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*Leeds Studies in English*  
School of English  
University of Leeds  
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## THE DAY OF BYRHOTH'S DEATH AND OTHER OBITS FROM A TWELFTH-CENTURY ELY KALENDAR.

The Old English poem on the Battle of Maldon was first printed by Thomas Hearne in 1726 and has been many times re-edited. The precise day of 991 on which the battle was fought is not given in any of the literary sources, and neither historian nor editor of the poem had been able to fix it till A. S. Napier and W. H. Stevenson in their edition of *The Crawford Charters* (p. 88, Oxford 1895) pointed out that Byrhtnoth's obit was to be found under 11 August in an early Winchester kalendar printed by R. T. Hampson (*Medii Ævi Kalendarium* i, 442) as long ago as 1841; it comes from the Cottonian MS. Titus D xxvii, ff. 3-8b—not from Tib. D xxvii, the reference given in *The Crawford Charters*. 11 August has therefore been adopted in the recent editions of E. D. Laborde (1936) and E. V. Gordon (1937), who gives the date of the kalendar as c. 1100, though F. Wormald, who re-edited it (without the obits) in the first volume of *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100* (Henry Bradshaw Society LXXII, 113-125) attributes it to 1023-1035 and to the New Minster, Winchester; the original kalendar was written after the death of Archbishop Wulfstan but before the death of Canute and before its owner Ælfwine became abbot of the New Minster.

Recently another scent led me to a twelfth-century kalendar in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge.<sup>1</sup> This has a

<sup>1</sup> I have to thank Mr. H. M. Adams, Librarian of Trinity College, for his kindness in checking several obits in which letters were blurred or illegible in the rotographs of the Ely Kalendar. The notes to Miss Dorothy Whitelock's *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge 1930) have been of the greatest service, and this paper has profited much from her scrutiny of the original draught and reading of the proof.

Abbreviations are ASC (C. Plummer and J. Earle, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*); BCS (W. de G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*); DB (Domesday Book); HE (*Historia Eliensis*, in D. J. Stewart's *Liber Eliensis* i, Anglia Christiana Society 1848); KCD (J. M. Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus Anglo-Saxonici Ævi*); Thorpe (B. Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Anglicum Ævi Saxonici*). The names of English counties are abbreviated as in the publications of the English Place-Name Society.

number of interesting obits, some few of which have been printed by W. de G. Birch in *Fasti Monastici Saxonici Aevi*. The kalendar in question is prefixed to the copy of the " *Historia Eliensis* " in MS. O. 2, 1, described by M. R. James at pp. 79-82 of the third volume of his catalogue of the Western Manuscripts in Trinity College Library (Cambridge 1902). The latest royal obit is Stephen's, the latest episcopal obit that of Nigel, second bishop of Ely, whose successor Geoffrey Ri del died in the same year as Henry II. The inferior limit is therefore 1189, the superior 1173, since S. Thomas of Canterbury was canonised in that year and his feast (29 December) is entered in the original hand. The palaeography of the kalendar supports the date 1173-1189. Kalendar and obits (just short of 350 in number and mainly of monks and benefactors) show that the leaves in question were written at Ely and nowhere else, and *f.* 1 of the " *Historia Eliensis* " bears the characteristic Ely mark. That is all that need be said here, since I hope to publish the kalendar, if possible in facsimile, at some future date. For the same reason I have expanded silently the abbreviations in the Latin cited.

Among the obits of kings, bishops and nobles recorded in this kalendar is Byrhtnoth's, given under 10 August. If any monastic house had reason to remember the precise date of the battle it was Ely which had benefited largely under his will (HE. ii, 62) and preserves to this day the headless body of its benefactor. Byrhtnoth's bones were last examined in 1769 when they were moved to their present resting-place in a niche of Bishop West's Chapel beside Archbishop Wulfstan the homilist and five bishops, all of whom are commemorated in this kalendar with the curious exception of Osmund, an early eleventh-century bishop of Skara in Sweden. Nor were Byrhtnoth and his nephew Wulfmær (mentioned at Maldon 113-115) the only members of their family to fall in battle against the Danes. It is clear that the *Oswius* slain by the pirates and commemorated on 5 May was the husband of Byrhtnoth's daughter Leofflæd. The list of properties given

