Old English Words for Relics of the Saints[*]

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The resources of the *Dictionary of Old English* (*DOE*) have proven invaluable to historians of the earlier Middle Ages. The *Microfiche Concordance* assisted Sarah Foot, for example, as she has traced how shifts in the Old English terms *mynster* "monastery, minster" and *nunne* "nun, vowess" expose fault-lines in Anglo-Saxon religious life that hardly show in Latin terminology of the period.[1] Using the more recent, electronic versions of the *DOE* and its searchable *Corpus*, I seek in this paper to explain some patterns of vocabulary in another ecclesiastical sphere, the cult of saints. This vocabulary has received little attention, despite the acknowledged importance of relic-cults in the Anglo-Saxon Church and the large quantity of relevant material in Old English.[2] Both Latin and vernacular terms for saints' relics repay scrutiny. They are often less

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[*] I have used the *DOE* short-title and reference system throughout when citing Old English texts or their immediate Latin sources. These short-titles may be found on the website of the *DOE*, at <http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/st/index.html>. In quotations from all primary sources, I have silently expanded ampersands and tironian *et* as "and" or "et" and have omitted most non-essential diacritic marks. Translations are my own unless otherwise attributed. For their helpful comments on drafts of this study, I am grateful to Leslie Lockett and Robyn Malo and to the two readers who anonymously reviewed the essay for *Florilegium*. Above all, my thanks and appreciation go to the creators of the *Dictionary of Old English* for all the light that their important work continues to shed on questions of cultural history.

1 On *mynster*, see Foot, "Anglo-Saxon Minsters"; on *nunne*, see her "Language and Method" and *Veiled Women*, 1:96-104.

2 See Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, and more recent essays in Thacker and Sharpe, eds., *Local Saints and Local Churches*. Foundational studies of vernacular materials for relic-cults include Liebermann, *Die Heiligen Englands*, and especially Förster, "Zur Geschichte des Reliquienkultus."

transparent than modern histories assume, and, like the monastic words studied by Foot, some Old English relic-terms reveal more than their Latin counterparts about prevailing religious customs.

      This study begins with a review of some Latin terms and of certain material traits common to early medieval relic-cults, since these profoundly shaped the Old English vocabulary surveyed in the second part of the paper. In modern perspective, the vernacular developments are often surprising and suggest that many Anglo-Saxons thought about relics according to categories rather different from those that recent scholarship has emphasized. The third part of the essay seeks to draw out implications of this vocabulary as it blends elements of Latin hagiographic and Old English secular literature, and a brief conclusion turns back to scan some broader horizons, linguistic and historical.

1. Latin Backgrounds: Terminology and the Concealment of Relics

Historians of art and architecture have carefully sifted the terminology for the material trappings of relic-cults,[3] yet there still is no comprehensive study of medieval Latin terms for relics themselves.[4] By the early Middle Ages, Lat. *reliquiae* had become a blanket term used for saints' corporeal remains, whole or fragmentary, but also for species of lesser and derivative relics. (Standardized canonical distinctions among classes of relics were a post-medieval development.[5]) In the absence of further archaeological or textual cues, the term *reliquiae* alone does not disclose what the objects in question actually were.[6] Other literal names might clarify whether whole bodies (*corpora*) were at issue, as opposed to parts (*membra*, *artus, caput* etc.) or the bones (*ossa*), embers (*favillae*), ashes (*cineres, busta*), or dust (*pulvis*) that

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3 E.g., Braun, *Die Reliquiare*, 17-69; Crook, *The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Saints*, *passim*.

4 Perhaps the best overview of terminology for relics is Grégoire, *Manuale di agiologia*, 310-18, with references to earlier literature. For specific studies, see Gagov, "Uso e significato del termine 'corpus,'" "Il culto delle reliquie," and "Il termine 'nomina.'" It must be stressed that my remarks following in this section offer only cursory, selective treatment of Latin terminology, many items of which, on closer review, pose difficulties even of basic classification (e.g., as literal *vs.* metonymic *vs.* metaphoric). A fuller study of the Latin evidence is greatly needed.

5 For the terms applied by modern canon law, see Dooley, *Church Law on Sacred Relics*, 4-5.

6 On this vagueness and its consequences, see Beissel, *Die Verehrung der Heiligen*, 1:142-44; and Kötting, "Reliquienverehrung," 326.

survived destruction.[7] Likewise, the oldest nomenclature for representative relics produced by contact with saints' bodies includes literal terms for strips of cloth (*brandea* or *palliola*) lowered into the tomb, as well as more generic terms for "blessed/sanctified objects" or "gifts, favours" (*eulogia, sanctuaria*, *beneficia*, *benedictiones* etc.).[8]

   Even in the ostensibly literal vocabulary there are pitfalls: *corpus* could designate not only an intact body but also a fragment of one. This synecdoche mirrors an ancient belief that a saint's *virtus* resided as fully in the part as in the whole.[9] Presumably the term *corpus* did not extend to non-corporeal relics, but then again we are seldom in a position to know for sure. Archaeology offers a cautionary parallel: beneath the main altars at Ripon and Hexham, Bishop Wilfrid had crypts dug to enshrine what his biographer calls *reliquiae* from Rome. Since, in the seventh century, transplanted Roman "relics" would likely have been *brandea* or *palliola*, Wilfrid's arrangements have been interpreted as a deliberate staging of non-corporeal or, at most, fragmentary corporeal relics as if they were intact bodies.[10] The case, though rare, is instructive. Relic-seekers in a position to know the difference may have preferred whole to partial bodies and corporeal to contact relics. It is generally accepted that, from the later eighth century onwards, increased export of bodily relics from Rome encouraged discriminations of precisely that kind. But whether distinctions between whole and partial, corporeal and representative, were foregrounded, and whether it was even possible for the vast majority of supplicants to make such distinctions at all, are questions that any study of this lexical domain must face.[11] The typical early

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7 Clas.Lat. *cineres* "ashes" could designate human remains or the site of burial; see *Thesaurus linguae latinae*, vol. 3, fasc. 5, cols. 1069-75 (s.v. *cinis* senses II and II B). In medieval texts, the transferred sense of *cineres* includes uncremated remains: see, e.g., Rudolf of Fulda, *Miracula sanctorum in Fuldenses ecclesias translatorum*, 329, line 19.

8 See exemplary treatments of these and related terms by McCulloh, "The Cult of Relics in the Letters and 'Dialogues' of Pope Gregory the Great"; and Weidemann, "Reliquie und Eulogie."

9 See Gagov, "Uso e significato del termine 'corpus.'"

10 Crook, "The Enshrinement of Local Saints," 207-208. For a comparable case at 11th-century Canterbury, see Spurrell, "The Promotion and Demotion of Whole Relics," 68.

11 See Smith, "Old Saints, New Cults," on the influx of corporeal relics into Carolingian Francia. On the devaluation of representative relics that supposedly resulted, see Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques*, 45-49, and Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist*, 24-25; but cf. Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, 45, who argues that such perceptions of hierarchy would rarely have penetrated to the "niveau des simples fidèles qui a continuèrent à apprécier les vertus thaumaturgiques des objets ou des liquides ayant touché les reliques." Smith, "Oral and Written," 336-43, discusses a notable indifference to the corporeal/representative distinction among both popular and clerical traditions in medieval Brittany and Wales.

medieval experience of relics probably frustrated such notional hierarchies by confronting believers with a double opacity: one in the physical forms of enshrinement, another at the level of terminology. *Corpus* or other "literal" terms may sometimes have functioned as verbal equivalents of Wilfrid's crypts.

Latin also offers many figurative elaborations of terms for relics, and these say even less about the concrete identity of what they name. Late antique authors, for example, already referred to relics as *patrocinia* "[tokens or benefits of] patronage" or *pignora* "pledges, tokens, sureties," and hagiographers of the Middle Ages applied these nouns to corporeal and non-corporeal relics alike.[12] Another ancient figural pattern substituted for the names of relics terms for various kinds of vessels or structures that housed them. Thus, monuments associated with cults — *memoriae, martyria, tropaea* etc. — became natural metonyms for the relics they sheltered and also, by virtue of that contact, relics in their own right.[13] But the implication of the reliquary in the relic had farther-reaching consequences, as the former concealed and, in some sense, subsumed the identity of the latter. The problem is most noticeable in those body-shaped or "speaking" reliquaries (*redende* or *sprechende Reliquiare*) that, as Cynthia Hahn has shown, did not always reliably signal what relics they contained.[14] The mimetic, shaped reliquaries that are Hahn's focus remained rare in the earlier Middle Ages. Her point about the paradoxical relation of relic to reliquary nevertheless applies to the earlier medieval period and to the chests (*scrinia, loculi, arcae, thecae* etc.) or smaller vessels (*capsae, bursae* etc.) typically used then.[15]

The archaeological record suggests that some of the very earliest forms of relicshrines in the British Isles did have "access holes" that allowed pilgrims to reach in and make direct contact with the holy object, or at least with the earth, cloth, or other substance that covered the relics inside. Evidence for this type of common access appears to wane in England by the seventh and eighth centuries, however, as the cult of relics increasingly centred on tombs and shrines inside churches.[16] The emergent pattern

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12 Gagov, "Il culto delle reliquie." Cf. Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques*, 121, asserting that, in certain circumstances, the terms *pignora* and *patrocinia* were restricted to secondary relics.

13 On empty sarcophagi as relics, see Dierkins, "Du bon (et du mauvais) usage des reliquaires," 248-52.

14 As Hahn notes, "The reliquary in some sense enables or even constitutes the power of the relic. An argument can be made that the container ultimately supersedes the contained"; Hahn, "The Voices of the Saints," 28.

15 Hahn discusses the metaphoric significance of one common earlier form, the *bursa*, in her study "Metaphor and Meaning," 243-48.

16 See Thomas, *Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 133-66, esp. 138, 143, and 159.

then suggests that, after its initial invention and elevation, a significant relic would be put in a sealed container and kept secured. It would not routinely be exposed to view thereafter, and to the extent that one may speak at all of popular "access" to relics, it was typically access of a highly mediated and restrictive kind.[17] Many smaller or contact relics acquired with less fanfare would not even get the brief scrutiny of a ceremonial elevation before being deposited in altars or multi-relic shrines.[18] Reliquaries of any sort might be opened by their keepers, but public showings (*ostensiones*) of their contents were infrequent unless a translation was to follow. Otherwise, when showings occurred, it is seldom clear from the language of the sources whether the container was opened and the object taken out, or whether displaying the *closed* reliquary constituted an *ostensio*.[19] Routine showings and the rise of transparent reliquaries are associated with a piety of the gaze (*Schaufrömmigkeit*) ascendant only from the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[20] Prior to that turn, the typical western reliquary was less concerned with making a saint's absent, glorified body seem present.[21] Instead, concealment may have often had the opposite effect — of *disassociating* relics from bodies and perhaps, as a consequence, from a sense of the saint's personhood. The reliquary as experienced did not so much speak for the relic but rather fused with it into a sacred but potentially impersonal object of power.[22]

   To ascribe an impersonal sanctity to relics will seem strange to readers whose views on these phenomena have been shaped in the later twentieth century by Peter Brown, Caroline Walker Bynum, and others who have written so insightfully about the *praesentia* of the saints, through their relics, as friends and patrons.[23] An assumption

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17 See Braun, *Die Reliquiare*, 510. On forms of "access" to relics in the Middle Ages, see, e.g., Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, 26-28, and Sigal, *L'homme et le miracle*, 36-40.

18 See recently, e.g., Röckelein, "*1 alter hölzerner Kasten*."

19 Diedrichs, *Vom Glauben zum Sehen*, 78 and 141-47. On types of *ostensiones*, see Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques*, 209-16; Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist,* 277-83; and, for the late Middle Ages, Kühne, *Ostensio reliquiarum*.

20 On evolving reliquary-forms and *Schaufrömmigkeit*, see Diedrichs, *Vom Glauben zum Sehen*, 28-35 and 159-73.

21 Cf. Hahn, "Metaphor and Meaning," 250.

22 See Meyer, "Reliquie und Reliquiar im Mittelalter"; Dinzelbacher, "Die Realpräsenz der Heiligen," 136-37; and Diedrichs, *Vom Glauben zum Sehen*, esp. 29, describing the "hermetische Abgeschlossenheit" of early reliquaries. The concept of fusion (my term) is articulated in the extraordinary treatise on relics, *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, by Thiofrid of Echternach (d. 1110); see Ferrari, "Gold und Asche," 65.

