

# Leeds Studies in English

New Series XLII

2011

Edited by

Alaric Hall



Editorial assistants  
Helen Price and Victoria Cooper

*Leeds Studies in English*

<[www.leeds.ac.uk/lse](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/lse)>

School of English  
University of Leeds

2011

# Reading Between the Lines: The Liturgy and Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and Homilies

Stewart Brookes

Source investigation has played a significant part in the study of Old English literature for many years, with scholars seeking to identify the biblical verses, patristic commentaries, and treatises upon which the Old English texts are based.<sup>1</sup> As Charles Wright recently commented, 'The recovery of [Latin] sources has been one of the great undertakings — and one of the great successes — of Old English literary scholarship since the late nineteenth century.'<sup>2</sup> Despite this emphasis upon Latin sources, little attention has been paid to the presence of occasional quotations in Latin in Ælfric's Old English saints' lives and homilies beyond the observation that the inclusion of Latin is a characteristic feature of Ælfric's later writings, a sign of a more educated target audience.<sup>3</sup> Certain questions occur to me about these Latin citations, however, that have not adequately been resolved by the explanations which have thus far been offered. First, why does Ælfric single out particular Latin lines for inclusion in his saints' lives and homilies? And secondly, why does he include Latin at all in texts which are otherwise written exclusively in the vernacular?<sup>4</sup>

## Looking behind the use of Latin quotations

In order to investigate Ælfric's inclusion of Latin quotations in his *Lives of Saints* collection and homilies I will begin by examining his 'Life of Cecilia'. This saint's life offers a useful

<sup>1</sup> An example of what has been achieved in the field of source studies is the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* project which set out to identify all 'written sources which were incorporated, quoted, translated or adapted anywhere in English or Latin texts which were written in Anglo-Saxon England (i.e. England to 1066), or by Anglo-Saxons in other countries': <<http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/whatisfontes.html>> [accessed 20 February 2012].

<sup>2</sup> Charles D. Wright, 'Old English Homilies and Latin Sources', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed. by Aaron J. Kleist (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 15–66 (pp. 15–16).

<sup>3</sup> M. R. Godden, 'The Development of Ælfric's Second Series of *Catholic Homilies*', *English Studies*, 54 (1973), 209–16 (p. 216).

<sup>4</sup> For Ælfric's saints' lives, see *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, Early English Text Society, o. s., 76, 82, 94, 114 (London: Oxford University Press, 1881–1900; repr. as two volumes 1966). Hereafter cited as *LS* with item number. For his homilies, see *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series: Text*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, Early English Text Society, s. s., 17 (London: Oxford University Press, 1997); *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series: Text*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, Early English Text Society, s. s., 5 (London: Oxford University Press, 1979); and *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by John C. Pope, Early English Text Society, s. s., 259, 260 (London: Oxford University Press, 1967–68). Hereafter cited as *CH* 1, *CH* 2, and *SH*, respectively. For a study of Ælfric's textual output, see *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. by Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

test-case because it is a vernacular translation which features Latin quotation in a way that is typical of many of the other pieces in the *Lives of Saints*. The ‘Life of Cecilia’ opens with Ælfric setting out the dilemma faced by Cecilia, a devout Christian from childhood, when she is told that she must marry the worthy, but heathen, Valerian. Cecilia has no way out and the wedding celebrations begin. In the description of the festivities we see the first of two Latin lines that Ælfric includes in his Old English text:

Pa betwux þam sangum and þam singalum dreamum, sang Cecilia symle þus Gode, ‘*Fiat cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum ut non confundar*’ (‘Beo min heorte and min lichama þurh God ungewemmed þæt ic ne beo gescynd’). And sang symle swa. (lines 16–19)<sup>5</sup>

Then in the midst of the songs and the constant melodies, Cecilia sang continually to God in this way, ‘*Let my heart and my body be unstained so that I might not be put to shame*’ (‘Let my heart and my body be undefiled through God so that I might not be put to shame.’) And she always sang in this way.

Shortly afterwards Cecilia and Valerian find themselves in bed together:

Cecilia sona, þæt snotere mæden, gespræc hire brydguman and þus to Gode tihte, ‘Eala þu min leofa man, ic þe mid lufe secge, ic hæbbe Godes encgel þe gehylt me on life, and gif þu wylt me gewemman, he went sona to ðe and mid graman þe slihð þæt þu sona ne leofast. (lines 20–24)

[I]mmediately Cecilia, the wise virgin, spoke to her bridegroom and thus allured him to God, ‘Oh, my beloved husband, I say to you with love, I have an angel of God who guards me while (I am) alive, and if you wish to defile me, he will turn to you at once and strike you in anger so that instantly you will not live.

Valerian does not expect this speech from his bride on their wedding night; nor do Cecilia’s words have the effect she wants, to ‘allure’ him to God. Rather, Valerian is afraid, demands to see evidence of this angel for himself and, suspecting that Cecilia has a secret lover, threatens to kill them both. Eventually, Cecilia persuades Valerian that he will not merit an angelic visitation until he has been baptised and has embraced Christianity. This accomplished, an angel appears to Valerian, bearing ‘*anum gyldenum gewrite*’ (‘a golden piece of writing’, line 40). We then see the second of the Latin lines:

On þam gewrite wæron þas word gelogode, ‘*Unus Deus, una fides, unum baptisma*’ (‘An ælmihtig God is and an geleafa and an fulluht’). (lines 42–44)

In the piece of writing were arranged these words, ‘*There is One God, one faith, one baptism*’ (‘There is one almighty God and one faith and one baptism’).

