

Adapting Winefride in Welsh, Latin and English

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Abstract

The Lives of the Welsh saints provide an excellent case study for how Latin texts were adapted in different languages in multilingual medieval Britain. Following advances made in the textual scholarship of the Welsh and Latin Lives by the recent AHRC *Cwlt y Seintiau yng Nghymru* and *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* projects, we now know much more about these texts and how they relate to one another. This case study takes the example of the border-crossing saint Winefride/Gwenfrewy, whose Latin Life by Robert of Shrewsbury was translated and adapted in Middle English and Middle Welsh. Despite the traditions of Winefride being trilingual, individual texts are overwhelmingly monolingual. The primarily Middle English texts and collections are the most multilingual, but this is almost always English/Latin rather than English/Welsh. This study also examines in detail examples of where Welsh occurs in Robert of Shrewsbury's Latin Life of Winefride, being primarily associated with place-names and personal names. As Robert's Life was adapted into Middle English as well as Middle Welsh, I study how these uses of Welsh in Robert's Life are adapted in contrasting ways in the two languages (as well as later Latin adaptations in England, which follow different patterns to the vernacular adaptations). While the overwhelming trend in the Middle English texts is deletion of the Welsh elements, there are examples of creative engagement with the Welsh language. I highlight that a fuller view of Welsh-English linguistic interaction in the Middle Ages is enabled by widening the lens beyond the Welsh March.

1 Introduction: Welsh saints and trilingual traditions

Recent years have seen a great uptake in interest in the Lives of the Welsh saints. Whereas these texts were traditionally treated uncritically as witnesses to the Age of Saints in the sixth and seventh centuries, scholars since the latter part of the twentieth century have highlighted

how they are more productively viewed as shedding light on the historical context and textual culture in the years in which they were composed, in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries (Dumville 1977; Evans and Wooding 2007). This more recent approach has culminated in two large AHRC-funded projects: *Cwlt y Seintiau yng Nghymru / The Cult of Saints in Wales* (2013–2017), which edited the saints’ Lives and poems to saints surviving in Welsh, and *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* (2017–2019), which edited the Latin Lives of the Welsh saints.¹ A number of these editions are now available on the project website (www.welshsaints.ac.uk) with further editions forthcoming.

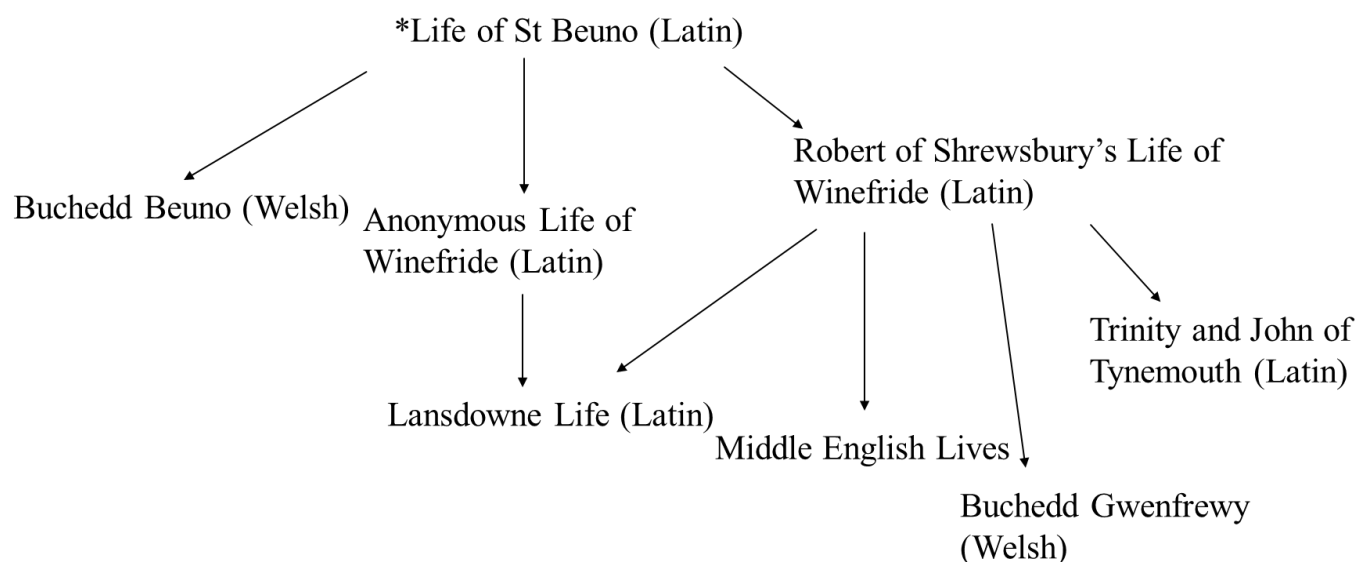
Our improved understanding of these Lives and their transmission is highly relevant to the study of medieval English in a multilingual context: the Lives of Welsh saints provide an excellent opportunity for making cross-linguistic comparisons. These are texts which are almost always composed in Latin initially, as with so much hagiography of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but subsequently a number of them are translated into Middle Welsh and, more surprisingly, Middle English. This is true, for example, of the most famous of Welsh saints, St David. His Latin *vita* was originally composed by Rhygyfarch of Llanbadarn Fawr near Aberystwyth in the late eleventh century, but survives in a wide variety of Latin versions (see James 1967; Sharpe 2007). It was also translated and adapted into Middle Welsh as *Buchedd Dewi*, perhaps in the fourteenth century, its earliest manuscript dating from 1346 (ed. Evans 1959). A Middle English Life of David by fifteenth-century prior Osbern Bokenham also recently came to light. This was not identified until 2005, when Simon Horobin discovered the Abbotsford Manuscript (Abbotsford, Advocates Library, Abbotsford MS B3), containing 183 saints’ Lives by Bokenham (Horobin 2005 and 2007). The Middle English Life of David, which is ultimately in the tradition of Rhygyfarch’s Life and concludes with Latin poetry, has now been published (ed. Horobin 2020: 339–345) and invites comparative research: how and why does it differ from the Latin and Middle Welsh versions? How did the Middle Welsh and Middle English authors adapt shared Latin sources? Teilo, a patron saint of Llandaf, also has a Middle English Life, although no extant Middle Welsh Life, and we can similarly examine how the Middle English adaptor changed the Latin *vita* and consider why they chose to translate a text from Wales (ed. Kooper and Callander 2016). While the Lives of David and Teilo may enable comparative research, there is one

