

# PARALLEL *LIVES*

Alcuin of York and Thiofrid of Echternach  
on Willibrord, Sanctity and Relics

# PARALLELE *LEVENS*

Alkwin van York en Thiofried van Echternach  
over Willibrord, heiligheid en relieken

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Voor Gabi



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## Introduction

### Points of departure

Every year, on Whit Tuesday, thousands of people gather in Echternach, on the border of Luxembourg and Germany, to partake in a dancing procession. Preceded by the clergy and their attendants in full liturgical attire, accompanied by musicians, participants pass through the town and into the local parish church, the former abbey church of Echternach, either walking or performing the characteristic dance. In the church, the procession enters the crypt, and passes the sarcophagus that contains the relics of the founder of the church and the patron of the town, Saint Willibrord.

The dancing procession of Echternach seems like a tradition harking back centuries, an impression seemingly confirmed by UNESCO's description of the procession on its list of intangible cultural heritage.<sup>1</sup> But although the tradition is indeed old, it is not early medieval, nor did it remain unchanged over time. A procession in Echternach on Whit Tuesday was first recorded by the early twelfth century.<sup>2</sup> Dancing is first recorded in the sixteenth century, and the route of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/hopping-procession-of-echternach-00392>, consulted March 15, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24. Cf. also KYLL 1964.

the procession changed over time. In the later eighteenth century, the dancing procession was banned altogether, and ceased to be held for almost two decades until it was revived in 1802.<sup>3</sup> The present appearance of the procession is as much a product of the last two centuries as it is a relic from the Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup>

The place where Willibrord's relics, the devotional focus of the procession, were kept did not remain unchanged either.<sup>5</sup> In the eighth century Willibrord's relics were elevated from a partially submerged grave behind the altar to a grave above the floor, a *Hochgrab*, attached to the altar.<sup>6</sup> When a new church was built Willibrord's relics were moved again, and in 1031, during the dedication of the third abbey church, Willibrord's remains were moved once more, now to the site of the new main altar in the nave of the church.<sup>7</sup> In 1498 they were moved again, to a new *Hochgrab*.<sup>8</sup> There they remained until 1794, when soldiers of the revolutionary French army disturbed the grave.<sup>9</sup> Local clerics and lay people collected parts of Willibrord's remains, and kept them in their private homes. During the following century, some of these relics were assembled by a succession of parish priests of Echternach, and kept in the *Pfarrkirche*, the old parish church. From there they returned to the abbey church as a new shrine was installed in front of the altar, in 1906. It was not before 1938 that the relics were placed in the purpose-built extension of the medieval crypt where they are now.<sup>10</sup> The present setting of the focal point of the dancing procession is therefore no more than eighty years old.

Looking at what has been written on the subject so far, there often seems to be the implicit idea that medieval thought on sanctity was static. In this dissertation, however, I argue that, like the dancing procession and the location of Willibrord's relics, ideas underlying saints' cults and devotion to relics changed, depending on the situation of medieval thinkers and the theological influences that shaped them. I do so by studying the thought of two medieval authors on sanctity and specifically on a type of holy objects known as relics, and placing these ideas into their historical context.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. KIESEL 1969, pp. 86-88.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. REUTER 1958, p. 27; SCHROEDER 1986 and 1989; TRAUFFLER 2000, and literature there.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. for the following sections 1.1 and 4.1.

<sup>6</sup> KRIER 1996; SCHROEDER & TRAUFFLER 1996, pp. 36-37; STAUD & REUTER 1952, pp. 17-18. Cf. ANGENENDT 1994b, pp. 225-228 and CROOK 2000, pp. 68-75 on this trend.

<sup>7</sup> CÜPPERS 1981, p. 149; NAMUR 1866, p. 139.

<sup>8</sup> CÜPPERS 1981, p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> GOETZINGER 1940, p. 184; KIESEL 1969, pp. 91-93; SEILER 1999, p. 286.

<sup>10</sup> DUMONT 1958, p. 135; GOETZINGER 1940, pp. 206-210; SPANG 1965. Cf. CÜPPERS 1975, pp. 332-333 (228-229).

This research is the product of a larger research project, *Mind over Matter, debates about relics as sacred objects*, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). That project, led by Janneke Raaijmakers, evaluates debates about and intellectual reflections on the nature and purposes of relics between c. 350 and c. 1150 AD, debates that often also involved other devotional objects, such as icons and the Eucharist.<sup>11</sup> One of the questions that the VIDI-project *Mind over Matter* addresses is whether opposition to relics in the period before the Reformation was only a matter of occasional outbursts of isolated individuals, who in the end caused little harm to existing practice, or whether their viewpoints were shared by larger groups. It is clear that there was debate about relics, occasionally at the very least. Janneke Raaijmakers' research includes studies of the debates between Vigilantius of Callagurris and Jerome in the fifth century,<sup>12</sup> and between Claudius of Turin and Dungal and Jonas of Orléans in the ninth century.<sup>13</sup> Amongst later debates there is the conflict between Guibert of Nogent and the monks of Soissons in the twelfth century.<sup>14</sup> These debates have generally been treated as limited in extent, occasional, and hardly relevant to the general picture.<sup>15</sup> The question is whether this assumption is correct. At first glance such instances seem isolated, but were they? And if so, did people only occasionally reflect on the nature and function of relics?

Underlying this project is the hypothesis that medieval thinkers had to define the way in which the divine interacted with the material world in relics. The project members aim to find out which issues were controversial, for example whether people thought God was actually present in the relics of his saints, or whether they saw relics as signs of grace. This is new ground in medieval studies: the study of thought on relics in the early medieval West is still in its infancy. Studies on debates about relics have been undertaken, but mostly for the Late Antique period, or for the Byzantine world, not for the micro-Christendoms of early medieval Latin Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

For a long time, relics were not studied intensively at all; Heinrich Fichtenau began his article on the subject of medieval relic veneration by noting a 'certain unease' (*gewisses Unbehagen*) among historians to study the subject.<sup>17</sup> Up to relatively recently there were scholars who explicitly or

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<sup>11</sup> cf. the research proposal: Janneke Raaijmakers: *Mind over matter. Debates about relics as sacred objects, c. 350 - c. 1150*.

<sup>12</sup> I base myself on a paper by Janneke Raaijmakers, 'Debating relic cults in Late Antiquity: Vigilantius of Calagurris, Victricius of Rouen and Paulinus of Nola', given at a workshop on religious materiality, Utrecht, 30 January 2015.

<sup>13</sup> APPEBLY 1992; Van BANNING 1997; GANZ 1995, pp. 775-777; NOBLE 2009, pp. 303-312; RAAIJMAKERS 2017.

<sup>14</sup> RUBENSTEIN 2002.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. CROOK 2000, pp. 8-9; GEARY 1986, p. 176, BARTLETT 2013, pp. 587-591.

<sup>16</sup> Byzantinists have studied thought about relics far more extensively. Cf. e.g., CONSTAS 2002, esp. Pp. 273-278 and idem 2003, pp. 267-268; DAL SANTO 2012, pp. 290-293.

<sup>17</sup> FICHTENAU 1952, p. 62. Cf. GUTH 1970, pp. 1-6.

implicitly assumed that in the early Middle Ages, Christianity was the viewpoint of a minuscule élite while the majority of the populace lived in a quasi-magic world of thinly veiled paganism.<sup>18</sup> Relics were often seen as part of this ‘popular religion’.<sup>19</sup> Although scholars like Peter Brown have shown how ideas about relics were in fact shared by the Fathers of the Church, the top echelon of the ecclesiastic élite, the fact that scholars still used this framework relatively recently shows that it is still important to notice this debate, especially as this notion of popular religion (or ‘superstition’) versus élite (or ‘official’) religion has also plagued studies of miracles.<sup>20</sup>

Within this larger framework, and with these historiographical themes in mind, I have studied two medieval intellectuals and their writings on relics. Debate about relics presupposes thought about relics, and different strands of thought existing simultaneously. If both authors can be shown to have ideas about what relics were and how they worked, and if these ideas differed from one another, but were both shared by larger collectives than just the single author, this would mean that at least in some cases the definition of relics and sanctity in general was open to debate, providing a backdrop for the supposedly isolated instances of debates about relics mentioned earlier. At least in two ways I think I can make a case for such an intellectual infrastructure for debate; in ninth-century hagiography we can see the significance of relics and the proper use of relics debated by (near-)contemporaries, and in Thiofrid’s response to Alcuin’s hagiography we can see new attempts to define sanctity and explain the function of relics.

Just as there was thought on relics, the same is true for sanctity in general as well. We know that authors of some saints’ lives used their writings as intellectual ammunition in contemporary ecclesio-political debates,<sup>21</sup> and that cults adapted to changing needs, while related fields, such as the history of ideas about the resurrection of the body in the Middle Ages,<sup>22</sup> the history of thought on the cross,<sup>23</sup> and the Eucharist<sup>24</sup> have been studied for various medieval perceptions of the subject in question. Why then not likewise study thought about relics? Yet when looking at what historiography there is, we are confronted by an historiographical assumption of stasis.

This is even true for the study of sanctity in general. Despite centuries of study of saints’ lives, little research has been done on the theology of sanctity in the earlier Middle Ages. Scholars

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<sup>18</sup> As pointed out by Van ENGEN 1986, p. 529; De JONG 1998b, pp. 261-264, also 269; KÜNZEL 1992, pp. 1056-1057.

<sup>19</sup> Implicitly in RENDTEL 1985, pp. 60-61, explicitly in MORRIS 1972 and GEARY 1986, e.g. pp. 30-34.

<sup>20</sup> Esp. BROWN 1981, pp. 13-22. On Brown’s contribution, cf. Van EGMOND 2001, p. 11. Cf. for criticism of the official-popular dichotomy HAARLÄNDER 1994, pp. 119-120 and SMITH 1990, pp. 309-311.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. HEYDEMANN 2011, esp. p. 199.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. APPLEBY 2005, pp. 15-18; BYNUM 1991 and 1995; WILLIAMS 1999.

<sup>23</sup> CHAZELLE 1985 and 2001.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. MACY 1984; De LUBAC 1949; PHELAN 2010b; RUBIN 1991.

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have focussed on what cults of saints tell us about social values and on the ecclesio-political debates in which their authors were involved, and within which they used their writings as ideological statements. Peter Brown, Nicole Hermann-Mascard, and František Graus, and more recently scholars like Ian Wood, Anne-Marie Helvétius, and Julia Smith, have studied the interplay between speaking about saints and speaking about society in the first millennium and the way in which authors of saints' lives used the person of the saint, or the saint's adversaries, to present a picture of ideal or villainous behaviour.<sup>25</sup>

Other historians, especially of the later Middle Ages, have studied the development of long-term trends in ideas about who was considered holy in medieval society. They have indicated that differences between various local cults were the result of different social circumstances. In addition they have shown that changes in these circumstances were prone to lead to favouring the cult of new saints, or change the persona of existing saints to appeal to new values. Examples of such changes are the rebranding of Saint Cuthbert as a protector of sailors and traders in Northern England in the twelfth century, or the rise of the *Adelsheilige* Saint Odulphus as a patron saint of flood control measures in the Northern Low Countries after centuries in which he had been venerated primarily as a patron of minsters of secular canons.<sup>26</sup>

There is, therefore, an (often implicit) view of medieval thought on sanctity and relics as a static phenomenon, and, by contrast, a view of saints' cults as dynamic. While studies of individual saints' cults and groups of saints' cults, ecclesio-political and socio-cultic contexts of sanctity, as well as cultic practices abound, the history of the concept of sanctity remains neglected. Individual cults have received a good deal of attention, the history of what people at various points in time considered to be the general principles of sanctity is yet to be undertaken seriously. In this respect sanctity stands out as a field of which the theological development has not been explored, while related fields of theological reflection have. The question is whether ideas about sanctity and relics at the interface of social thought, political polemic, practices of veneration, and theology remained static, and, if not, what dynamics we can see at work.

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<sup>25</sup> E.g. BROWN 1981, 1982a (on which CAMERON 1999, ROUSSEAU 1999, and especially HAYWARD 1999, pp. 123-131) and 1982b; HERMANN-MASCARD 1975; GRAUS 1965 and 1990; WOOD 2001; HELVÉTIUS 1993; SMITH 1994, 1995b and 2003. Cf. also historiographical overviews, e.g. SMITH 1992; GEARY 1994a and BOSWORTH 2010, pp. 1055-1056.

<sup>26</sup> On local cults, cf. e.g. BLAIR 2002; THACKER 2002a and b. Diachronic changes have often been studied with quantitative methods, e.g. MURRAY 1978; VAUCHEZ 1981; WEINSTEIN & BELL 1982. Cf. also the sociological approach to miracle stories, developed in SIGAL 1985. For Cuthbert I base myself on Christiania Whitehead's paper 'Cuthbertine Hermits and North Sea Merchant Traders', delivered at the International Medieval Conference, Leeds, 6 July 2015. For Odulphus on my own, as yet unpublished, research.

This is no new observation. Reviewing *Sanctus*, Delehaye's study on late antique (and medieval) sanctity, Marc Bloch remarked: 'Basically, what Father Delehaye brings us is a contribution to that history of holiness in the Church which, if ever there were a writer bold enough to attempt it, a scholar and a psychologist great enough to realize it, will no doubt be a book almost without equal in the prospects it will open on the human mind. We are at present only doing the preparatory work.'<sup>27</sup> This remark, written after three centuries of preparatory work by Delehaye and the other Bollandists, still holds true almost a century later, notwithstanding the advent of the new study of saints' lives as sources for a history of ideas and mentalities, and given Bloch's doubts it may never be written. The 'unparalleled prospects on the human mind' remain to be opened up.

### Research questions and method

Rather than study only the ecclesio-political or social aspects of sanctity in isolation, I want to provide a theological perspective, integrating the ecclesio-political, cultic, and social and make a start filling the gap in our knowledge that was noted by Bloch. In so doing I aim to show the interrelation between theological definitions of sanctity and relics on the one hand, and political and sociological aspects on the other. The underlying assumption is that the act of describing a saint requires a hagiographer to express his beliefs about sanctity and its relation with the divine, mankind, society and the church. These beliefs and the way in which they are put into words are held to have been fed by traditions which the authors in question considered authoritative, but which nonetheless could be modified to suit the author's needs.

I have applied this approach to a study of two intellectuals, Alcuin of York and Thiofrid of Echternach, who wrote about one saint, Willibrord. I argue that the texts written as part of the promotion of Willibrord's cult reflect a 'theology of relics', defined in large part by an underlying 'theology of sanctity'. This is not theology in the formal sense of dogma. Early medieval thinkers neither received an authoritative dogma about saints and relics from Late Antiquity, nor did they ever conceive such a dogma themselves.<sup>28</sup> Even so, authors involved in the cult did express their own views about what relics and saints were, and how they interacted with the divine, which

<sup>27</sup> BLOCH 1929, p. 89: '*Au fond, ce que P. Delehaye nous apporte, c'est une contribution à cette histoire de sainteté dans l'Église qui, s'il se trouve jamais un écrivain assez hardi pour la tenter, assez grand érudit et assez grand psychologue pour la réaliser, sera, n'en doutons pas, un livre presque sans égal dans les vues qu'il nous ouvrira sur l'esprit humain. Nous n'en sommes pour l'instant qu'aux travaux préparatoires.*' Cf. POULIN 1975, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> SMITH 2015, p. 50, contrary to assertions by scholars such as MEYER 1950, p. 56, and (implicitly) GOODICH 2007.

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constitutes theology in a looser sense of the word. Through studying their work carefully, paying close attention to their vocabulary and use of older sources, I aim to reconstruct their relic theology.

This is also why I have called this dissertation *Parallel Lives*, referring to the tradition of works that compare the lives of two historical figures to learn something about the archetype they embody. The founder of this tradition, Plutarch, for example compared Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great as examples of great generals, and Numa Pompilius and Lycurgus as great legislators. The tradition persists until this day, given Alan Bullock's double biography of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin as examples of modern, totalitarian dictators called *Parallel Lives*.<sup>29</sup> My take on this tradition is somewhat different, however, as I want to study the ideas about sanctity of two men by studying the *vitae* they wrote. That is: I study two biographers through their writings, not two putatively comparable historical figures through their deeds. Traditionally, the authors of 'parallel lives' look for archetypes; I do so too, but the archetypes I look for are textual constructs which differ from author to author. I therefore play with the tradition of parallel lives, which is also why I chose to italicize *Lives*, indicating that I study texts, rather than practice biography. Like Plutarch and his imitators, however, I do intend to learn something from the comparison.<sup>30</sup>

As will be shown in the following chapters, it is not only the period in which the saint lived that defined the ideas about his sacred state. The way in which the two *vitae* discussed here describe the historical figure of Willibrord says a lot about the circumstances of their authors. The first author, Alcuin of York (c. 735 - 804), is a household name to early medievalists, as he was prominently involved in the Carolingian 'renovation' – the effort to restore the church by improving educational and moral standards, sponsored by Charlemagne and his successors – and in practical-political debates about mission and the organization of the church at the Carolingian court. Strange though it may seem given the extensive attention paid to Alcuin by scholars in the past, Alcuin's ideas about sanctity have not been studied yet. What I hope to show here is that there is enough evidence in Alcuin's writings to paint a picture of his ideas about sanctity and relics, and that by overlooking the subject of sanctity, a crucial element in Alcuin's thinking has been missed.

The second author studied here, Thiofrid, abbot of Echternach (c. 1035 - 1110), is best known to scholars of relics and their veneration on account of his *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, written between 1102 and 1104, a treatise about the nature of saints, their bodies and external attachments, and their proper veneration. This is one of the few works that address the general principles of the

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<sup>29</sup> BULLOCK 1992.

<sup>30</sup> On Plutarch cf. JACOBS 2018.

veneration of saints and relics head-on, together with the works of Victricius of Rouen at the turn of the fourth century, and Guibert of Nogent around 1125.<sup>31</sup>

What medieval scholars thought about sanctity, not from a sociological or political perspective, but theologically, has rarely been explored, in contrast to the patristic age or the later Middle Ages, and it is therefore from Late Antiquity that I draw examples for my methodology, for example in the works of Peter Brown and Rowan Williams. Brown's study on the then newly-discovered Mainz sermons of Augustine argued that Augustine introduced a new theological frame for the cult of saints. The African Father presented saints as examples, rather than as elevated heroes of the Church, as had previously been the case. According to Brown this was an innovation that led to the development of two different visions of sanctity within the confines of the Latin Church: the imitable and the inimitable saint.<sup>32</sup> Brown's notion of Augustine as an innovator in this respect may be a bit overstated, and does not wholly do justice to Augustine's changing views of what saints and their relics could do,<sup>33</sup> but the suggestion that there could be various theologies of sanctity coexisting in different (patristic) traditions is one that should be taken into account by those studying medieval sanctity. In my opinion, Brown's suggestion of an Augustinian tradition of 'imitable saints' is also born out by my research, as this is also very much how Alcuin saw the saints.

Rowan Williams published an article on the saint's body in the works of Eusebius (on Origen) and an anonymous work on Lucian of Antioch, both from the fourth century. In it he argued that both authors presented the saint's body, and especially his chest, as 'a tangible sanctuary for the divine'. Williams then went on to show how the underlying idea of sanctity in both cases is different: in one case, the living body is the place in which God dwells and acts, in the other, God works through the liturgy, enacted in the vicinity of the saint's body.<sup>34</sup> Again, we have signs of coexisting traditions, but in this case the differences between both are far more finely drawn, and only present themselves through a careful reading. This dissertation follows Williams' lead inasmuch as it uses the same method of reading carefully in search of theological concepts, but now in medieval sources, to reveal the underlying theology of hagiographic works. The methodological implications will be explored below.

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<sup>31</sup> Thiofrid: ed. FERRARI 1996; Victricius: eds. MULDER & DEMEULENAERE 1985; Guibert: ed. HUYGENS 1993.

<sup>32</sup> BROWN 2000.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. BROWN 1967, pp. 408-418; BYNUM 1995, p. 104, n. 171; COURCELLE 1968, pp. 139-153; SAXER 1980, pp. 245-281.

<sup>34</sup> WILLIAMS 1999, p. 66.

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The examples of Brown and Williams' work on sanctity in Late Antiquity provide us both with a theoretical and a methodological starting point to use in the analysis of early medieval sources. That such examples must be imported from a different era (albeit a closely related one) has its roots not only in the relatively recent origins of scholarly interest for thought on sanctity, but also in limited attention devoted to the intellectual foundations of the concept of sanctity in the Middle Ages itself, due to the polemics about saints and their relics in the Reformation. Both reformers, who criticized the role of saints and their relics in Christian devotion, and the Council of Trent, which stressed that the essence of the Catholic devotion to the saints had not changed since the days of the Fathers, based their stance on the assumption that devotion to saints and relics had been a self-evident and constant element in catholic devotional practice – either to argue for continuation of the practice, or against it. Both also referred to patristic authorities to make their point. The Middle Ages were of little consequence in this debate, other than as a period of continuity.<sup>35</sup> This tradition of debate still forms the backdrop to much of what modern people think to know about medieval saints' cults – or at least my experience of their ideas about this subject. This is also one of the reasons why the modern academic study of sanctity relies heavily on work done on the patristic and Reformation eras.

Rather than look for universal ideas underlying the veneration of saints and relics in the earlier Middle Ages, it pays to submit various sources on saints' cults to a close reading, to find out what mattered to their authors, what kind of vocabulary and images they used when speaking about relics, and specifically what aspects of the perceived nature of sanctity and of relics they chose to highlight, and what general statements they made to indicate the status and function of saints and relics.<sup>36</sup> To add depth to such a close reading of a "Traditionsgeleitete Gesellschaft",<sup>37</sup> one must identify influences on the authors in question, especially in terms of borrowings from the Bible and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. In doing so, we can identify strands of patristic tradition which existed alongside one another, and which could be tapped into by medieval thinkers.

Looking at my sources for signs of thought on sanctity and sacred objects, I asked the following open questions. The first concerns the nature and origin of sanctity, and seeks to learn which criteria were required for a person to become a saint, according to a specific author. Within this context I have paid attention to themes such as predestination and virtues, and to events such as the saint's birth and death, as well as, in some cases, marriage, the administration of the

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. e.g. SMITH 2015, pp. 45-49 and, from a theological perspective MÜLLER 1986, pp. 28-78.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. BYNUM 1995 for a similar method; SEARLE 1995 and 2010 for my reading of nature and purpose (Searle's status and function).

<sup>37</sup> Term borrowed from EDELSTEIN 1965, p. 3.

sacraments. Another element of the same set of questions is how sanctity devolves from the saints into their relics. It is within this context that I will reflect on the importance of predestination and free will, of virtues and the relation between Heaven and Earth in the process of sanctification as perceived by the authors of my sources. The second group of questions investigates the nature and function of sanctity and relics, what powers a saint or relic is said to muster and what the relation is between the saint or the relic and mortals, faithful or unbelieving, God, other saints, and angels. What role do idiosyncratic traits of the saint play, if any? Does the power that works a miracle derive directly from God, from God through the saint, or from the saint himself without any direct involvement of the divine? What is the purpose of relics and of cultic practices in the interaction between the faithful, the saint, and possibly the divine? What constitutes proper behaviour towards a saint or a relic, and is proper behaviour socially differentiated? Did the behaviour or intention of the faithful matter at all? The third set of questions evaluates the relations between saints and their relics. Are relics conduits of the saint's presence and/or power, is the saint considered to be physically present in his relics? Do a living saint and a relic have the same nature and purpose, and are they capable of doing the same things?

The works of Alcuin and Thiofrid allow us to understand something of their theology of sanctity and relics as indicated above. To use the term 'theology' here is a conscious decision, but is used in a very specific sense. Here 'theology' is not dogma, but any attempt to describe the divine or the sacred. As such 'theology of sanctity and relics' is akin to 'thought about sanctity and relics'. Both 'thought' and 'theology' have their pros and cons. 'Theology' could imply a coherence of ideas, while 'thought' may imply conscious reflection. Neither can be said with certainty to be the case. Some ideas expressed by the same author may be internally conflicting, and some ideas could simply be the result of unconscious assumptions, e.g. through the use of certain vocabulary or authoritative texts, rather than critical reflection. When the terms 'thought' and 'theology' are used in the following, therefore, these need to be understood loosely. 'Thought' also includes the unconscious assumptions an author expresses, and 'theology' need not necessarily be coherent.

There are a few aspects of this method of research that need to be stated at the outset, which have to do with the relation between text, thought, and society. This relation is always difficult, and with a modern emphasis on originality in mind it seems especially difficult if an author draws elements of his text from another text, or refashions an existing text (*réécriture*) as both Alcuin and Thiofrid did.<sup>38</sup> In such cases a text no longer represents ideas particular to Alcuin or Thiofrid alone, but borrowed elements as well. In a tradition-based society such as early medieval Europe such

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. VEYRARD-COSME 2003b for Alcuin; FERRARI 1998 for Thiofrid.

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techniques of excerption, quotation, or paraphrase can also be a blessing in disguise. Studying what is taken from existing texts allows us to see what a medieval author thought was the authoritative viewpoint. *Réécriture* is a complication as well as an opportunity, because having two related texts and knowing which text derived from the other allows scholars to study what changes an author made to an existing narrative.<sup>39</sup> Isolating conscious modifications from the story in which they are embedded shows what mattered enough to the author of the rewritten text to change the original, and thus highlights his concerns. The fact that a story is not an original product of that author is thus of no importance in this respect: borrowing from an older source implies some form of approval, be it intentional or not; modification expresses personal interests. This is a relatively new approach to *réécriture*; the consensus is that it mainly aimed to alter the style in which a work is written but as I will show below the authors who rewrote saints' lives could also adapt the content of their stories and change the emphasis and the theology on which their reading was based.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to this first point about the difficulties and opportunities of *réécriture*, the second point to make here is that what research such as this can only explore are the ideas of one author in his immediate social-historical context. In some cases, authors are known to have been in touch with many like-minded people, and can be taken to have been what Janet Nelson termed 'organic intellectuals': men of learning with a position in society which allows them to speak for a greater group, comprising of intellectuals and non-intellectuals alike, rather than for themselves alone – thereby allowing us, as historians, to take their words as indicative of broader trends in thought.<sup>41</sup> For our purposes, it is noteworthy that one of these 'organic intellectuals' discussed by Nelson was Alcuin of York, whose contacts with the monastic world of Francia and Anglo-Saxon England and with the court of Charlemagne make him one of the most informative spokespersons of his generation.

Whether Thiofrid was an organic intellectual comparable to Alcuin remains to be seen. With ties to Trier, Mettlach, and perhaps Liège, his contacts outside Echternach were much more local than Alcuin's vast social and intellectual network.<sup>42</sup> Like Alcuin, however, Thiofrid wrote his works with an audience in mind, and his works were received by the community of Echternach. Like any medieval intellectual, moreover, he appealed to a tradition he thought was authoritative. Alcuin's and Thiofrid's opinions must have resounded in the community in which their works were read.

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<sup>39</sup> A point already made by GÉNICOT 1965, pp. 65-66, but popularized more recently under the term *réécriture*. Cf. Van UYTFANGHE 1999, p. 392.

<sup>40</sup> E.g. FERRARI 1998, pp. 129-131; VEYRARD-COSME 2003b, pp. 72-74. The notion is very old; cf. EBERT 1880, p. 23; Van der ESSEN 1923, p. 340.

<sup>41</sup> NELSON 2008, pp. 7-9.

<sup>42</sup> FERRARI 1994b.

Their thoughts, as put forward in their works for the community of Echternach, were read or heard by the monks, and the fact that these works remained read and copied, and were sometimes adapted to liturgical use implies some form of approval. All of this argues against overestimating the difference between ‘individual’ thought and ‘collective’ praxis, but even if extrapolation of ideas to a greater group of intellectuals is possible, as it is in Alcuin’s case, the ideas we find in our sources are still, by necessity, those of an (ecclesiastical) élite. The majority of society remains out of our sight, and we cannot fathom to what extent they shared the outlook of those who wrote our sources.

Taking into account the differences of genre and exigence within an oeuvre, the impact of sources on rewritten texts, and the impact of changing insights and exigences, the implicitly assumed coherence of ideas throughout the corpus of writings of an individual scholar is not without its risks.<sup>43</sup> Some scholars could, and did alter their opinions as time went on. Augustine of Hippo is a good example of this in the case of thought about relics and what they could do: late in his life, the African Father took leave of his initial reticence about miracles in the vicinity of saints’ relics, and celebrated the wonder-working power of relics in *De civitate Dei* 20, 8.<sup>44</sup> That said, however, one may as well assume coherence at the outset and then check whether this assumption holds up on closer inspection. If individual sources betray differences of outlook, one can then inquire why they do, and explain why the assumption does not work in specific cases. Although there are occasions where this will happen in this dissertation, I still believe that there is a central core of thought on saints and relics that breathes through the works of Alcuin and Thiofrid respectively.

Finally, it remains to be said that all of our evidence for the veneration of Willibrord in the period studied here points towards Echternach. As Willibrord’s foundation, Echternach maintained a special connection with the saint. Utrecht, Willibrord’s other important foundation, did not capitalize on its relation with Willibrord for much of its earlier history, and instead elaborated upon its relation with Boniface and locally venerated saints.<sup>45</sup> Within the corpus of texts from Utrecht in the earlier Middle Ages, Willibrord is only mentioned in passing, and one of the

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. on this question GARRISON 1995, pp. 43-44.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. BROWN 1967, pp. 408-418; BYNUM 1995, p. 104, n. 171; COURCELLE 1968, pp. 139-153; MOURANT 1974; SAXER 1980, pp. 245-281.

<sup>45</sup> At the moment, a good study of the saints venerated in early medieval Utrecht is lacking. I base myself on my own, as yet unpublished research.

earliest authors to mention Willibrord, Altfred, explicitly refers to Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*,<sup>46</sup> which stems from an Echternach context, indicating the second-hand nature of traditions on Willibrord in Utrecht in the early centuries of Willibrord's cult. It is also indicative of this lack of interest that Willibrord did not formally become a patron of the archbishopric of Utrecht until 1941.<sup>47</sup> Nor did Utrecht obtain relics of Willibrord before 1301.<sup>48</sup> In Echternach we have the main impresario of Willibrord's cult in the period under consideration, as well as the most significant cult site. This means that one can study Willibrord's cult in Echternach without devoting much attention to Utrecht.

### Chapter structure

Given that there are two authors at the core of this study, the dissertation itself also has a bipartite structure, with one part discussing Alcuin and his view of Willibrord, sanctity, and relics, and the other discussing Thiofrid's views on the same subjects. As the title suggests, both parts have a similar structure and run roughly parallel to one another. Each part is divided into three chapters: an introductory chapter on the *Vita Willibrordi* of each author and the cultic context in which it was produced, a second chapter which focusses on how Alcuin or Thiofrid described sanctity and what other phenomena the author considered to be closely associated with it, and a third chapter that does the same with relics. Each chapter thus builds on the preceding, and each chapter deepens an aspect of the preceding to resolve the four sets of questions outlined already.

To study the early cult in Echternach, we have various types of sources at our disposition: archaeological excavation reports, art historical studies, and charter evidence, as well as marginal notes in manuscripts.<sup>49</sup> All aid to our understanding of the gradual development of Willibrord's cult up to the time Alcuin wrote his *Vita Willibrordi*, shortly before 800. Most of chapter 1 is devoted to explaining the makeup of this text and the way in which it reflects the context in which the *Vita Willibrordi* was produced, the sources Alcuin used for his narrative, the choice for the particular form of a *Life* of the saint in both prose and verse (known as an *opus geminum*), and the question of audience of both parts of this work.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Altfred, *Vita Ludgeri* I, 4, ed. DIEKAMP 1881, pp. 8-9. The text is not from Utrecht proper, but from the abbey of Werden, but Altfred's ties with Willibrord run through Utrecht, not Echternach, whence its inclusion here in an Utrecht context.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. KIESEL 1968, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> KOK 1959, p. 273; De KRUIJF 2011, p. 55; STAAL 2000, p. 169; and the important but outdated VISSER 1933.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. below, section 1.1.

<sup>50</sup> Little work has been done on the verse book, which was once qualified as the product of *métromanie* (De GAIFFIER 1947, p. 136).

The discussion of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* in chapter 1 will lead us into the discussion of what Alcuin thought about sanctity in chapter 2. Alcuin was a prolific author of saints' lives, biblical exegesis, theological treatises, a treatise on virtues and vices, heresiology, introductions to subjects of the liberal arts, letters, and poetry. A number of these works relate to sanctity in one way or another, and a substantial part of chapter 2 is concerned with showing how these works, in all their variety, show a more or less coherent image of what sanctity is, according to Alcuin. I argue, moreover, that Alcuin's relied on his patristic reading, notably of the later works of Augustine (*De civitate Dei*, *De praedestinatione sanctorum* and others) for his ideas about sanctity. They also related to Alcuin's own societal, ecclesiological, and political preoccupations, such as his emphasis on baptismal catechesis, expressed in letters written around the time of the composition of the *Vita Willibrordi*.

In the third chapter I focus on relics, and argue that Alcuin's remarks on relics can and should be seen within his concept of what sanctity amounts to, and that Alcuin's theological preoccupations, for example with catechesis and preaching, and his desire to work within the framework of Augustine's teaching, have significant repercussions for his beliefs about the proper handling of relics, and the way in which relics may be said (not) to work miracles. An important element of this chapter is also the study of how Alcuin refers to relics. His interest in the material qualities of relics appears to be limited. What he is rather interested in, is their function within a framework of intercession.

The fourth chapter is the mirror of the first, and deals with the *Vita Willibrordi* composed by Thiofrid, abbot of Echternach, around 1104. Much of the chapter is concerned with the context Thiofrid in which wrote, and the way in which he responded to Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, which he modified and expanded into his own *Life* of the saint. Again, attention will be devoted to what we know of the cult of Willibrord in the period prior to Thiofrid's composition of his *Vita Willibrordi*, especially to the lasting importance of the saint as a focal point of monastic identity in the tenth and eleventh century, a period marked in Echternach by monastic reform. In addition to archaeological and charter evidence, we also have liturgical evidence for this period to guide us. The overall impression this contextual material gives is of increasing 'Benedictification' of monastic identity, leading to a new idea about the importance of Willibrord's monastic side and the nature of Willibrord's monasticism, as well as a different way of celebrating Willibrord's sanctity.

Chapters five and six mirror chapters two and three, and discuss Thiofrid's ideas about sanctity and relics. It will be argued that Thiofrid did more than update Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* with new miracle stories and add literary embellishment to Alcuin's text, and that he in fact supplanted Alcuin's Augustinian definition of sanctity with his own, which was primarily influenced

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by Gregory the Great and Jerome. These chapters also show that Thiofrid's new definition of Willibrord's sanctity responded to the changes in the self-perception of the monastic community, and how Thiofrid's different theological background and monastic values also led to him having different ideas about the essence of the church and the relationship between the monastic community and the outside world.

Like Alcuin, Thiofrid was the author of a substantial oeuvre. Though less extensive than Alcuin's, Thiofrid's writings include three saints' lives, two sermons, and a treatise on the nature and purpose of relics, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*.<sup>51</sup> This work and Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* are transmitted together in two manuscripts from Echternach. This treatise is unique in its form, as a medieval attempt to provide a comprehensive explanation of what relics are and how they do what they do, supported by stories of saints and miracles borrowed from various sources, mostly patristic. As in the case of Alcuin, the aim of these chapters is to show that there is internal coherence in Thiofrid's writings, and that they all show similar ideas about the nature of sanctity and the purpose of relics, founded on his reading of patristic authorities and his interpretation of the society he was a part of.

Methodologically, there is a difference between both parts of this dissertation. Alcuin's oeuvre is extensive, but never addresses the question of what a relic is and what it can do head-on. These chapters therefore treat isolated remarks about relics, and try to reconstruct the coherence between them. This is a proven method in studies on Alcuin, though not without its critics, who argue that such methods run the risk of cherry picking statements of Alcuin's out of context, a risk that can only be overcome by systematically devoting attention to that context.<sup>52</sup> The chapters on Thiofrid, however, are based on sources that were aimed to provide an in-depth, coherent explanation of what a relic was. In these chapters, I did not have to infer from isolated remarks, but could draw on Thiofrid's theology more directly. Given Thiofrid's ornate style and complex theological reasoning, however, this is not to say that extraction of Thiofrid's theology from his works is a comparatively straightforward affair.

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<sup>51</sup> FERRARI (ed.) 1996; MANITIUS 1931, pp. 93-96.

<sup>52</sup> CHASE 1981 on Wallach's use of the method is a good example of this criticism.



## PART I. ALCUIN



## 1. Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*

### 1.1. Willibrord's Cult before Alcuin

The oldest source mentioning either Echternach or Willibrord is a charter that records the donation of a monastery in Echternach to Willibrord by Irmina, abbess of Oeren, in 697 or 698.<sup>1</sup> When that charter was issued, however, Willibrord was still alive and not yet considered a saint, and the abbey was dedicated 'in the name of the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, the apostles Peter and Paul and the other saints'.<sup>2</sup> The development of Willibrord's cult in Echternach was a gradual process, and we can only speak with certainty of a fully developed cult for Willibrord around 800, around the time when Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* provided an authoritative report of Willibrord's sanctity. The development of cult prior to that date is the backdrop for Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, and provides us with the subject of this section. I argue that archaeology, charter evidence, and the study of marginal notes in early Echternach manuscripts allow us to see how the early cult of Willibrord in Echternach developed.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 3, pp. 17-20. Cf. for Irmina WAMPACH 1928; WERNER 1982; discussion of the latter in SCHROEDER 1983, pp. 469-474.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, p. 19: (...) *in nomine sanctę virginis Marię, genitricis Domini nostri Ihesu Christi, seu et beatissimorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli vel ceterorum sanctorum* (...).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. for the following SCHROEDER 1993, pp. 543-547; SCHROEDER & TRAUFLER 1996.

To study the early stages of Willibrord's cult is more complicated than it might seem. We generally know very little about cultic practices in the devotion to particular saints, and Willibrord's cult is no exception. What we do know, we often only discover by accident because a third party recorded it. Such evidence is often difficult to interpret. When one charter in the *Liber aureus* (to which I will return shortly) records a donation to the abbey of Echternach as a donation 'to Saint Willibrord',<sup>4</sup> this may reflect the donor's words, the ideas of the monk who acted as scribe, or perhaps the ideas of a copyist who altered the original at some point between the reign of Pippin III (751-768), when the charter was issued, and the inclusion of this charter in the *Liber aureus*, around 1220. In addition to this, our sources are biased. Despite the occasional appearance of lay people, the sources predominantly highlight the perspective of the abbey community on Willibrord's cult.

The earliest evidence for devotion to Willibrord is archaeological. Excavations, led by Jean Meyers and Jean Dumont, took place in the abbey church of Echternach between 1949 and 1951, together with restorations after war damage to the church in World War II. Though preliminary findings were published,<sup>5</sup> a full publication was late to arrive; Heinz Cüppers published a full report in 1975, two decades after the excavations had taken place, and after the deaths of both principal investigators. Cüppers himself was quick to acknowledge this was problematic.<sup>6</sup> The excavation uncovered three building phases: the present church, completed in 1031, a preceding church, on roughly the same footing, which was thought to be Carolingian,<sup>7</sup> and an even older, smaller church, built on a slightly different alignment. Meyers and Dumont thought this oldest church had been built by Willibrord himself around 704-706, a date they derived from the studies of Echternach's charter records by Richard Maria Staud.<sup>8</sup>

As shown by the publications of Meyers, Dumont, and Cüppers, their findings suggested that Willibrord was originally buried in the oldest church, in a sarcophagus that was partially submerged in the floor of the church behind the altar. This was an established burial practice in Francia since the fifth century.<sup>9</sup> Not long afterward, however, the appearance of the grave and the altar was changed, as the sarcophagus was put on floor level, in an elaborate box-like construction

<sup>4</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 54, pp. 119-120.

<sup>5</sup> DUMONT 1950 and 1958; STAUD & REUTER 1952, pp. 17-18.

<sup>6</sup> CÜPPERS 1975, p. 333 (299); idem 1981, p. 143. Cf. for subsequent excavations KRIER & WAGNER 1985; SCHROEDER & TRAUFFLER 1996 and literature there.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. TRAUFFLER 2000, p. 529.

<sup>8</sup> STAUD 1922; cf. CÜPPERS 1975, pp. 347-350 (242-245); JACOBSEN 1997, pp. 1130-1131.

<sup>9</sup> BARTLETT 2013, pp. 252-253; HAHN 1997, pp. 1095-1097; JACOBSEN 1997, pp. 1108-1110, 1126, 1130-1131. On the sarcophagus itself, cf. VIEILLARD-TROIEKOUROFF 1984.

that also included the altar table, a so-called *Hochgrab*.<sup>10</sup> The practice of *elevatio*, re-burial of a saint's body to facilitate veneration, is often an important sign of cult.<sup>11</sup> Therefore the construction of the *Hochgrab* in Echternach and its date are of particular significance. The archaeological context indicates the *elevatio* cannot have taken place before the first inhumation, in 739, or after the first abbey church was torn down, around 800.<sup>12</sup>

Additional circumstantial evidence for this *elevatio* comes from an early Echternach manuscript, now in Paris.<sup>13</sup> The texts in it stem from Willibrord's own circle. Judging by the contents of the manuscript in its present form, the person who had the quires bound together was primarily interested in liturgical timekeeping, the subject of most of the texts enclosed.<sup>14</sup> This manuscript is primarily famous for a pseudo-autograph note, supposedly of Willibrord himself, in the margin of a liturgical calendar.<sup>15</sup> Our interest here is in two notes in the margin of the *Hieronymian Martyrology* in the same manuscript (f. 28v), both by mid-eighth century hands, which record Willibrord's death on November 7, and the *elevatio* (or, in the note's wording, *translatio*) of Saint Willibrord on November 10. There are additions by several hands in the Hieronymian martyrology, some of which record the deaths of people who were probably not venerated as saints (e.g. the list of people at the bottom of f. 32v), but others record well-known saints, e.g. Petronella on May 31 (f. 17r).<sup>16</sup> The two notes on Willibrord, and especially the latter, which calls Willibrord *sanctus*, therefore perhaps reflect commemoration of Willibrord on these dates in the later eighth century. This is the liturgical background for Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* and its sermon, which provide reading matter for just such a feast.<sup>17</sup>

An additional piece of evidence for veneration of Willibrord is a piece of sculpted stone from the church of Rosport near Echternach. The sculpture shows the Virgin and Child, flanked by saints Peter and Paul, and by two archbishops. As the church of Rosport was dedicated to Saint Irmina of Oeren and Saint Michael, not to any of the saints depicted, it is probably not originally from Rosport. Christian Beutler argued that it was a retable, and originally came from Echternach:

<sup>10</sup> CÜPPERS 1975, pp. 351-353 (247-249); KRIER 1996. Cf. for context ANGENENDT 1994b, pp. 225-228; CROOK 2002; POLFER 2000, pp. 67-68.

<sup>11</sup> HEINZELMANN 1979, p. 80; ANGENENDT 1994b, pp. 222-225.

<sup>12</sup> The latter date is problematic. Cf. below, section 4.1.

<sup>13</sup> PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10837.

<sup>14</sup> The flyleaf of this manuscript dates from the eleventh century (see below), so there is no reason to believe that the manuscript was bound before that date (contra LIFSHITZ 2006, pp. 40-41).

<sup>15</sup> The wording of the note suggests it was written in 728, but the handwriting is from the second half of the eighth century. HEN 2010, pp. 187-188; MOSTERT 1999, p. 487. Cf. older opinions in HOEBEN 1967, p. 79; HOFFMANN 2001, pp. 11-12; KIRSCH 1940, p. 13; LAMPEN 1931, p. 67; LOCHNER 1987, pp. 157-158, and Van BERKUM 1997, p. 55, noting the problem. I owe the term pseudo-autograph to Marco Mostert.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. GAUTHIER 1980, pp. 322-323.

<sup>17</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, prologus. See also above.

Mary, Peter, and Paul were patrons of Echternach in the charter of 697/8; the archbishops could then be Willibrord and Boniface. Beutler also overturned the then current dating of the piece, in the twelfth century, as the way the pallium is worn by the archbishop figures is typical for the eighth century, not the twelfth.<sup>18</sup> Beutler suggested that it was part of the decoration of the Hochgrab in the Merovingian church, which is why his theory is mentioned here, even if it has received harsh criticism.<sup>19</sup> I will argue below that a different context, around 800 may suit the retable better.

We can follow the development of Willibrord's cult and the way in which Willibrord became the abbey patron even better through charter evidence. There is a clearly discernible trend from the Trinity, Mary, Peter, Paul and all other saints to Willibrord as patron of Echternach.<sup>20</sup> This shift confirms the notion of a nascent cult that archaeological, visual and manuscript sources suggest, and is important, because it highlights which saints are the primary focus of the communal identity of Echternach. The shift itself, however, is also evidence of the fluid nature of notions of patronage, and the fact that the question who was patron of a church could be open to doubt or debate.

Charter evidence for Echternach is indirect, as few charters are transmitted in their original form<sup>21</sup> and most derive from a manuscript that was composed in the twelfth and thirteenth century, the *Liber aureus* of Echternach.<sup>22</sup> It is a so-called a *Chartularchronik*, a cartulary in the shape of a narrative history of the abbey, embedded in that of the Frankish kingdom. This work was composed in the 1190s, when it seemed that the Holy Roman emperor wanted to grant control over the abbey of Echternach and all its possessions to the archbishop of Trier in exchange for the castle of Nassau. The first scribe, Theoderic, left the work unfinished. His account ended in the year 726, either because of his death or because the impending threat of losing the monastic independence subsided. A generation later an anonymous scribe added new quires that included charters up to the early thirteenth century.<sup>23</sup> As a work in its own right, the *Liber aureus* lies outside

<sup>18</sup> BEUTLER 1978, pp. 12, 50. Cf. BEUTLER 1996, BRAUN 1907, pp. 645-649; BRAUN 1924, II, p. 308-309; HELMUS 2010, p. 43, also n. 45; SCHROEDER 1979, pp. 372-374. Following Braun 1907, the Y-shape of the pallium on the two archbishops and Saint Peter dates the object after c. 750 and before c. 1100.

<sup>19</sup> Beutler's interpretation of the piece as a retable is extremely questionable, as no other retables are known before the twelfth century. The entry on retables in the *Lexikon des Mittelalters* refers to Beutler's theory as 'failed' (*gescheitert*)

<sup>20</sup> A similar overview, though less detailed, may be found in KOK 1959, pp. 269-271.

<sup>21</sup> Some mentioned as such by WAMPACH (ed) 1929 (nrs. 47, 159, 162, 171, 173, 174, 175, 177, 180, 182, 183, 184, 187, 190, 193, 194, 198, 201), two additions in GASNAULT 1963 (Wampach's nr. 125 and 172). On the last charter mentioned (172), cf. FRANKLIN 2009, pp. 99-106. Most of these (WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nrs. 159, 162, 171, 173, 174, 175, 177, 180, 182, 183, 184, 187, 190, 193) are royal charters. WAMPACH (ed) 1929 nr. 43 is an original, but a forgery, dated after 1191 and irrelevant to our study here. Only a handful of charters are known to us through manuscripts, other than the *Liber aureus* (WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nrs. 138, 185, 189 (forgery), 191 (forgery), 192, 195).

<sup>22</sup> Also known as the *Chronicon Epternacense*, GOTHA, Forschungsbibliothek, membr. I. 71.

<sup>23</sup> HEIDRICH 2000, pp. 455-456; LAMPEN 1920b, p. 26; MARGUE 1999, pp. 241-243; SAUER 1993, pp. 247-251.

the chronological scope of this study. It is important here as a source for older charters that are transmitted as part of the work.

The traditional subjects for which the charters in the *Liber aureus* have been studied, is as sources for factual information about the legal status of the abbey and its possessions,<sup>24</sup> the social context in which it operated,<sup>25</sup> and the medieval practices of which charters bear witness; transactions of goods and falsification of charters. None of these subjects are directly relevant to the study undertaken here. Only one charter yields practical information relating to Willibrord's cult.<sup>26</sup> The relevance of the *Liber aureus* to the study undertaken here lies primarily in the way in which the charters mention Willibrord, as founder of the abbey, as a saint whose remains lie buried in the abbey, and/or as patron of the abbey. Such references to Willibrord bear witness to his status in the abbey, and allow us to see diachronic shifts in that perception.

The reason that some caution is in order, is that we have to assume what we read about Willibrord's role as a saint in the community in the charters is what was written at the time, and not the product of later modifications. This is where matters get complicated. Firstly, it is well known that the *Liber aureus* includes forgeries and that other charters are transmitted unreliably.<sup>27</sup> Rombaut, for example, has shown that the *Liber aureus* contains no less than four renditions of a single charter, of which the fourth is closest to what the original must have looked like. Even that version, Rombaut concluded, probably derived from a cartulary or a similarly chronologically ordered source, rather than directly from the original charter itself.<sup>28</sup> Charters went through various stages of copying while they were stored in the archive of Echternach, but archival practices in Echternach have not yet been researched properly. It is clear, however, that what the authors of the *Liber aureus* had before them was ordered in some form, perhaps in loose quires recording sets of donations. One such set may have been composed during or shortly after Beornrad's tenure as abbot, as many of the donations prior to Beornrad's death all have similarly truncated dates. Such later editorial activity could affect the description of the patronage of the abbey.<sup>29</sup> That said, we can still see a lot of variance in the way in which the abbey patronage is described, even in charters from the same period, which suggests there was no attempt made to make all charters conform to a later ideal. Secondly, many charters, especially those of local donors, were probably written by

<sup>24</sup> E.g. BIJSTERVELD 1989, 1990; BIJSTERVELD [et al.] 1999; NOOMEN 1999.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. COSTAMBEYS 1994.

<sup>26</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, pp. 259-260, nr. 167. Cf. below, section 4.1.

<sup>27</sup> MÜHLBACHER 1900. Cf. HEIDRICH 2000, p. 457; LAMPEN 1952, p. 112.

<sup>28</sup> ROMBAUT 1989; idem 1990. Cf. also Van ACKER 1986 and the earlier debate on these charters between LAENEN (1932) and PRIMIS (1931; 1932).

<sup>29</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 125, pp 193-194.

monks from Echternach. Royal charters are the exception, as they are more likely to be written up in the royal chancery.<sup>30</sup> Royal charters are also noticeably more conservative in their description of the abbey patron.

The Echternach *Liber aureus* provides a large number of charters for the later 750s and 760s. The preceding period, from the 720s to 751/2 is a hiatus in the charter evidence of the *Liber aureus*, either due to reasons of preservation or to a lapse in donations. Many donations in the period after 751/2 are located in the immediate vicinity of Echternach, in the Bidgau, the Ardennergau, Saalgau, or Wawergau, rather than further afield, as in Willibrord's lifetime. The donors in the twenty donations made during the reigns of Pippin III and his son Carloman were all local individuals, interacting with a monastery with primarily local interests.<sup>31</sup> The only exceptions are two royal charters, affirming the royal protection and immunity of the abbey, Carloman's charter following his father's virtually verbatim.<sup>32</sup> All charters have truncated dating formulas but they have different ways of describing the abbey patron. One charter donates goods 'to saint Willibrord'.<sup>33</sup> Other charters also refer to the saint as founder of the abbey, as patron, or as a saint whose body is buried inside the abbey.<sup>34</sup>

The first genuine<sup>35</sup> charter from Echternach after 739 concerns the donation of goods to the church of *Rinara* (Rindern) in the *pagus Duphlaio* in the first year of Pippin's reign as king (751-752) by a man named Adalhard, his wife, and his mother. The charter records the abbey as being the *basilica sancti Petri* ('Saint Peter's abbey'), but also says that the donation was made 'for (the glory of) the name of the Lord and for the veneration of Saint Willibrord and Saint Peter'.<sup>36</sup> The juxtaposition of Peter and Willibrord, both identified as saints in this charter indicates that Willibrord was seen as a saint by this time.<sup>37</sup> Although he was considered a saint by the mid-eighth century, Willibrord was not yet patron of the monastery.<sup>38</sup> Another charter, dated to the seventh year of Pippin's reign (757-758), records a donation to Echternach by a certain Gerwin 'to the both holy and venerable lord in Christ, father Aldebert, abbot of the church of Saint Peter and Saint

<sup>30</sup> Cf. on these HEIDRICH 2000.

<sup>31</sup> The same is true in Fulda: RAAIJMAKERS 2012, p. 43.

<sup>32</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nrs. 44-66, pp. 107-129. The royal charters are nrs. 50, pp. 115-117 and 58, pp. 122-123

<sup>33</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 54, pp. 119-120.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. also the table at the end of this section.

<sup>35</sup> The first two charters in the *Liber aureus* dated after 739 (WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nrs. 42-43, pp. 102-107) have long been known to be forgeries. Cf. BRIMMEYR 1921, p. 195, Van der ESSEN 1905, p.381, HEIDRICH 2000, pp. 468-469, MÜHLBACHER 1900, p. 350.

<sup>36</sup> *propter nomen Domini et venerationem sancti Willibrordi et sancti Petri*. WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 44, pp. 107-108.

<sup>37</sup> SCHROEDER & TRAUFLER 1996, p. 36 argues for a somewhat later date, around 768.

<sup>38</sup> The same pattern can be observed in Fulda around this same time. RAAIJMAKERS 2012, pp. 49-50.

Willibrord in the monastery of Echternach, where this same precious confessor rests in the body'.<sup>39</sup> This is the first time Willibrord appears as patron of the abbey church of Echternach, albeit together with one of the original patrons, Saint Peter.

Of thirty-five donations recorded in the *Liber aureus* for Adalbert's tenure as abbot (739-775), fifteen mention Willibrord as patron, seven times together with other patrons, eight times alone.<sup>40</sup> Another three charters, royal charters by Pippin, Carloman, and Charlemagne, mention Willibrord as founder and saint, but not as patron. Fourteen private charters mention the fact that Willibrord is buried in the abbey, with two other charters both mentioning Willibrord as patron and his burial. Peter is more frequently mentioned as patron: he occurs as patron in twenty charters, in twelve cases together with other patrons, in eight cases alone. Five charters mention the Trinity as patron, always together with other saints. The most common patronage is that of Peter and Willibrord (nine charters), followed by Peter or Willibrord alone (both eight charters). Four charters do not mention a patron. On the basis of these charters, the 750s, 760s, and the early 770s appear as a period of transition. With the Trinity gradually disappearing from the record, Peter and Willibrord, or Peter or Willibrord alone, became the focal point of monastic identity. Saint Paul, mentioned in the earliest sources, is now absent.

For Charlemagne's reign charter evidence is extensive. About seventy charters are transmitted. On the basis of abbots' reigns, this collection of seventy charters can be divided into two. The first forty-three charters (of a total of sixty-five) belong to Beornrad's tenure as abbot (775-797), while the last twenty-two belong to the short interregnum in which Charlemagne is mentioned as *rector* of the abbey (797-798, two charters) or to the abbacy of Ado (798-817, twenty charters). This division is not only chronological. A shift occurred in the way the abbey patron is described, roughly at the end of Beornrad's tenure as abbot. Of the forty-three charters of Beornrad's reign, twenty, almost half of the total, mention Peter as patron, together with Willibrord on seven occasions, and with Willibrord as well the Trinity on three occasions – in one case with Saint Paul appearing as patron as well. Willibrord is mentioned alone as patron on twelve occasions, while eight charters do not record a patron, and only refer to the fact Willibrord is buried in the church. Four charters do not give any information about the abbey's patronage.

Two of the twenty-two charters from Charlemagne's and Ado's tenure do not record a patron, two only say that Willibrord is buried there, two mention Peter as patron, three give Peter and Willibrord as patrons together, and a staggering thirteen mention only Willibrord. Only five

<sup>39</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 45, pp. 109: *Domino et sancto et venerabili in Christo patri Aldeberto abbati de basilica sancti Petri vel sancti Willibrordi in monasterio Epternaco, ubi ipse pretiosus confessor corpore requiescit.*

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the table, below.

out of twenty-two charters mention Peter, while eighteen mention Willibrord. Thus, by the turn of the eighth century Willibrord had become the most significant saint of the abbey, and usually also its patron. Royal charters are notably conservative in patronage; except for one charter from Charlemagne's early reign<sup>41</sup> royal charters refer to Echternach as the monastery of the Trinity and Saint Peter (or just Saint Peter), until the reign of Zwentibold (r. 895-900).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 93.

<sup>42</sup> The royal charters are: WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nrs. 50, 58, 68, 92, 93, 112, 138, 151, 159, 162, 166, and 171.

nr.	Donor	Dedicatee	Date
44	Adalardus	<i>ad iam dictam ecclesiam sancti Petri</i>	751/2
45	Gerwinus	<i>ad prefatum monasterium (scil. basilica sancti Petri vel sancti Willibrordi (...)) ubi ipse pretiosus confessor corpore requiescit)</i>	757/8
46	Hildegarda	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	758/9
47 <sup>43</sup>	Godoinus & Helmericus	<i>ad ecclesia vel monasterio ... in honore sancta Trinitatis vel ceterorum sanctorum</i>	762-07-20
48	Gerwina, nun	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi confessoris atque pontifices, quod est consecratum in honore sancta Marie et sancti Ioannis Baptiste et apostolorum Petri et Pauli et sancti Andree</i>	761/2
49	Leutharius	<i>ad monasterium sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse pontifex corpore requiescit</i>	767/8
50	Pippinus rex Francorum vir inluster	<i>monasterio (...) in honore sancta Trinitatis et sancti Petri, quod sanctus Willibrordus episcopus suo opere edificavit, ubi ipsius corpus requiescit</i>	751-68
51	Bizo	<i>in honore sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi</i>	751-68
52	Boblina, nun	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	751-68
53	Casilo	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	751-68
54	Cogilfildus	<i>sancto Willibrordo</i>	751-68
55	Hertuwinus & wife Absinda	<i>ecclesie sancti Willibrordi</i>	751-68
56	Milo & wife Ragentrudis	n/a	751-68
57	Nichteradus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi</i>	751-68
58	Carlomannus gratia Dei rex Francorum vir illuster	<i>vir Adeburtus abbas Epternacensis monasterii (...) in honore sancte Trinitatis et sancti Petri, quod ipse sanctus Willibrordus episcopus suo opere edificavit, et ubi ipse corpore requiescit</i>	768/9
59	Giraudus	<i>ad ecclesiam beati Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	768/9
60	Guntherus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	768/9
61	Hachardus	<i>ad basilicam sancti Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	768/9
62	Haidolfus	<i>ad basilicam sancti Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	768/9
63	Norpertus & wife Warinlindis	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	768/9
64	Warnildis	<i>ad monasterium (...) in honore sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi</i>	768/9

<sup>43</sup> Cf. on this charter PIRENNE & VANNÉRUS 1935; their objections to its veracity as a donation notwithstanding, the charter stems from the period discussed here, even in their assessment.

65	Baba, filia Herini	n/a	769/70
66	Bibilo & wife Fredegarda	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	768-71
67	Bertramnus	<i>ad ecclesiam beati Petri (...) ubi domnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	771/2
68	Karolus rex Francorum vir inluster	<i>vir Adebertus abbas Epternacensis monasterii (...) in honore sancte Trinitatis et sancti Petri, quod venerabilis episcopus Willibrordus suo opera edificavit et ubi ipse corpore requiescit</i>	771/2
69	Bertilda & Richwinus	n/a	773/4
70	Hirmenildis	<i>ad basilicam beati Petri (...) ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	773/4
71	Nebelungus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	773/4
72	Luthfridus	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum (...) in honore sancte Trinitatis et apostolorum Petri et Pauli et ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	773/4
73	Ratherius	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	774/5
74	Rethor and Uda	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum (...) in honore sancte Trinitatis et sancti Petri, ubi ipse sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	774/5
75	Theodrada	<i>ad sacrosanctum monasterium quod vocatur Epternacum, ubi dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	774/5
76	Aldericus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi</i>	739-75
77	Bertsinda filia Radowini	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	739-75
78	Uda	n/a	739-75
79	Hartherus & Alsent	<i>ad ecclesiam peculiaris patroni nostri sancti Petri principis apostolorum (...) ubi dompnus Willibrordus pontifex corpore requiescit</i>	775/6
80	Coimarcus	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum (...) ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	776/7
81	Mauritius	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	777/8
82	Hainradus	<i>ad monasterium peculiaris patroni nostri Willibrordi</i>	780/1
83	Hilduwinus	<i>ad monasterium vel ad sacrificium sancti Willibrordi</i>	780/1
84	Hesterbaldus & wife	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse confessor requiescit</i>	780/1
85	Madalgarda	n/a	780/1
86	Bernuwinus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri, ubi ipse preciosus dompnus Willibrordus in corpore requiescit</i>	782/3
87	Hadaburch	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	782/3

88	Frauhigarda	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum (...) quod ipse dompnus Willibrordus construxit et ubi in corpore requiescere videtur</i>	783/4
89	Theugerus and Harduwicus	<i>ad ecclesiam beati Willibrordi</i>	783/4
90	Ruduwinus and son	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	784/5
91	Hodibaldus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	784/5
92	Carolus gratia Dei rex Francorum et Langobardorum ac patritius Romanorum	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum, quod est in honore sancti Petri constructum, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	775-84
93	Carolus gratia Dei rex Francorum et Langobardorum necnon et patritius Romanorum	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum, (...) in honore sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse preciosus sanctus corpore requiescit</i>	775-84
94	Folcwinus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi (...) ubi dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	785/6
95	Audradus	n/a	786/7
96	Gotricus	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum (...) in honore sancti Petri, ubi dompnus Willibrordus pontifex corpore requiescit</i>	786/7
97	Waldrada & Herloara	<i>ad loca sanctorum vel ad monasterium Epternacum (...) ubi dompnus Willibrordus pontifex corpore requiescit</i>	786/7
98	Wundo	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse corpore requiescit</i>	788/9
99	Haribertus	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum, quod est constructum in honore sancti Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	788
100	Sifridus & wife	<i>ad monasterium sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi</i>	788/9
101	Beonradus & Audradus	<i>in iure dominationis sancta illius ecclesie, que est in honore sancti Petri principis apostolorum seu sancti Willibrordi constructa in loco qui dicitur Epternacum</i>	789/90
102	Leuda	<i>ad basilicam sancti Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	789/90
103	Reginarda	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	789/90
104	Nandingus	<i>ad ipsam ecclesiam (sc. sancti Willibrordi)</i>	789/90
105	Dagalindis	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi (...) ubi ipse dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	790/1
106	Garbannus & wife Ratsind	<i>ad ecclesiam peculiaris patroni nostri sancti Petri principis apostolorum (...) ubi ipse dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	793/4
107	Immina	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri (...) ubi ipse preciosus dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	792/3

108	Haruduwinus & wife Ava	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	794/5
109	Hardowinus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri (...) ubi ipse dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	795/6
110	Madalwinus	<i>ad basilicam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse preciosus corpore requiescit</i>	795/6
111	Harduwinus	n/a	795/797
112	Karolus gratia Dei rex Francorum et Langobardorum ac patricius Romanorum	<i>(Berneradus (...) qui est rector) monasterii sancti, ubi dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	785-97
113	Bibilo & Fridesint	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi in Epternaco, ubi ipse corpore requiescit</i>	775-97
114	Hildrada	<i>ad monasterium sancti Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	797/8
115	Guntramnus & wife Amaltruda	<i>peculiari patri nostro Willibrordo</i>	797/8
116	Alfula	<i>ad basilicam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi</i>	798/9
117	Hamelicus & wife Dada	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi</i>	798/9
118	Hericus	<i>ad ecclesiam beati Willibrordi</i>	798/9
119	Norpertus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	798/9
120	Ranbertus & sister Renilda	<i>ad basilicam beati Willibrordi</i>	798/9
121	Harduwinus & wife	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	801/2
122	Walafridera	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	801/2
123	Ermeradus	n/a	802/3
124	Godo	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	803/4
125	Godetruda	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi in (qua) ipse domnus in corpore requiescit<sup>44</sup></i>	804/5
126	Irmengarda	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	805/6
127	Erenbaldus	<i>ad ecclesiam Epternacensem, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	806/7
128	Irmengarda	<i>ad ecclesiam beati Willibrordi</i>	806/7
129	Hericus	n/a	811/2

<sup>44</sup> I follow the reading of an 11th c. copy, now PARIS, BNF lat. 10400, f. 58r. *Liber aureus* reads *ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordii*.

130	Raginardus	<i>beato Willibrordo</i>	798-814
132 <sup>45</sup>	Gerardus diaconus	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum, ubi peculiaris pater noster Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	771-814
133	Gerbertus	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	771-814
134	Harduwinus	<i>sancto Willibrordo</i>	771-814
135	Martheus & wife Hengela	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	771-814
136	Raginildis	<i>beato Willibrordo</i>	771-814

Table 1. Donations made out to Echternach, 751-817.

	751-775	%	775-797	%	797-817	%
<b>Trinity</b>	7	20%	0		0	
<b>Peter</b>	19	54%	15	43%	6	26%
<b>Willibrord</b>	29	83%	32	91%	21	91%
<b>Willibrord's corpus</b>	16	46%	20	57%	19	83%
<b>None</b>	4	11%	3	9%	2	9%

Table 2. Patrons of Echternach in charters, 751-817.

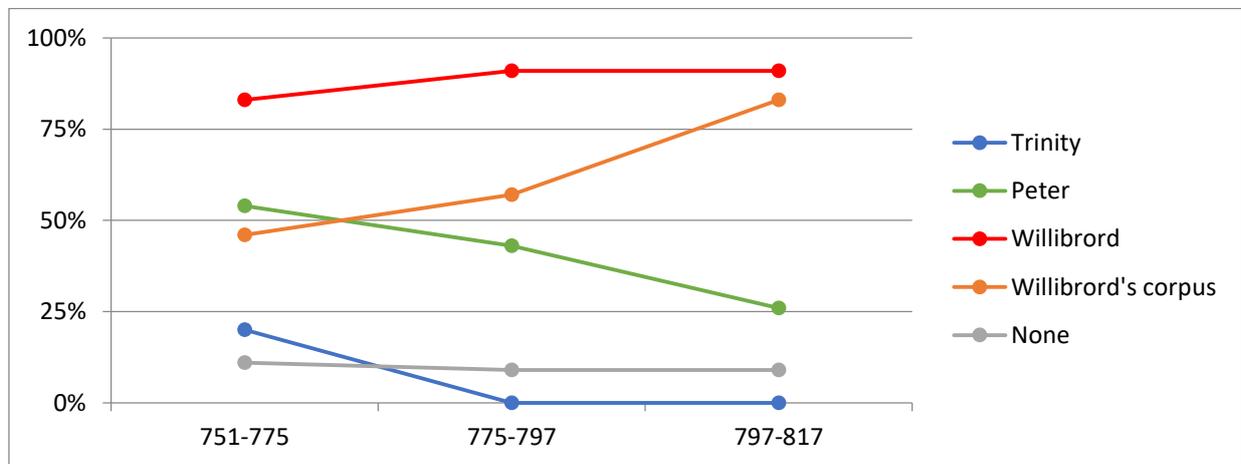


Table 3. Relative development of patronages in Echternach, 751-817.

<sup>45</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 131 is not transmitted as a charter.

## 1.2. Context of Production of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*

As already indicated, Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was probably written in the last decade of the eighth century, around the time the charters suggest that the significance of Willibrord as abbey patron changed. The date of the *Vita Willibrordi* is derived from internal evidence, and will be discussed below. A date, however, is only the starting point for research into the context of production. Which event, if any, prompted its composition, and within which social surroundings did the compository process take place? In many cases, hagiographic production can be related to the retrieval of the saint's body (*inventio*), the elevation of a saint's tomb to allow for or encourage devotion to the saint (*elevatio*), the transfer of relics from one place to another (*translatio*), or the construction of a new church to house the saint's relics.<sup>46</sup> Historians have not yet been able to identify a cultic occasion for which Alcuin produced his *Vita Willibrordi*. Likewise, there is no internal evidence for an exact date of composition. Even so, I will argue here that the occasion for the composition of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* needs to be sought in an effort of Beornrad, Echternach's first abbot, to promote his kinsman Willibrord's cult.

Alcuin dedicated his *Vita Willibrordi* to Beornrad, one of his pupils, abbot of Echternach (c. 775/777 - 797),<sup>47</sup> missionary in the Münsterland, and bishop, subsequently archbishop of Sens (c. 785, resp. 786/7<sup>48</sup> - 797). Beornrad and Alcuin were both Anglo-Saxons, related by ties of blood to Willibrord.<sup>49</sup> Given that Alcuin addresses Beornrad as archbishop, the *Vita Willibrordi* must have been composed in the decade between 786/7 and 797.<sup>50</sup> Some scholars have opted for an even stricter dating, to the year 796 or 797. The argument provided for this dating derives from the sermon appended to the prose section of the *Vita Willibrordi*, which mentions Tours. Alcuin lived in Tours after 796, and the reference could be taken as a *terminus post quem*, dating the *Vita Willibrordi* to after Alcuin's arrival in Tours in 796, but before Beornrad's death in the following year.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> HEINZELMANN 1979, pp. 77-80; HERMANN-MASCARD 1975, pp. 35-37, 82-84.

<sup>47</sup> *Catalogus abbatum Epternacensium primus*, ed. WAITZ 1881, pp. 738-740. Cf. for Beornrad's career ANGENENDT 1990a, p. 293; BRUCH 1964, pp. 4-5; FLECKENSTEIN 1993, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> On the elevation of the see of Sens, see BULLOUGH 1962, p. 228. On the combination of abbatial and (arch)episcopal responsibilities in the eighth century, cf. De JONG 1995, pp. 627-628.

<sup>49</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, prologue and chapter 1. Cf. for the importance of family ties in saints' cults McKITTERICK 1989a, p. 241, Von PADBERG 1995, p. 89; for Alcuin, Willibrord and Beornrad: SCHREINER 1989, pp. 192-193, SCHROEDER 1979, pp. 375-376; WOOD 1999a, p. 171; idem 2010, p. 114.

<sup>50</sup> As COSTAMBEYS 2014, p. 262; HALBERTSMA 2000, p. 72; KOK 1959, p. 259; LIFSHITZ 2006, p. 41; MOSTERT 1999, p. 478; NIEUWLAND 1991, p. 16; Von PADBERG 1981, p. 17; RAMBRIDGE 2003, p. 377; SCHROEDER 1986; idem 1989, p. 187; TOWNSEND 1993, p. 114; TRAUFFLER 1996, p. 49; WALTER 1973, p. 36; WAMPACH 1953, p. 129; WOOD 1991, p. 3. cf. BANNIARD 1992, p. 384 which holds the same argument, but arrives at a different date (792-797).

<sup>51</sup> BERSCHIN 1991, pp. 115-116; BROOME 2014, p. 185; BULLOUGH 2004, p. 165; DEUG-SU 1980a, p. 181; LIFSHITZ 2006, p. 41 (probable date); MAYR-HARTING 2009, p. 212; VEYRARD-COSME 2003a, p. lvi.

Circumstantial evidence also points to a date in the 790s, rather than the 780s: there are similarities between ideas expressed in the *Vita Willibrordi* and Alcuin's letters on baptism of 796,<sup>52</sup> and Alcuin's other hagiographic works all date from the 790s or early 800s as well.<sup>53</sup> There is, however, no conclusive evidence which allows us to limit the date of the *Vita Willibrordi* to these narrow confines: all of the three arguments together, only provide circumstantial evidence, which points, however, to a date of composition in the late 790s.

Despite the fact that Alcuin addressed Beornrad as archbishop of Sens, the intended audience of the *Vita Willibrordi* was the the abbey community of Echternach. The abbey's community was the text's intended primary audience; this is abundantly clear from *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 30, where Alcuin speaks of 'this house' (*hac domo*), 'this self-same church' (*hac eadem ecclesia*), and 'this place' (*loco isto*), where Willibrord is buried. These references can only refer to Echternach. The probable reason that Alcuin chose to address Beornrad as archbishop was that this was the highest ecclesiastical office Beornrad held, and possibly also because the archiepiscopate was something which Willibrord and Beornrad held in common.<sup>54</sup> Other traits which Beornrad and Willibrord had in common are also easily identified in the *Vita Willibrordi*: the young novice Willibrord is compared to the young Samuel in *Vita Willibrordi*, just as Alcuin called Beornrad Samuel in his letters,<sup>55</sup> and both Beornrad and Willibrord are known to have taken an active interest in missionary activities – Willibrord in Frisia, Beornrad in Saxony.<sup>56</sup> Willibrord, Beornrad, and

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Other dates may be found in BRUNHÖLZL 1975, p. 281 (782-789); GASKOIN 1904, p. 61 (782-786); KLEINCLAUSZ 1948, p. 222, n. 104 (782-789/793-797); Von PADBERG 1999, p. 175 (789-793), mostly without any explanation.

<sup>52</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 110, to Charlemagne, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 156-159, especially pp. 158-159, *Epistola* 111, to Megenfrid, Charlemagne's treasurer, *ibidem*, pp. 159-162; *Epistola* 113, to Arn of Salzburg, *ibidem*, pp. 163-166. Cf. CLOSE 2011, pp. 287-299; PHELAN 2010a, pp. 464-474; SMITH 1995a, pp. 656-657.

<sup>53</sup> In addition the poem on the bishops, kings, and saints of York is dated to this period according to its most recent editor, Peter Godman. cf. GODMAN (ed.) 1982; BULLOUGH 1981, p. 339; VEYRARD-COSME 2003a, p. xvi.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. SCHREINER 1989, pp. 192-193. Also note the interplay between intellectuals and bishops, as explored in STECKEL 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, 1, 3. The letters and letter-poems in question are *Epistola* 49, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 93 (on which HAUCK 1954, vol. 2, pp. 128-129); *Epistola* 88, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 132-133;

*Carmen* 4 (*Carula perge nunc cito pelagi trans aequora cursu*) = S-K 2146, ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 221, vv. 22-35;

*Carmen* 8 (*Est mihi servili scripulus dicione subactus*) = S-K 4610, eds. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 228, HAGEN 1887, pp. 128-129, nr. 77;

*Carmen* 16 (*Te rogo, sancta pater, supplex per carmina nostra*) = S-K 16124, ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 239;

On the significance of nicknames in Alcuin's letters, cf. GARRISON 1995, pp. 146-256; eadem 1998 and 2004. On the name Samuel, GARRISON 1995, p. 157 and eadem 1998; De JONG 1996, p. 241.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. HÖMBERG 1953, p. 80, KOHL 1999, pp. 58-60; LEIDINGER 2004, pp. 27-35; PRINZ 1948, pp. 79-83, and WOOD 2001, p. 89-91.

Alcuin, moreover, had ties to the Pippinid/Carolingian court.<sup>57</sup> Alcuin's contemporary audience in Echternach would therefore find certain elements in the narrative of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* closely related to their, or at least their abbot's, interests in the Saxon mission.<sup>58</sup>

The interests which Alcuin and Beornrad liked to project on Willibrord are manifest from the contents of the *Vita Willibrordi*, discussed more extensively below. Alcuin describes Willibrord as the ideal learned missionary. Having been educated in Ripon and amongst the learned men of Ireland, Willibrord put his learning in practice by preaching to the pagans, in close cooperation with the Pippinids.<sup>59</sup> The episodes of Willibrord's life in the first part of Alcuin's prose *vita* are tied together with recurring references to preaching, and Alcuin added a sermon which Willibrord had supposedly delivered to Radbod.<sup>60</sup> Alcuin explicitly rated the ministry of preaching above the working of miracles.<sup>61</sup> Three miracles which Alcuin narrates involve the saint's refusal to resort to violence when confronted with opposition, whether from an angered pagan in Walcheren, or from unwelcoming Christians along the way, such as the guard of the wheat field near Susteren or the rich landowner who refused to let the saint camp on his meadow.<sup>62</sup> All of these miracles of 'passive retaliatory judgement' hammer home the message that vengeance does not belong to people, but to God.<sup>63</sup> Also, the other miracles which Alcuin reports about Willibrord can be linked with the ministry of preaching and baptismal catechesis. Five of the ten miracles narrated in the *Vita Willibrordi* before Willibrord's death contain an element of thirst and saturation, for example by miraculously increasing the available amount of wine, by making water appear through prayer, or by offering drink, as in the case of the rich landowner.<sup>64</sup> Such explicit references to water and wine can be interpreted as veiled references to the salvic powers of baptism and the Eucharist, especially as they compare closely with the stories of the marriage at Cana (John 2:1-11) and the conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:4-26), in which Jesus refers to himself as a well of living water.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Beornrad is mentioned in the *Codex Carolinus*, where he functions as a letter bearer (*Codex Carolinus* 94, ed. GUNDLACH 1892, p. 632), but, given the date of Beornrad's ascension as abbot in Echternach, probably not *Codex Carolinus* 47 (ibidem, p. 565). For Willibrord: ANGENENDT 1973; GERBERDING 1994.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. below, especially section 2.3.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. ALBERI 1998, pp. 8-9; DEUG-SU 1980a, p. 70; VEYRARD-COSME 2000, pp. 413-420.

<sup>60</sup> BERSCHIN 1991, p. 124; Von PADBERG 1995, p. 132.

<sup>61</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 14. cf. *Vita Richarii* 9.

<sup>62</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1 (and 2), 14, 15, and 20 respectively. Cf. MAYR-HARTING 2009, p. 213; WOOD 2001, pp. 28-29 and pp. 84-85.

<sup>63</sup> JOHNSON 2010, term discussed on pp. 19-21.

<sup>64</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1 (2), 16-20.

<sup>65</sup> I owe this observation to Janneke Raaijmakers.

It is surely more than a coincidence that around the time Alcuin wrote his *Vita Willibrordi*, the cult of Willibrord in Echternach gathered momentum, as can be shown from the charter evidence previously discussed. It is also around this time that the archaeologists mentioned earlier suggested a new church was built, and a new tomb of Willibrord must have been put up. Even the Rosport retable could have been from this period, if it indeed came from Echternach originally. Beutler's assertion that the archbishops are Willibrord and Boniface is surely wrong; early Carolingian Echternach never elaborated on its relation with Boniface. Alcuin did not even mention Boniface in his *Vita Willibrordi*, which is strange as Boniface's hagiographer Willibald had already linked both saints in his *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>66</sup> It is far more likely that if the Rosport retable is indeed from Echternach, and from the eighth century, it depicts Willibrord and Beornrad, the only other archbishop to have a direct connection with Echternach. It would date the Rosport retable between 786/7 and 797, like the *Vita Willibrordi*. Taken together, all the evidence suggests that abbot Beornrad, after his elevation to the archbishopric, promoted the cult of his relative, the archbishop-abbot Willibrord, with the construction of a new church and artwork, the commission of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, and a promotion of Willibrord as the patron of Echternach and a means to fulfil a growing need for a *vita* that could be read at the saint's feast.<sup>67</sup>

### 1.3. An *opus geminum* and moral education

Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* is an *opus geminum*, a work that covers the same subject matter in both prose and verse.<sup>68</sup> Both the prose first book and the verse second book have a preface and an appendix and cover the life and miracles, partly posthumous, of Willibrord. The *opus geminum* originates from the practice of *conversio*, the school exercise of converting a prose text into verse and/or vice versa.<sup>69</sup> Starting with poets such as Arator, Dracontius, Juvenius, and Sedulius, this school tradition developed into a literary genre in the fourth and fifth century. Two texts with the same or a nearly identical narrative or edifying content were juxtaposed in different textual genres. The late antique example of Sedulius, who added a prose *Opus paschale* to his verse *Carmen paschale*, a Gospel harmony in poetic form, was known in Anglo-Saxon England, at least to the poet Aldhelm, who

<sup>66</sup> The first mention of Boniface that I know of in Echternach is in the calendar of the Paris-Echternach Sacramentary (cf. below, section 4.1), PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 9433, f. 8v. June 5 is empty in the older Calendar of Willibrord, PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 10837, f. 37r.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. VEYRARD-COSME 1995, pp. 194-197.

<sup>68</sup> On the *opus geminum*: FERRARI 2008; FRIESEN 2011; GODMAN 1981, and WIELAND 1981.

<sup>69</sup> LAUSBERG 2007, pp. 530-531, §§ 1099-1103, esp. § 1101 and § 1103.

composed *De virginitate* (*On virginity*), a work on monastic virginity, first written in verse, and then with a prose explanation to match, in imitation of Sedulius.

In the same period the practice of *conversio* was also applied to Latin hagiography.<sup>70</sup> Several cases are known where an author wrote a verse saint's life as a complement to a prose life. Saint Martin of Tours (d. 397), for example, had been celebrated famously by his contemporary and friend Sulpicius Severus in prose. Both Paulinus of Périgieux and Venantius Fortunatus produced verse accounts of the saint's life, matching Sulpicius' prose, Paulinus sometime between 460 and 473, Venantius between 565 and 600.<sup>71</sup> Just as Aldhelm imported this tradition to Anglo-Saxon England, Bede took over the tradition of verse hagiography when he added a verse account of the life of Saint Cuthbert to the oldest, anonymous, prose *vita*.<sup>72</sup> Bede later revised his verse life, and also wrote a new prose *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*. Though the two lives by Bede were not often transmitted together,<sup>73</sup> and were composed years apart from one another,<sup>74</sup> Alcuin states in his poem on the bishops, kings and saints of York that Bede wrote the prose version first and then produced the verse as a complementary text.<sup>75</sup> It was probably the example of Bede's lives of Cuthbert which Alcuin followed in the *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>76</sup> As a result of his misunderstanding the sequence and aim of Bede's *Vitae Cuthberti*, Alcuin placed himself and his work in a tradition that did not exist, writing a saint's life that was conceived as an *opus geminum* from the beginning.<sup>77</sup>

Alcuin's choice for an *opus geminum* was at least in part given in by his intended audience. The dedicatory letter of his *Vita Willibrordi* shows that Alcuin wanted both elements of the *opus geminum* to serve a specific purpose and that each had its own intended audience: a monastic audience as a recipient for the first book, an inner circle of advanced students for the second. Alcuin says: '(...) I arranged two booklets: one proceeding in prose mode, which, if it would seem worthy to your

<sup>70</sup> Cf. AIGRAIN 1953, pp. 164-169.

