

FRITHEGOD AND STEPHEN

ADAPTING THE *VITA SANCTI WILFRIDI*

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THE LITERARY PHENOMENON of the so-called *opus geminatum* or *geminus stilus* has been well documented in late-antique and early medieval Latin literature.¹ In sum, this genre produces two texts of essentially the same content but of different form: one in prose and the other in poetry. Though it is common for both texts to be by the same author—*opera geminata* of Caelius Sedulius, Aldhelm, and Bede are good examples²—the poetic companion piece to a prose work was also often composed by a different author, sometimes centuries apart, and even sometimes in a different language. So Alcuin, who incidentally has his own poetic and prose lives of Willibrord, composed a kind of poetic version of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* in his poem on York;³ and, to stretch the genre to its limits, some Old English poetry can be read as “twinning” Latin prose sources.⁴

One of the more elaborate of these *opera geminata* was composed in the mid-tenth century, after Oda, Archbishop of Canterbury, probably taking advantage of military expeditions in Northumbria, was able to acquire the relics of Saint Wilfrid, which apparently were withering away, unkept and

1 Godman, “The Anglo-Latin *Opus Geminatum*,” 215–29; Wieland, “*Geminus stylus*,” 113–33; and Friesen, “The *Opus Geminatum* and Anglo-Saxon Literature,” 123–44.

2 Caelius Sedulius, *Opera omnia*; Aldhelm, *Opera*; Bede, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*; and Bede, *Bede’s Latin Poetry*. See, especially, Brooks, *Restoring Creation*, 69–76.

3 Godman, “The Anglo-Latin *Opus Geminatum*,” 215. For the lives of Willibrord, see Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi Archiepiscopi Traiectensis*, 81–141; and “De vita sancti Willibrordi episcopi,” in *Alcuini Carmina*, 207–20.

4 For example, the Old English *Guthlac A*, in Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, is an Old English, versified form of the Latin life, in *Felix’s Life of Saint Guthlac*. See Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England*, 52, who locates the Old English literary tradition in the closely related genre of biblical verse paraphrase. Scholars have also read the two versions of the Old English Boethius as an *opus geminatum*; see Irvine, “The Protean Form of the Old English *Boethius*,” 4; and Weaver, “Hybrid Forms.”

dishonoured by all too timid priests. To celebrate the restoration of these bones to a respectful place in Canterbury, Oda commissioned Frithegod, a continental scholar who was presently sojourning with him, to compose a poetic life of Wilfrid, as a sort of literary parallel to the material reliquary that would now hold Wilfrid.⁵ The result is the *Breviloquium vitae beati Wilfridi*, a hallmark of the difficult and esoteric Latin of England in the tenth century.⁶

At the time of its composition, two prominent prose works on Wilfrid's life were in existence: Bede's account in Book IV of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, and Stephen of Ripon's *Vita sancti Wilfridi* (hereafter *VSW*).⁷ Frithegod used Stephen over Bede and the result is that Stephen's *Vita* and Frithegod's *Breviloquium* come to function as a sort of literary diptych; they become an *opus geminatum*. But Frithegod was not one to stand aside and simply render the prose life into poetic form. He does follow, more or less, the order of the life as given by Stephen, and certain strategies, from copying words and phrases verbatim to retelling a sentence or two in his own baroque fashion, are clear. More interestingly, he occasionally uses a word or a phrase as a springboard to take the narrative in a completely different direction. But because the *Breviloquium* is an original work that is also occasionally dependent on its source text for comprehension, the poem demands reflection on itself and almost simultaneously on the *VSW*, especially under the guiding principle of holy rumination.⁸ As an elaborate rhetorical piece, the *Breviloquium* features many mnemonic devices typical of poetry, such as rhyme, alliteration, and unusual vocabulary, which in turn allow for easier memorization and reflection. The poem provides much opportunity for sustained thinking in order

5 The prose preface to the *Breviloquium* reads: "Itaque tantae tamque Deo dignae affinitatis delectatus uicinitate, et editiore eas entheca decusare et excerptis de libro uitae eius flosculis nouo operae pretium duxi carmine uenustare" (And so, as I was delighted by the nearness of his presence, which was so great and so worthy to God, I thought it worthwhile not only to decorate these bones with a more exalted reliquary but also to adorn them with a new poem derived from flowers plucked from the book of his Life). The standard edition of the *Breviloquium* is *Frithegodi monachi Breuiloquium uitae beati Wilfredi*; however, I use my own unpublished edition throughout. Line numbers of my edition are the same as in Campbell's up to line 1328, when Campbell's numeration erroneously jumps to 1330. All translations are also mine unless stated otherwise.

6 Lapidge, "The Hermeneutic Style," 116–19; Lapidge, "A Frankish Scholar"; and Lapidge, "Frithegodus Cantuariensis diac."

7 Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*; or Bede, *Storia degli inglesi*; and *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. Colgrave. For the relationship between the two, see Kirby, "Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the 'Life of Wilfrid.'"

8 See Brooks, *Restoring Creation*, 74–75.

to tease out the meaning of individual words, as well as whole sentences. It facilitates and demands its audience to ruminate. Furthermore, since rumination tends to focus on teasing out the meaning of individual words or short phrases, an author who aims to produce a work worthy of rumination, must be a master of the language. Frithegod certainly was, even if his style is sometimes too ambitious in its impenetrability.⁹ But so also the subject of his poem was a master of language. Wilfrid's eloquence is stressed again and again by Frithegod throughout the *Breviloquium*.¹⁰ And so, by analogy, Wilfrid's mastery of expression mirrors Frithegod's mastery of expression developed out of reading and ruminating over Stephen's *Vita*. Both Wilfrid and Frithegod reveal the potential of words to reflect divine mysteries, and by doing so they provide *exempla* for the reader not only to use as a model for spiritual improvement, but also as complex and difficult material that requires much contemplation. For this reason, a close study of how exactly Frithegod read Stephen—how he ruminated over that text—can shed light on the *Breviloquium* as a product of monastic reading and teaching.

