Ghostly mentor, teacher of mysteries: Bartholomew, Guthlac, and the apostle's cult in early medieval England

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I: The relationship between Guthlac and his imagined spirit-mentor

Guthlac's education when he forsook the monastery of Repton was as full and fashionable as any man of Mercian royal descent could reasonably hope for around the year 700.[1] He had learned the ways of the world as a soldier before entering Repton as a novice. There, under the direction of Abbess Ælfthryth he became proficient in letters and monastic routine. He learned to sing in the Roman mode lately introduced to Britain. Yet his preparation for life as a hermit at Crowland was deficient in one respect. This man who had shunned the company of his fellow-monks, and had studied the Lives of the Egyptian hermits, had not foreseen, even so, the depths of loneliness he would encounter in solitude.

Judging by his near-contemporary biography (721x749) by an otherwise unknown monk named Felix, the loneliness began to express itself in two clinical forms.[2] One was extreme anxiety, described as torments by devils.[3] The other illness was depression, accidie; as his biographer Felix put it, the 'poisoned arrow' of aching despair.[4] During a particularly serious episode, and after three days not knowing what to do, Guthlac sang Psalm 120, 'In tribulatione invocavi dominum et reliqua,' and

found himself in the presence of a teacher not of this world. Thereafter Guthlac learned to cope with the solitude by dependence on this spiritual mentor, a soul-friend. His imagined rescuer and henceforth exemplar was the Apostle Bartholomew.

Although, according to Felix, Guthlac now 'began to inhabit the desert with complete confidence in the help of St Bartholomew', nevertheless, this was the beginning of a relationship characterised by visions of Hell and an acute sense of its dangers.[5] Demons are a major feature of Guthlac's mental landscape as portrayed by his biographer. Bartholomew the imagined mentor acts as role-model and intervenes in demonic episodes. In one violent crisis, Guthlac dreams that the apostle comes to his rescue after having been abducted into Hell. Bartholomew then orders the offending devils to take Guthlac back to the reality of his lodgings.[6]

Guthlac's choice of Bartholomew as his mentor has important implications for our understanding of his spiritual formation and ambitions and his subsequent ministry and education of others. It also raises questions about the significance of Bartholomew's wider veneration within the English church.

The relationship was emphasised while Guthlac's memory was very much still alive, in a formal coda to his biography. Felix's Life of Guthlac was written most probably within fifteen to twenty-five years of Guthlac's death in 714, with the help, inter alia, of Guthlac's successor Cissa, and Æthelbald king of Mercia (716--57) who sought oracles from Guthlac while a prince in exile. A series of verses at the end of the earliest surviving, ninth-century manuscript, spell out in the initial letters of successive lines

BEATUS GUTHLAC

and in the final letters

BARTHOLOMEUS.[7]

It was the opinion of Bertram Colgrave that these verses were intended to be inscribed on the saint's shrine, probably the one built for the him by king Æthelbald 'with wonderful structures and ornamentation'.[8]

II: How the relationship was presented to subsequent generations of religious-in-training

Felix addressed his Latin biography to King Ælfwald of East Anglia (d. 749). However, as in the case of its later adaptation into Old English verse, it is clear that it was composed for audiences which heard the story every year on Guthlac's feast-day, April 11, and perhaps on other occasions.[9] Various observations encourage the likelihood that these audiences were monastic. The text's overall theme is the value of the monastic life as a means of fighting for Christ. At a detailed level, scholars have perceived textual influences, on the verse Lives particularly, from St Benedict's Rule, plus a number of other internal clues including a consistent etymology of the Apostle's name intelligible to educated religious.[10]

Further, such knowledgeable audiences schooled in accounts of the Apostle and familiar with his veneration would have best appreciated the allusions to Guthlac's relationship with Bartholomew. Thus, according to Felix, it was on Bartholomew's feast day, then celebrated on August 25, that Guthlac first set foot on the island of Crowland. It was on that day too, wrote Felix, that Guthlac arrived a second time after he had returned to Repton almost immediately for three months to settle his affairs. Generations of quick-thinking young monks spotted, but were not perturbed by, the impossibility of one or the other date. What mattered was the implied auspiciousness of Bartholomew's feast day in the mind of their founder or honoured alumnus.[11] Felix alluded again to Guthlac's attachment to his imagined mentor in reporting the date, 'five days before the feast of Bartholomew', of the consecration of the Crowland hermitage and Guthlac's ordination.[12] That attachment was to be commemorated many times over at Crowland (as probably at Repton) and to become part of the future Benedictine monastery's educative stock-in-trade.

Novices from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries learned to place the Apostle at the centre of their understanding of Guthlac. Just how enduring, strong and thematically-focused was the pervasive relationship is demonstrated by the surviving evidence of text, image and cult. For example, Guthlac's debt to the Apostle was emphasised liturgically, as in a set of eleventh-century choral responses for Guthlac's feast-day.[13] The most important artistic evidence is in the so-called Guthlac Roll, a series of roundels showing scenes from Guthlac's Life in which Bartholomew figures prominently.[14] Though this dates from the twelfth century (when English enthusiasm was kindled for dedicating hospitals in Bartholomew's honour and at Crowland on

Bartholomew's day, 1136, Guthlac's remains were translated to a new shrine), it may preserve much older local traditions.[15]

Specifically, as Colgrave pointed out, two pieces of local tradition involving the Apostle were illustrated by the artist of the Roll.[16] In the eighth roundel Bartholomew presents Guthlac with a scourge, and in the ninth Guthlac uses this scourge to drive away devils. Elsewhere is shown a book.[17] This may allude to the local tradition that Guthlac possessed a psalter, and this Bartholomew appears to hold in a fold of his garment in the eighth roundel. Guthlac is shown with the book in earlier scenes and in the ninth roundel it lies on the altar in his oratory while he scourges the devils.