<sup>71</sup> Edited: PETSCHENING 1888, pp. 3-159 (Paulinus), and LEO 1881, pp. 293-370 (Venantius).

<sup>72</sup> First noted (as far as I know) in WERNER 1881, p. 345. Cf. also KIRSCH 2004, p. 427; LAPIDGE 1989, p. 85, n. 31; PALMER 2009, p. 30; VEYRARD-COSME 2003a, p. liii, and (implicitly) WALTER 1973, p. 37.

<sup>73</sup> Only one tenth-century manuscript is known to contain both Bede's prose and verse lives of Cuthbert: CAMBRIDGE, Corpus Christi College, 183.

<sup>74</sup> *Vitae Cuthberti*: THACKER 1989, p. 118.

<sup>75</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus, regibus, et sanctis Euboricensis ecclesiae* (*Christe deus summi virtus sapientia patris*; S-K 2176; BHL 900b), vv. 685-687.

<sup>76</sup> DALES 2012, p. 21; WALTER 1973, pp. 36-37; WAMPACH 1953, pp. 132-133. Not, as BEJCZY 1990, p. 122 would have it, Sulpicius Severus' *Vita sancti Martini*. Cf. on Bede's influence on Alcuin below, and BROWN 1997; DALES 2013, pp. 19-27.

<sup>77</sup> This has not been noted as such in scholarship to date. DALES 2013, p. 127 for example sees Aldhelm and Bede as hagiographic examples, which they were not.

Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was also innovative in another respect he reintroduced the *opus geminum* in Francia, where Alcuin's example would later be followed by, amongst others, his student Hraban Maur in his *De laudibus sanctae crucis* and Brun Candidus of Fulda's *Vita Aegil*. Cf. BECHT-JÖRDENS 1992 and RAAIJMAKERS 2012, pp. 240-243.

wise person, one could read publicly for the brothers in the church; the other running on Pierian foot (i.e. metre, JV), which must only be ruminated in a hidden corner amongst your advanced students.<sup>78</sup> Concerning the sermon that serves as an appendix to the first book, Alcuin continued: ‘(...) I also added a homily to the first booklet, which I hope is worthy to be preached by your venerable mouth to the people.’<sup>79</sup> The intended audience of the sermons therefore included not only the monastic community, but also any others present in the church during the festive celebration of the saint’s death.

The audiences of book 1 and the sermon, however, are more convergent than Alcuin states in his preface. The sermon was allegedly intended for a mixed lay and monastic audience which Alcuin refers to as the *populus* in the dedicatory letter, but addresses its listeners and readers as ‘most beloved brothers’ (*fratres karissimi*), an address which Alcuin generally applies only to fellow religious men.<sup>80</sup> The place of the laity in Alcuin’s intended audience, and in Willibrord’s cult overall is difficult to assess, but at any rate decidedly secondary to that of the monastic religious.<sup>81</sup>

There are reasons to believe that the prose book of the *Vita Willibrordi* was read in the church on Willibrord’s feast day. Monastic rules (e.g. *Regula Benedicti* 42) prescribe the reading of saints’ lives during mass, and this was also common practice in Gaul (amongst other places) from the sixth century onwards.<sup>82</sup> Alcuin also mentioned the practice of reading a *vita* during the feast of the saint in the prologue to one of his other saint’s lives, the *Vita Vedasti*, which, like the *Vita Willibrordi* was accompanied by an exhortative sermon.<sup>83</sup> If the prose *Vita Willibrordi* and the sermon were both read out in the church, they would have shared the same primarily monastic audience. The differences between the intended audiences for prose book and sermon were therefore less significant than hitherto assumed. Nevertheless the two are certainly different from the audience of the verse book.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, prologus: (...) *et duos digessi libellos. Unum prosaico sermone gradientem, qui publice fratribus in ecclesia, si dignum tuae videatur sapientiae legi potuisset.* Cf. BANNIARD 1992, pp. 384-385; Van EGMOND 1999; De JONG 1998a, pp. 48-49; STELLA 2010, p. 117.

<sup>79</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, prologus: *Unam quoque priori libello super addidi omeliam, quae utinam digna esset tuo venerando ore populo praedicari.* On the problematic meaning of the word *populus* in this context, cf. Van UYTFANGHE 1985 and GIBSON 2015, pp. 631-632.

<sup>80</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 32. There are about thirty instances of the phrase in Alcuin’s works; cf. e.g. ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 56, l. 26 (to the monks of Wearmouth and Jarrow), p. 72, l. 28 (to Aethelberht of Whithorn and his monks), and p. 81, l. 31 (to the priest Monna).

<sup>81</sup> Cf. HEAD 1990, p. 3 and SMITH 1995a, p. 660-661 on lay interest in saints’ cults.

<sup>82</sup> ORCHARD 1995a, p. 7 for the *Vita Willibrordi*, Van UYTFANGHE 1985 and 2005 for the general principle.

<sup>83</sup> BANNIARD 1992, pp. 382-383.

<sup>84</sup> E.g. Van der ESSEN 1923, p. 339; HELVÉTIUS 1993, pp. 52-53.

The two intended audiences for the two books of the *Vita Willibrordi* also suggest two intended purposes. It has been assumed that where as the first book aimed at edification,<sup>85</sup> the second book served an educational purpose by demonstrating the practice of *conversio* of a prose story into metre.<sup>86</sup> Given that Alcuin uses the verb *ruminare*, it is more likely that the second book was as a tool for contemplation. This impression is confirmed by a consideration of the appendices of both books, and the fact that there are striking differences in content.<sup>87</sup> Where the appendices of the first book shift in discursive mode from narration to admonition, the appendices of the second book make another discursive shift, from narrative history to contemplation. Given that the *scholastici* for whom this book was meant were presumably adolescent or young adult clerics and monks, such a purpose would be an important element of their education, which was not solely aimed at the technicalities of *grammatica*.<sup>88</sup>

The purpose of education to Alcuin was both moral and doctrinal. The aim was to train learned and upright clerics. The liberal arts were a means to this end, necessary for understanding Scripture and the Fathers in order to celebrate the liturgy correctly and safeguard the orthodoxy of the church. Education, in the arts among other things, was also helpful for instilling the necessary moral values on the clergy needed to safeguard liturgy and orthodoxy. The religious purpose of education is reflected in the way in Alcuin used words such as *lectio*, *studium*, and *eruditio*. *Lectio* often referred to reading Scripture, and *studium* to ruminating the contents of Scripture, while *eruditio* referred to knowledge of the divine, divine law, and monastic discipline. The ultimate aim of *eruditio* was salvation.<sup>89</sup> This is in line with Alcuin's ideas about education overall. His writings on the subject prove his high regard for education, focussing on the liberal arts, as well as his Christian interpretation of the arts. One element of this interpretation is the pairing of education in the arts with moral elements, as in *De rhetorica et de virtutibus*, in which Alcuin combines the liberal arts

<sup>85</sup> DEUG-SU 1980a, pp. 48-49, 52, REISCHMANN (tr.) 1989, p. 39, WOOD 2001, p. 82. Cf. DELEHAYE 1955, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> On the *scholastici*, cf. esp. Van EGMOND 1999, De JONG 1998a, pp. 48-49.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. below, section 1.4. This conclusion confirms the suspicions of Gereon Becht-Jördens, who, studying a later *opus geminum*, Brun Candidus of Fulda's *Vita Aegil*, indicated that there was a difference in content and purpose (BECHT-JÖRDENS 1992, pp. 27-48), and suggested the same might be true for other *opera gemina*, Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* amongst them (*ibidem*, p. 27). I thank Janneke Raaijmakers for making me aware of Becht-Jördens' work. Cf. also BERSCHIN 1991, p. 123.

<sup>88</sup> EDELSTEIN 1965, pp. 74-78. Cf. CRISTIANI 1992. Cf. also the shift of supposed setting for reading *Vita Willibrordi* 2, from the school room (e.g. LAMPEN 1950, p. 122) to the dormitory in recent literature (e.g. BULLOUGH 2004, p. 224).

<sup>89</sup> BROWN 1994, pp. 19-21, 32-33, EDELSTEIN 1965, pp. 76-78 on education in Alcuin's letters. Cf. LECLERCQ 1963, pp. 106-112.

subject *retorica* with the subject of the virtues.<sup>90</sup> Another is Alcuin's interpretation of philosophy as a means by which to gain salvation in *De vera philosophia*, a dialogue by Alcuin set in a school context.<sup>91</sup>

*De vera philosophia* opens with a group of pupils, who ask their teacher about true philosophy, 'the teacher of all virtues'.<sup>92</sup> Philosophy is understood as the discipline that aims at the enlightenment of the soul, and is then associated with Christ (through John 1:9).<sup>93</sup> The pupils urge the teacher to teach them, 'for the natural light for human minds is the light of wisdom, but unless it is stirred by a teacher's frequent straining, it remains hidden in it like a spark in a stone', thoughts reminiscent of Alcuin's discussion of light in his *Commentary on John*.<sup>94</sup> The teacher agrees: 'For the desire of every good is by nature inserted in the minds of men, but some devious error drags off very many towards bad things.'<sup>95</sup> Similar statements about the ultimately good state of man's nature can be found elsewhere in Alcuin's oeuvre.<sup>96</sup> Even if salvation and education are necessary because of devious error, man is in principle good by nature. Education simply needs to bring the good out through good knowledge and good habits.

Given their role in the church and the educational culture of the day, and Alcuin's own clerical state and that of many of his pupils, Alcuin's writings primarily emphasize the education of the specialists of salvation, the clergy, and the religious.<sup>97</sup> It is no wonder, then, that Alcuin's instructions regarding teaching and preaching, though not wholly restricted to the clergy were also primarily directed towards the clergy.<sup>98</sup> The *Vita Willibrordi* fits into the picture of Alcuin as an educator of churchmen, especially in a monastic setting.

#### 1.4. The structure and contents of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*

As an *opus geminum*, the *Vita Willibrordi* has a complex structure. The first book, in prose, has a dedicatory letter as a preface, consists of thirty-one chapters, and concludes with a sermon by way

<sup>90</sup> Cf. ALBERI 1989; KEMPSHALL 2008; SCHEIBE 1959a, p. 59. WALLACH 1959 took this work as a mirror of princes for Charlemagne, but that seems too far-fetched. Cf. CHASE 1981.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. ALBERI 1997 and eadem 2001; HOLTZ 2004; idem 2010.

<sup>92</sup> *Omnium virtutum magistra*, PL 101, col. 849.

<sup>93</sup> PL 101, cols. 849-850.

<sup>94</sup> PL 101, col. 850: *naturale itaque est mentibus humanis scientiae lumen, sed nisi crebra doctoris intentione excutiat, in se quasi scintilla latet.*

<sup>95</sup> Ibidem: *Est enim mentibus hominum veri boni naturaliter inserta cupiditas: sed ad falsa quaedam plurimos eorum devious error abducit.*

<sup>96</sup> Cf. PERETÓ RIVAS 2008, KEMPSHALL 2011, pp. 344-345.

<sup>97</sup> ALBERI 2001, p. 897.

<sup>98</sup> FOX 2005, pp. 221-223.

of an appendix. The second book, in verse, has a dedicatory poem as a prologue, consists of thirty-one chapters, all in dactylic hexameters, and concludes with an appendix of two chapters, in elegiac couplets. These two elegiac chapters can be seen as the metrical counterpart of the sermon which forms the appendix to the first book; Alcuin says as much in the prologue to the first book, as he refers to the elegiac chapters of the second, just after he has mentioned the sermon of the first book.<sup>99</sup> Alcuin added a list of chapter headings at the beginning of each book,<sup>100</sup> and also composed a mass for the feast of Willibrord that derives from the *Vita*.<sup>101</sup>

Alcuin's stated intention in the *Vita Willibrordi* is to report on Willibrord's *vitam, mores et miracula*, which explains the structure of both books of the *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>102</sup> The first part is an account of Willibrord's career (*vitam*), focussing on mission. The various episodes which Alcuin describes are tied together by repeated references to preaching,<sup>103</sup> which is the 'glue' that binds individual events into a continuous narrative. The second part of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* deals with the miracles that happened during the life of the saint (*mores*), and the third part details the saint's death and subsequent miracles at the saint's tomb or otherwise related to the cult (*miracula*). Both books have some sort of interior prologue between the first and second sections.<sup>104</sup> The interior prologue of the first book explicitly distinguishes between the working of miracles (*miraculorum operatione et signorum ostensione*) and the ministry of preaching the Gospel (*ministerium euangelicae praedicationis*), the subjects of both halves of both books. Though both phrases have patristic backgrounds,<sup>105</sup> the idea of structuring a saint's life in these terms was Alcuin's own.

The term *opus geminum* suggests that the structure and content of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was identical in both prose and verse. This is not the case. The prose book opens with two chapters on the life of Wilgisl,<sup>106</sup> Willibrord's father, a saintly layman (*Vita Willibrordi* 1, 1), and the prophetic

<sup>99</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, prologue: *Unam quoque priori libello super addidi omeliam (...) Item secundo adieci sermoni beleiacum carmen (...)*. Cf. BERSCHIN 1991, p. 124 and idem 2010, p. 169; VIARRE 1989, pp. 226-227; WAMPACH 1953, pp. 132-133.

<sup>100</sup> BERSCHIN 2010, pp. 169-170. Cf. POULIN 2005.

<sup>101</sup> The mass has at times been 'discovered' by various authors (ORCHARD 1995a and 2000b; SCHNEYDERBERG 1995; LOCHNER 1987), but it was Orchard who proved that the mass was Alcuin's work.

<sup>102</sup> Contra BERSCHIN 1991, pp. 130-131, EBERT 1880, p. 24, REISCHMANN (tr.) 1989, p. 42, SCHROEDER 1990, p. 350, WALTER 1973, p. 37, WAMPACH 1953, p. 130-132.

<sup>103</sup> *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 5, 8, 12, and 2, 2, 6, 10, and 12.

<sup>104</sup> *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 14 and 2, 13 respectively.

<sup>105</sup> Both *miraculorum operatio* and *ministerium praedicationis* occur several times in Bede, as well as in Ambrose and Cassiodorus, but never combined in one sentence. *Signorum ostensio* occurs in Gregory the Great (*Dialogi* 1, 12, on which WOOD 1999b, p. 96; McCREADY 1989, pp. 3-4, 19-21). Alcuin's juxtaposition of these terms struck a chord with Alfrid, who used it in the *Vita Liudgeri*.

<sup>106</sup> The name is also rendered Wilgils or Wilgis; I will retain the form Wilgisl, which seems to be the original.

dream which Willibrord's mother is said to have had in the night of the saint's conception.<sup>107</sup> In this dream she swallowed the moon and its light started to shine from the womb as an indication of the sanctity of the child she conceived that night (1, 2). We then learn of Willibrord's birth and baptism, and his oblation into the monastery of Ripon, where he proved to be a new Samuel (1, 3). Hearing of the great learning of bishop Egbert and the priest Wictbert, Willibrord left Ripon as a young man, and went to Ireland, to live with these two men. He stayed there for twelve years (1, 4). Aged thirty-two, however, Willibrord became consumed by religious fervour to preach to the pagans, and boarded ship, arriving in Frisia, but moving on swiftly to Francia to muster the support of the Frankish leader (*dux*) Pippin (1, 5). Pippin recognized Willibrord's sanctity, allowed him to preach in Francia, and then sent him to Rome to be consecrated as a bishop (1, 6).

In Rome, pope Sergius<sup>108</sup> received a prophetic dream, in which an angel showed him Willibrord's sanctity, and asked the pope to consecrate Willibrord archbishop. The pope duly obliged, and in the process gave Willibrord a new name, Clement (1, 7). Reinforced with the pope's blessing, Willibrord returned to the task of preaching even more zealously, and even more effectively (1, 8). Eventually the saint went outside of Francia as well, to preach to the pagan Frisians under their king Radbod. Radbod kindly received the saint, but Willibrord was unable to generate any effect, and went on to the Danes, who turned out to be even more ferocious than the Frisians (1, 9).<sup>109</sup> On the way back from Denmark, Willibrord camped on an island named Fositesland, where the saint desecrates the holy well by baptising converts in it. The locals, amazed that the gods do not punish Willibrord for his sacrilege, report the event to Radbod (1, 10), who was greatly enraged by the saint's behaviour. The saint preached to the king,<sup>110</sup> who eventually let him go unharmed (1, 11). Returning to Francia, Willibrord continued to preach and set up churches (1, 12). After Pippin's death and his succession by Charles Martel, the latter managed to subdue the Frisians, and Willibrord continued his work of preaching amongst them (1, 13).

The following ten chapters (1, 14-23) provide ten miracle stories as separate episodes, introduced by a brief interior preface (1, 14). Thus we hear of the time when Willibrord desecrated a pagan shrine in *villa Walicbrum*,<sup>111</sup> where the guard of the shrine struck the saint with a sword. He could not hurt the saint, and died three days later as a result of divine vengeance (1, 14). During

<sup>107</sup> There is an extensive literature on dreaming in the Middle Ages. Cf. Van EGMOND 2005; DUTTON 1994; KESKIAHO 2005, esp. pp. 242-245; idem 2015, pp. 52-59, there p. 56.

<sup>108</sup> Sergius I (687-701).

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Von PADBERG 1995, pp. 75, 190.

<sup>110</sup> On this sermon, cf. Von PADBERG 1997.

<sup>111</sup> The Carolingian *emporium* retrieved near Domburg, on the Dutch island of Walcheren.

another journey, the saint was cursed by a man guarding a wheat field, somewhere near *Suestra*.<sup>112</sup> The following day, the man who had cursed the saint died on the spot (1, 15). While travelling through sandy coastal areas, the saint once produced a spring by praying (1, 16).<sup>113</sup> The saint moreover once quenched the thirst of twelve thirsty men with one flask of mass wine, which was afterwards found to be as full as before the men drank (1, 17), and on another occasion he blessed a barrel, which held only a little wine, and touched it with his staff, after which the wine in the barrel miraculously increased, until the barrel started to overflow (1, 18). On yet another occasion, the saint managed to saturate the thirst of forty men from four small flasks (1, 19).<sup>114</sup> When, on another occasion, a rich man refused to drink with the saint, who was camping wild on his pastures, he was unable to drink for a year, until Willibrord returned, and lifted the curse (1, 20). Willibrord also dispelled an outbreak of disease in a nunnery in Trier by blessing the water (1, 21), and performed an exorcism by means of blessed water (1, 22).<sup>115</sup> Finally, Willibrord baptised Charles Martel's son Pippin, and prophesised that the child would be greater than his ancestors (1, 23), pointing forward to Pippin's assumption of the throne in 751.

*Vita Willibrordi* 1, 24 provides a catalogue of virtues,<sup>116</sup> mostly the virtues of a bishop and missionary, rather than a monk or abbot. It then mentions Willibrord's death and burial in Echternach. This event is followed by further miracles. The saint's sarcophagus grew miraculously, so that it was big enough for the saint (1, 25). A brother living far away from Echternach received a prophetic dream reporting Willibrord's departure from this life, and miraculous light and scent often occurred near the bed in which the saint had died (1, 26).<sup>117</sup> Through the unction with oil from the lamps which burned over the saint's tomb, people were cured of disease,<sup>118</sup> and penitent sinners were freed of their fetters by praying in the saint's church (1, 27). A paralysed woman was carried into the church, and was healed near the site of the saint's relics (1, 28), and the same happened to a young man who suffered from epilepsy (1, 29). Finally, a deacon, who stole a cross containing relics<sup>119</sup> from the church, fell ill as a consequence, and died, while the stolen relic cross was retrieved. This story is used as a warning not to steal from the church. Then the text shifts

<sup>112</sup> Susteren, near Maastricht.

<sup>113</sup> Many 'wells of Willibrord' are known, but the exact place is not identified in the *Vita Willibrordi*, and by consequence no identification of an individual well can be made. Cf. BOEREN 1958; BORCHGRAVE 1864, p. 17; KIESEL 1969, pp. 97-98; MARGRY 1997; cf. on well-creating miracles ZOEPEF 1908, pp. 190-192.

<sup>114</sup> ZOEPEF 1908, pp. 192-193.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. below, section 2.5 on the importance of water and wine.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. BERSCHIN 1991, pp. 125-126.

<sup>117</sup> ZOEPEF 1908, p. 195.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. BARTLETT 2013, p. 249 on this practice.

<sup>119</sup> That the cross contained relics only shows in the verse account, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 32.

from narrative to exhortative, urging the audience to live a chaste life, in order that the prayers devoted to saint Willibrord will be heard by the saint, and sins forgiven (1, 30). The last chapter of the prose life tells of the miraculous increase of the wine stores in Echternach on the feast of Wilgisl (1, 31), after which follows the sermon on the feast day of the saint, which has already been discussed (1, 32).<sup>120</sup>

The verse book has a different order.<sup>121</sup> The story of Willibrord's background and birth has been moved from the opening chapters to the appendix at the end, and the story of Willibrord's education in Ripon and in Ireland is omitted entirely. The verse commences with an account of Willibrord's life as a missionary, but here the emphasis is not on mission and conversion, as in the prose, but on the pastoral aspects of Willibrord's work: further Christianization after the initial acceptance of the faith.<sup>122</sup> In keeping with this shift, the story of the journey to the Danes, the return to Francia through Fositesland, the confrontation with Radbod, and Willibrord's sermon, more than ten percent of the length of the prose book, is limited to fourteen lines in the verse. The confrontation with Radbod and Willibrord's sermon are left out completely. The foundation of Utrecht as Willibrord's see, however, receives a separate chapter in the verse, while it was not mentioned in the prose. *Vita Willibrordi*, 2, 13 gives a completely different connecting device between the section focussing on mission and preaching and the miracle section. Whereas 1, 14 states that preaching should always be held to be superior to miracles (a criticism of miracles that has roots in the works of Augustine),<sup>123</sup> but some miracle stories should be told nonetheless, 2, 13 states that the saint performed a host of miracles, but only a few can be reported. The critical stance concerning the purpose of miracles found in 1, 14 is absent here, but this may be due in part to the fact that the reader is referred to the prose if he wants to know more about the miracles. The treatment of miracles in the verse book is extremely brief, which suggests they did not have a central role in Alcuin's ideas about the contemplation of sanctity.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, dedicatory letter: *Unam quoque priori libello super addidi omeliam* (...). Cf. infra.

<sup>121</sup> WIELAND 1992, p. 89 would have that this is a conscious imitation of the narrative of Vergil's *Aeneid*. As stated previously, the source imitated may be Bede's *Vitae Cuthberti*. For the differences in chapter structure, cf. below.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. for the difference WOOD 2001, p. 4.

<sup>123</sup> E.g. *De civitate Dei* 22, 8. Cf. on the Alcuin passage ANGENENDT 2010a, p. 69; DEMM 1975; Van EGMOND 2004; Van UYTFANGHE 1981. MAYR-HARTING's claim (2009, pp. 212-213) 'that Willibrord's miracles are narrated to point out the virtues of his ministry of preaching' is a *non sequitur*. Cf. for criticism of miracles in Carolingian Francia the *Vita altera Sancti Bonifatii* 21 (BHL 1401, ed. LEVISON 1905, pp. 76-77). Cf. also GRAUS 1965, p. 47 (referring to miracle-critical lives, but not that all of the examples given are Carolingian); WEST 2010. On Augustine, MOURANT 1974; cf. McCREADY 1989, pp. 3, 33-38 on Gregory the Great's use of Augustine in this respect.

<sup>124</sup> STELLA 2010, pp. 117-118. The reference to the prose version is in *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 13.

The miracle stories section of verse, chapters 14-23 is strikingly similar to its prose counterpart in prose, chapters 14-23 – a similarity that is all the more striking as the preceding sections showed such a marked difference between prose and verse, and the following sections do likewise. Discussing the *post mortem* miracles, the miracles of healing lamp oil and the liberated sinner are brought to the first place, rather than the miracles at the site of the bed in which Willibrord died, while the prophetic dream of the brother who lived far away from Echternach is left out completely. Finally, the exhortation at the end of 1, 30 has no counterpart in book 2.

Book 1	Book 2	Content	Source
1	<b>33</b>	Wilgisl, the saintly layman	Matthew 5:15 Family tradition?
2	<b>34a</b>	Willibrord's mother's dream	Luke 1:5-6 <i>Vita sancti Aidani</i> 1 (BHL 184)? Family tradition?
3		Willibrord's upbringing in Ripon	1 Samuel 1:20, 23, 2:26 Stephen of Ripon, <i>Vita sancti Wilfrithi</i> 26 (BHL 8889)? Family tradition?
4		Willibrord's twelve years in Ireland	Genesis 12:1 Luke 3:23 Ephesians 4:13) Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 5, 10
5a	1	Willibrord's journey to Frisia	Matthew 9:37 Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 5, 10
<b>5b</b>	2	Preaching	Jeremiah 4:3
6	3	Pippin sends Willibrord to Rome	Romans 10:13 1 Timothy 3:1-7 Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 5, 11
7a	4	Sergius' dream and Willibrord's ordination	Exodus 29:5 Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 5, 11
7b	5	Willibrord receives the name <i>Clemens</i>	Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> 5, 11
8	6	Preaching in Francia	
9	7	Journey to the Frisians and Danes	Echternach tradition?
10	8	Baptising the converts on Fositesland	Echternach tradition? Local tradition?
11		Confrontation with Radbod	
12		Preaching	
13a	9	Conquest of Frisia by Charles Martel	2 Samuel 12:31 1 Chronicles 20:3

13b	10	Preaching amongst the Frisians	
	11	Willibrord receives <i>Traiectum</i> as a see	Bede, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> V, 11
	12	Preaching	Matthew 25:19-21
	13	Not all things the saint did, can be narrated	Romans 9:26
14a		Interior preface	
14b	14	Miracle of <i>Walichrum</i>	Romans 12:19 Echternach tradition?
15	15	Miracle near <i>Suestra</i>	Echternach tradition?
16	16	Miracle of the spring in the coastal area	Exodus 17:6 Bede, <i>Vita sancti Cuthberti prosaica</i> 18 (BHL 2021)? Echternach tradition?
17	17	Miracle of the saturation of twelve paupers	Luke 6:38 Echternach tradition?
18	18	Miracle of the overflowing barrel	Matthew 17:9, Mark 9:9 Gregory the Great, <i>Dialogi</i> 1, 9 Echternach tradition?
19	19	Miracle of the saturation of forty	John 2:7-11, 14:12 Echternach tradition?
20	20	Miracle of the cursed rich man	Matthew 10:40 Echternach tradition?
21	21	Miracle of the curing of the nunnery in Trier	Acts 9:36-38 Echternach tradition?
22	22	Miracle of the exorcism	Echternach tradition?
23	23	Prophecy on Pippin III	Anso of Lobbes, <i>Vita Erminonis</i> 9 (BHL 2614)? Echternach tradition?
24	24	Catalogue of virtues – Willibrord's death	Genesis 25:8, 35:29
25a	25	Miracle of the sarcophagus	Echternach tradition?
25b	26	A wondrous smell filled the whole church during the burial rites	Echternach tradition?
	27a	That miracles often happened near the saint's grave	Echternach tradition?
26a		Miracle of the brother's dream	Echternach tradition?
26b	28	Miracles of light at the bed in which Willibrord died	Echternach tradition?
26c	29	Miracles of scent at the bed in which Willibrord died	Echternach tradition?

27	<b>27b</b>	Miracles of healing oil of the lamps and the liberation of the repentant sinner	Echternach tradition?
28	30	Miracle of the healing of the paralysed woman	Echternach tradition?
29	31	Miracle of the healing of the epileptic young man	Echternach tradition?
30a	32	Miracle of the stealing deacon	Proverbs 18:3 Echternach tradition?
30b		Exhortative conclusion of the <i>Vita Willibrordi</i> proper	
31	34b	Wilgisl, the holy hermit	Deuteronomy 28:3-4 (Luke 1:42) Family tradition?
32		Sermon on Willibrord's feast day	

Table 4. Schematic presentation of the structure of the *Vita Willibrordi*.

Note: Because the order in Book I is followed here, some sections of Book II are given *ex ordine*; these are highlighted in bold. Where no chapter number is given, this narrative element does not appear in the book in question.

### 1.5. Alcuin's sources

Alcuin used a number of written sources for his *Vita Willibrordi*. As said before, the direct inspiration for the form of the *opus geminum* were Bede's *Vitae Cuthberti*, but these are not quoted or alluded to in any way, despite the fact that Bede had mentioned Willibrord in these works. While he did not plunder the *Vitae Cuthberti* for stories, Alcuin certainly used Bede's report on Willibrord's career in *Historia ecclesiastica* 5 for *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 3-8 and 2, 1-7. Twenty-six out of thirty-two chapters of the prose book and twenty-eight out of thirty-four of the verse do not derive from Bede.<sup>125</sup> It therefore goes too far to say that the *Vita Willibrordi* is 'based largely on Bede's account' as some scholars have done.<sup>126</sup> There are significant differences between both texts too.<sup>127</sup> Bede's report on Willibrord is interwoven with reports on other missionaries, one named Suitberct and two named Hewald.<sup>128</sup> Alcuin says nothing about these men. Moreover, Bede alleged that it was

<sup>125</sup> Also observed by PALMER 2009, pp. 30-31.

<sup>126</sup> Quoted from CONTRENI 1986, p. 427. Cf. also VEYRARD-COSME 2003a, p. liii.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. WOOD 2001, p. 81.

<sup>128</sup> Finding Willibrord's companions has become something of a sport amongst (Dutch) medievalists. Cf. LAMPEN 1920c, p. 265; idem 1939, p. 39, idem 1948, pp. 49-53; SCHMITZ 1942, p. 70; SCHROEDER 1979, pp. 374-375; VERBIST 1939, p. 180; VIS 1987; idem 1990; WAMPACH 1953, p. 211.

Pippin who had given Willibrord Utrecht as a see, while Alcuin only mentioned Utrecht as a place of arrival, and reported that it was Charles Martel who gave it to Willibrord.<sup>129</sup> Alcuin also added new material, such as Sergius' prophetic dream.

Some of Alcuin's divergences from Bede appear meant to tie Willibrord closer to the example of Saint Peter. Bede said that Willibrord set out to Frisia with twelve companions, Alcuin says there were eleven. This affects the typology significantly: twelve companions makes Christ Willibrord's typological ancestor, eleven changes him into Saint Peter.<sup>130</sup> Bede reported two visits to Rome, with the second culminating in Willibrord's ordination as archbishop. Alcuin only reported the second visit, and says that Willibrord's ordination took place in Saint Peter's, while Bede had placed it in Santa Cecilia in Trastevere.<sup>131</sup> Again, Alcuin linked Willibrord to Saint Peter in spite of his source. Alcuin did not explain why. Perhaps it was because Peter was a patron of Echternach, perhaps it was in order to stress that Willibrord was the apostolic rock (*petrus*) on which the new Frisian church was founded, and thus a second Peter, perhaps both.<sup>132</sup>

Beyond Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* no other sources on Willibrord can be linked securely to Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* with certainty. Alcuin may have known the *Liber pontificalis* or its derivative, Bede's *De temporum ratione* 66 (also known separately as *Chronica maiora*), Stephen of Ripon's *Vita sancti Wilfrithi* or the letter which Boniface wrote to pope Stephen III. All of these treat Willibrord's career into some detail,<sup>133</sup> none of these texts was certainly known to Alcuin. As Deug-Su noted, Willibrord's prophecy on Pippin has similarities with a prophecy on Pippin with which Anso of Lobbes credited Ermino, though whether there is any influence between the two texts is uncertain.<sup>134</sup>

Some of the miracle stories bear a strong resemblance to older antecedents. Eighty years ago Lanzoni identified close similarities between the dream of Willibrord's mother and other dreams where the saint's mother swallows the moon, e.g. Saint Cayran and Saint Máedóc, and expressed a

<sup>129</sup> PLUMMER 1898 (ed.), p. 292 states '(...) in this he was probably only confirming what his father had done', but this is by no means certain.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. PLUMMER 1898 (ed.), p. 288, which comments on the significance of the number 12 to Bede, and VEYRARD-COSME 2003a, pp. 325-326 for Alcuin. For the importance of Saint Peter's, cf. the discussion of *Carmen* 44, below.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. PLUMMER 1898 (ed.), p. 292, DEUG-SU 1980a, p. 76. The point is that Willibrord was ordained on November 22, the feast of saint Caecilia. KIRSCH 1940, p. 12 follows Alcuin over Bede. Bede is more likely to have been correct, as Willibrord was ordained on the Feast of Saint Cecilia, November 22.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. DEUG-SU 1980a, p. 76.

<sup>133</sup> Boniface, *Epistola* 109, ed. TANGL 1916, pp. 234-236.

<sup>134</sup> Anso of Lobbes, *Vita Erminonis* 9 (BHL 2614), eds. KRUSCH & LEVISON 1913, pp. 468-469.

Anso and Alcuin wrote around the same time. DEUG-SU 1980a, p. 86 thinks Anso influenced Alcuin; WAMPACH 1953, p. 133 held the opposite relationship, and I am not sure whether either really influenced the other, or perhaps two authors struck upon the same idea.

confidence that Irish sources had inspired Alcuin.<sup>135</sup> A miracle in which Willibrord produced a spring of sweet water near the sea may be an imitation of a miracle in which Saint Cuthbert produced a well from a rock (in imitation of Moses).<sup>136</sup> In addition, the miraculous increase of wine in the storeroom of Willibrord's monastery, recounted in *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 18 and 2, 18 is very similar to a miracle performed by Boniface, bishop of Ferentis, in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*. Gregory wrote about the bishop of an impoverished church, which only possessed one vineyard to gather an income from. As the harvest failed one year, the bishop still had the remaining crop harvested and the barrels prepared, and even shared out from the harvest to the poor. The little wine he had poured into the church's own barrels in the storeroom miraculously increased, almost to the point of pouring over onto the floor. When the bishop and his cousin, the priest Constantius, found out, Boniface ordered the priest to keep the miracle hidden. He did so partly in imitation of Christ, and partly because he feared his humility would be compromised if people would seek him out for the miracles that took place in his presence.<sup>137</sup> What Alcuin (and to Gregory before him) wanted to point out here was Willibrord's modesty as well as his proficiency in the imitation of Christ, both exemplified in his hidden miracles (*mores*), a point to which we will return below.<sup>138</sup>

Even with the inclusion of these texts, however, most of the *Vita Willibrordi* does not have a precedent in written sources as far as we know. It is possible that Alcuin relied on oral tradition for most part.<sup>139</sup> In fact, there are three hypothetical traditions Alcuin could have drawn from, first of all an oral tradition concerning Willibrord within the Northumbrian family or kin group to which Alcuin, Beornrad and Willibrord belonged. The stories about Wilgis, whose successor as abbot of an unidentified monastery on the Holderness<sup>140</sup> Alcuin would eventually become, may have found their way to Alcuin through such a tradition.<sup>141</sup> Secondly, Alcuin could also have heard traditions about Willibrord in Echternach, or (thirdly) in Utrecht, when he visited these places.<sup>142</sup> The miracle

<sup>135</sup> LANZONI 1927, pp. 248-249. Cf. ANGENENDT 2000, p. 246; DEUG-SU 1980a, p. 64-65. Contra VEYRARD-COSME 2003a, p. 398; eadem 2003c, p. 82. The life of Máedóc of Ferns (also known as Aidan, BHL 184) seems the most likely candidate as Alcuin's source amongst surviving hagiographic texts.

<sup>136</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 16 / 2, 16; Bede, *Vita Cuthberti* 18. Moses: Exodus 17. Cf. KRISCH 2004, pp. 440-442.

<sup>137</sup> Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 1, 9. The same theme of keeping miracles hidden also appears elsewhere, e.g. Bede, *Vita Cuthberti prosa* 10, ed. COLGRAVE 1940, p. 190. Cf. for Christ Matthew 17:9, Mark 9:9.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. the discussion of the catalogue of virtues in *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 24, cf. section 2.2.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. SMITH 1990.

<sup>140</sup> Not necessarily Spurn Head, as the consensus seems to be (cf. FOOT 2006, p. 99, n. 114; GARRISON 1995, p. 54; LEVISON 1946, p. 55; PETTS 2009, p. 88); in the earlier Middle Ages the Holderness formed a promontory between the sea and the marshlands around the river Humber, which is exactly how Alcuin described the location of the monastery.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. WOOD 2010.

<sup>142</sup> Alcuin probably visited Echternach in 780, during the journey that was commemorated in *Carmen* 4 (as above), and certainly visited it at an unknown moment after 785, given that he wrote *Carmen* 8 (as above) to Beornrad from Echternach (v. 17) when Beornrad was already bishop in Sens.

stories which Alcuin reports, especially those which occurred near Willibrord's grave in Echternach, and possibly also the Denmark/Fositesland account could have found their way to Alcuin through Echternach. As neither the hypothetical family transmission nor the hypothetical Utrecht tradition can explain all the events narrated in the *Vita Willibrordi* that do not derive from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, an oral tradition in Echternach is the best available explanation for how Alcuin acquired his material – although, again, the ultimate proof for such a contention is lacking. Most likely, the oral tradition in Echternach was supplemented by writing as well. The opening words of the prose prologue of the *Vita Willibrordi* ('After letters of your excellency were brought to us'<sup>143</sup>) imply that the writing process started for Alcuin when he received letters from Beornrad, the abbot of Echternach. Alcuin does not disclose the contents of these letters; he only suggests that they contained a request from Beornrad for the composition of the *Vita Willibrordi*. They may, however, have contained some material for this requested *vita* as well.

As said, Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was composed in the later 780s at the very earliest, and more likely only in the mid-790s, more than half a century after Willibrord had died. The first charter evidence for Willibrord's cult can be traced back as far as the early 750s, a dozen years after Willibrord's death, and more than three decades before Alcuin wrote his *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>144</sup> It is possible that some other author composed an earlier *Vita Willibrordi* in the interim, to broadcast the reputation of the new saint. No such earlier *Vita Willibrordi* remains, but Thiofrid wrote that Alcuin had based his *Vita Willibrordi* on an older *vita*, composed by an anonymous Iro-Scottish author.<sup>145</sup>

Scholarly opinion about the Scottus (as Alcuin's anonymous predecessor is known), has varied. Some scholars have simply noted that Thiofrid believed that such an older life existed,<sup>146</sup> others have cast doubt on Thiofrid's report,<sup>147</sup> and yet others have endorsed it.<sup>148</sup> The theory that

<sup>143</sup> *Delatis ad nos vestrae excellentiae litteris (...)*.

<sup>144</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nrs. 44-46, pp. 107-110.

<sup>145</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 475: *Nam primo quidam lingue et gentis Scotticę aggressus tanti viri gesta describere, rustico stilo detrivit dignitatem hystorie; dein Albinus, cognomento Alcuinus, de Britannia, (...) conatus est inurbanum lepido seponere dicto et incompta comere; (...)*. Scottus as an adjective referred to Irish, rather than Scottish affairs before the beginning of the second millennium.

<sup>146</sup> DEUG-SU 1980a, pp. 47-48; GOULLET 2005, p. 25; Poncelet in the prologue of his edition in 1910; SCHROEDER & TRAUFFLER 1996, pp. 28-29, n. 93 and p. 67 (which dates him to c. 768), SEILER 2001, col. 1527, WOOD 2001, p. 71, n. 1.

<sup>147</sup> BERSCHIN 1991, p. 116 noted that Ekkehard IV of Saint Gall used the same topos. Levison, in the prologue of his edition in 1920, p. 93 essentially believed Thiofrid could not have been reliably informed about events three centuries before his own times.

<sup>148</sup> BANNIARD 1992, p. 381 (implicitly); Van der ESSEN 1905, pp. 383-384 (explicitly), idem 1923a, p. 341 (implicitly), HAUCK 1964, p. 236, NORBERG 1995, p. 130, PALMER 2009, p. 31, TALBOT (tr.) 1954, p. 2; TRAUFFLER 1996, p. 49; WAMPACH 1953, pp. 134-135, WATTENBACH [et al.] (trs.) 1888, p. 3.

Thiofrid's report is truthful, and the Scottus and his *Vita Willibrordi* did indeed exist, has at least something to recommend it. The extant written sources only provide source material for part of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*. An older *Vita Willibrordi* could have provided some of the material that we cannot trace before Alcuin.<sup>149</sup> The nascent cult of Willibrord in the 750s and 760s, demonstrated by charter evidence, and archaeological material and artifacts provide a context for a text celebrating the saint's life and deeds, which the Scottus could have provided. On the other hand, Alcuin could have drawn upon oral reports or information provided by Beornrad in the 'letters', if that is what they were.

A comparison of Alcuin's use of sources in his other saints' lives that he composed helps to clarify matters. In both the case of the *Vita Vedasti* and the *Vita Richarii* there was an older *vita* which provided the structure of Alcuin's account. The research of Deug-Su and Veyrard-Cosme has shown that Alcuin's work followed the structure of these sources quite closely. Little is left out, and the overall structure is maintained. Only the style of the work was significantly altered.<sup>150</sup> In addition, as we will see, Alcuin also made changes to the underlying theology of sanctity, but this is a point Veyrard-Cosme did not notice, and which is not important here.

The picture of Alcuin's method is markedly different in cases where Alcuin used several sources, such as his two sermons on Saint Martin.<sup>151</sup> Deug-Su's study shows that these sermons rely on a large corpus of hagiography, including Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini*, *Dialogi*, and *Epistola ad Bassulam*, and Gregory of Tours' *Libri historiarum*.<sup>152</sup> There are, thus, at least two ways in which Alcuin used his sources. Either he used a corpus of sources, and used what he thought useful, tying together segments of his sources in a fashion that has been likened to patchwork quilting,<sup>153</sup> or he relied on a single source, and emended that to fit his stylistic tastes and theological views. The former method is found in the sermons on Saint Martin, the latter in the *Vita Vedasti* and *Vita Richarii*. As Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* derives from at least a number of sources, including a substantial borrowing of content from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, we may assume that Alcuin used the patchwork method in the *Vita Willibrordi*, which makes it unlikely that a fully-fledged *vita* by the Scottus existed.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. PONCELET (ed.) 1910, p. 418, DEUG-SU 1980a, p. 88.

<sup>150</sup> VEYRARD-COSME 1993, 2000, 2003a and 2003b.

<sup>151</sup> Sometimes mistakenly known as a *Vita sancti Martini*.

<sup>152</sup> DEUG-SU 1981. Cf. BERSCHIN 2010, pp. 170-175.

<sup>153</sup> The term is referred to by OTTEN 1997, pp. 28-29, crediting it to John Cavadini. Similar observations have been made elsewhere. Cf. FOX 2005, p. 215, idem 2009, p. 339, GARRISON 2010, p. 139, GORMAN 2009, p. 46, MARENBOON 1981, pp. 30-31, ORCHARD 2000a, p. 41.

We can reconcile Thiofrid's report and the interpretation of Alcuin's habits as a hagiographer involved in *réécriture*. Beornrad's request to Alcuin for a new life may have been accompanied by a narrative or a collection of stories on the saint.<sup>154</sup> Thiofrid reports that what the Scottus wrote were *gesta*.<sup>155</sup> These could have been a full saint's life, but it is equally possible that Thiofrid meant that the Scottus composed a collection of miracle stories. This would be more in line with the argument developed above about Alcuin's methods. Moreover, Alcuin spoke of the miracle stories collectively as *gesta* as well, as he says: 'Even though the ministry of preaching the Gospel should be preferred over all the working of miracles and demonstration of signs, I do not think I must remain silent, on account of God's glory, that gave what is told in the deeds (*gesta*), but rather bind them (the deeds, JV) together with my pen, so that the things which he was known to have done will not disappear in later centuries.'<sup>156</sup> It is the way in which Alcuin bound these deeds together with his own theological views that is the subject of the next chapter.

## 1.6. Conclusion

Our knowledge about the first decades of Willibrord's cult in Echternach, the immediate background to the composition of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, is by necessity based on limited and heterogenous source material, including evidence from archaeological excavations, manuscript studies, and the study of charters preserved in the *Liber aureus* of Echternach. There are several complications in understanding this material, both in terms of date and in terms of meaning. Even so, there are significant insights to be gained that shed light on the development of Willibrord's cult in Echternach and its development from the 750s until the composition of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*.

The charters in the *Liber aureus* indicate a gradual trend towards more attention for Willibrord as founder, as relic, and eventually as patron of the abbey. This trend gained momentum during the abbacy of Beornrad, when Willibrord took over from Peter the role of main patron of Echternach in the charters in the *Liber aureus*. It may also have been around this time that the Rosport retable was commissioned and that the Carolingian church of Echternach was built. The

<sup>154</sup> DEUG-SU 1980a, p. 88.

<sup>155</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 475 and *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 3, 21-22, ibidem, p. 494.

<sup>156</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 14: *Licet omni miraculorum operatione et signorum ostensione ministerium evangelicae praedicationis praeferendum sit, tamen quod a gesta narrantur, ad gloriam donantis Dei non tacenda esse censeo, sed magis stilo alliganda, ne pereant posteris saeculis, quae priscis temporibus acta esse noscuntur*. This passage is completely misinterpreted in FINUCANE 1977, p. 22, when he says that Alcuin acknowledges that common people were still more impressed by miracles than by preaching. Alcuin never says anything of the kind!

role of the abbot, who was a relative of Willibrord, was crucial. It was Beornrad who asked Alcuin to write his *Vita Willibrordi*, which in turn highlighted the similarities between Beornrad's career and Willibrord's. Both were Anglo-Saxons working in Francia, both were archbishop and abbot, both had ties with the Pippinid/Carolingian rulers of Francia, and both were active in the mission. Such similarities will not have been lost on a contemporary audience, Beornrad included.

Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* reflects the interests of the community for which it was written, or at least its abbot's interests, as well as the interests of the author of the text. The focus is on Willibrord as a preacher and a missionary, his close cooperation with the *de facto* rulers of Francia, his abhorrence of violence, and, implicitly, on the importance attached to the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. Even though its author probably thought he followed a Bedan precedent, given his description of what Bede had written in the York poem and the way in which that putative Bedan project is mirrored by Alcuin's own writings in the *Vita Willibrordi*, Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was an innovation in hagiography. It deliberately conceived of a prose and a verse life as a complementary pair from the beginning, rather add a verse *vita* to an existing prose life, sometime after the prose had been written. Through his pairing of two genres of text Alcuin could use both halves of the *Vita* to express a message that was tailored to the perceived needs of a specific audience. The prose life, written for the whole monastic audience and perhaps for a lay audience as well, emphasized the importance of mission and the correct missionary strategies. The verse life, written with the élite of monastic students in mind, focussed on contemplation. Both parts of the work were critical of miracles. Both should be understood with the person of Beornrad, and his various responsibilities as abbot, archbishop, and missionary, in mind.

Whereas Thiofrid stated that Alcuin had based his *Vita Willibrordi* on an older, existing work by an Irish author, it is clear that Alcuin did not have a full *vita* at his disposition to work from. Several chapters in the first half of the *vita* derive from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, while there is a hint of influence from Irish hagiography. Other influences, especially in the styling of the narrative, were biblical. Most of the second half probably derives from stories that were told in Echternach. These traditions may either have come to Alcuin orally or in a written form, as might be inferred from the wording of Alcuin's prologue. If the latter is the case, perhaps this is what Thiofrid referred to as the Irishman's work. The *Vita Willibrordi* we have today, however, is fully the product of Alcuin's genius. This is all the more evident if we compare his method of composition from various sources in the *Vita Willibrordi* with the method used when rewriting his other saints' lives for Richarius and Vedast.

## 2. Alcuin on sanctity

### 2.1. Predestination

This chapter investigates Alcuin's ideas about the origins, the nature, and the purpose of sanctity. Over the past decades, Alcuin has received substantial attention as a political thinker,<sup>1</sup> the instigator of educational<sup>2</sup> and liturgical reform,<sup>3</sup> a logician<sup>4</sup> and a theologian.<sup>5</sup> All of this attention notwithstanding, little research has been done on Alcuin's thought on sanctity. Alcuin made remarks on these subjects in several works, in different genres, written at different times, with different exigences, and for different audiences.<sup>6</sup> It is important therefore to study different groups of writings in turn, showing their interrelation and the way in which different emphases in each complement our understanding of Alcuin's ideas about sanctity as a whole. But let me begin by

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. WALLACH 1977.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., BOUSSARD 1981; DIEM 1998; FORTGENS 1947; HOLTZ 1997 and SWIGGERS 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g. ABERCROMBIE 1953; ELLARD 1956 for liturgy, but cf. BULLOUGH 1983, pp. 66-67 and DESHUSSES 1965 for a reassessment of the extent of Alcuin's involvement with the so-called *Hucusque*.

<sup>4</sup> DEMETRACOPOULOS 2006; MARENBON 1981, idem 1997.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. OTTEN 2000.

<sup>6</sup> For a study in how different audiences could elicit different nuances in a definition of sanctity from a single author, cf. SMITH 1994, on Hucbald of Saint-Amand. For Alcuin, cf. AUERNHEIMER 2003, pp. 134-140. The term 'exigence' derives from the study of rhetoric. Cf. GILL & WHEDBEE 1997.

letting my sources speak. Alcuin's *Vita Vedasti*<sup>7</sup> opens with a general reflection on saints and their purpose:

*Postquam Deus et dominus noster Iesus Christus ovem quaerere perditam de caelis in hunc mundum per virginalē venerat uterum, et tota suae dispensationis et nostrae salutis peracta plenitudine, cum triumpho gloriae ad sedem paternae maiestatis reversus, ut tetricas ignorantiae tenebras toto depelleret orbe, multa sanctorum lumina doctorum, euangelicae praedicationis luce fulgentia, toto diviserat mundo: ut, sicut caelum fulgentibus ornatur stellis, quae tamen omnes ab uno inlustrantur sole, sic et lata terrarum spatia sanctis splenderent doctoribus, qui tamen ab aeterno sole inluminati, divina praeveniente gratia, caecas ignorantiae tenebras verae fidei fulgore et glorioso Christi nomine inlustrarent, ut, eis ministrantibus, longa ab initio saeculi esuries aeternae vitae aepulis satiaretur.*

After he came into this world through a virgin's womb to seek his lost sheep; after the whole fullness of his forgiveness and our salvation had been performed; after returning to the seat of the glory of his father's majesty with the triumph of glory, our God and Lord Jesus Christ spread many lights of holy teachers, shining with the light of the preaching of the Gospel, over all the world, to expel the dark shadows of ignorance, so that, just as heaven is decorated with glittering stars, which are still all enlightened by one sun, just so wide tracts of land shine with holy teachers, who, though enlightened by the eternal sun, through the anticipation of divine grace, illustrate blind shadows with the radiance of true faith and with Christ's glorious name, so that, through their service, the hunger, which lasted since the beginning of time, was replenished by the food of eternal life.

In the following sentence, which turns the focus of the story to Saint Vedast, Alcuin again refers to God's agency, this time indicating that it was God's grace which sent Saint Vedast to Arras.<sup>8</sup> Both in the general principle of sanctity, then, and in the choice of individual saints, God's foreknowledge and predestination play an important part, according to Alcuin, who describes both God's actions on Earth and those of the saints through a frame of light.

Alcuin's two other saints' lives provide a similar picture of the role of predestination in the making of sanctity. In the *Vita Richarii* Alcuin is the least specific and only states that Saint

<sup>7</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 1.

<sup>8</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 1: *De quorum numero sanctus Dei sacerdos Vedastus et praedicator egregius (...) in has, divina dirigente gratia, ob multorum salutem pervenit regiones, (...).*

Richarius, who was born a pagan, converted ‘driven by the inspiration of divine grace,’<sup>9</sup> but in the story of Willibrord’s mother’s dream in the opening chapters of the *Vita Willibrordi* Alcuin gave his most extensive description of the relation between Christ, sanctity, predestination, and light. In this dream Willibrord’s mother sees the moon gradually grow full, fall into her mouth, and fill her stomach with light. Upon consulting a priest for the meaning of this dream, the mother-to-be learns that the child she conceived that night is destined to become a saint, ‘who destroys the gloomy errors of darkness, and will show the full orb of his perfection wherever he will go, accompanied by the splendour of divine light, will draw the sight of many people to him.’ Alcuin concluded that ‘the true outcome of events followed his interpretation of her dream’, a statement which both introduces Alcuin’s account of Willibrord’s career and emphasizes that Willibrord was, to Alcuin, a preacher and missionary.<sup>10</sup>

This dream story is also significant for the way Alcuin tied it to biblical precedents. At the beginning of the story of Willibrord’s mother’s dream, Alcuin states that he is to report the prophecy of Willibrord’s divine election. Like John the Baptist, a *lucifer* (a bringer of light, or, in this context, the morning star<sup>11</sup>), Willibrord was ‘made holy by God from his mother’s womb,’<sup>12</sup> a partial quote from the verse ‘he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb’.<sup>13</sup> This verse is not uncommon in Merovingian hagiography.<sup>14</sup> Alcuin’s alternative reading (*sanctificatus* for *Spiritu Sancto replebitur*), is not wholly uncommon either. There are parallels in, amongst others, the works of Bede and Jerome, and the same phrase is also found in an inscription from the church of Saint Martin in Tours, which Alcuin may have read when he resided in Tours.<sup>15</sup> The significance of Alcuin’s use of the more uncommon rendering of this verse is that it highlights one element of his concept of sanctity: a saint is a saint because God fills him with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Richarii*, 3: *inspiratione gratiae divinae compunctus*.

<sup>10</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 2: *qui luce veritatis caliginosos tenebrarum errores discutit, et quocumque perrexerit, comitante superni luminis splendore, plenum suae perfectionis ostenderit globum, coruscanteque rumoris eius candore et morum pulchritudine, multorum in se adlicit aspectum*. *Cuius ergo somni et interpretationem rerum veritas subsequuta est*.

<sup>11</sup> In the verse book, the term *lucifer* is also applied to Willibrord directly: Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 34, vv. 23-26; the same term is also applied to Richarius in Alcuin, *Vita Richarii* 1.

<sup>12</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 2: *Et ut eiusdem sancti patris Willibrordi altius nativitatis originem et mox in utero matris divinae electionis repetam praesagia, revertar, unde egressus sum. Nam sicut sanctissimus praecursor domini nostri Iesu Christi beatus Iohannes Baptista, ex utero matris Deo sanctificatus, (...)*. On the image of John the Baptist in Anglo-Saxon episcopal hagiography, cf. KINGSLEY 2014, pp. 220-221.

<sup>13</sup> Luke 1:15: *Spiritu Sancto replebitur adhuc ex utero matris suae*.

<sup>14</sup> *Vita Sancti Arnulfi* 2 (BHL 689-692), ed. KRUSCH 1888, p. 432; *Vita Sanctae Genovefae* A, 4 (BHL 3335), ed. KRUSCH 1896, p. 216.

<sup>15</sup> e.g. Bede, *In Lucae Evangelium expositio*, ed. HURST 1960, p. 135: *hic de utero matris sanctus uocatus fuit*; Jerome/Didymus Alexandrinus, *Liber de Spiritu Sancto* 2, PL 23, col. 105: *Iohannes quippe adhuc in matris utero sanctificatus exsultat*; Jerome, *Commentarii in Ephesius* 2, PL 26, col. 509. The inscription: ed. Le BLANT 1856, p. 243, nr. 182.4. The inscription, however, is not securely dated.

With his reference to John the Baptist Alcuin cast Willibrord's birth in terms that relate to predestination as well as the incarnation. Through John, Alcuin connected Willibrord to Christ. In addition to this typology from the New Testament, Alcuin also compared Willibrord to an Old Testament figure: Samuel. The opening words of the prose *Vita Willibrordi*, preceding the story of the dream are borrowed from the story of Samuel's birth (1 Samuel 1), and the subsequent story of Willibrord's oblation derives its wording from the following chapter, on Samuel's upbringing in the temple.<sup>16</sup> Given the suggestion of divine intervention in Samuel's birth as well as in John the Baptist's, the fact that the dream story with its reference to predestination is accompanied by references to these biblical archetypes suggests that Alcuin aimed to construct a double typology here: just as God predestined John the Baptist's birth, and Samuel's birth before that, just so he arranged the Willibrord's birth, predestining his sanctity in keeping with the general plan of salvation.

Alcuin described this predestined sanctity with the metaphor of light, an image that returns in several other places.<sup>17</sup> Willibrord's preaching, Alcuin said, enlightened the Frisians,<sup>18</sup> and light plays a part in miracles that take place in the vicinity of the saint's relics.<sup>19</sup> One of the most revealing examples of Alcuin's use of this narrative frame is the verse account of Willibrord's preaching, where it is said that Willibrord, 'full of God, light from Christ's light' went from place to place, and 'spread the rays of the light of the Gospels into hearts'.<sup>20</sup> There is patristic precedent for this manner of speaking, especially in Augustine,<sup>21</sup> as well as biblical example, e.g. in John 1:4-8. The latter precedent invites us to take a look at what Alcuin makes of this passage in his *Commentary on John*.

Alcuin twice commented on this passage in the Gospel, first when the verse by verse commentary reaches this point (John 1:4), and again when commenting on John 5:36. On v. 4 ('In him was life, and the life was the light of men'), Alcuin said that this means that reason is the light that gives life to man, the *rationalis animal*, created after God's image. Life and wisdom, however,

<sup>16</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 3. The opening phrases of this chapter also hark back to the narrative of Samuel's birth and oblation in the first two chapters of 1 Samuel. Cf. also De JONG 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. for Alcuin VEYRARD-COSME 1997, more in general ANGENENDT 2002, pp. 387-388.

<sup>18</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 5: *Sed ut somnii, Deo dispensante, impleretur veritas, (...) illas in partes navigare cogitavit et clarissima evangelicae praedicationis luce torpentes longa infidelitate populos, si Dei esset voluntas, inlustrare; ibidem 13: Nec quicquam in ea vetusti erroris tenebras ignorantiae latuisse sinebat, sed totam evangelica luce sine ulla dilatione perfundeat (...)*. Cf. *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 2: *qui luce veritatis caliginosos tenebrarum errores discutit (...)* comitante superni luminis splendore (...); *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 13: *Nec quicquam in ea vetusti erroris tenebras ignorantiae latuisse sinebat, sed totam evangelica luce sine ulla dilatione perfundeat.*

<sup>19</sup> cf. below, section 3.3.

<sup>20</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 2, vv. 1-4: *Ille deo plenus, lumen de lumine Christo, / Iam quascumque piis peragravit gressibus urbes, / Vel castella, casas, vel conpita, semper ubique / Sparsit evangelicae radios per pectora lucis.* cf. also 2, 10, vv. 4-6: *Et lux orta fuit residenti mortis in umbra / Iamque diu populo; verus sol Christus ubique, / Eluxit, subito tenebris cedentibus atris.*

<sup>21</sup> SPITZ 1972, pp. 46-47; CHIDESTER 1992. Cf. also the use of light in hagiography, which starts with Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi* (2, 2) at the latest.

are decidedly the prerogative of faith, as Alcuin concluded: ‘But also like an animal is whatever man, who does not understand the things that are of the Holy Spirit.’<sup>22</sup> The true light, Alcuin continued, is Christ, who enlightens the hearts of all men with the presence of his knowledge, but some people are stupid and blind. Most interesting is the exegesis for the verses 8-9 (‘He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into (this) world.’) Alcuin here stated that holy people are also rightly called light, as Jesus had said ‘You are the light of the world’ (Matthew 5:14), and Paul had said ‘For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord’ (Ephesians 5:8). He continued: ‘but there is a great difference between the light which is shone upon, and the light which shines; between those who receive participation of the true light so that they shine, and that same eternal light, which not only shines in itself, but also suffices to enlighten with its presence whatever it touches.’<sup>23</sup> When commenting on John 5:37, Alcuin juxtaposed John 1:8 (‘He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light’) with Matthew 5:14. Alcuin again explained that neither John, nor the apostles were lights out of their own right, but that they were lights through Christ, ‘who is the true Sun, rising in the hearts of the faithful.’<sup>24</sup> All of this forms the backdrop to Alcuin’s theology of sanctity, which is decidedly Christocentric, but also claims there is a profound difference between the saints and Christ. Notably he also linked sanctity with salvation, which means that in theory, all true Christians are saints; saints are those who have ‘seen the light’ in a spiritual sense of the phrase.<sup>25</sup>

Alcuin’s idea of predestined sanctity contains a paradox. In his *vitae*, Alcuin presents the saints as examples to the audience of his *vitae*, and actively encourages them to follow the footsteps of the saints.<sup>26</sup> However, if the saints are predestined by God, as Alcuin says, and only express their

<sup>22</sup> Alcuin, *Commentaria in Iohannis evangelium*, PL 100, col. 745: *Quo verbo aperte docetur quod ipsa vitalis ratio, per quam omnia disposita sunt et reguntur, non omnem creaturam, sed rationabilem tantum, ut sapere possit, illuminat. Homines namque, qui ad imaginem Dei facti sunt, percipere sapientiam possunt, animalia non possunt. Sed et animalis quicumque est homo, non percipit ea quae sunt Spiritus Dei.* The last sentence (1 Corinthians 2:14) also appears in Alcuin, *Epistola* 182, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 301, and was first applied to this passage in John by Augustine (*Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium* 1, 1, 1, ed. WILLEMS 1954), and taken here from Bede, *Homeliarum euangelii* 1, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, col. 747: *Sed multum distat inter lucem quae illuminatur, et lucem quae illuminat; inter eos qui participationem verae lucis accipiunt ut luceant, et ipsam lucem perpetuam, quae non solum in se ipsa lucere, sed et sua praesentia, quoscumque attigerit, illustrare sufficit.* The sentence is again borrowed from Bede.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, col. 817: *Nec Joannes per se erat lucerna, nec apostoli per se lumen, sed a lumine Christo ille lucerna, et illi illuminati ab eo, qui est sol verus oriens in cordibus fidelium.*

<sup>25</sup> The key publication on Alcuin and seeing is NOBLE 2005; 2009, pp. 224-226. Cf. Van RENSWOUDE 2011, pp. 105-106 for the interplay of light, blindness, and spiritual seeing in the *Passio Apollonii*.

<sup>26</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 30, 32; *Vita Vedasti*, prologus; *Vita Richarii* 18. This flies in the face of what Patrick Geary argued (GEARY 1994a, p. 22), that ‘They (meaning the saints, JV) glorify God; they do not provide models for mortals.’ It is also in line with the synthesis of high medieval theology in GOODICH 2007, pp. 16-18. It should be

sanctity in the examples of their lives, why should anyone be encouraged to follow their examples? Why the emphasis on preaching, and the description of the saints as teachers? Why would imitating the saints benefit the ordinary faithful? The answer lies in Alcuin's use of Augustine's writings against the Semipelagians.<sup>27</sup>

Alcuin's debt to Augustine has long been noticed.<sup>28</sup> Alcuin's epistolary self-perception was deeply influenced by Augustine,<sup>29</sup> as were his ideas about education,<sup>30</sup> philosophy,<sup>31</sup> prayer,<sup>32</sup> the sacraments,<sup>33</sup> and conversion,<sup>34</sup> his biblical commentaries,<sup>35</sup> theological tracts,<sup>36</sup> and his heresiology.<sup>37</sup> Some of Alcuin's apparent uses of Augustine are less straightforward. Thus on at least one occasion, Alcuin quoted a work he believed to have been written by Augustine, which was in fact a sermon by Caesarius of Arles.<sup>38</sup> Other borrowings from Augustine in Alcuin's works were the product of mediation, e.g. through Bede.<sup>39</sup> Even so, Alcuin was evidently very fond of Augustine's work, and quoted him more often than any other church father. He also actively tried to find works by Augustine which he did not possess himself. While living in Tours he wrote to Charlemagne's cousin Gundrada, asking her to find a copy of Augustine's *De origine animae*, and send it to him.<sup>40</sup> Whether Gundrada did, we do not know, but the anecdote underlines Alcuin's high regard for the African father. It is no wonder, then, that Alcuin's views on predestination echo those of Augustine, especially those expressed in *De praedestinatione sanctorum*.

As his struggle with Pelagius about free will went on, Augustine had gradually developed new views on predestination. Shortly before Augustine's death two monks from southern Gaul, Prosper of Aquitaine and Hilary,<sup>41</sup> asked Augustine to help them challenge the idea of some monks in Lérins

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born in mind that Alcuin wrote before, and was therefore not aware of, the Carolingian controversy over predestination, on which cf. GILLIS 2017 and PEZÉ 2017a and b.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. also MECONI 2014 on sanctity ('deification') in Augustine.

<sup>28</sup> In addition to the works of Alberi and Ogilvy in the preceding notes, cf. also CHÂTILLON 1983; MATTER 2010, and SCHEIBE 1959a, pp. 42-50.

<sup>29</sup> GARRISON 2004, p. 108, but cf. also VEYRARD-COSME 2003b on the contribution of Jerome.

<sup>30</sup> FORTGENS 1947, p. 58; LEFF 1998, p. 5; PRILL 1987, p. 5; MARENBON 2015, pp. 62-63.

<sup>31</sup> DUBREUCQ 2004, pp. 273-274; KING 2003, pp. 32-33 and MORSE 1954 (on *De Virtutibus et Vitiis*).

<sup>32</sup> CONSTANTINESCU 1974, pp. 31-32.

<sup>33</sup> CHAZELLE 2001, p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> BOUHOT 1980; PHELAN 2010a; RAMBRIDGE 2003, p. 380.

<sup>35</sup> CHAZELLE 2001, p. 72.

<sup>36</sup> CURRY (ed.) 1966, p. 5 and KREUTLE 1918, pp. 347-348 (*De Ratione Animae*); CAVADINI 1981 and 1991, pp. 142-146 and MEYER 1959a, p. 344 (*De fide sanctae et individuae Trinitatis*); CHAZELLE 1989, p. 46 (*Epistola* 307); GORMAN 1997, pp. 75-77, and 2009 (*Commentaria in Iohannem*); KESSLER 2000, pp. 174-175 (*Commentaria in Apocalypsim*).

<sup>37</sup> BIGGS 1994 (*Adversus Elipandum*); BLUMENSHINE 1983, pp. 226-227 (*Contra Haeresim Felicis*).

<sup>38</sup> Aluin, *Epistola* 291. I will return to this letter below.

<sup>39</sup> FOX 2003, p. 45. Cf. HEIL 1978, p. 270.

<sup>40</sup> *Epistola* 309, to Gundrada, dedicatory letter to *De ratione animae*, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 474.

<sup>41</sup> Probably the later archbishop of Arles of that name. If not, he is otherwise unknown.

and Marseilles, who argued that conversion, the *initium fidei*, was not due to God's grace, but to man's free will, and that man had to persevere in the faith through his own free will as well, a position later known as Semipelagianism.<sup>42</sup> Augustine replied to Prosper and Hilary by sending them a work in two books, *De praedestinatione sanctorum*.<sup>43</sup> Salvation, Augustine argued, can only be obtained through predestination. If one is predestined to believe, God gives him faith and if so, this causes his prayers to be heard. As a reward for his prayers, God gives his faithful the gifts of faith. The most important of these is perseverance, which allows the predestined to remain faithful until the end. Those who do not, will be judged righteously by God. Augustine summarized this position by saying: 'This is the predestination of the saints, nothing else: the foreknowledge and preparation of God's gifts, through which those who are liberated, are most certainly liberated. The others, however, are left in the mass of the lost by a just, divine judgement (...).'<sup>44</sup>

Even if it is God's predestination that causes men to be saved, and hence become saints through the gifts of salvation, Augustine argued, neither prayer nor preaching have lost their meaning. If they had, Paul would not have preached. God works through our preaching, Augustine argued, as Paul says: 'it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.'<sup>45</sup> Preaching has a function, as it must help Christians to remain obedient in the faith. The same is true for prayer. It is wrong to argue that predestination means that God has already predestined man to be saved or not, and that it therefore does not matter what one does. According to Augustine, failure to remain faithful is caused by man's weakness. God does not predestine people to eternal damnation. The paradox in his dogmatic and pastoral positions, between salvation as a product of predestination, and damnation as a result of man's failing seems to have eluded Augustine.<sup>46</sup> To him, man's condemnation on the basis of original sin was the logical result of God's righteous judgement.

Although this has not often been noted, Alcuin knew *De praedestinatione sanctorum*. The most recent overview of Alcuin's use of Augustine by Mary Alberi makes no mention of Alcuin's knowledge of the work, nor does the study of the reception of *De praedestinatione* in the same

<sup>42</sup> The term is something of a misnomer, as the main adherents of Semipelagianism, Faustus of Riez and John Cassian, did not see themselves as related to Pelagius in any way, and condemned his views. Cf. CHÉNÉ (tr. comm.) 1962, pp. 385-389; LESOUSKY (tr., comm.) 1956, pp. 33-39, 57; LEYSER 2000, pp. 31-32; STUMP 2001; WETZEL 2001.

<sup>43</sup> PL 45, cols. 993-1034. The second book is also known as *De dono perseverantiae*. This work is relatively obscure in modern scholarly thought about Augustine.

<sup>44</sup> Augustine, *De dono perseverantiae* (14) 35, PL 45, col. 1014: *Haec est praedestinatio sanctorum, nihil aliud: praescientia, scilicet et praeparatio beneficiorum Dei, quibus certissime liberantur, quicumque liberantur. Ceteri autem ubi nisi in massa perditionis iusto divino iudicio relinquuntur (...).*

<sup>45</sup> Philippians 2:13; Augustine, *De dono perseverantiae* (14) 34, PL 45, col. 1013: *Deus est qui operatur in vobis et velle et operari pro bona voluntate.*

<sup>46</sup> Cf. WETZEL 2001, pp. 50-54, STUMP 2001, pp. 130-142.

volume.<sup>47</sup> Jack Ogilvy's study on *Books known to Anglo-Saxon authors from Aldhelm to Alcuin* provides one reference to the second book, *De dono perseverantiae*, in *Adversus Elipandum*, where Alcuin mentioned 'the first and second book of Predestination'. Frederick Biggs discovered another use of *De dono perseverantiae* in Alcuin's *Adversus Felicem*, where Alcuin calls the text Augustine's letter to Hilary and Prosper and quotes the penultimate chapter.<sup>48</sup> This means that Alcuin used *De dono*, and probably also knew *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, as both books were transmitted together.

As Alcuin's idea of sanctity was deeply influenced by Augustine's *De dono perseverantiae*, death must have meant a great deal more to Alcuin than any of the other events of passage in a human life. Augustine had explained that one could only decide whether an individual had truly been a saint after he had died. Before that, there was no way of knowing for sure whether one had really begotten the gift of perseverance, upon which all other gifts depended. Sanctity unto death was therefore the ultimate proof of God's predestination. Death, accordingly, was the only rite of passage which mattered specifically with regard to sanctity. To the saints themselves, however, death itself was not significant, as it was a word without substance, as Alcuin pointed out in one of his more philosophical moments. Like the word nothing, it existed only as a word, without being a real thing.<sup>49</sup> Alcuin's point in the letter in which he says this concerns soteriology,<sup>50</sup> but the specific point about death applies to saints as well: death is simply the absence of life, just as darkness is the absence of light. For those who have merited eternal life, death therefore changes nothing.

## 2.2. Sainly habits and the saintly life

Even if saints were made holy by God from their mothers' wombs, therefore, this does not mean that saints were fully grown and fully armed saints from their predestined births onwards. Both in the prose and in the verse account of Willibrord's mother's dream, Alcuin made it clear that it is the course of events which proves the truth of the dream. Although the source of Willibrord's sanctity is divine, its demonstration is primarily a matter of Willibrord's own actions throughout

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<sup>47</sup> ALBERI 2013; DRECOLL 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Alcuin, *Adversus Elipandum* 3, 17 (ALC 5), PL 101, cols. 282-283; *Adversus Felicem Urgellitanum Episcopum Libri Septem* 1, 14 (ALC 6), PL 101, col. 139, and 1, 15, *ibidem*, col. 141. OGILVY 1936, p. 16. The references in *Adversus Felicem* were first identified in BIGGS 1994.

<sup>49</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 307, to Charlemagne, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 470; ENDRES 1915; KREUTLE 1919, pp. 7-8; SERRALDA 1978, pp. 69-74. The argument does not seem to have been borrowed from an older source, but derives directly from Wisdom 1:13. Cf. Sedulius Scotus, *Collectaneum miscellaneum* 65.2 (ed. SIMPSON 1988, p. 263), which likewise derived directly from Wisdom.

<sup>50</sup> As explored in CHAZELLE 1989.

his life.<sup>51</sup> This manifestation of Willibrord's divine pre-election starts, in Alcuin's account, with his father's decision to hand the child over to the abbey of Ripon. Willibrord's upbringing there is defined as a matter of instruction in holy zeal and sacred letters.<sup>52</sup> His proficiency as a pupil is likened to that of Samuel: divine grace (a sign of the importance of predestination in Alcuin's understanding of sanctity) allowed Willibrord to shine in understanding and habits.<sup>53</sup>

Willibrord's holiness is characterized by what modern scholars would term 'virtues'. The modern word derives etymologically from the Latin *virtus*, which is problematic. *Virtus* in medieval Latin can mean 'virtue' in the modern sense of the word, but it can also mean divine grace, or more generically 'strength'. Especially in discussions about saints, relics, and miracles, the latter usage of the term is often assumed by modern scholars.<sup>54</sup> Alcuin, on the other hand, used the term *virtus* mostly in an ethical sense, following the classical example, e.g. using it in antithesis to *vitium* for example in *De virtutibus et vitiis*,<sup>55</sup> and when he referred to the four cardinal virtues.<sup>56</sup> *Virtus* meaning the power to work miracles occurs in Alcuin's writings, but to a more limited degree.<sup>57</sup>

There are some clear indications in the *Vita Willibrordi* of the virtues Alcuin associated with this predestined-yet-nurtured sanctity. In *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 24 and its counterpart *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 24 we find catalogues of Willibrord's virtues. The prose book is the longer of the two:

*Fuit enim iste vir sanctus omni dignitate praeclarus, statura decens, vultu honorabilis, faciae venustus, corde laetus, consilio sapiens, ore iucundus, moribus compositus, in omni opere Dei strenuus. Cuius vero patientiae esset, ex antedictis eius gestis ostenditur; vel quantam vero habuisset industriam euangelium Christi praedicare, vel qualiter illum in opere praedicandi divina adiuuaret gratia, non necesse est nostro proseguere stilo, quod totius populi testimonio comprobatur. Eius vero secreta conversatio in vigiliis et orationibus, in ieiuniis et psalmodiis et vitae sanctitate et signorum ostensione intellegi datur. Caritatem scilicet assiduus labor ostendit, quem cotidie pro Christi nomine sustenuit.*

<sup>51</sup> Cf. also Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 34, vv. 27-28.

<sup>52</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 3: *relegiosis studiis et sacris litteris*.

<sup>53</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 3: *Quem divina mox gratia ab ineunte pueritia et sensu proficere et moribus pollere, quantum ad tales congruit annos, concessit, ita ut nostris temporibus novum Samubel nasci putares, de quo dictum est: Puer autem Samubel proficiebat atque crescebat et placebat tam Deo quam hominibus*. Cf. 1 Samuel 2:26, De JONG 1996, pp. 50, 160.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. ANGENENDT 1994a, p. 155; idem 2008, p. 462; idem 2010a, p. 55; idem 2010a, p. 55 and 2010b, pp. 70-71; BOZÓKY 2012, p. 139; BULLOUGH 1981, p. 342; DELARUELLE 1961, pp. 218-219, 227; GEARY 1990, pp. 22-23; HELVÉTIUS 1996, p. 404; KLANICZAY 2014, p. 218. HEAD 1990, p. 102 explicitly mentions both meanings.

<sup>55</sup> on which below section 2.4.

<sup>56</sup> e.g. Alcuin, *Epistola* 19, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 53; *Epistola* 60, ibidem, p. 103; *Epistola* 139, p. 220; *Epistola* 309 (= dedicatory letter of *De ratione animae*), p. 475; *Disputatio de rhetorica et de uirtutibus* 43, *Rhetores Latini minores*, p. 547; ibidem, p. 550. cf. MÄHL 1969; WERNER 1998, pp. 452-453.

<sup>57</sup> E.g. Alcuin, *Sermo in natale sancti Martini* (known under various titles, sometimes misleadingly as *Vita sancti Martini*, ALC 81, BHL 5625), ed. MIGNE, PL 101, col. 662: (...) *in qua* (scil. *Ecclesia sancti Martini, JV*) *etiam usque hodie multa miraculorum signa, plurimae sanitarum virtutes, consolationes moerentium, pietates laetantium* (...), copied almost verbatim in the shorter *Sermo in transitu sancti Martini* (ALC 81, BHL 5626), ibidem, col. 664. On these sermons, cf. DEUG-SU 1981.

This holy man was famous in every dignity, becoming of stature, beautiful by appearance, charming by face, happy by heart, wise in counsel, pleasing in speech, restrained in manners, vigorous in every work of God. What patience he had, is demonstrated by the aforementioned deeds; whether what great zeal he had to preach Christ's Gospel, or how divine grace aided him in the work of preaching it, we need not run through with our pen. His hidden manners are given to understand in his vigils and prayers, his fasting and psalm-singing, and both the sanctity of his life and the performance of miracles. Assiduous toil showed the devotion, which he maintained for Christ's name daily.

The verse book, though less lengthy in its discussion, stresses the same virtues.<sup>58</sup> Willibrord's sanctity, divinely preordained and nurtured in monastic surroundings, was thus made manifest by his dignity, beautiful appearance, wisdom, moral uprightness, and vigorous pursuit of God's work, summarized as patience, zeal for preaching, and the maintenance of vigils, prayers, fasting, psalm-singing, and a saintly lifestyle overall. These virtues are generic, but do not seem to have been borrowed from an older text collectively. These are the values which Alcuin himself considered the most important. The emphasis on piety, strict observance of the liturgy, and fasting points to monasticism, and no wonder: Willibrord was a monk, Alcuin composed his *Vita Willibrordi* for a monastic community, and he himself, though not strictly speaking a monk, spent a great part of his life in religious communities.<sup>59</sup> Even so, these virtues are not exclusively monastic. To try and separate the monk from the bishop, the archbishop of Utrecht from the abbot of Echternach in Alcuin's picture of Willibrord, as has sometimes been attempted,<sup>60</sup> is not helpful, especially not as Beornrad, the dedicatee of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, was also abbot and archbishop simultaneously. Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* suggests that Alcuin's ideal monk was not living solely within cloister walls, but performed his role partly inside, and partly outside the monastery, for the greater good of the world he lived in.<sup>61</sup>

Alcuin's other saints' lives exemplify the same virtues. Richarius is a preacher, and lives a monastic life. The *Vita Richarii* also emphasises mortification, due to the ascetic emphasis in the

<sup>58</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 24, vv. 1-4: *Vir fuit iste dei paciens, moderatus, honestus, / Moribus egregius, et in omni strenuus actu, / Corde pius, humili mitis rigidusque superbo, / Solator miseris, et inops sibi, dives egenis.*

<sup>59</sup> CHÉLINI 1961, p. 23; DELIUS 1931. Cf. also BECKER 1989, p. 23.

<sup>60</sup> Most notably in SCHROEDER 1990; cf. ANGENENDT 1989a.

<sup>61</sup> Contra, e.g. PALMER 2009, p. 212.

*Vita sancti Richarii* from which Alcuin drew his information.<sup>62</sup> Though he is also cast in a monastic mould, Alcuin's Vedast is, again, a preacher. Alcuin also notes the chaste honesty of his manners, his love of Heaven, his devotion to the liturgy (feasts, hymns), and his almsgiving.<sup>63</sup> In both saints, the manifestation of sainthood is thus in their deeds, while the cause of sainthood is sought in God's predestination. The virtues with which Alcuin associated his saints are, however, dependent on the social position of the saint in question, and leave room for their individual character traits.

The virtues which Alcuin's Willibrord, Richarius, and Vedast exemplify also return in his description of other saints. The best example of this is Alcuin's poem on the bishops, kings and saints of York,<sup>64</sup> which charts the history of the Northumbrian church, with a strong focus on its bishops. Alcuin celebrates the exploits of pope Gregory the Great, the bishops of York from Paulinus to Aelberht, the kings Edwin and Oswald, the queen-abbess Aethelthryth, and a number of churchmen with Northumbrian backgrounds: Cuthbert, Ecgberct, Wihthberht, Bede, Willibrord, the two Hewalds, Suitberht, and Wira, amongst others. With only one female saint and two lay saints, both of them kings and martyrs, the emphasis is clearly on churchmen.<sup>65</sup>

Gregory's sanctity is related directly to his work as a preacher, both in his homeland and, by proxy, in Britain.<sup>66</sup> Paulinus is praised as 'truthful of speech and prudent of heart, / a cultivator of justice, a true lover of piety, / an orthodox teacher, administering heavenly gifts, / to seaboard peoples (...),<sup>67</sup> a description which emphasizes preaching and teaching, as well as the administration of the sacraments, orthodoxy, and inward devotion. The same themes return when Alcuin discusses Paulinus again, later on.<sup>68</sup> Neither in Gregory's case, nor in Paulinus' does Alcuin remark on the origin of their sanctity. He does so, however, when speaking of bishop Wilfrid, 'whom almighty God filled with heavenly light / so that he would drive dark shadows of error from the lands'.<sup>69</sup> The following lines relate Wilfrid's exploits as a missionary to the South Saxons

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Alcuin, *Vita Richarii*, 4 (preaching), 12 (monasticism), and 13 (asceticism); *Vita sancti Richarii* (BHL 7249) 9 for the asceticism in Alcuin's source. Cf. BERSCHIN 1991, pp. 153-157 and DIEM 2015 for the importance of mortification in some forms of early medieval monasticism.

