

## MIRACULA NYNIE EPISCOPI

The *Miracula Nynie Episcopi* (henceforth *MNE*) are an anonymous hagiographic epyllion<sup>1</sup>, recounting the life and miracles of St. Nynia<sup>2</sup>, a tenuous figure traditionally considered to be a British bishop and founder of Whithorn, an ecclesiastical site in the south-western tip of Galloway, itself generally regarded as the cradle of Scottish Christianity<sup>3</sup>.

The poem presently consists of 504 hexameters<sup>4</sup>, divided into fourteen chapters, each introduced by a short prose heading. The first four chapters provide an outline of Nynia's career; chapters v to viii are devoted to the miracles performed in his lifetime, whereas chapters x to xiii deal with posthumous miracles. The two sets of miracles are separated by the account of Nynia's passing (§ ix), which is wondrous in its own right, as the saint is carried to heaven by angels in a blaze of glory. The last chapter (§ xiv) contains a final eulogy of the saint, to whose greatness and innumerable miracles no one could do justice; hence, the poet apologetically justifies his<sup>5</sup> choice of offering just a selection to his readers.

This selection amounts to nine miracles in total<sup>6</sup>, a number rich in numerical resonances, since nine is the number of the orders of the angels and of the celestial spheres, the motion of which is managed by the angels; also, nine is the square of three, the number of the Trinity, whose heavenly seat is above the nine angelic orders<sup>7</sup>. The structure of the *MNE* as well as

1. [CPL 2152; BHL 6240b; ICL 14261]; K. Strecker (ed.), *Miracula Nynie Episcopi*, Berlin 1923 (MGH PLAC IV/2), pp. 944-61.

2. On the onomastic confusion surrounding St. Nynia, cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *Hymnus S. Nynie Episcopi*, pp. 227 and 232-3. I have here chosen to follow the earliest surviving source on the saint, that is Bede, who uses the form «Nynia».

3. For an outline of the elusive St. Nynia and of the history of Whithorn, cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *Hymnus S. Nynie Episcopi*, pp. 227-49.

4. The text is defective at line 277: cfr. Strecker (ed.), *MNE*, p. 954 (apparatus). Cfr. also M. R. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion: The Evidence of Saints' Cults*, unpubl. PhD diss., University of Durham 1998, p. 47.

5. Although we are in the dark as to the gender of the anonymous author of the *MNE* and although it has been suggested that the *MNE* may be the result of a class exercise, hence attributable to a group rather than a single poet, I will refer to them in the singular and with a masculine pronoun as shorthand for this/these unidentified individual(s). Cfr. also below, p. 261.

6. K. Strecker, *Zu den Quellen für das Leben des Hl. Ninians*, «Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde», 43 (1920-2), pp. 3-26, esp. pp. 9-11 and Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 56-7. Cfr. also below, pp. 268-71.

7. J. MacQueen, *St. Nynia: A Study of Literary and Linguistic Evidence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Edinburgh 2005, p. 9.

the trajectory of Nynia's career arguably reflect this numerological scheme, in that the poem opens with the incarnation of Christ and His descent from heaven to earth, and continues with Nynia's life and work, which can be considered an extension of Christ's in the circle of redemption unifying heaven and earth, human and transcendent. Thanks to the holiness achieved during his lifetime, Nynia is ultimately carried by the angels beyond the sky to the glory of the Trinity, as well as helping others to achieve the same through his apostolate, and he continues to do so even after his death through his posthumous miracles<sup>8</sup>.

This numerological element is a feature of the tradition of Latin *uitae* in metrical form<sup>9</sup> and, what is more, it is found also in the *Hymnus S. Nynie Episcopi* (henceforth *HNE*), an anonymous hymn which has been considered a twin poem to the *MNE* and attributed to the same author<sup>10</sup>. On the basis of source study as well as of the style and diction of the two poems, such an author has been identified with a Northumbrian or a Northumbria-trained individual, possibly a junior figure still trying to come to terms with the rules of Latin syntax and prosody or a not particularly skilled versifier anyway, given his frequent metrical blunders<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, the inconsistency in the distribution of such errors as well as in the use of a key source such as Aldhelm has led to the suggestion that the *MNE* might be a sort of "class work", a communal exercise on the part of a group of unexperienced students, each trying to imitate a set house style in the section of the poem putatively assigned to them<sup>12</sup>. Be as it may, the *MNE* and *HNE* may be confidently dated to the 780s<sup>13</sup> and associated with the «York school» of Anglo-Latin poetry, so-called because it was active in and around York between *ca.* 780 and *ca.* 820 and had Alcuin as its figurehead<sup>14</sup>. Indeed Alcuin was the primary intended audience of the two

8. *Ibidem*, pp. 9-10 and J. MacQueen, *The Literary Sources for the Life of St Ninian*, in *Galloway: Land and Lordship*, curr. R. D. Oram - G. P. Stell, Edinburgh 1991, pp. 17-25, esp. pp. 21-3.

9. *Ibidem*, pp. 21-2.

10. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 227-59.

11. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 251-8.

12. A. P. M. Orchard, *Wish You Were Here: Alcuin's Courtly Poetry and the Boys Back Home*, in *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe*, curr. S. Rees Jones - R. Marks - A. J. Minnis, Woodbridge 2000, pp. 21-43, esp. p. 32.

13. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 251-3.

14. A. P. M. Orchard, *Alcuin and Cynewulf: The Art and Craft of Anglo-Saxon Verse*, «Journal of the British Academy», 8 (2020), pp. 295-399, esp. pp. 295-324. Cfr. also *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, p. 253.

poems, as they were sent to him on the Continent as a tribute to the now far-away master<sup>15</sup> (or possibly also as a school exercise requiring correction)<sup>16</sup>. As to the place of composition of the *MNE* and *HNE*, the scholarly debate has alternatively suggested Whithorn or York or both, as a sort of joint venture between the two sites. That is the author could have been trained at York but writing at Whithorn, perhaps as a member of the local monastery<sup>17</sup>; alternatively, he could have versified at York a (lost) prose text from Whithorn<sup>18</sup>.

The *MNE* are uniquely attested in manuscript Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Patr. 17 (B.II.10) (s. XI<sup>1/3</sup>; Mainz)<sup>19</sup>, where it occurs immediately before its companion piece *HNE* at ff. 157va-161va as the third last item of Alcuin's devotional *florilegium De laude Dei*<sup>20</sup>. Notably, according to the online catalogue of the British Library, another witness would be the manuscript London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius D.III (England, s. XII<sup>4/4</sup>/XIII<sup>1/4</sup>)<sup>21</sup>, a legendary from April to June and one of the three manuscript witnesses of the *Vita S. Niniani* (henceforth *VSN*) by the Cistercian monk Ailred of Rievaulx (ca. 1110-67)<sup>22</sup>. The Tiberius copy of the *MNE* would occur at ff. 191r-192r, immediately after the *VSN*, which be-

15. Cfr. the letter of thanks sent by Alcuin to the Whithorn community: E. Dümmler (ed.), *Alcuini sive Albini Epistolae*, Berlin 1895 (MGH Epist., 4/II), no. 273, pp. 431-2.