¹ *The Cult of Saints in Wales* project was led by David Parsons of the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. The *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* project was led by Paul Russell of the University of Cambridge.

border-crossing saint *par excellence* in medieval Wales, namely Winefride or, in Welsh, Gwenfrewy.

Medieval texts from the twelfth century onwards normally present Winefride as a virgin martyr from North-East Wales, who was resurrected by St Beuno but retained the scar where she had been decapitated. The site of her martyrdom was identified with that of Winefride's Well at Holywell, Flintshire, which is said to have burst forth after her head fell to the ground. The following stemma provides the broad outline of how medieval Winefride texts relate to one another:²

Figure 15.1: Stemma of the Lives of Winefride



As can be seen from Figure 15.1, of pivotal importance are the two early Latin Lives of Winefride. These are twelfth-century works, Robert of Shrewsbury having composed his lengthy Life around 1137–1142 (Pepin and Feiss 2000; ed. Callander forthc. b). Robert's Life

² For an excellent and detailed overview of the trilingual Winefride traditions, focusing more on broader textual changes than textual multilingualism and the translation of individual words and names as here, see Gregory (2012). The stemma presented here is in some ways likely to be a simplification. Sims-Williams (2018: 23–32) has argued that Robert of Shrewsbury's Life influenced *Buchedd Beuno* in its presentation of Winefride's martyrdom (whether directly or by having fed back into the tradition of the Latin Life of Beuno at an anterior stage), although this is unproven; cf. Callander (2019: 137).

moves from Winefride's lifetime to Robert's present, describing how he and others translated her relics from Gwytherin to Shrewsbury in 1137/8. The anonymous Life, being much shorter, but with descriptions of many miracles at Winefride's well site, appears to have been composed in the vicinity of Holywell (ed. Wade-Evans 1944: 288–308; ed. Callander forthc. a). Robert of Shrewsbury's Life was far more widely circulated in medieval Britain and forms the basis of the Welsh prose translation *Buchedd Gwenfrewy*, the earliest manuscript of which dates from the second half of the fifteenth century (ed. Cartwright forthc. a; ed. Baring-Gould and Fisher 1907–1913, iv: 397–423) and the various Middle English adaptations. Robert's Life also survives in a shortened version in the thirteenth-century manuscript Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.4.42 (ed. Callander forthc. c) and in an even shorter abridgement as part of John of Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium* (ed. Hortsmann 1901, ii: 415–421; ed. Marzella forthc.). Elements of both Lives are combined in the short compound version in the fourteenth-century codex London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 436 (ed. Gregory 2016; ed. Callander forthc. d). All the manuscripts of the different versions of Winefride's Latin Lives appear to have been copied in England, with no Latin Life of Winefride surviving in manuscripts copied in Wales. Winward (1999) has argued that the great similarities seen between the two twelfth-century Latin Lives of Winefride indicate they drew on a shared source, namely a lost Latin Life of Beuno. *Buchedd Beuno*, a Middle Welsh translation of the Life of Beuno, survives and contains the story of Winefride's martyrdom (ed. Sims-Williams 2018). Five late medieval Welsh poems to Winefride and her well also survive, although due to the nature and brevity of the poetry it is difficult to connect them directly with either of the Lives (for discussion, see Callander 2020).

As is clear from the stemma, the shape of Winefride's traditions differs in Middle English, Middle Welsh, and Latin. Lewis has recently highlighted the role of language in determining the form of hagiographical traditions in Wales.³ He highlighted that in Latin, the material is primarily prose or prosimetric *vitae* produced in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, with relatively little independent verse. In Welsh, the prose saints' Lives are later and derivative, in almost every case being translations of Latin originals. However, celebratory poetic hagiography flourished in Welsh, particularly in the later Middle Ages, and it is clear that the Winefride tradition in Wales fits this model well.

³ Barry Lewis made these contributions in his presentations at the Leeds International Medieval Congress (Leeds, 2019) and the Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae Conference (Cambridge, 2019).

