

WHICH TEXT IS RHYGYFARCH'S *LIFE* OF ST DAVID?

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Rhygyfarch ap Sulien (1056/7–1099) belonged to the family that controlled the *clas* of Llanbadarn in the eleventh century.¹ His father Sulien was bishop of St Davids, and Rhygyfarch's *Life* of St David has always been in some sense a well-known work. He identifies himself as the author in the concluding chapter, where he modestly asks his attentive readers to pray 'for me, who am named Rhygyfarch and who rashly applied my inadequate talent to this subject'. This sentence is included in two versions of the text, however, and at different periods now one, now the other has been accorded precedence as representing most nearly the original work of the author.²

From the twelfth century the shorter version was quite widely available in manuscript; an abridged copy was first printed in 1516, and other printed editions of all or part of the work appeared in 1645, 1668, and 1691.³ The latest of these editions, in *Anglia Sacra*, edited by Henry Wharton (1664–1695), was the first to draw on the longer text preserved uniquely in a manuscript from Brecon priory which by the seventeenth century was bound with other items in the library assembled by the famous book-collector Sir Robert Cotton (1571–1631), where it was shelved under the bust of the Roman Emperor Vespasian with the shelf-mark Vespasian A. xiv. Wharton had taken as his text the version in another of Sir Robert Cotton's manuscripts, Vitellius E. vii, which was a copy of the *Life* as revised by Gerald of

¹ Lloyd, 'Bishop Sulien', 1–6; J. Conway Davies, *Episcopal Acts*, 2, 493–506; Lapidge, 'The Welsh-Latin poetry', 68–106.

² The editions to which I shall mainly refer are Wade-Evans, 'Rhygyfarch's Life', 1–73; Wade-Evans, *VSBG*; J.W. James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*. The quotation is from § 67. In 1985 in Lapidge and Sharpe, *Bibliography*, 14, I regrettably cited James's edition as the preferred text. I subsequently changed my mind and indicated this in Sharpe, *A Handlist*, 458. The present paper seeks to justify my view that the longer, Vespasian text used by Wade-Evans better represents Rhygyfarch's work than the shorter text edited by James.

³ The edition of 1516 is a rearrangement of John of Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium Angliae Walliae Scotiae et Hiberniae*, augmented by the addition of a prologue and fifteen further Lives, printed by Wynkyn de Worde as *Noua Legenda Anglie* in 1516 (and also ed. Horstmann); the *Life* of St David is John's abridgement, I.254–62. The other early editions are John Colgan [1592–1658], *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae* (1645), 425–32 (text of the Irish abridgement, some comparison made with the 1516 edition, and Colgan also knew of Gerald's *Life* and John of Tynemouth's); [The Bollandists], *Acta Sanctorum*, Mar. I (1668), 38–47 (text of the Digby family from an English manuscript then in Utrecht); and Henry Wharton, *Anglia Sacra* (1691), II.628–40 (text as rewritten by Gerald of Wales with selected variants from Vespasian A. xiv as 'Ricemarus'), 645–7 (two lengthy additions from Vespasian A. xiv, §§ 20–31 and 54–8). Note that James (xxiii, xxxviii) mistakenly transfers 1645 as year of publication from Colgan's *Acta* to the Bollandists' *Acta Sanctorum*; at p. xxix he gives 1636 as the date of publication of Colgan's edition and mistakenly names Colgan's expressed source, Bishop David Rothe, as Bishop Richard Routh.

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Wales towards the end of the twelfth century.⁴ Wharton realised that the Vespasian text was fuller, and he printed extracts from it to complement Gerald's version. In 1853 the complete text from the Vespasian manuscript was put into print by William Jenkins Rees (1772–1855), a graduate of Wadham College, Oxford, who was rector of Cascob in Radnorshire from 1807 until his death and from 1820 also a prebendary of Christ's College, Brecon.⁵ This long version of the *Life* was re-edited by Arthur Wade Wade-Evans (1875–1964) in 1913; Wade-Evans included an English translation with his edition of the Latin.⁶ The translation was reprinted by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1923, and the Latin text was reprinted with other *Lives* of Welsh saints from the Vespasian and other manuscripts in Wade-Evans's volume *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae* in 1944. Wade-Evans's text remained the standard one until 1967, when John Williams James (1889–1983), chancellor of Bangor cathedral (1940–64), brought out a new edition, on which he had worked intermittently since 1930. James was the first to attempt a full investigation of the textual history, so that his edition carried a great deal more academic authority than the earlier editions. He argued that the Vespasian text was a reworking of the *Life*, made at Brecon around the year 1200 but incorporating some changes made a little earlier at St Davids around 1190. He therefore presented instead a text that relied largely on two groups of manuscripts, both of which bore witness to what he called 'the basic mid twelfth-century Latin text'.⁷ In so doing he claimed to have recovered the text as revised at St Davids for Bishop Bernard, who held the see from 1115 to 1148. James was elusive on the subject of how far he thought this mid-twelfth-century text differed from the text as composed by Rhygyfarch, but he held that it was not possible to get back nearer to that original. James was conscious that he was going against what had been the general opinion, and he justified this by claiming that he followed the evidence: 'If any long-cherished beliefs will be repelled by my conclusions, I can plead only a convinced acceptance of the evidence of the texts'.⁸

⁴ The version by Gerald of Wales has been printed by Brewer: *Opera* III.377–404. Brewer's text was taken from Wharton (including his notes from 'Ricemarus') in the belief that the Vitellius manuscript had been destroyed in the Cotton fire of 1731. Brewer also compared the extracts from Gerald's *Life* quoted by Archbishop James Ussher in *Ecclesiarum Britannicarum Antiquitates*. He seems to have assumed that Ussher's quotations were textually independent, but Ussher was a regular user of Sir Robert Cotton's library and may have quoted from the Vitellius manuscript. This was badly damaged in the fire. A second copy exists in British Library, MS Royal 13 C. 1 (s. xv), fols 171r–180v; the text here was augmented with miracle-stories extending as late as 1388, and the surviving copy was made in the 1450s for the antiquary William Worcestre. The Royal Library catalogue suggests that this may have been the copy used by Ussher; in his time the Royal manuscripts were kept at St James's Palace, where he could have had access.

⁵ Rees, *Lives*, 117–44, with translation, 418–48. The edition was produced by Rees's brother who ran the family's printing business in Llandovery.

⁶ There is an account of Wade-Evans's published works by Bachelléry, 'Nécrologie A.W. Wade-Evans', 165–8.

⁷ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxx.

