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**LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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VERBAL PATTERNS IN AELFRIC'S
LIVES OF SAINTS

by

Wendy J. Duschenes

Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research of the
University of Ottawa, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Master of Arts degree in English Literature.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Wendy J. Duschenes was born February 15, 1956, in Saint John, New Brunswick. She attended Westfield School and graduated from Saint John High School in 1974. After studying at the University of Western Ontario and at the University of Ottawa, she received, in 1979, her B.A. in Honours English.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express very special thanks to my dissertation advisor, Dr. Raymond St. Jacques, Coordinator of English Undergraduate Programmes, University of Ottawa, who has been particularly helpful and encouraging to me throughout this entire project.

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INTRODUCTION

There has been much scholarly investigation of AElfric's Lives of Saints since 1890 when Walter W. Skeat first published his edition and translation of the Anglo-Saxon work found in the British Museum Cott. Ms. Julius E. vii.¹ Although thematic and historical studies have often shown how these Lives fit within an AElfrician and medieval literary context and have helped to keep these pieces prominent in AElfric's canon by debating their interesting narrative details, critics have not paid a great deal of attention to AElfric's particular use of verbs. A careful examination of the Lives of Saints reveals that AElfric deliberately chooses and manipulates verbs in such a way as to create consistent verbal patterns that contribute in an essential way to the manifesting of his Christian philosophy. This study examines several of these interesting verbal patterns for the purpose of better understanding the general view of the world and the concept of the nature of sanctity in the Lives of six female Saints.

The standard edition of AElfric's Lives remains that of

W.W. Skeat which includes not only the Old English text but also a discussion of the manuscripts and of AElfric's sources and his alliterative style. Skeat's edition contains thirty-seven hagiographical accounts attributed to AElfric.

Although Skeat recognised that only one of these, concerning St. Mary of Egypt (XXIIB), was not written by AElfric, recent critics have concluded that the Lives on the Seven Sleepers, XXIII, on St. Eustace, XXX, and on St. Eufrasia, XXXIII, are also not by AElfric.²

Early studies on AElfric are generally concerned with biography, background and sources. Notable here are the works of Dietrich, White, and Gem, Ott and Loomis.³

AElfric as a homilist is studied by Marguerite-Marie Dubois who, in 1945, discussed his sources, his method of writing and his influence on later authors.⁴ Valuable comments on the Latin influence on AElfric's style have been made by Dorothy Bethurum. She discusses source material for AElfric (518), his "theory about translation" (519) and his "improvements" on earlier authors (522) while maintaining that AElfric's "work exhibits best the degree to which English in the tenth century could approximate the effects achieved by the mannered Latin prose of the fourth and fifth centuries and still remain English, with a native syntax and native stylistic features."⁵

In her study of form, stylistic elements, traditions and purpose, Rosemary Woolf notes the influence of the Latin lives on English works. Her belief is that "the Saint's Life was extremely limited by its conventions ... But these literary limitations derive from the Latin models and do not at all reflect upon the intellectual grasp or poetic skill of the Anglo-Saxons."⁶

The Introduction to Homilies of AElfric, vol. 1, edited by John C. Pope offers invaluable information on AElfric's canon.⁷ Apart from commentary on the author's vocabulary, syntax and modal conjunctions, Pope has a long and very important section on AElfric's rhythmical prose (105-136). Briefly highlighting what critics such as Thorpe, Skeat, Stevenson, Assmann, Dietrich, Rieger, Sievers, Brandeis, Gerould and Bethurum have had to say on the question, Pope goes on to discuss exhaustively alliteration, rhythm, syntax and diction and many other metrical and stylistic controls.

An article by Clemons also contains much valuable material concerning AElfric's life and literary works.⁸ Clemons distinguishes AElfric's initial works, the Catholic Homilies, from his later Lives of Saints: the homilies were to be read in the Mass celebrating the Sundays and festivals in the church year; the Saints' Lives, on the other hand, were "narrative pieces intended for private or public

reading at any time ... The Saints represented are primarily those who had been outstanding in the history of Christianity, including Christianity in England, but whose festivals were celebrated only by monks" (181). Clemons contends that for all of his works, AElfric carefully chose his sources in order to avoid promulgating apocrypha. Clemons labels this search for authoritative material, AElfric's "stand for purity of doctrine" (184). The modern critic also points out that AElfric's "world-view" was "bounded by Creation, Fall, Redemption and Judgment" (189) and that his "work as a whole amounts to a representative account of Christian world history in its main phases" (188). In his discussion of stylistic devices, Clemons examines AElfric's use of allegory and classification (188-189), and parallelism (197). Impressed with AElfric's "grammatical regularity", Clemons briefly notes that the author distinguishes the "is, sind" forms of the verb "beon" from the "biþ, beoþ" forms of the same verb (201).

The only study dealing exclusively with verbs in AElfric's work is that of Keith A. Tandy.⁹ Tandy begins by discussing AElfric's translation of Priscian's Latin Grammar into Anglo-Saxon, demonstrating the English author's lucid understanding of the structure of language and noting that AElfric "is certainly aware, through the process of

explaining his text in English, of the fact that English, lacking morphological variation to mark aspect, must often resort to modification of periphrastic structures to express aspectual features where they are not in fact already embedded, lexically, in the signification of the verb" (187). Tandy goes on to show how AElfric distinguishes three classes of beings through his manipulation of verbs and verbal aspect.¹⁰ In discussing "The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ", which directly follows AElfric's preface to his Lives of Saints, Tandy notes that, "in explicit aspectual terms, soul-less things have punctual inception and termination and durative lives; men and angels have punctual inception at their creations, but eternal duration of their souls; God is eternally durative, with no inception and no termination" (188). While examining the Life of St. Eugenia, Tandy subdivides his second class in order to show AElfric's differentiation between pagans and Christians, which is achieved by an acute and delicate employment of verbs. For this understanding of the aspectual features of a language, Tandy particularly lauds AElfric and demonstrates how the author artistically uses his grammatical knowledge to build a narrative structure for the Lives.

This dissertation proposes to extend Tandy's interesting study by investigating AElfric's six Lives of Saints

concerning women¹¹ from the point of view of how this feature of his verbal technique functions in clarifying the differences among pagans, and Christians, especially Saints, and God. The first chapter deals with this question.

Tandy's article has provided good indicators in the study of aspect but there are a number of other paths of investigation into the subject of AElfric's verbal usage that have not yet been explored by critics. The second chapter of this thesis discusses AElfric's use of modal verbs for the purpose of expressing the nature of sanctity. Finally, AElfric's iterative employment of the verb "beon" in describing divine essence, the natural order of the universe, and the character of the Saints is examined in the last chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

AElfric's artistic use of verbal aspect in the Life of St. Eugenia has been discussed in Mr. Tandy's seminal article on the subject. The same feature occurs in AElfric's Lives of Aethelthryth, Agatha, Agnes, Cecilia, Lucy and Eugenia, and is the subject of the first part of this initial chapter. A second part of the chapter is an expansion of Tandy's ideas through an investigation of some definite recurring verbal patterns involving aspectual features in these six Lives.

In the Lives examined here God is seen as protector and comforter, healer, bridegroom, and father. His omniscience and His ability in all of these roles are defined by AElfric throughout the Lives frequently through the use of the verb "beon" as shall be discussed later. It is generally apparent that God transcends the temporal and spatial limitations that restrict other beings. He is portrayed as having an overall "plan" for the concomitant parts of the universe, as opposed to the specific goals of the Saints, for instance, and whereas the Saints must strive to reach their goals, God has only to put into effect the individual steps of His plan in a

sequence befitting His benevolent desires. The weight of His authority causes these inceptive steps to result in eternal states.

Let us first look at the kinds of statements concerning the Christian concept that God is, as Tandy puts it, "eternally durative, with no inception and no termination" (188). Such an expression is to be found in the Life of St. Agatha in the passage where Quintianus threatens to kill the Saint for having first declined his overtures (14ff), she being already "cristes maedene", 47 (the virgin of Christ) and now for refusing to bow to the pagan gods as Quintianus demands (64, 83, 106). Agatha abhors the suggestion that she perform pagan worship and while her own life is in danger, she does not fear death as she defiantly proclaims, "Crist me is for haele", 103 ('Christ is my salvation'). In contrast to mortal life and especially in contrast to the pagan gods "þe synd staenene. and treowene", 109 (which are of stone and wood), Agatha praises the Creator "þe soþlice aleofap", 110 (who truly liveth). This statement is definitive of God and is universal as it transcends time and space; that is, for Christians God "lives" eternally: He has always existed and shall exist forever.

More is learnt of the eternal and transcendent existence of God in the Life of St. Agnes where again the Saint scoffs

at idols of brass "of þam þe man wyrp wynsume fate",
133 (whereof men construct fair vessels) and of stone "mid
þam þe man straeta wyrp", 134 (whereof men make
streets). Agnes compares these statues to the home of God:

Nis na godes wunung on þam graegum stanum.
ne on aerenum wecgum. ac he wunap on heofonum.
(137-136)

God's dwelling is not in the grey stones,
nor in brazen lumps, but He dwelleth in Heaven.

Interestingly, in locating God's "wunung", AElfric
eschews any comparison between Heaven and the plastic idols
in which pagan gods were said to "dwell". Whereas the
"dwelling-place" of such idols is derived from concrete
materials, God's "wunung" is known only as "heofonum" and
cannot be described in earthly terms. This gives it an
ethereal quality and suggests that we must consider, on a
different plane, God's act of "dwelling". The latter is
expressed through the verb "wunian", which means not only "to
dwell", but also "to be". Thus, AElfric communicates the
notion that God continues to "dwell" or to simply "be" in
Heaven; there is no apparent inception or conclusion to this
habitual act or existence, and in fact this process is

presented in such a way that a reader should not relate it to his own mundane concept of time and space. Therefore, by means of the verb "wunian", the mystery of Heaven is inculcated, and the impression that God transcends temporal and spatial limitations is reinforced. This idea is furthered by a passage in the Life of St. Aethelthryth where AElfric, after explaining the conflict between Aethelthryth's desires (3, 15-16) and her husband King Ecfrid's wish to consummate their twelve year marriage (20-23), devotes a short section to a discussion of God's universal and timeless power:

Nu cwaep se halga beda þe þas boc gesette.
 þæt se aelmihtiga god mihte eaþe gedon
 nu on urum dagum þæt aepeldryþ þurh-wunode
 unge-wemmed maeden. þeah þe heo wer haefde.
 swa swa on ealdum dagum hwilon aer getimode
 þurh þone ylcan god þe aefre þurh-wunap
 mid his gecorenum halgum. swa swa he sylf behet.

(24-30)

Now the holy Beda who wrote this book
 saith that Almighty God might easily cause,
 even now in our days, that Aethelthryth should remain
 a pure maiden, though she had a husband,
 as whilom in the old days it formerly befell,

through the [grace of the] same God, who continueth ever
with His chosen saints, even as He Himself hath
promised.

AElfric opens this passage with a tribute to Bede as he does for Ambrose in the Life of St. Agnes (1-5); this is a standard motif, which is especially interesting in the case of AElhelthryth as AElfric is praising an English author who has included biographical and hagiographical details on an English saint in his Ecclesiastical History.¹² By referring to Bede AElfric brings "venerable" authority to his own account of the Saint, but he also reinforces the timeless aspect of these lessons. AElhelthryth is celebrated for her faith and her works, as well as her nationality, but her achievement is offered as a paradigm for others. Thus, it is essential that the past, AElhelthryth and Bede, be linked to the present and even to the future. This is accomplished by AElfric through his choice of a modal verb (25) and various contrasting verbal tenses (26-30). AElfric trusts Bede's two hundred year old statement that, should He desire, "se aelmihtiga god mihte eaþe gedon/... þaet aepeldryþ þurh-wunode unge-wemmed maeden. þeah þe heo wer haefde", 25-27 (Almighty God might easily cause,/... that AElhelthryth should remain/a pure maiden, though she had a

husband). The combination of modal (25) plus subjunctive verb forms (26) establishes the notion of God's power but neatly precludes the possibility of placing this idea within a temporal or spatial context. The fact that this could happen once again, "nu on urum dagum...swa swa on ealdum dagum hwilon aer getimode/purh pone ylcan god...", 26, 28-29 (even now in our days...as whilom in the old days it formerly befell,/through the [grace of the] same God...) refers to the omnipotence of God and links the past with the present without yet restricting God's protection of a virginal Saint to a specific time or locale. Next, the idea of the transcendence of God is presented through a deliberate use of the verb "purh-wunian", which may be translated as meaning, "to persevere, continue, remain": "god þe aefre purh-wunap/mid his gecorenum halgum. swa swa he sylf behet", 29-30 (God, who continueth ever/with His chosen Saints, even as He Himself hath promised). God's existence is not only exempt from the limitations of time but it is noteworthy that His dwelling place is not mentioned here as it is in the Life of St. Agnes (135-136). This is accounted for by the semantic differences between the verb "wunian" ("to dwell, remain, stay, be, occupy") as chosen for Agnes and the verb "purh-wunian" as used in AEthelthryth. Interestingly, AElfric manifests the special bond between God

and Saint also through the choice of this verb. Concerning Aethelthryth's life AElfric writes:

....aepeldrype þam engliscan maedene.
 þe waes mid twam werum and swa-peah wunode maeden.
 swa swa þa wundra geswuteliap þe heo wyrçþ
 gelome....
 and heo wearþ forgifen ecfride cynincge.
 and twelf gear wunode unge-wemmed maeden
 on þaes cynincges synscype. swa swa swutele wundra
 hyre maerpa cyþap. and hire maegþ-had gelome.

(2-4, 17-17)

....Aethelthryth, the English maiden,
 who had two husbands and nevertheless remained a virgin,
 as the miracles show which she often worketh....
 and she was given in marriage to King Ecfrið.
 And twelve years she lived in wedlock with the king,
 yet continued an unpolluted maiden; even as evident
 miracles
 often make known her sacred relics and her virginity.

Dispensing with the Preterit of "wunian" AElfric now prefers the less semantically restrictive verbal concept inherent in the verb "purh-wunian" for the purpose of expressing in the subjunctive mood the possibility of God yet again

"preserving" Aethelthryth (26-27) in order that she "remain" as one of the chosen Saints with her eternal God (29). God has promised to "continue" with His Saints (30), a vow expressed in the Preterit Indicative and inceptive of a durative situation. It is this aspect of eternal existence that links the past with the present and future and because a prime function of all Saints' Lives is to put forward basic Christian truths by way of lauding a particular Saint, this passage may not be called tangential. The hypothetical act is neither related nor restricted to a specific time or place. Thus, considering that "aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation"¹³ the impact of the aspectual features inherent in this passage is essential to an understanding of AElfric's larger view of the concomitant parts of a universe controlled by God.

Related to this notion of God's "timeless" governing of the cosmos is AElfric's employment of the verb "ricsian", "to reign, rule, hold sway, prevail". An example of AElfric's stylistic choice of this verb for narrative purposes is to be found in the Life of St. Agnes in the Saint's final speech before she is "received" by God, "for his naman gemartyrode", 245 (martyred for His Name):

Be Ic andette mid muþe. and mid minre heortan.
 and mid eallum innoþe. ic þe gewilnige.
 aenne soþne god. þe mid þinum suna rixast.
 and mid þam halgan gaste. an aelmihtig god aefre.

(236-239)

'Thee I confess with my mouth and heart,
 and with all inward affection Thee I desire,
 One true God, who reignest with Thy Son
 and with the Holy Ghost, ever One Almighty God.'

When viewing the phrase, "þe mid þinum suna rixast"
 (238), in terms of verbal tense only, it may be categorized
 as being Present Indicative third singular. If AElfric had
 related this phrase to a specific temporal or spatial
 context, then the inherent restrictions of this relationship
 would probably have us view this passage not in terms of
 aspect but in terms of tense, which Bernard Comrie labels
 "situation-external time" (5). But by the careful exclusion
 of such details which would restrict the scope of the meaning
 of this phrase, and by the inclusion of the key word,
 "aefre", 239 (ever) in describing the existence of God,
 AElfric shows that the transcendence of God may be
 demonstrated through aspect, or "situation-internal time"
 (Comrie, 5). As Tandy notes:

in English aspect is not expressed overtly,
in a morphological system, but covertly,
in modifiers, periphrastic verb structures,
and lexical meaning...

