 81), Grimbald and John assisted Alfred in his translation of the Scriptures: 'Eluredus . . . per Grimbaldum et Johannem, doctissimos monachos, tantum instructus est, ut in brevi, librorum omnium notitiam haberet, totumque Novum et Vetus Testamentum in eulogiam Anglicae gentis transmutaret'. This translation of the Bible is mentioned by no other author, and has not survived, so most scholars are content to regard the story of the *Liber* as a legend. I am by no means convinced that the reference is not taken from the preface to a copy of the translation that had survived at Ely, and that the story is genuine. It is true that a translation of the Bible would be a prodigious undertaking, but, despite the superior reverence that its text would exact, Alfred would no doubt take the same liberties in omitting unimportant material as he did in his translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and so could greatly lighten his task. On the other hand, William of Malmesbury ascribes to Alfred an incomplete translation of the Psalms which still exists, and if this ascription is correct it suggests, in so far as it goes, that Alfred can scarcely have translated the entire Bible.

³ In particular the lengthy notices under 885 and 887 explaining the complicated successions in the Carolingian Empire at this period.

⁴ By Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, i. 382d.

⁵ The provenance of the psalter is proved by the close resemblance of its illustrations to those in the Evangelary of Ebo (Epernay MS. 1), whose scriptorium is known for certain; cf. P. Durrieu, 'L'origine du psautier célèbre dit le Psautier d'Utrecht', in *Mélanges Julien Havet* (Paris, 1895), pp. 649-57; A. Goldschmidt, 'Der Utrechtpsalter', in the *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, xv. (1892), 156-69; and L. Traube, *Palaeographische Anzeigen*, in the *Neues Archiv*, xxvii. (1902), 243.

by the early eleventh century, when its illustrations influenced those of another psalter (Harleian MS. 603) written in this country at about that date.¹ But other connexions between England and Rheims besides those established by Grimbald are known to have existed, so that this suggestion is a possibility and nothing more. There is perhaps rather more to be said for associating Grimbald with the ninth-century manuscript of the works of Prudentius that is now in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 223.² Some notes accompanying a list of Frankish kings on page 1 of this manuscript show that it was written at St. Bertin's during the reign of Charles the Bald,³ and some scribbled dates on page 349 refer to events that occurred in the abbey between 846 and 870.⁴ The regnal list on page 1 has been continued in a coarse Anglo-Saxon hand of the tenth century with the names 'Carl rex. Heanric rex'. Since these cannot be kings who reigned successively, the names were perhaps written while Charles the Simple and Henry the Fowler were reigning simultaneously, that is, between 918 and 922 or 923. In any case, the two names suggest that the manuscript was in England in the tenth century, and since it came from St. Bertin's there is a distinct possibility that it may have been brought over by Grimbald.

Apart from the offer of the see of Canterbury in 889, not much information is available about Grimbald's life in England. His name is amongst those of the witnesses to a charter of 893, but this is a clumsy forgery of the twelfth century.⁵ The part that he played in the foundation of New Minster is very obscure, and

¹ See particularly W. de Gray Birch, *The History, Art, and Palaeography of the Manuscript styled the Utrecht Psalter* (London, 1876), pp. 114-20, and A. Springer, *Die Psalter-Illustrationen im frühen Mittelalter* (Abhandl. d. königl. Sächs. Gesell. der Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Klasse, viii. 1883), p. 221; these both date the Harleian psalter rather too early. Durrieu, *art. cit.* p. 646, considers that this psalter may have been written on the Continent and not in England, but the weight of opinion is against him.

² See the description of the manuscript in M. R. James, *Descriptive Catalogue of the MSS. in the Library of Corpus Christi College*, i. (Cambridge, 1912), 521-5. I am indebted to the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College for their kindness in permitting me to examine the manuscript, and to have rotographs made of two pages of it.

³ The notes relating to St. Bertin's are printed by James, *op. cit.* p. 522.

