Passing phases of pilgrimage

Rite de passage as a literary device in twelfth century English pilgrimage stories

England in the Twelfth Century

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Introduction

When talking about pilgrimage people often tend to think of the medieval world where pilgrims travelled far and wide to Santiago de Compostela, for example, in hope of some sort of revelation. However pilgrimage is not only an activity of the past. The Hajj, the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, was undertaken by nearly two million pilgrims just last year.[1]

Not just Islamic pilgrimage sites are popular these days, Christian pilgrimage sites made their comeback over the last decades. According to James Harpur, author of *The Pilgrim Journey: A History of Pilgrimage in the Western World*, this renewal is "because of a desire for individual religious experience and a hunger for ritual in a world that nurtures neither".[2] While the number of churchgoers is declining, pilgrim numbers are ever rising worldwide. For example over 270.000 people completed the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in 2010. To illustrate the increase in number of pilgrims: only 2.491 underwent the same journey in 1985.[3]

Cultural significance

Undertaking the journey itself is not the only aspect of pilgrimage which has been growing in popularity. Its cultural significance seems to be on the rise as well. Different media outlets have been inspired by it. The BBC for instance has produced a miniseries on pilgrimage in 2018 and 2019, where several celebrities travelled to either Rome or Santiago de Compostela.[4] In the Netherlands the KRO-NCRV produced the show *Mijn Pelgrimspad* in which a Dutch presenter walked part of the Jabikspaad, a pilgrim path in the Netherlands. The show was first broadcasted in 2017 and returned for a second season the year after.[5] Not only has pilgrimage been present on the small screen the last few years. The phenomenon seems to have increased its presence on paper as well, as several new books on pilgrimage are being published every year. From modern guide books of popular pilgrim routes to personal journals, as well as novels that are purely fictional, several genres are represented when it comes to modern pilgrimage literature.[6]

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[1] The National, 'Hajj 2019: Everything to know about the Islamic pilgrimage to Makkah' https://www.thenational.ae/uae/heritage/hajj-2019-everything-to-know-about-the-islamic-pilgrimage-to-makkah-1.885598 [accessed on: 6-8-2019].

[2] Dana Greene, 'History of pilgrimage in the west sheds light on revival of interest today', *National Catholic Reporter* https://www.ncronline.org/books/2016/08/roads-holy-authors-history-pilgrimage-west-sheds-light-revival-interest-today [accessed on: 4-2-2019].

[3] Robert Macfarlane, 'Rites of way: Behind the pilgrimage revival', *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/jun/15/rites-of-way-pilgrimage-walks [accessed on: 4-2-2019].

[4] BBC Two, 'Pilgrimage' https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09w7lc0 [accessed on: 29-7-2019].

[5] KRO-NCRV, 'Mijn Pelgrimspad' https://www.kro-ncrv.nl/programmas/mijnpelgrimspad [accessed on: 29-7-2019].

[6] Goodreads, 'Popular pilgrimage books' https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/pilgrimage [accessed on: 29-7-2019].

This is not the first time a reoccurrence of interest in pilgrimage has happened. It occurred in different periods throughout history and therefore is periodic. One of these periods is nowadays known as 'the long twelfth century', which coincides roughly the period between 1050 and 1250. Back then, not only were a lot of pilgrimages undertaken, there was also a lot of literary material dealing with pilgrimage produced. Good examples of these are hagiographical texts. In these texts, written on saints, attention was often paid to certain saints' shrines and the travels towards them. A small selection of these hagiographical texts will be used in this thesis. The following four texts will be discussed: *Life and miracles of St Modwenna* written by Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald,* written by Eadmer of Canterbury, *The hagiographies of the female saints of Ely* written by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin and *The book of St Gilbert* of which the author is unknown.

These sources have in common that they were all written in England during the long twelfth century. Secondly, they all contain a part about pilgrimage journeys. The pilgrims in these texts undertake these journeys because they want to be cured through a miracle by the saint who the hagiography is written about. If one looks at these texts it stands out that the structure of these pilgrimage story, no matter how short or long it is, is the same. Each time the pilgrimage journey is written following the same narrative: that of a *rite de passage*.

Rite de passage

It were anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner who discovered this phenomenon in the seventies of the previous century. According to them medieval pilgrimage could be seen as a *rite de passage*.[7] Criticism on this model followed, but at the beginning of the current century historian Anne Bailey stated that she found a way to work around this critique. According to her a *rite de passage* is present in the text in the form of a literary device.[8] Seeing if this theory by Anne Bailey holds up and if so in what way the concept of *rite the passage* functions as a literary device in twelfth century pilgrimage stories is the goal of this work. This will be done through an analysis of the four mentioned hagiographical texts. With the results following this analysis I will take a look at how this can offer us a better insight in narrative strategies, England's twelfth century and hagiography as a genre itself.

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[7] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and pilgrimage in Christian Culture: anthropological perspectives* (New York, 1978).

[8] Anne Bailey, 'Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited: Anthropological approaches to Latin miracle narratives in the Medieval West', in: Matthew M. Mesley and Louise E. Wilson (eds.), *Contextualizing miracles in the Christian West, 1100-1500: New historical approaches* (Oxford, 2014), 17-40, 24-25.

To reach this goal, this thesis will be structured as follows: in the first chapter it will be explained what hagiographies are and the history of hagiographies will be dealt with, with a particular focus on miracle stories. After which there will be a chapter wherein the use of hagiographies as a historical source will be discussed. The third chapter will contain the method of research and thus deal with the theory of *rite de passage* and the way discourse analysis will be used. In chapter four to seven four hagiographical texts will be individually analysed after which the results will be brought together in the concluding eighth chapter.

1. Hagiography: a history and a source

The sources which will be analysed to answer the question set for this thesis are the following editions: *Life and miracles of St Modwenna, Life and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald, The hagiographies of the female saints of Ely* and *The book of St Gilbert.* The reason I choose these specific sources first of all has to do with their availability. Without too much of a fuss I could get my hands on these sources, which made the choice for source material quite obvious. When selecting source material I also tried to make a diverse selection, which resulted in two of the sources being female saints and the other two male saints. When looking at the authors, the sources are also diverse. For not all the authors of the texts are known. On top of that, the editions which I will use were all recently written. Only one of them was written in the eighties of the last century, while the other three were written during the beginning of the twenty-first century. This means that they are up to date with the latest research.[9] Lastly, the four editions contain not only the original Latin, but are also translated into English. It will be the translations on which the analyses will be based seeing that my Latin is not sufficient enough to use the original.

Besides being diverse the sources of course also have a lot in common. As mentioned in the introduction they were all written in England during the Middle Ages. Whereas the first three sources were written at the beginning of the twelfth century, the last one was written during the beginning of the thirteenth. The long twelfth century thus comprises the publication of these four sources.

Saints' lives

When dealing with hagiographies the first question one should ask themselves is: what exactly are hagiographies? In short a hagiography is the 'writings about the saints', thus some sort of biography of a saint. The word derives from Greek with *hagios* meaning holy, or the saints and *graphe* meaning writing.[10]

Hagiographies, or lives of saints, deal with spiritual and pedagogic concerns and have proven to be a valuable source for researching the Middle Ages. Not only do they tell us about their subject, saints, but they also contain information about the author and those who used the

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[9] *The book of St Gilbert* was written in 1987, while *Life and miracles of St Modwenna, Life and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald* and *The hagiographies of the female saints of Ely* were written respectively in 2002, 2006 and 2004.

[10] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', in: Thomas Head (ed.) *Medieval hagiography: An anthology* (New York, 2001), XIII-XXXVIII, XIV.

texts.[11] Hagiographies were stories about the sacred designed to teach the faithful to imitate actions which the community had decided were paradigmatic. The goal of hagiographies was to present models of behaviour so worthy of emulation that the readers would follow their example. They served as some sort of lesson and could be seen as an *exemplum.[12]*

The genre of hagiography was popular all over Europe. The *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, the catalogue for hagiographical sources, lists more than eight thousand saints' lives, and for England alone hundreds of examples can be found in either verse or prose. One should keep in mind here that the hagiographies catalogued are just the ones that survived the test of time. Due to the reformers of the fifteenth and sixteenth century there is probably only a fraction left of all the hagiographies which were produced during the Middle Ages. With this amount of material left, it is only fair to assume that virtually everyone living in the Middle Ages was exposed to saints' lives in one way or another.[13]

History of hagiography

How did the genre of hagiography develop? First of all, to start writing a story which fits into the genre of hagiography a saint is needed. It should be noted here that saints, and thus sanctity itself, is a social construct. One only becomes holy when a group of certain people decides so. In this case it is the Christian church who decides who becomes a saint after their death. Because of this power, the Church could deliberately sanctify people who delivered their message and pursued their ideals. By choosing who to sanctify or not, the Church could thus influence which persons the layman worshipped and followed.[14]

The first Christians who came to be sanctified can already be found during the time of the Roman Empire and are the martyrs of early Christianity. After which, during the fourth and the fifth century, monks from ascetic movements in the middle east followed. [15] The first great boom in writing of hagiography also occurred during this time, after Christianity became tolerated as a religion by emperor Constantine in 313. It were these monks and their practices, for example St Augustine of Hippo, on who the first of many hagiographies were based. These works slowly started to spread to the west and the Roman Empire.[16]

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[11] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', XIII.
[12] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred biography: Saints and their biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1992), 5-6.
[13] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred biography*, 13-14.
[14] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', XV.
[15] Ibid, XV-XVI.
[16] Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims: Popular beliefs in Medieval England* (London, 1977), 17-18.

