

**Anonymous**

**The Life of St Cuthman**

*(BHL 2035)*<sup>1</sup>

2020

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<sup>1</sup> This translation was made by Roger Pearse, Ipswich, and is released into the public domain.

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## Introduction

St Cuthman was an Anglo-Saxon saint, perhaps dating to the 7-8<sup>th</sup> century. He is one of the few Anglo-Saxon saints who came from the lowest rung of society; he was a shepherd before being reduced to begging, as well as having to care for his mother. He remained a layman, and may have been illiterate.

According to the medieval *Life*, he was born somewhere in southern England. On the death of his father and with a sick mother, he was obliged to carry her with him on a bed in a wheelbarrow-like cart, supported by a rope around his shoulders, and to work as an itinerant labourer. He travelled into Sussex, where the rope broke at a place called Steyning at the foot of the downs. Taking this as a sign from God, he built a church, and spent the rest of his days there.

The church was in existence in the time of King Alfred, whose father Aethelwulf was originally buried there. The church was granted by Edward the Confessor to the Norman abbey of Fécamp, and the cult of St Cuthman consequently appears in Normandy after that date. In modern times the church at Steyning was dedicated to St Andrew, but has recently been rededicated to St Andrew and St Cuthman.

The medieval *Life* translated here is probably 11<sup>th</sup> century, and no doubt originated at Fécamp, with which three of the four manuscripts known have an explicit connection. It was first edited by the Bollandists in 1658, under February 8th. An excellent modern critical edition, and study, with an abbreviated translation, was published by John Blair in 1997,<sup>2</sup> and the reader is referred to this for more information on every point.

Elements of the *Life* seem similar to early Irish or Celtic saints' legends, so may well be much earlier than the *Life* itself. The style is uneven, and probably reflects the hand of more than one author.

## Cuthman's wheelbarrow

In a 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscript, the Luttrell Psalter (British Library, Additional 42130), on f. 186r there is a depiction of a medieval cart of exactly the sort described in the *Life*., with a single wheel in front,

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<sup>2</sup> John Blair, "Saint Cuthman, Steyning and Bosham", in: *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 135 (1997), 173-92.

and supported by a rope around the shoulders. It may perhaps have been a standard medieval invalid carriage.



### Manuscripts of the Latin text

The text was first edited by Jean Bolland himself, in the *Acta Sanctorum: Februarii* vol. 2 (Antwerp, 1658), p. 197-9. The text was based upon two manuscripts **A** and **B**, both copied from manuscripts at Fécamp, but from different ones. At that date A was in Paris, and belonged to André Duchesne (d. 1640), cosmographer to Louis XIII. The other, B, was more mutilated. It was at Rouen in the hands of another Jesuit, Frédéric Flovet, about whom I have been unable to discover anything but appears in other volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*. Possibly both A and B were modern transcripts of older manuscripts, which may explain their failure to survive. The Bollandist edition was mainly based upon A, with help from B.

Two manuscripts are listed in the Bollandist database today. Neither is online, so I have not been able to consult either.

- **G** = Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, MS Memb.I.81, fol. 134r-136v. 14<sup>th</sup> century, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Written in England. A collection of British and English saints' lives.
- **R** = Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS U17, f.2-5v. 15<sup>th</sup> century, and written at Fécamp. A lectionary.

### Chapter divisions

The Bollandist text contains not one but two sets of chapter divisions. The text is divided into twelve short chapters, but then headings are intruded which divide the whole work into three chapters. Both are reproduced below. Possibly the two systems were found in A and B, and Bolland simply reproduced both.

G has no chapter divisions at all. R has a set of 12 chapters, similar to but different from those in the Bollandist edition, followed by a block of continuous text.

## About this translation

This translation was begun in autumn 2019, by preparing an electronic version of the Bollandist text, and expanding the abbreviations. A draft translation was completed and partly revised, based upon the Bollandist text. Only then did I become aware of the Blair article. I collated the text and translation against Blair, although I have ventured to prefer the Bollandist reading at a couple of points, which I have indicated. Bible references are from the Vulgate, and where appropriate the text and the Douai translation of the passage are given in the footnote for reference.

The text translated is given as an appendix. I have indicated the difference between “u” and “v”, and “i” and “j”, as every modern language text does, and as every Latin text did until quite recent times. Those wishing to follow the practices of antiquity will find no difficulty in converting the text to upper case, removing all punctuation and word division, and merging U/V and I/J. But the ordinary reader will be grateful for all the helps that he can get.

Roger Pearce  
November 2020

## Translation

### CHAPTER 1. The holy youth of St Cuthman, loyalty to his mother.

1. The blessed Cuthman, as has come down to us of present times from a truthful narrative of ancient times, was born to devout Christian parents in the southern parts of England.<sup>3</sup> And a few days after his birth from the womb of his mother, he was born again from the womb of the divine spring,<sup>4</sup> and then after a little interval of time was confirmed by the laying on of the sacred oil. And so the boyish years elapsed very innocently, and on becoming a youth of good character, he was accomplished in age and grace before God and men.<sup>5</sup> But the father of his flesh from infancy imposed on him the yoke of the heavenly father, impressing on him the fear of God, promising to him many blessings if he would faithfully worship and fear God. The grace of God also was not lacking to the teachable boy, but within, in the ears of his mind, the voice of his heavenly Father fully instilled what in the ear of flesh his earthly father carefully taught him from without. So he appeared to pious eyes as a delightful man, young in age, but old in sense, youthful in boyish years, but mature with the behaviour of old age. For although indeed he was in his most pleasing youth and might flourish in the world, in his heart already the world withered; which he disdained, as though it was decaying and withering along with his youthful prime. Hence also he cherished neither the lasciviousness of mind nor body, in which the time of youth is normally entangled, but simply carrying on in the way that he had been taught by his father, he studiously took care to avoid the blandishments of the world.