Pilgrims to Guthlac's shrine at Crowland took home miniatures of the flaying knife, legendary instrument of Bartholomew's torture, but for the commissioner and designers of the roll and their intended daily audience, the crucial motif which linked mentor and pupil was the scourge.[18] Above the abbey's west door, a central sculpture put Guthlac's scourging of a devil at the heart of his story. Obvious allusions are the scourging of Jesus; and, with the book, the prefiguring of Flagellation ritual, in which participants scourged themselves to the accompaniment of psalms.[19] Here such allusions underline the central theme, Guthlac's exorcism of demons, following the example of his mentor.

Combat with devils characterised literary traditions about Bartholomew and was a familiar motif of hermit stories from Antony onwards.[20] It was in such contexts that the religious-in-training would have accessed the deep meanings to be learned from their founder's story. From the verse Lives they knew Guthlac's rescuer from the

demons as dryhtnes ar, halig of heofonum, ‘the Lord’s messenger, holy from heaven’, the conduit of ‘terror coming from above to the wretched spirits’.[21] If confirmation is sought of the importance of Guthlac’s Bartholomew-like powers of exorcism, it is here. For example, the poet of one of the verse Lives, 'Guthlac A', concentrated on Guthlac’s imagined fight against devils for possession of the Fenland in greater detail than Felix did.[22] Novices were encouraged to focus on Guthlac’s ministry of exorcism and healing as learned from a supernatural exponent. Meanwhile a miraculous relic known as 'St Guthlac's Bell', kept at Repton until the Dissolution of the monasteries, was deemed efficacious for headaches; bells were understood to have the power of purifying the air and driving away devils.[23] The compiler of a ninth- or tenth-century version of the Latin Life which belonged to St Augustine’s, Canterbury, went so far as to preface it with a Life of St Paul the hermit, associate of the demon-fighting Antony.[24]

Hence, religious-in-training at Crowland were given an introduction to their own spiritual mentor Guthlac shot through in text and image with motifs and ideas springing from representations of Bartholomew. Not least of these were sacred writings, both biblical and apocryphal.

III: The likely patterns of devotion from which the relationship sprang

1. Bartholomew in text

a) The biblical Bartholomew

By the ninth century the practice had begun of identifying the disciple known by his patronymic Bartholomew (Son of Tolmai), mentioned in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (but only in their lists of the Twelve, which coupled him with Philip), with a disciple known by his given name Nathanael 'of Cana', mentioned only in the Gospel of John.[25] The latter reported Nathanael's recruitment by Philip and his consequent conversation with Jesus. In John 1:47 Jesus tells Nathanael, who is described as 'an Israelite without guile,' that he has seen him under a fig tree - the 'tree of knowledge'.[26] If it is possible to sense here an implied suggestion of a second sight, then added significance is lent to Jesus's bestowal in John 1:51 of a second sight on Nathanael-Bartholomew: 'You shall see heaven laid open and, above the Son of Man, the angels of God ascending and descending.'[27] It is hoped to demonstrate that this allusion to Jacob's vision at Bethel, an episode understood exegetically as a mythologising of the Hebrews' appropriation of the Canaanite temple of Baal at Bethel, is crucial in interpreting Bartholomew's importance for Guthlac, and for the Church in early medieval Europe in general.[28] Since the allusion, on this hypothesis, points directly ahead to the later legend of Bartholomew's doings - in a career whose course may have been run historically by c.60 - its inclusion in the Gospel of John by 100 conceivably points to an origin for the legend no more half a century after the career it purported to describe.[29]

b) <u>The apocryphal Bartholomew</u>

The credibility of such an origin is supported by the circulation within two centuries of the Apostle's discipleship of a text known to Jerome (c.341--420) as <u>The Gospel of</u>

Bartholomew, proscribed by 'Gelasius' but since lost.[30] This has been identified with a second, The Questions of Bartholomew, known to Bede at Jarrow and therefore presumably at other English monasteries in the time of Guthlac.[31] This esoteric book relates directly to demonic themes in Guthlac's pupilship under Bartholomew. For example, it includes an account of Bartholomew's humiliation and interrogation of the Devil as allowed by Christ. As Bartholomew presses the demon 'Beliar's' face into the earth, he asks for respite and reveals his true name, Satan; how he and his fellow fallen angels were chased from heaven by Michael and the heavenly host; and how he deceives men into sin. Afterwards Bartholomew asks forgivenesss for sinners and receives Christ's blessing and permission to reveal 'these secrets' to 'as many as are faithful and are able to keep them unto themselves'.[32] In a third text, The Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew the Apostle, Bartholomew is again associated with visions of Christ harrowing hell and crowned in heaven.[33] At the Ascension, each apostle is separately blessed and in many cases described by reference to his future role. Of Bartholomew the text says: 'He will be the depositary of the mysteries of the Son [my italics].'[34] Later 'the apostles thanked and blessed Bartholomew for what he had told them: he should be called the apostle of the mysteries of God [again my italics].'[35]

