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Sacred Mnemonics in Late Medieval England: ars memoria in the Hagiography of Osbern Bokenham

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Abstract

This thesis examines the practice and understanding of the ancient *ars memoria* (art of memory) tradition in late medieval England. Using the work of fifteenth-century Augustinian friar Osbern Bokenham, I argue that his hagiography demonstrates a pronounced engagement with both ancient *ars memoria* techniques and original medieval adaptations and expansions of these narrative mnemonic strategies. The late medieval *ars memoria*, therefore, speaks to the education and training that allowed for complex and fluid approaches to mnemonic narration.

Bokenham's surviving body of work includes a set of commissioned female saints' lives entitled *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, and a sizeable legendary of continental saints' lives based largely on Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, interspersed with both original and variously sourced local saints' lives. Bokenham also wrote *Mappula Angliae*, a geographical history of England translated and adapted from sections of Ralph Higden's *Polychronicon*. Finally, the "Dialogue at the Grave of Joan of Acres" is a short text that details Richard of York's matrilineal claim to the throne.

Bokenham's engagement with conventional mnemonic traditions demonstrates intentional adaptations and customizations that correlate to various categorizations of saints. The narratives of many of the English, Irish and Welsh saints that Bokenham inserts into Voragine's established list do not easily lend themselves to those traditional mnemotechnics based on the more formulaic nature of earlier, continental saints' lives. For these local and usually later saints Bokenham substitutes a pronounced and novel

emphasis on mnemonic geographies, local anecdotes, or alternate forms of genealogies, such as spiritual or ecclesiastical lineages. For example, Bokenham employs etymology selectively instead of imitating Voragine's near-universal application. Bokenham then takes the etymological and mnemonic principles of origin-mapping and transposes them onto geographical, cultural, and successional frameworks. The *Mappula Angliae*, which was designed to accompany Bokenham's large legendary, emphasizes the innovative concept of transforming the cities, churches, shrines, and anecdotal memories of England and its people into a living, breathing memory palace.

Keywords

Middle Ages, Medieval, Christianity, Christian saints, Christian women saints, Virgin martyrs, Hagiography, Hagiographer, Middle English, *ars memoria*, Art of memory, Memory, Mnemonics, Etymology, England, East Anglia, Medieval literature, Fifteenth Century, Osbern Bokenham, *Legenda Aurea*, *Mappula Angliae*, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, *Dialogue at the Grave of Dame Joan of Acres*.

Summary for Lay Audience

This thesis examines the practice and understanding of the ancient Greek and Roman *ars memoria* (art of memory) tradition in late medieval England. Using the work of fifteenth-century writer Osbern Bokenham, who translated and adapted a large collection of saints' lives, I argue that his texts demonstrate both a pronounced engagement with ancient *ars memoria* techniques and a development of original medieval adaptations of these narrative mnemonic (i.e. memory device) strategies.

Bokenham's surviving opus includes a set of commissioned female saints' lives entitled *Legendys of Hooly Wummen (Legends of Holy Women)*, and a sizeable legendary of saints' lives based largely on Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea (Golden Legend)*, interspersed with adapted, variously-sourced, local saints' lives. Bokenham also wrote *Mappula Angliae (Map of England)*, a geographical history of England translated and adapted from sections of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon (A History of Many Ages)*.

Bokenham's uses or adaptations of conventional mnemonic techniques demonstrate his engagement with the art of memory as well as his ability both to select existing strategies and create new ones depending on various categories of the saints whose lives he re-tells. Bokenham uses a Christianized form of classical etymology—or the moralized, symbolic, and purportedly linguistic origin of words—as well as vividly described images, to make high-profile saints like the apostles or female virgin martyrs stand out. For the English, Irish, and Welsh saints that Bokenham inserts that do not easily lend themselves to traditional mnemonic strategies, Bokenham substitutes a pronounced and novel emphasis on geographies, powerful local anecdotes, or alternate forms of genealogies, such as spiritual or ecclesiastical lineages.

In this way, Bokenham takes the etymological and mnemonic principles of origin-mapping and transposes them onto geographical, cultural, and successional frameworks. He also adapts the now popularized concept of memory palaces and transforms the cities, churches, shrines, and anecdotal memories of England and its people into a living, breathing memory palace. This project provides a look at the development of what is now arguably a lost art, and how, from its early roots in oratory, this art was adapted for use in written religious works.

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Abbreviations

<i>Dialogue</i>	<i>Dialogue at the Grave of Dame Joan of Acres</i>
<i>LA</i>	<i>Legenda Aurea</i> by Osbern Bokenham
<i>La</i>	<i>Legenda aurea</i> by Jacobus de Voragine (T. Graesse's Latin edition)
<i>LHW</i>	<i>Legendys of Hooly Wummen</i>
<i>MA</i>	<i>Mappula Angliae</i>
<i>MED</i>	Middle English Dictionary
<i>NLA</i>	<i>Nova Legenda Anglie</i>
<i>OED</i>	Oxford English Dictionary
<i>SEL</i>	<i>South English Legendary</i>
<i>AKJV</i>	Authorized King James Version

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Introduction

i. *Ars memoria* in Late Medieval England

This dissertation focuses on the fifteenth century writings of Augustinian friar Osbern Bokenham (1393-c.1464), who lived and worked at Clare Priory in Suffolk, East Anglia. Bokenham is best known for his prolific hagiography, and this form lends itself quite well to an analysis of literary methods: the highly formulaic nature of saints' lives makes them excellent indicators of shifting narrative techniques or cultural concerns. At the time, East Anglia in particular was a highly influential center of literary production and was home to such writers as John Lydgate, John Capgrave, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, the author of the N-town plays, and others. Besides his predecessors, Bokenham was already quite aware of his talented close contemporary and fellow Augustinian Capgrave and in his writing implies a connection between “the fyrsh [sic] rethoryens, / Gowere, Chauncere, & now Lytgate” (*LHW* 1403-4), “My fad[y]r ... maystyr Ioon Capgrauē” (*LHW* 6356) and himself. Despite the humility topos that envelops these references, Bokenham places himself as the culmination of a literary genealogy of English writers.

Bokenham's candidacy for an analysis of the use of ancient *ars memoria* (art of memory) techniques in late medieval England is based on a number of factors including the volume of his surviving saints' lives, his high level of education, his use of the vernacular and inclusion of local saints, and the way in which living and writing in East Anglia with its many wealthy and literate female patrons likely influenced his

development of mnemonic strategies especially for female saint narratives.¹ In addition, Bokenham's ambitious project of transforming Britain into a memory palace, complete with a guidebook, speaks to the friar's process of adapting traditional *ars memoria* techniques into accessible and appropriate material for his audience. Given that this project examines, through Bokenham's work, the practice and understanding of the ancient *ars memoria* (art of memory) tradition in late medieval England, I would be remiss if I did not briefly first address the birth and development of the art from its origins in ancient Greece through its journey to Bokenham's corner of the world.

Nearly every discussion of memory, and specifically the *ars memoria*, begins with Cicero's tale of the real or imagined Grecian poet Simonides of Ceos.² As the story goes, Simonides was called out of a banquet hall just before its disastrous collapse; he was able to help relatives identify the victims' badly crushed bodies because he remembered who had been in attendance and where they had been sitting. This event inspired the concept of a mnemonic technique that pairs images with places in such an order that recollection is possible as though the mind contained markings imprinted on a wax tablet. In *The Art of Memory*, Frances Yates tracks the history of mnemotechnics from ancient Greece through the seventeenth century, highlighting the *Ad Herennium*'s prominence and following memory's move from rhetoric to ethics in the Middle Ages (Yates 68-9). Mary Carruthers treats of medieval *ars memoria* in greater depth and in

¹ I discuss Bokenham's distinct treatment of female saints in several chapters: the virgin martyrs in particular are considered in Chapter One, in which I demonstrate Bokenham's use and development of mnemonic etymologies exclusively for high ranking saints or saints to which Bokenham has attached special significance, and Chapter Two, which focuses exclusively on virgin martyrs and the ways in which these figures lend themselves particularly to the classical *ars memoria*'s instructions for memory images.

² The story can be found in Cicero's *De oratoria*, II, 86-88.

several works and it is primarily these studies that have informed my understanding of the art's history as well as its use and function in late medieval England.

Yates and Carruthers produced seminal works on the *ars memoria* tradition, but neither recognize its pervasive influence on hagiography. Yates does not specifically address the role of mnemonics in hagiographical traditions at all and Carruthers only discusses mnemonic etymology briefly in reference to Voragine's legendary. For instance, Carruthers' article, "Inventional Mnemonics and the Ornaments of Style: The Case of Etymology," describes the mnemonic aspect of Voragine's numerous etymologies with a particular focus on the example of Saint Cecilia that Chaucer picks up for his version of Cecilia's life in *The Canterbury Tales* (Carruthers pp.104-106). In *The Book of Memory*, Carruthers observes that some saints' lives include descriptions of memory feats, and she connects these to a perception of moral perfection in the sense that these saints are able to recite numerous psalms or other large amounts of sacred text from memory due to the saints' exceptional holiness (p.71). This observation is, however, not connected to the use of mnemonic techniques in hagiography and instead comments on the presence of references to and awareness of moralized memory arts. Rather, Yates' and Carruthers' treatments of the history and development of the *ars memoria* have been focused in large part either on treatises that specifically comment on or propose new techniques for the memory arts, or on incredibly sophisticated mnemonic texts intended for highly educated audiences.³

Using Bokenham's work, I argue that the hagiography of this period demonstrates a pronounced engagement with both ancient *ars memoria* techniques and medieval

³ See, for example, the discussion of Hugh of St. Victor's complex ark in Carruthers and Weiss (pp.41-70).

adaptations and expansions of these narrative mnemonic strategies. Studying where and how the *ars memoria* is employed, therefore, can reveal the elements of education or monastic training, an emerging sense of English national identity, a pride in the vernacular, and an evolving hagiographic tradition that allowed for complex and fluid approaches to mnemonic narration. Three of Bokenham's texts survive: *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, a collection of thirteen female saints' lives; *Mappula Angliae*, a short geographical history of England; and *Legenda Aurea*, the manuscript discovered in 2004 which – despite missing at least one third of its original contents, by my estimation – is over 400 folios in length. The previously unedited *Legenda* or parts of it have been the subject of a few short studies,⁴ but my study is one of the first to examine the manuscript in its entirety and the first to consider any and all of Bokenham's work in the context of the *ars memoria* tradition.

In Chapter 1, “Variations on a Theme: The Mnemonic Function of Etymologies,” I address the etymological treatment of saints' names that is a distinct feature of Bokenham's main source text, Jacobus de Voragine's thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea* (or “Golden Legend”), a collection of saints' lives and other feast days ordered according to the liturgical calendar. Bokenham translates, adapts and augments Voragine, but his more discerning use of etymologies reveals a distinct shift in the application of certain *ars memoria* techniques. Bokenham assigns etymologies to a smaller number of saints

⁴ See Catherine Sanok, *New Legends of England: Forms of Community in Late Medieval Saints' Lives* (2018); Cynthia Turner Camp, “Osbern Bokenham and the House of York Revisited” (2013); Simon Horobin, “Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham” (2007), also “A Manuscript Found in Abbotsford House and the Lost Legendary of Osbern Bokenham” (2007); Alice Spencer *Language, Lineage and Location in the Works of Osbern Bokenham* (2013). The Early English Text Society has announced OS 356: *Lives of the Saints: Vol. I*, the first of three volumes that will contain Bokenham's *Legenda aurea* translation and adaptation, edited by Simon Horobin and recently published (October 2020).

than does Voragine, and etymological treatment seems to act as a mark of distinction or prestige, since it is generally only applied to the most popular and powerful of saints (such as the Evangelists). Etymologies tend to be more common in longer, more elaborate narratives as well as those written in verse and may represent those lives that had been commissioned or that were intended for patronage. Of particular interest, Bokenham's etymologies occur in a relatively high number of female saints, which I argue indicates the prominence of female patrons and devotion to female saints that characterizes late medieval East Anglia.

Chapter 2, "Saintly Bodies: The Mnemonic Flesh of Virgin Martyrs," investigates the gendered violence in the lives of such popular female virgin martyrs as Saints Margaret, Agnes, and Katherine. In addition to the misogyny and objectification called out by feminist readings of female saints' lives, I argue for another motivation behind the graphically violent nature of these narratives: the advice and methods within the *ars memoria* for creating highly effective memory images. A treatise on rhetoric once thought to have been authored by Cicero, the *Ad Herennium* (ca.86-82 BCE) gives several conditions for the elements most suitable to the composition and context of a memory image: dis-honourable actions and marvelous or wondrous events, featuring active figures of exceptional beauty that are distinctly ornamented or disfigured and bloodstained. The sensationalism of many virgin martyr lives makes it easy to read them as just that: stories that cater to the appetites and short attention spans of a lay audience. However, I argue that in Bokenham's hagiography these narratives represent a remarkable and diverse concentration of mnemonic techniques, and that these memory

images are sites of tension between intentionally eroticized saintly bodies and the suppression of desire that should distinguish Christian mnemonics.

Chapter 3, “Landscapes and Memory: Geographical Mnemonics in Bokenham’s Saints’ Lives,” examines the many local saints’ lives that Bokenham adds to his source. While many of these lives lack an etymology or genealogy, Bokenham employs mnemonic geographies to present them as the foundational narratives of England’s cultural memory. The chapter also addresses Bokenham’s *Mappula Angliae*, which was intended as a companion piece or index of sorts for the local saints’ lives, and which provides a description of England based largely on Christian history and interpretation of the landscape.

Chapter 4, “The Mnemonics of Genealogy: Traditional, Spiritual, and Ecclesiastical Lineage in England’s Saintly Clergy,” shows how Bokenham’s saintly genealogies serve a function similar to his etymologies. The meaningful linguistic heritage located in mnemonic etymology is thus adapted and expanded to the physical or spiritual ancestry of the saints. The significance of genealogical elements in relation to the *ars memoria* tradition is exemplified in a text universally assigned to Bokenham, *Dialogue at the Grave*, an exchange between two fictional characters that gives a detailed account of Joan of Acre’s lineage (Joan was daughter to King Edward I) and establishes Richard of York’s claim to the throne.

Bokenham’s engagement with the *ars memoria* tradition, therefore, shows that traditional mnemonic techniques were generally maintained in the narratives of early saints while also demonstrating methods that have been adapted and transformed to

accommodate both elements within newer local saints' lives as well as the untrained memories of those who read his work.

ii. Introduction to the *ars memoria*

Central to the classical *ars memoria* are its foundational texts: Marcus Tullius Cicero's *De oratore* composed in 55 BCE; Marcus Fabius Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* of 95 BCE;⁵ and the anonymous *Ad Herennium*, which for well over a thousand years was thought to have been authored by Cicero⁶ but was actually written by an unidentified instructor of rhetoric in Rome between 86-82 BCE.⁷ The *De oratore* gives a general outline of the technique inspired or developed by Simonides in which orators situate memory images on ordered and arranged imaginary places, advises that the places should be clearly defined and spaced at regular intervals, and calls for the memory images to be well outlined and effective. Quintilian follows Cicero but gives an expanded description of the technique and, curiously, is reluctant to recommend its widespread use while also recognizing its value to orators.⁸ In a reflection of the increased role of the written word in educational training and advanced intellectual pursuits, Quintilian's method involved memorizing a prepared written page or a tablet as well as images (Yates *AoM* 64-5); the

⁵ Cicero's *De oratore* and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* address the art in passing and with an assumption that the reader is already familiar with the terminology and basic concepts of the artificial memory (Yates *AoM* 21).

⁶ As Caplan notes in the introduction to his edition of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the earliest doubts about Cicero's authorship occurred in the mid- to late-fifteenth century, although "the belief in Ciceronian authorship has still not entirely disappeared" (Caplan ix).

⁷ See Caplan xxvi. As Yates notes, there is still some debate about both the authorship and the work's date of composition (Yates *CAoM* 875). It seems to only have come to any real attention c. 350 CE in Africa.

⁸ Yates entertainingly observes that Quintilian even implies the use of the *ars memoria* by auctioneers for memorizing objects when he considers possible uses outside of oratory (Yates *CAoM* 877).

model of the written page became central to later medieval adaptations of the art. The third foundational memory text, the *Ad Herennium*, is a textbook on rhetoric that addresses what seem to be the basic practices of training the artificial memory and refers to a tradition similar or identical to the ones Cicero and Quintilian allude to, in which memory places such as buildings are used to store images that can be called upon from any point of their order of placement.

All three of these works are devoted to the art of rhetoric, of which they make memory a part. The art was designed to train the memory of an orator in preparation for delivering long speeches and remembering key details with precise accuracy. Cicero emphasized the importance of order, and also observed that sight is the strongest sense, and so whatever might pass through the eyes of the body or the inner eyes of the imagination will make the most powerful and lasting impact on the memory.⁹ Quintilian gave the clearest description of the mnemonic of *loci* (places) and *imagines* (images)¹⁰ in outlining the memorization of a large building with many rooms and placing memory images in those rooms, on pedestals, windowsills, etc., the whole of which may be visited during a speech and recalled in order based on the path taken through the building (Yates *AoM* 18). The anonymous *Ad Herennium* contains a section that describes effective memory images and discusses the reasons why they have the strongest hold on us; in other words, an exploration of the psychological causes of our emotional engagement with, and therefore heightened ability to recall, certain images over others.¹¹

⁹ *De oratore*, II, lxxxvii, 357.

¹⁰ *Institutio oratoria*, XI, ii, 17-22.

¹¹ It is this reasoning that I draw on in my discussion of Bokenham's use of especially violent depictions of torture as well as his descriptions of exceptional beauty in his female virgin martyr saints' lives.

The *Ad Herennium* is also the memory treatise to place the most emphasis on the effectiveness of remarkable humans in extraordinary circumstances as memory images, which connects with my focus on the martyrs in Chapter Two.

Although I will cover relevant portions of the *ars memoria* in each of the following chapters, it is ideal to provide a general summary of the art's rules here. In a place or series of places that are well lit, equally spaced and clearly demarcated, memory images are set. These memory images represent an idea, a word, or part of an argument, and are most effective if they are unusual or extraordinary in some way, quite beautiful or repulsive, and emotionally compelling. The images and places are arranged in a clear order so that they may be called upon from any point and remembered in sequence, which is why a path through or around a building is particularly useful. The art emphasizes connections and associations, some of which are thought to be universal, and others that are more personal or particular to the individual engaging in memory work. All three major *ars memoria* works address in somewhat vague terms a form of memory for words, as in placing images or symbols in a series where each individual entry stands for a separate word; all sources conclude that this is an overly complex and less useful form than memory for things/objects and consequently this aspect of the art is passed over.

iii. Medieval *ars memoria*

The classical mnemonic tradition entered medieval Christendom through a variety of authors and commentators. As one educated and trained in the discipline and instruction of rhetoric before converting to Christianity, Saint Augustine of Hippo (354 –

430 CE) imported the early influence of his classical education into his works of Christian theology and philosophy. His writings and letters demonstrate a thorough understanding and use of rhetoric, including rhetorical persuasion which he used particularly in dealing with various religious controversies.¹² As Yates observes, “the classical mnemonic [i.e. art of memory] was still being used by rhetoric students and teachers at Carthage in Augustine’s time,” and Augustine was indeed “interested in feats of memory” (Yates *CAoM* 879). In his *Confessions*, Augustine meditates on the infinite mystery of memory and describes, much along the lines of classical memory palaces or structures, a vast storage system within an organized mental landscape (*Confessions* X, especially viii; this discussed in detail in my Chapter Three). As both a Father and Doctor of the Church, Augustine, and therefore his work, held particular significance in the medieval period especially for those in the Augustinian order, such as my author Osbern Bokenham, and his close contemporary, John Capgrave.¹³

Other influential authors of the Augustinian order include the twelfth-century theologian and exegete Hugh of St. Victor (whose work on memory, including a mnemonic model of an ark, featured in Chapter Four)¹⁴ and the fourteenth-century Oxford-educated Thomas Bradwardine, who wrote *On Acquiring a Trained Memory*.¹⁵

¹² For a discussion of Augustine’s use of advanced rhetoric, see James J. Murphy’s “Saint Augustine and the debate about a Christian rhetoric” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 01 December 1960, Vol.46 (4), pp. 400-410. Religious controversies of Augustine’s time included Manicheanism, Donatism, and Pelagianism.

¹³ Bokenham lived and worked at Clare Priory, Suffolk, founded in 1248 as the earliest Augustinian house in England. John Capgrave was also an Augustinian friar who eventually became prior of the nearby Lynn friary in Norfolk, the largest Augustinian house in England. Both Bokenham and Capgrave attended Cambridge and earned its prestigious highest degree.

¹⁴ Hugh of St. Victor’s works include *Three Best Memory Aids for Learning History*, and *A Little Book About Constructing Noah’s Ark* (Carruthers and Ziolkowski 33-40; 45-70 respectively).

¹⁵ See Carruthers and Ziolkowski 207-214.

The English poet and rhetorician Geoffrey of Vinsauf wrote *Poetria nova*, a rhetorical treatise based on the *Ad Herennium* that also included a section on memory.¹⁶ Bokenham was familiar with the text¹⁷ and would no doubt have read it in its entirety; it may in fact have been a part of his studies at Cambridge. Martin Camargo declares that “there is ample evidence that [the *Poetria nova*] was used across the full spectrum of medieval education, from the lower schools through the universities” (13).¹⁸ Even though the *Poetria nova*’s memory section is quite brief, it acknowledges that the ability to retain and recall can be trained and refined as part of the overarching tradition of narrative-building and word-crafting that is rhetoric.

The foundational mnemonic texts, in fact, were widely available. There are over a hundred surviving manuscripts of the *Ad Herennium*, and “complete commentaries began to appear as early, perhaps, as the twelfth century, translations as early as the thirteenth” (Caplan xxxv). Yates points to the period between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries as the height of the *Ad Herennium*’s popularity (Yates 67), and it is important to note here that medieval knowledge of the classical *ars memoria* was solely dependent on this text. Incomplete copies of Cicero’s *De oratore* and Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria* did circulate, although it is not until the beginning of the Early Modern period that these would have become generally familiar to the students of the memory tradition (Yates 68). Carruthers describes how, after the collapse of the Roman empire in the fifth century, learning retreated into monasteries where a practice she terms ‘monastic memory’

¹⁶ Geoffrey of Vinsauf studied rhetoric in Paris and returned to England to teach at Northampton (Camargo 7).

¹⁷ Bokenham references “Galfridus Anglicus, in hys newe poetrye, / Embelshyd wyth colours of rethoryk / So plenteuously” (*LHW* 88-90) and goes on to give Geoffrey high praise.

¹⁸ See Camargo “Introduction to the Revised Edition” in Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria nova*.

developed and flourished. Carruthers also points to an institutional revival of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* in the thirteenth century that marks the text as one of many influences on medieval understanding and practice of the *ars memoria*:

When [the *ad Herennium*] was revived in university teaching after 1250, it was within the context of an extraordinarily rich, diverse understanding of *memoria*, which had developed in monastic traditions of ruminative meditation and the composition of prayer. Monastic *memoria* is more like what is now called ‘mindfulness’... a discipline of attentive recollection and concentrated reading of texts in the bible. (*BoM* 154)

The association that persisted in the medieval period between the *Ad Herennium* and Ciceronian authorship was driven in part by Cicero’s emphasis on ethics and virtues in his *De Inventione*, which in turn was picked up and adapted for Christian purposes by Augustine in his use of the memory as a storehouse for knowledge of the divine and for the keeping of virtuous things. The moralized locational mnemonic adopted churches and cathedrals, pilgrimage sites and other local religious structures for memory place models, and Bokenham’s mnemonic use of geography is a transformative adaptation of this development.

iv. Bokenham’s Life, Order, and Influences

According to Bokenham, in September of 1443 he was “ful yerys fyfty” of age (*LHW* 248) and in his life of Saint Faith he declares that he, “on þi day to lyuyn first dyde begyn” (*LHW* 4034). Born in 1393 on Saint Faith’s feast day of October 6th, Bokenham

died sometime after 1467, the date of the last surviving document to mention him.¹⁹ He was probably born near Old Buckenham and educated early on as a novice at the Norfolk house of Augustinian canons. Attending Cambridge University, Bokenham received his *baccalarius* degree in 1423 and went on to obtain a *magister* degree, as did his close contemporary and fellow Augustinian John Capgrave, before settling at Clare Priory no later than 1427 (Delany 7-8). As Winstead notes, “achievement of the highest academic degree, the *magisterium*, was strictly rationed by the [Oxford and Cambridge] universities themselves. Each mendicant order was only allowed one *magister* of theology every two years by each university” (Winstead 3). On Bokenham’s likely training at Cambridge, Delany observes that he “would have acquired considerable experience in teaching younger students, in disputation, biblical explication, classics, logic, natural philosophy, and theology” (Delany 7).

Within the educational system Bokenham would presumably have encountered the concept and practice of Ciceronian or Herennian *memoria* as a part of rhetoric in the medieval trivium, although it would, as Carruthers has pointed out, doubtless be intertwined with the concentrated study, meditation, and recollection of the monastic *memoria* that had taken hold. Bokenham’s close contemporary in both writing and education, Capgrave, employed an etymology-building technique in his life of Saint Gilbert of Sempringham²⁰ although the practice is neither a regular nor prominent focus of his work. Capgrave’s elaborate display of freeform exposition of Latin name elements

¹⁹ John Baret of Bury wrote his will in 1463 and it was probated in 1467 (Delany 5). In it, Baret grants “to Maister Osberne Frere of Clare iij s. iiij d.” (Tymms 35).

²⁰ Capgrave also included an etymologizing treatment in his life of Saint Augustine, but his etymology of Gilbert is striking in that it demonstrates an original exercise based on an early model, whereas etymologies of ‘Augustine’ already existed. See Chapter One, page 57-60 for a discussion of Capgrave’s etymologizing.

demonstrates an awareness of the relatively less common hagiographical etymologizing treatments of names,²¹ and when considered in the context of Bokenham's similar work could indicate that moralizing etymologies of both names and other words, in the vein of Isidore of Seville's early seventh century *Etymologiae*, constituted a component of instruction or study certainly at Cambridge if not also in other universities. Ultimately, Bokenham's awareness of and interest in the various applications of the *ars memoria* take form largely in his hagiography, and his accompanying works also reveal the traces of medieval memory training that he received.

v. Bokenham's Works

The focus of this thesis is the art of memory in late medieval England and Bokenham's longest work is the principal source of discussion and evidence. The *Legenda Aurea* is a translation and adaptation of Jacobus de Voragine's popular²² thirteenth century hagiography of the same name to which Bokenham has added several other legends of saints, most of whom were born or did their most important work in Britain.²³ The legendary harnesses the authority of its dominant source text to present an

²¹ Note that despite Capgrave's Voragine-like etymologizing in the aforementioned life of St Gilbert of Sempringham, the exercise is not repeated consistently throughout his other saints' lives, which is perhaps an indication that Capgrave considered the technique to be more of a narrative parlour trick or novelty than a consistent application stemming from carefully crafted mnemonic tradition.

²² A testament to its popularity, Voragine's work survives in over eight hundred manuscripts (Horobin *Politics* 932).

²³ In 2004 the sole extant manuscript of the *Legenda* was discovered by the Faculty of Advocates at Abbotsford House and identified by Simon Horobin. During my project this long text had yet to be edited, so a significant part of my early research was dedicated to transcribing most of the manuscript and writing footnotes and references.

adapted collection that focuses on Britain's saints as the inheritors or descendants of Voragine's earlier and widely established continental saints.

Bokenham's second major work is the *Mappula Angliae*, a geographical history of England. Written as a companion to the long legendary, Bokenham's translation and adaptation of part of Higden's *Polychronicon* survives in a single manuscript, British Library Harley 4011, fols. 144r-163r. The manuscript reveals Bokenham's name through an acrostic formed by the first letters of each chapter. Part of the *Mappula Angliae*'s role as companion text to Bokenham's legendary is as a guidebook of both topographical and historical markers of spiritual significance as they relate to the local saints inserted into the *Legenda aurea*. The *Mappula*'s presumed authority as a form of historical record invests the legendary in turn with increased reliability as a cohesive and canonical text.

As a point of comparison, let us briefly consider two other connected legendaries; the first is the variously dated but generally contemporary legendary *Nova Legenda Anglie*, which has been at times attributed, likely in error, to Bokenham's fellow author and Augustinian John Capgrave.²⁴ Variant versions of this text contain between 156 and 177 relatively formulaic lives of English, Irish, Welsh and Scottish saints and Bokenham uses it for source material in at least four of his saints' lives.²⁵ Through the *Nova Legenda Anglie* (*NLA*) the author proposes an exclusively British collection of saints and delves into as much historical detail as he could collect; the legendary is therefore

²⁴ The legendary has been confidently attributed to fourteenth-century historian and hagiographer John of Tynemouth, with later additions and minor changes made by sixteenth-century publisher Wynkyn de Worde (Horstmann x-xvii).

²⁵ Bokenham uses the *Nova Legenda Anglie* in a significant way for four of his saints' lives: John of Beverley, Aldhelm, Botolph, and Winifred (see Appendix D for details on Bokenham's sources for his local saints' lives). Bokenham may very well have used the *NLA* for very minor details in other lives, but these four can conclusively be identified as his main source for the aforementioned saints.

concerned entirely with local saints for a local and possibly monastic audience.²⁶ Aside from using its contents to supplement missing information for select narratives, however, Bokenham is interested neither in imitating any part of the *NLA* nor in incorporating its many other local saints into his legendary.

The other relevant text for comparison is William Caxton's 1483 translation of Voragine's legendary, which is strikingly similar to Bokenham's in that it uses Voragine's text as a base while silently inserting local saints' lives. Caxton claimed that he used three versions of the golden legend for his compilation: a Latin version, an English text, and a French text, any of which may have included the additional local saints. Caxton's version potentially adds a few more local lives than Bokenham's although it is difficult to determine conclusively, given the damaged state of Bokenham's legendary and the missing folios. Caxton's translation is utilitarian and adheres to Voragine's overall approach of brevity, simplicity, and repetition, where Bokenham's rarely sticks exactly to his source even for the shorter lives.

Returning to a consideration of Bokenham's works, the Augustinian friar also wrote *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, a collection of thirteen female saints' lives compiled in 1447 at the request of Friar Thomas Burgh of Cambridge for his sister Beatrice and the unnamed convent of nuns where she resided. It survives in London, British Library MS Arundel 37. Of the thirteen saints, nine²⁷ also appear in Bokenham's longer *Legenda*

²⁶ One of the earliest manuscripts of the *Nova* was dedicated to one Thomas de la Mare, Abbot of St. Albans 1349-96, and previously Prior of Tynemouth (Horstmann xi).

²⁷ Lucy, Agnes, Agatha, Dorothy, Margaret, Mary Magdalene, Christina, Faith, and Ursula and the 11,000 virgins survive in both *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* and the *Legenda aurea*.

aurea, with the additional four²⁸ presumably included in the legendary before it was damaged, given their place in the liturgical calendar after Winifred, whose feast day of November 3rd also marks the point at which the rest of the manuscript is lost. There are seven narratives with dedicatory prefaces to patrons, and all of these prefaces are either removed or altered for inclusion in the longer collection.²⁹ The *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* collection is of interest not only for what it reveals about East Anglian literary patrons but what it implies about a regional devotion particular to female saints and how that may have shaped Bokenham's own valuation of which categories of saints should receive mnemonic emphasis. Unlike much of the *Legenda aurea* and the 'Capgrave' *Nova Legenda Anglie*, the lives in this collection of commissioned legends are all written in verse and expand enthusiastically and elaborately on their source versions.³⁰

Bokenham also refers to two other works that are now lost. In his relatively short legend of Saint Thomas, he directs his readers to a more complete version of the life which he calls "my boke which I compiled and translaid oute of latyn into englissh of Seynt Thomas life in especial which is distinct into thre parties, and the parties into

²⁸ Elizabeth, Cecilia, Katherine, and Anne. The *Legenda aurea* begins with Saint Andrew, whose feast day is November 30th so it is reasonable to assume that the lost portion of the manuscript included saints whose feast days fell between the 3rd and 30th of November.

²⁹ Margaret (dedicated to Thomas Burgh), Anne (dedicated to Katherine Denston for her daughter Anne), Dorothy (dedicated to Isabel Hunt), Mary Magdalene (dedicated to Lady Isabelle Bouchier, Countess of Eu, sister of Richard Duke of York), Katherine (dedicated to Katherine Howard and Katherine Denston), Agatha (dedicated to Agatha Flegge), and Elizabeth (dedicated to Countess of Oxford, Elizabeth de Vere), (Serjeantson xx-xxi).

³⁰ It is worth noting here that Capgrave wrote a lengthy life of Saint Katherine circa 1450, and Bokenham references it in the prologue to his version as "My fadrys booke, maystyr Ioon Capgrau, / Wych þat but newly compyld he" (*LHW* 6356-7). In this long text, Capgrave announces that "[b]ecause thou were so lerned and swech a clerk, / Clerkes must love thee – resoun forsoth it is" (Capgrave 3.38-9). Capgrave could have been hoping for a patron to fund the life of Saint Katherine, or he could have produced it, as he himself declares, because, as a learned clerk himself, he has a special devotion to this intellectually imposing saint. It has no identifiable dedicatee, although his life of St. Gilbert (c. 1440) was written for the nuns at Sempringham and his life of St. Augustine is dedicated to an unnamed gentlewoman (Long 68).

chapitres” (*LA* 23). In his life of Saint Anne he also refers to a more complete account, saying that “At þis tyme I wil not determyne” whether Anne’s three daughters were “be oon husbonde or ellys be thre” because “in þis mater what best plesyth me / I haue as I can declaryd in latyn / In balaade-ryme” (*LHW* 2079, 2078, 2080-2). The work could be a separate *vita* or a discussion of Anne’s daughters and their parentage.

Works confidently attributed to Bokenham include the only known Middle English translation of Claudian’s *De Consulatu Stilichonis* which survives in London, British Library MS Additional 11814, and the *Dialogue at the Grave of Dame Joan of Acres*, often referred to as the “Clare Roll”; it is found in London, College of Arms, MS Muniment Room 3/16. The *Dialogue* is reproduced in Appendix E of Chapter Four as part of my discussion of mnemonic genealogy; it traces the lineage of Clare Priory’s patrons with a particular focus on Richard of York’s matrilineal connection to a legitimate claim to the throne. During the latter part of Bokenham’s time at Clare, Richard of York became the priory’s patron, and Horobin suggests that the Abbotsford *Legenda* was produced for Richard’s wife, Cecily Neville. Bokenham used his interest in and talent for tracing paths of origin in creative and meaningfully memorable ways to associate the priory with Richard and then Richard with the throne in a bid to raise Clare’s status and remind its patron of the worth of its talented inhabitants.

vi. Bokenham’s Travel and Mnemonic Geography

As this summary of his work shows, Bokenham was keenly interested in the geography of Britain and the saints who had traversed its roads and pathways. Bokenham himself was well-travelled and visited many of the sites where the saints he describes

were venerated. Descriptions of his own travels pepper several of the local saints' lives that he included in his legendary, and although he reports some continental journeying, the stated purpose of the *Mappula Angliae* speaks to the importance he placed on local places.

One instance of Bokenham's known travel was to Winifred's Well in Holywell, Wales. In his life of Saint Winifred, Bokenham recounts two miraculous wonders and gives his host and the locals as his authoritative sources:

Of this laste balade y haue no euydence
 But oonly relacyoun of men in that cuntre
 To whom me semyth shuld be youyn credence
 Of alle swyche thyngys as ther doon be
 For whan y was there myn hoost told me
 That yt soth was wyth owte drede
 For hym self had seyin it doon in dede. (*LA* 421)³¹

In other words, Bokenham is compiling anecdotes on his visit "whan [he] was there" in order to flesh out his legend from his *Nova Legenda Anglie* source. Bokenham references his "hoost" several times and makes a point of recording that "hym self had seyin it doon in dede," which provides Bokenham's narrative with the report of a contemporary eyewitness. The life of Winifred is also where we find an example of *topographia*: Bokenham transplants a description of Wales from Higden's *Polychronicon* into the beginning of Winifred's narrative, which strengthens the connection between saint and

³¹ All transcriptions from Bokenham's *Legenda Aurea* are my own. I have provided the text with original spelling and minimal editorial intervention.

place. Additionally, the miracles that Bokenham added involve the well, a landmark that sprang up at the location of Winifred's murder.

In his Saint David narrative, Bokenham writes of certain verses describing indulgences granted to visitors of the church that they “ben writen there bothen on the wallis and on tablis of fair text hand in dyuers placis” (*LA* 135). While the intriguing descriptions of the wooden *tabulae* hung and posted around St. David's Cathedral in Wales implies a knowledge generally only accessible by visiting, Bokenham adds that “[i]t is also seid there *commounly*, but I dare nat affermyn it for I saw nevir writyng therof, that who so visite twies seynt Daudid on pilgrymage, he shal moun aftir eten white mete in Lenton by graunte of the seid pope Kalixtus” (*LA* 135). It is unclear whether Bokenham is referring to the verses he transcribed or to other grants he came across via hearsay, but the garbled nature of the Latin verses included at the end of the life of Saint David would indicate that either Bokenham was relying on a highly imperfect recollection of his own, or it was someone else's also confused account of the Latin, and Bokenham chose to reproduce the report as best he could. The latter explanation seems probable because, after all, Bokenham's healthy Latin skills make it unlikely that he would have copied the verses down so erroneously or remembered them so poorly. It stands to reason then, that Bokenham travelled to Holywell in Northern Wales but did not have permission or the desire to travel as far as the remote Southeastern St. David's Cathedral.

In his life of Saint Æthelthryth Bokenham mentions that greater details of her genealogy can be found locally: “The pedegrue of whom who so list to see / At Ely in the munkys bothe in picture / He it fynde mow shal, and in scripture” (*LA* 223). As Simon

Horobin concludes, the reference “adds to our knowledge of this shrine and indicates Bokenham’s familiarity with Ely” (Horobin *Politics* 940); once again, Bokenham’s local travels work not only to support the authority of his narrative but to encourage readers to visit local sacred sites.

Bokenham demonstrates a singular devotion to Saint Margaret as he describes visiting a priory of Dominican canons near his birthplace and how, while touching a ring of his to the holy relic of her foot, “[b]othe flesh and boon ... / Where thorgh a cristal bryht and pure / Men may beho[l]den eche feture / Ther-of” (*LHW* 138-41). The story of Bokenham’s short journey to visit and interact with Saint Margaret’s relic acts as an example of spiritually valuable travel and sacred landmarks that are, presumably, more accessible to the majority of his readers than the longer and more costly continental pilgrimages. Bokenham follows the story up with another anecdote, this time featuring continental travel. He describes how the protection gained from this saintly contact with Margaret’s foot saw him delivered from an attack just outside of Venice where, just as he “supposyd to haue [been] myscheuyd” by a “cruel tyraunth ... and fyue mo men” (*LHW* 163, 161-2), he called upon Saint Margaret through the ring and was rescued.

In the prologue to his life of Saint Margaret, Bokenham mentions traveling twice to Italy, and in summarizing the saint’s life, he reveals that “I dede lerne wyth-owte fayle / The laste tyme I was in Itayle, / Bothe be scripture and eek be mowthe” (*LHW* 107-9) the whole story of the saint’s life while at Montefiascone. He recounts how he stopped there on his way back from Rome to compile the saint’s story and challenges “who me not leue” to “go thedyr & he shal it preue” (*LHW* 111-2), thus underlining the reliability and authority of firsthand research. Each of these anecdotes underlines the benefits of

personal connections to saints, the rewards of visits to local shrines, and the importance of knowledge gained while travelling.³²

In a later narrative, Bokenham describes an encounter with Lady Isabel Bouchier, Countess of Essex and sister to Richard of York, in which Isabel requests a life of Saint Mary Magdalene and he asks for a delay until after a journey:

She me *pardonyd* tyl I come ageyn

From seynt Iamys, yf god wold so.

And I now haue performyd & do

Aftyr myn entent myn pylgrimage. (*LHW* 5110-3)

In 1445 Bokenham travelled to the shrine of St. James at Santiago de Compostela in Spain; upon his return, he began to write the life of Mary Magdalene.³³ The visit to Spain would have confirmed the details in Voragine's life of Saint James, a narrative that served as Bokenham's source and included the saint's travel to Spain and his body's return and eventual burial there. Voragine drew from John (or Jean) Beleth, the *Codex Calixtinus* that at one time had been falsely attributed to Pope Callixtus II, Bede, Hugh of Saint Victor and others for a lengthy and thorough miracles section. Unfortunately, we can only speculate that perhaps Bokenham might have added to or changed parts of his

³² Bokenham also visited Tolentino, Italy, most likely in 1459 during a meeting of the general chapter of the Austin friars, a trip that "may have provided Bokenham with the opportunity to visit the shrine [of Saint Nicholas] and to transcribe the miracles that were recorded there" (Horobin *Politics* 940). Since Bokenham's life of Saint Nicholas of Tolentino contains miracles not recorded elsewhere in vernacular versions, this is a strong indicator that Bokenham used travel to more fully support his hagiographical narrative.

³³ According to Mary Sergeantson, Bokenham's life of Saint Mary Magdalene is taken largely from Voragine's *Legenda aurea* and expanded while incorporating some details from the New Testament (Sergeantson xxiii).

source based on what he had learned on his trip: one of the missing sections of the *Legenda Aurea* manuscript would have contained Saint James' legend.³⁴

What we can say for certain is that with the exception of the missing life of Saint James, Bokenham treated the lives of those saints to whose shrines he had travelled with special care. His Margaret prologue is highly personal, and the life is extensively embellished; Winifred's narrative is embellished and contains personal anecdotes; the life of Saint David is singular and contains many original elements. For Bokenham then, physical geography and the imagined spaces of the memory are connected to the ways in which saints' lives are written, read, and remembered.³⁵

Bokenham's work demonstrates a knowledge and use of a variety of mnemonic techniques, and several of these strategies have not been studied or even recognized in *ars memoria* scholarship. Most work in the field focuses on the transmission and interpretation of traditional techniques among highly educated individuals, and not how they were adapted for regional use and for the unwitting memory training of lay readers. Bokenham's texts prove that medieval *ars memoria* techniques were adapted for an active audience which included the devoted patrons and readers of fifteenth-century East Anglia.

³⁴ The cut is located between Abbotsford MS fol. 144v-145r and contains, I believe, the last sixteen stanzas of Bokenham's life of Saint Christina, which survives in its entirety in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* Arundel manuscript, the life of Saint James, Saint Christopher, and all but the final three and a half lines of the Seven Sleepers.

³⁵ Chapter Three explores the topographical elements in Bokenham's local saints' lives and the idea of mnemonic geography, particularly in relation to English saints and the *Mappula Angliae* text that Bokenham intended as a guidebook or companion piece to his legendary.

1. Variations on a Theme: The Mnemonic Function of Etymologies

“Indeed, letters are tokens of things, the signs of words, and they have so much force that the utterances of those who are absent speak to us without a voice ... The use of letters was invented for the sake of remembering things, which are bound by letters lest they slip away into oblivion.”

Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*³⁶

1.1 Introduction to Mnemonic Etymology

Etymology, broadly defined as the origin of words, is a component of the study of grammar –and, later, rhetoric– that continues to be reshaped according to varying sets of expectations about its use and purpose. These expectations are based on beliefs about the moral, factual or ‘truth’ value of language, and allow for explanations involving the shape of the letters, the mood of the sound, and the semantic influence of similar words. While the tendencies of classical and medieval etymologies to include creative or fictional origins of a word have been, and might well continue to be, met with scorn by modern critics,³⁷ their definitions sought not to establish simple, reductive entries but to explore the full range of the word’s effect on the senses. Presenting etymologies that create memorable narratives of words encourages the audience to build the causal frameworks and associative networks that make up the foundational training of the *ars memoria*. Osbern Bokenham’s hagiography, taken in large part from Jacobus de

³⁶ *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (39).

³⁷ In the introduction to his translation of Voragine’s *Legenda aurea*, Ryan relates an observation made by Graesse (who edited the only Latin text of *legenda aurea*) about Voragine’s prefatory additions: “those most perverse etymologies, in which more than anywhere else our Jacobus limps” (Ryan xvii). This condescending condemnation of Voragine’s etymologizing is also addressed by Sherry L. Reames in her 1985 book *The Legenda Aurea: a reexamination of its paradoxical history*, which describes in detail the legendary’s fall from popularity during the sixteenth century onward.

Voragine's etymology-laden *Legenda aurea*, provides a glimpse into uses and adaptations of mnemonic etymology in late medieval England.

William Granger Ryan describes Voragine's etymologies as representative of an overarching method: "a name is the symbol of the person who bears it, and in its letters and syllables can be found the indication of what the person's life, with its virtues and its triumphs, is to be" (Ryan xvii). Although there is evidently a profound respect for the sacred nature of the divinely assigned saints' names in the *Legenda aurea*, I believe that Voragine's opinion of etymology –and by extension, Bokenham's– is closer to that exemplified by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologiae* of the early seventh century. Both hagiographers believed that the pursuit of divine knowledge, or truth, could follow many different paths, much as Isidore's flexibility of interpretations grants the reader opportunities for a personally significant method of comprehension and recollection.

While it is difficult at this point to determine precisely which manuscript of Voragine's *Legenda aurea* Bokenham might have worked from, or if he also made use of a French translation, we can draw some significant conclusions from the surviving material that stands witness to the Austin friar's views on etymology, specifically, the practice of employing imaginative etymologies as part of several strategies for mnemonically effective saint legends. Both Theodore Graesse, editor of Voragine's Latin text, and William Granger Ryan, editor and translator of the Princeton University Press English edition, agree that approximately 182 entries are certainly authored by Jacobus, and the 61 other legends that circulated with the collection are not Voragine's work, though some are carefully constructed according to the style and pattern established by the Dominican compiler. I should note here that while I do respect and acknowledge the

distinction in authorship made by Graesse and Ryan, I believe that Bokenham worked from a manuscript that incorporated these additional lives according to their chronological place in the liturgical calendar, and that Bokenham either assumed the whole to be Voragine's writing, or did not care to mark out those 'questionable' entries, so as to avoid procuring a false authorial figure to grant equivalent *auctoritas* to the narratives.³⁸ As such, I do make use of the additional lives in order to enrich my discussion of Bokenham's treatments.³⁹

I would like here to present a breakdown of which of Voragine's saints' lives receive etymologies and how those are distributed, as a way to understand both Voragine's approach to the use of etymologies and Bokenham's divergences from that pattern. To begin with the numbers: of Voragine's 182 entries, 152 are more properly called "saints' lives," as opposed to hallowed days such as Pentecost, or The Exaltation of the Holy Cross, etc. Of those, 97 have etymologies, and of those entries, 13 are female saints. Voragine grants etymological introductions to approximately 33% of his female and 63% of his male saints. In contrast, of the 157 surviving legends in the *Legenda Aurea* and *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* manuscripts (again, categorized as "saint's lives"), Bokenham assigns etymologies to approximately 26% of female and a much lower 12% of male saints. This demonstrates that while Voragine establishes an etymological formula and applies it wherever he can, usually only hampered by his uncertainty with Greek and Hebrew, Bokenham has a more sophisticated approach- one

³⁸ I believe that Bokenham did, however, decline to include certain of the additional lives that were both clearly weak imitations of Voragine's style, and composed by a French hagiographer interested only in bolstering the reputation of undoubtedly proximal cities such as Lyons or Paris.

³⁹ In the order they appear in Graesse's text, the lives are: *Saint Scholastica*, *Saint Erasmus*, *Saint Barbara*, *Saint Oswald* (ref in *MA*), *Saint Dorothy*, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, *Saint Anna*, *Saint Clare/Clara*, *Saint Roman*.

dominated by an awareness of his audience and/or largely female patron base, and a recognition of the mnemonic significance of such an exercise. Additionally, Bokenham displays discriminating selection, made evident in those etymologies he leaves out due to repetition, such as the several Felixes, Pauls, Julians and Johns, or lack of clarity, such as Thomas the Apostle, Thomas of Canterbury and Thomas Aquinas.

In addition to this, Bokenham's translation and adaptation of Voragine's work identifies and employs other mnemonic strategies such as formal prologues, vivid images—for example the six-winged cherubim from Isaiah, Margaret's dragon, or Katherine's vicious wheel—and most strikingly, verse translations. Rhyming verse is a form rooted in oral literary traditions, where easily memorized material was both crafted and sought after; 21 of the surviving legends in Bokenham are written in verse. Since 18 of these are female saints' lives, and 10 of these have both etymologies and prologues—compared to 11 prose lives with prologues,⁴⁰ all of which are male—we can conclude with some confidence that Bokenham's hagiography represents a familiarity with, as well as care and awareness of, mnemonic techniques. The ease with which he evaluates, filters and embellishes Voragine's etymologies speaks to his concerted effort to be recognized and remembered in the legendary literature of East Anglia. Writing under the shadow of such giants as Chaucer, Lydgate and Gower, as well as his close contemporary Capgrave—to whom Bokenham refers his readers in his life of Katherine, recommending they search for “[m]y fadrys book, maystyr Ioon Capgraue.../ [i]n balaadys rymyd ful craftily”⁴¹—Bokenham looked to mnemonics in order to establish his own particular literary voice.

⁴⁰ Only one of which has no etymology at all: Saint Augustine of Hippo.

⁴¹ *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* 173, lines 6356 & 6359.

This use of mnemonic strategies, and mnemonic etymology specifically, certainly did set Bokenham apart especially for any reader familiar with Voragine’s text. I will now consider the extant lives in both Voragine and Bokenham that include etymologies, as well as the mnemonically distinctive elements such as prologues or verse form that Bokenham added to enhance the importance of particular narratives. Voragine’s lives are largely uniform, always in prose, and generally the only marker of a saint’s distinct worth was the length and detail of their narrative.

The table below demonstrates Bokenham’s dispersal of key characteristics of the 24 saints’ lives with etymologies present in both texts:

Figure 1.1 Dispersal of Key Characteristics of Etymologized Legends

Apostles	Virgin Martyrs⁴²	Exceptional Men⁴³	Exceptional Women
Thomas, pr.	Agnes, pr., v.	John the Baptist, pr.	Mary Magdalene, pr., v.
John, pr.	Lucy, pr., v.	Lawrence, martyr, pr.	Clare
James the Less	Agatha, pr., v.	Michael, archangel, pr.	Elizabeth, pr., v.
Peter, pr.	Margaret, pr., v.	Luke, Evangelist	Anne, pr., v.
Paul, pr.	Cecilia, pr., v.	Ambrose, pr., v.	
Matthew, pr.	Katherine, pr., v.	Jerome, pr.	
		Augustine	

pr = includes a prologue

v = written in verse

⁴² It is likely that Bokenham’s Saint Christina narrative is missing a prologue that would contain the etymology present in Voragine. See also following footnote.

⁴³ Although Voragine’s life of Saint Vincent contains an etymology and Bokenham expanded his version of the martyr’s life and wrote it in rhyme royal verse, Bokenham –in a highly unusual move– did not include the etymology. However, the opening word of the narrative, “[w]hilom” (*LA* 88), might indicate a missing prologue, which would in all likelihood have contained the etymology. As with Saints Ambrose, Margaret, and Katherine, “[w]hilome/[w]hylom” begins the life proper after a prologue (*LA* 171, 248, and *LHW* 174), or for example in the case of Saints Christina and Faith it indicates a missing prologue, evident especially in the surviving title of Faith’s narrative, “Here folwyth the lyf of Seynt Feyth” (*LA* 386).

Of the 21 verse lives in Bokenham, 11 have etymologies,⁴⁴ and with the exception of Saint Ambrose, all of these are women. Of the saints listed, only four are without prologues: James the Less, whose legend follows a pattern consistent with the other narratives and whose lack of prologue may be attributed to a textual division overlooked or purposely excluded by the scribe; Clare, whose etymology is less linguistically sophisticated and based on wordplay;⁴⁵ Augustine, whose legend is unexpectedly brief; and Luke, a *vita* made up of a somewhat improvised etymology and a narrative taken from the curt and impersonal version written by Jerome instead of the lavish imagery-laden tale from Voragine.

Of the 10 verse lives without etymologies,⁴⁶ Barbara and Dorothy are merely attributed to Voragine (only five of the attributed legends have etymologies, and these are almost all French saints);⁴⁷ Paul the hermit and Apollonia have no etymology in the Latin text to begin with, and the name ‘Paul’ has already been treated etymologically in the apostle Paul’s *vita*; Audrey/ Æthelthryth and Winifred have ‘vernacular’ names, which render the Latin interpretive toolkit useless; Christina’s etymology in Voragine is

⁴⁴ The eleventh is Saint Feyth, who is not included in the above table as her life is not found in Voragine.

⁴⁵ “she [Clare’s pregnant mother] herd a voys from heuene seyinge to here on this wyse ‘woman dred not ner be not a-ferd for thou shalt brynge forth a cler lyth the wyche shal clerly illumynynd and makyn brygh [sic] the word.’ For whiche cause whanne hyre chyld was born and brought to the baptem she mad yt to clepyn ‘Clara’ fully trostyng that the reuelacyoun the wyse was sheuyd on to hyre shulde in tyme comynge be fulfullyd in hyre chyld” (*Legenda aurea* 311).

⁴⁶ In the order they appear: Barbara, Paul the Hermit, Vincent, Dorothy, Apollonia, Mary the Egyptian, Æthelthryth, Christina, 11 000 virgins, Winifred.

⁴⁷ This would seem to indicate that a French copyist has inserted these lives of French saints, and fitted them to Voragine’s distinctive style and pattern, including the etymologies, in order to claim for them an authoritatively supported place on equal ground with the rest of the saints in the collection.

confused, and as Ryan notes, is probably intended for a different ‘Christina’;⁴⁸ Mary the Egyptian’s prologue sets up one of Bokenham’s underlying goals, which is to equate etymology with genealogy, lending each practice considerable *auctoritas*, but in the process discards an etymology for this particular Mary; in Vincent’s verse legend, Bokenham chooses to disregard the insubstantial and unstructured etymology that lists potential interpretations without giving linguistic roots;⁴⁹ and finally ‘Ursula and her 11,000 virginal companions’, where the popular title of *11,000 virgins* renders any meaningful etymological exercise impossible and the titular virgin’s name most obviously draws ursine associations.

1.2. The History of Etymology: Plato, Naturalism, Sound and Isidore of Seville

In order to understand the significance of Bokenham’s use of etymologies, it is necessary at this point to consider the history of etymologizing and where it has intersected with the *ars memoria* or been recognized as a mnemonic technique in its own right. Critical interpretations of etymologizing from the classical period to the middle-late Renaissance had been dominated by the dismissive and largely condescending attitude represented by the nineteenth century scholar Ernst Curtius, who concluded a survey of etymological instances from the Bible to Augustine with the comment “all I have presented so far can be taken as more or less insipid trifling” (496). While Mary Carruthers identifies this opinion as damningly reductive and incorrect, she declines to

⁴⁸ “Saint Christina’s name suggests *chrismate uncta*, anointed with chrism. She had the balm of good odor in her relationships with others, and the oil of devotion in her mind and benediction in her speech” (Ryan 1.385).

⁴⁹ “The name Vincent may be interpreted as burning up vice, or as conquering fires, or as holding on to victory” (Ryan 1.105).

address mnemonic etymologizing any further than her brief article “Inventional Mnemonics and the Ornaments of Style.” However, in this short discussion, Carruthers establishes etymology rather comfortably as an ‘ornament of style’ (a narrative aspect included in rhetorical treatises) with identifiable characteristics of medieval mnemonics, and proposes that stylistic techniques such as ornamentation and embellishment, both in literature, art and architecture, should no longer be considered as exempt from holding meaning simply by virtue of being entertaining and decorative (Carruthers *Inventional Mnemonics* 104).

After giving the example of Voragine’s etymological preface to Saint Cecilia – an etymology which is better known to contemporary audiences through its appearance in the “Second Nun’s Tale” from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*– Carruthers explains that the purpose is not to give an accurate linguistic lineage of the saint’s name, but to provide tools for the reader to internalize the aspects of the legend that should be meditated upon for spiritual benefit. She identifies two strategies used in Cecilia’s etymology that relate to the two sensory gateways of memory, *painture* and *parole*, or sight and hearing: “ ‘Ce-ci-li-a’ *sounds like* ‘caeca’ and ‘lilia,’ or like ‘caeci’ and ‘via,’... [I]lilies –at least for audiences used to seeing them painted in images of the Virgin and described in sermons– are white, with green stems and a sweet scent... Such associative play is ... the fundamental stuff of remembering” (105). The associations produced by these etymological exercises must be recognized as mnemonically effective markers, consciously inserted into the narrative in order to orient and prepare the reader for the *vita* to follow.

Carruthers, Curtius, and more recent scholars do not, however, discuss other categories and methods of etymological use that are both rhetorically ornamental and mnemonically sophisticated. The lack of recognition of rhetorically ornamental mnemonic etymologies indicates that Bokenham's approach to and use of this particular strategy stands apart from the traditional, historical use and even intention of etymologies. A certain variety of at times opposing approaches to the use of etymologies can be seen from the earliest classical and Christian texts and can provide some insight into the context in which Bokenham might have come to learn about etymology.

The earliest surviving writing on what could be called an *ars memoria* is the anonymous *Dialexeis*, a fragment dated to about 400 BCE, which stresses three main strategies for remembering: first, the mind must be attentive in order to process and store what passes through it; second, repetition (by hearing and saying) is key to a full incorporation of knowledge into the memory; and third, one should place what one hears on what one knows. This third rule emphasizes the visual, oral nature of the roots of mnemotechnics, while conceiving of the mind's relationship to memory in textual terms. The *Dialexeis* then gives examples of how to accomplish this mental mapping exercise through a sort of phonetic word association: if the name "[Chrysippus] is to be remembered; we place it on χρυσός 'chrysos' [gold] and ἵππος 'ippos' [horse]... for courage [place it] on Mars and Achilles" (Yates 44). Although Yates describes the formation of images for this method as originating from "primitive etymological dissection[s] of the word" to be remembered (45), the early technique demonstrates both an awareness of mnemonic effectiveness—in the formation of such striking images as a golden horse—as well as the importance of the ear in linking "Chrysippus" to the

meaningful combination of “chrysos” and “ippos,” or ‘chrys-ippos.’ The difference between the two parts of the third exercise represents what will become a primary distinction in the development of artificial memory training; that is, memory for things, *memoria rerum*, versus memory for words, *memoria verborum*. It is the latter that will contribute to our understanding of the mnemonic functions of etymology, and the various treatments of *memoria verborum* by Quintilian, Cicero, Plato and others reveal Bokenham’s etymologizing as a method consciously designed to assign value to mnemonic word, or more specifically, name histories, as a reaction against pre-Christian approaches.

The seventh century BCE *Ad Herennium* conceived of the art of memory as being “like an inner writing,” where those who “know the letters of the alphabet can write down what is dictated to them and read out what they have written... For the places [in the method of *loci*] are very much like wax tablets or papyrus, the images like the letters, the arrangement and disposition of the images like the script, and the delivery is like the reading” (Yates 22). This is noticeably similar to Augustine’s view of how language and memory participate in the interpretive process through which one can come to ‘know God’, where through the proper use of linguistic examination an individual moves from the meaningfully uttered word (*dictio*) to the inner word or concept (*dicibile*), then to immanent knowledge (a kind of recollection) and finally the divine logos (which motivates both cognition and language) (Amsler 46, 105). Augustine describes the ‘inner word’ as a “word imprinted on the mind” (*De trinitate* 9.10.15),⁵⁰ an extra-verbal, spatialized language responsible for the mind’s articulation of thought - a process defined

⁵⁰ Translation provided by Amsler (105).

by Aristotle as operating with an almost exclusive reliance on images. In *De magistro* and elsewhere, Augustine expresses memory as a key presence in meaningful examinations of the world; for example, the highest stage of cognition, or interior illumination, is obtained through the “memorial function of language” (*De magistro* chapters 8-14; see Amsler 103 for full citation), and pedagogical discourse, in which etymology is involved, as “a process not of leading to, but of leading *back to*, *remembering*” (*De magistro* 1.1; see Amsler 104; emphasis mine). Although Augustine seems to support a procedural use of language in the pursuit of knowledge of the divine, he expresses reservations in line with Plato, Quintilian and others; it is to these reservations that I will now turn.

In his *Etymologiae*,⁵¹ written in the early 600s, Isidore of Seville situates the practice of etymology as part of the first set of critical pieces of information on which his entire encyclopedia of knowledge is based, along with grammar, the alphabet (its invention, significance of sounds and shapes of letters), parts of speech, etc.⁵² According to Isidore then, etymology, or the origin of words, grants insight into the original meaning (truth) of a word, and “one’s insight into anything is clearer when its etymology is known,” a statement Isidore adapts from Tertullian’s *De Fuge* 1.2, where knowledge of the author (*auctore cognito*) is replaced by *etymologia cognita* (Isidore 54). Also included in this section is Isidore’s explanation of the origin of language, which is

⁵¹ Isidore’s *Etymologiae* is one of the first medieval large-scale projects of its kind and unique in its thorough, consistent employment of etymology as educational tool. Isidore’s text is a comprehensive encyclopedia of necessary information organized alphabetically and addressed through the knowledge system of the Seven Liberal Arts.

⁵² Bokenham would almost certainly have read Isidore’s *Etymologiae*, considering that the Austin friars at York had at least three copies recorded in their possession in the late fourteenth century (Humphreys 262), and records of book loans between monastic groups in the area testify to an atmosphere of active textual circulation.

ascribed to the ancients, who would largely assign names for things based on their qualities or meaningful associations. While some words, Isidore admits, come into being through the whim and caprice of human will, others are corruptions so distant from their true form as to be unrecognizable; these ‘barbaric’ methods of word creation are the reason why not all words are open to etymologizing.