2. However as time went by, he led out his father's hungry flock when told to, careful with them in going out, and coming back to the control of the one entrusting them to him. And when, on a certain day, Cuthman was attending in the pasture to a flock that had to be kept safe, the lunch hour arrived, at which it was necessary by the order of his father that he return home. And when he was unable to do so conveniently, and did not dare to drive his flock without the authority of his father, and he was without a substitute guard; he made a circle around his flock with his shepherd's staff, which he was carrying in his hand, saying, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, O flock, I order you not to go beyond those boundaries which I have set for you before my return." A wonderful thing: a herd, lacking reason, understands the power of so great a prayer, nor do they for a while approach the boundary in order to go beyond the limits. Cuthman went, and he returned, giving thanks to God because he found his flock unharmed. And thus he did for several days, whenever a similar necessity compelled him to go away from the flock. But there was also in the place of pasture a stone, upon which the holy shepherd had become accustomed to sit, which is held in great veneration by the locals to this day, because the Lord has conferred many blessings through it, by the merits of this memorable<sup>6</sup> shepherd.

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<sup>3</sup> Blair translates "*partibus Australis Angliae*" as "in Sussex", thinking of Bede's "*provincia Australium Saxonum*", the land of the South Saxons, but this is not in the text.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. baptised. The "spring" is the baptismal font.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Luke 2:52.

<sup>6</sup> Lit. "of the remembered/mentioned shepherd".

3. So God, wishing the man whom He loved to ascend a higher hill of grace, appointed him to train with opponents, so that he, who before in prosperity was meek and lowly in heart, might contend also in adversity against a cunning foe with the weapons of patience.<sup>7</sup> So that from that time on he was indeed heaping up this merit by greater sacrifices.

After the death of his father, therefore, Cuthman soothed the grief of the mother, which was great, not so much by exhortation of pious word, as by the effect of faithful activity. And then he was bustling about in the care and duty of ministering; he became for her the *staff of her old age* and the *light of her eyes*.<sup>8</sup> In no way neglecting his mother, he who became a son to her by the generation of the flesh, (became) a father in solicitude, a most devoted brother in the profession of the one faith, and a humble servant and minister in obedience. Here, seeing that the zeal of the son corresponded well to the merits of the mother, when she was perceiving that his filial solicitude for her maternal necessity was never lacking, and the more that was done in vain in order to avert physical poverty ...<sup>9</sup>

4. After some years had passed, and the worldly property which his father had left had been expended, his mother began to approach destitution,<sup>10</sup> and what was more miserable, now worn out by great age, a very painful faintness took possession of her which deprived all her limbs of their due functions. Cuthman was moved with pity for the suffering of his mother, and the more endlessly she pushed her son to abandon her, the more affectionately he stood forward to help her.

The good man thought of a new form of assistance, so that the blessing of skill might supply what penury of resources denied. Indeed he made a wooden bed on which he placed his enfeebled mother. This, hanging down by a rope from his shoulders, by the impulse of his hands pushing and steering equally, went in front of him with the aid of a wheel at the front. This he carried everywhere with him, him walking behind, his mother before him on the bed; and commending himself entirely to divine providence, he left his own hearth and homeland.

5. While directing his course in this way, with his burden less burdensome, into eastern parts, Cuthman made his way through a meadow, in which some men were cutting back the grass with a sickle. And there, by accident, the rope by whose blessing he was carrying that bed suddenly broke, and initially the simple man was baffled, doubtful what to do. But after a while, acting confidently, he took a branch from an elder tree which he saw standing nearby, and twisted it and supplied the lack of the previous bit of rope.

On seeing this, the men aforementioned mocked him as a fool, since elder is a brittle wood, easier to break than to twist, nor is it usual to use it for a service of this type. The wretches did not pay attention to what they were soon about to receive, that “laughter shall be mixed with sorrow, and

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<sup>7</sup> Blair: “Wishing him to rise to higher grace, God put him to trials; and he was as patient in adversity as he had been meek in prosperity.”

<sup>8</sup> Tobit 10:4.

<sup>9</sup> There is no main verb, and it seems clear that there was originally more to the sentence. Perhaps the missing text said something like “the more that was done in vain to ward off physical poverty, the poorer they became, so she urged him instead to embrace spiritual riches.” – the mention of worldly poverty seems to expect a contrast, which would naturally be with heavenly riches.

<sup>10</sup> Interestingly “*vergere ad inopiam*” / “*vergens ad inopiam*” is a Scottish legal term, meaning “approaching insolvency”. Here we may understand “approaching destitution”.

mourning takes hold of the ends of joy.”<sup>11</sup> Yet again the empty exultation echoed in their throats, yet again the laughter did not ebb from their mouths, when suddenly the fine weather was disturbed, and such an inundation of rain descended, that they called it a sign of the anger and vengeance of God on themselves because of its excessiveness. Their business spoiled, therefore, each hurried to return home, and because of their excessive need to go faster, to those running faster their speed seemed slow.

And lest it might be said to have been an accident, or lest might be possible to impute this change of weather<sup>12</sup> to the natural effects of the air, and not to be ascribed to the divine retribution, in addition to the loss of hay, which was thus made useless, according to the likeness of the mockers of the prophet Elisha,<sup>13</sup> posterity deplores their laughter when every year following, (there is) rain in that meadow at the time of the same hay-making, even to this day.

## CHAPTER 2. The church at Steyning built by St. Cuthman, and not without miracles.

6. Seeing that the Lord had rendered vengeance on his enemies,<sup>14</sup> Cuthman made a vow in thanks, that he would not allow himself rest in his days until he found a place for the Lord, where he might build a tabernacle to his Name. And he appointed this sign for himself, saying, that in whatever place that elderwood rope broke, in that place he would build a church in honour of the Lord, and he stay there before His face, remaining in that place continually. And after this was uttered, it was thereupon soon accomplished. But he went on his way, poor and destitute, and he sustained the poverty of his wretched mother by transporting goods from one place to another, and by the aid of begging.<sup>15</sup>

7. Finally after untold hardship of hunger and thirst, after troublesome toils of many-fold fatigues, by the Lord’s guidance he came to a place which we today call Steyning. There, as the saint was pushing the aforementioned vehicle before him, the rope which was hanging from his shoulders suddenly broke, and (the bed) was jerked out of his hands down to the ground. When he saw this, Cuthman was very much astonished, and struck with fear, for he was supposing that his mother had been hurt. But when he knew for sure<sup>16</sup> that she was unhurt, he came back to himself and said, “Lord Jesus Christ, you who have been with me in this way of my pilgrimage in which I walk, and have guarded me, and given me bread to eat, and clothes, with which I covered my nakedness; I give thanks to you, that in the sign which I asked from you, you have shown your servant the place which you have chosen, to which you have led me in safety. ‘In truth I have learned that you do not show favouritism, but in every nation’<sup>17</sup> you are caring for the careful,<sup>18</sup> lifting up the humble, and humbling sinners down to the ground. Now I know for sure, that you have chosen this place, so that

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<sup>11</sup> Prov. 14:13, “Risus dolore miscebitur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat.” “And the latter end of joy may be grief.”