23 See Malo, "Saints' Relics in Medieval English Literature," 13, n. 31.

that early medieval people inevitably wanted to put human faces on the relics they revered is also encouraged by the conventions of hagiography. A literate minority who usually lived and worshipped under the same roof, so to speak, with the saints' remains, hagiographers naturally personalized that *praesentia*. And yet the history of reliquaries that Hahn, Diedrichs, and others have begun to recover draws attention to the fact that most early medieval people experienced relics not as anything suggestive of a person or a body, but as a closed box or stone slab: even a *fenestella* or "access hole" did not necessarily allow squinting, groping pilgrims to identify the precise objects of their devotion. Such effacement of the saints' *virtus* left a blank that begged to be filled. After the twelfth century, the "speaking" or transparent reliquary would increasingly work to that end. And other evidence across the Middle Ages — inscriptions, relic-lists, identifying labels (*authentica*), public showings (*ostensiones*), or tests (*probationes*) — bespeaks the constancy of desires to know what particular *reliquiae* actually were.

The Old English materials examined below reveal a mostly different trend of responses. The categories operative in vernacular terminology rarely suggest a personalized notion of *praesentia*. On the contrary, much of the evidence affirms that relic and reliquary had popularly merged into a "holy thing" that levelled many kinds of distinction. Two principal terms, *reliquias* and *haligdom*, go farther in those directions than any comparable Latin word, accomplishing semantically what early medieval reliquaries often did materially: they occlude and elide, collectivize and largely depersonalize the "holies" that they contain.[24]

2.1. Old English Specifying Terms, Literal and Figurative

In Old English just as in Latin, basic relic-terms include concrete nouns for bodies (*lic, lichama*), or parts thereof (*leomu* "limbs," *earm* "arm," *heafod* "head," *feax* "hair" etc.). Of nouns in this group, perhaps most frequent is *ban* "bone(s)," no doubt reflecting a similarly common use of *ossa* as a relic-term by Latin authors.[25] Likewise, objects sanctified by contact with saints' bodies could simply be called by their

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24 The analogies between hagiographic language and the concealing effect of many reliquaries are well drawn by Malo, "The Pardoner's Relics," 89; see also Röckelein, "Die 'Hüllen der Heiligen.'"

25 OE *ban* occurs a total of *c.*475 times; by my count, about 63 of those refer to relics (see below, note 32). Thus, *ban* is, as a relic-term, somewhat less common than the loan word *reliquias*, discussed below.

literal names: clothing (*reaf*), dust (*dust*), oil (*ele*), and the like. Such usages require no comment, save that, on one occasion, *lichama* "body" possibly mimics the extension of Lat. *corpus* to name an indeterminate relic. The instance occurs in an interlinear version of prayers in London, British Library, Arundel 155, where Latin "ad *pignora* sanctorum tuorum prostratus indulgentiam peto" (I beg forgiveness at the *pignora* [tokens, relics] of your saints) is glossed "to lichaman haligra þinra astreht ic bidde" (ArPrGl 1, 18.6: I pray prostrate at the *bodies* of your saints [emphasis mine]). Either the glossator has taken for granted that, at least in his local community, *pignora* will be understood as referring to particular *corporeal* relics, or the notion of "bodies" has been generalized, as happens in Latin, to include fragmentary corporeal or even non-corporeal relics.[26] Elsewhere the Arundel glossator renders the general Latin relic-term, *reliquiae*, with a more precise Old English one, *liclafa* "bodily remains," that clearly conveys the aspect of corporeality.[27] Glosses do not necessarily say much about the living language, but the Arundel glossator's choice to disambiguate these Latin lemmata sets him apart.

    Among specific Old English relic-terms indebted to Latin figurative usage are three instances of the noun *mundbyrd* "patronage, protection" adopted as a semantic loan for *patrocinium* in its transferred sense "(saint's) relic." Since two of these occur in ninth-century texts (the *Old English Martyrology* and Wærferth's translation

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26 In a different prayer (ArPrGl 1, 32.65), "pignore" used in its literal sense "pledge, token of surety" is appropriately glossed by OE "wedde." The earliest citation for *pignora* in the sense "saints' relics" provided by the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, fasc. 11:2278 (s.v. *pignus* sense 4), comes from the 11th-century hagiographer Goscelin of Saint-Bertin. Given the widespread use of *pignora* as a relic-term since late Antiquity (see bibliography in note 12, above), however, it seems implausible that the usage was not known in England well before Goscelin. On the local cults in the Arundel glossator's (probable) community, see the following note.

27 ArPrGl 38.26-28 (all emphases mine) "mid þinum gefylst foreþingugum [*sic*] and eac [-] þara *liclafa* synd hæfede on andweardre stowe [-]" (aided by your intercessions and also [those of the saints] whose *bodily remains* are kept in this present place); this glosses Latin "tuis adiutus intercessionibus simulque sanctorum dei quorum *reliquiae* continentur in presenti loco aecclesiae Cristi" (aided by your intercessions together with those of God's saints whose relics are preserved in this present location of Christ Church). OE *liclaf* in the Arundel gloss is remarkable not only as a unique compound but because the simplex *lafa* is itself rare as a semantic loan for "relics of the saints" (see below, section 2.2). Note in the above quotation the unglossed "aecclesiae Cristi," corroborating a localization of Arundel 155 to Christ Church, Canterbury. Near the mid-eleventh century (the date of the manuscript), the principal relic at Christ Church would have been the body of St. Ælfheah; thus, the gloss *liclafa* was apt, given local circumstances.

of the *Dialogues*) which depend closely on Latin, it is not clear whether the respective translators, much less their early readers, recognized *mundbyrd* as a relic-term.[28] A more consequential use may be that in a famous poem, *The Dream of the Rood*: "Is me nu lifes hyht / þæt ic þone sigebeam secan mote / ana oftor þonne ealle men, / well weorþian. Me is willa to ðam / mycel on mode, ond min mundbyrd is / geriht to þære rode" (Dream 126b-131a: It is now my life's hope that I may, alone, more frequently than other people, seek out that Victory-Tree, honour it well. I have a great desire for that in my mind, and my *mundbyrd* is *geriht to* the cross). Because a possessive pronoun or genitive with *mundbyrd* ordinarily refers to the protector rather than recipient of protection, the last two half-lines require a somewhat unusual object-genitive syntax for "min mundbyrd" in order to yield the anticipated sense, such as "my source (*or* hope) of protection" (i.e., "that which protects me").[29] But if, as readers have often assumed, an actual cruciform reliquary of the True Cross inspired details of the vision, then behind the poet's choice of *mundbyrd* may lurk *patrocinium* as a figurative designation for the relic. Consequently, the phrase *geriht to* [+ dative] may mean not "directed towards" but "directly upon" or "right at," yielding a play on two meanings: "what patronizes/protects me is directly upon the cross" and "my relic is right at the (reliquary-)cross."

Given the evidence for occasional loan translations of *patrocinium* as a relic-term, one might expect a similar reflex of *pignus* or plural *pignora*. Yet nowhere does the Old English equivalent *wedd* appear to translate "relic(s)," even though the vernacular word does sometimes carry other figurative senses of Lat. *pignus,* such as "sacrament."

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28 OE Mart 5 (Kotzor) Se 4, A.1 "þa ageaf [St. Marcellus] ðone clænan gast ond þæs lichaman insmoh forlet monnum to mundbyrde" (then St. Marcellus gave up his pure spirit and left behind the husk of his body as a *mundbyrd* for human beings); cf. Pass.Marcell. 6 (Acta sanctorum, Sept. 2:197E) "incontaminatum reddidit spiritum, sancti corporis nobis exuvias ad patrocinium derelinquens" (he yielded up his untainted spirit, leaving behind as a *patrocinium* for us the remains of his holy body). See also GD 2 (C) 38.176.28-177.1 "we full oft ongytaþ, þæt hit þus byð eac in ðam mundbyrdum haligra martyra" (we very often recognize that it is also thus in the *mundbyrdum* of holy martyrs); cf. GREG.MAG. Dial. 2.38.2 "in ipsis quoque patrociniis martyrum sic esse sentimus" (we perceive it to be thus as well in the *patrociniis* [= relics] of the martyrs).

29 E.g., Swanton, ed., *The Dream of the Rood*, 137. For comparable examples of *mundbyrd* with the possessive pronoun, cf. GenA,B 1753, 2709-10; and And 1433.

2.2. Generic Borrowings: *reliquias* and **relicas*

Some words for relics as a class of objects raise questions that the Latin backgrounds do not wholly answer. One mystery surrounds the most direct Old English translation for Lat. *reliquiae*, namely, *laf* (plural *lafe* or *lafa*). That noun frequently renders *reliquiae* when the latter means the "remnants" of some commonplace substance or "remainders" of a group.[30] But as a translation of the more restricted sense "(saints') relics," *lafe* appears to have been avoided. The tendency already shows in the *Old English Bede*, where the translator consistently uses *laf* for the "remnant" of, for example, the Romano-British population,[31] whereas all instances of *reliquiae* "(saints') relics" in the source receive different treatment, involving either the loan word *reliquias* (discussed below, pp. 94-95) or the substitution *ban* "bones."[32] The *DOE Corpus* yields only three examples of the simplex *laf* (or its plural, *lafe*) as a loan translation for "(saints') relic(s)." Two of these three actually confirm the marginality of the usage: one is arguably a mechanical gloss, and the third occurs within a phrase added to explain a much more common relic-term nearby.[33] It is not obvious why the Anglo-Saxons

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30 See Portnoy, *The Remnant*, 40-43 (charts 2 and 4).

31 Bede 1 (10.48.4) "lafe Brytta" (the remnant of the British) and Bede 1 (12.54.1) "ðære earman lafe" (the wretched remnant); cf. BEDA Hist.eccl. 1.13.46 "Brettonum reliquiae" and 1.15.52 "de miserandis reliquiis."

32 Bede 3 (9.182.23) "þa brohton ban" (the fetched bones); Bede 3 (9.184.15) "ofer his banum" (above his bones); Bede 3 (11.190.2) "æt þæm banum" (at those bones); cf. BEDA Hist.eccl. 3.11.246 "reliquiae allatae"; 3.11.248 "supra reliquias"; and 3.13.252 "ad reliquias." For *ban* used of relics, see *DOE* s.v. *ban* sense A.2.a.i, and s.v. *ge-ban*; see also note 25, above.

33 BenRGl 58.97.13-15: "be þam his behate he do gewrit and [*sic*] naman halgena þare *lafe þe sind halidomas* þara sind and þæs andweardes abbodes," glossing "De qua promissione sua faciat petitionem ad nomen sanctorum quorum *reliquie* ibi sunt et abbatis presentis" (emphases mine; this passage from Benedict's *Rule* is translated and discussed below, p. 96). The glossator's addition "þe sind halidomas" expounding "lafe" may confirm the scarcity of the latter as a relic-term. Another example also occurs in collocation with a more familiar relic-term, in HomS 39 (ScraggVerc 12) 28-29: "Eac we sculon beran oðre halige reliquias, þæt syndon haligra manna lafe" (translated and discussed below, p. 97). A third example occurs in the 11th-century ordeal, LawIudDei VII, 13A: "ic halsige þe [. . .] þurh þa halgan laua, þe innan þisre cyricean synt" (I adjure you [. . .] through the holy relics that are within this church). On the use of OE *laf* within the hapax compound *liclaf*, see above, note 27. Portnoy (*The Remnant*, 57-59) sees an additional attestation of *laf* in the sense "remains, relic" at Phoen 376, but the occurrence there is genitive singular, not the expected plural, and may simply mean "inheritance, legacy," an interpretation supported by the Latin source, LACTANT. Phoen. 167.

would have avoided *lafe* as a Christian technical term. Æthelwold's "Winchester Vocabulary" of the later tenth century actually promoted several native religious words over their equivalent loans, such as *weofod* "altar" over borrowed *altare*.[34] If the extinct pagan backgrounds of *weofod* rendered its connotations unthreatening by the tenth century, the contrary possibility exists that *lafe* remained too enmeshed in secular discourses, not least in poetry, where it often attaches to coveted, strife-haunted heirlooms, including weapons.[35]

   Whatever the motives, an avoidance of *lafe* as a loan translation for (*sanctorum*) *reliquiae* calls attention both to the number of alternatives used in its stead, and to the fact that at no time does any single term appear to have edged out all its competitors. The most obvious redress of any perceived deficiencies in *lafe* was a borrowing of Lat. *reliquiae* as OE *reliquias*. The loan word is not rare, occurring slightly more than 100 times, frequently in collocation with *halig,* in the phrases *halige reliquias* and *reliquias haligra manna.* The recorded instances belong overwhelmingly to the masculine *a*-stem declension and imitate Latin by appearing usually in the plural.[36] Past studies of the loan word *reliquias* have inferred its status as a "learned" rather than "popular" borrowing, based on the degree of its prosodic and morphological assimilation to native patterns.[37] Because learned loans from Christian Latin occur in both earlier and later Old English, the designation "learned" implies little about the specific circumstances of borrowing. The four earliest attestations of *reliquias* are found in the *Old English Martyrology*, a text compiled by one or more authors, probably in the ninth century at an Anglian centre.[38] The *Martyrology* incorporates numerous

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34 Gneuss, "The Origin of Standard Old English," 76.

