

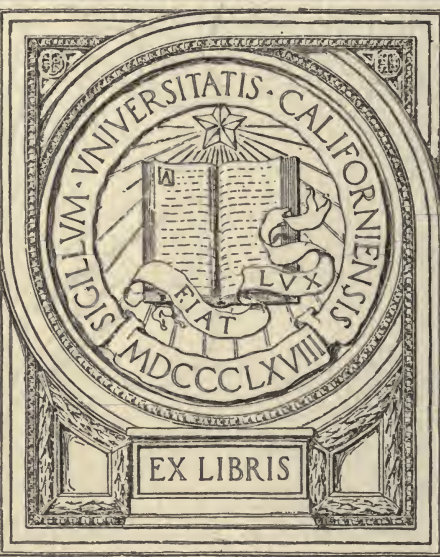
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V

St Oswald

and

The Church of Worcester

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TO THE  
ABBOT OF

## ST OSWALD AND THE CHURCH OF WORCESTER

WHEN Osbern, the precentor of Canterbury in the early days after the Conquest, re-wrote the Life of St Dunstan, he described that saint's passage from the abbey of Glastonbury to the bishopric of Worcester as involving no change of allegiance—'from the Virgin' he passed 'to the Virgin, from the Mother of the Lord to the Mother of the Lord': or, as we might put it more plainly, from St Mary of Glastonbury to St Mary of Worcester.<sup>1</sup> The high-flown style in which Osbern wrote, and the historical errors which disfigured his work, soon called forth another Life of St Dunstan, written by a successor of Osbern in the precentorship, the historian Eadmer, the friend and biographer of St Anselm. Eadmer, in his preface, gives as an example of his predecessor's inexactness the fact that he had said that the cathedral church of Worcester was dedicated to the honour of the Blessed Mary the Mother of God, whereas when Dunstan was bishop its dedication was to St Peter the Prince of the Apostles.<sup>2</sup> It was not long before a third Life of St Dunstan came from the pen of William of Malmesbury. He passes over the work of his contemporary Eadmer in silence, but he loses no opportunity of denouncing the ignorance of Osbern. As he was writing for the monks of Glastonbury, who were particularly eager at that time to assert their share in the glories of Dunstan, his depreciation of the Canterbury Chanter, as he calls him, would not come amiss. In his interpretation of the vision in which Dunstan beheld St Peter handing him a sword, he says: 'Blessed Peter handed him his sword, because he grudged him not his own seat at Worcester. For the bishop's throne at Worcester had not yet passed to the name of the Blessed Mother of God.' After exposing the mistake which Osbern had made on this point, he adds: 'I learn from this that his historical investigations have not gone very far, since he does not know the churches of his own country.'<sup>3</sup> In a later passage he gives an explanation of the change of dedication at Worcester. 'Oswald',

<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of St Dunstan* (Rolls S.), p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

he says, 'furnished his episcopal see at Worcester with monks living according to rule; not indeed expelling the clerks by force, but circumventing them with holy guile. For in a purposeful neglect he withdrew his presence from the church of Blessed Peter, whom that see had served from ancient times, and exercised his pontifical office with his monks in the church of the Blessed Mother of God, which he had constructed in the churchyard. So, as the people flocked to the bishop and the monks, the clerks were deserted, and either took their flight or bowed to the monastic yoke.'<sup>1</sup>

We are not concerned for the moment with the fiction of Oswald's 'holy guile', but only with the dedication of the church of Worcester. Eadmer tells us that he had sought for information from Worcester itself,<sup>2</sup> and we are fortunate in being able to appeal to a monk of Worcester who was a little earlier than Eadmer, and was unusually well informed as to the traditions of his own church. This was Heming, who under Bishop Wulstan's guidance collected and arranged the ancient charters of the see, and copied them out to preserve them for posterity.<sup>3</sup> Heming's chartulary, as we now have it, is a curiously composite document, the leaves of which have been disarranged, so that it is not easy to discover its original form or even to say whether it is all the work of one compiler. It has more than one preface, and more than one conclusion: but this may be only due to its original distribution into several books. One of these conclusions comes on f. 152. He has just given an early charter of a certain Wiferd and his wife Alta, and he adds to it a note to the effect that after their death a stone structure bearing a cross was erected over their grave and in their memory. By this cross, on account of the level space, Oswald often used to preach to the people; because the church of the episcopal seat, which was dedicated in honour of St Peter, was very small and could not contain the multitudes that assembled, and that noble monastery of St Mary, which he commenced for the episcopal seat and worthily brought to com-

<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of St Dunstan* (Rolls S.), pp. 303 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 163 f.

<sup>3</sup> Heming was not the first to collect the Worcester Charters into a Register. A like attempt was made a hundred years before, possibly begun under the direction of St Oswald himself. Fragments of this—'by far the earliest English chartulary of which we have any trace'—are preserved in the British Museum (*Nero E. 1*) and among Lord Middleton's MSS. at Wollaton (see the description by Mr. W. H. Stevenson in the *Middleton Catalogue*, published by the Historical MSS. Commission, pp. 197 ff.). The order of the charters in the surviving pages of this ancient register agrees with that followed by Heming: but happily Heming did not follow his predecessor in the abbreviation of the text of the documents.

pletion, had not as yet been built. This stone structure remained till the time of King Edward (the Confessor), when Alfric, the brother of Bishop Beorhtheah (1033-8), desiring to enlarge the presbytery of St Peter's, pulled it down and used the materials for his building.<sup>1</sup>

Here is a picture to the life, far more convincing than the story of Oswald's 'holy guile'—a parable of what was happening in the English Church of the second half of the tenth century. A great spiritual movement was in progress: the old limits were too narrow for the new enthusiasm. It was no 'purposeful neglect' which made Oswald leave the little sanctuary which had sufficed for the needs and the ambitions of the past: it was the call of the people who could find no room inside. And the old church was spared, as the wattle-church at Glastonbury had been spared, when church after church rose beside it; and as, nearly a century later, the old church of St Peter at Jumièges was spared, when the noble minster of St Mary was built beside it by Abbot Robert, whom Edward the Confessor afterwards brought to Canterbury. Oswald, who was one of the foremost spirits of the new movement, had been a monk at Fleury when that abbey, newly reformed, was at the height of its fame. His conceptions of the dignity of divine worship doubtless impelled him forward, and he would embrace with eagerness the opportunity of raising a great 'basilica', as he himself calls it, in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

We may now go back from these later authorities to Oswald himself, and read what he wrote in 983, when he had been bishop of Worcester for twenty-two years, and for half that time archbishop of York as well. These are the opening words of a charter (K. C. D. 637) issued in the year which had brought what he regarded as the crowning mercy of his life.

'The mercy of our Lord and our Redeemer ruling all the kingdoms of the whole world: He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory. So to me Oswald, Archbishop, though unworthy, He hath granted so great a boon of His loving-kindness, that beyond all my expectation I should bring to its completion the basilica which I have founded in my episcopal see, to wit in the monastery of Worcester, in honour of Mary, Mother of God, in the year of our Lord's Incarnation 983.'

We cannot fix with precision the year in which Oswald brought

<sup>1</sup> Hearne, *Hemingi Chertularium*, ii. 342; B. C. S. 1007.

monks to Worcester. At the outset of his episcopate he had formed a small community at Westbury-on-Trym, as a model of monastic life after the reformed manner. Then came his great new foundation at Ramsey in Huntingdonshire, colonized in the first instance from Westbury. Ramsey in its turn supplied the nucleus of the settlement at Worcester. The great church of St Mary must have taken from six to ten years to build: for we have positive evidence that the monks were in Worcester by 977, if not sooner. But Oswald was no rough-handed reformer. He would not force the pace, and he would not obliterate the past. The little old church of St Peter still stood and enjoyed the prerogative of the bishop's stool. In a charter (B. C. S. 1166), misdated 965, but shown by the signatures to belong to 991, the year before the archbishop's death, a grant is said to be made 'with consent and license of the monastic society of St Mary, the episcopal chair of whose monastery is known to be consecrated to St Peter'.

This reverence for the past is a fine trait in Oswald's character, and it goes far to explain the peaceableness which marked the reform of his cathedral chapter. But we can well understand that his successors would feel the incongruity of the situation thus created; and the church of St Mary was bound to succeed to the dignity to which its superior merits entitled it.

It will seem to those who are familiar with the history of the church of Worcester, as it has been written in recent times, that the account given above is seriously defective, inasmuch as it makes no reference to an earlier church of St Mary and to the monks who at one time were attached to it, as evidenced by a series of notices in charters from the eighth to the tenth century. It has become customary to explain these notices by the supposition that there were two churches side by side with a common cemetery between them, the principal church being dedicated to St Peter and served by secular clergy, while the other of lesser dignity had at one time at any rate been served by monks. The two churches are thought of as receiving benefactions separately and competing for public favour, until Oswald put an end to their rivalry by rebuilding St Mary's on a grand scale and transferring to it the bishop's chair and the ancient endowments of St Peter's.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of discussing point by point the difficulties inherent in the situation thus outlined, it may be well to state at once that

<sup>1</sup> The modern view is clearly stated in the *Victoria County History of Worcester*, ii. 3 f., 95 f.



an examination of the Worcester charters down to the time of Oswald has convinced me that there was no church of St Mary, and that there was no community of monks at Worcester before the days of the great reform in the latter part of the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> The diligent labours of the monk Heming have preserved to us a mass of information regarding the bishop's *familia*, as his cathedral chapter in old days was called, such as is not available for any other church in England. Here at least we are not left in such darkness as should compel us to fall back on conjecture to reconstruct the history of the past. It is true that not all the charters Heming copied are trustworthy documents. We have good reason to think him an honest man, but Worcester in the days gone by was no exception to the general run of ecclesiastical foundations which had thought it necessary to supplement their genuine deeds with others modelled on them, in order to secure their title to properties the charters of which had perished by fire or perhaps had never existed at all. The period of national decline under King Ethelred, which marks the close of the tenth century as an age of decadence and disaster following an age of intellectual progress and unbroken peace, would seem also to have been a period in which churchmen were in constant danger of being robbed of their inheritance and were driven to resort to methods of self-protection which our modern conscience condemns as pious frauds. Later ages were yet more prolific in the manufacture of documentary evidence; but Worcester has not in this respect the evil record of Winchester and Abingdon and Sherborne and other great foundations, thanks no doubt to the very fact that Heming's work had preserved so much that without it would have perished. But Heming, honest as he was, could only work with his materials; the charters lay before him, and he had no means of appraising their authenticity: the science of criticism was not yet, and only a very glaring forgery could be detected at the time he wrote. We need not, therefore, be surprised if a considerable number of his charters fail to satisfy the tests to which the modern student must submit them.

These strictures do not affect the general history of the bishop's *familia* at Worcester, as it may be read in Heming's chartulary. For the charters which the members of the *familia* attest as witnesses are not charters of gifts to themselves, but grants which the bishop makes with their consent. They are usually grants for two or three lives with a clause of reversion to the church—a kind of extended

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

lease such as we presently find in great numbers under Oswald's own administration. There was no particular temptation to forge a domestic charter of this nature, though it might suffer in the copying through scribal errors and through the embodiment of later notes as if they were part of the original document.

Our first sight of the *familia* at Worcester comes to us in a small group of charters of the time of Bishop Denebert, whose episcopate of twenty-four years (798–822) nearly coincided with the reign of Coenuulf (796–821), the successor after a brief interval of the great Offa, king of Mercia. One of these (B. C. S. 283) is the charter of a certain Abbot Headda, making a disposition of his properties. It bears no date, but as it closes with a grant intended to secure the prayers of the Worcester *familia* for his kinsman, Bishop Heathored, it is perhaps reasonable to place it shortly after that bishop's death in 798. It opens with a prologue, which we shall meet again, concerning the fleeting course of time and the need of following the example of the Greeks, who committed their transactions to writing lest they should fall out of memory. 'Wherefore I, Headda, presbyter and abbot, with the testimony of all the venerable *familia* at Worcester, bequeath my own proper inheritance; making this condition, that my heirs in the line of my family of the male sex and in holy orders shall receive it, so long as in my kindred there can be found a wise and prudent man who can exercise ecclesiastical rule in due and monastic fashion; and that never shall it be subjected to the authority of laymen. But after that, if in our family such churchmen shall be wanting, and they shall be unworthy and unskilled, not knowing how to rule and govern it aright, I order that without any obstacle it be rendered to the episcopal see at Worcester—that is to say, the lands at Dogedeswell and Tyreltun. Besides these I also add an estate of my possession which is known by the dwellers around it as Onnandun; for the remedy of my soul and of the soul of my kinsman, Bishop Heathored, and for the good of all the souls of our kindred; because I am an *alumnus* of that *familia*, and was educated and brought up at the threshold of the church.'

We do not know what abbey Headda held, perhaps a small abbey at Dowdeswell in Gloucestershire, the first property which he names. It was common in those days for such houses to descend by inheritance, and too often they fell into lay hands, a danger against which Abbot Headda here seeks to provide. It is unfortunate that no names of witnesses have been preserved, so that we must wait for the next charter to give us the earliest list of the Worcester *familia*. Meanwhile it is something to have caught a glimpse of the *familia*, as the

training-ground of clergy who were afterwards to hold positions of importance in the Church.