(Tandy, 181)

Thus, while the denotation of God, "aenne soþne god.
þe mid þinum suna rixast./and mid þam halgan gaste.
an aelmihtig god aefre" (238-239) is integral to the poetic
function of this Life, the use of aspect removes it from the
historical context in which Agnes' story is told and elevates
it to an independent position demanding notice of a reader.

Two additional examples of the employment of "ricsian"
are found in the Lives of St. Cecilia and St. Lucy where they
occur, in both cases, in very similar closing lines. To be
noted here for the purpose of discussing aspect is the
phrase, "on ecnysse" (Cecilia, 363; Lucy, 152):

and urbanus se papa bebyrigde hi arwurþlice.
to wuldre þam aelmihtigan þe on ecnysse rixap.

AMEN. (Cecilia, 362-363).¹⁴

And Urban the pope buried [Cecilia] honourably
to the glory of the Almighty who reigneth in eternity.

AMEN.

Ba araerde þa leoda. þær heo laeg cyrcan.
 and on hire naman gehalgodon. þam haelende to
 wurpmynte
 seþe aefre rixap on ecnyse god. AMEN.

(Lucy, 150-152)

Then the people reared a church on the spot where
 [Lucy] lay,
 and hallowed it in her name, to the Saviour's glory,
 who ever reigneth as God throughout eternity. AMEN.

In both examples the Preterit verbs, "bebyrigde" (Cecilia, 362), "araerde", "laeg", "gehalgodon" (Lucy, 150-151), support the hagiographical narrative and are followed by the final lines containing the Present Indicative "rixap" (Cecilia, 363; Lucy, 151). By their verbal tense, these latter already stand out from the historical context. Through a combination of AElfric's omission of concrete temporal and spatial indicators, his employment of the Present Indicative tense of "ricsian" and his deliberate inclusion of the phrases "on ecnyse" (Cecilia, 363) and "aefre...on ecnyse" (Lucy, 152), AElfric creates aspectual effects that give these Christian truths special prominence

and impact. As seen in the above examples and as noted by Tandy, "aspect is accessible largely through ... semantic analysis" (Tandy, 181).

A few more examples of AElfrician statements about God's timeless and habitual acts may be cited, here. We have seen how AElfric uses the Present Indicative of "purh-wunian" in the Life of St. Aethelthryth to establish God's eternally durative existence with "His chosen Saints": "þone ... god þe aefre þurh-wunap/mid his gecorenum halgum", 29-30 (God, who continueth ever/with His chosen Saints). To this proclamation may be added AElfric's observation in the penultimate line of the Life of St. Agatha:

...seo ceaster wearþ ahred
fram þaes fyres frecednyse. þurh agathen.
foreþingunge.
þam haelende to lofe. þe his halgan swa wurþaþ.
þaes him sy a wuldor on ecere worulde. AMEN.

(233-236)

...the city was delivered
from the peril of fire by Agatha's intercession,
to the praise of the Saviour, who thus honoureth
His Saints.

who judges according to the will, and knoweth all things.

Again, the Present Indicative indicates that God's perception and His judgment cannot be compared to the ability of humans, whose experience is bounded by time and space. God's might is unlimited and forms a separate category.

Another act representative of God's omnipotence is found in the Life of St. Agatha where the Saint initially fails to recognise that "sum harwencge mann", 131 (a hoar-haired man) is in fact St. Peter, sent by God. To the man who "wolde þa halgan gelacnian", 133 (wanted to heal the Saint) Agatha almost belligerently replies:

Ne gymde Ic nanes laece-craeftas naefre on minum life.
ic hæbbe minne haelend þe gehælp mid his worde.

(135-136)

'I never cared for any leechcraft in my life,
I have my Jesus who healeth me by His Word....'

This reported ability of God is not reserved for Agatha exclusively and, apart from employing the Present Indicative

for the purpose of creating animated dialogue within this Life, AElfric wishes to express that such healing can be available to all Christians at any time. Thus, through a particular verbal presentation another aspect of God seems to transcend time and space.

A final example is chosen from the Life of St. Agnes. After enumerating to her astonished earthly suitor a long list of gifts and promises (25-52) which Agnes has already received from God, her "lufiend", 27 (lover), the Saint proclaims that, "His spada ne ateoriap. ne his welan ne waniap", 55 ('His abundance never faileth, nor His wealth waneth'). The concepts of "abundance" and "wealth" (55) are used metaphorically and exemplified in earthly material possessions and sentiments comprehensible to human beings. Both concepts can represent an unbounded largesse. AElfric combines these possibilities in meaning with the signification of the negative forms of the verbs, "ateorian" and "wanian", which by definition imply copiousness, and then expresses these verbal phrases in the Present Indicative tenses, such that an impressive aspectual framework is set up through which the notion of God's transcendence is manifested.

Whereas God is depicted as One Who transcends the normal limitations of time and space, lower beings must yet exist

within their confines. How they operate on earth is aspectually shown by AElfric for the purpose of demonstrating the great difference between pagans and Christians.

Fundamentally, Christians, and Saints in particular, are portrayed as having definite goals which they steadfastly pursue and eventually reach. In their lives, there is room for development in the areas of learning, and of understanding Christianity, for instance, as they successfully pass through hardship and approach ultimate union with God. Pagans, on the other hand, generally have only lustful or murderous desires but seldom have long-term goals, and despite their pretensions to being earthly potentates, the leaders of this group are continually frustrated and stymied by the verbal arguments and the adamancy of the Saints.

Tandy contrasts the two groups in this manner:

While pagans are limited to punctual, inceptive, perfective acts, the distinction between their world of space and time and the permanent and morally defined world of Christians is more sharply drawn, and Christians are not limited to minimal agency, static postures, and abstract moral action: they appear in the world capable of action in it, and they change and

grow; of course their actions and their growth are both given moral contexts, while pagan actions have temporal and spatial contexts.

(Tandy, 189)

It appears that AElfric most commonly uses the verbal construction, "weorpan" plus the Past Participle of another verb, to express the development of a Saint from one stage to another in her life. Four seminal steps in AEthelthryth's growth, stated in this particular verbal fashion, may be first examined; the use of a variation of the same verbal formula in an example of how the Saint continued to help the sick after her death will be cited afterwards. The initial two steps in AEthelthryth's maturation appear early in the Life:

AEpeldryþ wearþ þa for-gifen anum ealdor-menn
to wife....
Se ealdor-man gewat þa þa hit wolde god.
and heo wearþ forgifen ecfride cynincge.

(8, 13-14)

AEthelthryth was given to a certain alderman

[Tondbyrht] to wife ...

The alderman died when God would,
and she was given in marriage to King Ecfrid.

The act of "giving" Aethelthryth to a man is punctual and would normally lead to a relatively durative state of affairs. Aelfric, however, mindfully indicates at the outset of this narrative that he intends to write about "þære halgan sancte aepeldrype þam englisca maedene./ þe waes mid twam werum and swa-þeah wunode maeden", 2-3 (the holy Aethelthryth, the English maiden, /who had two husbands and nevertheless remained a virgin). Hence, a reader is forewarned that Aethelthryth directs her steadfast will towards staying celibate despite these enforced circumstances. The fact that the marriage to Tondbyrht is only mentioned and the marriage to Ecfrid just briefly discussed indicates their relative unimportance in the grander aspect of Aethelthryth's Christian life. They are "tests", in a sense, of the Saint's determination and she must successfully pass them in order to enter monastic life where she will perform Christian tasks for the betterment of others before commencing the last phase of her earthly life, the approach to Heaven. From the grammatical point of view these two sentences are important to this study as they contain passive verbal constructions revealing that these

happenings occur as a result of another human being exerting his will upon a Saint.¹⁶

Having managed to avoid consummating her marriage to Ecfrid, Aethelthryth finally persuades her husband to let her enter the convent. "Ða lyfde hire se cynincg þeah þe hit embe lang waere/þaes þe heo gewilnode", 34-35 (Then the king permitted her, though it was rather long (first),/to do that which she desired). After she has spent twelve months at Coldingham (36-37), Aethelthryth is elected to a higher more responsible position:

...and heo sybpan wearþ gehadod
 eft to abudissan on elig mynstre.
 ofer manega mynecena. and heo hi modorlice heold
 mid godum gebysnungum to þam gastlican life.
 (37-40)

...and she was then, again instituted
 as abbess in the monastery of Ely,
 and [set] over many nuns, whom she trained as a mother
 by her good example in the religious life.

Although this step is again according to the will of another person, we may safely infer that the Saint's special nature

nature she is given the opportunity to expand her abilities and to lead other nuns. The Saint's earthly course in this direction is stopped by her becoming "grievously afflicted" with a tumour (50), a development inceptive of her approach towards death and a union with God.

In these four passages containing the verbal construction made up of "weorpan" plus the Past Participle of a verb, the essential steps of Aethelthryth's growth may be seen. Seen collectively they are as follows: in her early life, she is governed by others who decree her two marriages, yet she stubbornly remains celibate (8, 13-14). Receiving her veil (36) she shows such worth as to "become instituted/ as abbess" (37-38) at Ely where her celebrated life of charity and service begins. When she has achieved her earthly goals she "becomes afflicted" (50) and dies: "heo gewat of worulde mid wuldre to gode", 66 (she gloriously departed out of this world to God). This final act is punctual but unlike the passage describing her marriages (8-17), this sentence employs the Preterit Indicative "gewat" to signify an act that both punctually terminates her earthly life and allows her to reach her final goal, an "eternal life" with God. At this point in the Life AElfric's artistic style allows for him to make a variation in the noted "weorpan" formula in order to show that even after her

death, others benefit from her Saintly behaviour. It is reported by Bede, and later by AElfric in a copulative verbal construction involving "weorþan" (116), that Aethelthryth's translated body is a panacea for the "unhal":¹⁷

Baer waeron ge-haelede þurh þa halgan femnan
 fela adlige menn. swa swa we gefyrn gehyrdon.
 and eac þa þe hrepodon þaes reafes aenigne dael.
 þe heo mid bewunden waes. wurdon sona hale.
 and manegum eac fremode seo cyst micclum.
 þe heo aerest on laeg. swa swa se lareow beda
 on þære bec saede. þe he ge-sette be þysum.

(113-119)

By means of this holy woman were healed
 many sick men, as we have heard of old;
 those also who touched any part of the shroud
 in which she had been wound, were instantly cured;
 and likewise the coffin wherein she had first lain
 greatly benefited many persons, as the teacher Beda
 said in the book which he wrote concerning this holy
 woman.

AElfric employs the same verbal technique to outline the steps of development in Eugenia's life. The Saint has been educated "on woruld-wysdome../aefter greciscre upwytegunge. and laedenre getingnyse", 20-21 (in worldly wisdom/according to the Greek philosophy and Latin eloquence) when, through an unnamed source, she discovers the writings of St. Paul:

Eugenia þa þæt æpele maðden.
 wel þeah on wisdom. and on upwytegunge.
 Ða becom hyre on hand þæs halgan apostoles lar
 paules þæs maeran ealles manncynnes lareowes.
 Ða wearþ hyre mod mycclum on-bryrd
 þuruh þa halgen lare. þeah þe heo þa gyt
 hæpen waere.
 (22-27)

Eugenia then, that noble maiden,
 well increased in wisdom and in philosophy.
 Then came into her hands the holy apostle's doctrine,
 [the words of] St. Paul, the famous teacher of all
 mankind.

Then was her mind greatly aroused
 by the sacred doctrine, though she was still a heathen.

Despite her being a heathen, AElfric points out that Eugenia has the potential for growth and change. Already she has "increased" her learning in the disciplines which her father Philip values (19) but it is only when she reads the doctrine of St. Paul that she advances from the stage of accumulating the limited amount of "worldly" knowledge already realized by her contemporaries (23), to the level of being inspired to such an extent that Eugenia energetically seeks a Christian teacher:

Heo baed þa hyre faeder þæt heo faeren moste
geond his hames on alexandiscre scyre.
wolde swa cepan þære cristenra lare....
Hwaet þa Eugenia ardlice faerde.
op þæt heo becom þær þa cristenan sunge
mid mycelre blisse þus maersigende god.
Omnes dii gentium demonia. dominus autem caelos fecit.
Ealle þære haepenra godas syndon deofla.
and dryhten soþlice heofonas geworhte.
Eugenia þa mycclum wearþ onbryrd....

(28-30, 35-41)

Then prayed she her father that she might go
away from his house in the city of Alexandria;

she thus desired to seek after the Christians'

doctrine....

So then Engenia quickly journeyed

until she arrived where the Christians were singing
with great joy, thus glorifying God:

'Omnes dii gentium demonia; dominus autem celos fecit':

'All the gods of the heathen are devils,

and verily the Lord created the heavens.

Eugenia then was greatly stirred...


Again we see that AElfric has employed the phrase, "wearp onbryrd" (26, 41), but in this second instance the author has made a subtle but significant change, the recognition of which is essential to our perceiving that Eugenia is now entering a stage of deeper reflection into Christianity. In the first example of "wearp onbryrd" (26) it is "hyre mod" (her mind, spirit) that is affected; AElfric later implies that the devotion and the song of the Christian assembly have "consumed" Eugenia (41) and in the passage following this verbal construction, AElfric describes how Eugenia immediately asks her eunuch servants Protus and Jacinctus to cut her hair and disguise her as a boy:

Ba nam eugenia hi on sundor-spraece.
 het hi gebropra. and baed paet hi
 hyre faex forcurfon on waepmonna wysan.
 and mid waedum gehiwodon. swylce heo cniht waere.
 wolde þam cristenan genealecan
 on waerlicum hiwe. þaet heo ne wurde ameldod.
 Hi faerdon þa þry. and heora gefaeran forleton.
 oppaet hi becoman to þaere cristenra wununge.
 Baer hi daeges and nihtes heora drihten heroden.

(48-56)

Then Eugenia took them apart in conversation,
 called them brethren, and besought that they
 would shear her hair after the fashion of men,
 and disguise her with garments as if she were a boy.
 She desired to approach the Christians
 in the garb of a man, that she might not be betrayed.
 Then went these three, and left their companions,
 until they arrived at the Christian's abode,
 where they praised their Lord by night and by day.

This passage exemplifies how Eugenia, having been "greatly
 stirred" by the Christians' behaviour (41), motivates herself
 and inspires others, namely her servants "þa waeron



gelaerede on leden. and on grecisc./mid eugenian mid
woruld-licra lare", 44-45 (who had been instructed in Latin
and in Greek, /together with Eugenia, in worldly doctrine) but
who also lack Christian training. The fact that the eunuchs
obey her entreaties is stated in Eugenia's later statement to
Philip explaining her disguise:

Hwaet þa eugenia seo aeþele faemne.
cwaep þaet heo wolde hi sylfe be-diglian.
and criste anum hyre claennysse healdan.
on maegþhade wuniende. mannum uncuþ.
and forþy underfaenge aet fruman þa gyrlan.
waer-lices hades. and wurde ge-efsod.

(227-232)

Well then, Eugenia, the noble woman,
said that she had desired to keep herself secret,
and to preserve her purity to Christ alone,
living in virginity, unknown to man,
and therefore at the first had assumed the robes
of a man's garb, and had had her hair shorn.

AElfric again employs the "weorþan" formula to describe
this important step for Eugenia of having her hair cut in a

man's style in order to enter a monastery (232). Because this is a past event being recalled, AElfric suitably makes use of the Pluperfect tense but had this statement been written in the Preterit, it could easily have appeared in the earlier passage (48-56) as it describes a necessary and initiatory step in Eugenia's Christian development. AElfric also enunciates that Eugenia now has a definite desire "to approach the Christians" ("wolde...", 52) and her movement towards Christianity is graphically illustrated by her departure away from "heora gefaeran", 54 (their companions) and in the direction of "paere cristenra wununge", 55 (the Christians' abode). The act of changing environments is at once a purgation from life in a heathen city, "forpan philippus aflygde pa cristenan/of alexandrian. ealle on aer", 33-34 (seeing that Philip drave away the Christians/from Alexandria beforehand, all of them) and also an inauguration into the apparently boundless Christian "world". Eugenia and her servants make a geographical and spiritual progression towards a preferred destination ("Hi faerdon pa pry.../oppaet hi becoman...", 54-55) and are at last able to commence the Christian worship (56) for which they will finally be martyred (379, 414).