⁸ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, vii. James's edition appears not to have been widely reviewed, but those reviews that I have found accept his findings. So H.D. Emanuel (40–2) who makes a small number of literal corrections, welcomes James's text as 'a firm textual foundation for further studies'; J.E. Caerwyn Williams (183–5), in the first sentence of his review, says, 'The value of this volume can scarcely be overstated'; and Thomas Jones (156–7) – who had excoriated the deficiencies of Wade-Evans's *VSBG* – accepted all of James's conclusions with the qualification that James's assertion that the textual history could be traced no farther back than "two separate copies of an archetype in the possession of Bernard ...", although credible on a priori grounds, cannot be other than slightly dogmatic' (Thomas Jones, 'Review of James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*'). Others have also endorsed James's

While I do not dispute that James edited a mid-twelfth-century version of the text that enjoyed some medieval circulation in England and in Normandy, I shall argue that he erred in his judgement of the Vespasian text and that all his reasons for denying its priority were mistaken. When James's assumptions and arguments are cleared away, it becomes evident that Vespasian has preserved for us something very close to Rhygyfarch's text and that its deviations are minor errors of copying that can usually be put right.

James's account of previous scholarship on the text catalogues the stages by which more and more manuscripts were identified.⁹ From Wade-Evans's 1913 edition he quotes a few telling points:¹⁰

In his Introduction (pp. xi–xiv), following Baring-Gould and Fisher (vol. ii, pp. 285–6), he calls the Vespasian text 'the best ... the fullest, and so far as I know quite unique ... There are at least some slight omissions and alterations', and '... mistakes'. The other Latin texts (excluding the versions of Giraldus Cambrensis and John of Tynemouth) are comprehensively styled 'anonymous Norman-French versions of Rhygyfarch's original work, some as old as, if not older than, the Vespasian MS.' (p. xi); and he then ingenuously admits (p. xii), 'and certainly, all these recensions, and others which are said to exist, have never been collated'.

At the end of his paragraph, James dismissively adds, 'This confession speaks for itself and for the critical worth of his conclusions. Comment is superfluous'. I do not know why James was so condescending about Wade-Evans, but it is clear that this account of his predecessor's work was carefully worded to undermine Wade-Evans's credibility. It implies that Wade-Evans's valuation of the Vespasian text was derivative and came from the popularizers, Sabine Baring-Gould (1834–1924) and John Fisher (1862–1930).¹¹ It imputes error to the Vespasian text, as if Wade-Evans was admitting that his judgement was ill-founded, and it exhibits Wade-Evans's attitude as dismissive towards the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman manuscripts on which James relied. In particular, Wade-Evans is made 'ingenuously' to confess that he had not bothered to do his homework on these other versions. Elsewhere, James writes:

Wade-Evans has boldly identified the Vespasian with Rhygyfarch's original, although he admits that none of the various manuscripts has ever been collated and compared with others, nor even with the texts of Giraldus's *Vita*.¹²

In contrast, we are meant to see James as the real scholar whose conclusions, based on laborious examination of the manuscript evidence, command a different order of respect and trust.

James gives a concise overview of the period of his work on the text.¹³ He studied the manuscript recently acquired by Cardiff Public Library in 1930–31, when Miss

findings, among them Michael Richter ('The Life of St David' 381), 'The new edition ... has provided a sound basis for all future research in this branch of Welsh hagiography. ... The important conclusion reached by the editor is that the Vespasian recension can no longer be taken as the authoritative version'; and D.S. Evans, *The Welsh Life*, xxxix–xlii, who concisely restates James's views.

⁹ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxxviii–xli.

¹⁰ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxxix. The ellipses are James's.

¹¹ Baring-Gould and Fisher, *The Lives*, II.285–6. J.W. James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxxix, offers a slighting summary of their work, implying that they could not be bothered to refer to manuscripts specifically and that their judgement between 'amplification' and 'abridgement' was derisory.

¹² James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxxii.

¹³ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, viii.

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E.G. Parker of the Bodleian Library in Oxford collated for him the manuscripts in Oxford and Cambridge. At that date James himself was preparing his dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Divinity of Durham university.¹⁴ At that stage Sir John Edward Lloyd urged James to publish his findings about Rhygyfarch, but circumstances prevented his doing so. After 1946 work resumed on a wider front but was again laid aside. Then in 1959 the bishop of St Davids, John Richards Richards, asked him to lecture on the *Life* of St David, and with the help of Dr Hywel Emanuel from Aberystwyth the work was brought to a conclusion.

By the time the work was finished, James had knowledge of twenty-five Latin manuscripts and four significant early printings of a Latin text. He also refers to ten copies in Welsh, but these are given little discussion.¹⁵ He divided the Latin texts into five 'recensions'. His 'Nero recension' and 'Digby recension' are in reality one and the same, being two family groups of manuscripts witnessing to what is essentially one text, the shorter version which I shall refer to as the Nero–Digby text. His 'Giraldus recension' is the reworking made by Gerald of Wales. His fourth recension is the 'Vespasian recension', that is the longer text previously published by Rees and Wade-Evans, though James added the testimony of two abridgements. Finally his fifth grouping, the 'Irish recension', is an abbreviation of the Nero–Digby text from a well-known Irish collection of Lives of mainly Irish saints.¹⁶ After cataloguing the manuscripts grouped in this way, James offers an analysis of the relationship of the various versions, and it is the reasoning here that most exposes the flaws of his method.

Assumption plays a large part. There is, first, an assumption that the age of the manuscript witnesses provides a guide to the age of the text transmitted. Thus, 'of the five recensions of the *Vita Davidis* only two, the Nero and the Digby, can be followed back to the mid-twelfth century',¹⁷ 'the Giraldus recension – nearest in age to the Nero and the Digby',¹⁸ and more fully:¹⁹

If Giraldus wrote his *Vita* in 1176, using a text of the Nero recension, and palaeographic evidence makes the MS. Digby 112 contemporary with the Nero E. 1, then there were three recensions in existence before there is any evidence of the Vespasian text: and all three, well before 1200, are united in challenging the authenticity of one-fifth of the Vespasian text, viz. the 1,600 words of its 7,900 which are not elsewhere recorded.

A prevailing thread in James's reasoning is that the Vespasian text, in a manuscript which he describes as early-thirteenth-century, could not be earlier than the shorter text attested in no fewer than six twelfth-century manuscripts. This assumption is false: it is common for a text to survive only in manuscripts much later than the author's time, and the fact that a related text survives in older copies does not mean that the text itself has to be older. James avoided this error in his consideration of the

¹⁴ James, 'A history'.

¹⁵ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xl, cites anonymously his own paper, James, 'The Welsh version'. For a more up-to-date discussion, consult Evans, *Buched Dewi*, and a revised English edition, *The Welsh Life*, which prints the text from the fourteenth-century Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi (Oxford, Jesus College, MS 119). D.S. Evans, *The Welsh Life*, lv, has increased the number of known copies to fourteen but discusses only five.

¹⁶ The collection in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B. 485, is discussed by Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 247–96.

¹⁷ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxx.

