

THE SAINTLY FEMALE BODY AND THE LANDSCAPE OF FOUNDATION IN ANGLO-SAXON BARKING

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Toward the end of the seventh century an Anglo-Saxon noblewoman named Ethelburga became the first abbess of a new monastery. Her foundation of what would become known as Barking Abbey—and especially the abbey's subsequent development around her tomb—effectively transformed the landscape of the Greater London area and western Essex.

As numerous cultural geographers have argued, landscape is an inherently social rather than a natural phenomenon.¹ That is, a landscape is created by those who live in and move through it. It acquires cultural meaning as it is deployed by a community to express shared ways of being in the world, shared perceptions of bodies in time and space. Replete with the symbolism of “natural” reference points such as rivers and hillsides, and enriched by the memories that accrete to human-constructed habitations and monuments, a landscape becomes, in turn, the stage for the performance of religious, dynastic, and gendered identities. It also becomes the site of narratives both past and future: reciprocally shaping and being shaped by myth and memory, institution and identity, a landscape is inherently invested with historical narrative. Indeed, according to Christopher Tilley, even the names given to places constitute “an act of construction of landscape,” since names, like other more elaborate narratives of place, incorporate the experience of the events that have taken place there.²

Narratives of monastic foundation in a period of religious conversion involve a significant transformation—a retelling, as it were—of the pre-Christian landscape. To say, moreover, that an Anglo-Saxon abbess founded a monastery is far from an innocent statement: any narrative of such a founding entangles ideologies of gender and kinship, and mystifies the transformation of reproduction into cultural production.³ Ethelburga's saintly female

body helps define the Middle Saxon Essex landscape within which her abbey was founded—but how, and to what end? Answers to those questions may be sought in three early narratives of Barking Abbey and its foundress within the Essex landscape. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* conflates two complimentary but separable accounts; an early charter provides yet a further story. Each narrative engages Ethelburga's body within a different symbolic landscape, according to a different way of perceiving and defining gendered social identity.

In what might be called Bede's frame story, Barking's foundation is subsumed within the larger history of the conversion of the East Saxons. In brief, Essex had originally accepted Christianity in the first decade of the seventh century, during the reign of Sabert; after his death, however, his pagan sons had driven Bishop Mellitus of London back to Canterbury. Later, first under Sigbert and then under his successor Swidhelm, the Northumbrian Saint Cedd successfully re-evangelized Essex from missionary centers (at Bradwell-on-Sea and Tilbury) closer to the kingdom's traditional heartland around Chelmsford and Colchester. Two kings, the apostate Sighere and the Christian Sebba, succeeded Swidhelm, and it was with the patronage of the pious Sebba that Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, appointed Eorcenwald bishop of the East Saxons, with his see returned to London.

According to Bede, Eorcenwald had earlier founded two monasteries in the Greater London area: Chertsey in Surrey for himself and other men, and Barking in Essex for his sister Ethelburga as a place *in quo ipsa Deo devotarum mater ac nutrix posset existere feminarum* [in which she might become the mother and nurse of many women devoted to God].⁴ Ethelburga is here defined (and implicitly gendered) primarily by her blood kinship with Eorcenwald and additionally by her spiritual kinship, her identification as mother to those anonymous women. This kinship is also inextricably linked with monastic discipline: she behaves herself, and leads the other anonymous women to behave themselves, *condignam se in omnibus episcopo fratre* [in all things as became the sister of the bishop her brother]. Chertsey and

Barking stand together as twinned monuments to Eorcenwald's institution of *regularibus disciplinis optime* [the best and most regular monastic discipline] and as exemplary sites for the submission of the Thames Estuary and Greater London areas to orthodox Christianity.

Indeed, regularity of discipline is the thematic core of Book IV of the *Ecclesiastical History*: preceded by discussion of the 673 Synod of Hertford and its resulting resolutions on ecclesiastical organization, Eorcenwald's installation as bishop regularizes the episcopal succession disrupted by Mellitus' expulsion earlier in the century. Similarly, in enclosing his sister's body in her monastery, Eorcenwald—or at least Bede's narrative of Eorcenwald—encloses Essex within Canterbury's sphere of influence. And both do so despite the fact that London is by no means central to its diocese: it is arguably not even actually in Essex but rather on the frontier between and among Essex, Mercia, Wessex and Kent. Even Barking lies on Essex's far western boundary. As an originary myth of community, this frame story ties this spiritual and political (re)colonization of Essex with the replacement of traditional blood kinship lines by a new Christian lineage in which Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury ritually and narratively "begets" Eorcenwald, who as bishop becomes as it were a father to the daughters to whom his sister stands as *mater ac nutrix*.