35 Exceptionally, Portnoy argues that the range of uses for the noun results not merely from poetic licence but from a falling together of two homophones, laf_1 "remnant" and laf_2 "sword"; Portnoy, *The Remnant*, 6-33.

36 Thus appear the plurals nominative/accusative *reliquias*, genitive *reliquia*, dative *reliquium* or, by late reduction, *reliquian* or *reliquion*. The relatively large number of occurrences of *reliquion* cluster in a single 11th-century relic-list (Rec. 10.8 [Först]).

37 The prosodic evidence is slim: of the two attestations that can actually be scanned, only one, in the versified calendar called the *Menologium* (Men 73), serves the argument. See Pogatscher, *Zur Lautlehre der griechischen, lateinischen und romanischen Lehnworte*, 24 and 31; and Funke, *Die gelehrten lateinischen Lehn- und Fremdwörter*, 63. Cf. Wollmann, *Untersuchungen zu den frühen lateinischen Lehnwörtern*, 104-12, for a critical review of the distinction between popular and learned.

38 Mart 1 (Herzfeld-Kotzor) De 26, A.23; Mart 5 (Kotzor) Ap 28, B.28, and Jy 14, A.12 (twice). But the martyrologist's usual formula to identify the resting places of saints' bodies employs *lichoma* rather than *reliquias*; see the introduction to Kotzor, ed., *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, 417*-418*.

Latin words glossed by explanatory phrases, but, significantly, it does not treat *reliquias* as a term requiring such elucidation.[39] In prose works traditionally associated with King Alfred's reforms, the term appears to be already widespread, occurring three times in Wærferth's version of the Gregorian *Dialogues* and fourteen times in the *Old English Bede.*

Occurrences of *reliquias* proliferate in tenth- and eleventh-century homilies, laws, wills, and liturgica, and it produces one compound, *reliquiasocn* "a visit to relics," recorded three times in different Vercelli Homilies.[40] The rising frequency of a learned loan *reliquias*, however, may also conceal the waning of a kindred alternative. In the *Old English Martyrology,* alongside the earliest attestations of *reliqui-* forms appear two occurrences of *relicgang*, meaning either "visitation to relics" or "procession with relics."[41] The significance of this rare compound is that its first constituent, *relic-*, may attest an earlier popular borrowing of Lat. *reliquiae,* through Vulgar Latin or Old Irish, yielding a form OE *relic (plural *relicas).[42] The possibility that two loans, one popular and one learned, once coexisted among the Anglo-Saxons calls to mind John Blair's argument that, by the mid-ninth century, foci of relic-veneration had largely shifted from local cults at grave-sites to tomb- and shrine-based ones inside minsters.[43] If OE *reliquias* were borrowed during or as a result of that institutional-izing shift, the extinction of an earlier popular loan *relicas perhaps correlates with a growing clerical monopoly on relic-cults.

Nearer the other end of the Anglo-Saxon period, a wavering in the recorded mor-phology of OE *reliquias* prompts different historical questions. Spellings in the later tenth and eleventh centuries occasionally look like efforts to re-Latinize the loan as

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39 See Kotzor, ed., *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, 245*-248*.

40 HomS 34 (ScraggVerc 19) 163; HomS 36 (ScraggVerc 11) 3; HomS 38 (ScraggVerc 20) 3-4. I accept the definition for the term established by Förster, "Zur Geschichte des Reliquienkultus," 8-9, n. 5. Cf. CHM s.v. *reliquiasocn* "visit to a shrine"; the word does not appear in BT, BTS, or Campbell's *Addenda.*

41 From parallel formations such as *huselgang*, Förster deduces a meaning "visitation to relics," mak-ing *relicgang* a synonym for *reliquiasocn*; see Förster, "Zur Geschichte des Reliquienkultus," 9, n. 5. But it is difficult to disassociate *relicgang* from the frequent collocation *gan* (or *gangan*) *mid reliquium* "walk in procession carrying relics"; see DOE s.v. *gangan* VI.5.b, and s.v. *gang* 1.a.iv.a.

42 Förster assumes a Vulgar Latin etymon ("Zur Geschichte des Reliquienkultus," 72, n. 5); thus also Wollmann, *Untersuchungen zu den frühen lateinischen Lehnwörtern*, 158. On OIr *reilic*, see below, section 4. According to the *OED* s.v. *relic* (n. and a.), ModE *relic* descends from a later borrowing of OF *relique* and is attested only from the 13th century.

43 Blair, "A Saint for Every Minster," 456.

reliquie (thrice) or *reliquię* (once).[44] Such variants would be negligible if the earliest of them were not a deliberate choice in Æthelwold's translation of the Benedictine *Rule* (at BenR 58.101.1-3): "Be þam his gehate sette he fæstnunge mid gewrite to þæs abbodes naman and þæra halgena, þe hyra reliquie, þæt is hyra ban, on þære stowe restað" (Concerning his promise, let him confirm it with a document [invoking] the names of the abbot and of those saints whose relics, that is, whose bones, rest in that place).[45] Here the Latin source has only, "De qua promissione sua faciat petitionem ad nomen sanctorum, quorum reliquiae ibi sunt" (BENEDICT Reg. 58.19: Concerning that promise, let him offer a petition in the name of the saints whose relics are there). In the Old English *Rule*, the explanatory phrase "þæt is [. . .]" typically follows loan words and loan formations that Æthelwold expected his readers to find foreign or otherwise unfamiliar.[46] Since OE *reliquias* was already current by the later ninth century, Æthelwold's treatment of the word — providing a lexical gloss and restoring an un-English morphology (perhaps with a "corrected" pronunciation on the antepenult?) — suggests a deliberate strategy of alienating a familiar word in order to redefine it within narrower limits.[47] Possible motives for doing so emerge from a closer semantic analysis of *reliquias* in contemporary texts.

In a handful of occurrences, context identifies certain *reliquias* as corporeal relics[48] or as secondary ones.[49] In the majority of cases, however, *reliquias* suppresses those

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44 The exceptional forms are briefly noted by Förster, "Zur Geschichte des Reliquienkultus," 71-72, n. 3. A nominative plural *reliquia* occurs in the late poem *Durham* and may represent another morphological variant, but the line in question (Dur 19) has prompted much editorial intervention; see ASPR 6:152-53. The assertion of CHM, s.v. *reliquias*, that *reliquium* occurs as a singular form is incorrect.

45 Schröer's apparatus records no variants of *reliquie* in manuscripts of BenR. The Old English form is the same in BenRWells (58.100.1-3) and BenRW (58.117.33-35). The other relevant citations come from texts with no particular links to Æthelwold: thus *reliquie* at RegC 2 (Schröer) 70 and Rec 2.4 (Hunt) 1.7; *reliquię* at Rec 10.8 (Först) 213.

46 See Gretsch, *Die 'Regula Sancti Benedicti' in England*, 251, and, for the present example, 251, n. 25.

47 The two occurrences in verse, at Men 73 and Dur 12, indicate a primary stress on the first syllable in the loan word. On accentuation in learned loans, see Wollmann, *Untersuchungen zu den frühen lateinischen Lehnwörtern*, 104-5.

48 E.g., Bede 4 (33.382.15-16) "þa genamon hi sumne dæl his feaxes him to reliquium" (they then took a portion of his hair as relics for themselves); LS 16 (MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii) 20.9-11 "and þin lichama biþ wurþful mid mannum, þæt swa hwa swa ahrineþ þine reliquias [. . .] he biþ gehæld" (and your body will be revered among people, so that whoever touches your relics [. . .], he will be healed). See also GD 1 (C) 10.86.11 "mid his gebana reliquium" (with the relics of his bones), and cf. the corresponding H version, "æt his deadum banum" (at his dead bones). See also GD 2 (C) 38.177.1-3

distinctions and can show even greater elasticity than its Christian Latin etymon. The breadth and levelling effects of the term appear in several popular sermons for Rogationtide, a subset of texts that contains roughly a quarter of the total attestations of *reliquias*. The Rogation Days (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday prior to the feast of Christ's Ascension) required litanies and processions in which clergy bore a church's relics, crosses, candles, gospel book(s), and other ceremonial ornaments.[50] While many Old English sermons survive for the Rogations, they describe such rituals in mostly general, unlocalized terms. Mentions of "relics" are perhaps open-ended for that reason. Vercelli Homily 12 admits the equivalence of primary and secondary types: "Eac we sculon beran oðre halige reliquias, þæt syndon haligra manna lafe, hyra feaxes oððe hyra lices dæl oððe hrægles" (HomS 39 [ScraggVerc 12] 28-30: Also we ought to carry other holy relics, that is, the remains of holy persons, a portion of their hair or body or clothing).[51] Here the phrase "*oðre* halige reliquias" is crucial, as it suggests the category of "relics" also includes the two previously named items in the procession. The first is a cross: "And we sculon beran usse reliquias ymb ure land, þa medeman Cristes rodetacen þe we Cristes mæl nemnað, on þam he sylfa þrowode" (HomS 39 [ScraggVerc 12] 16-18: And we ought to carry our relics around our land(s), the worthy cross of Christ, which we call "Christ's emblem").[52] The asyndeton after "land" also implies that the "rodetacen" itself constitutes one of the *reliquias*. Either the processional cross is thus presumed to double as a reliquary or, in the author's mind, the category of *reliquias* has expanded to include sacred objects that are, technically, neither relics nor reliquaries. In fact, the sermon also seems to classify as *reliquias* "ða bec þe man hateð godspel" (HomS 39 [ScraggVerc 12] 18-19:

"þæt hi na ne cyðað swa manige fremsumnesse þurh heora lichaman, swa hi ful oft god eowiað þurh heora reliquias" (that they do not reveal as many benefits through their [living] bodies as they very often display goodness through their relics). All four of the attestations of *reliquias* in the Old English *Dialogues* probably refer to bodily relics, and Wærferth's relic-terminology stays close to the Latin source.

49 E.g., HomS 46 (BlHom 11) 196-98 "manige men þær þa moldan neomaþ on þæm lastum [*scil.* of Christ, imprinted on the Mount of Olives] þe þæt begytan magan þæt hie hit don motan, and him to reliquium habban" (there many people, those who are able to contrive that they can do so, gather the earth in those footprints and keep it as relics for themselves).

50 On the names for these days, see Hill, "The *Litaniae maiores* and *minores*." The Old English term *gangdagas*, used both for the Rogation Days and for the so-called Greater Litany (25 April), confirms their popular association with liturgical processions; see *DOE* s.v. *gang-dæg*.

51 On the significance of *lafe* in this passage, see above, p. 93 and note 33.

52 On the periphrasis *Cristes mæl* for "cross," see *DOE* s.v. *Crist* 1.b.ii; also s.v. *cristel-mæl*.

those books that are called "gospel(s)"). Certainly, some medieval gospel books associated with particular saints were considered "relics" by contact. The precious bindings of such books could, moreover, contain small chambers to house fragmentary relics.[53] But the implication of the present passage that cross, gospel books, and relics are all categorically *reliquias* is surprising. The end of the homily confirms it, however, when the author again implies that cross, gospel books, and saints' remains all constitute "relics," the former two being termed "þa halgan reliquias dryhtnes" (HomS 39 [ScraggVerc 12] 73-74: the holy relics of the Lord).