9 The *Breviloquium* signals an awareness of language and expression right from its opening lines:

Inscius egregios aegris conatibus actus
ordior, insipidum quo fert fiducia sensum,
ausibus infidis aderit sed calculus ignis
forcipe uaticum solitus purgare labellum:
cunctipotens Opifex, archani pandulus Index,
Spiritus internis animans dulcoribus antra
cordis amara mei, ne quid displodat inepti
lingua tenax iusti. ...
Namque, fatebor enim, tua me pellexit honestis
scilicet indulcanda modis odisque canoris
caelo uita micans, terris oratio praestans.
Ergo age, deciduas precibus suppleto loquelas.
Affer praesidium, ne sit sub fasce ruendum. (1–8, 26–30)

Ignorant and with a feeble effort, I undertake to write distinguished deeds wherever boldness bears my slow understanding, but a coal of fire, handled with tongs and accustomed to purge prophetic mouths, will assist my hesitant presumption, this coal which is the omnipotent Creator, the clearly pointing Revealer of the mysterious, the Spirit who blows life into the bitter caves of my heart with inner sweetness, so that my tongue, clinging to what is just, should not blurt out anything unseemly. ... Truly—I will confess it indeed! —your life, which shines in heaven, and your eloquence, which excels on earth, have captivated me; they should really be sweetened with a worthy meter and melodious song. Go then! And with your prayers furnish what is lacking in my failing words. Give protection, so that there should not be a collapse under this burden.

10 See, for example, lines 135–46, 642–43, 823–25, 970, and 1095.

The Version of the *Vita sancti Wilfridi* Used by Frithegod

Before moving into the specifics of adaptation, a brief discussion on the textual witnesses is needed. The three surviving witnesses of the *Breviloquium* produce two distinct versions of the poem. Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, O.v.XIV.1, contains an earlier version of the *Breviloquium*;¹¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8431, contains the revised version of the poem;¹² and London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius A.i, contains the earlier version which has been corrected and altered to reflect the later, revised version. The latter was apparently a copy of the earlier draft which a scribe, possibly Frithegod himself, went over and updated with the more recent version.¹³ In sum, Frithegod seems to have composed his poem, circulated it at least among his peers in Canterbury, but then decided to go through and make revisions to a final version that then circulated more widely. Most, though not all, of the changes are improvements on the meter of the line. Other changes clarify or replace some particularly difficult word with another sometimes equally difficult word, and in a few instances, the rationale for the alteration is not at all clear. For the purposes of this study, a reading from the earlier version, represented best by the Saint Petersburg manuscript (**L**) gives only a single instance of an alteration that removes a word shared by the *VSW*. At line 724 the participle “*degens*” has been altered to “*dolens*,” against its source (similarities in *italics*):

sub pagano quodam rege Hunorum degens (*VSW* 28.27–28)

externo sub rege dolens [**L**: *degens*] *sensi cicatrices* (*Brev.* 724).

In this instance, the change from *degens* to *dolens* improves the meter, and for that reason, not much can be said about Frithegod’s use of the *VSW* while

11 Lapidge, “A Frankish Scholar,” 169–71; Dumville, *English Caroline Script*, 92–94; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, no. 843.

12 Lapidge, “A Frankish Scholar,” 171–72; Ebersperger, *Die angelsächsischen Handschriften*, 88–92; Dumville, *English Caroline Script*, 92–93; and Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, no. 890.5.

13 For the manuscript, see Lapidge, “A Frankish Scholar,” 163–69; Dumville, *English Caroline Script*, 92–93; Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 140; and Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, no. 312. For the possibility of the manuscript being an autograph, see Lapidge, “A Frankish Scholar,” 177; and Lapidge, “Autographs of Insular Latin Authors,” 127–28. While Campbell believed that the version in the Saint Petersburg manuscript is authoritative and that the differences in the version of Claudius A.i are the result of scribal tinkering (, *Frithegod monachi Breuiloquium*, viii), Young, “Author’s Variants,” conclusively demonstrated that the differences are actually corrections improving the poem.

revising. On the contrary, in one instance, the reading of **L** is altered in the later version to match closer the reading of the *VSW*:

Nam et per *tres annos* simul cum eo *mansit* (*VSW* 6.5–6)

Tarde quidem rediit, uerum *tres mansitat annos* (*Brev.* 172)

Sero quidem rediit, uerum *tria lustra* peregit (*Brev.* 172 **L**).

Young notes, but does not explain, the alteration from “*tria lustra* peregit” to “*tres mansitat annos*” at line 172.¹⁴ Although the evidence from a single example is slight, at the very least this one instance suggests that Frithegod consulted the prose life while revising his work.

As for Stephen’s *VSW*, there are two surviving witnesses: London, British Library, Cotton MS *Vespasian D.vi*, fols. 78–125 (**V**);¹⁵ and Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 223 (**S**), formerly in Oxford as part of the Fell Collection.¹⁶ While the *Vespasian* manuscript was held at Canterbury during the period when Frithegod was present, its life of Wilfrid was added later in the eleventh century, and therefore could not have been consulted by Frithegod. Similarly, the Salisbury manuscript, which was produced in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, is of too late a date for Frithegod to have had at hand. But with these two witnesses available, it is clear that the *Vespasian* manuscript is, indeed, closer to Frithegod’s actual source than the Salisbury manuscript. However, as will be discussed below, the *Breviloquium* does share enough overlap with the Salisbury manuscript to determine that Frithegod’s copy of the *VSW* must have shared readings from both. The evidence accumulates mainly in similarities of English place names and chapter rubrics that are closer in Frithegod’s *Breviloquium* and the *Vita* of *Vespasian D.iv* than Salisbury 223.

In almost all instances, the spelling of the names in the *Breviloquium* are closer to the spellings of the *Vespasian* manuscript over the Salisbury manuscript (see Table 8.1¹⁷). Generally, *Vespasian* and the *Breviloquium* prefer the use of /d/ over /th/ and of /i/ over /e/. The *Breviloquium* and *Vespasian* also prefer /E/ to /Ae/, though *Vespasian* does have “Aethelredi”; and the

14 Young, “Author’s Variants,” 79.

15 Pulsiano, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile*, 4:14–18; Colgrave, *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, xiii–xiv; and Gneuss and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, no. 390. The manuscript is composite due to a later rebinding.

16 Colgrave, *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, xiv–xv; and Madan, et al., *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts*, 2: no. 8687. I here use the sigla of my edition, which is different than Colgrave who uses **C** for the *Vespasian* manuscript and **F** for the Salisbury manuscript.

