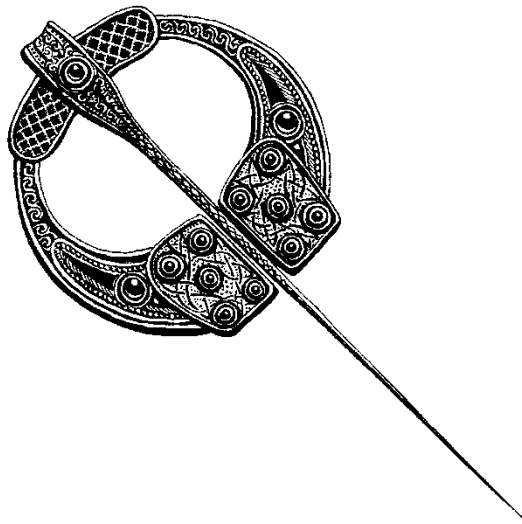


The Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is a yearly spring conference organised by postgraduate students of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at the University of Cambridge. Information on the next Colloquium, including details of registration and submission of abstracts, may be found on the Colloquium's official website: <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/ccasnc/>.

Selected proceedings of the Colloquium are published annually in *Quaestio Insularis*. All enquiries and subscription requests should be directed either to the address found on the official website, or by email to: quaestioinsularis@gmail.com





UAESTIO

INSULARIS

*Selected Proceedings of
the Cambridge
Colloquium in
Anglo-Saxon,
Norse and Celtic*

Volume 22 · 2021

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in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic

Printed in the United Kingdom
in Cardo
by Victoire Press

ISSN 1745-8676

ISBN 978-1-909106-31-4

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ABBREVIATIONS

eDIL	<i>eDIL: Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language</i> , edited by Gregory Toner, Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, Sharon Arbuthnot, Marie-Luise Theuerkauf and Dagmar Wodtko (www.dil.ie, 2020)
CLA	Codices Latini Antiquiores
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina
GPC	Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: A Dictionary of the Welsh Language Online

PREFACE

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the twenty-second number of *Quaestio Insularis*, the journal of the annual Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (CCASNC). Both the journal and the Colloquium, established in 1999 on the initiative of the postgraduate community of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, have maintained an impressively high standard, driven by the enthusiasm and commitment of successive cohorts of students. The 2021 conference — highly successful although entirely online — focused on the theme of Faith and Fidelity, which elicited a stimulating variety of papers given by postgraduates from a wide range of institutions, headed up by the plenary speaker Dr Sarah Künzler, who explored the relationship between landscape and faith in the saints' lives in the Book of Lismore. The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is delighted to continue its association with CCASNC and its published proceedings. *Quaestio Insularis* 22 and all back numbers of the journal can be ordered directly from the Department's website (www.asnc.cam.ac.uk).

Prof. Elizabeth Ashman Rowe

Head of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic
University of Cambridge

COLLOQUIUM REPORT

The 22nd Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic took place online for the first time on Saturday 8 May 2021. Despite the unique situation, the Colloquium featured a range of fascinating papers from ten different postgraduate students on the theme of ‘Faith and Fidelity’. We were very pleased to be able to invite Dr Sarah Künzler from the University of Glasgow to be our keynote speaker. Although we missed being able to all come together in person, the online format meant we were able to host speakers and audiences from even further afield than usual, and every paper was followed by a rich discussion.

We are also pleased to announce that after the colloquium we were able to begin digitising past volumes of *Quaestio Insularis*, which are now available online at <https://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/publications/quaestio/index.html>.

Session I (*Chair: Anna Chacko*)

Brittany Hanlon, You’ve Got a Friend in Me: Constructions and Offers of *Freondscip* in Old English Lawsuits

Jasmine Jones, Loving the Lady: An Ecclesiastical Allegory in the Old English *Soliloquies*

Ela Sefcikova, ‘*Hwa Dear Ðonne Dryhtne Deman*’: Authority in *Solomon and Saturn II*

Session II (*Chair: Roan MacKinnon Runge*)

Finn Longman, Faithful to the End: The Changing Role of Láeg mac Rianganbra in *The Death of Cú Chulainn*

Patrick McAlary, *Alter Patricius*: Imitation and Competition in the *Vita Albei*
Tatiana Shingurova, Baptising the Dead: Mog Ruith in Service to God

Keynote Lecture (*Chair: Brigid K. Ehrmantraut*)

Sarah Künzler, *Landscapes of Faith in Medieval Texts: The Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore*

Session III (*Chair: Eleanor Smith*)

Kensa Broadhurst, *Lymbo yw or'nys dhodho: Does Gwreans an Bys Reflect Post-Reformation Belief in Cornwall?*

Cameron Wachowich, *On Ormesta: Attestation and Etymology of an Insular Title for the Historiae of Orosius*

Session IV (*Chair: Alisa Valpola-Walker*)

Tristan Alphey, *Landnámabók, Agnomina and Group Fidelity: A Socio-Onomastic Case-Study*

Michael David Lawson, *In the Court of the Maiden-King: Figures of Fidelity in Old Norse Romance Narratives*

The members of the colloquium committee for 2020–21 were Roan MacKinnon Runge, Pau Blanco Ríos, Eleanor Smith, Anna Chacko, Joe McCarthy, Brigid K. Ehrmantraut, and Alisa Valpola-Walker.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Quaestio Insularis 22 was edited by Roan MacKinnon Runge, Pau Blanco Ríos, Eleanor Smith, Anna Chacko, Joe McCarthy, Brigid K. Ehrmantraut, and Alisa Valpola-Walker. The editors wish to acknowledge the assistance of our anonymous 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.

Landscapes and Faith in Medieval Irish Texts: The Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore¹

Dr Sarah Künzler
University of Glasgow

For modern city slickers like myself, the landscape has lost much of the immediacy it must have held for its pre-modern inhabitants. This encompasses food production, the intimate knowledge of local topographies including treacherous areas to traverse and profitable fishing grounds and the skills to navigate the landscape without the help of (Google) maps. Religion and mythology shaped (and continue to shape) experiences of landscapes and places, as topographical features may be connected to holy or mythological figures. In their materiality and namescapes, landscapes may also communicate political claims or gendered ideologies. In short: landscapes are never pure and rarely simple. Whatever practical and/or cultural knowledge we bring to a landscape greatly influences our experience of it.

