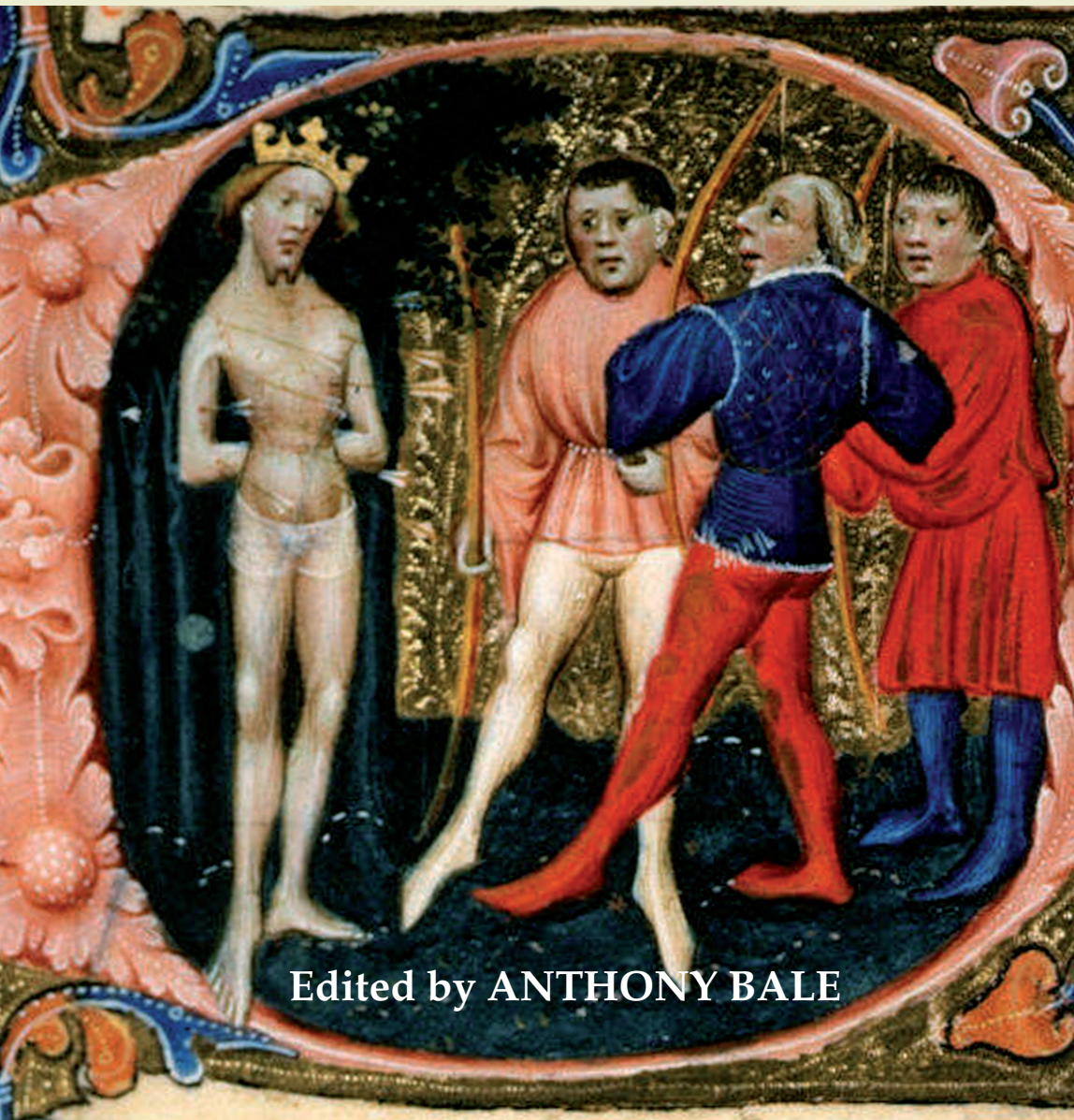


ST EDMUND

KING AND MARTYR

Changing Images of a Medieval Saint



Edited by ANTHONY BALE

St Edmund, King and Martyr

CHANGING IMAGES OF A MEDIEVAL SAINT

YORK MEDIEVAL PRESS

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Anthony Bale



THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

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PREFACE

The essays in this volume stem from a very productive and rewarding public seminar held at Birkbeck College, University of London, in 2004. The seminar, entitled *St Edmund: Royalty, Martyrdom, Masculinity*, was sponsored by Birkbeck's School of English and Humanities but was not just focused on literary texts. The seminar brought together an exciting and diverse range of disciplines: Old and Middle English studies, Scandinavian studies, music, art history, histories of gender and sexuality, book history, theology, political history. The audience, comprising scholars, students and members of the public, likewise attested to the appeal and relevance of the saint and to the ongoing blossoming of 'medieval studies', broadly conceived. The essays assembled here contribute a range of readings of St Edmund's cult, from different disciplines, and also offer a kind of history of St Edmund's cult in its many different facets, from the ninth century to the early modern period.