17 References are to lines of the *Breviloquium* and chapters of the *VSW*; R = rubric.

Salisbury manuscript tends to use /g/ where the *Breviloquium* and Vespasian do not. Furthermore, the final chapter of the *Vita* has a chapter division in Vespasian that is not in Salisbury, and such separation is reflected in the *Breviloquium* by means of a rubric at line 1374: “Quomodo fratribus signum in caelo apparuit” (How a sign appeared in the sky to the brothers). However, the rubric here differs from that of the Vespasian manuscript, which has “De signo circuli” (Of the sign of the arc).¹⁸ Furthermore, along with the final rubric of Vespasian, just mentioned, the rubric at 954 of the *Breviloquium* reads “Suðsaxonum” where Vespasian has “Selaesia” (and Salisbury has only the letters “se”). Later in this chapter, the form “Suthsexun” does appear in Vespasian where Salisbury has “Australia Saxones” (41), but it cannot be known if that instance influenced the rubric of the *Breviloquium*. With such evidence, it is safe to conclude that Frithegod was using a copy of the prose *Vita* of the same textual family as Vespasian, even though the differences between them indicate that Frithegod’s copy was at some distance from the Vespasian manuscript. But there is also one instance where the *Breviloquium* agrees with the Salisbury reading against that of Vespasian. At line 979, the *Breviloquium* has “Aediluualch,” where Vespasian has “Ethelwalhc” and Salisbury has “Aetheluualch.” The /Ae/ of the *Breviloquium* is uncommon, especially when Vespasian has an /E/, although this is not the only example in the *Breviloquium* when /Ae/ appears when Vespasian has /E/.¹⁹ The /d/ over /th/ in the *Breviloquium* also follows an expected pattern. The consonant cluster of Vespasian, /lhc/, is unusual and probably an error introduced in this manuscript and not seen by Frithegod. The most probable scenario, also taking into consideration the date and provenance, is that Frithegod’s copy of the *Vita* was the exemplar or very closely related to the exemplar of Vespasian. Vespasian made a few alterations to the spelling of names, and the one error. The discrepancies in the rubrics at lines 954 and 1374 may also have occurred after the copying of Frithegod’s exemplar, but since one of the rubrics in the *Breviloquium*, immediately before line 599, matches content with the *Vita* that does not appear in Frithegod’s poem,²⁰ it is also certainly

18 Unless stated otherwise, all translations of the *VSW* are from Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*.

19 Compare 638: Aelfuune; *VSW* 24: Elfwini (**V**), Aelfwini (**V**).

20 The rubric in the *Breviloquim* reads “Quomodo Ermenburgis reginae insidias passus est” (How he suffered the treachery of Queen Iurminburg), the following narration borrows from chapter 24 of the *VSW*, which mentions Iurminburg as Wilfrid’s adversary. The *Breviloquium*, however, leaves Wilfrid’s adversaries vague, and Iurminburg is not mentioned a part of the narrative until a short section beginning at line 681, which again borrows from chapter 24 of the *VSW*.

possible that the rubrics of the *Breviloquium* were added very shortly after the poem's composition and may not be authorial. Moreover, in one instance, the rubric of Salisbury (VSW 48) matches that of the *Breviloquium* (1106) against *Vespasian*: the rubric at 1106 is from Salisbury.²¹

Table 8.1. Select names found both in the *Breviloquium* and the two witnesses of the *Vita sancti Wilfridi*.

<i>Breviloquium</i>	VSW V	VSW S
185: Brunhild	6: Brunechild	Baldhild
106/192: Daluuinus (L) ²²	4/6: Dalfinus	Dalfinus
231: Aegilbertus	9: Aegilbehtus	Aegelberchtus
580R: Inagustaldaesae	22: Inhagustaldensae	Inhaegustaldesei
671: Adalgisum ²³	27.2: Aldgislum	Aldgelsum
672: Efruinus	27.2: Eferwine	Efyruinus
928R: Berhtuualdus	40: Beorhtuald	Birhtwald
934: Berhtuualdus ²⁴	40: Berhtuald	Bergtwald
940: Edilredi	40: Ethilredus ²⁵	Aethelredus
942: Ekfridi	40: Ecfridi	Ecgfrithi
949: Ermenburgis	40: Irmenburgae	Irminburgae
952: Centuuini	40: Centwini	Centwine
979: Aediluualch	41: Ethelwalhc	Aetheluualch
1002: Erchenuualdus	43: Ercenvoldum	Erconwaldum
1036: Aldfridus	44: Aldfridus	Aldfrithus
1041: Euuroica	44: Euroica	Eboraca
1271: Alhtfrido	59: Aldfridi	Aldfrithi

21 The rubric at line 579 presents ambiguous evidence. The *Breviloquium* has the name "Inagustaldaesae," C has "Inhagustaldensae," and S has "Inhaegustaldesei" (VSW 22).

22 C and P erroneously read *Maluuinus*.

23 In this instance, the line seems to be corrupt and the added syllable may be the result of a later scribe attempting to fix the meter. Line 671, which reads in the manuscripts, "quiret Adalgisum collatis subdole regem," likely originally read: "quiret [ut Aldgislum] collatis subdole regem"; I am grateful to Drew Jones for proposing this emendation.

24 Cf. 1265, Berthuualdo, which is erroneous for Berhtuualdo; VSW 57 correctly has Berchtwaldo (V) and Bergtwaldo (S).

25 But VSW 4 has Aethelredi (VS).

Additionally, in two instances not involving names, the variant in the Vespasian manuscript may lie behind the reading in the *Breviloquium*. The first is straightforward: both the Vespasian witness (VSW 43.35) and the *Breviloquium* (1019) read the word “primus” over “prius” of the Salisbury witness. But the second is more complex. In chapter 21 of the VSW, Colgrave prints “inter secularesque undas” of Salisbury 223 (VSW 21.7), translating “amid the tossing billows of the world.” For *seculares*, however, Vespasian D.vi reads “spiculares,” a word not attested elsewhere, but apparently to be understood as “thorny” or “prickly,” or alternatively as a reading for “speculares,” that is, “like a mirror,” or “reflective.” Neither is exactly nonsensical: Wilfrid steers the ship of the Church either through waves of thorns or through sparkling waves. With that said, Colgrave is probably right to prefer Salisbury’s reading of *seculares* here over Vespasian’s, as the simplest and most straightforward. But Vespasian’s reading of *spiculares* does seem to underlie the description of waves in line 565 of the *Breviloquium*: “corpus perspicuis castum purgabat in undis” (he would wash his chaste body in clear waves), a conflation of the waves of VSW 21.7 and a description of Wilfrid’s unstained body of VSW 21.14: “corpus quoque ab utero matris suae integrum” ([He kept] his body...pure from his mother’s womb). Although *perspicuus* in the *Breviloquium* rightly means “clear” and is not etymologically or semantically connected to the *spicula* of the Vespasian reading, it is difficult to ignore the connection between *spiculares undas* of the *Vitae* and *perspicuis undis* of the *Breviloquium*.²⁶ All evidence considered, Frithegod likely had a version of the VSW closer to that in the Vespasian manuscript, but with some readings that eventually found their way into the Salisbury copy.

