

The Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is a yearly spring conference organized by postgraduate students of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at the University of Cambridge.

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CONTENTS

<i>Abbreviations</i>	vi
<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Colloquium Report</i>	viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
Bede's <i>Castella</i>	1
<i>Michael Winterbottom</i>	
The Anglo-Saxon Bride of Christ: Text and Image	8
<i>Kirsty March</i>	
Literal and Spiritual Depths: Re-Thinking the "drygne seað" of <i>Elene</i>	27
<i>Daniel Thomas</i>	
East and West in <i>De Principibus Instructione</i> of Giraldus Cambriensis	45
<i>Natalia I. Petrovskaia</i>	
Rewriting <i>Beowulf</i> : Old English Poetry in Contemporary Translation	60
<i>Jennifer Lorden</i>	
The Baptism of Edwin: Contrary Traditions	75
<i>Dominic Gibbs</i>	

ABBREVIATIONS

ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DOE	<i>The Dictionary of Old English: A–G Online</i> , ed. A. diPaulo <i>et al.</i> (Toronto, 2007)
EETS	Early English Text Society
os	original series
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
LSJ	<i>Greek-English Lexicon</i> , ed. H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1968)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Auct. antiq.	Auctores antiquissimi
LL nat. Germ.	Leges nationum Germanicarum
MP	<i>Modern Philology</i>
N&Q	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
NM	<i>Neuphilologische Mitteilungen</i>
DMLBS	<i>Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources</i> , ed. R. E. Latham, D. R. Howlett <i>et al.</i> (London, 1975–)
OMT	Oxford Medieval Texts
TLL	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Leipzig, 1900)
QI	<i>Quaestio Insularis</i>

PREFACE

I am delighted to welcome the tenth number of the annual volume, *Quaestio Insularis*, and to celebrate a decade of its existence. I congratulate the postgraduate community of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, who established the important Colloquium, the edited proceedings of which *Quaestio* represents, and who have continued to organise it and to edit the associated journal for the last ten years. The 2009 conference at which the papers published here were read was, like previous conferences, a highly successful event. *Quaestio* 10 and all back numbers can be ordered directly from the Department's website ([www.asnc.cam.ac.uk](http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk)). The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is delighted to be associated with both the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic and *Quaestio Insularis* and wishes them continued success for many decades to come.

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#### COLLOQUIUM REPORT

The 2009 Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, "Hidden Depths", held in Room G/R 06-7 of the English Faculty on Saturday 7 March was, despite some bad fortune, still a most successful event. Prof. M. Winterbottom had been due to speak but had to pull out at the last minute due to illness; happily Prof. M. Lapidge stepped in and presented a paper, a version of which can now be found in 'Author's Variants in the Textual Transmission of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica?*', *Filologia Mediolatina* 16 (2009), 1-15. Prof. Winterbottom has very kindly allowed us to publish the article which would have formed the basis of his talk. We owe both our gratitude. Jennie Doolan was also taken ill at short notice and unfortunately unable to present her paper, 'Muddying the Waters – Óðinn the Boatman in Hárbarðsljóð'.

#### Session I (Chair: Veronica Phillips)

Kirsty March, 'The Bed of Solomon: The Anglo-Saxon Bride of Christ – Text and Image'

Eystein Thanisch, 'Conceptual and Actual: The Otherworld and Ireland'

Daniel Thomas, 'Literal and Spiritual Depths: Re-Thinking the "drygne seað" of *Elene*'

#### Session II: Plenary Speaker (Chair: J. Eric Denton)

Michael Lapidge, 'Author's Variants in the Textual Transmission of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica?*'

#### Session III (Chair: Jeffrey S. Love)

Natalia Petrovskaia, 'Gerald of Wales and the Orient'

Paul Gazzoli, 'The "Hidden Depths" of the Guthred-Passage in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*'

Jennifer Lorden, 'Translating the Old English Poetic Tradition'

#### Session IV (Chair: Megan C. Cavell)

Peter Buchanan, 'Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Egwini* and the Invention of Hagiographic Authority'

Sophie Rixon, 'The Hidden Abecedarian Linking Device and Other Secrets of the Old Minster Sinthama'

Dominic Gibbs, 'The Baptism of Edwin: An Examination of the Contrary Traditions'

The members of the colloquium committee for 2008-9 were:

J. Eric Denton, Megan C. Cavell, Jeffrey S. Love, Katherine Miller and Veronica Phillips.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Quaestio Insularis* 10 was edited by J. Eric Denton, Megan C. Cavell, Jeffrey S. Love and Veronica Phillips. The editors also wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Paul Russell, Dr Elizabeth Boyle, Dr Helen Foxhall Forbes, Dr Rory Naismith, Debbie Potts, Victoria Lever, Sonia McLintock, Lizzy O'Hara and our peer reviewers. Editorial design is by Alistair Vining and the *Quaestio Insularis* logo was drawn by Katharine Scarfe Beckett. The production of this volume and the successful running of the conference have been made possible through the generosity of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic and the support of the Faculty of English.

Bede's *Castella*<sup>1</sup>

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In a stimulating article in *Northern History*,<sup>2</sup> Andrew Breeze discussed a passage in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (henceforth *HE*) where Bede describes how Chad (d. 672), while bishop in northern England, travelled round his diocese: 'coepit . . . oppida rura casas uicos castella propter euangelizandum non equitando sed apostolorum more pedibus incedendo peragraré'.<sup>3</sup> That is, he went out preaching the gospel not on horseback but, like the apostles, on foot. But where did he go? I shall suggest some slight modifications of Breeze's conclusions.

Breeze argues that he went round 'cities, country areas, towns, villages, and homesteads'. His case starts from the assertion, attributed to James Campbell, that 'this clustering of words is not

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<sup>1</sup> I offer this short piece in atonement for my (enforced) failure to attend the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, March 2009. It has been read in two drafts by Andrew Breeze and Rod Thomson, but they are not to be supposed to agree with my conclusions.

<sup>2</sup> A. Breeze, 'Bede's *Castella* and the Journeys of St Chad', *Northern History* 46 (2009), 137–9.

<sup>3</sup> Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, III.xxviii.3, ed. Lapidge, *Histoire*, II, p. 174. I cite by book, chapter and sub-section; the subsections were established by M. Lapidge for his edition, *Histoire Ecclesiastique du Peuple Anglais*, Sources Chrétiennes 489–91 (Paris, 2005). 'He visited cities and country districts, towns, houses and strongholds, preaching the gospel, travelling not on horseback but on foot after the apostolic example', transl. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, ed., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, OMT (Oxford, 1969), p. 317.

typical of Bede's style, strongly suggesting that Bede took it from a written source. Hence the problem. Readers of Bede cannot refer to his other writings to see precisely what he meant'. Bede does not in fact avoid such accumulation of words (note IV.iii.5 'inter plura continentiae humilitatis doctrinae orationum uoluntariae paupertatis et ceterarum uirtutum merita').<sup>4</sup> But Campbell is misrepresented. He actually wrote: 'This marked clustering of words for places which he [Bede] does not generally use except when following a written source strongly suggests that in the *passages* [my italics] where they occur he is in fact following written sources now lost, very possibly letters'.<sup>5</sup> Campbell, in fact, was not discussing our passage alone, and this quotation is part of a wider argument, characteristically subtle, though perhaps not quite watertight. It must be said, however, that our passage does not read like something Bede is likely to have to draw from elsewhere. He is describing in general terms a familiar episcopal routine, and the words for places are accumulated for rhetoric effect: Chad went absolutely everywhere in his diocese.

'Oppida rura casas uicos castella.' The words are not on the same level. Four of them are words for places. But *rura* are not in the same sense places; and the inference is that the preceding *oppida* means not so much (or also means) 'towns'<sup>6</sup> as 'town' in contrast with country.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Lapidge, *Histoire*, II, p. 214; '... in addition to all his merits of temperance, humility, zeal in teaching, prayers and voluntary poverty and other virtues too', transl. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, p. 343.

<sup>5</sup> J. Campbell, 'Bede's Words for Places', *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte, WV, 1986), p. 104.

<sup>6</sup> Not 'cities', as Breeze has it; Bede knows the word *urbs* perfectly well.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Bede, *HE*, I.xvii.3, ed. Lapidge, *Histoire* I, p. 174, 'non solum in ecclesiis uerum etiam per triuia, per rura praedicabatur' (taken over verbatim from Constantius). The streets (of towns or villages) contrast with the country. 'They preached ... not only in the churches but also in the streets and in the fields', transl. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, p. 57.

A comma then should follow *rura*. Chad went everywhere, just as did another preacher, Aidan, also on foot: 'discurrere per cuncta, et urbana et rustica, loca . . . solebat' (III.v.1, ed. Lapidge, *Histoire*, II, p. 36; my commas).<sup>8</sup>

We proceed to a list of three places where people lived. According to Breeze, the list is descending; but that is to prejudge the issue of the meaning of the words. First, *casae*. Breeze himself, despite his earlier disclaimer, uses the evidence of Bede's usage to elucidate the sense, remarking that Bede translates 'Whithorn', 'white building',<sup>9</sup> by *Candida Casa* (V.xxiii.4; cf. III.iv.1: ed. Lapidge, *Histoire* III, p. 176 and II, p. 32). Other passages show that in Bede the meaning of the singular is the same. Breeze glides to the conclusion that the plural *casae* means '(small) towns'; but it should connote buildings, not *groups* of buildings.<sup>10</sup> As to *uicus*, this certainly means something like 'village'.<sup>11</sup>

That leaves *castellum*. Breeze offers four arguments against the word here meaning 'stronghold'. a) 'Some readers will feel jarred by a listing that starts with cities and goes down to villages, but ends on a jolt with noblemen's strongholds.' But, as we have seen, the first two words are to be taken separately; after that the list might be going *upwards*, from buildings through villages to fortified places. b) 'The

<sup>8</sup> 'He used to travel everywhere, in town and country', transl. *ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>9</sup> See J. Bosworth and T. N. Toller, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Oxford, 1898), s.v. *ærn*: 'A place, secret place, closet, an habitation, a house, cottage.'

<sup>10</sup> Though the buildings could of course be grouped together. They might well be small, though not as small as *casulae*, for which see I.xix.1; at III.viii.2 that word is used of cells for sick nuns, just as *casa* is used at IV.xxii.5 of the building to which Cædmon is taken to die (similarly at IV.xxiii.4 Adamnán speaks of examining 'singulorum casas ac lectos' at Coldingham).

<sup>11</sup> See Campbell, 'Bede's Words for Places', pp. 108–16 (difficult to distinguish from *uilla*).

Old English Bede [in III.xxviii.3] takes *castella* as *hus* "houses" and this is not lightly dismissed.<sup>12</sup> But this is to assume that the translator kept the Latin order. So far as one can judge from his rendering of the words elsewhere,<sup>12</sup> what he translates by *hus* is not *castella* but *casas*. c) 'The British Academy medieval Latin dictionary specifically [i.e. at III.xxviii.3] takes *castella* as "huts, houses, homesteads, buildings".' But its two other instances are open to question.<sup>13</sup> d) 'The *castella* of Bede's source is surely the *castellum* of the Vulgate, consistently used to represent Greek *kēmh* "village, small town" and nothing to do with castles or strongholds.' This may be so, but we need to ask what Bede thought the word means in the Bible. I return to this point below.

It is too self-denying to refuse to look at other uses of the word in the *History*. At I.i.2 'castella' is taken over from Gildas (*De excidio Britonum* iii.2; ed. Winterbottom, *The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (London, 1978), p. 90), who clearly understood it of strongholds; if Bede did not recognise the propriety of the word (and he too speaks of their fortifications), he could have changed it. The same may be said of 'ciuitatibus atque castellis' in I.xiii.2 (ed. Lapidge, *Histoire* I, p.

<sup>12</sup> For *hus* = *casa* see IV.xxii.5 and IV.xxiii.5 (and = *casula* at III.viii.2). As for *castellum*, it is translated *burh* at IV.v.2 and *ceaster* at V.xi.5.

<sup>13</sup> In fact *DMLBS* (s.v. 1b) gives only 'hamlet or homestead'. Two other passages are cited. a) The young Guthlac 'aduersantium sibi urbes et uillas, uicos et castella igne ferroque uastaret' (Felix, *Vita S. Guthlaci*, § 17, ed. B. Colgrave, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac: Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 80), a striking parallel. Colgrave translates 'the towns and residences of his foes, their villages and fortresses' (*ibid.*, p. 81); and that *could* be right. b) 'Hinc quia castellum nesciit [*sc.* faber] qua manserat idem clericus' (Wulfstan, *Miracula S. Swithuni*, i.98–9 in M. Lapidge (with contributions from J. Crook, R. Deshman and S. Rankin), ed., *Cult of St Swithun*, Winchester Studies 4.ii: The Anglo-Saxon Minsters of Winchester (Oxford, 2003), p. 416). If the smith knew nothing of the place, we cannot know either; Lapidge translates 'town'.

158),<sup>14</sup> also taken from an extant source (Marcellinus Comes). The word recurs at IV.v.2 (ed. Lapidge, *Histoire* II, p. 226), where a synodal text speaks of 'episcopus castelli Cantuariorum quod dicitur Hrofaescaestir',<sup>15</sup> here of a fortified town.<sup>16</sup> Finally V.xi.5 (ed. Lapidge, *Histoire* III, p. 66): 'donauit autem ei [Willibrord] Pippin locum cathedrae episcopalis in castello suo inlustri, quod antiquo gentium illarum uerbo Viltaburg, id est Oppidum Viltorum,<sup>17</sup> lingua autem Gallica Traiectum uocatur'.<sup>18</sup> again a fortified town.

Now Breeze might have clinched his case by stressing a difficulty facing anyone who wishes to understand *castella* here of noblemen's strongholds, the castles familiar in a later period. John Blair writes that 'forts and fortifications are puzzlingly absent from both the written and the archaeological record of the early Anglo-Saxons', and he mentions no evidence for them before 749.<sup>19</sup> Equally, fortified burhs are also only documented later.<sup>20</sup> Bede therefore could not have

<sup>14</sup> 'Cities and strongholds', transl. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, p. 47.

<sup>15</sup> 'Bishop of the Kentish town known as Rochester', transl. *ibid.*, p. 351.

<sup>16</sup> For Rochester, see Campbell, 'Bede's Words for Places', p. 105.

<sup>17</sup> Thus Bede (naturally) knows the word *burh*, and perhaps thought of it as implying fortification (for this cf. Campbell, *ibid.*, pp. 101–2). Apparently relevant here is a passage from Vegetius (an author Bede knew): 'castellum paruulum, quem burgum uocant' (*Vegetius Epitome Rei Militaris*, IV.x.3, ed. M. D. Reeve (Oxford, 2004), p. 131); but this refers to a building thrown up temporarily to protect a source of water, and the terminology is influenced by the technical use of *castellum* for a 'receptaculum aquae' (*TLL*, s.v. II).

<sup>18</sup> 'Pippin gave him a place for his episcopal see in his famous fortress which, in the ancient language of the people, is called *Wiltaburg*, that is the town of the Wilti', transl. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, p. 487.

<sup>19</sup> M. Lapidge *et al.*, ed., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Blackwell, 1999), p. 191.

<sup>20</sup> According to Blair (see the previous note) '*burh* . . . seems in pre-Viking sources to denote Iron Age hillforts or monastic sites, rarely royal sites'.



known of 'castles' or 'fortified towns' in contemporary England, let alone visualised them in Chad's Northumbria. When he does use the word *castellum* elsewhere (see above) he is either talking of the distant past on the basis of a written source, or of a Continental site, or of 'a Romano-British walled town'.<sup>21</sup> What Bede imagines Chad as visiting still needs to be clarified.

Breeze rightly refers us to the Vulgate's use of the word. As Philip Burton remarks,<sup>22</sup> Jerome's employment of the word to render Greek κἄμη<sup>23</sup> fits in with other passages, notably in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, where the sense is 'village, small town'. But none of Burton's parallels was available to Bede (for his Vegetius passage see n. 18). How then did he know what *castellum* meant in the New Testament? He could have learned from Isidore (*Etym.* XV.ii.6, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911)) that 'oppidum . . . magnitudine et moenibus discrepare a uico et castello et pago':<sup>24</sup> a *castellum*, then, was small and without walls, but it kept company with *uici* and *pagi*.<sup>25</sup> And the word is found a good deal in patristic texts. Thus Augustine speaks in the same breath of 'urbes atque oppida, castella, uicos, agros

<sup>21</sup> Blair, *ibid.*, p. 396.

<sup>22</sup> P. Burton, *The Old Latin Gospels* (Oxford, 2000), p. 159.

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that this was not necessarily a tiny place; see *LSJ* s.v. 'unwalled village' (as opposed to the fortified πόλις).

<sup>24</sup> 'An *oppidum* differs from a *uicus* and a *castellum* and a *pagus* by its size and by having walls.' (My own translation.)

<sup>25</sup> Similarly in the next (odd) sentence: 'ciuitates autem aut coloniae aut municipia aut uici aut castella aut pagi appellantur.' ('But *ciuitates* are called either *coloniae* or *municipia* or *uici* or *castella* or *pagi*.' Again, my own translation.) Isidore's etymological comment on *castellum* in § 7 (diminutive of *castrum*) is not helpful for our purpose.

etiam uillasque priuatas' (*De uera religione* iii.5: apparently descending),<sup>26</sup> and Jerome (*In Naum* 2) of 'minores urbes et uiculos et castella'. In a work certainly familiar to Bede,<sup>27</sup> Augustine, talking of the meaning of the Greek ἄγρος in Mark XVI.12, says that 'agri . . . nomine non castella tantum uerum etiam municipia et coloniae solent uocari extra ciuitatem, quae caput et quasi mater est ceterarum, unde metropolis appellatur' (*De consensu euangelistarum* III.xxv.71), while, in a letter (clxxxv.33) that Bede may have read, he lists 'fundi, pagi, uici, castella, municipia, ciuitates' (ascending).<sup>28</sup> It is this use of *castellum* for a smallish (country) town that is reflected in the Latin Bible, the Vulgate no less than the *Vetus Latina*. And Bede, on this occasion, follows this well-established usage (so too, probably, Felix in the *Vita Guthlaci*: see n. 14), even though he, like patristic writers, was well aware of the other and original meaning 'fort, stronghold'.

I suggest then that we should not follow Breeze so far as to translate 'homesteads'<sup>29</sup> in *HE* III.xxviii.3. Bede, I have argued, saw *castella* as hamlets or even small towns. My guess would be that in our passage he moves from individual houses to two words for centres of population which he himself might find it hard to distinguish.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. also *Leges Visigothorum*, ed. K. Zeumer, MGH LL nat. Germ. I (Hannover and Leipzig, 1894), p. 364, IX.i.21: 'ciuitas, castellum, uicus aut uilla uel diuersorium' (descending).

<sup>27</sup> M. Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2006), p. 198.

<sup>28</sup> That *castella* were not necessarily very small is suggested by a passage in another letter of Augustine's (ccix.2) about one that later became a bishopric.

<sup>29</sup> C. Gleeson *et al.*, ed., *The Chambers Dictionary* (2003) s.v. homestead: 'a dwelling-house with outhouses and enclosures immediately connected with it'.



## The Anglo-Saxon Bride of Christ: Text and Image

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This paper is a thematic exploration of the Anglo-Saxon portrayal of the Virgin as the bride of Christ, which delves into the depiction of Mary as bride, bridal chamber and queen. Aldhelm (d. 709) notes in his *Prosa de Virginitate* (henceforth *PdV*) that Mary is at once 'aurora solis, nurus patris, genetrix et germana filii simulque sponsa ac felix bernacula, sanctarum socrus animarum, supernorum regina ciuium *Columba inter .LX. reginas et bis quadragenas pelices*'.

<sup>1</sup> In these few lines, the many roles of the Virgin are manifest; she is the mother, bride, daughter and queen of Christ. The *sponsa Christi* is a popular theme in the later medieval period, where various anchoresses cast themselves in the guise of the bride of Christ (as, for example, Mechthild of Magdeburg (d.1282)). While this has proved a pervasive point of study, the Anglo-Saxon tradition has been neglected and particularly the most important *sponsa Christi* and *supernorum regina ciuium*, the Virgin Mary.<sup>2</sup> The Virgin is the main

<sup>1</sup> Aldhelm, *PdV*, v–vii, ed. R. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, MGH, Auct. antiq. XV (Berlin, 1919; repr. 1961), p. 292, '... the dawn of the sun, the daughter-in-law of her Father, the mother and sister of the Son and at the same time his bride and blessed handmaid, the mother-in-law of holy souls, the queen of the heavenly citizens, "a dove . . . among threescore queens and fourscore concubines"', *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, transl. M. Lapidge and M. W. Herren (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 106–7.

<sup>2</sup> On the Anglo-Saxon tradition, see, R. K. Upchurch, 'Virgin spouses as model Christians: the Legend of Julian and Basilissa in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*', *ASE* 34 (2005), 197–217; H. Magennis, "'Listen Now All and Understand": Adaptation of Hagiographical Material for Vernacular Audiences in the Old English Lives of St Margaret', *Speculum* 71 (1996), 27–42; see also M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1990) and M. Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary* (Cambridge, 1998).

vehicle for expressing the humanity of Christ. Not only is the person of the Virgin the bride and queen but her womb acts as the bridal chamber, where human substance is married to the divine and from which Christ the bridegroom advances (Ps. XVIII.6).

