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Article

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# Bede, St Cuthbert and the Science of Miracles

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Whilst Bede's *Prose Life of St Cuthbert* has been several times edited and translated, and has been discussed together with his historical writings, his earlier, metrical, version of the *Life* has received considerably less attention. Bede worked on his *Lives* of Cuthbert during the periods when he was also writing his fundamental works on computus and natural philosophy. A central argument of this article is that Bede's work on these 'scientific' subjects had a significant impact on his ideas concerning sanctity and the miraculous, and that this gave him a unique approach as a hagiographer.

Bede's *Metrical Life of St Cuthbert* is accepted as an early work, although it is not precisely dated. Michael Lapidge's analysis of the manuscript evidence has shown that Bede in fact produced both an early version, c705, and a later revision whose date is unclear.<sup>1</sup> The early version was necessarily composed after the appearance of the *Anonymous Life of St Cuthbert*, written at Lindisfarne soon after Cuthbert's death, since Bede's poem follows the prose account quite closely.<sup>2</sup> The first oddity about Bede's version, however, is that it nowhere mentions the existence of the prose original. This is puzzling, not only because it was Bede's usual practice to give the sources of his information, but also because naming the witnesses to the miracles of the saints was already established as important within the growing genre of hagiography. The simplest explanation is perhaps that Bede expected that readers of his poem would already know the prose text on which it was based. As has been pointed out before there was precedent for creating a verse work as a complement to a prose treatment of the same subject. Lapidge has demonstrated Bede's use of Arator's sixth-century works on Sts Peter and Paul as a model.<sup>3</sup> However, only St Martin of Tours had previously been the subject of

both a prose and a verse handling of his life and miracles; and this, together with the facts that the *Anonymous Life of St Cuthbert* was the first life of an Anglo-Saxon saint to be produced, and one of the earliest hagiographies to be composed in Anglo-Saxon England, suggests that Cuthbert was being placed speedily and with pomp amongst the ranks of the established saints.

That Bede felt a personal link to St Cuthbert is shown in his letter to the priest, John, to whom he sent a copy of the revised version of his poem.<sup>4</sup> This letter was used in most surviving manuscripts of the *Metrical Life* as a preface to the work, since the poem does not have one of the usual type. The identity of John has never been established, but the letter shows that he was personally known to Bede, and was about to undertake a journey to ‘the gate of the blessed Apostles’. It appears that Bede and John had talked about Cuthbert and his miraculous powers; and Bede mentions that he himself has been granted the healing of his tongue whilst singing about the saintly bishop’s miracles.<sup>5</sup> Whether the singing here is literal, or whether Bede is referring to the time during which he was working on his poem, is unclear; but what is more important is the fact that Bede feels a real, and even emotional, devotion to Cuthbert. This personal experience is mentioned in the context of a statement that Bede is collecting accounts of other recent miracles, and that he already hopes to write another work, in order to record the ongoing deeds of Cuthbert.

Bede’s personal devotion to Cuthbert thus seems clear, as does his determination to record and to promulgate the miracles of the ‘local hero’ who is also a great, new addition to the pantheon of saints. However, none of this entirely explains Bede’s omission of any mention of his main source, nor his apparent failure to inform Bishop Eadfrith and the Lindisfarne community (who were the possessors of Cuthbert’s relics and responsible for the production of the *Anonymous Life*) of his enterprise. The evidence for this omission comes from the Prologue to Bede’s later *Prose Life of St Cuthbert*, which is dedicated to ‘the holy and most blessed lord and father, Bishop Eadfrith, and to all of the congregation of brothers who serve Christ on the island of Lindisfarne’.<sup>6</sup> This is a prologue of the established type, setting out the credentials of the work and explaining its origin; but it is one with a slight twist. Bede places heavy emphasis on the role of Eadfrith and his monks, noting that they have commissioned the preface as well as his book itself.

Their direct involvement with the work is detailed, with Bede stating that he has ‘presumed’ neither to record anything about Cuthbert nor to issue his work for copying without subjecting it to their scrutiny. He says that he has taken great care to collect the facts about Cuthbert ‘with the help of those who knew him’, and has given the names of key witnesses. Moreover, he showed his notes to Herefrith, a priest who knew Cuthbert well, and to others with personal knowledge. Finally, the draft was read and discussed by a committee of experts for two days at Lindisfarne.<sup>7</sup> The submission of his work to the authority of Lindisfarne is thus clear; and yet Bede writes as if his material were all the result of his own investigations, and once again makes no mention of the *Anonymous Life*.<sup>8</sup>

This ambiguity continues. On the one hand, while no alterations to Bede’s text were required, the new work is issued under the authority of the bishop and community of Lindisfarne. On the other, Bede nevertheless establishes his status as author by recording that, whilst he submitted his work to the Lindisfarne committee, and would have changed it if necessary, he refused to add ‘many other things’ about Cuthbert which those at the Lindisfarne meeting wanted to be mentioned. His reason was that it would be ‘hardly fitting or proper’ to insert new material at this stage into a work which had been so fully thought out and perfected (*deliberato ac perfecto*). The work was thus passed and approved for dissemination and copying, under the joint auspices of Bede, Eadfrith, and the meeting at Lindisfarne, but with Bede established as author. It is after all this has been set out, and after his graceful request for the prayers of the Lindisfarne community, that Bede mentions his earlier, poetic version of Cuthbert’s life. Bede writes as if Eadfrith were unaware of the *Metrical Life*, and says that it was composed at the request of ‘our brethren’ (presumably those of Wearmouth and Jarrow). It is shorter than the new, approved version, and in heroic verse, but handles the material in the same order as the new work. Having opened the Prologue with a humble address to Bishop Eadfrith and to Lindisfarne, Bede concludes with an apparently personal statement: ‘In the preface of that work I promised that I would write more fully at another time about the life and miracles [of Cuthbert]; and in this present little work I am attempting to keep the promise I made’.<sup>9</sup>