⁴ I have been able to read the following dates: (1) *Anno incarnationis Domini DCCCXLVI*. This presumably refers to the translation of the relics of St. Folquin in 846 (Folquin, *Gesta S. Bertini*, c. 58, in *Scriptores*, xiii. 619). (2) *Anno incarnationis Domini DCCCLXVII, VI kal. Decembris, feria iiii, accepit f.* . . . The meaning of this is not clear, but it may be noted that a diploma of 28 November 867 (*iiii kal. Dec. instead of vi kal. Dec.*) was one of those drawn up by Grimbald. (3) [*Anno incarnationis Domini DCCC]LXX, viii id. Martii, matricula sancti Petri*. . . This was the first anniversary of the date of the death of Bishop Hunfrid of Thérouanne, formerly abbot of St. Bertin's (*ibid.* c. 74, p. 621). There are several other dates on the page, which is a mass of scribbles, but I have been unable to read them.

⁵ Birch, *Cartularium Anglo-Saxonicum*, ii. no. 571, pp. 212-14. Burhric, to whom the charter is professedly granted, was bishop of Rochester from 933-4 to 940-64, and not in 893.

requires some detailed discussion. Before going on to this, however, it will be as well to determine the date of his death. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records the death of 'Grimbald maessepreost' on 8 July 903.¹ The entry of this in the Parker MS. is in a hand of the early tenth century, but it is under one of the group of dates (892-929) which have all been incorrectly altered by a year;² the notice was originally inserted when the date read 902 instead of 903, and 902 is given by the *Annals of St. Neots*³ and the *Annales Cicestrenses*.⁴ We might therefore conclude that the true date of Grimbald's death was 8 July 902. But it has recently been argued that there is a further error of a year in the (uncorrected) annals between 902 and 907 inclusive, owing to the omission of any entry under 901 in the text which was the common source of both the Parker MS. and the *Annals of St. Neots*; the true dates are 901-6 instead of 902-7.⁵ Since this emendation of the years brings the dates of the *Chronicle* into line with those of the 'Mercian Register', which at every point where they can be tested can be shown to be correct, it would seem that this further correction must be accepted, and that the true date of Grimbald's death was 8 July 901. The date 903, which represents that of the final corrected version of the *Chronicle*, was copied by the *Vita*⁶ and by almost all the subsequent sources for the life of Grimbald.

There are three sources that might reasonably be expected to throw some light on the part played by Grimbald in the foundation of New Minster: the early charters of the abbey, the *Vita prima*, and the *Liber Vitae* of the early eleventh century. During the later middle ages six early charters of Edward the Elder appear to have been known at Hyde. The first of these was an undated charter in Anglo-Saxon recording the purchase from Bishop Denewulf and the community of Old Minster of a church and stone dormitory, and a piece of land whose measurements are given, in order that the king might found there a monastery for the salvation of his soul and that of his father Alfred.⁷ There follow three charters, the first of which is dated 900 and the other two 901, granting estates at Micheldever, Anne, and Chiseldon to

¹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a. 903 (ed. Plummer, i. 92).

² *Ibid.* i. 85, n. 1; Plummer rather misleadingly prints the entries under the altered (but incorrect) dates. Cf. Robinson, *The Times of St. Dunstan*, pp. 18-20.

³ *Annals of St. Neots*, a. 902 (in Stevenson's edition of Asser's *Life*, p. 143).

⁴ *Annales Cicestrenses*, a. 902 (ed. F. Liebermann, *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen*, Strassburg, 1879, p. 87). The annals (from Cotton Vitellius. A. xvii) date from the twelfth century, but incorporate earlier material.

⁵ W. S. Angus, *The Chronology of the Reign of Edward the Elder*, ante, liii. (1938), 204-9. ⁶ See above, p. 531.

⁷ The most convenient edition of this and the following charters is in the notes and appendices to Birch's edition of the *Liber Vitae*; this one will be found on pp. 155-7, note. There is a better edition of it in Miss F. E. Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1914), pp. 27-8.

the new abbey,¹ then a formal foundation charter in Latin which is dated 903 ;² and finally another charter concerning Micheldever of 904.³ None of these charters has survived in any copy earlier than the twelfth century,⁴ and their authenticity is difficult to determine ; linguistic tests cannot very easily be applied, since the copyists may well have made alterations in order to render more intelligible the terms of the charters, and before the reign of Athelstan there were no very definite diplomatic formulae in royal charters from whose presence or absence one could draw any conclusion. The problem, however, is not one that need be discussed here, for all the charters agree on a single point ; not one of them, either in the body of the text or in the lists of witnesses, mentions the name of Grimbald. This fact—if the charters have any value—seems open to only one interpretation : that Grimbald was dead before New Minster was actually founded. This is not incompatible with the dates of the charters in question ; only that granting Micheldever to the abbey is dated 900, and this may well be simply a fault of the copyist, since the indiction is correct for 901.