I suspect that the homilist here betrays a misunderstanding encouraged by the more or less equal status of all three of those objects as *res sacrae* for various purposes, especially the swearing of oaths — a ritual that, perhaps more than any other, brought laypeople into actual contact with relics and reliquaries.[54] Latin legal and canonistic sources sometimes do place relics within a larger, vaguely defined category of "holy things," but no inverse tendency occurs, to my knowledge: that is, Lat. *reliquiae* does not normally appear as a general equivalent for *res sacrae* (or neuter plural *sacra* or *sancta* etc.). In Old English, by contrast, Vercelli 12 is hardly alone in so diluting the sense of *reliquias*. The author of another set of Rogationtide sermons admonishes, "ne geþristlæce ænig man ætes oððe wætes to onbyrigenne [...] ær he mæssan hæbbe gehyred, and barefotum Cristes bec and his rodetacna *and oðre halige reliquias* eadmodlice gegret hæbbe" (HomS 34 [ScraggVerc 19] 92-94: let no one dare partake of food or drink [...] before he has heard Mass and has humbly, and with bare feet, reverenced Christ's books [i.e., the gospels] and his cross *and other holy relics* [emphases mine]).[55]

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53 For book-binding reliquaries, see Braun, *Die Reliquiare*, 47, and other examples mentioned by Harbert, "King Alfred's *æstel*," 108.

54 For oaths on *res sacrae* including the cross and/or relics and/or gospel book(s), see Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques*, 236-38; Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist*, 132, 141, and 146; see also below, section 2.3. Another ritual that sometimes placed relics, crosses, and gospel books in the same functional category was the "humiliation" of relics, or *clamor*; see Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist*, 170, and Geary, "L'humiliation des saints."

    From this point on, I refer to *res sacrae* as a convenience only. The term does not appear regularly in early medieval sources, which tend to define the category of "holy things" rather loosely; see Kramis, "The Notion of 'Res sacrae,'" 6-17. When eventually given stricter definition in later canon law, the category of *res sacrae* usually excluded relics and sacraments; see Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques*, 313-14, and the article by Nez in *Dictionnaire de droit canonique*, vol. 7, cols. 598-602 (s.v. *res*).

55 The two Vercelli Rogationtide sets are Scragg's nos. 11-13 and 19-21. The latter three may have had a single author; see Scragg, "An Old English Homilist," and the introduction to his edition of *The Vercelli Homilies*, xxxix-xlii.

The befuddled author of yet another sermon (HomS 42 [Baz-Cr]) suggests that "temples" in Old Testament times contained *reliquias* that were removed during a three-day penance.[56] The reference to *reliquias* is just one of this preacher's peculiar anachronisms (for instance, Elijah prays to Christ, and the Canaanites — or Ninevites? — neglect to attend "Mass"). His assimilation of *reliquias* to a broader class of "holy things," however, can be attributed to a wider-spread tendency, attested by Vercelli 12 and 19. Still other anonymous sermons multiply evidence for a fluid popular definition of "relics,"[57] and similar thinking evidently underlies the logic of another major vernacular relic-term, *haligdom*, discussed below.

 Even if the preceding examples are exceptional, they confirm that, in some preaching *ad populum*, uses of OE *reliquias* stretched the limits of Lat. *reliquiae* to a problematic degree. If this was indeed a recognizable tendency by the mid-tenth century, it casts in sharper relief the affectations in Æthelwold's treatment of Lat. *reliquiae* in cap. 58 of the *Rule.* His unborrowing, so to speak, of what must have been a familiar loan word suggests an urge to reform the already entrenched *reliquias*, to wrest it from what he saw as an abuse, and to reconnect it through the gloss "þæt is hyra ban" to a restricted idea of Lat. *reliquiae* as corporeal. Because

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56 HomS 42 (Baz-Cr) 30-33 "Ða bær man of ælcum halgum temple ealla þa halgan reliquias ut þe þær on innan wæron. Þa com Cristes stefn of hefenum to eorðan and let dynian ofer ealc þæra manna þe þas þry dagas his fæsten abræc ær þa halgan reliquias eft into þam temple comon" (Then one bore out of every holy temple all the holy *reliquias* that were inside. Then Christ's voice came from heaven to earth and made it thunder over everyone who, during these three days, broke his fast before those holy *reliquias* came back into the temple). On the muddle of biblical precedents in HomS 42, see Tristram, *Vier altenglische Predigten,* 325; also Bazire and Cross, eds., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, 57-58. If the homilist understood these "temples" and their contents in Old Testament terms, his mention of *reliquias* mimics the frequent association between another Old English relic-term, *haligdom*, and the Tabernacle or Ark of the Covenant (see below, section 2.3).

57 A levelling of crosses, gospel books, and relics may also occur in HomS 35 (Tristr 4) 27-32, but the passage is corrupt; see Tristram, *Vier altenglische Predigten*, 217-18 and her commentary at 311; also Bazire and Cross, eds., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, 75. By parallel with *reliquias* in a general sense "holy objects," the author of HomS 35 (Tristr 4) may have also understood *godspel* to mean any "holy book"; see Tristram, *Vier altenglische Predigten*, 310-11. For an analogue to the phrase "and other relics" again in the context of Rogationtide, cf. HomS 30 (TristrApp 2) 153-56 "and mid þam halgum reliquium we sculon beon god lofsecgende. and cristes rodetacn forðberan. and his þa halige godspell. and oðre halignessa. mid þam we sceolon bletsian ure þa eorðlican speda" (and in the presence of those holy *reliquias* we ought to be praising God and ought to proceed with Christ's cross and those holy gospels of his and other *halignessa*, with which we should bless our earthly goods). On *halignes* as a relic-term, see below, section 2.3.

control over relic-cults played a vital role in the monastic reforms of the mid-tenth century, an ambition to reset limits on this fundamental term would be understandable.[58]

If such was the spirit of Æthelwold's intervention regarding OE *reliquias*, it had little effect even among his disciples. Ælfric's writings employ the usual borrowed form *reliquias* without scruple, though he never applies it as indiscriminately as some of the anonymous homilists do. I find only one instance in which Ælfric's alterations of a Latin source seem motivated by a concern to distinguish the kinds of relics in a list.[59] Otherwise he shows no particular fastidiousness in the matter, and his writings freely use the other common generic, *haligdom*, a term potentially as unruly as *reliquias* and, on closer inspection, just as revealing of contemporary attitudes.

2.3. Generic Formations: *halignes* and *haligdom*

Like *reliquias,* the noun *haligdom* occurs approximately 100 times. Whereas *reliquias* always denotes sacred "relics" or other species of "holy things" (mis)identified as such, *haligdom* is inherently complex by reasons of its derivational morphology and the semantics of its root, the adjective *halig*. Of two distinct Germanic etyma, **hailagaz* and **wīhaz*, Old English preserves few traces of the latter while its developments of the former, as OE *halig*, combined what in some other languages developed as lexically distinguished concepts, namely, of "the holy," i.e., the attribute of a deity (cf. Lat. *sanctus*), and of "the sacred," i.e., the attribute of persons or things set specially

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58 See the seminal essays by Thacker: "Æthelwold and Abingdon," "Cults at Canterbury," and "Saint-Making and Relic Collecting by Oswald."

59 ÆLS (Maur) 71-74: Benedict sends a message to Maurus "mid lacum, þæt is mid haligdome of þæs Hælendes rode, and of Marian reafe and of Michaeheles pelle, and of Stephanes lichaman and of Martines reliquium" (with gifts, that is with the *haligdom* of the Saviour's cross, and of Mary's garment, and of Michael's pall, and of Stephen's body and of Martin's *reliquias*). Ælfric's version distinguishes the non-corporeal Marian relic and the corporeal one where his Latin source does not: cf. Ps.-Faust. Vit.Maur. 3.20 "tres portiunculas ligni salutiferæ Crucis, et reliquias sanctæ Dei genitricis, Sanctique Michaelis Archangeli, ex palliolo rubeo sanctæ scilicet eius memoriæ, Sancti quoque Stephani Protomartyris, ac beati Confessoris Christi Martini" (three small pieces of the saving wood of the cross, and relics of the holy Mother of God and of St. Michael the archangel — that is, of the red cloth from his holy shrine — and also [relics] of St. Stephen, the protomartyr, and of Christ's blessed confessor, Martin).

apart for service to the divine (cf. Lat. *sacer*).[60] Both senses bear on the various uses of *haligdom*. The second element, *dom*, involves another difficult polysemy; it probably functions here as a derivational suffix rather than as a compounding element.[61] Ewa Ciszek has identified eight deadjectival nouns in -*dōm* (including *haligdom*) demonstrating six semantic functions for the suffix: (1) "state, condition"; (2) "a quality"; (3) "an act, activity"; (4) "a thing"; (5) "a group of people, collectivity"; (6) "territory, a place."[62] Ciszek perceives in attestations of *haligdom* functions (2), (4), and (6). In effect, her semantic analysis thus agrees with that of the original Bosworth-Toller *Dictionary* of 1898, which distinguished three major senses: "I. holiness, sanctity"; "II. holy things, relics, holy work, a sacrament"; "III. a holy place, sanctuary."[63] Between Toller's *Supplement* of 1921 and Campbell's *Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda* of 1972, the entry underwent several subdivisions and expansions, not all of them helpful.[64]

The possible meanings of *haligdom* have been thus generally understood for some time. The difficulties of interpreting many occurrences of the word nevertheless remain, and a suspicion arises that modern translators and compilers of glossaries have often chosen one or another of the dictionary-senses arbitrarily. Based on a review of all attestations of *haligdom* (which I have attempted to sort in the Appendix), the following remarks seek to relate these ambiguities to the external history of relic-cults sketched in my first section, above. Attention to those contexts can settle the meaning in only some cases; the big picture is nevertheless helpful even where it fails to resolve such questions, since the real interest of *haligdom* as a relic-term lies in the implications of its entire semantic range.

The distribution of *haligdom* as a relic-term differs notably from that of *reliquias*. In the restrictive sense "(saint's) relic(s)," *haligdom* does not appear prior to the tenth

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60 On Germanic words for "holy," see Baetke, *Das Heilige im Germanischen*, and Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World*, 16-20 and 353-54. The parallel with Lat. *sanctus* and *sacer* is admittedly inexact since the latter words do share a root; see Ernout and Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 587 (s.v. *sancio*).

61 See cross-references in the *DOE* s.v. -*dōm*. On the status as a suffix, see Ciszek, "-*dōm* in Medieval English," and Bongetta, "The Development of the English Suffix '-*dom*."

62 Ciszek, "-*dōm* in Medieval English," 112-13.

63 Largely agreeing with BT, but more clearly articulated, is the analysis of *haligdom* by MacGillivray, *The Influence of Christianity*, 64-66.

64 Two additional senses were added: "IV. holy doctrines" is spurious, as explained in note 65, below. "V. sacrament," in my view, should not be a separate sense but belongs under "II. a holy thing," where Bosworth originally had it. The reasons for this opinion will be made clear below.

century, and perhaps not until the later part of that century. Where the word appears earlier, an abstract sense "holiness" or "sanctity" prevails. Such is the meaning of both occurrences in the prose *Paris Psalter*, of four (from a total of six) in the *Pastoral Care*, and of all eight in the Old English *Dialogues*, where it always translates *sanctitas*.[65] (*Haligdom* does not occur, in any sense, in the *Old English Bede* or in the *Orosius*, the *Soliloquies*, the *Boethius*, the *Old English Martyrology*, the *Life of St. Chad*, or any other comparatively early text.) The abstract meaning "holiness, sanctity" recedes somewhat over the tenth century, but it does endure through later Old English and into Middle English.[66] Over much the same period, *haligdom* in its abstract sense competed with another deadjectival noun, *halignes*. The histories of these two parallel each other closely: both were narrowed and concretized into names for the same three species of "holy things."[67] The range of senses for both words invites comparison with a similar concretizing of *sanctitas* and *sanctimonia* in Christian Latin, but Latin models alone do not suffice to explain the Old English developments.[68]

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65 Two indeterminate instances in the *Pastoral Care* are: (1) CP 7.50.1-2 "haligdom [. . .] ðære clænan ðenunge ðæs sacerdhades," translating "sacra misteria [*MS var. for* ministeria]," thus probably understood in the sense "sacrament" (translate "sacrament [. . .] of the pure ministry of the priesthood"); (2) CP 49.383.7 "ðonne he wilnað ðæt he haligdom lære" (when he desires that he teach *haligdom*); cf. ɢʀᴇɢ.ᴍᴀɢ. Reg.past.3.25.83 "ut cum sancta quis studet dicere" (as when someone strives to speak holy [words]). BTS (sense IV) takes the latter attestation of *haligdom* as "holy doctrines" but adduces no other passage to support it. More plausibly, *læran haligdom* simply means "teach (the virtue of) holiness." An exceptional concrete usage in the *Pastoral Care*, discussed below (pp. 103-105), refers to the Ark of the Covenant. In Wærferth's *Dialogues*, OE *haligdom* always translates *sanctitas* in the source.

