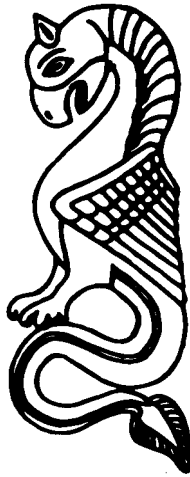# Leeds Studies in English

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Sententia in Narrative Form: Ælfric's Narrative Method in the Hagiographical Homily on St Martin

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I

It is generally agreed that Ælfric is the greatest prose writer in the vernacular in Anglo-Saxon England and his massive body of composition testifies to a distinctive creative method, which may be defined, in relation to the antecedent works he draws upon, as fundamentally 'a process of selection, adaptation and independent argument'.[1] He usually abbreviates his source materials, but his exact method of adaptation is varied, depending on different items of relevance on individual occasions, such as the nature of the source text, the audience and/or reader he had in mind, and the genre of the work he was engaged in producing. This last aspect, with particular reference to the distinction between the homily and the hagiography, was the subject of my recent article on the *Passio Apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (*ÆCHom* I, 26).[2] There I showed how Ælfric is successful, both thematically and stylistically, in adapting a Latin *Passio* to his purpose of writing a preaching homily, by making (among other things) thematic use of narrative and homiletic modes of discourse, having, for example, the two martyr saints speak in the homilist's own voice addressing the Anglo-Saxon audience when the occasion arises in the course of the hagiographical narrative.[3] While self-contained as a study of the Peter and Paul homily, the article poses a new problem to consider: how differently does Ælfric respond to the same subject and source material when writing for a homily and when writing for a hagiography? In this essay I propose to discuss this question with reference to the two lives of St Martin of Tour that Ælfric wrote, one for the *Catholic Homilies* (Second Series xxxiv; *Dictionary of Old English* short title *ÆCHom* II, 39) and the other for the *Lives of Saints* (xxxi; *DOE* short title *ÆLS* 31), drawing on essentially the same range of Latin

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[1]   *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), s.v. *Ælfric of Eynsham*.

[2]   Hiroshi Ogawa, 'Hagiography in Homily – Theme and Style in Ælfric's Two-Part Homily on SS Peter and Paul', *Review of English Studies*, 61 (2010), 167–87.

[3]   'Hagiography in Homily', pp. 182–85. 'A saint as preacher' (as Godden in the study below calls it) seems to be a feature of earlier saints' lives in the *Catholic Homilies*; see, for example, *Assumptio Sancti Johannis Apostoli* (*ÆCHom* I, 4), lines 95–128. But it has disappeared in later ones, including the one on Martin, as we shall see. See M. R. Godden, 'Experiments in Genre: The Saints' Lives in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1996), pp. 261–87 (pp. 278–82).

sources.[4] The two lives and their shared Latin sources make an ideal trilogy for comparative study. By reading the homily on St Martin in light of the source texts on one hand and, on the other, its hagiographical counterpart written later for a different purpose, we can best see how Ælfric revises the Latin *Vita* and the associated materials to create his own homily in a way which gives it a distinctive form and significance as a preaching text about the saint's life.

The life in the *Catholic Homilies* has often been referred to as Ælfric's 'shorter life' compared with the work in the *Lives of Saints* collection, which follows its source texts more closely and is much longer (1495 rhythmical prose lines in the standard edition) — 'as long as any three average Ælfrician homilies'.[5] One focus of discussion from this point of view has been omissions of contents that have made the work shorter. 'The entire homily,' says G. H. Gerould, 'is a plain tale in rapid, unadorned prose of the saint's life and death, as brief as was consistent with clarity yet by no means ill fashioned'.[6] However, of real importance, from my point of view, are the new emphases Ælfric introduces into the hagiography as he adapts it and the exact ways in which he makes the omissions and other relevant adaptations to reinforce those emphases. To discuss all this demands full analysis of his narrative method and general use of language in adapting the hagiographical materials into a work appropriate for a collection of homilies.

Before proceeding to the analysis, we may be wise to recall what M. R. Godden has described as Ælfric's 'change of heart about the genre',[7] which is evident in later saints' lives in the *Catholic Homilies*. One might assume that the homiletic mode of discourse, seen in the Peter and Paul homily and other earlier saints' lives in the *Catholic Homilies* (see above, n. 3), would be a continuing basis for Ælfric's hagiographical homilies, informing later ones in the series as well. In fact, however, the later saints' lives, from the life of Cuthbert (*ÆCHom* II, 10) onwards, show Ælfric departing from his earlier pattern in favour of a new form, as Godden goes on to explain:

> The earlier, nonalliterative saints' lives often begin with some kind of homiletic address from preacher to audience, but the lives of Cuthbert, Benedict, and Martin launch straight into narrative without a hint of the audience's presence. They are also very much longer than most of the homilies. The sense or pretense of a preaching text is clearly fading; Ælfric seems to have largely abandoned the attempt to adapt hagiography to a preaching

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[4] They are: Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Sancti Martini* for the main part, supplemented by the same author's *Dialogi* and Alcuin's summary of Sulpicius (*Vita Sancti Martini Turonensis*), the *Epistula Tertia* by Sulpicius for the death of the saint, and *Historia Francorum* by Gregory of Tours for the post-mortem part. For details of the precise extent of Ælfric's indebtedness to each of these, see *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, ed. by M. R. Godden, Early English Text Society, s. s., 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 623–33. Citation from Ælfric's two lives is made below from *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. The Second Series*, ed. by M. R. Godden, Early English Text Society, s. s., 5 (London: Oxford University Pres, 1979); and *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by W. W. Skeat, Early English Text Society, o. s., 76, 82, 94, and 114 (London: Oxford University Press, 1881–1900; repr. in two volumes, 1966); and citation from Sulpicius's works is from *Sulpicii Severi Libri Qui Supersunt*, ed. by C. Halm (Vienna: Gerold, 1866), with page and line. For *Historia Francorum*, see n. 41.

[5] D. R. Letson, 'The Form of the Old English Homily', *American Benedictine Review*, 30 (1979), 399–431 (p. 422).

[6] Gordon Hall Gerould, 'Ælfric's Lives of St. Martin of Tours', *JEGP*, 24 (1925), 206–10 (p. 207). More recently, Jonathan Wilcox has noted the radically different lengths of the two versions, seeing them as a consequence of the distinct contexts in which they were used ('The Audience of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and the Face of Cotton Caligula A. xiv, fols. 93–130', in *Beatus Vir: Studies in Early English and Norse Manuscripts in Memory of Phillip Pulsiano*, ed. by A. N. Doane and Kirsten Wolf (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), pp. 229–63 (pp. 243–44).

[7] Godden, 'Experiments in Genre', p. 280.

genre even before he had completed the *Catholic Homilies* and begun to treat the saint's life as a distinct kind of discourse.[8]

The life of Martin, as one of these later works of the genre, testifies to the change. The life has no opening address to the audience or reminder of the feast for the saint as the occasion on which it is delivered but 'launches straight into narrative'.[9] Nor does it feature the protagonist saint taking on the role of a preacher speaking in Ælfric's own voice where appropriate (as it would have been in, for example, lines 161–77, discussed below in IV). Ælfric does not even provide comments by expanding on the saint's words and deeds, though he could well have chosen to do so in several passages (see lines 24–26 and 41–43, both discussed in II). In the one commentary where Ælfric does insert a doctrinal issue (lines 82–85), he raises a point which he does not make very well (see below, n. 27). Clearly, Ælfric has now reached a new solution for his problem about the genre.

How then does Ælfric register his sense of a preaching homily into which he attempts to reshape the hagiographical materials of his Latin sources in the Martin homily? My contention in the following sections is that Ælfric relies on specialized uses of homiletic diction and a narrative method designed to enhance the sanctity and virtues of the protagonist saint, thereby incorporating into the narrative what is in effect a commentary on his sayings and deeds. These points will emerge as we analyse the homily and Ælfric's emphases within it in comparison with the original form of the saint's *vita* and also the different emphases in his later, longer life of the saint.