A fourth apocryphal work is the Acts of Bartholomew, Book Eight of the Apostolic History by Pseudo-Abdias, probably put together in Frankish Gaul, perhaps a century or so before the birth of Guthlac. Richard Lipsius thought it based on a Nestorian Nestorian exemplar, perhaps of the fifth century.[36] In fact many earlier texts were used by the Frankish redactor, possibly including the original of a Preface attributed to Ambrose of Milan (339--97).[37] Elsewhere in the Apostolic History, in The Acts of

Philip, Bartholomew helps in the destruction of a shrine at Hieropolis. Here Bartholomew's presence 'in India' disrupts the healing of a temple 'demon', Astaroth, whose followers seek the oracle of a second 'demon', Beirith, in another unnamed city. Bartholomew casts out a devil, cures King Polymius' daughter, shatters an idol, has an angel re-consecrate its temple, and summons up the idol's demon. The king is baptised but his brother Astriges' idol, Vualdath, is broken and Astriges has Bartholomew put to death.[38]

The names of these demonised deities provide a crucial clue to the ultimate origins and purposes of the legend. Far from being a south Asian male divinity, Astaroth is the Hebraicised name of the Phoenician Astarte, earth-mother and moon-goddess, corresponding to Aphrodite and patron of the city of Sidon. When Astaroth's followers go to another city to consult Beireth, perhaps the eponymous patroness of Beryt, modern Beirut, is meant. Beryt, progenitor of the Phoenician pantheon, was also known as Baalat, patroness of Byblos, to the north.[39] She and Astarte, therefore, were aspects of the same deity. Together with the supreme divinity El (represented by the Biblical El Elyon, 'the most high god'), she and her consort Baal (Vualdath of the Barthlomew legend?) stood at the core of Canaanite worship. The implication forces itself upon the reader, therefore, that India stands for the Levant and insofar as Bartholomew was destroying other peoples' deities, he was attacking those of the ancient rivals of the Hebrews - deities adopted also by Israel.[40] Even the name Polymius can be etymologised. 'Polymius' is 'Ptolemy' without its 't', and 'Ptolemy' is 'Tolmai', the patronymic of Nathaniel as identified with 'bar Tolmai', Bartholomew.[41] Since the composition of the Phoenician pantheon had long been familiar in the West, the true identities of the deities in The Acts of Bartholomew

were only thinly disguised for more educated members of Western monastic communities.[42]

When Guthlac decided to be a hermit on the island of Crowland, under Bartholomew's example, he would also have known from readings of Gregory of Tours that Bartholomew's body had been enshrined on the island of Lipari off Sicily.[43] The travels of English clerics and religious will have brought them into contact with the miracles and wonders associated with the shrine, if only at second hand, and their experiences may have been reported in the Repton refectory.

2. Bartholomew and Guthlac in the context of Dark Age mentality and mission

A) Guthlac's motivation in his choice of imagined mentor

Under Bartholomew's tutorship, Guthlac became seer and oracle. However, he was best remembered for his exorcisms: for example he exorcised Hwaetred, a noble of the East Angles, Ecga, a gesith, or companion, of Æthelbald,[44] and his own pupil, Beccel, who was tempted to cut Guthlac's throat while shaving him.[45] Then, too, there is Guthlac's contest with so-called demons for possession of his chosen home at Crowland, an ancient burial chamber, together with the beorg, or barrow, on which it stood and the Fenland round about. Small wonder that by the thirteenth century his reputation was 'supreme tamer, or conqueror, of monsters, Monstrorum domitor'.[46]

When Guthlac is described by Felix as abducted into Hell, and Bartholomew rescues him, the resonance with Bartholomew's apocryphal visions of heaven and hell, and Christ's narration to Bartholomew of his harrowing of Hell, is deafening.[47] There can be no doubt of the deep meanings of these esoteric motifs for the early medieval Church, whether in the East or in 'Dark Age' Britain. Bartholomew is introduced in the verse *Lives* as 'ofermaecg', literally 'the man above', or 'the son or kins-person from above'. Alexandra Olsen has pointed out that this 'hapax legomenon' runs parallel to what is correctly described as the 'consistent' etymology of the name Bartholomew by the Commentators. It is explained as filius suspendentis aquas - 'son of one who suspends the waters (or himself), that is, son of God'.[48] Ofermaecg has been noticed as an almost precise equivalent of this etymology's reduction to filius ('son') and celsus ('above') in the poetic works of Sedulius Scotus, the Irish monk who established a centre of learning at Liège in 848.[49] The Hebrew Nathan-'el, 'God has given [a son]', consequently takes on particular significance.

In choosing Bartholomew as mentor, Guthlac was making a statement about himself, setting himself an agenda of spiritual and therapeutic formation and achievement. He was tieing his posthumous remembrance to that of an apostolic hero and, in effect, engaging in a programme of religious appropriation.

