

The Third Gender and *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*

Rhonda L. McDaniel



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Chapter Four

Brides and Soldiers of Christ

Agnes: Sponsa Christi

Ælfric's life of St. Agnes appeals to its audience in terms of desire, the desire of the saint for a relationship with Christ, which then reproduces itself in the audience as they (male and female alike) identify with the saint and thus participate in desiring the Son of God. For the life of Agnes, like that of Eugenia, illustrates the relationship of the soul with its Creator. Whereas Eugenia's life exemplifies the journey of the soul to salvation and the *virum perfectum* of spiritual completeness, the life of Agnes depicts the relationship of the soul to Christ as bride to bridegroom.

The version of Agnes's legend known to Ælfric was attributed to Ambrose throughout the Middle Ages, but was not actually written by him. The author of this life, however, seems to have known Ambrose's *De uirginibus* very well, for the work resounds with thematic ideas and images found throughout Ambrose's work, thus earning the author the nickname of Pseudo-Ambrose.¹ The Pseudo-Ambrosian legend is the one quoted by Aldhelm in his "Prosa de uirginitate" and translated by Ælfric in *Lives of Saints*.

From the first, Ælfric emphasizes that Agnes "on ðone hælend gelyfed" [believed in the Savior], even when there is no matching phrase in the closest published Latin texts nor in the CCL.² Following the Latin text closely, Ælfric describes Agnes as *snotor* (wise) and *eald-lic on mode* (elderly in mind) in contrast to her youth. He mentions in line fourteen that Agnes attended school, but does not indicate what her education entailed. Given her wisdom and mental maturity, however, we might reasonably infer that she received the common education in rhetoric, which would have included training of the memory. Mary Carruthers stresses the connection, saying, "[Memory] was co-extensive with wisdom and knowledge, but it was more—as a condition of prudence, possessing a

well-trained memory was morally virtuous in itself. ... the memory feats of saints are frequently stressed in hagiography, even of saints who were not scholars (like Francis of Assisi). This was done not to show off their intellectual prowess, but to stress their moral perfection.”³ Ælfric translates the Latin version’s brief comment on Agnes’s beauty, but also reproduces the greater emphasis placed upon her mind, so that we know in passing that “heo wæs wlitig on anyne” [she was beautiful in countenance], but also understand that her physical beauty holds no match to the beauty of faith and virtue in her soul because she is “wlitigre on geleafan” [more beautiful in faith].⁴ Her true loveliness lies in the moral character developed in her soul rather than in her nubile body. Hers is not just dry belief in the sense of intellectual assent, however, for Ælfric observes how “heo lufode crist” [she loved Christ], making the person Agnes loves more specific than the Latin version, which says that Agnes “dilexit auctorem” [loved the Creator].⁵ Where the Latin version implicitly connotes this love to be the expression of the *imago Dei* in relation to its maker, Ælfric personalizes Agnes’s love and humanizes it by fixing her love upon Christ. In this brief introduction, the audience sees at work in Agnes’s life the two activities of loving God and governing her own body so that the beauty of Agnes’s outer appearance reflects the inward beauty of her faith because “heo lufode crist.”⁶

The reason that Agnes even has a story to be written into a life is summed up in those three words: “heo lufode crist.” No other man can rival the Son of God in Agnes’s affections, not even the son of the Roman prefect, who promised rich clothing and great wealth to Agnes if she would wed him. Ælfric translates almost the entire response she delivers, maintaining the lyrical quality of the Latin original. Agnes first sharply rejects the offer of gems and worldly riches her suitor has made to her, calling him “synne ontendnys / leahtras foda . and deaðes bigleafa” [incitement of sin, nourishment of vice, and support of death], words that place him in the serpent’s role as tempter.⁷ Agnes herself succeeds, however, where Adam and Eve failed: the Augustinian “female” rational activity that manages worldly matters submits to the “male” rational activity that contemplates truth so that her decisions with regard to marriage and worldly wealth reflect her proper desire for Christ. This belief in and love for the transcendent other translates Agnes’s life out of the material order of riches and marital intercourse into the transcendent order of grace, salvation, and relationship with God. Agnes’s submission to Christ gives her free-

dom from the physical and temporal demands of men like Sempronius's son just as the submission of the "female" activity of the mind to the "male" activity results in a harmony that frees the mind from the tyranny of the physical passions.

Yet this freedom from the dominance of sensual desire does not seem to negate either the body or sex. Agnes declares "Ic hæbbe oðerne lufend / þinne ungelican . on æðelborennysse" [I have another lover unlike you in noble birth].⁸ She claims Christ as her own lover, a better lover than the son of the prefect will ever be. The language of the rest of Agnes's speech is unblushingly embodied and sexual in its portrayal of a womanly perception of her standing as a virgin bride of Christ, yet it is so bodied that the prefect's son misunderstands it in a completely literal way. In the Latin text, she speaks not only in terms of the imperishable riches her heavenly lover possesses, but speaks of Christ himself in frankly sexual and desiring terms, which Ælfric reproduces from the Latin text almost word for word. Pseudo-Ambrose writes, "Iam mel et lac ex eius ore suscepi / iam amplexibus eius castis astricta sum / iam corpus eius corpori meo sociatum est: / et sanguis eius ornauit genus meum [*sic*]" [Now I have received honey and milk from his mouth; already I am drawn close in his chaste embrace; now his body is joined to my body and his blood decorates my cheeks]. Ælfric translates this passage as "Of his muðe ic under-feng meoluc . and hunig . / nu iu ic eom beclypt . mid his clænum earmum . / his fægera lichama is minum geferylht . / and his blod ge-glende mine eah-hringas" [From his mouth I receive milk and honey; now already I am embraced by his pure arms, his fair body is united to mine and his blood decorates my eyes].⁹ While not quite so frankly embodied, the closing words to Agnes's speech also speak of her union with the transcendent bridegroom in sexual terms. In Pseudo-Ambrose she says,

quem cum amauero casta sum :
cum tetigero munda sum :
cum accepero uirgo sum nec deerunt post nuptias filii
ubi partus sine dolore succedit et fecunditas
quotidiana cumulatur

[when I love him, I am chaste; when I touch him, I am clean; when I receive him, I am a virgin, nor will children be lacking after the marriage, where birth follows without sorrow and fruitfulness is increased daily].

Ælfric translates,

Ponne ic hine lufige . ic beo eallunga clæne . / þonne ic hine hreppe
 . ic beo unwemme . / ðonne ic hine under-fo . ic beo mæden forð
 . / and þær bærn ne ateoriað . on ðam bryd-lace . / Þær is eacnung
 buton sare . and singallic wæstmbærnyss

[When I love him, I am altogether pure; when I touch him, I am unstained; when I receive him, I am a virgin still. And issue ceases not in that wedded state; there is increase without pain and incessant fruitfulness].¹⁰

In both the Latin and Ælfric's version, the climax of Agnes's love for Christ will come with fulfillment of her longing: the wedded state, the intimate consummation of pure and holy desire that is perpetually fruitful, perpetually satisfying. Agnes speaks of the relationship as something present and ongoing: she receives, is embraced, is united to her lover in language evocative of the psalms and canticles and of Ambrose's interpretation of the bride seeking the kisses of her spouse: "illa osculum poposcit, deus uerbum se ei totus infudit" [She sought the kiss, God the Word poured himself into her wholly].¹¹ Agnes shows absolute confidence in her transcendent lover, so much so that she turns down every offer of wealth that the prefect's son makes as though he were offering sewage.¹² In doing so, she embodies the ideal of the soul that refuses to be distracted by material, temporal allurements from its contemplation of and devotion to the divine and does so by showing that ardor in its closest parallel from human experience: the sexually desiring bride seeking consummation with her lover. In the bridal chamber of Agnes's memory this sanctified image of gendered sexuality in the context of relationship with the metagendered other drives away any attraction that a worldly marriage might have to offer. In that chamber, she meets her bridegroom as a woman in a union that transcends sex and is completely satisfied and at peace in herself.

In sharp contrast to Agnes's example of the restored harmony of the activities of the mind through relationship with Christ, the young Roman and his father, Sempronius, both illustrate Ælfric's translation of Alcuin on the misdirection of the three parts of the soul in *LS* 1:

Uþwytan sæcgað . þæt þære sawle gecynd is ðryfeald . An dæl is
 on hire gewylnigend-lic . oðer yrsigend-lic . þrydde gesceadwislic.
 Twægen þissera dæla habbað deor and nytenu mid us . þæt is

gewylnunge and yrre. Se man ana hæfð gescead . and ræd . and andgit. Gewylning is þam menn forgifen to gewilnienne þa ðing þe him fremiað to nit-wyrðum þingum and to þære ecan hæle . Þonne gif seo gewylnung mis-went . þonne acenð he gyfernesse . and forlygr and gitsunge. Yrre is ðære sawle forgifen . to ðy þæt heo yrsige ongean leahtres . and ne beo na synnum under-þeodd. ... Gif þæt yrre bið on yfel awend . þonne cymð of þam unrotnisse . and æmylnysse. Gescead is ðære sawle forgifen to gewyssienne and to styrenne hire agen lif . and ealle hire dæda. Of þam gesceade gif hit miswænt . cymð modignysse and ydel gylp .