The time-frame of this collection covers the chronological span of Edmund's medieval cult, from the murky circumstances of the saint's death and his first *vita*, written between 985 and 987 by Abbo of Fleury, to a life of the saint written in newly Protestant sixteenth-century England. This collection is not, however, intended to provide an exhaustive account of the cult of St Edmund; given the enormous range and reach of the cult, such would be an over-ambitious undertaking. Rather, the guiding principle to these essays is the rewritings, continuities and reconceptualisations of sanctity represented in Edmund's changing saintly image. In this way, the intention of the volume is to show the openness and dynamism of a medieval saint's cult, to demonstrate how the saint's image could be used in many and changing contexts. Edmund's image was bent to various political and propagandistic ends, negotiating identity, politics and belief. While Edmund's iconographic attributes generally remain constant – crowned or shot through with arrows – this stability belies a variety of rewritings of his life and a steady accretion of traditions and apocrypha. When we think of medieval people being devoted to a saint, we need to prompt ourselves to ask what it is that people were devoted to; the substance of devotion is not necessarily fixed or stable, and it is not easily retrievable. Thus this collection of essays alights on those key but often neglected interventions in the cult of St Edmund at which new images were produced, in which traditions were invented, and in which older elements of the cult were elided.

This collection is intended to put multi- and inter-disciplinary scholarship into practice, for which a saint's cult makes an ideal subject. The essays gathered here mine a rich seam of polyglot texts, translations, images, music,

Preface

ideas, politics and myth buried in Edmund's cult. The cult touches kings (among them Stephen, Richard II, Henry VI), poets (notably John Lydgate), and a great many anonymous medieval people who engaged with Edmund's saintly image, through pilgrimage, wall-painting, stained glass, sermons, prayer and so on. And moreover, through Edmund's cult we can query conventional boundaries, such as Scandinavian: English; pre-Conquest: post-Conquest; national: regional; strength: weakness; mercy: vengeance; medieval: modern; elite: popular.

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Contributors

medieval popular religious belief and practice, in particular the social and cultural construction of sanctity and the representation of saints in both the Middle Ages and today.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BHL	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i>
BL	British Library
CPR	<i>Calendar of the Patent Rolls</i>
EAN	A. E. Nichols, <i>The Early Art of Norfolk</i> (Kalamazoo, 2002)
EETS ES	Early English Text Society, Extra Series
EETS OS	Early English Text Society, Original Series
LALME	<i>A Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English</i> , ed. A. McIntosh <i>et al.</i> , 4 vols. (Aberdeen, 1986)
MED	<i>The Middle English Dictionary</i>
MPL	<i>The Minor Poems of John Lydgate</i> , ed. H. N. MacCracken, 2 vols., EETS ES 107, OS 192 (London, 1911–34)
NIMEV	<i>New Index of Middle English Verse</i> , ed. A. S. G. Edwards and J. Boffey (Woodbridge, 2006)
NLA	<i>Nova Legenda Anglie</i> , ed. C. Horstmann, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1901)
ODNB	<i>The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
PSIA	<i>Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology</i>
RC	<i>The Riverside Chaucer</i> , gen. ed. L. Benson (Oxford, 1987)
RRAN	<i>Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum</i> , ed. H. W. C. Davis <i>et al.</i> , 4 vols. (Oxford, 1913–)
STC	A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, <i>A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640</i> , 3 vols. (London, 1976–91)
TLES	<i>Three Lives of English Saints</i> , ed. M. Winterbottom (Toronto, 1972)
VCH	<i>Victoria County History</i>

Editorial Note

The terms ‘Dane’, ‘Danish’, ‘Viking’ and ‘viking’ are used variously in the essays gathered here to describe St Edmund’s adversaries; the inconsistency in this nomenclature derives from medieval accounts of those who killed St Edmund.