II

Ælfric's life of St Martin in the *Catholic Homilies*, titled *Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi*, is a 'birth-to-beatification homily' (as opposed to the Episodic type),[10] describing the blessed life of the title saint from his birth in a heathen family to his death in glory (and a post-mortem incident). For this homily, as for his later telling in the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric draws mainly upon the *Vita* of the saint by Sulpicius Severus, supplemented by four associated materials (see above, n. 4). As mentioned above, abridgement by omission is Ælfric's basic approach to the copious source materials, a feature long known and best summarized by Godden:

> Ælfric's technique […] was to abridge by summarising most of the incident and omitting much of the contextual detail; in particular the background of ecclesiastical history (the exile of Hilarius by Arians, their oppression of Martin, his conflict with other bishops and clergy, the gradual evangelisation of areas surrounding Tours) mostly disappears, though some aspects, such as the qualities of the monastic life which Martin sustained while bishop of Tours, are given fuller treatment. What Ælfric produces is an account of Martin's virtues and miracles rather than a sequential history.[11]

Godden's summary embraces two types of omission: omission of an incident itself and omission of some detail in an incident. The examples of the former Godden mentions are from earlier chapters of the *Vita* (cap. 6-cap. 10), while an example from later chapters is the omission of cap. 20 of the *Vita* with its account of Martin's dealings with Emperor Maximus.

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[8] Godden, 'Experiments in Genre', p. 281.
[9] But Ælfric does give both a hint of the audience's presence and a reminder of the feast day in the closing portion of the homily; see V.
[10] For these terms, see Letson, 'The Form', pp. 420–21.
[11] Godden, *Commentary*, pp. 622–23.

This latter omission appears to have given Ælfric an impetus. He now goes on to omit most of the remaining chapters of the *Vita* (though not cap. 24), and where he does not entirely omit, he draws on Alcuin's condensed account rather than on the original account of the miracles Sulpicius gives in the *Dialogues*.[12] It seems as if Ælfric now felt he had had enough miracles to tell and should hasten to the final climax of the narrative, to which he turns with a few words of excuse: 'Ne mage we awritan ealle his wundra on ðisum scortan cwyde. mid cuðum gereorde. ac we wyllað secgan hu se soðfæsta gewat' (lines 266–69).[13]

While omissions of entire events reveal where Ælfric puts emphasis and where he does not in his account of the saint as *godes andetere* 'confessor of God' (line 1) and *godes cempa* 'soldier of God' (line 7), even more important are omissions of the other kind — omissions of contextual detail from incidents he does relate. Thus, Ælfric usually omits to mention place-names and personal names in accounts of miracles and other incidents. He also often pares the narrative to Martin and his immediate adversary, making other people in Sulpicius's account invisible. Omissions of this kind not only help to abridge the source text, but, more importantly, to represent Martin as a type rather than as an individualized saint. This aspect of Ælfric's narrative technique acquires greater significance, particularly when omission of contextual detail is combined with a certain set of diction which tends to be formulaic and even symbolic.

But before we discuss that point, we should note another of Ælfric's techniques which is related to the point Godden makes in the summary quoted above about the homily not being a sequential history. Ælfric does not do anything, apart from adding two incidents (lines 146–52 and 152–54) that ultimately come from the *Dialogues*,[14] to disrupt the order of events given in the *Vita*, but he tends to 'detemporize' them. This is partly because he follows the *Vita*, for the latter 'follows the chronology of the subject's life until success is attained, and then summarizes thematically further achievements'.[15] But even where the *Vita* gives a chronological account in the earlier part, Ælfric often minimizes the temporal element in his narrative, pushing chronology into the background. For example, he downgrades a temporal phrase denoting time when in the *Vita*, either omitting it entirely or replacing it with the

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[12] See Frederick M. Biggs, 'Ælfric as Historian: His Use of Alcuin's *Laudationes* and Sulpicius's *Dialogues* in His Two Lives of Martin', in *Holy Men and Holy Women*, ed. by Szarmach, pp. 289–315 (p. 297). Ælfric had occasionally derived his account from Alcuin rather than Sulpicius in the preceding parts; see Godden, *Commentary*, pp. 628–31.

[13] 'We cannot write down all his miracles in this short discourse, with familiar language, but we will say how the righteous man departed.' Translation of the homily here and in the other footnotes is cited from *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church. The First Part, Containing the Sermones Catholici, or Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. by Benjamin Thorpe, 2 vols. (London: Ælfric Society, 1844–46; repr. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1971), ii, pp. 498–519.

[14] Godden (*Commentary*, p. 628) writes that they 'probably come […] from Alcuin, who summarizes them together'. Letson also points out that 'Alcuin adds two related miracles, the raising of the widow's son and the healing of the dumb girl' after the first two miracles Martin performed. From the evidence we have now, however, he seems to give a confused picture in saying that these miracles 'are found at a late point in Sulpicius' and that Ælfric 'seems to misplace both of these miracles, locating them after Martin's consecration' ('The Form', p. 423 and n. 48). As a matter of fact, the miracles originate ultimately from Sulpicius's *Dialogues* II.4 and III.2 respectively. There the first miracle at any rate is narrated as occurring after Martin's election as Bishop of Tours, though Alcuin appears to give both as pre-election events. Nor does Letson seem to make it clear why Ælfric, by placing them where he does, 'breaks the thematic arrangement' (n. 48). For a full discussion, see Biggs, 'Ælfric as Historian', pp. 296–97.

[15] Biggs, 'Ælfric as Historian', p. 295. On the same page Biggs cites from Clare Stancliffe to give more specific details: 'as Clare Stancliffe writes, "chapters 2–10 do contain a chronological account of Martin's career up to his election as bishop and the foundation of Marmoutier; the following fourteen devoted to his miraculous deeds as bishop are strictly arranged according to subject-matter" '.

inexpressive *ða* 'then' or its equivalent, as in lines 105 *Sum ungesceadwis man hine sylfne aheng* (*Vita* 118.14 *Nec multo post, dum […], indicatur unum ex familia seruulum […]*), 110 *Þæt turonisce folc hine ða geceas him to leodbiscope* (*Vita* 118.25 *Sub idem fere tempus ad episcopatum […] petebatur*), and, in a cataloguing passage from the later part, 198 *Tetradius hatte sum hæðen þegen […]; Martinus eac com to anes mannes huse* (*Vita* 126.10 *Eodem tempore Taetradii […]. Per idem tempus in eodem oppido ingressus […]*).[16] The force of focusing on the events themselves in this way is shown clearly by the contrast it makes to Ælfric's treatment in the *Lives of Saints* version, where he renders the *Vita's* wording in each of the three sentences faithfully as: *ÆLS* 31.239 *Eft æfter sumum fyrste [...]*, 254 *On þære ylcan tide [...]*; and 506 *Ða wæs sum heah-þegen [...]. On ðære ylcan tide on þam ylcan fæstene […]*,[17] respectively.

Ælfric's 'detemporization' makes its narrative significance felt more clearly in stretches of sentences which involve a *ða* (*ða*) 'when' clause, rendering a *cum*-clause in the *Vita*. The latter has four instances of the temporal clause in its earliest part prior to Martin's baptism, invariably placing it before its main clause. Ælfric, while following the *Vita* in all four except one (Martin at age fifteen) in the *Lives of Saints* version, is varied and flexible in the homily. He takes over one of the four as it is in the *Vita* (112.2 *cum esset annorum decem, […] ad ecclesiam confugit*, which he renders as 'ða ða he tyn wyntre on ylde wæs. ða arn he to cyrcan',[18] line 8), but omits the reference to Martin at age twelve (*Vita* 112.4) and puts the reference to age fifteen after the main clause (line 17, rendering *Vita* 112.11). Then, most importantly, he concludes the pauper episode by explaining how Martin was impressed by Christ's appearance in his dream, saying with the last of the temporal clauses: 'Martinus ða fægnode þære fægeran gesihðe. and wearð þa gefullod forhraðe on criste ða ða he on ylde eahtatyne geara wæs'[19] (lines 42–44). He places Martin's age at that time at the end as if it were an afterthought, rendering the temporal frame less important than in the *Vita's* original account (113.26 *cum esset annorum duodeuiginti, ad baptismum conuolauit*).[20] The *Vita* has a sentence before this implying the passage of time prior to the baptism; so does the *Lives of Saints* version, following the *Vita* closely again. By contrast, in the homily version Ælfric connects the vision and the baptism by the single word *forhraðe* 'immediately'. The passage of time is rendered invisible, making the pauper episode thematically more important and dramatizing the baptism as its denouement.

[16] line 105: 'Some irrational man hanged himself', (Latin) 'Not long after these events, while Martin […], he was told that one of the slaves of the family […]'; line 110: 'The people of Tours then chose him for their diocesan bishop', (Latin) 'Nearly about the same time, Martin was called upon to undertake the episcopate […]'; line 198: 'There was a heathen thane named Tetradius […]. Martin also came to a man's house', (Latin) 'At the same time the servant of one Tetradius […]. About the same time, having entered […] in the same town'. In the last of these passages, Ælfric might have drawn on Alcuin's condensed version; see Godden, *Commentary*, p. 630, note to lines 196–211. Translation of Sulpicius's works in the footnotes is all taken from Alexander Robert, 'The Works of Sulpicius Severus', in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, Volume XI, ed. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Oxford: Parker, 1894), pp. 1–122.