B) Retrospective evidence from the dedications of churches

One largely unexplored area of study with the potential to illuminate monastic training in the early Middle Ages, as well as the mentality and cultural background from which sprang an imagined pupilship like Guthlac's (and further, the wider popularity of

individual universal cults in Anglo-Saxon England), is the spatial pattern of religious dedications.

Margaret Gelling has accepted forty-four places in England whose names are taken as indicative of pre-Christian Germanic religious activity; names such as Woden's beorg, encountered inter alia at Wednesbury in Staffordshire, fall into this category.[50] No fewer than twenty-two, or possibly twenty-four of these places are located in ancient parishes under Bartholomew's patronage or contiguous to, or no more than five miles from, one or more such parishes. Wednesbury is a case in point, evidenced under the Apostle's patronage from at least 1413. Since only 180 of England's 14,000 or so ancient parishes have Bartholomew as their patron, this is a striking and statistically significant correlation. It is even more striking when dedications of ancient churches in honour of Bartholomew are mapped. Their spatial distribution is far from random. No fewer than a fifth of these parishes lie within the extent of two neighbouring Anglo-Saxon dioceses, those of the peoples known as the Hwicce (with their cathedral at Worcester) and the Magonsaetan (whose cathedral was at Hereford).

Mapping Bartholomew churches and 'pagan' place-names together, further patterns emerges. For example, Essex has a number of places with names from the god Thunor, chiefly along its borders, but hardly any Bartholomew churches, and Hampshire likewise. In contrast there are no 'pagan' names but several Bartholomew churches in Norfolk and Suffolk, the kingdom of East Anglian over which Aelfwald, Felix's patron, ruled. As for Guthlac himself, it may be no coincidence that churches in his honour are concentrated in a single district of north Leicestershire close to a handful of places with 'pagan' names.

These correlations are best explained as zones of Christianisation. However, it is not only Mrs Gelling's Germanic place-names that correlate well with Bartholomew dedications. So do places whose names derive from the British nemeto-, meaning a temple or shrine - in Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, and Gloucestershire, the 'Celtic West'. One is Nympsfield, where a healing shrine of Mercury was replaced by a church c.380.

A number of Bartholomew churches have interestingly high elevations, had royal assocations, and were sited in curvilinear yards. Three examples suffice. Areley Kings, Worcestershire, is set in a high, round yard, looking out over the river Severn, in whose sandstone cliffs are caves with traditions of eremitical occupation. This is where Layamon wrote his Brut, a Middle English romantic history of Britain.[51] From Tardebigge, Worcestershire, a panoramic view takes in the distant Malvern and Clee Hills. Its yard is high and round and has a well on its perimeter. The other church associated with the place's founder, Earl Tyrdda, is that of Tredington, dedicated in honour of Gregory. Churchdown, Gloucestershire, also has a high, round yard, as well as a British place-name, and is sited within an Iron Age fort looking out over Gloucester. Churchdown was the caput of the tenth-century royal estate with which was endowed Gloucester's second minster, St Oswald's.

C) Possible contexts for early insular devotion

i. Kings and their idols: Educating the king

If there is a true distinction to be drawn from the evidence in eastern England of the Bartholomew dedications (all but absent in Essex) in conjunction with the 'pagan' place-names (all but absent in Norfolk and Suffolk), it is possible that it echoes the contrasting attitudes of Anglo-Saxon kings towards Christianity. The role of Polymius and Astryges in the Batholomew legend may have been pointed out to such kings, in association, perhaps, with the example of Solomon and Josiah, with the expectation that Christian holy men would throw down their 'idols', and it is the latter allusion which seems the crucial one in searching for an early medieval context for Bartholomew dedications.[52]

ii. The eremitical ideal

Some dedications in Bartholomew's honour may have arisen from his perceived role as seer and keeper of mysteries since they appear to have been associated with places of hermitage. This category includes places associated with hermits who took Bartholomew's name, such as Bartholomew of Farne (d. 1193). The case of Plegmund's place of hermitage, Barrow in Cheshire, may also involve the theme of Christianisation since the place-name Bearu, 'grove', potentially indicates a pre-existing sacred site.

iii. Appropriation of sacred places

Guthlac's imitation of Bartholomew in his opposition to demons explicitly equates his struggle for possession of his chosen home, the burial chamber and mound at

Crowland, with the Apostle's overthrow of deities whose places of worship were required to be appropriated for Christian use. But whose deities were implied in the Guthlac story? Whose religious buildings were to be acquired? Three categories invite examination.

a) Pre-Christian cemeteries

According to Felix the Fenland demons spoke British - a strange observation unless it had a purpose, since British was a language familiar to Mercians.[53] Guthlac’s father Penwalh, and perhaps his sister Pega, had names derived from British originals. British had been spoken in the neighbourhood of Repton within two decades or so of Guthlac’s birth.[54] Yet the devils of Guthlac A are ‘menacing forces’. Perhaps it was an attempt to demonise the British in general. Felix described how ‘in the days of Coenred, king of the Mercians, the British nation, the enemies of the Saxon race, were troubling the English with attacks, pillaging and devastations of the people’.[55] At the same time, these demons inhabit a burial chamber within a tumulus.[56] A plan of the supposed foundations of Guthlac’s cell, a former chapel at Anchor Church Hill just south-east of Crowland Abbey, was published more than a century ago.[57] It has been suggested that it represents the foundations of a Roman, rather than a Bronze Age, or Neolithic barrow.