Our next charter (B. C. S. 304) is a grant by Bishop Denebert, which he is careful to say is not made on his sole authority, but conjointly with his *familia*. It opens with the same prologue as Abbot Headda's charter, which may suggest that both were drawn up by the same scribe and at about the same time. At any rate we shall find reason for placing this charter, which also bears no date, early in Bishop Denebert's episcopate. The bishop grants, 'with the consent and testimony of all the venerable *familia* at Worcester, to Balthun the presbyter, a man good and true, five manses at Bearmodeslea,<sup>1</sup> to hold for life and to bequeath to one heir whom he may choose; but after that heir's day it shall be rendered again without any dispute to the church of Worcester, whence it was granted forth'. Another property, eight manses at Collesburn, he grants to him for life and for two heirs after him, then to return to the above-named church. 'And be it known to all who read this charter, that not I alone have made this grant, nor alone have confirmed this decree; but all the congregation of the church of Worcester with me, because the priest Balthun aforesaid is a dear and faithful friend to that congregation, and an *alumnus* of that church.'

There is a grant to Abbot Balthun from King Coenuulf of the monastery of Kempsey in Worcestershire, dated 799 (B. C. S. 295); but we cannot be certain that in its present form it is an authentic document. The bishop's grant which we have been considering may perhaps belong to the preceding year, as Balthun is not spoken of as an abbot, and this early date would agree well with the signatures. For here we have the names of the *familia*—nine presbyters, four deacons, two clerks, and three other persons with no distinctive appellation. As we do not find 'clericus' as a description in other lists of the *familia* for the next century and a half, it may have come in here by the inadvertence of a later copyist, who found out his mistake and held his hand after he had written it twice.

In another charter (B. C. S. 307) Bishop Denebert with his *familia* at Worcester grants land at Hereford to Eanswith, 'to possess it while she lives, if I leave her to survive me in this world, on this condition, that she be always subject to the church of Worcester and its *familia* on this wise: namely, that she do always renew and cleanse and increase the raiment of that church; and that, after she shall go the way of her fathers, the land aforesaid without contradiction be assigned to the church of Worcester.' This document, again, is not

<sup>1</sup> Barnsley, a member of Bibury (= Biga's bury).

dated, but it is attested by twelve members of the *familia* with no distinctive titles after their names. When we compare them with the former list we find that six are the same—four priests, and two other persons, one of whom was there called ‘clericus’, and the other was left undescribed. Six names are new, but four of them recur in documents of 824 and 825; so that we are led to place this charter towards the end of Bishop Denebert’s time.

There is now a gap in our information until we come to the time of Bishop Alhun. Then, in 849, we find seven priests, a ‘*praepositus*’ or provost, and a deacon (B. C. S. 455). Afterwards, in 855, there are six priests, three deacons, and two others not described by any title (B. C. S. 490). One of the priests is now the provost, and he heads the list. Then under Bishop Werfrith, one of King Alfred’s learned men, we have lists for the years 872, 889, 892, 897, and 899 (B. C. S. 533, 559, 570, 575, 580). The numbers remain much the same, and at first one or two of the old names survive from Bishop Alhun’s days. We can watch the old men falling out, and new men coming in to fill their places. A provost still appears in 872, but not after that date. In 899 ‘*Cynelm abbas et diaconus*’ heads the list, and Abbot Cynelm stands in the same position in an undated Saxon grant which belongs to the same period (B. C. S. 603).

After this our information fails us for more than half a century, until we get a list again in 957, one of the last years of Bishop Coenwald. This list (B. C. S. 993) is of special value, as it enables us to observe the continuity of the *familia*, as represented in the numerous lists which occur in Oswald’s charters from 962 onwards. But of this we must speak later.

We have thus had clearly in our view for a century and a half the constitution of the church of Worcester—the bishop and his *familia*, a body of clergy who are joint holders with the bishop of the estates of the church. There is but one church of Worcester, and but one *familia*. And there is no hint anywhere of monasticism; for though at the close of the ninth century we find the list headed for a brief period by an abbot, we cannot safely conclude even that the man who bore this title was himself a monk, much less that the society he presided over was monastic.

There seems, therefore, to be no room for a church of St Mary or for a community of monks. The suggestion that there was such a church side by side with St Peter’s appears to be quite a modern one, based only on notices to be found in some of the early Worcester charters. But the evidence which at first sight seems to support such a theory will be found on examination to melt away altogether.

The number of Worcester charters preserved to us in some form or other from the earliest days down to the time of St Oswald's accession is considerably over a hundred. In sixteen of these we find a mention of the church or monastery of St Mary. Each of these charters must be dealt with separately in order to determine its claim to authenticity.<sup>1</sup> The result of such an examination will show that not one of them is trustworthy, so far at least as its reference to St Mary's church is concerned. One or two examples may here be given to show how the mention of St Mary's has come in.

The earliest charter which mentions St Mary's is B. C. S. 165, a grant of King Æthilbald, the bounds of which are dated 743. Before the signature comes the statement that this grant was made over *afterwards* to the monastery of St Mary of Worcester. This was evidently a note written on the charter at a later date, and copied in course of time as though it had been part of the original.

Another example of subsequent modification is B. C. S. 233, which is not strictly a charter, but a record of a grant by King Offa, who is spoken of in the third person. Here it is said that 'King Offa granted to the monks of the church of St Mary of Worcester' a certain property. A Saxon record of the same grant follows, which says nothing of monks or of St Mary, but records the gift as 'to the minster at Worcester for the use of the brethren'. The Latin record may have been written at a very much later date than the charter of which presumably it was a summary.

Again, B. C. S. 577 and 578 are two forms of grants said to have been made by King Alfred; but it is only the second and inferior form which speaks of 'the church of St Mary of Worcester'; the other form has simply 'the church of Worcester'.

Before we come to the consideration of the changes introduced at Worcester by St Oswald, it is desirable that we should learn something of the saint's earlier days. Our source of information is the anonymous *Life of St Oswald*, published by Raine in the *Rolls Series* (*Historians of York*, i. 399 ff.) from the Cotton MS., *Nero E 1*. As the biographer appeals to Archbishop Ælfric as a witness to the miracles performed at the tomb of King Edward the Martyr, he would seem to have written before that archbishop's death in 1005; and as he quotes the earliest *Life of St Dunstan*, which was dedicated to the same archbishop, we may perhaps date his work between 1000 and 1005. Oswald had died in 992, and his biographer was a monk of Ramsey, Oswald's greatest foundation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup> On this anonymous *Life* see further in Appendix C.

Our author begins with a long account of Archbishop Oda, Oswald's uncle. He tells us that Oda's father was said to have been 'one of those Danes who came over in the army of the fleet with Huba and Hinwar'. We learn from other sources that Ingwar and Ubba were the chieftains whose three sisters had woven the mysterious Raven banner which foretold victory or defeat; they had landed in England in 866, and were defeated after their invasion of Devonshire in 878. That Oda was of Danish descent we may readily believe; the name of his kinsman Oskytel, the archbishop of York, bears this out. The energy and adaptability of these fierce Norsemen is strikingly illustrated by the fact that less than eighty years after the Peace of Wedmore the two primatial sees were filled by men of Danish blood. We may accept the character given to Oda by Oswald's biographer, and regard him as a strong, brave, and prudent man. He was known after his death as 'Oda se goda', Oda the Good, a title which St Dunstan himself is said to have bestowed upon him. He must share with the saintly Bishop Ælfheah of Winchester the merit of preparing the way for the great monastic revival. Oda, we are told by Oswald's biographer, had received the monastic habit from the newly reformed monastery of Fleury; and as the English movement of reform under Dunstan and Ethelwold at Glastonbury was the fruit of Ælfheah's pious zeal, so the stimulus which it afterwards derived from foreign sources was partly the result of Oda's sending Oswald to be a monk at Fleury.

After having devoted the first section of his work to Archbishop Oda, the writer comes at length to his proper subject.<sup>1</sup> In highly rhetorical language, which serves to disguise his real lack of information, he tells us of Oswald's pious boyhood, his education under his uncle's supervision, and his rapid progress in sacred studies. Oda endowed him with a considerable fortune, which he employed in the purchase of a monastery at Winchester. He was of an exceedingly attractive character, and his abilities and wealth surrounded him with friends. After the fashion of the times, he arrayed himself in silk and fared sumptuously every day, but his heart was not at ease. 'In those days', says our author, 'there were no men of monastic life in England, and no rules of that holy institute. There were clerks of religion and dignity, who yet gave the treasures which they eagerly acquired not to the honour of the church, but to their wives. Among such dwelt this pious youth as Lot in Sodom.'

We must not exaggerate the import of such a statement as this. The first part of it we know to be not strictly true; for Bishop

<sup>1</sup> *Historians of York*, i. 410.

Ælfheah, who was himself a monk of devoted life, had ruled at Winchester from about 934 to 951; and though it is possible that Oswald did not go there till after his death, when he was succeeded by Ælfsige, of whom no good has been recorded, yet by that time Dunstan had been building up Glastonbury for some ten years and making it a true model of Benedictine life. But all this was half a century before the date at which our author was writing; and a tradition had begun to grow up to the effect that there were no monks in England, and that such monasteries as had not been wholly destroyed by the Danes were served by careless clerks whose iniquities called to heaven for vengeance. Such speedy forgetfulness of the recent past is no isolated phenomenon: it is indeed characteristic of great movements of reform.

We must pause to note here a misconception which arose a hundred years later, and still confuses the story of Oswald's early days. Eadmer, in re-writing his Life, says that Oswald became a canon at Winchester, and was soon made dean in spite of his youthfulness. 'Regular among irregulars,' he tells us, Oswald sought in vain to mend the morals of his colleagues, and at last left them in despair.<sup>1</sup> We need not press the anachronism of the use of the word 'canon', which does not seem to occur in any document of English origin, either Latin or Saxon, before the year 1000. It is enough to point out that the anonymous biographer, whose work he had before him, says nothing about Oswald's association with the cathedral church at Winchester, still less of his becoming its dean. What we are told is that out of the wealth with which his uncle Oda supplied him 'he bought for himself a monastery situated at Winchester, paying no inconsiderable price (*sibi monasterium quod est in Wintonia positum acquisivit, donando digno pretio*).<sup>2</sup> Such a proceeding is in harmony with what we know of the times, though by Eadmer's day it had happily become almost inconceivable. There were two great monasteries or minsters in Winchester—the Old Minster, which was the cathedral church, and the New Minster founded by King Alfred and his son King Edward. We have no ground for supposing that what Oswald purchased was the headship of either of these great foundations, still less that it was merely a stall in the cathedral minster. There were other churches in Winchester, such as the two which chance to be mentioned in connexion with Bishop Ælfheah in the earliest Life of St Dunstan.<sup>3</sup> Probably it was one of these smaller *monasteria* that was the scene of Oswald's earliest ministrations.

<sup>1</sup> *Historians of York*, ii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 410 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Memorials*, pp. 14 f.

‘I would fain visit the parts beyond the sea,’ he told the archbishop, ‘and in the place that your love shall decree enter the service of God and His saints.’ In other words, he would resign his position and his prospects, leave home and country, and become a monk in a foreign land. Had he been of a Wessex stock he would not have looked so far afield. Glastonbury under Abbot Dunstan would have provided him with the life he sought. Perhaps it is an indication of the silence with which Dunstan worked, that the fame of Glastonbury as the home of a new spiritual movement was not yet such as to attract this restless Danish youth. At any rate his uncle welcomed his determination and sent him with gifts and commendation to Fleury, where, under Abbot Wlfald, he would find the most perfect observance of the Rule.<sup>1</sup>

Oda in his old age implored that Oswald might be sent back to him. It may be that he hoped that the young monk might bring his experience to the English Church, and found a monastery on the reformed lines at home. It is a curious fact that in the last year of his life Oda obtained from King Edwy the grant of ‘forty manses’ at Ely, which was then practically deserted and in the king’s hand.<sup>2</sup> We shall find King Edgar offering Ely to Oswald at a later period among other available sites for the settlement of his monks. We may hazard the suggestion that Archbishop Oda had his nephew Oswald in view when he obtained lands at Ely from King Edwy. But Ely was to wait for another refounder, Bishop Ethelwold. And though Oda’s request was granted by the abbot of Fleury, his nephew’s return came too late: before he reached England the archbishop had passed away, on June 2, 958.

Oswald accordingly travelled north to his kinsman Oskytel, the archbishop of York, by whom he was commended to Dunstan, who had now been recalled from exile and was administering the sees of Worcester and London. Dunstan at once recognized his gifts and his goodness; and among his first acts on becoming archbishop of Canterbury he consecrated Oswald, with King Edgar’s permission, to the see of Worcester, which he had just vacated. This was in the year 961. His biographer now tells us how the new bishop, in

<sup>1</sup> Wlfald succeeded Archembold, who had ruled Fleury after Abbot Odo’s death in 941. Wlfald sent monks to St Peter’s at Chartres, at the request of Ragenfred, who was bishop of Chartres from 941 to 960. This took place, we are told, some three years after Wlfald’s accession (*Ann. O. S. B.* iii. 503). Abbo was dedicated as a boy at Fleury under Abbot Wlfald (*ibid.* 533). Wlfald became bishop of Chartres in 962 (*ibid.* 560). Accordingly he may have been abbot of Fleury from 943 to 962.