<sup>63</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 9.

<sup>64</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ....

<sup>65</sup> On Alcuin's notion of kingship as sacerdotal, cf. ANGENENDT 1997, pp. 272, 274; CLOSE 2011, p. 273; DALES 2012, p. 28. EBENBAUER 1978, pp. 78-79 specifies this for Alcuin's poetry. On the scarcity of female sanctity in the Carolingian era, cf. SMITH 1995b, eadem 2008, pp. 585-587.

<sup>66</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 79-89.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, vv. 137-140: *qui fuit ore simul verax et pectore prudens / iustitiae cultor, verus pietatis amator, / catholicus doctor, caelestia dona ministrans / gentibus aequoreis.*

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem, vv. 211-215: *qui Domini legem meditans in nocte dieque, / sedulous in populos sparsit praecepta salutis; / plurima quapropter convertit milia Christo / et fidei flammis virtutis et igne coruscans / frigora bis ternis borealia depulit annis.*

<sup>69</sup> Ibidem, vv. 579-580: *quem Deus omnipotens infudit luce superna / errorum tetricas terries ut pelleret umbras.* Wilfrid's missionary exploits are narrated in vv. 581-612.

and the Frisians; like Bede, Alcuin ignored the controversial aspects of Wilfrid's career. Wilfrid had, after all, spent most of his career being involved in one controversy or another, and had been deposed and exiled several times.<sup>70</sup> Alcuin's depiction of Wilfrid's preaching and mission thus uses similar language as the *Vita Willibrordi*, including the light metaphor.<sup>71</sup> York's later bishops, Bosa, John, Wilfrid II, Egbert and Aelberht, are all described as exceedingly holy, as preachers and teachers. Bosa's concern for the singing of hours in York is mentioned specifically; Wilfrid II is credited with the adornment of the churches of York and the care for the poor, and is said to have withdrawn into a monastery after having worked as bishop. Egbert is presented as the summit of ecclesiastical achievement, combining all of the virtues of his predecessors in one person. The same is true for Egbert's successor, Aelbert.<sup>72</sup>

The other saints in the York poem show more variance. Egbert is primarily an example, a teacher and a *peregrinus*, an exile from this world and specifically his own land for Christ. His companion Wihthberht is credited with the foundation of a monastery.<sup>73</sup> Willibrord is depicted as a missionary, as are the Hewalds, though their mission is cut short by their martyrdom. Suitberht and Wira are only mentioned in passing. No virtues are attributed to these saints.<sup>74</sup> Cuthbert is called a monk, but his main virtue is that of a priest, a teacher, and a preacher. Aethelthryth and Bede both have a single virtue: chastity in Aethelthryth's case, learning in Bede's.<sup>75</sup> Alcuin's depiction of the martyr-kings of Northumbria, Edwin and Oswald, focusses on military prowess, piety, largesse, and righteousness.<sup>76</sup> These values partially overlap with those of the bishops, but are also partially particular to the royal habitus. Both bishops and kings are supposed to be both lavish and just. There are also marked differences. Preaching is not a royal task, while on the other hand there is a military component that was absent from the episcopal habitus. What we see is, firstly, that Alcuin is primarily interested in clerical and monastic sanctity, and secondly that the virtues of these saints

<sup>70</sup> Cf. e.g. CUBITT 1989 and PELTERET 1998.

<sup>71</sup> *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 2 (...) *qui luce veritatis caliginosos tenebrarum errores discutit* (...); 1, 13: *Nec quicquam in ea vetusti erroris tenebras ignorantiae latuisse sinebat* (...). The fact that the theme has a patristic background and is not unique to Alcuin, is of no consequence for the point made here.

<sup>72</sup> Bosa: Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 847-864. Teaching: *ibidem*, v. 849. Preaching: vv. 853-854. Hours: 857-864.

John of Beverley: vv. 1085vv. Preaching and teaching: vv. 1088-1089.

Wilfrid II: vv. 1216-1247. Preaching and concern for the poor: vv. 1230-1237; monastic seclusion: vv. 1238-1247.

Egbert: vv. 1247-1266; Aelbert, vv. 1398-1407.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibidem*, vv. 1013-1033.

<sup>74</sup> Willibrord: *ibidem*, vv. 1037-1043; Hewalds: vv. 1044-1071. Suitberht and Wira: vv. 1072-1077. Cf. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5, 10.

<sup>75</sup> Cuthbert: vv. 646-750. Monk: v. 650. Priest, teacher, preacher: vv. 651-656. Aethelthryth: vv. 753-765. Bede: vv. 1291-1292, 1301-1315.

<sup>76</sup> Edwin: vv. 115-130; Oswald, vv. 265-283. On martyr-kings, cf. SMITH 2008, p. 599, on Oswald specifically CUBITT 2002, pp. 424-432.

are partly defined by their social role. To Alcuin there was social differentiation in the virtues of sanctity.

The York poem also shows that saints had a historical significance to Alcuin. This is an aspect of sanctity that must not be overlooked, as it also echoes in his other writings. In the sermon appended to the *Vita Willibrordi*, Alcuin also highlighted the importance of historical ties with the saints.<sup>77</sup> Saints are described as fathers to the communities with which they had historical ties, and their examples are presented to these communities. The monks of York are encouraged to walk over ‘(...) the road of truth and sanctity, across which the blessed fathers, our predecessors, arrived in the kingdom of Heaven (...)’,<sup>78</sup> and in a letter to an Anglo-Saxon archbishop, probably Eanbald of York, Alcuin refers to the writings of the fathers as the means through which the sanctity of his addressee has been educated.<sup>79</sup> In the latter case, saints are no longer only examples, but also function as vessels of the orthodox tradition of the church, which has to be guarded against the threat of heterodox teachings. This notion also enhances our understanding of Alcuin’s use of patristic texts, e.g. in his discussions with the Adoptionists.

### 2.3. Sanctitas, preaching, and monastic values

We can further deepen our understanding of Alcuin’s idea of sanctity by looking at his use of the word for holiness (*sanctitas*). The word occurs only six times in the *Vita Willibrordi*, always in the prose book, and is attributed to a number of people and groups of people in a variety of ways. Alcuin addresses Beornrad with the honorary address ‘your holiness’ (*vestrae sanctitatis*),<sup>80</sup> and once refers to Wilgisl, whose sanctity has come down unto his offspring.<sup>81</sup> In *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 5 Alcuin says that Willibrord does not want to follow his father’s example ‘in the sanctity of a monastic life’,<sup>82</sup> as long as there are Frisians to whom the Gospel still needs to be preached.<sup>83</sup> In *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 11 Willibrord preaches to Radbod, the Frisian king, and states that through baptism he will not only wash of all sin, but will also remove iniquity and injustice and ‘henceforth will live,

<sup>77</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 32.

<sup>78</sup> *Epistola* 42, to the monks of York, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 86. Cf. on this letter also below, section 2.4.

<sup>79</sup> *Epistola* 291, ibidem, p. 449: *Habes enim plurimorum libros patrum, in quibus vestrae auctoritatis sanctitatem optime eruditam esse novi*. On this letter, cf. below, section 3.5.

<sup>80</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, dedicatory letter.

<sup>81</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 1: (...) *in qua* (scil. *ecclesia*) *et post multiplices sancti laboris agones a Deo coronatus corpore requiescit, et posteri eius usque hodie ex sanctitatis eius traditione possident*. Cf. BROWNE 1908, pp. 4-7.

<sup>82</sup> *in religionis sanctitate*. *Religio* refers to monastic life in Alcuin’s writings; the only exception is the phrase *christiana religio*.

<sup>83</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 5: *Tricesimo itaque et tertio aetatis suae anno maior egregio viro fidei flamma crescebat in pectore, ita ut parum ei videbatur sibi soli tantummodo in reigionis sanctitate sudasse, si non et aliis quoque in praedicationis veritate prodesset*.

a new man, in all sobriety, justice, and sanctity'.<sup>84</sup> *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 24, refers to sanctity in relation to the proofs of Willibrord's inner sanctity: vigils, prayers, psalm-singing, and miracles. The fourth instance, in the homily, appears in an instruction to the audience of the sermon: '(...) let us correct our ways in his footsteps, so that we, who follow the examples of his holiness, may also share in the bounty of blessedness (...).'<sup>85</sup> Sanctity can therefore be a term of courtesy, implying high status (as in Beornrad's case); it can be associated with monastic life, in keeping with its association with virtues that are primarily monastic (as in Wilgis's case); but it was also something lay people could aim to acquire (as in Radbod's case), and is expressed through various practices, either liturgical (vigils, prayer, psalm-singing) or non-liturgical (miracles), and linked with sobriety and justice.

Similar concerns echo through the other two *vitae*. In the *Vita Richarii* the conversion of the former pagan Richarius through God's grace is made manifest in his preaching and his sanctity.<sup>86</sup> This juxtaposition of sanctity and preaching implies that sanctity is Alcuin's shorthand for saying that Richarius practices what he preaches. The same juxtaposition occurs in the dedicatory letter of the *Vita Vedasti*, and elsewhere in Alcuin's letters.<sup>87</sup> In the *Vita Richarii*, Alcuin said that miracles indicate Richarius's merits, leaving no reason to doubt his sanctity.<sup>88</sup> The *Vita Vedasti* also provides a parallel for the notion, expressed in the *Vita Willibrordi*, that sanctity can be acquired by the imitation of the saints and the application of their preaching; Saint Vedast's preaching is said to have 'converted a mass of people to the sanctity of the Christian religion through catholic teaching'.<sup>89</sup> This, again, emphasizes that Alcuin considers sanctity to be attainable by everyone, using the 'Augustinian' frame of imitation of the saints, described by Brown.<sup>90</sup> If sanctity is in principle attainable by every Christian, it exemplifies the way of life of the true, virtuous Christian. These virtues are to some extent linked with the social role of the individual, meaning that a king

<sup>84</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 11: (...) *deinceps novus homo vivas in omni sobrietate, iustitia et sanctitate*. Cf. PHELAN 2010a, p. 465 on this passage. cf. below on the term *sanctitas* in Alcuin's letters.

<sup>85</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 32: (...) *vias nostras in vestigia eius corrigamus, quatenus, qui sanctitatis eius sequimur exempla, beatitudinis sortiamur et praemia* (...). Cf. below on the term *sanctitas* in relation to inheritance and tradition.

<sup>86</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Richarii* 2: *Nec lucerna gratia Dei accensa diutius abscondi potuit, sed ut patefacta lumen sanctitatis et praedicationis longe lateque ad salutem multorum sparsit*.

<sup>87</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti*, prologus (= *Epistola* 74): *Ideo necesse est, ecclesiam plurimos habere defensores, qui non solum vitae sanctitate, sed etiam doctrina veritatis castra Dei viriliter defendere valeant*. Cf. e.g. *Epistola* 17, to Aethelhard of Canterbury, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 47; *Epistola* 173, to Arn of Salzburg, *ibidem*, p. 286. Cf. DIESENBERGER 2016, pp. 60-61. Diesenberger's study contains a discussion of most of Alcuin's letters to Arn and many others besides them, and, as well as much about preaching in Alcuin's saints' lives.

<sup>88</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Richarii* 18: *Nam patet ex miraculis, qualis est ex meritis, et antea vita fulgescit in opere subsequenti, ita ut non sit opus dubitare de sanctitate, dum tantus est in virtute*.

<sup>89</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 9: *Rexerat igitur praefatus Dei sacerdos ecclesiam Christi, divina auxiliante gratia, annis circiter XL sub magna evangelicae praedicationis devotione, sub magno pietatis amore, ac per id temporis multitudinem populi catholico dogmate ad christianae fidei convertit sanctitatem*.

<sup>90</sup> BROWN 2000; cf. the Introduction.

or a religious woman has a different set of virtues than a churchman. Even if there are kings amongst Alcuin's saints, however, most of Alcuin's saints are churchmen, and Alcuin's idea of sanctity and saintly virtues primarily reflects the concerns of clerics and monks.<sup>91</sup> Most of Alcuin's saints act inside as well as outside the cloister, and the virtues with which Alcuin credits them reflect both aspects of their career. Even Wilgisl, whose life in the cloister is far more secluded than his son's, has ties with the court; borrowing from Matthew 5:15, Alcuin states about Wilgisl that a saint's light should not be hidden, but shine out into the world.<sup>92</sup> That said, the differences between Wigisl's career and Willibrord's indicate that there are several ways to attain sanctity within the same social group (religious men), which Alcuin does not explicitly distinguish one from another, reflecting the diffuse nature of religious life in Alcuin's days.<sup>93</sup> The virtues which, to Alcuin, exemplify clerical sanctity more than others are restraint, concern for the liturgy, performing miracles, and preaching.

Alcuin emphasized restraint, rather than mortification.<sup>94</sup> This is in line with modern assessments that Anglo-Saxon ethical thinking privileges moderation over fasting for its own sake.<sup>95</sup> In all three *vitae*, there is also a clear link between fasting and the liturgy. Willibrord, Richarius, and Vedast all are noted moreover by their particular devotion to the liturgy, and specifically the singing of psalms.<sup>96</sup> What mortification is reported, usually also occurs in this context, that is as part of ecclesiastical practice. It should be noted, however, that the importance of fasting is markedly greater in the *Vita Richarii* than in the *vitae* of the bishops Vedast and Willibrord.<sup>97</sup>

Alcuin is ambiguous concerning the importance of miracles. Miracles are important to him, given that they make up a large part of the *Vita Willibrordi* and the fact that his miracles are listed together with his devotion to the liturgy as an outward sign of his inward devotion.<sup>98</sup> On the other hand, Alcuin played down the importance of miracles as a sign of sanctity, both in the prose book of the *Vita Willibrordi* and in the *Vita Richarii*. In both cases he explicitly states that the work

<sup>91</sup> Alcuin wrote before the Carolingian monastic reform of Aniane, which, amongst other things, stressed the formal distinction between monks and canons, and even then it took some time before the new, formal distinction between both groups was formalized and generally accepted. Cf. De JONG 1995, pp. 629-634.

<sup>92</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 34, vv. 53-56: *Nec decuit modio abscondi tam clara lucerna, / Lectula nec supter subicienda fuit, / Sed ponenda magis supra fastigia tecti, // Spargeret ut lucem altius illa piam.*

<sup>93</sup> Cf. ALBERI 2001, pp. 896-900 on Alcuin and the diffuse state of Carolingian monastic life.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 24 (*moribus compositus*). Cf. also Epistola 61, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 104-105, there p. 105: *Noli luxoriae subditus esse, sed Deo; quia castum corpus et animam vitiiis non maculatam Spiritus inhabitat sanctus.*

<sup>95</sup> Cf. GAUTIER 2011, pp. 293-294; LEE 2007, pp. 182-183; eadem 2012; MAGENNIS 1986; idem 1999, pp. 32, 104-108, and 110-111.

<sup>96</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 24, *Vita Richarii* 10.

<sup>97</sup> Especially Alcuin, *Vita Richarii* 13.

<sup>98</sup> in *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 24.

of preaching should be preferred over the working of miracles.<sup>99</sup> The *relative* importance of miracles in Alcuin's thought should therefore not be overstated. This is especially true of the two saintly bishops of whom Alcuin wrote *vitae*. Saints are primarily described as teachers (*doctores*), saintly bishops, such as Paulinus of York, Cuthbert, Vedast, and Willibrord especially so.<sup>100</sup>

When Alcuin does mention miracles, they are often presented as supplements to the work of preaching. An example is *Vita Vedasti* 3.<sup>101</sup> Here Alcuin altered an existing account from the *Vita Vedastis* ascribed to Jonas of Bobbio,<sup>102</sup> highlighting what he thought was the most important lesson in the miracle story. In *Vita Vedasti* 3, Saint Vedast accompanies Clovis, king of the Franks, after the latter has decided to convert to Christianity. On their way to Reims, where Clovis is about to be baptized, the king and his company, including Saint Vedast, cross the river Aisne. While they are crossing a blind beggar hears of the presence of the saint, who promptly heals the man. Alcuin added a new layer to this story by drawing in the wording of the biblical healing miracle of a blind beggar in Jericho called Bartimeus (Mark 10, Luke 18).<sup>103</sup> He also added passages to explain the reasons behind the story: he stressed that the beggar's blindness was not his own fault but a means for the demonstration of divine mercy, and thrice hammers home the deeper meaning of the miracle: that many people be healed spiritually (*spiritualiter*) through the physical healing of one blind man, a reference to the healing of the blind man on the Sabbath (John 9.3), a passage Alcuin explained in his *Commentary on John* as a demonstration of the work of God through the incarnation, to illuminate the whole of mankind.<sup>104</sup>

There are other divergences from Jonas' account as well. Jonas gives us a chance meeting of a disabled beggar with a holy man, who feels pity and makes the sign of the cross, healing the blind man. In Alcuin's narrative, we have a divinely ordained meeting between a beggar with a clear

<sup>99</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 14 as quoted above; *Vita Richarii* 9; *Adbortatio ad imitandas virtutes sancti patris Vedasti in actis descriptas* (BHL 8509, ALC 3), 2.

<sup>100</sup> e.g. Alcuin, *Carmen* 10 (*Urbs aeterna dei, terrae sal, lumina mundi*; S-K 16817, ALC 45.17), vv. 1-8, ed. DÜMLER 1881, p. 235; ed. idem 1895, p. 48 (as *Epistola* 17); *Vita Vedasti* 1 (translated above), and 7 (on saints in general), *Versus* ..., v. 139 (Paulinus), ibidem 650 (Cuthbert), *Vita Vedasti* 9 (on Vedast), *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 1, 5, 8, and 32, 2, 3, v. 3; 11, v. 5; 34, v. 23 (on Willibrord).

<sup>101</sup> Cf. for the text below, Appendix 1.

<sup>102</sup> The attribution was first made by Bruno Krusch, and later challenged by Anne-Marie Helvétius. I follow the assessment of Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood in their recent translation of Jonas of Bobbio's saints' lives. Cf. O'HARA & WOOD (trs., 2017), pp. 68-78.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. below. Alcuin does not seem to have used the similar, but not identical story, about two beggars in Matthew 20. DEUG-SU 1980b, pp. 680-683 discusses the passage, but not its antecedents; VEYRARD-COSME 2003a, p. 356 lists a range of healings, including the Bartimeus narrative which may have influenced healing narratives in Alcuin's saints' lives, but does not note the similarity of the passages explicitly. BOLTON 1979, pp. 46-47 mentions the passage and its biblical antecedents, but not the alteration of the nature of the miracle, which is the most interesting element in the section for our present purposes. Cf. also VERDO 2014 for a similar analysis of a miracle story in Alcuin's *Vita Richarii*.

<sup>104</sup> *neque hic peccavit, neque parentes ejus: sed ut manifestentur opera Dei in illo* (John 9.3); *forte nec sui caecatus culpa, sed ut manifestarentur opera Dei in illo* (Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 3). Cf. PL 100, col. 877.

agency in his own salvation and a saint who understands his typological position. He even has Vedast refer to his biblical example. Both Jesus and Vedast, we are given to understand, used the power of physical healing for the salvation of the whole world, and not just to heal individual beggars they chanced to meet. To Alcuin the healing was no longer effected by the sign of the cross,<sup>105</sup> but primarily through prayer. The saint feels that God is with him and that there is a higher price than the beggar's eyesight at stake, to which he responds by praying, invoking Christ's name and the biblical precedent, making the sign of the cross. Alcuin also allotted a new role to the bystanders in the story. The multitude of those present is never mentioned by Jonas, and plays a markedly different role in the biblical narrative, where those present tell Bartimeus to be quiet. Alcuin thus very consciously inverts *both* stories he used to show that the ultimate goal of individual miracles is the salvation of mankind, exemplified by the king and his retinue, and that miracles are effected firstly and foremostly through prayer and preaching, as mentioned in the introductory sentences. Miracles are merely a support for preaching.

Alcuin saw preaching as the foremost task of the clergy,<sup>106</sup> and also saw a role for the king, and even the laity in preaching, though to a lesser extent than the clergy, and often in a secondary or supporting capacity.<sup>107</sup> The context in which Alcuin's thoughts on preaching have received most attention is the context of mission in the Frankish borderlands – a point that had very direct political implications.<sup>108</sup> Alcuin was disgusted by the violent mission to the Saxons which was part of Charlemagne's conquest of Saxony, and by the prospect of equally violent conversion of the Avars.<sup>109</sup> He preferred preaching over forced conversions. No wonder, then, that the ideal of preaching, married to a contemplative life also found its expression in his saints' lives: these ideals were the bedrock of what Alcuin saw as the task of the church in his own day, and the contribution of the saints he celebrated to ecclesiastical history.<sup>110</sup>

Alcuin especially stressed the importance of a specific form of preaching, pre-baptismal catechesis. With the rise of child baptism in the fifth and sixth century, the social function of baptism had changed, from being primarily a token of individual conversion, to being a sign of

<sup>105</sup> This goes against general remarks on the importance of the cross (CHAZELLE 1985, p. 86) and the saint's healing behaviour (NIEUWLAND 1991, p. 83).

<sup>106</sup> ALBERI 2001, p. 896; HEIL 1978, p. 270; VIARRE 1989, p. 220. Cf. DIESENBERGER 2016, pp. 61-73 and WOOD 2001, pp. 83-85.

<sup>107</sup> LAUWERS 2004; cf. ALBERI 2003, pp. 129-131; DIESENBERGER 2016, pp. 74-78.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. BROOME 2014, p. 174; COSTAMBEYS 2014, p. 262; DUMONT 2004, pp. 425-426; SULLIVAN 1956, pp. 276-282, and especially WOOD 2001, pp. 83-85.

<sup>109</sup> BOUHOT 1980, p. 191; DALES 2013, pp. 112-118; HÜRTEIN 1963, pp. 24-25; SULLIVAN 1956, pp. 276-282; VEYRARD-COSME 2002, pp. 127-134; WOOD 2001, pp. 84-86, 89-91.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. ALBERI 1998, pp. 8-9; RAMBRIDGE 2003 (*Vita Willibrordi*), ALBERI 2001, pp. 900-901 (*Vita Richarii*).

belonging to a larger, Christian collective.<sup>111</sup> At the same time the practice of catechizing adult converts waned.<sup>112</sup> For the Frankish conquerors of Saxony, baptism was a sign of going over from one religious and political collective to another: from ‘pagan’ Saxons to Christian subjects of the Frankish king.<sup>113</sup> This form of thinking about baptism is perhaps best exemplified by Frankish annals, which conclude their reports of Frankish warfare with the statement that Saxons were baptised. These annals were written in the 780s, and therefore reflect a sense of what was thought to be proper with regard to baptism at Charlemagne’s court shortly before Alcuin started writing about the importance of preaching and baptismal catechesis.<sup>114</sup>

Alcuin argued that conversion should be a voluntary matter, not of compulsion.<sup>115</sup> Alcuin stressed the importance of pre-baptismal catechesis as a requirement for ensuring that people underwent the sacrament willingly and knowingly, and stressed that preachers should be morally and intellectually qualified to provide this catechesis.<sup>116</sup> In order to add strength to his argument, Alcuin referred to Augustine’s *De catechizandis rudibus*, although it is unclear whether he knew the text first-hand.<sup>117</sup> These concerns for voluntary conversion and baptismal catechesis fit with Alcuin’s ideas about sanctity, which were closely linked with preaching. Although the virtues extolled in him are not unique to him, Willibrord is the saint who most closely embodies Alcuin’s ideal of the preaching saint, and it is in the *Vita Willibrordi* that the importance of preaching is emphasized at great lengths, partially because it was written shortly before the other lives, partially because the personnel involved in the composition of *Vita Willibrordi* was more directly involved in the Saxon mission.<sup>118</sup>

An emphasis on teaching and preaching, then, is another trait of Alcuin’s concept of sanctity linked, no doubt, with the appreciation of mission in Alcuin’s circles, and the interests of the Carolingian reformers overall. From a cursory overview of Alcuin’s other writings, we can find

<sup>111</sup> Cf. SMITH 1995a, p. 656; TREFFORT 1996, pp. 35-43.

<sup>112</sup> BOUHOT 1980, p. 179; CLOSE 2011, pp. 233-236; DUMONT 2004, pp. 425-428.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. for this process FLIERMAN 2014.

<sup>114</sup> E.g. *Annales regni francorum* for 777, eds. PERTZ & KURZE 1895, p. 49. Cf. McKITTERICK 1997, esp. pp. 127-128, STOFFERAHN 2009, pp. 462-466, BROOME 2014, p. 199, and especially FLIERMAN 2014, pp. 131-136 for a discussion of these sources.

<sup>115</sup> The remark alluded to is Alcuin, *Epistola* 111, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 160: *Fides quoque, sicut sanctus ait Augustinus, res est voluntaria, non necessaria*. Cf. PHELAN 2010a, p. 465.

<sup>116</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 110, *ibidem*, p. 157. Alcuin may have composed the Carolingian baptismal catechesis known as the *primo paganus*. Cf. PHELAN 2008.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. WOOD 2001, pp. 83-84. The letters in question are Alcuin, *Epistola* 110, to Charlemagne, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 156-159; *Epistola* 111, to Megenfrid, *ibidem*, pp. 159-162; *Epistola* 112, to Arn, pp. 162-163; and *Epistola* 113, again to Arn, pp. 163-166. Alcuin explicitly refers to *De catechizandis rudibus* in *Epistola* 110 and 112. Bouhot thought Alcuin knew Augustine’s work well, Peter Cramer challenged this (CRAMER 1993, p. 189).

<sup>118</sup> Cf. WOOD 2001, pp. 83-84.

recurrences of each of the five elements identified above: the universal capacity to attain sanctity, the social differentiation of paths to sanctity, the focus on monastic virtues and the liturgy, the notion of the miraculous as a sign of sanctity, and the high value of teaching and preaching.

## 2.4. Sanctitas in Alcuin's letters

Alcuin used the term *sanctitas* outside of his saints' lives as well. Almost two hundred instances of the word in his letters provide a context for the findings from the saints' lives. We can see *sanctitas* used as a term of courtesy, mostly addressing high-ranking members of the clergy, once to a layman.<sup>119</sup> *Sanctitas* as a term of courtesy, often in nominal groups like *vestra sanctitas* (82 instances)<sup>120</sup> or *tua sanctitas* (42 instances)<sup>121</sup> indicate that Alcuin associated *sanctitas* with high status and ecclesiastical office, especially the (arch)episcopate.<sup>122</sup> Even bearing in mind that members of the clergy form the majority of addressees in Alcuin's letters, the near-absence of references to *sanctitas* in relation to lay people is telling. It confirms the impression from the saints' lives, that *sanctitas* was primarily associated with the clerical state of life. *Sanctitas*, however, is also used as an attribute of Christ,<sup>123</sup> the church,<sup>124</sup> the Bible,<sup>125</sup> and Christian faith.<sup>126</sup> On one occasion, Alcuin speaks of 'the sanctity of baptism',<sup>127</sup> but otherwise the sacraments are absent. Other values abound. Alcuin sees *sanctitas* exemplified in preaching, learning, the clerical or monastic state of life, and, more often than any of these, prayer.

Preaching is associated with sanctity in, amongst others, Alcuin's letter to the Bishops Leidrad of Lyon and Nefridius of Narbonne. Here he maintains that the faith and sanctity of his addressees allow them to take on the task of preaching against the Adoptionists.<sup>128</sup> A concern for

<sup>119</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 302, to the *vir inluister* Ardbertus (count Heardbert of Mercia?), ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 461.

<sup>120</sup> e.g. *Epistola* 20, to bishop Higbald of Lindisfarne, *ibidem*, p. 58 (on this letter, cf below, 2.2.4.); *Epistola* 186, to Arn of Salzburg, *ibidem*, p. 312; *Epistola* 226, to Eanbald of York, p. 370.

<sup>121</sup> e.g. *Epistola* 15, to Charlemagne's sister, Gisela, abbess of Chelles, *ibidem*, p. 42; *Epistola* 167, to Arn of Salzburg, *ibidem*, p. 275; *Epistola* 282, to Friduin, abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, p. 441. Cf. also the dedicatory letter of the *Vita Willibrordi*, to Beornrad of Sens, discussed above, also edited as *Epistola* 120, p. 175.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. also Beornrad and Willibrord in the *Vita Willibrordi* and Aelberht, and Paulinus in the York poem, discussed earlier.

<sup>123</sup> *Epistola* 39, to an unknown friend, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 82: *Quicquid illius (scil: Christi, JV) respuit sanctitas instantissime prohibe: quicquid illius diligit bonitas ardentis sime praedica*. Cf. *Epistola* 246, to Candidus and Nathanael, *ibidem*, pp. 394, 398.

<sup>124</sup> *Epistola* 23, to Felix of Urgel, *ibidem*, p. 61; *Epistola* 173, to Arn of Salzburg, p. 286.

<sup>125</sup> *Epistola* 261, the dedicatory letter of the Alcuin Bible, to Charlemagne, *ibidem*, p. 419.

<sup>126</sup> *Epistola* 213, to Gisela and Rotrud, *ibidem*, p. 354.

<sup>127</sup> *Epistola* 128, to Eanbald, archbishop of Canterbury, *ibidem*, p. 190.

<sup>128</sup> *Epistola* 200, *ibidem*, p. 331: (...) *veluti vestra inviolabile fides et caeleberrima sanctitas obtime novit, qui per divinae suffragia pietatis hanc nebulosam impietatis sectam clara veritatis luce pridem discutere studuistis, etiam et deo Christo donante caeptum praedicationis*

preaching can also be found in a letter to Arn of Salzburg: ‘May your sanctity keep a watch over Christ’s flock, lest anyone who belongs to you through your admonitions to your subordinates lacks Christ’s grace through wolves’ bites, as the loss of any soul is the loss of the herdsman.’<sup>129</sup> As said before, sanctity of habits, or of life, are also presented as a parallel to preaching in several letters. Alcuin thus urges his correspondents to practice what they preach, and to take up the social responsibilities that go with sanctity.<sup>130</sup> Learning is associated with sanctity in a letter to archbishop Arn of Salzburg, whom Alcuin encourages, amongst other things, to ‘copy the writings of the catholic fathers for the benefit of your sanctity’.<sup>131</sup> Education, of child oblates in particular, is also linked with sanctity. Monks are encouraged to bring up their pupils in chastity and sanctity,<sup>132</sup> and in at least one case, Alcuin reports to the father of an oblate that his son grows up in chastity and sanctity, in a fashion, not dissimilar to that of the oblate Willibrord.<sup>133</sup>

The link between sanctity and monasticism in Alcuin’s letters<sup>134</sup> is not surprising, as many of his correspondents lived in monasteries, and Alcuin often associated the monastic virtues of chastity and modesty with sanctity.<sup>135</sup> In one of his letters to Arn of Salzburg, he speaks of ‘the sanctity of life under a rule’, thereby clearly tying sanctity to obedience to a monastic rule.<sup>136</sup> On one occasion, however, in a letter that was probably addressed to a canon, Alcuin explicitly addresses the question of whether a monk is more saintly than a canon:

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*opus multa ex parte perfecistis.* Cf. *Epistola* 225, to Theodulf of Orléans, *ibidem*, p. 369. Cf. on the Adoptionist controversy CAVADINI 1993 and HAINTHALER 1997; and on Alcuin’s contribution especially HEIL 1970; MARENBOON 1997 and Van RENSOUDE 2017.

<sup>129</sup> *Epistola* 239, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 384: ‘*Tua vero sanctitas vigilet super gregem Christi, ne lupinis morsibus aliquis desit gratiae Christi tuis subiectis ammonitionibus ad te respiciens; quia perditio cuiuslibet animae pastoris est detrimentum.*’

<sup>130</sup> E.g. *Epistola* 74, dedicatory letter of the *Vita Vedasti*, to Rado, abbot of Saint-Vaast, *ibidem*, p. 117: *Ideo necesse est ecclesiam plurimos habere defensores, qui non solum vitae sanctitate, sed etiam doctrina veritatis castra Dei viriliter defendere valeant; Epistola* 285, to Higbald of Lindisfarne, p. 444: *In moribus tuis fulgeant exempla sanctitatis et in verbis veritatis praedicationis nitescat; quia haec duo maxime conveniunt episcopo, ut bonis vivat moribus et praedicationis verba non taceat (...).*

<sup>131</sup> *Epistola* 254, *ibidem*, p. 411: *De catholicae fidei vero ratione tempore oportuno divino inspirante spiritu non me abnego aliquid inde considerare secundum catholicorum scripta patrum atque ad vestrae augmentum sanctitatis transcribere.* Cf. *Epistola* 243, also to Arn of Salzburg, *ibidem*, p. 390.

<sup>132</sup> E.g. *Epistola* 271, to the monks of Murbach, *ibidem*, p. 490: (...) *erudite pueros et adolescentulos vestros cum omni diligentia, in castitate et sanctitate, et disciplina ecclesiastica, (...).* Cf. for this letter below.

<sup>133</sup> *Epistola* 224, to a count named Chrotogarius, *ibidem*, p. 367.

<sup>134</sup> *Epistola* 187, to the monks of Septimania, *ibidem*, p. 314; *Epistola* 195, the dedicatory letter of the Commentary on John to Gisela and Rotrud, p. 322; *Epistola* 296, to the monks of Jarrow, p. 444; *Epistola* 298, to bishop Raganbert of Limoges, p. 457.

<sup>135</sup> e.g. *Epistola* 15, to Charlemagne’s sister Gisela, abbess of Chelles, *ibidem*, p. 41: *in nec vestimentorum vanum exterius nitorem, sed sanctitatis et castimoniae nobilem interius splendorem,* *Epistola* 17, to Aethelhard of Canterbury, p. 42: *In lumbis castitatis sanctitas, in lucernis praedicationis claritas designator.* Especially prominent in relation to the value of modesty is the contraposition of sanctity and ornate dress, in letters to monastic communities, e.g. *Epistola* 137, to the monks of Septimania, p. 215, *Epistola* 282, to Fridiun, abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, p. 441. Cf. for the emphasis on modesty KIELING 2000.

<sup>136</sup> *Epistola* 184, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 310. This is not necessarily the *Regula Benedicti*, as some, mostly older scholars would have it (e.g. BERLIÈRE 1927, pp. 8, 12, 71, 127, and 130; DALES 2012, pp. 139-141). Cf. also BARROW 2015, p. 80 on Alcuin’s letters as an early sign of the use of rules for secular canons.

*Quod vero tua inquisivit caritas de duorum distantia locorum, id est sive in canonica sede, sive in monachica sanctitate melius esset ultimi diei expectare spiraculum: ubique Deus est, qui meritorum magis, quam locorum considerat qualitatem; et si sub orario plus laborasti, quam sub cucula in servitio Dei, quid causae est in articulo mortis tui laboris insigne abicere, et alterius quaerere indicium?*

As your affection inquired about the distance between two places, that is whether it would be better to expect the breathing space of the last day in the canonical state or in monastic sanctity: God, who takes more account of merits than of social status, is everywhere, and whether you worked in God's service more under an alb than under a cowl, why would you cast off the sign of your toil at the moment of your death, and seek another token?<sup>137</sup>

Apparently, Alcuin's correspondent wanted to become a monk after a life as a canon.<sup>138</sup> In discouraging his addressee from such a course of action Alcuin also outlines a general principle which echoes the message of his *vitae*: it is not one's vocation which makes an individual saintly, but merit in exercising this vocation. Other letters could be added, in which Alcuin associated sanctity with merit, and ranked merit above such things as rank and sex.<sup>139</sup> On one occasion, Alcuin simply says that sanctity is made manifest in works of righteousness, suggesting social status plays no real role in his thought about sanctity.<sup>140</sup>

Prayer is the single most important attribute of sanctity. Alcuin frequently asks his correspondents to pray for him,<sup>141</sup> or for Christians in general.<sup>142</sup> Such requests are primarily addressed to monks, whose sanctity allows them to intercede for others. The monks themselves, however, are also in need of prayer for their own sake. In a letter to the monks of Murbach, Alcuin

<sup>137</sup> *Epistola* 55, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 99. As said in the preceding, the formal distinction between the two groups was not strictly drawn in Alcuin's time; this only became an issue in the 810s, after Alcuin's death. Cf. De JONG 1995, pp. 629-634.

<sup>138</sup> On this issue BECKER 1989, p. 23. Cf. also the distinction between monks and canons without moral qualifications of superiority for monks in the *Admonitio generalis* 71 (ed. MORDEK [et al.] 2012, pp. 224-226). Cf. also *Admonitio generalis* 75 (ibidem, p. 228), which states that clerics should not imitate monks. On Alcuin's involvement with the *Admonitio generalis*, cf. SCHEIBE 1958; idem 1959b; HARTMANN 2010, pp. 33-35.

<sup>139</sup> *Epistola* 42, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 86 (cf. also above, section 2.2; *Epistola* 123, to Coenulf of Mercia, ibidem, p. 170.

<sup>140</sup> *sanctitas vero in iustitiae operibus constat. Epistola* 15, to Charlemagne's sister, Gisela, abbess of Chelles, ibidem, p. 41.

<sup>141</sup> E.g. *Epistola* 271, to the monks of Murbach, ibidem, p. 490: *Unde deprecor, carissimi fratres, vestram piissimam dilectionem, ut dignemini me in sanctis orationibus vestris fratrem habere quasi unum ex vobis, ut vestrae sanctitatis intercessione peccatorum meorum merear a deo Iesu indulgentiam accipere, qui est salus et beatitudo omnium in se sperantium.*

<sup>142</sup> E.g. *Epistola* 168, to the monks of Salzburg, ibidem, p. 276 (...) *ut vestra me sanctitas a terrenis levaret cupiditatibus, et in caelesti vobiscum collocaret desiderio.* Other examples: *Epistola* 310, to Remedius, bishop of Chur, ibidem, p. 478.

first asks the monks to pray for him, followed by the encouragement to bring up the oblates in the monastery in sanctity, so that they may intercede for the monks themselves in due time.<sup>143</sup>

Sanctity and prayer intersect especially in the notion of intercession, the idea that a more spiritually gifted party, such as a priest or a saint, can pray on behalf of someone else.<sup>144</sup> In one letter, Alcuin describes the status and function of the priest as follows: ‘a priest must be a preacher of God’s word and His will to the people, and an intercessor for his people to God, as a mediator between God and men.’<sup>145</sup> Another letter urges Coenulf, king of Mercia, to treat Christ’s priests decently, so the saints will intercede on the king’s behalf.<sup>146</sup> The same sentiment also works through in Alcuin’s wishes to other people of a religious persuasion: Alcuin wishes Friduin, abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow ‘May the angels, visiting the ecclesiastical offices and the works of brotherly union, find you standing before all, working before all, interceding for the Christian people in every way’.<sup>147</sup> Alcuin repeatedly asks others to intercede for him, ‘not trusting on my own merits, but fully commending myself to divine grace through Christ’s servants’ intercessions,’ Christ’s servants being monks and the members of the clergy.<sup>148</sup> It is also in this context that Alcuin’s notion of prayer confraternity plays a part. Alcuin’s interest in prayer confraternities is well-known, the most famous example being his inclusion in the prayers of the Frankish church at the council of Frankfurt in 794.<sup>149</sup>

Local saints play a particularly important role as intercessors as they function as spiritual fathers for their communities. Good examples are references to Saint Rupert of Salzburg as an intercessor, in a letter to the monks of Salzburg, and to Saint Boniface in a letter to the monks of Fulda.<sup>150</sup> To the monks of Lindisfarne, Alcuin emphasizes that the intercession of the saints who rest within the community, together with the emendation of the monks’ conduct are a greater defence than weapons.<sup>151</sup> Intercession is therefore the third in a set of three functions which Alcuin

<sup>143</sup> *Epistola* 271, to the monks of Murbach, *ibidem*, p. 490: *erudite pueros et adolescentulos vestros cum omni diligentia, in castitate et sanctitate, et disciplina ecclesiastica, ut digni habeantur vestrum post vos tenere locum, et pro vobis sanctis orationibus Deoque acceptabilibus assidua consuetudine intercedere*. On the importance of prayer in the Carolingian world, cf. De JONG 1995.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. MEYER 1959b.

<sup>145</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 114, to Eanbald, archbishop of York, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 168: *Sacerdos vero Dei verbi et voluntatis illius praedicator debet esse in populum et intercessor ad Deum pro populo, quasi mediator inter Deum et homines*. Cf. also *Epistola* 210, to George, patriarch of Jerusalem, *ibidem*, pp. 350, 351.

<sup>146</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 123, *ibidem*, p. 181.

<sup>147</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 282, *ibidem*, p. 441, *Angeli vero, visitantes officia ecclesiastica et opera fraternae unanimatis, te vero in primis stantem, in primis operantem, in primis intercedentem pro populo christiano omnimodis inveniant*.

<sup>148</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 278, *ibidem*, p. 434: *Ego vero (...) nihil de meis confidens meritis, sed totum me per famulorum Christi intercessionem divinae gratiae commendans (...)*.

<sup>149</sup> *Capitulare Francofurtense*, canon 56, ed. Albert WERMINGHOFF, MGH Conc. 2,1 (Hannover & Leipzig: Hahn), p. 171.

<sup>150</sup> Respectively *Epistola* 168, *ibidem*, p. 277; *Epistola* 250, p. 405. Cf. also below, 3.4.

<sup>151</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 21, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 59. Cf. also *Epistola* 22, *ibidem*, p. 60.

assigns to the saints: as example, as safeguard of the tradition of the church, and as intercessors. Through their examples, the saints guide the faithful to better their lives and attain salvation. As protectors of the tradition of the church,<sup>152</sup> saints ensure that the church can function as a vessel of salvation. As interlocutors with God, they help the individual faithful to receive mercy from God. All of these have the same purpose: the salvation of mankind.

If living Christians, and especially churchmen, exert themselves in sanctity, protecting the church and its traditions, praying, and educating their successors, they may merit to acquire salvation themselves, and help others to acquire it as well.<sup>153</sup> Though this may seem mostly relevant to the clergy, Alcuin explicitly tells Charlemagne that this is also the task of the laity:

*Nec enim hoc solis sacerdotibus vel clericis audiendum ibi arbitreris, sed etiam bonis laicis, et bene in opere Dei laborantibus dicendum esse credas; et maxime his, qui in sublimioribus positi sunt saeculi dignitatibus, quorum conversatio bona et vitae sanctitas et ammonitoria aeternae salutis verba suis subiectis praedicatio poterit esse.*

You must not think that this should be heard there (i.e. at the Last Judgement, JV) solely by priests or clerics, but must believe this to be even for good laymen, and those, toiling well in God's work, and especially to those, who are placed on the higher places of honour in the world, whose good conduct and sanctity of life and admonitory words of eternal salvation could be preaching to those subject to them.<sup>154</sup>

'This', in the opening line of the citation above, refers to the biblical verse Alcuin used in the preceding sentence, Matthew 25:21: 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'<sup>155</sup> This verse appears often in Alcuin's writings: in a dozen letters as well as in the *Vita Richarii*, the sermon appended to the

<sup>152</sup> Cf. above, section 2.2.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. *Epistola* 94, to pope Leo III, *ibidem*, p. 138: (...) *pio pastori condecet magnam commissi sibi gregis curam habere et sedula pietatis ammonitione et sanctitatis intercessione praevidere, ne aliqui ex illis per praecipitia errorum a via veritatis et perpetuae pascuis vitae exorbitare incipient*; *Epistola* 131, to the monks of Saint-Martin in Tours, *ibidem*, p. 198 (also DRISCOLL (ed.) 1998): *Et vos, sanctissimi huius familiae magistri et patres, docete filios vestros pie, sobrie et caste vivere, (...) scientes vosmetipsos salutis filiorum vestrorum aeternam habere apud Deum remunerationem, quatenus quorum ministeris utimini in terris, eorum prosperitatis mercedem habeatis perpetuam in caelis*; *Epistola* 206, to Nefridius of Narbonne and Benedict of Aniane, p. 342: *In his tua se exercent sanctitas, ut Deo auxiliante de huius vitae labore ad perpetuae quietis beatitudinem pervenire merearis.*

<sup>154</sup> *Epistola* 136, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 209. Cf. *Epistola* 297, to an abbess named Reginoida, *ibidem*, p. 456: *Per huius vitae sanctitatem in aeternam poterit quisque pervenire beatitudinem.* Cf. on the former reference DIESENBERGER 2016, pp. 79, 155. The implication of the last sentence is that lay rulers also have a role in preaching; this is born out by Alcuin's description of Charlemagne as *rex praedicator*. Cf. LAUWERS 2004.

<sup>155</sup> *'Engle serve bone et fidelis, quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, supra multa te constituam; intra in gaudium Domini tui.'*

*Vita Vedasti*, the *Commentary on John*, and *De fide sanctae et individuae trinitatis*.<sup>156</sup> *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 12 also plays on this parable, when Alcuin describes Willibrord as intent on meeting Jesus at the second coming ‘carrying in both his hands his multiplied talents’, and in the sermon appended to the first book of the *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>157</sup> This particular verse must have been dear to Alcuin, and representative of his idea of sanctity. It is all the more noteworthy that we find the verse used in relation to laymen as well. In a letter to Meginfrid, Charlemagne’s treasurer, Alcuin writes:

*Sed unicuique pensandum est, in quo gradu statuisset eum Deus et quo talento ditasset eum. Non enim solis episcopis vel presbyteris pecuniam suam tradidit Dominus ad multiplicandum, sed omni dignitati et gradui talenta bonae operationis tradidit, ut datam sibi gratiam fideliter amministrare studeat et conservis suis erogare contendat. Alius est, qui talentum praedicationis accipit; alius sapientiae; alius divitiarum; alius cuiuslibet amministrationis, quidam forte alicuius artificii donum a Deo, horum omnium bonorum dispensatore. Et in his omnibus fides et devotio spectanda est, ut fideliter laboret et viriliter sui domini pecuniam multiplicare satagat; quatenus desiderabilem vocem audire mereatur: Euge serve bone et fidelis, quia super pauca fuisti fidelis, supra multa te constituam; intra in gaudium domini tui.*

Everyone must consider deeply, in what state God has placed him, and with what talent He has enriched him. For the Lord did not give his money only to bishops or priests to multiply, but he gave talents to every dignity and grade, so that he would loyally strive to spread the mercy given to him and would hurry to pay out to his fellow slaves. There is one who receives from God, the dispenser of all good things, the talent of preaching, another that of wisdom, another that of riches, another that of whatever kind of help, one perhaps the gift of some craft. And faith and devotion must be taken into account by all of these, so that they would toil loyally and strive to multiply manly the money of his Lord, so that he may merit to hear the desirable voice: ‘Well done,

<sup>156</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 10, to Arn of Salzburg, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 46; *Epistola* 27, to pope Hadrian I, ibidem, p. 68; *Epistola* 63, to an unidentified abbot, p. 106; *Epistola* 67, to Aethelbald, abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, p. 111; *Epistola* 76, to bishop Remedius of Chur, p. 118; *Epistola* 79, to the abbess Aethelhyda, p. 120; *Epistola* 111, to Megenfrid, p. 160; *Epistola* 128, to Aethelhard of Canterbury, p. 190; *Epistola* 136, to Charlemagne, p. 208; *Epistola* 267, to an unknown addressee, p. 426, *Epistola* 310, to Remedius of Chur, p. 479; *Vita Richarii* 8; *Adbortatio ad imitandas virtutes sancti patris Vedasti in actis descriptas* 2; *Commentaria in Iohannem*, PL 100, col. 830; *De fide sanctae et individuae trinitatis* 1, 1, CC CM 249, p. 20.

<sup>157</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 12, vv. 1-4: *Hoc opus, hoc fuerat praeclearo praesule semper, / Plurima quod ferret animarum lucra tonanti, / Et domino ad servos remeanti occurreret ultro, / Multiplicata ferens manibus utrisque talenta*; ibidem, 1, 32: *O felix anima, quae saeculi labores dereliquisti et caelestem cum multiplici sudoris tui fructu requiem intrasti; talenta tibi commissa multiplicasti, praemia promissa accepisti! In pauca fidelis fuisti in terris, supra multa constitutus gloriaris in caelis*. Cf. also, e.g. *Vita Vedasti* 5, and *Carmen* 10 (as above), vv. 17, ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 236; ed. idem 1895, p. 49.

good and loyal servant. Because you were loyal over few things, I will appoint you over many; enter into the joy of your Lord.<sup>158</sup>

## 2.5. Inclusive sanctity and monastic virtues in *De virtutibus et vitiis*

The inclusive approach to sanctity, the idea that all Christians could potentially become saints and that sanctity was the result of true conversion, is perhaps best illustrated by looking at Alcuin's work on lay ethics, especially *De virtutibus et vitiis*, a work on the virtues and vices. It was written around the year 800 for a lay nobleman, Wido, count in the Breton march and is therefore roughly contemporary with the saints' lives discussed above.<sup>159</sup> Most of the contents of the text derive from patristic sources, such as Gregory's *Moralia in Iob*, and John Cassian, *Collationes* and *De institutis coenobiorum*, Isidore of Seville's *Sententiae* and *Commonitiuncula ad sororem*, Caesarius of Arles's *Sermons*, Julianus Pomerus' *De vita contemplativa*, and on one occasion Cicero's *De inventione*.<sup>160</sup> The spirit of Augustine breathes through all of the work, though no direct citations have been found.<sup>161</sup> *De virtutibus et vitiis* was a very popular text, not least in the Carolingian period itself. It has been transmitted in about 140 manuscripts.<sup>162</sup>

As the title suggests, *De virtutibus et vitiis* is a work which lists both virtues (chapters 1-26) and vices (chapters 27-34), concluding with a description of the four cardinal virtues (chapter 35). Many of the virtues are Christian commonplaces which can be applied in every Christian's private life, such as wisdom, faith, love, and hope (chapters 1-4), peace, mercy, indulgence, patience, humility, and conscience (chapters 6-11), and conversion and fear of the Lord (chapters 14-15). Other virtues relate to liturgical or quasi-liturgical practice, such as the emphasis on reading scripture (chapter 5),<sup>163</sup> on confession and penitence (chapters 12-13), on fasting,<sup>164</sup> on the giving of alms,<sup>165</sup> and on chastity (chapters 16-18). A third group of virtues concerns those virtues that Wido would need in

<sup>158</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 111, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 160. Cf. NELSON 2008, pp. 9-10.

<sup>159</sup> ANTON 1968, pp. 84-85. Cf. MÄHL 1969, p. 89.

<sup>160</sup> This overview of sources is derived from a variety of scholarly publications on the subject. Cf. ANSPACH 1936, p. 351; ANTON 1968, pp. 84-85; DUBREUCQ 2004, pp. 273-274, LAISTNER 1957, p. 198; OTTEN 1997, pp. 25-31; WALLACH 1955, pp. 194-195; idem 1959, pp. 236-242.

<sup>161</sup> DUBREUCQ 2004, pp. 273-274; Cf. KING 2003, p. 33. Alcuin did, however, use sermons of ps.-Augustine (Caesarius of Arles) for this work. Cf. also below for ps.-Augustine. The synthesis of these authorities, at least of Augustine and Cassian, is not self-evident. Cf. LEYSER 2000.

<sup>162</sup> BULLOUGH 1998, pp. 3, 21; HEIL 1978, p. 271. On lay readership, cf. CHANDLER 2010. Cf. also DIESENBERGER 2016, p. 48.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. on Alcuin's ideas of laymen reading Scripture ALBERI 2003, pp. 119-120.

<sup>164</sup> As a form of moderation. On fasting as a form of moderation, rather than asceticism, cf. above, and here especially MAGENNIS 1999, pp. 93-95.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. NELSON 2010, p. 387.

his work as a royal dispenser of justice (chapters 19-21), and vices he should avoid in the course of performing his role as a nobleman in society, notably envy, pride, irascibility, and seeking vain glory (chapters 22-25). The last chapter of the section on virtues concerns the virtue of perseverance (chapter 26), which is a sign of Alcuin's debt to Augustine. The vices are pride, gluttony, lust, greed, wrath, sloth, sadness, and vainglory; in effect the seven deadly sins, except envy (which had already had a separate treatment), and including sadness and vainglory.

*De virtutibus et vitiis* is clearly written for a lay nobleman,<sup>166</sup> as is not only manifest from the identity of the person to whom the work was addressed, but also from the emphasis on virtues Wido would need in the day to day run of the affairs of a nobleman, and the specific vices listed as ones that should be especially avoided. Chapters 19-21 are specifically devoted to Wido's particular needs, while the preceding sections provide an overview of the more general virtues, which any human should strive for. Some of these need some further explanation in view of Wido's role in life, especially the demand of chastity.<sup>167</sup> The chapter on chastity does not condemn sexual behaviour outright; there is talk of bringing up children 'of the flesh' (which implies some form of intercourse), but overall the demand is for restraint. Alcuin's ideas here are in line with later Carolingian attempts to impose, in the words of Julia Smith, 'as nearly a monastic morality on conjugal sexuality as possible'.<sup>168</sup> The prescriptions of reading and fasting likewise are the demands put on a religious specialist. They derive from the life of religious specialists *par excellence* in the Christian tradition, namely the clergy, but Alcuin shows how they can be integrated into a lay Christian's lifestyle.<sup>169</sup> As such, they betray the ideas underlying Alcuin's concept of sanctity.

In his study on the ethos of the Carolingian lay nobility, which he terms 'secular sanctity', Thomas Noble has devoted substantial attention to *De virtutibus et vitiis*. In Noble's words, 'Carolingian nobles were expected to be 'saintly' in public, partly to save their own souls and partly to save others.'<sup>170</sup> The idea was also to involve the lay nobility in the project of Christianization, and give them a stake in the formation of a *populus christianus*, a Christian people under Carolingian rule. Noble's assessment of the text departs from a political point of view. He interprets the ethos canvassed in, amongst others, *De virtutibus et vitiis* within this ecclesio-political framework as being

<sup>166</sup> The text is decidedly not a mirror of princes, as was once held. Cf. ANTON 1968, pp. 87-88; KEMPSHALL 2011, p. 168, n. 182.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. for chastity in during the married state JOYE 2013; LECLERCQ 1983, pp. 66-73; SMITH 2003, pp. 71-73. Smith's earlier statement (1994, p. 539), that Hucbald of Saint Amand's 'account of matrimony in the *Vita Rictrudis* showed an approval of matrimony all the more startling for being unprecedented in early medieval hagiography', takes no account of this point in Alcuin, but underlines a trend in hagiography, that attaches little value to marriage.

<sup>168</sup> SMITH 1995a, p. 667. Cf. NOBLE 2007, pp. 11-12.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. NOBLE 2007, p. 16.

<sup>170</sup> NOBLE 2007; quoted from p. 13.

both elitist and exclusively male.<sup>171</sup> Noble's conclusion is true for *De virtutibus et vitiis* and the other texts he studied, but may lead to the unwarranted conclusion that this is true for Alcuin's thought on sanctity overall as well. *De virtutibus et vitiis* is a discussion of one path to sanctity, tailored to the social role of a nobleman, but Alcuin's ideas stretched beyond the male nobility.<sup>172</sup> This is clear from Alcuin's letter to Charlemagne and his letter to the anonymous canon, both quoted above, but also from *De virtutibus et vitiis* itself. Most indicative in that respect is the concluding section, where Alcuin addresses Wido directly. Looking back at the work in hand, Alcuin says:

*Haec tibi, dulcissime fili Wido, brevi sermone, sicut petisti, dictavi; ut habeas cotidie quasi manualementem in conspectu tuo libellum, in quo possis te ipsum considerare, quid cavere, vel quid agere debeas: atque per singulas vitae huius prosperitates vel adversitates exortari, quomodo ad culmen perfectionis ascendere debeas. Nec te laici habitus vel conversationis secularis terreat qualitas, quasi in eo habitu vitae caelestis ianuam intrare non valeas. Igitur sicut in omnibus aequaliter regni Dei predicata est beatitudo, ita omni sexui, aetati et personae aequaliter secundum meritorum dignitatem regni Dei patet introitus. Ubi non est distinctio, quis esset in seculo laicus vel clericus, dives vel pauper, iunior vel senior, servus aut dominus, sed unusquisque secundum meritum boni operis perpetua coronabitur gloria.*

These things I have put to writing in a short treatise, my most beloved son Wido, so that you may always have this booklet before you like a handbook, in which you can consider yourself, what you should avoid, or what you should do, and to exhort yourself through the good and bad things of this life, how you should ascend to the summit of perfection. Your layman's appearance or your secular state in life<sup>173</sup> should not make you afraid, as if you would not be worthy to enter the doors of the heavenly life in it, for just as the blessed state of God's kingdom is preached equally in all things, just so the entrance of God's kingdom stand open to all sexes, ages, and states of life equally, according to the dignity of their merits. There is no distinction there between

<sup>171</sup> NOBLE 2007, pp. 30-34.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. also ALBERI 2003.

<sup>173</sup> My translation of *laici habitus* and *conversationis secularis qualitas* is one of many, that all do only partial justice to these terms. Both *habitus* and *conversatio* can be used to describe both the general behaviour of an individual (*habitus* in Bourdieu's sense) and one element of it, either dress (*habitus*) or speech (*conversatio*). I chose to translate this in the way I did because I interpret the juxtaposition as a way to say both from the outside (*habitus*) and from the inside (*conversatio*).

who was a layman in the world, or a cleric, rich or poor, young or old, slave or lord, but everyone will be crowned with glory according to the merit of their good work.<sup>174</sup>

Finally, another aspect of Alcuin's theology of sanctity as found in his *vitae* also resounds in *De virtutibus et vitiis*. Alcuin urged Wido to live a virtuous life, but in the dedicatory letter, Alcuin also hints at the necessity of divine mercy, and thus divine predestination,<sup>175</sup> as a requirement for eventual success, in addition to the continuous obligation of the faithful to do the good work. Given Alcuin's Augustinian understanding of sanctity and predestination, divine mercy should be interpreted as perseverance.

*Et hoc tuam, dilectissime fili, dilectionem obnixè deprecor, ut plurima tibi ipsi elemosinarum largitione, et iudiciorum aequitate, et misericordiae sedulitate, caelestis gloriae habitationem indefessa voluntate praeparare studeas. In quo opere et desiderio divina te clementia semper ubique adiuvare dignetur, dilectissime fili.*

And I beg you insistently, for your love, my most beloved son, that you strive to prepare a dwelling for yourself in heavenly glory, through the very lavish donation of alms, the justness of your judgements, the careful administration of mercy, and your untiring desire. May divine mercy deign it worthy to help you in that task and desire always and everywhere, my most beloved son.<sup>176</sup>

## 2.6. Conclusion

Alcuin never systematically discussed his views about sanctity, which means that the only way of exploring these views is through a careful reading of various sources on the subject, especially those sources that discuss individual saints, such as saint's lives, and those writings that discuss sanctity (*sanctitas*) outright. An overview of these writings shows that Alcuin's concept of sanctity is both ecclesiocentric and Christocentric.

<sup>174</sup> Alcuin, *De virtutibus et vitiis* 36 (ALC 38, partially edited as *Epistola* 305, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 464-465; PL 101, col. 638). Cf. VEYRARD-COSME 2003a, p. 77. Cf. also BYNUM 1995, p. 100. Augustine says virtue is achieved in the context of what is possible for each particular individual (*De genesi at litteram* 9.5, ed. ZYCHA 1894, p. 273).

<sup>175</sup> Cf., on the Augustinian background of the association of mercy with predestination below, 3.7.

<sup>176</sup> Alcuin, *De virtutibus et vitiis*, prologus (ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 464; PL 101, cols. 613-614). Cf. MEYER 1959a, p. 446; NEWHAUSER 1993, pp. 26 (bibliography) and 116-117 (discussion).

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Alcuin's thought on sanctity was deeply influenced by Augustine. He compares Christ with the sun and the saints with the stars to indicate the saints' dependence on Christ, and makes a similar point in his *Commentary on Jobn*: the saints are inferior to Christ, and dependent upon Christ in their sanctity. To Alcuin, the saints are predestined and their sanctity by consequence relies on His wish and His plan with creation. This idea of sanctity is illustrated by the image of light, which is very important in Alcuin's thought on sanctity overall.

Most of all sanctity is tied to correct functioning of Christian society. This is where sanctity is exemplified by the virtues of the saints. What virtues mattered most, depended on the social position and role within society of the person in question. Some virtues are necessary for most, perhaps even all, others are not. Virtues can and should grow over time. They are the product of the way they lived their lives as well as predestination. This interplay of predestination and virtue in Alcuin's thought relies strongly on Augustine's.

Alcuin repeatedly says that all walks of life can lead towards salvation, and implies that being saintly and being saved are the same thing. In practice, however, Alcuin's description of the values of sanctity clearly favour the clergy, and, to a certain extent, the nobility. Almost all saints whose lives he described, including Saints Vedast, Richarius, and Willibrord, were clerics, with a minority of saints being royal martyrs. Even the only possible exception to both rules, Willibrord's father Wilgisl, who initially lived the life of a saintly layman, eventually became a monk, and then proceeded in virtue as a hermit, and finally an abbot.

Alcuin's focus on the clergy reflects of his own position in life. A cleric from an early age onwards, he spent most of his life within a religious community: in York, amongst the clerics of Charlemagne's court, in the many religious houses he visited in Francia (Echternach amongst them), and finally in Tours, where he spent the last years of his life as abbot. This is not to say that Alcuin's view of the world was restricted to the cloister. Throughout this life, he was keenly aware of the world outside, but his view of that world is one, looking out from the cloister. Alcuin's ideas about sanctity reflect this view. It is no wonder, then, that his instructions regarding teaching and preaching, though not wholly restricted to the clergy, are also primarily directed towards the clergy. The correct education of the clergy, and the role of clerics as preachers, then, merit further consideration because of their importance within this idea of sanctity, and also of the church and its place in society. These values, moreover, also play a part in Alcuin's contribution to the debates of his time about mission and baptism and more generally about the nature and structure of Christian society, and therefore provide an important link with the context within which Alcuin developed and expressed his ideas about sanctity.

One question put forward in the Introduction has not been discussed so far, namely that of the importance of rites of passage in the development of sanctity. There is a simple reason for this omission. Though Alcuin mentions sacraments occasionally in his *vitae* – Wilgisl’s married state is mentioned, as is Willibrord’s baptism – events such as birth, death, and marriage are not discussed in relation to sanctity. Only baptism is linked with sanctity in two letters, and in *De rhetorica et virtutibus*, baptism is a defining trait of the church; faith and baptism set the church apart from the pagan philosophers. The administration of the sacraments, therefore, is an integral part of the normal Christian life, but not by itself a sign of sanctity. This cannot be said of the various grades of clerical ordination, which are taken to be expressions of sanctity. Both Wilgisl and Willibrord proceed in divine ordinations as a result of their growing perfection. The address of high-ranking clerics as ‘your sanctity’ (*vestra sanctitas*), should also be understood in that light. Alcuin’s dependence on Augustine’s teaching of predestination, finally, suggests that death was important as the moment at which sanctity could be proven, as this was the moment at which one could see whether an individual had been predestined for salvation or not.

## 3. Alcuin on relics

### 3.1. Relic vocabulary (i). Functional descriptors

As he never wrote a comprehensive account of his thoughts on relics, the first two sections of this chapter discuss how Alcuin referred to relics in his writings.<sup>1</sup> In Alcuin's time there were several Latin terms available to describe relics. Most derived from Late Antiquity, when a plethora of terms was in use to describe relics.<sup>2</sup> The variety of terms in use decreased gradually in the eighth and ninth century, and Alcuin's writings evince this trend.<sup>3</sup> Some of the terms used to describe relics indicated the function or origin of relics; the closest equivalent of the modern term relic, *reliquia* (from the verb *relinquo*, 'to leave behind'), which means 'remains' when translated directly into English, belongs to this group of terms. So do *pignus*, which translates as 'pledge', 'surety', or 'relict',<sup>4</sup> and *patrocinium* ('patronage', 'protection'). Alcuin used *reliquia* in relation to relics, but *patrocinium*

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. for the method deployed here McCULLOH 1976. Cf. HERMANN-MASCARD 1975, pp. 120-121.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. McCULLOH 1976 for Gregory the Great's terminology.

<sup>3</sup> I draw here on personal communication with Janneke Raaijmakers and Julia Smith. In line with trends in early medieval relic labels, as studied by Julia Smith (2012, p. 150), which betray little interest in the material capacities of relics, especially prior to c. 800. Cf. also SMITH 2015, p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. in Guibert of Nogent's *De sanctorum pignoribus*. Cf. GEARY 1986, p. 176; HEINZELMANN 1979, p. 18; SMITH 2012, p. 146.

appears only once, and *pignus* does not appear at all. The latter word occurs in Alcuin's work on only three occasions, never in a context in which the word denotes relics.<sup>5</sup> Other terms indicated the high value attached to relics, such as *thesaurum* and *gaza*, both meaning 'treasure', or *munus*, meaning 'gift'. Yet other terms described the material qualities of the relics in question. Examples are *corpus* ('body'), or terms referring to individual body parts (*capillus*, *os*), to ashes (*cinis*), dust (*pulvis*), blood (*sanguis*), or non-corporeal remains (*vestis*, 'clothes').

The term *reliquia* occurs on six occasions in the *Vita Willibrordi*. After the record of Willibrord's death when Alcuin wrote: 'through the operation of divine clemency, miracles (*signa*) and healings (*sanitates*) do not cease to happen near the relics (*reliquiae*) of the holy priest of God (...)'<sup>6</sup> The verse equivalent of this passage also refers to *reliquiae*.<sup>7</sup> In the subsequent sections, which deal with the miracles after Willibrord's death, the word *reliquia* occurs in the account of the healing of a paralysed woman. This woman, who had been paralyzed for seven years, was brought into the church by her relatives and placed near the *locellus* (either the location or the shrine; the Latin could mean either), in which the relics of the saint are kept.<sup>8</sup> There she poured out tears and prayed, and was subsequently healed.

Alcuin also spoke of *reliquiae* when he reported the punishment of a deacon who stole a cross that contained relics. What relics these may have been is not further specified.<sup>9</sup> *Reliquia* also occurs twice in the sermon appended to the first book of the *Vita Willibrordi*. Apart from referring to Saint Hilary of Poitiers' physical remains, the sermon speaks of *reliquia* to make an important general remark on the purpose of relics. Apart from a historical bond with the living saint, the sermon says, the presence of relics can be a means by which the saint acquires a tie with a community.<sup>10</sup>

The word *reliquia* is not found in the *Vita Vedasti*, and only once in the *Vita Richarii*, in the chapter which recounts the death and burial of the saint.<sup>11</sup> The poem on the saints of York is richer ground in this respect: *reliquia* occurs four times. One of these is in Alcuin's discussion of the relics

<sup>5</sup> Alcuin, *In Iohannem*, PL 100, col. 960, Alcuin, *De orthographia*, ed. KEIL 1880, pp. 306, 307.

<sup>6</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 24: *Ibi usque hodie, divina operante misericordia (sic!), signa et sanitates ad sancti Dei sacerdotis reliquias fieri non cessant.*

<sup>7</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 29: *Quam requiem speras animam habuisse beatam, // Talia dum terris per sanctas signa geruntur / Reliquias, tanti meritis dignissima patris? / Qui nostros poterit precibus relevare dolores, / Si iam corde pio lacrimas effundimus illic, / Quo pater egregius sacro corpore pansat.*

<sup>8</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 28: *prope locellum reliquiarum eius.*

<sup>9</sup> *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 32, v. 6. The prose equivalent does not mention relics.

<sup>10</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 32: *Licet per totius orbis ecclesias convenit omni populo christiano sanctorum festa celebrare, victorias laudare, vitam imitare, et quia in omnem terram exivit sonus eorum et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum, in omni terra consona cunctorum viventium voce laudandi sint, tamen singulis in locis propter familiaritatem cobabitationis cuiuslibet illorum et propter praesentiam sanctorum reliquiarum, quae in solatium illis vel illis condonatae sunt habitatoribus, speciali quadam veneratione apud cives suos familiaris honorantur.* On the role of local feasts in Carolingian Francia, cf. also HEAD 1990, pp. 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Richarii* 14.

of the Venerable Bede, which are the site of a healing, indicated as ‘a sign of salvation’.<sup>12</sup> The other occasions on which Alcuin spoke of *reliquiae* are all part of the description of King Oswald’s rule, death, and posthumous fame as a saint. Oswald’s relics play an important part in the latter, and are called *reliquia*, *ossa* (‘bones’, always plural), and *pulvis* (‘dust’).<sup>13</sup> This is a remarkably varied vocabulary by Alcuin’s standard. *Pulvis* does not appear elsewhere in Alcuin’s writings in a relic context, but refers here to the miracle-working dust from the site where Oswald fell in battle, which had been mixed with the saint’s blood, and to the dust onto which the water had fallen with which Oswald’s bones had been washed clean after their retrieval. The sanctity had apparently spread, to include the water first, and then the dust, as the water dried up.<sup>14</sup> The source of this story, including the use of the word *pulvis* to describe miracle-working matter, was found in Bede.<sup>15</sup> In this case Alcuin therefore borrowed the term from Bede, his source for the story of Oswald.

Alcuin also mentioned *reliquiae* in some of his *tituli*. These poems were composed for use as inscriptions in churches, as their texts make clear, although it is not always certain that they were ever executed as such. We often only know them because they were transmitted in manuscripts, as part of poetry collections.<sup>16</sup> It is understood though, that Alcuin intended his *tituli* to be inscribed, and that the practice was very much alive in Francia at the time.<sup>17</sup> One of Alcuin’s *tituli* refers to the church as the ‘nourishing house of God’, where there are ‘the treasures of the Thunderer, many relics of holy fathers’.<sup>18</sup> Another inscription also focusses on the relation of the church with relics:

*Haec, tu quam cernis, praeparva domuncula, lector,  
Reliquias propter sacras iam condita constat,  
Ut locus hic mundus suffragia sancta teneret:  
Servulus ut Christi veniens oraret in isto.  
Iusserat Albinus vates haec tecta parare,  
Pro quo, qui titulum videas, orare memento.*

<sup>12</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., v. 1316.

<sup>13</sup> Dust as a relic is a phenomenon well-established in Bede, but not otherwise attested in Alcuin. Cf. *Historia ecclesiastica* 1, 18, on Saint Germanus of Auxerre and dust from the tomb of Saint Alban.

<sup>14</sup> *Reliquia*: Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 361, 366, 483 and 1318; *ossa*: ibidem, vv. 362, 364, 367, 399; *pulvis*: ibidem, vv. 313, 341, 345, 350, and 354 (all referring to the dust of Oswestry); 398, 409, and 425 (referring to the dust of Oswald’s bones).

<sup>15</sup> *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3, 9-11. Cf. ROLLASON 1989, pp. 26-27.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. on Alcuin’s inscriptions TREFFORT 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. e.g. RAAIJMAKERS 2012, pp. 137-146.

<sup>18</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen* 90, 26b (*Haec domus alma Dei, hic sunt thesaura tonantis*, S-K 5862, ALC 61.90.26[b]), ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 317, vv. 5-6: *Haec domus alma dei, hic sunt thesaura tonantis, // Sanctorum multae reliquiaeque patrum.*

You, reader, who sees this small oratory:  
 it is manifest that it is built to house holy relics,  
 so that this clean place possesses divine support:  
 so that Christ's servant, coming here, may pray in it.  
 Alcuin the poet ordered this building built,  
 Remember to pray for him, you who sees this inscription'.<sup>19</sup>

Similar concerns for the fitting stature of the building as a site to house relics, as well as for Alcuin's well-being, enforced by the prayer of the faithful, also occur in another poem, which was perhaps composed for the same church.<sup>20</sup>

After hagiography and *tituli*, a third context in which Alcuin sometimes discussed *reliquiae* is his letters. In *Epistola* 11, a letter to Angilbert of Saint-Riquier, Alcuin asked the addressee to send 'sweetest gifts, which are also very necessary to me, that is: some relics of the saints.'<sup>21</sup> In another letter, Angilbert is again politely asked to send Alcuin some relics. The word used in this context, however, is *patrocinia* ('patronage').<sup>22</sup> A more vehement request was sent to Paulinus of Aquileia, to remind him of an older promise:

*Diu dilectionis tuae exspectavi promissa, hoc est vivificae crucis Christi vel aliarum reliquiarum patrocinia. Noli me, obsecro, tanto fraudare munere nec te veritatis mercede. Nolo, longinquitatem viae causeris. Caritas pennas ad volandum inveniet, nec flumina obruent illam. Sufficiunt alae fidei in palatio regis, quibus nec voluntas deest in accipiendo nec fides in reddendo. Si quid nostra petitio apud vos valeat, utinam et tua semper apud Deum valeat petitio, qui te in tam sublimi statuit gradu, ubi angelus eiusdem dei et domini nostri Iesu Christi effectus es.*

<sup>19</sup> *Carmen* 108, 1 (*Haec, tu quam cernis, praeparata domuncula, lector*, S-K 6034, ALC 61.108.1), ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 334. On liturgical cleanness, cf. ANGENENDT 2008, pp. 458-460.

<sup>20</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen* 108, 3 (*Albinus veniens peregrino vatis ab orbe*, S-K 519, ALC 61.108.3), ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 334.

<sup>21</sup> *devotissime te flagito, ut **dona dulcissima et mihi multum necessaria, id est sanctorum reliquias, mihi vel aliquas transmittere curaveris***, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 37. The translated section is given in bold. Cf. GEARY 1986, pp. 180-186 and HERBERS 2010, pp. 60-62 for gift exchange and relics (mentioning the example of Alcuin, amongst others), and especially SMITH 2016, pp. 442-443 on Angilbert's relic collection.

<sup>22</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 97, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 141-142: *Patrocinia sanctorum non obliviscere. Res ecclesiasticae pulchritudinis oculis occurrentes noli negligere ut adquiras. Nostra rusticitas avara est de talibus; vestra nobilitas larga est de omnibus*. *Patrocinia* is translated as 'relics' outright in HERBERS 2012, p. 111, and as 'heilige Unterpfänder' in HERBERS 2010, p. 61, which is all the stranger because Alcuin does not use the word for surety (*pignus*) in relation to relics at all. Cf. for Angilbert's role in procuring Italian relics for (amongst others) Alcuin RABE 1995, pp. 71-72. Rabe mentions the letter to Egino, discussed below, but not these letters.

I have waited long for the things promised by your love, that is the pre-eminence of Christ's life-giving cross or of other relics. I implore you, do not rob me of such a gift, nor yourself of the merit of truth. I do not accept that you excuse yourself on account of the distance. Charity would find feathers in order to fly, and rivers would not stop her. The wings of faith suffice in the king's palace, to whom neither the will to receive nor the faith to give is lacking. If our request bears fruit with you, may your request always bear fruit with God, who put you up in such an elevated state, where you are made an angel of the selfsame God and our lord Jesus Christ.<sup>23</sup>

The link of relics with patronage, both from Paulinus to Alcuin and from God to Paulinus, is evident. Other requests for relics are attested in letters to Bishop Egino of Konstanz from the early 790s, and to Arn of Salzburg in the later 790s.<sup>24</sup> Letters of other late antique and early medieval Christians also discuss the exchange of relics, so Alcuin represented an established practice amongst the ecclesiastical élite of this period.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, there are some ideosyncratic uses of the term *reliquiae*. The first is found in a letter to an archbishop in Britain dated after 793 which speaks of *reliquiae* in the context of abuses of relics. This letter and a second one, in which Alcuin does not speak of *reliquiae*, but of *ossa sanctorum* ('saints' bones'), are the clearest evidence of practices which Alcuin did not deem acceptable and will be discussed separately, below, because of the significance of the criticism on relics in these letters.<sup>26</sup> The other exceptional use of *reliquiae* is found in the grammatical treatise *Orthographia*, where Alcuin speaks of the spelling of the word *reliquia* – either as *reliquia*, or as *relliquia*. Alcuin held *reliquia* to be preferable, but *relliquia* to be possible, with a reference to poetic license where Vergil (*Aeneid* 1, v. 30) reads *relliquiae Danaum* ('remnants of Troy').<sup>27</sup> This reference to *reliquiae* is important to note, as in a Virgilian context the word *reliquiae* cannot refer to relics in the Christian sense of the word, but bears the more basic meaning of 'remnants'. Alcuin must have been aware of the origin of this example: not only does he name his source, but there is no known text that could have served as

<sup>23</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 28, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 70.

<sup>24</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 75, to Egino of Konstanz, *ibidem*, pp. 117-118; Alcuin, *Epistola* 146, to Arn of Salzburg, *ibidem*, p. 236. Cf. HERBERS 2012, p. 111, n.3.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. GEARY 1986, and, for an earlier example, TROUT 1999 on Paulinus of Nola, esp. pp. 238-239.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. below, section 3.5.

<sup>27</sup> Alcuin, *De orthographia* (ALC 32), ed. KEIL 1880, p. 308. Modern editions of Vergil read *reliquias Danaum atque immitis Achilli*.

an intermediary source.<sup>28</sup> Even *reliquia*, therefore, depends on its context to refer to the corporeal remains of saints.

Alcuin only occasionally uses terms that indicate the high value of relics: *Thesaurum* occurs once in the *Vita Vedasti*, where it appears as a synonym of *sanctum corpus*, and once in one of the inscription-poems discussed previously, where it occurs alongside *reliquia*.<sup>29</sup> *Gaza* never denotes relics. The interpretation of Alcuin's use of *munus* is more difficult, as the context often does not specify what kinds of gifts Alcuin meant. The one instance in which Alcuin most likely meant relics by *munus*, in my opinion, is a poem addressing Charlemagne, celebrating the emperor's entry in Rome as the restoration of orthodoxy. In this context, Alcuin calls Rome 'the head of the world, also the summit of prime honour / In which the holy gifts of treasure lie hidden'. The nominal group *munera sancta* could refer to the relics of the saints, for which Rome was famous, but Rome was also famed for its learning, papal authority, and orthodoxy. Those could also be the gifts that lie waiting for Charlemagne in Rome.<sup>30</sup> Where the context does provide an indication of the kind of gifts Alcuin meant, the *munera* in question never turn out to be relics. Although Alcuin certainly attached great value to relics, he did not use terms indicative of that great wealth as shorthand for relics.

### 3.2. Relic vocabulary (ii). *Corpus* and material descriptors

When Alcuin spoke of relics, he sometimes resorted to terms that related to the physical characteristics of relics. We find the word *sanguis* ('blood') referring to the relics of the Theban martyrs in *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 32 and no less than twenty-six instances of the word *corpus* ('body') in reference to relics in the *Vita Willibrordi*. Eight of these instances are found in the chapter headings which Alcuin added to his *Vita Willibrordi* for the posthumous miracles narrated, including the chapter heading of *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 28, the chapter in which the same body is referred to as

<sup>28</sup> Cf. BLAIR 1976; WIELAND 1992. On intermediary sources, cf. WRIGHT 1981.

<sup>29</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 9: *Qui mox facillime levantes fere trum, portabant sanctum corpus cum luminibus, laudibus et himnis ad locum sibi placitum, sepelientes eum cum magno honore iuxta altare eiusdem oratorii, nobile terrae condentes thesaurum;* Carmen 90, 26b (as above), vv. 5-6: *Haec domus alma dei, hic sunt thesaura tonantis, // Sanctorum multae reliquiaeque patrum.*

<sup>30</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen* 45 (*Carmina dilecto faciat mea fistula David*, S-K 1950, ALC 11.45), to Charlemagne, ed. DÜMLER 1881, p. 258, vv. 31-40: *Roma caput mundi, primi quoque culmen honoris, / In qua gazarum munera sancta latent, / Quae modo disrupto plangit sua viscera foetu, / Per te sanetur saucia membra cito, / Ut pater et populus concordia pace regantur, // Ut mens una fiat, quos habet una fides; / Quos genuit Christo, Christi confessus amorem, / Claviger aetherius Petrus in orbe pius, / Ne turbata fluat per mundum fulminis unda, / Unde solebat aqua pura manare prius.* On the function of this poem, cf. EBENBAUER 1978, pp. 83-84; on Alcuin's address to Charlemagne as David, cf. SZÖVERFFY 1970, pp. 419-420. For Alcuin's association of Rome with martyrs, cf. COSTAMBEYS 2014, pp. 263-264.

*reliquiae*. The addition of genitive nominal groups with the adjective *sancti* or the construction *corpore requiescere* to describe the bodies of saints, confirms that Alcuin used *corpus sancti* and *reliquia* interchangeably.<sup>31</sup> On other occasions, however, the word *corpus* need not refer to relics. In *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 3 the body of the living Willibrord is mentioned, without any indication that Alcuin considered this a relic in the making. In *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 31, Alcuin speaks of his own body and the bodies of those in his audience, again without any indication of particular sanctity, and the same is true of the body of the woman who was healed at the site of Willibrord's relics.<sup>32</sup> What makes the *corpus* a relic is the fact that it had belonged to a saint. The picture that arises from the *Vita Richarii* and *Vita Vedasti* is not dissimilar to that of the *Vita Willibrordi*. *Corpus* is used on a number of occasions, but only those in which Alcuin referred to the corporeal remains of the deceased saint, distinguished by genitive clauses with words such as *sancti*, *beati*, or *patris*.<sup>33</sup> refer to relics. Nothing in the description of the body of the living Richarius or Vedast indicates that Alcuin considered these bodies to be holy.