b) Healing shrines

At least one of the *nemeto-* places with devotion to Bartholomew is associated with a healing shrine, namely Nympsfield in Gloucestershire, adjoining Uley where the

Romano-British temple was Christianised c.380. A recent study of this association has identified a geographical pattern of dedications in honour of Antony which, like that of Bartholomew, has a concentration in western England.[58] Both Antony and Bartholomew were deemed efficacious in the later Middle Ages for skin disease; both Antony and Guthlac were tormented by devils. The apparent nexus between conditions of skin and mind invites analysis. Antony held great interest for the early medieval insular churches. For example, he was shown on the Ruthwell cross, c. 700, together with his companion, the hermit Paul.[59] It is difficult to determine the likeliest period at which the appropriation of healing shrines would have led to Bartholomew's patronage. Thus the apostle's final resting place was a church at Rome built on the site (on an island in the Tiber) of a temple of the healer Aesculapius, but while this translation took place only in 983 the site had been appropriated by the church at a much earlier date.[60]

c) Places of worship

The Acts of Bartholomew contains many allusions to the appropriation of religious buildings. An angel marks the temple of Astaroth with the cross, an early example of the motif of supernatural consecration of churches. This mirrors episcopal consecration ritual, whose liturgy included Christ's prophecy regarding Nathaniel as a latter-day Jacob at Bethel.[61] Gregory exhorted Augustine not to destroy temples but to convert them to Christian use. He is generally assumed to be speaking about temples of the English. But Guthlac's demons spoke British, and by analogy with the Bartholomew legend, Felix may have meant them to represent deities, not devotees. Were these then Celtic deities, still worshipped by British Fen-dwellers three hundred

years after Constantine made Christianity the state religion, and conceivably also adopted by English incomers?

Overall, therefore, the Guthlac-Bartholomew story, together with the geography of medieval devotion to the Apostle, may shed important light on the Christianisation process in England. What role did it play therefore in monastic education? Christianisation was high on the monastic agenda, and the noviciate were prepared for it by familiarity with the Lives of evangelisers like Bartholomew and Guthlac. But at what period was this happening? Was Guthlac among those taking up a work previously ignored by the urban hierarchy of the British church? That is difficult to argue in the light of the Christian appropriation at Uley, for example. The first church there may have been contemporary with Martin of Tours' destruction of shrines in Gaul (372x97) and/or the composition of the Milanese (Ambrosian) Preface on the evangelising Bartholomew, if this is to be attributed to Ambrose himself (339--97) or to the early editor of the Ambrosian Sacramentary, bishop Laurentius of Milan (490--512).[62] In the light of current knowledge about 'Dark Age' learning in western Britain and Ireland and contacts with the Continent, it is possible that the Apostolic History, probably compiled in Frankish Gaul not too long after 550, was known to the British church on the eve of Augustine's mission to the English (597), soon after at the start of Columbanus' Continental mission (590). Similarly, earlier versions of Bartholomew's Acts may have been introduced to British monks.[63]

On the other hand, it may never be known to what extent a hiatus in the British episcopacy and monastic life had taken place, allowing a return to pre-Christian ways

of worship and the abandonment of churches. It has been thought that Geoffrey of Monmouth's statement that bishops Theon of London and Thadioc of York fled to Wales in the latter part of the sixth century may have some historical basis. The traditional date is 586.[64] It may be instructive that William of Malmesbury declined to write down the names of certain saints translated at another Fenland monastery, Thorney, c. 972, because they were uncouth.[65] Walter de Gray Birch took this to indicate British names.[66] A tradition in the late seventh century recalled the names of 'sacred places abandoned by the British clergy' when they 'fled from the sword' of the English. Eddius Stephanus wrote of this in his biography of his master Wilfrid, a visitor and neighbour of Guthlac by virtue of his monastery of Oundle, where he died.[67] Consecration ceremonies were required not only at places of non-Christian worship appropriated to Christian use, but also at Christian places of worship which had been abandoned or involved in episodes of apostasy.[68]

d) Monastic training

Thus it may be argued that Guthlac's adoption of Bartholomew as imagined mentor had importance not only for his formation but also for that of subsequent generations of religious-in-training. Bartholomew was a role model also for appropriators of non-Christian places of religious activity and missioners, thereby impacting on lay education also. He represented authority, as keeper of mysteries and visionary. He also represented action, combatting the Devil in the forms of vice (casting down idols), disease (healing and exorcism), ignorance (setting up churches and communities, educating kings), and waste (making the wilderness bloom). The monk takes part in all these activities.

As to when the Christianisation took place which is represented by Bartholomew churches and 'pagan' place-names, it is hard to say, but an immediate association is with the seventh-century policy of conversion initiated by Gregory the Great, patron of the abbey church of Downside.

List of abbreviations and primary sources

AAA — Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha, ed. Tischendorf, Constantine. Leipzig: Avenarius & Mendelssohn, 1851.