Similar observations can be made for landscapes represented in texts. This article approaches the Lives of saints from the late fifteenth-century Book of Lismore through cultural geography in order to outline ways in which faith and landscapes relate to each other in these texts. It asks how the saints' Lives depict interactions with the (early) Christian landscape, and what perspectives may influence these depictions. The motif of water functions as a spring-board to discuss a number of themes, from gendered spaces to contested natural resources and concerns for rising on Judgement Day. In loosely following the more-than-representational approach in cultural geography, the analysis goes beyond the study of landscape representations

¹ I thank the editors of this issue for their comments, their help in obtaining sources during the pandemic, and for their patience. I would also like to express my gratitude to the anonymous peer-reviewer and the colleagues who provided helpful comments on earlier drafts of this study. All remaining errors are, of course, my own.

and touches on performative practices, everyday landscape use, and materiality.²

The European Landscape Convention defines landscape as ‘an area perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’.³ Patrick J. Duffy contends that ‘[l]andscape might be said to be produced in two senses, materially and metaphorically: materially, in the sense that the landscape is a legacy of past economic and social order; and metaphorically in the sense that it produces meanings which vary over time as different “readings” or constructions are put on it.’⁴ However, we must not disregard the reciprocal influence of cultures on landscapes and landscapes on cultures, as Matthias Egeler cautions, an issue that would benefit from further study also in relation to landscape representations in literature.⁵

However, studying landscapes in medieval Irish literature raises certain issues. For one, as Francesco Benozzo cautions, landscape should not be equated with nature, with the latter *per definitionem* lacking human influence.⁶ Furthermore, in many medieval Irish texts, landscapes are evoked rather than described.⁷ This entails that pastoral readings in the tradition of Theocritus and Virgil — as discussed by Oona Frawley — are only applicable to a small

² Hayden Lorimer, ‘Cultural Geography: The Busyness of Being “more-than-representational”’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 29 (2005), 83–94; Ann-Katrin Reuschel and Lorenz Hurni, ‘Mapping Literature: Visualisation of Spatial Uncertainty in Fiction’, *Cartographic Journal*, 48.4 (2011), 293–308.

³ Council of Europe Landscape Convention, Chapter 1, Article 1a. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treaty-num=176> [accessed 2 December 2021].

⁴ Patrick J. Duffy, ‘Introducing Landscape’, in *Exploring the History and Heritage of Irish Landscapes*, ed. by Patrick J. Duffy, Maynooth Research Guides for Irish Local History, 12 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 15–28 (p. 15).

⁵ Matthias Egeler, ‘Introduction’, in *Landscape and Myth in North-Western Europe*, ed. by Matthias Egeler, *Borders, Boundaries, Landscapes*, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), pp. 1–21.

⁶ Francesco Benozzo, *Landscape Perception in Early Celtic Literature* (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2004), p. ix.

⁷ For the Ulster Cycle, see Ranko Matasović, ‘Descriptions in the Ulster Cycle’, *Ulidia 2: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, ed. by Ruairí Ó hUiginn and Brian Ó Catháin (Maynooth: An Sagart, 2009), pp. 95–105 (p. 97).

number of early Irish texts.⁸ Nonetheless, the medieval Irish literary tradition is clearly embedded in the lived-in landscape, as the saints' Lives discussed below will show. Finally, one must be aware that landscapes in literature are not simple mirror images of material landscapes. Instead, artistic representations of landscapes 'are selective and partial, and often highly ideological, ways of seeing and knowing', as Christopher Tilley and Kate Cameron-Daum phrase it.⁹ While this applies to all landscape perception, in literary (and oral) representations, audiences are deliberately guided by authors and redactors, and it is these processes of mediating landscapes that are particularly revealing for cultural studies.

Saints' Lives are an interesting corpus to consider in relation to such issues, not least because of the longevity and diversity of the hagiographical tradition (and the associated, often regional saints' cults) in Ireland. While earlier research was unimpressed by (especially) the (later) Lives' focus on miracles (which can also alter the landscape),¹⁰ saints' Lives are now largely viewed as complex cultural constructs drawing on biblical and hagiographical tradition, multimedial saints' cults and lived religious experience.¹¹ Furthermore, landscapes can reflect the power and sanctity of a saint in both religious and political contexts.¹² As the work of Máire Herbert shows,

⁸ Oona Frawley, *Irish Pastoral: Nostalgia and Twentieth-Century Irish Literature* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005).

⁹ Christopher Tilley and Kate Cameron-Daum, 'The Anthropology of Landscape: Materiality, Embodiment, Contestation and Emotion', in *Anthropology of Landscape: The Extraordinary in the Ordinary*, ed. by Christopher Tilley and Kate Cameron-Daum (London: UCL Press, 2017), pp. 1–21 (p. 4).

¹⁰ Ludwig Bieler, 'The Celtic Hagiographer', *Studia Patristica*, 5 (1962), 243–65 (p. 259); Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 210–11.

¹¹ Dorothy Ann Bray, 'Miracles and Wonders in the Composition of the Lives of the Early Irish Saints', in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. by Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 137–47.

¹² Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain argue that *Betha Adamnáin* is a politically motivated composition from the Columban *familia* at Kells. See *Betha Adamnáin: The Irish Life of Adamnán*, ed. by Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain, Irish Texts Society, 54 (London: Irish Texts Society, 1988), pp. 1–44; Máire Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1988), pp. 151–

hagiographical material — which was often composed centuries after the saint's death — generally provides more information about the time in which it was written and transmitted than about a saint's lifetime.¹³ Landscapes may therefore be used to legitimise or explain a status quo with reference to the past and hence to communicate political messages. As saints' Lives are deeply embedded in the Irish landscape, they can provide a conceptual framework for explaining why the Irish landscape was the way it was: topographically, toponomastically, but also politically and spiritually.

The work of Amy Mulligan, Francesco Benozzo, Lisa Bitel, Alfred K. Siewers, Gregory Toner, Matthias Egeler, and Kay Muhr provides valuable starting points for analysing the relationship between landscapes and literature in medieval Ireland.¹⁴ The studies by Bitel and Mulligan are explicitly concerned with religious experience or the sacrality of the landscape but less so with the saints' engagement with the landscape.¹⁵ In cultural geography, there are diverse approaches to the study of faith and religious sources. These include discussing 'spatial patterns arising from religious influences, the impact of religion on landscape and landscape on

79; see also Sarah Waidler, 'The Hagiographer and His World: The Writing of Saints' Lives in Ireland During the Central Middle Ages' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2015), p. 5. Jean-Michel Picard noted a change from the sixth to the seventh century, when according to him the use of miracles for edifying purposes gave way to propaganda for the saint's community; see Jean-Michel Picard, 'The Marvellous in Irish and Continental Saints' Lives of the Merovingian Period', in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. by Howard B. Clarke and Mary Brennan, BAR International Series, 113 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1981), pp. 91–103.

¹³ Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry*, p. 2.

¹⁴ Amy Mulligan, *A Landscape of Words. Ireland, Britain and the Poetics of Space, 700–1250* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019); Benozzo; Lisa Bitel, 'Ekphrasis at Kildare: The Imaginative Architecture of a Seventh-Century Hagiographer', *Speculum*, 79.3 (2004), 605–627; Alfred K. Siewers, 'Nature as Otherworld: Landscape as Centre in Táin Bó Cúailnge', *Ulidia 2: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, ed. by Ruairí Ó hUiginn and Brian Ó Catháin (Maynooth: An Sagart, 2009), pp. 81–94; Gregory Toner, 'Myth and the Creation of Landscape in Early Medieval Ireland', in *Landscape and Myth*, pp. 79–97; Egeler, pp. 1–21; Kay Muhr, 'Water Imagery in Early Irish', *Celtica*, 23 (1999), 193–210.