It is clear that no definite answer can be given to the questions of why Bede chose to write a *Metrical Life of Cuthbert*, why he did not mention his use of the *Anonymous Life* in either of his own versions, and whether his first attempt had, or needed, the approval of Lindisfarne. The prologue to the *Prose Life* already seems to regard the letter to John as a preface to the *Metrical Life*, justifying its later treatment. This is slightly surprising since the letter itself demonstrates that Bede has already sent his work outside of Jarrow, even though the Prologue to the *Prose Life* suggests that it was composed only for Bede's brethren and was unknown at Lindisfarne. The final puzzle is that Bede does mention the *Anonymous Life*, and his use of it, in the introduction to his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Here he says that his writings on Cuthbert, both in the *History* and in his 'little book' on the saint, were based partly on what was written by the monks of Lindisfarne (which he trusted absolutely) and partly on the results of his own careful enquiries.<sup>10</sup> What does emerge clearly from all this, however, is the strength of Bede's own devotion to Cuthbert. The fact that the writing of the *Metrical Life*, which is something of a tour de force as a poetic composition, appears as largely Bede's own act of dedication to Cuthbert, is a key point for this paper. It establishes that it is appropriate to treat both of Bede's versions of Cuthbert's life and miracles as representing the results of his own careful selection and revision. A comparison of the two texts, and of both with the *Anonymous Life*, will thus offer insight into Bede's views on Cuthbert's sanctity and miracles at two key stages of his own career. The revised version of the *Metrical Life* will be used here, as Bede's improved and preferred text.<sup>11</sup>

Colgrave shows that the *Anonymous Life* was completed, in the version in which we have it, between 699 and 705.<sup>12</sup> It presents itself as the work of one author, since it opens with a prologue in which the first person singular is repeatedly used by one who expresses feelings of inadequacy in relation to the task imposed by Bishop Eadfrith and the community of Lindisfarne. Such statements should, perhaps, not be taken too literally, since Colgrave has also shown that both parts of the prologue are composed largely of quotations from other authors.<sup>13</sup> In fact, almost all of the text here is taken from: Victorius of Aquitaine's letter concerning the paschal cycle; Sulpicius Severus' *Life of St Martin*; the *Actus Silvestri*; and the *Life of St Anthony*. The author thus effaces

himself almost entirely even whilst establishing that Cuthbert's *Life* is going to take its place alongside established models of this rising genre. Its success as a model of its type is suggested by the fact that, as Colgrave points out, it was largely reused by Eddius Stephanus in his *Life of Wilfrid*.<sup>14</sup> The saints' *Lives* drawn upon are unsurprising, since they were well established as models; but use here of Victorius' letter is less obvious. There is no mention of Easter or its complications, and what is quoted is simply the author's expression of his sense of unworthiness in face of the difficulty of the task imposed upon him. Nevertheless, Victorius' paschal cycle, and the calculations upon which it was based, incorporated at least two serious problems criticised by Bede. For this reason they were slowly replaced by the sixth-century work of Dionysius Exiguus, which was espoused, clarified and updated by none other than Bede.<sup>15</sup> That the Lindisfarne community not only knew Victorius' fifth-century work, but still treated it as authoritative, is interesting given Bede's strong awareness of its shortcomings. Dionysius' system of calculation and dating was supported by Bede in *De temporibus* and *De temporum ratione* and was presumably taught by him to his own students.<sup>16</sup> Whether the quotation in the *Anonymous Life* suggests ongoing support for Victorius at Lindisfarne is impossible to tell; but it adds a further potential complication to contacts between Lindisfarne and Bede.

The opening of Bede's *Metrical Life* is significantly different. The letter to John has already been discussed, and is clear in its affirmation of Bede's devotion to Cuthbert, even if it omits any real statement of modesty on the part of the author. The first lines of the poem itself evoke a very different world from that of the *Anonymous Life*. They constitute a sort of meditation upon, and celebration of, the saints as sources of illumination for human darkness and as links to the divine light which is 'at the height of the heavens'.<sup>17</sup> The saints are likened to stars, and to lamps for the churches, and this latter theme leads into a survey of the regions of the world and of the great saints sent to each. To this select body is now added Cuthbert, who leads the Angles into a golden age.<sup>18</sup> The image created is of the layers making up the spherical universe, with the darkness of earth at the centre surrounded and illuminated by tiers of heavenly lights. Thus Bede not only composes in the manner of poetic writers such as Venantius Fortunatus (instead of simply quoting from them), but sets his conception of Cuthbert

within an evocation of a classically-based vision of the universe and of the peoples of the earth.

Strikingly, this is very much in line with the holism which commentators on Bede's scientific works, including both *De natura rerum* and his works on time and the computus, have stressed in Bede's thought. Faith Wallis, for instance, points out that Bede worked to make cosmography genuinely Christian, rather than remaining a pagan body of knowledge into which Christians could dip if required for the purposes of commenting upon certain biblical texts.<sup>19</sup> Thus Bede's *De natura rerum*, an early work as already noted, sets out a model of four levels in God's creation and expounds a view of the elements not as physical components of the material world but rather as properties of matter whose effects organise and structure it. Fire gives light to the stars, and its property of rising towards heaven helps to set the stars in the firmament, high above the dark heaviness of earth. The key points of the theory are set out in chapters 4 to 7 of the work. It would be stretching the point to say that this model is also set out in Bede's metaphorical handling of sanctity and light in the opening of the *Metrical Life*; but there is a clear link between the two passages.

If the elements provide one thread which links Bede's thought across works in apparently different genres, then numbers, as the means by which different levels of creation can be both analysed and interlinked, offer another. The significance of the number 46 in the thought of St Augustine and in Bede's *Metrical* and *Prose Lives of St Cuthbert* has already been demonstrated and offers an important example.<sup>20</sup> The number 46, for Augustine, brought together the themes of the building of the Temple, the perfection of the body of God, the development of the human body, and the name of Adam (with its symbolic meanings). Bede was aware of many, if not all, of these discussions, and chose 46 as the number of chapters in both his *Lives of St Cuthbert*. Numbers, their calculation and their applications, are also key issues in Bede's computistical works. The themes of the elements and of significant numbers also play their part in both Bede's texts on St Cuthbert, setting them apart from the *Anonymous Life*.

In terms of structure, Bede's departure from the *Anonymous Life* was radical. The earlier work had followed existing models in dividing the material into Books; but had exceeded them, and perhaps attempted to set a new precedent, by raising the number of Books to



four. Bede not only ignored the preface but also removed all division into Books, although the sequence of miracles remains roughly the same. Short as the *Metrical Life* is, it is all the more striking that Bede chose to insert different miracles in his account of Cuthbert's early life as well as expanding the overall number. A comparison of the *Metrical Life* and the *Anonymous Life* is not straightforward, since not all of the 40 chapters in the latter contain miracles, and others give brief accounts of several, while the same can be said of Bede's poem. However, Bede's first addition is an important one, and appears in both his works on Cuthbert, suggesting that it found favour with the Lindisfarne community also.