References to John Lydgate’s *Lives of Ss Edmund and Fremund* are given by line number and refer to the forthcoming edition of the poem, edited by Anthony Bale and A. S. G. Edwards.

Introduction: St Edmund's Medieval Lives

Anthony Bale

In the following pages I will introduce the *vitae* and cult of St Edmund, providing an overview of the chronology of Edmund's life, a brief account of the role of the abbey at Bury St Edmunds in Edmund's cult, a history of how the cult was celebrated, and a survey of some key scholarly approaches to medieval hagiography. For scholarly studies of medieval Bury St Edmunds the enduring work of M. R. James, M. D. Lobel, Antonia Gransden and Rodney Thomson remains essential;¹ their scholarship provides a comprehensive context to monastic and cultural life at Bury, that context in which the cult of St Edmund was constantly nurtured, performed, promoted and revised.

The vita of St Edmund: a chronology

The outline of Edmund's life is conventionally given thus: Edmund, king of East Anglia and martyr, was born around 840 (later traditions state he was crowned as a youth, in 855); he was killed by Danish invaders on 20 November 869. At Hoxne, a Suffolk village, a monument now stands to Edmund, marking the putative site at which his martyrdom is said to have taken place.² In a passage discussed in greater detail below by Carl Phelpstead (pp. 30–31), the near-contemporary *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (compiled c. 890) merely records that Edmund fought the Danes, the Danes were victorious, Edmund was killed and the Danes took the land.³ Another early

¹ See in particular M. R. James, *On the Abbey of S. Edmund at Bury* (Cambridge, 1895); M. D. Lobel, *The Borough of Bury St Edmund's: A Study in the Government and Development of a Monastic Town* (Oxford, 1935); A. Gransden, 'The Legends and Traditions Concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *English Historical Review* 100 (1985), 1–24; *The Archives of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. R. Thomson (Woodbridge, 1980).

² The year of the martyrdom is sometimes given as 870, on which see D. Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St Edmund', *PSIA* 31 (1969), 217–33. Bradfield St Clare, rather than Hoxne, has been proposed as the site of the martyrdom; see S. E. West, 'A New Site for the Martyrdom of St Edmund', *PSIA* 35 (1985), 223–4. The location of the martyrdom at Hoxne is probably an eleventh-century invention; see below, p. 3.

³ The context of these accounts is considered in detail by M. Mostert, *King Edmund of East Anglia: Chapters in Historical Criticism* (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 23–5.

source, Asser's *Life of King Alfred* (written in 893), includes an account of the king's death based on that given in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*:

In the same year [i.e. AD 869/870], Edmund, king of the East Angles, fought fiercely against that [Danish] army. But alas, he was killed there with a large number of his men, and the Vikings rejoiced triumphantly; the enemy were masters of the battlefield, and they subjected that entire province to their authority.⁴

Neither the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* nor Asser mention a martyrdom ordeal. As is the case with many saints' lives, there is little in the biography of St Edmund that can be regarded as fact; the story of his life quickly became overlaid with legend, apocryphal narratives and new traditions. In contrast to the rather spare accounts from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Asser, Edmund was revered as a martyr and saint fairly soon after his death: coins from before 900, bearing Edmund's memorial image, show the recognition of Edmund's cult by the Danes, whose own ancestors had slain the saint.⁵ Susan Ridyard has argued that, rather than growing out of popular enthusiasm, the cult was used by the Danes to control East Anglia.⁶

In the mid-tenth century, Abbo of Fleury (c. 945–1004) wrote the first hagiographical narrative of Edmund's life and martyrdom;⁷ this was based on an oral account given by Archbishop Dunstan (d. 988), communicated to Abbo. Abbo, abbot of St Benoît-sur-Loire, had been educated at the schools of Paris, Reims and Orléans, and spent several years at Ramsey (Huntingdonshire).⁸ According to Abbo's prologue, Dunstan had listened to Edmund's former arms-bearer recount the story of Edmund's martyrdom. Dunstan narrated this to Abbo and, on returning to Ramsey, Abbo was commissioned to write a Latin life of Edmund. This, he states, had never before been done. Antonia Gransden suggests that the founder of Ramsey, Oswald (d. 992), commissioned the life in order to extend the cult of saints in East Anglia, possibly as a response to the development of Northumbrian cults.⁹ An Anglo-Saxon version, a kind of translation at once abbreviated and augmented, of Abbo's

⁴ Translation from Asser, *Alfred the Great*, ed. and trans. S. Keynes and M. Lapidge (Harmondsworth, 1983), p. 78.

