

TEXTS RELATING TO THE DEATH OF MATILDA DE
BAILLEUL, ABBESS OF WHERWELL: ST. PETERSBURG,
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF RUSSIA, MS LAT.Q.VI.62, FOL. 12V

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This article offers the first full edition, translation, and commentary for three Latin texts relating to the death of Matilda de Bailleul (d. 1212), a Flemish abbess of Wherwell, a Benedictine abbey in Hampshire, England. Wherwell was relatively prosperous throughout its history and was probably founded in the tenth century by Queen Ælfthryth, wife of King Edgar. All three texts appear on the final verso (fol. 12v) of St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Lat.Q.v.I.62. The manuscript comprises two quires: the first contains a liturgical calendar; the second contains computistic and musical material, followed by the texts relating to Matilda's death. The calendar was made at St. Albans in the middle of the twelfth century and had reached Wherwell by 1189 or soon afterwards. The second quire could have been added at either St. Albans or Wherwell. The first two texts are short poems which commemorate Matilda in elegiac couplets. The third text is a letter of consolation on the death of Matilda, from Guy, prior of Southwick, to Euphemia de Walliers (or Wallers), prioress of Wherwell, who was Matilda's niece and successor as abbess of Wherwell. For the first time, evidence is identified which indicates that the two poems were written by different authors. Errors in previous editions of the poems and letter are corrected. Explanations are offered for numerous passages that are difficult to interpret, many of which have hitherto received no comment. Parallels are frequently cited for passages in Guy of Southwick's letter, thereby showing his influences and the extent to which his letter stitches together and reworks quotations from both the Bible and other sources.

In memory of Gwendoline and Leonard Marshall. This work forms part of a project titled "The Literary Heritage of Anglo-Dutch Relations, ca. 1050–ca. 1600" funded by a Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant. I am indebted to both the Leverhulme Trust and my colleagues on the project, Elisabeth van Houts, Sjoerd Levelt, and Ad Putter, for their comments on this research at various stages. Katie Bugyis provided insightful comments on a draft of this article and saved me from several blunders. At an early stage, she also kindly provided me with a photograph (not the one reproduced here) of the relevant page of the manuscript. I am grateful to Natalia Elagina (Наталья Елагина, Curator of Western Manuscripts), Svetlana Abuzina (Светлана Абузина), and the National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, for providing photographs of the manuscript and permission to publish the photograph of fol. 12v. I thank the two anonymous readers, who provided valuable criticisms, suggestions, and additional material.

The following abbreviations are used in this article: DMLBS = *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. Richard Ashdowne, David Howlett, and Ronald Latham (Oxford, 2018); and ThLL = *Thesaurus linguae latinae*, 11 vols. to date (Leipzig, 1900–2021).

Traditio 77 (2022), 1–29

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doi:10.1017/tdo.2022.2

Matilda de Bailleul (d. 1212) was the daughter of Euphemia of St. Omer and Baldwin I, castellan of Bailleul in Flanders.¹ She died a childless widow; we know nothing about her husband. Her maternal grandfather was William II, castellan of St. Omer, a position held by members of the family for over 150 years since 1105.² Her maternal uncle, Osto, was a Templar who was based in Flanders and then England.³ There is no direct evidence explaining Matilda's move ca. 1174 to Wherwell, a Benedictine abbey in Hampshire that was relatively prosperous throughout its history and was "almost certainly" founded in the tenth century by Queen Ælfthryth, wife of King Edgar.⁴ However, both Wherwell and

¹ We know from obits and the verses honoring Matilda that she died in December (see below in the commentary on the verses for a discussion of the exact date). The Close Rolls show King John on July 28, 1213 calling for the election of a new abbess of Wherwell. See *Rotuli litterarum clausarum in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. Thomas Duffus Hardy (London, 1833), 1:148. This means that Matilda died in December 1212, with her niece Euphemia's reign as abbess only beginning in 1213. The outline of Matilda's life in this article relies on Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns: The Ministries of Benedictine Women in England during the Central Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2019), 7–9; Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, "Made for a Templar, Fit for an Abbess: The Psalter, Cambridge, St. John's College, MS C.18 (68)," *Speculum* 95 (2020): 1010–50; *The Heads of Religious Houses. England and Wales. I. 940–1216*, ed. David Knowles, C. N. L. Brooke, and Vera C. M. London (Cambridge, 2001), 222 and 296–97; Rhoda Bucknill, "Bailleul, Matilda de (d. 1212), Abbess of Wherwell," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/105478> (accessed 23 July 2022); and especially Rhoda Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary" (Ph.D. diss., King's College London, 2003), 1:174–83.

² See further Arthur Giry, "Les châtelains de Saint-Omer, 1042–1386," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 35 (1874): 325–55.

³ Bugyis, "Made for a Templar," 1015.

⁴ Bucknill dates the move based on several arguments. We know from Pope Celestine III's privilege that Matilda was abbess in 1194, by which time she had already undertaken the restoration of Wherwell for which Celestine praises her. How long before 1194 did she arrive at Wherwell? We know from the Wherwell Cartulary that Matilda donated numerous items to the abbey. The sacrist's inventory shows the presence of two goblets from which Thomas Becket supposedly drank. These goblets may have been acquired ca. 1174 at the time of Becket mania, a possibility suggested to Bucknill by Anne Duggan. The acquisition of these relics might have been an early act by Matilda as abbess, aimed at gaining support for the restoration of Wherwell. The 1194 privilege from Celestine would then be the culmination of twenty years of work by Matilda, starting in 1174. We also know that she was a widow when she entered Wherwell, perhaps between thirty and forty years old. If she entered Wherwell in 1174 aged 30–40, then she died in 1212 aged 68–78, which are all plausible numbers. However, 1174 remains a best guess. See Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and its Cartulary," 1:177–80. Bugyis also points to connections with Matilda's uncle Osto as potential evidence for a date of 1174. Osto died ca. 1174, so if he was involved in her move to Wherwell, then it probably occurred in 1174 at the latest. We do not know whether there was a gap between her entering Wherwell and becoming abbess. See Bugyis, "Made of a Templar," 1049. On the founding of the abbey, see Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary," 1:2. On the abbey's wealth and size throughout its existence, see Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary," 1:91–168, though there were, of course, difficult periods. Under Abbess Matilda,

Matilda had numerous Anglo-Flemish connections that could explain her presence there. Two possible patrons have been proposed for the restoration of Wherwell and for Matilda's move there: (i) Queen Matilda (of Boulogne), wife of King Stephen; and (ii) Henry II.

In 1141, Wherwell was burnt to the ground, an act attributed to William of Ypres, the commander of Queen Matilda's Flemish mercenaries.⁵ Queen Matilda's name surprisingly appears in the list of obits in the calendar of a psalter commissioned by Osto and later owned by Matilda de Bailleul (Cambridge, St. John's College, MS C.18, hereafter the Wherwell Psalter).⁶ This has led to suggestions that Queen Matilda was behind the restoration of Wherwell, but there is no evidence of her having a direct connection with either Matilda de Bailleul or Wherwell itself, and in fact Queen Matilda was dead (d. 1152) by the time Matilda de Bailleul became abbess. Bucknill notes the possibility that Queen Matilda had some involvement in plans to rebuild Wherwell and that those plans only came to fruition after her death.⁷ Bugyis, however, has argued that extant documents point to Henry II as the driving force behind the restoration of Wherwell and Matilda de Bailleul's move, perhaps via her uncle Osto's connection with Henry II.⁸

Though we can only speculate on the reasons for Matilda's move, we know that her efforts to restore Wherwell were recognised by Pope Celestine III, who issued a privilege to Matilda and her consorsors on May 21, 1194, in order to protect their community from plunder.⁹ There is no evidence that it was issued in response to a particular threat at that time. From it we learn that Matilda remedied (amongst other things) the lack of books: ". . . through you those things that had been ordered badly there received arrangement and order, and the monastery, which had been destitute of both books and other ecclesiastical ornaments, received a welcome increase in all these things."¹⁰ Matilda is likely to have been personally

Wherwell allegedly had more than 40 nuns, and under Abbess Euphemia the number supposedly reached 80. See also David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses. England and Wales* (London, 1971), 255 and 267.

⁵ The identification of William of Ypres as the culprit is due to William of Malmesbury, *Historia novella*, ed. Edmund King and trans. K. R. Potter (Oxford, 1998), 104–105.

⁶ Bugyis, "Made for a Templar," 1019–20.

⁷ Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary," 1:177.

⁸ Bugyis, "Made for a Templar" (n. 1 above), 1019–20.

⁹ Bugyis, "Made for a Templar" (n. 1 above), 1010. For a full translation of the privilege, see Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary" (n. 1 above), 2:372 (no. 8). For the Latin text, see *Papsturkunden in England*, ed. Walther Holtzmann (Berlin, 1930), 1:615–16, no. 318.

¹⁰ ". . . que ibidem male fuerant ordinata, per te ordinationem et ordinem receperunt et monasterium, quod fuerat tam libris quam ornamentis aliis ecclesiasticis destitutum, gratum receipt in his omnibus incrementum." Translation as in Bugyis, "Made for a Templar" (n. 1 above), 1010; text as in Holtzmann, *Papsturkunden in England*, 1:615–16.

wealthy and donated many of the items herself.¹¹ Books were a vital part of monastic life: Matilda's time as abbess no doubt had a profound impact on the literary life of the nuns. Her obituary in Wherwell's mid-fourteenth-century cartulary (London, BL, Egerton MS 2104a, hereafter the Wherwell Cartulary) likewise attests to her commitment to education: "So that doctrine and learning might not be deficient, the zealous mother acquired one hundred and six volumes of books."¹² This was a significant donation. We know something of Matilda's niece, prioress, and successor, Euphemia de Walliers (or Wallers) (d. 1257), from her obituary in the Wherwell Cartulary: "Moreover, she was similarly attentive to external affairs and she conducted herself in her actions and her speech in such a way that she seemed to have not a feminine but rather a manly spirit."¹³

In this article I provide the first full edition, translation, and commentary for eleven elegiac couplets celebrating Matilda's life and for an *epistola consolatoria* (letter of consolation) from Prior Guy of Southwick Priory to Euphemia de Walliers. The texts appear on the final verso (fol. 12v) of St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Lat.Q.v.I.62 (hereafter Lat.Q.v.I.62). No one has hitherto provided a complete translation of the couplets. Gillert, Staerk, and Barratt have published a complete Latin text.¹⁴ Miner includes the Latin text in an unpublished dissertation.¹⁵ Gillert and Staerk both transcribe only the beginning and end of the letter of consolation.

¹¹ Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary" (n. 1 above), 1:176.