<sup>2</sup> *Crawford Charters*, no. V (B. C. S. 999): 9 May, 957.



apostolic fashion, travelled round the villages of the diocese, preaching and giving abundant alms. He endeared himself to every class, from the dukes to the peasants: justice, gentleness, and hospitality were the marks of his administration.<sup>1</sup>

We then come to a chapter which specially concerns us: it is headed, 'How Christ's prelate, chosen to government, afterwards earnestly sought to gather together monks'. It opens with a rhetorical outburst in praise of Fleury, whither St Benedict's bones had been brought from Monte Cassino by the holy Agiulf. Then we are told that there had followed Oswald to Fleury a Winchester youth named Germanus, who after a long and severe probation became a monk, and diligently learned the institutions of the Rule. Oswald now sent for Germanus, and set him to instruct disciples in the monastic manner of life. The fame of his pupils extended throughout the province, and many faithful clerks came under him, including the venerable priest Eadnoth, a man of noted wisdom. They soon passed the sacred number of twelve, not counting the children whom they trained. Oswald settled them at Westbury, where they offered an example of true monasticism. He furnished them with the necessaries of life, so that their whole care should be for the divine service. This state of things lasted for some four years.<sup>2</sup>

Next we have a description of King Edgar's Easter court, at which the whole question of monastic reform was considered. The king, who hated the clerks (*clericos perosos habuit*) and loved the monks, ordered more than forty monasteries to be established. His chief adviser in this was Ethelwold, the bishop of Winchester. Oswald asked the king for a place for his monks, and was offered the choice of St Albans, Ely, and Benfleet; after visiting these places he returned home.<sup>3</sup>

The narrative now reverts to the Easter court, to tell how a certain knight died during its course, and how at the funeral Oswald met with Ethelwin, son of that great Duke Athelstan who for his power was called the 'Half-king', and who ended his days as a monk at Glastonbury. Oswald asked Ethelwin if he could provide him a place suitable for monks. Ethelwin at once offered him Ramsey, where already there were three men desirous of the monastic life. Oswald visited Ramsey, and approved its island solitude among the fens. Returning home, he ordered the priest Eadnoth, the steward of the monastery, to go to Ramsey and make preparations; and on St John

<sup>1</sup> *Historians of York*, i. 421.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 427.

Baptist's Day (August 29) Oswald himself came and settled the monks there.<sup>1</sup>

A new chapter now begins by relating how during the next winter masons were secured and materials prepared for building a stone church in the spring. The church was cruciform, with a tower in the middle and another at the west end. Meanwhile other monasteries were being founded; for the king pressed the matter on, and ordered Dunstan to let Ethelwold of Winchester and Oswald of Worcester understand that all sites of monasteries should be furnished with monks or nuns. And this they quickly brought about, being eager so to do. Oswald made two monasteries, one in his cathedral city, the other at Winchelcombe. Of the latter he appointed Germanus, the dean of Ramsey, to be head. Ethelnoth was set to rule Ramsey; and in the cathedral city the headship was given to Wynsin, who had been trained at Ramsey (*apud nostri coenobii gymnasiurn*), and took with him certain brethren from the Ramsey choir.<sup>2</sup>

Our author makes no further reference to Worcester, save at the end, when he tells how the brethren at Worcester sent tidings to Ramsey of Oswald's death, and how the saint was buried in his own new church at Worcester.<sup>3</sup> In estimating the historical value of what he says about Worcester, we must bear in mind that he is a Ramsey monk, and his interests centre in his own house: Worcester and Winchelcombe concern him only because Ramsey monks ruled these foundations. But we learn from him that Oswald acted with prudence and patience. He began with a model monastery on a small scale at Westbury-on-Trym; then, thanks to Duke Ethelwin's unbounded generosity, Ramsey offered itself for a great foundation. The introduction of monks at Worcester came later. Wynsin, or Wynsige, who was put at their head, had received his training at Ramsey. There is no suggestion that he had been a member of the cathedral body at Worcester; nor is any hint given of a difficulty with clerks in the establishment of the monastery. It is important to note these silences, for Eadmer's Life of Oswald greatly improves on the barrenness of this early account.

We will now turn back to contemporary evidence, and see what may be learned from Oswald's own charters. Between the years 962 and 969 we have some thirty grants of leases, mostly for three lives, attested by members of the Worcester *familia*; and of these grants

<sup>1</sup> *Historians of York*, i. 431.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 435.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 474 f.

eleven belong to 969. After this we have a gap, and the next lists of the *familia* come to us in 977. When we add to this that we have a single charter attested by the *familia* of Bishop Coenwald in 957, it will be seen that we are in a position to watch the changes which took place in the composition of the cathedral body during the important period of twenty years, from the last days of Bishop Coenwald to the middle point of Oswald's episcopate. This is first-hand evidence of the course of his reform.

Bishop Coenwald's charter of 957 (B. C. S. 993) is a semi-poetical grant, made 'with consent of the brethren to Behstan presbyter of the same monastery'; and we may note the phrase, 'by the key of the apostolic authority of Peter', as a probable allusion to the dedication of the church. Thirteen names follow that of Coenwald in the attestation. Behstan stands first and Wulfric second; but only one name is followed by a descriptive title, viz. 'Cynethegn clericus'. In Oswald's charters, on the other hand, we shall find that it is the rule to place the title presbyter, deacon, or clerk after each name. Taking B. C. S. 1088 and 1089 as the earliest of the charters issued by Oswald in 962, we can learn something by a comparison of the names there given with the names of 957. The figures in brackets after the names of the first list indicate their places in the second list.<sup>1</sup>

957.	962.
1. Behstan.	1. Wulfric pr.
2. Wulfric (1).	2. Æthelnoth pr.
3. Æthelstan (13).	3. Ælfred cl.
4. Wulfnoth.	4. Wulfhun cl.
5. Ælfred (3).	5. Byrhstan cl.
6. Wulfr(ic) (17).	6. Cynsige cl.
7. Eadstan.	7. Wulfgar cl.
8. Oswulf.	8. Wynstan cl.
9. Ælfric (15).	9. Wulfheah cl.
10. Wulfhun (4).	10. Cynstan cl.
11. Cynsige (6).	11. Eadwine cl.
12. Cynethegn cler' (14).	12. Ælfstan cl.
13. Ælfstan (12).	13. Æthelstan cl.
	14. Cynethegn cl.
	15. Ælfric di.
	16. Eadgar cl.
	17. Wulfric cl.

<sup>1</sup> The order of names in B. C. S. 1088 has been deranged by a scribe, who read downwards instead of across.

The changes here shown are not more than might be expected in the course of five years. Four of the first list are missing from the second; but of these Wulfnoth reappears in 966 and afterwards; and Behstan, the senior in 957, may have died, or may have gone to live on the estate then granted to him. Eight names are new in 962; but we cannot be sure that some of these were not merely absentees on the former occasion.

Judging from the titles appended in 962, it seems that the only priests in 957 were Behstan, who is styled 'presbyter' in the body of the grant made to him, and Wulfric, who succeeds Behstan as the senior. Nor were matters any better in 962; for Wulfric and Æthelnoth are the only priests, and there is but one deacon, Ælfric. This is a startling revelation. It helps us to understand the general complaint that the monasteries or minsters were in the hands of clerks and the services grossly neglected. In contrast with this we may remember that nine presbyters, four deacons, and five other persons had attested Bishop Denebert's charter of *c.* 798.

Although we have lists of the *familia* in charters of 963, 966, 967, and 969, it will suffice for our present purpose to examine two lists which belong to the year 977; and it is important to bear in mind that there has been an interval of seven years (970-6), during which there are no lists for comparison. The first year of their appearance is noted before the names of those who have attested earlier charters.

977. <sup>1</sup>	977. <sup>2</sup>
Wynsige pr.	Wynsige mo.
957 Wulfric pr.	Wulfheh mo.
962 Wulfheah pr.	Æthelstan mo.
957 Æthelstan pr.	Æthelsige mo.
969 Ælfsige pr.	Æthelstan mo.
962 Eadgar pr.	Wulfweard mo.
962 Wistan pr.	Eadwine cl.
966 Eadweard pr.	Godingc cl.
966 Ælfgar di.	Ælfstan cl.
Godingc di.	Ælfsige mo.
Leofstan di.	Leofwine mo.
Æthelsige di.	Ælfgar mo.
Wulfweard di.	Æthelric mo.
957 Cynethegn cl.	Brihstan cl.
957 Wulfhun cl.	Eadweard cl.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. C. D. 596, 612, 613, 614.

<sup>2</sup> K. C. D. 615.

977. <sup>1</sup>	977. <sup>2</sup>
962 Wulfgar cl.	Æthelwold cl.
962 Brihstan cl.	Ælfstan cl.
966 Leofwine cl.	Wulfnoth cl.
962 Cynestan cl.	Wulfric cl.
966 Wynstan cl.	Cynetheng cl.
962 Eadwine cl.	Wulfhun cl.
957 Ælfstan cl.	Eadgar pr.
Ælfnoth cl.	Wulfgar cl.
Æthelwold cl.	Leofstan di.
957 Wulfnoth cl.	Tuna cl.
Æthelric cl.	Cynstan cl.
	Wunstan cl.

Looking at the former of the lists for 977, we may note that three or four members of the body have passed away since 969, and on the other hand there are eight new names. Wynsige, who has come from Ramsey, is now at the head, and among the other new names some may be of those whom he brought with him from the Ramsey choir. Wulfric, who was at the head, now takes the second place. There are six survivors of the thirteen who attested Bishop Coenwald's charter of 957; twelve survivors of the seventeen who signed in 962. Thus it is plain that there has been no violent breach of continuity. On the other hand, we observe the effect of Oswald's reforming influence in the change from the two priests and one deacon of 962 to eight priests and five deacons in 977.

There are six charters of 977 which present this same type of attestation (K. C. D. 596, 612, 613, 614, 616, 617): but there is one of the same year (K. C. D. 615) which is unique, and, if we may trust it, most instructive.<sup>3</sup> Of its 27 names 10 have the title *monachus* affixed to them. In the next year and henceforward the usual type of attestation is found again, and Wulfric and Wistan, the two presbyters missing from the exceptional list, reappear in their usual places. We might perhaps suppose that they had abstained from signing as a protest against this unexampled method of attestation. A few of the later charters show the title *monachus* attached to an individual name here and there: but never again is the whole body divided into those who were monks and those who were not. If we care to imagine that hard words passed on this occasion, it will only throw into relief the fact that apart from this there is no evidence

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K. C. D. 596, 612, 613, 614.

<sup>2</sup> K. C. D. 615.

<sup>3</sup> See the second of the lists given above.

at all of any kind of friction in the course of Oswald's great reform. It is right, however, to point out that the designation *monachus* is by no means the only peculiarity which marks the attestations of K. C. D. 615. We note also (1) the strangeness of the order by which three *clerici* are interposed between the first six and the last four of the *monachi*: (2) the late position of Eadgar, the only witness described as *presbiter*: (3) the absence of Wulfric *presbiter*, who headed the list before Wynsige arrived and stands second in the other charters of this year: (4) the description of Eadward as *clericus*, though in the other charters of this year he is styled *presbiter*. In view of all this we can hardly think that the attestations of this charter have come down to us in their original form; and it will be more prudent to abstain from basing any conclusions upon it.

In the following years, from 978 to Oswald's death in 992, there is little change. Wulfric, who apparently does not become a monk, disappears after 983. Wynsige signs for the last time in 986; and Æthelstan, the next name on the list, hereafter takes the first place.

The exact date at which Wynsige and the monks came from Ramsey cannot be fixed. All that we can say with certainty is that they were at Worcester in 977. Two charters which bear the dates 969 and 974 (B. C. S. 1243 and 1298) give no lists of signatures, but contain Saxon notes to the effect that they were witnessed by 'Wynsige monk (*or* 'dean') and all the monks at Worcester'. It is obvious that this cannot represent the original form of these charters, and the evidence cannot be accepted without hesitation. The date 969 is in any case inconsistent with the fact that Wynsige had been trained for some time at Ramsey, which itself was not founded until about that year, if so early.<sup>1</sup>

Lastly, a Worcester tradition of the end of the eleventh century throws some light on the events which we have been considering, and as it has been seriously misinterpreted it will be well to notice it here. The evidence comes from the Acts of a Synod held by Bishop Wulstan at Worcester in 1092, printed by Hearne (pp. 527 ff.) from *Vitellius* C. 9 (the extracts made by Patrick Young); and also by Wharton (*Anglia Sacra*, i. 542) from a contemporary document in the archives of the cathedral church. A dispute had arisen between the presbyters of St Helen's and St Alban's as to the rights of their respective churches.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B.

The bishop took the testimony of certain old men, well informed as to the ancient customs of the parish churches, and the testimony also of the monks of the cathedral church. It was affirmed that originally there was no parish in Worcester save that of the mother church. In the time of Bosel, the first bishop (680–691), St Helen's was a vicarage of the mother church. This arrangement was preserved throughout the times of all the bishops by the clerks who served in this see, until the days of Archbishop Oswald, who, by the aid of King Edgar and the authority of Archbishop Dunstan, changed the society of this church from the irregular life of clerks to the regular life and the habit of monks, A. D. 969. In St Oswald's time Wynsius the presbyter of St Helen's was vicar there of the mother church. He, with the others who served this church in the habit of clerks, laid aside the world and took the habit of monastic religion; and he gave up the keys of St Helen's church with its lands and possessions to the common use of the monks. In the third year of the conversion of Wynsius the presbyter, Oswald, with the king's assent, made him prior of the monks of this church.

We need not carry the story farther. The date 969 was doubtless gathered from the charter which claims to be of that year (B. C. S. 1243) and is said in the Saxon note to have been witnessed 'by Wynsige monk and all the monks of Worcester'. We note in passing that in the account here given there is no suggestion that there had ever been a community of monks at Worcester before St. Oswald's time.

