OSWALD
NORTHUMBRIAN KING
TO EUROPEAN SAINT

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The documents testifying to the presence of a cult of St Oswald on the continent span approximately eight hundred years. While apparently confined to German-speaking countries, with the notable exception of Flanders, the centres of the cult vary over the centuries. Thus, in the period under discussion here, the cult is to be found in Saxony in the tenth century, in Weingarten near Lake Constance in the eleventh, and at Regensburg in the twelfth. While there would have been some interaction between these various centres, it seems that the impetus for the cult mostly came afresh from England. Furthermore, in each of these cases an upsurge of interest in Oswald may well have been linked to the arrival in Germany, in order to marry a German noble, of a royal lady with English connections.

The spread of the cult within the period from the tenth to the twelfth centuries must also be placed within the general framework of Oswald’s early popularity on the continent. My paper fills the space between the end of the early diffusion of the cult by Willibrord and his companions, which forms the subject of Alan Thacker’s article, and the reception of Oswald legends into German vernacular literature, which is discussed by Annemiek Jansen. This latter development may well have arisen as a more or less direct result of an upsurge in interest in the saint at Regensburg in the twelfth century, as I shall be explaining towards the end of my paper. However, to begin with, let me document briefly what appear to be traces of Northumbrian influence on the diffusion of the cult in the period after its introduction at Echternach, where its presence in the early eighth century is already attested by no less an authority than Bede.

A western regional diffusion of the cult by the ninth century appears to be implied by Wandelbert of Prüm’s metrical martyrology. This carries an entry on the saint, on Oswald’s feast day of 5 August, qualified by the phrase *rex pius Anglorum*. As Dom J. Dubois has pointed out, the Echternach manuscript of the Hieronymian martyrology, which does not localise the saint, cannot have been Wandelbert’s only source. Accordingly, it is

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2 J. Dubois, *Le Martyrologe d’Usuard. Texte et Commentaire* (Brussels 1965), pp. 58,
EDITH, JUDITH AND MATILDA

reasonable to suppose that a copy of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* must also have been in circulation then in the region of the river Mosel, at such monastic centres as Prüm, Trier or Echternach. This need occasion no surprise because from this general area we also possess a calendar, written c.840, which, according to its editor, Winfried Böhne, can be traced back to Lorsch, Mainz and eventually to Jarrow itself. It would appear that by then works of Northumbrian provenance may have been circulating freely on the continent. And, by way of confirmation, the martyrology of Usuard, which was completed about 865 and which was followed by that of Ado of Vienne (died 874), actually specifies Bede’s work as the source of its entry: ‘Eodem die, sancti Osvaldi regis Anglorum, cuius actus commemorat venerabilis Beda in gestis eiusdem gentis’.4

The occurrence of liturgical documents bearing on Oswald further east on the continent is less well attested. The presence at Fulda of a copy of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, written in a late eighth-century Northumbrian hand, does not seem to have sparked off any major diffusion of the cult.5 The notice of his death is, however, entered in two calendars from Fulda itself, one now in St Gall, the other in Bamberg, both of which are of tenth-century origin.6 Fulda may also have had some influence on the inclusion of Oswald’s day in the calendar of Borghorst,7 but, in this case, it cannot be overlooked that quite a few members of the Saxon royal house are also included in the text. Since their names belong to the period before the foundation of Borghorst in 968, their inclusion, together with that of Oswald, could also reflect an interest of the founding nuns, who were recruited from the Ottonian abbey of Essen.8 The benefactors of this abbey, as we shall now see, were connected familially with both the continental Saxon and the Anglo-Saxon royal houses.


4 ‘On the same day, that of St Oswald king of the English, whose deeds the Venerable Bede records in his history of that same people.’ Dubois, *Le Martyrologe*, p. 278. On these liturgical documents see Folz, pp. 60-2.

5 *HE*, p. xlii.


8 A late 10th-century calendar, in contrast to two earlier ones, also included the feast day. This was possibly due to the influence of Abbess Matilda, granddaughter of Queen Edith; see K. Leyser, ‘Die Ottonen und Wessex’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 17 (1983), pp. 73-97, at p. 78. Althoff, *Das Necrolog*, p. 107.

211
As already stated, the presence of Oswald's cult at Borghorst in the tenth century may well have been due to circumstances quite unconnected with the putative influence of Bede, of Fulda, or of Echternach. When the son of Henry I of Saxony, Otto (later to be called 'the Great'), married Edith (Eadgyth), daughter of Edward the Elder of Wessex and half-sister of Athelstan in 929/930, the event was deemed worthy of notice by most historians of the period. It is, however, the Gesta Ottonis, written by Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim c.965 at the behest of Abbess Gerberga, niece of Otto, that concerns us here. Hrotsvitha included in her work passages not only on Otto, but also on his son Liudolf, his younger brother Henry, and his second wife, Adelheid. As might be expected of a female writer, queens received special attention from Hrotsvitha, who in this case mostly expressed her interest through superlatives. As has been pointed out by R. McKitterick, an important aspect of Hrotsvitha's work is the manner in which it presents the women of the Liudolfing house as transmitters of information about their families and as preservers of tradition. There was also, however, a critical political dimension to the work, which could not have been more timely. Both Leyser and Corbet have stressed the difficulties encountered by Henry and his son Otto in establishing their authority over Saxony. It is clear, however, that the arrangement of marriages with daughters of foreign noble families was regarded as an acceptable means of addressing these difficulties. And in Otto's case, very special care seems to have been taken with the choice of a bride. Two daughters of Edward of Wessex were sent for consideration, but, we are told, Otto spontaneously chose Edith. Edward's other daughter, Ælfgifu, seems

9 Gesta Ottonis, pp. 201-28.
10 Hrotsvitha's style and intention have been studied closely by P. Corbet, Les saints ottoniens. Sainteté dynastique, sainteté royale et sainteté féminine autour de l'an mil (Beihet der Francia 15, Sigmaringen 1986), pp. 111-14.
13 Leyser, 'Die Ottonen', pp. 77-80, 82-5, 95-6; P. Corbet speaks of 'la sainteté comme forme d'illustration du pouvoir', op. cit., p. 114.
14 Henry seems to have favoured Otto as successor, against the wishes of his wife,
then to have been betrothed to the king of Burgundy.\textsuperscript{15}