¹² For a full translation of the obituary, see Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary" (n. 1 above), 2:443 (no. 60).

¹³ "Circa exteriora uero nichilominus intenta ita se gessit in opere et sermone ut non femineum sed uirile magis animum gerere uideretur." The translation here is my own and differs slightly from that in Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), 114, mainly because I think that *intenta* is feminine nominative singular. For a full translation of the obituary, see Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary" (n. 1 above), 2:440–42 (no. 59). Euphemia was not Matilda's niece by marriage. See Bugyis, "Made for a Templar" (n. 1 above), 1017, n. 37.

¹⁴ See Karl Gillert, "Lateinische Handschriften in St. Petersburg," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellschriften deutscher Geschichten des Mittelalters* 5 (1880): 597–618, at 606–608, and note that the manuscript classmark when cited by Gillert was Q.I.62; Antonio Staerk, *Les manuscrits latins du V^e au XIII^e siècle conservés à la Bibliothèque impériale de Saint-Petersbourg: Description, textes inédits, reproductions autotypiques* (St. Petersburg, 1910), 1:275; and Alexandra Barratt, "Small Latin? The Post-Conquest Learning of English Religious Women," in *Anglo-Latin and Its Heritage: Essays in Honour of A. G. Rigg on His 64th Birthday*, ed. Siân Echar and Gernot Rudolf Wieland (Turnhout, 2001), 51–65, at 63–64, n. 48.

¹⁵ Priscilla Ann Miner, "Eleventh and Twelfth Century Latin Epigram" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1970), 119–20.

ELEGIAC COUPLETS IN HONOR OF MATILDA DE BAILLEUL

Authorship

Barratt raised the possibility that the couplets were written by one of the Wherwell nuns, perhaps even Euphemia.¹⁶ The evidence is circumstantial and oblique, but nevertheless tantalizing. Firstly, Barratt highlights the emphasis on Matilda's role as a *mater* and *matrona*. Since Matilda was a *mater* to the nuns of Wherwell, it would make sense for one of the nuns (for example, Euphemia) to have written verses that stress those aspects of her life. However, it is worth noting that the term *mater* itself does not indicate that the author was a nun of Wherwell: even an outsider would have considered Matilda a *mater* to the nuns. Secondly, Barratt notes the Latin letter from Guy to Euphemia on the same folio: the fact that Guy corresponded with her in Latin suggests that she knew enough Latin to have written the couplets. This is evidence in favor of Euphemia having written the verses rather than an anonymous nun.

The authorship of the verses is complicated by the fact that they may belong to two different poems. Gillert's edition is the earliest known to me and takes the verses as one poem; Barratt treats them as one poem; Bucknill states that there are two poems; and Staerk's layout suggests that he believed the verses to constitute a single poem.¹⁷ Miner prints the text as though a single poem, but notes that, if the first couplet is ignored, then "the poem appears to be more like two epitaphs, one of four distichs, one of six, each beginning with a line of alliterating *m*'s and closing in traditional ways."¹⁸ In the manuscript, the couplets are split between two columns and seemingly presented as two poems, each beginning with a pen-flourished initial in red and blue ink.¹⁹ There are five couplets in column one and six in column two.

Although Bucknill states that there are two poems, she does not entertain the possibility that they were written by different authors. There is, however, metrical evidence in favor of this conclusion. Firstly, the treatment of the name Matilda is inconsistent: *Mätildis* (I.3), but *Mätildis* (II.1).²⁰ This inconsistency could be explained by the difficulty of assigning a Latin scansion to a Germanic name. Names were often a source of difficulty in medieval Latin verse inscriptions.²¹

¹⁶ Barratt, "Small Latin," 63–64.

¹⁷ See Gillert, "Lateinische Handschriften in St. Petersburg," 607, where it is called "ein poetischer Nachruf an Mathilde von Flandern"; Barratt, "Small Latin," 64 (note the reference to "this poem"); and Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary" (n. 1 above), 1:175–76, especially nn. 20 and 21.

¹⁸ Miner, "Eleventh and Twelfth Century Latin Epigram," 119.

¹⁹ See below for a full description of the manuscript.

²⁰ References to the verses include poem and line numbers (for example, I.2), as found in the edition in this article (see below).

²¹ Iiro Kajanto, "Latin Verse Inscriptions in Medieval and Renaissance Rome," *Latomus* 52 (1993): 42–57, at 52–53.

However, such uncertainty would usually lead to some authors choosing *Mätildis* and others *Mätildis*, rather than one author vacillating between the two. Some useful evidence can be found in the mortuary roll of Matilda (d. 1113), abbess of La Trinité at Caen.²² Numerous Latin forms of her name appear in the poems contained in the roll. Those forms that appear in quantitative verse show whether the first syllable was treated by the author as heavy or light. There are a total of forty-nine examples of the name with a heavy first syllable, thirty-two with a light first syllable.²³ The only example from the Low Countries in the roll is *Māthildis* (Ghent).²⁴ From France, we find thirty-three heavy and sixteen light; from England, fifteen heavy and sixteen light. Most poems contain only a single mention of the name, but ten use the name more than once. Just two poems account for twelve of the sixteen light examples from England, so the light scansion was perhaps not as common in England as it might seem. Matilda of Caen's mortuary roll therefore shows that the heavy scansion was generally more common.²⁵ There are examples of two poets from the same location using different scansions, but being internally consistent.²⁶ Interestingly, there are also examples of individual authors vacillating between the heavy and light scansions: three poems have this.²⁷ Since ten poems use the

²² All quotations from Matilda of Caen's mortuary roll are cited from Dufour's edition: see *Recueil des rouleaux des morts (VIII^e siècle-vers 1536). Volume premier (VIII^e siècle-1180)*, ed. Jean Dufour (Paris, 2005), 1:392–502. Dufour edited the corpus of mortuary rolls in five volumes, published in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2013. Hereafter references to any of these volumes will use an abbreviated title followed by the volume number, a page reference, and (if necessary and separated by a period) line numbers: for example, Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:415.10–13. Dufour covered the later rolls chronologically in volumes 2–4, for example, *Recueil des rouleaux des morts (VIII^e siècle-vers 1536). Volume 2 (1181–1399)*, ed. Jean Dufour (Paris, 2006). Volume 5 contains indices and important discussions of various aspects of mortuary rolls. For example, for an overview of the terminology used for mortuary rolls in Latin and modern languages, see Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 5:45–46. The earlier edition of mortuary rolls is *Rouleaux des morts du IX^e au XV^e siècle*, ed. Léopold Delisle (Paris, 1866).

²³ Two verse examples were excluded because they did not provide evidence for the quantitative scansion: one occurs in a poem with an accentual (rather than quantitative) meter (Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:482.25); the other is *Mahidis* in a poem with erratic versification (Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:485.14).

²⁴ See Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:472.21.

²⁵ This is to be expected due to the syllabification of the compound: *Mathildis* is a compound of 'power, might' (*Mat-*) and 'battle' (*-hild-*), which would most naturally result in a closed (and therefore heavy) first syllable *Mat-*.

²⁶ From York: compare Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:415.3 (*versus Ricardi*) with 1:415.10–13 (*versus Petri*).

²⁷ From England: Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:419.3 (*Māthildis*), but 1:419.7 (*Māthildi*). From France: Dufour, *Rouleaux* 1:460.22 (*Māthildis*), but 1:461.1 (*Māthildis*). Also from France: 1:477.5 (*Vestrae Māthildis obitum cum nostra Māthildis*) and then 1:477.9 (*Māthildis*).

name more than once, the fact that three of them vacillate suggests that such inconsistency was not as rare as might have been thought.

It is possible that the different scansions in poems I and II reflect a difference between an author from the Low Countries and an author with a more Anglicised pronunciation of Matilda's name. The single heavy example from the Low Countries in Matilda of Caen's roll is clearly not enough evidence to show that the heavy scansion was more common there. If we expand our search to other texts, we later find spellings like the genitive *Machtildis* (Brabant, 1312), which would unavoidably scan with a heavy first syllable.²⁸ Latin forms attested in England as early as the twelfth century show spellings that begin *Mati-*, which is a spelling more compatible with a light first syllable, even though it does not guarantee one.²⁹ The evidence is currently weak, but further examples may come to light that show the heavy scansion to be associated with the Low Countries and the light scansion to be more common in England. Far more striking is the apparent difference between the treatment of the pentameter caesura in poems I and II. In poem I, the five pentameters never allow a short open vowel before the caesura. In poem II, this licence is found in three of the six pentameters: *carne* (II.1), *pia* (II.8), and *extrema* (II.10). It could, however, be a statistical fluke that all these examples appear in poem II, given the small number of pentameters across the two poems.

It is harder to draw reliable conclusions from the contents. The repetition of the date of Matilda's death (I.9–10 and II.9–10) may possibly be evidence that we are dealing with two separate poems, but certainly has no bearing on the question of whether there are two poets. At I.1–4 we find the only section with first person references: I.1–2 obliquely refers to the poet, while I.3–4 is a direct lament by the poet (*molestor*). Poem II has nothing comparable, which again suggests that there are two poems, but not necessarily two poets. The focus on personal grief in I.1–4 could suggest that poem I was written by someone with a particularly close connection to Matilda, namely her niece, Euphemia. Whilst poem I focuses on Matilda's life and death at Wherwell, poem II gives a brief biographical sketch, showing that there are two poems covering different aspects of her life.

Even though there is no single, definitive proof, the body of evidence points to two poems by two different authors. The most compelling arguments are metrical: the same author could easily have written two poems with different contents, but it would be unlikely for them to have adopted a different approach to the pentameter caesura in each poem. There are examples of a single poet using both scansions of Matilda's name, but it is more common for poets to stick with a single scansion. In poem I, the very personal lament is evidence in favor of Euphemia's

²⁸ See <https://dmnes.org/name/Mathilda> (accessed 29 June 2022).

²⁹ For MATILD on a coin from the Anarchy, see *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign*, ed. Edmund King (Oxford, 1994), plate VII, coin (c).

authorship. It is possible that in poem I the scansion *Mātildis* and the more Classical approach to the pentameter caesura point to Continental (that is, Euphemia's) authorship, but more research is needed on regional variation in Latin poetry of this period. A brief examination of mortuary roll verses from English institutions in the early twelfth century provides similar examples of light syllables being allowed before the caesura in both hexameters and pentameters, though the practice is not common.³⁰ Many of these poems from England do not have it; a few poems have one or two examples. The frequency in poem II is therefore all the more remarkable.

