An Introduction to the Study of
Old English Prose Hagiography: Sources and Resources

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Many of the essays in this volume are by scholars who have been active in the area of Old English prose homilies and saints’ lives for some time. Their contributions illustrate not only a variety of seasoned critical approaches but also considerable methodological expertise. This introductory chapter (more a collection of notes than an essay) is addressed to those students and scholars, from whatever discipline, who are attracted to, but not yet very familiar with, the field of Anglo-Saxon hagiography or Western hagiography at large. The aim of the chapter is to survey some of the principal research tools necessary for original work in the corpus of Old English lives (those by Ælfric and the anonymous individual lives) and the Latin texts that lie behind them. I have purposefully avoided certain topics that might otherwise require treatment here but are dealt with in detail elsewhere in this volume; for example, the manuscripts containing the Old English texts themselves are discussed in the chapters by Joyce Hill and Donald Scragg, and what is probably the most important of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts containing Latin hagiographic texts, the “Cotton-Corpus” legendary, figures largely in the chapter by Michael Lapidge and Peter Jackson. Purely for practical reasons, I have also excluded from consideration major Old English prose works that are hagiographic in content but collective in form: the Old English Bede, Gregory’s Dialogues, and the Old English Martyrology.

Hagiography is narrative, but it is framed by lists, including calendars of saints’ feast days, martyrologies, litanies, lists of relics and miracles, and even lists of manors and fields “owned” by the saints for the ecclesiasts under their patronage. This chapter has five sections of which the first and last are lists (more lists are in the notes). The first section lists the saints whose acts are narrated in one form or another in Old English prose. The last section lists the surviving manuscripts from the Anglo-Saxons’ own collections of Latin
hagiography and itemizes the Latin saints’ lives in each one. In between, the sections focus by turns on the scholarly resources for studying the Old English texts, Latin hagiography of continental origin, and Anglo-Latin hagiography. The chapter’s progression from published Old English texts to largely unpublished Latin manuscripts betrays its underlying theoretical bias: that the Old English saints’ legends are best read in relation to their individual Latin source texts and in the larger context of Latin hagiography in England and Europe in the early medieval period. The more we can learn about the Latin tradition, the better we will understand the 100 or so vernacular texts that for many English men and women, clerical as well as lay, replaced the Latin tradition in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

**List of Old English Prose Saints’ Lives**

Following is a list of all the texts of individual saints’ lives in Old English prose, the majority by Ælfric, the rest anonymous, that I have located through printed sources. The texts are listed alphabetically by saint’s name. Where there is more than one version of a saint’s life, Ælfric’s is listed first. Each text is identified by the conventional short title, as used by the *Dictionary of Old English*: ÆCHom = Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies, Series I and II; ÆLS = Ælfric’s Lives of Saints; ÆHomM = Ælfric’s Homilies (ed. Pope); LS = the anonymous saints’ lives, or Sanctorale. In the case of Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies, my numbering of the First Series is that of Thorpe’s edition only; for the Second Series homilies I have given two numbers, the first from Thorpe, the second from Godden’s recent EETS edition: thus ÆCHom II, 20/18 is number XX in Thorpe’s, XVIII in Godden’s edition of the second series.²

The short title is followed by the text’s identification number from the authoritative “List of Texts” by Frank and Cameron in their plan.³ For example, the first text in my list, Abdon and Sennes, has the short title ÆLS 24, and the identification number B1.3.24. I have given page (and sometimes line) numbers only where the piece in question is part of a larger text.

For reasons of space and to avoid redundancy, I have not given manuscript information or, in most cases, citations of printed editions; both are supplied at the appropriate place in the *Plan* (which does not, however, include references to Godden’s later edition of ÆCHom II). Editions printed since the publication of the *Plan* may be located in the bibliography of Luke Reinsma for Ælfrician texts and that of Karen Quinn and Kenneth Quinn for non-Ælfrician texts⁴ (see second section), but I have included references (in the Notes) to important editions not mentioned in the *Plan*, Reinsma, or Quinn and Quinn. Readers should note that not all the texts that follow are
"hagiographical" in the strict sense; most of Ælfric’s homilies on the various feasts of the Virgin, for example, take their narratives from scripture, not from the apocrypha.

