Tradurre: un viaggio nel tempo

a cura di
Maria Grazia Cammarota

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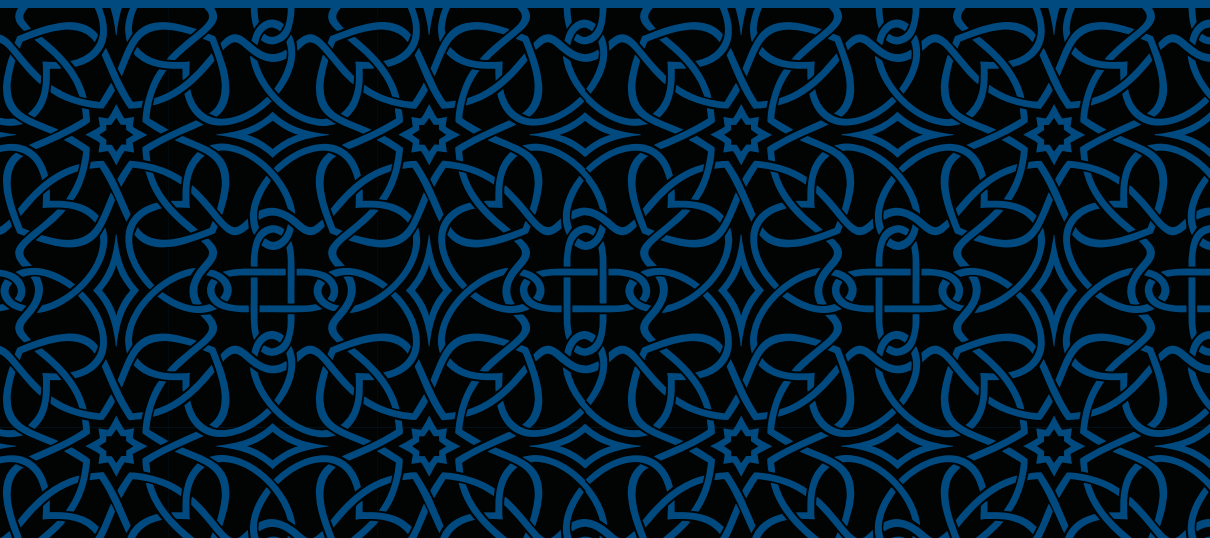

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Translating the Fate of the Soul in Late Anglo-Saxon England
Ælfric of Eynsham and Two *Post-Mortem* Visions

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Abstract   This essay discusses what is possibly the earliest translation from the *Vitas Patrum* corpus into a Western European vernacular, i.e. the Old English version of two visions of departing souls from the *Verba Seniorum* by Ælfric of Eynsham. Contrary to received notions, Ælfric favoured the narratives of the Desert Fathers as sources for paradigms of clerical celibacy and continence, two of the values that he was most anxious to teach and on which he took a strongly reformist stance. The two case studies presented aim to shed new light on the diffusion and appreciation of the Desert Fathers tales in Benedictine Reform England, in that they will show that, not unlike many anonymous homilists, Ælfric too drew on them as eschatological sources to conjure up two dramatic *post-mortem* scenes.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 The *Verba Seniorum*. – 3 The *Vitas Patrum* and *Verba Seniorum* in Anglo-Saxon England. – 4 Ælfric and the *Vitas Patrum*. – 5 Two Visions of Departing Souls: the Latin Source. – 6 Two Visions of Departing Souls: Ælfric's Translation. – 7 Conclusions.

Keywords   Anglo-Saxon England. Old English. Ælfric of Eynsham. Soul-and-body literature. Verba seniorum.

1   Introduction

Anglo-Saxon England was home to a rich and imaginative eschatology: creative and often flamboyant descriptions of the horrors of hell and the bliss of heaven, detailed and vivid representations of the events preceding or accompanying the Last Judgement abound in Anglo-Saxon literary culture, both in Latin and the vernacular, both in prose and verse.[1] The im-

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1   Anonymous Old English homilies teem with eschatological themes: see, for example, Vercelli Homilies iv (HomU 9, B3.4.9) and ix (HomS 4, B3.2.4); Blickling Homily v (HomS 17, B3.2.17); Napier homilies xxix (HomU 26, B3.4.26), xxx (HomU 27, B3.4.27), and xlii (a version of Adso of Montier-en-Der, *Libellus de Antichristo*: HomU 34, B3.4.34); Luiselli Fadda homilies vii (HomM 8, B3.5.8) and viii (HomM 14, B3.5.14); three Easter Day homilies drawing on the Gospel of Nicodemus (HomS 27, B3.2.27; HomS 28, B3.2.28; HomS 29, B3.2.29); four homilies drawing on the *Visio S. Pauli* (Blickling iv: HomS 14, B3.2.14; Blickling xvi: B3.3.25; Napier xlvi: HomU 37, B3.4.37; and HomM 1, B3.5.1); four homilies drawing on the Apocalypse of Thomas (Vercelli xv: HomU 6, B3.4.6; Blickling vii: HomS 26,

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mediate *post-mortem* destiny also captured the Anglo-Saxons' fascination and indeed the earliest vernacular witnesses of the soul-and-body legend in the West are in Old English (Di Sciacca 2002, 2006). A vast body of scholarship, especially from the '80s and '90s, has convincingly demonstrated the highly syncretistic character of Anglo-Saxon cosmology and eschatology, in particular its debt to ancient Judaeo-Christian apocryphal lore, much of which reached Anglo-Saxon England through Irish mediation.[2] However, another crucial layer of sources consists of texts that were attributed to or associated with prominent fathers of the early Eastern Church (Robinson [1972] 1994; Scragg 1986; Dendle 2001, 41-2; Di Sciacca 2010). In particular, a vast quarry of eschatological *exempla* were the so-called *Verba Seniorum* or *Apophtegmata Patrum*, that is collections of hagiographic and homiletic narratives, included in the wider still corpus known as the *Vitas Patrum*, centred on the Desert Fathers, namely the first monks of the deserts of Egypt, Syria, and Palestine.