or bequeathed by Byrhtnoth's son-in-law (HE. ii, 67) shows that he was a considerable landowner in Cambridgeshire, and this kalendar enables us to identify him with the *Oswig* who, along with an unnamed son, was killed in battle against the Danes at *Ringmere*, where the men of Cambridgeshire put up a stout resistance and suffered heavily.<sup>2</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 1010 CDE, it is true, gives the date of that battle as 18 May, but Florence of Worcester (*Monumenta Historica Britannica*, p. 586), to whom we owe the name of the battle-field, gives it as 5 May; he further styles *Oswius* a *nobilis minister* 'a thegn of high birth'. We know the names of three daughters of the *Oswius* of the "Historia Eliensis" and of a son of his, the *Ælfwinus* (HE. ii, 67) who was a monk of Ely. If *Oswius* had an elder (or more robust) son who was killed with him at *Ringmere* it is easier to understand his sending *Ælfwinus* to Ely as an oblate.

Others of Byrhtnoth's connexions and descendants, often benefactors of Ely too, are certainly or arguably to be recognised in this kalendar. His wife *Ælfflæd* and his wife's sister *Æthelflæd* are both commemorated on 20 May; his daughter *Leofflæd*, who had married *Oswius*, on 12 October; *Oswius'* brothers *Uva*, on 16 February, and *Ædericus*, perhaps on 24 September; *Ædericus'* son *Ædelmerus*, a monk of Ely, perhaps on 22 July; *Leofflæd's* and *Oswius'* daughters *Æthelwith*, on 28 June, and *Leafwaru*, on 18 October.

The *Ægelmerus comes* commemorated on 19 February may have been a connexion of Byrhtnoth's too. This person, it may be inferred, was the ealdorman *Æthelmær* who, with the thegns of the western counties, submitted to Sweyn at Bath (ASC 1013 DE); Florence of Worcester and Roger of Wendover assign to him the earldom of Devon.<sup>2a</sup> Like his father *Æthelweard* he was one of the chief lay supporters of the monastic

<sup>2</sup> He is probably also the *Oswi*, brother of *Vvi*, who is cited as a witness in HE. ii, 33, and, if, as seems likely, *Uvi* is a pet-form of *Ulf*, he is possibly the *Oswi*, brother of *Ulf*, in HE. ii, 17.

<sup>2a</sup> The *Obitus Ædelmari ducis* commemorated on 18 April in Titus D xxvii is presumably that of an earlier *Æthelmær*, ealdorman of Hampshire, who was buried in the New Minster (ASC 982 C).

revival. He founded the abbeys of Cerne (KCD 656 of 987) and Eynsham (KCD 714<sup>3</sup> of 1005), and was a patron of Ælfric the homilist (Whitelock, pp. 144-5). T. O. Cockayne suggested (*Leechdoms* III, xxiii) that Æthelmær's mother may have been a daughter of Byrhtnoth, and his suggestion was tentatively adopted by R. W. Chambers in *The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry*, p. 88. There is nothing in the Eynsham charter nor in the "Historia Eliensis" to support this hypothesis, and, as Miss Whitelock points out to me, there is some evidence elsewhere to suggest that Æthelmær was in no way akin to Byrhtnoth. But it is likely enough that he was in some way associated with him. Shifford *O* and Mickleton *Gl*, two of the estates with which Eynsham was endowed by Æthelmær, had been granted to Byrhtnoth by King Edgar; the first had been bequeathed to Æthelmær by his kinsman Leofwine, the second by Byrhtnoth himself. Æthelmær was also a beneficiary under the will of Byrhtnoth's wife Ælflæd (KCD 685 = BCS 1289 = Whitelock xv). As Miss Whitelock suggests to me "friendly relations between the families, common interests in the foundation and support of religious houses, seem to me sufficient to account for Æthelmær and his relation Leofwine receiving estates from Brihtnoth. Leofwine may have been related to both."

10 August: Obiit . . . brithnodus dux qui dedit huic ecclesie Spaldwic. T[r]umpintune. ratendune. seham. Acolt. fulburne. trippelaue. sumersham. 7 plurima que in testamento eius memorantur.<sup>4</sup>

5 May: Obiit . . . Oswius qui dedit nobis steuecheswrðe merch 7 dullingeham 7 unam uirgatam in swafham. qui interemptus est a piratis.<sup>5</sup>

[HE. ii, 67 and 88, probably 33 and possibly 17; ASC 1010 CDE].

<sup>3</sup> A better text, with annotations by W. H. Stevenson, is printed by H. E. Salter in *The Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham* i, 19 ff. (Oxford Historical Society xlix).