AA.SS. — Acta Sanctorum, ed. Bollandus, Joannes and others. 99 vols., Antwerp, Brussels, etc., 1643 etc

AB — Analecta Bollandiana. Brussels, 1882, etc.

AMA — Acta Mythologica Apostolorum, ed. Lewis, Agnes Smith. 2 vols., London: C. J. Clay & Sons, 1904.

Birch — Birch, Walter de Gray. Memorials of Saint Guthlac of Crowland. Collected from the Original Manuscripts. Wisbech: Leach and Son, 1881.

BL — British Library

BL, MS. Harley 1117, f. 65, printed in Birch, p.66--9

BL, MS. Oriental 6804, trans. by Budge, Ernest Alfred Wallis Wallis in The Contendings of the Apostles, Being the histories of the lives and martyrdoms and deaths of the twelve Apostles and Evangelists. The Ethiopic texts now first edited from manuscripts in the British

Museum, with an English translation. 2 vols., London: Henry Frowde, 1899, 1901; and Coptic Apocrypha in the Dialect of Upper Egypt, p.1--48, 179-230. London: British Museum, 1913.

Brut   Layamon. Brut. Edited from British Museum Ms. Cotton Caligula A.IX and British Museum Ms. Cotton Otho C.XIII, Brook, G.L., and Leslie, R.F., eds. 2 vols. Early English Text Society 250, 277. London: Oxford University Press, 1963--1978.

Butler   Butler, Alban (1956) Butler's Lives of the Saints, ed. and rev. Thurston, Herbert and Attwater, Donald (2nd edn). London: Burns & Oates.

CC   Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, 161--161D Corpus Praefationum, ed. Moeller, Edmond. Turnholt: Brepols, 1980-1.

CCCC   Cambridge, Corpus Christi College.

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DCB   Smith, William and Wace, Henry, eds. (1900) A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines. London: John Murray.

DCC   Cross, F.L. and Livingstone, E.A., eds. (1974) The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn.

DGM Gregory of Tours, De Gloria Martyrum. Van Dam, Raymond, trans. Translated Texts for Historians, Latin series 3. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988.

PE Eusebius, Praeparatio Evangelica I. Sirinelli, Jean and Des Places, Edouard, trans. Sources Chretiennes 228. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1974.

Farmer Farmer, David Hugh (1997, 4th edn.) The Oxford Dictionary of Saints. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

FelixR Vita Sancti Guthlaci auctore Felice. BL, MS. Royal 4 A xiv.

FelixC$_1$ Vita Sancti Guthlaci auctore Felice. CCCC, MS. 307.

Gelling Gelling, Margaret (1988) Signposts to the Past: Place-Names and the History of England (2nd edn.) Chichester: Phillimore.

GP William of Malmesbury, Gesta Pontificum. Hamilton, N.E.S.A., ed. London: Rolls Series, 1870.

GuthlacE The Guthlac poems of the Exeter Book, edited with an introduction and commentary, Roberts, Jane, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

GuthlacG BL MS. Cotton Vespasian D xxi. Printed in Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des hl. Guthlac / mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen und Miniaturen (Anglistische Forschungen 27), Gonser, Paul, ed. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1909; reprinted Amsterdam: Swets & Zeitlinger, 1966. Translated in Swanton, Michael (1975) Anglo-Saxon Prose, p.39--62. London: Dent; Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield.

GuthlacH Henry of Avranches, Vita Sancti Guthlaci Confessoris (Cambridge University Library MS. Dd. xi 78). Russell, J.C., and Heironimus,

J.P. (1935), The Sorter Latin Poems of Master Henry of Avranches Relating to England. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

GuthlacR — BL, Roll Y. 6, printed in Warner, G.F. (1928) The Guthlac Roll. Oxford: Roxburghe Club.

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JBAA — Journal of the British Archaeological Association.

LPFD — Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887, reprinted Vaduz: Kraus Reprint, 1965.

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RB — Revue Biblique. Paris.

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Notes

[1] Our knowledge of Guthlac stems principally from an eighth-century Latin prose Life (printed and translated with introduction and notes in Colgrave), of which the Prologue and first 25 chapter headings survive in a manuscript of the late eighth or early ninth century (FelixR), and the text as a whole from a ninth-century manuscript (FelixC$_1$); an Old English translation (GuthlacG and, partially, GuthlacV; also Birch:15) in eleventh-century manuscripts; two Old English verse Lives (respectively concerning the saint's spiritual trials and his holy death) known as 'Guthlac A' and 'Guthlac B' (GuthlacE) also in eleventh-century manuscripts but probably originating 'within the earlier Old English period', conceivably before c.730 (Roberts, GuthlacE: 70--1); and a twelfth-century roll of drawings (GuthlacR). A few later additions to the Guthlac story appear in a Latin poem of the thirteenth century (GuthlacH).

[2] Felix wrote his Life of Guthlac at the request of King Ælfwald of East Anglia, who died in 749. It exploits Bede's Life of Cuthbert and thus was written not earlier than 721 and most likely in the 730s (Colgrave: 6).

[3] FelixC$_1$: c.25 (Colgrave: 89).

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[4] FelixC1: c.29 (Colgrave: 95 and note, 197).

[5] FelixC1: c.25 (Colgrave: 89).

[6] Colgrave: 107ff.

[7] Birch: xix--xxi.

