THE *SOUTH ENGLISH LEGENDARY* "LIFE OF ST. EGWINE": AN EDITION

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The Middle English verse "Life of St. Egwine" is one of the many hagiographic poems affiliated with the so-called *South English Legendary* or *Legendaries* (*SEL*), a widely copied collection of vernacular devotional texts whose earliest compilation has been dated to the thirteenth century, and whose latest manuscripts date to the first half of the fifteenth.[1] A minor saint, Ecgwine[2] was the third bishop of Worcester and the founder of the monastic community at Evesham Abbey. One of the most striking features of his early hagiography is that the earliest version of his *vita* contains the only surviving account of a dispute between a monastery and a tenant to be dated to the Anglo-Saxon period.[3] This is indicative of his cult's close association with the endowed properties of Evesham, an aspect of his hagiographic tradition that is also discernible in the *SEL* legend.

In his study of the *SEL* manuscripts, Görlach identifies thirty-four "complete" manuscripts of the *SEL*, nineteen fragments, and eighteen miscellanies containing single items.[4] The tendency of the "Life of St. Egwine" to appear in appendices may suggest that the poem entered the *SEL* as the collection was already evolving and was only moved to its correct calendar position by later scribes. However, it is difficult to identify any point in the tradition where it seems that the *SEL* was *not* evolving, and in fact any distinction between "complete" and "fragmentary" versions of the *SEL* is inherently tenuous, as no two witnesses of the collection present the same texts in the same order. Indeed, as Thomas Liszka has argued,

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[1] On the *South English Legendary* (*SEL*) as a whole see O. S. Pickering, "*The South English Legendary*: Teaching or Preaching?" *Poetica* 45 (1996): 1–14 and Anne B. Thompson, *Everyday Saints and the Art of Narrative in the South English Legendary* (Aldershot, 2003). A recent survey of Middle English hagiography is Sarah Salih's introduction to a collection of essays: Sarah Salih, "Introduction," in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. eadem (Woodbridge, 2006).

[2] I have followed J's spelling of the name "Egwine" when referring to the *SEL* text or its protagonist, but follow the Old English "Ecgwine" in reference to the historical figure or the character in the *SEL*'s possible sources.

[3] Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1999), 158–61.

[4] Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary* (Leeds, 1974), viii–ix.

the very idea of a single "Legendary" is an editorial invention.[5] The most recent attempt at reconstructing the "earliest orderly"[6] version of the text is the edition of D'Evelyn and Mill, derived from two relatively authoritative (though damaged and incomplete) manuscripts, London, BL MS Harley 2277 (H, ca. 1300) and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 145 (C, s. xiv¹), and supplemented with additional material found in both Oxford, Bodleian Library Ashmole 43 (A, s. xiv¹) and London, BL MS Cotton Julius D.IX (J, s. xv; see below).[7] Though the *SEL* "Life of St. Egwine" appears in the J manuscript, it was excluded by D'Evelyn and Mill from this canon because damage to the relevant section of the A manuscript leaves open the question of whether the poem would have appeared in the missing folios.[8] One version of the "Life of St. Egwine" has appeared in print, in a volume produced by the Benedictines of Stambrook; however, this transcription of the so-called "Old English" poem is not a scholarly edition.[9] Thus the present edition is an important step forward in making the totality of these affiliated texts available to a wider readership.

THE "LIFE OF ST. EGWINE" MANUSCRIPTS

These are the manuscripts of the "Life of St. Egwine," listed in alphabetical order according to sigla:

E (London, BL, Egerton 1993, fols. 221v–222v [s. xiv])[10]

The manuscript was written by a single scribe and contains only the *SEL*; its dialect has been localized in North Gloucestershire. A damaged, but still

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[5] Thomas Lizska, "The South English Legendaries," in *The North Sea World in the Middle Ages: Studies in the Cultural History of North-Western Europe*, ed. idem and Lorna E. M. Walker (Dublin, 2001), 243–80.

[6] Charlotte D'Evelyn and Anna J. Mill, eds., *The South English Legendary*, 3 vols. (London, 1956–59), 1:x.

[7] The most important edition previous to this is *The Early South-English Legendary*, ed. Carl Horstmann, EETS, o.s., 87 (London, 1887), which is based instead on the earliest surviving manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Laud 108.

[8] D'Evelyn and Mill, *South English Legendary*, 1:8–9.

[9] *Saint Egwin and His Abbey of Evesham* (London, 1904), 167–75. The MS transcribed is London, BL Stowe 949.

[10] Descriptions can be found in Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 80; Horstmann, *Early South-English Legendary*, xviii; Laurel Braswell, "Saint Edburga of Winchester: A Study of Her Cult, A.D. 950–1500, with an Edition of the Fourteenth-Century Middle English and Latin Lives," *Mediaeval Studies* 33 (1970): 292–333; Michael S. Nagy, "Saint Æþelberht of East Anglia in the South English Legendary," *Chaucer Review* 37 (2002): 165; and Michael Lapidge, John Crook, et al., eds., *The Cult of St Swithun* (Oxford, 2003), 718.

mostly legible, version of the "Life of St. Egwine" is included in an appendix to its version of the collection, which is otherwise organized according to the calendar of feast days. The paleographic evidence is uncertain, but a mid-fourteenth-century date for the manuscript seems the most likely.[11] Throughout the manuscript, the text is heavily damaged and occasionally illegible. The E text of the "Life of St. Egwine" (hereafter distinguished from others as *E-Egwine*) witnesses this damage, and also contains some apparent transcription errors, most notably one probable case of eyeskip at lines 31–40. *E-Egwine* is closely related to *S-Egwine*, discussed below.

