A Cathedral Encountered:
Stories and Storytelling in Medieval Durham

EUAN MCCARTNEY ROBSON

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University College London

History of Art Department

2019

I, Euan McCartney Robson, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at how a medieval cathedral functioned, taking Durham Cathedral (begun 1093) as a case study. This is to say that it switches the focus away from *a priori* questions such as who planned, paid for, designed and built the cathedral (as well as when, for whom, with what materials, and even to what ends), and concentrates instead on how it was received. The ideas it evaluates, moreover, move beyond established conventions of compartmentalising style, tracing structural development, and decoding iconography. The "encounters" studied here sit at the intersection between body and building. They concentrate on the meanings they generated together, as dynamic and mutually enhancing agents.

In an attempt to consider, on a par, both object and subject, both cause and effect, evidence for the analyses that follow is sought out in medieval "stories" and "storytelling". How the cathedral thrilled, attracted, persuaded, frightened or even annoyed, these (and more) functions are all corroborated in contemporary sources. Just as critical, however, is the historically-contingent medieval viewer, for whom, in their particularity, such impressions neither sprang consistently, nor without mediation. Building throughout on the innate political and cultural alterity of the medieval world, a plurality of viewing communities is therefore emphasised along regional, social, professional and gendered lines. Over and above the conclusions it provides, these embodied perspectives are key: not just insofar as they might differ from, but ultimately compliment and augment, existing scholarship.

Durham Cathedral was an especially "storied" building, which is to stress its recurrence (then as now) in literature. In reality, however, the Norman foundation (begun in 1093) is less the subject here than a whole series of Durham Cathedrals, many long since torn down, some broken, the majority forgotten altogether. The result is a curiously fluid and fragmentary edifice that, belying its steadfast appearance today, was in the telling and re-telling for nearly four hundred medieval years.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Research into reception and the affective agencies of historic objects and images has developed swiftly in recent decades. As in other disciplines, medievalists working with a variety of subjects, methods and goals have followed the broad path first laid by the Konstanz school's work on *Rezeptionsästhetik*, literary criticism and reader-response theory. This thesis contributes to this larger ongoing project, but it is also an attempt to address a particular deficit of such analyses in the field of Anglo-Norman (or English Romanesque) studies. It is, thus, wide-ranging by nature, interdisciplinary, and of value potentially to a broad spectrum of academic interests.

"A Cathedral Encountered" draws on theories of mind and psychology, as well as phenomenology and architectural space. In an initial attempt to suggest certain of the more organic patterns of human thought (including but not limited to memory, emotion, and sensory-somatic experience), recourse to anthropology and even neuroscience was also necessary. Though their influence still indemnifies this thesis to a degree (no analysis of the "encounter", for example, stands in direct opposition to the broad principles of either subject) ultimately their respective contributions were not substantive. This isn't to suggest that students of the social or behavioural sciences would lack for compelling material here *per se* (to the contrary in fact, problems relating to society, relationships and human cognition are recurrent). Above all else though, this project is a contribution to art and architectural history, to the increasingly

diverse and dynamic methodologies for understanding the medieval world, and to the literary and linguistic cultures which underpinned it.

It is one of the fundamental contentions of this thesis that the material and immaterial remnants of pre-modern Europe were best understood when working together. Architecture, literature, sculpture, painting, the liturgy: all combined in the medieval cathedral to create meanings and experiences greater than the sum of their parts. Likewise, to larger productive ends, the above methodological means are brought together by design.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANS	*Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference of Anglo-Norman Studies*
Ant. J.	*Antiquaries Journal*
Arch.	*Archaeologia*
Arch. Ael.	*Archaeologia Aelina*
Arch. J.	*Archaeological Journal*
BAACT	*British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions*
Libellus de admirandis	*Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus Quae Novellis Patratae Sunt Temporibus*, 1 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1835)
Libellus de ortu	'Libellus de Ortu Sancti Cuthberti', in *Miscellanea Biographica*, ed. by James Raine, 8 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1838), pp. 63-87.
Capitula de miraculis	'Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus Sancti Cuthberti', in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. by Thomas Arnold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 333-362
Gesta pontificum	*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: The History of the English Bishops*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. by Michael Winterbottom and Rodney M. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007)

Gesta regum	*Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. by Roger. A. B. Mynors, Rodney M. Thompson and Michael Winterbottom, vol.1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998-9)
Historia Anglorum	*Historia Anglorum: The History of the English from AC 55 to AD 1154*, ed. by Thomas A. Arnold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
Historia regum	'Historia Regum', in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. by Thomas Arnold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 3-283
JBAA	*Journal of the British Archaeological Association*
Libellus de exordio	*Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*; *Tract on the Origins and Progress of this the Church of Durham*, ed. and trans. by David Rollason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000)
Rites of Durham/Rites	*The Rites of Durham: Being a Description or Brief Declaration of all the Ancient Monuments, Rites, and Customes Belonging or Being Within the Monastical Church of Durham Before the Suppression*, ed. and trans. by J. T. Fowler (Durham: Surtees Society, 1903)

TIMELINE OF WORKS

995

St Cuthbert's body is brought to Durham

Cuthbert is held in the *Ecclesia Alba* (or "white church"), a small whitewashed structure made from timber.

998

St Cuthbert is moved into the *Ecclesia Major* (or great church)

This is the second of three churches built on site, and is made from stone.

1071

William Walcher (d.1080) is appointed as Bishop of Durham

1080

William de St-Calais (also known as William of Saint Carilef; d. 1096) is appointed as Bishop of Durham

It is this William who later takes the decision, in 1092, to dismantle the *Ecclesia Major* and build a new cathedral "on a nobler and grander scale".

29th July 1093

The digging of the foundations of the new Norman cathedral begins

11th August 1093

Bishop William de St-Calais lays the cathedral's foundation stone

Construction follows on the stonework for the eastern arm, including the choir, the crossing and both transepts.

1099

Ranulf Flambard (d. 1128) is appointed as Bishop of Durham

Construction begins on the first two bays of the nave and lasts at least until 1128.

1104

Cuthbert is translated into the first east end

The entirety of the eastern arm, the crossing, all of the south transept, most of the north, and the two easternmost bays of the nave, are all now finished.

1128 (to 1133)

The nave is vaulted

Geoffrey Rufus is appointed as Bishop of Durham in 1133, by which point the rest of the cathedral is largely finished.

1133 (to 1140)

The Chapter House is built

1173 (to 1189)

Bishop Hugh le Puiset (d. 1195) builds the Galilee Chapel at the west end

It is later dismantled, in part, by James Wyatt in the late 18th century, before being reconstructed.

c. 1217 (to 1226)

The North and South Galilee Towers are built

1242-1280

The Chapel of the Nine Altars is built

Construction takes only two years less than it took to build the entire Norman cathedral initially.

1372-80

The Neville Screen is installed

It is donated to the cathedral by John Neville (d. 1388); all of its 107 figures are now lost.

Late 14th to early 15th centuries

Work continues in the monastic complex

Improvements are variously made to the cloisters, the chapter house, the scriptorium, the refectory, the kitchen, the undercroft and the dormitory.

15th century

The Rose Window is installed in the Chapel of the Nine Altars

The window was later "reconstructed" in the 18th century by James Wyatt, in the "style" of 13th century. Of what remains today, the majority dates to the 19th century.

1538 (to 1541)

The Benedictine monastery at Durham is dissolved

The last prior of Durham, Hugh Whitehead (d. 1551), becomes the first dean of the cathedral's secular chapter. St Cuthbert's shrine is pulled apart, his coffin is opened and his body (reportedly still incorrupt) is reburied in a plainer grave behind the altar.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The origins of this thesis lie with Eric Fernie. The reasons are numerous and, like my gratitude, beyond adequate summary here. One or two special acknowledgments, however, are essential to make. The body of scholarship that Eric has produced is as deep as it is wide and, although the timbre of my own research departs somewhat from it, it is only because of his ideas and persistent generous encouragement that it even exists at all. Of particular impact has been his *Romanesque Architecture: The First Style of the European Age*, a project to which I was lucky enough to make certain modest contributions as a Research Assistant, between 2011 and 2014. Eric argues in this book that theories about why Romanesque buildings took the forms that they did can be split into three main "functions": practicality, meaning and appearance. The first two—an especially robust pier supporting a lost tower for example or, more subtly, the fact that it was spiraled to indicate an area of higher liturgical significance—dominate in scholarship. Despite its relative neglect though, the third, the "effect of the building on the eye", was just as important, "if not more so" he stresses, as the function that most often drove patrons and masons to build. This, I took as an invitation. All faults and omissions must remain my own, but anything interesting and contributive that follows likely began in some form with this assessment.

At UCL, I could not have asked for a more insightful, committed and, above all else, sympathetic set of supervisors in Professor Robert Mills and Professor Alison Wright. To Bob, my primary, I owe a particular and substantial debt. Setting aside just how clear and effective

And, finally, to my wife Caitlin, who liked the bit about the fog, and to my new daughter Aella Emmeline: being on your team continues to mean the world to me. This thesis, such as it is, is very affectionately dedicated to you.

How would the painter or poet express anything other than his encounter with the world?

—Maurice Merleau-Ponty

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about function: how, why and—where possible—to what effects a medieval cathedral worked for its medieval audiences. It proceeds from a set of ideas which, though they gain in complexity over the course of four chapters, can be summarised relatively simply to begin with. This is one of the main tasks of this introduction, as well as a discussion of the objectives of the project, its relation to existing traditions of scholarship, its individual chapter structures, and finally a note on its scope/limits. The first and most essential task, though, is one of definitions: what do I take the terms "encounter" and "stories" or "storytelling" to mean? Why might they be important or interesting to the study of early medieval architecture, and what kind of judgements are ultimately at issue? At least six statements, all of which can essentially be taken as premises, seem sensible to begin with.

First, like its ancient relatives, the Latin words *incontrā* ("in front of") or *contrā* ("against"), an "encounter" is defined here fundamentally by a sense of two or more parties coming together. This is to stress physical proximity to the cathedral: that presence and engagement are key, that medieval bodies matter as much to the analyses that follow as medieval buildings.

Second, of the many types of "encounter" that might be analysed, none are separated from human sentiment and sensation (the generation of which is similarly taken, as a given, to be ineluctably, symbiotically, the product of both body and building). Aesthetic experience, interpretation, knowledge, belief: all were not only felt as well as rationalised simultaneously—

something we know about humans today from studies of mind and physiology—but actively triggered in the medieval world too, via conscious architectural decisions.[1] As with another close relation, therefore, the Old French *encontre*, which also implied a meeting of some kind but just as often a "confrontation", even a "fight", these "encounters" are always seen as reciprocal. Far from passively consuming the cathedral, the bodies studied here worked actively, counteractively on occasion, to direct and shape something new.[2] This, from Aristotle (d. 322 BC), was widely understood in medieval Europe at least from the late twelfth century. It is the idea that human audiences brought with them a company of "affects" (*affectus*): certain moods or dispositions, perhaps a specific memory or association, but just as likely a set of principles or judgments derived from reason and logic.[3] Thus, the "encounter" is seen a process, it is social by nature, and to some degree always arbitrary. It is situated there-and-then of course, in real-time and in a real place, but crucially it is also arrived at too, it is inescapably

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[1] The literature demonstrating the working relationship(s) of reason and emotion and/or mind and aesthetics is vast. Fundamental are James J. Gibson, *The Perception of the Visual World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950); Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); Richard Gregory, *The Intelligent Eye* (London: McGraw-Hill, 1970); and David Marr, *Vision* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1982). In relation to art and architecture specifically see also Harry Francis Mallgrave, *The Architect's Brain: Neuroscience, Creativity and Architecture* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) and, especially, Barbara Stafford, *Echo Objects: The Cognitive Work of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[2] The idea that the "viewer" is an active agent, in a dynamic real-time game of "give-and-take" with the world has its roots in the 1960s Konstanz school and *Rezeptionsästhetik*. See, in particular, the introduction by Paul de Man in Hans Robert Jauss, *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). See also Wolfgang Kemp, 'The Work of Art and Its Beholder: The Methodology of the Aesthetic of Reception', in *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 180-194. For medieval studies specifically see also Madeline Harrison Caviness, 'Reception of Images by Medieval Viewers', in *A Companion to Medieval Art*, ed. by Conrad Rudolph (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), pp. 65-85.

[3] Given that work began on Durham in 1093 it is important to stress here that even if interest in what is frequently termed the "affective turn" has principally focused on its later medieval flowering, many of its seeds were sown much earlier. Recent scholarship emphasising an evolutionary (as opposed to *re*volutionary) medieval understanding of affective "play" has commended the early contributions of, among others, Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167); Anselm of Canterbury (also known as Anselm of Bec; d. 1109) and his *Cur deus homo* in particular; Bernard of Angers (d. *c*. 1059) and the three other anonymous authors of the *Liber miraculorum sancte Fidis*; and even the panentheistic *De divisione naturae* (or *Periphyseon*) of John Scotus Eriugena (d. *c*. 877). See, especially, John Munns, *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Norman England: Theology, Imagery, Devotion* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016) and Barbara Newman, *God and the Goddesses Vision, Poetry, and Belief in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003). Were it not for these sources and studies, however, the extraordinary variety and playfulness of so much early medieval art and architecture still seems to make the point almost self-evident. See Madeline Harrison Caviness, '"The Simple Perception of Matter" and the Representation of Narrative, ca. 1180–1280', *Gesta*, 30.1 (1991), pp. 48-64.

the product of many other lived encounters, many other journeys to date.

Mary Carruthers has recently and powerfully argued for a jurisprudence of just this kind of aesthetic understanding, suggesting that the ancient concept of *ductus*—of literally "con*ducting*" oneself through a work of art—is critical to articulating the histories of medieval literature and rhetoric.[4] *Ductus* and its synonyms (*tenor*, *modus*, *color*, *via* and *iter*) reach, she writes, a "particular importance—even ubiquity—in medieval literary analysis".[5] Each term expresses and evaluates the experience of artistic forms as an ongoing, active and dynamic process. "*Ductus is* the way by which a work leads someone through itself", she argues, "…that quality in a work's formal patterns which engages an audience and then sets a viewer …in motion within its structures."[6] Carruthers' specific references to "motion", to "travelling" and especially to this idea of being led "along" or "through" a work of art, are I think very appealing insofar as an "encountered" cathedral is concerned.[7] Notably, many medieval sources couch the acquisition of particular, often special mental experiences (aesthetic satisfaction, elevated reasoning, the comprehension of scripture) in terms of a journey, the undertaking of which is frequently just as critical as the arriving.[8] Among others, the Franciscan philosopher, Bonaventure (d. 1274) was especially precise:

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[4] See Mary Carruthers, 'The *concept* of ductus, Or journeying through a work of art', in *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Art of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 190-213.

[5] *Ibid*., 190.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] Prevalent still in the *Quattrocento*—as recently studied in, for example, the letters of Ermolao Barbaro (d. 1493)—and traceable at least as far back as Cicero (d. 43 BC) and Quintilian (d. 100), "journeying" can in fact be numbered among the most recurrent tropes of the pre-modern world. See Virginia Cox, 'Rhetoric and Humanism in Quattrocento Venice', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 56.3 (2003), pp. 652-94 and Lucia Calboli Montefusco, '*Ductus* and *color*: the right way to compose a suitable speech', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 21.2 (2003), pp. 113-31.

Iuxta igitur sex gradus ascensionis in Deum, sex sunt gradus potentiarum animae per quos ascendimus ab imis ad summa, ab exterioribus ad intima, a temporalibus conscendimus ad aeterna, …scilicet sensus, imaginatio, ratio, intellectus, intelligentia et apex mentis seu synderesis scintilla.[9]

[As there are six steps of ascent to God, so there are six abilities of the soul by which we ascend from the bottom to the top, from things outside to those inside, by temporalities we climb to eternity, …the senses, imagination, reasoning, comprehension, intellection and the mind's peak, the spark of moral understanding.]

That his soul ascends is vital, upwards because it is harder, climbing to a "peak", from the "bottom to the top".[10] The process is effortful and thus enduring. "Steps" and "temporalities" and "abilities" are all incrementally, laboriously, won.[11] One by one, stage by stage, none can be skirted nor, once surmounted, can they be forgotten easily either: "These steps we have planted in us by nature", he went on, "…deformed by guilt, reformed by grace, cleansed by justice, strengthened by knowledge, perfected by wisdom".[12] Most importantly the journey is thus cumulative; every "step" relies on the one before it.[13] The impression each leaves on the

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[9] As his title, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, indicates immediately—*iter* meaning "journey" and *ārium* its "purpose"—the pursuit of God through movement is key. See Bonaventure, *Journey into God: Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, trans. by Josef Raischl and André Cirino (Phoenix: Vesuvius Press, 2012), p. 32.

[10] *Ibid*.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] "Hos gradus in nobis habemus plantatos per naturam, deformatos per culpam, reformatos per gratiam, purgandos per iustitiam, exercendos per scientiam, perficiendos per sapientiam". See Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, p. 32.

[13] *Ibid*.

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process is necessarily indelible in order to inform the next, to offer sufficient support to keep moving onwards (and upwards), to arrive—eventually—at an accumulated "understanding".[14]

Hence, and third, to the agencies of body and building I evaluate here, a final dimension is added too, that of lived circumstances. Insofar as the sources on Durham allow, those special steps and environments that defined the journeys *to*, and not just within the cathedral, also form critical concerns for every "encounter". An attempt is made here to incrementally tighten the focus from a broad sense of collective cultural conditioning (which is to say the thickest webs of Geertzian significance, what political pundits in the US often refer to as "baked-in" thought patterns) to the individual and the idiosyncratic.[15] This is something I am only able to suggest, and imperfectly at that, as a progressive narrative arc spanning all four chapters. That is because, while an exhaustive and orderly stratification of potential "encounters" (treated equitably, say, across a range of niche sociological categories) is a nice ideal, the surviving evidence makes anything quite so exacting highly impractical. Moreover, reality is just simply never that tidy anyway. It seems to me that our own embodied experiences do essentially confirm what psychoanalysis, deconstruction and hermeneutics have all long suspected. Stable consciousness is a myth, patterns of individual psychological habituation are complex, and the reduction or strict partition of either is (effectively) impossible. The aim here then is not so much to revive or "re-create" the unique historical experiences of persons *a*, *b* and *c*, than to hint at and—if possible—to colour in some of their shared dynamics of interiority.

Another way of putting this is that the approach here is consistently story-centric. The thematic divisions of self-identification towards which each chapter is successively arranged (more on which momentarily), were all cut and adjusted to fit the evidence, not *vice versa*. The fundamental foci and tenor of the stories that follow (which is to stress the specific types of

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[14] *Ibid.*

[15] See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

social, professional and gendered classes that they, not I, most frequently implicate) always lead the way. At the beginning of this project it did make a certain sense, in proportion both to the methodology and the typical length of PhD theses, to look at a single building as opposed to several; further to that, while studies interrogating the affective endowments of later medieval art and architecture have become increasingly numerous in recent years, the earlier medieval world (and the Anglo-Norman not least) seemed much more neglected; and, finally, whereas many first and second generation post-Conquest buildings have since fallen into disrepair, or been extensively remodeled, the original fabric at Durham is especially well preserved. None of these were incidental thoughts when it came to nominating the cathedral complex at Durham as a special case study here, but all were secondary, ultimately, to the unique scale and range of its surviving source material.[16]

Fourth, and on a related point of clarification: while what follows consciously embraces both the sensory and (to a lesser extent) the individual emotional faculties of the "encounter", it is not intended to be a thorough archaeology of either experience *per se*. There are several good reasons for this (not least of which is that the former has already been successfully attempted).[17] More to the larger point I've already begun though: precisely where the limits of such an approach ought to be drawn, why, and even by whom, might be slightly more difficult to pin down than they can at first appear. In his *De Anima*, book 3, part 1, Aristotle described a taxonomy of five senses.[18] These have since become so embedded in our collective consciousness that it is easy to forget that they were by no means self-evident to all pre-modern

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[16] It is impossible to do justice here to that body of literature, large as it is. For an excellent and recent assessment, however, see especially the introduction in Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the 11th and 12th Centuries* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003).

[17] See Emma Jane Wells, 'An Archaeology of Sensory Experience: Pilgrimage in the Medieval Church, c.1170-c.1550' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Durham University, 2013). While this thesis and my own share a number of interests, not least Durham and an emphasis on the reciprocal and mutually enhancing relationship of bodies and buildings, Wells' approach is to a greater extent archaeological and pilgrim-centric. The above paragraph and the next detail certain of the concerns which distinguish my own approach from others, some of which, though by no means all, also differ from 'An Archaeology of Sensory Experience'.

[18] Aristotle, *De Anima*, trans. by R. D. Hicks (New York: Read Books, 2008), pp. 73–112.

cultures. In his fourteenth-century poem *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, for example, William Langland (d. 1386) listed the five personified wits of the wise knight "Good Sense".[19] The first two, Sirs "See-well and Hear-well", echoed the Classical hierarchy of human faculties which— not unlike Foucault's surveillance, for example, or McLuhan's "Great Divide" theory— emphasised vision as the dominant modality of contemporary being.[20] The third son, however, Sir "Say-well", was a raconteur and the fourth and fifth, "Work-well-with-thine-hand" and "Godfrey Go-well" (i.e., moving and walking), both spoke to a sense of tactile-intuition (or kinaesthesia).[21] That neither of our modern predilections for smell and taste were invoked— the Old English word *smec* was often used, somewhat apathetically, to mean both—further attests to the point, in brief, that our "senses" have long been socio-cultural constructs.[22]

A simpler problem still, in truth, is the fact that visceral responses inevitably wax and wane; singular or neatly-compartmentalised modes of human feeling do not sit patiently awaiting our appraisal (especially at a distance of many centuries). Even when the stimulation of a body's sensory-emotive systems can be shown (or inferred) as the primary purpose for making a medieval object, care still needs to be taken to account for what we might call its "affective range". Again, we already know this pretty much intuitively. The first impression of any building, however rousing, is unlikely to be the same on the second, the fourth, or the hundredth visit. This might make for an obvious point if it were not for the fact that the challenge of distinguishing between, for instance, the accustomed experience of a resident monk and the inaugural impressions of a first-time pilgrim, is one most studies of medieval

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[19] William Langland, *Piers Plowman: The C Version*, trans. George Economou (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 94.
[20] *Ibid*.
[21] *Ibid*.
[22] On this last point see, especially, Lucien Febvre, 'Sensibility and History: How to Reconstitute the Emotional Life of the Past', in *A New Kind of History: From the Writings of Lucien Febvre*, trans. by K. Folca (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 12–26 and, more generally, *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Richard G. Newhauser (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

architecture do not take up.[23] Of course, even a short trip from the nave to the presbytery and back again can initiate a series of reflections so arcane or kaleidoscopic that no means of retrieval would ever suffice. The larger point, though, that the initial process of acclimating to a structure, of working it out or "wondering"—to borrow from Paul Binski—is not the end but merely "the start of thought and enquiry", is important.[24] "Wonder", as he puts it so well, is only what "*gets us going*".[25] To sense the world is not the same as to *make* sense of the world. Sensation is immediate and shocking. It is razor-thin, it floats between stimulus and stimulation, without ever being either. It is always emerging, always in flux, its meanings are yet to be processed. Affect, though, is what happens later, it is a much longer change within the body, caused by those initial sensations, as Aristotle knew.[26] The dynamism, the energy, and the chaos of that first spontaneous moment when, as for Hugh of Lincoln (d. 1200), our rational minds might be "suspended" is never fully lost from later reflections.[27] But it is always, inevitably, tempered in some way. Soon enough we gather or collect our thoughts, as the old sayings go; we ruminate on the way home, we "go over" what we've seen and felt. Then, when the time comes, some of us tell our story.

Thus, and fifth, it is sensible I think to make another clear distinction here between what could be termed the planned or imagined "encounter" (essentially whatever vision or desire was set out by a mason or patron) and that which actually took place. Assuming they are known, which often isn't the case, or that logic and inference can be reasonably applied to suggest an accurate set of building objectives, this is still no guarantee that to aim is to score, or that even

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[23] The exception, once again, is Emma Jane Wells. Wells distinguishes between three "participatory groups", these being "royalty, laity and a parochial society". See n. 15 above.

[24] See Paul Binski, 'Medieval Invention and its Potencies', *British Art Studies*, 6 (Summer 2017) https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-06/pbinski [accessed 3 December 2018].

[25] *Ibid*.

[26] On affect and the senses see, especially, 'Introduction: Making Sense' in Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 1-15.

[27] On Hugh of Lincoln here see, again, Paul Binski in n. 22 above.

the simplest or broadest plans will inevitably account for every outcome. Exactly how pronounced this leeway was between means and ends (in any given building), seems likely to have rested on at least three variables, none of which I think can be disregarded. Firstly, how familiar and/or how efficient were the makers of medieval buildings at channelling their local cultures of reception? (This is to double down on the importance of context and culture outlined above.) Second, how traditional or innovative was their project? (The least tried-and-tested designs, like Durham arguably, will logically have been the hardest to gauge.) And, finally, what types of demographics were in attendance? (A large well-known cult site, like Cuthbert's, seems much more likely to have attracted the most receptively diverse crowds, over and above, for instance, a small local parish.)

This, collectively, is to emphasise that while creative intent, craftsmanship and patronage are far from inconsequential to my approach (nor their satellite issues of representation, iconography, semiotics or *mimesis*), the first question to which every examination of Durham Cathedral is exposed here is not "what is this?", or "what was it meant to mean?", but "how did it actually work?". Maurice Merleau-Ponty was famous for claiming, among other things, that the "joy of art" lay in showing how something "*takes on* meaning".[28] His interest, like mine, was less in questions of where and when things were made, or even by whom and to what ends. Sometimes much the richer inquiry—and, in my experience, the least explored historically in studies of Anglo-Norman art and architecture—is in asking how and why they later functioned in practice (especially if differently). Typical, then, of what follows is a type of analysis that engages less with the circumstances surrounding the cathedral's original production than the varied and often even discrepant responses conjured during its long "after-life": in this case, a span of four centuries leading up to the Priory's formal

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[28] See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Sense and Non-Sense*, trans. by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 57.

surrender to the Crown in 1539.[29] It thus regularly traffics with that which cannot be read simply or seamlessly, that which is non- and sometimes even anti-semiotic, as well as a project as a whole that is essentially fated to remain unfinished: "never done, never closed" to borrow from Doreen Massey.[30]

This leads us to my sixth and final point. In discussing any ecclesiastical structure one is, of course, quite likely to yield plenty of subject matter that might be deemed religious. As a whole, though, my aim is not so much to reflect an image of a Christian building than a kind of mixed rhetorical sounding board. How the cathedral impressed, persuaded and delighted, but also how it intimidated, frightened and annoyed: all seem to me to be just as valid, as blueprints, for exploring how Durham functioned as an object "unveiled" onto a fundamentally human society.[31] It is for this reason, more than any other, that I am reluctant to impose any strict limits on what does or does not constitute a "story" here. Setting aside the fact that it makes sense to pull from a broader range of evidence when early medieval architectural ekphrases are generally so rare anyway (these will include annals, poems, allegory, histories, pseudo-histories and so on) there is another motivation too.

Emile Mâle, the "father" of medieval Christian iconography, famously began his most revered work, *The Gothic Image* (1958 [1898]), by asserting that the great cathedral was "first

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[29] On the afterlives of medieval art and architecture see, especially, Janet T. Marquardt and Alyce A. Jordan, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Art and Architecture after the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. vii-ix and pp. 1-17.

[30] See Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 9.

[31] The history of "unveiling" in this respect is old and complicated. Whereas for Aristotle (the villain of my analogy here) *technē* was a rational mode of craftsmanship, one he famously described in his *Nicomachean Ethics* as a "technical skill", to others like Plato it was always qualitatively distinct from *poiesis*, which brought art and architecture "into presence". See *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. vii. The makers of things, the former argued, essentially operated in a "reasoned productive state", largely unconcerned with higher ideals or abstract philosophy. Hence something of his cynicism towards the implicitly "lesser crafts" is often thought to have lingered in certain old aphorisms: "a gentlemen"—which is to say a free Attic man versed in the Liberal Arts—"…doesn't work with his hands". *Poiesis* though, Plato argued, was much more encompassing and closely linked to the "metaphysics of creative will". It was a method of making things too. But it also specified an "unveiling", a process that Heidegger and Agamben would later term "the production of *aletheia*": a kind of ongoing disclosure or opening up of things into the world. See especially Vrasidas Karalis, 'Martin Heidegger and the Aletheia of his Greeks', in *Aesthetics of Living*, ed. by Vrasidas Karalis (Cambridge: Cambriddge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 208-227.

and foremost a sacred writing of which every artist must learn the characters".[32] Objects of medieval art and architecture, he argued, were the clear and, in effect, almost passive manifestations of a predictable scholastic mindset. He elaborated:

> They [medieval people] organised art as they had organised dogma, secular learning and society. The artistic representation of sacred subjects was a science governed by fixed laws which could not be broken at the dictates of individual imagination.[33]

Mâle's Catholic, anti-secular and often uncomfortably nationalistic interpretation of medieval art found recurrent posthumous criticism. By contrast, however, his advocacy of a strict synchrony between text and image was largely spared and even perpetuated, at least until the late 1980s.[34] If it was not for the explicit relation of word to image that this project interrogates, this final point could go without saying. It has, after all, become quite fashionable in recent years—with good reason—to parody certain corners of medieval studies where this kind of excessive moralising still lingers.[35] For the sake of clarity though, I will stress that I have tried

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[32] See Émile Mâle, *L'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France: étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Âge et sur ses sources d'inspiration* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1898), p. 1. It is more commonly known in English as: Émile Mâle, *The Gothic Image*: *Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century,* trans. by Dora Nussey (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958). Employing first the *Speculum Maius*, a large medieval compendium drawn together by the Dominican Friar Vincent de Beauvais, Mâle later published two further enormously influential syntheses of medieval art and architecture (each predicated on a contemporary clerical source and each trained on recovering the "lost *language* of the [medieval] eye"). See Mâle, *The Gothic Image*, p. 13. The *Speculum Maius* ("The Great[er] Mirror") was comprised of three parts—the *Speculum Historiale* ("The Mirror of History"), the *Speculum Naturale* ("The Mirror of Nature") and the *Speculum Doctrinale* ("The Mirror of Doctrine")—and was itself largely derived from an earlier chronicle assimilated by the Cistercian monk Helinand of Froidmont (d. 1229/37). It was nearly unrivalled in breadth and, with the possible exception of Bartholomeus Anglicus's *De proprietatibus rerum,* it became the most frequented encyclopaedic work of the entire medieval period
[33] Émile Mâle, *The Gothic Image*, p. 30.
[34] In 1989 Michael Camille provided one of the first direct challenges. *The Gothic Idol*—a transparent and disparaging allusion to Mâle's *The Gothic Image*—caricatured both Male and the "old art history" as being too preoccupied with form and literary sources to the exclusion of more secular analyses, not least of "function" and "experience". See Michael Camille, *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[35] Mary Carruthers, for example, writes: "every flourish, every joke, every colour and ornament is said to conceal a lesson for the improvement of the viewer …one might well wonder if medieval people had *any notion of aesthetic experience or judgement at all*, or whether they could conceive of experience *only* in terms of Divinity

here, wherever possible, not to preempt or to presume judgments, but to allow the sources I unpack to speak for themselves (even when the results might seem unusual, at odds with existing scholarship, or even somewhat irreligious). And to these we can now turn for a closer look.

Stories and Storytelling

You have to be a fool, the revered philosopher of language John Austin once remarked, to rush in over ground already so well-trodden. To begin researching stories and storytelling is to be met with a formidable, not to mention ancient corpus, of chiefly theoretical work.[36] Many begin with an allusion to Aristotle's *Poetics* (*c*. 335 BC) or Horace's *Epistle to the Pisos* (*c*. 19 BC); and, if not, look for a note on the sheer ubiquity of their primary subject: something to the effect that every society indulges in "make-believe", that humans are "natural storytellers", shaping and sharing narrative almost by habit.[37] Thus, for Roland Barthes: "Like life itself, it is there, international, transhistorical, transcultural".[38] These trends to the timeless and possibly even innate properties of storytelling have resurfaced in recent years (and in medieval studies

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…and a pastorally motivated moral teaching (emphasis added)". See Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*, p. 8. Even the self-styled "historical *perspectivist*" Erich Auerbach—still a very prominent figure among medievalists today—epitomised the period with uncharacteristic myopia: "Their aim [medieval people] is not to bewitch the senses, and if nevertheless they produce lively sensory effects, it is only because the *moral, religious, and psychological phenomena* which are their *sole concern* are made concrete in the sensible matter of life (emphasis added)". See Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. by William Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 10-11.

[36] See, for example, Roland Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative', *New Literary History*, 6 (1974-5), pp. 237-72; Paul Cobley, *Narrative* (London: Routledge, 2001); Wolfgang Kemp, 'Narrative', in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson and Richard Schiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) pp. 58-69; and Suzanne Lewis, 'Narrative', in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. by Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 86-105.

[37] See, for example, Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 7.1 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 5-27.

[38] Barthes, 'Introduction to the Structural', p. 237.

not least, where manuscripts, plays, comic books, film and social media have all formed rich diachronic alliances). And yet, stories still remain both fundamental and ephemeral.

Of those that follow, many do speak to perennial human themes: to violence, to conquest, to politics, even to love. Just as certainly though, they are shot through with the ways in which their individual narrators—particular voices situated in their own particular places— worked to come to terms with them. The hows, whys, whens and wheres of those dynamics are no less valuable, but inevitably much more speculative. This isn't to apologise *per se*, my approach is firmly source-anchored, but to admit sympathy for what are sometimes called the "hermeneutics of suspicion".[39] I have tried, wherever possible, to read these stories (as well as their tellers) against the grain, to interrogate self-evident statements, and to chase what Rita Felski calls the "less visible" and sometimes "less flattering" realities of literary construction.[40] Serious, if ever-present and essentially conventional challenges still surround such an approach, but they are also further compounded by a second, the specifics of which need to be clearly stated right away.

Not only have historians of post-Conquest England suffered more than most from a fragmentary and/or compromised architectural record, we've also been left to deal with a matching paucity of written sources, not least those relating to agency and reception.[41] What

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[39] The "hermeneutics of suspicion" was a term coined by Paul Ricoeur and aimed at summarising the shared "school of suspicion" in Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche. See Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970).

[40] See Rita Felski, 'Critique and the Hermeneutics of Suspicion', *M/C Journal: A Journal of Media and Culture*, 15.1 (2012), [online] available at: http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/431./0 [accessed 09/03/18]. See also Amanda Anderson, *The Way We Argue Now: A Study in the Cultures of Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Rita Felski, 'Suspicious Minds', *Poetics Today*, 32.2 (2011), pp. 215–34; and Drew Milne, 'Introduction: Criticism and/or Critique', in *Modern Critical Thought: An Anthology of Theorists Writing on Theorists* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 1–22.

[41] No English source from the mid-tenth to the mid-twelfth-century, for example, can even plausibly rival the detailed ekphrases offered by Procopius of Caesarea and, later on, Gervase of Canterbury during the rebuilding of the Gothic cathedral. See Procopius of Caesarea, *On Buildings*, trans. by Henry Bronson Dewing and Glanville Downey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949) and Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury, Volume 2: The Minor Works Comprising the Gesta Regum with its Continuation, the Actus Pontificum and the Mappa Mundi*, ed. by William Stubbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

accounts have survived seldom align with anything like those of modern criticism. And even those that sometimes do are rarely (if ever) anywhere near as exacting. Accounts mentioning churches, in particular, tend either to be generalised and platitudinous, located in well-rehearsed topoi, or, as Sandy Heslop once put it pointedly, riddled with "ambivalence and contradictions".[42] Insofar as Anglo-Norman architecture can be thought of as a mode of address, therefore, or as a built embodiment of speech and feeling, the rhetorical mode has typically been much harder than logic and politics to substantiate. And it has remained, as such, the easiest to neglect. There is, though, a very compelling case to suggest I think that it was chief among them all as the function that—however mercurial—most frequently sold projects to patrons, motivated master masons and brought the faithful to worship. This is both the challenge and the major balance of risk and reward on which this thesis hangs: the distance, for better or for worse, between what follows and the field to which Durham belongs in its current state. We can turn there briefly now.

With few exceptions, the names and careers of Anglo-Norman architects are very poorly attested.[43] Consequently, the churches and great cathedrals they built have long been the foci of a scholarly tradition emphasising formal and stylistic development, over and above the humanness of their making. Conceptualised as a sequence of taxonomies subdivided by appearance, chronology and region, for the majority of nineteenth-century scholars (Robert Willis, Gerard Baldwin Brown and John Bilson to name only the most prolific) the story of Anglo-Norman architecture comprised a gradual evolution of motifs driven by internal motive

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[42] See T. A. Heslop, 'Attitudes to the Visual Arts: The Evidence from Written Sources', in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, ed. by Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987), pp. 26-32. Of course, it must be emphasised that the blame for any and all of these problems cannot be placed solely at medieval feet. That medieval sources did not forsee the tone or substance of modern writing cultures, or that modern reading (however we define it) can sometimes lead us to a perception of ambivalence or inexactitude in the past, and thus to frustration, can be no one's fault but our own. The point here is not to denigrate or to praise, but to illustrate a broad (if sometimes inconsistent) difference between medieval and modern ways of using text. This is one reason why an approach such as the one taken here might be rare.

[43] Some of these being Leofsi Duddesunu, Godwin Gretsyd, Teinfrith, Blitherus and Robert of Canterbury, about all of whom (unfortunately) we still know next to nothing at all.

forces.[44] Embodying many of the fashionable *modi operandi* of Modernism, the study of ecclesiastical architecture, in particular, was for a long time largely teleological by design, emphasising incremental developments of low to high, young to mature, simple to complex. At their heart was the resolution of a framework of discrete formal, structural and spatial problems, within which a building's visual appearance became, in effect, the product of an almost autonomous and self-contained discourse of stylistic interaction. With affect and architectural causality playing a limited role, human agency and interaction were reduced to ancillary characters in the narrative too, at best only tangentially relevant—if at all—to the sweeping arcs of progressive artistic development which dominated the period.

From the early twentieth century onwards, analyses of early medieval architecture more broadly did see a noticeable, if often only incremental shift, towards new approaches invoking greater human context. The biographical was preeminent among them, with scholars such as William Lethaby, John Harvey, Jean Bony and later Malcolm Thurlby all working to uncover the hidden or otherwise "forgotten" lives of master masons.[45] Just as influential, as in Gothic studies, was the emergence of an iconography of the Romanesque world, which emphasised the shared semiotic properties of buildings across Europe, and especially the ways in which they emulated other canonical structures.[46] Here, then, was where authorial intention was opened up in earnest, with the idiosyncratic "hands" of singular dominant characters (and

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[44] In respect of Durham see, in particular, Robert Willis, *Remarks on Architecture of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: J. & J. J. Deighton, 1835); Gerald Baldwin Brown, *From Schola to Cathedral: A Study of Early Christian Architecture and its Relation to the Life of the Church* (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1886); John Bilson, 'The East End of Durham Cathedral', *Journal of the RIBA*, 2 (1895), pp. 546-8; John Bilson 'Durham Cathedral: the Chronology of its Vaults', *Arch. J.*, 79 (1922), pp. 101-60.

[45] See, for example, W. R. Lethaby, *Westminster Abbey and the King's Craftsmen* (London: Duckworth, 1906); John Harvey, *English Mediæval Architects: A Biographical Dictionary Down to 1550* (London: Sutton, 1954); Christopher Wilson, 'The Origins of the Perpendicular Style and its Development to circa 1360,' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1980); Jean Bony, 'The Stonework Planning of the First Durham Master', in *Medieval Architecture and its Intellectual Context: Studies in Honour of Peter Kidson*, ed. by Paul Crossley and Eric Fernie (London: A&C Black), 1990, pp. 19-34; and Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Roles of the Patron and Master Mason in the First Design of the Romanesque Cathedral of Durham', in *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, ed. by David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 161-84.

[46] Eric Fernie, *Romanesque Architecture: Design, Meaning and Metrology* (Oxford: David Brown Book Company, 1995).

schools) becoming key talking points. Both eventually expanded to consider the impact of building works on local economies too, with a renewed interest in patronal agency in particular taking centre stage.[47] These were all ways that the broader project of "peopling" Anglo-Norman architecture was undertaken.

Only relatively recently however (in comparison with, say, analyses of modern and contemporary architecture and, even then, most notably in Gothic studies) have medievalists such as Madeline Caviness, Mary Carruthers, Jacqueline E. Jung, Paul Crossley and Paul Binski begun to really explore the people *in front of* as opposed to behind medieval buildings.[48] Using what is sometimes termed the "aesthetic" or "experiential" approach, these studies often build on the slightly older scholarly impulse—as Robert S. Nelson's influential volume on "visuality" put it so well—to see "as others saw": to not only poke at, but to somehow get inside the medieval "mind's eye".[49] Almost on a par now, in studies of medieval aesthetic theory, with Gregory the Great's (d. 604) famous exoneration of religious imagery, is the Augustinian (d. 430) ranking of visual modes, a framework that, for all of the bishop's perspicuity, fluctuated in its tone and effect across the medieval world. In spite of the distance he sought between his own particular brand of "vision" and the earthly restrictions of the material body, medievalists have repeatedly concluded that corporeality was an essential mechanism in medieval systems of vision. Jill Ross, Peggy McCracken, E. Jane Burns,

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[47] See most recently, for example, *Romanesque Patrons and Processes: Design and Instrumentality in the Art and Processes*, ed. by Jordi Camps, Manuel Castiñeiras, John McNeill and Richard Plant (Routledge: London, 2018). See also *Art and Patronage in the English Romanesque*, ed. by Sarah Macready and F. H. Thompson (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1986); Douglas Knoop and Gwilym Jones, 'The Impressment of Masons in the Middle Ages', *Economic History Review*, 1 (1937), pp. 57-67; and Douglas Knoop and Gwilym Jones, *The Mediæval Mason* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1933).

[48] See, for example, Caviness, 'Reception of Images by Medieval Viewers', pp. 86-105; Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages*; Jacqueline E. Jung, *The Gothic Screen: Space, Sculpture, and Community in the Cathedrals of France and Germany, ca. 1200-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Paul Crossley, '*Ductus* and *Memoria*: Chartres Cathedral and the Workings of Rhetoric', in *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Art of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mary Carruthers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 214-249; and Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder: Art, Artifice and the Decorated Style 1290-1350* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014).

[49] See *Visuality before and beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Suzannah Biernoff and Georgia Frank, have all demonstrated (if variously) the extent to which medieval "looking" was thought of, in fundamental terms, as an embodied process.[50]

Galen's (d. 210) theory of extramission—whereby the active rays of the eye functioned as a kind of *pneuma* that both lit and felt the world—was very well known throughout medieval Europe; indeed, it still ignites a special kind of quick scholarly thrill today. "Extramissive" or "intramissive", in any case both systems necessarily bridge a gap of some kind, they bring the image or, in this case, the cathedral "into sight". They depend by definition on the spaces between viewer and object. With such an emphasis on movement and journeying in this thesis, the issue of proximity is a natural one too: the need to distinguish a scale of looking, ranging from far to near, with different viewing distances inevitably making possible (or impossible) different modes of response. This is, therefore, another type of focus for the "encounter" here that is progressively tightened over all four chapters. Whereas, however, questions of space, kinaesthetic awareness and depth perception now combine almost instinctively for students of postmodern architecture—especially those familiar with Pierre von Meiss's *Elements* (1990 [2013])—the medieval cathedral's plastic connections to the somatosensory peripheries of the body are often underdescribed.[51] This sense of containment, though, of being *within* and thus in intimate personal conference with a space was clearly something that medieval sources knew about instinctively. Not for no reason do so many of the stories that follow offer shorthands for Psalm 26.8 when describing churches of which they were either admiring, afraid, or both:

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[50] See, for example, Jill Ross, *Figuring the Feminine: The Rhetoric of Female Embodiment in Medieval Hispanic Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); *From Beasts to Souls: Gender and Embodiment in Medieval Europe*, ed. by E. Jane Burns and Peggy McCracken (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013); Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); and Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[51] See Pierre von Meiss, *Elements of Architecture: From form to place* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

"Lord, I have loved the glory of thy house", William of Malmesbury (d. 1143) wrote for instance, "…the place where your presence dwells" (*habitationis gloriae tuae*).[52]

If a certain disconnect still remains between studies of Anglo-Norman architecture and precisely these kinds of embodied operations, then it is perhaps only par for the course for a field within which detachment from the leading edges of methodological culture is often something of a *leitmotif*. Saying in print what others perhaps daren't, Tadhg O'Keeffe recently stated that there is simply just a "scholarly squeamishness" in Romanesque studies about such "'non-objective'" evaluations of buildings.[53] If this might sound like an over-blunt criticism of a broad and dynamic discipline, given the many challenges outlined above the weight of evidence does still seem to hint that it is fair to a degree. While it is, for example, more or less axiomatic for architectural historians of other eras like Alice Friedman that "*subjectivity* is as much the subject as the building itself", what O'Keeffe pointedly terms the "objective" or otherwise "scientific" approach, still rules the Romanesque roost.[54]

This is all to say that the journey I hope to take, while explorative, nonetheless obliges me to pick a route through two fairly well-established perspectives (both of which I am indebted to in various ways). I am not the first to suggest that many of the most influential studies of Anglo-Norman architecture owe enormous dues to several deep-rooted schools of British empirical enquiry, archaeology and antiquarianism.[55] Nor will I be the last to chase that

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[52] See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. by Roger. A. B. Mynors, Rodney M. Thompson and Michael Winterbottom, vol.1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998-9), pp. 738-9.

[53] Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Archaeology and the Pan-European Romanesque* (London: Duckworth, 2007), pp. 82-3. For at least one (arguably quite precocious) defence of Romanesque experiential analyses, broadly defined, see Eric Fernie, 'Archaeology and Iconography: Recent Developments in the Study of English Medieval Architecture', *Architectural History,* 32 (1989), pp. 18-29.

[54] See Alice Friedman, 'In This Cold Barn We Dream', *Art Bulletin*, 76.4 (1994), p. 575 and, again, Tadhg O'Keeffe, *Archaeology and the Pan-European Romanesque*, pp. 82-3.

[55] See, for example, Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Alfred Clapham, *English Romanesque Architecture after the Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934); and Heinfried Wischermann, 'Romanesque Architecture in Great Britain', in *Romanesque: Architecture, Sculpture and Painting*, ed. by Rolf Toman (Cologne: Ullman and Könemann, 2004), pp. 216-51.

suggestion by noting that a certain separation has arisen in recent years between these *de facto* "traditionalists"—for whom facts and formalism often seem sacred—and the field's emerging "pluralists", for whom (put just as crudely) many recent moral interpretations sometimes make facts themselves seem problematic. Paul Binski put it sharply with his critique of a certain strain of formalist thought that hasn't yet quite "grown out of the suspicion of rhetoric with which architectural history as a discipline was first cursed".[56] For some historians "[l]anguage is *just* language, mere words", he wrote, no more than "'flapdoodle'", in comparison with which "architecture is somehow [more] 'real'".[57] Inasmuch as there are two wings alone to this intellectual spectrum (there must of course be more: most scholarship, no less than history, is neither quite this summary nor as teleological), both still tend in any event to share a general apprehension of human embodiment and the sensory-affective powers of surface and space. Only a small minority appear especially interested, this is to say, in subjects rather than objects, bodies *as well as* buildings and, ultimately, the special kinds of intermingling agencies generated in between.

Ultimately, if the primary responsibility of art and architectural history is the study of the image/object then the relation of image/object to word always brings into focus new and rich opportunities. Bringing stories to bear on architecture has the intrinsic advantage of focusing attention on the social dynamics of "encountering". We need look no further, for instance, than the contrasting modes of icono*philic* and icono*phobic* construction narrated by Abbot Suger (d. 1151) and Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153)—their respective ethics of curiousness (*curiositas*) and excess (*superfluitas*)—to see the substantial analytical currency this carries.[58] Similar though each of their churches might have been in certain basic

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[56] See Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder*, pp. 1-25.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] See Abbot Suger, *On the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*, ed. and trans. by Erwin Panofsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) and Conrad Rudolph, *The 'Things of Greater Importance': Bernard of Clairvaux's 'Apologia' and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

architectural terms, the ways and ends to which they were "storied" could hardly have been starker. At bottom though, they still held in common the same essential conviction that buildings spoke, that they engaged their audiences by design, that they could not only persuade and edify but (just as easily) discourage, distract, even corrupt.

Though a great many images in the cathedral were of course understood (and thus can still be to a degree) as literal or near-literal adaptions of biblical stories, the edges of their functions were not always so simply or impeccably drawn. Because didactic imagery can both "stand in" for a particular text, but also supplement it in various ways (including inadvertently), it is worth keeping an eye out, not only for the ways that images *should* be read, but how and why they might be—not misread *per se*—but misaligned. Michael Camille put it best when he wrote that, actually, "the special power of combining words and pictures" lies precisely in this kind of potential for "excess" or "interference".[59] Often, in fact, the most compelling medieval images were those that "distort[ed] the all-too-easy signification of language", those that forced "questions about categories, labels, and realties between *res et verba*".[60] Camille thus made the case while cautioning, in effect, for the value of an image that dissents.

However we think about it, as W. J. T. Mitchell has written, the systems of communication which dominate our modern world have already rendered that interplay of word and image far more complex and capricious than ever before.[61] Since the 1960s, Richard Rorty's characterisation of the "linguistic turn" has morphed into what Mitchell now terms the "pictorial turn": a shift he attributes to the moment when Michel Foucault first exposed the rift between the discursive and the "visible".[62] But perhaps the most consequential change, as far

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[59] See Michael Camille, 'Seeing And Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Art History* 8.1 (March, 1985), pp. 43.
[60] *Ibid*.
[61] W. J. T. Mitchell, 'Word and Image', in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. by Robert S. Nelson and Richard Schiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 50.
[62] See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 263 and W. J. T Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 11-34.

as this thesis is concerned, actually came when Ernst Gombrich shifted the locus of pictorial meaning away from the image to the place of those perceiving it.[63] It was Gombrich's interrogation of the cognitive apparatuses of "looking" that first empowered us to frame narrative meaning and its reading within effective schemes of psychological and psycho-cultural conditioning. As soon as the spectator joined the exchange—and was emphasised as active and dynamic—theories of how and why narrative images continued to function, beyond the hard fact of themselves, were opened up to a much broader range of possibilities.

These are too many to describe here, but it will suffice I hope to say that the (post)modern work largely collated under the rubric "narratology" (an anglicisation of Tzvetan Todorov's *narratologie*) is especially salient.[64] Its stand-out attribute, what is often labelled "double structuring", puts a stress on the story (*histoire*) in question, but just as crucially too, on its telling (discourse or *récit*). To chase the hidden significance in medieval stories let alone medieval storytellers though, is still no mean feat. Making sense of life and being has never exactly been the same thing as putting it on a page, hence the scope of the word "sense" itself (like the Old French *sens*) which implicitly includes the intuitive: what is thought and felt but not necessarily always said out loud.

All of the texts introduced here, like the concepts and the cathedral they signify for, have their own complex histories too. "Neither Oxford dons nor the Academie française", as Joan Wallach Scott once put it so memorably, have been able to fully shelter language from so many subsequent waves of "human invention and imagination".[65] To adopt T. S. Eliot's famous appraisal, old words are always liable to

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[63] See Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

[64] See, in particular, Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

[65] Joan Wallach Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Categry of Historical Analysis', in *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, ed. by Elizabeth Weed (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 81.