After baptism Eugenia secretly joins the monastery and regularly carries out service "purh modes lipnesse. and

mycelre eadmodnesse", 96 (with gentleness of mind and great humility). In describing her maturity in devotion AElfric contrasts Eugenia's earlier state of affairs as a heathen to her new Christian life through the parallel use of the verb "þeon", "to succeed, thrive". Formerly Eugenia "wel þeah on wisdom and on upwytegunge", 23 (well increased in wisdom and in philosophy), the worldly arts, until she read St. Paul which lead to her mind becoming "greatly aroused", 26 (Ða wearþ hyre mod mycclum on-bryrd"). Once Eugenia has made the decision to become Christian, "woruld-wysdome", 20 (worldly wisdom) is substituted by "lare. . þaes rihtan geleafan", 98 (the doctrine of the true faith) and Eugenia again undergoes a profound change which AElfric describes metaphorically:

Heo þeah on lare. þaes rihtan geleafan.
and on godcundlicum gewrytum mid godum wyllan.
and wearþ awend of wulfe to sceape.

(98-100)

She increased in the doctrine of the true faith,
and in divine writ, with a good will,
and was changed (as it were) from a wolf to a sheep.

Three years later the brethren at Eugenia's monastery recognise her great conversion and elect the Saint as their abbot, "for hyre arfaestan life./and nyston þæt heo waes wimman swa þeah", 119-120 (for her devout life,/and knew not that she was a woman all the while). Like all Saints, Eugenia must tackle a serious conundrum at some point. AElfric outlines it:

Ða wearp þæt maeden mycclum hoh-ful.
 hu heo aefre waeras wissian sceolde.
 Ne dorste swa þeah hi ealle gedrefan.
 and hyra geþeahht forseon. ac faeng to þam hæde.

(121-124)

Then became the maiden extremely anxious
 how she was ever to direct men;
 yet durst she not offend them all
 and despise their election, but accepted the office.

This may be a jibe at society by an amused author. AElfric uses the verbal construction, "wearp...mycclum hoh-ful" (121), to stress the "extremely anxious" state of mind at which Eugenia, disguised as a man, has just arrived. The verbal technique emphasizes her mood more than it does her

supposed reason for being anxious. The hypothetical question of whether or not she would be able to lead men, and not just fellow Christians, is skillfully conveyed by a modal verb but no direct answer is given the reader. Instead, AElfric goes on to the problem of tact and the maintaining of peace in the monastery ("gedrefan", 123) and the possibility of inexcusably disdain the brethren's counsel (124). AElfric has set up the problem in three and a half lines (121-124a): the first two lines employ the "weorpan" construction to explain Eugenia's transition from a contented observant Christian who, "þurh halige maegnu. þam haelende ge-cwaemde", 97 (by her holy virtues pleased the Saviour) to one in a state of anxiety and indecision (121-122). The factors which she considers are given in the next one and a half lines in a "ne durran" verbal construction (123-124a), and finally, in a crisp one half line statement conveying in the Preterit Indicative Eugenia's perfective and punctual act (124b), AElfric quashes any fears that this Saint would not be able to perform such an office. He quickly confirms her superior ability:

Hwaet þa eugenia hym eallum gebysnode
 mid goddre gedrohtnunge. to godes þeowdome.
 and mid carfulnyssse. þonne hyred gewissode.

(125-127)

Well then, Eugenia set an example to them all
with good devotion to God's service,
and with carefulness governed the community.

Eugenia is also acknowledged by "se aelmihtiga wealdend", 128
(the Almighty Ruler) Who grants her powers to heal the sick
(128-132).

Eugenia spends an active life, converting heathens to
Christianity but is eventually arrested by the pagan emperor,
Severus. The steps persistently leading to her eventual
martyrdom may be easily linked by observing the remaining
sentences containing the "weorpan" construction. At first,
she is apprehended:

AEfter bysum wearp ge-leaht seo geleaffulla
eugenia.
and to þam haepenan temple getogen mid ge-preate.
þæt heo þære gyðenan diane. godes wurpmynt
gebude.

(383-385)

After this the faithful Eugenia was caught,
and dragged, with threatening, to the heathen temple,
that she might offer the worship, due to God,
to the goddess Diana.

When she utterly refuses to obey Severus' orders, Eugenia is tortured and eventually led to prison: "Heo wearþ þa gebroht. into blindum cwearterne", 400 (Then she was thrown into a dark prison). While there, God visits the Saint to tell her, "þa scealt cuman to me.../...þu bist on heofonum gebroht", 410-411 (shalt thou come to me.../...thou shalt be brought to Heaven) and according to his prediction, Eugenia is killed and "becomes" martyred:

Ða com se cwaellere. on cristes akenned-nysse dæge.
 asend fram þam casere. and he þaet mæden acwealde.
 Heo wearþ þa gemartyrod...

(412-414)

Then came the executioner, on the day of Christ's birth,
 sent from the emperor, and he killed the maiden;
 so was she martyred...

All of these steps have been necessary in Eugenia's aspiring bid for Heaven. Thus we may see how Aelfric employs the verbal construction involving "weorþan" plus the Past Participle of another verb to indicate the successive stages in the life of a Saint who performs Christian tasks on earth in preparation for her eventual union with God. The examples ..

of this verbal structure are not as plentiful in the other Lives, which are also not as lengthy as the Life of St. Eugenia, but they nevertheless assist in creating a narrative structure while describing her development.¹⁸

A quintessential difference between pagans and Christians is lucidly demonstrated by AElfric through a brilliant and truly antithetical usage of this "weorpan" construction. Whereas it reveals the developmental phases in a Saint's life, the same verbal structure marks the very restricted and negative movements that a pagan is capable of making. Pagans are represented in these Lives by corrupt and immoral leaders who virulently misuse their judicial prerogative and therefore abuse their supposed position as "representative" of God on earth. While Saints choose words as their weapons when jealous authorities raise contention, such pagan commanders are portrayed by AElfric as being thoroughly deficient in verbal battle. Saints not only present Christian dogma and anti-pagan rhetoric in their speeches but they also entirely stymie and frustrate their pagan opponents who resort to exerting physical violence and torture. Both their attempts at argument and their exasperated and malevolent recourse indicate their regression in direct proportion to the Saint's development and ascendancy. Whereas AElfric traces the pattern of progression

in a Saint's life through the "weorpan" construction, to demonstrate the course of deterioration in a pagan's existence he creates an alternate verbal structure where a phrase containing "weorpan" plus a Past Participle is frequently associated with another phrase involving the verb "hatan", "to command, order". Although this pattern is used by AElfric in all of the Saint's Lives except that concerning Aethelthryth,¹⁹ the Life which seems to best illustrate it is the Life of St. Lucy. The pagan contender is Paschasius, "þam aepelborenan cnihte./þe awogode lucian.../arleas haepen-gilda...", 57-59 (the nobly-born youth/who was wooing Lucy.../an impious idolater), and in this case is not even an actual ruler but rather an impetuous young man from a noble family who assumes the haughty position of a commander. The above quotation is our introduction to the character of Paschasius; his first move consists in an attempt to persuade Lucy to perform pagan worship (59-60). The Saint's reply is that her offering to the Christian God has been to help others; but she notes:

nu ic wylle me sylfe him soþlice geoffrian.

forþan ic leng naebbe. hwaet ic on his lacum aspende.

'Now I desire verily to offer to Him myself,
because for sometime I have had nothing to spend in
his service.'

This angers Paschasius and although "hi spraecon fela", 68 (they spake much) the suitor considers that the threat of a beating for her is his viable choice of weapon in this strife if she will not be silent (69). To this she confidently answers, "paes lifigendan godes word/ne maƷon geswican. ne for-suwode beon", 70-71 (the words of the living God,/cannot be suppressed, nor but to silence). While their dispute continues, Paschasius only becomes more and more angry as Lucy manages to proclaim a number of essential Christian truths concerning the relationship between God and His Saints (73-75, 79-80) and the omniscience of God and the protection He offers his followers (84-93). Paschasius is again infuriated by the woman he has originally set out to marry and therefore suggests a suitable punishment for her insubordinate behaviour:

...Ic hate þe ardlice laedan.
to þæra myltestrena huse. þæt þu þinne
maegþ-had forleose.
þæt se halga gast þe fram fleo. þonne þu
fulllice byst gescynd.

(81-83)

Then [became]²⁰ the impious Paschasius perplexed,
 and [commanded] false magicians be brought unto him,
 that they with their enchantments might overpower the
 virgin of God.

But when they sped not at all, he commanded oxen to be
 harnessed to her,
 but they could not even so shake the maiden.

Paschasius arrives at such an angry phase that he resorts to his assumed prerogative and "commands" the "deceitful ones" (104) to conquer Lucy; next, he unsuccessfully attempts to remove her with oxen (106). These steps are expressed by AElfric in this verbal pattern: "Ða wearp ge-ancsumod se arleasa pascasius/and het... gelangfan.../pa het he spannan..." (103-104, 106). Paschasius' failure to overpower Lucy presumably causes him an embarrassing setback and when Lucy's speech (111-115) again stymies him, he is driven into yet another regressive step which AElfric recounts in a similar verbal pattern:

Ða wearp se arleasa geancsumod eft swiþor on mode.
 and het mycel ad ontendan on ymb-hwyr[f]te paes
 maedenes.
 and mid piþe hi besp[r]encgan. and mid spyrcendum ele.
 (116-118)

The law eventually intervenes and Paschasius is expected to justify his crimes:

Mid þam þe heo þis spræc. wearþ se man-fulla
pascasius
 mid racenteagum gebunden. and beforan þam maedene
gelaed...

He wearþ þa gebroht on bendum to rome.
 and þa witan heton hine beheafdian.

þaþa he ne mihte his man-daeda betellan.

(139-140, 1143-145)

Whilst [Lucy] thus spake, the wicked Paschasius
 [became] bound with chains, and led before the
virgin....

He [became] then brought in bonds to Rome,
 and the senators commanded him to be beheaded,
 when he could not excuse his evil deeds.

•It is interesting that AElfric now utilizes this "weorþan...
 hatan" verbal construction in showing that justice eventually
 allots Paschasius execution. While Lucy has thwarted his
 every intimidation and his only "progression" has been
 towards utter fury, others, such as "his magas" (125) and now
 "þa witan" (144), have relieved him of his "borrowed"

powers and the final "command" is a fatal one for Paschasius (144).

In the Life of St. Lucy we have an example of one of the ways in which AElfric describes verbally the very limited scope of pagans, as they are represented by Paschasius. Their steps are not just punctual and perfective but seem also to be impetuous, regressive and likely to be self-destructive. Their "goals", if they can be called that, tend to be concerned with lustful or short-termed activities. In contrast, Saints eagerly and successfully pursue their moral interest in helping others while preparing for their eventual goal of martyrdom and union with God. Their acts have a more durative sense than do those of the pagans. Christians are capable of change and development and the important moves that they make along their goal-oriented pathway are frequently described by AElfric in terms of the "weorpan" verbal pattern. The regressive steps of the pagans, on the other hand, can be seen in a recurring AElfrician verbal construction which combines "weorpan" and "hatan" to convey the misuse of power by pagan leaders. God is seen to transcend time and space and thus is aspectually in a completely different class from either Christians or pagans.

CHAPTER TWO

As we have seen in the previous chapter AElfric presents artistically the manifold differences between God, pagans, and Christians. Within the class of Christians, Saints have a special position which is again revealed verbally by AElfric, who artistically employs modal verbs in his discussion of the behaviour of a Saint in a world dominated by natural, and supernatural or spiritual laws. While natural laws are manifest on earth and are indisputable, spiritual laws are inconcrete but equally unalterable. Christians are well aware of these spiritual laws and recognise a moral compunction to abide by them in everyday life. Considering this obligation, AElfric defines an important aspect of the nature of sanctity by showing the immutable character of each Saint as she is governed by these laws. Just as nature is governed by laws, the Saint's behaviour must be ruled by the equally uncontrovertible essence of sanctity. Here, it is not a question of desire or conscious decision on the part of the Saint, as we find elsewhere with AElfric's use of "woldon", to be discussed

later, but it is a matter of a certain reality pertaining to the moral nature of the Saint. To manifest this "natural" inclination obligatory to saintliness, AElfric employs the verb "magan" in its various forms, and in so doing links the laws of nature with the essence of sanctity through the concept of immutability.

An example of AElfric's use of "magan" is given in the Life of St. Agatha where the disheartened Aphrodosia opines to Quintianus that Agatha's faith can never be "extinguished" (31):

Stanas magon hnexian. and paet starce isen
on leades gelicnysse. aerpan þe se geleafa mæge
of agathes breoste. beon aefre adwaesced.

(29-31)

'Stones may soften, and hard iron
become like lead, or ever the faith
in Agatha's breast can be extinguished.'

Aphrodosia has entirely failed (34) in her mission to persuade the young woman to marry "se cwealm-baere ehtere", 3 (the murderous persecutor) and in order to illustrate her frustration over such an impossible task, Aphrodosia (the

"fulum wife", 9) compares the steadfast faith of Agatha to the hard and immutable quality of stones and iron (29-31). By using "magan" to describe the hypothetical possibility of either stones melting and iron turning to lead (29, 30), or Agatha's Christian devotion being diminished (30, 31), AElfric has placed these potentialities on a par; in other words, if one event cannot happen, the prospect of the other must necessarily be precluded. Just as a cataclysm in nature ("magon", 29) would be required before the essence of stones or iron could be altered, some kind of moral cataclysm would have to occur ("maege", 30) before the nature of Agatha would change.²⁴ What appears to be an hyperbole in this scoffing remark by Aphrodosia is actually provided by AElfric in order to illustrate the link between natural and supernatural laws. Aphrodosia has, at least, a limited perception of natural laws and although she perceives the steadfastness of Agatha, she does not comprehend that this is an essential element of sanctity having to do with morals. Whereas all Christians have knowledge of spiritual laws, Saints accept them so fully that any transgression would defy the nature of sanctity. What AElfric expresses then in his use of the modal "magan" is that, according to the moral nature of Agatha, and of all Saints, in fact, certain worldly events are simply not possible.

The correspondence between stones and faith which Aphrodosia expresses in physical terms has a counterpart in an earlier statement delivered by Agatha "to pam yfelan teame", 18 (wicked team):

Eower word syndon winde gelice.
 ac hi ne magon afyllan min faestraede gapanc.
 þe is gegrund-stapelod.

(19-21)

'Your words are like wind,
 but they cannot defile my steadfast will,
 which is grounded immutably.'

The threats and enticements of Aphrodosia are compared to the intangible and ephemeral wind: they exist on earth only, sweep past Agatha, and have not the power to in any way influence the Saint. Her resolve, "which is grounded immutably" (21), is founded on central Christian premises such that Aphrodosia's fleeting words literally cannot destroy her faith. The significance of the modal phrase, "hi ne magon afyllan" (20), cannot be fully rendered by Skeat's translation "they cannot defile"; this strong emphasis on the moral nature of a Saint through AElfric's use of the verb "magan" compels us to consider other instances of AElfric's

use of "magan" as an indication that AElfric is defining yet another characteristic of the essence of sanctity.

We mark AElfric's use of "magan" again in the Life of St. Agnes to signify that Agnes' saintly nature precludes her from accepting any earthly suitor (85-86). With an almost life-long devotion to God, to whom she considers herself espoused (41), it is perfectly understandable that she "could not be allured" (85) from her "husband" for the sake of marrying the son of Sempronius:

Ac þaet godes maeden ne mihte beon beþaet
 þurh aenige lyffetunge fram hire leofan drihtne.
 ne heo naes afyrht. for his þeow-racan.

(85-87)

But the virgin of God could not be allured
 by any flattery from her beloved Lord,
 neither was she afraid because of his threatening.

This is not a matter of determinism but, rather, this statement specifies the kind of moral nature under which Agnes, like Agatha, operates. Though Sempronius should first use flattery and then intimidation (83-84), the inevitable outcome is failure (94); and yet he totally misconstrues her moral standpoint -- founded on her very nature -- as being

obstinacy.

After he has presented this aspect of Agnes' character, AElfric has the Saint express her personal convictions in such a way as to lend credence to this concept of a governing moral nature:

ic for-seah þinne sunu þe soþlice is man.
and ic nates hwon ne maeg on his neb-wlite beseon
for mines cristes lufe hu maeg ic him to teonan.
to þam deadum arlicnyssum. me ge-eadmedan.

