Personal names in the composition and transmission of Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*

FRANCESCA TINTI

ABSTRACT

While writing his prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*, Bede appears to have made deliberate choices as to which personal names to spell out. Some of those which he omitted, however, can be found in the marginal annotations of three later manuscripts of the work. A number of these names are also mentioned in the earlier Lindisfarne *Vita*, but some others have only been preserved through those marginalia. The article examines the monastic milieu within which efforts were made throughout several centuries to remember and transmit the names of the people who had witnessed Cuthbert's sanctity without interfering with Bede's text.

The earliest *Vita S. Cuthberti* was composed by an anonymous monk of Lindisfarne less than two decades after Cuthbert's death in 687. Shortly after that work had been completed, Bede wrote his first hagiographical text on Cuthbert, a poem which in many respects mirrors the outline of the anonymous *Vita* and which was probably intended as a metrical counterpart to the earlier work. In *c.* 720 Bede wrote a prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*, which, as has been noted by several commentators, is also clearly dependent on the anonymous *Vita*, although incorporating new information and omitting several details contained in the earlier text.[1] In this work Bede did not acknowledge his reliance upon the Lindisfarne *Vita*, but later on in the preface to his *Historia ecclesiastica* he specified that what he had written concerning Cuthbert, both in his historical masterpiece and in the *Vita*, he had taken in part from what he had previously found written about him by the brethren of the church of Lindisfarne, thus referring to the anonymous *Vita*.[2]

---

[1] On the basis of surviving manuscript evidence Michael Lapidge has suggested that Bede completed a first draft of the metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti* between 705 and 716 (probably closer to the earlier end of that interval), but revised it later, possibly around the time when he wrote the prose *Life*: M. Lapidge, 'Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*', *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to AD 1200*, ed. G. Bonner, D. Rollason and C. Stancliffe (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 77–93, repr. in his *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (London, 1996), pp. 339–55; M. Lapidge, 'Prolegomena to an Edition of Bede's Metrical *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*', *Filologia mediolatina* 2 (1995), 127–63, at 139–42.

[2] *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), p. 6: 'Inter quae notandum quod ea, quae de sanctissimo patre et antistite Cudbercto

15

Francesca Tinti

The early Anglo-Latin hagiographical works on Cuthbert have been the subject of continually renewed attention from scholars because of the important light they cast on Northumbrian history and early Anglo-Latin literature. Special attention has been given to the relationships among the three texts and to the ways in which Bede elaborated on the earlier anonymous work. Comparisons of style and structure have dealt especially with the two prose *Vitae*, as they allow for a more direct appreciation of Bede's use of the anonymous text.[3] This article will follow in that fertile tradition of studies by concentrating on one specific aspect, namely the role of personal names and the significance of Bede's choices regarding the people who were to be explicitly named in his hagiographical work. That to the author this was an important issue is confirmed by what he himself wrote in the prologue to his prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*:

nec tandem ea quae scripseram sine subtili examinatione testium indubiorum passim transcribenda quibusdam dare praesumpsi, quin potius primo diligenter exordium, progressum, et terminum gloriosissimae conuersationis ac uitae illius ab his qui nouerant inuestigans. Quorum etiam *nomina* in ipso libro aliquotiens ob certum cognitae ueritatis inditium apponenda iudicaui, et sic demum ad scedulas manum mittere incipio.[4]

uel in hoc uolumine uel in libello gestorum ipsius conscripsi, partim ex eis quae de illo prius a fratribus ecclesiae Lindisfarnensis scripta repperi adsumsi'.

3   See for instance: A. Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal of Reform', *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society. Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. P. Wormald with D. Bullough and R. Collins (Oxford, 1983), pp. 130–53, esp. 136–43; C. Stancliffe, 'Cuthbert and the Polarity between Pastor and Solitary', *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner *et al.*, pp. 21–44; W. Berschin, '*Opus deliberatum ac perfectum*: Why Did the Venerable Bede Write a Second Prose Life of St Cuthbert?', *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner *et al.*, pp. 95–102; A. Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner *et al.*, pp. 103–22; D. P. Kirby, 'The Genesis of a Cult: Cuthbert of Farne and Ecclesiastical Politics in Northumbria in the Late Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries', *JEH* 46.3 (1995), 383–97; K. Lutterkort, 'Beda hagiographicus: Meaning and Function of Miracle Stories in the *Vita Cuthberti* and the *Historia ecclesiastica*', *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk and Northumbrian*, ed. L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald (Groningen, 1996), pp. 81–106, at 83–91; C. E. Newlands, 'Bede and Images of Saint Cuthbert', *Traditio* 52 (1997), 73–109; C. Cubitt, 'Memory and Narrative in the Cult of Early Anglo-Saxon Saints', *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Y. Hen and M. Innes (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 29–66, esp. 39–50. On Bede's metrical *Life* and its relations with the prose *Lives* see Lapidge, 'Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*'.

4   'Nay rather, it was only after first diligently investigating the beginning, the progress, and the end of his [i.e., Cuthbert's] most glorious life and activity, with the help of those who knew him, that I began at last to set about making notes: and I have decided occasionally to place the *names* of these my authorities in the book itself, to show clearly how my knowledge of the truth has been gained': *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 142–5. The emphasis is mine.

Bede thus chose to point out that he had inserted in his text some of his authorities' names, that is, names of those who knew about Cuthbert's life. His concern to state and cite his sources is an aspect of his historical writing which has for long been appreciated by scholars and which assumes special significance within hagiography, a genre which since its very beginning and for its very nature has always depended upon the testimony of people who are said to have witnessed the events reported by the hagiographer, especially the miraculous ones.[5]

Several scholars have noted that although he was clearly relying upon the anonymous Lindisfarne *Vita*, Bede deliberately chose to exclude from his account various topographical details and personal names which appeared in the earlier *Vita*.[6] His intent was to make Cuthbert's *Vita* less parochial and more suitable for a wider audience. In other words, if on one hand, the author was keen on mentioning the names of the people who provided him with first-hand information about the life, death and miracles of Cuthbert, on the other hand, he was selective as to which names should appear in his work and, although many of the stories narrated in his text were lifted from the anonymous *Vita*, he often chose to leave out of his account names of people who appear in the earlier text in relation to those same stories. One of the main aims of this article is to investigate the criteria which may have guided Bede's choices in this respect through a comparison between the two works and a discussion of the role of personal names in the construction of

---

[5] On the relation between history and hagiography in Bede and on his use of oral sources cf. W. Levison, 'Bede as Historian', *Bede, his Life, Times and Writings. Essays in Commemoration of the Twelfth Centenary of his Death*, ed. A. H. Thompson (Oxford, 1935), pp. 111–51, at 123–32; J. Campbell, 'Bede I', in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), pp. 1–27, at 25–6, first published in *Latin Historians*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London, 1966), pp. 159–90; P. Meyvaert, 'Bede the Scholar', *Famulus Christi. Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. G. Bonner (London, 1976), pp. 40–69, at 53; B. Ward, 'Miracles and History. A Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories used by Bede', *Famulus Christi*, ed. Bonner, pp. 70–6, at 72; G. H. Brown, *Bede the Venerable* (Boston, MA, 1987), p. 95; *Beda: Storia degli Inglesi*, ed. M. Lapidge and trans. P. Chiesa, I (Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 2008), pp. xxxviii–xl. On Bede's naming of his sources, see A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 500 to c. 1307* (London, 1974), pp. 26–7. On the need to give evidence as a recurrent feature of hagiography, see J. Campbell, 'Bede II', in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, pp. 29–48, at 33, first published in *Bede. The Ecclesiastical History of the English People and Other Selections*, trans. J. Campbell (New York, 1968), pp. vii–xxxii; W. D. McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede* (Toronto, 1994), pp. 154–75.

[6] See, for example, Thacker, 'Lindisfarne', p. 119; M. Lapidge and R. Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales (600–1550)', *Hagiographies: histoire internationale de la littérature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire, en Occident, des origines à 1500*, ed. G. Philippart (Turnhout, 2001) III, pp. 203–325, at 214–15; Cubitt, 'Memory and Narrative', p. 43.

hagiographical texts.[7] Subsequently, the focus will shift from the origin and composition of the prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* to its transmission and, in particular, to a small group of later manuscripts in which those names that Bede had chosen to exclude from the main text reappear in a number of marginal annotations. Whereas some of these names seem to have been lifted from the anonymous *Vita*, some others are only known thanks to these marginal annotations and, because of their importance, will be discussed in detail in the appendix. This essay will pay special attention to the manuscript in which marginal annotations were added by what seems to be the hand of Reginald of Durham, the main hagiographer of twelfth-century Durham. It will investigate the milieu within which names of people close to Cuthbert were preserved, remembered and transmitted through several centuries and the reasons behind such an effort. In particular, it will look at how collective memory developed within the community of the Durham monks, who considered themselves as the legitimate heirs of Cuthbert's community and who strived to prove such a legitimacy through the production and copying of texts of historical and hagiographical nature.