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

Crack and sometimes break under the burden

Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,

Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,

Will not stay still.[66]

And yet, the world of early medieval narrative, in particular, has long been thought of as an especially rich picking-field by literary historians. In his *Romanesque Signs*, a study of early medieval narrative, Stephen Nichols for instance argued that the telling of stories underwent a radical overhaul in eleventh-century Europe, becoming one of the more profound symptoms of a much larger ideological shift: "to make the past present".[67] One common aim, he argued, was to show that the present belonged to a "coherent cosmogony", that it "manifested a divine plan of the universe".[68] The keys to this plan lay in applying knowledge of past events—not just the Christ story, but the histories of local saints and their miracles—to an ongoing unravelling of Salvation history. Situated between the beginning and the end of the world, but always in some way in close proximity to both, early medieval narrative was a closed and introspective system. Stories and storytellers, that is, set down a fairly consistent ground of discursive patterns, from which buildings like Durham emerged. Implicit, in fact, in the very idea that time unfolded sequentially, as a series of revelations brought by a God acting purposefully, was the principle that everything that happened *was a story*. Every event, every decision (indeed, every building) was possibly significant, even if in real-time the what and the why were sometimes only known

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[66] T. S. Eliot, 'Burnt Norton', *Four Quartets* (San Diego: Harcourt Inc.), p. 19.
[67] Stephen G. Nichols, *Romanesque Signs: Early Medieval Narrative and Iconography* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. xi.
[68] *Ibid*.

to God.[69] Not without exception, recent architectural investigations of medieval narrative have largely focused on identifying the texts—Pope Gregory's letters to Serenus (d. 604), Theophilus Presbyter's *De diversis artibus*, Bernard's *Apologia* to William of St. Thierry— that generated images inside buildings.[70] Perhaps a much sharper critical edge might lie though, I want to argue, not in asking what these texts were, than in how images added to and augmented their stories.

Some Notes on Chapter Structures

After this introduction, the thesis that follows is arranged into four chapters and a conclusion, each of which is subdivided for greater clarity. Chapter one performs two main tasks. First, it sets the analytical tone for what follows: a precedent is established in terms of how and why sources are unpacked, and a number of recurring themes are introduced, including the idea of a sociable cathedral and its connection to its natural environment. Second, and where the analysis really begins in earnest, is the task of laying the first layer of collective cultural conditioning for the "encounter", from which every subsequent chapter builds. This is done by situating the cathedral within a national and international context, that is as a properly "Anglo-Norman" structure. The key lens through which this assessment unfolds is one of Durham's most immediately striking architectural characteristics: its enormous size. What is sometimes termed the gigantic or "heroic" mode of building has been analysed very well by Paul Binski

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[69] See also Evelyn Birge Vitz, *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology: Subjects and Objects of Desire* (New York: New York University Press, 1989), pp. 111-12.
[70] See, for example, Caecilia Davis-Weyer, *Early Medieval Art, 300-1150: Sources and Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

in his *Gothic Wonder*, but it was also a defining hallmark of the Romanesque and post-Conquest worlds too. Little information survives to suggest in any explicit terms why the cultures of the period deemed to build so enormously. But the extent to which an otherwise simple-seeming feature of an edifice, its largeness, could actually affect and provoke such a complex range of responses is indicative of the nuance that defines the "encounters" here throughout.

In chapter two the focus narrows slightly more, and the case is made that there is particular and substantial value to situating the cathedral in its local context(s), not least because the Northumbrian "region" or "province" (to borrow the epithets favoured by late eleventh- and early twelfth-century sources) was both the last to be annexed into Anglo-Saxon England and the most violently hit by Norman hegemony. Here we look at the cathedral's second most eye-catching feature, its decoration. In the process an attempt is made to open up a broader diachronic dialogue that asks how, and to what ends, this technically precocious Norman edifice may actually have spent much of its time looking, not to the new, nor to the future, but somewhat nostalgically to the very deep Northumbrian past.

In chapter three, the cultural spotlight narrows still further, leaving collective considerations fully behind for the first time, in favour of the individual operations—split roughly in half—of lay and clerical communities. If my first two chapters are concerned with the twin defining attributes of Durham Cathedral today, its sheer scale and its decoration (in large part the exterior and interior perspectives respectively), then chapter three looks at the process through which one might move between the two. One of the primary objectives for building churches—and especially such large and voluminous structures like Durham—was to provide a suitable setting to perform the liturgy: to instruct (*docere*), to delight (*delectare*) and to move (*permovere*), on a stage befitting the drama of its subject. As well as the roles undertaken by clerics in this respect, pilgrims and pilgrimage are specially explored. In order

to reach the east end, and the cathedral's holiest spaces, each figure would have been able to navigate a route through the church largely (if not completely) of their own accord. Many rhetorical flourishes were there to guide them along the way: a sequence of "modes" (*modi*) and "colours" (*colores*) which evolved over time and worked in concert, mutually enhancing one another's shared meanings. Seen in this way, the similarities between the psychological and physiological journeys of literature and architecture—of the mind and the cathedral respectively—are at their most compelling. The east-to-west axis of the church forms the main structural coordinator of this process: from altar to altar, image to image, we move through (and via) specific doors, entries and screens, before reaching a climactic and highly-choreographed end with Cuthbert's shrine.

Finally, at our narrowest demographic focus now in chapter four, we look at the fact that throughout the medieval period Durham was an especially active location for the production of anti-female literature. Even though what we might think of as misogynistic or gynephobic behaviour today was, to a greater or lesser extent, par for the course at many English Benedictine priories, the sheer volume, combined with the rhetorical complexity of its many miracle stories, makes Durham unique among early medieval cult sites. Cuthbert's tradition of misogyny speaks especially well, moreover, to one final and (as we have already suggested) somewhat neglected aspect of early medieval architecture: space.

This final chapter, in distinguishing between male and female difference in particular, is intended to be summative of the previous three to a degree, but by no means conclusive. For a few final comments on exactly where and why I hope to draw the lines for this study, we can now look to its scope and limits.

Scope and Limits

To begin a project like this one, let alone to claim it as finished, is a real challenge. The early medieval cathedral has been expansively studied, making the questions that might be asked of it, not only numerous, but easily as nuanced in most cases as they are profound. For all of the omissions that were necessarily entailed, the focus and the rationale for what does follow should by now be a little clearer. Like many theses, the aim here is not to be exhaustive necessarily, nor definitive, but explorative and—where possible—experimental. Having laid claim to a little clear air, what follows is essentially a test flight. A range of image and literary methods, each with their own rhythms and temper, have all aided in steadying the course. Even so, Durham is such a physically large and theoretically complex space that no study—let alone such an atypical one—can reasonably aspire to tame every dialogue that intersects in its analysis. Given greater space and time, therefore, a number of other considerations would likely have been beneficial.

I have not been able, for instance, to discuss painting in any great detail (whether in relation to the figures that survive in the Galilee, the overall repainting of the thirteenth century, or the images recently uncovered in the prior's chapel). To a slightly lesser extent, I have also been forced to neglect the stained glass and much of the sculpture (although the majority of both has, of course, long been lost to us). And even though there was never likely to be room for a thoroughgoing art-historical and/or codicological account of the manuscripts I have discussed, these would have married very nicely I suspect as physically "encountered" objects too.

Medieval cathedrals, on account of their continued use, have been added to, changed, stripped down, and sometimes even dismantled and rebuilt altogether. In light of this persistent fragmentation, it is sometimes unfortunate that buildings like Durham (where, relative to others, the original fabric has survived so well) are so often pulled apart still further into constituent intellectual units: architecture, glass, metalwork, illumination etc. Here I have taken a more generalist approach in the belief that many of these aspects of the structure will have spoken to one another and, in the process, mutually enhanced a shared set of meanings that might otherwise be sacrificed if considered in isolation. That said, this approach must itself necessarily omit or gloss over certain features, often simply for the sake of brevity, that might otherwise have occurred to a more specialist study.

My aim, further to that, has not been to isolate—as others interested in issues of medieval agency and reception have sometimes done—a distinctive lexicon from which storytellers at Durham lifted in order to describe specific art and architectural experiences: beauty, wonder and so on.[71] This, I have come to think, would not have been an artificial exercise *per se*, but one that the available evidence (in its variety) did not leave me comfortable making. On a related point, though the Anglo-Saxon, Hiberno-Saxon and Scandinavian worlds all feature quite prominently in my analyses, especially in chapter two, I could not find room for Scotland, despite the fact that it has a great claim to being just as historically influential. Barring one or two short references, moreover, Durham's architectural relationship with Lindisfarne Priory is one I was forced to mostly exclude, as well as Finchale, Chester-le-Street and Ripon. With certain exceptions in chapters three and four, there was little space available to look very far beyond the main body of the church either. More might have been said, for example, about the west range, the undercroft, the dormitory, the dining room, the Great

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[71] Mary Carruthers, of course, has written on the former, and Paul Binski the latter. Those works in full are: Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014).

Kitchen and especially the building with which the cathedral shares the peninsula: Durham Castle.

Of all of these omissions, several might seem quite odd (the castle perhaps especially), but it is worth stressing once again that the approach pursued here is firmly story-centric. In most cases, even going back to the painting and the glass, a decision to exclude them was never consciously taken. Rather, the sources simply never led me there in any substantial fashion. As might be implicit at this point, my first and main interest here lies less with Durham itself and its surviving physical forms, than the ways and means by which we, today, might choose to study them. The methodology and the stories, this is to say, always lead the way. If certain sections might read as digressions or individual essays, or if certain lacunae might seem to emerge as we go along, especially to those more familiar with Durham, then this is a necessary condition of my approach. In any event though, there is I think good reason to prefer an essay format to a monograph. It is perhaps better to be terse and suggestive, than to offer a false impression of encyclopaedism. In truth, if these four chapters initiate rather than limit the association of other images and ideas, other sources, other modes of analysis (all of which I might perhaps have included but chose not to), then they will have served part of their purpose: to generate further discussion.

1

BUILDING IN STORIES

Shortly after 2.33am, on the 1ˢᵗ of May, 1942, air-raid sirens rang out across the city of Durham. A fleet of Luftwaffe bombers had been spotted approaching the coast and were only minutes away from flattening its eight-hundred-year-old cathedral. Describing what happened next an operative on duty with the Royal Observer Corps recorded: "I shall believe to the end of my days that I witnessed a miracle".[1] With an uncanny haste a thick white mist rose up from the River Wear, shielding the entire peninsula from view. The Germans circled blindly overhead several times, before unleashing a torrent of incendiaries. Moments later, as the planes retreated, the mysterious mist vanished, as if satisfied, revealing the building to be entirely unscathed. Thus, to the long tradition of the cathedral's stalwart guardian, the "Mist of St Cuthbert" was attributed more than twelve hundred years after his death.

Sceptics, then as now, protested. And yet to doubt—however reasonably—the innate capacity of a building to defend itself is to stand at odds with a persistent tradition of storytelling that stretches back well over two millennia. In antiquity, the *genius loci* was the protector, the spirit and the instinctive animation of built space. Its existential status as a living character meant that its presence and the products of its agency could be seen and felt by its

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[1] See Martin Dufferwiel, *The A-Z of Curious County Durham* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014), p. 78. With some light prompting, I have also heard several remarkably similar versions of this same story told by Welcome Stewards in recent years, on site, during visits to the cathedral.

occupants. As such, its favour (not unlike a Christian saint) could be courted: locally in the *vicus* by votive means or, more grandly, in the imperial cults of the Emperors, with Augustus often being depicted as a *genius* of Rome in its entirety. From the Etruscan roots *lar* or *larth* (meaning "lord"), something of the powerful dominion of Ancient Rome's *lares*—the minor tutelary deities of her suburbs (*Lares Vici*) and households (*Lar Familiaris*)— can also be inferred. The household *lar* in Plautus' *Aulularia*, for instance, not only narrates much of the play himself, but secretly pulls all the moral strings. Through a complex sequence of events he conspires to award the titular "pot of gold" not to Euclio or his father, the successive *patresfamilias*, but to his daughter Phaedria, because she alone looked after his building. Indeed, as Cicecro once argued, ownership of one's home could not even be claimed in the ancient world without first being sanctioned by the "heroes" and "daimones" resident in its walls.[2]

Many of these tropes persisted in the West long after the Empire's decline. In fact, even as late as the thirteenth century, stone personifications of ancient *genii* were still being incorporated directly into English ecclesiastical fabrics (as, for example, in the south wall of the nave at St Giles in Tockenham, Wiltshire; illus. 1).[3] The figure is recognisable by its *patera* (or *phiale*)*,* a wide and shallow dish used for placatory libation, and its *cornucopia*, a classic manifestation of the hope for good fortune and plenty. It is unclear exactly how this particular sculpture was understood to function, or the extent to which its former functions might have underpinned its new ones. Just as telling though, in any case, is the fact that (like so many other types of sculpture, columns, capitals, entablatures, bases etc.,) it was preserved and

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[2] On the "heroes" and "daimones" in the ancient world and Cicero see, especially, Matthew Dillon, *Omens and Oracles: Divination in Ancient Greece* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 263-322.

[3] It was once thought that this relief depicted Asclepius. Jocelyn Toynbee, however, has argued convincingly that it is a *genius loci*. See J. M. C. Toynbee, 'Two Romano-British Genii', *Britannia*, 9 (1978), pp. 329-30. For confirmation that this *genius loci* is spolia see also Martin Henig, *Roman Art, Religion and Society: New Studies from the Roman Art Seminar, Oxford, 2005* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2006), pp. 121-2 and Tim Eaton, *Plundering the Past: Roman Stonework in Medieval Britain* (Stroud: The History Press, 2000), p. 90.

appropriated from an earlier antique building. And so, it is quite likely, as recent studies of *spolia* (literally the "spoils" or the "plunder" of other edifices) have increasingly shown, that its builders prized something of the innate efficacy of the ancient stone itself, as opposed to its mere convenience as a reusable material.[4]

Thus, stones lived. Indeed, nowhere were the spontaneous and often almost impetuous actions of a medieval edifice any better attested than by one of Durham's own. In Chapter 92 of his *Libellus de Admirandis*, Reginald of Durham (d. *c*. 1190) tells the story of a young man healed by St Cuthbert of a nasty head wound.[5] But it actually begins in unusual fashion with the root cause of his injury, the bell in Durham's north tower. Having been freed without warning, the bell's clapper flew "like an arrow" towards his head, fracturing his skull.[6] (He was, we learn, being admonished for an excessive display of public drunkenness on cathedral grounds.) Several chapters later, the monk also detailed the story of an agnostic knight who, having had the audacity to approach the cathedral door, was suddenly flung from his horse and rolled repeatedly back-and-forth in the mud.[7] In fact, this was not even the first time that inclement northern weather had been wielded at Durham to thwart an invader. No lesser threat than the Conqueror himself had been repelled by Cuthbert's "mist" while trying to sack the old Anglo-Saxon cathedral, a structure which, in the simple assessment of one his own men, "always protected them from their adversities".[8]

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[4] On the revival of interest in spolia in the recent study of medieval art and architecture and corollary themes see, especially, Dale Kinney, 'The Concept of Spolia', in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. by Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 233-52.

[5] See Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus Quae Novellis Patratae Sunt Temporibus*, 1 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1835), p. 170.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] *Ibid*., 182.

[8] See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de exordio atque Procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis ecclesie*; *Tract on the Origins and Progress of this the Church of Durham*, ed. and trans. by David Rollason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 182-8. See also William Aird, 'The Origins and Development of the Church of St Cuthbert, 635-1153, with special reference to Durham in the period circa 1071-1153 (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1991), p. 96.

So powerful, in fact, and so widespread was the belief in the essential animation of stones in early medieval Europe that the Dominican friar Albertus Magnus (d. 1280) felt compelled to write a lengthy rebuttal—his *De mineralibus*—explaining why, in essence, they did not actually possess souls.[9] After combing through several popular old *lapidaries*, he lamented that the rich virtues of precious gems, ores and minerals were often not so much listed as they were narrated.[10] Certain very special stones even had their own biographies, the adventures and histories of which some of the most revered minds of the age—Marbode of Rennes (d. 1123), Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187), Arnold of Saxony (d. 1211)—had all been devoted at length to describing.[11] Marble was especially admired. In fact, even Magnus, the patron of natural scientists, was not always immune to its charms.

Switching to the first-person as well as to a certain anecdotal, perhaps even nostalgic register ("I say, when I was a young man…"), a story about a curious-looking piece Magnus encountered in Venice ensues.[12] This marble was intended to "decorate the walls of a church" and was being cut in two on site when suddenly, in its surface, "there appeared a most beautiful picture of a king".[13] A somewhat quixotic and atypical reflection then follows to the extent that "something of the same sort [happens] in clouds when they are not disturbed by winds".[14] Like Isidore of Seville (d. 636) though, who devoted close to an entire chapter to demystifying medieval marble in his *Etymologiae*, Magnus then appears to have worked quickly to avoid even the insinuation that he believed what he saw was real.[15] Actually, on reflection, "the

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[9] See Albertus Magnus, *Book of Minerals*, trans. by Dorothy Wyckoff (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967).
[10] On *lapidaries* and especially on the agency of stone(s) see Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).
[11] Marbode of Rennes wrote the *Libellus de lapidibus preciosis* and both Gerard of Cremona and Arnold of Saxony translated and transcribed multiple Pseudo-Aristotle works and the *De Virtutibus Lapidum*. See, further, John M. Riddle, 'Geology', in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by F. A. C. Mantello and A. G. Rigg (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), pp. 406-10.
[12] Albertus Magnus, *Book of Minerals*, p. 128.
[13] *Ibid*.
[14] *Ibid*.
[15] See Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. by Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach and Oliver Berghof (Cambridge: Cambriudge University Press, 2006), pp. 317-36.

forehead seemed too high …[a]nd when I was asked the reason for the disproportion …I said that the stone had been hardened from a vapour".[16] Though he was not one to be played in the end, something in the mystery and the game of the King's image still clearly thrilled Magnus, even many years later.[17] Pliny (d. 79 AD) perhaps took a similar kind of pleasure rebuking the sculptor Adamas in his *Naturalis Historia*, after he found an "image of Silenus" in his Parian marble.[18] And, not much later, we can find Alberti (d. 1472) noting how curious it was that "Nature herself seems to delight in painting", not least the "faces she puts in marble …of bearded and curly headed kings".[19] Marble, of course, was just as often revered in early medieval ekphrases for its classicising aura, as well as the very particular kind of *gravitas* it embodied, befitting the upper echelons of society: emperors, kings and great saints. The best marbles by far though—as storytellers from Paul the Silentiary (d. 580) to Theophilus Presbyter (d. 1125) all likewise confirmed—looked as if they had "venuous systems", that they might at any point suddenly "bleed", that they too were, in some sense, "alive".[20]

To our modern sensibilities, the living presence of the dead in Durham's old ashlar and mortar might seem much less strongly embodied. At least since Plato's theory of Forms, and in earnest in certain regards since John Ruskin's "pathetic fallacy", the ascription of human agency and animation to otherwise inanimate phenomena has been suspect. As Catherine Ingraham—the author of *Architecture, Animal, Human*—recently wrote, the twentieth- and twenty-first-century buildings we live with today largely seem to resist our investments of saga, anecdote and the now "disjunctive narratives of the present postmodern condition".[21] But even

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[16] Albertus Magnus, *Book of Minerals*, p. 128.

[17] Philippe Cordez has also recently analysed these and other passages from Magnus on marble. See, for example, Philippe Cordez, 'Les Marbres de Giotto. Astrologie et Naturalisme à la Chapelle ScrovegnI', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 55.1 (2013), pp. 8-25.

[18] See Finbarr Barry Flood, '"God's Wonder": Marble as Medium and the Natural Image in Mosques and Modernism', *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 23.2 (2016), p. 184.

[19] *Ibid*.

[20] Flood, '"God's Wonder"', pp. 168-219. See also Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*, pp. 187-95.

[21] See Catherine T. Ingraham, *Architecture, Animal, Human: The Asymmetrical Condition* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 33. See also Catherine T. Ingraham, 'Architecture as Evidence', in *Drifting: Architecture and* Migrancy, ed. by Stephen Cairns (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 61-81.

if not literally true, the rising of "Cuthbert's mist" can just as usefully be read as an indicator of the powerful affective endowment still intrinsic to his cathedral even in the twentieth century. This, the unique causal disposition, or "spirit" of built space, was compellingly described by Christian Norberg-Schulz as a type of "existential foothold".[22] The *genius loci* features aptly in the title of his often-neglected Modernist work on phenomenology in architecture. Buildings offer shelter but humans only "dwell" at length, he argued, when they can connect and identify themselves in meaningful ways to the fabric. Often the most profound and efficient structures are the ones that quickly make "sites" become "places": the ones we tell stories about, the ones that provide the "horizon", to borrow from Juhani Pallasmaa, for "confronting the human existential condition".[23]

Seen in this way, the ultimate historical significance of Durham Cathedral lies beyond itself. It has, of course, always been a visibly very seductive structure; it has long drawn our attention inward, towards its unique shape and arrangement. More than that though, it has borrowed, adapted and reflected meanings of our own making right back at us: back out into our own sense of Self and being in the world.

In a manner, this thesis is one long attempt to reverse-engineer that process. It begins and ends, not with Durham, nor with its particular and extraordinary surviving forms, but with historically-, socially- and culturally-contingent people. The evidence for these people and their "encounters", as above, is sought out in stories. This chapter therefore sets about laying some broad foundations of collective enculturation from which the next three can incrementally build. It takes much of the recent literature on Durham Cathedral at its word: that is, it thinks of the building as a truly Anglo-Norman and Romanesque phenomenon. Who was telling stories about cathedrals like this, we will ask, in post-Conquest England and early medieval

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[22] See Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1980), p. 5. George Cullen has also called it "the secret language of site" and various modern Finnish architects the *sielunmaisema* (literally the "soul-landscape" or "soul-scene").
[23] See Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Chichester: Wiley, 2012), p. 13.

Europe? What work did their ideas do for such structures, how might they impact our understanding of the "encounter", and why?

What follows is a long series of "thick" situated descriptions which, taken together, essentially aspire to do two things. Before turning to Durham's unique and idiosyncratic decoration (the main theme of the next chapter) the bulk of the analysis here relates to the other of perhaps its two most defining architectural attributes: its sheer and massive size. The subject of large (or overlarge) buildings, as we shall see, was of particular and passionate interest to dozens of storytellers all across early medieval Europe. As such, it makes for a rich and instructive route into a range of national (and international) conversations taking place right around the time of Durham's construction. Firstly though, we look to something of the brute fact of Durham Cathedral as an object seen from another kind of distance: a long-range view once again, but this time consumed *in situ*.

The relation and the play between architecture and site at Durham is unusual. Whereas so many other medieval churches became hemmed-in over time, sometimes even half-hidden by their urban surroundings, here nature provides the theatrical stage that Nicolaus Pevsner deemed comparable only to "Avignon and Prague".[24] Durham has always been inextricably tied to its landscape setting; it has always had the uncanny potential, to borrow from Pallasmaa once more, to "revive the poetic dimensions already present in a place".[25] This is something that medieval storytellers knew instinctively too and, as it turns out, were just as keen to write about. And so, for all these reasons, most of the "encounters" in this chapter do not even take place inside the cathedral, but outside it, in its larger surroundings.

As is the case throughout, these analytical processes are inexact, partly because the written record is so fragmentary and partly because, from among what does survive, my selections

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[24] Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, ed. by Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 159-60
[25] Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin*, p. 14.

must, by necessity, be personal. Wherever possible in each chapter, the main themes of the "encounter" are married closely with the main themes of the original sources. Still, to borrow from Clifford Geertz one final time, this project was never intended to be "an experimental science in search of law".[26] It is, rather, a naturally interpretative process directed "in search of meaning", within which appropriate controls have been applied.[27] To dwell in and around Durham Cathedral today is to be suspended in numberless "webs" of culture and ideology, the oldest silks of which are often frayed, intertwined, or missing entirely.[28] A precious few, however, are so integral to its structure that they do perhaps remain unbroken to this day.

With the pursuit of these in mind, we can now turn from the youngest story I include in this thesis, on Cuthbert's "mist", to what is (almost certainly) the oldest.

De situ Dunelmi

If ever there was any doubt as to Durham Cathedral's place and renown in early twelfth-century England, the Old English poem *De situ Dunelmi* (written *c*. 1104) immediately clears things up:

> Is ðeos burch breome   geond Breotenrice,
>
> steppa gestaðolad,   stanas ymbutan
>
> wundrum gewæxen.   Weor ymbeornad,

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[26] See Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 5.

[27] *Ibid*.

[28] Geertz put it as follows: "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning'. See Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 5.

ea yðum stronge,   and ðer inne wunað

5   feola fisca kyn   on floda gemonge.

And ðær gewexen is   wudafæstern micel;

wuniad in ðem wycum   wilda deor monige,

in deope dalum   deora ungerim.[29]

[The city is famous throughout the kingdom of Britain,

built on high, the rocks around it

wondrously grown up. The Wear runs round it,

a stream strong in waves, and within it dwell

5   many kinds of fish in the thronging of the waters.

And there has grown up a great woodland-enclosure;

dwelling in the place are many wild beasts,

in the deep dales, beasts without number.]

With these first eight of twenty-one relatively brief lines, our anonymous author brings an ambitious and abundant image of Durham into view. It is unclear whether the "island in the

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[29] *De situ Dunelmi* survived the medieval period in two manuscripts, both from the twelfth century: Cambridge, University Library, Ff. 1. 27 (C) and London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius D. xx (V). C. The latter was very badly damaged in the Cottonian fire of 1731. The poem has also been widely transcribed. See, especially, Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie's standard edition in the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*: Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, 'Durham', in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems. The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), p. 27. See also Thomas A. Bredehoft, *Early English Metre* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Christopher Cannon, 'Between the Old and the Middle of English', *New Medieval Literatures*, 7 (2005), pp. 203-21; Joseph Grossi, 'Preserving the Future in the Old English *Durham*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 112 (2012), pp. 42-73; Nicholas Howe, 'Conclusion: By Way of *Durham*', in *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 225-31; D. R. Howlett, 'The Shape and Meaning of the Old English Poem "Durham"', in *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, ed. by David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 485-95; Calvin B. Kendall 'Let Us Now Praise a Famous City Wordplay in the OE *Durham* and the Cult of St. Cuthbert', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 87 (1988), pp. 507-21; H. S. Offler, 'The Date of *Durham* (*Carmen de Situ Dunhelmi*)', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (1962), pp. 591-94; and C. L. Wrenn, *A Study of Old English Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1967).

Atlantic" Bede first described in his *De situ Britanniae* as "abounding in fish", "fowl" and "plentiful springs" is being consciously evoked here.[30] It does seem likely. In any case though, not only is the *situ* once again inseparable from the site (illus. 2), our author still seems to be investing in the poem, right away, with a series of strong visual connections to the Anglo-Saxon past.

The natural protection afforded to Durham through its combination of "rocks", "water" and "woodland"—not to mention, of course, Cuthbert's "mist"—was essential throughout the late tenth and eleventh centuries, when a much less powerful pre-Norman community had to deal with the repeated threats of Scandinavians and, to no lesser degree, the Scots. Other writers such as Symeon of Durham commended the site as "fortified by Nature".[31] Brother Laurence (d. 1154) extolled that Durham's "rocky plateau …discouraged an enemy" at the same time as its river "mocked hostile forces".[32] In fact, even when, as bishop, Ranulf Flambard tried to build a wall to protect the city, the anonymous author of his *Vita* still found room to point out that, anyway, "[n]ature had already defended it (*licet hanc natura munierit*).[33]

The specific and persistent praise here though, not just of the landscape but of its bountiful contents, was also likely indicative of some of the long literary traditions associated with Cuthbert's Hiberno-Saxon heritage. In early medieval Northumbria, southern Scotland and certain parts of eastern Ireland, it was more than customary for new monastic foundations to seek remote locations, but also specifically wooded ones too. St Patrick (d. mid fifth century), one of Cuthbert's primary missionary ancestors, founded his "great church in the

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[30] *De situ Britanniae* is the first chapter of the first book in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. See Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People/The Greater Chronicle/Bede's Letter to Egbert*, ed. by Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 9.
[31] See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 145.
[32] See R. J. Dickinson, 'A Description of Durham by Laurence the Monk', in R. J. Dickinson (ed) *City of Durham, 1179-1979* (Newcastle: Guinness & Rawson, 1979), p. 12.. See also Greti Dinkova-Bruun, 'Lawrence of Durham', in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain*, 4 vols, ed. by Sian Echard, Robert Rouse, Jacqueline A. Fay, Helen Fulton and Geoff Rector (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), pp. 1148-50.
[33] See Thomas O'Donnell, 'The Old English *Durham*, the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, and the Unreformed in Late Anglo-Saxon Literature', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 113.2 (2014), pp. 131-55.

wood of Fochloth".[34] The hermit Marbán (d. late seventh century) lived alone in his "bothy in the wood".[35] Guthlac (also known as Guthlac of Crowland; d. 714) took to the Land of the Fens and, as the Exeter Book describes it, a remote island "in a wood …revealed to him by God".[36] St Deglan (d. mid eighth century) built a secluded cell for himself next to the sea with "trees close about it".[37] Cedd (d. 664), a major influence at the Synod of Whitby, chose a site "among some steep and remote hills".[38] And, even as late as the twelfth century, Geoffrey of Burton recorded in his *Life of St Modwenna*, that the saint had sought out a secluded hermitage for herself, specifically on an "island" in the River Trent: a place she "loved …[because] at that time, it was a complete wilderness, full of woods …wild animals and desolate solitude".[39]

Moreover, the extent to which *De Situ Dunelmi* brings not just Durham's "[v]erdure mellows"—as Pevsner once described them—but its "thronging" waters to mind, its "many kinds of fish" and "beasts without number", is striking too.[40] A number of recent studies in medieval ecocriticism have unpacked the ways by which many writers, across post-Conquest England, often made a habit of mitigating the relationship and cooperative potentials of human and nonhuman environments.[41] This was done either by mitigating descriptions of the landscape through the use of topoi or otherwise mundane and formulaic prose, or, more commonly, by emphasising the essential Otherness and danger of "animality" beyond civilized borders. Even Alfred K. Siewers, while he demonstrated so well that descriptions of the Welsh

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[34] See Carole M. Cusack, *The Sacred Tree: Ancient and Medieval Manifestations* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), p. 78.

[35] See Della Hooke, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), p. 86.

[36] *Ibid.*, 85.

[37] *Ibid.*, 87.

[38] See Thomas Pickles, *Kingship, Society, and the Church in Anglo-Saxon Yorkshire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) p. 140.

[39] See Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and Miracles of St Modwenna* (Oxford: Clarednon Press,), p. 14.

[40] Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, p. 159.

[41] See, for example, Karl Steel, *How To Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011); Gillian Rudd *Greenery: Ecocritical Readings of Late Medieval English Literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); Lesley Kordecki, *Ecofeminist Subjectivities: Chaucer's Talking Birds* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); and *Engaging with Nature: Essays on the Natural World in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and Lisa J. Kiser (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

and Irish worlds, for instance, would more readily infuse human narratives with wild and bestial agencies, still concluded on the generally "alienating and allegorical descriptions of nature" that defined so much early medieval literature.[42] By contrast, our poem here seems not only to actively court but to eulogise the natural and perhaps even numinous phenomena of its surroundings. First and seemingly foremost according to our author, these are the attributes that make Durham "breome geond Breotenrice".[43]

The poem goes on:

> Is in ðere byri eac   bearnum gecyðed
>
> 10   ðe arfesta   eadig Cudberch
>
> and ðes clene   cyninges heafud,
>
> Osuualdes, Engle leo,   and Aidan biscop,
>
> Eadberch and Eadfrið,   æðele geferes.
>
> Is ðer inne midd heom   Æðelwold biscop
>
> 15   and breoma bocera Beda,   and Boisil abbot,
>
> ðe clene Cudberte   on gecheðe
>
> lerde lustum,   and he his lara wel genom.
>
> Eardiæð æt ðem eadige   in in ðem minstre
>
> unarimeda   reliquia,
>
> 20   ðær monia wundrum gewurðað,   ðes ðe writ seggeð,
>
> midd ðene drihnes wer   domes bideð.[44]

[There is also in the city, well-known to men,

[42] See Alfred K. Siewers, *Strange Beauty: Ecocritical Approaches to Early Medieval Landscape* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 134.
[43] Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, 'Durham', p. 27.
[44] *Ibid*.

10 the gracious, blessed Cuthbert

   and the head of the pure king,

   of Oswald, the lion of the English, and Bishop Aidan,

   Eadberht and Eadfrith, noble companions.

   Inside there with them is Bishop Æthelwald

15 and the famous writer Bede, and Abbot Boisil,

   who taught Cuthbert the pure in his youth

   with pleasure, and Cuthbert well received his teaching.

   Living beside the blessed one in the minster

   are uncounted relics—

20 Where many things are accomplished wondrously, as the writing says,

   with the man of the Lord, they await the Judgment.]

Here we can note a second kind of abundance, the "uncounted relics" of Durham's most revered historical figures.[45] At the heart of the descriptions, as at the heart of the new cathedral complex, sit the physical remains of Durham's most storied characters. Cuthbert, the "gracious" and most "blessed", flanks an extraordinary cast including Oswald, Aidan and Bede, many of whom also resided somewhat literally within the saint's embrace, inside his tomb.[46] Thus, a repeated interest in containment seems to emerge: successively, the Kingdom of Britain, the Wear, the woodland, the city, Cuthbert and finally Durham's relic collection. In summarising this peculiarity of structuring, Seth Lerer has argued that it signifies a concern with "closure and enclosure" as well as the alliterative structural traditions of early elegiac poetry.[47] Taking it one step further, however, Heather Blurton has argued that each consecutive

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[45] *Ibid*.
[46] *Ibid*.
[47] See Seth Lerer, 'Old English and its Afterlife;, in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed .by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 7-34

layer of enshrinement might almost literally function like a kind of precious reliquary for the last.[48] This places extraordinary value on the written word as well as its efficacy in relation to a site like Durham. Indeed, right when the poem looks to be tying up its ending, it is hard not to be struck by what must amount to its author's high sense of vocational regard: after all, "[w]here many things are accomplished wondrously" at Durham, it is only "as the writing says".[49]

Margaret Schlauch has argued that *De situ Dunelmi* was an unorthodox attempt to produce a vernacular version of the classic "city-praise" poem (or *encomium urbis*), a Latin genre found throughout early medieval Europe, but practically unheard of in Anglo-Saxon England.[50] Schlauch compared and contrasted a number of other earlier *encomia* from Milan, Verona and Monte Cassino, among others. In each instance though, the writers of these poems narrated their *urbi* in much more exacting detail. Alcuin of York (d. 804) offers a rare but, by comparison, effusive example from pre-Conquest Northumbria:

> Haec nimis alta domus solidis suffulta columnis,
>
> Suppositae quae stant curvatis arcubus, intus
>
> Emicat egregiis laquearibus atque fenestris.
>
> Pulchraque porticibus fulget circumdata multis,
>
> Plurima diversis retinens solaria tectis,
>
> Quae triginta tenet variis ornatibus aras.[51]

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[48] See Heather Blurton, '*Reliquia*: Writing Relics in Anglo-Norman Durham', in *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages: Archipelago, Island, England*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 39-56.

[49] Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, 'Durham', p. 27.

[50] Margaret Schlauch, 'An Old English *Enconium Urbis*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 40 (1962), pp. 14-28.

[51] See John Britton, T*he Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain, Represented and Illustrated in a Series of Views, Elevations, Plans, Sections, and Details, of Ancient English Edifices, with Historical and Descriptive Accounts of Each*, vol. 5 (London: M. A. Nattali, 1835), p. 104.

[This lofty building, supported by strong columns,

Themselves bolstering curving arches, gleams

Inside with fine inlaid ceilings and windows.

It shines in it beauty, surrounded by many a chapel

With many galleries in its various quarters,

And thirty altars decorated with different finery.]

The Latin rubric that pre-empts the only medieval copy of *De situ Dunelmi* to survive wholly intact—Cambridge, University Library, MS Ff.i.27—points unambiguously to its chosen thematic divisions: *De situ Dunelmi et de sanctorum reliquiis quae ibidem continentur carmen compositum* (On the Site of Durham and On its Relics). Next to Alcuin's rich ekphrasis of the church dedicated to Alma Sophia, however, the near total silence on a third theme should seem deafening: the new Norman cathedral itself. Indeed, given our primary interest in architecture here, as well as the strong scholarly consensus that *De situ Dunelmi* was probably set down at least ten years after construction began at Durham, in 1093, the sole and somewhat non-descript reference provided in its closing lines to a "minster" might appear to make for an unpromising start. To my mind though it is not.

I am standing on Prebends Bridge (illus. 3). Of all the ways to approach Durham, this is among the most iconic: the visual equivalent some have suggested of Constable's "Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows" (illus. 4).[52] Like others, my first impression of the building is simply inseparable from its landscape setting. The concept of "landscape" is of course very much post-medieval, but its forbears, the *numen* or again this sense of the innate "spirit" or *genius loci* of a place, all seem just as apropos.[53] A landscape is often viewed in its narrowest

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[52] Or, indeed, for Pevsner: "the vision of a Caspar David Friedrich or a Schinkel". See *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, p. 160.

[53] The study of "landscape" first began in geography. Following the lead of Friedrich Ratzel, probably the first man (albeit among the most controversial) to attempt to synthesise cultural histories with spatial orientation, the

sense, as a literal and physical vista, but here it can also be thought of as a kind of socio-cognitive construct. *De situ Dunelmi* offers us a rich distillation of a felt "place", one which at times might not seem very far removed today. This little hill-island—the "Dun-holm" as it was known before being Latinised to "Dunelm" after the Conquest, and eventually "Durham"—is still almost completely encircled by the River Wear (illus. 5). Towering above an already commanding peninsula and reminiscent both of an acropolis and, in the twelfth-century perhaps, the recently trialled motte-and-bailey castle, on a clear day it was probably visible nearly ten miles away. It was likely designed to evoke a kind of "heavenly fortress"; indeed, after visiting in 1626, Robert Hegge recorded that "He that hath seene the situation of this Citty, hath seene the map of Sion, and may save a journey to the Jerusalem [*sic*]".[54]

In his *Libellus de exordio*, Symeon of Durham recorded that the decision was taken in 1092 to build the new cathedral here "on a nobler and grander scale" (note the close equivalence there between esteem and size, the second theme to which we are about to turn).[55] Within twelve months Bishop William de St-Calais (also known as William of Saint Carilef; d. 1096) had ordered the old Anglo-Saxon church be demolished. Ground was broken on the 29th July 1093, and before the year was out the foundations for three apses had been laid and the outer walls of the choir begun. The foundation stone followed on the 11th August, before this first and expeditious building period, which lasted for eleven years, culminated in the translation of Cuthbert's remains in the summer of 1104.[56] Ranulf Flambard succeeded

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French school of geography quickly embraced a determinist conception of space in the late nineteenth century (distilled famously in Paul Vidal de la Blache's *milieu*). If many would later criticise Vidalian geography for its heavy conflation of nature, nativism and an apparent reluctance (or inability) to account for post-industrial society—Vidal likened it, more than a little disparagingly, to an "historical wind"—then a dynamic range of new avenues were nonetheless spawned in the later twentieth century which brought new emphases to natural space as a conditioning agent of society.

[54] See John Richard Watson, 'The Cathedral in Literature', in *Durham Cathedral: History, Fabric and* Culture, ed. By David Brown (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 486.

[55] See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 145.

[56] This is the sequence of events according to John Bilson's so-called "First Great Campaign of Construction". See John Bilson, 'Durham Cathedral: the Chronology of its Vaults', pp. 101-60 as well as John Bilson, 'The Beginnings of Gothic Architecture, II, Norman Vaulting in England', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 6 (1899), pp. 289-319.

William as bishop in 1099 and inherited a church built "as far as the nave".[57] When he died three decades later in 1128, his masons had reached the *testudo* (a term variously taken to mean either "roof" or "vault").[58] Five years after that, which is to say a little more than forty overall, the building was finished.[59]

The cathedral complex at Durham was the first (and only) major Norman ecclesiastical project begun north of York. Despite being squeezed, somewhat precariously, between a cliff above the River Wear to its west and an abrupt land slope to the east (see again illus. 5), it was built almost to the largest dimensions its site would permit. In fact, with walls exceeding three metres in thickness and a final length of more than four hundred feet (illus. 6), it was once counted among the largest and most ambitious structures, not only of its generation, but almost of any following the decline of the Roman Empire. Between the late fourth and early twelfth centuries only three buildings in the entirety of Latin Christendom could rival the size of Old St Peter's in Rome (begun 318) (illus. 7). In England, however, ten such giants, including Durham, were begun in less than a generation after 1066.[60] Dozens of fortified strongholds, castles and halls followed within eighteen months of the invasion, and many hundreds of smaller parish churches, priories, chamber blocks, water mills and houses arose in tandem.

The matchless scale of the Norman building project (as well as the extent to which it is so often upstaged by younger Gothic models) is made explicit, in fact, albeit inadvertently, in one of the most popular twentieth-century compendia of medieval architecture. In his preamble

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[57] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 167.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 168
[59] On this chronology more broadly see also W. St John Hope, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 22.2 (1908-9), pp. 416-23; M. G. Snape, 'Documentary Evidence for the Building of Durham Cathedral', in *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. by N. Coldstream and P. Draper (Leeds: The British Archaeological Association, 1980), pp. 20-36; and K. W. Markuson, 'Recent Investigations in the East Range of the Cathedral Monastery, Durham', *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral* (Leeds: The British Archaeological Association, 1980), pp. 37-48.
[60] Those continental buildings were the abbey church at Cluny, and the cathedrals of Mainz and Speyer. The Norman Buildings are the cathedrals of Westminster, Canterbury St Augustine's, St Albans, Winchester, York, Ely, Bury, Durham, Old St Paul's and Norwich. See Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 299.

to *Les Bâtisseurs de Cathédrales*, Jean Gimpel led with the Gothic "miracle" of industry.[61]

More stone, he wrote, was quarried over the course of three centuries in France than in the entire three millennia of Ancient Egypt. Unacknowledged, however, was the fact that the same feat was perhaps achieved in less than ninety years of Norman rule after 1066. It was, in all likelihood, nothing less than the most prodigious building programme in Europe, by volume, per capita, prior to the Industrial Revolution.[62] This is to make the final point that, by almost every qualitative and quantitative architectural measure, size can be thought to be a defining hallmark of the post-Conquest world. No prescriptive sources from the period are known to argue that a cathedral should be made large or, for that matter, why. And yet it is obvious from their sheer concentration that large architectural structures like Durham—or Canterbury (begun 1067), Winchester (begun 1079), Ely (begun 1079), St Augustine's (begun c. 1080) and Old St Paul's (begun 1087)—must have carried a very powerful affective endowment. To what ends size was thought to be impactful to the "encounter", why, and for whom, are all therefore natural if (to date) largely unexplored questions.

The Bigger the Better?

Does the desire to build a large cathedral even require a special explanation? Certainly, for Goscelin of St Bertin (also known as Goscelin of Canterbury; d. 1099)—one of the many aliens

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[61] See Jean Gimpel, *Les bâtisseurs de cathédrales*, (Paris: Seuil, 1980), p. 3.
[62] This claim, to my knowledge at least, has not been published. It is, for obvious reasons, very hard to substantiate. That said, it has been unoffically sanctioned (pers. comm.) by Eric Fernie. I alone though still must bear all the fault for any inaccuracy.

to gravitate to England during the upheavals of the eleventh century—the bigger, it seems, the better:

Bene destruit qui meliora construit. Ego inutilis homuncio, qui tantum terram occupo, plerumque indignor, pusillis edificiis, et inops rerum magna propono, ut data facultate non paterer stare templa quamvis spectata, nisi scilicet fuissent ad votum meum inclita, magnifica, precelsa, perampla, perlucida et perpulchra.[63]

[They [the Normans] do well to destroy who will build something larger. I, a useless little man, who only encumber the ground, am often annoyed when I see small buildings and, completely lacking in material means, I plan great things. There are perfectly well-regarded churches which I, given the power to do so, would not suffer to stand unless they were as glorious, magnificent, soaring, colossal, light-flooded and noble as I would wish them to be.]

Goscelin was clearly impressed by large churches, almost for their own sake, and even to the extent that small and otherwise well-regarded ones would often "annoy" him (*indignor*).[64] There is clear sense too, however, that like a number of other kindred terms from the period— *altitudo*, *magnitudo*, *immensus* or *sublimitas*—many of the requisite qualities he lists for a

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[63] See Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber Confortatorius: The Book of Encouragement and Consolation*, trans. by Monika Otter (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer, 2004), pp. 32-4. See also Charles H. Talbot, 'The *Liber Confortatorius* of Goscelin of Saint-Bertin', *Studia Anselmiana*, 37 (1955), pp. 1-117. This passage has also sometimes been quoted within discussions of Anglo-Norman architecture elsewhere. See, for example, Richard Plant, 'Innovation and Traditionalism', in *Architecture and Interpretation: Essays for Eric Fernie*, ed. by Jill A. Franklin, T. A. Heslop and Christine Stevenson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), p. 282.
[64] See Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber Confortatorius*, pp. 32-4.

"sufferable" building could just as easily have referred to a literal measurement of height, length or breadth, as they could a much richer sense of figurative or emotional depth.

Of all the architectural critiques to survive from early medieval England this passage, found in Goscelin's *Liber Confortatorius*, has a great claim to being the most extraordinary. The text was composed no more than ten years before ground was broken at Durham in 1093 and took the form of a long letter. It was written, Goscelin stated, to counsel and to console his former *pupilla* (a term which indicated both a protégé and a friend), in this case a reclusive young woman named Eva. Without warning, Eva had chosen to flee England for Angers, leaving Goscelin heartbroken.[65] Based, in part, on Jerome's letters of spiritual guidance to women, but predating Peter Abelard's *Historia Calamitatum* (*c*. 1132), Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum* (*c*. 1164)*,* and the Middle English *Ancrene Wisse* (*c*. 1225), it is perhaps the earliest of its genre to survive in the English literary tradition.[66] Unlike these other texts, however, which even if they are sometimes dedicated to a single person are nonetheless intended to be read by many, the *Liber Confortatorius* is a private and deeply personal document. "If by any chance this letter …should stray into alien hands", Goscelin pled from the beginning, it should "be returned immediately to her for whom alone it is intended".[67] What follows at times is a kind of grief that is so raw and undisguised that, even today still, the reader may indeed feel as if they are trespassing: "O my soul, dearer to me than the light, your Goscelin is with you …he is with you, undivided, in his better part, that part with which he was

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[65] The precise nature of this relationship has been of repeated interest and debate. See, especially, Katherine O'Briene O'Keefe, 'Goscelin and the Consecration of Eve', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 35 (2006), pp. 251-70; H. M. Canatella, 'Long-Distance Love: The Ideology of Male-Female Spiritual Friendship in Goscelin of Saint Bertin's *Liber Confortatorius*', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 19.1 (2010), pp. 35-53 and Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber Confortatorius*, pp. 1-18.

[66] See Abelard, Peter, *Historia Calamitatum: The Story of My Misfortunes*, trans. by Henry Adams Bellows (Loschberg: Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck, 2013); Ælred of Rievaulx, De institutione inclusarum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); and *Ancrene Wisse/Guide for Anchoresses: A Translation*, trans. by Bella Millett (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2009).

[67] Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber Confortatorius*, p. 19.

allowed to love you, that part which cannot be hindered by any physical distance".[68] Indeed, the uncommonly affectionate ways in which he wrote to, as well as of, the woman with whom he shared a "joint singular soul" (*unice anime*) might also suggest that the dispelling of advice actually motivated Goscelin slightly less than his own painful and cathartic attempts to deal with abandonment.[69] There is, this is to stress, a clear impression that Goscelin was in large part writing for himself. Thus, unencumbered by the judgment of others—Eva's imaginary spectre notwithstanding—his unusually effusive architectural commentary here is likewise lent a very rare and genuine sense of emotional candour.

Plain-speaking though he may have been, however, Goscelin's prose was still far from simple. He had trained Eva in a specific (and largely Augustinian) tradition of slow and meditative reading, what is sometimes termed "psalmody", or "reweaving the Psalter".[70] It not only necessitated frequent pauses to reflect on broader theological associations, but a very liberal use of allegory and metaphor too (both well-known medieval antidotes to *taedia*, or boredom, the chief peril of an anchoritic life, something we will return to in chapters two and three). This is how our particular section is opened up: "A lofty tree grows up to great heights from a deep root", he explains.[71] "When Solomon", he goes on, "erect[ed] the highest peak of the temple he [first] cut the foundations into the lowest depths".[72] These two phrases preface his moral of Rome, which was "founded as the smallest of all cities …[and yet] with military might …and a martyr's patience …obtained the pinnacle of the world".[73] Thus, the many rich and imaginative references he conjures to height and depth are neither incidental nor imprecise

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[68] *Ibid*., 21. Among other tropes that anchoritic advice literature would later run with, Goscelin refined the idea of Eva being "dead to the world" (an echo of Paul's instruction in Romans 6:11 that his followers be "dead to sin but alive to Christ"). In reality, she was very much living at the time of writing, but manifest in spiritual form it is she, not he, who returns to England from the afterlife to offer comfort and guidance to the author.
[69] *Ibid*.
[70] *Ibid*., 32-4
[71] *Ibid*.
[72] *Ibid*.
[73] *Ibid*.

but, as Monika Otter puts it, part of his and Eva's shared "mental fabric".[74] Thus, he builds:
point on top of point, image on top of image, until he reaches the apex of his own narrative,
the claim that even "He himself wastes and destroys, roots up and pulls down, that he may
build and plant", a further reference to Jeremiah 1:10.[75] Insofar as biblical precedent is invoked,
Goscelin here echoes (and likely mimics) many other early sources justifying massive new
architectural works. We need only remember just how pivotal the restoration of the enormous
new Temple of Jerusalem was to rabbinic literature, to the *Tanakh*, and then later to Josephus
(d. 100).[76] Not unlike the revived and rebuilt Holy City described in Revelation 21 and 22, this
is an unequivocal endorsement not only of the creative ends but (if needs be) the extraordinarily
destructive means by which such buildings might arise. Indeed, the discussion as a whole
hinges on Christ as the "great Redeemer", who after the Fall had "*raised up* humankind so
much more splendid[ly] than they were before".[77] The "guilt" of "our first parents", he
explains, was thus "rightly called fortunate", not sinful or depraved, because ultimately through
Him "a nobler victory" was eventually won.[78]

Given the sharp criticisms Goscelin made of the Norman elites elsewhere in the same
text, and considering the fact that it was they who expelled him from his post in Wiltshire (the
last point at which he ever saw Eva), this is a remarkable progression of reasoning. It really
would not have been at all surprising if he had extended his disapprobation of England's
invaders to their near-wholesale eradication of its native cult sites as well. And yet "they do
well to destroy", Goscelin stressed, because "they build something larger (*meliora*)".[79] No
standing masonry at all survives today of any pre-Conquest cathedral or large monastic Anglo-

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[74] *Ibid.*, ix.
[75] *Ibid.*, 34.
[76] See also Ann R. Meyer, *Medieval Allegory and the Building of the New Jerusalem* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003).
[77] Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber Confortatorius*, p. 33.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] *Ibid.*

Saxon church. All were demolished and rebuilt in what William of Malmesbury described as the new Norman "manner" (*ecclesiam aedificationis genere nouo fecit*), most within two decades of the Conquest and all within five.[80] The sheer speed and breadth of this change will doubtless have brought a very pronounced visual and psychological transformation to the country itself too (not least given the many years of recession that preceded it, and decades more of only incremental change).[81] At least as far as Goscelin was concerned, though, the "noble", "glorious" and "colossal" results to which the new ruling elites aspired did apparently excuse their often very violent methods.

It is clear, however, that this simple-seeming conclusion was caught up in a whole series of sometimes competing, sometimes complimentary evaluations: history, doctrine, love, loss and abandonment. This passage is on the one hand protractedly, inordinately, rational. (One wonders really if Eva would even have approved of such an endorsement.) On the other, it is untamed, impassioned and raw. Like many more of the stories that follow, Goscelin's cathedral is held in his head and his hand simultaneously. It is an object of visual seduction, this much is clear from his description. But it also guides his vision backwards, relentlessly, towards his own sense of Self and being. This is important to stress right away in chapter one. Here meaning is clearly mediated in the spaces between body and building, and it thus remains altogether beyond either one of them, always partial, always fractured. These are the micro- and macro-narratives of lived human experience, any one of which can look very different, as we shall see, depending on where one stands.