¹⁵ Bitel, 'Ekphrasis at Kildare'; Mulligan.

religion, religious ecology, and the politics and poetics of a religious landscape, community and identity'.¹⁶ Exploring these parameters allows one to examine precisely the performative practices, everyday landscape use, and materiality that is of interest to the more-than-representational approach, even if for a more comprehensive study of my corpus a comparative approach with uses of water in the wider European hagiographical tradition and the Bible would also be necessary.¹⁷

THE BOOK OF LISMORE AND ITS SAINTS' LIVES

The Book of Lismore is a late fifteenth-century vellum manuscript written in Irish. It bears its name because it was found 'during the course of structural alterations in Lismore Castle in 1814'.¹⁸ In her recent study of the manuscript, Margareth Smith makes a case for Timoleague Abbey, Co. Cork, as a place of origin.¹⁹ Brian Ó Cuiv and Whitley Stokes view Finghin Mac Carthaigh Riabhach, Lord of Cairbre, and his wife Caitlin Fitzgerald (daughter of Thomas Fitzgerald, eighth Earl of Desmond) as likely patrons, and the manuscript may have been kept at their residence in Kilbrittain on the Cork coast, roughly eight kilometres from Timoleague Abbey.²⁰

The Book of Lismore contains texts of native and non-native origin, from the saints' Lives discussed here to the travels of Marco Polo, legal material, and texts on kingship. While in the nineteenth century John

¹⁶ Lily Kong, 'Religion', in *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, ed. by Derek Gregory, et al. (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), pp. 642–43 (p. 642).

¹⁷ In terms of Biblical parallels, the theme of 'living water' connected to new birth and eschatological hope or ideas of water as purifying (both found in the Gospels) are not readily discernible in the saints' Lives in the Book of Lismore. Larry Paul Jones, *The Symbol of Water in the Gospel of John* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 136–46.

¹⁸ Brian Ó Cuiv, 'Observations on the Book of Lismore', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, 83C (1983), p. 269.

¹⁹ Margareth Smith, 'Kinship and Kingship: Identity and Authority in the Book of Lismore', *Peritia*, 27 (2016), 121–40.

²⁰ Ó Cuiv, 'Observations', p. 269; *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore*, ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), p. v.

Windele dismissed the manuscript as an unstructured accumulation of texts,²¹ Smith views it as fitting ‘very neatly into the literary culture of the fifteenth century’ in its combination of ‘native’ with ‘continental’ material.²² It should also be stressed that at the time of the Book of Lismore’s production, the Cork coastline was a hub of learning and poetic activity with excellent connections to further abroad. Current geographic remoteness (in terms of its relation to perceived centres) must therefore not be equated with cultural marginality — an important point to keep in mind.

The first complete text in the manuscript’s current state is an Irish Life of Patrick. This is followed by the Irish Lives of Colm Cille, Brigit, Senán son of Gercenn, Findian of Clonard, Findchú of Brí Gobann, Brendan son of Finnlugh (The Navigator) and Ciarán of Clonmacnois. Separated by a few folia is the Life of Mochua of Balla. It is unclear whether the saints’ Lives formed such a cluster in the original arrangement of the Book of Lismore. They are, however, all marked out by lavish interlace initials and it is possible that they were viewed and contemplated as a group.²³ While some of the texts — such as the Lives of Findchú of Brí Gobann and Brendan the Navigator — offer little to analyse from my current perspectives, others present a multitude of engagements with the landscape from cultural and practical perspectives.

LANDSCAPES, BOUNDARIES, PROPHECIES AND POLITICS

No Life is concerned explicitly with the area associated with the Book of Lismore, but the *vitae* nonetheless reveal interesting perspectives on the Irish landscape. Both *Betha Phátraic* (‘Life of Patrick’, a version of the ninth century *Vita Tripartita*) and *Betha Shenáin meic Geirginn* (BS, ‘Life of Senán’,²⁴ a text

²¹ John Windele, ‘The Book of Mac Carthy Reagh’, *Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society*, 1.2 (1857), 370–80 (p. 371).

²² Smith, ‘Kingship and Kingship’, p. 122.

²³ Veronica Biolcati at University College Cork is currently examining the initials in the Book of Lismore. This may reveal whether they are contemporary with the texts or later additions.

²⁴ Waidler, pp. 98 and 100 lists four Latin Lives and two vernacular Lives (one in Irish and one in French) that are dedicated to Senán; eighteenth- and nineteenth-century versions also exist. Waidler, p. 121 adds: ‘Although it is always possible that it was composed during

dated to eleventh century by Herbert and the late eleventh/early twelfth century by Waidler), share a scene in which the landscape is evocative of political expansion.²⁵ Waidler argues that *Betha Shenáin* ‘employs significant material’ from the *Vita Tripartita* in ‘crafting a version of Patrick’s prophecy about the birth of Senán’.²⁶

At the beginning of *Betha Shenáin*, Patrick resides outside Limerick before Senán is born. Senán’s kin, the men of the Corco Baiscinn, come to him to be baptised. Patrick obliges but refuses to go into their territory — Senán’s homeland — to baptise their women, children, and slaves because he does not want to move his household across the nearby river. Although the Corco Baiscinn offer to ferry him over, the saint declines, and the river marks the boundary of Patrick’s activity. Instead, Patrick proceeds to bless the Corco Baiscinn from the top of a mountain. In *Betha Shenáin*, the short scene interweaves topography and boundaries:

Luid Pátraic leo iarum for mullach Findine 7 roraidh [friú:] ‘An hí so bar crích fria Luimnech i tuaidh corice in n-oician siar?’ ‘As si,’ ar iatsom. ‘In roich,’ ar Pátraic, ‘in sliabh tall tuaidh .i. sliabh Ellbe, i crích Corcamruadh in Nindois?’ ‘Ni roich,’ ar siat. ‘Rosia re mbrath,’ ol Pátraic. ‘In roich dano bur crích in sliabh thall tair .i. Echtgi i crích ua n[D]esa?’ ‘Ni roich,’ ar siat. ‘Rosia iar cein,’ ar Pátraic. Beannachais Pátraic iarum Corca Baiscinn 7 doraidh riu: ‘Ni ricthe a leas techt damsa libh anbhar tír, ár ita gein ocuibh i mbroinn mhna, 7 is dó doradadh o Dia bur tír-si: is iarnachul bheithi, is dó fhoighentai 7 foighenus in cenel-sa ua Figennte. IS e bus Patraic duibh.’²⁷

the renewed battle for the bishopric of Inis Cathaig in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the weight of the evidence agrees with the linguistic analysis that BS [*Betha Shenain meic Geirrginn*] comes from an earlier period.’ Patrick’s prediction that Senán will be venerated across Ireland is already found in the earliest Latin Life of Senán, VS-MLA. See Albert Poncelet, ‘De magno legendario Austriaco’, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 17 (1898), 24–96, 123–216 (p. 69).

²⁵ Herbert, ‘Hagiography’, p. 345; Waidler, p. 114.

²⁶ Waidler, p. 117.

²⁷ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 1828–1838. All quotations from the Book of Lismore are from *Lives of Saints*, ed. and trans. by Stokes. All translations are Stokes’s.