This is the story of how, whilst still in secular life, Cuthbert averted disaster for monks from a nearby monastery. It forms chapter three in the *Metrical Life* where it is headed 'How the winds changed at his prayer and he brought rafts, which had been carried away to sea, back to land' (*Quomodo ventis oratione mutatis rates oceano delapsas revocarit ad litus*). The account occupies lines 95 to 119, and is of fairly standard length for this text. Despite its brevity, Bede establishes that the rafts used by the monks were normally brought downstream by the current of the Tyne, which was clearly slow enough to allow the rafts to be handled safely. On this occasion however a gale from the west caught them and they were blown helplessly out to sea, before the eyes of Cuthbert and a mocking crowd of laymen. Despite the hostile attitude of the audience, Cuthbert appealed to the power of God, hailed as the maker of both winds and waves. At this, the wind was changed and the rafts brought back to shore, to the edification of the crowd.<sup>21</sup>

The same miracle forms chapter three also of Bede's *Prose Life*, under an almost identical heading; here it is considerably longer, with comment on the saint's attitude to prayer and on the history of the monastery added. This version increases both the drama and the significance of the incident, by elaborating on the actions of the monks and on the resentment expressed towards them by the unwillingly-converted laity. Once again, it is the combined force of the river and the wind which defeats the monks; and once again it is Cuthbert's prayer which brings about the crucial change. Significantly, the storm does not just drop, but shifts completely in direction, thus blowing the rafts back to shore even against the current, and landing them close to the monastery itself. Lest anyone should question the origin of the story,

Bede here concludes by saying that his informant was a brother of his own monastery, who had heard the tale several times from one of the lay witnesses. Its addition thus seems to make several points. First, that Bede was not the only member of the Jarrow community who was interested in the miracles of Cuthbert, and that he felt able to add at least some to the Lindisfarne collection. Second, that a key theme in Cuthbert's career, present from a very early stage, was his affinity with the elements – in this case, a miracle of the air. In his *De natura rerum*, composed in the years leading up to 703, Bede devoted three chapters to the air and its currents, the winds, and their natures.<sup>22</sup> These established that winds can occur only in the lower air, and that their pattern and occurrence follow an order ordained by God, and dependent upon the locations of hills and the movements and risings of planets and stars. Bede specifies that it is the WSW wind, known as Africus, which is stormy, a statement which accords with the fact that the stormy wind in this story is coming from the west.<sup>23</sup> Its sudden reversal is thus established as only possible with the intervention of divine grace, and thus a true miracle.

It is perhaps not surprising that the first of these points seems to have been less well received at Lindisfarne than the second. Evidence for this appears in the fate of the miracle inserted as chapter five in the *Metrical Life*, concerning Bishop Aidan. It here follows Cuthbert's nocturnal vision of the soul of a bishop (subsequently identified as Aidan) being carried up to heaven. In the *Metrical Life* chapter five offers an account of 'how the same Aidan had given oil which calmed a storm at sea' (*Quomodo idem Aidanus tempestatem nautis praedicens oleum, quo haec mitigaretur, dederit*).<sup>24</sup> Unlike the story of Cuthbert and the rafts, this one does not reappear in Bede's *Prose Life*. This was apparently not because Bede thought it unreliable or unimportant, since he included a fuller version as chapter 15 of Book Three of his *Ecclesiastical History*, where he names his witness as Cynimund, priest of Jarrow, who was told of it by Utta, the priest who received the miracle-working oil. The removal of this story was presumably due to its concerning Aidan rather than Cuthbert, and also perhaps bears out Bede's statement that he was willing to alter his work on Cuthbert at the request of the Lindisfarne experts.

The theme of Cuthbert's affinity with the elements is one which grows in strength in Bede's versions, an emphasis both created by Bede

and justifiable by reference to his hagiographical models.<sup>25</sup> An example is the story of how sea-creatures ministered to the saint at Coldingham. It appears as chapter three of Book Two in the *Anonymous Life*.<sup>26</sup> Here, Cuthbert is described as keeping vigil on the seashore at night and, for an unspecified time, wading into the sea itself up to his hips, despite the strength of the waves, before being tended to by ‘two little sea animals’ when he emerges. It is miracle eight in Bede’s *Metrical Life*, whose heading already asserts that Cuthbert prayed in the sea through the night (*pernox oraverat*).<sup>27</sup> His lack of fear of the sea is further asserted by the statement in the text that he was immersed up to his neck (*collo*). In Bede’s *Prose Life* this miracle forms chapter ten, under the same heading.<sup>28</sup> The text amplifies the image of the saint’s fearless attitude to the sea, stating that he waded out until the waves reached his neck and arms, and spent the dark night there (*Ingressusque altitudinem maris donec ad collum usque et brachia unda tumens assurgeret, pervigiles undisonis in laudibus tenebras noctis exegit*). Thus, Cuthbert’s confidence in relationship to the sea appears to be the key point in Bede’s accounts, although later illuminators and tellers of the tale paid at least as much attention to the affecting image of the little sea-creatures who tended to the saint.<sup>29</sup>

Another small but significant example is found in the development of the story of Cuthbert’s winter journey to Pictland. This forms chapter four of Book Two of the *Anonymous Life*, and the topics picked out in the heading here are: that God provided dolphin flesh for the saint when he needed it; and that he made a prophecy which was fulfilled.<sup>30</sup> The account explains that the saint and two other monks from Melrose had set out on what was intended as a short voyage soon after Christmas. A storm blew up, and kept them trapped on a bare shore for several days. It was on the morning of Epiphany that Cuthbert successfully prophesied, first that food would be sent, and then that it would suffice for three days and that on the fourth the sea would calm. In Bede’s *Metrical Life* the story forms chapter nine, and the emphasis of the heading is somewhat different.<sup>31</sup> The key point here is that Cuthbert accurately predicted the day on which a storm would clear and the sea would be calm; a secondary issue is that his prayer was rewarded with food (*Quomodo nautis tempestate praeclusis serenum mare ad certum diem praedixerit et orando cibos impetraverit*). The poem emphasises the power of the storm, defeated by Cuthbert’s serene confidence in

God, the Lord of air and sea, who sends light in darkness and supplies humans with what they need. The account of the incident and the prophecy is more elaborate than in the earlier version, including the detail of the direction from which the wind blew. In the *Prose Life* the story forms chapter eleven, under the same heading as in the *Metrical Life*.<sup>32</sup> Here, as in Bede's earlier account, the emphasis is firstly on Cuthbert's prophetic powers, followed by his faith that God would save the group from snow, storm, winds and waves. The food is less important than the weather prophecy of which it formed part.