[8] Colgrave: 27.

[9] Olsen (6--7) pointed out that the likelihood of a monastic audience for the verse Life had been emphasised by a number of scholars, including Cynthia Edelstein Cornell, Zacharias P. Thundyil, and Thomas R. Post. The so-called 'Exeter Book' (Codex Exoniensis) was presented to that cathedral's library by bishop Leofric in 1046.

[10] Discussed by Olsen (see previous footnote). See also Footnotes 48 and 49.

[11] Colgrave: 4.

[12] FelixC1: c.47.

[13] BL, Harley MS. 1117, f. 65 (Birch: 66-9; the reference to Bartholomew is at 67).

[14] GuthlacR: eighteen, six-inch roundels, perhaps sketches for painted glass.

[15] Bartholomew's feast day had moved forward by then to August 24. The roll is discussed, together with other imagery of the saint at Crowland, particularly in sculpture, by Henderson (1986).

[16] Colgrave: 13.

[17] Warner: 23.

[18] Baring-Gould, 1914: 9, 260. The flaying of Bartholomew appears first in a tenth-century Greek version of his legend.

[19] Flagellant processions appear to have begun in Italy in the thirteenth century (DCC: 516--7).

[20] Kurtz, 1926: 104--146. Bartholomew continued to be associated with devil-combat into the later Middle Ages. Demons claiming to be Bartholomew harassed Angela of Foligno (1248-1309) and Christine of Stommeln (1242-1312), and even the Apostle's own wet-nurses in a fourteenth-century retable now in Tarragona Cathedral museum. I am grateful to Professor Joy Schroeder for the first two examples.

[21] Olsen: 37, 127.

[22] Olsen: 48. It has been thought likely that both verse Lives were written in eastern Mercia, most probably Crowland, with a western centre such as Hereford, Worcester or Glastonbury as a suggested alternative (Roberts, GuthlacE: 71).

[23] LPFD: 10, 138. Probably a hand-bell. It is now lost.

[24] CCCC, MS. 389, cited in Birch: xxi. Shook (1961) viewed this combination against the patristic traditions of psychopomps (Bartholomew's role here and in apocryphal texts) and the motif of the otherworld journey.

[25] Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14; John 1:43-51; 21:2. Holzmeister, 1940.

[26] On the social uses of the wild fig-tree, Kitto, 1879--82: 291.

[27] John 1:51.

[28] On Jacob and Bethel, see Kippenberg, 1971: 188ff..

[29] The apocryphal accounts of Bartholomew were printed by the Bollandists, AA.SS.: 5, Augusti, Venice, 1741, 7--108, and summarised in Butler, 1956: 3, 391--2. On Bartholomew's preaching and Passio, see AB: 14 (1895), 353--66; for the apocryphal Gospel of Bartholomew see Footnote 31; and for a fragmentary Passio in which the Apostle is martyred by drowning see Budge, 1913: 231--2. See also the footnotes to the following section. On the apocryphal fulfilment of Christ's

prophecy, James: 186. Goulder (1977) has argued that the events of John 1 were central to the Christology of a proto-Gnostic but also incarnational Samaritan or Hebrew church, as opposed to the Jewish church of Jerusalem. Suppression of this movement, which at first enjoyed a near-monopoly in Egypt and eastern Syria, implied exclusion of its literature from the orthodox Canon, but not, perhaps, before apocryphal accounts of Nathaniel-Bartholomew had entered Greek and Coptic tradition.

[30] James: 166ff.

[31] James: 166--181. It exists in a Greek version probably from the fifth century and in Latin probably from the sixth or the seventh (Wilmart and Tisserant, 1913).

[32] c.4, vv.7-71 (James: 173--180). A similar account appears in a Coptic gospel fragment of the fifth century or later (Lacau, 1904, and James: 149).

[33] A tenth- or eleventh-century Coptic version, BL MS. Oriental 6804, deriving from a Greek exemplar of which nothing is known, was printed, translated and discussed in Budge, 1913: xv--xxix, 1--48, plates 1--48, 179--230 (following initial publication in Budge, 1899, 1901), and summarised in James: 181--6.

[34] James: 185. This part of the text attempts to identify Bartholomew. ‘He protested: "I am the least of you all, a humble workman. Will not the people of the city say when they see me, Is not this Bartholomew the man of Italy, the gardener, the dealer in vegetables? Is not this the man that dwelleth in the garden of Hierocrates the governor of our city? How has he attained this greatness?"’ James commented (p.186): ‘In St John we read of [Nathanael] being "under the fig-tree"... this was probably enough to suggest to the Coptic author of the Book that he was a

gardener'. Gardening is a common hagiographic motif for cultivation of desert places and hence alludes to hermitage.

[35] James: 184.

[36] James (467--9) confirmed the view of Max Bonnet (Tischendorf, Lipsius and Bonnet, 1898) that the Frankish Latin compilation was the original of the Greek Passion of Bartholomew (known from a single manuscript of 1279, printed in AAA). The earliest manuscript of the Latin compilation is of the eighth or ninth century.