This point of view owes an intellectual debt to the Stoics, and the idea of ‘naturalism:’⁵³ all words are derived from the cradle of language, where a set of sounds is assigned based on the innate nature of the thing to be named. Etymology is the pseudo-scientific process by which the changes, corruptions and obscurities of time are swept away to reveal the truth of the world. Plato’s *Cratylus*, written around 360 BCE, takes as its main topic of discussion the argument between naturalism and conventionalism: the idea that an object’s name is a universal indicator of its true representation versus regionally variable agreements that determine an object’s name.⁵⁴ This debate is closely connected to approaches to and evaluations of etymological practice, where conventionalism could potentially disband the legitimacy of etymology or, at the very least, could suggest that etymologies are constructed purely for entertainment. Plato’s *Cratylus* is a dialogue between Socrates, Hermogenes and Cratylus, where Socrates represents the voice of reason as he navigates between the extreme positions of conventionalism and naturalism, respectively. Although the dialogue is written in such a

⁵³ Not, however, to be confused with the literary term ‘Naturalism’, developed in the 1870s by French novelist Emile Zola. Naturalistic novels differ from realistic ones in that while the latter aims to represent ordinary life as it occurs, the former makes use of medical, biological and behavioural vocabulary to describe human beings as “higher-order animal[s]” (Abrams et al, *Norton Anthology I* 2959).

⁵⁴ Despite the general unavailability of many of Plato’s works in the Middle Ages, Platonic concepts certainly survived and were passed along by many writers.

way that it could be read as a satire that pokes fun at zealous etymologists (and certainly there is reason to assume so—in fact, Plato spoke contemptuously on the use of etymologies in the support and development of artificial memory), the character of Socrates eventually finds a middle ground that acknowledges the naturalist perspective while recognizing that some words simply do not have a meaningful form or linguistic heritage.

In the etymology section of *Cratylus* Plato, either knowingly or unconsciously, has incorporated the two most powerful senses—seeing and hearing—into his primary method of etymologizing; that is, the sound and the appearance of words are of ultimate importance for making assertions and forming associations. This is what we saw echoed above in the *Ad Herennium*, which likened the tools and process of the art of memory to an ‘inner writing,’ with the alphabet’s letters standing in as a code of deeply symbolic or representative characters on which individuals could draw to record and then recollect information. Plato applies this concept in a scientific manner to the naturalist view on words, or names, remarking that only trained etymological experts could discern the relevant aural or visual components of a word and arrange them into a meaningful explanation.

Like his classical models, Bokenham also uses etymology to engage his readers in a multi-sensory, and hence memorable, experience of his topic, which in this case is the lives of the various saints in his legendary. For example, consider the etymological discussion implicit in the intellectual exercises of Suffolk hagiography; I am thinking here of his life of Saint Cecelia, whose legend has contemporary incarnations from the pens of Chaucer, Caxton, the anonymous *Gilte Legende* and others. The original Latin

legend presents four possible interpretations of the name ‘Cecilia’ (and here, I am using Ryan’s translation of Graesse’s Latin edition): “[it] may come from *coeli lilia*, lily of heaven, or from *caecitate carens*, lacking blindness, or from *caecis via*, road for the blind, or from *coelum* and *lya*, a woman who works for heaven” (Ryan 2.318).⁵⁵

Voragine explains each of these etymologies in two or three ways, in a strategy for striking upon the most likely and effective memory image for each individual reader or hearer of the work. The initial etymology in Voragine’s Latin is as follows: “*Caecilia quasi coeli lilia vel caecis via vel a caelo et lya. Vel Caecilia quasi caecitate carens. Vel dicitur a caelo et leos, quod est populus*” (Voragine 771, emphasis mine).⁵⁶ Voragine’s etymological markers of *quasi/quod* alert the reader to an upcoming interpretative definition, instead of a strictly fact-based linguistic one, as well as *vel dicitur* (or, it is said of/it is to say), which potentially complicates the series of interpretations by introducing the element of orally transmitted knowledge or hearsay.

Although translated from prose into verse, Bokenham’s Cecilia pays homage to Voragine’s etymological formula:⁵⁷

‘Cycile’ ys as mych to seye

As ‘lylye of heuene’, or ‘to þe blynd weye’ ;

Or ellys þis wurd ‘Cicilia’

⁵⁵ Unfortunately, Ryan’s translation here fails to reflect the order and significance of the specific markers I discuss. A clearer though clumsy, literal translation of the Latin might be: Cecilia **could mean** heaven’s lily **or** road to the blind **or** from *coelum* and *lya*, (a woman who works for heaven). **Or** Cecilia **could mean** lacking blindness. **Or it is to say** of *caelo* (heaven) and *leos* (people), **which means** the people’s heaven.

⁵⁶ See Appendix A for an index of etymological elements from Voragine’s legendary. The index serves as a demonstration of the range of Voragine’s onomastic tools, as well as an indication of what Bokenham could draw on to create original etymologies of, for instance, the local saints whose narratives he inserted into his collection.

⁵⁷ See Appendix C for a detailed breakdown.

Is compounnyd of ‘celum’ & of ‘lya’
 Or ellys ‘Cicyle’, after þe ethimologie,
 ‘Wantyng blyndnesse’ doth sygnyfye ;
 Or it is seyde of þis wurd ‘celo’,
 And ‘leos’ þat ‘peple’ toknyth also. *LHW* 7377-88

While the original Latin makes heavy use of phonological associations in its etymological analysis of ‘Cecilia,’ with its string of “Caecilia... caeli lilia... caecis via... caelo et lya” (although eventually, this tight sound group migrates slightly outwards, in the style of Isidore, with “caecitate carens” and “caelo et leos”), Bokenham must use internal and end-rhyme, together with other related words in order to arrange his etymology into an oral network. For example, the repetition of Cecilia’s name in the first, third and fifth lines⁵⁸ continues the utterance of the core set of syllables in a rhythmically driven chant that asserts itself into the reader or hearer’s memory through the second stated rule of the *Dialexeis*. This repetition also invites the text’s audience to acknowledge the interplay between ‘Cecilia’ and its sound counterparts: “lylye” and “lya” in the second and fourth lines, respectively, as well as the Latin “celum,” “lya,” “cello,” and Greek “[a]os,” inserted to reaffirm the phonological system that exists in both ancient and vernacular languages. Finally, the end-rhyme of “ethimologie” and “sygnyfye,” a pairing which articulates in a straightforward fashion the relationship between the current linguistic exercise and correct, meaningful interpretation of the significant details in saints’ lives.

⁵⁸ This is one repetition more than both Voragine and Caxton, who was himself a relatively unimaginative and verbatim-style translator.

This particular type of phonological etymologizing owes a great debt to Isidore's series of etymologies, whose basis for linguistic associations is grounded almost entirely in sound- the spoken, uttered word (recall Augustine's *dictio*). The form and flow of Isidore's etymologies in the Vocabulary section of his work in *Book X* encourages the reader or hearer to mouth the words, moving back and forth along the chain of terms, contemplating the connections in meaning, sound, feel, and – if reading – physical appearance of the words. The lettered headings of each section, arranged alphabetically, alert the reader's sense of hearing to the way in which the text's critical information must be processed, analyzed and stored for later recollection; in this manner, Isidore recognizes the importance of the ear in the function of memory and learning.⁵⁹

As mentioned above, the organizational method of etymological progression employed by Isidore, and later, Bokenham, creates a mnemonic network of phonological associations, on which the individual can draw to remember other items. It also prompts the imagination to form and store memory images in conjunction with the words connected by sound. The following example of phonological etymologizing is taken from Isidore's *Etymologiae*, and the passage contains identifiable similarities between this and Bokenham's approach:

Bright (*clarus*), from sky (*caelum*), because it shines, and hence also the term 'bright day' for the shining of the sky. Lofty (*celsus*) is named

⁵⁹ In fact, in *Book XI, De homine et portentis* (The human being and portents), Isidore describes the senses in typical hierarchical order. Beginning with vision, which is "more vivid (*vivacior*) than the rest of the senses, ... more important and faster, and endowed with greater liveliness (*vigere*), like memory among the rest of the faculties of the mind" Isidore then moves to hearing, which " 'draws in' voices... or catches sounds when the air is reverberating" (232). Recall also the *Dialexeis*, which is based on an oral, dialectical method of receiving and processing information, and emphasized the role of similarities of sound in etymological exercises.

after sky, because one is elevated and high, as if the term were ‘celestial’ (*caelestis*)... A ‘celestial one’ (*caeles*) is so called because such a one directs his course to the sky (*caelum*). Celibate (*caelebs*), one having no part in marriage, of which kind are the numinous beings in heaven (*caelum*), who have no spouses – and *caelebs* is so called as if the term were ‘blessed in heaven’ (*caelo beatus*). Heavenly-dweller (*caelicola*), because they ‘dwell in heaven’ (*caelum colere*) – for that is an angel.

(Isidore 215)

Note the pointed repetition of *caelum* (sky/heaven), a word that acts as both a phonological and symbolically thematic thread which weaves together heaven, contemplation of the beauties of the celestial realm, the perpetually chaste, and angels. While not organized alphabetically *within* the letter category, it moves the mind of the reader from an awe-inspiring panoramic view of the heavens, to the actions available to profoundly devoted Christians that will bring them closer to heaven (such as castration, not included in the quote), to those who have attained perfect bliss (heaven-dwellers). The passage goes on to address such virtues as mercy (*clemens*), as well as other behavioural practices that befit and benefit the proper Christian. Each alphabetical category is further divided into these types of associated groupings, where negative nouns and adjectives seem to swirl and twist around each other, leading to worse and worse consequences, and virtuous words form a complementary stairway to heaven.

In Bokenham’s hagiographies, the etymologies place the saint’s name, and therefore the saint themselves, at the center of a network of associations, each node marking a useful lesson or image for the recollector. Voragine’s and then Bokenham’s

Cecilia also moves in a progression similar to Isidore's guided tour, from the simple yet effective memory image of a lily to the saint's actions as an example; her active and contemplative life accessible to both secular and lay people; her traits and behaviours as a mortal reflection or echo of the scientifically established properties of heaven; then finally to the complex idea of looking at *Cecilia* spiritually, in order to observe the same virtues that are physically represented in the heavens (the sun, moon and stars). The soundscape of *Cecilia*'s etymology acts as a kind of pilgrim's guide to a good life; a guide that can be mapped onto those physical aspects of the sky laden with symbolic meaning.

Bokenham thus follows Voragine and embraces the phonological possibilities of etymology outlined by Isidore, but other authors reacted differently to the patterns of sounds and imagery they found. While Caxton's later translation, based on versions of the *Legenda aurea* in Latin, French and English and maintaining Voragine's prose and straightforward style, is a literal and sparse treatment, Chaucer's version represents a verse expansion more ornate than Bokenham's but lacking an awareness of the mnemonic phonological aspect. Where both Bokenham and Voragine repeat those sounds central to their aural theme through alliteration and various rhymes, Chaucer's 34-line etymology disperses sound associations through his use of a structure perhaps more pedagogically clear and casual, but effectively devoid of mnemonic strategy beyond the structure of verse.⁶⁰ What is striking is that while Chaucer clearly had access to Voragine's *Legenda aurea* in some form, he chose to excerpt only the etymological

⁶⁰ Verse form most likely chosen for aesthetic reasons.

preface, taking the content of the life itself from a Franciscan abridgement of the full *Passio S. Caeciliae*.⁶¹

After declaring the final five stanzas to be the “[i]nterpretacio nominis Cecilie quam ponit Frater Jabocus Januensis in Legenda” (inserted between lines 84 and 85 of the Cecilia narrative), Chaucer proceeds to unfold before his audience a less repetitively structured etymology: the various meanings of ‘Cecilia’ are given entirely in English, with the single exception of Greek ‘laos’ (λαός, people); where Voragine, followed by Bokenham and Caxton, declare the several interpretations, and then explain them in order, Chaucer gives the explanation immediately, thus preventing the formation of any possible associations by inserting material in between interpretative labels. As Appendix C makes clear, despite the name ‘Cecilia’ punctuating four out of the five stanzas, Chaucer’s verse pays little attention to aural thematics. Additionally, where Voragine has presented five alternative interpretations, distinguished by ‘vel’ and indicative of the audience’s participative role in a Platonic selection of the most relevant or most mnemonically effective, Chaucer has left out this alternative marker in favour of the casually stated “Cecile may *EEK* be seyde *in this manere*” (SNP 99, emphasis mine), which effectively opens the door to the etymological exercise as a form of entertainment as opposed to a carefully constructed mode of mental training. The interpretations, though presented in the ‘manere’ developed by Isidore and Voragine, are now merely a passing series of interesting trivia. Chaucer’s final separation of himself from the rhetorical strategies of etymologizing come in his dismissal of Isidore’s *auctoritas* in the prologue’s final stanza: “right so as thise philosophres write / That hevne is swift and round and

⁶¹ As discussed by Sherry L. Reames in her 1990 article “A Recent Discovery concerning the Sources of Chaucer’s ‘Second Nun’s Tale.’”

eeke brennyng” (113-4). Voragine gives Isidore as the critical point of contact for information collected from ancient philosophers, and both Bokenham and Caxton follow suit.⁶² This allows us to conclude that while Chaucer, Bokenham and Caxton all had access to Voragine’s *Cecilia* etymology, only Bokenham can be shown to provide a translation and adaptation that includes identifiable influences from rhetorical mnemotechnics (specifically aural associative constructions).

As David Sedley notes of Plato’s view on etymologizing in the *Cratylus* dialogue, “[a]n etymological expert has to learn to detect the salient semantic or phonetic components of each name and to set aside the others” (Sedley np). Not only does Plato declare that etymology requires the expertise of a trained master to execute properly, he also distinguishes between the importance of initial sounds, or what we might also call the core or root of a word, and those syllables that fall afterwards. Where a certain amount of hesitancy enters the discussion is evident in Plato’s statement that each basic sound can have more than one signification, and that it is the role of the expert to draw out, based largely on context, the relevant meaning among the several possibilities. The highly subjective and loosely scientific nature of such etymologizing is one of Augustine’s concerns, which expands to a general discussion of the arbitrariness of language, a precursor to Ferdinand de Saussure’s concept of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. Bokenham addresses these concerns by pointedly avoiding doubling etymologies, a practice that Voragine enthusiastically takes part in. Where Voragine

⁶² “Vel dicitur coelum, quia, sicut dicit Ysidorus, coelum philosophi colubile, rotundum et ardens esse dixerunt” (Graesse 771); “For, as Isidorus us doth teche, / Heuene, aftyr phylosophys speche, / Is uoluble & euere turnyng, / Round, & ardently brennyng” (Bokenham *LHW* 7405-7); “For ysodore saith that the phylosophres sayen that heuen is meuable, rounde & brennyng” (Caxton 364).

treats identical or similar saints' names with various etymologies,⁶³ Bokenham is careful to employ etymological strategies as unique instances of the deep and immovable significance of each chosen name. As we have seen, Bokenham's etymologies are applied almost exclusively to saints of universal importance, like the apostles, and then to those figures who carry special weight either to Bokenham, such as Margaret, or to his East Anglian audience, such as Felix the bishop, or the virgin martyrs and other female saints.

1.3 Memory Images, Augustine, and the *Ad Herennium*: Lucy

Although Augustine certainly voiced concerns about the potentially limitless nature of etymologizing, he did acknowledge the usefulness of searching for the sources of certain words. In particular, Augustine felt that the pedagogic discourse of etymology, if controlled by the appropriate amount of curiosity, was a mainstay of any thorough education. In this, his views coincide with those of Quintilian, who cautioned that etymology be used sparingly, and was concerned that presenting etymology as an exact

⁶³ Approximately five or six names receive this etymological insistence: Thomas the Apostle (abyss, twofold, dividing/separating, total wanderer, my God), Thomas of Canterbury (depth, twofold, cut down) and Thomas Aquinas (abyss, twofold, divided, signatus sive consummatus); John the Apostle (grace of God, one in whom is God's grace, one to whom a gift is given, to whom a particular grace or favour is given by God) and John the Baptist (prophet, friend of the bridegroom, lamp, angel, voice, Elijah, baptizer of the Savior, herald of the judge, forerunner of the King) – John Almsgiver and John Chrysostom are also included, but only their secondary names are treated; Felix (*in Pincis* for his resting place, or *pinca*, 'stylus', for what he was stabbed to death with) and Felicianus (*felix* + *anus*, a happy old man) – here, we see that the only etymological treatment Bokenham applies to a 'Felix' is the saint local to East Anglia; Remy (one who feeds the earth-dwellers with sound doctrine, shepherd who wrestles) and Remy (a pilot, oars, struggle); James the lesser (one who causes to fall, trips someone who is in a hurry, one who prepares, divine weight, cut down with lances) and James the greater (giving/given, spiritual and physical brother of John, son of thunder, the greater) – as with the various 'John's' Voragine concentrates on titles or additional names; and finally, Christopher (*Christo-phoros*, Christ-bearer) and Christina (*chrismate uncta*, anointed with chrism).

science grants the practice not only authority but an impression of indispensability in the understanding of language and meaning (Amsler 15).

Augustine sought to reconcile the use of etymology within pedagogical dialectic by recommending the practice only as a means of defining words that are potential sites of confusion or disagreement between speakers or authors and their audiences. Recall the earlier discussion of Augustine's tetrad, where the *dictio* (a word employed in the service of signifying something in the mind) brings into the mind of the hearer the *dicibile* (not the word itself, but the concept of that which the word signifies as it exists in the mind).⁶⁴ Now, within this model of language and communication, the *dicibile* is in danger of irrelevant and infinite regress if used in the context of strictly grammatical etymology. If words (*verbum*, *verba*) are used merely to explain the roots of other words, which in turn require the same etymological examination, the exercise quickly descends into linguistic futility. However, if the explanation is meant to be read allegorically as part of a rhetorical strategy, and the origins sought are spiritual in nature, the etymological project graduates, in Augustine's eyes, from *verbum* to *dictio* and *dicibile*.

Bokenham displays a modified concern regarding etymological practices and spiritual implications. For example, he rejects the universal application of prefatory etymologies supported by Isidore and Voragine in favour of a selective process that dominantly targets figures of both widespread and local devotion.⁶⁵ In addition, Bokenham avoids repeating etymologies for similar or identical names; where Voragine gives etymological explanations for three saintly Thomases (the apostle, Becket, and

⁶⁴ Also recall *res* as the real, extra-linguistic object, and *verbum* as a word uttered for its own sake (Amsler 47).

⁶⁵ Again, for this selective preference, see Figure 1.1 above, p. 28.

Aquinas), Bokenham treats the apostle exclusively. While this would indicate sensitivity to the potential chaos of liberal and literal etymologizing, Bokenham also inserts definitions of non-critical words, a practice that culminates in his *Mappula Angliae*.⁶⁶

Where Bokenham's hagiographic etymologies show the influence of both Augustine and the memory images of the *Ad Herennium* is in the several instances of particularly imagistic constructions, such as in the lives of Saints Lucy and Margaret. This method of etymologizing is focused not on the sense of hearing, as with the *Cecilia* examples, but is instead aimed at the faculty of imagination— that is, what processes sensory information and forms it into digestible images to be stored in the memory. In the Introduction, I spoke briefly about the role of memory images in the strategies of the *ars memoria*, and I will now examine how Bokenham uses a second type of etymologizing to develop a group of mnemonically effective narratives.

Bokenham's life of Saint Lucy survives in both British Library MS Arundel 327 (edited by Mary Serjeantson as *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*) and incompletely⁶⁷ in the *Legenda Aurea* manuscript (currently held in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, Scotland). The etymology is almost identical to Voragine's, with two notable exceptions: where Voragine introduces Ambrose's commentary on the nature of light with "[l]ux enim habet pulchritudinem in aspectione," or, 'light is certainly beautiful to look upon' (Graesse 29), Bokenham declines to offer this interpretation. However, a few lines later, in answer to Voragine's "Lucia habuit decorum virginitatis" he writes that "Lucye had þe beute of virgynyte" (*LHW* 8956), which suggests a direct connection between her beauty

⁶⁶ This text will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

⁶⁷ The *Legenda aurea* is missing the beginning of Lucy's legend, picking up at line 9039 in *LHW*, roughly 92 lines into the life. This section would also have included the etymology that I would argue was originally present.

and her body's virginal state instead of Voragine's subtle parallel between the beauty and grace of light and the saint's virginity.⁶⁸

Inconsistencies such as these are not uncommon in Bokenham's treatments of his sources, although it is unusual for Bokenham to pass up parallel points in his construction of the etymology's explanation. The only other change made to Voragine's text is the shifting of a final etymological option: "Vel Lucia dicitur quasi lucis via," 'or Lucy is to say light's way' (Graesse 30). Instead of placing this awkwardly in the final sentence, as in Voragine, and unaccompanied by a contextualizing explanation, Bokenham chooses to insert this additional option into his closing prayer in the prologue's final stanza, where he traditionally repeats either the most significant or all of the interpretations.⁶⁹ If Voragine's final sentence, quoted above, lends an abrupt finality to his etymological preface, Bokenham's adaptation of his source's model acts as a transition that both delivers an alternative meaning and prepares his audience for the life to follow by drawing a connection between the grace-filled light and its protective strength.

The etymology itself is fairly straightforward and in fact, it is one of the simplest interpretations. The name "Lucy" comes from Latin *lux*, *luce* meaning "light," and it is the properties of this grace-infused light that make up the entire etymology:

⁶⁸ Bokenham chooses to associate beauty primarily with Lucy herself, and not light on its own. This emphasis on Lucy's physical appearance contributes to this etymology's overall focus on mental imagery.

⁶⁹ The final stanza reads:

Now, blyssyd lucye, wych clepyd art lyht
 Or lyhtys weye, by a synguler propyrte
 Of specyal grace, whom so greth myht
 The holy gost yaf, þat in no degre
 To þe bordelhous myht not drawyn þe
 A thowsend men, with oxyn many a peyre. (*LHW* 8963-8)

Lvcye of 'lyht', aftyr Ianuencys purpose,
 Takyth þe name by dyryuacyoun;
 For the kynde of lyht ys, as seyth Ambrose,
 That in syht þer-of ys gracyous consolacyoun,
 It dyfffoundyth⁷⁰ þe self wyth-oute inquynacyoun,⁷¹
 It ryht furth procedyth wyth-owte crokydnesse,
 And a long lyne wyth-owte morous⁷² dylacyoun
 Ful redyly yt passyth, for þe greth swyftnesse. (*LHW* 8947-54)

This stanza suggests to its audience that at one end of a line of light is the saint, and at the other end, its source, God. This effectively reiterates the idea, again underlined by words like 'dyryuacyoun,' that the linguistic history performed by the etymological exercise has its counterpart in the divine grace that travels between a heavenly point of origin and the spiritual descendant, one of Christ's brides: Saint Lucy. Readers or hearers of this legend are encouraged to form an image of Lucy's light in their minds through a series of descriptions: the sight of it grants gracious consolation; its beams are unadulterated by shadow; it travels in a straight line, swiftly pursuing the righteous path without delay or distraction.

The striking imagery of this passage echoes a section in book X of Augustine's *Confessions*, in which he "come[s] into the fields and spacious palaces of [his] memory, where are treasures of countless images of things of every manner, brought there from objects perceived by sense" (*Confessions* X.viii). Here, he sifts through the store of

⁷⁰ MED "difffounden," diffuses. The only two attestations in Middle English are here and in Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae*.

⁷¹ MED "inquinacioun," defilement. Only attestation recorded.

⁷² L *morosa*, retarding, time-consuming.

images in search of God, describing how he can examine sensory experiences and ideas as though he were flipping through documents in a filing cabinet. Augustine concludes that the “abiding light” (X.xl) of divine love and truth is what he uses to scrutinize each image, and this spiritual flashlight represents a line of connection in very much the same way that Bokenham’s Saint Lucy is described as a personification of heavenly enlightenment and grace. When Augustine laments, in X.xxxiv (“Custody of the Eyes”) that while he yearns for the light that Tobias, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph⁷³ saw with their spiritual eyes, he struggles to direct his appreciation for worldly light past its own corporeal beauty towards its maker. In the “Lucy” etymology, the audience moves from the name to the properties of the spiritual light which *luce* represents; only after a memory image has been established does the etymology then move into a discussion of the light’s physical counterparts, such as Lucy’s virginity, charity and good works. In typical form, Bokenham ends his etymological prologue, as noted above, with a final prayer, which directs the audience’s attention once more to meditate on Lucy as ‘lyhtys weye,’ and to mentally follow her lit path as it guides their prayers heavenward.

1.4 Christian Grammatical Discourse and Sacred Onomastics: Bokenham’s Apostles

When in the late fourth century Saint Jerome wrote his *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum*, or The Interpretation of Hebrew Names, he was engaged in sacred onomastics: the study of and search for the origin of proper names in scripture. The Patristic writers usually applied onomastics to names from the Old, rather than the

⁷³ For Tobias, see Tobias 4:2-4; for Isaac, see Genesis 27:1-40; for Jacob and Joseph, see Genesis 48:11-22.

New Testament, in order to demonstrate the connections between and continuity of Judaism and Christianity (Amsler 83). Jerome, Isidore and others, taking a Christian interpretation of Plato's naturalist perspective,⁷⁴ believed that a person's name carried a meaning that could even be prophetic. This interpretation has been applied to Abram's change of name to Abraham,⁷⁵ or Saul to Paul the apostle, among other instances, where a new calling or dramatic life change is reflected in a new and etymologically appropriate name. In fact, we see in the Christian creation narrative several instances of originary naming, such as God's assignment of words for the basic elements of the world: "And God saw the light that it was good; and he divided the light from the darkness. And he called the light Day and the darkness Night" (Gen. 1:4-5), followed by 'Heaven' for the firmament, 'Earth' for the dry land, and 'seas' for the waters.⁷⁶

Instances of sacred onomastics appear throughout the Bible, such as in Matthew 1:21-23 "thou shalt call his name Jesus. For he shall save his people from their sins... Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God is with us," but frequently, biblical names are assigned interpretations based on either literal or allegorical context, quite divorced from any technical linguistic perspective.⁷⁷ Onomastics itself, however, is grounded in early instances of etymologies of proper names, such as in Homer, Ovid, and other

⁷⁴ See the discussion of Plato's *Cratylus* above.

⁷⁵ Genesis 17: 4-5 "And God said to him: I AM, and my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name be called any more Abram: but thou shalt be called Abraham: because I have made thee a father of many nations."

⁷⁶ Genesis 1:8-10.

⁷⁷ Additionally, in Genesis 29:32-30:20, Leah/Lia names her six sons in etymologically significant ways: 'Reuben' means 'son of the vision'; Leah said "The Lord saw my affliction. Now my husband will love me." Simeon, her second son, is called 'the hearing' because "God heard [Leah]". Levi, her third son, means 'the added one' because upon delivering him, Leah said "Now also my husband will be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons" and so on (see also Isidore, 165).

ancient authors. Phonological similarities and associations dominate the Grecian influence of the Stoics, and etymological explication is motivated for the most part by allegorical modes of thought, whereas the Alexandrian focus on technical linguistics and grammar finds its counterpart in the semantic Hebrew onomastics of Philo and others. Bokenham's treatment of Voragine's etymologies demonstrates a conscious negotiation of various methods and motivations drawn from the history of etymology.

Varro, who directly informs Isidore's *Etymologiae*, is oriented by grammar and rhetoric, as well as the less 'scientific' Stoic desire to use etymology as a way to understand the world, and was of the opinion that "ultimately, what matters is not whether the two words are morphologically related but how they shed light on each other's meaning" (Del Bello 91). The "quartus gradus etymologiae" developed by Varro in his *De Lingua Latina* reconciles the Stoic and Alexandrian models from a metalinguistic perspective (Del Bello 85). The ease with which Varro sifted through etymological approaches in order to create his own method of inquiry is in some ways reflected in Bokenham's work; he draws on the phonology of the Greeks, the semantics of the Hebrew tradition, and the mottled synthesis of the Latinate techniques where most effective. I will continue to demonstrate the flexibility of such a method by examining the etymologies of some of Bokenham's apostles, beginning with Thomas.

As mentioned earlier, Voragine's generous and somewhat cavalier approach to the application of etymology would have come under fire from almost all of the prominent figures addressed so far; Socrates' gleeful excess of both naturalist and conventionalist approaches in *Cratylus* is Plato's way of cautioning against extreme and unthinking use of any method. Quintilian, noting the scientific authority claimed by

enthusiastic proponents of etymology, cautioned that “the science of etymology is not to be used except in doubtful cases, ... [because] etymological discourse *claims* to open the opaque text in an authoritative way and represents itself as necessary for a proper understanding of language and meaning” (Amsler 15). Quintilian was concerned with the way in which etymology was performed: rearranging words, taking out, adding or changing letters, syllables etc. While Voragine is either dismissive of or somehow unaware of these and similar criticisms, Bokenham’s sensitivity to problematic aspects of etymologizing is nowhere more evident than in his treatment of the name “Thomas.”

Isidore’s brief onomastic section in book VII (God, Angels and Saints) chapter vi (people who receive their name from a certain presaging) draws on Jerome and begins with the first humans, Adam and Eve, while declaring that the following etymological treatments will be literal in nature, as opposed to mystical or spiritual (162). This makes Isidore a useful point of comparison in order to come to grips with what Bokenham’s treatment of Voragine’s material might mean. Thomas (the apostle), Isidore explains, means “the abyss” or “the twin,” which in Greek is *Didymus* (169). This single line is the theme on which Voragine produces variations, which Bokenham in turn expands further. Voragine turns these two interpretations into five: abyss; twofold (*didimus* in Greek); a dividing or separating (*thomos*); a total wanderer (*totus means*); God (*theos*) and my (*meus*), as in “My Lord and my God.” Thomas is called “abyss” because of his insight into the depths of God’s being; “twofold” because he knew and believed Christ’s resurrection by both sight and touch; “dividing” or “separating” either because he

separated his heart from worldly affection or because he set himself apart from the other disciples when he refused to believe Christ had risen (Ryan 1.29-30).⁷⁸

When Bokenham adapts the “Thomas” etymology for his legendary, he in fact maintains five interpretations, but alters Voragine’s version: he gives “botomelees depthe” (abyss); “hool passyng” (*totus means*); “diuyded” (divided); “douteful” (doubtful); and “doublid” (twofold) (*Legenda aurea* 28).⁷⁹ After his initial declaration of interpretations, Bokenham states that “al thise propirtees mow be shewid by the gospel conveyently to pertene to hym” (*LA* 28), which implies a discomfort with the authority of Voragine’s offerings. Bokenham’s first interpretation, “abyss,” is supported by the same passage that Voragine uses⁸⁰ but he also includes the surrounding verses as a contextualizing and mnemonic aid, perhaps for lay audiences. Bokenham then disrupts his source’s order by inserting *totus means* into second place, and then reassigning the translation and explication: where Voragine offered “total wanderer” for Thomas, as a figure who was completely outside of himself in his love for and contemplation of God, and supported this with a quote from Prosper’s *On the Contemplative Life*, Bokenham suggests that Thomas was “wholly passing” the other disciples in his fervent love and affection for Christ, and “as witnessith the gospell” (28) this is demonstrated in the book of John⁸¹ where, as Bokenham explains, Thomas exhorted the disciples to offer themselves up to die with their master when he heard that the Jews were conspiring to kill Christ in Judea. The sense remains the same, but the *auctoritas* of scripture, very

⁷⁸ The five Latin interpretations: abyssus, geminus (Greek didimus), divisio/sectio (thomos), totus means, theos + meus (Graesse 32).

⁷⁹ Bokenham’s *Thomas* etymology is included as Appendix B.

⁸⁰ John 14:6

⁸¹ John 11:16, “Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples: Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

much in the style of Jerome and Augustine, is much more reliable, persuasive and mnemonically effective than Prosper's relatively unfamiliar text.

Voragine's "divided" assigns to Thomas an active role in his absence for the resurrected Christ's apparition to the disciples in John 20, suggesting somewhat disapprovingly that in setting himself apart from the others, Thomas was left out of the visitation. Both Bokenham and Caxton rephrase this particular interpretation in order to portray Thomas as either entirely blameless or in fact more blessed than the others. Bokenham achieves this initially through subtle wording, where, as he writes, because the disciples shut the gates for fear of the Jews, Thomas "sawe not criste liche as diden othir disciples" (28).⁸² This is followed by Bokenham's insertion of an additional interpretation –one that has survived in the expression 'doubting Thomas'– Thomas was 'doubtful' when upon his return, the apostles told him that they had seen Christ. Although Voragine seems to frown upon Thomas' initial absence, and the wording of the scripture is itself ambivalent, Bokenham goes on to explain that Thomas' absence and doubt was not "of casuelte"⁸³ (a random or chance happenstance) but "by the eternal prouidence of goddis mercyful benygnite, which by his hard bileve and doute wolde deliveren vs from al maner diffidence of his resurreccion and mysbileve and doute" (*LA* 28).

⁸² Similarly, Caxton writes that Thomas "was departed fro the other appostles at the Resurreccion" (*The Goldene Legende*, Lii).

⁸³ Incidentally, this instance of the word, from Old French and Medieval Latin, might be the earliest attestation, and is not recorded in the *Middle English Dictionary*. Cf. Bokenham's *Lyf of S. Anneys* line 4445, which uses 'casuelte' in the *MED*'s 2.b. sense: an untoward event, misfortune.

Finally, Bokenham arrives at “doubled” which goes beyond Voragine’s literal explanation⁸⁴ to an expression of Thomas’ increased faith, which was then established and confirmed both in feeling and seeing, upon which the apostle then declared “*Deus meus & dominus meus*” and a statement of “my feith and my bileve” (28). This incorporates the isolated interpretation (*theos + meus*) that closes Voragine’s section, almost as an afterthought, and uses the scriptural reference as a support to “doubled.” Bokenham’s rearrangement and adaptation of Voragine displays the meticulous attention to factual evidence that comes out of the Alexandrian and Hebraic etymological methods, paired with the spiritually meaningful approach of the Stoics.

Ever conscious of both mnemonic strategies and the etymological concerns of Augustine and Quintilian, Bokenham gives Thomas and several other apostles this same treatment,⁸⁵ while avoiding the potential confusion and disastrous efforts at meditative recollection that would result from doubling etymologies of identical or even similar names. We see this in Voragine, who treats Thomas of Canterbury and possibly also Thomas Aquinas.⁸⁶ Voragine’s second Thomas (of Canterbury) means *abyssus* (abyss, or depth) in his profound humility, clearly shown in his wearing of a hair shirt and washing the feet of the poor; *geminus* (twofold) in his prelacy, when he taught by both word and

⁸⁴ Doubled or twofold because he came to know and believe Christ’s resurrection both by sight and touch.

⁸⁵ For example, in the life of John the apostle and Evangelist, Bokenham elaborates on Voragine’s etymology by inserting material from Jerome and Isidore that serves to further establish John’s four privileges (*LA* 36). In the lives of both Peter and Paul, Bokenham includes additional material from scriptures, a sermon by Gregory, and more Latin, Greek and occasionally Syrian (Peter *LA* 232; Paul *LA* 238).

⁸⁶ Ryan assigns the life of Thomas Aquinas to the section of legends that circulated with, but are only attributed to, Voragine. This Thomas is interpreted as *abyssus*, in his profound knowledge and wisdom; *geminus* in his intelligence and devotion; *divisus* from worldly vanity and pomp, leading instead a devoted religious life; *signatus/consummatus* (*Thau meus*) marked out/complete/perfect in his virtues and in perfectly doing God’s work (Graesse 918).

example; or *sectus* (cut)⁸⁷ as he was cut down in his martyrdom (Graesse 67). While Bokenham makes use of the same elements that are a part of various etymological interpretations, such as *ana* (above), he carefully avoids duplication of proper names, which sets him apart from the traditions of Voragine and Isidore.

The etymologies for Bokenham's apostles reflect a preference for scriptural support, incorporate more grammatical elements, and seem to insist on the audience's clear understanding. Perhaps this anxiety of delivering unerring comprehension is due to the well-established Christian tradition behind the treatment of these particular names; as Amsler observes, "the Christian interpreter searched for the origins of words to comprehend the origin of creation and, like the Stoics, to recover the cradle of reality and language. Calling things by their proper names at once articulated a full knowledge and repeated divine creation" (Amsler 84). Throughout his legendary, Bokenham is torn between the aesthetics of secular rhetoric and the power of the plain Christian message, and the Austin friar strikes out from both sides in short passages and scattered lines. This confusion of stylistic, philosophical and intellectual allegiances testifies to the mixed reception of rhetoric and etymology in the late medieval period, where poetic etymologies in particular fall under scornful scrutiny through the encroaching influences of continental humanism.

Etymology's place in mnemonics, according to Bokenham, is to unfold the meaning(s) of holy names, using the clearest method of interpretation: Stoic homophony, Augustinian imagery, or Hebraic-Jeromian grammatical exegesis. These methods access the memory through the ear, the eye and the intellect, respectively, and Bokenham

⁸⁷ Caxton translates *sectus* as the much more graphic "trenched & hewen" (Lxiii).

evaluates each saint's name and legend in order to select the appropriate etymological strategy for his mnemonic narrative. Bokenham adjusts for his prospective audience, writing in verse for commissioned works as well as lives he hoped would interest patrons, employing the more accessible visual and aural mnemonic etymologies for popular –and particularly female– saints, and switching to the more formal, intellectually and linguistically sophisticated lives of the apostles, no doubt with monastically trained readers in mind.

1.5 Late Medieval Practice of Etymology: Application and Development

Isidore, Jerome, and Varro, amongst others, have developed their own formulas for etymological work, and these range from the alphabetical organization and dominantly literal interpretations offered in the *Etymologiae*, to Augustine's and Jerome's specific *quia/quod* markers of allegorical or otherwise non-grammatical explanations. Appendix C demonstrates how keenly authors like Voragine, Bokenham, Caxton and even Chaucer were aware of and able to adhere to strict patterns of *interpretatio*. Indeed, there is an established tradition that produced strategies seen in use not only in Bokenham but made more evident in relation to the work of another contemporary; John Capgrave.

Although both Bokenham and Capgrave wrote their lives of Saint Gilbert at the same time and from similar sources, the two authors responded differently when faced with an opportunity for etymologizing. Capgrave's text, completed in 1451, opens with a greeting to Nicholas Reysby, the master of Sempringham, and after the usual modest declaration of motivation and intent moves into an etymology:

Of þe interpretacion of his name, what it schuld mene in Englisch, for we haue it not redily in our bokes of interpretaciones, we wil speke in swech maner as auctouris which dyuyde names in partes. Gyla, þei sey, is a word of Hebrew, as mech to sey as he þat passeth fro o cuntre to another. And ber⁸⁸ is a welle, or a pitte, eke deruyed [sic] fro þe Ebrewe tunge. Tus⁸⁹ is a Lateyn word, in Englisch a swete gumme, which we þrowe in our encenseris whan we schal doo a special honour to God. Thanne soundith his name thus on-to our heryng: This holy man was a walker here in erde þat passed fro þe welle on-to þe swete sauour. The welle clepe I þe holy baptem in which he was wasch fro Adam his synne. The swete sauour name I þe holy opynyon of this man which sauoured so swetely in þis land þat it mad many men to selle al þat þei had and folow þe steppes of pouerte.⁹⁰ (Capgrave 61-2)

Capgrave's 'bokes of interpretaciones' are intriguing, and it is tempting to consider the possible existence of a manual containing a compilation of meaningful name elements similar to the list in Appendix A, perhaps accompanied by relevant excerpts from scripture and other useful authorities. The comment implies, however, that because his interpretive resources of choice are unavailable, Capgrave will resort to the method of some authors, who locate meaning through a dissection of names into analyzable parts. Hence the multi-lingual Gyla+ber+tus, which Capgrave declares must *sound* to us, in

⁸⁸ באר in Hebrew.

⁸⁹ *MED* "thus" (n.) from Latin 'tus,' 'thus.' Frankincense tree; an aromatic gum resin, frankincense.

⁹⁰ At this point, Capgrave inserts the scriptural authority of 2 Corinthians 2:15-16 "For we are the good odour of Christ unto God, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one indeed the odour of death unto death: but to the others the odour of life unto life."

English, as the literal translation of those discrete pieces: a man who passes from + the well + to the sweet scent.

Since the audience is now capable of hearing the literal components of ‘Gilbert,’ all that remains for Capgrave to do is deliver the scriptural support for the spiritual sense of an ‘odour,’ and his interpretation of the name’s significance to the saint’s life. What is particularly remarkable about this part of the passage is the personal tone: the well, “clepe I,” is the baptismal font, and the sweet scent, “name I,” is men’s powerful opinion of Gilbert. Not only these singular pronouns, but the use throughout of ‘we,’ ‘us,’ and ‘our’ reinforces the notion of a Christian community of readers, cooperatively coming to understand this name. Capgrave also promises to include any relevant information that comes to his mind as he writes (62), in addition to what he gleaned from the local Gilbertines.

The organic nature of this life of Gilbert and the ease with which the etymology is executed stands in stark contrast to Bokenham’s version, which begins: “Seynt Gilbert an english man fadir and foundour of the ordre of Sympryngham was borne in the shire of Lincolne and in the forseid toun of Sympryngham” (*LA* 111). Two contemporaries, both Austin friars educated at Cambridge, chose to write lives of Saints Cecilia, Augustine and Gilbert; but where Capgrave diligently applied etymological principles to the local Saint Gilbert, Bokenham pointedly does not. Voragine, and to a certain extent, Capgrave, methodically attach etymologies to many of their saints, but Bokenham only applies these mnemonic prefaces to saints of particular importance to his audience.⁹¹

⁹¹ Note Figure 1.1 above, which demonstrates a consistency in Bokenham’s use of etymologies that privileges apostles, virgin martyrs, certain female saints, and church doctors.

As another point of comparison, Capgrave and Bokenham each give an etymology for Saint Augustine that consists of three basic interpretations: Augustine is named after Augustus, the most excellent emperor; August is the hottest month, and Augustine burns in charity and fervent love of the Lord; ‘Augustine’ is made up of *augeo* (to increase), *ana* (above) and *astim* (a city), meaning the saint’s virtues, life and works served to raise the glory of heaven. While Capgrave includes only the reference to Augustine’s own work, Bokenham’s version contains various authorities that confirm each interpretation, such as Remigius, Daniel 12:3, Augustine’s own *Confessions*, and an unnamed glossary that adds another interpretive trio (*LA* 328). Although Capgrave states that etymology “is cleped in gramer þe trewe exposicion of a word” (Capgrave 2), Bokenham is clearly treating it not as a mere rhetorical exercise, but as a mnemonic interpretive method for attracting the thoughtful consideration of his readers.

1.6 Conclusion

Bokenham’s selective incorporation of Voragine’s copious etymologies to his legendary reveals his sophisticated understanding of mnemotechnics as well as his awareness that a single rigid and potentially complex mnemonic strategy applied to all saints’ lives could overwhelm readers. Etymologizing the more popular saints whose name components represent interesting and dramatic ideas or events ensures that this moralization of linguistic elements is a spiritually beneficial exercise as well as a memorable one. If, however, it is the etymologist’s task “to revive possible sets of historical or mythological conditions that make up the *semantic script* of a given name... [and to retrace] various rhetorical routes that might have led, tropologically, to the

condensation of a given meaning into its form” (Del Bello 63), how might this approach, used as it is in Bokenham as a mnemonic strategy, be adapted to instances where etymologies are either unavailable or inadequate? A significant number of local saints’ lives in Bokenham’s legendary are added from sources other than Voragine, and of the close to twenty, only one has a distinct etymology: Felix, Bishop of East Anglia. The others, whose names are largely Germanic,⁹² contain neither etymologies nor any manner of attempts at linguistic dissection.⁹³ Chapters Three and Four will examine Bokenham’s strategies for these mostly male local saints whose narratives rely on geographical or genealogical forms of origin-tracing, whereas this next chapter will explore the lives of virgin martyrs and how Bokenham uses memory images largely in tandem with etymologies to emphasize or even bring more meaning to the violence or eroticism of these already memorable narratives.

⁹² Local saints in Bokenham’s legendary with Germanic names include Wulfstan, Gilbert, Cedde, Dunstan, Aldhelm, Botolph, Æthelthryth, Wilfrid, and Winifrid (the Edward and Oswald narratives are presumed lost although their names are Germanic in origin).

⁹³ These English saints’ lives reveal an author concerned with mnemonics, the *auctoritas* of origins, and the reputation of local saints. Bokenham adapts the etymological models displayed in his other legends to a general approach to establishing roots: genealogy and geography. Chapters Three and Four will discuss the mnemonic roles of sacred space and of lineage, respectively, in the context of Bokenham’s local saints and his *Mappula Angliae*.

2. Saintly Bodies: The Mnemonic Flesh of Virgin Martyrs

*My sister, my spouse is as a garden enclosed, as a spring shut up,
and a fountain sealed up*

Song of Solomon 4:12

2.1 Introduction to Virgin Martyrs

A dramatic proliferation of devotional art that occurred in the late medieval period both in England and throughout Europe created what can be called, according to Sarah Stanbury, an image culture. Saints appeared on chantry altars, on murals, on painted screens and wooden panels, in statues, embroidery, paintings, and windows. As Stanbury notes, the “desire to see, expressed so insistently in late medieval religious lyrics and dream-vision poetry, might even have been voiced, in part, as a response to a culture of images and their strategic deployment in liturgical spectacle” (5). Stanbury describes this desire to see as a force that is both spiritual and erotic, and the experience of looking or gazing as one that engages with the soul while existing inescapably in the realm of the senses. The connection between spiritual and emotional desire and its fulfillment through the mnemonic saintly body is the main focus of this chapter, which seeks to demonstrate Bokenham’s use, or in fact exploitation, of the affective and frequently erotic potential of imagery in virgin martyr narratives.

Writing during this period of devotional practice alongside the increased and widespread production of devotional art, Bokenham was sensitive to the potential for increased patronage and was able to take advantage of this shift from conceiving of the saint as distant and unknowable religious icon to having more personal and highly visual

encounters with these holy figures. His hagiography uses a distinct descriptive pattern to deal with the bodies of the saints and the violence enacted on them that is most common in the lives and deaths of the virgin martyrs; specifically, young female virgin martyrs.

Religious virginity may not have been widely practiced in the late Middle Ages, but it continued to be highly revered in the narratives of most hagiographers, perhaps largely due to the high number of female saints who were virgins. In order to understand why so many saints in the first few centuries of Christianity were virgins, and why long after the popularity of the practice declined fervent devotion and emotional attachment to the figure of the virgin persisted, I will briefly address early religious virginity and late medieval perceptions of it.

In Bokenham's lives of Saints Nereus⁹⁴ and Achilleus, who were martyred around 80 CE, a young pagan noblewoman named Flavia is converted and pledges her virginity to Christ after the saints preach to her against marriage. In addition to noting that a consecrated virgin is as close to God as are wives to husbands, and as close to angels as are sisters to brothers, they warn Flavia that wives are compelled to obey their husbands even against their own wishes, and that they are "often beten *with* her fystis and spurned with her heelis, and han moch peyn and travaile with bryngyng forth of children, and sometyme *para*uenture bryng forth monstritous and diffigured children" (*LA* 204). In response to Flavia's question about the general nature of husbands, Nereus and Achilleus reveal that "al men in tyme of spousail arn benygne and ientle but ful many whan thei ben a while marites thei cruelly behau[e] hem to her wyves and ful often preferren and

⁹⁴ Voragine says Nereus' name means "counsel of light," explaining that the saint was "a counsel of light by his preaching of virginity" (trans. Ryan 1.309), and although Bokenham does not include this etymology, the omission is consistent with his strategic deployment of etymologies as a mnemonic device particular to prestigious male saints like the apostles.

cherish her handmaidens by her” (204). Given this view of marriage, it is no wonder that Flavia and her contemporaries looked outside of marriage for spiritual fulfillment. Cloistering, asceticism and other practices offered a relatively independent alternative for young women who found such prospects of oppression, abuse and suffering in marriage as described above particularly distasteful.

Peter Brown describes virgins from the third century on as piling up “like pack-ice” around Christian communities whose families were discouraged from marrying their children to those outside the faith, since many of the young men of these same communities had answered the call to become priests, monks, hermits, or any of the other various religious occupations available to them (192, 191). For the parents of Christian girls in particular, the trouble of finding a financially advantageous husband was alleviated by the gravitation of young women to a union with Christ that was celebrated, glorified, protected and –importantly– funded, at least in part, by the Church.

However, as Brown also notes, the significant number of virgin girls and women drew the specific and hostile attention of surrounding pagan authorities to the point that, in the persecutions of the third century, “attempts at sexual violence against dedicated women and threats of condemnation to brothels (and no longer, simply, the threat of shameful execution) came to feature as a regular aspect” in both life and hagiographical legend (192). In late medieval England there were few, if any, non-Christians, and while there were a number of women’s religious houses, the ratio of Christian women living as dedicated virgins to women living ‘in the world’ was significantly different from the explosion of the early centuries of the faith. Texts such as the thirteenth century *Ancrene Wisse* demonstrate a deep concern with controlling and regulating the behaviour of

consecrated virgins while simultaneously emphasizing the supposedly overwhelming erotic power of their bodies. The suggestion that even a glimpse of the anchoress' hand through a deep-set, narrow, latticed window slit would be enough to arouse unwary passers-by speaks to the level of potent sensuality invested in the visual impact of virginal maidens in literature above and beyond hagiographical narratives.⁹⁵

As the bodies of female virgins came to be equated with the body of the Church, a greater emphasis was placed on inviolate virginity in late medieval hagiography (Kelly 42). Indeed, the impossibly tenacious and resilient Saint Christina withstands tortures so increasingly gruesome that the sight of her broken body prompts the women of Tyre to exclaim “o juge, þi decre / Is wroung & wrocht ful vnrychtfully, / For in [þis] mayde als mych as in þe / All wommen þou confoundyst utirly” (*LHW* 2751-4); the bodies of virgin martyrs have the potential to stand in not only for the Church as representatives of Christianity but also, as in the eloquent rebuke from the women of Tyre, for all women. At the same time that the miraculous power, intellect and eloquence of virgin martyrs was glorified and elaborated on, a diminished sense of the menace of actual rape is evident in these narratives; instead, the persecutors are merely puzzled, or even driven out of their wits trying to find ways not to rape but to obtain willing consent. The powerful prefect Olibrius in Bokenham's life of Margaret, stricken by the saint's great beauty, is devastated to hear his men's report that she is a Christian: “He chaungyd bothen colour and chere, / And as a man mad anoon he ferd” (*LHW* 506-7). After confirming the case directly with her, he “wex ner wood” (527) and orders her shut up in prison, “[e]uere musynge in his marryd mood / How and be what maner of sotylte / He

⁹⁵ See *Ancrene Wisse*, Part II (The Five Senses), particularly lines 101-3 and 192-3.

myht bereuy[n] hyre hyr *virginyte*” (530-2). Although Olibrius has the power and authority to command his men to commit general as well as sexual violence, Margaret’s status as both Christian and virgin scares him and forces him to consider how he might deprive her of her virginity through subtle conniving.

Perhaps Olibrius had heard stories similar to the life of Agnes, which contains the best known and most graphic attempted rape, as well as one of the most detailed and sensual descriptions of the ‘ghostly’ physical encounters between consecrated virgin and holy spouse. The tyrannous prefect, whose son lusted after Agnes, commanded that the saint be stripped and brought to a brothel to be defiled. After hearing that Agnes was stationed in the brothel, the son “hym fast hastyd to þe seyð plas, / Hopyng with hyre in hasty wyse / Hys fleshys foul lust to excercyse” (*LHW* 4411-13); he broke in upon the praying saint with “malapert & irreuerent” presumption only to “suddeynly doun fel up- on hys face, / And þe deuyl hym stranglyd in þat place” (4423, 4426-7).⁹⁶ Female virgin martyrs become, in a way, the superheroes of hagiographical narrative by the sheer seeming impossibility of their triumphant navigation through the most brutal tortures imaginable, and through the miracle of their contradictory physical forms: consecrated virginity enables the weak female vessel to become enriched with physical and intellectual superiority. Bokenham takes advantage of the extreme and compelling circumstances of the virgin martyr legend to craft mnemonically effective narratives through both overt and subtle changes to his source texts. Chapter One discussed

⁹⁶ The miraculous powers of Christian virgins existed primarily, it seems, to defend their holy virginities- like Cecilia’s guardian angel who is ready to attack any man who attempts to lay unchaste hands on the saint. For example, Voragine’s Cecilia warns her new spouse: “I have a lover, an angel of God, who watches over my body with exceeding zeal. If my angel senses that you are touching me with lust in your heart, he will strike you and you will lose the flower of your gracious youth” (trans. Ryan 2.319).

Bokenham's strategic use of etymology and noted his preference for pairing virgin martyrs with etymologies as well as with other mnemonics such as genealogies, or verse form instead of prose. This chapter examines how, due to the highly visual nature of late medieval devotion and the increase in the popularity of female –and mostly virgin martyr– saints, Bokenham's virgin martyr narratives also incorporate one of *ars memoria*'s main elements: the memory image.

2.2 Mnemonic Bodies: *Ars Memoria* and Female Virgin Martyrs

The contrast between beauty and violence present in the narrative of every virgin martyr adheres to medieval interpretations of memory image creation. Fourteenth-century academic theologian and Augustinian Thomas Bradwardine addresses memory images in *De memoria artificiali acquirenda* (*On Acquiring a Trained Memory*), when, before giving a few extremely violent examples using zodiac signs, he writes:

their nature should be wondrous and intense, because such things are impressed in memory more deeply and are better retained. However, such things are for the most part not moderate but extreme, as something greatly beautiful or ugly, joyous or sad, worthy of respect or derision, a thing of great dignity or vileness, or maybe a person who has been injured with an enormous open wound flowing with a remarkable river of blood, or in some other way made ugly . . . the color also very brilliant and intense, such as intense, fiery red, and the whole color strongly altering its appearance. The whole image also should have some other

quality such as movement, that thus it may be commended to memory more effectively than through tranquility or repose. (Bradwardine 208)⁹⁷

Contrast between physical and moral extremes and the emotional reactions they provoke is key to the retention of images, and here Bradwardine seems to suggest that striking human figures undergoing a dramatic and violent transformation make the most effective mnemonic aids. The audience respects and admires the saint while deriding the cruel and ignorant tyrant. Intense and brilliant colours such as ‘snowy white’ and ‘intense, fiery red’ are provided by the virgin martyr, especially when her shining flesh is bared and displayed before being showered by a river of blood.⁹⁸

Adding to the use of human figures as particularly effective and striking mnemonic aids, fifteenth-century author Jacobus Publicius, writing on the *ars memoria* as a part of rhetoric, gives the following instructions to guide the formation of memory images using specific aspects of the human figure:

Just as a long neck, and great length of hair, fingers, and the entire body, produce in us admiration and amazement, so daintiness of nostril, mouth, ears, breasts, belly, and feet provides an ornament to them; if in this way they are demure, you may think [them] the better . . . Whiteness of hands, chest, neck, and face; blackness of eyebrow, eyes, necklace, and clothes; modest gait, distinguished reputation, and outstanding virtue should be added to these good qualities of the body. (Publicius 239)⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Translated by Mary Carruthers. For the Latin text, see Mary Carruthers, ed., “Thomas Bradwardine: ‘De memoria artificiali adquirenda’,” *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992): 25-43.

⁹⁸ Below, on pages 126-138, I discuss Saint Katherine of Alexandria as an example of the violent aspects of memory images.

⁹⁹ For the Latin version of Publicius’ work used by translator Henry Bayerle, see Jacobus Publicius’ *Ars memoratiua Jacobi publicij florentini*.

Here, when ostensibly speaking in a general manner about the human memory image, Publicius seems to list characteristics exclusively used to describe young women. This demonstrates the assumption that a pleasing, effective and affective human memory image is almost exclusively female, especially in the context of an art composed, developed and used almost exclusively by men. In outlining these desirable aesthetic and behavioural traits, Publicius is simply participating in a long tradition that recognized, for better or worse, the ease with which the female form could be objectified and transformed into a mnemonic tool.

Objectification and use of women, or rather, their images for mnemonic purposes, can be found in Martianus Capella's early fifth century text *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury), which survived into the Middle Ages and outlined the ancient educational system, describing the artificial memory under the parts of rhetoric. In Capella's work, the bride receives the seven liberal arts as a wedding gift, personified as women: Grammar was a strict old crone, while Rhetoric was beautiful and statuesque, "wearing a rich dress decorated with the figures of speech and carrying weapons with which to wound her adversaries. The personified liberal arts conform remarkably well to the rules for images in the artificial memory . . . bearing with them secondary images to remind of their parts" (Yates 65). These allegorical female figures were developed according to the *ars memoria* tradition, nestled as it was in the intellectual landscape of the liberal arts, and Bokenham's life of Saint Barbara would seem to demonstrate not only an awareness of but also an engagement with this practice of memory image formation.

2.3 Barbara: The Tablet and Stylus of Mnemonic Saintly Flesh

Christian models of Publicius' beautiful, dainty, modest and virtuous female memory images are nowhere more evident than in the formulaic lives of virgin martyrs, where attractive young women are routinely stripped, displayed, threatened, tortured and killed, while maintaining their virtue, their confidence and their beauty. The first virgin martyr in Bokenham's immense legendary, Barbara could be considered one of the most venerated female saints of the Middle Ages alongside Saints Margaret and Katherine as the Three Holy Virgins (Derolez 200). Bokenham's source is unknown, although it is most likely an embellishment of both the life of Barbara that circulated with Voragine's *Legenda aurea* and another legend that was probably also used by the anonymous author of the *Gilte Legende*.¹⁰⁰

Bokenham's life of Barbara contains many of the elements typical of virgin martyr legends: as a beautiful young noblewoman, she is raised as a pagan but comes to the Christian faith through special grace granted in recognition of her extraordinary virtue; she demonstrates unwavering devotion in the face of imprisonment and cruel torture until finally she is martyred; and miracles occur at various points. Now, while Barbara's legend rests on a familiar framework, an examination of the two miracles that bracket her baptism reveals that Bokenham's word choices and arrangement create a carefully constructed metaphor of the saint's body as various tools in the memory student's kit-

¹⁰⁰ Hamer and Russell describe the *Gilte Legende* Barbara as an elaboration of the Flemish Augustinian Jean de Wackerzeele's Latin life (c.1370-1400). They also suggest that a high number of rhyming words in some of the more elaborate passages could indicate a second verse source (Hamer and Russell 381). I believe that given the striking similarity between certain parts of Bokenham's Barbara and the *GL* and considering the details in Wackerzeele missing from Bokenham that would certainly have been incorporated had they been available, it is very likely that Bokenham and *GL* were drawing on the same second source. This second source could be either a French verse life or an English life translated from French, given some of the vocabulary.

and by ‘tools’ I refer to the widely used metaphor from the *Ad Herennium* and other memory texts which posits the mind as a wax tablet, memory images as letters, their arrangement as script, and their delivery or perusal like reading (Yates 22).

The wax tablet metaphor is immediately obvious upon learning of the miracles: as Barbara steps into the bath where she will be baptized, she marks a token of the cross on the wall with her finger, and as she comes out, her feet sink slightly into the steps. The physical evidence of both these gestures survives for hundreds of years and serves as a reminder of the saint’s virtue and God’s power. Here, Barbara’s body takes on the role of the stylus, cutting ‘text’ into the wax tablet of the stone building. This miraculous act of memory writing may not in itself be convincing evidence of Bokenham’s metaphor, but once we consider details from the rest of the legend, which describes Barbara’s education in the liberal arts, the tower that is almost always included in visual depictions of the saint, and the initial rounds of torture, it will become clear that Bokenham’s Barbara is the most precise articulation of what I call the mnemonic physicality of his virgin martyrs.

At a very young age, Barbara’s “eyen of hir soule to hevenly light” are opened, and “[e]virmore silogizing in hir opinion / That so many goddis myght no wise be” (*LA* 10), she determines to ferret out the truth of what she suspects is a single omnipotent god. Used elsewhere in Bokenham during Saint Katherine’s eloquent argument to emperor Maxence against the worship of idols,¹⁰¹ ‘syllogize’ is repeated three more times as Barbara moves through a series of arguments and Bokenham departs from the general meaning of the verb as it appears in a mere two examples in the *MED* – “to reason, make

¹⁰¹ Katherine, who like Barbara has mastered the seven liberal arts, “by many syllogismys & by many an argument / She þer dyserthly shewyd hyr entent” (*LHW* 6493-4).

deductions” (*MED* “silogisen”)¹⁰² – and brings it in line with the inner, meditative exercises practiced by followers of the *ars memoria*. Significantly, the bulk of Barbara’s syllogizing comes after she has been instructed in the liberal arts (or sciences, as Bokenham calls them), of which memory is a part. The saint “ful ofte did silogise / In hir inward mynde whethir she did wake or slepe, / And as a *privee* counseil *within* hir close did kepe” (*LA* 13), in a form of constant rumination.

It is this rumination in her “inward mynde,” so key to the development and training of the artificial memory, that allows her to arrive at an observation that becomes central to the entire legend’s emphasis on physicality: the lines from Psalm 113 about pagan idols’ utter lack of working limbs, senses and faculties of reason. Psalm 113.12-16, later 115.4-8,¹⁰³ addresses with contempt idols that are figures shaped like human beings but which lack the life and consciousness that would distinguish them from other inanimate objects. Bokenham draws attention to the contrast between Barbara and the idols when he has her observe that if she kneels down to do reverence to these “stockis and stoones” (*LA* 13), it will confirm

That I, beyng sensible and witte havyng,
Speche, sight, heeryng and eke goyng,
Flessh, boones, blode and many thynges mo
Shuld worship that which wantith al tho.

¹⁰² Individual *MED* entries are referenced throughout this work but are subsumed under “*MED* ‘various entries’” in the bibliography for simplicity’s sake.

¹⁰³ “12 The idols of the gentiles are silver and gold, the works of the hands of men; 13 They have mouths and speak not: they have eyes and see not; 14 They have ears and hear not: they have noses and smell not; 15 They have hands and feel not: they have feet and walk not: neither shall they cry out through their throat; 16 Let them that make them become like unto them: and all such as trust in them.” (Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition, Psalm 113.12-16)

For neither they han witte, ner vndirstondyng,
 Speche ne sight ner heryng ner goyng,
 Flessh, blode ner boon, al be it in figure
 Of eche thei han likenesse by picture. (*LA* 13)

By inserting a mirrored or inverted version of the lines of the psalm to reflect the difference between the saint and the idols she contemplates, Bokenham draws attention to Barbara's body as it lives, breathes, thinks, and moves about. The addition of flesh, blood and bones presents a category of properties that are unique to living beings and can only be reproduced by the single god that Barbara continues to learn more about, but this addition also provides a graphic reminder of what she and the other virgin martyrs sacrifice in the course of their ordeals.¹⁰⁴

Immediately after this first articulation of Psalm 113, Bokenham describes how Barbara reaches the age at which "The flessh ageyns the spirite arerith bataile / By titulacion of lust, and myghtely dooth assaile / The castel of clenness by many a lyther gynne" (*LA* 13), but that lust has no effect due to her continuous mental and emotional contemplation of God. The arrangement of these passages simultaneously emphasizes the saint's body while introducing the first in a series of moments that record Barbara's transformation from spiritually blind, deaf and dumb pagan flesh to sealed mnemonic Christian vessel. The second of these physical shifts comes after Barbara's thirst for knowledge and her disappointment in the failed logic of idolatry drives her to establish an epistolary exchange with Origen, an Alexandrian theologian. Origen sends a letter,

¹⁰⁴ The flesh, blood, and bone that Barbara refers to, as well as the senses and the capacity for wit and understanding, are all internal (literally and otherwise), present but unseen in the living and lacking in the "stockis and stoonis" to which the saint refuses to kneel.

books and a priest to instruct her in the basic tenets of the Christian faith, and, in order to bypass the jealous protection of Barbara's pagan father, the priest poses as a physician with the skill to heal the young saint, who had become ill while anxiously waiting for Origen's reply.