(103-106)

'I refused thy son, who truly is a man,
and I can in no wise regard the beauty of his
countenance
for the love of my Christ; how can I, to His dishonour,
humble myself to the dead image?'

She has refused marriage to a man as she wishes to preserve her virginity (58-62). For the love of Christ she has made a troth (56), and according to her moral nature, it is out of the question that she even regard another suitor, as in the case of Sempronius' son.

God figures as Saviour (97) as well as bridegroom to Agnes, and as a result of her nature, it is out of the realm

of her understanding that she should worship a pagan goddess. Loving Christ, she has rejected a living man; how can she then, she asks, worship a "dead image"? (106) The use of a question, here, marks the incredulity of Sempronius' suggestions; and with AElfric's employment of "magan", we may see the utter impossibility of Agnes reacting differently. Her position has been foreshadowed in an earlier speech in which she says:

Ne maeg ic him to teonan operne geceosan.
and hine forlaetan. þe me mid lufe beweddode.

(40-41)

'I may not to His dishonour choose another
and forsake Him who hath espoused me by His love.'

Later, in the Life of St. Agatha, we find a further example of the modal verb "magan" being used by the Saint herself to express the immutable nature of a Saint:

Swa ic lust-fullige on þisum lapum witum....
Ne maeg min sawl beon gebroht mid blysse to heofonum.
butan min lichama beo on þinum bendum genyrwod.
and fram þinum cwellerum on þinum copsum agrapod.

(116, 119-21)

'So greatly I rejoice in these painful torments...
 My soul cannot be brought with joy to Heaven
 except my body be cramped in thy bonds,
 and by the executioners be gripped in thy fetters.'

Agatha is reciting a spiritual law concerning martyrdom, the proviso of which is impressed upon us by AElfric's use of "ne maeg..." (119): the event of the Saint's soul passing from earth to Heaven at the will and discretion of God cannot possibly happen until an earthly opponent plays the murderous role to which Agatha must react with fervour. Her joyful reaction and her desire to reach Heaven through martyrdom are integral to her nature; and thus we find that the importance of the torments lies not only in their being mandatory, but in the fact that, once fulfilled, Agatha is that much closer to her destination. This gives her strength to endure the tortures set by Quintianus, and even allows her, to the chagrin of the persecutor, to greet them "mid blysse" (119).

AElfric similarly expresses other aspects of the essence of sanctity in the Life of St. Lucy. Here he is concerned with the mind or will of the guiltless Christian versus the command of the guilty, and he points out that God recognises the innocence of his Chosen:

Lucia andwyrde þus. ne biþ aenig gewemmed.

lichama to plihte. gif hit ne licap þam mode.
 Deah þu mine hand ahebbe. to þinum haepengilde.
 and swa purh me geoffrige mines unwilles.
 ic beo þeah unscyldig. aetforan þam soþan gode.
 sepe demþ be þam willan. and wat ealle þincg.
 gif þu me unwilles gewemman nu dest.
 me biþ twifeald claennysse. geteald to wuldre.
 Ne miht þu gebigan minne willan to þe.
 swa hwaet swa þu minum lichaman dest. ne maeg
 þaet belimpan to me.

(84-93)

Lucy thus answered, 'no one's body is dangerously
 polluted, if it pleases not the (possessor's) mind,
 Though thou shouldst lift up my hand to thine idol,
 and so, by my means, offer against my will,
 I shall still be guiltless in the sight of the true God,
 who judges according to the will, and knoweth all
 things.

If now, against my will, thou causest me to be
 polluted,
 a twofold purity shall be gloriously imputed to me.
 Thou canst not bend my will to thy purpose;
 whatever thou mayest do to my body, that cannot happen
 to me.'

Through a similar employment of the verb "magan", Lucy flatly denies that her Christian point of view may be altered. She imputes to the true believer the ability to remain pure even when physically forced to imitate pagan worship or when sexually violated. The goodness of Lucy places her amongst the Chosen and she professes that by her moral nature, despite whatever may be done to her body, it cannot happen that her will become bent. Just as the narrator, and Agnes and Agatha have already made known, sanctity includes an immutable moral nature.

AElfric has shown that Saints, by virtue of their goodness, belong to God's select class, the Chosen; but he also wishes to show us that they are yet a part of humanity and of everyday life. They have desires and are able to consciously make choices. By exploring this human aspect, AElfric succeeds, among other things, in fleshing out the character sketches and in rendering the Lives more applicable to the ordinary experience of the reader. Whereas AElfric has chosen "magan" for revealing moral nature, he uses "woldon" for discussing choice. A good example of this moral usage is to be found in St. Agnes, where AElfric sets up an effective verbal pattern that clearly exhibits his poetic artistry. The virtues of St. Agnes are given in the introduction to this Life (6-13); next, by indirect speech we

learn of the material riches promised by the son of Sempronius if Agnes will agree to marry him:

Da brohte se cniht to þam claenan maedene.
deorwurpa gimmas. and woruldlice glencga.
and behet hire welan gif heo wolde hine.

(21-23)

Then the youth brought to the pure maiden
precious gems and worldly ornaments
and promised her riches if she would [have] him.

Agnes is seen, by the other characters and by the narrator as well, to have a choice in this matter. The conjunctive "gif" (23) divides this sentence into its two constituent parts, one mentioning the youth's offerings, and the other, the conditional agreement of Agnes. This use of conditional places great emphasis on the necessary compliance of Agnes, as directed by her desire. Whereas in the previous discussion it was Agnes' moral nature that prevented her from being "allured" from her lover (85), here the Saint is given an opportunity to exercise her will. With such accent on the possibility of choice, it would seem more appropriate to translate the "wolde" in "gif heo wolde hine" as signifying, "if she wanted (or desired) him".

AElfric wonderfully balances this conditional clause using the positive form of "wolde" (23), with Agnes' negative response to the proposal, as shown through the use of the negative form of the modal verb:

Ða sende se faeder sona to þam maedene.
 þæt ylce aerende. þe his sunu aer ahead.
 ac agnes wipsoc. saede þæt heo nolde
 þaes aerran bryd-guman aepelan truwan.
 aefre gewemman þurh aenig wedd.

(69-73)

Then the father sent straightway to the maiden
 the same errand which his son had before announced;
 but Agnes refused, saying that she would not
 by any marriage, ever stain
 the noble troth of the first bridegroom.

After the first marriage proposal (23), Agnes iterates the virtues of her lover and discounts any possibility of committing herself to another (27-62).²⁵ When pressed again, she forthrightly refuses (71). The balance found in the larger context between the two sections is underlined in this poetic line: AElfric strengthens the unquestionable force of Agnes' resolve by using the positive verb "wipsoc"

(71), and then reveals the Saints' desire not to "ever stain/
 the noble troth of the first bridegroom" (72-73). As the two
 marriage proposal occasions are parallel, we may translate
 the negative version of "wolde" as concerned with desire:
 "but Agnes refused, saying that she did not want/by any
 marriage, to every stain/the noble troth of the first
 bridegroom". When Agnes is perceived to have desires and the
 ability to make conscious decisions, the human aspect of the
 Saint is greatly emphasized. These paired indirect
 statements have an unquestionably "true" ring about them, by
 virtue of their being delivered by the narrator. To
 complement the balanced due, AElfric has added a final
 sentiment expressing the desire of Agnes, in her own words,
 as only she could truly know it:

Ic bletsige þe faeder bodigendlic god.
 þæt ic þurh fyr unforht to þe faran mot....
 Ðe Ic andette mid muþe. and mid minre heortan.
 and mid eallum innoþe. ic þe gewilnige.

(232-233, 236-237)

'I bless Thee, Father, who art to be proclaimed God,
 that I may pass unfearful through the fire to Thee....
 Thee I confess with my mouth and heart,
 and with all inward affection Thee I desire.'

AElfric has ordered his verbs as follows: "wolde" (23, the marriage proposal); "nolde" (71, the refusal); and "gewilnige" -- a conceptually-related though non-modal verb expressing Agnes' desire and the actualizing of her passion. AElfric establishes a balanced verbal pattern that provides a narrative structure for the Life of St. Agnes and demonstrates his artistic use of the modal verb "woldon" in revealing the humanity of the Saints.

CHAPTER THREE

The nature of beings in the universe is a major concern in AElfric's writings. At certain points, AElfric isolates a character from a Life and carefully defines the essence of that being -- either as an entity unto itself or as one individual in relation to another. These descriptive statements have a declamatory character which captures the attention of the reader. AElfric makes use of the verb "beon" for such articulations, and presents his information in such a way that it appears to be indisputable; it is aimed at the reader for his edification and acceptance, rather than his intellectual response. The pedagogical result of combining this rhetorical tone with seemingly uncontroversial utterances through the use of "beon" is that a reader notes and remembers what AElfric has indicated to be essential about various beings.

AElfric carefully chooses the tense of "beon" which will best endorse his artistic intentions. When using the Present Indicative form "is", AElfric is describing a being or

situation which is not fixed or limited temporally or spatially; that is, it has an eternal or universal quality. This tense is most powerfully employed in sentences concerning God. The Life of St. Cecilia offers an excellent example of this. On her wedding night, Cecilia argues the might of God and the supreme merit of virginity (31-37). Valerian, in turn, is frightened but intrigued enough to pursue the issue, and demands to scrutinise God's angel before he will be convinced of the verity of Christianity (38-40). Pope Urban receives Valerian and prays, "þone aelmihtigan god. þaet he for his arfaestnysse/þam cnihte gewissode. þaet he wurde geleafful", 54-55 (Almighty God, of His clemency, /to direct the youth that he might become a believer). The decisive factor that beckons Valerian to Christianity is the delivery, by the petitioned Angel, of a "golden writing" (57):

Efne þa faerlice aetforan heora gesihþum
 com godes engel mid anum gyldenum gewrite.
 and valerianus feoll afyrht to eorþan.
 þa araerde hine se engel and het hine raedan
 þa gylden an stafas þe him god tosende.
 On þam gewrite waeron þas word gelogode.

Unūs deus. una fides. unum baptisma.
 An aelmihtig god is. and an geleafa.
 and an fulluht. and he feng to raedene.

(56-64)

Lo then! suddenly before their sight
 came God's angel with a golden writing,
 and Valerian fell affrighted to the earth.
 Then the angel raised him, and bade him read
 the golden letters which God had sent to him.
 In the writing were set these words,
 Unus deus, una fides, unum baptisma:
 'There is one Almighty God, and one Faith,
 and one Baptism.' And he took and read.

A special credence is given this message because of the
 magnificence and otherworldly quality of the golden letters.
 AElfric effectively employs "is" in order to profess
 indisputably the existence of Almighty God (63-64). Valerian
 is deeply impressed by the supernatural presentation and this
 climactic moment in his life impels him to convert to
 Christianity. In response to the statement, "An aelmihtig
 god is. and an geleafa./and an fulluht" (63-64), Valerian
 answers ingenuously with a question which both displays the
 awe felt by an innocent, and emphasizes the incontestable

quality of the "golden writing":

Valerianus andwyrde. hwaet bep aefre soplecre
oppe to gelyfenne aenigum lifigendum menn.

(66-67)

Valerian, answered; 'What can ever be truer
or more to be believed in by any living man?'

Though the tangible manifestation of God's existence in this form ("anum gyldenum gewrite", 57) is ephemeral, the truth of this existence is eternal and universal.

The Saint's enduring faith in this doctrine is seen through their own words. Their personal protestations of the reality of the One for whom they are finally martyred, lend a particular authentication to such statements. AElfric again describes God, in the Life of St. Cecilia, for example, by exploiting the Present Indicative of "beon". To Tibertius' question, "AEnne god gebodiap./and hu-meta namast þu nam-cuplice pry godas", 161-162 ('One God they preach,/and how namest thou three Gods as if known by name?'), Cecilia answers:26

...An god is aelmihtig
on his maegen-þrymnysse wunigende. Ðone

arwurþiap we cristenan
 aefre on þrynnysse. and on soþre annysse.
 for-þan-þe faeder. and sunu. and se frofer gast
 an gecynd habbaþ. and aenne cyne-dom.
 swa swa on anum men synd soþlice þreo þing.
 andgit. and wylla. and gewittig gemynd.
 þe anum men gehyrsumiap aefre togaedere.²⁷

(163-170)

... 'there is one God Almighty,
 dwelling in His Majesty; Him we Christians worship
 for ever in Trinity, and in very Unity,
 because Father and Son and the Comforting Spirit
 have one nature and one kingdom;
 even as in one man are verily three things;
 understanding, and will, and conscious memory,
 which together ever belong to one man.'

We have already seen the rhetorical and semantic potency of the verb "beon" in the golden message professing the actuality of God (63); here, AElfric has Cecilia echo this presentment by plying the same verbal conjugation and simply altering the word order (163). At the same time, he has her relate God and man through the concept of Trinity, and by his manipulation of "beon" for the existence of God (163) and the

"composition" of man (168).

At other times, the narrator prefers to speak in his own voice using the same verbal construction with the same results. For example, the narrator opens the Life of St. Aethelthryth in this way:

AEpeldryþ wearþ þa for-gifen anum ealdor-menn
to wife.
ac hit nolde se aelmihtiga god þaet hire maegþ-had
wurde
mid haemedede adylegod. ac heold hi on claennysse
forþan þe he is aelmihtig god and maeg don eall
þaet he wile.
and on manegum wisum his mihte geswutelap.

(8-12)

Aethelthryth was given to a certain alderman [Tondbyrht]
to wife;
but Almighty God would not that her virginity should be
destroyed through cohabitation but preserved her in
continence,
because He is God Almighty and can do all that He will,
and in divers ways showeth His might..

Three important concepts are presented here: the indisputable existence of God Almighty (11a); His power to accomplish, according to His desire (11b); and the fact that His "mihte" is manifested in many different ways (12). All three ideas are essential to an understanding of Christianity, and the corresponding truth of the two latter (11b, 12) is dependent upon the existence of God; thus AElfric chooses the Present Indicative tense "is", which has an apparent resonance of the irrefutable, for his initial statement. In fact, the statement in 11.11-12 is gnomic in form as AElfric is iterating what Christians consider a self-evident truth.

According to gnomic characteristics, freedom for discussion of such utterances is not even considered. The use of "is" in a gnomic statement delivered by the authoritative narrator, then, renders this concept indubitable and also indicates to the reader the eminence of the idea within the Life.²⁸

The examples of AElfric's use of "beon", as exemplified in the words of three radically different speakers, Angel, Saint and narrator, provide a general perception of the existence and magnificence of God. Yet a more specific and personal view of Christ enjoys the same dynamic quality through the use of the Present Indicative "is" in the Life of St. Agatha, for example. After Agatha refuses the advances

of Quintianus, the persecutor threatens to "gram-lice...
 fordo", 83 (cruelly destroy her) if she will not sacrifice to
 the heathen gods.²⁹ She again angers Quintianus by
 disobeying his command:³⁰

pa cwehte se dema his deoflice heafod.
 and het hi gebringan on anum blindum cwearterne.
 and het paet heo sceolde hi sylfe bebencan.
 hu heo mihte aet-windan pam waelhreowum tintregum....
 Hwaet pa on mergen se manfulla dema
 het Agathen gelaedan to his lapan andwerdnysse.
 and befran hwaet heo smeade be hyre
 gesundfulnysse.³¹

Agathes him cwaep to. Crist me is for haele.

(91-94, 100-103)

Then the judge shook his fiendish head,
 and commanded to bring her into a dark prison,
 and bade that she should bethink herself
 how she might escape from the cruel tortures...
 So then in the morning the wicked judge
 bade Agatha to be brought into his hateful presence,
 and enquired what she had devised for her safety,
 Agatha said to him, 'Christ is my salvation.'

Against the threats of Quintianus, "se dema" (91), Agatha relies entirely upon a force, which is for pagans intangible or non-existent. Mention of the Saint's heroic attitude is conspicuously placed by AElfric between his differentiation of two separate concepts of torment: "þam ecum wítum", 96 (the everlasting torments) of which Agatha warns Quintianus and those tortures of the earthly transient type, "þisum lapum wítum" 116 (these painful torments) for which the Saint rejoices in her desire to join God in Heaven. Because she has chosen Christ as her Saviour, Agatha will not suffer the eternal tortures of Hell; the evanescent tortures, which Quintianus considers the coup of his malevolent prerogative (63, 83, 107), are disdainfully mocked by the Saint (116-121): her simple and positive response to the "judge" is that the existence of a benevolent Christ is her only requisite in order to retain "haleness". Significantly, AElfric's manner of expressing Agatha's supreme faith in God is through the use of the Present Indicative form of "beon" (103).