16. M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Latin Background*, in *A New Critical History of Old English Literature*, ed. S. B. Greenfield - D. G. Calder, New York (NY)-London 1986, pp. 5-37, esp. p. 24, rptd. as *Anglo-Latin Literature*, in M. Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature 600-899*, London 1996, pp. 1-35, esp. pp. 24-5.

17. The recurrent use of *noster* suggests so: cfr. *MNE*, ll. 21, 82, 99 and 324, ed. Strecker, pp. 945, 948, and 955. Also the emphasis on the monastic nature of Nynia's foundations may hint at a monastic affiliation of the poet himself: cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 253-5.

18. Cfr. below, pp. 266-71.

19. G. Suckale-Redlefsen *Die Handschriften des 8. bis 11. Jahrhunderts der Staatsbibliothek Bamberg*, vol. I, Wiesbaden 2004, (Katalog der illuminierten Handschriften der Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, 1), p. 128, n. 75, plates 446-8; F. Leitschuh - H. Fischer, *Katalog der Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Bamberg*, 3 vols., Bamberg 1887-1912; rptd. Wiesbaden 1966, I.1, pp. 363-6 (s. X ex.), and C. P. E. Springer, *The Manuscripts of Sedulius: A Provisional Handlist*, Philadelphia (PA) 1995 (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 85/V), pp. 119-20 (s. X-XI).

20. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 249-50.

21. D. Pezzini (ed.), Aelredus Rievallensis, *Vita Sancti Niniani*, in *Aelredi Rievallensis Opera historica et hagiographica*, Turnhout 2017 (CCCM 3. Aelredi Rievallensis Opera omnia, 6), pp. 56\*-7\*, and R. E. Guglielmetti - G. Orlandi (edd.), *Navigatio sancti Brendani*, Florence 2017 (Millennio medievale, 114. Testi 29), pp. 32-4 (s. XII<sup>4/4</sup>). Cfr. also the British Library record available online. The manuscript has not been digitised yet; I have consulted digital images provided on order.

22. [BHL 6239]; Pezzini (ed.), *VSN*, pp. 113-34. The most recent English translation features in M. L. Dutton (ed.), Ailred of Rievaulx, *The Lives of the Northern Saints*, trans. by J. P. Freeland, Kalamazoo (MI) 2006 (Cistercian Fathers Series, 71), pp. 35-63.

gins at f. 186r and apparently concludes at f. 191r. In fact, ff. 191r-192r do not contain the *MNE* but the concluding chapters of the *VSN* (i.e. most of § xi, and §§xii-v), with the relevant *explicit* in red at f. 192rb4-5 (*Explicit uita Sancti Nyniani Episcopi*).

The erroneous identification of the final chapters of the *VSN* with the *MNE* might perhaps be put down to the fact that while chapter xi recounts Nynia's passing and being escorted to heaven by an angelic host, chapters xii to xv all deal with his posthumous miracles. Indeed, chapter xii begins at f. 191rb26 with a large red capital and it may be speculated that this capital was (hastily) interpreted as the *incipit* of a distinct text devoted to Nynia's miracles, that is the *MNE*. (Indeed the British Library online catalogue marks the beginning of the alleged copy of the *MNE* at f. 191r.) Also, past scholarship has considered the posthumous miracles as deriving from an «appendix» to the now lost original life of St. Nynia, which has been posited as the foundation of the extant hagiographic tradition<sup>23</sup>. Hence, the palaeographic detail of the red initial of chapter xii of the *VSN* combined with the «appendix» theory may have led to the mistaken itemisation.

The *MNE* were edited jointly with the *HNE* in 1923 by Karl Strecker<sup>24</sup> and translated into English by Winifred MacQueen in 1960<sup>25</sup> and by Gilbert Márkus in 1998<sup>26</sup>.

Strecker collated an unpublished transcript of the *MNE* and *HNE* by Friedrich Vollmer – the first scholar who drew attention to the Bamberg copy of *De laude Dei*<sup>27</sup> –, with the text of the Bamberg manuscript<sup>28</sup>. The codex attests to a corrupted text, but Strecker was cautious in his emendations because the frequent faults in prosody and syntax made him wonder whether the wrong readings were to be put down to transmission mishaps or to the author himself («mancher Fehler kann emendiert werden, aber viele sind zweifellos ursprünglich, und es ist schwer zu unterscheiden, wie

23. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 230-8, and below, pp. 271-4.

24. Cfr. above, n. 1.

25. *Miracula Nynie Episcopi*, «Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society», 37 (1960), pp. 21-57; rptd. in MacQueen, *St. Nynia* cit., pp. 88-101.

26. *The Miracles of St Nynia the Bishop (c. 780?)*, in *The Triumph Tree: Scotland's Earliest Poetry*, 550-1350, cur. T. O. Clancy, Edinburgh 1998. pp. 126-39.

27. F. Vollmer (ed.), *Fl. Merobaudis Reliquiae. Blossii Aemilii Dracontii Carmina. Eugenii Toletani Episcopi Carmina et Epistulae*, Berlin 1905 (MGH AA, 14), pp. XIV-VII.

28. Strecker (ed.), *MNE*, p. 944.

weit man mit Emendationen gehen darf»<sup>29</sup>). Indeed, Strecker's suspicions have been confirmed by the rather critical assessment of the anonymous poet by more recent scholarship.

Since the editor of the *MNE* lambasted the anonymous poet as «legum prosodicarum ignarus» or a «Stümper»<sup>30</sup>, the *MNE* have been censoriously defined by successive scholars as «nothing but a mosaic of borrowings»<sup>31</sup>, «nothing more than a *cento* of formulas lifted from a variety of school authors»<sup>32</sup> or a «cut-and-paste pastiche» showing a «basic» level of versification<sup>33</sup>. The *MNE* are indeed largely derivative and systematically redeploy the verse of previous poets, including near-contemporary authors such as Aldhelm († 709 or 710), Bede († 735), and Alcuin († 804)<sup>34</sup>. However, the borrowings are also intra-textual, in that the anonymous poet often borrows from his own verse and indeed the echoes from the *MNE* detectable in the *HNE* have been put forward as key evidence for the joint authorship of the two poems<sup>35</sup>.