<sup>12</sup> “temporibus”.

<sup>13</sup> 2 Kings 2:23.

<sup>14</sup> Deut. 32:43.

<sup>15</sup> Lit. “by the work/trade/labour of carrying, and of begging”.

<sup>16</sup> Lit. “by reliable indications”.

<sup>17</sup> This is a quote from Acts 10:34, “In veritate comperi, quia non est personarum acceptor deus”. non es personarum acceptor, lit. “you are no respecter of persons”, i.e. does not care that Cuthman is just a labourer.

<sup>18</sup> A Latin pun, “diligente te diligis”.

I may build a church for you in it, in which you may hear the requests of your people praying to you for their needs, so that when what is asked by the desires of the just has happened, this may give thanks to you.<sup>19</sup> On me, Lord, by your grace rests the responsibility for this work, that you have inspired (me) interiorly to want, and I am bound exteriorly to this in the words of my mouth. Whither shall I go further, having been led here by your Spirit? This is the end of my wandering, this is the place of my habitation, in which I will give effect to my vows day after day. Almighty Father, you who have put an end to my wandering, ordain the beginning of the work. For who am I, Lord, and what is the house of my father, that I should build a house in your name?<sup>20</sup> You know that 'I am poor, and a labourer'<sup>21</sup> from my youth,<sup>22</sup> nor can I do anything by myself. If I try to help myself, it will be nothing unless you determine that I shall be helped. You have given the desire of building: supply the absence of building, and lead the work of building of this holy [place] to completion. Carry out, Lord, this work by my hands indeed, but with your resources. For considering that "my soul is troubled within myself"<sup>23</sup>, my spirit suffocated by faintheartedness, and lack of resource; but with you, if I raise up the eyes of my mind, my spirit revives and is strengthened, having ventured higher than I attempted. Strength in me is lacking, having been darkened by the eye of providence. Lord, your will is almighty, whose providence is not accustomed to deceive nor be deceived. In me want and poverty flourish: in you 'are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'.<sup>24</sup> Therefore more is my soul filled with security and confidence, in considering the riches of your goodness, than it is with diffidence and dejection, in weighing the miseries and failures of its own weakness."

8. Having spoken thus, he scrutinized the place into which he had been led, and he saw that it was suitable in everything for his proposed work. There was at the same time both little access by people, and at the same time also little noise and traffic, and its inhabitants were very few. It was a sheltered place at the foot of a declivity of the mountain,<sup>25</sup> at that time overgrown<sup>26</sup> with thorn bushes and small trees, now transformed into a farm of fertile and fruitful land, and fittingly enclosed by the streams of two springs descending from the mountain.<sup>27</sup>

He made a hut in that place therefore, where with his mother he could lay his head, and then he began to measure and mark out the position and design of the church. The sacred work was undertaken, not slowly or idly, but rather "in the sweat of his brow", and by the labour of his hands. "He bore the burden and heats of the day",<sup>28</sup> so that, as much delay as the work sustained from the

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<sup>19</sup> This from the sacramentary, "Ut reddita sibi sanitate, gratiarum Tibi in Ecclesia Tua referant actiones, per DNJC."

<sup>20</sup> Cf. 2 Chron. 2:6.

<sup>21</sup> Lit. "in laboribus", "in labours".

<sup>22</sup> Ps. 87:16: "Pauper sum ego, et in laboribus a juventute mea;" – "I am poor, and in labours from my youth".

<sup>23</sup> Psalm 41:7: "Ad meipsum anima mea conturbata est: propterea memor ero tui de terra Jordanis et Hermoniim a monte modico" – "My soul is troubled within myself: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan and Hermoniim, from the little hill."

<sup>24</sup> Col. 2:3.

<sup>25</sup> Blair correctly renders this: "It was a sheltered place at the foot of a steep-sloping down (*in declivi montis pede submontanus*)". "submontanus" as "under-mountain", i.e. sheltered.

<sup>26</sup> Treating silvester as "overgrown" rather than "wooded".

<sup>27</sup> Blair: "from the downs".

<sup>28</sup> Gen. 3:19; Matt 20:12: "qui portavimus pondus diei, et aestus" – "we who have borne the burden and heats of the day."



lack of scarce resources, [it received] as much advancement out of the emotion of a devoted heart, and it was supported by the voluntary labour of a free man's hands. Also the Lord gave him grace in the sight of the righteous living in the neighbourhood, who, assisting him with unstinting generosity, contributed liberally from their property in nourishment of the flesh, and in the construction of the works.

9. One day it happened that the holy man released in a pasture some oxen which he had unyoked from a wagon, and afterwards they went outside the boundaries of the pasture. When two sons of a certain matriarch,<sup>29</sup> called Fippa, had found them, they shut them up on their mother's farm. And when returning from his period of labour, Cuthman, seeking his oxen in the accustomed place, did not find them, he went further afield and he came upon the said youths, and they were saying to him that he was vainly seeking the oxen there, which they had shut up at their home. To whom Cuthman responded mildly, saying, "Don't, lads, don't impede the work of the Lord. But if in some way my oxen have injured you, show me, and I will give you what is fair." But they ignored him. And he said to them, "Lest through you a delay of the work of God may happen, on account of which you may expect a formidable sentence from the strict Judge,<sup>30</sup> I order you, in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to serve the Lord in the place of the oxen, just as they, if they were free, would serve." And laying his hand on them, he took hold of them, and yoked them to the wagon, to which oxen had been accustomed to be yoked. And so the wagon was worked by them pulling it, now full, now empty, without a murmur or complaint, at his voice stopping and moving on.