[17] 'Again after some time […]'; 'At that same time […]'; 'There was a certain great noble […]. At the same time in the same fortified town'. Translation of the *Lives of Saints* version is Skeat's in his Early English Text Society edition, ii, pp. 218–313.

[18] (Latin) 'when he was of the age of ten years, he betook himself […] to the Church'; 'when he was only ten years of age, he ran to church.'

[19] 'Martin then rejoiced at the fair vision, and was then speedily baptized in Christ, when he was eighteen years of age.'

[20] 'being now of the age of eighteen years, he hastened to receive baptism.' (Roberts's translation reads 'twenty years'.)

What is of hagiographical importance for Ælfric is the progress of events from giving the cloak through the vision to the baptism. His emphasis is not on the time at which they occur.

The importance of baptism in a saint's life is self-evident. But Ælfric seems to give it special emphasis as one of the three moments that punctuate Martin's life, the others being his retirement from military service (treated as consequent upon his baptism) and his election as Bishop of Tours. This last event is defined, both in the *Vita* and Ælfric's homily, as the highest point of Martin's attainment after which chronology is no longer relevant, and Ælfric obviously derived this from the *Vita*, as we have seen above. However, the form of emphasis on the baptism seems to be original with Ælfric, an emphasis which he gives, somewhat paradoxically, by referring to Martin being not yet baptized immediately *after* explaining his early virtues, on two occasions — first, in relating that Martin was as good as a Christian from his youth: 'He wæs swiðe geswæs eallum swincendum. and on mislicum yrmðum mannum geheolp. wædligum and wanscryddum. and næs ðeah ða gyt gefullod'[21] (lines 24–26), and then in Christ's words in the vision: 'Martinus me bewæfde efne mid ðyssere wæde. þeah ðe he ungefullod gyt farende sy'[22] (lines 41–42). The *Vita* does refer to Martin being a catechumen at both points,[23] but in a detached sentence *before* describing the virtues in the former (112.15–27) and in the intercalated position in the latter (113.19); the narratives in Ælfric's later telling show the same treatments (*ÆLS* 31.51, 82). The constant placement of the phrase with the addition of *þeah* 'nevertheless; though' at the end is Ælfric's own form of emphasis that he specially deploys for the homily. This distinctive manner of reference makes 'baptized/unbaptized' the underlying theme in the earliest part of the saint's life as Ælfric restructures it. He expresses the theme in narrative form, and significantly chooses not to add any comment to explain it. For the two references come from exactly where biblical quotations are made in the *Vita*, of Matt 6. 34 (somewhat obliquely) and Matt 25. 40 respectively, and Ælfric could have taken up the quotations and preached about the moral lesson of the event he had just told. But he merely places the phrase *næs ðeah ða gyt gefullod* at the very end in the first reference, as his own theme in place of the biblical teaching — an equivalence which Ælfric himself partly shows with his later telling: he quotes the verse from Matthew (more directly than the *Vita*, with 'swa swa þæt god-spel sægð . Ne þenc þu be mergene',[24] *ÆLS* 31.57) but mentions Martin not being baptized six lines earlier in a disconnected way. By the same token, Ælfric adds the word *fæger* 'fair' to the *Vita*'s *quo uiso* 'after this was seen' as his equivalent to the biblical quotation he omits in the vision scene. Simple though it is, the word with its rich associations of blessedness has a thematic force,[25] which is sufficiently powerful to make the equivalence convincing and to warrant its use again later when Ælfric refers to the angels coming to assist Martin in performing his first miracle (line 103; see below).

III

If abridgement is Ælfric's basic approach to his source texts, he shows other ways to make it effective and meaningful in achieving his larger end of rewriting a hagiography as a homily.

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[21] 'He was very kind to all afflicted, and helped men under divers miseries, the poor and ill-clothed, and, nevertheless, was not yet baptized.'

[22] 'Martin clothed me with this garment, though he be yet going unbaptized.'

[23] Ælfric does not reflect the distinction between being baptized and being a catechumen made in the *Vita*. For a detailed discussion, see Godden, *Commentary*, p. 624, note to lines 1–18.

[24] 'even as the gospel saith: "Take no thought for the morrow." '

[25] For a recent study of this word, see Antonette diPaolo Healey, 'Questions of Fairness: Fair, Not Fair, and Foul', in *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.*, ed. by Mark C. Amodio

We have seen something of this larger pattern already. But it can be seen more clearly in long stretches of sentences such as the following passage on Martin in conflict with Emperor Julian, where Ælfric is perhaps at his best in combining omission and other techniques:

> *ÆCHom* II, 39.45 Æfter ðisum gelamp on ðære leode gewinn. þæt Iulianus se casere gecwæð to gefeohte. and dælde his cempum cynelice sylene. þæt hi on ðam gewinne werlice ongunnon; Þa nolde martinus geniman his gife. ne on ðam gefeohte his handa afylan. ac cwæð þæt he wolde criste ðeowian. on gastlicum gecampe æfter his cristendome; Ða cwæð se wælhreowa þæt he wære afyrht for ðan toweardan gefeohte. na for criste eawfæst; Þa andwyrde martinus unforht ðam casere; Ic wille ðurhgan orsorh ðone here mid rodetacne gewæpnod. na mid readum scylde. oððe mid hefegum helme. oþþe heardre byrnan; Ða het se hæðena cyning healdan martinum þæt he wurde aworpen ungewæpnod ðam here; Þa nolde se hælend his ðegen forlætan. ac gesibbode þæt folc sona þæs on merien. þæt hi to ðæs caseres cynegyrde gebugon.[26]

Ælfric first omits to relate that the warfare took place in Gaul, an omission which enables him to rewrite it as a civil war ('on ðære leode gewinn'), not as an invasion by a foreign nation as in the *Vita*'s 'inruentibus intra Gallias barbaris' (114.7) and its close rendering in the *Live of Saints* version (*ÆLS* 31.94–95). Changing the setting in this way, Ælfric pares down the incident to a one-to-one confrontation between Martin and Julian, with no other relevant party visible around them. The conflict is further sharpened by being placed within a homiletic framework that derives its force from opposing sets of epithets used for the two — Martin, who would not *afylan* 'defile' his hands in the war but rather be engaged in a *gastlicum gecampe* 'ghostly warfare', *orsorh* 'fearless' in the face of Julian *se wælhreowa* 'the cruel' and *se hæðena cyning* 'the heathen king'. All these epithets, setting them in absolute antithesis in terms of Christian and pagan, good and evil,[27] are Ælfric's own, introduced without any prompt from the *Vita*; in fact, they represent his hallmark which is more widely used in this homily, as we shall

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and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 252–73.

[26] 'After this it happened, in the civil war, that the emperor Julian gave order for a battle, and distributed a royal donation to his soldiers, and they conducted themselves manfully in that conflict. But Martin would not take his gift, nor defile his hand in the battle, but said that he would serve Christ in ghostly warfare after his christianity. Then the tyrant said that he was afraid because of the battle at hand, not pious for Christ. Martin then boldly answered the emperor, "I will fearlessly go through the host, armed with the sign of the rood, not with red shield or with heavy helm, or hard corselet." Then the heathen king commanded Martin to be held, that he might be cast unarmed amid the army. But Jesus would not forsake his servant, but reconciled the folk forthwith on the morrow, so that they submitted to the emperor's sceptre.'