As already noted by Strecker, the *MNE* combine borrowings of classical and late antique Latin poets – from Vergil and Ovid to Juvenius, Sedulius, Arator, Dracontius, Paulinus of Nola, and Cyprianus Gallus – with contemporary Anglo-Latin authors, such as Aldhelm, Bede, and Alcuin<sup>36</sup>. In particular, Aldhelm and Bede are by far the two authors on whom the *MNE* and *HNE* are most heavily dependent. While the *HNE* is closely

29. Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 22 and 25, quotation at p. 25.

30. Strecker (ed.), *MNE*, p. 944 and Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., p. 22.

31. W. Levison, *An Eighth-Century Poem on St. Ninian*, «Antiquity», 14 (1940), pp. 280-91, esp. p. 283.

32. M. Lapidge, *Aldhelm's Latin Poetry and Old English Verse*, «Comparative Literature», 31/III (1979), pp. 209-31, esp. p. 231; rptd. in Id., *Anglo-Latin Literature 600-899* cit., pp. 247-69, esp. p. 269. Cfr. also Id., *Anglo-Latin Literature* cit., p. 25.

33. A. P. M. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, Cambridge 1994 (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, 8), p. 260 and Id., *Wish you Were Here* cit., p. 27.

34. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 256-7, and below, pp. 264-5.

35. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., p. 51.

36. Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 19-20 and Strecker (ed.), *MNE*, p. 944 and the following apparatus. Strecker also noted a potential parallel (*institiæ cultor*) with Venantius Fortunatus (*Iusticiæ cultor*, *MNE*, ix. 261, p. 953), but M. Lapidge has shown that the alleged echo is in fact a common tag in late antique and early medieval Latin poetry (including Alcuin) and concluded that the author of the *MNE* «shows no knowledge of Venantius»: *Appendix: Knowledge of the Poems in the Earlier Period*, in R. W. Hunt, *Manuscript Evidence for Knowledge of the Poems of Venantius Fortunatus in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, «Anglo-Saxon England», 8 (1979), pp. 279-95, at pp. 287-95, esp. p. 294. Cfr. also Orchard, *Wish You Were Here* cit., pp. 32-4.

modelled on Bede's hymn to St. Æthelthryth<sup>37</sup>, the *MNE* show familiarity with Bede's metrical *Vita S. Cudberti*<sup>38</sup>, not only in its general structure as a verse saint's life, but also in the tendency towards generalization and a number of specific borrowings<sup>39</sup>. The debt to Aldhelm is even greater since a little less than a fifth of individual lines of the *MNE* either correspond – whether verbatim or with just minor alterations – with single lines by Aldhelm or consist of a combination of several of his lines<sup>40</sup>. Otherwise, vocabulary or phrases from Aldhelm's works are drawn pervasively throughout the *MNE*, so much so that on the whole Aldhelm has been defined as «the base upon which the author of the [*MNE*] built»<sup>41</sup>. Yet, despite the extensive reliance on Aldhelm, the figurehead of Southumbrian poetry, the metrical practice, especially as far as the distribution of hexameter types is concerned, as well as the vocabulary of the *MNE* are in line with those of the York school<sup>42</sup>.

Aldhelm and Bede could also have mediated the knowledge of the classical or late antique sources of the *MNE*<sup>43</sup>. However, a dedicated study of the use of Arator's *Historia apostolica* in the *MNE* has shown that the extent of the debt of the anonymous English poet to this late antique source is greater than so far detected and, what is more, that he had a detailed knowledge of Arator and made a pertinent use of it<sup>44</sup>. Thus, at least in the case of Arator's work, our unnamed poet does not seem to be recycling a source second-hand, and future efforts in the *Quellenforschung* of the *MNE* and *HNE* may well grant further insights into the working method of their (often chastised) anonymous author, as well as into the milieu and circumstances of their composition.

37. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 255-6.

38. Beda Venerabilis, *Vita metrica S. Cudberti*, in M. Lapidge (ed.), *Bede's Latin Poetry*, Oxford 2019, pp. 70-90 and 181-313.

39. Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., p. 19; Orchard, *The Poetic Art* cit., pp. 261-2; Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 50 and 54-5; and MacQueen, *The Literary Sources* cit., p. 17.

40. Orchard, *The Poetic Art* cit., pp. 261-2 and 289-91 and Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 19-20.

41. Orchard, *The Poetic Art* cit., p. 263.

42. Orchard, *Alcuin and Cynewulf* cit., pp. 313-18 and Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 48-9 and 291-6.

43. Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., p. 22; Orchard, *The Poetic Art* cit., pp. 260-3; and Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 52-3.

44. R. Hillier, *Dynamic Intertextuality in the Miracula Nynie episcopi: Remembering Arator's Historia Apostolica*, «Anglo-Saxon England», 44 (2016), pp. 163-79.

The origin and development of Nynia's hagiographic tradition has proved rather controversial, with different models of transmission being proposed, often implying multiple intervening texts between what we might call the *Ur-uita* of St. Nynia and the earliest extant documents on the saint, namely Bede's brief account in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (henceforth *HE*)<sup>45</sup>, the *MNE*, and the *VSN*<sup>46</sup>.

The editor of the *MNE* as well as more recent scholarship has argued that a synoptic reading the *HE*, *MNE*, and *VSN* strongly suggests that they could ultimately be traced to the same source-text<sup>47</sup>, namely a (lost) Anglo-Latin *uita* put together under or by Pehthelm, the first Northumbrian bishop of Whithorn (ca. 731-5)<sup>48</sup>, itself presumably based on a (lost) British-Latin *uita*. The Anglo-Latin *uita* may be conveniently identified with what in the preface to the *VSN* Ailred refers to as the *liber de uita et miraculis* [S. Niniani] (henceforth *LVM*)<sup>49</sup>, that is an anonymous narrative of the life and miracles of St. Nynia, written by men of old (*uitam [...] a prioribus exaratam*) in a barbaric style and rustic language (*sermo barbaricus obscurabat; nimis barbarico [...] stilo; a sermone rustico*), which Ailred takes upon himself to bring out into the light of Latin eloquence (*in lucem Latine locutionis educam*)<sup>50</sup>, thereby integrating Bede's trustworthy testimony (*fideli testimonio*)<sup>51</sup>. Hence the textual relationship between the Ninian sources can be summarised thus<sup>52</sup>:

45. B. Colgrave - R. A. B. Mynors (edd.), *Beda Venerabilis, Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, Oxford 1969, III.iv, pp. 220-5.

46. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 228-38.

47. Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 15-7 and M. D. Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Lost Anglo-Saxon Prose Life of Saint Ninian*, «The Innes Review», 70/II (2019), pp. 205-12.