¹⁸ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxx.

¹⁹ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxxiii.

Life of St David by Gerald of Wales, which had survived in a single copy made (so James mistakenly thought) in the fifteenth century, from where it was transcribed by Wharton and printed in 1691.²⁰

I cannot help wondering whether James was started off on the wrong path by an early influence. Cardiff Public Library in April 1924 bought a collection of saints's Lives from the dispersal of the library of Sir George Wombwell of Newburgh Priory in the North Riding of Yorkshire. The manuscript had no shelf-mark when James used it, but it is now MS 1. 381. We are only concerned with part 2, written (according to Neil Ker) in the first half of the twelfth century and including an early copy of the *Life* of St David.²¹ James thought it was hardly later than the copies that he took as the types of the Nero and Digby families; he regarded it as only slightly inferior to the Nero copy. Soon after it was acquired, the Cardiff librarian asked for an opinion on the *Life* of St David from a curator of manuscripts at the British Museum, where Sir Robert Cotton's books, including the Nero and Vespasian texts, were then kept:

In 1925 the Librarian of the Cardiff Public Library obtained the opinion of the British Museum experts on the text of the *Vita Davidis* in a manuscript which they had purchased in 1924. Mr J. A. Herbert of the British Museum reported that he considered the Cardiff MS. earlier than the Vespasian A. XIV, but later than the Nero E. 1: 'its text was in very close agreement with that of the Nero, but both manuscripts differed considerably from the text of the Vespasian MS. It was possible that the Nero and Cardiff texts represented the original recension, and the Vespasian MS. a later expansion.'²²

James goes on to say that he himself, 'accepting Mr J.A. Herbert's conclusions, collated the Cardiff text with that of the Vespasian, and sent his collated notes to Dr Hunt, Keeper of the Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, who had them compared with the relevant texts' in Oxford and Cambridge, 'with the result that the overwhelming proportion of the readings in those manuscripts was found in agreement with the Nero–Cardiff texts; and the Vespasian text appeared as a

²⁰ James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xii. James gives no account of the Vitellius manuscript in his list of copies of Gerald's text; he had presumably accepted that it was destroyed, and I do not know his basis for this date. In my view, it is not correct: three *Lives* were the first items in the manuscript (Gerald's *Life* of St Æthelberht, a *Life* of St Patrick, and Gerald's *Life* of St David), from which a few charred leaves survive; the writing, however, is clear enough to say that these texts were copied around the beginning of the thirteenth century. I note that Ludwig Bieler had hesitated between dating it to late twelfth century and first half of the thirteenth century (Bieler, '*Anecdota Patriciana*', 220–37).

²¹ The manuscript was described by Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, II.348–9. J.W. James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xv, observed that the manuscript may have come from Dover priory, but this rests on a confusion of part 2 (fols 81–146) with part 1 (fols 1–80), a manuscript of somewhat later date that has at the foot of fol. 2r a Dover shelfmark matching BM1. 169 in the catalogue of the library there made in 1389 by Br John Whitfield (Stoneman, *Dover Priory*, 99). The two parts were bound together in England, probably in the early seventeenth century, when both belonged to Sir Robert Cotton. That part 2 was written at Barking is inferred from its beginning with Goscelin's *Lives* of the saints of Barking (though this inference really only applies to its first booklet, fols 81–96); its remaining at Barking through the middle ages from that fact that a distinctive hand of the early sixteenth century annotated both this book and Cardiff Public Library, MS 3. 833 (Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, II.371), which has still decipherable the *ex libris* of Barking abbey. This may disguise complexity, however, for fols. 81–146 are not a palaeographical unity; of the four booklets, the *Life* of St David is the third, self-contained, fols 121–129 (see below, 104).

²² James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xl; he cites a work published by Cardiff Public Library soon after it acquired the manuscript: Anon., *Catalogue of Manuscripts*: v–vi (preface signed by Harry Farr) and 3 (Herbert's description of the manuscript).

more or less isolated version'.²³ Implicit here is a second assumption, that the larger number of witnesses reflects the priority or superiority of the Nero–Digby text. But might there be another, less obvious assumption, that the opinion of an expert from the British Museum outweighed the views of dear old Wade-Evans? Mr Herbert perhaps expressed an opinion that it was 'possible' that Vespasian was a later text, not that there was reason to think so. I cannot help wondering whether he was in the first place consulted for his palaeographical opinion on the manuscript so recently acquired in Cardiff or perhaps on its dating relative to other manuscripts containing the *Life* of St David. As an assistant keeper working under Julius Gilson, the keeper of manuscripts who was largely responsible for the outstanding catalogue of the old Royal manuscripts in the British Museum, published in 1921, he would have been trained to make a comparison with other copies in the collection and did so.²⁴ It is hard to see that he would have been consulted for a considered text-historical judgement on the *Life*, yet James's tendency to confuse manuscript-copy and text led him to treat it as such, turning Herbert's opinion into 'conclusions'. Ironically, there is a question-mark as to whether the conclusions were Herbert's at all: the passage quoted by James is from the preface to the catalogue, signed by the Cardiff librarian, Harry Farr (1874–1968).

James's next assumption came in part from the biblical scholarship of his time. Textual critics who worked on the Bible had long favoured the shorter reading, and James treated this as a rule, applying it to a medieval text where it was certainly not appropriate.²⁵ His adherence to the 'shorter reading' (his quotation marks designate the supposed rule) emerges only obliquely. It comes out most precisely in his comments on comparing the Nero and Digby groupings of manuscripts. The two families differed in about 61 readings; 'of these the Nero reading is preferred 47 times and the Digby 14 times', and he goes on to say that 'the 47 preferred Nero readings include instances of the "shorter reading", better grammatical forms, and words that yield the better sense'.²⁶ This is in fact a misapplication of the principle applied in biblical criticism, where the shorter reading represents the more original version than the longer reading; that is, it is a principle to help judge between the original text and a rewritten version, not a text-critical rule to eliminate errors of transcription. James used the principle more appropriately in an overall appraisal of the tradition, though its purpose was obviously to reinforce his rejection of the Vespasian text. He briefly compared the various texts of the *Life* of St David with the *Life* of St Cadog, analysed by Hywel Emanuel as a composite text deriving from

²³ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xl. There appears to be some confusion. Here and elsewhere (viii) James attributes this phase of delegated collation by Miss Parker to the period 1930–31, but Dr Richard Hunt was not appointed keeper of western manuscripts until 1945; Edmund Craster was keeper until 1931, when he was succeeded by Edgar Lobel. I am grateful to Mr Steven Tomlinson of the Bodleian Library for the following information. Miss Evaline Gertrude Parker was the daughter of George Parker (1838–1906), who was on the staff of the library from 1854 until his death. About that date Miss Parker started doing work for the Library, answering enquiries that involved more time than the regular staff could give, although not apparently on the establishment. This continued until 1911. Over the next twenty years or more, she seems to have acted as an agent for those who wanted transcriptions or similar work, but nothing appears in library records.