[27] Ælfric extends this dualism to Martin and his father in referring to the latter's damnation, using the words *geðeah* 'throve' and *forwearð* 'perished' for the two respectively: 'Be ðam we magon tocnawan þæt gehwilce geðeoð to heofenan rice. þeah ðe heora frynd losian. þa ða se mæra wer swa micclum geðeah. and his fæder forwearð on fulum hæðenscipe' [By this we may know that any may thrive to the kingdom of heaven, though their friends perish, when this great man so greatly throve, and his father perished in foul heathenship] (lines 82–85; 'frynd' should be translated 'relatives', not 'friends'). This is the one comment of his own Ælfric adds in the homily. Ælfric would seem to mean that one should not wonder why many people are able to go to heaven when their kinsmen are damned, given that Martin was a great saint yet his father was so evil that Martin could not save him from damnation. In other words, Ælfric might be representing Martin's father as an exemplar — the worst of fathers, as evil perhaps as Emperor Julian *se wælhreowa*, whom even a saint like Martin could not help. For the evilness of Martin's father, see lines 14–16. But the point of making the comment seems not very clear, as Godden points out (*Commentary*, p. 626, note to lines 74–85). For a discussion of saints' lives as a genre that does not admit 'any (even momentary) ambiguity' between a protagonist Christian and his or her pagan relative, see Thomas D. Hill, '*Imago Dei*: Genre, Symbolism, and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography', in *Holy Men and Holy Women*, ed. by Szarmach, pp. 35–50 (p. 40).

see.[28] This thematic use of diction reaches its climax in this passage when Martin answers the Emperor's slander, saying that he is unafraid of going through the host, *mid rodetacne gewæpnod. na mid readum scylde. oððe mid hefegum helme. oþþe heardre byrnan* 'armed with the sign of the cross, not with red shield or with heavy helmet or hard corselet'. Godden notes that '[t]he red shield, heavy helm and hard mail-shirt […] correspond simply to Latin *clipeus* 'shield' and *galea* 'helmet''.[29] Since all this heavy equipment is rejected as powerless by Martin, one may perhaps discern 'a mock-heroic line' in this expansion that Ælfric makes, as J. Wogan-Browne suggests.[30] On the other hand, Wogan-Browne fails to note a point which Ælfric seems to make in the *mid*-phrases just quoted, *mid rodetacne gewæpnod* in particular. By using the phrase in literal contrast to *ungewæpnod* in the sentence immediately following, Ælfric makes the Emperor call *ungewæpnod* 'unarmed' what Martin himself calls *gewæpnod* 'armed', epitomizing the direct division between the Christian and pagan, the good and evil, views.[31] In this way, he expresses, in narrative form, the moral of the story unobtrusively but as clearly as by explaining it in commentary; he states the *sententia* with the explicitness appropriate to a preaching homily. Comparing Ælfric's two lives of Martin, Wogan-Browne further says that 'the earlier life […] allows Martin's background and military career to bulk much larger'.[32] But this does not seem to be wholly convincing, for the saint's military career is to all appearances minimized in the Martin homily. Thus, Ælfric does not stop to say that Martin continued to hold military office for two years after he was baptized, though he says so in his later telling (*ÆLS* 31.92–93, following the *Vita* 114.4–6).[33] Even in an earlier passage about giving a cloak to a pauper, Martin is said to have nothing to give the pauper but his cloak ('Ða næfde martinus nan ðing to syllenne þam nacedan ðearfan […] buton his gewædum', lines 29–31), rather than his cloak and his armour, as in the later version ('naht butan his gewædum . and his gewæpnunge', *ÆLS* 31.67). Ælfric clearly minimizes Martin's military career even at this point, in sharp contrast to those who accompanied him, whom he plainly calls soldiers ('cempan', line 35). His method is essentially the same at the crucial point under discussion. Martin the *miles Christi* standing against the heathen Emperor Julian is the main focus of this entire passage, as the *gewæpnod*-vocabulary and other epithets demonstrate.

The homiletic mode of discourse in the passage on Martin and Julian, sustained by this use of affective vocabulary, is carried on to the end, giving a fitting conclusion to the confrontation as Ælfric tells it. Now we read in the *Vita*, and the *Lives of Saints* version following it closely, that before Julian's order to send Martin to the ordeal was carried out, the heathen nation surrendered the next morning. Sulpicius then adds a concluding authorial commentary to the effect that this could not have happened except by God's intervention to save the saint, which

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[28] For example, the word *orsorh*(*lice*) occurs further in lines 70 and 301, and *wælhreow* in lines 20 and 59 (referring in both to Emperor Julian) and 301 (referring to the devil). Godden also notes this formulaic use of some epithets in this homily; see below n. 68.

[29] Godden, *Commentary*, p. 625, note to lines 45–58.

[30] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'The Hero in Christian Reception: Ælfric and Heroic Poetry', in *La funzione dell'eroe germanico: storicità, metafora, paradigma*, ed. by Teresa Pàroli (Rome: Il Calamo, 1995); repr. in *Old English Literature*, ed. by R. M. Liuzza (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 215–35 (p. 224).

[31] It may also be interesting to note that the confrontation reads like a passage from a story of a martyr and a persecutor, an impression which the word *aworpen* '(to be) cast away' in the Emperor's command reinforces. Ælfric and anonymous writers often use the word or its equivalent in describing martyred saints tortured in a variety of forms by persecutors who are *wælhreow*.

[32] Wogan-Browne, 'The Hero in Christian Reception', p. 224.

[33] On this point, see Paul E. Szarmach, 'Ælfric Revises: The Lives of Martin and the Idea of the Author', in *Unlocking the Wordhord*, ed. by Amodio and O'Keeffe, pp. 38–61 (pp. 47–48).

starts by asking the reader: *quis dubitet* […] 'who would doubt […]?' (114.24–115.2). The *Lives of Saints* version again follows this treatment (*ÆLS* 31.121–30). Ælfric in the Martin homily transforms all this into a single sentence (the last sentence of the quotation) in which he asserts what happened as a truth: 'Þa nolde se hælend his ðegen forlætan. ac gesibbode þæt folc sona þæs on merien. þæt hi to ðæs caseres cynegyrde gebugon'. As the initial *þa* certifies, the sentence is part of the narrative, continuing the action line of the incident being told. But it is a narrative with which Ælfric replaces Sulpicius's commentary; it is a commentary turned into narrative. It is a statement which, not unlike any of the Gospel narratives, is expressed as a truth, not by an impersonal narrator but by the homilist Ælfric, who is the omniscient author here.

The omniscient Ælfric also makes himself felt earlier in the pauper episode, where he says: 'On þære ylcan nihte æteowode crist hine sylfne martine on swefne'[34] (lines 38–39), representing Christ's appearance to Martin as a truth, rather than 'On þære ylcan nihte he geseah on swefne þone hælend' (*ÆLS* 31.75–76, where the emphasis is on Martin's dream, as it is in the *Vita* 113.15 *cum se sopori dedisset, uidit Christum […]*).[35] This homiletic mode takes a slightly different form in the account of Martin's first miracle of restoring life to a man who died before baptism. The man then begins to report how he was recalled from a dark place by the saint's intercession. After its first sentence, however, his reported speech abruptly reverts into the author's account, reopened with the narrative formula *Ða comon þær*:[36]

> *ÆCHom* II, 39.99 and he wearð ða geedcucod æfter lytlum fyrste. and sona gefullod. gesundful leofode to manegum gearum. and gewisslice sæde þæt he wære gelæd to leohtleasre stowe. and swærlice geswenct. on sweartum witum; Ða comon þær fleogende twegen fægre englas. and hine gelæddon ongean to life for martines bene. swa swa he bæd æt gode.[37]

The words 'for martines bene. swa swa he bæd æt gode' at the end certify that the *Ða comon* sentence in which they occur is not part of the restored man's report but a statement made by Ælfric. It would be easy to see anacoluthon here and say that Ælfric could have avoided this grammatical irregularity; both the *Vita* (118.5–10) and Ælfric's later telling (*ÆLS* 31.227–36) make it clear that the entire passage is the man's report, the former by recurrent infinitives (*excepisse […] fuisse […] esse […] reduci*) depending on the verb phrase *referre erat solitus* 'he was wont to report' and the latter by the narrator-author's confirmation of the report that it did so happen then ('and hit wearð þa swa', *ÆLS* 31.236). Here again, however, we should probably see a deliberate change on Ælfric's part in favour of the homiletic mode. Ælfric chooses to recount the coming of the angels and what ensued not as a reported story but as a truth, as appropriate to a homily. It is probably in light of this mode that Ælfric here again exploits opposing sets of affective epithets describing the place where the man was brought and the angels who helped him — words for 'lightless, dark, black' ('to leohtleasre stowe. and swærlice geswenct. on sweartum witum', featuring heavy alliteration on the *s*-words) are used to describe the former and a word for 'fair, bright' ('fægre') to describe the latter. This opposition between 'dark' and 'bright' parallels the opposition between Christian and pagan

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[34] 'On the same night Christ appeared to Martin in a dream'.

[35] 'In the same night he saw in a dream Jesus'; (Latin) 'when Martin had resigned himself to sleep, he had a vision of Christ […]'.

[36] Ælfric uses this formula later in line 187, again announcing the arrival of angels to assist Martin.