B3.2.26; Bazire – Cross iii: HomS 33, B3.2.33; HomS 44, B3.2.44; HomU 12, B3.4.12; various versions of the Sunday Letter (Napier xliii and lxiv or the 'Niall' version of the Sunday Letter: HomU 35, B3.4.35; Napier xlv: HomU 36, B3.4.36; Napier lvii: HomU 46, B3.4.46; HomU 53, B3.4.53; HomU 54, B3.4.54; HomM 6, B3.5.6); Luiselli Fadda iii drawing on the Apocalypse of Peter (HomS 12, B3.2.12); Bazire – Cross viii: HomS 30, B3.2.30; HomU 12, B3.4.12; Assmann xiv (HomS 6, B3.2.6); the 'Macarius Homily' (HomU 55, B3.4.55); the Three Utterances sermons (Luiselli Fadda i: HomM 5, B3.5.5; Bazire – Cross ix: HomS 31, B3.2.31; *Be heofonwarum 7 be helwarum*: HomS 5, B3.2.5); finally, the Old English version of the Seven Heaven Apocryphon (HomU 12.2, B3.4.12.2). Individual Old English homilies are identified according to the numbers assigned in Cameron 1973; for editions and secondary bibliography, see at least Bately 1993 and Scragg [1979] 2000. The two most-renown Anglo-Saxon homilists, Wulfstan of York and, though less profusely, Ælfric of Eynsham, also dealt with eschatological matters and apocalyptic fears: for Wulfstan, see especially Bethurum 1971, nos. 1-5, and Whitelock 1963; for Ælfric, see especially the *Sermo de die iudicii* in ed. Pope 1967-1968, 2: 584-612. Old English poems on related subjects are *Judgement Day I*, *Christ III* (both ed. in Krapp, Dobbie 1936, 212-15 and 27-49, respectively), *Christ and Satan* (ed. Krapp 1931, 135-58), *Guthlac A* and *B* (ed. Roberts 1979), *Soul and Body I* and *II* (ed. Moffat 1990). On the Anglo-Latin front, Bede authored one of the earliest commentaries on the Book of Revelation (*Explanatio Apocalypsis*: PL 93, 133-206), and he included two influential otherworldly visions, that of Fursey and of Dryhthelm, in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum* (III, xix and V, xxii, respectively: ed. Colgrave, Mynors 1969, 268-77 and 488-99). An Old English version of these two visions is found in two companion pieces of Ælfric's Second Series of the *Catholic Homilies* (CH 2, 20 and 21; ed. Godden 1979, 190-205), although Ælfric's source for Fursey is demonstrably not Bede: Godden 2000b, 529-44. To Bede has also been traditionally, though controversially, attributed the poem *De die iudicii*: ed. Fraipont 1955, 439-44. The Latin poem has in turn been the ultimate source for the Old English poem *Judgement Day II* and for a passage of the anonymous composite homily Napier xxix: see at least Caie 2000. Boniface too recounted a vision, that of the Monk of Much Wenlock, in his Latin letter to Abbess Eadburg (ed. Tangl 1916, 8-15), which was eventually translated into Old English (B6.1, ed. Sisam 1953, 212-23).

2   See at least Willard [1935] 1967; DiPaolo Healey 1978; Wright 1993; Cross 1997; SASLC 2. A most recent compendium of Insular eschatology is the substantial collection of studies in Carey et al. 2014.

This essay will investigate what is possibly the earliest vernacular version from Western Europe of two *Vitas Patrum* texts,[3] namely the Old English translation of two visions of departing souls from the *Verba Seniorum* by Ælfric of Eynsham (*c.* 950-*c.* 1010), the most celebrated prose writer of late Anglo-Saxon England as well as the most scrupulous offspring of the Benedictine Reform (Clemoes 1966; Gneuss 2009; Godden 1974, 2014; Hill 2009; Kleist 2000, 2001; Reinsma 1987). Contrary to received notions, Ælfric favoured the hagiographic narratives of the Desert Fathers as sources for paradigms of clerical celibacy and continence in general, by far two of the values that he was most anxious to teach and on which he took a strongly reformist stance (Di Sciacca 2012, 2014). The two case studies presented in the following pages aim to shed new light on the diffusion and appreciation of the Desert Fathers tales in Benedictine Reform England, in that they will show that, not unlike many anonymous homilists, Ælfric too drew on them as eschatological sources to conjure up two dramatic *post-mortem* scenes.

2 The *Verba Seniorum*

The so-called *Vitas Patrum* consist of a vast and heterogeneous corpus of hagiographical, homiletic, and eschatological tales devoted to the lives and sayings of the monks and fathers of the early Eastern Church.[4] Generally composed in Greek and/or other Eastern languages, they were eventually translated into Latin and enjoyed a vast popularity throughout the western Middle Ages and beyond.[5]

The very definition of *Vitas Patrum* is slippery, as it still largely relies on the omnium gatherum criteria underlying the seventeenth-century edition of the Latin corpus by H. Rosweyde (1628), eventually reprinted in volumes 73 and 74 of the *Patrologia Latina*. In fact, the configuration of this corpus has proved far from stable and one should rather speak of different *corpora* or nuclei than a single corpus. In P. Jackson's words, the *Vitas Patrum* "[were] in no sense a single work or even [an] organised collection [and Rosweyde's edition] inevitably imposed a false unity on a number of books that often had their own quite distinct, textual history" (1990, 162).

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[3] Another Old English version of two tales from the *Verba Seniorum* is contained in London, BL, Cotton Otho C.i, vol. 2, itself a manuscript from the mid-eleventh century, hence postdating Ælfric, although the two vernacular pieces could of course be earlier: see below, fn. 23.

[4] The literature on desert monasticism is vast; see at least Stewart 2000 and Di Sciacca 2010, 325-7.

[5] BHG 1957, 3: 191-214 and BHL 1986, 943-8. For an introduction to the *Vitas Patrum*, see Berschin 1980, 78-81; Solignac 1994; Williams 1997.

The *Vitas Patrum* as we know them comprise individual lives of celebrated desert hermits, first of all the *Vita S. Antonii*, the pioneering text of hagiography and one of the most widely read texts in the history of monasticism;[6] secondly, collections of lives, such as the *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*[7] and the *Historia Lausiaca*;[8] finally, the *Verba Seniorum*, again a bit of a hotch-potch label denoting various compilations of *dicta* and *exempla* that have complex and often intertwined textual traditions. At least five Latin collections have come down from late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages that can loosely be traced to Greek compendia of *gerontika* or *apophtegmata*,[9] namely the *Verba Seniorum* attributed to Rufinus, eventually included in Rosweyde's edition of the *Vitas Patrum* as Book III (BHL, no. 6525; PL 73, 739-814); the *Adhortationes sanctorum Patrum*, attributed to the deacon Pelagius (eventually Pope Pelagius I) and to the subdeacon John (eventually Pope John III), included in Rosweyde's *Vitas Patrum* as Books V and VI (CPG, no. 5570; BHL, nos. 6527-30; PL 73, 851-1024); the *Liber geronticon de octo principalibus uitiis* attributed to Paschasius Dumiensis, included in Rosweyde's *Vitas Patrum* as Book VII (BHL, no. 6531; PL 73, 1025-66; ed. Freire 1971); the *Pratum spirituale* by John Moschos, translated into Latin by Ambrose Traversari and eventually included in Rosweyde's *Vitas Patrum* as Book X (BHL, no. 6536; PL 74, 121-240); finally, the *Sententiae Patrum aegyptiorum* by Martin of Braga, now making up Appendix 3 to

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6   CPG, no. 2101; BHG, no. 140; ed. Bartelink 1994; for an English translation, see Vivian et al. 2003, 51-259. On the controversial authorship of the Greek life see Harmless 2004, 111-13, and Brown 2008, 213 fn. 1. On the numerous Latin translations of the Greek life, see BHL, no. 609, and Gandt 2008. The best known is the Latin version by Evagrius Ponticus (345-99): PL 73, 125-70; English translation in White 1998, 3-70. On the *Vita Antonii* as the defining text of the hagiographic genre, see Bartelink 1994, 54-6; Dendle 2001, 45-6; and Gregory 2013, 31-8. On the *Vita Antonii* in Anglo-Saxon England, see Whatley 2001a and Lapidge 2006, 119, 175, 179, 196, 229, 234, 238 and 281.

7   CPG, no. 5620; BHG, nos. 1433-4; ed. Festugière 1971. For the Latin version by Rufinus of Aquileia, see CPL, no. 198p; BHL, no. 6524; ed. Schulz-Flügel 1990.