66 *MED* s.v. *halidom,* sense 2.

67 See MacGillivray, *The Influence of Christianity*, 62-64. *Halignes* is much rarer than *haligdom* as a term including "relics": see HomS 30 (TristrApp 2) 153-56 (quoted above at note 57), HomS 39 (ScraggVerc 12) 28-32, and possibly Rec. 10.8 (Först) 17, although Förster plausibly interprets the last of these instances as "holy place, sanctuary"; Förster, "Zur Geschichte des Reliquienkultus," 82. For the sense "sacrament(s)," see WPol 3 (Jost) 36 and RegCGl (Kornexl) 16.292-96. The sense "sanctuary, holy place" prevailed among concrete meanings for *halignes*: the noun refers to the Tabernacle or *sancta sanctorum* six times in the *Pastoral Care*. At Bede 2 (10.136.23-26) and (10.138.2-4) it refers to pagan "holies," perhaps inclusive of the idea "holy places," though elsewhere in that work, *halignes* normally means abstract "holiness."

68 Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français*, 818 (s.v. *sanctitas*); Niermeyer and Van de Kieft, *Mediae latinitatis lexicon minus*, 2:1222 (s.v. *sanctimonium*, senses 1 and 3). The concretizing tendency is more evident in Lat. *sacramentum*; see summary and references in Stotz, *Handbuch zur lateinischen Sprache des Mittelalters*, 2:20.

By my count, OE *haligdom* appears with a narrowed sense "relic(s)" at least 24 times, but possibly as many as 44 times, the uncertain numbers reflecting the frequency of ambiguous instances. Apart from occurrences that mean "relic(s)" or Christian *res sacrae* as a broad category, five attestations of *haligdom* designate holy objects of the Jewish Temple or Tabernacle (Appendix, senses II.A.3.a-b).[69] Roughly a dozen more translate Lat. *sacramentum* in either a general sense "(liturgical) sacrament" or with narrower application to the Eucharist or baptism (Appendix, senses II.A.4 etc.).[70] A final concrete sense "sanctuary, holy place" has fewer strong examples (Appendix, sense II.B): the meaning does occur in the Heptateuch Exodus[71] and late in the Laud Chronicle, and it may pertain in several Psalter glosses, although the Latin lemmata there are all likewise polysemous (*sanctitas*, *sanctimonia*, *sanctuarium*, and *sanctificium*).

Whether or not these concrete senses actually evolved between the later ninth and later tenth centuries, their distribution confirms that *haligdom* achieved currency as a relic-term before *c.*1000, and that applications of the noun to physical objects did not render obsolete the abstract sense "holiness." The difficulty of demarcating various senses, however, arises near the very beginning of the record, in a citation from the *Pastoral Care*. The translator, following his source, arrives at Gregory's point about the need for rulers to balance action with prayer, as Moses did:

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69 Medieval Christians could view Old Testament artifacts as relics, in any case; cf. note 56, above.

70 One of these occurrences is concealed in CP 7.50.1-2; see note 65, above. *Haligdom* also translates *sacramentum* in its sense "oath," but the three instances are all in LibSc, where the glossator appears to have been working mechanically, hence his uniform translation of the same lemma even if the target-text uses it in a completely different sense (citations in the Appendix below under senses II.A.4.c and II.A.4, respectively).

71 Exod. 21:6 "Bringe his hlaford hine [*scil.* the slave] to ðæs halidomes dura and ðyrlige his eare mid anum æle" (Let his lord bring him to the door of the *haligdom* and pierce his ear with an awl). The biblical source mentions door and doorposts but does not specify of what structure (cf. Exod. 21:6 "et adplicabitur ad ostium et postes perforabitque aurem eius subula"). Modern biblical commentators assume that the door was that of the household to which the servant was being bound. But the Old English translator was not the only medieval source to associate the Vulgate's "ostium et postes" with a sacred place: Gregory the Great makes it the Tabernacle (GREG.MAG. Hom.Ezech. 1.3.249-52), and others follow him (e.g., Hrabanus, *Commentarii in Exodum* 3.1 [PL 108:109B-C]). Thus, the idea "Tabernacle" or, however anachronistically, "Temple" very probably informed the Old English translator's addition.

Forðæm Moyses oft eode inn and ut on ðæt templ [. . .]. Þærinne he sceawode on his mode ða diogolnesse ðære godcundnesse, ond ðonon utbrohte ðæm folce, and cyðde hwæt hie wyrcean and healdan scoldon. And symle ymb ðæt ðe hine ðonne tueode, ðonne orn he eft innto ðæm temple, and frægn ðæs Dryhten beforan ðære earce ðe se haligdom on wæs ðæs temples. (CP 16.101.24 and 16.103.1-5)

[Therefore Moses often went in and out of that temple [*scil.*, the Tabernacle] [. . .]. While inside, he gazed in his mind upon the secrets of the godhead, and from that place he brought out for the people and made known to them what they were supposed to do and observe. And concerning any matter over which he was uncertain, he would always run back into the temple and ask the Lord about it in the presence of the Ark, in which was the *haligdom* of the temple.]

All this follows Gregory's Latin, save that the source has nothing corresponding to the last phrase about a *haligdom*.[72] The word could simply mean "holiness," as it does elsewhere in the *Pastoral Care*. But in totality the evidence supports a reference to the "holy things" believed to rest inside the Ark: the Tablets of the Law, the rod of Aaron, and a jar of manna (Exod. 16:32-34; 1 Kings [1 Sam.] 8:9; Heb. 9:4). Ælfric later describes the Ark as "þæt halige scrin mid ðam heofenlican haligdome" (ÆCHom II, 12.2 [122.430-32]: that holy shrine with the heavenly *haligdom*),[73] even though he elsewhere uses *haligdom* for Christian "relics," too. The image of the Ark widely influenced representations of reliquaries, and many medieval Christians probably saw no difference in kind between the two.[74] One Old English Rogationtide preacher betrays a strikingly literal understanding of the Ark as a fused relic/reliquary.[75] If the translator of the *Pastoral Care* was indeed King Alfred or someone close to him, the image

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72 Cf. greg.mag. Reg.past. 2.5.44-49 "Hinc Moyses crebro tabernaculum intrat et exit [. . .]. Intus Dei arcana considerat [. . .]. Qui de rebus quoque dubiis semper ad tabernaculum recurrit, coram testamenti arca Dominum consulit" (Thus, Moses frequently goes in and out of the Tabernacle [. . .]. Inside, he ponders the mysteries of God [. . .]. He who, in matters of doubt, keeps running back to the Tabernacle, seeks advice from God in the presence of the Ark of the Covenant).

73 See also ÆHom 22, 222, as well as more general reference to the *haligdom* of the Temple at ÆLS (Maccabees) 344, translating plural *sancta* at 1 Macc. 3:59 (cf. Douai-Rheims "the holies"); also ÆHomM 15 (Ass 9) 136.

74 Hahn, "Metaphor and Meaning," 252-55.

75 HomS 42; see note 56, above.

of Moses in prayer before the portable Ark in the Tabernacle resonates with Asser's report that the king travelled with his own collection of "the holy relics of many of God's elect," housed in a tent and honoured by six candles kept always burning, probably in imitation of the six-branched *candelabrum* that burned continually in the Tabernacle sanctuary (Exod. 25:31-32; Lev. 24:2-3; Exod. 26:35).[76] For Asser and perhaps for the king himself, Alfred's private devotion to relics assumed a deliberative, political character: like Moses, he entered alone before a *haligdom* to discover God's secret will and then promulgate it.[77] The scene in the *Pastoral Care*, when read through Asser, illustrates what will be a persistent difficulty in interpreting many later instances of the word. If asked to point to his *haligdom*, would Alfred have indicated the relics inside an open, or closed, portable shrine, or the shrine itself, or the area around and containing the relics, shrine, and candles?

The quotation from the *Pastoral Care* exemplifies other features of *haligdom* as a term specifically for relics. The *DOE Corpus* contains few certain instances of singular *haligdom* used to mean "(individual) relic" or of plural *haligdomas* to indicate multiplicity.[78] The predominance of the collective singular means that the relic-term should often be translated "relic-collection" or, by analogy with Ger. *Reliquienschatz*, "relic-treasury."[79] Relic-lists and wills from the late Anglo-Saxon period suggest that miscellaneous relics collected in single shrines and called *haligdom* were common

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76   ASSER. Vit.Ælfr. 104.9-13 "sex illae candelae per viginti quatuor horas die nocteque sine defectu coram sanctis multorum electorum Dei reliquiis, quae semper eum ubique comitabantur, ardentes lucescebant" (twenty-four hours a day, by day and night, never failing, those six candles shed their light as they burned in the presence of the holy relics of many of God's elect, which [relics] always accompanied [Alfred] everywhere). Cf. recent discussions of this passage by Pratt, *The Political Thought of King Alfred*, 186-87, and by Smyth, *King Alfred the Great*, 209-10 and 323-24. Smyth's view, which has won few supporters, maintains that Asser's *Vita* is a forgery and that the detail concerning Alfred's candle is one of many plundered from Odo of Cluny's 10th-century *Vita* of St. Gerald of Aurillac.

77   See Pratt, *The Political Thought of King Alfred*, 206.

78   Thus my Appendix, sense II.A.2.a, with three citations: ÆCHom I, 18 (318.41) "haligdomum," but three manuscripts read dative singular "haligdome," presumably collective in sense. Another instance at ÆLS (Maur) 72 is discussed below at note 81. A third instance is BenRGl 58.97.13 (quoted above, note 33), where the morphology of the Latin target-text may have led the glossator to use an unidiomatic plural "haligdomas."

79   This has been long recognized; see BTS sense II.2(b), and Förster, "Zur Geschichte des Reliquienkultus," 65, n. 3. For the clearest attestations of this sense, see the Appendix below, sense II.A.2.b and its subsets. On the unity-in-plurality of relics in treasuries, see Hahn, "The Meaning of Early Medieval Treasuries."

accessories of both private and communal devotion.[80] For laymen, such shrines may indeed have been more familiar media of veneration than were the higher-status monuments of individual saints in major churches and monasteries. The collective sense conditions a number of patterns among the usages of *haligdom*. Whereas the loan *reliquias*, for example, often stands in collocations such as "the *reliquias* of Saint X," no occurrence of *haligdom* refers to the relics of an identified individual, whether Christ or a named saint.[81] Elsewhere, the same collectivity helps account for formulas of anathema or adjuration: "syn hi ealle amansumude of ealra heofonwara haligdome and eorþwarena" (HomU 15.1 [Scragg] 19-20: let them be banished from the *haligdom* of all who dwell in heaven and on earth);[82] "sy he ascyred from Godes dæle and from eallum haligdome" (Ch 1661 [Rob 68] 3-4: let him be cut off from God's portion and from all *haligdom*); "hæbbe he Godes unmiltse and ealles þæs haligdomes ðe ic on Angelcyn begeat" (Rec 6.6 [HarmD 19] 4-5: may he have the displeasure of God and of all the *haligdom* that I have acquired among the English); "Nu halsie ic þurh þa halgan þrimnisse and sanctus Petrus and ealne þane haligdom þe ic on Rome for me and for ealne þeodscype gesohte [...]" (Ch 325 [Birch 493] 26-27: I now adjure you through the Holy Majesty [or *þrinisse*, Trinity] and St. Peter and all the *haligdom* that I sought out at Rome, for my sake and for the entire nation). The relevant phrases in the first two examples could admit abstract or vaguely generic translations ("holiness" or "holy things"), but the third and fourth apparently do intend "relic collection," here standing by synecdoche for the congregation of saints represented in the *haligdom*.[83] This usage looks forward to the oath "by God and by

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80   In the Appendix below, see citations from relic-lists Rec 2.4 (Hunt), Rec 10.8 (Först), Rec 21.3.1 (Birch), Rec 21.3.2 (Birch), and Rec 21.3.3 (Birch), all under sense II.A.2.b. Of these, the citation at Rec 21.3.3 (Birch) 3-4 "se halidom ðe wæs on æþelstanes kyningces gimme" (the *haligdom* that was in King Æthelstan's gem(?)) is obscure. If not merely an error, *gimm* here may have an extended sense "treasury, collection of gems," though no such definition is reported by the *DOE* s.v. *gimm*.