J (London, BL, Cotton Julius D.IX, fols. 266v–268r [s. xv])[12]

Dated to the early fifteenth century, this manuscript contains only the *SEL*, and it is the latest manuscript of the "Life of St. Egwine." Its close affiliation with A gives the manuscript's "J collection" of the *SEL* a strong claim for importance, though Görlach thought the manuscript featured many "misreadings" and "errors easily recognized," for example omissions of single lines from poems attested in other manuscripts.[13] The "Life of St. Egwine" appears in an appendix to this collection and contains several passages not witnessed in the poem's other manuscripts. This longest version of the poem has been chosen as the base-text for the present edition.

One of the most noteworthy features of this manuscript is the J-scribe's failure to distinguish orthographically between "d" and "þ," in any position, in both the "Life of St. Egwine" and the collection as a whole. A. J. Bliss discusses this orthographic feature most thoroughly, as well as the occurrences of unetymological "ȝ," which combination only appears in two surviving manuscripts; the other, London, BL Cotton Caligula A.II, is a collection of vernacular romances also dated to the fifteenth century.[14] Though Bliss makes a tentative claim that the orthography reflects a Kentish dialect, there is simply too little evidence to allow for any definite conclusions.[15]

It can also be observed that the most broadly identifiable result of this orthographical tendency is to make "þ" and "ȝ" appear on the pages of the J manuscript with great frequency. These very characters were already dis-

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[11] Horstmann says ca. 1320 (*Early South-English Legendary*, xviii), but the consensus is rather later; see Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 245 n. 40.

[12] Descriptions include Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 6, 86–87; D'Evelyn and Mill, *South English Legendary*, 1:8–9.

[13] Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 87, 248 n. 79.

[14] A. J. Bliss, "The Spelling of *Sir Launfal*," *Anglia* 75 (1957): 276–87. See also the introduction to Bliss's edition of Thomas Chestre, *Sir Launfal* (London, 1960).

[15] Görlach argues that this is likely to be a feature of the text inherited from J's source (*Textual Tradition*, 248 n. 74).

appearing in the fifteenth century as a part of the transition from Middle to Modern English orthography. Perhaps in the J collection of the *SEL* these puzzling orthographical features reflect the cultural rather than linguistic values of these letterforms and appear as a scribal performance of "Englishness" to confer paratextual authority on the contents of the manuscripts. English scribes continued to employ insular script (with varying degrees of success) in the surviving forgeries and copies of Anglo-Saxon charters from the period between the Conquest and the composition of the *SEL*.[16] Certainly the J scribes could easily have been sophisticated enough in their textual criticism to know that antiquated vernacular letterforms tend to occur in manuscripts with older exemplars. Thus the scribes could have accordingly manufactured orthographical features to make their texts seem older and more authoritative. Indeed, these manuscripts might only be among the most easily identifiable examples of what would be, from the perspective of modern paleographical scholarship, a virtually untraceable practice.

Qa (London, BL Add. MS 10636, fol. 7a; incomplete [s. xiv²])[17]

This manuscript is one of several fragments identified by Görlach collectively as a "Q" collection of the *SEL*. One of its parchment folios includes the "Life of St. Egwine" to line 47. Görlach argues that the fragment's scribal hand is similar to that witnessed in manuscript "Y" (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Additional C.38), and on this basis he dates Qa to the late fourteenth century or circa 1400.[18] He argues further that the attribution of the manuscript's dialect to North Wiltshire does not help to localize its production, as the scribe seems to change orthography to imitate his exemplars. The manuscript generally follows the text of *V-Egwine*, though it is too short to witness the major differences between *V-Egwine* and the other versions of the poem.

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[16] Some examples found in Keynes's facsimile edition of charters include his 25 (Sawyer number 794, s. xi); 33 (S 553, s. xi); 35 (S 1026, s. xi–xii); 36 (S 1450, s. xii); 38 (S 1043, s. xii); 41 (S 349, s. xiii); and 42 (S 1033, AD 1227) (Simon Keynes, *Facsimiles of Anglo-Saxon Charters* [Oxford, 1991]). On the charters of Evesham Abbey (founded by Ecgwine), see also Jane Sayers, "'Original,' Cartulary and Chronicle: The Case of the Abbey of Evesham," in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter: Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München, 16–19 September 1986*, MGH 33 (Hanover, 1988), 371–95, esp. 377.

[17] Descriptions include: Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 95–96; Carl Horstmann, *Altenglische Legenden*, Neue Folge (Heilbronn, 1881), xxviii–xxx; Lapidge et al., *Cult of St. Swithun*, 719. See also Thomas R. Liszka, "The Dragon in the South English Legendary: Judas, Pilate, and the 'A(1)' Redaction," *Modern Philology* 100 (2002): 51.

[18] Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 96.

S (London, BL, Stowe 949, fols. 142v–144r [s. xiv²])[19]

Dated to the last quarter of the fourteenth century, this manuscript appears to be the second volume of a larger *SEL* collection. Again, the "Life of St. Egwine" appears in an appendix. Görlach attributes the text generally to an "indistinctive 'A' tradition" of the collection and identifies the dialect as East Gloucestershire.[20] This version of the poem appears to be closely related to *E-Egwine* and follows its omission of several passages found in the versions of the poem witnessed by J and V. The only edition to date of "The Life of St. Egwine" (cited above) is transcribed from this manuscript.

V (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS English Poetry A.1, fols. 52v–53r [s. xiv²])[21]

The so-called "Vernon Manuscript"[22] is a large, elaborate production dated to the end of the fourteenth century and containing hagiography, romances, and the A version of *Piers Plowman*.[23] Its *SEL* collection is the

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[19] Descriptions include Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 98–99 and *Catalogue of the Stowe Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 2 vols. (Hildesheim, 1973), 1:632–34.