All of this is recorded by Hrotsvitha. Moreover, while her eulogy of the new house of Saxon kings showed their right to rule to have derived both from ‘Geblütsheiligkeit’ or sanctity of ancestors and from the virtuous lives of its members, it also laid special stress on the contribution of the female line to these factors, including that of Edith, Otto's Anglo-Saxon bride.\textsuperscript{16} Edith’s mother, for example, is presented as of far superior pedigree to that of her half-brother, Athelstan;\textsuperscript{17} and, clearly with a view to underlining even more forcibly the ancient and sainted royal authority derived by Otto from his marriage, Hrotsvitha also wrote of Edith that she was ‘natam de stirpe beata / Oswaldi regis, laudem cuius canit orbis,/ se quia subdiderat morti pro


\textsuperscript{16} The female members of the family who were the subject of hagiographical treatment in this crucial period form the topic of P. Corbet's book: \textit{Les saints ottoniens}. The preoccupation with the Saxon queens is not surprising considering that a large percentage of the religious houses in the kingdom were \textit{Familienklöster}, as in the case of Hrotsvitha’s abbey. While the posthumous reputations of Otto’s mother Matilda, who merited two Lives, and of his second wife, Adelheid, were quite longlived, this does not seem to have been the case with Edith. This may be due to Edith’s early death, sixteen years after her wedding, and to the early prominence of her successor, Adelheid. There is some evidence, however, of a cult of Edith. The twelfth-century Bavarian recensions of the Martyrology of Hermann the Lame of Reichenaun have the following entry at July 8: ‘Apud Parthenopolim civitatem Saxonie sancte Enid regiae, uxoris quondam primi Ottonis’. Magdeburg (Parthenopolis) is quite rightly given as the place of her burial; her anniversary, however, appears as Jan 26 in the Necrology of Borghorst: see J. McCulloh, ‘Herman the Lame’s Martyrology’, \textit{AB} 104 (1986), pp. 349-70. For a study of the political implications of the two \textit{vitae} of Matilda, see G. Althoff, ‘Causa scribendi und Darstellungsabsicht: Die Lebensbeschreibungen der Königin Mathilde und andere Beispiele’, in \textit{Litterae Medii Aevi}, ed. M. Borgolte and H. Spilling (Sigmaringen 1988), pp. 117-33.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Gesta Ottonis}, lines 79-83 (p. 207): ‘Fratre suo regni sceptrum gestante paterni;/ Quem peperit regi consors non inclita regni,/ Istius egregiae genitrix clarissima domnae,/ Altera sed generis mulier satis inferioris.’ Athelstan’s mother, whose name, Ecgywyn (?), is recorded only in post-Conquest sources, may have been a concubine. Edith’s mother was either Ælflæd, daughter of ealdorman Æthelhelm, or Eadgifu, daughter of ealdorman Sigehelm. For this see E. B. Fryde, D. E. Greenway, S. Porter, L Roy, \textit{Handbook of British Chronology} (3rd edn London 1986), pp. 24-5; and P. Corbet, \textit{Les saints ottoniens}, p. 112, n. 7.
The question is: what grounds can Hrotsvitha have had for embellishing Edith's descent with the claim of a relationship between her and Oswald? In the words of Charles Plummer: 'That this is not genealogically correct only makes the testimony the more striking'.

Oswald's wife, whose name is given in the twelfth-century *Vita S. Oswaldi* by Reginald of Durham as Kyneburga, is said by Bede to have been the daughter of Cynegils, king of the West Saxons. Their son, Oethelwald, seems not to have been able to exercise independent or lasting royal power. So, in terms of kingship, Oswald's direct line appears to have died out. On the other hand, the evidence of the West Saxon royal genealogies, which were compiled in a variety of forms in the ninth century, combined with some key passages in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, arguably could have lent some tenuous substance to a claim of a relationship between Edith's family and that of Oswald, in the form of *Ansippung* or 'kinning'. Manipulation of the Anglo-Saxon royal record in Oswald's case may also be implied by certain king lists, such as those which appear in the *Liber Vitae* of Durham, where Oswald's name, which is given precedence over those of Oswiu and his sons, is second in place to that of King Edwin of Deira. Another possible example of manipulation of Oswald's record is provided by the king list compiled at New Minster, Winchester, a foundation and burial place of the West Saxon kings. Here, Oswald's father-in-law, Cynegils, is given pride of place. While the evidence is totally circumstantial, it could be that when King Athelstan's name was entered in the *Liber Vitae* of Durham, probably...

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18 *Gesta Ottonis*, lines 95-7 (page 207): 'born of the blessed lineage of King Oswald, whose praise the world sings, because he yielded himself to death for the sake of Christ's name'.

19 Plummer, II, p. 160. E. van Houts, 'Women', p. 57, sees no reason to doubt Hrotsvitha's statement that Edith was a descendant of Oswald 'despite the fact that no other evidence is available to corroborate it'.

20 *HE* III, 7, pp. 232-3 and n. 3; Tudor, above, p. 187, n. 57.


during his visit to the St Cuthbert Community at Chester-le-Street in 934, there was already in existence a belief in the supposed connection of his family with that of Oswald.24 Certainly Athelstan's family had developed an interest in the saint, because by then Oswald's relics had been translated from Bardney to St Peter's Gloucester by Æthelflæd, Athelstan's paternal aunt, wife of Æthelred of Mercia.25 Could it not be, therefore, that Hrotsvitha's claim simply echoes a tradition brought to Saxony at the time of Edith's marriage to Otto? That royal marriages gave rise to the reception of such traditions is hardly open to question. Moreover, it is worth emphasising in this instance that Athelstan is himself credited with having maintained a lively interest in saints and in the diffusion of their cults.