As Barbara continues her Christian education, her improved spiritual wellbeing is matched by her physical health until at last Bokenham provides a clear cue to his readers to participate in a mnemonic exercise, when between Origen's letters and the priest's instruction, Barbara learns about the incarnation:

That is to seyn, how doun was sent
 The *sonne* from the fadir *omnipotent*
 Into a virgyne, our kynde to take,
 And for mannys synne a seeth to make.
 And how by his passion redempt were we
 From the devels thraldam and captiuite;
 And how *with* his baptesme he did vs baptise
 And wesshe vs clene in so *gracious* wise
 That yf we wil ben also baptised
 In spirite and watir, fully dimysed¹⁰⁵
 Of al our synnes we shul so be
 That of heven to vs shal ben open entre; (*LA* 17)

In this twelve-line passage Bokenham neatly summarizes Christ's incarnation and passion, with an emphasis on the saving power of baptism, with "baptesme," "baptise"

¹⁰⁵ Possible error for *divised* (i.e. separated).

and “baptised” appearing within three lines of each other. “That is to seyn” is a tag Bokenham uses to signal his mnemonic etymologies, and it frequently marks a simplified or alternate explanation of a particular name’s significance, which can then be used as a shortcut for memory work. The repetition of “baptize” underlines its importance to this particular legend, since the two miracles Barbara performs during her life mark, at least in Bokenham’s version, the initiation and completion of her baptism.

Of more immediate interest than Barbara’s baptism, however, are the two and a half couplets that follow the incarnation lesson mnemonic:

Withoute which [baptism] of saluacion no mean is.

And whan Barbara had lerned al this

And wisely it preentyd in hir memorie

Anoon she desired that blissid lauatorie

Of baptesme to taken. (*LA* 17)

Once Barbara has learned this key information, she wisely prints or imprints¹⁰⁶ it *in her memory*, an action that refers specifically to the popular *ars memoria* metaphor of making imprints on a wax tablet or surface. When Bokenham writes that the saint “wisely” imprints the lesson of the incarnation, he again ties her to the *ars memoria* through prudence or wisdom, of which memory was one part, according to various schemes from Aristotle to Aquinas.¹⁰⁷ In effect, having been educated in memory training from rhetoric as part of the liberal sciences, Barbara is well equipped to store and

¹⁰⁶ *MED* “prenten” (v.) has two main meanings here: 1.a) “To make an impression in (a plastic surface)”, and 3.d) “to remember (sb. or sth.); . . . ben prented, be fixed (in the mind, memory, heart), be remembered.”

¹⁰⁷ See Carruthers *BoM* pp. 81-4 and pp. 87-9 for Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus on prudence and memory, respectively.

recall the lessons that will grant access to a blissful afterlife. The somewhat threatening “Without which of saluacion no mean is” lies in between the summary of Barbara’s lesson and the description of what she does with the information, and serves to highlight the importance of both the sacrament of baptism as well as learning and remembering basic tenets of the Christian faith; in other words, there is no means of salvation without the practice of spiritual mnemonics.

Bokenham’s articulation of his concept of Barbara’s body –and indeed the bodies of all virgin martyrs– as memory image and mnemonic device is quite advanced, as revealed by a re-examination of the baptismal miracles in the Barbara legend. This re-examination is especially productive when keeping in mind the seal-and-wax metaphor of the *ars memoria* as well as the emphasis on corporeality and the senses in Psalm 113. To clarify this concept, Bokenham suggests that Barbara is only ready for baptism once she has received memory training through the liberal arts and has engaged the results of her Christian education with mnemonic strategies. This process in turn transforms her body into a memory tool from inside out, beginning with her mind as a soft wax tablet ready to retain Origen’s teachings and extending to her flesh and limbs, as seen in the baptismal episode.

Priest and saint go to the local bathhouse, “which was of marbil stronge and sure” (LA 17) to carry out Barbara’s baptism, whereupon Barbara kneels and prays for God to “Open the tresour of thy mercie here / And fille this vessel *with* watir clere” (LA 18); immediately water springs up and fills the bath, and the saint gives humble thanks. This sudden appearance of water is not unusual by any means, and several other saints are granted similar miraculous springs. However, while Voragine’s legend simply leaves the

spring out and the *Gilte Legende* makes quite clear the miraculous nature of the occurrence,¹⁰⁸ Bokenham falls somewhere in between as he introduces what I call the imprinting miracles:

In which baptesme, the sooth to telle,
 Two grete myraclis there bifelle:
 First, entryng *with* hir fyngir geyns the este ende,
 In the hard marbil she did prende
 A token of the crosse, which as men mow see,
 Endurith yit as though it graven had be
 With a chysel; and that othir was this-
 That there she went oute, the two steppis
 Of hir bare fete wenten in so depe
 That the vessel the figure therof doth kepe
 Into this day. (*LA* 18)

In declaring that two miracles occurred at Barbara's baptism, Bokenham separates the spring entirely from the focus of the episode, and even the baptism itself receives less than two lines: "ful mekely [she] / Was baptized of the preste which stode hir by" (*LA* 18). In the *Gilte Legende*, the water springs up under her right foot as she steps into the bath, but Bokenham diminishes and rearranges the fountain episode in order to focus on the miracles that advance the concept of Barbara's mnemonic flesh.

Throughout the baptismal episode Bokenham uses the word 'vessel' to refer to the

¹⁰⁸ For the baptismal episode in Voragine see Graesse 900; the spring in the *Gilte Legende* divides into four crosswise parts that are compared to the four rivers of Paradise (*Gilte Legende* III.408-9).

bath: in Barbara's prayer for water, as the bath is filled with the water, and again as the steps receive and retain the imprint of the saint's feet. Significantly, although the primary sense of 'vessel' is as a small container usually for food and drink, followed by some kind of liturgical chalice or reliquary and much less frequently as a cask or tub for storing and transporting goods, the *MED* never defines it as a bath, pool, or anything similar. This absence points to Bokenham's conscious and intentional use of the word, which also carries several figurative meanings including a "person, regarded as the recipient, bearer, or agent of some abstract quality, the object of some divine action," and "the body, sometimes regarded as the receptacle of the soul" (*MED* "vessel"). I read this passage as Bokenham positioning Barbara's body as both tablet and stylus: in a conflation of the many senses of 'vessel' and the moralized *ars memoria*, Barbara receives divine grace but also inscribes mnemonic signs.

Barbara's mnemonic signs –the cross and the footprints– are pressed into the Roman bathhouse and turn it into a memory palace for devoted pilgrims to visit. The marble stone that had been described as strong, hard, and sure is transformed into the consistency of soft wax in order to receive the imprint of the cross made by the light touch of a single finger, and the impression of Barbara's gesture lasts for hundreds of years. Not only is the saint's gentle finger powerful enough to equal or even outlast a chiseled engraving, but her bare feet sink into the marble steps, leaving indentations in the miraculously malleable 'vessel' of otherwise solid stone.

The sophistication of Bokenham's references to the *ars memoria* is underscored when placed in context with other versions. Voragine's Barbara is baptized immediately after a conversation with Origen's priest. The baptism takes place in the tower, entirely

free of miracles, pomp or circumstance: Barbara, “[c]ognito autem” [having learned] about the Trinity, Christ’s sacrifice, and the power of baptism, “baptizata est in [t]urri” [is baptized in the tower] (Graesse 899). Later, she inspects the construction of the tower her father had ordered built for her, and [then Barbara walked into the baths and, facing the east side, placed a cross in the costly marble with her finger].¹⁰⁹ The almost casual marking of the cross on the marble bathhouse wall is one in a series of non-miraculous actions¹¹⁰ that Voragine’s Barbara takes once she decides to rebel against idolatry while her father is away on business.

Where Voragine’s version is concise and somewhat muted, the *Gilte Legende*’s account is lengthy and elaborate, full of enthusiastic if unfocused additions. The *Gilte Legende*’s Barbara simply listens to the priest’s explanation of the incarnation and desires baptism, but it is delayed significantly and at no point does the saint engage in active storage and recall, as opposed to Bokenham’s Barbara, who “With such conceites ... exercised *with a sad corage*” (*LA* 12); “And thus in hir conceites this maide did laboure” (13); “th’appetite of my meditacion” (15); “this blissid maiden hir did exercise / In thought, in worde and in werk” (20), etc. The *GL* portrays the entire legend as more fantastically miraculous, as its Barbara makes several tokens of the cross in the marble of the bath, water springs up from her foot and the streams form a cross like the rivers of Paradise, then finally Saint John the Baptist appears and baptizes her (*GL Suppl.* 408-9).

Bokenham’s use of *ars memoria* concepts is evident even in a small detail like

¹⁰⁹ “[p]erambulans vero Barbara in natatorio contra orientem instituit in marmoribus ejus digito pretiosam crucem” (Voragine 900).

¹¹⁰ After Voragine’s Barbara is baptized and receives further lessons from Origen’s priest, she asks for three windows instead of the two her father ordered installed in the tower, so that the number of windows might reflect the Trinity; she marks a sign of the cross on the bathhouse wall; and she ascends the tower and spits on her father’s idols.

Barbara's motivation for requesting three windows in her iconic tower instead of the two her father had planned. In Voragine, Barbara simply tells the workmen to build her an additional window –“facite et mihi aliam fenestram” (Graesse 900)– and even in the elaborate *Gilte Legende*, “sche wolde haue .iiij. wyndowes in worschip of the blessyd Trynyte” (408). Bokenham's Barbara requests a third window, and Bokenham explains that “this nombre of wyndowes oonly she / For remembraunce desired of the trinite” (19). In each version the tower is given a third window at the saint's command or request, and when Dioscorus returns and demands to know why the tower has an extra window, each version's Barbara explains the significance of three as it relates to the Trinity. The three windows as a mnemonic device is unique to Bokenham and we cannot help but think of the architectural mnemonic and see that in this legend, Barbara has imprinted or engraved memory images into the marble bathhouse and then altered the schematics of her tower, creating memory places out of pagan structures while practicing the mental discipline of the memory arts.

The final evidence of Bokenham's incorporation of *ars memoria* elements into Barbara's legend comes at the end of what survives of the saint's life.¹¹¹ After Barbara is stripped and beaten under the orders of the prefect Marcian, her seeming imperviousness to pain provokes her persecutor to exclaim “Barbara! Sey me whethir of flessch and boonys / Is thy breest made, or of horn and stoonys” (*LA* 23) since the composition of her unyielding body seems as impenetrable as the marble of the bathhouse. This question suggests that Barbara has undergone a physical transformation from living breathing

¹¹¹ The *Legenda Aurea* manuscript is missing not only as much as one third of its legends but also a significant number of leaves from various points throughout, and unfortunately a portion of Barbara's torture and her death is unavailable to us.

body to a hard material such as ivory or stone, and supports Bokenham's metaphor of Barbara's flesh as both stylus and tablet or her mind as a memory palace while also playing on the contrast between the living god of Christianity and the "stockis and stoones" of the pagan idols from Psalm 113.

Throughout Barbara's legend, Bokenham seems to suggest that the intersections of spirituality, physicality and wisdom that represent Christian tradition have backwards counterparts in the distorted mirror of Dioscorus and Marcian's pagan society, and that where Barbara's body can be understood by Christian readers as both holy flesh and mnemonic device, the saint's persecutors cannot comprehend anything beyond the material and literal. When Barbara declares "I mortifie my soule by withdrawyng / Of my five wittes from eche vnleeful thyng" (*LA* 24), she is in effect defining the conditions of the Christian world and its inhabitants, in which reason, the senses, the flesh and the soul exist in a mystical order established by a single omnipotent divine being. Barbara's rejection of "eche vnleeful thyng" refers to the unlawful chaos of the pagan world, and the subsequent torture inflicted on her emphasizes how far removed from order and logic her persecutors are.

It is to logic, rhetoric and memory training that Barbara has recourse, when during severe tortures "while thei were busy hir to hurt this wyse, / She thus in holy scripture hir did exercyse" (*LA* 24), and as she recites lessons from her Christian education, she demonstrates how spiritual mnemonics can provide peace and protection. The use of "exercyse" here echoes its several uses throughout to describe Barbara's active engagement with the *ars memoria* techniques she would have mastered as part of her liberal arts education, and this interpretation is bolstered by Bokenham's repetition of

other words like ‘syllogize,’ ‘conceits,’ ‘motif’ (a proposition, assertion or argument) and ‘meditation’ to refer to Barbara’s reasoning and other mental activities.

As Barbara’s scriptural memory exercise brings her even more closely in line with Christian mnemonics and logic, Marcian departs further and further from reason:

Whan Marcian *perceived* th’occupacion
 Of Barbara thus in ruminacion¹¹²
 Of holy scripture, he wex nere wode
 And began to bethynken in his mad mode
 By what peyn and by what grevaunce
 He myght ovircommen hir tolleraunce. (*LA* 24)

Barbara’s “ruminacion” –meditation or contemplation– of authoritative text marks her continued transformation into the spiritual realm, and parallels Marcian’s descent into madness, as he also engages in mental exercise when he begins to “bethynken.”

Bokenham may here be picking up on other authors’ uses of ‘ruminacion’ to evoke a metaphor of thinking over a memorized text; for example, Augustine describes the hidden mouth of Ambrose’s heart ruminating on sacred texts (*Confessions* VI.iii), and also writes about the process of recalling valuable information “from the stomach of memory to the mouth of reflection” as a form of “spiritual ruminacion” (*Against Faustus* VI.7). When recounting the story of Cædmon’s sudden divine poetic inspiration, Bede writes that after learning sacred history Cædmon, “memorizing it and ruminating over it, like some clean animal chewing the cud ... turned it into the most melodious verse”

¹¹²“The action of revolving something in one’s mind; meditation, contemplation ... Compare Middle French *ruminacion* recitation of a psalm from memory (14th cent. in an isolated attestation)” (*OED* “ruminacion” 1.a). The earliest attestation recorded by the *OED* is in 1585, which makes Bokenham’s use particularly interesting.

(*Eccl. Hist.* IV.24).¹¹³ Bokenham's Barbara engages in the very same form of spiritual rumination as she remembers and considers sacred text, furthering her Christian education and demonstrating the benefits of memory work.

Marcian's own rumination in the insanity of his mind is driven by an obsession with the value of the material world, and here the focus of his intent is exerting control over Barbara's flesh, which he believes governs her mind and soul instead of the other way around. Marcian had demonstrated this same reversal in understanding in his earlier attacks on Barbara, when he commanded "a stok to be sett, / And hir theron hefdlynges to be sett: / Hir bodie turned vp in his presence" (*LA* 23). This upside-down positioning of her body does not appear in *Voragine*, and the *Gilte Legende* only mentions it in passing, "her fete vpward and her hede downeward" (*GL* 422), yet Bokenham uses both "hefdlynges" and "turned vp." Bokenham reinforces the saint's position through the words of her prayer to God, who "seest al thyng" and she asks him to "See how I am revolued, lorde, in despite of the, / With myn hede downward, a ridicle to be" (*LA* 23). Headlong (or headling) carries the meaning of falling headfirst, or rushing heedlessly, and is only recorded by the *OED* as meaning 'upside down' in two rare eighteenth-century instances.¹¹⁴ If 'headlong' was understood as 'headfirst' then Bokenham's description of Marcian's orders emphasizes how utterly backwards the prefect's thinking is as he places Barbara in a reversal of Christ's position on the cross.

Keeping this reversal in mind, we can now return to Barbara's rumination and

¹¹³ The Latin of the passage is "rememorando secum et quasi mundum animal ruminando, in carmen dulcissimum conuertebat."

¹¹⁴ *OED* "headlong" (adj.) 3.c "poet. and literary. Upside down. *Obs. rare*" with 1713 and 1755 given as the only two instances.

Marcian's next vicious attack in his struggle for control over Barbara's body. He commands his torturers to take a "short, blunt swerd and successifly / Kuten of the breestis from hir body," since he reasons that "the duller the swerd were, the more torment" the process would be (*LA* 24). In response, the saint addresses the prefect, saying "O, thou moste cruel beest, thou Marcian! / O antropofage, which hast such wil / Mannys flesh to eetyn" (24). Through Barbara's reprimanding words, Bokenham reveals Marcian as the one who is truly "revolued" in his complete misunderstanding of the forces that govern the world. This is supported by the accusatory "antropofage," which, although unrecorded in both the *MED* and the *OED*, is presumably from Latin "anthropophagus" and French "anthropophage" meaning "cannibal." While no other version of Barbara's life contains either the accusation of or an actual act of cannibalism, Bokenham implies Marcian's intended consumption of saintly flesh as the ultimate reversal, or perversion, of one of the central acts of Christian faith: receiving Christ's flesh and blood in the Eucharistic sacrament. Where Barbara ruminates on Christ, re-chewing the body of Christ in her mind, Marcian's cannibalism is a ridiculous inversion of the saint's holy act.

This perversion makes Marcian's act the true "ridicle"¹¹⁵ (see Barbara's prayer, above), an absurdity and a mockery of Christian tradition, as he attempts to erase her faith and religious knowledge by attacking her body, but while her flesh may be torn, burned, battered and beaten, no amount of torture can erase the marble slate of her spiritual body on which Origen's lessons have been indelibly inscribed, much like the cross and footprints her newly baptized body had engraved into the bathhouse.

¹¹⁵ "*Obs. rare.* A ridiculous thing; an absurdity, a mockery." Earliest attestation is 1570 (*OED* "ridicle" (n.)).

Bokenham's integration of medieval mnemonics with the body of the virgin martyr is articulated nowhere more clearly and emphatically than in his life of Barbara. Since her legend sits at the beginning of his legendary (she is the second saint and the first virgin martyr in the collection)¹¹⁶ Barbara's *vita* serves as an example of how to read all other virgin martyr bodies as mnemonic devices, and to use their depictions to construct memory images for private meditation and recollection.

As Publicius noted (see above), observing from foundational *ars memoria* treatises like the *Ad Herennium*, the most effective memory images are beautiful young women, and Bokenham identified virgin martyrs as the epitome of Christian female virtue and beauty. As with all virgin martyrs, Barbara's beauty is mentioned several times: she is "a maiden, gode, fair and ying" (*LA* 10), a "virginal flour" with "grete beaute" (22) and admired for "th'excellence of hir beautevousnesse" (18). In Barbara's legend, Bokenham demonstrates the ease with which the body of the virgin martyr can lend itself to several different mnemonic roles, but what is most evident is how he perceived the holy flesh of these saints to function as memory images while also serving as metaphorical tablets, waiting for the erotic and violent inscriptions of their persecutions.

¹¹⁶ The lives in Bokenham's legendary begin with Saint Andrew the Apostle.

2.4 Dorothy and Prisca: The Visual Mnemonics of Virtuous Beauty

And for to spekyn of bodyly bewte,

She passyd alle þe maydyns of þat cuntre.

LHW 4769-70

Nowhere is the mnemonic physicality of virgin martyrs as memory images made more evident than when their beauty is a central focus, or when their beauty borders on the miraculous or particularly exceptional, as it does in Bokenham's lives of Dorothy and Prisca. The combination of beauty and virginity is especially effective, not only because great beauty –as the target of great temptation and desire– is more admirable when paired with control and discipline, but because the virginal flesh provides a visually pleasing blank slate for the memory arts practitioner.

According to Voragine, the conditions most precarious to the preservation of chastity are “*affluentia resolvens, opportunitas inducens, juvenus lasciviens, libertas effrenans, pulchritudo alliciens*” (Graesse 798), or an “abundance of wealth, which softens resistance, opportunity, which invites indulgence, youth, which leans towards licentiousness, freedom, which shakes off restraint, and beauty, which allures” (Ryan 2.341). As with Barbara, Dorothy and others, typical virgin martyrs are young and nobly born, have access to great wealth, and are almost always pursued by powerful and influential men; however, it is their beauty that signals their prestige and inspires their representation in art. When combined with the inviolate nature of their virginal bodies, this same beauty is the catalyst for the mnemonic physicality that dominates virgin martyr narratives and the seemingly inevitable eroticization of the gendered violence inflicted on their compelling bared flesh.

Given that chastity or virginity is, as Voragine believes, most at risk when in combination with such factors as wealth, youth, or beauty, great is the peril of these virgin martyrs prior to their trials and compelling is the narrative of their resistance indeed. An associative mnemonic is at work in these stories, whereby beauty, virginity and faith intertwine to signal these pure young saints, and these elements are so closely aligned that the loss of one would signal the total collapse of the whole. In order for Bokenham to succeed in using virgin martyrs as effective memory images, the saints' physical integrity must be linked to the spiritual integrity of the mnemonic's user; in other words, the security of the individual's position within the structure of the Christian community is dependent upon preservation of faith, virginity and beauty in saintly narrative.

Writing about the narrowing interpretation of appropriate memory image subjects, Yates observes that "[t]he images chosen for their memorable quality in the Roman orator's art have been changed by medieval piety into 'corporeal similitudes' of 'subtle and spiritual intentions'" and that the strikingly beautiful and strikingly hideous memory images have been "moralized into beautiful or hideous human figures" (87). Medieval Christian interpretation of the *ars memoria* has led Bokenham to identify virgin martyrs as ideal "strikingly beautiful" memory images, and to use their beauty to entice, their virginity to guard against overt titillation, and the looming prospect of their torture and death to ensure preservation of the saint's beauty and virginity. Bokenham's lives of Dorothy and Prisca contain instances of pagan threat to saintly beauty with an emphasis on miraculous or exceptional beauty that extends beyond that of his other legends, and so serve as examples of this type of associative visual mnemonic.

Bokenham's life of Saint Prisca is unusual among the prominent medieval legends circulating in England: whereas later popular versions give Prisca's age as between thirteen and sixteen, Bokenham's Prisca is "but eleven yere olde" (*LA* 74), following his likeliest source, the *Acta Sanctorum*.¹¹⁷ This makes Prisca Bokenham's youngest virgin martyr, and much as Chaucer's Prioress reduces the age of her Tale's protagonist to increase her audience's emotional attachment, Bokenham seeks out the legend of this incredibly young saint to include in his collection for the way in which it reinforces the key mnemonic properties of all his virgin martyrs.

When Prisca is brought to Claudius after his officers find her praying in a church the emperor marvels at "hir grete beaute," exclaiming "O, how grete a lorde art thou, Appollo, which hast made this maiden so fayre" (*LA* 74). Claudius immediately recognizes the source of Prisca's beauty as divine, even if he misidentifies the deity. Throughout both Bokenham's legend and that of the *Acta Sanctorum*, Prisca's body is described as glowing, shining or giving off light, which bears a connection to the *ars memoria* rules for memory places "which must be well lighted" and images "which are active, [and] sharply defined" (Yates 33). In fact, Bokenham translates "praeclaram" [very bright or brilliant] (*Acta Sanctorum* 549) as "so fayre," excludes the emperor's additional praise, "Magnus es Deus Apollo, et super omnes Deos gloriosus, qui hanc virginem genere praeclaram, vultu¹¹⁸ decoram, mente serenam composuisti"¹¹⁹ (*Acta Sanctorum* 549), and adds the mention of Prisca's "grete beaute" in order to emphasize

¹¹⁷ See *Acta Sanctorum* vol.2 under 18 January, pp. 547-552.

¹¹⁸ "vultus (volt-), ūs, m. . . [A]n expression of countenance, the countenance, visage, as to features and expression; hence, often to be translated by features, looks, air, mien, expression, aspect" (*Perseus Digital Library*, "vultus").

¹¹⁹ Great is the God Apollo, and glorious above all gods, who has made this virgin very brilliant, of comely countenance, united with a serene disposition.

the saint's good looks *before* addressing her brightness.

Although Dorothy does not necessarily shine, Bokenham's approach to her appearance is quite similar. Bokenham introduces Dorothy's beauty first through the saint's mother, who was "feyr of faas" (*LHW* 4754), before turning to Dorothy herself, declaring "for to spekyn of bodyly bewte, / She passyd alle þe maydyns of þat cuntre" (4769-70). Having established both Dorothy and Prisca's beauty, their *vitae* describe a series of tortures aimed at depriving the saints of their attractive features. Emperor Claudius orders Prisca "to ben buffetid and beetyng aboute the face" (*LA* 74) in the same way that Fabricius commands

hys tormentours wyth-oute lettyng
That þei wyth stauys hir face beuteuous
And wyth greth battys shuld al to-dyng,
Tyl of hir face were no semyng. (*LHW* 4878-80)

The intention of both persecutors is to eliminate any "semyng" or likeness of the saints' "beuteuous" faces, and in altering their appearances through physical violence, Fabricius and Claudius hope to erase Dorothy's and Prisca's identities as beautiful Christian virgins.

The beauty of these Christian virgins takes on a miraculous property in reaction to the violence inflicted when further measures are taken to spoil or mangle the saints' features. After Prisca is stripped and beaten, the emperor's cousin is particularly irate after "see yng that hir body was no thyng blemshyd with betyng but rather wex alwey more bright and more¹²⁰ and was as white as is snowe" (*LA* 74). In an attempt to quell the

¹²⁰ The phrasing suggests a word missing here; perhaps 'beauteous' or 'shining.'

virgin's shining virtuous flesh, he suggests that Prisca be imprisoned overnight and the next day "to ben anynted *with* boylyng hote grees— and ye shul see that she shal lesen al the brightnesse of hir beaute;" however, despite these attacks, "hir beaute was right nought apeyred but rather amendid" (74). Dorothy undergoes similar torture, when "In-to a tunne men shuld hyr beere / Ful of oyle feruently brennyng;" although it has no effect, and "As mery & glade þere-yn was she / As wyth swete bawm she anyntyd had be" (*LHW* 4787-8; 4790-1).

Here, the visual impact of the persecutions is heightened first by the inability of "boylyng hote grees" or "oyle feruently brennyng" to lessen or dim the saints' beauty, and then by the use of "anynted" in both passages,¹²¹ which transforms the violent attacks into benevolent applications of "swete bawm" overtly in Dorothy and somewhat more subtly in Prisca. Both of these aspects add the quality of 'unusual' or 'remarkable' as per *ars memoria* memory image instructions. This memorable sense of exceptionality is reinforced in Dorothy's narrative by the onlookers' surprise and wonder when the saint emerges from nine days of imprisonment following her immersion in boiling oil:

And hir beute was dyscrecyd ryht nouht
 But rather encrecyd more & more,
 Alle þo hyr seyn wundryd ful sore
 How she, þat so longe had be meteles,
 Myht in bodyly beute so sore encres. (*LHW* 4801-5)

¹²¹ Bokenham translates the *Acta Sanctorum*'s 'lavari' [bathe] as 'anynted' (*AS* 549). His translation of Voragine's "ac si balsamo ung[u]retur" [as though anointed with balsam/balm] (Voragine 910) is embellished but accurate.

Dorothy's miraculous increase in beauty parallels Prisca's body both after a beating when it "was no thyng blemmyshyd . . . but rather wex alwey more bright" as well as after the burning oil torture when Prisca's beauty was "right nought apeyred but rather amendid" despite the reasonable assumption that "she shal lesen al the brightnesse of hir beaute" (*LA* 74).

Bokenham contrasts the expected outcome of Dorothy's sufferings, that is, her beauty becoming "dyscrecyd," with the "but rather encrecyd," a polyptoton¹²² that echoes the series of actions and outcomes of Prisca's tortures where the "bodyly beute" of the saint continuously defies the logic of the physical world. In the same way, Dorothy's beauty that appears to "so sore ences" connects back to the response of those who see her as they wonder "ful sore" at the incredible sight. Fabricius and Claudius are constantly frustrated by the saints' miraculously healing, miraculously beautiful bodies, which the persecutors command to be beaten again and again. Much like Marcian's attack on Barbara, the 'anointing' of Dorothy and Prisca's figures represents a pagan perversion of Christian tradition acted out on virgin martyr bodies that is both impossibly endured and utterly withstood, in narratives that portray and preserve these beautiful young women as mnemonic devices.

Through various forms of pagan violence, Bokenham enhances the virgin martyr memory image and engages with anxieties over what an erasure of saintly beauty and flesh might mean. If these saints were to lose the primary elements that define them as Christian memory images, like their beauty and their virginity, by succumbing to either the offers, threats, arguments or attacks of their persecutors, they would no longer be

¹²² The repetition of words with the same root.

memorable or remarkable— their stories would not be written and the Christian community would have lost them as intercessors. What makes virgin martyrs such successful and compelling memory images, then, is the precariousness and frailty of the elements of their foundation: youth, virginity and physical beauty.

Other female saints who only possess one or two of these visual mnemonic traits — young, virginal, or beautiful— simply do not receive the same narrative treatment from Bokenham that would allow for the creation of memory images. The physical appearance of female saints who are neither virgins or martyrs is almost never referred to, and even then they may be described perhaps once as ‘fair’ —as with Bokenham’s Theodora, whose looks seem to be damned with faint praise as “a noble womman and a fayre” (*LA* 245)— but not usually as exceptionally beautiful unless they are also categorized as currently or eventually reformed whores. For instance, of the mere fourteen¹²³ surviving legends of female non-martyred saints by Bokenham, the commissioned life of Elizabeth contains one line that describes her as “of beute floure” (*LHW* 9547) as a child, and the rest are much less enthusiastic. Those female saints who lived long lives of contemplation and good works, while still venerated, were not good candidates for visual mnemonics precisely because of their long and relatively uneventful lives. Compared to the emotional impact of a stunning young noble woman sacrificing material goods and fleshly pleasures for her faith and arresting the decline of her beauty through a violent death, even virginal saints such as Martha or Scholastica would perhaps only be

¹²³ These are the wives and mothers: Paula “the noble matrone” (*LA* 96), Anne, Monica (St. Augustine’s mother), Theodora, Elizabeth; the quiet domestic virgins: Scholastica (St. Benedict’s sister), Marina (a cross-dressing monk), Audrey, Clare, Martha “*Cristys hostesse*” (279); and the reformed whores: Mary Magdalene, Mary of Egypt, Pelagia, Tharsis. This list excludes the Virgin Mary, who is, of course, in her own category.

remembered for their particular areas of patronage, such as cooking or protection against storms.

The only other saints whose physical attractiveness seems to rival that of the virgin martyrs are the reformed whores Mary Magdalene, Mary of Egypt, Pelagia, and Tharsis. Unlike the virgin martyrs, however, their beauty is a dangerous source of corruption and is closely associated with sin. For instance, Pelagia is “ful of richesse & of werdly welthe; wundryr fayr of body but in aray veyn & ambicyous & in hyre lyuyng incontinent & vicyous” (*LA* 391), and Tharsis is “a comown wumman in Egip, of so gret bewte that for hyre sake manye men soldyn here lyflode & comyn aftyr to gret myserye & myschef” (*LA* 392). Mary Magdalene had “passyd alle wummen [in] excellent bewte, / For, as it semyd to yche mannys syht, / Feyrer þan she no wummen be myht” (*LHW* 5392-4). Mary Magdalene’s beauty is linked to desiring male glances, and immediately following these lines is a caution that echoes Voragine’s statement about the main threats to chastity:

Thus þan in hyr were þese thre
 To-gedyr ioynyd in greth excellence,
 Youthe, abundaunce, & eek beute,
 Wych oftyn for lak of deu dylygence
 Mynystrys bene vn-to insolence,
 And of alle vycys þe bryngers yn,
 And so þei were in Mary Mawdelyn. (*LHW* 5395-400)

The insolence and vices that hover around a concentration of youth, wealth and beauty present a threat that can only be defended against with the “deu dylygence” of a strong moral conscience, and Bokenham reminds his readers of the dangers that accompany the

contemplation of images of such women at these early points in their spiritual careers.

The spiritual value of these saints is redeemed through extreme and rigorous discipline that amounts to self-inflicted physical violence in a process that uproots and destroys the beauty that is the source of their corruption. Tharsis is shut up in a cell so small she must dig in the dirt floor to make room for her body's waste as she starves to death; Pelagia, Mary Magdalene and Mary of Egypt become hermits whose sunburned, filthy and emaciated bodies bear no semblance to their previous desirable feminine figures— in effect, they have un-sexed themselves in their penitential fervour. The stories of these virgins-turned-whores serve to underscore the precariousness of virginity when accompanied by youth, wealth and beauty, and it is the omnipresent threat of corruption that lends virgin martyr narratives the element of intrigue required of the most effective memory images.

2.5 Margaret: Bokenham's Personal Memory Image¹²⁴

We have seen how great beauty only applies to virgin martyrs and reformed whores, and that Bokenham warns his readers away from the latter by pairing each mention of their physical charm with a comment about sin and ruin. In the same way that Christian mnemonics developed a moral division of “strikingly beautiful and strikingly hideous” humanized figures for memorizing virtues and vices (Yates 87), Bokenham emphasizes the miraculous, exceptional and brilliant quality of virgin martyrs' particular

¹²⁴ As with other female saints whose lives appear in both *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* and the *Legenda Aurea* manuscript, I prefer to cite the *LHW* as it is an edited text with line numbers. I always note any variations between the two texts. Additionally, the *LHW* preserves several prologues with personalized details about Bokenham's patrons, whereas the *LA* is a depersonalized manuscript with abbreviated, altered, or excised prologues.

beauty in an effort to guide the creation of illuminated virtuous memory images.

Although Bokenham's virgin martyrs are crafted for use as memory images, the descriptions of Prisca, Dorothy and other virgin martyrs are deliberately vague, and there is a careful absence of specific details about their features, such as eye or hair colour, that are typically found in love lyrics and other texts that feature beautiful women. Yates observes that it is "rare for a memory treatise, either manuscript or printed, to give an illustration of a human figure used as a memory image," and that this is "in accordance with the precepts of the author of *Ad Herennium* who tells the student that he must form his own images" (Yates 116). In other words, memory images are most effective when personalized and customized by the individual, according to his or her own tastes and experiences.

The basic template of the stunningly but vaguely beautiful virgin martyr allows the reader to fill in the blanks, as it were, of specific features in a way that need only adhere to general principles of harmonious beauty; the goal of the exercise is to develop a woman whose particular appearance speaks to the individual's own aesthetic sensibility. The expected list of a few distinct features as per the standard blazon of female beauty is replaced by a detailed blazing of tortured flesh, and the visual specificity of these passages acts as a counterbalance to the generality of the virgins' vague descriptions. This ensures that the imposition of detailed brutal violence through the chilling precision of these 'blazons of torture' has a higher personal impact on the reader and produces, therefore, a more effective memory image.

Despite the effectiveness of providing a general and vague outline of virgin martyrs for readers to fill in, Bokenham produces one distinct exception in his life of

Margaret, which contains the only instance of a detailed physical description of a saint. The passage in question reads exactly like a blazon, and is given from the point of view of Olibrius, the local prefect:

And whan he sey hyr forheed lely-whyht,
 Hyr bent browys blake, & hyr grey eyne,
 Hyr chyry chekys, hyr nose streyt & ryht,
 Hyr lypmys rody, hyr chyn, wych as pleyne
 Pulshyd marbyl shoon, & clouyn *in* tweyne,
 He was so astoynyd of that sodeyn caas
 That vnnethe he wyste wher that he was. (*LHW* 449-55)¹²⁵

This description is one of a series of embellishments that Bokenham inserts as additions to his source for this section of the legend which, though currently unknown, is thought to agree closely with the life of Margaret in the fifteenth-century *Sanctuarium* of Mombritius.¹²⁶ According to Mombritius, ‘By chance he saw blessed Margaret pasturing her nurse’s sheep: immediately he desired her.’¹²⁷ Bokenham’s passage expands on this briefest of moments and transforms Olibrius’ casual glance into an intense visual examination of Margaret’s face.

This examination echoes lines from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, in which he

¹²⁵ The Margaret legend is also in the *Legenda aurea* manuscript (the above quoted passage is on *LA* 249) with no significant variation. A few words appear in slightly different order; for example, “Hyr bent browys blake” in *LHW* appears as “Hir blake browes bent” in *LA*, or “Hyr lypmys rody” in *LHW* is “Hir rody lippes” in *LA*, the main difference being the spelling.

¹²⁶ See Serjeantson’s *Introduction* to Bokenham’s *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, p.xxii, in which she gives Bokenham’s sources for Margaret as a combination of Voragine, a Latin legend that agrees closely with Mombritius, and a Latin legend similar to that in the *Acta Sanctorum*.

¹²⁷ “Forte uidit beatissimam Margaritam oues nutricis pascentem : statimque eam concupiuit” (Mombritius 190).

describes the Prioress: “Hir nose tretys, hir eyen greye as glas, / Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed” (*GP* 152-3), and Alison from the *Miller’s Tale*: “Ful smale y-pulled were hire browes two, / And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo”¹²⁸ (Chaucer *MT* 3245-6). The passage in Bokenham also follows the specific instructions for a blazon – a categorized physical description of a woman– from Geoffrey de Vinsauf’s early thirteenth-century *Poetria Nova*, an extremely popular and influential treatise on rhetorical poetics. In his model exercise for describing a woman’s beauty, Vinsauf advises the writer to let “lilies bloom high on her brow,” for her eyebrows to “resemble in dark beauty the blackberry, and a lovely and milk-white path separate their twin arches. Let her nose be straight, of moderate length,” her lips “glow, aflame, but with gentle fire” and her chin “[s]moothen than polished marble” (Vinsauf 36).

In her own examination of this passage, Sheila Delany argues that Bokenham scrutinizes the convention of *descriptio* and here “uses it in order to refuse it,” explaining that the virginal female saint is rarely described because she is not “so much an individual as an exemplary figure” (79). Bokenham’s rhetorical flourish in this instance aims to position his hagiography against such embellishments. Bokenham includes his usual gestures toward vague beauty:

Of al that cuntre *in* the rownd compace
 Was nowher so fayr a creature;
 For shap & colour and eche feture
 Were *conproporcyond in swych* equalyte

¹²⁸ “A sloe, the fruit of the blackthorn tree” (*MED* “slo” (n.) (a)).

That she myht be merour of al bewte¹²⁹ (*LHW* 402-6)

After this general sketch, Bokenham insists, working within the conventional humility topos, that his skill in the “craffth of descrypcyoun” (*LHW* 407) falls short of Boethius, Homer, Ovid, Virgil, or Geoffrey de Vinsauf, and his eloquence is far beneath that of Gower, Chaucer or Lydgate, so that he cannot “compyle / A clere descripcyoun ful expressely / Of alle hyr feturys euene by & by” (411-13).¹³⁰ Despite this declaration, Bokenham gives a rather detailed description when Margaret catches the eye of the prefect as he rides around looking for Christians to persecute.

I agree with Delany in part, in that Bokenham uses this instance as a way to flaunt his mastery of *descriptio* without appearing too boastful, and perhaps that he is also attempting to problematize what he sees as empty and excessive rhetorical displays in the context of moralized literature; however, I argue that he uses this opportunity primarily as a single example¹³¹ of how to build a memory image out of the vague generalities of the formulaic virgin martyr figure. He chooses Margaret for this example because she is the first in this short legendary and because of his personal devotion to her. Although the description is not particularly innovative, I believe that Bokenham invites us, as readers, to share in the visualization of his own memory image and to experience his wonder and amazement through the eyes of Olibrius. In the same way that Olibrius’ gaze is abruptly

¹²⁹ The *LA* manuscript contains slight variants, but only those of line 404 are worth noting here: “For forme and shappe and eche feture” (*LA* 249).

¹³⁰ This passage may remind Bokenham’s readers of Chaucer’s *Nun’s Priest’s Tale*, when Chaucer yearns for the eloquence of Geoffrey of Vinsauf, even as he uses Geoffrey as a model for his apostrophe to Chauntecleer’s abduction. Bokenham refers both explicitly and implicitly to Chaucer several times throughout his legendary and these references act as invocations that bring Chaucer’s *auctoritas* to mind and to memory.

¹³¹ If Bokenham were to do this exercise for the other saints, it would defeat the purpose of creating opportunities for readers to construct personalized images based on their own tastes.

drawn to Margaret and he is forced to stand “euene styllē” (*LHW* 447), we are arrested, suspended in a moment of quiet, still contemplation as the saint’s face is etched into the wax tablets of our imaginations.

Like Olibrius, who “was so astoynyd of that sodeyn caas / That vnnethe he wyste wher that he was” (454-5) we must attempt to emerge from the space Bokenham provides that accords with the *Ad Herennium*’s first rule for ideal mnemonic environments, namely “in quiet spots to avoid disturbance of the intense concentration needed for memorizing” (Yates 75). Even though we “lokyd no ferthere than in hyr face,” there are enough “of natural yiftys” in “so lytyl space” (*LHW* 456-8) that adding to the image is unnecessary. In doing so, Bokenham demonstrates a certain level of customization in his memory image example, as he disregards the rest of Vinsauf’s exercise that extends to the entire body, the clothes and even hairstyle. By incorporating into Margaret’s description similarities to Chaucer and indeed to other texts outside of the hagiographical tradition, Bokenham encourages individuals to draw on descriptions from favourite and familiar narratives in order to provide details for their own personalized virgin martyr memory images.

Personalizing memory images is key to the success of the mnemonic process, and Bokenham’s Margaret, more than any of his other saints’ lives, is governed by the *ars memoria* principle of “making each memory [image] as much as possible into a personal occasion by imprinting emotional associations” (Carruthers *BoM* 75). In her examination of medieval conceptions of memory arts, Carruthers concludes, “recollection was understood to be a re-enactment of experience, which involves cogitation and judgment, imagination, and emotion . . . Memory’s success is heavily dependent on the recollector’s

skill in being able to form memory-images . . . that include personal associations” (76).

The extent to which Bokenham’s Margaret is an intensely personalized series of visual as well as linguistic mnemonics is made evident not only in his resourceful collection of sources to which he adds even more material, but in his prologue to *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* itself. Bokenham claims that he learned the details of Margaret’s legend as well as her several translations “[b]othe be scripture and eek be mowthe” (*LHW* 109) during a visit to Montefiascone in the Viterbo province of Italy, where there is a cathedral dedicated to Margaret, the town’s patron saint.¹³² He declares that his main reason for writing the legend is “to excyte / Mennys affeccyoune to haue delyte / Thys blyssyd *virgyne* to loue & serue” (127-9), and if any should wonder at his devotion to Margaret, it is because

. . . euene by
 Wher I was born, in an old pryory
 Of blake chanons hyr oo foot is,
 Bothe flesh and boon, I dare seyn this,
 Where thorgh a cristal bryht and pure
 Men may beho[l]den eche feture
 Ther-of. (*LHW* 135-41)

In these few lines, Bokenham reveals a familiarity with this local Dominican priory as well as a remarkable devotion to Margaret that motivated regular visits to stand or kneel in front of the reliquary, peering through the “cristal bryht and pure” to examine “eche feture” of the saint’s single foot– minus, that is, “the greth too only / And the hele” (141-

¹³² The Basilica of Santa Margherita is presumably what Bokenham refers to when he says “Thys blyssyd *virgyne* I dede visyte” (*LHW* 119).

2) which are kept at a nunnery in Reading, Berkshire.

Having spent so much time in fervent contemplation of (part of) Margaret's body, Bokenham's knowledge of the relic's miraculous powers of protection is authority enough when he explains that if someone touches a ring or brooch to the foot before their travels and later find themselves "in ony dreed or fere / To myscheuyn" (150-1), they will be safe and sound after an earnest promise to bring the object back to the relic's resting place. "Thys is fully myn opynyounn," Bokenham assures us, "For treuly, vp-on my conscyence, / I had hereof good experyence" (156-8). He goes on to relate how he escaped from the attack of a fierce Venetian thug through "the blyssyd medyacyoun / Of thys virgyne, aftyr myn estimacyoun" (165-6) once he had activated the ring with which he had touched her bare foot.

However we choose to interpret the amount of creative license at work in this anecdote, the level of personal investment in and connection with the figure of Margaret is clear. Even if Bokenham exaggerates his devotion somewhat, the pre-prologue¹³³ also mentions his friend Thomas Burgh, who has a "synguler deuocyoun / To thys virgyne of pure affecyoun" (179-80) and has requested the translation; between the two, Bokenham has good reason to invest Margaret's narrative with pleasing and entertaining mnemonic strategies. The legend is rich in distinct and memorable images that encourage a number of options for devotees, above and beyond the unusual blazon of Margaret's beautiful face. In the prologue, Margaret is likened to a pearl, also called a "margaryte," because

¹³³ Bokenham writes a prologue (lines 1-240) that addresses personal motivations for his life of Margaret, and that includes a discussion of his lack of skills (according to the conventions of the modesty topos), the circumstances that allowed him to collect reliable information for the legend, and finally bizarre instructions meant to conceal his identity. This is followed by another, more conventional prologue (lines 241-336) that contains an extended reflection on the significance of Margaret as a pearl. Only the second prologue is included in the *LA* manuscript.

where the pearl is white, small and virtuous,¹³⁴ she is white by her virginity, small by her meekness and virtuous by her charity and miracle working (*LHW* 249-55). Bokenham extends the explanation beyond that of Voragine or other versions that include this fanciful etymology by using each of Margaret's 'properties' to illustrate a portion of her life through an anecdote. In this way, the pearl memory image serves as a mnemonic for the entire narrative.

The pearl and the string of associated significances was familiar enough for medieval readers, who would have encountered the pearl or other similar symbols of material wealth as metaphor for priceless spiritual riches,¹³⁵ and the image is easily remembered with the "Margrete" / "margaryte" wordplay. This type of visual mnemonic is accessible to untrained laity, but instead of moving into the main part of the legend Bokenham spends four stanzas (lines 290-312) expanding upon the pearl's three functions –namely, that it prevents effusions of blood, mediates the heart's passions, and comforts the spirit– in order to present another image and set of associations in the form of a six-winged seraphim.

Bokenham explains that the six virtues of the pearl represent Margaret's six virtues of chastity, meekness, charity, patient suffering, spiritual comfort and victory, "be congruyte / Of simylytude" (*LHW* 315-6), and that these "sexte vertuhs be fygyryd mystyly / In the sexe wengys wych that Isaye / Of the cherubyns in hys vysyoun sy / Vp- on the hy throne, wyth hys gostly yhe" (321-4). No other version of Saint Margaret's life includes this image, and here with "be congruyte / Of simylytude" Bokenham signals that

¹³⁴ Used here in the sense of having many useful or powerful properties.

¹³⁵ One of the most prominent examples would of course be the anonymous late fourteenth-century *Pearl* poem.

what follows is a more sophisticated memory image for a readership trained in the *ars memoria* or at least familiar with this Christian mnemonic.

Figure 2.1 The Six-Winged Seraph



© University of Pennsylvania Press, Dec.4 2020. Drawing of the seraph by Ben Whitehouse from *The Medieval Craft of Memory*, edited by Mary Carruthers and Jan Ziolkowski, p. 89. Reprinted with permission of the University of Pennsylvania Press.

Alan of Lille, a twelfth-century theologian and philosopher, wrote a treatise called “On the Six Wings of the Seraph”¹³⁶ in which he explains at length how to use the image of the seraph as a mnemonic device for remembering the details of penance.¹³⁷ In this system, each wing is a part of confession such as “reparation,” “love of God” or “purity of mind,” and under each of these along the feathers of the image are written five rules or behaviours such as “renunciation of sin,” “bestowing alms” and so on (Balint and Carruthers 89). Balint and Carruthers observe that the image of Isaiah’s seraph¹³⁸ is “one that would be familiar to Alan’s audience, serv[ing] as a pictorial aid,” and that “the orderly analysis of penitential concepts and their attachment to separate ‘compartments’ within the six wings creates a series of mental spaces in which to place each concept at hand” (84). Bokenham mistakenly calls the angel one of the “cherubyns” (*LHW* 323) when he refers to Isaiah’s vision, and although this may be the result of scribal error over confusing spelling variants, it is tempting to consider the possibility that Bokenham may have encountered an image of Alan’s mnemonic seraph, which was given the title “The Cherub” in many manuscripts (Balint and Carruthers 86).¹³⁹

Although the wings of Bokenham’s seraph do not have details assigned to each of the five feathers, as they do in Alan’s example, his stanzas suggest an intention to allow these explanations to act as complementary information added to the labels of the virtues

¹³⁶ Alan is also supposed to have written a commentary on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* that focuses on the mnemonic section and provides expanded examples and explanations for various techniques.

¹³⁷ See Bridget Balint and Mary Carruthers, “Alan of Lille, *On the Six Wings of the Seraph*, in *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, ed. by Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 83-102.

¹³⁸ For the seraphim in Isaiah’s vision, see Isaiah 6: 1-3.

¹³⁹ For a more detailed discussion of medieval confusion of cherubim and seraphim, see Balint and Carruthers pp. 84-6.

on each wing. For example, the first wing would bear the labels ‘white’ and ‘virginity,’ which in turn would recall at least the general outline of the related stanza:

Louyd she nowt well virgynyte
 And of body and soule to kepe clenness,
 Whan Olibrius hyr *profryd* his wyf to be,
 And that she shuld be clepyd a pryncesse,
 And greth tresore shuld haue & rychesse,
 Lust, welthe and wurshepe excellently,
 And for clenness sake, as I do gesse,
 Alle hys greth *profyrs* she set nowt by? (*LHW* 257-64)

As we saw with Dorothy and Prisca, and then in the way that Bokenham qualified descriptions of saints such as Mary Magdalene or Tharsis, virginity is a key attribute that allows for morally responsible admiration and contemplation of a beautiful female saint. Bokenham is careful to specify that Margret’s “clenness” is both physical and spiritual, and through his emphasis on Olibrius’ physical offers of titles, pleasure, influence, and his three synonyms for material goods –“tresore,” “rychesse” and “welthe”– Bokenham reminds us of Margaret’s metaphoric worth as a “*precyous margaryte*,” “that gemme” beyond price (242, 291).

On the wings of the angel closest to God, then, virginity is the first and most important point to be remembered, and according to Bokenham this image “*sygnyfye[s]* / That this blyssyd mayde Margrete wurthyly / Be these sexe vertuhs to heuene dede stye, / Ther in ioye to dwellyn perpetuely” (*LHW* 325-28). Perhaps the relatively complex seraph memory image was meant for the “*wyttys . . . manye ryht capcyows / And subtyl*”

at Cambridge, whose harsh criticism Bokenham feared “sone my lewydnesse / Shuld aspye” (208-10) unless countered by evidence of sophisticated intellectual training. In this way, Bokenham uses the narrative of one of his more personally significant saints, Margaret, to present a range of visual mnemonics that would appeal to readers across various levels of education: the straightforward and easily remembered pearl image, the more elaborate and intricate seraph, and the romance or ballad-styled blazon of Margaret’s face.¹⁴⁰

2.6 Agatha: Mnemonics of Gendered Violence

*So woundyd I am & so al to-rent,
That on no wyse, as yt semyth be me,
No man of lust myht tempyd be.*

LHW 8678-80

Whether it be the pearl, seraph, or beautiful face, the memory images from Margaret’s narrative are fairly benevolent, and even though she undergoes torture, the result of her ordeal’s violence is floods of blood that inspire pity and outrage among the pagan witnesses. In her analysis of the *Ad Herennium*’s memory image instructions, Yates notes that the author intends to help memory “by arousing emotional affects through these striking and unusual images, . . . [a]nd it is clear that he is thinking of human images . . . bloodstained or smeared with paint, of human figures dramatically

¹⁴⁰ Bokenham also delivers one of the most elaborate and captivating descriptions of the dragon that Margaret famously conquers, giving him a name, Ruffyn, and displaying none of the hesitation apparent in Voragine when he refuses to give too much detail or credence to the saint’s more active and combative adventure. For Bokenham’s Margaret and the dragon episode, see *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* lines 687-777.

engaged in some activity” (Yates 26). While this certainly holds true for the image of Margaret, over which “as watyr in a ryuer / So ran hyr blood owt plenteuously” (*LHW* 577-8), there is never any mention of what specific area of the body the torturers are attacking. Representations of Margaret in manuscript illuminations, stained glass, or other kinds of devotional art usually depict a young woman with a cross, calmly stomping a distressed dragon underfoot, with no reference to the instruments of her torture and martyrdom.

Unlike Margaret, Dorothy and Prisca undergo torments that target main sources of their beauty: primarily their faces, but also their snowy white sides and their gracious curves which their persecutors attempt to destroy with stretches of imprisonment without food or water. Despite the specificity of their tortures, they, like Margaret, are portrayed rather lightheartedly in manuscript illuminations and other art: Dorothy with the basket of apples and roses that one of her persecutors mockingly asked for after she boasted of the bounty found in the garden of Paradise, and Prisca, likely due to her age, simply as a beautiful young girl and only occasionally with a docile lion at her feet. Bokenham’s emphasis has, for these virgin martyrs, been on memory images of their bodies as chisels carving into rock, as with Barbara, or their beautiful faces and glowing bodies, as with Dorothy and Prisca, or even the pearl and seraph of Margaret’s life.

As much as the language of Dorothy, Prisca, Margaret or Barbara’s legends serves to situate virgin martyr bodies firmly within the visual aspect of mnemonic tradition, depictions of Agatha as she calmly holds a platter on which rest her severed breasts provide the most concrete example of gendered, eroticized violence and its place in virgin martyr narratives. While other virgin martyrs experience at least one form of the

gendered violence typical of these saintly legends, such as being stripped and beaten (Juliana, Prisca, Katherine, Barbara), the breasts torn, burned or cut off (Katherine's queen, Barbara, Christina, Dorothy), and attempted rape (Euphemia, Agnes, Lucy, Justina), Agatha is unique in that her legend contains all three.

Agatha is nobly born and endowed with "greth excellence / Of beute" (*LHW* 8367-8) in body and soul. Her virtue, humility and devotion are described in a formulaic manner, but it is the consul Quincian whose description is unusual: a covetous idolater of low birth, raised high on fortune's wheel,

not oonly ygnoble was þis Quyncyan,

But he eek was a ful vycyous man,

And specyally he was lybydynous

Thorgh fleshly lust. (*LHW* 8387-90)

Generally, tyrants are described as cruel, angry or pitiless, and these adjectives tend to be attached to the persecutor's commands for torture and execution, which means that the mention of Quincian's libidinous fleshly lust shapes how Agatha's body is read. The lens through which we view the saint's body is also affected by her first trial, whereby for thirty days Agatha is kept by Afrodyse, "A wumman wych lyuyd in synful wuse, / Hyre body offryng to þe vnclennesse / Of ych þat cam" (8398-400) and her nine equally 'sinful' daughters, who are tasked with moving the saint from her faith and way of living.

Agatha's resolve proves to be firmer than stone or iron, and after several exchanges and a beating, Quincian issues a command for his tormentors to approach Agatha and

to þis damysel ying

Sumwhat shewyth of youre kunnyng.

Touchyth hyr a lytyl from þe herte
 Vp-on hyr pappys & doth hyr smerte,
 And let hyre knowyn what ys peyn. (8585-9)

The particularly calculating cruelty with which the order is given is different from the confounded, frustrated and oddly comic figure of the average tyrant, and what Quincian proposes is for a group of aggressive men to surround and ‘educate’ the young maiden about pain through a demonstration of their cunning, inflicted on her breasts. Coming as it does after Afrodyse’s attempted sexual education of Agatha, this can only be read as a highly violent sexual attack on the saint.

The enthusiasm and ferocity of Agatha’s torturers is one of the most vicious and horrifying of Bokenham’s surviving hagiographical legends:

Sum wyth pynsouns blunt & dulle
 Hyr tendyr brestys begunne to pulle
 Ful boystously; *summe* in here hondys
 Browhtyyn *brennyng* hoot fyr-brondys,
 And therwyth hyr pappys al to-brent;
Sum wyth yirnene forkys out rent
 The flesh þer-of, that grete pyte
 How þe blood owt ran yt was to se
 On euery syde ful plenteously.
 And whan þis was doon, he gan to cry
 And chargyd hys tormentours *in* al hast
 Hem of to kутten & way to kaste

Wyth-oute pyte or reuthe, allas! (*LHW* 8591-603)

Agatha undergoes the blunt weapons of Barbara's torment, the firebrands of Dorothy's ordeal, and the sharp forks or hooks of countless other tortures in this gory and terrifying display of the tormentors' extensive experience and knowledge of inflicting pain. The vigorous pulling and twisting of the saint's "tendyr brestys" begin the assault, and after the firebrands singe the "pappys," which could refer either to the whole breast or specifically the nipple, the available space of un-afflicted flesh is met with the cruder iron forks that break through and tear up what remains of the breasts. Quincian's energetic glee at the sight that should properly evoke "grete pyte" and "reuthe" speaks to the pleasure he has derived from the violation of Agatha's flesh, and armed with the knowledge of his lascivious and lustful nature, so purposefully mentioned earlier in the narrative, we can assume Quincian receives a certain amount of sexual gratification in this moment.

Although Barbara's reproach to Marcian¹⁴¹ after he orders her breasts cut off implies an intention to handle the severed flesh in something of an intimate manner, Quincian seems to be finished with Agatha after she accusingly asks him "hast þou no shame / A-wey to kuttyn that on thy dame / Thou dedyst soukyn" (*LHW* 8607-9). The saint also taunts him with the knowledge that she has spiritual breasts he cannot access that nourish and sustain her, and are dedicated to God, and he furiously orders her to be locked up without food or medical attention. In prison, Agatha is visited by Saint Peter, who offers to heal her, assuring her that because he is a Christian, she should not be ashamed of allowing him to handle her mangled chest; she responds that "wyth greth

¹⁴¹ See above, page 84.

torment / So woundyd I am & al to-rent, / That on no wyse, as yt semyth be me, / No man of lust myht tempyd be” (*LHW* 8677-80), denying the possibility of erotic pleasure from viewing her broken body. This of course implies that before the attack, her bared breasts provided an arousing image, and that only when subjected to extreme violence do they become less appealing— such a dramatic transition from desirable beauty to bloody gore makes Agatha’s torture particularly mnemonically effective.

After Agatha allows Peter to heal her and she appears before Quincian, beautiful once more, he orders her to be stripped and rolled on hot coals and shards of glass. This display of the saint’s body is cut short by a divinely caused earthquake, and Agatha is sent back to prison only to deliver her soul up to God before Quincian can enact any more violence. Such a relatively abrupt discontinuation of torture directs the focus away from the manner of her death and back to the mode of torment that makes up her distinct memory image. As with Katherine’s narrative (discussed below) where the precarious positioning of her beautiful body on a particularly vicious torture wheel creates an emotional reaction that strengthens the saint and wheel as a unified memory image, the mnemonic impact of Agatha’s legend peaks during the cruel assault on her breasts. Since memory images must be affective in nature, “sensorily derived and emotionally charged ... [and] successful recollection requires that one recognize that every kind of mental representation, including those in memory, is in its composition sensory and emotional” (*Carruthers* 75), the key to the mnemonic success of virgin martyrs as memory images lies in their physicality and in the emotions their narratives evoke, from pity to fear, desire, and devotion.

2.7 Agnes: Eroticizing the Virgin Martyr

And yf þou ne wylt, my goddys me so spede,

Of þi worthy byrth to confusyoun

Thou shalt of comoun bordel be þe abieccyoun.

LHW 4107-9

Bokenham centers his narrative of Agnes on the simultaneous desires of the prefect's son, who lusts physically after the young girl, and of Agnes herself, whose spiritual yearning for her holy bridegroom is articulated in highly erotic language. In Bokenham's version of this legend, the emotional element that produces mnemonic force is tied to the visual eroticism of a beautiful young woman's description of imagined marital affections with a spiritual spouse. Key to the strength of this visual mnemonic, as with Prisca and others, is the saint's extraordinary youth and beauty, although the eroticism of the Agnes legend is the most palpable of Bokenham's virgin martyrs and thus provides the clearest example of the physical desire written into the memory images of these saints.

In both Voragine's and Bokenham's versions of the life of Saint Agnes, the young girl is returning home from school when the prefect's son sees her and "þis ioly yung man / Of loue to hir felt more prykyng" (*LHW 4127-8*). Bokenham, however, presents the scene in the style of romance writing and suggests a reading of the saint's narrative more in line with the aristocratic adventures of the romance genre. Voragine keeps this episode brief and treats the suitor's offering of gifts as a necessary step in the process of creating the circumstances of Agnes' persecution, while taking advantage of Agnes' response to highlight her divinely inspired rhetorical skills. Bokenham, on the other

hand, recognizes the opportunity to expand the offering into a much more detailed collection of worldly temptations that can be visualized by the readers. This seemingly minor change is yet another indication of Bokenham's awareness of both the importance of the visual aspect in the *ars memoria*, as well as the inclination of men and women alike to crave a more personal, intimate experience of the saints' lives.