## APPENDIX

### A. WORCESTER CHARTERS OF ST MARY'S BEFORE ST OSWALD'S TIME

It is a perilous task for one who has not been trained in the modern school of Anglo-Saxon diplomatics to undertake such an examination as here follows. My apology must be that no one, so far as I am aware, has faced the problem of Oswald's reform from the point of view of the authenticity of the charter evidence in regard to what existed at Worcester before his time. I shall gladly welcome correction in detail; but I have an impression that a wider knowledge will only strengthen the case which I have endeavoured to put. It is only since this Note was written that I have seen the instructive article by Mr. W. H. Stevenson on the so-called 'Trinoda necessitas' in the *English Historical Review* for October 1914, and also Mr. F. M. Stenton's article in the same Review for October 1918 on 'The Supremacy of the Mercian Kings'. I have learnt much from both of these articles, and have made one or two references to them in my foot-notes.

#### I

B. C. S. 165. Æthilbald to Osred. Cold-Aston and Netgrove, co. Gloucester. 716 × 743.

This charter is accepted by Mr. W. H. Stevenson.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be noted, however, that the mention of St Mary's only comes in a sentence inserted before the signatures: *Haec autem testamenti traditio perpetualiter postea tradita est sanctae Mariae Uueo-gernensis monasterii pro ipsius regis salute*. This obviously is no part of the original charter, and may have been added at quite a late date.

The bounds are dated 743, at the end in Anglo-Saxon. The statement that Ethilbald booked the land *Utele bisceope into sancte Marian* is unintelligible as it stands. There may be some confusion with Utel, bishop of Hereford (c. 798), and St Mary of Hereford.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Stevenson's judgements on some of the early Worcester charters are recorded by Mr. C. H. Turner in his *Early Worcester MSS.*, pp. xxxii ff.



## II

B. C. S. 204. Uhtred *regulus*. Stoke. 770.

This charter is rejected as spurious by Stevenson. It follows the original Worcester charter of Uhtred (B. C. S. 203) almost *verbatim* with the necessary changes. But it corrects the Latin: adding *et* after *itaque*; writing *terreni* for *terrigenis*; and putting an accusative after *praeter*, instead of an ablative; changing *cessat* into *cesset*, and *ante ea* into *antea*. Moreover in the attestation it gives to Bishop Mildred the phrase *pia dei dispensatione*, which is given in the genuine charter to Uhtred, and, on the contrary, gives to Uhtred *Christi gratia concedente*, which is there given to Bishop Mildred. Its boundaries are given at great length, in contrast to the seven words of those of the genuine charter.

In Domesday Book the church holds Stoke with two berewicks, Easton and Bedindon, ten hides in all (= *X tributariorum* of the charter). Now in the genuine grant (B. C. S. 203) Uhtred gives land *V tributariorum* at Easton to his *minister* Ethelmund, with reversion after two heirs to the church of Worcester. The forged grant was an attempt to make out of the wording of this a gift of Stoke (including Easton), in the very same year, *fratribus deo servientibus in monasterio Uuigornensi quod constructum est in honore sanctissimae virginis et matris domini nostri Ihesu Christi Mariae*.

It may further be noted that this forged Stoke charter is the second of a group of 13 charters (beginning with Croppthorne, on f. 142 of the MS. [Hearne, p. 319]), which have been misplaced in binding. If we go on to f. 173 [Hearne, p. 391], we find *Incipit praefatio huius libelli*, and after this preface *Incipiunt capituli istius codicelli*. 1. *De Croppathorne*. 2. *De Stoke*, &c. The Croppthorne charter of King Offa is recognized as a forgery by Stevenson and others. It would be interesting to know how many of these thirteen are in better case.

## III

B. C. S. 205. Uhtred *subregulus*. Shipston. *n.d.*

This charter also is marked by Stevenson as spurious. But it is of a very different character. The forger is a stylist, though weak in grammar, as is shown by his opening words: *Appropinquantem mundi terminum . . . declaratur*. He has apparently used the genuine charter (B. C. S. 203): but he makes many changes. Thus Uhtred is *subregulus* instead of *regulus*, and in the attestation Offa is made to say: *mei ducis postulatione*. He exaggerates in the phrase *ex immensis donationibus*, and speaks not only of God as

the giver, but also of *domini mei piissimi regis Merciorum*. For *in usus aecclesiasticæ libertatis* he says *in usus ecclesiasticæ necessitudinis*; and for *in mensam eorum* he says *ad propriam mensuræ participationem mensæ illorum*. In the attestation we find *vexillum sacratissimæ crucis Christi* and *signum mirabile beatæ crucis*, elaborate phrases which by themselves suffice to raise grave suspicion at this period.

The grant is of land *iiarum mansionum iugera continentem* (a strange phrase) *quæ iacet iuxta fluvium qui dicitur Stur, ad vadum nomine Scepesuuasce*.

In Domesday Book the church holds two hides at *Scepwestun*.

This charter is no. 3 in the *codicellus* referred to above.

The grant is made *ad aecclesiam beatæ semper virginis dei genetricis Mariæ quæ sita est in Uuegerna civitate, ubi corpora patrum meorum digne condiuntur*. Compare B. C. S. 183, the doubtful charter of his brother Eanberht, which speaks of St Peter's as the church *ubi corpora parentum nostrorum quiescunt*. (That is a grant of *Tredingctun . . . iuxta fluvium qui dicitur Stuur*.)

#### IV

B. C. S. 223. Offa to Aldred. Sedgebarrow: Aldred to St Mary's. 778 (for 777).

This charter Mr. Stevenson classifies among those in which he sees 'some definite reason for believing the document to be genuine'. It still existed at Worcester when Hicces was dean: see his *Thesaurus* I. 170 f., where a transcript of it is given. It is primarily a charter of King Offa, granting Sedgebarrow to his *subregulus* Aldred. After the signatures is added a grant by Aldred *regulus* to St Mary's. We need not question Mr. Stevenson's acceptance of King Offa's charter. We are only concerned with Aldred's postscript, as to which he has expressed no separate judgement.

1. This postscript begins: *Nunc ergo ego Aldredus domino dispensante Huicciorum regulus*. But Aldred regularly styles himself *subregulus*, as indeed Offa calls him in this very charter. The only other place in which he describes himself as *regulus* is in B. C. S. 232, where we find *Ego Aldredus meam munificentiam corroborans*, &c. But this is a grant by Uhtred, not by Aldred; and *Aldredus* is a mere scribal error for *Uhtredus* in the attestation.

2. At the end we read: *et hoc cum subscriptione principum meorum muniendo munio*. But the three witnesses are *præfecti*, not *principes*; and the duplication *muniendo munio* seems to have no parallel in such a connexion in charters of the period.

3. The attestation begins thus: ✠ *Ego Aldredus regulus Huiciorum propriam meam donationem signo crucis notavi*. The phrase *signo crucis notavi* does not appear to occur again in any charter. In the very doubtful charter of his brother Eanberht (B. C. S. 183) we have *signum salutiferae crucis praenotavi*. In the Act of the council of Clovesho in 803 (B. C. S. 312) we find *signum notavi*: but only in copies, not in the original document. In the tenth century we have partial parallels: as *notavi* alone in two charters of King Athelstan to Exeter (B. C. S. 724, 726, both questionable); *regno* (for *signo*) *salubri adnotavi*, King Edred (B. C. S. 880); *signo salutifero* . . . *prenotavi*, King Edgar (B. C. S. 1112); *sigillum sancte crucis annotavi*, King Ethelred (K. C. D. 684); and, what is most notable, Oswald, in attesting King Ethelred's charters, though not in his own, constantly uses the phrase *crucis taumate adnotavi* (K. C. D. 639, 647, 648, 650, 652, 655, 657, 658, 659, 663, 673). Lastly, in a questionable charter of Edward the Confessor, A. D. 1060, we have in Bishop Wulstan's attestation *vexillo sanctae crucis praenotavi* (K. C. D. 809). Our parallels, therefore, so far as they are trustworthy, come exclusively from the tenth century.

4. There follow the names of three *praefecti*, introduced in each case by *signum manus*, as are the later names of Offa's charter. In Uhtred's charter (B. C. S. 232), already referred to, these three *praefecti* follow Eadbald *princeps*, who is the last witness of Offa's charter here. If this postscript is not genuine, we may suppose that they originally stood at the end of Offa's charter, and have been treated as the *principes* of Aldred by the forger (though still styled *praefecti*).

5. Finally, we have the dating of the charter after these last witnesses, whereas we should have expected it before the witnesses of Offa's charter. The year is not in agreement with the indiction and the other notes of time, being a year too late. Both Kemble and Birch, working from two chartularies, give it as DCCLXXVIII; Hickes, however, who transcribed the Worcester charter, gives DCCLXXIIII (*sic*). The year pointed to by the indiction is A. D. 777.

Accordingly, it seems reasonable to conclude that a genuine charter of King Offa was copied or imitated by a forger, who inserted a grant by Aldred of the land in question to the church of St Mary at Worcester; making the three *praefecti* who closed Offa's attestation into the *principes* of Aldred's grant, and placing the date at the end of the whole piece.

## V

B. C. S. 226. Offa to St Mary's. Ductun & Esig. *n.d.*

On this charter Mr. Stevenson expresses no opinion.<sup>1</sup>

It is verbally the same as B. C. S. 210, Offa's grant of lands to Ridda with reversion to the monastery of Breodun, only the necessary variations being made.

For *ad monasterium vocabulo æt Breodune* we have *ad monasterium sanctae Mariae vocabulo ðeogerna Ceastre*.

The bounds in B. C. S. 210 are given briefly and in Latin. Here, however, they are much fuller and in Anglo-Saxon.

The witnesses are with one exception the same in both documents.

There is thus little to help us to distinguish between these two charters as regards the question of genuineness. But it is important to observe that the church of Worcester showed another charter for the five hides at Esig in Gloucestershire, viz. B. C. S. 487, a grant of King Burgred in the next century, A. D. 855. This is somewhat inconsistent with the grant of King Offa *c.* A. D. 775.

We cannot, therefore, regard this charter (B. C. S. 226) as affording any solid evidence of the existence of St Mary's church in the eighth century. It is almost certainly a forgery based on B. C. S. 210.

## VI

B. C. S. 231. Offa and Aldred to St Mary's. Geate. *n.d.*

This is a duplicate, *mutatis mutandis*, of B. C. S. 246, a grant to the monastery of Clive, co. Gloucester, which is accepted by Mr. Stevenson; but he regards the present charter as doubtful.<sup>2</sup>

In the inserted passage, *qua eandem æcclesiam Æthilbaldus rex avo meo Eanulfo conscripsit*, we seem to have a confusion with the church of Breodun, which in B. C. S. 234 and 236 is ascribed to this Eanulf, grandfather of Offa, as its founder. The passage, which is unintelligible as it stands, is nearly identical with a passage in B. C. S. 273, where also it is followed by the clause *tamdiu fides Christiana apud Anglos in Britannia maneat*. This clause is also found in B. C. S. 236 (just mentioned); but otherwise not in any charter of the eighth century.

The three charters B. C. S. 231, 236, 273, are thus closely connected; and the least trustworthy of the three seems to be B. C. S. 231.

This charter is one of those transcribed in Smith's *Bede*; but it is

<sup>1</sup> Mr. F. M. Stenton regards it as 'suspicious' (*E. H. R.* xxxiii. 448 f).

<sup>2</sup> 'Probably spurious,' Stenton, *l. c.*, p. 445.

said to have been of later date than King Offa's time: see Hearne, *Heming*, p. 592. It is rejected by Kemble, and marked as doubtful by Stevenson.

## VII

B. C. S. 233. Offa to the monks of St Mary's. Broadwas. *n.d.*

This is marked as spurious by Stevenson.

It is granted *monachis sanctae Mariae Guigornensis ecclesiae*, and is followed by a Saxon form, from which perhaps it was derived; but in this form the grant is made 'to the minster at Worcester for the use of the brethren', no mention being made of monks or of St Mary's.

## VIII

B. C. S. 240. Offa to St Mary's. Icomb, in exchange for Sapey. 781.

On this Mr. Stevenson has pronounced no judgement.<sup>1</sup> It is rejected by Kemble. Its witnesses are the same as those of B. C. S. 239, Offa's grant of lands to St Peter's at Worcester; and its wording at the close is similar. It also has points in common with B. C. S. 236, and with the spurious charter B. C. S. 235. None of these charters are of good repute.

The mention of *fures illos quos Saxonice dicimus uergeldtheouas* is suspicious. Other notices relating to Icomb and to Sapey seem hard to reconcile with the exchange spoken of in this charter. Of Sapey we learn (Hearne, *Heming*, p. 255) that Beorhtheah, the bishop from 1033 onwards, granted it to his brother-in-law, and thus it became alienated, ultimately being granted to St Evroul. Icomb, on the other hand, is said (*ibid.*, p. 406) to have been given to the church by Earl Ælfgar, when Wulstan was prior: cf. p. 370, where it is said to have been given in Harold's time.

It is clear, therefore, that nothing can be built on the evidence of this charter.

This completes our review of the evidence for the existence of St Mary's in the eighth century. We need have no hesitation in dismissing it as quite worthless. After this point we have not the help of Mr. Stevenson's judgements.

<sup>1</sup> In *E. H. R.* xxix. 697, however, he regards it as having been falsified: and Mr. Stenton, *ibid.* xxxiii. 444, speaks of it as 'either spurious or remodelled'.