Such a view, however, is contradicted both by the *Liber Vitae* of New Minster and the *Vita S. Grimbaldi*. The *Liber Vitae* (British Museum, Stowe MS. 944),⁵ which was compiled early in the eleventh century, probably between 1016 and 1020, contains a brief account of the foundation of the abbey. It relates how Edward purchased from the bishop of Winchester a site on which to found a house for secular clergy, and how amongst the many men of devout life whom he invited from the Continent was one of especial holiness named Grimbald, a monk from St. Bertin's near Thérouanne. Grimbald was placed in charge of the new foundation, and his sanctity was demonstrated after his death by the miracles worked at his tomb.⁶ This story seems to be quite untrustworthy ; it is correct enough in saying that the site for

¹ Birch, *op. cit.* pp. 207–14. The elements of the date in the first of these charters do not agree ; the indiction is correct for 901, not for 900.

² *Ibid.* pp. 214–17. Here again the indiction and the date do not agree ; the indiction should be the sixth, not the fourth.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 217–19.

⁴ The charter of 903 certainly existed earlier than this, since it was used both in the *Liber Vitae* (1016–20) and by William of Malmesbury.

⁵ Birch's edition of the *Liber Vitae* must be supplemented by the *Catalogue of the Stowe MSS. in the British Museum*, i. (London, 1895), 623–30, which gives valuable information as to the dates of the various parts of the manuscript.

⁶ 'Plures bone memorie eximieque sanctitatis viros e transmarinis partibus evocavit [Edwardus], inter quos veluti quoddam sidus aureum, clarius renitentem ceteris, pretiosissimum Deoque amabilem Grimbaldum egregie virtutis incomprehensibilisque sanctitatis virum huic loco ascivit ex monasterio quod nuncupatur Tarwanense confessoris Christi Berhtini. Qui venerabilis pater, prefato rege astipulante, clericorum huius prelatus congregationi, sancte conversationis indesinenter dans operam, verbis operibusque eximiam vitam agebat monasticam. Qui cuius vite virtuti sue extiterit, et sacrum eius mausoleum innumabilium patrata celitus testantur beneficia virtutum' (Birch, *Liber Vitae*, pp. 4–5).

New Minster was purchased by Edward from the bishop of Winchester, but the statement that Grimbald was brought to England by Edward, instead of by his father, must be regarded as a major error, and the allegation that Grimbald was head of the new community is supported by no other early authority; the entry of his death in the *Chronicle* and the notices of his feast in ecclesiastical calendars give him the title of 'mass priest' or 'priest and monk' and never that of 'abbot'.

According to the *Vita prima*, Alfred gave to Grimbald, soon after his arrival in England, a *monasteriolum* at Winchester, where he could live as a monk until a bishopric fell vacant for him.¹ After Alfred's death, Edward was only able to retain Grimbald in England by promising to build a monastery at Winchester; this was completed under the saint's care in two years, and was consecrated by Archbishop Plegmund. When we come to analyse this account in the light of the charter evidence, it seems a reasonable hypothesis that the author of the *Vita* has antedated the actual foundation to make it precede Grimbald's death. The *Annales Cicestrenses*, which appear to be a reliable source, place under the year 902 the death of Grimbald, the arrival at Winchester of the relics of St. Josse (Judoc) from Picardy, and the dedication of New Minster.² So far as Grimbald's death is concerned, the annals have followed the *Chronicle* and made it a year too late. The date of the arrival of the relics unfortunately cannot be checked, for the French sources know nothing of the translation,³ and after the cessation of the *Annales Vedastini* in 900 there is an almost complete gap in our information as to what was happening in the West Frankish kingdom till Flodoard's *Annales* begin in 919. But later tradition at New Minster placed the arrival of the relics in Grimbald's lifetime,⁴ and the date in the *Annales Cices-*

¹ 'In urbe igitur Wentana constructo ibidem brevi monasteriolo, ipsum [Grimbaldum] interim residere fecit [Alfredus], ubi frequentius commorando eius meliflua reficeretur exhortatione, donec illum sullimari faceret in pontificali dignitate.' This was apparently expanded in the *Vita secunda* into the definite assertion that Alfred planned the foundation of New Minster; in Leland's analysis: 'Alfredus egit cum Grimbald de instituendo novo monasterio Ventae'. The charter of 903, however, does in fact show that Alfred had made some projects of this kind, since Edward describes himself as 'patris voti non segnis exsecutor'.