### THE BRIDE OF CHRIST IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

The bride of Christ *topos* derives ultimately from the Old Testament, where the bride is first a symbol of the land of Israel (Hosea I.2).<sup>3</sup> The relationship between Hosea and his wife mirrors the relationship between the children of Israel and Yahweh. Yahweh is aware that his people have been faithless and had relations with other gods and, consequently, the covenant agreed with Moses is broken and the children of Israel enter the period of the Babylonian captivity. While the covenant is in ruins, the female imagery is negative; the bride is a faithless, vain prostitute. In Jeremiah, she is a prostitute (III.1; III.6–12): the bride takes many lovers as a pagan is devoted to many gods. Isa. I.21 identifies her with the corruption of Jerusalem and in Isa. L.2, because of her infidelity the land becomes infertile and the rivers dry up.

The role of the bride differs in the Psalms and Song of Songs. Ps. XVIII.6 speaks of a *sponsus procedens de thalamo* ('bridegroom stepping out of the chamber'), whilst Ps. XLIV is set against the backdrop of a royal wedding. The relationship between the Song of Songs and the bride is probably the easiest seen, since in the words of perhaps the most influential commentator upon it, Origen of Alexandria (AD 185–254), the Song of Songs is an 'epithalamium,

<sup>3</sup> For in-depth background on the bride of Christ theme see C. Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ: An Enquiry into the Nuptial Element in Early Christianity* (London, 1940); J. Bugge, *Virginitas: an Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal* (The Hague, 1975).

that is, a marriage song, written by Solomon and done in the manner of a drama. He sings it as if she were a bride at her wedding, burning with heavenly desire for her bridegroom, who is the Word of God.<sup>4</sup> The Song of Songs was interpreted in three main veins. First was the carnal explanation, that it was an erotic poem. In the second, the Song of Songs became an allegorical reading of the relationship between the individual soul and Christ. The third explanation by Origen was an extension of this theme, interpreting the bride as a collection of all souls, the church and Christ: 'For the Bride desired him very deeply – whether she is identified as the individual soul that is made in his image or the Church'.<sup>5</sup>

In the Old Testament, the bride often symbolizes the people of Israel and their relationship to God through the old covenant; in the New Testament she becomes the church 'married' to Christ through the new covenant. It is through Christ that the promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled: he is the bridegroom of Ps. XVIII.6 and the new congregation is his bride. As Paul explains to the Ephesians, just as husbands should love their wives so Christ loves his church (Ephes. V.25). This imagery is developed further in Rev. XXI.2, where the city of Jerusalem is described as a bride 'adorned for her husband'. As in the Old Testament, the bride represents Jerusalem, but here it is the New Jerusalem of the new covenant and part of John's vision of the new heaven and the new earth.

<sup>4</sup> Origen, *Commentarium in canticum canticorum*, Preface, ed. W. A. Bachrens, *Origenes Werke VIII*, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte 33 (Berlin, 1925), pp. 61–71; transl. in *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval commentators*, ed. R. Norris, (Grand Rapids, MI, 2003), pp. 2–7, at p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Norris, *Song of Songs*, p. 2.

The Virgin herself becomes the bride at the Annunciation, as foretold in Isa. XI.1 and Isa. XIV.14 and fulfilled in Luke I.26–38 and Matt. I.16–25. The Matthew Annunciation focuses on the human relationships of Christ, particularly the line of Joseph who is of the house of David (Matt. I.1–18). If the Matthew Annunciation focuses on Joseph, then the Lucian account centers on Mary. In Matthew, we learn of the Annunciation through the dreams of Joseph while Luke focuses on the interaction between the Angel Gabriel and the Virgin. Yet, there is no substantial or detailed account of Mary's life in any of the canonical gospels. For this, we must look to the apocryphal *Proteuangelium* and the Pseudo-Matthew.<sup>6</sup> These two gospel accounts take us through the nativity of the Virgin, her infancy in the temple and the circumstances of her marriage to Joseph. According to these accounts, while she was at the temple Mary and the other virgins wove the sacred temple veil; during this time the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her on three occasions. It is through the Annunciation that Mary becomes the mother and Bride of Christ.<sup>7</sup> Most Anglo-Saxon apocryphal gospel accounts of the Annunciation are in tenth- and eleventh-century manuscripts and as Mary Clayton points out, Anglo-Saxon England was familiar with Marian apocrypha from an early point; Clayton cites the example of the description in Adamnán's (d. 704) *De locis sanctis* where the death of the Virgin is mentioned in connection with the church at Jehoshaphat.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For editions of the texts see J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 2005, repr. 2007), *Proteuangelium* at pp. 48–67 and Pseudo-Matthew at pp. 84–99; also see Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary*, pp. 6–23 and for the Old English text of the Pseudo-Matthew, pp. 153–91.

<sup>7</sup> Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary*, p. 177.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

## THE VIRGIN AS THE BRIDE

Aldhelm uses imagery from the Song of Songs to illuminate the Annunciation in his *Carmina ecclesiastica* and *Carmen de uirginitate* (henceforth *CE* and *CdV*).<sup>9</sup> Aldhelm's interpretation of the Song of Songs's bride and bridegroom motif does not rely on a simple equation between Christ and the church or the individual and Christ; for him it may also be applied to Mary at the Annunciation when she becomes the bride of Christ. This connection between the Annunciation and the bride of Christ motif is made explicit in the poem 'On the Church of St Mary the Perpetual Virgin' and the same passage is used for his entry on Mary in the *CdV*:

Haec, inquam uirgo caelesti pignore feta  
 Edidit ex aluo saluantem saecula regem,  
 Imperium mundi solus qui iure gubernat,  
 Ut dudum angelico discit uirguncula fatu,  
 Cum pater altithronus Gabrihel mississet ab astris.  
 Haec fuit, egregius quam promit carmine uatis,  
 Qui Solimis quondam diues regnauit in aruis,  
 Hortus conclusus florenti uertice uernans,  
 Fons quoque signatus caelesti gurgite pollens  
 Necnon et turtur tremulus; cui praescius in fit  
 Angelus: 'En sobolem generabis uirgo perennem  
 Atque puerperium paritura puerpera gignes:  
 Filius altithroni faustus uocitetur in aeuum!  
 Spiritus e caelo ueniet sanctissimus in te:  
 Virtus ecce tuo confert umbracula cordi;  
 Patris obumbrabit te, uirgo, celsa potestas.'  
 Quo dictum matris turgescunt uiscera fetu,  
 Qui genitus mundum miseranda labe resoluit

<sup>9</sup> Aldhelm, *CE* and *CdV*, ed. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, pp. 11–32 and pp. 350–471; transl. M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works* (Cambridge, 1985), *CE* at pp. 46–68 and *CdV* at pp. 102–167.

Atque crucifixus scelerata piacula dempsit.<sup>10</sup>

Aldhelm applies Cant. II.14, IV.2, V.2 and VI.8 specifically to the Virgin: she is the walled garden of whom King Solomon speaks, the perpetual Virgin. The imagery of the Song of Songs (which we have already seen was understood as a bridal song) is applied to Mary. She becomes the bride of Christ through her willingness to carry the son of God in her womb and so gains her place in Aldhelm's list of honoured virgins, amongst other brides of Christ.

The only known Anglo-Saxon commentary of the Song of Songs is by Bede, and DeGregorio cites it as an example of affective spirituality predating the works of Anselm of Canterbury (ca. 1033–1109).<sup>11</sup> Bede sees the Song of Songs as an allegory of the relationship between Christ and *ecclesia*, the church. Bede is adamant that the church is the sole interpretation attached to the bride, dismissing the claims of others that the breasts of the woman in Song of Songs VIII.1 are those of the Virgin. Bede says, 'Quod ait, *sugentem ubera*

<sup>10</sup> Aldhelm, *CdV*, ll. 1691–1709, ed. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, pp. 423–4, 'This Virgin, I tell you, pregnant with heavenly offspring, produced from her womb the King Who redeems all ages, Who alone rightly controls the government of the world – just as this young maiden had previously learned from an angelic announcement, when the high-throned Father sent Gabriel (down) from the stars. It was she whom the excellent prophet [i.e. Solomon], who once ruled as a wealthy man over the fields of Jerusalem, revealed in his song: '(My sister, my spouse) is a garden closed up, verdant on the flowering summit [*scil.* Of Libanus], a fountain sealed up, welling from the heavenly pool [cf. Cant. IV.2], a quivering dove [Cant. II.14, V.2 and VI.8]. To her the prescient angel began to speak [23]: 'Behold, you shall beget an immortal offspring and you, a mother about to give birth, shall bring forth an infant; let this Son of the high-throned (God) be called blessed for all eternity . . .', transl. Lapidge and Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, pp. 140–1.

<sup>11</sup> S. DeGregorio, 'Affective Spirituality: Theory and Practice', *Essays in Medieval Studies* 22 (2005), 129–39 at pp. 131–2 and p. 137, n. 10 and n. 11.

*matris meae, non de ipsa gloriosa Dei genetrice specialiter . . . Sed matrem suam dicit Synagoga humanae naturae substantiam, de qua et ipse nata erat, et Redemptorem omnium nasci ac nutririi desiderabat*.<sup>12</sup>

Clayton reminds us that both Jerome and Ambrose used parts of the Song of Songs in relation to the Virgin and the breasts of the Virgin were written about extensively.<sup>13</sup> We have already seen that Aldhelm applied the imagery of the Song of Songs to the Virgin and here Bede feels the need to dismiss explicitly any interpretation of the Song of Songs that included the Virgin, suggesting that there was a clear association between the Song of Songs and the Virgin in Anglo-Saxon England. Bede tries to emulate the Song of Songs himself by combining elements of it with New Testament ideas concerning the bride of Christ in a poem dedicated to Æthelthryth. Æthelthryth, as far as Bede was concerned, was a perfect example of a bride of Christ. She was married three times and throughout her marriages she retained her virginity. The poem is prefaced:

Videtur oportunum huic historiae etiam hymnum uirginitatis inserere, quem ante annos plurimos in laudem ac praeconium eiusdem reginae ac sponsae Christi, et ideo ueraciter reginae quia sponsae Christi, elegiac metro composuimus, et imitari morem sacrae scripturae, cuius historiae carmina plurima indita et haec metro ac uersibus constat esse composita.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bede, *In cantica canticorum*, xxi–xxx, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119B (Turnhout, 1983), p. 338, 'Where it is said, oh that you were nursed at my mother's breast, I do not understand that to mean specially those of the glorious mother of God . . . but the synagogue which is human nature from which was born the redeemer of all', transl. in B. Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (London, 1970), p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 12 and 228.

<sup>14</sup> Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (henceforth *HE*), iv.20 (18), ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, (Oxford, 1969; repr. 1981), pp. 396/397, 'It seems fitting to insert in this history

It is as if Bede is composing a marriage song in the manner of the Song of Songs for the marriage between Christ and Æthelthryth.<sup>15</sup>

The depiction of Æthelthryth at 90v, in the *Benedictional of Æthelwold* (London, British Library, Add. 49568 (Winchester c. 971–84)) is similar to the depiction of the Virgin in the Annunciation scene at 5v (signaling both women (also through their virginity) as brides of Christ) since both are dressed in similar clothing and in the colour gold.<sup>16</sup> Although an important event, the Annunciation scene is only depicted in two late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts: in the Boulogne Gospels 11v (Boulogne, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 11 s. x<sup>es</sup>) and in the *Benedictional of Æthelwold*.<sup>17</sup> However, it can be found several times in early stone carvings (such as the Ruthwell Cross and Auckland St Andrew).

The Ruthwell Cross contains a very simple depiction of the Annunciation with the Virgin and the Angel Gabriel shown frontally, both with halos. The Ruthwell Cross is one of the three witnesses to

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a hymn on the subject of virginity which I composed many years ago in elegiac metre in honour of this queen and bride of Christ, and therefore truly a queen because the bride of Christ; imitating the method of holy Scripture in which many songs are inserted into the history and, it is well known, these were composed in metre and verse.'

<sup>15</sup> Bede's poem ends with an allusion to the marriage of the lamb in the Book of Revelation: 'Aspice, nupta Deo, quae sit tibi gloria terries; quae maneat caelis aspice, nuta Deo. Munera laeta capis, festiuus fulgida taedis; ecce uenit sponsus, munera laeta capis'. 'Affianced to the Lamb, now famed on earth! Soon famed in heaven, affianced to the Lamb! Many thy wedding gifts while torches blaze. The Bridegroom comes; many thy wedding gifts.' Bede, *HE* iv.20 (21), ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 400/401.

<sup>16</sup> See R. Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold* (Princeton, NJ, 1995), pls. VIII and XXVIII.

<sup>17</sup> For descriptions of Æthelwold's *Benedictional* see *ibid.*, pp. 257–66; J. Backhouse, D. H. Turner and L. Webster, *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art* (London, 1984), no. 37; on the Boulogne Gospels see *The Golden Age*, no. 42.



*The Dream of the Rood* poem, in which we can again see the marriage of Christ, the sacrificial lamb, to his congregation as he is crucified for our sins.<sup>18</sup> The main device used in all three witnesses is the idea of the cross as the means of salvation, the cross being the Tree of Life. On the Ruthwell Cross this is shown through the use of a vine-scroll motif. In the Vercelli poem the cross, a tree, speaks of its ordeal of bearing Christ to his mortal death. Half-way through the Vercelli poem lines 90–4 compare the Tree to Mary, who like the tree is honoured above all over others of her kind: Mary is honoured *ofer eall wifa cynn* ('over all women').<sup>19</sup> These lines evoke Luke's Annunciation account where Gabriel honours Mary above all other women (*benedicta tu inter mulieres*, 'blessed art thou amongst women') (Luke I.28). Flemming, Ó Carragáin, Breeze and others note the history of associating Mary with the cross and in some cases understanding the cross as the Virgin; some even note a strong association of *The Dream of the Rood* tradition with Mary.<sup>20</sup> Ó Carragáin argues that the experience of Mary is like the experience of the tree. As the Virgin is

<sup>18</sup> The other two being the Vercelli *Dream of the Rood* poem and the Brussels cross, which is inscribed with: +ROD IS MIN NAMA GEO IC RICN/E CYNIN/G BÆR BYFIGYN/DE B/LODE BESTEMED: 'Cross is my name: once, trembling and drenched with blood, I bore the mighty King', Backhouse *et al.*, *The Golden Age*, pp. 90–1.

<sup>19</sup> M. Swanton, ed., *The Dream of the Rood* (Manchester, 1970; repr. Exeter, 1996), pp. 98–9).

<sup>20</sup> J. V. Fleming, 'The Dream of the Rood and Anglo-Saxon Monasticism', *Traditio* 22 (1966), 43–72; J. Canuteson, 'The Crucifixion and the Second Coming in *The Dream of the Rood*', *MP* 66 (1969), 293–7; É. Ó Carragáin, 'Vidi Aquam: The Liturgical Background to the Dream on the Rood 20a *Swetan on þa Swidran Healf*', *N&Q* 30 (1983), 8–15; É. Ó Carragáin, 'Crucifixion as Annunciation and the Relation of *The Dream of the Rood* to the Liturgy Reconsidered', *ES* 63 (1982), 487–505; A. Breeze, 'The Virgin Mary and the Dream of the Rood', *Florilegium* 12 (1993), 55–62.

honoured in the Magnificat above all other women so this tree was honored above all other trees as it was chosen to become the means of salvation. The Virgin, like the tree, suffers the pain of inaction. Like the tree, the Virgin must show faith in the lord by witnessing the Crucifixion and not taking part.<sup>21</sup>

The later *Benedictional of Æthelwold* shows particular devotion to the Virgin as it contains illustrations of the Annunciation to the Virgin as well as illustrations of the Nativity 15v and the death and coronation of the Virgin 102v.<sup>22</sup> The Nativity and Annunciation miniatures show the importance of the humanity of Christ as proceeding from the Virgin. The *Benedictional* contains a typical Annunciation scene, depicting Luke I.26–38. The Virgin in this scene is dressed in a dark gold coif and a lighter gold body garment, she is seated with a book in one hand and is probably reading the prophecy in Isa. VII.4 that foretells the incarnation of Christ. The Virgin is presented as a queen: her seat is like a throne and her feet are raised on a pillow, while she is dressed in gold like the queen of Ps. XLIV. The Virgin has a spindle in one hand, perhaps an allusion to the spinning of the veil but also a reminder that she is the second Eve. This miniature has been described as 'architectural' because of the imperial Roman style of the columns and building.<sup>23</sup> Mary is sitting under the balinth, a canopy used in church over the tabernacle. The message of the Nativity scene is that through the human body of the Virgin the saviour of the world came. The Virgin here is again dressed in gold, as in the Annunciation, but this time she has her own halo.

<sup>21</sup> See: Ó Carragáin, 'Crucifixion as Annunciation'.

<sup>22</sup> R. Deshman, 'The Imagery of the Living Ecclesia and the English Monastic Reform', *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. P. Szarmach (Kalamazoo, MI, 1986), pp. 261–82 at p. 272.

<sup>23</sup> *Idem*, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, pp. 9–17; *idem*, 'The Imagery of the Living Ecclesia', p. 267.

From the angle of the bed, she dominates the scene, as is fitting: this is because this moment is her crowning achievement, for she has given birth to salvation. The crib at the bottom of the scene is in the shape of a building. As Dushman has already pointed out, Christ is the living church (i.e. the church is built from living stones, the communion of those united in Christ), the cornerstone, the Eucharist on the altar of his cradle, and on this page we are reminded that it is through Mary that this came about. She gave birth to the living church; it was in her womb that the church was formed, from human and divine substance. In Mary, divinity and humanity fused; she gave birth to the King of Heaven and yet she is his bride.<sup>24</sup>

The Boulougne depiction of the Annunciation is rather different from the *Benedictional* scene. Instead of a whole page miniature, the Annunciation scene sits in the bottom left hand corner, to the right of which we are shown Mary and Elizabeth embracing at the Visitation. Above the scene are the ancestors of Christ from the opening of Matthew. As in the *Benedictional of Æthelwold*, Mary is seated and the Angel Gabriel approaches her from the left side. This page is reminding us of the two natures of Christ which fused in the womb of the Virgin at the Annunciation. The Nativity scene 12r is similar to the *Benedictional of Æthelwold*: Mary lies on an angled bed as the midwife puts a pillow behind her head, while Joseph sits next to the bed looking on. The box-like crib is below the bed but it is the Virgin that dominates the page.

The same message can be seen in the Judith of Flanders Gospel-book crucifixion scene 1v (New York, Pierspoint Morgan 806, (St

<sup>24</sup> *Idem*, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, pp. 19–26; *idem*, 'The Imagery of the Living Ecclesia', pp. 267–70.

Bertin, s. xi<sup>med</sup>).<sup>25</sup> Here, the garb of bride and queen is applied to the Virgin at the Crucifixion, an event that occurred on the anniversary of the Annunciation according to medieval commentators.<sup>26</sup> This crucifixion scene is rather typical and in it, we see the completion of the transition from the focus on the divinity of Christ to his humanity. Like most other Anglo-Saxon crucifixion scenes, we observe the moment of Christ's mortal death with the Virgin on His right, John the Evangelist witnessing the scene and taking down His testimony on the other side, and the veiling of the sun and moon combined with the blessing hand of God. The Judith of Flanders crucifixion scene, however, differs in several respects from the earlier examples, as will be shown. This scene contains four figures: Christ; the Virgin, John the Evangelist and the penitent Mary Magdalene/Judith of Flanders figure.<sup>27</sup> The Mary Magdalene/Judith of Flanders figure holds on to the bottom the cross, which is shaped like the Tree of Life.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See J. Rosenthal, 'An Unprecedented Image of Love and Devotion: the Crucifixion in Judith of Flanders's Gospel Book', in *Tributes to Lucy Freeman Sandler*, ed. K. A. Smith and C. Krinsky, (London, 2008), pp. 21–36.

<sup>26</sup> See note 20.

<sup>27</sup> There is some question over the identity of the penitent woman, whether she is Mary Magdalene or the patron of the Gospel Book, Judith of Flanders. See B. Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography in the Monastic Revival* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 159–61. On St John see J. O'Reilly, 'St John as a Figure of the Contemplative Life: Text and Image in the Art of the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform', in *St. Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult*, ed. N. Ramsay, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 165–85.

J. O'Reilly, 'The rough-hewn cross in Anglo-Saxon Art', *Ireland and Insular Art AD 500–1200*, ed. M. Ryan (Dublin, 1987), pp. 153–58; see also J. O'Reilly, 'The medieval iconography of the two trees in Eden', *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden*, ed. P. Morris and D. Sawyer (Sheffield, 1992), pp. 167–204.

This picture can be divided into two parts. On the right hand side, John is an observer while the Magdalene/Judith figure at the bottom on the cross can only humble herself before the scene. All the action is concentrated on the left. In the same instance, the blessing hand of God is receiving or acknowledging His son and the Virgin is moving to wipe her son's face. The foot of the Virgin is gently nudging its way out of the frame, connecting 'us' with 'them'. The Virgin here is fulfilling one of her roles as the 'intercessor'.<sup>29</sup> God's love for us flows down His blessing hand, through the tortured and crucified body of Christ and comes to us through the movement of the Virgin as she wipes her dying son's face. Through the movement of the Virgin towards her son and the breaking of the frame, the communion of Christians is brought into the scene.

The Virgin of this scene is quite different from the Virgin of other comparable Anglo-Saxon crucifixion scenes.<sup>30</sup> This woman is beautiful and young; she is not the worn woman of the Winchcombe Psalter 88r (Cambridge, University Library, Ff. 1. 23 (Winchcombe, s. xi<sup>med</sup>)) nor is she impassive like her counterpart in the Arundel Psalter 12v (London, British Library, Arundel 60 (Winchester, s. xi<sup>med</sup>)), nor does she weep as in the Ramsey Psalter 3v (London, British Library, Harley 2904 (Canterbury, s. x<sup>ex</sup>)).<sup>31</sup> This woman is upright, and she is not crying but she is strong. The scene in its entirety is reminiscent of Ps. XLIV. As we have already mentioned, that scene is of a royal nuptial, and in it the queen stands on the right-hand of the king dressed in gold. At the Crucifixion, Christ is enthroned on the cross.