Today things, people and ideas can all be "sized up". We are often encouraged to "think big", "dream big" or even to "go big or go home". Like Goscelin, each of these idioms implies

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[80] See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: The History of the English Bishops*, 2 vols, ed. and trans. by Michael Winterbottom and Rodney M. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 141. See also Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England*, p. 20.
[81] See especially Richard Gem, 'A Recession in English Architecture During the Early Eleventh Century and its Effect on the Development of the Romanesque Style', *JBAA*, 38 (1975), pp. 28-49.

a somewhat commensurate relationship between size and value (as does, of course, the "nobler and grander scale" of Symeon's Durham).[82] Edward the Confessor's hagiographer, Matthew Paris (d. 1259), was perhaps making much the same point when he described St Peter's Abbey—the first stylistically "Anglo-Norman" building (begun *c.* 1051)—as embodying a direct equivalence between sheer scale and regal authority (*grantz e reaus*).[83] Very little trace of this building survives, save for its depiction in the Bayeux Tapestry (illus. 8) and a second and fleeting description in the *Vita Ædwardi Regis.* The latter affirms and recent excavations attest, however, to an "enormous building", "nobly begun" and "raised up with the most lofty vaulting".[84] It is unlikely, given that he died only six years after work on the cathedral began, that Goscelin ever saw Durham for himself (at least not in any advanced state).[85] But among the other large Anglo-Norman churches he is likely to have visited, Ely Cathedral (illus. 9) and St Augustine's in Canterbury were both very similar in terms of their proportions, plan and "light-flooded" elevations. In any event, no one living in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries would have missed England's remarkable—and remarkably large—new building boom. Indeed, "from this time *all men* were greatly astonished at the novelty of the rising fabric (*novitate surgentis fabricae*) (emphasis added)", Smithfield's *Book of the Foundation* recorded around 1123.[86] "England was being filled everywhere with churches", wrote Bishop Herman

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[82] See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 145.

[83] For a recent translation of the relevant passage in the *Vita Ædwardi Regisis* that, though incomplete, does include the specifics of the architectural terminology, as well as a useful discussion, see Richard Gem, 'The Romanesque Rebuilding of Westminster Abbey', *ANS*, 3 (1981), pp. 33-60.

[84] *Ibid.*, 35. This link between size and nobility has also been extrapolated elsewhere. See, especially, Paul Binski, 'Reflections on the "Wonderful Height and Size" of Gothic Great Churches and the Medieval Sublime', in *Magnificence and the Sublime in Medieval Aesthetics: Art, Architecture, Literature, Music*, ed. by Stephen Jaeger (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 129-56 and Paul Binski, *Becket's Crown* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 50-51.

[85] Richard Plant argues that he will also have seen Speyer (Rheinland-Pfalz). See Richard Plant, 'Innovation and Traditionalism', p. 282.

[86] See William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 6, ed. by J. Caley, B. Bandinelli and H. Ellis (London, 1830), p. 294. See also Jill A. Franklin, 'The Eastern Arm of Norwich Cathedral and the Augustinian Priory of St Bartholomew's, Smithfield, in London', *Ant. J.*, 86 (2006), p. 120. Durham cathedral was also one of the many examples of a "new manner of building" (*novo edificandi genere*) by which, according to William of Malmesbury, "…the standard of religion, dead everywhere in England, had been raised" (*religionis normam, usquequaque in Anglia emortuam, adventu suo suscitarunt adventu*). See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, pp. 460-61.

of Ramsbury (d. 1078), "they were magnificent, marvellous, extremely long and spacious, full of light and also quite beautiful."[87]

Having climbed abruptly to meet its summit, I am met today with Durham Cathedral's façade (illus. 10). It has been much amended since the early twelfth century, not least to accommodate the new Galilee Chapel in the 1170s. However, in its surviving likeness, we have Henry of Huntingdon (d. *c*. 1157) describing Lincoln (illus. 11) as seeming "beautiful, strong …and inaccessible to any attacker" and Peter Kidson who, more recently, demonstrated the connection between such fronts and Roman triumphal arches (illus. 12).[88] The entrance today has been moved to the north wall, but to its first attendees entering from the west, the austere and impenetrable aspect of the twin towered edifice was likely compounded with two further and simultaneous associations: a kind of *triumphus* both of Christian victory and Norman subjugation.[89]

The solid and disciplined regularity (*ratio compositionis*) of the classical colonnades that encompassed, among other buildings, antique temples and amphitheatres (illus. 13), was long ago likened by Euripides to the young men of a Greek phalanx, and thus to the ranks of an army.[90] Moving now inside Durham Cathedral, I am greeted by eight pairs of massive alternating columns and piers, most of them adorned with their own precise insignia. It is very

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[87] See Richard Gem, 'The English Parish Church in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries: A Great Rebuilding?', in *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition, 950-1200*, ed. by John Blair (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1988), p. 21.

[88] For the comparison with the triumphal arch see Peter Kidson, 'Architectural History', in *A History of Lincoln Minster*, ed. by Dorothy Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 14-46. For the translation see J. C. Holt, *Colonial England, 1066-1215* (London: Hambledon, 1997), p. 7. See also Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English from AC 55 to AD 1154*, ed. by Thomas A. Arnold (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[89] The north wall door was likely installed sometime after 1140 and was, among other possible uses, the main focus for individuals seeking the right of sanctuary. Two chambers (now removed) were once visible above, within which monks were instructed to keep watch for those arriving. The consensus today is that for at least the first thirty years after 1133—which is to say before it was blocked by the new Galilee Chapel, and later by Bishop Langley's chantry tomb (c. 1437)—the west door was the main thoroughfare for pilgrims.

[90] See John Onians, *Bearers of Meaning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 8. See also *The Ends of the Body: Identity and Community in Medieval Culture*, ed. by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

tempting to think, from the west end of the building, that they do seem almost to flank and marshal the nave (illus. 14). The initial impression of resilience, strength and intimidation only continues once inside and, as such, moving eastward a route of almost guarded deliverance appears to unfold. The striking chevron pattern (illus. 15) also seems martial by association, recalling the ordinaries of Norman heraldry in the first instance, but also a long (if somewhat mercurial) provenance of militarism reaching back perhaps as far as the Greek lambda adorning Spartan shields.[91]

Rarely is the relationship between, as well as the special association of, body and building any more pronounced. Abbot Adelhard (d. 1082/83), describing the concurrent reconstruction of the Romanesque abbey of St Trond in present-day Belgium, recounted that the twelve "very impressive columns (*spectabilibus columpnis*)" that he installed in his church stood as watchful embodiments of the twelve apostles.[92] And Durandus (also Guillaume Durand; d. 1296), Bishop of Mende, pushed the equation still further. In his slightly later and very popular handbook to liturgical practice, he guided the reader to an understanding of the plan of a church, writing that:

> Dispositio autem ecclesiae materialis modum humani corporis tenet. Cancellus
> namque sive locus ubi altare est, caput representat, crux ex utraque parte brachia
> et manus, reliqua pars ab occidente quicquid corporis superesse videtur. [93]

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[91] Ordinaries were the simplest shapes used on heraldic shields, among the most common of which were the fess, the pale, the bend, the chevron and the cross.
[92] Onians, *Bearers of Meaning*, p. 86.
[93] See Günter Bandmann, *Early Medieval Architecture as Bearer of Meaning*, trans. by Kendall Wallis (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), n. 53.

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[the material arrangement of the church follows the disposition of the human

body. The chancel, that together with the sanctuary, represents the head and the

neck; a choir with its stalls represents the breast; a crossing extending outward

on both sides of the choir like two cuffs or wings represents the arms and the

hands; the nave represents the belly; and the lower crossing the haunches and

limbs.]

Echoed in the sentiments of both these men was a long and compelling self-reflective trend to

imagining bodies and their proportions in buildings.[94] Augustine of Hippo (d. 430) had already

thought and written about the connection at length, and his example was later followed and, in

a number of respects, extrapolated even more probingly by Honorius of Autun (d. 1151/54)

and Peter of Celle (also known as Peter Cellensis; d. 1183), both of whom were likely to have

been familiar to many learned northern clergymen.[95]

Of Justinian's colossal new Hagia Sophia (illus. 16), Procopius wrote that "the seeming

insecurity of its composition was altogether terrifying …For it seems somehow to float in the

air on no firm basis …but to be poised aloft to the peril of those inside it".[96] So too at Durham

are the improbable weights of the rib vault lifted to scarcely believable and thus almost

transcendent heights (see again illus. 14). Not for no reason is it now something of an

architectural cliché to point out that so many Gothic churches not only look tall but were, in

fact, built to seem *tall-looking*. In contrast to other Norman elevations, such as Saint-Étienne

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[94] For a recent and relevant discussion of the historical relationship between body and building in architectural theory see especially Joseph Rykwert, *The Dancing Column: On Order in Architecture*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 26-67.

[95] See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: a Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 152.

[96] "τῷ δὲ σφαλερῷ τῆς συνθέσεως δοκοῦντι εἶναι φοβερὸν ὅλως. δοκεῖ γάρ πη οὐκ ἐν βεβαίῳ ἐπηωρῆσθαι, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπικινδύνως τοῖς ἐνθάδε οὖσι μετεωρίζεσθαι." See Procopius of Caesarea, *On Buildings*, p. 18. The point is not absolutely clear in the text, but Procopius was perhaps making reference here to the ring of windows beneath the dome at Hagia Sophia. In any event, the comparison of two designs that shared a degree of novelty, as well as the consolidation of great weight with (and ultimately *in spite of*) great height is the intention here.

in Caen (begun 1066) (illus. 17), the arcade level at Durham is proportionally much larger, giving emphasis to the ground storey and stressing the sheer verticality of these swollen load-bearers. Each is footed by a mammoth plinth invariably rising higher than the average attendant's waist, so that as the soaring elevation is amplified so too is the subject humbled. These conscript columns thus seem to shoulder the substantial weight of the gallery, clerestory and vault, but in addition perhaps the even greater human and metaphysical burden, innate since Adam, and foremost in the minds of most who entered. For at least some of its attendants in the twelfth century, in other words, the experience of this colossal nave probably emulated the prelude to rapture. It generated a kind of "terrifying" Procopian transcendence, within which the pronounced augmentation of divine height forced the subjective and "perilous" impression of a diminutive self.[97]

That Durham was latently both imperialistic and militant, derived explicitly and unashamedly from the story of Conquest, can be in no doubt.[98] It was, of course, one of the "monastic fortresses" by which, on his deathbed, the Conqueror himself was rumoured to have boasted: "the Norman empire had been strengthened" (*huiusmodi castris munita est Normannia*).[99] It was also—as is maybe too infrequently pointed out—one of the many post-Gregorian building projects initiated on the order of Pope Alexander II, as a kind of penance and expiation for the inherent sin of the invasion. It can therefore be seen as an aggressive mode of persuading as many men and women as possible to follow the new Norman Good. Hence it is perhaps unsurprising that Goscelin would emphasise the relationship between his

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[97] See n. 93 above.

[98] The cathedral was also, of course, preempted on the same peninsula by Durham castle, a direct juxtaposition which is paralleled elsewhere in Norman England, as for example at Lincoln. For a relevant analysis see Richard Gem, 'Lincoln Minster: Ecclesia Pulchra, Ecclesia Fortis', in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Lincoln Cathedral*, ed. by T. A. Heslop and Veronica Sekules (Leeds: Publisher, 1986), pp. 9-28. See also Meg Bernstein, 'A Bishop of Two Peoples: William of St. Calais and the Hybridization of Architecture in Eleventh-Century Durham', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 77.3 (September 2018) pp. 267-284.

[99] See Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*, ed. by Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969-80), IV (1973), pp. 92-3.

own "useless little" body, which "only encumbered the ground", and the "colossal" feats of architecture that he liked to imagine "soaring" above him.[100]

There were others, like Goscelin, who were impressed by architectural *altitudo* (which is to say "height") almost for its own sake too. Gerald of Wales (d. 1223), the famous chronicler and archdeacon of Brecon, eulogised at length in his *Topographia* about the many tall ruins of England, from those built by the Romans to Stonehenge, and even the "wonderful" (*mirabile*) and "lofty" (*sublimitas*) summits of Snowdonia.[101]. His attitude was likewise very positively construed and akin, in a number of respects, to wonder and possibly something quite like the much later articulation of an early modern Sublime.[102] In fact, that is a connection that Antipater of Sidon (second century BC) had already made more than a thousand years earlier. Every one of the original seven "Wonders" of the ancient world—his *theamata* (θεάματα) or "things to be seen"—was built to an enormous scale (illus. 18).[103] The Pantheon (begun after 110), the Colosseum (begun 72 AD), Old St Peter's (begun *c.* 320), Hagia Sophia (begun 532) and many more leviathan stone structures overshadowed Rome and Constantinople in the imperial centuries. Numberless other large temples, triumphal arches and columns, mausolea, thermae, circuses and stadia were left standing all over its former territories long after the Empire's fall.[104] For those who looked for them, positive examples of architectural gigantism abounded in the Bible too. Solomon's lost *Hekhal*, for example, was nominally a "huge" building (היכל) (1 Kings 8.10). The colossal dimensions of Noah's Ark were exactingly

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[100] Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber Confortatorius*, pp. 32-4.
[101] See Gerald of Wales, *Topographia Hibernica*, in *Opera Omnia*, vol. 5, ed. by John S. Brewer, James F. Dimock and George F. Warner (London: Longman, 1867), p. 67.
[102] Paul Binski has also reflected on this connection. See Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder*, pp. 7-9, pp. 13-20 and pp. 30-33. See also, again, Paul Binski, 'Reflections on the "Wonderful Height and Size" of Gothic Great Churches, pp. 129-56.
[103] See, especially, *The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World*, ed. by Peter A. Clayton and Martin J. Price (London: Routledge, 1988).
[104] For two authoritative synopses see J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Imperial Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994) and Richard Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

enumerated by God himself (Genesis 6.15). And the New Jerusalem, as envisioned by the prophet Ezekiel, was replete with a third Temple wrought too large even for Mount Zion (Ezekiel 40-42). All were powerful exemplars, and all attested to a rich vein of monumentalism, positively imagined, running throughout Antiquity and beyond.

Both the Pantheon and Hagia Sophia, in particular, were large beyond all canonical requirements, and—with the possible exception of the Temple of Artemis—none of the "Wonders" bore any workaday relation to need or utility either. In truth, even Ezekiel's vision attested to a singular appetite for gigantism which, unbridled by reality, verged on architectural corpulence. This is to say that many prototypically large buildings in the early medieval world could be found wherein pragmatism and expediency were obviously only subsidiary concerns. For many, it is quite likely that their sheer size alone meant that they were knowingly raised in active conflict with either one or both. A thousand years later in the twelfth century, and almost as soon as it had been completed the beautiful and immeasurably large (*admirabilis pulchritudinis et immense*) tower at Beverley Minster (begun after 1188) crashed to the ground again.[105] A local writer knew exactly where to lay the blame:

> Artifices qui praeerant operi, non tantum quantum oporteret circumspecti; non tam prudentes, quam in arte sua subtiles; magis invigilabant decori, quamfortitudini; magis delectationi, quam commodo stabilitatis.[106]

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[105] See *The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops*, vol. 2, ed. by James Raine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 345. See also Roger Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 121. Stalley borrows from John Hooper Harvey, *The Mediaeval Architect* (London: Wayland, 1972), pp. 39-40.

[106] *Ibid*.

[The craftsmen in charge of the work were not as cautious as they should have been, nor as judicious as they were outstanding in their art; they were intent on beauty rather than strength, on delighting the eye rather than ensuring stability.]

Collapses were commonplace in Anglo-Norman England, certainly much more so than in the preceding Anglo-Saxon period.[107] This was, however, far from an indication of neglect or a decline in technical proficiency. To the contrary, a new kind of dynamism proliferated during the Norman century. It was typified all over England by this same apparent compulsion towards "art", "beauty" and "delighting the eye", three prized ideals which were, as this source intimates, if not quite synonymous then often very closely related to monumental size. Indeed, such was its upwards ambition, apparently, that sometimes "caution" and "stability" quite literally fell by the wayside.

The anonymous local writer at Beverley perhaps also hints, if indirectly, at a related attitude of Norman bravado or hubris.[108] The invasion of 1066 precipitated the spread not only of a new Roman(-esque) architectural vernacular, but an almost military-industrial mode of construction, driven by an intensely competitive and somewhat intransigent ruling elite.[109] At its head, by all accounts, the Conqueror embodied an almost belligerent sense of ambition and entitlement. Having ascended somewhat rapidly from the affectations of a duke to those of a king, he seems to have aspired, just as quickly thereafter, to the pretensions (and thus to the superstructures) of an emperor. It is, in truth, very difficult to overestimate the link between the gigantic mode of post-Conquest cathedral building, the caesaro-papal ambitions of England's new ruling classes, and the massive new behemoths being built in Mainz and Speyer

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[107] Stalley makes the same claim, see Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, pp. 39-40.
[108] On Norman hubris see especially Nick Webber, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911-1154* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 115-135.
[109] *Ibid.*, 107-14.

either.[110] William of Malmesbury alludes to this basic drive in his repeated use of the term *aemuluntur*—to copy, to rival and thus to emulate—when he extrapolates the exponential growth and expense of church-building in England after St Peter's Abbey.[111] Not unlike the vertiginous towers that rose at San Gimignano—the so-called "Medieval Manhattan"—or later still, indeed, in 1930s New York, ever greater heights, breadths and widths, and thus ever bolder and riskier attempts at patronage, were pursued (both in a local and ecumenical sense) via an almost unchecked battle for aesthetic supremacy.[112]

Goscelin too was probably inferring a similar kind of boastful association between the churches he liked to imagine and the fame and glory (*inclitas*) of the ancient past.[113] In fact, elsewhere in his *Vita Edithe* he directly equated the Saint of Wilton's "extensive" building works with the enormous heights and achievements of Babylon, Rome and Solomon.[114] Like the enigmatic author of the mid-twelfth-century *De mirabilibus urbis Romae,* who claimed to have paced out the length of the Pantheon, Goscelin also showed an exacting enthusiasm for the dimensions of Edith's new tower at Wilton (which, he claimed, exceeded many of even the most venerable "ancient wonders").[115] The strikingly close proportions of the three enormous arches built into the west façade of Bishop Remigius's Lincoln Cathedral, compared with those of the fourth-century Arch of Constantine (illus. 11 and 12), further make it clear that, whatever associative *animus* stood to be gained through such meticulous attention to size, was no

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[110] On the connections and rivalries with Germany see, especially, Richard Plant, *English Romanesque Architecture and the Holy Roman Empire* (unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of London, 1998).
[111] See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, pp. 725-9.
[112] Gombrich famously alluded to the game of "watch me" in his essay 'The Logic of Vanity Fair,' writing that: "each city must have known what the previous record had been". See E. H. Gombrich, 'The Logic of Vanity Fair', in *The Philosophy of Karl Popper*, ed. by Schilpp (La Salle: Open Court, 1974), pp. 948-49. See also, again, Paul Binski, 'Reflections on the "Wonderful Height and Size" of Gothic Great Churches, pp. 129-56.
[113] Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber Confortatorius*, p. 19.
[114] See, especially, *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber Confortatorious*, ed. by Stephanie Hollis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), p. 124.
[115] See G. McN. Rushforth, 'Magister Gregorius de mirabilibus urbis Romae: a new description of Rome in the twelfth century', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 9 (1919), pp. 14-58.

amateur pursuit.[116] It is a mode of thinking that we know existed, in Northumbria and doubtless at Durham too. At nearby Hexham, for example, William of Malmesbury was told that "[h]ere he [Wilfrid (d. 678?)] constructed buildings …with menacingly high walls (*minaci altitudine murorum*)"; they were, he stressed, "of remarkable polish".[117] "It was a popular saying in those days", he continued, "and one that found its way into writing too, that this side of the Alps there was no building like it."[118] Allowing both for hyperbole and the extent of the "popular saying", the frame of reference by which the monk was measuring these enormous edifices was clear: "people …nowadays say the same; when they see the manner in which Hexham is built, they swear it gives them a mental picture of the best Roman work."[119]

In his *Gesta Guillelmi*, William's namesake of Poitiers (d. 1090) famously wrote that the one heroic event which precipitated everything else in 1066—the Conqueror's first crossing of the channel to England—was an echo of Caesar's own expedition to the same island centuries before.[120] That large buildings, as well as peoples and actions, could also be correlated with similar kinds of histories and elevated rhetoric is a reflection too of the particular authority and *gravitas* that many obviously exuded long after his time. The various antique and biblical figures with which the founding of the massive White Tower in London (begun *c.* 1078) (illus. 19) later became associated—Belinus, Brutus, Caesar and many more still from Geoffrey of Monmouth's Arthurian legends—is startling (albeit, of course, wildly anachronistic).[121] This, William's largest stone castle, was also one of several to be

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[116] "*Romanitas* and *Christianitas* were indivisible" wrote Anthony Quiney. See Anthony Quiney, 'In Hoc Signo: The West Front of Lincoln Cathedral', *Architectural History*, 44 (2001), pp. 162-71.
[117] See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*, pp. 387-9.
[118] *Ibid*.
[119] *Ibid*.
[120] See William of Poitiers, *The "Gesta Guillelmi" of William of Poitiers*, ed. and trans. by R. H. C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 39-40.
[121] See, especially, Abigail Wheatley, *The Idea of the Castle in Medieval England* (York: York Medieval Press, 2004), p. 34.

honorifically designated an *arx palatina* by the monk William fitz Stephen (d. 1191).[122] Thus, the connection was made both with the centremost hill overlooking the ancient forum and, by extension, with the manifold connotations of Roman *virtus*: strength, fortitude, tenacity and once again a kind of idealised Norman *machismo*.[123]

Switching up the tone a little bit here though, we can also note that, writing a little over thirty years after its completion, Reginald of Durham actually offered a bluntly incongruous account of his own cathedral's enormous size:

Quod temporibus antiques plus miraculo exstitit quia tunc magis innocentiae simplicitas viguit, quam modernis diebus; in quibus solius astutia calliditatis arces superbae sullimitatis errexit.[124]

[In former times, more miracles occurred because greater innocence and simplicity flourished than in modern times. Today, modern cunning and craftiness has raised arches of sublime pride.]

Thus, *simplicitas* and *superbia* were set at odds, albeit not for the first time. Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167), who had been educated in the school at Durham and thus knew the cathedral intimately too, was just as scathing: "A monk should shun any sort of habitation that is too large (*magna nimis*) or extravagantly vaulted ...[lest he] feel like one expelled from paradise and imprisoned in a dungeon of filth and squalor".[125]

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[122] *Ibid*. On William fitz Stephen see also David A. Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1996), p. 207.
[123] On Norman *machismo* see also *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P. H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013).
[124] See Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 28.
[125] See Aelred of Rievaulx, *The Mirror of Charity: the Speculum Caritatis of St. Aelred of Rievaulx*, trans. by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (London: A R Mowbray, 1962), p. 34-6.

Both Reginald's *Libellus de admirandis* and Aelred's *Speculum caritatis*, the two texts within which these frank admonishments of excessively large and technically-advanced buildings first appeared, also sat within a larger conference of national and international ideas. Among a burgeoning network of precocious neo-Stoics, early Cistercians and otherwise passion-resistant clerics, a pronounced distaste was emerging in late eleventh- and early twelfth-century Europe for excessively elaborate patronage and, consequently, for architectural gigantism. Overlarge buildings were a distraction from the proper and daily workings of a soul seeking salvation. Many like Durham were reprimanded directly for the extent to which they enabled avarice, impropriety, social or political aggrandisement and—sometimes worst of all—simply pleasure or gratification. Many clerics, like Reginald and Aelred reiterated the lessons of the Church Fathers, and John Cassian (d. 435) more than most, who, writing nearly eight hundred years earlier, had equated *superfluitas* with mental fornication.[126] Where Reginald cited "pride" and Aelred "filth and squalor", others pointed to the respective fates of the massive Temple of Artemis (Acts 19.26-7) and even the high-flying Icarus (whose doom was first sealed by the unconscionable creative impulse of his father Daedalus).[127] Like Christ, many felt, buildings ought to be humbler. Large churches and cathedrals would "not better defend the faithful against the devil, but only bring them all the nearer to him."[128]

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[126] On early Neostoicism see, especially, Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages Tradition*, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990). On Cassian's influence see Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian: A Study in Primitive Monasticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950) and Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[127] At least by 1290 if not, in all likelihood, in some form long before that, exceptional master masons were linked and even portrayed—as for example in the nave labyrinths both of Reims and Amiens—in the role of Daedalus. See Paul Binski, '"Working by Words Alone": The Architect, Scholasticism, and Rhetoric in Thirteenth-Century France, in *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mary Carruthers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 16.

[128] This, it should be mentioned, is a somewhat complicated attribution. As briefly as I can describe it: Anthony the Anchorite, himself quoting an anonymous prelate, makes this point while talking to Paul the Hermit, as quoted by Peter Cantor in his *Verbum Abbreviatum*. See Peter Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum,* in *Patrologia Latina 205*, ed. by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1855), col. 316-8.

"Come", said the children of Adam, "let us make a city, let us make our name famous".[129] Its and their crowning glory should have been the vertiginous tower of Babel, a structure which, if its builders hadn't have been thwarted by God, would have "reached so high as to encroach on heaven" (Genesis 11.4). Writing from the Île de la Cité in 1182 where, with much fanfare only a few years earlier, the enormous new choir of Notre-Dame had just been consecrated, the cathedral's cantor, an uncompromising early scholastic named Peter (also Peter the Chanter; d. 1197), ruminated on much the same lesson. Somewhat witheringly he asked: "What madness is it that we should still be so concerned with the enormity (*magnitudo*), the curiousness (*curiositas*) and the excess (*superfluitas*) of the buildings that we make?"[130] In the first days of faith, he stressed, Abraham only lived in a small tabernacle; likewise Lot and Noah only in tents; save for a poor widow's provision of a small room and a candlestick Elisha had no dwelling of his own; and Paul, the first hermit, did he not live in a cave under the earth?[131] Thus Peter warned: "we are today very far departed from the simplicity of the ancients in the matter of building".[132] Those, he made plain, who yet aspired to erect enormous edifices, to encroach on heaven and to rear themselves up against the Lord ought to desist lest they also be scattered from the face of the earth.

Of all the late eleventh- and early twelfth-century critics of pride, excess and the dreaded vice of the eye, *curiositas*, probably the most articulate and certainly the most acerbic, however, was Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153).[133] Not long before he died, Bernard was enjoined

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[129] *Ibid*.

[130] Ibid., 12. See also Monique Boutry, *Petri Cantoris Parisiensis. Verbum adbreviatum. Textus conflatus* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004) and Eva Matthews Sanford, 'The *Verbum Abbreviatum* of Petrus Cantor', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 74 (1943), pp. 33-48. The choir at Notre-Dame measured roughly 108 feet in diameter, making it larger than any building in Paris and a worthy adversary, moreover, for most in Europe at the time of its construction.

[131] Peter Cantor, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, col. 316-8.

[132] *Ibid*., 12.

[133] See especially Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Steps of Humility and Pride*, trans. by M. Conway (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1989). See also Richard Newhauser, 'The Sin of Curiosity and the Cistercians', in *Erudition at God's Service*, ed. by John R. Sommerfeldt, vol. 11 (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1987), pp. 71-95 and Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), especially chapter 2 part 8 ('Curiositas, or Mental Fornication').

to write the *vita* of a man named Máel Máedóc Ua Morgair (later St Malachy; d. 1148), an itinerant Irish reformer who had himself very recently passed away—in the abbot's arms apparently—at his namesake abbey.[134] In its seventh chapter Bernard told his reader that, having ascended in 1124 to the bishopric of County Down in Ireland, the young saint was, despite his inexperience, already resolved to making a number of radical changes.[135] The abbot clearly delighted in the recollection that Malachy set about persuading the *indigenae*—the local inhabitants of his new diocese, and the ignorant and the negligent not least—to conform to the *decreta* of the Holy Fathers and Apostles regarding confession, and thus to the proper dictates of Bernard's own *universalis Ecclesiae*.[136] Not much later the young bishop then revealed plans to build a new oratory made of stone (*oratorium lapideum*).[137] It was to be fashioned, he made plain, in the manner in which he had seen in other regions. Before he had even finished setting out the foundations of his new building, however, some of the locals had already begun to voice their anger (*indignatus*). They were astonished (*indigenae quidem omnes mirati sunt*): no such building had ever before been seen in this little corner of the world, not in stone (*lapideus*), not in that manner (*instar eorum*) and—most egregiously it seemed—not on such an unnecessary (*superfluus*) scale.[138] Their ringleader, the son of the man who had been forced to yield control of the monastery upon Malachy's arrival, accosted the saint directly: "Why have you thought good to introduce this novelty (*novitatem*) into our regions? We are Irish", he exclaimed, "not French (*Scoti sumus, non Galli*)!"[139]

What was it about this new structure specifically that Bernard knew would have so incensed the *indigenae* in Down, and why? Setting aside, for a moment, the abbot's now

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[134] For a recent translation of the *Liber de Vita et Rebus Gestis Sancti Malachiae Hiberniae Episcopi* see St Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Life of Saint Malachy of Armagh*, trans. by H. J. Lawlor (London and New York: Aeterna, 2014). Malachy had visited Clairvaux Abbey before. Indeed, he had been so impressed by the Cistercians that at one stage he had tried to join as a monk, only to have his request refused by pope Innocent II.
[135] Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Life of Saint Malachy*, pp. 79-83.
[136] *Ibid*.
[137] *Ibid*.
[138] *Ibid*.
[139] *Ibid.*

infamous vilification of the Cluniacs, whose father abbey (Cluny III, begun 1088) (illus. 20) was the longest Romanesque structure ever conceived, neither Bernard nor, for that matter, Abbot Congan—Bernard's primary source for information about Malachy's youth—seem to have been presenting the oratory in isolation as a simple offense to good taste or to the pragmatics of building in the area (the sourcing of masons, materials and so on).[140] Nor, though both were queried, was it a question of necessity or expense alone. These were clearly important but no more than subsidiary issues, a little fuel at most to the main fire which, though it clearly inhered in stones, was (like Goscelin's letter to Eva) obviously much more transcendent. This story alluded, rather, to a clash of identities—*Scoti sumus, non Galli*—and to the association of those identities with particular materials and particular scales, manifest in a very particular place and space.

In the basic visual vernacular of early twelfth-century County Down, large stone buildings evidently stood out. They were not just different, not just out of keeping with the local landscape and the indigenous modes of construction, they were foreign, recognisably foreign: out of keeping with Us, with the Self, with the Same, certainly—but, more specifically, they were "French".[141] Except that, of course, there was nothing at all French about the oratory, or at least not yet. Malachy had only just begun to dig its foundations, there would have been very little, if anything, to distinguish it from the formal engineering methods of, say, the *Anglii* or the *Alemanni*, and, in any event, most of the locals were unlikely to have been so well travelled. No, Bernard seems to have been prompting his reader to recognise that the "presumptuous" man's anger was firmly situated in his own present, in his own core, in County Down, and—as the tenor both of the story and his moniker allude—in the iniquity (*iniquitatem*)

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[140] In his preface Bernard wrote that he both relied on (for information) and was enjoined to write the *life* by his reverend brother and friend, an Irish abbot named Congan. Marie Therese Flanagan believes that this Congan was the abbot of Surium (Inishlounaght, Co. Tipperary). See Marie Therese Flanagan, *The Transformation of the Irish Church in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), p. 14.
[141] Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Life of Saint Malachy*, pp. 79-83.

of his own preoccupations with an imagined periphery.[142] Seen in relation to his own self-image and to his own "barbarous community" (*populo barbaro*), as well as to the many enumerated virtues of the text's hero and standard-bearer—the "prudent" new bishop—the "presumptuous" man's attitude was clearly being inferred to be somewhat narrow-minded, possibly even irrational.[143] He was clearly less concerned with the French *per se* than he was with his own socially-constructed image of French-*ness*. His thoughts were not directed to the duchies of Brittany and Normandy, but to a much more indiscriminate suspicion of the Other: of reform perhaps, of innovation, of change, of bigger powers and bigger churches, of European hegemony, or some other amalgam of unreasonable assumptions about Bernard's own core, His France and His *universalis Ecclesiae*.

Rarely one to equivocate, the obvious passion that Bernard reserved for his narrative here is not especially shocking. Rather more surprising though perhaps are certain parts of the monologue with which he armed his ringleader against Malachy. "What frivolity (*levitas*) is this? What need was there for a work so large (*superfluo*), and so proud (*superbo*)? …Cease, cease, desist from this madness. If not, we shall not permit it, we shall not tolerate it!".[144] In its specific criticism of "frivolity" and "pride", most if not all of this excerpt—which, it can be stressed, Bernard concurred in the first person was "evil" and "poisonous"—would not have looked very far out of place in Reginald's *Libellus de admirandis* or, indeed, as a soliloquy in the abbot's own *Apologia* to William of St. Thierry written only two decades earlier (*c.* 1125). Here the abbot famously complained about the

Omitto oratoriorum immensas altitudines, immoderatas longitudines, supervacuas latitudines, sumptuosas depolitiones, curiosas depiction …Scimus

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[142] *Ibid.*
[143] *Ibid.*
[144] Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Life of Saint Malachy*, p. 81.

namque quod illi, sapientibus et insipientibus debitores cum sint, carnalis populi

devotionem, quia spiritualibus non possunt, corporalibus excitant ornamentis.

… [nos] qui omnia pulchre lucentia …cuncta denique oblectamenta corporea

arbitrati sumus ut stercora.[145]

[immense heights of the places of prayer, their immoderate lengths, their

superfluous widths, the costly refinements, and the painstaking representations

…We know that the bishops, debtors to both the wise and unwise, use material

beauty to arouse the devotion of a carnal people because they cannot do so by

spiritual means. …[we] regard as dung all things shining in beauty.]

With these memorable words, among well over seven thousand others, Bernard had

unceremoniously castigated the various Cluniac profligacies of "food, drink, clothing, bedding,

retinue" and, above all else, their "construction of buildings" right at the time when Durham

was nearing completion.[146] His invocation of the "ridiculous monstrosity" and "deformed

beauty" of that now infamous cloister was, if nothing else, an admonishment of the dangers of

reading in marbles (*legere in marmoribus*).[147] "So multiple and so eye-catching a variety of

diverse forms are there", Bernard lamented, that many would rather "occupy the whole day

admiring them …[than] meditate upon the law of the Lord".[148] Not for no reason therefore

might we wonder why the abbot, with such alacrity, then went on to describe Malachy's

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[145] For the full text, translation and a detailed examination of the *Apologia's* implications for thinking about medieval art history see Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance": Bernard of Clairvaux's "Apologia" and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990) and for this section specifically see p. 279.

[146] *Ibid*., 261.

[147] *Ibid*.

[148] *Ibid*., 282-3.

finished oratory as being not only large and inordinately expensive, but "very beautiful" (*pulchrum valde*).[149] The latter impression was especially curious given that it was achieved specifically, Bernard elaborated, because of the "careful attention" (*intuens diligenter situm*) that Malachy paid to its "form, composition …manner and quality" (*formam, compositionem ...modo et qualitate*).[150]

Thus, two powerful yet paradoxical and somewhat intertwined modes of "encountering" large ecclesiastical structures are appreciable. Even though these are more or less familiar in the canons of orthodox art and architectural history, the trends to *superfluitas* in particular that, unchecked, could provoke adoration and reverence, on the one hand, and something like moral revulsion on the other, have not been widely applied to the study of architecture in early post-Conquest England. Like Bernard, William of Malmesbury complicated the picture still further. For William, architectural gigantism could be a means both to condemnation *and* to redemption. In his *Gesta regum*, he reserved particular contempt for his King, the Conqueror's successor William Rufus (also known as William II; d. 1100), who "began and completed only one building …his palace in London [Westminster Hall], sparing no expense to secure an effect of open-handed splendour" (*magnificentiam exhiberet*).[151] While it seems clear that the monk—as well as other visitors such as Henry of Huntingdon who described it as both "remarkable" and "wondrous"—still to some extent revelled in the experience of the largest secular building in Europe of its time (illus. 21), the King was nevertheless ridiculed at length, in a familiar exploitation of epideictic praise-and-blame, for the unabashed narcissism that saw him allegedly describe it, once finished, as "not half big enough".[152] On account of it being his

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[149] Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Life of Saint Malachy*, p. 83.
[150] *Ibid.*
[151] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, pp. 566-7.
[152] *Ibid.*, See also Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, p. 39.

sole act of architectural patronage, moreover, the failure to provide, as a proper King should, for the embellishment of his church was, to the monk of Malmesbury, simply unforgivable.

Not much later he wrote about Roger, the Bishop of Salisbury (also known as Roger le Poer; d. 1139):

> Fecit enim ibi aedificia spatio diffusa, numero pecuniarum sumptuosa, specie formosissima; ita juste compositio ordine lapidum, ut junctura perstringat intuitum, et totam maceriam unum mentiatur esse saxum. Ecclesiam Salesbiriensem et novam fecit et ornamentis excoluit, ut nulli in Anglia cedat, sed multas praecedat; ipseque non falso possit dicere Deo, "Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae".[153]

> [For there he erected extensive edifices, at vast cost, and with surpassing beauty; the courses of stone being so correctly laid that the joint deceives my eye, and leads me to imagine that the whole wall is composed of a single block. He built anew the church of Salisbury, and beautified it in such a manner that it yields to none in England, but surpasses many, so that he had just cause to say, "Lord, I have loved the glory of thy house".]

Here the monk wrote effusively of the impression brought to his "eye", of the church's "surpassing beauty", and in the integrity of its walls, if only implicitly, of a wholesome loving body. He then made the point explicit, and concluded with perhaps the highest acclaim possible. Such, he insinuates, was the "beauty" of this new church that its bishop "had just

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[153] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, pp. 738-9.

cause" to cite Psalm 26.8: "Lord, I have loved the glory of thy house, the place where your presence dwells".

Thus, for his "extensive edifices" Roger received superlative praise, even though we know William had grave concerns, at the time of writing, that most of his own abbey's revenue had been diverted by the Bishop of Salisbury to fund its rebuilding.[154] William helpfully elaborated:

Quin etiam si qui essent ecclesiarum praelati qui viderentur ab antiquorum sanctitate degeneres, in mundialibus scilicet efficaces, in spiritualibus desides; tales, inquam, si qui essent, sumptuosis locorum cultibus conabantur errata obumbrare. Erigebat quisque templa recentia …Quorum est Rannulfus superius nominatus [155]

[It may be that there were prelates who seemed to fall short of the holiness of early times …But such men did their best to put their shortcomings in the shade by the wealth they lavished on holy places. Each one would build a new church …[a]mong these is that Ranulf of whom I have told above.]

To both Lucan and Suetonius, and the latter's *De Vita Caesarum* especially, William of Malmesbury invested great affinity.[156] In his treatments of Roger, Rufus and Ranulf

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[154] *Ibid.*, 736-9.
[155] *Ibid.*, 794-7.
[156] The influence of Suetonius, in particular, on William of Malmesbury is explicitly stated in the *Gesta regum* in a list of thirty-two instances complied by its latest editors. See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, pp. 461-2. See also Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. by Robert Graves (London: Penguin Books, 2007).

respectively, something like a kindred appraisal of the ethical mores of Augustus—the model Roman emperor, the epitome of Aristotle's *magnificentia*, and the man who memorably brought marble to a city of bricks—was being put to his reader.[157] The last there, Ranulf, was the "incendiary" by name, the tyrant by wide reputation, and the bishop of Durham no less: a man who "skinned the rich …[and] ground down the poor" while overseeing the vast majority of his cathedral's construction.[158] William was thus very consciously speaking, *ad hominem*, in the same complex high antique language of *laudatio* as many of his contemporaries.[159] All three were obviously dealt with quite scathingly, especially as regards their exacting demands of local economies. And yet, in each instance, the references to their individual fame, liberality, magnanimity and charitable largesse are all connected as the means by which they were ultimately able, in spite of their "shortcomings", to build "beautifully". For William of Malmesbury, as for so many of the most active minds of late eleventh- and early twelfth-century Europe, large feats of architecture could be scandalous, excessive, morally repugnant, beautiful, wondrous or noble. They could be indicative of virtuous rulers, the saving grace of the ill-reputed and the first condemnation for those who built very little or nothing at all. They could also delight, terrify and subjugate. These are the broad set of categories with which we might imagine a great many of Durham's first attendees wrestling (some of whom we will unpacking in much greater detail over the next three chapters).

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[157] Augustus actually requested that a list of his architectural accomplishments, narrated in the first person, be inscribed on bronze tablets and hung on his mausoleum in full view of the Campus Martius. See, Bonna D. Wescoat, 'The Patronage of Greek and Roman Architecture', in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Art and Architecture*, ed. by Clemente Marconi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 192.

[158] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, pp. 794-7.

[159] On *laudatio* and architecture see especially John Burrow, *The Poetry of Praise* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

A Multi-story Building

When, in his *Historia Anglorum*, Henry of Huntingdon recalled the enormous volume of William Rufus' new hall at Westminster, he made the comparison between the largest secular hall in Europe at the time and the marvel of Stonehenge (*Stanenges*).[160] Henry—like Herodotus (d. *c*. 425 BC), Diodorus Siculus (d. *c*. 30 BC) and Pliny the Younger (d. 113), who all discussed the pyramids before him—wrestled with what he supposed to be the most obvious question: not when, why or (in spite of their recurrent attribution to Giants) even by whom they were made, but *how*. The manner by which buildings are put together is as central a concern today as, in many ways, it has always been. Henry, however, like so many of the sources gathered together in this chapter, was much less concerned with the materials, the dimensions, the balancing of loads, or the technical proficiencies of any particular mason. He cared very little for prototypes, for attribution or for supplementing a progressive narrative of structural experimentation. Like Reginald of Durham and the operative on duty with the Royal Observer Corps, he was much more interested in the story and, in this case, the wonder (one of four from England) by which such "enormous stones" (*lapides magnitudinis*) had been raised to such "enormous heights" (*adeo in altum elevati sunt*).[161] Like Goscelin of St Bertin, he was clearly impressed. Like Albertus Magnus, he delighted in their mystery. The fact, though, that no one could even "conceive by what art such great stones" had been assembled was what drew his fascination the most.[162] Actually, these "doorways", as he understood them, would have been

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[160] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, p. 23-5.
[161] *Ibid*.
[162] *Ibid*.

much less compelling as the products of careful planning and forethought, than as some unknown and possibly even heroic human legend.[163]

The formidable, exhausting and thus impressive shipment of large and heavy stones, as well as the descriptions of the "journeys" that they made—often in spite of great danger, cost and difficulty—was of course a recurrent trope in early medieval sources. To cite Paul Binski's evocative analogy: these were "odysseys", the "artistic equivalent of Hannibal's elephants", and thus a means by which the achievements of the past might be outdone.[164] All sixteen monolithic columns that stood in support of the portico at the Pantheon in Rome, for instance, were famously dragged and floated more than fifteen hundred miles from Egypt (despite the fact that each one weighed some sixty tonnes).[165] To the saint and emperor of the east, Justinian I, credit was given for the haulage of dozens of piers too, likened by Procopius to "sheer mountain peaks", during the construction of Hagia Sophia.[166] And Abbot Suger, in bringing such weight to Saint-Denis, immodestly thought himself to have surpassed Justinian, Solomon and even the "wonderful" columns bolstering the largest imperial Baths of Diocletian.[167] In fact, even though the word *spolia* is a post-medieval construct, the practice of not so much recycling, but forcefully taking, breaking and remaking stones, was often a provocative and

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[163] The whole passage reads: "Secundum est apud Stanenges; ubi lapides mirae magnitudinis in modum portarum, elevati sunt, ita ut portae portis superpositae videantur: nec potest aliquis excogitare qua arte tanti lapides adeo in altum elevati sunt vel quare ibi constructi sunt." *Ibid.*

[164] Much of the poetic rhetoric of *labor arduus* which was especially prevalent in Benedictine accounts, was derived from ancient sources too: among others, Virgil, Ovid, Horace and Cicero. See Paul Binski, 'The Cosmati and *romanitas* in England: An Overview', in *Westminster Abbey, The Cosmati Pavements*, ed. by Lindy Grant and Richard Mortimer (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 116-34.

[165] See Thorsten Opper, *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 122-3.

[166] "πεποίηνται δὲ οἱ λόφοι λίθοις εὐμεγέθεσι σύνθετοι, λογάδην μὲν συνειλεγμένοις, ἐς ἀλλήλους δὲ πρὸς τῶν λιθολόγων ἐπισταμένως ἐναρμοσθεῖσιν, ἐς ὕψος μέγα. εἰκάσαις ἂν αὐτοὺς εἶναι σκοπέλους ὀρῶν ἀποτόμους". [The piers are composed of huge stones joined together, carefully selected and skilfully fitted to one another by the masons, and rising to a great height. One might suppose that they were sheer mountain-peaks.] See Procopius of Caesarea, *On Buildings*, p. 19.

[167] See Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *A World History of Art* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2005), p. 376.

boastful voice of cathedral-making. It roused its audience, by anecdote and adventure, to look up, to take notice, to get a certain set of thoughts and sentiments "*going*".[168]

This first chapter has aimed to provide a sense of Durham Cathedral as "encountered" in just these kinds of preliminary ways: as an object that is seen from a distance, as a site that is indivisible from its broader environment, as well as of course just simply, brutally, large. As approached today from the train station perhaps, or from Prebends Bridge, these necessary if often overlooked prospects of the cathedral (taken while we are still only just "getting there") might make for an unusual scholarly approach. In the absence of close quarter detail and especially Durham's prototypical decorative schemes, like Henry of Huntingdon we are forced into a certain obscurity of looking. But this is not to equate the view with a lack of productivity or importance. While such "encounters", then as now, must to some degree have worked to activate private modes of internal thinking (Goscelin of St Bertin, for one, made the connection between huge architectural displays and felt personal sentiment particularly clear) Durham Cathedral was also an emphatically public spectacle and (as we have seen) a political one too. Indeed, we might ask ourselves what even is interiority, if not a "useless little" state as Goscelin argued, in the face of such a triumphant military-industrial image?[169]

Robust and authoritative though it must have in some sense appeared, however, Durham did not (because it could not) dictate just one story to its visitors. The distant cathedral, its silhouette, its tall towers, its old western façade (now partly obscured), any one of which might today seem like staid and perhaps even dogmatic features for passive audiences, could active the "encounter" differently. They could all confirm the suspicion with which we began that reality was simply much more temperamental, much more negotiable than the inanimacy of "modern" stones do sometimes imply. Distant "encounters" such as these never insisted on

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[168] See, again, Paul Binski, 'The Cosmati and *romanitas* in England', pp. 116-34.
[169] Goscelin of St Bertin, *Liber Confortatorius*, pp. 32-4.

a specific set of meanings or responses *per se*, but they did initiate a process, they laid a certain groundwork. Mostly they directed those who approached to start thinking, to "get going", to build the tension perhaps and to prepare for what was about to happen next. Here was where the main event, Cuthbert, Oswald, Bede and Durham's long list of material human remnants, slowly loomed into view. Durham's thick monumental walls stood not only to mark the protective limits of their sacred threshold, but the initiation in earnest of a whole new process and spectacle: the cathedral's hitherto hidden interior world, to which we can now turn.

2

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Minor addenda notwithstanding, very few historians have since challenged the exacting chronology of early building works at Durham that John Bilson first began to outline in the 1920s.[1] In his so-called "First Great Campaign of Construction" he recorded that by 1104, the year of Cuthbert's *translatio*, the entirety of the eastern arm, the crossing, all of the south transept, most of the north, and the two easternmost bays of the nave, were all more or less complete (illus. 6). That first east arm—much of which was amended in the 1280s to accommodate the new Chapel of the Nine Altars—originally consisted of four bays finished with apses in echelon, as well as (in all probability) two towers that have also since been dismantled. Each transept had four bays too, with an aisle running the length of each eastern face. And it is likely that the nave was planned, from the beginning, to have a second pair of towers over the westernmost bay of its eight, two of which already stood in support of the crossing. Large piers and columns dominated the elevations in every arm, and supported a modestly-sized gallery level and clerestory which, in the transepts and nave, also included a wall passage. Both the east arm and the transepts were vaulted, and corresponding vaults were

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[1] See John Bilson, 'Durham Cathedral: the Chronology of its Vaults', pp. 101-60 and John Bilson, 'The Beginnings of Gothic Architecture', pp. 289-319. See also Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England*, p. 140 as well as, more recently, Eric Fernie, 'The Romanesque Cathedral, 1093-1133', in *Durham Cathedral: History Fabric and Culture*, ed. by David Brown (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 131-41.

planned for the main body of the church later on in construction. Durham—like Canterbury (begun 1070), Winchester (begun 1079), Ely (begun 1079), St Augustine's (begun *c*. 1080) and Old St Paul's (begun 1087)—showed, in all of these respects, close affinities to the "model" Anglo-Norman church. Even before ground was ceremonially broken, after prayers on the 29th July 1093, those involved in the planning for Durham were, however, already looking at a markedly different project.

Following a routine excavation to install new heating works in 1895 (illus. 22), we now know that the foundations of those first eastern apses (long since removed above ground) were initially constructed using stones that were neither axed diagonally, nor long enough in proportion to their height to have been the work of a typical Norman mason.[2] Actually, this particular method of tooling is thought to have preceded the cathedral by at least one hundred years. Of the likeliest explanations, two stand out: either these masons were in fact Anglo-Saxon, or these stones were actually taken from Durham's former Anglo-Saxon church (begun *c*. 996-9).[3] There is a chance that one or both of these measures were part of a simple cost-cutting scheme. Labour and materials were sometimes scarce, not least in the post-Conquest North, and older or otherwise redundant edifices were occasionally plundered (as, for example, at St Albans, where successive abbots recycled stones, tiles, glass and clay from the ruins of nearby Roman Verulamium).[4] And yet, with sharp new increases in post-Conquest quarrying, concentrated noble wealth and a rush of new technical expertise from the Continent, other motives might suggest themselves.

In his *Vita Karoli Magni*, for instance, the Frankish courtier Einhard (d. 840) recalled that Charlemagne (d. 814) had "columns and marble" brought from Rome and Ravenna to

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[2] See John Crook, 'The Architectural Setting of the Cult of St Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral (1093-1200)', in *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, ed. by David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 237-8.
[3] *Ibid.,* 239-41.
[4] See, for example, *BAACT: Alban and St Albans: Roman and Medieval Architecture, Art and Archaeology* ed. by Martin Henig and Phillip Lindley (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 2001).

beautify his Palace Chapel.[5] Thietmar of Merseburg (d. 1018) tells us that Otto I (also known as Otto the Great; d. 973) had a wealth of "precious marbles, gold and gems" imported to adorn his cathedral at Magdeburg, and (before demurring in the end) Abbot Suger had at least planned to bring columns all the way from the Baths of Diocletian to augment his new abbey church at St Denis.[6] No equivalent texts survive for Durham. But, given that its bishop-patrons enjoyed a similar and practically unrivalled level of ecclesiastical wealth and power, there is every reason (some of which we explored in the preceding chapter) to suspect that this reuse was a deliberate stripping of the "spoils" (*spolia*), and connected, in some meaningful sense, to the innate reverence afforded to the original Anglo-Saxon site.