The identification of poem I as Euphemia's work would leave poem II as the work of an anonymous poet, perhaps an English nun at Wherwell, but on this we can do little but speculate. It is not inconceivable that Guy of Southwick was the author. His letter of consolation to Euphemia (see below) indicates that his Latin was probably sufficient to write the verses. Furthermore, there is nothing in poem II that precludes his authorship. It is difficult to know whether certain aspects of poem II should be taken as indicative of male authorship, but it is worth noting the emphasis on Matilda being a *virago* and "a woman in sex only," whilst "in habits and merits she was completely manly." These were, however, common enough sentiments at the time and need not preclude female authorship (and therefore suggest male authorship).³¹ At any rate, the only evidence for Guy's authorship is the fact that he was moved enough by Matilda's

³⁰ Poetry is less common in the mortuary rolls from 1181–1399, that is, those in Dufour's second volume. I exclude examples likely to be false (or rather non-Classical) quantities, that is, vowels which the author may have taken to be long. In such examples the author was not knowingly allowing a light syllable before the caesura. This leaves the examples that follow. From the roll for William Giffard (Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:597–600, no. 126), bishop of Winchester (d. January 23, 1129): 1:598.15 "Dulce fit examen apud hunc, quod firmet et Amen" (hexameter, from Reading); and, in the same poem 1:599.26 "Subjectis socius, inferior sociis" (pentameter). From the roll for Vitalis (Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:514–86, no. 122), abbot of Savigny (d. September 16, 1122): 1:554.24 "Nec prosunt merita justis, pietate remota" (hexameter, from Gloucester); 1:573.30 "Et rosee gentis exercitus igne calentis" (hexameter, from Bardney); and, in the same poem, 1:574.3 "Ut prius ignota bona sumas ad tua vota" (hexameter); 1:574.5 (perhaps an accidental false quantity) "Qua novus est sospes et vivax celicus hospes!" (hexameter); 1:574.8 "Cesses orare, contagia nostra lavare" (hexameter); 1:574.9 "Moribus ornare, nos inde beatificare" (hexameter); and 1:585.6 "Mundi terrena, tendens alte sua frena" (hexameter, from London). From the roll for Matilda of Caen (d. 1113): 1:412.11 "Indulgendo, pius abluat ipse Deus" (pentameter, from Selby); 1:414.28 "Efficiturque minor inferiore suo" (pentameter, from York); and, in the same poem, 1:414.38 "Ut semper maneat unde laboret homo" (pentameter). From the roll for Bruno the Carthusian (d. 1101): 1:330.18 "Non sibi chara fuit, omnibus abstinuit" (pentameter, from Spalding); 1:335.13 "Huc tendunt vota, quo propitiatio tota" (hexameter, from Chester); 1:335.34 "Hic bonus athleta, cujus celeberrima vita" (hexameter, from Malmesbury); and, in the same poem, 1:336.16 "Sed puto, proficere, si dico 'Deus, miserere'" (hexameter).

³¹ Barratt, "Small Latin" (n. 14 above), 64.

death to write to Euphemia, so he may also have honored Matilda with an epitaph.³²

Although a detailed discussion of female literacy in the Middle Ages is beyond the scope of this article, a few things should be said about the potential importance of the authorship of these verses for our understanding of female literacy in the thirteenth century. There has been a growing body of scholarship on elite female literacy and women as literary patrons (whether secular or monastic, Latin or vernacular).³³ Despite the rise of the vernacular in English convents in the thirteenth century, a few continued to use Latin to a greater degree than the majority.³⁴ It is noteworthy that Wherwell, with its two closely-related Flemish abbesses (Matilda and Euphemia), was one of the few exceptions. Both abbesses must have played an important role in the presence of Latin at Wherwell after its destruction.

Our evidence for Latin literacy at Wherwell under the Flemish abbesses relies heavily on the Wherwell Psalter and Lat.Q.v.I.62. Both have been discussed by Bugyis and Barratt.³⁵ The additions and alterations made to these manuscripts during the lifetimes of both Matilda and Euphemia suggest the presence of nuns literate in Latin. In this context the identification of two poets (not one), both possibly female, has important implications. It suggests that knowledge of Latin was not confined to the two abbesses: there was, instead, a culture of Latin literacy fostered by the teaching of these two outstanding abbesses. The Wherwell Cartulary's obituary for Euphemia, which may have been written by one of the nuns, could be evidence of their teaching's legacy.³⁶

Origin

Miner suggests that the opening couplet of poem I is "a personal expression of sorrow," whilst the following lines (that is, I.3–10 and II.1–12) represent two epitaphs, which were written in order to give the nuns at Wherwell "a choice of verse

³² See below (*Origin*) for what I consider the most plausible explanation of how the two poems came to be composed (one by Euphemia, one by an anonymous nun of Wherwell).

³³ On the monastic side, a major contribution has been made by the three volumes of *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe*, ed. Virginia Blanton, Veronica O'Mara, and Patricia Stoop (Turnhout, 2013–17). See also Barratt, "Small Latin" (n. 14 above); and Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), for references in the index to nuns as readers, scribes, and composers of texts. On secular women, see for example Elizabeth M. Tyler, *England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c. 1000–c. 1150* (Toronto, 2017).

³⁴ Jane Stevenson, "Anglo-Latin Women Poets," in *Latin Learning and English Lore. Volume II*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andy Orchard (Toronto, 2005), 86–107, at 100. Note that Stevenson erroneously identifies Euphemia as the author (rather than the recipient) of the letter of consolation.

³⁵ See Bugyis, "Made for a Templar" (n. 1 above); and Barratt, "Small Latin" (n. 14 above), 62–63.

³⁶ See above, n. 13.

for use on the actual tomb.”³⁷ The difficulty with this interpretation is the separation of I.1–2 from the rest of poem I, since *molestor* (I.3) continues the “personal expression of sorrow.” It is much easier to explain poem I as a single literary epitaph, perhaps by Euphemia, which mixes a personal lament with a celebration of Matilda’s life, death, and afterlife.

Poem II, however, looks more like an epitaph specifically meant for Matilda’s tomb. It bears strong similarities to other medieval verse epitaphs, for example, one written for the tomb of Bruno the Carthusian (d. 1101):

I who am buried under this stone deserved to become the first founder of Christ’s fold in this monastery. My name is Bruno. My mother was Germany, but the heart-warming silence of the cloister brought me to Calabria. I was a teacher, a herald of Christ, a man known throughout the world. This was heavenly grace, not merit. The sixth day of October unlocked the chains of the flesh. You who are reading these lines, pray for peace for my soul.³⁸

Compare II.7–12 (honoring Matilda):

Flanders gave birth to her; England gave her a Rule; Werwell gave her an end; her pious life allowed her to see God. The day after the feast of St. Lucy gave to this woman the beginnings of light, so that her final day is her first day. May God himself be the true day for her and a giver of peace, by perpetuating the day for her rest.³⁹

Both contain elements common to such poems, sketching out the basics of the deceased’s life in a similar way: birth in one place, life in another, date of death, and prayer for peace for the soul in the afterlife.⁴⁰ Both are anonymous, as funerary inscriptions often are.⁴¹ Poem I differs from both due to its first-person lament

³⁷ Miner, “Eleventh and Twelfth Century Latin Epigram” (n. 15 above), 120.

³⁸ “Primus in hac eremo Christi fundator ouilis / promerui fieri qui tegor hoc lapide. / Bruno mihi nomen; genitrix alemania; meque / transtulit ad calabros grata quies eremi. / doctor eram; prece Christi; uir notus in orbe. / desuper illud erat gratia. non meritum. / carnis uincla dies octobris sexta resoluit. / spiritui requiem qui legis ista pete.” Two unasccribed epitaphs for Bruno’s tomb appear in the abbreviated edition of Bruno’s mortuary roll that was printed by Johann Froben in Basel in 1515. See *Bruno the Carthusian and His Mortuary Roll: Studies, Text, and Translations*, ed. Hartmut Beyer, Gabriela Signori, and Sita Steckel (Turnhout, 2014), 12, 17, and, for the texts, 132–33. I have made some minor changes to the capitalization and punctuation of the Latin and English.

³⁹ “Flandria nempe genus, regimen dedit Anglia, finem / Warewella, pia uita uidere Deum. / Crastina Lucie dedit huic primordia lucis / ut sic extrema sit sibi prima dies. / Vera dies sit ei Deus ipse datorque quietis, / ipsius ad requiem perpetuando diem.”

⁴⁰ See Vincent Debiais and Estelle Ingrand-Varenne, “Inscriptions in Orderic’s *Historia ecclesiastica*: A Writing Technique between History and Poetry,” in *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works, and Interpretations*, ed. Charles C. Rozier, Daniel Roach, Giles E. M. Gasper, and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge, 2016), 127–44, at 127–28.

⁴¹ Debiais and Ingrand-Varenne, “Inscriptions in Orderic’s *Historia ecclesiastica*,” 131.

by the author. When funerary inscriptions speak in the first person, the voice is usually that of the deceased.⁴²

We know from Orderic Vitalis that colleagues and students of William of Fécamp composed verse epitaphs for William after his death.⁴³ Hildebert's epitaph was used for William's tomb, while Athelelm's was written in William's mortuary roll. A similar situation may have occurred at Wherwell: Euphemia wrote poem I for inclusion in a mortuary roll and another nun wrote poem II for use on Matilda's tomb. Both were then entered in the mortuary roll, perhaps along with Guy's letter of consolation. At around the same time, all three texts (the two poems and the letter) were copied into Lat.Q.v.I.62, perhaps from the mortuary roll before it departed Wherwell.

Manuscript

Thomson gives a full description of the manuscript, which I summarise here for convenience, since copies of his work can be hard to access.⁴⁴ It comprises two quires, each of which has six folios. He states that the first quire was definitely made at St. Albans in the middle of the twelfth century, whilst the second is of a later date and could have been added at Wherwell. Fols. 1r–6v (the first quire) contain the calendar; fols. 7r–10v computistic material; fols. 11r–12r musical material, including a Guidonian hand; and fol. 12v the texts relating to Matilda's death.⁴⁵ Thomson identifies numerous hands, but for the purposes of this article it is important to note that he attributes fol. 12v to a single scribe from the first half of the thirteenth century, not long after Matilda's death. The additions to the calendar by many different hands show that it (along with the second quire) was at Wherwell by the late twelfth century, where it remained until the early fourteenth century (at least). Fol. 12v is the only material that was clearly added at Wherwell. Everything else in the second quire could have been added at either St. Albans or Wherwell.