[Philosophers say that the nature of the soul is threefold: one part in it is capable of desire, another is wrathful, the third is reasonable. The wild animals and cattle possess two of these parts together with us, that is, desire and wrath. Only a human being has reason and wisdom and understanding. Desire is given to humans to long for those things that benefit them, for useful things and for their eternal salvation. Yet if the desire goes astray, then it brings forth gluttony and fornication and avarice. Wrath is given to the soul in order that it might be angry against vices, and not be subjected to any sins. ... If wrath is turned aside to evil, then sadness and sloth come from it. Reason is given to the soul to guide and to govern its own life and all its deeds. If it goes astray from that reason, pride and vainglory come.]¹³

Sempronius's son exhibits errant desire in that he longs for the pleasure of a sexual relationship instead of relationship with his Creator. Sempronius himself illustrates wrath gone astray: instead of restraining vice in his son he takes offense at Agnes's refusal of marriage and becomes filled with rage.¹⁴ These two men also portray Augustine's concept of the unbelieving mind in which the "male" activity has turned away from the contemplation of truth and fallen into pride: "Ita cum uult esse sicut ille sub nullo, et ab ipsa sui medietate poenaliter ad ima propellitur, id est ad ea quibus pecora laetantur" [And then, while he wants to be like God under nobody, he is thrust down as a punishment from his own half-way level (of being both spiritual and physical) to the bottom, to the things in which the beasts find their pleasure].¹⁵ The very act of desiring to be one's own God results in a symbolic plunge to a sub-human level, slavery to the passions that humans share with beasts. The animal pleasures are those carnal activities that excite the bodily senses but require no understanding, such as eating or copulation.

Sempronius's son certainly seems to have been motivated by just such animal desires. When Agnes frustrates him, the Latin text describes him as being *insanus* (of unsound mind); according to Ælfric, he is first "ge-ancsumod and wið-innan ablend" [vexed and inwardly blinded], then stricken with *mod-least* (lack of heart or mind).¹⁶ Due to his unbelief, the young man takes Agnes's speech to refer to a human lover that she prefers to himself. The "male" activity of the young Roman's mind is unable to recognize the truth and he has apparently never exerted the "female" activity to rein in the body's desire for pleasures. In Ælfric's psychology, when the human mind turns away from God in this manner, it loses more and more of its likeness to its Creator, becoming instead more and more like the unreasoning beasts by allowing the parts of the soul that humans share with beasts, desire and wrath, to overrule reason and to direct and govern the actions of the person. According to Augustine and the other Latin Doctors, only the grace of God can restore the harmony and order of the *imago Dei* in a man or woman once he or she has descended to this bestial level.¹⁷ The son of Sempronius, denied his fleshly desire, sickens and sulks in mindless sloth. In his lovesickness, he exemplifies a masculinity defined by the pursuit of sex and outward beauty.

Sempronius cannot believe that any girl in her right mind would refuse to marry his son and so he himself sends a proposal of marriage to Agnes on his son's behalf. Agnes refuses again, saying that she would not "þæs ærran bryd-guman æpelan truwan / æfre gewemman þurh ænig wedd" [ever by any agreement tarnish the noble pledge of that first bridegroom].¹⁸ The prefect, in his own desire "to be like God under nobody," sinks not into beast-like lust as his son did, but into bestial rage when frustrated by Agnes's refusal to bow to his power or to bolster his high opinion of himself and his family by submitting to marry his son. Inquiring into who this first bridegroom might be, Sempronius learns that Agnes has been a Christian from childhood and is filled with delusion.¹⁹ In a dramatic irony that Ælfric's educated audience would not have missed, the unbelieving prefect thinks Agnes is deluded because he is himself unable to recognize the truth. Becoming "dreorig on mode" [troubled in his mind],²⁰ he turns away from the wrath that he rightfully wields as a government official in order to restrain vice and crime and falls into an errant wrath that attacks the bride of Christ, trying to persuade her with flattery and then with threat of dire punishments if she does not abandon her devotion to Christ.²¹ Agnes, however, repeatedly proclaims her love of Christ in both

Pseudo-Ambrose's and Ælfric's versions.²² When Sempronius warns her not to anger the Roman gods with her childishness, she responds in the Latin text with, "Fides enim non in annis sed in sensibus inuenitur: et deus omnipotens mentes magis comprobatur quam aetates" [Faith is not found in years but in understanding, and God omnipotent approves minds more than years.] Ælfric renders the thought as, "Se ælmihtiga herað / swiðor manna mod . þonne heora mycclan ylde . / and se geleafa ne bið on gearum . ac bið on glæwum andgitum" [The Almighty commends / the minds of men more than their great age; / and belief is not in years, but is in wise understandings].²³ Agnes's words again underscore the importance of the mental qualities of belief. Her knowledge of God provides her with the knowledge also of the importance of her own mind, the image of God in her own soul. Armed with such knowledge, Agnes remains unmoved by the persuasions and threats of Sempronius. Against the prefect's vexed mental state Agnes remains calm, steadfast in her knowledge of God. When threatened with having to choose between sacrificing to the pagan gods or being shamed among harlots, Agnes answers him with unshakable resolve:

Pseudo-Ambrose:

Si scires quis est deus meus: non ista de ore tuo proferres. Vnde quia ego noui uirtutem domini Iesu christi: segura contemno minas tuas credens: quod neque sacrificem idolis tuis: neque polluar sordibus alienis: Mecum enim habeo custodem corporis mei angelum domini.

[If you could know my God you would not let such words out of your mouth. Because I know the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, I, believing, am secure from your threats; moreover, neither shall I sacrifice to your idols nor be violated by the filth of strangers.]

Ælfric:

gif ðu cuðest minne god . ne cwæde þu ðas word . / Orsorghlice ic forseo þine þeow-racan . / forþan þe ic gearu cann mines drihtnes mihte . / Ic truwigu on him forþan ðe he / Is me trumweall . and unateorigendlic bewerigend . / þæt ic ðinum awyrgeðum godum ne ðurfe / ge-offrian . ne þurh ælfremede horwan . / æfre beon gefyled . mid þam fulum myltestrum / Ic hæbbe godes encgel haligne mid me.

[If you knew my God you would not say such words. Without worry I scorn your threats because I know very well the power of my Lord. I trust in him because he is a strong wall for me and a lasting defense so that I have no need to sacrifice to your detestable gods, nor by means of outward defilements may I ever be polluted among the foul prostitutes. I have the holy angel of God with me.]²⁴

Agnes's response highlights the importance of knowledge. Sempronius behaves as he does because he does not know God. Agnes, however, is perfectly confident in God's ability to protect her and so she has no fear of anything the prefect threatens. Even if she is outwardly defiled in her body at a place of prostitution, such acts cannot touch her inward purity because she will not have taken part in them willingly. As with Ambrose's Virgin of Antioch, Agnes knows that the purity of her mind and soul cannot be taken away by the violation of her body. Agnes herself finally describes the terrible judgment of God that awaits Sempronius, which sends him over the edge into a mindless fury.²⁵ The Latin text calls him *insanus iudex* (the insane judge). The word Ælfric uses is *woda* (madman). Again, the picture is of a man who has lost his rational mind and become like an animal by giving rein to beastly rage. It is a picture of hegemonic masculinity at it worst, for not only is it violent, it is violent in an unjust cause.

On Sempronius's orders, Agnes is stripped of her clothing but miraculously "þæs mædenes fex . befeng hi eall abutan . / sona swa þa cwelleras hire claðas of abrudon . / and þæt fex hi behelede on ælce healfe gelice" [the virgin's hair enclothed her all around as soon as the executioners wrenched off her clothes, and the hair covered her over on each side alike].²⁶ The immediacy with which Agnes's hair covers her allows for no gazing upon her nakedness. She is stripped, to be sure, but the reader's attention is directed not to the naked body of the saint, but to the abundance of hair with which God miraculously clothes her. This episode takes us back to the same Pauline passage in I Corinthians 11 that Augustine addresses in book twelve of *De trinitate*, which discusses a woman's covering for her head. Paul comments that "quoniam capilli pro velamine ei dati sunt" [for her hair is given to her for a covering].²⁷ In this manner, the life externalizes the inward reality of the ordered gender functions in Agnes's mind, for Augustine states that the covering of hair for the woman that Paul speaks of in the Corinthians passage figuratively describes the authority of the "male" activity of rationality, the part that faces God and reflects the divine image, that "covers" the "female" rational activity so

that its interaction with the temporal will not lead the mind away from its rightful attention to God. In fact, the life implies that God provided the covering precisely because Agnes did not let concern for her bodily condition distract her from being entirely focused upon God. Sempronius orders that Agnes be dragged to a brothel so that she might be raped and thus despoiled of her virginity, but God sends a shining angel to the whorehouse to protect her and provide her with a shining tunic that fits her exactly.²⁸

The importance of this relationship with the divine other and the order such a relationship brings to the mind is illustrated in the death, restoration, and conversion of Sempronius's son. "Mid sceand-licum willan" [with shameful desire] the youth rushes into the brothel to rape Agnes, but he is immediately struck dead.²⁹ When Agnes prays for him, the youth is restored to life by the angel of Christ and he *immediately* begins praising the Christian God.³⁰ Belief, as depicted in the life of Agnes, is the result of an encounter with the presence and reality of a transcendent other, and is considered to be the proper response to such an encounter. It is brought about by the soul encountering and recognizing the one in whose image it is made, which begins the restoration of the *imago Dei* that was shattered by the effects of sin. The sign of this restoration is the harmony and proper ordering of the activities of the mind. After being raised, the youth no longer is ruled by his animal desires because the proper order of his mental functions has been restored. The animal has submitted to the "female," which has submitted to the "male," which has submitted to God.