Abdon and Sennes, ÆLS 24, B1.3.24.
ÆEthelthryth, ÆLS 21, B1.3.21.
Agatha, ÆLS 9, B1.3.9.
Agnes, ÆLS 8 (part 1), B1.3.8 (with Gallicanus, John and Paul).
Alban, ÆLS 20, B1.3.20.
Alexander, Eventus, and Theodolus, ÆCHom II 20/18, B1.2.23, B1.4.24.
Andrew i, ÆCHom I 38, B1.1.40.
Andrew ii, LS 1, B3.3.1.6
Apollinaris, ÆLS 23, B1.3.23.7
Apollonius (Apollo) of Egypt (part 2 of Maccabees).
Augustine of Canterbury, LS 2, B3.3.2 (fragment).
Bartholomew, ÆCHom I 31, B1.1.33.
Basil, ÆLS 4, B1.3.4.
Benedict, ÆCHom II 11, B1.1.12 (see also Gregory the Great’s Dialogues 2).
Cecilia, ÆLS 32, B1.3.32.
Chad, LS 3, B3.3.3.
Christopher, LS 4, B3.3.4.8
Chrysanthus and Daria, ÆLS 33, B1.3.33.
Clement, ÆCHom I 37, B1.1.39.9
Cross (Exaltation), ÆLS 27, B1.3.27.
Cross (History), LS 5, B3.3.5.
Cross (Invention i), ÆCHom II 19/18, B1.2.22.
Cross (Invention ii), LS 6, B3.3.6.10
Cuthbert, ÆCHom II 10/10, B1.2.11.
Denis and companions, ÆLS 29, B1.3.29; also in Clement, pp. 558–60.
Edmund (king and martyr), ÆLS 31, B1.3.31.
Eugenia, ÆLS 2, B1.3.3.11
Euphrosyne, LS 7, B3.3.7.12
Eustace and Companions, LS 8, B3.3.8.
Forty Soldiers, ÆLS 12, B1.3.12.
Four Evangelists (Mark, part 2), ÆLS 16, B1.3.16, pp. 326–36.
Fursey (visio only), ÆCHom II 22/20, B1.2.25.
Gallicanus (see John and Paul).
George, ÆLS 15, B1.3.15.13
Giles, LS 9, B3.3.9.14
Gregory, ÆCHom II 9, B1.2.10.
Guthlac, LS 10, B3.3.10.15
James the Greater (i), ÆCHom II 31/27, B1.2.34.
James the Greater (ii), *LS* 11, B3.3.11.16
James the Less (see Philip and James the Less).
John and Paul with Gallicanus (Agnes, part 2), *ÆLS* 8, B1.3.8, pp. 186–94.
John the Baptist (Decollation), *ÆCHom* I 32, B1.1.34.
John the Baptist (Nativity i), *ÆCHom* I 25, B1.1.27.
John the Baptist (Nativity ii), *LS* 12, B3.3.12.
John the Evangelist (Assumption), *ÆCHom* I 4, B1.1.5.17 Extract also in
Julian and Basilissa, *ÆLS* 5, B1.3.5.
Lucy, *ÆLS* 10, B1.3.10.
Macarius of Egypt (part two of Swithun).
Machutus, *LS* 13, B3.3.13.
Malchus (Vitas Patrum, part 2), *LS* 35, B3.3.35, pp. 199–207.20
Margaret (i), *LS* 14, B3.3.13.
Margaret (ii), *LS* 15 (burnt), B3.3.15.
Margaret (iii), *LS* 16, B3.3.16.
Mark, *ÆLS* 16, B1.3.16.
Martin (i), *ÆCHom* II 39/34, B1.2.42.
Martin (ii), *ÆLS* 30, B1.3.30.
Martin (iii), *LS* 17, B3.3.17.21
Mary of Egypt, *LS* 23, B3.3.23.
Mary Virgin (Annunciation), *ÆCHom* I 13, B1.1.14
Mary Virgin (Assumption i), *ÆCHom* I 30, B1.1.32 (plus two Marian miracles:
Theophillus, p. 448; slaying of Julian Apostle by Mercurius, pp. 448–54).
Mary Virgin (Assumption ii), *ÆCHom* II 34/29, B1.2.36.
Mary Virgin (Assumption iii), *LS* 20, B3.3.20.
Mary Virgin (Assumption iv), *LS* 21, B3.3.21.22
Mary Virgin (Nativity i), *ÆCHom* II 36/31, B1.2.39; see also *ÆHomM*
8, B1.5.8.23
Mary Virgin (Nativity ii), *LS* 18, B3.3.18.24
Mary Virgin (Nativity iii), *HomU* 10 (VercHom 6, B3.4.10).25
Mary Virgin (Purification i), *ÆCHom* I 9, B1.1.10
Mary Virgin (Purification ii), *LS* 19, B3.3.19.26
Mary Virgin (Sermon of Ralph D’Escures), *LS* 22, B3.3.22.
Matthew (see also Andrew ii), *ÆCHom* II 37/32, B1.2.40.
Maur, *ÆLS* 7, B1.3.7.
Maurice and companions, *ÆLS* 28, B1.3.28.
Mercurius (slaying of Julian Apostle: see Basil; see also Mary Virgin,
Assumption i).
Michael (i), ÆChom I 34, B1.1.36.
Michael (ii), LS 24, B3.3.24.27
Michael (iii), LS 25, B3.3.25.
Mildred (i), LS 26, B3.3.26.
Mildred (ii? see Sexburga), LS 27, B3.3.27.
Neot, LS 28, B3.3.28.
Nicholas, LS 29, B3.3.29.
Oswald (king and martyr), ÆLS 26, B1.3.26.28
Pantaleon, LS 30, B3.3.30.
Paul (apostle), ÆChom I 27, B1.1.29.
Paulinus, LS 32, B3.3.32.
Peter, ÆChom II 28/24, B1.2.31 (exegetical, not hagiographical).
Peter (Chair of), ÆLS 11, B1.3.11 (includes Petronilla and Felicula, ll. 232–93).
Peter and Paul (i), ÆChom I 26, B1.1.28.29
Peter and Paul (ii), LS 32, B3.3.32.
Petronilla and Felicula (see Peter, Chair of).
Philip and James the Less, ÆChom II 18/17, B1.2.21.
Quintin, LS 33, B3.3.33.
Sebastian, ÆLS 6, B1.3.6.30
Seven Sleepers (i), ÆChom II 32/27, B1.2.34.
Seven Sleepers (ii), LS 34, B3.3.34.
Sexburga (see also Mildred ii?), B3.3.27 (one portion of the fragmentary text in MS London, Lambeth Palace 427, ff. 210–11, may be from a life of Sexburga).31
Simon and Jude, ÆChom II 38/33, B1.2.41.
Stephen Protomartyr (i), ÆChom I 3, B1.1.4.
Stephen Protomartyr (ii), ÆChom II 2, B1.2.3.
Theophilius (see Mary, Virgin, Assumption i).
Thomas, ÆLS 34, B1.3.34.
Veronica, VSal, B8.5.4.
Vincent, ÆLS 35, B1.3.35 (see also ÆHomM, B1.5.9, “On a Martyr’s Day”).32
Vitas Patrum (see also Apollonius, Macarius, Malchus), LS 35, B3.3.35.33