During the fifth and the sixth century, when Christianity was spreading over the European continent, Germanic tribes started to worship Christian saints. Instead of creating their own saints, they kept recognising the older Roman saints and worshipping them. This probably was due to the fact that the hagiographies of this time were still written by Roman elite. By doing this they were not just able to record the past, but also to influence the present and future, for people looked up to these saints. With keeping the stories of their sanctified people alive they could promote their ideals of traditional Christian life.[17]

Germanic people started to be declared as holy during the late sixth and seventh century. Germanic tribes had some new ideals of holiness which reflected much of the distinctive styles of Christianity which was developing in their kingdoms. Because of this, the nature and the language of western hagiography slowly started to change, for every group of Germanic people had their own local language and own local beliefs. It was during these times that public cults dedicated to saints started to take many forms. Liturgical outings and worship of relics became popular and martyrdom made a comeback.[18] A good example of the latter is Saint Boniface, who was murdered in Dokkum in 754.[19]

After this period followed the age of Charlemagne during the late eighth and the early ninth century. This was when a revival of the Roman imperial title took place and foundations for political structures on the European continent were laid.[20] Culture also flourished during this time, as the so called 'Carolingian Renaissance' was taking place.[21] This influenced the church, its culture and thus hagiographies. Powerful ecclesiastical hierarchies did much to clarify the traditions around the recognition of saints and the practice of the cult of relics. Rules surrounding these traditions were being set out.[22]

It was after the Carolingian Renaissance, from the ninth till the twelfth century, that monasteries became the chief custodians of the cults of relics and therefore the main producers of hagiographies as well. Cults of long-dead saints enshrined in these monastic churches provided a continuity with the past. On top of that, new saints were being recognised. This did not only happen in accordance with the traditional ideals of sanctity. New forms were also emerging. An example of this is members of royal dynasties of certain Germanic kingdoms

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[17] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', XVII.
[18] Ibid, XVIII- XIX.
[19] Consuelo Maria Aherne, 'Saint Boniface: English missonary', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Boniface [accessed on: 25-7-2019].
[20] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', XIX.
[21] Richard E. Sullivan, 'Charlemagne: Holy Roman Emperor [747?-814]', *Encyclopædia Brittanica*, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charlemagne/Religious-reform#ref108332 [accessed on 25-7-2019].
[22] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', XIX.

who were started to be sanctified. The sanctifying of opponents of royal power, like Thomas Beckett, also occurred. Another development was that those associated with reform monasticism would also be recognised as saints. [23] Of this we will see an example later on, for this form applies to St. Gilbert who we will see in *The book of St. Gilbert*.

The twelfth century Renaissance and the Church

What made this rise of hagiographies possible during these latter centuries had to do with what is nowadays known as the twelfth century Renaissance. On an economic and social level huge organisational transformation occurred throughout the continent of Europe. This was possible because of the good climate. Europe experienced a period with relatively warm weather which caused popular growth and an influx in agricultural products. The commercial economy and urbanisation could blossom during this time.[24] The church also benefited from this. Before this period localism ruled and one could speak more of a federal church, it was due to the organisational effects of the twelfth century Renaissance that the structure of the church changed. A slow assertion of papal independence from lay control within Rome was one of these changes. This would eventually lead to papal claims to authority over the whole Western church.[25]

Another change within the church around this time is a growing influence of purifying reform movements.[26] This was due to the effects of the twelfth century Renaissance as well. Because of a newly organised social network, people could get into contact with each other much easier to spread ideas. Schools and other learning institutions would also contribute to this. At the end of the tenth century these started to develop, out of which universities would follow. These places brought intellectuals together to discuss the world and religion.[27] These new ideas were written down and became one of the reasons why literature was flowering during this age.[28] A large body of the literature which is left from the twelfth century is religious. Hagiographies are a major part of this collection.[29]

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[23] Thomas Head, 'Introduction', XX.
[24] R. N. Swanson, 'C.1050', in: R. N. Swanson (ed.), *The Routledge history of Medieval Christianity: 1050-*1500 (London, 2015), XXIII-XXVI, XXV.
[25] R. N. Swanson, 'C.1050', XXIII-XXIV.
[26] Ibid, XXIII.
[27] Jan Ziolkowski, 'Latin and vernacular literature', in: David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith (eds.), *The new Cambridge Medieval history*, Volume 4, c1024-c.1198, part 1 (Cambridge, 2004), 658-692, 663-664.
[28] Jan Ziolkowski, 'Latin and vernacular literature', 658.
[29] Ibid, 681.

Miracle stories

The part of the hagiography genre on we will focus on in this thesis is that of miracle stories. Just as hagiography in general, this 'subgenre' also developed over the centuries. Miracles always played a prominent role in Medieval life.[30] They were seen as one of the basic dimensions of life and could be seen as the rule rather than an exception.[31]

In the Middle Ages no one questioned miracles as being the truth or not. On the contrary, it were these miracles which created local cults, the way in which virtually all the worship of saints started.[32] The miracles that happened were written down for the glory of the saint to advertise his powers to pilgrims. They were written down as they were reported to the officials of the shrines and afterwards rewritten in a literary form by a capable writer.[33] The miracle stories often originated from local and oral traditions.[34] This will also apply to the four sources which will be analysed later on.

The twelfth century Renaissance also had its influence on miracle stories. The Vatican started to have more control over the Western Christian Church during this time and play a more central role.[35] Results of this can be seen when looking at the production of miracle stories: they would now be fact-checked. Moreover, one had to apply for official canonization.[36] By 1215 it had become obligatory to obtain the approval of the Pope before a saint could be publicly sanctified. To get a person declared holy, miracles were demanded which were related to a life of virtue, miracles alone were not sufficient enough anymore. On top of that, witnesses and details were needed for the miracles. The miracle stories would be checked by a committee and only after that the decision would be made if a person would be sanctified or not.[37] It is St Gilbert of *The book of Gilbert* who had to go through this process, which we will see later on.

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[30] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the medieval mind: Theory, record and event 1000-1215* (Aldershot, 1987), 1.
[31] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the medieval mind*, 33.
[32] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred biography,* 22.
[33] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the medieval mind*, 34-35.
[34] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred biography*, 22.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the medieval mind*, 167.
[37] Ibid*,* 184-187.

2. Hagiography: a historical debate

Journeying to holy destinations out of devotion to a God, pilgrimage, is a long religious tradition in the Abrahamic religions.[38] According to some testimonies Christians were already paying religiously motivated visits before the third century and journeys to the Holy Land already flourished in the fourth century.[39] Over the centuries these travels never stopped, on the contrary, they expanded with even more sites to travel to appearing over the years. Even in present day thousands of believers travel to different pilgrimage sites all over the world in search for some sort of a religious experience.[40] Of course there have been periods in time where a decline in the amount of travellers can be witnessed. There was a decline in pilgrimages to the Holy Land during the Reformation in the sixteenth century for example.[41] On the other hand there were also periods of upheaval.

The long twelfth century

As mentioned in the introduction, one of the periods in which a huge interest in pilgrimage arose was the period nowadays known as the long twelfth century. This was due to a number of factors. Urbanisation, a better road network and the intensification of local networks are a few of these which created the opportunity and space for travelling. The broadening of lay and religious cultural horizons also played their part. In response to first the Cluniac in the early tenth century and later the Gregorian reforms in the second half of the eleventh century a new mentality was created in which there was more room for travelling.[42]

Not only the undergoing of a pilgrimage became popular during the twelfth century, there was also a growing interest in writing about pilgrimage. During this period different travel stories were produced and hagiographical texts became really popular. The latter included narratives such as saints' lives, translations, visions and miracle collections.[43] These miracle collections are of great interest to us. In these documents there was attention for certain saints, their shrines, shrines and the travels towards them. They provide us with a lot of information, making them useful sources on medieval pilgrimage.

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[38] Simon Yarrow, 'Pilgrimage', in: R. N. Swanson (ed.), *The Routledge history of Medieval Christianity 1050-1500* (London, 2015), 159-171, 159.
[39] Diana Webb, *Medieval European pilgrimage c.700-c.1500* (London, 2002), 1-2.
[40] Dana Greene, 'History of pilgrimage in the west sheds light on revival of interest today'.
[41] Bart Holterman, 'Pilgrimages in images: Early sixteenth-century views of the Holy Land with pilgrims' portraits as part of the commemoration of the Jerusalem pilgrimage in Germany' (Master Thesis, University of Utrecht, 2013), 20.
[42] Simon Yarrow, 'Pilgrimage', 159.
[43] Anna Taylor, 'Hagiography and Early Medieval history', in *Religion Compass* 7:1 (2013), 1-14, 2.

Source material

Even though there is a lot of rich source material to be found in hagiographical texts, they seem to have been overlooked by historians for a long time. It was only in the seventies and eighties of the previous century that historians started to see the potential of these miracle collections as a source for historical research into, among other things, pilgrimage. It was Ronald Finucane, a social historian, who started to work with hagiographical texts as sources. He used the social sciences, sociology and anthropology, as a means of validating a hagiographical source viewed so suspiciously by previous generations.[44] His study provided readers with valuable new insights into local saints' cults and their devotees, and was a huge success. This partly had to do with the fact that it fitted perfectly in the historiographical trend of that time: looking to the social sciences for new interpretative approaches. Finucane himself was inspired by Émile Durkheim, a French sociologist who with his work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* offered historians a way to deal with studying religion by re-inventing it as a social phenomenon.[45] By doing this, religious belief was placed within an acceptable empirical framework; religious practices could now be imagined as "social institutions fulfilling socio-cultural needs" and thus could be properly studied.[46] This approach of structural-functionalism has since then influenced the ways in which historians look at hagiographical texts.

One of these historians is Peter Brown, best known for his work on the religious culture of late-antique and early-medieval Europe. In *The Cult of The Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Brown was heavily influenced by Durkheim and his interpretation of religion as a social process.[47] Brown framed saints' cults as collective communities in which the cult 'centre' (the saint) and its 'clients' (the devotees) had a special bond together through a relation of mutual dependence. In addition to a religious function, Brown showed that saints' cults also had a social and political one. The saint's shrine can be seen as a 'greater whole' where all of society, the elite and the poor, was united.[48]

Anthropologists, though, have a completely different view. Whereas historians like to see the saints' cults as a peaceful place of collaboration, anthropologists like Michael Sallnow describe the shrine as 'an arena of competition and struggle'.[49] The view of Barbara Abou-el-Haj's fits with that of Sallnow. Her article *The Audiences of the Medieval Cult of Saints'*

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[44] Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims*.
[45] Émile Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912).
[46] Anne Bailey, 'Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited', 19.
[47] Peter Brown, *The cult of the saints: Its rise and function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1982).
[48] Anne Bailey, Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited', 20-21.
[49] Michael Sallnow, 'Pilgrimage and cultural fracture in the Andes', in: John Eade and Michael Sallnow (eds.) *Contesting the sacred: The anthropology of Christian pilgrimage* (London, 1991), 137-153. 143.

focusses on the fact that saints cults were not always quite as harmonious as some modern historians claim them to be. To illustrate this she mentions medieval sources which describe cases of mob violence at Santiago de Compostela. At the end of her article Abou-el-Haj concludes that much medieval hagiography was built around 'fantasies of consensus.'[50] Saints' cults as a collective community was thus probably not a reality, but more of a hagiographical construction. Historian Anne Bailey states that this does not mean that structural-functional theories cannot be used to interpret these medieval narratives anymore. On the contrary, she suggests to read these stories as a type of textual ritual, as "written sources which ritually express the consensus 'fantasies' of a collective hagiographic culture".[51]