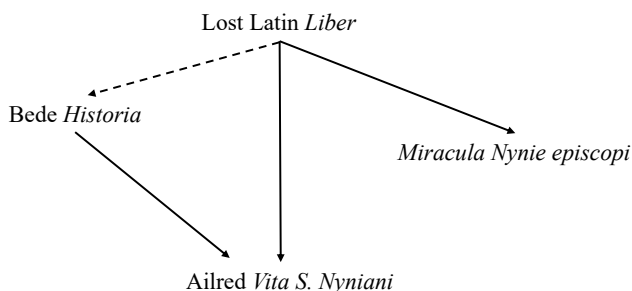
48. M. Bateson (rev. by M. Costambeys), *Pehthelm*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XLIII, Oxford 2004, p. 441; S. Keynes, *Appendix II. Archbishops and Bishops, 597-1066*, in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, curr. M. Lapidge - J. Blair - S. Keynes - D. G. Scragg, 2nd ed., Oxford 2014 (henceforth *BEASE*), p. 566; and B. Yorke, *Aldhelm's Irish and British Connections*, in *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric*, curr. K. Barker - N. Brooks, Oxford 2010, pp. 164-80, esp. p. 178.

49. Pezzini (ed.), *VSN, Prefatio*, p. 115, esp. ll. 41-2.

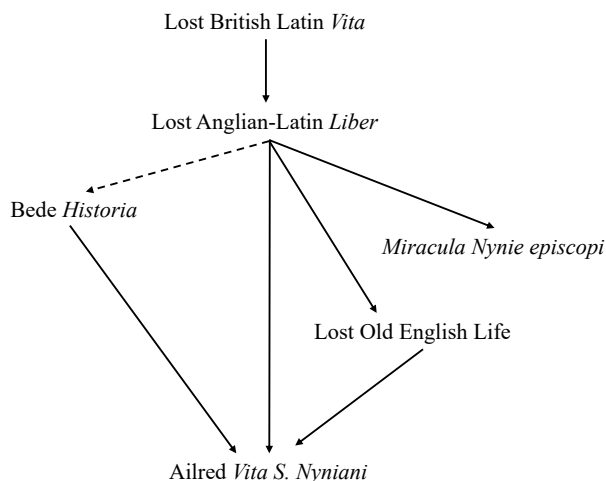
50. Pezzini (ed.), *VSN, Prologus*, p. 113, ll. 13 and 16-8.

51. Pezzini (ed.), *VSN, Prefatio*, p. 115, esp. l. 33.

52. Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Lost Anglo-Saxon Prose Life* cit., p. 206. The dotted line joining the «lost Anglian-Latin *Liber*» and «Bede *Historia*» represent an alleged abstract of the *Liber* that Bede would have consulted rather than the *Liber* itself: cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 237-8.



It has also been put forward that the *VSN* would have resulted from a conflation of Bede's notice in the *HE* and an alleged Old English version of the Anglo-Latin *uita* or *LVM*<sup>53</sup>, as the following figure shows more in detail<sup>54</sup>:



However, the insertion of this alleged vernacular life between the *LVM* and *VSN* has not gathered much consensus, being considered as superfluous speculation<sup>55</sup>.

53. MacQueen, *St. Nynia* cit., pp. 4-5 and 156-9.

54. Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Lost Anglo-Saxon Prose Life* cit., p. 208. Laynesmith's stemma is a more intelligible adaptation of MacQueen's: cfr. MacQueen, *The Literary Sources* cit., p. 20, and above, n. 52.

55. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 230-2, and below, pp. 273-4.



Indeed, the *HE*, *MNE*, and *VSN* all share the same basic outline of Nynia's life, though with a different level of emphasis and detail<sup>56</sup>. The major discrepancy concerns the miracles attributed to the saint, which are altogether lacking from Bede's brief account<sup>57</sup>, whereas they make up most of the narrative in both the *MNE* and the *VSN*. In general, the differences between the latter two accounts can be said to be a matter of time and detail. As to the order of events, in the *MNE* the key moments of Nynia's biography, i.e. Nynia's juvenile journey to Rome, the mission amongst the Picts, and the founding of Whithorn, are concentrated in the first four chapters, while the miracle stories – first the lifetime ones and then the posthumous ones – follow in a sequence interrupted only by the narrative of Nynia's death, which conveniently separates the two sets of miracles<sup>58</sup>. Conversely, in the *VSN*, Nynia's biography is interspersed with miracles, in that the Roman sojourn and the foundation of Whithorn are followed by the first two lifetime miracles, then comes the conversion of the Picts followed by the other lifetime miracles; afterwards, comes the chapter dedicated to Nynia's death and finally the series of the posthumous miracles.

On the whole, in both the *MNE* and *VSN* the miracle stories are divided into two sets, that is the miracles performed during Nynia's lifetime and the posthumous ones, and the two series largely correspond both structure- and content-wise. As to the lifetime miracles, while the first five overlap in both texts, except for minor details (highlighted in italics), the *VSN* features three more, as summarised in the following table.

<i>MNE</i>	<i>VSN</i>
1 A British king named Tudwal <sup>59</sup> , who has opposed Nynia and <i>ejected him from his lands</i> , is first punished with blindness, but repents and is then healed by the saint (§v)	A British king named Tudwal, who had opposed Nynia, is first punished with blindness, but repents and is then healed by the saint (§iv)

56. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 238-49.

57. Bede probably preferred to omit miraculous events which allegedly occurred in a remote past and therefore could hardly be verified: MacQueen, *The Literary Sources* cit., pp. 19-20. Notably, Bede also omitted all of Wilfrid's miracles and most of Cuthbert's: cfr. Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Lost Anglo-Saxon Prose Life* cit., p. 211. On Bede's attitude to miracles, in general, cfr. at least the recent reassessment by E. Ahern, *Bede's Miracles Reconsidered*, «Early Medieval Europe», 26/III (2018), pp. 282-303.

58. Cfr. above, p. 260.

59. The *MNE* attests to two different forms of the name: *Thuvabel*, §v (rubric) and *Tudvael*, v.104: cfr. Strecker (ed.), *MNE*, p. 948. The *VSN* attests to the form *Tudwaldus*: Pezzini (ed.), *VSN*,

	MNE	VSN
2	A speaking newborn baby acquits a Whithorn priest of the accusation of illicit paternity (§vi)	A speaking newborn baby acquits a Whithorn priest of the accusation of illicit paternity (§v) <sup>60</sup>
3	Wondrously rapid growth of vegetables out of season in the monastery patch (§vii)	Wondrously rapid growth of <i>leeks</i> and other vegetables out of season in the monastery patch (§vii)
4	The attempt to steal Nynia's <i>bulls</i> is prevented by a miraculous dizziness befalling the thieves; the gang leader is killed by a charging bull and subsequently revived by the saint (§vii.209-26 and 233-49)	The attempt to steal Nynia's <i>cattle</i> is prevented by a <i>protective circle</i> Nynia draws on the ground around the herds with his crozier and by a <i>restless fury</i> befalling the thieves; the gang leader is killed by a charging bull and subsequently revived by the saint; <i>the rest of the gang is freed from the stupor that forcibly enclosed them within the crozier-drawn circle</i> (§viii.1-25 and 31-45) <sup>61</sup>
5	The charging bull leaves its hoofmark on a rock as if on soft wax (§viii.227-32)	The charging bull leaves its hoofmark on a rock as if on soft wax, <i>thereby the place gets the name Farres Last</i> (§viii.25-30) <sup>62</sup>
6	---	The spiritual umbrella protecting Nynia and his brother Plebia from the rain dispels because of an <i>illicita cogitatio</i> by the saint (§ix)
7	---	A runaway boy from the monastery is rescued from shipwreck by Nynia's crozier, which he had taken with him (§x.1-50)

iv.5, p. 120. The historicity of such a king is debated: cfr. MacQueen, *St. Nynia* cit., pp. 12-21, and Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., p. 68, n. 238.