Each pier in Durham's first eastern arm was incised with spiral fluting and, save for one anomalous chevron-spiral hybrid, in both transepts too (illus. 23).[7] This type of decoration, what is occasionally termed the helical- or "Barley-Sugar-type" column, had not been seen in a Norman building of any denomination, in England, or any other nominally Norman territory, up to that point in time. It has been suggested that they may have deliberately echoed the set of twelve helical or "Solomonic" columns brought by Constantine from the Holy Temple to Old St Peter's in Rome (compare illus. 23 and 24).[8] Except for the fact that Solomon's Temple had been utterly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II after the Siege of Jerusalem (*c*. 587 BC), the connection between Durham and Rome is nonetheless convincing, especially since Durham's initial length and breadth (prior to extensive later renovations in the east end) measured to

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[5] See *The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna*, trans. by Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), p. 77.
[6] Thietmar of Merseburg, *Ottonian Germany. The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, trans. by David A. Warner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001) p. 104
[7] For a recent and provocative analysis of this anomalous column see Meredith Bacola, 'The Hybrid Pier of Durham Cathedral: A Norman Monument to the Shrine of St. Cuthbert?', *Gesta*, 54.1 (2015), pp. 27-36.
[8] See Eric Fernie, 'The Spiral Piers of Durham Cathedral', in *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. by N. Coldstream and P. Draper (Leeds: The British Archaeological Association, 1980), pp. 49-58.

within less than one metre of its mother church.[9] Only the *Rites of Durham* (a text to which we will return at length in chapter three) records vaguely, and as late as the sixteenth century, that these piers designated a space of particular sanctity as well as, in each instance, an altar.[10] Something similar may have been in operation in the Anglo-Saxon crypt at Repton (begun early eighth century), an unlikely prototype for Durham, but indicative potentially of a shared tradition (illus. 25).[11] In any event, once again, there is a clear indication that those in positions of power at Durham were interested in evoking and manipulating the past for the meaningful augmentation of the present, a theme to which we will return throughout this chapter.

The elaborate arch- and soffit-roll mouldings (illus. 26) that featured throughout the east end, with their bold linear spirals, chevrons and zigzags, have been argued to imitate those which are still visible at Anglo-Saxon Wittering (begun *c*. 1050) and Stow (begun *c*. 1040).[12] The alternation of piers and columns (illus. 14, 17 and 23), which again was only very rarely seen anywhere else in the Norman Empire, has been linked to a local tradition too, of which the best surviving example might be Great Paxton (begun *c*. 1050).[13] The stepped plinths that sat beneath both the external arcade and, later, the main arcade piers (illus. 27), have both been likened to those on the outside of the Anglo-Saxon presbytery at St Wystan's in Repton (begun early eighth century), as well as the crossing at St Botolphs in Hadstock (begun after 1090).[14] Durham's celebrated "lozenges" (illus. 28) in its nave have been allied to both a small fragment

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[9] "The external length of Durham was 123.09m; while that of Old St Peter's is estimated by Krautheimer to have been 122.38m. The internal length at Durham was approximately 117.83m; at Old St Peter's it was estimated to have been approximately 119.23m." See, Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Roles of the Patron and Master Mason', p. 163.

[10] See *The Rites of Durham: Being a Description or Brief Declaration of all the Ancient Monuments, Rites, and Customs Belonging or Being Within the Monastical Church of Durham Before the Suppression*, ed. and trans. by J. T. Fowler (Durham: Surtees Society, 1903), pp. 167-8. See also Eric Fernie, 'The Romanesque Piers of Norwich Cathedral', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 36 (1977), pp. 383-6.

[11] See Harold M. Taylor, *Repton Studies 2: The Anglo-Saxon Crypt and Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 9–13; Harold. M. Taylor and Jane Taylor, "Repton, Derbyshire; St. Wystan," in *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 511–53; and Fernie, "Spiral Piers of Durham Cathedral," pp. 49–50.

[12] Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England,* pp. 131-40.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] *Ibid*.

of wall painting from St Mary's Abbey at York (begun 1088/89) (illus. 29) and two carved

piers in the crypt of the Minster (begun 1154).[15] And finally, several parallels have been found

in late Anglo-Saxon manuscript illumination which might mirror the paired shafts of the

interlaced dado-arcading that once lined the inner walls of each of the original apses (compare

illus. 30 and 31).[16] Many more vigorous plastic carvings probably adorned the already

elaborately detailed multi-order templates, and there was scarcely any surface, in all likelihood,

from the vaults to the arcading to the piers, that was not also embellished in some way, whether

by chisel or by brush.[17] Indeed, by almost every standard, not only of design but of execution—

the proficiency of jointing and angling, the consistency of slab dimensions, as well as the sheer

finesse and precocity of its ornamentation—the masons' work at Durham, to quote Eric Fernie,

must have "looked as if it belonged in a different age".[18]

Fernie, of course, was implying—as others had done before and since—that this "age"

was essentially Anglo-Saxon. Some scholars though have also made connections beyond

England, with early medieval Andalusia, Salian Germany and Poitevin France. The intersecting

arcades at Aljafería Palace in Zaragoza (begun *c*. 1050) and, before it, the Great Mosque of

Córdoba (begun 784) both make for intriguing alliances (illus. 32 and illus. 33).[19] The great

cathedrals at Mainz (begun 975) and Speyer (begun 1030) speak to the caesaro-papal ambitions

of England's new ruling classes (we discussed these briefly in the last chapter).[20] And the

columns painted in imitation of veined marble at Saint-Savin-sur-Gartempe (begun *c*.1050)

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[15] See David Park, 'The Decoration of the Cathedral and Priory in the Middle Ages', in *Durham Cathedral: History Fabric and Culture*, ed. by David Brown (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 167-86.
[16] See, for example, the designs of canon tables in Saxon Gospel Books or fol, 4r from the Canterbury Bible (BL Royal MS IE VI) (late eighth century). See, especially, Barbara Abou-el-Haj, *The Medieval Cult of Saints: Formations and Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge Universtiy Press, 1997), p. 41.
[17] The building was certainly painted (and there is every reason to suspect just as lavishly). See Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England*, pp. 279-80 and p. 294.
[18] *Ibid.,* 34.
[19] While the Great Mosque at Córdoba was begun in the eighth century, the intersecting arcades date to 960s.
[20] See, especially, Richard Plant, English Romanesque Architecture and the Holy Roman Empire (unpublished doctoral thesis: University of London, 1998).

and Saint-Hilaire-le-Grand (begun *c*.1050) are certainly interesting too (compare illus. 14 and illus. 34).[21] None of these can be easily ignored (and I hesitate to rush through them). And yet, there is still something like a broad if sometimes quiet consensus that very few, if any, of these connections can be thought to be definitive (and certainly not singular influences) on Durham's plan or execution.

Except insofar, for instance, as they might have shared a more substantial common prototype now lost to us, the small parishes of Anglo-Saxon Wittering, Stow, Great Paxton, St Wystan's, and St Botolph's, are all unlikely to have influenced Durham in any direct or extensive fashion. It is not necessarily clear, moreover, why Islamic Spain should suddenly have interested Christian masons in the north of England. (This isn't to argue that they could not, only that, beyond the general argument for borrowed or augmented "exoticism", all the work still remains to be done to flesh out the relationship). Similar though they are in certain respects of size and structure, both Mainz and Speyer offer little to compare in the way of decorative consistencies. France might sit among the more likely sources, but very little of the paint survives at Durham to allow for a like-for-like comparison. And lastly, York, which makes the most sense by far, but also necessitates something of a chicken-and-egg-type judgment: the St Mary's fragment may not even predate Durham, and the two carved piers certainly do not. And so, collectively, if a general interest in the past might be clear at Durham, the corollary questions of why, for whom and to what ends still remain, by contrast, much less so.

In spite (or perhaps even because) of the paucity of obvious answers, speculation about the ethnicity of Durham's master mason has long since taken up many pages too. The issue has been repeatedly and energetically debated ever since Bilson, and later Thurlby and Bony (who

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[21] See David Park, 'The Decoration of the Cathedral', p. 169.

all paid close attention to the cathedral's decorative schema) offered their conclusions.[22] Bilson advocated for a Norman, albeit one who had experience north of the Channel, while Thurlby and Bony saw, in the "plastic" and "linear" values of the decoration, the hand of an Englishman, probably trained in the North (perhaps at York), but with a ready grasp of Norman customs. After nearly one hundred years the issue is still largely unresolved. Very little of the mason's character, inclinations, or anything like his *modus vivendi* can yet be assumed with any certainty. More to the larger point I am working towards though, is it perhaps worth asking, as Lisa Reilly once did, precisely what sort of knowledge (or dialogue) stands to be furthered in any case?[23]

By 1093, the patrons, the prince-bishops, most of the monks and, of course, the overwhelming percentage of Durham's new ruling elites were either ostensibly or actually Norman.[24] If the master mason—assuming there was only one, which might already be something of a stretch—was an Anglo-Saxon or even a part-descendant thereof, would this imply that, in spite of nearly three decades of Norman subjugation, this novel decoration was smuggled in beneath the noses of its unwitting sponsors? Or, perhaps, that while Norman masons held sway in the south, a native was free to master the invaders' methods of plan, proportion and elevation, before embellishing the cathedral of his own accord, in the north? What is more: given the spotlight that Durham initially enjoyed as the sole Norman ecclesiastical complex north of York, given the sheer wealth and ambition of its patrons, as well as the obvious hyper-precision that Bony in particular saw in its design, is it even realistic to think that this unique synthesis of forms could have been arrived at almost accidentally, via

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[22] See, again, John Bilson, 'Durham Cathedral: the Chronology of its Vaults', pp. 101-60; Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Roles of the Patron and Master Mason', pp. 161-84 and Jean Bony, 'The Stonework Planning of the First Durham Master', pp. 19-34.

[23] See Lisa Reilly, 'The Emergence of Anglo-Norman Architecture: Durham Cathedral', *ANS*, 19, ed. by Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), p. 337.

[24] See, for example, David Rollason, 'The Anglo-Norman Priory and its Predecessor', in *Durham Cathedral: History Fabric and Culture*, ed. by David Brown (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 27-38 and Hugh M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation, and Identity 1066-c.1220* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 205-7.

a rogue individual, as opposed to quite deliberately, in response to a specific historical environment?[25]

All of these questions notwithstanding, it is unclear above all else what light these types of analyses stand to shed on our primary interests here: how these carvings actually functioned, how they were received or "encountered", in practice and *in situ*. To these we now return, as well as to a more detailed examination of early medieval decorative agency and the cathedral's storied relationship to its distant past.

Numbers and Variety

As we have already noted, first-hand accounts of early medieval reception are few and far between, especially as concerns buildings, especially in England, and especially in the first two or three generations after the Conquest. Indeed, even when we can expand slightly both the geographical and chronological limits of our source material (something we have already begun to do in the previous chapter), there is still rarely anything to compare with the range and nuance of modern architectural criticism. As Mary Carruthers notes, however, one particularly rich and compelling exception is Procopius of Caesarea (d. *c*. 554) and his vibrant ekphrasis on Hagia Sophia (begun 532):

ταῦτα δὲ πάντα ἐς ἀλλήλά τε παρὰ δόξαν ἐν μεταρσίῳ ἐναρμοσθέντα, ἐκ τε
ἀλλήλων ἠωρημένα καὶ μόνοις ἐναπερειδόμενα τοῖς ἄγχιστα οὖσι, μίαν μὲν

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[25] Bony wrote: "as soon as we start examining its masonry closely, the building demonstrates that it could never have been started, not even conceived, without methods of advanced planning." See Jean Bony, 'The Stonework Planning of the First Durham Master', p. 33.

ἁρμονίαν ἐκπρεπεστάτην τοῦ ἔργου ποιοῦνται, οὐ παρέχονται δὲ τοῖς θεωμένοις

αὐτῶν τινι ἐμφιλοχωρεῖν ἐπὶ πολὺ τὴν ὄψιν, ἀλλὰ μεθέλκει τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν ἕκαστον,

καὶ μεταβιβάζει ῥᾷστα ἑαυτό. ἀγχίστροφός τε ἡ τῆς θέας μεταβολὴ ἐς ἀεὶ γίγνεται,

ἀπολέξασθαι τοῦ ἐσορῶντος οὐδαμῆ ἔχοντος ὅ τι ἄν ποτε ἀγασθείη μᾶλλον τῶν

ἄλλων ἁπάντων. ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἀποσκοποῦντες πανταχόσε τὸν νοῦν, τάς τε ὀφρῦς

ἐπὶ πᾶσι συννενευκότες, οὐχ οἷοί τέ εἰσι ξυνεῖναι τῆς τέχνης, ἀλλ' ἀπαλλάσσονται

ἀεὶ ἐνθένδε καταπεπληγμένοι τῇ ἐς τὴν ὄψιν ἀμηχανίᾳ.[26]

[All these details, fitted together with incredible skill in mid-air and floating off from each other and resting only on the parts next to them, produce a single and most extraordinary harmony in the work, and yet do not permit the spectator to linger much over the study of any one of them, but each detail attracts the eye and draws it on irresistibly to itself. So the vision constantly shifts suddenly, for the beholder is utterly unable to select which particular detail he should admire more than all the others. But even so, though they turn their attention to every side and look with contracted brows upon every detail, observers are still unable to understand the skilful craftsmanship, but they always depart from there overwhelmed by the bewildering sight.]

Procopius is clear here that the "extraordinary harmony" of the new basilica's interior (illus. 15) was generated by the way that, detail by detail, the viewer's eye was led around its surfaces.[27] While much of his panegyrical account of Justinian's building works (often referred to as *De Aedificiis* or *On Buildings*) is transparently motivated by flattery, there is a clear sense

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[26] See Procopius of Caesarea, *On Buildings*, pp. 22-3. See also Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*, pp. 136-7.

[27] Procopius of Caesarea, *On Buildings*, pp. 22-3

that Procopius was speaking—or was intending, at least, to give the impression of speaking—from personal experience. He was the beholder here, or at least one of them; his eyes, his gaze, "constantly shift[ed]".[28] As Carruthers points out, having been trained in the classics in Gaza, and in the art of rhetoric in particular, Procopius will have understood precisely this kind of roaming visual narrative as an account of *ductus*: that ongoing, active and dynamic process of literally "con*ducting*" oneself through a work of art.[29]

He went on to extrapolate, noting that the

Χρυσῷ μὲν ἀκιβδήλῳ καταλήλειπται ἡ ὀροφὴ πᾶσα, κεραννῦσα τὸν κόμπον τῷ κάλλει, νικᾷ μέντοι ἡ ἐκ τῶν λίθων αὐγή ἀνταστράπτουσα τῷ χρυσῷ. …τίς δ' ἂν τῶν ὑπερῴων τῆς γυναικονίτιδος ἑρμηνεὺς γένοιτο, ἢ τάς τε παμπληθεῖς διηγοῖτο στοὰς καὶ τὰς περιστύλους αὐλάς, αἷς ὁ νεὼς περιβέβληται; τίς δὲ τῶν τε κιόνων καὶ λίθων διαριθμήσαιτο τὴν εὐπρεπείαν, οἷς τὸ ἱερὸν κεκαλλώπισται; λειμῶνί τις ἂν ἐντετυχηκέναι δόξειεν ὡραίῳ τὸ ἄνθος. θαυμάσειε γὰρ ἂν εἰκότως τῶν μὲν τὸ ἁλουργόν, τῶν δὲ τὸ χλοάζον, καὶ οἷς τὸ φοινικοῦν ἐπανθεῖ καὶ ὧν τὸ λευκὸν ἀπαστράπτει, ἔτι μέντοι καὶ οὓς ταῖς ἐναντιωτάταις ποικίλλει χροιαῖς ὥσπερ τις ζωγράφος ἡ φύσις.[30]

[The whole ceiling is overlaid with pure gold, which adds glory to the beauty, yet the light reflected from the stones prevails, shining out in rivalry with the gold. …But who could fittingly describe the galleries …or enumerate the many colonnades and the colonnaded aisles by means of which the church is surrounded? Or who could recount the beauty of the columns and the stones with which the

[28] *Ibid.*
[29] See Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*, p. 136-7.
[30] Procopius of Caesarea, *On Buildings*, pp. 25-7.

church is adorned? One might imagine that he had come upon a meadow with its flowers in full bloom. For he would surely marvel at the purple of some, the green tint of others, and at those on which the crimson glows and those from which the white flashes, and again at those which Nature, like some painter, varies with the most contrasting colours.]

Critical to his *ductus*, as this second excerpt makes plain, were numbers and sheer variety. Who could properly "describe", "enumerate" or "recount" this building?[31] This was how his attention was drawn, *irresistibly*, from one "bewildering sight" to another.[32] The visual route(s) of the basilica, signposted by vivid and contrasting imagery, drove his shifting vision. Even though craftsmanship here (as well as, of course, the Emperor's own magnanimity) were key contributors in these respects, it was "not by any human power or skill …that this work [was] so finely turned".[33] It was in fact "by the influence of God" alone and especially Nature that his eye was moved along: the marvellous and innately admirable colours—purple, green, crimson, white—of the building's stones.[34] Having initially been drawn in by the basilica's "precipitously rising height", it was their sheer multiformity which then transported him away to a meadow "filled with flowers in bloom".[35] *Ductus* and variety (what the Greeks called *poikilia* and the Roman world *varietas*) thus worked together, speaking in harmony towards a common end: to puzzle, to please and then, finally, to overwhelm. Seen in this way, variety seems almost inextricable from *ductus*; indeed, as Carruthers herself emphasises, we might

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[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] *Ibid.*, 28: "…ξυνίησι μὲν εὐθὺς ὡς οὐκ ἀνθρωπείᾳ δυνάμει ἢ τέχνῃ, ἀλλὰ θεοῦ ῥοπῇ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο ἀποτετόρνευται".
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*, 18 and 27.

even say that it is *ductus*, a mindful assembly of persuasive images and ideas, which ultimately constituted the building's argument or thesis.[36]

As we have already noted, Justinian's most famous building "was altogether terrifying" for Procopius.[37] In terms of sheer scale, the massive proportions of Durham Cathedral and Hagia Sophia both clearly functioned (at least in part) as something like their "hard" power: boasting, eclipsing, affecting and thereby conquering. Then there is the sheer wealth and complexity of their respective masonry work. The abundantly varied surfaces and endowments of Durham's interior fabric, might they not also be thought of as something like its "soft" power: seducing, affecting, overwhelming and thus persuading? Separated by more than five hundred years and two thousand miles though they may be, it is tempting to wonder if at least some of the modes of seeing and experiencing built-form that Procopius describes here might also be quite reasonably applied to the north of England.[38] At the very least, however, we are perhaps now obliged to ask certain questions. Can Durham's peculiar and hitherto largely

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[36] See, again, Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*, pp. 136-7. On the importance and broad connotations of *varietas* see also Mary Carruthers, 'Varietas: a Word of Many Colours', *Poetica: Zeitschrift für Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft*, 41 (2009), pp. 33-54.

[37] See Procopius of Caesarea, *On Buildings*, p. 18. "τῷ δὲ σφαλερῷ τῆς συνθέσεως δοκοῦντι εἶναι φοβερὸν ὅλως."

[38] If needs be though, we can be even more direct. Not long after 1120, just around the time, that is, when work on Durham Cathedral was nearing its final phase, Theophilus Presbyter (d. 1125), a Benedictine monk, took to setting down his *De diversis artibus* ('On various arts'). In a passage that is as remarkable for its rarity as its candour, he instructs one of his pupils on how to properly (and abundantly) decorate a church: …carissime fili, domum Dei, fiducialiter aggressus, tanto lepore decorasti, et laquearia seu parietes diverso opere, diversisque coloribus distinguens, paradisi Dei speciem floribus variis vernantem, gramine foliisque virentem, et sanctorum animas diversi meriti coronis foventem, quodammodo aspicientibus ostendisti, quodque creatorem Deum in creatura laudant, et mirabilem in operibus suis praedicant effecisti. Nec enim perpendere valet humanus oculus, cui operi primum aciem infigat; si respicit laquearia, vernant quasi pallia; si consideret parietes, est paradisi species; si luminis abundantiam ex fenestris intuetur, inaestimabilem vitri decorem et operis pretiosissimi varietatem miratur. [dearest son, …you have approached the House of God with confidence, and have adorned it with so much beauty; you have embellished the ceilings and walls with varied work in different colours and have, in some measure, shown to beholders the paradise of God, glowing with various flowers, verdant with herbs and foliage …For the human eye is not able to consider on what work first to fix its gaze; if it beholds the ceilings they glow like brocades; if it considers the walls they are a kind of paradise; if it regards the profusion of light from the windows, it marvels at the inestimable beauty of the glass and the infinitely rich and various workmanship.] Despite their obvious similarities ("varied work", "various flowers", "infinitely rich and various workmanship" etc.), Carruthers argues that it is actually more "unlikely that Theophilus had read Procopius directly", than something of the process of seeing abundance—and thinking about seeing abundance—had become so ingrained essentially, so storied, that by the early twelfth century it had simply become a "virtuous feature" of building. See Theophilus Presbyter, *The Various Arts (De diversis artibus)*, ed. and trans. by Charles. R. Dodwell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 3 and Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*, pp. 152-3.

unexplained chevrons, zig-zags and lozenges—what Fernie memorably termed a "riot of idiosyncratic decoration"—be reasonably thought of as "purely ornamental" or *l'art pour l'art* (both have been argued)?[39] Or did they perhaps embody some kind of thesis: were they a means to communicate and, if so, with whom and to what ends?

If I do ultimately want to push the boat out a little further here, towards a *varietas* of argument (as well as to more of a *ductus* of argument in the next chapter), the basic aesthetic instinct towards decoration as an end in itself—what we sometimes call *horror vacui*—is still a useful door to open first. Malcolm Thurlby has argued that the elaborate designs of Durham's first east end might have indicated a desire on the part of the patron and/or master mason to fashion a kind of large ciborium.[40] Once again, the implicit suggestion is that decoration was positive, almost for its own sake. If not necessarily the more the merrier *per se*—because *too much* might still be possible—then a proportional (if inexact) relationship between opulence and propriety is clear: a lavish embellishment of forms would have befitted Cuthbert's status and shrine.

In studies on the insular architecture of England during the Anglo-Norman period it has often been observed that many of its early secular motifs seem detached from other modes of Romanesque building. Lindy Grant has argued that England "was more original, [more] inventive than Normandy" as well as "more open to outside influence(s)".[41] As something like a new vanguard emerged in the construction of, among other things, Anglo-Norman castles, lordly halls, so-called *donjon-palais*, bedchambers and chapels, the allure of "the grand, the overwhelming, [and] the decoratively complex" inspired a range of patrons and projects to build and to "consume" conspicuously.[42]

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[39] See, for example, Park, 'The Decoration of the Cathedral', p. 169.
[40] See Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Roles of the Patron and Master Mason', pp. 161-84.
[41] See Lindy Grant, 'Architectural Relationships between England and Normandy, 1100-1204', in *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages*, ed. by David R. Bates and Anee Elizabeth Curry (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994), p. 121.
[42] *Ibid.*, 124.

Comparably baroque trends have also been identified in early twelfth-century literature too, albeit with varying judgments. Students of Anglo-Norman literary studies have long since wrestled with two of the most mystifying features of their genre. First, very little material seems to have appeared, on either side of the Channel, in the immediate wake of the Conquest.[43] And second, when now canonical texts such as Benedeit's *Voyage of St Brendan*, the *Vie de St Alexis* and the works of Philippe de Thaon emerged during the reign of Henry I (1100-35), they somehow did so almost fully-formed. They had well-polished mannerisms, a susceptibility to formal and lexical experimentation and a pronounced fondness towards esoteric styles and practices.[44] Still, these similarities with secular building do not usually extend to the ecclesiastical world, or at least not at the level of the cathedral, where even the most revered eleventh-century edifices—Winchester, Canterbury, St Albans and the Abbaye aux Hommes in Caen for instance—all appear sparse by comparison to Durham (compare illus. 35 and illus. 14, 15, 17, 23 and 26). Thus, while *varietas* as an end in itself should not be dismissed in its entirety, much of the explanation must yet remain: why Durham, why now?

In common with many artful or aesthetic phrases, *varietas* was variously located in medieval Europe at the intersection between two extremes, what we might call "tame" or "underdone" on the one hand, and "flamboyant" or even "excessive" on the other.[45] A clear challenge thus emerges. Getting back to our audience: in any given context, one crowd's balanced variety might be another's ambivalence or even disgust (this is a theme we have met already, of course, in chapter one). *Varietas* thus resists a narrow definition, whether conceptually or via like-for-like material comparison. It relies on the beholder, on how art and architecture speak to and, in turn, affect individual people. With such a paucity of written accounts though, how can we

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[43] That is to say that no *romanz* works, for example, made either in England or Normandy, have been dated to before 1100 (or at least not confidently). See, for example, Geoff Rector, 'An Illustrious Vernacular: The Psalter en romanz in Twelfth-Century England', in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c.1100-c.1500*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), pp. 198-206.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] See, again, Mary Carruthers, 'Varietas: a Word of Many Colours', pp. 33-54.

even hope to distinguish faithfully, and at a distance of nearly a thousand years no less, between the "felt" experiences of multiple demographics? This is part of the ambition for this thesis that now begins in earnest and runs through into the next two chapters.

It has often been argued that the richer articulation of medieval sculpture, painting and buildings alike, was sometimes (though not always) associated with an advertisement of status or worth, a suggestion already implicit in Thurlby's theory of a large ciborium.[46] If only a rule of thumb, it can nonetheless be noted that, of all the sites in the cathedral, it was the chancel, the choir, Cuthbert's shrine, his altar and the transepts—the spaces that most closely surrounded the holy *corpus*—that were the most ornate. At least initially, these were the daily loci and preoccupation of one particular demographic above all others: a small retinue of perhaps twenty or thirty monks.[47] In 1083, a radical decision was taken to replace the old *congregatio* at Durham with a new and mostly foreign assembly of young Benedictines. Where for centuries Durham's lay clerics, the so-called "people of St Cuthbert" or his *haliwerfolc,* would have been largely free to interact, to work and even to marry within the local secular society, these men worked much harder to live in relative isolation. How did such a variety of forms function for those who had flown from the world (*fuga mundi*)?

Perhaps, in the words of Bernard of Clairvaux, variety relieved satedness: "*varietas tollit fastidium*".[48] Relief from the challenges of a "coenobitic" existence, of an isolated (if communal) life was a repeated justification for *varietas* in Benedictine art and architecture. Indeed, *taedium* (boredom) was a prominent monastic vice. *Taedium* was closely related to *satietas*, but where *satietas* was taken simply to mean "satisfied", *taedium* almost always

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[46] See, again, Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Roles of the Patron and Master Mason', pp. 161-84.
[47] We cannot know of course, beyond the level of speculation, or via what might be inferred using the Norman forms that do survive elsewhere in the cathedral, how the first east end looked exactly. The analyses that follow here are therefore broadly applied to the monks residing in the later medieval cathedral also.
[48] See especially Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (London: Continuum Books, 2009) and especially the chapter 'The Work of God (2): The Monk Alone' (pp. 175-94). See also Mary Carruthers, *The Experience of Beauty*, p. 146-7.

carried negative connotations.[49] It is "boredom" as we might understand it today, but shot through with an added sense of almost existential repugnance. Not unrelated too is the Greek word "*acedia*" which was employed commonly by the Desert Fathers (on whom Cuthbert both modelled himself, and later was modelled in turn by Bede).[50] *Acedia*, like *taedium*, implied a particular kind of spiritual dehydration, or a gradual diminishment of resolve and judgment. Sometimes called the "noonday devil" of the contemplative life, it represented one of the gravest and most constant concerns for those who undertook unremitting prayer and work (*ora et labora*). In his *De institutis coenobiorum*, John Cassian wrote that: "when depression attacks the wretched monk it engenders a loathing for his situation, dislike of his cell, and contemptuous disparagement of his brethren".[51] In the absence of sufficient *varietas*, he stressed, monks might easily stray from their chosen path.[52]

Of course, this runs somewhat contrary to how many have since seen strangeness interpreted, vis-à-vis imagery in the monastic complex, in Bernard's *Apologia*.[53] And yet, might *varietas* actually have to be understood as a much more nuanced phenomenon than his infamous invective to William of St-Thierry often leads us to believe? Like Bernard's deformed and ridiculous monsters, the sheer profusion, mixture and diversity of ornamentation at Durham surprises its beholder, then as now. These curious and costly carvings may not have evoked fear, mistrust or ridicule within the monastic community *per se*, but, like Procopius' Hagia Sophia, a shifting sense perhaps of *admiratio* at the "skilful craftsmanship", at that which was simply unusual and could help ward off the *taedium* of monastic living.[54]

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[49] See, for example, Michael Casey, 'Reading St Bernard: The Man, the Medium, the Message', in *A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux*, ed. by Brian Patrick McGuire (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 103.

[50] *Ibid*.,

[51] John Cassian, *Conferences*, trans. by Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 134.

[52] *Ibid*.

[53] See Conrad Rudolph, *The "Things of Greater Importance": Bernard of Clairvaux's "Apologia" and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

[54] See Walter D. Ray, *Tasting Heaven on Earth*, p. 66.

It can also be noted, as Jean Bony once did so thoroughly, that with the possible exception of the anomalous chevron-hybrid in the south transept, all the carvings in the eastern arm were the most proficiently rendered too.[55] As much as the sheer profusion of decoration in a building might imply status, is there any value attached to quality and technical precision? As Theophilus and Procopius both seem to have stressed, human embellishment and "skilful craftsmanship" were indeed key components in *varietas*. The visual and affective merits of late medieval *labor arduus*, allied with the special pleasure derived from exacting, indeed almost painstaking, arrangement and display has been discussed by Paul Binski.[56] As the tenor of the argument that follows reverts back once again to Cuthbert's Hiberno-Saxon heritage, however, it might be useful to briefly look at the decorative schemes of one of the most highly-worked and recognisable objects from his lifetime, the Sutton Hoo Belt Buckle (illus. 36). A swirling, sinewy, almost chaotic mass of stylised lines defines our first view of this object, but this is soon resolved. On closer more prolonged inspection, thirteen unique forms can be counted, as well as eyes, legs and feet; and is that a mouth, and maybe a beak? To "work out" the special subtleties of its zoomorphic forms might necessitate a certain familiarity with an Anglo-Saxon visual vernacular. More than that though, it demands scrutiny and time (something the monks at Durham, of course, had no shortage of).

Not unlike the "King's head" Magnus saw in his marble, a certain game is afoot here. The dense visual interlaces insist on a shifting and transitory viewing experience. Forms are resolved and then lost. We are forced to equivocate, to second guess ourselves, to retrace line after line. Successive impressions of uncertainty, doubt, even confusion creep in. Ultimately, we might be left with more questions than answers, none of which the buckle works very hard to help us with. Disentangling what we see, solving the riddle, these might drive us, but neither

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[55] Jean Bony, 'The Stonework Planning of the First Durham Master', pp. 19-34.
[56] See Paul Binski, 'The Cosmati and *romanitas* in England', pp. 116-34.

are really the objective here. Like the many interlacing arcades, chevrons, zig-zags and lozenges in the cathedral (illus. 15, 26, 28, and 30), the pattern and the play are the point. We are drawn in, we admire the craft and the "workmanship".[57] Like Magnus we look and we think and we marvel; thus, we are seduced.

It can be emphasised that many if not most of the decorative motifs to survive from seventh- and eighth-century Northumbria—the years during and immediately after Cuthbert's lifetime—share a very similar and pronounced interest in the complex interplay of line, pattern and surface texture. The carpet page opening the Gospel of St Matthew in the early eighth-century Lindisfarne Gospels is a classic and exceptional example (London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero D.iv, fol. 26v) (illus. 37), as is, of course, the St Cuthbert Gospel (formerly known as the Stonyhurst Gospel; London, British Library, Loan MS 74). Having been placed in Cuthbert's tomb in 698 on the occasion of his *translatio* to the high altar at Lindisfarne, this book and its original binding was unexpectedly found—so the story goes—when Cuthbert's coffin was reopened at Durham in 1104. In the bold plastic articulation of the raised interlace on its upper cover (illus. 38), and especially in the schematic square settings of its lower cover (compare illus. 39 and 28) it is easy get a sense of a shared tradition.

The bulk of these plastic and linear motifs likely found their way into the Anglo-Saxon North, not from the Anglo-Saxon south, but from Germanic, Scandinavian and "Celtic" artistic oeuvres.[58] The intertwining forms of the Lindisfarne Gospels in particular are also mirrored in the carved decoration of early stone Northumbrian churches, of which Acca's Cross (illus. 40) and the crypt built at Hexham by St Wilfrid (mid seventh century) are both rare survivals.

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[57] Theophilus Presbyter, *The Various Arts*, p. 3.
[58] See, for example, the essays in *Early Medieval Stone Monuments: Materiality, Biography, Landscape*, ed. by Howard Williams, Joanne Kirton and Meggen Gondek (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015); Catherine E. Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011); Jane Hawkes, *The Golden Age of Northumbria* (Warkworth: Sandhill Press, 1996); Janet Backhouse, *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (London: Phaidon Press, 1981), pp. 62-86; George Henderson, *From Durrow to Kells*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987), pp. 99-122.

Contemporary with all of these old images, moreover, was the spread in northern England of so-called hogback tombs (illus. 41). It has been argued that these structures represented an amalgam of the same types of pagan and Christian imagery, expressions in a sense of the conversion of the Hiberno-Norse elite.[59] Their house-style shape may actually have been indicative of genuine tenth-century lordly halls (now lost), complete with bowed sides and wooden shingles. "[T]he carved oval shapes represent little wooden tiles", writes Charles Kelsey and—in a crucial point to which we will return—"the interlaced lines [depict] the *wattles* or *osiers* of which their huts were made".[60]

Along with the vine-scroll, a near ubiquitous feature of northern Anglo-Saxon art, the carved eighth-century shafts at Hexham and Nunnykirk in Northumberland, Heysham in Lancashire, and the detailed relief cut into St Cuthbert's cross at Bewcastle in Cumbria (illus. 42), all also hint at the extent to which the fixation with angles and linearity in pre-Conquest Northumbria was itself derived from an interest in plants and trees. Few texts survive to explain this preoccupation in any great detail, but some recent studies have indicated that the Anglo-Saxon creation myth of a common origin between humans and trees may have survived the introduction of Christianity in the north, before being incorporated (along with many other pagan beliefs) into the new religion.[61] In numerous Anglo-Saxon poetic texts, some from explicitly Christian sources, humans are indeed conceived of in terms of trees whilst timber objects are often anthropomorphised. Most strikingly, the True Cross itself speaks as if it were a human being in the *Dream of the Rood*, and there are numerous references in the

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[59] Howard Williams, 'Hogbacks: the Materiality of Solid Spaces', in *Early Medieval Stone Monuments: Materiality, Biography, Landscape*, ed. by Howard Williams, Joanne Kirton and Meggen Gondek (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), pp. 241-68.

[60] See Charles E. Kelsey, 'The Coming of the Northmen', in *Oxford County Histories: Cheshire* (Oxford: Clarednon Press, 1911) p. 53

[61] See, for example, the essays in *Trees and Timber in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. by Michael D. J. Bintley and Michael G. Shapland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

poem to the limbs (*leomum*) of forests and humans, and the bosoms (*bearm*) and ribs (*ribba*) of ships.[62]

Fascinatingly, Michael Bintley has recently shown how certain Old English texts even actually identified various kinds of trees, church pillars, and rods as the precursors to the True Cross, with some even encouraging Anglo-Saxon men and women to see their own former sacred woods as harbingers for the new faith.[63] The theory posited is roughly that the Anglo-Saxons, when newly Christian, may have seen their ancestors as "northern Israelites". And so, they will have reinterpreted their old religion as a form of Judaism, the legitimate forerunner of Christianity, and their old sacred trees and pillars, likewise, as equivalently legitimate. Indeed, John Blair made the very powerful point only recently that the Old English word for "cross" was drawn not from any loan-word based upon the Latin *crux*, but from the words *treow* and *beam*, both of which meant "tree".[64]

That these sentiments merge with the broadly Hiberno-Saxon tradition we began to unpack in chapter one is further emphasised by the legendary references to particular sacred trees in Ireland—a sacred tree being referred to in Ireland as a *bile*—many of which were associated with druid priests. These include the famous trees that were the source of supreme wisdom and offered protection to each of its five provinces. If later sources can be trusted, these trees and others often marked royal inauguration sites too. In fact, no outrage seems to have been as keenly felt as the deliberate destruction of a tree by one's enemies: in one Irish Annal, written as late as 982, a prolonged local war even broke out following the deliberate

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[62] For relevant commentary on the *The Dream of the Rood* see the introduction to the Vercelli Book and the Ruthwell Cross in *The Dream of the Rood*, ed. by Michael Swanton (Manchester: Manchester University Press).
[63] See Michael D. J. Bintley, *Trees in the Religions of Early Medieval England* (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer, 2015).
[64] See John Blair, 'Holy Beams: Anglo-Saxon Cult Sites and the Place-Name Element Bēam', in *Trees and Timber in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. by Michael D. J. Bintley and Michael G. Shapland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 186-210.

destruction of a great tree which was used to inaugurate Kings in Magh Adhair, near Tulla, in present day County Clare.[65]

It is a combination of factors, however, beyond like-for-like comparisons and the region-specific traditions that we've begun to outline above, that really singles out trees and plant-life as relevant to a discussion of the decorative schemes at Durham Cathedral. What I want to do next is to situate this unique synthesis of Anglo-Norman forms within another contemporary compendium of stories, in order to continue to ask, firstly, why this masonry may actually have had a multiplicity of functions beyond the merely "ornamental", and secondly, why the themes of place and landscape we developed in the first chapter, as well as nostalgia and politics, are all essentially inextricable.

Symeon of Durham's *Libellus de Exordio*

In book 3 of his *Libellus de exordio*, Symeon of Durham wrote that in the spring of the year 995 a man named Ealdhun (also known as Aldhun of Durham; d. 1018/19), the last Bishop of Lindisfarne, was visited by a premonition.[66] Persuaded that there was an ominous and

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[65] See Thomas Johnson Westropp, 'Magh Adhair, Co. Clare. The Place of Inauguration of the Dalcassian Kings', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy (1889-1901)*, 4 (1896-898), pp. 55-60.

[66] The following passage is especially long and so, rather than quoting it at length, I have chosen to paraphrase much of it from the most recent translation, which I also use throughout this thesis. See, again, Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*; *Tract on the Origins and Progress of this the Church of Durham*, ed. and trans. by David Rollason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 145-9. Several versions of Symeon's *Libellus* remain extant. Perhaps the most important, and certainly the most facsimiled, is what is thought to be Symeon's own (revised) copy; it still resides in the special collections at Durham University Library: DUL MS Cosin V.II.6 Symeon, Historia Ecclesiae Dunelm. s. xii in., ex., xvi ex. Two anonymous addenda to this version are also contained within this manuscript. Both extend the history: the first from 1096 until the death of Bishop Ranulf Flambard in 1129; the second from 1133 to 1144. A third addenda, now in Cambridge University Library, covers the period 1145 to 1154 and is contained in a composite manuscript: Ff. i.27. A final version, now kept at the British Library, appears to be a copy of the text made prior to these addenda: BL Cotton Faustina A. v. A conference held in 1995 dramatically improved the knowledge of this early twelfth-century historiography. See *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North*, ed. by David Rollason

imminent threat of a Viking attack, he chose to abandon his diocese. He was instructed to immediately raise the incorrupt body of the most holy father Cuthbert, which had lain undisturbed for more than a century, and to head south for Ripon (*Hripum*).[67] A multitude of men, women and children made the journey with the venerable body in tow and, miraculously, not one was afflicted by any illness, hardship or inconvenience. When peace was resolved in the summer the multitude set out to return. They had reached an "uninhabitable plain" (*campo locus erat inhabitabilis*) named *Wrdelau*, not far east of Durham, when the cart on which the holy body was being carried came to a sudden halt.[68] All of the faithful rushed to add their strength but, despite their best labour, the body remained as "immoveable as a mountain" (*ueluti mons quidam mansit immota*).[69] It was obvious to all that the saint did not wish to be returned to his former resting place. After three days of prayers, fasting and vigils, it was revealed to a religious man named "Eadmer" that Cuthbert was intent on being translated to Durham instead.[70] At once the cart could be moved with next to no effort. With much rejoicing and praise, the people took the holy body to the place "revealed to them" (*itaque ad locum celitus ostensum*).[71] And so, on a small patch of level ground, at the top of a remote wildwood peninsula, the first little church of Durham was promptly built from branches (*factaque citissime de uirgis ecclesiola*).[72]

(Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1998). Symeon served as the Cantor of Durham and Michael Gullick, among others, has identified his hand in at least forty-three charters and manuscripts. It appears that the *Libellus de exordio* was first attributed to Symeon in a later twelfth-century copy. His precise role in the text's composition has been contested. See Michael Gullick, 'The Hand of Symeon of Durham: Further Reflections on the Durham Martyrology Scribe', in *Symeon of Durham: Historian*, pp. 14-31.

[67] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 145-9.

[68] The precise whereabouts of *Wrdelau* are now unknown. It was once claimed by J. T. Fowler, a nineteenth-century canon and vice-president of the Surtees Society, to be a hill to the city's east known variously as Nine-tree Hill and before that Mountjoy Hill, or Munjey. See Allen Mawer, *The Place-Names of Northumberland and Durham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), p. 206.

[69] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 145-9.

[70] *Ibid*.

[71] *Ibid*.

[72] *Ibid*.

Symeon's is a foundation story that—if not entirely apocryphal—seems at the very least to have had clear affinities with a number of other pre-Conquest topoi. Among others, the site of the first Anglo-Saxon minster at Steyning in Sussex was said to have been similarly "revealed" when a cart belonging to the hermit and renowned church-builder Cuthman suddenly broke down. The rope supporting his invalid mother snapped, leading him to exclaim: "Lord, Jesus Christ …I thank you that, in the sign which I asked for (*in signo quod petiui*), you have shown to your servant this place (*quia elegeris locum*) …this place for me to build you a church".[73] In a Latin *passio* contained in the *Kentish Royal Legend*, moreover, a monk named Byrhtferth (also known as Byrhtferth of Ramsey; d. 1020) recalled that the bodies of two seventh-century child martyrs, Æthelred (d. *c*. 669) and Æthelberht (d. *c*. 669), were likewise found to be impossible to move. Once again, it was only after a great many had tried and failed to lift them that King Egberht, who had planned for the boys to be buried in Canterbury, was advised by an unidentified clergyman to send them elsewhere. At once the remains could be picked up and translated with ease to Great Wakering in Essex, where a new monastery was hastily constructed.[74]

In each story, the selection process or the means by which the site of the new church ultimately came to be known involved very little, if any, human agency. In fact, the actions and inclinations of the main protagonists were all repeatedly underplayed and undermined. They proved either, in the case of the reverent and unassuming Cuthman, for example, to have been effectively incidental or, in the case both of the multitude and the King, to have been typically as well as topologically misplaced. Rather than being chosen by the faithful, these sites were

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[73] The earliest extant copy of the *Vita Sancti Cuthmanni* dates from the late medieval period. It has been argued, however, that a copy was made around 1100 that preserved pre-Conquest material. See John Blair, 'Saint Cuthman, Steyning and Bosham', *Sussex Archaeological* Collections, 135 (1997), pp. 173-92.

[74] See Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 214. Both of these examples are very likely to have been known to Symeon, or at least to the author of the *Historia Regum*, with which he is widely associated. See Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England: c.550 to c.1307* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 149.

all instead somehow "revealed" to them.[75] In fact, even when the exact place was finally disclosed it was invariably only to a single individual; and, even then, any corruptive influence that King Egberht's "unidentified clergyman" might have had was effectively mitigated still further, both by his piety and *de facto* anonymity.

In exactly the same way, Symeon tells us that Cuthbert disclosed his preference for Durham not to the multitude, nor even to Bishop Ealdhun, but to a solitary and somewhat nondescript "religious man called Eadmer".[76] If ever a richer characterisation of one Cuthbert's "bearers" might have been merited, then it is here. If at any point in Symeon's otherwise exacting account of lineages and legends, of epideictic *laudationes* and *vituperationes*, a figure seems so unexplored, or one of his self-described *digressiones* so apropos then, again, it is probably here.[77] And yet Eadmer, the sole recipient of the revelation, Cuthbert's *electus* and thus the exceptional vehicle among his *haliwerfolc* (the "people of St Cuthbert"), was described in almost the most sparing terms possible.[78]

Symeon cannot, of course, be thought to have been disinterested, nor, given the strikingly similar rhetorical tenor of these and several other foundation myths, is this likely to have been an anomaly. This appears, rather, to have been symptomatic of a larger strategy of curtailment, within which earthly power, and even Bishop Ealdhun's holy order, was exercised only passively to beseech for the "manifestation of a heavenly sign" (*precibus celestis*

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[75] For a relevant, recent and more expansive analysis of the creation—as well as, more specifically, the "revelation"—of sacred places in pre-Conquest England see Helen Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 19-54.

[76] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 147.

[77] As a repeated means, seemingly, to substantiate their narratives both Symeon and Reginald of Durham describe and evaluate a number of the first multitude (or "bearers") of Cuthbert's body, often at great length. David Rollason notes that the descendants of many of these figures such as Riggulf, Franco, Eilaf and Eadred will have taken pride in their ancestors' roles and status; indeed, Symeon relays that the vill of *Reiningtun* (probably Rainton) was named after, and perhaps even founded by, one such man named Reinguald. See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 148 n. 5.

[78] Symeon uses *populus* and *haliwerfolc* interchangeably in reference both to the first multitude and, later, to the semi-autonomous inhabitants of the Palatinate more broadly. See also Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 114 n. 66.

ostensionem indicii).[79] Unaffected by human hands, the extent to which this process could thus have been attributed, by reverse implication, to theophany, to a unique intercession of Cuthbert's will and therefore to a very special kind of providence and legitimacy, seems to have been strongly insinuated. The monk was apparently at great pains to stress that the very ground upon which this first little church at Durham was built, and from which it took its name, was already innately and verifiably sacred.

Symeon was a monk and, for some time, the Cantor at Durham. He first arrived at the priory in the company of William de St-Calais, who, before being selected by the Conqueror as Durham's new Bishop in 1080, had served as the abbot of Saint-Vincent du Mans in Maine. Symeon is one of perhaps no more than a dozen people known to have been in attendance, both at the new cathedral's ground-breaking in 1093 and at the formal *translatio* of Cuthbert's body just over a decade later. He is also the only surviving source known to have been living and writing in the immediate vicinity of the cathedral during all but four of its forty-year programme of construction. While from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries onwards there is a wealth of documentary material that attests, in various ways, to the history of the cathedral's architecture—annals, indulgences and financial accounts especially—our knowledge of the very earliest phases of construction at Durham is nearly exclusively indebted to this one invaluable manuscript.[80] The *Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius, hoc est*

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[79] It is worth stressing here that, in a number of other traditions of Durham's foundation, it is Bishop Ealdhun who receives Cuthbert's vision, not Eadmer. In most versions, using his additional power as an ordinary (all Anglo-Saxon bishops of Lindisfarne were granted considerable civic responsibility in tandem with their holy order) the bishop then more or less single-handedly orchestrates the move to, and settlement of, the peninsula at Durham. It really is telling therefore that this level of influence and responsibilty is expressly curtailed in Symeon's account. See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 147.

[80] And (at something of a stretch) to two others. The *Capitula de miraculis* (written *c*. 1104-10) will be looked at in chapter four. The *Libellus de admirandis* was compiled by another monk and hagiologist, Reginald of Durham, but he did not accede to the Priory until at least 1153, more than two decades after it was completed. Each of these accounts, of the translation and posthumous miracles of St Cuthbert respectively, are useful in many regards, but they are, at best, only incidentally concerned with the cathedral's fabric. See, again, Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus Quae Novellis Patratae Sunt Temporibus*, 1 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1835). For a fuller account of all of the relevant textual sources from the eleventh to sixteenth centuries, as well as a brief analysis of their relation to the cathedral's architecture see M. G. Snape, 'Documentary Evidence for the Building of Durham Cathedral', in *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. by N. Coldstream and P. Draper (Leeds: The British Archaeological Association, 1980), pp. 20-36. For a useful

Dunelmensis, Ecclesie (The Little Book on the Origins and Progress of this Church, that is, of Durham) was produced at the behest of his superiors and written, somewhat rapidly it would seem, not by the monk alone, but by a small team led by him between 1104 and 1107.[81]

Not unlike the author of the Old English poem *De situ Dunelmi* from our first chapter, many of the rhetorical devices the monk employs in this particular passage lend an impression to the narrative of a world set apart, of a community that was beholden to no one, and of a sanctuary, with boundaries that were naturally delineated by a sharp crook in the river Wear, that was divinely ratified.[82] Symeon seems to have been attempting to invest his island home with a pronounced new aura of legitimacy, autonomy and an almost Elysian or Edenic sense of site-specific sanctity.[83] The very ground itself was being made to seem inviolate. And thus, the insinuation seemingly being offered at the time of writing was that, as he and his superiors stood in the shadow of their not yet half-finished cathedral, they too remained by extension inviolable. Symeon's reader was very probably being urged to take note, in other words, that any physical or intellectual encroachment of this land would have been tantamount to a direct obstruction of God's will. What is more, by the same kind of obverse reasoning, any man- or Norman-made building on the peninsula was essentially legitimised. It stood to reason that if

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assessment of how both Symeon's and Reginald's texts relate to a number of other important contemporaneous writings see Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, lxxvii-xci. See also especially Hilary Seton Offler, *Medieval Historians of Durham: Inaugural Lecture of the Professor of Medieval History Delivered in the Applebey Lecture Theatre on 14 March 1958* (Durham: Durham University Press, 1958) and Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the 11th and 12th Centuries* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003).

[81] For the dating of the *Libellus de exordio* see David Rollason, LDE, pp. xix-xx, xlii. Cuthbert's translation to the new cathedral in 1104 seems to be the latest event recorded in the text with a date that can be reliably attested, it is thus the *terminus post quem*. In addition, it can be noted that there are numerous references to Turgot acting in his capacity as prior at the time of writing, his name is capitalised in the list of monks, and a later passage in the text states outright that Turgot "to this day holds in the Church of Durham the office of prior, which was some time ago entrusted to him by Bishop William". Turgot was made prior in 1087. In 1107, he was elected bishop of St Andrews, though there is reason to believe he may not have relinquished his post until 1109, or perhaps even until his death in 1115, giving a slightly rougher *terminus ante quem* of 1107/15.

[82] Mircea Eliade was perhaps the first to note that, in respect of nearly all religions—and Christianity probably especially—often the most fundamental characteristics of their sacred places are that they are somehow permanent, that they are somehow "revealed" and that they are only very rarely chosen (or admitted as having been chosen) by man. See Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. by Rosemary Sheed (London: World Publishing, 1958), pp. 368-9.

[83] For a fuller account of its etymology see Richard Stephen Charnock, *Local Etymology: A Derivative Dictionary of Geographical Names* (London: Houlston and Wright, 1859).

Cuthbert permitted both the demolition of the old Anglo-Saxon church and the construction of a new Norman one, both acts would likewise become divinely sanctioned by proxy.

Much of the rest of his *Libellus* reads in a very similar manner, as a series of selectively-reasoned stories from the past, which, taken together, seem to amount to something like an extended license to being in the present. Another account of the "Origins and Progress of this Church" might have described a local community beset by recurrent trauma and upheaval: by repeated Viking invasions, by Conquest, by the near-genocidal Harrying of the North and, most recently, by the sudden and radical dismissal of the old community of lay clerks in 1083.[84] To the contrary, however, Symeon was very clearly making the case for something like stability and continuity. His is an almost seamless teleological narrative within which the rule of the new Norman aliens, all of them staunch Benedictines (like Cuthbert, but unlike his predecessors), is merely the logical restoration of a natural order.[85]

My essential contention here then is that the decorative schemes of their new Norman cathedral perhaps ought to be thought of as operating in much the same fashion. Put another way, did this strange yet familiar (quasi-)Anglo-Saxon veneer speak in the same protracted rhetoric of reconciliation and revivalism as Symeon's *Libellus*? Was it too perhaps a pawn in the same traumatic and contrived renegotiation of the past with the present? Much of the decoration at Durham cathedral (illus. 15, 23, 28 and 30) may indeed appear familiar yet

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[84] It is very often, of course, just precisely when they are felt to be in question, or made vulnerable by some type of existential threat, that such protracted rationalisations of status and integrity tend to materialise. There would have been, it can be pointed out, much less need and urgency to enumerate and describe the new rulers' claims to legitimacy if they were already settled and obvious to all. A useful recent example of this phenomenon in a similar medieval context is: Walter Pohl, 'Memory, Identity and Power in Lombard Italy', in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 9-28. Pohl focuses on the example of a thirteenth-century tale of the Lombards.