Adapting the *Vita sancti Wilfridi*: Word Sounds

With relative confidence that Frithegod’s copy of the VSW looked similar to that of the Vespasian manuscript, it is possible to begin to see how he specifically used the text for his own composition. For the most part, his adaptation of Stephen is fairly straightforward. Almost each chapter is represented with a few direct verbal correspondences in roughly the same order of the prose account. The same general narrative is related in many instances, although with much abridgement due to the epitomizing tendencies of the *Breviloquium*. And yet, naturally, there are discrepancies between the two

²⁶ The construction using *perspicuis* in the second foot and in the ablative modifying the final word of the line also appears in line 64: “... perspicuis...plantis” (a rift of Vergil, *Aeneid*, 11.718: “pernicibus...plantis”). Line 274 has “perspiciant” in the same position. See below for further discussion on this method of adaptation.

texts. A minor instance has the *Breviloquium* stating that Wilfrid and his crew were victorious four times in a battle with barbarous pagans (392: “Unde quater victi remeant”), whereas the *VSW* (13.36) describes them as victorious only three times and ultimately saved by the incoming tide while the pagans prepared themselves for a fourth skirmish (13.40–41). Another example can be seen in an anecdote about a certain Winfrid who, according to Stephen, was left naked and desolated with his companions killed (*VSW* 25.11–16), but who, according to Frithegod, seems to fare worse: he is described as *perditus*, which admittedly may simply mean “undone” and not murdered (654–56). A last example, again minor, is the shift from “Iesu Nave,” that is Joshua, Son of Nun, in *VSW* 13.33–34 (“Iesu Nave ... pugnante”) to Jesus Christ in the *Breviloquium* (391: “Iesu uigilante,” with the change in participle for the sake of meter).

These examples point to a kind of playfulness of the text that Frithegod seems to be engaging with throughout. For there are numerous instances when Frithegod will take a single word from Stephen’s text or sometimes even part of a word and modify it for his own purposes. The change from “spiculares” to “perspicuis” discussed above is one example, but there are others that demonstrate that this practice was a general strategy of adaptation and composition. For two other clear examples: whereas the *VSW* (23.4–5) describes an accident that causes a man to put all his limbs out of joint (“membris desolutis”), in the *Breviloquium* the limbs become constricted and so unable to move: “Cruscula gressutos non norunt soluere tractus” (His legs were not able to slacken to make the movements for walking, 588); and whereas the *VSW* has two bishops stating that the regulation of the Church “pendet” (hangs, 29.18) on the judgement of Apostolic authority, Frithegod has the Pope instructing an assembly to “pendite” (“weigh,” “consider,” 748) the matter under trial. In these fairly minor examples, Frithegod is not misreading, but rather using words of the prose life more like prompts for his own composition. Interestingly, instead of choosing new words or continuing to use those of his source (along with their original meanings), Frithegod retains the relicts of his source but transforms them ever so slightly.

This strategy of adaptation clusters particularly in the composition of two rubricated sections based on chapters sixteen and seventeen of the *VSW*.²⁷ Chapter sixteen describes the restoration of the church at York:

27 For a good, alternative reading of these chapters and how Frithegod adapted them, see Lapidge, “Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Verse Hagiography,” at 250–51. Lapidge describes how Frithegod introduces arcane vocabulary and Grecisms, while remaining fairly close to the *VSW*.

Igitur supradicto rege regnante, beatae memoriae Wilfritho episcopo metropolitano Eboracae civitatis constituto, basilicae oratorii Dei, in ea civitate a sancto Paulino episcopo in diebus olim Eadwini christianissimi regis primo fundatae et dedicatae Deo, officia semiruta lapidea eminebant. Nam culmina antiquata tecti distillantia fenestraeque apertae, avibus nidificantibus intro et foras volitantibus, et parietes incultae omni spurcitia imbrum et avium horribiles manebant. Videns itaque haec omnia sanctus pontifex noster, secundum Daniele horruit spiritus eius in eo, quod domus Dei et orationis quasi speluncam latronum factam agnovit, et mox iuxta voluntatem Dei emendare excogitavit. Primum culmina corrupta tecti renovans, artificiose plumbo puro detegens, per fenestras introitum avium et imbrum vitro prohibuit, per quod tamen intro lumen radiabat. Parietes quoque lavans, secundum prophetam super nivem dealbavit. Iam enim non solum domum Dei et altare in varia suppellectili vasorum intus ornavit, verum etiam, deforis multa territoria pro Deo adeptus, terrenis opibus paupertatem auferens, copiose ditavit. Tunc sententia Dei de Samuhele et omnibus sanctis in eo implebatur: Qui, inquit, me honorificat, honorificabo eum; erat enim Deo et omni populo carus et honorabilis. (16.1–16.20)²⁸

In the *Breviloquium*, the general account and details remain the same:

Redditus ergo suis, instabat promptius illis.
Ecclesiae uero fundamina cassa uetustae.
Culmina dissuto uiolabant trabe palumbes.
Humida contrito stillabant assere tecta.

28 “Now during the reign of the above-mentioned king, after Wilfrid of blessed memory had been appointed metropolitan bishop of the city of York, the stone buildings of the church in that city were obviously in a ruinous condition. This church of God had been first founded by the holy Paulinus the bishop and dedicated to God in the days of Edwin, that most Christian king. But now the ridge of the roof owing to its age let the water through, the windows were unglazed and the birds flew in and out, building their nests, while the neglected walls were disgusting to behold owing to all the filth caused by the rain and the birds. When our holy bishop saw all this his spirit was vexed within him, as Daniel’s was, because he saw that the house of God and the house of prayer had become like a den of thieves; so, forthwith, in accordance with the will of God, he made a plan to restore it. First of all he renewed the ruined roof ridges, skilfully covering them with pure lead; by putting glass in the windows he prevented the birds or the rain from getting in, although it did not keep out the rays of light. He also washed the walls, and, in the words of the prophet, made them ‘whiter than snow.’ Furthermore, not only did he adorn the inside of the house of God and the altar with various kinds of vessels and furniture, but outside he richly endowed the church with many estates which he had acquired for God, thus removing its poverty by endowing it with lands. Then the word of the Lord concerning Samuel and all saints was fulfilled in him: ‘Them that honour me,’ He said, ‘I will honour’; for he was beloved and honoured both by God and by the whole nation,” Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, 33, 35.