A great collector of relics, Athelstan is also known to have distributed them generously.26 That Edith benefited from such largesse on the occasion of her marriage to Otto can hardly be doubted. The cult of St Maurice, leader of the Theban legion, whose standard was among the relics brought to Athelstan by a mission originating in Flanders, arguably provides proof of this. The cathedral church at Magdeburg, the main foundation of Otto of Saxony and of his wife Edith, is also dedicated to St Maurice.27 We may surely infer, therefore, that the relics used at Magdeburg came with Edith as a gift to Otto from Athelstan.

The exchange of such gifts is also exemplified in regard to manuscripts. The so-called Gandersheim Gospels, for instance, which were written at Metz c.860, appear then to have been taken to England. Here, they received an entry commemorating Queen Eadgifu and King Athelstan before ending up, by the eleventh century, on the continent in the monastery from which they now derive their name.28 Another, more pertinent case, this time by way of witness to the movement of manuscripts in the opposite direction, is provided by another gospel-book, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius A.II.

24 Gerchow, Die Gedenküberlieferung, pp. 121-2, discusses the visit to Chester-le-Street; see also S. Keynes, 'King Athelstan's books', in Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge 1985), pp. 143-201, at pp. 170-1, n. 135.
25 Thacker, above, pp. 120-1.
26 Keynes, 'King Athelstan's books', pp. 143-4.
27 Leyser, 'Die Ottonen', p. 84.
28 The manuscript is Coburg, Landesbibliothek 1. It is not certain whether Eadgifu should be identified with the step-mother or with the half-sister of Athelstan. On the manuscript, see Keynes, 'King Athelstan's books', pp. 189-93. About the same time, there possibly arrived at this abbey the so-called Gandersheim casket of late eighth-century origin. However, as its runic inscriptions have yet to be deciphered, it is not known whether this casket also served as a reliquary; see L. Webster and J. Backhouse, The Making of England. Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900 (London 1991), pp. 177-9.
This was perhaps written at Lobbes c.900, and carries the inscription, in an Anglo-Saxon hand, of Odda Rex and Mibhild Mater Regis. The commemoration indicates that this manuscript may have been given by Otto, son of Matilda, to Athelstan on the occasion of his marriage to Edith.29

As we have seen, the lack of direct evidence for the presence of Oswald's cult at Athelstan's court by no means precludes the possibility of West Saxon interest in its promotion. Indeed, quite apart from the implications of the evidence provided by Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim, a vested interest in Oswald would have greatly assisted Athelstan in the furtherance of his authority over the Northumbrian kingdom, where the conversion of the Danes had been secured only during his lifetime.30 As the first southern king of this region, Athelstan's efforts to impose his authority could only have benefited from a claim to a relationship with a historical king and martyr of the calibre of Oswald. Further, the suggestion of illegitimacy in his own background would no doubt have made this course of action all the more imperative.

In sum, therefore, possibly inspired by his visit to Chester-le-Street, Athelstan is very likely to have cultivated Oswald's memory actively as a useful means of promoting his own interest. Moreover, through the mediation of his half-sister Edith, his example may well have been followed in Saxony. Here, too, Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim's Gesta Ottonis suggests an awareness of the potential of the king-saint as a means of promoting political ambition. The subsequent diffusion of Oswald's cult in the eastern parts of the empire was no doubt largely due to the interest in the saint, which was thus stimulated among the religious communities connected familially with the Saxon royal house.31

Judith

After an interval of about a century the cult of St Oswald again made an appearance on the continent. Now, however, while it is also attested in Germany, its centre has shifted westwards, to Flanders, where similar patterns can be detected in its progress: these include patronage by the nobility, and the possible involvement of a lady of noble origin with English

29 Keynes, 'King Athelstan's books', pp. 147-53. On the cultural background of these gifts, see McKitterick, Early Medieval Europe 2, pp. 57-9.
30 D. Dumville, Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar (Woodbridge 1992), pp. 147-51. D. Dumville also draws attention elsewhere to the fact that on the occasion of the annexation of Northumbria, manuscripts from its monasteries travelled south and found their way into Wessex: see D. Dumville, Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England (Woodbridge 1992), pp. 105-7.
connections. The lady in question, Judith (c.1027-1094), was the stepdaughter of Baldwin IV of Flanders, and her first marriage was to Tostig (died 1066), earl of Northumbria and brother of King Harold. Subsequently she married Welf IV, duke of Bavaria (died 1101). Oswald’s cult, accompanied by relics, is thought to have reached southern Germany as an immediate consequence of this arrangement. Also, Judith’s connections with the court of Flanders are thought to have had a direct bearing on the arrival of Oswald’s cult in northern France.

Close contacts had existed for centuries between England and Flanders, and, in theory, the cult could have spread there at any time. However, the composition about 1050 of a Life of Oswald by Drogo (died 1084), monk of Bergues-Saint-Winnoc, marks an upsurge of interest in the saint. The Life is drawn mostly from Bede, and Drogo claimed that he had only added what Bede might have said himself, given more space and time. Yet, while his source is immediately identifiable, some doubt still remains as to how it became accessible. It is clear from internal evidence that the Vita was not written at Bergues itself; and, since Bergues had been colonised by monks of St Bertin in 1022, it is tempting to assume that Drogo composed his Life of Oswald while in temporary residence at that great monastery. However, N. Huyghebaert, in his extensive survey of the career of Drogo and of the cult of Oswald at Bergues, decided against this possibility on the grounds that there is no liturgical evidence whatsoever at St Bertin of the presence there of the saint’s cult. Consequently, Huyghebaert is inclined to date the presence at Bergues of the saint’s relics, which presumably influenced the decision to have a Life composed by Drogo in the first place, to the time prior to the colonisation of 1022. Could it be that earlier connections of benefactors of Bergues with the monastery of Echternach had resulted in the arrival there of relics? Drogo does not refer in Oswald’s case to the presence at Bergues of

32 These connections are discussed by J. Campbell, Essays, pp. 191-207. Included is the marriage of Alfred’s daughter Ælfthryth to Baldwin II of Flanders, ibid, p. 197.