Ælfric goes on to describe the persecutions, and eventual martyrdom, suffered by Cecilia, Valerian, and others. Aside from these two lines in Latin, however, his narration is entirely in Old English. A source study approach would point to Psalms 118. 80 and Ephesians 4. 5, respectively, as the texts lying behind these quotations, adding the information that Ælfric’s Latin is of a non-Vulgate form.<sup>6</sup> This still leaves unanswered the question as to why Ælfric

<sup>5</sup> Quotations from Ælfric’s ‘Life of Cecilia’ are from *Ælfric’s Lives of the Virgin Spouses*, ed. and trans. by Robert K. Upchurch (University of Exeter Press: Exeter, 2007), pp. 72–85.

<sup>6</sup> For Psalm 118. 80, the Vulgate has ‘*fiat cor meum immaculatum in iustificationibus tuis ut non confundar*’ (‘Let my heart be undefiled in thy justifications, that I may not be confounded’), lacking ‘*et corpus*’ which is in Ælfric’s Latin, and adding ‘*in iustificationibus tuis*’ which Ælfric does not have. In the case of Ephesians 4. 5, the Vulgate has ‘*unus Dominus, una fides, unum baptisma*’ (‘One Lord, one faith, one baptism’), using ‘*Dominus*’ whereas Ælfric has ‘*deus*’. Several, though not all, of these differences can be found in the variants printed in the edition of the Vulgate used in this paper, *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatum Versionem*, ed. by Robertus Weber (Stuttgart: Deutsche

should choose to quote these two lines in Latin, and only these two lines, since the Latin does not appear to add anything to the understanding of the story.

## Latin quotation in other of Ælfric's writings

A strong clue as to Ælfric's motivation for including Latin in his vernacular translations is provided by a pair of comments in his adaptation of the Book of Judges. Summarising the biblical account in chapter four of the Book of Judges, Ælfric narrates the Israelite victory over Yabin and his army, and the demise of Sisera at the hands of Yael. He then pauses for a moment to draw his audience's attention to the fact that this event is alluded to in the Book of Psalms:

We secgað nu eac þæt we singað be þisum on urum sealmsange, swa swa hit sang Daudi þurh þone halgan gast, God heriende þus: *'Ecce inimici tui sonauerunt et qui oderunt [te] extollerunt capud. Fac illis sicut Madian et Sisera sicut Iabin in torrente Cison.'* Ðæt ys on urum gereorde, he cwæð to his Drihtene: 'Efnu nu Drihten þine fynd hlydað and þa þe þe hatiað ahebbað heora heafda. Do him swa swa Madian and swa swa Sisaran and swa swa Iabin æt þam burnan Cyson.'<sup>7</sup>

Also, we say now that we sing about this in our singing of the Psalms, just as David sang it inspired by the Holy Spirit, praising God in this way: *Your enemies have made a noise: and they that hate you have lifted up the head. Do to them as you did to Midian and to Sisera: as to Yabin at the brook of Kishon.* That is in our language, he said to his Lord: 'Even now, Lord, your enemies clamour and those who hate you raise up their heads. Do to them just as to Midian and just as to Sisera and just as to Yabin at the stream of Kishon.'

Up until this Latin verse, with its authorial explanation, the adaptation of the Book of Judges has been entirely in Old English. Ælfric explains that he quotes the Latin in order to underline the link between the Israelite victory in the Book of Judges and the reference to this in Psalm 82. 3, 10.<sup>8</sup> A few passages later, Ælfric once more quotes in Latin from this psalm (Psalms 82. 12), and again he draws attention to the fact that this is a Latin verse that is sung regularly as part of the recitation of the Psalms:

Be þisum we singað eac on þam foresædan sealme ongean Godes wiðerwinna þe willað æfre þwyres, swa swa se halga gast us sæde þurch Daudi: *'Pone principes eorum sicut Oreb, Zeb et Zebee et Psalmana.'* Ðæt is on Engliscre spræce, 'Sete ðu ure Drihten heora ealdormen swa swa Horeb and Zeb and swa swa Zebee and Salmana.'<sup>9</sup>

We also sing about this in the aforementioned Psalm against the adversaries of God, who always wish perversely, just as the Holy Spirit told us through David: *Make their princes like Oreb, and Zeb, and Zebee, and Salmana.* That is in English, 'Make you, our Lord, their leaders just like Oreb and Zeb and just like Zebah and Zalmunna'.

In contrast to his inclusion of Latin in the 'Life of Cecilia', there is no mystery here as to Ælfric's intention. He informs his audience that these Latin verses ought to be familiar from the liturgy: 'We secgað nu eac þæt we singað be þisum on urum sealmsange' ('Also, we say

Bibelgesellschaft, 1994). Translations from the Vulgate are from *The Holy Bible: Douay Version. Translated from the Latin Vulgate* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1956).

<sup>7</sup> *The Old English Heptateuch and Ælfric's Libellus de Veteri Testamento et Novo, vol. 1*, ed. by Richard Marsden, Early English Text Society, o. s., 330 (London: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 192–93, lines 91–98. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm numbers in this paper refer to the Vulgate's numbering. This psalm is Psalm 83 in the Hebrew original and many modern English translations.