PERSONAL NAMES IN THE TWO PROSE LIVES

The earliest *Vita S. Cuthberti* was very probably commissioned close to the time of Cuthbert's translation in 698 to prove his sanctity and promote his cult. Hence the prominence of miracle stories and, given the early date of the work, the straightforward tone with which those stories are recounted: the eye-witnesses who are named were still alive when the anonymous author was writing, and his most immediate readers would have also remembered the events narrated.[8] When Bede wrote his prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*, more time had elapsed, and there were very few people alive who had met the saint and witnessed his life, miracles and death. Indeed, the author was keen to point out the old age and the closeness to death of some of his named witnesses, thus highlighting the extremely valuable significance of their testimony.[9] As he wrote in his prologue, these were the credible authorities whom he had personally interviewed and whose names were provided in the text to show clearly where his knowledge came from. It has been noted that Bede was keen to give his sources whenever he introduced new material which had not been covered

---

[7] Bede's metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti* will not be taken into consideration in this context because of its different nature and its very limited inclusion of personal names, which Wilhelm Levison explained through reference to 'the exigencies of the verses' and which Michael Lapidge has attributed to Bede's fidelity to the model of Arator: cf. Levison, 'Bede as Historian', p. 127 and Lapidge, 'Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*', p. 90.

[8] See Stancliffe, 'Cuthbert', pp. 24–7.

[9] See below, pp. 22–3.

in the earlier *Vita*.[10] However, a systematic comparison between the two *Vitae* demonstrates that he did more than that and that his choices regarding the names which were to be mentioned probably underwent a process of more sophisticated elaboration.

Through the table printed below it can be noted that Bede's *Vita* contains several more named persons than the anonymous *Vita*. Bede has a total of fourteen named people who in the Lindisfarne text do not appear at all and one more person (Baldhelm, priest of Lindisfarne), who is referred to without being named by the anonymous author.[11] The anonymous *Vita*, on the other hand, contains eight names of persons who are either totally ignored or mentioned without being named in Bede's work. For instance, Bede omitted to mention Elias, a priest of Lindisfarne, who had informed the anonymous author on a three-year-old child's prophecy concerning Cuhtbert's episcopacy. He kept, however, Bishop Trumwine (called Tumma in the earlier work) as a source for the same story, a person with whom he (and his wider audience) would have been more familiar.[12]

Another miracle witness only mentioned in the anonymous text is Penna. He had told the Lindisfarne author about Cuthbert's healing of a paralytic boy. When reporting the same episode in his own text, Bede did not have any first-hand source and seems to have relied entirely on the anonymous author's story, but he avoided mentioning, let alone naming, Penna, a witness he had not personally encountered.[13] Another informant omitted by Bede is Plecgils, a priest of Melrose who had told the anonymous author about the famous episode concerning the sea otters which ministered to Cuthbert at night on the shore at Coldingham. Bede recounts the same episode in chapter 10 of his prose *Vita* without providing the name of any witness; at the end of the chapter, however, Bede says that the cleric of Coldingham who had spied on Cuthbert from a distance (and whose name is not given in either text) had been silent about the miraculous event until Cuthbert's death, as the saint had demanded, but later proceeded to tell the episode to many people, thus following in this respect the manner in which the Lindisfarne author had ended his chapter on the same matter.[14]

The higher number of named people in Bede's work is mostly due to the fact that he incorporated new material which had not been covered by the anonymous author. In most cases these people were witnesses at miracles or informants for events only reported by Bede. For instance, the hermits named

---

[10] Stancliffe, 'Cuthbert', p. 27, n. 43.
[11] Cf. *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, pp. 120–3 and 240–1.
[12] Cf. *ibid.* pp. 64–5 and pp. 156–7. See also McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede*, p. 159.
[13] Cf. *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, pp. 116–19 and 256–9.
[14] Cf. *ibid.* pp. 78–83 and 188–91.

19

Table 1: People named in the anonymous *Vita S. Cuthberti* and Bede's prose
Vita S. Cuthberti[1]

Anonymous	Bede	
Aebbe	Aebbe	abbess
Aelfflaed	Aelfflaed	abbess
Aethilwald	Aethilwald	abbot of Melrose
	Aethilwald	hermit at Farne
Aidan	Aidan	bishop
Aldfrith	Aldfrith	king of Northumbria
	Alhfrith	sub-king of Deira
	Augustine	archbishop of Canterbury
presbiter	**Baldhelm**	priest of Lindisfarne
	Bede	author
Beta	Bede	priest of Lindisfarne
	Boisil	prior of Melrose
	Cudda	abbot
Cuthbert	Cuthbert	monk, bishop and saint
	Cynimund	monk of Lindisfarne
Eadberht	Eadberht	bishop of Lindisfarne
Eadfrith	Eadfrith	bishop of Lindisfarne
Eata	Eata	abbot of Melrose and bishop of Lindisfarne
Ecgfrith	Ecgfrith	king of Northumbria
Elias		priest of Lindisfarne
	Felgild	hermit at Farne
	Gregory	the Great
	Guthfrith	sacrist of Lindisfarne
Hadwald	Hadwald	servant of Aelfflaed
Hemma	*comes*	
Hereberht	Hereberht	hermit
	Herefrith	monk and abbot of Lindisfarne
Hildmer	Hildmer	reeve
	Ingwald	monk of Wearmouth
Kenswith	*deuota Deo femina*	Cuthbert's nurse
Penna		witness of a miracle
Plecgils		priest of Melrose
Sibba	*comes*	
	Sigfrith	monk of Melrose and, later, Jarrow
Theodore	Theodore	archbishop of Canterbury
Tumma	Trumwine	bishop
Tydi	*presbiter*	priest of Melrose
	Verca	abbess
Walhstod	Walhstod	monk of Lindisfarne
Willibrord	Willibrord	bishop
Winfrith		bishop

Notes:
[1] Names which only appear in one of the two works are highlighted in bold. For people who
are mentioned without being named, corresponding Latin descriptions given by the author are
provided.

Æthilwald (or Oidiluald, as Bede would have probably spelled his name)[15] and Felgild, who succeeded Cuthbert on Farne Island, only appear in Bede's work; this is because they participated in a couple of miraculous events which took place after the anonymous *Vita* had been written.[16]

Another name which only appears in Bede's text is that of Herefrith, abbot of Lindisfarne at the time of Cuthbert's death in 687, who would seem to have acted as Bede's main informant. He is mentioned for the first time in the prologue, where he is said to have been shown Bede's draft before publication so that amendments could be introduced.[17] He is then mentioned again in chapter 8 as the source of all the information concerning the death of Boisil, prior of Melrose. Herefrith was also Bede's informant on Cuthbert's healing of Ælfflæd, abbess of Whitby, thanks to a linen girdle which Cuthbert had sent her while she was ill.[18] He is mentioned one more time in chapter 37, where his report on Cuthbert's death is quoted verbatim by Bede. Herefrith can therefore be described as the main source for the most important new information on Cuthbert's life and death which had not been provided by the Lindisfarne author. He is the main representative of that group of informants who were interviewed by Bede himself for the purposes of his *Vita S. Cuthberti*.

Another person who is only mentioned by Bede is Verca, the abbess of a monastery not far from the mouth of the River Tyne. She appears in the text in relation to a miracle which had happened at her monastery, when Cuthbert, by tasting water, gave it the flavour of wine.[19] This miracle is not told in detail in the earlier *Vita*, but it is only hinted at in the final chapter among other miracles that the author decided to omit from his narration.[20] Bede says that he had had access to this information through one of the people who had tasted the wine and who had subsequently moved to the monastery at Wearmouth where he had also been buried.[21]

---

[15] On Bede's spelling of English personal names, see Lapidge, 'Prolegomena', 135. Unless otherwise stated, in this article all names are spelled following Colgrave's *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert* in order to make references to the edited text easier to identify.

[16] See *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, pp. 300–5.

[17] *Ibid.* pp. 144–5.

[18] *Ibid.* pp. 230–5.

[19] *Ibid.* pp. 264–7. Verca is also mentioned later on (pp. 272–3) in Herefrith's account of Cuthbert's death as reported by Bede: she had sent Cuthbert a cloth which he had been unwilling to wear while alive but asked for his body to be wrapped in it for his burial.

[20] *Ibid.* pp. 138–9.

[21] Although in this case Bede does not give the name of his source, two of the manuscripts in which the *Vita* has been preserved (both of Durham provenance) contain a marginal note indicating that his name was Fridumund. See *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, p. 266 (apparatus). For a discussion of the names preserved through such marginal annotations, see below, pp. 26–34, and the appendix, pp. 39–42.