The same verbal technique is found in the Life of St. Agnes where the Saint's pronouncement of her complete trust in God is given in response to the intimidations of Sempronius:

Orsorghlice ic forseo þine þeow-racan.
 forþan þe ic geare cann mines drihtnes mihte.
 Ic truwige on him forþan þe he
 Is me trumweall. and unateorigend-lic bewerigend.

(124-127)

Without care, I despise thy threatenings,
 because I well know my Lord's might.
 I trust in Him because He is
 to me a strong wall, and an unfailing defence.

Agnes, like Agatha, defiantly attests to God's greatness (125-127) but whereas Agatha speaks of God using the other-worldly term, "salvation" (103), Agnes describes her Lord in more concrete terms. Why should Agnes fear the fleeting dangers posed by Sempronius (116-121) when she claims to have already perceived her Lord's "mihte" (125)? God is a protector, who represents for Agnes a "barricade" between herself and her enemies (126-127). AElfric combines the copulative verbal form in the Present Indicative (127) with heroic battle motifs (126-127) in order to produce an image of indubitable strength and makes use of the verbal form "is" (127) in order to show that God's role as a defender of Christians is not temporally or spatially limited: He is a

"trumweall" and He incontestably remains one.

Again to be found in the Life of St. Agnes is a personal attestation to the might of God, but this example comes from a radically different source, the son of Sempronius, after he has been raised from the dead:

Ða aeteowde þær cristes encgel. and þone cniht
araerde.

and he arn þær-rihte ut. þa he geedcucod waes.

clypigende ofer eall. and cwaepende þus.

An god is on heofonum. and eac on eorþan.

seþe is þæra cristenra god....³²

(201-205)

Then appeared there Christ's Angel, and raised the
youth,

and he immediately ran out, when he was requickened,
crying everywhere, and saying thus,

'There is One God in Heaven and likewise on earth,

He who is the God of the Christians....'

The son has converted from the lust and heathenism for which he was struck down (163-173), to an awesome Christianity (204-205). Having been raised from the dead, he has attained a special perspective on spiritual laws and although the son

clamorously expresses a general Christian truth (204-205), he imbues it with personal evidence of an unusual sort. To give full impact to this revelation and conversion, and to manifest this Christian ontological truth, AElfric again chooses the Present Indicative of "beon" (204-205).

Effectively complementing and completing this pattern of verbal usage, AElfric again employs the Present Indicative of "beon" in the words of God Himself. In the Life of St. Eugenia, AElfric has God visit the prison where Eugenia is being held in order to pronounce that He is her Saviour:

ac se haelend com mid heofonlicum leohte.
 and brohte þam maedene. maerne big-leofon.
 snaw-hwitne hlaf. and on-lihte þæt cweartern.
 Ða cwaep se haelend to þam halgan maedene.
 Eala þu eugenia. ne beo þu afyrht.
 Ic eom þin haelend. þe þu healice wurpost.
 and mid eallum mode. and maegne lufast.
 On þam daege þa scealt cuman to me. þe ic com
 to mannum.
 and on minre gebyrd-tide. þu bist on heofonum,
 gebroht.

(403-411)

But the Saviour came, with a Heavenly light,
 and brought the maiden abundant sustenance,
 a snow-white loaf, and illuminated the prison.
 Then said the Saviour to the Holy maiden,
 'Behold! Eugenia! be not thou affrighted.
 I am thy Saviour, whom thou highly honourest
 and whom with all thy mind and strength thou lovest.
 On that day shalt thou come to me, when I became man,
 And on the day of My nativity thou shalt be brought
 to heaven.'

Among these six Lives of Saints, the Life of St. Eugenia is
 the only one containing direct speech³³ by the Lord and
 it is noteworthy that AElfric, by employing the Present
 Indicative of "beon" (408), shows God to be the protector,
 sustainer and lord who Himself finally reveals to the Saint
 His identity: "Ic eom þin haelend" (408). Because God
 Himself addresses Eugenia, the direct and personal
 association between God and Saint is established. AElfric
 shows that the Lord protects his followers and is a Being
 whom Christians should not fear. All of this is possible
 through AElfric's choice of verbal form ("Ic eom....", 408),
 producing a statement which has an irrefutable quality.
 Because of the tone of this speech, a reader cannot
 intellectually respond to the statement, but is likely to

accept it.

In the light of these various statements of AElfric's Saints concerning the existence of God and the final utterance of God concerning His ontology, it is interesting to note AElfric's use of the same Present Indicative form of "beon" in the gnomic passages in these Lives. AElfric does not, in fact, limit his use of the form "is" to the discussion of the ontology of God, but chooses this form for expressing proverbial truths as well, as befits their nature as universal human truths. It is now possible to see a pattern emerging through AElfric's employment of this verbal form, namely the assumption that certain beings and things have an eternal and universal quality. Both sets of truths, eternal and human, are obviously considered by AElfric as mainstays of the Christian existence, and provide him with the central themes for his Lives. It appears, therefore, that AElfric links the supernatural and the natural existences through his verbal choice in order that we may better understand his presentation of the laws integral to the Christian realm.

In the Life of St. Cecilia is to be found an example of AElfric's use of "beon" in a gnomic saying. The speech is one of Cecilia's last, and it occurs during the final confrontation between the Saint and her persecutor before Cecilia's passion:

Almachius se arleasa het þa ardlice gefeccan.
 þa eadigan cecilian. and hi axode sona
 [of] hwylcere maegþe heo waere. and hi motodon lange.
 oppaet þam deman ofpuhte hyre drystig-nyss.
 and cwaep orhlice eft to þam maedene.

Nast þu mine mihte. . and þaet maeden him cwaep to.

Ic secge gif þu haetst hwilce mihte þu haefst.

< AElces mannes miht þe on modignysse faerþ.

is soþlice þam gelic swilce man siwige

ane bytte. and blawe hi fulle windes.

and wyrce sippan an þyrl þonne heo to-punden

bip

on hire greatnysse þonne togaep seo miht.

(308-319)

Then the wicked Almachius bade quickly fetch
 the blessed Cecilia, and at once asked her
 of what family she was, and they disputed long
 until her boldness vexed the judge,
 and he said arrogantly to the maiden;
 'knowest thou not my might?' And the maiden said to him:
 'I will say, if thou biddest me, what sort of might
 thou hast.

Every man's might who walketh in pride
 is verily like as if a man should sew up

a bladder, and blow it full of wind,
and afterward make a hole, when it is puffed out,
then, in its greatness, the might departeth.'

In response to Almachius' challenge, "Nast þu mine mihte",
313 ('knowest thou not my might?'), Cecilia renders a
gnomic-type saying. Her condemnation of Almachius is greatly
strengthened by her application of a simile concerning a
blown-up "bytte" (317) and a proud man, for, according to the
nature of proverbs, the truth of the statement is difficult
to dispute. The use of "is" in the comparison (316) again
enforces Cecilia's point of view and renders Almachius'
without defence: how can you, after all, argue against a
general truth of human nature? AElfric, then, employs a
proverb containing the Present Indicative of "beon" in order
to express a universal theme in the natural world.

An example of a more specifically Christian proverb is
found in the Life of St. Eugenia where the Saint negatively
responds to the marriage proposal of Melantia with a gnomic
saying for her edification:

Ða andwyrd eugenia byssere olecunge.
and cwaep to þam wife. mid þisum ingehyde:
þæt þa gewylnunga þissere andweardan worulde.

synt swipe swicole. þeah þe hi geswaese beon.
 and þæs lichoman luſtas gelome be-pæcep.
 and to sarniſsum gelaedap þa þe hi swiþost
 lufiap.

(162-167)

Then Eugenia replied to this flattery,
 and spake to the woman to this intent,
 that the desires of this present world
 are extremely deceitful, though they be pleasant,
 and the lusts of the body oftentimes seduce
 and bring them to sorrow who love them most.

As in the proverb examined in the Life of St. Cecilia, the truth of this statement is universal and incontestable, but here it is also offered as a warning for both the "suitor" (158-161) and the reader. Do not be seduced by the temptations "þissere andweardan worulde", 164 (of this present world), the author exhorts. We are constantly reminded of the supernatural world promised to the believers, and the relative "sarniſsum", 167 (sorrow) for non-Christians is accentuated by AElfric's use of the Present Indicative of "beon" (165) in this gnomic-type saying.

From proverbs we may pass on to an examination of passages in these Lives concerning the natural order of the

universe. In describing the environment, for instance, AElfric frequently employs the Present Indicative conjugation of "beon" as found in the proverbs and in the statements concerning God's ontology, and by continuing and augmenting this verbal pattern, AElfric convinces us of the verity of certain laws on earth. We are led to see a world picture which contains specifically local geographical facts, as in the Life of St. AElthelthryth where Sexburh,³⁴ sixteen years after the death of her sister AElthelthryth, sends the monks in search of a burial stone:

Ða wolde seo sexburh aefter syxtyne gearum.

don hire swustor ban of þære byrgene up.

and beran into þære cyrcan. and sende þa gebroþra to secenne sumne stan to swilcere neode.

forþan þe on þam fenlande synd feawa weorc-stana.

Hi hreowan þa to grantan-ceastre. and god hi sona
gehradode.

swa þaet hi þær gemetton ane maere þruh

wip þone weall standende. geworht of marm-stane

eall hwites bleos bufan þære eorþan.

and þaet hlyd þær-to gelimlice gefeged.

eac of hwitum marm-stane swa swa hit macode god.

After sixteen years Sexburh desired³⁵
 to take up her sister's bones from their burial-place
 and translate them into the church. Then she sent
 the brethren
 to seek a stone suited to that purpose,
 because in the fen-country there are few hewn stones.
 They rowed to Grantchester, and God forthwith prospered
 them

so that they found there a great coffin,
 standing against the wall, wrought of marble
 all of white hue, above ground,
 with a lid fitted excellently unto it,
 also of white marble, even as if God had made it.³⁶

- ♦ With the exception of one verb in the passage quoted above, the description of the stone hunt is given within a Preterit verbal construction. The single non-Preterit verb, "synd" (77), occurs within an adverbial clause explaining the brethren's need to travel elsewhere for a monument. Because the translation of the Saint's bones into the church is an historical incident, AElfric appropriately chooses the Preterit tense; but when expressing a general truth about the fen-country of England -- which is, in fact, a universal truth about that sort of marshy land anywhere -- AElfric

reverts to the Present Indicative conjugation. The verbal usage, here, indicates the contrasting levels on which AElfric is working; on the one hand, the author employs the Preterit in discussing ephemeral happenings on earth which may exemplify good or evil life; on the other hand, he interests his reader by artistically integrating topographical fact rendered in the Present Indicative tense, implying that as long as life continues, such natural conditions will also remain the same.

AElfric similarly combines his artistry with his discussion of the natural order of the universe in the Life of St. Agatha. After Agatha's passion, Quintianus attempts to apprehend the Saint's kindred but is himself destroyed when crossing the River Symaethus:

Hine gelaechte an hors.³⁷ þa þa he laeg on

þam stæpe

hetelice mid topum and hefde him upp.

Ða spearn ofer hors to. and asprencde hine ofer

bord.

and naes his fule lic afundan aefre sippan.

þa ne dorste nan man dreccan hire megþe.

ac arwurþodon hi ealle. ge-egsode þurh god.

On þære ylcan scire sicilian landes

is an byrnende munt. þone menn hatap ethna.
 onaeled mid sulphore. þaet is swaefel on englisc.
 Se munt byrnþ aefre. swa swa ma opre dop.
 þa ge-timode hit ymbe twelf-monap
 aefter agathes þrowunge. and ethna up ableow
 swyþe egeslice ontendnyssé. and arn be þam munte
 on flodes gelicnysse. and formulton þa stanas.
 and seo eorþe forbarn. op þaet hit to þaere
 byrig becom.

(211-225)

A horse seized him, as he lay in the ship,
 savagely with its teeth, and lifted him up;
 then another horse spurned at him and flung him
 overboard,
 and his foul body was never found afterward.

Then durst no man vex her kindred,
 but honoured them all, being awed by God.
 In the same province of the land of Sicily
 is a burning mountain, which men call Etna,
 kindled with sulphur, that is brimstone in English.
 The mountain burneth ever, as many others do.
 Then befell it, about twelve months
 after Agatha's passion, that Etna exploded

(læt. blew up)

with a very fearful burning, which ran down the mountain
 even like a flood, and the stones melted,
 and the earth was burnt up, until it came to the city.

Between the descriptions of the demise of Quintianus and the
 intercession of Agatha, who saves the city from "paes fyres
 frecednyss", 234 (the peril of fire), AElfric places a short
 passage which illuminates the volcanic aspects of Mount Etna
 (217-220). There is no reason for a reader to doubt the
 existence of a "burning mountain" (218) called Etna, nor to
 suspect that the correct nomenclature of "sulphore" is
 anything but "swæfel" in Old English (219). AElfric further
 bolsters his perspective on volcanoes by noting that Etna
 continues to burn "aefre", just "as many others do" (220).

Whereas the sections flanking this description utilize
 Preterit tenses, it is the Present Indicative which is used
 to delineate the natural history of Etna. To manifest the
 immutable nature of a volcano such as Etna, to underline the
 natural order of the universe, and to give credence to his
 narrative, AElfric employs the Present Indicative form of
 "beon" (218, 219).

We have seen that AElfric uses "beon" in a certain way
 for presenting an irrefragable picture of nature. In order
 to associate this view with his concept of the supernatural,

AElfric again adopts the Present Indicative forms of "beon".
 In the Life of St. Cecilia we have an example of such a link
 between nature and God in the passage where Tiburtius
 questions Cecilia about Christianity:

Cecilia þa aras. and mid anraednysse cwaep.
 Ealle ge-sceafta scyppend aenne sunu gestrynde.
 and forþ-teah þurh hine sylfne þone frofer gast.
 þurh þone sunu he gesceop ealle gesceafta þe
 syndon.

and hi ealle gelyffaeste þurh þone lifigendan gast.
 (156-160)

Then Cecilia arose, and with steadfastness said:
 'The Creator of all creatures begat a Son,
 and sent forth of Himself the Comforting Spirit;
 through the Son He-created all creatures that
 exist [are],
 and quickened them all through the living Spirit.'

If we translate "he gesceop ealle gesceafta þe syndon"
 (159) more strictly than does Skeat and ourselves render it,
 "He created all creatures that are", then the sense of the
 indubitable existence of "ealle gesceafta" (159) is realized.

We confidently accept the verity of the statement which has been delivered with "steadfastness" (156) because of AElfric's choice of verb and, concomitantly, we understand the natural order of beings in the universe.

A second example of the unity between natural and supernatural being shown through the use of the Present Indicative of "beon" is to be found in the Life of St. Aethelthryth in a passage describing the condition of the Saint's body after the translation of her bones:

Hit is swutol þæt heo wæs ungewemmed mæden.
 þonne hire lichama ne mihte formolsnian on eorþan.
 and godes miht is geswutelod soþlice þurh hi.
 þæt he maeg araeran þa for-molsnodon (sic)

lichaman.

seþe hire lic heold hal on þære byrgene
 git oþ þisne daeg. Sy him þæs a wuldor.

(107-112)

It is evident that she was an unspotted virgin, since her body was not suffered to moulder in the earth, and in her, God's power is verily manifested, namely, to raise up corruptible bodies, in that He hath kept her body uncorrupt in her grave

even unto this day; wherefore, to Him be everlasting
glory.