The miracles so far examined have centred on the elements of air and water, and their interactions with humans in the form of winds, storms, rivers, waves and the sea. However, Cuthbert's power over the wind occurs in relation also to the element of fire.<sup>33</sup> In the *Anonymous Life* this story is chapter seven of Book two.<sup>34</sup> The text narrates how Cuthbert visited his widowed foster-mother, Kenswith, on a day when a house in her village caught fire. A strong east wind blew the flames into the village and towards Kenswith's house. Cuthbert averted disaster by falling to the ground and praying, at which the wind blew strongly from the west and drove away the fire. This is miracle twelve in the *Metrical Life*, where it is briefly told.<sup>35</sup> Bede here omits all details concerning the house-owner, emphasising the effects of the saint's prayers on the flames which were devouring the roof and on the wind whose direction was changed. The *Prose Life* restores the story to full length, although it is vaguer than the *Anonymous Life* about the relationship between Cuthbert and his 'mother'.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, the account of the fire is fuller and more circumstantial. One house catches fire, and a 'great wind' from the east blows burning thatch across the village. The flames are so strong that even though people run with pails of water they are driven back; but once again Cuthbert's prayers change the direction of the wind and prevent further harm. Bede then goes on to compare Cuthbert to other great saints, and to emphasise the link between fire and the works of the devil. This is a theme introduced by Bede, which both makes the saint's powers over the elements very impressive and establishes that the elements have spiritual as well as material significance. The fact that Bede stresses Cuthbert's success in changing the direction of the wind, whilst giving the fire a somewhat metaphysical role, perhaps accords with his relative lack of comment on fire in *De natura rerum*. Here, up

to ten chapters each are accorded to the air, waters, and the earth, while fire is simply discussed as one of the elements in Chapter Four.

The final element to be considered is earth, and this also appears several times in Cuthbert's miracles. It is most prominent in the accounts of Cuthbert's retreat to the island of Farne and construction of his hermitage there. These appear in Book Three of the *Anonymous Life*. Chapter two of this book relates how Cuthbert, with no human help, carried and placed a stone which four monks could not transport even with a cart. It is then followed by the story of how Cuthbert's prayers led to the creation of a reliable well of sweet water (described in one place as a 'fountain') in what had been hard earth and rock.<sup>37</sup> In Bede's *Metrical Life* the story of the rock is compressed into a short section of the account of how Cuthbert created a heaven-inspired refuge in what was previously hostile and demon-infested territory.<sup>38</sup> However, the production of water from dry rock is the subject of chapter sixteen, which also elaborates on the sweet taste of the water by stating that it was turned into wine on at least one occasion when Cuthbert drank it.<sup>39</sup> In Bede's *Prose Life* the story of the rock is again compressed into the overall account of the construction of the hermitage and the expulsion of the demons, which makes up chapter seventeen.<sup>40</sup> In this case, however, Bede elaborates both on the varying depth of the water on the landward and ocean-facing sides of the island, and on its contrast with Lindisfarne, since the latter is an island only twice a day due to the pattern of the tides (whose Greek name is also provided). The reader is thus given a strong sense of the reality of the island and its location, as well as of the natural forces to which it is exposed. An impression of scientific expertise is also communicated. In a similar vein, Bede's account of the well is considerably more scientific than that in the *Anonymous Life*. Bede's story begins, like his source, by emphasising the hard rock on which the hermitage is built, and stresses the significance of the miracle by using quotations from the psalms to evoke God's power to bring water from rock. However, the well is prosaically described as a 'small pit' (*foveam*) which fills up with water overnight, another touch which develops the sense of the physical reality of the site. That the water could be fresh despite the surrounding presence of the sea was not necessarily miraculous in itself, as Bede established in Chapter Thirty Eight of *De natura rerum* that salt water filtered through the earth could and would emerge as fresh water.

The transformation of the water into wine is now removed from this chapter altogether, perhaps because it would be in some tension with the evocation of bare earth, rock, and the saint's increasing isolation and asceticism. Instead this theme appears as a miracle in its own right, in one of the accounts which Bede added from local witnesses of his own. The story is not paralleled in the *Anonymous* or the *Metrical Life*, and is the centrepiece of chapter 35 of the *Prose Life*. The incident took place at Tynemouth, and one of those who experienced it, who became a monk at Wearmouth, related it directly to Bede.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Bede's capacity to add new miracles, from his own sources rather than from Lindisfarne, is used to emphasise the saint's powers over water.

However, the theme of Cuthbert's power over the elements, and over the sea in particular, is not just continued in the *Prose Life* but expanded. This is shown in a relatively simple way by chapter 36 of the *Prose Life* which tells the story, as its heading explains, of how a storm on the sea taught a lesson to some of Cuthbert's monks who disobeyed him.<sup>42</sup> It is not derived from the *Anonymous Life*; and in the equivalent section of the *Metrical Life* Bede simply emphasises Cuthbert's dedication to the service of God through his retreat to Farne.<sup>43</sup> The story marks the point at which Cuthbert withdraws from the active engagement with the secular world which was imposed upon him as bishop, and withdrew once again to his hermitage. Bede stresses that Cuthbert again overcame both external and internal distractions, and that such a man deserves obedience from all. As Bede points out, the disobedience was over a relatively small matter, since the monks, being well supplied with food, did not eat the goose which Cuthbert offered them but left it hanging on the wall of the guesthouse. This brought down upon them a fierce storm which kept them trapped for seven whole days until Cuthbert, returning to visit them, pointed out the error of their ways. They were contrite and cooked the goose, upon which the sea immediately calmed and the winds dropped (*eadem hora unda in mari cessantibus ventis suo a fervore quiescerit*). The lesson learned by the monks was that God would use the elements to punish those who did not obey His faithful servant, Cuthbert. Cuthbert's own awareness of this link is shown by his speech of instruction to the disobedient monks, one of whom was Bede's source for the story, Cynimund.