Bokenham's exchange between suitor and saint begins with a reference to Agnes as "þis gemme of uirgynyte" (*LHW* 4120), drawing on the familiar metaphor of female saints as jewels or gems in heaven's treasury. He then establishes a distinction between the riches of heaven and those of earth; this distinction will be reinforced throughout the exchange. In Voragine, "Cui ille gemmas et divitias innumerabiles promisit, si consensum ejus conjugio non negaret" [He promised her jewels and great riches if she would not refuse to be his wife] (Graesse 113), while Bokenham refuses to grant the pagan's gifts the word "gemme," reserving that instead for the wealth of Christian virtue. This creates an interesting, if awkward, passage in which Bokenham avoids the obvious translation from the Latin *gemmas* to gem, an effort that runs counter to his usual methods.¹⁴² Instead of gems, Agnes is presented with "[m]ych þing," "ful *precyous* ornamentys," "bettyr ornamentys," "[p]recyous stonys many bryht shynyng" (*LHW* 4124, 4125, 4129, 4130). Where words like *ston* would initially be understood as referring to "[a] discrete piece of rock; a stone, pebble" and require "precyous" to specify their high

¹⁴² Almost without exception, Bokenham prefers to translate by selecting the word in Middle English that is the most similar sounding. For example, Voragine's "capsa argentea" and "capsa lignea" (Voragine 704) –silver box and wooden box– are "capse of syluyr" and "capsel of tre" in Bokenham (*LHW* 3474, 3476), and the *Middle English Dictionary* records this as the only occurrence of "capse;" Voragine's "incantatori" (Voragine 421) is "incantatour" in Bokenham (*LHW* 2956), also listed in the *MED* as a unique occurrence.

value,¹⁴³ *gemme* is immediately understood as a “precious stone, gem; [a] precious thing, a virtue” or even “an illustrious or precious person” (*MED* “ston” (n.) 1; “gemme” (n.) 1). The prefect’s son physically offers Agnes these jewels and rings, which she refuses with scorn. He assumes that she desires and expects grander offerings, and proffers great riches, land, attendants and worldly renown. This impressive collection of temporal wealth is then contrasted by the saint’s description of the riches that she receives from her betrothed, all of which are meant to overshadow, diminish and embarrass each aspect of wealth, power and reputation that the pagan society values.

The strategic use of “gemme” is particularly evident as Agnes answers all his offers with the superior gifts from her lover in the style of rising stakes in a poker game: the suitor’s precious ornaments are bested by “*precyoushere ornamentys*,” his many rings by “*þe ryng of hys feyth . . . / Bettyr þan þow of kynrede & dygnyte*” and a “*precyous beyl of gold*” (*LHW* 4145-7, 49), and his precious stones and great riches by the “*precyous stonys wych incomparable be*” around her neck, “*margarytes*¹⁴⁴ *innumerable . . . bryht shynyng gemmys*” (4151-3), the “*mantel of gold woue werk, / Many precyous*¹⁴⁵ *nowchys*”¹⁴⁶ and finally “[i]ncomparabyl tresore” (4157-9). The comparatives and superlatives “[b]ettyr,” “*precyoushere*,” “*incomparable*” and “*innumerable*” serve to reinforce the significance of the line that lies at the center of this description and contains the bright shining “*gemmys*” that Christ has surrounded the saint with and that act as her

¹⁴³ A “jewel, gemstone, precious stone” is the ninth definition given for “ston” (*MED* “ston” (n.) 9.a).

¹⁴⁴ i.e., pearls

¹⁴⁵ The repetition of ‘precious’ drives home the worth of these divine gifts, and since they can all easily be described as ‘precious,’ this implies that each object both in and from paradise is of incomparably superior value to worldly goods.

¹⁴⁶ “*nouche*” (n.), cluster of gems (*MED*).

guide. The physicality of these gifts is echoed throughout the narrative and emphasizes Agnes' body as the focal point for the readers' imaginations. Agnes bears the ring of Christ's faith, which manifests itself as an imaginary set of heavenly objects: her finger is circled by a gold ring, her throat by a necklace of precious stones, and her body is covered by a golden robe, innumerable pearls and shining jewels. Christ has embraced her,¹⁴⁷ set a mark of ownership on her face, and their bodies have become one.¹⁴⁸

Just as Agnes' body has become covered with metaphorical treasures, all of her senses have been engaged in order to completely saturate and surround her body with grace, but also to prevent access by either man¹⁴⁹ or devil. Although as the thirteenth-century philosopher, physician, and author of the wildly popular *Bestiaire d'Amour* Richard de Fournival observed, the eyes and ears were thought to be the gates to the soul's memory,¹⁵⁰ and the rest of the senses were potential sources of either grace or corruption. Agnes has *seen* Christ's "greth beute," *heard* his heavenly maidens whose singing "is uery blys," *tasted* his kisses "[s]wettere þan eythir mylk or hony," *touched* his body, and *smelled* his miraculous scent (*LHW* 4180, 4171, 4173), and in this way we know that the pan-sensory experience of Christ's presence has occupied Agnes' body in a manner at once pure and sensual.

¹⁴⁷ "full oftyn in armys he halsyd hath me" (*LHW* 4174); this is a play on the word 'halsyn', which means 'to embrace', but is also used figuratively of the Church, to embrace Christ (*MED* "halsen").

¹⁴⁸ "In my face he hath set a specyal merk / Pat noon oþthir shuld be louyd but he" and "wyth hys blood my chekys enbelshyd hath he;" "Hys body to myn now *conioynyd* is" (*LHW* 4155-6; 4177; 4176).

¹⁴⁹ I use the word 'man' here quite purposefully, because the primary persecutors of virgin martyrs are always male. This tradition reinforces that threats from women come solely in the form of deception and seduction, and never through violence.

¹⁵⁰ "Ceste memoire si a ij. Portes, veir et oir, et a cascune de ces ij. Portes si a un cemin par ou i puet aler, che sont peinture et parole" [The memory has two gates, sight and hearing, and to each of these gates is a path; those paths are "painture" (pictures or images) and "parole" (speech)] (Fournival 4).

This continues with Agnes' declaration, in the face of continued threats from the prefect Simpronian, that "a keper I haue of my body, / An aungel of god, wych dylygently / Me kepyth & helpyth *in euery nede*" (*LHW* 4319-21). This angel's diligent attention to Agnes' body encourages readers to also keep watch, as later her body is surrounded in turns by miraculous locks of hair, a blinding brightness that outshines the sun, a perfectly fitting white gown, and, during her torture, she is bathed in fire-resistant heavenly dew. This series of bodily adornments revels in the saint's passive reception of gifts and reinforces the compelling image of innocent, obedient female Christian beauty.

The significant expansion of the suitor's brief and unimaginative offerings in Voragine creates an image in the minds of Bokenham's readers that enables them to experience some of the temptation that Agnes faced, while also providing a base on which to visualize the much greater degree of brilliant wealth that adorns the saint. The centrality and significance of "gemme" recalls Agnes as the "gemme of uirgynyte" (*LHW* 4120), thereby transforming the image of a young Christian girl into the shining and richly clad bride of Christ whose unshakable faith and loving determination can be called upon to intercede on behalf of penitent sinners.

Agnes is the only woman to speak boldly and in great detail about her desire for and experience with a lover, and, even though this lover is the incorporeal Christ, the reader must either struggle to avoid picturing the lustful embraces of a very real husband and wife, or work towards an understanding of spiritual connection that includes a sensual experience free from sin. Agnes reveals how Christ's "organys han maad me melody" without "blemyssyng of myn u[ir]gynyte" (*LHW* 4170, 4175), and this description of the lovers encourages the visualization of the saint's spiritual coupling

with Christ while adding an element of erotic voyeurism to the mnemonic meditation. Bokenham's life of Agnes participates in the tradition of spiritual eroticism evident in, for example, the popular devotional Marian lyric "I syng of a m[a]yden," which describes the moments leading up to Christ's conception. The lines portray the speaker as a reverent suitor approaching Mary in her bedroom, where she "lay / As dew in Aprille / That fallyt on the spray" (14-6). Mary's readiness as she reclines in her bed, awaiting her chosen mate – "Kyng of alle kynges / To here sone che ches" (3-4)– demonstrates both how acceptable such sensual descriptions of divine encounters were, as well as the *imitatio Mariae* adopted here by, or rather for, Agnes.

The prefect presents Agnes with the choice of either sacrificing to the goddess Vesta with other virgins or being taken to a brothel;¹⁵¹ she refuses both options and so he makes the choice for her. In his decision to send the young girl to a brothel, he not only satisfies his own lust, but also inhabits a popular representation of the pagan's insatiable appetite for exactly the kind of sex and violence that was condemned by the Church. This seeming endorsement of sensuality and eroticism within the context of Christian spirituality is perplexing to modern readers, although presumably both Bokenham and his audience read this narrative with an understanding of the vast difference between Christian and pagan treatments of virgin martyr bodies that had been established in hagiographical tradition.

For Bokenham, eroticism fits securely with his understanding of what elements contribute to creating powerfully memorable images. Carruthers describes the late medieval attitude that justifies this casual sexualization of saints by drawing on the

¹⁵¹ "aut cum meretricibus scortaberis" [or engage in whoring with the prostitutes] (Voragine 114).

Italian jurist Peter of Ravenna, famed for his memory, who used a ‘visual alphabet’ of human figures: “[f]or the sake of vivid images . . . of the sort memory can easily fix on, . . . [h]e even suggests using the forms of enticing women for such a purpose: ‘illae enim multum memoriam meam excitant,’ ‘these greatly stimulate my memory,’ though, he adds, this is not a technique for those who loathe women or who cannot control themselves” (Carruthers *BoM* 137). Bokenham harnesses the mnemonic power of eroticism, but by situating it within sacred narrative, it becomes less a sinful indulgence than a spiritual exercise.

The erotic potential of the naked female form might be neutralized by the grace of virginity, as is evidenced, for instance, by narratives about Joan of Arc. Talking about the complicated presence and absence of desire for holy women in *Eloquent Virgins*, McInerney uses the historical Joan of Arc to explain the supposed power of virginity to neutralize any sexual arousal felt by faithful Christians that might result from the sight of naked saintly bodies. When an injured Joan of Arc is undressed and tended to by her soldiers, her attendants declare afterwards that while her naked body was the most unimaginably beautiful mortal form they had seen, their desire remained in check through their faith and her purity.¹⁵² As McInerney observes, “the sacred quality of Joan’s virginity repelled desire one way or another” (198).

In hagiography, then, the narrative insertion and manipulation of a beautiful, virginal Christian female body on display is both a highly effective memory image and a test or evaluation of the quality of the audience’s faith. When Agnes is stripped, however, instead of dwelling on or expanding the titillating moment in which the young

¹⁵² According to the account of Joan of Arc’s trial (See Quicherat 233).

girl's body is bared and put on display, Voragine portrays the scene as more of a methodical wardrobe change, where Agnes' clothes are replaced by the garment of her hair, divinely grown in length to provide coverage appropriate for a modest Christian virgin.¹⁵³ Like the account of Joan of Arc's nakedness, Bokenham's scene allows imagined participation in a memorable public viewing of beautiful saintly flesh.

Bokenham's version provokes the reader's imagination and transforms the stripping scene and what follows by exploiting the saint's transition from clothed to naked to covered, first with the bands that gently slide away from her hair:

But as sone as þis mayde¹⁵⁴ dyspoylyd was,
 The bendys from hir here a-wey dede slyde,
 And swych thyknesse þere-to god yaf by *grace*
 Þat hire it enuyround on euery syde,
 And alle hir nakydnesse fully dede hyde,
 So þat bettyr curyde, as *in* sum degre,

Wyth hir heer þan wyth clothys she semt to be. (*LHW* 4358-64)

Bokenham's use of "dyspoylyd" is the culmination of a determinedly depraved and lascivious image that has been built up from the prefect's earlier threats, when he declares that she will be abused with common women, and "of comoun bordel be þe abieccyoun" (*LHW* 4301). The prefect's command that Agnes be "[de]spoylyd shamefastly" (4352) signals to the audience the double meaning of the word 'despoilen'

¹⁵³ "Tunc praefectus iussit eam exspoliari et nudam ad lupanar duci. Tantam autem densitatem capillis ejus dominus contulit, ut melius capillis quam vestibus tegetetur" (Voragine 115); "Then the prefect had her stripped and taken nude to a brothel, but God made her hair grow so long [and thick] that it covered her better than any clothing" (Ryan 1.103).

¹⁵⁴ [þis mayde] Anneys (*LA* 84).

which, when paired with “shamefastly,” implies the ravaging of the saint’s body and foreshadows her place as the “abieccoun” –“one who is utterly degraded” (*MED* “adjeccioun” (n.) 1.b)– of the brothel.¹⁵⁵ Agnes’ earlier description of her lover and the kisses and embraces they have shared further reinforces the undertone of eroticism in this passage.¹⁵⁶ In the eight lines given above, Agnes’ hair is perceived as so bountiful, wild and wanton that it slides –in what can be read as a sensual movement– gently discarding the confines of the bands as it is freed, much in the same way that Agnes’ body has been loosed, however forcibly, from the confines of clothing. The hair does not burst, explode or shatter, in the gloriously violent manner that is common to the physical trials typical of virgin martyrs in hagiographies, thus providing a point of contrast for evaluating the nature of Bokenham’s specific narrative treatment.

Bokenham’s description is more striking when compared to contemporary vernacular treatments of the scene: both the *Gilte Legende* and Caxton’s *Golden Legend* are exact translations of Voragine,¹⁵⁷ while only the *South English Legendary*’s version of Agnes matches Bokenham’s level of titillation as it describes the persecutor’s intent to bare the saint’s limbs to the eager eyes of all the city’s men, “hure to ssende” (*SEL* 1.20). The voyeuristic thrill of maidenly shame and imminent violation is heightened through repeated references to Agnes’ body: “hure de[o]rne lymes . . . al hure swete body . . . bineþe hure kne[o]” (20-21), as well as a clear image of men gathered around a naked beauty, continuously attempting to peer through the precarious veil of hair to the virginal

¹⁵⁵ Cf. treatment of Agnes’ stripping in the *SEL* (qtd below), with the use of “ssende” to imply not only shame but also violation (see *MED* “shenden” (v.) 3.a.).

¹⁵⁶ See above, p.116 “organys han maad me melody,” etc. and *LHW* pp. 114-115.

¹⁵⁷ See ‘Agnes’ in *Gilte Legende*, 1.109, and in Caxton V.2 n.p.

flesh underneath.¹⁵⁸

In *Voragine*, the saint's hair grows so densely that it covers her better than (*melius quam*) any clothing. This creates the image of a curtain of hair, impenetrable to desiring eyes, that immediately covers the saint and shields her from the lustful advances of the pagan onlookers. Bokenham utterly abandons such narrative caution and pushes further as he first declares that Agnes' nakedness is fully hidden –which reminds his readers that her body was visible in the first place– and then evaluates the new visual barrier: better covered, “*in sum degre,*” with her hair than with clothes she “*semt*” to be. This subtle amount of doubt, introduced by the casual “*in sum degre,*” can initially be dismissed as an empty half-line filler, until we see that by it the saint only *seems* to be better covered. Bokenham has altered *Voragine*'s absolutely desire-proof version in order to achieve a more memorable moment; the remarkable element in this instance of minor adaptation is that Bokenham privileges the principles of the *ars memoria* memory image construction to the point of arousing desire for a saint in strict defiance of his source's clear intentions to the reverse.

The thick hair that wraps itself around Agnes' body is finally replaced after she arrives at the brothel and is greeted by an angel; in *Voragine*, the angel “*locum claritate nimia circumfulsit sibique stolam candidissimam praeparavit*” (Graesse 115).¹⁵⁹

Bokenham describes the angel's radiance as a material substance that not only blinds

¹⁵⁸ The passage in the *South English Legendary*: “Þe constable hure let strupe so naked so he[o] was ibore, Þat echman ssolde hure de[o]rne lymes ise[o] hure to ssende ... Þis maide [w]as noȝt for hure zonghede ac ar hure smok were of inome, On hure heued was so miche her sodeinliche bicome, Þat helede al hure swete body & tilde bineþe hure kne[o] Þat me nemizte for þat her of þe body noȝt yse[o]” (V.1, pp. 20-21).

¹⁵⁹ The angel's “radiance filled the place with light and formed a shining mantle about her” (Ryan 1.103).

those who look upon it, but also obscures Agnes from their touch: “No man hir myht neythyr touche nere se” (*LHW* 4371). After Agnes prostrates herself in prayer, “anoon beforn hyr dede apere / A whyht stole” (*LHW* 4382-3) which she gratefully puts on, discovering that it fits her exactly:

And whan anneys þis cloth had on hyr do,
 Wych as whyht was as snow or lyly,
 So wele mesuryd yt was hyr body to,
 And *con*proporcyond so conveniently,
 As þow it shapyn had be þere-by
 So þat no man th[ur]st doute, wych yt dede se,
 Of aungels handys yt made to be. (*LHW* 4393-99)

Bokenham plays with the secondary meaning of “stole” as a liturgical vestment and reinforces its form and appearance as both a robe and a cloth; however, there is yet another semantic dimension to this particular word choice, as ‘cloth’ carries the initial connotations of a piece of fabric. Compare this to Bokenham’s life of Saint Faith, in which “anoon she clad was in a gowne / And a mantel snow-wyht” (*LHW* 3811-12). In contrast to Agnes’ attractively tailored “stole,” Faith’s “gowne” is more of a loose, shapeless outer garment, and serves only as a symbol of God’s favour in addition to the mantle and a crown, visible only to the future Saint Caprasius.

The linguistic ambiguity of Agnes’ garment provides the reader’s mind with whichever image suits best: either Agnes is covered in a form-fitting robe, or she is wrapped in a length of cloth, potentially similar to the stoles worn by the clergy, or even to the graceful –and at times precariously draped and revealing– togas adorning the

female figures of classical art and sculpture. The colour of the divine garment is then given as “as whyht was as snow or lyly,” both of which are popularly used to describe beautiful virginal flesh.¹⁶⁰ As such, clothing Agnes in a fabric, the colour of which blurs the visual distinction of where the garment ends and the saint’s body begins, allows for a highly eroticized memory image.

Absent from Voragine’s narrative is the added wonder of the dimensions of the robe, perhaps because it is not made clear whether the garment fully materializes or remains part of the excessive brightness provided by her guardian angel. Certainly, if the stole were to become a separate object granted to Agnes, as it is in Bokenham, the care that Voragine took to emphasize the intense blinding light projected by the angel would perhaps be undermined by the appearance of another powerful source of divine light. In any case, the “stolam” fits all her curves and angles so perfectly –“conproporcyond¹⁶¹ so conveniently”– it could only have been made by the angelic attendants of her lover, the only one who could know the dimensions of her body so excellently and intimately.

The measured fit of the garment, likened to a second skin, is proof of a miraculous event; indeed, the cloth is “shapyn,” not made by human hands but divinely created.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Examples from Bokenham include the seven women martyred during Blaise’s *passio*, “whos flessch anon wexen as white as snowe” (*LA* 110), and Prisca, whose stripped body was “no thyng blemmshyd with betyng but rather wex alwey more bright and more and was as white as is snowe” (74). Chaucer’s Prioress describes the Virgin Mary as “the white lyle flour” (*Prioress’ Tale* 461). It is also a familiar simile in descriptions of romance heroines (i.e. objects of desire). For example, in Chaucer: “[E]melye, that fairer was to sene / Than is the lylie upon his stalke grene” (*Knight’s Tale* 1035-6); or the *Pearl* poet’s description of the Green Knight’s lady: “Schon schyner þen snawe þat schedez on hillez” (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* 956).

¹⁶¹ Although Sergeantson has expanded the manuscript’s “cōproporcyond” with an ‘n’, given the Latin and Bokenham’s propensity toward very slight Anglicization of Latin words, an ‘m’ seems likely. However, while the *Legenda Aurea* manuscript has only the abbreviated form with a macron over the ‘o’ in the life of Agnes (85), the word appears fully expanded in the life of Margaret as “conproporcyoned” (249).

¹⁶² Shapen (v.), from Old English *scippan*, has the primary meaning “Of the Deity: to create (the universe, its aspects, creatures, etc.), to bring into existence” (*MED*).

The word “conproprcyond” comes from Medieval Latin *comproportionalis* and is, as far as I am aware, unique to Bokenham. The word refers to “having the same relation of parts as something else, [or] having the same shape” (*MED* “comproporcioned” (ppl.)) or in Bokenham’s Margaret, it means a completely harmonious balance or adherence in design to the absolute ideal of physical beauty.¹⁶³ As such, the memory image of the divinely clothed Agnes is no less titillating than when she was stripped or covered only by her hair because the dress reveals the shape and curves of her body, and its colour mimics her flesh.

Agnes’ final appearance, clad in gold and leading a lamb “[w]ych þan snow was more wyhte” (*LHW* 4622),¹⁶⁴ works well as a visual cue for her name,¹⁶⁵ and Bokenham has already given his etymology in the prologue to her legend: “Agnes of agna, who-so wyl it seke, / Dyruyid was, seyth Ianuence. / Agna is a lamb, a best ful meke” (*LHW* 4067-8). The lamb that Agnes leads is not only white, but its colour is “þan snow more wyhte,” a phrase that triggers visual associations with the legend’s descriptions of the beautiful saint’s bare flesh and once again employs, in the echo of a moment when Agnes was stripped, what is here a more subtle eroticism in order to heighten the impact of the Agnes memory image. It is not unusual for a saint’s life to end with an account of their appearance to friends, family or devotees, dressed luxuriously and shining with holy

¹⁶³ It appears in Bokenham’s initial description of Saint Margaret’s beauty, quoted above on page 36, in which the saint’s “shap & colour and eche feture” are all “conproprcyond in swych equalyte / That she myht be merour of al bewte” (*LHW* 404-6).

¹⁶⁴ During a vigil at their daughter’s tomb, Agnes’ parents see her “[In] gold woue garnementys . . . And on hir ryht hand a lamb ful swete / Wyth hir walkyng besydyn hir fete, / Wych þan snow was more wyhte” (*LHW* 4615, 4620-22).

¹⁶⁵ *MED* “agnelet” “The Lamb [i.e. Jesus]”; ‘agnus castus’ (phrase.) from the Greek *ágnos* meaning “chaste-tree”, and the Latin *castus* meaning “chaste”; a shrub “traditionally regarded as a preservative of chastity;” and ‘agnus (dei)’ (n. or phrase.) a “Lamb of God [i.e. Jesus]; a figure of a lamb used as an emblem of Jesus.”

light;¹⁶⁶ what is worthy of notice are those instances where objects or accessories on, around or carried by the saint give not only a visual cue as to their identity but act as an associative mnemonic notch in a series of images that unfold the recollected narrative in the viewer's imagination. As a frequently depicted female saint in the art of the late medieval period, Agnes, accompanied by her lamb, is one of the most immediately recognizable of the virgin martyrs, while her legend is quite memorably one of the most eroticized and the least violent.

2.8 Katherine: The Maiden and the Mnemonic Wheel

*[W]han þat þe whelys turn ronde
Iche of hem shal sum of hyr flessch cache,
And þat oon leuyth anopir shal feche
Among hem alle whan she is sett.
. . . þat horryble & hydous torment*

LHW 7108-11, 7129

Where Agnes' narrative is highly eroticized but relatively free of violent torture, Bokenham's life of Katherine of Alexandria draws its mnemonic strength from the violence of the most recognizable gory torture device in medieval hagiography and the emotional reactions it triggers. Katherine is, along with Agnes and Margaret of Antioch, one of the most popular female saints of the medieval period. Her popularity can be attributed in no small part to the horrific and memorable iconography that survives in

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Bokenham's life of Saint Faith, when a white dove appears bearing a jeweled crown and luxurious garments for the saint (*LHW* 3800-14).

depictions of the saint in manuscript illuminations, statues, stained glass and other forms of devotional art. She is always portrayed with the instrument, not of her death, but of her torture: a truly terrifying spiked wheel that was designed specifically for her by one of Emperor Maxentius' more inventive and sadistic henchmen.

When Bokenham introduces Katherine, he departs from his source to extend her physical and moral description by almost forty lines. Where Voragine delays describing Katherine until the emperor's impression of her –“*admirans nimium ejus prudentiam et corporis pulchritudinem*” and “[e]rat enim speciosa valde et incredibili pulchritudine omnium oculis admirabilis videbatur et gratiosa”¹⁶⁷– Bokenham's description occurs at the very beginning of the legend. Bokenham's narrative divisions between prologue and life separate the mnemonic etymologizing of 'Catherine'¹⁶⁸ from the highly visual aspect of his version of Katherine's life. This strategy is best understood through an examination of the imagery employed in his descriptions of Katherine herself and the process of her martyrdom.

Katherine is introduced as a young maiden, “ful feyr of faas” (*LHW* 6379), who is the sole child of King Costus or Constance of Alexandria and inherits most of her father's wealth upon his death. This noble maiden is given the advantage of all the aesthetic benefits and fair features that nature can offer:

For as it semyd in hyre formyng

¹⁶⁷ “He was overwhelmed with admiration of her knowledge and the beauty of her person;” “She was indeed lovely to behold, of truly incredible beauty, and was seen by all as admirable and gracious” (Ryan 2.335).

¹⁶⁸ ‘*catha*’ and ‘*ruina*’ (total ruin), or ‘*catenula*’ (a chain or ladder), as discussed in Chapter One. Although some of the etymologies either immediately invoked or painstakingly constructed certain images, the complex linguistic, intellectual exercises of the other examples were intended, as I have argued, for a highly literate, university-educated and rhetorically trained audience such as prominent and influential religious leaders of East Anglia and beyond.

She¹⁶⁹ foryetyn had ych oþir þing ;
 So besy she was on hyr to pore
 Al hyre tresoure, þat very pore
 She semyd to be whan she had do. (*LHW* 6383-7)

Bokenham's purposeful reluctance to provide specific details about Katherine's appearance works in tandem with his emphasis on the saint's abundant ideal physical features to encourage the creation of an image that accords with each individual reader's sense of feminine beauty, as we have seen earlier in the general and vague descriptions of virgin martyrs. The word "tresoure" allows for the construction of a memory image based on such a vague description simply because, as we saw with Bokenham's Margaret, even a basic blazon technique uses the "tresoure" found in a palette of material riches to form a face out of pearls, roses, glass, gold and jewels.

The reckless generosity with which Nature depletes her stores in the creation of this maiden while forgetting "ych oþir þing" is paralleled by the saint's constant alms-giving of her father's great fortunes. Katherine's disregard for her own considerable transitory wealth makes evident the element of means and opportunity that the saint rejects in order to protect her virginity.¹⁷⁰ Much like Agnes, and indeed all the virgin martyrs, Katherine "al þe thyngys . . . set at noht," since she intends to purchase for herself

The goodys wych neuere away shul pace,
 Ner neuere mysse,
 As uertu in erthe, & joye & blysse

¹⁶⁹ I.e. "Dam[e] Nature" (*LHW* 6381).

¹⁷⁰ Here I am referring to the earlier discussion from Voragine about the elements such as youth, beauty, wealth and opportunity that present the greatest threat to virginity.

Afȝyr þis lyf in heuene to leed. (*LHW* 6405, 6408-11)

Bokenham describes the bounty of Katherine's physical and intellectual¹⁷¹ advantages as "treasure[s]" and "gifts," both words that invoke fantastical and visually stunning hoards of wealth and inspire a brilliant and fanciful image of the beautiful saint.

As Bokenham's description of Katherine continues to expand beyond his source, the saint is given the treasure and gifts of Dame Nature, to which the "greth plente addyd dame *grace* / Of hyr tresour" (*LHW* 6389-90), as well as her inherited financial "fortune, / Wych was ryht greth; for, as [Bokenham] seyde before, / A kyngys doughtyr she was bore" (6398-6400). For Katherine as well as Agnes, Bokenham focuses his audience's attention on the great earthly treasure these saints either have or have potential access to, contrasted by the heavenly treasure they either possess (as in the case of Agnes) or aspire to (as in the case of Katherine).

After Katherine challenges Maxentius with a display of rhetorically skilled argumentation, Bokenham reminds his readers of her beauty when he arrives at the line that, in Voragine, is the first and largely only comment on Katherine's appearance,¹⁷² when the emperor marvels at

. . . þe *greth* beute

Wych she hadde in excellent degre,

Past alle opir, as to hys eye,

That euere to-forn he had seye. (*LHW* 6543-6)

¹⁷¹ Like Barbara, Katherine is "Informyd . . . in ych scyence / Of þe seuene wych be clepyd lyberal" (*LHW* 6392-3) and can hold her own against any of the country's scholars.

¹⁷² In Voragine, the emperor "was overwhelmed with admiration of [Katherine's] knowledge and the beauty of her person," and Voragine declares that the saint "was indeed lovely to behold, of truly incredible beauty, and was seen by all as admirable and gracious" (Ryan 2.335).

Maxentius' reaction to Katherine's face and figure emphasizes the saint's extraordinary beauty, but it also restricts too long a contemplation of her initial fifty-line challenge to idolatry by shifting back to a simple visual focus. Katherine's beauty far exceeds that of any other woman that "euere to-forn he had seye," and much like Olibrius' first encounter with Margaret when "sodeynly his eye / On hyr he kest" and "was so astoynynd" (*LHW* 444-5, 454), Maxentius "astoynynd was inwardly" by her and quickly moves to evaluate her attractiveness by judging "to hys eye." Just as we are invited to view Margaret through the prefect's desiring eyes, Maxentius' visual examination of Katherine encourages us to continue crafting our memory image of the saint.

Bokenham moves fairly quickly through Katherine's debate with the fifty philosophers who are summoned to defeat her and almost glosses over the first round of torture¹⁷³ in order to focus on the moment in which the emperor's wife and his chief commanding officer visit Katherine in prison while the emperor is away. In Voragine, "carcerem inaestimabili claritate fulgentem et angelos plagas virginis perungentes" [the cell is lit with intense brilliance and angels anoint the virgin's wounds] (Graesse 793). Bokenham spends twenty-four lines on this moment, after establishing the officer's nobility as the "prynce of c[h]eualrye" (*LHW* 6909), and the queen's divinely inspired affection toward the saint. The shining light the visitors perceive is so powerful that "þe

¹⁷³ The first instance of torture is given a nearly straight translation by Bokenham in an unusual occurrence of either restraint or disinterest in this particular moment of violence. The passage in Voragine: "Tunc ille furore repletus iussit eam spoliata[m] scorpionibus caedi et caesam in obscurum [c]arcerem tradi ibique diebus duodecim fame cruciari" (Graesse 792); cf. the passage in Bokenham: "And anoon þe tyraunt in hys cruelte / Comaundyð þat she wyth-oute taryng / Dyspoylyd shul be of hyr clothyng, / And be so longe wyth skourgys bete / **Tyl al hyr body dede rede blood swete** / . . . To a dyrk prysoun he hyr sent, / And chargyd þat twelue dais folwyng / Mete ner drynk shuld no man hyr bryng, / He purposyng hyr to enfamyne" (*LHW* 6890-9; bold text indicates Bokenham's most significant addition).

bryhnesse þer-of þei suffre ne myth” (*LHW* 6926) and they collapse in a swoon or involuntary prostration. With their sight temporarily disabled and their bodies immobilized,

[S]odeynly of so swete sauour

And of so greth conforth an [o]dour

In-to þer nosethyrllys dede ascende,

þat alle here spyrytys begunne to amende

And were reuyguryd in wundryr wyse. (*LHW* 6929-33)

Their spirits are “amende[d]” and “reuyguryd” in miraculous fashion, and while the most common sense of “amende,” as in ‘restore’ or ‘repair,’ does apply, there is here another implied meaning of ‘change,’ ‘alter’ or ‘save’ in a theological sense (*MED* “amenden”). This would perhaps be a tenuous reading if it were not for the word’s pairing with “reuyguryd,” which, while it does carry the meaning of ‘revived’ or ‘re-energized,’ is used in Bokenham with the sole sense of being brought back from the dead through divine intervention. One main indicator of saintliness or holiness, especially after death, is a sweet smell emanating from the corpse, casket, tomb or gravestone of the saint, and as the moment of Katherine’s own death approaches it is the overpoweringly “swete sauour” filling the nostrils of the two pagans that contributes to their physical as well as spiritual transformation. The actions and emotions of these noble visitors can guide the affective mnemonic meditations of Bokenham’s readers, as the officer and the queen each struggle against the circumstances of their spiritual ignorance and search for a joyful and fulfilling truth.

Here, Bokenham emphasizes the privilege of spiritual sight –that which enables an

individual to see angels and other divine beings— by creating a clear hierarchical sensory progression from bodily sight to blindness, then to the deprivation of all physical control. In this moment of utter powerlessness, the queen and the officer are prepared through humility to receive a sign of Katherine’s sanctity in the form of the sweet and comforting savour or odour that travels into their nostrils and rises into their minds, their faculties of perception.

The impact of this powerful transition is channeled into the image of Katherine that the pair view through their new eyes, in which the saint sits

In a gloryous sete, & stondyng hyr by

Aungelys occupyd wyth besy cure

Hyr woundys for to heel & cure

Wyt many a ful swete oynement,

Wych wer þan baum more redolent. (*LHW* 6940-4)

This re-setting of the pagan pair’s senses prepares them to see the angels and to receive Katherine’s doctrine; in other words, they have been granted access into the Christian community and therefore are able to share in the visual mnemonics of Christian narrative. The image combined with the olfactory cues of the sweet ointment, “more redolent,” fragrant, or sweet-smelling than balm, also prepares the audience to imagine or perceive in their own minds the saint in all her glory.

Throughout this prison scene, Bokenham’s focus on the senses conforms to certain observations from the *ars memoria* tradition. Cicero, for example, states that “the most complete pictures are formed in our minds of the things that have been conveyed to them and imprinted on them by the senses, but that the keenest of all our senses is the sense of

sight” (Cicero *De oratore* II, lxxxvii, 357), and Yates summarizes one of Aristotle’s conclusions that memory is “a collection of mental pictures from sense impressions”¹⁷⁴ (Yates 47). In an effort to imprint a mental image firmly in his readers’ minds, Bokenham expands Voragine’s version with a more elaborate visual description that also incorporates the intense “swete sauour” and “[o]dour” that infuses Katherine’s cell. What follows this emphasis on sense perception is the saint’s description of heaven, in which she locates the experience of joy outside the realm of the body’s ability to comprehend, since “neuere tunge coud telle wyth speche, / Nere hert thynk, nere eerys here” (*LHW* 6984-5). Bokenham increases the value of his visual narratives by arguing that taking the saints, and specifically virgin martyrs, as subjects for memory images on which to contemplate and meditate is the closest that mortal faculties can get to envisioning (near) divine subjects.

After fixing Katherine firmly in the physical realm, as he does with his other virgin martyrs through descriptions of their beauty and the tortures they undergo, Bokenham moves on to the visual climax of the saint’s martyrdom, true to his declaration at the end of the prologue that he will focus not on her life, but “Compendyously of al I wyl declare / No more but oonly þe passyoun” (*LHW* 6363-4). For the apparently unimportant details of the saint’s first 18 years, including how she came to be a Christian, Bokenham directs his readers to seek out “My fadrys book, maystyr Ioon Capgraue,” which, although it is “rare / And straunge to gete,” delivers all the necessary details and more, in “balaadys rymyd ful craftyly” (6356, 6361-2, 6359). Despite reading or at the very least being

¹⁷⁴ Although Aristotle adds an element of time, because the mental images of the memory are of things perceived in the past.

aware of Capgrave's work,¹⁷⁵ there is no evidence in Bokenham's life of Katherine of any influence or borrowing from this contemporary text. It is likely that Bokenham rejected the growing tendency, seen in the *Gilte Legende's* Katherine and in Capgrave, to append extra material to the Katherine legend that described the saint's ancestry and childhood in detail in favour of focusing more on two compelling visual extremes: the beautiful saint and the terrifying wheel.

Katherine's wheel, as it eventually becomes known, could easily be considered the most memorable and terrifying torture device in all of Christian hagiography. The device is proposed to Maxentius after Katherine's continued steadfastness has caused mass conversions through the demonstration of her virtue and the strength of her doctrine. The inventor of the machine is the prefect, aptly named Cursates, and he insists that the device will frighten Katherine into participating in sacrifices to the idols. He asks for three days, within which

Foure greth¹⁷⁶ [sic] whelys ordeynyd be,
 Of wych þe serclys goyng rounde aboute
 Shul wyth hookys of yirn, weel stondyng oute,
 Be thyk set, & yche spook þer-to
 Ful of yirne sawys shul be set also,
 As sharp as euere þei mowe be grounde,

¹⁷⁵ John Capgrave completed his life of Saint Katherine in 1445, and it is composed of 8,000 lines of rhyme royal verse divided among five books. The title of "fader" that Bokenham uses may refer to Capgrave's position as Prior Provincial of England, which he held from 1453-7. The text reads like a highly expanded and elaborated version of the life in the *Gilte Legende*, which was composed c.1420 and collected in the legendary in 1438 (Winstead, *Introduction to Capgrave's The Life of Saint Katherine* n.p.).

¹⁷⁶ great

So þat whan þe whelys turn ronde
 Iche of hem shal sum of hyr flessch cache,
 And þat oon leuyth anopir shal feche
 Among hem alle whan she is sett. (*LHW* 7102-7111)

The true moment of Katherine's death is somewhat anticlimactic in the sense that the wheel has no part in her execution; in fact, her beheading accords with the general formula to such an extent that we must examine the most memorable image of the narrative in order to discover where and why Bokenham has privileged it over the passion or martyrdom that he claimed as his focus.

Katherine's wheel is unlike any contraption Bokenham's audience is sure to have seen,¹⁷⁷ and yet it is described with such detail and with such a sense of malicious intent that it is quite easy to form a mental picture of it. When Katherine is placed inside, the hooks of each sharp and deadly wheel will eagerly tear away whatever flesh is left by the previous wheel in a calculated attack by a "membre of sathanas" (*LHW* 7093), launched not just at Katherine but at the beautiful physical representation of Christian faith that is her memory image.

¹⁷⁷ Wheels are not, however, entirely unheard of, and two of Bokenham's other virgin martyrs are faced with somewhat similar devices: in the middle of a series of tortures, Juliana is "streynd on a whele so streyte til al hir bones were so broken that the mary ran oute of hem" (*LA* 127). This contraption resembles one of the more common types of torture wheels that function much like a rack, on which the victim's limbs are tied and stretched until dislocated or even torn off. Euphemia, however, is set on "a gret wheel, the wich was maad so by craft that alle the barrys ther of wern hoo[t] & ful of [c]oolys, the wiche whanne the wheel were turnyd the [c]oolys shul fallyn on hyre & brennyn hyre & the barrys shuld touchyn hyr body & rendyn yt" (360). Although different from Juliana's rack-like wheel, Euphemia's device is much like a second type of torture wheel on or under which were placed stationary hooks, blades or bars that would inflict a series of burns or cuts at intervals. What makes Katherine's wheel so striking is its horrifyingly brutal and unique design: the intricate, multi-directional parts are intended to work like a blender, shredding the saint's body beyond recognition.

When the machine is built and set out in the courtyard the onlookers cower in fear, for the wheels “were ordeynyd in so cruel wyse / That two shuld upward rendyng ascende / And contraryously rendyng two descende” (*LHW* 7118-20). Katherine’s encounter with the wheel differs across versions¹⁷⁸ of the tale: in Voragine, the wheel has barely been completed when Katherine prays to God and an angel strikes the engine, whereas Bokenham places Katherine “among þese whelys rounde / . . . wych hyr shuld confounde / Or constreyn hyr for feer to sacryfyse” (7121-3). Bokenham’s readers share in Katherine’s fear as part of a mnemonically effective experience; as Carruthers observes, “[a]ffectus . . . is the agent by means of which rumination and memorization take place; in other words, remembering is an activity in which the emotions must be engaged in order for it to occur at all” (Carruthers 217). The terror this device evokes is palpable in the text, made evident in the detailed descriptions of its design and intent as well as the striking combination of the beautiful young saint and the cruel spiked wheels.

Just before the wheel is introduced, Katherine is brought out of prison where she had been held without food or other comforts for twelve days. Maxentius expects the saint to be filthy and emaciated, but when he

Hyr beheld, bryhter of ble

And of colour fressher in euery wyse

Than she was, as he cowde deuyse,

Fyrst or he to prysoun hyre sente, (*LHW* 7028-31)

he becomes enraged and beats his torturers in frustration because he cannot permanently

¹⁷⁸ “St. Katherine” from the *Speculum Sacerdotale* follows Voragine in having the angel destroy the wheel before she encounters it, while the *South English Legendary* (II.540) and the *Gilte Legende* (II.902) place Katherine inside the device before it is destroyed.

mark and disfigure the virginal flesh that maintains its form like the cold, unyielding wax of a firmly set memory image. The bystanders are deeply affected by the sight of the wheel: “who-so sey [it] gan wexyn aferd; / & . . . yt men dede agryse” (7116-7), and their feelings of fear and dread enhance the impact of the scene. With the element of *affectus* in mind, Bokenham crafts his narrative in such a way that his readers feel the same fear and dread as they meditate on a scene that positions the “bryhter” and “fressher” beauty of the young saint against the horrifying wheel, perhaps aided by images from devotional art such as the sculptures, stained glass and decorative screens found in many churches.¹⁷⁹

Bokenham connects the beauty and violence in Katherine’s legend to two central aspects of *ars memoria* memory image construction: a remarkable image (Katherine’s beautiful body) covered in blood or red paint (during her initial torture); and *affectus*, or emotional effects, (produced in this instance by the contrast between the grace and harmony of Katherine’s intact form and the cruel, violent wheel). These visual elements help carve the image into the memory, and while Katherine’s wheel is the most terrifying of saintly emblems, the same combination is evident in Bokenham’s Margaret, among other of his virgin martyrs. When Olibrius orders Margaret beaten with such severity that her blood flows out like a river and even “the vnpetous *prefect* his eyne dede hyde /

¹⁷⁹ The life of Saint Katherine in the *Speculum Sacerdotale* is the closest to Bokenham’s version in terms of memorable and vivid descriptions of the wheel. As Sherry Reames notes, “[t]here is not much ambiguity about the purposes of this account, then. It does not encourage its readers or listeners to imitate Katherine in any way, but only *to understand and remember her emblem* and rely on her as an intercessor” (Reames 171, emphasis mine). The *Speculum Sacerdotale*’s description is as follows: “[t]hat two wheles schulde be sette togeder and renne acordyngly togedre, and other two as cruel as they rennyng in another maner contrarily ageyn hem, and alle these wheles were daggyd alle abowte outward with scharpe nayles made like to hokys so contrarily sette that when the mayde schuld be sette amonge hem that sche schulde amonge hem be rent upward and downeward in the moste cruellyst maner” (220).

Wyth his mantel, & myht not suffre to se” (*LHW* 656-7), the shining white of Margaret’s pearl etymology and the lily white of her skin from Bokenham’s blazon are stained with floods of red blood. The emotional effect of this striking image is heightened both by Olibrius’ inability to bear the sight as well as the “vnpetous” that immediately precedes his reaction, which implies that the sight is so horrible that the memory image of the saint in this moment must be as extraordinary as is possible to imagine.

2.9 Conclusion

In Katherine, Bokenham emphasizes the juxtaposition of the beautiful white virgin against the terrible sharp bloodthirsty wheel and plays down her intelligence and her skill in argumentation in order to do so. This adaptation of his sources—expanding certain sections with especially descriptive verse while leaving other sections entirely free from embellishment—is evident in both obvious and subtle ways in all of his virgin martyr narratives and speaks to an understanding of and engagement with memory image techniques. Bokenham’s treatment of Katherine, Margaret and other virgin martyr narratives containing visceral torture scenes demonstrates his espousal of the Bradwardinian approach of wondrous images, and the potential visual impact of one or more open wounds as the figures go through dramatic and violent transformation. Although Bokenham is certainly not unique in his elaboration of violent torture scenes, in other lives or even within the same life Bokenham includes elaborate memory structures, as with the six-winged seraph in Margaret, or the memory work that accompanies Barbara’s Christian education, which speaks to the breadth and sophistication of his mnemonic range.

In the Katherine narrative, Bokenham's abbreviation of debate in favour of the action of torture or dramatic divine intervention adheres to the Bradwardinian principle of movement over stillness, whereas Bokenham's Barbara is in some ways the opposite of Katherine in that her narrative is dominantly one of intellectual development and applied mnemonic work. This observation can only be made, however, by relying on what remains of the Barbara legend, since the manuscript is missing an unknown number of leaves and the saint's narrative is cut just as Barbara accuses Marcian of being an "antropofage" or cannibal after he orders her breasts to be cut off. This very accusation is as startling as it is unique and implies a much more visceral and memorably transgressive re-telling of the saint's torture than other versions. We can only speculate as to how graphic Bokenham's version of Barbara's tortures might have been, and so we must look elsewhere, to the other virgin martyr lives, for evidence of the range of Bokenham's mnemonic treatments of this group of saints.

The oft repeated call, in memory treatises, for images of striking beauty is answered resoundingly in almost all of Bokenham's female saints' lives but extraordinary physical beauty is nowhere more pronounced than in virgin martyr lives. We see this with Saints Dorothy and Prisca, who are excellent examples of the youth, virginity, and Christian faith that exponentially increase the exceptional nature of the saints' beauty and make their bared flesh during persecution all the more memorably compelling. In fact, the saints' striking beauty is at times matched by descriptions of shining or glowing that cause the reader to imagine the saints as being well-lit, which is another quality of memory images. Prisca's body grows brighter and brighter and is white as snow despite the assaults on her holy body. In the Saint Æthelthryth narrative

Bokenham describes the saint as a “noble gemme,” “The bright bemys therof shyne so clere / That fer rounde aboute the bemys is sprad” (*LA* 225) and Bokenham then refers to Matthew 5:14-16 and compares the saint to a lantern or a candlestick that shines on all sides for all men to see. The shining quality of these beauteous saints connects to the episode in Bokenham’s *Agnes* when, after being taken by force to a brothel, the naked saint is surrounded by a light so intensely bright that she is impossible to look at.

The divine light that surrounds Agnes prevents unchaste eyes from seeing and, in fact, blinds those who attempt to cast their lustful gaze upon the saint and when Agnes’ pagan suitor rushes into the brothel with sinful intent he is struck down and killed. Others who enter the brothel “with glad chere / God worshypyng with hert entere” (*LHW* 4403-4) arrive and depart with no major injury, meaning that Agnes’ body is a memory image accessible only to the faithful. Indeed, the beauty and occasional nudity of the virgin martyrs act as a test of faith in that despite the potential for sensuality or for instance the deliberately erotically charged language Bokenham’s *Agnes* uses to describe her divine lover, truly faithful readers will be able to access these well-lit beauteous saints as memory images and meditate on them with chaste wonder.

As we have seen, Bokenham uses some basic mnemonic strategies in the legends of those saints who are both widely popular and those with special significance personally or locally, and his virgin martyrs stand out as a category of saintly narratives that receive several of his preferred *ars memoria* techniques such as a rhymed verse format, etymologies and genealogies. The memory image is the mnemonic that dominates Bokenham’s virgin martyr vitae, and the impact of those vivid descriptions, when examined in the context of the language of imprinting and engraving in *Barbara* and the

image-building exercise in Margaret, among other examples, supports my conclusion that Bokenham's virgin martyr lives represent a nuanced understanding of the effectiveness and construction process of this technique. From extraordinary beauty and spiritual sensuality to eroticized gendered torture and brutal violence, Bokenham's virgin martyr narratives inspire his readers to create individualized affective and effective memory images while delivering basic lessons on medieval spiritual mnemonics.

3. Landscapes of Memory: Geographical Mnemonics in Bokenham's Local Saints' Lives

*Behold, in those innumerable fields, and dens, and caves of my memory,
innumerbly full of innumerable kinds of things.*

Augustine's *Confessions* x.vi-vii

3.1 Introduction

The subjects of Bokenham's local¹⁸⁰ saint narratives are largely monks, priests, bishops or archbishops, and some of their legends contain a select number of the standard *ars memoria* elements that enhance memory and recollection, such as the genealogies or verse forms that have appeared in the more canonical, established lives. What sets many of Bokenham's local saints' lives apart, however, is the emphasis on place and nation that marks a shift in his use of mnemonic techniques. This geographical or topographical mnemonic, developed specifically for some of his English, Irish and Welsh saints, will be the focus of this chapter.

The local saints that Bokenham chooses to include in his legendary are placed among the continental –and more canonical– saints according to the order of the liturgical calendar, in adherence to the traditional mnemonic techniques of familiar order and organization.¹⁸¹ Regular references to Voragine in the narratives Bokenham adapted

¹⁸⁰ Since Bokenham claims saints from Ireland, Scotland and Wales as 'English' and therefore 'England's saints,' I will, unless otherwise noted, use "England," "English" and "local" interchangeably to refer to the saints (and their geographic locations) that Bokenham has added to his legendary.

¹⁸¹ The importance of order is discussed, for example, in Aristotle's *De memoria et reminiscencia*, where he defines a successful memory system or structure as a series of associated images or things that can be searched through by starting at any point. This can of course only work if there is a well-established order to the series.

from the *Legenda aurea* encourage a transposition, by readers, of that text's well-established authority onto the nearby local lives whose sources vary from Bede to a few anonymous accounts.¹⁸² This not-so-subtle hijacking of *auctoritas* sustains the efficacy of Bokenham's mnemonic approaches, as Voragine's prestige guarantees an intellectual and temporal investment by readers. Once Bokenham succeeds in gaining his audience's initial support, however, he must then also instill the value of place from a nationalistic perspective,¹⁸³ as well as the concept of specific, crafted geographical space in order to ensure the invested participation of his readers. He accomplishes this primarily by adapting the traditional architectural memory technique from the *ars memoria* into a geographical mnemonic in which the Isle of Britain becomes a type of memory palace.

After discussing the architectural mnemonic within the *ars memoria* tradition, I will give a cursory introduction to Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae* text—a geographical history of England—and discuss how it contributes to his approach of transposing the architectural mnemonic technique into geographical terms within the framework of his legendary. I will then examine Bokenham's life of Alban, England's first martyr, his lives of Saints Wilfrid, Winifred, and David, and the cluster of East Anglian saints: Felix, Æthelthryth, Cedd, and Botolph.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² For a chart that displays the sources Bokenham uses for his local saints' lives, see Appendix D: Sources for Bokenham's local saints' lives.

¹⁸³ The nationalistic perspective here refers to Bokenham's portrayal of England as a place of extraordinary spiritual benefit in its local saint population and prestigious pilgrimage rewards; a place of special divine grace that makes a most appropriate and worthy memory structure for Christian mnemonic work as directed by vernacular texts. See the discussion of Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae* below.

¹⁸⁴ King Edmund the martyr would of course be included here but unfortunately his legend has not survived (see note 191, below).

All these saints stand out as examples of the different geographical mnemonics that Bokenham employs for his local saints: Wilfrid's life has some of the highest crossover with the *Mappula Angliae* in terms of place names and other references; Winifred's legend has some place names in common with the *Mappula* as well, but also contains a detailed geographical description in its opening lines; in his life of David, Bokenham includes a bizarre set of lines attributed to Pope Callixtus II that grant significant spiritual rewards for travel to St. David's Cathedral; and Bokenham's East Anglian saints are largely unique, either in their individual inclusion in a hagiographical collection of this size, or in the detailed treatment they receive as a result of their geographic origin. I end the chapter by briefly addressing the challenges Bokenham faces, specifically when dealing with the lives of relatively minor ecclesiastical saints. These narratives frequently lack miracles, violent conflict, dramatic travel, or unique memorable features. I provide examples of a few continental saints fitting this description whose narratives Bokenham translates without major change, in order to demonstrate the significance of even his small alterations to the local ecclesiastical saints.

3.2 The Architectural Mnemonic of the *ars memoria* and Bokenham's Geographical Mnemonics

The architectural mnemonic of the *ars memoria* tradition, broadly speaking, involves using existing or imagined memorized structures, such as homes, buildings or churches, as the foundation on which to arrange memory images. Related to and developed out of the method of *loci*, or method of places, the clearest early description of

this architectural place method comes from Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*.¹⁸⁵ Yates gives an excellent summary of Quintilian's explanation:

In order to form a series of places in memory ... a building is to be remembered, as spacious and varied as one as possible, the forecourt, the living room, bedrooms, and parlours, not omitting statues and other ornaments with which the rooms are decorated. The images by which the speech is to be remembered ... are then placed in imagination on the places that have been memorized in the building. This done, as soon as the memory of the facts requires to be revived, all these places are visited in turn and the various deposits demanded of their custodians. We have to think of the ancient orator as moving in imagination through his memory building *whilst* he is making his speech, drawing from the memorized places the images he has placed on them. The method ensures that the points are remembered in the right order, since the order is fixed by the sequence of places in the building. (Yates 18-9)

A physical example from Christian religious tradition might be the artwork arranged inside churches, such as stained glass, crosses, and paintings, wherein the viewer either physically walks around inside the church and pauses at each image to contemplate a story, lesson or meaning, or simply follows the images with their eyes while seated in a pew.

One such exercise wherein the faithful walk around and stop at images to meditate on their contents is the Stations of the Cross, also known as the Way of the Cross; artwork depicting significant moments of Christ's last mortal day are placed most

¹⁸⁵ Specifically, XI.ii, 17-22 of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*.

commonly around the inside of a church so that viewers can experience the events in their mind's eye and engage in contemplative prayer. This process triggers a collective act of imagining and remembering, in a sense, one of the formative moments within the Christian community. The Stations of the Cross became more fixed and established from the fifteenth century on, but we do see for example in chapter 29 of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, how Margery¹⁸⁶ tours the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem and at each stop is either granted visions or has vivid imaginings of Christ and Mary during the procession, crucifixion and death. Upon visiting Christ's grave, "sche thowt sche saw owyr Lady in hir sowle, how sche mornyd and how sche wept hir sonys deth, and than was owyr Ladiis sorwe hir sorwe" (Kempe 78). In this instance, Margery's visual exercise leads to a transfer of sorts of the emotional experience of a historical and spiritual moment. Margery's physical tracing of Christ's route from cross to tomb and beyond, the impact of the visualization and Margery's highly charged emotional response work together to imprint the narrative in her memory. After her visit to the tomb, Margery is "so ful of holy thowtys and medytacyons and holy contemplacyons in the Passyon of owyr Lord Jhesu Crist" (78) that it seems almost identical to some version of Quintilian's method. Although Margery has not constructed the Via Dolorosa in her head, the images or visions that she describes are a form of memory image, and these trigger recollection and contemplation as she revisits, in a manner of speaking, her journey.

We see a specific, trained and perhaps more accessible approach in book ten of Augustine's *Confessions* when, searching for God, he says:

¹⁸⁶ Here "Margery" refers to the character in the text, as potentially separate from the author, Kempe.

I come into these fields and spacious palaces of my memory, where the treasures of innumerable forms brought into it from these things that have been perceived by the senses [are] hoarded up ... To this treasury whenever I have recourse, I demand to have anything brought forth whatsoever I will ... [In] that huge court of my memory ... have I in a readiness the heaven, the earth, the sea, and whatever I could perceive in them. (10.8)

Here and throughout book ten Augustine meditates on, among other ideas, the capacity of memory to hold all things in a seemingly endless space, and for its wielder to summon experiences, sensations, texts and concepts at will. Augustine conceives of an entirely realistic inner world when he ‘surveys’ the mountains, stars and rivers that he sees with, as he says, “such vast spaces between, as if I verily saw them abroad” (X.viii). Augustine emphasizes the senses as the gates through which all things in the memory pass, and this allows him to recall not only ideas and arguments but sights, sounds, tastes and smells.

The scale of Augustine’s seemingly transcontinental memory storehouse dwarfs Bokenham’s project which, in comparison, is modestly contained on a single island. In the *Mappula Angliae*, a brief geographical history of England written to accompany his lives of local saints,¹⁸⁷ Bokenham combines the relentless detail of Hugh of St. Victor’s Ark (see below) with the Augustinian-inspired transposition of architectural to geographical mnemonic, and it is as though he is directly recalling Augustine’s invitation to “[b]ehold ... those innumerable fields, and dens, and caves of my memory, innumerably full of innumerable kinds of things” (X.xvi, 121-3). In short, Bokenham’s

¹⁸⁷ Bokenham’s *Mappula Angliae* will be introduced and discussed shortly below; see page 148.

local saints form memory images, arches, and pillars, while the physical landscape of Britain itself becomes a memory structure for his English Christian readers.

The architectural mnemonic and any spatially-based variations on it, such as Augustine's ranging internal storehouse, were increasingly adapted for use in the shaping and recollection of written narrative instead of lengthy speeches. Christian authors from the twelfth century onward looked to this ancient art first for strategies for generating and remembering sermons, and then, later, for composition and recollection of texts.¹⁸⁸ A good example of a medieval Christianized architectural mnemonic comes from the twelfth-century Augustinian Hugh of St. Victor who wrote on memory aids. One text of Hugh's in particular that has been variously titled "On Noah's Ark," "Constructing Noah's Ark," or "A drawing of the Ark" contains painstaking instructions for a vast and complex structure on which its historical, theological and psychological teachings could be arranged and later meditated upon. However, because the structure itself cannot be familiar in any real, tangible sense, unlike the fields and spacious palaces of Augustine's memory or Bokenham's national spiritual topography, the Noah's Ark exercise was intended more for trained clerks in religious orders than for lay folk.¹⁸⁹

Bokenham's attempt to transform the geography of England into a national memory place was part of a European trend that became integrated in England's university and monastic education systems by the fifteenth century. Carruthers claims

¹⁸⁸ Authors such as the twelfth-century scholar Boncompagno da Signa, thirteenth-century philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas as well as his contemporary, the philosopher Albertus Magnus, and others.

¹⁸⁹ Indeed, Hugh of St. Victor's "The Three Best Memory Aids for Learning History" is listed as the earliest selection of medieval texts on memory and mnemonics in *The Medieval Craft of Memory*. See Carruthers and Ziolkowski, 1-31. For further discussion of Hugh of St. Victor's ark, see Chapter Four.

that the fifteenth century saw “the newly rediscovered ancient mnemonic based on architectural places of memory” (*BoM* 44), and it is from this point that the main classical memory treatises began to receive more attention as they became increasingly more available. Bokenham is writing just before the humanists of the Early Modern Period who were interested in an even more rigorous revival of the *ars memoria*, such as Giulio Camillo with his wooden memory theatre structure of the mid-sixteenth century in Italy, or the German Dominican Johannes Romberch’s mnemonic alphabet and the use of Paradise, Purgatory and Hell as memory places from his *Congestorium artificiose memorie* of 1520, which Yates calls “[o]ne of the fullest and most widely cited of the printed memory treatises” (93). The emerging ‘theatre of the world’ topos was already familiar by the 1400s in Italy¹⁹⁰ and it, as well as the fields and caves of Augustine’s memory landscape in his *Confessions*, either directly or indirectly informed Bokenham’s application of the principles of the architectural mnemonic more broadly to a spiritual view of England’s physical landscape.

By combining his knowledge of the *ars memoria*’s architectural mnemonic with his focus on England’s geography, Bokenham transposed the concept of a memory structure onto the topography of his homeland. In this way, through his pairing of his *Mappula Angliae* text with the insular saints’ lives added to his legendary, Bokenham created an original geographical mnemonic.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ See, for example, Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), a philosopher of the Italian Renaissance whose *De vita coelitus comparanda* (On Obtaining Life from the Heavens), composed sometime in the 1480s, speaks of “constructing an ‘image of the world’” (Yates 164).

¹⁹¹ Evaluating the *Mappula Angliae*’s efficacy as a mnemonic support to the local legends is complicated by the loss of a few key narratives; namely, the lives of Saints Edmund, king and martyr, Edward, king and confessor, Oswald, Cuthbert, and Alphage, all of whom are mentioned in the *MA*, but whose narratives are lost due to the missing folios of the *LA* manuscript.

3.4 A Guidebook to the Saints' Lives: Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae*

One of Bokenham's trademarks is to assign a mnemonic treatment to those saints he considers to be important or significant; as the previous chapters have demonstrated, he tends to give mnemonic etymologies of names to the apostles, church fathers, and some virgin martyrs, while the legends of all virgin martyrs contain mnemonically effective memory images. As mentioned above, Bokenham employs a consistent mnemonic technique for the at least sixteen¹⁹² legends of local saints, even though they are drawn from various sources and are at times vastly different in length, style and level of detail. Taking the common element of their geographical location —Britain— and building on the architectural mnemonic from traditional *ars memoria* methods, Bokenham created a geographical mnemonic that positions Britain¹⁹³ itself as a memory palace.

When Bokenham employs what I am calling a 'mnemonic geography' he does so by creating a landscape of the country, dotted with spiritual wonders and sites of pilgrimage; in short, Bokenham's local saint narratives produce associative webs that cover the length and breadth of Britain. Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae*, a geographical history of England written to accompany his *Legenda Aurea*, builds on the local saints'

¹⁹² Bokenham claims the Roman-born Augustine of Canterbury (d. 604 CE), calling him "Austin of Ingland," although the saint was not native to Britain. Despite this title, I am not counting the saint in the local saints total given above. Bokenham makes reference to Saints Alphage, Cuthbert, Oswald, and Kings Edward and Edmund in his *Mappula Angliae*, so it can be assumed that the damaged Abbotsford manuscript contained at least these additional local saints' legends, if not more.

¹⁹³ I use 'Britain' to refer to England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, because that is the geographical span of Bokenham's imagined memory structure. However, Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae* as a companion to the legendary occasionally obscures regional and national boundaries since despite his claim to focus on England, his descriptions at times include the broader boundaries of Britain as a whole. The *MA* is for the most part a history of England, but the mnemonic project draws all of Britain under an English mantle.

lives to construct an expanded England as the ultimate memory palace, encompassing the hills, churches and soil in which are stored the cultural treasures of English Christians: their saints. Bokenham wrote the *Mappula Angliae* c.1440 and it survives in a single manuscript, British Library ms Harley 4011 (ff. 144 – 163).¹⁹⁴ The manuscript, compiled c.1450, also contains several other texts, including John Lydgate's 6,000-line *The Life of Our Lady* among many other of Lydgate's works,¹⁹⁵ a number of recipes, and a calendar with mnemonic verses.¹⁹⁶ The *Mappula* is Bokenham's translation, with a few excisions and additions, of selections from Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, a text intended to act as a history of the world. Although Bokenham's introduction to the *Mappula Angliae* implies that he wrote the work after most or all of his legendary was complete, it is not unreasonable to consider that he may have had access to Higden and referenced parts to inform some of his hagiographies.¹⁹⁷

Even though Higden's work includes much of the then-known world, Bokenham was only interested in the particular section of the *Polychronicon* that describes the history of England. Bokenham also incorporated or inserted mentions of Wales, Ireland

¹⁹⁴ A transcription of the *Mappula Angliae* is available in a rudimentary edition from the late 1800s by Carl Horstmann, whose primary focus was to make the text of the *Mappula* available without providing much additional information, context or analysis. See Carl Horstmann, Ed., "Mappula Angliae" *Englische Studien* 10 (1887), 1-34.

¹⁹⁵ Lydgate's work was commissioned by Prince Hal, who later became Henry V.

¹⁹⁶ Besides its original collection of religious and secular texts, including the nationalistic *Libel of English Policy* and the practical *Book of Nurture*, the manuscript contains sixteenth-century additions in the form of a draft of a letter, and an anonymous poem.