The three texts on fol. 12v are carefully laid out, suggesting a well-planned, single act of copying. Poem I (the first column) seems to have been written first. Afterwards, poem II (the second column) was added. The first line of poem II is almost identical in appearance to the text in poem I, but subsequent lines of poem II (in particular II.3 onwards) appear larger, as though the scribe decided that the original text size was too small. By placing poem I on the left and poem II (which is two lines longer) on the right, the scribe leaves a space of

⁴² Debiais and Ingrand-Varenne, "Inscriptions in Orderic's *Historia ecclesiastica*," 131.

⁴³ Arthur George Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066–1422* (Cambridge, 1992), 15–16.

⁴⁴ Rodney M. Thomson, *Manuscripts from St. Albans Abbey, 1066–1235* (Woodbridge, 1982), 1:123.

⁴⁵ Thomson has a small error: he gives the reference as fols. 11r–12v for the Matilda texts.

two lines beneath poem I, in which the rubric for the letter of consolation appears. This allows the letter to be written across the whole page without leaving any gaps.

The calendar, which was presumably originally attached to a psalter, had reached Wherwell by 1189 or soon afterwards.⁴⁶ How this transpired is not known. Thomson notes Eileen Power's suggestion that nunneries were generally dependent on male houses and professional scribes for their books; he therefore speculates that Wherwell may simply have ordered "its service-books from the nearest, most accommodating or most competent scriptorium."⁴⁷ Bucknill suggests that there must have been a link (now obscure) between the Bailleul family and St. Albans: a private psalter was probably given to Euphemia in Flanders and then taken by her to Wherwell, with the calendar being the only part of the psalter now extant.⁴⁸

Edition

In the edition below, the use of punctuation and capital letters is in accordance with modern conventions. All abbreviations have been silently expanded. Square brackets surround letters that are completely illegible in the photograph (Figure 1) but can be supplied from the context.

Text

I

D[e]mul[c]ere nequit [ca]ntu Philomena dolorem	1
quem nouat in ueteri uulnere plaga recens.	
Matris matrone Matildis morte molestor,	
si tamen hec moritur cui noua uita datur.	
Vixerat illa Deo munde quia mortua mundo;	5
luce tamen plena non erat apta frui.	
At nunc in Domino carnis compage soluta	
alta petit liber spiritus, ima caro.	
Crastina Lucie sibi lux illuxit et orto	
sidere lucis ei mors premit atra suos.	10

⁴⁶ Thomson, *Manuscripts from St. Albans Abbey*, 1:37. Thomson calls it the Leningrad Calendar. Bucknill refers to it as the *Kalendarium*.

⁴⁷ Thomson, *Manuscripts from St. Albans Abbey*, 1:37–38.

⁴⁸ Bucknill, "Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary" (n. 1 above), 1:179–80.

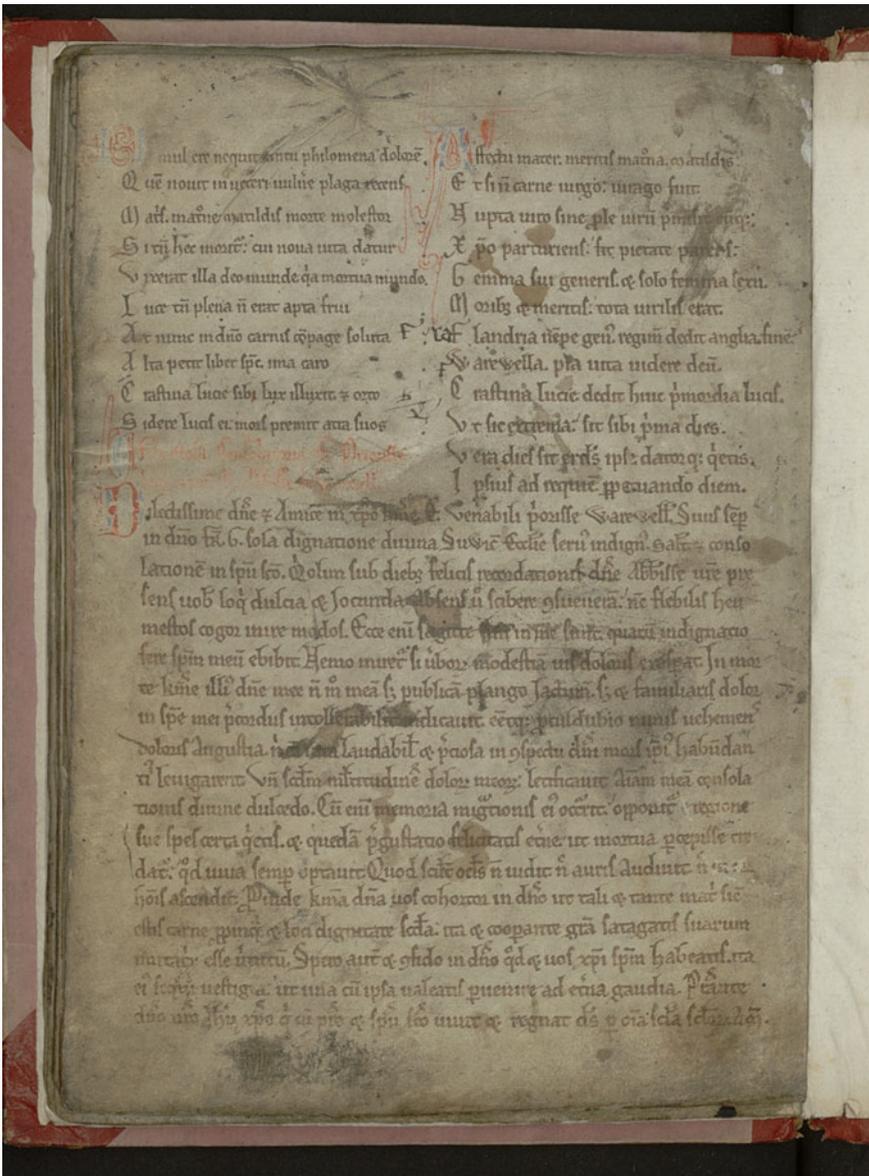


Figure 1: St. Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Lat.Q.v.I.62, fol. 12v

II

Affectu mater, meritis matrona, Matildis, etsi non carne uirgo, uirago fuit.	1
Nupta uiro sine prole uirum premisit eumque; Christo parturiens fit pietate parens.	
Gemma sui generis et solo femina sexu, moribus et meritis tota uiriliter erat.	5
Flandria nempe genus, regimen dedit Anglia, finem Warewella, pia uita uidere Deum.	
Crastina Lucie dedit huic primordia lucis ut sic extrema sit sibi prima dies.	10
Vera dies sit ei Deus ipse datorque quietis, ipsius ad requiem perpetuando diem.	

Translation

I

The nightingale cannot soothe with her song the pain which a recent blow renews in an old wound. I am troubled by the death of Matilda, matron mother, if however she is dead to whom a new life is given. [5] She lived a pure life for God because she was dead to the world; she was not, however, fit to enjoy the full light. But now that she is with the Lord and the bonds of the flesh have been broken, her free spirit seeks the heights, while her flesh seeks the depths. The day after the feast of St. Lucy shone upon her and, when the star of the morning has risen for her, black death crushes its allotted people.

II

In disposition a mother, by merits a matron, Matilda, although not a virgin in flesh, was a virago. She was married to a man without the offspring of men and she sent him ahead. Giving birth for Christ, she becomes a parent through her piety. [5] A jewel of her people and a woman in sex only, in habits and merits she was completely manly. Flanders gave birth to her; England gave her a Rule; Wherwell gave her an end; her pious life allowed her to see God. The day after the feast of St. Lucy gave to this woman the beginnings of light, so that her final day is her first day. May God himself be the true day for her and a giver of peace, by perpetuating the day for her rest.

Commentary

I.1 philomena: A common medieval spelling of *philomela* (“nightingale”): see DMLBS s.v. *philomela*.⁴⁹ The nightingale’s connection with lamentation can be found as early as Homer (*Od.* 19.512–23), where Penelope compares her mourning with that of the ἄηδών (“nightingale”).⁵⁰ Latin *philomela* comes from Greek Φιλομήλα (Philomela), a princess in Greek mythology who (according to most Latin authors) was turned into a nightingale, whilst her sister, Procne (Πρόκνη), became a swallow. In some versions of the tale, Philomela becomes a swallow and Procne a nightingale. The version of the myth in Ovid (*Met.* 6.401–674) was the most widely known in the Middle Ages and influenced authors like Chrétien de Troyes and Chaucer, although Ovid (in his *Metamorphoses*) does not identify which birds the sisters become.⁵¹ Ovid does, however, elsewhere associate Philomela with mourning (*Am.* 2.6.6–10), as does Vergil (*G.* 4.511–515), who compares Orpheus’s lamentation after the loss of Eurydice to the mourning nightingale (*maerens philomela*). In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the nightingale suddenly appears as a favorite among poets throughout Europe.⁵² Yet in Christian poetry the nightingale is mostly connected with consolation and joy rather than lamentation.⁵³ In the secular poetry of the *Carmina Burana* and in vernacular poetry, the nightingale is likewise usually associated with love and joy.⁵⁴ In I.1, the poet’s grief is so great that even the joyful, soothing song of the nightingale cannot alleviate it.

D[e]mul[ere] . . . [ca]ntu . . . dolorem: There are numerous Classical parallels that may have inspired this line, for example, the soothing birdsong in Vergil

⁴⁹ See also Lena Behmenburg, *Philomela* (Berlin, 2009), 2, n. 5.

⁵⁰ On the nightingale and lament in Greek and Roman poetry, see Thomas J. Nelson, “Most Musically, Most Melancholy”: Avian Aesthetics of Lament in Greek and Roman Elegy,” *Dictynna* 16 (2019): 1–93 (note that this online article is separated into 93 paragraphs rather than pages).

⁵¹ Albert R. Chandler, “The Nightingale in Greek and Latin Poetry,” *The Classical Journal* 30 (1934): 78–84, esp. 79. In the Middle Ages the “reception of Ovid was predominantly centred on the *Metamorphoses*.” See Suzanne Conklin Akbari, “Ovid and Ovidianism,” in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature. Volume 1: 800–1558*, ed. Rita Copeland (Oxford, 2016), 187–208, at 187. On Ovid’s continuing influence in English monasteries throughout the late medieval period, see James G. Clark, “Ovid in the Monasteries: The Evidence from Late Medieval England,” in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, ed. James G. Clark, Frank T. Coulson, and Kathryn L. McKinley (Cambridge, 2011), 177–96. The most detailed study of the Philomela myth, with a focus on German and French vernacular retellings in the Middle Ages, is Behmenburg, *Philomela*.

⁵² Thomas Alan Shippey, “Listening to the Nightingale,” *Comparative Literature* 22 (1970): 46–60, at 46.