<sup>4</sup> Spaldwick *Hu*, Trumpington *C*, Rettendon *Ess*, Soham *C*, *Acolt Sf* (HE. ii, 92), Fulbourn *C*, Thriplow *C*, Somersham *Hu*.

<sup>5</sup> Stetchworth, March, Dullingham, Swaffham *C*.

- 20 May: Obierunt soror nostra Æðelfleda que dedit nobis dittune 7 hedham Cheleshelle. 7 soror illius Ælfleda uxor brithnodi ducis que dedit nobis Ratendu[ne] 7 terram in sebam (*recte* seham) 7 unam hidam in cheffe.<sup>6</sup>  
[KCD 685 = BCS 1288-9 = Whitelock XIV and XV; HE. ii, 64 and 63].
- 12 October: Obiit soror nostra leofleda que dedit nobis belesham.<sup>7</sup>  
[HE. ii, 88].
- 16 February: Obiit Vua laicus qui dedit sancte æðeldreðe wiuelingeham.<sup>8</sup>  
[HE. ii, 35 and 66, probably 33 and possibly 17].
- 28 June: Obiit soror nostra Æðelswid domina que dedit huic ecclesie stiuècheswrde.<sup>9</sup>  
[HE. ii, 88].
- 18 October: Obiit soror nostra leofwara que dedit nobis dittune 7 westune.<sup>10</sup>  
[KCD 788 = Thorpe, p. 577 = Whitelock xxx; Thorpe, p. 571 = Whitelock xxxi; HE. ii, 88 and 89].
- 19 February: Obiit Ægelmerus comes.

The earliest royal obit is that of Edgar who restored the monastery (8 July), followed by Æthelred II (23 April), Edmund Ironside (29 November), Canute, whose visit to Ely is described in the "Historia Eliensis" (12 November), Æthelred's son Alfred, who died at Ely after barbarous ill-treatment and was buried there in 1036 (5 February), Hardicanute (8 June), his mother Queen Emma, widow of Æthelred II and Canute (7 March), Edward the Confessor, who was partly brought up at Ely (5 January), Harold II and many slain with him at Hastings (14 October), William the Conqueror (10 September),

<sup>6</sup> Wood Ditton C, Hadham Herts, Kelshall Herts, Rettendon Ess, Soham C, Cheveley C.

<sup>7</sup> Balsham C.

<sup>8</sup> Willingham C.

<sup>9</sup> Stetchworth C.      <sup>10</sup> Fen Ditton, Weston Colville C.

Matilda, Queen of Henry I (1 May), Henry I himself (1 December), and Stephen (21 October).<sup>10a</sup>

8 July: *Obiit rex Ædgarus qui ecclesiam istam renouavit. constituens in ea cetum monacorum . possessionibus eam ualde muniuit.*

[ASC 975; HE. ii, 5 ff.].

23 April: *Obiit rex Æðelredus qui dedit uillam de litlebery.*<sup>11</sup>

[ASC 1016 DEF; HE. ii, 58].

29 November: *Obiit rex Ædmundus.*

[ASC 1016 DEF (to sancte Andreas mæssan = 30 Nov.); HE. ii, 79].

12 November: *Obiit rex canutus qui istam ecclesiam multa libertate roborauit 7 uillam de dittune pro chefle nobis mutauit.*<sup>12</sup>

[ASC 1035 CD (on ii. Id. Nouemb. = 11 Nov.), 1036 E; HE. ii, 79, 82, 84-88].

5 February: *Obiit Æluredus filius Æðelredi regis.*

[ASC 1036 CD; Cnutonis Regis Gesta iii, 4-6; HE. ii, 90, but in no case is the day specified].

8 June: *Obiit rex hardecanutus . . . .*

[ASC 1042 CDE; HE. ii, 91].

7 March: *Obiit soror nostra ymma regina que multiplici donorum obsequio fraternitatem huius ecclesie comparauit.*

[ASC 1051 C (ii. Id. Mart. = 14 March), 1052 D (on ii. No. Mar. = 6 March); HE. ii, 79 and 90].

5 January: *Obiit decus anglorum Rex Ædwardus qui huic ecclesie dedit uillam de lachingeheðe 7 suorum auctoritate scriptorum locum istum multipliciter roborauit.*<sup>13</sup>

[ASC 1065 CD, 1066 AE; HE. ii, 91-96 and 100].

<sup>10a</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that in Titus D xxvii the obits of Edgar, Æthelred, Edmund, Canute, Hardicanute and Emma are entered under the same days as in this Ely kalendar.

<sup>11</sup> *rex Æðelredus qui dedit* is written on an erasure in a larger and later hand. The village is Littlebury Ess.