Victor Turner

Looking at hagiographical texts as if they are textual rituals can be done using the ritual theories of Victor Turner. Victor Turner was active as an cultural anthropologist during the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century and is best known for his work on rituals. One of his theories is about structure and anti-structure. Where structure stands for the spatial and regulatory structures of the Christian church, anti-structure should be seen as the spiritual aspirations of pilgrims. It is in this anti-structure that *communitas* can be found, a state entered by pilgrims in which every day norms are overridden. Turner's *communitas* has a lot in common with Brown's theory and has also faced the same critique by Michael Sallnow.[52]

However, it was a different theory of Turner and his wife Edith (an accomplished anthropologist in her own right), discussed in *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*, that came to the attention of medievalists. In this book, the Turners linked Christian pilgrimage to Arnold Van Genneps model of *rite de passage*, a ritual of passage, which marked an individual's transition of leaving one group to enter another.[53] The Turners adapted this model and widened its application to include medieval pilgrimage. Again, although quite popular, this model has also been critiqued for being too abstract to be effectively applied to the real world. Yet this objection becomes less relevant when one decides to look at the narratives of the hagiographical texts themselves. By seeing the hagiographies as

[50] Barbara Abou-el-Haj, 'The audiences for the medieval cult of saints', *Gesta* 30:1 (1991), 3-15.
[51] Anne Bailey, 'Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited', 23-24.
[52] Anne Bailey, 'Modern and medieval approaches to pilgrimage, gender and sacred space', *History and Anthropology* 24:4 (2013), 493-512, 495-497.
[53] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and pilgrimage in Christian Culture*.

textual rituals, thus constructions and not as fact-based texts, Anne Baileys has suggested a different approach.[54]

Anne Bailey

Anne Bailey states that using Turner's model when looking at medieval miracle collections may not give us any insight into how medieval pilgrimage was practiced, but can tell us something about the structural thought-worlds of medieval hagiographers and about the sociological function of the miracle genre. A textual adaptation of *rite de passage* can take the ritual beyond the level of historical reality and into the collective minds of medieval hagiographers. According to Bailey, *rite de passage* can be seen as a literary device. It is sort of narrative journey.[55] Unfortunately, after this statement Bailey moves on to another topic and does not elaborate further on the theory of *rite de passage*. She does not explain what sort of information we could get out of looking at texts in this specific way. This is where I will continue. However, before I start with this, let us first look at the concept of *rite de passage* in some more detail.

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[54] Anne Bailey, 'Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited', 24-25.
[55] Ibid, 25 and 29-30.

3. *Rite de passage*

In the next four chapters the sources will be analysed using the concept of *rite de passage*. To be able to do this properly this chapter will focus on the concept of *rite de passage*. First is explained what is meant by a *rite de passage*, how Victor Turner connected it to his pilgrim theories and, in the end, how Anne Bailey uses the concept a literary device.

Arnold van Genneps' *rite de passage*

In 1909 Arnold van Gennep, a French ethnographer, wrote *Les rites de passage*. In this work Van Gennep introduced the concept of *rite de passage*, a ceremony or ritual which is performed when an individual leaves one group to enter another. Common Christian examples of this are the rituals of baptism and marriage. Van Gennep himself explained his concept by using the following metaphor: society is as a house divided into different rooms and corridors. Every time a passage occurs, so when one individual leaves one group to enter another, he or she would, in the metaphor, get to change rooms.[56] According to Van Gennep there are uncountable different *rite de passage* ceremonies or rituals to be found in different cultures all over the world, but they all have one thing in common: they can be divided into three phases: pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal.[57]

During the first phase, the pre-liminal phase, so called 'rites of separation' are carried out. Through symbolic behaviour the detachment of the individual from society is signified. The individual is forced to leave their status quo behind by breaking with previous practices and routines.[58] The bachelor party is a fine example of the pre-liminal phase. Where for one day only both the bride and bridegroom get to go wild. They get to separate themselves from their daily life's routine. The norms which normally count do not on this day.

After the pre-liminal phase it is time for the liminal phase, the 'rites of transition' or the 'margin'. During this phase the state of the ritual subject becomes ambiguous as it passes through a realm or dimension that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state, they are betwixt and between all familiar lines of classification.[59] An example of the liminal phase is the mourning period which separates a person from being married and being widowed.

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[56] Arnold van Gennep, Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (trans.), *The rites of passage* (London, 2010), 26.
[57] Arnold van Gennep, *Rite of passage*, *11*.
[58] Victor Turner, *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure* (Ithaca N.Y., 1969), 94.
[59] Victor Turner, *The ritual process*, 94.

The last phase which occurs is called the post-liminal phase, or the 'phase of aggregation'. It is in this phase that the passage is consummated and the subject returns to their old social life, in the new role that has been assigned. The individual is now again in a stable state, has rights and obligations of a clearly defined structural type and is expected to behave in accordance with the customary norms and ethical standards appropriate to his new settled state.[60] An example of this is when the wedding ceremony is over and the marriage is officially conducted. The two people who undertook the marriage ritual have now moved on to the next phase and go back to their daily life, but with their status permanently changed.

Victor Turner

In *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure* Victor Turner used this concept by Arnold van Gennep and developed it further. In the later *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture,* Turner and his wife Edith applied the concept to Christian pilgrimage. At the beginning of this latter book the couple state that their book is "an attempt to examine in some detail what we consider to be one characteristic type of liminality in cultures ideologically dominated by the 'historical', or 'salvation', religions."[61] The Turners continue by stating that, even though liminality is big and complex in the major ignition rituals of tribal societies, Catholic Christian tradition only has one real liminal phase available for the laity: pilgrimage. With creating pilgrimages, Christianity generated its own and only mode of liminality for the laity. [62] The Turners thus state that one can look at pilgrimage as a *rite de passage* itself.

So how is a *rite de passage* structured when applied to a pilgrimage journey? The pre-liminal phase in pilgrimage can be seen as the starting phase, the individuals that would proceed to undertake a pilgrimage were usually separated from society. They were 'outsiders'. Getting this label could happen in a couple of ways, of which sickness and/or disability occurred the most.[63] Another way was penance, where an individual could have been banished or could be wearing an iron bond as punishment for their crimes. These individuals in the pre-liminal phase were still present in society, but they were barred from playing an active part in it by the rest of society.[64]

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[60] Victor Turner, *The ritual process*, 94.
[61] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture*, 3.
[62] Ibid, 3-4.
[63] Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims*, 59.
[64] Anne Bailey, *Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited*, 26-27.

The liminal phase in pilgrimage is that of the journey. During this phase, no matter what class, sex or reason for being an 'outsider', all pilgrims would come together. *Communitas* occurred during this phase. The pilgrims travelled, either alone or together, to a saints' shrine. This journey was often long and dangerous. The journey itself could even be seen as a sort of penance.[65] Having arrived at the shrine, people would stay there as long as it took for them to recover. This could be minutes, days or even longer. Most of the time was spent praying to the saint and to God.[66]

Post-liminal, the last phase, is the phase where the pilgrim would miraculously be cured or forgiven and therefore could be part of society again.[67] As we will see, this sometimes happened quite literally in the hagiographies, with the cured pilgrims being surrounded by a crowd. In this phase the pilgrims were sort of 'reborn'. They could go back home and return to their former mundane existence, in their new fully accepted state. Like in other *rite of passage* ceremonies there was a rise in status, the pilgrims would be part of society again. Additionally it was commonly believed that the pilgrim had made a spiritual step forward.[68]

The model of *rite de passage* thus turns out to be applicable to the journey of pilgrimage. However, it should be taken into consideration that on some aspects it differs. The pilgrimage was, unlike some other *rite de passage* rituals, voluntary. Pilgrims had the choice to decide when and where they wanted to go.[69] At least it was like this in the beginning of Christianity. The earliest pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Rome were purely undertaken out of devotion, but as Christianity developed, pilgrimage became integrated within the whole system. The moment the Vatican started to have more control over the religion, pilgrimage became institutionalised as a means of keeping everyone's moral state under ecclesiastical control. Whereas pilgrimage started out as something completely voluntary, over the centuries it turned into the norm.[70]

Anne Bailey

Victor Turners' theory of *rite de passage* has not only seen a lot of praise, but as stated in the previous chapter also received quite some critique. On this critique we will not dwell any further in this chapter. Instead we will go straight to Anne Bailey who stated that she has found a way to work around this critique while still being able to use Victor Turners' theory when working

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[65] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture*, 7.
[66] Anne Bailey, *Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited*, 27-29.
[67] Ibid, 29.
[68] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture*, 15.
[69] Ibid, 8, 34.
[70] Ibid, 231-233.

with medieval pilgrimage journeys. According to Anne Bailey it does not matter that Victor Turners' model is too abstract and reductionist to be effectively applied to specific real-life experiences. At least not when one decides not to look at real-life experiences but rather focus on the written literary medium. This way if you apply structural models to the texts, structural thought-worlds of medieval hagiographies can be made clear and the important sociological functions of the miracle genre can be highlighted.[71]

This is what Bailey wants to do. With her expertise in twelfth century pilgrimage stories she states that miracle stories from twelfth century England indeed lend themselves perfectly for a *rite de passage* analysis. This is for two distinct reasons: firstly because of the three-fold structure each miracle story is arranged around, just like the *rite de passage* model. Secondly pilgrim journeys are often depicted in terms of great suffering.[72] The pilgrims are suffering before their journey, during the pre-liminal phase, because of their penance, disease or disability. A suffering that is only amplified during the liminal phase, for the journey is often long, difficult and dangerous. Especially for the ill or disabled.[73] Even after the journey, when the pilgrims have arrived at the shrine, the suffering does not always stop, for the journey can get emotionally harsh at the shrine. A lot of pilgrims are depicted crying when having arrived at the shrine.[74]

When adapting the concept of *rite de passage* in such a textual way it takes the ritual beyond the level of historical reality and into the collective minds of medieval hagiographers. This way a pilgrimage journey is no longer a *rite de passage* in a literal and historical sense, but it can be seen as a literary device applicable to the entire text. The pilgrims in the texts are caught up by this narrative, and carried along by this *rite de passage* framework and agenda from the moment they step onto the page. It is not known if this was done consciously by the authors of hagiographical texts or not.[75]

According to Bailey it is possible to delve into a community's collective psychology when reading the miracle stories, if one keeps in their mind how these stories are structured. Such a delve help tell us more about the society in which the stories were written, its aspirations and fears. Looking at these stories even suggests one way in which religious authorities may have responded to life's uncertainties: by telling stories.[76]

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[71] Anne Bailey, *Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited*, 25.
[72] Ibid, 25-29.
[73] Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London, 1999), 83.
[74] Susan Signe Morrison, *Women pilgrims in late Medieval England: Private piety as public performance* (London, 2000), 137-138
[75] Anne Bailey, *Peter Brown and Victor Turner revisited*, 29-30.
[76] Ibid, 38-39.