Patrick then went with them to the top of Findine, and said to them: “Is this your district to the north of Luimnech, as far as the ocean in the west?” “It is”, say they. “Doth [your territory]”, said Patrick, “reach the mountain there in the north?” even Sliab Ellbe, in the district of Corcomruad in Ninnus. “It reacheth not”, say they. “It shall reach before the Judgment”, saith Patrick. “Doth your territory reach that mountain there in the east?” that is, Echtge in the territory of Húi Desa. “It reacheth not, say they. “It shall reach after a long while”, saith Patrick. Then Patrick blessed Corco-Baiscinn, and said to them: “Ye need me not to go with you into your country, for ye have a child in a woman’s womb, and unto him your country hath been given by God. [...] It is he that will be a Patrick to you.

It is notable that *Betha Phátraic* in the Book of Lismore contains the blessing from afar and the assignment of Scatterry Island to Senán, but no mention of political expansion or the local topography is made.²⁸

The episode is found also in the *Tripartite Life*: ‘Nochadechaid feisin .i. Patraic, isatir; acht atchid atir ass im Luimnech siar ocus fothuaith, ocus bennachais innairiu’.²⁹ Yet only in *Betha Shenáin* does Patrick topographically map and visualise the future territory of the Corco Baiscinn according to named topographical features (mountains and the sea), thus overlaying the material landscape with cultural meaning. The performative practise of the baptism is thus related to material aspects, and the acceptance of the Corco Baiscinn into the Christian fold is coupled with a view – quite literally, given that they are surveying the topography – to future political expansion.

²⁸ *Betha Phátraic*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 494–508.

²⁹ *The Tripartite Life of Patrick: with other Documents Relating to that Saint*, ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, 2 vols, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, 89 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), pp. 206–07; ‘Patrick himself did not go into the land (Thomond); but he saw the land round Limerick in the west and to the north, and he blessed the territories and their islands’. Only John Colgan, *Acta Triadis Thaumaturgae* (Leuven: Cornelium Coenestenum, 1647), p. 158 mentions the mountain Findine.

Waidler notes that ‘Corco Baiscinn and the lands of Scattery never in fact reached this far, but this potentially could be read as an attempt by Inis Cathaig to assert its rights over Killaloe, even to the point of alluding to Inis Cathaig eventually taking hold of its rival’s entire diocese’.³⁰ Waidler adds that ‘Sliab Echtge is given by Keating as one of the boundaries of the diocese of Killaloe after the synod of Ráith Bressail’ but for her, ‘the significance of Sliab Eilbe is unclear’.³¹ In her comment on an earlier draft of this article, however, Elva Johnston pointed out that Sliab Eilbe is not only the highest upland in Corco Baiscinn (dominating the inland landscape for miles around) but that its geological formation is also visually striking.³² The reference therefore likely alludes to both knowledge of the material landscape and to political significance.

Patrick even prophetically assigns the future saint a dwelling on a nearby island, a place defined by the natural boundary of water. The prophecy is found both in the Patrician material and in *Betha Shenáin*, where it is narrated as follows:

‘Et ann inis tall tiar ambeluibh in mara, in fil [...] aitreabh innte?’ ar Pátraic, .i. inis Cathaigh. ‘Ni fil,’ ar siat, ‘ar itá peisd adhuathmur innte nach leicc a haitreabad .i. Cathach a hainm.’ ‘IS amra,’ ar Pátraic, ‘an mind ordain 7 in lia loghmur 7 in mogh airmitech sainshercach oc Dia 7 oc dainibh [.i.] in macan gignither ocaibh, ár is arachinn

³⁰ Waidler, pp. 118–19. Waidler, p. 166 adds that this would have carried a weighty message in later times: ‘Given Inis Cathaig’s episcopal hopes and claims in the twelfth century and possibly more desperately in the thirteenth century, this is a notable view and derives authority for the monastery’s claims from the man cast in the role of Ireland’s first bishop.’ Pádraig Ó Riain, ‘Albert Le Grand’s Life of Sané of Plouzané, alias Seanán of Scattery Island’, in *Mélanges offerts au professeur Bernard Merdrignac*, ed. by Jean-Christophe Cassard, Pierre-Yves Lambert, Jean-Michel Lambert, and Bertrands Yeurc’h, *Britannia Monastica*, 17 (Landévennec: CIRDoMoC, 2013), pp. 97–106 (p. 97) stresses the link between Senán’s pedigree (the Corca Bhaiscinn) and the area around Scattery Island.

³¹ Waidler, p. 118.

³² I thank Elva Johnston for kindly pointing this out to me in her comments.

coiméttar talam na hinnsi út i n-óighe, ár is ann bias a eiseirghi 7 eiseirghi sloigh moir do noebuibh maille fris.³³

‘And the island there in the west, in front of the sea,’ that is, Inis Cathaigh, ‘is there a dwelling in it?’ saith Patrick. ‘There is none,’ say they, ‘for there is a terrible monster therein named Cathach, who doth not allow it to be inhabited.’ [...] For it is for his sake [for Senán’s sake] that the soil of yon island is preserved in virginity, for it is there that his resurrection will be, and the resurrection of a great host of saints along with him.

The reference to the monster effectively preserving ‘virgin soil’ for Senán’s future centre of the faith by inhabiting the water around it is only found in *Betha Shenáin*, and the claiming of the island by the saint (and its relationship with the surrounding waters) is discussed below.

Patrick then sends Maculatus and Latius, two members of his retinue, to baptise the territory of the Corco Baiscinn. They found a church near Scatterry Island which is separated from the future holy graveyard only by the narrow stretch of water that separates the island from the mainland:

IS ann dano rothoghsat na noeibh-sin recles doibh 7 port a n-eiseirghi do thæibh puirt Innsi Cathaig don leth tuaidh i n-ercomair Reilgi Aingil Dé, ár rofhetatar ba hi Relic in Aingil i n-Inis Cathaig nobiath esseirghi Shenáin, 7 ba maith leosom a n-eiseirghi do beith i comhfocus d’eiseirghi Senáin [indus] cumadh [...] aroen re Senán rodechsatais do mhordail bratha.³⁴

Then did those saints choose a church for them(selves), and a place for their resurrection, beside the harbour of Inis-Cathaigh northwards over against the Graveyard of God’s Angel. For they knew that in the Graveyard of the Angel, in Inis-Cathaigh, Senán’s resurrection would

³³ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 1839–1845.

³⁴ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 1869–1874.

take place, and they desired that their resurrection should be near Senán's resurrection, so that they might go along with Senán to the great assembly of Doom.

Their church foundation is spatially and spiritually oriented towards the rising of their bodies on Judgement Day. A concern for the future dominates the actions of the present; no doubt a powerful message, perhaps particularly for a lay audience.