⁵ These are now in the British Museum in London (gallery 41, room 32). See C. E. Blunt, 'The Saint Edmund Memorial Coinage', *PSIA* 31 (1969), 234–55, and comments by Phelpstead and Finlay, below p. 30 and p. 46.

⁶ S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 211–33.

⁷ Abbo's text is BHL 2392, printed in *TLES*, pp. 67–87. On Abbo, see P. Riché, *Abbon de Fleury: Un Moine Savant et Combatif (vers 950–1004)* (Turnhout, 2004), esp. pp. 40–3; also, A. Gransden, 'Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*', *Revue Bénédictine* 105 (1995), 20–78.

⁸ 'Dunstan (d. 988), archbishop of Canterbury', *ODNB*.

⁹ Gransden, 'Legends and Traditions', p. 5.

text was made by Ælfric of Eynsham (c. 950–c. 1010) within his collection of saints' lives.

Abbo's life formed the enduring template of Edmund's *vita*, and manuscripts of the work continued to circulate into the fifteenth century.¹⁰ The basic details of Abbo's account are thus: the Danish pagan Hinguar attacked East Anglia and sent an ambassador to Edmund, king of East Anglia, who was at this point residing at the place Abbo calls 'Haeglisdun'. The Danish communiq   demanded that Edmund reign under Hinguar. One of Edmund's bishops advised the king to surrender or flee, but Edmund swore his devotion to his men and to Christ. Citing Christ's example, Edmund then said that he would not slay Hinguar's ambassador because he did not wish to stain his hands with blood; Edmund told the ambassador that he would submit to Hinguar if the Danish invader converted to Christianity. His ambassador having returned, Hinguar ordered the seizure of Edmund. Edmund discarded his weapons, was bound, 'tried' before Hinguar, scourged and then tied to a tree. During this ordeal, Edmund repeatedly called out to Christ, further stimulating the Danes' ire. The Danes then shot arrows into Edmund's body, until he resembled a hedgehog; then the Danes beheaded Edmund, and discarded the head in woodland. A range of miracles is then said to have taken place: particularly popular in medieval imagery is the story of a wolf that guarded Edmund's head until the head was found (miraculously shouting 'Here! Here! Here!') and reunited with the body. Early accounts of Edmund's death do not agree on the site of martyrdom (Abbo gives 'Haeglisdun', other accounts name 'Sutton', and later monastic documents give Hoxne); none locate it at Bury.¹¹

Around the memory of Edmund grew a rich and versatile cult; the saint was lauded not only as an exemplary Christian, but also as a model king, scholar, virgin and East Anglian. A small chapel was soon set up at the site of Edmund's martyrdom, but when Edmund's body was found to be incorrupt the body was moved to Beodericisworth (i.e. Bury); it is unknown precisely when the body of St Edmund reached Bury, although this can probably be dated to the early years of the tenth century.¹² According to the Bury monk Hermann (late eleventh century), between 1010 and 1013 the saint's body was removed from Suffolk to London, by the monk Ailwyn (or Egelwin) in

¹⁰ *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, ed. N. R. Ker, 2nd edn (London, 1987), s.v. 'Bury St Edmunds'.

¹¹ See Gransden, 'Legends and Traditions', pp. 8–9.

¹² A. Gransden, 'The Cult of St Mary at Beodricsworth and then in Bury St Edmunds Abbey to c. 1150', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 55 (2004), 627–53, argues that the church at Beodericisworth, later Bury, was first dedicated to the Virgin and only later, when Edmund's cult was well established, dedicated to the martyr. In the later medieval period, the date of the first Translation of Edmund's body to Beodericisworth was given as some time during the reign of   thelstan (893/4–924).

order to protect it from renewed Danish raids;¹³ having performed a range of miracles for Londoners, the body returned to Bury. Ailwyn's presence was required, some forty years later, to confirm the authenticity and the incorrupt nature of the body when the coffin was opened at Bury by Abbot Leofstan (abbot 1045–65).¹⁴ The wealthy Benedictine abbey at Beodercisworth was rededicated to Edmund in 1095 and the reputedly incorrupt corpse was translated into the abbey church in 1097.¹⁵