Yet Winefride is unique among Welsh saints in having a substantial tradition in Middle English as well as Middle Welsh and Latin. How do the Middle English texts compare? Middle English Winefride traditions flourished primarily from the fifteenth century onwards (Gregory 2012). Most of these texts are closely related to Robert of Shrewsbury's Life, but with many unique innovations. The earliest extant Middle English Winefride text is John Mirk's *Festial* sermon on Winefride, perhaps composed in the later 1380s, Mirk then being a canon of the Augustinian house at Lilleshall in Shropshire (ed. Powell 2009–2011). This relatively early interest in Winefride in Shropshire is not surprising, given the strength of her cult at Shrewsbury, where her relics had been translated. Following the elevation of Winefride's feast by Canterbury in 1415, more Middle English Winefride texts appear. John Audelay the Blind (*fl.* c.1417–1431), a chantrist at the Augustinian Haughmond Abbey near Shrewsbury, addressed two Middle English poems to Winefride: a carol and a *salutacio* (ed. Whiting 1931; ed. Fein 2009). Both John Audelay and John Mirk can be associated with Shrewsbury or its vicinity and a Shrewsbury focus is clear in their texts too, but Winefride travelled further than this. There is a Life of Winefride in a single mid-fifteenth century manuscript of the *Gilte Legende* (London, British Library, MS Add. 35298; ed. Hamer and Russell 2000) and an unrelated Life of Winefride in one fifteenth-century manuscript of the *South English Legendary*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 779 (ed. Horstmann 1889). In the mid-fifteenth century, Osbern Bokenham, a friar of Clare Priory in Suffolk, produced a metrical English Life of Winefride, found, like the Middle English Life of David, in the newly discovered Abbotsford manuscript (ed. Gregory 2012: 412–420). Bokenham had made a pilgrimage to Winefride's well at Holywell in 1448 (Gregory 2012: 285), illustrating its popularity as a destination for pilgrims in the later Middle Ages. As well as editing and printing the *Gilte Legende* Life of Winefride in 1483/4 as part of his *Golden Legend* (ed. Ellis 1900, VI: 127–132; Gregory 2012: 277), around 1484 Caxton translated and published Robert of Shrewsbury's Life of Winefride as an individual pamphlet (ed. Horstmann 1880). In places he translated fairly closely and elsewhere (particularly in the description of Winefride's life itself) omitted large amounts of material. While Winefride traditions flourished in Latin, Welsh and English, no Winefride texts are known to survive in French, which may be a result of the late flourishing of the cult, primarily in the fifteenth century.

The medieval traditions of Winefride are thus trilingual insofar as there is substantial material surviving in Latin, Welsh, and English. Yet it is striking when we turn to the texts themselves that they are most commonly monolingual. The Latin Lives are all in Latin only, although there is some interesting treatment of Welsh personal and place-names, discussed

further below. The Welsh poems to Winefride are all in Welsh only. In the two earliest manuscripts of *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* (Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 27ii; s. xv²; and Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Llanstephan 34, s. xvi ex.), all the material is in Welsh only, including the title for the Life. Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS Peniarth 252 (1594–1610), on the other hand, is a trilingual Latin-Welsh-English compilation and includes some Latin words and marginalia in its copy of *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* (Cartwright forthc. b), although the text is still overwhelmingly in Welsh only. Latin incipits and explicits appear to be less common as a rule in Middle Welsh texts than Middle English texts, although this conclusion must remain tentative until a full study is undertaken.

It is thus the primarily Middle English Winefride texts which are most multilingual. Beyond the use of personal and place-names, this multilingualism is always English/Latin, never English/Welsh. Bokenham's Life and the *Gilte Legende* Life are entirely in Middle English. This is also true of the Bodley 779 Life, apart from the use of *Deo Gracias* in l. 62, rhymed with *was*, which refers to what the people in the church say when Winefride is resurrected. Mirk's sermon is all in English but has a Latin title and the collection as a whole has a Latin incipit and explicit in London, British Library, MS Cotton Claudius A II. The *Festial* survives in whole or in part in forty-five manuscripts as well as early prints (Powell 2009–2011, I: xliii–xliv). Intriguingly, its textual tradition includes a sixteenth-century manuscript (Cardiff, Central Library, MS 2.632 (Havod 22)) which contains a translation of some of the temporale sermons into Welsh, but not of the Winefride sermon.⁴ In terms of the Middle English Winefride tradition, however, it is Audelay and Caxton who make the most extensive use of Latin.

The extent of the use of Latin by Audelay and Caxton in treating of Winefride has not received sufficient attention. In both instances the Latin texts have been presented as peripheral through italicisation or, in the case of Horstmann's edition of Caxton's pamphlet Life, placement in footnotes. Audelay's poems survive in a single fifteenth-century manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 302), which employs significant amounts of both Latin and English. While the Winefride *salutacio* has a brief Latin incipit and explicit, the main text of carol and *salutacio* is in English only (unlike some of Audelay's other English *salutaciones*, which repeat a Latin word or words at the start of successive

⁴ For an edition, see Lewis (1925). On translation of Middle English texts into Welsh and other languages, see Byrne (2020).

lines). However, these Middle English texts are followed by a Latin rhymed antiphon and a Latin collect. The collect is also found in Caxton's Winefride pamphlet, while a version of the same rhymed antiphon to Winefride occurs in John of Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium* (Harper 2010). Thus the following Winefride collection is found in Douce 302, fols 26^r–27^r:

1. 'Wenefrede, thou swete may' (Middle English Winefride carol)
2. 'Salutacio Sancte Wenefrede' (Middle English Winefride *salutacio*)
3. 'Virgo pia Wynfryda' (Latin rhymed antiphon to Winefride)
4. 'Deus qui beatam virginem...' (Latin collect for Winefride)

What the codex provides here is a small bilingual collection of Winefride material. The Latin texts are not distinguished by script in the manuscript from the English as they are by italicisation in the modern editions of Audelay's work and there is no reason to think they are of a lower status than the preceding Middle English texts, albeit they are far shorter. Indeed, one might expect the Latin liturgical texts to be of higher status, although the manuscript does not indicate this either.

The Latin texts in Audelay's collection have clear liturgical associations, and this is also a relevant context for the Latin texts in Caxton's Winefride pamphlet. Whereas the Life of Winefride itself and the story of the moving of her relics are in English only, including incipit and explicit (the latter noting Caxton as the translator), the English is followed by three and a quarter pages of Latin, which concludes the pamphlet. These are extensive Latin prayers for different Winefride festivals, including that of her passion but also that of her Translation. Liturgical use, particularly at Shrewsbury, would provide a strong motivation for the inclusion of Latin here. Indeed, Harper (2007: 215) suggests that this liturgical collection 'was probably assembled direct from material used at Shrewsbury', with Lowry (1983: 116) arguing that 'the commission and editorial advice came from Shrewsbury', probably via Thomas Mynde, abbot of St Peter's, Shrewsbury (cf. Sutton 2005). Some of the Latin material in Caxton's pamphlet is unique, while other pieces are also found in other liturgical books (Harper 2007: 215–216). As noted, the Latin collect in John Audelay's collection also appears in Caxton's printing, although the rhymed antiphon 'Virgo pia Wynfryda' does not. Winefride's liturgy has not received much attention and far more work is needed to edit and compare these texts, which are normally in Latin and survive in England rather than Wales. It is worth noting that the two words of Latin in the Bodley 779 Life, *Deo gracias*, are also strongly associated with a liturgical context, this being a response at mass, and, in the text, occurs in the context of attending mass at church.