There are further interesting references to water in *Betha Shenáin*. For example, after travels to Rome and Tours, Senán returns to Ireland to found several churches. One of them is on Inis Mór, presumably Deer Island on the River Fergus. There, the resident bishop Sétna is enraged when the holy men observe a woman washing clothes in the well that they use for mass: 'IS olc in gnímh út [...] Bannscál ag nighi eduigh a meic asin tiprait asa tabarr usce oiffrind dún.'³⁵ The usage of water resources for quotidian and holy activities — and hence interactions with the landscape driven by different agendas — thus creates a conflict between the secular inhabitants of the island and the religious community. This is a legitimate concern, especially for small islands with presumably limited freshwater resources. To resolve the issue, Senán instructs one of his followers, Libern, to thrust his crozier into the earth beside his foot to create a spring, named *Tipra libirn* (Libern's well).³⁶ Senán's faith in God's power, and Libern's faith in Senán, thus create a more hospitable landscape for the religious community and have a profound impact both on the landscape and its inhabitants.

PLACES AND THE FUTURE: THE SPATIAL PATTERNS OF RESURRECTION

The Lives in the Book of Lismore contain a multitude of references that also engage with the topic of place and space, some of which are explicitly related to water. Finding one's divinely ordained place to live and the assigned *locus*

³⁵ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2161–2162, “Evil is yon deed. [...] A woman washing her son's clothes in the well out of which the water of Mass is brought to us.”

³⁶ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2180–2183.

resurrectionis is a frequent topic in the Lives discussed here.³⁷ This significantly influences the spatial patterns arising from religious influences (in fact retrospectively explaining existing patterns), as the places mirror divine providence. The theme is developed in relation to the future founding of monasteries, as the saints often travel extensively and can found multiple communities. In more than one case, this is connected to water. When Mochua is expelled from Comgall's monastery at Bangor, he asks Comgall for a token (*comartha*) by which he can recognise the place to found his church. The only token Comgall can muster is a well: 'Ni fhil comhartha ocum,' ar Comgall, 'acht mana bera lat in topur-so'.³⁸ While in lived-in landscapes wells are generally static, this presents no issue for the saint, as Mochua and his followers take the well on their journey: 'Et fo intsamail Moysi mic Amra riasa rabha nell solusta ic tiachtain a hEigipt atbert-som sin'.³⁹ When Mochua's foster-brother gifts him his church, a drop falls out of that cloud and forms a fountain as a sign of their unity. Water fulfils a highly symbolic function in this episode, not least as a marker of a preordained place. That there appears to be a connection between church foundations and wells in *Betha Mochua Balla* is apparent in another episode, where Mochua is not able to found a monastery because he had not marked out the well.⁴⁰

The ordained place of resurrection at times contradicts the saints' own will and thus stresses their obedience to God. For example, in *Betha Fhindéin*, Findian dwells in a place for sixteen years but is told by an angel that this will

³⁷ The wandering of the saints to a pre-ordained place of resurrection is reminiscent of the ancient Israelites to their Promised Land; on this see Victor Counted and Fraser Watts, 'Place Attachment in the Bible: The Role of Attachment to Sacred Places in Religious Life', *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 45.3 (2017), 218–32 (p. 221).

³⁸ *Betha Mochua Balla*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 4668–4669, "I have no token," said Comgall, "unless you take with thee this fountain".

³⁹ *Betha Mochua Balla*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 4673–4674, 'like Moses, son of Amram, before whom there was a shining cloud as he went forth from Egypt, they had a watery cloud following them'.

⁴⁰ *Betha Mochua Balla*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 4688–4689.

not be the place of his resurrection.⁴¹ In *Betha Phátraic* the angel Victor tells Patrick that his resurrection will not be in Armagh:

Et iss ed rotriall, dul do Ard Macha ar cumad ann nobeth a eiseirghe. Doriacht Victor aingel chuige, 7 is ed roraidh fris: ‘Eirc fortculai don bhaili asa tudhcaduis .i. don tSabhall, ár is ann atbela 7 ní a nArd Macha dorat Dia duit h’eiseirghi. Th’ordan 7 th’oirechus, do chrabudh 7 t’forcetul amal dobhetha beo a nArd Macha.’⁴²

And he proceeded to go to Armagh that there his resurrection might be. But Victor the angel came to him and said to him: ‘Go back to the place whence though camest, even to the Barn; for it is there thou shalt die and not in Armagh has God granted thee to arise. Thy dignity and thy primacy, thy piety and thy teaching shall be in Armagh as if thou wert alive.’

Just like the Ancient Israelites in Genesis 12.1, for whom the command to leave their home and seek the Promised Land came with ‘a tremendous promise of greatness’, the saints are asked to trust in God to find their divinely ordained resting place.⁴³ This is not simply a local concern and the embeddedness of the motif in Biblical geography becomes clear in *Betha Phátraic*: ‘Et raghait fir Eirenn a comhdail Pátraic co Dun Lethglaisi co ndichset maroen friss co Sliab Sion, baili i ndingne [...] Crist mes for clainn nAdhaimh isin laiti-sein’.⁴⁴ Down becomes the centre of an Irish exodus to

⁴¹ *Betha Fhindéin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2601–2603; ‘Ni hé so inadh h’eiseirghi’, ar se. ‘Bid he cena inadh do comdhala riat mhanchuibh il-lo bratha’, ‘This is not the place of thy resurrection [...] howbeit this will be the place of thy meeting with thy monks on Doomsday’.

⁴² *Betha Phátraic*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 602–606. In the much longer episode in the Tripartite Life, Patrick composes a poem expressing his love for Armagh and laments that he is not able to choose his own place of resurrection; see *Tripartite Life*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, pp. 253–54

⁴³ Counted and Watts, p. 221.

⁴⁴ *Betha Phátraic*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 620–623, ‘The Men of Ireland will go to meet Patrick at Down and wend [...] along with him to Mount Zion, where Christ will deal

the Last Judgement and Irish geography is linked to the Christian world through divine spatio-temporal order. Michael Frassetto stresses that ‘defining the geography of the afterlife and establishing the rituals of death and dying were of great importance in the Middle Ages’.⁴⁵ In the Lives discussed here, this interest spans both corporeal and spatial aspects and links the landscape simultaneously to the past and to the future.

FOUNDING NARRATIVES AND GENDERED SPACES

After sojourns in Ireland and abroad, Senán fulfils Patrick’s prophecy and settles on Scattery Island in the Shannon estuary. The island was settled by a Christian community in the sixth century and entertained episcopal hopes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, around the time at which *Betha Shenáin* was written.⁴⁶ Before he can settle down, however, Senán has to displace the monster from the local waters by making the sign of the cross. He then consecrates the island by walking around it with angels, two performative actions that symbolically claim the land as a Christian space. However, the local king opposes Senán’s settling. Yet the saint prevails, eventually defeating the king’s druid by calming the storms the druid conjures. When the druid sets up camp on a neighbouring island, Senán makes the sea swallow the island, which the *vita* asserts is called *Carrac na nDruad* (rock of the druids) ‘today’ (*aníu*).⁴⁷ When the king confronts him about these deeds, Senán makes the earth swallow the king’s horses — at *Fán na n-Ech* (‘Slope of the Horses’), ostensibly in the West of Scattery Island — and when the king storms off, he dies when falling off his horse.⁴⁸ The claiming of the landscape thus

judgment to Adam’s children on that day.’ This comment is not found in the Tripartite Life.

⁴⁵ Michael Frassetto, ‘Resurrection of the Body: Eleventh-Century, Evidence from the Sermons of Ademar of Chabannes’, *The Journal of Religious History*, 26.3 (2002), 235–49 (pp. 235–36).