The erection of the shrine was part of a concerted effort by the abbey to promote the cult, which included, also in the late eleventh century, a collection of miracles of St Edmund written at Bury by Hermann.¹⁶ Certainly from around this time, if not earlier, Edmund's cult 'sustains the idea of St Edmund as inhabiting a pivotal position between East Anglia as a discrete political entity and those outsiders seeking to consolidate their authority over it'.¹⁷ Bury had secured its place as the focus of Edmund's cult; with its close links to the English Crown and its distinctive East Anglian identity, Bury became a popular and lucrative pilgrimage site. Gransden has described a 'boom' in Edmund's cult from the 1020s, commensurate with the 'spectacular development' of other Anglo-Saxon saints' cults.¹⁸ Ridyard has argued that Anglo-Saxon cults blossomed in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest.¹⁹ Edmund's cult seems only to have been recognized formally by the Church in 1122, although it was clearly well established before this.²⁰ In the period around 1140, before St Thomas Becket's shrine at Canterbury garnered massive celebrity, Edmund's shrine at Bury was probably the most popular pilgrimage site in England.²¹

¹³ See S. Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities: Miracle Stories in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 35.

¹⁴ *Memorials of Saint Edmund's Abbey*, ed. T. Arnold, 3 vols., Rolls Series 96 (London, 1890–96), I, 40–6.

¹⁵ The change of name from Beodercisworth to Bury St Edmunds or Saintedmundsbury occurred by 1050; see Lobel, *Borough of Bury*, pp. 4–5. On the translation of Edmund's body, see the near-contemporary account given by Hermann, monk of Bury, in *Memorials*, ed. Arnold, I, 84–91; this is discussed by Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, pp. 24–31. On the movement and the changing state of Edmund's corpse, see Gransden, 'Legends and Traditions', pp. 5–7, which also nicely describes the conventions and *topoi* of hagiography used in the Edmund legend.

¹⁶ On Hermann and his text, see Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, pp. 24–62.

¹⁷ Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, p. 34.

¹⁸ Gransden, 'Legends and Traditions', p. 11.

¹⁹ S. Ridyard, 'Condigna Veneratio: Post-Conquest Attitudes to the Saints of the Anglo-Saxons', *Anglo-Saxon Studies* 9 (1987), 180–206.

²⁰ See C. G. Loomis, 'The Growth of the St Edmund Legend', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 14 (1932), 83–113 (p. 84).

²¹ See R. H. C. Davis, 'The Monks of St Edmund', *History* 40 (1955), 227–39 (esp. p. 234); B. Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind: Theory, Record and Event, 1000–1215* (Philadelphia, 1982), pp. 105–6, on the 'competition' between the cults of Cuthbert, Edmund and Thomas.

Much work on the abbey buildings at Bury was done during the abbacy of Anselm (abbot 1121–48), with significant steps being made in new building.²² Anselm, who travelled widely and was a close friend of Henry I (1068/9–1135, r. 1100–), seems to have actively promoted the interests of Bury at the English court and in northern France, and would have realized that the community of St Edmund's men needed splendid buildings. The abbey itself was largely finished by 1150 and would have presented an imposing, indeed spectacular, monument to St Edmund and the community under his patronage and protection.²³

The twelfth century has generally been characterized as the 'golden age' of the abbey at Bury and was certainly the period in which the cult of St Edmund was most energetically developed and promoted. Much of this sense of a high point in Bury's spiritual and material wealth is due to the dazzling figure of Abbot Samson (abbot 1182–1211), 'truly great as a man of many activities and as a ruler'.²⁴ Samson, according to the Bury monk and historian Jocelin of Brakelond (*fl.* 1180–1200), had a particular reason for his devotion to St Edmund: aged nine, he had a dream that Edmund saved him from the devil; his mother then took him to visit Edmund's shrine. As abbot, Samson was responsible for the increased prosperity of the abbey, the development of written records there, and the confirmation of its privileges; as Jocelin describes, Samson made some key interventions, which considerably strengthened the abbey's positions.²⁵ As well as refurbishing the shrine of St Edmund following the fire of 1198, Samson moved towards direct management of the abbey's estates, he travelled between his manors as a supervisor, he banished the town's Jews, he founded the hospital of St Saviour at Babwell, and he repurchased for the abbey the large and lucrative manor of Mildenhall. Samson also reworked the version of the miracles of St Edmund found in the famous illustrated Pierpont Morgan manuscript.²⁶

Key texts in the development of Edmund's cult continued to be produced at Bury: the *Annals of St Neots*, written at Bury probably in the twelfth century, furnished further details of Edmund's life, including the widely accepted date of his accession in 855.²⁷ Around 1150 Gaulfridus (Geoffrey) of

²² James, *On the Abbey*, p. 119.