Looking at the Winefride texts as a whole, while the tradition of Winefride is trilingual, most individual works or groups of works are wholly or largely monolingual. The main exceptions to this are Audelay's Winefride collection and Caxton's Winefride pamphlet. In these cases, the Latin texts provided are liturgical. Beyond the use of personal and place-names, we do not find mixed-language English/Welsh texts. This is perhaps surprising as extant Winefride texts were often produced in or aimed at areas in England near Wales like Shrewsbury, where there would have been substantial numbers of Welsh speakers, or in North-East Wales, the main area of Winefride's Welsh cult, where there would have been substantial numbers of English speakers (cf. the extensive use of English loan-words in Welsh poetry describing luxury goods in a Marcher context, discussed by Fulton in this volume). This is not reflected in the texts that we have and it is worth asking why this is the case. With a few creative exceptions (cf. Roberts 1958: 53–54), mixed-language texts in Welsh and English do not appear to have been common in the Middle Ages, although after 1400 we do find some examples of multilingual manuscripts which contain different Welsh and English texts, often alongside Latin, such as Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MSS Peniarth 26, 50 and 326 (Lloyd-Morgan 2015). The lack of direct influence between vernacular traditions in Welsh and English (which is much starker in the period before 1300) might push up against and complicate some of the work on multilingual exchange in medieval Britain which does not take Welsh as a focus. Nevertheless, the Welsh language does not disappear entirely in the Latin and Middle English Winefride traditions and its presence there will be the main focus of the remainder of this chapter.

2 The Welsh language in Latin and Middle English Winefride texts

As noted, Winefride's Latin Lives are almost entirely monolingual in all their versions, but Robert of Shrewsbury's Life is interested in engaging with Welsh, and this is maintained and adapted in a number of later texts drawing on Robert's work. Some of this may derive from the lost Latin Life of Beuno which Robert was using, although this is by no means certain. Whatever the explanation, Robert certainly had no problem in calling attention to the fact that people spoke a different language in the area where Winefride lived and died.

One interesting part of this relevant to the study of how communication functioned between different linguistic groups is that Robert specifically refers to oral translation during the removal of Winefride's relics in 1137/8. At Gwytherin in North-East Wales, where Winefride had been buried, Robert speaks to the locals, who are initially very hesitant and

who only agree to hand her over *data pecunia*, a fact which Robert's later adaptors are keen to omit. But Robert does not speak to the people directly in their language; he uses a local priest as an interpreter:

Tunc prior, eodem presbitero mediante seu interprete, cateruam hominum quę astabat allocutus...

'Then the prior, with that priest mediating and likewise being an interpreter, having addressed the company of people which was standing nearby...' (§34; text and translation from Callander forthc. b).

Robert is a good witness to these events: he was present and he himself was the prior speaking here. While he may have invented other elements of the Life and Translation, I see no motivation for inventing this translator, and thus this provides one possible model for communication between speakers of different languages in medieval Wales, where a local priest could act as a translator. Presumably, the priest is translating into Welsh, although this is not stated explicitly. Yet, it is unclear which language Robert was speaking here. Was it Latin, French, or English? This is not stated, and they are all possible options.

Of all the Latin, Middle Welsh, and Middle English works, the only later text to maintain this reference to the translator is Caxton's pamphlet *Life of Winefride: Thenne the pryour by the moyen of the preest or by his interpretacion spacke vnto alle the companye of men that were there* (Horstmann 1880: 310). Caxton thus maintains this acknowledgement that the people at Gwytherin spoke a different language to that of Prior Robert. This is in stark contrast to many of the other Middle English versions of the Life, some of which omit all reference to Wales. What can have motivated Caxton alone to retain this? While Caxton significantly reduces Robert's description of Winefride's Life itself, the story of the Translation of her relics is kept much more fully. As noted, this may be because the pamphlet was commissioned by clerics at Shrewsbury, who would have had a particular interest in the story of how Winefride's relics were transferred to them. Caxton thus provides a full and detailed translation of this part of Robert's work and the retention of this reference is part of this.

This is the only reference to oral translation in the texts. Otherwise, the appearance of the Welsh language in the Latin and Middle English works is primarily associated with place-names and personal names. We can see an example of this in Robert of Shrewsbury's provision of the Welsh epithet *casulsych* ('dry-chasuble') for Beuno. After Beuno departs

from Holywell, Winefride sends him a chasuble every year, which is miraculously carried to him by the well-stream and in the sea, while remaining completely dry. As Robert writes,

Ex hoc autem beato uiro additum cognomen est, quod apud Walie homines hodieque memoriale habetur. Nam Beunous Casulsech, id est, Beunous Casulasicca uocatur, eo quod per aquas ab aquis illesa ad eum sicca casula deferretur.

‘Now on account of this a nickname was given to the holy man, which is held to be worthy of remembrance today as well among the people of Wales. For he is called Beuno Gasulsych, that is, Beuno Dry-chasuble, because the dry chasuble would be conveyed to him through waters undamaged by waters’ (§11; text and translation from Callander forthc. b).