⁴⁶ Waidler, p. 98 summarises that the community on Scattery Island is recorded from the late ninth to the fourteenth century.

⁴⁷ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2306–07.

⁴⁸ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2309–29.

interweaves land and water and even includes the riverine landscape beyond the island.

This demonstrates that the landscape's non-human inhabitants, geopolitics, and religious as well as political rivals all play a role in conceptualising the island as an emergent, yet initially contested, centre of the Christian faith. Senán makes the island habitable and thereby creates one of the most holy features on Scattery Island, Senán's well. During a year of drought, an angel tells Senán where to dig for water with a sprig of holly: 'Adrachtatur focétoir Senán 7 in t-aingel, 7 dochuatar cusin maighin i tá in t-uisci inniu. Doraidh in t-aingel: '[...], ni bhia urcra ar uisci isin tiprait-si cein bias aireib isin cill-so, 7 icfaidh cech ngalar doberthar cuici'.⁴⁹ The saint provides water for his community and a healing well that is linked to the future of the monastery (as the well is visited to this day): a clear indicator that water can function within different discourses (the religious and the quotidian) even in relation to a single water source.

There are notable parallels with the foundation of Armagh by St Patrick. Patrick too is opposed by a king and kills the king's horses who graze too close to his foundation. He also consecrates the land by walking around it with an angel.⁵⁰ For the readers of the Book of Lismore, this could establish a link between Armagh and Scattery island, particularly since there are several such parallels between these two Lives. The grouping of texts in manuscripts, and the resulting reading of them together, can therefore influence how individual texts are understood. While Scattery Island is never described through ekphrasis (as is the case, for example, with Kildare in Cogitosus's *vita*

⁴⁹ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2379–84, 'Senán and the angel arose at once and went to the spot in which the water is to day. The angel said: "[...] there will be no want of water in this well so long as there shall be habitation in this church, and it will heal every illness which shall be brought to it.'" This mirrors the Libern episode quoted above, as the landscape is made habitable by faith in God, which has a lasting influence on the island's natural resources. It is also reminiscent of Numbers 20, where God tells Moses to strike a rock with his staff to create water in the desert of Zin.

⁵⁰ *Betha Phátraic*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 556–79. Waidler, p. 171 links these contests to the contest between Moses and the Pharaoh in Exodus 7.14.

of Brigit), its landscape is nonetheless multi-layered and expressive of various concerns.⁵¹

But this is not the end of contested spaces in *Betha Shenáin*, and once again, the surrounding riverine area is evoked. Canair the pious is associated with Benntraige (modern Bantry, Co. Cork), close to the region in which the Book of Lismore was most likely composed. Waidler argues that the episode may have been originally independent but could represent Senán's connection with the region of the Book of Lismore.⁵² In a dream Canair perceives that the church on Scattery Island is the foremost church in Ireland, perhaps reflective of the 'flourishing and ambitious community' that Ní Ghrádaigh proposes based on the island's material culture.⁵³ Canair therefore travels to Inis Cathaig to secure a favourable spot for her resurrection.

When she approaches the island, Canair walks on water like Jesus on the Sea of Galilee, an action that underlines her own sanctity.⁵⁴ Despite this, she is sent away by Senán, notably because the island is forbidden to women: "Ni thiagat mna a n-indsi-sea", ol Senán'.⁵⁵ This constructs the established centre of the text as a highly gendered place. But Canair is not easily defeated:

'Cid dia ta latsa sin?', ol Canair. 'Ni messa Crist, ar ni lugha thainic do thathcreic ban inás do thathcreic fher. Ni lugha roces ardaigh ban inás ardaigh fher. Robhatar mná oc umaloid 7 oc timterecht do Crist 7 dia aps[t]alaib. Ní lugha, dano, thiaghuit mna isin bhflaith nemhdha inait fir. Cidh, dano, arna gebhtha-sa mná cucat at indsi?'⁵⁶

⁵¹ Lisa Bitel, *Landscape with Two Saints: How Genovefa of Paris and Brigit of Kildare Built Christianity in Barbarian Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 139.

⁵² Waidler, p. 121.

⁵³ Jenifer Ní Ghrádaigh, 'Scattery Island's Forgotten Romanesque', *Archaeology Ireland*, 20.4 (Winter 2006), 26–30 (p. 27). Sadly, Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin's study 'The Cult and Lives of Senan of Inis Cathaig' (unpublished M.A. Thesis, NUI Cork, 1981) was inaccessible to me.

⁵⁴ For the biblical passage, see Jones.

⁵⁵ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, l. 2431, "Women enter not this island", saith Senán'.

⁵⁶ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2431–36.

‘How canst thou say that?’, saith Canair. [...] ‘Christ came to redeem women no less than to redeem men. No less did He suffer for the sake of women than for the sake of men. Women have given service and tendance unto Christ and His Apostles. No less than men do women enter the heavenly kingdom. Why, then, shouldst thou not take women to thee in thine island?’

Canair clearly links Inis Cathaig and heaven in her speech, arguing that entry into the latter should guarantee her access to the former. It is notable given that she, like Maculatus and Latius, comes to Inis Cathaig with her resurrection in mind. Canair continues to stand on the water throughout their conversation, thus exercising the same control over water that Larry Paul Jones proposes Jesus exhibits on the Sea of Galilee in John 6.16–21, but also remaining in the liminal space that surrounds the island.⁵⁷

Kay Muhr suggest that Canair may symbolize the ‘once-female spirit of the river Shannon’ while from a diametrically opposed mythological perspective, Kenney views Senán as a ‘river god’.⁵⁸ Elva Johnston suggests that Scatterry Island may symbolise an inversion of the Island of Women.⁵⁹ However, I would rather see the episode as drawing ‘on a frequently overshadowed strand of Christian thinking [...] that stressed that all believers were equal before God regardless of whether they were men or women’.⁶⁰ Eivor Bekkus suggests that ‘the presumably male author wished to acknowledge that women ‘might fulfil the same demands as those laid upon men, but gain a smaller reward’.⁶¹ Bekkus therefore proposes a critical author

⁵⁷ Jones, p. 141.

⁵⁸ Muhr; James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928; repr. 1966), p. 364.

⁵⁹ Elva Johnston, ‘Powerful Women or Patriarchal Weapons? Two Medieval Irish Saints’, *Peritia*, 15 (2001), 302–10 (p. 309).

⁶⁰ Johnston, ‘Powerful Women’, p. 309.

⁶¹ Eivor Bekkus, ‘Men on Pilgrimage, Women Adrift: Thoughts on Gender in Sea Narratives in Early Medieval Ireland’, in *Gender in Medieval Places, Spaces and Thresholds*, ed. by Vicotria Blud, Diane Heath, and Einat Klater (London: University of London Press, 2019), pp. 93–105 (p. 105).

for this Life, and the episode would certainly have been of interest to a female patron, such as Caitlin Fitzgerald.