Method

Anne Bailey concludes that when treating the concept of *rite de passage* as a literary device, Victor Turners' theory is applicable to medieval pilgrim stories. By doing this, one can figure out more about the text, and the society that produced it. Bailey however does not go one step further and see if her proposed applying of theory to story actually works. This is where my thesis continues. With keeping the Turners and Anne Bailey's findings in mind I will take a look at four hagiographical texts in the next chapters, using discourse analysis as a method. This method makes it possible for historians to look at a text in a particular way. With a focus on language and its relationship between social and cultural contexts a discourse, which can be seen as the social construction of reality, can be found. This way not only the true meaning, but also the intention of a text can be discovered.[77] It will be a test, to see if Anne Bailey's statement actually holds up and if so, the question what it can tell us about *rite de passage* as a literary device, England's twelfth century and hagiography as a genre will be answered.

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[77] Brian Paltridge, *Discourse analysis: An introduction* (London, 2006), 2 and 8-9.

4. Life and miracles of St Modwenna

The first set of pilgrimage stories which will be analysed can be found in Geoffrey of Burton's *Life and miracles of St Modwenna* which was written between the years 1118 and 1150.[78] The stories are centred around the Burton Abbey in Burton upon Trent, a Benedictine monastery of which Geoffrey of Burton was abbot from the year 1114 till 1150.

Burton Abbey and Saint Modwenna

Research has indicated that a settlement was founded at Burton during the early Anglo-Saxon period. The reasoning behind this settling remains unclear but it has been suggested that it was probably founded in the context of Wilfrid the bishop of York's activities in the seventh century. These activities included setting up several monasteries throughout the country.[79] The monastery at Burton was most likely one of these. During this time the settlement of Burton was not known by its current name however. Instead it was known as 'Mudwennestow', which translates to 'Modwenna's holy place'.[80] This name had to do with a small chapel which was located on Andresey, an island in the river Trent near the monastery. This chapel, dedicated to Saint Andrew, became associated with Saint Modwenna over the years, for she was supposed to have built it there.[81]

In the eighth century the settlement became known as Burton, which means 'a settlement at a fortified place'. Its fortified status may have attracted the attention of the Norsemen which caused the settlement to be under their control for quite some time during the ninth and the tenth century. The monastery was re-founded around the turn of the eleventh century, when the Norsemen were driven away, and a Benedictine abbey was established.[82] Just a few years after the abbey was re-founded Saint Modwenna was brought to the abbey. Her (alleged) remains were transferred from the chapel on Andresey to Burton abbey and a shrine in her honour was built there. Even though these changes occurred it was the island of Andresey which continued to be significant as a religious site. Saint Modwenna did not become important to the abbey of Burton yet. However, this would all change when Geoffrey of Burton became abbot in 1114.[83]

[78] Geoffrey of burton, Robert Bartlett (ed. and trans.), *Life and miracles of St Modwenna* (Oxford 2002).

[79] Alan Thacker, 'Wilfrid, St., in: Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg (eds.), *The Blackwell Encyclopædia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1999), 474-476.

[80] 'Burton-upon-Trent: General history', in: Nigel J. Tringham (ed.), *A history of the county of Stafford*, Volume 9: Burton-upon-Trent (London, 2003), 5-20.

[81] 'Burton-upon-Trent: Established church', in: Nigel J. Tringham (ed.), *A history of the county of Stafford*, Volume 9: Burton-upon-Trent (London, 2003), 107-130.

[82] 'Burton-upon-Trent: General history', 5-20.

[83] 'Burton-upon-Trent: Established church', 107-130.

Even though a shrine dedicated to Saint Modwenna was present when Geoffrey arrived at Burton, the saint herself was quite unknown. Geoffrey could find hardly anything about this virgin saint, which was why he started to do research himself. This research led him to source material from Ireland: a *vita*, a biography, written about Saint Modwenna by an author called Conchubranus. It was this material which Geoffrey reviewed and adapted into his version of Saint Modwenna's story.[84] Writing a life was not the only activity Geoffrey undertook in his time at Burton Abbey. He also rebuilt the church & Saint Modwenna's shrine, was energetic in protecting the church's rights & privileges and actively promoted the saint. It is within reason to say that this all probably led to an increase of pilgrims.[85]

The text which Geoffrey of Burton produced, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna,* consists of two parts. The first part contains the *vita* of Saint Modwenna and is based on the earlier work written by Irish author Conchubranus. The second part of the text, the part which is of interest to this thesis, contains accounts of miraculous cures and punishments connected with the shrine of Saint Modwenna at the abbey of burton. The stories of this last part are based on stories from local oral traditions and Geoffrey's own experience.[86]

Who exactly is this Saint Modwenna who this hagiography was written about? Unfortunately not a lot can be said about that, for not a lot is known about her. It should be stated that we are not even sure if she really existed at all. Allegedly Modwenna was an Irish Abbess who lived some time during the early Middle Ages. On her way back from a pilgrimage in Rome she came across the island Andresey where she built a chapel dedicated to Saint Andrew. Her motivation for this is unknown, but the story goes that she lived there for a while as an anchoress after she returned to Ireland. After her death the body of Modwenna was brought back to the chapel so she could be buried there.[87]

Pilgrimage

In *Life and miracles of St Modwenna* eleven pilgrim stories can be found. These differ in size from being just three sentences long to a whole page. All these stories, no matter how short they are, are structured as a *rite de passage*.[88] This means that every story contains the above discussed pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal phase. Looking at just the title of the first chapter which discusses two pilgrimage stories; *45. A lame person made straight and a blind man*

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[84] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, XIII-XIV.
[85] 'Burton-upon-Trent: General history', 5-20 and 'Burton-upon-Trent: Established church', 107-130.
[86] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, XI.
[87] 'Burton-upon-Trent: Established church', 107-130.
[88] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, 185-219.

restored to sight, immediately shows what the pre-liminal phase is going to be in these stories.[89] In these tales the pilgrims are physically secluded from society. In the chapter mentioned it is a lame person and a blind man, but in other chapters of the book there are, for example reports of a person with a wart or a cripple, proving that sickness or being disabled indeed are ways to be in the pre-liminal phase and being secluded from society. In other words: being physically different from the norm removes you from the norm. This is not the only way people find themselves in the pre-liminal phase in this book, however. Another way is that of bondage. There are several examples of people who have some sort of iron bond around them. In the stories they get described as

> *"... a penitent with an iron bond around his arm."*
>
> or
>
> *"... wore an iron bond as a penance around his belly."*[90]

By having to wear these bonds everyone can see that they did something wrong in the past and because of that they differ from the majority of the people and hereby are partially secluded from society.

Even though the methods of seclusion differ a lot from each other there is something most pilgrims mentioned have in common: they are not able to take care of themselves. They are described as being poor and get around because of support through charity.[91] This shows that before they go on pilgrimage the pilgrims are not physically secluded from society, but that they cannot take a big part in it either. They need help to get around, they cannot do it by themselves. Another commonality is the duration of their seclusion. Most of the pilgrims have been suffering for a long time. It is mentioned that some of them have been suffering since childhood. With others, during the description of how they got in this pre-liminal phase, it is mentioned that they have been like this "for a long time".[92] Emphasis is thus put on the duration of the seclusion. All these people have been suffering for a very long time.

The liminal phase is less structured than the pre-liminal phase and differs quite a bit between the accounts. The one thing all the stories have in common is that in the end the pilgrims pray to the holy virgin Modwenna. The journey of how they get to her shrine is where the stories differ from each other. Some of them came from far, while others lived nearby.[93]

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[89] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, 185-189.
[90] Ibid, 189.
[91] Ibid, 185-189, 199-205 and 217-219.
[92] Ibid, 185-189 and 199-205.
[93] Ibid, 185-189 and 209-217.

Some of the pilgrims came directly to Burton, while others had visited other shrines first, so called shrine-hopping.[94] Visions, dreams and trances also appear in the liminal phase. Several pilgrims are visited by Saint Modwenna herself, either to tell them to go visit her shrine or to cure them directly.[95] After reading the liminal phase passages from *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, the conclusion can be made that this phase is a complex one where a lot is happening. The things which are happening do have something in common: every single one has spiritual aspects. The pilgrims enter some sort of sacred space or time one way or another. Some immediately at the beginning of their journey, with spiritual visions where the saint appears to them, others have to wait until the end of their journey where several hours or even days are spent praying in front of the altar.

In the post-liminal phase the reintegration of the pilgrim takes place. First of all the bond comes off, or the pilgrims are cured from whatever ails them. Through this they can again be part of society for they do not differ from other people anymore. However, the reintegration does not stop there. In a lot of the stories a crowd is present at the moment the pilgrim arrives in their post-liminal phase. An example of this are the stories where some pilgrims are reintegrated during a mass.[96] The moment a pilgrim is released from its burden the people who are present in the church either start running towards them or start to cheer. This way the pilgrim gets to experience being part of society again. For they are immediately literally part of society (again) by being the centre of attention of a physical crowd. Not only does the pilgrim get physically reintegrated, but also religiously. Most of the stories end with the crowd, the clergy and the pilgrim worshipping God and or Saint Modwenna.[97] The times this does not happen at least a mention is made that the pilgrim was cured due to God's Grace. Part of the reintegration is thus being part of the religious world again. This makes sense seeing that western medieval society was a profoundly Christian one.

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[94] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, 189-191, 217-219 and Anne Bailey, 'Representations of English women and their pilgrimages in twelfth-century miracle collections', *Assuming Gender* 3:1 (2013), 59-90, 80.

[95] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, 186-189 and 209-217.

[96] Ibid, 199-205 and 217-219.

[97] Ibid, 199-205.

Saint promotion

What stands out when reading the stories is the emphasis on God and the saint. The ending of some of the stories make it sound like they were just written as some sort of hymn to celebrate Saint Modwenna:

"They acknowledged the virgin's outstanding merit, marvelled at their holy mother, so worthy of honour, and showed deep and heart-felt reverence for Modwenna, the glorious handmaid of Christ."[98]

Sentences like these make it feel like the pilgrim stories in this text are just used to glorify the saint. Like the miracles stories are used as some sort of confirmation to show how good the saint actually was.