<sup>29</sup> O'Reilly, 'St. John as a Figure of the Contemplative Life', p. 170.

<sup>30</sup> Rosenthal, 'An Unprecedented Image of Love and Devotion', pp. 24–9.

<sup>31</sup> For discussions of these see Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography*. Also see, E. Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900–1066*, A Survey of Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles 2 (London, 1976), no. 41, p. 60, no. 80, pp. 97–8 and no. 103, p. 120.

The Crucifixion too is a marriage where Christ the bridegroom is wedded to his people through the act. Here too, the Virgin stands on the right hand of the king – her son – and is dressed in regal gold.

HWÆT WÆS SEO SALOMONES RÆSTE ELLS BUTON SE  
HALGA INNOÐ: THE VIRGIN AS THE BRIDAL CHAMBER  
The Virgin's womb acts as the bridal chamber for the bridegroom, Christ. The Council of Ephesus in 431 decreed: 'confitemur sanctam uirginem Dei genetricem eo quod Deus uerbum incarnatus sit et inhumanatus et ex ipso conceptu uniuertit sibi illud quod ex ea sumptum est templum'.<sup>32</sup> In the womb of the Virgin occurs a comingling, a marriage of the carnal and the divine, not only is the Virgin the bride of Christ but her womb acts as the bridal chamber of Ps. XVIII.6. Augustine uses Ps. XVIII.6 to connect the womb and bridal chamber, 'cum Verbum caro factum est, in utero uirginali thalamum inuenit; atque inde naturae coniunctus humanae, tamquam de castissimo procedens cubili, humilis misericordia infra omnes, fortis maiestate super omnes'.<sup>33</sup> The Virgin is the perfect vessel. The *uirginali thalamum* ('bridal bed') is the womb of the Virgin from whom he took his human substance and fused it with his divinity.

<sup>32</sup> 'Therefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. According to this understanding of the unconfused union, we confess the holy virgin to be the mother of God because God the Word took flesh and became man and from his very conception united to himself the temple he took from her'. N. P. Tanner, ed. and transl., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (London, 1990), I, pp. 69–70.

<sup>33</sup> Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, ed., D. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont, CCSL 38 (Turnhout, 1956; repr. 1990), I, pp. 109–10. '... when the Word was made flesh, He found a bridal bed in the virginal womb; from which He came forth united to human nature as though from the most chaste bridal chambers', transl. in É. Ó Carragáin, *Ritual and the Rood: Liturgical Images and the Old English Poems of the Dream of the Rood Tradition* (Toronto, 2005), pp. 322.



In the *CdV*, Aldhelm makes a direct parallel between Mary's womb and the temple:

Virginis intemerata uidens praecordia castae  
 Maluit, ut prolem peperisset uirgo supernam,  
 Sordida qui ueniens dempsisset crimina mundi,  
 Dum dilubra dedit Christo atque sacella pudoris.<sup>34</sup>

Aldhelm sees Mary's body as a temple that is a sanctuary for Christ, a chamber from which the bridegroom can step out. Born without sin, the Virgin is the vessel from which the redeemer of the world is born. Sinead O'Sullivan has already demonstrated that the image of the temple represents virginity in the works of Aldhelm.<sup>35</sup> This concept of the bodily temple was also used later on by Ælfric in his *Lives of Saints*, for example in his *Life of St Lucy*, where the saint is described as 'godes tempel' ('God's temple').<sup>36</sup>

As we have already seen, Bede is wary of the interpretation of Mary in the Song of Songs and in his account the bride is the 'synagogue', as he dismisses in particular any correlation between the breasts of the bride and the Virgin Mary. However, Bede still applies the bridal imagery to the virgin as he uses the bridal chamber as a metaphor for her womb: 'fiat ut spiritus sanctus adueniens me caelestibus dignam mysteriis reddat; fiat ut in meo utero filius Dei humanae substantiae habitum induat atque ad redemptionem mundi

<sup>34</sup> Aldhelm, *CdV*, ll. 1682–1685, ed. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 423, '... seeing the undefiled heart of a caste virgin, preferred that this virgin should give birth to the divine offspring – who, by His coming, should take away the foul guilt of the world – when He gave (her as) a temple for Christ and (as) a sanctuary of Chastity', transl. Lapidge and Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 140.

<sup>35</sup> See S. O'Sullivan, 'The Concept of Virginity in Aldhelm's *De uirginitate*', (unpubl. MA dissertation, University College, Cork, 1995).

<sup>36</sup> Ælfric, *Lives of Saints II*, ed. W. W. Skeat, EETS 84, 96, 104, 114 (Oxford, 1886; repr. as 2 vols. London, 1966), pp. 68–83.

tamquam sponsus suo procedat de thalamo'.<sup>37</sup> Here, the Virgin's womb is viewed as a bridal chamber, with divine substance as the 'bridegroom' and the Virgin's own human substance playing the role the bride. Homily ii.24 expresses the same concept, where the development of Christ's body in the womb of the Virgin mirrors the building of the temple.<sup>38</sup>

The *Old English Advent Lyrics* contain another important dramatisation of the Annunciation scene that depicts Mary as the bride of Christ. As in Bede's Homily i.3, the Virgin speaks of her own womb as the temple. Her body is the perfect vessel to give birth to the Messiah because of her immaculate conception:

Nu ic his tempel eam  
 gefremed butan facne; in me frofre gaest

<sup>37</sup> Bede, *Homelia* i.3, ed. D. Hurst, *Opera homiletica*, CCSL 122 (Turnhout, 1955), p. 20, 'Let it be done that the Holy Spirit's coming to me may render me worthy of heavenly mysteries; let it be done that in my womb the Son of God may put on the condition of human substance and may proceed like a bridegroom from his chamber (Ps. XIX.5 (XVIII.6)) for the redemption of the world', transl. L. W. Martin and D. Hurst, *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1991), I, p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, II.24, ed. Hurst, *Opera homiletica*, p. 365, 'atque ideo non casu gestum sed diuinitus procuratum est ut eo annorum numero templum edificaretur quo dierum numero corpus dominicum quod per templum figurabatur in utero uirginali perfici oportebat'; '... so it did not happen by chance, but was divinely arranged, that the temple was built during the same number of years as the days required for the Lord's body, which was prefigured by the temple, to be developed in the Virgin's womb', transl. Martin and Hurst, *Bede the Venerable*, II, p. 250.

gecardode.<sup>39</sup>

At 318–25, express Mary's eternal virginity by the idea that she is a building whose gates are locked to all but the Saviour:

god sylf wile gæstes mægne  
 gefælsian, fæder ælmihtig,  
 ond þurh þa fæstan locu foldan neosan,  
 ond hio þonne æfter him ece stondað  
 simle singales swa beclused  
 þæt nænig oþer, nymðe nergend god,  
 hy æfre ma eft onluceð.<sup>40</sup>

While there are various commentaries on the Annunciation surviving from Anglo-Saxon England, Blickling Homily I, *In natale domini*, stands out as particularly pertinent in its use of the imagery for the Virgin. This is where we find a typical Annunciation account save in one detail, a direct parallel is made between the Virgin and the Bed of Solomon found nowhere else in the Anglo-Saxon tradition:

On hire was gefylled þætte on Cantica Canticorum was gesungen, & þus gecweden, 'Salomones reste was mid weardum ymbseted, þæt was mid syxtigum werum, þæm strengestum þe on Israhelum wæron & anra gehwylc hæfde sweord ofor his hype for nihtlicum ege' – Eno nu hwæt was seo Salomones ræste ells buton se halga innoð þære a clænan?<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> *The Old English Advent Lyrics* 206–8, 'Now I am His temple / built without sin; / the Spirit of comfort / came to rest in me'. References to this poem are from *The Old English Advent Lyrics: A Typological Commentary*, ed. R. B. Burlin (New Haven, CT, 1968).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 319–25, 'God Himself, by the might of the Spirit / will penetrate these golden gates, / and through these fast locks visit the earth, / and after Him then they always shall stand / forever eternally thus closed up / that none other, but God the Saviour / may ever more unlock them again'.

<sup>41</sup> 'In her was fulfilled what was sung in the Song of Songs, thus saying: "Solomon's bed was surrounded by guards, that is by sixty strong men, the

The bed in this homiletic context is a unique image. The *Salomones ræste* ('Bed of Solomon') is from Song of Songs III.7 (*lectulum Salomonis*). There is no other Anglo-Saxon text to which this homily might be compared. We know that the line describing the Bed of Solomon seems to be influenced by the writings of eastern commentators such as Apponius's *Explanatio in canticum canticorum* and by the works of Ephriem the Syrian.<sup>42</sup> The bed of Solomon is the *innop* ('womb') of the Virgin. Her body acts as the bridal chamber of Ps. XVIII.6

#### THE VIRGIN AS MIDDANEARDES CWEN

In the late Old English apocryphal gospels of the Virgin Mary, Archangel Gabriel calls the Virgin 'middaneardes cwen' ('queen of earth'). Likewise, Aldhelm earlier identified the Virgin as *supernorum regina cinium* ('queen of the heavenly citizens').<sup>43</sup> She is the queen through her marriage to the prince and king, Christ. In lines 275–81 of the *Old English Advent Lyrics*, the Virgin is the purest queen and the bride of the prince of the sky, her son:

Eala þu mæra middangeardes  
 seo clæneste cwen ofer eorþan. /  
 Bliþe mode, þæt þu bryd sie

strongest that were in Israel, and each of them has a sword's girt to his hip on account of the terror of the night". Now then what was Solomon's bed else but the holy womb of the Virgin ever pure . . . ? R. Morris, *The Blickling Homilies*, EETS os 58, 63, 73 (London, 1874, 1876, 1880; repr. London, 1967), pp. 10–11.

<sup>42</sup> Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin*, pp. 227–9; it is also influenced in parts by Bede, *Homilia* I.3: see M. Clayton, 'The Sources of the Blickling Homily 1 (C.B.3.4.18)', *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register* (1996), <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed November 2009.

<sup>43</sup> See note 1.

This complex family relationship is best illustrated by the 'Quinity' of the *Ælfwine Prayer* book at 75v (London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. XXVII, (Winchester, 1032–5)). The Quinity is an unusual representation of the Trinity: this line drawing presents four figures: two youthful, bearded men, both with cross nimbus (one of whom has the stigmata) beside the Virgin and Child. The Virgin is wearing a crown and on top of the crown and coif is the dove of the Holy Spirit. It appears as if the four figures are sitting above the earth looking down upon it. The Virgin appears in the role of queen of heaven, as indicated by her crown, a position she holds because she is mother of the king. At the same time, as the child in her lap reminds us, she is the mother of Christ and it is through her that the Redeemer is born.

In conclusion, in the commentary, text and image the bride of Christ motif was vibrant in Anglo-Saxon England long before the commentaries of St Bernard. Not only the title 'bride of Christ' but also the powerful bodily images associated with the idea, such as that of the womb, emphasise the human aspects of Christ incarnate. It was through meditation on the Virgin that believers come to understand the human nature of Christ.

<sup>44</sup> *The Old English Advent Lyrics* lines 275–6 and 280–1, 'You, most renowned, O greatest on earth, / throughout the world the purest queen' and 'And rightfully declare that you are the bride / of the most noble Prince of the sky'.

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The treatment of Judas Cyriacus by the eponymous hero of Cynewulf's Old English poem *Elene* has led to some disquiet amongst scholars. Modern readers are generally resistant to the aggressive devotion with which Elene pursues her goal, whilst the recognition of inverted hagiographical tropes in the account has made the presentation of the queen seem worryingly ambiguous.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly so with regard to Elene's coercive imprisonment of Judas in a dried-up well. The incarceration and starvation of the Jewish representative by the Christian queen distortedly reflects the fate of countless Christian martyrs, threatened with unpleasant death unless they recant their faith and partake in the worship of pagan deities.<sup>2</sup>

This distorted reflection cannot be wholly attributed to the narrative structure of the legend in the Latin tradition known to Cynewulf.<sup>3</sup> Comparison with the Latin text which most closely

<sup>1</sup> For a convenient discussion of the hagiographic echoes in the text, see M. E. Bridges, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry*, *Anglistica* 22 (Copenhagen, 1984), pp. 77–80. Cf. also R. DiNapoli, 'Poesis and Authority: Traces of an Anglo-Saxon *Agon* in Cynewulf's *Elene*', *Neophilologus* 82 (1998), 619–30, at pp. 619–20.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Woolf's description of this episode as an 'inverted passion' (R. Woolf, 'Saints' Lives', *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. E. G. Stanley (London, 1966), pp. 37–66, at p. 47).

<sup>3</sup> On the sources of the poem, see *Cynewulf's Elene*, ed. P. O. E. Gradon (London, 1958), pp. 15–22. In citations from this edition the characters 'yogh' and 'wynn' have been normalized to 'g' and 'w' respectively. Translations are

approximates Cynewulf's putative source, the *Acta Cyriaci*, suggests that the Old English poetic account in fact amplifies and emphasizes the oppressive nature of Judas' imprisonment.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the most striking thing about the Latin account is its brevity. The text is silent about the suffering endured by Judas and does not describe the place of his confinement except as a 'dry pit'. Judas does not voice any specific complaint about his treatment and the motivation behind his capitulation and plea for release is implicit rather than explicit: 'Beata Helena dixit: "Per Crucifixum, fame te interficiam, nisi dixeris ueritatem". Et cum haec dixisset, iussit eum mitti in lacum siccum, usque in septem dies, sic ut custodiretur a custodibus. Cum transissent autem septem dies, clamauit Judas de lacu, dicens, "Obsecro uos, educate me, et ego ostendam uobis crucem Christi"'.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast, the corresponding passage in *Elene* occupies some thirty lines.<sup>6</sup> The poetic account both introduces details not present in the *Acta* and freely elaborates on the hardship suffered by the captive. The place of confinement itself, whilst still described as a dry pit (*drygne sead*),<sup>7</sup> is more explicitly defined in terms of imprisonment: it is

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my own unless otherwise stated. For a further discussion of the history of the legend and its transmission in Anglo-Saxon England, see *The Old English Finding of the True Cross*, ed. M. Bodden (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 24–35.

<sup>4</sup> For the text of the *Acta Cyriaci*, see *Finding of the True Cross*, ed. Bodden, pp. 60–100.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84. Translated in M. J. B. Allen and D. G. Calder, *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: the Major Latin Texts in Translation* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 65: 'Blessed Helena said, "By Him who was crucified, I will kill you with hunger, unless you tell me the truth." When she had said this, she ordered him to be cast into a dry pit, and guarded by jailors for seven days. After seven days had elapsed, Judas cried out from the pit, "I implore you, take me out and I will show you Christ's Cross"'.  
<sup>6</sup> *Elene* 685–715.  
<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 693a.

described not only as a place of torment (*bearmlocan*)<sup>8</sup> and a place of compulsion (*nydcleofan*),<sup>9</sup> but also explicitly as a prison (*carcerne*);<sup>10</sup> Judas is not only tormented by hunger (*hungre gepreatod*)<sup>11</sup> but is also bound with fetters (*clommum beclungen*);<sup>12</sup> he describes his confinement as an affliction (*proht*)<sup>13</sup> but also as captivity (*haeft*).<sup>14</sup> Stress is laid on Judas' isolation (*duguða leas*)<sup>15</sup> and on both the emotional (*siomode in sorgum*)<sup>16</sup> and the physical (*sarum besylced*)<sup>17</sup> nature of his torment. Unlike in the Latin text, Judas' capitulation is explicitly linked to his inability to endure further torment,<sup>18</sup> and his release from the pit, passed over in the *Acta*, is described in seven lines of verse.<sup>19</sup>

What was, therefore, merely a narrative detail in the prose becomes in the poem a significant episode. That this elaboration represents a change made by the poet, rather than simply reflecting a difference in Cynewulf's source, is suggested by comparison with the Old English homily *In inuentione sanctae crucis*, of which the earliest extant text is that contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auctarium F. 4. 32. The text's most recent editor has suggested not only that the homily shares the same ultimate Latin source used by Cynewulf in the composition of *Elene*, but also that the homily's Old English

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 695a.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 711b.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 715a.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 695b.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 696a.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 704b.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 703b.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 693b, 'Deprived of companions'.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 694a, 'Dwelt in sorrows'.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 697a, 'Exhausted with wounds'.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 699–708.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 709–15.



archetype may have been directly influenced by the poem itself.<sup>20</sup> In the matter of the pit, however, the homily follows the Latin text closely, echoing its cursory and utilitarian treatment of the episode. It seems likely, therefore, that the elaboration evident at this point in the poem may be attributed to Cynewulf's own invention.

This elaboration has of course been frequently noted, and the publication of Thomas D. Hill's 1971 article on the role of sapiential structure and figural narrative in the poem established the now common notion that the passage demands a figural reading.<sup>21</sup> Most frequently, critics have pointed to parallels with the biblical account of Joseph's confinement in a pit, his release from which was commonly linked typologically with Christ's harrowing of hell.<sup>22</sup> In this context, it has been observed that Cynewulf's description of Judas' captivity in terms of fetters – nowhere mentioned in any prose narrative – appears to relate to the theme of bondage as a representation of the torments of hell.<sup>23</sup> Critics have also pointed to the way that the episode parallels the description of the burial and resurrection of the cross in *Elene*, which in turn appears to be a typological representation of the burial, descent into hell and

<sup>20</sup> Bodden, ed., *Finding of the True Cross*, pp. 28–47. See especially the stemma reproduced on p. 36 and the conclusions drawn on p. 47. For an objection to Bodden's stemma, see the review by D. Donoghue in *Speculum* 65 (1990), 368–9.

<sup>21</sup> T. D. Hill, 'Sapiential Structure and Figural Narrative in the Old English *Elene*', *Traditio* 27 (1971), 159–77. Cf. E. G. Whatley, 'Bread and Stone: Cynewulf's 'Elene' 611–618', *NM* 76 (1975), 550–60; T. D. Hill, 'Bread and Stone, Again: *Elene* 611–18', *NM* 81 (1980), 252–7.

<sup>22</sup> Gen. XXXVII.18–36.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, pp. 246–8. On the theme of release from bondage, see T. Rendall, 'Bondage and Freeing From Bondage in Old English Religious Poetry', *JEGP* 73 (1974), 497–512.

subsequent resurrection of Christ.<sup>24</sup> In the argument that follows I will not seek to dispute the presence of these typological resonances. Rather I wish to suggest that the particular language in which Cynewulf describes Judas' incarceration potentially adds a further, and perhaps more specific significance to this deeply figural passage.

The concision with which the actual process of Judas' confinement is described in the Latin text is evident in the passage quoted above. The Old English prose account, whilst removing the reference to jailors and adding a reference to the starvation by which Judas is to be tormented, is similarly utilitarian in its narrative expression: 'ƿa bebead seo cwen Elena þæt hine man name and sette on ænne diopne seað buton æte and butan wæte, and þa wunode he þær seofan dagas and seofan niht'.<sup>25</sup> At first glance, the poetic account seems equally uncomplicated:

Heht þa swa cwicne corðre lædan,  
scufan scyldigne – scealcas ne gældon –  
in drygne seað<sup>26</sup>

Closer examination, however, may suggest that these lines are more significant than they initially appear. Stacy S. Klein has shown how the hasty subservience of Elene's retainers here and elsewhere in the poem establishes the queen's power and authority.<sup>27</sup> Klein further

<sup>24</sup> Cf. D. G. Calder, 'Strife, Revelation, and Conversion: the Thematic Structure of *Elene*', *ES* 53 (1972), 201–10, at 205–6.

<sup>25</sup> Bodden, ed., *Finding of the True Cross*, pp. 185–8, 'Then the queen Elene bade that they seize him and set him in a deep pit without food and without water, and then he remained there for seven days and seven nights'.

<sup>26</sup> *Elene* 691–3a, 'Then she commanded them to take him thus alive from the company, to shove him, guilty, into a dry pit (the retainers did not hesitate)'.

<sup>27</sup> S. S. Klein, 'Reading Queenship in Cynewulf's *Elene*', *Jnl of Med. and Early Mod. Stud.* 33.1 (2003), 47–89, at p. 72.

suggests that the phrase *corðre lædan* – together with the subsequent reference to his isolation in the pit – highlights Judas' exclusion at this moment from the community of the faithful.<sup>28</sup> Neither detail is paralleled in the Latin or vernacular prose accounts.

More significant, perhaps, is the way in which these lines may invoke descriptions of hagiographical torture. The lines are strikingly similar to Cynewulf's account of one of the torments inflicted on the Christian heroine by the Roman prefect Eleusius in his other signed large-scale hagiographic narrative, *Juliana*:

Het þa ofestlice, yrre gebolgen,  
leahtra lease in þæs leades wylm  
scufan butan scyldum.<sup>29</sup>

The similarity of diction and syntax here is obvious, and has been commented upon by Margaret Bridges, who highlights the contrast between the phrase *scufan scyldigne* in *Elene* and *scufan butan scyldum* in *Juliana*. Noting the frequent descriptions of saints and martyrs as unguilty in hagiographical narratives,<sup>30</sup> Bridges highlights the way in which this familiar trope is inverted in *Elene*: 'The hagiographical commonplace of the sinful ordering the martyrdom of the innocent may well have led to an ironic reading of *Elene* 691–2'.<sup>31</sup>

However, it seems possible that the close similarity of these two passages points to more than simply an ironic colouring. What

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>29</sup> *Juliana* 582–4a, 'He then commanded them quickly, enraged with anger, to shove her without guilt, devoid of sin into that surge of lead'. References to this poem are from *Juliana*, ed. R. Woolf (London, 1955) with the characters 'yogh' and 'wynn' normalized to 'g' and 'w' respectively.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the earlier description of the death of Stephen Protomartyr in *Elene* 489b ff.