Although most of the personal names which are contained only in Bede's work are related to events which do not appear in the earlier *Vita*, it is worth emphasizing that this is not always the case and that Bede also names people who are described as his own informants for miraculous events which, however, had already been narrated by the Lindisfarne author. For instance, Ingwald was a monk of Wearmouth who was still alive, though very old, when Bede was writing. He told Bede a miraculous story that he had heard from Cuthbert himself. This was a miracle which had occurred when Cuthbert was still young, and, while on a journey, found some food hidden in the straw of a hut's roof. Though Bede's version of the story is more elaborate than the anonymous author's, it is apparent that it is based on the earlier text, but the mentioning of Ingwald as the source of this incident gives the entire story a new strength, especially because he is said to be now very old and 'no longer with carnal eyes gazes on things earthly, but rather, with a pure heart, contemplates things heavenly'.[22]

Old age and closeness to death reappear with reference to another of Bede's informants: Sigfrith, a very old priest living at Jarrow when Bede was writing his *Vita S. Cuthberti*. He is described as the witness of Cuthbert's arrival at Melrose, an episode not contained in the earlier *Vita*. In Bede's narration, on the other hand, this is a crucial moment of Cuthbert's existence, as it represents the very beginning of his life in the service of God and his total acceptance of the monastic discipline, inspired by the example of Boisil, the prior at Melrose. The latter was standing at the gate of the monastery when Cuthbert was approaching; he realized how great the man was going to be and said to those who were standing by: 'Behold the servant of the Lord'; a sentence which, as Bede is keen to point out, resembled what Jesus had said looking upon Nathanael as he came towards him. The prophetic words pronounced by Boisil were heard and remembered by Sigfrith, who, after many years, reported them to Bede. It would seem that the contrast between Sigfrith's condition when he heard the prophetic sentence and the time when he reported it is of special significance. Whereas at the time he was just a young man who had learned as yet only the first rudiments of monastic life, by the time Bede was writing, he was a monk at Jarrow, 'living the life of a perfect man in Christ and, amid the feeble sighs of his latest breath, thirsting for a joyful entry into another life'.[23] The fact that he was going to die soon makes his recollection of the episode and the words pronounced by Boisil even more significant. It is as

---

[22] Cf. *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, pp. 70–1 and 170–1 ('nunc longe gratia senectutis magis corde munda coelestia quam terrena carnalibus contemplatur aspectibus').

[23] *Ibid*. pp. 172–3: 'perfectum in Christo agens uirum et inter egra spiritus extremi suspiria laetum uitae alterius sitiens introitum'.

22

if Sigfrith's memory was all the more valuable, given his very old age, and more importantly, the state of mind which characterized his waiting for death.[24]

These were the people whose names Bede was most interested in spelling out in his text, as opposed to those who only appear in the anonymous *Vita*. It is perhaps significant that such lay people as Hemma or Sibba, though both mentioned and described as *comites*, are not explicitly named in Bede's work. Equally interesting is the fact that Kenswith, Cuthbert's nurse, should be simply described as a *deuota Deo femina* ('faithful handmaiden of God'), without being named by Bede. The only women whose names appear in his work are those of the three abbesses Æbbe, Ælfflæd and Verca. Otherwise the world described by Bede is populated by men, and these men are almost exclusively ecclesiastics.[25] This seems to fit in very well with the author's view of his times and society which he perceived as in need of a reform that could only be carried out by spiritual leaders described by Bede as *doctores* and *praedicatores*.[26]

NAMES IN MONASTIC MEMORIAL CONTEXTS

Deciding to name or not to name a given person may appear as a casual activity, depending almost exclusively upon the internal demands of the narrative structure of a text. In fact, Bede lived in a world in which remembering people through their names, especially in liturgical contexts, was an act of utmost importance. This is also clearly stated at the end of the prologue of his *Vita S. Cuthberti* addressed to Bishop Eadfrith of Lindisfarne, in which the author reminds the bishop that his community had already promised to pray for him, especially after his death, and that Eadfrith had also ordered Guthfrith, the sacrist, to place Bede's name in the register of his holy congregation, a register, or 'album' – as Bede calls it – which is likely to have been a predecessor of the earliest, ninth-century section of the memorial book known as the

---

[24] On images of illness and death in Bede's writings, see also D. A. E. Pelteret, 'Bede's Women', *Women, Marriage and Family in Medieval Christendom: Essays in Memory of Michael M. Sheehan*, ed. C. M. Rousseau and J. T. Rosenthal, Stud. in Med. Culture 37 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1998), pp. 19–46, at 36–7.

[25] The only exceptions are the Northumbrian Kings Aldfrith, Ahlfrith and Ecgfrith, as well as the reeve named Hildmer, who appears twice in Bede's *Vita S. Cuthberti* (in chapters 15 and 31). It would seem, however, that Hildmer's name is mentioned in order to give the author the opportunity to specify that the man mentioned in chapter 31 was the same as the one appearing in chapter 15. It is perhaps also significant that in chapter 31, where Hildmer's healing occurs thanks to some bread which had been previously blessed by Cuthbert, Bede should point out that, although all those who were present were laymen, they were devout ('erant autem laici omnes sed religiosi'), and that, apparently, was the reason why the miracle could take place: *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, pp. 256–7. On women, especially abbesses, in Bede's writings, see Pelteret, 'Bede's Women'.

[26] On Bede's preoccupations with the decline of his people and the role of *doctores* and *praedicatores* in promoting a reform of both state and society, see Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal of Reform'.

Durham *Liber vitae*.[27] Hagiographies and memorial books are undoubtedly texts of different natures which served different functions, though they ultimately originated in the same monastic milieu. For this reason, and thanks to what Bede himself wrote about the names of his authorities in the prologue to his prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*, it can be safely assumed that his choices regarding the people who should have been explicitly named in his hagiographical text were not casual. If the memorial function of the register in which Bede wanted his name to be inserted represents its principal *raison d'être*, for its part Bede's *Vita S. Cuthberti*, like other hagiographies, is also intimately connected with the workings of memory. Commemoration was a fundamental part of early medieval monastic life, and hagiography worked as a tool through which the collective social memory of a given community, and of those involved in the cult of the same saint, could be built.[28] If the use of a *liber vitae* in liturgy clearly allowed for the triggering of memory through the invocation of the names contained in the memorial book, it is easy to imagine that encountering a name in a hagiographic text would elicit a similar, though less structured, commemorative process in the minds of those who were used to remembering people, especially the dead, in such a way.

Bede wanted his hagiographic text on Cuthbert to be based on the recollections of specific people. Although many of the events which he described had

---

[27] *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, pp. 146–7. For a full discussion and edition of the Durham *Liber vitae*, see *The Durham Liber Vitae. London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A.VII: Edition, and Digital Facsimile with Introduction, Codicological, Prosopographical and Linguistic Commentary*, ed. D. Rollason and L. Rollason, 3 vols (London, 2007). In the ninth-century portion of the Durham *Liber vitae*, which incorporates earlier material probably collected at Lindisfarne, the name 'Bede' occurs twice in the list of priests (on 21v and 22r). For a discussion of the possible place of origin of the Durham *Liber vitae* cf. J. Gerchow, 'The Origins of the Durham Liber Vitae', *The Durham Liber Vitae and its Context*, ed. D. Rollason, A. J. Piper, M. Harvey and L. Rollason (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 45–61, E. Briggs, 'Nothing but Names: the Original Core of the Durham Liber Vitae', *The Durham Liber Vitae and its Context*, ed. Rollason *et al.*, pp. 63–85, and L. Rollason, 'History and Codicology', *The Durham Liber Vitae. London, British Library, MS Domitian A.VII: Edition*, ed. Rollason and Rollason, I.31–4, where it is maintained that the Lindisfarne origin, proposed by Briggs, is more likely than the Wearmouth–Jarrow origin suggested by Gerchow.

[28] Among the literature on the subject of medieval liturgical commemoration, see *Memoria. Der geschichtliche Zeugniswert des liturgischen Gedenkens im Mittelalter*, ed. K. Schmid and J. Wollasch (Münster, 1984), which also contains many references. On the memorial role of *libri vitae,* see *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester, British Library Stowe 944, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A. VIII and British Library Cotton Titus D. XXVII*, ed. S. Keynes (Copenhagen, 1996), pp. 49–65; on the role of liturgy in the creation of a common identity, see C. Cubitt, 'Unity and Diversity in the Early Anglo-Saxon Liturgy', *Unity and Diversity in the Church*, ed. R. N. Swanson, Stud. in Church Hist. 32 (Oxford, 1996), pp. 45–57; on memory and early Anglo-Latin hagiography, see S. Coates, 'Ceolfrid: History, Hagiography and Memory in Seventh- and Eighth-Century Wearmouth–Jarrow', *JMH* 25.2 (1999), 69–86, and Cubitt, 'Memory and Narrative'.

already been told by the anonymous Lindisfarne author, he presented his story as the fruit of the memories of people whom he had personally interviewed. Of some of these witnesses he was keen to point out their high moral status and their closeness to death, which made their recollections all the more valuable and made them capable of recognizing the heavenly meaning of the miraculous stories they reported to Bede. These people represent a special link in the process of remembrance that Bede's hagiography was meant to construct. Through his work, Cuthbert was going to be remembered as a saint, and this remembrance would be based on the recollections of people who, in their turn, were going to become men of blessed memory, to be remembered thanks to Bede's inclusion of their names.

As noted above, several scholars have emphasized the differences between the Lindisfarne *Vita* and Bede's text in terms of style, structure and production context. It has also been noted that Bede left out many topographical details and many of the anonymous author's attributions of report to specific people.[29] It is worth considering, however, whether from the point of view of memory preservation and gathering of faithful witnesses, especially with respect to miraculous events, the two texts should not be seen as pursuing the same goal. Both authors emphasize in their prologues the efforts made to find eye-witnesses and to check the validity of their accounts.[30] Both texts show that the construction of *memoria* is the result of a collective effort involving the author and those with whom the author was in contact while writing his work. Both writers could rely upon a network of people whose individual recollections could be shared to become part of a wider process of remembrance. In many ways, therefore, they both show how memory and hagiography are profoundly related, notwithstanding the specific features which distinguish each text. At the same time, however, the fact that Bede introduced new personal names and left out others which were contained in the earlier text is an important reminder that memory is not static, that it necessarily develops with time and that different people remember in different ways. As noted by Cubitt, the interval which separated the composition of the anonymous work from that of Bede's *Life of Cuthbert* had probably allowed for the memorialization

---

[29] See above, n. 6.