The theme is most visible, and most dwelt upon by Bede, in the story of how Cuthbert was provided by the sea with a twelve-foot beam which he needed for his building work. It is chapter four of Book Three in the *Anonymous Life*, and follows the stories of the rock and the well.<sup>44</sup> Its heading here is ‘Concerning the wood brought by the sea in service to the saint’ (*De ligno quod mare serviens ei detulit*). The text recounts how Cuthbert asked the monks who visited him for a substantial beam, which they failed to deliver. Cuthbert’s faith is rewarded however, when the sea, in obedience to Christ, and in honour of God’s servant, delivers with its waves a beam of the right size and in the right place, to the awe and gratitude of the brothers. In the *Metrical Life* the story is chapter nineteen, and its heading suggests a shift in emphasis: ‘How the sea served him’ (*Qualiter eidem mare servierit*).<sup>45</sup> The chapter opens with a sort of meditation on how Cuthbert gained power even over something as powerful as the sea through his prior subjugation of himself. This was proved when, at the very next tide after the monks had failed to bring Cuthbert the beam he needed, the sea not only brought it to the island but placed it at the very spot where it was to be used. The calculation of tides in relation to the time of the arrival of the beam is an addition by Bede. The *Anonymous Life* simply states that the sea brought the beam during the night. It is also striking that this is one of the chapters most changed in Bede’s revision of his *Metrical Life*. The first draft prefaced the main miracle with a secondary account concerning some pregnant seals, and the respect they showed for the saint, before moving on to demonstrate that the seals’ home, the sea itself, also served the saint.<sup>46</sup> In the revised version, Bede makes the point more directly, with his assertion that the elements serve those who subject themselves (*Obsequiumque illis elementa impendere*).

The focus on the sea, and Cuthbert’s power over both it and the other elements, is considerably developed in the *Prose Life*. Here, the story in question forms chapter 21, and its heading is still more emphatic: ‘How even the sea served his needs’ (*Qualiter eius necessitatibus etiam mare servierit*).<sup>47</sup> The chapter, moreover, opens with a reflection on the significance of this and the other demonstrations of Cuthbert’s power over the elements. The statement is: ‘Not only the creatures of the air, but also those of the sea, and, what is more, even the sea itself, as well as air and fire ... offered obedience to the reverend

man' (*Non sola autem aeris sed et maris Animalia, immo et ipsum mare sicut et aer et ignis ... viro venerabili praebuere obsequium*). Bede goes on to emphasise that this demonstrates that all creation will serve someone who succeeds in submitting himself absolutely to the maker of that creation. Indeed, God gave dominion over creation to humans; but it is almost entirely lost, since we fail to give obedience to the Lord who brought that creation into being. For Bede, who has a clear model of the structures and hierarchy of creation, power over the sea is a still greater miracle than power over the beasts; and this is asserted again in the next sentence: 'I say that the sea itself attended upon the servant of Christ, to serve him quickly at need' (*Et ipsum inquam mare promptum famulo Christi ubi opus habuit, impendebat officium*). The point is not lost upon the monks either, in this account, since the chapter concludes by stressing the awe they feel towards one whom even the elements serve (*cui etiam elementa servient*).

The *Anonymous Life* does not share this vivid sense of the power of the elements, their place in creation, and the significance of their obedience to Cuthbert. Its presentation of the miracle of the sea and the beam is followed by an account of Cuthbert's power over birds, and ability to communicate with them; its opening sentence simply states that, just as the sea served Cuthbert, so also did the birds of the air (*Sicut ergo diximus mare servientem homini Dei, ita et aves coeli obedierunt ei*).<sup>48</sup> Moreover, whilst Bede's concept of the status of these miracles was accepted when his *Prose Life* was scrutinised at Lindisfarne, later writers who reworked and added to the miracles of Cuthbert largely missed or dismissed the point, and reverted to the simpler idea that Cuthbert's overall range of powers was enormous and impressive. What persisted was an emphasis on Cuthbert's 'special relationship' with the sea, as well as with 'his' territory. Cuthbert's status as the most celebrated saint of northern England meant that updated versions of his miracles were produced with some regularity in the post-Conquest period and the twelfth century, and their inter-relationships, while complex, offer important evidence.<sup>49</sup> A survey will bring out the key points.

The most important of the early 'post-Bedan' miracles were a group of seven, mostly taken from a compound work known as the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, which incorporates stories and texts from the ninth to the eleventh centuries. To these were subsequently added



a detailed account of the translation of St Cuthbert's relics into the new cathedral at Durham in 1104, and further miracles. By the late twelfth century this expanded collection, now usually known as the *Liber de translationibus et miraculis sancti Cuthberti*, included twenty-one miracles.<sup>50</sup> The four most frequently retold miracles from the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* emphasise the saint's attachment to, and protection of, his people and territory, rather than his healing powers. Cuthbert is shown as: helping ensure the success of King Alfred and his descendants; using a miraculous storm at sea to ensure that his relics and community stayed in Northumbria; punishing an army of invading Scots by causing the earth to swallow them; and punishing Scandinavian interlopers who failed to respect his church and shrine. Two of these thus draw upon Cuthbert's established powers in relation to the elements, but make this a secondary issue; the miracles actually emphasise the saint's political, protective and punitive powers in the world of human affairs.

In the three accounts of events around the time of the Norman Conquest the approach is similar. Here, both Tostig Godwinsson and a Norman soldier experience the saint's punitive powers. In contrast, Cuthbert exerts his power over the tides of the sea to ensure that his relics and community reach Lindisfarne safely, when menaced by the military power of the conquerors, despite the fact that the causeway should have been underwater when they reached it. The stories in the expanding collection concerning the miracles worked by Cuthbert in the twelfth century are very similar in their central themes (and indeed so were the majority of non-healing miracles worked by saints all across England). When the bishop of Durham, Ranulf Flambard, annoyed the saint on the occasion of the 1104 translation of the relics into the newly-completed cathedral, the response took the form of rain, rather than a full-blown storm.<sup>51</sup> Overall, the elements play only a small part in these accounts, whose main emphases are the proven incorruption of the saint's relics and his power to intervene in human affairs.