<sup>31</sup> Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, p. 246.

Bridges does not mention, is that these passages also bear a curious resemblance to some lines from the Old English poetic *Daniel* describing Nebuchadnezzar's command that the Three Youths be placed in the Fiery Furnace:

Het þa his scealcas scufan þa hyssas  
in bælblyse, beornas geonge.<sup>32</sup>

The question of guilt or innocence is not raised here, but the parallels are nevertheless suggestive. All three passages describe an order to put a captive into a place of torment using the formula *het þa . . .* and the verb *scufan* together with the prepositional phrase *in [x]*. Moreover, in the passages from both *Elene* and *Daniel* the object of the verb *hatan* – the *scealcas* – is linked to the verb *scufan* by the alliterative metre. We have, therefore, three passages which use similar vocabulary and syntax to express basically similar events in basically similar contexts. In two cases, this context is explicitly hagiographic. Both in *Daniel* and in *Juliana* the victims are subjected to torture due to their refusal to submit to heathen worship. The third case seems to invert this hagiographical pattern: in *Elene* it is the Christian queen who tortures the heathen to gain his submission.

The similarities in these passages must be accounted for. The possibility of direct influence between these three poems should not be ruled out. Sixty years ago Claes Schaar declared on the basis of linguistic similarities between *Daniel* and both *Elene* and *Juliana* that Cynewulf's debt to the former poem 'can hardly be doubted'.<sup>33</sup> The rise of oral-formulaic theories regarding the composition and

<sup>32</sup> *Daniel* 230–1, 'He then commanded his retainers to shove the youths, the young men, into the blazing fire'. References to both *Daniel* and *Azarias* are from *Daniel and Azarias*, ed. R. T. Farrell (London, 1974).

<sup>33</sup> C. Schaar, *Critical Studies in the Cynewulf Group*, Lund Studies in English 17 (Copenhagen, 1949), p. 253.

conventional diction of Old English poetry has subsequently made such arguments for conscious literary borrowing unfashionable; however, recent work by (in particular) Andy Orchard has challenged many of the assumptions arising from such oral-formulaic approaches, particularly the idea that 'if only more Old English verse had survived, many parallels of phrasing unique in the extant corpus today would be recognized as mere commonplace'.<sup>34</sup> Renewed analysis of the parallels between *Daniel* and the works of Cynewulf would perhaps be timely.

Such an examination is, however, well beyond the scope of the present paper. Fortunately, it is also unnecessary for my immediate purposes. In what remains of this paper I intend to consider the three passages identified so far in light of the conventional nature of Old English literature. In particular, I suggest that a fuller understanding of all three passages, and of the lines in *Elene* in particular, may be gained by a consideration of the conventional associations of the verb *scufan*.<sup>35</sup>

An examination of the use of this verb in Old English literature suggests an association with the enforced movement of a subject into a more hostile or unpleasant environment as the physical enactment of a judgement made by a figure of authority. Its use in the three passages identified above is not, therefore, in itself remarkable: in

<sup>34</sup> A. Orchard, 'Computing Cynewulf: The *Judith*-Connection', *The Text in the Community: Essays on Medieval Works, Manuscripts, Authors and Readers*, ed. J. Mann and M. Nolan (Notre Dame, IN, 2006), pp. 75–106, at p. 98. Cf. Orchard's attempt to demonstrate the influence of Cynewulf's poetry through a comparison of repeated formulas in his 'Both Style and Substance: The Case for Cynewulf', *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. C. E. Karkov and G. H. Brown (New York, NY, 2003), pp. 271–305.

<sup>35</sup> My analysis includes instances of the prefixed forms *a-*, *be-*, *for-*, *oð-*, *to-* and *wið-scufan*.

addition to these poetic examples, the verb is widely used in prose hagiographical texts to describe movement into an intended *locum martyrii*. What is striking about the use of this verb, however, is that as well as being thus used in the context of the persecution of the faithful, it is also very widely attested in contexts relating to divine rather than terrestrial judgement.

The verb is frequently used to describe relocations resulting from two specific examples of divine judgement. The first relates to the fall of man and the expulsion from Eden: *scufan* is very often used in prose texts to describe the movement into the world of hardship and death. One example of the use of *scufan* in this context can be found in the surviving corpus of Old English verse.<sup>36</sup> Far more frequent in poetic texts, and again common in prose, is the use of *scufan* to describe expulsion from heaven and movement into hell: examples survive in both verse and prose for the use of *scufan* in relation to both the fall of the angels and the damnation of the sinful at the Last Judgement.<sup>37</sup>

The association of *scufan* with the concept of judgement is thus strong in both prose and verse. What is striking about the use of the verb in poetry, however, is that even in those instances where no explicit reference is made to (specifically spiritual) judgement, the use of *scufan* nevertheless often appears to invoke such ideas. In the Old English *Exodus*, for example, the verb *forscufan* describes the separation of the Egyptian pursuers from their intended quarry

<sup>36</sup> *Guðlac* B 852–63a. References to both *Guðlac* poems are from *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, ed. J. Roberts (Oxford, 1979).

<sup>37</sup> For examples from the poetic corpus, see for example *Christ and Satan* 441–7a and 628–41. References to this poem are from *Christ and Satan: An Old English Poem*, ed. M. D. Clubb (New Haven, CT, 1925).



through angelic agency.<sup>38</sup> The action of the angel to protect the Israelites has been described by Edward Irving as a 'revelation of power'.<sup>39</sup> It is probable, however, that the episode contains more specific overtones. The poet notes that from this moment onwards the fates of the two nations are sundered, a comment that Peter Lucas interprets as indicative of a 'moral distinction'.<sup>40</sup> The idea of a judgement being passed is strong here. Indeed, the separation of the hosts at this point foreshadows their more dramatic separation by the Red Sea, an event which is clearly presented in terms of conventional descriptions of the Last Judgement.<sup>41</sup> It does not seem implausible to suggest, therefore, that the earlier separation of the hosts might be envisaged as a prefiguration of the coming judgement.

For a further example we might turn to *Beowulf*. In the aftermath of the fight with the dragon, following the death of the protagonist, Beowulf's followers dispose of the corpse of the dragon by the pragmatic means of pushing it over the cliff into the sea:

. . . dracan ec scufan,  
wyrm ofer weallclif,    leton weg niman,  
flod fæðmian    frætwa hyrde.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Exodus* 203b–7. References to this poem are from *Exodus*, ed. P. J. Lucas, rev. ed. (Exeter, 1994).

<sup>39</sup> E. B. Irving Jr, 'Exodus Retraced', *Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope*, ed. R. B. Burlin and E. B. Irving Jr (Toronto, 1974), pp. 203–223, at p. 219.

<sup>40</sup> *Exodus*, ed. Lucas, p. 107 (note on line 207b).

<sup>41</sup> *Exodus* 447–515. Cf. R. M. Trask, 'Doomsday Imagery in the Old English *Exodus*', *Neophilologus* 57 (1973), 295–7.

<sup>42</sup> *Beowulf* 3131b–3, 'They also shoved the dragon, the serpent over the headland, let the waves take, the flood embrace the guardian of the treasures.' References to this poem are from *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. F. Klaeber, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boston, MA, 1950).

Andy Orchard has discerned an 'alarming' parallel between this passage and the funeral of Scyld Scefing at the beginning of the poem.<sup>43</sup> A more precise parallel, however, may be established between this passage and the famous lines describing the despairing Danes worshipping at heathen altars:

Wa bið þam ðe sceal  
þurh sliðne nið    sawle bescufan  
in fyres fæþm,    frofre ne wenan,  
wihte gewendan!<sup>44</sup>

The parallels established here in the use of *scufan* and *bescufan* and in the phrases *flod fæðmian* and *in fyres fæþm* seem to suggest an equation between the fate of the dragon and that of the souls damned to hell.

It is possible, therefore, that the use of *scufan* in the passages cited from *Daniel*, *Juliana* and *Elene* carries an implicit association with divine as well as terrestrial judgement. Such a possibility is suggested, I would argue, by a comparison with the particular way in which the verb is used in the poem *Guðlac A*. During the long contestation between saint and demonic persecutors in this poem, there comes a point at which the devils realise that the torments they are imposing on Guðlac are having no effect. At this moment the devils turn to deception. Guðlac is transported to the doors of hell, where the souls of sinful men must seek entrance after death:

'Ne eart ðu gedefe    ne dryhtnes þeow  
clæne gecostad    ne cempa god  
wordum 7 weorcum    wel gecyþed,  
halig in heortan:    nu þu in helle scealt  
deope gedufan,    nales dryhtnes leoht

<sup>43</sup> A. Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 105, n. 45.

<sup>44</sup> *Beowulf* 183b–6a, 'Woe for the one who must through terrible affliction shove his soul into the fire's embrace, not expect comfort, any reversal!'

habban in heofonum, heahgetimbru,  
 seld on swegle, forþon þu synna to fela  
 facna gefremedes in flæschoman.  
 We þe nu willað womma gehwylces  
 lean forgielðan þær þe lapaþ bið,  
 in ðam grimmostan gæstgewinne.<sup>45</sup>

This is not a simple threat of violence on the part of the devils. Rather, they present this seemingly inevitable outcome as an authentic act of judgement. Guðlac, the devils assert, has been judged unworthy (*ne . . . gedefe*). The adjective *gedefe* is significant here, given its specialized meaning in reference to God's chosen people and to those deemed righteous.<sup>46</sup> Similar overtones can be discerned in the use of the past participle *gecostad*. The verb *gecostian* is frequently used in contexts in which saints demonstrate their spiritual worth and fortitude by enduring persecution and martyrdom.<sup>47</sup> According to his adversaries, therefore, Guðlac has been tested, found wanting and judged accordingly. Even the word *forþon* implies a causal relationship between Guðlac's apparent sins (*synna to fela*) and his relocation to hell rather than to heaven.

<sup>45</sup> *Guðlac A* 579–89, “‘You are not worthy, nor a purely proven servant of the Lord, nor a good champion, fully revealed by words and deeds, holy at heart. Now you must plunge deeply into hell, not at all have in heaven the Lord's light, high dwellings, a seat in heaven, because in the flesh you performed evil, too many sins. We will now give you requital for each iniquity, where that is most hateful to you in that grimmest spiritual strife’”.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. A. diPaulo Healey *et. al.*, ed., *The Dictionary of Old English: A to G online* (Toronto, 2007) [hereafter *DOE*], *gedefe*, definition 2 [accessed 31 July 2009].

<sup>47</sup> *DOE*, *ge-costian*, *ge-costnian*, definition 1; *ge-costod*, *ge-costnod*, definition 1 [accessed 31/07/2009]. The devils' deceit here is emphasized by comparison with the use of the verb and the related adjective *gecost* throughout the poem – cf. *Guðlac A* 91–2, 153b–60a and 533–6a.

The devils' speech, therefore, is clearly intended as mimicry of divine judgement: they seek to persuade Guðlac that he has indeed been judged and damned.<sup>48</sup> Guðlac does not, however, fall for their trick, challenging the devils to do as they threaten if it is within their power. Guðlac's victory here is brought about through his knowledge that only God has the power to execute a judgement of the kind that the devils attempt. Having exposed the emptiness of their threat, Guðlac rebukes the devils, describing how they were themselves cast down into hell:

Ne mostun ge a wunian in wyndagum  
 ac mid scome scyldum scofene wurdon  
 fore oferhygdum in ece fyr<sup>49</sup>

In light of the foregoing discussion, the use of *scufan* in this context is hardly surprising. What is more noticeable is how Guðlac subsequently reshapes these lines to express the devils' own unsuccessful attempts to persuade him of his own damnation:

ne þurfan ge wenan wuldre biscyrede  
 þæt ge mec synfulle mid searocræftum  
 under scæd sconde scufan motan

<sup>48</sup> This strategy was perhaps part of the Guðlac legend. Cf. *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 104–6: ‘Ecce nobis potestas data est te trudere in has poenas, et illic inter atrocissimarum gehennarum tormenta uariis cruciatibus nobis te torquere commissum est’. It is interesting to compare the devils' words in the Old English prose translation of Felix: ‘Us ys miht geseald þe to sceofanne on þas witu þisse deopnysse’, *Das angelsächsische Prosa-Leben des heiligen Guthlac*, ed. P. Gonser, *Anglistische Forschungen* 27 (Heidelberg, 1909), p. 132, ll. 212–14. For a suggestion that this passage in *Guðlac A* relates to the three utterances exemplum from the soul's journey tradition, see *Guthlac*, ed. Roberts, pp. 25–6.

<sup>49</sup> *Guðlac A* 632–4, ‘You could not dwell forever in joyful days, but for pride you were shoved guiltily with shame into the eternal fire’.

ne in bælblæsan bregdon on hinder<sup>50</sup>

The key here is the question of guilt. The devils in *Guðlac A* (and elsewhere) are shoved into hell because they are guilty. *Guðlac* himself, however, according to his own explanation, cannot suffer the same fate because contrary to the devils' assertion he is ultimately *not* sinful. The devils' attempt to bring about the saint's damnation is premised upon a judgement that is false.

The same may be said of the situation in both *Daniel* and *Juliana*. Both of these poems are particularly concerned with the question of judgement. In *Juliana* this becomes almost an obsession. Recurrent throughout the poem is the question of Eleusius' authority to pass judgement on the saint,<sup>51</sup> and the poem culminates in a final image of God presiding over mankind on Doomsday, an affirmation of his role as the one true judge.<sup>52</sup> Judgement is similarly implicit in the account of the deliverance of the Three Youths from the fiery furnace. According to medieval figural exegesis, this episode was a typological representation of the Harrowing of Hell. Thus the fire from which the Youths are released in *Daniel* is a figural description of the

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 673–6, 'You need not expect, deprived of glory, that, sinful, you might shove me with cunning craft under the shadow of shame, nor drag me downwards into the blazing fire'.

<sup>51</sup> Cf., for example, *Juliana* 87–8, 134, 162a, 210 and 534b. Most interesting for the present discussion is the attempt by the false angel to trick the saint into submitting to Eleusius: there is considerable irony in the devil's twofold description of the prefect as *se dema* (*ibid.* 249b and 256b). After her uncertainty regarding the origins of the apparently angelic messenger is affirmed by a heavenly voice, the compound *domeadig* is used as a telling description of Juliana's blessed state (*ibid.* 288a).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 695b–731.

torments of hell, as the fire into which the devils threaten to push *Guðlac* is a literal one.<sup>53</sup>

In each poem, therefore, a contrast is established between the false judgement of the world and the true, divine judgement of the hereafter. In both poems the saints suffer the judgement of temporal authorities, a judgement that is based on the false premise of the antagonists' heathen perspective. In both poems, however, the true judgement of God is manifested through angelic intervention. Strikingly, in each poem this intervention takes the form of an angel pushing away flames intended to consume the faithful, and in each case the verb used to describe this action is *toscuſan*.<sup>54</sup> As with *forscuſan* in the passage from *Exodus* discussed above, the use of this verb, I suggest, implies an understanding of this event as an act of divine judgement. In this instance, divine judgement is explicitly contrary to the terrestrial judgement of the heathen persecutors.

Returning, finally, to *Elene*, the situation is fundamentally different. In both *Daniel* and *Juliana*, the judgement represented by the use of *scuſan* is fundamentally at odds with the true judgement of God. In *Elene*, by contrast, the judgement passed on Judas by the Christian queen precisely foreshadows that which awaits him at the Last Judgement, if he does not reform himself. Unlike Juliana and the Three Youths, but like the devils in *Guðlac A*, Judas *is* guilty.

Far from being unchristian, therefore, Elene's action becomes symbolically an exercise of divine judgement. Indeed, in contrast to

<sup>53</sup> The precise formal relationship of the weak feminine noun *bælblæse* (attested only in *Guðlac A* 676a) to the noun *bælblýs* (found in *Daniel* 231a and *Exodus* 401a) is unclear. It is noticeable, however, that while the former word refers explicitly to hell, both contexts in which the latter form is recorded contain probable typological references to the Harrowing (cf. *Exodus*, ed. Lucas, p. 126, note on line 399).

<sup>54</sup> *Daniel* 333–44, *Juliana* 559–68. Cf. *Azarias* 49–58.

the ruthlessness of Eleusius and Nebuchadnezzar, this is in a sense an act of mercy. Whereas in the prose texts Judas is simply starved into submission, with no sense of conversion or of self-awareness, in the poetic account Judas does confess to his previous error:

ic ær mid dysige    þurhdrifen wære  
7 ðæt soð to late    seolf gecneowe<sup>55</sup>

The phrase *to late* is significant here. The implication that his sudden self-knowledge is futile is not strictly appropriate to Judas' current situation. It is not too late for him, as his subsequent release and ecclesiastical career testifies. The words would be appropriate, however, as the lamentation of one damned for eternity in hell. Unlike Juliana and the Three Youths, Judas is not protected by a guardian angel: he suffers the full torments of his own personal hell, complete with chains and fetters. Figuratively, it is this that brings about his self-knowledge and subsequent conversion.

By symbolically enacting his future judgement and damnation, therefore, Elene's actions present him with a chance to change his ways. As I pointed out earlier, Judas' release from the pit is not described in either the Latin or the Old English prose narratives. In the poem, however, Elene commands his release in language which might be read in terms of a harrowing:

þæt hine man of nearwe    7 of nydcleofan,  
fram þam engan hofe    up forlete.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Elene* 707–8, 'I was previously permeated with foolishness, and myself perceived that truth too late'.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 711–12, 'That they let him up from that narrow house, out of constriction and out of the place of compulsion.'

Judas' movement upwards is as symbolic, I suggest, as his earlier movement downwards. The emphasis on confinement and especially on the narrowness of the pit in these lines clearly engages in stock descriptions of hell in Old English verse. If the pit is Judas' own personal hell, therefore, this moment is his own personal harrowing.

An understanding of the confinement of Judas in the pit in the way I have outlined potentially allows for a new perspective on how and why Cynewulf elaborated on his Latin source in this passage. In fact, I suggest that it shows Cynewulf consciously and intelligently responding to his source. The inversion of a hagiographical trope in this passage, by presenting Judas' confinement in the light of a *just* judgement, potentially removes rather than emphasizes any concerns regarding the behaviour of the heroine. Judas' torment becomes the inevitable result of his own stubborn refusal to accept the truth and an expression of his inherent damnation. Implicitly, Elene is no more to be blamed for his suffering than God is for the torment of the damned in hell.

This is emphasized later in the poem by the use of the verb *bescufan* in the familiar context of Satan's confinement to hell. In a speech considerably elaborated from the Latin prose,<sup>57</sup> Judas taunts the devil with an awareness of the judgement which awaits him:

... þec se mihtiga cyning  
in neolnesse    nyðer bescufed  
synwyrcente,    in susla grund,

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 939–52a. Cf. *Finding of the True Cross*, ed. Bodden, p. 92: 'Qui mortuos suscitauit Christus, ipse te damnet in abyssum ignis aeterni'. Translated in Allen and Calder, *Sources and Analogues*, p. 66: 'May Christ Who raised the dead damn you to the abyss of everlasting fire'.

domes leasne<sup>58</sup>

Not only does the description of the abyss of torments (*susla grund*) here call to mind the torments suffered by Judas in the depths of the pit, but the action represented by the verb *bescufan* is here again premised on a perception of guilt (*synnyrcende*). The use of the future tense in these lines is significant, clearly invoking the notion of the Last Judgement. Whereas it is through the temporary enactment of judgement within the world that Judas will avoid damnation at the Last Judgement, the damnation of Satan envisaged at that future moment is absolute.<sup>59</sup> The depths of the pit into which Judas is shoved may be figuratively a representation of hell; it is through his experience in these depths, however, that Judas will eventually come to claim his place in the heights of heaven.

<sup>58</sup> *Elene* 941b–4a, ‘The mighty king will shove you, sinful, below into the gulf, deprived of glory, into the abyss of torments’.

<sup>59</sup> In this context the phrase *domes leasne* is intriguing. Usually interpreted as ‘deprived of glory’, the phrase may also be understood as meaning ‘deprived of (positive) judgement’. The phrase perhaps hints at the ultimate and irreversible nature of the judgement passed on Satan. Unlike Judas, he has no possibility of reprieve.

East and West in *De Principis Instructione* of Giraldus Cambrensis

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Praeparatis igitur tanto itineri necessariis, ab orientali Asia ad extremos tendens Europae fines, in Angliam demum duplici navigio, extra communem uidelicet orbem, angulum occidentalis oceani remotissimum non absque labore et periculo magno circa kalendas Februarii patriarcha peruenit.<sup>1</sup>

Here, in a passage from the early-thirteenth century work *De principis instructione* of Gerald of Wales, we have a vision of Britain as the remotest region of the West.<sup>2</sup> Gerald is describing the visit of the

<sup>1</sup> *De Principis Instructione*, ii.24, ed. G. F. Warner, *De Principis Instructione Liber*, Giraldi Cambrensis Opera VIII (London, 1891), p. 203, ‘Having prepared the things necessary for such a voyage, from oriental Asia aiming for the extreme ends of Europe, finally by a double voyage, to the most remote corner of the western ocean, evidently beyond the common sphere, not without great struggle and peril, the patriarch arrived in England around the kalends of February’. This edition, the most recent one, is used throughout the present discussion; all references will be to book and chapter number. An incomplete translation of the work is available in J. Stevenson, transl., *Gerald of Wales: Concerning the Instruction of Princes* (Felinfach, 1991). *De Principis Instructione* is hereafter referred to as *DPI*. All translations here are my own and, following *QP*’s stipulations, in all citations from this edition ‘j’ and ‘v’ have been normalized to ‘i’ and ‘u’ respectively.