[30] Catherine Cubitt ('Memory and Narrative', p. 49) has noted that the anonymous author often introduces his miracle stories by naming his informants. She interprets this practice as indicating that 'his literary techniques perhaps remained close to oral discourse' rather than as a guarantee towards 'factual accuracy'. However, although the anonymous author's less developed techniques make his resulting narrative look less convincing than Bede's, one should not discard the possibility that he was equally interested in proving the accuracy of his story by insisting on the fact that it was the fruit of the report of eye-witnesses. In this respect both authors shared an interest in giving evidence and naming sources for the events they were writing about, especially the miraculous ones.

of events, especially the miraculous ones, through their repeated recounting within the community.[31] This process probably weakened the need to refer explicitly to the sources of such well-known stories, unlike the new stories reported by Bede, which, as was shown above, provide the context for most of the personal names that only appear in the later work. However, as we have seen, Bede was selective also in other respects, as not only did he choose to eliminate from his account the anonymous author's sources, he also decided to leave out the names of several people, especially the lay ones, who took part in events appearing in both works but who, as a result, are only named in the Lindisfarne text.[32]

MARGINAL ANNOTATIONS IN LATER MANUSCRIPTS OF BEDE'S PROSE *VITA S. CUTHBERTI*

Bede's work became the basis for the veneration of Cuthbert, and manuscript transmission shows that his text was much more widely copied and distributed, both in England and on the Continent, whereas the surviving manuscripts of the anonymous *Vita* almost exclusively belong to a later, post-1100 group of continental legendaries.[33] However, if Bede was undoubtedly successful in producing a new coherent and official narrative of Cuthbert's life and death and in creating an enduring image of the saint, the same cannot be said about his suppression of personal (and geographical) names, since a number of these reappear in marginal annotations added into three later manuscripts of his prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*. What makes these marginal annotations exceptionally interesting is the fact that, while several of them reproduce names also provided by the earlier Lindisfarne *Vita*, some others refer to names which are not contained in the source but which were deemed worth adding and preserving alongside the main text of Bede's work throughout several centuries of transmission.

The earliest of these later manuscripts of Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* contains only a handful of such annotations, but it is appropriate to begin with it, not only because of its date but also because it has been long recognized as one of the main manuscripts on which any edition of Bede's *Vita* should be based.[34] The manuscript in question is London, British Library, Cotton

---

[31] *Ibid.* p. 43.

[32] On Bede's selectivity see also Coates, 'Ceolfrid', 71–3, which analyses Bede's use of the anonymous *Vita Ceolfridi* in his *Historia abbatum*. See also Brown, *Bede the Venerable*, p. 72, and Newlands, 'Bede', pp. 77–82.

[33] D. A. Bullough, 'A Neglected Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript of the Lindisfarne *Vita S. Cuthberti*', *ASE* 27 (1998), 105–33, at 105.

[34] The others being Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 183 and London, British Library, Harley 1117. See Bullough, 'A Neglected Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript', pp. 120–1, n. 58, where it is noted that the implications of Colgrave's decision to rely instead on a group of manuscripts of the twelfth century and later were pointed out in reviews which appeared

26

Vitellius A. xix (V in Colgrave's edition). It probably originated in the mid-tenth century at St Augustine's, Canterbury; it is written in one of the mid-century phases of Anglo-Saxon square minuscule, and seems to have been in any case at Canterbury by *c.* 1000.[35] It is among the earliest surviving copies of Bede's prose *Vita* (1v–7r, 9r–84v) and contains his metrical *Life* too (on 88v–114r). Moreover, it is the earliest of a group of Canterbury manuscripts containing Bede's *Lives of Cuthbert*; its importance for the present purpose is related to the presence of a small number of marginalia, also of the tenth century, which spell out some proper names omitted by Bede in the main text of the prose *Vita*.[36] These notes, unlike other lexical and grammar glosses also contained in the manuscript, do not appear in the other Canterbury manuscripts belonging to the same group.[37] The marginalia containing proper names can be found on three different folios. The first one is on 28v, where a near-contemporary or later hand added the words *n[omen] fl[uuii] tabiade* against Bede's *iuxta fluuium quendam*, thus spelling out the names of the River Teviot, which Bede had decided to omit (see Fig. 1).
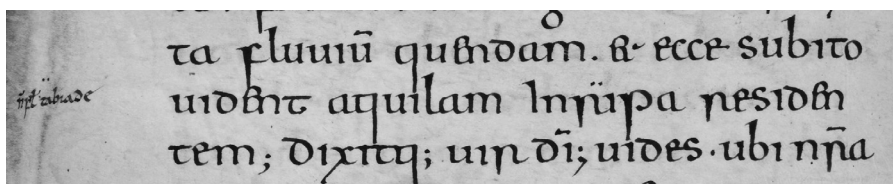

Figure 1: Detail of London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xix, 28v

Marginal annotations of the same nature can also be found at the top of 30v. In this case another, contemporary or near-contemporary, hand wrote *Nomen feminæ quensþið. Nomen uiculi hruningaham.* Above the initial N in each instance of *Nomen* the scribe made use of a distinct *signe-de-renvoi* matching respectively with each of those inserted above the words *feminę* and *uiculi* in the main text

---

in the early 1940s, immediately after the publication of *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*; see for instance M. L. W. Laistner's review of Colgrave's edition in *AHR* 46 (1941), 379–81. On Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 183, cf. S. Keynes, 'King Athelstan's Books', *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England. Studies presented to Peter Clemoes*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 143–201, at 180–5, and D. Rollason, 'St Cuthbert and Wessex: the Evidence of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183', *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner *et al.*, pp. 413–24, at 415, 419.

[35] See Lapidge, 'Prolegomena', p. 143, and references provided there.

[36] *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, p. 27. It should be noted that Colgrave dated these marginal additions to the eleventh century. I am grateful to Tessa Webber and Julian Harrison for palaeographic advice on the marginalia in Vitellius A. xix.

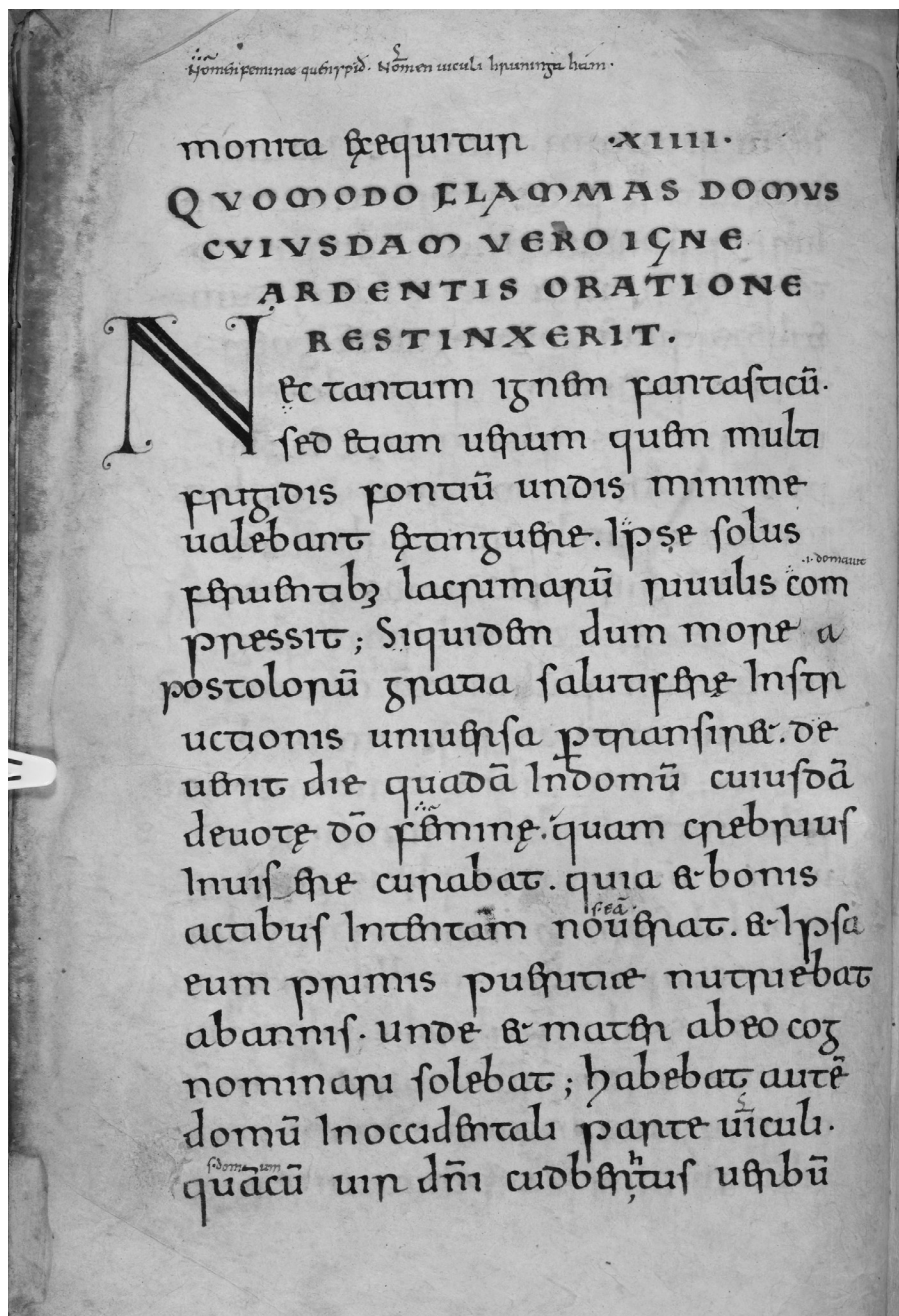[37] See Bullough, 'A Neglected Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript', p. 121.