<sup>9</sup> *Heptateuch*, ed. by Marsden, p. 194, lines 150–55. Emphasis is mine.

now that we sing about this in our singing of the Psalms’) and ‘Be þisum we singað eac on þam foresædan sealme’ (‘We also sing about this in the aforementioned psalm’). The need for this explanation is because the Book of Judges did not occupy a central place in the daily worship of the Anglo-Saxons and so the defeat of Sisera and Yabin would not have been well known. Similarly, the reference in Psalm 82 to Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna would not have been understood without the background story. That Ælfric includes these two, arguably obscure, references in his highly-selective adaptation of the Book of Judges is significant. The adaptation condenses whole chapters into a few succinct lines of summary and typically omits exotic names.<sup>10</sup> It seems evident that Ælfric’s reason for including these two episodes in his adaptation of the Book of Judges is because he wants to explain the verses from the Psalter for the monastic contingent in his audience. Governed by The Rule of St Benedict these monks followed a regime which stipulated that all 150 psalms should be recited each week, beginning afresh at the Night Office on Sunday.<sup>11</sup> The monks had to commit the entire psalter to memory and sing it every day, but understanding the context of what they were singing was another matter, even for those who were fluent in Latin. Recognising that the psalmist’s allusions to characters from the Book of Judges were likely to be lost on his audience, Ælfric cites these verses in Latin in order to aid the process of recognition and he explains their meaning in order to add greater significance to the recital of the liturgy.

For Ælfric, obedience stems from understanding, and he aims to combat ignorance with frequent explanations. He stresses the importance of understanding key liturgical texts in his homily for Ash Wednesday:

Ælc cristen man sceal cunnan his pater-noster, and his credan. Mid þam pater-nostre he sceal hin gebiddan, and mid þam credan he sceal his geleafan getrymman. Se lareow sceal secgan þam læwedum mannum þæt andgyt to þam pater-noster and to ðam credan, þæt hi witon hwæs hi biddað æt gode, and hu hi sceolon on god gelyfan.<sup>12</sup>

Every Christian man must know his Pater Noster, and his Creed. With the Pater Noster he shall pray, and with the Creed he shall confirm his faith. The master shall teach the unlearned men the meaning of the Pater Noster, and of the Creed that they may know what they ask of God, and how they are to believe in God.

Addressing this very requirement, Ælfric’s ‘De Dominica Oratione’ supplies a phrase-by-phrase analysis of the Latin in which the Pater Noster was recited.<sup>13</sup> Catering for both the unschooled and more learned, the homily provides a clear example of Ælfric’s commitment to explaining primary Latin texts such as the Pater Noster and the Psalms in the vernacular.

With Ælfric’s commitment to explaining primary texts in mind, I suggest that he includes the Latin lines in his ‘Life of Cecilia’ in order to provide the background to Latin verses with which his audience ought to have been familiar. The context in which an Anglo-Saxon congregation, particularly one which included the laity, would have been most likely to encounter Latin scripture was in the recitation of the liturgy. In his adaptation of the Book of Judges, Ælfric points explicitly to the liturgical source behind the Latin he quotes: ‘sealmsange’ (‘the singing of psalms’). As we have seen, he does not indicate the source of the Latin quotations in the ‘Life of Cecilia’ and so consideration of their place within the liturgy

<sup>10</sup> The omission of ‘superfluous’ names is Ælfric’s practice throughout his writings; see, for instance, his comments in ‘De Sancta Maria’, *CH* 2, 31. 6–10. Even in his translation of the Book of Genesis, where he generally follows the biblical text closely, Ælfric omits lengthy genealogies.

<sup>11</sup> *The Rule of St Benedict*, ed. and trans. by O. H. Blair (Fort Augustus: Abbey Press, 1948), ch. 17.

<sup>12</sup> *LS* 12, lines 261–67.

<sup>13</sup> *CH* 1, 19. In *CH* 1, 20, ‘De Fide Catholica’, Ælfric turns his attention to the Creed.

is required. Conveniently, the liturgical sources known to Ælfric are listed in a letter that he wrote to Wulfstan, outlining the service books required for effective prayer as part of his effort to educate those with ecclesiastical responsibility:

Mæssepreost sceal habban mæsseboc and pistelboc, and sangboc and rædingboc and saltere and handboc, and penitentialem and gerim.<sup>14</sup>

A mass-priest must have a massbook and a Book of the Epistles, and an antiphoner and a lectionary and a Book of Psalms and a manual and a penitential and a computus.

After examining the items in this and the corresponding lists in Ælfric's Old English 'Letter to Wulfsig' and his Latin 'Letter to Wulfstan', I believe that the service book known as the antiphoner ('sangboc') is the liturgical text which explains Ælfric's use of Latin in his 'Life of Cecilia'.<sup>15</sup> Antiphoners contained the text, and often musical notation, for the sung parts of the Divine Office (the daily cycle of liturgical prayer), gradually coming to include hymns, responsories, versicles, and psalms, in addition to the antiphons which give the book its name.<sup>16</sup> In his guide to the liturgical observances of the monks, the 'Letter to the Monks of Eynsham', Ælfric makes frequent reference to the antiphoner. For example: 'Nam his tribus noctibus canimus sicut antiphonarium nos docet' ('In these three nights we sing as the antiphoner instructs us') and 'tribus psalmis totidemque lectionibus cum responsoriis agitur nocturna laus, ut in antiphonario titulatur' ('The Office of Nocturns is said with three psalms and the same number of readings and responsories, as in the antiphoner').<sup>17</sup> It is clear that Ælfric assumes that the monks will have ready access to a copy of the antiphoner for the precise details about the various psalms and chants that he mentions.