²⁴ John Alexander Herbert (1862–1948) is best known for his work on illuminated manuscripts of the high middle ages and on medieval English and French romances.

²⁵ '*Brevior lectio potior*' was the first of fifteen text-critical principles defined by Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745–1812) in relation to the Greek New Testament, though he allowed circumstances in which it was not to be preferred (Metzger, *The Text*, 120). The principle was always more favoured by biblical scholars than others.

²⁶ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxx.

seven sources.²⁷ James claimed to detect only three or four elements of composition in the Vespasian text, but he then generalized:

Such editing was a common feature in the Middle Ages, and scarcely a document, secular or ecclesiastical, has reached us as it left its author's hand. The Book of Llan Dav, in particular, illustrates such a *process of expansion* (my emphasis).²⁸

James's approach was very different from Emanuel's, and the composite nature of the *Life* of St Cadog was something he illustrated rather than assumed. James was unable to show that the Vespasian text was composite in anything like the same way, but in the reading of the textual tradition that he had built around Herbert's opinion Vespasian had to be seen as interpolated. Longer meant worse. James's holding to this view even when he could see that all of the later versions of the *Life* were abbreviated rather than expanded may seem perverse, and one suspects that the conclusion dictated the reasoning where the Vespasian text was concerned.

The assumptions so far identified lie in the background to a considerable extent. Failure to distinguish copy from text, allowing manuscript-date to sway one's view of textual history, favouring the shorter over the longer reading whenever a choice is required, are all aspects of James's textual principles, and we might have expected them to influence his work on any text. A particular assumption, however, plays a large part in his explicit reasoning here. I am convinced that here more than anywhere else the stated reasoning did not lead to the conclusion but was rather a contrived route to reach the preconceived answer. I refer to the argument for rejecting the Vespasian text, based on Gerald of Wales's contribution to the evolution of the text.

It appears to be assumed that, if the Vespasian text had existed when Gerald wrote his paraphrase of the Nero–Digby text, he must have known it. He allows no room for the possibility that Gerald, never a diligent antiquary, might not have known the text; still less that the Nero–Digby text might have suited Gerald's needs better:

How can Giraldus's omissions of all the local traditions peculiar to the Vespasian text be explained? Is it conceivable that with all his Pembrokeshire antecedents, his strong sense of local patriotism, his upbringing in St Davids itself, his obvious acquaintance with the locality and its traditions, his consuming ambition for that see and none other, and his readiness to sell his soul for the success of his enterprise, is it conceivable that he would have knowingly falsified the traditions as recorded in the Vespasian text, substituting for them creations of his own imagination? The only possible conclusion is that Giraldus was totally unacquainted with the Vespasian text, which must have come into being later than 1176, if not after 1184, and that he had written his *Vita* as a young prebendary and archdeacon in 1172–6, soon after his return to Wales from the University of Paris. The matter in his own work would represent the local traditions current in St Davids in 1150–75, whereas that in the Vespasian MS. represents those of 1184–1200. Had he previously known of the latter, there would have been no occasion to reproduce the former in his own work. The only conclusion possible from the evidence is that Giraldus wrote his *Vita* about 1176, when the text of the Vespasian was as yet unknown in St Davids. The only type of text used by Giraldus was a text of the Nero recension.²⁹

²⁷ Emanuel, 'An analysis', 217–27 (which made use of his unpublished dissertation, 'The Latin Life of St Cadoc').

²⁸ James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xii.

²⁹ James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xxxii.

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The last short sentence is a statement of fact. In spite of the claim to work 'from the evidence', however, the rest of this, with its rhetoric and its repetitions, is no more than special pleading founded on a protested assumption. Gerald wrote a paraphrase of the Nero–Digby version of the *Life* of St David, and he did so, as he explains in his preface, in order to provide a more elegant version. If the rest of James's blustering was valid, it would mean that the passages peculiar to the Vespasian were in some stronger sense pertinent to Gerald's purpose than the four fifths of the text shared by Vespasian and Nero–Digby. If that were so, he might have made the point by citing a few sentences to illustrate. James does not even illustrate what Gerald added to Nero–Digby nor attempt to show in what way it served his metropolitan cause; indeed Gerald's purpose in rewriting the *Life* is assumed. The texts do not support the bluster, and there may be many reasons why Gerald worked from the mid-twelfth-century version rather than the late-eleventh-century original of Rhygyfarch's *Life*.

More revealing is what James does with the dating of Gerald's work. Having confounded the date of the manuscript with the date of the text, the Vespasian text for James took its shape around 1200. Before James, students of Gerald's career had dated his rewriting the *Life* to the period 1199×1203, when he was most involved with his ambition to be consecrated to the see in circumstances that would confirm its independent metropolitan status. This date was inconvenient for James, since it might mean that Gerald had chosen to use Nero–Digby at a time when at Brecon, his own archdeaconry, there was a copy of the Vespasian text. He therefore redated Gerald's writing the *Life* to a time when he was first nominated to the see in 1176, or rather to the years between his return to Wales around 1172 and his nomination by the chapter of St Davids. This would make the *Life* of St David Gerald's earliest substantial work, predating his first published work by at least a dozen years. The only certainty is that the *Life* was finished before Gerald put together his *Symbolum electorum*, in which around 1199 he collected specimens of his fine writing, including the preface to the *Life* of St David.³⁰ The probability is that it dates from the 1190s and was not motivated by the metropolitan cause at the turn of the century.³¹

The point of this use of Gerald's *Life* in James's argument is simple. It was the only way James could find to make an argument that Vespasian did not exist significantly earlier than the manuscript in which the text has reached us. It was meant to justify the notion that the shorter text preserved in older copies was the earlier and more authentic version of the *Life*. But what is claimed to rest on evidence, and thereby to vindicate James's 'modern' textual scholarship over Wade-Evans's lazy methods and acceptance of what had become tradition, turns out to depend rather on a series of assumptions. It even seems that James had begun by taking his conclusion from J.A. Herbert.

James offers no coherent discussion of the Vespasian text, still less a reading of how its peculiar passages – additions, as he would have it – change the argument and purpose of the text. He had made up his mind that it was unimportant, in spite of all that local interest that he had assumed would have demanded Gerald's attention.

³⁰ Gerald of Wales, *Symbolum electorum*, IV.23. Only Books I–II of this work have been edited by Brewer (*Opera* I.197–364); he gives a synopsis of Books III–IV (*Opera* I.391–5), but the witness of the *Symbolum* to the text of these prefaces has generally not been used by editors.

³¹ Richter, 'The Life of St David', 381–6.