Like the former passage from the Life of St. Cecilia (156-160), these lines contain a mixture of Present and Preterit verbs: the Preterit conveys specific historical information about Aethelthryth, such as the fact that "heo waes ungewemmed maeden", 107 (she was an unspotted virgin) during her lifetime; but in order to present details eternally veridical, AElfric chooses Present tenses. The ability of God "to raise up corruptible bodies" (110) is convincingly told in the Present Subjunctive: "...he maeg araeran þa for-molsnodon (sic) lichaman" (110),³⁸ where the Subjunctive verb indicates that this is an action not restricted to the time or locale of this Life only. In fact, AElfric incorporates the phrase, "git op þisne daeg", 112 (even unto this day) as support for his claim about God's omnipotence. Yet in order to strongly emphasize certain Christian laws for which he has a pedagogical concern, AElfric uses the Present Indicative form of "beon" in two statements here (107, 109). As in his discussion of Mount Etna in the Life of St. Agatha (214-225), AElfric finds useful the Present Indicative form of "beon" for making these laws articulated and hopefully learnt by the reader, and for

suggesting certain aspects of sanctity. The authoritative tone in the statements, "It is evident that she was an unspotted virgin" (107) and, "...in her, God's power is verily manifested" (109), is achieved through the choice of verb. AElfric further girds his argument by following these statements with a certain "evidence" or explication of the notions (108, 110-112), and finally concludes the passage with a statement resembling the deductions in a syllogism; it is praise for the sort of God Who can and does perform such acts: "Sy him paes a wuldor" (112). The aspect of the eternal present in the phrase "everlasting glory" (112) complements the earlier phrase concerning the incorruptibility of the Saint's body "even unto this day" (112) and reinforces the concept of a special bond existing between God and His Saints.

The Saints also make pronouncements about themselves vis-à-vis God. Because God remains an intangible force for many, these statements are of an abstract nature. The reader of these Lives, therefore, requires sufficient reason for accepting their verity and this is provided by AElfric's consistent use of the Present Indicative "beon" pattern. The confident tone imbued in various copulative verbal constructions found in the Saint's own monologues lends credence to statements concerning the abstract relationship

between God and Saint of which only a Saint could understand. Statements such as "~~Ic eom godes pinen~~" ('I am God's handmaid', Agatha, 45) or the variation, "Ic eom paes aelmihtigan pinen" (Lucy, 73) uttered as an emendation to Paschasius' sarcastic question "Eart þu la god?" ('What, art thou God?', Lucy, 72) explain the special position which Saints have in a Christian hierarchy. In the Life of St. Agnes, for instance, the Saint returns from the dead to assure her parents of her place in the celestial order:

Warniap þaet ge ne wepon me swa swa deade.

ac blyssiap mid me. Ic eom þysum maedenum

geferlaeht.

and ic mid him under-feng. swiþe faegere wununga.

and þam ic eom on heofonum geþeodd. þe ic her on

eorþan lufode.

(255-258)

'Beware that ye weep not for me as if dead,

but rejoice with me, as I am a companion of these

virgins,

and I have received with them very fair habitations,

and I am associated to Him in Heaven, whom I loved

here on earth.'

Agnes has society among women who had remained celibate on earth and she is now joined with the One to whom she has dedicated her life. Agnes has presaged her divine liaison with God earlier in this Life by noting that:

Of his muþe ic under-feng meoluc. and hunig.
nu iu ic eom beclypt. mid his claenum earmum.

(45-46)

From his mouth I have received milk and honey;
now already I am embraced with His pure arms.

What would be regarded on earth as a sensual act (45-46) is here an abstract and divine experience and thus imperceptible and incomprehensible to an ordinary person without the personal attestation of a Saint. It is through AElfric's artistic manipulation of verbs that we understand that this "embrace" (46) is not a singular incident but a "reality" universal to Saints, which transcends time.

These are a few of the examples of AElfric's use of the Present Indicative of "beon" in the Saints' monologues. As we have seen in a discussion of AEthelthryth (ll.73-93), the narrator describes certain actions of the Saint in the Preterit. These statements indicate the earthly aspects of an historical figure: due to human nature, all persons have

limitations. The Saints' own statements boldly employing the Present Indicative of "beon" reveal, however, something of the essence of sanctity and thus dramatic irony is involved in each one. Because we have seen the "beon" verbal pattern employed elsewhere by AElfric, we are apt to confidently accept these indications of sanctity.

In contrast to AElfric's employment of the Present Indicative "is" form of "beon", is his usage of the forms, "beo, bist, biþ, and beop". As Peter Demoes has pointed out, AElfric's "distinction between the 'is, sind' forms of the verb 'to be' to denote present time and the 'biþ, beop' forms to denote future illustrates his regard for fine points of grammar."³⁹ Whereas AElfric's statements concerning the future are forceful and generally convincing, the nature of predictions prevents such statements from appearing as resolute as the Present Indicative sentences. The latter stand out from the text most powerfully, but the Future Indicative and Subjunctive sentences are still impressive; by their dynamic tone, they tend to assure a reader of their verity. Thus, an examination of these Future phrases concerning future conditions, the essence of sanctity, and the will and power of God, enables us to better understand AElfric's philosophy.

The Life of St. Lucy offers us an excellent example of

the use of the Future tense to predict future occurrences. AElfric tells his audience at the outset that "mycel' meniu", 2 (a great multitude) has travelled fifty miles from Syracuse to Catana in order to pray at Agatha's tomb (1-4). The widow Eutychia and her daughter Lucy pray for the return of the mother's good health, as physicians have not been able to cure her.⁴⁰ After mass Lucy suggests that Eutychia touch the tomb in order to again become "hal", 19 (whole) and in a vision Lucy receives from Agatha an important prediction as to the renown of the future Saint:

pa'wearp lucia on slaepe. and geseah agathen
 betwux engla werodum. aenlice gefretewode.
 and clypode hyre þus to. clypigende ufenne.
 Min swustor lucia. soþ godes maeden
 hwi bitst þu aet me þaes þe þu miht sylf
 getipian
 þinre meder geheolp þin halga geleafa.
 and efne heo is gehaeled. halwendlice þurh crist.
 and swa swa þeos burh is gemaersod þurh me.
 fram criste.
 swa biþ siracusa burh. þurh þe gewlitegod.
 forþan þe þu gearcodelist criste. on þinum
 clænan maegþ-hade.
 wynsume wununge. and þa awoc lucia.

Lucy fell asleep and saw Agatha
 amongst hosts of angels, splendidly adorned,
 and called to her thus, crying from above,
 'My sister Lucy, true virgin of God,
 why prayest thou of me that which thou couldst thyself
 grant?

Thy holy faith has helped thy mother,
 and lo! she is entirely healed by Christ;
 and even as this town is renowned through me, by
 Christ's favour,
 so shall Syracuse be renowned through thee,
 because thou didst yield thyself to Christ, in thy
 pure virginity,
 as a pleasant habitation;' and then Lucy awoke.

AElfric introduces this Life by making known how greatly the
 people of Syracuse revere Agatha because she "has merited
 something from Christ,/since she suffered for His name that
 she might ever/ behold Him in her presence, in eternal bliss"
 (16-18). This reveals to us that Agatha has suffered
 martyrdom on earth for her commitments and has thus been
 awarded the promised rank for Saints among the angels in
 Heaven (24). Just as we have seen in the Life of St. Agnes
 that Sempronius' son has gained an extraordinary insight

into spiritual laws while his life has been "suspended" (163-173), we may witness the way in which the author artfully persuades us in the Life of St. Lucy to accept the predictions of Agatha from her privileged post. She, after all, has achieved her saintly goal and may offer as proof of her success the continued renown of Catana through her actions, "by Christ's favour" (30). Agatha's prediction of the future fame of Syracuse on account of the work of Lucy appears, then, more plausible, and she enhances this prophecy by noting that Lucy's "holy faith" has already inspired Eutychia and now "heo is gehaeled. halwendlice purh crist", 29 ('she is entirely healed by Christ'). Thus, when AElfric expressly chooses the Present Indicative to announce the undeniable and enduring éclat of Catana in his first clause, "and swa swa þeos burh is gemaersod purh me. fram criste.", 30 ('and even as this town is renowned through me, by Christ's favour'), the employment of the Future Indicative in the associated and dependent clause makes this prediction credible: "swa biþ siracusa burh. purh þe gewlitegod", 31 ('so shall Syracuse be renowned through thee'). AElfric has Agatha further support the prognostication by explaining that God intends this notoriety because Lucy has given herself "to Christ, in [her] pure virginity, / as a pleasant habitation' (32-33).⁴¹ In this passage we

have seen the contrasting but complementary use of the Present Indicatives of "beon" (30, 31) while aspects of the essence of sanctity (24, 26, 30-33) and the power of God (29-31) are also revealed.

In the same category of predictions using the Future is a notable example to be found in the speech made by God to Eugenia in the Life of St. Eugenia. This promise is given to the Saint directly before her execution by order of the emperor (410-414) and occurs in the same speech in which AElfric effectively employs the Present Indicative of "beon" to reveal the relationship between God and the Saint: "Ic eom pin haelend", 408 ('I am thy Saviour'). Because the latter statement achieves a bold assured tone through this verbal construction, the concluding sentence, a prediction, appears veritable:

Ic eom pin haelend.⁴² þe þu healice

wurpost.

and mid eallum mode. and maegne lufast.

On þam daege þa scealt cuman to me. þe ic com to

.mannum.

and on minre gebyrd-tide. þu bist on heofonum

gebroht.

(408-411)

'I am thy Saviour, whom thou highly honourest
 and whom with all thy mind and strength thou lovest.
 On that day shalt thou come to me, when
 I became man,⁴³
 And on the day of My nativity thou shalt be brought
 to heaven.'

In addition to noting that the prediction in the Future Indicative tense follows the convincing use of the Present Indicative, we should also notice the impetus provided in these lines by the omniscient role which AElfric gives to God (408-409). Once this is made clear, AElfric has the opportunity to have God presage the future and the prediction made here is a particularly poignant one for a Saint, as it is the ultimate "invitation", to join God, for which she has striven during her lifetime. As well, the omnipotence of God is very clear in this final line where it is stated that by God's decree the Saint will "be brought to heaven" (411): there is no need to describe how this will happen or which of God's servants will perform the task -- it is sufficient that He has assured the Saint of this future event. Stylistic features such as verbal usage and syntax are combined here by AElfric in order to greatly strengthen the impressiveness and credibility of this speech.

The same employment of the Future conjugations is found

in sentences describing hypothetical situations. Three examples may be examined in the Life of St. Agatha; two of these have Future Subjunctive constructions, while the other involves Future Indicative. The latter occurs in a passage where Quintianus suggests that Agatha exercise her "free-will" by electing to undergo one of two proposed activities:

swa heo mid fordendum dyslice for-ferde.
 swa heo þam godum geoffrode. swa swa aspelboren
 and wis.

(63-64)

either she must die in her folly with condemned
 (felons),
 or she must sacrifice to the gods like a noble
 and wise maiden.

When Agatha continually rebuffs Quintianus' threats by words only, the persecutor becomes frustrated and immediately demands obedience: "geoffra þam godum. þæt ic þe gram-lice ne fordo", 83 ('Sacrifice to the gods, that I may not cruelly destroy thee'). Because Agatha's reply is prefaced by the sentence, "Ða andwyrde agathes. unforht þam deman", 85 (Then Agatha answered the judge fearlessly)

Through the repetition of this conditional "if...then" construction, AElfric builds up his argument that God is the ultimate defender of His Saints; and he does this by choosing from amongst the elements of his 'world-picture'⁴⁴ in order to display the intimate connections between the natural and supernatural. Jesus, who inhabited earth, is shown in a traditional role as the subduer of "wild beasts" (85-86). Next, AElfric names a lifeless phenomenon which is generally little understood but feared by man, and counters that the shield against fire used in torture is not water but a "halwendlic deaw", 88 (a healing dew) brought from Heaven by the Lord's angels. The final statement in this trio is the least concrete but, in fact, the most powerful in convincing a reader of the Saint's supreme belief in God. Though a persecutor may understand how to prepare tortures for a Saint, he does not comprehend the defences which Agatha has suggested and he is especially unlikely to appreciate the Holy Spirit whom the Saint fully trusts (89-90). The faith expounded here is akin to that earlier seen in the modal construction from the Life of St. Lucy: "Ne miht þu gebigan minne willan to þe./swa hwaet swa þu minum lichaman dest. ne maeg þaet belimpan to me.", 92-93 ('Thou canst not bend my will to thy purpose;/whatever thou mayest do to my body, that cannot happen to me.') where the Saint makes it clear

the commencement of her sufferings and, using the Imperative and the Future Subjunctive, delivers his ultimatum: Agatha must either subjugate herself or lose her life. The conditional construction might be more accurately translated into Modern English as, "Forsake thy self-will, in order that thy life may be saved", thus conveying the dependence of Agatha's future state on her present decision.

In the previous example, Agatha has been given a choice as to her welfare.⁴⁵ To the command of Quintianus she now defiantly replies:

Agathes andwyrde on þære hencgene þus.

Swa ic lust-fullige on þisum lapum wítum....

Ne maeg min sawl beon gebroht mid blysse to heofonum.

butan min lichama beo on þinum bendum genyrwod.

and fram þinum cwellerum on þinum copsum agrapod.

(115-116, 119-121)

Agatha answered on the rack thus,

'So greatly I rejoice in these painful torments....

My soul cannot be brought with joy to Heaven

except my body be cramped in thy bonds,

and by the executioners be gripped in thy fetters.'

This statement indicates Agatha's recognition of the necessary elements of martyrdom for a Saint. She has already made her choice for God though Quintianus refuses this answer and now Agatha's earthly fate is in the hands of her enemy. The matter of torture becomes Quintianus' choice and Agatha welcomes the onslaught as she realizes that she is dependent in her martyrdom upon the proposed future actions of her persecutor. AElfric's contrasting usage of "beon" in Quintianus' command, "forlaet pine anwyllysse. þæt þinum life beo geborgen", 114 ('Forsake thy self-will, that thy life may be saved.') and in Agatha's response (119-121) underlines just this point. Quintianus' demand employs this verbal construction in stressing that Agatha must bend to her persecutor's will in order to save her life. Agatha's reply uses "beo" very differently in stating an opposing point of view: Agatha knows that she must not sacrifice to the pagan gods because by saving her earthly life in such a manner, she would forfeit her Heavenly one.

The Present Subjunctive forms, "sy, syn", are used very sparingly by AElfric in these Lives. Unlike the "þip, þeop" forms, they are not used for expressing the future⁴⁶ but, rather, AElfric reserves them almost exclusively⁴⁷ for use in poetic formulaic phrases for glorifying God. Generally, these are the means for

concluding a Life or summarizing a section thereof, where, for instance, the characteristics or achievements of a Saint are attributed to God. Such constructions are found in only three of the six Lives,⁴⁸ in two of these we may see AElfric's artistic use of the Present Subjunctive for their formulaic constructions. It is stated that, "...seo ceaster wearp ahred/fram paes fyres frecednysse. purh agathen. foreþingunge./pam haelende to lofe. þe his halgan swa wurpab, 233-235 (the city was delivered/from the peril of fire by Agatha's intercession,/to the praise of the Saviour, who thus honoureth His Saints); and the final line reads, "paes him sy a wuldor on ecere worulde. AMEN.", Agatha, 236 (Wherefore to Him ever be glory to all eternity. AMEN.)

A variation of this phrase is found in the Life of St. Eugenia after the Saint appears in a vision describing to Claudia the "bliss" (420) which Heaven has provided Philip and herself, and informing Claudia of her own imminent death and departure to Heaven. Again AElfric concludes this Life by saying, "Sy wuldor. and lof. þam wel-wyllendan drihtne./on ealra worulda woruld. ealra his wel-daeda. AMEN." 427-428 (Be glory and praise to the gracious God,/world without end, for all His benefits. AMEN.).⁴⁹

A similar example, found near the end of the Life of St. Aethelthryth, praises God for His power "in that He hath kept

[Aethelthryth's] body uncorrupt in her grave/even unto this day" (111-112). With the phrase, "Sy him paes a wuldor", 112 (wherefore to Him be everlasting glory),⁵⁰ AElfric closes that section of the Life dealing with physical biographical details and resumes his narrative with more ethereal or less concrete "facts", such as healing performed by means of her shroud (113-116).

Although this type of conclusion is a literary convention, it can be used effectively for pedagogical and aesthetic purposes. The above phrases containing the Present Subjunctive of "beon" are all spoken by the narrator who, by his authoritative delegation and his humble but sincere tone achieved partly by means of the Subjunctive gives these sentiments an outstanding resonance in the Lives. Attention is also cast upon them because of their strategic location in the works with the result that the ultimate praise is awarded to God.⁵¹ Another artistic advantage to employing the Subjunctive tense, here, is that the declaration of glory attains a universal quality; that is, it is not restricted to either the century in which a Saint lived or to the time when AElfric composed this piece: the praise is unending for an everlasting Lord.