The antiphoner was of fundamental importance to the functioning of monastic life: the antiphoner's chants were designed to complement the readings from the life of the particular saint being commemorated, and the completion of the lection was signalled by a sung antiphon and response. Examination of the kind of antiphoner to which Ælfric refers is complicated by the fact that no complete antiphoner has survived from the Anglo-Saxon period. Nevertheless, it is still possible to get some idea of the contents of Anglo-Saxon antiphoners by turning to examples from earlier periods which are likely to have formed the basis from which Anglo-Saxon service books would have been constructed. One such exemplar is the Compiègne Antiphoner (*Liber Responsalis*), a mid ninth-century compilation of antiphons and responses which was erroneously attributed to Gregory the Great.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in Altenglischer und Lateinischer Fassung*, ed. by B. Fehr, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa, 9 (Hamburg: Grand, 1914), Ælfric's 'First Old English Letter for Wulfstan', p. 126, 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics*, ed. by Fehr, 'Letter to Wulfsig', p. 13, l. 52, and 'Letter to Wulfstan', p. 51, l. 137. For the identification of the 'sangboc' with the antiphoner, see Helmut Gneuss, 'Liturgical Books in Anglo-Saxon England and their Old English Terminology', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 91–141 (pp. 103–4). Close discussion of the function of service books, and a detailed account of the extant witnesses to these service books from the Old English period, is provided by the essays in *The Liturgical Books of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Richard W. Pfaff, Old English Newsletter: Subsidia, 23 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1995). See also, Richard Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> J. E. Krochalis and E. A. Matter, 'Manuscripts of the Liturgy', in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. by Thomas J. Heffernan and E. A. Matter, 2nd edn (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2005), pp. 393–430 (p. 395).

<sup>17</sup> *Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, ed. and trans. by Christopher A. Jones, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 24 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 144–45 and 138–39.

<sup>18</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 17436, c. 860–80. For ease of reference, I cite from *Patrologia Latina* 78, cols.

The first of the two Latin lines contained in Ælfric's 'Life of Cecilia', 'Fiat cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum ut non confundar' ('Let my heart and my body be unstained so that I might not be put to shame'), can be found in the Compiègne Antiphoner in the chants assigned for the celebration of Cecilia's feast day. It occurs twice as an antiphon and once as a sung versal, though neither is an exact match for the Latin Ælfric quotes.<sup>19</sup> The second, 'Unus deus, una fides, unum baptisma' ('There is one God, one faith, one baptism'), does not appear in the Compiègne Antiphoner. It is, however, present in the Sarum Missal, which provides a late witness to the liturgical tradition.<sup>20</sup> The wording of the first Latin line in the Sarum text matches the Latin formulation used by Ælfric, suggesting a relationship with a common source.<sup>21</sup> The evidence from these two antiphoners supports the theory that Ælfric chose to include these two Latin lines in his Old English 'Life of Cecilia' because they were those that would have been repeatedly heard by his audience on the saint's day, sung with musical elaboration which would have made the Latin memorable. While I have chosen Cecilia as my example, the same case for the inclusion of Latin can be made for many of the other pieces in the *Lives of Saints*. However, neither the Compiègne or the Sarum texts provide a complete source for the Latin lines cited by Ælfric in his *Lives of Saints*. For example, the Latin line included in Ælfric's Life of Agatha, 'Mentem sanctam spontaneam, honorem deo, et patrie liberationem' ('A mind voluntarily holy, an honour to God, and deliverance to her country'; *LS* 8, line 204), appears in the chants for Agatha in the Hereford Breviary but not in the Compiègne or Sarum texts.<sup>22</sup> This is unsurprising because variation amongst service books is to be expected: the liturgy was not a fixed entity, and antiphoners contained patterns of chants and textual accretions which reflected localised customs. Accordingly, I am not positing any particular antiphoner as having been known by Ælfric. Rather, I am situating his choice of Latin lines within a liturgical tradition which may or may not be reflected by an individual service book.<sup>23</sup>

It is not only antiphoners which provide evidence that a significant proportion of the Latin quotations that Ælfric includes in his *Lives of Saints* can be explained by situating them within

641–850. See also R. J. Hesbert, *Corpus Antiphonalium Officii*, *Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta, series maior*, 7–12, 6 vols (Rome: Herder, 1963–79). Hereafter referred to as *CAO* with an antiphon number. The association with Gregory the Great is examined in J. W. McKinnon, 'Gregorius Presul Composuit Hunc Libellum Musicae Artis', in *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, ed. by Heffernan and Matter, pp. 613–32. McKinnon suggests that the compilation of the book took place during the papacy of Gregory II (715–31), but that English scholars in the Carolingian court mistakenly attributed it to Gregory the Great (590–604) because of their recognition of his role in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons (p. 632). Discussion from the point of view of Old English research is provided in Susan Rankin, 'The Liturgical Background of the Old English Advent Lyrics: A Reappraisal', in *Learning and Literature*, ed. by Lapidge and Gneuss, pp. 317–40 (319–20).

<sup>19</sup> The antiphon is 'Fiat domine cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum ut non confundar' (*Patrologia Latina* 78, cols. 816A, 816B), but has the word 'domine' which is not in Ælfric's Latin. The versal is 'Fiat cor meum immaculatum ut non confundar' (*Patrologia Latina* col. 817A), omitting 'et corpus' which is found in both Ælfric and the preceding antiphon. As noted above in footnote 6, the wording of the Vulgate does not match that used by Ælfric.

<sup>20</sup> *Breviarum ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum*, ed. by F. Procter and C. Wordsworth, 3 vols (Cambridge: Almae Matris Academiae, 1886), III, 1083.

<sup>21</sup> *Sarum*, ed. by Procter and Wordsworth, III, 1080 (response); iii. 1082 (antiphon).

<sup>22</sup> *The Hereford Breviary, edited from the Rouen edition of 1505, with collation of Manuscripts*, ed. by Walter Howard Frere and Langton E. G. Brown, Publications of the Henry Bradshaw Society, 26, 40, 46, 3 vols (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1911), II, 110. *CAO* 3746.