<sup>2</sup> On Gerald of Wales, see R. Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales: A Voice in the Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stroud, 2006); P. Edbury, ‘Preaching the Crusade in Wales’, *England and Germany in the High Middle Ages*, ed. A. Haverkamp and H. Vollrath (Oxford, 1996), pp. 221–33; H. Pryce, ‘Gerald’s Journey Through Wales’, *Jnl of Welsh Eccles. Hist.* 6 (1989), 17–34; M. Richter, *Giraldus Cambrensis: The Growth of A Welsh Nation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Aberystwyth, 1972); C. Rooney, ‘Gerald of Wales and the Tradition of the Wonders of the East’, *Quaestio Insularis* 4 (2003), 82–97; and the

Patriarch of Jerusalem to England, part of an effort to engage the aid of Henry II in a crusade to the Holy Land. The affair appears urgent, since arriving on the kalends of February (1 February) would mean the Patriarch's voyage took place in the dead of winter, not an ideal time for travel on the Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> The 'double voyage' in the passage refers to the two sea voyages the Patriarch had to undertake – across the Mediterranean, and across the Channel. These details, as well as the use of turns of phrase such as 'most remote corner of the Western ocean' and 'oriental Asia', serve to stress the distance traversed by the Patriarch, and the difficulties, the great *labor* and *periculum*, of the voyage. This trend of stressing the remoteness of Britain is something of a common theme in the *DPI* and part of a greater picture of Gerald's use of the notions of East and West for his own rhetorical purposes. It is with this issue that the present paper is concerned. With this and other examples I would like to demonstrate that Gerald's use of geographical terms, specifically *oriens* and *occidens*, is tied into the structure of his work on a very fundamental level. Secondly, Gerald's use of the terms reflects his affiliation with the wider European tradition; that no man is an island is a statement certainly true of Gerald of Wales. Gerald was heavily involved in preaching the Third Crusade in Wales, and his interest in the Holy Land and awareness of geography beyond the confines of his personal experience (expected of a crusade preacher), brings him closer to figures like Bernard of Clairvaux, and belie his own

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introduction to Thorpe, transl., *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales and the Description of Wales* (Harmondsworth, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> The winter season, November to March, on the Mediterranean is characterised by high waves and stormy seas; see M. G. Nafaa, A. M. Fanos and M. A. Elganainy, 'Characteristics of Waves off the Mediterranean Coast of Egypt' in *Journal of Coastal Research* 7.3 (1991), 665–76, esp. p. 669.

definition of Britain as a remote corner of the earth, at least in intellectual terms.

Gerald of Wales, Giraldus Cambrensis, or Gerald de Barri, as he is sometimes known (*ca.* 1146–*ca.* 1223) was at first one of Henry II's followers and then one of his most bitter critics, and the *DPI*, completed around 1217, represents his rather ambiguous attitude to Henry and his family.<sup>4</sup> One of the major criticisms Gerald levies at Henry is his abandonment of his plans for the Crusade.<sup>5</sup> Gerald, who himself participated in the preaching of the Third Crusade in Wales in 1188 with Archbishop Baldwin, seems to have seen the deliverance of the Holy Land as one of the most important tasks for a 'modern' monarch.<sup>6</sup> However, it is not merely a contemporary vision of the East that pervades *DPI*. In this work, the representation of the East is very complex and it is hardly homogenous as a concept.

Although it is customary to begin discussion with a definition of terms, because Gerald's use of the use of the terms *oriens* 'orient'/'east' and *occidens* 'occident'/'west' is heavily dependent on the context, the examination of his use of these terms cannot be discussed without reference to the overall trends of the *DPI*.

One of these overall trends is Gerald's concern with the fate of the Holy Land. As was already mentioned, one of the criticisms Gerald levies against Henry II in the *DPI* is his evasion of the

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<sup>4</sup> *DPI*, ed. Warner, pp. xlviii–li; for the dates, see *DPI*, pp. xv and li; R. Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales: A Voice in the Middle Ages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Stroud, 2006), p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> *DPI*, ed. Warner, p. xxv; Bartlett, *Gerald*, pp. 68–73 and 75; see discussion below, pp. 54–7.

<sup>6</sup> For an account of the journey, see Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Kambriae*, ed. J. F. Dimock, *Giraldi Cambrensis Itinerarium Kambriae et Descriptio Kambriae*, Giraldi Cambrensis Opera VI (London, 1868), pp. 3–152; transl. L. Thorpe, *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales and the Description of Wales* (Harmondsworth, 2001).

promise to journey to Jerusalem, and the fact that he also holds back his sons from doing so.<sup>7</sup> Gerald's primary interest as far as the East is concerned lies in the affairs of the Holy Land: he devotes whole chapters of the *DPI* to it.<sup>8</sup> However, this interest only emerges well into the second part of the three-part book. The first part is mainly concerned with giving good and bad examples of rulers from history. Gerald presents historical examples from Jewish, Greek, Roman and Carolingian history, largely in that order. Alexander of Macedon, Hannibal, Caesar, Augustus, Pippin and Charlemagne form one of the sequences he creates.<sup>9</sup> A tendency that immediately springs to mind when examining one of these sequences is one of a historical movement from East to West, known as *translatio studii et imperii*. The second of the two elements, *translatio imperii*, emerged as a term describing the perceived tendency of imperial transfer, first to Rome from the East (as described in Virgil's *Aeneid*), and subsequently from the Roman Empire to Charlemagne's empire.<sup>10</sup> The *translatio studii*, a corresponding transfer of knowledge, is regarded by some scholars, such as Jacques Le Goff, as a critical part of the same process.<sup>11</sup> In general terms for the *DPI* this means the earlier the figure discussed, the farther East his sphere of activity. Since the *DPI*, at least in the first of its three Books, is largely chronologically structured, an East-West movement of the narrative, reflecting the medieval *translatio*

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 47; see also Bartlett, *Gerald*, pp. 54 and 68–73, especially 68–70 and *DPI*, ii.31, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 221).

<sup>8</sup> For example, *DPI*, ii.7, ii.22, iii.3 and iii. 15–23, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. 170–2, 200, 234–6 and 263–95.

<sup>9</sup> *DPI*, 'Praefatio Prima' and i.9, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. 7–8 and 32 ff.

<sup>10</sup> E. R. Curtius, transl. W. R. Trask, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, (Princeton, NJ, 1990), pp. 28–9.

<sup>11</sup> See J. Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization*, transl. J. Barrow (Oxford, 1988), p. 171 and J. Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2000), p. 14.

*studii et imperii* type of thinking, becomes apparent. It also appears worthwhile noting, that while references to the *oriens* are plentiful in the early part of the work, references to the *occidens* are not.<sup>12</sup> It can be argued that this is a consequence of Gerald's choice of subject and of his shift in focus. However, it is a very significant shift (one from absence to distinct presence). The term *occidens* appears only in the section where Gerald settles down to discuss current affairs (until that point he did occasionally come back to the modern day, but never too extensively). It is as though in Gerald's picture of history, the *oriens* played the major role for most of it, while the *occidens* comes to the foreground once the narrative approaches Gerald's own times. Again, this is appropriate if we consider the text in the light of the *translatio studii et imperii* concept. So, not only is Gerald structuring his work, at least at the level of detail, on the East to West movement, but the movement itself is a concept derived from an existing pan-European tradition.

The next question to ask, if there is an East-West movement in the work, is what is the East and what is the West for Gerald? This involves the examination of Gerald's use of a third geographical term, *Asia*. It is first mentioned in the context of a pause in the persecution of Christians.<sup>13</sup> The term recurs subsequently at least four times.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The term *occidens* does not occur at all in Book I. It features, however, in Books II and III, often alongside the term *oriens*. The first instance of *occidens* and *oriens* occurring in the same sentence comes in *DPI*, ii.21, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 199.

<sup>13</sup> *DPI*, i.18 (ed. Warner, p. 84), 'Hic etiam per Quadratum discipulum Apostolorum et Aristidem Atheniensem uirum sapientem instructus et eruditus, praecipit per epistolam ad Minutium Fundanum proconsulem Asiae datam, ut nemini liceret Christianum sine objectu criminis aut probatione damnare'. The passage, comes from Hugo Floriacensis, discussing Aelius Hadrianus; reference here appears to be to Asia as a Roman province. 'Thus instructed and educated



The first of these is in the context of the three patriarchs in three regions: the patriarch of Antioch in Asia, that of Alexandria in Africa, and that of Rome in Europe.<sup>15</sup> The passage occurs in the context of Gerald's description of the structures of government and Church in the world in i.19, specifically where he describes regions to be ruled by different patriarchs.<sup>16</sup>

Horum itaque unus principatum in Asia tenuit, qui principatu uel praesulatu in Antiochia praefuit; alius in Africa primatum habuit, qui in Alexandria pontificatum tenuit; tertius in Europa principabatur, qui Romani apicis infula decorabatur.<sup>17</sup>

One of the implications of this passage seems to be that in Gerald's perception, the Christian world is not confined to Europe. It seems here more or less to embrace the entirety of the known world, which incidentally, is represented as tripartite. This latter could be dismissed as merely a feature of the medieval penchant for triads.<sup>18</sup> However,

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by Quadratus, the disciple of the Apostles, and Aristides of Athens, a wise man, he ordered by a letter given to Minutius Fundanus, proconsul of Asia, that no one may condemn a Christian without an accusation of a crime or a trial'; see Hugo Floriacensis, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ed. R. Rottendorff, *Hugonis Floriacensis monachi benedictini chronicon quingentis ab hinc annis & quod excurrit, conscriptum: hactenus à multis desideratum, nunc tandem postliminio ex membranarum antiquissimis erutum, ac publicis visibus transcriptum* (Münster, 1638), p. 71. This edition was used by Warner.

<sup>14</sup> *DPI*, i.19, ii.1, ii.21 and ii.24, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. 107, 158, 199 and 203.

<sup>15</sup> *DPI*, i.19, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 107.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. 103–114.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 107; 'One of these [*sc.* patriarchs] held primacy in Asia, and was in charge of the dominion and bishopric of Antioch; another had primacy in Africa and held the pontificate in Alexandria; the third ruled in Europe and was decorated with the cap and mitre of Rome'.

<sup>18</sup> See M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, 2008), p. 79, on mnemonic techniques associated with triads; see also V. F. Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning, and*

there are some general parallels between this and the schematic representations of the world current in the Middle Ages.<sup>19</sup> Most significant is the fact that Gerald draws boundaries between Asia, Europe and Africa. This tripartite structure is distinctly reminiscent of the so-called T-O type of the medieval *mappae mundi* 'world maps', which divide the world into three sections: Europe, Asia, and Africa.<sup>20</sup> These maps were usually orientated towards the East, and had Jerusalem at the centre, based on Biblical passages of Ps. LXXIV.12 and Ezekiel V.5. The Earthly Paradise would normally be depicted at the top (eastern-most) point of the map. The Mediterranean would usually provide the division between Europe, Asia, and Africa (see Figure 1, below).<sup>21</sup>

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*Influence on Thought and Expression* (New York, NY, 2000), pp. 107, 109 and 128 on the popularity of the triad.

<sup>19</sup> Arguably, that schematic representation itself is a reflection of the medieval obsession with triads. This will be discussed in more detail below in the section on the *mappae mundi*; see below, pp. 52–53.

<sup>20</sup> See D. Woodward, 'Reality, Symbolism, Time and Space in Medieval World Maps', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 75 (1985), 510–21, esp. p. 511.

<sup>21</sup> See also, for example, the World Map, 'Map Psalter': London, British Library, Additional 28681, 9r (c. 1265); British Library website: [http://ogimages.bl.uk/images/011/011ADD000028681U00009000\[SVC2\].jpg](http://ogimages.bl.uk/images/011/011ADD000028681U00009000[SVC2].jpg) (accessed 25 February 2009).

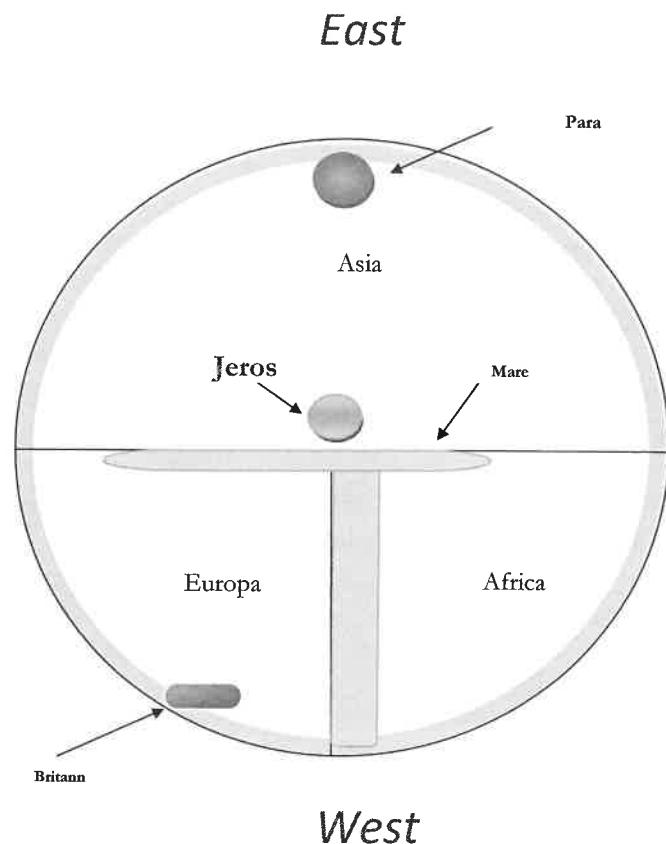


Figure 1: A schema depicting the major features of a medieval *mappa mundi*.

The depiction of the world in the *DPI* matches this structure in that it has both the tripartite division and the marginalisation of Britain, referred to above.<sup>22</sup> Another major geographical feature of the *mappae*

<sup>22</sup> See the passage describing the visit of the Patriarch of Jerusalem to Britain above, p. 45.

*mundi* is Paradise, usually depicted at the easternmost point of the world. Although none of the references to Paradise in Gerald's *DPI* seem to be unambiguously geographical, a number can be argued to have potential geographical connotations.<sup>23</sup> It may be useful, therefore, to think of Gerald's East and West with the *mappae mundi* framework in mind.

Another feature of the *mappae mundi*, is that they showed historical or biblical places and sometimes personages, as well as contemporary locations. Thus, Adam and Eve would often be represented in the Earthly Paradise, and the tower of Babel would often feature, as well.<sup>24</sup> Thus, these maps could be described also as synchronic representation of world history or world order. This is precisely what Gerald appears to be striving for in the *DPI*. Although he shows an East-West progression in the *translatio studii et imperii* style, Books II and III are concerned with depicting the state of the modern prince. Gerald therefore appears to be using the concepts and knowledge current among his contemporaries to drive his argument.

What use then does Gerald make of the *oriens*, with all of its connotations, for rhetorical purposes? There are two instances in the *DPI* of a powerful argument driven largely by the connotations of oriental wisdom, and supported by Western authority. These are two

<sup>23</sup> For instances of *paradysum* (in variant spellings) in *DPI*, see *Appendix to Introduction*, i.19, iii.9 and iii.14, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. lix, lxvii, 109, 251 and 262. The piece printed as *Appendix to Introduction* is Gerald's original introduction to the book. Replaced subsequently by a different introduction, this piece is preserved in a collection known as *Symbolum Electorum*, since Gerald, apparently, was unwilling to let it go; for more on this, see Warner, *DPI*, pp. xvi–xvii.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, the Hereford Mappa Mundi; images on the Hereford Cathedral website <http://www.herefordcathedral.org/visit-us/mappa-mundi-1> (accessed 10 May 2010).

passages quoting Gildas on the subject of Porphyrius. Here, Gerald presents us with an inversion of what we have been accustomed to see in the rest of the work. Gerald strengthens his case against Henry and his offspring by presenting us with not merely one authority, but two, making one of the two an eastern one. The first instance, in i.17, is as follows:

Unde et illud Porphirii orientalis haeretici a Gilda introductum in Historia sua de Britonum excidio et hic apponendum: 'Britannia', inquit, 'occidentalis insula fertilis est tyrannorum patria'.<sup>25</sup>

Although in this instance, Gerald brands Porphyrius a heretic, he uses the authority of Gildas who quotes him to validate the statement, presenting his readers with a view of Britain and the British rulers, as seen from the East. This passage comes towards the end of a chapter on the fates of tyrants, which covers territory from the history of the Israelites (Saul, Rehoboam, Jerobam), through Greeks (Alexander of Macedon), the Romans (Pompey, Julius Caesar, Mark Anthony), to the Franks, leading up finally to this mention of the British.<sup>26</sup> The Easterner's appraisal of Britain as the worst of all in this respect, coming as it does after a lengthy list of Eastern tyrants, is an effective rhetorical device. At least Gerald seems to have held this opinion, since he resorts to this tactic again by repeating this quotation. He omits this time, however, the reference to Porphyrius as a heretic, and referring to him as a *historicus* instead.

<sup>25</sup> *DPI*, i.17, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 76, 'From which, that [saying] of Porphyrius, the oriental heretic, introduced by Gildas in his history "Of the Ruin of the Britons" ought to be placed here: "Britannia," he says, "the western island, is the fertile homeland of tyrants".'

<sup>26</sup> *DPI*, i.17, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. 57-76.

Ait enim Porphirius, orientalis historicus, 'Britannia est occidentalis insula, foecunda tyrannorum patria'.<sup>27</sup>

Again, we find a similar use of the quotation as before. This time, however, Gerald dispenses with the reference to Gildas. The effectiveness of the rhetoric no longer needs his extra support (or else it is assumed that the reader will remember the previous instance). If one had read the preceding three hundred pages which essentially set out the East, biblical, historical, present, as a backdrop for the activities of historical giants, who were all tyrants, this passage should have the effect of a mirror suddenly put up to the reader's eyes.<sup>28</sup> The West, in eastern eyes, is as guilty of tyranny, as the East is in the western eyes. Towards the latter part of the work, the focus, not only in terms of narrative, but also in terms of criticism, shifts to the West. Therefore, it appears that Gerald's take on *translatio studii et imperii*, the historical movement from East to West, is not altogether positive.

In fact, one of the most negative passages relating to Henry II in the *DPI* is on the subject precisely of a movement towards the west (Henry's Irish campaign).

<sup>27</sup> *DPI*, iii.27, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 303, 'Indeed, Porphyrius, the eastern historian says, "Britain is a western island, a productive homeland of tyrants"'; note that it is possible that the *historicus* in this instance replaced *haereticus* in the process of textual transmission rather than through any decision of Gerald's. A thorough study of the manuscripts is necessary in order to clarify this matter.

<sup>28</sup> *DPI*, i.9 and i.17, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. 32 and 58, on historical giants. For an example of negative portrayal of tyrants in the history of the East, and of the negative influence associated with the East, see the passages relating to Mark Anthony, who receives the *orientali imperio* in the triumvirate division of the Roman Empire. Gerald goes on to say that Mark Antony repudiates Octavian's sister in order to marry Cleopatra of Egypt, who incites him to war against his compatriots; *ibid.*, i.17, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. 62-3. He is consequently associated with the East both through the allocation of land and through his wife, and this association can be seen as leading to civil war.

Nec mirum; qui ad tantam Christi uocationem et in ipsa quoque tanti praeconis absentia filium, quem pro se saltem uersus orientem mittere debuerat et in Sarracenos, uersus occidentem quae sunt mundi quaerentem, non quae Christi Jesu, infausto misit omine et in Christianos.<sup>29</sup>

Here, failure in the West is expressly defined as the result of the refusal to participate in the crusade, i.e. it is a product of the failure to turn towards the east. The theme of the *oriens* as the origin and source historically is taken up, echoed, and inverted in contemporary terms. The call of Christ here is seen as leading eastwards, away from the direction of the *translatio studii et imperii*.

The focus, which had hitherto been shifting further and further westwards, stops at Britain, the 'homeland of tyrants', and further movement west seems proscribed. There is also a theme of sinfulness present in the passage, again, echoing the idea of Britain as the 'homeland of tyrants'. Rather than combating the Saracens in the East, Henry is occupied with fighting Christians in the West, and is therefore subject to punishment. This is one of Gerald's main criticisms of Henry, which he delivers with intimate knowledge of the Irish expedition.<sup>30</sup> This passage contrasts greatly with another, also dealing with Henry's expeditions abroad:

Quam innaturaliter et illaudabiliter coniurata in uentrem uiscera tam orientales Asiae quam etiam Hispaniae uictorias uestras, quas occidentalibus continuare et fidem Christi egregie dilatare animoque

<sup>29</sup> *DPI*, ii.31, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 221; 'It is not surprising that he [Henry] in view of such a calling of Christ and in the very absence of such a herald too, with ill omen sent his son, whom he should have sent to the east against the Saracens, at least on his behalf, to the west against Christians anyhow to seek the things of the world and not those of Jesus Christ'.