## IX

B. C. S. 433. Berhtuulf to Heaberht, bishop of Worcester, and the monks of St Mary's. Mitton: one manse. Christmas Day, 841.

This charter seems so colourless and even, that it is difficult at first sight to judge of its genuineness. The only striking feature is the invocation of the Nine Orders of Angels: but this offers us the needed clue. For not only does this recur in the next charter (B. C. S. 434), but we find on comparison that the whole of the wording of the former charter is contained in the latter, which is three times its length, with the exception of the description of the property and of the grantees. B. C. S. 434 is a grant of privileges by the same king to the monastery of Breodun: it is fantastic in style and full of grammatical blunders, therein corresponding with other charters of Berhtuulf (B. C. S. 428, 450, 453, 454). There can be no doubt that our charter is abbreviated from this.

The date, given in the same words, has been placed at the beginning, instead of coming before the signatures; and there is no prooemium. This in itself is suspicious. The witnesses differ only in order and spelling, save that there are added three *duces* and four *ministri*. The title *minister* is unusual, if not unknown, in genuine Mercian charters, though it was common in Wessex and Kent. Exceptions are B. C. S. 137, 245, 296, 349, 351, 514; but the second and third of these are quite untrustworthy, and we cannot firmly rely on any of the rest.

The one clause which is not taken from B. C. S. 434 is: *Heaberhto episcopo quandam ruris particulam, mansam scilicet unam, in villa quam ruricolae Myttun appellant, monachis videlicet sanctae Mariae pigornensis aecclesiae perfruendum et possidendum iugiter usque in aevum*. The description of the land has no parallel in other charters of Berhtuulf. The monks of St Mary's may once more be dismissed as an anachronism.

We learn from the Domesday Survey that one hide at Mitton went with the Manor of Breodun: it had been alienated, and was recovered by Archbishop Wulstan after the Conquest.

## X

B. C. S. 462. Beorhtuulf. Grimley to St Mary's. 851.

This charter is soon disposed of. The introduction of Dathan and Abiron into the guarding clause seems to occur in no charters except B. C. S. 1135, the forged charter of Edgar to Worcester,

and B. C. S. 1178, the charter of Edgar to Croyland as given by 'Ingulf'.

The attestation is made up of the names of the king and Bishop Alhun, followed by a list taken from B. C. S. 357, Coenuulf's charter of 816: the two other bishops thus introduced had been dead about thirty years.

## XI

B. C. S. 541. **Ceoluulf to the monks of St Mary's. Overburg. 875.**

The opening and closing portions of this charter are found with slight variation in B. C. S. 540. There we read: *rogatus a Werfrido antestite Huicciorum et familia in Uueogernacestre, istam libertatem . . . donavi*. Here, however, we have the clumsy combination: *rogatus a Werfrido episcopo Wiciorum et familia in Wigornacestre, concessi monachis deo famulantibus in monasterio Wigornensi quod constructum est in honore sanctae et perpetuae matris et virginis Mariae*.

The witnesses of B. C. S. 540 reappear in B. C. S. 541, with the exception of *Deorlaf episcopus*: but a number of other names are added in the latter charter. Three of these raise suspicion: *Alhferht dux, Kyred, Wulsige*; for they seem really to represent Ealfrith, bishop of Winchester, Ceorred or Ceolred, bishop of Leicester, and Wulfsize, another bishop, all of whom attest charters of this period.

This charter is one of those which come from the *codicellus* already spoken of: and it is plain that no weight can be attached to its evidence, either for monks or for St Mary's church at this period.

## XII

B. C. S. 578 is a Canterbury memorandum to the effect that King Alfred gave certain lands at Rotherhithe to Archbishop Plegmund and Bishop Werfrith. The words which concern us are: *unum archiepiscopo Doroberniae Plegmundo et successoribus eius ad opus ecclesie Christi et monachorum: alterum vero Werefrido ad ecclesiam sanctae Mariae Wigoracensem*. But B. C. S. 577 gives a better form of the same memorandum, in which we read *unum archiepiscopo Plegmundo ad ecclesiam Christi, alteram Uuerfrido ad ecclesiam Uuigornacensem*.

We need not discuss the authenticity of the grant. We may note, however, how easily the mention of St Mary's may be inserted by a copyist.

## XIII

B. C. S. 616. Bishop Werfrith to Abbot Cynelm. 10 manses at Bengeworth. 907.

Here we have the clause: *et sciat quicumque hanc terram teneat cotidie elemosinam faciendam pro anima Burhredi regis et Alhuni episcopi, qui hanc terram donaverunt deo et sancte Mariae ad ecclesiam in Uueogernacestre.* The clause is unlikely in itself to be genuine; and in B. C. S. 235 the 10 manses at Bengeworth are said to have been given by King Offa in 780. It is followed by the statement that the grant is made in 907 with leave of King Alfred, who, however, had been dead seven or eight years; and the signatures are not of Bishop Werfrith's time, but correspond with those of charters of 849-55 (B. C. S. 455, 490).

Older materials may perhaps have been worked up in this charter: but as it stands it is a particularly clumsy forgery.

We conclude that the ninth century offers us no more tangible evidence than the eighth century of a church of St Mary or of a community of monks at Worcester.

## XIV, XV

B. C. S. 665. Athelstan to St Mary's. Aust on Severn. 929.

B. C. S. 666. Athelstan to St Mary's. Eaton on Cherwell. 929.

These two charters must be considered together, on account of the similarity in their date and attestation:

Scripta est haec cartula anno dominicae incarnationis nccccxviii, ac sexto regno Æþelstani regis, Christo Ihesu gubernante, renovando in melius cum senatorum signaculo confirmavit.

✠ Æþelstan rex sceptris fretus regalibus hanc cartam signavit cum manibus.

✠ pulfhelm archiepiscopus cum ceteris præsulibus.

✠ Ælþino . þeodredo . Fryðestano . Sigehelmo . þynsigio . Beornheho . Eadgaro . Ælfhæho . Odaño . consignavit.

✠ Osferð comes cum ducibus ac ceteris optimatibus . Ælfþaldo (*and 16 others*) consignavit.

Rodeþard quoque archipræsul cum Eboracensis suffraganeis . Æscher'h'to . þigredo . Earnulfo . Columbano . consignavit.

So in B. C. S. 665: the only difference in B. C. S. 666 is that the attestation is broken off after the word *optimatibus*.

We begin by noting the date. The evidence of Athelstan's charters points on the whole to the commencement of his reign on Dec. 25, 924. His sixth year, therefore, began Dec. 25, 929. If these charters are genuine, they were issued in the last week of 929. If they are



not genuine, we may suppose that the compiler simply reckoned from the statement of the Worcester copy of the A.-S. Chronicle, which placed Athelstan's accession in 924, though the Winchester copy in its corrected form gave 925.

The phrase *renovando in melius* is intelligible in B. C. S. 665, which is intended as a confirmation—*ut firmior esset stabilitas*; but it is meaningless in B. C. S. 666.

*Confirmavit.* Each of these charters appears again in the latter part of the MS. of Heming's Register, and in a modified form. We note that in each case *confirmavit* is altered into *confirmata*. The references in Hearne's edition are pp. 111 and 434 for B. C. S. 665; pp. 67 and 379 for B. C. S. 666. We have already observed that this Register is a composite document.

*Sceptris fretus regalibus.* It is hardly conceivable that a genuine charter of King Athelstan should contain this phrase in the attestation. In charters of King Edgar, however, we find *regali fretus dignitate*, not indeed in the attestation, but in the body of the document (B. C. S. 1056, 1151).

*Signavit cum manibus.* This again is a phrase which raises suspicion. Lastly, the addition of Archbishop Rodeward and the 'suffragans' of York is an astonishing feature. B. C. S. 666 does not go on to this point, but in the later forms of both charters the reviser has put Rodwald into his normal position. Of these 'suffragans' Æsberht attests charters from 930 to 934, and Wired (of Chesterle-Street) generally attests with him. But Earnulf and Columbanus are otherwise unknown. The grouping of names in the attestation has no parallel in the Worcester documents. It may be for this reason that the reviser attempts to normalize the attestation in the later forms. We may suppose that the compiler had based his forgeries on some charter in the Register of another house, such as that of Burton-on-Trent, where abbreviations of this kind were in use.

After this preliminary survey we need not spend much time on the further details of each charter: but some points deserve notice.

In B. C. S. 665 the prooemium *Variante iam temporum statu*, &c., is closely parallel in sense, though not in wording, to that of B. C. S. 1052 (attributed to King Edgar): *Vacillante practicae vitae statu*, &c. This prooemium also introduces *surget gens contra gentem*, a text which is found in several charters of the end of the tenth century (B. C. S. 1085, 1095, 1099, 1113, 1115, 1125, 1216).

The interesting phrase *totius Albionis*, though frequent at a later period, cannot be found in any charter of Athelstan which is certainly genuine.

*Benevolentibus autem et audentibus and tradentur in manus gladii* do not seem to occur in the guarding clauses of any other charters.

When we turn to B. C. S. 666, we are able to trace its language in other charters of the Worcester collection. The proemium, indeed, is quite extraordinary, and to its odd phrases there seem to be no parallels. We may note, however, that *evangelicum paradigma* has occurred in the proemium of B. C. S. 665.

*Ut aliquid ex percepti mundanis regni distributione . . . quamvis minus dignum ad ecclesiasticae liberalitatis servitium expenderim.* This is phraseology of King Offa's time; the very mistakes, *mundanis* for *mundani*, and *liberalitatis* for *libertatis*, are but repetitions: see B. C. S. 202-5, 210, 226, 231, 239, 246, 251: several of these charters are forgeries, but based on genuine models.

But the charter chiefly drawn upon is King Burhred's grant of the same property to Bishop Alhun (B. C. S. 509). From this comes the ungrammatical phrase *Eatun iuxta flumine Cearpellan*. And the whole of the guarding clause, *Pax servantibus, &c.*, is taken from this charter. Accordingly, we can have no hesitation in dismissing both these charters (B. C. S. 665, 666) as spurious.

## XVI

B. C. S. 700. Athelstan to Worcester monastery. Clifton-upon-Teme. 930.

This is marked by Kemble as spurious, and no one will question his decision.

The reference to Anlaf—*tropheum ex Anolafu rege Norannorum, qui me vita et regno privare disponit*—is an anachronism: for Anlaf's legendary attempt on Athelstan's life on the night before Brunanburh was still seven years in the future. Historical references of this kind are almost invariably signs of forgery.

The date is given as '930 in the sixth year of Athelstan's reign'; but the indiction and epact belong to 934: see on this point the next charter.

## XVII

B. C. S. 701. Athelstan to St Mary's. Wastill, Cofton, &c. 7 June, 930.

This again is rejected by Kemble. Its dating at once arouses suspicion: *Anno dominicae incarnationis DCCCCXXX, regni vero mihi commissi VI, Indictione VII, Epacta III, Concurrente II, Septimis Junii idibus, luna XXI<sup>a</sup>.*

Here 930 corresponds with the sixth year of the reign, but all the other terms apply to 934. Moreover, Wulfstan's attestation as archbishop of York agrees with the later date. It is a curious fact that B. C. S. 703 [cf. 1344], a grant of Athelstan to St Peter's at York, has the same confusion of dates. We may remember that from 972 to 1023 the archbishops of York were also bishops of Worcester—Oswald, Aldulf, Wulfstan: so that the connexion between the two churches may have been intimate during the whole of this period. Our charter is said to have been issued at London; but the York charter is dated on the same day at Nottingham.

There are other grounds for the rejection of this charter; but we need only mention here the odd phrase *Britannicae gentis* in the description of the king's title.

We conclude, therefore, that not one of the four charters in which Athelstan is represented as making grants to Worcester has any claim to be considered as genuine. Accordingly the supposed evidence for the existence of a church of St Mary and for a community of monks at Worcester before the time of St Oswald disappears entirely when critically investigated.

## B. WYNSIGE AND THE MONKS AT WORCESTER

The date of the introduction of monks by Oswald into the church of Worcester deserves a more careful consideration than it has yet received. The accepted date is 969, the year to which Florence of Worcester assigns the expulsion of the clerks and the establishment of monks under Wynsige as dean. For this date he claims to have the authority of Oswald himself.<sup>1</sup> This appears to be supported by a charter (B. C. S. 1243) of Oswald, which bears the date 969, and is attested by 'Wynsige monk and all the monks at Worcester'. It is probable that Florence had this charter before him and drew his date from it.

But we shall presently see that so early a date is inconsistent with the fact that Wynsige had received his habit at Ramsey, and had been under training for several years in that monastery. It is therefore necessary to submit the charter in question to a critical examination.

We have noticed above (p. 16) that for the years 962 to 969 we

<sup>1</sup> 'Unde S. Oswaldus sui voti compos effectus, clericos Wigornensis ecclesiae monachilem habitum suscipere renuentes de monasterio expulit; consentientes vero hoc anno *ipso teste* monachizavit, eisque Ramesiensem coenobitam Winsinum, magnae religionis virum, loco decani praefecit,' Flor. Wig. *sub anno* 969.

have at least thirty charters in which Oswald grants leases for three lives, with a reversion to the church of Worcester. After 969 there is a strange gap<sup>1</sup> until the year 977, when the series recommences. On the one side of the gap the list of the 'familia' attesting is headed by 'Wulfric presbiter'; on the other side of the gap 'Wynsige presbiter' takes the first place, and 'Wulfric presbiter' stands next beneath him.