¹⁹⁷ Ranulf Higden, (d.1364), a monk of the Benedictine abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester, composed the *Polychronicon* c. 1327, but continued to work on it until his death in 1364. John Trevisa (1342 – 1402) completed the first known English translation in the 1380s, and there is also an anonymous translation by a fifteenth-century writer, although after performing a close comparison with each version, I would suggest that Bokenham was working either directly from Higden's Latin, or from a now-lost translation, as opposed to either of these surviving English translations. See *Polichronicon Ranulphi monachi Cestrensis: Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, in *Chronicles and memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the middle ages*, 1865.

and Scotland as were relevant to his explanation of Britain, or to a contextualization of the Welsh, Irish or Scottish saints¹⁹⁸ in his hagiographical collection. The *Mappula Angliae* has seventeen chapters¹⁹⁹ and begins by describing England's various names, such as "Albion" and "Anglia," its physical dimensions, adjoining isles, main highways, rivers, and the land's miraculous wonders or supernatural marvels. The *Mappula* then delineates the sometimes-shifting boundaries of the shires, cities, bishoprics and sees, and ends with a description of the various peoples who inhabit the island, along with their customs and their general dispositions.

Despite the availability of substantial material on Ireland, Scotland and Wales in Higden's *Polychronicon*, Bokenham focused, as he did with the local saints he included in his legendary, on English saints and on England as the setting for his spiritual geographical mnemonic. In the *Mappula Angliae* prologue, Bokenham describes his legendary as an "englische boke" made up of the standard canonical saints from the *Legenda aurea*, to which he has added "oper famous legendes" (MA 6) and it is the content of these legends that becomes the professed motivation for the *Mappula* project. With the exception of the Irish Patrick and the Welsh Winifred and David, the other legends he refers to—the surviving ones, at any rate—are all of English saints, and he

¹⁹⁸ Although none of the surviving lives are of Scottish saints, it is possible that Bokenham had originally included one or more that have now been lost due to manuscript damage.

¹⁹⁹ The first letter of each of the *Mappula Angliae*'s seventeen chapters, excluding the prologue, acts as a playful mnemonic acrostic that spells out 'Osbernus Bokenham'; for all Bokenham's adherence to the *humilitas* trope, he could not resist the urge to insert his name in this memorable manner. Bokenham's reference to the acrostic in the epilogue also claims the most easily identifiable portions of his original contribution: "I of no þynge seyde þere-yn challenge ne desire to be holdyn neythur auctour ne assertour, ne wylle aske no more but to byn holdyn oonly the pore compilatour & owte of latyne in to ynglyssh the rude & symple translatour sauf also þe connexiouns of þe chapitures, whose capitalle lettrys expressyn the compilatours name" (*Mappula Angliae* 34). It is worth noting that Higden also includes his name in an acrostic built into the *Polychronicon*.

even includes saints like John of Beverley, Felix of East Anglia, Gilbert of Sempringham, Botolph, Æthelthryth²⁰⁰ and Wilfrid,²⁰¹ who do not regularly appear in the other main legendaries.²⁰²

The Irish Saint Brigid, whose legend is found in Voragine,²⁰³ the *South English Legendary*, the *Nova Legenda Anglie*, and the later *Gilte Legende*, is not included in Bokenham's collection. Even Saint Cuthbert's predecessor and founder of Lindisfarne, the Irish Saint Aidan, whose name is mentioned in the *Mappula Angliae* –but without the “holy,” “blessed” or “saint” that usually accompanies a saint's name– and whose legend is in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* as well as the *Nova Legenda Anglie*, is not to be found in Bokenham.²⁰⁴ Such is Bokenham's focus and priority on adding only what he saw as the most important, and therefore often English, saints to Voragine's popular and established ‘golden’ legendary. As Alice Spencer notes, there is clear “proto-nationalistic

²⁰⁰ In terms of the main hagiographical collections written in England, Æthelthryth's narrative is found only in Ælfric and Bede.

²⁰¹ Bokenham's Wilfrid is taken only from Bede, and other than the impressively comprehensive and exclusively English *Nova Legenda Anglie*, no other major collections include this saint.

²⁰² Some of the non-local lives Bokenham added to his legendary that are not found in other main collections can, for the most part, be explained as individually and personally significant legends. For example, he added Nicholas of Tolentino, an Augustinian friar canonized in 1446; Bokenham may have visited the saint's tomb during a meeting of the general chapter of Austin Friars in 1459 (Spencer 12). Bokenham also added Faith, on whose feast day he was born, and Clare, who shares a name with the priory where he lived and worked (Clare Priory was founded c.1248 by Richard de Clare, Earl of Hertford and Gloucester).

²⁰³ Graesse has placed Saint Brigid's life in the attributed section of his edition; it is possible that Bokenham's version of Voragine's legendary did not include Brigid, although Bokenham did take his life of Barbara from Voragine, and that narrative is also in the attributed section.

²⁰⁴ Although the *Legenda Aurea* manuscript is damaged and several leaves are missing throughout, the area around where Aidan's narrative would be shows no sign of missing leaves. Brigid's feast day is February 1st and would fall directly before the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There is a cut to the manuscript at this point and a life of Saint Ignatius of Antioch is potentially missing, but given that Brigid, arguably the most prominent female Irish saint, is not mentioned in the *Mappula Angliae* or any part of Bokenham's legendary, it is a fair assumption that she was never included. Considering Bokenham's general attention to female saints, it is likely that he would have mentioned Brigid somewhere if she were included in his legendary.

rhetoric [in] the *Mappula Angliae*” (12) and this, combined with his carefully selected additions as well as his incorporation of *ars memoria* techniques, supports a geographical mnemonic reading of his local saint legends.

In his prologue to the *Mappula Angliae*, Bokenham introduces his project and declares its intended goal. According to Bokenham, this creative adaptation of Higden’s work was written because there is:

oftene-tyme in lyvis of seyntis, Of seynt Cedde, seynt Felix, seynt Edwarde, seynt Oswalde and many oþer seyntis of Englonde, mencyoun made of dyuers partis, plagis, regnis & contreis of this lande ... þe w[iche], but if þey be declared, byne fulle hard to knowene : Therefore, for þe more clerere vndirstandyng of the seid thyngis and othur, y haue drawe owt in to engliche XV chapturs þe whiche Arnulphus Cistren[sis] in his policronica of this landis descripcioun ... the w[iche] welle knowene & cowde, hit shalle byne easy ynoughe to vnderstande alle þat is towched þer-of in the seyde legende.²⁰⁵ (MA 6)

Bokenham’s insistence on “clerere vndirstandyng,” familiarity and comprehension (i.e. “welle knowene” and “cowde”²⁰⁶) should be read as a recipe for memory structures – in other words, his readers can place the saints from his hagiography onto England, the geography of which becomes familiar and recognizable through the use of the *Mappula Angliae*. The *Mappula* provides enough information and description to turn the land into a memory structure complete with topographical markings and supernatural wonders.

²⁰⁵ Here, “legende” refers to his *Legenda Aurea*, or his “engliche boke” which he has mentioned earlier in the prologue.

²⁰⁶ See *MED*, “connen” (v.), 5.a. “To know (particular things, facts, or truths); be familiar with or informed about (sth.); also, come to know, understand, recognize.”

Implicit in his promise to declare the “*dyuers partis, plagis, regnis & contreis* of this lande” lest they be “fulle hard to knowene” is Bokenham’s suggestion that lives of local saints cannot be properly consumed, understood and remembered without specific geographic knowledge. This does not seem to be a problem or a concern for the earlier, continental saints’ legends, but because they have received other forms of mnemonic treatments it is clear that Bokenham’s geographical mnemonic will be exclusively applied to England and its saints. Bokenham suggests that the various geographical locations will not be “knowene” unless they have “be declared;”²⁰⁷ in other words, for the sake of his readers’ full topographical comprehension, Bokenham will both thoroughly interpret the land and paint a mental picture with his narrative as he deciphers geographic descriptions, transforming them into a memory landscape.²⁰⁸

The four words that Bokenham uses to refer to “this lande” (“*partis, plagis, regnis & contreis*”) each mean basically the same thing: region. However, just as there are many ways to distinguish or categorize a memory item and just as Bokenham nearly always provides several interpretations in his mnemonic etymologies, each of these four words can mean different things—for instance: division, shire, realm or kingdom, and homeland or native country.²⁰⁹ England can thus be sectioned off in various ways, perhaps even

²⁰⁷ The verb *declaren* is most easily taken to mean ‘to tell about’ but here it also carries the sense of ‘to explain’ or ‘interpret,’ and I find that ‘to reveal, show, display’ is, while a slightly less common meaning, the other sense of the word that Bokenham intends. *MED*, “*declaren*” (v.), 1, 2 and 4.

²⁰⁸ Of the 84 named geographical locations—including churches—mentioned in Bokenham’s lives of local saints, 37 are also referenced in the *Mappula Angliae*. Many more *Mappula Angliae* place names may be echoed in the local narratives lost to manuscript damage.

²⁰⁹ *MED*, “*partie*” (n.) 3.a. “A geographical division, part of the world, region” or b. “a geopolitical division, nation; a subdivision of a country, kingdom, town, etc.; a district or province”; “*plage*” (n. (1)) 1. “(a) A region, land, or country”; “*regne*” (n.) 2.a. “A state or community governed by a monarch,” or 3.a. “The territory over which a king’s power extends, country, realm”; “*contre*” (n.) 3. “(One’s) native country or district; homeland, fatherland.”

according to the *Mappula*'s chapters: by broad dimensions, natural resources, supernatural wonders, by Brutus' divisions (i.e. the boundaries of England, Scotland and Wales),²¹⁰ the "gret kyngis highe-weyes" (*MA* 6), rivers, names of shires or prominent cities, of the realms and their divisions, the bishoprics and their sees, or even by the people themselves. According to Yates' thorough survey of architectural mnemonics, it is not unusual for *ars memoria* practitioners to use a range of models such as houses, temples, hospitals, or churches. Yates points to illustrations from popular sixteenth-century works that demonstrate the established use of abbeys with their surrounding buildings, the constellations and even the realms of Heaven and Hell as memory palaces.²¹¹

Despite this variety of architectural mnemonic places, what Bokenham suggests breaks from all previous mnemonic structures—at least, those that exist within the main *ars memoria* tradition—and instead comes closer to a theoretical model that could very well have been based on, or at least inspired by, the description of the landscape of Augustine's memory in the *Confessions*, with its fields, dens, and bodies of water. To make the significant leap from using a single building or even a city to using the entirety of Britain as a memory structure, Bokenham must conflate some of the main principles from the authoritative *Ad Herennium* on selecting memory places with those on selecting memory images: 1) they must be marvelous or wondrous (images); 2) they must generate

²¹⁰ The divisions Brutus of Troy assigned when he parceled Britain off for each of his three sons, according to a popular foundation myth found in Higden. Higden records that Brutus' eldest son Locrinus received Loegria (England), his second son Camber received Cambria (Wales), and his third son Albanus received Albania (Scotland). See Higden 2.30-3.

²¹¹ Abbey memory system from Johannes Romberch, *Congestorium Artificiose Memorie*, ed. of Venice, 1533 (Yates fig. 6a, n.p.); the cosmos as a place system, also from Romberch (Yates fig. 2, p.123); Hell and Paradise as artificial memory systems from Cosmas Rossellius, *Thesaurus Artificiose Memoriae*, Venice, 1579 (Yates fig. 8a and 8b, n.p.).

an emotional response (images and places); 3) they must be familiar (images and places); 4) they must be real, and not fictional (places).

Just as Hugh's description of the ark begins by outlining the base and general shape of the structure, the *Mappula* moves quickly from a history of the "dyuersitees of namis of this lande" (*MA* 6), in which England is said several times to be "a no \bar{p} er worlde" (7), to its dimensions. This chapter, titled "Of the sight & dymencyons of þis lande" (7), contains a play on words that lends itself to Bokenham's concept of a visually constructed geographical memory structure: Middle English "site." Often spelled "sight," the word as it is used in the title and body of the chapter refers to the position or geographical location of someone or something and, indeed, readers are informed that "Sowthest þer-fro stant Fraunce, Sowthwest Spayne, Northe þens is Norway, and Ireland fulle West" (7). While this allows for an impression of Britain surrounded by water that is in turn bordered by other lands, it is also set apart by yet another repetition of Isidore's observation that "Brytayne stant w[*ith*]-in the Occiane as þaughe hit were in a no \bar{p} er worlde" (7). This serves to isolate the isle and to conceive of it as an almost mystical place of myth and legend; when Bokenham describes how "þe furst land þat apperethe to hem þe wh[*iche*] seylene [sic] thidure, is a Cite cleped Rutiport" (7), readers are transformed into travellers who approach this "o \bar{p} er worlde" and document what part of the land first presents itself to view.²¹²

After shifting to view Britain from without, the *Mappula* describes the foundation for a geographical mnemonic mental structure by giving the length, breadth and general shape of the island. The "angille of Calidonye" or Caithness in "þe vtirrest parti of

²¹² "Rutiport" is modern Richborough, just north of Sandwich on the east coast of Kent.

Scotlande” is given as the northernmost point, with “þe brynk of Totenese” or the Penwith district in Cornwall, “xv lewkis by-yonde þe see of Stowe” as the southernmost point, and there are 800 miles between north and south; west is Menevia (or St. David’s) in South Wales, and east is Great Yarmouth in Norfolk, with 200 miles between east and west (*MA* 7). The next instructional point for building a mental model is that the island is oblong, yet larger in the middle than in the extremities, which gives a general shape and concept of the structure.

If we look at Bokenham’s surviving local saints’ lives for a similar geographical outline, we see that Patrick is the only saint located west of David, and Winifred completes the small cluster along the west side of the proposed British memory palace. To the east is Augustine of Canterbury, whose famous landing place –the Isle of Thanet– is incredibly close to Richborough. Æthelthryth’s Coldingham monastery in Berwickshire²¹³ is technically the northernmost place mentioned in the local lives, but Lindisfarne monastery on Holy Island, with its references in the narratives of Saints Wilfrid and Cedd, is represented as the northern edge of Christian Britain.²¹⁴ While there is no surviving saint’s life in Bokenham that claims as southwest a location as Totnes, Saint Aldhelm was Bishop of Sherborne and Dunstan trained at Glastonbury, later founding a monastery there as abbot.²¹⁵ Regardless of the degree of accuracy with which Bokenham’s local saints match the exact geographical range of the land outlined in the *Mappula*, by placing his hagiographical narratives and his geographical history in

²¹³ Located along Scotland’s southeast coastline.

²¹⁴ Although Saint Cuthbert, one of Bokenham’s missing local saints, is associated with Melrose Abbey and Lindisfarne monastery, and would be an excellent candidate to represent the north.

²¹⁵ There is a Saint Boniface mentioned in both the *Mappula* and the *Legenda* who was born in Devon, but only Boniface of Tarsus survives in Bokenham’s legendary.

conversation with each other, Bokenham proposes a landscape-based topographical mnemonic. His saints populate the isle and invest the wondrous and marvelous fields, hills and cities with spiritual significance.

The *ars memoria* tradition for memory places requires that the best places should be well-lit, and the *Mappula* describes Britain as brighter than all other areas: “þis Ile lithe so moche vndur þe Northe plage of heuyne, þerfore ... hit is oft dovted of hem þat beholdene hit wheþur þat brightnes be of þe Euerode aftur þe sonne goyngē downe or els of þe morow-day spryngyngē before þe risyngē of þe sonne” (*MA* 7). In fact, Britain is brighter than “Armenye, Macedonye and Italle and alle oþer regions þe whiche liene undur þe same lyne” (7). Taken with the later observation that “[h]it is to be considered deuovtely how moche cleere brightnes of goddis mercyfulle pite hathe syngulerly Illumined & iradied þe peple of Ynglond” (11), all these references to brightness and light in Britain imply that God’s affection slows the sun and strengthens its beams in order to illuminate the country that is the focus of this divine favour. In this way, the basic structure of Britain-as-memory-palace has been outlined and seemingly well lit both from above, through an excess of northern celestial glare, and from below, through the metaphorical brilliance of its grace-imbued soil.

Higden and Bokenham were not the only ones thinking and writing about topography. According to Philippa Maddern, the late fourteenth century saw a sharp rise in records of landscape and landscape change, and these observations continued to increase in frequency through the fifteenth century (Maddern 61). Maddern suggests the medieval view that stability in the landscape represents peace and harmony, whereas “changes in the landscape acted as a sign of, and could be identified with, social and

economic tension, encroachment, and disturbance” (65). This increased attention to topographical disruptions and the anxiety they provoked helped fuel what Maddern calls “a kind of landscape nostalgia,” which would explain the popularity of Higden’s “elegiac descriptions” (67) of perpetually bountiful natural resources. Certainly, when Bokenham adds to Higden’s list of incorruptible saints whose bodies testify to the divine grace granted to England’s soil,²¹⁶ he redirects attention to a second, more positive kind of landscape change: that caused by saints in a progressive spiritual enrichment of the land.²¹⁷

3.5 The First English Martyr: Saint Alban of England

For Bokenham, the early saints of Britain were in many ways the spiritual parents of English Christianity. As such, several of Bokenham’s saint narratives emphasize immediate connections between saint and reader through their common ground- quite literally, the soil under their feet. This emphasis usually overshadows or completely replaces the traditional references to noble genealogical ancestry that are so common in continental lives, with the marked exception of Saints Ursula and Æthelthryth. In the life of Saint Alban, as in several of Bokenham’s other local saint narratives, any mention of lineage tends to take the form of some kind of ecclesiastical genealogy, in the sense of

²¹⁶ Bokenham adds King Edward, John de Constance (or Coutance), and Joan of Acris to Higden’s list of Saints Æthelthryth, King Edmund and Bishops Alphage and Cuthbert (*MA* 11), (Higden 28). Trevisa’s translation remains faithful to the saints Higden mentions, while the anonymous translation included in the Higden edition adds Saints Edward and Thomas of Canterbury, “with mony other seyntes” (Higden 29).

²¹⁷ Of course, he is also pushing a more personally beneficial agenda when he includes “kynge Edwardis doughtre þe furst aftir þe conqueste, Dame Jone of Acris, whos body lithe hool & incorrupt in þe frires queere of Clare one þe sowthe side” and for whom God has shown man miracles “of old tyme & newe” (*MA* 11), since attention to Joan of Acres and her burial place would mean increased traffic, devotion and patronage for Clare Priory.

either the saint's instructors, students, and successors, or their physical impression on the landscape, such as the number of religious houses they established. In the case of Saint Alban, the token mention of noble lineage is replaced by the miraculous manipulations of English soil that took place as he literally carved a path to the location of his martyrdom and inscribed a lasting memory into the spiritual map of England.

Bokenham's life of Alban, England's first martyr,²¹⁸ is adapted largely from Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* and begins "The yere of our lordis incarnation two hundrid and six, vndir the persecucion of Dioclisian and Maximian, it plesid the seid lordis grace to embelshen and enhauncen the yle of Britaigne with the confession of holy martirs" (*LA* 66). Here, the date of the reign of the emperors Diocletian and Maximian²¹⁹ positions Alban as suffering simultaneously with the many other martyrs who died under one of the most brutal Christian persecutions in the history of the Roman empire. This historical parallel invites Alban to be read as a peer to these early Christian martyrs, but also as a marker for the beginning of England's own spiritual chronicles.

While Bokenham follows Bede fairly closely for most of Alban's legend, he departs early on when the then-pagan Alban provides refuge to a Christian cleric who is fleeing Maximian: Bokenham gives his name as Amphibolus and repeats the name, even though Bede does not name him.²²⁰ The addition of the name can be explained by the

²¹⁸ The life of Saint Alban marks a shift in how the style and structure of the early Roman saints' lives were adapted or even abandoned in the process of creating a distinctively English hagiographic voice. Most of the shorter lives in Voragine follow a particular pattern that consists of an etymology (usually), the saint's place of birth, parents, the most significant ruler of the time as well as the local tyrant (if a martyr), their upbringing and the rest of the *vita*.

²¹⁹ Historically, Diocletian and Maximian reigned from approximately 285 until sometime before 310 CE. The date for Alban should be 286, as it is in Bede (*Historia ecclesiastica* 28), and not 206 CE; either authorial or scribal error could be responsible.

²²⁰ Bede refers to Amphibolus as 'clericus' and nothing more.

fact that Alban's story was well known and had been fleshed out since the establishment of St. Albans, just north of London,²²¹ and perhaps Bokenham lifted the name from a version of the life that he had heard at one time or another. However, if we look to Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae*, we find that Alban appears as part of the history of Caerleon (Wales) where "[o]f thus cyte was blessid Amphibolus, seynt Albonys mayster" (*MA* 19). This reference to Amphibolus as Alban's master is echoed in Bokenham's version of the legend, after Alban observes his guest's holy living and becomes a convert under his instruction.

Alban, inflamed with the zeal of martyrdom, dressed himself in the cleric's "pilgryme clothis, as hatte, tabbard, and slaveyn, in which he came fro Rome" (*LA* 66), and offers himself in place of "his gest and his maister" (66). Where Bede had Alban simply put on the "habitu, id est caracalla" [the dress, that is the cloak] (Bede 28) that the cleric had been wearing, Bokenham describes a full switch of costume, specifically the hood or cap, sleeveless undergarment, and cloak that made up Amphibolus' pilgrim outfit, and adds that this was what he wore from Rome. This is yet another way in which Bokenham not only connects Alban to the early Christian martyrs on the continent, but here also uses the authority of the holy uniform of a Roman pilgrim to recreate or relocate a center of early Christian authority and tradition in England.

²²¹ In Caxton's *Golden Legend* and the anonymous *Gilte Legende*, both later than Bokenham, the entry for Alban carries the full title of "Alban and Amphiabel." See also Lydgate's *The Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*, written in 1439. However, according to Joseph Loth, the name Amphibolo was introduced even earlier, in 1139, when Geoffrey of Monmouth misread Gildas's '[sub]sancti abbatis amphibalo' as 'sancti abbatis amphibali', rendering 'in the garb or cloak of a holy abbot' to a church 'of St. Amphibolus,' an abbot ('amphibalus' in Latin is 'cloak' or 'chasuble'). Geoffrey then assigned the newly discovered Amphibolus to Saint Alban, whose growing tradition demanded a more detailed and expanded legend. (J. Loth, "Saint Amphibalus," *Revue Celtique*, XI, (1890), 348ff; quoted in *John Lydgate: The Life of Saint Alban and Saint Amphibal*, J. E. Van Der Westhuizen, Ed. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1974. p.35).

When, during his examination by a pagan judge, the saint is asked for his “progeny and kynrede,” Alban responds “[w]hat longith it to the to weten of what kynrede *or lyneal progenye by succession* I am borne?” (67, emphasis mine) and upon the judge’s insistence he gives his full name, Albanus,²²² which, he says, “I was clepid of my parentele, but I worship oonly and serue verrey quyk god in heuen which made of nought al thyngis” (67). Bokenham’s addition –given above in italics– is a careful definition of what exactly the judge is looking for (i.e. his bloodline), but it also draws attention to the information that he substitutes: a statement of his Christian faith. The saint disavows his pagan ancestry in favour of his newfound English Christianity and the heavenly ancestry that each martyr inherits.

Bokenham’s Alban narrative quickly moves from the brief questioning scene and the lackluster and unremarkable torture that follows it to a new focus: the saint’s miraculous geographic manipulations. Alban parts the waters of a river, then, after climbing a hill that appears to have been formed specifically as a setting for his martyrdom, creates a perpetual spring:

And anoon whan he was led forth to his iewesse he cam to a flode, the which ran with a passyng stronge strem bitwix hym and the place where he shuld ben hefdid. Moreovir, he sawe a grete multitude of peple, bothe men and wommen, the which by the wil and the werkyng of god were clepid to the obsequy and the *seruise* of his blissid confessour and martir. The which peple so occupied the passage of the brigge that as by liklynesse vnneth by evensonge s[ee]l he shuld moun han *commen* ovir; ... This seeyng, blissid Alban, whos desire was feruent

²²² Bokenham uses the Latin form “Albanus,” and here would have been an opportunity to provide an etymology. See Appendix A for etymological name elements.

to *commen* to his passion, went nere to the river side and, lifyng vp his eyen to heven, preyed in his hert. And anoon the flode which was *impetous* of cours and wondir swyfte in rennyng departed on two and yafe hym a drye wey in the botome therof forto passen ovir.²²³ (*LA* 221)

When Alban parts the waters, he does so in front of a large number of pagan witnesses who immediately convert, as is common of martyrs' miracles. The difference here is that the audience is made up of an English populace who have been divinely summoned "to the obsequy and the *seruise*" of the saint, and the "grete multitude of peple, bothe men and wommen" drawn to the hill recalls Christ's sermon on the mount in Matthew 5-7, where multitudes of people flocked to see the famous figure.

The parting of the river is written so as to evoke the highly memorable larger scale miracle that Moses performs on the Red Sea in Exodus 14.21-2: "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left" (AKJV). However, unlike Moses, who is escaping persecution, Alban parts the waters to hasten his arrival to the place of his execution. Also unlike the Moses miracle, which takes place overnight during the

²²³ Later, once Alban has crossed the river and performed his second miracle, "the mynisterie of the flode *performed* and doon, the river turned ageyn vnto his [sic] and obserued his cours in rennyng as it did byforn" (*LA* 221); cf. Exodus 27-8: "And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; [and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.] And the waters returned..." (AKJV).

cover of darkness, Alban's parting of the waters happens before "evensonge s[ee]l" or sunset, in order to maximize the miracle's visibility to believers and pagan skeptics alike.

The beginning of the Alban passage quoted above marks one point where Bokenham's version differs ever so slightly from its source: where Bede writes "[c]umque ad mortem duceretur, peruenit ad flumen quod muro et harena, ubi feriendus erat, meatu rapidissimo diuidebatur" (30),²²⁴ Bokenham situates the river between the saint and his "iewesse" (i.e., sentence or punishment) instead of between the town and the execution arena. Bokenham's version replaces the town with the saint as a locational marker, and the parallels to Moses at the Red Sea and Christ on the mount stress the momentous importance of Britain's "glorious martir" (*LA* 220) both in relation to these bold biblical figures and in his own right. The parallels also increase the ease of memory work for readers of the Alban narrative.

Although Christ's famous mount receives no description in the Bible, both Bede and Bokenham paint a picture of Alban's hill in such a way as to make it easily imagined in a mental image. In Bede, the hill is a beautiful gentle slope "qui beati martyris cruore dicaretur" (32).²²⁵ Bokenham's version introduces some subtle changes: "This hil was an oportunely plesant place peyntid and clad with verdour and *with* many diuersitees of

²²⁴ "As he was being led to his execution, he came to a rapid river whose stream ran between the town wall and the arena where he was to suffer" (31).

²²⁵ "[fit] as a place to be hallowed by the blood of a blessed martyr" (Bede 33). According to Bede, "qui oportune laetus gratia decentissima quingentis fere passibus ab harena situs est, uariis herbarum floribus depictus, immo praeceps, nihil abruptum, quem lateribus longe lateque deductum in modum aequoris Natura conplanat, dignum uidelicet eum pro insita sibi specie uenustatis iam olim reddens, qui beati martyris cruore dicaretur" (32). ["This hill lay about five hundred paces from the arena, and, as was fitting, it was fair, shining and beautiful, adorned, indeed clothed, on all sides with wild flowers of every kind; nowhere was it steep or precipitous or sheer but Nature had provided it with wide, long-sloping sides stretching smoothly down to the level of the plain. In fact its natural beauty had long fitted it as a place to be hallowed by the blood of a blessed martyr" (33)].

flouris, *pleyn as the see*, withouten stoones or craggis; a conveyent and worthy place for the plesant beaute therof to ben *dewid and enbawmed with this holy martirs blode*” (*LA* 221, italics indicates Bokenham’s changes). In this version, Bokenham works in a reference to the sea, which recalls Moses’ miracle and again bolsters the significance of Alban’s entire narrative through this connection. Bede’s “dicaretur” (*dico*: to devote, dedicate, or consecrate) is emphasized by Bokenham’s “dewid and enbawmed” doublet, and where Bede observes that the hill is an appropriate place for a martyr’s sacrifice, Bokenham goes further, suggesting that the hill, “a conveyent and worthy place,” was made specifically to receive Alban’s blood.

After his parting of the river waters, the saint’s second and final geographic miracle takes the form of a spring that appears out of the ground at the top of the hill and recalls Moses striking a rock with his staff to provide water to his people.²²⁶ When Alban prayed, “anoon at his fete sprange vp a *perpetuel welle nevir to waxen drye* aftir, that al *menn* myght knowen therby that broke in the vale had also doon the martir *seruise*” (*LA* 221). Although the river returns to its original course, as does the Red Sea, the saint leaves a permanently plentiful spring as a mark on the landscape that functions as a physical witness to Alban’s holiness.

The legend’s visually stunning account of the martyrdom and the geographic marks left by the saint’s miraculous terrestrial manipulations are excellent examples of the way in which Bokenham’s often subtle changes emphasize the importance of and connection between landscape and local saints. For this first martyr of Britain, however,

²²⁶ Exodus 17.6: “Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel” (AKJV).

Bokenham does away with the specifics of location as provided at the end of Bede's section on Alban²²⁷ in favour of a more general visual impression of the saint potentially occupying any attractive hill in the English landscape. This broadening of Alban's possible location to include all of England grants his readers a more immediate sense of connection to the saint, and their ability to imagine Alban's narrative taking place on a familiar hill greatly increases the mnemonic effect of the narrative.

3.6 Saint Wilfrid and the *Mappula Angliae*

In the Alban narrative, Bokenham focuses on broader, more general geographic characteristics to facilitate application of the English 'proto-martyr' to any area that might best suit the landscape with which each reader would be familiar. In a slightly different approach exemplified in his life of Wilfrid, Bokenham uses place names to tie the saint to specific locations in England. This shift represents Bokenham's two different attitudes towards geographic mnemonics in local lives; in one, the saint represents England more broadly, and can be flexibly located to whatever landscape marker is most mnemonically effective for the individual reader, whereas in the other approach, named locations encourage a relatively accurate set of reference points situated on the memory structure of England. Wilfrid is also one of the most frequently mentioned saints in the

²²⁷ Bede mentions that Alban was martyred "iuxta ciuitatem Uerolamium, quae nunc a gente Anglorum Uerlamacaestir siue Uaeclingacaestir appellatur; ubi postea, redeunte temporum Christianorum serenitate ecclesia est mirandi operis atque eius martyrio condigna extracta. In quo uidelicet loco usque ad hanc diem curatio infirmorum et frequentium operatio uirtutum celebrari non desinit" (34). [Alban was martyred "near the city of Verulamium which the English now call either *Uerlamacaestir* or *Uaeclingacaestir* (St. Albans). Here when peaceful Christian times returned, a church of wonderful workmanship was built, a worthy memorial of his martyrdom. To this day sick people are healed in this place and the working of frequent miracles continues to bring it renown" (35)].

Mappula Angliae, and it is possible that Bokenham had Wilfrid in mind when he described the *Mappula* as a tool “for þe more clearere vndirstandyng” (*MA* 6) of the local saints’ lives. Wilfrid’s legend is fraught with political conflict, multiple rulers, and changing appointments, all of which Bokenham attempts to simplify in the life, while expanding on the situations in the *Mappula*.

Wilfrid’s name appears in the fourteenth chapter of the *Mappula*; the chapter covers “þe Bysshopryches of þis londe & ... hure sees” (*MA* 24), and is a mass of place names, rulers and of course, bishops, archbishops, popes and priests. The saint is first mentioned when “Wylfryde, þe whiche longe had be flemyd owte of Norþehumbirlonde, was made bysshope of Chestir; and II yere aftir, when the kyng of Norþehumbirlonde Alfryde was dede, Wylfryde turnyd ageyne to his *propur* see Hangustaldence” (*MA* 27). As confusing as this offhand note may be, the entire section that covers Wilfrid and his contemporaries is convoluted at best. There are so many upheavals, replacements, banishments and accusations that the description of which bishops held which sees reads more like an overly involved game of musical chairs- no wonder Bokenham simplified Wilfrid’s legend and left the details to the *Mappula*.

The saint had certainly been “flemyd,” or banished, from Northumberland, and Bokenham includes two episodes of conflict in his Wilfrid narrative, but his focus is largely the places and people the saint impressed and inspired. For instance, at the age of fourteen, he began studying under the monks at Lindisfarne and, due to his intelligence and dedication, both his peers and his elders held him in great affection. His education continued at Canterbury under one of Saint Gregory’s disciples, then he was tonsured in France by the highly impressed Bishop of Lyons, and his learning deepened in Rome

before he finally returned to England. Under King Alhfrith, who ruled part of Northumbria, Wilfrid received land in Stamford and a monastery in Ripon, and in short order was made bishop of all of Northumberland.

In the *Mappula*, Bokenham documents how Wilfrid “taryed a-bowtyne his confirmacioun yn France” and was temporarily replaced, and then records “certeyne stryvis” between the saint and the king that caused Wilfrid to be “put owte ageyne” by Archbishop Theodore, “corupt by þe kyng” (*MA* 28). In Bokenham’s Wilfrid narrative, however, there is no interruption between the saint’s confirmation in Paris and his return to Northumberland. When Alhfrith’s successor, Ecgfrith, makes false accusations against Wilfrid and necessitates a trip to Rome to obtain a defense, Bokenham again cuts material, this time in the form of a side trip to Frisia to convert thousands of ‘barbarians’ that Bede describes in his *Historia ecclesiastica*. Instead, Bokenham chooses to focus on a moment in a synod recorded in the *Mappula* when Wilfrid is selected to make a statement of faith on behalf of all of Britain.

Giving a close translation of his source, Bokenham writes “Wylfryd the Wyl belouyd of god, bysshop of the cyte of Yorc ... for al the nort part of the ylys of Britayne & Irlond the ys dwellyd *with* Britons, englyssh, Scottys & Pictys, confessyd opynly the trewe & vniuersel feyth of hooly cherche & confirmyd his wurdys wyth subscripcoun” (*MA* 396).²²⁸ This statement from the synod in Rome portrays Wilfrid as not only the Bishop of York, but also the testifying authority for all of Christian Britain as well as the ecclesiastically recognized recipient of God’s affection. Throughout the narrative, Bokenham focuses largely on Wilfrid’s presence in Northumberland, and specifically

²²⁸ For the same passage in Bede, see *Historia ecclesiastica*, p. 526.

Ripon, the monastery he was given and in which he died. The various rulers who opposed Wilfrid are mentioned only briefly and seem to die within a short period of time, leaving the saint as a bright representation of English Christianity in Northumberland, and specifically York and Ripon.

Bokenham's Wilfrid narrative focuses on the saint's relatively untroubled activities in Northumberland but the *Mappula* which Bokenham introduces as a companion piece to the legendary reports unsettled dynamics between saint and king. It is possible that the *Legenda Aurea*, or individual lives from it, would be in demand among Bokenham's patrons whereas access to the potentially paired *Mappula* and *Legenda Aurea* could be somewhat restricted to, for instance, either the trained and disciplined ecclesiastical minds of Bokenham's fellow priests or the more studious and wealthy patrons. The *Legenda's* Wilfrid with its relatively uncomplicated narrative of the long career of a dedicated Northumbrian priest could be read on its own, and those readers who chose to pursue the *Mappula* and read the two texts closely would most likely have been able to properly contextualize the additional and potentially problematic material.

Whatever readership Bokenham may have imagined or intended for these two works, we know he composed the *Mappula* after either most or all of his legendary was written, and that he never returned to insert references to the text in his hagiography, even though the *Mappula* was likely designed to be circulated or perhaps even bound with the *Legenda*. Even so, it is notable that in the Wilfrid narrative Bokenham's only reference to Bede, his source for the legend, is at the end, when he gives part of the first line of Wilfrid's epitaph followed by "Hec Beda, libro quinto *capitulo* 19 de gestis" (*MA*

397). Given the material excised from Bede, I believe studious or curious readers were meant to make primary use of the *Mappula* as a supporting text, instead of Bede.

Material from the *Mappula* provides more detail on the locations mentioned, as well as some of the shifting appointments that are simplified in the Wilfrid narrative. What this means mnemonically is that readers who only had access to the legendary could create and recall a simple association between Wilfrid and York, in Northumberland, and readers with access to the *Mappula* could incorporate the expanded information on the saint into a more nuanced geographic network that extended beyond York.

3.7 Topographia in Bokenham's Life of Saint Winifred

In his Wilfrid narrative Bokenham repeats references to particular places to establish the saint's geographic mnemonic network. In Winifred, instead of rote memorization, Bokenham employs a different technique called *topographia* that uses evocative landscape description to impress the memory of a location onto readers' minds. *Topographia*²²⁹ (topography) is both a science and a rhetorical device wherein language is used to describe a location or its features in detailed accuracy, and Bokenham's life of Saint Winifred contains one of his best examples of this device. Bokenham's engagement with this practice, more evident in his *Mappula Angliae*, enables his readers to create a true representation of Britain in their minds as a memory structure. In this section I will examine how his use of *topographia* in the life of Saint Winifred²³⁰ expands on and even differs from the descriptions in the *Mappula*.

²²⁹ From the Greek τόπος (“topos”), place, and γράφω (“grapho”), write.

²³⁰ Bokenham's life of Saint Winifred is found only in the *Legenda*, and not in his *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*. This is most likely because the *LHW* is made up of the more canonical female saints, and the particular saints chosen are perhaps the result of a specific request for such a text.

While he is not equally preoccupied with geographical description throughout all the local saints' lives in his legendary, Bokenham is especially anxious to create a more detailed mnemonic landscape when he has travelled there himself, as was seen for example in the personal anecdote in Saint Margaret's prologue, when he goes to "an old priory / Of blake chanons" (*LHW* 136-7) near Old Buckenham²³¹ to pray for protection and to kiss Margaret's foot. Bokenham does this in a more formal manner in his life of Saint Winifred, drawing on both Higden's authority²³² as a chronicler and "[a]s experience me tawt" (*LA* 108) when he visited the Holywell site in Flintshire, Wales, in 1448. Bokenham's main source for his Winifred narrative is the *Nova Legenda Anglie*, an anonymous fifteenth century collection of saints' lives that he may have also drawn from to either fully source or to supplement small parts of his other legends.²³³ Originally titled *Sanctilogium Angliae*, the *Nova Legenda Anglie* has been associated with John Capgrave, although there is no evidence linking him with the legendary.²³⁴

²³¹ There has been some speculation as to where Bokenham is from, and certainly Old Buckenham is one candidate. As Sheila Delany speculates, "Suffolk might have been [Bokenham's] native county, or he may have hailed from the village of Old Buckenham in Norfolk, a few miles north of the Suffolk line," where there had been a house of Austin canons (Delany 6). In her introduction to *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, Serjeantson includes, in addition to Old Buckenham, Carl Horstmann's suggestion of Bookham, in Surrey, and Samuel Moore's guess of Burgh Le Marsh, in Lincolnshire (Serjeantson xiii-xiv). Old Buckenham is certainly the leading candidate as Bokenham's place of birth.

²³² These additions come from sections of the *Polychronicon* that are not included in the *Mappula Angliae*.

²³³ Bokenham used *Nova Legenda Anglie* substantially for his lives of Saints John of Beverley, Aldhelm, Botolph and Winifred, and may well have used it for his life of King Edmund the Martyr, as it is not in either Voragine or Bede, his first two preferred sources. Bokenham's exact source remains unclear because his life of Saint Edmund is missing from the damaged and incomplete *Legenda* manuscript; we only know of its likely existence through Bokenham's reference to it in the *Mappula*.

²³⁴ John de Tynemouth, a likely author of most of the *Nova Legenda Anglie* lives, was a fourteenth century historian and hagiographer, vicar of Tynemouth and possibly monk of St. Albans (Horstmann xxxiv) who wrote a collection of over 100 English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish saints' lives based on painstakingly compiled documents and personal research. He wrote *Historia Aurea*, a history, some saints' lives and a martyrology. The chart in Appendix D

Bokenham's Winifred begins not with the saint's name or birthplace, or even, as the *Nova Legenda Anglie* does, with Saint Beuno, Winifred's spiritual father and instructor. Instead Bokenham brings his readers west, flying across the country to Wales:

At the west ende of Brytayne the more
 Lyith a Prouince, a ful fayr cuntre,
 Wich, aftyr Policronicas lore,
 Buttyth on the gret Occyan see;
 Wich ys distinct in to partys thre²³⁵
 Wyth dyuers watrys ful of hillys & valys
 And in oure Wulgare now ys clepyd 'Walys.'

But how this name cam of Gualesia,
 Kyng Ebrankys doughtyr wich ther was quen,
 As yt of Cambrio was fyrst clepyd Cambria,
 Ner of the comodytes wich in that cuntry been
 As bestys & foullys, wax hony & been,²³⁶
 And many other thyngys here spekyn nyl y
 Wich seyde Policronica declaryth opynly.

For myn entent ys not at this our
 To ben occupyd abowtyn Topographe
 But the princypal cause of this labour
 Ys blyssyd Wenefredys lyf to descrye;
 Wiche be cruel hefdynges onys dede dye,

displays Bokenham's textual sources as well as where he departs from Voragine, all of which speaks to where Bokenham locates historical or hagiographical *auctoritas*. If a saint's life is not in Voragine, Bokenham looks to Bede, to *Nova Legenda Anglie*, and then sometimes to Malmesbury (though usually only for supplementary details).

²³⁵ In Higden: Kaermarshyn (Carmarthen), (Isle of) Anglesey, and Powysia (Powys) (400).

²³⁶ This section is more or less inspired by Higden's verse from 396-8, although Higden does not mention fowls, wax, or bees. Bokenham likely read the description of abundant natural resources and then invented the lines that would best fit his verse.

And reysyd ageyn, yerys ful fyftene
 Lyuyd aftyр that, a pure mayde & clene. (*LA* 99)

The first stanza situates Wales in relation to his East Anglian audience, but still within the bounds of Great Britain, and delivers the bird's eye view of a land divided into three parts, its surface made up of undulating hills and valleys crossed throughout with the veins of various rivers, streams and lakes. Bokenham then produces a stanza in which he coyly slips in both etymology and *topographia* while protesting that his "principal cause" is Winifred's life, and that he will not digress into these supposedly irrelevant details.

Winifred's life is written in rhyme royal, and Bokenham's use of the rhetorical device of *occupatio*²³⁷ draws comparison to the prologue of Chaucer's "Clerk's Tale" from his *Canterbury Tales*, which is also written in rhyme royal and features a long-suffering, arguably saintly female figure. At the end of the prologue, the Clerk refers to the lengthy geographic description that his source, Petrarch, begins his tale with as unimportant: "The which a long thing were to devyse, / And trewely, as to my jugement, / Me thinketh it a thing impertinent" (*Clerk's Prologue* 52-4). And yet, the Clerk goes to the trouble of recreating this geographic description in several lines at the end of his prologue and in the first stanza of the tale itself, thereby drawing attention to the landscape on and near which the tale takes place. Perhaps Bokenham was inspired by the use of this rhetorical device as a way to both imitate a source of great literary *auctoritas* and marry topography to this particular hagiographical narrative.²³⁸

²³⁷ *Occupatio*: "[a] figure in which attention is drawn to something by professing to omit it" (*OED*, "preterition, n. 1." is cross-referenced with "occupatio").

²³⁸ Recall the earlier allusion to Chaucerian style which married mnemonic and rhetorical technique in Chapter Two, pages 96-99.

In contrast to the geographical description in Winifred's life, the *Mappula Angliae*'s summary of Wales' geography is almost curt; it gives rivers as borders of sorts — “þe flode of Dea at Chestur in þe Northe, & þe flode cleped Vaga beside þe Castelle Stygulence in the Sowthe, distermynyng and departyne Englonde & Walis assondur” — and mentions Offa's dyke, Flint Mountain and Basingwerk Abbey. The description ends with the note that “[t]he sowthe-west side of Walis lokythe towarde the spaynyssh see, & þe fulle weste vpon the Iryssh see” (MA 12). This description provides borders made up of various bodies of water, but provides little detail concerning the general shape of Wales. The *Mappula*, then, outlines shapes and borders, divisions of rivers and highways and territories, while Winifred's narrative provides details, colours and context that fill in the locational memory image.

Returning to the description of Wales from the Winifred narrative, Bokenham gives the etymology of Wales in a way that emphasizes the importance of feminine place name etymology, and includes a line also found in Chapter Six of the *Mappula Angliae* which references the third part of Britain as having once been “cleped Cambria, of Cambro, þe III. sonne of Brute, *but now in oure vulgar hit is cleped Wales, of Gualesia, kynge Ebrankes doughture, þe w^{che} was somtyme kynge there*” (MA 12, emphasis mine). The italicized addition of the explanation for the name ‘Wales’ from ‘Gualesia’ is Bokenham's insertion of a line taken from Higden's 38th chapter, “De Cambria sive Wallia” (Higden 394), which describes the history and geography of Wales in rhyming couplets.²³⁹ In both the *Mappula Angliae* and the life of Winifred, Bokenham ignores Higden's alternate etymology of the nobleman named Gwalone, which reads more as an

²³⁹ Higden's description of England, Ireland, and Scotland are in prose, but he switches to verse for his description of Wales.

afterthought than a legitimate etymological explanation.²⁴⁰ In this way, the focus remains on the female saint and the female-inspired name of her birthplace.

This instance is significant because Bokenham goes out of his way to juxtapose text from different sources (Higden's *Polychronicon* and the *Nova Legenda Anglie*), which brings saint and geographical history together. By favouring an etymology which posits a female name as the source for 'Wales' within the narrative framework of the life of a female saint, Bokenham once again lavishes attention and mnemonic strategies not only on hierarchically dominant saints like the main apostles, but also on those saints significant to Bokenham personally, or those valued by his patrons and East Anglian readers in general who tended to favour female (and usually virgin) saints. Winifred is, then, an example of his particular attention to virgin female saints, and it is possible that her life may have been written with a hope for attracting patronage, as with several of his other female saints composed in verse form.²⁴¹

Turning now to the rhetorical flourish that follows at the tail end of this opening to Winifred's life, we see that Bokenham sets the saint's life on equal footing with the

²⁴⁰ Higden's etymologies for Wales are taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*HRB*, 2:1-8, and *History of the Kings of Britain*, translated by Sebastian Evans and Reverend Charles W. Dunn [London: Dent, 1963], 29-34, and *HRB*, 12:19 / translated by Evans, 263-64). As Ronald Waldron suggests, Higden could have taken the name *Gwalone* —that Bokenham rejects— from Gerald of Wales' *Cambriae Descriptio* (See notes to "Trevisa's Translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*, Book I, Chapter 38, De Wallia: An Edition" in *Authority and Subjugation in Writing of Medieval Wales*, Eds. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones, Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2008, p.130).

²⁴¹ *Saint Margaret* was written for a 'Thomas Burgh,' *Saint Anne* for John and Katherine Denston, *Saint Katherine* for Katherine Denston and Katherine Howard, *Saint Dorothy* for John and Isabel Hunt, *Saint Agatha* for Agatha Flegge, *Saint Elizabeth* for Elizabeth de Vere, and *Saint Mary Magdalene* for Lady Isabel Bouchier, Countess of Eu (Serjeantson xx-xxi). Some of Bokenham's other female saints' lives may have also been dedicated to patrons or friends, but since evidence suggests that mentions of patronage were removed upon inclusion in the legendary, it is impossible to speculate about specific lives.

linguistic ‘science’ of etymology and the authoritative aura of geographical history by addressing these in the narrative’s first few stanzas.

In the third stanza of Winifred’s life, quoted above, the “entent” and “principal cause” Bokenham refers to is the rhetorical practice, recommended by Aristotle, of declaring the purpose or goal of the speech or text in order to situate the reader and establish their expectations. Bokenham describes this most clearly in his prologue to

Legends of Hooly Wummen:

Two thyngys owyth euery clerk
 To aduertysyn, begynnyng a werk,
 If he procedyn wyl ordeneelly :
 The fyrste is ‘what’, the secunde is ‘why.’
 In wych two wurdys, as it semyth me,
 The foure causys comprehendyd be,
 Wych, as filosofys vs do teche,
 In the begynnyng men owe to seche
 Of euery book ; and aftyr there entent
 The fyrst is clepyd cause efficyent,
 The secunde they clepe cause materyal,
 Formal the thrydde, the fourte fynal. (*LHW* 1-12)²⁴²

Despite Bokenham’s statement of discarding topography in favour of his narrative’s true aim, in a mere three stanzas he has painted a mnemonic landscape of Wales, given it a

²⁴² Aristotle writes of the four causes most notably in *Physics* and *Metaphysics*.

name supported by etymology, and rehearsed the main plot points of Winifred's life.²⁴³ Should his readers not remember anything else from Saint Winifred's legend, they will already have a visually attractive landmark and the memory image of a young virgin, miraculously revived after a brutal decapitation— a method of execution that, as Bokenham's audience would know, typically marks the certain and final end of a saint's suffering.

The pilgrimage site associated with Winifred is the well or spring that miraculously appeared at the very location of the saint's decapitation, and it is this specific geographic spot that becomes the focus of some personal description. Bokenham relates how the stones in Winifred's well "[i]n many sundry placys sprenklyd be / *With* dropys of blood al fressh to se" (*LA* 421), and that any skeptics could place clear stones from elsewhere, leave them for a while, and come back to find them spotted in the same manner. As proof of the authority of his claim, Bokenham declares:

Of this laste balade y haue no euydence
 But oonly relacyoun of men in that cuntre
 To whom me semyth shuld be youyn credence
 Of alle swyche thyngys as ther doon be,
 For whan y was there myn hoost told me
 That yt soth was wyth owte drede

²⁴³ Bokenham also explores outside of his source, first in the discussion on the renaming of Winifred's Well (or Holy Well/Holywell), and then in a reference to Higden. Higden's lines are translated in Bokenham with slight embellishments, which makes Bokenham's comment about curious readers learning more by finding the *Polychronicon* more of an appeal to authority rather than, as he does with Bede, a legitimate instance of directing a reader to the source for additional information.

For hym self had seyin it doon in dede. (*LA* 421)

Bokenham was there himself and collected information from local eyewitnesses, much in the style of a reporter. His insistence that the testaments of locals should be trusted is based on the assumption that “men in that cuntre” are undeniable authorities on “alle swyche thyngys as ther doon be,” a claim that invites his audience to consider themselves as expert collaborators collecting spiritual and geographical knowledge across Britain through his hagiography.²⁴⁴

The host’s authority is bolstered twice: once in his statement that “yt soth was wyth owte drede” and again that his story must be true because “hym self had seyin it doon in dede.” With the host’s authority established, Bokenham mentions him two more times as he relates further details about the miraculous Holywell, introducing an additional anecdote with “[a]nothyr thyng also myn oost me told” and again one stanza later with “[w]iche feythfully my forseyd ost told me” (*LA* 421).²⁴⁵ Both Bokenham’s physical presence chronicling his visit, as well as his host’s first-hand eyewitness experience as a Flintshire local reinforce the location as ‘real’ and reliable, and promote the descriptions of Wales and Holywell from the Winifred narrative and the *Mappula Angliae*²⁴⁶ as effective building blocks for Winifred’s geographical mnemonic location.

²⁴⁴ This relates to Bede’s claims that he was either a witness to certain events or has it on the authority of eyewitnesses. Bokenham is presenting his hagiographical anecdotes using the same criteria for credibility as a chronicler.

²⁴⁵ The anecdote ends with Bokenham’s record of the host’s words: “‘Lo syre,’ *quoth* my ost, ‘so god me spede / This story ys soth wich y you haue told / Wherefore to reportyn yt ye may be bold’” (*LA* 423).

²⁴⁶ Note that the *Mappula Angliae* only contains descriptions of Wales, and not Holywell specifically.

3.8 A Thriving Tourist Trade: Pilgrimage to Saint David's

Just as Winifred's Well becomes a popular site of pilgrimage, St. David's Cathedral in Wales marks another important point in Bokenham's geographical mnemonic. In fact, both of Bokenham's lives of these Welsh saints feature anecdotes related to the importance of certain locations as pilgrimage sites for devotees of these holy figures, although while Winifred's main pilgrimage spot is located at the well that sprang up where she was beheaded, David's site is at a church built on land that was divinely designated before he was born.²⁴⁷

Besides a sampling of small miracles, other general reinforcement of saintly importance can be found in the content of the *Mappula Angliae* that intersects²⁴⁸ with Bokenham's narrative.²⁴⁹ In order to bolster David's prestige beyond the miracles that the saint performs, Bokenham twice links David to the legendary King Arthur. First, in the *Mappula*, Bokenham mentions that the relocation of the archbishopric from Caerleon to Menevia happened "vndir kynge Arthure þe tyme of seynt Dauyd" (*MA* 25), implying Arthur's real and direct involvement in a decision that increased recognition and ecclesiastical authority to the religious site that David founded. Second, at the end of the David narrative, Bokenham relates how "[t]his blissid man ... deid the yere five hundrid

²⁴⁷ One of David's earliest miracles involves a spring that appears out of the ground for his baptism, but unlike Alban and Winifred, it does not function as a landscape marker for the saint's main geographic mnemonic. The miraculous spring passage in Bokenham's life of David: "whan he shuld be cristenyd, the bisshop of the cuntreyre, Elwey, commyng vnwarly oute of Irelande in the haven clepid Gleys even vndir a crag there he mett with the childe sprange a fair bright welle which nevir was seyn there biforn, in which the seid bisshop cristenyd hym" (*LA* 133).

²⁴⁸ Even though the *Mappula* was written after most or all of Bokenham's saints' lives, there are several instances of overlapping or closely related material. This is unsurprising, considering that they were meant to be read side by side.

²⁴⁹ The bulk of this material relates more closely to the following chapter, where I discuss ecclesiastical genealogy. See Chapter 4, pages 228-231 for the material on Saint David.

fourty and two, sone aftir his eeme Arthure the noble kyng of Britaigne, and was buried in his owen cathedral chirche Menevie” (*LA* 134). In this way, both David the saint and St. David’s cathedral are inextricably connected to memorable and culturally important legend and together stand in mnemonic significance on Bokenham’s map.

The geographical focal point of Saint David’s narrative is Vallis Rosina²⁵⁰ (renamed Menevia) in Pembrokeshire, Wales; a spot divinely ordained for David three decades before he was born. It was Saint Patrick who first discovered the valley and was attracted to its beauty:

[A]t the last [Patrick] came into a mery and a plesaunt place aftir his entent which was clepid Vallis Rosina where he purposid hym to duellyn and abiden al the residue of his life solitarily in hooly meditacions and contemplacion. To whom an angel appierid seyeng on this wise, ‘This place, Patrik,’ quoth he, ‘which thou desirest thou maist not han, For god hath previded it and ordeyned it to oon not yet born and nat ne shal til thritty wynter hereaftir. Wherfore our lorde hath sent me to the to yiuen the warnyng there of and to shew the the place which he hath ordeyned for the.’ And forthwith he ledde hym vnto an hille on the see side and shewid hym ovir the see the Ile of Irelande. (*LA* 132)

Instantly recognized by Patrick as a spiritually significant and meritorious place, Vallis Rosina becomes the mnemonic focal point of the David narrative’s landscape, and the eventual site of St. David’s Cathedral. This place, which according to the angel had been “previded ... and ordeyned,” is imbued with God’s special consideration, and readers are encouraged to think of David’s connection to Menevia in the same terms as Patrick’s

²⁵⁰ Valley Rosea, Valley of the Roses; it is also called Glyn Rhossyn or Rhoson Uchaf.

connection to Ireland.²⁵¹ The pairing of ‘provided’ and ‘ordained’ carries extended meaning of ‘foreseen’²⁵² and ‘God’s will,’²⁵³ but ‘ordained’ can also be read in the sense of ecclesiastical appointments. This anecdote thus directs a reading of the “mery and ... plesaunt place” of St. David’s as a location pregnant with mnemonic weight.

Saints’ lives rarely begin with anecdotes featuring a saint other than the titular character and it is this very rarity that makes both the story and the saints involved memorable. Few saints have entire regions reserved for them by God, but in this anecdote, we learn through angelic pronouncement that Patrick is to become the spiritual father of Ireland, and David, that of Wales. This broad saintly geographic representationalism is also responsible for the scarcity of specific geographical details in either the David or Patrick legends, and they are associated almost exclusively with one major site of pilgrimage each.²⁵⁴

Although David is immediately identified with the *Vallis Rosina* that Patrick left behind, there is a marked disinterest throughout this legend in exactly where any other significant event takes place. For example, while pre-natal miracles are generally reserved for exceptionally holy figures, such as John the Baptist and most obviously Christ, Bokenham describes how David’s pregnant mother entered a church where the famous Saint Gildas was preaching. Gildas could not preach until the woman left the

²⁵¹ Indeed, Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland; David, the patron saint of Wales.

²⁵² *MED* “previden” (v.) 1. “(a) To foresee (sth.)” and 2. “(a) To arrange (sth.) in advance.”

²⁵³ *MED* “ordeinen” (v.) 6. “(a) Of God or Christ: to decree (sth.), make a law; ... (b) to foreordain (sth.)” and 7. “(a) To command ... that sth. be done.”

²⁵⁴ Although it is unreasonable to expect Bokenham to include information that was unavailable to him, there are several instances in, for example, the lives of David, Patrick and Winifred where he dramatically alters his source in one way or another. Because of this tendency to adapt, more than faithfully translate, for this group of lives, Bokenham’s treatments invite closer examination in order to determine both what his agenda might be, and which narrative elements might be identified as mnemonic techniques adjusted for his readership.

church because, as he explains, “she shal brynge forth a sone the which shal han more grace and powere than I, the which also as in priuilege of worship, in shynyng of wisdam, and in facundie [sic] of preachyng shal incomparably superexcellen and exceedyn al the doctours of Britaigne” (*LA* 133). Bokenham excises any particulars that might distract from the details he considers mnemonically significant; as such, he does not give the names of David’s parents²⁵⁵ nor does he provide the location of the church where Gildas is miraculously silenced. Gildas’ pronouncement sounds very much like the interpretative section of an etymology, and David’s worship, wisdom and preaching are supposed to exceed all the “doctours” of Britain. Since “Britaigne,” as Bokenham uses it, refers to the whole island of England, Wales and Scotland, this passage is meant to portray David’s talents, grace and abilities as properties of great spiritual benefit to the entirety of the isle, and not just Wales. This further clarifies Bokenham’s agenda of broad geographical representation, which locates Wales as a gracious limb on the mnemonic body of Christian England.²⁵⁶

Returning once more to Vallis Rosina, Saint David’s journey there is somewhat circuitous, and he performs miracles and founds monasteries around Britain before heading back to Wales. David’s uncle, then an archbishop, recounts to the saint a message he received from an angel in a vision advising of a preordained location for the

²⁵⁵ His father was Sant, prince of Keretica (Cardiganshire), who violated his mother, the nun and sometimes saint: Non, Nonnita or Nonna. The controversy around his conception would explain why Bokenham chose not to include David’s ancestry.

²⁵⁶ Of course, as Britons, David and Gildas would presumably not have been keen on this particular interpretation that conflates their nation with the encroaching Anglo-Saxons. This is further complicated by the difficulty of identifying a source, or more likely sources, for Bokenham’s life of Saint David. Bokenham could have altered Gildas’ supposed proclamation to suit his purposes, or it could be a faithful rendering of his source. In any case, my reading of the passage and its purpose in Bokenham’s project rest largely on Bokenham’s own definition and use of “Britain.”

see of Menevia: “[Q]uoth the angel ‘there is nat fer hens a place,’ and shewid hym Vallem Rosinam, ‘where now is his hooly sepulcre; a place,’ quoth he, ‘bothe to religion and to congregacion more able and more competent. In which place the prouidence of god hath chosen hym a tresorie hous of many feithful soulis” (LA 134). Upon David’s appointment as archbishop, he accordingly moves his see to Vallis Rosina, which is “now the bisshops see and the cathedral chirche Meneuia”²⁵⁷ (LA 133) where he later dies and is buried. The angel’s description of Vallis Rosina as a “tresorie hous” would have immediately struck trained memory students with its similarity to popular and common memory metaphors of treasury stores; as Carruthers notes, the “*thesaurus*, ‘storage-room,’ ‘treasury,’ and ‘strongbox’” is the “second major metaphor used in ancient and medieval times for the educated memory” (Carruthers *BoM* 37).²⁵⁸ St. David’s Cathedral and the ground it is built on function as a mnemonic locational node in Bokenham’s geographic memory map.

Bokenham’s David narrative ends with the report of a supposed thirteenth century discovery by John Peckham, Archbishop of Canterbury, upon a visit to Menevia where:

he fonde this pardon that folowith. First he fonde that Kalixtus pope, for the grete deuocion that he had to Seynt Daud, stired and excited Englissh pilgrymes asmoche or rather to visite Seynt Daud of Walis as Seynt Petir of Rome, and grauntid that what pilgryme goo twyes to Seynt Daud shal haue asmoche pardoun as for oones goyng to Rome, as it is conteyned in this vers: Roma semel quantum dat bis meneuia tantum. (LA 135)²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ ‘Meneuia’ underlined in manuscript.

²⁵⁸ The first major metaphor for the trained or educated memory is that of the book or tablet; See Carruthers *BoM* p. 18.

²⁵⁹ Latin underlined in manuscript.

The Latin line is, according to Bokenham, followed by twelve more, and these verses are found “bothen on the wallis and on tablis of fair text hand in dyuers placis” (*LA* 135).

The rest of the verse is garbled and full of errors, most likely as a result of Bokenham receiving the information second-hand from a visitor to the church who either had insufficient Latin training or an imperfect memory. It is possible that Bokenham himself only possessed enough Latin skills to translate, but not to correct such incredibly flawed verse.

Such tablets, or *tabulae*, were quite popular in English churches from the thirteenth century on and functioned as reference works for literate guides of pilgrim groups or literate visitors such as other trained monks or priests (Krochalis 437). One such example is the Glastonbury Tablets that purport to record a history of Glastonbury abbey from its founding by Joseph of Arimathea in CE 63 and connect the abbey and its history variously to Saints David and Patrick, to King Arthur, and to the Holy Grail; the six tablets also provide a list of indulgences for visits to the abbey as granted by various bishops (Krochalis 435). The material that Bokenham adds at the end of his life of Saint David besides the tablet contents, namely the saint’s connection to his uncle, King Arthur, as well as a thorough list of Menevia’s succeeding bishops and indulgences granted to visitors by popes, archbishops and bishops, is all in keeping with what might typically be recorded on these *tabulae*.²⁶⁰ Returning to the indulgences in verse that could be found on walls and tables in ‘dyuers placis’ at St. David’s, we see that the text, repeated in such a way, would act as a constant reminder to visitors of the spiritual value

²⁶⁰ I discuss the material at the end of Bokenham’s David in detail in Chapter Four, pages 227-229.

of their pilgrimage and might encourage their regular return, or at least inspire them to recommend the trip to others seeking the same spiritual benefit.