[85] On this last point see also Bernard Meehan, 'Outsiders, Insiders, and Property in Durham around 1100', *Studies in Church History*, 12 (1975), pp. 45-58 and Meryl Foster, 'Custodians of St Cuthbert: the Durham Monks' Views of their Predecessors, 1083-c.1200', in *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, ed. by David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 53-65. Both have argued that Symeon and his retinue were particularly keen to consolidate their rights to property and power at Durham after 1083 following the radical decision to establish a new Benedictine assembly. See also David Rollason, 'Symeon of Durham and the Community of Durham in the Eleventh Century', in *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1992), pp. 183-98.

unspecific, evocative yet alien, or it might just seem only loosely reminiscent of an Anglo-Saxon architectural vernacular—now as then—because it wasn't so much copied as it was imagined. That isn't to say that its unique and ornate surfaces should be thought of as having been completely "made-up" *per se*, so much as they were, like the monk's account, selectively perceived. Indeed, their ersatz forms may actually have been derived, somewhat ironically, from a sincere albeit imprecise attempt to project authenticity, and thus legitimacy, in stone. If, like Symeon, the cathedral's masons were complicit in manipulating the same essentially fast and loose connection between Durham's new Norman powers and its earliest and most revered communities, then unlike the monk they would have been effectively working without a model.[86] This is to say that a powerful pre-Conquest tradition, that "different age" Fernie described earlier, may very well have been evoked in Durham's new interior. But, building on what Lisa Reilly first suggested, it was perhaps executed in a somewhat foggy and politically opportunistic post-Conquest fashion.[87]

The human instinct to this kind of nostalgic process is something of a paradox. It simultaneously forges connections with an often-fictitious past in order, in some way, to supplement the present.[88] Simply on account of the fact that they can never be fully or faithfully restored—often because they never *really* existed at all—the scattered remnants of the past are the ultimate enablers of attitudes generated at the nexus of art and artifice. The word "nostalgia"

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[86] Such "imaginative" processes are innately destabilising. See especially *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). Since it amounts to an organic and tacit kind of understanding, the shared identity of such communities will rarely survive its own scrutiny and audit. It is, more often than not, exactly at the point of consolidation that change first becomes inevitable. For a useful recent parallel see Zygmunt Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001). The now ruinous Lindisfarne Priory (begun *c*. 1150), with its many similar anomalies—its abundance of incised decoration, chevrons, alternating columns and piers, rib vaults and heavily embellished moulding profiles—might therefore also allude to a later and related kind of desire to echo the "authenticating" forms of the past, and a kind of visual link with the cult of St Cuthbert, long after the Norman cathedral complex at Durham was complete. See E. Cambridge 'The Medieval Priory', in *English Heritage Book of Lindisfarne Holy Island*, ed. by D. O'Sullivan and R. Young (London: Batsford/English Heritage, 1995), pp. 68-9.
[87] See, again, Lisa Reilly, 'The Emergence of Anglo-Norman Architecture', pp. 335-51.
[88] On nostalgia see, especially, Renée R. Trilling, *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2009) and J. M. Fritzman, 'The Future of Nostalgia and the Time of the Sublime', *Clio*, 23 (1994), pp. 167-89.

derives from two Greek roots: *nostos* meaning "to return home" and *algia* which equates to something like "longing."[89] Svetlana Boym distinguishes two types, "restorative" and "reflective", writing that "restorative nostalgia" puts an emphasis on *nostos*, and undertakes a kind of transhistorical remodelling of "home", while "reflective nostalgia" lives in *algia*, and emphasises longing, "wistfully, ironically, desperately", without actually seeking out that home in any meaningful sense.[90]

In certain respects, both the *Libellus* and the cathedral express powerful *algia*, given that each enthuse for and covet a time that no longer exists. And yet "restorative nostalgia", as defined, is most applicable in each instance because neither think of themselves as nostalgic *per se*. That is, in part, because nostalgia is not a medieval term, having only been defined (indeed *diagnosed*) in 1688 by a young medical student from Switzerland, but also because both Symeon and the cathedral are presented as legitimate and truthful. Nostalgia represents loss and displacement on its face, but also a certain rose-tinted indulgence. Thus, in her now canonical *On Longing*, Susan Stewart writes that the human inclinations for nostalgia and fantasy are very often inseparable. "Nostalgia is a sadness without an object", she argues, "…a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in *lived experience*".[91] In twelfth-century Durham, the nostalgic impulse thus has to be seen and understood dialectically in relation to history. It is an affective rather than mnemonic mode of thinking and feeling. It is driven by emotion as opposed to pure memory (such as memory can even *be* pure). Thus, it was never so much the literal materiality of a building like Durham, the

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[89] The word "nostalgia," in spite of its Greek roots, did not originate in ancient Greece. "Nostalgia" is only pseudo-Greek, or nostalgically Greek. The word was coined by the ambitious Swiss student Johannes Hofer in his medical dissertation in 1688. (Hofer also suggested nosomania and philopatridomania to describe the same symptoms; luckily, these failed to enter common parlance.) Contrary to our intuition, "nostalgia" came from medicine, not from poetry or politics. It would not occur to us to demand a prescription for nostalgia. Yet in the seventeenth century, nostalgia was considered to be a curable disease, akin to a severe common cold. Swiss doctors believed that opium, leeches, and a journey to the Swiss Alps could all take care of nostalgic symptoms.

[90] See Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

[91] See Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 23.

specificity of its forms, or even its likely prototypes that really mattered, but the way that they made their subjects feel.[92] In his *Sublime Object of Ideology* Žižek refers to a "kind of reality which is possible only on condition that the individuals partaking in it are *not* aware of its proper logic; that is, a kind of reality *whose very ontological consistency implies a certain non-knowledge of its participants*".[93] Not knowing is, somewhat ironically, an integral component in thinking and feeling such "authentic" images. In fact, it is sometimes just as soon as the subject knows too much that the illusion of the "real" quickly falls apart.

Historians, for their part, are often suspicious of nostalgia, since it is commonly taken to mean not only an inexact recollection a bygone time but also, insofar as time is understood to be linear, it effectively represents an innate distrust in time as a progressive process. As an unbridled desire, the nostalgic appetite risks turning real or "proper" historical enquiry into mythology: better time, more desirable time, time spent dreaming, all somehow exist outside real and mundane time, and are thus toxic to the dispassionate mind. Hence, the past of nostalgia—to paraphrase Faulkner—is not even past. Nostalgia, though, doesn't have to be seen in opposition to modernity, but as part of it: a function defined less in relation to yesterday, than in an ongoing and sometimes very revealing search for meaning today. Nostalgia as an active and habitual human mechanism has always coped with the "felt lack" of the present by making, unmaking and remaking the past towards productive ends. Thus, it is neither antimodern nor postmedieval and, as Rousseau, Nietzsche and C. S. Lewis all did before them, a number of medievalists have recently taken up arms against time as a constant, with one of

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[92] On nostalgia see also Linda M Austin, *Nostalgia in Transition, 1780-1917* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2007); David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country - Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), especially chapter one ('Nostalgia: Dreams and Nightmares'); and *Gender and Emotions in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Destroying Order, Structuring Disorder*, ed. by Susan Broomhall (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), especially Part II ('Chronicling Feelings of Disaster and Ruin').

[93] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 21. See also Slavoj Žižek, 'How Did Marx Invent the Symptom?', in *Mapping Ideology*, ed. by Slavoj Žižek (London and New York: Verso, 2012), p. 305.

the more prominent, Carolyn Dinshaw, arguing that "past-present-future times" can all be "collapsed into a very capacious now".[94]

In his *Libellus*, we can note that Symeon was at repeated pains to stress just how remote and uninhabitable the first multitude found their new site to be (illus. 2 and 5). There is every reason to suspect that Durham had long been inhabited prior to 995: the peninsula had unique natural defences, unrivalled views of the surrounding area and—although the monk would not, of course, have known it—a record of human archaeology that stretched back nearly four millennia.[95] And yet he repeatedly makes claims to the effect that the land was wild, unkempt and covered on all sides by very dense forest (*quoniam densissima undique silua totum occupauerat.*).[96] In the first instance this clearly extended and corroborated the original insinuation that the ground was unspoiled by human hands and therefore, by reason, pristine upon discovery. It also, of course, threw the multitude's flight into dramatic relief. Fleeing servitude at the hands of the Vikings (*quantotius fugiens superuenturam pyratarum*), before surviving many other adversities (*difficultate et uexatione*), and ultimately forsaking the world, society and culture, the resolve and special deliverance of the faithful was being made to evoke—if not to imitate—a kind of latter-day Exodus.[97] These two inferences are both, of course, probably among the most common in foundation stories of the period, but they also

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[94] See Carolyn Dinshaw, 'Temporalities', in *Middle English: Oxford Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature*, ed. by Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 107. See also Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon is Now: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

[95] For the archaeological record see M. O. H. Carver, 'Early Medieval Durham: the Archaeological Evidence', in *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. by N. Coldstream and P. Draper (Leeds: The British Archaeological Association, 1980), pp. 11-19. See also Robert Surtees, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, vol. 1 (Durham: E.P. Publishing, 1816).

[96] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 148. Once again it is worth noting that this also echoes the account of Cuthman's first site: "It was a sheltered place at the foot of a steep-sloping down, then overgrown with thorns and trees, now transformed into fertile and fruitful farmland" (*Erat locus in decliui montis pede submontanus, tunc dumis et arbustis siluester, nunc in terre fertilis et fructifere agriculturam redactus*). For the translation see Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, p. 38.

[97] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 148.

seem to have been very consciously allied to a third which, when set alongside the cathedral's decoration, perhaps amounted to an even more reverent association.

In his much earlier prose life of Cuthbert—with which we know Symeon was intimately familiar—Bede had already presented the islands of Farne as the culmination in a sequence of the saint's own ever more extreme withdrawals into the wild.[98] Bede described those islands as being "utterly lacking in water, corn and trees …[and] ill-suited for human habitation" (illus. 43).[99] That is, of course, until Cuthbert arrived and laboured to transform the site until it was made "in all respects habitable". "He built a city there", Symeon will have read, "fitted for his rule".[100] Symeon, then, provides a calculated and propitious analogue when he recounts at length how the first multitude at Durham, marshalled by Bishop Ealdhun, likewise found their own island to be "not easily habitable (*sed non facile habitabilem inuenit*) …[until] with the help of all the people …and a burning love for Christ and St Cuthbert (*amore Christi et sancti Cuthberti feruens*) …[they] soon made it fit for living".[101]

Durham's earliest communities were likely being portrayed in the self-same image of intense labour and humility with which Cuthbert was associated, and from which the special topography of the site, in turn, became inseparable. Symeon's foundation story reads like an etiological myth: it reasons *post hoc* for a kind of history and legitimacy that was underwritten by frequent testimonies but also, and recurrently, by the intrinsic power of place and landscape. Indeed, the exacting details of struggle and industry did not end there. Later on, the monk recorded, an even larger gathering of the faithful, from the whole area between the river Coquet and the river Tees, all came to aid voluntarily in the construction of a second church made of

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[98] That Symeon pulled at will and at length from both Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* as well as his prose *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*—often *verbatim*—is well attested. For a full analysis of the *Libellus de exordio*'s many written and oral influences see especially Rollason, *LDE*, lxviii-lxxvii.
[99] See Bede, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 96-7.
[100] *Ibid*.
[101] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 149.

stone.[102] They cut down (*siluam succidit*), they uprooted (*extirpans*), they ploughed (*arando*) and they sowed (*seminando*).[103] They persevered devotedly, he explained, until it was finished: a church of noble workmanship (*ecclesiam honesto nec paruo opere inchoauit*).[104]

Symeon then seems to have been quite conscious of what really set his story apart, of what actually gave his narrative its lustre and perhaps drove its dissemination in earnest. In short, it was its *mise en scène*: a socially constructed series of interdependent physical and intellectual landscapes, that we should perhaps think of (once again) not so much as having been "made-up" as "perceived".[105] Once the dynamics of the monk's somewhat nostalgic, somewhat opportunistic framework begin to be grasped, Symeon's storied island stage quickly begins to mirror, not only that described in the *De situ Dunelmi*, but the histories of other remote Christian sites too (not least, of course, Farne Island and Iona). His protracted emphases, moreover, on felling (*siluam succidit*) and uprooting trees (*extirpans*) as well as— most importantly—the peninsula's first little church "made from branches" (*citissime de uirgis ecclesiola*) likewise seem to augment a much larger whole.[106] Each of these will have made for tacit allusions to the meagre and labour-intensive provisions of an eremitic life, but also, in the repeated invocation of timber specifically, perhaps something of the peninsula-specific tradition of wooden forms that we began with. In this one story, Durham's first two churches were presented as the latest in an ancient and legitimising line of sacred wilderness retreats. With the monk's remote wildwood peninsula performing another variation on the role of *locus amoenus* (less the "pleasant place" of Virgil's imagining this time than a kind of labour-intensive haven for ascetic comfort), the builders of its third, under whose directives Symeon

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[102] *Ibid.*, 148-9.
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] *Ibid.*
[105] Or, put another way, as embodying many of the characteristics of what Benedict Anderson might have more efficiently labelled an "imagined community". See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).
[106] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 149-52.

was clearly operating, were therefore perhaps strategically poised for a very special kind of inheritance.

Sticks and Stones

In chapter seventeen of the third book of his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bede recalled that on the 31st August 651 a man of "Irish" descent, the monk and the missionary credited with inaugurating a new Christian era north of the Humber Estuary, a man named Áedán (Aidan), had died.[107] Aidan's body, we learn, was subsequently taken to Lindisfarne, the island given to him by the Northumbrian King, Oswald, for his episcopal see in 635. He was eventually translated into a brand-new church built by his successor, a fellow Ionian, Fínán mac Rímedo (Finan). The church was constructed, Bede emphasised, in the "Irish manner" (*more Scottorum*): "not of stone, but of hewn oak and a thatching of reeds (*non de lapide, sed de robore secto, totam composuit atque arundine texit*)".[108]

No material evidence of this building survives, nor, as we know, did the remnants of any Anglo-Saxon cathedral or large monastic Anglo-Saxon church.[109] As many have noted over the last century, this makes the task both of surveying pre-Conquest architecture and extrapolating its influences on later modes of Anglo-Norman building somewhat challenging.[110] When Bede describes Finan's church at Lindisfarne, however, as having been

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[107] See Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, pp. 135-7.
[108] *Ibid.*
[109] Again, see Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England*, p. 24.
[110] See Eric Fernie *The Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1983). In respect of Durham specifically, the loss of Winchcombe Abbey, from where a great many of Durham's new retinue of Benedictine monks originated, via the west of England, Jarrow and Wearmouth, is also of particular regret. Very little, if anything, can be said with any assurance in terms of the abbey's form, but it could hardly

built out of "hewn oak and a thatching of reeds" and not, as he seems at pains to stress, out of stone, it is difficult to escape the suspicion that he is in some sense criticising the decision.[111] That suspicion is strengthened by another description he offers elsewhere in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*—one, it can be noted, among several others—of the newly erected Northumbrian monastery dedicated to St Peter at Wearmouth (begun 674).[112] Bede tells his reader that its founder and abbot, Benedict Biscop (d. 690), "travelled to Gaul and brought back the kind of craftsmen not hitherto known in Britain …who constructed for him a stone church".[113] It was erected in the "Roman manner (*iuxta Romanorum morem*)" which, the monk makes clear, "…he [Biscop] had always loved".[114]

Bede's tone is so unequivocally sympathetic throughout this second passage—not least towards the abbot, his old mentor and a close personal friend—that it seems very likely that the point being inferred earlier of Finan's wooden church was that its makers, those working in the "Irish manner", only did so because they did not have the skill or the wherewithal to work in stone. Not only that: the *ipso facto* superiority of these *cementarii* from Gaul, those craftsmen working in the "Roman manner", can also be deduced from the fact that, ultimately, the esteem in which these stonemasons were held was not confined to these two alone: "it was not simply that they completed the work asked of them", the monk extolled, "but, in doing so, they made the English race know and learn this particular skill."[115] The essential tenor then of this story, not unlike Malachy's oratory in the last chapter, seems to relate once more to a clash of two different identities played out in two different modes of building: on the one hand, an

have been inconsequential, and its loss is symptomatic of the same larger problem of deciphering Durham's influences.

[111] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, pp. 135-7.

[112] Another example: The new stone church at Whithorn, for example, built by the "reverend and holy" Bishop Ninian, a man who, not unlike Malachy, had received "orthodox instruction in Rome" and would later become a saint, is described as having been built in "a method unusual among the Britons". See Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History*, p. 115.

[113] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History*, p. 276.

[114] *Ibid.*

[115] *Ibid.*

implicitly higher "Roman" or continental standard and, on the other, a lower "Irish" or indigenous manner.

Among the more common modern explanations for this pre-Conquest tendency to build in timber is one of technological inferiority or incompetence too. "[D]ue to a falling-off of skills", Jacques Le Goff famously wrote, theirs was "a period when the lesser arts triumphed".[116] On reflection, though, there is perhaps much to recommend the suspicion that, in the north of England not least, "hewn" or "thatched" timber buildings such as Finan's at Lindisfarne, and even, indeed, the "first little church of branches" built by Bishop Ealdhun at Durham in 995, were not necessarily always lesser structures in the sense that Bede intimated.[117] This is to say that the pre-existing modes of "Irish" or indigenous building may have had their own equivalent traditions within which timber buildings were not so much cheap, convenient or outdated alternatives to stone, but pronounced statements, in their own right, of core insular identity.[118]

In no lesser text than *Beowulf*, for example, the timber hall of Heorot is used as a powerful symbol of order against the chaotic and monstrous stone mere of Grendel.[119] And to Finan's church of "oak and reeds", as well as at least three further timber buildings that Bede cites as having been built in Aidan's honour, there can also be added a significant number of highly-revered wooden structures that, by the monk's own implied standards, would otherwise

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[116] See Jacques Le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 59.
[117] Bede was not, of course, alone in his sentiments. That the nominally Irish/Roman divide in Christianity was not only obvious but hotly divisive in the pre-Conquest period is nowhere more apparent than in the many powerful reactions to the Synod of Whitby in 664, to the fiercely controversial shape of the tonsure and the especially the disputed dates of Easter. See David Rollason, *Northumbria, 500-1100: Creation and Destruction of a Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also *Northumbria: History and Identity, 547-2000*, ed. by Robert Colls (Chichester: Phillimore and Co, 2007) and especially chapters 3, 4 and 5 ('"The Start of Everything Wonderful": the Old English Poetry of Northumbria'/ 'Bede, St Cuthbert and the Northumbrian *Folc*'/ '"Northumbria" in the Later Middle Ages') and Rosemary Cramp, 'The Northumbrian Identity', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1999), p. 1-11.
[118] See also Susan Mills, '(Re)constructing Northumbrian Timber Buildings: the Bede's World Experience', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1999), pp. 66-72.
[119] See, for example, *Beowulf*, ed. and trans. by Albert W. Haley (Boston: Branden Press, 1978). pp. 37-8.

have been befitting of stone.[120] We know, for example, that Æduinus, the first confessedly Christian King of Northumbria (also known as Edwin or Eadwine; d. 632/33), deliberately chose timber over stone for the patronage of all of his churches and estates.[121] So too, despite having more than ample resources, did two of his inheritors, Oswald (d. 641/42) and his brother Oswiu (also known as Oswy or Oswig; d. 670)—both of whom having been exiled in Ireland were instrumental alongside Aidan in reintroducing Christianity to mid-seventh century Northumbria.[122] And, in addition to the first monastery built at Old Melrose and its daughter-house built at Ripon, the entirety of the Deiran royal house at Whitby and the second Bernician royal centre at Yeavering were all also recorded specifically as having been built from "timber alone".[123]

In fact, the sense that many of the residents of both pre- and post-Conquest Northumbria were so accustomed to wooden construction may be nowhere better emphasised than in their language. By far the most common term used to describe the "building" or "erecting" of any kind of edifice in the north of England, including those made of stone even more than a century after the Conquest, was *getimbran* or *getimbrian*, which quite literally meant "to timber".[124] Thus, in the *Chronicle*: "in this year (*Her wæs brocen*) the Roman stronghold was destroyed by the Goths (*Romana burh from Gotan*) 1,110 years after it was built (*ymb .xi. hundra wintra 7 .x. wintra. þæs þe heo getimbred waes*).[125] Indeed, even in spite of the fact that when, in the

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[120] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 135-7.

[121] See Michael Shapland, 'The Cuckoo and the Magpie: the Building Culture of the Anglo-Saxon Church', in *The Material Culture of the Built Environment in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Maren Clegg Hyer and Gale R. Owen-Crocker (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 92-116.

[122] *Ibid*.

[123] *Ibid*.

[124] See *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Manuscript E: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud 636, 409. Indeed, in another *de facto* fringe culture, similarly, the Middle Welsh verb *adeilad* just as readily meant "to build" as it did "to weave". For a much broader assesment of early timber and wattling techniques in architecture in the British Isles see also Mark Gardiner, 'The Sophistication of Late Anglo-Saxon Timber Buildings', in *Trees and Timber in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. by Michael D. J. Bintley and Michael G. Shapland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013),pp. 45-77. See also Michael G. Shapland, 'Meanings of Timber and Stone in Anglo-Saxon Building Practice', in *Trees and Timber in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. by Michael D. J. Bintley and Michael G. Shapland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 21-44.

[125] *Ibid*.

final two and a half centuries prior to the Conquest, stone churches rapidly became the norm in England, especially in the south, there is compelling evidence to suggest that many communities north of the Humber still maintained a lingering adherence, skeuomorphically at least, to wooden aesthetics. The pronounced lengths of the freely worked stone and pilaster strip work that adorn the faces of many towers and manorial *curia*—such as still survive (remarkably) at Barnack, Earls Barton (illus. 44) and Barton-upon-Humber—have all been convincingly argued to have functioned consciously as echoes of timbered surfaces.[126]

The idea I want to conclude with in this chapter though is not so much that, to any given Northumbrian, wood (or the illusion of wood) may have been preferable to stone (or *vice versa* in Bede's case). Either would be an all too sweeping conclusion and exceptions to both, in any event, could obviously be very easily found. In a sense, I am much less interested in what the native preferences in twelfth-century Durham were towards these respective materials than how and why Symeon's stories were consciously, perhaps even conspiratorially organised, in a somewhat nostalgic fashion around them.

It would of course be quite easy to allow for a certain amount of hyperbole in both Bede's and Symeon's histories. Yet we perhaps should not think of the pasts being invoked by either of these storytellers as outright fantasies. The histories of the sites and buildings each attempts to capture may not have been wholly factual but, just as emphatically, neither were they wholly invented either. Actually, it was perhaps precisely in this tortured alliance between reality and the impression and aura of an "old tradition", that nostalgia became such a potent mechanism, intentionally or otherwise, for both men. Sometimes, Svetlana Boym emphasises, nostalgia is not even directed towards the past really, but "sideways".[127] In practice, the desire

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[126] See, again, Michael Shapland, 'The Cuckoo and the Magpie', pp. 92-116.

[127] See Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 90. On Boym's influence in particular, as well as issues of medieval nostalgia more generally, see also the special issue of the *postmedieval* journal from 2011—'The Medievalism of Nostalgia', *postmedieval*, ed. by Helen Dell, Louise D'Arcens and Andrew Lynch, 2.2 (Summer 2011)—which itself followed on from a symposium of the same name held in 2009 at the University of Melbourne.

that drives the nostalgic impulse can sometimes feel frustrated and unrepresented within traditional narratives of linear time, and so it works to conceive of its own path. The kinds of critical analyses which most successfully capture this dynamic might be called "off-modern" she argues, a term which could confuse and disorientate at first, but which ultimately leads us down a lesser-trodden path, away from classically-deterministic narratives of history, and towards something new.[128] "Off-modernism" enables a critique which pushes back against any misleading preoccupations we may have in the present with novelty and innovation for their own sake.[129] It makes a point of allowing "reflection and longing, estrangement and affection" to work productively hand-in-hand.[130] This is a process, moreover, that our next source, Bishop Ælfwold of Sherborne (d. 1058) seems to have known all too well.

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[128] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 90.
[129] *Ibid*.
[130] *Ibid*.

3

MEANING IN MOTION

Bishop Ælfwold's (d. 1058) devotion to the holy father Cuthbert was so profound that he frequently found himself brought to tears—even, William of Malmesbury stresses, at the mere mention of his name.[1] As the love he felt for the saint increased "day by day", eventually the "good flame" (*bona flamma*) in him could contain itself no longer.[2] And so Ælfwold set out on a pilgrimage from his home in faraway Sherborne, in Dorset, to seek out the holy *corpus*. After he arrived at Cuthbert's shrine, the bishop then took an even bolder decision: "he tore away the cover of the tomb and talked with [the saint], as with an old friend to whom he was loyal".[3] Then, "leaving a small gift as a token of his lasting affection", he went on his way.[4] Years later, as he began to recognise that his days were almost at an end, Ælfwold was repeatedly overheard singing his favourite antiphon:

> Sanctus antistes Cuthbertus,
>
> uir perfectus in omnibus,
>
> in turbis erat monachus,

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[1] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*, p. 283.
[2] *Ibid*., 284.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] *Ibid*.

digne cunctis reuerendus.[5]

Holy Bishop Cuthbert,

A man perfect in all things,

Was a monk amid such crowds

And worthy of respect from all.

Later still, when his speech began to fade, he implored others to sing it into his ear instead. And thus, William affirms, "to his very last breath he showed the love (*amor*) he felt for the saint".[6]

This rather touching account speaks directly to the main theme of this third chapter (as well as the *leitmotif* of this thesis as a whole): movement. William's narrative underlines the vital importance of movement in the experience of ecclesiastical architecture in early medieval England. It references the physical travel of Ælfwold himself, his trips both to and from Durham Cathedral. But it also suggests cognitive mobility. It evokes not only the means by which he *brought* the saint to mind, but the ends to which these devices moved him inwardly as well: affecting, conducting and shifting his thoughts, from love to tears and back again. Not insignificantly, it also underlines the extent to which a story (or a set of stories in all likelihood) had themselves travelled great distances across pre- and post-Conquest England. In the process, they transformed a tired old recluse (who had actually taken great care to spend his final years

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[5] *Ibid.* This particular antiphon was the third antiphon sung at the second nocturns of the Office for the Deposition of St Cuthbert. See also Christopher Hohler, 'The Iconography', in *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, ed. by C. F. Battiscombe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 396-408.

[6] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum,* p. 285. The original Latin from which this story is paraphrased reads as follows: "Referebatque presbiter quod fuisset episcopus prona obsequela sancto Cuthberto deuotus, ad omnem eius memoriam letanter illacrimans. Peneque semper antiphonam illam de Sancto tenebat corde, ruminabat ore, exercebat opere: [see antiphon above] …Cumque cotidianus amor in eius pectore dulce incrementum acciperet, nec in eo bona flamma se caperet, ad Sanctum Dunelmum profectus est. Ibi, quod magnae uidetur audatiae, reuulso sepulchri operculo cum eo quasi cum amico fideliter collocutus, xeniolum in perpetui pignus amoris deposuit, et abiit. Iam uero fatali puncto instante, antiphonam quam diu uox suffecit cantitans, sermone precluso ceteris ut dicerent manu innuit. Ita inditium amoris quem in Sanctum habebat cum extremo flatu emisit."

alone on a remote coastal island) into a powerfully magnetic cult of truly international attraction.[7]

And yet, writing from the ancient Near East, Clement of Alexandria (d. 215) had been adamant that "it was impossible to draw [the divine] near to us in our eyes, or to grasp [Him] with the hands".[8] Like many other early Christian theologians, Clement believed that real-world conferences with the divine, of the type that William described here, were either nonsense or delusion. Actually, he argued, He dwelt only "in the light which no man can approach unto …[and] whom no man hath has seen, nor can see" (a clear reference to 1 Timothy 6:16).[9] No single place or space on earth, in other words, was any more likely to have been holier, in the ancient world, than any other. "Pilgrims" and "pilgrimage" were neither common nor instinctive categories, with perhaps their closest Latin cognate, *peregrinatio*, mostly referring to travellers, sometimes their means, or possibly just that they settled in a foreign land.[10] Whereas the medieval pilgrim (broadly defined) undertook to journey away on unfamiliar roads, often risking great hardship or discomfort, the ancient *peregrinus* (a "foreigner" or "one from abroad") generally longed for home.[11] More to the point, as Cyprian once (d. 258) alluded, Christ himself had already made plain that "where only two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).[12]

By the eve of the Norman Conquest, however, a wealth of documentary sources attest to the fact that large numbers of men and women, like Ælfwold, had begun to make long journeys in order, conversely, to shorten this very same gap between themselves and a whole

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[7] See Alan Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St Cuthbert', in *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to AD 1200*, ed. by Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989), pp. 103-24.
[8] See Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis, Books 1–3, The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 85, trans. by John Ferguson, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), p. 236.
[9] *Ibid*.
[10] See Georgia Frank, 'Pilgrimage', in *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. by Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 826-43.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] Saint Cyprian, *The Sacred Writings of Saint Cyprian* (Loschberg: Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck, 2013), p. 174

series of sacred and site-specific loci.[13] How these journeys worked, as well as how they impacted the final "encounters" for which so many were undertaken, are therefore both indispensable and quintessentially medieval questions.

William's *Bona Flamma*

The transformative power of medieval pilgrimage has been the subject of dozens of cross-cultural studies.[14] The majority have built on or refined the platform laid, in large part, by Victor and Edith Turner's *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978 [2011]).[15] Their work shone a light for the first time on pilgrimage as a rite of passage, one involving an initial act of separation, succeeded by a liminal phase within which the pilgrim, freed from her usual socio-cultural constraints, forged new bonds of *communitas* with fellow travellers.[16] Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of pilgrims that journeyed to and within pre-Conquest Northumbria left very little evidence in their wake. Thus, it is something of a challenge for us (as perhaps it was too for William of Malmesbury writing a century later) to

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[13] See, again, Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2000).

[14] See, for example, *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*, ed. by Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe (Leiden: Brill Academic Press, 2005); Dee Dyas, *Pilgrimage in Medieval English Literature, 700-1500* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001); Susan Signe Morrison, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1975).

[15] Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

[16] Both the causes and character of early Christian pilgrimage are somewhat difficult to locate. If there were related terms, then Greek and Latin alike did seem to have lacked for a precise equivalent for "pilgrimage" as we now think of it. Some early Christians did speak of journeying *orationis causa,* roughly translated, "for the sake of prayer", to pray (*euchesthai, proseuchesthai*) or to venerate (*proskunein*) at holy places. In contrast with the medieval period, the objectives of these religious travellers were far less homogenous, with prophets, faith healers, preachers, and various emissaries, all uprooting themselves from society, but largely in the hope of distributing spiritual aid as opposed to collecting it. See, again and especially, Georgia Frank, 'Pilgrimage', pp. 826-43.

say much at all about Ælfwold's experiences *en route* to Durham, or, for that matter, his final homecoming (or "reaggregation" phase) when he returned, as a changed man, to the old structures and responsibilities of his former life in Sherborne.

A second prominent approach to studying pilgrimage, however, seeks to investigate the ways in which the process functioned to gratify particular compulsions.[17] This is something that William's *bona flamma* can help us to say more about. Implicitly positive and yet incendiary, vivid but invisible, William describes a mysterious sweetness growing inside the bishop's chest (*in eius pectore dulce incrementum*).[18] What was this "good flame"? What work did William mean for it to do in his story, and how might it have informed Ælfwold's "encounter" with the cathedral?[19]

We know from medieval sources that pilgrimage served a number of collective and individual needs. Many pilgrims had the hope of divine favour or prophecy in mind and, still more, the relief from illness, hardship and a wide range of other workaday problems.[20] To a greater or lesser extent, these will all be referenced in this chapter. None seem to have been the case here for Ælfwold though. He was, the monk summated, "a man of the most respectable life"; he disregarded the "lavish accompaniments of banqueting", ate from a "wooden dish", took no "rich food", and always washed his cup out "to remove any taste of beer".[21] He wanted for nothing, he was abstemious and he wasn't sick. Indeed, his final and unspecified illness seems only to have caught up with him long after his pilgrimage to Durham. This though, perhaps, was the point. That William didn't expand on what he meant by the *bona flamma*,

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[17] See, especially, Diana Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2001), esp. pp. 11-27 and pp. 235-54.

[18] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum,* p. 283.

[19] It is important to stress once again that the intention here, as outlined in the introduction, is not so much to revive or "re-create" the unique historical experiences of persons *a*, *b* and *c*. Ælfwold, the actual historical figure, did not visit the Norman cathedral at Durham (begun 1093), but the Anglo-Saxon cathedral located on the same site, prior to its demolition. Rather, the analysis is located in the story and the storyteller, in William's *Gesta*. Hence the question: what work did William (not Ælfwold) mean for the "good flame" to do?

[20] Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage*, pp. 11-27.

[21] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum,* p. 283.

except incidentally, suggests either that its meaning was implicit, and/or that Ælfwold was less the subject here than Cuthbert himself. In either event, crucially, the saint was flattered.

In his *Libellus de Admirandis*, Reginald of Durham collated the testimonies of many pilgrims who benefited from Cuthbert's cures. And yet, almost as equally, he mentioned the large number of clerics, nobles and even royalty, who, like Ælfwold, journeyed *non sibi* ("not for themselves") to offer gifts *ab imo pectore* ("sincerely", "from the heart", or "out of affection").[22] The extent to which Cuthbert was said to be loved unconditionally, without agenda or ulterior motive, a fact evidenced here by the bishop's repeated selflessness, was a clear and useful topos. For both William and Ælfwold seemingly, Cuthbert's sanctity, his miracle-working, and his curative powers, while far from incidental, were nonetheless secondary to what we can take—pretty much literally—to mean a kind of "burning desire" for proximity.[23] That the bishop could no longer be satisfied simply by bringing the saint to mind, that he yearned for a more physical communion, that he "tore away" the cover of Cuthbert's tomb, these instincts all speak to a profound sense of somatic and material urgency.

Since it was first published, a steady and increasing stream of medievalists interested in pilgrims and pilgrimage have annexed the generative promise of Yi-Fu Tuan's *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977 [2001]) into an impressively broad catalogue of inquiries.[24] Tuan's repeated retreat, however, to just this same sense (and need) to travel to be right "there", *in situ*, and "in place" in the landscape, still endures at something like their

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[22] *Ibid.*

[23] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*, pp. 282-5.

[24] See, for example, Mark Paterson, 'Des approches plus que visuelles de l'architecture: vision, touché, technique', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 12.3 (2011), pp. 263-81 and, in relation to medieval studies specifically, see *Space in the Medieval West: Places, Territories, and Imagined* Geographies, ed. by Meredith Cohen and Fanny Madeline (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Megan Cassidy-Welch 'Space and Place in Medieval Contexts', *Parergon*, 27.2 (2010), pp. 1-12; Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) and Thomas Zotz 'Présentation et bilan de l'historiographie allemande de l'espace,' *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public*, 37.1 (2006) pp. 57-71. The relationship between devotional performance and sensory encounter has also been explored particularly well by Jill Stevenson. See Jill Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture: Sensual Piety in Late Medieval York* (New York, 2010). See also *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüsken (Atlanta: Rodopi, 2001).

collective vanguard.[25] Even insofar as Ælfwold's "small gift" might be construed as indicating a diplomatic mission of some kind, or an intent to curry favour for his bishopric, William, like Tuan, was clear that it did not preclude the fundamental, gravitational allure—frequently described by sociologists of modern tourism today—of an "authentic" personalised experience.[26] How, though, can we get at that experience? What was Cuthbert's shrine doing? Or—as I want to emphasise here—what was it asking Ælfwold to do?

In their introduction to *Push Me, Pull You*, a recent collection of essays in which Tuan would doubtless be interested, Sarah Blick and Laura D. Gelfand explain their methodology.[27] Based on the "Pushmi-Pullyu" character in Hugh Lofting's Dr Dolittle books (an animal with two heads that is only able to move when both are in agreement), their title epitomises an approach focused on the reciprocal and cooperative relationship between viewer and object. Consider how Ælfwold's attention and especially his emotions (both encapsulated in the heat of his *bona flamma*) shifted back and forth: from Sherborne to Durham, from his own inner monologue to that of the saint, and eventually from outside to inside his cathedral. Each spoke to one another, they cooperated. And, as his flame grew, so did their respective distances shorten. William's narrative, in other words, was defined by the way that a relationship was advanced and eventually compressed: the unique *push* and *pull* of Ælfwold and Cuthbert working in tandem. Just as the bishop prepared himself for the saint, so too did the saint and

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[25] See Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). Many have summarised the broad transformation in religious sensibilities which swept the Christian world after Clement of Alexandria's time in terms of a deep cognitive shift in "material" or "tactile" piety: once put pithily as a new kind of "worship with one's lips and fingertips". See, especially, Victor Buchli, *An Archaeology of the Immaterial* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), esp. pp. 37-64 and Robert Louis Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 116-7. Peter Brown famously termed it the "localizing of the holy": the process whereby an interest in the remnants and assorted accoutrements of sacred *corpora* escalated exponentially in the early Middle Ages, and especially after the Second Nicene Council decreed, in 787, that all church altars were required to contain a relic. See Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (London: SCM Press, 1981), pp. 86-8.

[26] See Tore Sager, *The Ethics of Mobilities: Rethinking Place, Exclusion, Freedom and Environment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008) and Blake Leyerle, 'Landscape as Cartography in Early Christian Pilgrimage Narratives', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 64.1 (Spring, 1996), pp. 119-143.

[27] See *Push Me, Pull You: Imaginative and Emotional Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art*, ed. by Sarah Blick and Laura D. Gelfand (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

his shrine prepare themselves for him. As he stood, *in actu*, at the limits of the cathedral, both were already poised for him to enter: not just to journey to, but within the building. Thus, reallocating Alfred Gell's brilliant terminology, the cathedral itself performed an "abduction of agency".[28] It exploited a relationship already long in the making. Having arranged itself expectantly in a calculated composition, Durham will have guided the bishop to move and *to be moved* accordingly within its walls.

Put another way: insofar as a material structure can be thought of as cognisant, less of an interest to it (and thus to me) was why William of Malmesbury's Ælfwold travelled so far to talk with Cuthbert, than how Cuthbert's cathedral, and especially his shrine, eventually played on and with that decision in aesthetic terms. In order to really get at the personal "encounters" that chapters three and four now look to hone in on increasingly, we need to ask not just "what did Cuthbert's shrine look like" or "what was it doing", but "what was it asking individuals like Ælfwold to do?". Now that we have arrived in the building proper, how, I want to ask, did the medieval cathedral's many tropes, figures and forms (so many of them now lost sadly) once offer the final climactic fuel for their respective inner fires?

Thus, we will also now return to expand the discussion of *ductus*, a concept we have already met in the introduction, as well as briefly in chapter two. In her *Rhetoric Beyond Words* Mary Carruthers traces the various idiosyncrasies of its history and application, she enumerates and describes a number of models that might seem especially pertinent to an analysis of the medieval cathedral: among them, both the builder and the pilgrim.[29] The former erects his edifice course by course, while the latter journeys stage by stage. Both move actively, she stresses, by "grades" or "steps", towards a "goal", that is to the "encounter" conceived here.[30] Each is guided by their own intuition (and that is critical), but also the "stylistic qualities of

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[28] See Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013).
[29] Carruthers, 'The *concept* of ductus', p. 190.
[30] *Ibid*.

parts and formally arranged relationships" that make up the materials, paths and sites along the way.[31] This sense of reciprocity between image and movement in the medieval cathedral, would likely come as no surprise to historians of theology and liturgical studies in particular. One of the primary objectives for building churches—and especially such large and voluminous structures like Durham—was to provide a suitable setting to perform the annual liturgy: to instruct (*docere*), to delight (*delectare*) and to move (*permovere*), on a stage befitting the drama of its subject.[32]

There are vanishingly few parallels in the early medieval period for us to work with, but Abbot Suger's *De consecratione* at least offers something like a retroactive insight, *ex post facto*, into how Durham Cathedral might have performed.[33] The abbot's prose rarely steered far away from his concern and praise for the enactment of the liturgy at St Denis. Like Quintilian (d. 100), Augustine, Atilius Fortunatianus (d. mid fourth century) and Hugh of St Victor (d. 1141) had all done before him, Suger likened the work of the architect (*architectus*) to that of the *orator* and the rhetorician. The jury might still be out on just how influential Suger's hand in the cathedral's construction actually was—as well as the extent to which the *anagogicus mos* (his "upward leading method") was critical to its design—but, as Panofsky once noted, the abbot's sheer restlessness seems telling. "Quickly disposing of other duties and hurrying up in the early morning", the frequently "sleepless" abbot describes himself fretting over all sorts of measurements, materials and especially those "hard-to-find wooden beams for the west range".[34] To read Suger is to be reminded (repeatedly) that the arrangement of the church was just as critical as the arrangement of the *dispositio*, the leading constituent parts of every good lector's lesson or speech.

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[31] *Ibid*.

[32] This according both to Cicero and, later on, Thomas Aquinas. See Carruthers, 'The *concept* of ductus', p. 190.

[33] See Abbot Suger, *On the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*, ed. and trans. by Erwin Panofsky (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

[34] *Ibid*., 95.

In spite of being able to boast a prolific *scriptorium*—as well as one of the largest libraries in early medieval Europe—no equivalent text quite matched the rigour and enthusiasm of Suger's *De consecratione* at Durham Priory in the later medieval period (or at least, that is, not one that survived the Dissolution).[35] Both the *Durham Missal* and the *Durham Processional* are useful, in part, for reassembling certain aspects of the liturgical customs *c.* 1350 (and I will dip into them), but neither shed too much light on the intimate correlations of body, image and building I am chasing here.[36] In this respect, the bulk of what we might infer relies on the anonymous account now known as *The Rites of Durham*.[37]

Writing in the early sixteenth century, its anonymous author began with the cathedral's "highest part": its holiest spaces, in the east end, with the "Nine Altars", "St Cuthberts feritorye" and the "Quire".[38] It is not just the lavish description of Cuthbert's shrine, "one of the most sumptuous monuments in all England", but its "foure seates or places" reserved directly beneath it for "lame or sicke men", that give an immediate sense of that original "gravitational allure".[39] It is a feeling that the cathedral was not so much built for but around the saintly body.[40] Stand next to the shrine today (or what survived of it past the First and Second Suppression Acts of the late 1530s) and you will also notice that, like elsewhere in

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[35] On the *scriptorium* and library, again, see the introduction in Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the 11th and 12th Centuries* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003).

[36] The *Missal*, for example, offers a rich list of rubrics used during the ritual blessing and distribution of both the candles at Candlemas and the palms on Palm Sunday. It also offers a fascinating account of the "prostration of the bishop" during the singing of the seven penitential psalms, which was conducted each Ash Wednesday.

[37] The lost text now known as the *Rites of Durham* survives in at least a dozen different manuscripts. The oldest of these (Durham Cathedral Library, C.III.23) is a fragmentary roll thought to have been written by the antiquarian William Claxton of Wynyard (d. 1597) at some stage in the final decade of the sixteenth century. The second oldest is a small quarto book (Durham University Library, Cosin B.II.11) which was probably copied at the behest of John Cosin (d. 1672), later Bishop of Durham, for his namesake library sometime around 1630. These two form the special but not exclusive focus of the next two chapters (as they do in the compendium collected by the Surtees Society, and first published by the Reverend and Honorary Canon Joseph Thomas Fowler, in 1903). See *The Rites of Durham: Being a Description or Brief Declaration of all the Ancient Monuments, Rites, and Customes Belonging or Being Within the Monastical Church of Durham Before the Suppression*, ed. and trans. by J. T. Fowler (Durham: Surtees Society, 1903). Fowler includes excerpts from at least seven manuscripts: British Museum, MS. Harl. 7047; Cambridge University Library, MS. Cambridge (referred to as C. and marked GG215); MS. Lawson (referred to as L.); MS. Hunter, no. 44, Tract 10; MS. Hunter, no. 45; and—preeminently—Durham University Library, Cosin B.II.11 and Durham Cathedral Library C.III.23 (mentioned above).

[38] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, pp. 1-19.

[39] *Ibid.*, 4

[40] *Ibid.*

England, some of the flagstone flooring has been worn away. John Crook will tell you that this attests to the shuffling feet of countless generations of pilgrims, all huddled and clambering for communion with Cuthbert's *corpus*.[41] On most days (though by no means all) visitors to this part of the cathedral can now expect a rather hushed and tranquil spectacle (illus. 45). In the twelfth century, however, Reginald of Durham described "packed throngs" whose enthusiasm was sometimes so great that "stewards" with "wooden beams" had to be brought in to keep good order.[42] "Men of every rank, age and profession, the secular and the spiritual," the *Capitula de miraculis* recorded, "…[they] all hastened to be present".[43] That the meaning generated as these crowds met with Cuthbert's shrine was inextricably tied to movement is something I want to emphasise throughout this chapter: not just via pilgrimage, but in relation to liturgical and devotional practices too. Time and again, movement is shown to be more than merely a physical action. It is thought and imagined and felt. Building on the concepts of agency outlined in chapters one and two, this third chapter now looks to the cathedral, and Cuthbert's shrine in particular, as performative medieval objects. Such as they are recoverable, their meanings are, in every sense, presented in motion.

The Rites of Durham

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[41] See John Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints in the Early Christian West, c.300-c.1200* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 2000). See also M. O. H. Carver, 'Early Medieval Durham: the Archaeological Evidence', in *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. by N. Coldstream and P. Draper (Leeds: The British Archaeological Association, 1980), pp. 11-19.
[42] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 100.
[43] 'Capitula de Miraculis et Translationibus sancti Cuthberti', in *Symeonis monachi Opera* Omnia, ed. by Thomas Arnold, vol.1 (London: Longman, 1882-5), p. 251.

Having first been produced not long after one of the most destructive episodes in English ecclesiastical history, the *Rites of Durham* describes a world which, at the time of writing, had already been all but completely swept away. This is, of course, not unproblematic. Save, however, for one similar account written by a "recusant" Churchwarden named Roger Martin (d. 1615), which described some of the late medieval ceremonies of a small village church in Long Melford, Suffolk, the *Rites* is a unique and thus invaluable—as well as somewhat ironic—survival from the immediate post-Suppression period.[44] Except for the inclination to preserve for posterity's sake the memories of a very small (and probably very elderly) group of Catholics, the author's personal political objective, like the original manuscript, can only be guessed at.[45] At the very least, however, its effusive and exacting tone does offer every inkling that it was composed by someone who was not only intimately familiar with Durham Cathedral but perhaps somewhat nostalgic too for its former rituals and solemnities. For every reminiscence that might seem to be qualitatively rose-tinted though, the quantitatively exhaustive, sequential and often uncommonly garrulous descriptions contained in the *Rites* also suggest an apparently sincere desire to preserve a faithful account of proceedings.[46] In any

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[44] Although the scale both of the ceremonies and structures at Long Melford were much smaller than at Durham, they have many points in common. See Roger Martin, 'The State of Melford Church and Our Ladie's Chapel at the East End, as I Did Know It', in *The Spoil of Melford Church: The Reformation in a Suffolk Parish*, ed. by David Dymond and Clive Paine (Ipswich: Salient Press, 1992), pp. 1-2 and Roger Martin, 'Tradition and Change: The Old Religion and the New, The State of Melford Church as I, Roger Martyn Did Know It', in *Religion and Society in Early Modern England: A Sourcebook*, ed. by David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell (Lonon and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 11-13. See also, in part, Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1992), pp. 37-40.

[45] On the Counter-Reformation context and its effects on art and architecture see especially Eamon Duffy, *Reformation Divided: Catholics, Protestants and the Conversion of England* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017) and *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*, ed. by Marcia B. Hall and Tracy E. Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[46] The sequence of the liturgical calendar outlined in the *Rites*, as well as a number of other salient details can also be corroborated in large part by the two other fourteenth-century liturgical texts we have already referenced: *The Durham Missal* (British Library, MSS Harley 5289) and the *Durham Processional* (British Library, Royal 7.A.vi)—both unpublished. John Mckinnell writes that further evidence that confirms the sequence can also be found in the "rolls containing financial accounts of the obedientiaries of the priory (notably those of the Almoner, Bursar, Feretrar, Hostillar, Prior of Finchale and Hallgarth Manor), and in six ordinaries of Durham Trade Companies (dating from between 1403 and 1532)". See John McKinnell, 'For the People/By the People. Public and Private Spaces in the Durham Sequence of the Sacrament', in *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages. Proceedings of the 2009 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Frances Andrews (Shaun Tyas: Donington, 2011), pp. 213-31.

event, because the original has been lost to history, because its copies survive in an assortment of conditions (most of which are either incomplete or embellished in one way or another), and because it has very clearly been subjected over the years to a variety of uses (not least my own), the *Rites* already neatly speaks to the diachronic prospect of a medieval cathedral that we are also hoping to make a special point of suggesting in these final two chapters.

If the *Rites* might seem to be a compelling (albeit late) piece of evidence for marrying a *ductus* of rhetoric with a *ductus* of architecture in medieval Durham, then no one has yet taken up the task of assessing it. This reflects less as reticence for the source though, than it perhaps does for the field. With several special exceptions, architectural historians as a whole have yet to fully flesh out the connections between the liturgical performance(s) of embodied early medieval subjects and Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical design. Paul Crossley has rightly cautioned that because much of the information available to us is circumstantial, every effort to assess (and, especially, to reassemble) a kind of "artistic policy" or "programme" necessitates a series of somewhat precarious leaps from the visual to the verbal.[47] And yet, as he points out, it is indeed extraordinary to think that in the bibliography of his own subject, the cathedral of Chartres (begun 1194), there has been only one attempt in more than 3,000 publications.[48] And thus, to his self-imposed question, "Did the 'artistic advisors' at Chartres draw the evident parallels between the *ductus* of literary rhetoric and the contrived flow of liturgical performance?", Crossley was compelled to answer with a clear (if somewhat conditional) "yes".[49]

Crossley situates Chartres in relation to a long tradition of monastic thinking, stretching as far back as Augustine of Hippo and his successor, Fortunatianus of Aquileia (d. after 355?),

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[47] Paul Crossley, 'Ductus *and* Memoria', pp. 214-249.
[48] It is worth quoting Crossley here in full: "It is extraordinary that in the vast bibliography of Chartres (in 1989 there were more than 3,464 publications) little or no attempt—with one shining exception—has been made to correlate the imagery of the building with its liturgy. See Crossley, '*Ductus* and *Memoria*', p. 215.
[49] *Ibid*., 217.

both of whom described *ductus* in terms of a literary composition.[50] The images in the cathedral had to be read: in order to reach the *scopus*, the final climactic chapter with the *Sancta Camisa* and the *Sedes Sapientae* in the east end, the reader-pilgrim had to navigate a "way through" the composition of her own accord, but many rhetorical flourishes were there to guide her along the way. A sequence of "modes" (*modi*) and "colours" (*colores*) worked in concert and mutually enhanced one another's shared meanings, all in anticipation of reaching the Virgin's shrine.[51] Seen in this way, the similarities between the *psychological* and *physiological* journeys of literature and architecture—of the mind and the cathedral respectively—are clearly quite compelling. Unlike Chartres, however, which retains many of its original furnishings, if you stand almost anywhere inside Durham Cathedral today, with the *Rites* in hand, the one thing that becomes abundantly clear quite quickly is the substantial loss of all these focal points: exactly those visual "grades" and "steps" that Mary Carruthers encourages us to look for.[52]

As is to be expected, the major impetus of Durham's thematic schemes will have surrounded Cuthbert: his image, his biography, certain of his miracles and otherwise evocative saintly decoration. At a count, the *Rites* suggests at least eighteen windows depicted his image across the complex from the cloisters to the east end, ranging variously in terms of size and style. Close to the majority of this glass was donated by Bishop Thomas Langley (d. 1437) and, though lost, a reasonable assumption might be its former resemblance to the Cuthbert window—likewise his gift—which survives at York Minster.[53]An extant albeit badly damaged twelfth-century image of Cuthbert accompanied by Oswald can still be seen in the Galilee

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[50] *Ibid.*

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] See Carruthers, *Rhetoric Beyond Words*, p. 190. In truth unfortunately, Durham's interior today probably tells us just as much about the rose-tinted ideals of St John Hope, Percy Dearmer, the Alcuin Club of antiquarians and their collective attachment to the Arts and Crafts movement, as it does about the interior as it looked on the eve of the Reformation.