Next we note that for the year 969 alone we have eleven charters, in ten of which 'Wulfric presbiter' stands, as we have said, in the first place, and Wynsige does not appear at all. The eleventh is the exceptional charter which is said to have been attested by 'Wynsige monk and all the monks at Worcester'.

Oswald's charters follow various types, which recur with only the necessary modification of the name of the person who receives the grant and the description of the land granted. The type to which our charter belongs is seen in its purity in B. C. S. 1238. First comes the date A. D. Then the body of the grant, beginning 'Ego Oswald, superni rectoris fultus iuvamine presul', and ending 'restituatur immunis'. Then the bounds, introduced by the superfluous sentence, 'His metis prefatum rus hinc inde giratur', and beginning 'Ðis synd þa land gemære . . .' Lastly, the attestations of Oswald and the 'familia', some eighteen or twenty in number.

Frequently, however, we find Saxon notes inserted at various points, before or after the bounds, or at the end of the signatures. These give supplementary grants, or the names of the heirs to whom the property came. In the latter case it is obvious that they are later insertions which the copyist of the charters has embodied.

Now the charter in which we are interested is constructed as follows:

- (1) The date, followed by 'Ego Ospald superni rectoris fultus iuvamine praesul . . . restituatur immunis'.
- (2) A Saxon note saying that 'This was done with the witness of Wynsige monk and all the monks at Worcester'.
- (3) 'His metis prefatum rus hinc inde giratur.'
- (4) Þis syndon þa land gemæru . . .'

Here there are two divergences from the type: a Saxon note is inserted before the bounds; and the attestations of Oswald and the members of the 'familia' are missing. As we have not the original charter, but only the copy in Heming's chartulary, we can

<sup>1</sup> Of the two charters dated 973 and 974 we shall speak later: neither contains the list of the 'familia'.

only hazard a conjecture as to the cause of variation. We may suppose that the original charter was mutilated at the end, so that the names were lost; and that a later scribe wrote on the margin or between the lines the Saxon note which perplexes us. At any rate we are justified in suspecting that the copy does not represent the charter in its original form; and we shall be prepared to reject the statement about Wynsige and the monks, if we find it to be inconsistent with historical probability.

After 969 there is, as we have said, a considerable gap in the Worcester charters; and the next charter which gives us a list of the 'familia' does not come till 977. Oswald became archbishop of York after Oskytel's death (1 Nov. 971), possibly not till 972 (Flor. Wig.); but he retained the see of Worcester. King Edgar died July 8, 975: a reaction against the monks who had displaced clerks followed; but we have no indication that Worcester was affected by it. We must now notice two charters which fall within this gap.

B. C. S. 1293 is a memorandum of a lease granted by Archbishop Oswald at London in 973: only a few signatories are named, and these are not of the Worcester 'familia'. But in 974 we have a charter (B. C. S. 1298) which has no attestations, but is said in a Saxon note to have been granted 'with the witness of Wynsige dean and all the monks at Worcester'. This is a parallel to the charter which we have already considered, and it must be examined in its turn.

It belongs to another type of Oswald's charters. It begins 'Ego Osualdus archiepiscopus ergo Christi crismate praesul iudicatus': then the date A. D., and the body of the grant ending with the word 'restituatur'.<sup>1</sup> Next we have the bounds: 'þis syndon . . .' After this we have two Saxon sentences: (1) 'This was done with the witness of Wynsige dean and all the monks at Worcester;' (2) 'Brihtlaf was the first man, and now it is held by his sons, Byrhtwine and Byrhtmær.' There is no list of the 'familia' attesting.

It is plain that the second of these notes is no part of the original document, but a subsequent addition. The first is perplexing; but,

<sup>1</sup> The normal opening is 'Ego Ospald ergo Christi crismate presul iudicatus'. In the charter of 974, however, 'archiepiscopus' is awkwardly inserted: but afterwards it is usual to write 'archipresul' instead of 'presul'. We may note that B. C. S. 1203 reads: 'Ego Ospold largo Christi carismate praesul dicatus', which perhaps may be the correct form. For recurrence of a blunder compare the phrase 'libera omni regi nisi aecclesiastici census' in several charters: as contrasted with 'libera ab omni saecularis rei negotio . . .' in K. C. D. 651, 662.

as the charter itself is no longer extant, we may well doubt whether our copy faithfully represents it. We seem to see the same hand at work as in the earlier charter of 969. Again we must say that the evidence is not such as will bear any great stress.

It is strange that Worcester leases should be wanting for these seven years (970-6), with the two exceptions that we have mentioned.<sup>1</sup> It may be that a batch of charters of this period was found by Heming in a state of almost irrecoverable collapse through damp or other misfortune. As soon as we reach the year 977 we have no less than seven charters (K. C. D. 596, 1012-17), all of which show us Wynsige in the first place, and Wulfric in the second, at the head of the Worcester 'familia'. The main body of the 'familia' remains as we saw it in 969; but six new men now appear with Wynsige for the first time, and three of them we presently find described as monks; no doubt they were the brethren from 'the choir of Ramsey', whom Oswald, as we are told, brought to Worcester with Wynsige.

Here, then, for the first time, we are on firm ground. We can say with confidence that in the year 977 Wynsige and a few other Ramsey monks had become established in the 'familia' at Worcester. They may have come in before this date, but we cannot prove it.

In order to check the date 969, we need to know when the first settlement took place at Ramsey. For the early Life of Oswald tells us that Wynsige received his training in that monastery.

Oswald met the alderman Ethelwine at the funeral of a knight who died at the time of a great Easter Council, of which neither the place nor the year is mentioned by the early biographer. A few days after this Oswald visited Ramsey, and on his return to Worcester at once dispatched Eadnoth to make preparations for an immediate settlement, which took place on August 29 of the same year. Everything was necessarily constructed on the smallest scale; but the next year saw the beginning of a stone church.

Now the historian of Ramsey (p. 30), writing at the end of the twelfth century, adds to this information that the funeral of the knight took place at Glastonbury. It is quite possible that this reached him by a trustworthy tradition. And we note with interest that a charter, in which King Edgar confirmed to Bishop Ethelwold the liberties of Taunton, is said to have been granted at an Easter Council held at Cheddar in 968 (B. C. S. 1219).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> B. C. S. 1299 is wrongly assigned by Birch to 974: it belongs to 977, though 'Edgar' is written by a scribe's mistake for 'Edward'.

<sup>2</sup> This, however, is not a very satisfactory charter (Winch. Reg.).

This year (968) is a traditional date for the first settlement at Ramsey: for in one of the MSS. of the History of Ramsey (cent. xiv) the date 969 is entered in the margin against the notice of the foundation of the new church (p. 40). It is not quite easy, however, to reconcile this date with the narrative contained in the Privilege of King Edgar, to which the writer himself refers, and which is given later in the book.<sup>1</sup> For here we read that the consecration of the new church took place on Nov. 8, 974, five years and eighteen days after the first temporary buildings had been erected (p. 185): but this brings us back only to October 969.<sup>2</sup>

Yet another tradition is preserved in the List of Abbots of Ramsey (*ibid.*, p. 339), where Eadnoth is said to have been sent by Oswald from Westbury in 970, and the settlement of twelve monks is assigned to August 29, 972. And, again, the Register of Ramsey distinctly places the foundation of the monastery in 969, the arrival of Eadnoth in 970, and that of the twelve monks from Westbury in 972.<sup>3</sup>

Whether the foundation of Ramsey be assigned to 968, 969, or 970, it is difficult to suppose that Wynsige, after being trained there, could have been placed at the head of the Worcester 'familia', at the very earliest, before 972, when Oswald became archbishop of York. We are told in a document of 1092 (*Anglia Sacra*, i. 542) that he was made prior of Worcester in 'the third year of his conversion': and Oswald's biographer (p. 435) speaks of him as follows:

Illis qui sub eo erant in civitate [i. e. at Worcester] anteposuit Wynsinum reverendum presbyterum, qui erat apud nostri coenobii gymnasium eruditus, cui annexuit quosdam fratres ex nostro choro.

In conclusion, we are certain from the charters that Wynsige was at the head of the 'familia' at Worcester in 977. Six years after this Oswald could thank God that he had been able *praeter spem* to bring to completion the church of St Mary at Worcester (K. C. D. 637: A. D. 983). In view of all that has been said above, the dates 969 and 974, which are found in the charters B. C. S. 1243, 1298, where Saxon notes speak of 'Wynsige monk' and 'Wynsige dean', cannot be relied on as satisfactory evidence.

<sup>1</sup> The charter is only of value as evidence of Ramsey tradition of the time when it was forged.

<sup>2</sup> This consecration is probably a pure invention. The Ramsey historian has to make a second consecration, after the repair of the church, on November 8, 991, which is the real consecration date in the anon. Life of St. Oswald (pp. 463 f.).

<sup>3</sup> *Monasticon*, ii. 554; and for other dates see *ibid.*, p. 546 n. (*Ramsey Chartulary*, Rolls Ser., iii. 170 ff.).

## C. ODA, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

The anonymous *Life of St Oswald*, which was hailed by historians some thirty years ago as throwing fresh light on the events of the second half of the tenth century, has never been subjected to a critical investigation.<sup>1</sup> Such an investigation must begin with the account of Archbishop Oda which forms its first section. Oda's story has been variously retold by the post-Conquest historians, and it is most desirable to consider the pre-Conquest evidence, in this as in other instances, without allowing it to be confused with the later accretions and interpretations. These Norman or Normanized historians have coloured the history of the tenth century according to their later conceptions; but they had little to guide them that we have not before us to-day, and we need to be constantly on the watch against their misinterpretations and amplifications. In the present note I have sought (1) to bring together the whole of the pre-Conquest evidence as to Archbishop Oda, and then (2) to show how his story has been treated by later writers.

1. *Pre-Conquest Evidence.*

The *Life of Archbishop Oda* published by Mabillon (*Acta SS. O. S. B.* vii. 286 ff.) is ascribed by the editor conjecturally to Osbern. This ascription is supposed to be supported by William of Malmesbury, who in his account of Oda says:

Quantulum autem est testimonium quod ei perhibet Osbernus, qui eum dicit pro sanctitate et industria sua ab omni Anglorum orbe semper defendendum, nisi Dunstanus successisset (*Gesta Pont.*, p. 24 f.).

This, however, is a mistaken inference. There is nothing parallel to these words in the *Life of Oda*. William of Malmesbury is simply quoting from Osbern's *Life of St Dunstan* (p. 107): 'nisi Dunstanus succederet, ab omni Anglorum orbe semper defendendus'.

Wharton, who at first ascribed the *Life* to Osbern, changed his mind and ascribed it to Eadmer, mainly on the ground of its appearance among other works of that writer. This latter view seems to have won general acceptance (*Anglia Sacra*, ii, p. x; Hardy, *Catalogue of Materials*, i. 566; W. Hunt, art. 'Oda' in

<sup>1</sup> I have recently endeavoured to show that the biographer's account of Edgar's coronation at Bath is largely derived *verbatim* from a copy of the Coronation Service akin to that which was probably used for King Ethelred. *Journal of Theological Studies*, October 1917, pp. 56 f.



*Dict. Nat. Biogr.*). It is confirmed by the results of the following inquiry.

This Life is mainly drawn from the account of Oda which forms the first section of the anonymous Life of Oswald his nephew, published by Raine (*Historians of York*, i. 399 ff.) from the Cotton MS., Nero E. 1, in which 'alone it appears to be preserved.'<sup>1</sup>

What, then, do we learn of Archbishop Oda from the biographer of Oswald? First, in order to illustrate his high moral courage, he describes his dealings with the licentious young king Edwy. The king, unfaithful to his wife, had intercourse with another woman. The archbishop rode out with his attendants to the place where this woman was staying, carried her off, and sent her out of the kingdom. The king accepted his admonitions, and he and his whole court submitted humbly to his guidance.<sup>2</sup>

Our author next proceeds to relate three miracles wrought by Oda, one before and one after he became archbishop, the third after his death. 'Bright with the roses of spring, he cast forth sin's monstrous thorns after receiving the sacrament of baptism.' Such are our author's flowers of speech, worth noting at this point, because they reappear in later writers whom he has inspired: we may gather from them that Oda was baptized in boyhood, not in infancy. His frequent attendance at church could not be restrained even by his father's threats: 'Some say', the writer continues, 'his father was one of those Danes who came over in the army of the fleet with Huba and Hinwar.' The youth now forsook father and mother and his lawful inheritance, and attached himself to a pious knight named Æthelhelm, who showed him a father's affection. In his household Oda received instruction from a man of religion, and presently was ordained deacon: not many months afterwards he received the priesthood.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. of York*, i. 403. It would seem as if something had fallen out of the text at this point. For after quotations from Isaiah and the Psalms the writer goes on: 'Explicita apostolica epistola, ad ordinem Christo iuvante redeamus propriae relationis. Quoniam superius beatissimi viri Odonis veneranda memoria facta est', &c.

<sup>3</sup> There is no suggestion here of premature ordination. The writer's notes of time are extremely vague and are oddly expressed: Oda lives with Æthelhelm 'per plurimis mensibus'. Then he was ordained deacon. Then, 'after he had passed the time of boyhood and adolescence, and when now the [gap in MS.] of his age was drawing near, he began to glow through the indwelling Holy Spirit shed abroad in him . . .' Then '*excursis per paucis anni mensibus*' he was ordained priest.