8   CPG, no. 6036; BHG, nos. 1435-8v. The Greek text is attested in three recensions: G, B and A; recension G is ed. Butler 1967, 2; see also CPG Supplement, 6, 376. At least three Latin versions of recensions G and A are attested: CPG, no. 6036, 168-70; Butler 1967, 1: 1-10 and 15-38; Wellhausen 2003, xxv–viii and 53-9. These Latin versions were all included in Rosweyde's edition and reprinted in PL: *Heraclidis Eremitae paradisus* (BHL, no. 6532; PL 74, 243-342; ed. Wellhausen 2003); *Palladii lausiaca* (BHL, no. 6534; PL 74, 343-82); *De uitis Patrum liber octauus siue Historia lausiaca interprete Gentiano Herueto* (PL 73, 1065-234).

9   The Greek tradition of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* consists of collections arranged either alphabetically (CPG, no. 5560; PG 65, 71-440), or systematically according to vices and virtues (CPG, no. 5561, fragmentarily edited; and CPG, no. 5562; ed. Guy 1993-2003). An international project, *Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia* (MOPAI), based at the University of Lund, aims to study the textual traditions of various collections of *apophthegmata*: see http://monastica.ht.lu.se/ (2018-05-17).

Rosweyde's *Vitas Pratum* (CPL, no. 1079c; BHL, no. 6535; PL 74, 381-94; Barlow 1950, 30-51).

As S. Rubenson has pointed out, with their almost unlimited adaptability, the sayings made constant re-formations possible, being naturally subject to contaminations, accretions or omissions, and various 'context-bound' alterations (2013; Batlle 1980). Since late antiquity up to nowadays, over a geographic area stretching from Ethiopia to northern Europe, they have been constantly translated and retranslated, thus transmitting the legacy of early monastic education, with its roots in classical *paideia*, into a variety of Christian traditions and monastic practices (Rubenson 2013).

3 The *Vitas Patrum* and *Verba Seniorum* in Anglo-Saxon England

Previous scholarship has argued that the Anglo-Saxons knew the *Vitas Patrum* chiefly by means of intermediate sources and that of this vast body of texts only the *Historia monachorum* and the *Verba seniorum* can be said with a good degree of certainty to have been understood by the early English as *Vitas Patrum* (Jackson 1990, 162-3; Cross 1985, 244 fn. 84). As a matter of fact, as I have shown elsewhere, both the manuscript and literary evidence do mitigate, if not upend, such a conservative estimate (Di Sciacca 2010, 314-22; 2012; 2014, 134-8). In particular, the late Anglo-Saxons seem to have made a twofold use of the *Vitas Patrum* as sources for both the revival of crucial monastic values by the Benedictine Reform movement and the shaping of a vivid picture of the afterlife by many an anonymous homilist. The most pertinent example of the latter are the anchorite-and-devil *exempla*, a type of eschatological narrative recurrent within the collections of *Verba seniorum*, where the devil recounts (or sometimes is forced to do so by the desert hermit) either a vision of the Otherworld or the struggle of angels and demons over the soul at death (Di Sciacca 2010). These *exempla* provided the narrative framework of the so-called Devil's Account of the Next World, "one of the most popular eschatological tales in late Anglo-Saxon England" (Wright 1993, 175), surviving in no fewer than eight Old English versions (Wright 1993, 175-214; Di Sciacca 2010, 339-41).

Furthermore, one of the Old English *post-mortem* visions featuring an address of the soul to the body, the so-called 'Macarius Vision', has been associated with St Macarius, a multifaceted, nearly ubiquitous character in the literature concerning the Desert Fathers (Di Sciacca 2010, 333-8). Ultimately traceable to a Greek original,[10] this Old English version is attested in two anonymous homilies, the Macarius Homily (incipit: *Ic bidde*

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10 *Visio de sorte animarum*, traditionally attributed to Macarius of Alexandria: CPG, no. 2400; PG 34, 385-92.

eow and eadmodlice lære),[11] and Napier xxix (incipit: *Her is halwendlic lar and ðearflic læwedum mannum, þe þæt læden ne cunnon*).[12]

4 Ælfric and the *Vitas Patrum*

Ælfric has traditionally been credited with a cautious, if not frankly mistrustful attitude to the *Vitas Patrum* because of some reservations he airs in the Latin prologue to the Lives of Saints:[13]

> Nec tamen plura promitto me scripturum hac lingua, quia nec conuenit huic sermocinationi plura inseri; ne forte despectui habeantur margarite christi. *Ideoque reticemus de libro uitae* [sic][14] *patrum, in quo multa subtilia habentur quæ non conueniunt aperiri laicis, nec nos ipsi ea quimus implere*. Illa uero que scripturus sum suspicor non offendere audientes, sed magis fide torpentes recreare hortationibus, quia martyrum passiones nimium fidem erigant languentem.

> I do not promise, however, to write very many [things] in this tongue, because it is not fitting that many should be translated into our language, lest peradventure the pearls of Christ be had in disrespect. And therefore *I hold my peace as to the book called Vita*[*s*] *Patrum, wherein are contained many subtle points which ought not to be laid open to the laity, nor indeed are we ourselves quite able to fathom them*. But I think that those things which I am now going to write will not at all offend the hearers, but will rather refresh by their exhortations such as are slothful in the faith, since the Passions of the Martyrs greatly revive a failing faith.

In view of Ælfric's doctrinal concerns and his constant struggle against *gedwyld* – a key ælfrician word the meaning of which ranges from 'folly' to 'heresy' (Godden 1978; DeGregorio 2001) – the dodgy *subtilia* of the

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11 HomU 55, B3.4.55; Gneuss, Lapidge 2014, no. 66; Ker 1990, no. 50, art. 2; ed. Zaffuto 1999, 178-97.

12 Hom U26, B3.4.26; Gneuss, Lapidge 2014, no. 637; Ker 1990, no. 331, art. 22; ed. Napier 1967: 134-43. On the textual overlaps between these two homilies and between them and Vercelli Homily iv, see Wright 2002; Di Sciacca 2002, 232-4 and 242-50; 2006, 368-70 and 374-80.

13 Latin text and translation both from Skeat 1966, 1: 2-3; emphasis added.

14 The irregular nominative plural *uitas* is more frequently attested in manuscript tradition than *uitae*, which became current in modern times in the wake of Rosweyde's edition: see Batlle 1972, 7-9. Ælfric, however, seems to prefer the singular *Vita Patrum*: see Jackson 2000, 262-3.

Vitas Patrum could be identified with the visionary and sensational elements typical of the eschatology of these texts. Ælfric is renowned for his fastidiousness with sources and uneasiness with miracles and visions (Hill 1993; Clayton 1986; Godden 2000a). However, it is perhaps fairer to say that what he felt uneasy about was "the sometimes querulous popular reception" of such components of hagiographic narratives (Whatley 2002, 160-1 and 166, quotation at 166).