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted, however, that there is some correspondence between the chants listed by Ælfric in his 'Letter to the Monks of Eynsham' and those in the Compiègne Antiphoner; see J. R. Hall, 'Some Liturgical Notes on Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham', *Downside Review*, 93 (1975), 297–303 (p. 299).

a liturgical context. The Book of Psalms also provides important support for this idea because it is the source for just over a third of the Latin lines that Ælfric cites in the *Lives of Saints*. As noted earlier, the Book of Psalms would have been familiar to monks through the daily cycle of recitation. The particular verses that Ælfric selected from the Psalms to include in Latin in his saints' lives, however, are often of more direct relevance to the liturgy than this because they are those which played a central part in the services. For instance, in his 'Life of George', Ælfric has George defiantly proclaim Psalm 69.2 when strapped to a wheel, about to be tortured by the Emperor Datian: 'Deus in adiutorium meum intende; domine, ad adiuuandum me festina' ('O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me': *LS* 14, line 90). The request for urgent divine assistance fits the narrative well enough, but the reason that Ælfric opts to have George speak in Latin, rather than just Old English, is because Psalm 69.2 would have been known to the monks in his audience because it was chanted as the opening for each of the monastic hours.<sup>24</sup> Not only that, but as we see from Ælfric's directions in the 'Letter to the Monks of Eynsham' (§4, §26, and §47), this verse was prominent at other sections of the liturgy too. On the surface, the decision to include Psalm 69.2 in Latin in his 'Life of George' provides an opportunity to explain the meaning of this familiar Latin formula. Ælfric may well have intended to do more than that, however, because putting the oft-chanted words in George's mouth creates an associative identification between the saint and the daily routines of the monks. With an awareness of this associative process, we can return to Ælfric's portrayal of Cecilia at her wedding feast: 'Pa betwux þam sangum and þam singalum dreamum, sang Cecilia symle þus Gode, "*Fiat cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum ut non confundar*" [...] And sang symle swa.' ('Then in the midst of the songs and the constant melodies, Cecilia sang continually to God in this way, "*Let my heart and my body be unstained so that I might not be put to shame*" [...] And she always sang in this way'). The repetition of the adverb 'symle' ('continually, always') highlights Cecilia's constant devotion to prayer, providing both mirror and paradigm for the monks with their unending regime of chants.

Not every one of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* includes Latin which relates to the liturgy. Noteworthy examples of this absence of Latin liturgical material are Ælfric's lives of Agnes and Martin: both of these saints had a set of antiphons associated with their feast days and so it is surprising that Ælfric's does not incorporate this. What this absence of Latin may suggest is that Ælfric's did not have at his disposal liturgical chants for these saints, offering us a potential window into the content of his antiphoner. Along similar lines, it seems possible that the reason that there is no liturgical Latin quotation in Ælfric's lives of saints Æthelthryth, Swithun, and Oswald is because these three saints were comparatively recent, and from England, and so did not have an established Latin liturgy associated with them.<sup>25</sup> In this regard, one may note Ælfric's comment in the 'Letter to the Monks of Eynsham' that the correct chants should be sung for the feasts of all the saints throughout the year, but if these are not available, then other appropriate ones could be adapted in line with their usual practice (§73). Clearly, it

<sup>24</sup> A. Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), §403 and §407.

<sup>25</sup> As regards their English provenance, note Ælfric's defensive tone at the end of his 'Life of Edmund' (*LS* 32, lines 259–263): 'Nis Angelcynn bedæled Drihtnes halgena, þonne on Engalanda licgaþ swilce halgan swylce þæs halga cyning is, and Cupberht se eadiga, and sancte Æþeldryð on Elig, and eac hire swustor, ansunde on lichaman, geleafan to trymminge' ('The English nation is not deprived of the Lord's saints, since in the English land lie such saints as this holy king, and the blessed Cuthbert, and Saint Æthelthryth in Ely, and also her sister, incorrupt in body, for the confirmation of the faith.')



was not uncommon for the monks to find that they did not have chants for the saints being commemorated. Even so, setting aside the anomalies, there appears to be sufficient evidence to point to a link between the Latin lines in the *Lives of Saints* and the liturgy, with the Latin lines Ælfric quotes being those which would have been heard in the antiphonal chants for the saints' day in question. By including the Latin in his Old English adaptations, Ælfric points to the link between the narratives of the saints' lines and the services commemorating them.

## **The Cotton-Corpus legendary**

Having argued that the liturgy served as inspiration and source for the Latin that Ælfric includes in his saints' lives, it seems appropriate to consider the question of the source materials that he drew upon for his *Lives of Saints*. As Patrick Zettel demonstrated, the Cotton-Corpus Legendary — or, to be more precise, something similar to it in scope and content — is likely to have served as the Latin source for many of Ælfric's saints' lives.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, when Ælfric quotes lines in Latin in his *Lives of Saints* one might expect the Latin wording to match that of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary source text. For the lives of Cecilia and Agatha, the Cotton-Corpus Legendary contains a good match. This is not, however, always the case: in the 'Life of Julian and Basilissa' the Cotton-Corpus Legendary has Psalm 67. 29 as 'Confirma hoc deus, quod operaris in nobis' ('O God confirm what you have wrought in us') whereas Ælfric's Latin is 'Confirma hoc deus, quod operatus es in nobis'. Ælfric's version of this psalm is that found in the liturgy (e.g. CAO 1873 and 7990) and it would seem that he deliberately chose the liturgical (non-Vulgate) form over that found in his source. In light of this, one may conclude that when there is agreement between the Latin lines quoted by Ælfric and those found in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary (as with Cecilia and Agatha), it is because the Cotton-Corpus Legendary is using the form which Ælfric knew from the liturgy. This does not challenge the primacy of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary as Ælfric's source for his *Lives of Saints*, but opens up a new avenue of research when considering his treatment of his source materials.

