

Published in final edited form as:

Medium Aevum. 2013 June 1; 82(1): 23–43.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHRIST: TEXT AND CONTEXT IN THE *VITA MILDRETHAE*

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The *Vita Deo dilectae uirginis Mildrethae* (BHL 5960) was written by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin during his residency at St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, in the final decade of the eleventh century.¹ Goscelin was the most celebrated hagiographer of his generation, whose prolificacy in writing the 'lives of countless saints' would later render him, in William of Malmesbury's estimation, as 'second to none since Bede'.² Very little is known about Goscelin's life and what is known has been pieced together from tantalizing snippets found in his hagiographical works.³ He was a Flemish émigré who left the monastery at Saint-Bertin and moved to England while still a young man in the early 1060s. His move may well have been at the encouragement of Bishop Herman of Ramsbury and Sherborne, since Goscelin appears to have joined the Benedictine community at Sherborne. While in the south-west, he may have served as chaplain to the nuns at Wilton and it is possible that he may also have served Bishop Herman as a secretary-cum-companion. Certainly his service in the bishop's household would explain his sudden departure from the locality following Herman's death in 1078. Goscelin appears to have quarrelled with Herman's successor, Osmund, who, by 'serpent envy and a step-father's barbarity ... compelled [Goscelin] to wander a long way away'.⁴ Nursing feelings of exile, Goscelin appears to have led an itinerant existence before settling at St Augustine's in the early 1090s. This peripatetic period, however, proved his most productive, and a great many of the works attributed to him, some thirty in total, were written during these years.⁵ Judging from his hagiographical commissions, Goscelin appears to have spent time at Peterborough, Barking, Ely, and Ramsey before being recruited to Canterbury to commemorate the grand translation of the abbey's entire relic collection in 1091, a colossal project which occupied him for the rest of the decade.⁶

Goscelin's purposes in undertaking hagiographical commissions were complex. His decision to dedicate three of his Lives to prominent Norman bishops suggests he was motivated by both personal and political concerns. He dedicated his Life of Wulfsgie to Bishop Osmund, his Life of Edith to Archbishop Lanfranc, and his Barking texts (the Lives of Æthelburh, Hildelith, and Wulfhild) to Bishop Maurice of London.⁷ His prologues which precede the *Vitae* communicate his thinly veiled hopes of securing employment (and a home) while, at the same time, they advance the interests of the religious communities by commending their Anglo-Saxon saints to the new Norman ecclesiastical elites.⁸ But for Goscelin it was about much more than simply recording the Lives of neglected saints. He saw hagiography as an opportunity to impart spiritual instruction. His personal interest in spiritual improvement was heralded in 1080 when he wrote a devotional manual for Eve, a young novice whom he had befriended at Wilton, known as the *Liber confortatorius* (a 'book of encouragement').⁹

Here Goscelin's concern for the instructional and contemplative functions of his text is manifestly apparent, but the same concerns also surfaced in his hagiographical works.

While his modern editors have often identified the strands of thought that fed into Goscelin's texts, the precise ways in which allusion and intertextuality gave his works their depth and didactic power have seldom been explored in detail. One particularly rich passage in the *Vita Mildrethae* concerning a local healing cult allows us to see clearly the strategies Goscelin employed to impart his message. An understanding of the various textual, liturgical, visual, and architectural contexts, as well as contemporary social practice, allows us to explore Goscelin's account of this Kentish saint. Thus it is only through a very close reading of this passage within a historically holistic framework that we can begin to unravel the broad range of patristic, Christological, and liturgical textual traditions that Goscelin drew upon to frame his narrative and elicit spiritual understanding.

The *Vita Mildrethae* commemorates St Mildrith, a local Kentish saint and celebrated possession of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury.¹⁰ She had been an early eighth-century abbess of Minster-in-Thamet whose sanctity had been verified shortly after her death by the exhumation of her incorrupt body. In 1030 King Cnut gave Abbot Ælfstan permission to appropriate the church at Minster and to translate Mildrith's remains to St Augustine's, a distance of some twelve miles.¹¹ The monks held Mildrith in high esteem. For example, we know from another text written by Goscelin containing an account of her translation to St Augustine's and her miracles that Mildrith's relics were conspicuously displayed before the high altar and that her feast was accorded the highest rank.¹² Moreover, we learn that in the pre-Conquest period it was common practice for the abbot of St Augustine's to travel to Minster-in-Thamet with his monks every year on her feast day (13 July) to celebrate lauds at her former church.¹³ So beloved was Mildrith that in the late 1080s, when the canons of the newly founded priory of St Gregory's fraudulently claimed to possess Mildrith's relics, the monks responded by commissioning Goscelin to write a polemic categorically refuting the bogus allegations.¹⁴ They also seized the opportunity to commission brand new hagiographical material for her liturgical cult encompassing this *Vita*, an account of her translation and miracles, and the *Historia de S. Mildretha* (a set of antiphons with musical notation to be sung during the liturgy).¹⁵ But despite the clear political objective underpinning this project, Goscelin also saw it as an opportunity to expound one of the main articles of Christian faith, a tenet fundamental to both the monastic community and the laity alike, the Ascension of Christ.

Goscelin wove an eschatological message about Christ's divinity and his promise of salvation through one chapter in particular, the account of a healing cult on the Isle of Thanet. The *Vita* describes how, on her return from France, Mildrith left her footprints on a stone as she descended from a ship at Ebbsfleet on the east Kent coast.¹⁶ The stone was like white marble and very hard, yet Mildrith's footprints showed as though imprinted in fresh snow or clay. Goscelin stated that the stone was continually sought for healing, performing remedies for the faithful suffering from various diseases. Scrapings of the stone, when drunk, cured fevers and other ailments, while visitors also took the powdered stone away with them. Mildrith's footprints continued to be visible and the stone remained in the same place on the river bank, since repeated attempts to move it had met with no success. Every

time the stone was moved it would return to its original place before daybreak or shortly after. The faithful erected a chapel in Mildrith's memory and encircled the stone with a *porticus*. Various services were held here and every year it was visited at Rogationtide.

Although scriptural allusions punctuate this narrative, Goscelin's description of the stone owed more to an extra-scriptural Christian tradition concerning the footprints Christ left on the top of the Mount of Olives when he ascended to heaven. This tradition did not originate in the Bible.¹⁷ The first reference to Christ's footprints on the Mount of Olives appeared in the late fourth century, in a letter sent by Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, to Sulpicius Severus.¹⁸ Paulinus was clearly keen to locate the site of the Ascension within the sacred geography of the Holy Land since, as we learn in a later letter, he believed that '[n]o other sentiment leads people to Jerusalem than the desire to see and touch the places where Christ was physically present, and to be able to say from their own experience: We have gone into his tabernacle and have adored in the place where his feet stood.'¹⁹ In his letter to Sulpicius Paulinus described the ground at the Mount of Olives which was 'both visible and accessible to worshippers and preserves the adored imprint of the divine feet in that dust trodden by God'. Moreover, he claimed that the ground resisted any attempt at adornment and this was the only place in the whole church to retain 'its natural green appearance of grass'.²⁰

Sulpicius Severus then incorporated his friend's description of the footprints in his *Chronicon*, written around the year 403.²¹ He elaborated certain aspects: for example, the ground, which, Paulinus informed us, had not been wont to accept adornment, now 'cast the marble into the faces of those laying it'. Moreover, he altered the description quite substantially by omitting any mention of grass or turf. He did, however, retain the words '(h)arena' (sand) and 'pulus' (dust), implying that the ground was gritty or powdery. Furthermore, it is in Sulpicius' *Chronicon* that we find the first indication that visitors may have attempted to remove the dust, since he remarks that despite the frequent visitors, the footprints suffered no perceptible damage.