It is thus significant that Eorcenwald's own monastery at Chertsey has a definite, local name and history as well as a specific topographical reality in the *regio* of Surrey—the geographical term implies Surrey's existence as a sub-kingdom of Kent—in a place *vocatur* [which was called] "Cerota's Island." Ethelburga's Barking, by contrast, lies within the *provincia*, the independent kingdom, of the East Saxons, in a place *nuncupatur* [which was given the name] in *Berecingum*. Despite the implication of political autonomy, however, the site is denied a local name and history. In *Berecingum* describes not a specific place with previous meaning, but a relatively amorphous expanse inhabited by relatively anonymous "people who live among the birch trees." They have no name, no history until Ethelburga's body—

constructed through her spiritual kinship with Eorcenwald and Theodore—provides a focal point for a Christian landscape.

A second and far more localized narrative of Barking's foundation appears in the so-called Hodilred Charter (British Library, Cotton Augustus ii.29). The charter's explanation of the reverse metonymy by which the name of a territory comes to devolve upon a specific monastic site defines Ethelburga precisely through her secular kinship as much as, if not more than, through her Christianity. In doing so, the charter deploys Ethelburga's body not to create a new place so much as to reaffirm the dynastic landscape of the long-inhabited Essex in a time of cultural and political transition. Dating probably from the second half of the eighth century, the charter manuscript has been generally accepted as an accurate copy of an earlier, late seventh century original.⁵ Even that postulated original, however, seems to represent the textual trace of an originally oral and likely ritual donation (or perhaps serial donations) made a generation or so prior. According to a marginal note from around the year 1000, *pis is seo boc to Beorcingon*, [this is the "book," the deed, for Barking Abbey] and as such it writes into history the creation of a place through the transformation of secular, dynastic *folclond* into monastic *bocland*.

Like many another Anglo-Saxon charter, this one begins with a brief, prayer-like prologue, invoking the ultimate power and authority of God, and constructing the monastery as already established: *locis vestris aliquid offerre videmur vestra vobis reddimus non nostra largimur*. [Whenever we seem to render gifts to your sacred and venerable places, we only restore that which is your own, and not ours to give.] Of course, in order to "restore" property to God, one must first possess it in this world: in giving the land away the grantor paradoxically demonstrates, quite dramatically, his own continuing wealth and power. Thus, if a strategic redefinition of spiritual kinship and ecclesiastical lineage characterizes Ethelburga's entrance into Bede's *History*, this charter, by contrast, emphasizes her blood-kin and deploys her body as a conduit for secular dynastic memory. Alliteration suggests that the grantor of the lands, Hodilred (or Ethelred) is

more than likely bound by close kinship to Ethelburga (in the charter, Hedilberga)—and to Eorcenwald, who appears in the charter not as the abbey founder but only as a witness. Hodilred identifies himself, however, primarily as *parens Sebbi provincia East Sexanorum* [kinsman of Sebbi of the province of the East Saxons]. His grant of land to Ethelburga—or rather to God through Ethelburga—is also at least in part a political act, strengthening his alliance to the Christian Sebbi rather than the pagan Sighere.

In any event, his donations found Ethelburga's monastery within a net of dynastic political affiliations worked out upon the landscape of southwestern Essex and its small rivers, rising in forested uplands and running south through fields and marshlands toward the Thames. To augment her monastery called *Beddanhaam*, Hodilred grants to her *terram quae appellatur Ricingahaam Budinhaam Deccanhaam Angenlabeshaam et campo in silua quae dicitur Uuidmundes felt* [the land[s] called *Ricingahaam*, *Budinhaam*, *Deccanhaam*, *Angenlabeshaam* and the open country within the forest which is called *Widmundesfelt*]. The charter's *Widmundesfelt* is probably to be identified with the Wyfields north of Ilford, within the once extensive forest of Essex. *Deccanhaam*, the modern Dagenham, lies on the later Barking District's eastern border, the west bank of the River Beam. Barking Abbey itself stands on the district's western border, on the east bank of the Roding, the course of which still divides Barking from East Ham. The original core of Ethelburga's nascent monastery, *Beddanhaam*, probably lay west of the extant ruins of Barking Abbey, perhaps between two channels of the river; if the charter's grant of land in the similar-sounding *Budinhaam* augments the earlier, original donation, it is tempting, albeit highly speculative, to identify this "new" land as the site of the later abbey.