10. Meanwhile, after hearing what had happened, their mother arrived in haste, and seeing her children fatigued by the burden of the immense exertion, she was shouting furiously, "Woe is me, why was I born, to see my offspring unlucky and the calamitous enslavement of my sons?"<sup>31</sup> 'Woe is me, my sons, why'<sup>32</sup> did I give birth to you, and nurse you, sons of endless bitterness and confusion? 'Let the day perish', I pray, 'on which he was born'<sup>33</sup> who has subjected you to so great enslavement. Let him perish who afflicts you<sup>34</sup> with such great maltreatment, and let the work entirely vanish, in which so cruelly you are being exhausted without humanity."

The blaspheming mother was yelling these and many other things at the saint. But he replied in a mild voice, "Woman, believe me, the work in which your sons have served, I have not done that, but what 'lives in me, the power of Christ',<sup>35</sup> that did the works; and works that are done in God cannot entirely go to waste. But you, 'just as smoke vanishes, you will vanish',<sup>36</sup> like 'the chaff, which the wind drives away from the face of the earth',<sup>37</sup> so that your descendants may learn, having been

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<sup>29</sup> Mater familias.

<sup>30</sup> "districti iudicis".

<sup>31</sup> This sentence is preserved only in the otherwise unreliable manuscript G.

<sup>32</sup> Tobit 10:4. "Heu, heu me, fili mi! ut quid ..." – "Woe, woe is me, my son; why..."

<sup>33</sup> Job 3:3. "Pereat dies in qua natus sum" – "Let the day perish wherein I was born".

<sup>34</sup> The Bollandists print "nos", "us".

<sup>35</sup> 2 Cor. 12:9. "ut inhabitet in me virtus Christi." – "that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

<sup>36</sup> Ps. 67:3. "Sicut deficit fumus, deficiat;" – "As smoke vanisheth, so let them vanish away:"

<sup>37</sup> Ps. 1:4.

chastised through you, that it is forbidden to speak evil of what has been blessed by God, nor to destroy what is built when he is ordering it.”

Scarcely had he finished his words, and behold a whirlwind came from the north wind and covering her lifted her up on high, and lifting her up to a very high mountain, set her down on the earth. And there it opened its mouth with a gaping chasm and swallowed her up. From this that place is called the pit of Fippa to this day.

After that Cuthman released the lads from the cart, and said to them, “My sons, give thanks to God, that, in chastising, he only chastised you but did not hand you over to death<sup>38</sup> like your blaspheming mother. Go in peace; as for the rest, walk more carefully in the commandments of the Lord; and lest the work that you had been undertaking disappear from memory, there will be for you and your descendants as a perpetual sign, multiple ridges on your necks, contracted from the impression of the yoke and the dampness of the air.”

Saying these things, he dismissed them, ‘and fear came upon all their neighbours, and all these things were made known over all the hill country,’<sup>39</sup> which was around them.

### Chapter 3. Other miracles of St Cuthman

11. And so, after crowds had gathered from every side to hear the sound of the words of the holy man, at the same time both in order to admire the amazing deeds of prodigies, in regard to both living and inanimate things, happening every day through him. In his days he was persevering anxiously in his labours, but in the nights (he was persevering) continuously in prayer. Never did he enjoy his bread in idleness, in accordance with this, “In sweat will you eat your bread,”<sup>40</sup> and “the festival days are turned into tears”.<sup>41</sup> “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep”, as is right!<sup>42</sup>

Cuthman therefore, while, according to custom, daily supporting the workers of his church just like the least important, although he was in charge of everything, frequently used to hang up his hand garments, which we call “gloves”, on the sun’s rays,<sup>43</sup> while praying<sup>44</sup> in church with devotion; on leaving he put them on again, and so he returned with joy. And thus he did every day.

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<sup>38</sup> Ps. 117:18. “Castigans castigavit me Dominus, et morti non tradidit me.” – “The Lord chastising hath chastised me: but he hath not delivered me over to death.”

<sup>39</sup> Luke 1:65. “Et factus est timor super omnes vicinos eorum: et super omnia montana Judaeae divulgabantur omnia verba haec:” – “And fear came upon all their neighbours; and all these things were noised abroad over all the hill country of Judea.”

<sup>40</sup> Gen 3.19, “In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane,” “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread”

<sup>41</sup> Tobit 2:6, “Dies festi vestri convertentur in lamentationem et luctum.” – “Your festival days shall be turned into lamentation and mourning.”

<sup>42</sup> Rom. 12:15.

<sup>43</sup> The Latin could mean “in the sun’s rays,” but Blair draws attention, probably rightly, to other Celtic or Breton saints, such as St Leonorius, where the idea of hanging garments on a ray of sun is found. See P. Barry, “The Bridge of Sunbeams”, *The Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914), 79-89 for examples.

<sup>44</sup> Lit. “remembering the prayers.”

12. While the saint sparkled with such great and so many visible virtues, still more excellent works followed.

The holy man was concerned with numerous works in constructing the basilica, now in erecting the wooden columns, now in connecting them together with the rafters. However it happened on a certain day that a unique beam of wood was so struck by an accidental blow that it became bent, and what was previously invaluable,<sup>45</sup> was abandoned afterwards as thoroughly useless for work. While the saint, and the others also, were all<sup>46</sup> lamenting over the loss, behold, in no time at all a pilgrim on pilgrimage came to them, and he said to them, "Why are you all<sup>47</sup> sad?" To whom Cuthman replied, saying, "The perpendicular<sup>48</sup> to be joined to the existing timber has been accidentally put out of alignment,<sup>49</sup> and we are afflicted with weariness and loss." To which he (replied), "'To those who fear God, nothing is lacking.'<sup>50</sup> Stretch out your hand also; let us take it apart, set it up in the right position, and make it straight."<sup>51</sup> And so it was done.

This having been done, Cuthman threw himself immediately at the man's feet, saying, "I entreat you, Lord, to tell me, 'Who are you?'"