AElfric's employment of the Preterit conjugations is, on the other hand, quite commonplace. Preterit verbs are the

foundation for historical narrative integral to Saints' Lives and other works of literature. Whereas AElfric uses other tenses of "beon" for discussing the essence and the eternal and universal qualities of things and beings by which we understand their intimate links in the Christian cosmos, his purpose in employing Preterits is more narrowly functional: Preterit verbs describe the ephemeral aspects of daily existence, as opposed to the greater questions concerning our moral conduct on earth and the death for which we prepare ourselves. As AElfric points out in the Life of St. Cecilia,

gif þis lif waere ana. and oper naere selre.
 þonne mihte we ondraedan us deapes rihtlice, ...
 and on þam ecan life þe aefter þysum cymb
 'biþ þam rihtwisum forgifen rest. and gefea.
 and þam unrihtwisum þa ecan wiða.

(138-139, 151-153)

'If this life were alone, and there were no other
 better,

then might we rightly have dread of death....

And in the eternal life which cometh after this
 shall be given to the righteous rest and gladness,
 and to the unrighteous eternal torments.'

Lucidly manifested here is the contention that, while good mortal Christian behaviour is important, the afterlife is the ultimate goal. Thus, for AElfric's pedagogical and artistic objectives, the Preterit tenses have a functional, yet not unusual verbal capacity. They provide a narrative framework but do not express truths essential to AElfric's philosophy.

To impress his readers as to the relative importance and veridical nature of his comments, AElfric carefully plans his usage of the verb "beon". The Present Subjunctive tends to be found only in poetic formulaic phrases, while hypothetical situations are generally described in the Future Subjunctive. Predictions, on the other hand, appear to be defined with more certainty through the employment of the Future Indicative. But, by far, the most impressive usage of "beon" is seen in passages containing the Present Indicative. By combining effective rhetorical tone with his understanding of how to manipulate verbs, AElfric makes bold statements which one would be hard-pressed to dispute.

CONCLUSION

AElfric understood that in manipulating verbs he could create certain verbal patterns which would greatly strengthen his narrative and augment the impact which it would have on a reader. In modal verbs, which are characteristically used with other verbs to express mood or tense, AElfric found possibilities for discussing the nature of sanctity. In these Saints' Lives the verb "magan" is employed in expressing the immutable moral nature of a Saint, while "woldon" is used to describe the humanity of Saints who, like all human beings, have certain desires and are able to make deliberate choices. AElfric also manipulates verbs and aspectual features in Old English for the purpose of clearly differentiating God, Christians, and pagans. While God is shown to transcend time and space and pagans are centred in an amoral or immoral "stasis", Christians are portrayed as having scope for learning and spiritual progress. The verbal pattern involving aspect which AElfric most commonly uses for discussing this ability of Saints is formed by combining "wearpan" plus the Past Participle of another verb. The

description of pagans is, on the other hand, very different as their lack of growth and change is manifested through a verbal pattern consisting of "wearpan" plus the Past Participle of another verb in the first phrase and the verb "hatan" in a related phrase.

AElfric's frequent and deliberate use of "beon" in describing divine essence, the natural order of the universe, and the character of the Saints, is also noteworthy. The Present Indicative "is" defines the indisputable existence and essence of God and natural objects. Gnostic type statements as well as statements concerning the natural order of the universe also appear in the Present Indicative of "beon" and forge the link between the natural and supernatural elements. The Present Indicative of "beon" is also used to denote the special bond between God and His Saints. The Future Indicative is employed in predictions while hypothetical situations are described in the Future Indicative and Subjunctive. The Present Subjunctive "sy" and "syn" are used sparingly, generally in poetic formulaic phrases praising God, and are often found at the conclusion of the Lives. The Preterit of "beon" functions in sentences defining ephemeral details of the historical narrative type. AElfric's thorough understanding of the verbal possibilities integral to Old English provided him with a vehicle for

expressing his Christian ideas with great facility. A careful examination of AElfric's work reveals his artistic employment of verbs and gives us, his readers, another reason to laud him as the foremost author of the late Anglo-Saxon era.

FOOTNOTES

1. Walter W. Skeat, ed. AElfric's Lives of Saints, Being A Set of Sermons on Saints' Days formerly observed by the English Church, vol. 1 & 2. EETS. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). All page and line references to AElfric's Lives are to this edition. Skeat provided the translation here for his 1890 edition, which accounts for the archaic phraseology and, in some cases, the outmoded concepts. It is, however, the only complete translation available and is included solely for the convenience of the non-specialist. A note on the meaning of "maedene" in Old English: this word can be translated as, "unmarried girl", "virgin", or "servant" or "hand-maiden". While I believe that the latter meaning is most often applicable I generally concur with Skeat's use of the other two concepts as well, as he has deemed them correct according to the context.

2. In describing the manuscript, British Museum, Cotton

Julius E. vii, N.R. Ker states: "The Life of St. Euphrosyna (art. 44) is not ... stylistically like AElfric's work and is out of place in the order of the Church year, and two non-AElfrician texts (arts. 3031: Sk., nos. 23, 23B) were added early, the first of them in time to be included in the table of contents. Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 206. See also Peter Clemons, "The Chronology of AElfric's Works," The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickins, Ed. Peter Clemons (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), pp. 212-247. Clemons notes: "Four items in this manuscript, differing from the rest in intention, style and linguistic usage, must be eliminated at the outset as not by AElfric (Skeat XXIII, XXXIIIB, XXX and XXXIII)" (219). The primary purpose of this article is "to define the main features of AElfric's educational programme and to determine their chronological sequence" (213). Clemons also makes an interesting case for Skeat XVI, AElfric's "Memory of the Saints": "Here, I think, we have a homily specially written for the set -- to serve as a general introduction to it.... It places the passions of martyrs in an historical

perspective and relates them to the reader's struggle against sin. It has been removed from the first place in Julius, though it is still not assigned to any specific occasion; but in II.1.33 it retains the rubric appropriate to an initial position: 'Incipit sermo de memoria sanctorum' (222). In an earlier article Grant Loomis still attributes "the legend of Euphrosyna" to AElfric. See "Further Sources of AElfric's Saints' Lives" Harvard Studies, 13 (1931), 5.

3. Before Skeat's translation had appeared, Edward Dietrich had already published a treatise on AElfric's identity, his writings and the Anglo-Saxon Church, entitled "Abt AElfrik," Zeitschrift für die historische theologie, XXV (1855), 487-597; XXVI (1856), 163-256. This was translated by Caroline White as AElfric, A New Study of His Life and Writings Yale Studies in English, II (Boston: Yale University Press, 1896); White augmented the work with a section on the monastic revival. Harvey Gem's An Anglo-Saxon Abbot: AElfric of Eynsham (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912) discusses AElfric briefly but deals more rigorously with the questions of monasticism in England, Ireland and Italy, the doctrines of the Anglo-Saxon Church and the religious

literature from that period, as well as Danish infiltration into Britain. J.H. Ott's Über die Quellen der Heiligenleben in AElfric's Lives of Saints I (Halle: C.A. Kaemmerer, 1892), investigated AElfric's sources.

4. M.M. Dubois, AElfric, Sermonaire, Docteur et Grammairien (Paris: Libraire E. Droz, 1943).
5. Dorothy Bethurum, "The Form of AElfric's Lives of Saints," Studies in Philology, 4 (1932), 515.
6. Rosemary Woolf, "Saints' Lives," in Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature, ed. Eric Gerald Stanley. (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 64-65.
7. John C. Pope, ed. Homilies of AElfric, vol. 1 EETS. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).
8. Peter Clemons, "AElfric," in Continuations and Beginnings, pp. 176-209; hereafter cited as "AElfric."
9. Keith A. Tandy, "Verbal Aspect as a Narrative Structure in AElfric's Lives of Saints," in The Old English Homily and its Backgrounds, ed. Paul E. Szarmach & Bernard F.

Huppé (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978), pp. 181-202.

10. Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, 1971, defines "aspect" as, "The nature of the action of a verb or the manner in which that action is regarded esp. with reference to its beginning, duration, completion, or repetition without reference to its position in time, whether indicated by a set of inflectional forms, by the meaning of the verb itself, by an adverbial modifier, by such devices as the so-called progressive tenses in English, or by some other means". "Aspect" is defined by Funk and Wagnalls Standard Comprehensive International Dictionary, 1973, as: "A categorizing of the verb indicating, primarily, the nature of the action performed in regard to the passage of time, as in English "he ran" (perfective), "he was running" (imperfective or durative), and, in certain languages, the manner in which the action is performed, the intent of the subject, Aspect is shown in the various languages by means of auxiliaries, affixes, root changes, etc." Cf. Keith A. Tandy and Bernard Comrie.

11. The AElfrician Lives concerning women Saints exclusively have been selected for this study in order to fall into line with Tandy's initial investigation of one female Saint, Eugenia.
12. See Book IV, Chapters XIX and XX of Bede's Ecclesiastical History.
13. Bernard Comrie, Aspect (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 5.

14. Cecilia does not die immediately from her wounds:

Se cwellere hi sloh þa mid his swurde
 aene eft. and þryddan sipe. ac hire swura
 naes forod.
 and he forlet hi sona swa samcuce licgan.
 forþam-þe witan cwaedon þaet nan cwellere
 ne sceolde
 feower sipan slean to. þonne man sloge
 scyldigne.

(353-357)

So the executioner struck her with his sword
 once and again and a third time, but her neck
 was not pierced;

(Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1971), p. 75.

15. This ironic title is applied to Quintianus (Agatha, 43), Sempronius (Agnes, 91), Almachius (Cecilia, 342), and Severus (Eugenia, 376). Philip is also referred to as "dema". His case, however, is unique as his conversion from heathenism to Christianity is an important part of the Life. As a heathen, the nomenclature for Philip is as follows:

"sum aepel-born paegn", 5 (a certain nobly-born
thane)

"heah-gerefan", 9 (chief ruler)

"paes paegn philippus", 12 (this thane Philip)

"se faeder philippus", 19 (her father Philip)

"hyre faeder", 28 (her father)

"pam heah-geraefan", 182 (the chief ruler)

"eugenia faeder", 183 (Eugenia's father)

"se dema", 195 (the judge)

"se gerefa", 214 (the judge)

"se geraefa", 223 (the governor)

"philippus swa swa faeder", 247 (Philip, as a
father)

After his conversion (264-265) Philip is called:

"pone cristenan philippum", 298 (the Christian

Philip)

"pone maeran biscop", 305 (the illustrious
bishop)

"pone bisceop philippum", 313 (Philip the bishop)

"baes aepelan philippes", 318 (the noble
Philip)

"minne faeder", 421 (my father)

16. Cecilia is another Saint forced to marry, "Heo wearp swa-peah beweddad swa swa hit woldon hire frynd./ anum aepelan cnihte", 10-11 (She was nevertheless wedded, as her friends willed it, to a noble youth); but AElfric early points out that Cecilia is "sum aepele maeden", 1 (a noble maiden) and "fram cild-hade cristen", 2 (a Christian from childhood). It is also noted that the man she marries "is nu halig sanct", 12 (is now a holy saint) whose actions, though earthly, are performed in a dignified fashion appropriate to his familial stature:

Hit gewearp swa-peah paet se wurpfulla

cniht

pa brydlac geforbode. and gefette paet

maeden

mid woruldlicum wurpmynte swa swa heora gebyrde

waeron.

(20-22)

It befell nevertheless that the honourable youth provided the marriage-gift and fetched the maiden with worldly dignity even as became their rank. Cecilia begins a process of converting her new husband immediately (23ff).

17. Just as Aethelthryth helps others after her death, Agatha is described as, "eardes alysednyss", 204 (deliverance to her country). Later, the heathen flee from Etna to Agatha's tomb (226ff) and it is stated that Agatha intercedes on behalf of the people (233-234). In Agnes Constantia prays to and receives aid from the Saint (261ff) and thereafter a Church is built in the name of Agnes (287-289) so that many may be healed at her tomb (290-292). A Church is raised in the place where Lucy dies (150-151) in the Life of that Saint. Cecilia's house is also made into a Church (Cecilia, 360). After her death, Eugenia is able to bring cheer and a message about her father to Claudia, her mother (Eugenia, 415-422).

18. Other examples of the "weorpan" pattern are to be

found in

Lucy (23); (127-129)

Agatha (145-146)

Cecilia (10); (28-30)

Among the Secondary Saints:

Cecilia: Tiburtius (127); (184)

Valerian (38); (252); (266-267)

Maximus (269)

Agnes: Constantia (272-273); (283-284)

AEBeldryp: Sexburh (70-72)

n.b. This verbal construction is never used directly for describing God because He equals perfection and therefore has no development. The phrase is linked with God when it is being noted that in a particular fashion, His might has become manifested:

Hwaet þa godes miht mycclum wearþ geswutelod
(Agnes, 144)

Lo then! God's power was mightily manifested

ac godes miht wearþ geswutelod. sona on þam
maedene

(Lucy, 97)

but God's might was displayed at once in the

maiden

19. Aethelthryth has no earthly enemy, but only her own mortality which she overcomes through her Saintly devotion.

20. Skeat translates: "Then was the impious Paschasius perplexed,/and bade false magicians be brought unto him" (103-104). In order to make this verbal pattern clearer, the verbs have been translated more strictly here: "Then became ... Paschasius perplexed,/and commanded...."

21. Again, the translation has been altered: Skeat writes, "Then was ... /and bade...." (116-117). The amended translation reads; "Then became ... /and commanded...." See also 11.124-126.

22. Skeat includes a question mark in his translation.

23. See Footnote #20.

24. Aphrodosia views Agatha as simply a very stubborn person and therefore she does not distinguish between Agatha's nature as an ordinary human being and Agatha's

nature as a Saint. This points out that Aphrodisia is entirely blind to sanctity and its essence just as she is ignorant of Creation and Salvation History. Accordingly, she does not understand the integral links between natural and supernatural laws and cannot foresee the ability of God to change the laws of nature by some miracle such as the eruption of the volcano Etna, which is discussed at the end of the Life of St. Agatha (217ff). The result of this explosion is that the heathen turn to the Saint's tomb for her intercession in this crisis (226-234). In addition men discover that God can, in fact, cause stones to melt (224).

25. As to such iterations found in this and similar passages, Pope notes that, "AElfric is occasionally led by his Latin sources into coining metaphorical or elaborately descriptive epithets unrelated to those of the Old English poets. In the Life of St. Agnes he borrows from Ambrose some abusive expressions for the Saint's worldly suitor and some honourific descriptive titles for God." John C. Pope, ed., Homilies of AElfric (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), I, 123, n. 2. The corresponding passage by Ambrose is to be found in his Vita Sancta Agnetis, Caput I, Acta Sanctorum, 2, pp. 715-728, and reads:

Ad haec B. Agnes tale fertur juveni dedisse
responsum: Discede a me fomes peccati, nutrimentum
facinoris, pabulum mortis: discede a me, quia ab
alio jam amatore praeventa sum, qui mihi satis meliora
te obtulit ornamenta, et annulo, fidei suae subarrhavit
me, longe te nobilior et genere et dignitate. Ornavit
inaestimabili dextro chiro dexteram meam, et collum
meum cinxit lapidibus pretiosis: tradidit auribus meis
inaestimabiles margaritas, et circumdedit me vernan-
tibus atque coruscantibus gemmis. Posuit signum suum
super faciem meam, ut nullum praeter ipsum amatorem
admittam. Induit me cyclade auro texta, et immissis
monilibus ornavit me. Ostendit mihi thesauros incom-
parabiles, quos mihi se donaturum repromisit si ei
perseveravero. Non ergo potero ad contumeliam prioris
amatoris vel adspicere alium, et illum derelinquere,
cum quo sum caritate devincta: cujus est generositas
celsior, possibilitas fortior, aspectus pulchrior,
amor suavior, et omni gratia elegantior: a quo mihi jam
thalamus collocatus est, cujus mihi virgines justissi-
mis vocibus cantant. Jam mel et lac ex ore ejus
suscepi: jam amplexibus ejus castis adstricta sum: jam
corpus ejus corpori meo sociatum est, et sanguis ejus
ornavit genas meas. Cujus mater virgo est, cujus pater

feminam nescit. Cui Angeli serviunt, cujus pulchritudinem soli et luna mirantur: cujus odore reviviscunt mortui, cujus tactu foventur infirmi: cujus opes numquam deficiunt, cujus divitiae non decrescunt. Ipsi soli servo fidem. Ipsi me tota devotione committo. Quem cum amavero, casta sum; cum tetigero, munda sum; cum accepero, virgo sum. Nec deerunt post nuptias filii, ubi partus sine dolore succedit, et foecunditas quotidiana cumulatur.