That some sort of high status settlement stood there by the early eighth century is argued by archaeological evidence for timber structures, perhaps including at least one chapel aligned with the later abbey church, as well as by a quantity of spinning and weaving equipment, fragments of gold thread, combs, manicure sets, tuning pegs from a musical instrument, high quality insular and imported pottery, and coins. The presence of

three styli would be consistent with a monastic site, or at least with a population for whom the tools of literacy constituted markers of status.⁶ Like other Middle Saxon monastic sites such as the contemporary East Saxon women's house at Nazingbury, the earliest Barking Abbey at *Beddanhaam* seems to have constituted a cluster of buildings within a larger enclosure or *vallum* distinguished from the aristocratic estate out of which it was founded primarily by the presence of one or more chapels.⁷ C. P. Loveluck also underscores the difficulties in distinguishing female monastic and secular aristocratic settlements on the basis of archaeological remains alone in his discussion of another analogous foundation at Flixborough (Lincolnshire).⁸

Beddanhaam's (and Barking Abbey's) location may, moreover, hint at the appropriation of a pre-existing cultural (and perhaps even ritual) significance that the abbey could exploit for Christianity. Place-names like *Beddanhaam* formed from a personal name (Bedda) plus *-haam* indicate central or core places, estate centers of some perceived antiquity.⁹ Whoever Bedda may have been, and whatever his affiliation with Hodilred and Ethelburga, he seems to have lent his name also to the *bæde wylle*, a small stream flowing east into the Roding just above the site of the oldest Barking Abbey.¹⁰ Excavations in and around Barking town have revealed both Iron Age and Roman pottery and coins.¹¹ North of Barking, a scatter of Bronze Age pottery also indicates that a substantial settlement, perhaps even an important regional center, occupied the rising ground in the angle between the Roding and the stream known as Loxford Water; by the Middle Iron Age this settlement had become Uphall Camp. Signs of later Roman and Early Saxon occupation document later reuse of the hill-fort's defenses and its strategic command of both the river crossing along the main London-Chelmsford road, and the secondary road south and east to Tilbury via Barking. Early Roman occupation at Uphall, however, focused rather on a rectangular enclosure, possibly a shrine, relatively rich in flagons, beakers and other objects possibly indicative of some sort of funerary cult activity.¹²

In Anglo-Saxon England, land on the boundaries of territories often seems to have been selected as a proper site

for cemeteries or the administration of justice.¹³ Howard Williams has argued for deliberate Saxon reuse of an inherited landscape marked by prehistoric and Roman sites, particularly burial sites, in order to forge relationships with a powerful, sacred history: "each new burial would have re-inscribed such meanings upon old monuments." In this way, "early Anglo-Saxon communities were constructing and reproducing their idealized visions of past and present, their mythical origins and their social identities, through the placing of the dead at old monuments."¹⁴ Barbara Yorke has argued more specifically that the foundation of Barking Abbey represents the last in a series of experiments enabling the continuity of local political power by commemorating (and redefining) the ancient sacral authority of the ancestors in an anxious age of change and conversion from paganism to Christianity.¹⁵

By emphasizing blood-kinship, then, and by selecting precisely this site—*Beddanhaam*, Barking—the charter constitutes the saint's female body and the monastery around it as a conduit for dynastic memory. Ethelburga's presence in the landscape asserts and consolidates a heritage of both sacral and political power. Accordingly, the charter concludes by restating the grant not as a series of separate estates but as one unit. In effect, the charter creates out of a small monastery at *Beddanhaam* the more powerful *Beorcingon* by (re)defining the boundaries and limits of the land and all that belongs to it: *ab oriente writola burna ab aequilone centinces treow et hanc hem stede ab australe flumen Tamisa*. That is, on the east the *Writolaburna*, the modern River Beam; on the north *Centinces triow*, Becontree Heath, the meeting place of hundred court; and *Hemstedes*, probably Fulwell Cross in Ilford on the northwest; and then finally, on the south the river Thames.

In both the Hodilred Charter and Bede's frame narrative, Ethelburga's body within her abbey provides a focus for the appropriation and renaming of a landscape by and for men (Hodilred and Sebbi in the one and Eorcenwald and Theodore in the other) for whom Ethelburga's body is constructed and gendered within analogous regimes of blood and spiritual kinship.