Liuida nudato suggrundia pariete passa,
 imbricibus nullis. Pluuiae quacumque uagantur.
 Pendula discissis fluitant laquearia tignis.
 Fornice marcebant kataractae dilapidato.
 His ita contuitis, exhorruit. Illicet alti
 uiribus ingenii reparare peribula templi
 incumbunt fessi uasto sudore ministri,
 nec minus appropriant opicizi emblemata proni,
 arcus incultos hialino claudere uelo.
 Pondus et informes Athlantes ferre priores
 iussit, et expletum. Limphis perfunditur absis,
 albanturque suis lustrata altaria peplis.
 Exin glorifico persoluit munia Christo. (437–53)²⁹

As with the examples given above, the same sort of adaptation is apparent here. The *basilicae* founded (“fundatae”) by Paulinus (VSW 16.4) are the basis of the Church’s foundations (“fundamina”) in the *Breviloquium* (438); the nest-building birds (“avibus nidificantibus”) (VSW 16.6) are the basis of the bare wall (“nudato...pariete”) (441); the same birds described as flying (“volitantibus”) (16.6) are the basis for the defiling pigeons (“uiolabant...palumbes”) (439); and two sentences of the prose life describing the washing of the walls and the furnishing of the altar (16.14–15: “Parietes...dealbavit...altare...ornavit”) become a single, much altered sentence in the *Breviloquium*, describing the covering of the altar with a white cloth: “albanturque suis lustrata altaria peplis” (452). Frithegod is reading Stephen closely at this point, but his adaptation surpasses Stephen’s words by using their sounds and specific components to help build the foundations of his own terminology.

29 “Once he was restored to what was his, he therefore turned all the more quickly to it. Specifically, the foundations of the old church were useless. Since the roof had been opened, pigeons defiled the vaults. A damp roof was dripping from rotten planks. The black eaves hung over the bare wall, since the shingles were gone. Rain trickled in every which way. The ceiling, suspended by split rafters, wavered unsteadily. The windows were falling apart under the dilapidated arch. Upon seeing these things in such a state, he shuddered. Straightaway, the labourers, through the ability of their craftsmanship, set upon repairing the enclosure of the lofty church, working to fatigue with immense effort. No less did the workers, who were keen to add mosaics, hasten to enclose the unadorned arch with a glass pane. He commanded that the previously unshaped pillars bear their weight and it was done. He poured holy water over the apse and covered the holy altar with its own white cloth. Thereafter, he fulfilled his duties to glorious Christ.”

The next section of the *Breviloquium* continues this trend. The corresponding chapter of the *Vita sancti Wilfridi* describes a *de luxe* production of the gospels, written in golden letters and held in a case made of purest gold and most precious gems:

Addens quoque sanctus pontifex noster inter alia bona ad decorem domus Dei inauditum ante seculis nostris quoddam miraculum. Nam quattuor evangelia de auro purissimo in membranis depurpuratis, coloratis, pro animae suae remedio scribere iussit: necnon et bibliothecam librorum eorum, omnem de auro purissimo et gemmis pretiosissimis fabrefactam, compaginare inclusores gemmarum praecepit; quae omnia et alia nonnulla in testimonium beatae memoriae eius in ecclesia nostra usque hodie reconduntur, ubi reliquiae illius requiescunt, et sine intermissione cotidie in orationibus nominis eius recordantur. (17.35–17.44)³⁰

With Stephen, the case for the gospels is sumptuously constructed: “omnem de auro purissimo et gemmis pretiosissimis fabrefactam” (17.40–41) and described in the same terms as the golden letters of the gospels themselves (“auro purissimo”). With Frithegod, the book is described, but with a significant change:

Optima quaeque dedit libens exenia miris
efflorata modis: capsacibus atque gemellis
codex aurato consaeptus grammate scriptus,
auctus, euuangelicum seruans in corpore textum.
Cumque benigniuolo persolueret omnia corde,
inflatur nullo, Iesu moderamine, tippo. (471–76)³¹

In accordance with Stephen’s account, Frithegod has the book written in golden letters, although he alters the detail on the case which here encloses the book in twin covers instead of gems: “capsacibus atque gemellis / codex

30 “Our holy bishop also provided for the adornment of the house of God, among other treasures, a marvel of beauty hitherto unheard of in our times. For he had ordered, for the good of his soul, the four gospels to be written out in letters of purest gold on purpled parchment and illuminated. He also ordered jewellers to construct for the books a case all made of purest gold and set with most precious gems; all these things and others besides are preserved in our church until these times as a witness to his blessed memory; here too his remains rest, and daily, without any intermission, his name is remembered in prayer,” Colgrave, *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, 37.

31 “He gladly donated the best gifts, every one picked for their marvellous features. Among these was a book bound in twin covers, and enhanced by golden letters of a scribe; within it the Gospel text was preserved. And when Wilfrid completed all these things with a benevolent heart, he did not become swollen with pride, but Jesus kept him restrained.”

aurato consaeptus grammate scriptus / auctus" (a book bound in twin covers, and enhanced by golden letters of a scribe, 472–73). Frithegod leaves out Stephen's detail of the gems (*gemmis*) and replaces it with two similarly sounding, but different, terms: *capsacibus gemellis* and *aurato grammate*. As with the previous chapter, Frithegod's method of adaptation based on word sounds rather than the words themselves continues. He forgoes any mention of "gems," but extracts the sequence, /g/ + vowel + /m/, to form his own aurally similar expressions. And here, the alteration from *gemmis* to *gemellis*, though admittedly convenient for the meter, helps to point outward to the "twin" relationship created by the *Breviloquium* alongside the prose life. Just as the gospels were contained by two covers, so also is the life of Wilfrid now "twinned" by prose and poetic versions, which, while serving a similar function of veneration, remain significantly distinct.

Earlier in this same chapter, Frithegod reaches the extreme limits of this strategy with an obscure pun on the two words spelt *populus*—that is *pōpulus*, people, and *pōpulus*, the poplar or, occasionally, birch tree. In the prose life, Wilfrid has the Church at Ripon decorated as sumptuously as the gospel books, which shine before the sight of the people:

beatissimus Wilfrithus episcopus thalamum veri sponsi et sponsae in conspectu populorum, corde credentium et fide confitentium, auro et argento purpuraque varia mirifice decoravit. (17.10–17.13)³²

Frithegod's account, while retaining the general narrative, varies much from Stephen's. He does not mention the gold, silver, or purple, and decides to include a longer description of the actual process of building the church whose careful, thorough, and well-balanced portrayal appropriately fits form to content:

Theosopho spirans animo cognata sinergus
oppida diffuso Hripis amplificare columno,
illic planata triuiatim uomere terra,
simmetriis perpendiculo perfecte libratis
ecclesiam statuit, thalamum Christoque dicauit. (458–62)³³

32 "The blessed Bishop Wilfrid wondrously adorned the bridal chamber of the true Bride-groom and Bride with gold and silver and varied purples, in the sight of the multitudes who believed in their hearts and made confession of their faith," Colgrave, *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, 35, 37.