⁵³ F. J. E. Raby, “Philomena praevia temporis amoeni,” in *Mélanges Joseph De Ghellinck* (Gembloux, 1951), 435–48, at 437–38.

⁵⁴ Raby, “Philomena,” 441–42.

A. 7.32–34: “*variae circumque supraque / adsuetae ripis volucres et fluminis alveo / aethera mulcebant cantu lucoque volabant.*”⁵⁵ The alleviation of grief and pain was naturally a topos of pagan consolation literature. The consolation literature of pagan authors such as Cicero and Seneca the Younger subsequently influenced Christian authors such as Ambrose and Jerome.⁵⁶

I.2 nouat: The vowel quantity shows that this cannot be *nōuit* from *noscere*. Firstly, the couplet would make no sense: “The nightingale cannot soothe with her song the pain which a recent blow knows in an old wound.” Secondly, such a metrical anomaly would be unusual in a common verb, given that poem I otherwise has Classical quantities. Preference should therefore be given to an interpretation of *nouit* that would scan correctly. Gillert prints *nouat* as though it were the manuscript reading.⁵⁷ In the manuscript the reading *nouit* is clear, so this is probably a scribal error under the influence of the common perfect *nouit* (from *noscere*). I therefore emend the text and likewise read *nouat* from *nouare* (“to make new”): “the pain which a recent blow renews in an old wound.”

in ueteri uulnere plaga recens: Staerk has *nēlu* where the manuscript clearly reads *uulñe*. There do not seem to be any proposals identifying this “old wound.” The “recent blow” (*plaga recens*) is clear: the death of Matilda. The “old wound” may be the damage caused by the papal interdict issued by Innocent III in 1208, which was still in effect and several years “old” by the time Matilda died. Christian burials were not allowed until the interdict was lifted in 1214, so Matilda’s death in 1212 was a painful reminder of the significant impact the interdict had on normal life: even an abbess could not receive a proper Christian burial.⁵⁸ Gervase, a contemporary and a monk of Christ Church Canterbury, referred to a *dolor*. . . *immanis et angustia* (“an immense pain and affliction”) that spread throughout England due to the interdict, with the dead buried in profane places rather than consecrated cemeteries.⁵⁹ Clearly the interdict made the stressful period following a death far worse, since the living were denied the solace and closure provided by a Christian burial. Every death must have renewed the anguish caused by the interdict. Peter of Blois once even wrote a letter of consolation to Matilda regarding the interdict.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Vergil, *Aeneid* 7.32–34, ed. Henry Rushton Fairclough and George Patrick Goold, in *Virgil, Aeneid, Books 7–12; Appendix Vergiliana*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 4–5.

⁵⁶ See Ronald K. Rittgers, *The Reformation of Suffering. Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Oxford, 2012), 37–62.

⁵⁷ Gillert, “Lateinische Handschriften in St. Petersburg” (n. 14 above), 607.

⁵⁸ C. R. Cheney, “King John and the Papal Interdict,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 31 (1948): 295–317, at 299–300.

⁵⁹ *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. William Stubbs (London, 1880), 2:101.

⁶⁰ Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), 113, n. 134. See also below on Guy of Southwick’s letter, commentary, 3–5.

matris: As abbess she was the “mother” of the nuns at Wherwell. Bede uses *mater* to distinguish between abbesses and other women religious, for example, *mater ancillarum* and *uirginum Deo deuotarum perplurium mater uirgo*.⁶¹

I.3 matrone: Matilda’s status as a *matrona* (“married woman”) is explained in II.1–3 (see below).

morte molestor: The author expresses personal pain at the death of Matilda. Instead of beginning with a focus on Matilda, the poem opens with the poet’s grief, reflecting the depth of the poet’s sorrow and suggesting a very personal connection with Matilda.

I.6 luce tamen plena non erat apta frui: Although Matilda was, during her lifetime, “dead to the world” (*mortua mundo*) and living only for God, she was not able to enjoy the “full light” (*luce . . . plena*). However, after death (the transition is marked by *At nunc*) her spirit “seeks the heights” (*alta petit*), where she can now enjoy the “full light.” God is the full light. Compare 1 John 1:5: “quoniam Deus lux est, et tenebrae in eo non sunt ullae.” A few decades after Matilda’s death, Thomas Aquinas, citing 1 John 1:5 in his commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*, uses *lux plena* to describe God. He argues (Book 2, Distinction 12, Article 3) that, since God is the full light, knowledge of God himself in himself is the full light: “Cum autem Deus sit lux plena, et tenebrae in eo non sint ullae, 1 Joan. 1, cognitio ipsius Dei in se est plena lux.” Compare also the ideas of perfect knowledge and seeing face-to-face found in 1 Cor. 13:9–12.

I.9 Crastina Lucie . . . lux: Compare I.9–10 and II.9–10, both of which state the date of Matilda’s death. See DMLBS s.v. *crastinus* (2b) for examples of *crastinus* used as a masculine substantive with a saint in the genitive to mean “the day after the feast of St. . . .” See DMLBS s.v. *crastinus* (1c) for both feminine and masculine examples of its use as an adjective with *dies*, again with the same meaning, “the day after.” *Crastina Lucie . . . lux* clearly means “the day after the feast of St. Lucy.” Note the play on the similarities between *lux*, *lucis*, and *Lucie*. Bucknill takes this to mean that Matilda died on December 14, since St. Lucy’s day is December 13. Barratt instead takes the verses to mean that she died “on the morning of the Feast of St. Lucy (December 13).”⁶² St. Lucy’s day is December 13, so we might expect “the day after St. Lucy’s day” to mean December 14, but perhaps the poetic reference is based on the day (whether liturgical or secular) beginning during the hours of darkness. Thus “tomorrow’s light” (*crastina lux*) could be a reference to sunrise on December 13, since that is the daylight

⁶¹ Sarah Foot, “Bede’s Abbesses,” in *Women Intellectuals and Leaders in the Middle Ages*, ed. John Van Engen, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, and Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis (Cambridge, 2020), 261–76, at 264.

⁶² See Bucknill, “Bailleul, Matilda de” (n. 1 above) and Barratt, “Small Latin” (n. 14 above), 64, who does not explain her reasoning for choosing December 13, rather than December 14.

that follows the beginning of St. Lucy's day, which occurs at night. The obits for Matilda are frustratingly contradictory. The Wherwell Psalter has her death on December 13, but Lat.Q.v.I.62, fol. 6v, marks her obit on December 14.⁶³ Perhaps December 13 is correct and December 14 in the obit in Lat.Q.v.I.62 is a misunderstanding of the poetic references to her death in the same manuscript. If December 14 is correct, then perhaps the December 13 obit in the Wherwell Psalter is similarly a misunderstanding of the same poetic references and evidence that the scribe had seen verses like the ones in Lat.Q.v.I.62.

I.9–10 orto / sidere lucis: When the morning star (*sidere lucis*) has risen. Compare the ancient hymn *Iam lucis orto sidere* ("Now that the morning star has risen"). The hymn is sung at Prime and may have been part of the Old Hymnal, which means that it could date back to the fifth century.⁶⁴ It is found in eighth-century manuscripts at Darmstadt and Trier, whilst attestations in English manuscripts date from at least the eleventh century.⁶⁵

I.9–10 sibi . . . ei . . . suos: The intended referents of these pronominal forms are not all self-evident, because in Medieval Latin we find non-reflexive uses of *se* and *suos* as well as reflexive uses of *is*. In such close proximity it is not impossible to have *sibi* and *ei* both referring to Matilda, given the Medieval Latin extension of *sibi* to non-reflexive uses. Compare a poem from Chester in Bruno's mortuary roll, which has *Gratia summa dei propitiatur ei* (line 6 of the poem) and then *sit sibi iam requies* (line 10): both *ei* and *sibi* refer to Bruno, but *sibi* conveniently creates a heavy syllable in *sit*, whereas *ei* allows *propitiatur* to have a light final syllable.⁶⁶ This may also be the motivation for *sibi* in I.9, where *ei* would not scan. Note that *suos* is reflexive, referring back to death: "black death crushes its allotted people," that is, death takes those whose time has come.⁶⁷ Since the dead are buried beneath the earth, they are also "pressed down" literally: see "Mors

⁶³ For the Wherwell Psalter, see Bugyis, "Made for a Templar" (n. 1 above), 1016. For Lat.Q.v.I.62, see Thomson, *Manuscripts from St. Albans Abbey* (n. 44 above), 1:136, n. 8.

⁶⁴ See Inge B. Milfull, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church* (Cambridge, 1996), 127–29. On hymnals in Medieval England, see Helmut Gneuss, *Hymnar und Hymnen im englischen Mittelalter* (Tübingen, 1968). On the Old Hymnal, see specifically Gneuss, *Hymnar und Hymnen*, 10–54, especially the table on 24, in which *Iam lucis orto sidere* is to be found. For the possibility of a fifth-century date, see Els Rose, *Ritual Memory: The Apocryphal Acts and Liturgical Commemoration in the Early Medieval West (c. 500–1215)* (Leiden, 2009), 19.

⁶⁵ *A Dictionary of Hymnology, Setting Forth the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of All Ages and Nations*, ed. John Julian (London, 1907), 577–78.

⁶⁶ Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:335.12 and 1:335.16 (no. 143).

⁶⁷ See *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford, 1996), s.v. *suus* (12) for similar usages and compare *suus dies* ("his allotted day," hence "the day of his death").

premit omne caput” (from Bruno’s mortuary roll); “mors premit omnia” (twelfth century, Bernard of Cluny, *De contemptu mundi* 3.231).⁶⁸

II.10 mors . . . atra: In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as in earlier times, *mors* is often given the epithet *atra*. Other common epithets during this period include *fera*, *cita*, *dura*, *inimica*, *pallida*, *inuida*, and *amara*, whilst *improba*, *impia*, *mala*, and *crudelis* are usually avoided.⁶⁹

II.1 Affectu mater, meritis matrona Matildis: The poet states that Matilda was a mother (*mater*) to the nuns at Wherwell in terms of the affection she showed them, but of course she was also their *mater* because she was their abbess (see above). She earned the status of matron (*matrona*, “married woman”) due to her marriage (see II.3), even though by the time she entered Wherwell she was a widow.⁷⁰

II.2 etsi non carne uirgo, uirago fuit: Due to her marriage she was not physically a virgin, but she was a *uirago*. The word-play on *uirgo* and *uirago* is common enough, and *uirago* was frequently used to commend women in the Middle Ages.⁷¹ The sentiments expressed are common in medieval hagiography and are by no means a reason to presume male authorship.⁷² Matilda was called a “noble and wise virago” (*nobilis sapiensque uirago*) who transcended “the minds of strong men in constancy and counsel” (*fortiumque uirorum animos constantia et consilio transcendatis*) during her lifetime in a letter sent to her by Peter of Blois, archdeacon of London, and written sometime between March 23, 1208 and January 1209.⁷³ Matilda’s niece, Euphemia, was similarly praised for her “manly spirit” in her obituary in the Wherwell Cartulary: “that she seemed to have not a feminine but rather a manly spirit” (*ut non femineum sed uirile magis animum gerere uideretur*).⁷⁴

II.3 Nupta uiro sine prole uirum premisit eumque: Bucknill has a gap in the Latin here and, consequently, a gap in the English: “Married to a man, without children [. . .]” (“Nupta uiro sine prole uirum [. . .]”).⁷⁵ With *sine prole uirum*, compare Vergil *A.* 6.784: “felix prole virum” (“blessed in a brood of heroes,” referring to

⁶⁸ For the quotation from Bruno’s roll, see Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:332.27 (no. 136). For the text of Bernard of Cluny (with a French translation), see *De Contemptu Mundi. Bernard le Clunisien: Une vision de monde vers 1144* (Turnhout, 2009), 206–207.