The tradition next surfaces in Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*, written at the Abbey of Iona in the mid-680s.²² The text claims to offer a 'faithful and accurate record' of the experiences of a certain Arculf, a Gaulish bishop who had spent nine months in the Holy Land. Adomnán, the Abbot of Iona, made, he claims, 'careful inquiries' of the bishop and, having jotted his notes down on 'tablets', professed now to be committing them to parchment.²³ But despite these stenographic avowals, Adomnán appears to have relied principally on existing textual sources to produce his description of the Holy Land. Arculf's personal testimony was utilized only to supplement the accounts that Adomnán had already read.²⁴ He relied heavily on Jerome, particularly his translation of Eusebius' *Onomasticon*, his scriptural commentaries, and the *Liber hebraicorum nominum*, but another favourite was Sulpicius Severus and the discussion of the Church of the Ascension in Adomnán's *De locis sanctis* derived almost entirely from Sulpicius' *Chronicon*.²⁵ To be fair to Adomnán, he did acknowledge this debt. Before proceeding to quote virtually verbatim, he offers the parenthetical remark 'as is found written in another source', and later claims that Arculf's account was 'perfectly in accordance with the writings of others'.²⁶ But Arculf's oral account does appear to have introduced Adomnán to new information. He wrote that '[a] great round church stands there, which has within its circuit three arched porticos roofed

above'.²⁷ The footprints, however, which lay at the centre, remained open to the sky and were surrounded by a large bronze circular structure which measured up to the chin. A large lamp reportedly hung overhead, suspended on pulleys, which burned both day and night. And, for the first time, visitors were explicitly described as scooping up the dust, a feat achieved by stretching an arm through an aperture in the side of the bronze structure.²⁸

Adomnán's *De locis sanctis* represented the latest information on the Holy Land and was widely and rapidly circulated.²⁹ One recipient was the Jarrow-based Bede, who held it in such high esteem that he wrote his own abridged version and incorporated the more noteworthy passages into his *Historia ecclesiastica*, including the section on the Church of the Ascension.³⁰ Bede's account follows that of Adomnán in its essentials and offers no significant amplification; its contribution to the tradition lay more in aiding its dissemination than in refining its content. Through Bede this tradition of Christ's footprints appears to have gained a wide currency in Anglo-Saxon England, appearing in vernacular poetry, homiletic literature, and Old English martyrologies.³¹

Goscelin's learning is well established and he would certainly have been familiar with Bede, if not with the entirety of this extra-scriptural tradition.³² Moreover, as a professional hagiographer, he would have also been aware of the normative function of the genre, that being to establish a saint's claim to sanctity by revealing the parallels between their life and that of Christ.³³ It is particularly interesting that an earlier Life of Mildrith, with which Goscelin was almost certainly familiar, had not drawn these parallels explicitly.³⁴ This text, which most likely had a mid-eleventh-century Canterbury provenance, recounts Mildrith's wrangles with the Abbess of Chelles and her subsequent flight to Kent.³⁵ But the circumstances and significance of her landing at Ebbsfleet are nowhere mentioned. There is nothing about a stone, her footprints, or a healing cult: it cuts straight to her arrival back at her mother's church at Minster-in Thanet. Goscelin, therefore, added this episode to the textual tradition. But it is more than simply hagiographical embroidery; it is the narrative linchpin which lays claim to her sanctity since it explicitly spells out the parallels between Mildrith and Christ. It is through this chapter more than any other in the *Vita* that Goscelin formally advanced his claim to her sanctity.

The clever thing about this chapter is that Goscelin intended it to work on several different levels. In the same way that he used the textual tradition of Christ's Ascension to say something about Mildrith, that is, to advance his claim to her sanctity, he also used the story of her footprints and the healing cult at Ebbsfleet to make an exegetical point about Christ's Ascension and mankind's eventual entry to heaven. The episode offered a unique opportunity for Goscelin to underscore the centrality of the Ascension in the Christian message and impart spiritual guidance to his audience. So just how was the Ascension understood in eleventh-century England and what insight or commentary did Goscelin offer?

In the Bible the emphasis lay on the Apostles' visual apprehension of Christ's Ascension: 'while they *looked* on, he was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their *sight*. And while they were *beholding* him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them ... and said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you *looking up* to heaven?'³⁶ Patristic and early medieval commentators foregrounded the phrase 'out of their sight' and emphasized how

Christ's divinity was only perceived once he had passed out of sight, or, in other words, once his human form had disappeared.³⁷ For St Augustine of Hippo, Christ's incarnate form had obscured his true Godhead.

It was necessary that the form of the slave [i.e. his human form] should be taken away from their sight, for gazing upon it they thought that Christ was only that which they saw ... But his Ascension to the Father meant that he should be looked upon as he is, the equal to the Father, so that there at last they should see the vision which suffices for us.³⁸

It was only once the corporeal Christ had become invisible to the eyes of the watching Apostles that they truly *saw* him with the eyes of faith.

This emphasis on the experiential dimension of the Ascension, on the Apostles' visual apprehension of Christ disappearing into the clouds, was particularly popular in Anglo-Saxon England. It is a phenomenon to which both Meyer Shapiro and, more recently, Robert Deshman have drawn attention, emphasizing how Anglo-Saxon homilists, poets, and manuscript illustrators sought to elicit from their audience an empathetic identification with Christ's disciples.³⁹ In the eighth-century poem *Christ II*, for example, this was achieved by modernizing the event and recasting it in contemporary clothes. The author Cynewulf described the moment of Christ's Ascension: 'Cyning ure gewat / þurh þæs temples hrof þær hy to segun / þa þe leofes þa gen last weardedum / on þam þingstede, þegnas gecorene' ('Our king departed through the roof of the temple where they saw, those who then yet remained watching, the chosen thanes, the footprint of the dear one in that assembly-place').⁴⁰ The Ascension is removed from its biblical setting. There would have been no temple and certainly no Anglo-Saxon thanes standing around watching. Through the words 'temples', 'þegnas', and 'þingstede' – the Old English word for meeting or assembly place – the poem resituated the event both in terms of the contemporary pilgrimage experience and Anglo-Saxon society and social practices.

Anglo-Saxon manuscript illustrators similarly sought to situate their beholders as spectators at the actual Ascension. A new figurative type, dubbed the 'disappearing Christ', appeared in the eleventh century.⁴¹ The traditional image of the fully visible Christ was superseded by an image of Christ vanishing into heaven where his upper body was obscured by clouds and only his legs and feet were visible. First portrayed in the early eleventh-century Missal of Robert of Jumiéges, the 'disappearing Christ' subsequently appeared in at least three later Anglo-Saxon manuscripts: the Bury St Edmund's Psalter, the Tiberius Psalter, and the Cotton Troper.⁴² In each the full-length Apostles are depicted gazing up at Christ's lower limbs hanging down from a cloud. By depicting the Ascension from the Apostles' perspective, manuscript illustrators sought to make the viewer a participant in the event itself, identifying themselves with the Apostles and sharing their visual and emotional experience.⁴³

The Anglo-Saxon enthusiasm for provoking the imaginative re-enactment and empathetic identification of the event is nowhere more pronounced than in the late tenth-century Blickling Homily on the Ascension.⁴⁴ Once again listeners were encouraged to imagine the contemporary pilgrimage experience. Graphic descriptions of the Church of the Ascension

helped to set the scene: 'There are three porches built around the church, and these are very handsomely assembled from the top and roofed over. But the great church, which stands there in the centre, is open and has no roof.'⁴⁵ The homilist was clearly familiar with the extra-scriptural textual tradition since we find typical comments about how the earth would resist all attempts at worldly adornment, how the footprints themselves were once enclosed in a green copper, now gold and silver, structure, and how pilgrims would extend their heads and arms through a small aperture in the side and retrieve particles of dust.⁴⁶ The aim was to enrich the sensory experience to be vicariously apprehended by the Anglo-Saxon audience. Those listening were invited to conjure up in their mind's eye a set of footprints which could be touched, kissed, and even hollowed out; moreover, they were to imagine that they themselves were doing the touching, kissing, and hollowing. Picturing themselves partaking in the full sensory experience was intended to encourage the audience not only to empathetically identify with the Apostles, but also to imitate their faith. Towards the end of the homily, we find the exhortation: 'Dearly beloved, although we are not now at the holy place that I have just spoken of, nonetheless, we may in these places where we now are become good and proper before our Lord, if we in our lifetime do what is true and proper.'⁴⁷

A footprint was the perfect vehicle for an exegetical lesson on Christ's divinity since it succeeded in symbolizing both his presence and absence on earth. A footprint is seen only when the foot that made it has gone; its very existence is contingent on the absence of the foot. Admittedly the same could be said for the imprint of any body part; however the foot had special allegorical significance.⁴⁸ Feet symbolized Christ's humanity and Incarnation while his head represented Christ's divinity.⁴⁹ As Gregory the Great wrote: 'We can also understand by his feet the mystery of his incarnation, by which his divinity touched earth because he took a body to himself ... If we take the Lord's feet to be the mystery of his incarnation, we can appropriately take his head to represent his divinity.'⁵⁰ A footprint to contemplate worked far better than a picture of legs dangling from a cloud since it neatly encapsulated the main thrust of the exegetical message; on one hand it represented the disappearance of the Incarnate Christ, while on the other, its indestructible quality represented his continuing divine presence here on earth.