Not so the third early narrative of Barking's foundation. Drawn, according to Bede, from a *libellus*, a collection of the saint's miracles as experienced, remembered, and written down in Barking Abbey itself within a generation of her death, perhaps in conjunction with the translation of her body by her successor, Abbess Hildilith, the *Ecclesiastical History's* embedded narrative of Ethelburga and her Barking also foregrounds the act of creating a focal point for history. In both frame story and charter, Ethelburga's specifically female body remains for both blood and spiritual kin-groups the means of cultural (if not biological) reproduction. Although edited and enclosed within Bede's frame story, the *libellus* implicates a variant narrative of the saintly female body and the landscape around it. In the *libellus* narrative, her gender is defined by her kinship with neither bishop nor male ancestors, but rather with the frame story's anonymous women consecrated to God. Her female body consequently transforms the landscape around it in a radically different way.

Significantly, this landscape transformation involves acts of ritual such as those that would have defined Barking as an ecclesiastical rather than aristocratic site. As Jonathan Z. Smith argues, "ritual is, first and foremost, a mode of paying attention;" and since the sacred and the profane "are not substantive categories, but rather situational ones," it follows that "sacrality is, above all, a category of emplacement."¹⁶ In Smith's terms, the miracles of the *libellus* "place" Ethelburga and her abbey within and through a new mode of perception, enacted through Christian ritual. Liturgical ceremonies and processions between and among the new abbey's probably multiple chapels over the course of the day—the movements of female bodies through the landscape—would have been one of the most visible actions delineating Barking as a religious site. Just such a procession is the setting of the first miracle Bede cites.

In that first miracle, Ethelburga prompts her spiritual daughters to choose the site of their future graveyard, a prudent enough response to a time of pestilence, but more importantly also an act which defines Barking as a sanctified place in the fullest sense of the word. After singing Matins early one morning,

just before daybreak, the women leave their chapel and process to the graves of the monks who had died recently. (Although Bede introduces Barking as a house for women, it becomes clear, as its second, inner story continues, that it actually housed both men and women, under the governance of a woman, like the Frankish foundations which Bede cites elsewhere as the earliest models for Anglo-Saxon female monasticism.) As Ethelburga guides the other women, *ecce subito lux emissa caelitus, veluti linteam magnum venit super omnes, tantoque eas stupore perculit*. [Behold suddenly a light sent from heaven like a great sheet came upon them and struck them into a stupor, so that they stopped singing for very fear.] Eventually the light rises up and leads them *in meridianam monasterii partem, hoc est, ad occidentem oratorii secessit, ibique aliquandiu remoratus et ea loca operiens, sic videntibus cunctis ad caeli se alta subduxit*. [To the south part of the monastery, that is, to the west of the chapel, and staying and covering that place a while, finally withdrew back into the heights of heaven.] The supernatural answer to the women's dilemma echoes Peter's vision (in Acts 10.11) of a similar sheet of light—and subsequently of a myriad of animals, clean and unclean, being offered to him as food. The occasion of Peter's vision is his visit to the Roman centurion Cornelius: the intertext's focus on converting the gentiles has particular relevance to the transformation of a pagan landscape into a Christian one.

Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has noted that the cemeteries especially of monastic houses like Barking “were places of holy connection, channels of intercession and negotiation with the sacred.”¹⁷ Certainly, in this as in the other Barking miracles that Bede cites, death at daybreak—that is, coinciding with the liturgical Office of the Dead after Matins, a time evoking a temporal liminality consonant with geographical openness constitutes a defining element. Almost as common is the association of light and movement with the transfiguration of the earthly body. When Ethelburga herself dies, for example, a number of miracles foreshadow the event, but the vision granted to Torhtgyth, her assistant in maintaining regular discipline within the community, is especially telling.¹⁸ On a certain night,

just as day begins to break, Torhtgyth leaves the building in which she had been staying and sees clearly what seems to be a corpse wrapped in muslin, brighter than the sun, being carried upward out of the sisters' dormitory. Both the visionary and her vision are in motion, Torhtgyth moving out of her chamber as the light-shrouded corpse rises outwards and upwards from another. As her vision unfolds, Torhtgyth sees that *species corporis gloriosi* [glorious body] being drawn by cords brighter than gold further and further up into the *caelis patentibus* [wide open heavens] until it vanishes from earthly sight.