⁶⁹ Miner, “Eleventh and Twelfth Century Latin Epigram” (n. 15 above), 92.

⁷⁰ Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), 113.

⁷¹ Penelope Nash, *Empress Adelheid and Countess Matilda: Medieval Female Rulership and the Foundations of European Society* (New York, 2017), 182.

⁷² Barratt, “Small Latin” (n. 14 above), 64.

⁷³ Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), 113, with the text and translation of part of the letter appearing in n. 134. The letter is no. 17 in *The Later Letters of Peter of Blois*, ed. Elizabeth Revell (Oxford, 1993).

⁷⁴ See n. 13, above.

⁷⁵ Bucknill, “Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary” (n. 1 above), 1:175–76.

Rome), in which the old form of the genitive plural is preserved.⁷⁶ Our author no doubt copied *prole uirum*, either directly from the *Aeneid* or indirectly from another author. This line is our evidence that Matilda was a widow and did not have any children; or rather she did not have any surviving children when she entered Wherwell.

premisit: The use of *praemittere* (“to send in front or in advance”) as a euphemism for death is not specifically recorded in the DMLBS or the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, but ThLL cites this meaning and gives examples. See ThLL s.v. *praemitto* I.B.1.a. Compare, for example, Seneca, *Ep.* 99.7: “quem putas perisse, praemissus est.”⁷⁷ The active sometimes implies responsibility. Compare Plautus *Cas.* 448: “certum est, hunc Accheruntem praemittam prius.”⁷⁸ In II.3, however, the use of the active (“she sent him ahead”) clearly does not mean that Matilda was in any way responsible for his death. For similar examples, see ThLL s.v. *praemitto* I.B.1.a.β, for example, Seneca, *Dial.* 6.19.1: “Iudicemus illos abesse et nosmet ipsi fallamus, dimisimus illos, immo consecuturi praemisimus.”⁷⁹ The Senecan passages found favor with Christian writers affirming a belief in the afterlife. We find an identical use of *premisit* in an entry from England in the mortuary roll for Vitalis, abbot of Savigny (d. September 16, 1122): “Multos ad summi pre-misit gaudia celi, / Quos tandem sequitur, cum sanctis luce potitur.”⁸⁰

premisit eumque: Gillert and Miner punctuate “premisit, eumque / Christo parturiens.” This would reflect the usual syntax and word order with *-que*, but the sense would be difficult. The text would then read “Nupta uiro sine prole uirum premisit, eumque / Christo parturiens fit pietate parens” (“married to a man, she sent the man ahead without offspring and, giving birth to him for Christ, she becomes a parent through her piety”), suggesting that she gave birth to her husband for Christ in some manner of speaking. It would also make *uirum* the accusative object of *premisit*, removing the parallel with *prole uirum* in the *Aeneid* (see above). Barratt has no comma and instead a semicolon after *eumque*. The manuscript has a punctus elevatus after *eumque*. This makes better sense: *-que* can be postponed in poetry and *premisit* then governs *eum*. If a past tense of *esse* is understood with “nupta uiro,” then the whole line can be

⁷⁶ Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.784, ed. and trans. Henry Rushton Fairclough and George Patrick Goold, in *Virgil, Eclogues; Georgics; Aeneid I–VI*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 588–89.

⁷⁷ Seneca, *Ep.* 99.7, ed. Richard Mott Gummere, in *Seneca, Epistles 93–124*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1925), 132–33. Almost identical is Seneca, *Ep.* 63.16 “quem putamus perisse, praemissus est.”

⁷⁸ Plautus, *Casina* 448, ed. Wolfgang David Cirilo de Melo in *Plautus: Casina; The Casket Comedy; Curculio Epidicus; The Two Menaechnuses*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 2011), 58–59.

⁷⁹ Seneca, *De consolatione ad Marciam (Dialogi 6)* 19.1, ed. John W. Basore, in *Seneca, Moral Essays. Volume II*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1932), 64–65.

⁸⁰ See Dufour, *Rouleaux*, 1:555.22–23 (no. 86).

construed thus: “[She was] married to a man without the offspring of men and she sent him ahead.”

II.4 *Christo parturiens fit pietate parens*: The notion of the “bride of Christ” did not just apply to virgin nuns: married women (even those whose husbands were still alive) could also be brides of Christ.⁸¹ Even a widow with children could become a bride of Christ.⁸² Matilda may have been considered to have given birth for Christ by spiritually “producing” children in the form of nuns, thus making the nuns both brides of Christ and the “children” of a bride of Christ.⁸³ Compare, however, the twelfth-century *Speculum Virginum* 5.10: “Imitate this chief of virgins as far as possible, virgin of Christ, and you too, with Mary, will seem to give birth spiritually to the Son of God.”⁸⁴ We might therefore expect Matilda, as in the *Speculum Virginum*, to be portrayed as giving birth spiritually to the Son of God, not the nuns, via her piety. Yet the dative *Christo* shows that the author has in mind “for / on behalf of Christ.” Thus, in II.4 Matilda is not “giving birth to Christ,” which would require an accusative *Christum*. The search for an object for *parturiens* is perhaps the reason for Gillert taking “eumque / Christo parturiens” together. The conception of various kinds of spiritual kinship probably originates in John 1:12–13: “Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri, his qui credunt in nomine ejus: qui non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, neque ex voluntate viri, sed ex Deo nati sunt.”⁸⁵ Aldhelm (in his prose *De Virginitate*) described the nuns taught by Hildelith, abbess of Barking (c. 700), as “adoptive daughters of regenerative grace brought forth from the fecund womb of ecclesiastical conception through the seed of the spiritual Word.”⁸⁶

II.5 *gemma sui generis*: Bucknill translates “jewel of her race”; Bugyis “jewel of her people.”⁸⁷ She is a jewel of the Flemish, as is made clear two lines later (II.7),

⁸¹ See Rabia Gregory, *Marrying Jesus in Medieval and Early Modern Northern Europe: Popular Culture and Religious Reform* (Farnham, 2016), 145–67.

⁸² Gertrud of Ortenberg is an example. See Gregory, *Marrying Jesus*, 153–54.

⁸³ Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), 113.

⁸⁴ “Hanc uirginum principem, tu uirgo Christi, quantum possibile est, imitare et cum Maria filium dei uideberis spiritualiter parturire.” See Rabia Gregory, “Marrying Jesus: Brides and the Bridegroom in Medieval Women’s Religious Literature” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007), 79.

⁸⁵ “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Translation as in the New King James Version (hereafter NKJV).

⁸⁶ Aldhelm, *De virginitate* 2: “adoptivas regenerantis gratiae filias ex fecundo ecclesiasticae conceptionis utero spiritalis verbi semine progenitas.” ed. R. Ehwald, in MGH, *Auctores antiquissimi* 15 (Berlin, 1919), 230. For the translation, see Aldhelm, *The Prose Works*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Cambridge, 1979), 59–60.

⁸⁷ See Bucknill, “Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary” (n. 1 above), 1:175–76, with the Latin text in n. 20, and Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), 113.

where *genus* is also used: “Flanders gave birth to her” (“Flandria nempe genus . . . dedit”).⁸⁸

II.6 tota: Staerk erroneously transcribes *totā* (that is, an abbreviation of *totam*).

II.7 Flandria: Bucknill has *La Flandria*.⁸⁹ Although *la* is written before *Flandria*, it is clearly a later addition made in a different ink. In between the two columns there are several jottings. To the left of *Flandria* we find another *F* and then *la*. To the bottom left of *Warewella* (II.7) we find another *F*, and to the bottom left of that are a couple of indistinct letters. The presence of the *F* before *la* suggests that the scribe was scribbling *Fla*; the fact that these letters appear near *Flandria* indicates that this was the word the scribe had in mind. It may be part of a *probatio pennae* (pen trial). It is interesting that the scribe has chosen to fixate on *Flandria*.

regimen dedit Anglia: England gave Matilda the monastic rule under which she lived at Wherwell. See DMLBS s.v. *regimen* 7 for the meaning “rule of conduct (as observed by a religious community).” Note that *regimen* is perhaps a metrically-convenient alternative for *rēgūla* (particularly in this context, since the accusative *regulam* would only ever be permissible in elegiacs via elision). The poem draws attention to the fact that Matilda’s first experience of monastic life was in England.

II.7–8 finem / Warewella: Bucknill translates *finem* as “fulfilment.”⁹⁰ It could also mean that Wherwell gave her a goal/purpose in life; or it could simply highlight the fact that she died at Wherwell. II.7–8 seem to present a sequence: she was born in Flanders, entered the monastic world and lived under the rule in England, died at Wherwell, and saw God in the afterlife; these lines therefore cover her birth, life, death, and afterlife. This latter explanation seems the most plausible.

II.8 pia uita uidere Deum: Though *piā* scans as heavy at the pentameter caesura, the vowel is short by nature and *pia* agrees with *uita*, the subject of *dedit*, which must be understood from the previous line. The object of *dedit* is then the infinitive *uidere*: her pious life “gave seeing God,” that is, allowed her to see God upon her death. Neither Barratt nor Bucknill punctuates at the end of the line.

II.9 Crastina Lucie: See above on I.9: we should probably supply *lux* with *Crastina*.⁹¹

huic: “to this woman,” that is, Matilda.

⁸⁸ Bucknill, “Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary” (n. 1 above), 1:176, with the Latin text in n. 20.

⁸⁹ Bucknill, “Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary” (n. 1 above), 1:176, n. 20.

⁹⁰ Bucknill, “Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary” (n. 1 above), 1:176.