"I," he said, "am He<sup>52</sup>, in whose name you are building this church; but you will become a sharer of perpetual memory and glory in this."<sup>53</sup> And so at once he disappeared from their sight.<sup>54</sup>

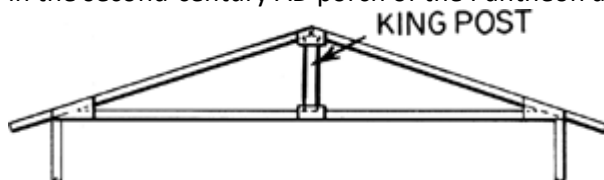
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<sup>45</sup> The text has "trabale unicum", "unique piece of wood". This must mean a structure in which a single piece of wood is of critical importance. The obvious piece is the roof tree, which is horizontal and holds up the entire roof. But the piece of wood is described below as "perpendicular", which means that it must be a vertical, perhaps a ridge post. The structure is not clear, nor which piece of wood in it is referred to. Blair suggests a stave church, otherwise unevdenced in England at this period; but this had a series of vertical posts to hold it up, rather than a single post.

<sup>46</sup> "Adinvicem", "in turn".

<sup>47</sup> Again "in turn".

<sup>48</sup> "perpendicularo" – this is perhaps the king post, in a roof truss. This method of constructing a roof was known to the Romans, and is one of the simplest ways to create a roof over the doorway. If we imagine that the structure was a shed, with a solid east end, then this would be the west end, with the entrance below the king post. King posts were used in Roman timber-framed roof construction, and in the roofs of medieval churches and tithe barns. See D. Perring, *The Roman house in Britain*, London: Routledge (2002), p.119: "The king-post roof was possibly a Hellenistic innovation, but is first positively attested by a bronze copy in the second-century AD porch of the Pantheon at Rome."



<sup>49</sup> "ligni praesentis", of the existing timber (sing). Bolland read "lignis", ablative pl., but "praesentis" is certainly genitive sing., and Blair's mss read "ligni", also gen. sg. All these relate to "perpendicularo".

<sup>50</sup> I.e. Nothing is impossible to those who fear God. Ps. 33:10 "Timeate Dominum, omnes sancti eius, quoniam non est inopia timentibus eum." – "Fear the Lord, all ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him."

<sup>51</sup> It isn't clear exactly what the problem is, but perhaps someone had hammered a piece together which left all the rest of it out of alignment. Taking it down onto the ground, taking it apart, and putting it together again from the other end probably solved the problem.

<sup>52</sup> I.e. Christ. But Blair gives "Andreas", St Andrew, from G. However that manuscript shows signs of tampering in the Norman interest. St Andrew had no skill with carpentry, but he is today is the

But Cuthman presided for a long time in his church, and at length received the reward of his labour, and was raised up in glory from earthly to heavenly joys, where he remains forever and ever,<sup>55</sup> Amen.

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dedicatee of the church in Steyning. I don't know if this dedication is medieval, but if so this may be a sign of a crude medieval alteration. The same manuscript changes Saxon "Fippa" to Norman "Philippa".

<sup>53</sup> I.e. the church will be dedicated to St Cuthman.

<sup>54</sup> Lit. "from their eyes."

<sup>55</sup> per saecula saeculorum = for ever and ever.

## Appendix 1 – The Latin Text

VITA AVCTORE ANONYMO

Ex II veteribus MSS.

### CAPUT I

*S. Cuthmani sancta adolescentia, in matrem pietas.*

[1] Beatus Cuthmanus, sicut ex veterum veridica relatione ad modernorum pervenit notitiam, a parentibus Christianissimis in partibus Australis Angliae extitit oriundus. Qui paucis post nativitatem ex utero matris evolutis diebus, ex divini fontis utero est renatus, ac deinde parvi temporis intervallo sacrae unctionis impressione confirmatus. Effluxit itaque nimis innocenter puerilibus annis bonae indolis factus adolescens, proficiebat aetate et gratia coram Deo, et hominibus. Pater vero eius carnalis, ab infantia iugum Patris illi caelestis imposuit, timorem Dei imprimens, promittens ei multa bona si pie coleret et timeret Deum. Docili quoque puero gratia Dei non defuit, sed intus in mentis auribus vox Patris caelestis satis inspiravit, quam in aure corporis pater terrenus foris edocuit. Erat tunc piis oculis delectabile videre virum, aetate iuniorem, sensu vero seniore, annis puerilibus tenerum, sed canis moribus maturum. Cum enimvero<sup>56</sup> gratissima iuventute mundo floreret, in eius corde mundus iam aruit; quem quasi corruentem, simul cum suo flore marcentem despexit. Unde etiam nec lasciviam mentis nec corporis, ut solet aetas iuvenilis implicari, amplexus est, sed simpliciter in forma, quam a patre didicerat, incedens, mundi blandimenta devitare studiose curavit.

[2] Procedente vero tempore, patris pecora suscepit ipso iubente pascenda, sollicitus cum ipsis egrediens et regrediens ad imperium commendantis. Cumque die quadam Cuthmanus pecoribus in pascua conservandis intenderet, prandendi hora advenit, qua oportuit eum domum ex patris praecepto repedare. Cumque non posset opportune, nec auderet sine patris imperio, gregem suum minare, vicarioque custode careret; virga pastorali, quam manu gestabat, circulum fecit circa gregem suum, dicens, “In nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi, grex, tibi praecipio, ne metas istas, quas tibi posui ante regressum meum egrediaris.” Mira res: intelligit pecus rationis egens tantae invocationis virtutem, nec est aliquatenus aggressum fines egredi limitatos. Ivit Cuthmanus et rediit, Deo gratias agens, quod gregem suum invenit illaesum. Sicque faciebat per singulos dies, quando<sup>57</sup> similis necessitas eum a grege divertere compellebat. Erat autem et lapis in loco pascuae, supra quem pastor sanctus sedere consueverat, qui in magna veneratione habetur ab indigenis usque ad hodiernum diem, eo quod Dominus multa beneficia per ipsum contulerit meritis memorati pastoris.

[3] Volens igitur Dominus virum, quem diligebat, arcem gratiae amplioris ascendere, adversis eum disposuit exercere<sup>58</sup>, ut qui prius in prosperis mitis fuit et humilis corde, etiam in adversis adversus

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<sup>56</sup> Blair prints the text of G (“enim vera rerum”) but suggests that it, and the reading of R (“enim vera”) are both corrupt. I have given “enimvero”, the reading of the Bollandists. Blair suggests that this reading is a correction by the Bollandists, rather than the reading of A or B.