27

Figure 2: London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xix, 30v

(see Fig. 2). The personal name refers to Cuthbert's nurse, and like the name of her village, is provided in the Lindisfarne *Vita*, from which presumably both names were lifted to be added in the margins of Bede's *Vita*.

The most intriguing of the marginal annotations to be found in Vitellius A. xix is that appearing in the margin of 32v, line 10, also contemporary or near-contemporary with the main script, which reads *nom[en] uxoris eadsuid* (see Fig. 3). This refers to the wife of a reeve named Hildmer, a woman who had been seized upon by a demon and was miraculously healed by Cuthbert.
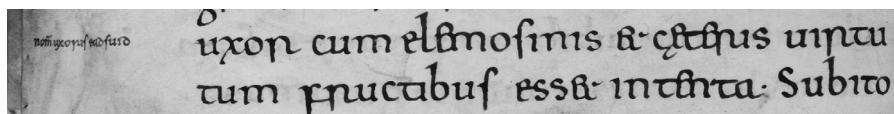
Figure 3: Detail of London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xix, 32v

The fact that Eadswith's name cannot be found in any surviving version of the Lindisfarne *Vita* has been taken by Bullough to indicate the probable existence of an eighth-century manuscript of the anonymous text which would have contained the woman's name as well as the other proper names added to Cotton Vitellius A. xix.[38] This hypothesis would seem to be reinforced by the spelling of the name of the River Teviot (*n[omen] fl[uuii] tabiade*) on 28v, which Bullough describes as a 'fully acceptable . . . spelling of an early eighth-century Lindisfarne scribe'. This spelling is noticeable because it differs from the version (*Tesgeta*) preserved in all the manuscripts used by Colgrave for the edition of the anonymous *Vita*.[39] As Bullough notes, the adding of names extracted from the Lindisfarne *Vita* to a copy of Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* may have happened at any stage between Bede's completion of the work and the mid-tenth-century date of Vitellius A. xix; however, the spelling of *tabiade* and the presence of Eadswith's name would seem to indicate that it took place in the earlier part of that interval.[40]

The addition of names in the margins of Vitellius A. xix was not an isolated phenomenon: it represents the earliest surviving, though less developed, example of a practice which can be better appreciated and understood with reference to a couple of later Durham manuscripts, belonging to a different recension of Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*. The earlier of the two is Cambridge,

---

[38] *Ibid.* pp. 120–2. It should be noted, however, that the later Durham manuscripts of Bede's prose *Life* which are discussed below contain marginal annotations referring to several more personal names which are not to be found in any surviving manuscript of the anonymous *Vita*. For a fuller discussion of this intriguing group of names, see also the appendix below.

[39] *Ibid.* pp. 119–20, 122. See *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, p. 84.

[40] Bullough, 'A Neglected Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript', p. 122.

29

Trinity College O. 3. 55 (C$_3$ in Colgrave's edition), a mid-twelfth-century manuscript containing much material on Cuthbert, his cult and the history of the Durham community, which by that time had become monastic and had been making a great deal of effort to represent itself as the legitimate successor of Cuthbert's community.[41] The other Durham manuscript which contains a series of marginal annotations referring to proper names omitted from Bede's text of the *Vita S. Cuthberti* is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Fairfax 6 (O$_3$ in Colgrave's edition), dating back to the second half of the fourteenth century. This imposing manuscript, written in Anglicana, contains about twenty works of historical and hagiographical interest, including, as well as Bede's verse and prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* (and two chapters from the *Historia ecclesiastica* which follow the prose *Vita* in several surviving manuscripts), Symeon's *Libellus de exordio* and various works of Reginald of Durham.[42] Of particular significance is the presence of Reginald's *Libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti uirtutibus*, a collection of post-mortem miracles of Cuthbert which the author began to write in the 1160s.

Reginald can be taken to represent a significant trait-d'union between the two Durham manuscripts under investigation: in the earlier one (C$_3$) it is possible to recognize the distinctive features of his hand, which seems to have been responsible for the very marginal notes which are being examined here (see Fig. 4).[43]

Through this manuscript Reginald appears to have proceeded to study the main texts on Cuthbert and intervened to add names which had been left out by Bede. As we shall see, many of these names belonged to people who had witnessed or reported Cuthbert's miracles, events in which Reginald had a famously noticeable interest: in his *Libellus* he explains that after hearing Ailred of Rievaulx narrate examples of Cuthbert's miracles on many occasions, and after inspecting relevant works preserved at Durham, he realized

---

[41] For a description of the contents of the manuscript, see M. R. James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1900) III, no. 1227.

[42] On Fairfax 6, see F. Madan, H. H. E. Craster and N. Denholm-Young, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, II, part II (Oxford, 1937), no. 3886, pp. 773–5; N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*, 2nd ed. (London, 1964), p. 74, and *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis, ecclesie*, ed. and trans. D. Rollason (Oxford, 2000), pp. xxxvii–xxxix.

[43] I owe the identification of Reginald's hand in the margins of Trinity College O. 3. 55 to Tessa Webber to whom I am very grateful. I also wish to thank Michael Gullick who has kindly allowed me to see his unpublished work on Reginald's hand, which he has identified in a number of Durham books and charters. Among the main features which distinguish Reginald's script, Tessa Webber has noted in a personal communication that Fig. 4 displays Reginald's distinctive form of the g, the rather long shaft of the d and the general backward-leaning character.
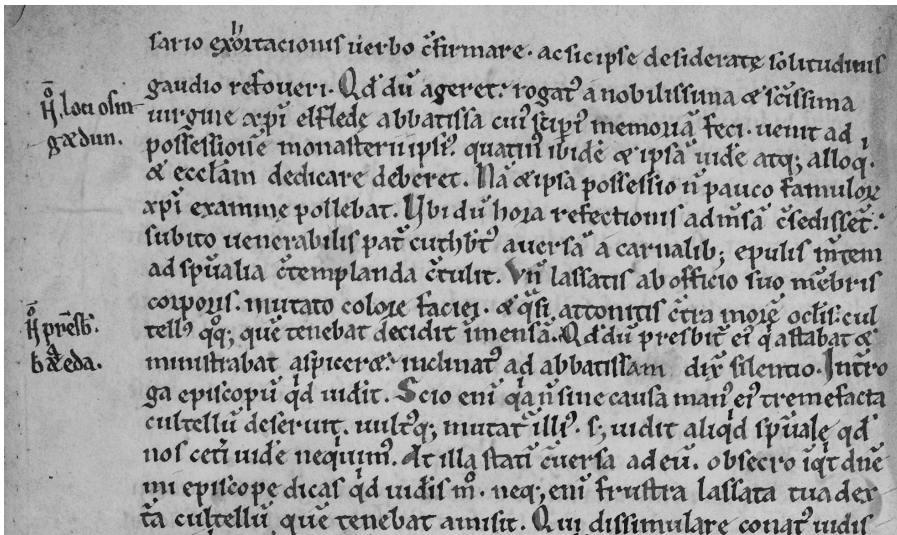
Figure 4: Detail of Cambridge, Trinity College O. 3. 55, 19v. Reginald's marginal annotations read *N[omen] loci osingædun* and *N[omen] presb[iteri] baeda.*

that Ailred's stories had not been recorded in writing, hence his decision to compose his work on recent miracles of Cuthbert. His perusal of Bede's prose *Vita* (contained within 5v–25v of the Trinity manuscript) would seem to have been part of the research which led him to produce his collection of miracles. For its part the fourteenth-century Fairfax manuscript represents a later step in the Durham accumulation of historical and hagiographical texts: in this manuscript Bede's work was copied on 13r–29v by a scribe called *Petrus Plenus Amoris* alongside various later texts, including, as mentioned above, Reginald's *Libellus.*[44] Though contemporary with the main script, the marginal annotations on personal and geographical names contained in this manuscript appear to have been copied by another scribe as they are in a better-formed handwriting than the text; this is an unusual feature which testifies to the care which was taken to reproduce the information that the scribe saw in the margins of his exemplar (see Fig. 5).[45]

[44] See *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de exordio,* ed. and trans. Rollason, p. xxxviii, n. 109, but note that the reference to the scribe named *Petrus Plenus Amoris* is on 1r. See also J. B. Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, NY, 1995), p. 69.