Goscelin was certainly not the first to tie all these themes together. As we have just seen the Blickling Homilist, over a century before, used the imagined sensory apprehension of the footprints to teach the message of Christ's divinity. Goscelin, however, took the message one step further because he transformed it from an act of imagination into a tangible sensory experience for believers by locating the footprints within the local Kent countryside. The stone, Goscelin said, lay near to the port of 'Ippeles fleot'.⁵¹ This was Ebbsfleet on the south coast of the Isle of Thanet, an important *entrepôt* from the prehistoric through to the late medieval period.⁵² Unfortunately today there is no sign of either the chapel or the stone. Nor are there any references to a chapel in that location in the later documentary record.⁵³ In fact the only source independent of Goscelin to corroborate his account of the healing cult dates from the eighteenth century. In 1723, the Thanet historian and antiquarian John Lewis wrote that '... but a few years ago there was a little rock at Ebbs Fleet called St Mildred's rock'.⁵⁴ Moreover, in a preceding engraving 'Mildred's Rock' is depicted not on the shoreline, as we might have expected, but out in the middle of the estuary.⁵⁵ This is actually a much more

plausible location. Pegwell Bay is a depositing coastline, little more than a giant mud flat. Although the Wantsum Channel continued to allow nearby Sandwich to function as an international port until the late fifteenth century, access was always difficult and in the late Middle Ages the channel was only navigable by skilled Italian pilots. Indeed the silting up of the Wantsum was the overriding concern of the barons of Sandwich throughout the Middle Ages.⁵⁶ It is possible that even as early as the eighth century it was far easier for ships to drop anchor some way off the shore instead of attempting to navigate the treacherous Wantsum. Passengers would thus have had to disembark and either wade or be rowed ashore. Although the idea of a stone lying out in the middle of the estuary does not neatly tally with Goscelin's description of it lying 'super ripam fluminis' it does nevertheless testify to an enduring tradition that Mildrith's footprints were physically present in the local landscape; that they could be visited and offered pilgrims a tangible sensory experience. Although it is possible that this tradition may have originated with Goscelin, it is clear that he was doing something quite innovative. While the Blickling Homilist invited his listeners to meditate upon a set of imagined footprints, Goscelin's exegesis was directed at people seeing, touching, and scraping real-life hollows in the ground. Through Mildrith's footprints – which were in essence standing in for those of Christ – the Ascension was lifted from its biblical setting and resituated in the local Kent landscape.

Goscelin was careful to draw out the parallels between Mildrith's footprints and those of Christ on the Mount of Olives. God's handiwork, for example, shone through both sets of prints: while Christ's footprints exposed his divinity, the stone, placed 'diuinitus' ('by divine influence') for the disembarking Mildrith, bore the indelible sign of the Lord's gracious affection he felt for his virgin ('In hoc ... infinita Domini benignitas indelebile dare dignata est indicium, quam gratiosum in electa sibi uirgine habuerit affectum').⁵⁷ Moreover, Mildrith's footprints, like those of Christ, were immutable; they could neither be moved nor their appearance altered ('Lapis non solum impressum sibi pignus domine semper seruat ... inuictus et reses perhenniter durat').⁵⁸ On occasions when the stone was removed, it was later rediscovered in its original location ('... sepe ab eodem loco remotus est, sed post modicum iterum in sua sede repertus est').⁵⁹ Goscelin described how the stone '... quasi ramus arboris trahentibus cedit ac dimissus uelut naturaliter in suum locum resilit' ('... yields to those dragging [it] as if it were the branch of a tree and when it has been released it just as naturally springs back to its place').⁶⁰ The marks on Mildrith's stone were indelible and undamaged by regular abrasion just as Christ's footprints suffered no perceptible damage despite the frequent visitors to the Church of the Ascension who took their scrapings away as souvenirs. It was also customary for those sick with fevers or other illnesses to mix the dust they had scraped from Mildrith's stone with water and drink it as a remedy and even to take the powdered stone away with them for later use ('Norunt enim adhuc febricitantes et ceteri morbi ex antiqua consuetudine lapidem radere et, hoc puluere potato, certam medelam haurire').⁶¹ The miraculous healing properties of the dust scooped from Christ's footprints was not a feature of the early extra-scriptural tradition. Yet it was made explicit in the Blickling Homily: 'And many men – that is, those who may obtain permission to do it – take the soil from the footsteps to have it as a relic, and many diseases and illnesses are cured when the dust is applied.'⁶² Goscelin's assumption that healing was also the normative function of the dust from Mildrith's stone may imply that this was a

feature of the tradition that enjoyed a wider currency by the end of the eleventh century. Similarities were also drawn with regard to the architectural forms of the churches erected on both sites. A rotunda consisting of three arched porticos was constructed around Christ's footprints on the Mount of Olives.⁶³ Correspondingly, the local people built an *oratorium* in Mildrith's memory and also encircled the stone with a *porticus* ('His populi accensi uirtutibus de hoc sacrario uirginis oratorium in memoriam eius fecere et sacra porticu ipsum ipsius saxum cinxere ...').⁶⁴ As the chapel is not attested in any other historical source besides this *Vita*, the architectural specifics are lost; nevertheless, it is tempting to imagine that this chapel may have been a rotunda. Round churches were not unknown in western Europe. Architectural copies of the Anastasis Rotunda of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem were erected in the Latin West from the ninth century onward.⁶⁵ Anglo-Saxon round churches include the church of Abingdon Abbey built in the mid-tenth century, the church of St Mary and St Edmund erected after the foundation of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds in 1020, and the rotunda begun by Abbot Wulfric at St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, around the year 1049.⁶⁶ Finally, were readers of the *Vita* left in any doubt over the similarities between Mildrith's footprints at Ebbsfleet and those of Christ on the Mount of Olives, Goscelin ended the passage with an explicit scriptural allusion: 'Hic etiam, post typum Ierusalem Christique et ecclesie sacramentum, impletum Isaie uidetur uaticinium: Venient ad te qui non nouerunt te et adorabunt uestigia pedum tuorum et pulverem pedum tuorum lingent.' ('The prophecy of Isaiah: "may those who do not know you come to you and worship the steps of your feet and lick the dust of your feet", later [fulfilled] in Jerusalem and the sacrament of Christ and the Church, seems to have been fulfilled here too.')⁶⁷ Goscelin took care to bring the extra-scriptural tradition back to the authority of the Bible, thus further sanctioning the practices performed at Ebbsfleet.