Pope Callixtus II “stired and excited Englissch pilgrymes” to value the location of St. David’s with nearly the same veneration as the centre of Catholicism: Rome.

When Bokenham describes the discovery of the papal grant, as well as the supporting verses on various tablets around the church, he creates a memory image that incorporates the very traditional *ars memoria* act of inscription. Much as Saint Barbara’s thumb mark and footprints are permanently etched into the marble of the bathhouse where she is baptized,²⁶¹ St. David’s, as a wax tablet inscribed with precious promises of grace, ends up as a precious marker in the storehouse of Bokenham’s geographic memory palace.

3.9 Supporting Local Saints: Bokenham’s East Anglian Group

Moving now to the other side of Britain, an examination of the East Anglian figures in Bokenham’s collection reveals the hagiographer’s special interest in these particularly geographically close local saints. As with Saints John of Beverley,²⁶² Gilbert of Sempringham,²⁶³ and even Faith, Bokenham’s selection demonstrates a careful attention to the regional interests of his readers, although Saint Faith may have been

²⁶¹ For my description and discussion of this, see Chapter Two, pages 77-81.

²⁶² John of Beverley is likely included because he taught Bede: “[o]f whos educacion and collegie was worshipful Bede the which wrote many profitable thyngis to the sustenaunce of the vniuersal feith of the chirche of Ingelond” (*LA* 197). Saint John ordained Bede a deacon and then a priest (Bede *Historia ecclesiastica* p. 566). See also Bede’s life of John of Beverley in *Historia ecclesiastica* 456-68, Book V.2-6, although Bokenham used the *Nova Legenda Anglie* as the source for his life of John.

²⁶³ Gilbert of Sempringham was likely either a special request or anticipated as such, perhaps in recognition of Gilbert as the only English person to found a religious order. John Capgrave wrote a Life of Saint Gilbert in 1451 for the Gilbertine nuns, but this is later than Bokenham is supposed to have written the bulk of the *Legenda Aurea*, and Bokenham certainly would have mentioned Capgrave’s work had he been aware of it.

included largely because her feast day and Bokenham's birthday are one and the same, as opposed to any special local devotion to Faith.²⁶⁴ The East Anglian saints in Bokenham's legendary are Felix, Æthelthryth, Cedd, Botolph and King Edmund, although Edmund's narrative does not survive in the *Legenda Aurea* manuscript; we know of the life's original inclusion due to specific references in the *Mappula Angliae* and the saint's overwhelming popularity.²⁶⁵ In terms of hagiographical collections, of the five East Anglian saints, Felix and Cedd can only be found in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*,²⁶⁶ Æthelthryth is in Bede as well as in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, and Botolph can only be found in the *Nova Legenda Anglie*, while Saint Edmund's legend appears in many different sources. For the most part, these East Anglian saints are not especially popular outside of their region, as evidenced by their general absence from major early collections.

Bokenham maintains a focus on personal attachment to geographical location throughout these and other local saints' lives by inserting certain expressions or references that were not in his source narratives. For example, throughout Bokenham's life of Saint Wilfrid, he repeats "his owyn country" (*LA* 396-7), instead of the "Britannia" of his source text.²⁶⁷ Such repetition of "his owyn" emphasizes Wilfrid's relation to England as a cherished homeland and encourages English readers to consider the connection to the saint that they inherit by virtue of their collective "owyn country."

²⁶⁴ The final stanza of Bokenham's life of Saint Faith contains this reference: "the translatur / ... Wiche on thy day to liuyn fyrst dede bygynne" (*LA* 391).

²⁶⁵ See, for example, the *Mappula Angliae* p. 11.

²⁶⁶ Cedd is also found in the *Gilte Legende*, written around 1438, although it is extremely unlikely that Bokenham would have had access to or known about it.

²⁶⁷ Bede, *Historia eccl.*; largely v.xix, although Wilfrid is mentioned in a number of other sections.

In other places such a reference is inserted purely as an addition to the source material, as when Saint Botolph returns “ageyn hoom to his owen cuntree” from the “first norys of nacion,” or Saxony (*LA* 217),²⁶⁸ or when Bokenham addresses Saint Æthelthryth directly and describes the resounding greeting she will receive “whan thou *commest* hoom into thy cuntre” from Northumbria, and then a few lines later when he returns to speaking to his audience he references the monastery built “in hir owen cuntre” of East Anglia (*LA* 225).²⁶⁹

Bokenham emphasizes this deep sense of homeland and ownership as well as connections between the saints and their “cuntre” particularly in his East Anglian saint narratives. For instance, Bokenham ties the meaning of Felix’s name to the effect that the saint has on the East Anglian people. In his Æthelthryth narrative, Bokenham uses subtle alterations from his source to present East Anglia as a microcosm of England itself; he also positions the saint as a noble and spiritual figure renowned throughout England, effectively turning East Anglia into a memorable location above and beyond the geographical mnemonics of his hagiography.²⁷⁰ In the life of Saint Cedd, Bokenham focuses almost exclusively on the saint’s time in East Anglia despite Cedd having spent only a fraction of his life there. What distinguishes these particular saints is a noticeable

²⁶⁸ In Bokenham’s source: “Botulphus ad Angliam ... redire” (Botolph returns to England); *NLA*, Ed. Carl Horstmann, vol.1 p. 131.

²⁶⁹ In Bokenham’s source, the passage makes no specific mention of the saint returning to East Anglia, nor does it mention the geographical region in which the new monastery is located: “Post annum uero ipsa facta est abbatissa in regoine quae uocatur Elge, ubi constructo monasterio”; and Colgrave and Mynors’ translation: “A year afterwards she was herself appointed abbess in the district called Ely, where she built a monastery” Bede, *Historia Eccl.*, 392-3.

²⁷⁰ I imagine that the now lost Saint Edmund narrative would have functioned in much the same way, especially since Edmund was a former patron saint of England until the mid-fourteenth century, and there was a popular shrine dedicated to him at Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk, East Anglia. The shrine was a popular pilgrimage destination for centuries.

focus not simply on England but on East Anglia as a special place of consideration and spiritual significance.

3.10 Saint Felix: Etymology and Geography

Of the seventeen surviving local saints' lives in Bokenham's collection, Felix is the only legend that includes an etymology, although he is not the only saint with an obviously Latinate name.²⁷¹ Bokenham's source for Felix's life is Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, and he gathers the scant references to Felix²⁷² that are scattered across Bede's work to create a cohesive narrative of one of East Anglia's major saints.²⁷³ Bede portrays Felix as a mere supporting character to the East Anglian Christian King Sigeberht, and spends much more time discussing Saint Fursey (or Fursa) instead.²⁷⁴ Bokenham's concerted effort to promote Felix is evident in his determination to unite the authority of his source with the distinction of an etymology, which, although it exists in Bede (as opposed to coming from an original exercise), could have been ignored. Instead, Bokenham excises the etymology from the lives of Saints Primus and Felicianus²⁷⁵ in order to prevent a doubling; as is his practice, he selects and includes etymologies for only what he considers the more important saints.

²⁷¹ For example: Saints Ursula, Augustine, Gilbert of Sempringham, David, and John of Beverley. Augustine of Hippo had already been assigned an etymology, otherwise it is possible that Augustine of Canterbury would have received one.

²⁷² References to Felix appear in ii.xv, iii.xviii, iii.xx. and iii.xxv of Bede's *Historia Eccl.*

²⁷³ The four major East Anglian saints are Edmund (king and martyr), Felix, Æthelthryth and Botolph.

²⁷⁴ Saint Fursey was an Irish saint who arrived in East Anglia shortly after Felix and who preached to and converted many people, and founded a monastery thought to be Burgh Castle in Norfolk.

²⁷⁵ In Voragine, "Felicianus quasi felix anus, id est, felix senex" (Felicianus is as though from 'happy' and 'old', that is, 'happy old man') (Voragine 345).

The ‘felix’ etymology in Bede’s brief record is mentioned almost in passing, whereas Bokenham rearranges the material to accord for the most part with the pattern laid out by Voragine. Bede gives “Siquidem totam illam prouinciam, iuxta sui nominis sacramentum, a longa iniquitate atque infelicitate liberatam ad fidem et opera iustitiae ad perpetuae felicitatis dona perduxit” (Bede 190/ ii.vx); “Indeed, as his name signified,²⁷⁶ he freed the whole of this kingdom from long-lasting evil and unhappiness, brought it to the faith and to the works of righteousness and bestowed on it the gift of everlasting felicity” (Bede 191). Bede maintains a neutral tone as he explains in a relatively concise manner²⁷⁷ that the result of the saint’s actions accords with the meaning of his name: ‘happy.’²⁷⁸

In contrast to this seemingly impartial account, Bokenham relies on an alternative interpretation of the word: “And worthily was this man clepid Felix, which is asmoche to seyn in englissch as happy or gracious, for he was gracious and fortunat bothen in the sight of god and of man, and al the werkys which he wrought were graciously begunnen and graciously brought to an ende” (*LA* 48). In addition to leaving out any mention of pre-existing “evil and unhappiness,” Bokenham focuses on the possible meaning of ‘felix’ as ‘gracious,’ which has the effect of heightening the importance of East Anglia by implying special divine consideration and attention.

²⁷⁶ Although “sacramentum” here means ‘mystery’, so “according to the mystery of his name,” Colgrave and Mynors’ translation provides a clearer sense of the phrase.

²⁷⁷ While Bede’s etymology here may be concise, he does employ polyptoton in his variations on *felix* (‘infelicitate’ and ‘felicitatis’). Polyptoton is a “rhetorical figure involving the repetition of a word in different cases or inflections within the same sentence” (*OED*, “polyptoton”).

²⁷⁸ Unlike many of Voragine’s etymologies, ‘felix’ does not require an interpretation based on the fragmented parts that, sometimes questionably, are said to make up a given name. For examples and further discussion, see Chapter One.

Felix rules the bishopric of East Anglia “worshipfully and *graciously*” (*LA* 48) for seventeen years, and the only one of these gracious “werkys” that Bokenham reports is his founding, in coordination with King Sigeberht, of a school for children. Bokenham adds to Bede that “by gode labour of the bisshop and gracious favour of the kyng, al that province was turned to the feith of our lorde Ihesu criste” (48), thus implying that educational institutions are the key to a successful and region-wide conversion. This credits the happy and gracious saint with the felicitous Christianization of East Anglia, emphasizes his role in the intellectual and spiritual health of the community, and adds to the repetition of the word ‘gracious’ that helps reinforce the etymology.

The etymological emphasis on the saint’s name in Bokenham’s work is, however, secondary to a concern with place. Although Bokenham moved Bede’s ‘felix’ etymology up from where it sat buried among other details, Bokenham first declares the ‘where’ condition –which usually falls just *after* the etymological explanation in Voragine– when he begins: “The first man that taught Cristis feith to the people of Est Ingelonde was oon clepid Felix, the which was born in the boundys of Burgundy” (*LA* 138). By connecting Felix first with East Anglia and then with his place of birth, Bokenham establishes a hierarchical association that is reinforced, after the etymology, by the saint’s preference for England over France. Felix had been consecrated in France, but felt the draw of a new challenge, and so “he left Fraunce and came into Ingelonde and went vnto Caunterbury to the primate that tyme clepid Honorius, and tolde hym th’entent of his *commyng*” (*LA* 139). The archbishop eagerly sends Felix to “Est Ingelonde” where “biforn hym was nevir noon sent to techen *hem*” (*LA* 139). Felix’s progression from France to England, and then within England from Canterbury, the source of all British ecclesiastical

authority, to East Anglia, marks what could be read as a pilgrimage trail for the figure destined to be the region's first bishop.

Bokenham adds a description of Dunwich, the location of the bishop's see, to Bede's sparse account in order to emphasize Felix's geographical representation further. After narrowing the reader's regional scope from East England to Suffolk, he then moves to "Dummok, but now is clepid Donwiche, the which stant vp on the see bitwix two portis or havenys, and in tho dayes was a notable and a famous citee" (*LA* 48). This brief and seemingly unnecessary addition²⁷⁹ acts, in fact, as an acknowledgment of the proud and prosperous heritage of Bokenham's East Anglian readers and provides them with a familiar landmark on which to place their saint, in an adaptation of the *ars memoria's* method of *loci*. If, however, Bokenham's readers were not especially excited about Dunwich as a memory place, they might benefit from the only other significant addition to the material from Bede, which takes the form of another location: that of Felix's translation to Ramsey abbey in Norfolk, performed by Oswald, Archbishop of York,²⁸⁰ and Æthelwine, an East Anglian count.²⁸¹ In this way, readers of Felix's life could choose between a location in East Anglia that might already provide some personally significant connection to the saint, and the historically or geographically recognizable locations of Dunwich or Ramsey Abbey.

²⁷⁹ The brief description could perhaps come from either Higden's *Polychronicon* or William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum* or *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, although it could also be original to Bokenham, as a close search of these texts did not uncover the passage in question.

²⁸⁰ Interestingly, Bokenham does not describe Archbishop Oswald as 'hooly' or 'blessid,' words which he uses in references to other saints.

²⁸¹ This information is found in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta pontificum*, pp. 236-7.

3.11 East Anglia's Virgin Saint: Æthelthryth of Ely

The references to East Anglia generally, then to Dunwich and to Ramsey Abbey in Felix, serve to situate the saint at potential geographic points of mnemonic association. However, the Felix narrative lacks a personal connection; the saint is presented very much as he appears in Bede—as a benevolent yet distant early spiritual benefactor who came from elsewhere and adopted East Anglia. A more personal geographic connection exists in Bokenham's life of Saint Æthelthryth, since this exceptional homegrown saint, “[t]wyes wife and evir maide” (*LA* 223), was born of East Anglian nobility and her reputation brought pilgrims and prestige to Ely and to East Anglia as a whole. In fact, Bokenham encourages his readers to learn more about Æthelthryth's lineage by examining written records and images—perhaps stained glass or other artwork—at Ely in the monks' keeping.

Bokenham inserts a personal geographic reference in the Æthelthryth narrative in a seven-line stanza located not quite halfway through the legend that speaks directly to the saint. Bokenham anticipates the reaction of East Anglians to the saint's return when he describes them as faithful witnesses who rejoice at Æthelthryth reuniting with their ‘hoom ... cuntre.’ The stanza reads:

Now farewele lady, and do thy part;
 For the litle while thou shalt here be,
 So to ben exercised in religious art
 That whan thou *commest* hoom into thy cuntre,
 Al folk there which the shul here and see
 -For such grace in the as they shul aspy-

Mow god preysen and his name magnify. (*LA* 225)

This type of direct address exists in the other *Legenda Aurea* narratives, but it tends to take the form of a prayer at the legend's end in which Bokenham suggests a typical combination of praise, admiration, and request for special protection that devotees of that particular saint might find useful. The direct address to the saint shifts Bokenham's usual construction of "*hir owen cuntre*" (emphasis mine), which will be used just three stanzas later, to the more intimate pronoun use of "*hoom into thy cuntre*"; this brief shift brings the reader into a closer relationship with the saint as they momentarily assume the narrator's voice and speak directly to Æthelthryth.

Throughout the Æthelthryth narrative "*cuntre*" refers specifically to East Anglia, as opposed to England, and this is supported by a similar use several lines earlier at which point the narrator looks ahead to when the saint will be "[t]ranslatid vnto a nothir place / Not oonly but eke to a nothir cuntree" (*LA* 225), meaning her journey from the abbey in Northumberland to Ely in East Anglia. Since Bokenham uses "*cuntre*" elsewhere to mean England, these particular instances of the word suggest East Anglia as its own microcosm of the larger nation, much like England is referred to as "*a noþer worlde*" and "*a Cornere of the worlde*" in the *Mappula Angliae* (*MA* 6, 7).

The fifth line of the stanza of direct address, "*Al folk there which the shul here and see*" presents this special East Anglian community of Bokenham's readers as the 'folk' –people, or more specifically and in another sense of the word, people of a province or region– who receive the saint 'hoom' and who both 'here and see' her. This homecoming moment in which the community of the faithful will both hear and see Æthelthryth is echoed in Bokenham's prologue and epilogue to the *Mappula Angliae*,

which refers to “alle tho þe whiche shuld redene hit²⁸² or here hit” and to “þe redere or þe herer” at least four times (6, 33-4). This multi-sensory experience of the saint and the narrative of her life accords with the *ars memoria*’s tradition of integrating more than one sense perception into successful memory work. In fact, the saint is arguably even more easily accessible for memory work than the text in that devotion to her requires nothing more than general sight and hearing, whereas the *Mappula* suggests that the audience might be readers or hearers, perhaps depending on their level of literacy.

This part of Bokenham’s life of Æthelthryth is also remarkable for its emphasis on the saint’s influence on and ties to England. The legend begins “Wilome in estynglonde”²⁸³ and continues to reference East Anglia (i.e. East England) throughout the saint’s first two chaste marriages when she lives elsewhere. The direct address stanza discussed above comes in the middle of a five-stanza disruption of the plot at the point when Æthelthryth is about to return to East Anglia for the first time in over a decade. This is also the point at which she returns as an officially consecrated virgin, as opposed to the private promise that she had kept secret in her youth; armed with this ecclesiastical authority, she becomes abbess of the monastery she founds in Ely.

Bokenham’s shift in tone and his unusual address to his muse²⁸⁴ in the first stanza of the five-stanza digression– “In the mean tyme my muse may pley / Where hir best list”

²⁸² The ‘hit’ refers to Bokenham’s “englische boke ... of *legenda aurea* and ... oþer famous legendes” (*MA* 6) because he intended the *Mappula* as a geographical gloss of sorts for his legendary, whereas the other instances of “þe redere or þe herer” refer specifically to the *Mappula Angliae* audience.

²⁸³ The manuscript reads “estynglonde” and it is certainly a scribal error (*LA* 223).

²⁸⁴ Bokenham refers to a muse probably no more than half a dozen times in all his extant work, and the digression is similar to the flowery and grandiose style he employs in the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* prologue as well as in his original version of the life of Saint Thomas of Canterbury (*LA* 41-52).

(*LA* 225) –imitates, for a moment, the grander style of the epic. Through this temporary tonal shift Bokenham suggests a form of hagiography that transforms select local saints into cross-genre heroes who come to represent both the spiritual and secular ideals of a nation. However, the perilous journey or arduous travel that usually marks grander tales is, in the life of Saint Æthelthryth, a holy noblewoman’s relatively quiet move from one abbey to another: from Coldingham, Northumbria to Ely, East Anglia. The large-scale importance is located, for Bokenham, in a holy heroine’s return to the “cuntre” of her noble kin, and in a move that boosts both the spiritual and secular profile of the area.

Bokenham elaborates on Æthelthryth’s grace and geographic influence when he declares:

Within the *preordial*²⁸⁵ circuyte of a yere
 That this noble *gemme* closid ben had
 The bright *bemys* therof shyne so clere
 That fer rounde aboute the *bemys* is sprad
 And not oonly Northumbirlonde is made glad
 But thurghoute al Ingelond in length and brede
 The fame therof did sprynge and sprede. (*LA* 225)

The “bright *bemys*” of the saint’s influence illuminate the entire “length and brede” of England, which, according to Bokenham’s *Mappula*, runs “frome þe brynke of Totenese vn-to the angille of Calidonye,” and “from Meneuye ... in þe west end of Sowthe-Wales in to Yarmouthe in Northfolke” (*MA* 7). Such wide-ranging beams call to mind the *Mappula*’s fifth chapter, “Of the gret & mervellous wondurs of this lande” (*MA* 6), in

²⁸⁵ Scribal error for ‘preordinate’ (preordained or prearranged; see *MED* “prēordināt(e)” (adj.) 1.a). This looks to be a conflation of ‘preordinate’ and ‘primordial.’

one of the only sections of the geographical history that Bokenham has greatly altered by his addition of “*mervellous wondurs*,” and the saint’s fame as the beams that “*sprynge and sprede*” are much like the freshwater springs, fountains or other mysterious bodies of water to which the *Mappula* ascribes mysterious powers.

England’s possession of such a “noble *gemme*” is likened, in the stanza that follows that quoted above, to the faithful followers at the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:14-16.²⁸⁶ Bokenham compares England’s gem to the “*citee on an hille [that] may not hid be*” and the light that “*no man puttith vndir a busshel / ... but vp settith it he / On a candlestick*” and declares that “*Right so Criste wold nat this gemme hide / But made it to shyne aboute on eche side*” (*LA* 225). The purpose of the nunnery at Ely is to set the metaphorical candle on the candlestick; together, Æthelthryth and Ely make up the city on the hill of East Anglia, and this well-lit geographical memory place illuminates all of England. This constant insistence on English place and on the nation as ‘hoom’ inspires attachment and pride of place in the reader’s mind and encourages the mnemonic work of remembering and meditating on local saints’ lives, strengthened by the *ars memoria*’s *affects* (i.e. emotions) that work on pride of country.²⁸⁷

3.12 An East Anglian Legend: Cedd and the Conflation of Saintly Narrative

A sense of pride of country, and of East Anglia specifically, is the likeliest reason for Botolph’s and Cedd’s inclusion in Bokenham’s collection. These East Anglian saints

²⁸⁶ Matthew 5:14-16 “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (*AKJV*)

²⁸⁷ For further discussions of and references to the role of emotions in memory work, see Chapter Three, pages 99-100, 106-7, 111, and 136, and Chapter Four, pages 261-2.

are not found in any other major collection besides Botolph's inclusion in the *Nova Legenda Anglie* and Cedd's appearance in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, although Bede gives Cedd's brother Chad much more attention. In fact, Bokenham quietly elides Cedd's and Chad's narratives, giving Cedd credit for some of Chad's adventures, and he even attributes Chad's date of death and divine premonition of passing to Cedd. Cedd died in 664 some years before his younger brother, although Bede gives no year in his records,²⁸⁸ and his death is somewhat unremarkable; indeed, Bokenham glosses over it, continuing through events in Chad's life as though they were part of Cedd's narrative. By combining Cedd and Chad into one saint, Bokenham elevates this 'single' East Anglian bishop and saint to a heightened importance along with the region he is supposed to represent.²⁸⁹

Cedd was sent to King Sigilbert of East Anglia by King Oswiu of Northumberland "for to preche the worde of life vnto the peple of est Ingelonde" (*LA* 135). Later, as the time of his²⁹⁰ death approached, Bokenham writes that "the tyme came in which by the eternal prouidence of god, this blissid man by bodily deth shuld be lyftid vp a quyk stoon to the bilyng of hevenly Jerusalem" (*LA* 136). Bokenham changes the line from his source, Bede, who refers to the many plague victims from the saint's church community as transforming into the living stones of *1 Peter 2.5*,²⁹¹ Bokenham's version portrays a more exclusive process in the selection of building blocks for the heavenly

²⁸⁸ See Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, 288.

²⁸⁹ Cedd was sent to East Anglia c. 660, consecrated as bishop by Finan in Lindisfarne shortly thereafter, then returned to East Anglia (Bede 282).

²⁹⁰ This is an instance where Bokenham inserts material from Chad's life into Cedd's narrative. The lines discussed above come from Bede's Chad, which Bokenham treats as though they were from Cedd.

²⁹¹ 1 Peter 2.5: "you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house..." (*NKJV*).

city.²⁹² This line suggests the concept of each local saint in Bokenham’s collection becoming important building blocks in the memory structure of Jerusalem in heaven, their corporeal forms making a direct connection between the physical landscape of East Anglia—and England more broadly—and the heavenly city.

Bokenham’s conflation of Cedd and Chad heightens Cedd’s profile not only as a saint but as a specifically East Anglian saint, and one such overlap also connects Cedd to another high-ranking figure— Saint Æthelthryth. Bokenham records how:

Owyn, a man of grete *perfeccion* which had *commen* with seynt Audre the queen oute of Estynglonde into Northumbirlonde and was dispensatour and stiward of hir householde; and aftir, for zeel of *perfeccion*, forsoke al the worlde and drowe to Cedd’s monasterie in Northumbirlonde at Laestingaig, and aftir went with hym forth to Lichefelde. (*LA* 136)

This passage depicts Owine as a man of sufficient “*perfeccion*” to recognize Cedd’s greatness and be drawn to the saint in such a way that he follows him from place to place. Just as Owine followed “seynt Audre the queen” from East Anglia to Northumberland, he becomes devoted enough to the worthy Cedd that he follows him from Lastingham to Lichfield.

This is another divergence from Bede, aside from appropriating the story from Chad and placing it in Cedd’s narrative: Bede records that Owine came “cum regina Aedilthryde de prouincia Orientalium Anglorum, eratque primus ministrorum et princeps

²⁹² In Bede, the line refers initially to members of Chad’s church at Lichfield: “Superuenit namque clades diuinitus missa, quae per mortem carnis uiuos ecclesiae lapides de terrenis sedibus ad aedificium caeleste transferret” [“A plague sent from heaven came upon them which, through the death of the body, translated the living stones of the church from their earthly sites to the heavenly building”] (Bede 338-9).

domus eius” (Bede 338-9),²⁹³ with no mention of their further travels together into Northumberland. Later, Bede documents how Owine “ueniret ad monasterium eiusdem reuerentissimi patris, quod uocatur Laestingaeu” (338-9)²⁹⁴ and Lichfield is not mentioned at all. Bokenham’s transposed story adds the parallel journeys that Owine took with Saint Æthelthryth and Saint Cedd so as to link the saints and raise their profiles as holy figures connecting physical points on both the English landscape and Bokenham’s mnemonic spiritual landscape.

3.13 ‘His owen cuntree:’ Saint Botolph and Pride of Place

Where Bokenham conflates Cedd and Chad in order to increase East Anglian geographic representation, his Botolph narrative excises mention of that saint’s brother so as to focus on Botolph’s connection with East Anglia and those in power. References to place names will presumably associate a local saint with one or more locations recognizable to readers, and in some narratives like Botolph, Bokenham changes his source to emphasize a saint’s personal, even emotional connection to their homeland.²⁹⁵ Such personal references anchor the life of Botolph within a personal space, as when the saint returns “ageyn hoom to his owen cuntree” from the “first norys of nacion,” or Saxony, where he had gone to receive a monastic education (*LA* 217). Bokenham’s English provides a much more intimate image of space that does the *Nova Legenda Anglie*’s corresponding line: “Botulphus ad Angliam ... redire” (*NLA* 131). This practical description lacks the key words “hoom” and “his owen cuntree.”

²⁹³ [with Queen Æthelthryth from the kingdom of the East Angles, being the chief of her officers and the head of her household]

²⁹⁴ [came to the most reverend father’s monastery at Lastingham]

²⁹⁵ As discussed above in the life of Saint Æthelthryth.

These small changes occur throughout Bokenham's adaptation of Botolph's narrative; for instance, the saint studied at a monastery that also housed King Ethelmund's²⁹⁶ two sisters, and Bokenham describes their support of the saint with a strong emphasis on their shared homeland. These sisters:

weren also sent thider to lerne the disciplyne of hevenly philosophie. And thei louedden singularly wele seid Botulph as a souereyn techer of holynesse and of chastite and for the zele that they hadden to bryng the *perfeccion* of religious livyng into his cuntree and hers. And whan these yung ladies knewen that he wolde turnen hoom ageyn into the cuntre of his byrthe, thei sent hoom tidynges by hym to the kyng her brothir. (*LA* 217)

The corresponding passage in the *Nova Legenda Anglie*²⁹⁷ contains the word “repatriare,”²⁹⁸ yet does not quite deliver the shared sense of connection, affection and devotion to England achieved by “his cuntree and hers,” or the familiarity and potential nostalgia in turning not simply “hoom ageyn” as if at the end of a narrative episode of adventure but entering “into the cuntre of his byrthe.”

A few lines later, Bokenham specifies that Botolph “came hoom into Ingelonde” (*LA* 217), a repetition that ensures “hoom”²⁹⁹ and “Ingelonde” are clear synonyms. This repetition is nowhere to be found in the *Nova Legenda Anglie*, and Botolph's travel home

²⁹⁶ King Ethelmund, who Bokenham names as “kyng of the south Englissh men” (*LA* 217), grants the saint land on which he builds his Icanhoh monastery, the location of which has been identified as Iken, near Aldeburgh in Suffolk. Ikano or Ikanhoe is ‘Ikanhoensis’ in Latin, and is generally identified as Iken, located by the estuary of the Alde in the East Anglian county of Suffolk.

²⁹⁷ “... duo sorores ... que beatum virum repatriare volentem intelligentes, mandata ei imponunt fratri regi perferenda” (*NLA* 131).

²⁹⁸ Literally “return to one's native country.”

²⁹⁹ “Hoom” of course already carried the sense of both one's house as well as one's native land (*MED* “hom” (n.) 1. and 2.).

is only referred to with “Transito ergo mari” (*NLA* 131). Beyond this emphasis on an affectionate connection to England, Bokenham’s version also expands on the royal sisters’ admiration and reverence for Botolph which, as with Owine’s supposed devotion to Saint Cedd, increases Botolph’s stature as an important East Anglian figure.³⁰⁰ This importance is further cemented by King Edgar’s request, carried out by Adelwold, Archbishop of Winchester, to divide Botolph’s remains and distribute them: the head was sent to Ely Cathedral and half the body to Thorney Abbey, both in the East Anglian county of Cambridgeshire, and the remainder was kept “amonge the regal reliques” until Saint Edward, king and confessor, gave it to Westminster Abbey (*LA* 218).

3.14 The Issue of Ecclesiastical Hagiographic Narrative; or, The Uneventful Lives of Saintly Priests

An emphasis on place works well for the East Anglian saint group, or for saints like Patrick, David or Winifred, whose traditions have strong associations with Ireland, St. David’s (Wales), and St. Winifred’s Well (Holywell, Wales), respectively. Other saints are commonly referred to along with a location to distinguish or identify them, such as Thomas of Canterbury, John of Beverley, or Austin (Augustine) of England, which guarantees a fairly successful geographic association. The situation becomes more difficult when Bokenham includes saints like Wulfstan, Aldhelm, Cedd, or Wilfrid, because he must create an explicit connection between these saints and a particular place or series of places in England. He does this indirectly at times through the *Mappula*

³⁰⁰ As with his life of Saint Cedd that excises mention of the saint’s brother Chad, Bokenham leaves out references to Botolph’s brother Adulf who was also supposedly a saint, although much lesser known.

Angliae, but with only a few exceptions, the narratives of these ecclesiastical local saints tend to lack the memorable violence, excitement, or flashy miracles of higher-profile saints.³⁰¹ It is this dry, brusque approach to narrative that Bokenham seems to be trying to break free from even as he is bound by the sparse details of local saints' lives.

Bokenham accomplishes his goal in two main ways: a geographical mnemonic,³⁰² which is this chapter's focus, and a spiritual or ecclesiastical genealogical mnemonic, discussed in the following chapter.

The narratives of continental Saints Remigius (Remy), Hilarius (Hilary), and Macarius serve as examples of where Bokenham follows Voragine's restrictive formula, as opposed to his treatments of local ecclesiastical saints' lives. The value of such a comparison between continental and local hagiographies lies in the way it highlights Bokenham's specific and predictable approach to narratives that he categorizes as deserving of mnemonic treatment, such as the local lives, or not, in the case of the minor continental saints. Examined side by side, we see that Bokenham dismisses or minimizes elements³⁰³ in the minor European narratives that in the account of a local saint would be embellished or, if absent, created and inserted. Minor Saints Remy, Hilary and Macarius have their counterparts in such British saints as Wulfstan, Aldhelm, Cedd or Wilfrid; the following brief survey of Bokenham's treatment of three continental saints' lives will provide context for the surrounding discussion on his significant manipulation of sources for local saints' lives.

³⁰¹ High profile saints like the martyrs, apostles, and other popular saints.

³⁰² At times this geographical detail is provided through the *Mappula Angliae* instead of in the individual legends themselves.

³⁰³ Elements such as etymologies, geographical features, or an emphasis on the connection between the saint and either their birthplace or the region they are associated with.

In Voragine, the Remy, Hilary and Macarius narratives, minus the etymologies, are approximately 600 words, 600 words, and 550 words respectively; in Bokenham, they are 1100 words, 1000 words and 800 words long, respectively. Allowing for the words that must be added in the process of translating from Latin to English, Bokenham's versions are fairly close translations of his source. These three narratives average 1.66 English words for each Latin word, which represents a moderately faithful translation rate. As a point of comparison, William Caxton's translation of Voragine's work, printed in 1483, averages 1.7 English words for each Latin word.³⁰⁴ Throughout this work Caxton's translation remains quite close to his source, and the similarity between Bokenham's and Caxton's translation rates demonstrates just how little Bokenham altered his source for these standard and relatively low-profile continental saints. In each of these three narratives, Bokenham has excised an etymology³⁰⁵ and pared down what little could be described as excess in Voragine's versions³⁰⁶ so as to present a minimalistic narrative that stands in stark contrast to the relative glamour and intrigue of the local ecclesiastical saints inserted into Bokenham's 'new Golden Legend' for English audiences.

In continental lives, any interest in place, or even in mnemonic techniques in general is largely absent, in stark contrast to Bokenham's local saints. In the Saint Remy

³⁰⁴ Caxton's lives of Remy, Hilary and Macarius (or 'Maclaire' as Caxton calls him) at 1015 words, 858 words and 996 words, respectively.

³⁰⁵ Bokenham reserves etymologies for saints of particular significance or status, such as virgin martyrs or apostles. For more on this concept, see Chapter One on Bokenham's mnemonic etymologies.

³⁰⁶ For example, in the life of Saint Hilary, Bokenham cuts out Voragine's expression of doubt regarding the historical accuracy of a certain Pope Leo. In the same life, Bokenham also excises a strange miracle involving two merchants and their disagreement over dedicating a block of wax at the saint's altar. Caxton made the same changes.

narrative, for example, Bokenham mentions France, then specifically Reims (ME Reymys; L Remensis) and Laon (ME Landanence; L Landunensem) in adherence to the source, with no additional information about where in France each city is located or what might be distinctive about each in terms of topography, history or even natural resources. The legend of Saint Macarius is incredibly vague, geographically speaking: at one point the saint is travelling from “a cuntree clepid Scithia” (*LA* 72), and this is the only time a place name appears in the narrative. Voragine is similarly sparse with geographical specifics, but Bokenham seems content to follow his lead: he makes no effort, as he has done elsewhere, to pursue further detail in order to flesh out the legend— he is simply not interested in adding details of place to a continental saint.

Even when Voragine does provide geographical specifics, Bokenham does not help his English audience understand the spaces associated with continental saints. According to Bokenham, Saint Hilary’s birthplace is “the cuntre of Gyayne”³⁰⁷ instead of ‘Aquitaine’, the more recognizable and easy translation of Voragine’s “Hilarius ... regionis Aquitainiae oriundus” (Voragine 98). Similarly, Bokenham uses the intentionally unfamiliar “Pictanence” instead of ‘Poitiers’ when identifying Hilary’s episcopal see. Throughout the lives of continental saints Bokenham rarely replaces Latinate place name forms with the more recognizable Middle English versions, and this enforces a sense of distance and vague foreign space that discourages mental mnemonic exercises. English saints, on the other hand, are lavished with memorable information on the places they haunted, presented in an accessible form which includes interesting details and avoids Latinate forms of place names – even if it is at times inaccurate or

³⁰⁷ ‘Gienne’ is an Anglo-French term that refers to the region of Aquitaine.

entirely fictional. For example, in his life of Saint Gilbert of Sempringham, Bokenham is quite specific from the first sentence: “Seynt Gilbert, an English man, fadir and foundour of the ordre of Sympryngham, was borne in the shire of Lincolne, and in the forseid toun of Sympryngham” (*LA* 111). If the reader cannot recall or does not know where Sempringham is, they may at least have an idea where Lincolnshire is, and from there might simply imagine the town somewhere in that general area.

In his life of Saint Felix of East England, Bokenham declares that the saint was “born in the boundys of Byrgundy” (*LA* 138), here using alliteration³⁰⁸ to fix Felix’s starting point in a journey that takes him from Burgundy, France across the channel to England. Once in East England, Bokenham narrows the geographical scope further to specify Felix’s see. This additional description of Dunwich³⁰⁹ does not come from any known source, although the likeliest case is a line existing in a now lost version of Higden’s *Polychronicon* or Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*. Given this additional detail, the reader can locate Felix in Suffolk via Dunwich, which in turn can be imagined as a “notable” and “famous” place along the East Anglian coast. Considering that most of his readership would in fact come from within East Anglia, this level of added geographic detail would most certainly supply his audience with the ability to create a memory map on which to place local saints.

One deliberately missed opportunity for a memorable and somewhat geographical play on words comes in Bokenham’s life of Saint Hilary, when the saint arrives uninvited

³⁰⁸ Although the alliteration could be from a version that Bokenham read in addition to his source for Felix’s life, Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, Bokenham still would have chosen to maintain this catchy, memorable line.

³⁰⁹ See above, page 191 for Bokenham’s added description of Dunwich.

to a meeting arranged by Pope Leo I.³¹⁰ Pope Leo, a supporter of the Arian heresy, attempts to make fun of Hilary through his place of birth:

‘[T]u es Hilarius Gallus?’ Et ille: ‘non sum Gallus, sed de Gallia id est, non sum in Gallia natus sed de Gallia episcopus.’ Cui papa: ‘et si tu es Hilarius de Gallia et ego sum Leo, romanae sedis apostolicus et iudex.’ Cui Hilarius: ‘et si sis Leo, non de tribu Juda, et si iudicans resides, sed non in sede maiestatis.’ (Voragine 98)³¹¹

The joke here is the pope’s pun on ‘Gallus’, which in Latin can mean ‘cock’ or ‘rooster’ as well as ‘a Gaul,’ met by Hilary’s cutting remark that Pope Leo is a lion in name only, but is not the lion of Judah, which symbolized Christ.³¹² Bokenham translates Voragine’s passage somewhat cryptically, or perhaps in a way that reflects the growing discontent with France and the French at the time. Bokenham’s Hilary responds to the pope’s query “[a]rt thou Hillarie the Frenssh man,” saying “I am no Frenssh man but I am of Fraunce; that is to seyn, I am no Frensh man by my nature but I am of Fraunce by my pontifical dignyte” (*LA* 72).

This denial of French temperament is interesting, but makes no sense without the pope’s potentially humiliating comment about being a cock standing up to a lion unless

³¹⁰ Voragine attempts to reason with the lack of a recorded Pope Leo at this time, and muses that the figure was either a usurper who claimed the name of Leo, or the heretical and later exiled Pope Liberius, who may have been called Leo (Voragine 99).

³¹¹ “‘Are you Hilary the cock?’ ‘I am not a cock,’ the saint responded, ‘but I was born in Gaul and am a bishop from Gaul.’ Leo: ‘So you are Hilary from Gaul, and I am Leo, apostolic bishop and judge of the see of Rome!’ Hilary: ‘You may be Leo, but not the Lion of Judah, and if you sit in judgment, it is not in the seat of majesty’” (Trans. Ryan, 1.88). Note that Voragine is mistaken here when he writes “non sum in Gallia natus,” as Hilary was indeed born in France; Ryan perhaps decided to silently correct this slip, which could also have been due to scribal error.

³¹² The reference in the Bible to the lion of Judah is found in *Revelations* 5.5: “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”

Bokenham is making a parallel between the French and the English, who would be the new ‘lions’ of Christianity.³¹³ Missing from Bokenham’s passage, however, is the mnemonic effect of the Latin pun, which invokes the image of a cock and a lion facing off. This image is made more memorable because Hilary ‘the cock’ defeats Pope Leo ‘the lion’ in an especially visceral and humiliating manner.³¹⁴ Bokenham’s version diffuses the mnemonic effectiveness of the original and instead leaves his readers with yet another fairly generic instance of a saint triumphing over an adversary.

Aside from image-inducing puns, another technique available to Bokenham should he choose to make portions of a legend easier to understand, visualize, and remember, is to provide translations or explanations of interesting and significant Latin words or references from a narrative. For instance, in the middle of a story about Saint Remy’s handling of a delicate matter involving a certain bishop’s indiscretions, there is an opportunity for Bokenham to explain the significance of Latin names, which he seemingly uncharacteristically neglects: the bishop names the two children that resulted from his fleshly sins ‘Latro’ and ‘Vulpecula.’

In *Voragine*, the bishop declares “quoniam puer de latrocinio aequisitus est, volo ut Latro vocetur” [because the boy was acquired through theft, I want him to be called ‘thief’] (*Voragine* 97). The bishop orders the second child, a girl, to be called

³¹³ Caxton offers an interesting translation in his version of *Voragine*’s work: “Thenne said the pope to hym ‘thou art hylaire the cocke and not the sone of an henne’ And saynt hylaire answerd ‘I am hylaire & no cock but a bysshop in gallia, that is in fraunce,’ thenne said the pope ‘thou art hylaire gallus, And I am leo of the papal see, Juge,’ to whom hylaire said ‘yf thou be leo, yet art thou not of the trybe of Juda’ ” (Caxton 112r). This translation could be a botched joke, a misunderstanding of the Latin, or both.

³¹⁴ Hilary infuriates the pope, who storms out of the synod and “forthwith he went to the siege, and there toke hym so violent a rede flixe that he shedde oute therewith al his entrails and his guttes, and so miserably and wrecchidly deyed” (*LA* 72).

‘Vulpecula,’ which means ‘little fox.’ For this same section, Bokenham’s version reads: “For asmoche as this childe was bigete of thefte or of stelth, I wil that hys name be clepidd Lettro” and then “a doughtir which he commaundid to be clepidd Vulpecula” (*LA* 71; names underlined in manuscript). The *Legenda* manuscript typically underlines Latin words or important names and places, as it does here, and Bokenham would usually translate or otherwise gloss words or phrases that his readers would neither know, recognize nor understand.³¹⁵ Bokenham’s love of wordplay and etymology might also suggest that he would fully explain the meaning behind the names, if not expand the section with his own added material. For instance, Bokenham includes the etymology for Saint Felix of East England from his source in Bede but rearranges it to a more prominent location in the life. He also plays on the double meaning of the names of non-local Saints Claire (clarifying, illuminating) and Faith (true faith, faithfulness, etc.). Instead, in the Remy narrative, just as he has excised the etymology of the saints’ names in nearly all of the lesser or minor continental legends, he refuses to maintain or insert any techniques that might inspire memory work and gives a tightly contained version of Voragine’s Remy.

There are higher profile ecclesiastical saints such as Jerome, Augustine, or Steven,³¹⁶ and for these Bokenham certainly expands and elaborates on his source

³¹⁵ For example, in his life of Saint Gilbert of Sempringham, Bokenham translates and explains the saint’s final words, “Dispersit dedit pauperibus” (*LA* 111; Latin underlined in the manuscript as were the Latin names in his life of Saint Remy), as “that is to seyn, he hath sprenklid abrode and youen to pore men” (*LA* 111). Bokenham gives further clarification through the saint’s apparent separate explanation: “And in maner of expounyng what he ment he rehercid ageyn the same wordis on this wise: ‘He hath sprenklid abrode to many; he yafe, but he solde nat to pore men, but nat to riche’” (*LA* 111). “Dispersit dedit pauperibus” is a reference to Psalm 111.9 in the Latin Vulgate, or 112.9 in the *Authorized King James Version*.

³¹⁶ Saint Steven, generally called the first martyr.

material, but the difference is that the ecclesiastical locals are arguably of the same general significance as the relatively less popular Saints Archbishop Remy, Bishop Hilary and Abbot Macarius. As we have seen, Bokenham elevates these minor local saints³¹⁷ specifically, and finds ways to increase their significance by inserting mnemonic tools into their narratives.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Bokenham selected and adapted hagiographical sources in order to accommodate a transposition of the *ars memoria*'s architectural mnemonic onto a geographic scheme. He accomplished this in no small part by describing his *Mappula Angliae* as a guidebook of sorts to the 'famous' local legends he added to the authoritative canon of Voragine's *Legenda aurea*. Bokenham targets English audiences and potential patrons: first, by translating Voragine's text into the vernacular, and second, by adding the local saints that his readers may have a deep personal devotion to, or at least familiarity with. Through detailed geographic descriptions, numerous references to place names, and an occasional nationalistic rhetoric of pride and national identity, Bokenham shapes his local saints' lives into a series of geographical mnemonics. In a way, Bokenham becomes the cartographer of a mnemonic English landscape, where physical characteristics and the spiritual footprints of saints combine to create the foundation of Britain's memory palace.

³¹⁷ Many of whom have attained a rank no higher than priest or abbot.

4. The Mnemonics of Genealogy: Traditional, Spiritual and Ecclesiastical Lineage in England's Sainly Clergy

*Loken that I shuld first descrie
Of this womman the genealogie...
In the descent of hir kynrede
From the progenitours hir biforn*

Bokenham "Mary of Egypt" (LA 167)

4.1 Introduction

This project has addressed distinctive and high-profile saints whose lives provide ample mnemonic resources. Several of Bokenham's saintly narratives seem to defy categorization as mnemonic works, either because they cannot fit into the previously discussed models that incorporate etymology, vivid memory images, or geographical association, or because while they may contain one or more of these mnemonic techniques, the presentation or weight of these elements is not such as might warrant their inclusion in previous groupings. The narratives that exist in this category of exceptions are almost entirely of local saints with ecclesiastical status, and the one characteristic that runs through them all is a genealogical treatment. Much like how etymologies or geographical marks and histories trace connections and origins, genealogy, whether traditional, spiritual, or ecclesiastical, forms connections that function as associative mnemonics.

Saints in this final category include Dunstan, Cedd, Wulfstan and Wilfrid, whose abbreviated narratives focus on intimate or professional connections that frequently stand in for familial bonds. I also address the concept of mapping lineage through an examination of Saint Æthelthryth's genealogical records at Ely and I discuss the final section of Bokenham's life of Saint David as it nicely exemplifies what I argue is an

attempt to develop the mnemonic potential of alternate forms of genealogy; in the specific instance of the David narrative, it is ecclesiastical genealogy. I also touch on Ursula who, while not an ecclesiastical figure, is part of a narrative that demonstrates a geographically based spiritual genealogy. The following section of the chapter addresses Bokenham's use of genealogy as a vehicle for encouraging the community to remember its duty to shame all successive generations of Thomas of Canterbury's murderers. Finally, I briefly examine Bokenham's *Dialogue at the Grave*³¹⁸ for its use of flexible and at times matrilineal or female-centric genealogy of Clare Priory's patrons in a socially and politically motivated memory work. It is valuable to read these narratives together because such comparative examination reveals where and how Bokenham succeeds in his determination to make each local saint's life "welle knowene & cowde" (*MA* 6), specifically through the use of ecclesiastical or spiritual genealogy, or other forms of lineage.

As Chapter One has demonstrated, Bokenham uses etymology strategically as a mnemonic device, and deploys this technique in the lives of those select saints who meet certain criteria; namely, the apostles, many of the virgin martyrs, and high-profile saints like Augustine of Hippo and Jerome. Chapter Two discusses the virgin martyrs, in whose narratives Bokenham makes full use of the *ars memoria* techniques for constructing striking memory images. Chapter Three discusses the mnemonic geography that Bokenham develops specifically for a large portion of his local saints,³¹⁹ and this current chapter addresses those local saints who appear to have largely fallen through the cracks

³¹⁸ The full title of this text is: *Dialogue betwixt a secular asking and a Frere answering at the grave of Dame Joan of Acre*.

³¹⁹ The third chapter also introduces the *Mappula Angliae*, a geographical history of Britain adapted from Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*; see page 148.

of Bokenham's clearly defined categories and mnemonic tactics. This chapter is not focused exclusively on one kind of genealogy, but instead works to identify where Bokenham employs a common mnemonic strategy for this final grouping of saints. Such a strategy, I would suggest, is one that seeks to establish associations of a genealogical or pseudo-genealogical nature between local saints and recognizable, memorable figures like rulers and other nobility, high-ranking ecclesiastical officials, prominent spiritual individuals, and other saints.

In much the same way that mnemonic etymology presents a name's linguistic heritage and produces certain appropriate memorable associations,³²⁰ genealogy traces lines of descent and reveals connections to both monarchical and spiritual nobility. As Spencer argues, "Bokenham's treatment of lineage reflects a ... preoccupation with ... the authority of origins" (65), and the many references in the *Mappula Angliae*—and therefore in his source, Higden's popular *Polychronicon*—to Isidore and his *Etymologiae* support a general recognition of the authority and importance granted to the practice of connections to origins, both linguistic and ancestral.

In his clearest articulation of the equivalent authority and value of genealogy to etymology, in the life of Saint Anne, Bokenham bookends the double genealogies of Anne and her daughter Mary, which trace through their husbands a line of descent from David, with etymologies, while describing the application of etymology to names as the production of a kind of healthful Christian doctrine.³²¹ In the Anne narrative Bokenham

³²⁰ For example, Saint Margaret and a pearl (from the Latin *margarita*), "which is shining white, small, and powerful ... shining white by her virginity, small by humility, and powerful in the performance of miracles" (Ryan 1.368); or Ambrose and amber (from the Latin *abra*), "a fragrant, precious substance. Ambrose was precious to the Church and spread a pleasing fragrance both in his speech and actions" (Ryan 1.229).

³²¹ This concept is discussed on pp. 49-57 in Chapter One.

also declares that “I my besynesse / Do diligently to claryfye / [Mary’s] moderes lyf & hyr genalogye” (*LHW* 1435-7), and praises Anne as the “stoke & rote” (1510), who possesses “nobyl & royal kynrede, / Conueyede from dauid down lyneally” (1513-4). Bokenham declares that “[a]ftyr the reulys of interpretacyon, / Anne is as myche to seyn as ‘grace’” (1497-8),³²² goes on to give etymologies for David, Solomon, Nathan, Jacob, Esau, Joseph, Mary and Anne, then combines the meanings of ‘Joseph,’ ‘Mary’ and ‘Anne’ to produce “the humble vertu / Saluacyon, tokned be þis name ihesu” (1607-8). This combination is a “bref moralizacyon” (1601), or exposition, of the moral and spiritual significance of the name meanings within the context of each other.³²³ By proceeding from genealogy to etymology, the legends assert that the two taxonomies are interdependent, and that lines of descent and influence can function mnemonically.

The types of genealogy I discuss in this chapter are traditional, spiritual and ecclesiastical, and while I also address ties with English rulers, these connections could best be described as a straightforward form of social genealogy; they link the saint with one or more memorable high-profile figures. In the context of this project I have created working definitions for the kinds of genealogy present in the saints’ lives discussed: *spiritual genealogy* signifies the powerful connection between mentor and mentee in instructions of the Christian faith, or among the chosen community of, for example, a monastery. *Ecclesiastical genealogy* refers to the predecessors and successors of an official ecclesiastical position such as the abbot, bishop or archbishop of a particular jurisdiction. Spencer observes that Bokenham, especially as an author writing in the

³²² This etymology also appears in Bokenham’s *Dialogue at the Grave*, discussed below. Anne, in that instance, is the first child of Richard of York and Cecily Neville.

³²³ *MED* “moralizacion” (n.); this is the earliest recorded instance of ‘moralization.’

vernacular, “is keen to deploy the authenticating function of genealogy in order to construct and consolidate a sense of national identity and community” (Spencer 66). Because Bokenham writes in English for an English audience, these additional genealogical forms allow him to delineate an associative web of mnemonic connections that spans a range of secular and sacred sources of English authority. This resolves an additional potential difficulty presented by the local saints: a general paucity of traditional genealogical information, which renders the customary saintly genealogy impossible to preserve as a mnemonic component of the hagiographical formula.

4.2 Genealogy: A Recipe for Mnemonic Success

In his prologue to the life of Mary of Egypt,³²⁴ Bokenham takes the unusual step of describing a recipe of sorts for constructing hagiographical prologues. This is a marked departure from the rest of the legend, in which he follows Voragine closely in detail but expands and elaborates according to the demands of his chosen verse format. Bokenham lays out the following set of expectations that he assumes readers would have:

But here at the begynnyng I biseche
 Al them which it redyn or here
 Shul in tyme *commyn*g that they nyl here
 Loken that I shuld first descrie
 Of this *womman* the genealogie
 Of the pedegre;³²⁵ that is to seyn,

³²⁴ This legend survives in the *Legenda Aurea* manuscript (167-71).

³²⁵ B uses ‘pedigree’ significantly elsewhere: after the epic genealogy in Anne (*LHW* 1610) and in the prologue to Mary Magdalene’s life with reference to the Lady Isabella Bowser, Countess of Eu, who is related to the Duke of York and whose relations are underlined in black in the

That I shuld tellyn in wordis pleyn
 Hir fadris name and modris & so forth *procede*
 In the descent of hir kynrede
 From the *progenitours* hir biforn,
 And the placis name where she was born
 Whethir it citee were or toun.³²⁶ (*LA* 167)

Voragine provides neither etymology nor genealogy for his version of Mary of Egypt and, given that a verse life in Bokenham tends to mean that the narrative was either commissioned or intended for patronage, I argue that Bokenham, due to the lack of potential mnemonic tools in his source, provides a detailed description of the rhetorically expected elements of a prologue. In other words, Bokenham outlines what should have existed there, if it had not been the case that he “yit nevir coude aspy / writing of hir that gan so hy” (*LA* 167).³²⁷ Bokenham glosses the phrase “genealogie / Of the pedegre” as “[h]ir fadris name and modris,” “the descent of hir kynrede,” and “the *progenitours* hir biforn.” He introduces the gloss with the tag “[T]hat is to seyn”, the same formula he used in etymologies to signal an explanatory interpretation. In this detailed description of what he is unable to provide, Bokenham alerts his readers to what they should expect at

manuscript (5006, underlined names span lines 5004-5021). The earliest uses of ‘pedigree’ in the *MED* are largely Lydgate and Bokenham.

³²⁶ This describes an approach similar to the practice in Hugh of St. Victor and others of knowing the where, when, and who of a thing to gain a full knowledge of it. Here, tracing the saint’s ‘progenitors’ acts as a timeline, ideally followed by names of family members and finally the saint’s birthplace.

³²⁷ This reference to an unsuccessful investigation implies that he has searched outside of Voragine through scripture and other chroniclers and hagiographers for records of Mary’s ancestry, although it is of course more likely that Bokenham already knew no such material existed and adopted the persona of the scrupulous scholar as part of his instructional prologue.

the beginning of at least some of his saints' lives: some manner of situating a saint by virtue of a line of connections, whether genealogical, etymological, or geographical.

Where etymology granted *auctoritas* to the saint through a demonstration of the linguistic origin of their name and the appropriateness or congruity³²⁸ of the word-saint match, genealogy performed much the same function. In fact, genealogy has many scriptural exempla to verify its legitimacy in the *Book of Genesis*, such as the lengthy genealogy that connects all of humanity to Adam and Eve (*Gen. 5*). Genealogy as a mnemonic strategy works by connecting the saint to other significant figures like noble or royal ancestors, and in Bokenham, those familial connections sometimes take the form of memorable associations of a spiritual or ecclesiastical nature, or even close ties with prominent royals. In the Mary of Egypt prologue Bokenham articulates the importance of some type of mnemonic association, and in the lives of his local saints we are able to see the plurality of mnemonic genealogical forms that Bokenham employs to that end.

Of the eighteen surviving lives of local saints, Felix “bisshop of est Inglonde” is the only narrative containing an etymology—a brief one which Bokenham takes from his source (Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*)—and it is worth noting that Felix, who was born in France, not England, has a Latin name that immediately lends itself to traditional etymological interpretation. Local English saints Thomas of Canterbury and John of Beverley could not receive etymological treatment since other saints with the same names were already given etymologies in Voragine, while Augustine of Hippo had claimed priority over Augustine of Canterbury, and it is unlikely that Ursula’s narrative would benefit from any association with ursine qualities or symbolism. Six of the

³²⁸ Bokenham’s term, meaning “[a]greement in character, similarity” also within the context of, I would argue, the second sense of “propriety, correctness” (*MED* “congruite”).

surviving local lives include a traditional genealogical reference: both Patrick's and Ursula's parents are named, as are Æthelthryth's (as well as her maternal grandfather Henricus and her sainted aunt Hilda), while in Winifred's narrative only her father is named; Aldhelm's noble father and royal uncle (King Ine of Wessex) are identified, and although Bokenham is delighted to connect Dunstan with the saint's uncle Aldhelm the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dunstan's parents are merely mentioned but not named.

In addition to providing most of the source material for Bokenham's project, Voragine's legendary acts in many places as a type of exemplar, although admittedly and as discussed in previous chapters, Bokenham deviated significantly in certain narratives when the material ran counter to his mnemonic approach. Voragine delivered etymologies first and offered genealogies second, although the latter are largely sparse and undetailed.³²⁹ Many of Voragine's saints are simply said to be of noble descent, and frequently this vague nobility functions to support a general sense of the saint's overall higher quality; their social status mirrors or even indicates their moral and spiritual excellence. This approach was generally unavailable to Bokenham, and he would have had to find other ways to claim a manner of nobility for his local saints, as very few of them were high ranking; he sought other genealogical forms or sources of prestige that, while not distinctively English, did set English saints apart from the majority of Voragine's canonical figures who were either royalty, vaguely noble, or had the distinction of titles like Apostle or Evangelist.

³²⁹ For example, in Voragine: "The virgin Agatha was highborn and a great beauty" (Ryan 1.154); "Nicholas, a citizen of Patara, was born of rich and pious parents. His father was named Epiphanes, his mother, Johanna" (Ryan 1.21); "Anastasia was born into a noble Roman family; her father, Praetaxtatus, was a pagan, but her mother Faustina was Christian. Anastasia was raised in the Christian faith by her mother and Saint Chrysogonus" (Ryan 1.43).

Although far less frequent, there are also saints who are exceptional despite their origins, such as Saint Peter Martyr, who “emerged like a radiant light in a cloud of smoke, or a white lily among briars, or a red rose among thorns” (Ryan 1.255). In *Voragine*, this specific type of description only appears in the life of Peter Martyr, although there are plenty of pagan-born saints who adopt Christianity or who are instinctively holy in their behaviours from birth. Particularly in Bokenham, virgin martyrs are especially prone to this kind of genealogical portrayal, presumably because it is more dramatic and admirable for a beautiful girl or woman born of wealthy pagan parents to discard such worldly riches for the intangible bounty that is the right of Christ’s most prized handmaidens. When this concept is attached to an image like the soft rose blooming amidst sharp thorns, it suitably aligns with Quintilian’s assertion that the best memory images are those which are “sharply defined [and] unusual, and which have the power of speedily encountering and penetrating the mind” (Yates 38). The “radiant light in a cloud of smoke” (Ryan 1.255) from *Voragine*’s Saint Peter is certainly sharply defined and dramatic, and it carries with it the additional weight of the moral or spiritual significance of light shining in a dark place. The unusual nature of a beautiful object thriving in desolate surroundings is as remarkable and compelling as is a child growing perfect in a faith not belonging to its parents, and so both the image and the concept represent the unrelenting triumph of the readers’ Christian faith.

Bokenham’s legend of Margaret contains an instance of this idea’s expression: “But ryht as of a ful sharp thorn / Growyth a rose bothe fayr & good, / So sprong Margaret of the hethene blood” (*LHW* 348-50); it also appears in Bokenham’s *Christina*, who receives a lengthier discussion of this phenomenon:

But lych as oftyn off a full scharp thorn
 Flouris spryngyn fayre and delycious,
 And off foull earthe grouyth good korn,
 Gold eek and siluyre ant [sic] stonys precious,
 So off these hethene folk and vicyous,
 Wych in ydolatrie here lyfe dyde fyne,
 A mayde both fayre and eke gracious
 Was born, whos name thei clepyd Cristyne. (*LHW* 2115-22)

Especially in these lines from Bokenham's *Christina*, we see the genealogical progression of "hethene folk" interrupted by Christianity and reinforced by the similarity of *Christina*'s very name to Christ's. Later, Christ himself arrives as both father and bridegroom and adopts or incorporates the saint into the highest order of his own divine lineage. Indeed, as Agnes once declared to her pesky suitor, her current and eternal lover is "[b]ettyr þan þow of kynrede & dygnyte" (*LHW* 4147), "[w]hos kynrede þan þine ys hyere" (4165), and "[w]hos modyr is a mayd, & hys fadyr eek I-wys" (4178). These examples from Bokenham sound much like Voragine's Peter Martyr, and indeed, Bokenham followed Voragine's description of Peter, even emphasizing the saint's genealogy by excising his source's etymology.³³⁰ It should be noted that Peter Martyr is a virgin martyr, and while Voragine's use of the 'rose from thorns' motif is confined to

³³⁰ Peter of Milan is a "noble cheventeyn of the faith, as a bright light oute of smoke & as a white lilie amonge brusshalye [sic] and bremblis and as a fair rede rose of thornes sprang of his progenitours a doctor, a maiden and a martir" (*LA* 182). The etymology Bokenham cuts out interprets 'Peter' as "knowing or recognizing, or as taking off one's shoes; or Peter comes from *petros*, firm" (Ryan 1.254).

that single legend, Bokenham implements the trope explicitly in his lives of Margaret and Christina, and more subtly in other virgin martyr narratives.

Also evident in Voragine are spiritual connections that act like or even substitute for familial ones, as in Mark and Peter: “Mark the evangelist belonged by birth to the priestly tribe of Levi. He was a son of the apostle Peter by his baptism, and his disciple in the word of God” (Ryan 1.243), and James the Greater: “He is called James the brother of John because he was his brother not only in the flesh but in the similarity of their character and virtues, for both had the same zeal, the same desire to learn, and the same ambition” (Ryan 2.3).³³¹ Bokenham picks up on this and employs the language of familial relations to individuals connected by religious instruction or spiritual purpose, although the concept is so widespread that it would be foolish to assign the influence of its presence in Bokenham’s writing solely to Voragine.³³² In fact, the *Middle English Dictionary*’s entry for “genealogie” includes “2.c. *fig.* a body of spiritual descendants,” and the example given for this particular definition is from the fifteenth century author John Mirk’s *Festial*: “The werkes of þe byleue byn mekenes and charyte..and he þat hath þes two, he ys wrytten yn þe geanology [sic] of Cryst” (qtd. in *MED* “genealogie” 2.c.).