When compared with Alcuin's three *vitae*, the York poem is dissimilar. The former refer to relics either as *reliquia*, or as *corpus*, but do not discuss the material aspects of the relics of the saints in any further detail. The source material which Alcuin took from Bede, however, does much more with the corporeal aspects of the relics of the saints, and this is reflected in Alcuin's vocabulary in the York poem. The appearance of *ossa* and *pulvis* to denote bones and dust as relics has already been noted. In the same context, namely the relic cult of the martyr king Oswald, the saint's hand is discussed as having 'still-growing nails, supple sinews, and undecayed flesh'.<sup>34</sup> This displays an interest in the materiality of relics, if only for their unnatural capacity to resist decay, on the part of Alcuin as well as his source, Bede.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Prose: Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 25: *sancti patris corpus*; 1, 27: *ad corpus sancti*; 1, 28: *ad eius* (scil. *sancti*, JV) *corpus*; verse: 2, 25: *corpore eius* (scil. *sancti patris*, JV); 2, 27: *ubi sanctus vir corpore requiescit*; 2, 30: *ad sancti viri corpus*; 2, 31: *ad eius* (scil. *sancti viri*, JV) *corpus*; 2, 34: *ubi corpore requiescat*. *Corpore requiescere* also appears in relation to Willibrord in *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 21, and in a number of charters, e.g. WAMPACH (ed.), 1929, p. 116, nr. 50. Cf. also *Vita Willibrordi*, 1, 25: *Conditum est venerabile corpus in sarcofago marmoreo, quod primum toto Dei famuli corpori quasi dimidium pedis brevis inventum est, fratribusque ob hoc valde contristatis et consilio suspensis, quid agerent, et sepius tractantibus, ubi aptum sancto corpore invenissent locellum; sed miro modo, divina donante pietate, inventum est subito sarcofagum tanto Dei viri corpori longius, quanto brevius ante apparuit. Et in eo viri Dei corpus cum ymnis, psalmodiis et omni honore condentes, sepelierunt illud in ecclesia praefati monasterii, (...).*

<sup>32</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 29.

<sup>33</sup> All of these instances occur in Alcuin, *Vita Richarii* 14, 15, and 18, and *Vita Vedasti* 9, with the exception of one, in the title of the first work: *Gesta sacerdotis magni tenet iste libellus Richarii, cuius centula corpus habet*.

<sup>34</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 308-309: (...) *ungla crescens / flexilis et nervus, viridis caro, forma venusta*.

<sup>35</sup> On this theme, cf. ANGENENDT 2010b; BYNUM 2011, pp. 182-186; WALSHAM 2010, p. 11. ANGENENDT 1994a, p. 151, and idem 2011, p. 22 note that the trope was mostly associated with chaste saints and with martyrs; BYNUM 2011, pp. 182-183 notes that the trope became more popular in the later Middle Ages.

This interest in the absence of decay, again a trait that is only found in the York poem and not in Alcuin's other works, is also reflected in Alcuin's inclusion of Bede's reports of *inventiones*, where the saint's body is mentioned, often together with the clothes (*vestis, vestimentum*) in which the saint was buried.<sup>36</sup> Incorrumpibility is played upon in the case of martyrs and two monastic saints. The connection between the monastic state and virginity, in the sense incorrumpibility, is one which Alcuin deliberately made, at least on one occasion.<sup>37</sup> This is the case with Saint Cuthbert, whose body is mentioned in relation to the miracles taking place there and in relation to the retrieval of his incorrupt body, clothes and all, eleven years after death. Following the report given by Bede, even the saint's shoes can aid to heal the ailments of the suffering.<sup>38</sup> Like Cuthbert's body, Oswald's hand and Aethelthryth's clothes are mentioned as retrieved without signs of corruption.<sup>39</sup> The incorrupted state of the latter is mentioned explicitly, and said to be the result of the queen's monastic life as a nun (*virgo*): 'And how she was whole, living as a nun in the flesh, / the Lord made clear after her death through manifest signs; / for, having been buried for sixty years, her flesh / was still retrieved uncorrupted, with all her clothes.'<sup>40</sup> Finally, the word *corpus* occurs in the context of a light miracle, following the death of the Hewalds, two martyred missionaries, whose bodies float upstream towards their companions after they have been thrown in the river Rhine, having been brutally tortured and killed.<sup>41</sup> In the case of another light miracle, that of Oswald, Alcuin uses a variety of terms, *reliquia, ossa, sanguis, nervus*, and *pulvis*, derives mostly from Bede.<sup>42</sup>

The interest in the material aspects of saints' relics in the York poem is at odds with Alcuin's otherwise rather negative view of the body. The word *caro*, used to describe the incorrupted flesh of Oswald and Aethelthryth, also serves to mediate negative associations of flesh: flesh as a prison, or as a metaphor for lust.<sup>43</sup> On the few occasions in which Alcuin does discuss the material aspects of relics, therefore, there is not so much a specific relic discourse, as the occasional application of general terms to refer to the human body, or parts of it, applied to relics. This leads to the following conclusion: according to Alcuin a body or *corpus* becomes a relic after the death of its occupant,

<sup>36</sup> *Historia ecclesiastica* 4, 19.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. for this combination of incorruption and virginity ANGENENDT 2011, p. 22.

<sup>38</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 682-737.

<sup>39</sup> Oswald: Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 300-307; Aethelthryth: *ibidem*, vv. 765-776. Cf. for this hagiographic theme ANGENENDT 1994a, p. 151; 2010a; *idem* 2011, pp. 22-23; BARTLETT 2013, p. 100-101; BYNUM 1995, mentioning the Bedan report of this *inventio*, on p. 206.

<sup>40</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 763-766: *Quamque integra foret vivens in corpore virgo, / Post mortem dominus signis patefecit apertis; / Nam caro sex denos etiam tumulata per annos, / Incorrupta quidem tota cum veste reperta est.* Cf. ROLLASON 1989, pp. 37-38.

<sup>41</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 1043-1070, especially from v. 1055 onward. On the relative mobility of martyrs' remains, cf. ANGENENDT 2010b, pp. 121-122.

<sup>42</sup> *Historia ecclesiastica* 3, 9-13.

<sup>43</sup> E.g. Alcuin, *Versus* ..., v. 677, 1637, 1646 (prison); *ibidem*, v. 758 (lust). Cf. TOLOMIO 1999.

due to the fact that that body belonged to a saint. It is not holy by and of itself. This goes against the grain of what scholars like Angenendt and Bynum have suggested that people in the early Middle Ages generally believed.<sup>44</sup> His relic theology fits into Alcuin's wider theological view. His concept of sanctity is one that focusses on the soul. Even so, the body also has a function, as he explains to Gundrada, in the dedicatory letter of *De ratione animae*, written around 802.

*Totus homo adsumendus erat, id est anima et caro, cuius anima, id est redemptoris nostri, tantae sanctitatis et iustificationis est, ut omnes in se credentium animae per eam sanctificari et iustificari possint, et caro tantae munditiae et libertatis a peccato, ut omnium in se confidentium carnes, divina in ea operante gratia, purgari et liberari possint, quia sanguis, qui de eadem carne lancea militis vulnerata fluxerat, pretium est salutis humanae, per cuius effusionem extincta est flamma illa paradisi custodia, et via fidelibus aperta est ad lignum vitae, quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum viventium.*

Man had to be taken up wholly, that is: soul and body, of which the soul, that is: our Saviour's soul, is of such sanctity and justification, that all souls of those believing in him could be sanctified and justified through it, and the flesh, so clean and free from sin, that the flesh of all who believed in him could be cleansed and freed, through divine grace working in it, because the blood, which flowed from that same flesh, wounded by the soldier's lance, is the price of human salvation, through the pouring out of which that fiery guard of paradise was put out, and the way was opened to the faithful to the tree of life, which is planted near streams of living waters.<sup>45</sup>

The findings from Alcuin's hagiography are, again, not dissimilar from what is found elsewhere in his writings. Generally, Alcuin's most common way to describe relics is *corpus*. In Alcuin's poetry this word is even more common as a descriptor of relics than *reliquia* is, perhaps due to the constraints of metre. The phraseology is also similar to that of Alcuin's hagiography: we find instances of *corpore pausare* in both poetry and letters, always in reference to saints.<sup>46</sup> Other instances

<sup>44</sup> Cf. ANGENENDT 2002, pp. 388-391; BYNUM 1995, pp. 113-114.

<sup>45</sup> *Epistola* 309 (= dedicatory letter of *De ratione animae*), ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 474. Cf. on this text CURRY (ed.) 1966 and SZARMACH 1999.

<sup>46</sup> Alcuin, *Versus*..., v. 682; *Carmen* 9 (*Postquam primus homo paradisi linquerat hortos*, S-K 12275, ALC 11.9), v. 73, ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 230, tr. GODMAN 1985, pp. 127-139, comm. GARRISON 2001; *Carmen* 47 (*Musa volans veniat Monimagno ferre salutem*, S-K 9921, ALC 11.47), v. 7, ibidem, p. 260; *Carmen* 88, 15 (*Hic pater et pastor magnus, Christique sacerdos*, S-K 6580, ALC 46.[11].88.15), v. 17, p. 308; *Carmen* 89, 2 (*Hic pater egregius Vedastus corpore pausat*, S-K 6576, ALC 46.[14].89.2), v. 1, p. 309; *Carmen* 99, 9 (*Hic quoque sanctorum pausant duo corpora patrum*, S-K 6658, ALC 46.[12].99.9,

of the word *corpus* in Alcuin's letters in reference to relics are accompanied by *sanctus* or an equivalent.<sup>47</sup>

A few references merit a little further elaboration. Alcuin's *Epistola* 20, a multi-sided emotional and theological reflection on the problem of theodicy,<sup>48</sup> was written after the Vikings plundered the monastery of Lindisfarne. Alcuin has the following to say about the event:

*(...), quando pagani contaminaverunt sanctuaria Dei et fuderunt sanguinem sanctorum in circuitu altaris, vastaverunt domum spei nostre, calcaverunt corpora sanctorum in templo Dei quasi sterquilinum in platea. Quid nobis dicendum est, nisi plangendum animo vobiscum ante altare Christi, et dicere: Parce, Domine, parce populo tuo, et ne des hereditatem tuam gentibus, ne dicant pagani, ubi est Deus christianorum?*

(...) when the pagans contaminated God's sanctuaries and shed the blood of the saints in the precinct of the altar, devastated our house of hope, [and] trampled the bodies of the saints in God's temple as if it were dung on the street. What can we say, except cry in our heart with you before Christ's altar, and say: 'Spare, o Lord, spare your people, and do not give your inheritance over to the unbelievers, lest the pagans say: Where is the God of the Christians?'<sup>49</sup>

The phraseology is descriptive of the material aspects of saints' relics in a very peculiar way, as it compares relics with dung. It is clear, however, that this is not a comparison Alcuin himself thought of as correct; this is the pagan point of view of the Vikings as interpreted by Alcuin, when they killed the clergy and looted the church. The comparison should probably be taken as exemplary of both the pagans' ignorance in terms of what is truly valuable and their disrespect for all that is good and holy.

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LARGEAULT 1884, pp. 239-244), v. 1, p. 324; *Carmen* 99, 22 (*Haec diruta quidem renovavit templa sacerdos*, S-K 5856, ALC 46.[7].99.22; LARGEAULT 1884, p. 269), v. 10, p. 327; *Carmen* 109, 24 (*Quae cernis veniens, lector, haec inclita tecta*, S-K 12831, ALC 61.109.24), p. 340, v. 15.

<sup>47</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 17, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 45 (on which below); *Epistola* 20, *ibidem*, p. 57; *Epistola* 212, p. 353; *Epistola* 250, p. 405; *Epistola* 273, p. 431. The only exception is *Carmen* 65, 1 (*Nomine pandecten proprio vocitare memento*, S-K 10345, ALC 11.65.1), vv. 2, 11, *ibidem*, p. 283, which calls the Bible a *corpus sanctum* and a *corpus sacrum*. This poem is found in three Alcuin Bibles: LONDON, British Library, Add. 10546 (BISCHOFF 2004, p. 94, nr. 2360), PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 15176, and ROME, Biblioteca Vallicelliana B 6 (BISCHOFF 2014, p. 279, nr. 5351). Cf. FISCHER 1971, p. 57.

<sup>48</sup> GARRISON 2002, p. 72. Cf. GARRISON 2001 on Alcuin, *Carmen* 9, on the same subject.

<sup>49</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 20, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 57. The reference in the last sentence is to Joel 2.17.

Another pattern in Alcuin's thought is the association of martyrs, not with bodies, but with blood, as martyrs imitated Christ in his suffering, and were thereby washed in Christ's blood, as indicated above in the quote from the dedicatory letter of *De ratione animae*.<sup>50</sup> This pattern is more pronounced in Alcuin's poetry than elsewhere, as there are more poems dealing with martyrs. In one poem, Alcuin juxtaposes those 'whose bodies were God's temples' (that is: chaste virgins) with those female martyrs, 'who will hold the kingdoms of Heaven through their red blood'.<sup>51</sup>

Other terms relating to the material qualities of relics are rare. *Epistola* 290 refers to relics as *ossa sanctorum*.<sup>52</sup> *Carmen* 44, a letter-poem to Alcuin's pupil and assistant, Wizzo/Candidus,<sup>53</sup> refers to relics in a number of terms relating to their materiality. The subject of this letter is Wizzo's journey to Rome, where Wizzo has to deal with relics in a number of ways. He should further the cause of his own salvation by praying in the churches, prostrate before the altar, and wet the pavement slabs before relics with his tears.<sup>54</sup> Like Willibrord in the *Vita Willibrordi*, and like Alcuin himself at an earlier date, Wizzo also has to try and get relics from the pope, be they ashes, clothes, or hairs, or a piece of the holy cross.<sup>55</sup> The request for relics is also found in prose letters, but in those letters Alcuin used inflections of the word *reliquia*. The specification of the kinds of relics Alcuin would like to have is unique to this letter poem.<sup>56</sup>

When discussing relics in terms of their material qualities, Alcuin made no formal distinction between what modern scholars would call corporeal relics and contact relics.<sup>57</sup> Relics are relics, whatever their link with the saint might be. Thus clothes are as much relics as bodies are. Corporeal

<sup>50</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen* 9 (as above), v. 79, ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 231; v. 207, ibidem, p. 234; *Carmen* 86 (*Hic pater egregius meritis Bonifatius almis*, S-K 6575, ALC 61.86), vv. 2, 4, p. 304; *Carmen* 89, 5 (*Sanguine martyria praesul Dyonisius aram*, S-K 14707, ALC 61.89.5), v. 1, p. 309; *Carmen* 89, 16 (*Iohannes, Paulus partier, Laurentius atque*, S-K 8326, ALC 61.89.16), v. 3, p. 311; *Carmen* 90, 16 (*Quem nec flamma vorax vicit, Laurentius aram*, S-K 13155, ALC 61.90.16), v. 2, p. 316; *Carmen* 90, 17 (*Hoc altare pius servet Quintinus ab hoste*, S-K 6907, ALC 61.90.17), v. 2, p. 316; *Carmen* 99, 2 (*Quintinus martyr, pater et Dionysius aram*, S-K 13630, ALC 61.99.2, on which LARGEAULT 1884, pp. 229-230), v. 4, p. 323; *Carmen* 99, 3 (*Hanc pater egregius aram Filibertus habebit*, S-K 6088, ALC 61.99.3, LARGEAULT 1884, pp. 230-231), v. 4, p. 323; *Carmen* 109, 17 (*Haec loca sancta tenet praeclarus in orbe magister*, S-K 5929, ALC 61.109.17), v. 4, p. 335.

<sup>51</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen* 99, 20 (*Virginibus sacris hoc est altare dicatum*, S-K 17286, ALC 61.99.20; LARGEAULT 1884 p. 268), vv. 5-6, ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 327: *Corpora nam quarum templa fuere dei, / sanguine vel roseo caeli quae regna tenebunt*. Cf. BAUER 1973, p. 104 on this poem, and STANCLIFFE 1982 and ANGENENDT 1994a, p. 55 on 'red' martyrdom as opposed to 'white' monastic martyrdom.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. below, section 3.5.

<sup>53</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen* 44 (*Te mea mens sequitur, carissime Candide, tristis*, S-K 16092, ALC 11.44), ed. DÜMMLER 1881, pp. 255-257. For the addressee, cf. LÖWE 1943. On the first lines, cf. BAUER 1973, p. 107, n. 50. For the authenticity, cf. JULLIEN & PERELMAN 1999 p. 55. We know that Wizzo traveled to Rome at least twice as letter bearer as well as Charlemagne's eyes and ears in the city, in 799 and in 800/801. Cf. for the importance of Rome BIRCH 1998, pp. 39-40; DIESENBERGER 2007; GARRISON 1997, pp. 106-107; HERBERS 2010, pp. 55-58; PERRIN 2007.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. for this mode of prayer and for prayer in the presence of relics RENDTEL 1985, pp. 53-55.

<sup>55</sup> Cross relics do not appear elsewhere in Alcuin's writing, except once, in *Epistola* 28, to Paulinus of Aquileia, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 70. For Alcuin, cf. BULLOUGH 2003, p. 338.

<sup>56</sup> McCULLOH 1980, p. 313.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. SMITH 2015 on the development of this terminology.

relics moreover, are generally not specified in any level of detail. This suggests that the status of the relic as a relic is what mattered to Alcuin, rather its material appearance. Alcuin also never referred to seeing the relics themselves, nor to the importance of sight as a condition for miracles. This may be, at least in part, because relics were enclosed and generally invisible to the faithful. He does refer, however, to the tombs of saints, which are, as we shall see, the prime focus for the cult of the saint, as this is where miracles happen and people turn to for intercession.<sup>58</sup> One word stands out in particular in the discussion of saints' tombs: *sarcophagus*. Stone coffins are only mentioned eight times in Alcuin's writings, but all eight occasions refer to saints' tombs.<sup>59</sup> From this it would seem that the sarcophagus is an outward manifestation of the saint's relics, both in Alcuin's writings, and probably in churches as well.<sup>60</sup> Rather than the body itself the sarcophagus was the visual representation of the saint's presence.<sup>61</sup>

### 3.3. Relics and miracles

As can be surmised from the overview I have just provided, Alcuin does not explain explicitly how relics come into being, but only speaks of relics in relation to the remains of a dead saint. This would be in line with Augustine's teaching in *De dono perseverantiae*, that one's salvation is only certain after death.<sup>62</sup> As this is to argue from silences and suppositions, however, it remains important not to stress this argument unduly. Alcuin is far more explicit about the status and function of relics after their status as relics had been established through the working of miracles.<sup>63</sup> He linked relics with intercession, or entreaty by the saint in favour of the salvation of whoever prays at the saint's tomb, and miracles, for example in his sermon on Saint Martin, which states that many signs of miracles happened at Martin's tomb, and many miracles (*virtutes*, in this case) of healing, while the sorrowful were consoled and the happy were given mercy.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Cf. on the importance of graves as focal points of devotion ANGENENDT 1994a, pp. 125-133; TREFFORT 2010, p. 240.

<sup>59</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., v. 372 (Oswald); *Carmen* 89, 1 (*Haec domus alma dei flammis crepitantibus olim*, S-K 5855, ALC 61.89.1), v. 8, ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 309 (Vedast), *Vita Richarii* 14, eds. KRUSCH & LEVISON 1902, p. 398 (Richarius), *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 25, title and text, ibidem, II, 25 title and v.3 (Willibrord).

<sup>60</sup> For the role of a saint's tomb as a physical manifestation of the holy, cf. HAHN 1997, p. 1079 and esp. 1082.

<sup>61</sup> The only other term for a reliquary that I found in Alcuin was *scrinium*, in *Carmen* 54 (*Nunc bipedali carmine laudes*, S-K 10720, ALC 11.54), v. 38, ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 266. Cf. for the use of this word CARRUTHERS 1990, p. 40. On the general invisibility of relics in this period: DIEDRICHS 2001, pp. 141-143.

<sup>62</sup> Augustine, *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 14.26, 28, PL 44, cols. 979-981.

<sup>63</sup> Alcuin never says miracles have this role, but he does suggest so by saying that miracles indicate the power of the saint.

<sup>64</sup> Alcuin, *Sermo in natale sancti Martini* (ALC 89, BHL 5625), PL 101, col. 662: (...) *in qua* (scil. *ecclesia sancti Martini*) *etiam usque hodie multa miraculorum signa, plurimae sanitatum virtutes, consolationes moerentium, pietates laetantium, praestante Domino*

As we have noted in passing, miracles were not the highest good to Alcuin, who held them to be inferior to the ministry of preaching. In this, Alcuin is an early example of a ninth-century hagiographic tradition that is critical of too much attention to miracles, later exemplified by, e.g. the author of the anonymous *Vita altera Bonifatii*, who, like Alcuin, held the saints to be primarily preachers, whose preaching is reinforced by God's show of his special favour in the guise of miracles.<sup>65</sup> Their posthumous merit with God is likewise shown by miracles, following Augustine's example in *De civitate Dei* 22, 8.<sup>66</sup> These convictions were certainly not without critics. The omission of posthumous miracles in Alcuin's other *vitae* seems to have been felt as a lack by the communities that venerated the saint, as both Vedast and Richarius received miracle collections within decades after the completion of Alcuin's *vitae*. The anonymous author of the *Miracula sancti Richarii annis 814-864* refers to Alcuin when he states the purpose of his work is to reveal those things that the carelessness of older authors left out completely,<sup>67</sup> while Haimo, the author of a miracle collection of Saint Vedast, likewise spoke of *negligentia scriptorum, et desidia imperitorum* ('the negligence of authors and the sloth of the impious'), which rendered miracles *obnubilata* ('clouded over').<sup>68</sup> Clearly then, there were at least two conflicting ideas about the posthumous miracles at work in Francia in the ninth century, more or less alongside one another.

Despite Alcuin's cautious stance toward miracles, there are miracle stories in Alcuin's saints' lives, especially his *Vita Willibrordi*. These miracles function as signs of the sanctity of Alcuin's subjects. Due to this signpost function, *signum* ('sign') is often used, alongside *miraculum* ('miracle'). Most of these miracles concern the living saints. Posthumous miracles are rare in Alcuin's works. In the *Vita Vedasti*, only one relic miracle (of sorts) occurs. Both Alcuin's source and his own version relate how the building in which the saint had died caught fire, but how the room and bed in which the saint had died were spared. A local religious woman, named Habita (or Abita) claimed she had seen the saint ward off the flames himself. Both Jonas and Alcuin stressed that the point

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*nostro Jesu Christo, fieri solent, qui vivit et regnat cum Deo Patre (...)*. The passage is copied almost verbatim in Alcuin's other sermon on Saint Martin, *Sermo in transitu sancti Martini* (ALC 81, BHL 5626), *ibidem*, col. 664.

<sup>65</sup> *Vita altera Sancti Bonifatii* 21 (BHL 1401, ed. LEVISON 1905, pp. 76-77). Cf. on this tradition DEMM 1975; Van EGMOND 2004; WEST 2010. Cf. also GRAUS 1965, p. 47, which refers to miracle-critical lives, but does not note that all of the examples given are Carolingian.

<sup>66</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 14 and *Vita Richarii* 9. Cf. above, chapter 2, section 3. Augustine's position on relics and miracles changed noticeably over time. Cf. above, Introduction, n. 45.

<sup>67</sup> *Miracula sancti Richarii annis 814-864* (BHL 7230), AA SS o.s.b. 2, pp. 213-227; there p. 213: *Sanctorum sacra miracula operante Divina clementia Angelico didicimus oraculo esse propalanda, qui inter cetera loquitur as beatum Tobiam: sacramentum, inquit, Regis abscondere bonum est, opera autem Dei revelare et confiteri honorificum est. Qua nos admonitione tacti, ea quae pro meritis beati Richarii miracula divina peregit dignatio, litteris mandare studuimus: et quia incuria antiquorum omnia praetermissa videntur, nisi pauca quae in vita ipsius attitulata sunt (...)*.

<sup>68</sup> *Miracula auctore Haimone, monachi sancti Vedasti* (BHL 8510), AA SS Feb. 1, 3rd ed., 813-816, quote on p. 813.

of the miracle was to show Saint Vedast's high standing with God.<sup>69</sup> In the *Vita Richarii* Alcuin only copied the three relic miracles which had already been included in his source, and his rendition of these stories differs little from the original versions. The healing of a disabled man is presented more or less in the same way as the anonymous source.<sup>70</sup> The same goes for the liberation of a chain gang, which passed by the saint's church and begged him for their liberation, after which their shackles fell off, and of the protection the saint provided against an epidemic, which was obtained through prayer and through boiling a relic, the saint's *clavis* (either his key or his collarbone), and providing the water in which the relic was cooked to an ill man.<sup>71</sup>

Our best evidence for Alcuin's thought on relics and miracles comes from the *Vita Willibrordi*. This is the only one of Alcuin's lives which contains a substantial set of posthumous miracle stories. We can find three categories: supernatural experiences, liberations, and miracles of retribution. The *Vita Willibrordi* mentions visions, and the appearance of heavenly light or scent. Alcuin reports wondrous lights, and wondrous scent in both the prose and, to a lesser degree, in the verse books of the *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>72</sup> These miracles, however, are not caused directly by relics. I will explain what I mean by looking at Alcuin's miracles of scent.<sup>73</sup> Alcuin speaks of a supernatural scent when reporting Willibrord's burial and similarly that a miraculous scent and light was often witnessed at the site where his bed stood. In the latter case, Alcuin explicitly states that the scent is the product of the presence of angels, and therefore not of the bed itself.<sup>74</sup> In the verse book, Alcuin does not explicitly state that the scent is the product of angels, but explains that the miracles, such as those of scent, take place *through* the relics.<sup>75</sup> In this rendition of the miracle, relics are the conduit through which the miracles take place. A relic is therefore a catalyst and a conduit but not an active participant in the miracle. Thus the sweet scent of the shrine is not a sign of lack of decay, as it was in the sources studied by Angenent and Bynum,<sup>76</sup> but the sign of heavenly visitors:

<sup>69</sup> Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Vedastis* (BHL 8501-8505) 9-10; Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 9.

<sup>70</sup> *Vita sancti Richarii* (BHL 7245) 12, ed. KRUSCH 1920, pp. 451-452; Alcuin, *Vita Richarii* (BHL 7223), 15, ed. KRUSCH & LEVISON 1902, p. 399.

<sup>71</sup> *Vita sancti Richarii* (BHL 7245) 12-13, as above, p. 451-452; Alcuin, *Vita Richarii* (BHL 7223), 15-17, pp. 399-400. Cf. for the theme of liberation and healing SCHROEDER 1993.

<sup>72</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 25-26; *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 26, and 28-29.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. for supernatural scent in Christian writing DEONNA 1939.

<sup>74</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 25: *Sed et miri odoris flagrantia omnium perfuderat nares, ut perspicuae intellegeretur, ad exequia viri sancti angelicum venisse ministerium*; ibidem, 2, 26: *Inter et exsequias miri flagrantia odoris / Ambrosio ecclesiam perfundit nectare totam, / Perspicue angelicam monstrans venisse catervam / Ad patris officium laetis concentibus almi*; ibidem, 1, 26: *Multi quoque fratrum testati sunt, crebrose super lectulum, in quo beatam animam suo creatori reddidit, mirabile vidisse lumen suavissimamque odoris dulcissimi sensisse flagrantiam, ut omnino his signis crederetur, caelestes locum frequentasse cives, in quo sancta anima migravit ad Dominum*. Angels are amongst the means through which Augustine says God works his miracles, in addition to acting directly or through the spirits of martyrs, and living people: Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 22, 9.

<sup>75</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 29, vv. 6-7: *Talia (...) per sanctas signa geruntur / Reliquias (...)*.

<sup>76</sup> ANGENENT 2010b; BYNUM 2011, pp. 177-189.

*In quo multoties caelesti nectare dulcis  
 Flagrat odor, vere pigmento dulcior omni:  
 Testibus a multis fieri quae vera probantur,  
 Quorum vita fidem certam dat casta relatu.  
 Quam requiem speras animam habuisse beatam,  
 Talia dum terris per sanctas signa geruntur  
 Reliquias, tanti meritis dignissima patris?  
 Qui nostros poterit precibus relevare dolores,  
 Si iam corde pio lacrimas effundimus illic,  
 Quo pater egregius sacro corpore pausat.*

‘In the same place the sweet scent of heavenly nectar  
 often drift, truly sweeter than any spice.  
 These things are proven to happen, by many witnesses,  
 whose fully chaste life gives credence to their account.  
 What peace may you hope your blessed soul to have,  
 when such miracles are enacted on earth through holy  
 relics, most worthy of the merit of such a father,  
 who can relieve our pains with his prayers,  
 if with a pious heart we pour out our tears there,  
 where our exceptional father rests in hallowed body?’<sup>77</sup>

*Odor* also occurs elsewhere in Alcuin’s writings. In the York poem, Alcuin re-tells Bede’s story of Drythelm’s vision.<sup>78</sup> Drythelm was a commoner who died after a long illness and reawoke during the first vigil near his body. He then told his wife how he saw purgatory, Hell, a flowery place for the good, but not very good, and finally Heaven itself. Alcuin has Drythelm mention a sweet smell thrice, first, together with the winter sun, when seeing the flowery place, then, with an even brighter light, an even sweeter smell in Heaven, and finally when Drythelm’s guide, a manlike figure, dressed in bright clothes, explains what Drythelm saw: ‘Near this place lies that gleaming / place with excessive light, also full of wondrous scent, / about which the sweetest voice of the singing (angels and saints, JV) resounded.’<sup>79</sup> The *mira odor*, in short, is the scent of Heaven. This is also true

<sup>77</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 29.

<sup>78</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 906-1007. The story derives from Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5, 12-13.

<sup>79</sup> Alcuin, *Versus* ..., vv. 999-1001: *Pertinet ad cuius vicinia fulgidus ille / luce locus nimia, miri quoque plenus odoris, // de quo cantatum suavissima vox resonabat*. The other passages referred to are vv. 965-966 and vv. 979-981.

in other stories about scent that Alcuin told in the *Vita Willibrordi*: scent derives from heaven, not from the body of the saint. In other words: it was not a sign of corporeal incorruptibility. This is significant as the consensus amongst scholars is that early medieval people believed that sweet scent at the site of the saint's grave *was* the product of incorruptibility. Arnold Angenendt, for example, believed that the position Alcuin took here, that miraculous scent was a sign of the presence of heaven or heavenly visitors, was first voiced by Thomas Aquinas.<sup>80</sup> The *Commentary on John* provides a Christocentric theological backdrop here. Commenting on the anointment in Bethany,<sup>81</sup> Alcuin wrote:

*Quae tibi superflua sunt, pedibus Domini necessaria sunt, id est, minimis quibusque in Ecclesia; de quibus in fine dicturus erit Dominus: Quandiu fecistis uni ex minimis his, mihi fecistis. Domus autem repleta est odore id est, Ecclesia vitae religiosae fama [bona]. Nam odor bonus est vita bona. Audi Apostolum: Christi bonus odor sumus, inquit, in omni loco; et in Cantico canticorum: Unguentum effusum nomen tuum. Item: Dum esset rex in accubitu suo, nardus mea dedit odorem suum. Ubi aperte quid Maria semel fecerat, typice autem quid omnis Ecclesia; quid anima quaeque perfecta semper faciat, ostenditur.*

These things that are superfluous to you (the reader, JV), are necessary to the Lord's feet, that is, to the least in the Church, about whom the Lord will say in the end: 'as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me' (Matthew 25.40). The house is filled with the fragrance, that is: the church is filled with the good repute of religious life. For good scent is a good life. Hear the Apostle: 'For we are the aroma of Christ,' he says, 'everywhere' (2 Corinthians 2:15), and in Song of Songs: 'Your name is oil poured out' (Song of Solomon 1:2). Likewise: 'While the king was on his couch, my nard gave forth its fragrance,' (Song of Solomon 1:11) where it is clearly demonstrated, that what Mary once did, the whole Church must do figuratively, and the perfect soul always.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>80</sup> ANGENENDT 1994a, pp. 157-158. An example of scholars ignoring Alcuin's point of view is, NIEUWLAND 1991, p. 62. Cf. also the detailed discussion of scent in KÖTTING 1982.

<sup>81</sup> John 12, especially v. 3: 'Mary (...) anointed Jesus' feet with it and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance.'

<sup>82</sup> Alcuin, *Commentaria in Iohannem* PL 100, col. 907.

Something similar underlies the light miracles that sometimes occur near relics.<sup>83</sup> Like miracles of scent, these experiences are not linked to the material vicinity of relics of the saints, but rather to direct divine intervention. Such miracles do not occur exclusively near (corporeal) relics. One of Willibrord's disciples, who at that moment was at a great distance from the saint's corpse, saw the saint's soul rise to Heaven 'with a great clarity of light'.<sup>84</sup> There is light at the site of the saint's bed too. Alcuin does not explain where this light comes from, and does not explicitly relate it to relics. In fact, as indicated above, Alcuin said that the light comes from Heaven, rather than from the relics themselves.<sup>85</sup> Light, moreover, had a significance beyond relics; as discussed before, light was also an image of preaching. Both Christ and Willibrord are also compared to sources of physical light: Christ is twice called the Sun, Willibrord is compared with the moon.<sup>86</sup> It is within this context that we should understand the posthumous miracles involving miraculous light, rather than attribute the latter to the relics themselves, which, as noted earlier, could not be seen. Alcuin thus went against another strand of early medieval thought about light and sanctity, explored by Arnold Angenendt, which argued that the bodies of the saints themselves emitted light. As in the case of his discussion of the inherent holiness of the saint's body, and its role in the production of miraculous scent, Alcuin's position presents an alternative to the strand of early medieval thought that has so far been studied by scholars, showing, as in the case of the criticism of miracles, that several ideas about relics could coexist.<sup>87</sup>

Relics do not play an active part in liberation miracles either. Alcuin records how people are healed of disease or liberated from their shackles in the presence of relics.<sup>88</sup> The verse report of the posthumous miracles begins by stating that Willibrord 'rests in his own monastery in Echternach / which he built himself, earlier, in praise of the Lord / in which God has performed signs of salvation up to the present moment.' 'Signs of salvation', *signa salutis*, refers both to miracles and to salvation, here as well as elsewhere; physical healings are to be understood as signs of salvation to come.<sup>89</sup> The prose book focusses on God's grace and the faith of the sick as effective causes of the

<sup>83</sup> Considerably more work has been done on seeing sanctity than on smelling it. Cf. HAHN 1997; JØRGENSEN 2004; NOBLE 2005.

<sup>84</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 26: *cum magna luminis claritate*.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. BARTLETT 2013, p. 247 on bed relics. Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 28, v. 2 speaks of *aetherium lumen*, which implies the light comes from heaven, the prose equivalent (1, 26) states that the scent made clear the angels visited the site.

<sup>86</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 2 and 2, 10, v. 5.

<sup>87</sup> ANGENENDT 2002, pp. 387-391.

<sup>88</sup> Healing: Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 27, 28, and 29 and 2, 27, and 30-31; liberation: *ibidem* 1, 27 and 2, 27; liberation of distress: *ibidem* 1, 25 and 2, 25. SCHROEDER 1993, pp. 552-557.

<sup>89</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 27, vv. 2-4: *In propria pausat felix Aefternaco cella, / In laudem domini quam iam construxerat ipse, / In qua signa deus faciet nunc usque salutis*; furthermore twice in Alcuin, *Versus...* (vv. 149 and 1316), *Carmen* 89, 2 (as above), v. 4 and *Carmen* 109, 11 (*Adspice tu lector nostrae pia signa salutis*, S-K 1151, ALC 61.109.11), v. 1. The meaning of

miracle.<sup>90</sup> Alcuin thus makes clear from the outset that it is God who performs miracles, and that the relics are only important inasmuch as they are the resting place of God's saint.<sup>91</sup> Relics are a focal point or a conduit of divine thaumaturgical power. Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* implies a complete negation of any intrinsic power of Willibrord's relics.

The posthumous healing miracles themselves as narrated by Alcuin repeat the message that it is not the relics themselves but God and the faithful who play an active part in the miracle.<sup>92</sup> When fettered men cried over their sins in Willibrord's church, Christ liberated them from their bounds, not Willibrord.<sup>93</sup> When a paralyzed woman was carried into the church, Alcuin stressed that her body is completely beyond her control. 'Only her faith was strong,' Alcuin states, 'through Christ's suppliant / she could hope for salvation, and hope itself did not fail her.'<sup>94</sup> Alcuin suggests that the relics of the saint provide the ill woman with a means of connecting with the saint, through a combination of prayer and tears, which constitute Alcuin's idea of an acceptable mode of behaviour when addressing relics. Faith and God's grace are the acting parts in these miracles, not the saint or his relics,<sup>95</sup> but relics mark the places where that faith must be expressed to effect miracles, often through the pouring out of tears as a sign of true feelings.<sup>96</sup> The saint's role is limited to that of a medium in this communication process between man and God.

This is also true in the one miracle in which a sinful person is punished in the *Vita Willibrordi*. This story concerns a deacon, who stole a cross containing relics, and was punished for the theft. The monks of Echternach prayed to God in order to save the thief from damnation. The thief, however, showed contempt for their efforts. God, however, sees all things, and 'does not delay to avenge the injustices done to his servants very often,' and the thief promptly died.<sup>97</sup> The verse *Life*, though less explicit about the working of the miracle, also states that God protects the belongings

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the term, however, is not limited to miracle: in Alcuin, *Commentaria in Iohannem*, PL 100, col. 846 the term *signum salutis* refers to circumcision.

<sup>90</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 27: *Deo donante et fide illorum cooperante*. Contra ANGENENDT 1990a, p. 455, which claims that Alcuin thought the saints worked miracles.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. LUTTERKORT 1996, p. 89 on miracles in the works of Bede.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. VEYRARD-COSME 1995, pp. 209-212.

<sup>93</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 27, v. 9: (...) *laeti redeunt Christo donante soluti*.

<sup>94</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 30, vv. 7-8: *Sola fides viguit, posse sperare salutem / Per famulum Christi, nec se spes ipsa sefellit*. Also note that Alcuin has no objections to women visiting the tombs of saints. Cf. on the issue of female access to relic shrines SMITH 2002, esp. pp. 172-180.

<sup>95</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 31, vv. 8, 11.

<sup>96</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 28: *fusus lacrimis*, and 2, 30, v. 6: *Effundens lacrimas fessa cum voce tepentes*, and 31, v. 10: *Proque salute sua lacrimas fundebat amaras*, respectively. Cf. DRISCOLL 1999, p. 160 on the meaning of tears and penitence.

<sup>97</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 30: *Turbatisque de hac re fratribus, utpote factorem impij sceleris ignorantes, tunc praecibus sancti Dei confidentes, (...) ille vero, qui hoc crimen commisit, obdurato corde salutem suam contempsit, (...). Cogitavit infelix latere posse, quoddam absque oculis aliorum se fecisse sciebat; sed Dei oculum, cui omnia aperta sunt, latere non potuit, qui servorum suorum iniurias saepius vindicare non tardat*.

of his servants.<sup>98</sup> God's hand in the miracles is emphasized, especially in the verse book, which mentions God's hand behind the miracles in relation to each miracle just mentioned, while this is not always made explicit in the prose book. This difference in emphasis can be due to the difference in audience between both books. The advanced monastic students for whom the verse book was composed, may have appeared as an audience more suited for theological reflection about the working of miracles.

### 3.4. Relics and prayer

The role of the saint in the miracle, as said, is that of intercessor. However, Alcuin maintained that intercession is not solely meant to produce miracles. Rather, the main object of intercession is the acquisition of God's grace. This is demonstrated by the letter sent to the clergy in York around 795. Here Alcuin focussed on the liturgical and edificatory aspects of sainthood, as well as on the patronage of the saints, and on the relation of the saints in heaven with their relics on earth, and, by proxy, with those praying at the site of the relics, when Alcuin remarked:

*Sanctorum patrum sequamur vestigia, qui nos genuerunt in Christo et in hoc sacratissimum ovile congregaverunt et paternae pietatis lacte enutrierunt. Horum animas in conspectu summi pastoris ac redemptoris nostri aeternis gaudiis semper adsistere credimus et inde nostris favere precibus, si mandata vitae, quae nobis Spiritu sancto inspirante statuerunt, concordi devotione nos observare agnoscunt. Recordemur omni hora, dilectissimi fratres, quales habuimus patres et progenitores, quam praeclaros et pios, Deo amabiles et omni populo honorabiles. Non simus degeneres illorum nobilitate filii. Dum horum inter sacratissimas constamus reliquias, eorum cogitemus imitari conversationem; quatenus eorum consortes gloriae effici mereamur. Non nos saeculi ambitio, non carnalis delectatio, non luxoriae putredo, non ebrietatis venena a rectissimo vitalis viae tramite revocent; per quem illi gradientes gloriam cum Deo meruerunt sempiternam.*

We follow the footsteps of the holy fathers, who begot us in Christ and brought us together in this most holy sheepfold and brought us up with the milk of paternal piety. We believe that their souls are always standing before our highest herdsman and Saviour with eternal joy and therefore [they] favour [us] with our prayers, if they observe that we observe in united devotion the rules of life, which they gave us through

<sup>98</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 32, vv. 12-14: *Quo pereunte timor crevit cum laudibus ingens / Fratribus et populo, cernentes omnia Christo, / Quaeque sui servi fuerant, servante tueri.*

the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Beloved brothers, let us remember every hour, what fathers and ancestors we have, how famous and pious, beloved to God and honourable to all the people. Let us not be their degenerate sons in nobility. When we stand in the presence of their most holy relics, let us force ourselves to imitate their conduct, so that we may be worthy to be made their companions in glory. Let not worldly ambition, fleshly delight, the decay of luxury, the poison of drink call us off the most right way of life, through which, going up, they earned eternal glory with God.<sup>99</sup>

This notion of praying while standing in the presence of relics is also manifest in another letter by Alcuin, dated to the last years of his life, and addressed to Aethelhard, archbishop of Canterbury (c. 793 – 805). Alcuin mentioned his nearing end, and his awareness of his own sins, and asked that Aethelhard prays for the alleviation of those sins, standing near relics. This very specific instruction is testimony to the idea that the presence of relics enhances the efficacy of prayer.<sup>100</sup>

As noted, Alcuin's miracle stories do not give relics an active part in the way the miracle comes about. There is no inherent wonder-working power in the relics, but God works his miracles near the bodies of the saints sometimes to indicate the saints' merits with him. Rather than the product of inherent thaumaturgical power, miracles are the result of processes of intercession, in which the relics are a passive focal point. The saints, however, are active participants.<sup>101</sup> This pattern also appears in Alcuin's other writings. A *titulus* for the cemetery of the abbey of Saint-Amand records how Arn of Salzburg (also abbot of Saint-Amand) dedicated the building to 'the greatest intercessors': Michael, Peter, and Amand.<sup>102</sup> Several *tituli* for altars refer to the saints as intercessors, usually those saints to whom the altars were dedicated.<sup>103</sup> In letters to religious houses Alcuin called the patron saints of those communities their intercessors: Saint Martin for Tours, Vedast for Arras, Ninian for Whithorn, John the Baptist for Montolieu, Rupert for Salzburg, Peter and Paul for

<sup>99</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 43, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 87-88.

<sup>100</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 311, *ibidem*, p. 480. Cf also Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* 19.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. ANGENENDT 1994a, pp. 74-84, 106-108; McLAUGHLIN 1994, p. 104.

<sup>102</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen* 109, 15 (*Haec aequata solo viluit domus inclita quondam*, S-K 5823, ALC 61.109.15), ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 338, vv. 5-8.

<sup>103</sup> In addition to the inscriptions mentioned further on in this section, cf. *Carmen* 110, 7 (*Hac domini frater Iacobus veneratur in ara*, S-K nr. 5757, ALC 61.110.7), ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 341, v. 4: *Adiuuet hic borum* (scil. *Iacobi, Germani et Vedasti, JV*) *nos intercessio semper*.

Wearmouth and Jarrow, and Boniface for Fulda.<sup>104</sup> Most of these communities are known to have possessed relics of the saints in question.<sup>105</sup>

Alcuin himself also tried to benefit from the intercession of saints and their communities, sending silks to the tomb of Saint Ninian in Whithorn and of Saint Boniface in Fulda,<sup>106</sup> and when he asked the bishop of Limoges, Raganbertus, to favour the monastery of Saint-Martin in Tours, he mentioned the intercession of Saint Martin and the Limousin Saint Aredius, which Raganbertus would gain.<sup>107</sup> Ricbod of Trier is also invited to Tours, where he would gain the intercession of Saint Martin.<sup>108</sup> Other letters refer to saints in their role of intercessor. The means for this were primarily liturgical. In a letter, which accompanied Alcuin's *tituli* for the church of Saint-Vaast in Arras, Alcuin also referred to the missal he sent to the community. He wrote this missal, he says, for the honour of God and to beg the intercession of the saints and the assistance of the angels, which are necessary for the living.<sup>109</sup> In one letter, to the abbess Aethilthyda, Alcuin counsels his addressee to 'honour the saints' feasts with divine praise and alms for the poor frequently, so that you may merit to take part in their blessed state through their intercession.<sup>110</sup> The picture we get is of close ties between individual communities and their 'own' saints, not least through their saints' relics, within a network of intercession. The saints have an active part as intermediaries between the faithful and God; their relics only play a passive part.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 51, to the monks of Tours, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 94: *O felix familia, tali gaudens pastore, talem habens in die Domini ductorem! Felix, qui eius tota voluntate sequitur vestigia, ut illius inhaerens praeceptis ipsius mereatur consociari gloriae. Ut hoc fieri valeat, nulla vos saeculi concupiscentia, nullum carnale desiderium abstrahat; nec vestrae salutis vosmetipsos negligentes esse decet nec paratam vobis a Deo gloriam parvi pendere. Habetis enim Dei gratiam auxiliantem vos et magnum intercessorem, sanctum scilicet Martinum, depraecantem cotidie pro vobis; quia, in cuius servitio cotidie statis in domo sua, illum habetis in caelis omni hora suffragatorem; Epistola 74, to Rado of Saint-Vaast (= dedicatory letter of Alcuin's *Vita Vedasti*), ibidem, p. 116 and ed. KRUSCH 1896, p. 414: *Habes in omni opere bono Christum adiutorem, sanctum quoque Vedastum intercessorem; Alcuin, Epistola 273, to the monks of Whithorn, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 431-432; Epistola 272, to the monks and abbot of Montolieu, ibidem, p. 431; Epistola 168, to the monks of Salzburg, p. 277; Epistola 282, to Friduin, abbot of Wearmouth and Jarrow, p. 441; Epistola 250, to the monks of Fulda, p. 405.**

<sup>105</sup> Cf. RAAIJMAKERS 2012, pp. 96-98, and 121 for Fulda. Cf. for localism ANGENENDT 1994a, pp. 125-128, idem 2000, p. 211; BAUER 2000, pp. 149-151, BLAIR 2002.

<sup>106</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 273, to the monks of Whithorn, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 432; *Epistola* 250, ibidem, pp. 405-406.

<sup>107</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 298, ibidem, p. 457.

<sup>108</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 191, ibidem, p. 318. Cf. the letter to Theotgar, discussed below.

<sup>109</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 296, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 455: (...) *primo in honore summaeque Trinitatis; deinde sanctorum intercessionibus deprecandas etiam et angelorum suffragia postulanda, quae multum necessaria sunt in hac peregrinatione laborantibus* (...).

On Alcuin and the liturgy, cf. ELLARD 1956 and BULLOUGH 1983.

<sup>110</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 79, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 121: *Sanctorum festiuitates cum laude divina et pauperum elemosina frequenter honora, quatenus eorum merearis intercessione illorum esse particeps beatitudinis; cf. Epistola 193, to Arn of Salzburg, ibidem, p. 321.*

<sup>111</sup> Cf. also Alcuin, *Epistola* 114, ibidem, p. 168: *Aaron stabat cum turribulo dignitatis suae inter vivos ac mortuos, ut ira Dei non ardesceret plus in populo. Sacerdos vero Dei verbi et voluntatis illius praedicator debet esse in populum et intercessor ad Deum pro populo, quasi mediator inter Deum et homines.*

Alcuin wrote in similar vein about some monks from another monastery, who had run away from their abbot, and joined Alcuin's community in Tours, around 801, much to the dislike of their abbot, Theotgar. One of the attractions of Tours as a destination to run away to was the presence of Saint Martin's relics.<sup>112</sup> Alcuin refers to the desire of the monks who ran away from Theotgar's monastery 'to commend themselves to the intercessions of Saint Martin'. These monks 'wanted to visit Saint Martin's relics on account of prayer (...) asking us to be intercessors with Saint Martin's good will on their behalf, so that they would be received in his *locus*,' the latter term either referring to the saint's tomb or more generically to a place associated with the saint.<sup>113</sup>

We see three things in this case that are important to understand Alcuin's theology of prayer: first, as Alcuin and the community are also asked to be intercessors as well, intercession was not the prerogative of saints alone.<sup>114</sup> Also, Alcuin evidently believed that by going to a place which possessed relics, the faithful were able to request the intercessory assistance of the saints to whom the relics belonged, in a way not dissimilar from what Augustine had described in *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*.<sup>115</sup> Ogilvy's study on the use of classic and patristic authors by Anglo-Saxon authors does not note any knowledge of *De cura* among Anglo-Saxon authors, however, so it is not clear whether Alcuin knew this text or arrived at a similar conclusion otherwise.

Finally, the case of Theotgar's monks underlines the interplay between the local and the universal. The ties highlighted in Alcuin's letters are those of local communities with their own patrons. Such ties are decidedly local. On the other hand, Alcuin's own participation in the veneration of saints as far afield as Boniface in Fulda and Ninian in Whithorn suggests that outsiders could also tap into these connections. This is also what the monks of Theotgar's monastery tried to do in Tours, no doubt, although in their case the method was by going to Tours, rather than by sending letters and gifts. We know that pilgrimage – if that is what the monks were up to – was sometimes frowned upon in the earlier Middle Ages,<sup>116</sup> but Alcuin probably spoke of these monks as 'erring sheep' because they had gone away without their abbot's consent.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 223, *ibidem*, p. 366. This letter does not belong to the collection concerning the runaway cleric from Orléans, on which cf. MEENS 2007.

<sup>113</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 223, to the abbot Theotgarius, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 366: (...) *propter oportunitatem horum fratrum, qui venerunt ad nos, ut se commendarent sancti Martini intercessionibus (...)* orationis gratia sancti Martini reliquias visitare voluerunt (...), *precantes nos cum sancti Martini pietate intercessores esse pro illis, ut recipiantur in locum suum (...)*. Cf. also *Epistola* 245, to Candidus and Nathanael, *ibidem*, p. 393, with similar wording, but referring to a different affair. On *locus*, cf. BROWN 1981, pp. 10-11.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. also above, section 2.4.

<sup>115</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 311, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 480. Cf. Augustine, *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* 19.

<sup>116</sup> CONSTABLE 1976.

<sup>117</sup> 'Erring sheep': *oviculas errantes*, Alcuin, *Epistola* 223, to the abbot Theotgarius, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 367. Theme is prevalent throughout the letter.

Alcuin is both explicit and persistent in his description of the course that the ordinary faithful should follow when they find themselves before relics. In *Carmen* 44, Wizzo is instructed to lie prostrate on the floor before the relics, and pour out tears and groan while simultaneously praying and praising God. Both the paralysed woman and the chained sinner in the *Vita Willibrordi* are said to cry over their sins, with explicit reference to their tears and to the saint's intercession on their behalf.<sup>118</sup> The same pattern also occurs in Alcuin's poetry: *Carmen* 90, 6 refers to the intercessory powers of Saint Médard for all those who come to cry over their sins before the saint's altar.<sup>119</sup> In at least one case, Alcuin also explicitly referred to pouring out tears while interceding on behalf of another.<sup>120</sup> Such tears should be seen as a sign of compunction, of true faith in a context of penitence, a mode of behaviour following patristic prescriptions.<sup>121</sup> Tears as the desired accompaniment of confession also appear in the letter to the *pueri* of Saint Martin, which concerns confession.<sup>122</sup>

The theology of sanctity and relics explored so far finds its clearest expression in the exhortative conclusions of Alcuin's saints' lives and the sermons appended to two of these, the *Vita Willibrordi* and the *Vita Vedasti*. The concluding section of the prose *Vita Willibrordi*, immediately following the section of the punishment of the stealing deacon, emphasizes one obligation for the community: a restrained manner of life (*casta conversatio*), 'so that divine mercy may deign it worthy to hear you out through the prayers of Saint Clement,<sup>123</sup> the apostolic man in every honest request, just as we said before that he heard the prayers of the ill in this self-same church, and allowed them to return home with long-desired health.'<sup>124</sup> Alcuin then continued to explain that the miracles of healing are the physical equivalent of salvation of the soul, and that both are effected through the intercession of God's saint, 'who rests here in the body, and whom we believe to be present in spirit'. Alcuin also emphasized the need to pour out tears before the saint.

<sup>118</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 28 and 2, 30 for the paralysed woman, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 27 for the chained sinner – the parallel passage in *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 27 does not mention the event in a similar manner. Cf. also Alcuin, *Carmen* 44 (as above), ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 256, v. 25; *Vita Vedasti* 6.

<sup>119</sup> Alcuin, *Carmen* 90, 6 (*Haec est aula quidem sancti veneranda Medardi*, S-K 5880, ALC 61.90.6), ed. DÜMMLER 1881, p. 314, vv. 1-4.

<sup>120</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 249, to Charlemagne, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 402.

<sup>121</sup> E.g. Alcuin, *Epistola* 22, *ibidem*, p. 60 (also given in translation earlier in this section): (...) *sicut Ninivitarum ei* (scil. *Deo*, JV) *placuit poenitentia, et pepercit civitati per lacrimas confitentium peccata sua*. Cf. on Alcuin and penitence DIESENBERGER 2016, p. 33; DRISCOLL (ed.) 1998; *idem* 1999 (on which BULLOUGH 2004, pp. 66-67; KÖRNTGEN 2002). On patristic precedents, ROSENWEIN 2006, pp. 49-50 (John Cassian), and 87-88 (Gregory the Great).

<sup>122</sup> Alcuin, *Ad pueros sancti Martini* 5, ed. DRISCOLL 1998, p. 54, also *ibidem* 9, p. 60.

<sup>123</sup> i.e. Willibrord, who was called Clement when he was ordained by pope Sergius.

<sup>124</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 30: (...) *quatenus divina clementia per sancti Clementis viri apostolici praeces in omni petitione honesta vos exaudire dignetur, sicut ante diximus, illum exaudire praeces infirmantium in hac eadem ecclesia, eosque cum diu desiderata sanitate domum redire concessit*.

These rules of intercession also underlie the concluding sections of the *Vita Richarii*, and, though in a more constrained manner, the *Vita Vedasti*. In the former Alcuin said: ‘it is given to understand, what great power he (Richarius, JV) must have to intercede for our sins, if we call with faith unto him, who has such great power to heal the sick who come to him with faith.’ Alcuin again placed the obligation of imitation of the saint upon the community, playing on the universal as well as the local aspects of the veneration of saints. Alcuin said Richarius must have the power to intercede for the sins of those who pray to him, as manifestly has *virtus* to heal the physically disabled, ‘(...) for it is manifest from his miracles, what merits he has, and through the life he led before he shines in his new profession, so that we should not doubt his sanctity, when he has such strength (or virtue; the term used here is *virtus*, JV)’. The following sentences highlight three recurring themes in Alcuin’s discussion of saints: physical and familial proximity of the saint, the importance of imitating the saint, and the possibility that through imitation, the monks may become saints themselves:

*Quapropter dignum est, ut ab omnibus honorificetur, qui omnium Dominum semper amabat, propensius tamen a nobis qui eius corpori cotidie adsistimus; quatenus quos filios genuit in doctrinis, dignos possideat heredes in meritis. Nec illi tantum nostra prodest laudatio, quantum nobis eius imitatio. Magis illi placet Imitator devotus, quam laudator otiosus. Unde, fratres carissimi et sanctissimi patres et filii iocundissimi et totius sanctae congregationis populus qui ad tanti patroni festa convenistis, dignos vos facite, ut Deus omnipotens per eius intercessionem vestras exaudiat orationes. Ornate vosmet ipsos spiritali pulchritudine, supereminenti caritatis gloria et victrici fidei fortitudine et suavissima Christi bonitate spei, sequentes semper sanctorum patrum vestigia, ut per eorum gradientes exempla, illorum societate digni efficiamini (...)*

On this account he, who always loved the Lord of all, is worthy to be honoured by all, but more willingly by us, who stand next to his body every day; so that he may have those as heirs in merit, whom he begot as sons in his teachings. Our praise is not so much for his benefit, as imitating him is for us. A devout imitator pleases him more than a disengaged worshipper. Therefore, most beloved brothers and most holy fathers and most pleasing sons and assembly of the whole, holy congregation, who have come together for the feast of such a great patron, make yourself worthy, so that almighty God will hear out your prayers through his (Richarius’s, JV) intercessions. Decorate yourself with spiritual beauty, with the outstanding glory of love and the strength of conquering faith and the sweetest goodness of trust in Christ, always following the

footsteps of the holy fathers, so that, going up through their examples, you will be made worthy of their company (...).<sup>125</sup>

The sermon appended to the *Vita Willibrordi* also plays on the difference between universal and local veneration, saying that while all Christians should ‘celebrate the feasts of the saints, praise their victories, and imitate their lives’, this is *a fortiori* true for those who have a historical connection with a saint, or those who have his relics. The word used here is *familiaritas*, which emphasizes the importance of spiritual kinship relations in Alcuin’s thought about intercession. Both this sermon and the sermon for Saint Vedast emphasize the saint’s imitable example, and the saint’s preaching above all.<sup>126</sup> Local ties with a particular saint are emphasized, but these go no further than the fact that a saint worked or was buried within a particular community, which should be particularly grateful to their own saint. In fact, the particular traits of each saint are presented in such universal terms, that they can hardly be said to have any idiosyncratic traits left, even to the extent that the same sermon could be used by several communities for several saints, with only minor alterations.<sup>127</sup>

Finally, the sermons bring back a question concerning audience, and social differentiation. Alcuin’s sermons were mostly written for members of the clergy and for religious communities, and it is their links with particular saints that Alcuin reminds them of. They are the guardians of the relics we find discussed in Alcuin’s writings, and their role as men (and to a lesser extent women) of prayer is emphasized, which, in Alcuin’s thinking implies that their need for relics is also greater. Their *familiaritas* with the saints is the greatest, and as Alcuin’s saints had been churchmen as well, the saints are primarily their role model. Their moral obligation to imitate the saints is therefore greater. Even so, the laity is not excluded from partaking in saints’ cults, or benefiting from the saint’s intercession with the divine. The sermon on the feast of Willibrord, which, as noted earlier, primarily addressed a monastic audience, was also meant to reach a lay populus.<sup>128</sup> The example of the woman healed at Willibrord’s tomb also shows that lay people could access saints’ shrines, and that Alcuin was not critical of this. Though Alcuin’s thought about relics and their links with the faithful focusses on churchmen (as a result of Alcuin’s social and theological thinking), this does not mean that women or the laity had no access to relics.

<sup>125</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Ricarii* 18. Cf. also *Vita Vedasti* 9.

<sup>126</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 32, and *Adbortatio ad imitandas virtutes sancti patris Vedasti in actis descriptas*.

<sup>127</sup> The *Adbortatio ad imitandas virtutes sancti patris Vedasti in actis descriptas* was also used for Bertin (BHL 1298d), Corbinian of Freising (BHL 1949d), Emmeram of Regensburg (BHL 2542c), and Sabinus of Piacenza (BHL 7450b). Cf. ORCHARD 2000b for the case of the sermon for Willibrord.

<sup>128</sup> Cf. above, section 1.3.

In sum: Alcuin saw relics as focal points for prayers for divine salvation through saintly intercession, rather than as autonomous actors of miraculous relief. Grace is valued above the working of miracles, but the process that effects both is the same process: prayer, especially near the saint's relics, combined with the imitation of the saint's virtues, true faith, and tears, can lead the saint to intercede for the suppliant with God, who then effects the desired result, be it a healing or salvation. This is not to say that Alcuin believed prayer can only be effective if one prays at a saint's tomb, but like Augustine he believed that the proximity of relics helped to be heard out. This is especially so for those communities that guarded these relic: because of their direct access, they had special obligations towards their saints. Others, however, can tap into this resource as well.

### 3.5. Criticism of the abuses of relics

The notion that relics are a place for prayer is reinforced by looking at two letters by Alcuin which address what he thought were abuses of relics: *Epistolae* 290 and 291.<sup>129</sup> Both letters have a similar message, contain similar wording, and are addressed to archbishops in the British Isles, *Epistola* 290 to archbishop Aethelhart of Canterbury (archbishop from 793 to 805), *Epistola* 291 to Eanbald of York.<sup>130</sup> In these letters Alcuin focussed on the need of preaching and the role of the preacher in the salvation of the people, especially in the face of certain abuses which Alcuin wrote he had seen practiced himself. Alcuin's main remedy against the perceived abuses is that the church should teach what the first preachers to Britain taught. In other words, his defence against abuse consisted of a general appeal to tradition. Both letters end with a further exhortation that the archbishop be involved in preaching for the salvation of the people as well as for his own, as, according to Alcuin, both depend on the archbishop's conduct.

<sup>129</sup> A translation of these letters is appended, below as an appendix. Both letters are transmitted in two manuscripts, LONDON, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A XV, s. 11, damaged by fire in 1731 (Dümmler's ms. A 1) and CAMBRIDGE, Trinity College O.10.16, an apograph of the former, made by Thomas Gale (d. 1702) (Dümmler's A 1 \*). In A 1 *Epistola* 290 is found on ff. 126r-127r, *Epistola* 291 is transmitted only a few folia away, on ff. 130v-131v. The passages discussed have been noted before, cf. COATES 1996, p. 546; GUTH 1970, p. 16, and RICHE 1991, p. 221.

<sup>130</sup> Either Eanbald I (780-796) or Eanbald II (796-808). The identification has not been made before, to my knowledge, but follows from the similarity between the manuscript's *Ill.* and the address to Eanbald in Alcuin, *Epistola* 46, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 91, a letter that was written by a priest named Eanbald and addressed to the archbishop of the same name, identifying author and addressee as *Ille* and *Illi* respectively.

The perceived abuses at the heart of these letters are the practice of wearing *filacteria* and *ligaturae*, pendants containing pieces of scripture or relics as amulets, and a practice referred to as *conventus* or *coniurationes*. The former is of interest to us here, but we need to understand the latter as well to understand these letters as a whole. Alcuin described *conventus* as outdoor events in ‘mountainous places’, following a liturgical celebration, in which drinking was involved.<sup>131</sup> The term *coniuratio* indicates that oaths were taken as a part of the proceedings. These two acts combined, suggest that *conventus* was a form of guild feasting.<sup>132</sup> What appalled Alcuin was that people involved in *conventus* sought some kind of religious satisfaction in their brotherhoods, where they combined church services with drinking and other apparently unacceptable behaviour. *Coniuratio* is a word with a negative connotation, and probably rather reflects what Alcuin thought of this practice than what its practitioners actually called it; as they went to church, they must have thought of themselves as Christians.<sup>133</sup> It is Alcuin who interprets their drinking bouts in eschatological terms, referring to Christ’s speech on the end of times and to the coming of false Messiahs, figures with a strong satanical connotation in Christian teaching.

This brings me to the criticism of *filacteria* and *ligaturae* in these letters. In *Epistola* 291 Alcuin equates such *ligaturae* with *pharisaica filacteria*, a reference to Christ’s criticism of the great store the Pharisees set in outward appearance in their religious practice (Matthew 23:5).<sup>134</sup> Like the Pharisees and the participants in the *conventus*, the wearers of *ligaturae* are hypocrites, and their salvation is at risk. Alcuin noted that people ‘carry God’s Word or relics around their necks’, and then ‘rush off towards their foulnesses’ (*vadunt ad immunditias suas*), as if such ‘pacts of satanic convenience’ (*diabolicae convenientie pacta*) would not harm the state of their soul.

For the practice of wearing *philacteria* – the modern scholarly term used for relics worn on the body, usually around the neck – we have several references in other writings. Gregory of Tours, for example, was quite explicit in his description of the practice, in his case of relics enclosed in pectoral crosses. Both his father and mother owned such portable relics, and so did Gregory himself.<sup>135</sup> Also Northumbrian churchmen with ties to Alcuin carried relics on their bodies.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. LEE 2007. The Alcuinian section of the *Admonitio generalis* is also opposed to drunkenness, amongst other vices, quoting Galatians 5:19-21; *Admonitio generalis* 80 (ed. MORDEK [et al.] 2012, p. 236, l. 416).

<sup>132</sup> Scholars have referred to this letter as an early example of clerical criticism of guilds in the Carolingian era: HOSKING 2006, p. 104; OEXLE 1981 and 1985; REYNOLDS 1984, pp. 77-78; ROSSER 2006; SMITH 1995a, pp. 676-677. LEE 2007, p. 49, n. 199 argues explicitly against this. RASPANTI 2007, p. 189 discusses the passage in his study of the word *populus* in the early Middle Ages, but ignores the possibility of a guild context.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Van RHIJN 2003.

<sup>134</sup> On Alcuin on the Jews, cf. BLUMENKRANZ 1963, pp. 144-146.

<sup>135</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Liber in gloria martyrum* 83, ed. KRUSCH 1885, pp. 94-95; *ibidem* 10, p. 45. Cf. also HEN 1995, p. 108; SNOEK 1995, pp. 82-90; SMITH 2012.

Willehad of Bremen, whom Alcuin certainly knew (and may have been related to<sup>136</sup>) was once saved from a deadly blow of a pagan's club by the relic-containing box (*capsa*) which he carried around his neck, so his *vita* tells us.<sup>137</sup> The practice of carrying relics on the body as such can thus hardly be what Alcuin criticized.

Given also Alcuin's own involvement in the collection of relics, it is more likely that what Alcuin protested against was the beliefs of the users of such relics.<sup>138</sup> He understood this belief to be that the sins of wearers of *ligaturae* were forgiven simply by wearing the object, which would amount to a personal use of holy matter to force God (or the saints) to allow them to sin consciously.<sup>139</sup> This, he stated, cannot be right, as 'it is better to imitate the examples of the saints in the heart, than to carry about their bones in little bags'.<sup>140</sup> Imitating the examples of the saints is a notion that also appears elsewhere in Alcuin's writings, and harks back to the notion of the church as a vessel of saintly tradition, explored in the preceding chapter.<sup>141</sup> To Alcuin the saints were teachers, who demonstrated how a Christian should live, and could aid the faithful through their intercession, but possessing their relics alone was not enough, a point, coincidentally, which was also brought to bear a few decades later by Paschasius Radbertus, who considered relics to be far inferior to the example of the saint's life.<sup>142</sup> Alcuin considered it the archbishop's responsibility to put these matters to right, just as he should deal with the *coniurationes*.

Alcuin was not alone in this criticism of *philacertia* and *ligaturae*. Not only did he feel that tradition was on his side, especially in the person of Augustine, there are at least two sources that

<sup>136</sup> WOOD 1994, pp. 190-191; idem 1999, p. 171; idem 2010, pp. 114-115, 120-121. Cf. Alcuin, *Epistola* 6, to an abbot (Beornrad of Echternach?), ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 31. Both Alcuin and Willehad had ties with Echternach, founded by Willibrord, and headed at that time by Beornrad. Alcuin is known to have been related to both Willibrord and Beornrad, and Willehad may likewise have been related. Cf. also BULLOUGH 2004, p. 356; NIEMEYER 1956, pp. 27-32.

<sup>137</sup> *Vita Willehadi* 4 (BHL 8898, ed. PERTZ 1829), p. 381: *Qui* (scil. *Willehadus*, JV) *inde traniens venit Triantha (...)* *Unde contigit, ut quidam discipulorum eius divino compuncti ardore, fana in morem gentilium circumquaque erecta coepissent evertere et ad nihilum, prout poterant, redigere; quo facto barbari qui adhuc forte increduli perstiterant, furore nimio succensi, irruerunt super eos repente cum impetu, volentes eos funditus interimere; ibique Dei famulum fustibus caesum multis admodum plagis affecere. Quorum etiam unus evaginato gladio super serrum Dei irruit, conatus ei capud abscidere. Verum beatus vir ipso in tempore capsam cum sanctis reliquiis in collo suspensam habebat. Cumque ictus ferientis super collum eius decideret, corrigiam quidem capsae partim praecidit, ipsum vero in nullo penitus vulnerare potuit. Quo miraculo pagani exterriti, ipsum ac socios eius illaesos abire passi sunt, nec ulterius in aliquo eis molesti esse praesumpserunt.* Cf. also WOOD 1995, p. 261. It is not relevant here whether the *Vita Willehadi* derives from Echternach, as NIEMEYER 1956 argued, or stems from Bremen. Cf. FERRARI 1994a, p. 23, n. 106.

<sup>138</sup> Contrary to what is implied in ANGENENDT 1994a, p. 158. Cf. HAARLÄNDER 1994, pp. 154-156; LEGNER 1995, p. 325; RICÉ 1991, pp. 218-221.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. on coercion of saints in (somewhat later) medieval religious practice GEARY 1994b.

<sup>140</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 290: *melius est in corde sanctorum imitare exempla, quam in sacculis portare ossa; evangelicas habere scriptas ammonitiones in mente magis, quam pittaciolis excaratas in collo circumferre.* Also quoted by VEYRARD-COSME 1995, p. 197.

<sup>141</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* 43, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 87-88, discussed above, 2.2.1. cf. also above, 2.1.4.

<sup>142</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *De Passione Sanctorum Rufini Et Valerii*, PL 120, col. 1489: *Si enim vestis exiguae particula, vel modicus resoluti corpusculi pulvis, de sanctorum memoriis comparatus, ineffabile fidelibus praebere patrocinium creditur, quis digne vel explicare vel cogitare valeat eorum vita virtutesque (...).* cf. HEYDEMANN 2011, p. 198; RAAIJMAKERS 2017, p. 75.

show a similar concern in the circle of people around Boniface. One of these two sources, the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, has been thought to be the product of the *Concilium Germanicum* of 742/3 or the Council of Lestines in the following year.<sup>143</sup> It lists, in very summary fashion, thirty superstitious and pagan practices, the ninth being ‘sacrifice made to one of the saints’ (*De sacrificio quod fit alicui sanctorum*), the tenth being ‘phylacteries and amulets’ (*De filacteriis et ligaturis*). The theme of *filacteria* and *ligaturae* also appears in Boniface’s *Epistola* 50, addressed to Pope Zacharias, dating from 742. Whereas Alcuin’s letters responded to practices on the British Isles, the evidence from the 740s makes clear that similar concerns bothered Anglo-Saxon clergymen working on the Continent fifty years earlier. Boniface considered these ‘abuses’ to be widespread in his days, both in the lands in which he worked and in Rome itself:

*Et quia carnales homines idiote, Alamanni vel Baiouarii vel Franci, si iuxta Romanam urbem aliquid facere viderint ex his peccatis, quae nos prohibemus, licitum et concessum: a sacerdotibus esse putant et nobis inproperium deputant, sibi scandalum vite accipiunt. Sicut adfirmant se vidisse annis singulis in Romana urbe et iuxta ecclesiam sancti Petri in die vel nocte, quando Kalende Ianuarii intrant, paganorum consuetudine chorus ducere per plateas et adclamationes ritu gentilium et cantationes sacrilegas celebrare et mensas illa die vel nocte dapibus onerare et nullum de domo sua vel ignem vel ferramentum vel aliquid commodi vicino suo prestare velle. Dicunt quoque se vidisse ibi mulieres pagano ritu filacteria et ligaturas et in brachiis et cruris ligatas habere et publice ad vendendum venales ad comparandum aliis offerre. Quae omnia, eo quod ibi a carnalibus et insipientibus videntur, nobis hic inproperium et impedimentum predicationis et doctrine perficiunt. De talibus ait apostolus increpans: ‘Dies observatis et tempora; timeo, ne sine causa laboraverim in vobis’. Et sanctus Augustinus dixit: ‘Nam qui dictis malis, id est carais et divinis et aruspibus vel filacteriis et aliis quibuslibet auguriis crediderit, etsi ieiunet, etsi oret, etsi iugiter ad ecclesiam currat, etsi largas elymosinas faciat, etsi corpusculum suum in omni afflictione cruciaverit, nihil ei proderit, quamdiu sacrilegia illa non relinquerit’. Nam si istas paganas ibi paternitas vestra in Romana urbe prohibuerit, et sibi mercedem et nobis maximum profectum in doctrina aecclesiastica proficerit.*

And because if ignorant people of the flesh, be they Alamans, Bavarians, or Franks, saw anything of these sins, which we have forbidden, practiced in Rome, they think

<sup>143</sup> Vatican, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Lat. 577 (BISCHOFF 2014, p. 415, nr. 6545), ed. BORETUS 1883, pp. 222-223. Cf. DIERKENS 1984; MOSTERT 2013; WOOD 1995, p. 254. MOORE 2011, p. 210, n. 38 associates the *Indiculus* with the latter council; the general feeling of scholarship seems to favour the former. DIERKENS 1984 hedges his bets.

that they are permitted and allowed by the priests and make sarcastic remarks to us, that we made them take offence on their ways of life. Thus they affirm to have seen that choirs move through the streets in the pagan manner in the city of Rome and near the church of Saint Peter by day or by night, at New Year's eve,<sup>144</sup> and shouting according to the pagan rite and singing sacrilegious songs and burdening tables with food on that day or night, and that none wants to lend his neighbour either fire or an iron tool or any utensil whatsoever. They also say they saw that women there have amulets (*filacteria et ligaturas*), bound both on their arms and legs and publicly offer to sell them as commodities or to make them for others. Therefore all things which are seen there by foolish men of the flesh, are here performed as an insult to us and an impediment for preaching and doctrine. About such men the apostle said, rebuking: 'You observe the days and times; I fear, that I will not have worked amongst you without reason' (Galatians 4.10-11). And Saint Augustine said: 'For who believes in the said evils, that is pseudo-magic and divination and soothsaying or phylacteries and whatever other omens, it will not benefit him whether he fasts or prays or constantly runs to church or makes generous gifts, or torments his body with every affliction, while he does not let go of this sacrilege.' For if your Fatherly person forbade such pagan affairs there in the city of Rome, it would be to his merit and a very great benefit for us in the church's teaching.<sup>145</sup>

It is improbable that Alcuin knew either Boniface's letters or the *Indiculus*. He never alludes to Boniface's letters in his writings, and the *Indiculus* has a minimal manuscript transmission. Alcuin, Boniface, and the anonymous author of the *Indiculus* were probably influenced by the same patristic ancestor. Both Alcuin and Boniface mention Augustine, but Boniface's 'quotation' from Augustine is actually from a sermon by Caesarius of Arles.<sup>146</sup> Closer inspection reveals that Boniface's quotation from Galatians is not identical to the Vulgate but stems from Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 54.3, that is: two headings before the place where Boniface found the putative quotation from Augustine he used in the letter translated above. It is clear therefore that Boniface used this sermon,

<sup>144</sup> Cf. HARMENING 1979, pp. 121-127 on this practice.

<sup>145</sup> Boniface, *Epistola* 50, ed. TANGL 1916, pp. 84-85. Cf. DIERKENS 1984, pp. 13, 22 on the relation of this letter with the *Indiculus supersitionum*.

<sup>146</sup> The sermon *De tempore* is known as ps.-Augustine 278 (formerly 241) and as Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 54. Cf. on Caesarius' reception in modern scholarship HEN 2002; on patristic objections to (pagan) phylacteries KÖTTING 1958, pp. 324-325.

and thought that Augustine was its author.<sup>147</sup> The same could be true for the author of the *Indiculus*,<sup>148</sup> and for Alcuin as well. Though, like Boniface, Alcuin does not refer to Caesarius, there is a textual similarity between his letters and some of Caesarius' sermons, which suggests that he borrowed from Caesarius, and he definitely used one of Caesarius' sermons in his *Commentary on John*.<sup>149</sup> Augustine by contrast only used the word *filacteria* on four occasions, but the works in which he did so are not known to have been used by Anglo-Saxon authors.<sup>150</sup> *Ligatura* appears more often, also in works which Boniface and Alcuin knew, but the contexts in which Augustine uses *ligatura* are dissimilar to Alcuin's use, or Boniface's. Co-occurrence of *ligaturae* and *filacteria*, absent from Augustine, is found in Caesarius' sermons on three occasions: *Sermones* 1, 19, and 50.<sup>151</sup> Whether Alcuin used any of these sermons, and if so, which one, is difficult to tell. We know of two quotations from Caesarius in Alcuin's writings,<sup>152</sup> and those quotations stemmed from a different sermon. Manuscript transmission of Caesarius' sermons, however, clearly indicates an Anglo-Saxon interest in Caesarius' sermons, and an active involvement in their transmission.<sup>153</sup> In addition, some Anglo-Saxon manuscripts state that Augustine, not Caesarius, is the author of these sermons.<sup>154</sup> Boniface's misattribution is not without a context. This is also significant for our assessment of Alcuin here. If he thought he was relying on Augustine here, rather than on Caesarius, that has to be seen as part of his reliance on the African Father elsewhere, and therefore as part of the core of Alcuin's theological thinking, thus emphasizing why the beliefs of the wearers of *phylacteria* so appalled him.

Whatever the patristic roots of Alcuin's relic criticism, the way in which Alcuin framed his depiction of the abuse of relics is telling. The proper use of relics aids the imitation of the virtues of the saints. This imitation, moreover, should take place within a context of preaching and teaching, safeguarded by ecclesiastical authority and tradition, elements which have all been treated extensively in the first half of this chapter, dealing with Alcuin's concept of sanctity.

<sup>147</sup> The Vulgate reading of Galatians 4:10-11 is *Dies observatis et menses et tempora et annos (...)* where Boniface and Caesarius read *Dies observatis et tempora (...)*. Cf. BOUHOT 1980, p. 185; HARMENING 1979, pp. 126-127.

<sup>148</sup> HARMENING 1979, p. 151.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. for Caesarius' sermons on superstitions and their influence in the Carolingian world HEN 1995 and 2002; on the *Commentary on John* CANTELLI BERARDUCCI 1994, p. 56.

<sup>150</sup> Augustine, *Quaestionum in heptateuchum* 1, q. 111, ed. FRAIPONT 1958, p. 41. The other passages are Augustine, *De opere monachorum* xxviii, 36, ed. ZYCHA 1900, p. 585, and *Speculum* 25, ed. WEIRICH 1887, p. 170. Cf. OGILVY 1936, p. 18.

<sup>151</sup> Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 1.12, ed. MORIN 1953, p. 9; *Sermo* 19.4, ibidem, p. 90; *Sermo* 50.1, ibidem, p. 225.

<sup>152</sup> Alcuin used Caesarius' *Sermo* 18 in *De virtutibus et vitiis* 14, identified in WALLACH 1955, pp. 194-195 (cf. OTTEN 1997, p. 25), and of a quotation in *Epistola* 296, identified in CONSTANTINESCU 1970, p. 222. Note that Constantinescu also suggests that a quotation from Faustus of Riez in *Epistola* 51 reached Alcuin through Caesarius.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. the introduction to Morin's edition, and the discussion of the manuscripts there. All of the oldest manuscripts have an Anglo-Saxon origin, often in Anglo-Saxon centres on the European mainland.

<sup>154</sup> BARRÉ 1962, p. 24; KLINGSHIRN 1994, pp. 213-214.

### 3.6. Conclusion

Alcuin never gave a full definition of what he considered a relic to be. This means that we must look through Alcuin's works and see where and in what way relics are discussed. Relics are discussed only in Alcuin's hagiography, which describe miracles associated with them; *tituli*, which describe the relics enclosed in churches or altars; and letters, which describe relics in a context of friendship, exchange and patronage. None of these texts had the objective of being systematic, but their vocabulary allows for some conclusions to be drawn.

Alcuin used a varied vocabulary to describe relics, based on their origin, function, or material characteristics. Indicators of high value are relatively rare; *reliquiae* is common; *corpus sancti* likewise, though the body was in principle valued negatively in Alcuin's theology. Other terms describing the physical characteristics of relics are likewise rare. This makes it difficult to say whether Alcuin cared much about what kinds of objects these relics were. The impression that one gets, however, is that Alcuin was not overly interested in the physical aspects of relics, unless they were significant to the story of the saint, such as the association of blood with martyrs. The most materially inclined text, moreover, the York poem, derived its material descriptors for relics from its source, Bede. The fact that Alcuin was not concerned with the materiality of relics has a background in Alcuin's theology of relics. For the divine agency which works through them, it did not matter what relics were made of, as relics are only one of several possible receiving ends of the agency of God, in the person of the Holy Spirit on Earth. This fits with the observations of Julia Smith on the vocabulary of early medieval relic labels. In addition, the *philacteria* letters indicate that Alcuin thought that the idea that relics could effect miracles or salvation on their own accord was beyond the pale of Christian orthodoxy.

Although not critical of miracles per se,<sup>155</sup> Alcuin stressed that miracles are the work of God. Saints are not credited with the performance of miracles themselves. It is also God who avenges injustices done to the saint, both in life and in death. Even the miraculous scent and visions of supernatural light, witnessed in the vicinity of relics, are rather associated with the presence of angels and of heaven, than with the material remains of the saints. The idea that the *virtus* of the dead saint remained in his body as a thaumaturgic residue, found in some other early medieval authors, is categorically incompatible with Alcuin's thoughts about relics. Incorruption as a trait of relics likewise only appears in the York poem, where it derives from Alcuin's source text.

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<sup>155</sup> Cf. ANGENENDT 2010a, pp. 69-72; DEMM 1975.