Resources for Studying Old English Prose Saints’ Lives

The splendid Bibliography of Publications on Old English Literature by Stanley Greenfield and Fred Robinson (Greenfield/Robinson) is the standard
bibliography for the field. 34 But with its formal orientation toward the history of scholarship, it does not attempt to serve as a guide to Old English prose hagiography as such. Nowhere in the text or index is there anything resembling a comprehensive list of the Old English prose saints' lives, nor can such a list be drawn up piecemeal using Greenfield/Robinson only. A necessary complement to Greenfield/Robinson is the redoubtable Plan for the Dictionary of Old English, mentioned earlier. The third and longest section, by Angus Cameron, comprises an elaborately classified and numbered list of all the extant texts of Old English, verse and prose, with all known manuscript copies of each text (keyed to entries in Ker's Catalogue) and its most recent or standard printed edition. The numbering works according to a classification system likely to become very familiar to Anglo-Saxonists as the Dictionary of Old English, with its ancillary publications, becomes more widely known and used. 35 Thus section A in the Plan comprises all the poetic texts; section B consists of twenty-eight categories of prose texts; section C comprises glosses, and so on. Most relevant to hagiography are B1, the works of Ælfric (the two series of Catholic Homilies, B1.1–B1.2, and the Lives of Saints, B1.3); B3.3, the "Sanctorale" or anonymous prose saints' lives; and B19 (the Old English Martyrology). 36 The Ælfrician texts in the Plan B1. 1–3 are listed more or less according to their order in the standard printed editions (which is the calendar order of the saints' feast days in the chief manuscripts), but those in B3.3, "Sanctorale," are listed alphabetically by saints' names.

Cameron's lists of prose lives, despite their mixture of calendar and alphabetical formats, are the most convenient and complete, and they are an essential starting point for the study of the corpus of Old English prose hagiography. 37 They can be improved slightly, as I have tried to do in the preceding list by adding separate entries for Apollonius, the Four Evangelists, John and Paul, Macarius, the Maccabees, Malchus, Sexburga, and Veronica, all of whom are the subjects of separate Old English texts, or distinct parts of texts, but are not identified in the Plan.

The Plan offers a listing of texts, manuscript copies, and standard editions up to 1972. It is not a bibliography as such. Two newer works cited earlier, by Reinsma and the Quinns, 38 provide more specialized bibliographical support and guidance to students of Old English prose hagiography. Reinsma's bibliography of editions and scholarship on Ælfric's works includes sections specifically on the homilies and saints' lives, arranged chronologically by date of publication, and provides a helpful abstract of each item listed. Manuscripts, subjects, and modern authors each have separate indices, allowing one to locate studies and editions of individual saints' lives. The Quinns' Manual deals with the non-Ælfrician corpus of Old English prose. Unlike Greenfield/Robinson's and Reinsma's bibliographies, which
plot the development of modern scholarship chronologically, the Quinns have
provided a guide to the texts themselves, organized on the model of the
Toronto Plan, including the Plan reference numbers. Thus the “Sanctorale”
section of the Manual essentially duplicates that of Plan, but with more in-
formation about each separate text, including incipits, manuscripts, brief
descriptions of each text, all known editions, and pertinent studies. The Manual
also, however, repeats some of the Plan’s problems and omissions, for ex-
ample, of Malchus, Sexburga, and Veronica, although Malchus at least is
visible through the General Index.

Both Reinsma’s and the Quinns’ valuable works incorporate bibliographical
items appearing as late as 1982 (and occasionally later). For more recent
material, the best resource, in addition to the standard literature bibliogra-
phies, is the bibliography of Anglo-Saxon studies compiled annually by Carl
Berkhout, published in the spring issue of the Old English Newsletter, espe-
cially section 3c, dealing with prose literature.69 Reinsma and the Quinns
include unpublished doctoral dissertations among their citations, as does
Berkhout. A recent convenient bibliography of dissertations on Old English
is that of Pulsiano;40 for current information about dissertations, the standard
source is, of course, Dissertation Abstracts International, especially the A
volume, covering the humanities and social sciences in North America, and
the C volume, covering Europe and elsewhere (all fields, but selectively).41
More specialized annual reports and summary catalogues are usually avail-
able in major research libraries for locating dissertations abroad and in spe-
cialized subjects.

**Resources for Studying the Latin Sources of
Old English Prose Saints’ Lives: Non-native Saints**

The great majority of the printed texts of Old English prose saints’ lives
are accessible only in older, collective editions, where one is faced with the
Old English text, information about its manuscript sources and language, and
little else. A few lives are available in individual editions, and a handful of
these print and discuss the Latin source of the Old English text.42 In most
cases, therefore, one must make use of the standard resources of hagiographic
scholarship at large, and do for oneself the “Quellenforschung” usually pro-
vided in a good critical edition, to gain some understanding of the Latin
tradition in which the Old English hagiographer worked and to which that
text, in one way or another, responds.

To illustrate the use of these hagiographic sources and resources and
some of their attendant problems, I selected more or less at random, as a
representative text for source study, one of the pieces in Ælfric’s Lives of
Saints: the story of SS. Julian and Basilissa, who represent, as “virgin spouses,” an interesting subcategory of Ælfric’s martyred saints (cf. also Cecilia and Valerianus, Chrysanthus and Daria). Ælfric’s source in this case was a Latin legend, the Passio SS. Juliani et Basilissae, of which more shortly.