²³ On Anselm's fostering of the cult of St Edmund, see Gransden, 'The Cult of St Mary'.

²⁴ Such is the assessment of D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of the Development from the times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 943–1216* (Cambridge, 1940), p. 306.

²⁵ See Gransden's biography of Samson, *ODNB*.

²⁶ C. Hahn, 'Peregrinatio et natio: The Illustrated Life of Edmund, King and Martyr', *Gesta* 30 (1991), 119–39 (the *vita* is *BHL* 2398); the text of the Morgan manuscript miracles is *BHL* 2395–6.

²⁷ Whitelock, 'Legends and Traditions', p. 224; 'Edmund (d. 869), king of the East Angles', *ODNB*; *The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, ed. D. M. Dumville and M. Lapidge (Cambridge, 1985).

Wells ('de Fontibus') produced his *De Infantia Sancti Eadmundi* (examined in detail by Paul Antony Hayward in this volume) at Bury, describing the childhood of Edmund and further miracles connected with him. Around the same time, a further set of miracles (now BL Cotton MS Titus A.viii) was produced, attributed to Osbert of Clare (d. c. 1158), prior of Westminster, who also had a Suffolk background.²⁸ A giant compilation made in the fourteenth century at Bury (now Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 240) gathers together a wide range of texts about Edmund's life and miracles. This was the source in the fifteenth century for much of the long narrative poem, *The Lives of Ss Edmund and Fremund*, written for the English king Henry VI (1421–71) by the Bury monk John Lydgate (c. 1370–1449/50). Lydgate's rich text is discussed further in the essays in this volume by A. S. G. Edwards, Anthony Bale and Alexandra Gillespie.

Bury St Edmunds: abbey, town and saintly community

The town and abbey at Bury were crucial to the development and growth of the cult of St Edmund, and they enjoyed an unusual, indeed unique, governmental and religious authority that frames almost every aspect of the medieval cult of St Edmund.²⁹

The town of Bury seems to have been established in the Anglo-Saxon period; a monastery, built of wood, was founded there by Sigeberht (*fl.* 630/31–654), king of the East Angles, in the mid-seventh century.³⁰ In 1020 the Benedictine abbey at Bury was founded (or possibly refounded) by king Canute (d. 1035), as an expiatory gesture;³¹ Canute's father, Sweyn Forkbeard (Sveinn Tjúguskegg Haraldsson, d. 1014), had tried to exact tribute from Bury and was said to have been killed by Edmund, an episode discussed below in Rebecca Pinner's essay.³² Canute's stone church was consecrated

²⁸ On the complicated history of authorship and attribution of this text, see Paul Antony Hayward's essay in this volume; also, R. M. Thomson, 'Two Versions of a Saint's Life from St Edmund's Abbey: Changing Currents in Twelfth-Century Monastic Style', *Revue Bénédictine* 84 (1974), 383–408; Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, pp. 55–8.

²⁹ A thorough history of the town's governance is given by Lobel, *Borough of Bury*.

³⁰ See M. Statham, *The Book of Bury St Edmunds* (Buckingham, 1988), pp. 11, 25; this information is based on references from Bede and the *Liber Eliensis*, a twelfth-century Ely chronicle, and is, therefore, not entirely reliable.

³¹ D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 156–8, surveys Canute's uses of sanctity in terms of nationalism and the development of a coherent English political identity.

³² Thus the secular canons of *Beodericisworth* were replaced by Benedictine monks, although, as Antonia Gransden has cogently warned, there is the possibility of continuity between these seculars, devoted to the incorrupt body of St Edmund, and the formally Benedictine monastic community. Moreover, religious from Holme might have formed part of the first monastic community at Bury. See Gransden, 'Legends and Traditions', pp. 1; 10; 14–16.