The evidence provided by the collection of posthumous miracles assembled and retold by Reginald of Durham, at the prompting of Ailred of Rievaulx, largely continues this pattern. Reginald is estimated to have worked from c1165 to c1174 whilst also spending much of his time attending upon, and recording the works of, Godric of Finchale.<sup>52</sup> This work, known as the *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti*

*Virtutibus quae Novellis Patratae Sunt Temporibus*, seems never to have had a wide circulation, and survives only in three manuscripts (with excerpts in a fourth); moreover, most of these are either from Durham or of northern English provenance.<sup>53</sup> However, given Reginald's position as the main hagiographer of the Durham community in the second half of the twelfth century, and the fact that his work was both preserved at Durham and copied in later volumes, the collection may be taken as representative of how Cuthbert and his miracles were perceived at the main cult centre in this period.<sup>54</sup>

Reginald's collection includes no fewer than 129 chapters giving accounts of miracles, sometimes with more than one event in a chapter. The great majority appear to come from the second half of the twelfth century, and to have been witnessed either in Durham itself or at Lindisfarne and Farne. Ailred of Rievaulx contributed some which he either witnessed or was told about, mostly coming from the Scottish borders. All, however, appear to have been revised by Reginald, whose Latin style is highly distinctive. That Reginald was fully aware of St Cuthbert as a saint with special powers in relation to the elements in general and to the sea in particular is shown in several of his accounts; but it is equally the case that he does not place upon this the same emphasis as did Bede. For instance, Reginald chose to retell the post-Bedan story of how the bishop and community of St Cuthbert fled from Durham to Lindisfarne to escape the wrath of the Conqueror as part of chapter sixteen of his *Libellus*. Here, whilst the sea once again parts to leave the causeway accessible, the emphasis is on Cuthbert's protection of his people, who are protected from wintry weather and the darkness of the night. The punitive side of St Cuthbert's powers is strongly emphasised by Reginald, who tells how a wealthy man who refused to help the people of the saint was punished by a destructive fire.<sup>55</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that the miracles which place most emphasis on Cuthbert's powers in relation to the sea are those which take place in and around Farne. In chapter 23 Cuthbert saves a trading ship from a storm, while in chapter 28 similar protective powers are matched by use of the weather and the sea to punish a thief. Perhaps most impressive for the range of Cuthbert's powers in this arena is chapter 30, in which the saint protects a group of English ships from a storm at sea before saving them from death by fire, and finally sending winds which bring the English ships to safety at Farne whilst blowing the

hostile Frisians back to their own shore.<sup>56</sup> Power over winds and storms is shown again in chapters 32, 36, 52, 75, 83, 102 and 136. Of these, the story in chapter 52 is particularly striking, since here St Cuthbert (when called upon by the abbot of Grimsby) saves the boat of Stephen, cardinal legate to Norway, from disaster, when St Peter, St Paul, and other saints have failed to do so.<sup>57</sup> Fire occurs less frequently, but appears in chapters 30, 36, and 109. Chapter 136 is set inland, at the saint's chapel in Slitrig, Teviotdale, but echoes the story of Cuthbert's prophecy in Pictland through its demonstration of his ability to protect his followers during storms of wind, rain and snow. However, whilst Reginald frequently refers to Bede's work on Cuthbert's miracles, he does not echo the latter's reflections on the special significance of the saint's control over the elements; his approach is simply to prove Cuthbert's sheer range and quantity of miracles.

Still further from Bede's approach is the account of St Cuthbert in the *South English Legendary*. This complex work originated in the thirteenth century, and survives in more than sixty manuscript versions of varying length and contents. The earliest version appears to be that in Oxford, Bodleian, Ms Laud 108, and here St Cuthbert appears as number 51 of 74 saints. The account of Cuthbert is relatively long, taking 108 lines in Horstmann's edition of the Laud text, which compares well with the 100 lines devoted to St Edmund and with St Oswald's brief handling in 45 lines.<sup>58</sup> Given the compression required, it is hardly surprising that details are removed, and that Cuthbert is anachronistically described as bishop of Durham, but his main claims to fame here appear as his contacts with angels, and his dedication to his duties as monk and bishop. Cuthbert's 'custom' of praying up to his neck in the sea is here made a nightly occurrence, with the otters tending to him on one occasion when cold and exhaustion made him unable to stand (lines 85-94). The overall emphasis is simply on Cuthbert as an example of a good monk and bishop.

This simplification continued in the fifteenth-century, Middle English, verse *Life of St Cuthbert*.<sup>59</sup> The work is not written as a continuous narrative, but follows in turn several different Latin source texts. The author of the poem names his sources as: leaders of the church in Ireland; Bede; later miracles; a short version of the Life; accounts of the translation to Durham and the restoration of monks to serve Cuthbert; and 'divers other chronicles' (line 55).<sup>60</sup> Reginald is not

used here. Nevertheless, it is Reginald's approach, of emphasising the overall range of Cuthbert's powers, which is followed. Book II is a paraphrase of Bede, and the stories of: the rafts; the prophecy in Pictland; the use of the wind to control a fierce fire; the sea and the beam; and the monks, the goose and the storm, are all included. The viewpoint of this author is summed up in the reflection on the story of how the sea provided Cuthbert with the wooden beam he needed (chapter 21). 'Not only fowls who fly, but beasts of the sea and other creatures, the air, the sea, the elements, all give their service to Cuthbert'.<sup>61</sup> A final witness as to later views of St Cuthbert's miracles is provided by the couplets explaining images which were painted on the backs of the choir stalls of Carlisle Cathedral in the late fifteenth century. These now constitute a set of seventeen surviving images, for which Bede is the source named in the inscriptions, and they cover only Cuthbert's life, with no posthumous miracles.<sup>62</sup> As in the *South English Legendary*, there is emphasis on Cuthbert's contacts with angels, and on the dedication with which he carried out his roles of monk, hermit and bishop. There is only one healing miracle here and, though three scenes relate to Cuthbert's life as a hermit, the story of the sea and the beam is not among them. Indeed, of all the events selected, only the prayers in the sea (whose couplet omits the otters) and the production of water from a stone have anything to do with the elements.