At the outset in a study of this kind, it is advisable to consult an encyclopedia for general information about the saint’s origins, legend, cult, and iconography. The best of those devoted to hagiography is the Italian Bibliotheca Sanctorum. I should mention at this point also that the only general guide to the Anglo-Saxons’ use of Latin texts, including saints’ lives, has been Ogilvy’s Books Known to the English. Although less than thorough in its coverage and prone to various kinds of errors, Ogilvy’s book is nonetheless valuable in the early stages of source study of Old English literature, and his list of texts and references forms the original basis of the forthcoming Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture, designed to replace Books Known.

Two German dissertations, both published in 1892, laid the foundations for subsequent study of Ælfric’s Latin hagiographic sources: those of Förster, on the “legends” in Catholic Homilies, and Ott, on those in volume 1 of Skeat’s edition of Lives of Saints. The lives in volume 2 were first sourced by Loomis and others, and source studies of specific hagiographic texts by Ælfric continue to appear. The important work of Patrick Zettel on the Latin hagiographic sources of both the Homilies and Lives is discussed later in this chapter as well as in that of Lapidge and Jackson in this volume. Less work has been done on the sources of the anonymous lives.

According to Ott, Ælfric’s Latin source for our sample text, his life of SS. Julian and Basilissa (hereafter ELS 4), was a seventh-century Latin prose passio (hereafter Pas.Jul.Bas.) very similar to that printed in the Acta Sanctorum, Januarius, volume 1, but having more details in common with some of the manuscripts cited there for variant readings. Acta Sanctorum, the work of a dedicated group of Jesuit scholars, Société des Bollandistes, is perhaps the best known (and certainly the bulkiest) of the resources of modern hagiographic scholarship. Its hefty folio tomes contain vitae or passiones of nearly all the known saints of the Christian Middle Ages whose feast days occur from January through November. The texts are printed in the order of the saints’ feast days. Thus the first three volumes of Acta Sanctorum are devoted to the saints with feast days in January, including Julian and Basilissa on January 9, although in the early Middle Ages the pair were associated in some calendars and martyrologies with January 6 or 8. This sort of variation in feast days is typical.

Having reached the Acta Sanctorum edition of Pas.Jul.Bas., we confront a major difficulty. Although Acta Sanctorum remains the greatest single collection of hagiographic texts, it is also, like J.-P. Migne’s more familiar library of patristic texts, Patrologia Latina, out of date and deficient by modern
scholarly standards. Moreover, it is incomplete: the lives of the saints of December have not been edited for Acta Sanctorum. The great majority of the volumes were published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and although they contain editions that are in some cases still valuable today, only the November volumes (1887–1925) reflect truly modern standards of textual scholarship. The Acta Sanctorum edition of Pas.Jul.Bas., for example, is based on an unnamed, undated "very old manuscript" collated with several others that have taken a good deal of modern scholarship just to identify. The early Bollandists frequently, though not always, made use of relatively late manuscripts, preferring usually more polished (but often much revised and interpolated) redactions, in legendaries of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, to the cruder but more "authoritative" recensions of the early medieval period. The Acta Sanctorum editions of late classical and early medieval texts such as Pas.Jul.Bas., therefore, are not usually representative of the sort of texts that Anglo-Saxons such as Aldhelm or Ælfric used in their own hagiography, and detailed critical comparisons between an Old English text and a Latin text from Acta Sanctorum alone should be avoided if possible.

The modern Bollandists, on the other hand, have provided us with several tools for either tracking down more recent and rigorous printed editions, or, failing that, for finding more authoritative, earlier manuscripts. Their journal Analecta Bollandiana, founded in 1882, publishes articles in the whole field of hagiography, Eastern as well as Western, including editions of shorter hagiographic texts, critical studies, manuscript information, hagiographic catalogues of smaller manuscript collections, and review notices of new books and articles in the field. It is well indexed (every twenty volumes), viz., by saints, manuscripts, and modern authors, as is each fascicle of the journal. Needless to say, working through the copious indices for notices of one’s chosen saint, text, or manuscript, can be tedious, but it is a necessary and invariably rewarding task for anyone in the early stages of a hagiographic project.

The accompanying monograph series, Subsidia Hagiographica, includes editions of longer texts, special studies, and catalogues of hagiographic texts in medieval manuscripts in the larger and smaller libraries of Europe. Among the most important volumes in the Subsidia series are the great hagiographic catalogues of the libraries of Paris, Brussels, and Rome, which include manuscripts of insular origin, some of the most significant of which, for hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England, have only recently begun to be recognized as insular. More recently, the Bollandists have concentrated their cataloguing efforts on the provincial libraries of France.

Perhaps the most widely used volume in the Subsidia series, in addition to Delehaye's classic popular introduction to hagiographic literature, is the Bollandists' handlist of medieval Latin hagiographic texts, Bibliotheca
Hagiographica Latina (BHL), an alphabetical listing of all the Christian saints, Eastern as well as Western, whose lives are preserved in Latin. The different vitae or passiones of each saint are arranged in ostensibly chronological order, with a separate identification number, incipit, and desinit (BHL does not use explicit), and where possible, citations of printed editions of (and printed excerpts from) each variant version of the life. Where there is no printed edition of a particular recension or redaction, BHL cites published notices of manuscript copies.