<sup>12</sup> Wood Ditton, Cheveley C.

<sup>13</sup> Lakenheath Sf.

14 October: *Obiit rex haraldus anglorum 7 plurimorum bello interemptorum.*<sup>13a</sup>

[ASC 1066 ADE; HE. ii, 100-101].

10 September: *Obiit Willelmus rex anglorum.*

[ASC 1086 E (on þone nextan dæg æfter natiuitas sancte Marie = 9 Sept.); HE. ii, 101-134].

1 May: *Obiit Matilda regina.*

[ASC 1118 E].

1 December: *Obiit Rex henricus anglorum.*

[ASC 1135 E].

21 October: *Obiit rex anglorum stephanus cui sit miseratio deus.*

[Robertus de Monte and Roger of Wendover give the day of Stephen's death as 25 Oct.].

The obits of men slain at Maldon, *Ringmere* and Hastings have been cited earlier in this paper. Other historical events are commemorated on 18 October (the obit of Eadnoth I, Bishop of Dorchester, and of many friends of the monastery who died with him at Ashingdon<sup>14</sup> in 1016), on 23 September (the obits of *Æðelricus*<sup>15</sup> and of many others who fell at Stamford Bridge in 1066), and on 31 May (the obit of Waltheof, earl of Northampton, who was executed in 1076 and buried at Crowland Abbey, where, after 1112, his relics worked miracles). Frequently in the Cambs. DB we find a holder of land in 1066 described as *homo Wallef comitis* and, as Miss Whitelock informs me, *Walðef comes* occurs in the Liber Vitae of the Cambs. abbey of Thorney (BM. Add. 40000).

23 September: *Obiit Æðelricus qui interemptus est 7 plurimi cum eo in aquilonali bello.*

[ASC 1066 C (on 25 Sept.)].

<sup>13a</sup> In the Roman Martyrology in Vitellius C xii (from St Augustine's, Canterbury) we have under 14 October *Obitus haroldus rex anglorum et quam plurimi fratres nostri.*

<sup>14</sup> This entry, which will be given later among the obits of bishops of Dorchester, shows that Cambridgeshire suffered heavily at Ashingdon, as six years earlier at *Ringmere* and fifty years later at Stamford Bridge.

<sup>15</sup> This is perhaps the *Edericus homo Alurici Cilt* who, according to the Cambs. DB, held land at Pampisford in 1066.



31 May: Obiit frater noster Waltheus comes.

[ASC 1076 E, 1077 D; HE. ii, 107].

The episcopal obits, some of which will be of interest to a future reviser of Stubbs' *Registrum Sacrum Anglicanum*, mostly belong to Dorchester in which Ely lay till the erection of the see in 1109, or to Elmham, the adjacent diocese of East Anglia. Bishops of Dorchester commemorated are Æscwig (23 April), Eadnoth I whose body Ely had appropriated as it was being carried from the battlefield of Ashingdon to Ramsey of which Eadnoth had been prior (18 October), Æthelric (8 December) and Eadnoth II (18 September).

23 April: Obiit dominus Æscwius episcopus qui dedit sancte Æðeldreðe magnam infulam purpuream.

[First sig. KCD 621 of 979, last KCD 1295 of 1002; ASC 992 E; HE. ii, 29 and 34].

18 October: Obiit dominus Ædnodus episcopus 7 plurimi amici nostri qui interempti sunt a piratis.<sup>15a</sup>

[Sig. KCD 1307 of 1012; ASC 1012 E; ASC 1016 DEF; HE. ii, 71 and 79].

8 December: Obiit dominus Æðericus episcopus.

[First sig. KCD 1316 of 1020, last KCD 746 of 1032; ASC 1034 CDE, but no day given].

18 September: Obiit Ædnodus episcopus.

[First sig. KCD 763 of 1042, last KCD 784 of 1046; ASC 1046 E (forðferde Eadnoð biscop benorðan), 1049 C (forðferde Eadnoð se goda biscop on Oxna ford scire), but no day given].

Bishops of Elmham commemorated are Æthelstan (7 October), Ælfgar (24 December), Ælfwine (12 April), Ælfric, probably the second of that name (9 January), and Stigand, afterwards Bishop of Winchester and Archbishop of Canterbury (21 February). Ely still has the bones of the three first named. Æthelstan and Ælfwine were benefactors who had both been monks of Ely before their consecration to the episcopate while

<sup>15a</sup> For the *Memoria* of others slain at Ashingdon see the kalendar from Titus D xxvii and the paper at pp. 25-27 of this number.