Indeed, it is here that the novelty of Goscelin's text is most marked. Instead of achieving enlightenment about the Ascension through acts of imagination (as in the Blickling Homily), Goscelin's readers were invited to experience the re-creation of the event at first hand. So while visitors to Mildrith's footprint were ostensibly engaged in obtaining miraculous cures, Goscelin suggested that they were in fact, through Mildrith, bearing witness to Christ's Ascension itself. This concept of re-actualizing an event in Christian history was part and parcel of eleventh-century liturgical practice. In the ninth century Amalarius of Metz (c. 775–852/3) had drawn attention to the dramatic aspect which underlay the mass, the central ceremony of Christian worship, explaining how the ritual, performative actions of the celebrants (and the observing congregation) made the eucharistic sacrifice a rememorative allegory for the life, ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ.⁶⁸ The laity received a daily reminder as to the signification of the bread and wine through the repetition of their own ritual behaviours which they had come to associate with the mass. The appreciation of the dramatic potential of the liturgy spread beyond continental Europe and expanded to encompass ceremonies other than the mass. One of the earliest Anglo-Saxon examples of liturgical drama is the *Visitatio sepulchri* found in the *Regularis concordia*, drawn up in the early 970s by Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester and one of the leaders of the Benedictine Reform movement.⁶⁹ The *Visitatio*, performed at matins on Easter Sunday, gave instructions for the dramatic re-enactment of the visit to Christ's sepulchre during which the three Marys heard the angel announce Christ's Resurrection and saw the proof for themselves. Three

monks, wearing copes and carrying thuribles of incense, played the part of the Marys, while the 'angel' at the sepulchre wore an alb and held a palm-twig. The aim was for a ritualistic as opposed to a realistic expression, since the point of the exercise was to evoke a sympathetic connection with the biblical figures. As Bradford Bedingfield explains:

The point of dramatic liturgical ritual like the *Visitatio* is not to construct for an appreciative audience a representation of biblical history. It is, rather, to make the participants feel that they are, along with the holy women, seeking Christ on Easter morning, finding the proof that he had risen, and proclaiming it to the world.⁷⁰

In this liturgical drama the participants were restricted to the four principals, but in other ceremonies the entire monastic community was involved. Following the *Tenebrae*, celebrated during the night office on the three days before Easter Sunday, the candles in the church were all extinguished. Out of the darkness, the kneeling brethren, would hear, from three sides, pairs of children cry to the Lord and the choir's resounding reply 'Christ is dead.'⁷¹ The ritual was repeated three times. This intention of those who compiled the *Concordia* was to arouse 'the compunction of the soul' by allowing the participants to experience 'the terror of that darkness' which covered the whole world at the time of Christ's Passion.⁷² These are, of course, examples of dramatic ritual taking place within a monastic setting, but such practices may also have involved the laity on occasion. The Palm Sunday celebrations probably involved a broader demographic. A procession would depart from the mother church for a second church where a scriptural reading was given and the 'palms' were blessed and distributed. The return procession to the mother church was a dramatic re-enactment of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The crowd of processing worshippers, having come together to meet Christ, were now to imagine themselves escorting him into the city. The processioners' sympathetic identification with the citizens of Jerusalem was aroused through the carrying of 'palms' (most likely willow leaves) and the singing of the song sung by the original crowd ('Hosannah in the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord').⁷³

The most important liturgical ceremony, however, for the involvement of the laity in this kind of dramatic ritual was Rogationtide. This liturgical festival, comprising three days of processions, immediately preceded the Feast of the Ascension on Holy Thursday. Its origins are obscure and various, but it may have evolved principally to commemorate the supplicatory processions of the Ninevites described in the Book of Jonah (iii.1–10) or the penance instituted by their bishop Mamertus and performed by the citizens of Vienne around the year 470. The form that these processions took in Anglo-Saxon England can only be pieced together from the surviving homiletic literature, but it is clear that they involved a broad swathe of the community.⁷⁴ Congregations from semi-devolved chapelries would gather at the ancient mother church at the third hour of the day and from thence process barefoot through the mother parish, chanting litanies of the saints, bearing crosses, and carrying holy relics.⁷⁵ Although precise details are lacking, the route probably took the crowd through fields and countryside.⁷⁶ The procession would have stopped *en route* to listen to sermons or to pray, but, once again, the homilies and liturgical rubrics are not specific about the nature of these stopping points or stations. Most sermons took divine judgement as their central theme, expounding on the tribulations of the citizens of Nineveh

and Vienne and reminding folk that they must expunge their own sins lest they also feel the wrath of God. This emphasis on spiritual purification and penance suggests that Rogationtide was more than a mere recapitulation or dramatic re-enactment of earlier penitential performances; it was about the Day of Judgement and humanity's union with heaven. The eschatological tenor of the sermons prepared Rogationtide participants for the Feast of the Ascension the following day, when humanity's redemption through Christ was celebrated. One of the Vercelli homilies for the third Rogation day made the association between Rogationtide and the Ascension explicit by explaining that one of the purposes for instituting the three days of prayer and fasting was to purge any impurities practised since Easter so that 'Tomorrow at the holy Lord's Ascensiontide' the celebrant would be 'clean at the Lord's altar'.⁷⁷

Significantly, as Goscelin made clear, Mildrith's stone played an important role in local Rogationtide observances. Although the precise details are obscure, the site featured as part of a dramatic ritual involving local people and the performance of sacred litanies ('in diebus rogationum sacras hic populus agit letanias').⁷⁸ The site was already a stage for ritual and re-enactment associated with Rogationtide and the Feast of the Ascension. Goscelin's purpose in the *Vita Mildrethae* was to point out that the everyday practices at Mildrith's stone – the scraping and consumption of the dust – should be thought of in the same light as those performed annually. The text thus had a didactic purpose: to instruct its reader to recognize that each and every visit, whether at Ascensiontide or during the rest of the year, re-actualized the biblical Ascension and its central message, that is, the Day of Judgement and humanity's elevation to heaven.

We must assume that Goscelin's initial audience was a monastic one.⁷⁹ One of the earliest witnesses to the *Vita* shows the text marked with *punctus elevatus*. According to Richard Southern, who discusses their use by Eadmer in his *Vita S. Anselmi*, this symbol indicates that the sentence is left in suspense and that a rise in pitch is required immediately before this mark.⁸⁰ This copy of Goscelin's *Vita* was probably intended to be read aloud, perhaps during the liturgy on Mildrith's feast day or during mealtimes in the refectory at St Augustine's. This manuscript, British Library, Harley MS 3908, is extremely significant for the study of the cult of Mildrith. Although it does not bear an *ex libris* inscription, nor is it listed in the fifteenth-century catalogue of books at St Augustine's, the manuscript is nevertheless written in the 'prickly' script introduced into the abbey from neighbouring Christ Church in 1089 and has been dated to the first decade of the twelfth century.⁸¹ Not only does it contain a version of Goscelin's *Vita* and his *Translatio et miracula S. Mildrethae*, but also two liturgical texts; the first a set of lessons and the second a set of narrative antiphons and responsories complete with musical notation, known as the *Historia de S. Mildretha*.⁸² The *Historia* exhibits close parallels to Goscelin's other texts, the *Vita*, the *Translatio*, and the polemical piece he wrote to rebut the claims of the Priory of St Gregory, so it is highly likely that it was also his work.⁸³ Certainly, if the comments of William of Malmesbury are anything to go by, Goscelin was almost as well known for his musical genius as he was for his hagiographical talents.⁸⁴ The episode of Mildrith's footprints is central to the *Historia* and would have been the medium through which Goscelin introduced his reinterpretation of the Mildrith legend and the significance of her

stone to the liturgical practice of the abbey. The episode is equally prominent in the lessons, which reproduced verbatim sections from the both the *Vita* and the *Historia*.⁸⁵ Anyone celebrating Mildrith's feast day using this manuscript would not only have been well aware of the story of her footprints, but also of their spiritual significance.