Thus in the first edition of BHL, the entry for SS. Julianus and Basilissa lists six different literary memorials, the earliest of which is the anonymous passio (our Pas.Jul.Bas.) as printed in Acta Sanctorum, here numbered BHL 4529, along with three variant versions, BHL 4530–32, encountered by the Bollandists in their manuscript researches. BHL 4532, for example, differs from 4529 in omitting the prologue and most of the last chapter. On the other hand, the next three items under Julianus and Basilissa, BHL 4533–35, comprising poems by various authors in praise of the two saints, are not simply variant versions of the passio prima (BHL 4529), but distinct works, although based ultimately on some version or other of the basic passio. The earliest of these, BHL 4533, a lengthy section of Aldhelm of Malmesbury’s major work De Virginitate, is obviously relevant to the Anglo-Saxon context, because, as a work well known to the later Anglo-Saxon literati, it may turn out to have influenced Ælfric’s treatment or selection of the legend of Julian and Basilissa.

There are two supplements to BHL, published in 1911 and 1986, the second of which, the Novum Supplementum, supersedes the former. In the case of Pas.Jul.Bas., it incorporates the references made in the 1911 Supplément to additional variant recensions (BHL 4532b–d), and cites two new printed editions of BHL 4529, both based on important early manuscripts, and a study, by Delehaye, of the cults of the martyrs of Egypt, including Julian and Basilissa. The two supplements also reveal, however, that the numerical classification system of BHL, as set up in the first edition, does not always reflect the textual facts as revealed by more exhaustive research and more recent manuscript discoveries. The system has come to appear somewhat cumbersome (e.g., the proliferation of alphabetical modifiers, such as BHL 4532b–d, mentioned previously), and even misleading. A famous example concerns the passio of St. Alban, Britain’s “protomartyr,” where the original BHL numbering system conveys a topsy-turvy picture of the history of the text as it has been reconstructed since the turn of the century.

Despite these drawbacks, BHL remains the essential guide (Ker’s Catalogue, for example, usually indicates hagiographic Latin sources solely by BHL number). It offers at a glance a sketch of the literature inspired by a saint’s cult, with the main bibliographical information. Especially now with its updated supplement, it provides a vivid if schematic picture of the rich
instability of hagiographic texts in the Middle Ages. Each recension represents a different interpretation of the inherited legend, and to speak of the life or passion of a particular saint becomes meaningless in the light of the textual variety revealed in BHL and its supplements.65

A substantial number of the Latin hagiographic texts current in Anglo-Saxon England, including Pas.Jul.Bas. and the ultimate sources of many of the prose lives and the poems Elene and Andreas, were originally composed in Greek. Many cults of originally Greek or otherwise “Oriental” saints had migrated to Italy, Gaul, and Spain by the sixth and seventh centuries and thence to England and Ireland. For our purposes, the best scholarly treatment of the hagiographic repercussions of this migration is that of Siegmund, whose book on Greek Christian literature in the West is particularly detailed in its attention to hagiography and hagiographic manuscripts and has not in this respect been replaced by Berschin’s otherwise superior study.66

Siegmund lists and discusses the earliest surviving manuscript copies of the principal Latin versions of Greek saints’ legends popular in the West, invariably identifying them by their BHL numbers.67 He dates Pas.Jul.Bas. among the texts translated into Latin in the seventh century or earlier, citing as evidence Aldhelm’s knowledge of it, and early manuscript copies such as the late seventh century “Luxeuil Lectionary” and some early legendsaries (anthologies of hagiographic texts for liturgical or devotional reading) such as Munich, Bayerisches Staatsbibliothek 3514 and 4554 (early and late eighth century, respectively).68 Today, in certain instances, Siegmund’s references to legendsaries can be supplemented from Cross’s work on the hagiographic sources of the ninth-century Old English Martyrology.69 For example, Cross mentions unpublished early recensions of Pas.Jul.Bas. in legendsaries of the ninth and tenth centuries in the Vatican and in Montpellier.70 The legendsaries in general are discussed by Philippart in a volume of the Typologie series, with a table of the oldest (seventh- and eighth-century) legendsaries and much valuable information about hagiographic texts of various kinds.71

Manuscripts such as those cited by Siegmund and Cross, and the modern editions based on them, are, compared to the early printed editions, potentially more valuable witnesses to the recensions of Pas.Jul.Bas. current during the Anglo-Saxon period. But the earliest manuscripts are rarely of English provenance. It is possible that an early manuscript from outside England could be very similar to the recension used by Ælfric himself, because, as is well known, the tenth-century revival of monastic culture and Latinity in England was strongly influenced from abroad and manuscript books were brought from the continent in significant numbers.72 But it seems only logical that manuscripts of demonstrably English provenance, if they exist, are likely to take us closest to the sources of the Anglo-Saxon hagiographers. Unfortunately, the Bollandists did not prepare a Latin hagiographic catalogue to the
English libraries, and the only major survey of hagiographic manuscripts in British libraries, that of Sir Thomas Duffus Hardy, covers texts about British saints and British history only (see later). The new reference work in progress, Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture, will go some of the way to compensating for the lack of a Bollandist-type catalogue. Helmut Gneuss’s published list of manuscripts extant from Anglo-Saxon England is one of the project’s more important bases and a necessary reference point for any research involving Anglo-Saxon manuscript sources.