Senán eventually agrees that Canair may be buried on the brink of the island but identifies a problem: “Dobérthar,” or Senán, “inat eiseirghi duit sunn for brú thuindi, 7 is ecal lim in mhuir do breith do taisse as”.⁶² The water which Canair navigates so successfully in life therefore becomes problematic for her resurrection. This likely reflects knowledge of coastal landscapes, and perhaps a specific knowledge of the soil on Scattery Island. In his 1837 *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, Samuel Lewis notes that Scattery Island consists of ‘very good land but the sea is making rapid encroachments upon it’.⁶³ In this case, knowing coastal landscapes creates anxieties related to the faith and to burial practices in particular.

Canair, however, trusts in God to prevent the carrying off of her bones and hence in a metaphorical way claims her own space through her faith: “Rom-bia-sa la Dia”, ol Canir, “ni ba hedh toisech béras an mhuir as don inis in maighin a mbiu-sa”.⁶⁴ She therefore joins a hosts of other saints that defy the elements (such as saints Margaret and Theodore) to preserve their material integrity.⁶⁵ Canair may also exercise an influence on the landscape, as just like her body, the place of her burial presumably also defies erosion.⁶⁶ The issue is both practical and highly symbolic and the episode enforces a double liminality: the coastal landscape (between water and land) and the boundary of the male-connnotated holy place.⁶⁷ On the other hand, nothing

⁶² *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2440–41, “A place of resurrection”, saith Senán, “will be given thee here on the brink of the wave, but I fear that the sea will carry off thy remains.”

⁶³ Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland. Comprising the Several Counties, Cities, Boroughs, Corporate, Market, and Post Towns, Parishes, and Villages*, 2 vols (London: S. Lewis, 1837; repr. 1940), II, pp. 19–20; Muhr, p. 206.

⁶⁴ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2442–43, “God will grant me”, saith Canair, “that the spot wherein I shall lie will not be the first that the sea will bear away”.

⁶⁵ Caroline Walker Bynum, ‘Material Continuity, Personal Survival, and the Resurrection of the Body: A Scholastic Discussion in Its Medieval and Modern Contexts’, *History of Religions*, 30.1 (1990), 51–85 (p. 83).

⁶⁶ Walker Bynum, ‘Material Continuity’, p. 83.

⁶⁷ I thank the anonymous reviewer for directing my attention to this.

less than the incorporation of the female saint's body into the soil of Scattery Island is at stake here: surprisingly, given Senán's previous statement.⁶⁸

The interaction between (encroaching) water and holy soil is clearly of interest to this Life, as the topic also appears in connection with Libern on Inis Mór (likely Deer Island). There, Bishop Dalann observes that the island is not suitable for burial because the sea will eat away at the land and hence wash away their bones before Judgement Day: “As criata brisc in talam[-so]: nochnaife in muir 7 beraid leis ar reilgi-ne: ni maith in baili eiseirghi dun”.⁶⁹ Libern, who had previously been miraculously spared by waves while sitting on a rock and also created the well for the community on Senán's order in another episode, proclaims: “tabhair mu da bhonn-sa frisin muir intan doghenaidh mo adnocal, 7 nom-bia-sa o Dhia na brisfe in muir in talmain sin osin amach”.⁷⁰ Both on Inis Mór and on Scattery Island, the burial of a Christian figure influences the natural environment. The Life clearly engages with issues concerning the practicing of the faith in the medieval Irish anchorite tradition.⁷¹

The prevalence of water themes in the form of wells, liminal maritime areas and rivers in this *vita* is striking.⁷² This holds true on a religious as well as on a more profane level. Muhr argues that a medieval ‘understanding of the sacrament of baptism as a “rite of passage” through water meant that any

⁶⁸ I thank the anonymous reviewer for raising this issue in their comments. To my current knowledge, there is no evidence for the veneration of Canair on the island.

⁶⁹ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2184–85, “This land is clayey and brittle; the sea will wash away and carry with it our remains. Not good is the place for our resurrection”.

⁷⁰ *Betha Shenáin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2186–87, “when ye shall bury me, put my two soles towards the sea, and I shall obtain from God that the sea will not break that land thenceforward”.

⁷¹ I thank the anonymous reviewer for stressing this in their comments. Waidler, p. 143 has also noted that many of the miracles Senán performs on Scattery Island are prefigured at other places.

⁷² See Toner, ‘Myth and the Creation of Landscape’. The continued importance of holy wells in Ireland is discussed in Suzanne J. Crawford O’Brien, ‘Well, Water, Rock: Holy Wells, Mass Rocks and Reconciling Identity in the Republic of Ireland’, *Material Religion*, 4:3 (2008), 326–48.

water could function as a symbol of the Christian's approach to God'.⁷³ In the Book of Lismore, the issue is raised in two Lives. In *Betha Phátraic*, Patrick miraculously creates a well for his own baptism by the blind Gornias: 'ni buisce oca asa ndingned in bathius, cu tard signin na croichi do laim na nuidhin tarsin talmain cur' mebaidh topur as.'⁷⁴ In *Betha Choluim Chille* in the Book of Lismore, Colm Cille also brings forth a well when he needs water to baptise a child by making the sign of the cross over a rock, a miracle that is also found in Adomnán's Life of the saint.⁷⁵ A concern for baptismal water is also found in *Acallam na Senórach*, which concludes the Book of Lismore. When Patrick meets Caílte and Oisín at the erstwhile fort of Finn mac Cumail, his first question for them is if they can show him a well so that he may baptise the local population.⁷⁶ In its current state, the Book of Lismore therefore not only has a Patrician framing, but the first and the last text also alludes to baptism at their very beginning.

Saints also interact with water in other Lives in the Book of Lismore. Mochua and other clerics create water for a mill by their croziers into a mountain, thus permanently altering the landscape: 'O rosiach-tatar tra na cleirig in loch rolá Muchua a bhachail isin loch, gu rotholl roimpe in sliabh. Doróine dano Feichin in cétna 7 na cléirig arcena, co frith amlaidsin uisqui don mhuilinn'.⁷⁷ On another occasion, Mochua brings the waters of a lake

⁷³ Muhr.

⁷⁴ *Betha Phátraic*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 58–59, 'But Gornias had not water wherewith he could perform the baptism; so with the infant's [Patrick's] hand he made the sign of the Cross over the ground, and a well-spring brake therefrom.' The episode is also found in the Tripartite Life.

⁷⁵ *Betha Choluim Chille*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, l. 900. The miracle is abridged in the Book of Lismore. Adomnán's *vita* in fact openly groups it with another water miracle (a book that cannot be destroyed by water). This underlines the saint's power over an at times destructive element and juxtaposed it with the importance of water for Christianity; see *Adamnani Vita S. Columbae* ed. by William Reeves and J. T. Fowler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), Book II, chapter X.

⁷⁶ *Acallamh na Senórach*, ed. by Ernst Windisch, *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch*, 4 vols (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), IV.1, ll. 79–104.