<sup>57</sup> Blair prints “cum”, but the sense is not “when” but “whenever”, so I have given the Bollandist reading.

<sup>58</sup> Blair gives “adversus eum disposuit exerceri”, apparently as a conjecture of his own. I have retained the Bollandist reading.

callidum hostem armis patientiae decertaret. Quatenus hinc inde bene meritum donis potioribus cumulare.

Defuncto igitur patre suo, Cuthmanus moerorem matris, qui multus erat, delinivit, non tam pii sermonis exhortatione quam devotae operationis effectu. Satagebat denique in cura et officio ministrandi, factus ei *baculus senectutis* et *lumen oculorum*. Haudquaquam matri deesse, qui factus est ei carnis generatione filius, sollicitudine pater, unius fidei professione frater devotissimus, obsequiis servus humilis et minister. Hic videns matris meritis bene respondere filii devotionem, cum maternae necessitati numquam sentiret<sup>59</sup> sollicitudinem deesse filialem, ac id frustra quo ad inopiam corporalem agitur propulsandam ...<sup>60</sup>

[4] Lapsis igitur aliquot annorum curriculis, expensisque bonis temporalibus quae pater reliquerat, vergere coepit mater ad inopiam, et quod miserabilius est, senio multo iam confectam languor invasit gravissimus, qui membra debitis privavit officiis universa. Compassus Cuthmanus matris passioni, et quo<sup>61</sup> magis taediosa effecta est ut eam filius desereret, eo magis affectuosus extitit ut serviret.

Cogitavit vir bonus novum subveniendi genus, ut quod opum penuria denegabat, artis beneficium ministraret. Profecto ligneum lectum composuit, in quo languidam collocavit. Qui, fune quodam ab humeris eius dependens, impulsu manuum pariter et regimine, rotae praeambulae adminiculo, ipsum praecedebat. Hoc semper in lecto matrem praeviam, subambulus ipse, secum portabat, seque prorsus dispositioni Divinae commendans, lares proprios ac patriam dereliquit.

[5] Tendens igitur Cuthmanus cum onere minus oneroso in plagas orientales, transitum fecit per pratum, in quo viri quidam gramina falce resecabant. Ibique, casu contingente, rupto repente fune, cuius beneficio lectus ille portabatur, inprimis obstupuit vir simplex, dubius quid faceret. Sed postmodum fiducialiter agens, de sambuco,<sup>62</sup> quam prope vidit adstantem, virgulam sumpsit, ac torsit, et funiculi prioris defectum supplevit.

Quod videntes, viri praelibati deridebant eum quasi fatuum, cum sit sambucus lignum fragile, fracturam facilius admittens quam torturam, nec soleat huiusmodi ministerio deservire. Non attenderunt miseri, quod mox erant expectaturi, quia “risus dolore miscebitur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat.” Adhuc exultatio vanitatis in gutture eorum resonabat, adhuc risus ab ore illorum non recesserat, cum subito turbata aeris serenitate, tanta pluviae descendit inundatio, ut in se signum iracundiae et vindictae Dei ex sua nimitate reportarent. Infecto igitur negotio, singuli domum repedare festinarunt, et prae nimio accelerandi desiderio, celerius currenti<sup>63</sup> celeritas ipsa tarda videbatur.

Et ne casu diceretur contigisse, vel aeris passionibus posset haec mutatio temporis imputari, et non ultioni Divinae ascribe, praeter iacturam foeni, quod tunc inutile factum fuit, ad instar irrisorum

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<sup>59</sup> Blair prints “videres ... sentires” instead of “videns ... sentiret”. The first is definitely and the second appears to be a conjecture. I have kept the Bollandist reading, because there seems no reason for the author to start using the second person.

<sup>60</sup> The rest of the sentence is lost.

<sup>61</sup> AASS gives “eo quod”, “because”, but Blair’s “et quo ... eo” is clearly right.

<sup>62</sup> This should be sabucus, which the OLD gives for “elder tree”.

<sup>63</sup> “celerius current” is the reading of G; the others read “eisdem fugientibus”, “to the same fugitives”.

Prophetae Elisei, deplorat posteritas illorum risum, singulis annis descendente pluvia tempore falcationis eiusdem prati usque in hodiernum diem.

## CAPUT II

### *Templum Stanningense a S. Cuthmanno aedificatum, non sine miraculis.*

[6] Videns igitur Cuthmanus quod retribuerat Dominus vindictam in hostes suos, cum gratiarum actione votum vovit Deo, se non daturum requiem temporibus suis, donec inveniret locum Domino, ubi aedificaret tabernaculum nomini eius. Et hoc signum sibi constituit, dicens, quia in quocumque loco rumpetur funiculus ille sambucinus, illic aedificaret templum in honorem Domini, et apparebit ibi ante faciem eius manens illic iugiter. Et hoc<sup>64</sup> effatus mox inde profectus est. Ibat autem per viam suam pauper et egenus, et calamitosae matris inopiam<sup>65</sup> opera subvectionis, et ope mendicitatis sustentabat.