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Rather than focussing on their miracle working power, Alcuin emphasized the role of relics within a network of intercession. Saints are often referred to in terms that imply a relation: as fathers (of children), as teachers (of pupils), or as intercessors (for their suppliants). Saints are there to pray to the divine, just as the ordinary faithful are. What sets them apart from ordinary faithful is a gradual difference in sanctity, which allows them to be more effective in their prayers. The way in which they intercede for those who pray before their relics, however, is not altogether different from the prayers of the clergy, or even the ordinary faithful. Idiosyncratic traits of the saint in question matter only to a limited degree, the presence of his relics and the ties of a local saint with a local community in a given place matter much more. Within this context, Alcuin placed great emphasis on correct behaviour in the face of relics. Alcuin did not restrict access on the basis of sex, ordination, or social position, given the access the paralyzed woman was said to have to Willibrord's relics. What he thought was necessary, however, was a show of due deference through prayer, and pouring out tears over past sins, and imitating the example of the saints. Other ways of using relics as devotional objects, such as those of the wearers of *filacteria*, met with strong criticism from Alcuin.



## **PART II. THIOFRID**



## 4. Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*

### 4.1. Willibrord and Echternach after Alcuin

For a proper understanding of Thiofrid's writings on Willibrord, it is important to see his works as receptions of Alcuin's writings and to study them in relation to developments in the monastery and the cult of Willibrord after 800. The first two sections of this chapter therefore chart the development of the cult of Willibrord and the reception of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* in the abbey of Echternach. I shall argue that throughout the period of the ninth to the twelfth century many aspects of monastic life in Echternach changed, but the cult of Willibrord remained central to the self-perception of the monastic community and that Alcuin's writings were adapted to suit the community's needs in this respect.

Historians have generally focussed on two periods of perceived greatness in the history of the abbey of Echternach: the eighth century, when Willibrord and (to a lesser extent) Beornrad were historically significant abbots, and the late tenth and eleventh century, when Echternach was a centre of luxury manuscript production. In the traditional narrative these two periods are separated by an era of both moral and intellectual decline. The blame for the decline was cast on

the lay abbots who ruled Echternach since the reign of emperor Louis the Pious (814-840).<sup>1</sup> A decline in manuscript production and the introduction of canons to replace Benedictine monks were given as evidence for this decline. Only in the last two decades has this view of the history of Echternach in the ninth century been challenged by scholars, emphasizing a number of new insights.

Firstly, scholars now point to the heterogenous nature of the lay abbacy. Many of the 'lay' abbots in Echternach were in fact bishops, like Sigoald, bishop of Spoleto (abbot of Echternach c. 818-827), Theutgaud, Hetti and Radbod, archbishops of Trier (abbots 827-832, 832-838 and c. 892-897 respectively), and Hatto, bishop of Verdun (861-864). Others were counts, like Adalhard 'the Seneschal' (abbot 847-861), Reginar (897-916), Giselbert (916-939), and Sigfrid (948/9-973), the last lay abbot in Echternach. Other individuals, such as the abbot Hieronymus (abbot 838-847) are difficult to identify for lack of sources. What all these abbots had in common was that they had other responsibilities outside the cloister walls in addition to their task as abbot, but they were not a coherent group in any other respect, which means that any collective disqualification of their tenures is essentially invalid.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the moral disqualification of lay abbots by older scholarship has been revised. Abbots with responsibilities beyond the cloister walls were nothing new to Echternach. Willibrord and Beornrad had also been bishops in addition to being abbot of Echternach and their episcopal responsibilities did not stand in the way of the perceived flowering of the abbey in the eighth century.<sup>3</sup> The 'lay' abbots of the ninth and tenth century moreover displayed an interest in the abbey's spiritual welfare. Jean Schroeder has emphasized that Sigfrid, the last lay abbot, was actively involved in the reform that ended his tenure as lay abbot. Far from a despoiler of the monastery who lacked spiritual motives Sigfrid was an active supporter of religious reform, as many lay abbots were.<sup>4</sup>

Thirdly, the idea that a decline in manuscript production is a sign of spiritual decline has been overturned. Manuscript production in the scriptorium of Echternach is difficult to study. Rosamond McKitterick even likened the scriptorium of Echternach to Lewis Carroll's Cheshire cat:

<sup>1</sup> BERNAYS & VANNÉRUS 1910, pp. 432-433; BOSHOF 1989, pp. 215-216; BRUCH 1964, p. 10; PARISSE 1989; SCHMITZ 1942, p. 101; STAUD & REUTER 1952, pp. 23-25. WAMPACH 1929 and BIJSTERVELD [et al.] 1999, p. 218 are more cautious. Cf. EMBACH 2010, p. 141; FELTEN 1980, pp. 39-55; HELVÉTIUS 1998; De JONG 1995, pp. 634-636.

<sup>2</sup> BRUCH 1964, pp. 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> Also noted in FELTEN 1980, pp. 39-40.

<sup>4</sup> BOSHOF 1989, p. 244; SCHROEDER 1977, pp. 335-336; idem 1981. MARGUE 1999. For involvement of lay nobles in monastic reform in the tenth century, cf. WOLLASCH 2000, pp. 169-171.

the more you look at it, the less you see.<sup>5</sup> What is clear, however, is that Echternach was a prolific scriptorium for biblical manuscripts in the early eighth century,<sup>6</sup> and that this production declined even before the end of the eighth century. Manuscripts were only copied in Echternach on a limited scale long before the arrival of the ‘lay’ abbots. What has led to this misconception is Echternach’s remarkably large collection of late tenth and eleventh-century manuscripts. In the late tenth century Echternach acquired a collection of rare classical texts under the influence of intellectuals from the circle of Gerbert of Aurillac, and in the early eleventh century the monastery scriptorium produced a number of luxury manuscripts, many ordered by emperor Henry III.<sup>7</sup> These exceptional developments, however, were not caused by the reform of the monastery that preceded it by several decades, but by contacts that were established with Gerbert and Henry, some time after the reforms. This means that the image of cultural decline as measured in the dynamics of manuscript production does not coincide with the perceived spiritual decline.<sup>8</sup>

The notion of spiritual, material, and cultural decline in Echternach is mostly due to the self-perception of the monastery in the period following the end of the tenure of the last lay abbot, Sigfrid, in 973. In this year emperor Otto I reformed the abbey with Sigfrid’s support. A new abbot, Ravanger, was brought into the abbey, together with a new group of monks. These men came from the Benedictine abbey of Sankt Maximin in Trier, and with them they brought the *Regula Benedicti*. As was so often the case in religious reforms, the basic premise of the rhetoric of monastic reform in the tenth century was that such reform was necessary to restore (monastic) standards to a pristine level. This rhetorical position requires those who employ it to suggest that monastic life prior to reform fell short of this standard.<sup>9</sup> In the case of the reform of 973 in Echternach, this idea was reinforced by the fact that the monks of Echternach had not been ‘proper monks’ (in the eyes of the reformers), but canons.

In the eighth century there had not been a firm distinction between monks and canons, and communal religious life overall was very varied. Only after the reforms of Louis the Pious and Benedict of Aniane in 816/7 did the *Regula Benedicti* become the only standard for monastic life in Francia, and even then several important abbeys, such as Saint Denis and Stavelot-Malmédy, had

<sup>5</sup> McKITTERICK 2000, p. 501; eadem 2002, p. 99. Cf. FERRARI 1994a, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> NETZER 1987, pp. 16-22; eadem 1994, pp. 9-11; cf. eadem 1989a.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Von EUW 1999; HOFFMANN 1986; NORDENFALK 1971; PLOTZEK 1969a.

<sup>8</sup> FERRARI 1994a; McKITTERICK 1989b; eadem 1990; 2000; 2002; NETZER 1989a and b; eadem 1994, 1999. Older literature that linked decline in manuscript production and general ‘decline’: BRUCH 1964; LOCHNER 1987, p. 176; WAMPACH 1929.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the modern, critical approach to the rhetoric of monastic reform: BARROW 2009 for tenth-century England, NIGHTINGALE 2001 and VANDERPUTTEN 2013 (and SNIJDERS 2015, pp. 18-22) for Lotharingia and Flanders respectively. cf. the more cautious MAYR-HARTING 2007, p. 40.

decided to stick to a canonical way of life.<sup>10</sup> It was only in the eyes of reform-minded Benedictines that this choice was a change for the worse. To speak of reform in Echternach as the 'return of the Benedictines' is to take their rhetoric for granted and to misunderstand the monasticism in Echternach in the eighth and ninth century.<sup>11</sup> There had never been Benedictines before 973, certainly not by the reformers' standards.

What the reform of 973 amounted to on the ground is difficult to say, as we know little of what form of communal life was practiced before the reform.<sup>12</sup> Three things certainly changed: the centrality of the *Regula Benedicti* was either established or enhanced, the arrival of forty new monks and a new abbot affected the structure and makeup of the community, and with their arrival new ties were established between Echternach and the new monks' old house, Sankt Maximin.<sup>13</sup> In the long run, the impact of reform on the monastic self-perception and the communal memory of the abbey of Echternach was significant. This strengthened by another Benedictine reform under the influence of Poppo, abbot of Stavelot in 1028. The more limited impact of the second reform on the monastic identity of the Echternach community may be due partly to the fact that this reform followed the pattern established in 973, as the reformers had ties with the Sankt Maximin, where Poppo was abbot since 1022.<sup>14</sup>

The monastic reforms of the tenth and eleventh century drew Echternach into a larger network of monastic institutions, and this also affected Willibrord's cult and the distribution of his relics. In 1031, shortly after the second reform, a new church was consecrated in Echternach. Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* reports how Willibrord's relics were retrieved during the proceedings, and installed in a new tomb.<sup>15</sup> It also says that the then abbot of Echternach, Humbert, retrieved a rib from Willibrord's body, and mentions that he saw that Willibrord's pallium had remained incorrupt.<sup>16</sup> It is surely no coincidence that relics of Willibrord's rib and pallium start to be attested

<sup>10</sup> BOSHOF 1989, p. 197; De JONG 1995, pp. 629-634. For Echternach: MARGUE 1999, p. 235.

<sup>11</sup> This older point of view is perhaps best epitomized by HALLINGER 1971. Cf. for this older interpretation of affairs in Echternach e.g. BRUCH 1964, p. 10; CHOUX 1960; PARISSÉ 1989; STAUD & REUTER 1952, p. 26; WAMPACH 1952, pp. 114-116.

<sup>12</sup> MISONNE & MARGUE 1988; MARGUE 1999; NIGHTINGALE 2001; SCHROEDER 1981; SNIJDERS 2015, pp. 18-21. On monastic reform in the tenth and eleventh century in general, cf. KOTTJE 1989; VANDERPUTTEN 2013.

<sup>13</sup> HALLINGER 1971, p. 111, n. 4. Hallinger notes that monks from Stavelot went out to several houses in the later tenth century, e.g. Echternach, Weissenburg, Sankt Emmeram in Regensburg, and Otto's new foundation Sankt Moritz in Magdeburg. Cf. also MISONNE & MARGUE 1988, p. 55; NIGHTINGALE 2001, pp. 171-172 and WOLLASCH 2000, pp. 171-172.

<sup>14</sup> WOLLASCH 2000, p. 182. Cf. SCHÄFER 1991.

<sup>15</sup> The hyper critical approach to this story in VISSER 1933, which concludes that Thiofrid's narrative is "zuiver fantasie" (pure fantasy), cannot be taken seriously. Cf. CROOK 2000, p. 3 on the wider trend.

<sup>16</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 34; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, vv. 81-143.

from the following decades onwards in houses within Echternach's monastic network. An eleventh-century relic label (*cedula*) from Stavelot, formerly attached to a piece of Willibrord's pallium, has remained, and can be related to an eleventh-century calendar from the same monastery, which records the feasts of both Willibrord and his father Wilgisl.<sup>17</sup> Other early reports of relics of Willibrord appear in the decades after 1031 as well, mostly in houses with links with Echternach through Sankt Maximin. These sources do not specify what kinds of relics were stored. Relics of Willibrord are mentioned in a catalogue of relics present in the monastery of Hirsau during the dedication of the church in 1091,<sup>18</sup> other relics are mentioned in Brauweiler at some point between 1065 and 1076 and in Weissenburg in 1068.<sup>19</sup> Before 1031 we only know of Willibrord relics in St Maximin in Trier (mentioned in 952), in St Emmeram in Regensburg (mentioned in 980), in Luxembourg (987), and in Prüm (1003). The latter relics were clothes; the other references give no details.<sup>20</sup> Thus although the spread of Willibrord's relics started earlier on, the *inventio* of 1031 provided a catalyst, doubling the number of known relics outside of Echternach within decades. This fits in well with what we know of Poppo's involvement in the cult of another saint and founding father, Remaclus, the founder of Stavelot, whose *inventio* is recorded for the year 1042.<sup>21</sup> Reformer monks of Poppo's 'school' probably put a great store in founder saints' relics and spread them to other churches as well, perhaps because the rhetoric of reform incited a need to re-establish the relation of the monastic community with its origins, as well as its relation with other houses.<sup>22</sup>

Later references to the distribution of Willibrord's relics cannot be related to the monastic reform movement. Thiofrid reports that he himself took Willibrord's staff and a part of Willibrord's rib to Walcheren when he visited the island,<sup>23</sup> and two centuries later, in 1301, the monks of Echternach sent a piece of Willibrord's rib, pallium, and sandal to Utrecht after the canons of Oudmunster had asked for relics of Willibrord. Simultaneously a prayer confraternity was set up between both houses, emphasizing the importance attached to relations between institutions as a

<sup>17</sup> The eleventh-century calendar (BRUSSELS, Bibliothèque royale/Koninklijke bibliotheek 1813) is mentioned in COENS 1941, pp. 281-283; cf. LOCHNER 1987, p. 215. The *cedula* is edited in GEORGE 1987, p. 87, nr. 20. Stavelot also possessed a relic of Willibrord's *pallium* by at least 1185 (GEORGE 1987, nr. 27, pp. 88-89). I owe the discovery of this information to Elisa Pallottini.

<sup>18</sup> *De consecratione maioris monasterii nostri Hirsaw*, ed. WAITZ 1888, 261-262., mentioned in BEISSEL 1892, p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> Weissenburg: WAMPACH 1953, pp. 376-377. Brauweiler: MOUCHARD 1989. Weissenburg had links with Sankt Maximin, as said; Mouchard links the foundation of Brauweiler with Poppo of Stavelot.

<sup>20</sup> HAU 1940, p. 241. Prüm had long-standing ties with Echternach. Cf. NEU 1981.

<sup>21</sup> *Dedicatio ecclesiae Stabulensis*, ed. WATTENBACH 1873, pp. 307-308 (in a note to the *Vita Popponis*). Cf. FICHTENAU 1952, p. 64; STAUD 1922, p. 13.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. SANSTERRE 2004, p. 225.

<sup>23</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 36; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, vv. 223-347.

backdrop for relic exchange.<sup>24</sup> Rather than signs of reformers' ties, these exchanges are testimony to the lasting idea within the community of Echternach of the link of their community with the diocese of Utrecht through the figure of Willibrord.

The impetus to identify the monastery with its founder forms a thread throughout the medieval history of Echternach. This is also clear from the charter record in the *Liber aureus*.<sup>25</sup> The number of charters in this repository is significantly smaller for the period after 817 than for the preceding period, trailing off especially in the century after the reforms of 973, when most charters that remain are royal charters. What we can infer from charters dated after 817 is that the religious men of Echternach consistently sought a connection with Willibrord, at least up to the reform of 1028. This is not to say, however, that there were no changes in the perception of Willibrord as a monastic founder.<sup>26</sup>

After the reform of 973, some of the royal charters are explicit in their report of the relations between the king, Willibrord, and Echternach. This is evident in the reform charter issued by Otto I in 973,<sup>27</sup> but even more so in the royal charter of Otto II for Echternach, issued in Aachen in 980. Summarizing his father's charter and elaborating on it, Otto says:

*Fidelium itaque nostrorum relatione comperimus, monasterium esse in regno nostro Aefternacus dictum, in quo beatus requiescit Willibrordus archiepiscopus, quod ipse venerabilis a fundamentis construxit, datis sibi a piissimo rege Pippino prediis, hoc etiam ab ipso principe filioque eius Karolo necnon Chludowico imperatoribus scriptis privilegiis sub mundeburdio et defensione succedentium regum vel imperatorum deliberatum est mansurum ac monachicum ordinem secundum regulam sancti Benedicti ab inhabitantibus ibi perpetualiter conservandum, quod pravitate cuiusdam Karlomanni invasoris et tyrannidem exercentis violatum est, monasticae videlicet vitae norma destructa et clericis saecularibus intromissis, sed rursus a domno et genitore nostro bonae memoriae Ottone serenissimo augusto instinctu illustris viri Sigifridi comitis secundum decreta supra dictorum imperatorum in priorem statum est reparatum, constitutum ibidem abbate Ravangero nomine.*

We ascertained through the report of those faithful to us, therefore, that there is a monastery in our realm called Echternach, in which the blessed archbishop Willibrord

<sup>24</sup> Van den HOVEN van GENDEREN 2003, pp. 556, 620-621; De KRUIJFF 2011, p. 55; STAAL 2000, p. 69; VISSER 1933. On the sandals, first attested in Echternach in 1039, cf. KIESEL 1968, p. 8, and SMITH 2016 on sandal relics, esp. pp. 448-450 on their theological significance.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. above, section 1.1.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. similar explorations of the representation of monastic founders, e.g. MICHALOWSKI 1984 and RAAIJMAKERS 2018, which the author kindly supplied to me in a draft version.

<sup>27</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 173, pp. 270-273.

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rests, which the self same venerable man built himself from its foundations, after estates had been given to him by king Pippin. This was indeed resolved in written privileges by that same prince and by the emperors, his son Charles and also by Louis, that it should remain under the tutelage and protection of subsequent kings or emperors and that the monastic way of life according to the Rule of Saint Benedict should always be preserved by those living there, which was violated through the depravity of a certain Karloman, who invaded it and exerted tyranny, inasmuch as the rule of the monastic life was overturned and secular clerics were brought in, but it was restored again to its former state according to the decrees of the aforementioned emperors by the lord and our father the most serene emperor Otto, of blessed memory, at the instigation of the count Sigfrid, *vir illustris*, as an abbot by the name of Ravanger was set up there.<sup>28</sup>

Predictably, the author projects the contemporary Benedictine identity of Echternach into the deep past of its foundation, and its subsequent close association with Carolingian rulers, starting with Pippin III. As indicated above, this reflects late tenth-century standards of monasticism rather than eighth-century practice. The other historical error, no less programmatic than the first, lies in the rendition of the involvement of a royal dynasty with Echternach from its foundation onwards. This report is historically incorrect on several counts. The most significant mistake is the portrayal of Willibrord's monasticism as Benedictine, for which there is no historical ground, and which, as indicated above, probably reflected late tenth-century standards of monasticism rather than eighth-century practice. The other historical error, no less programmatic than the first, lies in the rendition of the involvement of a royal dynasty with Echternach from its foundation onwards. The charter conflates Pippin II, the first Pippinid benefactor of the abbey (but not its co-founder, as Otto implies), with Pippin III, the first king to issue charters for it, and Charles Martel, Pippin II's son, with the emperor Charlemagne, father of Louis the Pious. The conflation is not unique and hardly surprising, given the similarity in names, but it also suited the interests of the donor to present himself and his father in a long tradition of royal involvement in Echternach, and perhaps this was why the charter was issued in Aachen, home of the Carolingian imperial past of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, mentioned in the charter. The Carolingian tradition, however, had been usurped by a new dynasty now, as the Ottonians replaced the Carolingians as the dynasty of East Francia. The period after Louis the Pious was seen as one of moral decline, by the Ottonians as well as the

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<sup>28</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 177, pp. 276-277.

reformers. The blame for this decline in Echternach was put on Karloman, a lay abbot who in fact could lay a far better claim on a connection with the Carolingian past of Echternach than the Ottonians, as he was a son of Charles the Bald and therefore a Carolingian himself.<sup>29</sup> This rendition of Echternach's history and Willibrord's place in it is therefore shaped by the politics of the late tenth century.

The recent monastic reforms also had another effect on the representation of patronage in the charter evidence of Echternach. Given that many of these charters were royal ones, and followed each another verbatim, it is less useful to apply statistical methods on these charters than it was in Chapter 1. Even so, these charters provide us with valuable information. Of those from the period between the first and second reform, eleven in number, including the reform charters of 973, only three explicitly mention Willibrord as patron saint of Echternach. Four more mention the fact that he is buried in the abbey, and two say that the monks of Echternach worship God and saint Willibrord, which hints at Willibrord's patronage without calling it outright. No other patrons are mentioned in these charters. After the reform of 1028 the picture changes again. In the thirteen charters from the *Liber aureus* composed between 1028 and 1110, four mention Willibrord as patron, including two marked by Wampach as dubious, while one refers to the monks as serving Willibrord, and one mentions monastic possessions as being Willibrord's own. Two other charters mention Willibrord's being buried in Echternach, and three refer to the Trinity as the patron of Echternach, always together with Willibrord. The other charters do not mention a patron. This is a far more substantial percentage of charters than in the earlier period, discussed in chapter 1.

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<sup>29</sup> BOSHOF 1989, pp. 215-216.

nr.	Donor	Dedicatee	Date
137	Reiginbertus & Herwinus, brothers	<i>ad monasterium quod vocatur Esternach (...) ubi ipse dominus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	817/8
138	Hludovicus divina ordinante providentia imperator augustus	<i>vir venerabilis Sigoaldus (...) abba monasterii, quod dicitur Aþternacus, quod est constructum in honore sanctae et individuae Trinitatis seu etiam sancti Petri, principis apostolorum (...) quod beatus Willebrordus episcopus suo opere aedificavit, ubi etiam ipse corpore requiescit</i>	819-07-19
139	Ludovicus divina ordinante providentia imperator augustus	<i>venerabilis vir Sigoaldus (...) abbas monasterii, quod dicitur Eþternacum, quod est constructum in honore sancte et individue Trinitatis et sancti Petri principis apostolorum (...) quod beatus Willibrordus episcopus suo opere edificavit, ubi et ipse corpore requiescit</i>	817-827
140	Ava	<i>ad monasterium nostrum Eþternacum (...) ubi ipse dominus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	832/3
141	Wintarius	<i>ad monasterium nostrum in Eþternaco (...) ubi ipse dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	835/6
142	Irmintruda	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse pretiosus corpore requiescit</i>	835/6
143	Ava	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse pretiosus dompnus in corpore requiescit</i>	832-838
144	Hethi	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse pretiosus corpore requiescit</i>	852/3
145	Hattho vir illustris	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi in loco nuncupante Eþternacum ubi ipse corpore requiescit (...)</i>	855/6
146	Gesrammus	<i>ad monasterium sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi in loco nuncupante Eþternaco, ubi ipse pretiosus corpore requiescit (...)</i>	861/2
147	Liuthfridus	<i>ad monasterium sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi in loco nuncupante Eþternaco, ubi ipse pretiosus corpore requiescit (...)</i>	862/3
148	Winimannus, priest	<i>ad monasterium sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi in loco nuncupante Eþternaco, ubi ipse pretiosus corpore requiescit (...)</i>	864/5
149	Helmgaudus, priest	<i>illis fratribus, qui die noctuque Deo servient ad sanctum patronum Willibrordum</i>	866/7
150	Adalinus	<i>ad monasterium Eþternacum (...) ubi ipse dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	867/8
151	Lotharius divina providente clementia rex	<i>ad monasterium in quo sancti Willibrordi corpus constat esse humatum</i>	855-869
152	Adalwinus	<i>abbatem Karlomannum de monasterio Eþternaco, ubi pretiosus dominus sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	876/7
153	Buovo	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi, quod est constructum in honore sancte Trinitatis et sancti Petri principis apostolorum et</i>	877/8

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*ceterorum apostolorum et sancta Dei genitricis et virginis Marie, ubi ipse preciosus dompnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit*

154	Doda & Adelarda	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi</i>	877/8
155	Albertus	<i>ad ecclesiam sancti Petri et sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse domnus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	879-904
156	Leodefridus	<i>ad monasterium Epternacum, ubi sanctus Willibrordus corpore requiescit</i>	869-882
157	Berctrudis, nun	<i>(sanctissimum Christi pontificem Willibrordum epternacensis monasterii patrem egregium)</i> <sup>30</sup>	894/5
158	Winimannus, cleric	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi</i>	887-895
159	Zuentibulcus gratia divina annuente rex	<i>Fratribus beato Willibrordo servientibus (...) fratribus de monasterio beati Willibrordi quod dicitur Epternaca</i>	895-10-28
160	Bruotbertus & wife Cunigunt	<i>ad sanctum Willibrordum, cuius corpus in Epternacensis monasterii loco requiescit (...)</i>	901/2
161	Wigericus Dei patrocinate gratia comes	<i>ad luminaria sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse corpore requiescit</i>	903/4
162	Hludovicus divina favente clementia rex	<i>missus Reginbarii religiosi comitis et abbatis coenobii Eftirnacha dicti, in honore sancti Willibrordi aedificati (...) coenobio sancti Willibrordi (...) ad Eftirnacham</i>	907-03-19
163	<i>Reginnerus, Dei patrocino et clementia comes et quamquam indignus monasterii sancti patris Willibrordi eiusdemque congregationis abbas et rector</i> <sup>31</sup>		907/8
164	Udilbertus, priest	<i>ad altare sancti Willibrordi (...)</i>	907/8
166 <sup>32</sup>	Karolus divina favente clementia rex	<i>stipendia fratrum in monasterio sancti Willibrordi scilicet in Epternaco Deo famulantium</i>	915-01-16
167	Beringaudus, canon and rector	<i>sancto altari, quod sanctus Clemens Willibrordus in nomine et in honore sancta et individue Trinitatis edificavit et dedicavit et sub quo ipse Deo iubente feliciter requiescit</i>	926/7 or 930/1
168	Buovo, son of Wolcmar & Richilde	<i>monasterio Epternaco dictum ad usus fratrum Deo sanctoque Willibrordo famulantium</i>	930/1 or 934/5
169	Humbertus, son of Gozmer	<i>sancto Willibrordo, super altare suum</i>	919-936
170	Godilda	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi et ad altare sancta et individue Trinitatis</i>	915-928?

<sup>30</sup> The charter is not explicitly made out to the abbey of Echternach, but the abbey is mentioned in these terms, and is implied to be the charter's beneficiary.

<sup>31</sup> Reginar disposes of some of the monastery's possessions for the purposes of the maintenance of a hospital.

<sup>32</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 165 is not transmitted as a charter.

171	Otto divina opitulante clementia rex	<i>ad monasterium sancti Willibrordi in loco qui dicitur Efternacha constructum</i>	947-08-04
172	Sigifridus & wife Hathawiga	<i>sancto confessori Christi Willibrordo qui in Epternaco (...) requiescit</i>	965/6
173	Otto divina favente clementia imperator augustus	<i>Monasterium (...) in regno nostro, in quo beatus Willibrordus archiepiscopus requiescit, quod ipse a piissimo rege Pippino datis prediis construxerat, et quod ipse princeps et eius filius Karolus scriptis privilegiis sub potestate succedentium regum manere firmaverant.</i>	973-03-15
174	Otto imperator augustus	N/A	973-03-15
175	Otto divina ordinante providentia imperator augustus	<i>Monasterium (...) in regno nostro, Aefternacus dictum, in quo beatus requiescit Willibrordus archiepiscopus, quod ipse venerabilis a fundamentis construxit, datis sibi a piissimo rege Pippino prediis, hoc etiam ab ipso principe filioque eius Karolo necnon Chludowico imperatoribus scriptis privilegiis sub mundeburdio et defensione succedentium regum vel imperatorum deliberatum est mansurum ac monachicum ordinem secundum regulam sancti Benedicti ab inhabitantibus ibi perpetualiter conservandum, quod pravitate cuiusdam Karlomanni invaloris et tyrannidem exercentis violatum est, monasticae videlicet vitae norma destructa et clericis saecularibus intromissis, sed rursus a domno et genitore nostro bonae memoriae Ottone serenissimo augusto instinctu illustris viri Sigifridi comitis secundum decreta supra dictorum imperatorum in priorem statum est reparatum, constitutum ibidem abbate Ravangero nomine.</i>	980-06-01
176	Iohannes episcopus servus servorum Dei	<i>Monasterium sancta Epternacensis ecclesiae</i>	983/4
177	Otto divina favente clementia rex	<i>Ravangero Epternacensis ecclesiae venerabili abbati (...) ad usum ecclesiae suae monachorum Deo sanctoque Willibrordo confessor die noctuque ibi servientium</i>	992-04-03
178	Sigfrid, count	<i>Abbaciam sancti Willibrordi</i>	992
179	Otto divina dispensante gratia rex	<i>Cenobium (...) Epternacus habens vocabulum, ubi beatus Willibrordus archiepiscopus corpore requiescit, quod ipse sanctissimus (...) a fundamentis construxit et monachici propositi reguleque sancti Benedicti cultoribus observandum instituit.</i>	983-993
180	Otto divina favente clementia rex	<i>Ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi confessoris Christi in loco Efternacus vocato constructam</i>	993-05-15
181	Otto divina favente clementia Romanorum	<i>Clari illustrisque abbatis Ravangeri de monasterio sancti Clementis Willibrordi quod situm est Efternaci</i>	997-10-14

	imperator augustus		
183	Heinricus divina favente clementia rex	<i>Monasterium (...) in regno nostro Aesternacus dictum, in quo beatus requiescit Willibrordus archiepiscopus, quod ipse venerabilis a fundamentis construxit (etc.)</i>	1005-05- 31
184 <sup>33</sup>	Heinricus divina favente clementia Romanorum imperator augustus	<i>Monasterio Efdernach dicto (...) ad usum aecclisiae et monachorum Deo sanctoque Willibrordo confessor die noctuque ibi servientium</i>	1023-06- 18
186 †?	Heinricus divina favente clementia rex	<i>Sancto Willibrordo in Epternacha</i>	1039-09- 29
187	Heinricus divina favente clementia rex	<i>Curtem Efternacum sancti Clementis Willibrordi (...) ad usum fratrum ibidem Deo sanctoque Clementi Willibrordo famulantium</i>	1041-01- 26
190	Heinricus divina favente clementia Romanorum imperator augustus	<i>Abbatiam Efdernacensis loci, quam idem Clemens Willibrordus in honore sanctae et individuae Trinitatis construxit, et ubi ipse corpore quiescit</i>	1050-03- 30
191 †?	Liutfrid	<i>Sancto Willibrordo</i>	1056
192	Wilhelm, bishop of Utrecht	<i>Ad (...) ecclesiam Epternacensem</i>	1063-12- 28
193	Heinricus divina favente clementia rex	<i>Abbatiam Efdernacensis loci quam idem Clemens Willibrordus in honore sanctae et individuae Trinitatis construxit, et ubi ipse corpore quiescit (...) pro amore Dei et sancti Willibrordi</i>	1065-05- 01
194	Gerard, duke of Lotharingia	<i>Aecclisiae sancti Willibrordi</i>	1067-04- 11
195	Alexander episcopus servus servorum Dei	N/A	1069-05- 06
196	Godfrid, duke of Lotharingia	<i>Abbas ecclesie Epternacensis Reginbertus</i>	1071-1076
197	Henric, count	N/A	1095-04- 12
198	Gerard	<i>Sanctę et individue Trinitati et sancto Willibrordo</i>	1096
199	Guntram	<i>Ad ecclesiam sancti Willibrordi, ubi ipse pater et dompnus in corpore requiescit</i>	1084-1106
201	Frideric, bishop of Cologne	<i>(In Texandria in villis iuris sancti Willibrordi)</i>	1100-1110

<sup>33</sup> WAMPACH (ed.) 1929, nr. 165 is not a charter, but a letter by the empress Gisela. Cf. on the relation between Gisela and Echternach NORDENFALK 1971, pp. 30-31.

Table 5. Donations made out to Echternach and its abbot, 817-1110.

Like charter evidence, archaeological evidence aids our understanding of Willibrord's cult in the centuries after Alcuin and Beornrad. The second church of Echternach, however, remains something of a conundrum. Meyers and Dumont said little about it, and seem to have been little interested. They did suggest, however, that it had been built by the abbot and archbishop Beornrad, around 800.<sup>34</sup> What little later work there is has focussed on the eastern and western extremities of this building: the western apse and the crypt under the (eastern) choir. For our present purposes the debate concerning the date of the second church, its western apse, and its crypt, is important because both western apses and crypts were popular places to place relics. Jacobsen, who studied the uses of western apses in Carolingian architecture, identified the one of Echternach as one of the earliest known examples of a western apse north of the Alps, claiming that it had been put up together with the church by Beornrad in the 790s.<sup>35</sup> Cüppers, however, argued that the apse was a later addition, because the wall of the absid was superimposed on the cover plate of a burial. This tomb respected the orientation of the western wall of the church, suggesting that the burial took place after the construction of the second church, but before the construction of the apse.<sup>36</sup> At any rate, the western apse left no trace in the liturgy of Echternach, which is strange as it was therefore seemingly built without a liturgical purpose.<sup>37</sup> It therefore seems more likely to me that the apse was a later addition, perhaps even later than the composition of the main liturgical source for the period, the Paris-Echternach sacramentary of 895, and was in use only for a limited period of time.

Similarly, the relation of the crypt that lies underneath the present church with the second church is difficult to reconstruct. Some scholars have thought that the crypt dated to the same phase as the construction of the second church, and was an example of Carolingian architecture.<sup>38</sup> Others, Cüppers amongst them, have suggested that the crypt was added to the second church later on. They argued that the shape of the crypt is more typical of early Ottonian architecture, and suggested that the crypt was built around 940 to supplant an older external crypt.<sup>39</sup> Our lack of

<sup>34</sup> Following STAUD 1922, pp. 12-19. Cf. BINDING 1996; JACOBSEN 1992, pp. 221-222; SCHROEDER & TRAUFLER 1996, p. 39; STAUD & REUTER 1952, p. 22. CÜPPERS 1975 is cautious, p. 353 (249).

<sup>35</sup> JACOBSEN 1992, pp. 221-222; cf. BINDING 1996, p. 41, nr. 2.

<sup>36</sup> CÜPPERS 1975, pp. 356 (252).

<sup>37</sup> CÜPPERS 1975, pp. 354 (250). I owe this observation of lacking liturgical context to Janneke Raaijmakers. For context, cf. MANN 1961; SCHMIDT 1956; JACOBSEN [et al.] 1991, p. 103.

<sup>38</sup> OSWALD [et al.] 1966, p. 66; STAUD 1922, p. 20; STAUD & REUTER 1952, p. 22. Cf. GAUTHIER 1980, p. 189; KIESEL 1949a, p. 22; idem 1949b, p. 27

<sup>39</sup> BINDING 1996, p. 39; CÜPPERS 1975, p. 359-361 (255-257); DUMONT 1958, p. 148; ROSNER 1991, pp. 93-94. Cf. POLFER 2000, pp. 57-60; KUBACH & VERBEEK 1976, 1, pp. 1294-1295 (arguing a date of 940); 4, p. 106 (arguing 1031); Supplement pp. 19-21 (940); JACOBSEN [et al.] 1991, p. 103.

knowledge of the Carolingian and post-Carolingian arrangements for the housing of Willibrord's relics in Echternach, therefore, is a severe impediment for understanding the context of Willibrord's cult.

What little we know of the arrangements of Echternach's second abbey church testifies to a continued interest in Willibrord's cult throughout the ninth, tenth, and eleventh century. This is an important point to make, as older scholarship maintained that Willibrord's remains were lost prior to the *inventio* of 1031.<sup>40</sup> The way in which our main source for the *inventio*, Thiofrid, frames the story (the *Vita* speaks of a search party, breaking open the church floor and searching through three crypts, only to find Willibrord in the third), has led scholars to believe that Willibrord's body had gone missing at some point prior to 1031. This notion gained strength from the fact that scholars saw *inventiones* as discoveries in a modern sense, which require a certain period of loss, rather than as liturgical events, during which a saint's remains are lifted up from the old grave to be buried in a new, often more prominent, sepulchre.<sup>41</sup> In addition, historians have held the canons of the period before the reform in low esteem anyway, due to the credence given to the reformist rhetoric of their sources.<sup>42</sup>

In order to explain how the body of the abbey's founder could have been lost in the first place, some scholars suggested that it was hidden from the Vikings, who plundered nearby Trier in 882. After the danger had passed, the canons are supposed to have forgotten where they had hidden the relics.<sup>43</sup> This is unlikely. In fact, the canons were well aware of the location of Willibrord's burial, as one of the charters of the early tenth century, a donation by the abbey's then provost, Berengaud, states that he gives goods to 'the sacred altar, which Saint Clement Willibrord built and dedicated in the name and the honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, under which the same man rests happily, as God ordained.'<sup>44</sup> The significance of this charter seems to have evaded earlier scholars, but it emphasizes that whatever objections could be levelled against the lay abbots and the canons of Echternach, the cult of Willibrord remained, and the relics were not neglected or lost. It also resolves at least one problem with regard to the location of Willibrord's tomb: by 936, the sarcophagus in which Willibrord was buried must have been located under the main altar, presumably either in the crypt that still remains, or in its predecessor. The '*inventio*' of 1031 was

<sup>40</sup> KIESEL 1949b, p. 27; KOK 1959, p. 271; NAMUR 1866, p. 139; STAUD 1922, p. 13; STAUD & REUTER 1952, pp. 23-24.

<sup>41</sup> e.g. STAUD 1922, p. 13; STAUD & REUTER 1952, pp. 23-24.

<sup>42</sup> e.g. THIELE 1964, p. 16; SCHROEDER 1981, p. 293; WAMPACH 1952, pp. 112-114.

<sup>43</sup> KIESEL 1969, p. 77; STAUD & REUTER 1952, pp. 23-24. Whether Echternach was pillaged in 882 is unclear. Cf. BRUCH 1964, p. 7; FERRARI 1994a, p. 20.

<sup>44</sup> WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 167, p. 260: (...) *sancto altari, quod sanctus Clemens Willibrordus in nomine et in honore sancta et individue Trinitatis edificavit et dedicavit et sub quo ipse Deo iubente feliciter requiescit (...).*

little more than an *elevatio*, framed liturgically as if it were a rediscovery of Willibrord's relics in order to legitimize the reformist claim on the monastic heritage and discredit the negligent monks before the reform.

#### 4.2. Alcuin and Willibrord in Echternach manuscripts (800-1200)

Thus charters and archaeology indicate the continued interests of Echternach's monks and canons in their patron, Willibrord. The clearest sign of continuity in the veneration of Willibrord in Echternach is found in the manuscript evidence from the abbey. Manuscripts from Echternach testify moreover to the persistence of Alcuin's influence on the celebration of Willibrord's feast in the church of Echternach in the centuries following the composition of his *Vita Willibrordi*. As this influence persisted throughout the period studied here, the context of reception of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* in Echternach, both of the *Vita* itself and of its liturgical adaptations, is the most important textual context for Thiofrid's writings. This paragraph therefore looks at this reception.

Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was often copied, but most extant manuscripts were written during or after the twelfth century, and most of these do not stem from Echternach. They therefore do not add much to our understanding of Alcuin's reception in Echternach before Thiofrid wrote his *Vita Willibrordi*. Amongst the manuscripts that do inform us, two groups can be distinguished: manuscripts that contain (part of) the *Vita Willibrordi* in its original form, and liturgical adaptations, including manuscripts that contain the mass formula that Orchard attributed to Alcuin.<sup>45</sup> The oldest manuscript that contains Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, now in Stuttgart, is also one of the few that comprises all the constituent parts of the text (prose book with dedicatory letter, list of chapter headings, and sermon appendix, verse book with chapter headings and elegiac appendix). The history of the manuscript is unclear: it bears an early seventeenth century library mark of the monastery of Weingarten, and may have come to Weingarten from Konstanz.<sup>46</sup> Where the manuscript was prior to the fourteenth century is unknown. The *Schrijftheimat* of the manuscript is also uncertain, as is the date. Bischoff seems to have believed that the manuscript was composed in Echternach in the early ninth century. Ganz on the other hand dated the manuscript to the

<sup>45</sup> ORCHARD 1995a.

<sup>46</sup> STUTTGART, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HB XIV. 1 (BISCHOFF 2014, p. 361, nr. 6096). Cf. Levison in his introduction to the MGH edition; Poncelet in his introduction to the AA SS edition; BISCHOFF 1982, p. 99; BULLOUGH 2004, p. 107; BUHL & KURRAS 1969. EMBACH 2010, p. 140 wrongly refers to this manuscript as a copy of works of Jerome.

second half of the ninth century, without stating his reasons for doing so.<sup>47</sup> Given the contents, the uniform script and relatively lavish decorations, the book was probably intended as a 'patron saint *libellus*', a luxury manuscript that contains a work or works celebrating the patron of a monastic institution, which would argue for Echternach as place of composition.<sup>48</sup>

The Stuttgart manuscript is of interest not only as an early and complete luxury copy of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, but also because it contains interlinear and marginal corrections by several hands, some contemporary with the text, and some of a later date. The later, post-Carolingian hand added, amongst other things, notes in the margin of the verse life, indicating lines where the metre seemed to be flawed.<sup>49</sup> This is significant, especially as faulty metre was the reason that Thiofrid gave for writing a verse *Vita Willibrordi* himself.<sup>50</sup> The marginal hand that added the notes in the Stuttgart Alcuin manuscript could in fact be Thiofrid. Even if Thiofrid was not the scribe, the manuscript bears witness to criticism of Alcuin's work in Echternach, if that was where the notes were made.

There is some circumstantial evidence to strengthen the case for an Echternach origin for the Stuttgart manuscript. A copy of Taisus Samuel's *Liber sententiarum* in Anglo-Saxon minuscule script, written in Echternach, contains similar corrections, while a second hand inserted the first five lines of Alcuin's verse account of Willibrord's life, accompanied by neumes on the flyleaf (f. 1v), indicating perhaps an attempt to sing the work.<sup>51</sup> This testifies to the presence of the second book of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* in Echternach in the ninth century, and given the rare transmission of the verse book in manuscripts, the most likely source for this quotation would be the Stuttgart Alcuin manuscript. Though far from conclusive, the Taisus Samuel manuscript hereby provides suggestions for the early history of the Stuttgart Alcuin manuscript and the early reception of Alcuin's work in Echternach. The same early reception is also testified by another ninth-century manuscript containing the prose *Vita Willibrordi*, now part of a composite manuscript in Paris. As

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<sup>47</sup> BISCHOFF 1965, p. 234, n. 7. A date around 800 (suggested, but not explicitly given, by Bisschoff), is presented as fact by, e.g. BULLOUGH 2004, p. 107; McKITTERICK 2000, p. 509; eadem 2002, p. 106; NETZER 1994, p. 7; SCHROEDER 1979, pp. 377-378 and Van VLIERDEN 1995, p. 82. EMBACH 2006 opts for the ninth century, without providing an argument. GANZ 2010, p. 193 for the alternative date. To my untrained eye, the decorative programme of TRIER, Stadtbibliothek 23 (Gospels of Sancta Maria ad Martyres), which NEES 2010, pp. 221-225 argues is an Echternach manuscript of c. 800, bears similarities with the Stuttgart Alcuin manuscript, which could plead for an early date of the latter manuscript.

<sup>48</sup> The term 'patron saint *libellus*' derives from SNIJDERS 2015.

<sup>49</sup> E.g. on f. 33v.

<sup>50</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, 1-15; cf. FERRARI 1998; WIELAND 2001. Cf. also below.

<sup>51</sup> BERGMANN 1966, pp. 92-94. Cf. SCHROEDER 1979, p. 378.

Rosamond McKitterick noted, this copy of Alcuin's *vita* was written by the same scribe who was also the main contributor of the Paris-Echternach sacramentary, which dates to c. 895.<sup>52</sup>

Another manuscript, now part of a collection of hagiographic and theological material kept in Verdun, has been palaeographically attributed to a group of manuscripts copied in Echternach during the abbacy of Reginbert (1051-1081).<sup>53</sup> This copy of the *Vita Willibrordi*, though now bound together with other pieces, was originally a sort of *libellus*; the text of this version of the *Vita Willibrordi* coincides with quire endings and was not copied by the same hand as the other segments of the manuscript. It only consists of the prose life, without sermon and chapter headings, but includes the dedicatory letter and a sketch for a figure with a nimbus, probably meant to be turned into a depiction of Willibrord.

Sometime in the twelfth century a collection of saints' lives was copied in Echternach. The manuscript is now in Paris.<sup>54</sup> Of particular interest is the inclusion of a *Vita Sergii*, commemorating the pope who ordained Willibrord.<sup>55</sup> The lives are not ordered in calendrical order, and the purpose of the manuscript is not clear. The prose book of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* is included, except for the chapter headings and sermon. What is interesting about this manuscript is that, in addition to the prose book of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, the scribe also added a number of new chapters that derive from Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*, and more specifically from the miracle stories which Thiofrid did, and Alcuin did not record.<sup>56</sup> These chapters have been edited separately as the *Miracula sancti Willibrordi* (BHL 8943), but in the manuscript they follow immediately after the *Vita Willibrordi* and were clearly meant to form one entity with it. The text of this manuscript is closely akin to that of the Verdun manuscript.

Together, all of these manuscripts and Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* testify to a lasting interest in both Willibrord and Alcuin's writings. The fact that three versions of a *Vita Willibrordi*, i.e. Thiofrid's new *Vita Willibrordi*, the expanded version of Alcuin's prose life in Paris BNF lat. 9740

<sup>52</sup> McKITTERICK 2000, p. 512; eadem 2002, p. 208. PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10865 (BISCHOFF 2014, p. 169, nrs. 4664-4665) is a composite, formerly dated to the ninth and tenth (Bischoff), or tenth and eleventh century (DELISLE 1863, p. 98), part of which, including the *Vita Willibrordi*, is from Sankt Maximin (BARTÒLA 2004, p. 288; Bischoff). GANZ 2010, p. 193 states (without argument or reference) that this ms. is from Echternach, from the third third of the ninth century.

<sup>53</sup> VERDUN, Bibliothèque municipale 74, ff. 67r-82v. cf. LEVISON (ed.) 1920, p. 103; NORDENFALK 1931, p. 231; the online catalogue by Thomas Falmange dates this section of the manuscript to the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> c. ([http://www1.arkhenum.fr/bm\\_verdun\\_ms/app/index.php?type\\_recherche=cote&choix\\_secondaire=Ms.%2074&tri=](http://www1.arkhenum.fr/bm_verdun_ms/app/index.php?type_recherche=cote&choix_secondaire=Ms.%2074&tri=), consulted March 18, 2018).

<sup>54</sup> PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 9740. *Vita Willibrordi* starts on f. 148r. FERRARI 1994b, p. 245 dates the manuscript to the thirteenth century.

<sup>55</sup> BHL 7597, here ff. 22v-26r. This *vita* is in fact the entry on Sergius in the *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. MOMMSEN, MGH *Liber pontificalis* 1, pp. 210-216).

<sup>56</sup> Older historical scholarship maintained that the *Miracula* were Thiofrid's source, but as Ferrari suggested, it the other way around: the *Miracula* are based on Thiofrid. Cf. Van der ESSEN 1905, p. 385; LAMPEN 1920a, p. 14; PONCELET 1907; VISSER 1933, p. 180 (older literature); FERRARI 1994a, p. 48 and 1994b, p. 245 (revision).

and a copy of Alcuin's prose life without additions in the Verdun manuscript were produced within a century from one another also shows that within the Echternach community there was a demand for different renditions of the founder's life, to cater for different needs. For one, the text had to be adapted for liturgical purposes. Several liturgical manuscripts were produced in Echternach in the period discussed here: the Paris-Echternach sacramentary in the late ninth century, and the Darmstadt-Echternach sacramentary in the early eleventh century provide some context for the celebration of Willibrord's feast, with additional information coming from a manuscript fragment in Paris, from the tropiary/graduale now stored in Paris, and from the giant bible composed in Echternach under Reginbert (1051-1081), now in Luxembourg.

The Paris-Echternach sacramentary,<sup>57</sup> composed around 895,<sup>58</sup> contains several direct and indirect references to Willibrord. The calendar in this manuscript records the feasts of Willibrord's father, Wilgis (January 30, f. 5v), Willibrord himself (November 7, f. 11v), and his teacher Ecgbert (November 20), as well as the feast of Saint Caecilia, the date of Willibrord's ordination (November 21, both f. 12r). The elevation of Willibrord's body, recorded as *translatio* in Paris 10837, is not mentioned in the sacramentary. In the Paris-Echternach sacramentary, Willibrord is also mentioned in the litany of saints (f. 16v), the recitation for the living and the dead (as the last saint in a litany, f. 23v), the mass on the feast of Saint Thomas (as intercessor, together with Mary, f. 168v), the mass for abbot and community (as intercessor, together with 'all the saints', f. 228v), and in the mass for the deceased monks (as patron and intercessor, f. 258v).<sup>59</sup> There is a good chance that this manuscript reflects liturgical practice in Echternach for at least the period up to the first reform of the monastery, in 973, and possibly up to the second reform in 1028 and the dedication of a new abbey church in 1031. By then, a new style of liturgy was introduced, which is evident in the Darmstadt-Echternach sacramentary.<sup>60</sup> That is not to say that liturgical practice remained stationary throughout this period: for example a later hand added a formula for the feast of Willibrord's ordination, on November 21<sup>61</sup> – a feast that was not recorded by the first hand, and was probably only introduced later.

<sup>57</sup> PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 9433 (BISCHOFF 2014, p. 152, nr. 4587). The formulary is on ff. 161-162. Cf. HEN 1999; HEN (ed.) 1997.

<sup>58</sup> NORDENFALK 1931. Older scholarship sometimes retains a date in the eleventh century. Cf. HEN (ed.) 1997, p. 18; MIESGES 1915, p. 16, but cf. also REINERS 1889, pp. 30-33.

<sup>59</sup> ff. 228v and 258v respectively. Cf. MULLER 1981, p. 203, ORCHARD 2001.

<sup>60</sup> DARMSTADT, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, 1946. Cf. LOCHNER 1987, p. 113; STAUB [et al.] 1982; EIZENHÖFER & KNAUS 1968, pp. 33-37.

<sup>61</sup> ff. 163v-164r.

Whereas the Paris-Echternach sacramentary has been called ‘by any standard one of the most eccentric Mass-books of the early Middle Ages,’<sup>62</sup> the Darmstadt-Echternach sacramentary is fully Gregorian, and in line with the ideals of the reformers.<sup>63</sup> Willibrord is again mentioned in litanies of saints (e.g. ff. 13r, 17v), and the formulary for his feast, which had been included in the Paris-Echternach sacramentary is also enclosed in this manuscript (ff. 230r-231v). Both the vigils and the feast of Saint Caecilia, the day on which Willibrord was ordained archbishop of the Frisians, are also honoured with a special feast in this manuscript (ff. 233v-234r), as is the feast of Willibrord’s namesake, Saint Clement (f. 234r-234v). Willibrord is still mentioned in the votive mass for the congregation (f. 255r), although the formula for the mass in this manuscript differs substantially from the formula in the Paris-Echternach sacramentary. The formula of the votive mass for deceased monks (ff. 277r-v), however, is identical to the one found in the Paris-Echternach sacramentary.

New liturgical manuscripts were produced in subsequent decades. Most of these are dated to the abbacy of Reginbert (1051-1081), as one of the scribes of several of these manuscripts, Volkerus, mentions in one manuscript that he copied it when Reginbert was abbot.<sup>64</sup> Amongst these manuscripts is the Echternach graduale, tropary, and sequentiary, now in Paris.<sup>65</sup> After the chants for the cycle of the temporale, the moving feasts of the liturgical year, one folio, f. 20, from an older manuscript, is inserted. The recto side of this fragment contains an incomplete prayer, on the full-page illumination on the verso of this page, Willibrord sits in state, flanked by two deacons. The illumination is thought to have been made during the abbacy of Ravanger (973-1008),<sup>66</sup> or slightly later, around 1020.<sup>67</sup> The following page (f. 21r) contains directions for chant on Willibrord’s feast. The manuscript also bears testimony to the institution of a new feast by Reginbert, namely a feast in commemoration of the relics of the saints on November 19.<sup>68</sup>

As said, the Paris-Echternach sacramentary and its Darmstadt-Echternach counterpart contain the same formulary for the mass of Willibrord.<sup>69</sup> The formulary is based on Alcuin’s *Vita*

<sup>62</sup> HEN (ed.) 1997, p. viii.

<sup>63</sup> LOCHNER 1987, p. 112.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. EMBACH 2010; FERRARI 1993; MULLER 1981; NORDENFALK 1971, p. 68; SPANG 1967, p. 26.

<sup>65</sup> PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10510. HEINZ 1981, p. 173, n. 3. Cf. LOCHNER 1987, p. 114; MULLER 1981, p. 204; SCHNEYDERBERG 1995. The manuscript is sometimes dated to Thiofrid’s tenure as abbot, and contains some chants attributed to him. Cf. LAMPEN 1920a, p. 18, repeated in HEINZ 1981, p. 173; LOCHNER 1987, p. 134; MANITIUS 1931, p. 96; SCHMITT 1981.

<sup>66</sup> EMBACH 2010; VIS 1989, pp. 29-32; Van VLIERDEN 1995, p. 84.

<sup>67</sup> PLOTZEK 1969b, p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> Chants for the feast are recorded on ff. 21v-22r. I will return to this feast below, in my discussion of Thiofrid’s *Flores peyraphii sanctorum*.

<sup>69</sup> ORCHARD 1995a; cf. also ROTH 1891 and SCHNEYDERBERG 1995.

*Willibrordi*. In fact, as Orchard indicated, the mass formulary was probably the product of Alcuin's quill: Alcuin also added masses to his other saints' lives, and sent a mass for Boniface to Fulda, as well as possibly composing or modifying masses for the Northumbrian saints Cuthbert and Oswald.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the mass for Willibrord includes material from Alcuin's mass for *Translatio Sancti Martini* (July 4), and was adapted for several local saints before the eleventh century.<sup>71</sup> The inclusion of the mass formulary in these two manuscripts indicates that it continued to be used in Echternach to venerate the monastery's patron.

Another use of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* appears in an eleventh-century fragment of a liturgical manuscript preserved in an Echternach context. The fragment contains liturgical readings, interspersed with chant, preserved on the flyleaf of the Echternach collection on timekeeping, Paris, BNF lat. 10837.<sup>72</sup> The script of this manuscript is somewhat similar to that of the Darmstadt-Echternach sacramentary, although it was not written by the same scribe. The readings contained in the fragment derive from Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 3-6, but the text of which they were a part must have been considerably longer.<sup>73</sup> These readings were also used in the most voluminous liturgical manuscript from Reginbert's tenure as abbot, the Echternacher Riesenbibel, a manuscript that contains both a full bible and liturgical material and was composed and used in Echternach. Amongst this material is Thiofrid's sermon for the feast of Wilgis, but the manuscript also contains sections from Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>74</sup> A complete version of the same office has been found in later medieval breviaries and an antiphony from Echternach,<sup>75</sup> and, in an expanded version, in medieval liturgical manuscripts from Utrecht from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>76</sup> The date of this adaptation of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* for liturgical usage is not known, but must lie between the composition of the source text in the late eighth century at the earliest, and the date at which the oldest witness was composed, presumably in the eleventh century.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>70</sup> ORCHARD 1995b and c; RAAIJMAKERS 2012, pp. 48, 90.

<sup>71</sup> ORCHARD 1995a, pp. 6-9.

<sup>72</sup> PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10837, f. 1. Cf. KIESEL 1969, p. 73; LOCHNER 1987, pp. 168-175; ORCHARD 1995a; SCHNEYDERBERG 1995.

<sup>73</sup> As noted by Levison (MGH SS rer Merov. 7, p. 104).

<sup>74</sup> LUXEMBOURG, Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg, ms. 264, f. 230v: *lectiones* 10-15 (later addition, c. 1100); f. 397v: *lectiones* 1-8. A later copy (LUXEMBOURG, Bibliothèque nationale 12, s. 14, f. 495v) indicates that *lectiones* 1-14 and Alcuin's sermon (*Vita Willibrordi* 1, 32) must have been written on a folio at the end of the manuscript, that has now gone missing. Cf. FALMANGE & DEITZ 2009.

<sup>75</sup> Now LUXEMBOURG, Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg, mss. 7, 10, 12, 24 (breviaries), and ms. 105 (antiphony). Cf. LOCHNER 1987, pp. 168-169.

<sup>76</sup> UTRECHT, Universiteitsbibliotheek 406, 407, 408, 410, and 411, as LOCHNER 1987, p. 169. cf. MOLL 1864, I, pp. 521-525; De LOOS 2012.

<sup>77</sup> Contra LOCHNER 1987, p. 197.

### 4.3. Thiofrid and his *Vita Willibrordi*

Throughout centuries of change in the community of Echternach, therefore, the canons and monks had continued to commemorate both Willibrord and saints associated with him in various ways in their liturgy, based largely on Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*. The dates at which Willibrord was commemorated and the liturgy performed on the occasion, however, were fluid, and changed over time. This was the backdrop for Thiofrid's composition of a new *Vita Willibrordi*, which responded both to the changes in the community, and to Alcuin's example.

Little is known about Thiofrid's background. Family relations are unknown, and it is also unclear whether he had ties with schools outside of Echternach, although his knowledge of contemporary writings from Liège suggests there is a link with the school there.<sup>78</sup> Thiofrid was probably brought up as a monk in Echternach, and was certainly there during the abbacy of Reginbert, his immediate predecessor (1051-1081). In 1081 Thiofrid was designated as Reginbert's successor, but his eventual appointment as abbot was only affirmed by the emperor two years later, in Rome in November 1083, at the height of the conflict between Henry IV and Gregory VII over Henry's second excommunication.<sup>79</sup> Thiofrid was abbot of Echternach until his death in April 1110.<sup>80</sup> He is believed to have been an efficient abbot, trying to win back lost monastic possessions and buttressing up the monastery's rights against rivals.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, he is mostly remembered for his writings, which include a *Vita Liutwini*, a *Vita Willibrordi*, *Flores epythapii sanctorum*, two sermons, for Willibrord and his father Wilgisl, a letter to Henry IV (dated 1101), some hexameters for Willibrord's staff,<sup>82</sup> and perhaps a *Vita Irminae*.<sup>83</sup>

Whereas Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was composed as one entity, Thiofrid wrote several works to further Willibrord's cult, including a *Vita Willibrordi*, over a longer period of time. There are therefore several contexts of production, not one. The oldest, the *Sermo in natale sancti Wilgisli abbatis* appears in the giant bible of Echternach, produced during the abbacy of Thiofrid's predecessor Reginbert, between 1051 and 1081, and must have been composed before the latter date.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> The text in question is Franco of Liège's *De quadratura circuli*. Cf. FOLKERTS & HUGHES 2016, pp. 50-51

<sup>79</sup> Thiofrid, who was very attached to Henry in many respects (a letter by Thiofrid to the emperor remained, and he mentions Henry in his *Vita Willibrordi*) does not reflect on the larger context of these events, the Investiture Controversy, at all.

<sup>80</sup> cf. FERRARI (ed.) 1996.

<sup>81</sup> FERRARI 1994b, p. 15.

<sup>82</sup> TRIER, Dombibliothek 257 (s. 17), f. 171v contains a poem that Thiofrid is said to have composed for this staff. The object itself is lost.

<sup>83</sup> All other attributions to Thiofrid are deemed questionable. Cf., e.g. FERRARI 1994c, pp. 15-17, FRANKLIN 2009, pp. 125-129, 165-167.

<sup>84</sup> LOCHNER 1987, p. 216 also attributes the office for Wilgisl, which is derived from the sermon, to Thiofrid.

Willibrord is also briefly mentioned in *Flores Epythaphii Sanctorum*, a work dedicated to Bruno, who is addressed in his dignity of archbishop of Trier. Bruno was archbishop from 1101 to 1124, and the *Flores* must therefore have been composed after 1101.<sup>85</sup> The third work on Willibrord, Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*, was composed in the forty-ninth regnal year of Emperor Henry IV, i.e. between October 1104 and October 1105.<sup>86</sup> Thiofrid refers to the *Flores* in his *Vita Willibrordi*, which means that the *Flores* were completed shortly after 1101, and the *Vita Willibrordi* three years later.<sup>87</sup> The sermon Thiofrid wrote for the feast of Willibrord is difficult to date.<sup>88</sup>

Not only the dates of composition of Thiofrid's works on Willibrord are varied, so are the intended purposes of his works. The sermon for the feast of Wilgisl is clearly meant to supply a liturgical text celebrating the saint. According to Thiofrid himself the *Flores* were written, amongst other things, to explain the introduction of the feast of all saints' relics on November 19, 1059. There is no cultic event, however, to explain the composition of Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*. Several factors may have played a part in Thiofrid's decision to compose a *Vita Willibrordi*: a desire for stylistic amelioration, and a wish to add to the repertory of Willibrord's miracles and enforce Echternach's role a guardian of Willibrord's cult, especially miracles in which Willibrord protects those who belong to him from some external threat. Stylistic amelioration is a well-known reason for *réécriture* of saints' lives.<sup>89</sup> Alcuin himself had pointed to the uncultivated style of his source texts when he rewrote the lives of Saint Vedast and Saint Richarius,<sup>90</sup> and Thiofrid, in turn, complained about Alcuin's lacking observance of the rules of versification.<sup>91</sup> If this was indeed Thiofrid's main reason for his composition of a new *Vita Willibrordi*, we must understand this work as a act of devotion by Thiofrid to the patron saint of his monastery, as an attempt to honour Willibrord with beautiful gifts.

An additional reason to compose a new *Vita Willibrordi*, however, could have been the desire to record those miracles that had not been mentioned by Alcuin. The last chapter of Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*, a long account of Thiofrid's visit to Walcheren, combined with numerous additions

<sup>85</sup> On the meaning of the title of this work, cf. FERRARI ed., 1996, pp. x-xv. On Bruno: GLADEL 1932, pp. 51-104; SCHECHTE 1934.

<sup>86</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, v. 673. FERRARI 1994a, p. 63.

<sup>87</sup> Not 1102-1108 (HALBERTSMA 2000, p. 73).

<sup>88</sup> FERRARI 1994a, p. 66 points to the fact that Alcuin had also appended a sermon to his *Vita Willibrordi*, but this does not rule out the possibility that Thiofrid had already composed such a sermon earlier, and thus appended an older work to his new *Vita Willibrordi* in imitation of Alcuin.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. the typology of *réécriture* in GOULLET 2003, esp. pp. 119-121 and for Alcuin VEYRARD-COSME 2003c, pp. 74-76. Cf. EBERT 1880, p. 23; Van der ESSEN 1923, p. 340; FERRARI 1994a, p. 65.

<sup>90</sup> AIGRAIN 1953, p. 164; BERSCHIN 1991, pp. 142-143. *Epistola* 74, to Rado of Saint-Vaast (= dedicatory letter of Alcuin's *Vita Vedasti*), ed. DÜMMLER 1895, p. 116 & ed. KRUSCH 1896, p. 414; *Epistola* 306, ed. DÜMMLER 1895, pp. 465-466 & eds. KRUSCH & LEVISON 1902, p. 389

<sup>91</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, vv. 1-15; cf. FERRARI 1998; WIELAND 2001. Cf. also above, section 4.2.

from local traditions from Walcheren in chapters 13, 31, and 35, suggests that it was the experience of Willibrord's popularity in Walcheren during Thiofrid's visit there that caused him to write and incorporate the newly discovered traditions about Willibrord into the narrative of Echternach. At the same time he brought these miracles into Echternach's sphere of influence by including them in the *vita*, thus emphasizing Echternach's role as guardian of Willibrord's cult. On another occasion in his work, Thiofrid also complained explicitly that many miracles which Willibrord had previously worked, had passed into oblivion because nobody had bothered to write them down.<sup>92</sup> Apparently, then, Thiofrid decided to commit all that he knew about Willibrord to writing in response to what he felt was previous generations' neglect in this respect, making his complaint more than a literary commonplace, and making his journey to Walcheren the immediate exigence of his composition of a new *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>93</sup> Read in this way, Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* can be seen as a means to claim extraneous traditions on Willibrord for Echternach.

Finally, Thiofrid's picture of Willibrord is decidedly more monastic than Alcuin's version, which focussed on Willibrord as a missionary and a preacher. Thiofrid copied Alcuin's stories, but, consciously or unconsciously, his reading of Willibrord's career, is decidedly focussed on the monastic side of Willibrord's career, on monastic seclusion, asceticism, sacrifice, contemplation, and subjugation to monastic rules. These themes will be explored further below.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4.4. Thiofrid and Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*

Like Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, Thiofrid's is a composite of a prose and a verse life, the latter in four books, and a sermon (*Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi archiepiscopi*), appended to the prose book. All three constituent parts of the work are considerably more verbose than their counterparts in Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, in keeping with the tradition of imitation and emulation.<sup>95</sup> Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi prosa* follows Alcuin's example closely. Like Alcuin, Thiofrid first discussed Willibrord's background, birth, and upbringing, continued with an account of his life as a missionary, and then reported a number of miracles which the saint performed when he was alive, concluding with an

<sup>92</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24; idem, *Vita Willibrordi metrica*, 3, vv. 18-35. Cf. also the Carolingian authors of miracle collections on Richarius and Vedast mentioned above, section 3.3.

<sup>93</sup> It is, however, difficult to date this journey exactly: cf. LAMPEN 1920b, p. 32; Van WERVEKE (ed.) 1885, pp. 4-5.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. section 5.1

<sup>95</sup> LAUSBERG 2007, pp. 546-547, §§ 1143-1144, especially § 1144. Here also FERRARI 1994a, p. 64, and, for a detailed study of one section of both works, DRÄGER 2008.

account of the saint's death, burial, and posthumous miracles. Although the overall structure thus remained the same, Thiofrid did modify the chapter structure by adding new chapters and by conflating existing chapters.<sup>96</sup>

As said, Thiofrid's additions to the *Vita Willibrordi prosa* are either stylistic ameliorations or new miracles. Thiofrid was keen to draw parallels between Willibrord's life and passages from Scripture and patristic texts, especially Jerome, but also Gregory the Great and Augustine.<sup>97</sup> He also added a large amount of literary borrowings from classical authors and allusions to classical learning for stylistic embellishment, itself a means to add weight and authority to his version.<sup>98</sup> Some of these classical texts are exceptional. Thiofrid was well-read in rather even the more obscure Latin poets (e.g. Juvenal and Statius), and displayed an interest in logic, for which he used Aristotle's *Categories* (in the translation by Boethius) and Porphyrius' commentary on the *Isagoge*, not the more common *Categoriae decem*.<sup>99</sup> Special mention must be made in this respect to the large number of words, borrowed from Greek, including relatively rare ones,<sup>100</sup> and occasionally what appear to be neologisms, only found in Thiofrid.<sup>101</sup> This leads to what has been characterized as a baroque style of writing, or, more to the point, a style in the tradition of the *genus grande*, which is at times hard to grasp.<sup>102</sup>

Thiofrid also included new stories to the portrayal of Willibrord's life, and elaborated upon others. Where Alcuin had related how Willibrord had sailed from Ireland to the mouth of the Rhine, Thiofrid added a local tradition from Gravelines, in northern France, which held that Willibrord had not been allowed aboard the ship which carried his companions, on account of lack of fare. He was then said to have sailed from Ireland to Gravelines on a rock, and only to have continued the last stretch of the journey to the Rhine aboard the ship, which had carried his companions.<sup>103</sup> After reporting the miracle of divine retribution in *Walichrum*, which Alcuin had

<sup>96</sup> Cf. below.

<sup>97</sup> An overview of all citations does not exist at this moment; the best way to gain an impression of Thiofrid's citations, is a look in the annotation to the editions of Poncet and Ferrari, and the overview of authors quoted in LAMPEN 1920a, pp. 31-61. The importance of Jerome in Thiofrid's *Vita Liutwini* was noted independently by WINHELLER 1935, p. 97.

<sup>98</sup> For an overview of Thiofrid's reading, judging by borrowings in the whole of Thiofrid's *oeuvre*, cf. LAMPEN 1920a, pp. 38-61.

<sup>99</sup> GIBSON 1991, p. 119; SCHROEDER 1977, p. 231 for the manuscripts in question, notably PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 11129.

<sup>100</sup> E.g. *Archyposia* (*Vita Willibrordi prosa* 19), and *Enoforum* (*Vita Willibrordi prosa*, chapter list). Cf. LAMPEN 1920a; LECLERCQ 1989; ORBÁN 1995, p. 53.

<sup>101</sup> E.g. *emysticum* (*Vita Willibrordi prosa*, prologus).

<sup>102</sup> FERRARI 1995, p. 217, n. 10 (on the use of terms derived from dialectic); idem (ed.) 1996, pp. lxxii-lxxix; idem 1998, p. 132; LAMPEN 1920a, pp. 8-9; WAMPACH 1953, pp. 137-139; WIELAND 2001; WORSTBROCK 1977. On the genus: LAUSBERG 2007, § 1079, 3, pp. 522-524.

<sup>103</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 5; Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 5.

reported before him, Thiofrid added that, according to local tradition, Willibrord had also set a boundary between the land and the sea by miraculously creating the dunes.<sup>104</sup>

Thiofrid also added material, which he derived from texts other than Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>105</sup> Certain details in his historical narrative agree more with Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, notably the idea that Pippin II, not Charles Martel, donated Utrecht to Willibrord,<sup>106</sup> or with Willibrord's pseudo-autograph in Paris, BNF lat. 10837.<sup>107</sup> When he expanded Alcuin's story of Willibrord's prophecy on the young Pippin, son of Charles Martel, Thiofrid borrowed from the *Annales Regni Francorum* (not Regino of Prüm, as Poncelet thought).<sup>108</sup> The manuscript Thiofrid probably used is a historiographical compendium composed in Prüm in 1084,<sup>109</sup> possibly at Thiofrid's request, as he was already abbot of Echternach, Echternach had contacts with Prüm, and the manuscript was sent to Echternach early in its history.

Thiofrid also worked through a number of *vitae* of saints with a historical relation to Willibrord to find additional information, which he found lacking in Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*. Such details hint at an honest attempt by Thiofrid to reconstruct Willibrord's career, rather than a slavish rumination of Alcuin's report. Just before his account of Willibrord's death, Thiofrid added a reference to the friendship between Willibrord and Boniface, conflated from stories about both saints in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*.<sup>110</sup> In similar fashion Thiofrid added the famous story of the near-baptism of king Radbod which he found in the *Vita Wulframni*,<sup>111</sup> and a summary of Willibrord's dealings with Saint Amalberga, reported in the *Vita Amalbergae*.<sup>112</sup> Such

<sup>104</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 14; Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 13. Cf. on local, oral transmissions in saints' cults in fringe regions SMITH 1990 on saints' cults in Carolingian Brittany.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Van der ESSEN 1905, pp. 384-385.

<sup>106</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 8 and 10.

<sup>107</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 7. In other respects Thiofrid followed Alcuin, e.g. when only noting one visit to Rome. Cf. SCHROEDER 1985, pp. 11-12.

<sup>108</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 23; Thiofrid *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 22. The facts Thiofrid narrated are only transmitted together in the *Annales regni Francorum* for the years 750, 754, 755, 758 and 768, not in any of the later texts borrowing from that source. Cf. GOETZ 2004 on the reception of Carolingian historiography on the coup of 751 (though Goetz overlooked Thiofrid).

<sup>109</sup> TRIER, Stadtbibliothek 1286/43 8°.

<sup>110</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii* 5 (BHL 1400), ed. LEVISON 1905, pp. 24-26; Liudger, *Vita Gregorii* 2 and 10 (BHL 3680), ed. HOLDER-EGGER 1887, pp. 67, 75; Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 23, p. 473: (...) *secundum legale institutum et decreta canonum*. Poncelet thought of Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, but details derive from two versions of the story: the version in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* as well as the account in Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*. I thank Richard Broome for drawing my attention to the latter source in this respect.

<sup>111</sup> BHL 8738. On the relation between this text and Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* cf. WOOD 1999b, p. 107; idem 2001, p. 92. I have found no manuscript witness of this text that I could relate to Echternach.

<sup>112</sup> *Vita Amalbergae* 4 (BHL 323), AA SS Jul. III, 3rd ed., pp. 87-98, there p. 88E. Cf. for this text WOOD 1991. I have found no manuscript witness of this text that I could relate to Echternach.

acts of narrative expansion and historical criticism, especially the use of Bede to correct Alcuin, can be understood as a means of authorial legitimation vis à vis Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>113</sup>

Thiofrid integrated the two miracle stories mentioned above about the floating rock and the formation of the dunes of Walcheren into the *vita* within the sections which derive from Alcuin. He also added eight new chapters with more or less miracle stories after the point where Alcuin's *Vita* had ended. These concern new posthumous miracles. Three of these stories are also set in Walcheren: a trial by combat between fighters representing the sea, and fighters representing Willibrord about a stretch of land (31), a report on the miraculous victory of the people of Walcheren over Robrecht the Frisian, count of Flanders (35), and Thiofrid's own visit to Walcheren, and the events that befell him while he was there (36). Together, these additions form about a third of the total length of Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*.

Other additional stories come from the monastic history of Echternach and its immediate vicinity. Thiofrid added a large amount of details to Alcuin's assertion that wealthy men gave land to Willibrord in recognition of his missionary work. This reveals Thiofrid's acquaintance with the charter archive of Echternach.<sup>114</sup> An added chapter (33) related the horrible fates that befell those who tried to alienate monastic lands and rights, which fits in nicely with other contemporary monastic dissatisfaction about magnates laying a claim to monastic possessions. Other additions which refer directly to Echternach are the report on the devotion bestowed on Willibrord by Willehad of Bremen and Stigand of Canterbury (29), and the *inventio* and *translatio* of Willibrord's relics in Echternach in 1031 (34). Even the story of Willibrord's role in the victory of the people of Walcheren against Robrecht the Frisian, count of Flanders, is brought into Echternach's sphere of influence, as the people of Walcheren thank Willibrord by sending the captured banners of Robrecht's army to Echternach, and promise to pay a sum of money to the monastery in commemoration of their victory (35). What may have helped in this decision, and in later inviting Thiofrid to Walcheren as a peacemaker, was that Echternach had landed possessions on the island.<sup>115</sup> Finally, a report on a miracle that happened to Hilderic, *custos* of the church of Trier, while on pilgrimage to Jerusalem (32) has links with Echternach through the monastery's proximity to Trier.<sup>116</sup> To Thiofrid, in short, Willibrord's cult is Echternach's concern. This is not only a mere statement of fact, or a result of Thiofrid's reliance on Echternach traditions, but also an expression

<sup>113</sup> I owe this observation to Erik Goosmann.

<sup>114</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 12; Thiofrid *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 12.

<sup>115</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 35; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, vv. 217-222. Cf. FRUIN 1892.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. for a detailed study of this section DRÄGER 2009.

of how Thiofrid thought things ought to be, as hagiography as a genre is not only descriptive, but also prescriptive.

The picture for Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi metrica* is similar to that for the prose life: it is considerably longer than Alcuin's example. Where Alcuin's verse life weighs in at 479 lines, Thiofrid's contains 2042 lines; the size of the work has more than quadrupled. Contrary to the second book of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi metrica* follows the same order as its prose counterpart, without changing the order of the story or adding elements that are not also present in the prose rendition of Willibrord's life. Three elements that are present in the prose life, however, are left out: Thiofrid's list of donors to Willibrord, his report on the punishments divinely levelled against certain noblemen who maltreated the abbey, and his report of the devotion to Willibrord displayed by Willehad, Beornrad, and Stigand of Canterbury. Thiofrid says he left one of these sections out because of 'so many barbarous names',<sup>117</sup> and given the numerous non-Latin names in all three chapters, metrical problems may have caused him to leave out all three of them. Also contrary to Alcuin's writings and Thiofrid's prose, Thiofrid's verse *Vita Willibrordi* is divided into four books.<sup>118</sup> There is no chapter list preceding the main text, and the text of the chapters seems to be continuous, without any indication that one chapter ends and another starts. The chapter numbering in the Trier manuscript may well be an addition by a scribe, aimed to facilitate the comparison of prose and verse renderings of the same events.

Likewise, Thiofrid's *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi archiepiscopi*, and, to a lesser extent, his *Sermo in natale sancti Wilgisi abbatis*, differ substantially from Alcuin's sermon. While the second sermon does not have a clear counterpart in Alcuin's writings with which it can be compared, the first sermon is, again, considerably longer than Alcuin's example.<sup>119</sup> This is not without reason. Alcuin's sermon on Willibrord is almost devoid of biographical details. Thiofrid's *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi*, by contrast, recollects events from the saint's life, from the annunciation of his birth to the miracle of his survival after the assault of the guard of a temple in Walichrum. The sermon on Wilgisl makes much of Wilgisl's decision to change his way of life, from that of a devout layman to that of a monk, a hermit, and eventually an abbot.

<sup>117</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, vv. 79-80, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 498: *Est has excerptas percurrere prompta voluntas, / Sed mandare stilo tot barbara nomina vito*. This concerns the chapter on the noblemen punished by Willibrord's wrath (*Vita Willibrordi prosa* 33).

<sup>118</sup> TRIER, Stadtbibliothek 1378/103 contains Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi metrica* with chapter numbers in the margin to indicate the relation in subject matter between the chapters of the prose *vita* and sections of the verse books, but there is no sign that these chapters were a preconceived part of Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi metrica*. On these mss, cf. FERRARI 1994c and idem (ed.), 1996.

<sup>119</sup> At about 5000 words it is, in effect almost the same length as Alcuin's whole prose *Vita Willibrordi*, which contains seven thousand, including the sermon.

Both sermons derive their information directly from older sources, and not from Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*. This is abundantly clear for the sermon on Wilgis, as it is older than the latter text. It is also true for the sermon on Willibrord, which quotes Bede's *Chronica maiora* (i.e. *De temporum ratione* 66), a source to which Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* does not refer. This indicates that the sermon takes its information directly from Bede as a source, independently of the larger text with which they are copied in the Gotha and Trier manuscripts. The relations between the sermons and Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* are very close, given that they treat the same subject matter, were written by the same author, and for a large part relied on the same sources. The point here is that the sermons should not solely be seen as appendices to the *vitae*; they have their own function, and were composed more or less independently from the *Vita Willibrordi*. In a sense their inclusion of biographical details makes them the counterpart of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* as texts that could be used for liturgical reading, something which one could hardly do with Thiofrid's lengthy and complex *Vita Willibrordi*.

<i>Vita prosa</i>	<i>Vita metrica</i>	<i>Sermo</i> <sup>120</sup>	Alcuin (prose)	Other source
1	I, vv. 17-57	3 & 4	2	
2	I, vv. 58-87		3	
3	I, vv. 88-123	5	1	
4	I, vv. 124-196		4	Gravelines tradition
5	I, vv. 197-256	5	5	
6	I, vv. 257-406	5	6	
7	I, vv. 407-501	6	7	
8	I, vv. 502-519		8	Bede
9	II, vv. 1-9	7-9	-	
10	II, vv. 10-61		9	
11	II, vv. 62-213		10 & 11	
12	-		12	Charters
13	II, vv. 214-284	10	14	Walcheren tradition
14	II, vv. 285-322		15	
15	II, vv. 323-360		16	
16	II, vv. 361-385		17	
17	II, vv. 386-422		18	
18	II, vv. 423-447		19	

<sup>120</sup> *Sermo* chapters 1, 2, 11 and 12 do not relate to the *Vita Willibrordi* as such, but are introductory and concluding exhortations.

19	II, vv. 448-520	20	
20	II, vv. 521-574	21	
21	II, vv. 575-631	22	
22	II, vv. 632-680	23	
23	II, vv. 681-720	-	Willibald & Liudger
24	II, vv. 721-781 III, vv. 3-45	24-26	
25	III, vv. 46-61	27	
26	III, vv. 62-108	28 & 29	
27	III, vv. 109-222	30	
28	III, vv. 223-293	31	
29	-		Echternach tradition
30	III, vv. 294-374		<i>Vita Amalbergae</i>
31	IV, vv. 1-48		Walcheren tradition
32	IV, vv. 49-74		Echternach tradition
33	IV, vv. 75-80		Echternach tradition
34	IV, vv. 81-143		Echternach tradition
35	IV, vv. 144-222		Walcheren tradition
36	IV, vv. 223-358		Eyewitness account

#### 4.5. Thiofrid's intended audience

As indicated earlier, the first book of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was probably intended to be read out in the church of Echternach during Willibrord's feast day, November 7. The greatly expanded length of Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* compared with Alcuin's, as well as the difference in compositional style, suggest that Thiofrid had a different purpose in mind for his work than Alcuin. Even for a Benedictine monastery in the eleventh century, in which the cult of saints received substantial attention in the monastic liturgy, at matins, terce, and completes, Thiofrid's version was probably too long to read in its entirety, and too complicated to be understood as well.<sup>121</sup> Thiofrid's sermon on Willibrord, however, could be read within the hour.

One could see Thiofrid's sermon as catering for the liturgical needs of the community, while the prose *Vita Willibrordi* seems more useful as an object of study or within the context of private

<sup>121</sup> FERRARI 1994a, p. 67 argues for the intensification of the cult of Willibrord in the eleventh century as a reason for Thiofrid's composition of the *Vita Willibrordi*. cf. De GAIFFIER 1947, p. 137; SNIJDERS 2011.

contemplation by a select group of a few learned monks. In such contexts, Thiofrid's exuberant style makes more sense than when read aloud to an unprepared audience. This could also be the reason why biographical information about Willibrord was incorporated into Thiofrid's sermon. The sermon would then be meant for liturgical usage, the *Vita prosa* for some other purpose, probably study by advanced students, not unlike Alcuin's *scholastici*. Another factor that adds to the idea that Thiofrid did not write his *Vita Willibrordi* for liturgical purposes is the total absence of signs of use of this text. Both before and after the composition of Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*, it was Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* and the liturgical readings and chants derived from it that defined the liturgical commemoration of Willibrord in Echternach, and later elsewhere as well.<sup>122</sup> The only text in Thiofrid's corpus of Willibrordiana for which we do have evidence of liturgical usage is the *Sermon on the feast of Wilgisl*, which is included in the Echternacher Riesenbibel.