After this the knight set out on a pilgrimage to Rome, taking the young priest with him. They had a favourable voyage, but at an inn on the other side Æthelhelm had a heart-attack and was like to die. Oda sent for a cup of wine, made the sign of the cross over it, and gave it to the knight, who presently recovered and continued his journey. After prayers and almsgiving in the sacred city, they returned safely home. They were welcomed by the king, who soon after this made Oda bishop of Wilts. Shortly afterwards the archbishop of Canterbury died, and the king made Oda his successor.<sup>1</sup>

After this he was celebrating the Holy Eucharist, and 'the ancient miracle was in our days renewed': he perceived a drop of blood flow from the true Body of Christ. Amazed, he called a faithful servant who stood near, and showed him secretly the miracle. He bade the archbishop rejoice that God had so highly honoured him, and pray that the sacrament might return to its first form. This done, the archbishop partook of it; and in honour of the miracle he fed that day the poor, the orphans and the widows.

A further honour granted to him was that, while he was engaged in repairing and heightening the ancient church at Canterbury, which had been consecrated by St Augustine, no heavy rain fell on the city's walls. The roof of Christ Church had been taken off; the walls were repaired and raised 'bis quinis et denis passibus pedum'. This is not told as one of the three miracles: but later writers greatly improved upon it.

The third miracle occurred after Oda's death. His successor was Ælfsin, 'who being puffed up by temporal prosperity rose against the servant of God after his decease, counting him to be dead'. One day, standing over his grave, he reproached him, saying: 'Bishop, now liest thou prostrate, and I enjoy the right of triumph. When thou wast living, I had no merit: now thou art gone, I have received my due.' The next night Oda appeared in a vision to a certain priest, and said: 'Go to the bishop, and ask why he contemned me yesterday and smote me with his staff.' The priest failed, both then and after a second vision, to discharge his task. The third night Oda appeared in more glorious form and warned him no longer to be disobedient. So he bore the message which was given him: 'I tell thee that thou shalt cross the sea, and climb

<sup>1</sup> The writer's vagueness as to dates is again apparent: 'Excurso perparvi spatii tempore defunctus est archiepiscopus.' But Oda became bishop of Ramsbury in 927, if not earlier; and Archbishop Wulfhelm died c. 941, in the second or third year of King Edmund.

the mountains; but never shalt thou sit in the apostolic seat.' Ælfsin dismissed the messenger with contempt; but soon afterwards that misfortune befell him which the Spirit had foretold.

This ends the first section of the biography of Oswald. When the writer passes to his proper subject, he refers to Oda again as superintending Oswald's education, supplying him with the means to purchase for himself a monastery at Winchester, and afterwards sending him with rich gifts to Fleury, where he was to enter on the monastic life. At this point we have the only sentence in which Oda is brought into any connexion with monasticism. Fleury, says our author, was the house from which Oda himself received the monastic habit ('ex quo idem pontifex suscepit monasticae religionis habitum').

It is plain that the writer had but scant knowledge of the history of Oda's times. The only king whom he mentions by name is Edwy, and his account of him differs from all others: he has nothing to say of the scandal of his coronation day, when Oda sent Dunstan and Kynsige to bring back the young king to the banquet of the nobles; nor of Oda's divorcing Ælfgifu, the king's wife, on the ground of a too close relationship. Although the author afterwards makes use of the earliest Life of St Dunstan, he has not employed it as a guide in this opening section.

As to dates and localities he gives us little help. He does not say where Oda was born, or where the good knight Æthelhelm lived. He had heard a report that Oda's father was one of the Danes who came over with Ingwar and Ubba.<sup>1</sup> It is a tempting suggestion that Oda was the Danish boy whom Asser saw in a monk's habit in Alfred's new monastery at Athelney.<sup>2</sup> But Asser wrote in 893,<sup>3</sup> and if Oda died at seventy—a supposition which would make him a bishop at thirty-eight and archbishop at fifty-three—he must have been born in 888. We might indeed date him a little earlier; in any case the suggestion is not easily reconcilable with what we have been told of his education under Æthelhelm's roof, and with the express statement that he received his habit from Fleury. Moreover, there is no evidence, apart from his tenure of the Wilts bishopric, to connect him specially with Wessex.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> 'In quo etiam monasterio unum paganicae gentis edoctum in monachico habitu degentem, iuvenem admodum, vidimus, non ultimum scilicet eorum,' Stevenson, *Asser*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxxiv.

Fleury had been reformed about 930, that is twenty years after the foundation of Cluny, and by Odo the second abbot of Cluny: it had, however, retained its independence, and did not come under the Cluniac system of control. It is possible that, as later writers assert, Oda only received his habit thence when he was raised to the see of Canterbury, in 942. [Dunstan's great work at Glastonbury was then only beginning; but, by the time that Oswald decided to become a monk, Glastonbury was well under way, and he might have joined Dunstan and Ethelwold there, in the home of the native movement of reform.] Had he been of Wessex stock he would probably have done so: but the nephew of the Danish Oda was guided by his uncle's prepossession to Fleury; and hence is to be explained the influence exercised by that foreign house upon a part at least of the revived monasticism of England.

We may now gather together such other notices of Archbishop Oda as are to be found in pre-Conquest sources. It will be convenient to begin with the Lives of St Dunstan.

1. In the Life written by the Saxon priest B, about the year 1000, Oda is mentioned twice. First we have the well-known story that on Edwy's coronation day the boy-king left the royal banquet for the company of two women of high birth, a mother and a daughter, who were designing to entrap him into a marriage with one or other of them. The archbishop, observing the displeasure of the nobles, sent Abbot Dunstan and Bishop Kynesige, Dunstan's kinsman, to bring him back to the royal feast. They found him seated between the two women, the crown lying on the ground. Dunstan forced him away from them, placed the crown on his head, and brought him back to the nobles. The wrath of Æthelgifu, the elder of the women, drove Dunstan into exile.<sup>1</sup>

Oda is again mentioned when his death is recorded, and the tale is told of his successor Ælfsin, the bishop of Winchester, that he perished of cold in the Alps when on his way to Rome to fetch his pall. But nothing is said of Ælfsin's contemptuous reproach of Oda, nor indeed is he discredited in any way.<sup>2</sup>

2. Adelard, in his Life of St Dunstan (c. 1010), speaks of Oda only in connexion with Dunstan's consecration to the see of Worcester. The archbishop, he says, omitting mention of the title of the church to which Dunstan was appointed, to the amazement of all assigned him by title to the Metropolitan Church of Christ at Canterbury. To those who humbly remonstrated he replied: 'I know, beloved, what

<sup>1</sup> *Memorials of St Dunstan*, ed. Stubbs, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

God speaketh in me;’ and this was afterwards accounted an inspired prophecy.<sup>1</sup>

3. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in its pre-Conquest form mentions neither Oda’s accession nor his death. But the Worcester Chronicle (D) has under 958 the entry: ‘In this year Archbishop Oda separated King Edwy and Ælgifu, for that they were too near akin.’<sup>2</sup> Thus we have three early stories of the interference of Oda in the domestic life of the young king; and all of them are different, though not necessarily irreconcilable.

4. We will next take the evidence of charters. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, 660, prints a charter dated 927, which is attested by ‘Odo Scyrburnensis episcopus’,<sup>3</sup> This is one of a group of grants to Christ Church, Canterbury (cf. nos. 747, 766), in Cod. Lambeth. 1212, in all of which a like attestation is found. They cannot be regarded as authentic copies in their present form. The Canterbury scribe may have added the titles of the bishops’ sees. The third of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> It cannot, however, be affirmed with certainty that this is pre-Conquest evidence. A.S. Chron. D alone has:

958. Her on þissum geare Oda arcebiscep totwæmde Eadwi cyning 7 Ælgife. forþam þe hi wæron to gesybbe.

Is this a pre-Conquest statement? Plummer says (II. lxxix): ‘We must, therefore, recognize the fact that *D as we have it* is a late compilation, some of which dates from after 1100, and none of it probably from much before 1100.’ This is his judgement, in spite of the fact that Sir G. Warner had said that the earliest hands might be as early as 1050 (p. xxxix).

Two other entries distinctive of D show an interest in the wives of the kings:

946. The whole annal is in A, except for the insertion of the following words, after the statement that King Edmund died on St. Augustine’s mass-day: ‘þ was wide cuð. hu he his dagas geendode. þ Liofa hine ofstang æt Puclan cyrcan. 7 Æþelflæd æt Domerhame, Ælfgares dohter ealdormannes, was þa his ewen.’

965. Her on þissum geare Eadgar cyning genam Ælfyðe him to cwene, heo was Ordgares dohtor ealdormannes.

[Inserted also in the marg. of F, which reads: ‘Ælfðryðe him to gebeodan.’]

The mention of Liofa as the robber who murdered King Edmund, and of Pucklechurch as the scene of the murder, are only found elsewhere in William of Malmesbury (*G. R.* 159) and Florence of Worcester. None of the biographers of Dunstan mention the name of the place, not even W. of M., though he says that the ‘villa’ was given to Glastonbury for his death-rites (‘data in inferias villa’).

Florence of Worcester tells the story in a different way from W. of M., and introduces the word ‘cleptor’ from the biographer B (p. 29).

The Chronicle D does not tell us that Edmund’s first wife was Ælgifu, the mother of Edwy and Edgar.

<sup>3</sup> Oda’s see was Ramsbury (‘Wiltuniensis’, *Hist. of York*, i. 406).

the group (dated 941) has 'Alfred episcopus' as another witness, without naming his see: but in fact this Ælfred was the bishop of Sherborne from 933 to 943. Accordingly, we cannot regard no. 660 as strong evidence that Oda was already a bishop in 927, though it is quite possible that the date is correct.

A Winchester charter (B. C. S. 663), attested by 'Oda episcopus', is but slender evidence for the year 928; but after this he certainly attests as bishop until 941, and as archbishop from 942 onwards.

His last attestations are in the early part of 957, while Edgar the king's brother is still at court. The most important of these, and possibly the last (May 9, 957), is B. C. S. 999, the original of which is printed in *Crawford Charters*, no. V. This is a grant from King Edwy of land at Ely<sup>1</sup> to Oda himself, 'fidelissimo meo archiepiscopo meoque patrono, toto mentis affectu, cum consensu meorum obtimatum.' Perhaps the king protests his affection a little too much: the breach must have quickly followed. It is generally supposed that Edwy's marriage with Ælfgifu caused the archbishop's abstention from court. A Saxon charter (B. C. S. 972), attested by 'Ælfgifu the king's wife and Æthelgifu the king's wife's mother', has three episcopal witnesses; but Oda's name does not appear. If it be true that in 958 he succeeded in annulling this marriage, yet it cannot be shown by any trustworthy charter that he appeared again at court, and the probable date of his death is June 2, 958.

The real reason for his withdrawal may have been connected with the breach between Edwy and Edgar, even if he did not openly side with the latter. His consecration of Dunstan for Edgar can hardly have been pleasing to Edwy and his friends.

Before leaving the charters we may notice a Saxon bequest relating to Christ Church, Canterbury, which gives us the names of some of Oda's clergy and monks (B. C. S. 1010). 'This is the witness of Oda archbishop, Byrhtere, Cænpig, pealdred mass-priests, Sigfreð, Ospeald, Freðegod, Sigered, Heared deacons,' &c. As we cannot date the document, we cannot say positively that Oswald the archbishop's nephew is here referred to, though it is not unlikely. Of Freðegod we have further knowledge.

We may here add that a mention of Oda and his brother Athelstan is found in connexion with Burwell in *Hist. Ram.*, p. 49.

<sup>1</sup> The editors of the *Crawford Charters* (p. 81) suppose that 'æt Helig' cannot mean Ely as the whole of the Isle of Ely was then in the possession of St Æthelthryth's monastery. But was this so? Is there any reason to mistrust the statement that St Ethelwold bought, c. 970, twenty hides which the king had *infra insulam* (*Lib. Eliens.*, p. 109)?

5. A poetical Life of Wilfrid is printed by Raine, *Historians of York*, i. 105 ff. William of Malmesbury informs us that it was written by one Fridegodus.<sup>1</sup> Prefixed to it is a prefatory epistle by Archbishop Oda, in which he declares that he carried the body of Wilfrid from Ripon to Canterbury, thus rescuing it from shameful neglect. The style of this epistle is exceptionally turgid and obscure. For the controversy as to this removal see Raine, *ibid.* xxxix, xliii.

6. A letter of Oda to his suffragans, after a synod held in King Edmund's time, is quoted at some length by William of Malmesbury:<sup>2</sup> and various synodical constitutions are printed by Wilkins (i. 212 ff.).

7. Oda is mentioned as having been his patron by Abbo of Fleury, in an acrostic poem addressed to Archbishop Dunstan (*Mem. of Dunstan*, p. 410):

Solus Odo pius cenSor qui iure sacerdoS  
Te pater ante fuiT; sat nos amplexus amaviT.

8. The Episcopal Lists contained in *Tib. B. 5* were drawn up, probably at Glastonbury, about the year 990; being a continuation to Archbishop Sigeric's time of the series contained in C.C.C. Camb. 183.<sup>3</sup> Here Oda appears as the second bishop of the see of Wilts ('Wiltunensis'), between Æthelstan and Ælric. In the list for Canterbury there is no name between Oda and Dunstan. That list ends thus:

Wulfhelm  
Oda se goda  
Dunstan  
Æthelgar  
Sigeric.