Following this radical change in the prefect's son, the Romans accuse Agnes of practicing a sorcery that *mentes mutat* (perverts minds).³¹ Ælfric translates this idea as "awent ... manna mod" [perverted the minds of men and women].³² Both Pseudo-Ambrose and Ælfric use words that point out the irony of the situation: *muto* primarily denotes "change" and *awendan* variously means "turn aside, change, translate." In this context and from the point of view of the pagan Roman crowd, both words literally mean "pervert." But from the perspective of the authors and their religious readers, the words also literally mean "change," for the minds of Sempronius and his son have been changed through their encounter with Agnes and by seeing for themselves the power of God at work in her. What the perverse crowd sees as perverted is actually rightly ordered and true *sub specie aeternitatis*. The unbelieving crowd cannot recognize this rightness, however, and being *hetelic gedrefede* (exceedingly disturbed), they attempt to burn Agnes. But instead of immolating the saint, the fire turns against the

crowd and consumes them. Agnes praises God for the miracle, but after hearing her words of praise, an even greater crowd clamors for her execution. Agnes receives the crown of martyrdom and the fulfillment of her holy desire by means of a sword stroke to the throat.

In all probability, the monastic Anglo-Saxons would have recognized the dynamics of this order of relationships in the life of Agnes, not just by virtue of the writings of earlier churchmen and Ælfric's sermon on the Trinity and the soul, but also in light of their own experiences in identifying with Agnes, their own desires for relationship with the same lover that Agnes loved so much. Looking from within this desiring relationship, one can begin to imagine how religious laymen and women in the time of Ælfric could have seen in Agnes an example worth following. The characteristics that make Agnes a beacon for the faithful, with the metagendered harmony of the activities of her mind, could be emulated by both men and women, lay and cleric. Agnes represents the believing soul's desire for God, a desire that redirects Agnes's love away from a female/male sexual relationship to a gendered/metagendered spiritual relationship. In the same way, the desire that her life arouses in the audience is not the desire of a man for a woman or *vice versa*, but a movement of the will toward Christ for which the closest analogue in strength and intensity is erotic desire, the erotic desire of a woman for her lover, her bridegroom. God would harmonize the exercise of these same mental functions for the believing Anglo-Saxons, freeing them to pursue relationship with the transcendent other, God himself. In this way, the believer could escape the domination of the animal passions that kept him or her from pursuing the most noble and truest desire of the soul, to see and know God face to face, to be able to say as Agnes said before her execution:

Pseudo-Ambrose:

Ecce iam quod credidi uideo . quod speraui iam teneo . quod concupiui complector . te confiteor labiis et corde . totis uisceribus concupisco . Ecce ad te uenio uiuum et uerum deum: qui cum domino nostro Iesu Christo filio tuo et cum spiritu sancto uiuis et regnas semper et in cuncta sæcula sæculorum . Amen.

[Behold! Now I see what I have believed, what I have hoped for I now possess, what I have desired I embrace. I confess you with my lips and heart, with all my innermost parts I long for you. Behold! I come to you, the living and true God, who, with our Lord Jesus

Christ, your Son, and with the Holy Spirit lives and reigns always and for ever! Amen].

Ælfric:

þæt þæt ic gelyfde þæt ic geseo . / ðæt þæt ic gehihte . þæt ic hæbbe
nu . / Þe Ic andette mid muðe . and mid minre heortan . / and mid
eallum innoðe . ic þe gewilnige . / ænne soþne god . þe mid þinum
suna rixast . / and mid þam halgan gaste . an ælmihtig god æfre .

[That which I have believed, that I see; that which I desired, that I
now have. I confess you with my mouth and with my soul and with
all my heart I long for you, the one true God, who reigns with your
Son and with the Holy Ghost, one Almighty God forever!]³³

In leaving the world through death, Agnes obtains her life's desire, union with her transcendent bridegroom and a dwelling in the court of heaven.

Sebastian: *Emissarius Clandestinus Dei*

Some years ago, Allen J. Frantzen asserted that “for a man to be holy is to act like a man; for a woman to be holy is also to act like a man,” yet certain elements of the *passio* of Agnes seem to call that statement into question.³⁴ She certainly demonstrated through her virtue and steadfastness that she had come as close as a yet mortal being can come to attaining the *virum perfectum*, but she did so by completely building her identity as a virtuous bride desiring union with virtue itself, Christ her bridegroom. As a result, one might wonder what it means for any saint, male or female, to “act like a man.” Does Frantzen have in mind participating in what Clare E. Lees calls “the traditional male pursuits of warfare, territorial expansion, and aggression”?³⁵ Or does the hagiography of the late Roman martyrs reorient masculinity in a way that creates a new, metagendered kind of man, the saint, just as it reoriented femininity and created a new, metagendered kind of woman, the saint? Ælfric has already demonstrated in the previous *passiones* that Christian deeds can define unexpected kinds of masculinity in men whose lives are lived outside of the identity-constructing culture of the monastery. From the deeds of Alban, the fugitive priest, and the converted executioner to the proclamations of the resurrected son of Sempronius, behaviors that society might consider aberrant or outright unmanly are lauded in the *passiones* as heroic evidence of true belief and

love for God. The *passio* of St. Sebastian continues to explore this alternative gendering of male saints.

The *passio* of Sebastian, another Pseudo-Ambrosian work like those of Agnes and Eugenia, may provide a template for what it means for holy men to enact a third gender in the late antique/early medieval religious cultural milieu in which Pseudo-Ambrose wrote.³⁶ Ælfric drastically edited the *passio* of Eugenia when he translated it into Old English, especially with regard to its imagery of Eugenia's symbolic transformation from female into the third gender—in short, Ælfric wrote the entire issue of shifting gender out of his rendition, leaving simply the story of a woman disguised in man's clothing. Yet he did describe Eugenia as living “mid werlicum mode” [with a manly mind].³⁷ Both the Latin and the Old English versions, however, define the behaviors of this manliness so that Eugenia and her two eunuch companions are characterized by the rather womanly qualities (in the late Roman view) of virginity, gentleness in speech, humility, and single-hearted service and devotion to Christ. Similarly, in Ambrose's life of the Virgin of Antioch, the soldier who exchanges clothing with the virgin claims that donning her feminine clothes (symbolically acquiring female attributes) will make him a true soldier of Christ. The implication of these legends and of others is that a fusion of gender characteristics occurs in both men and women when they enter into a believing relationship with Christ—the mixture of masculine and feminine qualities that the Gospels attribute to the Son of God manifests itself in the lives of the saints as they draw closer to him through prayer, study, and good works. The saints of both sexes thus transcend their biology and are freed from the gender roles assigned to their sexes by their secular societies so that they might pursue the metagendered other and become more like Christ in the process. This interpretation, however, is rooted in the monastic understanding of the transformation of men and women who devote themselves to virginity. How does Ælfric translate this process in the *passio* of Sebastian for a nonmonastic audience?

Ælfric begins by telling his audience that Sebastian lived “lange on lare on mediolana byrig” [a long time in the city of Milan during his instruction].³⁸ The text in *Acta Sanctorum* (*AASS*) notes that Sebastian was in Milan “partibus eruditus” [imparting instruction], but BL, Cotton Nero E.i omits this important information. Ælfric first establishes that Sebastian possesses considerable education—enough to be an established teacher in a major imperial city. Pseudo-Ambrose first tells his readers that the emperors Diocletian and Maximian think very highly of Sebastian and

make him commander of the first cohort of the Roman military before ever discussing the qualities the two emperors find so admirable. This appointment implies that the emperors consider Sebastian to be a capable and successful warrior, well educated, a leader, and loyal to themselves and so indeed he turns out to be:

Pseudo-Ambrose:

Sebastianus ... Diocletiano et Maximiano Imperatoribus ita carus est. ... Erat enim vir totius prudentiae, in sermone verus, in iudicio iustus, in consilio prouidus, in commisso fidelis, in interuentu strenuus, in bonitate conspicuus, in vniuersa morum honestate praeclarus. Hunc milites ac si patrem venerabantur: hunc vniuersi, qui praeerant palatio, carissimo venerabantur affectu. Erat enim verus Dei cultor, et necesse erat vt, quem Dei perfuderat gratia, ab omnibus amaretur.

[Sebastian was loved by Diocletian and Maximian. ... He was truly a wholly prudent man, truthful in speech, just in judgment, careful in counsel, faithful in [any] undertaking, vigorous in action, remarkable for goodness, distinguished for general probity of character. The soldiers even honored him as a father; all the people who presided over the palace honored him with the most loving affection. For he was a true worshiper of God, and it was inevitable that he whom the grace of God had filled would be loved by all people.]

Ælfric:

He wæs swiðe snotor wer . and soðfæst on spræce . / rihtwis on dome .
and on ræde fore-gleaw / getreowe on neode . and strang fore-
þingere / on godnyse scinende . and on callum þeawum arwurðful
. / Dæghwamlice he gefylde his drihtnes þenunge geornlice . / ac
he bediglode swa þeah . his dæda þam casere / dioclitianæ se wæs
deofles big-gencga . / He lufode swa þeah ðone halgan wær /
and ealle þa hyred-menn hine hæfdon for fæder . / and mid lufe
wurðodon . forðon þe god hine lufode .