This epithet is attested in other sources, like versions of the twelfth- or thirteenth-century Welsh genealogical collection *Bonedd y Saint* (‘The Pedigree of the Saints’; Bartrum 1966: 59; on dating the collection, see Lewis 2020). Robert provides both the Welsh form and a Latin translation, which indicates that he did not expect his readers to understand Welsh, but that he nevertheless thought the Welsh form was worth preserving. *Casulsech* would have been a possible Welsh spelling of the epithet at the time Robert was writing and may well derive from a written Latin source from Wales, such as the lost Latin Life of Beuno. This epithet is retained in both Welsh and Latin in the shortened versions of Robert’s Life in the Trinity O.4.42 recension (§11) and by John of Tynemouth (§7). The Welsh epithet is retained but the Latin removed in the Middle Welsh translation of Robert’s Life, *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* (§20). There is a similar section in the anonymous Latin Life, but with Beuno’s epithet in Latin only:

Huic casule uirginis ob meritum tanta uirtus inerat quod ubicumque Beunonus foret hanc indutus, nec pluuiā humectari nec pilus eius posset uento moueri. Talis rei euentu, Beunonus Casulam Siccus agnominatus est.

‘This chasuble, on account of the virgin’s merit, contained such power that, wherever Beuno should be wearing it, it could neither be made wet by rain nor could its material be moved by wind. After that had happened, Beuno was distinguished by the nickname Dry-Chasuble’ (§17; text and translations from Callander forthc. a).

The compound Lansdowne recension here follows the anonymous Life and retains the final sentence largely unchanged: ‘Tali euentu rei, Bennonius Casula Sicca congnominatus est’ (§4; text from Callander forthc. d). The fact that this miracle is described in both Robert’s Life and the anonymous Life might indicate that it was found in the lost Latin Life of Beuno, although the Middle Welsh *Buchedd Beuno* contains no such miracle, perhaps having omitted it as part of the process of adapting, translating and shortening the Life. While the epithets are largely retained in the Welsh and Latin texts drawing directly on Robert’s Life, it is notable that no epithet is kept in any of the Middle English texts. Of these, all but Mirk’s *Festial* describe the relevant miracle, but do not connect this with Beuno name, or name him as *Casulsyth*, *Casula Sicca*, or a Middle English equivalent.

As can be seen, Robert of Shrewsbury does not merely record Welsh names in his Latin Life; sometimes he explains and comments upon them. Thus he discusses Winefride’s Well, which at her martyrdom burst forth where her head touched the ground:

Locus uero ubi sanguis illius effusus est, primitus Siccauallis dicebatur. Postquam autem capud uirginis abscisum terram tetigit et, ut prefati sumus, fons ibi aque salientis emanauit, qui etiam manet usque in hodiernum diem, sanans omnes languores tam in hominibus quam in pecoribus, locus isdem de nomine puelle uocabulum sortitus est. Nam illorum lingua Fennan Wenefrede, nostra uero Fons Wenefrede nominatus est. Fennan enim latino sermone fontem sonat.

‘Now the place where her blood was spilled was called Dry Valley to begin with. But after the virgin’s severed head touched the ground and, as we mentioned earlier, a spring of gushing water flowed out there, which still remains up to this very day, healing all illnesses both in people and in animals, that place acquired a designation from the girl’s name. For it was called in their language Winefride’s Fennan, but in ours *Fons Wenefrede* [Winefride’s Well]. For *fennan* denotes *fons* [well] in Latin speech’ (§5; text and translation from Callander forthc. b).

Robert here provides the Welsh and Latin names for Winefride’s well, although notably the second part of the Welsh form is simply the saint’s Latin name, rather than a form of Welsh *Gwenfrewy*. Robert’s spelling *fennan* merits discussion as the presumed basis for the use of the word in Middle English adaptation. It could derive from an oral or written form of Welsh *ffynnon*, which in the twelfth-century is normally spelt <finnaun>, with <fennaun> being a possible form, <e> representing /ə/. Robert’s form could thus derive from a miscopying of

<fennaun> in a source or, given the form <Fenna^on> in the Trinity recension (the <o> added by the scribe), <fennan> could be an error for Robert's original <fennon>, which would reflect the spoken form of the word.

Robert's discussion here is paralleled by a similar section in *Buchedd Beuno*, which could indicate that this derives from the lost Latin Life of Beuno.

Yn y lle y syrthyawd y gwaet ar y dayar, y kyvodes ffynnyawn odynd; a'r ffynnawn honno hyt hediw yssyd yn rodi yechyt y dynyon ac anyveileit oc eu heinyeu a'e clwyfeu. A'r ffynnawnn honno a enwit o enw y vorwyn, ac a elwit Ffynnawn Wenvrewy. (§13; Sims-Williams 2018: 147)

'In the place where her blood fell on the earth, a well rose up from there; and that well to this day gives health to people and animals from their diseases and wounds. And that well was named after the maiden's name, and was called Winefride's Well' (my translation).

In *Buchedd Beuno* (as also in the Middle Welsh translation of Robert's Life) the Welsh name is given without explanation, as this is unnecessary. But was there an explanation in the Latin Life of Beuno or was this added by Robert? If the latter, this raises the question of how Robert came to learn the meaning of the place-name and may be indicative of his interactions with locals in Wales or with Welsh monks at Shrewsbury. This explanation of the well-name is without equivalent in the anonymous Life and Lansdowne Life, although they do include the Welsh name *Sechnant* (Anonymous Life §7; Lansdowne Life §1) for the dry valley, which Robert includes only in Latin as *Siccaualis*. Robert's statement is kept largely unchanged in the abbreviated version in Trinity O.4.42. John of Tynemouth retains the Latin name, and adds a reference to Basingwerk, but leaves out the Welsh:

Locus vero vbi sanguis illius effusus est, non longe a monasterio nomine Basingwerk in Norwallia, primitus 'Sicca uallis' dicebatur; sed post eius mortem vsque in hodiernum diem Fons Wenefrede appellatur.

'Now, the place where her blood was spilled, not far from the monastery called Basingwerk in North Wales, was originally called Dry Valley, but after her death until our days it has been called 'Winefride's Well' (§3; Text and translation from Marzella forthc.).