[20] Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, 99.

[21] Descriptions include: ibid., 100–102; Lapidge et al., *Cult of St Swithun*, 720–21; Braswell, "Saint Edburga" (n. 10 above), 320–21; Norman Blake, "Vernon Manuscript: Contents and Organisation," in *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1990), 45–89; and the introduction to the facsimile edition: A. I. Doyle, *The Vernon Manuscript: A Facsimile of Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. Poet A.1* (Cambridge, 1987). A digital edition of the manuscript from the Bodleian Digital Texts series is forthcoming.

[22] There is a large body of criticism touching on this famous manuscript; see, for example: Julia Boffey, "Forms of Standardization in Terms for Middle English Lyrics in the Fourteenth Century," in *The Beginnings of Standardization: Language and Culture in Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. Ursula Schaefer (Frankfurt am Main, 2006), 61–70; Maidie Hilmo, *Medieval Images, Icons, and Illustrated English Literary Texts: From Ruthwell Cross to the Ellesmere Chaucer* (London, 2004), 97–138; A. S. G. Edwards, "The Middle English Manuscripts and Early Readers of *Ancrene Wisse*," in *A Companion to Ancrene Wisse*, ed. Yoko Wada (Cambridge, 2003), 103–22; Phillipa Hardman, "Windows into the Text: Unfilled Spaces in Some Fifteenth-Century English Manuscripts," in *Texts and their Contexts: Papers from the Early Book Society*, ed. John Scattergood and Julia Boffey (Dublin, 1996), 44–70; and A. I. Doyle, "The Shaping of the Vernon and Simeon Manuscripts," *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1990), 1–13.

[23] The *Piers Plowman* section is described by Kane and Donaldson (William Langland, *Piers Plowman: The A Version; Will's Visions of Piers Plowman and Do-Well*, ed. George Kane [London, 1960], 17). Kane and Donaldson place the date "closer to 1400 than 1380," deviating from Skeat's 1370–80 (William Langland, *The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman in Three Parallel Texts; Together with Richard the Redeless*, ed. W. W. Skeat, 2 vols. [Oxford, 1886], 1:xv). Görlach identifies the "accepted" date of the manuscript as 1390 (*Textual Tradition*, 102–3).

manuscript's first item (fols. 1r–80v). The Vernon manuscript is written in a West Midlands dialect, and there are indications that it was intended as a display book. Thus, perhaps the apparent "mania" for altering the *SEL* texts, noted by Görlach, might simply result from the fact that in all likelihood it was intended to be looked at rather than read.[24]

Sources

The earliest surviving *Vita S. Ecgwini* is anonymous in its only surviving manuscript, London, BL, Cotton Nero E.1, fols. 24v–34v (Worcester, s. xi²).[25] However, the text has been convincingly attributed to the pre-Conquest author Byrhtferth of Ramsey by Michael Lapidge. Given that Byrhtferth lived in the eleventh century, the *vita* must have been written well after Ecgwine's death in the early eighth century.[26] Byrhtferth's account was heavily revised after the Conquest by Dominic of Evesham into a version upon which all subsequent accounts of Ecgwine are based, including that found in the *SEL*.[27] Dominic's version survives in the manuscripts Dublin, Trinity College 172 (s. xiii) and Hereford, Cathedral Library P.7.vi (s. xii²).[28] Lapidge dates Dominic's text to just after the Norman Conquest.[29]

The three other major versions of the Latin *Vita Ecgwini* are redactions of Dominic's text:

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[24] P. R. Robinson, "The Vernon Manuscript as a 'Coucher Book,'" in *Studies in the Vernon Manuscript*, ed. Derek Pearsall (Cambridge, 1990), 15–28. Görlach claims that "scribal corruptions" prove that this revising was not done by the V scribe, but this argument is inherently conjectural and cannot be applied to every alteration. Complaints about the inaccuracies of ornate manuscripts date back at least to St. Jerome's Vulgate preface to Job (*Biblia sacra: iuxta vulgatam versionem*, ed. Robert Weber, 5th ed. [Stuttgart, 2007], 732).

[25] For a description of this manuscript see Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *The Lives of St. Oswald and St. Ecgwine*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Oxford, 2009), xciii–xcix.

[26] Lapidge dates the text after the millennium because of Byrhtferth's phrase at *Vita S. Ecgwini* 4.6, "nos vero, qui in ultima millenarii sumus parte et ultra progressi" (Byrhtferth, *Lives*, lxxxiii). The only other edition is that of J. A. Giles, *Vita Quorundam [sic] Anglo-Saxonum: Original Lives of Anglo-Saxons and Others Who Lived before the Conquest* (London, 1854), 349–96.

[27] Edited by Michael Lapidge in "Dominic of Evesham: *Vita S. Ecgwini episcopi et confessoris*," *Analecta Bollandiana* 96 (1978): 65–104.

[28] Dominic, "*Vita S. Ecgwini*," 70.

[29] Michael Lapidge, "The Medieval Hagiography of St. Ecgwine," *Vale of Evesham Historical Society Research Papers* 6 (1977): 72–73. Again, the *vita* is anonymous in the manuscripts, and the attribution is Lapidge's.