33 "Our fellow worker was eager with a soul of godly wisdom to build up Ripon, the town of his birth, with hazel planted all around. After the ground there was made level everywhere by the plough, he raised a church with all its parts symmetrically and perfectly balanced by a plumb-line, and then consecrated it to Christ as a bridal chamber."

Most of what Frithegod writes here can be understood as an imaginative, realistic expansion of what he read in Stephen, with the exception of the oddly specific detail on the surrounding hazel grove (“diffuso...colurno”) (459). The mention of these trees, which only seems to serve to add a bit of colour, is striking. It is, however, less confusing when read next to Stephen’s account which describes the procession occurring “in the sight of the multitudes” (“in conspectu populorum,” 17.11). In this case, Frithegod seems to have deliberately (mis)read the phrase as something along the lines of *conspectu pōpulorum*, that is “in the sight of the poplars or birches.” While the assumption is that Frithegod would have understood *populus* as birch instead of poplar, and that he would have known somehow that birch and hazel trees are genetically related, the oddity of this detail can only really be explained in this way. Frithegod also would certainly not have misunderstood Stephen here, and the change must be a deliberate play on words, despite how deeply it is hidden.

The high concentration of such unusual alterations in these two chapters can be explained by their content: both chapters depict the restoration of churches, which in both cases receive sumptuous additions and further decoration. So also, these two sections of the *Breviloquium* are, in a sense, restorations of the prose life, with their own sumptuous additions and decorative flourishes. Frithegod has taken the verbal foundations of the *VSW* and refashioned them as Wilfrid did physical buildings.

Looking Back to the *Vita sancti Wilfridi*

While aural similarities between the words of the *VSW* and the *Breviloquium* give some indication of Frithegod’s compositional methods, they also show the importance of reading his poem alongside his source, very much within the deliberate scope of the meditative strategies behind the *opus geminatum*. But if so, how could Frithegod actually expect his audience at Canterbury to be so attentive to such a level of minutia as to appreciate this method of adaptation? For one, it really does seem as though Frithegod expected his readers to be familiar with the *VSW*, either by frequent reading and meditation over the text or by having a physical copy of the book open on the desk for easy consultation. Indeed, the *Breviloquium* can be so obscure in some places that it is almost impossible to understand it without familiarity with the prose text, and occasionally, recourse to Stephen’s account serves as a kind of answer key for the perplexed.

Especially coming to the end of the poem, some passages become extremely difficult, verging on incomprehensibility. Line 1212, for example, has eluded modern scholarship. The manuscript reads: “Quis duo quidecies

denos pariter quoque quinos / elogio archontes queat infamare maligno." Since *quidecies* is not a word, all editors as early as Mabillon emend to "quindecies" and punctuated it to align with *duo*.³⁴ The line could then be rendered as: "Who can defame $[(2 \times 15) + (10 \times 5) =]$ eighty bishops with an evil utterance." The problem with this emendation is that the number then changes drastically from the prose account. In the corresponding chapter of the *VSW*, Stephen writes that there were not eighty but 125 bishops whose decree would need to be defamed (53.70: "cum centum xxv orthodoxis episcopis"). With this figure at hand, the manuscript reading of the *Breviloquium* actually becomes sound; it is just that the number *duodecies* is obscured by tmesis and the interfering *qui* is to be understood as the adverb: "Quis duo- qui -decies denos pariter quoque quinos" (Who in what way is able to defame $[(12 \times 10) + 5 =]$ 125 bishops...). It seems hardly possible that this riddle is capable of being solved without consulting the prose life.

While this example may be the most obscure, there are other allusions in the *Breviloquium* for which their meaning is understood only with assistance from the *VSW*. Line 1261, "cum numero uitae meruisti praemia summae" reads bafflingly as "you have earned the rewards of the highest life with a number (*cum numero*).". Chapter 53 of the prose life clarifies the sense by listing biblical figures who lived longer lives because of intercession (56.31–35). Frithegod's phrase "cum numero" is evidently meant to reflect that Wilfrid earned a longer life; the word *uitae* is a genitive of both *numero* and *praemia*: "you have earned the rewards of the highest life along with a few more years of this life." Similarly, only eight lines later, Frithegod uses the adverb *cessim* (1269). In its only entry for this headword, the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (*DMLBS*) hesitantly defines it as "(?) in return." In the context, Wilfrid has sought the halls of King Æthilred, who "retulit cessim," that is, following the *DMLBS*, "received him in return." But the prose account gives a hint on the probable meaning of this word; for Æthilred prostrates

34 Before Campbell, the text saw two printed editions: Mabillon, *Acta sanctorum ordinis S. Benedicti*, 3,1:171–96, supplemented in 4,1: 722–6 (and later appearing in *PL* 133, 979–1012), which is an edition of the Saint Petersburg manuscript; and Raine, *Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops*, 1:105–59, which is an edition of the Cotton manuscript with variants from the Saint Petersburg and Paris manuscripts. See Lapidge, "A Frankish Scholar," 158n7. Each of these editions edits lines 1212–13 as: "Quis duo-quindecies, denos pariter quoque quinos / elogio archontes queat infamare maligno?" The text in *CLASP: A Consolidated Library of Anglo Saxon Poetry* is also taken from Campbell, and lines 1212–13 are translated as "Who could defame rulers of forty-five years' service / with a malicious pronouncement?" "FRITHEGOD.BrevVWilfred," *CLASP*, <https://clasp.ell.ox.ac.uk/db-latest/poem/FRITHEGOD.BrevVWilfred>, accessed May 30, 2023.

himself on the ground and “oboedienter spopondit” (57.22), that is, following Colgrave, “obediently made a promise.” The adverb *cessim*, which is likely connected to the verb *cedere* in the sense “yield, submit,” could be rendered as “submissively” and correspond to Stephen’s *oboedienter*. Admittedly, none of these examples require a readership intimately familiar with the prose life to make at least some sense of the meaning. But the prose life certainly does help—it provides an aid that Frithegod may have expected his readers to have read or to have at hand to untangle some of the more complex passages of his poem; it performs in reverse to the earliest stated goals of the *opus geminatum*: the poetry is deliberately obscured to require clarification in the pre-existing and much clearer prose life.

The most apparent similarities between Stephen’s *VSW* and Frithegod’s metrical version are unsurprising for any rendition of a new work based on its previous source. The general narrative remains the same and there are many instances of relatively uninteresting verbal overlap. But what is remarkable between two is the degree to which the prose life continues to function as an almost necessary text for interpreting the *Breviloquium*. Despite its very idiosyncratic nature, the *Breviloquium* remains reliant on the *VSW* for its interpretation. And by doing so, Frithegod has composed not just a poem, but rather a new composition that forces the reader back to his source. The two works become an *opus geminatum* that emerge as a single work of two equally significant parts.