[37] 'And he was then after a little space requickened, and forthwith baptized, lived prosperous for many years, and, moreover, said, that he had been led to a lightless place, and heavily afflicted with dire torments. Then there came flying two fair angels, and led him again to life, at the supplication of Martin, as he had prayed of God.'

in the passage on Martin and Emperor Julian, while the word 'fægre' for the angels may also echo 'þære fægeran gesihðe' of Christ in the pauper episode. Like these two previous passages, the passage on Martin's first miracle shows Ælfric narrating as an omniscient homilist and enforcing his view with the dualism of opposing epithets for 'good' and 'evil' as a method of expressing *sententia* in narrative form.

IV

As can be seen from the previously quoted passages, Ælfric's techniques of omitting contextual detail and casting the *sententia* of hagiographical events in the narrative make his prose 'striking in its starkness'.[38] The starkness has stylistic and thematic dimensions. Stylistically, it is a product of a narrative prose focusing upon the progress of the action mostly told with verbs in the preterite tense. The succession of these assertive verb forms has a thematic consequence. It helps to heroicize the protagonist saint as a man of absolute sanctity, at all times unswerving in being a *godes cempa* and unhesitating in acting as such. This is part of the picture we saw earlier of Martin standing *orsorh* against Emperor Julian (lines 45–58). But the heroicization is seen more distinctly in later passages where Martin as a bishop confronts his adversaries. Perhaps the best example is a passage drawing upon the *Vita*, cap. 13. Martin has overthrown an idol-fane and then attempts to destroy a pine-tree standing close by, to the great anger of the people who have worshipped it (lines 161–63). Ælfric continues:

> *ÆCHom* II, 39.163 Ða noldon ða hæðenan þam halgan geðafian. þæt he swa halig treow æfre hynan sceolde; Cwæð þeah heora an þæt he hit underfenge feallende to foldan. and hi hit forcurfon. gif he on god truwode þurh trumne geleafan; Þa geðafode martinus. þæt mid gebylde. and wearð gebunden under ðam beame geset ðider ðe he bigde mid healicum bogum. and næs him nan wen þæt he ahwar wende buton to ðam halgan. swa swa he ahyld wæs; Hwæt ða ða hæðenan aheowon þæt treow mid ormætre blisse. þæt hit brastliende sah to ðam halgan were. hetelice swiðe; Þa worhte he ongean ðam hreosendum treowe þæs hælendes rodetacn. and hit ðærrihte ætstod. wende ða ongean. and hreas underbæc. and fornean offeoll ða ðe hit ær forcurfon; Þa awurpon ða hæðenan sona heora gedwyld. and to heora scyppende sæmtinges gebugon mid micclum geleafan ðurh martines lare.[39]

As usual, Ælfric leaves out what are, to him, irrelevant details in the *Vita* — the accompanying monks worrying about Martin and the distant crowd watching and wondering — leaving Martin and those actively engaged in resisting him in direct confrontation with each other. What is new in and characteristic of this passage is the sensational language with which Ælfric describes the enraged heathens intent on revenge and the danger of the falling tree in the successive two clauses ('Hwæt ða ða hæðenan [...] mid ormætre blisse [...] hit brastliende sah [...] hetelice swiðe') and in the second clause after these ('hit ðærrihte ætstod [...] hreas

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[38] This is a phrase Godden uses for the homily on St Cuthbert ('Experiments in Genre', p. 277). Godden shows that the later hagiographical homilies in the *Catholic Homilies*, those on Cuthbert and Martin among them, share important features of style that separate them from the earlier ones in the series; see 'Experiments in Genre', pp. 276–82.

[39] 'Then the heathens would not allow the saint that he should ever destroy so holy a tree; though one of them said, that he should receive it as it fell to earth, and they would cut it down, if he trusted in God with firm belief. Martin then consented to that with boldness, and was set bound under the tree, where it bent with its high boughs, and they had no expectation that it would turn anywhere, save to the holy man, as it was inclined. Whereupon the heathen hewed the tree with boundless delight, so that it sank crackling towards the holy man, very violently. Then made he towards the falling tree the sign of the Saviour's rood, and it straightways stood still, turned then again,

underbæc'). Ælfric's aim is obviously to set the roaring dangers as a foil to the saint, who is shown, in between those dangers in the intervening clause, as heroically determined and steadfast ('Þa worhte he […] rodetacn'). This sharp contrast between the violent and the calm, the moving and the steadfast, is intensified by an alteration Ælfric introduces as a consequence of excluding the watching crowd from the scene: the pine-tree, turned backwards by virtue of Martin's prayer, almost falls upon the violent heathens themselves, not on the crowd who are standing safely away, as in the *Vita* (123.14–15) and its close rendering in the *Lives of Saints* (*ÆLS* 31.417–18). The alteration, by making the intended harm come upon the intenders themselves, makes their role as a foil more poignant. The saint then never again comes to the fore. It is the enraged heathens who now transform, from *mid ormætre blisse* 'with excessive delight (to harm Martin)' to *mid micclum geleafan* '(turning to Martin's God) with great devotion'. This transformation is paralleled by a larger progress of action that frames the entire passage. Destruction of the idol, begun at Martin's initiative ('Se halga towearp […]', line 161), is brought to completion by the heathen worshippers, who are now willing to cast away their false belief ('awurpon […] heora gedwyld', the last line but one in the quotation), thereby completing the conversion and embracing the saint's example. The two -*wearp*/-*wurpon* words at the opening and ending form an envelope pattern, highlighting the two parallel changes that are central to the event.

This narrative framework and the narrative tension it produces are reinforced by the use of 'downgraded' speech in the passage. In the *Vita*, one among the heathen worshippers protests to Martin in direct speech, urging him to prove his claims about his God (122.23–26). This is 'downgraded' to indirect speech in Ælfric's passage, as seen above ('Cwæð þeah heora an þæt […]', the second line). More importantly, in the *Vita* Martin is assigned, before being set under the ordeal, an indirect speech in which he instructs the people on the folly of worshipping the tree (122.20–22). The author of *De Falsis Diis* and other related passages, Ælfric could have developed this bit of teaching into a mini-homily of his own, much as he does in similar contexts in earlier hagiographical homilies in the *Catholic Homilies*, including the one on the passion of Peter and Paul (see I). Here he does not, however. On the contrary, he omits Martin's speech entirely, leaving only a faint hint of it in the phrase *ðurh martines lare* 'through Martin's teaching' at the very end of the passage. The correspondence to Martin's original speech in the *Vita* makes it possible to interpret this *ðurh*-phrase as a narrative equivalent of a commentary, not unlike the narrative statements delivered from the omniscient author's point of view in the two earlier passages we have discussed (*ÆCHom* II, 39.45–58; 99–105).[40] But it is more significant to note that there is no *lar* given by the saint in the passage being discussed as Ælfric has restructured it. Martin is, at least in this passage, a man who teaches

and fell backwards, and nearly fell on those that had before cut it down. The heathens then forthwith renounced their error, and immediately turned to their Creator, with great faith, through Martin's instruction.'

[40] The prepositional phrase of this kind is a recurrent feature of this homily and often seems to stress God's power that a miraculous event testifies to; see, for example, 'he ða frecednysse þæs færlican attres mid gebedum afligde. þurh fultum drihtnes' [he with prayers drove away the peril of the sudden venom, through the Lord's aid] (lines 88–90); 'and hine unwurðne of deaðe arærde. þurh his ðingrædene wið þone soðan god' [and raised him unworthy from death, through his intercession with the true God] (lines 108–09); 'englas […] cuðlice to spræcon for his clænan life' [Angels […] familiarly spake with him, because of his pure life] (lines 220–21); 'ac he wearð gehæled […] þurh þæs hælendes gife' [but he was healed […] through the grace of Jesus] (lines 244–45); and 'an wod man […] wearð gewittig ðurh þæs weres geearnungum' [an insane man […] became sane through the man's merits] (lines 256-58; see below). Godden mentions the first and fourth of these examples, noting that the *þurh*-phrase there is not from either the *Dialogues* or Alcuin's condensed account (*Commentary*, p. 632, note to lines 239–68).

not with words but through action; the disappearance of Martin's speech emphasizes the saint as a man of action.