## **Latin in the Homilies**

The use of Latin in Ælfric's homilies is often more extensive than in the *Lives of Saints*. In a number of the *Catholic Homilies*, for example, Ælfric quotes many lines of Latin taken from the gospel reading that the homily discusses, dissecting and expounding the meaning of that Latin line by line. The inclusion of Latin becomes a more frequent feature in Ælfric's later homilies, leading Malcolm Godden to argue that Ælfric's increased inclusion of biblical quotations in Latin demonstrates that Ælfric anticipated a more sophisticated audience for the Second Series of *Catholic Homilies* than for the First Series. We can even see this process in action, for when revising the Second Series of homilies, Ælfric appears to add Latin versions of biblical verses in two places which originally only had his Old English rendering.<sup>27</sup> In the homilies written towards the end of Ælfric's career, quotation in Latin became even more common. Despite this general trend, there is still much variation between individual homilies.

<sup>26</sup> Patrick H. Zettel, 'Ælfric's Hagiographic Sources and the Latin Legendary Preserved in B. L. Ms. Cotton Nero E1 + C.C.C.C. Ms. 9 and Other Manuscripts' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford, 1979), p. 43; Patrick H. Zettel, 'Saints' Lives in Old English: Latin Manuscripts and Vernacular Accounts: Ælfric', *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 17–37.

<sup>27</sup> Godden, 'The Development of Ælfric's Second Series of *Catholic Homilies*', p. 216.

Some homilies contain several quotations in Latin (e.g. *CH* 1, 19; *CH* 2, 20; *CH* 2, 22; and *CH* 2, 24), while others — even those judged to be composed toward the end of Ælfric’s career — do not contain any Latin at all, aside from a rubric assigning the liturgical date (e.g. *CH* 1, 29; *CH* 2, 33; and *SH* 12). In some ways this variation is not unexpected because the homilies encompass a variety of genres, and vary between being didactic, exegetical, and hagiographic. The heterogenous nature of the homilies makes them a particularly productive corpus to examine through the lens of the Latin liturgical cycle.

As with the *Lives of Saints*, the texts of the liturgy provide an explanation not only for Ælfric’s inclusion of many of the Latin lines in his homilies, but also for their wording. For example, in his homily on the Nativity of Christ, Ælfric uses the liturgical Latin form ‘gloria in excelsis deo’ in preference to the Vulgate’s ‘gloria in altissimis deo’:

Þa færlice æfter þæs engles spræce wearð gesewen micel meniu heofenlices werodes. god heriendra and syngendra: ‘*Gloria in excelsis deo. et in terra pax hominibus bone uoluntatis*’; þæt is on urum gereorde: ‘Sy wuldor gode on heannyssum. and on eorðan sib mannum. þam ðe beoð godes willan. and þa englas þa gewiton of heora gesihðe to heofonum.’<sup>28</sup>

Then suddenly after the angel’s speech, there was seen a great multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and singing ‘*Glory in the highest to God. And on earth peace to men of good will*’; that is in our language ‘Glory to God in the highest and peace to men who are of good will.’ And the angels then departed from their sight to heaven.

The ‘Gloria’, as the hymn is frequently called, had a prominent part in the liturgy, and it makes sense for Ælfric to cite it in its familiar liturgical form — as it would be sung and heard — in order to avoid confusion upon the part of the audience for his homily.<sup>29</sup> An Old English homily on this topic provides an ideal opportunity to supply the narrative context for the frequently-repeated ‘Gloria’ chant, and the liturgical prominence of the ‘Gloria’ explains Ælfric’s inclusion of the line in Latin, twice, in his homily on the Nativity of Christ.<sup>30</sup> Ælfric is consistent in his use of this non-Vulgate wording, and thus we see him quote the ‘Gloria’ in this form when addressing his monks in his ‘Letter to the Monks of Eynsham’ (e.g. §16, §22, §26, and §52) and also throughout his homilies.<sup>31</sup>

A significant proportion of Ælfric’s exegetical homilies open with a Latin quotation. These Latin openings are often very brief, sometimes no more than a few words, and have not attracted sustained scholarly interest because it has been assumed that the Latin that Ælfric includes is simply a small extract taken from the gospel reading of the day. That assumption is lent credence by Ælfric establishing the connection between a particular homily and the gospel text with linking phrases such as ‘þe nu geræd wæs’ (‘which was now read’) and ‘on ðisum godspelle þe we nu gehierdon’ (‘in this gospel which we now heard’).<sup>32</sup> These phrases clearly indicate that the homily is designed to be read directly after the daily reading from the gospel to which it refers. A second, related scholarly assumption has been that the Latin Ælfric quotes is taken from the Vulgate. John C. Pope, for example, asserts that ‘Ælfric normally quotes the

<sup>28</sup> *CH* 1, 2, 29, 129–30. My emphasis. See Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, Early English Text Society, s. s., 18 (London: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 16. The biblical verse is Luke 2. 14.

<sup>29</sup> The ‘Gloria’ occurs frequently in the antiphoner, e.g. *CAO* 2946 and *CAO* 6858a.

<sup>30</sup> The second instance is omitted in *CUL* Gg. 3. 28, which only has the verse in Old English on the first occasion.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, *CH* 1, 2, 29, 129–30; *CH* 1, 38, 113–15; *CH* 2, 5, 233, 255, 281.

<sup>32</sup> *CH* 1, 17, 3 and *CH* 1, 10, 3. See also, *CH* 1, 11, 3, and many further examples.