1. The "Digby/Gotha recension" of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 112 (Winchester xii[1]) and Gotha, Furschungs-Biblothek, MS I.81 (English s. xiv[1]).[30] This is a major redaction of Dominic's text that leaves only four chapters intact: 14, 17, 18, and 19.[31] The absence of several details indicates that this is not likely to have been a direct source for the *SEL* "Life of St. Egwine," at least not without supplementation. Most importantly, the *SEL* poem does not minimize Brihtwold's involvement in the endowment of the monastery. The Digby/Gotha emphasis on Coenred's authority in this matter is identified by Lapidge as the version's most important distinguishing characteristic.[32] The Digby/Gotha version of Dominic's text is in turn "drastically abbreviated" in Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MS 27 (I.2.6).[33]

2. Thomas of Marlborough's version, which prefaces his *History of the Abbey of Evesham* in the manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson A.287 (s. xiii[1]).[34] Thomas rewrites the *Vita Ecgwini* extensively, adding and changing substantive details in both the prose narrative and his transcription of Evesham's foundation charter.[35]

3. A version found in John of Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium*. This collection was edited by Horstmann as the *Nova Legenda Anglie* and is referred to hereafter by Görlach's abbreviation *NLA*.[36] The *NLA Vita Ecgwini* appears to have drawn from both Dominic's and Thomas's versions. Görlach says that the direct source of the *SEL* "Life of St. Egwine" could have "been identical with, or very similar to, the *NLA* text."[37] This is an overstatement of the parallels. Below are two examples of specific passages from the *SEL* version that are translations from Dominic but do not appear in the *NLA*; the parts missing from the *NLA* are designated by italics:

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[30] Lapidge, "Medieval Hagiography," 85–89; "The Digby-Gotha Recension of the Life of St. Egwine," ed. Michael Lapidge, *Vale of Evesham Historical Society Research Papers* 7 (1979): 39–55. See also Rosalind C. Love, ed. and trans., *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives: Vita S. Birini, Vita et Miracula S. Kenelmi and Vita S. Rumwoldi* (Oxford, 1996), lxxvi–lxxvii.

[31] Lapidge, "Medieval Hagiography," 86.

[32] Ibid., 87, 147–50.

[33] Ibid., 88.

[34] Thomas of Marlborough, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, ed. and trans. Jane E. Sayers and Leslie Watkiss (Oxford, 2003), 6–40. See also Byrhtferth, *Lives*, xci–xcii.

[35] Dominic, "*Vita S. Ecgwini*," 75. On Thomas's political motivations as a historiographer, see Alain Boureau, "How Law Came to the Monks: The Use of Law in English Society at the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century," *Past and Present* 167 (2000): 29–74.

[36] *Nova Legenda Anglie*, ed. Carl Horstmann (Oxford, 1901), 370–78; Lapidge, "The Medieval Hagiography," 90.

[37] Görlach, *Textual Tradition* (n. 4 above), 216

"Life of St. Egwine" 45–48

Þo he was to Rome icome, wonþer þer was y nou;
To Seinte Petres cherche Seint Egwyne ferst drou,
for he hadde y wilneþ longe þilke cherche to se.
Þo he was þere afore þe anter, adon befel akne.

Dominic 6.12

Denique uir sanctus, secundum apostolum "stigmata Iesu Christi in corpore suo portans,"[38] in conspectu populorum ferro uinctis pedibus Romam ingreditur, *quod maxime quesierat*, in ecclesia beati Petri apostolorum principis, ad orationem prosternitur.

("And so the holy man, who was [as the apostle says] 'carrying the signs of Christ on his body,' entered Rome in the sight of the people, with his feet chained in iron, and — *as he had dearly wished* — he prostrated himself to pray in the church of Peter, prince of the apostles.")

"Life of St. Egwine" 112–14

Þe ioie þat him þoʒte of þe song telle ne mai no tonge.
As he stod and bihuld hom faste, he miste whare hi bicome.
Gret wonþer þoʒte Eoues þerof, and of þat he sei er some.
To þe bischop he wente stilleliche, and tolde him al þen ende;

Dominic 8.14

Expauit Eoues, hebetatus tam chorusca uisione; nec ferens celestia conspicere, tacitus ac tremebundus domum rediit; que uiderat uiro Dei per quendam prepositum suum intimare curauit.
("*Eoves was terrified, stupefied by such a gleaming vision; silent, trembling, and not daring to look at the heavenly things, he returned home. He made sure to tell what he had seen, through his same superior, to the man of God.*")

These departures indicate that the source of the "Life of St. Egwine" was not identical with the *NLA* version of the *Vita Ecgwini*. However, it is noteworthy that these discrepancies are relatively few, until the narratives abruptly diverge in their account of the second trip to Rome; in the *NLA* version, Ecgwine performs a miracle unattested in the "Life of St. Egwine."[39] Thus no extant version or redaction of Dominic's text is close enough to the "Life of St. Egwine" to be the poem's definitive source; the poet could have drawn on any combination of them, not to mention the charters and documents that served as Byrhtferth's original raw materials.[40]

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[38] Quoting Gal. 6:17.

[39] *Nova Legenda Anglie*, ed. Horstmann, 374, 8–14.

[40] I discuss the relationship between the *SEL* "Life of St. Egwine" and its sources and manuscripts, both hagiographical and legal-documentary, in my forthcoming article "Documentary Poetic and Editorial Practice: The Case of 'St. Egwine,'" in *Rethinking the South English Legendaries*, ed. Heather Blurton and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, forthcoming from Manchester University Press.

The Choice of Base-Text

Because the J manuscript's witness of the "Life of St. Egwine" (*J-Egwine*) is the fullest version, it is therefore particularly useful as a base-text for the present edition. I have silently expanded abbreviations, capitalized proper nouns and the first words of sentences, and added modern punctuation. To call attention to the unstable nature of the tradition as it survives, I have used italics and boldface to indicate the lines from *J-Egwine* that are *missing* from the other manuscripts; lines in italics are absent from the similar texts *E-Egwine* and *S-Egwine*, and lines in bold appear only in *J-Egwine*.