33 On Bergues (Groenberg) and the cult there of St Winnoc, see C. de Croocq, ‘Saint Winoc. Abbé de Wormhout, patron de Bergues (vers 640-717)’, Annales du comité flamand de France (1944), pp. 1-191.

34 The Life (BHL 6362) is edited by the Bollandists: AASS Aug. II (Paris 1867), pp. 83-103. Two sermons on the miracles associated with Oswald (BHL 6363) have yet to be edited. Drogo refers to his source in his prologue, ibid., p. 94.


OSWALD
corporeal relics, which are specifically mentioned by him elsewhere in relation to the other saints of the abbey, Winnoc and Lewinna. It could be, therefore, as Huyghebaert has suggested, that a relic in the form of a fragment of the wood on which Oswald's head had allegedly been impaled was kept at Bergues. Such a fragment is known, for instance, to have been venerated by Willibrord.  

There could also be another reason, however, for the presence at Bergues of Oswald's relics. The historical records show that the abbey's main benefactors, the counts of Flanders, traditionally enjoyed close contacts with England. Two possible occasions which could have given rise to the transference of some Oswald relics from England to Bergues have been discussed and subsequently rejected by N. Huyghebaert.

The first possibility concerns an earlier Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald and mother of Baldwin II of Flanders, founder of the abbey, who had previously been wife successively to Æthelwulf (839-55) and to Æthelbald (855-60) of Wessex. Huyghebaert, not aware of a possible West Saxon interest in Oswald, as witnessed above, dismissed the possibility that Oswald's relics could have reached Bergues through the good offices of the mother of the abbey's founder.

A second set of suggestions regarding a possible connection between the presence of Oswald's cult in Flanders and West Saxon influence, this time focusing on the role of an intermediary called Balger, is likewise rejected by Huyghebaert. One difficulty is knowing how to assess the reliability of the account in the Catalogus Reverendorum Abbatum Monasterii S. Winoci, composed at the end of the sixteenth century by the then prior of Bergues, Pierre de Walloncapelle. The text mentions two translations of Oswald's relics at Bergues, the first of which, in 1038, is described in the following words:

In the year 1038 the bodies of St Oswald, king and martyr of the English, and of St Idaberg, virgin, were translated hither to us from England by Balger, a monk of this monastery, thanks to his close friendship with St Edward, king of the English.

A similar wording is used by the author in dating a second, historically authenticated, translation of these saints to the year 1221; and Huyghebaert believes that de Walloncapelle's account of the 1038 translation derived from a confusion with the translation of St Lewinna in 1058. It is in this context that Drogo refers to his own fellow monk Balger who was 'known to the

I quote the passage from Huyghebaert, 'Les deux translations', pp. 84-5; the edition of the source, A. Pruvost, Chronique et cartulaire de l'abbaye de Bergues-Saint-Winoc (I, Bruges 1875), p. 89 and p. 208, was not accessible to me.
EDITH, JUDITH AND MATILDA

king, queen, and to several leading men of the country', i.e. England, presumably the same monk as is mentioned by de Walloncapelle. Huyghebaert further points out that, pace de Walloncapelle's claim, Edward could not be called king of England until 1042. However, it is possible that Pierre de Walloncapelle's passage presumes the memory of an earlier translation, albeit in garbled form, and it is to this possibility that we will now turn.

The famous embassy sent by Hugh, duke of the Franks, to King Athelstan in 926 had been led by Count Adelolf of Boulogne, brother of Arnulf of Flanders and lay-abbot of St Bertin. A son of Ealdswith, King Alfred's daughter, Adelolf was eminently qualified for the task of negotiating the terms of a marriage between Athelstan's half-sister Eadhild and Duke Hugh. Further, whatever the exact terms may have been, the occasion is known to have been marked by an exchange of relics, apparently at the monastery of Abingdon. J. A. Robinson has shown, for instance, that the monks at Abingdon later claimed possession of some relics presented by Duke Hugh. Could it be that Athelstan had responded in kind by presenting Adelolf with, among others, relics of Oswald? It may be a very tenuous link that connects Abingdon with St Bertin and so Bergues. But we should at least allow for the possibility that, having been kept at St Bertin since Athelstan's time, Oswald's relics were then translated to Bergues probably shortly before Drogo composed the saint's Life c.1050. Indeed, there can have been no more suitable occasion for the transfer of these relics, presumably among others, than the arrival at Bergues in 1022 of a colony of monks from St Bertin. It is possible, then, that Balger, the eleventh-century monk of Bergues mentioned by de Walloncapelle and Drogo, became interested in St Oswald through his close links with England, and inspired his fellow monks at Bergues to accord an active cult to their relics of St Oswald. Pierre de Walloncapelle's version of events is clearly quite

40 Drogo of Bergues, Historia translationis S. Lewinnae, MGH Scriptores 15, pp. 782-9, at p. 783; see also Huyghebaert, 'Les deux translations', pp. 87-8.
42 Robinson, op. cit., p. 80. See also Thacker, above, p. 121, n.150.
43 Alternative possibilities are that Balger himself might have initiated the transfer of Oswald relics from St Bertin to Bergues; or that Balger might himself have obtained relics of St Oswald in England, and been responsible for transmitting them to Bergues. Might he have been able to procure them from Abingdon, scene of the 926 relic exchange? It is worth noting that the only Baldgarus noted by Gerchow in the Anglo-Saxon necrological tradition is found in the chapter-book of Abingdon: ed. J. Gerchow, Die Gedenküberlieferung, p. 336.
inaccurate in its detail. This is not to say, however, that it does not contain a grain of historical truth.

Before ever Judith of Flanders moved to Northumbria about the middle of the eleventh century, therefore, she could have been aware of Oswald's cult. According to Symeon of Durham, the monks of Lindisfarne had placed St Oswald's head (formerly buried in their cemetery), in the reliquary-coffin holding St Cuthbert's body when they abandoned their monastery in 875; and subsequently the relics of the two saints shared the same itinerary. Thus, by the time of Judith's marriage to Tostig, which lasted from c.1051 to 1064/5, the relics had already reached their final resting place at Durham. The remains of Oswine, king of Deira after Oswald, had likewise reached Durham, where Judith is known to have procured part of them. The queen's devotion to St Cuthbert is similarly attested by Symeon of Durham. Despite the lack of direct evidence in Oswald's case, therefore, it must seem very likely that Judith's proven interest in relics extended also to him.