With regard to Ælfric’s hagiographic sources, however, an unpublished Oxford dissertation by Patrick Zettel has drawn attention to a mid-eleventh century English legendary, the so-called Cotton-Corpus legendary, which seems very similar, if not identical, to the collection of hagiographic texts that Ælfric drew on for the non-English saints’ legends included in Catholic Homilies and Lives of Saints. In the case of Julian and Basilissa, for example, Zettel’s textual analysis of parallels between ÆLS 4 and several Latin recensions strongly suggests that the text of Pas.Jul.Bas. in BL Cotton Nero E. i is closely related to Ælfric’s source. The Cotton text, which according to Zettel is of the same type as BHL 4532, shares with the Old English several detailed divergences from the printed versions of BHL 4529, including occasional errors. Especially significant, however, is the fact that the Cotton text of Pas.Jul.Bas., like ÆLS 4, is considerably abbreviated in comparison with BHL 4529. Whereas Anglo-Saxonists have normally credited Ælfric himself with reducing and simplifying the legend (ÆLS 4 is half as long as BHL 4529), some of the detailed work of editing and abbreviation (including the omission of some potentially sensitive material on the asexuality of monks and nuns) had already been done for him by the nameless scribes responsible for the transmission of Ælfric’s source text. Even though the Cotton manuscript is a half-century or more later than Ælfric’s time, it appears to derive from a collection of saints’ lives, a legendary in effect, in use in late tenth-century England, which in turn derived from a late ninth-century continental collection.

Zettel’s work implies that Ælfric’s “interpretation” of a text such as Pas.Jul.Bas. is not as easily isolated as previous critics have assumed. To place his hagiographic achievement in perspective, it must be viewed as part of a larger process of textual transcription, redaction, and transmission. We need to find out as much as possible about the Anglo-Saxons’ own Latin recensions of the legends before we can approach the vernacular versions with critical confidence. The manuscript sources for this are few enough, but until Zettel’s work began to attract attention they had been all but ignored. In addition to the major collection known as the Cotton-Corpus legendary, with its later affiliates, three manuscripts in particular are worthy of note and, to the best of my knowledge, have been little studied for their possible
relevance to the extant Old English prose saints’ lives, except by Cross in his work on the Old English *Martyrology*\(^3\): London, BL Harley 3020 (late tenth century, Christ Church, Canterbury\(^80\)), Paris BN Lat. 5574, ff. 1–39 (possibly Mercian, early tenth century\(^81\)), BN Lat. 10861 (early ninth century, Christ Church, Canterbury\(^82\)). The hagiographic texts in these manuscripts are identified by saints’ names in the final section of this chapter.

**Resources for Studying the Sources of Old English Prose Saints’ Lives: Native English Saints**

Although foreign saints, from continental Europe and Eastern Christendom, make up the majority of those whose legends were rendered into Old English prose, several vernacular lives of native or insular saints have been preserved. As our initial list of texts indicates, Ælfric composed narrative accounts of six native saints: Alban, Æthelthryth, Cuthbert, Edmund, Oswald, and Swithun, along with Gregory the Great, a sort of honorary Englishman by virtue of his having directed the mission of St. Augustine of Canterbury.\(^83\) Ælfric also recounted substantial portions of the visions experienced by the Irish *peregrinus* St. Fursey in East Anglia. Anonymous accounts, or fragments of them, are extant for Augustine, Chad, Guthlac, Mildred, Neot, Paulinus, and possibly Sexburga. Short accounts of some of these and of other native saints (mainly Northumbrian) are included in the Old English *Martyrology*\(^84\).

This is all that has survived from what was probably a larger corpus of vernacular prose lives of English saints. We know, for example, that underlying a twelfth-century Latin account of Æthelthryth of Ely there was an Old English life, longer and more detailed than Ælfric’s version in *Lives of Saints*, which was probably composed at Ely in the eleventh century. A life of St. Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester (1062–95), composed in Old English by Coleman of Worcester soon after Wulfstan’s death, is lost, but a Latin translation by William of Malmesbury, *BHL* 8756, survives. The recent work of David Rollason on Mildred of Thanet and that of Susan Ridyard on several other Anglo-Saxon royal saints point to the existence of other lost vernacular and/or Latin lives of native saints, demonstrating the value of studying the post-Conquest manuscripts for literary evidence of the pre-Conquest saints’ cults and the interesting connections and contrasts between the two periods.\(^85\)

The Anglo-Saxons of the tenth and eleventh centuries do not appear to have composed new Latin lives of non-English saints (such as the twelfth century Anglo-Latin poems on the desert saints Malchus and Paul or the martyrs Laurence and Catherine). Their efforts, and those of the foreign hagiographers who wrote in England, were concentrated rather on the native
saints of their own and earlier ages. Of these lives there is a substantial number. Unlike many of the saints whose cults reached England from the continent and the Mediterranean, and whose “legenda” are usually dismissed mainly as pious fictions, many of these vitae of native Anglo-Saxon saints are believed to be at least rooted in genuine history and local tradition, even if they are not reliable in every detail, and they have always received a good deal of attention from historians. As a result, historical scholarship on the Latin sources of native Anglo-Saxon hagiography, and on the larger corpus of Anglo-Latin lives in general, is more current and more accessible than the scholarship on many of the continental saints who chiefly occupied Ælfric and the other vernacular hagiographers. This is true both for the early Anglo-Saxon period, up to the early ninth century, and the later period, when the vernacular prose lives appear to have been composed.

For example, Bertram Colgrave’s critical editions of the Latin lives from the early period (Cuthbert, BHL 2019, 2021; Guthlac, BHL 2723; Wilfred, BHL 8889; and Gregory the Great, BHL 3637) were recently reprinted in paperback. Wallace-Hadrill’s 1988 commentary on Bede’s Ecclesiastical History (inter alia a compendium of early Anglo-Saxon saints’ lives) complements the 1969 edition and translation by Colgrave and Mynors. The two surviving hagiographic poems of the late eighth–early ninth century by Alcuin (whose Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae includes a virtual life of King Oswald martyr) and Æthelwulf (De Abbatibus) are now accessible in modern critical editions. The anonymous life of Ceolfrid, BHL 1726, and Bede’s metrical life of Cuthbert, BHL 2020, are the subjects of important new essays, the latter in a major commemorative collection on Cuthbert’s history, cult, and memorials. Bede’s apparently lost recension of the passio of St. Anastasius, a Persian martyr venerated in Rome from the seventh century, has now been identified as one of the extant versions, BHL 408.