The significance of the 'downgraded' speech may be seen more clearly in contrast with those few contexts where Ælfric does use direct speech. In those parts of the *Vita* and associated texts on which Ælfric draws for his homily, there are fourteen instances of direct speech involving different speakers.[41] Of these, Ælfric retains eight; the rest, assigned mostly to Martin's adversaries in the Latin texts, are rendered into indirect speech, including a single case of the '*het* 'commanded' + infinitive' construction for Martin. Of Ælfric's eight examples of direct speech, one each is for Christ (in Martin's vision; see II) and Martin's disciples (in their response to the saint who has just imparted foreknowledge of his own destiny to them; see V). In the other examples, the saint himself is the speaker: lines 52 (announcing his final determination to Emperor Julian), 77 (in a reply to the devil, making the latter vanish; the latter's original direct speech (*Vita* 116.10) is 'downgraded' to indirect speech), 234 (in another reply to the devil, causing him to vanish again and with the same change in mode of speech from the *Vita* (134.9); see below), 277 (in teaching his disciples about the greedy fowls which he likens to the devils; see V), 292 (in a prayer to God), and 301 (in the final speech of victory over the devil on the deathbed). The contexts present all these as climactic moments in each event in which the speech occurs. So does the alternation of direct and indirect speech for the saint in his confrontation with the Emperor; his first speech (put in direct speech in the *Vita*) as well as the Emperor's reply is rendered in indirect speech before his direct speech at the last moment, as seen above. By comparison, in his later telling Ælfric takes over all the direct speeches from the source texts except one (which he renders using the '*het* + infinitive', as in the homily), regardless of the speaker. All this testifies to the force for which Ælfric employs direct speech in the Martin homily, as a form to be exploited only at significant points in the hagiographical narrative.[42] In light of this evidence, the omission of Martin's speech referred to at the end of the previous paragraph confirms where Ælfric's emphasis falls in the narrative of the event: not on 'the saint as preacher' but on Martin as a man of heroic action.

To return to the saint's heroicization, idealization and glorification as its slightly varied form may be seen at work in a few passages Ælfric rewrites rather radically, including the two discussed by Frederick M. Biggs.[43] In one, lines 216–20, Ælfric describes Martin as falling down on the steps at the holy altar ('on ðam healicum gradum æt þam halgum weofode'), either understanding Alcuin's *per gradus* 'on the steps' in a specialized sense or rewriting *de cenaculo* 'from the upper storey' in the *Vita*. In either event, Ælfric thereby makes the incident more appropriate to a saint and more deserving of the angel's subsequent visit and healing. In the other passage, lines 256–60, an insane man is healed by sitting where the saint had rested earlier, by the latter's virtues ('geearnungum'), not by virtue of his bedstraw ('stramine'), as in the source. Ælfric replaced the particularizing *stramine* with the inexpressive *geearnungum*, either because he found the word 'superfluous' in Alcuin's condensed account (if that is his

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[41] *Vita* 113.19, 114.13, 114.18, 116.10, 116.12, 122.23, 127.6, 134.9, 134.15; *Epistula III* 147.24, 148.8, 148.16, 149.17; and *Historia Francorum* 32.10. Reference to this last work is to *Gregory of Tours, Historia Francorum*, ed. by B. Krusch and W. Levison (Hannover: Hahn, 1937–51), Fascicule I, by page and line.

[42] On Ælfric's manipulative use of direct and indirect speech, see Ruth Waterhouse, 'Ælfric's Use of Discourse in Some Saints' Lives', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 83–103. On his usage in the later life of Martin, see Judith Gaites, 'Ælfric's Longer *Life of St Martin* and its Latin Sources: A Study in Narrative Technique', *Leeds Studies in English*, 13 (1982), 23–41 (pp. 25–26).

[43] Biggs, 'Ælfric as Historian', pp. 292–93 and 297–98.

source text at this point) or because, were he drawing on a detailed account in the *Dialogues*, 'perhaps for personal or theological reasons he was offended by the suggestion of intimacy between the saint and a woman' who might have served as 'the intermediary between the saint and the cured person', as Biggs argues.[44] Should the latter be Ælfric's source text here,[45] the replacement may indicate an attempt on Ælfric's part to make Martin more impeccable as a man and more saint-like than in Sulpicius's account by suppressing in his narrative anything that may hint at behaviour less than appropriate of a saint. The attempt would explain a third 'strikingly different' account Ælfric gives in lines 178–89, where the saint appears as a man of virtue who cannot destroy a heathen temple, not because he is powerless but because the building is too strong for any human power, as Godden notes: 'in the *Vita*, Martin cannot destroy the temple because the heathens resist, and the angels simply keep them at bay while he demolishes it, whereas Ælfric says Martin cannot destroy the temple because of its strong construction, and the angels do the work for him'.[46]

Two additional passages may amplify Ælfric's representation of Martin as a saint without human imperfections. One of them, lines 154–60, derived from the *Vita*, cap. 12, tells how Martin spellbound a band of heathen men and released them when realizing his mistake (121.24–122.12). Godden points out that Ælfric gives a different account, 'failing to explain that Martin spellbound the heathens not in a gratuitous display of power but in the mistaken belief that they were engaged in devil-worship rather than a funeral'.[47] The 'failure' might have been deliberate, as suggested by two phrases (quoted below) that Ælfric uniquely introduces in his account. As Ælfric reshapes the story, Martin saw from afar the heathens carrying a corpse for burial *mid anþræcum gehlyde* 'with a horrible clamour' (line 155–56,[48] instead of with linen clothes spread over the corpse which misled the saint in the original account), and for that heathen practice he spellbound them momentarily but released them *for his godnysse* 'because of his kindliness'[49] (lines 159–60). Ælfric has apparently transformed a story of the saint's misplaced use of miraculous power into a veneration of his goodness.

The other passage (lines 229–38), an account of the devil tempting Martin, shows an interesting case of similar revision combined with a distinctive vocabulary which reinforces it:

> *ÆCHom* II, 39.229 Hwilon com se deofol on anre digelnysse mid purpuran gescryd. and mid helme geglengd to ðam halgan were þær he hine gebæd. and cwæð þæt he wære witodlice se hælend; Þa beseah martinus wið þæs sceoccan leoht. gemyndig on mode. hu se metoda drihten cwæð on his godspelle be his godcundan tocyme. and cwæð to ðam leasan mid gelæredum muðe; Ne sæde ure hælend þæt he swa wolde beon mid purpuran gehiwod. oþþe mid helme scinende. þonne he eft come mid engla ðrymme; Ða fordwan se deofol dreorig him fram. and seo stow ða stanc mid ormætum stence. æfter andwerdnysse þæs egeslican gastes.[50]

[44] Biggs, 'Ælfric as Historian', pp. 292–93.

[45] Biggs discusses the two passages in comparison with the corresponding narratives in the *Lives of the Saints* to argue that Ælfric draws on Alcuin's condensed *Vita* rather than Sulpicius's *Dialogues* for some part of the *Catholic Homilies* life of the saint.

[46] Godden, *Commentary*, p. 629, note to lines 178–89.

[47] Godden, *Commentary*, p. 628, note to lines 154–60.

[48] Godden says that 'the reference to their noise […] is perhaps due to Alcuin's brief summary' (*Commentary*, p. 629, note to lines 154–60).

[49] *The Dictionary of Old English*, ed. by Angus F. Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Sharon Butler, and Antonette diPaolo Healey (Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 1986–) cites this passage as an example of the word *godnes* used of persons in the sense 'kindness, benevolence, generosity' (s.v. 2.a.ii).

[50] 'Once the devil came, in a secret place, clothed with purple, and with a crown adorned, to the holy man, where he

The saint, as Ælfric represents him here, shows not even a momentary sign of being in doubt about the identity of the figure before him, as he apparently is in the *Vita*, cap. 24, where he remains silent when first spoken to and is urged to acknowledge what he sees: 'Martine, quid dubitas credere, cum uideas?'[51] (134.12–13); all this is followed in the narrative of the *Lives of Saints*. Ælfric's Martin in the homily does not hesitate to respond, recalling Christ's words in the Gospel. This is one of the two biblical references Ælfric gives in the homily. But like the other reference (a quotation of Ps 117.6 in lines 77–78, drawn from the *Vita* 116.12–13), this reference is derived from the *Vita* (134.15–18). Ælfric neither dwells on it nor expands it with commentary, but abridges it and hastens to the closing remark about the devil vanishing. The devil in turn is given a representation which is similarly reduced but relies more on symbolism, with just two features — *mid purpuran gescryd. and mid helme geglengd* 'clothed with purple and adorned with a crown' — picked up to the exclusion of other realistic details of his appearance given in the *Vita*. The contrast between the two figures, one representing the heroic saint and the other the tempter and Antichrist, is intensified by a distinction mentioned earlier concerning the mode of speech assigned to them — that is, assertive direct speech assigned to the former ('cwæð […]; Ne sæde ure hælend […] ðrymme') and indirect speech to the latter ('cwæð þæt he wære […] hælend'), 'downgraded' from two direct speeches in the *Vita*. In his direct speech itself, the saint announces his triumph using a contrasting vocabulary which reflects Ælfric the homilist's own voice — *gehiwod* 'feigned' in reference to the devil's false appearance (as against the narrative *gescryd* 'clothed' in an earlier sentence)[52] and *mid engla ðrymme* 'with a host of angels' in reference to the Advent. The two epithets are original with Ælfric, though the speech itself and its biblical reference are in the *Vita*. Nor are the epithets used in Ælfric's later telling (*ÆLS* 31.764–69), which repeats the narrative *gescryd* in the saint's speech and has no equivalent to *mid engla ðrymme*. In fact, this later version, following the *Vita* closely, lacks any of the features seen above to be characteristic of the passage of the homily. They are homiletic features which show Ælfric adapting the narrative he found in the *Vita* to his own purpose, focusing upon the saint's unswerving devotion and his *gelæredum muðe* 'learned mouth' and incorporating the moral into the narrative.