<sup>30</sup> Bartlett, *Gerald*, p. 70; on Gerald and Ireland, see Bartlett, *Gerald*, pp. 21, 24–5, 27 and 31–40.

excelso iam conceperas, tam paruo et iniquo consilio, totique fidelium orbi damnosissimo, distulerint!<sup>31</sup>

This follows the same tendency as the passage mentioned previously. Coming earlier in the text, it is less overtly critical than the later passage, following the build-up of emotional tension throughout the work. There is still, however, an appreciably visible criticism of the lack of attention paid to the East. Going further back, towards the beginning of the work, the importance of the East (with criticism of Henry absent) is stressed in yet another passage:

Cuncti quoque terrarum principes tam Christiani quam Gentiles, et sicut Almannicus Frethericus et Manuel Graecus, sic Noradinus suo tempore et post Psaladinus, et sicut Asiae sic et Europae, Hispaniae uidelicet, tam fidei domesticae quam infideles, eundem exeniis et nuntiis crebris honorare consueuerunt et uisitare.<sup>32</sup>

Gerald is talking about Henry's fame abroad and his external political connections. In this context, it is interesting that while Nur ad-Din and Saladin are divided temporally (*Noradinus suo tempore et post Psaladinus*), Frederic and Manuel are not. The division here, and with Europe and Spain, is not temporal but territorial. Consequently, they are seen as different political, possibly even cultural units. Here, as in

<sup>31</sup> *DPI*, ii.21, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 199; 'How unnaturally and unpraiseworthy the innards, conspiring against the stomach, had distracted with poor and infamous council, most harmful to the whole globe of the faithful, your victories both in the east of Asia and also in Spain, which you had already planned to continue in the west and excellently with lofty spirit to extend the faith of Christ'.

<sup>32</sup> *DPI*, ii.1, ed. Warner, *DPI*, pp. 157–8; 'And also all the princes of the world, Christians and Gentiles alike: just as the German Frederik and Manuel the Greek, so too Nur ad-Din in his time and later Saladin, just as in Asia so too in Europe (namely Spain), those of the native faith as well as the infidels are in the habit of honouring and visiting him [king Henry] through gifts and frequent messengers'.

the passages discussed above, Gerald is using terms and concepts that would be familiar to his audience (an educated audience), but using them in a slightly different way. Even though, as demonstrated above, the world he depicts in the *DPI* matches that of the *mappae mundi*, the divisions in this passage do not quite do that, even though they are similar to them in that they are both temporal and geographical.

#### CONCLUSION

We may now return to the question we asked at the beginning: how does Gerald use the *oriens* and its connotations in medieval thinking for rhetorical purposes? Gerald's approach seems to consist mainly of the subversion of expectations. The framework of the narrative appears to be the *translatio studii et imperii*, and yet as the focus of the narrative shifts from East to West, the focus of ideals or goals shifts from West to East. This we have seen from the passages pertaining to Henry and the crusades.<sup>33</sup> While earlier on in the narrative the movement from East to West appears positive, this is shown in a negative light later on in the narrative, in the section on John's failures in Ireland and criticism of Henry for abandoning the crusade.<sup>34</sup> Failure in the *occidens* is expressly defined as the result of the refusal to participate in the crusade, which results in failure in the *oriens*. Here, the theme of *oriens* as the origin and source historically, is taken up and echoed in contemporary terms. All good and all evil can be seen as arising from the *oriens* and one's engagement or failure to engage with it. West and East here are points of the compass, not geographical regions.

<sup>33</sup> See above, pp. 54-7.

<sup>34</sup> *DPI*, ii.31, ed. Warner, *DPI*, p. 221.

The second large element in Gerald's technique, again subversion of expectations, relates to the layout of the world he presents in the *DPI*. Insofar as the geography, or world-order is concerned, Gerald seems to use the same framework as the *mappae mundi*. To a certain extent, this framework functions as one would expect it to. Geography, for Gerald, as for his contemporaries engaged in the creation of the *mappae mundi*, was in a sense inseparable from history, specifically the history of Salvation. On the one hand, this leads us to the conclusion that the *DPI* stands with roots firmly within the medieval cartographical tradition. On the other hand, it supports the notion of the history of the Fall and of Salvation being represented in a geographical movement from or towards the East. Gerald's geography echoes that of the *mappae mundi* also in that it has a moralising function. Like the *mappae mundi*, which show, on the same map, events as far removed from each other in time as the Fall of Man and the Passion of Christ, Gerald's geography reflects a Christian framework and carries a distinct pro-crusade message. Where he differs from the *mappae mundi*, is again, when he comes to discuss the contemporary world, by separating, for example, Europe, Asia, and Spain, in the passage discussed above.<sup>35</sup> Like the subtle changes introduced by Gerald into the *translatio studii et imperii* theme, this subtle change into the division of the world appears to be intended to catch the reader's attention and prevent a complacent reading of the *DPI* at yet another exposition on well-known themes. It appears, therefore, that Gerald, while demonstrating his affiliation to the wider European tradition, used it to the advantage by following it or diverging from it, or adapting it to suit his rhetorical purpose.

<sup>35</sup> See above, p. 57.

Rewriting *Beowulf*: Old English Poetry in Contemporary Translation

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Old English poetry begins in translation. For most readers, at least, encountering Old English in school means first encountering a translation made by someone else. Encountering the original language for the first time usually means making translations of one's own – halting, word-for-word, striving to be literally accurate. But even in the manuscript records of the Anglo-Saxon period, we first see Old English in translation, in the Latin paraphrase of Cædmon's *Hymn* included in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. Apologising for his presentation of the poem, Bede explains, 'Hic est sensus, non autem ordo ipse uerborum, quae dormiens ille canebat; neque enim possunt carmina, quamuis optime composita, ex alia in aliam linguam ad uerbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri'.<sup>1</sup> In the centuries since Bede, the dilemma of translating Old English poetry has changed little.<sup>2</sup> Every translator must navigate the territory

<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, iv.24, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, OMT (Oxford, 1969), pp. 416/17. 'This is the sense but not the order of the words which he sang as he slept. For it is not possible to translate verse, however well composed, literally from one language to another without some loss of beauty and dignity'.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, questions as to whether Bede was translating an Old English original or whether the Old English only survives as a later translation of Bede's Latin have been debated by several scholars. See K. S. Kiernan, 'Reading Cædmon's "Hymn" with Someone Else's Glosses', *Representations* 32 (1990), 157–74; conversely, P. Cavill, 'Bede and Cædmon's Hymn', *Lastworda Betst: Essays in Memory of Christine E. Fell, with her Unpublished Writings*, ed. C. Hough

between literally translating and somehow remaking the *decoris* and *dignitatis* of the original text.

The problem is particularly acute in the case of Old English: while the poems' manuscripts are secured in various libraries and their texts are preserved in scholarly editions, the remoteness of their language ensures that the cultural provenance of Old English poetic tradition will depend on the *idea* of its texts safeguarded in translations. Since translations cannot exist without deviating from their source texts, a translator always barter that which can be lost for that which must be preserved. Translators' choices reveal differing ideas about which features of a text embody essential elements of Old English poetic tradition. J. R. R. Tolkien, for one, claimed that 'if you wish to translate, not rewrite, *Beowulf*, your language must be literary and traditional . . . because the diction of *Beowulf* was poetical, archaic, artificial (if you will), in the day the poem was made'.<sup>3</sup> Tolkien realised a lofty diction and distinctively poetic, possibly archaic vocabulary had been integral to the experience of Old English poetry in its original tradition. Reassessing the situation some decades later, however, E. G. Stanley argued that while aiming for a lofty register, verse translations of *Beowulf* had introduced verse forms and vocabulary that were anachronistic both to Anglo-Saxon and to contemporary culture.<sup>4</sup> Even Ezra Pound's translation of the *Seafarer*,

and K. A. Lowe (Donington, 2002), pp. 1–17. In either case, Bede's commentary encapsulates a central dilemma of translation theories to the present day.

<sup>3</sup> J. R. R. Tolkien, 'Preface', *Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment: A Translation into Modern English Prose*, transl. J. R. Clark Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London, 1950), p. xvii, quoted in E. Morgan, *Beowulf*, (Manchester, 2002), p. xv.

<sup>4</sup> E. G. Stanley, 'Translation from Old English: "The Garbaging War-Hawk"', or, 'The Literal Materials from Which the Reader Can Re-Creat the Poem', *A*

remarkably contemporary for Old English translations of its time,<sup>5</sup> uses such archaising terms as 'oft', 'knocketh' and 'aye in winsome life'.<sup>6</sup> The poem does not strictly live up to Pound's later declaration that writing should include 'nothing that you couldn't, in some circumstance, in the stress of some emotion, actually say'.<sup>7</sup> Pound's rule also points to another contemporary problem of translating Old English poetry: the cultural context of poetry changes.

Particularly from the twentieth century onward, we no longer have a distinctively poetic vocabulary analogous to that of the Anglo-Saxon period, and approximations of that era's customary 'poetic' language often carry with them a different set of cultural connotations, and introduce a kind of alterity actually foreign to the original poems. On the other hand, eliminating deliberately lofty language, as Tolkien suggests, removes an integral part of the experience of the original. The stylized language of Old English tradition is no longer accommodated by the aesthetic sense of contemporary readers. The problem goes beyond one of merely translating sound or sense. The problem is one of recreating the music of an old poem on the instrument of a new language.

This inherent difficulty of verse translations has led me to focus on them in particular for the purposes of this paper, as prose carries distinct formal connotations of its own. As a means of re-creating a text for those who do not have access to the original language, a verse translation in particular bears responsibility both to carry the meaning of the original verse and to function as a poem in its own right. In

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*Collection of Papers with Emphasis on Old English Literature* (Toronto, 1987), pp. 83–114.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. H. O'Donoghue, in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. P. France, (Oxford, 2000), p. 552.

<sup>6</sup> E. Pound, 'The Seafarer', *Ripostes of Ezra Pound* (London, 1912), pp. 25–30.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem, Selected Letters* (New York, 1971), p. 49.

recent decades, translation theorists such as Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere have focused increasingly on re-creating the cultural function of an original source text both in the language and in the cultural context the text is translated into.<sup>8</sup> Bassnett notes Roland Barthes's observation that 'the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture'.<sup>9</sup> If, therefore, even an original text can consist of nothing more than the raw materials of culture, how much more must this be true of translation, which begins in an admission of cultural difference – one of language, at least. As early as 1952, Edwin Morgan had realised that the different workings of a past tradition was a fundamental problem of translation. In the introduction to his translation of *Beowulf*, he explained:

[H]ere is the crux of the modern translator's problem . . . There is no use being faithful to the poetic archaisms of the original if the result cannot be couched in terms acceptable to one's poetic co-readers and co-writers . . . Whatever the tradition of the original poetry may have been, the translator's duty is as much to speak to his own age as it is to represent the voice of a past age: these are, indeed, equal tasks.<sup>10</sup>

But precisely *how* 'the voice of a past age' is to be 'represent[ed]' in the tradition of contemporary poetry is not always clear. Any word or phrase in a poem will have countless ambiguities and connotations attached to it, many of which may be lost to contemporary readers. Attempting to find an equivalent word or phrase often involves both fixing on a particular meaning of a word and introducing new ambiguities and connotative effects. In this way we are reminded that

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<sup>8</sup> S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, *Translation, History and Culture* (London, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> R. Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and transl. S. Heath (London, 1977), p. 146, quoted in S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (Clevedon, PA, 1998), p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> E. Morgan, *Beowulf* (Manchester, 2002), p. xvi.



a translation of a poem is always also a reading of a poem that both provides an interpretation and may inspire new ones.

Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf* translation in particular has attracted critical scrutiny commensurate with its vast readership, and the language of his translation has been widely considered in the light of its relations to cultural traditions. For Heaney specifically, remaking *Beowulf* as a poem required negotiating with the cultural and political implications of his Northern Irish heritage and its relationship to English language poetic traditions. As a child Heaney had been taught the Irish language as 'the language that I should by rights have been speaking but I had been robbed of'.<sup>11</sup> Yet as a poet writing in English, Heaney nonetheless 'consider[ed] *Beowulf* to be part of [his] voice-right'.<sup>12</sup> It was, in fact, *from* this particular cultural juxtaposition that Heaney found the language to capture both the formality and what he saw as the 'foursquareness about the utterance' in Anglo-Saxon verse.<sup>13</sup> From the speech of his upbringing he borrowed not only dialect words such as 'thole' or 'bawn' but a style of speech with the strength and dignity to bear the poem's weight.<sup>14</sup> Wanting *Beowulf* 'to be speakable by one of [his] relatives',<sup>15</sup> Heaney renders the 'gnomic' asides of the poet, a device foreign to contemporary poetry, in a way that is familiar and colloquially plain but frequently elegant: 'Fate goes ever as fate must',<sup>16</sup> or, as in Hrothgar's homily, at once nostalgic and foreboding:

So learn from this

<sup>11</sup> S. Heaney, *Beowulf*, (London, 1999), p. xxiv.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Beowulf* 455, transl. Heaney, p. 16.

... I who am telling you  
have wintered into wisdom<sup>17</sup>

or

For a brief while your strength is in bloom  
but it fades quickly . . .<sup>18</sup>

The archaic tone of the original may be gone, but so, in Heaney's time, is the cultural reverence presumably accorded to such a tone in the Anglo-Saxon era. In order to make his verse *function* with comparable *gravitas*, Heaney must reach to the other end of the poetic register for a language plain and plausible enough to ring true in modern ears. By deliberately making the poem something that 'you could . . . actually say', Heaney would seem to ensure that Pound's literary criteria have been fulfilled.

At the same time, however, this method introduced new significances to the poem, or departures from the literal meaning of the original. Criticisms of his text raise the question of what precisely a faithful translation needs to be faithful *to*, and here we realise the potential for conflict between the translators and the critics. For example, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Tom Shippey wrote a highly critical review of Heaney's *Beowulf* which demonstrates some of the conflicting expectations poets and academics might have for the use of translation. Taking issue with a number of linguistic and tonal elements, the urgency of Shippey's displeasure seems revealed when he points to Heaney's automatic canonical status given his Nobel Prize and inclusion in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*: 'Like it or not,' Shippey writes, 'Heaney's *Beowulf* is the poem now, for

<sup>17</sup> *Beowulf* 1723–5, transl. Heaney, p. 56.

<sup>18</sup> *Beowulf* 1761–2, transl. Heaney, p. 57.

probably two generations'.<sup>19</sup> Shippey anticipates that undergraduates will read and accept the Heaney translation in place of the original poem, and from this point criticises the poem at length for its deviation from or adherence to his interpretation of the original. For Shippey, Heaney's language fails to '[preserve] a native purity', while the encounter with the coast guard lacks the original's level of social tension. The 'Lay of the Last Survivor', however, is 'excellent, plain, like the original full of unexplained transitions and unstated regrets'.<sup>20</sup> As a scholar of Old English poetry, Shippey prioritises loyalty to the interpretational traditions of contemporary *Beowulf* scholarship. Significantly, his criticisms focus on a particular *function* of this translation – as the only version of 'the poem' that undergraduates or casual readers may ever come to know, the translation will both reflect and determine its relation to the canon of world literature.

Although perhaps the most prominent, Heaney's translation is not the only one that negotiates past and present literary traditions. As a scholar of Old English poetry, Michael Alexander less readily departs from *Beowulf*'s 'wrought style and syntax' or its 'archaic poetic locutions'.<sup>21</sup> In the introduction to the 2001 edition of his translation, Alexander places the poem within a historical and literary frame of reference, declaring *Beowulf* 'the first substantial work in English'.<sup>22</sup> 'Substantial' here does not seem to mean the first *lengthy* extant work in English, but rather that it is the first English poem worthy of the canon of world literature. Alexander writes, 'As an epic, [*Beowulf*] is of the same family as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of the eighth century

<sup>19</sup> T. A. Shippey, 'Beowulf for the big-voiced Scullions', review of *Beowulf*, transl. S. Heaney. *Times Literary Supplement* 5035 (1 October 1999), p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10, emphasis mine.

<sup>21</sup> M. J. Alexander, *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 2001), p. lv.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

BC. More condensed and more elegiac in tone than Homer's poems, it has been thought closer in kind to Virgil's *Aeneid*.<sup>23</sup> Applying the classical genre of 'epic' poetry places *Beowulf* firmly within a recognised genre of the greatest world literature and sets the tone for the poem's reading. Repeatedly, the epic tradition becomes for Alexander that by which *Beowulf* should be understood. The closing funeral scene is compared to those in Homer or Virgil,<sup>24</sup> and it is observed that, compared to Achilles or Aeneas, 'Beowulf exemplifies the heroic ideal in a socially responsible form'.<sup>25</sup>

Alexander acknowledges that the epic genre may be a useful if not comprehensive means of framing the poem, writing that while the poet 'admires, idealizes, identifies with, the epic synthesis and works in its conventions', his work is still 'more reflective' than epic's classical manifestations.<sup>26</sup> Yet placing the poem in an epic tradition gives an idea of its elevated, somewhat archaic, and distinctively literary status, and Alexander must find for his translation a poetic register to match. His *Beowulf*, then, reaches for a formal tone, set by the first word of his translation, 'Attend', set off on its own line and punctuated by an exclamation point. Translating the opening interjection as a verb, or what's more, a command, gives an oratorical grandness and sweep evocative of the epics of Homer and Milton. The technique admits variation, however, and indeed draws on Old English verse techniques such as alliteration and short, powerful phrases:

he had laid aside

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxii.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

his heathen soul. Hell welcomed it.<sup>27</sup>

In some places, Alexander's language diligently follows the original, using contemporary English cognates whenever they are available, including modern 'Weird' for *nyrd*,<sup>28</sup> or translating

git . . .  
glidon ofer garsecg    geofon yþum weol,  
wintrys wylm[um].

as

you . . .  
danced on the Spear-Man. The sea boiled with  
whelming waves of winter.<sup>29</sup>

The near-literal translation, of the unusual compound in particular, gives the poem a new sense of alterity in relation to the new poetic tradition it has arrived in. Even close translations of compounds, however, seem inflected by epic language when *beagbroden cwen* (ring-adorned queen) becomes the distinctively Homeric 'flashing-armed queen'.<sup>30</sup> For Alexander, the archaic and elevated terms of epic both before and after *Beowulf* provide a more recognisable aesthetic by which to convey medieval poetry to modern readers. The interaction involved in translation illustrates how *Beowulf* coexists with and forms generic relationships with other texts in the contemporary imagination, informing the language a translator might deem appropriate to the poem. Since the available language and poetic

<sup>27</sup> *Beowulf* 850–1, transl. Alexander, p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 477 and 572, transl. Alexander, pp. 19 and 23.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 512–16, transl. Alexander, p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 623, transl. Alexander, p. 24.

forms are always already culturally inflected, contemporary literary traditions inevitably influence the reading of the poem.

While Alexander focuses on the integration of the poem into the historical conventions of world literature, Scottish poet Edwin Morgan focuses on juxtaposing the poetic conventions of *Beowulf*'s original culture and that of its present translation. He divides his introduction into two halves, the first devoted to 'The Translator's Task in *Beowulf*' and the second to 'The Art of the Poem' – the former to the context of the present and the latter to that of the past. The second of these gives Morgan's sense of the poem's thematic and literary qualities. When Morgan places the *Beowulf* poet in 'an epic tradition',<sup>31</sup> he seems to be indicating less about the poem's generic conventions than its virtuosic skill and literary authority. While he ranks the poet alongside Milton and Virgil, he quickly contrasts the poet's tradition as one 'a little clumsier and less flexible' than theirs.<sup>32</sup> Morgan attributes the themes and timbre of the poem to a distinctively Old English tradition, noting 'the peculiarly Anglo-Saxon quality of pathos or poignance . . . very notably illustrated in *Beowulf*'.<sup>33</sup>

Morgan thus isolates the defining features of what he considers *Beowulf*'s most important passages, citing for special attention Hrothgar's homily, the parting of Beowulf and Hrothgar, and the father's elegy – passages particularly representative of the 'pathos' that Morgan isolates as so characteristic of Anglo-Saxon verse. In Morgan's hands, Hrothgar's speech is given a complex diction, dense with hard consonantal alliteration and internal rhyme:

In this brief hour the flower of your manhood  
Blows, and then in a flash either sickness or the sword,

<sup>31</sup> Morgan, *Beowulf*, p. xxix, emphasis mine.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxix.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxii.

Either the seizure of fire or the seething of the flood,  
 . . . shall deprive you of life.<sup>34</sup>

Beowulf's telling of the father's elegy, by contrast, carries lighter alliteration and more softly echoed repeating sounds, such as the *ar* in 'far marches' or *ing* of 'morning', 'recalling', 'longing':

Morning after morning he is forever recalling  
 His son in the far marches; he has no anxiety  
 To live on in longing for another inheritor  
 within these courts.<sup>35</sup>

The mini-elegy gradually intensifies, accelerated by compounds and building alliterative echoes:

Desolate wine-hall and wind-vexed resting-place  
 Wasted . . . ;<sup>36</sup>  
 solitary is his elegy  
 Sung for the solitary: all his castle and country  
 To him too empty.<sup>37</sup>

Offering 'elegy' for *sorbleoð* (sorrow-song), Morgan invokes the name of the modern critical category offered to such verses. 'Solitary' for *an after anum* (one for another one) also echoes a frequent translation of *anhaga* in the first line of the *Wanderer*, another Old English elegy in which, perhaps, the dying sing for the dead. Mindful, then, of contemporary readings, Morgan's sense of the poem's place in the literary canon is tuned to the immediate Anglo-Saxon context of *Beowulf*, to the poetic landscape he perceives within and around it.

<sup>34</sup> *Beowulf* 1762–6, transl. Morgan, p. 46.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 2450–3, transl. Morgan, p. 64.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* 2456–7, transl. Morgan, p. 64.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 2460–2, transl. Morgan, p. 64.