² *Annales Cicestrenses*, a. 902 (ed. Liebermann, *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen*, p. 87): 'Obitus sancti Grimbaldi sacerdotis. Adventus sancti Iudoci . . . Deductio Novi Monasterii Wintonie'. The death of Grimbald and the coming of the relics of St. Josse also appear under 903 in the Canterbury manuscript (F) of the *Chronicle* (ed. Plummer, i. 93).

³ They are so far unaware of the translation that the relics of the saint were successfully rediscovered in Picardy in 977. The full account of the *Inventio* and *Miracula* is still unpublished (see Hardy, *Catalogue of Materials*, i. 266-8), but Mabillon (*Acta SS. ord. S. Bened.* ii. [1669], 571) has printed a brief abstract describing the actual *Inventio*.

⁴ See the *lectiones in translatione S. Iudoci confessoris* for 9 January in Tolhurst, *Monastic Breviary of Hyde*, iii. (Henry Bradshaw Society, lxxvi. 1938), fos. 189^v-190^v. This account seems to be very late in date, and is of little value; it is very vague about the actual translation, and gives Grimbald the title of abbot.

trenses may have succumbed to the same error that affected the date of Grimbald's death. The same is true of the dedication of New Minster; since Edward's charter shows that a church formed part of the property acquired from the bishop of Winchester, there would be nothing to delay the dedication of the new monastery. We can probably accept the statements of the *Vita* that Alfred built for Grimbald a *monasterium*—probably no more than a house where he and a few other clergy could live in common—at Winchester, and that it was he who encouraged Edward to proceed with the foundation of a new monastery at Winchester in accordance with Alfred's wishes. If the remainder of our reconstruction is correct, the relics of St. Josse arrived on 9 January 901, and were placed in Grimbald's care. During the summer the king was negotiating with the bishop of Winchester for the acquisition of the church and a suitable site for his projected foundation. Grimbald died on 8 July, before the negotiations had ended, and was buried in the church in question.¹ Later in the year the purchase of the site was completed, and the monastery was endowed with the estates of Micheldever, Anne, and Chiseldon and was dedicated by the archbishop. It was the completion of the remaining monastic buildings that called forth Edward's further charter of 903, though the tower of the church was not apparently finished till a few years later.² Only on some hypothesis such as this can we reconcile Grimbald's close traditional association with New Minster with the fact that he is neither styled abbot in contemporary sources nor figures in the early charters of the abbey.

It may perhaps be as well, by way of epilogue, to say a few words about the subsequent history of the cult of St. Grimbald and the legends that grew up around him. For the popularity of his cult in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries we have plenty of evidence. Out of nineteen English ecclesiastical calendars of this period, thirteen contain the notice of his feast on 8 July; ³ an Anglo-Saxon list of English saints and their resting-

¹ The *Liber de Hyda*, xiv. 2 (ed. Edwards, p. 84), declares positively that Grimbald died after the dedication of the monastery, but this statement from a fourteenth-century work is obviously of no value as evidence.

² According to Ethelweard, *Chronicon*, iv. (in H. Petrie and J. Sharpe, *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, London, 1848, p. 519), Plegmund dedicated the tower of New Minster in 908: 'Post triennium vero [= 908] archiepiscopus Plegmund enceniauit in Wintonia urbe arduam turrim, quae tum noviter fueret sita in honore genitricis Dei Mariae'.