Vulgate' and that Ælfric's 'pericopes and other extended translations from the gospels clearly follow the Vulgate, though one cannot always choose among the minor variants.'<sup>33</sup>

When comparing the Latin that Ælfric cites in his homilies with the Vulgate, it becomes apparent that some of the passages match reasonably well, but there are a number which display significant levels of variation. The examples below demonstrate the nature of this divergence:

1) postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis MARIAE. et Reliqua;

(CH 1, 9. 3, 'Purificatione Sanctae Mariae': 'After the days of the purification of Mary.') et postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis eius secundum legem Mosi tulerunt illum in Hierusalem ut sisterent eum Domino (Luke 2. 22: 'And after the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord'.)

2) Cum turba plurima conueniret ad Iesum. Et reliqua

(CH 2, 6. 1, 'Dominica in Sexagesima': 'When a very great multitude was gathered to Jesus, and the remainder.')

cum autem turba plurima conueniret et de civitatibus properarent ad eum dixit per similitudinem (Luke 8. 4: 'And when a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities unto him, he spoke by a similitude.')

3) Amen, dico uobis, nisi abundauerit, et reliqua (SH 15, 'Dominica VII Post Pentecosten', line 0: 'Amen, I say to you, unless abound, and the remainder.')

dico enim uobis quia nisi abundauerit iustitia uestra plus quam scribarum et Pharisaeorum non intrabitis in regnum caelorum (Matthew 5. 20: 'For I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.')

4) Ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia; ipsi gloria in secula (SH 21, 'De Falsis Diis', lines 4–5: 'From him are all things, and through him are all things, and in him are all things; to him be glory forever.')

quoniam ex ipso et per ipsum et in ipso omnia ipsi gloria in saecula (Romans 11. 36: 'For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things; to him be glory for ever.')

In the first example above, Ælfric's Latin is close to that found in the Vulgate, with the only (noteworthy) difference being the presence of 'Mariae'. The second example also presents a reasonable match between Ælfric's text and the Vulgate; the absence of the Vulgate's 'autem' from Ælfric's version does not constitute enough of a divergence to suspect a non-Vulgate origin. As with the first example, there is the addition of a named indirect object ('ad Iesum') which is not present in the Vulgate. The third example has the additional word 'Amen' and omits the Vulgate's 'enim', both of which could be seen as within the range of textual variation that is found in texts that are derived from the Vulgate. The final example, from Ælfric's homily 'De Falsis Diis', exhibits the greatest differences between Ælfric's Latin text and the Vulgate and is suggestive of a non-Vulgate source text. In his edition of 'De Falsis Diis', Pope evinces surprise at Ælfric's departure from what he regards as the primacy of the Vulgate text and locates equivalent Latin wording in Augustine's *De Vera Religione* and *De Doctrina Christiana*.<sup>34</sup> However, Pope remains sceptical that either of these works of Augustine served

<sup>33</sup> *Supplementary Homilies*, ed. by Pope, pp. 713 and 152. This view is accepted by James E. Cross, 'The Literate Anglo-Saxon: On Sources and Disseminations', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 58 (1972), 67–100 (p. 89), who likewise argues for the primacy of the Vulgate, though he notes the desirability of looking for Old Latin influences.

<sup>34</sup> It is not unusual for Augustine to quote older Latin, pre-Vulgate forms of the Bible in his writings.

as a direct source for Ælfric, noting that he cannot help suspecting that Ælfric lifted the entire Latin opening to ‘De Falsis Diis’ from a Latin sermon of the Augustinian era but that he is unable find a text to support this hypothesis.<sup>35</sup>

Comparison of Ælfric’s Latin citations with the Vulgate text leads to two findings. First, although the wording of Ælfric’s Latin quotations is often close to the Vulgate, it nonetheless contains minor differences, with these differences sometimes being of enough significance to suggest a non-Vulgate source. Secondly, a number of the Latin verses that Ælfric quotes have been altered (e.g. by adding a subject or an object to the sentence) in order to clarify their sense outside of the context of the biblical narrative from which they have been extracted. After examining potential biblical sources, such as Vulgate texts and older Latin bibles, it is clear that there is no precise match with the wording of Ælfric’s Latin and that this divergence cannot be explained away as the result of variation amongst Latin bibles. When looking at liturgical material, however, Ælfric’s Latin formulas can be found. For each of the examples cited above, material can be located in the antiphonaries which exactly matches that quoted by Ælfric:

1) postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis MARIAE. et Reliqua; (*CH* 1, 9. 3, ‘Purificatione Sanctae Mariae’: ‘After the days of the purification of Mary, and the remainder.’)

Postquam impleti sunt dies purgationis Mariae tulerunt illum in Jerusalem ut sisterent eum domino (*CAO* 7307a, ‘Purificatio Mariae’: ‘After the days of the purification of Mary were fulfilled, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord. )

2) Cum turba plurima conueniret ad Iesum. Et reliqua (*CH* 2, 6. 1, ‘Dominica in Sexagesima’: ‘When a very great multitude was gathered to Jesus, and the remainder.’)

Cum turba plurima conueniret ad Iesum et de civitatibus properarent ad eum dixit per similitudinem exiit qui seminat seminare semen suum (*CAO* 2040, ‘Dom. Sexagesimae’: ‘When a very great multitude was gathered to Jesus and hastened out of the cities, He spoke by a similitude: ‘the sower went out to sow his seed’.)

3) Amen, dico vobis, nisi abundauerit, et reliqua (*SH* 15, ‘Dominica VII Post Pentecosten’, line 0: ‘Amen, I say to you, unless abound, and the remainder.’)