⁹¹ In pre-Classical Latin (for example, Plautus), however, *lux* was often treated as masculine.

primordia lucis: The poet emphasises the etymological wordplay between *Lucie* and *lucis* by their placement at the caesura and the end of the line. The connection between these two positions in the hexameter is underlined in Leonine verse by the presence of rhymes, but the connection predates the use of rhymes. We might expect to see mention of Lucifer, continuing the wordplay, but perhaps the poet eschewed the male Lucifer, given feminine *lucis* and *Lucie*. Matilda died on the day after the feast of St. Lucy (compare I.9–10), so that was the day on which she saw the light of God, that is, entered the afterlife. Compare the same position in a hexameter by Prudentius: *Hamartigenia* 344: “antiquae recolens primordia lucis.”⁹²

II.10 ut . . . prima dies: Here *ut* introduces the result of the previous line. Her death marked her passage into the afterlife, so in a way her final day was nevertheless her first day, because it was the first day of her new life. Barratt mistakenly takes this to mean that Matilda died on the same day of the year on which she was born.⁹³ Compare Godfrey of Winchester (d. 1107) *De Cnuth rege* (from his *Epigrammata historica*) 11–12: “Lux postrema sibi luxit duodena Novembris, / et postrema dies fit sibi prima dies.”⁹⁴

II.11–12 Vera . . . diem: Staerk centres this couplet as though it were the final couplet of a single poem spanning the two columns. In reality it is the final couplet of the poem in the column on the right.

II.11 ei deus: Gillert reads *er* and then signals that the text is illegible up to *ipse*. Staerk transliterates *erds*. Though the letter looks like an *r* at a distance, enlarging a digital image shows that there is a separate black mark (not the same colour as the text) at the top right of an *i*. This has caused the confusion. Barratt has the correct reading, *ei deus*.

II.11 Vera dies sit ei deus ipse: Light and day are intertwined, and so day can stand for light. God is light (1 John 1:5) and Jesus calls himself the light of the world (John 8:12 and 9:5). Compare especially John 1:9: “Erat lux vera, quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum.”⁹⁵ See also the twelfth-century Flemish-born Alain de Lille (Alanus de Insulis, Alan of Lille), *Anticlaudianus* 4.288–90: “Hos Deus esse deos fecit, quos lumine uero / Vera dies fudit et quos ab origine prima / Vestiuit deitatis honos”; and (in medieval hymns) “in carnis latebris / uera dies diescit” and “uera dies elucescit.”⁹⁶ Jesus

⁹² Prudentius, *Hamartigenia* 344, ed. H. J. Thomson, in *Prudentius: Volume I*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1949), 228–29.

⁹³ Barratt, “Small Latin” (n. 14 above), 64.

⁹⁴ *Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists of the Twelfth Century. Volume 2: The Minor Anglo-Latin Satirists and Epigrammatists*, ed. Thomas Wright (Cambridge, 1872), 148.

⁹⁵ “That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.” (NKJV).

⁹⁶ *Cantiones et muteti: Lieder und Motetten des Mittelalters*, ed. Guido Maria Dreves, *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* 20 (Leipzig, 1895), 69 (no. 46) and 74 (no. 56).

is the “vera dies” at the beginning of a hexameter in Thietmar of Merseburg’s early eleventh-century *Chronicon* (book 6, prologue, line 6): “Vera dies, lucem tu nunc benedicito talem.”⁹⁷

II.12 ipsius ad requiem perpetuando diem: Poems in mortuary rolls frequently end with prayers that the deceased be granted eternal rest. Here “by perpetuating the day for her rest” means “by granting her eternal rest.”

A LETTER OF CONSOLATION FROM GUY OF SOUTHWICK TO EUPHEMIA, PRIORESS OF
WHERWELL

Guy was a canon of Merton and prior of the Augustinian priory in Southwick, Hampshire ca. 1186–1206.⁹⁸ The letter was obviously written after Matilda’s death (December 13 or 14, 1212), but it cannot have been very long afterwards: Euphemia is still addressed as the prioress of Wherwell, so it must have been before she became the abbess, which cannot have happened earlier than July 28, 1213.⁹⁹ Preceding the letter are two lines of rubric introducing the letter. This rubric forms the last two lines of the first column of fol. 12v. The text of the letter then begins on the line below the rubric and the page is no longer split into two columns. In the edition below, section numbers have been added in square brackets in both the text and translation. The abbreviations for *Iesu* and *Christo/Christi* have been expanded; all other abbreviations have been silently expanded, with the exception of the names of the sender, the addressee, and the deceased. Guy (the sender) is represented only by *G*, so the remainder is supplied in brackets; the same is done for Euphemia (the addressee) and Matilda (the deceased). The use of punctuation and capital letters is in accordance with modern conventions. Letters that on their own are only partially legible, but are clear from the context, have dots beneath them. Sometimes words or letters are now completely illegible but can be supplied because they occur within quotations from other sources: these words/letters are placed in square brackets in the text. In the translation, square brackets are only used for the verb in the *salutatio*, which is omitted (as is usual) in the Latin. Quotations from the Bible and other sources are noted in the commentary but are not italicised or otherwise marked in the text.

Text

[Rubric:] Epistola consolatoria E(uphemie) priorisse super mortem M(atildis) abbatisse de Warewella

⁹⁷ Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* 6, ed. Robert Holtzmann, in MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, n.s. 9 (Berlin, 1955), 272.

⁹⁸ Revell, *The Later Letters of Peter of Blois* (n. 73 above), 91, n. 1.

⁹⁹ See above, n. 1.

[1] Dilectissime domine et amice in Christo karissime E(uphemie) uenerabili priorisse Warewelle suus semper in domino frater G(uido) sola dignatione diuina Suuice ecclesie seruus indignus salutem et consolationem in spiritu sancto. [2] Qui olim sub diebus felicitatis recordationis domine abbatisse uestre presens uobis loqui dulcia et iocunda absens uobis scribere consueueram, nunc flebilis heu mestos cogor inire modos. [3] Ecce enim sagitte domini in me sunt, quarum indignatio fere spiritum meum ebibit. [4] Nemo miretur si uerborum modestiam uis doloris exasperat. [5] In morte karissime illius domine mee non modo meam sed publicam plango iacturam; sed et familiaris dolor in spiritus mei precordiis intolerabil[er ra]dicauit, essetque procul dubio nimis uehemens doloris angustia, nisi eam uita laudabilis et preciosa in conspectu domini mors ipsius habundantius leuigaret. [6] Unde secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum letificauit animam meam consolationis diuine dulcedo. [7] Cum enim memoria migrationis eius occurrit, opponitur e regione sue spes certa quietis et quedam pregestatio delicitatis eterne, ut mortua percepisse credatur quod uiua semper optauit. [8] Quod scilicet oculus non uidit nec auris audiuit nec [in cor] hominis ascendit. [9] Proinde, karissima domina, uos cohortor in domino ut tali et tante matri, sicut estis carne propinqua et loci dignitate secunda, ita et cooperante gratia satagatis suarum imitatrix esse uirtutum. [10] Spero autem et confido in domino quod et uos Christi spiritum habeatis, ita eius sequamini uestigia, ut una cum ipsa ualeatis peruenire ad eterna gaudia. [11] Prestante domino nostro Iesu Christo, qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uiuit et regnat, deus, per omnia secula seculorum. Amen.

Translation

[Rubric:] Letter of consolation to Euphemia, prioress, regarding the death of Matilda, abbess of Wherwell

[1] To the beloved lady and friend in Christ, dearest Euphemia, the venerable prioress of Wherwell, Guy, always her brother in the Lord, by divine grace alone an unworthy servant of Southwick Church, [sends] greetings and consolation in the Holy Spirit. [2] Once, in the days of the blessed memory of the lady, your abbess, I was accustomed to say pleasant things to you when I was present and to write cheerful things to you when I was absent, but now tearful, alas, I must begin sad songs. [3] For behold, the arrows of the Lord are in me, and their poison almost consumes my spirit. [4] Let no one be surprised if the force of grief roughens the modesty of my words. [5] In the death of that dearest lady of mine I lament not only my loss, but also the public loss; but intimate grief too has unendurably taken root in the depths of my spirit, and without doubt the anguish of grief would be too strong, if the praiseworthy life and precious (in the eyes of the Lord) death of that woman were not greatly alleviating it. [6] Therefore, the sweetness of divine consolation has given joy to my soul in accordance with the multitude of my griefs. [7] For when the memory of the passing of that woman comes to

mind, the sure hope of rest and a certain foretaste of eternal delight are set directly against it, so that she is believed to have acquired upon death that which she always wished for whilst alive; [8] which, of course, the eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, and which has not entered into the heart of man. [9] Therefore, dearest lady, I encourage you in the Lord that, with the support of grace, you strive to be an imitator of the virtues of such and so great a mother, just as you are a relative by blood and second in rank at the abbey. [10] Moreover I hope and trust in the Lord that you have the Spirit of Christ and follow his footsteps, so that like her you are able to arrive at the eternal joys. [11] With the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

1 Dilectissime: The letter begins with a small pen-flourished initial in red and blue ink.

E(uphemie) uenerabili priorisse Warewelle: Euphemia is not addressed as the abbess, suggesting that the letter was written not long after Matilda's death (December 13 or 14, 1212).

Suwice ecclesie: Guy was prior of Southwick. Modern Southwick is spelled in various ways in charters and deeds: Suwic, Suthwyk, Suthwick, Suthweek, Sudwica, and Suthwike.¹⁰⁰

2 Qui olim . . . inire modos: Compare Boethius *De consolatione philosophiae* book 1, poem 1, lines 1–2: “Carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi, / Flebilis heu maestos cogor inire modos.”¹⁰¹ Guy reworks and expands the first line liberally, but it is still clear that “qui olim . . . dulcia et iocunda . . . scribere consueueram” echoes “carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi.” The second line of Boethius is quoted verbatim. Guy explicitly states that he corresponded, met, and spoke with Euphemia in person during Matilda's lifetime. Bucknill suggests that Guy, Matilda, and Euphemia “talked and laughed together.”¹⁰² Presumably she takes “uobis loqui” as referring to Euphemia and Matilda, but compare “abbatise uestre” and “uobis scribere.” Guy is less likely to have written a letter jointly addressed to Matilda and Euphemia, so *uobis* probably refers to Euphemia alone. I think that here Guy is referring only to his previous conversations and correspondence with Euphemia.