[45] I am grateful to Tessa Webber for her help with the Anglicana script of Fairfax 6. The same marginal annotations which are contained in Fairfax 6 are also to be found in a paper Durham manuscript of the sixteenth century (London, British Library, Harley 4843), which appears to be a transcript from this fourteenth-century manuscript: *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert,* ed. Colgrave, pp. 29, 49.
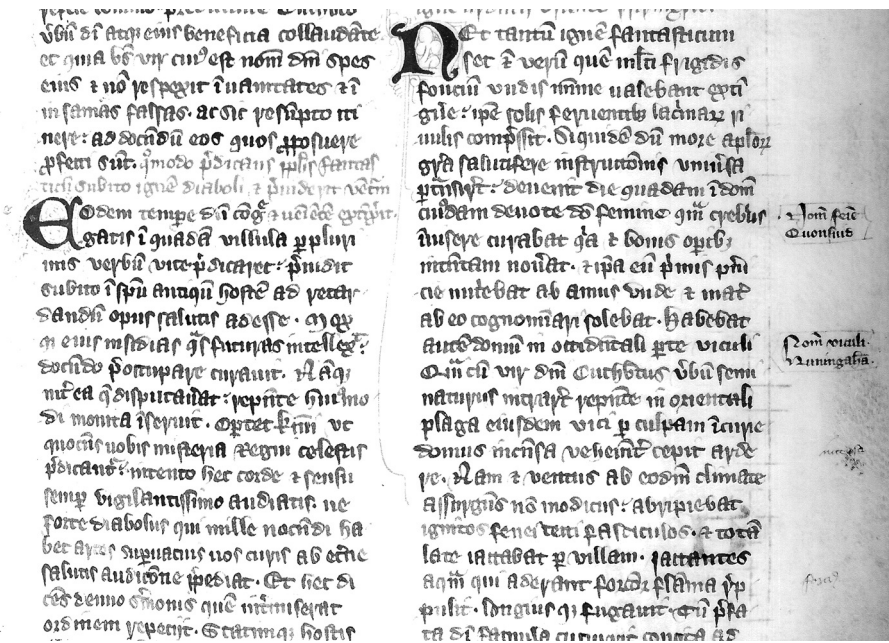
31

Figure 5: Detail of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Fairfax 6, 18r. The marginal annotations read
Nom[en] fe[m]i[n]e Quonsuid and Nom[en] viculi Runingaha[m].

Before considering in more detail the significance of the Durham origin of these two manuscripts, it is necessary to look at the contents of the marginal annotations. First of all, it should be noted that, although clearly related to each other, neither the main text nor the marginal annotations in C_3 and O_3 are identical. Furthermore, C_3 contains unique annotations referring to two place-names and a personal name which do not appear in O_3, while the latter contains references to a place-name and a personal name not appearing in the former.[46]

The main feature which distinguishes the glosses in these two Durham manuscripts from those in Vitellius A. xix is not the higher number of proper names preserved, but rather the nature of the personal names. Whereas all the

---

[46] The place-names which only appear in C_3 can be found on 10v (*N[omen] fl[uuii] iccabicide*), about which see Bullough, 'A Neglected Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript', p. 122, and on 19v (*N[omen] loci osingædun*) (see Fig. 4); the personal name which is unique to the same manuscript can be found in the annotation on 18r (*N[omen] comitis Hemni*). The personal name only appearing in O_3 is on 24v (*Nom[en] presbiteri Tydi*), which also contains the reference to a place-name that is not in C_3 (*Nom[en] viculi Medeluong*). See the apparatus in *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, at pp. 196, 262, 252, 260 respectively, and note that at p. 252 Colgrave erroneously indicates that the annotation *Nomen comitis Hemni* appears in both manuscripts.

place-names and the personal names contained in Vitellius A. xix had been lifted from an early copy of the anonymous *Vita*, which according to Bullough would have also contained the name of Eadswith, not to be found in any of the surviving manuscripts of the same *Vita*, the two later Durham manuscripts also incorporate marginal notes spelling out the names of people only appearing in Bede's text. This is the most remarkable of the three groups of personal names which can be identified in the marginal annotations contained in C_3 and O_3 and which, for the sake of clarity, can be described as follows:

1. names extracted from the anonymous *Vita* and entered next to the corresponding passages of Bede's text dealing with the same events.[47] It can be noted that all the place-names also belong to this group;
2. names of people described by Bede as *frater*, *presbiter* and so on, without specifying their names, and not appearing in the Lindisfarne *Vita*;[48]
3. names of people who also appear in other sections of the text in which they are named. These would seem to act as cross-references, ensuring that the reader realizes that a given priest whose name is not mentioned in a passage is in fact the same as the person named in another section of the text.[49]

The names in the second group, though not very numerous, are especially interesting because they add to our knowledge and allow us to identify a number of people (especially miracles' witnesses) whose names are not transmitted in the main text of either the anonymous *Vita* or Bede's prose *Vita*. The nature of the annotations in the second and third groups suggests that they must have been originally added in the margins of a copy or

---

[47] Colgrave has printed these annotations in the apparatus of his edition at pp. 192, 260, 288–9 (references to Tydi), 200 (reference to Kenswith, or Quoinsuid/Quonsuid), 240 (reference to Sibba, or Sibca/Sibul), 252 (reference to Hemma, or Hemni), 277 (reference to Walhstod, or Ualchstod/Walchstod).

[48] These marginal annotations are printed *ibid*. pp. 164 (reference to Baella, Bede's source for a miracle not contained in the earlier *Vita*), 204 (reference to Eadswith, or Eadsuid), 266 (references to Betuald and Fridumund, witnesses to another miracle not appearing in the anonymous *Vita*), 305 (reference to Ceolberct, witness to a miracle only reported by Bede). The marginal annotation referring to Eadswith (contained in each of the three manuscripts that are discussed here) has been included within this group because it cannot be found in any surviving manuscript of the anonymous *Vita*, even though according to Bullough this female name is likely to have been lifted from a lost early copy of the Lindisfarne *Vita*. For a fuller discussion of this extremely interesting group of personal names see the appendix below.

[49] See *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave pp. 262, 265 (marginal annotations referring to a priest named Bede, who is very likely to be the same as the one named in the main text of chapter 37), 289 (reference to Cinimund, or Cynimund/Cynemund, a priest who is named by Bede in chapter 36).

copies of Bede's prose *Vita* by someone who was close to Bede and could remember the identity of the people who appear in the main text without being named.[50]

It is not possible to ascertain why Vitellius A. xix should contain only a limited number of such name annotations. However, as the four which it does contain appear in succession and are contained between chapter 12 and chapter 15 of Bede's text, it is perhaps just a coincidence that the manuscript should not have more. As the Durham manuscripts do not contain any more annotations in that section of the *Vita* than the ones also appearing in Vitellius A. xix, it would seem that at some point in the transmission of the Canterbury recension, marginal notes appearing in just one part of Bede's work were inserted, while those contained in other sections were left out for reasons which are now impossible to recover. By contrast, the efforts made by the twelfth-century Durham community to preserve several more names in marginal annotations which were copied alongside the main text of Bede's *Vita* can be reconstructed more closely and understood within the context of a renewed and intense interest in Cuthbert's cult and Bede's role in promoting and publicizing the origins of that cult.

THE CULT OF CUTHBERT AT DURHAM IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY AND BEYOND

In the first half of the twelfth century the Durham monks, who had been newly established as a Benedictine community in 1083 by Bishop William of St Calais, had been very active in creating a history which would identify their monastic community as the direct descendant of the Lindisfarne one. The monks who were installed in 1083 had in fact been summoned from the newly reformed monasteries of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow to replace the eleventh-century secular community of Durham. The principal and incontrovertible link between past and present was the presence of Cuthbert's incorrupt body at Durham, where it had arrived in the late tenth century following the wanderings of his community from Lindisfarne, then to Chester-le-Street, Ripon and finally Durham.[51]

Symeon of Durham's *Libellus de exordio*, which among other sources draws heavily on Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*, represents the main outcome of the efforts made in the early twelfth century to reconstruct the community's past, describe the monks as worthy custodians of the saint and defend their properties, at a time when the division of the estate between bishop and monks was

---

[50] Cf. Bullough, 'A Neglected Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript', p. 122.
[51] For a full account of the history of the church of Durham at this time, see W. M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans. The Church of Durham, 1071–1153* (Woodbridge, 1998).

causing some anxiety, something that apparently continued to preoccupy the Durham community throughout the twelfth century.[52]

The earliest manuscript of the *Libellus de exordio* (Durham, University Library, Cosin V. II. 6), likely to incorporate corrections by Symeon himself, contains a list of names of monks of Durham in various hands.[53] Though not directly dependent on it, this list has much in common with the names which were entered into the Durham *Liber vitae* in the early twelfth century, when the monks of Durham began to revive the memorial book which, as mentioned above, had probably originated at Lindisfarne.[54] Alan Piper has shown that the two lists are independent of each other and has suggested that they may have been based on monastic profession-slips which probably became disordered, thus explaining the variations in order between the two lists.[55] The presence of this list of names in the earliest surviving manuscript of Symeon's work is significant for a number of reasons. First of all, it demonstrates that in the context of a historical work such as the *Libellus,* its author thought it appropriate to ask the reader at the very beginning of the text to pray for those whose names followed, that is to say the monks of Durham, thus providing his work with a powerful commemorative function, similar, indeed very similar, to that of the memorial book which was being revived at the same time. The changes of hands which can be recognized indicate that names were added at various stages during the course of the twelfth century, thus fulfilling the author's explicit request to keep on inserting the names of the monks who were to join the community of Durham in the future.[56] Various successive phases can be

---

[52] See M. Foster, 'Custodians of St Cuthbert: the Durham Monks' Views of their Predecessors, 1083–c.1200', *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093–1193*, ed. D. Rollason, M. Harvey and M. Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 53–65, at 56–7, and *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de exordio*, ed. and trans. Rollason, pp. lxxvii–xci. On the division of the estate at Durham, see also Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, pp. 142–83. For a comprehensive study of the division of the *mensa* in England, see E. U. Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter in Twelfth-Century England: a Study of the 'Mensa Episcopalis'* (Cambridge, 1994).