The figurative use of “genealogy” still relies in part on the tenor of actual blood relationships, and of the 160³³³ lives in Voragine there are twenty legends with full

³³¹ Bokenham translates this passage quite closely: “Marc the evangelist of the kynrede of Leui and a preste petris sone in baptesme and his disciple in goddis worde” (*LA* 179). We are unable to compare the passage from Saint James the Greater due to its loss as part of missing manuscript leaves.

³³² The greatest emphasis on ecclesiastical lineage is articulated in Bokenham’s life of Saint David, as discussed below.

³³³ Both Graesse and Ryan recognize about 153 legends as likely written by Voragine, and Graesse includes 52 other lives that circulated with the *Legenda aurea* and were attributed to Voragine. In my count I have included seven of these attributed lives that survive in Bokenham’s legendary. The seven are Saints Dorothy, Anne, Barbara, Clare, Scholastica, Thomas Aquinas,

information on the saints' parents and in some cases even a grandparent. One such example is Voragine's legend of Mary Magdalene, which while it expands no farther than the saint's parents and siblings, does mention Mary's historically royal lineage: "Maria Magdalena ... ex regia stirpe descenditibus: cujus pater Syrus, mater vero Eucharis nuncupata est. ... fratre suo Lazaro et sorore sua Martha" (Voragine 408).³³⁴ There are ten that mention only the saint's father,³³⁵ eight that mention only the saint's mother,³³⁶ and more than twenty that make brief references to the saint's nobility or prestigious lineage while not providing details on either parent's names.³³⁷ Typically Voragine will reference the saint's nobility and when the information is available or desirable he will go on to name a father, a mother, and any high profile extended relatives, if they exist. Bokenham maintains most of Voragine's genealogies but leaves out Thomas Aquinas' mother and James the Less' mother. He also omits Simon and Jude's father, Alpheus, but he adds and emphasizes their relation to Christ, describing them as "sonys of owre ladyis sustrys Marte Cleophe & cosyns to ihesu crist oure

and Erasmus. This number is most certainly higher but unfortunately due to manuscript damage, we can only speculate which of the other attributed lives Bokenham originally included.

³³⁴ The same passage in Bokenham leans heavily on the elevated status of Mary's ancestry and makes much of the single line in Voragine.

Born was of þe most worthy kyn
 Wych þat tym was in þat cuntre,
 For of þe royel blood descendyd she,
 Whos fadyr hyht Syre, a man worthy,
 And hyr modyr clepyd was Eucharis.
 A brothir she had ... / Lazarus by name, ...
 & / Marthe, hyr sustyr as doth testyfye
 Ihon in hys gospel, wych wyl not lye. (*LHW* 5369-80)

³³⁵ Saints Barbara, Ambrose, Petronilla, Margaret, James the Greater, Savinian and Savina, Jerome, Chrysanthus, Elizabeth, and Katherine.

³³⁶ Saints Lucy, Silvester, Remy, Thomas Aquinas, Quiricus, the Seven Brothers, Clare, Cosmas and Damian.

³³⁷ Those saints assigned as attributed by Graesse but which Bokenham used are included in this consideration.

sauyour” (*LA* 403). Genealogical references in several other legends may well have been cut in addition to these but their beginnings are missing due to manuscript cuts. These excisions are relevant in that they tend to privilege a paternal line, with the exception of Simon and Jude’s remarkable connection, through their mother only, to Mary and to Christ. Bokenham applies his spiritual descent mnemonic in his local male saints’ lives, and paternal lineage easily finds its counterpart in the male-dominated realm of ecclesiastical positions.

4.3 Mapping Saintly Lineage

Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141) was a widely read and influential Saxon Augustinian canon who Carruthers describes as “one of the major intellectual figures of the first half of the twelfth century,” with works surviving in nearly 2500 manuscripts (*Craft of Memory*, 32). Hugh also wrote several works related or relevant to the *ars memoria*, and certainly saw it as the foundation on which important theological and exegetical work was done. For instance, he wrote an instructional treatise called “[*liber de tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum*]” or “The Three Best Memory Aids for Learning History” that served as a starting point for novices in their studies of the Bible. Even if Bokenham had no direct access to these texts, Hugh’s work certainly influenced monastic education especially within the Augustinian community; Bokenham would have encountered these or similar writings, which would inform the development of his own mnemotechnics.

One of Hugh’s works, the *Libellus de formatione arche* (ca. 1125-30), is an excellent example of a medieval adaptation of mnemonic techniques and provides a

valuable early analogue to Bokenham's work in its blending of biological and ecclesiastical genealogy within an architectural memory structure. Hugh's *arche* text elaborately describes the biblical ark as a memory structure, emphasizing the mind's eye, or the internal visual sense. Carruthers describes the text as a "cosmography— a combination of *mappa mundi* and *genealogia*, together with mnemonics for the vices and virtues ... all put together as an elaborate set of schematics imposed upon the Genesis description of Noah's Ark" (*BoM*, 294). Within the complex mnemonic structure of the ark is a longitudinal band that runs from one end to the other and represents the life of the church. Half is a traditional bloodline representing the time between Adam and the birth of Christ,³³⁸ and the other half is a timeline since the Incarnation that takes the form of a spiritual or ecclesiastical genealogy, in that it records the succession of apostles and popes (*BoM*, 298-9).³³⁹ Measuring time through two kinds of genealogies, Hugh recognized and incorporated traditional and ecclesiastical genealogy as part of the medieval—and for him, specifically monastic— art of memory.

Bokenham also blends biological and ecclesiastical genealogy but employs a simplified model: in place of incorporating saints into a large complex structure like the ark, he uses a general, more conceptual map of England, and relies on the basic patterns and individual associations inspired by familiar local saintly figures for his mnemonic geography. Hugh of St. Victor has plotted Adam's extensive bloodline and a lengthy succession of popes on the great central beam of his ark, whereas Bokenham leans on

³³⁸ Such as is found in the book of Genesis, particularly Genesis 5-11.

³³⁹ On this band, Hugh also instructs his reader to place the names of the twelve patriarchs on the first half and the names of the twelve apostles on the other half, along with busts of their likenesses, accompanied by the particular iconic images that are traditionally associated with each. This reinforces the highly visual nature of medieval Christian mnemonics.

any and all references to noble, ecclesiastical or spiritual lineage in those local lives that are otherwise largely bereft of mnemonic potential to imprint his various shorter genealogies as discrete narrative pockets within the legends. Bokenham's mnemonic genealogies are not intended for use in composing sermons or for recourse in complex treatises or discussions- they merely serve to incite some degree of interest where there might not otherwise be, especially in the brief and uneventful lives of local ecclesiastic figures.

If Hugh of St. Victor's cosmography operates on a larger scale and with the end goal of memorizing a genealogical line from Adam through to the most recently consecrated pope, Bokenham's project could almost be called a micro-cosmography, with its focus on England as "a noþer worlde" (*MA* 7) and the relatively less imposing figures of its local saints. Carruthers and Weiss note that the ark text has "traditionally been called *De arca Noe mystica*, or 'The Ark of Noah According to the Spiritual Method of Reading,' and that the ark's "voluminous and intricate design ... can be meditated upon in the tradition of the monastic *memoria spiritalis*" (*Medieval Craft of Memory* 41).³⁴⁰ In line with the mentally composed structures of the *memoria spiritalis* tradition that tend to be drawn from Biblical material and then customized, Bokenham's genealogies are placed on readers' individually tailored conceptualizations of England as a whole or of smaller local areas. This method is at once both of the Quintilian tradition (in its use of existing physical forms such as buildings) and of the monastic tradition (in

³⁴⁰ The *memoria spiritalis* is a monastic art of memory and discipline of inventive meditation that shares much in common with the locational memory approach; however, as opposed to the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*'s recommendation of using existing, familiar structures as memory storehouses, practitioners of *memoria spiritalis* or 'holy recollection' "tended to construct their mnemotechnical buildings in their minds, as a prelude to prayer" (Carruthers *Craft of Thought* 81).

that it would be uncommon indeed for a reader to possess accurate and exact knowledge of the country's topography and so at least part of the memory structure must necessarily be an inventive mental composition).

4.4 Æthelthryth at Ely

Hugh of St. Victor wrote for an exclusively monastic or academically trained audience, whereas Bokenham wrote for a broader audience that included those East Anglian lay readers who acted as his patrons and commissioned translations of specific saints.³⁴¹ In place of Hugh's complex ark with its massive genealogies, Bokenham used short but distinct notices of a saint's lineage, whether it be familial, spiritual or ecclesiastical, and relied on the genealogy's brevity for mnemonic effectiveness. However, one instance of a saint's genealogy already quite literally mapped out is a reference in his life of Saint Æthelthryth to her lineage, "The pedegree of whom who so list to see / At Ely in the *munkys* bothe in picture / He it fynde mow shal, and in scripture" (*LA* 223). As Simon Horobin notes, Bokenham's reference to the representations of Æthelthryth's lineage indicate a certain familiarity with Ely and we might assume that Bokenham has been there, perhaps more than once, and had the opportunity to examine the shrine and the monastery's records.

Horobin suggests that the pictures³⁴² "probably stood alongside four surviving panel paintings, now in the Society of Antiquaries and thought to have formed part of the

³⁴¹ Carruthers and Ziolkowski note that Hugh of St. Victor wrote "entirely for a clerical audience living under a monastic rule, including the novices of his own order of Augustinian canons" (*Medieval Craft of Memory* 4).

³⁴² See John Fletcher, "Four Scenes from the Life of St Etheldreda" *Antiquaries Journal* 54 (1974), 287-9. The paintings are reproduced and discussed by Margaret Rickert in *Paintings in Britain: The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1965) p 187 and plate 188.

retable of St. Audrey's shrine at Ely. These paintings depict her marriage to Egfrid, her leaving her husband for a nunnery, the construction of the church at Ely, and the translation of St. Audrey's body" ("Politics, Patronage, and Piety" 940). Bokenham suggests that a reader with particular interest in and devotion to the saint could travel to her shrine at Ely and walk around while processing the image and word pairing of the 'picture' and 'scripture' into a visual genealogic mnemonic. While the paintings record Æthelthryth's literal genealogy they would also, by virtue of their place at Ely, call to mind the saint's spiritual genealogy in the form of her actual sister and successor Seaxburh and the generations of spiritual sisters who lived, worked and prayed in the "nunnery, a ful religious place" (*LA* 225) that she founded and oversaw as abbess.

4.5 Saint David and Records of Ecclesiastical Lineage

Much like his reference to records of saintly lineage at Ely, Bokenham's life of Saint David concerns itself at one point with records of descent, although instead of directing readers to visit for information on a saint's ancestry Bokenham here delivers a list, transposed and adapted from the *Mappula Angliae*, that details David's spiritual descendants in the form of ecclesiastical successors. David's ecclesiastical genealogy is measured in bishops and papal indulgences in much the same way that Hugh of St. Victor's mnemonic structure measured the succession of apostles and popes in conceptual cubits along the length of the ark. While Bokenham's David lacks a mnemonic structure, the path of the pilgrimages to the cathedral church suggested at the culmination of listed ecclesiastical connections could function as a type of mental and physical construction. Although David's narrative is discussed in detail in the previous

chapter for its mnemonic geographical aspects, here I will briefly address its unusual ending and its relevance to mnemonic spiritual genealogy.

Bokenham excised David's parents' names but names Gildas, a holy man whose inability to preach while David's pregnant mother is present portends the baby's future status. Two other spiritual guides are also described: Ailbe/Elvis, who baptizes David, and the "blissid man clepid Paulyn, a bishop" (*LA* 133) who instructs the saint. This patrilineal line of monastic instruction culminates in Saint Germanus, David's spiritual grandfather. Later, David "turned ageyn into his owen cuntrey and to Menevie where that tyme was archebisshop his owen eeme, a worshipful man whos name was Gisthanus, whider whan Dauid came his eeme tharchebisshop tolde hym the reuelacion which an angel had seid vnto hym" (*LA* 134). Rhygyvarch's *Life of St David*³⁴³ (c. 1090) mentions a bishop Guistilianus, who is called David's "fratrueilis" or cousin (Wade-Evans 9), but this figure merely converses with David for a while and then disappears from the narrative. While Bokenham's David was "made archesbisshop aftir his eeme" (*LA* 134), the only previous bishop on record is one Dubricius who is entirely unrelated to the saint. In this way Bokenham transforms a brief, offhand reference to a kinsman into a figure in whom familial and ecclesiastical relations are united; David inherits the archbishopric of Menevia through both forms of genealogy.

Rhygyvarch's narrative ends with a patrilineal genealogy that traced the saint's lineage to Welsh nobility and which Bokenham replaces with a section largely lifted from his *Mappula Angliae* that details how twenty-four of the saint's successors held the

³⁴³ Whether or not Bokenham used Rhygyvarch's narrative, one of its many recensions or adaptations, or another source, Rhygyvarch remains the most comprehensive medieval life of Saint David and is useful in discussions of what information Bokenham may have had available as he worked.

position of archbishop and how “the five and twentyth whos name was Symon³⁴⁴ loste it ... Aftir seid Symon, the eight bisshop, Margarnes by name, was the first bisshop of that see that eete flessh” (*LA* 134-5). After specifically naming these two disappointing successors, Bokenham relates that there were eleven bishops after “Margarnes” before St. David’s became suffragan to Canterbury in the early twelfth century and that “After these folowid eight bisshops Of which the five first were nevir obediencers to tharchebisshop of Caunterbury, but the thre last that is to seyn Anselme, Thomas and Richard, constreyned by the kyngis³⁴⁵ commaundement, did submission” (*LA* 40). Bokenham notably alters his *Mappula* passage on St. David’s here, in the saint’s narrative, and adds ‘Margarnes’ and the rest of the names from one or more other sources. I believe it is possible that Bokenham came by the information in the final anecdote involving Thomas Beck and the Latin inscription secondhand from someone who had visited the cathedral and perhaps had read the tablets or *tabulae* mounted there.³⁴⁶

The list of names and numbers is followed by one final bishop, Thomas Beck, and Bokenham describes how during Beck’s tenure a discovery is made of a particular pardon or condition granted by Pope Callixtus II that is “writen [in Latin] there bothen on the wallis and on tablis of fair text hand in dyuers placis” (*LA* 135); Bokenham takes this opportunity to then list the successive popes³⁴⁷ who upheld or added to the condition. By

³⁴⁴ ‘Symon’ is a confusion of the much more accurate ‘Sampsoun’ in the *Mappula Angliae* (25).

³⁴⁵ The *Mappula Angliae* mentions “kyng Herry þe firste” (25), who ruled from 1100-1135, although the tenures of Anselm, Thomas, and Richard fall under the reign of King Henry III who ruled from 1216-72. These three named bishops are additional to the *Mappula* material.

³⁴⁶ See my earlier discussion of medieval *tabulae* in Chapter Three, pages 186-7.

³⁴⁷ Bokenham lists the popes who follow Calixtus II as Paschal, Gregory, Honorius, Celestine, Martin, Innocent, Nicholas, Eugene, Benedict, and Boniface. The source of this information is unknown and the accuracy of Bokenham’s records is questionable: Paschal was pope directly before Calixtus II, while the rest are out of order with approximately 115 years of papal rule unaccounted for in between.

replacing a traditional genealogy and even the more customary list of miracles with these ecclesiastical lineages, Bokenham provides his readers with a sense of connection to Saint David by virtue of the tangible roots that grow from Canterbury up through the bishops, as well as through the wider network of popes who are themselves fathers of their global spiritual community. Positioning this ecclesiastical genealogy at the end of the legend mirrors the usual location of genealogies at the opening of a life and claims the mnemonic effect of such a memorable narrative placement.

4.6 A Flight of English Virgin Martyrs: Saint Ursula and the Spiritual Genealogy of a Shared Homeland

On a much larger scale than paintings in churches or records of a single bishopric, mnemonic genealogy and geography come together in the story of Saint Ursula and the 11,000 virgins, where Bokenham's focus on both the importance of place and the concept of traditional and spiritual definitions of family work together in the most memorable large scale martyrdom of early legend.³⁴⁸ In this section, I argue that Bokenham's efforts to correct and clarify his source, Voragine, on the matter of Ursula and her companions' geographical origins, are paired with an emphasis on the group's spiritually familial bond as the sisters and daughters of England as well as the brides or handmaidens of Christ. Even the majority of the men who join the party along the way are either related to one or more of the companions or are also originally from Britain, and thus share the same bond borne of the spiritual-geographical overlap.

³⁴⁸ In this particular instance I use the term 'legend' with emphasis on its potential implication of fiction over fact. If they ever existed, there were most likely eleven of Ursula's companions, and not 11,000.

Not all earlier versions of the Saint Ursula story agree on Britain as the geographical origin of the famous travels, but after the twelfth century historiographer Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his *Historia Regum Britanniae*,³⁴⁹ Ursula's birthplace was traditionally assigned to Britain, specifically Cornwall, and her many companions were from all across the island.³⁵⁰ In Voragine's Ursula narrative, which Bokenham takes as his source and follows fairly closely, there are several prominent ecclesiastical figures — some of whom are English Christians living or travelling abroad— who fall under the saint's banner and perish in an epic mass-martyrdom event. Bokenham even follows Voragine's claim that a more than likely fictional Pope Ciriacus, who was “of Britayne ... born” (*LA* 400), abandoned his pontifical duties and position to accompany Ursula and her companions, especially after learning that “[f]ul many a kynnys wumman he had there” (*LA* 400) among the maidens. Ciriacus is drawn to join the group by spiritual, geographical and familial connections, and the addition of this rare British pope³⁵¹ increases the exceptionality and therefore mnemonic potency of such an assembly.

Voragine's Ursula is from “Britannia,” which Ryan translates as ‘Britain,’ and her fiancé Etherius is from “Angliae,” which Ryan unhelpfully translates as ‘Anglia’

³⁴⁹ See Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, book 5, chapters 9-16. Ursula's legend also appears in the *South English Legendary*, *Gilte Legende*, *Nova Legenda Anglie* and William Caxton's *Golden Legend*. However, because Caxton was, like Bokenham, working with Voragine's cryptic text, he confusingly assigns Ursula to Britain and her suitor to England.

³⁵⁰ Ursula is pictured holding the Cornwall coat of arms and her story is told in the anonymous mid-fifteenth century *Chronicle of England to Henry V* or *Brut Chronicle* (story contained in fol. 030r-031r, Ursula image on fol. 030v, of Bodleian Library MS. Laud Misc. 733). The manuscript also contains *De arte heraldica* by Johannes de Bado Aureo.

See also the “Arrival of Saint Ursula at Cologne” (ca. 1333) by Italian painter Bernardo Daddi, which features flags bearing St. George's cross, a clear indication that the virgins came from a clearly Christianized early England (Getty Museum).

³⁵¹ This British Pope Ciriacus is almost certainly fictional; whether or not he was considered as such by Bokenham and his contemporaries, there was only one recognized, recorded British pope and that was Pope Adrian IV, born Nicholas Breakspear, who held the papal throne from 1154-9).

(Voragine 701, Ryan 2.256). ‘Britannia’ can refer to either Britain or Brittany,³⁵² but ‘Anglia’ seems to refer exclusively to England.³⁵³ In Bokenham, Ursula is from “Britayne the lesse” (Little Britain) or Brittany, and Etherius is from “Inglond,” despite, as mentioned above, the tradition solidified in Geoffrey of Monmouth that Ursula is from Cornwall. This is, however, the only time Bokenham refers to “Britayne the lesse,” and afterwards references only Britain or England, in effect conflating Voragine’s ‘Britannia’ and ‘Angliae’ into one distinctly English homeland. Bokenham writes “[t]o Britayn she seyld & to Inland” (*LA* 400) when describing Queen Gerasina’s travels on her way to join Ursula and the mass of virgins, where Voragine has written simply “in Britanniam navigavit”³⁵⁴ (Voragine 702). Bokenham, however, immediately adds, “And whan this seyde Gerasine ful of prudence / Wyth hyre fiue childryn cam to the place / Where Vrsula was” (*LA* 400), which makes clear that Ursula is in “Inland,” and from this point on, “Britayn” and “Inland” are one and the same. One could argue, of course, that Bokenham was detailing a route that included a stop in Brittany before crossing the English channel; however, I believe that here Bokenham uses a pair or doublet to clarify and emphasize, especially since he did not add “the lesse” or otherwise modify to indicate Brittany. These lines also confirm that England is “[w]here Vrsula was,” and since Ursula had not travelled at any previous point in the narrative, we can only assume that Bokenham has here declared England to be her birthplace.

³⁵² Using ‘major’ or ‘minor’ after ‘Britannia’ was a common way to distinguish between Britain and Brittany.

³⁵³ Perhaps this is Voragine’s initial mistake or a compromise in dealing with an unclear source of his own, and Bokenham follows Voragine in this particular detail despite the likelihood that he would have most certainly come across the mythology establishing Ursula as a British princess.

³⁵⁴ [sailed to Britain].

As Alice Spencer notes, Bokenham also changes the sourcing of virgins from both kingdoms to one: in Voragine, Ursula's request specifies that both the king and her father, "rex cum patre" (Graesse 702), select young women for the enterprise from their respective populations whereas Bokenham's Ursula asks,

' ... that they to me

Wyln tenthe cheyrest maydyns sende

And fayrest & wurthyest of here cuntre

And vp on ych of vs for to intende

Off other maydyns assignyn a thow[s]ende.' (LA 399)

Through her request for ten of the fairest, worthiest and "cheyrest maydyns"³⁵⁵ Ursula guarantees that the young women who will consecrate their virginities and then sacrifice their lives should serve as an offering of and from the best of the British peoples. If, as this narrative implies, England's most valuable commodity is its populace, then the gifting of its daughters and sisters can be seen as a nation's tithe of sorts to the faith, extracted from the families of the isle's collective congregation. The physical –as opposed to spiritual– loss of 11,000 women of marriageable, childbearing age would have inflicted an extreme blow to the estimated 3.6 million English Christians living in fourth-century Britain (Alcock 260); such a sacrifice recalls the *Ad Herennium*'s "idea of helping memory by arousing emotional affects" (Yates 26), where the emotional pull of thousands of beautiful virgins horribly martyred is made to resonate more deeply with Bokenham's readers because of the additional connection of the saints' Englishness.

³⁵⁵ *MED* "chois" (adj.): distinguished, excellent, noble, handsome (person).

When Bokenham recounts how “anoon were gaderyd from ych cuntre / Of ynglond maydyns to this entent / The fairest that fowndyn myth ony wher be” (*LA* 400), he specifies that each region’s contributions possess beauty that outstrips that of all other maidens on an international scale. These remarkable women are taken from a vast range of cities, towns and villages across Britain, and as semantically broad as the word “cuntre” is in terms of what geographical size it refers to, from a hamlet to an entire nation, here Bokenham uses it in the same way he does in chapter eleven of the *Mappula Angliae*, to mean shire, province or county.³⁵⁶ England’s daughters, then, represent each province, and their notable beauty commands the attention of their audience on both sides of the narrative.³⁵⁷ Their journey that ends in a mass martyrdom binds them together in spiritual kinship similar to that of religious monastic communities, and the changes in Bokenham’s version add the bond of citizenry to that kinship. Sisters in place and in spiritual purpose, Ursula and her followers particularly inspire the memories of English readers, who are able to claim a possible distant connection to the martyrs by blood or topographical origins, and an English community of faith.

Indeed, Bokenham makes other changes that present the virgins as almost exclusively English and therefore part of the country’s spiritual community that shares a past, present and future with the legend’s late medieval English readers. In both Voragine and Bokenham, Queen Gerasina of Sicily and her children are related to Ursula, and can

³⁵⁶ The chapter’s opening is written in Bokenham’s own words: “Owte of the Cytees, . . . he returnythe his style ageyne to the cunctrees . . . [the] shires or provincis, the *wich* at þis day byn clepid countees” (*MA* 20).

³⁵⁷ Voragine’s virgins come rather generally “[f]rom all sides” (Ryan 2.257), presumably from both England and Brittany (and in the Latin, “[u]ndique igitur virginibus confluunt,” Graesse 702), whereas Bokenham’s maidens are collected specifically from “ych cuntre / Of ynglond.”

therefore claim or participate in an English lineage: “Seynt Gerasine eek of Gale³⁵⁸ quen ... / Martirie the bysshop whiche sustyr was to / And to Saray, Vrsulaas modyr” (*LA* 400).³⁵⁹ Bokenham highlights this familial connection when he cuts out Voragine’s description, which follows immediately after mention of the queen’s relation to Ursula, of Gerasina’s highly successful international recruitment of virgins and her role as leader of this global contingent.³⁶⁰ Voragine’s Gerasina even runs military drills that attract the attention and admiration of high-ranking men. Bokenham, on the other hand, preserves the exclusively British origin of the virgins and downplays Gerasina’s recruiting role, limiting her to a prestigious follower and cheerleader. When Bokenham’s Gerasina arrived with her children in England, she

dede gret diligence

Bothe hire & hyre felaschepe to solace

And them to confermyn in here newe grace

And was here guyderesse to Rome & ageyn

And wyth hem eek deyid in Coleyn. (*LA* 400)

Instead of rallying an international group of women to the cause and taking on a position of strong leadership, Bokenham’s Gerasina assumes a tangential and maternal role, comforting and guiding the virgins before joining them in martyrdom. This version

³⁵⁸ “Cecyle” in *LHW* 3251.

³⁵⁹ “Sancta quoque Gerasina regina Siciliae, ... soror Macirisi episcopi et Dariae matris sanctae Ursulae” (Voragine 702); in English, “[Gerasina] was the sister of Bishop Macirisus and of Daria, Saint Ursula’s mother” (Ryan 2.257).

³⁶⁰ In Voragine, Queen Gerasina gathers her four daughters and youngest son, and then “[a]t her invitation, virgins gathered from various countries, and Gerasina, continuing as their leader, eventually suffered martyrdom with them” (Ryan 2.257). The passage in Latin: “Cujus consilio virgines de diversis regnis colligebantur et earum semper ductrix existens cum iis tandem martirium passa est” (Voragine 702).

emphasizes the concept of an immense adoptive family as well as the English composition of the martyrs, and even Ursula's Brittonic origins have been shifted to England over the course of the narrative.

Even though Gerasina of Sicily and her children as well as many others are martyred alongside the group, the feast day honours only those 11,000 British virgins. In this way, Bokenham maintains the legacy of the largest recognized³⁶¹ group of holy martyrs as the sole province and product of England. These spiritual exports are memorable in the display itself of such an unusually sizeable fellowship of maidens: "Whan puplisshd was this newe miracle / So many virginys assemblyd to be / Many bysshops come to this spectacle" (*LA* 400). As noted in the *MED* entry, the word 'spectacle' derives in part from the Latin *spectaculum*, which incorporates elements of the theater and public show in its meaning (*MED* "spectacle" (n.) 1. a and b). The assembly and their subsequent journey are certainly objects of public wonderment, and these boatloads of beautiful virgins compel wonder and admiration from both the spectators of this public display and the narrative's readers as they imagine this unusual phenomenon. Voragine calls it a "grande spectaculum" (Graesse 702), but Bokenham goes beyond that and pronounces the mass gathering of virgins a new miracle, which in turn casts the assembly in an imagined golden glow in anticipation of their blinding collection of halos.³⁶²

³⁶¹ Recognized until the Roman Catholic Church removed Ursula and her virgins from the official church calendar in the 1969 reform.

³⁶² Of course, Bokenham could be using "miracle" in the sense of a "wondrous phenomenon or event; an extraordinary or remarkable feat; a marvel" (*MED* "miracle" 1.a), although given the hagiographical context it is unlikely that the word is here divorced from its more traditional and familiar context of divine origins. Moreover, when Bokenham translates and adapts Higden's *Polychronicon* section on Britain's great, unexplained natural wonders, he calls them "merveillous wondurs," and "þe merveilles & the wondres" (*MA* 9). Even when he assigns the

This bold description, supported by the claim that these virgins are the most beautiful maidens in the world, recalls Bokenham's vivid flourishes of corporeal detail from his conventional memory image virgin martyrs, although admittedly Ursula and her maidens are, in their sheer numbers, distinctly different from other virgin martyrs who suffer either alone or with one or two companions. Indeed, the Ursula legend intersects the mnemotechnics of memory images, place or geography, and both literal and spiritual genealogy in its themes.

4.7 Brief Bishops' Lives: The Genealogy of the Church

When Bokenham recounts Saint Margaret's translation, he declares that "[w]herefore, prolyxite to escheu, / I wil lete passe al maner digressyoun, / An shortly goon on to the conclusyoun" (*LHW* 971-3). He professes this intention of brevity several times in his writing,³⁶³ which demonstrates both his awareness of the mnemonic effect of pointed, tight storytelling as well as his use of a rhetorical technique best described as a combination of *occupatio*, a "description of a situation, or naming of objects, while professing to leave them unmentioned through lack of knowledge, or unwillingness to discuss them",³⁶⁴ and the principle of *brevitas*, of which Geoffrey of Vinsauf says "I

source of these geographical mysteries to "þe auctor of alle thyngis, ... þroughe [whose] speciale grace this yle Brytayne is syngulerly priuylegid" (*MA* 9), Bokenham does not use the word 'miracle' to describe the phenomenon, thereby reserving this term for the specific displays of wonders attributed to God, Christ, angels or saints (*MED* "miracle" 1.b).

³⁶³ For example: in his life of Saint Anne: "But in þat myn auctour I follow sothly, / And also to eschewyn prolyxite" (*LHW* 16111-2); his life of Saint Augustine of Canterbury: "I remitte hym to *Bede de gestis Anglorum*, where in the last ende of the first boke and in the thre first chapitres he shal fynden al this clerely and diffusely tretid. The which for the prolixite I passe ovir at this tyme" (*LA* 210); and his life of Saint Thomas Becket: "Of which grete multitude oonly thre or foure at this tyme forto excluden prolixite I wil briefly rehersyn here in honoure and louyng of this blissid martir" (*LA* 244). It is worth noting that the examples here are from some of Bokenham's longer lives, which is where he tends to make these and similar declarations.

³⁶⁴ Nims 90.

compress the entire subject into a few words – those which are essential to it and no others”.³⁶⁵ In other words, at times Bokenham is brief especially in relation to his sources, but occasionally he expresses the goal of brevity while demonstrating the aforementioned dreaded prolixity. Although *brevitas* is an effective mnemonic strategy especially in uneventful narratives, Bokenham’s lives of local ecclesiastical figures are sometimes also edited and abbreviated to remove references to contentious interactions between the saints and their kings in an effort to portray a manufactured sense of harmony.³⁶⁶

Throughout writings on the *ars memoria*, the concepts of *brevitas* and *divisio*³⁶⁷ are frequently linked together as a way of monitoring the amount and organization of information crafted by orators and authors. Martianus Capella, writing on artificial memory in his fifth century work *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, advises that “if the material is lengthy, being divided into parts it may more easily stick.”³⁶⁸ Similarly, in *De tribus maximis circumsantiis*, Hugh of St. Victor declares, “the memory always rejoices in both brevity of length and fewness in number.”³⁶⁹ In the lives of certain English priests and bishops, Bokenham’s excision or abridgment of material is indeed motivated by the urge to create a narrative that adheres to the mnemonically effective *brevitas*.

³⁶⁵ Vinsauf 56.

³⁶⁶ Perhaps there was a political and financial motivation for this secondary form of editing, since during Bokenham’s active years and sometime previous to that Clare Priory was not enjoying the generous level of support from its royal patrons that it had in the past. Portraying unity and harmony in relationships between clergy and royalty would at the least ensure that current connections were not agitated.

³⁶⁷ On *divisio* the *Ad Herennium* states, “[b]y means of the Division we make clear what matters are agreed upon and what are contested and announce what points we intend to take up” (Caplan 9/ *Ad Herennium* I.iii).

³⁶⁸ Transl. Yates 64.

³⁶⁹ Transl. and qtd. in Carruthers *BoM* 341.

Bokenham's writing displays –albeit somewhat sporadically– an awareness of these and similar statements on *brevitas* and *divisio* as he works to identify a mnemonic formula for the lives of sainted English bishops. The local holy bishops tend to lack the visual impact of noble beauty or the tortures of martyrdom, and they even, as in Alban or Felix, fail to produce wondrous miracles that engage the imagination and energize the memory. If these local bishops could only be celebrated for their strict way of life, it stands to reason that their ecclesiastical connections or close relationships with royalty might carry the most mnemonic potential for readers looking for references to high-profile figures. Bokenham employs *divisio* in its principles of laying out an order of items and while his legendary is necessarily bound by the calendar arrangement of feast days, he links or organizes the saints in this group both by mnemonic approach and their presence in varying degrees of detail in the *Mappula Angliae*.

4.8 Dunstan

Saint Dunstan's life effectively illustrates the value of abbreviating a source, in this case Adelard of Ghent's *Lectiones In Depositione S. Dvnstani*.³⁷⁰ As with Wilfrid, Bokenham's version omits instances of turmoil and unrest, Dunstan's clashes with King Eadwig, and the chaotic multiple royal successions during Dunstan's lifetime, all of which result in a brief narrative with a focused spiritual genealogy in place of traditional lineage. In Dunstan, the saint's spiritual lineage is made up of an archbishop and three kings with whom the saint was close and for whom he provided spiritual guidance, thus

³⁷⁰ See Adelard of Ghent's "Lectiones In Depositione S. Dvnstani" in W. Stubbs *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, pp. 53-68.

creating a relatively harmonious and even divinely encouraged bond with an uninterrupted, undisputed succession of English kings.

Writing about the value of abbreviated saints' lives, Bokenham warns against a contemporary's much lengthier version of a Saint Katherine narrative when he references the better-known John Capgrave's *The Life of St. Katherine* in the prologue to his own version of Katherine's legend. Criticism is delivered through seeming praise as Bokenham describes how "My fadrys book, maystyr Ioon Capgraue" is composed in "balaadys rymyd ful craftily" (*LHW* 6356, 6359) but that,

for-as-mych as þat book is rare

And straunge to gete, at myn estymacyoun,

Compendyously of al I wyl declare

no more but oonly þe passyoun. (*LHW* 6361-4)

The portrayal of Capgrave's lengthy legend as rare and difficult to obtain makes Bokenham's own simple, 'compendious' narrative much more palatable to readers. Indeed, Bokenham's *Katherine* is just over a thousand lines long, whereas Capgrave's legend is a substantial eight thousand lines over five books; such a text would indeed have been very expensive and difficult to procure and would appeal to a small select audience. Perhaps here Bokenham was hoping to garner interest in either individual copies of his Katherine legend or in a small collection of lives; presumably those patrons named in several of the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* narratives received individual copies of the legend they sponsored and they or others like them may have requested additional saints' lives from Bokenham's repertoire.³⁷¹

³⁷¹ Bokenham's Katherine legend was dedicated to Katherine Denston and Katherine Howard. For other *LHW* patrons, see Chapter Two, page 17, note 29. There is currently no evidence of the

Much like the difference between Capgrave's and Bokenham's *Katherine* legends, most other legends of Saint Dunstan such as William of Malmesbury's extensive and detailed *Vita Dunstani* are several times longer than Bokenham's text. Bokenham has condensed Adelard's already abbreviated narrative down to a series of miracles and ecclesiastical appointments that run more like a highlight reel than a unified narrative. Adelard worked from the earliest life of Dunstan by a priest known only as "B" whose text forms the basis for several later works. As a point of reference for length, in Stubbs' edition of the early lives B's vita is 49 pages long, Adelard's is only 15 pages, the popular Osbern of Canterbury's is 92 pages, Eadmer's is 88 pages, William of Malmesbury's version is 73 pages, and John Capgrave's is 28 pages long. Taking into account Bokenham's cuts to Adelard's text with the addition of one anecdote most likely taken from Osbern, Bokenham's version is equivalent to about three to three-and-a-half pages.³⁷² If Stubbs is correct in his assertion that Dunstan was "the favourite saint of the mother church of England for more than a century and a half" and that the "memory of his greatness was permanent" (ix), such dramatic abbreviation on Bokenham's part indicates that what does remain is the focus of Bokenham's interests.

For instance, all of the prominent lives of Dunstan with the exception of Adelard name Dunstan's parents early in the *vita*.³⁷³ In stark contrast, Bokenham's legend follows

production and circulation of individual copies of any of Bokenham's lives, although that is not to say such items did not exist at one time.

³⁷² The anecdote Bokenham inserts describes Dunstan's vision of Mary and other holy virgins who take him by the hand and sing verses of a song by Sedulius. The anecdote first appeared in Osbern, and Capgrave reproduces it closely in his own version. Bokenham may have used Osbern or Capgrave, or as Bokenham writes in his introduction to the story, "[i]t is also written amonge the myraclis of our lady" (*LA* 207).

³⁷³ "Pater eius Herstanus, mater Kinedrida nominati, ambo pietate in Deum et nobilitate generis insignes, pari uirtutum studio et concordii morum elegantia aeuum exegere" (William *SL* 170); "His father Heorstan and his mother Cynethryth were both of them distinguished for their piety

Adelard's single depersonalized mention of Dunstan's parents: "This holy and blissid man, Seynt Dunstan, was brought forth of such fadir and modir in this worlde which aftirward he shuld mow seen for her meritis amonge the queres of angels in that othir worlde" (*LA* 54). The absence of Dunstan's parents' names here is unusual, given that Heorstan and Cynethryth are recorded prominently in hagiographies and possibly other historical documents. Leaving the saint's parents unnamed distances Dunstan from familial attachments and focuses attention instead on the first named figures: Dunstan's uncle Athelm, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and King Athelstan, the first of several rulers who are attached to Dunstan and who look to him for guidance. Adelard is also the first and only of Dunstan's hagiographers to cut out references to Ælfheah the Bald, bishop of Winchester, who is mentioned in all other versions as either an uncle or a close relation of Dunstan's,³⁷⁴ and Bokenham follows suit; perhaps this is because Dunstan visits Ælfheah after his first banishment from court and Bokenham's version excises all references to or descriptions of strife between Dunstan and the English kings, even those included in Adelard.

In both Adelard and Bokenham, Archbishop Athelm introduces Dunstan to King Athelstan, who "received hym gladly and tretid hym worshipfully. Aftir whos deth also he was singulerly cherisshid of his brothir kyng Edmunde" (*LA* 54). Athelm is Dunstan's only blood relative to be named in Bokenham, and even then, Athelm is an ecclesiastical figure whose relation to Dunstan serves only to connect the saint with the first in a long line of English kings who rule during Dunstan's lifetime. In the seamless transition from

towards God and their nobility of birth; and it was in equal zeal for virtue and in all concord of refined manners that they lived out their lives" (transl. Winterbottom and Thomson, 171).

³⁷⁴ See for instance the mention in Malmesbury (185), B. (Stubbs 12), Osbern (Stubbs 82) or Eadmer (Stubbs 171).

Athelstan, who apparently treats the saint worshipfully, to Edmund, who singularly cherishes Dunstan, Bokenham glosses over the events of Athelstan's rule, which contain insidious political intrigue and Dunstan's expulsion from court. Although Adelard also leaves these details out, Bokenham later cuts material in Adelard related to kings Eadred, Eadwig, Edward, and Æthelred that refer to disputes and exile.

The third and final king mentioned in Bokenham's version is Edmund's son Edgar, upon whose birth Dunstan was visited by angels chanting "Pees to the chirche of Ingelonde, in oure Dunstans and this childis new born tyme" (*LA* 206). Bokenham removes Adelard's reference to queen Ælfgifu, which changes the description of the birth to focus on the patrilineal lineage of Edmund, Edgar and Dunstan as well as the saint's position as a connection between and spiritual father of the two rulers. Bokenham's version implies an uninterrupted lineal succession and notes neither that Edmund was assassinated nor that two others reigned before Edgar took the throne. In fact, Bokenham cuts Adelard's account of these other rulers and maneuvers his way around the opening of Adelard's seventh chapter in order to avoid a reference to Edgar calling Dunstan back from an exile that occurred under the troublesome King Eadwig.

Dunstan's abbreviated legend adheres to Bokenham's apparent qualifications for a memorable hagiography in brevity, with its short, rapid narrative sequences. Bokenham also increases the legend's memorability by altering Dunstan's genealogy to portray a select few English rulers as familial connections with whom any disagreements were excised, and by privileging the wondrous miracles over the mundane details of religious monastic life. Bokenham's approach to Adelard's longer narrative is excellently represented in one abrupt random line: "Ner it oweth nat to be passid vndir silence how

twyes while [Dunstan] lived he sawe the holigoste in likenesse of a dowe” (*LA* 56). This reference to the mystic Dove appears in the midst of large swaths of Adelard’s text that Bokenham has cut, and highlights Bokenham’s focus on Dunstan’s harmonious close connections with English kings in a narrative punctuated by memorable if abrupt and unconnected miracles.

4.9 Cedd

As with Dunstan, Bokenham also excises or simplifies the familial relations of other British saints while emphasizing their social relationships with royalty. Another such example is the life of Saint Cedd taken from Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Bokenham conflates Bede’s narratives of the two brothers Chad and Cedd under “Cedde” and never mentions Chad or the rest of Cedd’s family.³⁷⁵ Cedd is raised and educated at Lindisfarne by Bishop Aidan, is close with Aidan’s successor Finan, and has several patrons and affectionate friendships among various rulers such as King Oswiu of Northumberland, King Sigeberht of the East Saxons, King Oethelwald, King Peada of Mercia and Peada’s successor Wulfhere. Some of these relationships are in fact taken from the events of Bede’s Chad and subsumed under Bokenham’s Cedd.

At the beginning of Cedd’s legend Bokenham inserts into Bede’s lines that King Oswiu is “brothir of the hooly kyng and martir seynt Oswald” (*LA* 135) and reinforces another connection to the saintly king when Bede’s Chad –now Cedd in Bokenham– is granted land for a monastery under Oethelwald, “the sonne of kyng Oswald *the martir*”

³⁷⁵ Bede records four siblings, Cedd, Chad, Cynibill and Caelin, who were all priests (Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 288). Similarly, Bokenham’s life of the East Anglian Saint Botolph is in essence a translation of the narrative from *Nova Legenda Anglie*, slightly abbreviated but with every instance of Botolph’s brother Adulf excised. Although the brothers, like Chad and Cedd, were both saints, Adulf is known only through versions of Botolph’s legend.

(*LA* 136; italicized words represent Bokenham's addition). Although Bede never connects Cedd with Saint Oswald, Bokenham inserts or rearranges material in order to highlight real or fictional links between the two saints. Bokenham stays relatively close to his source, Bede, but just before Cedd dies, Bokenham continues with the life of Chad –as Cedd– in a manner nearly as seamless as the reattachment of Saint Æthelthryth's head, even though there are ten chapters in Bede separating the Cedd and Chad narratives.³⁷⁶

One might argue that perhaps Bokenham had an imperfect copy of Bede's work and that the material in between Cedd and Chad was missing, but I would point out that because Bokenham inserted anecdotes taken from outside and in between the two sections, the act of combining the lives can only be read as deliberate.³⁷⁷ By conflating the two saints, Bokenham avoids Cedd's uninteresting demise; according to Bede, after establishing Lastingham monastery and serving as bishop for a number of years, Cedd contracts the plague, dies, and is eventually buried in a small stone church nearby (Bede iii.23). Instead of Cedd's quiet unremarkable death by plague, Bokenham substitutes the striking and memorable death of Chad, whose March 2nd feast day is given both within the narrative as well as in the calendar, although attached instead to his brother Cedd's name. Chad's passing was marked by the arrival of a singing heavenly host to announce to the saint that he would depart in seven days' time, and the miraculous visit from

³⁷⁶ The break begins near the end of iii.22 and runs until iv.2.

³⁷⁷ For example, even though Bokenham breaks off following Bede's Cedd near the end of iii.22, he inserts the story of Oethelwald's land grant and the foundation of the Lastingham monastery from iii.23 in the middle of Bede's Chad narrative (and excises mention of Chad from this story as well). Even in the *Mappula Angliae*, Bokenham refers to 'Cedde' and 'Cedda' without making any specific distinction between them, which is unusual for an author who is in so many other places quite concerned with authenticity, accuracy and clarity of understanding.

musical messenger angels was witnessed and later recorded. Every aspect of Bokenham's treatment of his sources indicates that he was motivated by the mnemonic principles of brevity, compelling narrative elements, and in certain circumstances, a form of social genealogy that focused on connections with rulers.

4.10 Wulfstan

The next legend I will turn to, that of Saint Wulfstan, exemplifies many elements of Bokenham's ideal brief saintly bishop's legend: Wulfstan has primarily a spiritual father instead of parents; he develops an affectionate bond with a king; and he performs a single, remarkable miracle. The eleventh-century Bishop of Worcester Wulfstan had already captured the attention of several hagiographers including William of Malmesbury and John of Tynemouth. Malmesbury based his *Vita Wulstani* primarily on a now lost Old English life by Coleman, a monk of Worcester (d. 1113),³⁷⁸ and Tynemouth based his life of Wulfstan on an abbreviated version of Malmesbury's *Vita Wulstani* with supplementary details from Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum*.

Although Bokenham knew the *Nova Legenda Anglie* and used it for several other saint legends, he eschews it in favour of the shorter version found in John of Tynemouth's source which has been generally attributed to Senatus Bravonius, Prior of Worcester in the late twelfth century.³⁷⁹ Senatus manages to do, somewhat more gracefully, that which Bokenham had attempted in his abbreviation of Adelard's *Lectiones In Depositione S. Dvnstani*, in that he establishes the saint's character, delivers

³⁷⁸ As discussed by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson in *William of Malmesbury: Saints' Lives*, xv-xvii (2002), OUP.

³⁷⁹ The version of Senatus' life closest to Bokenham's source manuscript can be found in Darlington's *The Vita Wulstani of William of Malmesbury*, pp. 111-114.

a popular miracle story and finishes off with his feast day in a clear, short and unstilted narrative.

Wulfstan is established as a representation of English spirituality unified with English monarchy in a miraculous episode in which the saint refuses to acknowledge any authority other than the deceased and sainted King Edward the Confessor. William the Conqueror attempts to strip Wulfstan of his office but is embarrassed and humbled by a version of the Arthurian sword-in-the-stone feat when no one other than Wulfstan is able to move the bishop's ecclesiastical accessories from Edward's tomb. This miracle is strangely absent from both Malmesbury's seemingly comprehensive *Vita Wulfstani* and his *Gesta Pontificum*; Senatus included it in his abbreviation and this is where Bokenham sources the story. In earlier hagiographical record the miracle first appeared in Osbert de Clare's *Life of Edward the Confessor* and then again twenty years later (c. 1163) in Ailred of Rievaulx's life of the same saint, although slightly abbreviated. Due to the popularity of Ailred's work, "the legend was widely disseminated and a shortened form of Ailred's version [believed to be that of Senatus] is found in the Abridgment of [Malmesbury's] *Vita Wulfstani*" (Reginald R. Darlington xxxi-ii).³⁸⁰

Bokenham's Wulfstan adds a few factual and descriptive details but stays fairly close to Senatus' version. The life begins with the historical tag "[in t]he tyme of the reigne of seynt Edward mayden and confessoure" (*LA* 29),³⁸¹ a variation of which is also

³⁸⁰ Senatus' Life of Wulfstan survives in Durham Cathedral Library MS B.iv, 39b (D), and in some form in three other manuscripts from the British Library: Cotton MS Vespasian E. ix, ff. 10-14v (an abbreviation from a manuscript like D.), Harley 322 ff. 106-147 (H.) (a close copy of (D.)), and Lansdowne 436 (R.) (a copy of a manuscript like (H.) with further abbreviations). Bokenham was working from a manuscript nearly identical to D., or an abbreviation of D. that has not survived.

³⁸¹ Bokenham either chose a similar line from close to Senatus' opening to begin his narrative, or the manuscript he was working from began in the same way. In MS D., the line is "Regnante

found in Bokenham's life of Saint Cedd, and it situates the narrative's events within the framework of a local ruler.³⁸² In this way, Wulfstan is immediately associated with King Edward, whose reign was preceded and followed by disruptions to the lineage of established Anglo-Saxon rulers by Danish and Norman invaders. The only English bishop to retain his office after the Norman Conquest of 1066, Wulfstan is a figure of English ecclesiastical authority who survived, at least for a time, the wide-ranging shifts in power and position throughout the aristocracy and the church during that time. In Bokenham's brief narrative, the saint's simple and straightforward English faith is shown to be superior to the troubled intellectualism of post-conquest continental authorities.

Malmesbury's *Vita Wulstani* contains an etymology of the saint based on the names of his parents, Æthelstan and Wulfgifu (*Saints' Lives* 14),³⁸³ but Bokenham focuses instead on Brihtheah, Wulfstan's predecessor as Bishop of Worcester who supposedly raised and educated him. Indeed, Bokenham relates how "seynt Wulstan in his childehode began to liven an hevenly life in erthe" with Brihtheah or "Brittegus" (*LA* 77), although we know through records as well as through Malmesbury's version that Wulfstan is educated at Evesham abbey and then Peterborough abbey, coming to Worcester only after his family lost their lands and both his parents entered monasteries (Darlington xxiii). As a result, Bokenham's version recasts Wulfstan as a child of the

igitur illustri Anglorum rege Edwardo" (Darlington 69) [Then reigned the noble Edward king of the English people], although the line from MS R., "Temporibus sancti Edwardi confessoris piissimi regis Anglie" (Darlington 68 n.1) [In the time of Saint Edward the confessor, King of England] is closest. Bokenham has added the descriptor "mayden," which he uses almost exclusively to describe virginal female saints.

³⁸² Saint Cedde: "The tyme that kyng Oswyn, brother of the hooly kyng and martir seynt Oswald reigned" (*LA* 135). A similar tag appears in Voragine a scant handful of times but almost always serves to situate persecutions of Christians under a particular emperor.

³⁸³ The etymology is also present in Senatus' abbreviation.

English church instead of someone who was raised by his parents and who only entered the church in adulthood.

Where Senatus introduces the life with a metaphor about the fruit of virtue and farmers seeking to harvest corn even though it is mixed with weeds, Bokenham travels directly from the “tyme of the reigne of seynt Edward” to Bishop Brihteah, “by [whose] handis [Wulfstan] was clad a munke” (*LA* 77). Between the king and the bishop, Wulfstan grows to be a man of such virtue and holiness that “al the grete astates of Ingelonde desired his loue and his frendshyp” (77), and this local renown is echoed in another of Bokenham’s slight changes when Wulfstan is promoted to the bishopric of Worcester, “by common assent of the kyng and al the lordis of the parlement” (77). Subtly manipulating his source, Bokenham includes neither the strife between Wulfstan and his immediate predecessor Ealdred,³⁸⁴ nor the negotiations and conditions that everyone eventually agreed to; in so doing, Bokenham’s version solidifies the image of Wulfstan as a bishop of an English people who instantly recognize his value, unlike William the Conqueror and Lanfranc, the Norman Archbishop of Canterbury.

Senatus’ lament of King Edward’s passing receives another adjustment from Bokenham, where the ecclesiastical ramifications of English subjugation are felt.

Senatus:

[t]ranslato itaque Anglorum regno ad exterarum nationes ; cunctisque Neustrie freno
subiugatis beatus Uulstanus quasi ex Anglis superstes pontificatu indignus

³⁸⁴ Ealdred was Bishop of Worcester after Brihteah and had been nominated as Archbishop of York. Pope Nicholas refused to grant him the pall unless he revoked his claim on the title and incomes from Worcester. Ealdred begrudgingly consented but continued to withhold certain properties and rents rightfully belonging to Worcester for quite some time and had apparently expected Wulfstan to be neither sufficiently bright nor tenacious to give him much difficulty in continuing to receive those unlawful incomes.

decernitur quasi homo ydiota ; nimie simplicitatis et inpericie. (Senatus *VW*
112)³⁸⁵

Bokenham:

whan thus the reigne and the crowne of Ingelonde was translid into the
Normandies blode *and frensh men had the rule of the chirche, Lanfranc beyng*
archebisshop of Caunterbury, Wulstan [sic] by common decree of al the clergie
at a counceil holden at Westmynster was condemped of sympilnesse and of
vnkunnyng, vnable forto ben a bisshop.” (*LA* 29, italics indicate Bokenham’s
additions)

The changes in the passage reveal Bokenham’s concern for the loss of English royal and ecclesiastical lineage as seen in the parallel between the English crown and kingdom translated to the Normans’ blood, and the control of the English church with Canterbury at its center overtaken by ‘French men.’ Bokenham’s two additions to the passage emphasize the conflict of blood in which Wulfstan participates. In particular, by translating the relatively vague “*exteris nationibus*” as “Normandies blode” Bokenham invites a genealogical metaphor between hereditary lines of rule in both state and church, which emphasizes Wulfstan’s position as the last surviving post-conquest English bishop and sole descendant of English clergy. In Bokenham, Wulfstan is declared unfit as a bishop only after the French have taken over control of the church, which makes the message of the narrative’s miracle that much clearer.

³⁸⁵ [Thus, with the kingship of the English having been transferred to foreign peoples and with all having been subjugated by a Neustrian bridle, blessed Wulfstan, the last English bishop, was judged to be unworthy; he was judged to be an uneducated man of excessive simplicity and ignorance].

In both texts, once Lanfranc and King William order Wulfstan to resign his staff and ring the saint responds by admitting his unworthiness, but Bokenham adds that this was something Wulfstan knew even when the “clergie of Ingelonde chese me thereto” (*LA* 77), a comment that highlights the change from English to French ecclesiastical authorities as well as Wulfstan’s status as a member of a disbanded but not forgotten English clerical community.

Bokenham’s additions to the saint’s speech continue as Wulfstan minimizes Norman authority and reinforces the ecclesiastical lineage and royal power that he is a part of and subject to. Wulfstan will not acknowledge Lanfranc’s status and instead insists on acting as though the previous English leadership of church and country were more effective than the current invasive pretenders:

Nevirtheles, the kyng and my lorde Edwarde, that tyme by auctoritee of our holy fadir the pope, leid this charge vpon me ; wherefore me semyth that thou shuldist nat discharge me of that thou chargindest me not with, ner shuldist not prive me of th’office and the dignyte which thou nevir commytteddest vnto me. . . [I] wil and shal gladly resignen my pastoral and my shepis croke, but not to the but to hym I wil deliveren it ageyn which that toke it me. (*LA* 77)³⁸⁶

The saint’s bold speech is a challenge to Lanfranc and his French clergymen and in no uncertain terms Wulfstan declares that contrary to their current evaluations, the “clergie of Ingelonde” and the king “my lorde Edwarde” selected him as bishop, a decision supported by the ultimate ecclesiastical authority of the pope himself, a detail Bokenham

³⁸⁶ In Bokenham’s source, Wulfstan does state that he “will return the staff to King Edward’s tomb, . . . and not to others” (*Vita Wulfstani* 112). The manuscript is slightly damaged at the ellipsis, but Bokenham’s additions take place beforehand.

added to the passage for effect. Wulfstan will not go against the result of the synod, but in resigning his office he will only recognize the authority of the English king over both church and state, implying that William and Lanfranc are merely placeholders, playing at being in power. At the end of Wulfstan's address to Edward's tomb, he directs the king to "yiue it [i.e. the bishop's staff and ring] thou to whom the best liketh" (77). Wulfstan here prophesies that the deceased English king will still elect the next bishop, and not William or Lanfranc, in a demonstration of the saint's righteous English indignation at the displacement of English power.³⁸⁷

After this speech, Bokenham's Wulfstan turns his back on Lanfranc and the rest of the clergy and proceeds to resign his staff to the tomb of King Edward, requesting that the king hold it until a worthy man comes to take it up. Miraculously the staff immediately becomes fixed in the marble of the tomb, despite the vigorous efforts of Gondulf, the Bishop of Rochester, to remove it. Only after Lanfranc, the king and the clergy apologize, admit the error of their judgment and beg the saint to take up his bishopric again does the tomb release the staff freely into Wulfstan's hands. Bokenham's thoughtful selection of source text as well as his alterations, excisions and additions combine in a mnemonically effective and emotionally powerful narrative that unifies genealogies of church and state authority, to the benefit of the text's community of English Christian readers.

³⁸⁷ Bokenham's addition of Wulfstan's total lack of respect for the French 'invaders' is not surprising, given that he wrote near the end of the Hundred Years' War between England and France, but it is interesting to see how much care he has taken with this saint's life in particular, identifying the potential for a declaration of English Christian independence during the early transfer of control into French hands. Even by the fourteenth century, French was considered to be "the language of the national enemy" (Knowles 55), so the emphasized animosity toward the Normans in Bokenham's version befits the time in which he writes.

4.11 Wilfrid

Bokenham uses Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* as his source for a life of Saint Wilfrid, although he cuts down the available material for Wilfrid and changes his source to focus on a relatively polite retelling of relationships between the saint and various English rulers. Bede wrote a life of Wilfrid in v.19 of his *Historia* and included much more detail on the saint in several other sections. Not only does Bokenham ignore this other material but also anecdotes that involve other saints whose lives make reference to Wilfrid, such as John of Beverley or Æthelthryth. This abbreviated and censored version of Wilfrid demonstrates where Bokenham reduced details of ecclesiastical lineage or ties with royalty in order to create a mnemonically effective, streamlined, and simplified brief narrative. In short, the life of Wilfrid is an example of Bokenham embracing mnemonic brevity for a local church figure while selectively avoiding crafting any type of overly detailed or extensive mnemonic genealogy that would reveal multiple disharmonic associations between Wilfrid and other important individuals.

Wilfrid himself was something of a polarizing figure and had troubled relationships with those in power, and Bokenham's version functions as a summary with few connections made other than the admiration of his monastic brethren and the impressive support of two popes. In fact, while the *Mappula Angliae* contains detailed information on Wilfrid's troubled career and even records that Wilfrid was the first Bishop of Selsey and that the bishopric endured 333 years under 20 bishops (*MA* 25), Bokenham decides not to use this ecclesiastical lineage in his Wilfrid narrative. Perhaps, because Wilfrid is most associated with York, records of succession in other bishoprics

would diminish that association; however, there is also an ecclesiastical lineage of York in the *Mappula*. I find it most likely that Bokenham's reduction of Wilfrid material is due to the surplus of largely problematic connections and relationships that the saint developed over his career, including being ousted from York on multiple occasions.³⁸⁸

For instance, the *Mappula* details how Wilfrid was Bishop of Chester for two years and then “turnyd ageyne to his propur see Hangustaldence” (*MA* 27) after the death of King Aldfrith, with whom the saint had quarreled over a number of years. During the account of the bishopric of York, the *Mappula* describes a heated quarrel over Roman versus Celtic methods of calculating Easter during which Wilfrid won the debate in favour of Roman Easter but gained adversaries. A complicated record of instability at York follows this disagreement:

Wilfridus was restoryd ageyne to Yoorke. But not-fore-than, while Wilfride taryed a-bowtyne his confirmacioun yn Fraunce, Cedda ... [was] made bysshope of Yoorke. But III yere aftur ... Wylfryde was restoryd to Yoorke. But yet ... for certeyne stryvis be-twyx hym and the kynge Egfryde (he) was *put* owte ageyne by þe archbysshope Theodyr, corrupt by þe king. (*MA* 27-8)

A few lines later, the *Mappula* mentions that Wilfrid was the first abbot at Ripon, a detail which, added to the previous records, leaves readers with a shifting or scattered sense of where Wilfrid was or who he was connected to in a positive way.

³⁸⁸ See *MA* 26. The *Mappula Angliae* also contains an ecclesiastical lineage of Felix's bishopric that, as with Wilfrid, is not included in the legendary. Felix's life includes a simple etymology and perhaps Bokenham decided that this would be a sufficient mnemonic. Alternatively, as both the Felix and Wilfrid narratives are taken from Bede, it is worth considering that unlike the patchwork multi-sourced David legend that freely incorporates ecclesiastical lineage records from the *Mappula*, Bokenham preferred to maintain his translations of Bede without additional material.

In narrowing the cast of characters for mnemonic effect, Bokenham even cuts out any mention of Saint Æthelthryth, King Ecgrith's virgin wife to whom Wilfrid was a spiritual advisor. Much to Ecgrith's chagrin, Wilfrid encouraged the queen in her pursuit of virginity and refused Ecgrith's bribes to convince the saint otherwise.³⁸⁹ Wilfrid's interference in the marriage was a likely cause of the growing animosity between Wilfrid and the Northumbrian king and is perhaps why Bokenham included neither the anecdote nor any reference to the popular East Anglian saint, despite featuring Wilfrid at several points in Æthelthryth's legend.

Ultimately Bokenham's Wilfrid narrative connects the saint largely to York and mentions only one disagreement with Ecgrith and one with Aldfrith. Even the drawn-out dispute with Aldfrith is quickly resolved by the king's death soon after refusing to obey a papal command,³⁹⁰ an event followed by a brief description of Wilfrid's universal acceptance under Aldfrith's son's rule. This version minimizes the chaos of the saint's many different bishoprics and the several kings and archbishops he clashed with and succeeds in producing a narrative that is both easier to remember and perhaps more enjoyable to read.

Bokenham's reluctance to acknowledge or include details of disagreements between England's Christian rulers and the country's saints shapes his approach to hagiography as a genre.³⁹¹ His frequent statements about how he will condense or

³⁸⁹ See Bede iv.19.

³⁹⁰ Bokenham gleefully dismisses Aldfrith's obstinacy: "but not for than he liuyd not longe aftyr" (*LA* 397).

³⁹¹ The obvious exception to this reluctance is of course Bokenham's life of Thomas of Canterbury. This original narrative, composed from and inspired by various sources, spurns most of the conventions of the other legends in the collection and should be considered separately in its own right.

exclude certain material for brevity's sake, as for example in Gilbert, "as is written in his legende by many notable *processis* which were to longe to tellen" (*LA* 111), Aldhelm, "forto seyn al *compendiously*" (209) and elsewhere apply most frequently to the lives of saintly bishops. At a glance, the only longer standard local male saints' lives³⁹² in Bokenham's collection are David, a figure who represents all of Wales; the East Anglian Cedd whose life is a combination and abbreviation of Bede's Cedd and Chad narratives; Alban the first English martyr; and Dunstan, whose life is only slightly longer and is greatly abbreviated by any standard.³⁹³

Figures of ecclesiastical authority were often in conflict with local rulers, and Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* contains several instances of excommunications or other church sanctions exchanged for orders of exile or imprisonment over matters of policy, public or private behaviour, financial management and property. Details of such conflicts could potentially compromise the image of the unified English Christian community that emerges in Bokenham's writing. Because Bokenham excluded certain historical details according to this agenda while also achieving abbreviated and simplified narratives, his readers were more likely to retain and to reflect on a saint's life while contemplating examples of harmonious political exchanges between England's priests and its nobility.