60. While the key element of the miracle corresponds in the two texts, the two accounts substantially differ with Ailred's being much more detailed and elaborate.

61. For a detailed comparison of this miracle, cfr. Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 12-5.

62. On this place name, cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the HNE, pp. 227-59. The motifs of the defiant bull and of the mark left on a rock as if on soft wax have striking echoes in pre-Conquest homiletic texts on St Michael, in turn derivative of the foundational *Apparitio in Monte Gargano* [BHL 5948-9]: cfr. C. Di Sciacca, *St Michael and Beowulf: The Not-So-Odd Couple*, in *Il culto micaelico nelle tradizioni germaniche medievali*, cur. D. Bullitta, Alessandria 2023 (Bibliotheca Germanica. Studi e Testi 58), pp. 245-300, esp. pp. 259-60 and 267.

	<i>MNE</i>	<i>VSN</i>
8	---	The crozier becomes rooted in the ground and grows into a large tree with a fountain springing at its foot (§x.51-63)

Thus, apart from the last three miracles of the *VSN*, unparalleled in the *MNE*, the storyline of the first five miracles basically overlaps, with just some differences in details, such as Nynia's expulsion from Tudwal's kingdom, only mentioned in the *MNE*; the specific reference to the leeks of the monastery vegetable patch, found only in the *VSN*; finally, the protective circle drawn around the cattle with the saint's crozier and the place-name *Farres Last*, «(lit.) bull's hoof-mark», resulting from the wondrous impression of the charging bull's hoof on a rock, both featured only in the *VSN*.

The hagiological motifs making up these miracles have been traced to a «well-worked stock» of Celtic hagiography, which «might help to establish the extent of [Nynia's] pre-Northumbrian tradition»<sup>63</sup> eventually converged in the Anglo-Latin *LVM*. The latter has been prevalingly identified with the shared source which the anonymous poet of the *MNE* and Ailred independently drew on and re-arranged<sup>64</sup>. In the *MNE* the sequence of events, with the biographical elements all concentrated in the first four chapters, and then rest of the narrative dominated by the miracles stories, seems coherent with a work that proposes to be not so much a *uita* as an account of miracles. Also, the anonymous poet explicitly states his aim to provide just a selection of the innumerable miracles attributed to Nynia («Ex quibus innumera scribendo linquere quondam / Predixi, obsequio sed sancti pauca relatu / Incipiam pandens cellaria pauperis horti»), and then to describe those reported briefly (*tenui sermone*)<sup>65</sup>. Such a selection, with the accompanying generalisations and condensations, probably resulted from the versification of the underlying prose account of the *LVM*, accord-

63. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 56-9, 61-4, and 67-9, quotations at pp. 59 and 56; and J. MacQueen, *History and Miracle Stories in the Biography of Nynia*, «The Innes Review», 13/II (1962), pp. 115-29, esp. pp. 118-25. Cfr. also N. K. Chadwick, *St. Ninian: A Preliminary Study of the Sources*, «Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society», 3<sup>rd</sup> s., 27 (1948-9), pp. 9-53, esp. pp. 37-43 and 51-3.

64. Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 11-16; Levison, *An Eighth-Century Poem* cit., pp. 284-8; and Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Lost Anglo-Saxon Prose Life* cit., pp. 209-11.

65. *MNE*, xiv.465-7 and 453, Strecker (ed.), p. 960.

ing to the tradition of the *opus geminatum*<sup>66</sup>, which proved distinctively popular in the early English literary culture, especially within the hagiographic genre<sup>67</sup>. Conversely, Ailred makes a more detailed use of the *LVM* as well as expanding it with additional material probably datable closer in time to his *VSN*<sup>68</sup>, in order to provide a full-fledged life, consisting of both a detailed biography of the saint and a broad selection of miracles.

As to the posthumous miracles, they amount to four in both the *MNE* and the *VSN* and correspond but for the last one, as shown in the following table:

	<i>MNE</i>	<i>VSN</i>
1	Healing of a deformed paralytic boy, <i>named Pethgils</i> <sup>69</sup> , while lying by Nynia's tomb during the night (§x)	Healing of a deformed paralytic boy while lying by Nynia's tomb during the night (§xii)
2	Healing of a leper (§xi)	Healing of a scabious pauper, <i>named Aedelfridus</i> (§xiii)
3	Healing of a blind woman (§xii)	Healing of a blind woman, <i>named Deisuit</i> (< Old English <i>Dægswith</i> ) (§xiv)
4	<i>Transformation of the Mass Host into the Christ child</i> (§xiii)	<i>Healing of two lepers by the waters of a well near Nynia's tomb</i> (§xv)

Whereas the lifetime miracles make up a rather eclectic series, in that they fall into different typologies, the posthumous ones are all healing mir-

66. M. Lapidge, *Aedilulf and the School of York*, in *Lateinische Kultur im VIII. Jahrhundert. Traube-Gedenkschrift*, curr. A. Lehner - W. Berschin, St. Ottilien 1989, pp. 161-78; rptd. in Id., *Anglo-Latin Literature 600-899* cit., pp. 381-98, esp. p. 386, n. 29, and Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., p. 56.

67. G. Wieland, *Geminus Stilus: Studies in Anglo-Latin Hagiography*, in *Insular Latin Studies: Papers on Latin Texts and Manuscripts of the British Isles, 550-1066*, cur. M. Herren, Toronto 1981, pp. 113-33; P. Godman, *The Anglo-Latin Opus Geminatum: From Aldhelm to Alcuin*, «*Medium Ævum*», 50/II (1981), pp. 215-29; and B. Friesen, *The Opus Geminatum and Anglo-Saxon Literature*, «*Neophilologus*», 95/I (2011), pp. 123-44.

68. Levison, *An Eighth-Century Poem* cit., pp. 287-8; Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Last Anglo-Saxon Prose Life* cit., p. 209; Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., p. 11; and Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., p. 55. On the hypothesis that Ailred relied on an Old English version of the *LVM*, cfr. above, p. 267.