Another good example in which this occurs is in the story where a cured pilgrim is brought before Queen Matilda, who ruled England at the time. [99] The Queen Matilda of this story is Matilda of Scotland, who sat on the throne from the year 1100 till 1118. Because of her education in Romsey Abbey, a Benedictine nunnery in southern England, she was a very religious person. Later she became known as Matilda the good Queen, or Matilda of blessed memory. There was even an attempt to canonise her.[100] After the pilgrim is brought before Queen Matilda, the church of Burton receives royal support from her, an almost blessed queen. This story of course contributed hugely to the positive image of the church.

Since the pilgrim stories we have looked at are part of a hagiography written on the Saint Modwenna it is of course rather obvious that they contributed to creating a positive image of the saint. On the contrary, it fits perfectly with the image we have of the goals of hagiographies of that time.[101] It also coincides with the goal of Geoffrey of Burton's other work in and around Burton.[102] Creating these positive images and stories of Saint Modwenna would promote the shrine and cult, which in the end would benefit Burton Abbey.[103] The structure of *rite de passage* seems to lend itself perfectly for this goal. The writer wants to make the saint look good. With using the *rite de passage* as an literary device the writer has an easy frame in which the pilgrim gets from one phase to the next. It is with help of the saint that the pilgrim goes through this process and gets from being sick or wearing a bond to being whole and part of society again.

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[98] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, 185-189.
[99] Ibid, 199-205.
[100] Lisa Hilton, *Queens consort: England's medieval queens* (London, 2008), 40-59.
[101] Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims*, 51.
[102] Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and miracles of St Modwenna*, XI.
[103] Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the medieval mind*, 34.

5. Life and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald

The second set of pilgrim stories which will be discussed are written by Eadmer of Canterbury in two different works: *Miracula S. Dunstani* and *Miracula S. Oswaldi*.[104] The former was probably written between the years 1105 and 1109 and is centred around Christ Church in Canterbury, while the latter centres around Worcester and was probably produced between the years 1113 and 1115.[105]

Eadmer of Canterbury

While there are a lot of authors of hagiographies out there of whom not a lot is known, Eadmer is not one of them. On the contrary, we are quite well informed about his life and career. Born around the year 1060, Eadmer had a connection with Christ Church in Canterbury from an early age, as he was a child oblate of the Benedictine Abbey housed there. This meant that he witnessed the Norman Conquest of 1066 up close and that he could have been present during the destruction of the church by fire in 1067. We know for sure that he was present during the time the Normans took power over the church and seated a Norman archbishop there.[106]

Eadmer had a lifelong interest in the cults of saints and the miraculous. This partly was due to the fact that during his life there was an increase in hagiographies being written. Another probable reason for his interest was related to the old monks of Christ Church who might have inspired him. When the Normans took over the church they were not always respectful to the old English saints and even neglected some of them. It were the old monks who, to displeasure of the Normans, kept worshipping the native saints. Young Eadmer saw this and was probably influenced by them.[107] Eadmer was different from other monks at Christ Church. What set him apart was his relationship with Anselm of Canterbury, the second Norman archbishop of Canterbury. Eadmer was a close companion of the archbishop and even accompanied him during his two exiles from England.[108] It was this relationship which gave Eadmer the opportunity to be more than just a local hagiographer. For this special position offered him a lot of knowledge and gave him the opportunity to witness certain events and meet particular people. Opportunities which he otherwise would never have gotten.

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[104] Eadmer of Canterbury, Andrew J. Turner and Bernard J. Muir (eds. and trans.), *Lives and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald* (Oxford, 2006).
[105] RW Southern, *Saint Anselm and his biographer: A study of monastic life and thought, 1059-c.1130* (Cambridge, 1963), 281-283.
[106] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Lives and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald*, XIII.
[107] Ibid, XIV-XVI.
[108] Ibid, XVII-XXI.

Saint Dunstan and Saint Oswald

Eadmer wrote a lot of different works, but the ones which we will be discussing here are the miracle collections he wrote about two different saints, Saint Dunstan and Saint Oswald. Dunstan was an Anglo-Saxon saint who was born around the beginning of the tenth century and died in 988. He was successively abbot of Glastonbury, bishop of Worcester, bishop and later on archbishop of Canterbury. He was seen as the figurehead of the English Christian community and was given personal credit for a set of reforming accomplishments. We now know that these credits are undue, the reforms were the work of others.[109]

Eadmer probably wrote *Miracula S Dunstani* somewhere between 1105 and 1109, which means that the work was most likely written in France during one of archbishop Anselm's periods of exile. This caused the work to be quite unknown in England during Eadmer's lifetime.[110] Eadmer based his work on a *vita* written by Osbern, another Benedictine monk present at Christ Church, which was written just a few years before Eadmer started writing his *Miracula S Dunstani*. Eadmer mostly concerned himself with correcting the work of Osbern. He stated so himself in the preface of his work.[111] While rewriting Osbern's work Eadmer made two major changes. First of all he erased Osbern completely. Whereas Osbern sometimes named himself as witness, Eadmer did not. Secondly, Eadmer removed all details of names and places. Whereas Osbern sometimes tended to name the pilgrims, Eadmer did not. To him the names were just of secondary importance, the central part of the story was the power of the saint to curse or cure.[112]

The second work of Eadmer concerns Saint Oswald. Like Saint Dunstan, Saint Oswald was born at the beginning of the tenth century. He held a double seat, being bishop of Worcester from 961 and archbishop of York from 972 till his death in 992. Similar to Saint Dunstan, he was one of the leaders of the English monastic reformation of the tenth century. However, we know a lot less of his life than we know of Dunstan's. What we do know is mostly derived from a *vita*, written between 997 and 1002, attributed to Byrhtferth of Ramsey.[113] Eadmer was

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[109] Michael Lapidge, 'Dunstan [St Dunstan]', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* https://www-oxforddnb-com.ru.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8288?rskey=GbZljL&result=3 [accessed 27-6-2019].
[110] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Lives and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald*, XVII-XIX.
[111] Ibid, 45.
[112] Ibid, XXXI-XIX and LXXVII.
[113] N. P. Brooks, 'Oswald [St Oswald]', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* https://www-oxforddnb-com.ru.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20917?rskey=jNttgN&result=2 [accessed 27-6-2019].

probably inspired by this work, although he does not mention any sources in his *Miracula S Oswaldi*.[114]

Eadmer most likely wrote *Miracula S Oswaldi* between 1113 and 1115. Unlike most of his other work, he did not write this for the needs of the church Of Canterbury, but for his friends at Worcester Cathedral.[115] Besides being based on the *vita* by Byrhtferth, Eadmer based his work on the research he conducted when he visited Worcester and talked with the monks there.[116] Unlike his work on Saint Dunstan, this work only circulated in England and just a few copies were made. It therefore looks like it was made especially for the church of Worcester itself and not for a broader public.[117]

The texts

For the analysis of the writings of Eadmer of Canterbury I have looked at the pilgrimage stories which were present in the two miracle collections. In *Miracula S Dunstani* thirteen pilgrimage stories can be found, whereas *Miracula S Oswaldi* contains only four of them.[118] The reason for the difference in number can be explained by the fact that the first work is a lot bigger than the second. In these seventeen pilgrimage stories once again the *rite de passage* structure can be found.

What immediately stands out is that, as said before, Eadmer keeps the descriptions of the pilgrims quite vague. Only twice does he provide us with a name of a pilgrim.[119] In general Eadmer keeps the pre-liminal, pre-travel, phase really short. Most of the times this phase does not consist out of more than just a couple of sentences. The *Miracula S Oswaldi* contains stories with a longer pre-liminal phase.[120] Just like we have seen in *Life and miracles of St Modwenna* the pilgrims encountered are either sick, disabled or penanced. Reading both miracle collections, one comes across a lot of different types of diseases and disabilities. From:

> *"... a certain old woman seeking in her advanced age to recover the sight that she had lost in her youth."*

to

> *"There was another man lacking one of his feet…"*[121]

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[114] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Lives and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald*, CVII.
[115] RW Southern, *Saint Anselm and his biographer*, 283.
[116] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Lives and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald*, CVIII.
[117] Ibid, CXXVIII.
[118] Ibid, 161-177 and 293-315.
[119] Ibid, 167.
[120] Ibid, 293-297 and 313-315.
[121] Ibid, 165-167 and 167-169.

The most interesting case might be of a certain German, Clement, one of the two people who is in fact named by Eadmer. Clement had been punished by sentence of excommunication and had since been in Satan's hands according to the account. As a result decaying flesh could be found all over his trembling body. He thus suffered not only from punishment, but from disease as well. The story of the other pilgrim who gets named is of less interest and unfortunately also only two sentences long.[122]

The first thing that stands out when looking at the liminal phase is that even though the liminal phase is the phase where the person according to the theory should find themselves in some spiritual state and thus separated from society as a whole, over half of the pilgrims depicted in Eadmer's stories have companions on their journey. Either, they are travelling together with other pilgrims, or they are taken to the shrine by others, for example their parents, because they simply are not able to do it themselves.[123] Besides that, there are once again a lot of different things happening during this phase of the stories. Even though all the pilgrims at one point or another arrive at either the tomb of Saint Dunstan or Saint Oswald, this is not the endpoint for every story. This means that not everyone is cured at the tomb.