This small volume, measuring only 16.5 cm. by 12 cm., is extraordinary, both for its size and its highly specific contents, gathering together in one place all the necessary material to celebrate Mildrith's feast day.⁸⁶ It is tempting to conclude that this *libellus* of Mildrith, with its portability and the completeness of the material contained within, was intended for use outside the confines of St Augustine's Abbey and possibly for the dissemination of the Mildrith legend to the laity. It is clear that the monastic brethren led services in commemoration of Mildrith. In his *miracula*, Goscelin describes how a mother, longing for a miracle to cure her daughter, waited while one of the brothers delivered an account of Mildrith's life and healing works to the people.⁸⁷ Presumably this was done in the vernacular. While this took place at Canterbury, a similar arrangement may have well existed at Minster-in-Thamet. Wulfic II, Abbot of St Augustine's from 1045 till 1061, was 'accustomed every year on the anniversary of her triumphant crossing to visit with the brothers [of St Augustine's] her ancient church and tomb on the aforesaid island and to celebrate there the divine merits of [her] feast with the greatest joy'.⁸⁸ Although things may have changed after the Conquest with the influx of foreign monks and the controversial appointment of Abbot Wido, it is possible that some pre-Conquest practices may well have been retained.⁸⁹ It may be pure coincidence, but in 1091, the year when Goscelin most likely arrived at St Augustine's, the feast of Mildrith's translation (held annually on 18 May) fell on the Sunday immediately preceding the Monday of Rogationtide. Had the monks from St Augustine's continued their habit of celebrating Mildrith's feasts on Thanet and had Goscelin been one of their number that year, he would have had first-hand experience of these ritual practices.⁹⁰ This might be pushing things a little too far; nevertheless, the evidence suggests that Goscelin's intention to enlighten visitors to Mildrith's stone as to the true significance of their visit may indeed have been realized through the pastoral ministry of his fellow monks.

Goscelin of Saint-Bertin was without doubt the pre-eminent hagiographer of his generation and this passage in the *Vita Mildrethae*, which discusses Mildrith's stone on the Isle of Thanet, epitomizes perfectly his ability to combine his knowledge of Christian writing with his erudition and appreciation of the wider purpose of hagiography. While sympathetic to the political concerns of the communities that commissioned his works, Goscelin nevertheless wrote to his own agenda. He rewrote and re-presented the existing Mildrith legend, drawing upon local sources, but, crucially, overlaid this with his own interpretative framework, based upon an existing textual tradition concerning the footprints left by Christ at his Ascension. Goscelin combined the two traditions to reveal the true message left by Mildrith's footprints, namely Christ's eschatological promise that the faithful visiting Mildrith's stone would indeed follow in his footsteps to salvation. This passage demonstrates superbly the complexity and multiple layers of meaning and exegesis that Anglo-Latin hagiographers could weave into their texts. Furthermore, it reminds us that it is principally through tracing the intertextual connections contained within a given

hagiographical work that we can begin to reconstruct its purpose and intended meaning, and reveal the potential of these rich texts to illuminate the spiritual imagination of the eleventh century.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to Helen Gittos who first drew my attention to this passage. I am also grateful to John Blair for his comments on an earlier draft. This research was supported by the Wellcome Trust (grant numbers WTO84161/Z/07 and WTO98455MA).

Appendix

British Library, Harley MS 3908 fols 22^v–24^r, printed and collated with other versions of the *Vita Mildrethae* by D. W. Rollason, for which see nn. 10 and 16. The translation is my own.

Iam uirgo Domini angelico ductu et felici cursu patriam attigit et puppis currens in portum uirginalis insule qui Ippeles fleot dicitur successit. Adiacebat quadratum saxum ut marmor niueum, granditate uires uincens quattuor uirorum duritie basium et columnarum que lacesseret ferrum, egressure uirgini ita accomodum, ut diuinitus credatur ibi preparatum. In hoc itaque infinita Domini benignitas indelebile dare dignata est indicium, quam gratiosum in electa sibi uirgine habuerit affectum, ut omni posteritati perpetuo [23^r] sit in salutem et exemplum ipsius meritorum. Nam ubi a nauī descendētis domine uestigia subiectus excepit, ita ea sibi quasi recenti niui aut luto infixā subito ostendit, ipsiusque comites et affluentes ad tam insigne miraculum populos obstupefecit. Nec solum eternaliter durat hoc signum uirginea planta informatum, uerum etiam uariis languoribus iuge operatur remedium pro fide credentium. Norunt enim adhuc febricitantes et ceteri morbidī ex antiqua consuetudine lapidem radere et, hoc puluere potato, certam medelam haurire. Patet et alia superne uirtutis gratia. Lapis non solum impressum sibi pignus domine semper seruat, uerum etiam in eodem loco super ripam fluminis, quo ei a nauī suppeditauerat, inuictus et reses perhenniter durat. Sepe temptatum est, sepe ab eodem loco remotus est, sed post modicum iterum in sua sede repertus est. Plerumque in altum ipsius amnis gurgitem est dimersus, sed citius quam humano officio posset sue mansioni est redditus. Nocte quoque sullatum uideres ante luciferum uel post pusillum in sua relatum. Quod et nostro tempore satis compertum habemus. Miroque modo quasi [23^v] ramus arboris trahentibus cedit ac dimissus uelut naturaliter in suum locum resilit. His populi accensi uirtutibus de hoc sacrario uirginis oratorium in memoriam eius fecere et sacra porticu ipsum ipsius saxum cinxere; quatenus hic cum diuinorum beneficiorum augmento cresceret fidelium deuotio, et instar uirginalis templi uocaretur domus Dei lapis positus in signum et titulum eius qui factus est in caput anguli.⁹¹ Hic ergo assiduantur carismata uirginis et, inter ceteras frequentias, in diebus rogationum sacras hic populus agit letanias. Hic infirmi, ut prenotatum est, uirginei lapidis rasuras in aque potu gustantes, non solum ipsi curantur, uerum etiam, asportato lapidei pulueris antidoto, ceteris languidis medentur. Hic etiam, post typum Ierusalem Christique et ecclesie sacramentum, impletum Isaie uidetur uaticinium:

Venient ad te qui non nouerunt te et adorabunt uestigia pedum tuorum et pulverem pedum tuorum lingent.⁹² Linxerunt hunc salutiferum puluerem qui biberunt et in uestigio uirginis adorabant Dominum, cuius ipsa erat templum. His itaque uberius loco suo expositis, ne alibi repetere cogere[24]mur ad uirginem deducendam superius reuertamur.

(Now, with angelic guidance and a fortunate passage, the virgin of the Lord reached her homeland and the ship, moving fast, approached the port of the island belonging to the virgin, which is called *Ippeles fleot*. A square stone, snow-white like marble, lay nearby, which, defeating by its size the strength of four men [and] challenging iron with the hardness of its plinths and columns, was so convenient for the virgin [who was] about to land, that it might be believed to have been prepared in that place by divine providence. Consequently on this the infinite kindness of the Lord saw it fit to give an indelible sign [of] how much gracious affection he had for the virgin he had chosen for himself, so that it might forever be to the benefit of every future generation and [serve] as an example of her merits. For when the underlying [stone] received the footsteps of the lady descending from the ship, so it revealed at once those [footsteps] imprinted upon itself, as if in fresh snow or clay and it astonished her companions and the crowds flocking to such a remarkable miracle. Not only does this sign moulded by the sole of the virgin's foot last forever, but it also is continually effective as a cure for several illnesses on account of the faith of those who believe. Indeed, to this day, those [who are ill] with fevers and other sick folk know by ancient custom[ary practice] to scrape the stone and that, after having drunk this powder, [they] have consumed an indisputable remedy. This and another acknowledgement of [her] power is well known from on high. The stone not only preserves for ever the relic of the lady [that has been] impressed upon it, but also always remains unconquered and immobile, in the same place on the river bank, which had been at hand [when she descended] from the ship. It has often been put to the test, it has often been removed from that same place, but after a short while it has again been found in its [original] position. Often it has been immersed in the deep gulf of the stream itself, but more speedily than it would be possible by human power, it is returned to its own home. Also, when it was removed at night, you would see that it was brought back to its [home] before daybreak, or a little while thereafter. That we have had abundantly ascertained in our own time. And, in a wonderful way it yields to those dragging [it] as if it were the branch of a tree and when it has been released it just as naturally springs back to its place. The people were incited by these powers of the virgin's holy place to build a chapel in her memory and to surround her stone itself with a sacred portico; where the devotion of the faithful might thrive with the increase of divine favours, and the stone, the equivalent of the virgin's temple, set as a sign and a pillar shall be called the house of God, 'which has become the head of the corner'. In this place now the virgin's gifts are perpetually present and on Rogation Days, and on other occasions, the people perform sacred litanies here. Here, as has been noted before, the weak sipping shavings of the virgin's stone in a draught of water, are not only themselves healed, but also heal other sick by taking away [with them] the remedy of powdered stone. The prophecy of Isaiah: 'may those who do not know you come to you and worship the steps of your feet and lick the dust of your feet', later [fulfilled] in Jerusalem and the sacrament of Christ and the Church, seems to have been fulfilled here too. Those who drank licked this healing dust and

in the footprint of the virgin they worshipped the Lord of whom she herself was a temple. As these things have been more fully set out in the appropriate place lest we be forced to return [to them] elsewhere, let us return to deal with the virgin.)