Ever since its inclusion in W. J. Rees's *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints* (Llandoverly, 1853), this version of the *Vita* has been the best known, and it has acquired an importance out of all proportion to its date and critical value, and exaggerated claims have been made for it by enthusiastic students.³²

A stranger reason is given elsewhere: 'The presence of the Vespasian MS. in the British Museum led to its becoming the most influential of all the texts of Rhigyfarch's *Vita*'. And he goes on:

But notwithstanding, it cannot be regarded as a primary text. Unlike the Nero E. 1, the Cardiff MS., the Rouen U. 141, and the Saint-Omer 716, it is not an independent copy of a vanished archetype. It is only a thirteenth-century copy of a very late twelfth-century copy (c. 1190 AD) of a mid-twelfth-century text of the Nero type, of which there are four twelfth-century copies earlier than it – not to mention two twelfth-century copies of the Digby group – all six twelfth-century copies displaying among themselves a considerable degree of agreement in opposition to the characteristic Vespasian readings. Whatever may be said of it, the Vespasian text is only a secondary text, derived from the text of Rouen U. 141.³³

Apart from the restatement of false inferences based on mistaken assumptions in textual criticism, what case does James make to support his contention that Vespasian has been interpolated at a late date? Two categories of 'late' alteration are discussed.

James's first class of alterations 'comprises the identification of persons and places in Pembrokeshire which differ totally from those of Giraldus'.³⁴ Nine examples are given. In view of the thrust of what James has said, the reader may suppose that names are changed to alter the localization of the text, perhaps even to reflect a new agenda. Far from it. No alternative names are cited from Gerald's version, and the names concerned are absent from the Nero–Digby text; since that was what Gerald used, he would have had to make up alternative names if he wanted to insert names, but he did not. These names must be either additions in Vespasian where there was no name in Nero–Digby or omissions in Nero–Digby where Vespasian has a name. The latter is typical of hagiographical rewriting. James's mention of 'those of Giraldus' (where 'those' must refer to persons and places imputed to but absent from Gerald's text) is rhetoric to make a trivial reduction of names by a hagiographical abbreviator appear more significant. In three cases the names in question occur in other places in both texts, and their repetition or omission has no effect on the sense. In two examples the name in question is the River Teifi in Ceredigion, not near St Davids. The others are of very minor local interest, and in three cases derive from sections which Nero–Digby had reduced to a single sentence. It is far-fetched to present these changes as significant additions to assert the agenda of the church of St Davids around 1190.

For the one change of this class that matters James gives an incorrect reference, citing for '*Veterem Rubum*' § 13 instead of § 14. He discussed the passage in the context of Gerald's work.³⁵ St David has returned from founding monasteries in England and Gwent. The Vespasian text reads, *ad locum quo prius proficiscens exulauerat, .i. ad Veterem Rubum, rediit* ('he returned to the place from which he

³² James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xxv.

³³ James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xxxvii.

³⁴ James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xxxiv.

³⁵ James, *Rhigyfarch's Life*, xxxi.

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had been separated when he set out, namely *Vetus Rubus*). He dwelt there for some time, but then chose to move at the prompting of an angel; *ostenditque mihi locum ex quo pauci in infernum intrabunt; omnis enim qui in cimiterio illius loci sana fide sepultus fuerit, misericordiam consequetur* ('for [the angel] showed me a place from where few will go to perdition; for everyone who is buried in good faith in the graveyard of that place will obtain forgiveness'). The place to which David and his followers travel is *Rosinam Vallem, quam uulgari nomine Hodnant Brittones uocitant* ('*Vallis Rosina*, which the British call in their common tongue *Hodnant*'). This latter is where St Davids now stands. The change of sense introduced by the Nero–Digby version is to omit the place-name of *Vetus Rubus* and to rephrase the angel's direction to include the word 'nearby': *est autem alius prope locus, in cuius cimiterio quicumque salua fide humati fuerint uix eorum unus inferni penas luet* ('there is another place nearby where scarcely one of those buried in the saving faith in its graveyard will pay the pains of perdition'). With Nero–Digby as his source, Gerald's variation was *alius non hinc procul locus* ('another place not far from here'). James, taking *Vespasian* as the later version, draws the inference that this seemingly small alteration gives rise 'to the false conclusion that St David's *Vetus Rubus* was the Cardiganshire *Hen Fynyw* near *Aberaeron* instead of a forgotten site in the vicinity of the present St Davids cathedral'. If this late-twelfth-century interpolator is focused on St Davids, why should he have forgotten the local site and its story and instead looked further afield for a place whose name matched the story? It is surely the reverse: Rhygyfarch was a *Llanbadarn* man with strong interests in *Ceredigion*, and the St David of his story moved from *Vetus Rubus*, that is *Hen Fynyw*, to *Hodnant* and St Davids. The name *Mynyw* (Latinized as *Menevia*) is unusual, deriving from Irish, and it moved with him.³⁶ The adjectives *Vetus* or *Hen*, that is 'old' or 'former' *Mynyw*, show that Rhygyfarch recognized this move; his loyalty to the site in *Ceredigion*, however, kept him from using the old name *Mynyw* in reference to the new site, St Davids. Whoever shortened his text to produce the Nero–Digby version may have wanted to avoid any implication that St David himself had connexions elsewhere in west Wales. Or more likely he may simply have thought this was an unnecessary complication and that it was better to remove both place-names and substitute a vague local indicator, 'nearby'.

James's second class of changes is altogether more interesting and raises wider questions. He complained that *Wade-Evans's* edition of the *Lives* from the *Vespasian* manuscript omitted everything connected with the church and see of *Llandaf*, while noting that the *Vespasian Lives* do not include the *Life* of St Gildas by *Caradog of Llandarf*. He then draws out several phrases shared between the *Vespasian* text of David's *Life* and other *Vespasian Lives*, among them *Vita S. Cadoci*, *Vita S. Iltuti*, and the *Llandaf* text *Vita S. Dubricii*. The point here is to say that the phrases in the *Vespasian* text of David's *Life* are not Rhygyfarch's work but reflect alterations made by the *Brecon* copyist who, he supposed, brought these *Lives* together for the first time around 1200. The extension of these parallels beyond *Lives* in the *Vespasian* manuscript to include two works by *Caradog of Llandarf* goes against James's inference: the *Brecon* copyist did not copy either *Caradog's Vita S. Gildae* or his revision of *Lifris's Vita S. Cadoci*, so the parallels must originate further back. *John Davies* has shown that these verbal parallels are best explained by seeing several of

³⁶ Gerald of Wales's version glosses *Vetus Rubus*: *Puer autem nutritus est in loco qui Vetus Rubus dicitur, qui et Kambrice Hen Meneu [Hen Fynyw in modern spelling], Latine uero Vetus Meneuia uocatur. Sortitus est autem locus hic nomen ab Hybernico Muni quod et rubus sonat* (p. 384).

these Lives as a group composed by Caradog, who must have known Rhygyfarch's *Vita S. David* in the form that has come down to us as the Vespasian text.³⁷ James had claimed there was no evidence for the existence of the longer text before the date of the Vespasian copy; Caradog's work in effect provides that evidence.