69. *Recte Pethgils or Pectgils*; this name occurs several times in the *Durham Liber Vitae*: cfr. Levison, *An Eighth-Century Poem* cit., p. 286, n. 12.

acles, with the notable exception of the “odd one out” of this series, that is the eucharistic miracle concluding the *MNE*. The emphasis on the healing power of the saint can be considered a hagiographic topos and in the *MNE* it is intimately associated with the Whithorn site, in a clear bid to boost its popularity as a pilgrimage centre<sup>70</sup>. Indeed, the health-bringing efficacy of Nynia as well as of his shrine had already been anticipated in the account of the foundation of Whithorn, described as the house of the Lord, to which many afflicted by long-standing disease eagerly hurry to have their health restored and grow strong in all their limbs («Hęc domus est domini, quam plures visere certant; [...] Nam curant multi morbo contracti vetusto, / Prompta salutifere capessunt munera curę / Omnibus et membris sancti virtute virescunt»)<sup>71</sup>. Also, verse xiii (N) of the *HNE* celebrates Nynia’s healing power against leprosy<sup>72</sup>. A distinctive feature of the three shared miraculous healings<sup>73</sup> is that they are specifically performed by means of incubation, that is by lying down by the saint’s tomb<sup>74</sup>. The *HE*, *MNE*, and *VSN* all agree that Nynia was laid to rest in his own church<sup>75</sup>, and also the *HNE* and Alcuin’s letter to the Whithorn community mention that the (entire) body of the saint rests in his church<sup>76</sup>, a consistency which may have been deliberately aimed at discouraging rival claims about Nynia’s place of burial and

70. P. Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian: The Excavations of a Monastic Town 1984-91*, Stroud 1997, pp. 19-20 and 40-8. Cfr. also *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 245 and 249.

71. Strecker (ed.), *MNE*, iv.92 and 94-6, p. 948.

72. Strecker (ed.), *HNE*, p. 962.

73. Conversely, the healing of the two lepers at the end of the *VSN* is performed by the water of the spring miraculously come out at the foot of Nynia’s crozier: cfr. above, p. 270.

74. On the long-standing tradition of incubation, its Graeco-Roman pagan origins and the controversial relationship with its late Antique Christian manifestation, especially in the Byzantine world, cfr. at least G. H. Renberg, *Where Dreams May Come: Incubation Sanctuaries in the Graeco-Roman World*, Leiden 2017 (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, 184), II, pp. 745-807; R. Wiśniewski, *Looking for Dreams and Talking to Martyrs: The Internal Roots of Christian Incubation*, «Studia Patristica», 63 (2013), pp. 203-8; F. Graf, *Dangerous Dreaming: The Christian Transformation of Dream Incubation*, «Archiv für Religionsgeschichte», 15/1 (2014), pp. 117-44; and H. Delehay, *Les premiers Libelli Miraculorum*, «Analecta Bollandiana», 29 (2010), pp. 427-34.

75. Cfr. Colgrave-Mynors (edd.), *HE*, III.iv, p. 222, l. 14; Strecker (ed.), *MNE*, ix (rubric), p. 953; and Pezzini (ed.), *VSN*, xi.53-4, p. 130. The exact nature and location of Nynia’s shrine, however, remain elusive, as the poet of the *MNE* uses a «multivalent diction» to describe it, and it could be envisaged as a stone coffin adjacent to altar, as a crypt or *hypogeum*, or, finally, as a cave; indeed four miles away from Whithorn, at Physgill Glen, there is St Ninian’s Cave, a small sea cave believed to have served as a retreat for the saint, eventually becoming a destination of medieval pilgrims: Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 71-5, quotation at p. 74.

76. Strecker (ed.), *HNE*, xv (P), p. 962, and Dümmler (ed.), *Alcuini Epistolae* cit., p. 432, l. 3. On Alcuin’s letter acknowledging the receipt of the *MNE* and *HNE*, cfr. above, pp. 261-2.

possession of his relics<sup>77</sup>. Unlike other hagiological motifs paralleled in British hagiography<sup>78</sup>, incubation is not a common feature of early medieval Insular saints' lives<sup>79</sup>, with the exception perhaps of the story of Cuthbert's shoes – hence, strictly speaking a secondary relic – healing a paralytic during the night<sup>80</sup>. This idiosyncratic trait of Nynia's miracles may perhaps be traced to the cult of St. Martin of Tours<sup>81</sup>, to whom Nynia dedicated his own foundation, according to the unanimous testimony of the *HE*, *MNE*, and *VSN*<sup>82</sup>. Indeed, according to the latter, Nynia personally visited St. Martin on his way back home from Rome and St. Martin himself would have provided the stone-masons who would eventually build Whithorn<sup>83</sup>.

The fact that the three beneficiaries of the three shared healing miracles all have Old English names has suggested that the group of posthumous miracles made up an «appendix» which must have been put together after the Northumbrian takeover of Whithorn and subjoined to the *LVM* in order to enhance the reputation of Nynia as a healer and, in turn, the attractiveness of Whithorn as a pilgrimage destination<sup>84</sup>. Thus, according to a particularly «baroque model of transmission»<sup>85</sup>, while Bede's source would have been an «abstract» of the (lost) Anglo-Latin *uita* or *LVM* – itself derived from a (lost) British-Latin *uita* – sent to Bede by Pehthelm<sup>86</sup>, the source-text underlying the *MNE* and the *VSN* would have been a composite Latin text, resulting from the conflation of the *LVM* with the posthumous miracle appendix, with the intermediate stage of a vernacular version of this composite life being the immediate exemplar of the *VSN*<sup>87</sup>. The following figure by Thomas Clancy tries to summarise the above, as well as accounting for the subsequent misreadings and/or misspellings of the saint's name allegedly occurred in the course of the transmission<sup>88</sup>:

77. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, p. 249.

78. Cfr. above, p. 270.

79. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 64-5.

80. B. Colgrave (ed.), *Vita Sancti Cuthberti auctore anonymo*, in *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, Cambridge 1940, IV.xvii, pp. 136-9.

81. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., p. 65.

82. Cfr. *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 246-8.

83. Pezzini (ed.), *VSN*, ii.34-54, pp. 118-9.

84. MacQueen, *St. Nynia* cit., pp. 4, 11 and 159-60; Id., *The Literary Sources* cit., p. 17; and T. O. Clancy, *The Real Ninian*, «The Innes Review», 52/1 (2001), pp. 1-28, esp. pp. 9 and 23.