In one instance a pilgrim leaves uncured to go back home and then on her way back is met by Saint Dunstan who cures her right there on the spot.[124] This "certain old woman", as she is called by Eadmer, is cured by Saint Dunstan the moment her guide leaves here which means that she is left alone blind. Why did the saint decide not to cure her at the tomb, as he does with almost everyone else? It might have to do with the suffering which characterises the liminal phase. Without her guide the woman is really helpless and left all alone. So this might have been the amount of suffering Saint Dunstan wanted her to have, before she was allowed to be cured. This is not the only time that Saint Dunstan visits the pilgrims during their liminal phase. He also activates them to go on pilgrimage in for example their dreams.[125]

No significant differences can be found between *Miracula S Dunstani* and *Miracula S Oswaldi* when looking at the liminal phases. Where the two works do differ greatly is in the post-liminal phase. In both texts crowds are present when the pilgrim enters their post-liminal state, which as we know means that the pilgrim immediately literally becomes part of society again. The difference is in the tone and the length of the miracle stories in both texts which are very different from each other. In *Miracula S Dunstani* Eadmer does not spend a lot of words

[122] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Lives and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald*, 167.
[123] Anne Bailey, 'Women pilgrims and their travelling companions in twelfth-century England', in: *Viator* 46:1 (2015), 115-134, 118.
[124] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Lives and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald*, 165-167.
[125] Ibid, 161.

describing how the pilgrim is brought back into society, except in one case where in the end the pilgrim was punished again and the cure was reverted.[126] Examples of this are:

> *"The man returned and became whole again at the very moment foretold to him: this brought great joy to the clergy and the townspeople"*

<div align="center">or</div>

> *"… they each received the sight that they were seeking, and because of that they spread great joy among the people."*[127]

God and Saint Dunstan are thanked and praised in the stories, but it is done in a subtle way. In *Miracula S Oswaldi* the opposite is the case. Here we find that more sentences are dedicated to the post-liminal phase and the praises to God and Saint Oswald are really obvious:

> *"… And the other brothers, witnessing such a sudden and complete cure in their brother, were overjoyed and coming together they praised God, who had lovingly worked marvel through their own most beloved father; in praising they recommended it, and recommending it they praised him together, with great devotion in their hearts and voices raised on high."*[128]

Differences

The style of *Miracula S Dunstani* and *Miracula S Oswaldi* thus differ quite a bit in the pre-liminal and the post-liminal phase. A question we could ask ourselves is where this difference in style comes from. It could have to do with the reason for the writing of both texts. Writing *Miracula S Dunstani* Eadmer was correcting a text, for Saint Dunstan was pretty well known and there were already texts written about him. The fact that Saint Dunstan was already quite established could be the reason that there was no need for as much emphasis on describing the great deeds of the saints, for the general public already knew how great of a saint he was.

The hagiography Eadmer used for inspiration to write his *Miracula S Oswaldi* was already over a century old, however, and not widely in circulation. This could explain why it was rather unknown.[129] It could be that Saint Oswald needed to be re-promoted as a saint, that this is the reason why the stories about Saint Oswald are more detailed and especially why the post-liminal phase is more extensive. By doing this Eadmer created more room for the reader to make a connection between the pilgrim, the saint and God, so the saint could be praised more.

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[126] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Lives and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald*, 163.
[127] Ibid, 161 and 167-169.
[128] Ibid, 293-295.
[129] Ibid, CVII-CVIII.

6. The hagiography of the female saints of Ely

The third set of pilgrimage stories which will be analysed can be found in Goscelin of Saint-Bertin's *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*. In this edition several *vitae* and miracle collections of the saints celebrated at Ely are bundled. Goscelin of Saint-Bertin is seen as the probable author of these texts.[130]

Saint Æthelthryth

In the edition by Rosalind C. Love several hagiographies of four different saints can be found: Sexburge, Werburge, Wihtburge and Æthelthryth. For our analysis we will focus on the latter saint: Æthelthryth. Æthelthryth lived during the seventh century and was the daughter of Anna, king of East Anglia. East Anglia was a small independent Anglo-Saxon kingdom of the area which nowadays comprises the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. Æthelthryth married twice during her life. First with Tondberht, the ealdorman of South Gyrwas, and after his death with Ecgfrith, king of Northumbria.[131]

Even though she married twice Æthelthryth never consummated either of her marriages and after being married for twelve years to Ecgfrith she decided to leave him to become a nun at Coldingham, a parish on the Scottish borders.[132] A year later, in the year 673, she went back to the south and decided to found a double monastery on her great estate in Ely. Here she ruled for six years before dying of the plague in 679.[133] She declared holy on the 17th of October 695.[134]

The monastery of Ely

The monastery in Ely was kept in existence and was re-founded as a Benedictine community around 970 by Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester. The first abbot who was appointed and who would be significant in promoting the cult of Saint Æthelthryth was Byrhtnoth.[135] He seemed to have a considerable interest in the cult of relics and was probably the one who initiated the

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[130] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, Rosalind C. Love (ed. and trans.), *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely* (Oxford, 2004).

[131] Alan Thacker, 'Æthelthryth [St Æthelthryth, Etheldreda, Audrey]', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8906?rskey=p6qMM2&result=1 [accessed on: 15-7-2019].

[132] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, XIII.

[133] Alan Thacker, 'Æthelthryth [St Æthelthryth, Etheldreda, Audrey]'.

[134] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, XIV.

[135] A. F. Wareham, 'Byrhtnoth', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-49409?rskey=MIMe0D&result=2 [accessed on: 8-8-2019].

veneration of the saints of Ely as a closely united group. Stories were made up for the other three saints, Sexburge, Werburge and Wihtburge to connect them to Æthelthryth in order to make them one family. With this feeling of a collective of saints the cult around the monastery in Ely grew. However what we do not have of this period is any sort of hagiography. So if it got produced during this time, it has since perished.[136]

Over the next century nothing of real interest to the cult of the female saints at Ely happened, until the year 1082 when Simeon became abbot at Ely. Simeon would be the first post-Conquest abbot to hold office long enough to achieve anything of notice. The first major thing he achieved was that he regained some of the lands which had been plundered after the Conquest. The second was that he oversaw the renewal of the monastic buildings and he initiated the start of the work on a new Romanesque church. These innovations were thought of as necessary for the abbey of Ely if it wanted to maintain its high status.[137]

After Simeon's death in 1093 a long interregnum took place in the abbey. It took seven years for a new abbot to be appointed: Richard, a monk of Bec. He was responsible for a new translation of the saints of which Æthelthryth's took place in 1106. [138] Simeon was succeeded by Hervey in 1107. It was he who brought forth the creation of the bishopric of Ely, of which he himself became the first bishop in 1109. It was during this period that literary activity started to blossom around Ely.[139]

Goscelin of Saint-Bertin

The hagiographical text which will be analysed is called the *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* and can be seen as part of the hagiographical collection of Ely's saintly past. This collection has been constructed during the period from Byrthnoth's abbacy till the regime of Ely's first bishop: Hervey. The composition covers a span of a hundred-and-fifty years in which significant changes took place.[140] When looking at the edition by Rosalind C. Love the name of Goscelin of Saint-Bertin can be found as name of the author on the cover of the work. However it is not sure at all if Goscelin was the writer of *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* or any of the other texts which can be found in the edition. In the next couple of paragraphs a small detour from answering this

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[136] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, XVIII-XIX.
[137] Ibid, XIX.
[138] Ibid, XXI-XXII.
[139] Dorothy M. Owen, 'Hervey', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13107?rskey=IATF4Q&result=8 [accessed 8-8-2019].
[140] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, XXII.

thesis' question will be taken to discuss the probable authors of *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe*, starting with Goscelin himself.

Goscelin of Saint-Bertin was a monk from Flanders who came to England in the early 1060s. Here he joined the household of Herman, bishop of Ramsbury and Sherborne under who's patronage he flourished. It was at Herman's instigation that Goscelin wrote his first *vitae* of Anglo-Saxon saints.[141] Because Goscelin wrote a lot of hagiographies during his life, later on a lot of anonymously written ones got assigned to his name. This includes texts which can be found in *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*.[142] After Herman died, Goscelin had to leave the area, probably because of some disagreement with Herman's successor, a Norman called Osmund. From this moment on he went into a kind of exile.[143] During his period of exile Goscelin visited several abbeys which inspired the hagiographies he would write later in his life. The abbey of Ely was most likely one of them which he would have visited during the abbacy of Simeon.[144] It was by 1090 that he settled at St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury where he continued to write hagiographies and where he also seemed to have composed several liturgical texts.[145]

Could Goscelin be the author of *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe*? Rosalind C. Love states that even though Goscelin got described as writing liturgical material at Ely, of which *Miracula S. Æethledrethe* would be a good candidate, he is only left as one of the possibilities. She states that some of the features of the text do not seem to match to closely with his style and that it is not as convincing as other material in her edition that Goscelin is the author of this text.[146]

Other possibilities

One of the probable authors of the *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* is thus Goscelin, but he is not the only one. To find out other possibilities for the authorship of the text we have to go take a look at the history of the text itself. The earliest written evidence of Æthelthryth can be found in the year 731 when Bede included her in his *Historica Ecclesiastica*. During this time veneration of the saint was not widespread yet. This was something which would start after the abbey of Ely

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[141] R. C. Love, 'Goscelin of Saint-Bertin', in: Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg (eds.), *The Blackwell Encyclopædia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1999), 213.
[142] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, XIII.
[143] R. C. Love, 'Goscelin of Saint-Bertin', 213.
[144] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, XIX.
[145] R. C. Love, 'Goscelin of Saint-Bertin', 213.
[146] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, LXV.

was properly re-founded in the second half of the tenth century. Until that time the saint would stay quite unknown.[147]

The re-founding of the Abbey sparked new interest in the saint and because of her presence on several post-Conquest liturgical calendars she became quite popular throughout England.[148] However, it is not clear if this interest sparked new writings for no surviving evidence has been found of an attempt to expand on Bede's narrative until the twelfth century. It was a monk of Ely named Gregory who started to produce a metrical account of Ætehlfhryth's life and posthumous miracles. This can be seen as a direct result of the saints translation of 1106.[149] It seems as Rosalind C. Love wants to want to ascribe the *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* to this monk Gregory. According to her it fits into the context of the time of the regime of bishop Hervey.[150]

One of the reasons why it is so difficult to decide who wrote the *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* has to do with the fact that it is not exactly clear when the text itself was written. Nothing more specific than the early twelfth century can be said. On top of that were a lot of different styled texts produced with the same topic and the same stories in the eleventh century and can we not say for sure which text was based on which and on which one the *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* itself was based in the end.[151]

The pilgrims

In *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* six miracle stories concerning pilgrimage journeys can be found.[152] What stands out immediately is the length of these stories. Whereas the other texts analysed in this thesis contain some stories of just two or three sentences, in *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* all stories are considerable longer. *A* thing that should be taken into consideration is that four of the miracle stories in *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* we can also find in the eleventh century texts on which *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* was probably based. In these texts these stories are just two sentences long.[153] The author thus deliberately made the choice to expand the narrative in their version of the stories. However, the author does not give us is names of the pilgrims. All of them are anonymous. Only for two of the pilgrims a home location is given: Bradford and the

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[147] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, XXIII.
[148] Ibid, XXXII.
[149] Ibid, LIX.
[150] Ibid, LXVI.
[151] Ibid, LXI- LXV.
[152] Ibid, 111-131.
[153] Ibid, 110-116.

abbey of Ely itself.[154] The only further information we have of them is whether the pilgrims are female or male and some of them get described as being "young".