I have also stayed as closely as possible to J's orthography, including its confusion of "d" and "þ"; where I have suggested emendations, they are put into square brackets "[ ]" and indicated in the *apparatus criticus*. Readings in curly brackets "{ }" are witnessed in the text but appear to be ungrammatical. Because minor orthographical variations among the witnesses are common, I have only noted them in the *apparatus criticus* when they could potentially affect scansion. Stanza breaks follow the paragraph marks in the J manuscript; *punctus* and *punctus elevatus* indicating half-lines are found in all the witnesses besides J, but because they are inconsistent I have followed *J-Egwine* and not included them.

The Edition

Seint Egwine þe holiman was here of Englonde.	[266v]
Bischop he was of Worcestre, as ich unþerstonde.	
Of kings kunde he was icome, god man he was ynou;	
fro þe time þat he couþe wit to godnesse he drou.	
In þe contre he was of Worcestre, þo þe king Aþeldreþ	5
king was of þe march of Walis, and þe king{s} Kenred.	
Al his richesse he forsoc and to pouerte him nom.	

To ordres he wente, ech after oþer, so þat he prest bicom.
So holi lif he ladde and clene þat me[n] spec þerof wide,
al þe contre was glad of him about in ech side.   10
So þat þe bischop of Worcestre as God wolde was deþ,
to be bischop was Egwine ichose, as me nom sone red.
Þat aȝen he was wit al his miȝte, ac for noȝt he was so;
for Aþeldred, king of þe march, wit strengþe him nom þerto.

Þo he was bischop ymad, suiþe wel he duþe his deþe,   15
wit preching and god ensample þat folc to god to lede.
Debonere he was to godemen, þe luþere he wit sede
and chasteþe hom of hor synne; he ne spareþe for ne drede.
Þerfore were þe schrewen wroþe, and nome hom to rede
to belye þis holiman for oueral his falsheþe.   20
Hi bilowe him to þe king, and to þe pope also sente
þat luþerman he was asyne, and his bischopriche schente.

Þe king and alle heiemen were wit him wroþ ynou,
and putte him out of his bischopriche, wit gret schemnesse and wo.
To Rome he was ysomneþ ek, to ansuere of his trespas.   25
Þe godeman sede, in al his wo, þat wel more wordi he was.
He nom hit al in pacience, and cride Godes ore
and þoȝte, þei he were annyd, þat he aguste our Lord more.

To Rome he moste, to ȝiue ansuere of þat he hadde misdo;
for his sinne he nom þen wei, and for his parsche also.   30
His leggs wit strong feteris hi gyueþe faste,   [267r]
and þe keie biside Euesham in þe water of Hauen caste.
Al ygyneþ he wente ford in sorue and pynes stronge;
to Rome he com, wit alle wo, þei hit were er longe.

Un esi wei he hadde on nymeþ god gome,   35
to wende from Euesham al yfetereþ to Rome;
or miȝte his leggis ake, he spurnde ek lome
he aboȝte heuen somedel dere ar he þuþer come.
Þo þat folc yseie him come uetereþ so faste,
for wonder hi come abouten him and wer somdel agaste;   40
and ȝut, yuetereþ as he was, un euen wei he nom.
From þe toun of Evesham by Malmesbur he com.
Seint Aldelme he fond do deþ, þe masse he song do,
and bureþe þen holiman ar he wolde from him go.
Þo he was to Rome icome, wonþer þer was ynou;   45
to Seinte Petres cherche Seint Egwyne ferst drou,
for he hadde ywilneþ longe þilke cherche to se.
Þo he was þere afore þe anter, adon befel akne

and longe rede his orisones, and suþþe wente an hei
and re[ue]steþe him and song his masse, as þat folc ysey.   50
His men wente ford þe while and his mete boȝte.

Hi boȝte ferst an grete uisch, and þis holiman broȝte.
Þo hi openeþe þis fisch, in his wombe hi founde
þe keie of his feteris þat he caste in Hauen grounde.
Þe keie þat was in Hauen icast, here in Englonde,   55
in a fisch was ifounde at Rome; þer was Godes sonde.
In Rome in þe water of Tibre þe fisch was ynome;
nadde neuer þe keie so fer, wit oute miracle, icome.

Seint Egwine unlek his gynes bifore hom echoun.
For wonþer, þat folc aboute him þikke com anon.   60
Glad was þat miȝte wit him speke, oþer enes him ise,
and gladder þat miȝte his blessing haue oþer nei him be.
To þe pope com þe tiding aȝen him and he ȝede,
and afeng him wit gret honor and gret loue him gan bede.
To his paleis he ladde him ford and sette him on his se,   65
and sede he was betre wordi to sitte þer þan he   [267v]
and beþ him ȝiue him his blessing and asoili him also.

"A sire, merci," quaþ þis oþer; "moche ic haue mis do.
Þerfor ich am hiþer icome to be asoileþ of þe."
"Hit is beter riȝt," quaþ þe pope, "þat þou asoili me."   70
Þe pope dude þis holiman gret honour and pritte,
and long him huld þer wit him, and ȝut him þoȝte al to litte.