According to James's manner of thought, Caradog's knowledge of the wording of the longer text must have pre-dated the oldest manuscripts of the Nero–Digby text and would therefore have been the older version. As I have said, the date of surviving copies cannot be used in this way.

It is in fact extremely difficult to date the Nero–Digby recension other than that it was made after Rhygyfarch's time and before the earliest witnesses. James suggests that the Nero–Digby reflects:

Bishop Bernard's attempt to secure for his see independence of Canterbury and primacy in Wales. Papal sympathy was essential to this enterprise, and to win this, Bernard had to gloss over Rhygyfarch's appeal in chapter 46 to the Patriarch of Jerusalem, and also to minimize the role of Padarn and Teilo. The words 'Romana auctoritate' are incompatible with Dewi's promotion to the Archbishopric by the Patriarch; and, despite the angelic injunction to the Patriarch, all mention of Padarn's and Teilo's consecration is suppressed, as is also the description of their gifts from the Patriarch: Dewi must be exalted above them.³⁸

How are we to make sense of this? If James were correct in his view that the Nero–Digby text reflects Bernard's version of what Rhygyfarch wrote, whatever Bernard *omitted* from the story must be irrecoverable. What we read about David's consecration by the patriarch is there still in the Nero–Digby text, §§ 44–8; so is his being accompanied by Teilo and Padarn, and the patriarch's preparing for them *tres honoratissimas sedes* ('three seats of the highest honour'). There is no way of recovering whatever might have been omitted, and what James says had to be played down is still there, else neither he nor we could have known of it. Such argument as James offers can only depend on imagination. The story mentions that the patriarch presented David with four gifts: it is imagination to suppose that Rhygyfarch must have also mentioned gifts to Teilo and Padarn. James's other point in this regard is to suggest that § 53 is at variance with the story of consecration by the patriarch in § 46. There the patriarch *ad archiepiscopatum eum* [or *David agium* in Vespasian] *prouehit*, 'he advances him [St David] to the archiepiscopate'. In § 53, however, it is by the consent of all the bishops, kings, princes, nobles, and all ranks that David *totius Brytannicę gentis archiepiscopus constituitur* ('is constituted archbishop of the whole British nation'.) I do not see variance here; the patriarch had consecrated David, the Britons received and installed him as their archbishop, regarding his see as *totius patrię metropolis*, 'metropolitan church of the whole country'. James adds that Christopher Brooke had suspected here a 'suspicious acquaintance with the charters forged in Canterbury during the Canterbury–York primacy dispute'.³⁹ In Brooke's words, 'these phrases have a sinister ring for anyone who has studied the Canterbury forgeries'.⁴⁰ The forgeries, however, are associated with Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury, who intended for his see the primacy of all Britain and Ireland. That aspiration and the phrases that express it were evident at Canterbury

³⁷ Davies, *The Book of Llandaf*, esp. 109–31.

³⁸ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxx.

³⁹ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxx, cites Brooke, 'The archbishops', 214, n. 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

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in the 1090s and may have been already widely known.⁴¹ Rhygyfarch himself may have subverted the same phraseology to make David archbishop of the British race – a context might perhaps be found in Bishop Wilfrid's difficulties with Archbishop Anselm around 1095 – though in truth the language is so normal for such titles that I do not think it necessary to suppose any influence from Canterbury. But what of the words *Romana auctoritate*? After the synod at Llanddewibrefi, in § 55 Rhygyfarch introduces a second synod, the Synod of Victory, a name derived from a very early British source;⁴² this reaffirms the decisions of the first synod. *Ex his igitur duabus synodis omnes nostre patrie ecclesie modum et regulam Romana auctoritate acceperunt* ('As a result of these two synods all the churches of our country received their pattern and rule by Roman authority'). It is certainly unclear how these local synods could act with Roman authority in any narrow sense, but the phrase is surely intended to convey no more than that the decisions were made in a canonical manner. Again, there is no real conflict with the story of David's consecration by the patriarch. James has adopted a pedantically strict reading in order to find contradictions.

He then touchingly supposes, 'With the exception of passages such as these' (though he did not point to any others), 'there seems no occasion to question the faithfulness to Rhygyfarch of the Basic mid twelfth-century text, or of the manuscripts of the Nero and Digby recensions, so far as they conform to it.'⁴³ It is perhaps surprising that, after so much insistence on his 'convinced acceptance of the evidence of the texts', James proclaims the authentic Rhygyfarch on such a simple supposition. If he were correct in regarding the mid-twelfth-century text as a reflection of Bishop Bernard's case, it is surely surprising that it does not tally with the account set out by the cathedral chapter in a letter to Pope Honorius II before 1130. The fiction offered there was that David

communi electione clericalis et laicalis concilii tocius regni occidentalis Britannie assumptus ac deinde a sancto Dubricio antecessore suo et a propria sinodo sicut in eadem mos extiterat ecclesia legitur fuisse archipresul consecratus

(is said to have been picked out by the common choice of a council of the church and laity of all western Britain and thereafter consecrated archbishop by his predecessor St Dubricius and [according to the custom of the same church] by its proper synod.)⁴⁴

⁴¹ Lanfranc's claim is expressed in his 1072 letter to Pope Alexander II (*Epistolae*, ed. Clover and Gibson, 50). Brooke followed Böhmer's dating of the forged decretals to 1070–72 in support of Lanfranc's own interest and identified the forger as one Guerno (Brooke, 'The Canterbury forgeries'); Southern argued for a later dating around 1120–21, associating them with Archbishop Ralph's visit to Rome in 1121 (Southern, 'The Canterbury forgeries', 193–226). Whatever the date of the forgeries, Canterbury pursued the idea of a primacy over the whole of Britain and Ireland throughout this period. Among other sources, Goscelin's Lives of St Augustine and St Lawrence of Canterbury, published in 1099 or soon after, reflect Canterbury's case for such a primacy. The phraseology is used by Anselm as archbishop, for example, in a charter datable to 1101: *A. Cantuariensis archiepiscopus et maioris Britannie atque Hibernie primas*, ed. Dodwell, *The Charters of Norwich*, 1.163 (no. 260).

⁴² A text survives, probably from the sixth century, recording the decisions of the Synod of the Grove of Victory (ed. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials*, 68). These bear no relation to what Rhygyfarch says about the Synod of Victory.

⁴³ James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxx.