26. About the kind of stylistic technique represented in this quotation Peter Clemons states that a "technique with which education familiarized [AElfric] was the 'question and answer' method used by the Fathers. One of his writings was an English version of sixty-nine of the questions which a certain Sigewulf has asked Alcuin about the interpretation of Genesis and of the answers which Alcuin had given. Examples commonly occur in AElfric's homilies too. For instance, in one of his homilies for Epiphany he asks (drawing at this point on a Pentecost homily of Gregory the Great), 'Hwi com se halga gast þa on fyres hiwe ofer þam apostolum, and ofer Criste on his fulluhte on culfran gelicnysse?' ['Why did the Holy Spirit come then in the form of fire

over the apostles, and over Christ in His baptism in the likeness of a dove?'] The allegorical answer is in terms of the apostles' ardour and Christ's humility, qualities which every Christian ought to have."

"AElfric," p. 192, n. 1. The translation of this question in Old English is from The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, ed. B. Thorpe, vol. 2, p. 44. For other questions and their answers, in the Life of St. Cecilia, see 11.47ff, 65ff, 103ff, 117ff, 122ff, 140ff, 154ff, 175ff, (228ff).

27. In his discussion of AElfric's literary sources, Peter Clemons has pointed out that the works of St. Augustine provided AElfric with, "an intellectual framework -- for example, for a sense of the fundamental unity of history -- and for the exposition of difficult points of dogma such as the nature of the Trinity. 'Ðone wisan Augustinum þam þe we wel truwiap to swa micelre deopnyse' ['The wide Augustine, whom we trust fully in regard to such great depth of meaning.'] AElfric calls him in one place." Peter Clemons, "AElfric," p. 185 & n. 3.

28. A paper concerning gnomes in Old English literature and entitled, "Gnomic Verses and Thematic Strands in

Beowulf" was read by the author, Dr. Raymond St. Jacques, at the Ninth International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazo, Michigan, in May 1974. For general information on gnomes in literature, consult The Growth of Literature, vol. I, Chapter 12, by H.M. Chadwick & Nora K. Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932).

29. This phrase is repeated further on in the Life, thus emphasizing the reality of such "torments". Compare the two passages from the Life of St. Agatha: "Ða cwaep agathes. Ðu earmingc bepenc þe/hu þu maege aet-windan þam ecum witum", 95-96 (Then said Agatha, 'Thou, miserable, bethink thyself/how thou mayest escape the everlasting torments.') "Agathes andwyrde anfealdlice and cwaep./Wip-sac þu þine godas. þe synd staenene. and treowene./and gebide þe to þinum scyppende. þe soþlice aleofap/gif þu hine forsihst. þu scealt on ecum witum þrowian", 108-111 (Agatha answered simply, and said,/'Renounce thou thy gods which are of stone and wood,/and pray to thy Creator who truly liveth;/ if thou despisest Him, thou shalt suffer in eternal torments.')

30. See also 1. 112-114, 122-123, 128-130, 154-156, 167-170, in the Life of St. Agatha.

31. Skeat's translation fails to convey the essential relationship between "gesundfulnyse" (102) and "haele" (103). By observing the delicate semantical correspondences of these words and their compounds found here and elsewhere in AElfric's works, we should better understand the author's view of the complex links between the natural and supernatural. This may be seen by first examining the definitions provided by Bosworth:

gesund (adj.): sound, healthy, entire, unhurt,
safe, favourable, prosperous.

Related words include, "onsund" and "ansund".

hael(e) (n.) : health, safety, salvation,
happiness.

hael (adj.): hale, safe, whole, sound.

If the translation of Agatha is altered slightly, "So then in the morning the wicked judge/bade Agatha to be brought into his hateful presence, /and enquired what she had devised for her soundness (healthiness)"

(100-102), it becomes apparent that AElfric is stressing the mortality of the Saint. By emphasizing the frailty of the human body on earth (102), versus the

soul which transcends time and space, AElfric shows how crucial is Agatha's personal mandate as to her physical well-being. Agatha, like all Saints, decides that she is able to believe in Christ with such profundity that she may categorically say (again altering Skeat), "Christ is my health (safety/salvation/happiness)" (103). The correspondence between "gesundfulnysse" and "haele" is now clear: the intangible God is so familiar and so real to a Saint that He is actually her health. Again, artistic force is lent this rejoinder by AElfric's choice of the operative Present Indicative. We may also note the natural connecton between "hael(e)", "haelan" (v.) and "haelend" (n.): "a healer, Saviour, Jesus". See also:

<u>Agatha</u>	(86, 126, 127, 136, 146, 160, 162, 168, 184, 235)
<u>Agnes</u>	(97, 194, 223, 265, 268, 271, 275-277, 279, 281, 292)
<u>AElpeldryp</u>	(18, 93, 95, 111, 113, 116, 133, 134)
<u>Cecilia</u>	(86, 178, 278, 305, 344, 350, 360)
<u>Eugenia</u>	(97, 129, 139, 141)
<u>Lucy</u>	(8, 12, 13, 19, 29, 35, 36, 50, 151)

32. The indubitable fact of God expressed through the Present Indicative tense in this passage, "An god is on heofonum. and eac on eorþan./seþe is þæra cristenra god", 204-205 (There is One God in Heaven and likewise on earth,/He who is the God of the Christians), is bolstered by AElfric's artistic acumen in following this immediately with the contrasting verbal phrase: "and eower godas ne synd nahtes", 205 (and your gods are naught). A further example of this technique of verbal "opposition" is found in the next line, again referring to the pagan gods: "Hi ne magon him sylfum fremian. ne oprum fultumian", 206 (they can neither profit themselves nor help others). This sentiment is verbally and ideologically precisely opposite to the speech by Agnes to the "unhal" Constantia (265):

...se haelend þe ge-hælen maege.

þurh þone þu scealt underfon. þinra

wunda haele.

Ða awoc constantia. and waes swa ge-haeled....

(275-277)

('...the Saviour has power to heal thee,
through Whom thou shalt receive the healing of
thy wounds.'

Then Constantia awoke, and was so healed....)

The same tension provided through the use of these and other contrasting verbs is found in each of the Lives.

33. Examples of reported speech are to be found in the Life of St. Eugenia and the Life of St. Lucy. Bishop Helenus reveals to Eugenia that he is aware of her gender, family, and:

...paet heo þurh maegþ-had mycclum gelicode.

þam heofon-lican cyninge. þe heo gecoren

haefde.

and cwaep þaet heo sceolde swiþlice

aeht-nyssa.

for maegþ-hade þrowian. and þeah beon

gescyld

þurh þone soþan drihten. þe ge-scylt his

gecorenan.

(79-83)

...how she, by the virginity which she had chosen,
greatly pleased the heavenly King;

and said, that she should extremely suffer

persecutions

because of her virginity, and should yet be

preserved
 by help of the true Lord, who shields His chosen
 ones.

Helenus then advises Protus and Jacinctus that,
 although they are servants, they should be mindful,
 ...þaet hi crist gespraecce þysum godspellicum
 wordum.

Ne hate ic eow na þeowan. ac ge synd mine
 freond.

(86-87)

...that Christ addressed them in these gospel-
 words,

'I call you not servants, but ye are my friends.'
 In the Life of St. Lucy, Paschasius queries as to why
 his attempts to have the Saint dragged to a whorehouse
 are entirely stymied:

Se cwellere þa cwaep to þam claenan maedene.
 hwaet is se Intinga. þaet an þusend manna
 þe ne magon astyrian swa unstrang swa þu eart.
 Lucia him cwaep to. þeah þu clypige tyn
 þusend manna.
 hi sceolan ealle gehyran þone halgan gast þus
 cweþende.

Cadent a latere tuo mille et decem milia a dextris

tuis tibi autem non adpropinquabit malum.
 þusend feallap fram þinre sidan. and tyn
 þusend fram þinre swyþran.
 þe sylf soþlice ne ge-nealecaep nan yfel.

(108-115)

The murderer then said to the pure maid,
 'What is the reason that a thousand men
 cannot even stir thee, all weak as thou art?'
 Lucy said to him, 'though thou call ten thousand
 men,
 they would all hear the Holy Ghost thus speaking:
 Cadent a latere tuo mille, et decem millia a
 dextris tuis, tibi autem non adpropinquabit
 malum.

A thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten
 thousand at thy right hand,
 but verily no evil shall approach thyself.'

34. In explanation for the non-existence of an AElfrician
Life of St. Sexburh, Rosemary Woolf offers this
 hypothesis:

In his life of St. Edmund, in a passage not

derived from his source, AElfric displays a strong native pride in the Anglo-Saxons' record for sanctity: 'The Anglo-Saxon people are not deprived of the Saints of God, since in England such holy men as this king, and the blessed Cuthbert, and St. Aethelthryth of Ely and her sister [Seaxburg], all lie buried with their bodies uncorrupted for the strengthening of our faith.' AElfric wrote lives of three of these four (that of St. Cuthbert is in the Catholic Homilies), and perhaps he omitted Seaxburg because Bede's account of her is short, and her life so closely duplicates that of her sister.

Rosemary Woolf, "Saints' Lives," in Continuations and Beginnings, p. 63. Sexburh is identified as being the mother of Earcongota in a chapter concerning Saint Earcongota in the Ecclesiastical History. Sexburh is also briefly discussed by Bede in the accounts of Aethelthryth (iv, xix).

35. Here we have another example of the Saint's Christian and moral choice and the actualizing of her desire. Note that Skeat here translates "wolde" (73) as "desired" and not, as is generally true of his

translation, "would".

36. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors in their edition of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) write of "Cambridge" and the coffin as follows:
- "Doubtless a Roman sarcophagus taken from the Roman town on Castle Hill, Cambridge. Granta-caestir means 'the Roman fort on the Granta' the name being later changed to the 'bridge over the Granta'. The first part of the word developed into Cam-- and so the name became 'Cambridge'. The name of the river Cam is a back-formation." (p. 394, n. 1).
37. Beasts are also to be found, though in different capacities, in the Life of St. Agatha (85-86); Eugenia (100, 156); and Lucy (106-107).
38. This is the sort of concept which heathens like Aphrodisia (Agatha, 26ff) cannot understand. See footnote 23.
39. "AElfric," p. 201.

40. The lines read:

Seo wydewe waes unhal. swa paet hire arn blod
geond feower geare faec. and faela laeca cunnode.
ac hi ealle ne mihton hyre anre ge-helpan.

(Lucy, 8-10)

The widow was diseased, so that she had a flux
of blood
for the space of four years, and had tried many
physicians,
but all of them could not help her, though she
was but one.

In his edition, Skeat elucidates the meaning of this passage in a footnote: "A quaint expression. 'Many physicians could not heal one patient'" (p. 211).

41. A parallel passage is found later in the Life of St. Lucy when, shortly before her death, Lucy reiterates these words:

Swa swa seo catanenscisce burh binnan hire weallum
haefþ minre swyster agathen. miccle fore-
þingunga.

swa ic eom forgifen. fram þam elmihtigan gode
nu þyssere byrig. siracusanan.

ow to gepingienne. gif ge fop to geleafan.

(134-138)

'Even as the city of Catana within its walls,
has the powerful intercessions of my sister Agatha,
so am I allotted by Almighty God
now to this city of Syracuse,
to intercede for you, if ye receive the faith.'

42. As previously noted, this is the only occasion for direct speech by God in these six Lives.
43. Although this is awkwardly translated, as a result of combining the Future and Preterit tenses, "that day ... when I became man" (410) refers, of course, to December 25th. This is St. Eugenia day.
44. AElfric's "world-picture" is explained in his piece called, "Sermo de Initio Creaturae," to be found in The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church, vol. 1, ed. Benjamin Thorpe (London: Richard & John F. Taylor, 1844).
45. As to such a "choice" being offered under pain of

death or, at least, dishonour, see also: Agnes (116ff);
Cecilia (221ff); Eugenia (358ff, 369ff).

46. One exception may be noted here. It is found in the Life of St. Cecilia where the Subjunctive renders the future sense, "become baptized":

Ɔa cwaedon Ɔa halgan gebroƆra Ɔe he on.

bendum laedde.

Bebeod bysum cwellerum Ɔaet hi us cuce healdan
on Ɔinum agenum huse. nu Ɔas ane niht.

oppaet Ɔu sy gefullod fram fyrnlicum

synnum....

(247-250)

Then said the holy brothers whom he was leading

in bonds;

'command these executioners to keep us alive

in thine own house now for this one night,

until thou be baptized from former sins....'

47. Again an exception may be made in the case of the Subjunctive usage in the Life of St. Cecilia. Note the verbal construction in Tiburtius' comment on the two crowns of paradise presented to Valerian and

Cecilia by the Angel. This speech occurs before the conversion of Tiburtius to Christianity, and thus the crowns are yet invisible to him:

Ic wundrige þearle hu nu on wintres daege
 her lilian blostm oppe rosan braep.
 swa wynsumlice and swa werodlice stincap.
 Ðeah þe ic hæfde me on handa þa blostman.
 ne mihton hi swa wynsumne wyrð-braep macian.
 and ic secge to soþan þaet ic swa eom afylled
 mid þam swetan braepa. swylce ic sy geedniwod.

(103-109)

'I wonder exceedingly how now, on a winter's day,
 here lily-blossom or rose's breath
 smells so winsomely and so sweetly.
 Though I had the blossoms in my hand
 they could not make such a winsome perfume;
 and I say in sooth that I am so filled
 with the sweet breath as if I were made anew.'

48. The Life of St. Agnes closes by stating that Constantia has a church built in honour of Agnes. Many people "wurdon gehaelede. þurh þa halgan agnen", 292 (were healed through the holy Agnes):

Ða romaniscan maedenu manega eac þurh-wunodon

on claenum maegphade. for cristes lufe.
 aefter agnes gebysnunga þe þær bebyrged is.

(293-295)

Likewise many of the Roman maidens continued
 in pure virginity for the love of Christ
 after Agnes' example, who is there buried.
 The Subjunctive poetic formula is not used to conclude
 the Life of St. Cecilia, but a tribute is nevertheless
 given to God:

and urbanus se papa bebyrigde hi arwurþlice.
 to wuldre þam aelmihtigan þe on ecnysse

rixap. AMEN.

(362-363)

And Urban the pope buried her honourably
 to the glory of the Almighty who reigneth in
 eternity. AMEN.

The Life of St. Lucy concludes similarly:

Ða araerde þa leoda. þær heo laeg cyrcan.
 and on hire naman gehalgodon: þam haelende to
 wyrþmynte
 seþe aefre rixap on ecnysse god. AMEN.

(150-152)

AMEN.

(131-135)

Many examples of such are there in books,
how oftentimes men and their wives have lived
wondrously,
and dwelt in chastity, to the glory of Jesus,
who consecrated virginity, even Christ our
Saviour;
to whom be honour and glory for ever. AMEN.

51. The Lives of Saints account for and praise the work of their central characters who may serve as examples of exceptionally virtuous Christian human beings; but the Saints, like all -- from the Christian point of view -- are ultimately the servants of God and it is to Him that the greatest and final accolades must be given.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the verbal patterns which AElfric created in his Lives of Aethelthryth, Agatha, Agnes, Cecilia, Eugenia and Lucy for the purpose of conveying his spiritual views. After an Introduction which reviews AElfrician criticism, the first chapter discusses how AElfric manipulates verbs and the aspectual features of Old English for the purpose of distinguishing three groups of beings, God, Christians, and pagans. A second chapter deals with AElfric's ability to convey both the nature of sanctity and the human aspect of a Saint through his understanding of the possibilities inherent in modal verbs. The way in which AElfric uses "beon" for describing the character of Saints, the natural order of the universe, and divine essence is pointed out in a final chapter. This dissertation demonstrates AElfric's ability to employ verbs for the purpose of manifesting his Christian philosophy.