New editions and translations of the Latin lives of the later Anglo-Saxon saints have either appeared within the recent past or are forthcoming (as cited and noted by Keynes in his 1987 bibliography discussed later): Æthelwold, BHL 2646–47 (by Ælfric and Wulfstan of Winchester); Dunstan, BHL 2342–43 (by B and Adelard); Edward martyr, BHL 2418 (anonymous passio); Edmund martyr, BHL 2392 (the passio by Abbo of Fleury); Oswald of York, BHL 6374 (the life now credited to Byrhtferth of Ramsey); Swithun, BHL 7944–45 (by Lantfred). Æthelwold and Dunstan are the subjects of recent major collections of essays.

Studies and editions of texts from this later period that are not listed by Keynes concern the memorials of more shadowy saints from earlier periods or learnedly poetic versions of existing prose texts: Æthelred and Æthelbert, BHL 2643 (late tenth century passio preserved in the “Simeon of Durham”
Historia Regum and attributed by Michael Lapidge to Byrhtferth of Ramsey; Ecghwine, BHL 2432 (vita by Byrhtferth); Grimbald (BHL Nov. Suppl., p. 407: vita preserved in a thirteenth-century breviary); Indract, BHL 4271 (not William of Malmesbury’s but more probably tenth–eleventh century); Kenelm, BHL 4641m (passio); Neot, BHL 6052 (vita prima); Rumwold, BHL 7285 (vita); Swithun, BHL 7947 (miracula in verse, by Wulfstan of Winchester); Wilfred, BHL 8891 (vita in verse, by Frithegod).94

Although there is no standard study of or detailed guide to Anglo-Saxon hagiography as such, several books, complementary in approach, offer help. Wolpers’s Die Englische Heiligenlegenden, purely literary in approach (and now somewhat old fashioned in its formgeschichtlich focus), deals selectively with both Latin and vernacular texts and their relationships. The pertinent chapters of Gransden’s Historical Writing provide a detailed survey of major and minor Latin texts and contexts, but from a purely historical perspective. Also valuable for its succinct but thorough coverage of the chief hagiographies is Lapidge’s broad survey of Anglo-Latin literature as a whole in the new edition of Stanley Greenfield’s history of Old English literature.95

Thanks to the work of these scholars, and to the appearance of excellent special bibliographies on Anglo-Saxon historical materials, there is no need here for a detailed consideration of the native English saints and their sources. The bibliographies of Anglo-Saxon history by Rosenthal and Keynes are valuable updates of (and introductory alternatives to) the relevant portions of the more comprehensive older bibliographies of Graves on English history and Bonser on Celtic and Anglo-Saxon. Celtic-Latin sources are the subject of a recent bibliography by Lapidge and Richard Sharpe.96 The Keynes bibliography, which costs a pittance, is explicitly intended as an introductory bibliography, and as such constitutes a detailed guide to the themes and periods of Anglo-Saxon history, culture, and their written sources. Particularly relevant to hagiographic study are the general sections “Royal Biography,” “Hagiography,” “Local Histories,” and “Manuscripts,” but there is little that one can afford to ignore in the sections devoted to the chronologically arranged topics in the rest of the book. In Rosenthal’s bibliography the section “Ecclesiastical History,” including “Ecclesiastical Biography,” complements the hagiographic and ecclesiastical sections of Keynes but reaches further into the secondary scholarship.

A recent book by Rollason,97 surveying the cults of Anglo-Saxon saints as a whole, provides the essential historical background to any future study of individual texts, Latin or vernacular. This is both a highly informative and judicious historical survey of the saints’ cults, and a rich and thoughtful study of their liturgical, social, and political contexts, against the background of continental saints’ cults and hagiography. Ridyard’s detailed monograph,98 on West Saxon and East Anglian royal saints, is a more focused, more textually
oriented study of a small group of saints and their literary memorials (including King Edmund, Æthelthryth, and Sexburga), which emphasizes, like Rollason, the role of the saints’ cults as instruments of policy, deeply involved with the activities of elite groups in English society.\textsuperscript{59}

Despite this copious and growing body of historical and textual scholarship on native Anglo-Saxon hagiography, there is still no comprehensive listing of the texts and manuscripts to compare with the Plan’s list of vernacular works (see the first section of this chapter) or the list of Celtic saints’ lives in Lapidge and Sharpe. Something like such a list will emerge from the complete version of Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture. As mentioned earlier, the Bollandists did not catalogue the Latin hagiographic manuscripts of English libraries. The only major work of reference that remotely resembles a Wegweiser to English hagiography is Hardy’s sprawling and outdated Descriptive Catalogue in the Rolls Series.\textsuperscript{100} Its notices of unpublished manuscripts are cited frequently in BHL and it is still useful in the early stages of a project in English hagiography, particularly for lists of manuscripts of a specific work that are in major British libraries and for early editions, but its coverage of continental libraries is erratic, and Hardy, working in the mid-nineteenth century, naturally missed many manuscripts in British libraries that were not yet properly catalogued. Occasionally, he missed a work or saint altogether; for example, King Oswald of Northumberland, one of the heroes of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History, subject of a separate prose life by Ælfric (see the first section) and of several Latin lives by hagiographers on the continent, where Oswald’s cult flourished throughout the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{101}

List of Latin Manuscripts of English Provenance, up to 1100,
Containing Hagiographic Texts