[53] J. T. Fowler, 'On the St Cuthbert Window in York Minster', *Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Journal*, 4 (1877), pp. 249-376.

Chapel (about which there has been mixed debate).[54] And a similar but largely unknown wall painting, hidden today behind the panelling in the monks' former refectory (now the Chapter Library) is likely contemporaneous too. Only found as recently as 1962, the image was keyed extensively at an unknown time in preparation for a thick layer of plaster, rendering it difficult but not impossible to make out two similar standing figures of a bishop and a king.

If the mid-thirteenth century trend towards repainting older Norman structures is any guide—among them Ely and Peterborough offer the best evidence today—Durham may also have undergone a minor rejuvenation sometime between 1250 and 1300 too. Again, nothing much survives. Possible traces of foliate designs have been found in several spandrels, and faint remains of further foliate scrollwork, combined with flowers and a trefoil-ended stalk, might be seen in the south transept. Hints of a similar floral scheme could also be suggested in the vaulting of the south aisle of the nave, where four-petalled motifs combine with stencilled rosettes. (It is tempting to ally at least some of these designs to the organic subjects discussed in chapters one and two.) A larger modern reproduction does now fill part of the blind arcading in the south aisle (illus. 46), but little to no information about its design (and still less its function) can be reliably assumed.

At any rate, the risk of overindulging in guesswork about what has been reproduced, would likely be further compounded by what has not. The *Rites* also describes in excess of a hundred different (and differently detailed) references to other decorative features, including altars, screens, roods and "trellesdoure[s]", all of which likely served, not only to instruct and to guide the reader-pilgrim, but to protect the saint and his possessions too. Some iron-railings were even reinforced with "iron pikes a quarter of a yard long".[55] Many of these sub-divisions

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[54] These images were not even properly uncovered until the 1930s when the whitewash was removed. See Stuart A. Harrison, 'Observations on the architecture of the Galilee chapel', in *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, ed. by David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 213-34.

[55] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 102

were added and replaced in piecemeal fashion over the centuries, and very few required substantial material alterations to the main fabric of the church. Indeed, some, like the "wainscoting", the cupboards, and even the large "two-storey" timber chamber built to house the resident anchorite (somewhere in the east end of the north choir aisle) left no appreciable marks whatsoever.[56] Some of the rituals involved in the display of these and other key objects described in the *Rites* also remind us of their varied temporal dimensions, of the different roles many played in the long sequence of feasts days. Not only could certain screens and "almeyrie" cupboards be opened and closed and even moved (based on the time of year) but a number of very special items, such as the massive bronze Paschal candlestick (now lost), were only brought out once or twice every twelve months.[57] If this larger sense of loss is somewhat daunting, then the *Rites* makes up for it to a degree with its long and vivid descriptions of the "Auncyent Customes of Prossession".[58] One in particular, the most rehearsed and recurring for Durham's monks, is worth pausing at to unpack a little.

The Sonnday prosessiō

David Harris Sacks has written that medieval processions were "especially well-suited to convey the structure of authority in a community".[59] They represented "in the simplest, most

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[56] St John Hope's liturgical plan of Durham Cathedral on the eve of the Reformation was published in 1903, but it was not until after the First World War, when the clergy of Durham (as well as the rest of the clergy in the Church of England) had indulged enough of the Alcuin Club's agenda, that they began to restore the side altars and shrines indicated in the plan.

[57] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 98. The candlestick was, in fact, mostly kept hidden and disassembled throughout the year, under the stairs of the north choir aisle.

[58] *Ibid.*, 104-8.

[59] David Harris Sacks, 'Celebrating Authority in Bristol, 1475-1640", in *Urban Life in the Renaissance*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman and Ronald F. E. Weissman (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1989), p. 192.

abstract, and yet most visible way" the social and clerical hierarchies of those involved.[60] The "Sonnday prosessiō" (hereafter the Sunday procession) at Durham was led by the priest, followed by the gospeller, the epistoler, the censer, two taperers, an acolyte bearing a cross and two boys (one carrying the salt and the water, the other the book from which the priest would later read).[61] The remainder of the monks and novices initially waited in the quire until the procession returned to what was called the "station", located in front of the rood screen in the nave.[62] With the exceptions, as and when, of the very old, the very young or the otherwise infirm, the entirety of the convent was expected to be present. All sang anthems and all offered prayers for the dead.

The early-twentieth-century Soviet director and film theorist, Sergei Eisenstein, once wrote that "it is hard to imagine a montage sequence for an architectural ensemble more subtly composed, *shot by shot*, than the one that our legs create by walking among the buildings of the Acropolis"[63] The precise route the monks took during the Sunday procession is never stated explicitly, nor, of course, was it necessarily (or even likely) to have remained consistent over the centuries. In any case, rigid adherence, tunnel-vision and single-mindedness are our enemies here. Though it would clearly have been much more regular and habituating than the path of a layperson or reader-pilgrim, a certain pliancy in the monks' system must still have been key. Discussing Geoffrey of Vinsauf's (d. *c.* 1215) *Poetria nova*, a two-thousand-line poem that advises its readers on how to "arrange" the sequences or "itineraries" of a good literary composition, Carruthers picks out the positive emphases he places on *digressio* (the "digression"):

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[60] *Ibid.*
[61] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, pp. 104-8.
[62] *Ibid.*
[63] Sergei M. Eisenstein, 'Montage and Architecture', trans. by Michael Glenny, *Assemblage*, 10 (December 1989), p. 117.

Sometimes, as I advance along the way, I leave the middle of the road, and with a kind of leap I fly off to the side, as it were; then I return to the point whence I had digressed.[64]

A *digressio* is not a distraction here *per se*, not a full (or even wrong) departure from a natural course, but a way to "amplify the treatise yet more fully".[65] It can be either brief or long he argues (Cicero being especially famous for the latter), though not so much that "it will be difficult to find the way back".[66] Going "outside the bounds of the subject", letting the mind or the pen "withdraw from it a little", are both essential and favourable instincts.[67] (The monk and the cathedral, that is, work together.) Nonetheless, in consultation with the Cistercian *Consuetudines* (*c*. 1150) and the Salisbury *Processional* (*c*. 1502), William St John Hope's notes on the *Rites* suggest a useful if not absolutely accurate picture of how proceedings unfolded (see illus. 47 for a ground plan within which the major sites that follow are marked).[68]

The main protagonists in the Sunday procession assembled in the presbytery for the *benedictio aquae* ("the blessing of the water"), and probably right in front of the steps to the high-altar. Here they will have waited in anticipation of the priest initiating proceedings by ascending them to sprinkle it. He then probably led the procession through the north door of the "French Peere" and directly into Cuthbert's feretory, in order to sprinkle the small (but incomparably important) altar located immediately adjacent to his shrine. Leaving this time through the south door, he will then have returned to the presbytery. The third sprinkling was of those who followed behind him through this door, beginning with the cross-bearer, the ministers, the monks in order of seniority, and any novices. In the same order, the procession

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[64] This is Carruthers' translation. See Carruthers, 'The *concept* of ductus', pp. 191-3.
[65] *Ibid*.
[66] *Ibid*.
[67] *Ibid*.
[68] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, pp. 302-3.

then moved on to the convent, possibly through the north quire door, before turning to the west for the first time, down through the aisle and into the north transept. Here, the first three altars (of a series of many more) were sprinkled too, beginning with those of Sts. Nicholas and Giles on the north wall, Sts. Gregory and Benedict to the south, and, finally, as they returned along the aisle, the altar of St. Blaise. The procession, having been lacking somewhat in all likelihood for much elbow room thus far, then suddenly found itself exiting into the wide spaces of the Chapel of Nine Altars for the first time.

The Chapel of the Nine Altars (illus. 48) was, of course, a space accessible to a range of both laypersons and clerics (if not always at the same time), and so it bears pausing in here for a while too. Straightforwardly named, this was the second of three major alterations to the material fabric of the Norman building (the last being the crossing tower). It took the place of the smaller and much more modest apsidal east end finished in 1104. Few sources state its purpose outright or even implicitly, but the ambition to create a more sumptuous (which is to say aggrandising) setting for Cuthbert's shrine cannot have been incidental. Curiously, it took close to forty years to complete, almost as long as the original Norman edifice in its entirety. Its size and much of its design, both the vision of the *architector nove fabrice*, Richard of Farnham (d. late thirteenth century?), have been closely linked by Peter Draper to the east end at Fountains Abbey (*c.* 1247).[69] Typical of an early English Gothic design, its height in particular was emphasised by its skinny new lancet windows (illus. 49), its *en délit* shafts of Frosterley marble and (whether deliberately or as a consequence of the ground) the steep reduction of its floor. Depicting a hierarchy of meticulously arranged biblical figures expanding from its centre to its periphery, its enormous rose window (first installed in the early 1400s; illus. 50) will have greeted the procession and pilgrims alike, probably bringing both

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[69] Peter Draper, 'The Nine Altars at Durham and Fountains', in *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. by Nicola Coldstream and Peter Draper (Leeds: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 1980), pp. 74-86.

divine order and scholastic clarity to mind. Though most of what survives now dates to the nineteenth century, we can assume that the original was designed in such a way as to instruct, enlighten and evoke. With the narrative windows, to its left and right, all showing stories from the Bible and Cuthbert's life juxtaposed similarly, the whole effect seems likely to have been conceived—at least in part—to both reiterate *and* augment the preeminent motifs of the liturgical process.

The impression that this space and the light from its windows leave (even today in their amended forms) might seem to encourage an analysis along visual lines. Certainly, for many modern (and especially Modern*ist*) architectural theorists, the power and the sense of "vision" often predominates. "I exist in life only if I can see", le Corbusier is supposed to have said, "I am and I remain an impenitent visual—everything is in the visual".[70] In the medieval world too, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to suggest that, following Aristotle, seeing was a "spiritual" sense.[71] It brought an awareness of objects set at a distance (quite literally, of course, because optical rays moved). It therefore had greater utility over touch, which was confined only to direct contact and thus to the physical limits of the body. Multi-functional though the mechanisms of "looking" were often thought to be, however, it was just as commonly understood as a deceptive and even deficient sense. Richard of Saint Victor (d. 1173), for instance, regretted that:

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[70] Le Corbusier, *Precisions* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1991), p. *7*.

[71] See also, for example, Herbert L. Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Ontario and New York: Broadview Press, 2004); Herbert L. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); and *The Four Modes of Seeing: Approaches to Medieval Imagery in Honor of Madeline Harrison Caviness*, ed. by Evelyn Staudinger Lane, Elizabeth Carson Pastan and Ellen M. Shortell (London and New York: Routledge, 2009).

since it [vision] is blunt, it does not discern the smallest; since it [vision] is lazy, it

does not reach things far away; and since it [vision] is not attentive, it does not

penetrate hidden things.[72]

Actually, precisely on account of the distance entailed between viewer and object, there was

always room for obstruction, indeed even deliberate interference, of that which was seen.

Malign devils, he argued, were ever set on tricking him with their optical illusions.[73]

Conversely though, touching could relay close and unambiguous information of one's

surroundings, literally *first-hand* (that is, without the risk of intermediaries). Reflecting on

Aristotle's *De anima*, a text we've already encountered, even Thomas Aquinas assessed that

the capacity for touch involved a "far higher degree of precision".[74] In fact, "[t]he preeminence

of touch in man," he stressed, was ultimately "why man is the wisest of animals".[75] Time and

again in scientific and ekphrastic discourse like these, touching was actually valued on a par

with seeing, and sometimes even higher, as the acutest and, therefore, the most active sensory

faculty for "encountering" the world.

Even in spite of the fact that a great number of early medieval monastic storytellers,

some of whom we have already met—Reginald of Durham, Peter Cantor, Bernard of Clairvaux

etc.—espoused the renunciation of sensory stimuli, these ideas still readily mingled inside

ecclesiastical grounds. Over and above its pilgrims, this makes what Durham's monks thought

as they first entered and beheld the Chapel's enormous glass windows, as well as its intense

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[72] See Richard of St Victor, *In Apocalypsim Joannis Libri Septem*, in *Patrologiae Latinae*, ed. by J. P. Migne, 196 (Paris: Garnier, 1855), pp. 686.

[73] *Ibid*.

[74] Thomas Aquinas, *Aristotle's De Anima: in the version of William of Moerbeke and the Commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. by Kenelm Foster and Silvester Humphries (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2007), p. 303.

[75] *Ibid*.

polychromy and special array of corral-fossil Frosterley columns, particularly interesting.[76]

Building into the bargain some of the themes of *varietas* and the roaming Procopian eye explored in chapter two, might the act for these men not only of "digressing" from the route by looking, but also touching, have outweighed—even imperiled—the salvific promise of these spaces?

The answer, broadly applied to lay and cleric persons alike, might sit closer to probably than possibly. But because the sources generally do not allow us to know for sure and—especially—because the mixture and variety of experiences (then as now) is key, a definitive answer is unnecessary. As we move into the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries especially, certain devotional traditions which prioritised the visual—the *Augenkommunion*, for example, the Eucharist taken "with the eyes" not the mouth—do seem to have increased.[77] Still, the number of storytellers referencing tactility never really waned. Even in, for instance, the so-called "visionary" narratives of Gertrude of Helfta (d. 1302), written just as the Chapel of the Nine Altars was nearing completion at Durham, something of the intimacy of touching completely takes over. In book 3, chapter 17 of her *Legatus Memorialis Abundantiae* we learn that, while the Eucharist was being celebrated, Gertrude wandered throughout the east end of her own church, speaking variously into its walls where Christ had "revealed himself".[78] Claiming dissatisfaction with the *Augenkommunion* specifically, she whispered:

> Lord, although I am now filled with the most incredible sweetness …it seems to
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> me that when you were on the altar you were *too far* from me. Grant me, therefore,

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[76] The Chapel of the Nine Altars does retain some subtle remnants of its earliest polychromy, with certain hues of red, blue and black visible on the arcade surrounding the altars, as well as one or two quatrefoils above.

[77] Other examples include the many newly-transparent "monstrances" and "ostensoria" (*monstrare* and *ostendere* both literally meaning "to show"), the increasingly complex portals and tympana of the late medieval world, and plenty of rood and/or choir screens. On the *Augenkommunion* see also Suzannah Biernoff, *Sight and Embodiment*, pp. 133–64.

[78] See Gertrude of Helfta, *Legatus Memorialis Abundantiae Divinae Pietatis*: *The Herald of Divine Love*, ed. and trans. by Margaret Winkworth (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), p. 175.

during the Blessing of this Mass, the favor of *feeling* that my soul is *united* to yours

(emphasis added).[79]

Christ responded, she wrote, by "clasp[ing her] to his breast" and holding her firmly in a "divine union that was as sweet as it was close" (suggesting once again that a basic need for close physical proximity, to move towards, and to be moved inwardly and simultaneously by the divine, was not an instinct unique to Bishop Ælfwold).[80]

With the east end blessed in its entirety, the Sunday procession then continued down the south aisle of the cathedral towards Bishop Hatfield's altar, the vestry altar, and the three altars of Our Lady of Houghal, Our Lady of Bolton and Sts. Faith and Thomas. Leaving the south transept, the priest then led them outside, and into the cloister, probably through its eastern door.[81] All of the cloister's alleys were blessed in similar order, from east to west, with each of the entries to the parlour, the chapter house, the prior's lodging, the frater, the common house, the passage to the farmery and, finally, the dorter, all being sprinkled too. The priest then led the procession back into the main body of the church, via the western cloister door, and turned to the west once more, stopping at the altar of the Bound Rood and the altars of Bede, Our Lady in the middle, and Our Lady of Pity in the Galilee Chapel (illus. 51).

Fortunately, James Wyatt—a man known on occasion as "Wyatt The Destroyer"—never quite finished knocking down Durham's Galilee Chapel in 1795. It wasn't, however, for lack of trying. By the time the Society of Antiquaries intervened he had already discarded much of

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[79] *Ibid*.

[80] *Ibid*.

[81] There are two doors through which the procession could move on the south wall of the nave in order to gain access to the claustral buildings. The Monks' Door, as it is commonly referred to, sits the firthest to the west and has a lavishly designed portal incorporating foliage, beasts and strap iron tracery (it dates roughly to 1130). The Prior's Door, the inner face of which likely dates to around the same time, and its outer face slightly later in the twelfth century, depicts four elaborately carved, recessed orders. There is evidence of what are likely to be former wall fixings between the two, which suggest the location of the former scriptorium. Like the main body of the church, much of the cloister will have been glazed, at least up until the 1760s, when it was replaced with the current three-light tracery scheme.

its roof and made plans (which he successfully executed only nine months later) to demolish most of the chapter house.[82] What did survive of the twelfth-century works, though, shows that the Galilee was originally made up of five equally-sized aisles, with arcades of four bays. In part, at least, because of the naturally limited room available for building, it is wider than it is long. What some have termed a "late" or otherwise "transitional" Romanesque design doubtless amounted to a clear aesthetic distinction from the main body of the cathedral. If the nave, as we have seen, emphasised weight, militarism and conquest, then subtlety, intricacy and slender quatrefoil piers combined here to offer a very different impression. The increased proportion of window to wall also made room for more light to accentuate the keeled rolls, abaci, waterleaf capitals, lightly pockmarked limestone shafts and, most strikingly, its heavily chevroned arches (what Alfred Clapham once called "baton brisé")[83] Of all the spaces through which the Sunday procession moved in the cathedral, this was perhaps the most multi-functional and thus potentially the most digressive, having been used to (re-)house Bede's tomb and shrine, several altars and preaching stations, the monks' Consistory Court, the chantry tomb of Thomas Langley (d. 1437) and—as will be a special feature of chapter four—a space for female worship.

None, however, would have infringed much on what happened next, because as the priest re-entered the nave from the Galilee, at the head of at least a dozen other monks, he was thus very likely recalling—maybe even re-enacting to some degree—Christ's triumphal re-entry into Jerusalem (from the region of Galilee). The route left the Chapel through its north-east

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[82] See Chris Caple, *Conservation Skills: Judgement, Method and Decision Making* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 94 and Nikolaus Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson, *County Durham* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 166. If, as evidence suggests, Wyatt was less than pleased with his nickname then, in his defense, he at least seems to have been a man of his own time. The final three decades of the eighteenth century were an especially destructive phase in the cathedral's history. Only a few years earlier, John Wooler, the cathedral's own architect, had managed to pull down the original north porch, before rebuilding it again without its upper chamber. And, in 1777, George Nicholson, the Clerk of Works at Durham, had ordered that more than two inches of stone be chiselled away from the cathedral's exterior, in order to combat—of all things—long-term erosion.

[83] See Alfred Clapham, *English Romanesque* Architecture, p. 149.

door, walked most of the length of the nave, and joined with the rest of the convent (referenced earlier) at the "station" for the final leg. At least two of Bishop Hugh le Puiset's most conspicuous enhancements to the fabric seem likely to have been key at this specific moment: firstly, the lavish choir screens organising the crossing and, especially, his enormous carved stone rood beneath which the rest of the convent had been waiting. The *Rites of Durham* describes this rood as depicting the "whole storie & passiō of oᵘ Lord wrowghte in stone most curiously & most finely gilte".[84] As a whole, remarkably little is known about Anglo-Norman roods and their screens, but in respect of Durham, this arrangement can also be corroborated by contemporary wall paintings. At St Mary's church in Kempley (Gloucestershire) and St Mary Magdalene's in Ickleton (Cambridgeshire), for example, a series of extant images dating to *c*.1130, all of which probably flanked old roods (now lost too), depict assorted scenes from Christ's Passion and Crucifixion, as well as a variety of (martyred) Apostles.[85]

After leading the bidding prayer, the Lord's prayer and further prayers for the dead, the priest then sprinkled the final altar, the Jesus Altar, and split the procession into two. This time referencing the Suffering Redeemer perhaps, he then led the monks on one final course, beneath the double *Agnus Dei* of the screen and the crucifix, and back into the presbytery, via the two doors to its right and left. Movement, once again, will have been a critical component throughout this experience. Not only would the incremental motions of the procession itself have married to some degree with those of the narrative figures on the rood, but perhaps even

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[84] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 32.

[85] Roods often varied in their location, appearing as often as not on the western side of the crossing or sometimes several bays into the nave. Arnold Klukas made the case that Durham's rood sat one bay west of its crossing, with the choir screen perhaps being found further in between the western crossing piers. In being so placed, the choir area would logically have extended under the corssing, maybe even sealing off the routes to the north and south transept chapels in the process. See Arnold Klukas, 'The Architectural Implications of the Decreta Lanfranci', *ANS*, 6 (1983), pp. 137-71. See also, on the liturgical and arrangement issues at Durham more generally, Arnold Klukas, 'Durham Cathedral in the Gothic Era: Liturgy, Design, Ornament', in *Artistic Integration in Gothic Buildings*, ed. by Virginia Chieffo Raguin, Kathryn Brush and Peter Draper (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 69-83. Thomas Russo, however, has argued for much more of an assymetrical arrangement of the Romanesque rood. See Thomas E. Russo, 'The Romanesque Rood Screen of Durham Cathedral: Context and Form', in *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, ed. by David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 251-68.

more explicitly with the gestures and stagecraft of the priest and his retinue. Crossing this final threshold, moreover, at the crescendo of the whole event, members of the convent were perhaps thus symbolically (and pre-emptively) encouraged to move their thoughts to their own personal journeys, crossing over from this world into the next, and ultimately towards the biggest destination of all: Christ's kingdom and paradise.

As at Chartres, the east-to-west axis of Durham Cathedral was therefore the main structural coordinator of this highly-disciplined and, at various points, hyper-precise *ductus*. The journey began and ended in the east, in the presbytery, and thus in the cathedral's holiest spaces, with Cuthbert and the solemn attendance of the whole convent. From altar to altar, image to image, space to space, the priest and the water moved through (and via) specific doors, entries and screens, before reaching a climactic and richly-choreographed reassembly, with the monks and novices, at the "station". In essence, these monks will have been presenting themselves over and over with the same fundamental ideas and signs, strategically poised we can assume, along a clear course with a clear ending.

Much like the cathedral itself this is to say, its monks both shaped and re-shaped their own *ductus*, with many likely moving back and forth, from east to west, choir to cloister, feast to feast, over the course of weeks, months and even years. The implication is that *ductus*, as a system for arranging and disseminating divine themes and motifs, was always inextricably tied to both body and building. To a greater or lesser extent, much of the laity too, especially Durham's local communities, will have evolved, by routine, their own modes of thinking and acting in Durham's spaces: not unlike a kind of informal "rhetorical dilation" as Paul Crossley termed it.[86] These personalised modes of being, however, will have remained tied fairly securely to a more or less consistent mixture of performance, movement and image, practised and internalised over generations. From the outset, in other words, the cathedral anticipated,

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[86] See Crossley, 'Ductus *and* Memoria', pp. 231-2.

assiduously cultivated and perpetuated a medieval culture geared towards actualising Gregory the Great's material defence of images. The cathedral provided instruction to its clerics and pilgrims alike: differently of course, and yet often by similar means and a deliberate economy of guided "encountering".

For pilgrims like William of Malmesbury's Ælfwold, long before they could have reached to tear away the cover of Cuthbert's tomb—the climactic finale of his own journey at least—they first would have had to negotiate the cathedral's lengthy preamble. Initially, the crowds: other pilgrims, traders and the local community outside, the noise and the muddle of Durham's cramped urban peninsula. Then, a liminal moment, the transition to the inner sanctum. For at least the first thirty years after its completion the great west door would have been the main thoroughfare for pilgrims, before it was blocked by the new Galilee Chapel, and even more pointedly by Bishop Langley's chantry tomb after 1437. However they arrived though, passing beyond the start of the main northern wall, or beneath the enormous two-storey porch above it (now lost), a calmer scene would doubtless have ensued: not quite the hush and solemnity often enforced today (because the medieval nave could still be a loud and raucous place), but an immediate and deliberate shift in atmosphere and expectation. Ælfwold's followers would doubtless have had some freedom to move as they liked (if much less than today), but a clear sense of direction and purpose—augmented by the "modes" and "colours" of the cathedral—would nonetheless have seen them along the right path. Durham's large arresting piers, as we saw already, its high gallery and windows, its many altars, and the warm and lambent tongues of candle light—all would have caught the eye and the ear, scattering their thoughts away towards countless digressions, but collectively and progressively towards one main objective.

Around the choir they would head, past the tall figures on the rood, beneath the rose window, through the Nine Altars and behind the presbytery: all guiding them incrementally

closer to the threshold (*transibo*) of Cuthbert's feretory. Then the *scopus*, the final chapter itself, the image to which the bishop's entire journey, from Sherborne to Durham, had been devoted: Cuthbert's tomb and shrine—the various form(s) and function(s) of which we can now return to once again.

A Grave Matter

Among the more obscure early custodians of St Cuthbert's body was a quite remarkable man named Elfred son of Westou (d. mid-eleventh century). Symeon of Durham tells a story within which Elfred, a fierce advocate of Cuthbert's sanctity, was unofficially but affectionately dubbed the *custos ecclesiae fidelissimus* (the "most faithful guardian of the church").[87] Such was his fidelity in fact that, according to Symeon, Elfred would frequently sit and converse with the saint while trimming "his hair and nails".[88] Afterwards, he would then make a special display of laying a small selection of Cuthbert's locks on the exposed embers of a thurible. When they could be seen to glow brilliantly without being consumed, Elfred—much to the admiration of many witnesses—would proclaim the physical incorruptibility of the holy *corpus* and give thanks to God. [89]

Aside from the suspicion that the community seems unlikely to have been so cavalier with the remains of their most precious possession, this story might also seem to stretch the imagination given how indisposed successive generations had long been to opening the saint's coffin. In fact, on only seven separate occasions, over the course of nearly 1,200 years, are the custodians of Cuthbert's *corpus* recorded as daring to peek inside. On the two most recent, in

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[87] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 106-8.
[88] *Ibid.*
[89] *Ibid.*

1899 and 1827, the axes of the religious and scientific worlds had shifted somewhat from the mid-eleventh century and, in 1539, Drs Ley, Henley and Blythman had arrived only with the intention to "throw down his bones".[90] We have to go back to 1104 before we can get a comparable sense of the profound visceral impact of his flesh, *in esse*, when (on the eve of Cuthbert's *translatio*) Symeon himself "did not cease to kiss the sacred feet of the body, nor to moisten them with his tears".[91] That the saint only entertained the most rarefied company— and *rarely* at that—is also emphasised by the fact that only three further accounts before then depict him unveiled. The *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* records two of them. King Edmund (also known as Edmund I; d. 946) placed two gold amulets, "with his own hand", on top of the body sometime in the early 940s.[92] And, in or around the year 934, his predecessor, King Æthelstan (d. 939), lay a *testamentum* "at Cuthbert's head" detailing a large bequest (including a Gospel Book, many precious ornaments and the estate of South Wearmouth).[93]

The very "first opening of his sepulchre" in 698, when the monks on Lindisfarne were expecting to raise "only his bones", was recorded in some detail both by Bede and the anonymous author of his original *Vita*.[94] The latter famously relayed that "they found a thing marvellous to relate, namely that the whole body was undecayed".[95] In short order, they then resolved to place it in a new and bespoke wooden chest (*levis theca*).[96] Bede, himself relying on an anonymous source, tells us that the chest was made from six planks fashioned from a single slow-growing oak tree, which had been chosen in the apparent knowledge that it seeded

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[90] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 102
[91] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 71.
[92] *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto: A History of Saint Cuthbert and a Record of His Patrimony*, ed. by Ted Johnson South (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), p. 67 and p. 65.
[93] William M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans: The Church of Durham, 1071-1153* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), p. 43.
[94] See Bede, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 131.
[95] *Ibid*.
[96] *Ibid*.

some four hundred years earlier ("during the time of the Romans").[97] Its craftsmen used shell augers, as opposed to metal, to bore holes for the pegs (on account, in all likelihood, of Cuthbert's affinity for the sea), before stuffing its shoulder joints with wool-tow. They then began to carve its images.

Cuthbert (still inside the original coffin) was placed on an under-plank engraved with a stepped-base cross. The Virgin and Child appeared on his foot-board; two archangels, Michael and Gabriel, stood on the head-board; and a further five archangels, from the liturgy of the Irish church, assembled on the saint's right. The twelve apostles were found on the plank to Cuthbert's left, with Peter and Paul nearest to his head. On the lid (which slightly exceeded the width of the rest) an adult but beardless Christ (illus. 52) was flanked by the symbols of the four evangelists (illus. 53). And, finally, from what we can tell, most if not all of these figures were then presented with *tituli* in both Latin and ligatured- or so-called bind-runes. Today this structure—which was partly pieced back together by Ernst Kitzinger in the late 1930s, using only 169 of the more than 6,000 pieces excavated in 1899—amounts to a unique survival of early Anglo-Saxon relief carving (illus. 54).[98] Some of these images might seem to speak for themselves, but at a distance of more than thirteen hundred years, and given the absence both of contemporaneous and corroborative regional commentary, we still need to tread quite carefully. It is something of a challenge, for example, to say anything definitive regarding the juxtaposition of different scripts, or to suggest why some figures (like Matthew, Mark and John) are given runes, whereas others (like Luke) are not. These problems are further compounded, firstly, by the suspicion that the carvers were, in the words of Raymond Page, "unused to cutting the characters" and, secondly, by the poor condition of the wood (a result

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[97] Dendrochronology also seems to confirm this dating. See Raymond Page, 'Roman and Runic on St Cuthbert's Coffin', in *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to AD 1200*, ed. by Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989), p. 258.
[98] See also: Ernst Kitzinger, 'The Coffin-Reliquary', in *The Relics of St. Cuthbert*, ed. by C. F. Battiscombe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 202-304.

both of its age and of a fungoid infection contracted from being re-buried in damp ground in the nineteenth century).[99] Whatever their meaning, however, we can at least infer that, given the similar modelling of the Franks Casket (*c.* early eighth century), this was not an uncommon practice in early medieval Northumbria.[100]

Like the runes, the five archangels arranged to the saint's right and the beardless Christ on the lid have all spoken, if not quite to a lingering pagan influence, then to what Kitzinger himself bluntly summed up as a "hard and barbaric" style.[101] Irrelevant of their appeal today, however, these figures were once unequivocally precious. That Cuthbert's original coffin from 687 was retained inside his second from 698 (and then again inside his third in 1104), speaks to a nested, almost *matryoshka*-esque sense of incrementally inherited sanctity. It also speaks, once again, to a very special kind of tactual-symbiotic relationship, one which could also shed some light on the stepped-base cross engraving. The cross's dimensions relative to Cuthbert's body implies that this under-plank was arranged so that Cuthbert's head and the uppermost part of his torso would lay roughly at its intersection, while his feet aligned with its base. As a compliment to this arrangement, we can also note that Richard Bailey, among others, has persuasively argued that in Anglo-Saxon England this particular kind of stepped-cross often functioned not only as a signifier for the act of the Crucifixion, but very frequently as an evocation *of* the actual True Cross itself.[102] The saint was, in other words, laid to rest *in imitatio Christi*: not simply near but, in effect, actually *on* the cross of the Crucifixion.

References to the *loca sancta* of Jerusalem and to the Holy Sepulchre, the nominal centre of both the beginning and the end of the medieval world, were well understood by

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[99] Raymond Page, 'Roman and Runic', p. 260.
[100] Page (above) also cites a number of name-stones and grave-markers from Lindisfarne and Monkwearmouth as being of the same ilk. See, for example, AS Corpus Lindisfarne 27 in the Priory Museum. See Page, 'Roman and Runic', pp. 257-66.
[101] Ernst Kitzinger, 'The Coffin-Reliquary', p. 207.
[102] Richard Bailey, *England's Earliest Sculptors* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1996), pp. 80-94.

Anglo-Saxon clerics.[103] And thus, at the very least, the cross supporting Cuthbert's body would have signified both the earthly and the Heavenly Jerusalem: both the Crucifixion as an historical event and as an augury of the Second Coming (when Cuthbert too would be seen presented among the community of saints). The saint's incorrupt body was thus suspended, both in physical and temporal terms, between the wooden cross beneath him, a material echo of Christ's final hours, and his Saviour enthroned in heaven (and in the future) above. That the beardless Christ was flanked by the Four Evangelists also likely symbolised the apocalypse, as well as something possibly like Christ's (and Cuthbert's) divine mission, that is to travel to the furthest corners of the world. The now much-studied pectoral cross (illus. 55) which sat on his chest was studded with blood-red garnets (the "carbuncles of the Bible") and if, as has been argued, it bore any resemblance to the *crux gemmata* (or the triumphant cross in the Old English poem, *The Dream of the Rood*), then Golgotha, Judgment Day and perhaps even the Tree of Life may all have been brought to mind.[104]

Only one other account has survived describing the coffin directly after the eighth century. It was written by Reginald of Durham in the twelfth, more than two or three generations after the *translatio* in 1104. It was "engraved with the most wonderful carving", he claimed, and depicted "manifold forms of animals, flowers and the likenesses of men".[105] He then concluded somewhat cryptically, however, by suggesting that "rather than admiring the skill or the powers of the carver, the onlooker was lost in amazement".[106] Two perspectives present themselves regarding this apparent (if minor) slight on its maker(s). It cannot be the case that he was simply unimpressed. And, in any event—unlike Klitzinger—Reginald would

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[103] See, for example, Martin Werner, 'The Book of Durrow and the question of programme', in *Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 23-40.
[104] See Elizabeth Coatsworth, 'The Pectoral Cross and Portable Altar from the Tomb of St Cuthbert', in *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to AD 1200*, ed. by Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989), p.296; Elizabeth Okasha, *Hand-list of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 108-112.
[105] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 90.
[106] *Ibid*.

have been very unlikely to admit as much anyway (especially on the record). Thus, he either hadn't seen it for himself, or, he had seen it, but was "amazed" less by its appearance than the sheer gravity of its contents, *coram Deo*. In the end, it was probably a telling combination of the two. No other details were forthcoming, and given that he was generally vague on its formal qualities (and apparently quite mistaken on the "flowers"), we probably have every reason to suspect that, rather than a first-hand observation, this amounted to a credible estimate of his (or perhaps a "typical" monk's) likely sentiments. Indeed, if his notes on the actual *translatio* are to be taken seriously, then it actually seems very likely that no one, let alone Reginald, would have been able to view the coffin after 1104 anyway. Having been inspected for a second time, Reginald notes that it was wrapped in a "coarse linen cloth soaked in wax", before being interred in a second coffin bound by "hides and iron".[107] It was then lifted into a third, decorated with gold and precious gems (*auro et gemmis*) and lifted on to its base.[108] These final embellishments were probably seized at the Dissolution, but ample (if fragmentary) evidence was found of the waxed-linen and animal hides enveloping the first and second coffins, during each of the excavations in sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.[109]

Movement through Stillness

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[107] *Ibid*.

[108] *Ibid*.

[109] For the sixteenth-century see, again, Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*. For the (two) nineteenth-century excavations see James Raine, *Saint Cuthbert: with an Account of the State in which his remains were Found upon the Opening of his Tomb in Durham Cathedral in the year MDCCCXXVII* (Durham: G.Andrews, 1828) and J. T. Fowler, 'On an Examination of the Grave of St Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral Church, in March, 1899', *Archæologia*, 57 (1900), pp. 11–28.

When the author of the *Rites of Durham* recalled the "faire and sumptuous shrine", which stood "about 3 yards from the ground", and was placed towards the "back side of the great altar", he was attempting to distinguish the edifice's late medieval appearance from that which first occupied the east end built by William of St Calais.[110] Aside from the "iron chest" within which Cuthbert's body was solemnly placed—an apparent mistake unless, as Fowler speculates, he meant to imply "iron-bound"—no further details were forthcoming.[111] In any event, at a distance of nearly five hundred years, there is an obvious risk in taking this evidence too literally. If the description provided is just as vague in certain respects, a far more reliable picture of the shrine that stood in the immediate wake of Cuthbert's *translatio* is provided in the *Capitula de miraculis* (possibly written by Symeon of Durham).[112] To Abbot Richard of St Albans can be attributed the honour of being the saint's first recorded healing in his new setting. The abbot, one of a handful of dignitaries invited to witness the event, was promptly cured of a long-term affliction to his left hand as he, along with Prior Turgot and several other clerics, made the effort to lift the coffin onto a large stone slab. The slab was raised "high above the ground" behind the altar and on "nine columns" which were apparently tall enough to necessitate that Turgot climb up onto the slab in order to guide the coffin to its proper spot on top of it.[113]

This passage seems to imply a rather simple structure: not yet the solid and ornate plinth installed later on (possibly by Bishop Hugh le Puiset). But perhaps a shrine of the "table-type" popular with the Normans.[114] Several stories contained in Reginald's *Libellus* make it clear that there was space enough, if only just, for the resolute to squeeze in beneath: one particularly tenacious and apparently quite impatient man even went so far as to punch the undercarriage

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[110] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, pp. 74-5.
[111] *Ibid*.
[112] 'Capitula de Miraculis', pp. 29-36.
[113] *Ibid*.
[114] See John Crook, *English Medieval Shrines*, p. 214. See also Michael Tavinor, *Shrines of the Saints: In England and Wales* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2016), p. 5.

of the saint's tomb in the hopes of gaining his attention.[115] The base itself seems to have exceeded the limits of the coffin by "no more than a hand's width", and was adorned with a series of stylised draperies, which both protected the shrine and made it vulnerable to dust and candle-fire respectively.[116] Both seem to be broadly corroborated in a contemporary leaf from an illustrated early twelfth-century copy of Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert* (Oxford, University College MS 165, fol. 122r) (illus. 56). As to its vertical dimensions, Reginald also recalled the tale of another man afflicted with a terrible toothache, who, while kneeling at the shrine, proceeded to rest his cheek at the coffin's edge. From this we can perhaps infer that the edifice as a whole was not much taller—discounting a series of steps which archaeology of the feretory pavement suggested surrounded it—than the average pilgrim.[117]

From this vantage point, and in full view and seemingly out of great relish for a big crowd, Cuthbert would occasion his most spectacular feats. Before the eyes of the assembled crowds, sick men were spontaneously cured, the crippled were made to stand, and one convict's shackles were even made to fall miraculously to the floor.[118] Much of the more redolent paraphernalia of these spectacles was also often reintegrated into the ongoing spectacle: chains, crutches, rotten appendages, wooden eyes and even the troublesome molar of the man with toothache were all donated as tribute to the saint and then prominently hung across his tomb.[119] The overall impression of the shrine, in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, is not only of a magnet for frenzied activity, but of a saint who worked deliberately and assiduously (with the help of his monks) to promote his cult aggressively.[120] Thus, it unsurprising to read Reginald claim—if perhaps a little disingenuously with regards to the saint's notorious misogyny—that Cuthbert operated something like an equal opportunities policy, whereby his

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[115] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 252.
[116] *Ibid*.
[117] See John Crook, *English Medieval Shrines*, pp. 241-7.
[118] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, (various).
[119] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 3-5.
[120] Again, see Abou-El-Haj, 'Saint Cuthbert', pp. 177-206.

curative powers were "neither distant for those far away …nor left undisturbed by all of those nearby".[121]

And yet any such claims might seem to stand at odds, not with the strict and punitive restrictions of access for women alone (of which more in the next chapter), but with the unusually tight limitations of space in the early feretory itself. Today, no such challenges seem apparent. But the exacting chronology of Norman building works at Durham that John Bilson first began to outline in the 1920s—the so-called "First Great Campaign of Construction"— does likewise seem to suggest that its first Norman masons did make a protracted point of restricting lay access to the feretory.[122] In contrast to the "sumptuous" sixteenth-century stage described in the *Rites*, within which "no lesse" miracles were manifest than "in all England", the first shrine at Durham occupied a much more confined space, just beyond the choir, which, tellingly, seems very probably to have been the sole point of access.[123] Not only was an ambulatory conspicuously absent then, there doesn't seem to have been any other arrangement for the accommodation of laypersons either, save for what assistance a series of temporary wooden screens (or so-called "furniture ambulatory") might have done. Indeed, even by Reginald's own account, the former cripple whose crutches later came to adorn Cuthbert's shrine actually seems to have been healed in the cloister, having apparently found it too difficult to move through into the east end.[124] For much if not most of the liturgical year, in other words, Cuthbert's body seems conversely to have been hidden away, as Eric Fernie put it tersely, in "a dead end".[125]

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[121] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 178.
[122] See John Bilson, 'Durham Cathedral: The Chronology of its Vaults', pp.101-60
[123] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 4.
[124] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 100.
[125] See Eric Fernie, 'Design Principles of Early Medieval Architecture as Exemplified at Durtham Cathedral', in *Engineering a cathedral: Proceedings of the conference Engineering a cathedral held at Durham Cathedral on 9–11 September 1993 as part of the 900th anniversary celebrations of Durham Cathedral*, ed. by Michael Jackson (London: Thomas Telford, 1993), pp. 150-1.

This, then, might seem for an unpromising start to an analysis predicated on movement to and from the shrine. There is though another point to be made. In February 687, having suffered the first bout of what would be his final illness—his *passio* or *de facto* martyrdom—Cuthbert was visited in his cell by the monk Herefrith (also known as Herefrith of Lindisfarne; d. late seventh century), the principal source for Bede's account of the saint's final weeks (chs. 37–40).[126] Cuthbert reportedly asked Herefrith and his brethren to bury his body, on Inner Farne, in a somewhat nondescript sarcophagus "covered with turf".[127] This, he stressed, would remove the burden of those "fugitives and criminals" who might flock and overwhelm the community on Lindisfarne were he to be buried on the main island. It was only when Herefirth returned later on with a delegation of fellow monks set specifically on changing his mind, that Cuthbert reluctantly agreed to be buried inside St Peter's. And only then on the stipulation that he be housed in its "innermost part" so that "you [the monks] may be able to visit my tomb" and "control the visits of others".[128] Per the dying Cuthbert's plea then, access to the innermost parts of the cathedral at Durham was still being controlled by his monks, who were "indissolubly" bound to the protection of their holiest asset. If this might go some way to suggesting why the arrangements were such, however, then we need to work a little harder to get a sense of how it affected the shrine's reception.

Needless to say, there are no easy answers here, and especially not at a distance of more than five hundred years. With that being said, even given the relative paucity of first-hand accounts, the actions and inclinations of most individuals would still, nevertheless, have likely owed much of their structural logic to the conditions of *habitus* and production shared—however unconsciously—by their own group. Thinking about the monastic community first of all: that Cuthbert's shrine was initially built to reference the saint's first resting place on Holy

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[126] See Bede, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, pp. 124-36.
[127] *Ibid*., 124.
[128] *Ibid*.

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Island might seem, in isolation, like a relatively innocuous detail. In truth, even within the specific context of the passage, which assiduously recounts all of its latter-day "glorye and ornaments", it still struggles, by comparison, to stand out.[129] Elsewhere in the *Rites*, however, our author also recalls that no one but Durham's earliest monastic communities would have been permitted to commune with the "bewtifull & excellent" stone effigy which hung above it either, and depicted the saint with mitre and crozier "as he was accustomed to saie masse".[130] Nor would anyone but these men have seen, or perhaps even have known, that this image had been surrounded by a series of "wood[en] stanchels" in order to deliberately evoke the "memorie and special monumt of the first cuṁynge of that holie mā[n]": another significant reference to his "first little church of branches" from 995.[131]

Again, in and of themselves, any or all of these minor details might seem, if not incidental necessarily, then perhaps part of a somewhat routine desire, on the part of possibly thirty or forty monks, to aid in some combination of placating or (re-)remembering their patron saint. What I would like to suggest, however, is that taken together these fragmentary remnants might hint at a much more meaningful whole. Rather than simply aiding in the recollection or commemoration of the past, these visual cues were perhaps complicit in providing for a much more active sensory-somatic bond with the holy father Cuthbert. They may have been both edifying and transformative by design. They could, that is, have been tailored to the unique visual vernacular of the early monastic community in order to encourage a very special kind of meditative or "imagined" movement: a means, put another way, for the individual monk to journey, *in situ*, to a series of specific times and places other than their immediate surroundings.[132]

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[129] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 5.
[130] *Ibid*., 68.
[131] *Ibid*.
[132] On the sense of "imagined pilgrimage" as defined here (roughly) see, especially, Sara V. Torres, 'Journeying to the World's End? Imagining the Anglo-Irish Frontier in Ramon de Perellós's Pilgrimage to St Patrick's Purgatory', in *Mapping Medieval Geographies: Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300-*

The term "trans-locative" is probably more familiar to linguists and anthropologists than it is to architectural historians, but insofar as it is used to denote the mechanisms whereby humans tend to maintain cherished symbols or rituals of their past in the hope of retaining something of their identity in the present, then it is apt here too.[133] It might be tempting to approached these passages in the *Rites* by way of Clifford Geertz's famous and deceptively simple dictum: that rituals are a kind of "story that people tell themselves about themselves".[134] And yet, on reflection, the monk's communion with Cuthbert's shrine seems less likely to have created an "as if" world *per se*—or at least not alone—than an even more profoundly somatic communion with the past, unfettered by temporal and geographical distance. During ritualised moments especially, images and attitudes to being seem to have worked in concert towards such ends, mutually enhancing one another's shared meanings.[135] The physically-present monk in early medieval Durham was perhaps being encouraged to journey somewhat absently too: that is, literally within the saint's feretory, but via a process of reimagining and replotting its spaces with the imported topographies of the deep Cuthbertine past.[136]

Each and every monk at Durham was, of course, embedded inside a whole series of his own layered identities, identities that were acquired incrementally over time and defined by a variety of unique and situated relationships. During the lifespan, both of individuals and

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1600 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 300-24, Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1975), esp. pp. 300-10. And Daniel K. Connolly, 'Imagined Pilgrimage in the Itinerary Maps of Matthew Paris', *The Art Bulletin*, 81.4 (Dec, 1999), pp. 598-622.

[133] See, for example, Thomas Tweed, 'On Moving Across: Translocative Religion and the Interpreter's Position', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 70 (June 2002), pp. 253-77.

[134] See Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 448.

[135] Two of the twentieth century's most revered anthropologists, Max Gluckman and Victor Turner, both believed that most historical rituals fell short of uniting societies entirely, but that they would often succeed, nevertheless, in constructing strong positive connections in the few exclusive areas of the community that were shared by all. David Kertzer later added to that the idea that the most effective rituals did not force people to acquiesce to one another's beliefs *per se*, but rather reinforced the experience of a kind of shared historical togetherness. See Max Gluckman, *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society* (New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction, 2012), Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction, 2008); David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988); and, especially, again, Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

[136] See also, again, Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 300-10.

communities alike, some combination of these layers always tends to appear dominant, while others might seem to recede. Some cultures do, of course, choose to promote the individual—what we call the Self—and yet the premier attributes that both distinguished as well as bound the young Benedictine communities at Durham were their shared coenobitic traditions of communal living. The new monastic schools of post-Conquest England, as in Europe, were the main educational sites of the early Middle Ages.[137] Their adherents were trained in comprehension, memory and reflection using visual vehicles: to organise knowledge, that is, using designed or diagrammatic forms. By no means were all of these *picturae* literally drafted though, most were internalised and introspective images (one tool, among many, of the mental retention routines—the *memoria spiritalis* or *sancta memoria*—of any given monk).[138] But insofar as this special and collective fusion of thinking and remembering, via visual cues, was fundamental in underpinning the experience of living and communing with the divine in the intensely private world of the monastic complex, it perhaps thus makes room for us to suggest how Durham's own unique "grades" and "steps" functioned in their infancy.

Augmented by specific and evocative images, this was perhaps a process whereby the monk was being directed towards the "goal" of shedding his own body—of moving and journeying with his heart, as opposed to his feet—in search of the canonical events and places of Cuthbert's own lifetime. In which case, it was therefore probably much necessitated by, and in a very real way *against*, the monk's own isolated physical existence in the cathedral. Unable to leave or to travel to these sites themselves in the flesh, the monastic community doubled down, both on their own lithic and bodily interiors. It was a method which extended from the original understanding of the monastic vocation as a kind of journey in and of itself: a spiritual

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[137] Marilyn Dunn, *Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Malden: Balckwell Publishing, 2000), esp. pp. 82-110 and pp. 138-57.

[138] See also, especially, Miriam Gill, 'The Role of Images in Monastic Education: The Evidence from Wall Painting in Late Medieval England', in *Medieval Monastic Education*, ed. by George Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 2000), pp. 117-35.

or "imagined" pilgrimage in the mind towards salvation. In so exercising his vow of *stabilitas*, the monk was thus already inclined to draw heavily, in the absence of other stimuli, on the shrine's suggestive agencies, in order to picture and ultimately to move (in some sense possibly *literally*) to distant places well beyond (and even well before) the confines of the twelfth-century complex.

In one lesser-known version of the *Rites* (Durham, II, 6311. III. MS. Hunter, No. 45) the point is brought even more emphatically home. The text describes in some detail the saint's original tomb which was first "translated owte of the White Church"—the second home on the peninsula built to house Cuthbert's body—before being "laid in yᵉ Abbey Churche".[139] It claims that even up until the Dissolution, when Dean Robert Horne (d. 1579) apparently had it destroyed, a special "monumt" stood in the new cathedral's "cloister garth" in specific recognition of that spot where the tomb, with Cuthbert inside, had formerly waited prior to being translated.[140] The account of that *translatio*, in 1104, is well attested in the *Capitula de miraculis*, which also corroborates the same monument in the garth.[141] In one otherwise innocuous detail, however, recorded by its anonymous author, we learn that Cuthbert's translation party entered the east end of the cathedral through a doorway in the south transept. Tantalisingly, this version of the *Rites* also states that there was a "dour thorowgh [which] the mounckes was carried to be buried", in exactly the same place.[142] The implication, then, is that the deceased would not only be put to rest in deliberately close proximity to that same "monumt" in the cloister (in order, like certain pilgrims, to bask in some of its latent holy benefit). But in journeying along the same route and through the same door specifically, they

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[139] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham,* p. 68.
[140] *Ibid*.
[141] See W. M. Aird, 'The Making of a Medieval Miracle Collection: The *Liber de Translationibus et Miraculis Sancti Cuthberti*', *Northern History*, xxviii (1992), pp. 1-24.
[142] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 68.

would also be evoking—and perhaps following or even in some sense *reusing*—the same sequence of spaces as Cuthbert, in order to reach the same ultimate destination, in heaven.

Historians and medievalists investigating the larger trajectories of Christian spirituality have tended to attribute the emergence of this very special kind of "imagined" pilgrimage, or what has sometimes been called "movement through stillness", to the end of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and to figures such as Jean Charlier de Gerson (d. 1429).[143] In his *Modus quidam* (*c*. 1400), the self-styled reformer and mystic poet described the ways in which those who might otherwise be unable to commute to Rome in the Jubilee Year might make the journey in the mind.[144] To the extent, however, that such modes of thinking are often thought to be not only typical of but even derived primarily from the later Middle Ages (and special reforms such as the *devotio moderna*), their influence has perhaps been inadvertently overemphasised. This isn't to suggest that these were not the most dynamic and developed examples of their kind, but rather that, possibly by virtue of the preeminence afforded to surviving textual evidence, earlier (albeit more poorly attested) instances such as these at Durham may have been undervalued.