Amen dico vobis nisi abundauerit iustitia vestra plus quam scribarum et pharisaeorum non intrabitis in regnum caelorum alleluia (*CAO* 1379, ‘Dom. 7 Post Pent.’: ‘Amen. I say to you unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Halleluyah.’)

4) Ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia; ipsi gloria in secula (*SH* 21, ‘De Falsis Diis’, lines 4–5.: ‘From him are all things, and through him are all things, and in him are all things; to him be glory forever.’)

Ex quo omnia per quem omnia in quo omnia ipsi gloria in saecula (*CAO* 2751, ‘De Trinitate’: ‘From him are all things, and through him are all things, and in him are all things; to him be glory forever.’)

Given this exact match in wording, there seems no doubt that Ælfric is quoting his Latin openings to the homilies from an antiphoner. Each of the gospel readings would have been accompanied by an appropriate antiphon or response, and it is these which Ælfric repeats, in Latin, in his homilies. This is not simply a question of identifying a source, however; the importance of this is recognising that Ælfric deliberately quotes from the antiphoner in order to reinforce the relationship between the liturgy sung in the service and his homily which is read after it. Having established that the Latin openings to the homilies are directly drawn from the liturgical chants which accompanied the readings from the gospels, it becomes clear

<sup>35</sup> *Supplementary Homilies*, ed. by Pope, p. 713.

that Ælfric consistently and consciously introduces material of a non-Vulgate, older Latin, origin into his homilies. While the antiphons are often of non-Vulgate origin, however, it does not necessarily follow that the readings from the biblical texts themselves were non-Vulgate. Accordingly, even though antiphonal chants may be cited in older Latin forms in the openings to Ælfric's homilies, the main body of his homilies often rely upon the Vulgate.<sup>36</sup>

## Questions of audience

Finally, I would like to address the question of whether the presence of Latin citations offers sufficient evidence to justify assumptions that the *Lives* are aimed at a more educated audience, learned in Latin. Ælfric was trained at Winchester in a monastic setting which cared also for the laity, and so he often writes with a mixed congregation in mind.<sup>37</sup> If the inclusion of quotations in Latin had been intended for a 'learned' few, the Old English translations which accompany each Latin line would have been redundant. Rather, Ælfric sets his sights upon those who might hear the responses sung in Latin but not necessarily understand their meaning or their relevance to the saints' lives being celebrated. As argued above, Ælfric includes the Latin in his Old English adaptations of these lives in order to provide the background information and ensure that the sung responses are more clearly understood. Through such explanation, he is able to enhance the experience of all those participating in services and add to the significance of the recital of the liturgy.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have pointed to some of the ways in which an understanding of Ælfric's educative project can be teased out from a close study of his inclusion of Latin quotations when these are viewed in the wider context of the medieval Latin liturgical cycle. Ælfric chose to include Latin verses in his Old English *Lives of Saints* and homilies that would have been familiar to his audience from the antiphons and responses in the liturgy. Not every Latin quotation can be explained in this way, but what is clear is that we have not yet uncovered the full significance of Ælfric's linguistic choices and there is still scope for a careful reconsideration of the function of Latin quotation in Ælfric's writings. It may be possible, and I propose this somewhat tentatively, to reconstruct the antiphoner that Ælfric had before him (or recalled from memory) when composing his homilies. The evidence for the homilies is much stronger than that for the *Lives of Saints* and it is probable that this is because the antiphons associated with the saints' lives were not so firmly established at that time or, at least, Ælfric did not have access to them in his antiphoner.

<sup>36</sup> Pope argues that Ælfric 'presumably turned to his own copy of the Latin Bible' when translating extended sections (*Supplementary Homilies*, p. 152). The presence of quotations in Latin makes it much easier to distinguish between variant Latin sources, of course. When our sole evidence for those Latin sources are Ælfric's translations into Old English, then the situation is not as clear cut.

<sup>37</sup> Mary Clayton, 'Homiliaries and Preaching in Anglo-Saxon England', *Peritia*, 4 (1985), 207–42.

Stewart Brookes, Reading Between the Lines: The Liturgy and Ælfric's Lives of Saints and Homilies, pp. 17-28. Megan Cavell, Looming Danger and Dangerous Looms: Violence and Weaving in Exeter Book Riddle 56, pp. 29-42. Carol F. Heffernan, The Nun's Priest's Identity and the Purpose of his Tale, pp. 43-52. Bernard Mees, The Yew Rune, Yogh and Yew, pp. 53-74. Hiroshi Ogawa, Sententia in Narrative Form: Ælfric's Narrative Method in the Hagiographical Homily on St Martin, pp. 75-92. Olga Timofeeva, Infinitival Complements with the Verb (ge)don in Old English: Latin Influence Revisited, pp. 93-108. The prose saint's life is defined here in its widest possible sense as any narrative text primarily concerned with a saint who is assigned a feast day. It is not my intention to investigate the place of such texts in the Anglo-Saxon liturgy and consequently this article does not attempt to make any distinctions between lives clearly written for different purposes. Outside the Catholic Homilies and the Lives of Saints, there are two further texts assigned to the *Sancwrale*. The first is St Vincent (LS XXXVII), the second is a homily for the Nativity of Mary the Virgin (Assmann III).  
Jl. Reading Between the Lines: The Liturgy and Ælfric's Lives of Saints and Homilies. Leeds Studies in English New Series XLII 2011: Why does Ælfric single out particular Latin lines for inclusion in his saints' lives and homilies? And why does he include Latin at all in texts which are otherwise written exclusively in the vernacular? Leeds Studies in English New Series XLII 2011: Why does Ælfric single out particular Latin lines for inclusion in his saints' lives and homilies? And why does he include Latin at all in texts which are otherwise written exclusively in the vernacular? Save to Library.