in 1032, but building seems to have been fairly constant and on a grandiose scale between the eleventh century and the 1530s. Abbot Baldwin (abbot 1065–97) was instrumental in furthering Edmund's cult, in building a giant stone Romanesque pilgrimage church, and drawing up charters, harking back to the saint's life, which supported Bury's claims to independence.³³ The abbey church, commenced in the 1080s and built on a plan similar to that of Winchester Cathedral, was enormous – its length about 500 feet – and spectacular in decoration;³⁴ it would, Eric Fernie avers, have been in a class with only two or three other buildings of its time, such as the imperial cathedral at Speyer (begun 1030) and the abbey at Cluny (begun 1088).³⁵ Bury's church, the ruins of which can be seen today, had an exceptional West Front, 'perhaps the most complex façade structure ever built in Britain or, indeed, on the Continent', although we know little about its decoration other than that it had magnificent bronze doors.³⁶ The abbey had at least ten chapels, dedicated to saints other than Edmund, some of whom were of particular local significance such as Botolph (d. 680, an East Anglian saint), Jurmin (a seventh-century East Anglian prince), Petronilla (a Roman virgin martyr whose image features frequently in medieval East Anglian church art), and Robert of Bury (d. 1181, said to have been murdered by Bury's Jews).

The religious community at Bury was granted a significant amount of land in 945 by Edmund I of England (r. 939–46), which became known as the 'banleuca' of St Edmund; this area was the abbot's jurisdiction in which he enjoyed all but regal powers;³⁷ the abbot appointed his own justices in the 'banleuca' and royal justices did not have authority here. More contentiously, the 'banleuca' was exempt from the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishops of Norwich, in whose diocese Bury was located; the abbot of Bury was thus subject directly to the pope, rather than the local bishop. The 'banleuca', an ecclesiastical franchise, which became a kind of statelet endorsed by St Edmund's protection and was directly antagonistic to Norwich, would, for several hundred years, provide a powerful image of belonging and exclusion

³³ See B. Abou-El-Haj, 'Bury St Edmunds Abbey between 1070 and 1124: A History of Property, Privilege and Monastic Art Production', *Art History* 6 (1983), 1–29; 'Baldwin', ODNB. For a hand-list of the various charters known from the medieval abbey, see Thomson, *Archives of the Abbey*, pp. 45–164.

³⁴ James, *On the Abbey*; J. Crook, 'The Architectural Setting of the Cult of St Edmund at Bury 1095–1539', in *Bury St Edmunds. Medieval Art, Archaeology and Economy*, ed. A. Gransden (London, 1998), pp. 33–44, describes the Norman influences on the shrine and crypt.

³⁵ See E. Fernie, 'The Romanesque Church of Bury St Edmunds Abbey', in *Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, pp. 1–15 (p. 5); Fernie's account usefully supplements that given by James, *On the Abbey*, in its precise description of the construction of the church.

³⁶ See J. P. McAleer, 'The West Front of the Abbey Church', in *Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, pp. 22–33; McAleer (p. 23) gives a good summary of the stages in the abbey's construction, including the various collapses and repairs.

³⁷ See Statham, *Book of Bury*, p. 11; the inhabitants of Bury paid geld to the abbey, while the rest of Suffolk paid it to the Crown.

based on reverence to St Edmund.³⁸ Alongside the 'banleuca', the abbey at Bury retained the Liberty of St Edmund, a large area of west Suffolk in which the abbot had vice-regal rights; in the Liberty, the abbot exercised sheriff's powers, largely concerned with crime and justice.³⁹ The abbey also developed distinctive, effectively legal, posts with a secular, rather than clerical or moral, remit: the abbey's cellarer was similar to a lord of the manor, responsible for provisioning the abbey, and the more powerful sacrist executed the abbot's rights in the borough and had control over the town (but not the abbey) of Bury, including the gaol.⁴⁰ Thus in considering the context of Edmund's cult the abbey must be seen not only as a religious foundation but as a political, financial, judicial and legal entity with a distinct and idiosyncratic local identity and a specific territory.⁴¹ In addition to its holdings in Bury and Suffolk the abbey enjoyed significant estates in Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Northamptonshire, and had a London property, Bevis Marks, from at least around 1390. The abbey, unusually, also had its own mint, until the fourteenth century.⁴² The *vita* of St Edmund – showing the saint as pious yet vengeful to those who encroached on his territory – both fed and was fed by the unusual independence and autonomy of Bury's abbey.

From the end of the eleventh century the abbey had a flourishing *scriptorium* and an enormous library.⁴³ In the fifteenth century, if not earlier, the abbey was engaged in secular book-selling as well as monastic book production.⁴⁴ Some of the most splendid and significant English medieval manuscripts come from this milieu: of particular note are the *Bury St Edmunds*

³⁸ Gransden, 'Legends and Traditions', pp. 8–9 describes the hostilities between Bury and Norwich in the eleventh century, when Arfast, bishop of East Anglia, proposed moving his see from Thetford to Bury, which would have incorporated the community at Bury.