NOTES

1. Where possible, hagiographical texts will be identified by their reference number in *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina (BHL)*, 2 vols (Brussels, 1899-1901), with supplement by H. Fros (1986).
2. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. R. A. B. Mynors, completed by R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998), I, IV, cccxlii, 592.
3. The standard biography of Goscelin remains *The Life of King Edward who Rests at Westminster*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1992), pp. 133-49. See also Thomas J. Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury: a critical study of his life, works and accomplishments', 2 vols (unpub. Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1973); Richard Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540*, Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin 1 (Turnhout, 1997), pp. 151-4 (and the Additions and Corrections to this work published in 2001); and M. Lapidge and R. C. Love, 'The Latin hagiography of England and Wales (600-1550)', in *Hagiographies: Histoire internationale de la littérature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire, en occident, des origines à 1500*, ed. G. Philippart, CCSL, 4 vols (Turnhout, 2001), III, 203-325 (pp. 225-33).
4. '... uiperina inuidia et uitricali barbarie deuotus tuus coactus est longius peregrinari': *Liber confortatorius*, ed. C. H. Talbot, *Analecta monastica*, 37 (1955), 1-117 (p. 19); trans. W. R. Barnes and Rebecca Hayward, 'Goscelin's *Liber confortatorius*', in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and 'Liber confortatorius'*, ed. Stephanie Hollis, W. R. Barnes, Rebecca Hayward, et al., *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts* 9 (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 97-212 (p. 104).
5. For the most recent discussion of his attributed works see Lapidge and Love, 'Latin hagiography', pp. 225-33.
6. On Goscelin's writings for St Augustine's, see Richard Sharpe 'Goscelin's St Augustine and St Mildreth: hagiography and liturgy in context', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 41 (1990), 502-16.
7. Goscelin's *Vita S. Wulfsini (BHL 8753)* is edited by C. H. Talbot, 'The Life of Saint Wulsin of Sherborne by Goscelin', *Revue bénédictine*, 69 (1959), 68-85; his *Vita S. Edithe (BHL 2388)* is edited by A. Wilmart 'La Légende de Ste Édith en prose en vers par le moine Goscelin', *Analecta Bollandiana* 56 (1938), 5-101; and his Lives of the Barking saints (*BHL* 2630b, 2630d-e, 2631b, 3942, 8736d) are edited by Marvin L. Colker 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury which related to the history of Barking Abbey', *Studia monastica* 7 (1965), 383-460.
8. Stephanie Hollis, 'Goscelin and the Wilton women', *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. Hollis at al., pp. 217-44 (p. 222). The classic allegation of Norman scepticism towards the Anglo-Saxon saints has been challenged by S. J. Ridyard: 'Condigna veneratio: post-Conquest attitudes to the saints of the Anglo-Saxons', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 9 (1987), 179-206. Ridyard argues that the Norman bishops were not antagonistic, but recognized the political advantage which might accrue from endorsing native saints if only 'their history was fully documented and their function effectively publicised' (p. 206).
9. See above n. 4.
10. (hereafter VM), ed. D. W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend: A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England* (Leicester, 1982), 349-54.
11. Richard Sharpe, 'The date of St. Mildrith's translation from Minster-in-Thamet to Canterbury', *Mediaeval Studies*, 53 (1991), 349-54.
12. *Translatio et miracula S. Mildrethae* (hereafter TM), ed. D. W. Rollason, 'Goscelin of Canterbury's account of the translation and miracles of St. Mildrith (*BHL* 5961/4): an edition with notes', *Mediaeval Studies*, 48 (1986), 139-210 (pp. 172, 175f and 180).
13. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
14. Goscelin's *Libellus contra inanes S. Mildrethe usurpatores (BHL 5926)* contradicts the arguments which St Gregory's set forth in their own *Vita*; both texts are edited by Marvin L. Colker, 'A hagiographic polemic', *Mediaeval Studies*, 39 (1977), 60-108.

15. The *Historia de S. Mildretha* survives in a single witness: British Library, Harley MS 3908, fols 43^r-50^v. For the attribution of Goscelin's authorship see Sharpe, 'Goscelin's St Augustine and St Mildreth', pp. 512-15.
16. *VM*, xix, 132f. The Latin text and an English translation is given in full in the appendix. References to other chapters of the *Vita* will be to the printed edition by Rollason (*VM*). All references to this specific chapter of the *Vita*, however, will be to this edition (indicated by line number).
17. Consensus follows Acts i.1-12 in identifying the Mount of Olives as the site of Christ's Ascension. This contradicts Luke xxix.50f. where the location is given as Bethany. There is no mention of any footprints in either location.
18. Paulinus of Nola, *Opera*, ed. W. von Hartel, *CSEL*, 29 (1894), letter 31.4, p. 272.
19. 'Non enim alter affectus homines ad Hierosolymam rapit, nisi <ut> loca, in quibus corporaliter praesens fuit Christus, uideant atque contingant possintque et de suo fructu edicere: introiimus in tabernacula eius et adorauius ubi steterunt pedes eius': *ibid.*, letter 49.14, ed. Van Hartel, p. 402; trans. P. G. Walsh, *Letters of Paulinus of Nola*, Ancient Christian Writers, 2 vols (Westminster, Md, 1967), II, 273.
20. 'Itaque in toto basilicae spatio solus in sui cespitis specie uirens permanet et impressam diuinorum pedum uenerationem calcati deo pulueris perspicua simul et attigua uenerantibus harena conseruat...': Paulinus, *Opera*, letter 31.4, p. 272; trans. Walsh *Letters*, II, 129f. The first reference to a church on the Mount of Olives is found in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Vita Konstantini*, where he describes how Helena, the mother of Constantine, erected a church to commemorate Christ's journey into heaven: F. Winkelmann, *Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantius*, GCS Eusebius 1/1 (Berlin, 1975; rev. 1992), III, xliii, 137. The pilgrim-nun Egeria, who visited the Holy Land in the 380s, distinguishes between the 'Imbomon' on the summit and the 'Eleona' built over the cave where Jesus gave his eschatological teaching (Matt. xxiv.1, xxvi.2), *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land*, trans. John Wilkinson (Warminster, 1981), xliii, 142. The 'Imbomon' was built shortly after Egeria's visit by a Roman noble lady named Poemenia, see Joan E. Taylor, *Christians and the Holy Places: The Myth of Jewish-Christian Origins* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 143-56.
21. '... quod locus ille, in quo postremum institerant diuina uestigia ... continuari pauimento cum reliqua stratorum parte non potuit, siquidem quaecumque applicabantur, insolens humana suscipere terra respueret, excussis in ora apponentium saepe marmoribus, quin etiam calcati Deo pulueris adeo perenne documentum est, ut uestigia impressa cernantur, et cum cotidie confluentium fides certatim Domino calcata diripiat, damnum tamen arena non sentiat, et eandem adhuc sui speciem, uelut impressis signata uestigiis terra custodit': Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon*, ed. C. Halm, *CSEL*, I (1866), II, xxxiii, 87.
22. Adamnan's *'De locis sanctis'*, ed. and trans. Denis Meehan, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 3 (Dublin, 1958). For the dating of the text see pp. 9-11.
23. 'Arculfus, sanctus episcopus, gente Gallus, diuersorum longe remotorum peritus locorum, verax index et satis idoneus, in Hierosolymitana ciuitate per menses nouem hospitatus, et locis quotidianis uisitationibus peragratis, mihi Adamnано haec uniuersa quae infra exaranda sunt experimenta diligentius perscrutanti, et primo in tabulas describenti, fideli et indubitabili narratione dictauit, quae nunc in membranis breui textu scribuntur.': *ibid.*, p. 36.
24. For the relationship between Adomnán and Arculf see Thomas O'Laughlin, 'Adomnán and Arculf: the case of an expert witness', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 7 (1997), 127-40 and Ora Limor, 'Pilgrims and authors: Adomnán's *De locis sanctis* and Hugeburc's *Hodoeporicon Sancti Willibaldi*', *Revue bénédictine*, 114 (2004), 253-75. For Adomnán's exegetical intentions see Thomas O'Laughlin, 'The exegetical purpose of Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 24 (1992), 37-53.
25. Thomas O'Laughlin, 'The library of Iona in the late seventh century: the evidence from Adomnán's "De locis sanctis"', *Eriu*, 45 (1994), 33-52.
26. '... ut alibi scriptum repertum est ...' and '... aliorum scribtis recte concordat ...': Meehan, Adamnan's *'De locis sanctis'*, I, xxiii, 64, line 26 and p. 66, line 14.
27. '... ubi grandis ecclesia stat rotunda, ternas per circuitum cameratas habens porticos desuper tectas': *ibid.*, p. 64, lines 16-18. Adomnán made a little sketch of the round church which he appended to his text: *ibid.* (between pp. 62 and 63).