⁴⁴ The documentation of Bernard's case has been preserved in Book II of Gerald of Wales, *Libellus inuentionum* (ed. Davies, 130–47); the letter of the chapter of St Davids to Honorius II (datable only 1124×1130), II.10, gives this account of David's consecration. The synod is that of the church of western Britain, and the word 'proper' denotes its independent status.

It would appear that no attempt was made to rewrite the argument of the *Life* in Bernard's time by replacing Rhygyfarch's role for the patriarch of Jerusalem with the contemporary interest in Dubricius. That tradition does not enter the *Life* until Gerald of Wales introduced it, and he was able to draw on the letter to Pope Honorius.⁴⁵ Rather, the revision sought simply to abbreviate and, according to the common practice of hagiography, to reduce the amount of particular detail that would mean nothing to a non-local audience.

There is one avenue that may help to contextualize the creation of this abbreviated text more closely, but the precise evidence is tenuous. Bishop Bernard did not become interested in metropolitan status for St Davids until around 1125. For the previous six years he had been actively working on behalf of successive archbishops of Canterbury and their primatial claim against Archbishop Thurstan of York. Thurstan's victory meant an end to the notion of a primacy of all Britain and Ireland and for Bernard opened the door to a metropolitan in Wales. Earlier than that, however, there is a possibility that Bernard was already seeking to promote the cult of St David, perhaps in rivalry with his Norman colleague in Wales, Bishop Urban of Llandaf, who twice complained about Bernard to the papacy. Both attended the Council of Reims in 1119, and at that time Urban obtained bulls from Pope Calixtus II (1119–24); Bernard was in Rome in 1123 and obtained a bull for St Davids from the same pope. From this context a false notion grew up that David was canonized by Pope Calixtus; scholars who realise that would be anachronistic have sometimes expressed it rather that the cult was at least approved by the pope, for which there is no direct evidence.⁴⁶ In 1120, however, Urban claimed to translate the relics of St Dubricius at Llandaf.⁴⁷ Then soon after 1126 William of Malmesbury (eager to preserve Glastonbury's claim to St David's relics) reported that *Bernardum episcopum semel et secundo eum quesisse et multis reclamantibus non inuenisse* ('Bishop Bernard had more than once looked for his body and in the face of many protests could not find it').⁴⁸ William also supplies the best evidence that Bernard had sought official recognition for the cult of St David from Pope Calixtus:

⁴⁵ Gerald of Wales, *Vita S. Davidis*, ed. Brewer, *et al.*, *Opera*, III.401; Rhygyfarch (§ 50) had mentioned Dubricius along with Deiniol as the holy men who brought David to the synod. The discussion of the evolution of accounts of the synod by Richter ('Canterbury's primacy', 184–5), intended to isolate Bernard's contribution in the evolution of the *uita*, is hampered by his acceptance of James's view of the textual history.

⁴⁶ The notion of canonization is mentioned by Haddan and traced to Francis Godwin (1562–1633), bishop of Llandaf (ed. Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, I.316n); it is refuted in some detail by Toynebee, *S. Louis*, 239–40. The review of this by Grosjean (211–13), adds some details, including the observation that Godwin's inference had been rejected already by the Bollandists in 1668. Recent books that have repeated the notion in a qualified form have not cited any evidence (Davies, *Conquest*, 184; Walker, *Medieval Wales*, 72).

⁴⁷ An account is given of the translation of St Dubricius in the Book of Llandaf (ed. Evans, 84–7). On Friday, 7 May 1120, the body was moved from Bardsey, *uerbo et consensu Radulfi Cantuariensis ecclesie metropolitani*; it was brought into the church at Llandaf on Sunday, 23 May, and on Wednesday, 2 June, the relics were washed before being enshrined. At this point we are told that the church was small and a rebuilding scheme was undertaken, apparently *after* the translation, which is most unusual; but the account goes on to say that on Wednesday, 14 April, in Holy Week, a letter from Archbishop Ralph was received, giving permission to rebuild. The letter is incorporated, p. 87. It may be that this letter was treated as authority for the translation of the saint's body, which was begun just over three weeks later.

⁴⁸ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, C text, I.25 (ed. Mynors *et al.*, I.810); this is part of a long addition (19.3–29.1) on the history of Glastonbury, added by William in the late 1120s. The passage was expanded a little to describe Bernard as *episcopum Vallis Rosine* in the interpolated text of William's *De antiquitate Glastonie ecclesie* § 16 (ed. Scott, 64).

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in his brief notice of the pope's merits, he mentions that he was so far from seeking to exploit pilgrims to Rome *ut Anglos peregrinos magis ad Sanctum David quam Romam pergere ammoneret pro viae longitudine: ad illum locum bis euntibus idem benedictionis refundendum commodum quod haberent qui semel Romam irent* ('that he encouraged English pilgrims to go to St Davids rather than Rome, because of the length of the journey; those who went twice to St Davids should have the same privileges in the way of benediction as those who went once to Rome').⁴⁹ How the pope did this remains unclear, but his favouring St Davids surely reflects the prompting of Bishop Bernard, perhaps when they met in Reims in 1119 but more likely when they met in Rome in 1123. The shorter text of the *Life* was not revised to put forward the new metropolitan arguments of the late 1120s and beyond, nor does it refer to any desire to translate the relics, but it may have been published in the early 1120s in the context of Bernard's first concern to maintain the status of St Davids against the aspirations of Bishop Urban at Llandaf.

If we put away James's assumptions and arguments meant to support what I can only see as a pre-conceived condemnation of the Vespasian text, all difficulties disappear. We need no longer pretend to find early-twelfth-century retouching in comparing the shorter text with an irrecoverable author's archetype. The straightforward reading of the textual evidence is that Rhygyfarch's text has been best preserved in Wales among the Lives of other Welsh saints in the Vespasian manuscript. Much could be said on the archaism of language and content that we find in the Vespasian text in comparison with the Nero–Digby version.

That there were further copies of this text in Wales is evident from the fact that the Welsh versions depend on the longer text such as we have in the Vespasian manuscript. Two Latin abbreviations are also based on this version. One of these must have been made in the twelfth-century, since the extant copy, now Lincoln Cathedral, MS 149, dates from the latter part of that century.⁵⁰ It appears to have been made for Leominster priory in Herefordshire and close to the eastern extremity of the medieval diocese of St Davids.⁵¹ The other is the work of John of Tynemouth, a monk of St Albans who in the first half of the fourteenth century collected legends of local saints from various parts of Britain. From Wales he has no fewer than fourteen *uitae* derived from texts found in the Vespasian collection, and in his case it seems probable that he had used the extant manuscript at Brecon.⁵² A further possible trace of the Vespasian text appears at Glastonbury. William of Malmesbury wrote a history of Glastonbury abbey, and the text as preserved certainly shows

⁴⁹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, V.435 (ed. Mynors *et al.*, I.778–81).