Like the *Vita Willibrordi prosa*, the *Vita metrica* seems intended for a school context, as an example of the practice of *conversio*<sup>123</sup> – converting the contents of a prose work into verse, applied much more strictly than in Alcuin's example. Thiofrid's explanation of why he wrote the *Vita Willibrordi metrica*, which focusses on the mistakes in Alcuin's versification, points to the use of the text as an example for those interested in the finer points of literary composition. Alcuin's slight alterations of theological focus between the prose and verse book are absent from Thiofrid. The sermons on Willibrord and Wilgisl were primarily meant to be read to the community at mass. This does not only follow from the fact that they are sermons, and thus conform to a genre that was primarily intended for liturgical usage, but also from the fact that the oldest textual witness for the sermon on Wilgisl is a liturgical manuscript. Their inclusion in the same manuscripts as Thiofrid's *Vitae Willibrordi*, however, also hints to another potential purpose: as a partial fulfilment of an imitation of Alcuin's textual cycle, although this is, as has already been noted, more true of Thiofrid's sermon on Willibrord, than of his sermon on Wilgisl.

Whereas Alcuin claimed his sermons addressed both the monastic community and those who visited the church at the feast of Willibrord, the audience which Thiofrid's sermons address is exclusively monastic. The exhortative second half of Thiofrid's sermon on Willibrord makes this abundantly clear: everything which the life of Willibrord is supposed to teach the audience, is applied exclusively to monks. This is because Thiofrid's theology of sanctity focusses exclusively on monastic life, as I will show below. The social context of Thiofrid's work, secluded and contemplative monasticism, therefore went hand in hand with a theology that saw monastic life as

<sup>122</sup> Cf. LOCHNER 1987, pp. 168-176.

<sup>123</sup> LAUSBERG 2007, pp. 530-531, §§ 1099-1103, esp. § 1101 and § 1103.

the evident way towards sanctity. If there were visitors to the abbey at the feast of Willibrord, Thiofrid's sermons did not take account of them.

#### 4.6. Conclusion

The period between the completion of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* and the production of Thiofrid's writings on Willibrord is marked by both continuity and change in Willibrord's commemoration in Echternach. On the one hand, the members of the community continued to seek a link with their founder and to promote his cult throughout the period discussed. On the other hand, the reforms of the late tenth and early eleventh century, especially the Benedictification of monastic identity in Echternach and subsequent liturgical innovation in the abbey towards a Gregorian standard, had significant repercussions for Echternach's communal identity, liturgical practice, and the relation to the patron saint.

Modification of the liturgy went hand in hand with a transformation of the way in which the saint was presented. This can be deduced from the variety in the existing copies of the Alcuiniana from Echternach between the ninth and twelfth centuries. It is almost as if each manuscript had its own version of Alcuin's text, sometimes with additions to cater for a specific need, liturgical or otherwise. On the one hand we have the Stuttgart Alcuin manuscript from the ninth century and the Gotha and Trier manuscripts of Thiofridiana from the twelfth, which are all essentially patron saint *libelli*, on the other we find the Verdun *libellus* containing only Alcuin's prose and the legendary in Paris, which records a prose life with extra miracles taken from Thiofrid, and the various liturgical adaptations of Alcuin's writings. Each manuscript met different needs, and while some needs coexisted, others arose as practices of veneration changed. The same is true for the various combinations of feast days to which the sacramentaries studied testify.

Thiofrid's work fits this broader pattern. His *Vita Willibrordi* and his sermons as well as, to a lesser degree, his *Flores* suit the liturgical and communal needs of the abbey in his own days. Thiofrid's criticism of Alcuin was twofold: he had not committed all the miracles to writing that Willibrord had performed, and his verse life had not conformed to the rules of versification. Certainly, in his *Vita Willibrordi* Thiofrid added a large number of miracles that Alcuin had not recorded. Stylistic changes are also manifest: Thiofrid's distinctive style with its many allusions to patristic and biblical reading is clear on every page. Through his additions and stylistic alterations, Thiofrid also greatly extended the length of his work. Thiofrid's approach displays his extensive reading, both of classical texts and of hagiographic works of saints that were in some way related

to Willibrord. This new approach and the different context within which Thiofrid wrote also affected the way in which he presented Willibrord's sanctity.

The difference in style and length also testifies to a different purpose. Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* is hardly suitable for liturgical usage through its unwieldy size and complex literary allusion. Rather, it is the sermons appended to the work that lend themselves to liturgical use. The *Vita Willibrordi* itself must be seen as complementary to other works: to the sermons, which were probably read on the saint's feast, to Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, which remained the more readily available and more influential text on Willibrord. Even so, Thiofrid did satisfy a need, given that his work was used as material for the luxury manuscript in Gotha and its less luxurious counterpart in Trier. These manuscripts, especially the former, are perhaps best understood as expressions of Echternach's monastic self-awareness, and we can read Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* as a statement of contemplative, Benedictine monastic identity.

## 5. Thiofrid on sanctity

Discussing the Ottonian monastic reform movement in Lotharingia, Henry Mayr-Harting remarked: ‘The heart of tenth-century reform was to establish or enhance a community not only in its communal living, but also in its communal (and elaborate) liturgy, worship, and prayer. It was a high-church movement, so to speak, with a markedly Christ-centered spirituality.’<sup>1</sup> This applies well to Thiofrid’s concept of sanctity too. As we will see in this chapter, Thiofrid’s concept of sanctity was defined by the needs of the monastic community he was part of, first as a monk and later as an abbot. It focussed on the liturgy and on Christ, and understood sanctity in a way that left out virtually all non-monastic forms of Christian life. As such it represents a form of post-reform rewriting of monastic saints’ lives that is attested elsewhere as well.<sup>2</sup>

Just as the second chapter explored Alcuin’s thought on sanctity, just so this chapter explores Thiofrid’s thought on sanctity. The questions asked are similar to those asked in the chapter on Alcuin, and focus on the origin, the nature and the purpose of sanctity in Thiofrid’s writings. There are substantial differences between Alcuin’s thought about sanctity and Thiofrid’s. The latter’s

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<sup>1</sup> MAYR-HARTING 2007, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. GÉNICOT 1965, HELVÉTIUS 2003 and HEYDEMANN 2011, pp. 191-195 on the *Vitae Huberti*.

oeuvre is far more explicitly concerned with sanctity and relics. Thiofrid, moreover, is one of the few medieval authors whose thought on sanctity and relics have been studied, especially by the most recent editor of Thiofrid's *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, Michele Ferrari.<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that all has been said. Elaborating on Ferrari's work, I investigate whether Thiofrid's views as found in the *Flores* were also expressed in his saints' lives, and if so, what Thiofrid did when his own views on sanctity and relics differed from those of Alcuin. Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*, was, after all, a rewriting of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, which had manifestly expressed Alcuin's thought on sanctity and relics, as discussed in the previous chapters. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Thiofrid therefore had to respond to Alcuin's ideas as put forward in his *Vita Willibrordi*.

### 5.1. Sanctity in Thiofrid's works on Willibrord

Like Alcuin, who expressed a general principle of sanctity in his sermons and saints' lives,<sup>4</sup> Thiofrid provides us with a general principle of sanctity in the opening lines of the first chapter of his prose *Vita Willibrordi*, and promptly applies it to the subject of this text, Willibrord:<sup>5</sup>

*Universitatis opifex et genitor, sicut ex inordinata yles iactatione cuncta redigens in ordinem et pulcherrimus ipse incomparabili mundum exornans pulchritudine ad illuminandam et decorandam noctis caliginem astra queque condidit suis vicibus in celi venientia faciem, sic ad illustrandam et exornandam myrcocosmi internam noctem ac speciem et ante legem et sub lege et sub gratia susceptionis matutine tempore veri luciferi verum et eternum mane nuntiantis choruscante iubare, summe virtutis viros quasi summe claritatis sidera suis temporibus edita vicissimque permutata super peccatorum tenebras ingenti dedit exoriri sanctitatis lumine ac splendorem solis iusticie cecitati humane infundere. Inter quos, velut inter astra matutina simul Deum cum iubilarent omnes filii Dei laudantia, in penitus toto divisio orbe Britannis, in provintia Northumbria exortum est sydus lucidissimum phylochristus Willibrordus, radiis virtutum omnium non modo Britannicum sed tocius orbis terre quadripartitum illustrans circulum.*

Just as He, who was most beautiful himself, bringing all matter out of disordered chaos into order, placed all stars in their places to enlighten and embellish the darkness of night, decorating the world with incomparable beauty, just so the Maker and Founder

<sup>3</sup> FERRARI 1994b, 1995, 2005; idem (ed.) 1996.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. in Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 32, paraphrased above, 3.1, and in *Vita Vedasti* 1, as quoted above, section 2.1.

<sup>5</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 1, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 461.

of all things gave men of the highest virtue, like stars of the highest clarity, each being born and dying in their time, whether before the law, or under the law, or under grace of the early morning, as the radiance of the true Morning Star, announcing truth and eternity with his hand, shines, to enlighten and embellish the internal night of our microcosm, to light up over the darkness of sinners with the great light of their sanctity, and to pour the splendour of the sun of justice into human blindness. Amongst those, as if amongst the morning stars, praising God together while all sons of God rejoiced, a most lucid star, Willibrord, the friend of Christ, enlightening not only Britain, but the four quarters of the whole earth with the rays of all his virtue, was born amongst the Britons, completely cut off from all the world, in the province Northumbria.

Like Alcuin in the prologue of his *Vita Vedasti* (and similarly in his *Vita Willibrordi*), Thiofrid likened sanctity to light, and linked it directly to God's hand in the history of creation.<sup>6</sup> Also like Alcuin, Thiofrid emphasized the importance of divine predestination. Sanctity and the work of the saints in history is compared to the very act of creation, a thought which Thiofrid also expressed by speaking of man's soul as a *mycrocosmus*, a miniature creation, in which saints act as the lights of Heaven, just as the sun, moon, and stars do in the natural world.<sup>7</sup> Like Alcuin, Thiofrid describes sanctity in terms which derive from a monastic background; Wilgis's marriage is celebrated as chaste, and solely meant to produce offspring,<sup>8</sup> and the notion of *peregrinatio*, which had been one of the main themes of Alcuin's description of Willibrord, retained pride of place in Thiofrid's rewriting. Thiofrid even seems to launch a notion of 'double peregrination', to the extent that he emphasizes that Willibrord's decision to move from Christian Ireland to pagan Frisia was a desire for an even further removed exile from the saint's homeland, Northumbria.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to these similarities, however, there are also notable differences. The most important one concerns the way in which both authors linked sanctity to monasticism. Alcuin may have linked sanctity *primarily* with the monastic way of life, Thiofrid's idea of sanctity is *exclusively*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. e.g. Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 3, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 11, which speaks of Liutwin as a lamp (*lampas*). Cf. on Thiofrid and light metaphors ANGENENDT 2002, pp. 391-393; idem 2011, p. 20. Thiofrid may in fact have known Alcuin's *Vita Vedasti*, as the text was transmitted in a tenth-century manuscript from Echternach, LUXEMBOURG, Bibliothèque nationale du Luxembourg, 97 (BISCHOFF 2004, p. 134, nr. 2535), ff. 168-178.

<sup>7</sup> This line of Thiofrid's thought is further explored below (5.4). Cf. also *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, v. 55, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 483, where baptism is described as the rain of the microcosm. Cf. below, section 5.4.

<sup>8</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 1, ibidem, p. 461: (...) *maritum sola posteritatis spe ac dilectione, non causa carnalis concupiscentie sortita* (...); *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, vv. 25-26, ibidem, p. 483: *Wilgislo digno primati iuncta marito / Non estu carnis, sed causa posteritatis*.

<sup>9</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 5, ibidem, p. 463: (...) *ardentiori longinquioris exilii estuavit desiderio* (...). Cf. *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, vv. 202-207, ibidem, p. 485.

monastic, and his concept of monasticism is also markedly different from Alcuin's.<sup>10</sup> The latter's envisaged a monasticism that was deeply involved with the world beyond the cloister. Most of Willibrord's career, as depicted by Alcuin, takes place outside the monastery. In fact, only Willibrord's upbringing in Ripon and a single miracle in Willibrord's own monastery depict Willibrord within the cloister.<sup>11</sup> Echternach is first mentioned in Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* in the story of Willibrord's burial there. Willibrord is said to have visited other religious communities, namely the community of nuns in Trier and the papal *familia* in Rome, but his own monastic life is itinerant.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to Alcuin's, Thiofrid's portrait of Willibrord strongly emphasises the saint's monastic status and links him almost exclusively with Echternach. This is not immediately clear, for Thiofrid followed the general outline of Alcuin's *Vita*, but it becomes manifest when one analyses the sections added by Thiofrid.

There are many more examples of the changed and enhanced importance of monasticism and monastic interests in Thiofrid's depiction of Willibrord. Whereas Alcuin's depiction of Willibrord presented missionary zeal as its protagonist's main virtue, Thiofrid focussed on contemplation and monastic seclusion. He said of Willibrord that he was a man of contemplation on several occasions,<sup>13</sup> while preaching is of far less pronounced importance. The repeated reference to preaching in Willibrord's life, which provided the 'glue' between the episodes narrated in Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 5-14, is absent from Thiofrid's reworking of these chapters. Whereas Alcuin's image of Willibrord had balanced his monastic and episcopal duties, Thiofrid described Willibrord as a monk first, and only then a bishop.<sup>14</sup> This is also where seclusion comes in: Willibrord is said to be hiding in the monastery of Echternach, in keeping with his monastic vocation.<sup>15</sup>

Thiofrid emphasized that monasticism is about ideals such as strictness and discipline. Even as a child in the monastery of Ripon, Willibrord 'did not follow the allurements of a looser way of

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also ORBÁN 1995.

<sup>11</sup> The miracle of the overflowing barrel, Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 18 and 2, 18.

<sup>12</sup> Contrary to the assertions of HELVÉTIUS 1993, pp. 65-66. Cf. ANGENENDT 1990b, pp. 14-15 and PALMER 2009, pp. 13-14, 64-65, 211 on Willibrord and Benedictinism (opposed to older literature such as BOEREN 1939, pp. 5-6; EDEL 2001, p. 130; EMBACH 2006, p. 46; FELTEN 1993; GAUTHIER 1980, p. 314; KIESEL 1968, pp. 1-2; LAMPEN 1939, pp. 7-9; PRINZ 1965, pp. 195, 383); SCHMITZ 1942, pp. 68-79; ANGENENDT 1972 (esp. p. 194) and Van BERKUM 1978 and 1989 on the incompatibility of *stabilitas loci* with Willibrord's life, and PELTERET 1998 for further context. On Alcuin's depiction of Willibrord and the lack of Benedictine features in it, cf. ORBÁN 1995, p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 13, 23; *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi* 3, 6, and 8. Cf also *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 4, where Willibrord's life in Ireland is described as a pursuit of contemplation.

<sup>14</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 9, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 465; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, vv. 7-8, *ibidem*, p. 488.

<sup>15</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 21, *ibidem*, p. 472: (...) *quem in difficili aditu et scrupula latitantem Efternacensi proseucha* (...).

life', but focussed on the virtues of divine contemplation.<sup>16</sup> Willibrord's desire for *peregrinatio*, too, is cast within this frame as a desire for greater strictness, and not, as in Alcuin's report, as a desire for more advanced teaching in 'holy letters'.<sup>17</sup> Thiofrid described the life which Willibrord led in Ireland as being lived 'in the schools of the greatest strictness', guided by 'the strictest rule of the Irish brothers'.<sup>18</sup> Strict discipline, then, is an element of sanctity that is far more pronounced in Thiofrid's description of Willibrord's early life than it is in Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*. In addition to this, Thiofrid often characterized monastic life as a contemplative life. *Contemplativa vita, theoretica vita*,<sup>19</sup> *vita speculativa*, or equivalent terms appear in several chapters of the *Vita Willibrordi*: the desire for contemplation is Wilgis's reason for becoming a monk, for example,<sup>20</sup> while Willibrord is called an eagle, dwelling with the angels in contemplation.<sup>21</sup> Even a bishop's task is contemplation.<sup>22</sup> When Willibrord died, moreover, 'he flew away from the body of this death, towards what must be contemplated'.<sup>23</sup> Contemplation is the be-all and end-all of the religious life as well as of sanctity *tout court* in Thiofrid's thinking, which reinforces the association of sanctity with the most contemplative class of the religious order, the order of monks.

The central theme which ties together sanctity and monasticism in Thiofrid's *vitae* is akin to contemplation: the theme of not being of this world. Saints are described as vessels of the Holy Spirit,<sup>24</sup> citizens of heaven,<sup>25</sup> and especially those beings that fly up from the earth to higher things:

<sup>16</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 4, *ibidem*, p. 463: *Non remissioris vitę sectatus est lenocinia, (...)*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*: *Cumque duas etatis attigisset decadas, arcioris vitę rigorem ardentius quam exquisitissimas appetens delicias, internis auribus audivit primam vocem dominicam ad primum patriarcharum Abraham: Exi de terra tua et de cognatione tua, et persecutus regis eterni vestigia, qui non in patria, sed in via, non in parentum domo, sed in diversorio de uteri virginalis aula processit carnis nostre indutus trabea, peregrinationis et districtioris conversationis gratia (...)* in *Hyberniam secessit preclus advena*. Cf. *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, vv. 130-146, *ibidem*, p. 484.

<sup>18</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 5, *ibidem*, p. 463: *In scolis ergo summe districtionis, ut ex districtissima Hyberniensium fratrum colligi datur regula, in virum spiritualem et perfectum educatus sanctę matris eccliesie futurus cathecysta (...)*. Cf. COATES 1997 for other examples of uses of the Insular past in reform movements on the European mainland.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 4, *ibidem*, p. 463: *(...) et in contubernio excellentissime sanctitatis virorum, mundi luminum, Egberti et Wibicberti pontificum, ibidem pro nanciscenda uranice patrię gloria exultantium, theoretices sophię epotavit flumina (...)*. On the history of *theorica/theoretica vita*, cf. LECLERCQ 1961.

<sup>20</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 3, *ibidem*, p. 462. The verse (*Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, v. 89, *ibidem*, p. 484) speaks of *speculativa vita*.

<sup>21</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 13, *ibidem*, p. 468. Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 3, ed. LAMPEN 1936, pp. 11-13, and below.

<sup>22</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 23, *ibidem*, p. 473.

<sup>23</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24, *ibidem*, p. 474: *(...) de corpore mortis huius evolavit ad contemplandam (...)*.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 17, *ibidem*, p. 470 (*Spiritus sancti vas*), *ibidem* 31, p. 478 (*eminentissimum eiusdem Spiritus vas Willibrordum*). Cf. also *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 4, p. 463 (*Eminentissimum (...) vas electionis Paulum*); *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, v. 296, p. 490 (*Paulum vas electum, vas imitans preciosum*); *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi* 12 (*vas electionis Paulus*); *Vita Liutwini* 4, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 14 (*vas electionis sanctus Liutwinus*); *ibidem*, p. 15 (*Paulus (...) vas electionis*). Cf. *Vita Liutwini* 4, *ibidem*, p. 15: *habitor domus sacrae mentis eius Spiritus Sanctus (...)*.

<sup>25</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 5, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 463 (*peregrinantibus a Domino municipatum provideret in celestis patrię civium contubernio*); *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, v. 757, p. 494: *Cantavitque novum Sion cum civibus ymnum*.

eagles, as we have seen, doves, or feathered animals in general.<sup>26</sup> Monks are in this world, but not supposed to be part of it. In his catalogue of Willibrord's virtues, Thiofrid says: 'he gave himself to remain in the flesh, by nature the lodging for mortals, but not to inhabit it, just as he knew he would leave from this world, not as if out of a house, but rather as if out of a temporary lodging'.<sup>27</sup> Alcuin's thought had not been devoid of a share of criticism of the flesh, and Alcuin certainly shared the notion that life on earth was a *peregrinatio*, but to him such ideas were not boundary markers between the monastic and the secular; rather, they applied to both, albeit in different ways or measure. To Thiofrid, by contrast, body and soul were antithetical aspects of a human being, and monasticism was likewise antithetical to the lay life.<sup>28</sup> This is partially due to Thiofrid's patristic reading, which focussed on the letters and biblical commentaries of Jerome and a number of works of Gregory the Great, both authors with a decidedly monastic outlook on Christian life, but it may also reflect anxieties about the nature of monastic life that were felt more broadly in the eleventh and twelfth century. This was a period in which, in the words of Giles Constable, 'monastic values and practices permeated both lay and ecclesiastical society,' and in which monastic seclusion was highly valued, but where this high value paradoxically also meant that monks were called upon to take their place in the active life.<sup>29</sup>

In the *Vita Willibrordi*, Thiofrid also used other protagonists to show what a monk should or should not do. Willibrord's pupil, who merited to see the death of the saint announced in a vision, is said to be 'one of his chosen disciples, instructed and educated in all the knowledge of divine law and intent on the studies of theology'.<sup>30</sup> Much of the discussion of the stealing deacon, by contrast, focusses on the ideal behaviour of monks, as opposed to the behaviour of the thieving deacon. Monks are encouraged to forsake the world and leave behind every material possession and even every desire for material possession, just as Joseph fled Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39), leaving behind

<sup>26</sup> *Animal pennatum* and similar nominal groups, e.g. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 7, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 465 (on Willibrord and Sergius); *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 29, ibidem, p. 477 (on Willehad); *Vita Liutwini* 2, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 9 (on Liutwin).

The saint as a dove: e.g. *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 3, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 462 (on Wilgisl): *deposito sarcinarum pondere, pennas columbe sibi assumat, ut in ramis arboris, que de mystico sinapis succrevit semente, requiescat* (cf. also *Sermo in natale sancti Wilgisli abbatis*); *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi* 4 (on Willibrord): *et assumptis mysticis columbe pennis euolans elongavit fugiens ut frueretur quiete intima*.

<sup>27</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 21, ibidem, p. 474: (...) *cum in carne commorandi natura diversorium mortalibus, non habitandi, dederit, ita se discessurum sciret de seculo, non tanquam de domo, sed tanquam ex hospicio*.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. below, especially sections 5.4 and 6.1. For Alcuin, cf. section 3.2.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. CONSTABLE 2004, p. 338 on the contemporary debate about this aspect of monasticism.

<sup>30</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 472: *quidam ex electis eius discipulis, omni divine legis scientia instructus et educatus et theologie studiis intentus* (...); *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, vv. 759-760, p. 494: *Nam pernox eius, vir ad unguem factus, alumnus, / Pernox in psalmis* (...).

his shirt, and not to seek material gains through ecclesiastical office, like Gehazi and Achan.<sup>31</sup> As part of this discussion of the outer limits of monastic behaviour in the verse life, Thiofrid sums all of this up in one key verse, saying 'Disdain of the world befits perfect monks'.<sup>32</sup> In the prose *Vita* and in the *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi*, Thiofrid also provided the monastic alternative, by saying that 'the purpose of the perfect monk is to cry, either over himself or over the whole world', a thought borrowed from Jerome.<sup>33</sup> This, again, indicates that the task of the monk is not to be sought inside the world, but secluded from it, and indeed in antithesis to it.

The world-forsaking element of Thiofrid's monasticism is defined by three elements in particular: sacrifice, asceticism, and the importance of obedience to rules. An association of monasticism with sacrifice is found first in the oblation of Willibrord by his father, Wilgisl.<sup>34</sup> This will not strike as surprising, given that the noun *oblatio* derives from the verb *offerre*, which denotes the act of making a sacrifice. Thiofrid, however, does not only use the verb *offero*, but also the noun *holocaustum* ('burnt offering'), in relation to Willibrord's oblation.<sup>35</sup> The same chapter also describes Wilgisl's own entry into the monastery as a sacrifice, this time using the term *hostia*.<sup>36</sup> Other monks are also called *holocausta*. When the monks of Echternach celebrate the feast of Wilgisl, and run out of wine, the abbot, Adalbert, addresses his monks, reminding them that they should not be sad on account of physical want, but should remember that they offered themselves as burnt offerings to God.<sup>37</sup> If Thiofrid has Adalbert say this to the whole community, the notion of sacrifice can safely be said to apply to all monks, and not just to saints.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 27; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 3, vv. 162-222.

<sup>32</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 3, v. 178: *Perfecti monachi defert despectio mundi*.

<sup>33</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 27, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 476: (...) *quia finis perfecti monachi est flere vel se vel totum mundum (...); Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi* 12: (...) *nominis inquam uestri significationem et dignitatem acutissimo mentis intuitu perspicite. et quia monachus non doctoris sed plangentis habet officium qui uel se uel mundum lugeat et domini pavidus praestoletur aduentum*. Cf. Jerome, *Adversus Vigilantium* 15: *Monachus autem non doctoris habet, sed plangentis officium: qui uel se, uel mundum lugeat, et Domini pavidus praestoletur aduentum*. I owe the observation of this parallel to Janneke Raaijmakers.

<sup>34</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 3, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 462: *Et oblato tantę spei pignore in holocaustum suauissimum Domino (...)*

<sup>35</sup> Use of this term entails a reference to Genesis 22:1-8, where Abraham is ordered to slaughter his son as a burnt offering, and to Romans 12:1. Cf. De JONG 1996, pp. 157-191, and 284-287. In Thiofrid's own time, child oblation was starting to go out of fashion, but that development was still in its infancy. Cf. BOUCHARD 1987, pp. 48-54; CONSTABLE 2004, pp. 348-349; De JONG 1996, pp. 290-302.

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem: *lugum dominicę suauitatis collo suo imposuit et hostiam vivam, bene placentem, rationabilem se Deo vivo et vero obtulit*. The wording plays on Romans 12:1.

<sup>37</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 28, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 477: *Non decet unanimitatem vestram, filii mei et viscera mea, pro ullo terrene commoditatis intertrimento erummosa affici mesticia, que ipsa exsiccet ossa, sed interna iucunditate ad sempiternę refectationis et delectationis anhelare agalmata et eundem et inmutabilem ac invictum gerere animum inter aduersa et prospera. In holocaustum quidem suauissimum Domino labiorum vestrorum vitulos optulistis, in plenitudine caritatis refici meruistis*. Cf. Also *Vita Liutwini* 7, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 22: *In cordis ara mactavit se in holocaustum suauissimum Domino (...)*.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. WOLLASCH 1984 on the monastic vow as a sacrifice.

Another section of his *Vita Willibrordi* also underlines the importance of the notion of sacrifice for Thiofrid's understanding of sanctity. The section in question concerns the confrontation of Willibrord with the temple guard in Walcheren.<sup>39</sup> According to Alcuin, Willibrord had been assaulted by a man whose responsibility it was to take care of the statue of a pagan deity, after the saint had destroyed the statue in question. The saint, however, had escaped unharmed, and made sure that his companions did not kill the guard, who died by divine vengeance shortly after. As has been argued above,<sup>40</sup> Alcuin's rendition of this story must be read as a discussion of missionary tactics and especially the need to abstain from violence. Thiofrid, however, diverged from Alcuin's narrative. He said that Willibrord had not escaped unhurt. Instead Willibrord had been wounded, and his blood was still kept as a relic in the church of Westkapelle. Given that Thiofrid had visited Walcheren by the time he wrote the *Vita Willibrordi*, this is probably an attempt to reconcile Alcuin's report with local traditions.<sup>41</sup> Thiofrid used this tradition to make a new point about Willibrord's experiences in Walcheren. It had only been God's hand which had saved the bishop, and God had not done so on Willibrord's own account, as Willibrord clearly desired to become a martyr, but in order that the churches which Willibrord had founded would not suffer the loss of his protection.<sup>42</sup>

For Thiofrid, Willibrord's blood and his willingness to suffer death qualify him as a martyr: he speaks of blood as a witness, playing on the definition of martyrs as blood witnesses.<sup>43</sup> The following chapter even opens with saying that Willibrord proceeded, 'crowned with the laurel of martyrdom'.<sup>44</sup> Thiofrid evidently valued martyrdom highly, just as he valued monasticism. Both forms of sanctity have an element of sacrifice, but Thiofrid does not equate one with the other in the way in which Clare Stancliffe showed some Irish monastic authors did in the seventh century.<sup>45</sup> What makes Willibrord a martyr in Thiofrid's eyes here is Willibrord's willingness to die, without regard for whether he actually died or not.

Thiofrid's rendition of Adalbert's words to the monks of Echternach, cited above, also merge the ascetic and sacrificial elements of Thiofrid's idea of monasticism. This is especially clear if one

<sup>39</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 13, ed. PONCELET 1910, pp. 468-469; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, ibidem, vv. 214-284, pp. 489-490.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. above, esp. sections 1.2, 2.3 and 2.6.

<sup>41</sup> The same principle also seems to underlie the addition of a local tradition from Gravelines earlier in Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 5; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, vv. 222-233, and the inclusion of a narrative on the formation of dunes on Walcheren through Willibrord's say-so in *Vita Willibrordi* 13 and *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, vv. 268-291.

<sup>42</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 13, ibidem.

<sup>43</sup> Cf., e.g., Augustine, *Sermo* 329, PL 38, col. 1454: *Empti sunt fideles et martyres: sed martyrum fides probata est; testis est sanguis.*

<sup>44</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 14, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 469: (...) *rediit laureatus martyrii laurea* (...).

<sup>45</sup> STANCLIFFE 1982. I will return on the importance of martyrs to Thiofrid below, in section 5.3.

looks at the verse rendition of the same story. Where the prose version of Adalbert's words emphasizes the sacrificial aspect of monasticism alongside its ascetic character, it is the latter which becomes the most important element of Adalbert's words in the verse:<sup>46</sup>

*Filioli dominique mei, sitis benedicti.  
 Non sitis mesti, non desint gaudia menti,  
 Non dolor afficiat quis vite panis abundat.  
 Vivite spiritui, non cor substernite carni;  
 Prospera non inflent, non vos adversa fatigent.  
 Non animi levitas, non vos unavit egestas,  
 Non ad delitias huc convenistis opimas,  
 Sed perferre famem, sitis, estum, dampna, laborem.  
 Est Deus in vobis; in eo sitis, maneatis.*

My sons and masters, be blessed.  
 You must not be sad, joys of the soul are not lacking,  
 No pain affects who abounds in the bread of life.  
 Live in the spirit, do not submit your heart to your flesh;  
 Good times must not puff your pride, bad times must not tire you.  
 Neither levity of the soul, nor need united you,  
 You did not come here together for delicious foodstuffs,  
 But to prefer hunger, thirst, heat, loss, toil.  
 God is in you; be in him, remain.

Another example of the focus on asceticism is found in Thiofrid's recourse to the *topos* of the naked following of the naked cross, or the naked Christ, which appears in both the prose life, in reference to Wilgisl's monastic vocation, in the verse life, concerning Willibrord's desire for the monastic, rather than the episcopal status, and finally on three occasions in the *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi*, mentioning the obligations of the monks addressed in the sermon.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 3, vv. 236-244.

<sup>47</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 3, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 462: *Audita interno auditu dominica sententia: Si vis perfectus esse, vade, vende omnia que habes, et da pauperibus, et sequere me, verba vertit in opera et, mutato cum animo militari paludamento, nudam crucem nudus sequens, expeditior et levior ascendit scalam Iacob (...)*  
*Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, vv. 295-298, ibidem, p. 486: *Deserui patriam patrię celestis ob anlam, // Non ut ditarer, nec in exilio dominarer, / Sed nudus Christum nudum sequerer crucifixum. / Non speculative didici sublimia vite.*

The third point, in addition to asceticism and sacrifice, concerns the importance of written rules. One example is the explicit reference to ‘the custom of the law and the decrees of the canons’,<sup>48</sup> i.e. written texts, with which Willibrord’s desire to appoint a reluctant Boniface as his successor would be in accordance. Another example of this importance is Thiofrid’s reworking of the story of Willibrord’s upbringing. Alcuin said that Willibrord spent his youth in Ripon as an oblate, and then went to Ireland to study under Ecgberct and Wihtbert.<sup>49</sup> Thiofrid effectively tells the same story, but as said earlier, he also refers to ‘the strictest rule of the Irish brothers’.<sup>50</sup> A similar statement can be found in the sermon on Willibrord’s feast, where the monks of Echternach are encouraged to ‘examine him (meaning Willibrord, JV), who, almost from the earliest beginnings of his infancy carried the Lord’s yoke, under the greatest strictness of the monks of Ireland, and put his early examples, habits, and conduct before you, to imitate (...)’.<sup>51</sup> In the *Vita Willibrordi metrica* Thiofrid gives a whole range of prescriptions, which derive from this rule, Columbanus’ *Regula coenobialis*, a text that a modern scholar found ‘extremely harsh in all respects’ compared with other monastic rules, thereby agreeing with Thiofrid’s assessment.<sup>52</sup>

The repeated reference to the strictness of the rule of the Irish monks and to the burdens of monasticism in general is telling for a number of reasons. Thiofrid’s description of the Irish rule as one of great strictness has been noted already. The references indicate Thiofrid’s conscious attempt to make sense of a distant and at times foreign past. The idea that Willibrord lived an ideal monk’s life in a monastery that was serving under one particular monastic rule was based on a twelfth-century monastic reality, which attached great authority to monastic rules. The importance of monastic rules as guidelines for acceptable monastic behaviour had greatly increased as a result of ninth-century Carolingian reform, with its emphasis on the *Regula Benedicti* that only became stronger in the tenth and eleventh century. Although recent scholarship has cast some doubt on

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*Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi* 12: *Cenobite pusillus grex et angelis et hominibus facti spectaculum qui nudum christum nudi sequimini summe religionis monachi.*

Ibidem: *Perpendite quod cum nudi abiecta grauissima mundane conuersationis sacrina nudi christi domini nostri decreuistis et nouistis sequi uestigia mentis ore dixistis et quasi iuramento domini firmastis custodire uias uestras actionum uidelicet uestrarum itinera nec declinare neque a dextris neque a sinistris a rectitudinis semita.*

Ibidem: (...) *bis contentus nudam crucem nudus sequatur* (...). cf. on this topos CONSTABLE 1979.

<sup>48</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 23, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 474: (...) *legale institutum et decreta canonum.*

<sup>49</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 5, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 464: *In scolis ergo summe distractionis, ut ex districtissima Hyberniensium fratrum colligi datur regula, in virum spiritualem et perfectum educatus sancte matris ecclesie futurus cathecysta (...).*

<sup>51</sup> Thiofrid, *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi* 12: (...) *qui pene ab ipsis infantie crepundiis sub summe distractionis regula fratrum hyberniensium iugum portauit dominicum* (...). Cf. on this manner of speaking about child oblation De JONG 1996.

<sup>52</sup> Ed. WALKER 1957, pp. 142-169. The judgement quoted is from STEVENSON 1997, p. 209. Cf. also DIEM 2005, pp. 243-247. Thiofrid quotes provisions in *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, vv. 156-196, ed. PONCELET 1910, pp. 484-485. It is unknown which manuscript of this text Thiofrid consulted, and whether he used the longer or the shorter version of this text; none of the extant manuscripts can be attributed to Echternach.

the success of these reforms,<sup>53</sup> the rhetoric that went with them provided the perception of a break in monastic history, and a stark contrast between the status quo before and after the reform. Taking recourse to Columbanus' *Regula Coenobialis* can be seen as a coping mechanism, which allowed Thiofrid to explain that Willibrord's life as a monk was perhaps not one according to Benedict's *Rule*, but bore close resemblance to the Benedictine way of life of Thiofrid's own time, at least in its strictness and adherence to a written rule. In this respect, Thiofrid clearly diverged from the rhetoric of the Ottonian charters quoted earlier.

A monastic overtone is even evident in his version Willibrord's career as an archbishop, that is, in his stress on the clerical, as opposed to the monastic side of Willibrord's career. Alcuin had simply stated that after his return from Rome, Willibrord had continued to preach, and that the results of that preaching could be observed in the conversion of those regions, the churches founded there, and the religious communities established there.<sup>54</sup> Later on, when Alcuin described how Willibrord received the see of Utrecht from Charles Martel, the emphasis was again on preaching and baptism.<sup>55</sup> Thiofrid modified Alcuin's report to the extent that he dated Willibrord's arrival in Utrecht earlier than Alcuin does, explicitly referring to what he had read in Bede.<sup>56</sup> In addition to changing Alcuin's chronology, Thiofrid also gave a different rendition of the essence of Willibrord's life as an archbishop. This passage is significant because it suggests Thiofrid felt a need to legitimate Willibrord's association with canons, as opposed to monks:<sup>57</sup>

*Et ut de interiore eius claustrali profecto conversatione summatim perstringam, monachum se ab ipsis infantie crepundiis meminit; et idcirco monachum, quem pene infans induit, quem tanto sudore, tanto tempore tenuit, occasione pastoralis cure amittere et mutare noluit, sed omne in domo Dei cum consensu secum conversantium collegium monachice religionis tramitem incedere instituit, quia aliter quam vixit non docuit; unde et usque ad has nostri temporis feces et nostrum triste vivere nulla in Galliis clericorum concio propius sancta Traiectensi congregatione monachico ordini accessit et consuetudines profundius et attentius attigit et tenacius tenuit.*

<sup>53</sup> Cf. above, section 4.1.

<sup>54</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 8: *Eo vir Dei instantius illis in regionibus semina vite sparserat, quo plus necessarium antiquam ignorantiae famem depellere perspexerat. Qualem, divina gratia adiuvante, illis in locis fructum fecisset, testes sunt usque hodie populi per civitates, rivos et castella, quos ad veritatis agnitionem et ad unius omnipotentis Dei cultum pia ammonitione perduxerat; testes quoque ecclesiae, quas per loca singula construxerat, testes et Deo famulantium congregationes, quas aliquibus adunavit in locis.* Cf. also Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 13: *In qua tunc gente (scil. Fresonum, JV) sanctus Wilbrordus positus est praedicator sedisque episcopalis in Traiecto castello delegatus est. Qui, maiori evangelizandi occasione accepta, nuper gladio adquisitam gentem sacro baptisinate abluere conatus est.* cf. Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 12.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 8; *ibidem*, 10. The passage in Bede in question is *Historia ecclesiastica* 5, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 9.

And in order that I summarize briefly the accomplishment of his life inside the claustrum: he remembered that he was a monk from the very beginnings of his childhood; and therefore he did not want to cast off or change the habit that he had put on almost as a child, and which he kept whatever the task and whatever the time, on occasion of pastoral care, but decided to take the path of monastic devotion, with the whole college of those who lived with him in God's house because he did not live in any other way than he taught,<sup>58</sup> and therefore there lived not one assembly of clerics in the Gauls, which came nearer to the monastic order than the holy congregation of Utrecht, or achieved its habits more profoundly and more attentively or held them more tenaciously, up to these drags of the present time and our sad existence.

While Thiofrid's concept of sanctity is far more exclusively focussed on the Benedictine way of life, his treatment of the secular domain is decidedly negative. Forsaking the world is an element of monastic identity which is heavily emphasized. Flesh is repeatedly called a prison.<sup>59</sup> The secular world is compared with Sodom and Egypt,<sup>60</sup> and especially with the Egyptian wife of Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's palace guard (Genesis 39). The image of Joseph, fleeing her advances while leaving his shirt behind is taken as an archetype for the monks, leaving their worldly dress behind, and taking on the monastic cowl and habit.<sup>61</sup> The antithesis between the regular monastic and the secular way of life, now explicitly highlighted, also has repercussions for the way in which Willibrord interacts with the world around him, according to Thiofrid. The saint's vengeance is a far more prominent aspect of his identity, especially after death. Alcuin had explicitly reserved vengeance as an object of God himself, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, and in Alcuin's interpretation the saint occasionally seems oblivious of the vengeance God works on those who slight Willibrord. Alcuin recorded only one posthumous miracle of divine vengeance in his *Vita Willibrordi*, in which Willibrord was not personally involved. Thiofrid repeats these stories along

<sup>58</sup> Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 2, 36: *Cuius si quis uelit subtilius mores uitam que cognoscere, potest in eadem institutione regulae omnes magisterii illius actus inuenire, quia sanctus uir nullo modo potuit aliter docere quam uixit.* cf. also *Moralia in Iob* 31, 22.

<sup>59</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 474: *anima in carnis carcere*; ibidem, p. 475: *in carnis ergastulo*; ibidem 30, p. 478; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, v. 121, p. 484: *de carnis carcere ceo*; ibidem 2, v. 282, p. 493: *carcere carnis*; ibidem v. 720, p. 493: *carnis carcere ducto*.

<sup>60</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 474 and *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, v. 751, p. 494. Cf. also *Vita Liutwini* 7, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 21, ibidem 9, p. 25; ibidem 15, p. 36.

<sup>61</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 27, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 476 (addressing the monks of Echternach) and the verse counterpart, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 3, v. 166, p. 495; *Sermo in natale sancti Wilgisli abbatis*. Cf. WOLLASCH 1984, pp. 529-531.

much the same lines, and moreover added a biblical precept 'Give room to anger' (Romans 12:19).<sup>62</sup> Yet when he adds new material to Alcuin's narrative, the tone is markedly more vengeful. Willibrord, who 'was worthily and rightly called Clement through the dispensation of divine providence', also 'hurled vengeful spears of punishment at the rebellious and inflicted loss of life on the proud, just as he always stretched out his heart to suppliants of his piety'.<sup>63</sup> What follows is a catalogue of noblemen who infringed on the monastic possessions of Echternach, and accordingly met with a nasty end. Whereas Alcuin's ideas about sanctity, as argued previously, concerned the nobility as well as he aimed to provide a general concept of what a Christian society should be like, Thiofrid's view of nobles is a hostile one. It is difficult not to relate this to his dealings as abbot with various nobles and the difficulties of managing monastic possessions, and especially *Fernbesitz*.<sup>64</sup>

The vengeful aspect of the saint's character also emerges in the context of the story of the stealing deacon. Thiofrid reminded his audience of the biblical precept 'Be holy, for I am holy',<sup>65</sup> but then also listed examples of what happened to those who were killed for breaking this precept, such as Achan, son of Zerah (Joshua 7), Gehazi (2 Kings 5), and Ananias and Saphira (Acts 5). The last example is especially interesting because Thiofrid referred to Peter's compassion and the mildness of his character, which had cured Dorcas on another occasion. In the case of Ananias and Saphira, Thiofrid explained, the sword of Peter's apostolic authority outweighed Peter's merciful nature. It was for the sake of the church that the saint behaved more vengefully than he would have done on his own accord.<sup>66</sup> There are especially striking similarities between Peter's case and Willibrord's. Both worked under grace, rather than under the law, as Joshua and Elisha had done when they punished Achan and Gehazi respectively, and both were vengeful on account of their authority and responsibility for the church, against their clement character. Thiofrid's explanation for Peter's behaviour therefore applies in equal measure to Willibrord, especially as Thiofrid stated that he, whom Peter's vengeance does not please, cannot be a monk.<sup>67</sup> Peter's

<sup>62</sup> *Date locum ire*. Quoted in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 19, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 471, and alluded to in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 14, ibidem, p. 469, as *dans locum ire*.

<sup>63</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 32-33, ibidem, p. 479: (...) *ut digne ac iure constet eum Clementem nominatum divine dispensatione providentie. (33.) Sed sicut in supplices pietatis semper exeruit viscera, sic in rebelles et in contumaces ultricia aminadversionis intorsit spicula et vite intulit dispendia.*

<sup>64</sup> Van BERKUM 1993; BIJSTERVELD 1989, 1990; BIJSTERVELD [et al.] 1999; BLOK 1974; LAMPEN 1918, 1920d; NOOMEN 1999. The problem of rival claims on land were a common theme in early medieval monasteries' problems in managing their landed goods. Cf. MORRIS 2008, pp. 338-342.

<sup>65</sup> Leviticus 11:44 and 45, 19:2, and 20:26; 1 Peter 1:15-16.

<sup>66</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 27, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 476; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 3, vv. 180-196, pp. 495-496.

<sup>67</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 3, v. 196, ibidem, p. 496: *Esse nequit monachus, cui Petri displicet actus.*

example in the case of Ananias serves as a universal example to all churchmen who are responsible for the salvation of the souls of their flock.

## 5.2. Sanctity in the *Vita Liutwini*

In addition to his works on Willibrord, Thiofrid also composed lives for two other saints: Liutwin, a contemporary of Willibrord – founder of the abbey of Mettlach and archbishop of Trier as successor to his uncle Basin and predecessor of his own son Milo<sup>68</sup> – and Irmina, abbess of the nunnery of Oeren in Trier, whose involvement in the early history of Echternach has already been noted.<sup>69</sup> The *Vita Irminae* cannot be discussed here, given the problems we have in reconstructing what Thiofrid originally wrote.<sup>70</sup> This leaves us with the *Vita Liutwini*, which provides us with an opportunity to compare our findings from the *Vita Willibrordi*, just as we could compare our findings from Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* with his *Vita Richarii* and *Vita Vedasti*.<sup>71</sup> This text, though considerable in length and far longer than the earlier life of the saint, on which it was based,<sup>72</sup> is a good deal shorter than Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*. It was written earlier in Thiofrid's life, sometime between 1072 and 1078, before he became abbot of Echternach, around the same time he composed the *Sermo in natale sancti Wilgisi abbati*.<sup>73</sup>

Even if allowances must be made for the different time of composition, and even though Thiofrid's style is markedly less complex in his earlier works, compared to the *Vita Willibrordi* and the *Flores*,<sup>74</sup> the *Vita Liutwini* displays a lot of resemblance to the *Vita Willibrordi* in terms of the values attributed to both saints. Both Willibrord and Liutwin were founders of monasteries as well

<sup>68</sup> ANTON 1989a, pp. 156-160; EWIG 1987, pp. 136-141; GAUTHIER 1980, p. 293; WINHELLER 1935, pp. 86-87. Liutwin appears as a witness in several of Irmina's charters, as does his uncle Basin, his predecessor in Trier, but there are no further links with Echternach. Milo had the bad fortune of becoming a target for Boniface, as the example of what a bad bishop looked like. Thiofrid does not treat this controversy in his work in any way, and may well not have known of the connection.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. above, section 1.1.

<sup>70</sup> What we have are three significantly differing versions. None of the remaining versions (Hansen's edition, which is evidently interpolated, either by Hansen or by his source, and the two manuscript versions) seems to me to resemble Thiofrid's style. This goes against what was argued by FERRARI 1994a, p. 59-61. Cf. on the *Vita Irminae* HANSEN 1841; KNICHEL 2001; KRUSCH 1893, pp. 619-621; PONCELET 1889.

<sup>71</sup> There are few studies on the *Vita Liutwini*, but cf. WINHELLER 1935; FERRARI 1994a, pp. 58-59; on the reception: FERRARI 1994b.

<sup>72</sup> *Vita sancti Liutwini* (BHL 4955), AA SS Sept. 8, 3rd ed., pp. 169-172. This life was written after 941. Cf. GAUTHIER 1980, p. 360.

<sup>73</sup> LAMPEN (ed.) 1936, pp. xxvi-xxviii. Cf. BAUER 1996, p. 1010; FERRARI 1994a, pp. 58-59; SCHROEDER 1977, pp. 308-312.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. SMITH 1994 for a study of stylistic differences in the hagiographic production of a single author (Hucbald of Saint-Amand).

as archbishops, and Thiofrid described both primarily as monks. Liutwin's career had differed from Willibrord's in some respects as well. Willibrord had entered the monastery of Ripon at a tender age as an oblate, Liutwin had lived as a layman before he founded the monastery of Mettlach. He had even fathered a child, Milo. Like his description of Wilgis's life as a layman, Thiofrid's portrait of Liutwin's lay career focusses on Liutwin's forsaking of the aristocratic layman's life. From the beginning, the saint desired to follow Christ,<sup>75</sup> but he delayed his entry into the monastery, on the one hand because excessive zeal might be detrimental at his young age, and on the other hand because divine providence had decreed that he would have to father Milo.<sup>76</sup> Like Wilgis, Liutwin forsook luxury, and did not put his trust in his earthly riches,<sup>77</sup> and, also like Wilgis, he performed his tasks as a soldier in such a way as to prepare him for spiritual war,<sup>78</sup> which is equated with the monastic way of life at a later point in the *Vita Liutwini*.<sup>79</sup> Summing up the qualities of Liutwin's lay career, Thiofrid can find no better praise for his subject than to exclaim 'O man, house of the Holy Spirit, layman, example of virtue to all the orders of the church!'<sup>80</sup> This links Liutwin's lay life to the clerical state, while the monastic way of life is equated with the lot of saints,<sup>81</sup> and monks with true Christians,<sup>82</sup> indicating where Thiofrid's true interests lay.

Socially there is an interesting side note here. In early medieval monasticism, there was some discussion about who the ideal monks were: oblates, who entered the monastery when they were young through the vow of their parents and were brought up as monks, or *conversi*, who entered

<sup>75</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 2 (BHL 4956; ed. LAMPEN 1936), p. 7: (...) *iam mundo vellet crucifigi et tollere crucem suam et crucifixum sequi* (...)

<sup>76</sup> Ibidem, p. 8: (...) *quia divinae providentiae immutabile est decretum (...) de fructo ventris tui ponam super sedem tuam* (= Psalm 132 (131):11), *duxit uxorem titulis parentum insignem, ex qua genuit Milonem suum, ut competenti loco lector inveniet, in sancta Treverica sedes successorem*. Cf. also *Vita Liutwini* 16, ibidem, p. 37. On Liutwin's historical career, cf. ANTON 1989a and b, and EWIG 1987.

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem: (...) *luxuque carens* (...) and (...) *non laetatus est super multis divitiis suis, non putavit aurum robur suum* (...); Thiofrid, *Sermo in natale sancti Wilgisli abbatis: Aurum obrizum iuxta hystoricum sensum robur suum non putavit*. Cf. Job 31:24-28: *Si putavi aurum robur meum, et obrizo dixi: Fiducia mea; si laetatus sum super multis divitiis meis, et quia plurima reperit manus mea; (...) est iniquitas maxima, et negatio contra Deum altissimum*.

<sup>78</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 8, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 9: (...) *milem Christi sub chlamyde et candenti lino absconditum quibusdam praexercitamentibus in terrena exercuit militia, (...), ut ex similitudine huiusmodi militiae sciret stare ex adverso pro domo Israel in die praelii, ut non ignoraret disponere et confortare ad pugnam eos quibus collucatio esset non adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes tenebrarum harum, contra spiritualia nequiae in caelestibus* (= Ephesians 6:12); *Sermo in natale sancti Wilgisli abbatis: Nihil ei paludamentum et baltheus nocuit quia sub alterius habitu alteri militavit*. The passage on Wilgis derives in large part from a section in Jerome's praise of Nebridius in a letter to the latter's widow (Jerome *Epistula* 79).

<sup>79</sup> e.g. Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 8, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 24: (...) *ut tandem ostenderetur in opere magnitudo popularis laetitiae quae in eius mystice sonuit nomine*.

<sup>80</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 3, ibidem, p. 12: *O virum, Spiritus Sancti archisterium, o laicum omnibus ecclesiasticis ordinibus virtutum exemplum, (...)*.

<sup>81</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 4, ibidem, p. 15: *Ex negotiis saecularibus summi meriti laicus Liutwinus in parte sortis sanctorum in lumine electus* (...).

<sup>82</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 5, ibidem, p. 17: (...) *adunavit in sanctuarium Dei lapides pretiosos qui volvuntur super terram, de quibus Apocalypsi Ioannis civitas magni regis exstruitur, summae videlicet religionis viros* (...).

the monastery when they had grown up, and took the monastic vow on their own volition. The latter group was, by Thiofrid's time, gaining the upper hand, and child oblation was going out of fashion. Thiofrid, however, took a moderate view: Willibrord is an ideal monk and an oblate; Wilgisl and Liutwin (and the more contemporary monks Ekehard and Frithelo, mentioned in the *Vita Willibrordi*) are all *conversi*. Both *conversi* and *oblato* could therefore be good monks.<sup>83</sup>

In the *Vita Liutwini* monasticism is primarily a matter of forsaking of the world. This is not only true for the life of the layman Liutwin in the earlier chapters of the *Vita Liutwini*, who 'wanted to be crucified and carry his cross and follow the Crucified One',<sup>84</sup> but also for the portrait of the monastery founded by Liutwin in Mettlach, the monks of which 'carried around Jesus' death in their own body'.<sup>85</sup> The decision to found the monastery in Mettlach was initiated by a desire for a place 'fit for the exercise of a more remote life', not dissimilar from Willibrord's life, secluded from the world in Echternach.<sup>86</sup> The criticism of private property, implicit in the layman Liutwin's lack of interest in such things, is also implied in the description of the monks of Mettlach, who 'had nothing except Christ, as befits Christ's perfect servants',<sup>87</sup> and submitted their body and their desires to the abbot.<sup>88</sup> Their main occupation was the liturgy, exemplified by prayer and readings, which Thiofrid linked with an ascetic way of life when he wrote that Liutwin 'crucified with Christ on the cross, crucified his flesh with its sins and desires, expected the coming of the judge of the heart with sleepless vigils and lit lamps'.<sup>89</sup> The same chapter specifies that 'he removed all means of a more lenient life and impediments to sanctity away from him',<sup>90</sup> threw his body onto the naked earth, and fasted.<sup>91</sup> Liutwin, in short, 'lived in the flesh without the flesh, transgressed the confines of the flesh in contemplation'.<sup>92</sup> As such he was 'made from a worm into an angel'.<sup>93</sup> As in the case of Willibrord, divine predestination and foreknowledge are referred to in relation to Liutwin's future greatness.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Cf. De JONG 1996, pp. 100-101, 126-132, and 297-299.

<sup>84</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 2, ibidem, p. 7: (...) *vellet crucifigi et tollere crucem suam et crucifixum sequi* (...).

<sup>85</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 5, ibidem, p. 17: (...) *mortificationem Iesu in corpore suo circumferentes* (...).

<sup>86</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 4, ibidem, p. 14: *remotioris vitae studiis congruae*.

<sup>87</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 5, ibidem, p. 17: (...) *ut perfectos decet servos Christi, nihil habebant praeter Christum*.

<sup>88</sup> Ibidem, p. 20: *ut verus coenobita nec corpus suum nec voluntates in propria habens potestate*.

<sup>89</sup> Ibidem, p. 17: *Orationi lectio, lectioni successit oratio; Vita Liutwini* 7, p. 22: *Christo crucifixus cruci, carnem suam crucifixit cum vitis et corruptiscentis pervigilibus excubiis et lampadibus accensis expectabat adventum interni iudicis* (...). Cf. *Vita Liutwini* 7, p. 21: *elegit divitias in lege Domini meditari die ac nocte*.

<sup>90</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 7, p. 22: *Omnia remissioris vitae instrumenta et sanctitatis a se removit impedimenta* (...). Cf. *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 4, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 463: *Non remissioris vitae sectatus est lenocinia*, (...).

<sup>91</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 7, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 23.

<sup>92</sup> Ibidem: *In carne vixit sine carne, claustra carnis transivit contemplatione*.

<sup>93</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 10, ibidem, p. 27: *ex verme factus angelus*. Cf. also the remark on Liutwin's desire for his own death, *Vita Liutwini* 14, ibidem, p. 34, and the juxtaposition with Liutwin's resurrection at the second coming, *Vita Liutwini* 23, ibidem, p. 44.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. below, on the importance of names in Thiofrid's thought.

*Deus, Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ex quo omnis paternitas in caelis et in terra nominatur plerosque sanctorum quos ante informis materiae formam et ornatum praescivit et praedestinavit specialius quoque praevenit et sublimavit gratia septiformis Spiritus sui et eos aut ante mundo cognosci quam nasci, ante habere nomina quam corpora, aut iam natis praeter nomen novum quod os Domini nominavit, ea preordinavit imponi vel commutari nomina, quibus praesignatur quam praeclara, quam magnifica eius futura essent in operationis merita.*

God, Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from which all paternity in the Heavens and on Earth is named and who foreknew and predestined all of the saints before the form and shape of their unformed matter and more particularly preceded and sublimated them through the grace of his sevenfold Spirit, also preordained names to be given to them or to be changed, either to be known to the world before born, to have names before they have bodies, or even a new name, which the Lord's mouth called those that were already born, with which it would be made known in advance how famous, how great their future merit would be.<sup>95</sup>

Thiofrid then applied this to Liutwin. His name (from 'liut-', meaning people, and '-win', meaning 'wine') is explained in two complementary ways: as 'joy of the people', as wine makes man's heart happy, and as a pointer to the fact that Liutwin would consecrate the wine of the Eucharist, the true cause of man's joy. The theme is repeated in a later section of the *Vita Liutwini*.<sup>96</sup> These passages are significant, for they underline the association of names with predestination and the Eucharist – on which we will return below.<sup>97</sup> The importance of the Eucharist in the *Vita Liutwini* is manifest in other ways as well. Two examples of this are the story of Liutwin's ordination and the miracle which he is said to have performed while still living in the flesh. At his election as archbishop, Thiofrid had Liutwin protest that he is not worthy of the dignity of the office. One of the arguments Liutwin provides is that his secular career has left blood on his hands, thereby rendering him incapable of consecrating the sacrament.<sup>98</sup> Though he is eventually ordained, the reasoning behind Liutwin's argument is not refuted.

<sup>95</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 1, ed. LAMPEN 1936, pp. 5-6.

<sup>96</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 8, ibidem, p. 24: (...) *ut tandem ostenderetur in opere magnitudo popularis laetitiae quae in eius mystice sonuit nomine*; *Vita Liutwini* 10, ibidem, p. 28: *Et cum Liutwinus praeter quod, ut iam dictum est, metonomicos populi laetitia, secundum theutonice idioma linguae etiam interpretetur populi vinum (...)*; ibidem, p. 29: *Secundum etymologiam sui nominis laetificabat populum in Dei operibus suis et directa est salus in manu eius (...)*.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. below, 5.4.

<sup>98</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 8, ibidem, p. 25: (...) *non decree, se utpote ab annis adolescentiae educatum sub alis terrenae militiae, humano contaminatum sanguine, incontaminati et immaculate Agni, Christi, sacrosancta mysteria conficere.*

The single miracle which Liutwin works in Thiofrid's *Vita Liutwini* also concerns the Eucharist. At the time of the miracle, Thiofrid said, Liutwin was simultaneously bishop, or archbishop, in three places: Trier, Reims, and Laon. As the saint prepared to celebrate mass in Reims one day, the story goes, a delegation from Laon asked the saint to come to their town and celebrate mass there as well. Liutwin, who does not want to disappoint the honest desire of the people of Laon, prays to God, reminding him of the miracle performed at Gibeon (Joshua 10:12-14), where the Sun and Moon stood still to allow Israel to gain a victory over its enemies. God hears out Liutwin's request, the sun stands still, and Liutwin celebrates mass in Reims and Laon on a single day.<sup>99</sup> The miracle story again suggests the importance of the Eucharist in Thiofrid's thought.

### 5.3. Sanctity in the *Flores Epytaphii Sanctorum*

Thiofrid's ideas about sanctity in his *Vita Willibrordi* and *Vita Liutwini* can also be found by looking at his *Flores Epytaphii Sanctorum*, the work that provides by far the most extensive systematic discussion of Thiofrid's thought about sanctity. This discussion is, however, still subordinate to the overall purpose of the work, which was to explain and celebrate the power of relics. *Flores Epytaphii Sanctorum* is also distinctive because it uses a different set of examples of sanctity. Whereas the *vitae* describe the (monastic) life of confessors, many of the saints celebrated in the *Flores* are martyrs. The fourth book is even devoted exclusively to the instruments of their martyrdom.<sup>100</sup> The first thing to notice about the discussion of sanctity in the *Flores*, therefore, is that it underlines a point made earlier in relation to the story of Willibrord's desire for martyrdom: that Thiofrid saw two ways to become a saint; either through a monastic life, or through death as a martyr. The martyrs Thiofrid mentioned, however, are far from contemporary. They belong to the distant past, mostly, though, given the case of Willibrord's mishap in Walcheren, not exclusively, to Antiquity. This means that, though Thiofrid acknowledged the theoretical existence of another way to become a saint through martyrdom, sanctity was to all accounts and purposes a monastic affair for himself and his contemporaries.

In the first book of the *Flores* Thiofrid argued that the essential characteristic of mankind is the struggle between body and soul. The body, Thiofrid says, stems from the earth, and therefore

<sup>99</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 13, pp. 32-33.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. below, section 6.3.

by its nature belongs to the earth and thus to sin. The soul, on the other hand, belongs to Heaven and thus to God. By nature, therefore, the soul wants man to ascend to heaven, while the body is by nature inclined to sin, and will condemn man's soul to ruin if it gains the upper hand.<sup>101</sup> This point of view touches on statements and ideas found in Thiofrid's *Lives* of Willibrord, Wilgisl, and Liutwin. In the *Vita Willibrordi*, Thiofrid speaks of man as a *mycrocosmus*, a miniature creation.<sup>102</sup> He clearly believed the struggle between good and evil that was fought on the level of creation as a whole, was also fought within each person individually.

This dualist view of man and of creation also explains why Thiofrid attached so much importance to forsaking the world. If one explicitly equates the earth and the body with sin, any undue involvement with the earth, any undue care for the body has potentially lethal consequences for the sake of one's soul. Conversely, if the soul gains the upper hand, it will not only save itself, but also the body to which it is bound. This is Thiofrid's key point. It explains that not only the soul of the saint is a piece of heaven on earth, but also that this holds true for the body of the saint. To this definition of relics and its consequences for Thiofrid's theology of relics we will return later; what matters here is that this also gives us Thiofrid's implicit definition of a saint: someone whose soul has conquered his body, who has thereby been saved, and thus belongs to heaven by nature.<sup>103</sup>

Thiofrid also provides another image of sanctity in the *Flores* when he describes saints, and specifically their corporeal remains, as members of the body of Christ. The image has a biblical origin,<sup>104</sup> and it also has similarities to the idea of being in Christ, or being one with Christ,<sup>105</sup> but in the *Flores*, Thiofrid takes the notion of the saints being the body of Christ and the saints being one with Christ literally, to the extent that it affects the essence of the bodies of the saints.<sup>106</sup> These bodies, Thiofrid argues in *Flores* 1, 5, are like the body of Christ himself, which he compares to the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark had contained the stone tables on which the Ten Commandments had been written, but the law of the New Covenant would be written on the hearts of men (2 Corinthians 3:3). This, Thiofrid implies, refers to the saints, and this dual association of saints with both Covenants and Christ's body – of which, he says in the same passage, they are the members

<sup>101</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores Epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 2.

<sup>102</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 1, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 461; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, v. 55, ibidem, p. 483.

<sup>103</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores Epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 2 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 14): *Et reuera exceptis angelis lucis nihil in creaturis felicius est homine qui a carne non superatur sed desideris eius que militant aduersus animam dominatur, nihil item exceptis spiritibus apostatis infelicius est homine qui cotidie de uita periclitatur, et cuius anime libertas captiuatur*. Cf. below, section 6.1.

<sup>104</sup> notably 1 Corinthians 12:12 and Ephesians 1:10.

<sup>105</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:17: *Qui autem adhaeret Domino, unus spiritus est*.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. for this, in addition to the passage mentioned in the next note, Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 3. Cf also ANGENENDT 2000, pp. 303-304.

– also cements their place within a larger narrative of human salvation.<sup>107</sup> The likening of the bodies of saints with the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant is a recurrent theme in Thiofrid's writing. Willibrord's relics, for example, are called an Ark in the *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>108</sup> As this work was written shortly after the passage in the *Flores*, we may assume that it was composed under the influence of the same reasoning.

Thiofrid was not the first to make a comparison between the Ark of the Covenant and the relics of the saints. The oldest comparison of this type I could find is in Stephen of Ripon's *Vita sancti Wilfrithi* (composed c. 720) – but it should be noted that the simile there is with a very specific Old Testament story, namely the Philistine captivity of the Ark (1 Samuel 4-5).<sup>109</sup> This was decidedly not what Thiofrid thought of, as he alluded to sections of the Torah, but even so Thiofrid's thought in this respect is not unique.<sup>110</sup> Relics could, and were, likened to the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant, even if Thiofrid is exceptionally explicit and theological in his comparison. The more common comparison, however, was between the Ark and relic containers.<sup>111</sup>

Thiofrid's *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, then, provides us with two explanations of what sanctity is: the victory of the soul over the body, and the partaking of the saint in Christ, and especially Christ's death.<sup>112</sup> These two are not mutually exclusive, especially if one assumes, as Thiofrid evidently did, that the victory of the soul over the bodies of the saints was a matter of divine

<sup>107</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores Epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 5, ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 23: *Cumque omnia que tropologice de electorum dicuntur capite ipsis quoque membris congruant mystice anime etiam sanctorum et somata sunt testamenti arca intus et foris auro tecta, quia intus fulgent diuina scientia et foris optima morum congruentia et in eis posita est testificatio id est omnis sancte doctrine abundantia, et ex utroque latere assistunt Cherubin (angelorum uidelicet custodia) ut interius exterius que muniantur ab exterminatoris Egypti sequitia.* HAHN 2012, p. 240 in my opinion misinterprets this passage by taking it to refer to reliquaries, rather than the relics contained within. Cf. also below.

<sup>108</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, vv. 139-140 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 498): *Arca Dei vivi transfertur, soma patroni; / Arę sub mensa celestis ponitur arca.* Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 34 (ibidem, p. 480): (...) *mystica arca testamenti Domini translata et deducta in iubilo* (...). Cf. also the description of Willibrord and Sergius as the two mystical angels on the lid of the Ark in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 7, p. 464.

<sup>109</sup> Stephen of Ripon, *Vita sancti Wilfrithi episcopi Eboracensis* 39 (BHL 8889), ed. LEVISON 1913, p. 232; ed. COLGRAVE 1927, p. 78: *Et nunc, fili mi, secundum consilium matris tue fac, disrumpe vincula eius et sanctas reliquias, quas regina de collo spoliati abstraxit et in perniciem sui, sicut arca Dei, per civitates ducens, per fidelem nuntium emitte ei, et si nolueris, quod optimum est, illum in episcopatu habere, dimitte* (Levison: *dimittere*) *eum liberum, et de regno tuo cum suis, quocumque voluerit, abscedat.*

<sup>110</sup> *Aduocationes Beate Marię Virginis*, ed. SINUÉS RUIZ 1948, p. 27: *ARCA Dei Mater dicitur, quia velut arca testamenti veteris legis corbanam in quo reliquie souanrii (?) erant continebat, sic diua Uirgo thesaurum desiderabilem equo totus mundus repletur, scilicet Dei Filium, in se tenuit.*

<sup>111</sup> Both in texts, e.g. Hraban Maur, *De institutione clericorum* 2, 45, ed. ZIMPEL 2006, p. 378: *Nam quod in dedicatione templi in nocte praecedente diem dedicationis reliquiae sanctorum feretro conditae in tentorio vigiliis custodiuntur, quid aliud demonstrat, quam quod arca testamenti cum sanctis, quae in ea erant, in tabernaculo Mosaico ante aedificationem templi per excubias leuitarum servabatur?; Inventio Sancti Mathiae* 3 (BHL 5698), ed. WAITZ 1848, p. 229: *Arca autem sacras habens reliquias* (...); Richer of Saint-Rémi, *Historiae* 3, 23, ed. HOFFMANN 2000, p. 182: *Nec minus et arcam opere eleganti decoravit. In qua virgam et manna id est sanctorum reliquias operuit*, and also on reliquaries themselves, e.g. on the Arca santa of Oviedo (late 11<sup>th</sup> c., roughly contemporary with Thiofrid), which bears an inscription which self-defines the object as an *Arca*. I owe this reference to Elisa Pallottini. HAHN 2012, p. 240, which states that Thiofrid's discussion of the Ark is the usual one, overlooks this point. On Hraban, cf. APPLEBY 1995.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. FERRARI 2005, pp. 62-64.

predestination. Taken together, predestination, salvation, and victory of the soul over the body were three aspects of the same process, namely the history of God's work in creation. The victory of the soul over the body in the individual saint is simply how predestined salvation works, while salvation itself is the process which binds the individual saints and unifies them into the body of Christ, and also gives them their purpose within the history of the world as a whole. The body of Christ in all of this is key. Through martyrdom, through the imitation of Christ, or liturgically in the Eucharist, people partake in Christ and therefore become part of his body and are hence saved. This goes to emphasize the crucial role of the Eucharist in Thiofrid's thinking.

#### 5.4. Macrocosmos, *mycrocosmus* and predestination

After this discussion of the general principles of sanctity in Thiofrid's various works, I would like to focus on a few of his ideas in greater detail, beginning with his ideas about the origins of sanctity. The point to begin such a synthesis of Thiofrid's works is the passage in his *Vita Willibrordi* about divine predestination and the *mycrocosmus*. The gist of this passage is that God created man just as he had created the whole of creation, in accordance with his divine will.<sup>113</sup> A similar remark has been noted in the opening words of the *Vita Liutwini*,<sup>114</sup> even if the wording is somewhat different, and the word *mycrocosmus* does not appear. Divine predestination, then, is the origin of sanctity, and it is an essential part of God's plan with the world as a whole.

Divine predestination is also what causes 'names to exist before creation. Thiofrid clearly stood in a tradition of what one could call 'nominal realism' for want of a better term. Late antique and early medieval thought had a long tradition of seeing names as indicative of the objects they described, partially on the basis of Ancient, pagan tradition, partially on biblical precedent.<sup>115</sup> Thiofrid clearly knew of this tradition, as he quotes Jerome's work on the meaning of Hebrew names in the Old Testament – though perhaps only through the intermediary source preserved in a manuscript from Echternach<sup>116</sup> – and he certainly knew Isidore of Seville's classic discussion of etymology.<sup>117</sup> The link between God's name and the names of saints, however, not only draws on

<sup>113</sup> Cf. above, section 5.1.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. above, section 5.2.

<sup>115</sup> The classic discussion is CURTIUS 1953, pp. 486-490.

<sup>116</sup> PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 10443. Cf. McKITTEK 2000, p. 509; eadem 2002, p. 206.

<sup>117</sup> Isidore, *Etymologies* 1, 29, *De etymologia*, ed. LINDSAY 1911 (n.p.). Cf. CURTIUS 1953, p. 487. The text was probably available in Echternach in the ms. now PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 10291, copied in Eastern France in the third quarter of the ninth century, and bearing the owner's mark of Echternach. The manuscript is not mentioned by McKitterick (as in the preceding note); cf. BISCHOFF 2014, p. 160, nr. 4624; STEINOVÁ 2016, p. 377, nr. 3.

this tradition in medieval *grammatica*, but also on the theological notions of predestination and the pre-existence of God's Word.

The word *mycrocosmus*, mentioned in passing in the preceding discussion, deserves some more attention. The word is rare in Latin. Only five authors had used it before Thiofrid, and two of those instances were too obscure to have been known to him: a poem of Gerhard of Seeon to emperor Henry II in a *codex unius* in Bamberg,<sup>118</sup> and the preface to Hraban Maur's *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, which is transmitted only in four manuscripts, none of which has any connection with Echternach.<sup>119</sup> In addition to these two instances, Aldhelm had used the word in the prose explanation of his poem on chastity,<sup>120</sup> and Isidore of Seville used it once in the *Etymologies*.<sup>121</sup> Bede had used the word on three occasions: twice in *De temporum ratione* (once in the chapter that was also known separately as the *Chronica maiora*), and once in *De tabernaculo*.<sup>122</sup> Aldhelm and Bede both translated the term as 'smaller world' (*minor mundus*) and Bede said he derives the term from the Greek language and from a philosophical tradition. Only Isidore can be related to a manuscript with an Echternach provenance, but in the *Sermon on the Feast of Willibrord* Thiofrid cites Bede's *Chronica*. It is therefore likely that either the *Chronica* or *De temporum ratione*, of which the *Chronica* is an excerpt, is the source of his use of the term, if it was not derived from Thiofrid's reading of Isidore. Like Thiofrid, Bede related the term to the larger story of human salvation, saying that what is true for the world, that it has six ages, is also true for the microcosmos, that is: for every human being individually.<sup>123</sup>

For his use of the word *mycrocosmus* to depict sanctity as divinely preordained Thiofrid was indebted to an older theological tradition represented by Isidore and Bede. But Thiofrid also added elements of his own making. One of these is the attention he devotes to the meaning of names.

<sup>118</sup> ed. STRECKER 1937, p. 397, as nr. 40.

<sup>119</sup> Hraban, *Epistola* 8, ed. DÜMMLER 1899, p. 393-394.

<sup>120</sup> Aldhelm, *De virginitate prosa* 3: *Et quidem uniuersa haec, quae per gymnosofistas exerceri deprompsimus inter scolares saecularium disciplinas, apud uestri discipulatus industriam non exterioris hominis motibus aguntur, sed interioris gestibus geruntur, siquidem microcosmum id est minorem mundum ex duplici et gemina materiae substantia constare uestrae sagacitatis solertiam non arbitror latere, quin potius, sicut exterioris hominis natura, qui in propatulo formatus uisibiliter conspicitur, haud difficillime deprehendi potest, ita interioris qualitatem, qui caelesti afflatus spiraculo iuxta Geneseos relatum creditur, a uestra prudentia membratim et particulatim subtiliter inuestigatam reor.*

<sup>121</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 3, 23, 2: *Sed haec ratio quemadmodum in mundo est ex uolubilitate circularum, ita et in microcosmo in tantum praeter uocem ualet, ut sine ipsius perfectione etiam homo symphoniis carens non constet.*

<sup>122</sup> Bede, *De temporum ratione* 35: *Sed et homo ipse, qui a sapientibus microcosmos, id est minor mundus, appellatur, hisdem per omnia qualitibus habet temperatum corpus, imitantibus nimirum singulis eius quibus constat humoribus, modum temporum quibus maxime pollet;* ibidem 66 (= *Chronica maiora*): *De sex huius mundi aetatibus ac septima vel octava quietis uitaeque caelestis et supra in comparatione primae ebdomadis, in qua mundus ornatus est, aliquanta perstrinximus, et nunc in comparatione aevi unius hominis, qui microcosmos Graecae a philosophis, hoc est, minor mundus solet nuncupari, de eisdem aliquanto latius exponemus;* *De tabernaculo* 3: *Unde et a physiologis graecae homo microcosmos, id est minor mundus, uocatur.*

<sup>123</sup> Cf. the previous footnote.

The names of a number of biblical figures (Nabal, Deborah, Zechariah, and Andrew), saints (Liutwin, Willibrord, and Sergius), an abbot (Reginbert), and one pagan king (Ongend of Denmark), are explained according to their (presumed) etymology. Ongend's name simply indicates his character, as Thiofrid says it means 'he is nothing but a pagan'.<sup>124</sup> This etymology reinforces Ongend's role in the narrative, as it explains why Willibrord failed to convert the Danes. The name of Thiofrid's predecessor as abbot of Echternach, Reginbert, implied that he was 'directed most excellently in the supervision and control of holy religion'.<sup>125</sup> For the meaning of biblical names Thiofrid borrowed from biblical commentaries, including a glossary of the meaning of Hebrew words in the Old Testament, that was in turn derived from a work of Jerome. Thus Nabal is translated as 'fool', Deborah as 'bee', and Zechariah as 'mindful of the Lord'.<sup>126</sup> Andrew's name is linked to the Greek *ανδρ* ('man'), and taken as a sign of the saint's (manly) virtue. The names of the saints all refer to salvation: Sergius' name is interpreted as 'saver of gentiles',<sup>127</sup> Willibrord's name is explained as meaning 'willing bread',<sup>128</sup> and Liutwin's name received the double explanation 'wine of the people' and 'joy of the people', indicative of Liutwin's role as a priest, who consecrates the wine of the Eucharist and thereby gives the people the source of true joy.<sup>129</sup> Willibrord's name is not explicitly linked with the bread of the Eucharist, or Christ as the Bread of life,<sup>130</sup> but the *Vita Willibrordi* does play on the notion of the Bread of life in relation to Willibrord's ministry,<sup>131</sup> and a link with the Eucharist is thereby implied.

Thiofrid was very interested in the way in which saints' names represented a source of divine power, and devoted a chapter of the third book of the *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* to this subject. The place of this chapter within the *Flores* is significant. In the third book, Thiofrid turns to those things

<sup>124</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, v. 28: 'On' est ens, quod prodit ab 'est': generis vice non est.

<sup>125</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 4, 7: (...) archyterium sanctę Efternacensis ecclesię ygumenus Reginbertus nomine (secundum ethimologiam nominis sui excellentissime in sanctę religionis proposito et regimine gubernatus) (...). Reginbert derives from the words Regin- ('to rule') and -bertus ('shining').

<sup>126</sup> The glossary PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France lat. 10443 has been mentioned earlier. The passages referred to are: Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 22, ed. PONCELET 1910, pp. 472-473: (...) nomine et meritis memoris Domini Zacharię apostolici (...),

Ibidem 27, p. 476: (...) instar Nabal Carmeli iuxta nomen suum stulti (...),

Ibidem 35, p. 481: Secundum mysticę apis Debbore canticum (...).

<sup>127</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, v. 402: Sergius huic nomen, servantis gentibus omen.

<sup>128</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 2: (...) atque vite fonte regenerato, nomen, quod per penultimi elipsin elementi iuxta thetonicę ydioma lingue voluntarius panis sonat, Willibrort imposuit; cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, vv. 68-72.

<sup>129</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita sancti Liutwini* 1, ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 6: Liutwin vero, cum secundum os er organum Spiritus Sancti David vinum laetificet cor hominis, interpretatur populi laetitia. (...) Et filius Liutwin nomen est sortitus, quia vinum erat propinaturus, quod in nuptiis Christi et Ecclesie admiratus est architriclinius.

<sup>130</sup> John 6: 51-52, a reference which appears in *Flores Epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 4.

<sup>131</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 12, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 468: Dumque diatim Christi Domini daptilis economus dominicę familie affatim sumministraret evangelici tritici diaria (...); *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, vv. 448-450 (ibidem, p. 491): Daptilis antistes, tanto sub honore recedens, / In fines Fresię statuit maturius ire, / Quo saciet gentem divini panis egentem.

that belong to the saints, but are not corporeal, which he calls the ‘external attachments of the saints’.<sup>132</sup> These range from the names of saints, through the shadows of their bodies, to things that modern historians tend to describe as ‘contact relics’: staffs, clothing, utensils, all kinds of liquids that had been in contact with the saint or carried his blessing, and the objects that were used in the martyrdom of the martyred saints.

According to Thiofrid, the names of the saints are transient and enduring at the same time. He explains this, saying that names in general are fleeting by their nature, gone after the moment they are spoken, but the names of the saints are eternal, because ‘through the Word, God with God in the beginning, they are enduring (...) through participation and communion of its unchanging and lasting nature in its natural transition’.<sup>133</sup> The names of the saints, therefore, have become one in substance with the Word of God. This process is said to be the result of divine predestination,<sup>134</sup> which fills saints with God’s Spirit, which overflows from the saints into their bodies, and through those bodies and all their external attachments, into the world.<sup>135</sup> This process, however, does not explain how the names of kings Ongend and Radbod became prophetic of their bearers’ behaviour. Thiofrid’s discussion of names in the *Flores* therefore does not cover all of the statements made about names in the *Vita Willibrordi*.

There is, again, a clear similarity between Thiofrid’s description of the Eucharist, and the invocation of saints. Both are effected by the spoken word,<sup>136</sup> and both effect a real presence, with saving qualities. In the case of the Eucharist, this is the real presence of Christ, in the case of the invocation, it is the presence of the saints. Thiofrid consciously drew on this analogy in the chapter on names as well:<sup>137</sup>

*Et sicut dominici corporis et sanguinis mysterium quod in specie panis et uini cotidie per sacerdotum conficitur ministerium uere ac absque ulla dubitatione fidelium representat illud corpus Christi Domini quod crucifixum, quod lancea militis perfossum est et mortuum, et illum cruorem qui de perfosso Crucifixi somate cum aqua profusus est redemptionis humane precium, sic inuocatio sanctificatorum*

<sup>132</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 1: *eorum* (scil. *sanctorum*, JV) *appendiciis exterioribus*.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibidem*: *Nomina quippe eorum uiuunt in secula, et per Verbum in principio Deum apud Deum (...) transitua participatione tamen et communiōe inmutabilis et intransitiue nature in ipsa naturali transitione sua sunt intransitiua, (...)*.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. the conclusion of the chapter on names: *Sanctus sanctorum Deus eterna sua prouidentia ante mundi constitutionem ac ornatum inmutabili preordinauit et disposuit sententia (...)*.

<sup>135</sup> The verb *transfundo* appears in several places in *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* in this sense, e.g. the opening sentence of *Flores* 3, 2: *Cum autem diuine uirtutis excellentia sine transitione transeuntia nomina tanta ubique accumularet et comitetur gloria nimirum in umbras quoque corporum se in uberi transfundit misericordia, et ingenti stupore attonita percellit mortalium pectora*.

<sup>136</sup> I thank Els Rose and Marco Mostert for drawing my attention to this fact, in personal communication in April 2017.

<sup>137</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 1.

*nominum absque omni ambiguitate promerentibus insinuat omnem interne uirtutis ueritatem et potentiam ac presentiam regnantium cum incircumscripto Spiritu spirituum.*

And just as the mystery of the body and blood of the Lord, which is prepared daily in the guise of bread and wine through the ministry of the priests truly and without any cause for doubt makes present that body of Christ, which was crucified, which was pierced by the soldier's lance, and dead, and that blood which flowed forth from the pierced body of the Crucified with water, the price of man's redemption, just so the invocation of the sanctified names teaches the deserving every truth of internal virtue and power and presence of those, ruling with the indescribable Spirit of spirits, without any ambiguity.

