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SOME NOTES ON ST ALNOTH

A correspondent was looking for the *Life* of St Alnoth in the *Acta Sanctorum*, and found himself confused by the series, as most of us are initially.

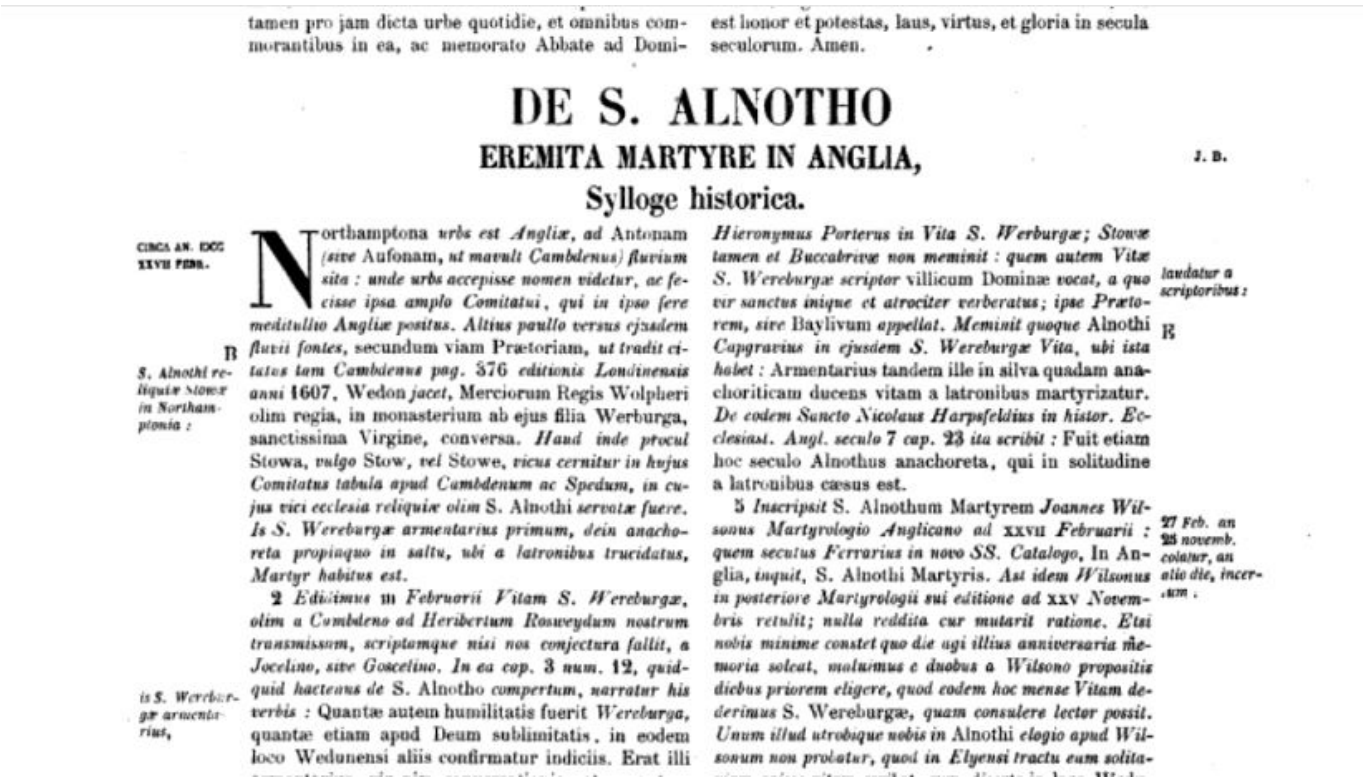
The *Acta Sanctorum* is confusing to the casual visitor, because all the lives of the saints are given on their saints' day, the day in the Catholic Church on which they are commemorated. For Alnoth this is February 27. There is no overall numbering of volumes. Instead the numbering is within each month – January vol 1, etc.

The material for St Alnoth is in February, vol 3, under the material for February 27th. In the 1658 original edition, it's on p.684. I'm not sure if there is a standard way to reference this, but I might give it as something like:

> Acta Sanctorum, Februarii III, Feb.27, p.684 (1658)

This volume is online in a hard-to-read form **here**. An electronic transcription is **here**. (If you are on Windows, just do a ctrl-F in your browser for Alnoth)

Most people find the 19th century reprint easier to use. There it's on p.689, **here** (which is p.736 of the PDF).



tamen pro jam dicta urbe quotidie, et omnibus commorantibus in ea, ac memorato Abbate ad Domi- est honor et potestas, laus, virtus, et gloria in secula seculorum. Amen.