When looking at the pre-liminal phase it can be concluded that once more the pilgrims are separated from the normal world because of diseases or disabilities in all the stories. What stands out is that half of them cannot seem to function because of the fact that there is something wrong with their hands. The others are paralysed, not able to talk or blind. The pilgrims are thus all missing one of their senses. On top of that all the pilgrims have been separated from the normal world for a long time, some even for a couple of years. They have tried other remedies like medicines, but so far had no luck in being cured.[155] This influences the mood of the pilgrims and their caretakers. For they seem to not have a lot of hope left to be cured:

> *"...there was a young man who had seven years long for an unknown reason lacked the use of his tongue. His parents are dumbfounded, and wonder at their sorry luck, grief torments the depths of their hearts, and their grief and lamentation is constant."*[156]

The pre-liminal phase is thus coloured by its lack of hope and understanding for why the disease had befallen the pilgrim.

During the liminal phase of these stories the suffering of the pilgrim continues and gets even worse. Now having thought to have find a cure for their disease, the pilgrims set out on a pilgrimage journey to the tomb of Saint Æthelthryth which was often tough and quite emotional.

> *".. and the woman does not spare the flood of tears, but rather cries out more from the depth, and crying out begs more urgently, that the disease which is distorting the limbs of her body be driven out."*[157]

It are sentences like these in which the author writes down the emotions which are stirred up by the pilgrims and which show what a hard time the pilgrims are having. Four out of six pilgrims are depicted crying at the shrine of Saint Æthelthryth. What we however do not encounter in the liminal phase of these stories are dreams and visions. Not once does Saint Æthelthryth appear to one of the pilgrims. Seeing as the liminal phase is marked by its spiritual state it is strange that we do not find any examples of this in *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe*.

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[154] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, 113-115 and 119-123.
[155] Ibid, 111-131.
[156] Ibid, 113-115.
[157] Ibid, 111-113.

Just like we have seen in the texts discussed in the previous two chapters the moment the pilgrim is cured and proceeds to the post-liminal phase he or she is immediately getting to be part of society again. For a crowd is present to celebrate the fact that the pilgrim is healed. God and the saint are praised by the spectators for the miracle they have performed. However it is just only in one story in which the praise sounds like some sort of hymn.[158] In this story a young man from Bradford gets his voice back after which references to Solomon's *Song of Songs* are made. According to Medieval people *Song of Songs* described the love between Christ and the human soul.[159] A reference like this shows the people that God and Saint Ætheltryth were glorious, that they cared about people and wanted to make them whole again.

Emotions

When reading the pilgrimage stories in *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* one can come to the conclusion that whatever the pilgrims are doing it is intense. The pilgrims have all been deeply suffering for a long time beforehand and during their journeys as well. Emotions are running high. When they have arrived in the post-liminal phase though the pilgrims themselves become quite relaxed. The pilgrim who gets described with the most vivid emotions from being cured just gets described as "joyfully".[160] It are the crowd and, if present, the companions of the pilgrims who in the post-liminal phase get to feel fierce emotions.

Why are the emotions and actions of first the pilgrims and afterwards the spectators so passionate? What did the author want to accomplish with writing this way? Seeing as *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* was probably written during the reign of the first bishop of Ely, Hervey, it could again be a work with as main goal saint promotion. Of course Saint Ætheltryth was already quite well known throughout England and she already had a following. With Ely recently becoming a bishopric though, it could be that they wanted to prove their place in Christian England and thus needed a new collection of miracle stories to proof that indeed they were a place worth visiting and that they were worth of being a bishopric. Showing the pilgrims suffering this much, but still in the end being cured could show others that they were worthy, for Saint Ætheltryth was indeed really powerful and cared about people She was so powerful that after you had tried everything else and nothing had worked you could always still come to Ely and find your cure then and there.

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[158] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, 113-115.
[159] The editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, 'Song of Solomon', *Encyclopædia Britannica* https://www.britannica.com/topic/Song-of-Solomon [accessed 1-8-2019].
[160] Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *The hagiography of the female saints of Ely*, 129-131.

7. The book of St Gilbert

The last set of pilgrimage stories which will be analysed can be found in *The book of St Gilbert* which was written in the first years of the thirteenth century.[161] The stories are centred around Sempringham Priory in Sempringham, Lincolnshire. This priory was built by Gilbert of Sempringham, the subject of the book. At Sempringham Gilbert founded a monastic order and he is, till this day, the only English saint to have done so.[162]

The text we are going to take a look at in a moment differs substantially from the first three which have been discussed. This is because of the author, who in this case is truly unknown. While for the first two works we have a known author and for the third book there are some serious suggestions, for this hagiography nothing can be stated for sure. The only thing which is certain is that the author was a sacristan of the Conventual Church of St Mary in Sempringham, for the author implies so themselves in the prologue of their work.[163] The second point where this work differs from the others is the saint who is the subject of the text. Whereas for the other texts the saint had been dead for centuries at the moment of writing, Gilbert had only died a few years before he got canonized and this *vita* was written about him.[164] Because of this quite a lot is known about the life of saint Gilbert.

Gilbert of Sempringham

Gilbert was born somewhere before the year 1089 into a family of the lesser nobility who had at that point recently settled in Lincolnshire. The monk probably was the eldest son to a Norman knight and an Anglo-Saxon mother.[165] Due to an unspecified deformity Gilbert was unable to follow in the footsteps of his father and pursue a profession as knight, so he was sent to school. First he was educated locally, most likely at Crowland Abbey, where they had adopted the Benedictine rule. Later on he went to France to study, here he focused on the literary arts.[166] Once back in England his father gave him two churches and he started to educate children in Sempringham.[167]

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[161] Author Unknown, Raymonde Foreville (ed. and trans.), *The book of St Gilbert* (Oxford, 1987), LXXIII.
[162] Brian Golding, 'Gilbert of Sempringham [St Gilbert of Sempringham]', *Oxford dictionary of national biography* https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10677?rskey=RLIV3O&result=1 [accessed 12-7-2019].
[163] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, LXXIII-LXXIV.
[164] Ibid, LXXII.
[165] Brian Golding, 'Gilbert of Sempringham [St Gilbert of Sempringham]'.
[166] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, XVIII.
[167] Brian Golding, 'Gilbert of Sempringham [St Gilbert of Sempringham]'.

Over the following years a lot happened in Gilberts life. He entered several religious houses where he was ordained as priest. However he never forgot his pastoral duties while he was in bishops service and he continued to visit and instruct the parishioners of Sempringham while he was away. He was even offered an archdeaconry at Lincoln which, because of his own agenda, he declined.[168] After several years of spending time between Sempringham and other places, he returned to Sempringham full time.

Back in Sempringham Gilbert decided to sell his goods and to follow, just like many of his contemporary reformers, the path of poverty. It was around 1131 that he started to lead a group of anchoresses living at Sempringham, inspired by the ways of living of the Cistercians lay sisters and lay brothers. During this time there were no written institutions at Sempringham yet nor had Gilbert showed any indication of wanting to found a religious order. But the community kept growing, with smaller communities being established at different churches.[169]

Since Gilbert was reluctant to take on leadership he travelled to Cîteaux in 1147 to bind his foundation to the Cistercian family. Unfortunately for him, the Cistercians declined because Gilbert's community was primarily directed at the care of women, something that was of little appeal for the Cistercians. Pope Eugene III, the first Cistercian pope, told Gilbert he should govern the community himself. This was what Gilbert decided to do when he returned to Sempringham. He started developing a rule based on not only the Benedictine and the Cistercian rule, but later also the Augustinian rule. It was during this period that almost all of the Gilbertine houses, which housed both men and women, were founded.[170]

In *The book of St Gilbert* Saint Gilbert is presented to the reader as a good shepherd. The saint practiced the virtues of humility, mercy, sincerity and most importantly chastity and poverty. Even though he was the founder and master of the Gilbertine order he behaved just like one of its members and he never acted like he was any better than the one over whom he watched.[171] Before his death he chose a successor, so there would be a stable and short transitional period. This was desired because there were two calamities which had occurred during the years. The first of which was the exile of Thomas Becket, for he had taken refuge in houses of the Gilbertine order. To clear this up Gilbert himself had to appear in front of the royal court. The second calamity was a revolt of lay brethren who wanted to see an even stricter separation between the males and the females in the community.[172]

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[168] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, XIX.
[169] Brian Golding, 'Gilbert of Sempringham [St Gilbert of Sempringham]'.
[170] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, XXI-XXII.
[171] Ibid, XXII-XXIII.
[172] Ibid, XXIII-XXIV.

Gilbert died in 1189, being over a hundred years old and having lost sight due to old age. He was buried in Sempringham where his tomb was constructed in such a way that it was accessible from two sides. This way both the women and men, who were not allowed to come into contact with each other, could come visit his tomb. It was only a relatively small while before he was canonized, for this happened on the eleventh of January 1202.[173] *The book of St Gilbert* was written shortly afterwards and was presented to Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury somewhere between the 13th of October 1202 and the 4th of February 1203.[174] Due to the fact that the text was produced such a short while after Gilberts death, the hagiography is full of details, so we know quite a bit of what went on Saint Gilberts' life and the first few years of the Gilbertine order.

Pope Innocent III

Not only the unknown author and the recent death of the saint make the text quite different from the first three. Pope Innocent III, who was active during the time *The book of St Gilbert* was written, had a big influence as well due to the previously discussed structuring and strictness of the Church. In this chapter we will delve a bit further into this. When one looks at the structure of the text the influence of these reformative processes can be found, for the part on miracles in text is split in two parts: the formal and the informal collection. The author of the text introduces the formal collection as follows:

… These [the miracles] *have been investigated by the venerable Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, Eustace, bishop of Ely, and Acharius, abbot of Peterborough, together with many other notable men, in accordance with our Lord Pope Innocent III's mandate …*[175]

The introduction of the formal collection mentions the following:

… they [the miracles] *have not been investigated in the course of this inquiry…*[176]

The miracles in the formal collection have thus been examined in the way Innocent III ordered, while the miracles in the informal collection were not.

Innocent III was pope from 1198 to 1216 and is generally seen as one of the most powerful and influential popes in the middle ages. Besides having a lot of influence on the European Christian states and claiming supremacy over all of Europe's rulers, he is known for

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[173] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, XXIV-XXVI.
[174] Ibid, LXIII.
[175] Ibid, 265.
[176] Ibid, 305.

his reforms and the Fourth Lateran Council.[177] Innocent III came close to accomplishing the task begun by Gregory VII, refining western canon law and translating papal ideology into reality.[178]

These reforms can be found in the distinction made in the categorisation of the miracles in *The book of St Gilbert*. Innocent III wanted the church and the various Christian orders to be more strict and (mostly) based on truths. To achieve this the pope introduced a procedure where only the miracles worth of credence were to be recorded. Miracles would only be acknowledged as 'real' when they were attested by witnesses who were under oath. The miracles in the formal collection were authenticated in this way, not only by the priory at Sempringham, but also by the Roman Curia itself, the central administrative body of the Church.[179] The focus on oaths and witnesses is something which we will see while looking at the pilgrimage stories in the formal miracle collection.