John of Tynemouth's version of the Life is greatly shortened and clearly he did not consider it essential to retain this particular onomastic detail.

In the Middle English texts, the Welsh name is overwhelmingly not retained, broadly following the pattern already seen with Beuno's epithet. Thus, we find in Mirk's *Festial a fayre welle*, a wonderful wel in Audelay's carol, a *fayre welle* in the *Gilte Legende* Life, and a *swythe fayr Welle* in the Bodley 779 Life. Caxton, similarly to John of Tynemouth, presents the well's name only in the language in which he is writing, as *saint Wenefredes well*.

References to Wales and Welsh place and personal names are generally reduced in the Middle English texts to varying degrees of extremity. As Gregory 2012: 280) writes,

the Bodleian 779 Life of Wenefred alters the names of several principal characters rather severely. Wenefred herself appears as 'Uonefred' or 'Wonefred(e);' Caradog is unnamed and instead appears variously as 'the Kinges Sone,' 'this fool Child' and 'this 3ong Child;' Eleri is recast as 'Bulopius;' and his mother, Tenoï, appears as 'Eusebie' and 'Euzebye.' Gwytherin has become 'Veterat' and 'Syre Aleyn' is 'King of Ingelonde.' Only 'Beuno' appears unchanged. Titled in the manuscript *Seint Vonefrede þe Holi Virgine*, this Life never mentions Wales or any place therein, and no comments are made upon the origin of Wenefred's name.

This is perhaps the most extreme example of the erasure of Welsh material in the Middle English texts, but it is paralleled to a degree by all of them. A reader looking at this text would have no reason to think that Winefride was not simply an English saint and the personal names, with the exception of Beuno, would not associate her with Wales. There is an obvious temptation to view this in the context of medieval England's political domination of medieval Wales, with the appropriation of Winefride's cult being one part of this.

However, further questions require answers before moving to this conclusion. Do we see here an attempt to make the names less markedly Welsh (and thus more neutral?) so that the good example of the saint may be retained without connecting her with Wales? Or is this an instance of a far broader pattern of removing irrelevant material, not needed in a new English context, which could draw the minds of readers and listeners away from the text's important lessons? Currently we do not know, but studying the Lives of Welsh saints and their treatment in Middle English could improve our understanding both of such processes of condensation and simplification and of attitudes towards Wales and the Welsh in medieval England.

Such a study would need to assess how all Middle English Lives of Welsh saints (those of Teilo and David as well as those of Winefride) engage with and/or remove Welsh

detail and proper nouns. This cannot be done effectively in a vacuum and would need to be viewed in the context of the broader treatment of local detail and proper nouns in the collections and by the authors noted. How do the writers of collections like the *Gilte Legende* treat Latin Lives of saints based in areas of less obvious political relevance to medieval England? Do we see the same type and scale of erasure as with the material concerning Wales, or is there a difference? If there is a difference, what is particular about the treatment of Wales and Welsh names? A further question is what differences can be perceived between changes made in the Middle English adaptations and later Latin collections from England, such as John of Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium*. He often omits proper nouns, but in the case of Winefride he does not go as far as some of the Middle English texts: is this part of a wider pattern of more local details being retained in Latin texts from England than Middle English texts? The basic point which can be made currently is that the Middle English Winefride texts tend to erase local Welsh detail and proper nouns to a greater extent than the Latin or Middle Welsh texts. The precise significance of this erasure is not yet known.

It was noted above that the Welsh name for Winefride's well was overwhelmingly not retained by the Middle English adaptors of Robert's Life, but there is one counterexample. In Bokenham's Life, a form of the Welsh term is maintained:

Gret wundyr yt was for the place before
 Wher this newe plenteuous welle dede sprynge
 Was wone watyr to han neuere more
 Lesse gret reyn thedyr ony dede brynge
 Yet whanne yt ther cam wyth owte taryge
 Among the stonys yt wanysshd gret & smal
 Wherefore yt clepyd was the drye wale
 But nowe chawgyd ys wtowte drede
 The name therof as the legende doth spelle
 For in here language ./ Fenwey . Wenefrede
 Yt ys clepyd & in oure speche the welle
 So man & beste of euery maladye
 Wyth deuocyôn souht ys founde remedye (ll. 422–434; Gregory 2012: 416)

'It was a great marvel, because the place where this new plentiful well sprang up previously did not usually have water, unless great rains brought any there. Yet when it came there,

without delay it disappeared among the stones, big and small, for which reason it was called the Dry Valley. But now its name is changed, without doubt, as the saint's life tells; for in their language it is called *Fenwey Wenefrede*, and in our speech *the welle*. Thus for man and beast a remedy of every disease, when sought with devotion, is found.'

We find here the expected reference to *this newe plenteuous welle*, but a version of the Welsh term *Fenwey Wenefrede* also occurs at l. 431. The form *Fenwey* can be explained as developing from Robert's written form in the following manner: *Fennan* > *Fenuan* > *Fenwan* > *Fenway* > *Fenwey*. The letters <y> and <n> could be confused, particularly if the descender of the <y> were unclear, and the ending may show the influence of other place-names ending in -wey, including anglicisations of Welsh -wy endings, such as *Conwey*. As with Robert's Life, the Latin form *Wenefrede* is used in the Welsh name, rather than Middle Welsh *Gwenfrewy*. Bokenham thus retained something similar to Robert's rendering of the Welsh form and does not seem to want to remove the Welsh elements. It is noteworthy how balanced his treatment is, referring to English and Welsh in a similar manner: *in here language / in oure speche*. In l. 431–432, the name *Wenefrede* appears to apply to both the Welsh *Fenwey* and the English *the welle*, and English readers can only access the English name *Winefride's well* by piecing together the English noun in l. 432 with the use of the saint's name in the Welsh place-name *Fenwey Wenefrede* in l. 431. Perhaps Bokenham's local interest was sparked by his own pilgrimage to Holywell. He shows knowledge of Wales elsewhere in the text, utilizing Higden's *Polychronicon* and unique information about miracles which he claims to have learned by *relacyon of men in that cuntre* (l. 513; Gregory 2012: 289–290; Sanok 2018: 101, 106–108). Regardless of the general pattern, Bokenham highlights how the treatment of Wales in Middle English texts is not exclusively concerned with erasure.