It thus appears very strongly that, although Durham hagiographers continued to draw upon both Bede and the post-Bedan miracles, even they did not adopt Bede's scientifically-oriented views as to the special significance of Cuthbert's powers over the elements and the sea. Instead, the emphasis during periods of Viking and Norman invasion and political turmoil was on Cuthbert as a powerful defender of his property and people. The twelfth century then saw a shift to greater emphasis on powers of healing. Beyond Durham, in the later middle ages, and especially in works aimed at least in part at lay audiences, Cuthbert appears primarily as an exemplary representative of the Church. A secondary theme was that of the frequency with which he conversed with, or was helped by, angels. Bede's work on time, computus and chronology was important for chroniclers but was not, it seems, judged relevant by hagiographers.<sup>63</sup> It is equally clear that Bede did not derive his views on the significance of 'elemental' miracles from his hagiographical sources. Bede's understanding of the scale of power

involved in intervening in the functioning of the universe as created and set in motion by God was very much his own. In the light of his study of the inbuilt mechanisms governing the earth, the planets and the stars, and the nature of the elements, he could appreciate just what was involved in such interventions as Cuthbert achieved. Affecting the winds and the tides was a larger issue than communicating with an animal, healing a human body, or casting out a demon. For Bede, these miracles were definitely not mere ‘fairy-tale wonders’.<sup>64</sup>

A final important point is that Bede drew upon his ‘scientific’ knowledge when composing his hagiographic works in a way which was highly specific to him. In the periods during which he focused on the life of St Cuthbert he was also paying particular attention to computus and natural philosophy. If c705 is accepted as the date for Bede’s first draft of the *Metrical Life* then it follows closely after his treatise *On the Nature of Things* and his first work on computus, *On Times*, which was completed in 703.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, the *Prose Life* is usually dated to c721 (since Bishop Eadfrith died in that year); and in the long work on computus which Bede completed in 725, now known as *De temporum ratione*, he states that he wrote the *Prose Life* ‘recently’.<sup>66</sup> Further evidence for this closeness of both time and ideas is suggested by the sole manuscript which preserves the text of the draft version of the *Metrical Life*. This is now Besançon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms 168, and was probably written in the ninth century, at a centre associated with the Anglo-Saxon missionary efforts in what is now Germany.<sup>67</sup> It also contains Bede’s *De natura rerum*, *De temporum ratione*, and *Chronica maiora*, as well as a collection of computistical texts which Bede himself used. This collection thus looks very like the materials which would have been on Bede’s desk at the time when he was working on both his greatly expanded outline of time and Creation and his revised version of the life and miracles of Cuthbert.

More important is the fact that the view of the universe and its workings which Bede put together in *De temporum ratione* is extremely impressive. Overall, it assembles a strikingly coherent account of the universe as a working system, integrating the earth with the layers of air and ether around it, up to the boundary of the firmament.<sup>68</sup> The places and inter-actions of the elements are clearly established, as are the places and movements of the planets and stars, which nothing but divine intervention can change. Straightforward information on the size and

orbit of the sun is given, together with an extremely clear explanation of the causes and timings of solar and lunar eclipses. All such phenomena are the regularly-occurring results of the rules of operation for the universe, set in motion by God and due to continue unchanged unless and until God determines otherwise.

A specific example of such a phenomenon, and of how it can be misunderstood, is discussed at some length. This exposition is provided in Book Two chapter 25, and addresses the belief that if a new moon appears to be lying flat (that is, with its horns facing up or down) then the month following will be stormy.<sup>69</sup> Bede's approach is to demonstrate that this is impossible, on grounds of 'natural reason'. His first point is that the moon is placed well above the zone of air which experiences phenomena such as winds and clouds. It thus cannot be the case that the moon's position is affected by earthly weather, still less that the moon would or could respond to weather. The second point is that the moon has no light of its own but rather is lit by the sun; and thus the part of the moon's surface which appears bright will depend simply upon the relative positions of the sun and the moon. When the moon is in conjunction with the sun then the lit portion will be turned wholly away from the earth, producing a new moon. As the moon moves onwards a crescent of light appears. Bede further points out that in Spring the sun's path climbs from South to North in such a way that it will light up the moon from below, with the result that the crescent moon, seen at sunset at the equinox, will appear to be lying with its horns pointing upwards. This is why such moons will occur at a season when strong winds are likely; but the idea that there is a causal or predictive connection is entirely due to ignorance. This is the level and type of understanding which underlies and informs Bede's analysis of St Cuthbert's miracles, and it emphatically singles Bede out from other hagiographers.

## Notes

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1 M. Lapidge, 'Bede's Metrical *Vita S. Cuthberti*', G. Bonner, D. Rollason, C. Stancliffe, eds., *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989, 77-94, at 78-9 and 83.

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- 2 W. Levison, 'Bede as Historian', A. Hamilton Thompson ed., *Bede; His Life, Times and Writings* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1935, repr.ed. 1969), 111-51.
  - 3 Lapidge, op. cit., 86-90.
  - 4 For the text of the letter see W. Jaager, ed., *Bedas metrische Vita sancti Cuthberti*, Palaestra 198 (Leipzig, Mayer & Muller, 1935), 56-7.
  - 5 *linguae curationem, dum miracula eius canerem, expertus sum*, Jaager ed., 57.
  - 6 See B. Colgrave, ed. and trans., *Two Lives of St Cuthbert; A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 142-3.
  - 7 *Ibid.*, 144-7.
  - 8 This silence has led to some previous discussions of Bede's work omitting any mention of his dependence upon the *Anonymous Life*. See, for example, C.G. Loomis, 'The Miracle Traditions of the Venerable Bede', *Speculum*, 21 (1946): 404-18.
  - 9 *In cuius operis prefatione promisi me alias de vita et miraculis eius latius esse scripturum. Quam videlicet promissionem in praesenti opusculo, prout Dominus dederit adimplere satago.* Colgrave ed., 146.
  - 10 See *Praefatio Baedae ad Regem Ceolwulfum*, in C. Plummer, ed., *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, vol.1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1896), 4.
  - 11 This is the version edited by Jaager (see above).
  - 12 Op. cit, 13.
  - 13 *Ibid.*, 60-4.
  - 14 *Ibid.*, 310.
  - 15 For a discussion of the issues involved in the early construction of Easter Tables, and the gradual process of adoption on the work of Dionysius in Britain, see C. P. Nothaft, *Scandalous Error: Calendar reform and calendrical Astronomy in Medieval Europe*, Oxford University press, Oxford, 2018, 46-53. See also C. Jones, 'The Victorian and Dionysiac Paschal Tables in the West', *Speculum*, 9 (1934): 408-21.
  - 16 For discussion of key issues involved see: Bede, *On the Nature of Things and On Times*, transl. by C. B. Kendall and F. Wallis, *Translated Texts for Historians* 56, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 24-5.
  - 17 *divina poli de culmine flamma*, Jaager ed. 58.
  - 18 *Aurea qua Cuthbertus agens per sidera vitam / Scandere celsa suis docuit iam passibus Anglos*, *ibid.* 60.
  - 19 F. Wallis, 'Bede and Science', S. DeGregorio ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 113-26.