Thus, I think it can be concluded that Ælfric's reservations were not so much about the *Vitas Patrum* narratives *per se* as about the potentially unpredictable response to them on the part of readers and listeners who lacked his level of education and his discriminating approach to sources. Indeed, Ælfric's actual hagiographic production attests that he must have been quite familiar with at least a substantial section of this corpus: he explicitly mentions the *Vitas Patrum* no fewer than eight times[15] and demonstrably draws on them in twelve occasions.[16] In particular, Ælfric seems to have valued the *Vitas Patrum* as sources of exemplary tales of monastic virtues, especially chastity and clerical celibacy (Di Sciacca 2012, 145-70; 2014, 147-58 and 172-81). However, he also appropriates the *Vitas Patrum* as eschatological sources, insofar as he translates and adapts into Old English two visions of departing souls from one of the collections of the *Verba Seniorum*, the *Adhortationes sanctorum Patrum* (PL 73, 1011-12; the PL text is reproduced in the following Appendix with variants from Worcester, Cathedral Library, F. 48 in footnotes, and Ælfric's Old English version on facing column).[17]

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15 *Sermo in Natale omnium Sanctorum* (CH 1, 36; B1.1.38; ed. Clemoes 1997, 486-96); *Sermo de sacrificio in die Pascae* (CH 2, 15; B1.2.18; ed. Godden 1979, 150-60); *De doctrina apostolica* (SH 2, 19; B1.4.20; ed. Pope 1967-1968, 2: 622-35); Visions of Departing Souls (SH 2, 27; B1.4.28; ed. Pope 1967-1968, 2: 775-9); *Natiuitas S. Mariae Virginis* (B1.5.8; ed. Assmann [1889] 1964, no. 3, 24-48); Summary of the Book of Judith (B1.5.15; ed. Assmann [1889] 1964, no. 9, 102-16); Letter to Sigefyrth (B1.8.5; ed. Assmann [1889] 1964, no. 2, 13-23); Latin preface to the Lives of Saints (Skeat [1881-1900] 1966, 1: 2-4).

16 *Circumcisio Domini* (CH 1, 6; B1.1.7; ed. Clemoes 1997, 224-31); *Assumptio S. Mariae Virginis* (CH 1, 30; B1.1.32; ed. Clemoes 1997, 429-38); *Sermo de sacrificio in die Pascae* (CH 2, 15; B1.2.18; ed. Godden 1979, 150-60); *De doctrina apostolica* (SH 2, 19; B1.4.20; ed. Pope 1967-1968, 2: 622-35); Passion of St Eugenia (ÆLS 2; B1.3.3; ed. Skeat [1881-1900] 1966, 1: 24-50); Life of St Basil (ÆLS 3; B1.3.4; Skeat [1881-1900] 1966, 1: 50-90); Life of St Æthelthryth (ÆLS 20; B1.3.21; Skeat [1881-1900] 1966, 1: 432-40); Life of St Swithun (ÆLS 21; B1.3.22; Skeat 1966, 1: 440-72); The Maccabees (ÆLS 24; B1.3.25; Skeat [1881-1900] 1966, 2: 66-124); *Dominica quinta post Pascha* (SH 1, 8; B1.4.8; ed. Pope 1967-1968, 1: 357-68); Visions of Departing Souls (SH 2, 27; B1.4.28; ed. Pope 1967-1968, 2: 775-9); Summary of the Book of Judith (B1.5.15; ed. Assmann [1889] 1964, no. 9, 102-16).

17 The first *exemplum* also provides the narrative frame of the Irish version of the Three Utterances sermon known as *The Two Deaths*: ed. and transl. in Ritari 2014; see also Ritari 2013; Wright 1993, 177-8; 2014a; 2014b, 362-9. On the Worcester manuscript, see pages 156-8 of this paper.

5 Two Visions of Departing Souls: the Latin Source

The two Latin *exempla* occur one after the other, without much of a connection apart from the thematic analogies, and the latter *exemplum* follows the former by means of a simple clause (*Dixit iterum qui supra*), of the sort frequently used to link the tales of the *Verba Seniorum*. Typically, the two eschatological tales are set within the context of a conversation between a *frater*, a youngish monk, and a *senex* or *abba*, an elderly and saintly figure.

The first *exemplum* opens with a question that the *frater* asks the *senex*, namely whether it is one's reputation or deeds that secure eternal salvation, and the *senex* promptly answers the deeds. The narrative that follows recounts the death of a sinful man and a pious one and is meant to illustrate the *senex*'s answer. The sinful man is a monk who during his earthly life has deceptively acquired a reputation of sanctity among the citizens of the nearby town, and because of his pretence, his soul will inevitably be handed to a devil and destined to the torments of hell. Conversely, the pious man is a poor, unknown pilgrim, who passes away in solitude among a crowd of sick people without receiving any care whatsoever, but ultimately his soul is lovingly collected by the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and joyfully escorted to heaven by David and his choir.

The second *exemplum* is attributed to the same *senex* as the former; it is shorter and describes only the passing away of a sinful wealthy man who, at the point of death, is overcome by a host of dreadful black riders mounting black horses and carrying a fiery rod each.

Interestingly, the two *exempla* are attested in a late Anglo-Saxon manuscript, Worcester, Cathedral Library, F.48, the most comprehensive witness to the circulation of the *Vitas Patrum* in early medieval England. It is a composite codex, consisting of three sections: the first (ff. 1-48), dated to the end of the eleventh century or beginning of the twelfth, contains the three most important individual *uitae* of the Desert Fathers, namely Evagrius's Latin version of the *Vita S. Antonii*, as well as Jerome's *Vita S. Pauli primi heremitae*[18] and *Vita S. Hilarionis*.[19] The second section (ff. 49-104), from the first half of the eleventh century, contains Rufinus of Aquileia's Latin translation of the *Historia monachorum*. Finally, the third section (ff. 105-164), dated to the mid-eleventh century, contains a selection of 171 *dicta* and *exempla* from the *Adhortationes*

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[18]   CPL, no. 617; BHL, no. 6596; ed. and transl. into French in Morales, Leclerc 2007, 143-83; for an English translation based on the text printed in PL 23, 17-28, see White 1998, 71-84. On the *Vita S. Pauli* in Anglo-Saxon England, see Whatley 2001c, 378-81, and Lapidge 2006, 316. On the Latin version of the *Vita S. Antonii* by Evagrius, see above, fn. 6.

[19]   CPL, no. 618; BHL, no. 3879; ed. and transl. into French in Morales, Leclerc 2007, 212-99; for an English translation based on the text printed in PL 23, 29-54, see White 1998, 87-115. On the *Vita S. Hilarionis* in Anglo-Saxon England, see Whatley 2001b, 251-2, and Lapidge 2006, 316.

sanctorum Patrum.[20] While the *Bibliotheksheimat* of all the three parts of the codex has been unanimously located in Worcester, their *Schriftheimat* is not certain, although it is also likely to be Worcester, especially in the context of St Wulfstan's career as prior and bishop (*c*. 1050-1095).[21]

The milieu of a northern see from the first half to the end of the eleventh century or beginning of the twelfth seems somewhat distant from Ælfric, and especially the third section of the Worcester manuscript containing the *Adhortationes sanctorum Patrum* with the two *exempla* under discussion postdates Ælfric, whose death has traditionally been reckoned to fall *c*. 1010. Thus, Worcester F. 48 cannot have been the copy of the *Adhortationes sanctorum Patrum* (or what he would probably have called just *Vita Patrum*) consulted by Ælfric. However, the question remains open whether he might have had access to the antigraphs of the Worcester codex. In particular, it has been suggested that the collection of *exempla* in the third section of the manuscript might have been copied from two exemplars, an Insular manuscript from as early as the eighth century and a later one.[22] This younger exemplar would perhaps have become available only during the later stages of the copying process and been used to complete the selection of *exempla*, including the two under consideration (Rudolf 2014, 204). The putative availability in eleventh-century Worcester, besides the actual F. 48 codex, of at least two exemplars of a selection of the *Verba seniorum* (most likely the *Adhortationes sanctorum Patrum*) adds to the evidence of the extant manuscripts containing excerpts from the *Verba seniorum* written or circulating in pre-Conquest England – five in total –,[23] thereby suggesting a greater

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20 Gneuss, Lapidge 2014, no. 761; Gameson 1999, no. 919; Thomson 2001, 30; Jackson 1992; Rudolf 2014. On the verso of the last folio (f. 164*v*), a hand of the first half of the twelfth century added an (incomplete) text of the *Vita Thais* (BHL, no. 8012): see Rudolf 2014, 191.