V

The final part of the homily, introduced with the rubric *De Eius Obitu*, is an account of the saint's last days (lines 270-313) followed by a post-mortem event (lines 314–32). For the former, Ælfric draws upon Sulpicius's *Epistula Tertia*, a letter to his mother-in-law Bassula, in which he supplements his *Vita*, apparently written while the saint was alive, with a description of his death and its circumstances. It is a full description linked into one large story, with five consecutive scenes: the saint's foreknowledge of his own death, his journey to one of his monasteries to settle a discordance among the monks, his announcement of his impending

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was praying, and said that he verily was Jesus. Martin then looked on the fiend's splendour, mindful in mind how the Creator Lord said in his gospel of his divine advent, and he said to the false one with learned mouth, "Our Saviour said not that he would be so habited in purple, or with crown shining, when he should come again with a host of angels." Then the devil vanished from him sad, and the place stank with an exceedingly great stench, after the presence of the terrific spirit.'

[51] 'Martin, why do you hesitate to believe, when you see?'

[52] Ælfric uses the verb *hiwian* in reference to a woman who pretended to be ill (line 112).

death and the disciples' bewailing, the saint on his deathbed, and his passing away. Ælfric follows this seamless succession closely, and the homily is now not shortened from the source so drastically. Still, Ælfric sometimes abridges boldly. Thus, when the saint hears the lamentations of the disciples in the third scene, he is assigned only one speech to make to God, which is condensed from the two speeches, intervened by narrative sentences, in the *Epistula* (148.16–17; 148.21–149.2). The abridged speech is not only much briefer but is more resolute, with the God-trusting supplication 'beo ðin willa .a. weroda drihten'[53] placed at its end (line 295). Again, the disciples, having made lamentations and pleas, are no longer present in the third scene, though they continue to have a role there in the *Epistula* (149.8–18), worrying about the saint's illness and trying in more than one way to make him comfortable as he lay on the earth. By removing the disciples from the scene, Ælfric leaves Martin alone in prayer, facing death and devil heroically, and hastens to the last moment, which he introduces with the phrase *oð þæt* 'until', a formula he often uses to introduce a climax:[54] 'and ne geswac his gebeda. oð þæt he sawlode'[55] (lines 299–300).

As before, Ælfric intersperses this condensed narrative with affective epithets which are original with him and which help to make the *sententia* of the narrative explicit as a substitute for comments. The epithets occur with intense concentration in two passages that describe Martin confronting the devil (devil himself and devil in simile). Thus, in the second of the five scenes, the saint, en route to a monastery, sees some fowls pursuing fish in a river and calls them *ehtende* 'chasing; persecuting' (line 276), likening them to the devils who *grædelice gripað to grimre helle* 'greedily snatch to the grim hell' the unwary (lines 278–79, with a striking alliteration). In the later passage describing the saint on his deathbed, the confrontation is intensified by more distinctive epithets for the saint and the devil:

> *ÆCHom* II, 39.300 He geseah ðone deofol standan swiðe gehende. and hine orsorhlice axian ongann; Þu wælhreowe nyten to hwi stenst ðu þus gehende? Ne gemetst þu on me. aht witniendlices. Me soðlice underfehð se heahfæder Abraham. into his wununge on ecere wynne; Æfter ðisum worde gewat seo sawul of ðam geswenctan lichaman sona to gode.[56]

The contrast between *orsorhlice* for one and *wælhreowe* for the other closely parallels the contrast in the earlier passage on the saint and Emperor Julian (see III) — a parallelism which reinforces the representation of the saint and his adversary as types rather than individuals; and the homiletic formulas such as on *ecere wynne* and *gewat seo sawul of ðam geswenctan lichaman* in the following clauses reinforce that approach to the narrative. None of the four phrases (except perhaps *wælhreowe*) is prompted by the *Epistula* (where we read: 'haec locutus diabolum uidit prope adsistere. quid hic, inquit, adstas cruenta bestia? […] Cum hac ergo uoce spiritum reddidit'[57] (149.16–19)), and *on ecere wynne* is an addition not found in the telling in the *Lives of Saints* (*ÆLS* 31.1368).

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[53] 'be thy will for ever, Lord of hosts!'

[54] Ælfric employs this conjunctive phrase earlier in lines 62, 87, 112, and 159. For Ælfric's usage in comparison with the phrase in prose romance, see my study 'Stylistic Features of the Old English *Apollonius of Tyr*e', in Hiroshi Ogawa, *Studies in the History of Old English Prose* (Tokyo: Nan'undo, 2000), pp. 181–204 (pp. 193–95).

[55] 'and ceased not his prayers until he expired.'

[56] 'He saw the devil standing very near at hand, and began fearlessly to ask him: "Thou bloodthirsty beast, why standest thou thus at hand? Thou wilt not find in me aught that is punishable; but me will the patriarch Abraham receive into his dwelling in eternal joy." After these words, the soul forthwith departed from its afflicted body to God.'

[57] 'Having spoken these words, he saw the devil standing close at hand, and exclaimed: "Why do you stand here, thou bloody monster? […]" As he uttered these words, his spirit fled.'

Then follow in rapid succession words for 'light' and 'shining' and other colourful expressions, all bearing obvious symbolism and describing in a long and poetic sentence the glory in which the saint's body is raised to heaven:[58] 'His lic wearð gesewen sona on wuldre. beorhtre ðonne glæs. hwittre ðonne meoloc. and his andwlita scean swiðor þonne leoht. þa iu gewuldrod to ðam toweardan æriste'[59] (lines 307–10). Ælfric probably owed much of the idea and material for this 'colourful description' (and the surrounding descriptions of the angels singing and the lamentations) to some preceding version or versions, as Godden points out.[60] But the arrangement is his own. *His lic* comes first, before *his andwlita*, unlike the order in the *Epistula* (149.19–150.1); and the balanced clauses are bound closely by the alliteration of *wuldre* and its derivative *gewuldrod*, a key feature that may well be Ælfric's own addition, judging from a variant reading of the *Epistula* which is otherwise very close to Ælfric's wording here.[61]

Ælfric finally turns to a post-mortem event which enhances the sanctity of the saint — a contest between the people of Tours and Poitiers for a superior claim to his body. It is at this point that Ælfric for the first time gives us an indication that what we have been reading is a preaching text, for he uses the verb *gehyran* 'hear' in introducing the narrative (*Is eac to gehyrenne* 'It is also to be heard' (line 314)), implying the presence of an audience he addresses. This is matched by another mark of preaching — a reference to the saint's feast on which the homily is delivered — which occurs immediately following the telling of the contest: 'On ðisum dæge gewat se halga wer to gode. mærlice of worulde. mid micclum wundrum geglencged'[62] (lines 328–29, with a striking alternation of alliterations on 'w', 'g' and 'm').[63] This poetic address to the audience trails off into a prayer for the saint's intercession and the final doxology. These last lines would seem rather abrupt, as there was nothing to match them at the homily's opening, neither a reference to the saint's feast nor a naming of source texts which would have helped to authorize the following homily. Whether this omission of a standard opening was deliberate or not is difficult to say with certainty. But it may tell its own tale of Ælfric's 'change of heart about the genre', showing the homilist already breaking away from the conventional form of hagiographical homily, much as he departs from the conventional division of narrative and commentary, in the present homily.

VI

Ælfric's life of Martin is a hagiographical homily which, like his other later works of the genre in the *Catholic Homilies*, no longer shares his earlier features such as 'a saint as preacher' and commentary and discussion of doctrinal issues prompted by the narrative.[64] But it has new recurrent features which sustain him in adapting the hagiographical narrative for his preaching purpose. Ælfric achieves this homiletic mode in narrative by deploying two

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[58] For a study of the 'light' symbolism in Old English, see Hugh Magennis, 'Hagiographical Imagery of Light and Ælfric's "Passion of St Dionysius" ', *Leeds Studies in English*, 37 (2006), 209–28.