Beyond the *Vita sancti Wilfridi*

Although Stephen’s prose life is the “twinned” part of an *opus* joined to the *Breviloquium*, it is also possible to glimpse comparable methods of composition and Frithegod’s high expectations for his readers in at least two other minor instances in the poem, which reveal oblique allusions that make better sense when the wider context of the source is known (or even at hand). My first example appears fairly early in the narrative, when Wilfrid is elected to a bishopric:

Auxit, rorigeri per quem micat astrea caeli,
uictoris specimen, quem iam transuexerat, Alpem.
Nam postquam dicto sedes uiduata patrono,
consulto regis necnon hortamine plebis,
lactea suspensis qui praebeat ubera mandris,
Vuilfridum patria creuerunt uoce legendum. (305–10)³⁵

35 “This paradigm of a champion, through whom the starry light of the dew-bearing heaven shines, extended the Alps, which he had just carried across to Britain. Indeed,

Line 309 can be read as a colourful metaphor for Wilfrid's pastoral duties: he spiritually nourishes those under him, like a ruminant giving milk to his young. But when the line is read in the wider context of this source, it begins to carry more weight. Line 309 borrows a line from the end of Virgil's second *Georgic*: "ubera uaccae / lactea demittunt" (2.524–25, "cows let down their milky udders"). Its allusive potential comes forth in light of the previous sentence, where Frithegod mentions how Wilfrid, by successfully arguing the Roman reckoning for Easter, has extended the "Alps" further, into Britain; he has, in other words, gained a victory for the "Roman" Catholic Church. With Frithegod's methods of adaptation in mind, it is almost certainly no coincidence that at the end of the second *Georgic*, only a few lines after the mention of the "milky udders," Virgil concludes the book with a description of the power and beauty of pre-historic Rome:

sic fortis Etruria creuit
scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma,
septemque una sibi muro circumdedit arces. (2.533–35)³⁶

Virgil could not have imagined his most beautiful (though pagan) Rome extending as far as the Catholic Church has; rather, it and its seven hills become enclosed literally within its walls. But this is exactly what Frithegod seems to have had in mind when quoting the *Georgics* at this moment. Wilfrid's ability to provide "pastoral" care of sound doctrine to his Northumbrian flocks, described using Virgil's language about ancient Roman pastoral life, connects and, more importantly, undermines Virgil's idyllic depiction of an enclosed Rome by showing that Rome through the Catholic Church extends beyond its seven hills right up to the edges of the world. Frithegod certainly risks losing this connection between Virgil's depiction of Rome and Wilfrid's extension of it in the depth of the *Breviloquium's* allusiveness. And yet, the connection is there, revealing how Frithegod read and used this section of the *Georgics*, which in turn demands his readers to perform equivalent close reading and reflection.³⁷

after the seat was abandoned by the aforementioned bishop [sc. Coleman], at the advice of the king and the encouragement of the people, they decreed in their native language that Wilfrid should be chosen as the one to offer udders of milk to the sheep dependent on him."

36 "In this way Etruria grew powerful and without a doubt Rome became the most beautiful of all things; it enclosed its seven hills within a single wall."

37 See also Dronke, "Functions of Classical Borrowing in Medieval Latin Verse," who discusses similar interpretative potential of Virgilian allusions in the *Waltherius*.

My second example can be found again in Frithegod's use of pagan literature. Near the end of the narrative, Wilfrid, now aged, falls into a four-day illness after which he is visited by the angel Michael:

Demum cum quintae spirarent lumina solis,
mittitur e summo, dictu mirabile, caelo
archanus Michahel nitido lampabilis ore,
quem pater intendens non ut phantasma repellens,
ceu Stilbonta, nouum lumen, ueneratur amicum. (1243–47)³⁸

Stilbon ("Stilbonta" in the accusative) is a rare Grecism for the planet, and by extension the god, Mercury, which makes the sentiment of the sentence odd. For one, the sentence falls within the stylistic device of ambiguity, which was often shunned by the grammarians but embraced by the poets.³⁹ Due to its position here, the phrase "ceu Stilbonta," placed immediately after *phantasma repellens* and immediately before *nouum lumen*, can be read two ways: either Wilfrid is not looking at Michael as if he were an evil spirit like Mercury ("non ut phantasma repellens, ceu Stilbonta"), or he is venerating Michael with reverence due to a deity ("ceu Stilbonta, nouum lumen, ueneratur amicum").⁴⁰ With that said, the line remains problematic. If "ceu Stilbonta" is in apposition to "phantasma," the specificity of the line is unusual; what is there to fear of Mercury in particular? Alternatively, if it is part of the clause governed by "ueneratur," why would Wilfrid be interested in venerating Michael as if he were a god, and a pagan god at that? In this case, Frithegod's source helps clear the matter. The word *stilbon* could have been picked up in Isidore, where he notes the Greek term for the planet Mercury;⁴¹ or if Frithegod had access to a bilingual, Greek–Latin gospel, he may have learned the word from Mark 9:3, which refers to the gleaming clothing of Jesus after the resurrection.⁴²

38 "In the end, when the light of the fifth day had beamed forth, Michael was mysteriously sent from the highest heaven—it is amazing to say—shining with a radiant face. Our father looked at him not as if he were a repellent ghost, but venerated him as if he were *Stilbon*, the new light, and a friend." I wish to thank Drew Jones for urging me to rethink my earlier reading of this section.

39 See the succinct discussion of ambiguity in Virgil in O'Hara, "Virgil's Style," 249–50; and Thomas, "A Trope by Any Other Name," 381–407. The grammarians employ the terms *ambiguitas* and, from the Greek, *amphibolia*.

40 The phrase "phantasma repellens" is also ambiguous since *repellens* may be modifying Wilfrid: "he [Wilfrid] looked at him and did not reject him as a ghost." But homoeoteleuton of participles modifying a masculine subject and neuter noun in the same line fits Frithegod's convoluted style.

41 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 3.70.20–21.