28. Ibid., p. 66, lines 5-12. Adomnán also mentions a miracle witnessed by Arculf on Ascension Day when a terrific gale blew through the church, *ibid.*, p. 68.
29. King Aldfrith, to whom Adomnán presented a copy, was probably responsible for its wide dissemination; see Bede's comments in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), V. xv, 508.
30. Ibid., V. xv-vii. For Bede's own *De locis sanctis* see *Venerabilis Bedae opera*, ed. and trans. J. A. Giles, 12 vols (London, 1843-4), IV, 402-42. The section on the Church of the Ascension appears at pp. 416-18.
31. For example Cynewulf's poem *Christ II* on the Ascension, ed. Bernard Muir, *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, 2 vols (Exeter, 1994), I, 66-81; the Blickling Homily for Ascension Thursday: *The Blickling Homilies: Edition and Translation*, ed. and trans. Richard J. Kelly (London, 2003), pp. 82-90; and *An Old English Martyrology*, ed. and trans. George Herzfeld, Early English Texts Society, OS 116 (1900), pp. 74-6. The significance of these texts is discussed below.
32. Barlow, *The Life of King Edward*, p. 143, n. 77.
33. Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event 1000-1215* (Aldershot, rev. edn 1997), pp. 167-70.
34. The *Passio Beatorum Martyrum Ethelredi atque Ethelbricti* (BHL 2641f.), ed. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, pp. 89-104. By his own admission Goscelin used 'antiquis historiis collectis', VM, prologue, 108, line 15.
35. The text describes the resting place of Mildrith's relics as 'ante principale altare, inter cancellos': Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, p. 93, line 29. This location pre-dated her removal to the north porticus by Abbot Wulfic in the mid-eleventh century in anticipation of his rebuilding programme.
36. '... videntibus illis elevatus est et nubes suscepit eum ab oculis eorum cumque intuerentur in caelum eunte illo ecce duo viri adstiterunt iuxta illos ... qui et dixerunt viri galilaei quid statis aspicientes in caelum ...': Acts i.9-11. My italics.
37. Robert Deshman, 'Another look at the disappearing Christ: corporeal and spiritual vision in early medieval images', *Art Bulletin*, 79 (1997), 518-46 (p. 533).
38. 'Oportebat ergo ut auferretur ab oculis eorum forma serui, quam intuentes, hoc solum esse Christum putabant quod uidebant ... Accensio autem ad patrem erat ita uideri, sicut aequalis est Patri, ut ibi esset finis uisionis, quae sufficit nobis': St Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Migne: PL, XLII, col. 833; trans. Stephen McKenna, *De Trinity* (Washington, DC, 1963), pp. 27f.
39. Meyer Shapiro, 'The image of the disappearing Christ: the Ascension in English art around the year 1000', *Gazette des beaux-arts*, ser. 6, 23 (1943), 132-52 and Deshman, 'Another look'.
40. Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*, p. 68, lines 494-7, trans. M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 208. On the emotional participation of the audience, see also Peter Clemoes 'Cynewulf's image of the Ascension', in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 293-304.
41. The term was coined by Meyer Shapiro, 'The image of the disappearing Christ'.
42. For a fuller discussion of these four Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and two English-influenced continental manuscripts, the Odbert Gospels of Saint-Bertin and the Bernward Gospels of Hildesheim, see Deshman, 'Another look', pp. 518-20.
43. Ibid., p. 533; Shapiro, 'The image of the disappearing Christ', p. 150.
44. Kelly, *The Blickling Homilies*, pp. 82-90.
45. 'Þonne synd þær þry porticas emb þa ciricean útan geworhte, ond þa ealle swiþe fægere ufan oferworhte ond oferhyrfe. Seo mycclre cirice þonne, seo þe þær on middum stondeþ, seo is ufan open ond unoferrhéfed': *ibid.*, p. 88, lines 144-7.
46. Ibid., p. 88, lines 154-66.
47. 'Ond nu, men þa leofestan, þeah we nu þær andwearde ne syn æt þære halgan stowe þe ic nu sægde, þe hwæpre we magon on þyssum stowum þe we nu on syndon, gode [ond] medeme weorþan for urum Drihtne, gif we nu soþ ond riht on urum life dón willap': *ibid.*, p. 90, lines 210-13.