[He was an exceedingly wise man and honest in speech, just in judgment and prudent in counsel, faithful in duty and a resolute intercessor, resplendent in goodness and honorable in all habits. He diligently fulfilled the service of his Lord daily, but nevertheless he kept his actions secret from the emperor Diocletian, who was a

worshiper of the devil. Nevertheless, he loved the holy man ... and all of the retainers esteemed him as a father, and honored him with love because God loved him.]³⁹

Although Ælfric rearranges the way the information is presented, he does not make any essential changes to the description of Sebastian, including the fact that he kept his Christianity *occultum* (hidden).⁴⁰ This “man’s man,” beloved by his soldiers and by the emperor and all his household, is noted for his wisdom, honor, justice, prudence, goodness, and trustworthiness—all of which are mental virtues that were the goal of the study of rhetoric as well as Christian virtues. The Latin text highlights Sebastian’s prudence, and Carruthers tells us that “Prudence involves both reason and will, an ‘intellectual virtue’ which also directs and ‘perfects’ the emotional, desiring will. It requires knowledge but it acts to shape up our ethical life so that we may live well, and not merely be good.”⁴¹ Sebastian’s high degree of prudence manifests itself continually, showing to what degree the *imago Dei* has been restored in his soul by the degree to which he “lived well.” As a result, even the pagan emperor greatly values him, and his cohort loves and honors him as a “father,” a title of respect and honor. All of these attributes and all of this respect accrues to Sebastian for one reason—not because Diocletian loved him, but “forðon þe god hine lufode” [because God loved him].⁴² Neither Pseudo-Ambrose nor Ælfric mention anything about Sebastian’s physical strength, possible battlefield victories, parentage, or whether he has or had a wife and children (though we may assume he does not). It stands to reason that he has considerable political influence since he is so well loved by the emperor, but neither writer shows Sebastian ever abusing his influence with the emperor(s). Rather, he acts like a secret agent of God, using his position for the purpose of encouraging other Christians who are being put to death because of their faith. Sebastian keeps his faith secret from the secular authorities in order to strengthen these persecuted Christians, and in so doing he uses the disguise of Roman masculinity to hide his true identity in Christ.

Both the Latin and Old English Lives first describe how Sebastian “Christianorum animos ... conforta[bat]” [comforted the souls of the Christians] who were weakening in their resolve because of the cruelty of the persecution.⁴³ Sebastian runs considerable personal risks not for the sake of advancement or the gaining of political power, but for the sake of comforting and encouraging persecuted Christians, strengthening their souls in the midst of their suffering. Immediately after describing

Sebastian's work of encouragement, however, the Latin text begins a rather serpentine narrative of Sebastian's works and their subsequent repercussions in the lives of various other people. Whatley describes the legend as "an epic *passio*, which interweaves the story of Sebastian with those of numerous other martyrs whom he supposedly converted or encouraged,"⁴⁴ a narrative strategy almost reminiscent of the (in)famous digressions in *Beowulf* except that these sub-legends are a bit more obviously related to Sebastian's own story. The first of these interwoven sub-lives is that of Marcus and Marcellianus, who faced the death penalty, or, as Ælfric more colorfully puts it, "Hi sceoldon þa under-hnigan . nacodum swurde" [They then must bow their heads for the naked sword].⁴⁵ Ælfric, following the main narrative line of the Pseudo-Ambrosian text, next describes how the friends, parents, wives, and children of the two brothers appeal to their love for family in an attempt to turn the men back to paganism and so save their lives. Ælfric emphasizes the irony of this attempt by pointing out how they "mid manegum tihtingum / þara cnihta mod fram cristes geleafan . / woldon awecgan . swylce hi wislice dydon" [with many accusations desired to shake the minds of the young men away from belief in Christ, as if they did so wisely].⁴⁶ In light of the medieval Christian consensus that the worship of man-made pagan idols is foolishness and the worship of the one true God the only real wisdom, Ælfric portrays the foolish friends and family as trying to persuade the brothers away from true wisdom back into their foolishness, highlighting their paradoxical position by commenting that these well-intentioned people thought they were acting wisely. Not that Ælfric makes them the butt of a joke—he simply brings out the tragic ignorance of the relatives as a way of setting up his audience to share the joy of the future conversion of the brothers' families by making them sympathetic figures even in their state of unbelief. The family members, in fact, are so sympathetic that Marcus and Marcellianus are touched by their pleas and begin to waver in their determination, to consider recanting their profession for the sake of their families. Such pathos could not fail to affect both monastic and nonmonastic audiences in Anglo-Saxon England, especially given the centrality of the kin group in early medieval cultures.

This scenario illustrates the point made by the Latin Doctors about the ways in which even good temporal things such as family could distract a man or woman from wholehearted devotion to the Savior. The brothers were not tempted away from their devotion by riches or sex or the threat of death, but when their families plead with them to spare them the

torment of losing husbands, fathers, children, the two men begin to weaken by turning their minds away from Christ to their loved ones. Their very love itself works against them to make them vulnerable to temptation. Here the difference between the Roman ideal of the man as *pater familias* and the Christian ideal of the *virum perfectum* comes most sharply into conflict. As *patres familiarum*, Marcus and Marcellianus must recant and continue in their roles as heads of the households, providers for their dependent wives and children and partakers in whatever civic duties are appropriate to their rank; as *viri perfecti*, they must subject their obligations to family and society to their ultimate loyalty to God, even if it means death. Both Pseudo-Ambrose and Ælfric make clear the toll this inner conflict takes upon the two brothers:

Pseudo-Ambrose:

Interea dum illa dicuntur, et ista referuntur, inter vxorum lacrymas, et suspiria filiorum, coeperunt milites Christi mollescere, et animos suos flectere ad dolorem. ... At ibi [Sebastianus] vidit athletas Dei immenso certaminis pondere fatigari.

[In the meantime, while those things were being spoken and these were being related, between the tears of their wives and the sighs of their children, the soldiers of Christ began to soften and to turn their minds toward their [the wives' and children's] sorrow. ... And then [Sebastian] perceived the athletes of God to be tired by the immense weight of the struggle.]

Ælfric:

Hwæt ða la ongunnon þa godes cempa hnexian / and heora mod awendon to hyre maga sarnysse . / Ða geseah sona sebastianus þæt . / hu þa godes cempa . ongunnon hnexian . / for þam mycclan gewynne .

[See, then! The warriors of God began to soften and their minds to turn aside toward the distress of their wives. Then Sebastian soon perceived how the warriors of God began to weaken because of their great conflict.]⁴⁷

Sebastian also recognizes the rending choice that the brothers face, and he observes how the love these men possess for their families causes their resolution to waver. He is unable, however, to stand by and allow the

men to choose momentary worldly happiness over the ultimate good not only of their own souls but of the souls of their families as well. Sebastian, “quem occultabat militaris habitus, et chlamydis obumbrabat aspectus” [who was disguised in the dress of a soldier and hidden from sight by a military cloak],⁴⁸ enters the pagan household of Nicostratus, into whose custody the brothers had been given. (Ælfric omits the comment upon Sebastian’s disguise from his translation.) Sebastian proceeds to encourage the young men, whom he calls *milites Christi* [soldiers of Christ] (Ælfric: *godes cempa* [God’s champions]), to remain firm in their faith and thus save their families and be with them for eternity rather than satisfying their families now and being separated from them forever in hell. The role of *pater familias* can only provide temporary happiness to each brother and his family; only in the role of the *virum perfectum* can each brother bring his family to eternal happiness. While Sebastian encourages the brothers in faithfulness and instructs the families in the course of greatest wisdom in a speech that includes “oðrum langsumum spræcum” [other lengthy discourses], which Ælfric compassionately omits, a heavenly light shines upon the saint and an angel appears in front of him.⁴⁹ Again the Latin text emphasizes the saint’s disguise, saying he was “indutus chlamyde, succinctus baltheo” [clothed in a military cloak, girded with a swordbelt], reminding the Latin audience of the irony of Sebastian’s appearance when the light and angel appear.⁵⁰ Ælfric again omits any mention of Sebastian’s military costume, pointing his vernacular audience’s attention to the miraculous light and accompanying angel. The immediate effect of this manifestation of transcendence is awe and conversion among the members of Nicostratus’s household, beginning with his wife, Zoe.

Upon seeing the angel, Zoe falls at Sebastian’s feet “cum intellexisset omnia” [because she had understood wholly], and in Old English, “mid fullum geleafan” [with complete belief].⁵¹ To this point, Zoe had suffered from an illness that had rendered her mute for six years, but when Sebastian recognizes her faith, he heals Zoe and restores her speech as a sign that he has spoken the truth. The woman immediately testifies that she has seen the angel and that the angel held a book from which Sebastian had instructed them, reminding the audience that Sebastian had first been a teacher. These comments are delivered in direct discourse in the Latin text, but Ælfric translates them as indirect discourse. As a result, Zoe’s next words, which Ælfric keeps in direct speech, stand out more forcefully:

Pseudo-Ambrose:

Benedicti qui in omnibus quae locutus es credunt, et maledicti qui dubitauerint vel in vno verbo ex his omnibus quae audierunt: quoniam sicut aurora superueniens vniuersas tenebras noctis excludit, et omnium oculis lumen, quod nox caeca negauerat reddit; ita lux sermonum tuorum omnem caliginem omnemque ignorantiae caecitatem extersit, et oculis recte credentium serenum post noctis tenebras diem reddidit: a me autem non solum incredulitatis tenebras exclusit, verum etiam sermonis mei ostium, quod sex annos clausum erat, patefecit.

[Blessed are those who believe in all that you have spoken and cursed are those who doubt even one word of all these things that they have heard. For just as the rising dawn shuts out the whole darkness of night and restores to the eyes of all the light which blind night had denied, so has the light of your discourse wiped clean all of the fog and all of the blindness of ignorance, and after the darkness of night has restored bright day to the eyes of those believing rightly; from me, however, it has not only shut out the darkness of unbelief, but has opened the gateway of speech for me, which was closed for six years.]

Ælfric:

Eadige synd þa þe þinum wordum gelyfað . / and þa beoð awyrigde
þe þises twyniað . / swa swa dægred to-dræfð þa dimlican þystra . /
and manna eagan onlyht þe blinde wæron on niht . / Swa adræfde
þin lar þa geleaf-leaste fram me . / and minne muð geopenode . and
min mod onlihte .