42 For bilingual gospels, see Berschin, "Greek Elements in Medieval Latin Manu-

But the surrounding language of the *Breviloquium* provides some further evidence that the word has been taken from Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, and is used to align Mercury (the messenger of the gods) with the angel Michael (the messenger of God).⁴³ In a list of planet names, Martianus states that *Stilbon* is the name for Mercury: "Mercurium Stilbonta nominarunt";⁴⁴ but this information is too brief and banal to shed light on line 1247 of the *Breviloquium*. The early medieval glossators, however, are a bit more helpful. For Remigius and John Scotus Eriugena gloss *Stilbon* as *splendens* (which is also how the word is glossed in the Cotton manuscript of the *Breviloquium*).⁴⁵ With these glosses in mind, the word in the *Breviloquium* seems to mean nothing more than "shining": "Our father looked at him not as if he were a repellent ghost, but venerated him as if he were a shining light newly arrived and a friend." But its connection to Mercury is reinforced in two further obscure references from the *De nuptiis*. In the first, after Michael has departed back to heaven, Frithegod interjects with an apostrophe to Wilfrid himself:

O defesse sagax, curat quem caelica pinax,
et quia pellacis uitasti gaudia saeculi,
cum numero uitae meruisti praemia summae. (1259–61).⁴⁶

The meaning of *pinax* at line 1259 is unclear. The *DMLBS* understands the word here to mean a "person of high rank" (s.v. 2), perhaps because its primary meanings "board, table" and "writing-tablet" (s.v. 1a–b) do not seem to make much sense in this instance. This definition, however, is an error; the word here does in fact mean some sort of tablet at line 1259, connected to Michael through his association with "Stilbon." For in the *De nuptiis*, the

scripts," 91–94.

43 Frithegod's dependence on Martianus Capella is almost certain, but is difficult to determine in the specifics. Young, "Author's Variants," 98, concludes his essay by suggesting that closer comparative study of the *De nuptiis* and the *Breviloquium* would illuminate much of Frithegod's own vocabulary. I wish to acknowledge that Andy Orchard first pointed me towards Martianus Capella and his glossators for this section of the *Breviloquium*.

44 *Martianus Capella*, ed. Willis, 322, line 15.

45 *Remigii Autissiodorensis Commentum in Martianum Capellam*, ed. Lutz, 448.10, 272: "MERCURIUM STILBONTA id est splendentem vel celerem"; and Iohanneis Scottusi, *Annotationes in Marcianum*, 448.12, 177: "STILBONTA id est splendentem." The gloss in Claudius A.i, fol. 33v, reads "splendens."

46 "Oh you exhausted prophet, who was healed by heavenly *pinax*, because you avoided the joys of this deceitful world, you have earned the rewards of the highest life along with a few more years of this life."

pinax is a magical tablet presented to Philology, which she recognizes as associated with Mercury:

spicas manu caelatumque ex hebeno pinacem argumentis talibus afferebat...
hanc tabellam cum ingestam sibi cognosceret virgo venerata, licet sponsi
agnosceret argumentum, tamen non ausa est sine supplicatione transire.⁴⁷

Frithegod's *caelica pinax*, which restores Wilfrid from his illness, echoes the *caelata pinax* of Mercury.

The second connection between Martianus and this section of the *Breviloquium* is more tenuous: Frithegod's description of Michael as "Archanus" (1245). Angels certainly do fall within the realm of the secret and, most often, the hidden, but the description of "secret Michael" is jarring, even if taken adverbially as in the translation provided above. The *DMLBS* is probably correct in its suggestion that there is here a "play on archangelus" (s.v. "archanus"). But as with so many other examples in the *Breviloquium*, an unusual phrase can be clarified by Frithegod's sources. In the second book of *De nuptiis*, in a discussion on spirits, Martianus connects the *arcana* to *Angelus*: "et quoniam cogitationum arcana superae annuntiat potestati, etiam Angelus poterit nuncupari" (because he announces the secret things of deliberations by a higher power, he could also be called an "Angel"); before clarifying that the *Angelus* refers to those whom "Graeci daemones dicunt" (the Greeks call *daemones*).⁴⁸ The intertextual connection between Martianus's angel and Frithegod's Michael could not be cogently sustained by this instance alone. But in consideration of Frithegod's use of *Stilbon* and his *pinax* elsewhere in this passage, "Archanus Michahel" does seem to be another hint towards Frithegod's close reading of the *De nuptiis* and a desire to use these allusions to associate Michael with Mercury. If Frithegod's Michael does find his literary form in inspiration from Martianus's Mercury, the archangel becomes more than a simple messenger to a comatose Wilfrid. He is now, like Mercury for the pagans, the Christian symbol of eloquence, a trait as cherished by Frithegod's Wilfrid as by Frithegod himself.⁴⁹

47 *Martianus Capella*, ed. Willis, 50.17–18 and 51.1–3. "She [sc. Themis] presented in her hands a bushel of grain and a *pinax* engraved in ebony with these such designs... Although the worthy maiden knew that this tablet had been brought for her, she dared not approach it without supplication, even though she saw that its subject was her husband." See Lenaz, *Martiani Capellae de nuptiis philologiae et Mercurii liber secundus*, 213; and the abridged information in Cristante et al., *Martiani Capellae de nuptiis philologiae et Mercurii libri I–II*, 327.

48 *Martianus Capella*, ed. Willis, 46.21–22.

49 For the allegory of Mercury as eloquence, see Nuchelman, "Philologia et son marriage."

Conclusion

While these examples from Virgil's *Georgics* and Martianus' *De nuptiis* may seem to stretch interpretative limits in their extremely allusive manner, they are not so inconceivable in light of Frithegod's treatment of Stephen's *VSW*. As a whole, they reveal the connections Frithegod seems to have had developed from his own reading, as well as the potential for the *Breviloquium* to extend meaning from often brief, seemingly insignificant utterances outward to the deep fount of the poem's sources. By doing so, Frithegod creates an expectation that the poem be read alongside the prose text. Like a diptych on an altar, like two covers on a single book, Frithegod's *Breviloquium* is profoundly connected with Stephen's prose life; they are not two separate works but a single *opus geminatum* that requires reading, and rumination over, both parts. And this practice of composition makes huge demands of its readers to be deeply familiar with, probably even to the point of memorization, not only the original hagiographical source, but also the literary texts of the monastic curriculum. Such attentive reading, however, could have occurred in a tenth-century monastic setting when monks not only could study whatever was available in the library during periods of private reading, but would also hear saints' lives read regularly in the refectory. Although it is difficult today to comprehend such intense demands on the reader, especially for those without the benefit of centuries of modern scholarly resources and electronic corpora accompanied by sophisticated digital tools, the rigorous rule of living followed by Frithegod's monastic readers would have prepared them better to be able to discover parallels between texts. The intertextual connections formed in Frithegod's *Breviloquium* reveal how truly different were the monastic reading practices of the tenth century, where social and ideological contexts permitted a life devoted to rumination in hopes of discovering truth.

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