48. Stories about the imprints of sacred footprints left on rocks were not uncommon in the early Middle Ages. Archangel Michael's footprints, for example, were revered at Monte Gargano, Apulia (see Richard F. Johnson, *Saint Michael the Archangel in Medieval English Legend* (Woodbridge, 2005) and J. C. Arnold 'Arcadia becomes Jerusalem: angelic caverns and shrine conversion at Monte Gargano', *Speculum*, 75/3 (2000), 567-88). The *Liber Eliensis* contains a curious tale concerning St Æthelthryth who inscribed her footprints on a Scottish hillside as though in molten wax ('in calida cera'), *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E. O. Blake, Camden, 3rd series 92 (1962), 28. The footprints need not necessarily have belonged to a saint. The hoofprints made in the Welsh countryside by the mule belonging to Mildrith's sister Mildburh were venerated by the local populace. The *Vita beate ac deo dilecte uirginis Mylburge* (British Library, Add. MS 24633, fols 22^v-24^r), which may also have been written by Goscelin, describes how rainwater collected in the hoofprints cured the feverish, at fol. 24^r. For more examples of sacred footprints see S. Reinach 'Les Monuments de Pierre Brute dans le langage et les croyances populaires', *Revue archéologique*, 3rd series 21 (1893), 223-36.
49. Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton, NJ, 1957), pp. 73f.
50. 'Potest quoque per pedes ipsum mysterium incarnationis eius intelligi, quo divinitas terram tetigit, quia carnem sumpsit ... Si pedes Domini mysterium incarnationis eius accipimus, congrue per caput illius ipsa diuinitas designatur': Gregory the Great, *XL homiliarum in Evangelia libri duo, XXXIII*, Migne: *PL*, LXXVI, cols 1242f.; trans David Hurst, *Forty Gospel Homilies* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1900), pp. 273f.
51. Line 2. British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian B XX and British Library, Harley MS 105 render this as 'Ipples fleet'.
52. Dave Perkins, 'The long demise of the Wantsum sea channel: a recapitulation based on the data', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 127 (2007), 249-59.
53. The fourteenth-century chronicler William Thorne made no mention of Mildrith's stone at Ebbsfleet, but tells a story about St Augustine leaving his footprints on a rock at Richborough: *Chronicle of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury*, trans A. H. Davis (Oxford, 1934), p. 4. The Tudor antiquarian John Leland noted that: 'Vestigium pedis S. Mildrudæ impressum manet in saxo maximo. Vide num natura sic luserit in lapide', but acknowledged that he derived his information from Goscelin's *Vita Joannis Lelandi antiquarii de rebus Britannicis collectanea*, 6 vols (London, 1774), IV, 8.
54. John Lewis, *The History and Antiquities Ecclesiastical as Well as Civil of the Isle of Tenet in Kent* (London, 1723), p. 58.
55. *Ibid.*, plate II.
56. Dorothy Gardener, *Historic Haven: The Story of Sandwich* (London, 1954), pp. 128-30; T. L. Richardson, *Medieval Sandwich and its World* (Sandwich, 2004), pp. 25-43.
57. Lines 4-6.
58. Lines 14-16.
59. Also 'Plerumque in altum ipsius amnis gurgitem est dimersus, sed citius quam humano officio posset sue mansioni est redditus. Nocte quoque sullatum uideres ante luciferum uel post pusillum in sua relatum.' ('Often it has been immersed in the deep gulf of the stream itself, but more speedily than it would be possible by human power, it is returned to its own home. Also, when it was removed at night, you would see that it was brought back to its [home] before daybreak, or a little while thereafter'), lines 16-20.
60. Lines 20-2.
61. Lines 12f. Also 'Hic infirmi ... uirginei lapidis rasuras in aque potu gustantes, non solum ipsi curantur, uerum etiam, asportato lapidei pulueris antidoto, ceteris languidis medentur.' ('Here the weak ... sipping shavings of the virgin's stone in a draught of water, are not only [they] themselves healed, but also, with a remedy of powdered stone carried away, they heal other sick people'), lines 27-9.
62. 'Ond manige men þær þa moldan neomaþ on þæm lastum, þe þæt begytan magan þæt hie hit dón motan, ond him to reliquium habban, ond monige adle ond untrumnesse þurh þæt beoð gehælde, þonne man þa moldan todēþ': Kelly, *The Blickling Homilies*, p. 88, lines 164-7.
63. Meehan, *Adamnan's 'De locis sanctis'*, I, xxiii, 64, lines 16-18; Kelly, *The Blickling Homilies*, p. 88, lines 140-6.

64. Lines 22f.
65. Robert Ousterhout, 'Loca sancta and the architectural response to pilgrimage', in *The Blessings of Pilgrimage*, ed. Robert Ousterhout (Urbana, Ill., 1990), pp. 108-24 and R. Krautheimer, 'Introduction to an "Iconography of medieval architecture"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), 1-33.
66. R. Gem, 'Towards an iconography of Anglo-Saxon architecture', in *Studies in English Pre-Romanesque and Romanesque Architecture*, ed. R. Gem, 2 vols (London, 2003), I, 225-52 (pp. 234-42).
67. Lines 29-32. The reference is to Isa. xlix.23 and lx.14.
68. O. B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore, Md, 1965), pp. 35-79.
69. *Regularis concordia Anglicae nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque: The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation*, ed. and trans. T. Symons (London, 1953), pp. 49f.
70. M. Bradford Bedingfield, 'Ritual and drama in Anglo-Saxon England: the dangers of the diachronic perspective', in *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. Helen Gittos and M. Bradford Bedingfield, Henry Bradshaw Society (London, 2005), pp. 291-317 (p. 303).
71. Symons, *Regularis concordia*, pp. 36f.; Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, pp. 117-22.
72. Bedingfield, *Ritual and Drama*, p. 307.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 308-11 and Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, pp. 90-113.
74. Injunctions against riding, hunting, bearing weapons, and gaming suggest the sermons were directed at an unlearned, lay audience, *ibid.*, pp. 194-6.
75. 'On þysum ðrym dagum cristene menn sculon forlætan heora þa woruldlican weorc on þa ðriddan tid dæges ... and forðgan mid þam halgum reliquium ...': *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, ed. Joyce Bazire and James E. Cross (Toronto, 1982), p. 83, lines 34-6; trans. Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, p. 195n.: 'On these three days, Christians must forsake their worldly work on the third hour of the day ... and go forth with the holy relics ...'
76. 'We sceal bletsian ure þa eorðlican speda, þæt synd æceras and wudu and ure ceap and eall þa þing þe us God forgyfen hafað to brucanne': Bazire and Cross, *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, p. 112, lines 112-14; trans. Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, p. 195n.: 'We must bless our earthly places, which are the acres and woods and our cattle and all of the things that God has given us to enjoy.'
77. D. G. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, Early English Text Society, OS 300 (Oxford, 1992), p. 234: 'þys mergenlican dæge æt þære halgan dryhtnes upastignestide clæne æt dryhtnes wiofode ...'; trans. Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, p. 204.
78. Lines 26f.
79. The *Vita* (or derivations thereof) survives in seven manuscripts. The first of these (British Library, Cotton MS Otho A viii, fols 1-5^v) was badly damaged by fire in 1731 and is now illegible. It may well have been the earliest witness since it has been dated on palaeographic grounds to the late eleventh century (Rollason, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 107). The next three in date were written in the early twelfth century at St Augustine's, Canterbury. These manuscripts contain the full-length *Vita* and several others of the Mildrith texts written by Goscelin. Two manuscripts, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.440, fols 11^v-33^v, written in a late twelfth-or thirteenth-century hand, and Trinity College Dublin, MS 172 (B.2.7), pp. 276-88 of thirteenth-century date, are both of unknown provenance and contain only the *Vita* (which, in the latter, breaks off suddenly in chapter 13). The final witness, Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, Memb. I.81 (olim M.n.57), fols 178^v-85^v, contains an abbreviated version of the *Vita*. Judging from this evidence the *Vita Mildrethae* does not appear to have been a very widely circulated text. The best and earliest copies were made at the abbey where her tomb was situated and where presumably she was most esteemed.
80. R. W. Southern, *The Life of St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury by Eadmer* (Oxford, 1962), p. xxix.
81. Helen Anne McKee, 'St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury: book-production in the tenth and eleventh centuries' (unpub. Ph.D. diss, University of Cambridge, 1997), p. 207. Richard Sharpe

makes a strong case for an earlier date, perhaps not much later than 1091, see Sharpe, 'Goscelin's St Augustine and St Mildreth', pp. 510-12.

82. The lessons are found on fols 35^r-39^v and the *Historia* on fols 43^r-50^v.
83. For the relationship between these texts and the attribution of Goscelin's authorship see Sharpe, 'Goscelin's St Augustine and St Mildreth', pp. 512-15.
84. 'Goscelin ... insignis litterarum et cantuum peritia ... musicae porro palmam post Osbernus adeptus': William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, I, IV, cccxlii, 592.
85. British Library, Harley MS 3908, fols 38^r-v.
86. Richard Sharpe, 'Words and music by Goscelin of Canterbury', *Early Music*, 19 (1991), 95-7.
87. '... dum post euangelium unus fratrum uitam et salutifera opera clementissime adiutricis populo dissereret': *TM*, xxvii, 195.
88. 'Solebat enim per singulos annos in die sui triumphalis transitus antiquum templum eius et monumentum in predicta insula cum fratribus reuisere laudesque ibidem diuinas summo festiuitatis tripudio celebrare': *TM*, xix, 179.
89. For the retention of insular practices in the abbey's scriptorium following the Conquest see McKee, 'St Augustine's Abbey', p. 217.
90. The term 'triumphalis transitus' probably relates to Mildrith's feast day proper, 13 July, as opposed to the feast of her translation to St Augustine's (18 May). Of course, this does not preclude the possibility that the monks visited Thanet on both occasions.
91. Gen. xxxv.20, Gen. xxviii.22, and Ps. cxvii (cxviii).22.
92. Isa. xlix.23 and lx.14.