This reliance on the theology of the sacraments is not without a context.<sup>138</sup> Some decades before Thiofrid wrote the *Flores*, the teachings of Berengar of Tours and their eventual refutation had led to more awareness of a need for clarification of the theology of the Eucharist, which would eventually develop into the adoption of the teaching of Transubstantiation as Church doctrine.<sup>139</sup> In the 1040s, Berengar of Tours developed a theory about the Eucharist, primarily under the influence of the writings of Augustine, and the ninth-century theologian Ratramnus of Corbie. Like Ratramnus, Berengar argued that there was no real presence of Christ in the host of the Eucharist.<sup>140</sup> This view attracted a number of influential adversaries, notably Lanfranc of Bec. In antithesis to Berengar, and following the work of another monk of Corbie and contemporary of Ratramnus, Paschasius Radbertus, Lanfranc developed another argument, namely that Christ was really present in the Eucharist.<sup>141</sup> Berengar was condemned in Rome in 1050, and subsequently also at a number of synods in France, between 1054 and 1059.<sup>142</sup> The Berengarian controversy continued all the way into the 1070s, however, until Berengar was again condemned, in Rome, in 1079. Even then Berengar refused to accept the doctrine that would later be called

<sup>138</sup> Cf. CHADWICK 1990; EVANS 2000; HOLOPAINEN 1998; MACY 1990; MATTER 2008, p. 519; RADDING & NEWTON 2003.

<sup>139</sup> The way towards that adoption was not as simple as it has sometimes been depicted, and even the term Transubstantiation did not yet exist in Thiofrid's days. The first use of the term Transubstantiation is credited to Roland Bandinellis, the later pope Alexander III, around the middle of the twelfth century. Cf. GOERING 1991; JORISSEN 1965, p. 7.

<sup>140</sup> FERRARI 1995, pp. 222-223.

<sup>141</sup> On the history of these positions, cf. CHADWICK 1990, p. 35; GRABMANN 1909, pp. 218-219; GANZ 1995, pp. 777-780; MATIS 2012; TAVARD 1979, pp. 98-101.

<sup>142</sup> MACY 1985 and 1990; RADDING & NEWTON 2003.

Transubstantiation.<sup>143</sup> We know that Thiofrid was aware of the controversy, for he refers to Berengar's supporters in *Flores* 4:<sup>144</sup>

*Et utinam diuinę uirtutis aspiratio Berengarię hereseos complices non morbo exulceret podagrico sed interni consilii sui antidoto a simili blasphemię liberet peste ac periculo, qui dum plus quam oportet sapere sapiunt ad nimium calorem transeunt ab aquis niuium, et sicut panem et calicem in altari humanę reconciliationis et fidei mysterium non credunt uerum esse corpus et sanguinem dominicum, sic tam inconsulta quam prophana temeritate omni sophistica argutia syllogismorum ac enthymematum persuadere conantur mentibus dogmata sua admirantium, ne inflexione genuum et effusione fletuum cuiilibet saluificę cruci formatę ad illius similitudinem in qua pependit salus angelorum et hominum reuerentiam et honorem inpendant debitum.*

(...) if only the breath of divine strength would not cause the heretical accomplices of Berengar to fester with its bite of gout, but would liberate them from a similar disease and threat of blasphemy with the antidote of its internal counsel, who, go over to excessive heat while they know more than is right to taste from waters of snow. Just as they do not believe that the bread and wine on the altar of human reconciliation and the mystery of faith is the Lord's true body and blood, just so they try to persuade the minds of their admirers to their teachings with both unwise and unholy temerity, with every sophistic trickery of syllogisms and arguments, lest they would attach due reverence and honour with the bowing of knees and the shedding of tears to whatever saving cruciform object similar to the one on which the salvation of angels and men hung.

Thiofrid suggests that Berengar's supporters (whoever they might be)<sup>145</sup> not only doubted the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but also questioned the value of honouring the symbol of the cross through their syllogisms and sophistry.<sup>146</sup> The fact that Thiofrid quotes Jerome's criticism of sophistry in the prologue to his *Commentary on Amos* suggests that his objections are

<sup>143</sup> RADDING & NEWTON 2003.

<sup>144</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 4, 7. Cf. FERRARI 1995, pp. 222-223.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. below, section 6.1.

<sup>146</sup> On the development of logic in the late eleventh and early twelfth century, cf. MARENBON 2000, pp. 4-5; TWEEDALE 1988.

fundamentally concerned with the application of dialectics in theology.<sup>147</sup> Thus, Thiofrid suggests, if the Berengarian logicians have their wicked dialectical way with the Eucharist and the sign of the cross, a host of other devotional practices, including, implicitly, the veneration of saints in their relics, and their names would be open for debate. This is all the more troubling for Thiofrid, as he sees the same principle at work in all of these phenomena. According to Thiofrid, divine power and grace overflow from God into his saints, into the Eucharist and the liturgy, and into all the eternal attachments of the saints, including their names. God is therefore physically present in all of these. This theological truth matters more to him than the rules of logic. Throughout the *Flores*, God's overflowing is underlined through the use of the verbs *fluo* (and derivative terms, such as *effluo*, *affluentia*, *flumina*),<sup>148</sup> and *fundo* (*infundo*, *transfundo*).<sup>149</sup> If the Berengarians questioned the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, therefore, this also affects the possibility of the saints to be present in their relics, and the fabric of the church as a whole.

Like Thiofrid, his near-contemporary Guibert of Nogent discussed relics in relation to Eucharistic theology. However, Guibert's use of Eucharistic thinking has nothing in common with Thiofrid's. For the abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy, the monks of Soissons are practicing things contrary to Christian teaching by displaying Christ's deciduous tooth. According to Guibert, however, there can be no such tooth on earth, as the presence of Christ's historical body on this earth in the guise of relics would mean that the Eucharist was without function. After all, the Eucharist was instituted, Guibert argued, to make Christ present in this world. But if he was already present in the remains of his incarnate body, there would be no reason for him to have a second

<sup>147</sup> Jerome, *In Amos* 1, 1: *nectes eius et firmissimae serae eius, euticus et eunomius, qui syllogismis et enthymematibus, immo sophismatibus et pseudomenis atque soritis, quae male ab aliis inuenta sunt, roborare conantur*. Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 4, 2, ed FERRARI 1996, p. 88: *Et utinam diuine uirtutis aspiratio Berengariane hereseos complices non morbo exulceret podagrico sed interni consilii sui antidoto a simili blasphemie liberet peste ac periculo, qui dum plus quam oportet sapere sapiunt ad nimium calorem transeunt ab aquis niuium, et sicut panem et calicem in altari humane reconciliationis et fidei mysterium non credunt uerum esse corpus et sanguinem dominicum, sic tam inconsulta quam prophana temeritate omni sophistica argutia syllogismorum ac enthymematum persuadere conantur mentibus dogmata sua admirantium, ne inflexione genuum et effusione fletuum cuiuslibet saluifice cruci formate ad illius similitudinem in qua pependit salus angelorum et hominum reuerentiam et honorem inpendant debitum*. Cf. on the influence of Augustine on Berengar (and Lanfranc) with regard to the application of logic to theology HOLOPAINEN 1998.

<sup>148</sup> E.g. *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 5: *Sancti sane Dei de quorum uentre profluxerunt flumina aque uine (spirituales profecto gratie et fluente celestis doctrine) (...)*.

<sup>149</sup> E.g. *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 3: *Sicut enim sermo Dei uiuus et efficax et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti usque ad diuisionem anime ac spiritus compagum quoque et medullarum mystice pertingit, sic sancte uis anime cum Deo iam regnantis ab intimis ad extima ad se cum in carnis carcere clausam tum in celestis Hierusalem municipatum translata pertinentia se mirifice diffundit, et quicquid sanctis preuenientibus ac intercedentibus meritis per carnem et ossa mirabile gerit idem mirabilis de dissoluto puluere in omnia tam exteriora quam interiora cuiuscumque materie uel precii tante fauille ornamenta et operimenta transfundit*; ibidem 3, 3: *Et cum spiritus sancti organum David canat, uirga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt, et uirga Dei (disciplina profecto Dei) et baculus Dei (sustentatio uidelicet Dei) in omni tribulatione carnis et spiritus ipsa consolata sint omnes electos Dei, et ita sibi confederentur uirga et baculus ut neque absque baculi sustentatione uirge correctio neque sine uirge correctione baculi omnifariam prodesse possit sustentatio, iure ac eque precellenti preconio eadem que in sanctificatas uirgas in baculorum quoque sustentamina diuine uirtutis transfusa glorificatur operatio*.

body in the Eucharist. Thus, by presenting the absurdity of a corporeal relic of Christ (Guibert argued), the monks assaulted the validity of the core of the liturgy of the Church.<sup>150</sup>

Thiofrid's thought related the Eucharist to relics in a completely different way, and corporeal relics of Christ play no part in his writings. Rather, he explicitly compared the overflowing of divine power in the Eucharist and in saints' relics, as we saw in the quotation above, but he also linked the invocation of the names of the saints to the making of the sign of the cross in the rites of baptism, and the consecration of kings, priests, and church utensils.<sup>151</sup> In these cases, saints' names and the sign of the cross are linked by liturgical usage, rather than by a shared process of sanctification. This adds a new layer of ties between sanctity and the sacraments: both are explicitly tied to liturgical practice, although saints may also work outside of the realm of the formal liturgy. It also indicates that, to Thiofrid at least, saints' names are linked with the figure of Christ, expressed in the sign of the cross. The strength of the names of the saints, Thiofrid argued, is the product of the unity between them and the name of God himself, a principle that seems to mirror the principle that makes the bodies of the saints into relics.<sup>152</sup>

This brings us back to a theme that has been touched upon before, namely the saints' unity in Christ. This notion, which derives from 1 Corinthians 6:17, also occurs in the address to archbishop Udo of Trier in the *Vita Liutwini*,<sup>153</sup> in the *Vita Willibrordi* and in the *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*. In the *Vita Willibrordi*, Willibrord is twice called 'God's priest, one in spirit with the Lord', alluding directly to the Vulgate wording of this verse.<sup>154</sup> Thiofrid also refers to Reginbert, Thiofrid's predecessor as abbot of Echternach, as being 'made one of spirit with the watchman of all spirits'.<sup>155</sup> Being primarily a treatise on how the saints work through their remains, however, *Flores epytaphii*

<sup>150</sup> Guibert, *De sanctis et eorum pignoribus* 2. RUBENSTEIN 2002, pp. 138-143

<sup>151</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 1: *Et sicut per signaculum salutiferę crucis fronti cuiusque fidelis inditum fugatur omnis infestatio inuisibilium hostium et consecratur crisma sacerdotale ac regium et consecrationis oleum et baptismatis mysterium, postremo quicquid in ecclesia consecrandum est in profectum et salutem credentium, sic et per innocationem sanctorum nominum. Ante nominantur nomina, et dehinc sanctis spiritibus quorum sunt significatiua cooperantibus diuina et ecclesiastica per saluifice crucis mysterium peraguntur ministeria.*

<sup>152</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 1: *Crux dominica dum nominatur, Dominus in medio terre sue salutem operatur. Intransitiua itidem sanctorum nomina dum nominantur omnis Christianę religionis consecratio confirmatur, imminens undecumque periculum deuotatur, inimica phalanx expugnatur, temporum intemperies temperatur, procellosum mare tranquillatur, uinis et defunctis somatibus salus redintegratur;* ibidem: *Vnum sunt cum Verbo incarnato et nomine Domini infinito.*

<sup>153</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini*, prologus (ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 1): *o praesulum decus et gloria, qui in quantum unum estis cum Christo (...).*

<sup>154</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 21 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 472): *symmista Dei, unus cum Domino spiritus;* *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 22, ibidem, p. 473: *Nimirum tantus internorum symmista secretorum sensum Domini cognovit, quia adberens ei unus cum eo spiritus fuit (...).* 1 Corinthians 7:17: *Qui autem adhaeret Domino, unus spiritus est* ('He who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him').

<sup>155</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 4, 7: (...) *unus spiritus factus cum spirituum omnium custode (...).* On the patristic roots of the image of the watchman, which often appears in Thiofrid's description of saints, cf. Van RENSWOUDE 2011, pp. 128-132.

*sanctorum* extends the process of unification to include not only the spirits of the saints, but also the flesh that the spirit has conquered. Thiofrid states that he '(...) who renders himself immune from the vices of the flesh by clinging to the Lord, is one of spirit with him, and is one flesh with his flesh'.<sup>156</sup> And just as the flesh of the saints is one with Christ's flesh, the names of the saints are one with Christ's name, and even Christ himself, the Word made flesh.<sup>157</sup>

### 5.5. The monastery and the outside world in Thiofrid's hagiography

Alcuin's notion of sanctity had at least in theory embraced all layers of society, as exemplified above all in *De virtutibus et vitiis*. This is not true for Thiofrid. His idea of sanctity is limited to monks and martyrs. As he mentions no contemporary martyrs, theirs is a class of saints that has only historical significance to Thiofrid. Contemporary sanctity is therefore exclusively monastic in Thiofrid's eyes. This raises the question how Thiofrid defines the relation between the monastery and the outside world, and what kinds of relations he envisaged as ideal. What could (or should) the outside world do for the monastery, and what could the monastery do for the outside world? No modern student of Thiofrid's work has paid particular attention to his discussion of these subjects, but the *Vita Willibrordi*, especially the newly added material in it, also reflects the relation of the monastic community of Echternach with the world outside the cloister in the early twelfth century. Especially prominent aspects of this relation in the *Vita Willibrordi* are the interaction of the monastery with rulers, and with the nobility, and the interest of the monastic community in the maintenance of order in society at large.

I will begin with Thiofrid's treatment of rulers and their relation to the monastery. *Königsnähe* is an aspect of the monastic identity of Echternach upon which Alcuin had also reflected. He had emphasized Willibrord's good relations with two generations of the Pippinid family, Pippin II and Charles Martel, while adding a prophecy about the future greatness of Pippin III, an overt hint to Pippin's future status as king.<sup>158</sup> Alcuin did not refer explicitly to Pippin III's royal status, but only mentioned that the course of events proved how right Willibrord's prophecy had been. Moreover

<sup>156</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 3: (...) *qui se a uiciis carnis reddit immunem adherendo Domino unus cum eo spiritus est, et una cum carne eius caro est.* cf. *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 2: *Caro siquidem subiugata spiritus imperio quasi unum cum eo efficitur cuius naturam sequitur, fit que spiritualis sicut e contrario spiritus si degenerat, si conditionis et dignitatis sue prerogatiuam non considerat, si a carne uincitur et in seruitutem redigitur fit carnalis, et sicut hec morientem sic ille uermem pascit non morientem.*

<sup>157</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 1: *Unum sunt* (scil. *nomina sanctorum*, JV) *cum Verbo incarnato et nomine Domini infinito, ideoque sicut illud ubique totum est et summe prodest, sic illa tota assunt et affatim prosunt quandocumque et ubicumque secundum fidem promerentium necesse est.*

<sup>158</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* 1, 5-7, 12-13, and 23; *Vita Willibrordi* 2, 3, 9, and 23.

Alcuin had not been alone in omitting the details of Pippin's rise to the throne. Many Carolingian authors had played down the specific nature of Pippin's acquisition of royal status, as emphasis on Pippin's coup d'état of 751 was not deemed politically expedient.<sup>159</sup> For Thiofrid, however, there was no reason not to mention events of a now distant past, and he duly added an account of the coup d'état of 751 and further details of Pippin's warfare against the Lombards, Aquitanians and Saxons to his rewriting of the prophecy of Willibrord.<sup>160</sup> Rather than omitting details to conceal a politically unfortunate event, Thiofrid's interest was in history for the sake of the status of the monastery.

Thiofrid not only referred explicitly to the deposition of the last Merovingian king, Childeric, but also explained that this was due to the fact that the king was 'in all things contrary to and incongruous with matters of government on account of the vice of enormous sloth and inertia', while Pippin, by contrast, was worthy to become king 'on account of his genius in war and excellence in the arts of government and prayer'. In addition Thiofrid emphasized that pope Zachary sanctioned the coup.<sup>161</sup> It is not hard to discern Thiofrid's basic ideas about good and bad rulership in these portraits, however brief they may be. Thiofrid then goes on to describe Pippin as a new David, 'a man after God's heart', and lists his victories over the Lombards, Aquitanians, and Saxons.<sup>162</sup>

With Thiofrid's reference to Charlemagne, a wholly new section is included in Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi*: a family tree which links the contemporary German emperor Henry IV with the Carolingian history of Echternach. Perhaps Thiofrid was particularly fond of this emperor because he had played a role in his own appointment as abbot of Echternach in Rome in 1083, perhaps it is also simply the fact that Henry was the ruling monarch, and thus allowed Thiofrid to continue the outcome of Willibrord's prophecy to his own days.<sup>163</sup> Henry in fact did descend from Charlemagne, but only through his father's maternal grandmother, Mathilda, who was a daughter

<sup>159</sup> For an overview of Carolingian writing on the coup of 751, cf. FOURACRE 2005; McKITTERICK 1997; SCHNEIDER 2004; its reception history in later texts is traced in GOETZ 2004, which overlooks Thiofrid.

<sup>160</sup> cf. above, section 4.4 for the sources used.

<sup>161</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 22, ed. PONCELET 1910, pp. 472-473 (quotations given in bold): *Nam hic et aviti nominis et paternę dignitatis et virtutis heres ac ob creberrimam hostium contusionem cognominatus Tudites, primus ex tanta prosapia ob insignis milicię ingenium et imperatoriarum et oratoriarum excellentiam arcium edicto et apostolica auctoritate nomine et meritis memoris Domini Zacharię apostolici, Hilderico Francorum rege deiecto et pro regali trabea et diademate monachica donato corona et tonica ob enormis segnitiei et inercię vicium, rebus regendis omnino contrarium et incongruum, electus, unctus et promotus est in regni Francię solium. Anima eius iuxta illud sapientis matronę de David, secundum cor Dei electo, elogium, custodita est quasi in fasciculo viventium apud Dominum; porro anima inimicorum eius rotata est quasi per impetum fundę et circulum.* Cf. *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, vv. 651-653, ibidem, p. 493.

<sup>162</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa*, 22, ibidem, p. 473; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, vv. 654-658, p. 493. Cf. on this theme REMENSNYDER 1995.

<sup>163</sup> LAMPEN 1918; LECLERCQ 1989, p. 194.

of Charles, duke of Lower Lotharingia, son of the Carolingian king Louis IV (r. 936-954).<sup>164</sup> Thiofrid uses this line of descent to imply that when Willibrord prophesized about Pippin, he in fact prophesized about all of Pippin's offspring, up to Thiofrid's own day, by saying that Willibrord's message concerned 'the magnificence of this family', not just that of Pippin III.<sup>165</sup>

This attempt to elaborate on the link between the ruling dynasty with the Carolingian past was certainly not without its reasons, for after connecting Willibrord's prophecy with Henry IV, Thiofrid's prose *Life* goes on to emphasize the special relation of the royal abbey of Echternach with successive rulers. Not only did Willibrord foresee the future greatness of the Pippinids, Thiofrid says, but he also understood that his foundation would be under great threat from local bishops. This threat could not be overcome through recourse to the bishopric of Utrecht, because it was too far away. Only the Pippinids could come to aid the monastery. When Willibrord placed his monastery under their *mundeburdium* he showed that he not only foresaw the future, but also acted wisely, in order to prepare the monastery for future problems.<sup>166</sup> Thiofrid thus used the story of Pippin III's kingship to focus on the *Königsnähe* of the twelfth-century abbey of Echternach and the long history of relation between the abbey and the kings of Germany. Kings, in short, were not sacred and had no role in the spiritual run of monastic affairs, but they did have a role in safeguarding the material welfare and independence of monasteries.

The relation between the monastic community and the nobility is another theme on which Thiofrid elaborates, taking a markedly different approach to the matter than Alcuin had done. Alcuin's idea of sanctity, as indicated in chapter 2, had been inclusive, and did not restrict the attainment of sanctity to the clergy or monks and nuns. Alcuin believed that salvation and sanctity went together and were open to all Christians who performed their task well within a Christian society. He therefore described sanctity as a common goal of all strata of society, and a unifying factor in Christian society. In Thiofrid's description of the nobility's interactions with the saint and his community the focus is far more on what distinguishes monks from others.

In addition to the characterisation of Wilgis's life as a layman and a monk, discussed above, there are three sections in Thiofrid's *Vita Willibrordi* which touch upon his negative assessment of

<sup>164</sup> Ibidem; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, vv. 659-680, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 493.

<sup>165</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 22, p. 473: *Nec solum in tantę stirpis magnificentię presagium (...)*.

<sup>166</sup> Ibidem: (...) *rata concessione ac firma testamenti conscriptione et astipulatione tradidit in ius et mundiburdium regum et imperatorum in ordine sibi legali iure succedentium*. This section does not have an equivalent in the verse life. The charter on which Thiofrid relies for this information is WAMPACH (ed) 1929, nr. 15, pp. 42-43. The best work to look at for a discussion of medieval immunities, both Merovingian and eleventh-century, is ROSENWEIN 1999.

the Christian nobility.<sup>167</sup> The most manifest treatment is found in a passing reference to Christian nobles in the story of Willibrord's confrontation with Radbod:

*O egregium, licet ethnicum, principem, qui iusticiae cultor, rigidi servator honesti in paganismo nostris corruptis moribus orthodoxe fidei proceribus se proposuit formam imitabilem! Nam hi, ubi iuxta illud poeticum: Pro lana rixantur sepe caprina, et exarserit in eis indignatio, nec ullus ultionis modus est nec ulla dilatio, ille, quasi legisset in carmine satyrico: Minuti semper et infirmi est animi exiguique voluptas ultio, iram dissimulare et magno vincere animo. (...) Noluit a quoquam deprehendi leges a se infringi, quas ipse primus primum ex gentilitate, legislatorem secutus Lacedaemonium Ligurgum, suffectum fratri suo Polibite, Spartanorum regi, invenit ac instituit Fresonum genti.*

O exceptional ruler, though pagan, who, as fosterer of justice, as preserver of rigid, honest faith, put himself to our nobles, to our corrupted days, as an imitable example in his pagan state! For they “often held goat’s hair for wool” there, according to that prophetic word, and anger sparked off in them, as there was neither a form of vengeance nor of delay, but he dissimulated their anger and conquered it with his great soul, as if he had read in the satirical poem: “revenge is always the delight of a stunted and weak and petty mind.” (...) He did not want to estrange anyone by breaking laws, which he had drawn up and instituted for the people of the Frisians, as first of the leaders of the people, a legislator following Lycurgus of Sparta, who was appointed by his brother Polibites, king of the Spartans.<sup>168</sup>

This remark is all the more revealing because there is no pressing reason in the story itself which required Thiofrid to comment on the behaviour of the nobility of his own times. That he did so nonetheless, indicates that the misconduct of contemporary nobles was something which mattered a lot to Thiofrid. The same enmity between Thiofrid and the nobility is clear from one of the chapters which Thiofrid added to the *Vita Willibrordi*, and which have no precedent in Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*. Thiofrid's discussion of rulership in the case of the Frisian king Radbod, the importance of royal connections for the monastic community, and the perceived enmity with parts

<sup>167</sup> I will leave the description of the punishment and subsequent healing of the rich miser (Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 19) out of discussion here, as Thiofrid attributed this man's behaviour with paganism, and it is unclear whether he believed the man was an actual pagan, or whether he used the word as an invective.

<sup>168</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 11, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 468. Cf. also *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 2, vv. 181-186, ibidem, p. 489. As Janneke Raaijmakers remarked, commenting upon an earlier version of this chapter, this also means that good kingship to Thiofrid is not necessarily Christian kingship, contrary to Alcuin's concept of sacral kingship.

of the nobility imply an idea of secular lordship that focusses on the king's task to maintain law and order, and on the task of the king and the nobility together to cater for the monasteries' worldly needs. In Thiofrid's binary worldview monasticism was the only truly Christian way of life; the laity exists as a resonator for monastic sanctity, as a facilitator of monastic life, and, in the case of rulers, as upholder of order, at best.<sup>169</sup>

Thiofrid devoted chapter 33 of his *Vita Willibrordi prosa* entirely to the vengeful side of Willibrord's character, when confronted with the proud and the rebellious. To illustrate his point, Thiofrid provided the reader with a catalogue of noblemen and their unhappy ends, invariably the result of their unjust treatment of the monastery of Echternach, which they had deprived of some of its possessions.<sup>170</sup> This section of Thiofrid's prose *Vita Willibrordi* – there is no counterpart in the verse *Vita* – has been studied by some scholars, because it contains valuable information about the loss of Echternach's property from the ninth century onwards,<sup>171</sup> and because this chapter, together with a slightly earlier letter of Thiofrid, is the oldest evidence for the existence of a county called Holland.<sup>172</sup> For present purposes this section is of interest because it shows Thiofrid's hostility towards the nobility.

Not all aristocrats were bad according to Thiofrid. He speaks positively of donors of the abbey of Echternach, first of all the Pippinids, who are effectively royalty to Thiofrid, but at the same time headed the list of noble donors in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 12. Also the monastery's *defensor*, Henry of Bavaria (1026-1042, later emperor Henry III), is remembered for his contribution to the monastery's well-being.<sup>173</sup> An even more positive assessment befalls those nobles who leave the secular world for a monastic existence. Liutwin and Wilgisl are examples of this, but Thiofrid also mentions two other, more contemporary examples: Ekehard, a nobleman from Walcheren who became a monk in Echternach and acted as Thiofrid's interpreter during his visit to Walcheren,<sup>174</sup> and another nobleman, Frithelo, who was healed during the *inventio* of Willibrord's body in 1031.<sup>175</sup>

Thiofrid's enmity against the nobility and his emphasis on the differences between the monastic state and society at large can be explained from his theology, but his struggles as abbot

<sup>169</sup> Cf. on late entries into monasteries in the twelfth century BOUCHARD 1987, pp. 56-64 and CONSTABLE 2004, pp. 348-349.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. also MAGNOU-NORTIER 1992 on monastic depictions of nobles in the earlier Middle Ages.

<sup>171</sup> e.g. BIJSTERVELD [et al.] 1999, p. 218; EIJGENRAAM 1920; LAMPEN 1920b and d; THIELE 1964, pp. 74-76.

<sup>172</sup> BAUER 1996, p. 1009; Van BERKUM 1993; BLOK 1974; HALBERTSMA 2000, pp. 135, 175; LAMPEN 1918, 1920d.

<sup>173</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 34, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 480; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, v. 87, ibidem, p. 498.

<sup>174</sup> Mentioned in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 36 and *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, v. 302.

<sup>175</sup> Mentioned in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 35 and *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, vv. 123-138.

to preserve the monastic *Fernbesitz* would have formed a catalyst for such views. Echternach's problems to manage its property were nothing new, but the reformist perception of monastic history as one of a glorious past, a period of decay, and then reform may have enhanced the significance of enigmatic feelings towards outsiders within the community, especially towards nobles threatening the possessions of the monastery.<sup>176</sup>

Thiofrid's ideas about monasticism are not part of an integrated view of the purpose of society, as Alcuin's had been. That is not to say, however, that he did not think monasteries were completely without responsibility for the outside world. It is in this context that I look at Thiofrid's descriptions of conflict resolution. The practice of trial by combat is mentioned in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 31, in a miracle story that will be discussed below. Significantly, Thiofrid expressed surprise at the practice, which was by and large on the wane in Europe by this time (though apparently not in a backward place like Walcheren),<sup>177</sup> and described it in some detail, but did not criticize it. Thiofrid's words suggest that the cause of his surprise is that the parties represented by the combatants were not human in nature, but that they were the sea and Saint Willibrord respectively. Eventually, however, there was no trial, because a miracle intervened: when Willibrord's champions took communion, directly before the battle was to commence, the sea withdrew.

While Thiofrid does not seem to have minded the practice of trial by combat, there are clear indications that he abhorred feuding. To understand this, we need to consider the author's own actions in Walcheren, reported in the final chapter of his *Vita Willibrordi*. In this chapter, Thiofrid relates how he travelled to Walcheren to supervise the settlement several conflicts on the island. In the course of the narrative, he reports how two men refuse to forgive people who wronged them, leave the assembly, and are punished by divine wrath for their stubbornness. In both cases Thiofrid and his interpreter, a local man named Ekehard who had become a monk in Echternach, take sides with the person whose request for forgiveness was refused, and in both cases Thiofrid managed to heal the stubborn men from their afflictions by placing relics of Willibrord on their bodies.<sup>178</sup> Both monks like Thiofrid and Ekehard and the relics they took with them therefore played a part in the secular world, within the context of conflict resolution.<sup>179</sup>

<sup>176</sup> For examples of these problems, cf. Van BERKUM 1993; BIJSTERVELD 1989; BIJSTERVELD [et al.] 1999; NOLDEN 2000; THIELE 1964; WAMPACH 1929. For the monastic response, cf. ROSENWEIN 1999, pp. 156-183 on Cluny and BOUCHARD 1987, pp. 138 and WHITE 1988, 40-85 for further context.

<sup>177</sup> BROWN 1982d, pp. 306-308 on feuding, KÜNZEL 1997, p. 73, nn. 44 and 45 on the backwardness of Walcheren.

<sup>178</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 36, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 482; *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, vv. 273-318, ibidem, pp. 499-500. cf. also below, on the structure of Thiofrid's miracles.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. also below, section 6.5.

All of these events take place within the context of the formal rules of feuding.<sup>180</sup> Two men who refused to forgive those who injured them, and would thus allow the feud to continue, are legally allowed to do so. Even so, Thiofrid says, they are punished by divine vengeance for their stubbornness in wishing to continue feuding when an opportunity for reconciliation is offered. It is only after their relatives – that is: those who had the obligation to partake in the feud – beg Thiofrid to heal their kinsmen, that the curse is lifted, upon which the feud is resolved. This, Thiofrid implies, is what God wants. Thiofrid's abhorrence of feuding should be seen in conjunction with his negative view of nobility. Feuding was an elite matter in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and commonly practiced as a means of resolving conflict. Thiofrid's own role as a monastic peace-maker, however, is also in line with what other scholars have shown to be common practice in this period in France and Lotharingia.<sup>181</sup>

## 5.6. Conclusion

In his works, Thiofrid discusses two things that can confer a saintly status on an individual: life as a monk, or death as a martyr. However, the examples of martyrdom he provides (in the *Flores*) are all ancient. In the confines of his own society, therefore, sanctity is an exclusively monastic prerogative. It is defined by strictness, discipline, and contemplation, just as monasticism is defined by sacrifice, asceticism, and obeying the monastic rule, in Thiofrid's own case the *Regula Benedicti*, in Willibrord's case (so Thiofrid says) the *Regula Coenobialis*. The origin of sanctity, however, does not lie in virtues, but in divine predestination. One of the ways in which this predestination is made manifest, is in names, such as the names of Willibrord and Liutwin, which are interpreted in ways that relate the names of these churchmen to the Eucharist. Other names are also interpreted in relation to the predestined role of their bearers, such as the name of pope Sergius and the pagan kings Radbod and Ongend. The last case is interesting in this respect, because his name singles him out for damnation.

Thiofrid's view of the world is dualist, and so is his view of man. On the one hand, he sees the world, flesh, and sin, on the other he sees Heaven, the spirit, and sanctity. This concept of sanctity led Thiofrid to focus on forsaking the world, and ascribe sanctity solely to monks and

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<sup>180</sup> Even if some scholars argue that feuds were less violent than is sometimes believed (HYAMS 2010), the fact that feuding and reconciliation followed certain established social patterns seems inevitable. Cf. GEARY 1994c, pp. 150-156; HYAMS 2010, pp. 159-160; WHITE 1986, p. 246.

<sup>181</sup> Esp. KOZIOL 1992 on Flanders in the mid-eleventh century, and WHITE 1986 on the monastery of Noyers in the Touraine at the turn of the eleventh century.

nuns. By consequence, the Christian nobility was depicted as morally inferior and worse than pagan kings if they do not support the effort of the religious. It is also in this context that we can see that Thiofrid's depiction of Willibrord is far more vengeful than Alcuin's. Where Alcuin's Willibrord had been mild to those who scorned him, pagan and Christian alike, Thiofrid's Willibrord is a vengeful saint, who punishes those who threaten him and his *familia*, especially nobles encroaching on Echternach's rights.

The way in which Thiofrid thought sanctity worked is also interesting. He described sanctity as a process of becoming one with God, that included both soul and body. This unification with God was itself the product of divine predestination, and affected all elements of the saint: his soul, his body, and even his name, which became one with the incarnate Word. This is where Thiofrid's theology of sanctity is at its most Christocentric, and where his saints lose their idiosyncrasies entirely, at least in a theological sense. Through the victory of their souls over the bodies, the saints become one with Christ, including their bodies, which are therefore the Arks of the New Covenant, a thought that is virtually unique to Thiofrid. As the saints are part of the body of Christ, their bodies are, like the Eucharist, physical manifestations of Christ on earth. This is one reason why the Eucharist is theologically significant in Thiofrid's discussion of sanctity and relics.

Thiofrid's concept of sanctity is embedded in the practice of the liturgy, in two ways. The first is his emphasis on consecration in the way in which he describes sanctity, which is similar with the consecration of the Eucharist. The other is his interest in the way in which saints themselves formed part of the liturgy, for example in the invocation of saints' names during Mass. It is also with regard to the role of saints in the liturgy and with regard to the nature of the Eucharist that Thiofrid finds fault with the supporters of Berengar of Tours.

## 6. Thiofrid on Relics

The exploration of Thiofrid's thought on sanctity in the *Flores Epythaphii sanctorum* in the previous chapter showed that to Thiofrid the essence of sanctity was twofold, and consisted of a micro and a macro level, with the micro level being the struggle between the body, as the element of man which is by nature drawn to sin, and the soul, the element of man which is by nature belonging to Heaven, and the macro level being the formation of the body of Christ in which the saints function as its members.<sup>1</sup> This may be the case for saints, but we still need to see where relics fit in, and whether all relics fit in in the same way, especially given the theological importance of the body to Thiofrid in connection with the body of Christ. Finally, we need to answer the question why Thiofrid wrote his treatise, and in response to what kind of ideas he developed his own views.

These questions, therefore, will be at the heart of this final chapter. From the outset, it should be clear that in Thiofrid's age, relics were much more central to religious practice and discourse than they had been in Alcuin's lifetime. By the late eleventh century, long distance pilgrimage had gotten into its stride, and monks and canons travelled the countryside with 'their' saints, to make

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<sup>1</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 2. Cf above, 5.3.

peace and collect funds for their communities. We have touched upon these developments briefly in the previous paragraph with regard to Thiofrid's account of his journey to Walcheren.<sup>2</sup> By devoting an entire treatise to relics, Thiofrid was typical of the world he lived in, yet as we shall see, his musings on the matter offer no shortcuts to contemporary debates about the uses and abuses of relics. They have to be investigated on their own terms and merits.

### 6.1. The *Flores Epythaphii sanctorum*

To understand Thiofrid's views on relics, we need to focus on the *Flores epythaphii sanctorum*. This text is devoted to a treatment of the nature and purpose of the bodies of saints and all that is attached to them, in one way or another. Thiofrid's *Flores epythaphii sanctorum* was composed before the *Vitae Willibrordi* which share its theological outlook. Thiofrid gives three reasons for the composition of this work: as an expression of orthodoxy against those who wish to detract from holy books (a group not further specified),<sup>3</sup> as an explanation of the feast for the relics of the abbey, instituted by Thiofrid's predecessor Reginbert in 1059,<sup>4</sup> and, finally as an answer to contemporary controversial views of the adherents of the teachings of Berengar of Tours.<sup>5</sup> These goals are summarized in the image that Thiofrid evokes in the four lines of verse that precede the work: the image of collecting flowers, and spreading them on the *epitaphia* of the saints, that is their physical as well as spiritual monuments.<sup>6</sup>

This causes something of a problem. Thiofrid's words suggest that he wrote the *Flores* in response to a contemporary debate about relics, but his supposed adversaries, the supporters of Berengar of Tours, are elusive. Older scholarship held that there was a school of 'Berengarians',<sup>7</sup> but recent scholarship has cast doubt on this assumption. Eleventh and twelfth-century sources refer to certain perceived 'heretics' as Berengarians, but perhaps rather as a way to raise suspicion on theological adversaries than as an indication of Berengar's theological influence.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Thiofrid's words suggest that his adversaries were not primarily interested in relics per se, but were

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, section 5.5.

<sup>3</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythaphii sanctorum*, dedicatory letter.

<sup>4</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythaphii sanctorum* 4, 7. HERMANN-MASCARD 1975, p. 201; LAMPEN 1920a, pp. 19-21.

<sup>5</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythaphii sanctorum* 4, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Von MOOS 1971, p. 67, par 43-44. *Epitaphium* in a medieval context refers to all kinds of writings for the dead. The main influence on this usage is Jerome. Cf. also Mayke de Jong's work on a ninth-century example of a text (later called epitaphium, Paschasius Radbertus' *Epitaphium Arsenii*.

<sup>7</sup> cf. HOLBÖCK 1941, pp. 53-54.

<sup>8</sup> MACY 1990.

concerned with the image of the cross. It may be, therefore, that Thiofrid did not refer to a real debate, but made references to adversaries as straw men, as a rhetorical ploy to present his argument as orthodox and refute potential criticisms. On the other hand, if there was no debate about relics in the decades around 1100, it would be an interesting coincidence that Guibert of Nogent wrote critically about the abuse of relics within two decades of the completion of Thiofrid's *Flores*. Guibert's ostensible reason for discussing relics in his *De sanctis et eorum pignoribus* was that the monks of Soissons claimed to have one of Christ's deciduous teeth, but Guibert's criticism of the abuses to which relics were put ranged far further than Soissons. His treatise also includes a debate about the Eucharist and the cult of saints generally, exactly the subjects Thiofrid also linked in his treatise. Perhaps, then, relics were discussed in the context of the debate about the Eucharist and the views of Berengar of Tours or other thinkers. It should be noted, though, that Thiofrid's *Flores* and Guibert's *De sanctis et eorum pignoribus* have different purposes: one is a discussion of what relics are in general, the other focusses on abuses and on relics of Christ in particular.<sup>9</sup>

In his treatise, Thiofrid distinguishes categories of relics. To understand his arrangement, we need to look at the structure of the *Flores*. The text is divided into four books. All four books of Thiofrid's *Flores* have seven chapters, and in the first chapter of each, Thiofrid outlines what each book discusses.<sup>10</sup> The first book deals with the special status of the bodies of the saints, and the way in which they derive that special status from the fact that they are free from sin, because in the struggle between good and evil, between mind and body, the saint's mind has conquered his body, and the body therefore follows the nature of the victorious soul (*Flores* 1, 2).<sup>11</sup> Thiofrid maintains that, even if they are prone to decay (*Flores* 1, 3), the bodies of the saints are, in effect, the tables of the New Testament, similar to the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, and consequently of the Old Testament in general. The bodies of the saints, moreover, are also the antitype of the Old Testament temple, and the antitype of the altar (*Flores* 1, 5).

The second book discusses reliquaries,<sup>12</sup> and the fact that these are an expression of the value of the relics contained within, which are even more valuable than the precious materials that are often used to construct the reliquaries themselves (*Flores* 2, 1-2). By decorating the relics of the saints, therefore, the saints are covered with the least unworthy material available, through which they can work their miracles (2, 3). More importantly, the donation of gold and precious objects to

<sup>9</sup> GUTH 1970, pp. 92-94; RUBENSTEIN 2002, p. 127.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. for the following FERRARI (ed.), 1996, pp. xvi-xx.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. for the following FERRARI (ed.), 1996, pp. xx-xxiii.

<sup>12</sup> The term itself is not used; its first use appears to occur only in 1550. Cf. BARTLETT 2013, p. 264. Cf. for the discussion of this book FERRARI 1995, p. 218 and idem 2005; HAHN 2012, pp. 22-24, 205-206.

the saints allows the faithful to demonstrate that they are free from avarice, and acquire heavenly riches (2, 4-5), while the saints are rewarded for their poverty in life (2, 6). For the sanctity of the saints themselves, however, Thiofrid argues, the reliquary does nothing, either to enhance it, or to diminish it (2, 7).<sup>13</sup>

Book 3 deals with matters concerned with the saints, such as their names (3, 1),<sup>14</sup> their shadows (3, 2) and contact relics of various types (3, 3-7).<sup>15</sup> Book 4 provides a christological framework for sanctity, and aims to explain how the force that worked through Christ's work of salvation on the cross also works through the objects with which the various saints were tortured and martyred (4, 4). The final chapter is a concluding reflection on the insufficiency of the author's talent, and the reason why the *Flores* were composed. Thiofrid explains that Reginbert, his predecessor as abbot of Echternach received a vision, which caused him to institute a feast for the relics of the saints as a means to muster their protection for the faithful against the threats that beset their souls during their sojourn on earth.<sup>16</sup>

Compared with modern (Catholic) categorisations of primary, secondary, and tertiary relics,<sup>17</sup> Thiofrid's division into four classes of relics is both similar and different. The identification of the bodies of saints as a special category of relics, a distinction more typical of the high medieval period than the early Middle Ages,<sup>18</sup> is an important similarity between Thiofrid and the modern categorization, but Thiofrid created a subdivision of non-corporeal relics into three classes of their own – tombs, 'external attachments', and instruments of torture, which each have their own distinguishing characteristics. This subdivision is substantially different from the post-Tridentine division of relics into primary, secondary, and tertiary relics, or the simple distinction between corporeal relics and contact relics. Names and shadows of saints, which Thiofrid discussed in the third book as part of the 'external attachments', would normally not even be qualified as relics by modern scholars.<sup>19</sup> Whether reliquaries were also considered a type of relic by medieval Christians in theory and in practice is difficult to say, although it will be argued below that to Thiofrid, the

<sup>13</sup> Referred to in HAHN 2012, pp. 23-25; BYNUM 1995, pp. 201-211 (under the name Theodore of Echternach, but Thiofrid is meant). Cf. FERRARI ed., 1996, pp. xxiii-xxxi.

<sup>14</sup> Referred to in BAUER 2000, pp. 150-151; HENRIET 2006, pp. 237-239.

<sup>15</sup> Referred to in BARTLETT 2013, pp. 244-245. Cf. FERRARI ed., 1996, pp. xxxi-xxxiii. Bartlett is mistaken when he states that Thiofrid used Acts 19:11-12 in these sections.

<sup>16</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythaphii sanctorum* 4, 7. Cf. FERRARI ed., 1996, pp. xxxiii-xxxv.

<sup>17</sup> As outlined, e.g. in GUTH 1970, p. 123; De KRUIJF 2011, p. 16; MEYER 1950, p. 56; ROLLASON 1989, p. 26. Cf. SMITH 2015, p. 46, and specifically on the incompatibility of Thiofrid's views, FERRARI ed. 1996, p. xxxv.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. SMITH 2015, p. 58.

<sup>19</sup> I know of only one other patristic or medieval author who speaks of the shadows of the saints, namely Ambrose (*Expositio euangelii secundum Lucam* 7, l. 2038, ed. ADRIAEN 1957: (...) *ut nos umbra sanctorum ab istius mundi ardore defendat* (...)), and that reference is rather vague. There is, moreover, no evidence that this text was known in Echternach.

tombs of saints take on some of the nature and purpose of the relics they enclose.<sup>20</sup> The distinction between instruments of torture and other classes of non-corporeal relics in the fourth book, moreover, suggests particular interest in the latter as a special category. The nature of these instruments is considered to be different from other non-corporeal relics, as they derive their sanctity not from the body of the saint with which they have been in contact, so Thiofrid argues, but through a likeness with the cross of Christ.<sup>21</sup>

## 6.2. The body of the saint (*Flores 1*)

The nature of corporeal relics has implicitly been treated in the discussion of *mycrocosmus* and its meaning in Thiofrid's thought. To him, corporeal relics were the remains of the bodies of saints, which had become one in nature with the soul that conquered it.<sup>22</sup> Its effect on the nature of saints' bodies, Thiofrid argued, was that they became one in substance with the spirit, which by nature belonged to heaven, just as a soul that was conquered by the body was made one in substance with the body, which belonged to the earth. The importance of Thiofrid's dualist view of man within a larger and equally dualist cosmology can hardly be overstated. One aspect was Thiofrid's concept of monasticism as the only truly Christian way of life on earth, and Thiofrid's disgust of all that either did not live up to his monastic ideals, or was not monastic at all. The same dualism is also at the basis of Thiofrid's ideas about relics, including its inherent and fundamental ambiguity concerning the status of relics. As bodies, they belonged to the earth by nature, yet as bodies of saints they also belonged to Heaven. Despite their physical origins, one may assume, relics share in Thiofrid's great esteem of all things spiritual. What is clear from the *Vita Willibrordi* and the *Vita Liutwini*, however, is that despite their partaking in the spiritual through grace, bodies are still subject to decay, as saints are said to be 'dwelling in the prison of the flesh'.<sup>23</sup> The same ambiguity also surfaces in the discussion of corporeal relics in the first book of the *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*. The first part of Thiofrid's argument the origins of relics, I have already discussed. The later chapters of the book discuss the powers of relics, and will be treated here. Two related aspects merit some extra attention: corruption and scent.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. below, section 6.3.

<sup>21</sup> It is anachronistic to speak of *arma Christi* in this respect, as the term developed only later, to describe the appearance of the instruments of Christ's torture and death in twelfth- and thirteenth century art. Cf. FERRARI 1995, pp. 220-221, and, on the *arma Christi*, BINDING 1977 and SUCKALE 1977. Even so, the notion of the *arma Christi* had precedents in both late antique and early medieval thought and in early medieval book art. Cf. EDSALL 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. above section, 5.4.

<sup>23</sup> Cf., e.g., Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24: (...) *degens in carnis ergastulo* (...). cf also above, section 5.1, where instances of this use have been listed. Cf. also BYNUM 1991, pp. 76-77 for context.

The fact that relics are liable to disintegrate was a problem for Thiofrid. He thought that bodies, including those of the saints, are subject to the natural processes of decay, in as much as they retain their original nature. Like the names of the saints, discussed previously, the bodies of the saints are transient by their nature and thus perishable. Through their participation with the divine, however, they partake in its eternal nature, and hence are incorrupt. Relics are therefore simultaneously corrupt and incorrupt, in a way that is intrinsically incompatible. Thiofrid resolved this problem by ascribing it to the human perspective. Relics are, in his words ‘nothing and transient to they, who are out of nothing and in transit in the eyes of Him, who alone is enduring and true, and that what is dead in our mortality is living in his immortality, and that what is proper to us is clear not to be so to Him.’<sup>24</sup> Along similar lines, Thiofrid also spoke of the saints’ bodies’ future incorruption.<sup>25</sup>

This requires some further explanation. On a theological level Thiofrid argued that the merits of the saints and God’s grace often delay the natural process of decomposition, and cause the relics to be different from ordinary bodies, both in terms of their capacity to work miracles, and with regard to the repittance of decay, but that the absence of rot is not a *sine qua non* for relics to be relics. Thiofrid wrote: ‘By nature it (i.e. the flesh, JV) is prone to decay, by merits and grace it remains undecaying against nature for a very long time, and through it, it repels worms that starve for it.’<sup>26</sup> Later on, in *Flores* 1, 7, Thiofrid returned to the subject, by stating that ‘they’, meaning the saints, ‘derive their infirmity from the old Adam,’ but that in the new Adam, that is: Christ, they become partakers in Christ’s glory of incorruption.<sup>27</sup> In short, both decay and incorruption can be found in relics, and whether the one is found or the other, is of no theological importance. The stance taken in the first quote, from *Flores* 1, 1, suggests that the presence of deterioration is more the result of the incomplete understanding of onlookers, and that things appear differently in the fullness of God’s knowledge. In this case, seeing decomposition would be an error on the part of the audience, not something inherent to the relic. This may indicate that Thiofrid worried about the effect of seeing relics.<sup>28</sup>

Secondly, there may be a deeper reason behind why Thiofrid took up the issue of the decay of saints’ bodies at length. In discussing the bodies of saints Thiofrid seemingly assumed that these

<sup>24</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 1, 1: *Nihil et transitium apud nos quorum esse ex nihilo et in transit est in conspectus eius qui solus est intransitum ac vere est, et quod nostrę mortalitati mortuum eius immortalitati est uiuum, et quod nobis esse illi constat non esse.*

<sup>25</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 1, 5 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 21: (...) *future incorruptionis odorem* (...).

<sup>26</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 1, 3 (ibidem, p. 16): *Ex natura est putribilis, ex meritis et gratia longissimo tempore contra naturam durat inputribilis, ac ab ea esuriens repellitur uermis.*

<sup>27</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 1, 7 (ibidem, pp. 28-29). The quoted passage is found on p. 28 and reads: *Corruptionis siquidem infirmitatem trahunt ex veteri Adam* (...).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. BYNUM 1991, p. 77; eadem 1995, p. 108; DIEDRICHS 2001, pp. 159-160; HAHN 2012, p. 26. Cf. also Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 2, 3, discussed below, section 6.3.

bodies, sanctified by the soul, would remain incorrupt. Given that the incorruption of saints' bodies was a popular hagiographic trope, this would not be surprising in and of itself. Even so, Thiofrid felt called upon to say that decay is also a possibility. This can best be explained as a response to instances where relics did turn out to have decayed. Such instances may have caused doubt about the authenticity of the relics concerned among the Christians who venerated these relics because they conflicted with the trope of incorruption in hagiography. By saying that the observation of decomposition was the result of the imperfection of the onlookers and that decay was a matter of imperfection anyway, Thiofrid responded to the doubts that also prompted the composition of Guibert of Nogent's *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus*.<sup>29</sup> As Caroline Walker Bynum argued,<sup>30</sup> fragmentation and decay of bodies were the main religious and cultural problems in relation to bodily resurrection and material continuity to be discussed by early scholastic thinkers, such as Guibert. To Thiofrid fragmentation is not so much a problem (he hardly devoted any attention to relic division), but his work shows that the later preoccupation with bodily disintegration predated scholasticism – at least by a few decades.

The same tension between the corporeal and spiritual origins of relics that underpins Thiofrid's discussion of incorruption can also be seen in his discussion of the sweet scent perceived near relics. In one passage, already referred to above, Thiofrid refers to this scent as the 'scent of future incorruption'.<sup>31</sup> As I noted already this remark is an indication that Thiofrid thought relics could be subject to decay, notwithstanding the fact that they would eventually turn out to be incorrupt. Just like present disintegration of the saint's body, this future incorruption could be perceived by onlookers, in the form of sweet scent. The following sentences, however, suggest that the scent perceived is not that of the relics themselves, but was the result of the saint's soul.<sup>32</sup>

*Fetentes artus facit non fetere, infirmitatem expellit infirmitate, saniam corporis ac anime peccati confecte uulnere tam sue corruptionis sanie quam spiritus sui curat medicamine. Que plerumque in sanctis uel podagrici, uel chiragrici, aut ydropici, aut alius alicuius inordinati humoris exuberantia etiam familiarissimorum a se summuoit frequentiam et sedulitatem incundissimam, post anime*

<sup>29</sup> Especially Guibert, *De sanctis et eorum pigneribus* 1 and 3. MORRIS 1972; PELIKAN 1979; PLATELLE 1999. On the rise of relic criticism in general in the twelfth century, cf. BROWN 1982d, pp. 317-319. It should be noted that Guibert is concerned with criticism of faulty practices, a subject that has no place in Thiofrid's writings.

<sup>30</sup> BYNUM 1991, pp. 77-80.

<sup>31</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 1, 5 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 21): (...) *future incorruptionis odorem* (...). Cf. *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 36 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 480): *Accessit ilico eterne memorie yguenus Humbertus non ausu temerario, sed affectu sincerissimo, ut pro reliquiis distribuendis aliquantulum de thesauro reconderet pretiosissimo et, elevato panlisper operculo, videre meruit dilectissimum dominum suum iacentem illesa cuculla et cilicio et pene toto corpore integro tantisque flagrante odoribus, ac si delibutum esset ungentis omnibus et aromata de carne mortua ebullirent pro vermibus.*

<sup>32</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 1, 5 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 21).

*diungium omnes cuiuscumque conditionis et nationis ad glorificandum auctoris interne suavitatis munificentiam per suauissimi odoris de putredine spirantis allicit flagrantiam. Odoris quippe suauitas anime dignitatem et mundiciam, fetoris obscenitas ostendit carnis uilitatem et immundiciam. In olenti carne carnis olent spurcitię ac uitia, in odorifera anime redolent uirtutes ac merita.*

It (the body of the saint, JV) causes stinking limbs to stop to stink, expells infirmity from disease, cures health of body and soul, hurt by the wound of sin, both with the effluent of its corruption, and with the medicine of its spirit. The exuberance of disorderly fluid, whether of gout or cheragra, or dropsy, or another, even of the most common ones, which generally removes the most delightful attendance and devotion from the saints, draws all, of whatever state or nation, to the glorious munificence of the originator of internal sweetness, through the fragrance of a very sweet scent, breathing from decay, after the departure of the soul. The sweetness of its scent therefore demonstrates the dignity and cleanliness of the soul, the obscenity of its stench the vile nature and filthy state of the flesh. In stinking flesh the sins and vices of the flesh stink, in the scents the virtues and merits of the soul scent.

In the *Vita Willibrordi*, Thiofrid elaborated on the same link between scent and virtue where Thiofrid rewrote the passage about the sweet scent noticed near Willibrord's tomb. Alcuin attributed the sweet scent to the presence of angels. Thiofrid, in contrast, again points to the effect of the saint's virtue, which was alive in Heaven, even if his flesh was dead on earth, and also explains this sweet scent through the fact that Willibrord was already dead to sin while he still dwelled on earth.<sup>33</sup> The same chapter also explicitly refers to the contrast between *natura* and *meritum* which is so central to Thiofrid's idea of sanctity and relics, when Thiofrid writes: 'What nature did not have, merit obtained'.<sup>34</sup> Thiofrid, in short, found it difficult at times to reconcile perception and theology. In the *Flores* as a whole, Thiofrid remains decidedly ambiguous about the materiality of the bodies of saints. Whenever confronted with the processes of deterioration to which also relics were liable, Thiofrid's arguments become contradictory.

<sup>33</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24 (ed. PONCELET 1910, AA SS Nov 3, pp. 474-475): *Inestimabilis suauitatis flagrantia omnium referta sunt nares et pectora, et evidentissimis indiciis declaratum est in carne mortua, quod vivens sancti Spiritus suauissima et decentissima extiterit curia, in qua Filius cum Patre in summa cenavit modestia et gloria, ex qua ascendentem filię Ierusalem preclaram videntes animam, ammiratę proruperunt in laudis praeconia: "Quę est ista, quę ascendita de deserto, sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrę ac thuris et uniuersi pulveris pigmentarii?" Odorem de se subtilem aspersit, quia degens in carnis ergastulo, ne grossum durumque esset bonum quod egi, arta retractationis manu comminuit et quasi de aromatibus pulverem reddidit, et peccato mortuus, Deo vivens, myrram et thus redoluit.* On bed relics: BARTLETT 2013, p. 247, here also KIESEL 1968, p. 10. Note that Thiofrid does not say that this is the bed in which Willibrord died, as Alcuin had.

<sup>34</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 474): *Quod natura non habuit, meritum obtinuit.*

In addition to this point about decay and incorruption, a second issue that merits attention is the impact of death on the saint. In the saints' lives for Willibrord and Liutwin, the monastic aspects of these men's lives had been emphasized, with a stress on the importance of forsaking the world for achieving perfection. One of the images Thiofrid uses for this forsaking of the world is the notion of being alive in the flesh, but dead to the flesh. Such expressions derive from the notion of being alive, but dead to sin, that was used by Paul, most notably in Romans 6:11 and 8:10, albeit in a very different sense.<sup>35</sup> The idea of death in the flesh also appears in the *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, when Thiofrid remarks: 'Happy, without doubt, is every man who "is turned to ashes" (Job 34:14) while alive, who does not forget his mortality, who dies for the flesh before the death of the flesh, whose internal organs are eaten by the worms of the soil and the pure earth (that is: from the undefiled Virgin), happy – I said – who is not still in the flesh, but in the spirit, whose "body is dead to sin, while his spirit lives for his justification" (Romans 8:10) and "expects the redemption of his body" (Romans 8:23).<sup>36</sup> In the *Flores*, Thiofrid inverted this image: the saints are 'dead to the world',<sup>37</sup> and 'dead to sin',<sup>38</sup> whose bodies are 'dead to sin',<sup>39</sup> whose flesh is 'dead to earthly desires'<sup>40</sup> and 'alive in the earth' (i.e. their tombs).<sup>41</sup> In fact, the concluding remark of the first book strikes this message home poignantly:

*In cęlestem terrestris mutatur natura, mors in sanctorum carne sua perfecte non optinet iura, sed caro in carne Christi morte destructa efficacius uiuit defuncta. Matricis suę nescit fetorem sed flagrantissimi spiritus sui seruat in se odorem, et quia ex se fetet in conceptione, in procreatione, in educatione, postremo in tocius uite presentis administratione, tandem ex precedenti utriusque conexione tocius suauitatis flagrantiam spirat de se in resolutione quam non habet ex conditione.*

<sup>35</sup> Romans 6:11: *Ita et vos existimate vos mortuos quidem esse peccato, viventes autem Deo, in Christo Ihesu Domino nostro.* Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 475): (...) *quia degens in carnis ergastulo, ne grossum durumque esset bonum quod egit, arta retractationis manu comminuit et quasi de aromatibus pulverem reddidit, et peccato mortuus, Deo vivens, myrram et thus redoluit.* Cf. for Romans 8:10 (*Si autem Christus in vobis est, corpus quidem mortuum est propter peccatum, spiritus vero vivit propter iustificationem*) the following.

<sup>36</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 2 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 13): *Felix procul dubio omnis homo qui uiuens in cinerem reuertitur, qui mortalitatis suę non obliuiscitur, qui ante carnis mortem carni moritur, cuius interna uermis de sola et pura terra (intemerata uidelicet Virgine) procreatus depascitur, felix - inquam - qui iam non est in carne sed in spiritu, cuius corpus mortuum est propter peccatum spiritus uero uiuit propter iustificationem et corporis sui exspectat redemptionem.*

<sup>37</sup> *mortuus mundo.* Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 2, ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 36.

<sup>38</sup> *peccato mortuus, Deo vivens,* borrowing from Romans 6:11; Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 24, ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 475, (cf. also the inversion of this verse in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 33, ibidem p. 479: *mundo vivus, sed Deo mortuus*).

<sup>39</sup> (...) *cuius corpus mortuus est propter peccatum;* Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 2, ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 13.

<sup>40</sup> *Caro de terra sumpta sed terrenis voluptatibus mortua,* borrowing from Romans 8:10; Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 2, ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> *humo vivus,* as Thiofrid says of John the Evangelist, Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 6, ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 74.

Earthly nature is turned into heavenly, death does not retain its rights in the perfect flesh of the saints, but dead flesh lives more effectively in Christ's flesh, destroyed by death. It does not know the decay of its mother, but serves the scent of the most fragrant spirit in it, and because it decays from it in conception, in procreation, in education, and finally in the conduct of the whole present life, it breathes from itself in its unbinding the fragrance of every sweetness, which it does not possess on account of its condition, but on account of the preceding connection.<sup>42</sup>

What all of this means is that, to Thiofrid, the physical death of the saints does not effect any change in their situation. They had already been dead to sin during life, and in Christ they remained alive. In this respect the death of the physical body was a matter of indifference. The significance that Augustine and, as I have argued, Alcuin attached to death as the moment at which one could finally establish whether a soul was predestined for salvation is completely absent from what Thiofrid wrote.<sup>43</sup> Thiofrid saw life and death in the conventional sense of those words as things that are immaterial to the saints. Saints were predestined for sanctity from the dawn of time, a predestination that is expressed, among other things, in the names of saints.

The same contrast is present in the description of the body of the living saint by Alcuin and Thiofrid. In Alcuin's writings there is no sign of any idea of the body of the living saint as in any way resembling a relic, neither in the miracle stories, nor in the description of the body of the saint in any other context.<sup>44</sup> To Thiofrid the body of the living and the the deceased saint are effectively the same thing, and the body itself is already sanctified (*sanctificatus*) while the saint is alive.<sup>45</sup> Death therefore plays no part in the process of sanctification as Thiofrid saw it, while to Alcuin it was a significant moment in that process. The contrast is very marked indeed.

<sup>42</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 1, 7 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 29).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. above, sections 2.1 and 2.6.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. above, section 3.2.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 5 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 464): (...) *sicut naturali quadam vi gemme magnetis agitur, ut gravissima ferri materies sine ullius instrumenti adiutorio in aere suspendatur, sic per sanctificati somatis inpositi virtutem ageretur, ut saxea moles super aquas elevaretur et cum vectore suo in litus transveberetur*, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 1, 3 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 16): *Caro sanctificata per naturam induta putredine et sordibus pulveris dormit in pulvere, per gratiam et meritum nigrilat in mirifico opere, et eum cuius dulcedo est uermis resuscitat de pulvere et reddit gratie*; and *ibidem* 3, 2 (p. 62): *Et sicut letatus et delectatus est typus Domini Ionas super obumbrationem hedere que Iudeam significat typice, sic anima que secundum Iheremiam tristis est super magnitudine et incedit curua et infima letificatur umbre sanctificati somatis protecta defensamine et curata medicamine. (...) Umbra lucem representat et ueritatem, dum obumbratio sospitatem per sanctificati somatis reddit sanctitatem*, in addition to further references to sanctified bodies in *Flores* 3, 4, to *pulvis sanctificata* ('sanctified dust') in *Flores* 2, 2 and 3, and *sanctificato cadavere* in *Flores* 4, 7.

### 6.3. Beyond the body (*Flores* 2-4)

Whereas Thiofrid devoted the first book of *Flores epythapii sanctorum* to the bodies of the saints, the remaining three books deal with three related subjects: the tombs of saints, instruments of torture, and those things that Thiofrid described as the ‘external attachments’ of the bodies of the saints. Given that Thiofrid’s argument about sanctity of the bodies of the saints in the first book does not extend to anything other than these bodies, all of the objects treated in the other books must acquire their sanctity in a different manner. As said, the sanctification of the bodies of the saints results from their partaking in the body of Christ. This cannot be the case for any non-corporeal relics. In the other books of the *Flores* Thiofrid therefore had to explain how tombs, external attachments of the bodies of the saints, and instruments of torture of the martyrs acquire their status as relics. Each book, in fact, provides a different view on this question.

The crucial concept for understanding Thiofrid’s concept of non-corporeal relics is the principle of overflowing. This is outlined in some detail in *Flores* 2, 3, as part of the discussion of the capacity of saints’ tombs to work miracles, to which I will return at the end of this section. This passage, however, describes a principle that is not only applicable to reliquaries and saints’ tombs, but that applies to everything that had been in contact with the saint’s body, both before and after the saint’s death, and which, as we shall see, also applies to the non-corporeal relics that are the subject of Book 3. The passage runs as follows:<sup>46</sup>

*Sicut enim sermo Dei uiuus et efficax et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti usque ad diuisionem anime ac spiritus compagum quoque et medullarum mystice pertingit, sic sanctę uis anime cum Deo iam regnantis ab intimis ad extima ad se cum in carnis carcere clausam tum in celestis Hierusalem municipatum translata pertinentia se mirifice diffundit, et quicquid sanctis preuenientibus ac intercedentibus meritis per carnem et ossa mirabile gerit idem mirabilius de dissoluto puluere in omnia tam exteriora quam interiora cuiuscumque materie uel precii tante fauillę ornamenta et operimenta transfundit. Atque ut ipsa anima in corpore non uideatur et tamen mira per corpus operatur sic preciosi pulueris thesaurus licet non uideatur, licet non tangatur sanctitatis tamen affluentiam qua de fonte qui manat de domo Domini et irrigat torrentem spinarum per preclara sanctificati sui spiritus merita irrigatur transmittit in omnia in quibus intra et extra occultatur.*

For just as ‘God’s Word, living and active and sharper than any sword, mystically reached up to the division of the soul and spirit and also touched the bond between

<sup>46</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epythapii sanctorum* 2, 3 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 37).

spirit and marrow' (Hebrews 4:12), just so the strength of the holy soul, already ruling with God, spreads out itself to the things that belonged to it, both when it was enclosed in the prison of the flesh and when it was brought over to the city of the heavenly Jerusalem in wondrous fashion, from its inmost to its outermost, and what it bears, in wondrous fashion, because the saints anticipated and intervene through flesh and bones, that same strength pours over very miraculously from loosened dust into all decoration and covering, both external and internal, of such sweetness of matter or value. And just as the soul itself is not seen in the body, and still works wondrous things through the body, just so, though the treasure of precious dust may not be seen, may not be touched, it still, through the famous merits of his sanctified spirit, sends forth the abundance of sanctity, 'from the spring, which flows from the house of the Lord and waters the valley of thorns' (Joel 3:18, VULG), into all things in which it is hidden, inside and out.

Thiofrid's theory of overflowing applies both to those objects that came into contact with a saint when the saint was alive, as with those objects that touched the saint's body, or its tomb, after death. Such is the case, for example, with Thiofrid's explanation of the wonder-working shadows of the saints. This chapter (*Flores* 3, 2) opens with the following observation: 'As, however, the excellence of divine strength should increase and follow such great names, transient without transition, everywhere, no wonder its glory also pours itself over into the shadows of bodies in abundant mercy, and overpowers the hearts of mortals with enormous, astonished amazement'.<sup>47</sup> Clearly then, Thiofrid maintained, the same principle of exuberance applies to the names (as discussed earlier) and shadows of the saints as well as to their reliquaries. What is noteworthy also, is that the power in question is said to be divine power, not the power of the saint.

The significance of this is perhaps best underlined by looking at the fourth book of *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, which discusses the instruments of torture. Thiofrid did not explain their miraculous power from the fact that these instruments had touched the bodies of the saints, but instead explains their holiness from the parallel with the cross on which Christ had died. In fact, Thiofrid compared the instruments of torture with Christ's cross. The fourth chapter of this book is even entitled: 'That sanctification is poured over from the saving yoke of the cross into every

<sup>47</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 2 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 62): *Cum autem diuine uirtutis excellentia sine transitione transeuntia nomina tanta ubique accumulet et comitetur gloria nimirum in umbras quoque corporum se in uberi transfundit misericordia, et ingenti stupore attonita percellit mortalium pectora.*

instrument of torture of the saints'.<sup>48</sup> It is this Christocentric approach, most notable in the fourth book, which indicates an essential point about Thiofrid's concept of sanctity which is also implicit throughout the work as a whole: the saint is part of the body of Christ, and therefore of Christ himself.

In terms of the thought on relics as developed in book 1 and 2, neither the third nor the fourth book provides new perspectives. Most of both books is simply an enumeration of miracles associated with various types of relics, such as oil, emanating from the tomb of Saint Nicholas (*Flores* 3, 5), or the chains that had been used to fetter Saint Peter (*Flores* 4, 5). More significant for our discussion here is the second book, which concerns the tombs of the saints.<sup>49</sup> Thiofrid focussed on two specific matters: the theological validity of the practice of devoting great expense to the tombs of saints, and the way in which the tomb relates to the relics within.<sup>50</sup> For his first point, concerning the devotion of great expense to the tombs of the saints, Thiofrid relied greatly on biblical precedents. He argues that the saints are the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, of which the streets are paved with gold and precious stones. Surely, then, the saints themselves are also worthy of gold. Gold, moreover, can be used as an expression of the saints' merit with God. The best illustration of this part of Thiofrid's argument can be found in the first chapter of the second book:<sup>51</sup>

*Et cum ipsa quę in quadrum posita est celestis Regis ciuitas ad quam sanctorum attinet uniuersitas, cum ipsa - inquam - aurum mundum ex auro et lapidibus preciosis stratas habeat plateas in quibus eterna deambulat et oblectatur Diuinitas, digne profecto pignera electorum Dei qui super fundamentum Christi edificant aurum, lapides preciosos non ligna neque stipulam, quorum sapientia et sincera corporis ac anime in auro metallorum preciosissimo intelligitur puritas de auro et gemmis exstructas et redimitas sortiuntur pixides et capsulas, cyboria et pyramidas. Nam ut intellectum pretereamus allegoricum quare secundum litteram omnis lapis preciosus et aurum non sit eorum operimentum qui in abundantia uirtutum ingrediuntur sepulchrum, qui reges et consules terre edificant sibi solitudines per tranquille mentis studium, et possident sapientie aurum et diuini eloquii argentum igne examinatum?*

<sup>48</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 4, capitula (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 79): *Quod ex salutari crucis patibulo in omne sanctorum supplicium transfusa sit sanctificatio.*

<sup>49</sup> Cf. the discussion of this book in FERRARI 2005.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. fort he following also HAHN 2012, p. 26.

<sup>51</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 1 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 31).

And as the city of the heavenly King, clean gold, which is ‘set up as a square’ (Revelation 21:16) itself, to which the whole community of the saints strives, as this city, I said, has streets paved with gold and precious stones (Revelation 21:18-21), on which the eternal Divinity walks and is delighted, the relics of God’s elect, who ‘build on Christ’s foundation, are surely worthy of gold and precious stones, and not of timber or straw’ (1 Corinthians 3:12). Their wisdom and the honest purity of body and soul is understood in gold, the most precious of metals; they are given boxes and capses, canopies and piramids wreathed with gold and gems. For should we not pass over as understood the allegory how, according to the letter, ‘every precious stone and gold should not be their cover’ (Ezekiel 28:13), who ‘enter their graves with an abundance of virtues’ (Job 5:26), ‘the kings and counsellors of this world, who build themselves hideaways’ (Job 3:14-15) ‘through the study of their calm mind’,<sup>52</sup> and ‘possess the gold of wisdom’ and ‘silver of divine eloquence, cured by fire’ (Psalm 12:6 (11:7))?

Shortly after these remarks, Thiofrid provides yet another biblical precedent by comparing the saints to the priests of the Old Testament. Their liturgical vestments are both a typological reference to the future merits of the saints, who are their successors as a royal priesthood (a reference to 1 Peter 2:9), and legitimize the decoration of the bodies of saints with costly materials.<sup>53</sup>

This brings us to Thiofrid’s second point, which concerns (lavish) expenditure on the tombs of saints. With this in mind, Thiofrid explains the connection between relics on the one hand and objects of great value on the other, gold in particular. Even if the material is suitable for the decoration of saints’ tombs, he argues, the importance of gold should not be overstated. Gold belongs to the earth, and has no true value. Compared to the relics themselves, it is vastly inferior.<sup>54</sup> In *Flores* 2, 2, Thiofrid describes gold as dust with a deceptive colour.<sup>55</sup> Sight is, once more, not a good means for establishing theological truth. The only value of gold, Thiofrid explains, lies in

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 4, 30: *Bene autem hi qui sibi solitudines construunt, etiam consules uocantur quia sic in se solitudinem mentis aedificant* (...)

<sup>53</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 1 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 32): *Sunt quoque regale sacerdotium, et cum ad numerum octo beatitudinum octo sint in lege inestimabilis precii et decoris ex typico lino, purpura, cocco, bysso, iacinto et auro, et gemmis preciosissimis non tam uestimenta quam ornamenta pontificum cum totius mundi fabricę tum omnium sacramentorum que in ecclesia per sacerdotale oportet amministrari officium mirabile ac uix humanis uerbis explicabile mysterium* (...). Cf. for other medieval uses of this image HAHN 2012, p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 29 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 477): (...) *ditavit maximis sanctorum patrociniis, omnia auri et argenti metalla et omnem lapidem preciosum longe prestantibus*.

<sup>55</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 2 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 34): *mutato colore lutum*.

displaying the shining value of the merits of the saints. Thus, he again emphasizes the disparity between matter and merit, even in the saints. Gold appears to be valuable, but its only value lies in its material capacities, especially its colour. Relics, on the other hand, appear to be simple dust, but are of the greatest value. Moreover, the worth of a piece of gold diminishes whenever it is divided. However, when divided, relics retain the whole of their strength in each piece. Thus, Thiofrid almost accidentally provides us with his rationale for the practice of dividing relics:<sup>56</sup>

*Preciosior est pulvis exiguus auro mundo obrizo licet utrique terre matrix sit origo, preciosior - inquam - quia illud fallit et infelici auaricie blanditur deceptorio colore, hic absque omni deceptionis fuco cum ingenti et digna omnium ammiratione in salutem mundi proficit ex spiritus sui sanctificatione. Aurum et quicquid in rebus materialibus oculos carnis fulgore suo prestringit quanto magis diuidendo cum summo diuidentis dispendio minuitur tanto minoris precii ducitur, tanti autem pulueris electrum quanto latius in patrocinia ecclesiarum Dei sine ullo distribuentis intertrimento distribuitur tanto profusius illi reuerentie ac honoris precium et egris mortalibus salutis remedium impenditur. Ex uenis terre aurum summo cum labore eruitur, summo cum sudore scoria eius ad purum excoquitur, et in fornace tum demum ad nature sue claritatem proficit, dum sordes amittit et abicit.*

Humble dust is more precious than clean, fine gold, though the origin of both is mother earth. More precious, I said, because the latter deceives and deludes the wretched with the unhappy, deceptive colour of avarice, the former, without any colour of deception with enormous and deserved admiration of all, benefits the salvation of the world on account of the sanctification of its spirit. Gold and whatever in material goods ties up the eyes of the flesh with their glittering decreases in value when it is diminished by division, at the greatest expense of dividing it, while the electrum of such dust, however, expends the reward of reverence and honour to it and the remedy of salvation to the mortally ill more lavishly, the more it is distributed into the *patrocinia* of God's churches, without any loss to the distributor. Gold is mined from the veins of the earth with the greatest toil, its ore is smelted to the pure stuff with the greatest hard labour, and then finally comes into the clarity of its nature in the furnace, when it dismisses and casts aside impurity. Just so the treasure of such great worth is also born from some earth, but is taken from the earth, while the saints are

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Guibert of Nogent, *De sanctorum pignoribus* 1, ed. HUYGENS 1993, pp. 106-107; tr. RUBENSTEIN 2011, pp. 214-215. Cf. also BARTLETT 2013, p. 242; BYNUM 1991, p. 78; GUTH 1970, pp. 90-91; RUBENSTEIN 2002, p. 215.

still fighting in the earthly war with the spirit, which is separated in them through the attention of divine mercy, and is proofed and cured by the fire of tribulation, like gold, which goes through the fire, and, very cleansed, without any impurity of vice, the ornament of a diadem is made by strong David's hand from the crown of Melchom (1 Chronicles 20:2).<sup>57</sup>

In addition to this theological explanation for lavishing riches on saints' tombs, he also provides a caveat, an alternative, pastoral explanation, and a refutation of a paradox, all in the second half of the second book. The caveat (*Flores* 2, 7), runs as follows: the saints themselves have no care as to whether their bodies are buried with great expense or not, as the present state of their bodies is of no consequence to them. Accordingly, we should not think less of saints who have not got a formal burial place in a church, because they drowned or were eaten by animals. They are just as holy as a saint buried in a grand church and a lavish tomb.<sup>58</sup> This again plays on the difference between the view from Heaven and the view of men, just as the discussion about the decay or incorruption of the bodies of saints does.

Before he provided this caveat in the last chapter, Thiofrid devoted three chapters (*Flores* 2, 4-6) to the pastoral aspect of expending riches on saints' tombs. This expense, Thiofrid argues, should be seen as an offering by the faithful that is primarily useful to the faithful themselves. They can show their devotion, and thus earn their place in Heaven, as giving to the saints is a charitable work. To this end Thiofrid alluded to a vision about the fate of the German king Henry II, whose soul was salvaged from eternal damnation through his gift of a costly reliquary to the church of Merseburg, which outweighed all of his sins in life.<sup>59</sup> Interestingly, this is the second time in *Flores* 2 that Thiofrid employed a pastoral frame. Earlier, in *Flores* 2, 3, he had also explained God had allowed man to make reliquaries in order to overcome the potential horror on the part of the

<sup>57</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 2 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 35).

Cf. also, for the value of relics as opposed to that of gold and gems *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 29 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 477): (...) *et ditavit maximis sanctorum patrocinis, omnia auri et argenti metalla et omnem lapidem preciosum longe prestantibus*, and for the use of particles of Willibrord's body as relics *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 34 (ibidem, p. 480): (...) *pro reliquiis distribuendis aliquantulum de thesauro reconderet pretiosissimo* (...) *Inseruit manum vir* (...) *et (...) de costis eius unam cum summa extraxit formidine* (...), and 36 (ibidem, p. 482): *Venit, scriniolum suum, in quo porciuncula costę clementissimi patris Willibrordi recondita est* (...). Cf. on criticism of relic division in Thiofrid's time Guibert of Nogent, *De sanctorum pignoribus* 1, ed. HUYGENS 1993, pp. 106-107; tr. RUBENSTEIN 2011, pp. 214-215; BYNUM 1991, p. 77-78; GUTH 1970, pp. 90-91; RUBENSTEIN 2002, p. 215.

<sup>58</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 7 (ed. FERRARI 1996, pp. 50-55). Although the subject matter of this chapter closely resembles some of the subjects treated in Augustine's *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, Thiofrid borrows from Jerome (*Epistola* 46 and *Adversus Iovianum* 1, 35) for the crucial points of his argument.

<sup>59</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 4-5 (ed. FERRARI 1996, pp. 40-47); cf. JACOBSEN 1998.

devout over seeing decomposing flesh, ‘just as he covered his consecrated body and blood with the veil of bread and wine’.<sup>60</sup>

These pastoral aspects are all the more interesting because Guibert of Nogent had argued similarly that venerating false saints could still be beneficial for those who venerated them if their faith was truthful, and also had said that the bread and wine hide the blood and body.<sup>61</sup> They also reflected on the way in which access to the visibility of relics was guided. In Alcuin’s time, it seems, relics were generally not visible to the believers, but remained enclosed in their containers, e.g. in sarcophagi. The same was still true in the early twelfth century.<sup>62</sup> Relics were stored in reliquaries, and these were generally speaking not of a type that allowed the faithful to see their contents. Even reliquaries that applied rock crystal generally kept the actual relic hidden from the eye. Rock crystal may have been used in such cases because of its exceptional value, not because it allowed people to see the relics contained within – at least not by this time.<sup>63</sup> Relics could be taken out of their container, however. Guibert had expressed his horror about the practice of taking relics out of their shrines in exchange for money.<sup>64</sup> Thiofrid’s concern about seeing relics, pastoral rather than concerned with the financial aspect of the transaction described by Guibert, may reflect concerns about an increasing demand to see relics, representing a desire to stick to the old ways.

In *Flores* 2, 6, Thiofrid addressed a paradox in his discussion of the saints. After all, Thiofrid says, the saints had exerted themselves in various forms of forsaking the world, such as ‘fasting, vigils, nakedness and tears, and throwing down limbs, consumed by fasting, on the naked earth, and fighting the laziness of the body and of lasciviousness’,<sup>65</sup> so why would it befit to honour such unworldliness with worldly pomp and glory? Thiofrid’s answer refers back to what he previously said about the relation between gold and relics. The expense of gold does not relate to the world forsaking life style of the saints, but to the merits which the saints acquired, and thus ‘agrees mystically with the merits of the perfect’,<sup>66</sup> just as the shapes of these reliquaries also reveal

<sup>60</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 3 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 39).

<sup>61</sup> On the former point: Guibert of Nogent, *De sanctorum pignoribus* 1, ed. HUYGENS 1993, p. 108, tr. RUBENSTEIN 2011, p. 216. On the latter point: .... Cf. GEISELMANN 1929, pp. 301-302.

<sup>62</sup> HAHN 2012, pp. 232-233.

<sup>63</sup> HENZE 1988, pp. 39-40. Cf. HAHN 2012, pp. 26, 93, 216-217, 232.

<sup>64</sup> Guibert, *De sanctis et eorum pignoribus* 1, ed. HUYGENS 1993, p. 106: *Solent nanque picidibus eburneis aut argenteis nuda sanctorum ossa contegere et ad tempus et horum, pretio sese ingerente, retegere*. Cf. tr. RUBENSTEIN 2011, p. 214; DIEDRICHS 2001, pp. 141-143.

<sup>65</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 6 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 48): (...) *inedia profecto vigilię, nuditas ac lacrimę, et exesa ieiunius membra in nuda humo collidere et corporis inimicari odio ac lascivie* (...).

<sup>66</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 6 (ibidem, p. 48): (...) *perfectorum mystice congruo meritis* (...). In the context in which Thiofrid uses the phrase, it refers to principles of mathematics, but the phrase may also be used to summarize Thiofrid’s point about expenses as well.

theological truths, and refer to Noah's ark and the various mathematical principles on which God founded the world.

Thiofrid's discussion of the apparent paradox between the forsaking of the world by the saints and the posthumous expenses of their devotees may indicate uneasiness about the practice of building lavish tombs in certain circles of eleventh and twelfth-century society. These chapters are a sign of changing attitudes concerning relic containers in the twelfth century. Guibert of Nogent also discussed them, but was opposed to the practice of burying people in costly tombs, and the twelfth century also saw important diversification of forms of reliquaries, more or less contemporary with Thiofrid's discussion of the meaning of such forms.<sup>67</sup> He was clearly not the only person thinking about what would be a proper encasing for saints' relics.

#### 6.4. Relics and the body of Christ

It is a theological truism to say that the phrase 'the body of Christ' has a variety of meanings in the Christian tradition. The term can refer to the body of the incarnation in the sense of the body, that died on the cross, to the host, of which Christ said 'this is my body',<sup>68</sup> and to the church, which Saint Paul called the body of Christ on many occasions.<sup>69</sup> It is important not to overlook the complicated way in which all of these ways of speaking about the body of Christ relate to relics. There are no 'quick and doctrinal answers', as Cynthia Hahn would have it.<sup>70</sup> To Thiofrid all of these uses were all inextricably linked, which compels us to look into Thiofrid's ecclesiology in some detail.<sup>71</sup>

Thiofrid's concept of the church, as the body of Christ, conceives of the church as the community of the saints, God's elect. His description of the saints, with its strong focus on forsaking the world, and his emphasis on the monastic way of life indicate that this community of saints is highly exclusivist. The repeated emphasis on the image of the saints as the body of Christ emphasizes this Christocentrism. The same is true of the notion of the saints, their names, and the instruments of their martyrdom joining in Christ and the experiences at the heart of his incarnation. Thiofrid's ecclesiology is focussed on the spiritual partaking in Christ and hence his community,

<sup>67</sup> Guibert, *De sanctis et eorum pignoribus* 1, ed. HUYGENS 1993, pp. 104-106, tr. RUBENSTEIN 2011, pp. 213-214. Relic containers: HAHN 2012, p. 67; MEYER 1950, pp. 58-66.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 27; Ephesians 1:23. 4:4, 12, 5:30, Colossians 1:24 and 2:19.