[37] On the texts employed see Lipsius, Richard, 'Abdius', in DCB: 1, 1--4, especially 4. The Ambrosian Preface, which survives only from the tenth century, is now said to be based on 'les Actes apocryphes des Apôtres' (CC 161C: 274; 161: xciv--v; 161D: 425). A further Preface for Bartholomew's feast-day was composed for the Mozarabic church in Toledo, Spain, by the ninth century (CC 161C: 465--6; 161: xxxiv--v. Janini, 1982: xxxii--xxxiii, 296--301). Later adaptations included the thirteenth-century Legenda Aurea of Jacobus de Voragine (little altered from the Pseudo-Abdias), most recently translated by Ryan 2, 109--15. Ethiopic texts were translated and printed by Malan (1871) and Budge (1899, 1901), and Arabic texts by Lewis, AAM (1904). James: 471ff.

[38] The Apostle is not martyred by flaying, however. This was to be a later addition to the legend. See James, 468.

[39] On these deities, WDB: 45-6, 53-4, and with their cities, Moscati, 1973: 57--68.

[40] The Christian Apostle had been clothed, therefore, in the mantle of Elijah but also that of King Josiah, who threw down Solomon's altar of Astaroth.

[41] King Astriges' name appears to resonate with that of Astaroth, a neat opposition.

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[42] The description of the pantheon by Philo of Byblos was propagated in Eusebius, PE.

[43] Gregory of Tours, DGM: I, 33. The resting place at Lipari was also known to the author of the Greek Acts of Bartholomew (AAA: 259). A previous resting place from c.507 in Daras in Mesopotamia was reported by Lector (1618--22), pt.505. The prevalence of islands in association with Bartholomew - Lipari, the island in the Tiber at Rome, and here Crowland - resonates with the themes of desert and solitude.

[44] $FelixC_1$, c.41.

[45] $FelixC_1$, c.35. Beccel was said to be present at Guthlac's eventual, natural death. Redin (1919: 85) took Beccel's name (Beccelmus in the Guthlac Roll), to be from Celtic bekko-s, 'little' (and thus comparable to modern Welsh bachgen, diminutive of bach, 'little', thus 'little one'), or perhaps a hypochoristic form of a compound with Beorn- or Beorht-; AA.SS: Sept. III, 446ff.

[46] GuthlacH, f.61, quoted by Henderson 1986: 88. Was the contest tale a substitute for, or accompaniment to, a foundation charter endowing Crowland with its lands? One of the unique fragments in GuthlacH is the story that Guthlac's sister, Pega, herself a solitary at what is now Peakirk, not far from Crowland, appeared to her brother in the form of the Devil. Guthlac was not deceived.

[47] Olsen: 50. Henderson (1986: 81) has pointed out that a similar vision, culminating in rescue by the Apostle, was had by Rahere, founder of St Bartholomew's Hospital, Smithfield, according to his biographer. It is described in Webb, 1921: 42--3.

[48] Ryan: 2, 109.

[49] Olsen, 53--4, and on *ofermaecg*, 18, following Robinson, 1968.

[50] Gelling, 160, fig.11. Wilson, 1992: 5--21.

[51] Brut: lines 1--7.

[52] Such a context can be seen also on the Continent. Budak (1998: 241--9, especially 244), has shown that Bartholomew's patronage was chosen for the ninth-century reconsecration of refurbished Dalmatian royal churches of late antique origin.

[53] As noted in the variant of the Old English prose Life of which a fragment survives in the Codex Vercellensis (GuthlacV).

[54] Gelling: 101.

[55] Colgrave: 109.

[56] Olsen (33), who also quotes Karl P. Wentersdorf: 'The battle for the tumulus represents... the unremitting campaign by the church to suppress the lingering remnants of heathendom'.

[57] JBAA 35: 133, reprinted in Birch, facing xlii.

[58] Jones, 1999: 121-3.

[59] Paul's Life was associated with that of Guthlac at Canterbury, as mentioned earlier.

[60] Mâle, 1942. On the issue of the temple's early Christianisation, I am grateful to Dr Michael Jost for his advice, based on his unpublished PhD thesis (Jost, 1998).

[61] JB: 47, footnote 28.b.

[62] CC: 161, xciv. See Footnote 36 above.

[63] A specific, personal link between a British church in north Wales and Lyons in Gaul (perhaps the monastery of Île Barbe), probably datable to 540 (Knight, 1995), can now be added to other epigraphic and ceramic evidence for Continental contacts, for which see a summary in Thomas, 1994: 5, 197--208. On the context

within which transmission of literary texts could take place between Gaul and Britain see Williams, 1912: 179--188; on Irish scholarship and contacts with Merovingian Gaul see, respectively, Bieler, 1952, and James, 1982; and on the likely assumption by the British church of responsibility for public (Latin) education see Charles-Edwards, 1998: 75--82. Columbanus' teacher was himself a pupil of 'a certain learned Greek' and also taught Mo-Chuaróc, 'whom the Romans styled doctor of the whole world' (Ó Cróinín, 1995: 177).

[64] Bright, 1878: 33.

[65] GP: 327.

[66] Birch: xvi. The names of three Thorney saints, the male hermits Tancred and Torthred, and the female Tova, are known, supposedly killed by the Danes in 870 (Farmer: 460). But these appear to be Germanic names.

[67] Wilfrid: c.17, 150, 202.

[68] Apostasy among British as well as English Christians must be considered.