³⁹² Where "longer" here is defined as more than one full manuscript page, and "standard" referring to the exception of Thomas of Canterbury mentioned in the previous note.

³⁹³ Bokenham's life of Dunstan is one and one quarter pages long, and significantly shorter than any other version of the saint's life.

4.12 Politicizing Mnemonic Genealogy: Dissent and the Generational Shame of Thomas of Canterbury's Attackers

With various forms of genealogy at his disposal, Bokenham is able to assign a lineage to each saint based on what would most effectively link them with an aspect of English authority, whether through their bloodline, their spiritual or ecclesiastical connections, or their affectionate ties with Christian rulers. In Bokenham's life of Thomas of Canterbury, an original composition constructed from numerous sources, he takes great pains to mark out the saint's connections, but not to his predecessors, successors, or family members. Instead, his focus is on those by whom the saint gained martyrdom, and he names these individuals quite deliberately and repeatedly. The implication of this focus is twofold: a warning to the Christian community of England that without vigilant protection of the harmony between church and state, treason from within is possible, and a reminder that records of misdeeds can pursue a family for generations.

In his life of Thomas of Canterbury, Bokenham refers to a longer life of the saint and directs whoever desires further details to read "my boke which I compiled and translated oute of latyn into englissh of Seynt Thomas life in especial which is distinct into thre parties and the parties into chapitres" (*LA* 46). Whether Bokenham in fact worked from a large Latin source for certain narrative details, such as Edward Grim's *Vita S. Thomae* (c.1171-2) or William of Canterbury's *Vita et miracula S. Thomae Cantuariensis* (1173-4) or simply claimed a single invented source, we can assume that

the shorter version found in the *Legenda Aurea* manuscript represents a highlight reel of the longer legend's most relevant and important points.³⁹⁴

Bokenham, who laments, “allas in mannys werkis is no thyng stedfast ner longe abidyng” (*LA* 46), writes in the final years of the Hundred Years’ War and the turmoil that eventually gave rise to the Wars of the Roses. Amidst this turbulent time, Bokenham’s life of Thomas of Canterbury addresses the consequences of miscommunication between rulers and subjects such as malcontent mercenary knights, the repercussions that follow violent trespasses against church figures, and how both hagiography and collective memory play a role in ensuring that the shame of those trespasses echoes down their line. Bokenham focuses on the perpetrators’ names during his account of the events leading up to the martyrdom:

thei, anoon wenyng and supposyng to doon the kyng grete plesaunce forto sleen tharchebisshop, with oon assent conspiredden and sworne his deth, whos namys were these: Reynolde Beryssonne, Hugh Morvile, William Tracy, and Richard Britonn³⁹⁵ ... This heryng, oon Ranulf Brooke³⁹⁶ whom the archbisshop Thomas had accursid while he was in his exile ... mett with hem, comfortyng hem and helpyng in her cursid conclusioun. (*LA* 46)

³⁹⁴ It is likely that Bokenham began composing his translation and adaptation of Voragine’s *Legenda aurea* sometime in the 1430s, since he makes reference to an “englische boke the whiche y haue compiled of legenda aurea and of oþer famous legends” (*MA* 6) in his *Mappula Angliae*, itself composed circa 1440. We know that Bokenham continued to add to his legendary through the 1440s, and it is in this decade that he wrote many of the verse lives of female saints from the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* collection, several of which were dedicated to East Anglian patrons. Bokenham’s longer life of Saint Thomas of Canterbury could have been written at nearly any point, although we know that it was completed prior to the short life included in the *Legenda* manuscript.

³⁹⁵ Reginald FitzUrse, Hugh de Morville, William de Tracey and Richard le Breton (Michael Staunton, *The Lives of Thomas Becket* (Manchester UP, 2013), 30).

³⁹⁶ Ranulf de Broc.

Later in the narrative Bokenham calls these men “the sonnes of Belial” and observes that they “were fully *determynd* to doon that deede which shuld be cause of sorowe and shame to hem selfe and to al her kynredis aftir vnto the worldis ende” (*LA* 48), and indeed, in his dramatic repetition of several of their names Bokenham engages the mnemonic techniques of Aristotelian repetition and emotional affect in order to engrave into the minds and memories of his ideally enraged, indignant readers, that they have a Christian duty to curse and ridicule the ‘kynredis’ of these men in perpetuity.³⁹⁷

As Michael Staunton notes, Saint Thomas’ horrific murder at the peak of his fame and renown made him unforgettable:

To the people of Canterbury, the ecclesiastical capital of one of the most powerful kingdoms in Europe, martyrs must have seemed a thing of legend, part of more dangerous and less civilized times. For one of the best-known men in Europe to be murdered in his own cathedral by agents of the king was unthinkable... [T]he extraordinary nature of these events should not be forgotten. (Staunton 28)

Thomas Becket’s popularity as a saint and the popularity of his shrine as a pilgrimage destination speak to how unforgettable he was to the English people. Saint Thomas also stands apart from the rest of Bokenham’s local saints in his historical proximity to the *Legenda Aurea*’s readers and in the abundance of detailed records of his life and extraordinary death that exude a palpable and memorable veracity that is lacking in the narratives of other earlier saints’ lives.

³⁹⁷ Bokenham records St Thomas’ final defender: “This clerkis name was Edward Grym, borne of the castel of Grauntbrigge, whos mynde mote ben in blissyngē for as moche as he was the first partener by manly puttyng vp of his arme of the begynnyng of this new *sacrifise*” (*LA* 48).

Addressing the circumstances of the Thomas narrative and its impact, Bokenham declares that the story “myghthen *perpetuelly* embelisshe and worshippen the title of hym that suffrid and openly shewen the wickidnesse with evirlastyng shame and reprove of the fame and the name of hem that pursued hym” (LA 49). In other words, the account of the saint’s glory will perpetually be remembered and retold, while the wickedness of his persecutors will also be remembered in an everlasting socially imposed shame and blame on their families. After his description of the murder, Bokenham laments that “al othir martirs men of othir sectys tormentid or slayne, but this cristen martir cristen men in name but not in werk as vnkynde sonnes slougen her owen fadir” (LA 50) and calls the act a “patricide” (LA 51), a word that portrays the saint as the spiritual father of England or, at the very least, of Canterbury. This language of familial connections cues readers to mourn their common paternal loss and as a community of spiritual children to wholeheartedly accept the responsibility of remembering the perpetrators’ names and directing shame toward the murderers’ “kynredis aftir vnto the worldis ende” (LA 48). In his life of Thomas of Canterbury, Bokenham harnesses the mnemonic potential of genealogy and pairs it with repetition and emotional affect in order to issue an effective warning against dissent, particularly in the form of attacks on church representatives.

4.13 Mnemonic Genealogy and Politics in *Dialogue at the Grave*

Bokenham wrote parts of his legendary and *Mappula* with a political or social agenda and, as discussed above, his life of Thomas of Canterbury demonstrates the use of mnemonics in service to contemporary worldly concerns. In late medieval England, devotion to saints and saints’ lives was at its peak in East Anglia, an area that had

produced such prominent saints as King Edmund the Martyr and Audrey or Æthelthryth of Ely, as well as a good number of hagiographers.³⁹⁸ Living during this period, Bokenham would have been acutely aware of the history of Clare Priory as the first Augustinian house in England, and of the weight of his responsibility as an Augustinian friar translating, adapting and composing saints' lives. Bokenham also had to divide his attention between the appetites of his audience and the political concerns of his patrons, whose allegiances were pressured during the mid-fifteenth century by Richard of York's various struggles for power.

When Richard officially claimed the throne in 1460, he did so through his maternal lineage, his mother Anne Mortimer being the great-granddaughter of Lionel of Antwerp, King Edward III's second son.³⁹⁹ Written earlier but also focusing on Richard's access to status and power through female progenitors, Bokenham's prologue to his *Life of Mary Magdalene* details his patron Lady Isabel Bouchier's connection to her namesake and grandmother Isabella of Castille and how Isabel's brother Richard of York has a right to the Spanish crown as great-grandson of King Peter of Spain (*LHW* 5004-5019). Bokenham emphasizes female figures in accounts of traditional lineage and inheritance and that becomes a strategy for courting the attention and favour of the Duke of York, patron and protector of the Honour of Clare.

The practice of using genealogy as a means of claiming power or authority is particularly evident in the 1456 *Dialogue at the Grave*⁴⁰⁰ from Clare Priory, composed in

³⁹⁸ Hagiographers of the area include Felix of East Anglia (*Vita Guthlacus*), Osbert of Clare, John Capgrave, John Lydgate, and of course, Osbern Bokenham. Other prominent religious writers include Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe.

³⁹⁹ Richard was also King Edward III's great-grandson through the king's fourth son, Edmund of Langley.

⁴⁰⁰ For the English text of this dialogue, see Appendix E.

both Latin and Middle English, written in rhyme royal stanzas, and confidently attributed to Bokenham (Horobin *Politics* 943). *The Dialogue at the Grave*⁴⁰¹ showcases the fame and success of the priory while tracing the lineage of its noble patrons and founders, and supports Richard's matrilineal claim to royal succession while also promoting the priory's claim to a prestigious historical heritage.⁴⁰² The space in between the parallel Latin and English lines contains illuminations of eight⁴⁰³ shields depicting the arms of the figures mentioned in the *Dialogue*.

The *Dialogue* is an exchange between a "seculer" and a "frere" and traces, in genealogical form, Clare Priory's patronage history; the lineage presented is exactly that of Clare Priory's patrons, and not the full genealogy of its patron's extended families. The discussion takes place over the grave of Joan of Acre, a prominent priory patron and daughter of King Edward I. Although his apparent focus is on matrilineal lineage within a traditional genealogical structure, as opposed to most of his mnemonic genealogies that were structured around connections within the male-dominated categories of ecclesiastical figures or rulers, Bokenham is in fact constructing the most prestigious and continuous lineage possible for Clare Priory through its patrons. With this goal in mind we might understand why, after introducing the priory's founding couple of Richard de

⁴⁰¹ The full extended title: *This dialoge betwixt a seculer askyng, and a frere answering, at the graue of dame Johan of Acres; sheweth the lineall descent of the lordis of the honoure of Clare, fro the tyme of the foundation of the freeris in the same honoure, the yere of our lord a M.ccxlviii vnto the first of May, the yere, a Mcccclx*. For a description of the single surviving manuscript see Anthony Richard Wagner, *A Catalogue of English Medieval Rolls of Arms*. Oxford, 1950, p.98.

⁴⁰² Horobin argues persuasively that Bokenham's so-called Yorkist sympathies may have been a misinterpretation of his devotion to the wealthy Yorkist East Anglian families who patronized his work, as well as to Richard of York who was the patron of Clare Priory (See "Politics and Patronage" 943). However, if Bokenham's writing was meant to appeal to supporters of the York claim, perhaps the unverifiable truth of his personal politics is largely irrelevant.

⁴⁰³ There is one incomplete shield illumination at the end; the left side contains the Mortimer, Earl of March arms and the right side has been left blank. Perhaps it was intended to represent Anne of York and Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, the last union mentioned in the *Dialogue*.

Clare and Maud de Lacy, Bokenham rearranges two generations in order to present Richard's childless grandson instead as his son. In the *Dialogue* Bokenham calls Richard's grandson "the furst Gilbert" who marries "Dame Mauld, a ladye ful honourable / Borne of the Ulsters [w]as she with ryff / Hir armes of glas in the est gable" (36-9).

Bokenham goes on to credit this Maud with building Clare's church "fro the fundament" with "[h]er lord" (42), although after Gilbert's untimely early end the Honour of Clare passed to Gilbert's youngest sister Elizabeth just eight years after Maud and Gilbert were married; hardly enough time to build an entire church. This Maud has perhaps been confused with the original Maud (de Lacy) who awarded the priory several grants of land and provided significant financial support that would have initiated church construction; in any case, a deed from 1279 is the earliest surviving mention of the church (Barnardiston 12) and this falls within the date range of the first Maud's patronage.⁴⁰⁴ Bokenham rearranges the de Clare genealogy and corresponding gifts in such a way that three successive generations of de Clare women gift the friars with land, a church, and a chapel dedicated to St. Vincent (lines 34, 42 and 12-14, respectively).

Continuing to focus on matrilineage, Bokenham returns to Joan of Acre, who has now been made the daughter of 'second' Maud. Joan's lineage has been pruned and adapted to feature a single female child, "[a] brawnshe of right grete joye... A lady bright" (*Dialogue* 47-8), Elizabeth de Clare.⁴⁰⁵ Due to the focus in the *Dialogue* on Clare Priory's patronal lineage, Joan's other children both by Gilbert and by her second,

⁴⁰⁴ The church was officially finished and dedicated in 1338 (Barnardiston 15).

⁴⁰⁵ Gilbert and Joan's son, also named Gilbert, whose marriage to Maud of Ulster produced no heirs, is the generation that has been falsely inserted in between the founding couple (Richard and Maud, or Matilda) and Gilbert and Joan.

scandalous marriage to her then late husband's squire Ralph de Monthermer are not mentioned. Indeed, as Joan's miraculously incorrupt body and profitable tomb are the site of the *Dialogue*, it would hardly make sense to include information that detracts from the image of a 'good' woman. As Cynthia Turner Camp points out, Clare Priory's early supporters were the good women of the de Clare family: "the first effective patron was [Earl Richard's] widow, Countess Matilda who ... was a generous founder" (330), and after Matilda's death "the friars soon found another generous sponsor in Joan of Acre" (331), widow of Matilda's son Gilbert de Clare. Next in line was Joan's youngest daughter Elizabeth de Burgh, related to both Edward II and Edward III, and who supported Clare Priory substantially (331-2). There is no room in this prestigious lineage of virtuous women for second or third marriages or mention of any other children who did not directly participate in the support of the priory.

The priory patrons' influential connections were a point of pride as well as a source of potential income through increased reputation. Elizabeth's and her husband John de Burgh's arms are displayed prominently throughout the property,

As shewith our wyndowes in housis thre.

Dortour, chapter hous, and fraitour,⁴⁰⁶ which she

Made oute the ground, both plauncher and wal.

Q. And who the rose?⁴⁰⁷ A. She alone did al.

The implication in the stanza's final line is that Elizabeth was solely responsible for raising three buildings and funding the 'rose' feature, and we can then add her to the line

⁴⁰⁶ Dormitory, chapter house, and refectory.

⁴⁰⁷ The 'rose' here probably refers to the rose or wheel windows from the Gothic architectural style popular in England from the late twelfth to the early sixteenth centuries; they consisted of circular windows with looping designs and decorative edges.

of de Clare women who gave gifts to the priory.⁴⁰⁸ The arms mentioned here and those of Maud of Ulster recall Bokenham's reference to visual representations of Saint Æthelthryth's genealogy at Ely that readers may use to guide their contemplation and recollection of the saint. In fact, Turner Camp suggests that the *Dialogue* manuscript in roll form "may have hung as a *tabula* near Joan's tomb, or perhaps is a copy of a wooden or leather *tabula*," also noting that in contrast to private documents such as books and charters, the poem is a "public poster, presenting the Clare friars' house history to the conventual church's visitors" (344).⁴⁰⁹ The *Dialogue* then invites its readers to tour the property, traveling from the tomb to the church and on through the dormitory, chapter house, and refectory, all the while committing to memory the priory's generous and high-status benefactors.

In the *Dialogue* we read that Elizabeth de Burgh's only child is named "liche hir modir Elisabeth sothely" (*Dialogue* 59) whose main accomplishment is her marriage to Lionel of Antwerp, son of King Edward III, and the production of a daughter, Philippa. The connection of the names echoes the earlier misplacement of Gilbert, son of "[s]othley / An other Gilbertis" (18-9), and the repetition of 'Elizabeth' provides a link convincing enough to obscure any gap caused by the missing excised generation. Once again, this lineage drifts from a traditional genealogy and skips over Elizabeth and John's son William who with his wife Maud begets the second Elizabeth. William never inherits the Honor of Clare, however, which passes from Elizabeth to her granddaughter (Elizabeth) and her son-in-law Lionel and this is why Bokenham eliminates William

⁴⁰⁸ These women are de Clares either by birth or marriage.

⁴⁰⁹ *Tabulae* are placards, posters or signs displayed in prominent locations and they relate the history of a religious institution (Turner Camp 344). See my discussion of *tabulae* and the tablets in Bokenham's life of Saint David in Chapter Three, pages 184-5.

from the record. The Elizabeths become mother and daughter along what is here a matrilineal path of priory patronage.

At this point Bokenham's *Dialogue* begins to focus on the line of descent that demonstrates Richard of York's claim to the throne via his mother's ancestry; this coincides with the periods of patronage between Lionel's death in 1368 and Richard of York's receiving of the Honor of Clare⁴¹⁰ that mark a slow decline in the priory's fortunes. Indeed, Turner Camp observes that "[a]fter having enjoyed 125 years of close relationships with its tenurial family, the priory was deprived of focused benefactions and honored patrons under the Mortimers" (Turner Camp 334). This means that any mention of material gifts such as the land, church, chapel and other buildings from earlier generations of patrons must be replaced and, in this case, the certainty of physical wealth is exchanged for the intangible glory and potential influence of prestigious benefactors.

We read that even though Roger, son of Elizabeth and Lionel's daughter Philippa, had a son who died without heirs and "[r]ight thus did cese of the Marchis blode / The heire male" (*Dialogue* 71-2), Roger "[t]weyne doughtris lefte of his blode roial / That ones issue deide, that othis hath al" (76-7). Roger's daughter Anne begets Richard Plantagenet, third Duke of York, and Richard together with Cecily Neville have an astounding twelve children. Bokenham gives special emphasis to Richard and Cecily's first child, a daughter:

... aftir the tyme of long bareynes
 God first sent Anne which signyfyeth grase,
 In token that al her hertis heuynes,

⁴¹⁰ Richard of York becomes an active patron of Clare in 1454, although he received the Honor of Clare in 1432 (Turner Camp 334).

He, as for bareynes wold from hem chase.⁴¹¹

The etymological treatment for Anne's name is unique and speaks to the affection and significance that the *Dialogue* claims in its discussion of the Yorkist line of patrons as well as the emphasis on women and female lines of descent. In the manuscript's series of illuminated arms, the one following the arms of Richard of York and Cecily Neville has been left partially blank, with only the Mortimer arms filled in on the left.⁴¹² At the time the *Dialogue* was written, the Honor of Clare was still firmly in the hands of Richard of York.

Richard's daughter Anne had already been married but the inheritor of Clare had yet to be determined and presumably the next coat of arms was meant to portray the new generation of patrons. If the final arms were intended to represent Anne's union with Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, Anne's would traditionally be situated on the right.⁴¹³ The most likely scenario is that the arms stood in anticipation of the four-year-old Edward's future marriage, as the *Dialogue* declares that the deceased eldest son Henry "lefte Edward to succede temporally / Now erle of Marche" (116-7). This depiction assumes that the Honor of Clare will descend either to Richard and Cecily's eldest child, Anne, or to the eldest surviving son, Edward; either would be influential, high-status patrons.

⁴¹¹ This etymology is from the prologue to Saint Anne in Bokenham's *LHW* and is the only etymological instance in the entire dialogue.

⁴¹² In heraldic terms, from the point of view of the *viewer*, the left side is called "dexter," because heraldry works from the point of view of the *wearer*. It is the side of honour, or in the case of arms depicting marriage, it shows the male side. The right side, from the point of view of the *viewer*, is called "sinister."

⁴¹³ The only exception to the placement of the husband's arms on the right and the wife's on the left is the depiction of Elizabeth de Clare and John de Burgh, where the placement is reversed.

Indeed, speaking of both the *Dialogue* and the Clare cartulary Turner Camp observes that “[c]laiming such highly placed patrons granted the friars a privileged political position and allowed them to construct for themselves a continuous lineage of noble and royal patronage” (342). Bokenham’s *Dialogue* demonstrates his investment in the power, both mnemonic and socio-political, of various modes of genealogy. He harnesses traditional, spiritual, ecclesiastical and social genealogy in his hagiography as a mnemonic tool, while in his *Dialogue* he crafts a lineage of increasingly prestigious priory patrons that effectively fixes Clare in the minds and memories of potential benefactors in the East Anglian and then the broader national community.

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Chapter One Findings: Etymology

The creative, moralized etymologies of saints' names for which later generations of scholars mocked Voragine acted as the starting point of my discussion of the traditional *ars memoria* mnemotechnics that Bokenham adopts. Instead of Voragine's universal and, one might argue, thoughtless application that lacks meaningful connections due to repeated and re-used etymologies, Bokenham employs a nuanced and selective approach that highlights those saints he considers especially significant, such as apostles and virgin martyrs. Bokenham altered the etymologies in many ways, such as reducing the number of possible interpretations and significations of the saints' names so as not to overwhelm his readers with a plethora of mnemonic options.

John Capgrave, Bokenham's close contemporary and fellow hagiographer, demonstrated his knowledge of etymologizing in his life of Saint Gilbert of Sempringham when he composed an original moralizing treatment of the linguistic elements found in 'Gilbertus.' Since Capgrave and Bokenham would have received a nearly identical education, we might conclude that both men encountered the Isidorean exercise in their studies and that Bokenham decided to transform Voragine's mechanical element into a sophisticated mnemotechnic. However, unlike Capgrave, Bokenham did not build etymologies for his local saints, which, as I have argued, indicates that he distinguished between traditional mnemonic elements for continental saints of the conversion period, and new or adapted techniques for later local saints.

The etymologies that Bokenham uses and modifies from Voragine range from metaphor to nickname to object image, and this last category is especially apparent in the

female saints' lives. Katherine of Alexandria's name evokes images of a chain or ladder (*catenula* in Latin) leading heavenward, implying the permanent benefits of recollecting and contemplating both the image and Katherine's legend. Lucy is a shining light, Cecilia is a heavenly lily much like those often included in depictions of the Virgin Mary, and Margaret is a "margaryte" or a pearl, an image which draws comparisons to wisdom and virtue. Here, as in Chapter Two, we have seen the different delivery mechanisms Bokenham uses to maximize the visual impact of the names and lives of female saints, and virgin martyrs in particular.

5.2 Summary of Chapter Two Findings: Memory Images

Memory images are the second main mnemotechnic in Bokenham's repertoire of saintly narrative treatments and his preferred strategy for the lives of his female virgin martyrs. Where the etymologies conjure symbolic images of objects such as a lily, lamb, or pearl for the group of female saints whose lives are ended early and violently, Bokenham's development of and focus on moments of extraordinary beauty, extreme violence, or the loaded eroticism of a spiritual marriage bring the saints' bodies sharply into focus as a mnemonic device. In this chapter I addressed the nature of the graphic violence inherent in virgin martyr narratives as being rooted in the *ars memoria* instructions and methods for creating effective, emotionally compelling memory images.

Of course, this technique stems from inherited and pervasive societal values that normalized misogyny and the objectification of girls and women, and the record of very real third century persecutions against early female Christian virgins whose trials cemented the already established prizing and praising of female virtue. Constant pagan

attempts to dominate, violate, and control “pure” Christian flesh are compelling to late medieval readers in part because the narratives containing these interactions portray beautiful young women as the exclusive property of the Christian community; when the martyrs resist and triumph over their persecutors, the readers reclaim their possessions in a process that repeats every time they engage in the memory exercise of recollection and contemplation.

The memory images themselves, as I have demonstrated, are constructed according to the *ars memoria* guidelines in that they are marvelous or wondrous, they involve dishonourable actions, and are active figures of exceptional beauty that, like Agnes’ body that is covered with gifts of precious (spiritual) gems and gold from her divine lover, are lavishly ornamented, or like Agatha and the detailed grotesqueries of her brutal torture, disfigured and bloodstained. Bokenham also emphasized potential erotic or sensual elements in some of the lives, in a bid to capitalize on the mnemonic impact of the enticing female form while operating under the cover of a spiritual exercise for a religious audience whose strength of faith would allow them to view a beautiful naked young woman in their mind’s eye without the lust or temptation that was the apparent hallmark of pagan observers. All of Bokenham’s virgin martyrs are sourced from Voragine,⁴¹⁴ and my comparison of the two versions made evident how much Bokenham changed his source in order to enhance the violence, eroticism, or beauty of these narratives. The culture that encouraged the proliferation of devotional art in the late medieval period supported this type of visual mnemotechnic, and especially in East

⁴¹⁴ As I stated in Chapter Two, I consider Barbara as taken from Voragine even though according to Graesse and Ryan it is most likely a life that circulated with the *Legenda aurea* and only attributed to Voragine.

Anglia with its particular devotion to female saints, Bokenham's efforts were well-received.⁴¹⁵

5.3 Summary of Chapter Three Findings: Mnemonic Geography

Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae* was written as a guidebook for the local saints' lives in his long legendary and this chapter addressed the implications of such a pairing as well as the mnemonic role of the geographical emphasis in the narratives of local saints. Many of the surviving narratives of local saints do not echo the *Mappula* nor refer to some of the potentially relevant sections of that text, but others, like the Saint Winifred narrative's echo of the description of Wales, are in conversation with the geographical text. The many references to places, bishoprics, and events that appear in both the life of Saint Wilfrid and the *Mappula*, or the *Mappula*'s mention of several local saints, for example, allow Bokenham to declare that the legends would be better understood if the reader had a solid grasp of England's landscape: the country's geography, "the w[iche] welle knowene & cowde, hit shalle byne easy ynoughe to vnderstande alle þat is towched þer-of in the seyde legende[s]" of such saints as Cedd, Felix, Edward, Oswald, and "many oþer seyntis of Englonde" (*MA* 6). Many of Bokenham's local saints' lives emphasize place and nation much more than the earlier continental legends, and the references to England as "home," "birthplace," or "my/his/her/their country" are additions Bokenham consistently makes. These changes reinforce the idea of home, homeland, and the markers of miraculous or otherwise significant events that dot England's landscape.

⁴¹⁵ As evidenced by the large number of Bokenham's female saints' lives that contained dedications.

The geographical references in Bokenham's local saints' lives invite readers to travel, either literally or in their mind's eye, while contemplating the details of those saintly narratives; I compared this exercise to the fifteenth-century meditational practice of visiting images depicting Christ's last mortal day on earth as part of the Stations of the Cross that were posted most commonly around the inner walls of a church. One example of a literal invitation to travel to a site is in my discussion of the life of Saint David, where the reader is enticed by the papal declaration that two visits to St. David's Cathedral carry the same spiritual benefit as one pilgrimage to Rome. In Bokenham's life of Saint Patrick, the landscape on which Patrick stands, as he temporarily plans to stay until an angel intervenes, is described vividly, as is the view of Ireland from the *Vallis Rosina* in Wales reserved for David. Readers may travel to Ireland from Wales in their mind's eye without the cost and inconvenience of a physical journey.

This chapter also examined Bokenham's detailed geographic treatment of East Anglian Saints Felix, Æthelthryth, Cedd, and Botolph, and their prominent representation in the legendary as a result of their origin or religious activity in the community that supported Bokenham's work. Ultimately, the narratives of these East Anglian saints demonstrate that Bokenham prioritizes, emphasizes or adds geographical references and descriptions as seen especially in the life of Saint Felix, that he cultivates a personal connection to the community, as in the life of Saint Æthelthryth, or that he underscores the sense of England as the homeland where an important sacred figure is rooted both emotionally and spiritually, as in the life of Saint Botolph.

5.4 Summary of Chapter Four Findings: Genealogy

My final chapter identified how Bokenham employs a mnemonic strategy for this last assemblage of saints that are, for the most part, priests, bishops, and other ecclesiastical figures local to England, whose lives may contain geographical connections or vivid images but not to the degree which might place them squarely in one of the other mnemotechnic groupings. Bokenham's strategy in this group is to establish associations of a genealogical or pseudo-genealogical nature between local saints and recognizable, memorable figures like rulers and other nobility, high-ranking ecclesiastical officials, prominent spiritual individuals, and other saints. Frequently, and nowhere more pronounced than in the life of Saint Wilfrid, Bokenham altered the connections between saint and renowned figure to censure the conflict and turmoil that would distract readers and present a troubling model of disharmony between the church and England's ruling elite. I defined my own working genealogical terms: *spiritual genealogy* as a powerful connection between mentor and mentee in instructions of the Christian faith, or among a chosen religious community; and, *ecclesiastical genealogy* as referring to the predecessors and successors of an official ecclesiastical position.

In this chapter I established Bokenham's preoccupation with lineage and origins as is especially evident in his discussions or treatments of conventional genealogy; I addressed genealogical elements and related commentary in Bokenham's life of Saint Anne, in which Bokenham traces Anne's and her daughter Mary's lines as far back as he can while lamenting that the surviving records are patrilineal in nature, and he provides etymologies for each of their names as a supplement to the missing matrilineal information. In his life of Saint Ursula, Bokenham positions Ursula and her 11,000

saintly virginal companions as the daughters or sisters of nearly all who call England home, and alters his source to confirm England, and not Brittany, as the exclusive originary point of this martyred group. In essence then, the largest group of martyrs is made up of the most remarkable and exceptionally beautiful young women in the world, and they are from England, a land whose population is blessed and virtuous enough to be able to spare thousands of Christians dedicated enough to make the ultimate sacrifice. If the numbers of Ursula's group are to be believed, then as martyrs, England's daughters make up a generous portion of Christ's most valued brides and their spiritual and earthly relations will consequently reap great benefit. The prologue to Bokenham's life of Saint Mary of Egypt contains a description of genealogical information that ideally would be included at the beginning of a saint's life, and it reveals his expectation of an introductory mnemonic of etymological, genealogical, or geographical originary nature to root a reader at or near the start of a narrative. This expectation is supported by Bokenham's work throughout his legendary with etymological and geographical mnemotechnics.

The final section of the life of Saint David is the best example of a detailed recording of ecclesiastical succession and what can be viewed as a type of spiritual genealogy that brings the *auctoritas* of historical record into what may otherwise be considered a narrative relatively less moored in factual chronicles. Just as etymologies invested saintly legends with the weight of linguistic science, the various genealogical models in this chapter served to link readers to local saints through the connection of recognizable descent structures.

Bokenham's standalone work, *Dialogue at the Grave of Dame Joan of Acre*, is designed to draw support from a rich patron (Richard of York) while featuring the harmonious relationship between the Augustinians of Clare Priory and those figures of the English nobility who had founded and supported the priory in past years. *The Dialogue at the Grave* is an attempt to curry support and garner favour from Richard by legitimizing his claim to the throne through the presentation of a detailed female-centric genealogy that traces his lineage back to Lionel of Antwerp, King Edward III's second son. The text is set at the grave of Joan of Acres, whose body was found to be partially incorrupt and continues to lie in the grounds of Clare Priory. Readers are invited into this rather one-sided conversation between "a secular asking and a Frere answering" and presumably Bokenham hoped they might pay the Priory a visit or make donations once they learned of its prestigious patronage. This tour through the genealogy of the Priory's founders, patrons, and English rulers would have been especially memorable for those East Anglian readers in and around Suffolk or for those who frequently visited or passed through.

Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated that Bokenham uses different mnemonic tools according to different categories of saints, and that the continental figures receive the more traditional mnemotechnics of memory images and etymologies whereas the local saints benefit from Bokenham's adapted and developed geographical and genealogical mnemonics. This consistent difference in application establishes not only that Bokenham deploys mnemotechnics strategically depending on type of saint and type of narrative, but that he reserves these original connections of spiritual lineage and geographical place for England's holy figures. The sacred representatives of this

wondrous “noþer worlde,” Bokenham’s “hoom,” are thereby distinguished from the rest of the golden legend’s saints even as they gain authority through their inclusion in the prestigious collection.

5.5.1 Future Directions

Osbern Bokenham, though a prolific translator and adaptor, was by no means a brilliant innovator and his engagement with mnemotechnics was largely a product of his advanced education as well as his work in hagiography. Other medieval authors were also looking to the techniques of both the recent and ancient past to enhance the impact of their work as evidenced by, for example, Capgrave’s original etymologizing treatment of Saint Gilbert of Sempringham’s name. The most remarkable element in Bokenham’s oeuvre is the role of the *Mappula Angliae* as outlined in its introduction, in which Bokenham pairs that work with his legendary and more specifically to the local saints included in it. This not only calls attention to those saints Bokenham has added to the canonical selection from Voragine’s *Legenda aurea* but also raises England’s profile as “a noþer worlde” that “þroughe [God’s] specialle grace this yle Brytayne is syngulerly priuylegid” (*MA* 7, 9). Both England’s inhabitants and the broader international community are invited to marvel at “how moche cleere brightnes of goddis mercyfulle pite hath syngulerly Illumined & iradied þe peple of Ynglond” (*MA* 11), and we must assume Bokenham imagined at least a handful of readers using the *Mappula* as a reference during their study of his legendary and the extraordinary country that was home to these saints.

Pairing a text as a literal guide or reference book to another is uncommon at least within hagiographical tradition, and a survey of companion texts as well as a comparison of English pilgrims' guides (local and international) may well reveal more such connections and perhaps shed further light on Bokenham's influences. If other guidebooks and their companion texts contain evidence of *ars memoria* influence, the possibility of regional or national engagement with an evolving mnemotechnic tradition could open up the field of late medieval memory studies to a consideration of a broader intellectual movement toward mnemonics and narrative in educational or monastic settings. Discussions of mnemonics and theology such as Dave Tell's "Beyond Mnemotechnics: Confession and Memory in Augustine" that attempt to map out the impact that Augustine and others had on the development of memory techniques within a Christian framework, coupled with explorations of core elements of the *ars memoria* in their various iterations,⁴¹⁶ would focus examination of other hagiographical collections and aid to identify where other late medieval authors may be employing similar or original mnemonic techniques.

Constance Bouchard, for instance, has addressed memory and forgetting in early French hagiography, and while Bouchard's work focuses on the writing and rewriting of saints' lives as a reflection of the values and social context of each hagiographical iteration it still participates in a consideration of the function of memory in saints' legends. A closer look at various religious guidebook forms such as medieval churches' *tabulae*⁴¹⁷ and their relation to nearby art depicting saints' vitae may reveal that

⁴¹⁶ See, for instance, Carruthers' discussion of etymology and the memory arts in "Inventional Mnemonics."

⁴¹⁷ Specifically, *tabulae* that functioned as guides and tour highlights of churches and other sites dedicated to popular saints.

Bokenham's approach evolved alongside the development of formal memory exercises like the Stations of the Cross and that Bokenham's work was guided and shaped by the multifaceted presence of the *ars memoria* found across late medieval England.⁴¹⁸

5.5.2 Future Project

Years ago, my work with the then-unedited and not-yet-digitized *Legenda Aurea* manuscript⁴¹⁹ was a painstaking process of studying black and white microfilm, printing it out just right, transcribing the text, and creating a preliminary editorial apparatus. This in itself was a kind of memory exercise as I familiarized myself with the manuscript, its contents, where it was damaged (either missing leaves or decorated initials methodically cut out), then tried to piece together the meaning behind the inserted local saints' lives. With this manuscript's digitization and its eventual complete editing, I have considered turning my interest to the *Mappula Angliae*, Bokenham's companion to the legendary. Carl Hortsmann created a pared-down edition of the *Mappula* in 1887 and while it has been an invaluable research resource it is difficult to obtain and consists almost entirely of a basic transcription.

I propose the creation of an interactive digital edition of the *Mappula Angliae* text that incorporates multiple elements and represents the text's content and intent, such as maps, historical and architectural records, topographical descriptions, images of

⁴¹⁸ Of course, continental hagiographical collections merit investigation for evidence of mnemotechnics to best identify whether this is a trend specific to Bokenham, to England, or geographically widespread.

⁴¹⁹ The first volume of Simon Horobin's edition of the manuscript, *Osbern Bokenham: Lives of the Saints* for the Early English Text Society was released in October 2020 with Oxford University Press. This is the first of two or three volumes that will eventually comprise the entire *Legenda Aurea* manuscript.

surviving religious sites, and, where available, the narratives of those saints mentioned in the text.⁴²⁰ Ideally, I would use images of the manuscript as my base⁴²¹, include a facing-page transcription, and link to extra-textual materials through windows that pop up when the reader mouses over a relevant word, term, or phrase. The *Mappula* project would be an effort to reproduce the close consultation that Bokenham envisioned: a visual and literary geographical guidebook to the local lives in his legendary.

5.5.3 Final Thoughts

From its beginnings in the real or fictional banquet hall where Simonedes identified fallen dinner guests and discovered the importance of organized visualization, the *ars memoria* has resurfaced in various forms, emerging here as a tool to solidify Christian narrative traditions, there as a complex intellectual exercise, and now most commonly in trivia and scientific studies. The formal memory palace mnemonic has even found its way into popular culture, such as in the British Broadcasting Corporation's *Sherlock* series in which the title character refers to his 'mind palace' many times and introduced fans to the method of *loci* from ancient Greece.⁴²² Pop culture aside, the role of mnemonics has shifted from oral traditions with limited access to technologies of the written word, to a combination of memorizing long religious works and adapting mnemonics to narratives, to our high speed information consumption via various digital media. Just as the development of writing technology from manuscript to print has

⁴²⁰ Such as Saints David, Oswald, Edward, Æthelthryth, Wilfrid, Cedd, etc. Where some of those saints are unavailable in Bokenham's collection due to manuscript damage, I would include one of two versions from Bokenham's likeliest sources.

⁴²¹ British Library ms Harley 4011.

⁴²² See, for instance, Sarah Zielinski's "The Secrets of Sherlock's Mind Palace" in the *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 3, 2014.

fundamentally changed the way we digest, organize, and retain information, so smartphones have shortened our attention spans and negatively affected our working memory (Liebherr et al, np). It seems that in a quest to produce memorable subject matter, producers of digital media content have taken the mnemonic principle of *brevitas* to the extreme, arguably at the cost of our capacities to store and recollect such truncated material. Perhaps now more than ever, a re-consideration of the *ars memoria* is necessary in order to inspire further evolutions of these memory strategies that have held us in good stead for centuries.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Index of Etymological Elements in Voragine

<i>a</i> without; much, very	<i>beth</i> house
<i>achi</i> my brother	<i>ber</i> (Hebr.) well, pit, spring
<i>aegidius</i> (L form of Giles) a + <i>geos</i>	<i>blandus</i> bland
+ <i>dyan</i>	<i>caecis via</i> road for the blind
<i>aestus</i> heat	<i>caecitate carens</i> lacking blindness
<i>aga</i> speaking/ solemn	<i>cana</i> zeal
<i>agath</i> servitude	<i>catenula</i> a small chain
<i>agios</i> holy	<i>catha</i> total
<i>agna</i> lamb	<i>chisil</i> fortitude
<i>agnos</i> (Gk) pious	<i>Christophoros</i> the Christ-bearer
<i>agnoscendo</i> (Gk) knowing	<i>cis</i> vomiting; hard
<i>alarius, altus</i> high + <i>ares</i> virtue	<i>citius</i> faster
Amand: lovable	<i>clemens</i> mild; just; mature; pious
<i>amarum mare</i> bitter sea	<i>cleos</i> glory
<i>ambor</i> father of light	<i>coeli lilia</i> lily of heaven
<i>ambra</i> amber	<i>coelum</i> heaven
<i>ambrosia</i> food of angels	<i>cor</i> heart
<i>ambrosium</i> heavenly honeycomb	<i>corculus</i> little heart
<i>ana</i> above, upward	Cornelius: one who understands
<i>ander</i> a male, man	circumcision
<i>anus</i> old man	<i>cornu</i> horn
<i>arcens malum</i> keeping evil away	<i>cosmos</i> form; adorned; or (Gk) clean
<i>ares</i> virtue	according to Isidore
<i>astim</i> city	<i>cus</i> black
<i>augeo</i> to increase	<i>custos</i> guardian
<i>August(us)</i> August (heat, hot weather)	<i>custoditus</i> guarded
<i>banal</i> response	<i>cyprus</i> a mixture; sadness; inheritance
<i>Bar-Jona</i> son of the dove (<i>bar</i> =son, Syriac; <i>jona</i> =dove, Hebr.)	<i>dama</i> humble, gentle beast
<i>bastum</i> saddle	<i>damum</i> sacrifice
<i>beatitudo</i> beatitude	<i>dans</i> giving
<i>bela</i> habit, disposition	<i>Deo natus</i> born of God
<i>bene dictere</i> all spoke well (of him)	<i>deus</i> God
Benedict: blessed	<i>Diana, Venus</i> , goddess of beauty
<i>Boanerges</i> son of thunder	<i>dionysia</i> a kind of black gem, effective
<i>Cephas</i> : head; rock; speaking	against drunkenness (acc to
forcefully	Isidore) II 236
<i>chrismate uncta</i> anointed with chrism	<i>distans</i> distant
<i>cobar</i> burden, weight	<i>dogma</i> doctrine
<i>cope</i> cutting	<i>Domini</i> Lord
<i>bar</i> son	

- dominus: donans minas* condoning threats; *donans minus* giving less; *donans munus* giving a gift
dono Dei datus given by gift of God
dyan bright, brilliant; godlike
dyo two
egregius outstanding
epi above
 Elizabeth: my God has known; the seventh of my God; the satiety of my God
eu good
euphonia sweet sound
eusebius good worship
excelsus exalted
fabricans building
femina a woman
 French/Frankish/Francais (Francis):
ferocitas: fierceness, high-spiritedness and impetuosity
franciscae: term used for ax-shaped insignia carried before consuls in Rome, which stood for terror, security and honour
geos earth; dogma; house
germen seed
gerar holy, sacred
gero pilgrim
gir cut off
gore to preach, to say
gratus pleasing
grex flock
gyon wrestling/ sand/ struggle
gyla/gila (Hebr.) one who wanders from one country to the next
hilaris hilarious, cheerful
hyle primordial matter
ignem patiens being afire with love of God
Ja a name of God
 Jacobus: (L James) one who causes to fall; trips someone in a hurry; one who prepares
jaculum lance
 John/Johannes: grace of God
Johannis: to whom it is given
jubilus jubilant
jubilum dans one who gives jubilation
 Jude (L *Judas*) confessing; glorious
Julius one who begins
justitia justice
juvans vita aiding by life
laos/leos (Gk) people
lauream tenens holder of a laurel wreath
laus praise
Lebbaeus/ lebes a basin II 260
legens ardua one who chooses the hard tasks
leo lion
lesa salvation
lexis word
litos stone, rock
 Luke (L *Lucas*) rising up; elevating
lux light
macha skillfulness/ beating
machin king
machos fight
magnus great
manus good; hand
 Marcus: (L of Mark) sublime by mandate; certain; bent over; bitter, heavy hammer
margarita pearl
mari the sea; bitter
maria percellens striking the sea
Martem tenens one who makes war
 Martinus: one who angers/ provokes/ dominates
martyrum unus one of the martyrs
 Matthaesus: (L or Hebr Matthew) hasty gift; giver of counsel
 Matthias: (Hebr) given by God; gift of God; humble, small
mauron (Gk) black, acc to Isidore (R II 188)
mens mind
meus my
 Michael: Who is like to God?
 Modestus: standing in the middle
moys water
nardus nard (a sweet-smelling humble herb)

- naris* discretion
Nazarius consecrated; clean; separated;
 flowering; guarding
nemus a grove
Nereus: counsel of light
nereth never guilty, (*ne reus*?)
nicos victory
nisus elevation
nitor shining brightly
noma a law
obsecundans complying with
orge work
os lampadis mouth of a lamp
os manum mouth of hands
pan all, the whole
pancras booty; vari-coloured precious
 stone
pancrasius one who is beaten with
 scourges
Paul(us): mouth of a trumpet; their
 mouth; wonderfully chosen;
 miracle of election
pausa (Hebr) repose, quiet; (L) moderate
 man
petros firm
Petrus: (L Peter) knowing, recognizing/
 taking off one's shoes/ unbinding
phanos an appearing, apparition
philos love
pinca stylus
(in)+ polis city; *politus* polished, refined
pollens powerful
pollo admirable
polluo pollute
primus first; highest; great
procul at a distance
protos first
quaerens arcum seeking a bow
quiris javelin
quiriles a seat
remi to feed; shepherd; oars
remigo a pilot
reprobus outcast
rio master
ruina ruin
sebe eloquent; standing

se condens establishing oneself
secum dux commander of oneself
secundus second
sequens following
sile light
silva forest
Simon obedient; accepting/bears sadness
sisto, sistis to stand
Sophia: wisdom
stasis stand/(ing); position
status state, condition
stephanos (Gk) crown
Stephan(us) (Heb) norm, rule
strenue fans speaking strenuously/ with
 zeal
strenue stans/fans anus laudably
 standing, instructing and ruling over old
 women (widows)
symphonia symphony
syor/sior small
syos God, godly
tam Deus great God
tenens holding
terra earth
thaas higher
thadea a royal garment
Thaddeus one who lays hold of the
 prince II 260
thau completion, consummation
theos God
thesis position
tholos height
Thomas: abyss, or twofold (Gk *didimus*)
thomos dividing, separating
timor fear
timorem tenens holding fear
totus means total wanderer
tropos a turning
tus/thus gum, frankincense
ur light; fire
urbanitas an urbane man
us counselor; one who hastens
valens tiro valiant soldier of Christ
valorum value
vas a vase
veh woe

vere truly

Vincent: burning up vice, conquering
fires, holding onto victory

vita life

virtus (a) virtuous (man)

vivens talis living such, living the same
as

vivens alis shielding oneself with the
wings of the virtues

yper above

ys counselor

Zebedaeus giving, given

Epiphany (epi+phanos). The star
appeared from above.

Bethany (beth+theos). By working the
miracle (water to wine) in a
house, he appeared as true God

Appendix B: Etymology of Thomas, apostle (Legenda Aurea 28)⁴²³

Thomas, cristis disciple, aftir the sentence of Ianuence and othir doctours, is asmoche to seyn by interpretacioun of his name as ‘botomelees depthe,’ ‘hool passyng,’ ‘diuyded,’ ‘douteful’ and ‘doublid.’ And al these *propirtees* mow be shewid by the gospel convenyently to *pertene* to hym.

[1] As for the first, that is ‘botomeles depthe,’ we reedyn in the gospel that he mevid to *criste* a questioun seyng to hym on this wise: “Lorde, we wete not whider thou goost, wherfore teche ws how we mow knowen the wey.” And *criste* anoon openyng the *profunde* botomelees depthe of the divinite aunswerd and seid “I am the wey, I am truthe, and I am lyfe. No man *commeth* to my fadir but by me. yf ye had knowe my fadir, ye shuld haue knowen me and aftir this ye shul knowen hym, for siker ye han seen hym” (*John* ii).⁴²⁴

[2] ‘Al hool passyng’ was *Thomas* into the fervent loue and affeccion of his maister *criste* *Jhesu* whan not oonly he offrid *hym* self to goon and deyen *with* hym whan he herd that the iewys had maliciously conspired his deeth, but also he exorted his brethern, othir disciples, forto doon the same, As witnessith the gossell (*John* ii).⁴²⁵

[3] ‘Diuided’ was *Thomas* from the remenaunt of thappostles the day of *cristis* resurreccion at eve, whan *criste* appierid vnto hem in the place where thei were gadrid to gider and the gatis were shett for drede of the iewys, wherfore he sawe not *criste* liche as diden othir disciples (*John* 20).⁴²⁶

[4] Douteful he was whan he came in and they seiden that thei had seen *criste*. he wolde nat bileven it and seid on this wise: “But yf I putte *myn* hande in his side and see the woundis which the nayles made *in* his handis and in his feet, I shal not bileven that he is rysen.”⁴²⁷ But this absence of *Thomas* at *cristis* apperyng and his douteful aunswere at his ageyncommyng was not of casuelte, but it was by the eternal prouidence of goddis

⁴²³ Punctuation and section numbers are editorial.

⁴²⁴ *John* 14:5-7.

⁴²⁵ *John* 11:16.

⁴²⁶ *John* 20:19-24.

⁴²⁷ *John* 20:25.

merciful benygnite, which by his hard bileve and doute wolde deliveren vs from almaner diffidence of his resurreccion and mysbileve and doute. And this is the sentence of Seynt Gregorie vpon thys gospel: *Cum sero factum esset etc.*⁴²⁸ Where he seith thus: “The gracious godenesse of god wrought by a marveilous maner, that his chosen and wele biloued disciple shulde doute, to putten away al oure doute.” Marie Magdaleyn which sone bilevid did not so moche for vs as þis Thomas which longe doutid. For Thomas, doutyng, touchid cristis woundis bodily, and in that he curid the wundis of mysbileve in our soulis gostely. And therefore the eight day aftir his resurreccion, criste apperyng to his disciples as he did the first day seid to Thomas on this: “Shew in thi fynger hider and putt thyn hande in to my side and wil thou not be of fals and mysbileve but be thou faithful and true.”⁴²⁹

[5] Att which worde of criste anoon, Thomas was doublid, that is to seyn double wise in the feith, stablissid and confermed both in feelyng and in seeyng, and therefore he seid thus: “*Deus meus & dominus meus*- my lorde and my god”⁴³⁰ as who seith “Thou my god whom I see not art my lorde that boughtist me with that precious blode which ran oute of the woundis which I see and fele. This is my feith and my bileve.” And thus brefly haue I shewid by the gospel how that Thomas is conueniently clepid ‘Abyssus’, ‘totus means’, ‘diuisus’, ‘didimus’ and ‘Geminus’ and this seid suffiseth for the *prologe* and the interpretacion of his name.

⁴²⁸ Saint Gregory’s homily 26 on the gospels, on John 20:19-31.

⁴²⁹ John 20:26-27.

⁴³⁰ John 20:28.

**Appendix C: Etymological Markers, Tags, and Elements in ‘Cecilia’
Etymology in Voragine, Bokenham, Chaucer, and Caxton**

Voragine -prose	Bokenham -verse	Chaucer -verse	Caxton -prose
Caecilia	Cycile	It [Cecilie]	Cecyle
<i>quasi</i>	ys as mych to seye as	is to seye in Englissh	is as moche to sa[y] as
caeli lilia	‘lylye of heuene’	‘heavenes lilie’...	the ‘lylye of heuen’
vel	or	Or Cecilie is to seye	or
caecis via	‘to þe blynd weye’	‘the wey to blynde’...	‘a waye to blynde men’
vel	or ellys þis wurd ‘Cicilia’	Or elles Cecile, as I writen fynde,	or
a	is compounnyd of	Is joyned, by a manere conjoynyng of	she is sayd of
caelo et lya	‘celum’ & of ‘lya’	‘hevene’ and ‘Lia’...	‘celo’ & ‘lya’
vel	or ellys		or ellys
Caecilia	Cicyle, aftyr þe ethimologie	Cecile	cecylia
<i>quasi</i>	doth sygnyfye	may eek be seyde in this manere,	as
caecitate carens	‘Wantyng blyndnesse’	‘Wantyng of blyndnesse’...	‘lackyng blyndenes’
vel	or	Or elles, loo,	or
dicitur a	it ys seyde of þis wurd	this maydens name bright/ Of	she is sayd of
caelo et leos	‘celo’, and ‘leos’	‘hevene’ and ‘leos’ comth	‘celo’ (that is ‘heuen’) and ‘leos’
<i>quod est</i>	þat toknyth also	for which by right/ Men myghte hire wel	that is
populus	‘peple’	“the hevene of peple” calle... / For “leos” “peple” in Englissh is to seye	‘peple’

Appendix D: Sources for Bokenham's Local Saints' Lives

This chart displays Bokenham's textual sources as well as where and with what frequency he departs from Voragine, all of which speaks to where Bokenham locates historical or hagiographical *auctoritas*.⁴³¹ If a local saint's life is not in Voragine (as so few are), Bokenham looks to Bede, then to *Nova Legenda Anglie*, and sometimes to Malmesbury (though usually only for supplementary details).

Source	Saint's Life
Voragine <i>Legenda aurea</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick (with a few additions from Nennius, Higden, and an additional unknown source) • Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins (prose to verse; embellished)
Bede <i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cedd (conflated with material from Saint Chad's life) • Felix (supplemented by Malmesbury's <i>Gesta Pontificum</i>) • Augustine of Canterbury • Alban • Æthelthryth (prose to verse; greatly embellished) • Wilfrid
<i>Nova Legenda Anglie</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John of Beverley (greatly abbreviated) • Aldhelm (abbreviated and simplified) • Botolph (with mentions of brother Adolph excised) • Winifred (prose to verse; expanded and adapted)
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas of Canterbury (original to Bokenham but built by adapting from various sources) • Wulfstan (Senatus' abbreviation of Malmesbury's <i>Vita Wulfstani</i> which in turn is a Latin translation of Colman's Old English life; Colman's text does not survive) • Gilbert of Sempringham (anonymous life commissioned by Roger of Sempringham) • David (unknown; possibly a compilation of a few lives as well as at least one report⁴³²) • Dunstan (abbreviation of Malmesbury's <i>Vita Dunstani</i> with potentially some influence from Adelard of Ghent's <i>Lectiones In Depositione S. Dvnstani</i>)

⁴³¹ Of course, availability of textual resources is also a factor.

⁴³² This report refers to the unusual addition at the end of the life that describes the writing on wooden tables at St. David's along with the verses of corrupted or erroneous Latin.

Appendix E: English Text of Bokenham's "Dialogue at the Grave"⁴³³

- Q. What man lyeth here sey me sir Frere?
 A. No man. Q. What ellis? A. It is a woman.
 Q. Whose daughter she was I wold lefe here.
 A. I woll you tell sir liche as I can,
 5 King Edward the first aftur the conquest began,
 As I haue lernyd was hir fadir
 And of Spayn borne was hir modir.
- Q. What was her name? A. Dame Johan she hight
 Of Acris.⁴³⁴ Q. Why so declarid wold be?
 10 A. For there she sey furst this worlds light,
 Borne of hir modir, as chronicles telle me:⁴³⁵
 Wherfore in honoure, O Vincent of the
 To whom she had singuler affectioun,
 This chapel she made in pure deuotioun.
- 15 Q. Was she ought weddid to ony wight?
 A. Yea Sir. Q. To whom? A. Yf I shuld not lye
 To Gilbert of Clare, the erle by right
 Of Gloucestre. Q. Whos son was he? A. Sothely
 An othir Gilbertis.⁴³⁶ Q. This genealogye
 20 I desyre to knowe, wherfore telle me
 Who was his fadir? if it plese the?

⁴³³ Taken from K. W. Barnardiston's *Clare Priory: Seven Centuries of a Suffolk House*, pp. 63-69, which is in turn a transcription of the Clare Roll manuscript, London, College of Arms, MS Muniment Room 3/16.

⁴³⁴ Joan of Acre was the daughter of King Edward I and Eleanor of Castile, Edward's first wife. Joan is named for Acre, Israel, where she was born during her parents' participation in the ninth crusade of 1271-2.

⁴³⁵ The "chronicles" referred to here may be Thomas Walsingham's *St. Albans Chronicles*, which John Capgrave relies on for his *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles* (also known as *The Chronicle of England*). Capgrave records the discovery of Joan of Acre's incorrupt body and gives her parentage, (See John Capgrave *The Chronicle of England*, ed. Rev. Francis Charles Hingeston (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858) pp.168-9.

⁴³⁶ Here, Bokenham's genealogical records are erroneous: Joan's husband Gilbert was the son of Richard de Clare (1222-62), who founded the priory. When Richard Taylor was assembling his *Index Monasticus* of 1821, he listed a "1st Gilbert de Clere, and Maud his wife" and then a "2nd Gilbert de Clere, and Dame Joan of Acres" (Taylor 106) among early Clare Priory benefactors. The source he claims for this information is "the MS Grants" (106), presumably the fifteenth-century cartulary (See *The Cartulary of the Augustinian Friars of Clare*, ed. and trans. Christopher Harper-Bill, Woodbridge 1991). I believe however that this "furst Gilbert" is none other than Joan's son (1292-1314), who married Maud of Ulster in 1308. As this marriage produced no heirs it is possible that Bokenham, who may also have been responsible for at least some of the priory records, chose to incorporate Gilbert back into the line of 'fruitful branches' in a bid to demonstrate an unbroken descent of noble patronage for Clare Priory.

- A. This Gilbertis fadir was that noble knight
 Sir Richard of Clare: to sey all and sum
 Which for freris loue that Giles hight,
 25 And his boke clepid, *De regimine principum* :⁴³⁷
 Made furst frere Augustines to Ingelonde cum,
 Therin to duelle, and for that dede,
 In heuen God graunte hym joye to mede.
- Q. But leterally who was telle me,
 30 This Ricardis wiff whom thou preisest so?
 A. The Countes of Hereford and Mauld hight she,
 Which whan deth the knotte had undoo
 Of temporal spousaile, bitwixt hem twoo
 With diuers parcels encresid our fundatioun,
 35 Liche as our monumentys make declaratioun.⁴³⁸
- Q. Of the furst Gilbert who was the wyff?
 A. Dame Mauld, a ladye ful honourable
 Borne of the Ulsters [w]as she with ryff
 Hir armes of glas in the est gable,
 40 And for to God thei wolde ben acceptable,
 Her lord and she with an holy entent,
 Made vp our chirche fro the fundament.
- Now to dame Johan turne we ageyn
 Latter Gilbertis wyff, as to forne seyde is
 45 Which lyeth here. Q. Was she baryn?
 A. Nay sir. Q. Sey me what fruite was this?
 A. A brawnshe of right grete joye I wis.
 Q. Man or woman? A. A ladye bright.
 Q. What was hir name? A. Elisabeth she hight.
- 50 Q. Who was her husband? A. Sir John of Burgh,
 Eire of the Ulstris; so conjoynd be
 Ulstris armes and Gloucestris thurgh and thurgh,
 As shewith our wyndowes in housis thre,
 Dortour, chapter hous, and fraitour,⁴³⁹ which she
 55 Made oute the ground, both plauncher and wal.

⁴³⁷ Giles of Rome or Ægidius Romanus (c. 1243-1316) wrote several theological and philosophical treatises, the most recognized of which is *De regimine principum* (On the Government of Rulers). Giles was the Prior General of the Augustinian order. There is a contradiction in dates here, as Giles would have been five years old when Richard founded Clare Priory (c. 1248).

⁴³⁸ Maud de Lacy, Countess of Lincoln and through marriage, Hertford.

⁴³⁹ Dormitory, chapter house, and refectory.

Q. And who the rose?⁴⁴⁰ A. She alone did al.

Q. Had she ony Issue? A. Yea sir sikerly.

Q. Whot? A. A doughtir. Q. What name had she?

A. Liche hir modir Elisabeth sothely.

60 Q. Who euir the husbonde of hir might be?

A. King Edwards son the third was he,

Sir Lionel, which buried is hir by,

As for such a prince too sympilly.

Q. Left he onye frute this prince mighty?

65 A. Sir yea, a doughtur and Philip[a] she hight,

Whom sir Edmond Mortimer wedded trully,

First erle of the Marche, a manly knight.

Whos son sir Roger by title of right,

Lefte heire anothir Edmonde ageyn:

70 Edmonde left noone but deid bareyn.

Right thus did cese of the Marchis blode

The heire male. Q. Whider passid the right

Of the Marchis londis? and in whome it stode

I wold fayne lerne, if that I might.

75 A. Sir Roger myddil erle that noble knight,

Tweyn doughtris lefte of his blode roial;

That ones issue deide, that othris hath al.

Q. What hight that lady whose issue had grase

This lordeschip to atteyne. A. Dame Anne I wys,

80 To the erle of Cambrigge and the wyff was.⁴⁴¹

Which both be dede, God graunte hem blys.

But hir son Richard which yet liueth, ys

Duke of Yorke by discent of his fadir,

And hath Marchis londis by right of his modir.

85 Q. Is he sole or married this prynce mighty?

A. Sole? God forbede, it were grete pite.

Q. Who hath he wedded? A. A gracious lady.

Q. What is hir name I the prey telle me?

⁴⁴⁰ The 'rose' here refers to, presumably, the 'rose' or 'wheel' windows that became popular in Gothic church architecture throughout the Middle Ages; rose windows are circular windows with looping designs and decorative edges.

⁴⁴¹ Anne Mortimer married Richard, Earl of Cambridge, and they had Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York. Anne's ancestry on her mother's side (Eleanor Holland) includes Edward I and Henry III; however, the focus in Richard of York's claim is his place in line from Edward III, and the patronal focus of the *Dialogue* has no use for those aspects of Anne's lineage that are unrelated to Clare.

- A. Dame Cecile sir. Q. Whos daughter was she?
 90 A. Of the erle of Westm[o]relonde I trowe the yengest,⁴⁴²
 And yet grase her fortun'd to be the hiest.
- Q. Is ther ony frute betwix hem twoo?
 A. Yea sir, thonks be God ful glorious.
 Q. Male or female? A. Sir bothe too,
 95 Q. The nombir of this progeny gracious,
 And the names to know I am desyrus,
 The ordre eke of byrth telle yf thou kan,
 And I wil euir be euen thyn owen man?
- A. Sir aftir the tyme of long bareynes
 100 God first sent Anne which signyfyeth grase,
 In token that al her hertis heuynes,
 He, as for bareynes wold from hem chase.⁴⁴³
 Harry, Edward and Edmond ech in his plase
 Succedid, and aftir tweyn doughtris cam
 105 Elisabeth and Margarete, and afterwards William.
- John aftir William nexte borne was,
 Whiche be passid to goddis grase.
 George was nexte, and aftir Thomas
 Borne was; which sone aftir did pase
 110 By the path of deth; to the heuenly plase.
 Richard liueth yit, but the laste of all
 Was Ursula to hym whom God liste calle.
- To the duke of Excestre Anne maried is
 In hir tendre youthe: but my lord Herry,
 115 God chosen hath to enherite heuen blis,
 And lefte Edward to succede temporally
 Now erle of Marche, & Edmond of Rutlond sotheley
 Counte, bothe fortunabil. To right hygh mariage
 The othir foure stond yit on their pupillage.
- 120 Longe mote he liuen to goddis pleasaunce,
 This hygh and myghty prynce in prosperite
 With vertue and vycory god him auaunce
 Of al hys enemyes, and graunte that he,
 And the noble Princesse his wife may see
 125 Hir childres children or thei hens wende
 And aftir this outelary the joye that neuer shal ende. Amen.

⁴⁴² Cecily, youngest daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland.

⁴⁴³ This etymology is from the prologue of Saint Anne in Bokenham's *LHW* and is the only etymological instance in the entire dialogue.