³ F. Wormald, *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*, i. (Henry Bradshaw Society, lxxii; London, 1934), *passim*. The presence of the names of a large number of saints from Flanders and Picardy in the Winchester calendars and those derived from them perhaps goes back ultimately to Grimbald's influence. In the eleventh century, New Minster possessed amongst its other relics a tooth of St. Bertin (*Liber Vitae*, p. 160), which may have been brought to England and left to the abbey by him.

places which was compiled towards the end of the tenth century mentions the presence of his relics at New Minster;¹ and the arrival of Edgar in Scotland in 1075 is dated in the Peterborough manuscript of the *Chronicle* by the fact that it occurred on 'St. Grimbald's mass-day'.² It is naturally in manuscripts from New Minster that we find most notice being taken of the saint; the so-called 'Benedictional of Archbishop Robert' (Rouen MS. 369) contains a *Benedictio in natale Sancti Grimbaldi confessoris*,³ and the two Cotton MSS. Titus D. xxvi and Titus D. xxvii contain prayers or collects for use on his festival.⁴ A charter of Cnut of 1019 refers to New Minster as the place 'in quo et praeclarorum confessorum Iudoci atque Grimbaldi mirifica decenter hodietenus pollut somata'.⁵ But the most important documents are the *Translatio* and the *Miracula S. Grimbaldi*. The text of these forms the lections for 3 September and the octave after 8 July in the Breviary of Hyde;⁶ from Leland's analysis we know that they were also attached to the *Vita secunda*. The *Translatio* relates how, amongst other works of piety, the glorious king Athelstan bestowed the see of Winchester on St. Elfege, and how the bishop, knowing of the many miracles worked by Grimbald's relics, translated them to a silver shrine thirty years after the saint's death. The cloth in which the body was wrapped was found to be in perfect condition, and was preserved at the same time. Many years later, in the days of Edward the Confessor and Abbot Alfnoth, when a monk named Athelwold was custodian of the relics,⁷ these were again translated to a more fitting shrine as a result of a vision vouchsafed to two citizens of Winchester. The details of the miracles that follow are unimportant; some of them are recorded to have taken place while Rhiwallo—his name indicates that he was a Breton—was abbot of New Minster and Walkelin bishop of Winchester, and there is an interesting reference

¹ Birch, *Liber Vitae*, p. 92; F. Liebermann, *Die Heiligen Englands* (Hanover, 1889),

p. 15.

² *Chronicle*, a. 1075 (ed. Plummer, i. 209).

³ H. A. Wilson, *The Benedictional of Archbishop Robert* (Henry Bradshaw Society, xxiv; London, 1903), p. 39. The manuscript was written at New Minster in the second half of the tenth century, probably in the decade 980-90.

⁴ Printed by Birch, *Liber Vitae*, p. 46, n. 4; there is a reference to Grimbald in the litany in Titus D. xxvi (*ibid.* p. 264). Both these manuscripts appear to have belonged to Abbot Aelfwine (1035-57) of New Minster (*ibid.* pp. 251 seq.).

⁵ Birch, *Liber Vitae*, p. 248.

⁶ *Breviary*, iv, fos. 336^v-336^v (3 September: *In translatione Sancti Grimbaldi*), 291^r-292^r (9 July), 293^v-295^r (*Dominica infra octavas* and *In octavis S. Grimbaldi*).

⁷ This 'Athelwoldus qui tunc tempore editus fuit' is presumably the 'Aipold cyricpeard'—'Alwold the churchwarden'—who constructed one of the eleventh-century reliquaries of the abbey (Birch, *Liber Vitae*, p. 162). According to the *Liber Vitae* (p. 161), some at least of the relics of St. Grimbald were then kept in a reliquary called 'the shrine of St. John and St. Paul'. It is not clear whether this was before or after the second translation of the relics in the time of Alfnoth.

to a monk of St. Bertin's named Alquerus who was physician to William the Conqueror.¹

The *Translatio* is not a contemporary document; this is proved by its referring in the past tense to the reign of Athelstan and its asserting that his virtues were a model to his successors,² by the description of Bishop Elfege as *beatus*,³ by the statement that the translation of the relics was carried out thirty instead of thirty-three years after Grimbald's death,⁴ and by the absence of any precise details about the circumstances of the translation. It was certainly written before 1110, when the monks of New Minster migrated to Hyde, since the grave-cloths of Grimbald are described as being still preserved at New Minster.⁵ Probably it was composed soon after the second translation of the relics, during the abbacy of Alfnth II (1057-63). The *Miracula*, which describe events that occurred in the time of Abbot Rhiwallo (1072-c. 1087) and Bishop Walkelin (1070-98), must be a little later in date, and probably belong either to the last decade of the eleventh or the first of the twelfth century.⁶