Certainly, the king's relics figure prominently among the treasures donated to the monastery of Weingarten near Lake Constance by Judith's second husband, Welf IV. Despite being very closely connected with the imperial city of Regensburg, which was their main seat, the Welfs had selected Weingarten as their burial place and Judith herself is known to have endowed the monastery lavishly. Her endowment mostly took the form of manuscripts, and of those commissioned by her for the library at Weingarten, and still extant, three gospel books are of particular interest. One of them, now Pierpont Morgan Library MS 709, depicts a famous crucifixion scene; in this, the figure embracing the base of the cross, a rough-hewn tree, is thought to represent Judith herself. However, while

44 Plummer, II, 157. Athelstan probably saw Oswald's relics during his sojourn at Chester-le-Street.
45 Plummer, II, 164.
46 HDE III, 11: Arnold I, pp. 94-5.
47 A twelfth-century Weingarten manuscript, at the end of 'De Inventione et Translazione Sanguinis Domine', relates of Judith: 'Domina vero Juditha fletibus uberrimis lacrimosa obtulit pallam auro purissimo intextam, mfas habentem dispositas per loca aurifrigias; scrinea eburnea, auro et argento circumornata; cruces aureas cum reliquis sanctorum, gemmis optimis plene ornatas; calices aureos, thuribula et candelabra aurea, plenaria plurima, arcellam fabrefactam, plenam reliquias sancti Oswaldi; postremo quidem in timore Domini sacrosanctum Christi cruorem adolevit et obtulit quasi incensum in odorem sanctitatis; quo libamine hunc locum beavit. His patratis, Welfo dux, valedicens omnibus, ad Terram [Sanctam] prefecturus discedit', MGH Scriptores 15, p. 923. See also Baker, 'Zug', p. 106.
this manuscript may have originated in the first half of the eleventh century, the crucifixion scene, if it does depict Judith, must be a later addition: the earliest it could date from is 1051, the year of her marriage to Tostig. J. O'Reilly, taking her cue from the identifications of the wood of the cross made in the liturgical ceremonies on Good Friday, comments 'that the *lignum vitae* in Judith's miniature conveys with metaphysical wit the divine plan of salvation and the relationship of the redeeming Cross with the Tree of Death (the *lignum scientiae*) and the paradisal and eschatological Tree of Life'. I would like to suggest that there is also a possible link here with Bede's portrayal of Oswald setting up a cross and praying to God to help his army in battle. Amalarius of Metz's citation of Bede's testimony in this instance formed part of the *adoratio crucis* ceremony copied at Canterbury, c.975. Splinters of the cross allegedly set up by Oswald came to be regarded as relics almost immediately after the king's death. Moreover, relics in this form seem likewise to have become objects of veneration at such abbeys as Bergues on the continent, a development no doubt facilitated by the fact that the cult of the Holy Cross itself was already well established. King Athelstan's collection of relics, for instance, included a particle of the Holy Cross.

However the question of Judith's involvement may finally be resolved, Oswald's cult at Weingarten is certainly well attested in the period after her death. Thus, after being kept for some time in a chapel dedicated to St Leonard, the Northumbrian king's relics are known to have been moved nearer the burial vault of the founders themselves in 1182. Later still, the saint's cult was to be eclipsed to a certain degree by veneration of a relic of the Holy Blood, which had been presented to Judith's step-father by the Emperor Henry III. In the meantime, however, as E. P. Baker has shown,

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49 I want to thank Dr Jennifer O'Reilly for providing me with this reference; see also J. O'Reilly, 'The rough-hewn cross in Anglo-Saxon art', in *Ireland and Insular Art A.D. 500-1200*, ed. M. Ryan (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1987), pp. 153-8, at pp. 156-7.

50 On the distribution of the texts of Amalarius within England see Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 135-6. The *adoratio crucis* is also represented in the inscriptions of a portable altar (Musée de Cluny, Paris, cl.11459), which, since it shows affinities to her manuscripts, may have been part of the treasures presented by Judith to Weingarten: E. Okasha and J. O'Reilly, 'An Anglo-Saxon portable altar: inscription and iconography', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 47 (1984), pp. 32-51. K. H. Göller and J. Ritzke-Rutherford have drawn attention to the possibility that the cult of the Holy Cross may have aided the spread of Oswald's cult: 'St Oswald in Regensburg. A reconsideration', *Bavarica Anglica*, vol. I: *A Cross-Cultural Miscellany presented to Tom Fletcher* (Frankfurt am Main 1979), pp. 98-118, at pp. 100-1.

Weingarten was instrumental in the diffusion of Oswald's cult in south-west Germany and Switzerland, where veneration was largely confined to the dioceses of Chur and Constance within the metropolitan province of Mainz. Other local dedications, as listed by R. Folz, can similarly be linked to Welf land-holdings. A lively local traffic in Oswald's relics must have accompanied the expansion of the cult in the area in question. However, the earliest direct testimony to this kind of activity is dated to the end of the twelfth century.

In sum, therefore, of the saints whose cults Judith appears to have brought with her from Northumbria, Oswald certainly flourished most of all. Just as the Saxons had done before them, the Welfs showed a keen awareness of the political benefits which might accrue to them from the promotion of the king's cult by adopting him as their patron saint. His connection with kingship lent a special aura to his devotees, which was enhanced by the other royal saints commemorated regularly with him. Oswald's credentials eminently qualified him for inclusion in the category of sainted ancestors, by then so prevalent in continental royal houses. Indeed, he is found in such exalted company as that of a sainted emperor, Charlemagne, besides that of less well known continental kings, such as Sigismund of Burgundy.