3 Naming Winefride

The fourth and most detailed instance where Robert engages with the Welsh language is in his attempt to explain Winefride's name. Its origin remains somewhat uncertain. The form *Wenefreda* normally used in the Latin texts appears to be a Latinisation of Welsh *Gwenfrewy*, first attested in writing in the fifteenth century (Winward 1999), and the English forms draw upon the Latin, with the influence of such pre-existing English names as Winefrid. The first element of this is most likely *gwen* (the feminine form of the Welsh word

for ‘white’), but the second element is of unknown meaning and poorly attested elsewhere (Winward 1999: 100–3).

Like modern scholars, Robert was aware that there were two elements in her name, and explains how this came to be after Beuno resurrects her:

Inde ferunt illius prouintie homines eam Wenefredam fuisse uocitatam, cum antea, ut ipsi asseuerant, Brewa nominata sit. Quod enim ipsi in sua lingua Wen dicunt, latine candidum uocant. Sicque ex occasione albedinis collum circumdantis, ex re nomen habere dicta est, adiecta particula, quę est Wen, atque eufonie causa pristini nominis duabus litteris transmutatis, compositum obtinere uocabulum quod Wenefreda dicitur. ‘People of that province say that she was called Winefride on account of that [i.e. her scar], when previously, as they assert, she was called Brewa. For what they call Wen in their language, they call in Latin *candidus* (white). And so, on account of the whiteness encircling her neck [i.e. the scar], she was said to have her name from that, a particle having been added, which is Wen, and, the two letters of her earlier name having changed on account of sounding better (*eufonie causa*), to have the composite name, which is called Wenefreda’ (§5; text and translation from Callander forthc. b).

Robert here shows familiarity with Winefride’s Welsh name *Gwenfrewy*. As noted above, (*g*)*wen* is the feminine form of the Welsh adjective for *white*, and this is how Robert interprets the first part of her name. What follows is an attempt by Robert to explain the mutations. The Celtic languages are well-known for their initial mutations. One instance of where mutation takes place in Welsh is at the start of the second element of compound words. *Wen* and *Brewa* formed a compound here and, as the second element of this, *Brewa* undergoes lenition to *Frewa*, resulting in the form ‘Gwenfrewa’. How exactly the <f> was pronounced in *Wenefreda* is unclear. If it was /f/ rather than /v/, perhaps existing English names like *Winefrid* had already exerted an influence. Nevertheless, what we see here is someone from outside Wales looking at the mutations and trying to make sense of them, arguing that the phonological change takes place because it sounds better. Robert groups this with an unrelated change, namely of /w/ to /d/ in the second element of the compound (on this change, cf. Winward 1999: 102). Both Trinity (§5) and John of Tynemouth (§2) retain this explanation of the name, although Trinity cuts off the final section and thus does not attempt to explain the mutations and how the combination of *wen* and *Brewa* could lead to the form *Wenefreda*.

A somewhat different explanation of her name is given in the anonymous and Lansdowne Lives (the latter here drawing on the anonymous Life), which add the Latin word so that no explanation of the Welsh is needed. This might indicate that the anonymous Life, despite having been composed in Wales, was aimed at a partly non-Welsh audience. Winefride's scar is not described as white in the anonymous Life, and thus Robert's explanation would not work here. Rather, her name is linked to her wisdom:

Quanta scientie eloquentia hec uirgo prefulserit non est nostre facultatis edicere, sermones quippe elogii ipsius melle dulciores lacteque nitidiores in sensibus audientium reputabantur. Unde et ab omnibus publice Candida Wenefræda prenominata est, candore enim sophie eloquebatur et confirmiter degebat.

'It is beyond our ability to tell with what eloquence of knowledge this virgin shone forth, for the words of her speech were considered to be sweeter than honey and whiter than milk in the thoughts of those listening. And for that reason she was named White Winefride by everyone openly, for she spoke with the whiteness of wisdom and she lived steadfastly' (Anonymous Life §20; text and translation from Callander forthc. a; cf. Lansdowne Life §5; Callander forthc. d).

Candida Wenefreda is tautological in a Welsh context as *gwen* already means white, and thus the phrase would mean 'White White-Brewa'. The forms of proper nouns elsewhere in the text would point towards an author with knowledge of Welsh, but this deployment of *Candida* may be aimed at a partially non-Welsh audience. It is worth remembering in this context that all the Latin versions of Winefride's Lives survive only in manuscripts produced outside Wales. The addition of *Candida* here is much simpler than Robert's linguistic explanation and would be immediately intelligible to any Latin reader.

There is no explanation of Winefride's name in *Buchedd Beuno*. Again it is uncertain whether this was present in the lost Latin Life of Beuno and has been removed as unnecessary in the vernacular rendering or was an innovation in Winefride's Lives. In *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* (the Welsh translation of Robert's Life), Robert's explanation of the name is retained but greatly simplified:

A phobyl y wlad honno a ddywad mae Brewy oedd i henw hi. Yna, ac o achaws yr edau wenn oedd ynghylch y mynwgyl, y gelwid hi o hynny allan Gwenn Vrewy. (§13; Cartwright forthc. a)

‘And the people of that land said that her name was Brewy. Then, and on account of the white thread which was around her neck, she was called thenceforth Gwen Frewy’ (my translation).