21 Jackson 1992; Rudolf 2014, 204-5 and 208-10. On St Wulfstan, see at least Barrow 2014.

22 The composite nature of the codex and its gradual taking shape thanks to multiple scribes and revisers working from more than one exemplar were first put forward by Jackson 1992, 122-4, and eventually detailed by Rudolf 2014.

23 The five manuscripts in question are London, BL, Additional 15350, ff. 1 and 121 (*s*. vii-viii, prob. Italy; prov. Winchester, Old Minster); London, BL, Cotton Otho C.i, vol. 2 (*s*. xi[in] and xi[med], prob. Worcester; prov. Worcester); London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D.vi, ff. 2-77 (*s*. x[med] or x[2], prob. Canterbury, St Augustine; prov. Canterbury, St Augustine); the above-discussed Worcester F. 48; and Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 9850-52 (1221), ff. 4-19 and 144-76 (*s*. vii/viii, Soissons; prov. Corbie, *s*. viii[ex]?): Gneuss, Lapidge 2014, nos. 281, 359, 389, and 808.2; see also Di Sciacca 2010, 315-17, Rudolf 2014, 186-7, and, above, fn. 20. Like Worcester F.48, the Otho manuscript too has been associated with St Wulfstan, in that both codices were annotated by the monk Coleman, Wulfstan's chancellor and biographer, and the Otho codex contains the Old English version of two Latin *exempla* occurring in Worcester F. 48: Rudolf 2014, 212, 217. On the relationship between these two manuscripts, see Rudolf 2010.

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popularity and wider circulation of these texts than hitherto assumed.[24]

From a textual point of view, the Worcester version of the *exempla* largely agrees with the PL text, showing just minor variants (see Appendix), and it does not feature any distinctive reading that might especially link it or its putative exemplars to Ælfric's vernacular rendition. Indeed, the fact that the PL text and the Worcester one agree against Ælfric's translation favours the hypothesis that the discrepancies between the two Latin texts, on the one hand, and the Old English version, on the other, could indeed be put down to Ælfric's idiosyncratic choices as a translator rather than to distinctive readings of his putative Latin exemplar.

6 Two Visions of Departing Souls: Ælfric's Translation

Ælfric translated and adapted the two *exempla* into Old English for some unknown occasion (SH 2, 27; B1.4.28; ed. Pope 1967-1968, 2: 775-9), and they were subsequently fashioned by an anonymous interpolator into a composite extension to Ælfric's homily for the sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost of the Second Series of the Catholic Homilies (CH 2, 31; B1.2.38; ed. Godden 1979, 268-71). In this expanded form the homily is uniquely attested in London, BL, Cotton Vitellius C.v, a heavily interpolated copy of both series of the Catholic Homilies dating to the late tenth and early eleventh century.[25] In particular, the codex consists of three distinct groups of Ælfrician homilies marking three successive stages in the growth of the volume: Clemoes Ha (*s*. x/xi), Hb (nearly contemporary with Ha), and Hc (*s*. xi^1) (Clemoes 1997, 18-21; cf. Pope 1967-1968, 1: 26-8), the expanded version of the homily for the sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost belonging to the third part of the manuscript.

The homily for the sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost is one of the briefest items of the Catholic Homilies and expounds the passage from the sermon of the Mount on the impossibility of serving two masters, including the injunction to consider the lilies of the field (Matthew vi. 24-34). In particular, the key argument of the exposition is the contrast between the earthly, transitory goods and the heavenly, eternal values.[26] Therefore, "it is easy to see why someone would have decided to expand the homily" with

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24 Rudolf 2014, 204-5. On the Anglo-Saxon manuscript tradition of *Vitas Patrum* texts in general, see Di Sciacca 2010, 314-22.

25 Gneuss, Lapidge 2014, no. 403; Ker 1990, no. 220, esp. art. 46; Clemoes's ms. H: see Clemoes 1997, 18-21; Scragg's ms. X^1: see Scragg [1979] 2000, 110.

26 Godden 2000b, 602-4. The image of the transient beauty of the lilies being withered by winter cold must have struck a familiar chord with the Anglo-Saxon sensibility and its penchant for the *ubi sunt* motif: see, at least, Di Sciacca 2003.

two eschatological *exempla*.[27] While Ælfric's authorship has been agreed upon by both Pope and Godden on stylistic and linguistic grounds (Pope 1967-1968, 1: 30; 2: 771; Godden 1979, 374), it seems equally certain that Ælfric was not himself responsible for appending the two *exempla* to the interpolated version of the homily for the sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost in the Vitellius manuscript, since the opening and closing sections of the expansion are patently non-ælfrician.[28]

Ælfric's translation of the two Latin tales can on the whole be defined as both literal and selective, in that he accomplishes a faithful but not slavishly literal rendition of his base-text, which can be said to be consistent with Ælfric's typical translation method.[29]

In the first *exemplum* Ælfric can be said to have combined a fairly close rendition of his source-text with some substantial editing of it, especially in the opening of the tale. Here Ælfric does not omit just some narrative details (for instance, no mention is made of the wolf that in the Latin source suddenly appears in the monk's cell and leads him to the city where he witnesses the death of the two men), but he excises two important sections of the Latin. Firstly, Ælfric does without the opening exchange between the *frater* and the *senex* (*Nomen est quod salvat, aut opus? Opus*), replacing it with a brief introduction in which he explicitly quotes the *Vitas Patrum* as his source and sketches out the context of the narrative, by specifying that the visions occurs to a *munuc on westene* (a monk in the desert). (Consequently, in the second *exemplum*, while the Latin text mentions as source of the anecdote the same narrator as the first *exemplum* – *Dixit iterum qui supra* –, in the Old English version the source is *seo ylce boc*, the same book). Secondly, Ælfric omits the description of the many lamps and candles prepared to honour the supposedly holy hermit by the local residents, in despair and panicking at the prospect of losing him.

I would argue that these two major excisions are interrelated in that they both serve the purpose to downplay the contrast between the opposite circumstances of the two men's death. In the Latin source-text, it is precisely the *frater*'s question that triggers the telling of the explanatory *exemplum*

27   Pope 1967-1968, 2: 771. The transience of earthly things as expressed in the *ubi sunt* motif was often combined with the soul-and-body theme in Old English homiletics: see Di Sciacca 2006.