Ælfgar retired to Ely after he had resigned his see. The "Historia Eliensis" gives him the credit of that appropriation of Eadnoth I of Dorchester's body of which I have spoken before. Ælfric left five pounds to Ely by his will, and Stigand gave a great crucifix with figures of Our Lady and St John the Evangelist.

7 October: *Obiit frater noster Æðelstanus episcopus qui dedit nobis uillam de drenche[s]tune<sup>16</sup> 7 multa donaria in auro 7 argento.*

[First sig. KCD 703 of 999, last KCD 705 of 1001; HE. ii, 65].

24 December: *Obiit dominus Ælfgarus episcopus cuius corpus apud nos iacet.*

[First sig. KCD 706 of 1001, last, after resignation of see, KCD 727 of 1018; ASC 1021 D (Ælfgar biscop se ælmesfulla forðferde, on Cristes mæsse uhtan); HE. ii, 71-72].

12 April: *Obiit frater noster Ælfwinus episcopus.*

[First sig. KCD 729 of 1019, last KCD 740 of 1021/4; HE. ii, 75].

9 January: *Obiit dominus Æluricus episcopus.*

[First sig. KCD 759 of 1037, last KCD 761 of 1038/9; ASC 1038 C (. . . . gefor . . . . Ælfric biscop on East Englum), 1038 D (forðferde . . . . Brihteh biscop on Wigra ceastre .xiii. kl IAN), 1038 E (forðferde . . . . to foran Cristes mæssan Brihteh biscop on Wigra ceastre scire, 7 raðe þæs Ælfric biscop on East Englum); Whitelock xxvi, for his will].

21 February: *Obiit sancte memorie Stigandus archiepiscopus qui crucem magnam cum imaginibus Sancte Marie 7 Sancti Johannis dedit in ornamentationem huius ecclesie.*

[Bishop of Elmham 1043, Bishop of Winchester 1047, Archbishop of Canterbury 1052-70 deposed, ob. 22 February; HE. ii, 98].

<sup>16</sup> Drinkstone Sf.

Miscellaneous episcopal obits are those of Sideman of Crediton, who had been the tutor of King Edward the Martyr (1 May), of Wulfstan the homilist (28 May), of his sister's son Brihtheah of Worcester (20 December), of Stigand of Chichester (29 August), and of an Irish bishop Ducdun, whose see I have not been able to discover (14 January).

1 May: Obiit Sidemannus episcopus.

[Bishop of Crediton 973-977; ASC 977 C (forðferde Sideman bisceop on hrædlican deaþe. on .ii. kl. Mai. se wæs Defna scire bisceop)].

28 May: Obiit Wlstanus archiepiscopus qui apud nos iacet sepultus.

[Bishop of London 996, Bp. of Worcester 1002-1016 and Abp. of York 1002-1023; ASC 996 F; ASC 1020 CDF; ASC 1023 E; HE. ii, 87 (on the translation of his body); for his early history see D. Whitelock, *English Historical Review* LII, 460-465, and, for a general account of his career, the introduction to her edition of the "Sermo Lupi" now at press].

20 December: Obiit dominus brithagus episcopus.

[Bishop of Worcester 1033-1038; ASC 1033 D; ASC 1038 CDE; HE. ii, 87].

29 August: Obiit Stigandus presul.

[Bishop of Chichester 1070-1087; ASC 1086 E].

14 January: Obiit dominus ducdun episcopus ybernensis.

It may be found convenient if I summarise very briefly the new historical and biographical material provided by this kalendar:—

1. It gives 10 August, instead of 11 August, as the anniversary of the Battle of Maldon, and the monks of Ely, if anyone, should have known the day.<sup>17</sup>

2. It enables us to identify the Oswig of ASC 1010 with Byrhtnoth's son-in-law of that name.

<sup>17</sup> The phrase *Deo amabilis et hominibus*, applied to Byrhtnoth by the Ely historian (HE. ii, 55), is perhaps worth citing here.

3. It shows that the Ely area suffered heavily at Ashingdon in 1016 and Stamford Bridge in 1066.
4. It shows that the luckless Alfred lost no time in returning to England after the death of Canute.
5. It provides a number of episcopal obits not previously noted—of Æscwig, Æthelric and Eadnoth II of Dorchester, of Æthelstan, Ælfwine and Ælfric (probably II) of Elmham, and of Stigand of Chichester.

BRUCE DICKINS.