Apart from the *Vita secunda*, almost nothing was added in the twelfth century to the literature of Grimbald's career. The only important development was that the monks of Hyde succeeded in procuring a copy of the letter of Archbishop Fulk, and a lost

¹ 'Aderat tunc senior de monasterio sancti Bertini a Willelmo rege primo ibi commendatus, medicinalia artibus pericia celeberrimus, et quasi ob fraternitatem beati Grimbaldi fratribus acceptissimus, nomine Alquerus.' Alquerus—Leland corrupted the name to Algerus, and wrongly described him as physician to Edward the Confessor instead of to William the Conqueror—is mentioned in Simon's *Gesta S. Bertini*, i. 26 (*Mon. Germ. Hist., Scriptores*, xiii. 642).

² 'Cum enim gloriosus rex Athelstanus prudenter ac strenue regnum administraret Anglorum, et virtutis ac iusticie quam exercuerat successoribus suis exempla plurima relinqueret, . . .'

³ This is, of course, not in itself decisive, for *beatus* would be the natural adjective for a later copyist to add to Elfege's name.

⁴ 'Transacto tricesimo depositionis eiusdem anno corpus ipsius [i.e. Grimbaldi] de terra levavit [beatus Elfegeus].' Reckoning from the true date of Grimbald's death (8 July 901), this would make the date of the translation 3 September 931. But since Elfege's predecessor Beornstan only died on 1 November 933, the true date must be 934 at the earliest. This is in fact the date given by the *Annales Cicestrenses* (in Liebermann, *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen*, p. 88), and since these appear to embody a trustworthy source, it may be taken as correct.

⁵ 'Inventum autem est pallium . . . quod in Novo Wintonie Monasterio ob sancti memoriam usque in presentem diem reverenter conservatur.'

⁶ There seems to have been some variation in the title given to Edward the Confessor in the two copies of the *Miracula*. The Hyde Breviary, representing the copy attached to the *Vita prima*, describes him as 'egregius rex et confessor Christi Edwardus tercius', which is almost identical with the title employed by William of Malmesbury (*Gesta regum*, ii. 196; ed. Stubbs, i. 236: 'De sancto Eadwardo tertio, rege et confessore'), who had used this *Vita*. Leland's analysis, representing the copy attached to the *Vita secunda*, refers to the king as Edward 'the Peaceful' ('Ealfnthas abbas Novi Monasterii sub Edeuardo pacifico. Alguerus monachus Bertini medicus Eadueardi pacifici'), which is the sobriquet used by Florence of Worcester (*Chronicon*, a. 1066; ed. Thorpe, i. 224: 'pacificus rex Eadwardus'), whose *Chronicon*, as we have seen, was used by the author of the *Vita secunda*.

Winchester manuscript of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum*, from which four extant codices are derived, was interpolated and corrected from it and from one or other of the *Vitae*.¹ The thirteenth century was likewise uneventful, and the summary *Vita S. Grimbaldi* of John of Tynemouth, which dates from the second quarter of the fourteenth century, is still unaffected by the growth of the Grimbald legend.² This really begins with the *Liber de Hyda*, which dates from the second half of the same century, and, while using nearly all the English material we have examined already, embarks with the help of Higden's *Polychronicon* on extraordinary developments of its own.³ The more surprising of these are an account of a Council convened in London in 885 to welcome Grimbald, a full report of the sermon which he delivered before it, an admonitory address by Alfred to the ignorant prelates of the English church, and a statement to the effect that nobles and officials as well as clergy all expressed their determination to learn to read. In consequence of this, the University of Oxford was founded in 886,⁴ with St. Neot, Grimbald, Asser, John the Old Saxon, and an imaginary John the Welshman as its professors. Alfred is then represented as having bought the site for the chapel and dorter of New Minster, and we have a wholly apocryphal account, calculated perhaps to annoy the inmates of Old Minster, of how Edward was only deflected by Grimbald from depriving Old Minster of some of its estates for the endowment of the new foundation. We hear finally how the saint's plans for expelling the canons from New Minster and replacing them by monks was only prevented by his death.