DE S. ALNOTHO

EREMITA MARTYRE IN ANGLIA,

Sylloge historica.

J. B.

CIRCA AN. DCCC XXVII FEBR.

Northamptona *urbs est Angliæ, ad* Antonam *(sive* Aufonam, *ut mavult Cambdenus) fluvium sita : unde urbs accepisse nomen videtur, ac fecisse ipsa amplo Comitatui, qui in ipso fere meditullio Angliæ positus. Altius paullo versus ejusdem fluvii fontes,* secundum viam Prætoriam, *ut tradit citatus tam Cambdenus pag.* 576 *editionis Londinensis anni* 1607, Wedon *jacet,* Merciorum Regis Wolpheri olim regia, in monasterium ab ejus filia Werburga, sanctissima Virgine, conversa. *Haud inde procul* Stowa, *vulgo* Stow, *vel* Stowe, *vicus cernitur in hujus Comitatus tabula apud Cambdenum ac Speedum, in cujus vici ecclesia reliquiæ olim* S. Alnothi *servatæ fuere. Is S. Wereburgæ armentarius primum, dein anachoreta propinquo in saltu, ubi a latronibus trucidatus, Martyr habitus est.*

B

S. Alnothi reliquiæ Stowæ in Northamptonia :

2 *Edidimus* III *Februarii Vitam S. Wereburgæ, olim a Cambdeno ad Heribertum Rosweydum nostrum transmissam, scriptamque nisi nos conjectura fallit, a Jocelino, sive Goscelino. In ea cap.* 3 *num.* 12, *quidquid hactenus de* S. Alnotho *compertum, narratur his verbis :* Quantæ autem humilitatis fuerit *Wereburga,* quantæ etiam apud Deum sublimitatis, in eodem loco Wedunensi aliis confirmatur indiciis. Erat illi

is S. Werburgæ armentarius,

Hieronymus Porterus in Vita S. Werburgæ; Stowæ tamen et Buccabriæ non meminit : quem autem Vitæ S. Wereburgæ scriptor villicum Dominæ *vocat, a quo vir sanctus inique et atrociter verberatus; ipse Prætorem, sive* Baylivum *appellat. Meminit quoque* Alnothi *Capgravius in ejusdem S. Wereburgæ Vita, ubi ista habet :* Armentarius tandem ille in silva quadam anachoriticam ducens vitam a latronibus martyrizatur. *De eodem Sancto Nicolaus Harpsfeldius in histor. Ecclesiast. Angl. seculo* 7 *cap.* 23 *ita scribit :* Fuit etiam hoc seculo Alnothus anachoreta, qui in solitudine a latronibus cæsus est.

laudatur a scriptoribus :

R

5 *Inscripsit* S. Alnothum Martyrem *Joannes Wilsonus Martyrologio Anglicano ad* XXVII *Februarii : quem secutus Ferrarius in novo SS. Catalogo,* In Anglia, *inquit,* S. Alnothi Martyris. *Ast idem Wilsonus in posteriore Martyrologii sui editione ad* XXV *Novembris retulit; nulla reddita cur mutarit ratione. Etsi nobis minime constet quo die agi illius anniversaria memoria soleat, malumus e duobus a Wilsono propositis diebus priorem eligere, quod eodem hoc mense Vitam dederimus* S. Wereburgæ, *quam consulere lector possit. Unum illud utrobique nobis in* Alnothi *elogio apud Wilsonum non probatur, quod in Elyensi tractu eum solita-*

27 Feb. an 25 novemb. colatur, an alio die, incertum.

There does not seem to actually be a "vita" for St Alnoth. This item is instead a "sylloge", which seems to be a collection of snippets from other hagiographical sources. It was written in 1658 by the Bollandist editor: in this case, none other than Johannes Bolland

(“I.B.”) himself.

Bolland quotes for St Alnoth the “Life” of St Werburgh, which is in February vol 1. He also gives another couple of snippets from elsewhere. I did look to see if the vita of St Werburgh had been translated, but if it has, it eluded me.

Alnoth himself was a 7th century anglo-saxon saint, who lived first as a herdsman. He suffered from the attentions of an unfair bailiff, and then he moved to become a hermit. He was eventually murdered by robbers.

One day I ought to sit down and compile a “finder’s guide” for anybody wanting to work with the lives of the saints. Maybe it already exists, I do not know. Like most people, I wandered into the world of hagiography more or less by accident!