¹⁰⁰ For the various spellings, see W. H. Gunner, “Notices of the Priory of Southwick, in the County of Southampton,” *The Archaeological Journal* 3 (1846): 214–22, at 215, n. (a); D. A. Wilmart, “Un opuscule sur la confession composé par Guy de Southwick vers la fin du XII^e siècle,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 7 (1935): 337–52, at 337; and Revell, *The Later Letters of Peter of Blois* (n. 73 above), 91, no. 16, paragraph 1.

¹⁰¹ Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae* 1, ed. H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, in *Boethius, Theological Tractates; The Consolation of Philosophy*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1973), 130–31.

¹⁰² Bucknill, “Wherwell Abbey and Its Cartulary” (n. 1 above), 1:183.

3 ecce enim . . . meum ebibit: Almost a verbatim quotation of Job 6:4 “quia sagittae Domini in me sunt, quarum indignatio ebibit spiritum meum.”¹⁰³ Guy adds *fere* and moves the verb *ebibit* to the end of its clause. The abbreviation *dni for domini* is just about visible; it is anyway guaranteed by the context. I follow most biblical translations by rendering *indignatio* as “poison.” Most English translations of Job 6:4 make “my spirit” the grammatical subject and “their poison” the object (that is, the reverse of the Latin) for the sake of clarity, but my translation of Guy’s letter is more literal.

3–5 ecce enim . . . intollerabil[er ra]dicauit: This entire section is almost identical to part of a letter from Peter of Blois to Pope Celestine III (reigned 1191–1198), written ca. 1193: “Nemo ergo miretur si uerborum modestiam uis doloris exasperet; iacturam enim plango publicam sed et familiaris dolor in spiritus mei precordiis intolerabiliter radicauit. Sagitte enim domini in me sunt, quarum indignatio ebibit spiritum meum.”¹⁰⁴ Note how Guy’s addition of “non modo meam” is somewhat clumsy given the following “sed et.” Peter’s sentence contrasts *publicam* with *familiaris*, hence the use of *sed*. By adding “non modo meam” Guy preempts *familiaris*. Peter’s letter is written in the name of Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, asking Pope Celestine III to intervene and press for the release of Richard I (the Lionheart), who had been taken prisoner near Vienna by Duke Leopold of Austria in December 1192 and handed over to Henry VI, the Holy Roman

¹⁰³ “For the arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit drinks their poison.” (NKJV).

¹⁰⁴ The reading *intolerabiliter radicauit* is what appears in the earliest editions. See Letter cxliiii in the undated Belgian *editio princeps*, which is the basis for the text I print here. It was published ca. 1480 by the Brethren of the Common Life (*Fratres Vitae Communis*) at their press in Brussels. See John D. Cotts, *The Clerical Dilemma: Peter of Blois and Literate Culture in the Twelfth Century* (Washington, DC, 2009), 269, n. 1. See also the 1519 Paris edition of Jacques Merlin (Jacobus Merlinus), fol. 75v (epistola cxliiii). Jan Buys (Johannis Busaeus/Jean Busée) was the first to read *inconsolabiliter* and reduce *intolerabiliter* to a marginal variant: *Opera Petri Blesensis*, ed. Jan Buys (Mainz, 1600), 264, epistola cxlv. Pierre de Goussainville (Petrus de Gussanvilla) follows Buys’s text: *Petri Blesensis Bathoniensis in Anglia Archidiaconi opera omnia*, ed. Pierre de Goussainville (Paris, 1667), 225. Buys’s reading may be a conjecture. In his *Praefatio ad candidum lectorem*, Buys mentions that he has undertaken “Emaculatio ab innumeris mendis et corruptelis, quae omnia opplerant exemplaria” (“Removal of the many errors and corruptions that abound in all copies”) and writes that he has added “Variæ lectiones cum breuibus Notis” (“Variant readings with brief notes”). Goussainville notes his use of Buys’s edition in his *Praefatio ad lectorem*. Goussainville may be the source of *inconsolabiliter* in later editions of the letter. Brial has *inconsolabiliter radicatur* without explanation, though he mentions Goussainville’s edition and therefore probably made use of it: *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France, Tome dix-neuvième*, ed. Michel-Jean-Joseph Brial (Paris, 1833), xxx. For a detailed account of Peter’s life, see Stephen Hanaphy, “Classical Erudition in the Letters of Peter of Blois” (Ph.D. diss., Trinity College Dublin, 2010), 7–29. See also R. W. Southern, “Peter of Blois: A Twelfth-Century Humanist?” in *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies*, ed. R. W. Southern (Oxford, 1970), 105–33.

Emperor. Richard was released in February 1194.¹⁰⁵ From this the probable date of 1193 can be deduced. I can find no common source from which both Peter and Guy could have taken the non-biblical parts of this section. Since Peter's letter was written before Guy's, the obvious conclusion is that Guy had seen a copy of Peter's letter. Of course, the quotation from the Bible (Job 6:4: *sagittae . . . meum*) could have been chosen independently by each author, but the non-biblical sections suggest that Guy copied this whole passage from Peter's letter, including the choice of Job 6:4. We know that Guy corresponded with Peter.¹⁰⁶ While Matilda was alive, Peter of Blois, then archdeacon of London, sent Matilda a letter of consolation regarding the interdict Pope Innocent III had placed on England and Wales.¹⁰⁷ Peter's letter to Matilda was written at some point between March 23, 1208 and January 1209.¹⁰⁸ The numerous connections between Peter, Guy, Matilda, and Euphemia together make it believable that Guy had access to Peter's letter to Pope Celestine III and mined it for material when writing to Euphemia. The alternative is that both Peter and Guy borrowed from a source that is no longer extant, for example, a work by John of Salisbury: Guy made a florilegium of the letters of John of Salisbury, whom Peter of Blois also knew and from whose works Peter borrowed.¹⁰⁹

5 intollerabil[er ra]dicauit: A small portion is not visible in the manuscript, but is guaranteed by the context and a comparison with Peter's letter to Pope Celestine III (see above on sections 3–5).

Nisi eam uita laudabilis et preciosa in conspectu Domini mors ipsius: Compare Ps. 115:6: "pretiosa est in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum eius."¹¹⁰ Aelred of Rievaulx (1110–1167) juxtaposes the *uita laudabilis* and *mors pretiosa* in three works: (i) *De spiritali amicitia* 2.14: "ut et eorum uita laudabilis, et mors pretiosa iudicetur," which draws on both Ps. 115:6 and Cicero, *De amicitia* 23: "ex quo illorum beata mors uidetur, horum uita laudabilis";¹¹¹ (ii) *Vita sancti Edwardi regis* 1.47–48: "laudabilis

¹⁰⁵ See Hanaphy, "Classical Erudition," 22–23. Over a century ago Beatrice Lees, following a suggestion by Charles Bémont, argued that the letters written by Peter in Eleanor's name were rhetorical exercises. See Beatrice A. Lees, "The Letters of Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine to Pope Celestine III," *English Historical Review* 21 (1906): 78–93.

¹⁰⁶ For a letter from Peter to Guy, see Revell, *The Later Letters of Peter of Blois* (n. 73 above), 91–98 (no. 16).

¹⁰⁷ Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), 113, n. 134.

¹⁰⁸ Bugyis, *The Care of Nuns* (n. 1 above), 113, n. 134.

¹⁰⁹ Revell, *The Later Letters of Peter of Blois* (n. 73 above), 91, n. 1. Hanaphy reconsiders the extent to which Peter's borrowings (in particular from John of Salisbury) should be called "plagiarism." See Hanaphy, "Classical Erudition," 34–60.

¹¹⁰ "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints." (Ps. 116:15 in NKJV).

¹¹¹ Aelred, *De spiritali amicitia* 2.14, ed. Anselm Hoste and Charles H. Talbot, in *Aelredi Rievallensis opera omnia 1: Opera ascetica*, CCM 1 (Turnhout, 1971), 305; and Cicero, *De amicitia* 23, ed. William Armistead Falconer, in *Cicero XX: De senectute, de amicitia, de diuinatione*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA, 1971), 132–133. On Aelred's sources for his

eorum uita et mors nichilominus preciosa”;¹¹² and (iii) *Speculum charitatis* 1.99: “neque enim tua mors flenda est, quam tam laudabilis, tam amabilis, tam omnibus grata vita praecessit.”¹¹³ The reading *uīta* relies mostly on the context, though the first two letters are just about visible. Aelred’s work was certainly known to Peter of Blois, whose *De amicitia christiana* made use of Aelred’s *De spiritali amicitia*.¹¹⁴ It is plausible that Guy also made use of Aelred’s work.

habundantius: Literally “more abundantly.”

6 unde secundum . . . diuine dulcedo: Compare Ps. 93:19: “secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum in corde meo consolationes tuae laetificauerunt animam meam.”¹¹⁵

8 quod scilicet oculus . . . ascendit: Compare 1 Cor. 2:9: “sed sicut scriptum est quod oculus non vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascendit quae praeparavit Deus his qui diligunt illum.”¹¹⁶ The quotation from Corinthians allows us to supply [*in cor*], which is otherwise illegible.

9 loci: Here referring to Wherwell.

10 uos Christi spiritum habeatis: See Rom. 8:9: “si quis autem Spiritum Christi non habet, hic non est eius.”¹¹⁷

ita eius sequamini uestigia: See 1 Pet. 2:21: “in hoc enim vocati estis quia et Christus passus est pro vobis vobis relinquens exemplum ut sequamini vestigia eius” and Job 23:11: “vestigia eius secutus est pes meus.”¹¹⁸

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Keywords: Medieval Latin verse, epitaphs, mortuary rolls, Flanders, Low Countries, England, women Latin poets, literacy

De spiritali amicitia, see Lawrence C. Braceland and Marsha L. Dutton, *Aelred of Rievaulx, Spiritual Friendship* (Trappist, KY, 2010), 25–26.

¹¹² Aelred, *Vita sancti Ædwardi regis* 1.47–48, ed. Francesco Marzella, in *Aelredi Rievallensis opera omnia*. 7: *Opera historica et hagiographica*, CCM 3A (Turnhout, 2017), 95.

¹¹³ Aelred, *Speculum charitatis* 1.99, ed. Hoste and Talbot, in *Aelredi Rievallensis opera omnia* 1, 57.

¹¹⁴ Braceland and Dutton, *Spiritual Friendship*, 23.

¹¹⁵ “In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.” (Ps. 94:19 in NKJV).

¹¹⁶ “But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” (NKJV).

¹¹⁷ “Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.” (NKJV).

¹¹⁸ 1 Pet. 2:21 “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.” (NKJV). Job 23:11 “My foot has held fast to His steps.” (NKJV). See also Lucy Donkin, “Following the Footsteps of Christ in Late Medieval Italy: Pietro Pettinaio’s Vision of St Francis,” *Word & Image* 32 (2016): 163–80, at 165.