[Blessed are those that believe your words and be those accursed that are uncertain of them. Just as the dawn disperses the dim gloom and gives light to the eyes of men and women that were blind in the night, so your teaching dispersed that unbelief from me and opened my mouth and enlightened my mind.]⁵²

Understanding and belief now having dawned in Zoe's mind, her restored spiritual and physical health manifest themselves in this testimony. She describes her conversion in terms that specifically address the mental nature of the event, the teaching that dispels the darkness of ignorance, illuminating the mind with spiritual truth that blesses all who recognize and believe it. The significance of this treatment of Zoe is that her healing

and her testimony about the angel and the enlightenment that comes to her through Sebastian's teaching serve to validate his message and thus play a part in the efficacy of his preaching. Ælfric does not tone down the importance of Zoe's contribution—in fact, he translates the forceful nature of her words as she blesses those who believe Sebastian's message and curses those who doubt it. As a result, her husband, Nicostratus, thirty-three members of their household, the families of the two imprisoned young men, plus sixteen others who were being held prisoner at Nicostratus's house, more than fifty people in all, believe Sebastian's message, convert to Christianity and receive baptism.

By this point in the story, Sebastian's sanctity is beyond question. He teaches, he shows compassion, he heals, his teaching converts hundreds to Christianity, and he encourages those Christians who are waiting to be martyred. Yet martyrdom awaits Sebastian himself. Passing over digressions from the focus on Sebastian, I want to skip to the torture and execution of Marcellus and Marcellianus and then of Sebastian himself.

As renewed persecution of Christians breaks out, the new prefect Fabianus, called *insanissimus* (most insane) in Pseudo-Ambrose's text, orders the brothers be placed into a pillory and made to stand upon nails stuck into the soles of their feet. Yet the two stand singing a psalm about the happiness of brothers who dwell together in unity.⁵³ Fabianus's unhealthy, insane mind contrasts sharply with the patient suffering of Marcellus and Marcellianus. When he hears the brothers singing about their happiness in being able to suffer together, he responds "Eala ge ungesæligan . and soðlice earmingas . / alecgað eowre ge-wit-leaste . and alysað eow fram witum" [O you unhappy and truly wretched men! Give up your madness and free yourselves from punishment].⁵⁴ Unable in his own madness to see himself or his prisoners from an eternal perspective, Fabianus calls Marcus and Marcellianus "unhappy" and "insane" when all the while they possess the rightly ordered, believing minds and he possesses the disordered, unhealthy mind. The brothers reply that they are glad to suffer "on cristes lufe" [in the love of Christ], and they remain in the pillory singing all night.⁵⁵ Despite their obviously painful position, the love of the two brothers for Christ overwhelms all physical pains and distractions. Neither the Latin text nor Ælfric says that the pain was removed; instead the joy the brothers feel because of Christ's love enables them to take up their pain and transform it into song. Then Fabianus "iussit eos ambos vbi stabant lanceis per latera verberari" [commanded that they both be

struck with lances through their sides where they stood].⁵⁶ Ælfric adds that Fabianus gives this order “mid fullum graman” [with utter rage] and the young men are “ofstunge” [pierced] where they stand.⁵⁷ The brothers receive not just the threat of penetrative violence against them, but the violence itself. Their bodies are pierced through at the moment of their martyrdom, and they die immediately. The idea of lances piercing the sides of the brothers calls to mind the piercing of Christ’s side while he hung on the cross. The symbolic identification of Marcus and Marcellianus with Christ through their pierced feet and sides confirms their sanctity and hal-
lows their martyrdom.

After the deaths of the two brothers, Fabianus in the Latin version penetrates Sebastian’s military disguise and accuses Sebastian to the emperor Diocletian.⁵⁸ Ælfric does not mention the military clothing and simply notes that Fabianus denounces Sebastian to the emperor. He uses adjectives and adverbs that associate Diocletian with the devil, calling him *deoflice gram* (devilishly enraged) and *deofollica cwellere* (devilish murderer).⁵⁹ Feeling betrayed by the discovery that his beloved servant held secretly to the hated Christian religion, Diocletian furiously orders Sebastian to be tied up and shot with arrows until dead. Pseudo-Ambrose writes that “Tunc posuerunt eum milites in medio campo, et hinc inde eum ita sagittis repleuerunt, ut quasi hericus ita esset hirsutus ictibus sagittarum” [Then the soldiers placed him in the middle of a field and they filled him with arrows on this side and that to such an extent that, like a hedgehog, he was very prickly with the strikes (shafts) of arrows]. Ælfric translates: “Þa læddan þa cempan þone cristes þegn . / and setton hine to myrcelse . swa swa se manfulla het . / and heora flan him afæstnodon . foran . and hindan . / swa þicce on ælce healfe hwylce iles byrsta” [Then the warriors led the thane of Christ thence and set him up as a target, just as the wicked man ordered. And their arrows fastened into him, before and behind, so thick on each side they were like the bristles of a hedgehog].⁶⁰ Sebastian’s executioners do a thorough job, for every spare inch of flesh has an arrow stuck in it. Sebastian, however, does not die from his wounds. A martyr’s widow comes to bury Sebastian’s body, but she finds him still alive and so takes him to her home and nurses him back to health in a miraculously short amount of time. The saint through whom God healed so many now himself receives healing from God through this widow. Instead of fleeing from Rome when he had recovered, though, Sebastian goes back to the emperor’s palace and confronts Diocletian

again about his unjust persecution of the Christians. The emperor seems unimpressed and orders his soldiers to beat the saint to death with clubs. They do the job completely this time and dump the body in the sewer so that it will not be found and honored by the Christians. As his last miracle in the life, Sebastian appears to another widow in a dream, telling her where to find his body and where he wishes to be buried.

What, then, does Sebastian's legend teach about the performance of male sanctity? The lesson is not an affirmation of "traditional" masculine endeavors, such as fighting or striving for political power. Sebastian illustrates the secret use of secular position in order to accomplish God's purposes of teaching, encouraging, preaching, and healing. Ælfric mentions the saint's military disguise once, then never refers to it again despite the probable example of his source text. Given Ælfric's apparent comfort in translating the story of Eugenia in disguise—and he constantly reminded his audience that she *was* in disguise—it seems odd that he would quibble with the idea of disguise in the story of Sebastian, especially since Sebastian, too, had strong reasons for maintaining his outward military appearance, namely building up the courage and spiritual strength of persecuted Christians. Ælfric's reluctance to foreground the disguise of a spy, even a spy for God, may reflect a sensitivity to the event of ealdorman Ælfric of Hampshire's treason against King Æthelred in 992.⁶¹ The contrast between an outward military disguise and Sebastian's depiction as a soldier of Christ that Pseudo-Ambrose makes so prominent Ælfric erases in his translation, leaving Sebastian as a secret soldier of Christ never leaving his earthly military context. As a result, there is no obvious opposition in the Old English version between a heroic, military masculinity and the heroic Christian masculinity enacted by Sebastian. Ælfric seems to teach that one man can be both secular warrior and soldier of Christ. (His comments in the *Item alia* at the end of his translation of Maccabees would then apply only to the ordained clergy.⁶²) If this is the case, then Ælfric seems to argue against warriors abandoning their military obligations in order to follow Christ. In the context of a Christianized Anglo-Saxon society there would be no need to choose between the two. The legend of Sebastian in Ælfric's hands provides military males with the opportunity to imagine and construct themselves as soldiers of a different kind, humble, encouraging, guiding, teaching, and able to stand firm in their faith and service to God.

George: *Nunquam Deceptus Est*

The *passio* of St. George also brings out this same theme of rejecting cultural definitions of masculine gender in favor of the new Christian constructions for nonmonastic men and women that point toward metagender, a construction based upon the characteristics of the mind as the *imago Dei* rather than on physical and sexual prowess, establishment of a family, or political power.⁶³ The Latin life begins with a description of the requisite diabolical emperor, Datian, and narrates how he has ordered everyone in his realm to worship his pagan idols. George does not even enter into the story until section five in the Latin text. In Ælfric's translation, however, George appears immediately, both in Ælfric's opening remarks about heretical versions of George's *passio* and in the first line of the *passio* itself. In mentioning how "Gedwolmen awriton gedwyld on heora bocum" [Deceivers have written falsehoods in their books],⁶⁴ Ælfric immediately sets up a theme that carries throughout the saint's *passio*: the opposition of truth to falsehood and insight to blindness. Deceivers have written lying stories about George, but Ælfric will restore the truth so that no one may take any secret harm from the lies.

George, a nobleman, possesses great wealth and holds the place of an economically, militarily, and politically powerful figure in Cappadocia.⁶⁵ No mention is made of George's education, but given his rank and position in Cappadocia it seems unlikely that he did not have a similar education to that of Eugenia or Sebastian. When he sees the way that Datian intimidates and frightens the people into worshipping the pagan gods, however, George cannot stand quietly by:

Latin life:

Sanctus vero Georgius aspiciens ex omnium provinciarum populis apud impium Datianum populos multos adesse Christum Dominum plaspheantes et daemones adorantes ... omnem pecuniam, quam secum attulerat, egenis distribuit, et exuens se chlamidem terreni imperii balteo se induit et lorica fidei crucis vexillo protectus iubareque sancti Spiritus illustratus sic erupit sub conspectu Datiani imperatoris dicens: "Omnes dii gentium daemonia, Dominus autem noster caelos fecit."