[53] See M. Gullick, 'The Scribes of the Durham Cantor's Book (Durham, Dean and Chapter Library, MS B.IV.24) and the Durham Martyrology Scribe', *Anglo-Norman Durham*, ed. Rollason *et al.*, pp. 93–109, at 108–9; see also by the same author, 'The Hand of Symeon of Durham: Further Observations on the Durham Martyrology Scribe', *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North*, ed. D. Rollason (Stamford, 1998), pp. 14–31, and 'The Two Earliest Manuscripts of the *Libellus de Exordio*', *ibid.* pp. 106–19, at 113–15.

[54] *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de exordio*, ed. and trans. Rollason, pp. xviii, lxxiii–lxxiv.

[55] A. J. Piper, 'The Early Lists and Obits of the Durham Monks', *Symeon of Durham*, ed. Rollason, pp. 161–201, at 166.

[56] *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de exordio*, ed. and trans. Rollason, pp. 4–15. Symeon's interest in commemoration can readily be explained bearing in mind that he was cantor at Durham and therefore in charge of the obits of the deceased brethren, as well as the church's calendar of feasts. See D. Rollason, 'Symeon's Contribution to Historical Writing in Northern England', *Symeon of Durham*, ed. Rollason, pp. 1–13, at 2.

identified thanks to the entering of the priors' names in capitals, thus suggesting that the corresponding parts of the list were entered in their time.[57]

Cambridge, Trinity College O. 3. 55, or C_3, one of the Durham manuscripts containing the marginal annotations to Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* which have been examined above, dates back to the mid-twelfth century, that is, to a time when monks' names were still being added into the list contained in the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Libellus de exordio*.[58] It has been suggested that C_3 may have been compiled between November 1152 and December 1153, when the Durham bishopric was vacant, and the monks were probably anxious about their future; hence the need to invoke St Cuthbert through a collection of texts related to his cult, as well as that of Oswald and Aidan.[59] The prior at that time was Lawrence (1149–54), whose name – written in capital letters – can be found, together with the names of his contemporaries, in the earliest *Libellus* manuscript.[60] This seems to have been a period in which it probably made a lot of sense to ensure that all the names of the people who had somehow been acquainted with Cuthbert were remembered and copied together with the main text of Bede's prose *Vita*, the work which represented the main reference for the cult and which, as we have seen, was also used as a source by Symeon.[61] As has been noted by Alan Piper, the Durham community needed to seek the origins of its identity in seventh-century Lindisfarne, and Bede's writings represented the main source for that search.[62] Moreover, if we add to this general context the fact that the annotations in C_3 can be attributed to a specific monk – Reginald – who happens to have been the main

---

[57] *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de exordio*, ed. and trans. Rollason, pp. 10–11 and notes.

[58] See above, n. 41.

[59] B. Meehan, 'Notes on the Preliminary Texts and Continuations to Symeon's *Libellus de Exordio*', *Symeon of Durham*, ed. Rollason, pp. 128–39, at 130. On the three principal Durham saints, their role in Symeon's *Libellus* and in several twelfth-century manuscripts of Bede's prose *Vita*, including Trinity College O. 3. 55, see A. J. Piper, 'The First Generation of Durham Monks and the Cult of St Cuthbert', *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner *et al.*, pp. 437–46, at 439 and 443. It should be remembered that Trinity College O. 3. 55 is just one of the fourteen surviving twelfth-century copies of Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* which belong to the group associated with the Durham cathedral priory. On the relations between bishop and convent between 1083 and 1153 and the monks' principal preoccupations throughout that period, see Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans*, pp. 142–83.

[60] See *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de exordio*, ed. and trans. Rollason, p. 11, n. 43.

[61] Symeon also made himself the copies of Bede's work contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 175 and Bodley 596: *Symeon of Durham: Libellus de exordio*, ed. and trans. Rollason, pp. lxviii–lxix. On the importance of the writings of Bede for the new monastic community at Durham see A. Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 31–2; on Bede's prose *Vita* as the most important text on Cuthbert throughout the Middle Ages see Brown, *Bede the Venerable*, p. 72.

[62] Piper, 'The First Generation', pp. 443–5.

hagiographer of twelfth-century Durham, with a special interest in Cuthbert's post-mortem miracles, the picture becomes much more telling.

Reginald is likely to have added the annotations in the Trinity manuscript shortly after its completion and before starting to write his *Libellus*, that is, between the mid-1050s and the early 1060s.[63] In the second half of the twelfth century the cult of the saints was becoming increasingly formalized, to the effect that hagiography was more directly permeated by the demonstrability of sanctity, supported by identifiable witnesses. Sally Crumplin has noted that Reginald's *Libellus*, with its very high proportion of healing miracles, mirrors such developments very closely.[64] In his tales, 'details of people, ailment and place' provide crucial information for the demonstration of Cuthbert's sanctity. Crumplin has also compared the way in which the more recent healing miracles narrated by Reginald appear to be modelled on those which had been told by Bede in his prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*, with the addition of details on 'people, places or symptoms' which Bede had not deemed important while dealing with much earlier miracle stories.[65] The evidence provided by the Trinity manuscript demonstrates that Reginald also intervened to add such details on people and places in the margins of Bede's work. In other words, not only did he compile a collection of new miracles which would match the requirements of the most recent developments in hagiography, he also made sure that a manuscript of Bede's text copied at Durham around the time when he joined the priory, would also contain as much similar information as possible, which could probably be extracted from the margins of earlier copies of Bede's work.

Although it is possible to give a name to the very scribe who added the marginal annotations in the twelfth-century Trinity manuscript and understand his possible motives and interests, our knowledge of the marginalia's transmission remains limited, as we do not know from which manuscript(s) they derive; moreover, it should be borne in mind that the earliest surviving witness of the Durham recension, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 175, which was written by Symeon of Durham, does not preserve such annotations.[66] The twelfth-century Durham library must have included other earlier manuscripts

---

[63] On Reginald, see V. Tudor, 'Coldingham , Reginald of (*d. c.*1190)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 (http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23318, accessed 27 Aug 2009) and V. Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century: the Evidence of Reginald of Durham', *St Cuthbert*, ed. Bonner *et al.*, pp. 444–67.

[64] S. Crumplin, 'Modernizing St Cuthbert: Reginald of Durham's Miracle Collection', *Signs, Wonders, Miracles. Representations of Divine Power in the Life of the Church*, ed. K. Cooper and J. Gregory, Stud. in Church Hist. 41 (2005), 179–91, 184–5.

[65] *Ibid.* pp. 187–8.

[66] On Digby 175 see *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, p. 22; Gullick, 'The Scribe of the Durham Cantor's Book', p. 97; and Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria*, p. 42.

of Bede's *Vita* which contained marginal notes on proper names. The fact that in the twelfth century efforts should have been made to reproduce those names fits in with all the other efforts that the monks were making towards the construction of an identity which was deeply related to the origins of Cuthbert's cult. The endurance and the continuing importance of those efforts is further confirmed by the survival of several later manuscripts in which it is possible to encounter Bede's writings alongside the more recent historical texts composed at Durham using Bede as a source.[67] That is also the case for Fairfax 6, which has been described as 'a major compendium of [the community's] hagiographical and historical texts', thus showing a continuing interest on the part of the Durham church in those works which constituted the key textual references in its history.[68] The manuscript's survival represents a powerful testimony of the way in which the principal works concerning the origins of the community and the development of Cuthbert's cult continued to be treasured at Durham throughout several centuries. It is noteworthy that a fourteenth-century scribe should have taken care to copy in such an imposing manuscript as Fairfax 6 the marginal annotations which spell out the names of the people mentioned in Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*. The manuscript *mise-en-page* was thus reproduced for later readers through a chain of events and actions directed at preserving the memory of Cuthbert's life together with that of all the people known to have witnessed it. This process demonstrates a very well-established scribal attitude to the author and to the literary authority of the received text, as many centuries after Bede's work had been written, Durham scribes would have still preferred to reproduce the layout of the text as they saw it in their exemplar, leaving annotations in the margins, rather than intervening to change the text through the insertion of those names. Just as the text had not been interpolated in the tenth century, when some of these marginalia were added into a Canterbury manuscript, later on the Durham scribes adopted a similar attitude, both in the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries.