28   Pope suggests that "the following hypothetical sequence may come near the truth: (1) Ælfric composed the *exempla* for some undiscoverable occasion. (2) Another preacher incorporated the *exempla* into a homily of his own. (3) A third person, possibly the interpolator of [Vitellius C.v], lifted out Ælfric's *exempla* and some of the surrounding matter to make the addition we find": Pope 1967-1968, 2: 772.

29   On Ælfric's theory and practice of translation, see Marsden 1991, 322-8; Wilcox 1993; 1995, 62-5; Stanton 2002, 130-41 and 144-71; Major 2006; Anderson 2007; Godden 2009; Gretsch 2009, 113-22.

on the part of the *senex* and that outlines the basic dichotomy *nomen/opus* underlying the contrastive arrangement of the two deaths. The source-text then provides many descriptive details meant to emphasise this dichotomy: while the sinful man is a monk who has undeservedly earned a saintly reputation as a hermit and is surrounded by the veneration and loving care of his flock, the pious man is presumably a lay person (*homo peregrinus*) lying alone among a crowd of sick people without any comfort or care.

Ælfric noticeably tones down such a contrast and immediately reveals the sinful nature of the hermit, by emphasising that his life has been all evil-oriented and that he has grown repugnant to God and was now awaiting death burdened by all his sins (*his lif wæs eall on yfel gelogod, Gode swiþe andsæte* […] *andbidigende deaþes mid eallum his synna*). Thereby, Ælfric spoils the *coup de théâtre* of the Latin tale when, contrary to all expectations, a terrible black devil descends on the false saint determined to get hold of his sinful soul with a fiery trident. However, while Ælfric is outspoken about the real disposition of the supposed saint, he is not quite as straightforward when it comes to define his status. While the Latin source presents him as a *solitarius* living *in monasterio* (contradictory though that might sound), hence most likely a monk, Ælfric more elusively speaks of *sum namcuð wer* (a certain renown man) living in an equally unidentified remote dwelling (*on sunderlicre wununge*).

The reasons for the editing of the sinful man's death on Ælfric's part can only be guessed at. As Anderson has convincingly argued concerning Ælfric's biblical translations, they

> are all constructed not so much as to faithfully recreate the biblical text, but more to use the story to showcase a particular moral lesson or highlight a current political relevance. (2007, 126)

Here, I would suggest that Ælfric was ill at ease with the monastic status of the sinful man. As a whole-hearted champion of Benedictine monasticism in its distinctively Anglo-Saxon reformed brand, Ælfric could not have been too happy to present a monk as a blatantly negative model, all the more so because he seems to have cunningly hidden his sinful nature, profiting from the gullibility of his flock. As Whatley has pointed out, the *exempla* from the *Vitas Patrum*

> were important to the monastic tradition not only because they presented a sort of collective mythology of monastic origins, but also because […] these texts describe, often with disarming frankness, the monks' temptations, humiliations, and failures […] Ælfric would have seen […] much potential danger, in publicizing these intimate revelations of saints and prototypical monks as fallible, unstable human beings, liable to error and self-deception. (2002, 175)

Thus, Ælfric altered his source to suit his needs and tastes, both concept- and style-wise, at times highlighting some points he put a premium on or, conversely, suppressing potentially embarrassing or misleading ones, thereby exercising that "opportunism [which] is a perfectly respectable tool of the skilful translator" (Marsden 1991, 358) or, rather, of a transla-tor-author such as Ælfric perceived himself (Anderson 2007, 122-6).

As to the translation of the second episode of the first *exemplum*, fea-turing the death of the pious man (a *homo peregrinus*, this time liter-ally rendered as *ælþeodig mann*), in general it can be said to be a very faithful rendition, even if defective in some points. On the whole, some discrepancies may be pointed out in the final scene of the ascension of the righteous soul, in that while the Old English text sums up that the heavenly choir was singing merrily, the Latin details that they were *psal-lentes in Jerusalem* and *cantantes hymnos*. On the other hand, the Old English version mentions that the blessed soul herself, when coming out of the body and upon being received into Michael's hands, starts singing a song of praise to the Lord. Finally, Ælfric rounds up the anecdote with a conclusion that, while it is unparalleled in the Latin, aptly echoes the *incipit* of the Old English translation of the whole *exemplum*. In particu-lar, the introduction of the desert monk and his prayer to God that he be granted the vision of the departing of both a sinful and a righteous soul reverberates as if in a sort of ring composition in the very closing lines of the tale, with the detail of the monk that makes his way back to the desert after his wish has been satisfied, thereby explicitly turning the narrative back to its starting point.

The Old English rendition of the second *exemplum*, in spite of the many *lacunae*, seems on the whole to follow the narrative development of the Latin source-text quite closely, with just minor omissions or additions. As to the omissions, while the Latin source specifies that the *senex* travels to the city to sell some utensils he has made, Ælfric's version just says that he had to deal with some business. As to the additions, while the Latin text introduces the *senex* that receives the vision just as a certain old man (*de quodam sene*), the Old English version specifies that he is a monk, advanced in virtue and years and it is emphasised that he is granted the vision precisely because of his spiritual merits.

On a concluding note, the most striking feature of the translation of these two deathbed scenes is that, contrary to the doctrinal restraint with which Ælfric has often been credited, here he does not eschew a full ren-dition of the sensational, at times gruesome, aspects of the *post-mortem* visions. Thus, the version of first *exemplum* maintains the description of the lengthy and morbid torture inflicted by the devil with his glowing tri-dent stuck into the heart of the false hermit, and the version of the second *exemplum* retains the colouristic details of the pitch-black infernal riders brandishing fiery staffs.

Similarly, Ælfric does keep to the lively dialectic elements of his source-text, such as God's intervention to encourage the trident-wielding devil not to show any mercy towards the false saint or the exchanges between Michael and Gabriel commenting on the blessed soul's reluctance to exit the body and, in turn, between Michael and God Himself in the same circumstance. Equally, the second *exemplum* offers a close rendition of the exchanges between the sinful rich man and the devilish riders summoned at his deathbed to fetch his soul.

Indeed, Ælfric sometimes even adds some graphic elements to his source, thereby enhancing the dramatic character of the narrative. For example, the devil from hell (*tartaricum inferni*) of the first Latin *exemplum* is a *dreadful* devil (*an egeslic deofol*) in the Old English version, and while the former simply holds his fiery trident in the heart of the false hermit (*tenebat tridentem igneum in cor solatarii illius*), his vernacular equivalent torments his victim at length with a trident that is not only fiery but also made of iron (*hæfde him on handa þryfyrclede force, ⁊ þæt wæs glowende isen, þæt he hine mid þære acwealde.* […] *Ða sette se deofol sona his force swylce glowende isen into his heortan ⁊ hine lange drehte mid* […] *licum witum*). Finally, in the second *exemplum* the unidentified number of black horses and their equally black and terrible riders (*equos nigros, et ascensores eorum nigros et terribiles*) becomes a great host of riders with a very fierce conduct and an entirely black body (*mycelne getruman, swylce ridendra manna mid swyþe reþum anginne*, […] *ansynes mid eallsweartum lichaman*). They too hold a staff that is not just fiery, as in the Latin text (*baculum igneum*), but made of iron (*hæfde* […] *isenne sagol on fyres gelicnysse*), and menacingly surround the sick man (*stodon be* […] *þam earman seocan menn*), in a vivid detail that is unparalleled in the Latin source and perhaps spontaneously inspired by many a similar death scene of soul-and-body literature.

