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Gilbert of Hoyland

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Gilbert of Hoyland († 1172)

1. Name variants: G. of Holland

2. Places: Swineshead, Clairvaux, Rievaulx, Larrivour

3. Biography: Little is known for certain about G.'s life. He was abbot of Swineshead abbey in Lincolnshire, England, which the Savigniac monastery of Furness founded around 1135. The area was commonly known as Hoyland or Holland in the Middle Ages, and it is from his time as abbot there that G. received his byname. G.'s nationality is unknown, scholars have hypothesized that he may have been part of the contingent sent from Clairvaux to Yorkshire to found Rievaulx in 1132. G. was perhaps elected abbot sometime between 1147, when Swineshead became Cistercian, and around 1150. He was possibly still the abbot of Swineshead when he died in 1172 at Larrivour, and some speculate that he died while returning from that year's General Chapter at Cîteaux. It is also possible that he had resigned as abbot of Swineshead and retired to Larrivour. G. was most famous for continuing Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*. His undisputed works survive in at least 51 medieval manuscripts, 49 contain either complete or incomplete versions of his *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, while the remaining two contain his letters (see DUTTON, Works 169–172, 181–182). Through his 47 sermons for monks and nuns, G. was said to have written in the manner and style of Bernard, though G. still retained his own voice, displaying substantial knowledge of scripture and the classics, a talent for building metaphors and alliteration, and, at times a keen wit.

4. Cultus:

a. Relics: –

b. Liturgical commemoration: 25 May

c. Patronage: –

d. Attributes: –

5. Fontes: Gilbert's name appears in five charters as a witness (MIKKERS, 33, 35, & n. 11, 12, 13, 31, 32); *Chronicon Claravallense* (PL 185: 1248C); for further references to Gilbert from contemporary sources see MIKKERS, 33–35.

6. Literature: H. COSTELLO, Gilbert of Hoyland, in: Cîteaux 27 (1976), 109–121; M. L. DUTTON, The Works of Gilbert of Hoyland. Manuscripts and Printed Editions, in: CSQ 35, 2 (2000), 161–186; The Works of Gilbert of Hoyland, trans. by L. C. BRACELAND, 4 vols., Kalamazoo 1978–1981; E. MIKKERS, De vita et operibus Gilbert de Hoylandia, in: Cîteaux 14 (1963), 33–43, 265–279; M. J. VUONG-DINH-LAM, Les observances monastiques. Instruments de vie spirituelle d'après Gilbert de Hoyland, in: CC 26 (1964), 170–199.

7. Illustrations: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plutei 17.30, fol. 1r. <http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWOHZbr6l1A4r7GxMCJf&c=Giliberti%20abbatis%20De%20hollandia%20Sermones%20super%20cantica#/oro/1> [10 Jun 2021]; see also M. L. DUTTON, Medici Connection: Gilbert of Hoyland's Sermons on the Song of Songs in Renaissance Italy, in: Cîteaux fasc. I–2 (2001), 100.

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