Omitted here are manuscripts containing only collective hagiographies such as Bede’s Ecclesiastical History, Aldhelm’s De Virginitate (prose or verse), Gregory the Great’s Dialogues or Prudentius’s Peristephanon. Marian texts are also excluded. Manuscripts marked with ? in parentheses are either rather late to be considered Anglo-Saxon (although of possible importance for Anglo-Saxon studies) or are not definitely of Anglo-Saxon provenance or quondam ownership. After each manuscript’s catalogue number (italicized), the lives it contains are listed by saints’ names in the square brackets, with any known authors in parentheses. For reasons of space and eyestrain, contents of some of the larger MSS (e.g. Cotton-Corpus legendary) are not detailed here, but the reader is referred to appropriate printed catalogues.
Arras. Bibliothèque Municipale 1029 [Cuthbert (Anon.), Dunstan ("B"), Filibert, Guthlac (Felix)].
Avanches. Bibliothèque Municipale 29 [Martin (Sulpicius, et al.)].
Boulogne. Bibliothèque Municipale 106 [Aichard, Bavo, Filibert, Guthlac (Felix), Walaric].
Brussels. Bibliothèque Royale 9850–52 [Vitae Patrum].
Copenhagen. Kongelige Bibliotek G.K.S. 1588 [Edmund (Abbo)], 2034 [Cuthbert (Bede, metr.)].
Dublin. Trinity College 174 (?) [Achatus (Anastasius), Afra, Anmalberga, Andrew (Gregory of Tours et al.), Balthildis, Barnabas, Crispina, Cyprian, Didimus and Theodora, Euphemia and soc., Euphrasius, Giles (Fulbert), Guthlac (Felix), Julian of Le Mans, Julian and Basilissa, Leonard, Lucy of Rome, Luke (Paul the Deacon), Maccabees (Gaudentius), Nicholas (John of Bari), Paternus (Fortunatus), Rufinus and Valerus (Pascharius R.), Servatius (Radbod), Spes and sor., Stephen (Augustine, et al.), Thecla, Theodota and fil., Victor and Corona, Vincent (Augustine, anon.)].
Durham. Cathedral Library A.III 29 [Benedict (Odo)].
Edinburgh. Advocates Library 18.7.8 [Lawrence].
Exeter. Cathedral Library FMS/3 [Basil].
Hereford. Cathedral Library O.6.xi [Martin (Sulpicius), Maur], P.2.v. [John Almoner, Margaret, Mary Magd., Nicholas (John the Deacon), Vit. patr.].
Leningrad. Public Library O. v. XIV.1 [Wilfred (Frithegod, metr.)], Q. v. XIV.1 [Felix of Nola (Paulinus)].

Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek 22053 (?); _Finding of the Cross_.

New York. Pierpont Morgan Library, 926 (?); _Alban_ (lections, from Bede), Alexius, Dunstan (Adelard), John Almoner.

Orléans, Bibliothèque Municipale 342/290 [Alexis, Anastasius, Athanasius, Exaltation of the Cross, Judas Quiriacus, Nicholas (John the Deacon), Thecla].

Oxford. Bodleian Library: _Auctarium F.2.14_ [Swithun (Wulfstan, metr.)]; _Bodley_ 109 [Cuthbert (Bede, pr. and metr.)], 163 [De abbatibus (Æthelwulf), Oswald (lections)], 381 [Gregory (John the D.)], 535 [Denis, Machutus (Bili), Mary Magd., Neot], 596 (?), _Cuthbert_ (Bede, pr. and metr.), Julian of Le Mans]; _Digby_ 175 (?); _Cuthbert_ (Bede, pr. and metr.), Oswald, Aidan]; e _Museo_ 6 [Augustine of Hippo (Possidius)]; _Jesus College_ 37 [Gregory (John the D.)]; _Trinity College_ 4 [Maurice and soc.].

Paris. Bibliothèque Nationale, _Lat. 1771_ (?); _Ambrose_ (Paulinus), 2769 (?); _Finding of the Cross_; 2825 [Cuthbert (Bede, metr.)], 5774 [Christopher, Finding of the Cross, Exaltation, Juliana, Margaret], 8431 (ff. 21–48) [Wilfred (Frithegod, metr.)], 10861 [Afra, Agatha, Agnes, Cecilia, Cyprian, Cosmas and Damian, Erasmus, Eulalia, Euphemia, Felix of Thibiuca, Gallicanus and John and Paul, Gervase and Protausius, James the Great, Juliana, Philip, Sebasteni (= Forty Martyrs), Sebastian, Sympronius and companions (= Four Crowned Ones), Vincent].

Rome. Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apost. Vaticana: _Pal. Lat. 235_ [Felix of Nola (Paulinus)], _Reg. Lat._ 204 [Cuthbert (Bede, metr.)], 489 [Brice, Martin (Sulpicius)], 566 [Swithun (Lantfred)].
Rouen. 1385 [Swithun (Lantfred)].
St. Gall. Stadtsbibliothek 337 [Dunstan (“B”)].
Worcester: Cathedral Library F. 48 [Hilarion (Jerome), Paul Hermit (Jerome), Vitae Patrum (Rufinus et al.)], F. 94 [Benedict (Odo)].

Note that this is not a complete list; some catalogues remain to be checked.

Notes

1. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey, et al., Dictionary of Old English (Toronto, 1986–).


3. Roberta Frank and Angus Cameron, A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English, Toronto Old English Series, 2 (Toronto and Buffalo, 1973), pp. 25–306. For an explanation of Plan’s numbering system, see the second section of text.


12. Ibid., p. 85.