If in a much less nuanced form, the origins of what the Benedictine monk, Dom Jean Leclercq, sometimes termed *peregrinatio in stabilitate* in the early 1960s, probably belong to a much older source anyway, and to one of the foremost fathers of the same monastic tradition: Cassiodorus (d. 585).[145] As a statesman Cassiodorus served under Theoderic the Great, but it was the work he pursued as a monk in later life, at the monastery he founded on his own estate at Vivarium, that first hinted at something like a nascent "trans-locative" tradition of cognitive

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[143] See, for example, Camille Serchuk, 'Gaul Undivided: Cartography, Geography and Identity in France at the Time of the Hundred Years War', in *Mapping Medieval Geographies: Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 175-200.

[144] See the 'Modus quidam, quo certis ex causis Romam ire non valentes in anno jubileo spiritualiter peregrinationem eamdem perficere possint', in Johannes Gerson, *Opera Omnia*, ed. by Louis Ellies du Pin, 4 vols (Hildesheim: Olms, 1728).

[145] *Peregrinatio in stabilitate*, it has to be stressed, is a term that was not used by medieval authors, although, as Leclercq argues, it does have close cognates. See Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A study of Monastic Culture*, trans. by Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), p. 51.

pilgrimage. In retirement there, Cassiodorus wrote a new and really rather innovative guide for monastic learning—his *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*—which not only went on to become one of the most influential early medieval texts in the Benedictine canon, but was also very likely to have been familiar to many of the monks in Durham.[146] In the introduction to book I, number 25, of his "Divine Letters", he neatly outlined his objective:

> tum si vos notitiae nobilis cura flammaverit, habetis Ptolomei codicem, qui sic omnia loca evidenter expressit, ut eum cunctarum regionum paene incolam fuisse iudicetis, eoque fiat ut uno loco positi, sicut monachos decet, animo percurratis quod aliquorum peregrinatio plurimo labore collegit.[147]

> [if a noble concern for knowledge has set you on fire, you have the work of Ptolemy, who has described all places so clearly that you judge him to have been practically a resident in all regions, and as a result you, *who are located in one spot*, as is seemly for monks, *traverse in your mind* that which the travel of others has assembled with very great labor (emphasis added).]

Cassiodorus thus encouraged the small set of eremitic and coenobitic men he shared his new scriptorium with to ruminate, at length, on a whole series of ancient cosmographers and geographers.[148] It was their journeying specifically, their "great labor" and the clarity of their many descriptions—so clear, in fact, that Ptolemy *could only* have lived there—that provided

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[146] See Cassiodori Senatoris, *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937). On the holdings in the early medieval library at Durham see, again, Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the 11ᵗʰ and 12ᵗʰ Centuries*, p. 12-21.

[147] Cassiodori Senatoris, *Institutiones*, p. 25.

[148] As well as Ptolemy, these probably also included, among others, Ammianus Marcellinus (d. 400), Dionysius Exiguus (also known as Dionysius the Humble; d. *c*. 544) and Julius the Orator (also known as Julius Honorius; d. late fourth century?).

both for the accuracy of his clique's imaginary analogues and their capacity (even in spite of Vivarium's closed walls) to travel there themselves. And thus, here too Cassiodorus cited the very same (or a very similar) kind of dualistic reasoning that we might recognise at Durham more than five hundred years later: the apparently very fruitful inversion of the monk's literal physical fixity and a very special kind of guided spiritual liberty.

When, some three hundred years earlier, Tertullian (d. 220) counselled a collection of Christian prisoners anticipating their martyrdom to "drop the name of the prison and call it a place of retirement", he too was stressing the point that "although the body may be shut in, all doors are open to the spirit".[149] And yet, this specific tension between physical fixity and the monastic vocation as being, conversely, quite like a journey, is nowhere more apparent perhaps than in the frequency with which references to the cloister (*claustrum*) carried overtones of security, confinement and even incarceration.[150] The rule of St Benedict observed from 1083 at Durham, for example, pointedly connected the confines of the cloister with the monk's own solemn vow of stability. And many commentators such as Bernard of Clairvaux lauded the attributes of custody that a cloistered existence brought for the focus and direction it enabled in its inhabitants.[151]

Following the conclusion of the Nine Altars project, nearly ninety years has to pass before we learn of any further changes to the spaces in and around Cuthbert's shrine; in fact, it is not until 1370, when the decision was first taken to relocate Bede (from his spot "near to St

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[149] Ronald D. Burris, *Where Is the Church? Martyrdom, Persecution, and Baptism in North Africa from the Second to the Fifth Century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012), p. 34.

[150] Wayne Dynes, Ilene Forsyth and Linda Seidel have all shown, in a variety of ways, that the cloister could be identified with the Holy Land. The deep carving of the surviving capitals from the cloister of La Daurade, for example, convinced Linda Seidel that the relationship between arcaded scenography and the sculptures' placement in the cloister could itself suggest simultaneously the places where the depicted events occurred—the Holy Land—as well as the place where they were viewed—the arcaded setting for the cloister. And so, a geographical continuity was therefore establised between the two. The cloister thus pictured to the brethren those scenes and places on which they spent their days so deeply meditating. See also Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (London: Continuum Books, 2009).

[151] See, especially, Jean Leclerq, 'Le cloître est-il une prison?', *Revue d'Ascetique et de Mystique*, 47 (1971), pp. 407-20 and Joan M. Ferrante, 'Images of the Cloister - Haven or Prison', *Mediaevalia*, 12 (1989), pp. 57-66.

Cuthbert's shrine") to the Galilee Chapel.[152] The move was likely pre-emptive, given that not two years later, Lord John Neville undertook an ambitious rebuilding plan to the sum of "more than 200 pounds of silver".[153] Cuthbert was given a new and seemingly rather grand "marble and alabaster" base to rest on, while Neville's showpiece, his new reredos (now known as the Neville Screen), was erected by a team of seven masons probably led by Henry Yevele (d. 1400).[154] Situated between the shrine and the cathedral's high altar it thus largely separated Cuthbert for the first time from the monastic quire, with access probably being restricted to the two doors to the screen's west alone.

It is at this point that we are now approaching something like the "sumptuous monument", described by the author of the *Rites of Durham*, with which we began. Lord Neville's plinth, with its four niches for kneeling pilgrims, is indisputably the one referred to in terms of its "workmanship of fine and costly marble".[155] To its west, the immediate vicinity of the feretory had now been transformed quite radically by the ornate alabaster figures adorning the reredos (of which more in the next chapter). To the east, a new line of tall iron railings also supported a series of recesses, within which torches would be placed to keep light in the evenings.[156] To both the north and south of the shrine stood its many "almeyries" or large wooden cabinets displaying the plentiful income of the cult: precious gems, jewels, gold, relics and—not least—the saint's enormous banner ("one of the goodliest relics that was in all England").[157]

This might be as close as we can get to reconstructing the scene within which, every year on the 20th March (St Cuthbert's principal feast day), the bishop would kneel at a "little

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[152] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, pp. 150-2.
[153] James Raine, *Historia Dunelmensis*, pp. 135-6.
[154] *Ibid*. Though it seems quite likely, we do not know for certain that Henry Yevele was involved in the screen's construction. It is also worth stressing that the monks at Durham are thought to have contributed more than one third of the total cost towards its installation.
[155] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 4.
[156] *Ibid*. 54
[157] *Ibid*., 94-6.

altar", slightly to the shrine's west, and say a special mass.[158] At its end, the *Rites* records that several other monks were then chosen to make a tightly-choreographed display of "raising" the cover of Cuthbert's shrine:

> ye cover was all gilded over and of eyther side was painted fower [four] lively Images curious to ye beholders and on the East End was painted the picture of o^r [our] Savio^r sittinge on a Rainebowe to geive judgm^t [give judgment] very lively to ye behoulders and on the West end of itt was ye picture of o^r Lady & o^r Savior [our Lady and our Saviour] on her knee. And on the topp of ye Cover from end to end was most fyne carved worke cutt owte w^th [cut out with] Dragons and other beasts moste artificially wrought and ye inside was Vernished w^th [varnished with] a fyne sanguine colour that itt might be more pspicuous [perspicuous] to ye beholders and att evry corner of ye Cover was a locke to keepe itt close but att such tymes as was fitt to show itt.[159]

Just how much finesse this act took is difficult to calculate, but given the cover's likely size and weight it was probably no mean physical feat. The monks used a complex system of ropes and pulleys attached, both to the central vault above, and to six large silver bells. As the monks pulled on the rope in unison, several more would then rush to open up all of the almeyries, displaying their precious contents. The collective multi-sensory impression may have been substantial because, as the bells rang out apparently, it did "make such a sound [that] itt did stirr all y^e peoples harts that was w^thin y^e Church to repaire vnto itt and to make their praiers to God and holy St Cuthb".[160]

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[158] *Ibid.*, 4.
[159] *Ibid.*, 5
[160] *Ibid.*, 4.

I've used the term "behold" before in this chapter very deliberately—as opposed to, say, "see" or "observe"—because, as this excerpt shows, it is very often the phrasing employed in the text. For all of his/her obvious enthusiasm, the anonymous author of the *Rites* never once wrote in the first person. Neither did they refer to any of their own experiences of the cathedral directly either, nor—aside from what we might infer—to how those of others might (or might not) have married with their own.[161] And even though they did, on occasion, cite a number of specific individuals such as the "noblemens" who commissioned objects, or "Kinges" who visited the cathedral on special feast days, those for whom its many former monuments and images were "curious", "goodly", "fine" and "lovely" were (more often than not) described simply as "behoulders".[162]

This might seem like an otherwise minor detail. Indeed, it might actually imply a kind of critical distancing, a judicious sense of detachment on the part of the author, for the sake of seeming objective. But it does also sit within a much older narrative tradition of looking at holy things and places, within which to "behold" was, by contrast, both to see *and* to feel (often in an especially profound and personal way). In his transcription and translation of the Hereford Map, Scott Westrem recently offered a close analysis of the common Middle English word-pair "bi-hold/heold", arguing for a powerful and conflated sense of both looking and possessing the territories it depicted simultaneously.[163] This isn't to suggest that the medieval viewer would have claimed ownership of Durham cathedral *per se*, simply by looking at it. Rather that, for our author, to "behold" its sacred images also meant, in some sense, to retain them within and thus to be complicit in what happened next: a sequence of active and embodied

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[161] In truth, given it's likely late sixteenth-century date there is probably good reason to suspect that whoever first wrote this text never actually saw pre-Dissolution Durham for themselves.

[162] See especially Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, pp. 1-7. See also Terry-Fritsch and Labbie, eds, *Beholding Violence in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (2012).

[163] See Scott D. Westrem, *The Hereford Map: A Transcription and Translation of the Legends with Commentary* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

experiences, defined by movement, whereby he/she also held an important stake in co-performing its spaces.

Though it has largely disappeared in most English Bibles written since the Revised Standard Version (1946-57), in the King James (which was begun in 1604, no more than a decade or two after the *Rites*) the word "behold" appears in at least 1300 separate instances.[164] It is the first word of the covenant God speaks to Adam and Eve following their creation and blessing (Genesis 1:29), and the last with which the risen Christ departs from his disciples (Matthew 28:20). In each instance, it is in the act of "beholding" specifically that the divine comes to reside *within* the people, as is the case even more explicitly too, for example, in Luke 17: 21: "for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you (*Ecce hic, aut ecce illic. Ecce enim regnum Dei intra vos est*).".

When St Jerome (d. 420) wrote that one of his disciples who visited the site of the inn in Bethlehem, the pilgrim and Desert Mother Paula, would "behold with the eyes of faith …the infant Lord wrapped in swaddling clothes", much more than a simple act of sight-seeing was being implied.[165] For Jerome, this moment represented an unusually powerful mode of both looking at and simultaneously journeying *within* a holy space, to the extent that Paula was actually undertaking a kind of cognitive repositioning, to a time and place other than her immediate surroundings. She was, in effect, arriving and yet departing from the inn in one and the same moment. That is to say that the three centuries that ordinarily separated her from Christ's brief sojourn in the world were somehow bypassed temporarily. As a pilgrim, Paula was of course itinerant by definition, but, in this instance, she was also journeying within space and through time, *in situ*, in order to become a spectator and possibly even a direct participant

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[164] See Maggie Ross, 'Behold Not the Cloud of Experience', in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: Exeter Symposium VIII*, ed. by E. A Jones (Woodbridge: Boydell &Brewer, 2013), pp. 29-50 and esp. pp. 30-2.
[165] See Jerome, 'The Life of Paula, Leader in Women's Early Monasticism, Letter 108, Jerome to Eustochium', in *Women's Religions in the Greco-Roman World: A Sourcebook*, ed. by Ross Shepard Kraemer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 183.

in a much older biblical story (Luke 2:16). In other words, to "behold" with her "eye of faith" was, as Ewert Cousins once put it, to trigger the "mysticism of the historical event", at which point she was bringing a revered stage and its setting to mind, but also—and just as *really*— "entering into its drama" too.[166]

We have already hinted at the extent to which certain of these types of dynamics, of imaginative internalised travelling, may have been at play both in and around Cuthbert's shrine and during the Sunday procession. Like Paula here, the priest who led the sprinkling (as well as his monks who followed in tow) may have been in some sense not only journeying within the cathedral, but inwardly too, to other spaces and times: to Galilee, to Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Indeed, even the account of Bishop Ælfwold, with whom we began underlines the importance of ruminating *ab imo pectore* ("sincerely", "from the heart", or "out of affection") on distant places and spaces.[167] In his rich analyses of the liturgical ceremonies of the very late medieval cathedral priory, John McKinnell has taken this point even further, arguing that, such was the complexity of their mature forms, many areas within the cathedral could by then "become" quite literally biblical.[168]

According to one version of the *Rites of Durham* (MS. Hunter, no. 44, Tract 10), for example, the "Washing of the Feet" took place at nine o'clock in the morning, on Maundy Thursday, in the eastern wing of the cloister (a strictly non-lay area).[169] Thirteen "poore aged

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[166] See Ewert Cousins, 'Francis of Assisi: Christian Mysticism at the Crossroads', in *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*, ed. by Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 163-90 and esp. pp. 166-7.
[167] See William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum,* p. 283.
[168] See John McKinnell, 'For the People/By the People. Public and Private Spaces in the Durham Sequence of the Sacrament', in *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages. Proceedings of the 2009 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Frances Andrews (Shaun Tyas: Donington, 2011), pp. 213-31
[169] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham,* pp. 77-8. Fowler includes excerpts from at least seven manuscripts: British Museum, MS. Harl. 7047; Cambridge University Library, MS. Cambridge (referred to as C. and marked GG215); MS. Lawson (referred to as L.); MS. Hunter, no. 44, Tract 10; MS. Hunter, no. 45; and—preeminently—Durham University Library, Cosin B.II.11 and Durham Cathedral Library C.III.23 (mentioned above). Durham Cathedral Library C.III.23 (*c.* 1593) was acquired by the Dean and Chapter of Durham in 1967; see R. C. Norris and A. I. Doyle, 'Rites of Durham', *The Durham Philobiblon*, vol. II, parts 9-10 (1969), pp. 67-8; they confirm the late-sixteenth-century date by means of the watermark (a pot with one handle). Durham University Library, Cosin B.II.11 (*c.* 1630) was copied by Brien Iles, John Wright and Thomas Wright, probably for John Cosin. See also, again, John McKinnell, 'For the People/By the People', pp. 213-31.

men" were invited from outside the complex, firstly to receive thirty pence as well as some food and drink, and then to have their feet ceremonially cleaned by the prior.[170] This performance underscored not just the literal mission, but also something like the projection of an image (to the world beyond the monastery) of Christian charity: the ancient virtue by which God, above all beings, was loved for his own sake and one's neighbour as oneself for the love of God (Mark 12: 30-31). Put another way, even if it was literally manifest behind strictly closed doors, much of the laity would still have understood their connection to this moment in real time—that it was, in fact, being performed for their specific spiritual welfare. That each of these men were also told beforehand, moreover, to make a point of washing their feet themselves before entering into the cloister and sitting with the prior, also hints at a secondary layer of localised meaning, at a particularly human kind of *savoir-faire* behaviour: that the symbolism and the act might have been sincerely compassionate but also, to some extent, socially regulated by cultural courtesies.

The "Washing of the Feet" also paid a distant temporal reference, as it did elsewhere in medieval Europe, to Christ's washing of his disciples' feet at the Last Supper (John 13: 4-10). Once again, and even if they cannot be directly corroborated, several more strategically expedient layers of thought seem quite likely to have been at play simultaneously. As McKinnell claims, the prior, for example, was probably careful to allude to but not to impersonate Jesus.[171] He washed the feet of thirteen as opposed to twelve lay bodies specifically: the sum total of Jesus Christ and each disciple (including Judas). Perhaps for the same reason was the washing of "said childryns feete" he argues—a ceremony which took place later on in Easter and probably referenced the presence of Christ in the least of human beings (Matthew 25:40)—performed, not by the prior, but several junior monks.[172] While

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[170] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham,* pp. 77-8.
[171] John McKinnell, 'For the People/By the People', pp. 213-31.
[172] *Ibid*.

Christ's proxy agents might have evoked and celebrated their Saviour's story, in other words, it still seems to have been crucial that they also took steps to emphasise that He was not literally embodied in any one of them.

This complex matrix of thinking, acting and being, of connecting multiple bodies to multiple histories, and of using performance to simultaneously invoke various socio-political, theological and distant temporal connections in a single moment, might actually be broadly symptomatic of a great many of the "goodlie ceremonyes" recorded in the *Rites of Durham*. That specific sense, moreover, of presence and absence, of being and yet not being Christ simultaneously, could also be extended to the way that many of the building's spaces were apparently conceptualised as binaries too. Drawing on evidence from the small quarto book version of the *Rites* (Durham University Library, Cosin B.II.11), for example, McKinnell argues that areas such as Cuthbert's choir could also "become" Gethsemane on Maundy Thursday and then, later on, Calvary on Good Friday, during the ritual enactment of the liturgy.[173] Curiously, so too even he claims could lesser spaces, such as the refectory, be imaginatively substituted for the upper room of the Last Supper.[174] Even areas beyond the cathedral proper, in other words, areas that were otherwise simply pragmatic, lived-in and essentially perfunctory places, could also at the right time be imbued with a real sense of biblical *animus*.

It is important to stress that what McKinnell—and, elsewhere, Allan Doig—is talking about here is no mere act of theatre, but a series of profoundly intimate and felt "encounters" with a set of characters and narratives that, while ancient, were nonetheless extremely immediate.[175] There is a clear sense in his argument not only that Durham Cathedral functioned

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[173] *Ibid*., 30.
[174] *Ibid*.
[175] See, for example, Allan Doig, 'Sacred Journeys/Sacred Spaces: The Cult of St Cuthbert', in *Saints of North-East England, 600-1500*, ed. by Margaret Coombe, Anne Mouron, and Christiania Whitehead (Turnhout: Brepols,

as a vibrant stage for the ritual enactment of the liturgiucal calendar, but that these spaces were also, in effect, being made almost physically thicker with sacred (and possibly even apotropaic) potential. As has been a recurrent theme throughout this chapter, movement and performance were also key: the sense that the body "entered into" a process with the building, that only by working together could these particular "encounters" be manifest in these particular ways. In addition to movement (albeit to a lesser extent), architectural space is the major critical focus for chapter four, as are a whole new range of its richly and sometimes surprisingly generative agencies. This discussion therefore serves as a neat segue into the next and final analysis, which also narrows in towards its tightest demographic focus: women.

2017), pp. 305-26; Allan Doig and Michael Sadgrove, 'Sacred Space and Its Use', in *Durham Cathedral: History, Fabric and Culture*, ed. by David Brown (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 350-65; and Allan Doig, 'Sacred Space: Liturgy and Architecture at Durham Cathedral', in *Historic Churches: The Conservation and Repair of Ecclesiastical Buildings*, 18, pp.39-42. See also Allan Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture: From the Early Church to the Middle Ages* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008). On this immediacy, see also Kathryn M. Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

4

SPACE, IT'S ABOUT TIME TOO

At some point in or around 1104, eleven years after building works began at Durham, the anonymous author of the *Capitula de miraculis* recorded that a wagon carrying a large girder had passed through the city gates, on its way to being assembled in the cathedral.[1] Only moments later, and apparently without warning, the girder fell from the wagon, "crushing a small child" in the process.[2] Because, however, Cuthbert could not "tolerate" any part of his new church to cause any harm to anyone, when the builders rushed to lift the girder the child was found, to the disbelief of all, to be completely unharmed.[3] By far the bulk of the miraculous stories relayed in this compendium relate to individuals—mostly men, clerics, wealthy benefactors and pilgrims—who were all in some sense rewarded, whether explicitly or implicitly, for their fealty to the saint's cult. This story, though, is a stand-out exception. Not only is the child an otherwise unimportant beneficiary of Cuthbert's curative *potentia*, s/he is expressly nondescript and embodies no obvious sentiment or affiliation to the saint or his half-built cathedral. And yet, records of such cures are rarely, if ever, improvident or inopportune. In this case, the wagon, the girder and the builders all seem to foreground a sense of urban (as

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[1] See 'Capitula de Miraculis', p. 229. Later in chapter twenty-one, a similar story is told wherein a young boy was crushed by yet another wagon carrying one of the cathedral's great bells into the city.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

opposed to spiritual) labour. The author was also at apparent pains to stress that the miracle occurred in an urban space (as opposed to a sacred one), just inside the confines of the city gates. A clear parallel thus emerges between the wholeness of the child and the wholeness of the secular community, suggesting that as s/he was restored to full corporal integrity, so too was that of the bounded civic body.[4] That the text was written less than a year after the event it describes also suggests that its author—a monk at Durham in all likelihood—had something like an urgent vested interest in emphasising the happy and consensual marriage of church and city. We might infer, in other words, that Cuthbert chose to devote himself to the flattery and wellbeing of his community precisely when the relationship between Durham's sacred and secular realms was actually at an especially low ebb.

The histories of medieval cathedrals are, by and large, the histories of a small and somewhat select group of adult men. More often than not they speak of the abbots, bishops and monks who built and occupied them, or the wealthy male benefactors and dignitaries who paid for them with their patronage. And yet, when we choose to switch our focus from production to function, new obligations arise to study such buildings from a range of different perspectives: local communities, travellers, pilgrims, merchants, labourers, the poor, young adults, children, and, within the special context of this final chapter, women. Unlike other smaller monasteries, the large cathedral-priory at Durham was both the mother church for the diocese and the home for the bishop's see.[5] So, even though, at its heart, the precinct did operate as a self-contained community of relatively introspective men, this twin role meant that there were also frequent requirements for interactions with much of the outside world. Indeed, in spite of its rites of consecration and dedication, and the special presence of Cuthbert's *corpus*

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[4] Christiania Whitehead makes a similar point while discussing a range of healing miracles associated with Cuthbert's twelfth-century cult. See Chrstiania Whitehead, 'Spiritual Healing: Healing Miracles Associated with the Twelfth-Century Northern Cult of St Cuthbert', in *Medieval and Early Modern Literature, Science and Medicine*, ed. by Rachel Falconer and Denis Renevey (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013), pp. 173-85.

[5] On this dynamic see, also, Eric Cambridge 'The Medieval Priory', in *English Heritage Book of Lindisfarne Holy Island*, ed. by Deirdre O'Sullivan and Robert Young (London: Batsford/English Heritage, 1995), pp. 9-16.

which rendered the cathedral sacred in large part, the influx and influence of what Mircea Eliade famously termed the "profane" could never be fully abated.[6]

No more than a year or two later, Symeon of Durham took to writing down the story of a man named Barcwith, one of Earl Tostig's men, who had pursued a "notorious" fugitive, a culprit of "many atrocious crimes" named Aldan-Hamal, to the physical limits of the church.[7] The fugitive had taken sanctuary in the cathedral—as was his right—but Barcwith, our antihero, was impatient for justice. And so, in his rage, he decided to break down the door. His men protested, but before he had even finished explaining that he cared not for the "peace of a dead man [i.e. Cuthbert]", the saint had struck him down "as if by an arrow from above."[8] Not three days later, Barcwith had died and, for six months afterwards, an appalling smell surrounded his grave. If we might have been briefly tempted to empathise with Barcwith's heroism (if not necessarily with his temper), then Symeon nonetheless very quickly guides us towards the conclusion that Cuthbert's rule and, just as importantly it seems, the physical limits of his domain, took absolute precedent. His will and his space were emphatically non-negotiable.

Written within quick succession of one another, we have evidence here to suggest that both authors were working—possibly in tandem—to actively (re-)define their audience's understanding of three critical issues: Cuthbert's supreme omnipotence, the physical and *de facto* boundaries of his cathedral church, and finally who (on the right occasion) could or could not access them. In each case, this was done by spotlighting secure architectural spaces from the past, for the protection, we might presume, of real and latterly vulnerable spaces in the present.

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[6] See Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. by Rosemary Sheed (London: World Publishing, 1958), pp. 368-9.
[7] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 176-7.
[8] *Ibid*., 177.

Initially, space is materially illustrated. It is defined by a walled city, by the cathedral itself and its grounds. These are genuine as opposed to invented geographies of actual lived existence. They are familiar spaces, spaces within which real people located themselves and went about their daily business. But then a shift occurs: while these spaces do remain physical somewhere, they quickly acquire new *meta*physical properties too. As they are described and re-imagined they gain in complexity, separately and at least twice, through the lenses of these two monks as well as whoever we presume their audience to be. Space thus becomes partly abstract. This is a process we are quite familiar with by now. Like so many of the features of the cathedral we have already looked at, space is both literal and literary. It is held in the head and the hand simultaneously, except that in this case the distinction doesn't always remain clear. To take one example: on the one hand, space is made to seem fixed and strong, it is impervious to Barcwith's violent rage. Indeed, it is perhaps immutable; there is a clear sense of foreboding in the scene that Symeon describes, one which implicitly transcends time. Do not encroach on Cuthbert's door today, *nor at any time in the future*, lest you share in this man's ignominious fate. On the other hand, doors, like city gates, are made for walking through, they are permeable by definition. Symeon may have aspired to project an image of a secure cathedral as well as a community of well-contained and relatively introspective monks. And yet, can we accept this as a faithful reflection of reality? Indeed, might his passionate insistence to the contrary actually almost betray him on its face?

In reality, medieval cathedrals were very often both mundane and cosmopolitan places: sites for almsgiving, education, trade and hospitality, within which transcendent affairs would not only mingle, but often actively collaborate with the secular.[9] There is good reason to believe, for example, that town councils and other approved committees might have been

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[9] Meg Bernstein and Catherine E. Hundley have organised a session at the forthcoming Society of Architectural Historians Annual Conference titled "Yours, Mine, Ours: Multi-Use Spaces in the Middle Ages,", which will unpack in greater detail this largely unexplored sacred/secular relationship in the cathedral (pers. comm.)

convened in Durham's nave, that stores of local merchandise were kept in its sacristy, and maybe even that legal paperwork was signed in its choir.[10] We know that Cuthbert's shrine itself served as the backdrop for the public consecration of bishops, as well as the place where, according to several sources, their fractured seals were kept for posterity.[11] The cathedral owned two large fonts too, one in the Galilee Chapel and another in the nave, where babies were baptised during Easter and Pentecost Eve.[12] Young boys were free to explore much of the cathedral's nave and transepts (and, to a certain extent, young girls the Galilee after 1170). Adolescent apprentices of various stripes assisted with the work of established workmen. Under the master's supervision, junior monks and novices helped out in the almonry. Durham's enormous Paschal candlestick, among other liturgical instruments, was routinely cleaned and polished by children from local almshouses.[13] The homeless and hungry were periodically invited into the cloisters to be fed, washed and watered.[14] And a whole host of other kitchenhands, launderers, gardeners, plumbers, physicians, blood-letters, artisans, cellarers, chamberlains and other *obedientiaries* of various talents maintained the precinct's inner sanctum in discrete capacities.[15]

Indeed, even though there is a wealth of evidence to suggest that the monks at Durham remained anxious about enforcing a strict spatial segregation between themselves and the outside world, right up until the Dissolution, the reality of its enforcement must have frequently proved to be much less pragmatic. Even if its walls weren't already only half-built in 1104—

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[10] On this phenomenon see Donal Cooper, 'Access all areas? Spatial divides in the mendicant churches of late Medieval Tuscany', in *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages. Proceedings of the 2009 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Frances Andrews (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2011), pp. 90-107. Cooper has shown that some laymen attending Mendicant churches in late medieval Tuscany engaged in these kinds of behaviours regularly, something he suggests might have been common elsewhere across Europe too.

[11] See Matthew Holford, 'Durham: History, Culture and Identity', *in Border Liberties and Loyalties: North-East England, c. 1200-c. 1400*, ed. by M. L. Holford and K. J. Stringer (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Unoversity Press, 2010), p. 36.

[12] See Francis Bond and Frederick Charles Eden, *Fonts and Font Covers* (Oxford: H. Frowde, 1908), p. 301.

[13] See Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, p. 98.

[14] *Ibid*., 77-8.

[15] See also Roberta Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close: The Evolution of the English Cathedral Landscape* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 240-3.

and thus physically porous to some extent anyway—law officials like Barcwith, and the labourers pushing the wagon, probably all still came and went with a certain amount of freedom.

Thus, we get a sense of the complexity of the lay and clerical relationship at Durham. The monks were, on the one hand, working for the laity—or at least on their behalf—as agents performing the ritual purification of the community. That connection was often only enacted in abstract terms or, in effect, by proxy. Barring only a handful of special performative exceptions (some of which we looked at in chapter three), the monks will have aspired to maintain both a figurative and literal distance (*fuga mundi*) from the outside world: a process that was both reflected and enabled via built space. And yet, partitioned though they were to a degree, they could never be fully separate. Teasing out the gaps between the literal and literary roles that space plays in this dynamic allows us to ask a whole series of other questions. Were the limits of Cuthbert's inner sanctum really so impenetrable? Did the reality match up to the stories? And if not, why would one of Durham's own monks have made a specific point of maintaining that they were?

It is unsurprising to note in these accounts that whatever tension underpins this relationship almost always explodes at a border of some kind: either right at the limits of the cathedral, at Cuthbert's door, or within very close range of his city walls. These are the flash zones where any latent sense of animosity or struggle is magnified. Movement across these boundaries is obviously very highly charged, which at times also works to insinuate something like a shared lay and clerical distrust of those beyond them: outsiders, criminals, rogue fugitive-hunters and even, to an extent, the otherwise innocuous builders with their girder. Though the local social fabric at Durham may already have been strained in 1104, in each case it wasn't until these lines were breached by "foreigners", moving from outside to inside, that Cuthbert chose to intervene. Thus, the records of these stories also emphasise the impressively long and

ambitious arm of the medieval cathedral. These are attempts to effect change and control, through stories and storytelling, well beyond the limits of its own walls, not only literally either, to the extent that the urban places of the city are invoked in the narrative, but politically too.

Towards the end of Barcwith's story we learn that the Earl Tostig of Northumbria (d. 1066), his superior, as well as all of those involved in the pursuit, apparently came together apologetically to donate a cross and a golden Gospel book to the church.[16] In part at least therefore, what we are looking at here is a variation on the classic punitive miracle story, a deliberate medieval conflation of sacred real estate, its violation and (as a consequence) its necessary compensation. This is a dynamic we will return to in this chapter again and again. It is a mode of storytelling that, as Barbara Abou-El-Haj has argued, speaks to the vigorous (re-)accumulation of Cuthbert's power and patrimony in the decades around the turn of the twelfth century.[17] Having expelled the old secular clerks in 1083 (a decision that, as we've already seen, had significant consequences) the new monks set about consolidating their former territories. Among others, Earl Robert Mowbray of Northumbria (d. 1125) was forced to relinquish "all rights over the land and men of Saint Cuthbert" in 1091; Thomas of Bayeux (d. 1100) ceded control of Carlisle in 1092; in spite of the somewhat dubious origins of several charters, the parishes of Coldinghamshire and Tynningham were returned around 1100; and the Bishop of Durham's former house and lands around York were reclaimed not much later.

A key feature to stress, then, is that even if Cuthbert's cathedral was supposed to function as something like a holy nucleus for the saint's cult (attracting, drawing in and seducing the faithful, as we saw repeatedly in the previous chapter), his sacred *virtus* and *potentia* could by no means be mapped in isolation from other sites in the world. The union of

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[16] See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 176-7.
[17] See Barbara Abou-El-Haj, 'Saint Cuthbert: The Post Conquest Appropriation of an Anglo-Saxon Cult', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 177-206.

property, space and storytelling, was fundamental to the ongoing upkeep and ambitions of the monastic community well beyond their borders. Tellingly to that end, indeed, the *Liber Summi Altaris* (now lost), a collection of stories chronicling Durham's claims to all of its former territorial endowments, was apparently chained, in pride of place, between the high altar and Cuthbert's shrine.[18] This conceptual unity between church, priory and town, which is now probably somewhat distant from our modern experience, can also be seen in the flexibility of contemporary terminology. The terms *burh* ("a fortified site") and *urbs* ("a walled place") were used to describe monastic enclosures from the time of Bede until after the Conquest, whilst *burh* could also acquire the sense of "minster".[19] The walled precincts of early medieval monasteries defined the sacred space within from the "profanity" of the outside world. They were the walls of the City of God, earthly imitations of the Heavenly Jerusalem, with its successive boundaries marking and describing varying degrees of sanctity.

The above stories from Durham also seem to suggest that its city walls functioned as something like "moral cordons" too, separating the order within from the chaos of the outside world. Up until at least the mid-to-late thirteenth century, when urban communities first emerged as serious competition for major ecclesiastical powers, the great monasteries and ecclesiastical estates of England and Wales largely ruled unimpeded. In fact, because the majority of the clerical population, not least its principal agents, were derived from noble or otherwise connected families, large monastic communities essentially stood at the forefront of one large (multi-)national ruling class. Durham, moreover, like its southern counterparts, was nearly exclusively stocked by men brought into power via close alliances of family and friendship or, on occasion, some kind of special *quid pro quo* arrangement (which is to say the

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[18] *Ibid*.
[19] See also Michael G. Shapland, 'Meanings of Timber and Stone in Anglo-Saxon Building Practice', in *Trees and Timber in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. by Michael D. J. Bintley and Michael G. Shapland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 21-44.

spiritual for the material and *vice versa*).[20] An abundance of documentary material—annals, indulgences, financial accounts, histories and miracle stories—attests to this broad consolidation of male privilege, as well as the many active attempts to restrict the influences of even the most virtuous and powerful women.

These are all interesting threads to pull at, and topical in various ways too. A number of recent architectural theorists working in other fields have moved towards considering the ways in which broader urban spaces like these became—as Françoise Choay once described them—"semantically charged" from within.[21] Their research suggests that many medieval civic identities will likewise have been shaped, augmented or suppressed by social processes of inclusion and exclusion derived from ecclesiastical examples. More broadly, moreover, in the time that has elapsed since "space" first began to shed its strictly geometrical connotations, it has also been picked up and invoked in conjunction with a great many other terms (each of which, in their own way, offers something different): literary space; cultural space; urban space; mental spaces; spaces of the imagination and of ideology. These are only a handful of new phrases that have problematised the old idea of an essentially Eucledian or isotropic realm, the assumption held at least since Newton's *Principia* (1687) that space is simply empty, devoid both of matter and meaning.[22] In most cultural fields, not least history and literary studies, the framework of time has long been privileged, yet an ever-increasing body of scholarship now advocates for space as an equivalent means of exegesis.[23] In the same way

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[20] On early medieval male hegemony see, for example, *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Clare A. Lees, Thelma Fenster and Jo Ann McNamara (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) as well as, for the later period, Katherine Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013).

[21] See Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). On the term's application in recent medieval studies see also Michelle M. Sauer, 'Extra-Temporal Place Attachment and Adaptive Reuse: The Afterlives of Medieval English Anchorholds', in *Medievalism and Modernity*, ed. by Karl Fugelso, Joshua Davies and Sarah Salih (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), pp. 173-96.

[22] Isaac Newton, *Principia*, intro. by Stephen W. Hawking (Philadelphia: Running Press Book Publishers, 2005).

[23] In relation to medieval studies specifically see especially *Space in the Medieval West: Places, Territories, and Imagined* Geographies, ed. by Meredith Cohen and Fanny Madeline (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); *Locating the*

that signs and language, or identity and gender, have all been exposed as cultural constructs, so too has space recently been shorn of any lingering (or comforting) sense of objectivity.

This final chapter is therefore an attempt to marry with some of these trends and to suggest what might be revealed when cathedral space is viewed as an open and mutable field of specifiable relationships. The type of space that follows here is storied and hyper-subjective. It performs, it has agency, almost innately so in fact. More than that though, while the final set of "encounters" with the cathedral that follow speak directly to space's generative and mixed potentials, they all also relate to Cuthbert's long-storied tradition of misogyny. Space was often the means at Durham through which Cuthbert, at a distance, could direct his will: an invisible yet somehow omnipresent conduit for his prejudicial energies. Space had the capacity—quite literally as we shall see—to deliver a very particular brand of sometimes kind, sometimes brutally uncompromising saintly power. Large medieval priories, cathedrals and churches have all benefited from sustained and exacting architectural study for the better part of two hundred years now. And yet, precisely these types of analyses, which take as their focus the broader physical and cogno-cultural functions of built space into account, have been relatively few and far between.[24] While, as before, what follows is not intended to be definitive, the nature and

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Middle Ages: The Spaces and Places of Medieval Culture, ed. by Julian Weiss and Sarah Salih (London: King's College, Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2012); *Thresholds of Medieval Visual Culture: Liminal Spaces*, ed. by Elina Gertsman and Jill Stevenson (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012); Lori Ann Garner, *Structuring Spaces: Oral Poetics and Architecture in Early Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011); *Mapping the Medieval City: Space, Place and Identity in Chester, c. 1200-1600*, ed. by Catherine A. M. Clarke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011); Megan Cassidy-Welch 'Space and Place in Medieval Contexts', *Parergon*, 27, 2 (2010), p. 1-12; *Place, Space, and Landscape in Medieval Narrative*, ed. by Laura L. Howes (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007); *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) and Thomas Zotz 'Présentation et bilan de l'historiographie allemande de l'espace,' *Actes des congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public*, 37, 1 (2006), pp. 57-71.
[24] Indeed, as several medieval archaeologists, including Richard Morris and Roberta Gilchrist, have lamented on occasion over the last two decades, even the exceptions to this rule have generally concentrated on the main body of the church to the exclusion of the wider complex, the precinct, the monks' quarters and so on. See Richard Morris, 'The Archaeological Study of Cathedrals in England, 1800-2000: A Review and Speculation', in *The Archaeology of Cathedrals*, ed. by Tim Tatton-Brown and J. Munby (Oxford: University Committee for Archaeology Monograph, 1996), pp. 1-8 and, especially, Roberta Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close: The Evolution of the English Cathedral Landscape* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer), 2005.

content of the surviving source material at Durham makes a contribution to just these kinds of debates a natural one.

"Audacious" Women in Space

In his *Libellus de exordio*, book 3, part 11, Symeon of Durham tells us that Judith of Flanders (d. 1095) was an honest and pious woman who "loved Cuthbert even more than did her husband".[25] By the time she became Countess of Northumbria in 1055, Judith had already donated a wide variety of *ornamenta* to adorn the saint's church.[26] More though, she'd promised, was yet to come. The countess did, however, have a special stipulation. In return for some of her landed possessions she wanted to worship, *in situ*, at Cuthbert's shrine. Thus, a dilemma emerged: new territories were welcome gifts, but custom had long dictated that women were prohibited from visiting "any of the churches …sanctified with the presence of his [Cuthbert's] sacred body" (*In nullam autem pene ecclesiarum …sui sacri corporis presentia illustrauit*).[27] Still, Judith remained undeterred. While she did not yet dare to test the saint's resolve herself, Symeon reports that she did secretly hatch a plan to send in a servant girl ahead of her:

> si hoc ipsa impune facere posset, domina post sequens securior ingredi auderet.

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[25] See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 175-7.

[26] *Ibid*., 175. She was also believed to have patronised the cult of St Oswald very heavily. See Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel, 'Edith, Judith, Matilda: the Role of Royal Ladies in the Propogation of the Continental Cult', in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. by Clare E. Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge (Stamford: Paul Watkins Publishing, 1995), pp. 210-29.

[27] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 105.

Puella ergo, domine sue uoluntate agnita, hora secretiori ad hoc temptandum conata est aggredi. Iam pedem intra cimiterium erat positura, cum subito ueluti uentorum uiolentia repelli cepit et uiribus deficere, et grauiter infirmita uix ad hospitium ualuit redire, decidensque in lectum, graui torquebatur cruciatu…[28]

[if she were able to do this with impunity, the mistress would follow after her and would dare to enter the church with more confidence of her safety. So, when the girl had learned her mistress's will, she undertook to approach the church at a very quiet time in order to attempt this. As she was about to place her foot inside the cemetery, she was suddenly repelled by a violent force as of the wind, her strength failed, and stricken with a grave infirmity, she was scarcely able to return to the hospice, where falling on to her bed, she was racked with a terrible torment…]

Before long the girl had died, leaving the countess "terrified" (*exterrita*) by what had happened.[29] Humbly, and in order to make amends, she immediately ordered a series of new commissions for the adornment of the church, including—among the several items that our author delighted in describing—a brand new gold and silver image of the crucified Christ.[30]

Throughout the medieval period, Durham was an especially active location for the production of anti-female literature. This is one story among close to a dozen in Symeon's *Libellus* alone. Elsewhere in book 2, for example, the monk also recorded the "rash daring"

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[28] *Ibid.*, 177.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*

(*ausu temerario*) of a woman named Sungeova, the wife of a man named Gamel, son of Bevo.[31]

Sungeova had only taken a quick shortcut across Cuthbert's churchyard—in order, *of all things*, to avoid a puddle in the road—when she was immediately relieved of her senses and died the same night.[32] Another, the "wife of a certain rich man", went mad, bit out her tongue, and eventually cut her own throat, only moments after her "womanly eagerness" (*feminea auiditate*) had compelled her to walk through the saint's cemetery.[33] In fact, by the end of this particular passage the monk's exasperation with the female sex seems almost to leap off the page when he stresses that: "*Many other divine signs* against similarly audacious women could be related here, but we must now move on to other things…".[34] Even though what we might recognise today as misogynistic or otherwise gynephobic behaviour was (to a greater or lesser extent) par for the course at many English Benedictine priories, the unusual volume combined with the rhetorical complexity of these stories makes Durham unique. Why, how and for whom were they written? And, more to my point, what work did they do to "story" the cathedral?

To describe and construct territory, to reserve or to limit access to space, has always been a means to order and to classify, to incorporate and therefore, also, to segregate particular types of people.[35] Thus, broader divisions of belonging, disaffection and communal cohesion, within a cathedral's larger socio-cultural landscape, are all apt to be traced through the coded rules and customs by which different types of bodies could (or could not) use its spaces.[36] As Massey

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[31] *Ibid*., 108-9.

[32] *Ibid*.

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] "Plura quidem contra simile aliarum feminarum audaciam diunitus ostensa adhuc narrari poterant, sed quoniam ad alia nobis transeundum est...". *Ibid*., pp. 109-10.

[35] See also Bernard Meehan, 'Outsiders, Insiders, and Property in Durham around 1100', *Studies in Church History*, 12 (1975), pp. 45-58 and Meryl Foster, 'Custodians of St Cuthbert: the Durham Monks' Views of their Predecessors, 1083-c.1200', in *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093-1193*, ed. by David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994), pp. 53-65. See also Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Harmondsworth: Psychology Press, 1970), esp. pp. 1-22 and pp. 121-39.

[36] See also Brian Golding, *Conquest and Colonisation: The Normans in Britain, 1066-1100* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), and chapter 5 especially ('Governing the Conquered'). See also *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Catherine E. Karkov and Nicholas Howe (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006) and Nick Webber, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911-1154* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 115-135.

put it tersely: "*Geography matters!*".[37] Leading with the old mantra most frequently associated with London estate agents (*location, location, location*) Massey built on ideas of spatiality first set out in Gillian Rose's *Feminism and Geography* (1993 [2013]), suggesting that the "mattering" of the map is almost always predicated on ingrained historical habits of power and exclusion.[38] This is to say that architectural space in Durham Cathedral was not only a physiological but a richly psychological lever; not simply a bland and homogenous stage upon which life and liturgy passed by, not just the stuff—put bluntly—between other more important things. Rather, stories of these spaces spoke directly to the larger inclinations of Durham's local community, to the innate tensions between its lay and clerical members, as well as to something like an indirect index of the oblique historical strategies adopted by women resisting patriarchal authority.

Insofar as gender is concerned the narration of built spaces has also long been especially critical in the making and maintenance of societal roles. A "woman's space", the "space of the home"; these are still recognisably cultural constructs today. They work to suggest more than the designation of separate geographies: expressions such as these move to reinforce charged political systems predicated on the presumption of male and female difference. In describing the "audacity" of these medieval women, their "rash daring" (*ausu temerario*) and "womanly eagerness" (*feminea auiditate*), Symeon was participating in much the same kind of process.[39] With each spatial infringement the cathedral's harshly exclusionary policies were blamed not on the male monks, nor even much on Cuthbert himself, but on an intrinsic lack of female decorum and propriety: clear nods, no doubt, to Paul's original injunction that "all things

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[37] *Geography Matters!: A Reader*, ed. by Doreen Massey and John Allen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
[38] Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).
[39] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 108-9.

should be done decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:40).[40] Our hands were essentially tied, Symeon seems to have been arguing. Even if, he says, we, the monks at Durham, had aspired to overhaul or to somehow impede or mitigate the rules for female ingress, we would have been unable to do so. In fact, these were, he made plain, "crimes" (*scelera*), committed knowingly, and even in spite of the fact that "with the consent of all, *both men and women*" Durham Cathedral was a male-only space.[41]

Sixty years later, Reginald of Durham, would go on to describe several more women who, similarly, had "dared" to infringe on Cuthbert's turf. One young girl named Emeloth, the "daughter of a local man", was only playing with her friends when, chasing a bouncing ball, she inadvertently strayed inside the cathedral.[42] In spite of her innocence relative to Cuthbert's other female casualties—an inference we can make both on account of her age as well as the vagaries of a bouncing ball—Cuthbert immediately "struck [her] down with insanity".[43] Not long after that, Geoffrey of Coldingham (d. 1215) noted the tale of a "certain Flemish woman" who tried to gain access to Cuthbert's former church on Inner Farne.[44] Once again it was for her "temerity", as he describes it, that she was blown away from the church walls by another strong wind.[45] Thus, some patterns emerge in these early sources. Not only an artful craft of shirking any culpability for these shocking casualties, but the repetition of very particular set of topoi: strong winds, insanity, a ruthlessly vindictive saint and, almost invariably, the

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[40] The *Didascalia Apostolorum* also inagurates its instructions for spatial arrangements in the gathered assembly with an appeal to "good order". And a much more elaborate reasoning for liturgical gender separation, and its biblical precedents, can also be found in an intriguing passage in Cyril of Jerusalem's *Procatechesis*, which he bases on what he assumes was a strictly gendered Noah's ark. See St. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments: The Procatechesis and the Five Mystagogical Catecheses* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977). See also, especially, Sarah Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space and Gender in Medieval Europe', in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe,* ed. by Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 246-61.
[41] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 108-9.
[42] See Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 403.
[43] *Ibid*.
[44] See Geoffrey of Coldingham, *Historia Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres, Gaufridus de Coldingham, Robertus de Graystanes, et Willielmus de Chambre*, ed. by James Raine (London: J. B. Nichols & Son, 1839), p. 309.
[45] *Ibid*.

audacious presence of a female body. Indeed, at nearly every stage in its long evolution the discursive history of Cuthbert's apparent misogyny, married with his cathedral's zero-tolerance policy, was highly derivative. Its chroniclers—all of them men—operated in transparently citational modes, abdicating their own voices at will. The objective, for the most part, seems to have been to mask any hint of a personal or confessional style by pointing to precedent, to what Symeon termed "divine signs", or to the embedded and thus irreparable operations of an assumed female psyche.[46] This type of back-and-forth, from source to source, from the present to the past, underlines the challenge inherent in locating the misogynistic impulse at Durham. It makes the questions both of reading and reception crucial: not just the what and where of stories themselves, but once again the who, how and why of their telling.

While Bourdieu's research on gender was quite minimal—some might say surprisingly—the core of much of his work was still given over to showing that culture (broadly defined) was regularly complicit in legitimising oppressive structures of bodily power such as these, while, at one and the same time, helping those structures maintain a kind of invisibility. In his 'The Berber house or the world reversed', for example, his now famous analysis of the "Kabyle" sees its assembly and configuration as being directly reflective of the socio-cultural binaries that its residents seem to think underpin the world.[47] The house was defined by public and private spaces which were principally organised by a corollary demarcation of male and female bodies. The somewhat dark and dank lower quarters of the house, the private spaces where stock and cattle were stored, equated to the female body; the much lighter and drier upper rooms, the public spaces within which guests would be hosted, were associated with the male. By mimicking, in its apparent boundaries, the divides that structured society, the house reified a perception of the world as organised by male and female oppositions. By insisting that

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[46] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, pp. 109-10.
[47] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Berber house or the world reversed', *Social Science Information*, 9 (1970), pp. 151-70.

this relationship between the "male discontinuous and the female discontinuous" be lived out, that divide came to be so deeply felt, Bourdieu believed, that it ultimately matured into something like a principle of natural or cosmic law.[48]

Insofar as the early medieval discourse on misogyny is concerned we have a long history to account for, stretching at least from Tertullian's *de Cultu Feminarum* right up to the Wife of Bath.[49] With their strong emphases on living the life of "impatient angels", of strict asceticism, celibacy, and a general distrust of flesh and female sexuality, the *vitae* and eremitic traditions of the early Desert Fathers might seem to have been particularly influential sources for Cuthbert's own particular brand. So too, perhaps, would any number of early monastic *regulae*, or canons of church councils concerned with the strict prohibition of female access into monastic complexes. In his *Regula ad monachos*, St Cesarius or Arles (d. 542) forbade women to enter his monastery.[50] Tonantius Ferreolus (d. 511) ruled that no women, not even nuns, were to be permitted entry to his estate.[51] The Carolingian reformer, Benedict of Aniane (d. 821), refused women access both to his basilica and to his monastery.[52] And many other accounts of early medieval cartularies, chronicles and saint's lives—not least those pertaining to individual Benedictine houses—pursued similarly exclusionary policies.

Prior to 1083, however, when the new cohort of Benedictine monks was introduced at Durham, sex and even marriage within the old clerical *congregatio* was happily tolerated, and

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[48] Studies of the medieval parish, in particular, have sometimes been influenced by Bourdieu's concepts of "field" and "habitus" too. See, for example, C. Pamela Graves, *Social Space in the English Medieval Parish Church* (New York: Routledge, 1989) and, to a lesser extent, Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven, 1992).

[49] See, among other synopses, R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) and R. Howard Bloch, 'Medieval Misogyny', *Representations*, 20 (Autumn 1987), pp. 1-24.

[50] See 'Sancti Caesarii episcopi arelatensis', in *Opera Omnia*, ed. by Germain Morin, 2 (Maredsous: Abbaye, 1942), pp. 149-155.

[51] See Tonantius Ferreolus, 'Regula Sancti Ferreoli uceticensis episcopi ad monachos', in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, 66 (Paris: Garnier, 1855), cols. 959-76.