Ate laste, þo he nolde abide no leng for no þing,
gode letteres þe pope him made forto bere þe king,
þat he let him be bischop as he was, and graunteþe him also   75
gret pri[u]elige and franchise þat in his lettres were ido,
and sente him aȝen in to Englonde, wit honor and pritte inou.
Þo he com ferst to Englonde, to þe king ferst he drou.
Þe king afeng him suiþe faire, for nede he moste so,
and, þo me tolde him þe miracle þat was at Rome ido,   80
he honoureþe him faire ynou and bed him forȝiuenesse,
and made him bischop as he was, wit gret pritte and richesse,

and graunteþe al þe franchise þat þe pope him hadde ido,
and in his chartre þuþer sente and ȝef him mo þerto,
and made him al his conseiler and nolde do no dede   85
þat scholde torne to eny nede bote hit were be his rede.
Þis holiman to alle gode þe king Aþeldred radde,
so þat king and ek þe bischop swiþe clene lif ladde

and þat lond was wel ywist þoron hor beire wissinge,
and þat was beter þan to be in contac for lesing;   90
and he þat made þe contek nadde noþong for his dede.
Of þe toun of Euesham somwhat we mote rede.

Evesham þat is a toun and abbeie of gret richesse
was þo bote as a wilde stude, and as a wildernesse.
Þikke of þornes and of boskes as hit were a wode forlete,   95
an abbeie þat was suþþe arerd þoron miracles grete.
Echome was þe stude icleped, and Euesham þere ȝut noȝt;
herkneþ nou in which maner he was suþþe to abbey ib[roȝt]
To Eschome þilke wildernesse schepherdes ofte þer c[om],
to wite hor schep and oþer orf þo seie hi þer lome.   100
Gret liȝt be niȝte, and ofte a day, and oþer miracles also
þe shepherdes to se þis wonþer þe eftre come þerto.   [268r]
Eoues het þis o schepherde þat al hor maistre was,
þat mest was in þilke stude, and oftest isei þat cas.

After him was þilke stede i clupeþ ferst Euesham.   105
Þis Eoues ofte, as ich ȝon sede, to þis stude cam.
He sei þer ofte fair miracle, and at o time he gan ise
þre maidens go op and don, fairor ne miȝte be.
Þe fairost of alle ȝede amidde, þat þoȝte as heo were
hor lady and hor maistresse, none fairor neuer nere.   110
Þe ladi bar an boc an honde, suiþe merie hi songe;
þe ioie þat him þoȝte of þe song telle ne mai no tonge.
As he stod and bihuld hom faste, he miste whare hi bicome.
Gret wonþer þoȝte Eoues þerof, and of þat he sei er some.

To þe bischop he wente stilleliche, and tolde him al þen ende;   115
wit þre men al priueliche þe bischop gan þuþer wende.
Þo he com almest to þe stude, ford alone he wente
and cride ȝerne on Ihesu Crist þat he som grace him sente,
þat he som insiȝt miȝt ise what were such tokinin{g}ge.
Ententifliche þis he bad, wit gret sor and wepinge   120
so þat our lord hurde his bone. He sei alle þre
þe maidens go, as hi dude er, ne miȝte none fairor be.

Þe ladi þat ȝede amidde hom þre, þat was our ladi suete.
A cros of golde heo bar an honde; þe maidens hire gonne grete.
Þo he hadde iseie þe suete siȝte and þere maidens þenne wente,   125

þe bischop þonkeþe Iesu Crist, þat such holi siȝte him sente.
To þe king he wente, Aþeldreþ, þat king was þe ȝut þo
and ar he ȝeue him þilke place from him he nolde go.
Þo he hit hadde igraunteþ him aȝen he wente anon
þe boskes þat þere stode þikke he let more op echone,   130
and let þere rere a noble cherche, of lym and of ston,
þat is nou a fair abbei, as men iseþ moni on.

Þe king Aþeldreþ wel holi lif and wel clene ladde,
and to alle godnesse drou, as Seint Egwine him radde,
and bicom monc at Bardeneye and holiman bicom.   135
Þo was Kenred his cosyn eir of þe kingdom,
and was king imad after him of þe march of Wal[is],
so þat bi hor beire daie seint Egwine was iwis.   [268v]

Þe king Kenred þoȝte wel, þo he was newe king,
þe newe cherche of Euesham bring to god ending,   140
and Seint Egwine him radde þerto so hi biseie hom beine
forto wende þerfore to Rome and dude hom in þe weie.
Constantin hi founde pope þo hi þuþer come.
Al hor demmande he graunteþe hom er hi wente fro Rome,
to arere þe abbei of Euesham, and grete hous and bolde,   145
and moni franchises ȝef hem ek þat ȝut beþ iholde.

Seint Egwine and þe king aȝen wente wit god pas
to þe erchebischop of Caunterber, Briȝtwold þat þo was,
and he let holde þe pope dede and ȝef more þerto
and let halwi þilke holi stude and conferm{i} also.   150
Þis gode king and Seint Egwine an abbeie let þere arere,
gret lond þe king ȝef þerto þat hi holdeþ ȝut þere.

Seint Egwine bileueþe al þen worl[d]e, and monc þer bicom
and bigan þus þere þe ordre and monkis to him nom,
and in godes seruise þer bigan al his lif bileue   155
and deide þere in midwinter a Seint Siluestres eue;
þenne me hast ȝut his dai as hit falt in þe ȝere.
Moni fair miracle þer comþ of his bodi þat liþ þere.
Nou Ihesu, for þe loue of Seint Egwine, lat ous such lif led
þat we mote to heuen come and forȝif ous our misdede.   160