³⁹ See *The Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds 1212–1301*, ed. A. Gransden (London, 1964), pp. xii–xiii.

⁴⁰ The history and roles of the cellarer and sacrist are explored in detail in Lobel, *Borough of Bury*, pp. 16–59.

⁴¹ This exclusive territory was accompanied, not surprisingly, by an animosity towards the Jews and Friars. According to Jocelin of Brakelond, the Jews were expelled from Bury in 1190 on the grounds that they were 'not St Edmund's men'. The Friars were expelled from the town in 1263, having entered the town 'in violation of the liberties of St Edmund's church' (*Chronicle of the Abbey*, ed. and trans. Gransden, p. 27).

⁴² See R. J. Eaglen, 'The Mint at Bury St Edmunds', in *Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, pp. 111–21.

⁴³ On the early history of the book production at Bury, see Webber, 'The Provision of Books'; also Thomson, 'The Library of Bury'. A surviving late twelfth-century list of Bury's books, of some 261 items, gives a detailed picture of intellectual and spiritual interests in the abbey; see R. Sharpe *et al.*, *English Benedictine Libraries, the Shorter Catalogues*, Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues 4 (London, 1995), pp. 50–87.

⁴⁴ James, *On the Abbey*; N. Rogers, 'Fitzwilliam Museum MS 3–1979: A Bury St Edmunds Book of Hours and the Origins of the Bury Style', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1986 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, 1987), pp. 229–43.

Psalter (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica MS Reg. lat. 12) and the *Bury Bible* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 2).⁴⁵ Moreover, much of this *de luxe* book production was concerned with the cult of St Edmund, seen in stunning productions such as the Pierpont Morgan manuscript of the illustrated life of St Edmund (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.736) produced c. 1130.⁴⁶ The abbey was also a centre for historical writing, which often took the form of *pièces justificatives* for the continuing independence of Bury;⁴⁷ such books include the beautiful illuminated history of England (now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 251), made by a Bury monk at the command of Richard II around 1390.⁴⁸ As described in the essays that follow, the abbey's *scriptorium* also made many hagiographical works that elaborated upon the *vita* and miracles of St Edmund.

As well being a destination for national and international books and learning, Bury was also exporting the image of St Edmund through books produced there. A mid-eleventh-century copy of Abbo's *Passio* (now Copenhagen, Royal Library MS Gl.Kgl.S.1588, fols. 4v–28r), certainly made in East Anglia and probably at Bury, was owned, by the thirteenth century, by the abbey of St-Denis near Paris.⁴⁹ From the eleventh century onwards, numerous foreign abbeys (Benedictine, Cluniac, Cistercian and Premonstratensian in France, Germany and the Low Countries) included Edmund in their legends and liturgies.⁵⁰

Closer to home and from a later date, one manuscript (now Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud misc. 683) demonstrates the abbey's use of vernacular poetry and culture to further Edmund's cult. This fifteenth-century collection of religious English poetry was organized, made and written at the abbey, although this is not explicit anywhere in the manuscript.⁵¹ The manuscript (discussed further below, p. 154) contains a number of devotional texts to St Edmund and other local saints (again, Robert of Bury, Petronilla) and weaves an emphatic sense of Bury's distinctive spiritual identity with conduct literature, Marian devotion and nationalist sentiments.

Behind the flowering of book production at Bury we can discern the

⁴⁵ On these particular books, see A. Heimann, 'Three Illustrations from the Bury St Edmunds Psalter and their Prototypes', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966), 39–59; C. M. Kauffmann, 'The Bury Bible (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 2)', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966), 60–81.

⁴⁶ See above, note 26.

⁴⁷ See Gransden's chapter, 'Historical Writing at Bury St Edmunds in the Thirteenth Century' in her *Historical Writing in England I, c. 550 to c. 1307* (London, 1974), 335–54.

⁴⁸ See John de Taxster (fl. 1240s) in *Chronicle*, ed. Gransden; V. H. Galbraith, 'The St Edmundsbury Chronicle, 1296–1301', *EHR* 58 (1943), 51–78.

⁴⁹ Gransden, 'Abbo of Fleury's *Passio*', p. 65.

⁵⁰ Gransden, 'Abbo of Fleury's *Passio*', p. 70.

⁵¹ A. Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms 1350–1500* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 112–17.