[52] Benedict of Aniane, 'Concordia regularum auctore Sancti Benedicto Anianae', in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. by J. P. Migne, 103 (Paris: Garnier, 1855), cols. 701-1380.

very few—*if any*—records of Cuthbert's alleged misogyny can be shown to pre-date the Conquest. Archaeologists have also shown that from the early eleventh century (more than two decades, at least, after his arrival on the peninsula), female bodies were still permitted to be buried within Cuthbert's cemetery.[53] Many women also played positive high-profile roles in the slow generational transmission of his community's traditions too. In fact, during his lifetime, Cuthbert was known to enjoy the company not only of many Abbesses such as Æbbe, Ælfflæd and Verca (to name only a few), but Queens as well (not least King Ecgfrith's wife, Iurminburgh). He was also recorded as having paid frequent visits to meet with his former nurse Kenswith, a woman to whom he affectionately referred as his "mother".[54] And he cured many women as well, including nuns, the sisters and wives of many priests, earls, prefects, and even an old and otherwise anonymous Scottish woman, right in the heart of his cloister at Durham.[55] There was, further to that, no specific decree anywhere in the Rule of St Benedict, beyond that insisting on their chastity, which forbade monks from allowing women to gain access to those churches in their care. And, in addition to a gospel book and cross donated by Queen Margaret of Scotland (also known as Margaret of Wessex; d. 1093), we also know the monks took receipt of her hair and a few teeth, not long after she died.[56] Why then, and at what point, did Cuthbert suddenly come to be regarded as a misogynist?

It's insufficient to conclude (at least on its own) that this was simply a symptom of a national post-Conquest metamorphosis, within which women occupying high status prior to 1066 were gradually displaced under Norman hegemony.[57] Accommodations for the

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[53] See Norman Emery, 'The Contribution of Archaeology', in *Durham Cathedral: History Fabric and Culture*, ed. by David Brown (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 159-66.

[54] Moreover, Ascelina (often Anselma), no less a figure than the mother of the cathedral's founder, Bishop William de St-Calais, was also recorded for posterity—along with dozens of other women—in the Durham *Liber Vitae* (the record of the names of men and women for whom the monks prayed). See *The Durham Liber Vitae and Its Context*, ed. by David W. Rollason, A. J. Piper, Margaret Harvey and Lynda Rollason (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004).

[55] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 403.

[56] *The Durham Liber Vitae*, p. 145.

[57] See, for example, Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the Impact of 1066* (London: British Museum Publications, 1984).

intermingling of male and female bodies, as well as male and female saints, were readily maintained all across post-Conquest England. Whether at Norwich, Canterbury, Worcester, Bury Saint Edmunds, Evesham or Malmesbury, records of women experiencing difficulty approaching churches and shrines were, by comparison, very few and far between. In fact, even on the Continent, at notoriously gynephobic sites like the Cistercian Abbey of Pontigny (begun 1114), saintly relics were frequently taken outside the church grounds in order to cater for any outlawed women in need of their efficacy.[58] The post-Conquest community charged with the protection and maintenance of St Cuthbert's shrine, therefore, took a unique position.

Passing the buck once again, Symeon singled out the monks and nuns of nearby Coldingham Priory. They had "grown lax", he wrote, "by feasting, drinking and committing other improprieties together …in those very residences [the monastery] which Cuthbert had dedicated to prayer and study".[59] Although most other accounts record the occasion as an accident, Symeon then made the point that, when the abbey later burned down, it was as a direct consequence of "their improper familiarity with each other". [60] Their proximity in space, in other words, had ultimately "afforded the enemy [the devil] an opportunity of attacking them".[61] At least a dozen other explanations arose over the next four hundred years. Both the early thirteenth-century *Libellus de ortu* and the late sixteenth-century *Rites of Durham*, for example, share broadly similar versions of the same essential tale wherein Cuthbert was falsely accused of impregnating a young female member of royalty.[62] Astonished, Cuthbert said a

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[58] See, for example, Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgramage C.700-c.1500* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) p. 94.

[59] See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 107.

[60] *Ibid*., On this story and Cuthbert's alleged misogyny generally see also William M. Aird, *St Cuthbert and the Normans: the Church of Durham, 1071-1153* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 125-6 and Christiania Whitehead, 'Spiritual Healing: Healing Miracles Associated with the Twelfth-Century Northern Cult of St Cuthbert', in *Medieval and Early Modern Literature, Science and Medicine*, ed. by Rachel Falconer and Denis Renevey (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013), pp. 176-9.

[61] See Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de exordio*, p. 107.

[62] See Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, 35-7 and 'Libellus de Ortu Sancti Cuthberti', in *Miscellanea Biographica*, ed. by James Raine, 8 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1838), pp.63-87.

prayer to God and asked him to prove his innocence, whereupon the ground immediately opened up, swallowing the "reckless girl" whole.[63] At this point, depending on the version, either her father, the then King of the Picts, or Cuthbert himself forbade any woman to access any church dedicated to, or in any way affiliated with, the saint. For reasons that aren't necessarily clear, the *Libellus de ortu* also records a further story involving a beautiful but "presumptuous" young girl, who had apparently taken to distracting a group of men listening to one of the saint's sermons.[64] Here, not content simply with sprinkling her with holy water, Cuthbert decided at that point to impose his ban.[65]

In any event, the various explanations for Cuthbert's change of heart perhaps mattered less, in almost every case, than the desire on the part of their authors to tell them. In the very early twelfth century, Symeon, and the (celibate) powers-that-were at Durham, probably still needed to justify their 1083 eviction of the cathedral's formerly married canons.[66] By the time Reginald was writing in the 1170s, this controversy had largely abated, but a new series of prohibitions had quickly taken their place. The fear of the female body, and the threat it presented to the "purity" of the high altar was a particularly pressing concern. Canons 6, 7 and 11 of the Second Lateran Council (1139) had only doubled down on the First's condemnation of marriage and concubinage among clerics. The result was that, by the dawn of the thirteenth century, a whole host of other bishops, priests and monks across England had begun to resurrect ancient taboos associated with female bodies. Levitican authority was widely invoked to advocate for the removal of menstruating women from churches, as well as those who had recently given birth.[67] Indeed even following their removal, many clerics continued to demand

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[63] 'Libellus de Ortu', p. 69.
[64] *Ibid*.
[65] *Ibid*.
[66] This was an argument first put forward by Rosalind Hill in an unpublished paper titled 'Saint Cuthbert, the Women and the Weasel' delivered at the International History Conference held in Oxford in 1972.
[67] See, especially, Jo Ann McNamara, 'The Herrenfrage: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050-1150', in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 3-30.

that all furnishings for the altar—lamps, draperies, vestments, plates and so on—all be cleansed in advance in case they had been handled, and thus polluted, by the touch of a woman. At Norwich, for example, the precentor is recorded as deliberately choosing a washer*man*, over a washerwoman, to launder the many fabrics and vestments of the clergy.[68] Thus, again slightly weasily, Reginald of Durham summarises that Cuthbert's aversion to women wasn't based on any apparent hatred of the female body but, rather, the simple desire to evade the "opportunities it provided for sin".[69] Indeed, the almost innately politicising attributes of such arrangements in churches also adds to the ethical reasons why space ought to be thought of as such an important category for a building's "architectural" analysis. In being so identified outside its walls, with the untamed and profane world beyond, women became further associated with clichéd traits such as emotionalism, ill-discipline and recklessness.[70] Conversely, the "man's world", the places inside the cathedral of controlled, considered and meaningful work, were equated to rationality and thus to justifiable power and prestige.

Barbara Rosenwein has drawn a convincing link between the early medieval tendency to build such mental as well as physical fortifications around churches and the earliest medieval concepts of immunity.[71] She argues that the process actually began with the exceptions and prohibitions that permitted royalty, and especially kings, to manipulate space via royal immunities, a habit which the papacy later appropriated too to argue for consecrated land. That the scale and the reach of Cuthbert's spatial project was just as regionally ambitious is further and repeatedly underlined. Symeon, for one, made the bold claim to the effect that, following the flight from Lindisfarne with Cuthbert's body in 875, women were "not even given

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[68] See also Gilchrist, *Norwich Cathedral Close*, pp. 240-3.
[69] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 403.
[70] On the emotional and recklesss trope see several of the essay collected in *Medieval Women and Their Objects*, ed. by Jenny Adams and Nancy Mason Bradbury (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017)
[71] Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Manchester: Manchester Universoty Press, 1999).

permission [then] to enter …those churches where his body had rested only for a time" (a rule he asserted that was maintained even up until his time of writing).[72] In fact, it was the church at Lindisfarne, he suggested, that was the first place, long before even Durham, to impose the ban "with the consent of all local men and women".[73] (Curiously, he does also add that a second building, namely the "Green Church"—a derivation from its apparently flat Greenland surroundings—was then constructed as compensations for female use.)[74] In the early thirteenth century, moreover, the anonymous author of the *Libellus de ortu* also made a note of a certain "foolish" northern count, who had chosen to travel to a hermitage once occupied by Cuthbert, in the Lowlands of Scotland. [75] It is unclear whether the count was aware of the risk he was taking by bringing his wife and daughters along for the journey, but, in any event, almost as soon as he arrived, his "hip and his leg" were both unceremoniously broken.[76] In the same text, one "severely crippled aristocratic lady", who had travelled from Embleton in Northumberland seeking a cure, was also banned from entering the church on Inner Farne.[77] And another, Emma de Grenville, who suffered from severe abdominal pain, as well as alternating sensations of "extreme heat and cold," was given a similarly cold welcome there too.[78]

No one knows when this fairly strange piece of hagiography first reached Durham, but it was almost certainly in the course of the thirteenth century. It seems to have been welcomed both because it filled a gap left by the traditional sources as well as because it did indeed actually offer the saint a special new royal ancestry. Its importance here, however, is in the fact

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[72] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 109.
[73] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, p. 109.
[74] *Ibid*.
[75] See 'Libellus de Ortu', pp. 63-87. This is a bizarre work really, containing elements resembling those found in medieval romances. It was written, in all probability, in the Cistercian house of Melrose in the second half of the twelfth century. Many of the difficulties raised in reading it are resolved when it is realised that the first twenty-three chapters are taken from the *vita* of a certain St Lugaid (also known as Moluag or Moloc of Lismore; d. 592).
[76] *Ibid*., 69.
[77] See also Dominic Alexander, *Saints and Animals in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), p. 145.
[78] *Ibid*.

that it worked to argue, such was Cuthbert's unique power, that something of his sacred emissions could effectively linger in space—almost like nuclear fallout—for an extraordinarily long time after the saint had moved on. Needless to say, this was a world away (in every sense) from how many other saint's cults typically operated in the period, presenting as it did to the faithful a somewhat unorthodox appraisal of the ongoing liveliness of the holy *corpus*.[79] The records of these stories once again emphasised the extremely long arm of the cathedral in effecting change and control far beyond its own walls. Many miracles at Durham, on Farne Island and at Peter's Church on Lindisfarne, particularly in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were similarly dated either on (or very close to) Cuthbert's feast days (especially the 4th September, the date of the saint's *translatio*).[80] Many more—such as Reginald's accounts of the sleeping monks who were visited with images of processions, torchbearers and deacons in their dreams, all across Northumbria simultaneously—also suggest something like the deliberate maintenance of a very special kind of temporal and liturgical synchronicity, in space, between Durham Cathedral and other important sites from Cuthbert's early biography.[81]

Curiously, however, in spite of an increasingly permissive regional context of anti-female behaviour, Reginald's tone had, if anything, grown more measured than Symeon's. Though far from the only story he told, the account of Emeloth and her ball was in fact his sole example of a woman to fall fatally foul of Cuthbert's vindictive side.[82] So, for instance, when he later recounted the story of Maud, a female intruder whose "encounter" with the cathedral very closely paralleled that of Judith's in Symeon's *Libellus*, she was not punished anything like so

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[79] See Bede, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 96-7. On the power of the saintly body and its relation to Anglo-Saxon architecture see also Helen Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
[80] See H. H. E. Craster, 'The Miracles of St Cuthbert at Farne', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 70 (1952), pp. 5-19 (and the section: *De mirabilibus Dei modernis temporibus in Farne insula declaratis*) and Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, pp. 249, 261 and 262-3.
[81] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 38, p. 58, and p. 59.
[82] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, pp. 151-4.

harshly. Maud, the new wife of the future king, David I of Scotland, had approached Cuthbert's cathedral alone one evening after dark.[83] She stopped short, however, of entering his churchyard when she learned of his famous aversion to women "polluting his holy places" (*loca sancta et nitida polluisti*).[84] Sceptical seemingly, if cautious still like Judith, she devised a test of her own. She asked her chambermaid, a woman named Helisend, whose talents included the working of fabrics, to disguise herself and attempt entry on her behalf. "At once", Reginald stresses, Cuthbert noticed Helisend's presence via "an unpleasant odor of impurity" (*ipsius immunditiae odorem sentio*).[85] In the end, the chambermaid was "very severely admonished" and forcibly ejected by the cathedral's sacristan, a man named Bernard.[86] Nonetheless, disguised in her black cope and hood, she did at least make it inside the main body of the church, and though she remained extremely "shocked and disorientated" (*multo tremore confusa*) for a long while afterwards, her life was ultimately spared too, and she even went on to take the veil at Elstow (*Elvestoue*) in Bedfordshire.[87]

Any number of reasons might explain this change, but it cannot have been inconsequential that the final decades of the twelfth century were an especially worrisome time for the monks at Durham. Cuthbert's gravitational pull had been lessened by a series of exciting new cult sites—most notably Edmund's at Bury (d. 869), Saint Godric of Finchale (d. 1170) and Thomas Becket at Canterbury (d. 1170)—all of whom allowed female pilgrims unfettered access to their cults.[88] In fact, around this time, several women even seem to have suddenly found favour once again with Saint Cuthbert. One "noble woman" named Agnes, for example, who fell ill following a blood-letting session, was healed right next to Durham's western

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[83] *Ibid.*
[84] *Ibid.*, 153.
[85] *Ibid.*
[86] *Ibid.*
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] See, especially, Francis Rice, *The Hermit of Finchale: The Life of Saint Godric* (London: Pentland Press, 1994), p. 299.

doors.[89] Another, Osanna of Foxton, was cured of an "inflamed eyelid".[90] And two further unnamed females were offered mercy within quick succession: a "blind and handicapped woman", and an "epileptic from Brompton".[91] Indeed, at certain times in the cathedral's late medieval history in particular, it seems as if the saint's once notorious misogyny had practically been forgotten altogether. In 1374, Alice Neville (d. 1374), the baroness and wife of Ralph Neville (d. 1367), for instance, was interred beside her husband in a highly prominent position, right in front of Durham's Jesus Altar. And, not much later, their son John (d. 1388) and his wife Maud (d. 1379), were also put to rest just inside the nave's south wall without even a hint of disapproval from Cuthbert. (In the interests of cynicism, it can be pointed out that the Neville family were famously liberal benefactors for the cathedral, but so too of course was Judith of Flanders, with whom we began.)

A significant feature to note then is that although certain prescriptive documents, such as medieval monastic *regulae*, do often attest to very strict partitions of male and female bodies, across medieval Europe, here we have demonstrations of their permeability. We can clearly infer that spatial rules and customs in medieval Durham were by no means inflexible. Indeed many, like the limits on ingress for women, seem to have been susceptible to both incremental as well as radical change over the *longue durée* (with local, regional and even national norms of behaviour all likely playing a role in their evolving trajectories). If the formal dictates, that is, regarding not just who could occupy particular spaces, but how, when and why, were important, then they were also important differently to successive medieval generations. Durham's many boundaries, its grades of access and its degrees of sanctity were all instrumental in not only reflecting but actively (re)constructing divisions drawn along gendered lines. In certain centuries, those lines were evidently quite unclear, to the effect that some

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[89] See Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 260.
[90] *Ibid.*, 269.
[91] *Ibid.*, 270.

women, like Judith and Maud, were occasionally moved to test them, while others, like Sungeova and Emeloth, apparently had no idea they existed at all. Time and again, in essence, these dynamics were lived out or practiced, as opposed to formalised: products of habit and custom rather than legislation pre-emptively set down.

Bourdieu, theorising on *habitus*, encourages us to interrogate the different, but practically related, contexts through which both men and women might have become inured to these performances at Durham over time. He defined *habitus* as the "systems of durable, transposable dispositions" that are "…always tending to reproduce the objective structures of which they are the product". [92] That is to suggest that the modes of thinking through and enacting such operations were not always evolved consciously, with a specific objective or end in mind, but as one part of a much larger, much more flexible process which drove sometimes radical, sometimes incremental change. Monasticism has long been associated with strict rules which brought order and routine to the daily life of its adherents, many having been legislated for by its founders. But it was not until certain monasteries such as Aniane and Fulda and councils like Aachen (816-9) started to formalise and transcribe these ideas that a degree of uniformity first began to emerge. Even then, if to a lesser degree, regional variations often held their ground, and it was not until the tenth century, at least, that the written customaries of major sites such as Cluny, Fleury, Monte Cassino, St Gall and Canterbury came to dominate extensive geographies. For a long time, in other words, while there were many regulations governing the specificity and development of spatial use in churches, certain of them remained negotiable, not least insofar as local interactions with non-monastic demographics, such as women in this instance, were concerned. Because, these customs often tended to reproduce those which had already reproduced them, they were commonly determined by the efficacy of past successes,

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[92] See Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse D'une Theorie de la Pratique: Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univerity Press, 1977), p. 72. See also Tor Hernes, *The Spatial Construction of Organization* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company), p. 52-4.

selectively (or sometimes even haphazardly) married with the tendencies of the present.

It is very difficult to otherwise explain why for example, after a period of relative calm, Cuthbert then seems to have suddenly reinstated his ban on female ingress so forcefully in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. On 18th September, 1417, a formal order was issued to organise the public punishment of "Matilda Burgh and Margaret Usher", servants in the household of Peter Baxter of Newcastle.[93] Together, they had attempted to approach the shrine, only to find themselves caught out and subjected to the full rigour of local law enforcement. The crime of ingress had now been more thoroughly outlined by the monastic community and made punishable by excommunication. On a technicality of some sort (possibly a joint confession) the two women were ultimately spared.[94] But they were then directed to ritually process, on six separate holy days in the coming liturgical year, around the nearby churches of Saint Nicholas and All Saints in Newcastle.[95] What is more, as part of an apparent if curious warning to other would-be "criminals", they were also asked to dress in the male clothes in which they, like Helisend, had been caught trying to break into the cathedral.[96]

That Agnes, Osanna of Foxton, the "blind and handicapped woman" and the "epileptic from Brompton" were all healed in close proximity to Durham Cathedral's west end is also unlikely to have been a coincidence.[97] It was Bishop Hugh le Puiset (d. 1195), who at the same time seemingly as working to reinvigorate Cuthbert's brand as one that primarily dispensed medical cures, also made plans to radically overhaul the building's structure. Geoffrey of Coldingham summarised his first initiative as being done in pursuit of a "new aisle" in the east

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[93] See William Fordyce, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham* (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton, 1857), p. 263.
[94] *Ibid*.
[95] *Ibid*.
[96] *Ibid*.
[97] See Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de Admirandis*, p. 260-70.

end.[98] Ultimately work was ended after several of the apparently "half-built" walls collapsed, whereupon le Puiset chose to refocus his attention on the western end of the nave and what would, in time, come to be recognised as the Galilee (or Lady) Chapel (illus. 51).[99] If several theories have been proposed—like the increasingly downward-dipping eastern slope—in reality there is no clear evidence to explain definitively why work began or ended, save for Geoffrey's own belief that le Puiset, to Cuthbert's apparent distaste, was making room for female worshippers.[100]

Of all the interior divisions at Durham, its many entries, "trellesdoure[s]" and one particularly famous screen, perhaps the most conspicuous would have been these two: the separation of the chancel from the nave and the nave from the Galilee (and, thus, the male clergy from the male and female laity respectively). Both the symbolic and lived meanings of these divides had long been understood, if variously. But it wasn't until the late thirteenth century that they came to be so fully explored on the page by Durandus, the canonist and Bishop of Mende, across eight volumes of his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*.[101] Here he made the distinction between *ecclesia* as a "sacred space", the main functional body of the church, and the larger precinct.[102] Spaces contained in the cloisters, the dormitories, the refectory and even the cemetery were, he stressed, merely "holy places".[103] This was a sliding scale of sanctity, in other words, which Dawn Hayes has inferred to be based primarily on

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[98] See Geoffrey of Coldingham, *Historia Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres, Gaufridus de Coldingham, Robertus de Graystanes, et Willielmus de Chambre*, ed. by James Raine (London: J. B. Nichols & Son, 1839), p. 11.
[99] *Ibid*.
[100] See, also, Richard Halsey, 'The Galilee Chapel', in *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. by Nicola Coldstream and Peter Draper (Leeds: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 1980), pp. 59-73.
[101] See *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum of William Durand of Mende: A New Translation and the Prologue of Book One*, trans. by Timothy M. Thibodeau (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 54-7. I do not mean to suggest here that Durandus was the first to discuss church space in these ways, only that, in its sheer breadth and depth, his *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* marked a new phase, as Thibodeau outlines in his introduction.
[102] *Ibid*.
[103] *Ibid*.

sexual purity.[104] Ultimately, the Galilee was the least of all these spaces: equally the most secular with the nave, but the most accessible for women and, in contrast to the choir and presbytery which were invariably reserved for the monastic community, it could also appropriately house the married and/or sexually-active.[105]

By the late sixteenth century, the author of the Cosin roll, the oldest version of the *Rites of Durham*, had likewise taken to enumerating a whole series of "causes wherfore women may not cū [come in] to the fferretere of St Cuth[bert]" or "enter within yᵉ pcinct [precinct] annexed in yᵉ monasterye" either.[106] Speaking with apparent relish and perhaps even somewhat nostalgically for a time when the "worke of iniquetie" committed by "evill and nawghtie" women incurred greater "punyshment", he pointed to the fact that

betwixt yᵉ piller of yᵉ north syde wᶜʰ yᵉ holie Water stone did stand in, & yᵉ piller that standeth ou [over] against that of yᵉ south syde …ther is a cross of blewe mrble, …in [front of which] all women that came to here [hear] devine s'vice should not be suffered to come aboue [about].[107]

[104] See Dawn Hayes, *Body and Sacred Place in Medieval Europe, 1100–1389* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 3-24.

[105] The commensurate relationship between sex and sanctity probably cannot be overemphasised. Indeed, it was even known to trigger paranoid medieval neuroses, not least the fear that sexual intercourse might occur inside or even in close proximity to a church's grounds.See, for example, James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) and chapters 9, 10 and 11 especially. In 1108 Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, famously moved to ban all clerics from taking wives, with dissension being punished specifically by exclusion from the spaces of the choir. *Ibid*., 187-92. By the middle of the twelfth century in England, ominous cautionary tales beginning with couples undertaking illicit sexual acts and ending in their being permanently stuck together were common. See Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennyslvania Press, 1999), pp. 61-9. And before long, only certifiable celibates were permitted even to approach the high altar at Durham.

[106] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, pp. 35-7.

[107] *Ibid*., 35.

This line of "blewe mrble" is still visible today (illus. 57), a clear lithic echo of a much older tradition of segregating the genders which, in Classical (or largely Western) hierarchies of thinking, distinguished the female body from the male mind or soul.

In many allegorical and exegetical texts from the ancient and medieval worlds, *ecclesia* was described as the bride of Christ, both a female and material partner to the male *noumen*. But insofar as the medieval church plan was thought to be a reflection of the body, its most highly sanctified spaces—those contained in its east end—were almost invariably associated with male hegemony: a male head and simultaneously, of course, a male locus of clerical power. It is difficult to over-emphasise the importance of this body and mind dichotomy in Durham's stories (especially given their often-provocative histories). Modern feminist theory has repeatedly taken this analogy to task, and contributions to (re-)mapping the socio-cultural history of the female body have been extensive in recent years.[108] A number of medievalists, such as Katherine French and Corine Schleif, have investigated how social position and marital status, among other things, could often determine where and under what conditions a woman in medieval England could be seated and *present* within her local parish.[109] Schleif, in particular, has drawn out at length not only how pew arrangements (as well as other material signs) could divide men from women inside the church, but a variety of corollary ways in which this separation was also played out in related socio-cultural constructs. She argues that, whether performed (as for example in the context of processions, weddings and other ritual enactments of the liturgy) or represented artistically on the wall or the page, the female body was very

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[108] See, especially, *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Sara Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994); Sarah Alison Miller, *Medieval Monstrosity and the Female Body* (New York: Routledge, 2010) and *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, ed. by Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

[109] See Katherine L. French, 'The Seat under Our Lady: Gender and Seating in Late Medieval English Parish Churches', in *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church*, ed. by Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), pp. 141-60. See also Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) and Margaret Aston, 'Segregation in Church', in *Women in the Church*, ed. by W. J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford: Studies in Church History, 1990).

often confined to the left, in opposition to the male, who dominated on the right.[110] This common medieval binary also corresponded to many more deep and gendered polarities that recurred throughout medieval Europe: dark/light, weak/strong, and even good/evil. Within these discourses, analyses of basic spatial boundaries, boundaries that divided public from private, body from mind, and interior from exterior, have all played a foundational role in discussions of spatial semiotics, as they have in postcolonial studies.

The harsh stance outlined by the anonymous author of the *Rites of Durham* was probably maintained up to the Suppression, suggesting that Cuthbert's misogyny had, after more than four hundred years, finally become something like an institutionalised part of the conventual routine. That line of "blewe mrble" slashed indelibly across the west end of the nave is of unknown date, but it is unlikely to have been fashioned prior to the late fifteenth century. By this time, women were permitted both to approach the line and to convene for a time in the Galilee Chapel at the extreme west end. At a distance approaching 200ft, the space behind the line offered a long if largely unimpeded view of the nave, its altars and, from 1380 onwards, parts of the new and extraordinarily ornate stone Neville Screen.[111] If obscured slightly by the presbytery to its west and the high altar to its east, the Neville Screen (illus. 58) would still have been among the primary focal points almost anywhere in the cathedral: visually very colourful and grand, a tall, assertive and explicit statement of lithic male segregation. The more than one hundred Caen stone figures which once occupied its niches have, since the Reformation, been lost and possibly destroyed. And yet it is still clear, looking at what remains today, that its richly-ornamented openwork structure was built to command only a partial visual obstruction. Like other liminal divisions in later medieval Durham, such as the rood screen

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[110] Corine Schleif, 'Men on the Right, Women on the Left: (A)Symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Spaces', *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church*, ed. by Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury (New York: SUNY Press, 2005), pp. 207-49.

[111] See Christopher Wilson, 'The Neville Screen', in *BAACT: Medieval Art and Architecture at Durham Cathedral*, ed. by Nicola Coldstream and Peter Draper (Leeds: British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, 1980), p. 91.

(now lost) and any number of other semi-permanent partitions—Lenten veils, tapestries, shutters and draperies—the view allowed by the Neville Screen offered, and perhaps even invited, a direct prospect of this same institutional divide. An array of images including the Virgin, St Oswald and Cuthbert not least, will have dominated the laity's impressions from the west. Yet they will also have known that a more tantalising spectacle, the very resting place of the saint himself, was also only slightly obscured just beyond.

In his *Stripping of the Altars*, Eamon Duffy delivers a sense of the dynamism inherent to this arrangement, a deliberate play on and with "distance and proximity, concealment and exposure" as profound liturgical experiences.[112] Intrigue was piqued and then attention was held, as much by what wasn't seen, as what was. That which was covered invited an uncovering in the mind, a special kind of concentration and speculation as to its shape and form and process. (This was especially so, perhaps, if it was also partially felt in some other way, whether heard or even smelled, or indeed if the occasion was rare: a feast or performance that came only once a year.) It was, as Duffy summarises perfectly, "both a barrier and no barrier" at all: physically fragmentary but speculatively whole.[113]

In a provocative essay on the art of late medieval English parish, Paul Binski has also suggested that the image of St John peering through a window at Christ could possibly have been extrapolated from such experiences of looking through so-called "elevation squints" (holes of various shapes and sizes which appeared across the church).[114] John's vision, he argues, might suggest that "the experience of revelatory seeing was a coveted visual privilege".[115] John, after all, was the preeminent representative of visionary and revelatory

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[112] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 111.
[113] *Ibid*.
[114] Paul Binski, 'The English Parish Church and Its Art in the Later Middle Ages: A Review of the Problem', *Studies in Iconography*, 20 (1999), pp. 1-25.
[115] *Ibid*., 13.

knowledge; John sees God's heavenly throne (Revelation 4: 1-3). And in much the same way, because looking is in certain respects an entitlement, because visual access to a space is also a method of laying claim to what is seen, such gaps in the material body of the church can be useful sites of inquiry regarding psycho-social theories of communal power and agency.

The desire and the "need to see", in other words, is crucial. The screen is liminal, positioned in-between, at the intersection of two directed operations, the curious and sacramental viewing from the nave, aisles and Nine Altars and, reversely, the emanations of sound, sights and secrecy reaching out to the assembled laymen and laywomen. It is something of a challenge to reconstruct, from the angles of those stood nearer or further from the screen (or in the Galilee) what could or could not be seen. But the combination of the latter must have been enough to trigger, on cue, the kneeling, bowing and other synchronised movements among the audiences as, among other moments, the Host was elevated by the monks. Assuming different positions in the nave offered different vantage points—indeed, these positions of privileged and powerful viewing seem likely to have been actively coded into the nave's design—then the relative privacy and introspection of individual experiences becomes worth considering too. No sources attest directly to any of these dynamics of viewing at Durham, let alone how they worked, but if the Dominican General Chapter is any reliable guide, then they were certainly taken into account.[116] By 1240, the Chapter had written formal provisions for the shape and measure of spacing—what were referred to as "windows"—in the screens that separated friars from laypeople in mendicant churches.[117] That they could also be opened and closed at will only adds credibility to the theory of their performative importance. Of course, there can be little doubt that screens, roods and closet chantry spaces were also a means to much more literally shield and secure sacred space, its contents, the reserved sacrament and so

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[116] See, for example, Georgina Rosalie Galbraith, *The Constitution of the Dominican Order, 1216 to 1360* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1925), pp. 85-108.
[117] *Ibid*.

on. But they can also be thought of, just as powerfully, as dynamic and deliberate agents in the segregation of medieval people and their viewing experiences. Even if, however, the most sacred spaces of the cathedral, its "highest parts", "St Cuthberts feritorye" and the "Quire" might suddenly have seemed that little bit more accessible for women, their separation still remained politically expedient.[118] Their new position offered a view of a pronounced socio-cultural divide: an even more brazen lithic reminder, in a sense, of *who went where*.

Space, it's about time too

It was probably Louis Sullivan, one of the spiritual fathers of modern American architecture, who first wrote that "form ever follows function".[119] Sullivan was indebted, by his own admission, to what he termed "rational thinking" and the example of—among others—Vitruvius (d. 15 BC), who, in his *De architectura*, had extolled the value of utility (*utilitas*).[120] Like Mies van der Rohe's "less is more" and Le Corbusier's "une maison est une machine-à-habiter", Sullivan's mantra for modernity went on to become one of the twentieth century's greatest architectural clichés. Even if this was a "rule" of building that Sullivan believed "shall permit of no exception", one of the more conspicuous must surely be the medieval cathedral.[121] If medieval cathedrals do sometimes express their function(s) by their forms—and, to a greater or lesser extent, that must very often the case—then I hope that this last chapter will

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[118] Fowler, *The Rites of Durham*, pp. 1-19.
[119] Louis Sullivan, 'The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered', Lippincott's Monthly Magazine, LVII (March, 1896), pp. 403-9.
[120] *Ibid*., 404.
[121] *Ibid*., 403.

nevertheless have assisted with the thesis-long conviction here that the medieval cathedral and, in this case, its medieval spaces were not always so easily described.

Space was a category and a process that regularly resisted stasis. It generated a wide and dynamic range of possibilities and influence. It was a by-product of a whole series of energetic and interactive relationships, relationships which (even if dissimilar or discrepant) could often not only coincide but coexist quite happily with one another. It both emphasised and attracted plurality and therefore heterogeneity. Rather than ever-following (as it were), the cathedral could perhaps be more accurately described as ever-negotiating or ever-*becoming* functional: it was (and remains) constantly under construction, never finished, never done, or—as Doreen Massey once put it so brilliantly—always a "simultaneity of stories-so-far".[122] By thinking through space as a category with a rich sense of pliability, heterogeneity and temporal flux, this final chapter has aimed to get a sense of how and why a varied stratum of mid-to-late medieval society, but especially women, situated themselves, not only in relation to a set of stones but, simultaneously, to their local communities and even the wider cosmos.

By adopting space as an analytical category in this chapter I've also wanted to make an implicit point of emphasising time too. Much of the original stone fabric at Durham Cathedral survives intact, and yet the spaces it contains have been made, unmade and remade incessantly. Not unlike a palimpsest, architectural space at Durham was consistently manifest at the intersection between traditional use and newly-emerging customs. Indeed, the steady old stones that make up the building that we are left with today might seem to inadvertently deceive us (if only slightly) by their apparent inanimacy, because, in reality, Durham is not a fixed and immutable object. It was and is still prone to the vicissitudes of time, reception and memory (among other things). The sources and stories discussed in this final chapter, like many before them, speak to the former power dynamics of different social, professional and, above all else,

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[122] Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, p. 9.

gendered classes. They thus perhaps offer a small challenge, as a result, to the still fairly widespread modern attachment to the idea that a church's makers, its first patrons and masons, are the only (or at least the most interesting and instructive) parties to study.

CONCLUSIONS

In my introduction, I made a point of suggesting that the first challenge of this thesis, as well as the major balance of risk and reward on which it might be judged, would lie in the distance (for better or for worse) between its conclusions and the current state of the field to which Durham belongs. In addition to offering some final thoughts on the innate value of studying "stories" and "storytelling" relative to Anglo-Norman architecture, and before addressing the findings of each individual chapter, we begin here therefore with a brief assessment of how Durham Cathedral is usually understood.

The main material focus of the aforgoing chapters is a building that has long been recognised as both a canonical and superlative example of early medieval engineering. The cathedral complex at Durham is regularly encapsulated as a kind of brilliant late-Romanesque lynchpin, linking with and preempting the nascent proto-Gothic style. It is "justly recognized", wrote John Bilson, "…as the culminating achievement of the Norman Romanesque".[1] "Obviously", Jean Bony enthused, "…the designer was no common builder …[but] one of the identifiable forerunners of that great mental shift of the early twelfth century …the first Age of Enlightenment".[2] Thus, analyses and descriptions of the cathedral can very often be found, either opening or closing chapters, in a variety of surveys on medieval art and architecture.[3]

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[1] See John Bilson, 'Durham Cathedral: The Chronology of its Vaults', pp. 101-60 (101).
[2] Jean Bony, 'The Stonework Planning of the First Durham Master', pp. 19-34 (33).
[3] A notable example is Kenneth J. Conant, *Carolingian and Romanesque Architecture, 800-1200* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978).

On account of its sheer precision, its scale, its vaulting and—in particular—its precocious pointed ribs, Durham has come to represent a sparkling apogee, not only to the first generation of post-Conquest building, but to a continent-wide narrative of "progressive" structural experimentation.[4] These are by no means the only summaries available, but for the sake of brevity we can perhaps note that, even as recently as 2015, Eric Fernie concurred that these were still the types of "conclusions with which it was difficult to disagree".[5] Durham clearly remained he confirmed "in the vanguard …of the most important European cathedrals of the eleventh and twelfth centuries".[6] It has not been my intention to disagree with any of these assessments simply for the sake of it, nor do I think them particularly disagreeable in themselves. And yet, I have wanted to take each of my four chapters here in a different and effectively opposite direction.

Though it might be somewhat unorthodox to introduce new material at this late stage, we really can get a fast and conclusive sense of that difference, by turning (for one final time) to a story. Wrapping things up himself in the climactic last section to book 3 of his *Gesta pontificum*, William of Malmesbury (d. 1143) described the final heady days leading up to Cuthbert's *translatio* at Durham in 1104. In the dead of night, Prior Ranulf Flambard had been awoken by a loud sound. The timber scaffolding supporting the cathedral's new roof-vault had collapsed to the ground prematurely. Fearing for the vault, and especially for the expensive new altar and floor beneath it, Ranulf rushed from his bed to the presbytery. As he stood

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[4] For a broad review of the literature on early rib-vaulting, which it is worth stressing is certainly contested, see Stephen Gardner, 'The Nave Galleries of Durham Cathedral', *Art Bulletin*, 64.4 (1982), 564-79. The claim to being the first in Europe to acquire rib-vaulting throughout has also been challenged. See David McGee, 'The "early vaults" of Saint-Etienne at Beauvais', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 45 (1986), pp. 20-31. On the progressive narrative generally see also, in particular, Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Alfred Clapham, *English Romanesque Architecture after the Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934); Hans Erich Kubach, *Romanesque Architecture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979); and Heinfried Wischermann, 'Romanesque Architecture in Great Britain', in *Romanesque: Architecture, Sculpture and Painting*, ed. by Rolf Toman (Cologne: Ullman and Könemann, 2004), pp. 216-51.
[5] See Eric Fernie, *The Architecture of Norman* England, p. 140 as well as, more recently, Eric Fernie, 'The Romanesque Cathedral', p. 141.
[6] Eric Fernie, 'The Romanesque Cathedral', p. 141.

surveying the scene with several of his monks, he and they were both overwhelmed by *timor* (a term William variously took to mean "awe" with some mixture of reverence and occasionally fear).[7] Somehow no harm had come to any part of the building, and not even to the timber props themselves, despite having fallen from a very great height. William, however, did not attribute the vault's remarkable survival to the advanced talents of any mason, to the building's innate structural integrity, or to a dynamic chronology of trial and error. He said nothing about design, load, lateral thrust or counter resistance. He attributed it, rather, to the "miraculous" intervention of Saint Cuthbert alone, the "rightly beloved father" to whom he then begged, for the sake of his own soul, to remember his narration kindly.[8]

Nearly eighty years have passed now since Richard Krautheimer first argued that the "problems of construction, design and function" that are fundamental to the study of buildings in other periods, were simply "differently emphasised …in the medieval conception of architecture".[9] "As a matter of fact", he went on, "…no medieval source ever stresses the design of an edifice or its construction".[10] "Not once", he was at pains to underline, did "…Suger refer to the revolutionary problems of vaulting and design in his new building at St Denis". [11] Rather, he concluded, it was the "religious implications" of buildings that were "…uppermost in the minds of its contemporaries".[12] That the "encounters" studied here were exclusively religious phenomena is of course something I have been doubtful of, and reasonable exceptions to the sources rule—some of which we have met—might at least include Procopius's *De aedificiis*, Gervase of Canterbury's *De combustione et reparatione* and Guillaume Durand's *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*.[13] But the larger point still stands.

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[7] *Ibid*.
[8] *Ibid*.
[9] See Richard Krautheimer, 'Introduction to an "Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 5 (1942), pp. 1-33.
[10] *Ibid*., 1.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] *Ibid*.
[13] See Procopius of Caesarea, *On Buildings*, trans. by H. B. Dewing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940); Gervase of Canterbury, 'Tractatus de combustione et repatrione Cantuariensis ecclesiae', in *The Historical Works*

It was not just that the structural merits of Durham's ingenious new transverse arches were ignored, nor that to do so (as we have seen) was essentially routine. It was not just that Prior Ranulf's reaction was a felt and thus, frankly, immaterial process either. It's the fact that feeling not form, indeed feeling over and above the evidence of form, won out in the end. The community's response to the collapsing scaffolding was the hinge upon which the entire story opened up. The prior's instincts, his sentiments alone, confirmed the miracle. Nothing, in fact, even needed to be said: "awe" infused to some degree with reverence and fear sufficed. What was felt was enough, even to the extent that (nearly three hundred miles away in his abbey in Wiltshire) William himself was moved to "beg" Cuthbert for his mercy.[14] Could this not simply have been an accident though? An errant or underpaid carpenter perhaps, maybe even sabotage? After all as we know, William had been admant elsewhere in his *Gesta regum* that Ranulf was both cheap and not well liked by his community.[15] In a word: no. In terms that again underline the preeminence of sentiment and sensation, our author makes plain that the "guilt" aroused from any such wrongdoing would have been felt too strongly (which, to relay William's emphasis in full, is to say "in the heart").[16] "Rightly", therefore, "did all the monks" stand alongside Ranulf that night looking up in such awe too.[17] There was no doubt about it. It was Cuthbert, impatient to be translated into his new cathedral, who had "pulled down all the timber".[18]

The quantifiable form of any medieval building—its shape and its dimensions, its geometry, its style relative to others, its structural prowess, its basic lithic reality—are all always likely to be instructive and interesting to us today. Big buildings, in particular, offer us

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of Gervase of Canterbury, ed. by William Stubbs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and *The Rationale Divinorum Officiorum of William Durand of Mende: A New Translation of the Prologue and Book One*, trans. by Timothy M. Thibodeau (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

[14] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*, p. 419.
[15] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, pp. 794-7.
[16] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*, p. 419.
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*

the rare comfort that big histories might be saved and remembered. Durham's remarkable survival as an object, its hard and fast factuality, its sheer thereness, all strengthen the belief (indeed, *the hope*) that meaning might wait, patiently and protected, in a close examination of its stones. And yet, because humans perceive and create the world simultaneously, because the relationship between bodies and buildings is mediated through both the emotional and cogno-cultural spaces that surround us, no stone can simply be an end in itself. This is not a conclusion that is meant to impugn in any way, or underestimate, the many advanced structural endowments of Durham's built form (or, moreover, much of the preceding material analysis). It is, rather, the instinctive thesis-long impression derived from a range of medieval "stories" and "storytellers" that themselves seemed to switch the attention away so persistently from object to subject, from cause to effect, and ultimately from a cathedral "built" to something like a cathedral "encountered".[19]

Krautheimer went on to stress the many discrepancies, today often forgotten or perhaps just ignored, between medieval and modern conceptions of the "copy". He cited, as an example, William of Malmesbury's assertion that the eleventh-century chapel built by Robert the Lotharingian at Hereford was a deliberate imitation (*modo imitatus*) of Charlemagne's Palace Chapel at Aachen. As with several other accounts of medieval architecture, this kind of *imitatio* had much less to do with any specificity of form than it did with other more qualitative or transcendent associations between buildings, persons and things. In fact, we know that these two kindred chapels differed in shape, material, elevation, size, and almost every other quantitative "measure" we might conceive of. Like Durham, if the Palace Chapel was in fact a

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[19] See also Keith Moxey's discussion of the "encounter" in Keith Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. 53-4. See also, in part, Bryson et al., 'Introduction', in *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, ed. by Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), p. xvii.

model for emulation, therefore, then it was propitious not on account of its appearance, *literatim*, but as an object with a particular and felt *animus*.[20]

In part to throw just this kind of point into the starkest relief, my first chapter began very deliberately with a physically-simple and yet receptively-complex feature of the cathedral: its large size. As we saw, architectural enormity was a defining hallmark of the post-Conquest world. No sources from the period seemed inclined to argue, at least not in explicit terms, that buildings like Durham should be made large, or, for that matter, why. But their sheer abundance nonetheless seemed telling. Sometimes, as we saw, certain writers such as Goscelin of St Bertin suggested a kind of commensurate relationship between size and value. Just as often though there were neo-Stoics, early Cistercians and otherwise passion-resistant clerics waiting in the wings to pour scorn on *curiositas*. Among them, no more than a decade after its consecration, one of Durham's own, the monk Reginald, can be found lamenting his cathedral's enormous arches of "sublime pride" (*arces superbae sullimitatis*).[21]

It has often been argued that the "long twelfth-century" period (to which many historians have attributed an early "Renaissance") conceived of itself as particularly forward-looking or "modern", a viewpoint to which there is ample reason to be sympathetic.[22] Within this framework, an especially large and precociously decorated building like Durham can sometimes seem to sit very well. If, however, both the word *modernus* and the bones of its

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[20] Paul Binski has written very recently that such theories of similitude—the idea that "buildings are images for thinking with", not "literal object[s] of mimesis" but "cognitive fiction[s] stimulating further thought"—need developing further. See Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder*, p. 14. Likewise Laura D. Gelfand has stated simply that the "study of these copies reveals that the faithful of the Middle Ages neither expected nor needed the same visual 'truth' from them their buildings as modern viewers". See Laura D. Gelfand, 'Sense and Simulacra: Manipulation of the Senses in Medieval "Copies" of Jerusalem', *postmedieval*, 3 (2012), pp. 407-22. The basis they suggest for copying *ad instar* ("on the model of"), *secundam formam* ("following the form of") or *ad similitudinem* ("according to the likeness of") was actually more often than not derived from "dream-visions", "building miracles" and other forms of "sensory imitation and evocation": a research angle for which stories and storytellers would, I submit, have valuable currency.

[21] Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de* Admirandis, p. 28.

[22] See, for example*, The Twelfth-Century Renaissance: A Reader*, ed. by Alex J. Novikoff (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017) and *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. by By Robert Louis Benson, Giles Constable, Carol Dana Lanham and Charles Homer Haskins (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

meaning (as we understand them today) may have been current, then many of these sources in particular also seemed to suggest that the impulse to create, to discover and to innovate was not always so simply or so positively construed. This moralist scale, moreover, has to be framed in its own due perspective. These impulses, these experiences, their range and their certainty, were all far from universally manifest, and they were all obviously subject to further compounding variables of regional, temporal and identity politics.

A risk eventually arises, this might be to say, that too close an adherence to a trans-historical, teleological or otherwise linear mode of framing the medieval past will eventually obscure the extent to which progress and novelty were not always so highly prized. Looking back from the dawn of the thirteenth century, Walter Map (d. 1209/10) perhaps summarised the mood quite well, writing in his *De Nugis Curialium* that: "the hundred years that have just run out constitute our 'modern times', [and, like] every age so far, we have found our own modernity displeasing".[23] This particular clash of the leading and traditional edges of built culture, of local conservative attitudes and radical international interests, was a complex one. Pithily evoked, however, in a quote often attributed to Bernard of Chartres (d. 1124/30): the people of that time were like "dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants" (*anos gigantum humeris insidentes*), a turn of phrase which might elegantly celebrate and yet also implicitly undermine the achievements of avant-garde projects like Durham.[24] After all, if the masons at Durham did indeed deem to build above or beyond their predecessors in certain respects, that isn't to say that they didn't still see further *because* (rather than in spite) of their ancient support.[25]

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[23] See Chenu, *Nature, Man and Society* and Michael T. Clanchy, '*Moderni* in Education and Government in England', *Speculum* 50/4 (1975), pp. 671-88.

[24] The attribution to Bernard of Chartres comes from John of Salisbury, writing around 1159. See John of Salisbury, *The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury, A Tweflth-Century Defense of the Verbal and Logical Arts of the Trivium*, trans. by Daniel D. McGarry (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1955), p. 167.

[25] *Ibid*.

In a similar vein, my second chapter attempted to (re-)open a dialogue that asked how and to what ends the new Norman cathedral may actually have spent much of its time looking, not to the new, nor to the future, but somewhat nostalgically to the very deep Northumbrian past. A second problem thus emerges insofar as the classic "progressive" history of experimental building might actually tend to disempower what was often a very dynamic, if somewhat contrived and mercurial relationship, between Durham's early-twelfth-century community and its rich Cuthbertine heritage. In one sense, Durham's preponderance as a *de facto* structural book end could almost be defeated on its own terms here anyway. Even at a casual glance most of the buildings which later "borrowed" from the cathedral's architectural vocabulary most conspicuously—among others, Lindisfarne (completed *c*. 1150), Waltham (completed *c*. 1150), Selby (begun early twelfth century), Kirkwall Cathedral (begun 1137), Dunfermline (begun 1126?) and Kirkby Lonsdale (begun early twelfth century)—all seem to have been far less concerned with its vaulting than they were with its many chevrons, zig-zags and spirals.[26] Looking primarily, however, at Symeon's *Libellus de exordio* and its foundation story, we also arrived at what is sometimes called an "off-modern" analysis. The evidence here, as well as in the interior's striking new decorative formulas, didn't point to an interest in posterity *per se*, or even actually to the past in certain respects, but somehow "sideways".[27] Once again, reflected in stories and storytelling, was evidence of the sheer range of the Geertzian webs within which the cathedral was spun: the sometimes subtle sometimes radical politico-cultural gamesmanship of Durham's new clerical classes.

In tandem with the *Durham Missal* and the *Durham Processional*, the evidence contained in the *Rites of Durham* pointed strongly to the sense that these same dynamics of nostalgic *memoria* and *admiratio* outlined in chapter two were deliberately mixed with performance and

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[26] On this point and on these buildings see, for example, Richard Plant, 'Innovation and Traditionalism', p. 267. See also Eric Fernie *The Architecture of the Anglo-Saxons* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1983).
[27] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, p. 90.

organised movement in chapter three. These sources hinted at the quality found in so much of Durham's lost liturgical furniture that guided the experiences of the cathedral's attendees. *Ductus*, as it was known, when contained in an image, was also the sum total and anticipation of every path leading up to it, from a pilgrim's journey to a monk processing through the east end and feretory. Led via its many images, tropes and figures, building and body worked in tandem, actively and mutually enhancing one another's interests. Felt anticipatory states like Ælfwold's *bona flamma* were thus moved inwardly, changed and satisfied as he was guided, in part by his own instinct, but largely by the broadly set paths and sites that ran towards the ultimate goal, communion with Cuthbert's shrine.

Chapter four continued to foreground the intimate connections manifest in space between presence and absence, material and immaterial forces, in the construction and practice of gender relations. Here Durham Cathedral invited us to consider its spaces as dynamic sites for the performance of identity once again, a recurring theme throughout. Male and female bodies operated in spaces that were prearticulated, coded in their design for the management of certain types of people. And yet, as we showed, a woman's space within Durham Cathedral, whether occupied or otherwise, was very often ground for renegotiation. The stories and modes of storytelling examined here also attested to a dynamic world of female bequests and occupations, despite the historical spatial divisions that worked to keep women "in their place". We are every often encouraged today, through social media, news outlets and celebrity culture, to assume that to have high visibility, or to occupy the public eye in some way or another, codes for power and influence. And yet, as Foucault memorably pointed out in his studies on visibility and surveillance, these dynamics were often much more complicated than this seductive binary implies.[28] In fact, the foregoing evidence shows that the very opposition of "public" and "private" space in the medieval cathedral often generated a surprisingly dialectical

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[28] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

system of response and resistance. My first three chapters largely operated under the assumption that to use Durham Cathedral was a process that was defined, fundamentally, by the body's location within or near it its walls, as well as its license to move relative to them. Even if, however, the historical restrictions for female access at Durham might seem to have been somewhat harsh and uncompromising, this ought not to suggest that their influences on its daily operations are not worth our attention. Indeed, this chapter demonstrated how and why many medieval women did not even necessarily need to be physically present in order to effect significant material and immaterial change.

As a tool for analysing the medieval cathedral throughout each of these chapters, a story's sharpest critical edge perhaps lies therefore in its ability to move its readers: not only emotionally, or towards some kind of improvement in knowledge or empathy, but temporally and geographically as well. To read or to listen to a story is to be led somewhere else. Away from the here-and-now, a near limitless vista of anywhere, any-what and any-when awaits. Stories such as those belonging to Bede, Symeon, Reginald, and the anonymous author of the *Capitula de miraculis*, all work to reveal and to colour worlds beyond our own, they bring unfamiliar environments into focus. More than that though, when we analyse their writing today, we actually relinquish control to some extent. Stories take charge for a time, they tell us where to look, what to think, sometimes even how to feel. For the casual reader, for whom reading is an end in itself, this is part of the thrill, a mode of learning, entertainment or simply just an escape from reality. For the historian, any one of these same dynamics might still apply, but at some stage control has to be seized back. The story must be tamed and interrogated in order to explain how our understanding of the cathedral has changed, why our knowledge, here in the present, is impacted.

No matter how controlling we aim to be as an audience, however, the first thing we can all agree on is the existence of that other place. Near or distant, present or past, real or imagined;

in a moment's work the best narratives steal us away, showing us that our here is not the only here to contend with. All of the stories and storytellers referenced in this thesis presented both a different cathedral as well as—to paraphrase Mary Midgely—the range of ways that *we* might see it differently.[29] By looking at Durham's variously storied history, we are reminded not only of how others viewed it, but of how we ourselves today still view it in "otherly" ways too. This is the enduring value of "stories" and "storytelling", over and above the work that mere stones alone can do.

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[29] See Mary Midgley, *Heart and Mind: The Varieties of Moral Experience* (London: Harvester Press, 2003).

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