¹ On these interpolations, which are only very brief, see the introduction of Stubbs to his edition of the *Gesta regum*, i. pp. xlix-li; the interpolated passages are on pp. 130 and 134, the former being the more important of the two. It is taken almost verbatim from the *Vita*, but the interpolator has omitted the account of how Grimbald looked after visitors to the abbey, and simply calls him instead *hostelarius*. The interpolator has added the name of the archbishop of Rheims, which William had omitted; this proves that the text of Fulk's letter was already at Hyde when the interpolation was made.

² This is the *Vita*, composed by John for his *Sanctilogium Anglie*, which is printed in J. Capgrave, *Nora legenda Anglie* (ed. C. Horstmann, Oxford, 1901), i. 500. It follows William of Malmesbury in ascribing the foundation of New Minster to Alfred and describing Grimbald as abbot. It does not seem to have used either the *Vita prima* or the *Vita secunda*, but was based on what was common knowledge regarding the saint.

³ *Liber de Hyda*, xiii. 1-4, 5, 9; xiv. 1-2 (pp. 30-41, 51, 76, 78-85).

⁴ The basis of this story, the idea that Alfred founded schools at Oxford, was taken by the author of the *Liber de Hyda* from Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, vi. 1 (ed. J. B. Lumby, vi. [Rolls Series: London, 1876], 354; cf. p. 358). This, as was pointed out by J. Parker, *Early History of Oxford* (Oxford, 1885), p. 49, was 'a natural deduction which any historian of the fourteenth century would make. He would have read in Florence of Worcester and others who had copied Asser, that Alfred encouraged education, and founded a school or schools; Oxford was the chief school known to him, and as he had no record of its foundation, it would be natural for him to put the two together.'

The most important contribution of the *Liber de Hyda* to the Grimbald legend was its establishment of a connexion between the saint and Oxford, and we owe its further developments to the historians of this university. One of the most notable of these was John Rous, who in his *Historia regum Angliae*, written towards the close of the fifteenth century, makes Grimbald, after having received his doctorate in theology at Paris, the first chancellor of Oxford.¹ But the climax was not reached till the reign of Elizabeth, when the controversy between the universities of Oxford and Cambridge as to their relative antiquity was at its height. Camden, in his edition of early English chronicles which was published at Frankfurt in 1603, interpolated into the text of Asser the famous chapter which claimed, with a wealth of circumstantial detail, that Alfred did not found the University of Oxford, but merely reformed it.² The interpolated chapter has been wittily summarized by a recent translator of Asser as involving 'an attempt on the part of Grimbald to dictate to the ninth-century Hebdomadad Council, which retorted that Gildas and Nennius, Melkin and Kentigern had approved of its constitution, while Saint Germanus, after crushing the Pelagian heresy, had apparently received the fifth-century equivalent of the modern honorary degree. Grimbald was unconvinced, and a royal commission was appointed to inquire into the state of the university, with the result that the saint removed himself (and his coffin), defeated and disgusted, to Winchester.'³ This ridiculous fiction, which ranks as one of the most impudent fabrications in the history of English scholarship, enjoyed in its day a quite undeserved success; it deceived even a scholar of the eminence of Mabillon, and was occasionally quoted by serious historians as late as the middle of the last century.

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¹ J. Rous (Rossius), *Historia regum Angliae* (ed. T. Hearne, Oxford, 1745), pp. 78, 78-9. In his account of Grimbald, Rous relied partly on the *Liber de Hyda* and partly on one of the late Winchester chronicles attributed to Rudborne, but some of the embellishments are certainly his own. Amongst other points, he declares that John and Asser also came from St. Bertin's, and that Grimbald was in his eighty-seventh year when he died.

² The interpolated chapter is in Stevenson's edition of Asser, *Vita*, c. 83b (p. 70). Camden actually used it for the first time in the edition of his *Britannia* published in 1600. Its history is elucidated by Parker, *op. cit.* pp. 39-45, and Stevenson, *op. cit.* pp. xxiii-xxviii. It seems probable that its author was Henry Savile of Banke, but that Camden was privy to the falsification.

³ Jane, *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, pp. xlvii-xlviii.