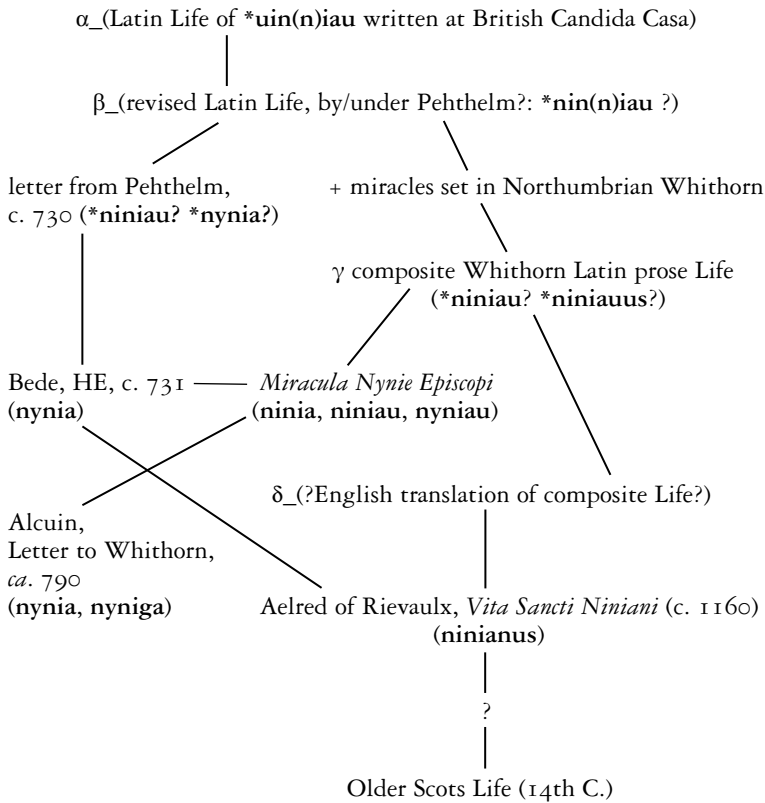
85. Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Lost Anglo-Saxon Prose Life* cit., p. 207.

86. Cfr. above, n. 52.

87. Cfr. above, p. 267.

88. Clancy, *The Real Ninian* cit., p. 24. Cfr. also above, n. 2, and *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 230-8.

Fig. 1: Proposed and tentative stemma for literary traditions of Ninian



As mentioned above, more recent scholarship has mostly dismissed arguments about multiple intervening texts in Nynia's legend, such as Bede's putative «abstract», the alleged Old English version underlying the *VSN*, or the supposed «appendix» of the posthumous miracles, which risk introducing wildly speculative as well as unnecessary complications within the process of transmission<sup>89</sup>. In particular, the Old English names featuring in the posthumous miracles of the *MNE* and *VSN* can just as well have been attested in the *LVM*, rather than in a later appendix, since the *LVM*

89. Cfr. above, pp. 265-7, and *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 230-8. Cfr. also Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Lost Anglo-Saxon Prose Life* cit. and J. E. Fraser, *Northumbrian Whithorn and the Making of St Ninian*, «The Innes Review», 53/1 (2002), pp. 40-59, esp. pp. 44-7.

postdates the Northumbrian occupation of Whithorn anyway and was presumably put together under or by Pehthelm<sup>90</sup>.

An entirely idiosyncratic miracle is the one concluding the *MNE*, that is the miracle of the Mass Host being transformed into the infant Jesus and then back into bread again. Indeed, the miracle is not performed by St. Nynia nor through his intercession, but takes place above the saint's altar when a Whithorn priest named Plecgils<sup>91</sup> invokes God to see the mystery of the Eucharist; hence the transformation of the wafer into Christ, whom Plecgils embraces and touches with his lips, before He transforms back into bread. Notably, the visual demonstration of the transubstantiation is also dealt with in another important witness of early eighth-century Northumbrian hagiography, that is the anonymous Anglo-Latin *Life of Gregory the Great*, written ca. 713 by a monk of Whitby<sup>92</sup>. Although the two eucharistic miracles are very different<sup>93</sup>, the *MNE* and the Whitby *Life of Gregory* could be taken as witnesses to what may have been a topical issue in the theological debate of the contemporary Northumbrian church, a debate which may have found distinctive elaborations at Whithorn under an erudite churchman such as Pehthelm<sup>94</sup>. Whether Ailred's source-text also featured the eucharistic miracle concluding the *MNE*, and, if so, the reason why he decided to omit it and replace it with yet another miraculous healing remain a matter of speculation<sup>95</sup>. However, the most likely explanations seem to be that Ailred preferred to omit the story either because it dealt with a thorny

90. Cfr. above, p. 271, and Laynesmith, *Bede, Aelred of Rievaulx, and the Lost Anglo-Saxon Prose Life* cit., p. 212.

91. The same name is also attested in the anonymous *Life of St. Cuthbert* and in the *Durham Liber Vitae*: cfr. Levison, *An Eighth-Century Poem* cit., p. 285, n. 9.

92. [BHL 3637]; B. Colgrave (ed.), *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby. Text, Translation and Notes*, Lawrence (KS) 1968.

93. In the Whitby *Life*, the story is set in Rome and the protagonist is a doubting woman who is ultimately shown the host in the form of a bloody finger: cfr. Colgrave (ed.), xx, pp. 104-8.

94. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 59-60. Cfr. also *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, pp. 229 and 236.

95. According to Wakeford, Ailred's knowledge of the eucharistic miracle about the Host transformed into Jesus would be hinted at by the phrase describing the healing of the flesh of the two lepers, which was restored just like the flesh of a little child («restituta est caro eorum sicut caro parvuli»): cfr. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., pp. 60-1 and Pezzini (ed.), *VSN*, xv.18-9, pp. 133-4. In fact, the phrase referring to the flesh of the child does not so much echo the eucharistic miracle as the Holy Writ (cfr. 2 Reg 5, 14); as Wakeford himself points out, Ailred's chapter recounting the miraculous healing of the two lepers teems with scriptural parallels, a circumstance which itself may indicate that Ailred was extemporizing: cfr. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., p. 61.



subject such as transubstantiation<sup>96</sup>, or because the only connection of the eucharistic miracle with St. Nynia is that it allegedly took place in his church<sup>97</sup>.

Nynia was «[t]he best loved Scottish saint of the later middle ages», and in more modern times he vied with Columba for the role of Scotland's apostle<sup>98</sup>. In the course of the late Middle Ages, Whithorn sustainedly drew a flux of pilgrims, including Scottish kings, such as Robert I the Bruce (1306-29), who visited the shrine in April 1329, just a month before his death, apparently seeking cure from leprosy, a malady with which Nynia was particularly associated, and James IV (1488-1513), who undertook an epic pilgrimage in March 1507 walking the 200 miles from Edinburgh to Whithorn in eight days<sup>99</sup>. Nynia's cult was not limited to Whithorn or Galloway, however, as it spread throughout Scotland and into the northern isles, as well as to the south of Britain, and even expanded overseas following the routes of medieval Scottish merchants<sup>100</sup>. Further lives of Nynia were produced in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, but they mostly elaborated on the *HE* and *VSN*, while the English tradition of the *MNE* and *HNE* was limited to Northumbria, or, more specifically, to the York school, and died out rapidly<sup>101</sup>.