We can see how the vernacular context has affected the explanation here. There is no need to explain what *gwenn* means, as it is known to mean ‘white’, and thus her name clearly derives from the *edau wenn* (‘white thread’) around her neck. The translator does not need to explain the mutations and there is also far less distance to go in moving from *gwen+Brewy* to the Welsh *Gwenn Vrewy* than from *wen+Brewa* to the Latin *Wenefreda*.

In most of the Middle English texts, Winefride’s name is unexplained. Audelay’s carol and *salutacio*, the Bodley 779 Life and Bokenham describe the scar as white, but do not link this to her name. The *Gilte Legende* Life and Caxton’s pamphlet Life present her scar as red, and again do not link it to her name. However, the Latin sequence *Gaude virgo Wenefreda* in Caxton’s pamphlet does appear to link Winefride’s name with the scar:

Gaude quia collum cingit ictus ensis qui non fingit sed te probat martirem. Gaude Wenefrede [*sic*] hinc est dicta, martir constans et non ficta, seruans hunc carecterem. (Horstmann 1880: 314–315)

‘Rejoice because the sword’s wound surrounds the neck, which is not feigned but proves you a martyr. Rejoice, Winefride was named because of this, a steadfast martyr and not contrived, preserving this distinguishing mark’ (my translation).

The sequence claims that Winefride was so named because of her scar but without explanation. Including a detailed etymological explanation like Robert’s would be incongruous with genre here, but perhaps this also indicates that the intended audience of this sequence was already familiar with the interpretation of Winefride’s name found in Robert’s Life. This would not be unexpected if this sequence derived from the liturgy in use at Shrewsbury, as the subsequent reference *post translata ad vrbem Salopie* would suggest. Interestingly, this etymology contradicts the red scar Winefride is said to have in Caxton’s Life, and illustrates how the sequence predates Caxton’s work and is drawing on Robert’s Latin Life rather than this Middle English translation.

The only Middle English Winefride text to offer an explanation of Winefride’s name is the earliest, that is, Mirk’s *Festial*. This adapts Robert of Shrewsbury’s etymology and does so in such a way as to blend Welsh and English:

eure whil scheo lyvyd, þer was a whyte serkul aboute hur nek þeras þe strok was, leke a whyte threde. Wherefore þereas scheo was before called Brewa, fro þis day forth men called hyr Wenefrede, þat is in englys a whyte threde. (ll. 63–66; Powell 2009–2011, I: 163)

‘ever while she lived, there was a white circle around her neck where the blow had been, like a white thread. For which reason, whereas she was previously called Brewa, from this day forth people called her *Wenefrede*, that is in English *a whyte threde*.’

Mirk uses Robert’s explanation to translate *wen* to ‘white’, although the presence of another language is implicit rather than explicit. Mirk makes no attempt to explain the mutations. He may have been unconvinced by or could not understand Robert’s explanation on the basis of *euphonia*. He does not present a connection between the second element *frede* and her previous name *Brewa*. Instead he links *frede* to the more similar English word *threde*. Th-fronting in English appears to be an eighteenth-century innovation (Beal 2012: 71) and therefore the initial consonants here must have been distinct from one another. Nevertheless, they are sufficiently similar for this to have offered writers like Mirk a tempting explanation for the name. Indeed, the monosyllabic *frede* in Middle English is closer to *threde* than the Latin *freda* would have been, the only difference being the initial consonants. Mirk apparently has no problem with Winefride’s name containing an English (or similar-to-English) element, although it is noteworthy that he describes *frede* > *threde* as an English translation. Winefride is presented as having lived in Wales in the sermon (although, compared to Robert’s Life, this is greatly reduced and confined to the story of the Translation in ll. 90 and 147), and the presence of another language is not made explicit. Thus, having a semi-English element in her name may be more easily explicable. Of the English texts, only Mirk offers an actual explanation of the name, yet every version of the Latin Lives maintains some form of explanation, perhaps reflecting a greater tendency in medieval Latin writing towards learned etymology.

4 Conclusion

Winefride’s Lives provide an opportunity to look at how Latin hagiography was adapted in a range of different contexts and areas by writers in Latin, Middle Welsh, and Middle English.

Winefride is exceptional for a Welsh saint in the amount of material surviving in Middle English as well as Middle Welsh and Latin, reflecting the strength of her cult in both England and Wales in the fifteenth century. She is nevertheless not unique in having a Middle English Life. The Latin Lives of the Welsh saints are border-crossing texts which often survive in manuscripts in England and could be translated into Middle English. Notably, Winefride's Middle Welsh and Middle English traditions do not appear to have much, if any, direct influence on one another. Presumably there was great mutual influence orally in bilingual areas like Oswestry hundred, but with the Winefride texts this is not reflected by bilingual Welsh-English texts or by substantial direct Welsh or English influence on one another. Nevertheless, the Latin Lives of the Welsh saints can engage richly with the Welsh language, as Robert of Shrewsbury's Life testifies, and the adaptations of these in Welsh and English can give us an indication of differing priorities. In the majority of the Middle English texts, the clear pattern is erasure of the Welsh language, but there is also some creative engagement and adaptation, as highlighted by Mirk's ingenious translation of Winefride's name or Bokenham's treatment of Ffynnon Wenfrewy. In scholarship on Welsh with reference to the multilingual context of medieval English, the focus has understandably been on the Marches and areas of direct linguistic contact (cf. Lloyd-Morgan 2015; Flood 2016). Yet this study highlights that there are also other paths we might pursue: a twelfth-century monk of Shrewsbury who wrote about a Welsh saint in Latin took an interest in the different language spoken in the land Winefride came from. Later, a fifteenth-century monk living in Suffolk, Osbern Bokenham, read this Latin Life and also, apparently, maintained a degree of interest in the Welsh language in composing his Middle English adaptation. The multilingual context of medieval English is not always where we expect to find it.

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