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- 20 W. Berschin, '*Opus deliberatum ac perfectum: Why Did the Venerable Bede Write a Second Prose Life of St Cuthbert?*', in Bonner et al, eds., 95-102.
- 21 This is, as Loomis demonstrates, a type of miracle widely found in models available to Bede, and of ongoing popularity in the deeds of Anglo-Saxon and English saints. Op. cit, 407.
- 22 See Bede, *On the Nature of Things and On Times*, transl. Kendall and Wallis, p. 2 for discussion of the date of this work.
- 23 Ibid., p. 91.
- 24 See Jaager, 69-70. This variant of the sea-calming miracle was widespread also; an example is the miracle by means of which St Germanus was able to cross to Britain, as told by Bede in *Ecclesiastical History Book One*, chapter 17.
- 25 For comparisons see: Notes in Plummer's edition of the *Ecclesiastical History*; and Loomis, op. cit.
- 26 Colgrave, op cit, 78-83.
- 27 Jaager, 74-6.
- 28 Colgrave, 188-91.
- 29 See, for instance, the miniature on p.35 of Oxford, University College, MS 165 (of c1130).
- 30 ibid, 82-5.
- 31 Jaager, 77-9.
- 32 Colgrave, 192-5.
- 33 This also is a form of miracle attested in Bede's models, and which Bede handles in full knowledge of those exemplars. For comparisons with Marcellinus, Aidan and Benedict see Loomis, op. cit, 406 and n. 5.
- 34 Colgrave, 88-91.
- 35 Jaager, 83.
- 36 Colgrave, 200-03.
- 37 Colgrave, 96-9.
- 38 Jaager, 87-8.
- 39 Ibid, 88-9.
- 40 Colgrave, 214-7.
- 41 Ibid, 264-7.
- 42 Ibid, 267-71.
- 43 Jaager, 110-13.
- 44 Colgrave, 98-101.
- 45 Jaager, 92.
- 46 Lapidge, op. cit, 80.
- 47 Colgrave, 224-7.
- 48 Ibid, 100-01.



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- 49 The fundamental works on the subject are: B. Colgrave, 'The Post-Bedan Miracles and Translations of St Cuthbert', in C. Fox, B. Dickins, eds., *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950); T. Johnson South (ed.) *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002); W. M. Aird, 'The Making of a Medieval Miracle Collection: the *Liber de Translationibus et Miraculis Sancti Cuthberti*', *Northern History*, 28 (1992): 1-24.
- 50 The versions of this collection, and their relationships, are discussed by Colgrave and Aird (see n.26 above). *Capitula de miraculis et translationibus sancti Cuthberti* is the title used by Arnold; see T. Arnold, ed., *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, vol.1 (London: Rolls Series 1882), 229-61.
- 51 'The Anonymous Account of the Translation of St Cuthbert, 29 August 1104', transl. C.F. Battiscombe, in *idem*, ed., *The Relics of St Cuthbert*, printed for the Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral by Oxford University Press (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 99-107, at 106.
- 52 See V. Tudor, 'The Cult of St Cuthbert in the Twelfth Century: The Evidence of Reginald of Durham' in Bonner et al, 447-68.
- 53 The manuscripts are: Durham, Dean and Chapter Library, MS Hunter 101 (a twelfth-century volume, and probably Reginald's autograph); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fairfax 6 (fourteenth-century); and London, British Library, MS Harley 4843, (of the early sixteenth century). The manuscript containing excerpts of the text is York, Minster Library, MS xvi. I. 12 (fourteenth century).
- 54 The work has not been translated and has no modern edition. It was edited by Raine in 1835 from the Hunter manuscript: *Reginaldi Monachi Dunelmensis Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus quae Novellis Patratae Sunt Temporibus*, Surtees Society Vol. 1, Durham (London: Nichols, 1835).
- 55 Raine, ed. 28-32.
- 56 *Ibid*, 67-9.
- 57 *Ibid*, 108-9.
- 58 C. Horstmann, ed., *The Early South English Legendary*, Early English Text Society, Original Series, 87 (London: Trübner, 1887).
- 59 J. Fowler, ed., *The Life of St Cuthbert in English Verse, c.A.D. 1450*, Surtees Society vol. LXXXVII (Durham: Andrews, 1891).
- 60 *Ibid*, 1-3.
- 61 Noght all anely fowles of flight, Bot bestes of Pe se and othir wyght, Pe aire, Pe se, Pe elements, All to Cuthbert servys tentis. *Ibid*, 71.
- 62 The texts of the couplets are given in the Surtees edition of the verse *Life of St Cuthbert*, on pages 10-11.

- 63 This is most evident in the world chronicles written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The main English example is the work of John of Worcester, itself drawing on the work of the chronological expert, Marianus Scotus. See: A. Lawrence-Mathers, 'John of Worcester and the Science of History', *Journal of Medieval History*, 39 (2013): 255-74; and T. Reuter, 'Past, Present and No Future in the Twelfth-Century *Regnum Teutonicum*', P. Magdalino, ed., *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), 15-36.
- 64 The phrase is Colgrave's, in his 'Bede's Miracle Stories', Hamilton Thompson op cit, 201-29, at 204. Far more negative are Raine's comments on Reginald's work, which include 'humiliating ... to human reason' (loc. cit. ix). The problem is also discussed by Benedicta Ward in 'Miracles and History; a Reconsideration of the Miracle Stories used by Bede', G. Bonner, ed., *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London: SPCK, 1976), 70-6.
- 65 See *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times* transl. Kendall and Wallis 2-3.
- 66 *Bede; the Reckoning of Time*, transl. F. Wallis, Translated Texts for Historians Volume 29 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 233.
- 67 See Lapidge, op. cit, 78-9.
- 68 This information, and Bede's comments, are predominantly found in Book Two (pp. 24-112 in Wallis' edition).
- 69 Ibid, 74-7.