Moving thus freely between this world and the next, the transfigured Ethelburga herself then returns in visions (often at daybreak) to guide her dying sister-daughters into the same light of heaven. Just as when Ethelburga dies she is *ergastulo carnis educta* [led out from the prison of the flesh], having left this life on earth *caelestis patriae patuerit ingressus* [to enter into the country of heaven], so too an anonymous nun who prays by Ethelburga's body for her own good death is *educta ex carne* [led out of her body]. And so too, three years later, Torhtgyth enjoys a prolonged visionary conversation with *carissima mea matre Aedilburge* [her most dear mother Ethelburga] who announces the time of her greatly desired death, her *transmigrationis* [transmigration] after having been *soluta carnis et infirmitatis vinculis* [delivered from the shackles of illness and the flesh], and her subsequent entry *ad aeternae gaudia salutis* [into the joys of eternal salvation].

The site of the miraculous light, the focus of Barking's sanctity and sacral power, literally grounds the monastery's existence within its own particular symbolic landscape. Yet throughout these narrated miracles this landscape comes into being precisely in those moments in which it paradoxically exceeds secular location: Barking becomes through ritual and miracle a place that transcends earthly emplacement, a place at once specifically localized (at least within the monastery itself) and simultaneously otherworldly in its separation. Moreover, because the miracles happen to and for the women, arguably indeed in response to their ritual activity, and despite the presence of

of monks, the *libellus* narrative constructs a female landscape, one in which women situate and define themselves in kinship only with each other, through their “mother” Ethelburga. Whoever may also have been responsible for founding the abbey, whether Eorcenwald or Hodilred, and whoever consecrated them to God in this place, Barking’s women claim the responsibility for producing both their own history and their own geography.

Ultimately, these three narratives of monastic foundation compliment even as they contradict one another. Frame and *libellus* narratives together tell Barking’s story in Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*; the charter would be accepted by Ethelburga’s successors as their *boc to Beorcingon*. Like the Ethelburga of the *libellus* narrative, “taking place” within liminal time and space, the Ethelburgas of the charter and Bede’s frame story similarly mediate between this world and the next, the secular and the eternal. But they mediate as much between and among men as between men and God: in the charter her body in her monastery facilitates her family’s consolidation of power by claiming an ancestral landscape and transforming it within a new cultural regime; in Bede’s frame story her body is deployed to colonize Essex for Christianity. Whether implicitly exchanged between Hodilred and God or explicitly enclosed by Eorcenwald, in the charter and the frame story Ethelburga’s body rests passively, a still reference point in space. In the *libellus* narrative, by contrast, where Ethelburga’s body is defined and gendered by reference not to male kinship lines and alliances but self-referentially to the women who join her in liturgical procession, female bodies create a landscape by inhabiting and moving through it. Read together, then, these three narratives of monastic foundation reveal the complexities of Barking’s eighth-century East Saxon landscape and the saintly female body on which it depends.

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END NOTES

1. The literature of cultural geography grows ever more extensive, but see, for example, Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London: Croom Helm, 1984); Richard Muir, *Approaches to Landscape* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1999); Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Knopf, 1995); and Yi-Fu Tuan, "Language and the Making of Place: A Narrative-Descriptive Approach," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81 (1991): 684-696. For the application of cultural geographical theory to medieval landscapes, see particularly the essays in Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, eds., *A Place to Believe In: Locating Medieval Landscapes* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2006).
2. Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), p. 33.
3. Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2001), especially pp. 17-39.
4. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, eds., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969). All quotations and translations of Bede's narrative of Barking Abbey's foundation (IV.6-10) are taken from this edition.
5. P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968) dates the original of Charter #1171 between 685 and 694, probably more precisely 690-693. According to Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents* (1955; 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979), I.446-447, this is possibly the earliest extant East Saxon charter. For discussion of the manuscript features that argue for its transcription at a later date, see Cyril Hart, *The Earliest Charters of Barking Abbey* (Colchester: Benham, 1953). All citations of the text are from this edition, pp. 27-28, translation p. 29.
6. Kenneth MacGowan, "Saxon Timber Structures from the Barking Abbey Excavations 1985-1986," *Essex Journal* 22.2 (Summer 1987): 35-38; Mark Redknapp, "The Saxon Pottery from Barking Abbey: Part 1, Local Wares," *London Archaeologist* 6.13 (Winter 1991): 353-360; Mark Redknapp, "The Saxon Pottery from Barking Abbey: Part 2, the Continental Imports," *London Archaeologist* 6.14 (Spring 1992): 378-381; Kenneth MacGowan, "Barking Abbey," *Current Archaeology* 13.5 (1996): 172-178. An extensive reinterpretation of both published and unpublished archaeological materials is offered by Graham Hull, "Barkingwic? Saxon and Medieval Features Adjacent to Barking Abbey," *Essex Archaeology and History* 33 (2002): 157-190.
7. P. J. Huggins, "Excavation of Belgic and Romano-British Farm with Middle Saxon Cemetery and Churches at Nazingbury, Essex, 1975-6," *Essex Archaeology and History* 10 (1978): 29-117, and "Excavations at Nazingbury,"