[7] Tandem post innumeras famis ac sitis acerbitates, post molestas multifariae fatigationis aerumnas, Domino ducente pervenit ad locum, quem nunc Stenningas<sup>66</sup> nominamus. Ubi cum vehiculum memoratum sanctus vir ante se agitaret, rupto repente funiculo, quo ab humeris eius dependebat, e manibus suis solotenus est elisum. Quo viso, Cuthmanus vehementer obstupuit et expavit, matrem enim<sup>67</sup> laesam fuisse suspicabatur. Sed cum illaesam certis cognovisset indiciiis, ad se reversus, ait, “Domine Jesu Christe, qui fuisti mecum in via peregrinationis meae hac qua ego ambulo, et custodisti me, et dedisti mihi panem ad edendum, et vestimentum, quo nuditatem meam operui; gratias ago tibi, quia in signo, quod petivi a te ostendisti servo tuo locum quem elegisti, ad quem me cum salute perduxisti. ‘In veritate comperi, quia non es personarum acceptor, sed in omni gente’ diligente te diligis, humiles exaltans, et humilians peccatores usque ad terram. Nunc scio vere, quia elegisti<sup>68</sup> locum istum, ut aedificem tibi in eo templum, in quo exaudias preces populi tui pro necessitatibus suis tibi supplicantis, ut consecutus quae iustis petierit desideriis, hic tibi gratiarum referat actiones. Mihi, Domine, tua dignatione huius operis onus incumbit, quia tu interius velle inspirasti, ego autem exterius ad hoc in verbis oris mei sum adstrictus. Quo ibo ulterius, a Spiritu tuo huc adductus? Hic est finis vagationis meae, hic locus meae habitationis, in quo reddam vota mea de die in diem. Omnipotens pater, qui finem imposuisti vagationi, principium dispone operationi. Quis enim ego sum, Domine, aut quae domus patris mei, ut aedificem domum nomini tuo? Tu scis quia ‘pauper sum, et in laboribus a iuventute mea’, nec possum a meipso facere quicquam. Si respexero ad adiutorium meum, omnino non erit, nisi tu adiuvere decreveris. Tu affectum dedisti aedificandi: defectum tu supple aedificantis, et sacri duc aedificii opus plenum ad effectum.<sup>69</sup> Operare, Domine, opus istud manibus quidem meis, sed viribus tuis. Respiciens enim ‘ad meipsum anima mea conturbata est’, a pusillanimitate spiritus suffocata, et virtutis defectu; ad te autem si mentis oculos attollo, reviviscit et roboratur spiritus meus, ausus altiora quam aggredior. Virtus in me deficit, oculo providentiae caligante. Tua, Domine, voluntas omnipotens est, cuius

<sup>64</sup> Blair prints “haec” (“hec fatus”, following G), either Sg F, or Pl N; but the verb is singular, and there is nothing feminine to refer to. So I have given the Bollandist text.

<sup>65</sup> Blair prints “inediam”, “hunger, fasting, starvation”, not indicating a source; A, B are inopiam, “poverty”. I have preferred the Bollandist reading.

<sup>66</sup> Blair prints “Staningas”, presumably from G; R, A = “Steningas”, B = “Stenningas”. I have left this as the Bollandist reading.

<sup>67</sup> Blair prints “vero”.

<sup>68</sup> Blair prints “elegis” – I have retained the Bollandist reading.

<sup>69</sup> Bollandists, “plenum ac perfectum”, “be full and perfect”.

providentia nec fallere nec falli consuevit. In me vigent penuria et paupertas; in te 'sunt omnes thesauri [scientiae et]<sup>70</sup> sapientiae absconditi'. Plus igitur securitatis et confidentiae concipit anima mea, dum divitias tuae bonitatis intuetur; quam diffidentiae et dejectionis, dum miseras et defectus propriae calamitatis examinat.

[8] Sic locutus, locum, in quem diverterat, oculis perlustrabat, ipsumque suo operi per omnia convenire proposito prospexit. Erat in eo tunc temporis rarus popularis accessus, rarus in eo tunc clamor et transitus, paucissimi et incolae eius. Erat locus in declivi montis pede submontanus, tunc dumis et arbustis silvester, nunc in terrae fertilis et fructiferae agriculturam redactus, duorumque fontium de monte descendendum rivis decenter inclusus.

Facto igitur ibidem tugurio, ubi cum matre possit caput reclinare, coepit metiri, et disponere de templi situ et constructione. Aggressus est opus sanctum non segnis aut otiosus, sed potius 'in sudore vultus', et labore manuum. 'Diei pondus portavit et aestus', ut quantum tarditatis opus inopis ex opum penuria sustinebat, tantum promotionis ex devoti cordis affectu, et liberalis corporis labore spontaneo reportaret. Dederat etiam illi Dominus gratiam in conspectu justorum habitantium in confinio, qui largitate munifica ei subvenientes, in corporis alimonia, operisque constructione de bonis suis illi liberaliter impenderunt.

[9] Contigit autem die quadam, quod cum vir sanctus boves, quos a plaustro disjunxerat, misisset in pascua, ipsi pascuae metas sunt egressi. Quos cum invenissent duo filii cuiusdam matrisfamilias, quae Fippa vocabatur, in praedio matris suae ipsos recluserunt. Cumque, redeunte laboris hora, Cuthmanus boves suos in loco consueto quaerens non inveniret, ulterius progressus reperit dictos adolescentes, dicentes sibi, quod in vanum quaerebat ibi boves, quos ipsi domi recluserunt. Quibus modeste respondit Cuthmanus dicens, "Nolite, filii, nolite opus Domini impedire. Sed si in aliquo boves mei vos laeserint, ostendite, et ego quod justum fuerit dabo vobis." Illi autem neglexerunt. Et ait illis, "Ne per vos tarditas operis Dei procuretur, pro quo districti iudicis sententiam formidabilem expectetis, praecipio vobis in virtute Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ut vice boum serviatis Domino, ut ipsi, si liberi essent, forent servituri." Et imponens illis manus apprehendit eos, et junxit plaustro, in quo boves jungi consueverant. Sicque operatus est in eis trahentibus plastrum, nunc plenum, nunc vacuum, sine murmure et querela, ad vocem ipsius stantes et incedentes.

[10] Auditis interea quae fiebant, mater eorum concito cursu advenit, et filios suos videns immensi conatus onere fatigari, furiose clamabat, "Heu mihi, ut quid nata sum videre mala proles meae et calamitosam servitutem filiorum meorum? 'Heu mihi, filii mei, ut quid' vos genui et lactavi filios amaritudinis et confusionis perpetuae? 'Pereat,' obsecro, 'dies in qua natus' est ipse, qui vos tantae servituti subjugavit. Pereat, qui vos tantis afficit contumeliis, et prorsus deficiat opus, in quo tam crudeliter estis inhumanitate fatigati."