Oswald's popularity may also be explained by reference to the fact that his biography lent itself to interpretation in a way particularly suited to the times in question. As E. P. Baker has argued, the emergence of warrior saints may well have been an important contributory factor to the growth of Oswald's cult. And in this respect, it is surely significant that the name of Oswald has sometimes been added to apparently prior dedications to St Martin, as appears to have happened at Bergues, for instance, and again at Weingarten.

52 Folz, pp. 67-70.
53 The roll-call of relics, some of which were collected by the church at Zug, the centre of Oswald's cult in Switzerland, is very interesting, but outside the scope of this paper. Reference is made to Oswald's head as a relic at Schaffhausen and part of his arm is said to have been procured from Peterborough. Baker, 'Zug', pp. 103-23.
54 Folz, p. 67, n. 83. On the English royal saints, see Campbell, Essays, pp. 192-3. Concerning the whole phenomenon of sainted ancestors, see Hauck, 'Geblütsheiligkeit'.
56 The dedication to St Martin already existed at St Bertin: C. de Croocq, 'Saint Winoc', pp. 51, 64, 76. On Weingarten, see Folz, p. 69.
EDITH, JUDITH AND MATILDA

Matilda
As a warrior saint celebrated for his warfare against the heathen, Oswald would have acquired great symbolic relevance by the time kings and nobles were embarking on the second crusade at Regensburg in 1147. Moreover, among the pilgrims on this occasion was another Welf, Henry the Lion. In 1168 he was to marry Matilda, daughter of Henry II of England; and this arranged marriage marked the beginning of a new English-Welf alliance.57

Twelfth-century Regensburg was not only the principal seat of the Welfs, it was also the location of a bishopric and of a number of extremely powerful and productive abbeys. As such it was well placed to serve as a centre for the dissemination of Oswald's cult. As Welf power expanded, so also devotion to Oswald seems to have spread. Thus it was probably after Henry the Lion extended his hegemony in the north-east of Germany about the middle of the twelfth century that one of the most important surviving witnesses to the cult arrived there, the famous St Oswald head-reliquary of the cathedral at Hildesheim (Pl. 12). Although an Oswald relic was at Hildesheim in 1061,58 it seems likely that the cult was reintroduced by Henry and his English wife, and that it was they who brought the reliquary to Hildesheim. This assumption is supported by the fact that beneath the octagonal dome, with its supposed particle of Oswald's head, there are eight panels depicting kings, nearly all of English origin (Pls 10, 12). Their names, Ædwardus, Elfredus, Ædelwoldus, Canutus, Ædelbertus and Edmundus, which are accompanied by those of Oswaldus and Sigemundus (of Burgundy), bear unmistakable witness to an ultimately English provenance for the reliquary, which is also indicated by details of the workmanship.59 If it can be further inferred from the names on the reliquary that Henry's English wife, Matilda, counted these kings amongst her saintly forebears, then her ambitions in this regard may be said to have greatly exceeded those of her predecessor, Edith, some three centuries before. It should not be overlooked, however, that Matilda found herself in the very place where her illustrious compatriot had previously lived. Indeed, the presence of the apparently English reliquary at Hildesheim is scarcely an accident. On the contrary, its presentation to the cathedral may well have represented something of a political statement on Matilda's part, an act of solidarity with her earlier role model. Furthermore, commemoration

57 On Henry the Lion, see K. Jordan, Heinrich der Löwe (Munich 1979).
58 Brandt, Kirchenkunst, p. 135.
59 C. M. Fandrey, Das Oswald-Reliquiar im Hildesheimer Domschatz (Göttinger Akademische Beiträge no. 125, Göttingen 1987); but for another view, see above, p. 5, n. 6. The presence of the reliquary at Hildesheim is attested from the beginning of the fifteenth century. The inscription underneath the head is given by Clemoes, p. 9, as: REX PIVS OSWALDVS SESE DEDIT ET SVA CHRISTO LICTORIIQVE CAPVT QVOD IN AVRO CONDITVR ISTO.
OSWALD

on the reliquary of so many sainted royal ancestors could also have been used with another political purpose in mind: to further the status of the Welfs in their claims to authority over Saxony.

The potential usefulness of liturgical objects as a means of furthering political ambition was fully appreciated by the Welfs. Thus, following the example of other important rulers before them, Henry and Matilda had arranged to have parts of their illustrious genealogies entered in a specially commissioned liturgical manuscript. Accompanying the genealogy on Henry's side is a cloak adorned by the sign of the cross, a symbol justified by his pilgrimage to Palestine in 1172. Elsewhere his descent is traced, in several illuminations, back as far as his grandfather, the Emperor Lothar. Matilda, for her part, is accompanied by a portrait of her father, Henry II, and of her grandmother, REGINA MATHILDA, grand-daughter of William the Conqueror and at one time childless wife of the last Salian emperor, Henry V.

The reliquary apart, no further attestations of Oswald's cult are recorded in Saxony. This is in marked contrast to Regensburg itself where various strands of devotion to the sainted king seem to have converged. Here Henry the Lion's political ambitions found expression, among other ways, in more secular literary manifestations. Thus, following the epoch-making ceremony of the canonisation of Charlemagne in 1165, instigated by Frederick Barbarossa, a German version of the ChansondeRoland was composed by the Regensburg cleric Conrad. Interestingly, according to its epilogue, the source for the translation of the Chanson was procured from England at the behest of the Duchess Matilda. Moreover the theme of this work, the fighting and forcible conversion of Saracen Spain by Charlemagne, lent itself to reinterpretation in terms of Henry's glorious crusade against the pagan territories of eastern Germany and of the Orient. Other texts appear to have been composed for the same purpose, a case in point being König Rother, likewise of Regensburg provenance, which reveals many similarities to the Chanson, and which could also be reinterpreted to the glory of the Welfs. An example of the Spielmannsepos or minstrel poetry, König Rother may be dated to c.1160-1170 on the basis of its allusions to political contemporary events in general, and to the fortunes of the Welfs in particular. The Brautentsführung or elopement theme present in König Rother appears to have influenced the composition of the German poem on Oswald, which is discussed in

60 K. Bertau, Deutsche Literatur im europäischen Mittelalter im europäischen Mittelalter (2 vols, Munich 1972-3), vol. I: 800-1197, pp. 459-60. For an illustration of the page containing the genealogy see ibid., II, pl. 64. This manuscript and others were written at the monastery of Helmarshausen on the Weser. The lead slab in the altar of the cathedral at Brunswick, which became the main seat of the couple, displays a similar inscription, including a reference to Matilda as FILIA HENRICI SECVNDI REGIS ANGLORVM FILII MATHILDIS IMPERATICRIS ROMANORVM; Bertau I, p. 460.