Apparatus Criticus

J   = London, BL, Cotton Julius D.IX
V   = Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS English Poetry A.1
S   = London, BL, Stowe 949
E   = London, BL, Egerton 1993
Qa = London, BL Add. MS 10636

lines 1–8: JVSEQa
1 of] in Qa   *2* he . . . Worcestre] of Wincetre he was Qa   ich] ich am SE   *3*
kunde] kinne V   *4* þat] om. Qa   godnesse] eche godnesse SE; al goodnesse V; gode-
nesse euere Qa   *5* he . . . Worcestre] of Wircestre he was V   þo] om. S   *7* his] þis
S   and to] into E   him] om. E; he VS   *8* To] And to E; And to þe S   he . . . wente]
wente E

lines 9–10: JVQa
9 me[n]] me J   þerof wide] þerof wel wyde V   *10* ech] everich V

lines 11–14: JVSEQa
12 to . . . Egwine] Seint Egwine bischop was SEQa; Seint Egwyne was sone to Bisschop
V   me . . . sone] heo nomen here E; heo alle nomen heore V; þey nom or Qa   *13* Þat]
Þer S   for noȝt] not forþan V   *14* king] þe king V   him nom] toke hy Qa

lines 15–16: JVQa
15 ymad] þer ymad V   *16* and] and wiþ V

line 17: JVSEQa
17 Debonere] Boner Qa   to] wiþ V

line 18: JVQa

lines 19–28: JVSEQa
19 Þerfore . . . wroþe] Þe luþere men were wroþe þerfore VSE   hom] hem fele SE; hem
alle Qa   *20 line om.* S; *var.* E: For honour þat he hedde and uor be hem wiþsede   for
oueral] roȝw E; oueral V   his] of V   *21* Hi . . . king] To þe king heo him belowe SE;
To þe king heo him bilowen V   pope] *er.* V   also] also heo VSE   *22* he was asyne]
he was mid alle SEQa; wiþ alle he was V   his] þe SE   schente] al schente S   *23*
heiemen] þe heiȝe men VSE   were wit him] wiþ him were VSE   *24* putte] putten
VSE   out] *om.* SE   gret schemnesse and wo] schemese and gret wo VSE   *25* his]
þis SE   *26* wel more] more VSE   *27 var.* V: *reversed with 28*   hit] *om.* EQa   al]
corr.   *28 var.* V: *reversed with 27*   þoȝte] þoȝte þat S

lines 29–30: JVQa
29 misdo] ido VQa

line 31: JVSEQa
31 wit strong feteris] ar heo wende to Rome E; whanne he wende to Rome S   faste] wel
faste VSE

lines 32–34: JVQa
32 caste] he caste V   *33* pynes] in pynes V   *34* to . . . wo] mid alle wo to Rome he
com V

lines 35–38: J

line 39: JVQa

line 40: JVSEQa
40 hi] men SE   come] comen E   abouten him] him aboute SE; aboute him þikke V

lines 41–46: J

lines 45–46: VSEQa
45 var. SE: Þem wondrede who þis miȝte beo 7 who him þider sende   þis miȝte beo] mihte hit beo V; hit myhte be Qa   *46 var.* VSEQa: to þe churche of seint peter . þis holi mon uirst wende

lines 47–54: JVSEQa
47 y] *om.* E   se] iseo V   *48* anter] heued VSE   adon befel] he sat adoun SE; adoun hem sat V   *49* and . . . orisones] his orisons bad swiþe longe SE; and his orisones bad swiþe longe V   *50* re[ue]steþe] reuestede VSEQa   as] as al E   *51* wente] becuden E; wenten SV   and] *om.* E   boȝte] bohten V   *52 var.* E (*MS damaged*): Asamo [. . .] quik . as hicom of þe see brouȝte   boȝte] bohten V   and . . . holiman] and or ford him S; and to þis holy man V   broȝte] brouhten V   *53* Þo] *om.* EV   openeþe] openeden E   fisch] ilke fisch V   hi] *om.* E   *54* his] þe Qa   he] was Qa (Qa *ends*)

lines 55–60: JVSE
55 in Hauen icast] om. E   *57* In Rome . . . Tibre] In þe water of Tibre at Rome SE; In þe watur of Tybre þat is at Rome V   *58* line om. E   nadde] Hadde S   miracle, icome] þe grace of God icome S; Godes grace icome V   *59* gynes] uerres E   *60* aboute him] orn þider SE; þider orn V   þikke com anon] as þicke as heo miȝten gon E; so þikke so hit myhte S; so þikke so hit mihte gon V

lines 61–62: JV
61 Glad] Glad he V   *62* oþer] oþur elles V

lines 63–70: JVSE
63 pope] *er.* V   and he] anon VSE   *64* afeng] feng V   loue] ȝift E   *65* sette] isette E   on] in E   *66* sede] seide þat VE; seiden þat S   *67* asoili] soilen V   *69* Þerfor] And for E   be] ben S   *70* riȝt] wurþi SE   pope] *er.* V

lines 71–72: JV
71 var. V: As þe honour þat he mihte . he him dude . mid in gret solas him brouhte   *72 var.* V: And longe huld him þere wiþ him and to suytel him þouhte

lines 73–85: JVSE
73 Ate laste] Þo VSE   nolde abide] no lengore bileue V   no leng for no] for no E; þer for none S; þer for no V   *74* gode . . . made] his letttres he made gode inow VSE   *75* þat . . . be] þe werþi E   as he] as he er SE   and] in he E; and he S   him also] *om.* V   *76* pri[u]elige] prielige V   were] weren S   *77* aȝen . . . honour] wiþ gret honour to Engelonde E; wiþ honour and pritte to Engelonde S*   and pritte] *om.* V   *78* þo . . . englonde] as sone as he can hider aȝen VSE   king ferst] king E   *79* afeng] welcomede V   *80* him] him of E   was at rome] at rome was VSE   *82* was] er was SE; was er V   wit] mid wel SE   pritte and] *om.* SE   *83* al] him al VSE   al þe] al þat