[Nevertheless, holy George, seeing that among the people of all provinces gathered before the impious Datian, there were many

present who blasphemed Christ and worshiped demons, ... all the money, which he had brought with him, he distributed to the needy. And taking off the cloak of the earthly empire, he put on the swordbelt and breastplate of the faith; protected by the sign of the cross and illuminated by the radiance of the Holy Spirit, thus he rushed up under the gaze of the emperor Datian, saying, "All the gods of the gentiles are demons, but our Lord made the heavens."]

Ælfric:

Ƣa geseah se halga wer Ƣæra hæðenra gedwyld / hu hi ðam deoflum
onsægdon and heora drihtn forsawon . / ða aspende he his feoh
unforh (*sic*) on ælmyssum / hafen-leasum mannum Ƣam hælende
to lofe . / and wærð Ƣurh crist gebyld . and cwæð to ðam casere . /
Omnes dii gentium demonia . dominus autem caelos fecit . / Ealla
Ƣæra hæðenra godas synd gramlice deofla . / and ure drihten soðlice
geworhte heofonas.

[Then the holy man saw the error of the heathen people, how they sacrificed to the devil and despised their Lord. Then he fearlessly distributed his property in alms to needy men and women, to the praise of the Savior, and became bold through Christ and said to the emperor, "Omnes dii gentium demonia, dominus autem caelos fecit," "All the gods of the heathens are cruel devils, and our Lord truly made the heavens."]⁶⁶

George in his wealth and military office embodies the late Roman cultural construction of powerful masculinity, but when he witnessed the way that Datian coerced his subjects into renouncing Christ and offering sacrifices to idols, George himself comes to a point of decision. Instead of leading a military coup against the emperor and seeking the imperial honor for himself or someone more tolerant than Datian, George counterintuitively liquidates all of his wealth and distributes the money to the poor around him, then removes the clothing that symbolizes his rank and power in secular society, the *chlamis* (cloak, often purple with gold threads, worn mainly by soldiers). This stripping of himself signifies George turning away from one identity (and the culture that shaped it) as a military leader and embracing another identity as a servant/soldier of Christ, enlightened by the Holy Spirit. The symbolism of these actions is lost in Ælfric's translation, however, for he omits the removal of the *chlamis* and donning of spiritual weapons, focusing only on how George distributed his wealth. In fact, even in his earlier description of

George, Ælfric leaves out any mention of his secular military status. The Latin version shows George laying aside his *chlamis* and donning the spiritual armor of a different kind of military, the *milites Christi*, as he goes to confront Datian. Instead of a cloak of purple and gold, George dons the belt and bears the breastplate of faith, protected by the cross and illuminated by the radiance of the Holy Spirit. Yet Ælfric also omits this aspect of George's transformation, noting only that the saint approached the emperor "þurh crist gebyld" [emboldened by Christ]. Ælfric's reluctance here is a mystery, for there is certainly a wealth of biblical support for the idea of spiritual weaponry, not the least of which comes from Ephesians 6:14, wherein Paul writes, "state ergo succincti lumbos vestros in veritate et induti lorica[m] iustitiae" [Stand, therefore, having girded your loins in truth and being clothed with the breastplate of justice]. Moreover, Ælfric does describe Alban being armed with such spiritual weapons. Whatever his reasons for leaving out George's change of clothing from *chlamis* to spiritual armament, Ælfric has uncharacteristically detracted from the impact of his story by doing so.

Nevertheless, George acts boldly enough when he marches up to Datian and quotes the same verse from Psalm 95:5 that seems to have been the battle cry of the Roman martyrs when confronting the secular authorities.⁶⁷ George gives a hint about his use of memory by having ready for use appropriate words of Scripture for the occasion. The Latin version has already depicted the kind of identity George has constructed of himself through his association with Christ and now he reveals that he has memorized at least the psalms, which, for medieval Christians such as the Latin hagiographers was "a book every educated person learned by heart as a step to learning to read."⁶⁸ The prudence associated with memory enables him to say the right thing for the occasion—in this case, a bold challenge to the emperor concerning false gods *versus* the true Creator God. The Roman pantheon is full of gods made of precious metals, wood, and stone, all made by "getreowleasera manna" [truthless people].⁶⁹ The emphasis upon false images sets up a contrast when George identifies himself to Datian as a true Christian a few lines later:

Latin life:

Sanctus Georgius dixit: "Christianus et Dei servus ego sum; Georgius nuncupor, genere Cappadocous, patriae meae comitatum gerens. Et hoc melius elegi temporalem huius saeculi exui dignitatis honorem immortalis Dei adherere imperio."

[Holy George said, "I am a Christian and a servant of God. I am named George, Cappadocian by race, holding the rank of a count in my homeland. And I have chosen this better thing, to be divested of the temporal honor of the dignity of this world to cleave to the empire of the immortal God."]

Ælfric:

Pa andwyrde georius ðam arleasan and cwæð . / Ic eom soðlice cristen and ic criste þeowige . / Georius ic eom gehaten . and ic hæbbe ealdor-dom / on minum earde . ðe is gehaten cappadocia . / and me bet licað to forlætenne nu / þisne hwilwendlican wurðmynt . and þæs wuldor-fullan godes / cyne-dome gehyrsumian on haligre drohtnung .

[Then George answered that wicked one and said, "I am truly a Christian and I serve Christ. I am named George and I have high authority in my land, which is called Cappadocia. It pleases me better to set aside now this temporal dignity and to serve in the kingdom of the glorious God in holy service."]⁷⁰

In both the Latin and Old English versions, George's speech contrasts power in a worldly court with service in the realm of God (a point Ælfric makes more clearly than the Latin author) and clearly shows that George considers it better to serve in the kingdom of Christ than to hold authority in Datian's empire. This inversion of ambition underscores the restructuring of George's desires away from self-aggrandizing temporal power and domination and toward humility and obedience to Christ. By deliberately turning his back upon temporal power and authority and taking up humble servitude, George behaves in a way that a secular ruler like Datian, who is intent upon those very "traditional male pursuits" identified by Lees,⁷¹ can only perceive as ignorance or insanity because George's actions are attuned to a reality that Datian cannot perceive.

Datian first gives George the benefit of the doubt, assuming that the saint acts out of ignorance: "Erras, Georgi; accede pronus et immola invictissimo deo Apollini, qui poterit tuae ignorantiae veniam condonare et sibi veridicum exhibere cultorem" [You err, George. Come near—bow to and sacrifice to the invincible god Apollo, who will be able to give pardon for your ignorance, and show yourself as a true worshiper of him].⁷² Datian tries to reason with George, to convince him that his loyalties are misguided. In translating Datian's speech into Old English, Ælfric

preserves Datian's interpretation of George's behavior: "þu dwelast georgi. / genealæc nu ærest and geoffra þine lac / þam unofer-swiðendum (*sic*) apolline . seðe soblice mæg / þinre nytennysse gemiltsian . and to his man-rædene gebigan" [You err, George. Approach first now and offer your sacrifice to the invincible Apollo, he who truly is able to show mercy to your ignorance, and turn back to his service].⁷³ The Old English verb that Ælfric uses here in Datian's speech, *dwelian* (lead astray, deceive, err), is the root for the word Ælfric uses in the opening lines of George's *passio* when he writes about *gedwolmen* (heretics, deceivers) that have written *gedwyld* (heresy, deception) in their books about George.⁷⁴ Less than thirty-five lines later, Ælfric places the verbal form of this same word into Datian's mouth as the emperor tells the saint that he *dwelast* in his service to Christ, who died an ignominious criminal's death on a cross, instead of worshipping the victorious Apollo.⁷⁵ Through this choice of words, Ælfric brings out the irony of the scene in which the devil-like pagan calls the saint a deceiver when the emperor himself is the one led astray, deceived by his own temporal ambitions and disordered desires. It also highlights the disparity between the hegemonic masculinity of Datian's devotion to the victorious Apollo and the seemingly feminized worship of a crucified Christ.

George's reply, in the form of a rhetorical question, reminds the readers of the *passio* again of what their greatest love is supposed to be: "Qui melius diligendus est, aut cui debemus exhibere culturam, Domino Jesu Christo Redemptori omnium saeculorum, aut Apollini omnium auctori daemoniorum?" [Whom is it better to love, or to whom ought we to offer worship, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of all the worlds, or Apollo, originator of all demons?] or as Ælfric translates it, "hwæðer is to lufigenne . oððe hwam lac to offrigenne . / ðam hælende criste ealra woruldra alysend? / oppe apolline ealra deofla caldre." [Which is to be loved, or to whom to offer sacrifice: to the Savior Christ, Redeemer of all the worlds, or to Apollo, parent of all the devils?]⁷⁶ George's question cuts through the veneer of appearances between Christ and Apollo by pointing out their true identities. Even the vernacular audience of the *passio* could supply the answer to George's question by remembering *LS* 1, where Ælfric writes, "þam men is gecyndelic þæt he lufige þæt þæt god is. Hwæt is god butan gode anum se þe is healic godnisse . butan þam ne mæg nan man nan þing godes habban" [It is natural to humankind that one should love that which is good. What is good except God alone, he who is sublime goodness, but for whom no one is able to have any good thing?]⁷⁷

Datian apparently understands the answer George expects, for “ira repletus” [filled with anger], or “mid deofollicum graman” [with devilish rage] as Ælfric puts it, the emperor orders his men to torture the saint.⁷⁸