[59] 'His corpse forthwith appeared in glory, brighter than glass, whiter than milk, and his face shone more than light, then already glorified for the future resurrection.'

[60] Godden, *Commentary*, pp. 632–33, note to lines 296–313.

[61] See Godden, *Commentary*, pp. 632–33, note to lines 296–313.

[62] 'On this day the holy man departed to God, gloriously from the world, with great miracles adorned.'

[63] Letson ('The Form', p. 425) has noted that the homily has 'an *uton* passage' (inviting the audience to pray for Martin's intercession) and 'the customary doxology', but does not mention the opening *Is eac to gehyrenne [...]*.

[64] See Godden, 'Experiments in Genre', p. 266.

powerful techniques. For one thing, he often abridges the account given in his source texts, paring the narrative to the saint and his immediate adversaries and those of their actions which reinforce his emphases in the homiletic framework into which he recasts a hagiography and thereby developing a prose which is 'striking in its starkness'. This feature of style has a thematic consequence. Focusing on the progress of action which he tells mostly with the assertive verb forms in the preterite tense, Ælfric presents the hagiographical events and their meanings as truths, projecting the omniscient author as a homilist, and represents the protagonist saint as a man of absolute sanctity, occasionally to the point of heroicization (see IV). Based on this manipulative use of narrative style, Ælfric has produced a hagiographical narrative which embodies within itself the *sententia* of the events it recalls; Ælfric gives the *sententia* in narrative form, rather than in commentary.

The *sententia* Ælfric gives in this way is reinforced by the other of his distinctive techniques in this homily — the use of affective epithets designed to sharpen the antithesis of 'a protagonist saint and his adversary' and 'good and evil', which is typically seen in the descriptions of the saint in conflict with Emperor Julian and the idol-worshippers (see III and IV, respectively). As a result, the epithets are often formulaic. One consequence of this formulaic vocabulary is its emphasis on the saint and his adversary as types rather than individualized examples of the type. Another consequence is what would seem as a 'misplaced' use of an epithet, seen at least once in this homily in the use of the phrase *þæt læne lif* 'the transitory life in this world'. Its implication is exactly what is called for in describing the saint's passing away as 'he ferde fram eallum frecednyssum ðises lænan lifes to his leofan drihtne'[65] (lines 270–72). But it seems slightly incongruous as an epithet for a man who has just been restored to life by virtue of the saint's prayer, to the joy and wonder of his mother and the people watching them: 'he sona aras to ðam lænan life þe he ær forlet; Þurh ðam tacne gelyfdon of ðære leode gehwilce on ðone lifigendan god. ðe hine to life arærde'[66] (lines 149–52).

Seen in a wider perspective, the formulaic vocabulary is obviously related to what Godden calls 'universalizing hagiographic diction',[67] common in the later hagiographical homilies in the *Catholic Homilies*. The epithets 'se halga', almost invariably the epithet for Martin from line 77 onwards, and 'se wælhreowa' referring to Emperor Julian and the devil, are the clearest examples of such diction, as he notes.[68] But usage is more flexible and varied in other vocabulary items. For example, the word *geswæs* 'gentle, pleasing' is used both in the sense of Christian charity (in 'He wæs swiðe geswæs eallum swincendum', lines 24–25 (see above, n. 21), and 'ða ungeðwæran preostas ðreade […] and on sibbe gebrohte mid geswæsre lare', lines 283–84)[69] and in the sense of sweet words of flattery (in 'He nolde olæcan ænigum rican mid geswæsum wordum', lines 251–52).[70] More interesting are words meaning 'to shine'. While they usually refer in this homily to a saint (Martin or Hilary) with their obvious symbolism, as in 'the colourful description' of Martin passing away (lines 307–10; see V), and also in

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[65] 'he went from all the perils of this miserable life to his dear Lord.'

[66] 'he forthwith arose to the poor life that he had before left. Through this miracle all of that people believed in the Living God, who had raised him to life.'

[67] Godden, 'Experiments in Genre', p. 280.

[68] Godden, 'Experiments in Genre', p. 280.

[69] 'rebuked the discordant priests […] and brought them in peace with kind advice.'

[70] 'He would not flatter any powerful man with sweet words.' Elsewhere Ælfric uses the phrase *mid geswæsum wordum* in referring to John's teaching (*ÆCHom* I, 4.204). On this example, see Robert K. Upchurch, 'Homiletic Contexts for Ælfric's Hagiography: The Legend of Saints Cecelia and Valerian', in *The Old English Homily: Precedent, Practice, and Appropriation*, ed. by Aaron Kleist (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 265–84 (pp. 281–82).

'hilarium […] scinende swa swa tungel. on soðre lare' (lines 60–61) and 'men gesawon scinan færlice æt his [Martin's] hnolle swilce fyren clywen. swa þæt se scinenda lig his locc up ateah' (lines 241–43),[71] they are occasionally used with descriptive purpose, as in referring to the shining sword ('ðam scinendan brande', line 191)[72] of a man who threatens to kill the saint and the devil's splendour ('þæs sceoccan leoht', line 232). In these last two cases, the relevant words serve to represent the adversaries sensationally, emphasizing them as a foil to the saint who is steadfast in confronting the dangers. This mixture of the two uses, universalizing and descriptive, might be worth a fuller consideration in comparison with other late hagiographical homilies in the *Catholic Homilies*, such as those on Cuthbert and Benedict.[73]

As I noted in passing where appropriate in the preceding analysis, the hagiographical diction, primarily a reinforcement of the *sententia*, is often also an important element of the alliterative prose in which much of the homily is written. Examples not mentioned previously include the poetic *folde* 'earth' in 'he hit underfenge feallende to foldan. and hi hit forcurfon' (line 165; see IV), the single occurrence of the poetic *metod* in 'gemyndig on mode. hu se metoda drihten cwæð […]' (lines 232–33), beside the four common words for 'God' (*god*, *drihten* (the usual form in the saint's speeches), *crist*, and *hælend*),[74] and the alliteration combined with wordplay on words of related meaning in 'he gehælde an mæden mid halwendum smyrelse gehalgodes ele' (lines 152–53). Frequent alliteration is another hallmark of the Martin homily shared by other later hagiographical homilies in the *Catholic Homilies*, notably the one on Cuthbert, and as such it needs to be examined in more detail than I have been able to consider in this study, both in its own right and in relation to the later form of Ælfric's rhythmical prose as he uses it in the *Lives of Saints* and other works.[75] How this and other rhythmical features can be seen at work in enhancing the effect of the narrative method Ælfric deploys in the Martin homily and how they represent, in a more regularized and mature way, an organizing principle of the narrative style in his later hagiographies are problems that remain to be explored in studying Ælfric's changing attitude to the genre and its consequences for his use of language and his prose style.

[71] Lines 60–61: 'Hilary […] shining as a star with true learning'; lines 241–43: 'men saw suddenly shining on his crown as it were a fiery circlet, so that the shining flame drew up his locks'. Szarmach calls the first of these an 'imagistic line' and notes that Ælfric uses 'no similes' in the corresponding part of his later version ('Ælfric Revises', p. 50).

[72] Godden notes: 'Neither source has anything as colourful as *scinendan brande* (line 191)' (*Commentary*, p. 630, note to lines 189–96).

[73] On the diction in the life of Cuthbert, see Godden, 'Experiments in Genre', pp. 278–79; and Peter Clemoes, 'Ælfric', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. by E. G. Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 176–209 (p. 206).

[74] For *foldan* in line 165, see Roberta Frank, 'Poetic Words in Late Old English Prose', in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, Douglas Gray and Terry Hoad (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 87–107 (p. 96). As for *metod*, M. R. Godden has pointed out that there are five uses of the word in Ælfric, all 'in passages where he was experimenting with a form of alliterating rhythmical prose': 'Literary Language', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume I: The Beginnings to 1066*, ed. by Richard M. Hogg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 490–535 (p. 498). See further Godden, 'Ælfric's Changing Vocabulary', *English Studies*, 61 (1980), 206–23 (pp. 217–19).

[75] On the development of Ælfric's rhythmical prose, see *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by J. C. Pope, *Early English Text Society*, o. s., 259 and 260, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1967–68), i, pp. 105–36; and James Hurt, *Ælfric* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), pp. 125–37.