The process of memorial preservation displayed by these manuscripts is reminiscent of what Mary Carruthers has written about the book as 'the chief external support of *memoria* throughout the Middle Ages', about the role of its layout and its glosses. The repeated reproduction of the marginalia referring to personal names, which had probably first been added to a very early copy or copies of the text, demonstrates the way in which 'a whole community of readers over time' could approach the various levels of information provided

---

[67] See S. Crumplin, 'Rewriting History in the Cult of St Cuthbert from the Ninth to the Twelfth Centuries' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 2004), pp. 26–7.

[68] A. J. Piper, 'The Historical Interests of the Monks of Durham', *Symeon of Durham*, ed. Rollason, pp. 301–32, at 325–7.

by the manuscripts.[69] The specific material culture represented by each single manuscript could thus interact with the main text and the marginalia there displayed to create a form of textual information which would ensure the preservation of the memory of all the people who had personally witnessed the origins of such an important cult as that of Cuthbert, without interfering with the authority of Bede's text. These manuscripts show how in a hagiographical context the process of memory preservation can proceed beyond the author's intentions through the collective remembrance of the people who had witnessed the saint's holy life and death, made possible thanks to the additions and interventions of some of those who – throughout many centuries – copied and recopied the main textual source for the saint's cult.

APPENDIX

A LIST OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE KNOWN ONLY THROUGH MARGINAL ANNOTATIONS IN LATER MANUSCRIPTS OF BEDE'S PROSE *VITA S. CUTHBERTI*

As was shown above, the personal names contained in the marginal annotations of the manuscripts of Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* which have been here examined can be divided into three groups, as some of them were most probably extracted from the anonymous *Vita*, some others spell out the identity of people who are not named in either work, while in a third group it is possible to place names which act as cross-references by referring to people who also appear in other sections of Bede's prose *Vita* in which they are named. Of these three groups, the second one is obviously the most interesting as it allows one to give a name to a number of people that in Bede's main text are simply defined as *frater*, *presbiter* and so on. Even though they are only known to us through some much later manuscripts of Bede's prose *Vita*, these names must have been added to a copy or copies of the same work at an early stage of its transmission, when it was still possible to remember the identity of those people whose names Bede had chosen not to spell out. Most of the people whose names appear in this group of marginal annotations were miracle witnesses whom Bede had been able to consult in person as they were brethren of Wearmouth–Jarrow, or at least had spent some time there. It seems therefore possible that the insertion of these names in the margins of Bede's work may have taken place within the same twin monastery. It is worth remembering, moreover, that in the prologue to his prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* Bede declared that he had decided occasionally (*aliquotiens*) to place the names of his authorities in the book.[70] If these words can be taken at face value, it would seem that on

---

[69] M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: a Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2008), p. 240.

[70] See above, n. 4.

39

other occasions he thought it better to omit such personal names as those listed in this appendix. A note of these same names, however, must have been made shortly after the completion of the work by someone who was very close to Bede. It is not possible to be any more precise about the earliest phases of their transmission, but the later manuscripts which have been examined here allow one to appreciate the way in which the memory of those same names managed to survive for several centuries afterwards.

1. Baella, name appearing in marginal annotations contained in C_3, 7r; O_3, 14v.

This is the name of a man whom Bede simply describes in chapter 3 of his prose *Vita* as *frater quidam nostri monasterii probatissimus*. He was Bede's source for a miracle performed by Cuthbert when some monks, who were transporting on rafts wood for their monastery, risked being dragged away by a sudden storm of wind; Cuthbert's prayers changed the winds and brought the rafts safe to land. Neither the miracle nor the informant is mentioned in the anonymous earlier *Vita* of Cuthbert. This is therefore one of those cases in which Bede adds new information on Cuthbert's life by citing sources that he had been able to consult in person. However, whereas he had apparently decided not to name his source in the main text of his prose *Vita*, Baella's name must have been added in the margin of a very early copy of the work by someone who was close to Bede and knew where the information had come from. As Baella was a monk of Jarrow, as Bede himself specifies, his name would have been fairly easy to remember by someone who resided in the same monastery.

2. Eadswith (or Eadsuid), name appearing in marginal annotations contained in V, 32v (see Fig. 3 above); C_3, 11v; O_3, 18v.

This is the only name belonging to this group to appear in a marginal annotation added to all the three manuscripts of Bede's prose *Vita* discussed in this article. In a way its presence is more difficult to explain than that of the other names in this list. In fact, unlike the others, this person is also mentioned, though not named, in the earlier anonymous *Vita*. Donald Bullough maintained that this name was most probably inserted in a very early copy of the anonymous work and from there it was also added as a marginal note to a copy or copies of Bede's *Vita*, which narrates the miracle concerning Eadswith at chapter 15.[71] Furthermore, as V on one hand, and C_3 and O_3, on the other, respectively belong to the two main recensions of the text, Eadswith's name must have been added to Bede's work before their separation took place.[72] As mentioned above, the woman, wife of Hildmer, a reeve named in both *Vitae*, was miraculously healed by Cuthbert. Unlike the other people in this list, she was not one of Bede's informants or the witness of a more recent miracle than those narrated in the anonymous *Vita*: her story had already been covered by the earlier *Vita*; it would thus make sense for her name to have been added to Bede's work via an early copy of the anonymous one, even though the lack of a surviving manuscript of the latter containing Eadswith's name does not allow one to be absolutely certain.

[71] Bullough, 'A Neglected Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript', pp. 120–2.
[72] See *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, pp. 45–50.

40

3. Betuald, name appearing in marginal annotations contained in C_3, 20r; O_3, 25r. This is the name of one of two witnesses to another miracle of Cuthbert which is only reported in detail in Bede's prose *Vita*, at chapter 35, though it is also briefly hinted at in the anonymous *Vita*.[73] The miracle took place in a female monastery situated near the mouth of the River Tyne, where Cuthbert made water taste like wine. Betuald was a priest of that monastery (*presbiter eiusdem monasterii*, in Bede's own words) who tasted the water from the same cup from which Cuthbert had drunk. Next to the words in the main text which describe this man as a priest of that monastery, both C_3 and O_3 have a marginal annotation spelling out the priest's name (*Nomen presbiteri Betuald*). Once again this name must have been added in the margins of an early copy or copies of Bede's work. His identity would have been known at Wearmouth–Jarrow thanks to the testimony of another monk (Fridumund, discussed below), who had witnessed the same miracle.

4. Fridumund, name appearing in marginal annotations contained in C_3, 20r; O_3, 25r. Fridumund, like the above-mentioned Betuald, was a witness to the miracle through which Cuthbert, by tasting some water, gave it the flavour of wine, narrated in chapter 35 of Bede's prose *Vita*. The annotation which spells out this monk's name does not appear exactly in the same position in C_3 and O_3. Whereas in the latter and later manuscript the annotation is placed next to the first appearance of the monk, described in the main text as a *frater qui proxime astabat*, in the earlier manuscript the same annotation can be found in the margin of the very last portion of the chapter, in which Bede says that one of the two men who had tasted the water after Cuthbert had drunk it had reported the story to Bede himself while staying at Wearmouth, where he had spent a considerable amount of time and where he had also been buried.[74] Fridumund was therefore an eye-witness and the primary source for Bede's account of this event.

5. Ceolberct, name appearing in marginal annotations contained in C_3, 25v; O_3, 29r. This was the name of a man who told Bede about a miracle which had occurred after Cuthbert's death and after the completion of the anonymous *Vita*. In fact, in the account he gives of the event at chapter 46 of his prose *Vita*, Bede confesses to being uncertain as to whether the merit of the miracle should be ascribed to Cuthbert or to Aethilwald, his successor as hermit at Farne, or even to Felgild, the third hermit at Farne, who was still alive when Bede was writing. The miracle concerned Felgild himself, who had been suffering from an inflamed swelling which covered the whole of his face. He decided to put into water some of the calf's skin that Aethilwald had fixed with nails in a corner of his oratory. When Felgild washed his face with it, the swelling disappeared. Bede says that this event was first reported to him by a priest of Jarrow who had seen Felgild's face when it was swollen and had touched it after it had been healed. The annotation spelling out Ceolberct's name (*Nomen presbiteri Ceolberct*) can be

---

[73] See above, n. 20.
[74] For the different position of the marginal annotation referring to Fridumund in the two manuscripts see the apparatus in *Two 'Lives' of St Cuthbert*, ed. Colgrave, p. 266.

found in both C_3 and O_3 next to the passage describing him as *religiosus quidam presbiter huius monasterii*.[75] Once again, the marginal annotation refers to a witness that Bede had personally interviewed but whose name he had decided not to mention in the main text of the prose *Vita*. However, as Ceolberct was a priest at Jarrow, his identity could easily be remembered by his companions. It was possibly in this way that his name was then added to an early copy or copies of Bede's work and was thus transmitted for several centuries afterwards in the margins of the main text of the prose *Vita*.[76]

[75] It should be noted that Colgrave erroneously gives the name's spelling in O_3 as *Ceolbercht* rather than *Ceolberct*. See *ibid.* p. 305.