- Essex Archaeological News* 10 (Winter 1977): 16-18. For the charter describing Nazingbury's late seventh-century foundation, see Herbert Hope Lockwood, "One Thing Leads to Another—The Discovery of Additional Charters of Barking Abbey," *Essex Journal* 25.1 (Spring 1990): 11-13; and for discussion of that charter's usefulness in the interpretation of Nazingbury's history, see Peter Huggins, "Nazingbury 20 Years On, or Where Did the Royal Ladies Go?" *London Archaeologist* 8 (1997): 108-11.
8. C. P. Loveluck, "A High-Status Anglo-Saxon Settlement at Flixborough, Lincolnshire," *Antiquity* 72 (1998): 146-61.
9. See two essays in Paul Everson and Tom Williamson, eds., *The Archaeology of Landscape* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998): Andrew Fleming, "Prehistoric Landscapes and the Quest for Territorial Pattern," pp. 42-66; and Tony Brown and Glenn Foard, "The Saxon Landscape: A Regional Perspective," pp. 67-94.
10. P. H. Reaney, *The Place-Names of Essex* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1935), p. 94.
11. VCH Essex III, 46-47.
12. Patricia Wilkinson, "Uphall Camp," *Essex Archaeology and History* 10 (1978): 220-221; Jane Sidell, John Giorgi and Alan Pipe, "Environmental Archaeology in London 1995-1998, Part 1," *London Archaeologist* 9.3 (Winter 1999): 67-76; and especially Pamela Greenwood, "Uphall Camp, Ilford," *Essex Journal* 23.1 (Spring 1988): 19-20, and "Uphall Camp, Ilford—An Up-Date," *London Archaeologist* 9.8 (Spring 2001): 207-216.
13. See David Griffiths, Andrew Reynolds and Sarah Semple, eds., *Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain* (Oxford: University School of Archaeology, 2003), especially the essays by Nathalie Cohen, "Boundaries and Settlement: The Role of the River Thames," pp. 9-20; Aliki Pantos, "On the Edge of Things': The Boundary Location of Anglo-Saxon Assembly Sites," pp. 38-49; Andrew Reynolds, "Boundaries and Settlements in Later Sixth- to Eleventh-Century England," pp. 98-106; Sarah Semple, "Burials and Political Boundaries in the Avebury Region, North Wiltshire," pp. 72-91; and Victoria Thompson, "The View from the Edge: Dying, Power and Vision in Late Saxon England," pp. 92-97. Kelley M. Wickham-Crowley, "Living on the *Ecg*: The Mutable Boundaries of Land and Water in Anglo-Saxon Contexts," in Lees and Overing, *Place*, pp. 85-110, is also enlightening.
14. Howard Williams, "Ancient Landscapes and the Dead: the Reuse of Prehistoric and Roman Monuments as Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites," *Medieval Archaeology* 41 (1997): 1-32; p. 25.
15. Barbara Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London: Continuum, 2003), p. 29.
16. Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1987), pp. 102-103.
17. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Dead to the World? Death and the Maiden Revisited in Medieval Women's Convent Culture," in *Guidance for Women*

Twelfth-Century Convents, ed. and trans. Vera Morton (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), pp. 157-180; p. 160. On the centrality of death and commemoration to monastic life, see also Patrick J. Geary, *Living With the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994); Megan McLaughlin *Consorting With Saints: Prayer for the Dead in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994); and Bonnie Effros, *Caring for Body and Soul. Burial and the Afterlife in the Merovingian World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2002).

18. I have written elsewhere about the relationship between the two women as an exemplary spiritual friendship and emblem for female community, but as translated with attendant anxieties as Bede appropriates the Barking *libellus* into his *Ecclesiastical History*: "Sanctimoniales cum Sanctimoniale: Particular Friendships and Female Community in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Carol Braun Pasternack and Lisa M. C. Weston (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004): 35-62; p. 33.