⁵⁰ Thomson, *Catalogue*, 115. Thomson noted that James had dated the manuscript to the thirteenth century 'with important consequences for his account of the development of the text': I suspect that the dating of the script was rather the consequence of his argument.

⁵¹ Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, II.934–9, discusses Gloucester cathedral, MS 1 (s. xiiith), which was the third volume of the same set; the two volumes are connected by cross-references. The Gloucester volume belonged in the seventeenth century to Fulk Walwyn of Hellens, Much Marcle, about twenty miles from Leominster, and the manuscript shows interest in Reading and its relic of St James, which Ker (*Medieval Manuscripts*, II.939) took as indicative of a Leominster provenance. Leominster was a cell of Reading abbey, and a list of books made *ca* 1192 includes a volume at Leominster containing Lives of St Brendan, St Brigit, St David, and St Edward the Martyr (Sharpe *et al.*, *English Benedictine Libraries*, 459). The main Reading section of this book-list includes a three-volume legendary which has been identified as perhaps that now divided between Lincoln and Gloucester (*ibid.*, 443). The second volume may well be Lincoln cathedral, MS 150 (s. xii), a manuscript older by about fifty years, but already paired with MS 149 in the first half of the sixteenth century, when both were annotated in the same italic hand.

⁵² Horstman, *Nova Legenda Anglie*, I.xxiii–xxv; James, *Rhygyfarch's Life*, xxv.

knowledge of Rhygyfarch's text but unfortunately it is not possible to be sure that it was known to William.⁵³ The only quotation at Glastonbury that might come from the Vespasian text rather than the shorter text does not appear until the *Chronica* of John of Glastonbury, and even then it is likelier that Glastonbury had the more widely known shorter version.⁵⁴

The shorter Nero–Digby recension survived, so far as one can tell from the extant copies, entirely outside Wales. The only copy now in Wales is that purchased by Cardiff Public Library in 1924. This is an interesting book. Although Ker found evidence that the second half formed a single book at Barking in the early sixteenth century, it is made up of four separate booklets from the twelfth century. We cannot be sure when they were bound together, but they speak loud and clear of the early circulation of such texts, not collected together as whole volumes, but in pamphlets of one or two quires. The *Life* of St David forms a booklet of just nine leaves, a witness to the form in which the text was circulated in the mid-twelfth century. James's two prime witnesses are copies added to already existing books. British Library, MS Cotton Nero E. 1 (s. xi, Worcester cathedral priory), was already a very large collection when David's *Life* was added, along with several others, around 1130–50. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 112 (s. xii^m, Winchester cathedral priory), was augmented around mid-century with a copy of the *Life* and other texts. The other early copies are all collections of saints' Lives, the sort of book into which it was obviously hoped that the *Life* would be incorporated as it circulated in booklet form. The other early copies of James's Nero family are in Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, MS U. 141 (s. xii^{med}, Jumièges abbey), and MS U. 19 (s. xii², Jumièges abbey), and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 161 (s. xii/xiii, St Augustine's abbey, Canterbury). The other early representative of his Digby family is now Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 793 (s. xii^{med}, no provenance). None of these manuscripts is from Wales, but their scatter across prominent houses in southern England and Normandy before the middle of the century suggests that this shorter text was circulated quite widely as a booklet and that many churches decided that it was worth recopying. The most likely context of that publication would be through Bishop Bernard's promotion of knowledge of St David outside Wales. Bernard had

⁵³ Two passages on St David in William's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, I.25 and I.36, are found only in a long addition concerning Glastonbury introduced by William in what the editors call the C-text (ed. Mynors, Thomson, and Winterbottom, I, 810, 814); neither passage shows knowledge of Rhygyfarch's text. William's *De antiquitate Glastonie ecclesie* does not survive in an authentic text but only as interpolated by the monks of Glastonbury at a later date. Here we find § 30 is closely based on Rhygyfarch's *Life*, §§ 44–8; the differences between the longer and shorter texts in this passage are slight, but the Glastonbury text shares one reading particularly with James's D3, namely Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 285 (*SC* 2430) (s. xiii, Ramsey), and both name the Irish bishop as 'Belue' rather than 'Helue'. This particular variant was already noted in 1691 by Wharton, 631, from what he called 'Hist. Glaston.', and repeated by (Brewer, *et al.*, *Opera* III.383).

⁵⁴ John of Glastonbury, *Cronica siue Antiquitates Glastoniensis ecclesiae*, § 36 (ed. Carley and Townsend, *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey*, 82), *quandam ingreditur ecclesiam in qua sanctus Gildas sermonem faciebat ad populum*, follows § 5 of Rhygyfarch, where Vespasian reads, *quandam ingreditur ecclesiam ad predicationem euangelii audiendam quam predicabat sanctus Gildas*, with the name Gildas; the shorter text omits the name, but John's wording otherwise is closer to the reading of Nero–Digby, *quandam ingreditur ecclesiam in qua quidam doctor uerbum faciebat ad populum*. Gildas is nowhere named in the shorter text, but this name may have entered the text as gloss, so that the passage does not convincingly attest to knowledge of the longer text at Glastonbury. In § 37 John follows the interpolated version of William of Malmesbury using Rhygyfarch, §§ 44–8, most likely in the shorter text; he adds some direct quotation not found in the interpolations in William's work, however, so he must have had direct access to a copy.

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been a prominent figure at court since the opening years of the twelfth century, chaplain to Henry I's queen, Matilda, until promoted to the see in 1115, a trusted colleague of Archbishop Ralph after that. He had the contacts to ensure a reception of the text, and Anglo-Norman circulation at his instigation is probably sufficient explanation of its shortened and somewhat delocalized character.

The advice to the reader who wants to study Rhygyfarch and the Welsh tradition of St David must be to use the Vespasian text. It has long been accessible in the two printings by Wade-Evans, and with a degree of effort it could be read in James's edition too by joining up all the passages relegated to the space below his edited Nero–Digby text. The questions are not all resolved. James noted that three manuscripts classified by him as belonging to the Nero family contained readings that approximated more to the Vespasian text, and in this way he traced the latter back to the copy from Jumièges, Rouen, MS U. 141, a startling inference, and only possible if one supposes that the longer text is an expansion of the shorter text. If the textual connexions were correctly observed, I have been unable to confirm it, and I have not resolved what such shared readings might signify. A new examination of the manuscripts may have to consider the possibility of contamination between copies of the Nero family and the Vespasian text, but this will not greatly affect the resulting edition. The chief means to restore the text of the original Vespasian version must be to investigate where the Nero–Digby version has preserved Rhygyfarch's wording at points where the latest copying of the longer text has introduced minor errors. This is attempted in the edition presented in this volume. James's labour shortened the work involved in arriving at this corrected text of the original and longer version, but his argument delayed our getting there.