224
Annemiek Jansen's paper. This is but one, however, of many motifs shared by König Rother with the Munich Oswald.⁶¹

Certain parallels between the German poem and the Life of St Oswald composed by Reginald of Durham in 1165, which are listed by Annemiek Jansen, suggest that the Regensburg writer of the Munich Oswald could have been drawing on this work. However, we must also take account of the role possibly played by the enigmatic addressee of the introductory letter of Reginald's Life, who is named Henricus. Could he have been identical with Henricus, subprior of Durham, natione Teutonicus? Victoria Tudor takes the view that this German, who is otherwise unknown, could have furnished Reginald with details of the Oswald legend current on the continent.⁶² In view of the fact that the themes shared by the texts are also otherwise attested in works produced in Regensburg, Tudor's view must be allowed to carry weight. As it happens, no trace has been discovered at Regensburg of a copy of Reginald’s Life of the saint. However, there is evidence to show that extracts were made locally from Bede's account of Oswald, and also that a copy was procured there of Drogo's Life of the saint. Furthermore, these two texts were considered important enough to be included in the great legendaries which began to be pieced together at Regensburg around the 1160s.

Oswald and the Irish Monastery at Regensburg

Strange as it may seem, Oswald's admission to continental legendaries may well have been due initially to a community of Irish Benedictine monks which had become established in Regensburg c.1080. The mother house of a number of other Schottenklöster or Irish monasteries, at Würzburg, Nürnberg, Erfurt and Vienna, to mention only the more important, this foundation had a very active scriptorium from about the middle of the twelfth century onwards.⁶³ Its known production included liturgical manuscripts, and


⁶² See V. Tudor’s article, above, p. 179.

⁶³ For recent histories of the Schottenklöster see L. Hammermeyer, 'Die irischen Benediktiner "Schottenklöster" in Deutschland und ihr institutioneller Zusammenschluss vom 12.-16. Jahrhundert', Studien und Mitteilungen zur
OSWALD

historiographical and hagiographical works. Moreover, while keeping in close contact with their Irish homeland, the Regensburg monks also maintained good relations with neighbouring monasteries. It is in this capacity that they appear to have contributed to the compilation of the most substantial legendary of all, the so-called Magnum Legendarium Austriacum. Despite the Austrian provenance of its surviving manuscripts, it has been argued that the exemplar of this great legendary was compiled at Regensburg from about 1160 onwards, as a co-operative monastic venture. Furthermore, the presence of a number of Irish Lives in the legendary implies active involvement in the compilation by the local Irish monastery, which was dedicated to St James. As we shall see, the presence of Oswald's Life in the collection may well be due to this involvement.

An early interest in Oswald on the part of the compilers of the Magnum Legendarium Austriacum is variously attested. In three manuscripts, including the oldest surviving one at Heiligenkreuz near Vienna, Oswald's Life is drawn from that compiled by Drogo of Bergues. This sets Oswald apart from other English saints in the legendary, whose lives almost invariably consist of extracts from Bede. In fact, this is also true of Oswald himself in a collection predating the manuscripts of the great Austrian legendary, Gesehichte des Benediktiner-Ordens und seiner Zweige 87 (1976), pp. 249-338; P. Breatnach, Die Regensburger Schottenlegende: Libellus de Fundacione Ecclesie Consecrati Petri (Munich 1977).


On the Magnum Legendarium Austriacum see A. Poncelet, 'De Magno Legendario Austriaco', ABB 17 (1898), pp. 22-216. The 580 vitae are divided according to the calendar into four volumes. The full legendary is nowhere extant. However, its contents can be pieced together from the disparate surviving volumes. On the Irish Lives see L. Bieler, Four Latin Lives of St Patrick (Scriptores Latini Hibemiae 8, Dublin 1971), pp. 13-21, 233-4. The pivotal role played by the various Regensburg monasteries will be discussed in my forthcoming edition of the Irish saints' Lives in the legendary.

Heiligenkreuz (Ord Cist) MS 13, fols 78v-80v; Lilienfeld (Ord Cist) MS 60, fols 115v-118v; Melk (Ord Ben) MS 6 (nunc: 101), fols 180v-184v.

known as the *Legendarium Windbergense*. This was compiled at the Premonstratensian house at Windberg, near Regensburg, in the second half of the twelfth century, probably between 1150 and 1160. As Poncelet has shown, both this collection and the Austrian legendary relied on the same or very similar sources, each adding further Lives from independent sources.\footnote{The six volumes of the Windberg legendary are now Munich Staatsbibliothek clm 22240-22245. For a description see Poncelet, art. cit., pp. 97-122. Since they already appear in a library catalogue of 1165, a date of compilation shortly prior to this seems likely. The excerpts from Bede comprise: *HE* II, 9; II, 20, III, 1-3; III, 5-7, finishing in the middle of the sentence and omitting the last paragraph; III, 8-13; IV, 14, omitting the first paragraph. Oswald's Life appears in volume clm 22242, ranging from 1 July to 15 August, as item no. 31, fols 114°-121°.}