<sup>70</sup> HAHN 2012, p. 236.

<sup>71</sup> For the theological use of the term, cf. DULLER 1974; HAIGHT 2004; MÜLLER 1986; PRUSAK 2004.

for example in *Flores* 1, 5, in the same section that likened the bodies of God's elect to the Ark of the Covenant:<sup>72</sup>

*Cumque omnia que tropologice de electorum dicuntur capite ipsis quoque membris congruant mystice anime etiam sanctorum et somata sunt testamenti arca intus et foris auro tecta, quia intus fulgent diuina scientia et foris optima morum congruentia et in eis posita est testificatio id est omnis sancte doctrine abundantia, et ex utroque latere assistunt Cherubin (angelorum uidelicet custodia) ut interius exterius que muniantur ab exterminatoris Egypti sequitia.*

And when all things, which were said tropologically about the head of the elect also agreed mystically, with his members, the souls and the bodies of the saints are the Ark of the Testament, covered with gold inside and out, because they shine inside with divine wisdom and outside with the excellent agreement of their habits, and the demonstration, that is, all abundance of holy doctrine, is placed in them, and the Cherubim (that is: the protection of the angels) stand beside them on either side, so that they are defended inside and out from the savagery of the Egyptian destroyer.

The same concept of the saints as the limbs of Christ's body, operating in total accordance with its head also appears elsewhere, for example in *Flores* 2, 5, which states that 'the head (i.e. God, JV) does not disagree with its members, nor the members with the head', which in this context must mean the collective of all the saints.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, in *Flores* 4, 6 Thiofrid asserted that

*In utroque summe pulchritudinis et sanctitatis membro suo caput electorum Christus Dominus est passus, in altero saxea mole prostratus, in altero prunis superpositus piscis paschalis assatus, et ideo sicut saluifice crucis sue patibulum sic utriusque de sacratissimo passionis sue calice, de uino condito et musto malorum granatorum inebriati supplicium modo dispensatorio prouidit, procurauit et consecrauit in salutem omnium promerentium.*

Christ, the Lord, the head of his elected, suffered in each of his members of greatest beauty and sanctity, struck down on the rocky ground in one, roasted like a fish at

<sup>72</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 5 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 23).

<sup>73</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 4 (ibidem, p. 39): *Non caput a membris non membra dissident a capite, sed quemadmodum Deus qui solus secundum ordinatissimam dispensationem sue prouidentie congruentem humane infirmitati medicinam nouit inpendere nunc ut antidoto parsymonie morbum sanat auaricie reicit materiam phylargyrie nunc eam admittit in sacrificium iusticie ut placere sibi probet deuotionem et oblationem cuiusque fidelis anime, sic eius corpus electi, alii quidem omnem mundi ornatum salutaris exempli gratia ut alios lucrifaciant sibi existimant detrimentum, alii se tali dignantur honore in sancte caritatis et orthodoxe deuotionis augmentum.*

Easter, put on top of coals, on the other, and therefore, he provided, administered, and consecrated the torture of each of these, intoxicated from the most sacred chalice of his passion, from the wine made from the juice of the pomegranate, in a dispensing manner for the salvation of all who deserve it, just as the yoke of the saving cross.<sup>74</sup>

Surely, then, the ultimate source of sanctity and therefore the origin of relics must be sought in the way in which Thiofrid interpreted the concept of the body of Christ.<sup>75</sup>

The core sacrament that embodies Christians' partaking in Christ in Thiofrid's thought is the liturgical act of the Eucharist, the uniting experience of the church, and in particular the way in which the church, Christ's body, partakes in the death of Christ's body through the bread that is Christ's body. It is the Eucharist that provides Thiofrid's ecclesiology, and therefore also his thought about sanctity and relics, with a theological and liturgical focus. This focus on Christ and partaking in Christ in the Eucharist needs to be understood in relation to the discussions about the Eucharist in Thiofrid's own days. Thiofrid takes the notion of partaking in Christ very literally, by making no distinction between the three different interpretations of the body of Christ. This means that to him, the bodies of the saints have become one with Christ, the names of the saints have become one with the Word that became flesh, and that the martyrdom of the saints *is* the death of Christ. The church of Christ, which equates to the community of the holy, becomes Christ itself through its partaking in the Eucharist, and becomes one with Christ. Theologically speaking, the saints lose all ideosyncrasy. They are simply extensions of Christ through divine predestination, divine grace, and their merit with God.

When exploring Alcuin's idea of sanctity, I have drawn attention to Alcuin's extensive focus on preaching, and the importance of baptism. Baptism, especially baptism of adults, preceded by baptismal catechesis and preaching in general, was shown to be a central element in Alcuin's definition of the church, and the task of the clergy. The contrast with Thiofrid's focus on the Eucharist is evident. What is more, the different choice of sacrament is a sign of a difference in ecclesiology and in the role which the church, and especially the monastic order, had in contemporary society. In the early Carolingian context in which Alcuin operated, the conversion of those that were deemed pagan was still a prime objective in the self-definition of the Frankish church, with the backing of the Frankish court. By the early twelfth century, mission was a fringe phenomenon in the self-perception of the monastic community of Echternach.

<sup>74</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 4, 6, ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 97. *Piscis paschalis*, 'Easter fish'. Thiofrid's phrase is obscure, and to the best of my knowledge has no clear patristic antecedent.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Guibert of Nogent's notion of the saints as *unicorporales* with Christ, RUBENSTEIN 2002, p. 126.

Thiofrid's ecclesiology contains two layers. On the one hand, he is highly exclusivist and sees the saints as the body of Christ, and hence the church. As these saints are either martyrs of a previous historical era or monastic saints, his ecclesiology of the church of his own day is effectively monastic. In support of this line of thought, one could argue that Thiofrid's writings show that he thought that the secular powers of the German realm fell short of the Christian ideal, an ideal which, he maintains, is only found within cloister walls, and then only when the monks try hard enough to live up to their ideals. It is noteworthy in this context that Thiofrid compared monks with the people of Israel, and calls them 'true Israelites' (i.e. God's chosen people, prefigured by the biblical Israel),<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, Thiofrid linked sanctity and the Church to the body of Christ and the Eucharist, but does not exclude the laity from that sacrament. Thiofrid's works therefore imply a two-tiered ecclesiology: a more exclusivist monastic image of the Church, and a more inclusivist idea, which included the laity, in a secondary role.

The link between the Eucharist and sanctity is also expressed in a different way, that has already been touched upon. As noted previously,<sup>77</sup> the names of both Willibrord and Liutwin were explained according to their etymology, as 'willing bread' and 'joy (or wine) of the people', with both etymologies being related to the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Above and beyond the other sacraments the Eucharist is the sacrament which defines the core business of the clergy. The laity, again, is there mostly as a resonator; they play no active role in Thiofrid's description of clerical (and monastic) sanctity.

Within this context, it is not surprising that Thiofrid was troubled by the theological views of Berengar of Tours. He held that the relation between the body of Christ and the host of the Eucharist could not be the body of Christ, mainly on grammatical grounds, as he held that 'this', referring to bread, could not equate 'my body', and that Christ must have meant this in a figurative manner.<sup>78</sup> Berengar constructed his views mainly on the basis of Ratramnus of Corbie's *De corpore et sanguine Domini* and thereby stood in a tradition which ultimately derived from Augustine.<sup>79</sup> Thiofrid's theology, however, relied on another theological tradition, more akin to that of

<sup>76</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 4, 7, ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 100 (on Reginbert, abbot of Echternach): (...) *neque esum mysticarum uictimarum uerus Israelita fastidit sed mystice subtracta pelle hostie artus in frustra concidens inter beatos beatorum labores manuum suarum manducavit*, (...). cf. *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, v. 85 (on the monks of Echternach): *Patribus egregiis Rhipensibus Israelitis*. Cf. similar usage of *Hebreus* in *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 5.

The term *Israelita* also appears in other contexts, but only in reference to the Old Testament, with the exception of one reference Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 4, where Christians are defined as 'proselites or true Israelites', borrowing from Acts 2:11.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. above, 5.4.

<sup>78</sup> CHADWICK 1990. Cf. FERRARI 1995, pp. 222-223; MACY 1984 and 1990.

<sup>79</sup> MATIS 2012, p. 378; OTTEN 2000, pp. 75-81; PHELAN 2010a.

Berengar's adversaries, such as Lanfranc of Bec, who based his argument on the works of another monk from Corbie, Paschasius Radbertus, and ultimately from Ambrose.<sup>80</sup> It had been Paschasius' *De corpore et sanguine Domini* which had advocated the teaching of Transubstantiation, even if the term itself came in use only in the course of the twelfth century. It is hard to know to what extent Thiofrid was aware of the theological arguments levelled against Berengar, although he certainly knew of the controversy, given his remarks about Berengar's 'accomplices' in *Flores* 4, 7. Paschasius's work was certainly known in Echternach; a copy had been donated to the abbey library around the turn of the millennium.<sup>81</sup>

Looking at the traditions from which Berengar and Thiofrid worked, it appears that not only their theological views on the relation between the sacrament and the body of Christ differed. Owen Phelan has argued that Paschasius highlighted the 'horizontal element' of the Eucharist, the creation of unifying bonds, while Ratramnus, emphasized a 'vertical element', individual sanctification and salvation.<sup>82</sup> The emphasis which Thiofrid's thought puts on the capacity of the Eucharist to unity people into the body of Christ that is the Church fits completely with Paschasius' thought on that sacrament.<sup>83</sup> Different, however, is that Thiofrid extends the same principle which underlies the consecration of the host to the bodies of the saints, and, through an additional process of overflowing, into a multitude of objects which had been into contact with the bodies of the saints, whether before or after death. Yet in view of the threat of Berengar's criticism for Thiofrid's ideas about the Eucharist, but by consequence also about the church, sanctity, and relics, it is no wonder that Thiofrid felt called upon to challenge those whom he perceived as Berengar's supporters, referring to 'the heretical accomplices of Berengar', who '(...) do not believe that the bread and wine on the altar of human reconciliation and the mystery of faith is the Lord's true body and blood,' and likewise challenge the sanctity of the cross.<sup>84</sup> Thiofrid views relics as parts of Christ's body in a quite literal sense of the word: saints are the body of Christ.<sup>85</sup> By juxtaposing sacred objects, such as crosses and relics, with the Eucharist, he implied that if one goes for the

<sup>80</sup> OTTEN 2000, p. 74.

<sup>81</sup> Now PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8915. Cf. FERRARI 1994a, p. 25; HARE 2004, pp. 130-133; NORDENFALK 1933, pp. 49-50.

<sup>82</sup> PHELAN 2010b, p. 278.

<sup>83</sup> Paschasius' idea of the Church was, like Thiofrid's, deeply monastic. Cf. PATZOLD 2012, pp. 387-388.

<sup>84</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 4, 7: *Et utinam diuine uirtutis aspiratio Berengariane hereseos complices non morbo exulceret podagrico sed interni consilii sui antidoto a simili blasphemie liberet peste ac periculo, qui dum plus quam oportet sapere sapiunt ad nimium calorem transeunt ab aquis ninium, et sicut panem et calicem in altari humane reconciliationis et fidei mysterium non credunt uerum esse corpus et sanguinem dominicum, sic tam inconsulta quam prophana temeritate omni sophistica argutia syllogismorum ac enthymematum persuadere conantur mentibus dogmata sua admirantium, ne inflexione genuum et effusione fletuum cuilibet saluifice cruci formate ad illius similitudinem in qua pependit salus angelorum et hominum reuerentiam et honorem impendant debitum.* Cf. above, 3.1.4.

<sup>85</sup> Like Transubstantiation, the term *corpus mysticum* is first used at a later stage, in a papal bull in 1314. Cf. De LUBAC 1949.

real presence of Christ in the host, as the Berengarians did, all forms of Christ's presence on earth fall apart, threatening a key aspect of Christian dogma. Thiofrid is honestly concerned here about the very foundations of the church he believes in.

### 6.5. Relics in practice

In addition to formulating his ideas about saints, relics, and the church, Thiofrid also addressed the function of relics. It should be noted from the outset that Thiofrid primarily speaks of relics in an 'official' cult setting. Most of the relics which Thiofrid discussed are located inside church buildings. As such they are mentioned in the *Vita Liutwini*, when Thiofrid relates how Liutwin built and decorated the church of Mettlach,<sup>86</sup> and in the *Vita Willibrordi* when Willibrord receives relics from the pope for the same purpose.<sup>87</sup> In the same text Thiofrid praises Willehad, the first bishop of Bremen, and Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury for their donations to Echternach; Willehad for donating various objects made from precious metals and Stigand for giving relics, which were worth even more – a point also underlined by Thiofrid's rendition of the Totengericht of Henry II in the *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*.<sup>88</sup>

If relics are taken outside of churches they are usually surrounded by liturgical or semi-liturgical behaviour.<sup>89</sup> Thus the relics of saint Babylas, which are summoned by Julian the Apostate in the story narrated in *Flores* 1, 4, are accompanied by 'every age of ecclesiastical order ran together, every sex and state'. This procession sings hymns and is compared to the procession in which David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.<sup>90</sup> The *Vita Willibrordi* likewise mentions two

<sup>86</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Liutwini* 4 (ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 16): *Sacra altaria pretiosissimo sanctorum reliquiarum thesauro copiosissime ditavit, ecclesiasticis ornamentis decoravit, vasa sanctificata et omnia quae voverat intulit.*

<sup>87</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 7 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 465): *Aperiri ei iussit arcas et sacra scrinia, ubi sanctorum reliquiarum et preciosissimorum ornamentorum recondita inerat copia, ut inde eligeret sua permissione ac conventia.* Cf. also Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 8, *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 1, v. 501, *Sermo in natale sancti Willibrordi* 6, and *Vita Liutwini* 15 (ed. LAMPEN 1936, p. 36): (...) *pretiosissimum apud se recondidisse thesaurum.*

<sup>88</sup> Willehad and Stigand: Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 29 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 477): *Amoris item intimi igne erga tanti patris quietis locum accensi advenerunt Beornradus ierarcha magnificus, eius consanguineus et rerum possessor hereditarius, et Stigandus, Anglorum archipresul excimus, quorum alter eiusdem cenobii rector effectus, incusis auro et argento et gemmatis ornatibus et descriptis ab eo in testamenti pagina prediorum reditibus, alter Efternacense oratorium exornavit et ditavit maximis sanctorum patrociniis, omnia auri et argenti metalla et omnem lapidem preciosum longe prestantibus.* The *Vita sancti Willehadi* was known in Echternach (in ms. PARIS, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat. 9738), and may indeed have been written there; cf. NIEMEYER 1956.

Henry II: Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 2, 4-5 (ed. FERRARI 1996, pp. 40-47); cf. JACOBSEN 1998.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. TÖPFER 1992 for the devotional reality behind Thiofrid's remarks to this extent.

<sup>90</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 1, 4 (ed. FERRARI 1996, p. 18): (...) *concurrit omnis etas ecclesiastici ordinis, omnis sexus et conditio, et deducebant arcam serui Domini in iubilo. In leticia cordis per VI milia passuum psallebant uoce altisona (...).* Cf. 2 Samuel (2 Kings) 6:15: *Et David et omnis domus Israël ducebant arcam testamenti Domini in iubilo, et in clangore buccinae.* Cf. on the background of this story CARRUTHERS 1998, pp. 116-153.

instances in which the relics of Willibrord were carried outside of the churches in which they were usually located. In both cases, this happened in Walcheren, and in exceptional circumstances. The first instance was in 1067, when Robert (later Robert I, count of Flanders 1071-1093), invaded Walcheren. The local populace requested the support of Willibrord in a local church in Westkapelle, and then took Willibrord's relics with it to the battlefield. Thiofrid, our only source for the role of the relics in this battle, says that these relics were enclosed in a box that was tied to the banner of the army of the people of Walcheren. Even though the situation is decidedly military, Thiofrid highlights the religious reverence for Willibrord: the whole army assembled in Westkapelle, took vows to honour the saint and celebrated mass and then carried the relics of the saint before the army in a place of honour. Thiofrid thus framed the whole experience as an explicitly ecclesiastical arrangement.<sup>91</sup>

The second instance in which Willibrord's relics appear outside of a church building is in the last chapter of the *Vita Willibrordi*. The relics mentioned here are parts of Willibrord's rib and staff, which Thiofrid took with him on his visit to Walcheren. Given that the staff was later stored in Echternach,<sup>92</sup> and that rib particles are associated with the *inventio* of 1031, Thiofrid probably brought these relics with him to Walcheren.<sup>93</sup> These relics are mentioned in the context of settlement of disputes. This must also be understood as an ecclesiastical context: monks and relics did often play a part in the conclusion of feuds (e.g. in the so-called peace of God movement), and the process of dispute settlement itself was also highly ritualized.<sup>94</sup> Clerics often used relics in these settlements, and monasteries are known to have capitalized on their ideological value.<sup>95</sup> In Thiofrid's case the disputes were also settled inside the church,<sup>96</sup> but the miracles which the relics

<sup>91</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 35 (ed. PONCELET 1910, pp. 480-481): *Walichbrenses cum, missis legatis, bellum deprecarentur, nec obtinuissent, et respectu paucitatis suę multitudinem hostium pertinuissent, coadunato omni suo agmine, convenerunt in basilicam terque quaterque beati Willibrordi consecratam sanguine, et ante participacionem mysterii salutaris hostię voto se obstrinxerunt quotannis, vita comite, censum illi persolvere, si interventu eius clementię potiri mererentur palma victorię. Nec mora, succensi ardentissime fidei calore pıxydem, in qua illius continentur reliquię, in vexilli suspenderunt cacumine, haud secus his freti quam Domino Deo previo duce gradiente ante eos in fortitudinis suę multitudine.* The interpretation of this passage (misidentified as original to the *Miracula sancti Willibrordi*) in SIGAL 1985, p. 49 is particularly misguided: on the basis of this text there is no reason to believe that Thiofrid believed the banner had become a relic itself. Cf. on this episode Van HOUTS 1999; HUIZINGA 1937; De JONGE 1997; LAMPEN 1920b, and on a similar use of relics in battle LEGNER 1995, p. 42.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. FERRARI ed. 1996, p. lvi. Thiofrid also composed an inscription for the staff, which remains in TRIER, Dombibliothek 257 (s. 17), f. 171v. cf. KIESEL 1968, pp. 8-9.

<sup>93</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 34 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 480): (...) *de costis eius unam cum summa extraxit formidine* (...).

<sup>94</sup> Cf. above, 5.5. For literature: GEARY 1986, p. 179; LAMPEN 1925.

<sup>95</sup> CALLAHAN 1992; TÖPFER 1992, and especially KOZIOL 1992.

<sup>96</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 36 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 482): *In crepusculo diei, eius comperto adventu, omnes utriusque sexus et diverse etatis insulani leto complebant littora cętu et eum, ac si ipse communis eorum patronus et dominus in carne venisset, intime devocionis affectu ac honoris magnificentia exceperunt et hymnologica vociferacione in orationis proseucham deduxerunt. Postera cum primo stellas oriente fugaret clara dies per leta frequentes convenere limina* (...). Cf. the discussion by LAMPEN 1920b.

effected did not take place there, but outside the assembly, when two stubborn men, unwilling to resolve their quarrels, rush out of the assembly, and are then struck by divine anger. This is only lifted when Thiofrid hurries to those afflicted and places relics on their chest. The men are then healed on account of the presence of the relics.<sup>97</sup> Even in the case of these impromptu miracles, the miracle itself conforms to a script, and takes place under clerical control.

Thiofrid's story about the relics he took with him to Walcheren and the miracles they effected, brings us to the subject of the miracle, and the differences between Thiofrid's descriptions of miracles and Alcuin's before him. Alcuin, whose emphasis was on preaching, saw the miracle as a preaching tool and emphasized true faith, compunction and prayer as prerequisites for miracles.<sup>98</sup> In contrast, Thiofrid focusses on divine power, inherent in the relic as the means for effecting the miracle. Because he saw relics as extensions of the divine that, in a theological sense, have essentially lost their own nature, Thiofrid could ascribe a miracle both to God and to the saint who was present at the site of the miracle, and to the saint's relics, without perceiving any ambiguity to the authorship of the miracle: this belonged to both God and the saint at the same time, as they have become one. Thiofrid makes this point most explicitly in the *Flores*, but echoes can be heard in his hagiography as well. Thus when Thiofrid added a local legend from Walcheren to his narrative of the devastation of a pagan temple on Walcheren, he wrote:<sup>99</sup>

*Et quia mirabiles elaciones maris crebrius subruerant litori contigua, mirabilis in altis Dominus per eximii prorethę sui Willibrordi merita mirabiliter excursus eius compescuit dispendia.. Vir enim virtutum omnium speculum per itineris sui baculum iuxta commune tocius provincię testimonium in continenti traxit sulcum, ut sibi visum est, sufficientem et congruum, ac illum in Iesu nomine, qui sicco pede incessit per liquidum et iussu tempestatem cohibuit ac ventum validum, posuit mari metam et terminum. Excrevit e vestigio congesta moles harene instar muri firmissimi; quam congestionem sua lingua dunon appellant indigene maritimi, et illic usque in presens eliduntur et confringuntur fluctus periculosissimi (...).*

And because extraordinary floods of the sea very often undermined the adjoining shore, the wonderful Lord in the highest miraculously restrained the losses due to their raging, through the merits of his extraordinary look-out man Willibrord. For the man,

<sup>97</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. above, section 3.3.

<sup>99</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 13 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 469):

the mirror of all virtue, drew a line in the soil with his travelling staff,<sup>100</sup> according to the communal testimony of the whole province, so that it could be seen, sufficient and agreeable, and put this line down for the sea as an end and a terminus in the name of Jesus, who walked on the liquid with dry feet and with his command calmed the storm and a strong wind. Out of the stick's trace a huge mass of sand rose up like a very strong wall, a mass which the indigenous coastal dwellers call dunon in their language, and there the most dangerous waves are broken and destroyed, up to the present day (...).

This story shows that Alcuin's notion that miracles depended on effective prayer is absent in certain sections of Thiofrid's rewriting of the *Vita Willibrordi*. A variety of different means are mentioned in Thiofrid's miracle stories, including the 'Alcuin pattern' of prayer, mercy, and miracle,<sup>101</sup> but they also comprise a physical act of the saint, such as the drawing of a line with a stick in the sand in the story above, or a blessing,<sup>102</sup> or celebrating the Eucharist.<sup>103</sup> The purpose of the miracle moreover, now has become to declare the glory and strength of the saint, rather than (primarily) a means of preaching, or an indication of the saint's merit with God.<sup>104</sup>

From this perspective miracles effected through relics are also given a new theological grounding. Due to the fact that the relics are part of the body of Christ, the force that effects the miracle is inherently immanent. This means that a miracle can be caused even without any desire for it to happen, or without the conscious decision on the part of the person involved. This is another marked contrast between Thiofrid's narrative and Alcuin's. Two examples suffice.

In Thiofrid's report of his own visit to Walcheren, as said, two men were struck down for their reluctance to forgive others and end feuding. In both cases, Thiofrid is called upon to help, and he brings relics of Willibrord with him to heal the afflicted. These relics are put on the chest of the afflicted,<sup>105</sup> and they are healed as a consequence. The stubborn feuders themselves,

<sup>100</sup> The staff in question was treated as a relic in Echternach. Thiofrid composed an inscription for it, and also mentions it in his report of his own visit to Walcheren, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 35 / *Vita Willibrordi metrica* 4, v. 277.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 15.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 17 and 28.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 20, 31, and, in part, 35.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 26 (ed. PONCELET 1910, p. 475): (...) *ad clarificandum insigne meritum mirifici pontificis* (...), and *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 21 (ibidem, p. 472): *Ad declarandam autem evidentius tanti viri gloriam et meritum* (...), which makes the whole narrative, including the tormenting of the household by an evil spirit a set up for the purpose of making Willibrord famous. Cf. for this latter phenomenon also *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 31 (ibidem, p. 478): (...) *divine dispensationis accidit examine* (...).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. McLAUGHLIN 1994, p. 46, who records an instance in 1075, when the abbot of Saint Riquier placed relics on the body of a dying man to help him have a speedy journey to heaven.

however, had no say in their healing, an element of crucial importance in Alcuin's healing stories. It is their close kin who call in Willibrord. Their own mental state or desire is of no consequence for their healing, and may in fact be adverse to it; in the second case, the man's father, who ultimately calls in Thiofrid, complained about the hardness of his son's heart. In fact, both men are only afflicted in order to change their mind, to turn them away from their anger, and make them willing to forgive others.<sup>106</sup>

The other example is the healing of an ailing monk in Echternach, as part of the *inventio* of Willibrord's relics and the dedication of the abbey church in 1031. Again, there is no indication of any conscious decision on the part of the person healed. Rather, the healing is caused by the ailing monk stumbling against Willibrord's tomb, an accident caused by a lack of control over his body due to his illness. Thiofrid writes:<sup>107</sup>

*Cumque, omni diligentia obserato et summa reverentia elevato sarcophago, sacre celebrarentur excubię, quidam ex cenobitis, Frithelo nomine, qui nobili ortus prosapia, deposito cingulo terrene milicie, oblati ante se duobus filiis indolis egregie, suavi se iugo subdidit servitutis dominice, supervenit, tota debilitatus membrorum compagine, utpote intestinis eius prolapsis et dependentibus in secessus confinio et margine. Intime orationis prostratus obtulit hostiam, et exurgens nescius impegit in tumbam, et absque ulla mora ex collisione salutifera, visceribus in sedem retortis pristinam, sanitatem adeptus est integram. Inestimabilis exorta est in cordibus Deum glorificantium leticia, et non tam ex vicinia quam de tota provintia populorum confluxerunt examina et, quasi presentem viventemque in carne communem patronum suum cernerent ac susciperent, voce altisona concrepabant laudum crasmata, et mystica arca testamenti Domini translata et deducta in iubilo, in sempiternę ac individue trinitatis altaris propiciatorio est posita.*

And when, as the sarcophagus was elevated with the required diligence and highest reverence, sacred vigils were celebrated, one of the monks, Frithelo by name, who was born from noble stock, having put down the belt of earthly military service, and having offered up his two sons of excellent character before him, put himself under the yoke of service to the Lord, arrived, devoid of any strength of limbs, inasmuch as his intestines had decayed and hung down, falling almost or entirely. Prostrate, he offered up the sacrifice of his intimate prayer, and getting up he struck against the tomb, and without any delay he regained full health, as his organs were put back into their original

<sup>106</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa* 36 (ed. PONCELET 1910, pp. 481-482).

<sup>107</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi prosa*, ibidem, p. 480.

seat, through this health-restoring collision. An inestimable happiness was born in the hearts of those who glorified God, and, not so much from the vicinity as from all the lands, swarms of people flowed together and, as if they saw and accepted their communal patron, present and living in the flesh, they sang the songs of praises loudly with high-sounding voice, and when the mystical Ark of the Lord's testament was brought in and put down in joy, it was placed in the mercy seat of the altar of the eternal and individual Trinity.<sup>108</sup>

## 6.6. Conclusion

Thiofrid distinguished three types of relics: corporeal relics, the instruments with which the martyrs were tortured and killed, and all manner of 'external attachments'. All of these relics were sanctified by the overflowing power of God, but the manner in which this power overflows into each group of relics (and into the containers in which they are stored) depends on the type of relic. Bodies are sanctified through the victory of the saints' souls over it, names are sanctified because they become one with the Name of God, instruments of torture become one with Christ's cross, and other 'external attachments' are sanctified through their contact with the bodies of the saints, as are relic containers.

For Thiofrid, relics, insofar as they are corporeal relics, are the trophies of the victory of the soul over the body, and of sanctity over sin in the body of the individual, the *microcosmos*. As such they are the counterpart of the church, which is the body of the saved in the world itself. The bodies have become relics because they have become one with the soul of the saint. The soul itself in turn has become one with God. Relics thereby are the physical manifestations of the body of Christ, the same body that is also present in the Eucharist, and are, in a very real sense, the micro-manifestations of the church. This is a relic theology that is decidedly different from what Alcuin had described. Death plays no part in the formation of the relic, and the strength of the relic is inherent to the relic, while to Alcuin relics encourage prayer and in this way contribute to saintly intercession and the imitation of the virtues of the saints.

Thiofrid goes to some lengths to explain that decay is no theological matter, but that God has made provisions to overcome human abhorrence of the outward appearance and decay of

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<sup>108</sup> The altar in question is the main altar of the church of Echternach, which was dedicated to the Trinity. Cf. WAMPACH (ed.) 1929, nr. 167, p. 260, discussed in section 4.1.

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relics, just as he veiled Christ's body and blood in the guise of bread and wine.<sup>109</sup> This is also a reason for constructing relic containers from valuable materials which are an adequate expression of the spiritual value of relics, and cover their unappealing exterior. The other reason for constructing reliquaries from precious materials is no less pastoral: it is through offering valuable reliquaries that Christians can show their devotion to the saints and hence to God, even though the whereabouts of their bodies is a matter of indifference to the saints themselves.

Finally, there is the link with the liturgy to be emphasized. Whenever Thiofrid described relics in his works, these relics were generally stored inside churches, and used in liturgical contexts. Dealing with relics was a clerical prerogative; lay people only had access to relics through the sanction of clerics or monks. This may have been the case in Alcuin's days as well, but there is no evidence for this in his writings.<sup>110</sup> This is because access of the type that Alcuin envisioned had less need to be restricted. Being near the relics of the saints sufficed to beseech the saints. In Thiofrid's miracles it is the physical contact with the relic or its container that heals. This requires far greater exposure of the relic, and therefore highlights matters of ecclesiastical control that did not surface in Alcuin's writings.

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<sup>109</sup> Thiofrid, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum* 3, 1.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. HERMANN-MASCARD 1975, pp. 84-87; GEARY 1990, pp. 40-50.



## Conclusion

Within the NWO VIDI-project *Mind over Matter, Debates about Relics as Sacred Objects, c. 350-1150*, I set out in this dissertation to study thought about relics in its social and intellectual background. The assumption underlying my research was that debate requires intellectual reflection on the subjects debated, in this case intellectual reflection on relics. It was my hypothesis that people in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages discussed how the divine interacted with the material world in relics, and expressed their beliefs in their writings, including saint's lives. I therefore studied these writings to analyse their beliefs, and in so doing, hoped to shed some light on the question whether debates about relics were local and isolated affairs, or whether discussions about the nature, status and purpose of relics were more widespread and influenced one another. More specifically I studied the backgrounds, intellectual and cultic, of two intellectuals' thought about sanctity and relics within the context of one saint's cult, the intellectuals being Alcuin and Thiofrid, the saint being Willibrord.

In the preceding chapters, I have argued that both Alcuin and Thiofrid displayed a more or less coherent idea about what sanctity is, how it comes about, and what it is meant to do. In the absence of formal dogma or an ultimate authority to which one could appeal for dogmatic

questions, the theological views expressed by Alcuin and Thiofrid on the subjects of sanctity and relics could perhaps best be characterized as ‘DIY theology’; an expression of individual views, based on the perception of the thinker in question. This means not only that their theologies are potentially highly idiosyncratic (as seems to be the case for Thiofrid), but also that they are very direct reflections of their views of God, mankind, and the Church. Such views are hugely relevant for historians of mentalities, of ideas, and of the Church.

Both thinkers related the principles of sanctity to a more general idea about the history of God’s plan in creation, about the nature of man, and about the purpose of the church. Their hagiography therefore results from their theology, anthropology, and ecclesiology. Especially important in the works of these two men is the notion of predestination that underlies the course of human history, including the role of saints’ in the fate of mankind. In Alcuin’s writings an Augustinian point of view of predestination led to the conclusion that sanctity was the result of God’s gift of perseverance until death, and used this as an exigence for an elaborate pastoral theology that focussed on the salvation of the whole people through prayer and intercession. Thiofrid, by contrast, emphasized that God had already predestined the saints’ greatness, and therefore implied that death made no significant impact. In addition, both scholars attached great weight to the sacraments, baptism in Alcuin’s case, the Eucharist in Thiofrid’s. For Alcuin, baptism was the token of entry into the church, and hence the body of the saved. Thiofrid, however, saw the Eucharist as the liturgical enactment of the unity of the true believers with Christ.

Despite their shared convictions about the nature of sanctity as predestined and linked with the sacraments, Alcuin and Thiofrid took different approaches to explain the specific nature of those links. This suggests that the nature of sanctity and relichood was open to interpretation, and that, in the absence of dogma, different interpretative routes could be taken. These routes, and the effect they had on the theology of sanctity, were influenced by the world view of the authors in question and their education. Alcuin’s view of sanctity was clearly coloured by his reading of Augustine, which endowed him with a strong sense of voluntary and individual conversion as a condition for Christian virtue. Another determining factor was his experience with the missionary church of early Carolingian Francia, which saw the forced conversion of groups of pagans as an integral part of the process of military subjugation and political integration of these pagans into the Frankish realm.

Thiofrid’s view, by contrast, was shaped by his training in and experiences as abbot of a Benedictine monastery which, in response to recent reforms, emphasized the ascetic traits of monasticism and described sanctity as a monastic prerogative, antithetical to the secular world. By consequence, Alcuin’s idea of sanctity was more socially varied, while Thiofrid’s idea of sanctity

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was exclusively monastic, and one pole in a binary world view in which society at large, and especially the nobility, was evaluated negatively. One of the factors that defined this change in thought about the relation between the monastic state and (Christian) society was no doubt the monastic reform movements in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, which left a profound mark on the monastic identity of Echternach. Another was the changed role of monasteries in society, which had become more removed from the pastoral care of society at large and more focussed on contemplation and the celebration of the liturgy.

Another factor influencing the theology of sanctity of these two authors was the patristic legacy. The reception of patristic material was no doubt partially due to availability, but availability alone does not suffice to explain the way in which we see the Fathers of the Church used in the works of Alcuin and Thiofrid. Alcuin, after all, was eager to acquire *De origine animae*, which he had heard of, but did not possess. Thiofrid received an Augustinian tradition through Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, but chose to rely on a Hieronymian tradition instead. The parallel Lives of Willibrord therefore bear testimony to the existence of parallel patristic traditions that could be used to lend authority to a particular theology of sanctity. Their authors' reading of these authoritative texts was influenced by their own convictions and circumstances. Alcuin's views were deeply influenced by the theology of Augustine, especially the theology set out in the African father's later works, which held that grace and perseverance in grace determined salvation and hence sanctity, as the two were inherently linked in Augustine's thinking. In Augustine, any Christian who perseveres in the faith until his death is essentially holy because he was predestined to be so. Thiofrid, on the other hand, was primarily influenced by Jerome and Gregory the Great. In their works another notion of sanctity prevailed, which saw the monastic way of life as ideal for true Christians. Theirs was a more tiered interpretation of the Church, in which monks were the true saints and ordinary Christians were not.

Their reading of patristic sources and the different times they lived in also shaped Alcuin's and Thiofrid's ideas about the material aspects of relics. Alcuin only occasionally described the physical characteristics of relics, never did so systematically, and never attached theological value to certain relics on account of their materiality. In all of these aspects, we may sense the inheritance of Augustine. Thiofrid, on the other hand, distinguishes clearly between the bodies of the saints and their 'external attachments', and between the instruments which brought about the martyrdom of the saints and other 'external attachments' as well. In this respect, Thiofrid is representative of a growing tendency to distinguish between relics on the basis of their material characteristics and devotion of particular attention to the body of the saints, but his theological reasoning behind the

processes of sanctification that underly each of these categories of relics is replete with ideas taken from his reading of Gregory the Great and Jerome.

Both Alcuin and Thiofrid both entertain a concept of sanctity that is Christocentric, and both believe in predestination, but the way in which their Christocentrism and predestination play out is very different. Using terms such as Christocentrism, Transsubstantiation, and Predestination to explain beliefs of medieval authors is not wrong in itself, even if they are anachronistic for the earlier Middle Ages. Yet it should be understood that this is just the beginning of an explanation of their beliefs, not the end. It is therefore of paramount importance for a study of the medieval theology of sanctity to explain just what kind of predestination or Eucharistic thought medieval thinkers entertained.

Both in the case of Thiofrid and in the case of Alcuin, it appears that the basis of thought about relics lies in their ideas about sanctity. Through a study of thought on relics, conversely, the ideas underlying sanctity have received a stronger profile. Alcuin's focus on the relics of saints as vessels of tradition and focal points of prayer, rather than as wonder-working objects themselves, is a good example of this. This view of relics was the product of an ecclesiology that put a strong emphasis on prayer as the core business of the Church. It was also opposed to the danger of certain practices Alcuin viewed as unorthodox and morally corrupt, such as the belief that the intrinsic power of relics alone was enough to be saved, at the expense of belief in God's almighty power. Rather than as intrinsically powerful objects, relics were conduits of divine power, subject to God's will, and tokens of the orthodox tradition on which the Church relied. The ties of communities with particular saints, especially founder saints, which Alcuin mentioned in his writings must be understood as a local exponent of his ideas about the importance of tradition for the purity of the church. Saints as well as their relics, however, were only a channel for prayer: any real power was God's and God's alone. The same principle of thought on sanctity guiding thought on relics is also true for Alcuin's warning of abuses of relics in two letters to Anglo-Saxon archbishops. It is clear from these letters and the cultural context in which they were written that Alcuin feared that the belief that relics had inherent power would lead people astray. He therefore urged the archbishops to preach that people should imitate the virtues of the saints, rather than put their faith in the corporeal remains of the saints.

Thiofrid's ideas about relics are likewise defined by his ideas about sanctity, but as his ideas about sanctity are so different from those of Alcuin, it is no wonder that his ideas about relics are also different from those of the author of the first *Vita Willibrordi*. It was the sanctification of the body through the victory of the soul over the body that turned the saint's body into a relic. His

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notion of binary oppositions in both cosmos and *microcosmus*, between Heaven and Earth, soul and body, good and evil, and his notion of the assumption of spiritual traits by the body if the soul succeeded in conquering the body mean that he considered relics to be inherently powerful, because they are essentially pieces of the body of Christ on Earth, like the Church and the Eucharist. The power to work miracles was present in the relics themselves. Hence, physical contact with the relics acquired a role in Thiofrid's description of miracles which relics had not had in Alcuin's writings. As a consequence, he also focussed more on the way in which relics were handled. As a general rule, he saw this as the task of the clergy, performed within the confines of the liturgy. Miracles are far more important to Thiofrid than to Alcuin anyway, as indicators of the power of the saint. A different theology of sanctity had profound consequences for the appreciation of relics.

There are, however, also significant similarities between Alcuin's thought on relics and Thiofrid's. Neither author pays much attention to seeing relics. This is perhaps the result of the way in which relics were stored at the time, as they were generally fully enclosed, and invisible to the believers. Scent is often mentioned, however. To Alcuin experiencing unnatural lights or scents in the presence of relics was a sign of heavenly visitors to the shrine. It did not signify the powers inherent in the relic, or incorruption, even though Alcuin knew this discursive frame and used it in the York poem. For Thiofrid, the same sweet scent is the proof of virtues. His approach to the incorruption of relics is complicated as he is on the one hand convinced that relics are part of the unchanging nature of Christ, but on the other hand notices that relics are subject to decay. Thiofrid solves this problem by stressing that noticing decay is the result of a human failing, and simultaneously arguing that decay, real or not, is a matter of no real theological importance. His words suggest that he thought seeing the decay of relics had a negative impact on the credibility of relic cults in his days. This impression is only strengthened by the fact that Thiofrid also says that relic containers are partially there to cover relics to prevent the faithful from being disgusted by the physical appearance of relics. The impression that some form of criticism about relics developed, based on the observation of their decay, is reinforced by the fact that Guibert of Nogent discussed the same problem in *De sanctis et eorum pignoribus*.

This brings me to the point of the influence of cultic context on thought. The thought of Alcuin and Thiofrid was evidently shaped by their experiences in the veneration of relics. Alcuin's description of saints' tombs as *sarcophagi* and his criticism of the wearers of *filacteria* and *ligaturae* was given in by his experiences of contemporary practices. Likewise, his vocabulary seems to be in keeping with a general trend in relic cults to use a more limited vocabulary to describe relics than had been in use in Late Antiquity, and to describe relics in generic terms, rather than define them

specifically in terms of material qualities. Thiofrid's writings suggest he frowned on seeing relics. Even so, the practices of seeing relics was on the rise in his days.

It is worthwhile to study the history of thought on sanctity as part of a study of the history of ideas. This is all the more so if one takes into account the interrelations between theory and practice, between tradition and contemporary needs, which play out at the interface of saints and their relics. This can be seen, for example, in the depiction of Willibrord. Alcuin's picture is that of a man of prayer and preaching, deeply involved with the world. This was on the one hand a reaction to the perceived abuses of the Saxon and Avar mission, and the renovation of the Frankish church overall, but on the other hand also a product of his patristic reading, especially Augustine. Thiofrid's depiction of Willibrord, which is far more monastic, reflected a Benedictinized idea of monasticism which drew a stricter line between the cloister and the outside world, almost (but not entirely) to the exclusion of the secular world from the true Church. These ideas were again the result of patristic reading, in this case the celebration of monasticism in the letters of Jerome and Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.

Patristic texts were clearly important formative factors in the thought of these two scholars, but we need to see patristic traditions in the plural. Patristic thought is an amalgam of historical developments and of the thought of different individuals at that, which formed a partially contradictory repository that medieval authors only had partial access to. Depending on the texts they knew, and on their own preferences, thinkers like Alcuin and Thiofrid crafted their ideas about sanctity and relics, and although there may be larger trends or schools of thought which preferred one strand of patristic thinking over another, intellectuals could lay claim to all strands of patristic thought as authoritative and elaborate on them in their own way. Thus one could speak of parallel patristic traditions influencing early medieval thinking in general and the theology of sanctity and relics in particular.

In addition to the influence of tradition, the influence of exigence is also clearly visible in our sources. Both Alcuin and Thiofrid wrote in reaction to events and practices of their own time. Confronted with different exigences, they could emphasize different aspects of their thought. The importance of exigence is best illustrated by Alcuin, whose letters show a different use of the terminology of sanctity and relics, and a different use of relics than his *vitae*. In this case, we are fortuitous enough in having both types of texts for a single author, so that we can see the way in which the picture of sanctity in both types of texts is complementary, not identical.

It follows from this study that it pays to take into account general questions about the nature and purpose of sanctity and relics, the way in which they come into being, and their relation to

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God and to the Church. Studied in this way, we can see an image of man and of society reflected in the outcome of our study of sanctity and relics. By looking at saints and their relics we see medieval thinkers' picture of the ideal Christian, of man and of society, which brings us back to the prospects of the human mind envisaged by Marc Bloch in 1929.<sup>1</sup> Alcuin's focus on prayer and the way in which this plays out in his description of both saints and the ideal mode of behaviour for the faithful in their encounter with relics is but one example of what I mean.

These are very general questions, but we must not forget to study medieval thinkers on their own terms, and to see what mattered to them. Special attention must be devoted to choice of particular images and comparisons to see how sanctity is framed, and the traditions from which these authors drew, partially out of necessity, because they only had a limited number of authoritative texts available to them, and partially because they chose to use certain texts that appealed to them, and applied them in a way that suited their needs. The beauty of combining both the general and the specific is that one gets a picture of the ideas of a medieval thinker in a way that does justice to his thought and lends itself to comparative analysis, both in terms of the actual questions those authors chose to answer, and in the analysis of the structure of the argument of the thinker in question. Seeing what mattered to them is at least as important as trying to use their work to answer modern questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Introduction.



**Appendix. Translated sections of Alcuin's works**

### Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 3

*Sacra igitur euangelicae auctoritatis narrat historia, dominum Iesum Hiericho pergentem ad confirmanda in fidem suae maiestatis corda populi praesentis cuidam caeco ad se clamanti lumen reddidisse oculorum, ut per corporale unius illius caeci lumen spiritaliter multorum inluminarentur pectora. Ita et sanctus Vedastus, Deo Christo donante, per cuiusdam inlumptionem caeci fidem quam verbo praedicavit in corde regis miraculo confirmavit, ut rex ipse intellegeret, tam sibi esse necessarium cordis lumen, quam caeco oculorum inlustrationem; et quod divina operata est gratia per preces famuli sui in oculis caeca nocte castigatis, hoc per sermones eiusdem famuli, eadem operante potentia, per spiritalis intellegentiam lucis in suo pectore perficeretur.*

*Nam regia excellentia condigno comitatu cum multitudine maxima populi, iter agentibus illis, venerunt in quoddam pagum, quod incolarum terrae illius consuetudine Vungise pagus dicitur, prope Reguliacam villam, quae sita est super florigeras Axnae fluminis ripas. Et ecce! eiusdem fluminis pontem rege transeunte cum multitudine populi, obviamit illis caecus quidam, huius diutissime solaris expers luminis: forte nec sui caecatus culpa, sed ut manifestarentur opera Dei in illo, et per illius inlumptionem praesentem plurimorum inluminarentur corda spiritaliter. Qui cum intellexisset a praetereuntibus, sanctum Vedastum Christi servum in eodem iter agere comitatu, clamavit: 'Sancte et electe Deo Vedaste, miserere mei et supernam pio pectore diligentius deposce potentiam, ut meae subveniat miseriae. Non aurum posco nec argentum, sed ut mihi lumen per sanctitatis tuae preces restituat oculorum'. Sensit itaque vir Dei, virtutem sibi adesse supernam. Non ob illius caeci tantummodo, sed plus propter praesentis populi salutem totum se in sacras effudit preces; in divina fidens pietate, dexteram cum signo crucis posuit super oculos caeci, dicens: 'Domine Iesu, qui es lumen verum, qui aperuisti oculos caeci ad te clamantis, aperi oculos et istius, ut intellegat populus iste praesens, quia tu es solus Deus, faciens mirabilia in caelo et in terra'. Mox ille caecus, lumine recepto, gaudens perrexit viam suam.*

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The sacred history of the Gospel tells us, that when the Lord Jesus passed through Jericho he restored the sight in the eyes of a blind man who called upon him, in order to strengthen the hearts of the people present into believing his majesty, so that through the physical sight of this blind man, the hearts of many could spiritually see. In like vein saint Vedast, through giving himself to God Christ, reinforced the faith which he preached by mouth in the heart of the king, through the healing of a blind man, so that the king himself understood, that the sight of his heart was as necessary for him, as the opening up of his eyes was to the blind man, and that divine mercy was enacted through the prayers of God's servant in eyes blinded by blind night, and that this could be done in his heart through the words of this selfsame servant, by the might of the same power, through the understanding of spiritual light.

For when his royal excellence travelled with a worthy entourage and a very large crowd of people, they travelled into a region, which the locals of the land habitually call Vungise,<sup>1</sup> near the villa Reguliaca,<sup>2</sup> which is located above the flowering shores of the Aisne. And lo! While the king crossed the bridge over that river with the crowd of people with him, a blind man, who had not seen the Sun's light for very long, came the other way. His blindness was not his fault, as luck would have it, but there in order that God's works would be made manifest and very many hearts would be enlightened by the presence of his enlightenment. When this man found out from those in the front that Christ's servant saint Vedast travelled in this entourage, he shouted: "Saint Vedast, God's elected, have mercy on me and diligently pray with a pious disposition for divine power, so that it may save me from my misery. I neither ask for gold, nor silver, but that I may see again through the prayers of your sanctity." The man of God felt he received divine power not solely on account of the blind man, but more on account of the salvation of all people present, and so he poured out saintly prayers, trusting in divine mercy, and placed his right hand with the sign of the cross over the eyes of the blind man, saying: "Lord Jesus, you who are the true light, who opened the eyes of a man born blind who called upon you, also open the eyes of this man, so that this people here present may understand that you alone are God, working miracles in Heaven and on Earth." Having received his sight immediately, the man resumed his course.

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<sup>1</sup> Voncq, dep. Ardennes.

<sup>2</sup> Unknown.

Mark 10:46-52

46 *Et veniunt Jericho: et proficiscente eo de Jericho, et discipulis ejus, et plurima multitudine, filius Timae Bartimaeus caecus, sedebat juxta viam mendicans.*

47 *Qui cum audisset quia Jesus Nazareus est,*

*Coepit clamare, et dicere: Jesu fili David, miserere mei.*

48 *Et comminabantur ei multi ut taceret. At ille multo magis clamabat: Fili David, miserere mei.*

49 *Et stans Jesus praecepit illum vocari. Et vocant caecum, dicentes ei:*

Luke 18:35-43

35 *Factum est autem, cum appropinquaret Jericho, caecus quidam sedebat secus viam, mendicans.*

36 *Et cum audiret turbam praetereuntem, interrogabat quid hoc esset.*

37 *Dixerunt autem ei quod Jesus Nazareus transiret.*

38 *Et clamavit, dicens: Jesu, fili David, miserere mei*

39 *Et qui praeibant, increpabant eum ut taceret. Ipse vero multo magis clamabat: Fili David, miserere mei.*

40 *Stans autem Jesus jussit illum adduci ad se. Et cum appropinquasset, interrogavit illum,*

Jonas of Bobbio, *Vita Vedastis* 3

*Cum pariter pergerent, quadam die venerunt in pago Vungense ad locum qui dicitur Grandeponte, iuxta villa Riguliaco, super fluvium Axona. Obvium habens caecum, multorum annorum spatia ab hac luciae damnatum,*

Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 3

*Nam regia excellentia condigno comitatu cum multitudine maxima populi, iter agentibus illis, venerunt in quoddam pagum, quod incolarum terrae illius consuetudine Vungise pagus dicitur, prope Reguliacam villam, quae sita est super florigeras Axnae fluminis ripas. Et ecce! eiusdem fluminis pontem rege transeunte cum multitudine populi, obviavit illis caecus quidam, huius diutissime solaris expers luminis: forte nec sui caecatus culpa, sed ut manifestarentur opera Dei in illo, et per illius inluminationem praesentem plurimorum inluminarentur corda spiritaliter.*

*Qui cum intellexisset a praetereuntibus, sanctum Vedastum Christi servum in eodem iter agere comitatu,*

*clamavit: 'Sancte et electe Deo Vedaste, miserere mei et supernam pio pectore diligentius deposce potentiam, ut meae subveniat miseriae.*

*Animaequior esto: surge,  
vocat te.*

*50 Qui projecto vestimento  
suo exiliens, venit ad eum.*

*51 Et respondens Jesus dixit  
illi: Quid tibi vis faciam?  
Caecus autem dixit ei:  
Rabboni, ut videam.*

*41 dicens: Quid tibi vis  
faciam? At ille dixit:  
Domine, ut videam.*

*petiit beato Vedasto, ut pro se immensae pietatis  
postolaret auxilium, ut lumen quod carebat, ipso  
denique inpetrante, recipere mereretur.*

*Non aurum posco nec argentum, sed ut mihi lumen  
per sanctitatis tuae preces restituat oculorum'.*

*Ille fidus de misericordiam Domini dexteram levavit,  
super oculos caeci signum crucis inposuit,*

*Sensit itaque vir Dei, virtutem sibi adesse supernam.  
Non ob illius caeci tantummodo, sed plus propter  
praesentis populi salutem totum se in sacras effudit  
preces; in divina fidens pietate, dexteram cum signo  
crucis posuit super oculos caeci,*

*52 Jesus autem ait illi:  
Vade, fides tua te saluum  
fecit.*

*42 Et Jesus dixit illi:  
Respice, fides tua te saluum  
fecit.*

*dicens: 'Domine Iesu, qui es lumen verum, qui  
aperuisti oculos caeci ad te clamantis, aperi oculos et  
istius, ut intellegat populus iste praesens, quia tu es  
solus Deus, faciens mirabilia in caelo et in terra'.*

*Et confestim vidit, et  
sequebatur eum in via.*

*43 Et confestim vidit, et  
sequebatur illum magnificans  
Deum. Et omnis plebs ut  
vidit, dedit laudem Deo.*

*statimque lumen oculorum recepit.*

*Mox ille caecus, lumine recepto, gaudens perrexit  
viam suam.*

Table 6. Textual makup of Alcuin, *Vita Vedasti* 3.

## 1.2. Alcuin, *Epistola* 290

DOMINO PATRI AEDELHARDO ARCHIEPISCOPO ALQUINUS SALUTEM.<sup>957</sup>

*Saepius mihi scribendum est quod semper diligendum. Et dum caritas non cessat, litterae non taceant. Refrigerium est quoddam caritatis apicibus exerere flammam et vice linguae frui litterulis, Quapropter tuae venerandae dilectioni non sit durum legere quod nostrae devotioni suave est scribere; desiderans vestram beatitudinem in omnibus proficere bonis et multam Deo lucrari plebem, ut multam apud Deum habeas mercedem. Non taceat lingua sacerdotis, nec cor in caritate frigescat.*

*Multas videbam consuetudines, quae fieri non debebant. Quas tua sollicitudo prohibeat. Nam ligaturas portant, quasi sanctum quid estimantes. Sed melius est in corde sanctorum imitare exempla, quam in sacculis portare ossa; evangelicas habere scriptas ammonitiones in mente magis, quam pittaciolis exaratas in collo circumferre. Haec est pharisaica superstitio; quibus ipsa veritas impropere phylacteria sua.*

*Et illa conventicula, in quibus deceptus est populus, aeclesias relinquentes et montana petentes loca, ibi non orationibus, sed ebrietatibus servientes; dicente ipso Christo: 'Si quis dicat vobis in desertis, quae sunt Christi, non in aeclesia, qui foras facit congregationes et Christi amittit aeclesias'.*

*Talia sunt plurima, in quibus necesse est vestram vigilare sollicitudinem; ut mala tollatur consuetudo et bona inferatur; invencio auferatur humana et evangelica custodiat ammonitio. Quod apostoli fecerunt et patres nostri, hoc audiatur ab ore tuo; ne cuiusvis sanguis queratur ab anima tua, sed lucrum habeas in omnibus et in omnibus honorificetur dominus noster Iesus Christus. Valeto in pace, karissime et excellentissime pater.*

<sup>957</sup> Text as in DÜMMLER (ed.) 1895, p. 448. Aethelhard was *de facto* archbishop of Canterbury since the death of Jænberht in August 792, *de jure* since 793. The letter was probably written before his deposition in 796/797 by king Eadberht III of Kent, and Aethelhard's conflict with Hygeberht of Lichfield. A French translation is found in STOCLET 2003, pp. 112-114.

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ALCUIN TO THE ARCHBISHOP, THE LORD FATHER AETHELHARD: GREETINGS!

I should write more often about what must always be cherished. And while affection does not cease, letters must not remain silent. A little cooling demonstrates flames with summits of affection and delight in letters instead of tongues. Therefore may it not be hard to read for your venerable affection what was sweet for our devotion to write; wanting your blessedness to prevail in all good things and to gain for God a great people, so that you may have a great merit with God. May the tongue of the priest not be silent, may the heart not abate in affection.

I saw many customs, which should not be practiced, which your diligence should forbid. For they carry amulets (*ligaturas*), which they think are holy, but it is better to imitate the examples of the saints in the heart, than to carry about their bones in little bags; to have their evangelical admonitions written in the mind, than to carry them about on the neck, written on a slip of parchment. This is the superstition of the Pharisees, whose phylactery (*phylacteria*) Truth himself reproached (Matthew 23:5).

Also those small assemblies in which the people are being misled, leaving the churches and heading for mountainous places, committing themselves to binge drinking, not prayer. As Christ himself said: "If someone tells you, who are Christ's, (that Christ is) in the desert, (he is) not in the church, who made congregations and dismissed the churches of Christ." (Matthew 24:26)

There are very many of such customs, on account of which your solicitude needs to be cautious, so that bad habits are destroyed and good ones introduced, that human invention is removed and evangelical admonition is guarded. What the apostles and our forefathers did, this must be heard from your mouth; that no blood whatsoever may cry out against your soul, but that you will possess gain in all things and our Lord Jesus Christ is honoured in all things. May you prevail in peace, most beloved and most excellent father.

### 1.3. Alcuin, *Epistola* 291

BENEDICTO PATRI ILL. ARCHIEPISCOPO ALCHVINUS DIACONUS SALUTEM.<sup>958</sup>

*Direxi hunc fratrem nostrum, vestrae pietati optime notum, ad agnoscendum vestrae prosperitatis desiderabile nobis nuntium, quod semper leto animo audiam. Quia valde necessarium est habitatoribus Britanniae talem habere praedicatorum, sicut vos haut dubium scio et opto esse in Domino. Quapropter vestra verba Dei in praedicando diligentia non taceat, sed aperiat os suum in eo qui ait: 'Aperi os tuum et ego adimplebo illud'. Ammone consacerdotes tuos et laboris tui cooperatores de discendo et praedicando fidem catholicam, sine qua, sicut beatus apostolus ait, 'impossibile est Deo placere'. Impossibile est quod omnino fieri non poterit. Fundamentum est salutis nostrae et initium redemptionis fides apostolica; et reigionis nostrae summa felicitas, si ea dilectionis operibus exaltabitur. Habes enim plurimorum libros patrum, in quibus vestrae auctoritatis sanctitatem optime eruditam esse novi.*

*Nec ullatenus sinas novas sectas introducere in reigionem cristianam, quae purissime tradita est a beato Augustino et caeteris doctoribus Britanniae. Quicquid illi docuerunt, doceatur, et quicquid illi non docuerunt, habeatur quasi alienum.*

*Ligaturas vero, quas plurimi homines illis in partibus habere solent et sancta quaeque in collo portare, non in corde desiderant; et cum illis Dei verbis sanctissimis vel reliquiis sanctorum vadunt ad immunditias suas vel etiam uxoribus debitum solvunt; quod magis est peccatum quam premium, magisque maledictio quam benedictio. Lege in libris de doctrina cristiana, quid exinde sanctus Augustinus dicat, et in eius pio capitulo CCLXXV. Ubi talia diabolicae convenientie pacta esse pronuntiat et multum cristianis vitanda esse testatur.*

*Sed et conventus singulares, quos solent habere et nominant coniurationes, omnino Deo non placere certissimum est nec religioni cristianae convenire. Nec umquam audivimus sanctos doctores talia tradidisse vel fecisse. Pura fides absque ulla inmissione malarum consuetudinum debet esse in populo christiano. Quam tua, pater sancte, sanctissima sollicitudo, sicut optime didicit, optime docere studeat; ut totus Britanniae populus de luce, quam tibi Christus perdonavit, illuminatus, per semitas vitae vias ambulare lucentes agnoscat et ad patriam sempiternae lucis pervenire mereatur.*

*Vestrae beatitudinis auctoritatem divina exaltare gratia et perpetua custodire pro speritate dignetur, sanctissime domine.*

<sup>958</sup> Text as in DÜMMLER (ed.) 1895, p. 449.

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ALCUIN, DEACON, TO THE BLESSED FATHER, ARCHBISHOP EANBALD:  
GREETINGS!

I sent you this brother of ours, known very well to your pious person, to learn the news, which I want to hear with a happy heart, of your well-being, desirable to us, because it is very necessary for the inhabitants of Britain to possess such a preacher as I know without doubt and hope that you are. May therefore your diligence not remain silent in preaching God's words, but may his mouth open in him who said: "Open your mouth, and I will fill it." (Psalm 80.11) Admonish your fellow priests and the fellow workers in your toil about teaching and preaching the catholic faith, without which, as the blessed apostle said, "It is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11.6) It is impossible that nothing happens at all. Apostolic faith is the foundation of our salvation and the beginning of redemption and the highest happiness of our religion, if it will be made high by works of good will.

You possess very many books of the fathers, in which I know is the most erudite sanctity of your authority. You must not allow that they introduce any new sects whatsoever into the Christian religion, that was brought to Britain in its purest form by the blessed Augustine and the other teachers. What they taught, must be taught, and what they did not teach, must be considered unfitting.

For the amulets (*ligaturas*) which very many people in those parts are accustomed to have and whatever holy things they are used to carry around their neck, they do not desire in their heart; and with these most holy words of God or relics of the saints they rush off towards their foulnesses, or even dissolve their bonds with their wives, which is a sin, rather than a prize, and more of a curse than a blessing. Read in the books on the Christian faith, what saint Augustine says there, and in its pious chapter 275 (*De doctrina christiana* II.23.36, JV), where he denounces such pacts of satanic convenience, and bears witness of much which Christians must avoid.

But it is also most certain that the secluded assemblies, which they are used to have and which they call brotherhoods (*coniurationes*) do not please God at all. Nor do they tally with the Christian religion, nor do we hear that the holy teachers have transmitted or done such things. A pure faith without any addition of bad habits must reside in the Christian people.

May your most holy solicitude, holy father, try hard to teach this in the best way, as it has learned in the best way; so that the whole people of Britain, enlightened by the light, which Christ gave wholly to you, may acknowledge to walk over the paths of life as over lighting ways and may merit to arrive in the land of eternal light. May divine grace deem the authority of your blessed person worthy to be exalted by and protected by eternal prosperity, most holy lord.



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## 1. Abbreviations

AA SS	<i>Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur, vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur</i>
AA SS o.s.b.	<i>Acta Sanctorum ordinis sancti Benedicti</i>
ALC	Marie-Hélène JULLIEN & Françoise PERELMAN, <i>Clavis Scriptorum Latinorum Medii Aevi. Auctores Galliae 735-987. II: Alcuinus</i> (Turnhout 1999).
BHL	Hippolyte DELEHAYE s.j. [et al.] (eds.), <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i> (2 vols., Brussels 1898-1901; supplement 1986).
CC	<i>Corpus Christianorum</i>
SL	– <i>Series Latina</i>
CM	– <i>Continuatio mediaevalis</i>
CPL	Eligius DEKKERS, <i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum</i> (3rd. ed., Turnhout 1995).
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica</i>
AA	– <i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
Conc.	– <i>Concilia</i>
Epp.	– <i>Epistulae</i>
PLAC	– <i>Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini</i>
SS	– <i>Scriptores</i>
SS rer. Germ.	– <i>Scriptores rerum Germanicarum</i>
SS rer. Merov.	– <i>Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i>
PL	Jacques-Paul MIGNE (ed.), <i>Patrologia Latina cursus completus</i>
S-K	Dieter SCHALLER & Ewald KÖNSGEN, <i>Initia carminum latinorum saeculo undecimo antiquiorum. Bibliographisches Repertorium für die lateinische Dichtung der Antike und des frühen Mittelalters</i> (Göttingen 1977; Supplement 2004).

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- , *Adversus Elipandum* (ALC 5), PL 101, cols. 231-270.
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## Summary

In this study I have looked at the way in which sanctity was defined by two medieval authors, Alcuin of York and Thiofrid of Echternach, especially in the *Vitae Willibrordi* which these two authors composed around 800 and 1100 respectively. I have argued that a careful study of these *vitae* and other works of the same authors allow us an insight into their ideas about sanctity and about relics, which in turn relate to their ideas about the nature of God, of mankind, of society and of the church. This study was called *Parallel Lives* (with *Lives* italicized) to indicate that through this comparison of two seemingly very similar lives, one can identify two very different sets of ideas about what a saint is, and consequently what man, society and the church ought to be.

Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* primarily celebrated Willibrord as a missionary and a preacher. Preaching is explicitly valued above the working of miracles, and many of the miracles that are mentioned can be linked with preaching, or with values such as tolerance and modesty. The reason for this emphasis on preaching is partly Alcuin's concern for the mission to the Saxons and the Avars at the time of writing the *Vita Willibrordi*, in the second half of the 790s, and partly an underlying idea about the importance of preaching by the clergy in general. Rather than forcing the conversion of those entrusted to his care, Alcuin's portrait of Willibrord provided his

contemporaries with an archetype of a modest, tolerant preacher, who abstains from violence in his efforts to convert pagans.

Even though there is therefore a strong contemporary exigence for describing Willibrord in the way in which Alcuin did, the importance of preaching remained a mainstay throughout his writings, including the description of other saints. This reflects Alcuin's general concern for a clergy and to a lesser extent a lay nobility which are concerned with the spiritual welfare of the whole kingdom. According to Alcuin, it is the task of those in charge of society, meaning both the clergy and lay magnates, to preach to those over whom they are placed, and of all Christians, but especially the clergy and members of religious houses, to pray for their own salvation and that of others. Again, in the latter case, Alcuin was in touch with the developments of his time, notably the development of networks of prayer confraternity.

Alcuin's ideas about saints and about the church and Christian society are therefore very close to one another, and to Alcuin's ideas about the interaction between man and the divine. That is to say: according to Alcuin, some people are predestined to be saints by God. This predestination is then born out by their deeds. These views, which are deeply influenced by the writings of Augustine of Hippo, are at the heart of Alcuin's ideas about the interaction between man and God: they give God ultimate authority in all things, but they oblige man to act according to the perceived Christian norms.

The role of saints in society is, to Alcuin, no different than that of churchmen. Saints represent the orthodox tradition of the church, which churchmen are supposed to uphold. Like all Christians they are supposed to pray for those in need, and provide examples of the Christian life to the faithful. The difference between saints and other Christians are gradual. Their prayer is all the more effective with God because of their proficiency in upholding orthodoxy, and living an exemplary Christian life. The fact that their life is only gradually different from that of other Christians also means that to Alcuin, sanctity is not the prerogative of a particular class of exceptional Christians, but is, in principle attainable by any kind of Christian, provided God had predestined him (or her) so, notwithstanding the fact that most of Alcuin's saints are male, priests, and members of religious communities.

To Alcuin, relics are a conduit for interaction of the faithful with the saint in Heaven, and through the saint with God. Whatever supernatural events may occur near the relics of the saint, however, are neither the product of inherent powers in the relics, nor of powers that the saint can muster independently, but of divine power. The point is crucial to Alcuin's description of miracles, which stress again and again that it is not the saint, but God who works miracles. This is also the reason why Alcuin objected to the belief that wearing relics on the body alone was enough to be

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forgiven. Forgiveness, Alcuin argued, was the product of compunction, prayer, and penitence, not of any powers that may be inherent in the relics themselves.

Thiofrid, by contrast, saw Willibrord as a monk first, and a bishop second. His picture of the saint is decidedly more focussed on monastic seclusion. This has a profound effect on Thiofrid's description of the saint's interaction with the outside world, which is viewed far more negatively. The outside world in many respects stands in antithesis to the monastic state. In these ideas Thiofrid reflects the concerns of contemporary Benedictine monastic thought. To him, not society, but the monastery is the home of true Christianity to Thiofrid. In these ideas the influence of patristic authors like Gregory the Great and Jerome echo through, ideas which had a far greater influence on Thiofrid's thought than Augustine. By consequence, sanctity is an almost exclusively monastic prerogative. Thiofrid acknowledges that martyrdom would also be a way to sanctity, but his examples of martyrs are all ancient, so this non-monastic alternative form of sanctity does not play a part in his view of contemporary society.

What monks and martyrs have in common in Thiofrid's thought is the fact that they both forsook the world. In doing so their soul, which is by nature a part of heaven, triumphed over the nature of their body, which is by nature part of the earth and drawn to sin. Through this victory of soul over body the body of the saint partakes in the saint's nature, and becomes holy itself. In fact, like the soul of the saint, it becomes a partaker in God's nature. Thiofrid's ideas about this process are deeply influenced by his ideas about the Eucharist, a topic that had been hotly debated in the decades before he wrote.

Like Alcuin, Thiofrid believed that saints were predestined to become saints by God. His way of working out this premise is different. To Thiofrid, the names of the saints indicate their saintly state. He often played on etymology: Andrew is 'manly in virtue', Willibrord is the 'willing bread', Sergius 'serves the gentiles', and Liutwin is the 'joy of the people', especially as he gives them true joy, the Eucharistic wine.

The primary role of saints in Thiofrid's thought is a contemplative one. His saints are monastic, and not of this world. This is because of the nature of sainthood in Thiofrid's descriptions of saints: their souls triumphed over their bodies, and hence heaven overcame earth in them. This definition also has implications for the social function of the saints. They are in many ways no longer part of society. Preaching is far less of a concern to Thiofrid. Nor are the saints as important as examples to the faithful, except monks. Saints may aid the faithful, by discharging their duties as clergymen (especially in serving the Eucharist), or aid the faithful by providing them with miraculous aid, but their main concern is with heaven, rather than with society. Miracles are

no longer primarily a tool for preaching, but mostly a means to make known God's favour with the saints. In this respect saints are like monks. Monks, likewise, should be enimical to the world, and especially to secular nobles. The only role in society that Thiofrid allots to monks is a role in the resolution of conflicts and feuds.

Thiofrid's ideas about how saints become saints also have implications for his description of relics and their functions. Relics, Thiofrid held, were objects partaking in the divine on earth. The power to work miracles was therefore inherent in them. This also presented Thiofrid with a number of practical problems concerning the appearance and decay of relics. Despite the high value Thiofrid attached to them, relics generally had a low intrinsic value. Moreover, they were subject to rot, despite partaking in the Almighty. Thiofrid resolved these problems by contrasting earthly appearances with divine realities. Relics may seem insignificant, and they may seem to decay, but they are in actual fact highly valuable, and partake in the future incorruption of the saints. Seeing relics is therefore not a good means to assess their worth. It may even confuse the faithful. Thiofrid therefore seems to have frowned on seeing relics. Rather, he believed that relics should be covered with gold and precious stones in order to express their true value, and as a means for the donors of precious relic containers to express their faith and perhaps earn forgiveness for their sins.

Socially, relics were primarily important within the context of the church. Most of the relics Thiofrid described were located within churches, and whenever they were taken out of church buildings, this was as part of church business, for example as part of an effort to resolve conflicts. Contrary to Alcuin, Thiofrid did not object to placing relics in close physical proximity to the bodies of the faithful. In fact, this is exactly the procedure he described in a number of miracles performed by Willibrord's relics, both in the *translatio* of these relics in Echternach in 1031 and during Thiofrid's own visit to Walcheren in the early twelfth century.

## Samenvatting

In deze studie heb ik gekeken naar de manier waarop heiligheid werd gedefinieerd door twee middeleeuwse auteurs, Alkwin van York en Thiofried van Echternach, vooral in de *Vitae Willibrordi* die deze twee auteurs schreven rond respectievelijk 800 en 1100. Ik heb betoogd dat een zorgvuldige studie van deze *vitae* en de andere werken van dezelfde auteurs ons inzicht geven in hun ideeën over heiligheid en relieken, die op hun beurt weer gerelateerd zijn aan hun ideeën over de aard van God, van de mensheid, van de samenleving en van de kerk. Deze studie heette *Parallele Levens* (met *Levens* cursief gedrukt) om aan te geven dat door deze vergelijking van twee schijnbaar zeer gelijke levens, twee zeer verschillende sets van ideeën kunnen worden geïdentificeerd over wat een heilige is, en bijgevolg wat de mens, de maatschappij en de kerk zouden moeten zijn.

Alkwins *Vita Willibrordi* eerde Willibrord in de eerste plaats als een zendeling en een prediker. Preken wordt expliciet boven het werken met wonderen geplaatst, en veel van de wonderen die worden genoemd, kunnen worden gekoppeld aan prediking of aan waarden zoals tolerantie en matiging. De reden voor deze nadruk op prediking is deels Alkwins zorg voor de missie bij de Saksen en de Avaren ten tijde van het schrijven van de *Vita Willibrordi*, in de tweede helft van de jaren 790, en deels een onderliggende idee over het belang van preken door de geestelijkheid in het

algemeen. In plaats van de bekering van diegenen die aan zijn zorg zijn toevertrouwd, te dwingen, voorzag Alkwins portret van Willibrord zijn tijdgenoten van een archetype van een bescheiden, tolerante prediker, die zich onthoudt van geweld in zijn pogingen om heidenen te bekeren.

Hoewel er daarom op het moment van schrijven een belangrijke reden was om Willibrord te beschrijven zoals Alkwin deed, bleef het belang van preken een vast element in al zijn geschriften, inclusief de beschrijving van andere heiligen. Dit weerspiegelt de algemene zorg van Alkwin voor een geestelijkheid (en in mindere mate voor een lekenadel) die zich bezighoudt met het geestelijk welzijn van het hele koninkrijk. Volgens Alkwin is het de taak van degenen die de leiding hebben over de samenleving, zowel geestelijken als lekenedelen, om te prediken tot degenen over wie ze zijn geplaatst, en van alle christenen, maar vooral de geestelijkheid en leden van religieuze huizen, om te bidden voor hun eigen redding en die van anderen. In het laatste geval stond Alkwin in contact met de ontwikkelingen van zijn tijd, met name de ontwikkeling van netwerken van gebedsverbroedering.

De ideeën van Alkwin over heiligen en over de kerk en de christelijke samenleving liggen dicht bij elkaar en bij de ideeën van Alkwin over de interactie tussen de mens en het goddelijke. Dat wil zeggen: volgens Alkwin zijn sommige mensen voorbestemd om door God heiligen te zijn. Deze predestinatie blijkt vervolgens uit hun daden. Deze opvattingen, die diep beïnvloed zijn door de geschriften van Augustinus van Hippo, vormen de kern van Alkwins ideeën over de interactie tussen mens en God: zij geven God het ultieme gezag in alle dingen, maar ze verplichten de mens om te handelen volgens de normen die Alkwin zag als christelijk.

De rol van heiligen in de samenleving is voor Alkwin niet anders dan die van geestelijken en monniken. Heiligen vertegenwoordigen de orthodoxe traditie van de kerk, die geestelijken geacht worden te handhaven. Net als alle christenen moeten ze bidden voor mensen in nood en het goede christelijke voorbeeld aan de gelovigen. Het verschil tussen heiligen en andere christenen is gradueel. Hun gebed wordt sneller door God verhoord vanwege hun bekwaamheid in het handhaven van de orthodoxie en het leven van een voorbeeldig christelijk leven. Het feit dat hun leven slechts geleidelijk verschilt van dat van andere christenen betekent ook dat heiligheid voor Alkwin niet het voorrecht is van een bepaalde klasse van uitzonderlijke christenen, maar in principe bereikbaar is voor elk soort christen, zolang God hem (of haar) zo heeft voorbestemd, ongeacht dat de meeste door Alkwin beschreven heiligen mannen, priesters en leden van religieuze gemeenschappen zijn.

Voor Alkwin zijn relieken een kanaal voor interactie van de gelovige met de heilige in de hemel, en door de heilige met God. Wat er zich ook voor bovennatuurlijke gebeurtenissen mogen voordoen in de buurt van de relieken van de heilige, deze zijn noch het product van inherente

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krachten in de relieken, noch van krachten die de heilige onafhankelijk kan opbrengen, maar van goddelijke kracht. Dit punt is cruciaal voor Alkwins beschrijvingen van wonderen, die keer op keer benadrukken dat het niet de heilige is, maar God die wonderen verricht. Dit is ook de reden waarom Alkwin bezwaar maakte tegen de overtuiging dat het dragen van relieken op het lichaam alleen al genoeg was om te worden vergeven. Vergeving, zo betoogde Alkwin, was het product van berouw, gebed en boetvaardigheid, en niet van krachten die inherent zijn aan de relieken zelf.

In tegenstelling tot Alkwin zag Thiofried Willibrord in de eerste plaats als monnik en pas in de tweede plaats als bisschop. Zijn schets van de heilige is duidelijk meer gericht op monastieke afzondering. Dit heeft een diepe weerslag op Thiofrieds beschrijving van de interactie van de heilige met de buitenwereld, die veel negatiever wordt gezien. De buitenwereld staat in veel opzichten haaks op de monastieke staat. In deze ideeën weerspiegelt Thiofried de zorgen van het hedendaagse benedictijnse monastieke denken. Niet de maatschappij, maar het klooster is de thuishaven van het ware christendom voor Thiofried. Hierin klinkt ook het denken van patristische auteurs als Gregorius de Grote en Hiëronymus door, die op Thiofrieds denken een veel grotere invloed uitoefenden dan Augustinus. Bijgevolg is heiligheid een bijna uitsluitend monastiek voorrecht. Thiofried erkent dat martelaarschap ook een weg tot heiligheid zou zijn, maar zijn voorbeelden van martelaren komen allemaal uit een ver verleden, dus deze niet-kloosterlijke alternatieve vorm van heiligheid speelt geen rol in zijn kijk op de hedendaagse samenleving.

Wat monniken en martelaren gemeen hebben in het denken van Thiofried is het feit dat zij beiden de wereld hebben verlaten. Door dit te doen zegevierde hun ziel, die van nature tot de hemel behoort, over de aard van hun lichaam, dat van nature deel uitmaakt van de aarde en tot de zonde wordt aangetrokken. Door deze overwinning van de ziel op het lichaam neemt het lichaam van de heilige deel aan de natuur van de heilige en wordt hij zelf heilig. In feite wordt het, net als de ziel van de heilige, deelgenoot aan Gods aard. Thiofrieds ideeën over dit proces worden diep beïnvloed door zijn ideeën over de Eucharistie, een onderwerp waarover in de decennia voordat hij schreef heftig gediscussieerd werd.

Net als Alkwin geloofde Thiofried dat heiligen waren voorbestemd om door God heiligen te worden. Zijn manier om dit uitgangspunt uit te werken is anders. Voor Thiofried geven de namen van de heiligen hun heilige staat aan. Hij speelde vaak op etymologie: Andreas is ‘mannelijk in deugd’, Willibrord is het ‘gewillige brood’, Sergius ‘dient de heidenen’, en Liutwin is de ‘vreugde van het volk’, vooral als hij ze ware vreugde geeft, de wijn van de Eucharistie.

De belangrijkste rol van heiligen in Thiofrieds denken is een contemplatieve. Zijn heiligen zijn monastiek en niet van deze wereld. Dit komt door de aard van heiligheid in de beschrijvingen

van heiligen van Thiofried: hun zielen zegevierden over hun lichamen en daarom overwon de hemel de aarde in hen. Deze definitie heeft ook implicaties voor de sociale functie van de heiligen. Ze maken op veel manieren geen deel meer uit van de samenleving. Prediking is voor Thiofried van veel minder groot belang. Evenmin zijn de heiligen nog zo belangrijk als voorbeelden voor de gelovigen, behalve voor monniken. Heiligen kunnen de gelovigen helpen door hun plichten als geestelijken te vervullen (vooral in het bedienen van de Eucharistie), of de gelovigen helpen door hen wonderbaarlijke hulp te bieden, maar hun aandacht is gericht op de hemel in plaats van op de samenleving. Wonderen zijn niet langer in de eerste plaats een middel om te preken, maar vooral een middel om Gods gunst bij de heiligen bekend te maken. Ook hierin lijken heiligen op monniken. Monniken staan eveneens vijandig tegenover de wereld, en vooral tegenover seculiere edelen. De enige rol in de samenleving die Thiofried toekent aan monniken is een rol in de oplossing van conflicten en vetes.

Thiofrieds ideeën over hoe heiligen heilig worden, hebben ook implicaties voor zijn beschrijving van relieken en hun functies. Thiofried stelde dat relieken objecten waren die deel hadden aan het goddelijke op aarde. De kracht om wonderen te verrichten was daarom inherent. Dit stelde Thiofried ook voor een aantal praktische problemen met betrekking tot het verschijnen en verval van relikwieën. Ondanks de hoge waarde die Thiofried eraan hechtte, hadden relieken over het algemeen een lage intrinsieke waarde. Bovendien waren ze onderhevig aan verval, ondanks hun deelhebben aan de Almachtige. Thiofried loste deze problemen op door de aardse schijn te contrasteren met goddelijke werkelijkheden. Relieken lijken misschien onbeduidend, en ze lijken misschien te vervallen, maar ze zijn in feite zeer waardevol en nemen deel aan de toekomstige onvergankelijkheid van de heiligen. Het zien van relieken is daarom geen goed middel om hun waarde te beoordelen. Het kan zelfs de gelovigen in verwarring brengen. Thiofried lijkt dan geen fan te zijn van het zien van relieken. Integendeel, hij geloofde dat relieken bedekt moesten zijn met goud en edelstenen om hun ware waarde te uiten, en als een middel voor de donoren van kostbare reliekhouders om hun geloof te uiten en misschien vergeving voor hun zonden te verdienen.

In sociaal opzicht waren relikwieën vooral belangrijk binnen de context van de kerk. De meeste relieken die Thiofried beschreef, bevonden zich in kerken en wanneer ze uit kerkgebouwen werden gehaald, was dit onderdeel van kerkelijke zaken, bijvoorbeeld als onderdeel van een poging om conflicten te beslechten. In tegenstelling tot Alkwin was Thiofried niet tegen het plaatsen van relieken in de directe fysieke nabijheid van de lichamen van gelovigen. In feite is dit precies de procedure die hij beschreef in een aantal wonderen uitgevoerd door Willibrords relieken, zowel in de *translatio* van deze relieken in Echternach in 1031 als tijdens zijn eigen bezoek aan Walcheren in het begin van de twaalfde eeuw.

## Curriculum vitae

Jelle Visser (born January 16, 1988 in Drachten, municipality Smallingerland), studied History (BA, 2006-2009) and Ancient Studies (BA, 2008-2010) at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, and Medieval Studies (MA, 2009-2012, *cum laudè*) at Utrecht University. From 2014 until 2018 he worked in the VIDI-project *Mind over Matter. Debates about Relics as Sacred Objects, c. 350 – c. 1150*, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). He is currently employed outside of academia.