Haec, et multa alia blasphemans mater sancto conviciabatur. Ille vero voce modesta respondit, "Mulier, crede mihi, opus, in quo servierunt filii tui, ego non operor illud, sed quae 'inhabitat in me virtus Christi', ipsa facit opera, quae penitus perire non possunt quia in Deo sunt facta. Tu autem

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<sup>70</sup> The biblical quote has these extra words, which the Bollandists include in the text, but is omitted by Blair.



‘sicut deficit fumus, deficias’, et sicut ‘pulvis, quem projicit ventus a facie terrae’, ut discant posterius, per te castigati, quia non licet maledicere benedictis a Deo, nec opus destruere quod ipso disponente est constructum.

Vix sermonem compleverat, et ecce ventus turbinis veniebat ab aquilone et involuens eam elevavit in sublime, et tollens eam in montem excelsum, deorsum misit in terram. At illa patulo hiato aperuit os suum, et absorbit eam, unde vocatus est locus ille, Fippae puteus, usque in hodiernum diem.

Quo facto Cuthmanus solvit pueros a plastro, et ait illis, “Filiis gratias agite Deo, quia ‘castigans vos castigavit et morti non tradidit,’ sicut blasphemam matrem vestram. Ite in pace, de cetero cautius incedentes in mandatis Domini; et ne excidat opus a memoria quod operati estis, erunt vobis ac posteris vestris in signum perpetuum rugae multiplices in cervicibus vestris, quas ex impressione iugi et aeris humiditate contraxistis.”

Haec dicens, dimisit eos, et factus est timor super omnes vicinos eorum; et super omnia montana, quae in circuitu eorum sunt, divulgabantur omnia verba haec.

### CAPUT III

#### *Alia S. Cuthmani miracula.*

[11] Confluentibus itaque undique turmis ad audiendam vocem sermonum sancti viri, simul et mirifica gesta prodigiorum intuenda, animantibus, et inanimantibus quotidie per ipsum contingentia. In diebus suis laboribus sollicitus, in noctibus vero in orationibus continuus insistebat. Numquam vescebatur pane otiosus, juxta illud, ‘In sudore vesteris pane tuo,’ et, “Dies festi vertantur in lamenta.” ‘Gaudere cum gaudentibus, flere cum flentibus,’ quam pium est!

Cuthmanus igitur more consueto quotidie ministrans operariis ecclesiae suae sicut minimus, qui maior praeerat, crebro consuevit indumenta manualia, quae chirothecas appellamus, radiis solaribus appendere, in ecclesia orationes devotione commemorans; resumpsit easdem egrediens, sicque revertebatur cum gaudio. Sicque faciebat per singulos dies.

[12] Talibus ac tantis Sancto coruscante virtutibus, editis excellentiora succedunt opera.

Vir sanctus opera frequenti in basilica construenda sollicitus est, nunc in columnis ligneis erigendis, nunc in laqueariis connectendis. Contigit autem die quadam trabale unicum sic ictu casuali fuisse incurvatum, quod prius perutile, postmodum operi penitus relinquebatur inutile. Sancto quoque ceteris adinvicem de damno conquerentibus, ecce sibi peregrinus peregre proficiscens subito advenit, quibus ait, “Ut quid adinvicem contristamini?” Cui Cuthmanus respondit, dicens, “Perpendiculo coniungibili ligni praesentis casualiter transsumpto, taedio afficimur et damno.” Quibus ille, “Timentibus Deum nihil deest. Extende et tu manum tuam; distrahamus illud, loco proportionato erigamus, coaequaemus.” Et factum est ita.

Quo facto Cuthmanus prostravit se ocius ad pedes viri, dicens, “Deprecor te, Domine, ut indices mihi, Tu quis es?”

“Ego,” inquit, “sum is, in cuius nomine hoc aedificas templum; tu autem perpetuae memoriae in eo particeps fies, et gloriae. Et sic continuo disparuit ab oculis eorum.

Cuthmanus autem diu in templo suo praesidens, tandem laboris meritum susceperit, in gloria a terrenis est proventus ad superna gaudia, ubi manet per infinita saecula saeculorum,<sup>71</sup> Amen.

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<sup>71</sup> Blair prints “saeculorum saecula”.

## Appendix 2 – Translation of the Bollandist Preface

About St. Cuthman the confessor of Steyning in Normandy.

J. B.<sup>72</sup>

1. The monastery of Fécamp, as Ralph Glaber writes in his *Histories*, book 4, chapter 4,<sup>73</sup> is established in the districts of western France near the ocean, and stands almost 40 miles from the city of Rouen, that is between Dieppe and Le Havre. It was first built by St Waningus, then restored by St William of Dijon around the year 1000 AD, according to his *Life* as we have given it on 1<sup>st</sup> January, and the 9<sup>th</sup>. To this belongs (or once belonged) the village which they call Stenningae or Steningae or Stanningae or Stenninga,<sup>74</sup> together with a certain church built by St Cuthman, and ennobled by his miracles and relics. The English, when they still possessed Normandy, are said to have given this to the monastery. It is said to have been made into a priory of the order of St Benedict, whether by Fécamp itself, or before that, we could not verify. St Cuthman, Cutman, vulgarly Cutmen himself, the founder and builder of the church, is honoured there on 8<sup>th</sup> February.

2. We have obtained a double copy of his life; one copy at Paris from André Chesnaeus,<sup>75</sup> cosmographer of Louis XIII, the other at Rouen from our friend Federicus Flovetus,<sup>76</sup> both copied from manuscripts from Fécamp, but from different ones; for the Flovetianus is often mutilated, and differs in certain words.

3. It is not known when St. Cuthman lived. If indeed he was an Englishman, and not from Cornwall or a neighbouring British district, it seems credible that he came to France in the ninth century of Christ, or rather in the tenth, now modified to the Norman faith.

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<sup>72</sup> Jean Bolland.

<sup>73</sup> Written ca. 1028. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodulfus\\_Glaber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodulfus_Glaber)

<sup>74</sup> Bolland seems to think that Steyning is in Normandy, rather than in Sussex.

<sup>75</sup> André du Chesne or Duchesne, d. 1640. [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andr%C3%A9\\_Du\\_Chesne](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andr%C3%A9_Du_Chesne)

<sup>76</sup> Frédéric Flovet was a fellow Jesuit, about whom I have been unable to discover anything, but who appears in other volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*.