Morgan explains the cultural positioning of the poem in the first half of his introduction. Here he significantly negotiates not so much for the poem's place within a canonical, historical literary tradition but within the aesthetic standards of contemporary poetry. As mentioned before, Morgan saw representing the poem *as a poem* to the culture receiving the translation to be an 'equal task', or in fact the same task, to faithfully representing the poet's original voice. Calling translation an 'art' and asserting that 'being read is the ultimate test in such a pragmatic art',<sup>38</sup> Morgan points to a particular development in the contemporary art of poetry – the tendency toward metre based on stress rather than syllable – as enabling his method of translation in a contemporary context. Rather than assimilating Old English poetry into the tradition of blank verse or ballad metre, or holding closely to an archaic imitation of the original as some earlier translators had done, Morgan derived a stress-based line, more loose than that of the Anglo-Saxon, like that which he found in contemporary poets such as W. H. Auden or T. S. Eliot.<sup>39</sup>

Invoking the names of his contemporaries, Morgan recognises that a translation arrives not only in a new language but also within the living system of conventions and textual cues familiar to its readers. Even the conventions of contemporary publishing make different claims for translated texts. A bilingual edition, for example, reminds readers on every page of the perpetual separation between the translation and the original, but at the same time implies a kind of one-to-one correlation between facing lines as they are set out on the page. Academic editions, such as those by R. M. Liuzza or represented in the Norton critical editions, contain extensive critical apparatus, lengthy introductions and explanatory footnotes at the

<sup>38</sup> Morgan, *Beowulf*, p. xii.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxiii–xxviii.

bottom of each page. Alternatively, poets from Pound and Auden to Heaney and Bernard O'Donoghue place Old English adaptations alongside original work in collections of contemporary poetry. Heaney's translation itself serves diverse practical functions, represented by the range of editions in which it has appeared: from the academic context of the Norton anthology to the slim Faber volume identical in style to Heaney's other volumes of his own poetry. The protean identity of Heaney's text raises the theoretical question of whether one translation can appropriately fulfil such various cultural functions. Liuzza, whose *Beowulf* translation appeared nearly concurrently with Heaney's, states, 'I was (and am) content with a trustworthy translation for classrooms, not too lively perhaps but at least honest and friendly'.<sup>40</sup> Might a translation, if it must stand in for the original, minimise the impact of contemporary prejudice on its language and representation? Defining the academic function of his text, Liuzza's use of words like 'trustworthy' and 'honest' suggest a deeper significance to the notion of faithfulness in translation, implying that other translations (perhaps more 'lively' ones) by contrast might be misleading, even deceitful, or at least unfriendly to students.

Even so, Liuzza's translation is necessarily enabled by readings of cultural context and the influence of literary traditions. He explains he wanted a translation 'that sounded like the poem I heard in my own head when I read *Beowulf*',<sup>41</sup> and recounts casting certain lines in decasyllables 'to mark certain parts of the poem as having an almost imperceptibly different flavour'.<sup>42</sup> The notion of *bearing* the poem, as a result of reading it, gestures toward the fact that *sound* is inherent to

<sup>40</sup> R. M. Liuzza, 'Beowulf in Translation: Problems and Possibilities', *Old English Newsletter: Subsidia* 31 (2002), 23–40, at p. 25.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

the sense of poetry, and the use of decasyllables suggests an aural sensibility informed by the rhythms of Chaucer and Shakespeare. Diction informed by continuing literary traditions likewise allow Heaney and Alexander's texts to *sound* to contemporary ears like the poem they hear *Beowulf* to be. But at least on a theoretical level, a difference of expectations remains between those translators who embrace the interaction between the original and contemporary tradition and those who seem to regret it. Given that Liuzza's stated goal is to offer an academically precise substitute for the original, it is understandable that he laments: 'Does the text "speak" through the transparency of the translator's words, or does the text silently suffer the imprint of the translator's style upon it? I want to believe in the former, but I know in my heart that the latter is more likely'.<sup>43</sup>

To say that translations 'suffer' the 'imprint of the translator's style' is to regret the very cultural encounter that makes a translation possible, of which, in fact, translation consists. 'Transparency' is impossible because each language bears connotative effects particular only to that language. Composing a translation in any language grounds the new text in the poetic traditions of its particular place and time, as irrevocably as the original language grounds the original text in its own. And only in the subjective *bearing* of a translator, or indeed of any reader, can this encounter take place. In this way objectivity or transparency is always a pretence, the universal never is. The role of sound in inflecting the sense of language, of connotation in colouring denotation, makes verse translations a more obvious ground for conflicting expectations. The impossibility of transparency has led Lawrence Venuti to argue that translators are ethically obliged to make their presence known in their translations, always asserting the alterity of the text being represented and admitting that the

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

translated text always remains an interpretation.<sup>44</sup> As we have seen, translators could hardly do otherwise. The negotiation between the old and new poetic traditions is, in a sense, written into the translation itself. Any evaluation of whether a translation is 'good' or 'bad', if it must be made at all, must be made in full consideration of the translation's intended functions, aesthetic materials and literary and historical contexts. Any translation that contributes in some way to Old English poetry's continuing life in contemporary terms cannot, ultimately, be seen as too far amiss by those intent on preserving the poetry's vitality and relevance in the modern age.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London, 2008). However Venuti also warns against limiting a translation through use of an exclusive, 'regionalizing' dialect in *The Scandal of Translation* (London, 1998), p. 11. This argument is challenged with reference to Scots translations of the *Seafarer* in J. Corbett, 'The Seafarer: Visibility and the Translation of a West Saxon Elegy into English and Scots', *Translation and Literature* 10.2 (2001), 157–73, at pp. 158–9.

<sup>45</sup> I am indebted to Heather O'Donoghue for guidance on an earlier version of this essay.

## The Baptism of Edwin: An Examination of the Contrary Traditions

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In this paper I propose to re-tread some reasonably familiar ground and compare the contrasting accounts of the baptism of King Edwin of Northumbria contained in the 'English' (i.e. the attributions of the conversion to Paulinus in Bede and the anonymous *Life of Gregory the Great*) and 'British' (i.e. the attributions of the conversion to Rhun map Urbgen in the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae*<sup>1</sup>) traditions. Placing particular emphasis on the probable sources of the respective traditions, I shall endeavour to synthesize the work of the leading scholars in this field over the last near half-century. Finally, I will suggest a number of conclusions that might be drawn from these excursions, together with some issues for further consideration.

### THE ENGLISH TRADITION

#### *Bede*

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<sup>1</sup> Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (henceforth *HE*), ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, OMT (Oxford, 1969), *passim*. Anon., *Vita Sancti Gregorii Magni* (henceforth *VSGr*), ed. B. Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great* (Lawrence, KS, 1968). Nennius, *Historia Brittonum* (henceforth *HB*), ed. J. Morris, *Arthurian Period Sources 8: Nennius* (Chichester, 1980), pp. 9–43 and 50–85. See in particular chapter 63, pp. 79/38. Anon., *Annales Cambriae*, ed. J. Morris, *Arthurian Period Sources 8: Nennius* (Chichester, 1980). See in particular the entry *sub anno* 626, pp. 86/46.



Of the various accounts, that of Bede is by far the fullest and likely to be the best known, and thus makes the most convenient starting point. His account of Edwin's reign and of the conversion of Northumbria begins with the unequivocal statement:

Quo tempore etiam gens Nordanhymbrorum . . . cum rege suo Eduine uerbum fidei praedicante Paulino . . . suscepit.<sup>2</sup>

We are then told a little further on that the occasion of Edwin's conversion was his marriage with the Christian princess Æthelburg of Kent, which was conditional upon Edwin granting to his wife and to her attendants and followers freedom to continue to observe their Christian faith, together with an undertaking on Edwin's part that he would himself submit to Christianity if on further examination it should prove to bear scrutiny.<sup>3</sup> The next element of the narrative is the account of how, at Easter in the following year, an attempt was made on Edwin's life at his royal residence on the Derwent by one Eumer, at the instigation of Cwichelm of Wessex, but that the king's life was saved by the heroic intervention of his loyal attendant, Lilla, 'minister regi amicissimus', who interposed his own body between the king and the assassin, taking the sword blow himself.<sup>4</sup> As events would have it, that same Easter Sunday his queen was delivered of a daughter, Eanflæd, whereupon in response to this double fortune Edwin promised Paulinus that if he were victorious in his punitive

<sup>2</sup> Bede, *HE*, ii.9, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 162/163, 'At this time the Northumbrian race . . . together with their king Edwin also accepted the word of faith through the preaching of Paulinus.'

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 'Neque abnegauit se etiam eandem subiturum esse religionem, si tamen examinata a prudentibus sanctor ac Deo dignior posset inuenire.' 'Nor did he deny the possibility that he might accept the same religion himself if, on examination, it was judged by his wise men to be a holier worship and more worthy of God.'

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 164/165.

campaign against Cwichelm, he would renounce idolatry and serve Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Notwithstanding his subsequent victorious military campaign, Edwin continues to defer making good on his now twice-given promise, hiding again behind his Council,<sup>6</sup> perhaps as a means of securing an opportunity to reach a fuller conclusion on the matter in his own mind:

Sed et ipse cum esset uir natura sagacissimus, saepe diu solus residens ore quidem tacito sed in intimis cordis multa secum conloquens, quid sibi esset faciendum, quae religio seruanda tractabat.<sup>7</sup>

Bede then introduces into his narrative the texts of two exhortatory letters sent about this time, 'eo tempore', by Boniface V to Edwin and Æthelburg. We note in passing that if one accepts, as seems right, that Paulinus was consecrated in July 625 and that Boniface V died in October 625, this, as has been observed *passim*,<sup>8</sup> leaves little time for communication between Northumbria and Rome. Bede then relates a flashback to an earlier episode in Edwin's life prior to his accession to the throne and whilst still a fugitive in East Anglia at the court of King Rædwald. Whilst spending a troubled night wrestling with his various predicaments, Edwin is visited by a stranger who promises him i) his immediate safety; ii) success over his enemies; iii) a great

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 166/167.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 'Sicque uictor in patriam reuersus, non statim at inconsulte sacramenta fidei Christianae percipere uoluit...'; 'So he returned victorious too his own country; but he was unwilling to accept the mysteries of the Christian faith at once and without consideration'.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 'He himself being a man of great natural sagacity would often sit alone for long periods in silence, but in his innermost thoughts he was deliberating with himself as to what he ought to do and which religion he should adhere to.'

<sup>8</sup> D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, revised edition (London, 2000), p. 33, summarises authoritatively the principal points of discussion.

and powerful kingdom surpassing that not only of his ancestors but also all the previous kings of the English nation; and iv) better counsel, more profitable for his salvation than any received by his parents and kinsfolk. Upon receiving Edwin's ready acquiescence, the stranger lays his hand upon Edwin's head, and enjoins him that when he next receives this sign he should be mindful of what has just passed between him and the stranger. Thereupon, so it is said, the stranger vanishes, leaving Edwin to reflect that the stranger was no man but a spirit.

The narrative is then brought back to the present and we find ourselves brought up to 627.<sup>9</sup> As Edwin remains considering his position, he is met 'quadam die' by Paulinus, who lays his hand upon Edwin's head and reminds him of the sign and of his promise.<sup>10</sup> Edwin is then stirred into convening the 'sparrow's flight' meeting of his Council, which need not be rehearsed again here, with the consequence that Edwin is baptised at York, and that Paulinus then, 'tempore sequente', baptises the other children of Edwin and Æthelburg, and then after accompanying the king and queen to their royal residence proceeds to preach and give baptisms in the river Glen for thirty-six days.

#### *The Life of St Gregory*

I turn now to the second strand of the 'English' tradition, namely the anonymous *Life of St Gregory*, purporting to be composed from

<sup>9</sup> A date usefully cross-referenced many years ago with characteristic forensic scrutiny by Wilhelm Levison to the *Chronica maiora*: see his *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), p. 272. I do not consider here the possibility that Bede's dates for events in Edwin's reign may need to be put back by a year: Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings (passim)* again gives useful coverage.

<sup>10</sup> Bede, *HE*, ii.12, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp.180/181.

ancient tradition, 'quomodo antiquitus traditur' by an unknown monk from Whitby.<sup>11</sup> This confirms Edwin's godfather at his baptism to have been Paulinus,<sup>12</sup> and gives another, different and shorter, account of Edwin's vision at the court of King Rædwald, and of the part played by Paulinus, as follows:

Ea tempestate dicunt ei de sua uita consternato quadam die quidam pulchre uisionis, cum cruce Christi coronatus apparens eum consolare coepisse, promittens ei felicem uitam regnumque gentis sue futurum, si ei obedire uoluisset . . . 'qui tibi primo cum haec specie et signo apparebit, illi debes oboedire' . . . Sub hac igitur specie dicunt illi Paulinum prefatum episcopum primo apparuisse.<sup>13</sup>

In my original presentation of this paper to the Colloquium, I had at this point without further amplification followed Wallace-Hadrill and, somewhat less emphatically, Colgrave, in identifying Paulinus himself as the ghostly visitor,<sup>14</sup> and emphasised this as an important distinction from the account given by Bede, who does not. On reconsideration, I would now put the point more cautiously. Bede's text can, perhaps as satisfactorily, be read as stating no more than that Paulinus was the first to appear *after* the vision, and need not imply that Paulinus was the mysterious visitor.

<sup>11</sup> Anon., *VSGr*, xvi, ed. Colgrave, *VSGr*, p. 98.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, xv, ed. Colgrave, *VSGr*, p. 96.

<sup>13</sup> Anon., *VSGr*, xvi, ed. Colgrave, *VSGr*, p. 100/101, 'On one occasion during this period, when he was in fear of his life, it is said that a certain man, lovely to look upon, appeared to him crowned with the cross of Christ and began to comfort him, promising him a happy life and the restoration of his kingdom if he would obey him . . . [and said,] "You must obey him who first appears to you in this form and with this sign." . . . It is said to have been Bishop Paulinus who first appeared to him in that form.'

<sup>14</sup> J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary*, OMT (Oxford, 1988), p. 71; Colgrave, *VSGr*, p. 150, n. 67.

Three other instances of material found in the *VSGr* not found in Bede's account can, however, be more safely identified. In chapter 15, the incident is recounted of a crow heard crying from an unlucky corner of the sky at a baptism of some heathen courtier presided over by Paulinus. Concerned by the distress being caused by the ill-omened behaviour of the crow, Paulinus orders his servant to shoot it with an arrow, and then proceeds to explain to the congregation that a bird unable to avoid or foretell its own death must be a poor prophet indeed.<sup>15</sup> Next, in chapter 17, the *VSGr* describes how the soul of Paulinus was carried to heaven in the shape of a great white bird, like a swan.<sup>16</sup> Finally, in chapters 18 and 19, the bringing of Edwin's relics to Whitby is described, including an account of how spirits of the deceased had subsequently come in splendid array to the Church of St Peter to visit their own bodies.<sup>17</sup>

*The 'English' Tradition Analysed*

What, then, might be made of these fragmented and self-contradictory episodes? Nora Chadwick, with justification, described Bede's account of Edwin's reign, withal, as:

. . . strange and inconsequent . . . we notice first of all the fact that much of it is obviously based ultimately on oral tradition, in contrast to the Canterbury documents which he also uses; and secondly, the curiously episodic and broken-thread nature of the whole story.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Anon., *VSGr*, xv, ed. Colgrave, *VSGr*, pp. 96/97.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii, ed. Colgrave, *VSGr*, pp. 100/101.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, xix, ed. Colgrave, *VSGr*, pp. 104/105.

<sup>18</sup> N. K. Chadwick, *The Conversion of Northumbria: A Comparison of Sources*, O'Donnell Lecture (Edinburgh, 1959), p. 1; repr. in *Celt and Saxon: Studies in the Early British Border*, ed. N. K. Chadwick (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 138–66, at p. 138.

How, moreover, should Bede's account be reconciled with the inconsistencies contained in the *VSGr*? Happily, Bertram Colgrave provides an ample pair of shoulders for the puzzled student to stand upon. In an article published in 1963,<sup>19</sup> he anticipates very substantially many of the conclusions put forward in his subsequent edition of the *VSGr* published five years later. In this paper I would like to give emphasis to two strands of his analysis. From at least the time of Plummer onwards,<sup>20</sup> it had been supposed that Bede had drawn from the *VSGr*. Colgrave, however, firmly rejects the possibility of any such borrowing.<sup>21</sup> Aside from his observation that in any event 'the verbal echoes are very slight', he considers it highly unlikely that Bede would have omitted the additional material contained in the *VSGr* had he been aware of it. Of the translation of the relics of Edwin to Whitby and its attendant miracles, he observes that Edwin was a king whom Bede greatly admired,<sup>22</sup> and that by analogy with the story of the discovery of the relics of Oswald and of

<sup>19</sup> B. Colgrave, 'The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great, written by a Whitby Monk', in *Celt and Saxon*, pp. 119–37, at p. 119.

<sup>20</sup> See C. Plummer, ed., *Venerabilis Baedae historiam ecclesiasticam, historiam abbatum, epistolam ad Egbertum, una cum historia abbatum auctore anonymo*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1896), II, p. 389, where he marks in italics all the words which are common to Bede's account and to the *VSGr*, and in view of the fact that the *VSGr* is the earlier of the two accounts, concludes: 'When we consider how freely Bede often deals with his materials, the fact that so many words can be traced is strong evidence that Bede had the *Life* before him.'

<sup>21</sup> Colgrave, 'The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great', p. 134.

<sup>22</sup> On this see N. J. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede* (London, 2006), noting at p. 91 in contrast to the more common 'obit' and 'defunctus est' used to report other deaths, the evocative 'peremptus' used of King Edwin and 'interempta' of Queen Osthryth, singling out both deaths as 'particularly heinous' and 'carrying the implication of murder', and noting at p. 118 his description of Edwin in the *Chronica maiora* as 'excellentissimus'.

their reception by the monks of Bardney, Colgrave asserts that Bede would surely have found room for it had he been aware of it. Likewise, the account of the migration to heaven of the soul of Paulinus might be thought of a piece with the account of the priest in Ireland who saw the soul of Chad being taken to heaven by a company of angels,<sup>23</sup> or of the nun Begu in the monastery at Hackness, thirteen miles from Whitby, who heard the passing bell tolling and saw Hild's soul being carried to heaven by angels.<sup>24</sup> His readiness to give credence to the tale obtained from the *Passio S. Albani* of the dropping out of the executioner's eyes as he delivered the fatal blow to St Alban<sup>25</sup> shows that incredibility is no bar to inclusion.<sup>26</sup> Finally, as Colgrave observes,<sup>27</sup> if Bede had made use of

<sup>23</sup> Bede, *HE*, iv.3, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 342/343.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, iv.23, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 414/415.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, i.7, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 32/33.

<sup>26</sup> There has, of course, been a considerable amount of scholarship concerning Bede and the incredible, with particular reference to his accounts of miracles. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede*, pp. 33–40, summarises with great insight the ebb and flow of different historiographical approaches, by turns variously polemical, flaccid and largely uncritical, or fiercely objective, varying perhaps as much according to the level of religious belief within society and the urgency afforded by that society to religious debate as with standards of scholarship. Of the leading experts in this field, it is instructive to contrast, for example: a) the generally sympathetic approach taken by Colgrave in his essay 'Bede's Miracle Stories' in *Bede His Life, Times, and Writings* (Oxford, 1935) with b) the scrupulously objective treatments of Wallace-Hadrill in his introduction to *Commentary*, pp. xxii–xxviii and c) *Bede. The Ecclesiastical History of the English People and Other Selections*, transl. J. Campbell (New York, NY, 1968) pp. vii–xxxii, repr. as 'Bede II' in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (Hambleton, 1986) pp. 29–48 and, finally, with d) the forensic examination by P. Wormald of the different emphasis placed by Bede on miracle stories in the context of such figures as Biscop, Wilfred and Ceolfrid in his essay 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', originally published in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Century of the*

the *VSGr*, is it not likely that he would have acknowledged it, as he does the *Life of Fursey*, the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert* or the account of the miracles in the monastery at Bardney?

However, with the benefit again of further reflection since my original presentation of this paper to the Colloquium, I now question whether Colgrave's case might be pressed too far. Walter Goffart cogently develops a contrary analysis, as follows:

[Colgrave's] argument takes too little account of Bede's critical acumen, especially in confronting a text written fifty miles south of Jarrow in his own adulthood. He need not have been less sensitive than we are to the farrago of the Whitby *Life*. A connoisseur of hagiography, he was well aware that there was scepticism at large. The Whitby *Life*, whose origins he probably knew, is likely to have seemed to him even more flawed by pious invention and other shortcomings than it does to us; it could, in his eyes, have typified the ignorance of Northumbrians about the Gregorian mission until his own acquisition of documentation from Canterbury . . . A naïve Bede and a Northumbria without contacts among monastic centres are prerequisites for Bede's ignorance of the Whitby *Gregory*. On a more credible view of the circumstances, it is improbable that the *Life* should have passed him by.<sup>28</sup>

Although scholarship has tended to afford Colgrave's views the highest authority, on this narrow point I respectfully counsel caution. The better view is probably that of Patrick Wormald who, when considering this matter in the context of reflecting upon the extent to which the application of the term 'Angles' to all speakers of a Germanic language in Britain could be attributed to Bede's use of the

*Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. G. Bonner (London, 1976) pp. 141–69, repr. in *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and its Historian*, ed. S. Baxter (Oxford, 2006), pp. 3–29, especially pp. 11–14.