7 Conclusions

Ælfric has traditionally been credited with a more selective and discriminating approach to sources than his anonymous counterparts, especially regarding topics which he considered intrinsically dangerous and verging on *gedwyld*, such as miracles and visions (Hill 1993; Clayton 1986). In the case of these two *exempla*, however, Ælfric seems to have exercised his meticulous editing on what may be defined a political point, namely the endorsement of the reputation of Benedictine monks, while he has somewhat surprisingly retained the sensational and dramatic aspects of the soul-and-body theme not unlike his anonymous colleagues.

Ælfric's faithful rendering of the visionary elements of these tales seems to confirm the crucial role of the *Vitas Patrum* as eschatological sources

in Anglo-Saxon England and to confer on them a fully orthodox stamp. Indeed, this case study should suggest caution against the dichotomic outlook that has traditionally drawn a pretty conspicuous line between the anonymous homiletic and hagiographic corpus, with all its sensational narratives, apocryphal flourishes, and doctrinal liberties, and the more rigorous, patristic-based, and reform-aligned corpus by authors like Ælfric (Di Sciacca 2014, 177-81). Such strict categorisations risk being inevitably anachronistic as well as neglectful of the nuanced, diverse facets of Anglo-Saxon spirituality and literary culture.[30]

Appendix

The following two columns contain Ælfric's Old English text from Pope 1967-1968, 2: 775.17-778.82 and 778. 83-779.106 (right-hand column) and a transcript from PL 73, §13, cols. 1011-12 and §14, col. 1012 (left-hand column). Variant readings from Worcester, Cathedral Library F.48, ff. 161*v*9-162*r*26 and 162*v*1-14, have been supplied in the relevant footnotes; abbreviations and ligatures have been silently expanded and mere orthographical differences from the PL text have not been signalled.

The translation from Old English is my own.

First *exemplum*

Frater quidam interrogavit senem, dicens: Nomen est quod salvat, aut opus? Respondit ei senex: Opus.[1] Et ait senex: Scio enim fratrem orantem aliquando, et statim audiebatur[2] oratio ejus. Subintravit autem in animo ejus cogitatus, velle[3] videre animam peccatoris et justi, quomodo abstrahitur[4] a corpore. Et nolens[5] Deus contristare eum in desideriis[6] ejus, dum sederet in cella sua, ingressus est lupus ad eum, et tenens ore suo vestimenta ipsius fratris, trahebat eum foras. Surgens autem frater[7] sequebatur eum: lupus autem duxit eum usque ad aliquam civitatem,[8] et dimittens fratrem illum, recessit. Cum vero sederet foras civitatem in monasterio, in quo erat quidam habitans, qui habebat nomen quasi magni solitarii, ipse vero solitarius infirmus erat, exspectans horam mortis suæ. Frater[9] ille qui ibidem venerat, videbat multam præparationem[10] fieri cereorum[11] et lampadarum propter solitarium illum, tanquam per ipsum Deus[12] panem et aquam inhabitantibus[13] civitatem illam præstaret atque salvaret eos, et dicebant: Si hic finierit, simul omnes moriemur. Facta autem exitus ejus hora,[14] vidit frater ille tartaricum inferni[15] descendentem super solitarium illum, habentem tridentem igneum, et audivit vocem dicentem: Sicut anima ista non

On þære halgan bec þe hatte Uita Patrum ús segð swutellice þæt sum munuc on westene abæd æt his Drihtene þæt he moste geseon hu se synfulla mann his sawle ageafe, 7 hu se rihtwisa gewite of life. Ða nolde se Hælend him þæs forwyrnan, ac him wæs gewissod þæt he gewende to anre byrig weard, þæt he mihte geseon swutellice be þam. Wiðutan þære byrig wæs on sunderlicre wununge sum namcuð wer sittende, swylce he ancersetla wære, ac his lif wæs eall on yfel gelogod, Gode swiþe andsæte, swa swa him aeode. Se læg þa swiþe seoc ungesæliglice, andbidigende deaþes mid eallum his synna. Ða geseah se munuc þe of þam westene […] þæt an egeslic deofol of þære deorcan helle com to þam seocan menn on his forðsiþe, 7 hæfde him on handa þryfyrclede force, 7 þæt wæs glowende isen, þæt he hine mid þære acwealde. Ða com stefen ufan fram þam ælmihtigan Gode to þam sweartan deofle, þuss secgende him to: Swa swa ic most on þisum menn habban nane wununge næfre, ne minne willan on him, swa þu eac ne arige ne him ne miltsige þonne þu ut atyhst his arleasan sawle. Ða sette se deofol sona his force swylce glowende isen into his heortan 7 hine lange drehte mid […] licum witum; 7 æfter manegum tidum þone mann adydde, þæt he his

me fecit quiescere,[16] neque una hora in se, sic neque tu miserearis ejus evellens eam.[17] Deponens igitur tartaricus[18] ille quem tenebat tridentem igneum in cor solatarii[19] illius, per multas horas torquens eum, abstraxit animam ejus. Posthæc autem[20] ingressus frater ille in civitatem, invenit hominem peregrinum jacentem in platea ægrotum, non habentem qui ei curam adhiberet; et mansit cum eo die una.[21] Et cum venisset[22] hora dormitionis ejus, conspicit frater ille Michaelem et Gabrielem descendentes propter animam ejus. Et sedens[23] unus a dextris[24] et alius a sinistris ejus, rogabant animam ejus, ut egrederetur foras;[25] et non exhibat,[26] quasi nolens relinquere corpus suum. Dixit autem Gabriel ad Michaelem: Assume jam animam istam ut eamus. Cui Michael respondit: Jussi[27] sumus a Domino, ut sine dolore ejiciatur, ideoque non possumus cum vi[28] evellere eam. Exclamavit ergo Michael voce magna dicens: Domine, quid vis de anima hac, quia non acquiescet[29] nobis, ut egrediatur? Venit autem ei vox:[30] Ecce mitto David cum cithara, et omnes Deo psallentes in Jerusalem,[31] ut audiens psalmum[32] ad vocem ipsorum egrediatur.[33] Cumque descendissent omnes in circuitu animæ illius cantantes hymnos, sic exiens[34] anima illa sedit in manibus Michael, et assumpta est cum gaudio.

sawle genam swa of þam lichaman, 7 hi lædde aweg mid […] helle. Æfter þisum eode se ylca foresæda munuc oninnan þære byrig, 7 he efne þa funde ænne seocne mann […] se wæs ælþeodig mann, 7 he ana þær læg […] unge […] Godes englas him to, Michael 7 Gabriel, swa swa God […], þæt hi þæs mannes sawle sceoldon underfon, 7 sæton hi […] healfa oðþæt he sawlade; ac his sawul nolde swa ut, swylce […] wære lað út of þam lichaman. Ða cwæþ Gabrihel to Michaele […], Genim þas sawle ardlice þe to, 7 uton siþian upp. Michael him andwyrde, Us is beboden fram þam ælmihtigan Gode þæt we butan sarnysse þas sawle genimon: nu ne magon we forþig mid nanre earfoðnysse þas sawle totwæman fram þam lichaman sw […]. Ða clypode Michael upp mid mycelre stefne 7 cwæþ: Hu wylt þu, leof Drihten, embe þas sawle? Heo nele us geþafian þæt heo ut gewite. Him com þa andswaru þuss secgende of heofonum: Ic asende nu rihtes þære sawle togeanes Dauid mid his hearpan, 7 þone heofenlican dream, ealle singende, þæt seo sawul gehyre heora ealra stemna, 7 heo wyle swa ut. Hi comon þa ealle to þære anre sawle swyþe myrige singende, 7 heo swa gewát ut of þam lichaman mid þam lofsange on Michaeles handum mid mycelre blisse, 7 heo wearð upp geferod mid eallum þam heape to þam soðan Hælende, þe heo swa gelicode; 7 se munuc gewende to þam westene eft, hæfde þa gesawen swa swa he sylf gewilnode.