The tortures that Datian commands involve George being hanged, having his flesh stripped off with iron pincers, and then having torches held to both of his sides until his inner organs could be seen through the burned flesh. The initial tortures seem designed to strip or burn away George’s outward covering of skin to reveal the truth below the surface of his body. Ælfric omits the description of how much George is to be burned, only translating that torches were to burn the saint’s sides. Then, if George persists in his loyalty to Christ, he is to be thrown outside the city, beaten with whips, and have salt rubbed into the wounds, perhaps as much to drive the corruption of Christianity out of George’s body as to cause gratuitous pain.⁷⁹ Yet after all of the torments, “corpus eius manebat illaesum” [his body remained unhurt].⁸⁰ George’s body is preserved unharmed, like those of some of the virgin martyrs, as a demonstration of George’s holiness and God’s power. In this fashion, the unharmed body itself serves as the proof of the wholeness of his essential humanity in his soul, just as it does in the *passiones* of the female saints. Through his lack of insight into nonmaterial realities, however, Datian attributes this miracle to magic and seeks a sorcerer to counter George’s power. This sorcerer, Athenasius, hears and comes to Datian, promising to do the job. Throughout this entire section in Ælfric’s translation, he always refers to Athenasius as a *dry*, and his sorcery as *drycraeft*, yet Athenasius refers to the miracle of George’s good health as *scyncraeft* (illusion). George himself perceives beyond the surface appearance of Athenasius, however, and comments that he recognizes God’s grace at work in the sorcerer. Because George participates in a transcendent reality, he perceives the interior truth and recognizes the trace of God in Athenasius’s heart before Athenasius knows it himself. George’s ability to see beyond the surface of things to true reality signifies the quality of his memory. Carruthers reminds us that “a trained and well-provided memory was regarded throughout this long period not as a primitive learning technique, but as the essential foundation of prudence, *sapientia*, ethical judgment.”⁸¹ George’s perception of truth unrecognized by others points to a well-developed memory. Athenasius, administers two poisonous potions to George, perhaps in an attempt to drive out whatever hidden power was believed to reside in George. Upon seeing the saint standing whole and healthy after drinking a deadly poison, the *dry* indeed falls at the saint’s feet in belief, asking for baptism. This scene sends Datian

into a fit of fiendish rage (he “*deoflice wearð gram*” [became devilishly enraged]⁸²), in which he immediately orders the hapless new Christian to be taken outside the city and beheaded.⁸³

After several tortures fail to affect George, Datian returns to reasoning with the saint, pleading with him as he would his own son and saying the gods want to show him mercy. The emperor alternates torment with temptation, each one serving to exacerbate the effects of the other in a late antique version of good cop/bad cop interrogation, except in George’s case there has been no real torment—he has emerged hale and whole from each attempt to destroy the body and inflict pain. Datian’s offer of fatherly advice and comments about the gods showing George mercy are so incongruent with the circumstances that George, filled with the Holy Spirit, smiles (“*subridens*,” and in Ælfric, “*smearcode mid muðe*” [smiled with his mouth]) as he answers equivocally that it is fitting to sacrifice to God.⁸⁴ In his inability to perceive beyond the surface meaning of the words, Datian misinterprets George’s response as a capitulation, an admission that he will worship Apollo, and so the emperor orders the idols to be decorated with gold and silver in order to make George’s apparent renunciation of Christ a highly public and festive occasion. George has no such intentions, however, but desires to do what will be most likely to bring people to belief, as his prayer indicates when he asks God to destroy the idols with fire “*ut hi, qui in te futuri sunt credere, cognoscant te et credant unum solum verum Deum et quem misisti in saeculum Jesum!*” [So that those who are to believe in you might recognize you and both believe in the one and only true God and in him whom you sent into the world, Jesus!]⁸⁵ George bows and prays for the destruction of the idols not for the sake of showing off power but for the sake of saving souls by revealing to them how helpless the idols are and so bringing the people to belief in the one true God. Even in this situation he exhibits a kind of manliness at variance with the traditional concepts of the military man and the authoritative ruler in that he does not do this feat himself, but with a humble bow asks another, God, to do it. In his dependency and his position as a suppliant, George behaves more like a servant than a soldier, yet his actions result in the destruction of Datian’s gods.

Unable to tolerate defeat by means of the humble prayer of the saint, Datian orders that George be dragged through the streets face-down and then beheaded. The dragging face-down seeks to enforce humiliation by mocking George’s bow in prayer, but George seems to see his very humiliation paradoxically as a triumph. In his final words, George thanks

God, “qui mihi contra inimici rabidam feritatem victoriam dignatus es condonare” [who has deigned to award to me the victory against the raging savageness of my enemy].⁸⁶ Ælfric expands this thought in his translation of the prayer, saying that George thanked God, “þæt he hine gescylde wið þone swicolan deofol . / and him sige forgeaf þurh soðne geleafan” [that he protected him against the deceitful devil and gave him victory through true belief].⁸⁷ Ælfric recapitulates the theme of deception that he set up at the beginning of the *passio*, and brings together the role of Datian as a deceived and deceiving, devil-like figure and George’s example of the triumph of true belief over the deceptive temptations offered to the saint through Datian’s persuasion, and to the readers by the devil himself. The saint’s prayer reminds the readers of the *passio* that true belief will give them insight and protect them from all manner of deception as long as they remain true to Christ.

After finishing his prayer the warrior of God receives the deathblow from the sword and the people of Cappadocia bury him with great honor. Datian, however, is suddenly slain by a bolt of heavenly fire as he is heading home with his companions. Ælfric adds a bit to the final thoughts of the *passio*, drawing out a final contrast between Datian and George: “and he [Datian] becom to helle ærðan þe to his huse . / and se halga georius siðode to crist . / mid ðam he a wunað on wuldre.” [and he went to hell before getting to his house, and the holy George departed to Christ, with whom he dwells ever in glory].⁸⁸ Datian now has no home but with the devil, this time in hell, while George attains to his greatest desire, dwelling with Christ for eternity. The contrasting ends illustrate to the readers the vanity of pursuing a hegemonic definition of masculinity by portraying it as a sure pathway to hell. Conversely, striving toward the spiritual maturity of the *virum perfectum* leads to the fulfillment of the greatest need and desire of all people (according to Ælfric), God. It produces growth in wisdom and discernment that allows those who believe to see past the surface appearance of things to the truth of God that lies beneath. By means of such wisdom, neither the saint nor those who imitate him may ever be deceived by the wiles of any spiritual enemy because it is a wisdom established through love and relationship with truth itself, with God.

* * *

The legends of George, Sebastian, and Agnes reflect different expressions of faithfulness to God and it is as difficult to discuss gendered expressions of the metagendered soul and mind here as in the previous chapter. Agnes

depicts the soul as the bride of Christ clothed in a body still residing in the material world. Her beauty and intelligence attract a suitor for whom she has no desire because she has already constructed her own identity as a bride of Christ independently of the men around her. As a bride, she desires the embraces and kisses of her bridegroom and she expresses her desire in one of the longest passages of direct discourse in *Lives of Saints*. Her rejection speech to Sempronius's son reveals how she has created her own bridal chamber in her memory and already meets there with Christ in intimate relationship. Yet desire is not Agnes's only attribute. Her desire for Christ exists only because she is wise, mature in mind, believes in the Savior, and will let nothing draw her love and intention away from him, not even the threat of rape or the actuality of martyrdom. She faces the danger of the one and the actuality of the other with the calm fortitude of a soldier and the eagerness of a bride on her wedding day. Sebastian, on the other hand, shows worldly warriors how they may be soldiers of Christ as well, even under the command of a pagan tyrant. Unlike Agnes, Sebastian hides his devotion to Christ, not out of fear of martyrdom but out of a desire live in order to strengthen and encourage other Christians suffering persecution. The masculinity Sebastian performs is complex in that it hides and avoids martyrdom for a while. Ælfric makes sure his audience knows that this is only acceptable because he is helping fellow believers who are undergoing torture and temptation. In this way, Ælfric takes the humble works of encouragement and teaching and turns them into work suitable for a warrior. Sebastian is neither a priest nor a monk, yet he brings others to Christ by his humility, teaching, and exhortation until his cover is blown whereupon he undergoes martyrdom twice, perhaps to make up for having avoided it so long before. George, too, reveals himself to be a Christian by responding to the plight of the people suffering under another tyrannical emperor. Ælfric does not reveal that George is a warrior in his translation of the *passio*, but sets up the opposition between falsehood and truth and highlights the insight and spiritual understanding that George possesses because of his belief in the truth of Christ. It is through belief that the mind perceives spiritual realities and George's insight comes into sharp relief in comparison to Datian's ineffectual attempts to see beyond outer appearances.⁸⁹ George initially reveals himself to be a Christian because of his compassion for the masses of people oppressed into worshiping idols. This compassion leads to munificent almsdeeds and confrontation with the emperor. By contrast with the emperor's own deceived condition and spiritual blindness George's wisdom and insight

show themselves clearly. The saint's humility and dependence upon God render the tortures ineffectual, maintaining his body's health and integrity until he prays for God to bring down the idols in order to convert the people to God. Relinquishing his wealth and status, George adopts a gender characterized by wisdom, spiritual insight, humility, and dependence upon God, a kind of masculinity that the emperor Datian finds intolerable and seeks to destroy—only to find destruction for himself.

NOTES

¹ For a brief comparison of the themes in Ambrose's *De uirginibus* with Pseudo-Ambrose's *passio* of Agnes, see McDaniel, "Agnes Among the Anglo-Saxons," 224–29.

² *LS*, 7.7b. This phrase does not appear in the Latin editions (Pseudo-Ambrose, *Epistola* 1, *PL* 17.813–21, and "Passio Agnetis," in *Sanctuarium seu Vitae Sanctorum*, ed. Mombricitus, 1.40–44), nor is it found in the text of what is considered to be the closest manuscript version found in the CCL, BL Cotton Nero E.i, Nero E.i, fol. 114r–116v, which simply says that she "dilexit auctorem" on 114r. For another reading of Ælfric's life of Agnes, see Gulley, *Displacement*, 37–49 and Hodgson, "Impossible Women," 12–21.

³ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 88–89.

⁴ *LS*, 7.13; cf. "pulchra facie sed pulchrior fide" [beautiful of face and more beautiful of faith], "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.40.42.

⁵ *LS*, 7.12b. "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.40.41.

⁶ *LS*, 7.12b.

⁷ *LS*, 7.25b–26. "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.40.51: "fomes peccati nutrimentum facinoris pabulum mortis." The idea of the serpent as tempter rather than of the woman as tempter occurs in Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.20 and in Casian, *Conférences*, 5.6.

⁸ *LS*, 7.27b–28.

⁹ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.41.9–11; *LS*, 7.45–48. The last two words of Mombricitus's edition of Pseudo-Ambrose's text differ from the text of the CCL found in BL, Cotton Nero E.i, which has "genas meas" rather than the scribal error, "genus meum." My translation follows the text of the Cotton manuscript.

¹⁰ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.41.15–17; *LS*, 7.57–62.

¹¹ Ambrose, "De Isaac uel anima," 3.9; "Isaac or the Soul," in *Seven Exegetical Works*, trans. McHugh, 3.9.

¹² "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.40.45; *LS*, 7.20.

¹³ *LS*, 1.96–109.

¹⁴ For an alternative reading of Sempronius, see Bankert, "Reconciling Family and Faith," 143–46.

¹⁵ Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.16; Augustine, *Trinity*, 12.16.

¹⁶ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.41.17; *LS*, 7.63 and 68.

¹⁷ "nec redire potest effusus ac perditis uiribus nisi gratia conditoris sui ad poenitentiam uocantis et peccata donantis. *Quis enim infelicem animam liberabit a corpore mortis huius nisi gratia dei per Iesum Christum dominum nostrum?*" Augustine, *De trinitate*, 12.16. "nor can [the soul] go back up again, having squandered and lost its strength, except by the grace of its maker calling it to repentance and forgiving its sins. For *who will ever free the hapless soul from the body of this death except by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord?*" Augustine, *Trinity*, 12.16 [italics as in original].

¹⁸ *LS*, 7.72–73.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.79

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.95.

²¹ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.41.27–30; *LS*, 7.83–84, 96–97.

²² "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.41.43; *LS*, 7.73, 86, and 105.

²³ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.41.49–50; *LS*, 7.109b–112.

²⁴ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.42.1–4; *LS*, 7.123–31.

²⁵ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.42.12; *LS*, 7.137–41.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.145–47. "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.42.14–15: "Statim autem ut spoliata est: crine soluto tantam densitatem capillis eius diuina gratia concessit: ut melius eorum fimbriis uideretur quam uestibus tecta." ["Immediately, however, when she was stripped, her hair loosened and divine grace granted her so great a density of hair that she seemed to be better covered by its ends than by her clothing."]

²⁷ I Cor. 11: 15b.

²⁸ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 16–21; *LS*, 7.148–59.

²⁹ *LS*, 7.170b.

³⁰ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.43.1–3; *LS*, 7.201–6.

³¹ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.43.7.

³² *LS*, 7.210.

³³ "Passio Agnetis," ed. Mombricitus, 1.43.23–27; *LS*, 7.234–39.

³⁴ Allen J. Frantzen, "When Women Aren't Enough," 165.

³⁵ Lees, Introduction to *Medieval Masculinities*, xv.

³⁶ Whatley, "Acta Sanctorum," 408. The *passio* of Sebastian (*BHL* 7543) may be found in the *Acta Sanctorum* for 20 Januarii (13 calendas Februarii), 265–78. The CCL version used for this analysis is from BL, Cotton Nero E.i (Gneuss and Lapidge #344). See also Damian Fleming, "Demilitarized Saint," 1–21.

³⁷ *LS*, 2.93.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2; Cf. *AASS* "S. Sebastianus," §1 and Cotton Nero E.i, fol. 102r. I have preserved the ambiguity of Ælfric's phrasing in Old English so that Sebastian may either be learning or teaching during his time in Milan.

³⁹ *AASS* "S. Sebastianus," §1; *LS*, 5.4–10.

⁴⁰ *AASS* "S. Sebastianus," §2; Cotton Nero E.i, fol. 102r.

⁴¹ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 83.

⁴² As in the other *passiones*, Ælfric only mentions one of the coemperors, Diocletian, because he thinks it better not to confuse his audience (or give them unwanted ideas) with the suggestion that more than one person might be the king or highest ruler at the same time. See Ælfric, *LS* Praefatio 19–21.

⁴³ *AASS* “S. Sebastianus,” §2. Cf. *LS*, 5.23: *gehyrte heora mod* (encouraged their minds).

⁴⁴ Whatley, “Acta Sanctorum,” 408.

⁴⁵ *LS*, 5.28; cf. *AASS* “S. Sebastianus,” §4. Skeat has translated *under-hnigan* as “undergo,” which is one possible meaning of the word. *Hnigian*, however, means “to bow down (the head),” and given the sentence of beheading by means of a sword, I have chosen to retain the more specific meaning of the root verb, since it also carries the implication of submission that is given as the primary meaning of *under-hnigan* in Hall & Meritt.

⁴⁶ *LS*, 5.40b–42. Since Marcus and Marcellianus are married and have children, Skeat’s translation of *cnihta* as “of the youths” seems inaccurate here. We do not really know whether they are retainers, disciples, or warriors, so it seemed best to me to translate the terms simply as “of the young men.”

⁴⁷ *AASS*, “S. Sebastianus,” §9; *LS*, 5.48–49. Although *mag* may also mean male relatives and kinsmen, the context of the lines leading up to this statement encourages the more specific translation of *maga* as “of their wives,” a usage that is attested in Hall & Meritt.

⁴⁸ *AASS*, “S. Sebastianus,” §9; Cotton Nero E.i, fol. 103r.

⁴⁹ *LS*, 5.86. These lengthy discourses are found in §§13–22 of Pseudo-Ambrose’s text.

⁵⁰ *AASS*, “S. Sebastianus,” §23; Cotton Nero E.i, fol. 105r.

⁵¹ *AASS*, “S. Sebastianus,” §24; *LS*, 5.93.

⁵² *AASS*, “S. Sebastianus,” §24; *LS*, 5.106–11. Zoe’s affirmation of the efficacy of Sebastian’s teaching uses the metaphor of the dawning light of instruction chasing away the gloom of ignorance—a metaphor that can be found also in Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* where he writes: “Sed quia ipsa mens, cui ratio et intelligentia naturaliter inest, uitiiis quibusdam tenebrosis et ueteribus inualida est, non solum ad inhaerendum fruendo, uerum etiam ad perferendum incommutabile lumen, donec de die in diem renouata atque sanata fiat tantae felicitatis capax, fide primum fuerat inbuenda atque purganda.” Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 11.2. “But since the mind, which was meant to be reasonable and intelligent, has, by dark and inveterate vices, become too weak to adhere joyously to His unchangeable light (or even to bear it) until, by gradual renewal and healing, it is made fit for such happiness, its first need was to be instructed by faith and purified.” Augustine, *The City of God*, 11.2

⁵³ Psalm 132:1.

⁵⁴ *LS*, 5.396–97.

⁵⁵ *LS*, 5.398.

⁵⁶ *AASS*, "S. Sebastianus," §84; Cotton Nero E.i, fol. 115v.

⁵⁷ *LS*, 5.404–05.

⁵⁸ *AASS*, "S. Sebastianus," §85; Cotton Nero E.i, fol. 115v.

⁵⁹ *LS*, 5.421 and 447.

⁶⁰ *AASS*, "S. Sebastianus," §85; *LS*, 5.425–28.

⁶¹ See Upchurch, "Big Dog Barks," 522–23, n. 80.

⁶² *LS*, 25.819–32.

⁶³ The legend of St. George (*BHL* 3373/74) has been dated to the early fifth century and apparently enjoyed great popularity throughout the early Middle Ages. The published edition closest to Ælfric's own Latin source and used here is by Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," 194–203. The closest manuscript version may be found in the CCL, BL Cotton Nero E.i. See also the entry on Georgius provided by Joyce Hill in Whatley, "Acta Sanctorum," 215–17.

⁶⁴ *LS*, 14.1

⁶⁵ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §5 and *LS*, 14.5–6 and 28–30.

⁶⁶ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §6 [the ellipses indicate missing text]; *LS*, 14.12–19.

⁶⁷ *LS*, 2.38.

⁶⁸ Carruthers, "Mechanisms," 9.

⁶⁹ *LS*, 14.21.

⁷⁰ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §8; *LS*, 14.26–32.

⁷¹ Lees, Introduction to *Medieval Masculinities*, xv.

⁷² Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §9.

⁷³ *LS*, 14.33–36.

⁷⁴ *LS*, 14.1.

⁷⁵ The entry in Hall & Meritt defines *dwelian* "(to go astray; lead astray; deceive.)" The implication is that one might also go astray by being deceived, which may be the sense in which Ælfric uses the word here.

⁷⁶ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §9; *LS*, 14.38–40.

⁷⁷ *LS*, 1.88–90.

⁷⁸ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §10; *LS*, 14.41.

⁷⁹ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §10; *LS*, 14.41–46.

⁸⁰ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §11.

⁸¹ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 219.

⁸² *LS*, 14.82.

⁸³ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §12–13 and *LS*, 14.48–84.

⁸⁴ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §16; *LS*, 14.126.

⁸⁵ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §18. See also Ælfric's translation of this prayer, *LS*, 14.137–40.

⁸⁶ Huber, "Zur Georgslegende," §20.

⁸⁷ *LS*, 14.164–65.

⁸⁸ *LS*, 14.182–83.

⁸⁹ Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies*, 407.