The most important witness to the Northumbrian reception of the *MNE* is the *Carmen de abbatibus*, an early ninth-century Latin poem by Ædiluulf (*fl.* 803-21), one of the few named representatives of the York school<sup>102</sup>. Ædiluulf's diction and versification has been shown to be highly derivative,

96. *Ibidem* and MacQueen, *The Literary Sources* cit., pp. 20-1.

97. Levison, *An Eighth-Century Poem* cit., p. 285.

98. T. Turpie, *Kind Neighbours: Scottish Saints and Society in the Later Middle Ages*, Leiden 2015 (*The Northern World*, 70), p. 94. Cfr. also D. Broun, *Ninian*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XL, Oxford 2004, p. 919.

99. *Ibidem*; Turpie, *Kind Neighbours* cit., pp. 94-139; and D. H. Farmer, *Ninian (Nynia)*, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, rev. 5th ed., Oxford 2011, pp. 325-6.

100. Turpie, *Kind Neighbours* cit., pp. 94-139, and G. Hay, *A Scottish Altar Piece in Copenhagen*, «*The Innes Review*» 7/1 (1956), pp. 5-11.

101. E.g. [BHL 6241]; cfr. also Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., p. 43 and *infra* the entry dedicated to the *HNE*, p. 259.

102. R. Sharpe, *Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540*, Turnhout 1997, no. 69; ICL 15778; A. Campbell (ed.), *Æthelwulf De Abbatibus*, Oxford 1967. For a detailed survey of the sources of the *Carmen de abbatibus*, cfr. Orchard, *Alcuin and Cynewulf* cit., pp. 348-76. For a recent study on the poem, cfr. C. Di Sciacca, *A Little Bird Told Me: Imagining the Interim in Ædiluulf's Carmen de abbatibus*, in *Endzeitvorstellungen: Die Interkulturalität des apokalyptischen Mythos im lateinischen und germanischen Mittelalter*, curr. E. Di Venosa - G. Pelizzari, Würzburg 2022, pp. 215-46.

with the *MNE* ranking as the fourth most drawn on source of the *Carmen de abbatibus*, immediately after Alcuin<sup>103</sup>. Indeed, the debt of the *Carmen de abbatibus* to the *MNE* is so extensive that Strecker was able to ascertain that Ædiluulf's must have drawn on a better text of the *MNE* than the one attested in the Bamberg codex; the *Carmen de abbatibus* could, therefore, be used to emend the *MNE*, although Strecker cautioned that emending a text such as the *MNE*, where so many errors were to be put down to the author rather than to transmission, would be «methodisch falsch»<sup>104</sup>.

The figurehead of the York school and addressee of the *MNE* and *HNE*, Alcuin himself, made some use of the *MNE* in his own verse<sup>105</sup>, as well as acting as the primary promoter of the *MNE* on the Continent. Indeed, the only surviving witness of the poem is a Continental manuscript of Alcuin's *De laude Dei* and it was probably through one of Alcuin's correspondents, Adalhard (752-827), abbot of Corbie, that Paschasius Radbertus (ca. 785 - ca. 860), also abbot of Corbie, acquired knowledge of the eucharistic miracle concluding the *MNE*<sup>106</sup>. In particular, Paschasius included a prosification of the original verse into his renown treatise on the nature of the Eucharist, *De corpore et sanguine Domini* (xiv. 120-59), tracing the anecdote to *gestis Anglorum*<sup>107</sup>. Paschasius's stance on transubstantiation did not go uncontested in the course of a veritable eucharistic controversy<sup>108</sup>. The most immediate and direct antagonist of Paschasius's is generally considered the contemporary and fellow monk of Corbie Ratramnus († post 868), who also authored a treatise entitled *De corpore et sanguine Domini*<sup>109</sup>. However the most prestigious participant in the controversy was Hrabanus Maurus († 856), himself one of Alcuin's greatest disciples, who devoted a chapter to the nature of the Eucharist at the end of his *Paenitentiale ad Heribaldum*<sup>110</sup>.

103. Thirty-five lines of the *Carmen de abbatibus* parallel the *MNE*, whereas thirty-six echo Alcuin: cfr. Orchard, *Alcuin and Cynewulf* cit., pp. 355-61. Cfr. also Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 20-3.

104. *Ibidem*, p. 22. Cfr. also above, pp. 263-4.

105. Orchard, *Alcuin and Cynewulf* cit., p. 307 and Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 23-4.

106. Levison, *An Eighth-Century Poem* cit., pp. 285-6.

107. B. Paul (ed.), Paschasius Radbertus, *De corpore et sanguine domini*, Turnhout 1969 (CCCM 16), pp. 89-90. Cfr. Strecker (ed.), *MNE*, xii, pp. 957-9 (apparatus) and Strecker, *Zu den Quellen* cit., pp. 6-7.

108. Cfr. at least C. Chazelle, *Figure, Character, and the Glorified Body in the Carolingian Eucharistic Controversy*, «Traditio», 47 (1992), pp. 1-36.

109. J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink (ed.), Ratramnus, *De corpore et sanguine domini. Texte original et notice bibliographique*, Amsterdam 1974.

110. PL, vol. CX, cols. 467-94, esp. cols. 492-4.

The debate on transubstantiation had not abated in Ailred's day and, as mentioned above, it was probably the contentious nature of the topic which prompted him to omit the eucharistic miracle, although sources roughly contemporary with Ailred and by Cistercian authors like Ailred himself dealt with similar topics<sup>111</sup>. In particular, the German Cistercian monk Caesarius of Heisterbach (*ca.* 1180 - *ca.* 1240) borrowed from Paschasius's version of the eucharistic miracle of the *MNE* in the exposition of a sequence for the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin (*Ave praeclara maris stella*)<sup>112</sup>, which likely makes the latest witness to the *MNE* indirect tradition that we can trace with some degree of certainty<sup>113</sup>.

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111. Wakeford, *The British Church and Anglo-Saxon Expansion* cit., p. 61, and MacQueen, *The Literary Sources* cit., pp. 20-1.

112. R. B. C. Huygens, *Commentaires sur la séquence Ave praeclara maris stella*, in *Serta medievalia: Textus varii saeculorum X-XIII in unum collecti*, cur. R. B. C. Huygens, Turnhout 2000 (CCCM 171), pp. 409-90.

113. My deepest thanks to Federica Di Giuseppe for her generous help in procuring much of the bibliography consulted for this essay.