81   The only instance of *haligdom* used for the relic of a particular holy figure is ÆLS (Maur) 72 "mid haligdome þæs Hælendes rode," but even here the relic is non-corporeal and probably collective in sense, according to the Latin source: cf. Ps.-Faust. Vit.Maur. 3.20 "tres portiunculas ligni salutiferae Crucis" (for the Latin and Old English of this passage, see the fuller quotations and translations above, note 59).

82   Cf. LawIudDei VII 12.1 "Ic halsige þe þurh ealle halignyssa, þe synt on heofonan and eorðan" (I adjure you by all *halignessa* that are in heaven and on earth); cf. the Latin source, Quadr. "per omnes sanctitates."

83   There may be an etymological basis for this sense, too, since the suffix *-dom* could signify "a group of people, collectivity" (Ciszek, "*-dōm* in Medieval English," 113), hence *haligdom* "a group of holy persons/objects" or simply "saints," by analogy with *hæþendom* "pagans."

holydom" — in effect, "by God and by the (relics of the) saints" — that survives, with variations, into Early Modern English.[84]

Other ambiguous instances of *haligdom* are probably so because they do not intend a restriction to "relics" but nevertheless include them. At least eight occurrences, for instance, pertain to oaths sworn on a *haligdom* (Appendix, sense II.A.1.b). External sources confirm that a relic (or a shrine holding multiple relics) would have often served this function. As noted in the earlier discussion of OE *reliquias*, however, early medieval oaths were also sworn on crosses and gospel books, or sometimes on the Eucharistic Host. Since the vagueness of *haligdom* as a name for the object used in oaths has precedents in Latin as well,[85] the ambiguity here looks purposeful, to designate a broader category of *res sacrae*.

But other ambiguities are probably not intentional. Instances of *haligdom* in five legal works by Archbishop Wulfstan pose the greatest difficulties because they seem capable of bearing any of the senses discussed here. One example will serve: "Eallum Cristenum mannum gebyrað swiðe rihte, þæt hig haligdom and hadas and gehalgode Godes hus æfre swiþe georne griðian and friðian [...]" (LawICn 4: It very justly befits all Christian persons that they always very zealously defend and protect *haligdom* and [holy] orders and the consecrated houses of God).[86] Because his style often turns redundant, here Wulfstan may have meant *haligdom* as collective "holy places, sanctuaries," a variation of nearby *Godes hus*. Elsewhere, three Wulfstanian sermons similarly decry injuries against *halignessa* and *Godes cyrican* (or *Godes hus*);[87] the

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84 *MED* s.v. *halidom*, sense 1; *OED* s.v. *halidom, -dome*, sense 3. The *OED* regards late re-spellings in *-dame* as evidence for a popular etymology as "by (my) holy Lady."

85 See note 54, above, and the full discussion of oaths on relics by Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques*, 235-70, esp. 238. Perhaps compare also attestations under my sense II.A.2.b.iii in the Appendix.

86 Cf. the Latin source, Quadr. "sanctuaria et ordines et deo dicata loca," where Lat. *sanctuaria* is also ambiguous, either "relics/reliquaries" or "sanctuaries." Similar collocations are at LawHad 11 "haligdom and hadas [...] weorðedan and Godes hus and Godes þeowas [...] griðedan" (repeated at LawGrið 24: they honoured *haligdom* and [holy] orders and protected God's houses and God's servants); likewise LawHad 1.3 "haligdom and hadas and gehalgode Godes hus a man sceal [...] weorðian" (repeated at LawGrið 28: one must always honour *haligdom* and [holy] orders and God's consecrated houses); cf. Quadr. "sanctuaria [*var.* sanctificationes] et ordines et Deo dicata domos." In his monumental edition of the laws, Liebermann's accompanying German translations hedge about the term *haligdom*, rendering it by the NHG cognate *Heiligtum*, which is also polysemous. Similarly, his glossary defines *haligdom* as "Heiligthum, Reliquie(nschatz)"; Liebermann, ed. & trans., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*.

87 See WHom 10c, 51-52, WHom 20.1, 33-37, and WHom 20.3, 37-42. *Halignes* here is taken as a place-term by MacGillivray, *The Influence of Christianity*, 63, and Dodd, *A Glossary of Wulfstan's Homilies*, 117.

position of plural *halignessa* there correlates with singular *haligdom* in the legal writings. But that correspondence reveals little, since *halignes* may also mean "sanctuary" as well as "relic(s)" or "sacrament" or "holy things." Only one of Wulfstan's compositions, the *Canons of Edgar*, narrows the options: describing the treatment of various objects in contact with the altar, canon 42 instructs, "geloge man þone haligdom swiðe arwurðlice" (WCan 1.1.1 [Fowler] 42, repeated as WCan 1.1.2 [Fowler] 42: one should arrange the *haligdom* very respectfully). There is no close Latin source. Fowler's glossary takes *haligdom* as "sacrament," in which case *gelogian haligdom* presumably refers to reservation of the Eucharist.[88] At this date (the early eleventh century), both the Eucharist and relics could be stored on or near an altar, although fixed altar-tabernacles remained quite rare.[89] A better clue to the meaning of *haligdom* in canon 42 is that an earlier canon, no. 38, has already dealt at length with Eucharistic reservation. The likelihood that Wulfstan here refers to care for a reliquary on the altar appears confirmed by a contemporary relic-list from the New Minster, where the collocation *gelogian haligdom* means "place, arrange relics" inside a shrine.[90] If that idiom explains Wulfstan's in the *Canons of Edgar*, it may also bear on two other vague references in the anonymous *Old English Penitential*. The passages in question distinguish the ministerial privilege of "handling the *haligdom*" from celebrating or touching the sacraments, on the one hand, and from "handling holy books," on the other; in both instances, *haligdom* appears to translate either Lat. *sanctuarium* or *reliquias*.[91] The clues in totality urge, in this instance, a translation "relics" rather than the more general "holy things," but either is finally possible.

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88 Against Fowler's assumption, cf. the more open-ended translation of the same sentence by Jost, ed., *Die "Institutes of Polity*,*"* 194: "das Heilige werde an einem ehrwürdigen Orte aufbewahrt."

89 Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist*, 205; for relics placed on altars, see also Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques*, 173-75. Some evidence from late Anglo-Saxon England indicates that the sacristy remained the place of Eucharistic reservation, even in major churches. Note the compound *haligdomhus* "sacristy" at RegCGl (Kornexl) 47.1133 (and cf. RegCGl [Kornexl] 34.807, where the same glossator renders Eucharistic *sacramentum* as "haligdom").

90 Rec 21.3.1 (Birch) 1 "Þys is se halidom þe his gelogod innan þam haligan scrine" (This is the *haligdom* that is arranged inside the holy shrine).

91 (1) Conf 3.1.1 (Raith Y) 3.4 "þe on Godes temple Gode þenian sceolon and haligdom and halige bec handlian" ([those] who ought to serve in God's temple and handle the *haligdom* and holy books); cf. *Poenitentiale Pseudo-Egberti* 3.4 (PL 89:421C) "qui in Dei templo Deo servire debent, et sanctuarium ac sacros libros manu tractare"); (2) Conf 3.1.1 (Raith Y) 3.12 "hit alyfed nis þæt ænig læwede wif and unsyfre godes geryno on cristes weofode handlian sceole ne haligdom ne ða halgan bec þe gehadode man handlian sceolan" (it is not permitted that any impure laywoman

An absorption of individual into collective and of spiritual into material presences of "the holy" constitutes the deeper rationale of what saints' relics have in common with other objects labelled *haligdom*. The notion of "holiness" as supernatural power, physically delimited and then conveyed to and through its confines, explains how *haligdom* can name that power as well as the things that it bonds with and emanates from, especially "relic(s)" and "sacraments." The inherently spatial character of the concept renders more understandable how *haligdom* also comes to mean "holy place, sanctuary." With its analogous features of enclosure and collectivity, a sanctuary-space and its sacred contents realize, on a larger scale, the essential functions of a reliquary.

3. "Relic-Treasure" in Vernacular Contexts

Since *haligdom* becomes more conspicuous from the later tenth century, a natural impulse will be to attribute its rise to Benedictine management of ecclesiastical vocabulary. Yet the distribution of *haligdom* warrants no such inference. Even if Æthelwold tinkered with the form and meaning of OE *reliquias*, as discussed earlier, the writings of Ælfric did not follow his lead. And Æthelwold never uses *haligdom*, while four of Ælfric's five deployments of the word refer to the Jewish Tabernacle or Temple rather than to Christian relics proper. With no clear impetus coming from the monastic party, then, it is striking how frequently *haligdom* in the sense "relic-collection" or "relic-treasury" shows up in legal texts and charters, in the wills of powerful ecclesiastics and laypersons, as well as in the anonymous sermons and saints' lives that arguably represent traditions more "popular" or "unreformed" than Benedictine. The several attestations in Wulfstan's writings confirm that *haligdom* owed its currency not to the Benedictine faction but to broader trends of Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical life that very much concerned the secular Church and the laity.[92] It is probably significant that the word proliferates at a time when, as David Rollason has observed, "all classes of [Anglo-Saxon] lay society were [. . .] involved in the cult of saints to an

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handle God's mysteries on Christ's altar, or handle the *haligdom* or the holy books that an ordained man is supposed to handle); cf. *Poenitentiale Pseudo-Egberti* 3.12 (PL 89:422D-423A) "non esse justum quod aliqua laica uxor impura Dei mysteria in altari Christi tractet, nec sacros libros, nec sanctuarium, quod consecrati homines manu versari debent." In the edition of the Latin *Poenitentiale Pseudo-Egberti* printed by Wasserschleben, ed., *Die Bußordnungen der abendländischen Kirche*, 318-48, at 330-31, "reliquias" appears in place of "sanctuarium" in both the above instances.

92 On Wulfstan's marginal relations to Benedictinism, see Hill, "Archbishop Wulfstan."

extent that they do not seem to have been in the pre-Viking period."[93] Such involvement shows both in popular attendance at major shrines and in an increasingly visible role for relics in displays of devotion and patronage by elites. Important laypersons collected relics and sometimes bequeathed them along with other valuables to their beneficiaries.[94] Five extant references to the safeguarding of important documents "in the *haligdom*" of a king or noble reveal that these collections were literally treasuries in the secular sense, too, as valuables secured in a locked chest or chamber.[95]

As it conveys at once collectivity and commodification, *haligdom* reflects a growing awareness that relics constituted another species of wealth, with all its attendant privileges and responsibilities. Early medieval casket-reliquaries were the protective strongboxes for this "spiritual treasure" (*geistlicher Schatz*),[96] which increasingly formed a part of royal, cathedral, and monastic treasuries and could mimic the functions served by other kinds of valuables.[97] What were apparently set expressions for getting or bestowing relic-treasure confirm the ordinariness of such acts: *begytan haligdom* "acquire a collection of relics" occurs three times, and there are single instances of *secan haligdom* "seek relics (for the purpose of acquiring them)" and *gyfan* and *unnan haligdom* "give, bequeath a relic-collection."[98] In a famous inventory of relics from eleventh-century Exeter, a preface relates how the relic-collecting King Æthelstan dispatched agents who "ferdon swa wide landes swa hig faran mihton and mid þam madmum begeaton þa deorwurðestan madmas, þe æfre ofer eorðan begitene mihton beon, þæt wæs haligdom se mæsta of gehwilcum stowum wydan and sydan gegaderod" (Rec 10.8 [Först] 17-21: journeyed as widely throughout the land

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93 Rollason, *Saints and Relics,* 186.