<sup>27</sup> Colgrave, 'The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great', p. 136.

<sup>28</sup> W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800)* (Notre Dame, IN, 1988), p. 266.

term, guardedly declined to be drawn on the point, stating that 'it remains unclear . . . that the *Whitby Life* was a source for Bede.'<sup>29</sup>

Colgrave's second insight is the strong linkage between the *VSGr* and the cult of Gregory at Whitby.<sup>30</sup> Colgrave shrewdly reminds us that Eanflæd and her daughter were for some time joint abbesses at Whitby. We have already seen that Eanflæd, daughter of Æthelburga of Kent, was the first Northumbrian to have been baptised by Paulinus. Bede relates in *HE* how, in the chaotic aftermath of Edwin's death in battle at Hatfield in 633, Paulinus brought Eanflæd and her mother back to Kent, to return subsequently as wife of Oswiu and to play a prominent role in the summoning of the Council of Whitby in 664.<sup>31</sup> As Colgrave observes, who then was more likely than she to know the story of her father's vision of Paulinus at the court of King Rædwald, and the story of Paulinus's soul being carried to heaven in the shape of a swan?<sup>32</sup> Likewise, the bringing of Edwin's relics to Whitby can plausibly be seen as the promptings of filial piety towards a father whom Eanflæd could only really have known, nursery memories apart, at second hand through the recollections of her mother. A similar attempt to draw inferences about Bede's sources for his account of the baptism of Edwin was made by Nora Chadwick.<sup>33</sup> Her thoughts were drawn to Deda, abbot of Partney, to

<sup>29</sup> P. Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', originally in G. Russell, ed., *The English Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism: Studies in Commemoration of the Second Centenary of John Keble* (Wantage, 1992), pp. 13–32; repr. in *The Times of Bede: Studies in Early English Christian Society and its Historian*, ed. S. Baxter (Oxford, 2006), pp. 207–28, at p. 225.

<sup>30</sup> Colgrave, 'The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great' p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> Bede, *HE*, ii.20, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 204/205.

<sup>32</sup> Colgrave, 'The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great', p. 132.

<sup>33</sup> N. K. Chadwick, 'The Conversion of Northumbria: A Comparison of Sources', p. 143.

whom Bede tells us in *HE* that he was indebted for an account of the physical appearance of Paulinus,<sup>34</sup> derived originally from the oral testimony of one who had participated in one of the mass baptisms conducted at the time of Edwin's conversion. As the same source was postulated by Wallace-Hadrill for the incidental details of the miracles witnessed at the Lincoln church in the same chapter,<sup>35</sup> this suggestion cannot lightly be dismissed.

Essentially, therefore, a picture emerges of Bede and the anonymous author of the *VSGr* both drawing, whether independently or not, largely on Northumbrian oral tradition, leavened perhaps in the case of the *VSGr* more fully with some Canterbury input. Moreover, following Colgrave, depending on the weight to be attached to the words 'diebus Edilredi regi illorum' in *VSGr* in suggesting that Æthelred was no longer king when the *VSGr* was written (i.e. a *terminus* of 704),<sup>36</sup> whilst accepting a date of composition not later than the death of Eanflæd in 714, this suggests that the *VSGr* was composed at least one and more probably two generations prior to Bede. Given the nature of the likely sources being drawn upon, at an interval of this length the discrepancies between the two accounts do perhaps more readily fall into perspective.

#### THE BRITISH TRADITIONS

I turn now to the conflicting British traditions. *Annales Cambriae s.a.* 626 reads: 'Etguin baptizatus est, et Run filius Urbgen baptizavit eum.'<sup>37</sup> A similar tradition exists in certain recensions of the *Historia*

<sup>34</sup> Bede, *HE*, ii.16, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 192/193.

<sup>35</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Commentary*, p. 78.

<sup>36</sup> *VSGr*, xviii, ed. Colgrave, *VSGr*, pp. 102/103.

<sup>37</sup> *Annales Cambriae, s.a.* 626, ed. Morris, *Nennius*, p. 86/46, 'Edwin was baptised, and Rhun son of Urien baptised him.'

*Brittonum*. The history of these various recensions is notoriously complicated,<sup>38</sup> and before considering aspects of this in more detail below, I simply give what might be regarded as the core elements of the original Harleian recension, ch. 63:

Edguin, filius Alli, regnauit annis XVII. Et ipse occupauit Elmet, et expulit Certic regem illius regionis. Eanflæd, filia illius, duodecimo die post Pentecostem baptismum accepit cum uniuersis hominibus suis, de uiris et mulieribus, cum ea. Eadguin uero in sequenti Pascha baptismum suscepit et duodecim milia hominum baptizati sunt cum eo. Si quia uoluerit quis eos baptizauit, Rum<sup>39</sup> map Urbgen baptizauit eos, et per quadraginta dies non cessauit baptizare . . .<sup>40</sup>

The important manuscript Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 139 absorbs the bulk of the above in a substantial marginal addition to the original text, but with some further amplification:

<sup>38</sup> Complicated indeed, but rendered intelligible following the seminal analysis of D. N. Dumville in 'The Sixteenth-Century History of two Cambridge Manuscripts from Sawley', originally in *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 7 (Cambridge, 1977–80), pp. 427–44, 'The Corpus Christi "Nennius"', originally in *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 25 (1972–4), 369–80, and "'Nennius" and the *Historia Brittonum*', originally in *Studia Celtica* 10/11 (1975–6), 78–95, all repr. in his *Histories and Pseudo-histories of the Insular Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1990) at, respectively, sections VIII, IX and X.

<sup>39</sup> Almost certainly an incorrect expansion of a contraction; other examples follow.

<sup>40</sup> Nennius, *HB*, lxiii, ed. Morris, *Nennius*, pp. 79/38, 'Edwin, son of Ælle, reigned seventeen years. He himself occupied Elmet and drove out Ceretic, king of that region. Eanflæd, his daughter, received baptism on the twelfth day after Pentecost with all her people, both men and women. And Edwin received baptism the following Easter, and twelve thousand men were baptised with him. If anyone wishes to know who baptised them, Rhun son of Urien baptised them, and for forty days he did not cease to give baptism.'

. . . Si quis scire uoluerit quis baptizauit eos, sic mihi Renchidus episcopus et Elbobdus episcoporum sanctissimus tradiderunt: Rum<sup>41</sup> map Urbgen (id est Paulinus Eboracensis Achiepiscopum) eos baptizauit.<sup>42</sup>

#### *The 'British' Tradition Analysed*

The sources of this conflicting 'British' tradition were considered in detail by Nora Chadwick and Bertram Colgrave in the articles from which I have already drawn extensively in considering the 'English' material, and also by Kenneth Jackson.<sup>43</sup> Despite the enormous progress that has been made in our research into these texts in the intervening near-half century, their analyses still bear up extremely strongly, and can still be read with very considerable profit. Kathleen Hughes showed in the 1970s that from the early seventh century to the late eighth century the *Annales Cambriae* and the *Historia Brittonum* run in close parallel.<sup>44</sup> Hughes pointed out that both texts deal with the struggles between, on the one hand, Cadwallon, King of

<sup>41</sup> That contraction again.

<sup>42</sup> Nennius, *HB*, lxiii, ed. Morris, *Nennius*, pp. 79/38. 'If anyone wishes to know who baptised them, Bishop Renchidus and Elbobdus, that most saintly of bishops, handed it down to me thus: Rhun son of Urien, that is to say Paulinus, Archbishop of York, baptised them.' See also Dumville, "'Nennius" and the *Historia Brittonum*', p. 82.

<sup>43</sup> K. H. Jackson, 'On the North British Section in Nennius', *Celt and Saxon*, pp. 20–62.

<sup>44</sup> K. Hughes, 'The Welsh Latin Chronicles: *Annales Cambriae* and Related Texts. The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture to the British Academy, October 1973', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 59 (1973), 233–58, and her essay, unpublished in her lifetime, 'The A-text of *Annales Cambriae*', both repr. in D. N. Dumville, ed., *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 67–85 and 86–100. See also the review by D. N. Dumville of the British Academy lecture in *Studia Celtica* 12/13 (1977/78), 461–7, repr. in his *Histories and Pseudo-histories of the Insular Middle Ages*, (Aldershot, 1990), at section III.



Gwynedd, and his successors, joined by Penda of Mercia; and on the other the Northumbrian kings Edwin, Oswald and Oswiu. However, although both texts (for example) name the battles similarly, both texts contained material not included in the other. Hughes also noted examples of fundamental divergences between the two in the reporting of the same events. From this, Hughes concluded that neither text could have been based on the other, but rather that both texts had drawn in varying degrees from a common source. Hughes also pointed out close correspondences with the Irish annals for this period and, perhaps refining a hypothesis of Kenneth Jackson,<sup>45</sup> postulated that this common source was a lost set of northern chronicles, perhaps originally maintained at Strathclyde. Further work by David Dumville showed, however, that on further analysis the greater part of the *Annales Cambriae* entries were in fact more likely to be drawn directly from Irish chronicles, specifically the *Clonmacnoise Chronicle*.<sup>46</sup> The focus of this paper means that my summary of some thirty years of endeavour by the leading specialists in this field must be brief. On the narrow point with which I am concerned in this paper, these explanations of the likely source of the bulk of the *Annales Cambriae* entries for this period do not provide a complete answer, since, as noted by Hughes,<sup>47</sup> the Irish annals do not record

<sup>45</sup> Although the main thrust of Jackson's article was subsequently shown by D. N. Dumville in 'On the North British Section of the *Historia Brittonum*', *Welsh History Review* 8 (1976/7), 345–54, repr. in his *Histories and Pseudo-histories*, II to be over-refined and generally unpersuasive, see on this narrow point Jackson, 'On the Northern British Section in Nennius', p. 49. It is not clear to this author to what extent Jackson's thinking may have influenced Hughes's later articles, but some influence seems not unlikely.

<sup>46</sup> D. N. Dumville, 'When was the 'Clonmacnoise Chronicle' created? The evidence of the Welsh annals', *Chronicles and Annals of Medieval Ireland and Wales*, ed. K. Grabowski and D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 207–26.

<sup>47</sup> Hughes, 'The Welsh Latin chronicles', p. 92.

the name of the man who baptised Edwin. Indeed, a number of other entries in the *Annales Cambriae* cannot be identified with corresponding entries in the Irish annals, notwithstanding that the Irish annals do contain other material bearing closely on North British affairs that would on their face seem no less worthy of inclusion than the other material common to all the texts. Some other source therefore needs to be postulated.

In this context, an interesting point was originally noted by Kenneth Jackson,<sup>48</sup> and subsequently used as a basis for much scholarly contention that on this at least the traditions of the *Historia Brittonum* cannot so readily be discounted. He drew attention to an entry in ch. 57 of the *Historia Brittonum*:

Osguid autem habuit duas uxores, quarum una uocabatur Rieinmelth, filia Royth, filii Rum, et altera uocabatur Eanflæd, filia Eadguin, filii Alii.<sup>49</sup>

Oswiu's marriage to Eanflæd, soon after 642, is noted in Bede and,<sup>50</sup> given that she was living in 685 as joint abbess of Whitby long after Oswiu's death,<sup>51</sup> for the *Historia Brittonum* entry to be true she must have been – as Jackson notes – his second wife. Jackson then identifies Oswiu's wife with the Raegnmaeld listed in the names of queens and abbesses of Northumbria in the *Liber Vitae* of Durham.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Jackson, 'On the North British Section in Nennius', p. 41.

<sup>49</sup> Nennius, *HB*, lvii, ed. Morris, *Nennius*, pp. 77/36. 'Oswiu however had two wives, of whom one was called Raegnmaeld, the daughter of Royth, the son of R[h]un, and the other was called Eanflæd, the daughter of Edwin, the son of Ælle.'

<sup>50</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.15, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 260/261.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, iv.26, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 428/429.

<sup>52</sup> Now authoritatively and conveniently edited by D. N. Dumville, 'The Northumbrian *Liber Vitae*', in his *Anglo Saxon Essays 2001–2007* (Aberdeen, 2007), pp. 109–182 at p. 123.

On the face of it a marriage between a young Northumbrian prince and a princess of the neighbouring British kingdom of Rheged ought indeed to be every bit as plausible as Jackson suggests. Indeed, among scholars broadly accepting this identification are, for example, James Campbell and David Rollason,<sup>53</sup> albeit that the latter sounds a shrewd note of caution in declining to draw too firm an inference as to what the background to this marriage might have been. Far from a love match or even the instrument of a political alliance between the kingdoms of Northumberland and Rheged, the unfortunate Rieinmelth/Raegnmaeld might have been no more than the victim of a forced marriage as the spoils of war, turned over subsequently for reasons of statecraft in favour of Eanflæd.

For the present, we do well to keep all possibilities in mind, whilst noting that none of these would, for various reasons, have been particularly easy topics for Bede to deal with such that no adverse inferences should necessarily be drawn from his silence on them. In any event, however, one can sensibly surmise at least a degree of interaction between early Northumbria and its British neighbours, such that the possibility that the British church might have been more closely involved in the conversion of Northumbria than Bede allows might perhaps justify closer consideration.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Plainly, at least a very substantial part of the English tradition is likely to be broadly true. We have seen how both Bede and the anonymous author of the *VSGr* are likely to have relied on local Northumbrian tradition, and may both be assumed not to have asserted the existence

<sup>53</sup> J. Campbell, *Latin Historians*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London, 1966), pp.159–90, repr. as ‘Bede I’ in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, (Hambledon, 1986), pp. 1–28 at p. 24 and D. Rollason, *Northumbria, 500–1100: Creation and Destruction of a Kingdom*, (Cambridge, 2003), p. 88.

of oral support for their accounts where none existed. This is particularly so in the case of the anonymous author, who was according to Colgrave likely to have been writing at a time when the underlying events could, albeit just, have been within living memory and could certainly have been related at no more than second hand.<sup>54</sup> Likewise Bede is unlikely to have asserted the existence of, let alone quoted in detail from the letters from Boniface, were these fabrications, and Wallace-Hadrill admits of no doubt as to their authenticity.<sup>55</sup> It is, therefore, appropriate now to review the various attempts that have been made to show how the British tradition might be accommodated alongside the English one.

The least persuasive attempt at such a reconciliation is that suggested by Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 139 itself, namely that Paulinus and Rhun were one and the same. For this to work, one would have to construct a biography for Paulinus/Rhun that accounted for a childhood consistent with Jackson’s dating of his father’s death to around 575 or 585, his presence with Mellitus on the Roman mission of 601 recounted in Bede and the various other events that we have considered.<sup>56</sup> It is not therefore surprising that the textual history of the manuscript itself casts doubt on such an explanation. David Dumville showed many years ago that the substantial marginal addition to the original text to which I referred earlier, containing the identification of Paulinus with Rhun and the references to Renchidus and Elbobdus, were one of a number of collations made in the period 1164–6, made from a manuscript, now

<sup>54</sup> Colgrave, ‘The Earliest Life of St. Gregory the Great’, p. 132.

<sup>55</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Commentary*, p. 68, albeit conceding that they ‘plainly demand skilled interpretation’. For a considered discussion of the difficulties of dating them, see D. P. Kirby, ‘Bede and Northumbrian Chronology’, *EHR* 78 (1963), 514–27 at p. 522.

<sup>56</sup> Bede, *HE*, i.29, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 104/105.

lost, of the 'Nennian' recension dating from about the middle of the eleventh century.<sup>57</sup> The formula 'si quis uoluerit scire' is used elsewhere in chapters 10 and 15 to introduce highly dubious material, and it seems to me that Thurneysen may well have been on the right lines when he suggested that the references to Renchidus and Elbobdus may have been inserted by an editor who was by then well aware that the weight of opinion was firmly established in favour of Paulinus having done the baptising and who accordingly felt obliged to beef up his account by inserting an ostensibly impressive reference to his authorities.<sup>58</sup> At any rate, it rather bears out the observation I made earlier that the episode seems to be derived from a non-standard source, the transmission of which is at present far from properly understood. In particular, more thought needs to be given as to the genesis of those entries in the British sources that can not be identified as corresponding to entries in the Irish annals. In this context, the linkage between Rieinmelth/Raegnmaeld may be of value, but the Rhun entries are one of a number of such, and it would

<sup>57</sup> See note 38, above. Since Dumville's seminal work a considerable body of scholarship has been developed concerning the 'Gaelic' and 'British' identities of eleventh- and twelfth-century Northumbria, i.e. the period to which these various collations can be dated. See for example T. O. Clancy, 'Scotland, the 'Nennian' recension of the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Lebor Bretnach*', *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland, 500–1297*, ed. S. Taylor (Dublin, 2000), pp. 87–107. The focus of this paper is, however, the seventh and eighth centuries rather than the eleventh and twelfth, such that I do not develop this further.

<sup>58</sup> See R. Thurneysen, 'Review of T. Mommsen, ed., MGH, Auct. antiq. XIII, *Chronicorum Minororum Saec. IV, V, VI, VII*, vol. III, Fasc. I (Berlin, 1894)', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 1 (1897), 157–68, at 161 ff., and also his 'Zu Nennius (Nennius)', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 20 (1936), 97–137, at 131 ff.. Whilst with the passage of time Thurneysen is no longer as influential a commentator as he was, on this at least he is quoted with evident sympathy by Jackson in 'On the Northern British Section in Nennius', p.55.

seem sensible to consider them all before advancing any firm conclusions.

Kirby has suggested that the explanation lies in a confusion of the mass baptisms in the river Glen described by Bede in *HE* ii.14, which might on this view be attributed to Rhun, and the baptism of Edwin at York, correctly attributed to Paulinus.<sup>59</sup> Whilst appearing to have the usual attractions of a middle course between two conflicting views, this would of course require both traditions to be wrong in at least some of their particulars and might perhaps be accordingly thought rather strained. Nora Chadwick persuasively dismissed any suggestion that Rhun and Paulinus may have acted jointly in a baptism,<sup>60</sup> which would indeed seem entirely at odds with the numerous instances of hostility existing between the Roman and Celtic churches.<sup>61</sup> She preferred the possibility that Edwin might, during one of his youthful periods of exile,<sup>62</sup> have spent some time in

<sup>59</sup> Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 64.

<sup>60</sup> Chadwick, 'The Conversion of Northumbria: A Comparison of Sources', p. 164.

<sup>61</sup> Since the point is very much a by-way to the main thrust of her argument, Chadwick can perhaps be excused a certain looseness of terminology here. Nevertheless, her use, in particular, of the term 'Celtic church' is rather elastic, and it is perhaps worth noting in passing that many scholars would argue – indeed, have argued – that there is no such thing. It is not a point that I am well-placed or inclined to develop in detail, but in thinking about this further I did alight on what strikes me as a very useful and typically cogent synopsis of the topic by Patrick Wormald in 'The Venerable Bede and "The Church of the English"', p. 224, to which those attracted by this point can usefully refer.

<sup>62</sup> Chadwick, 'The Conversion of Northumbria: A Comparison of Sources', p. 164, on which see both Jackson, *passim*, and more recently D. Ó Cróinín, *The Kings Depart: The Prosography of Anglo-Saxon Royal Exile in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries*, Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Gaelic History 8 (Cambridge, 2007), p. 4, adopting Plummer's citation of Simeon of Durham's *Life of Oswald*, I.2 in support of Edwin being driven to seek refuge at the court of Cadfan of

Celtic territory and have been baptised there, and then subsequently perhaps under pressure from Paulinus underwent 'conditional' baptism by an orthodox Roman rite. In support of this, Chadwick suggested that this might offer an explanation for what she termed the 'unusual and somewhat inexplicable procrastination of Edwin in accepting baptism at the hands of Paulinus if he had already undergone the ceremony at the hands of a British bishop'.<sup>63</sup> This too fails entirely to convince. This would not explain why the date given in the *Annales Cambriae* for the baptism should correspond with the date given by Bede, and would leave another loose end in the already complicated trail of how this tradition has been transmitted. Why, for example, should the conversion of an exiled princeling then still very much with his way to make in the world have been a subject for contemporary remark? Moreover, a much more plausible explanation for Edwin's procrastination in accepting baptism is surely that he very readily apprehended the, for him ultimately fatal, internal strife within his kingdom that such a step would cause.

In thus picking holes in the various explanations put forward to date, without yet being able to offer anything more compelling of my own, I am very well aware that I might be accused of lapsing into a cod-Nennian *coacervauit omne quod inueni* type of position, synthesising sources for the reader to pick out the bones later as best he may. In my defence I say firstly that, at the risk of repetition, the means of transmission for a number of entries in the *Annales Cambriae* and the *Historia Brittonum* that can not be traced back to an Irish source

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Gwynedd: *Venerabilis Baedae historiam ecclesiasticam*, II, p. 103. In this context, as Ó Cróinín very usefully identifies, Plummer's suggestion that Edwin's presence at the Welsh court so enraged Æthelfrith that it brought about the Battle of Chester is significant.

<sup>63</sup> Chadwick, 'The Conversion of Northumbria: A Comparison of Sources', p. 164.

remains imperfectly understood. This goes, of course, not just for the Rhun map Urbgen entry but for the various others as well. This is no straightforward matter, given that each entry might, conceivably, very well have its own unique source. Secondly, as a result of the ongoing study of interaction between the English and Celtic peoples during this period,<sup>64</sup> we understand much more closely now than formerly Bede's reluctance to credit – indeed, this does not put it strongly enough: his bias against and at times outright hostility to – British traditions, culture and achievements, to the extent that his near-silence on the existence of such interaction should not of itself be regarded as conclusive that no such interaction took place.

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<sup>64</sup> N. J. Higham, ed., *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2007), showcases some recent thinking on this issue.