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[1] *opus est*; [2] *exaudiebatur*; [3] *ut uelle*; [4] *abstraheretur*; [5] *non uolens*; [6] *desiderio*; [7] *frater ille*; [8] *duxit eum ad aliquam ciuitatem*; [9] *frater igitur*; [10] *operationem*; [11] *eorum*; [12] *tamquam Deus per illum*; [13] *inabitantibus*; [14] *facta autem hora exitus ipsius*; [15] *tartarum*; [16] *requiescere*; [17] *eum*; [18] *tartarus*; [19] *tenebat igneum tridentem in corde solitarii*; [20] *posthæc*; [21] *diem unam*; [22] *ueniret*; [23] *sedentes*; [24] *ad dextris*; [25] *egrediretur*; [26] *exierat*; [27] *missi*; [28] *uiolencia*; [29] *quiescit*; [30] *uenit autem uox dicens*; [31] *et omnes psallentes hierusalem*; [32] *psalmodiam*; [33] emended from *egrediebatur*; [34] *exiliens*

Translation of the Old English Text

In the holy book that is called *Vita* [*sic*] *Patrum*, it is clearly told us that a certain monk in the desert bade his Lord that he could see how the sinful man may give up his soul, and how the righteous may depart [this] life. Then the Saviour did not want to refuse him that, and he [the monk] was instructed that he should go to a city so that he could clearly see [the departure of the soul] nearby. Without the city there was living in a remote dwelling a famous man, as if he were an anchorite, but his life was all evil-oriented, extremely repugnant to God, so that He ran away from him. Then he miserably lay very sick, awaiting death with all his sins. Then the monk saw that from the desert […] a dreadful devil came from the dark hell to the sick man at the point of his death, and he [the devil] had in his hand a threefold fork, and that was of glowing iron so that he [the devil] tormented him [the sinful man] with it. Then came a voice from above, from the almighty God to the black devil, thus talking to him: Just as I could never have any dwelling in this man, nor [did I ever have] my will [obliged] in him, so you too won't show any kindness or mercy towards him when you draw out his wicked soul. Then the devil soon set his fork as if of glowing iron into his [the sinful man's] heart and tormented him at length with […] tortures; and after many hours [he] killed the man, so that he took his soul from the body and led her away with […] to hell. After these events the same aforesaid monk went into the city and now he found a sick man […] he was a pilgrim and he lay there alone […] God's angels to him, Michael and Gabriel, just as God […], that they should receive the man's soul, and they sat [by his] side until he passed away; but his soul did not want out, such [as though] it were loathsome [to her to get] out of the body. Then Gabriel said to Michael […]: Take that soul swiftly to you and let's go up. Michael answered him: It is commanded to us by the almighty God that we should take this soul without pain: now we cannot, therefore, separate this soul from the body with any distress […]. Then Michael called out loudly up [to God] and said: What do you wish, dear Lord, about this soul? She doesn't want to oblige us so that she may get out [of the body]. To him came the answer from the heavens saying thus: I will now send to the soul of the just David with his harp and the heavenly choir, all singing, so that the soul may hear all their voices and she may want [to get] out. Then they all came to that soul, singing very merrily, and so she went out of the body with a song of praise into Michael's hands with much bliss, and she was taken up with all that host to the true Saviour, that she pleased so much; and the monk went back to the desert, when he had seen just as he himself wished.

Second *exemplum*

Dixit iterum qui¹ supra, de quodam sene, quia venit² aliquando in civitatem, ut venundaret vasa quæ operatus fuerat. Et cum explicuisset ea, contigit eum sedere ante januam cujusdam divitis, qui jam moriebatur. Sedens ergo senex ille, vidit equos nigros, et ascensores eorum nigros et terribiles, habentes singulos³ baculum igneum in manu sua.⁴ Cum ergo jam⁵ pervenissent ad januam illam, statuerunt equos suos⁶ foras, et intravit unusquisque cum festinatione. Infirmus autem ille videns eos, clamavit voce magna, dicens: Domine, adjuva me. At illi dixerunt ei: Nunc memor factus es Dei, quando tibi sol obscuratus est? quare usque in hodiernum diem non exquisisti eum, dum adhuc tibi splendor erat diei? Nunc autem in hac hora non est tibi portio spei neque consolationis.

Vs segð seo ylce boc þæt sum oðer munuc hwilon, swiþe geþogen mann on mihte 7 on gearum, com into anre byrig embe his agene neode. Ða gesæt he swa æt anes rices mannes geate, se læg þær on forðsiþe, 7 se munuc þa beheold, for þan þe he mihte geseon, for his micclum geearnungum, hu se mann geendode on his forðsiþe. Ða geseah se munuc mycelne getruman, swylce ridendra manna mid swyþe reþum anginne, […] ansynes mid eallsweartum lichaman, 7 þa hors wæron […] bæron þa deofla, be þam þe he geseah þe hit eft ðu[…] lihton þa ealle 7 inn stopon caflice, 7 ælc hæfde h […] isenne sagol on fyres gelicnysse, 7 stodon be […] þam earman seocan menn, 7 he geseah hi ealle. He clypode […] mycelre angsumnesse, Drihten, gehelp min […] deoflu: Eart þu nu gemyndig þæs ælmihtigan Godes þonne þin sunne þe is forsworcen mid ealle? Hwi noldest þu […] þa hwile þe ðu hæfdest ænig […] þe he symle […] oð his ende.

¹ *idem qui*; ² *ueniens*; ³ *singuli*; ⁴ *manibus suis*; ⁵ *cum uero*; ⁶ *equos*

Translation of the Old English Text

The same book tells us that some other monk, a man very advanced in virtue and years, once came into a city for his own business. Then he sat at the gate of a rich man, he lay there at the point of death, and then the monk [sat watching], because he could see for his great merits how the man ended on his departure. Then the monk saw a great host as if of riders with a very fierce conduct […], of countenance with an entirely black body, and the horses were […] they carried the devils, about which/whom he saw that it again […], they all dismounted and went in boldly, and each had […] an iron club in the likeness of fire and they stood […] around the poor sick man and he saw them all. He called out […] with great distress: Lord, help my […] the devil: Now you are mindful of the almighty God, when your sun has darkened to you completely? Why didn't you want […] while you had any […] that he always […] until his end.

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