Be this as it may, extracts from Bede on Oswald turn up in two other manuscript witnesses besides the *Legendarium Windbergense*. One of these is Munich Universitätsbibliothek Cod. ms. 312, a manuscript which was at one time at the Benedictine monastery of Biburg. This preserves Oswald's Life in a form nearly identical to that of the Windberg manuscript. In this case, however, there are some unequivocal pointers to Irish involvement in the compilation of the manuscript. Thus, in the first part of the manuscript, which contains a collection of sermons, special attention is paid to St James, patron of the Irish at Regensburg. Here also, evincing the same interest, is found a copy of the *Translatio Iacobi Maioris*; and, most significantly, a list of saints' Lives of mainly Irish interest is also added to this part of the manuscript, in a later hand. Included in the list are such notable saints as Patrick and Kevin, who are accompanied by continental saints with Irish connections, such as Gall and Pirmin. What is particularly pertinent for us is that the list also refers to the Life of *Oswaldus rex*, which is further distinguished at its place in the manuscript by a large historiated initial (p.I. 17).\footnote{The importance of this volume for Irish studies has been recognised since the early seventeenth century, when a copy of its *Vita tertia Sti Patricii* was made by the Irish Jesuit Stephen White. Bieler, *Four Latin Lives*, pp. 14-15. Oswald's Life is at fols. 101°-123°. The other Lives are: Otmar, Hieronymus, Alexius, Augustinus, Martialis. For a description of the manuscript, see N. Daniel, G. Schott and P. Zahn, *Die lateinischen mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek München. Die Handschriften aus der Folioeihe*, part II (Wiesbaden 1979), pp. 55-7. A large initial at the beginning of Oswald's Life is also found in the Windberg manuscript.} Purely on the evidence of its emphasis on St James and of its list of mainly Irish saints, the Munich manuscript can hardly have been written in a scriptorium other than that of the Irish monastery at Regensburg. It also appears from the contents of the list that its compiler must have had a particular interest in Oswald: an interest presumably shared by the whole Irish community at Regensburg. The existence of this interest may also
underlie the survival at Regensburg of a twelfth-century fragment of a very similar Oswald dossier. While there is nothing to connect this fragment with the Schottenkloster, its text of the Life contains more or less the same excerpts as the other manuscript. However, unlike the Munich manuscript, the Regensburg Life of Oswald is distinguished by its strict omission of all extraneous matter present in Bede's account of Oswald. If there was interdependence between the manuscripts, therefore, then the Regensburg fragment must have been copied from the Schottenkloster Life.

Oswald's obvious importance to the Irish community at Regensburg may have arisen from the part played in his life by St Aidan of Lindisfarne. In the sometimes hostile or envious foreign surroundings of their monastery at Regensburg, the Irish monks sought justification for the protection of their privileges and immunities in the glorious historical role of their people in converting others to the true faith. Thus, the foundation chronicle of the Schottenkloster, entitled Libellus de Fundacione Ecclesie Consecrati Petri, devoted a paragraph to the role played by St Aidan in the conversion of heathen Northumbria. Its account was based on an existing text, also written at Regensburg, the Vita Mariani. What is particularly interesting about the Libellus's treatment of Aidan is its claim that he was buried 'cum honore et reverencia debita in civitate Windonia'. According to Bede, Aidan had been buried at Lindisfarne. Even if his relics may have shared the subsequent travels of those of Cuthbert and Oswald, it surely comes as a surprise to hear that he is supposed to have been buried at Winchester. Could it be that account has been taken here of Welf connections, through marriage, with southern England? The Welf connection may also help to explain the Schottenkloster interest in Oswald. The Welfs were in fact benefactors of the Irish monasteries in Germany: thus, the Schottenkloster of St Nicholas, a daughter house of the Regensburg community at Memmingen, was founded by Duke Welf VI c.1180.

Yet another possible explanation of Schottenkloster interest in Oswald lies, curiously enough, in the monastery's ongoing dependence for its well-being on lay benefactions. All documents written at St James from the 1150s onwards stress the role of lay benefactors and the pressing need of generosity towards the pauperes, another word for monks. This is one of the central themes, for instance, of the Visio Tnugdali, composed in St James c.1150,

70 Curschmann, MODSE, pp. 192-3, gives a description of the text; see also K. H. Göller, 'König Oswald' (as n. 60), p. 308.
71 'With honour and due reverence in the city of Winchester': Breatnach, Die Regensburger Schottenlegende, pp. 143-4. The Vita Mariani is edited in AASS Feb. II (1658), pp. 361-72.
72 HE III, 17. Plummer II, p. 167, notes the claim of the abbey of Glastonbury to relics of Aidan.
which claims that only noblemen who entered a monastery, or otherwise contributed generously towards its upkeep, might be encountered in heaven’s joyful fields. Here, the generosity displayed by Oswald during his Easter meal with Aidan, when he divided his silver dish among the pauperes, would have served as an excellent paradigm of the importance attached by the monks to their lay benefactors. And that Oswald in fact served as a role-model for benefactors is clear from the relevant illustration in the early thirteenth-century Berthold Missal from Weingarten (Pl. 13).

To sum up, then, the figure of Oswald rex et martyr clearly lent itself to a wide range of adaptations. Repeatedly, his cult appears to have attracted the attention of groups well placed genealogically to use his memory to their own advantage. In this way, for instance, his cult came to be fostered by such German noble houses as those of the Saxons and Welfs, who, through their marital connections with English ladies of royal birth, could more or less legitimately use the saint’s legend as a means of promoting their own political aims. Similarly, the house of Wessex itself may have ‘adopted’ Oswald in its own political interest. Later, through his transformation into the hero of a Spielmannsepos, Oswald the warrior-saint became a patron of crusaders. This appears to have occurred at Regensburg, where he also captured the imagination of Irish Benedictine monks, possibly first attracted to him by his connections with Aidan of Lindisfarne. In any case, his proven generosity to the poor also made him an excellent champion of monks dependent on largesse. Finally, while it lies outside the scope of the present article, this latter trait of his character, together with the fact that his feast day coincided with the harvest season, transformed Oswald into a saint widely venerated by the lower groups of society. Of Oswald it can be truthfully said, that his was a multifaceted cult.

74 Ó Riain-Radet, ‘Das Nekrolog’, p. 29. The Visio Tnugdali has been edited by A. Wagner, Visio Tnugdali. Lateinisch und Altddeutsch (Erlangen 1882).
76 Cf. Stancliffe and Cambridge, above, p. 5.