Pilgrimage

In the formal miracle collection of *The book of St Gilbert* twenty-one stories which focus on pilgrimage can be found. The informal collection contains twenty.[180] With these numbers it might seem like quite a lot of material, but it should be noted that not all of these stories are of sufficient interest to analyse, because of their length. For pilgrim stories of just one or two sentences in length there simply is not a lot to be analysed.

Even though there are a lot of stories to look at in *The book of St Gilbert*, there is one thing all these stories have in common: the reason for the pilgrim to go on pilgrimage. These texts contain not a single pilgrim who is travelling because of penance. Instead they are all travelling because of sickness and disabilities. Seeing the number of stories it seems kind of strange that not one of them was travelling because of punishment. Was this because of the fact that there were just no visitors coming to Sempringham because of penance or were they just not being recorded? Does this have to do with the fact that the stories were being checked by the church, and that they were written as some sort of *exemplum*? It could be that the writer did not want to include any pilgrims who had received some sort of punishment and were bound up. Unlike other examples of miracle stories, where one would be forgiven when they had done something bad, that is not the case in *The book of St Gilbert*. It could be that this is done

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[177] Collin Morris, *The papal monarchy: The Western church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1991), 433-438.
[178] Walter Ullmann, *A short history of the papacy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1972), 208.
[179] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, C.
[180] Ibid, 265-335.

deliberately, so people would know that there was no forgiving from God if they did something bad, so they would not be stimulated to do something bad, for there was no reason to believe that God would help them. We cannot be sure. The only thing we can be sure of is that the pilgrims who decided to visit Sempringham were all people who had suffered mentally or physically and had no part in the cause of their suffering.

The pre-liminal phase is thus the same for all the pilgrims: the people who decided to undertake the journey were not allowed to fully function in society because of their sickness or disability. Besides that the pre-liminal phase is quite diverse in this book. There are men & women, people who have only been suffering for a few days & people who have been suffering for years and people of all the different classes.[181] Therefore, not a lot of general statements can be made about the pre-liminal phase except that illness and disability happened to everyone. Of course this also meant that everyone could be cured. It did not matter what sex one was, how long one had been suffering or what ones profession in life was. Anyone was able to go on pilgrimage. Here the feeling of *communitas* shines through.[182]

The liminal phase in these stories stand out compared to the miracle stories in the other books, in that they are not as dramatic. The suffering of the pilgrims does not really take centre stage and the liminal phases actually get only short descriptions. Sometimes not even a sentence long:

"... spent three days praying constantly in this place;..."[183]

What one can see in these liminal phases is that over half of the pilgrims are accompanied by someone, they are once more not travelling alone. It are their servants, masters, friends or family who are helping them and bringing them to Sempringham in a cart.[184] This way the journey which is not even described as being though, gets made even easier.

The post-liminal phase is the phase which differs the most from the previous hagiographies we have discussed, because of the reintegration of the pilgrims. In these stories this does not take place that literally, the pilgrims are not immediately surrounded by a big crowd. In only one instance do we see a choir present, chanting *Te Deum Laudamus* for the recovery of the pilgrim, a hymn to bless or give thanks.[185] This is also the only instance in which

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[181] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, 269.
[182] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture*, 7.
[183] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, 331.
[184] Ibid, 297.
[185] The editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, 'Te Deum ladamus', *Encyclopædia Britannica* https://www.britannica.com/topic/Te-Deum-laudamus [accessed on: 8-8-2019] and Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, 283-285.

God gets praised. Of course it is stated that the pilgrims are thankful for their recovery, but again it is not as emotionally driven as we have seen in other hagiographies. Often the information is kept at a minimum and we are not given more than:

"There on the following night, she got better and became calm, giving thanks to God; and after three days she returned home cured."[186]

The difference in the formal and the informal collection can be found after the journey of the pilgrim is finished. Whereas in the informal collection the writer moves on to the next story, in the formal collection he does not. Here they list some of the witnesses of the just described miracle who on oath state that what just got described truly happened.[187]

Passionless

Why is it that these stories about Saint Gilbert's miracles are written in a lot less dramatic way and seem even quite cold in comparison with the miracle stories we have encountered earlier on? The most probable cause is the fact that this is the only work which was written in the thirteenth century. It is therefore the only work which has been influenced by the mandates of pope Innocent III. It could be that because of this new focus on fact-checking the tone of the stories completely changed. They became more truthful, but less telling. Through this process these miracle stories lost some of their magic, the focus on oaths and witnesses might also play their part in this process, which might have been one of the goals of Innocent III. Filtering the fake from the real stories and thus making the genre of hagiography, but also the saints and Christianity itself, more believable.

Even though the style of *The book of St Gilbert* is quite different from the other texts we have analysed saint promotion can still be seen as the goal of the text. For it was the first hagiography written on Gilbert after his death. In order to stay alive and remain popular the order needed to establish their saint as quickly as possible. A hagiography which consisted out of miracles performed by their founding father would of course help accomplish this.

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[186] Unknown, *The book of St Gilbert*, 291-293.
[187] Ibid, 265-303.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis we have looked at four different hagiographies, namely: *Life and miracles of St. Modwenna, Life and miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald, The hagiographies of the female saints of Ely* and *The book of St Gilbert*. Having finished analysing these works it is time to start drawing some conclusions.

Rite de passage

The *rite de passage* structure Victor and Edith Turner mentioned as being present in Christian pilgrimage can indeed be found in the miracle stories we have discussed. Anne Bailey theorised that we should not use the concept as a literal *rite de passage*, but rather use it as a literary device. Having analysed the stories I agree with Bailey: a *rite de passage* structure has definitely been applied in these texts. To figure out what this *rite the passage* frame attributes to these hagiographical texts we need to turn to their goal. In the end, like most of the texts within this genre, the goal of the discussed four hagiographies is to promote the saint, the saint's shrine and the cult centred around the saint. The *rite de passage* functions as a literary device in these pleas. The *rite de passage* structure thus contributes to reaching the goal of saint promotion.

When we take a look at the structure of the pilgrimage stories we have discussed we can observe the way in which this is done. At the beginning of each story the pilgrim to be is either sick, disabled or undergoing a penance. Whatever the case, the person is suffering and cannot function in the normal world. What follows is a journey to a saint's shrine, often characterised by even more suffering and different spiritual aspects like saintly visions. These journeys can differ quite a bit, but almost all of them end at the saint's shrine where the pilgrim spends time praying. At the end of the journey the person is healed or forgiven. The pilgrim gets cured and this way can be part of society again. Often this reintegration is showed literally, with the pilgrim being surrounded by a crowd. During this reintegration God and the saint get praised. This narrative, created by applying the structure of a *rite de passage*, lends itself perfectly for making the saint look good, for it is the saint who, in the end, provides a journey for the pilgrims to go from point a (suffering) to point b (being cured). In this process the saint acts as Gods conduit who ends the suffering.

In order to go through this process successfully the pilgrim had to prove themselves a proper Christian. This would be done by the pilgrims while they were going through the liminal phase, for this phase, defined by its focus on suffering, fits perfectly into the teachings of Christianity. Before the saint would cure the pilgrim and before the pilgrim would be able to

share in Christ's glory, they first had to suffer just as Christ did himself. This way the pilgrim would show they deserved to be cured while at the same time proving their devotion to the saint and to God as well.

Using a *rite de passage* structure would thus not only cause the saint to be promoted, but part of Christian's doctrine as well. Through these stories people would be inspired to undertake a pilgrimage, to visit a saint's shrine, but they would also be reminded that in order to reach glory, one had to suffer and show their devotion first. In essence, a hagiography taught the reader to be a good Christian by showing examples.

English hagiography

What does this thesis tell us about twelfth century England? Why did different cult of saints have to be promoted during the twelfth century? Most probable, it had to do with the Norman Conquest. After the Normans took over in England, a lot of Anglo-Saxon saints were forgotten or simply just put away. Writing new hagiographies might have helped with putting the saints into a positive light and getting Anglo-Saxon saint's cults popular again. Proving that these Anglo-Saxon saints were devoted and proper Christians, just like the Normans themselves, might have helped with making the Normans accept these old saints.

Stating something about hagiography as a genre at the end of this thesis might be difficult. For calling hagiography one genre might be a bit too broad, as it comprises a lot of different sort of texts. We can however say something about the miracle stories and that they indeed function as an *exemplum.* It shows that when one goes on pilgrimage and is a proper Christian one can get cured from either sickness or disability, or forgiven for its penance. It also shows that the Christian community is one for everyone and it wants to create the feeling that indeed some sort of *communitas* can be found. When going on pilgrimage it does not matter if you are poor or rich, young or old, male or female. Everyone can get sick, disabled or punisher and everyone can get cured or forgiven as long as they are devoted Christians.

Future research

Even though not a lot of new things can be said about hagiography as a genre, it is this genre in which further research would be quite interesting. Having stated that *rite de passage* indeed has a function as a literary device in the texts which were analysed, it would be interesting to see if this occurred in other texts written within this genre as well. Does this phenomenon just occur in hagiographical texts written in twelfth century England? Or does it also occur in texts written

in a completely different region? Or maybe in a completely different time period? If so can an origin of *rite de passage* be found?

There are therefore enough questions left to answer when looking at *rite de passage* as a literary device in pilgrimage stories. And surely *rite de passage* cannot be the only frame medieval authors used to achieve their textual goals. There must be others when the authors of texts wanted to achieve something different than saint promotion.

As a final note I would like to state that hagiographical texts are indeed interesting sources for historians to look at. It is a pity that they have been overlooked for such a long time. The fact that more and more texts are being analysed these days is a positive change. First of all because hagiographical texts are fun and great to read, but more importantly, for research, because they are filled with a lot of information about the communities in which they were written. Taking a proper look at hagiographical texts makes it possible to find a community's *zeitgeist*. When looking at a period as far away (time wise) in history as the Middle Ages, hagiographies can be really helpful to teach us how that time period worked and functioned. Research into hagiography is something which in my opinion we should keep doing in the future.

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