94 On Anglo-Saxon lay ownership of relics in the period, see Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 197; Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, 186; Smith, Fleming, and Halpin, "Court and Piety in Late Anglo-Saxon England," 587-88 and 595. Smith et al., 575, point out that high-ranking ecclesiastics also maintained private relic collections. On the eventual restriction of private ownership, see Herrmann-Mascard, *Les reliques,* 313-39.

95 Appendix, sense A.2.b.ii. See Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, 148-49.

96 See Fichtenau, "Zum Reliquienwesen," 112; also quoted by Dinzelbacher, "Die Realpräsenz," 119 (see also 137).

97 On relics in treasuries, see Hardt, *Gold und Herrschaft*, 132-34. On relics in early medieval gift-exchange and patronage, see Geary, "Sacred Commodities"; Smith, "Old Saints, New Cults"; Röckelein, *Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen*, 140-48.

98 Variations on the phrase *begytan haligdom* occur at Rec 6.6 (HarmD 19) 4-5; Rec 10.8 (Först) 20; KSB 8.1 (Liebermann) 13 (identical text at KSB [Birch] 45); cf. *secan haligdom* at Ch 325 (Birch 493) 26-27; *gyfan haligdom* at Rec 2.4 (Hunt) 3.1; *unnan haligdom* at Ch 1484 (Whitelock 8) 5-10.

as they could, and with [the King's] treasures acquired the most precious treasures that ever could be had on the face of the earth: that was the greatest relic-treasure [*haligdom*] gathered far and wide from this place and that).[99] The fact that such language feels so natural in Old English reflects not only the pervasiveness of Latin biblical and hagiographic models but perhaps also the traditional importance of treasures in vernacular literature.[100] The Old English calendar-poem called the *Menologium* weaves these strands together when it describes relics carried in Rogationtide processions as *halige gehyrste* "holy adornments."[101] The noun *(ge)hyrst*, a poetic word, joins ideas of material value and displayed beauty, usually on the possessor's person; *(ge)hyrst* in literary contexts encompasses treasures in the broadest sense, including weapons and other battle-gear.[102]

The description of relics in the *Menologium* recalls that another use of treasures was ostentatious display, an impulse that may also register in the cult of *haligdom*. David Rollason has gone so far as to suggest that a kind of competition grew between royal and aristocratic relic-collectors: since relics "served to validate the king's own judicial activity" in oaths and other transactions, his relic-treasures had to impress more than those of his magnates.[103] And the competition need not have been only between the king and highest elites. To the extent that those further down the social scale owned (or claimed to own) private relic-treasures, it is worth asking how this kind of status symbol lurked on the edges of, or even interfered with, public liturgies at Rogationtide. An admonition that opens what is surely the most "popular" of the extant Old English Rogation homilies makes a revealing plea: "Men þa leofestan, þis syndon halige dagas and gastlice þenunge mid mannum; forþi þe þas dagas næron for gytsunge geworhte ne for nanum rence, ac hi wæron geworhte for micelre neode eallum folce" (HomS 42 [Baz-Cr] 2-4: Most beloved, these are holy days and spiritual observances among the people; for these days were not established for the sake of covetousness or for any pomp; rather they were established for the great need of

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99 For a more recent edition of this and related documents, see Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, 171-209. On the motives of Æthelstan's relic-benefactions, see Rollason, "Relic-Cults as an Instrument of Royal Policy," 92-93; Thacker, "Dynastic Monasteries and Family Cults," 254-55.

100 On treasure as a conventional fixture in Old English poetry, see Tyler's recent monograph, *Old English Poetics*.

101 Men 73-75 "man reliquias ræran onginneð, / halige gehyrste; þæt is healic dæg, / bentiid bremu" (one begins to elevate relics, holy adornments; that is a solemn day, a glorious time for petition).

102 See Grein, *Sprachschatz der angelsächsischen Dichter*, 383 (s.v. *hyrst* and *ge-hyrst*).

103 Rollason, "Relic-Cults as an Instrument of Royal Policy," 98.

the entire populace). The words go somewhat beyond ordinary calls for appropriate behaviour at these liturgies; the homilist implies criticism especially of any who would use the processions, intended to benefit *ell folc*, as opportunities for competitive shows of pomp. Might the discouraged ostentations have included the layperson's private *haligdom*, richly housed, jostling in procession alongside the local church's? To judge from frequent admonitions in homilies, some effort was required on the clergy's part to remind wealthier congregants that these were not social events and that all except the sick were expected to walk, not ride, as they accompanied the relics.[104]

In the hands of royalty, laymen, or ecclesiastics, private relic-hoards should not be seen only as currency or status symbols. When not on display, the collection would, like other treasures, be kept secured, available for their owners to venerate and admire but perhaps even then not exposed to immediate view.[105] The basic forms and nomenclature of their containers (e.g., Lat. *scrinium*, *loculus*, OE *scrin, earc, cist* etc.) overlapped those used in ecclesiastical settings. Little evidence survives of how laymen employed their *haligdom* for devotional purposes. The anecdote discussed earlier from Asser's *Life* of Alfred suggests that the king entered his relic-tent alone to offer petitions before the *haligdom*, just as Moses prayed before the Ark. If there is any truth to the account, Alfred's arrangement may have been atypical for its elaborateness, but the conception of saintly *virtus* that it implied was probably not. The notion of relics as Old Testament "holies" rather than individual intercessors and friends also casts in a new light Alfred's apparent lack of interest in promoting any particular saint as a dynastic patron, an attitude that seems to have endured through the reign of Edward the Elder.[106] Under the next king, Æthelstan, and his successors down to the Conquest, particular saints and church-based shrines reclaim dynastic energies (though this impression also reflects the increasing activity of monastic hagiographers in the later tenth century). But Æthelstan also continued to be a notorious hoarder of small relics, and the late Anglo-Saxon aristocracy followed both his

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104 See the introductory remarks by Bazire and Cross, eds., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, 80-81 and, for the text, 83-84 (their Homily 6, lines 29-40; the relevant passage is not included in the electronic *DOE Corpus*). Homilists frequently warned against irreverence at the processions; see examples cited by Bazire and Cross, eds., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, xxii-xxiv; also Filotas, *Pagan Survivals*, 184-85.

105 Lynn Jones's study "Emma's Greek *Scrine* [*sic*]" suggests that Queen Emma's private *haligdom* was kept in a Byzantine triptych-reliquary, a style that also concealed its contents.

106 Thacker, "Dynastic Monasteries and Family Cults," 253.

example and its informing mentality, gauging access to this form of holy power by the material measures of quantity and beauty.

The medieval association between relics and "treasure," as it oscillated between literal truth and metaphorical elaboration, exercised literary imaginations beyond the brief reference in the *Menologium*. The hagiographic motif of relics as treasure had ancient roots,[107] but between the ninth and twelfth centuries the metaphor was unpacked again and again to create entire narratives, the *Translationsberichte*.[108] As a sub-genre, these accounts bespeak the emergence of a full-fledged conceptual metaphor RELICS ARE TREASURE, so that many salient attributes of the source domain (TREASURE) were lexically and narratively mapped onto discourse about relics. Thus, translation-accounts not only routinize the substitution of treasure-terms like *thesaurus* for relic-terms, but they also spin whole adventures out of actions stereotypically linked to fateful "hoards": hiding and discovery, bestowal or theft, curses or reprieves, triumphant displays or reburials.

The more deeply the idea of relics-as-treasure worked itself into vernacular and aristocratic cultures, the more susceptibility it showed to the ambivalent, even foreboding inflection that treasure often bore in secular literature. Latin accounts of relic-thefts, and of ingenious mechanisms to prevent them, already played on an ambivalence that treasure invited trouble for its possessor.[109] A passage in the late *Waltham Chronicle* well conveys what that unease might look like when mingled with secular lore about fatal hoards. Composed in Latin in the later twelfth century, the *Chronicle* incorporates oral and written traditions extending back almost to Harold Godwinson's foundation of the community of canons in 1060. Harold's gift of his treasury of eighty-five relics to Waltham is historical fact; indeed, had he not been killed at the Battle of Hastings, Harold's reputation as a relic-collector might have eventually rivalled Æthelstan's. The chronicler recounts in detail Harold's strangely elegiac sentiments on handing over the treasure, and the equally strange conditions he imposed on the community's acceptance of the gift. At the dedication, in the presence of the Confessor and other august company,

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107 On biblical and early hagiographical backgrounds of the motif, see Hahn, "Metaphor and Meaning," 244-46; Angenendt, "'Der Leib ist klar, klar wie Kristall'"; Buettner, "From Bones to Stones," 43-45; Mayr, "Reliquien — kostbarer als Edelsteine."

108 Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte*, 94.

109 On the conventions and purposes of these narratives, see Geary, *Furta Sacra*.

> Earl Harold had a large number of holy relics, which he had acquired him-
> self through considerable labour and immense diligence, set before them
> [...]. Harold, being a man of commanding appearance and surpassing elo-
> quence, spoke [...]: "Since from the time of man's original blindness 'a
> sacred hunger for gold' [*Aeneid* 3.57] has descended upon the sons of dis-
> obedience [...], I fear that, if these precious relics of saints are entrusted to
> these reliquaries of gold and silver, something 'far more valuable than gold
> or precious stones and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb' [Ps. 18:11
> (19:10)] may, through the prevailing madness of wicked men, be stolen
> from the church, and in these man-made vessels these holy things may be
> alienated through the greed of evil men in later generations, and put to the
> use of sinners. Yet these are things acquired by my own considerable toil and
> effort which I have decided to dedicate to the Lord. Therefore, if it meets
> with your approval, my lord king, and that of your chief men, let them be
> buried in the ground, sealed with clay, to lie hidden in a secret place con-
> cealed from all mankind except for the one man alone who is to be entrusted
> with the task of hiding this great treasure, for it is safer to be deprived of
> man-made vessels than to lose the protection of so sacred a thing."
>
> The king and all who were present approved and applauded this plan,
> and the wood of the Cross which brings salvation was taken and cut down
> the middle: they committed one section, with the other protecting relics of
> the saints, to a tomb, building over it a heap of stones and around it a huge
> wall, though a quite plain one, which could prevent the eyes of onlookers
> from gaining knowledge of such holy things.[110]

This speech is surely an embellished recreation, but the chronicler does credit the
whole account to an eyewitness who, "after writing down in his own hand a record
of each one of these sacred relics, thought it right to pass on an account of this by writ-
ing it in a chapter book for their descendants who would not freely have access to pene-
trate the deeper secrets of that place."[111] The words ascribed to Harold assume a dis-
tinction between literal and metaphorical treasure, yet separating the two — removing
the relics from those precious containers that thieves might target — does not seem
to be an option; the two kinds of treasure have become in some sense inextricable, if
not indistinguishable. The further interest of the passage lies in the occasional simi-
larities between its treatment of this relic-treasure and the ritualized burial of hoards

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110 Translation from Watkiss and Chibnall, eds. and trans., *The Waltham Chronicle*, 35 and 37.
111 Translation from Watkiss and Chibnall, eds. and trans., *The Waltham Chronicle*, 37.

as evoked by two important passages in *Beowulf*, not to mention by more distant analogues in the Old Norse and Middle High German legends of Sigurd/Siegfried.[112] The alleged confusion of burial customs with hoarding rituals that has puzzled some archaeologically-informed readers at the end of *Beowulf* would have seemed entirely unproblematic to any eleventh-century aristocrat or churchman accustomed to the fragmentation and conspicuous concealment of prized remains as a *haligdom* "relic-treasure."

4. Conclusions

The intersection of secular and hagiographic conventions about treasure in late Anglo-Saxon narratives deserves further study, but so do most of the issues touched on in this paper. There remains an urgent need for systematic treatment of Latin relic-terminology but also for comparative work on vernaculars in addition to Old English. A preliminary study of the Old Irish inventory has already uncovered some remarkable parallels: the loan word OIr *reilic* (plural *reilec*), for instance, means not just "relic(s)" but "grave" or "(Christian) cemetery," reflecting the metonymic principle that imbued sarcophagi and reliquaries with the *virtus* of their contents.[113] Likewise, in Old Irish a relic of any class of saint could be named by the loan *martir*, suggesting an archaic association between relics and the tombs of martyrs. Yet other Old Irish relic-terms, *cretair* and *mind* "blessed object, holy thing," resemble OE *haligdom* in signifying a category for which Latin had no single word, namely, the fused relic/reliquary as a talismanic treasure.[114] More obviously, the polysemy of *haligdom* has parallels in several cognate languages: OHG *heiligtuom* glosses Latin terms for abstract "holiness," concrete "holy place, sanctuary," and "sacrament." The sense

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112 See Tarzia, "The Hoarding Ritual." The episodes in *Beowulf* are lines 2221-77 (the "last survivor") and 3120-82 (Beowulf's funeral and the reburial of the hoard).