S; al his V   pope] *er*. V   ido] *om*. E   *84* in his] his V   þuþer sente] þider he sente
E; þider he ysend S; þere he aselede V   ȝef him mo þerto] more priueleges to E

lines 85–86: JV
85 no] none V

lines 87–88: JVSE
87 Þis . . . Aþeldred] Þe king Aþeldred to alle gode ꝛ to clene lif he SE; Þe kyng Etheldred to
alle goodnesse drouȝ and clene lyf he V   *88 var*. V: þorwh þe holy monnes lore . þat him
to goode redradde   king . . . clene] king þorw is lore holi E; kyng þo wel holy S

lines 89–92: J
89–92 var. SE: *lines om., replaced by* *135–38*

lines 93–160: JVSE
93 is a toun] is nome couþ E; in nou a toun S   *94* was] Nas V   þe bot as] bote E   and
as] as it were VSE   *95* þornes] vines E   hit] *om*. E   wode] stude E   *96* þat] þer
VSE   miracles] miracle fair and EV   *97* Echome] So[. . .] E   þe] *om*. E   and]
ac E   þere] *om*. SE   noȝt] nome E   *98* nou] men V   which] what SE   suþþe]
om. SE   ib[roȝt]] *lost in gutter* J   *99* þer] *om*. S   c[om]] *lost in gutter* J   *100* wite]
witen S   oþer] here EV; or S   þo . . . lome] iseȝen heo þere ilome E; þo seyȝen hy
þere ybettre S; and seye hi þer ilome V   *101* Gret] Gret holeȝ ("holeȝ" *er*.) V   *102* to]
uorte E   þis] þat V   efter] ofte EV   *103* Eoues het þis o] se ones dei þe E   *104*
þat mest] 7 E   isei] sei E   þat cas] þe S   *105 var*. SE: *reversed with* *106*   was]
was furst V   ferst] *om*. VSE   *106 var*. SE: r*eversed with* *105*   ofte] *om*. V   ich . .
. sede] i seide on SE; ich owerseide V   to] ofte V   stude] wildernese VSE   *107* He]
7 VSE   þer ofte] ofte þer SE   fair] *om*. SV   *108* maidens] uair VSE   fairore ne]
none uairore SE; feirore V   *109* þat] him E   heo] þeiȝ it E; þeiȝ V; þer S   *110* neuer
nere] þer nere E; nere S   *111* an boc] a boke S   suiþe] wiþe VSE   *112* þe song]
þat song V   ne] *om*. E   *114* þoȝte Eoues] him þouȝhte V   er some] ilome SE; er
ilome V   *116* al] wel VSE   *117 var*. E: *line om. (empty line follows* *118*)   com] *om*.
S   ford] þider V   *118* on] to SE   som] im some S; own V   *119* som insiȝt miȝt]
miȝte som insiȝt SE   what] þat V   *120* þis he] he hit V   wit . . . wepinge] wel sore
wepinge E; wiþ sor ꝛ wepinge S   *121* his] is is E; þis S   He] Þas he V   *122* þe] þis
E   go] gon VSE   dude] duden VSE   none fairor be] uairore ne miȝte non beo SE;
feirore mihte none beo V   *123* þre] *om*. V   *125* he . . . siȝte] he hedde þis iseiȝe SE; siht
iseie V   þere] þis EV; þe S   *126* holi] *om*. VSE   *127* he wente, Aþeldreþ] Etheldred
he wende V   was þe] was SE; þere V   *128* from . . . nolde] he nolde urom him SE   *129*
hit] *om*. SE   him aȝen] him þulke place aȝen E; him þulke stude aȝen S   *130* þikke]
om. SE   more] *om*. E; morie as S   *131* þere rere] arer þere E; þere arere SV   *132*
þat is] þis E; þare is SV   as . . . on] þat moni mon deþ to gon VSE   *133* wel] weþ
V   ladde] he ladde E   *134* alle godnesse drou] ech godnesse drow SE; alle goodnesse
turnede his þouht V   (*135–38 var*. SE: *replaces 89–92*)   *135* holiman] swiþe holi man
VSE   *137* king imad] mad king VSE   Wal[is]] Wal J   *139* wel] *om*. V   *141* and]
om. VE   biseie hom] heo beseine E; hii beye S   *142* dude] duden VSE   *143* founde]
founden VSE   pope] þe pope V   *144* demmande] askinge VSE   wente] wenden
E; wolden V   *145* to] uorte SE   arere] areren S   þe . . . bolde] a grete abbeye at
Evesham as heo wolde SE   and grete hous and bolde] þe abbei of Euesham as heo wolde
V   *146* ȝef hem ek] *om*. SE   *147* king] gode king VSE   wente wit] wenden aȝen SE;
aȝein wende V   *148* Briȝtwold] Briht ihote V   *149* and he] he V   let] het E   hol-
de] biholde V   ȝef] graunted V   *150* halwi] halwen E   holi stude] stude SE   *151*

abbeie] noblei E   let þere] letten þer V; let arere SE   *152* hi] þei S   holdeþ] habbeþ
E   *153* þen] þe SE; þis V   worl[d]e] worle J   *154* þus þer þe ordre] þer þe ordre E;
þe ordre þere S   monkis . . . nom] in monkes cloþes nom E; many gode men to him nam
S   *155* þer] *om*. S   *156* deide þere] þer [. . .] midwinter day E; deyde þer inne S   a]
in E; on S   *157* dai] haliday V   hit] he V   *158* fair] a uair S   þer . . . liþ] ur lord
doþ uor is body S   bodi] loue V   *159* Seint Egwine] him VSE   ous such] us here
such V   *160* mote] moten SE

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