This is the earliest mention of the title of honour—Oda the Good—which a later writer tells us was given to Oda by Dunstan himself. It is interesting to note that in the same manuscript Sigeric, who had been abbot of Glastonbury, is entered in the list for Wilts as 'Sigericus dei amicus'.

## 2. Notes on 'Vita Odonis Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis'.

This Life is printed by Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.* vii. 286 ff., *ex MS. cod. Thuano-Colbertino*. It is assigned to no author in the manuscript, but the editor conjectured that it was written by Osbern

<sup>1</sup> *Gesta Pont.*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> I have discussed these early episcopal lists in *The Saxon Bishops of Wells* (Oxf. Univ. Press, 1918), pp. 7 ff.

of Canterbury. Wharton, as we have said above, printed it again in *Anglia Sacra*, ii. 78 ff., from a Lambeth MS., still ascribing it to Osbern; but in his preface (p. x) he recants this judgement, and assigns it to Eadmer, among whose works it is found in C.C.C. Cambridge 371. We keep open for the moment the question of authorship. The pages of *Anglia Sacra* are here quoted, as being the more accessible: the divergence of text is small, save that lines have been dropped in Wharton's edition at several points.

78. *sicut rosa e spinis floruit*. Cf. *Vita Oswaldi*, 403 'ut vernis floruit rosis, et enormes peccaminum spinas post baptismi sacramentum defudit'. But here the 'spinae' are his pagan parents; as in the verses printed by Mabillon at the end of the *Life* (p. 295):

Ut rosa de spinis, sic prodiit Odo paganis.

79. *Graeca et Latina lingua magistris edocendum tradidit; quarum linguarum plerisque tunc temporis in gente Anglorum usus erat a discipulis beatae memoriae Theodori archiepiscopi profectus*. Cf. Eadmer, *Vita Bregwini* (*Angl. Sacr.* ii. 185): 'Florebat etiam adhuc quaque per Angliam exercitia ac studia literarum, quae ex beati Theodori pontificis Cantuariorum eiusque discipulorum traditione totam terram magnifice irrigabant.'

*ita ut posset poemata fingere*. Eadmer, in his *Life of Wilfrid*, ascribes to Oda himself the metrical *Life of Wilfrid* written by Frithegode, to which Oda wrote the preface: see Raine, *Historians of York*, I. xxxix.

*Post haec sacramento baptismatis renatus*. This is the first serious discrepancy with the *Vita Oswaldi*, which puts Oda's baptism before the troubles which led him to leave home.

*quantum ad instituta canonum spectat*. Oda's premature ordination has no place in the earlier account, though it may possibly have been suggested by certain inexact phrases of it; as 'deinde excursis perpaucis anni mensibus', &c. (*Osw.*, p. 405). In his *Life of Dunstan* Eadmer lays stress on the regularity of that saint's ordination (p. 173): 'Dunstanus ergo monachus sine dilatione factus est, et deinde legitimo tempore per canonicas sacrorum ordinum successiones etiam ad sacerdotii gradum . . . proventus.' This is a silent correction of Osbern's account (p. 83): 'celeriter illum monachali ac sacerdotali gratia promovit.'

*antiquorum exemplorum auctoritate victus*. Cf. *infra* 81: 'Canonum fatetur auctoritate prohiberi . . . iuxta veterum monumenta librorum . . . exemplum . . . victus in his,' &c.

*secreta male actae vitae ei aperire*. The statement that the courtiers made him their father-confessor has no counterpart in the earlier narrative.



*Interea dux regi suggessit.* The whole story of the visit to Rome is elaborated. The king, who is Alfred (see *supra* 78), furnishes gifts: both Athelm and Alfred die nearly at the same time. The writer had plainly identified Athelm with the alderman of Wilts who bore Alfred's gifts to Rome in 887, and died shortly before the king in 898: see A.S. Chron. *sub annis*. This identification sufficiently explains his statement as to Oda's premature ordination. If we suppose Oda to have lived to be 90, he must have been born in 868, and would have been only 19 when, being already in priest's orders, he accompanied Athelm to Rome.

*per sex continuos dies.* Athelm's sudden heart-attack is extended into an illness of six days, and he is made to send all his companions on before him with the exception of Oda. The king to whom Oda is introduced on his return is King Alfred, and not, as in the earlier account, the king who, on hearing of the miracle, made him bishop of Wilts (namely, King Athelstan).

80. *Scireburnae, nunc autem Sarisburiae.* Hermann, bishop of Ramsbury (or Wilts) 1045, and also of Sherborne (or Dorset), removed the see of the united dioceses to Old Sarum *c.* 1075. Hence the confusion between Wilts and Sherborne, which we have already noted in certain Canterbury copies of charters.

*Anno, &c.* The story of the restoration of King Athelstan's sword by Bishop Oda at the battle of Brunanburh does not appear in the early sources.

81. *Ne pontifex ecclesia sua relicta ad aliam migret.* This was an important element in the charges against Pope Formosus half a century earlier; but the controversy seems at that time to have found no echoes in England. In 1122 Eadmer, who had been elected and enthroned as bishop of St Andrews, though not yet consecrated, when urged to resign his claim, declared that this was not possible: the bishops whom he had consulted held 'eum ecclesiam quam canonicè electus regendam suscepit nulla ratione iuxta scita canonum indemnatum dimittere posse' (*Hist. Nov.* iv, p. 299). Similarly, he tells how Hervey, bishop of Bangor, failed to get himself translated either to Lisieux or to Ely, so long as Anselm lived (*ibid.* iii. 139, Pope Paschal's letter: 'Gualensis episcopi causam sacris omnino canonibus obviare non nescit'; and *ibid.* iv, p. 211).

Oda's objection is represented as being overcome by the precedents of Mellitus of London and Justus of Rochester; but he could not have been unaware that his immediate predecessors, Athelm and Wulfhelm, had been translated from Wells; apart from these, indeed, the only other precedent was that of Cuthbert, bishop of Hereford in 736, translated to Canterbury in 740.

*Omnes qui eis successerunt usque in praesens monachi, ut omnibus constat, extiterint.* We have no satisfactory evidence that either Athelm or Wulfhelm was a monk. After Anselm's death an effort was made to obtain a secular as primate: 'obiectum est nullum a beato Augustino nisi de monachico ordine unquam pontificatui Cantuariensi praesedissee, uno dumtaxat excepto' (who was deposed by the Pope): Eadmer, *Hist. Nov.* iv, p. 222. Accordingly, we see that here again the scruple of a later period has been introduced into the narrative, which thus becomes almost a controversial tract.

82. *Nuncii ad abbatem coenobii sancti Benedicti Floriacensis.* That Oda received the monastic habit from Fleury is stated by the biographer of Oswald, who happens to mention it, not in any connexion with his promotion to Canterbury, but as the reason why Oswald himself went to Fleury. But that the abbot of Fleury should have crossed to England to bring the habit to Oda is not very easy of credence.

In the Life of Oswald by Capgrave (or John of Tynemouth), which is largely drawn from Eadmer's Life of Oswald, Oda is made to become a monk at Fleury in his youth: 'idem vero sanctus Odo in iuventute constitutus mari transito habitum monasticum apud eundem Floriacum suscepit.'<sup>1</sup> This is probably a conscious correction, but of course no historical weight can be given to it.

*Quidam clerici maligno errore seducti.* The original narrative introduced the story of the bleeding of the Host without any controversial reference: it was the repetition 'in our days' of an ancient miracle, and was granted as the reward of Oda's sanctity. Here, however, it is represented as an answer to Oda's prayers, in order that the monstrous error of certain secular clergy might be publicly refuted. The former account lays stress on its secrecy, this on its publicity. Once more, therefore, we find that current controversy has led to the recasting of the narrative.

83. *Nulla aut infusio imbrium aut vis ventorum . . . in tribus annis.* The story that no heavy rain fell while the church at Canterbury was roofless is here elaborated. No rain at all and no storm of wind—such was the answer to Oda's special prayers; and this immunity lasted for three years: moreover, heavy rains fell immediately outside the city walls. It may be that this was the gradual growth of a Canterbury tradition, and not the invention of a particular writer.

*Verens ne si illum, &c.* The statement that Edwy was restrained at first by the fear that Oda might defer his coronation is peculiar to this

<sup>1</sup> Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, vii. 709; Raine, *Hist. of York*, ii. 503.

account. In the main the Life of Dunstan, in the form in which Osbern cast it, has been followed. The story of Edwy's mistress comes from Oswald's biographer; but her identification with the elder of the two women in the coronation story belongs to the present writer, as also does the mention of Ireland as the place of her banishment: the cruelty to which she was finally subjected appears first in Osbern. Oda's prophetic words at Dunstan's consecration are drawn from Adelard's Life of Dunstan, but our author has elaborated the scene. The sentence 'non enim lege stringitur sancti spiritus donum' (which is found in Mabillon's text, though not in Wharton's) has a close parallel in Eadmer's Life of Dunstan, p. 195: 'non constringitur lege donum et vocatio dei.'

85. *Alfsinus . . . cognomento Lippe*. This second name is an addition of our author. The charge against Ælfsin that he had bribed the nobles begins with Osbern's Life of Dunstan, as also the statement that he had sought promotion to Canterbury on the previous vacancy, when Oda was appointed. The story of his insult to Oda's tomb is considerably embroidered, and new details as to his death in the Alps are introduced.

86. *Odo se gode*. The story of the dove which appeared over Dunstan on Whitsun Day, and afterwards rested on Oda's tomb, is not found in the earlier Lives of Dunstan, nor in Osbern's; but it is the climax of a longer narrative in Eadmer's Life (pp. 202 ff.), where the sentences from 'genua flecteret' to 'a Cantuaritis appellatur' are almost word for word the same as here.

As the result of this investigation we may affirm with confidence that the *Life of Oda* which we have been examining comes to us from the pen of Eadmer, the precentor of Canterbury.

In his *Life of Oswald*,<sup>1</sup> Eadmer has followed Oswald's original biographer in introducing a preliminary description of his uncle Oda. It is interesting to compare this with his Life of Oda which we have just been considering.

He first tells the story of the restoration of the king's sword at the battle of Brunanburh: portions of the language used are identical with the story in his Life of Oda. Oswald's first biographer has no reference to this incident.

In the account of Edwy's mistress the original narrative is more closely followed (e. g. 'omissa coniugē sua'), and the woman is not identified with one of those who appear in the coronation story. Perpetual banishment to Ireland is spoken of; but no return to England, nor any brutality of treatment.

<sup>1</sup> Raine, *Historians of York*, ii. 2-5.

The story of the restoration of Christ Church, Canterbury, is improved by the statement that rain fell outside the city: but the period of three years is not given.

The bleeding of the Host is recorded, but no controversial use is made of the miracle.

These are the only incidents related. Nothing is said of the objections raised by Oda on his appointment to the see of Canterbury.

At a later point, when Oda is sending Oswald to Fleury, the original statement that this was the monastery whence the archbishop had himself received the monastic habit is worked up thus: 'Monachus loci illius sum. Habitum enim religionis, *ad onus regiminis sub quo gemo vocatus*, inde suscepi.' It is noteworthy that the words here italicized are absent from one of the early MSS.: it is possible that they are a later addition by Eadmer himself.

As Eadmer gives no hint that he has written a Life of Oda, it is probable that his Life of Oswald is the earlier work.

William of Malmesbury's account of Oda in the *Gesta Pontificum* (pp. 20-4) is almost entirely drawn from the Life of Oda by Eadmer. He does not fall into the mistake of making him bishop of Sherborne, but says expressly that he was bishop of Wilts with his seat at Ramsbury, 'permanente episcopo in Scireburna'; which looks like a conscious correction of the narrative before him. He plays on the 'rosa e spinis', saying: 'sicut ortu suo dumorum asperitatem eluctatur rosa, ita depressa feritate Danica, cuius gentis oriundus erat, in magnum specimen bonitatis evasit.' He states that Oda served for a time in warfare under King Edward the Elder: 'Eduardo aliquamdiu militans, nec multo post comam tonsus clericatum professus fuerat,' though nothing in the earlier accounts seems to suggest this. The story of King Athelstan's sword at the battle of Brunanburh is complicated by the fact that William had already told it (as he here says) in the *Gesta Regum* (i. 143 f.), but in a different form. There Anlaf, having made a night attack, surprises and slays a bishop, and then comes suddenly upon the king, who discovers that his sword has fallen out of its scabbard. After invoking God and Saint Aldhelm, he puts his hand to the scabbard again and finds the sword there: the sword, says William, is still preserved in the royal treasury in memory of the miracle. In the *Gesta Pontificum* this story is blended with the story of Oda's restoration of the sword as given by Eadmer.

Oda is made to cross the sea and fetch his habit from Fleury, when about to be made archbishop. His removal of Wilfrid's bones

from Ripon to Canterbury is recorded, and the poem which he had written on that saint is said to be the work of a certain Fridegodus. Then a synodal letter is quoted as an example of Oda's own literary powers. The statement that Oda recovered many properties of the archiepiscopal see, lost by the incursions of the Danes, leads on to the quotation of Osbern's eulogy, that England would never have ceased to mourn for Oda had not Dunstan been his successor—words taken from Osbern's Life of Dunstan. In telling the story of Ælfsin's insult to Oda's tomb, he makes the appearance of Oda the next night occur to Ælfsin himself, and not to one of his clergy. At a later point, in speaking of Dunstan (p. 30), he mentions the dove which settled on Oda's tomb, and the title given by Dunstan—*Odo se gode*.

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