113 Picard, "Le culte des reliques en Irlande"; see also the *Dictionary of the Irish Language [. . .] Compact Edition*, 502 (s.v. *reilic*), 455 (s.v. *martir*, sense b), 157 (s.v. *cretair*), and 464 (s.v. *mind* 1, sense b). Early Modern Irish lexicalized different senses as *creatair* (f.) "a halidom; any thing blessed, e.g. holy water; the consecrated element" and *creatar* (m.) "a sanctuary; a place where relics are kept"; see Dineen, *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla*, 262. On the relation of current Irish terms for graves, cemeteries, and relics, see also Viereck, "Europas Sprachenvielfalt," 384.

114 Parallels between OIr *cretair* and OE *haligdom* deserve particular scrutiny, and the evidence of *cretair* and *mind* should be compared with Julia Smith's remarks on attitudes towards relics in Celtic-speaking lands, in her "Oral and Written," 336-43; but cf. Blair, "A Saint for Every Minster," 485-86.

"(religious) relic" that, along with "sanctuary," usually attaches to NHG *Heiligtum* is not securely attested before Middle High German. Then, when it does occur, its singular usually has a collective sense, like OE *haligdom*.[115] Related forms exist in Old Saxon, Middle Low German, and Middle Dutch. The question of the influence of Old English on any of the continental dialects, or vice versa, remains open; the semantic parallels are indeed striking, but so are the differences — especially the apparent lack of a sense "(saints') relic(s)" for OHG *heiligtuom*. In Old Norse, where late Anglo-Saxon influence was widespread, the term usually appears as a *heilagr dómr* (plural *helgir dómar*), which looks like a calque of OE *haligdom* following a metanalysis as two words.[116] Most often translatable as "relic(s)," the Old Norse form does not present the difficult semantic range of its Old English and continental German counterparts.[117] For the distinct sense "sanctuary, holy place," a separate compound *helgidómr* occurs very late.[118]

The question of independent processes versus borrowing among these words is not just a linguistic one. Semantic developments across several early vernaculars confirm that their notions of holiness do not necessarily reflect some basic distinctions that we, with a hindsight conditioned by canon law or elite theology, expect to find there. In so far as the languages of the British Isles and continental Germania evidence an underlying conception of relics as depersonalized holiness, contained in material forms that in turn become and radiate that power, it is interesting to recall Diedrichs' argument that England and German-speaking lands were relatively conservative in adopting the newer style of "speaking" reliquaries, with their often greater emphasis on the glorified body and humanity of the saints.[119] Reminiscent of earlier twentieth-century phenomenological approaches to religion, the critical perspective on "holiness" that vernacular terms invite is hardly new in the study of medieval Christianity, even if the approach is now somewhat out of fashion in anglophone scholarship.[120]

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115 Karg-Gasterstädt et al., *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, 4:838 (s.v. *heiligtuom*). Cf. also OHG *wīhida* for both "relic" and "sacrament"; see Schützeichel, *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, 323. See also the Grimms' *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 4.2:843-44 (s.v. *Heiligthum*).

116 Thors, *Den kristna Terminologien i Fornsvenskan*, 152-53, discussing East Norse *hälghudomar*.

117 Degnbol et al., *Ordbog over det norrøna prosasprog*, vol. 3, *de-em*, s.v. *dómr*, sense 13. For another possible sense of *heilagr dómr* as a synonym for *kristinn dómr*, see Fritzner, *Ordbog over det gamle norske sprog*, 1:756 (s.v. *heilagr*).

118 Cleasby and Vigfusson, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, 248 (s.v. *heilagr*, sense II.1).

119 Diedrichs, *Vom Glauben zum Sehen*, 165.

120 For an overview, see Schmitt, "La notion de sacré," esp. §§13-14. This way of conceptualizing relic-cults has perhaps remained more pronounced in German-speaking scholarship, as in the works cited in notes 22 and 96 above.

Yet when integrated into a broader historical project, it remains a perspective of considerable explanatory force, as illustrated by Dominique Iogna-Prat's recent study of the developments by which the church building in the earlier Middle Ages became identified with and ultimately constitutive of "the Church," formerly understood as a mystical community.[121] Iogna-Prat observes two related developments: the materialization of the sacred in the church building with its appurtenances, and the metonymic transfer to the container (the church) of the sacralizing functions previously inherent in its content (the Christian community and its sacraments). These shifts obviously correlate with trends in relic-cults witnessed by the Old English terminology, first in its materializing and levelling of *reliquias* with other *res sacrae*, second in the fusion that *OE haligdom* implies between the container (the shrine or reliquary) and its often fragmentary, collectivized contents. Both "church" and "relic/reliquary," as they bond material and spiritual entities, are symptomatic of an early medieval religious mentality. Both are also representative in demonstrating the still-central place of historical lexicography among interdisciplinary approaches to the past. The relic-terms discussed here are striking reminders that the *Dictionary of Old English* and its *Corpus* exist to establish definitions, certainly, but also to help us hear what those definitions say about categories of perception and lived experience in the earlier Middle Ages.

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121 Iogna-Prat, *La maison Dieu*. The medieval Latin lexicon for "church" and "sacred" receives due attention throughout the book (see esp. 48-58 and 260-65). In general the study does not exploit early vernaculars, although an important trace of the shift that Iogna-Prat is considering survives in Æthelwold's Winchester usage, which lexicalized the distinction between "church building" (*cyrice*) and "the Church, body of believers" (*gelaðung*); see Gneuss, "The Origin of Standard Old English," 76.

Appendix:
Sorted Attestations of OE *haligdom*

I. Abstract
　　(the quality of) holiness, sanctity
　　　　PPs (prose) 11.1
　　　　PPs (prose) 50.8
　　　　CP 18.133.14
　　　　CP 49.383.7
　　　　CP 57.439.23
　　　　CP 57.439.34
　　　　GD 1 (C) 4.26.13
　　　　GD 1 (C) 5.46.22
　　　　GD 1 (C) 6.48.12
　　　　GDPref and 3 (C) 11.194.11
　　　　GDPref and 3 (C) 35.246.22
　　　　GDPref and 3 (C) 37.254.14
　　　　GDPref and 4 (C) 17.286.10
　　　　GDPref and 4 (C) 23.293.21
　　　　LS 12 (NatJnBapt) 119
　　　　HomU 11 (ScraggVerc 7) 1
　　　　HomM 1 (Healey) 27
　　　　PsGlE (Harsley) 144.5
　　　　PsGlE (Harsley) 96.12
　　　　DurRitGl 1 (Thomp-Lind) 100.6

II. Concrete
　　A.1.a. generally, a sacred object, or a group of such objects
　　　　LS 9 (Giles) 530
　　　　ChronC (O'Brien O'Keeffe) 1055, 17 (or take as II.A.2.b?)

　　A.1.b. unspecified *res sacrae* on which oaths are sworn (many
　　 of these attestations probably refer to relics; see also II.A.2.b.ii)
　　　　LawIIIAtr 2.1
　　　　LawIIIAtr 3.1
　　　　LawIICn 36
　　　　LawSwer 1

LawSwer 2
Rec 9.4 (Thorpe) 6
ChronE (Plummer) 1131.35
ChronE (Plummer) 1140.43

A.2. specifically, relic(s) of Christ or of the saints

A.2.a. an individual "relic" (but see note 78, above)
ÆCHom I, 18 (318.41)
ÆLS (Maur) 72
BenRGl 58.97.14-15

A.2.b. singular used collectively for an assemblage of relics or
relic-treasury (cf. Ger. *Reliquienschatz*)
ÆLS (Edmund) 194
Rec 2.4 (Hunt) 1.1
Rec 2.4 (Hunt) 1.2
Rec 2.4 (Hunt) 2.1
Rec 2.4 (Hunt) 3.1
Rec 10.8 (Först) 20
Rec 10.8 (Först) 28
Rec 10.8 (Först) 30
Rec 10.8 (Först) 31-2
Rec 10.8 (Först) 35
Rec 21.3.1 (Birch) 1
Rec 21.3.2 (Birch) 1
Rec 21.3.3 (Birch) 1
Rec 21.3.3 (Birch) 3
KSB 8.1 (Liebermann) 13 / KSB (Birch) 45
?WCan 1.1.1 (Fowler) 42 / WCan 1.1.2 (Fowler) 42
?LawICn 4
?LawHad 1.3
?LawHad 11
?LawGrið 24
?LawGrið 28
?Conf 3.1.1 (Raith Y) 3.4
?Conf 3.1.1 (Raith Y) 3.12

A.2.b.i. referring to the collection of relics and possibly other *res sanctae* carried in Rogationtide or other penitential processions
 HomS 30 (TristrApp 2) 14
 HomS 30 (TristrApp 2) 16
 HomS 38 (ScraggVerc 20) 6
 HomU 29.1 (Nap 36) 20
 HomU 46 (Nap 57) 92
 LawVIIaAtr 2.1

A.2.b.ii. referring to the relic-treasury as a place to safeguard documents; esp. in the phrase *mid/ æt þæs cyninges haligdome*
 Ch 939 (Whitelock 16.2) 31-2
 Ch 981 (Rob 85) 29
 Ch 1478 (Rob 115) 45
 Ch 1521 (Whitelock 29) 34-5

A.2.b.iii. referring to a relic-collection as if to the collective of saints invoked to guarantee anathemas and adjurations (this usage thus related to II.A.1.b)
 HomU 15.1 (Scragg) 20
 Ch 1661 (Rob 68) 4
 Rec 6.6 (HarmD 19) 4-5
 Ch 325 (Birch 493) 27

A.3.a. referring to the contents of the Ark of the Covenant
 CP 16.103.5
 ÆCHom II, 12.2 (122.432)
 ÆHom 22, 222

A.3.b. referring to the "(Jewish) holies" as a periphrasis for the Ark or the Temple (or take as sense II.A.3.a or II.B.1)
 ÆLS (Maccabees) 344
 ÆHomM 15 (Ass 9) 136

A.4. generally, a sacrament or the sacraments (collectively)
 CP 7.50.1-2 (see note 60, above)
 LibSc 10.41 (glossing *sacramenti* in the sense "sacred mystery")
 ArPrGl 1 (Holt-Campb) 17.72

A.4.a. referring to the Eucharist
LS 23 (MaryofEgypt) 739
ThCap2 (Sauer) 41.393.2
ThCap2 (Sauer) 44.397.2
ThCap2 (Sauer) 44.399.11
MkHeadGl (Li) 44
RegCGl (Kornexl) 34.807

A.4.b. referring to baptism
HomS 49 (Brot 2) 188
DurRitGl 1 (Thomp-Lind) 30.8

A.4.c. glossing *sacramentum* "oath"
LibSc 37.12
LibSc 37.17 (x2)

B. sanctuary, holy place
ChronE (Irvine) 1083.19
PsGlE (Harsley) 88.40 = *sanctitatem* (or sense I ? cf. *sanctuarium* PsG)
PsGlE (Harsley) 95.6 = *sanctitatem* ([sic] for *sanctitas* PsR; cf. sanctimonia PsG) (or sense I?)
PsGlG (Rosier) 88.40 = *sanctuarium* (PsG; cf. *sanctitatem* PsR)
PsGlI (Lindelöf) 73.7 = *sanctuarium* (PsR and PsG)
PsGlI (Lindelöf) 77.69 = *sanctificium* (PsG; cf. *sanctificationem* PsR)
PsCaI (Lindelöf) 5(4).17 = *sanctuarium*

B.1. the Jewish Tabernacle
Exod 21:6 (see above, note 71)

III. Indeterminate
AldV 2.3.1 (Nap) 127 "*sacramentorum* halidome" (*legas* halidoma?)
ClGl 3 (Quinn) 398 = sanctimonie

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