⁷⁷ *Betha Mochua Balla*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 4683–86, 'Now when the clerics reached the lake, Mochua cast his crozier into it, and the crozier bored through the mountain. Then

over an island when the king prohibits him from entering the island.⁷⁸ Brigit creates a lake of milk (fittingly called *Loch in Ais*) when she miraculously milks her cows for the third time a day to provide sustenance for visiting bishops.⁷⁹ Given that Brigit's Life has by far the highest number of food miracles, this unusual landscape creation is in line with the *vita's* theme. Finally, when Findian is in Britain, his companions David and Gildas are refused the land they demand for a church foundation. When a steward jokes that they may have the lake instead, Findian dips his torch into the lake and makes it recede: 'Atbert cohessomain immorro araili duine istigh: 'Madh ail,' ar se, 'dona clerchib, cuiret ass in loch mor-sa imuich a toebh in dúine 7 denat recles doibh 'na inat.' [...] Luidh Finden immorro 7 aithinne 'na láimh co rathum isin loch, cu rotheich roime isin muir'.⁸⁰ On another occasion, Findian visits a female monastery that lacks water and a well is found in the place where he sat down.⁸¹ In these examples, water is not related to mythological or religious thought, but to practical issues: including the production of food and drink and the creation of land for a church.

CONCLUSION

By drawing attention to the landscapes in hagiographical texts, we discover a variety of discourses: allusions to the Bible, gender, references to performative practices of the faith and even concerns for everyday water

Feichín did the same, and the rest of the clerics. And in that wise water was got for the mill.'

⁷⁸ *Betha Mochua Balla*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, l. 4794.

⁷⁹ *Betha Bhrigde*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 1680–89. This is equated with Loch Leamhnachta in the *vita*.

⁸⁰ *Betha Fhindéin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2542–45, 'Howbeit a certain man in the house said boldly: "If the clerics like," saith he, "let them put this great lake away from the side of the fortress, and let them build their church in its place". [...] Howbeit Findian went with a torch in his hand, and he dipped it into the lake, and the lake fled before him into the sea.'

⁸¹ *Betha Fhindéin*, ed. and trans. by Stokes, ll. 2663–66.

usage.⁸² In terms of temporal outlook, the actions in the texts are frequently oriented towards the future, most notably through concerns about the resurrection or the founding of religious communities. In the resulting spatial patterns, physical proximity to saints or their ‘centres’ appears favourable for the Last Judgement, a message perhaps of importance to the patrons of the Book of Lismore, who lived in close proximity to the Abbey at which the manuscript was likely produced. On the other hand, the landscapes in the Lives can also present challenges to the saints, challenges that are deeply rooted in living in the landscape and in the observance of landscape changes (such as erosion on islands). Hagiography therefore does not simply present (and create) sacred landscapes; it in fact outlines multifaceted cultural and practical interactions between landscapes and the faith. By taking tentative steps towards a more-than-representational approach and shifting the focus from landscape representations to interactions with — and responses to — landscapes, it is possible to foreground different layers of meaning in the texts.

Discussing one manuscript can provide only a snapshot of the different roles landscapes play in different *vitae* that were read by the same audience and may have been selected and adapted specifically for them. This audience likely noted parallels in the *vitae* that lead to particular readings, such as in the case of *Betha Shenáin* and *Betha Phátraic*. Whether such parallels were consciously worked into the material by the authors/redactors or whether they derive from earlier versions must be the focus of large-scale analyses of saints’ Lives based directly on manuscripts — an endeavour that would broaden our understanding of the cultural adaptations of landscapes in these texts.⁸³

The focus on the Life of Senán enabled a deeper look at a text that has not yet received the attention it deserves, while the comparative angle with the other Lives revealed some prevalent landscape-related themes. It is

⁸² See Sylvie Shaw and Andrew Francis, ‘Introduction: Sacred Waters’, in *Deep Blue: Critical Reflections on Nature, Religion, and Water*, ed. by Sylvie Shaw and Andrew Francis (London: Routledge, 2008; repr. 2014).

⁸³ Such work proved difficult in the current circumstances, when the author’s use of libraries was severely limited. This is particularly true since one of the two Latin Lives of Senán (VS-MLA) that pre-date the Irish Life has not yet been edited.

possible, however, the *Betha Shenáin* may have been particularly important for the patrons: not only because it is connected to the area of the Book of Lismore through the Canair episode, but because as Waidler argues it is a Life interested in ‘kingship, the claiming of land and the relationship between secular and ecclesiastical authority’.⁸⁴ Such themes would clearly need further investigation, and it is hoped that this short article may be an incentive for further research. The kind of research proposed here may never provide finite answers, but it bears testimony to the highly self-conscious and consciously mediated presence of the inhabited landscape in medieval Irish texts.

⁸⁴ Waidler, p. 119.

Faithful to the End: The Changing Role of Láeg mac Riangaobra in The Death of Cú Chulainn¹

Finn Longman

Much has been written about Cú Chulainn, the young Ulster hero who plays such a central role in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, but far less attention has been paid to his charioteer, Láeg mac Riangaobra.² Yet Láeg is far from a background character who serves only to transport Cú Chulainn from one place to the next. He is Cú Chulainn's closest friend, his faithful companion, and is sometimes identified as his foster-brother. He is both messenger and mediator, acting as intermediary between Cú Chulainn and his enemies, his own people, and the Otherworld. At times, he is positioned as Cú Chulainn's narrative foil. While Láeg is present in texts from the Old Irish period onwards, his role and character change substantially in the literature over time, and these late medieval and early modern developments have not yet been analysed or even articulated in any depth. In this paper, I will offer the medieval and early modern traditions surrounding the death of Cú Chulainn as a case study through which we can consider how Láeg's presentation develops and changes.

The Death of Cú Chulainn is a narrative with a complex textual history.³ For simplicity's sake, I will refer to the two recensions by Thurneysen's labels: 'Version A' and 'Version B'. Version A is the medieval text, often known by the title *Brislech Mór Maige Muirthemne* (not to be confused with the battle of

¹ This paper is adapted from my MA thesis, 'Favourite Charioteer, Beloved Foster-Brother: The Role of Láeg mac Riangaobra in Medieval and Early Modern Ulster Cycle Tales'. I am grateful to Kevin Murray for his supervisory support and guidance, as well as to the anonymous reviewer for their comments.

² For consistency's sake, I will use the spelling 'Láeg mac Riangaobra' throughout this discussion, rather than the early modern Laogh or the variant Lóeg, although direct quotes will use the spelling given. Other names have likewise been normalised to their earlier forms (e.g. Emer, not Eimhir or Eimhear).

³ I am using the English title here to encompass both the medieval *Brislech Mór Maige Muirthemne* and the early modern *Aided/Oidheadh Con Culainn*, to avoid using the title of one inappropriately for the other.

the same name that occurs during *Táin Bó Cúailnge*). The most complete version of the text is in the Book of Leinster, a manuscript compiled during the second half of the twelfth century, but it is acephalous; fragments in Trinity College Dublin MS H.3.18 supply the opening of the story. Both of these have been edited and translated by Bettina Kimpton, on whose text I will base my discussion of this version.⁴ Although the manuscript is twelfth century, some of the language of the tale points to a date of composition as early as the eighth century.⁵ The early modern recension, or Version B, offers a more complex picture, functioning less as a single text than as a broad tradition of prose, poetry, and prosimetrum, aspects of which are preserved in approximately a hundred manuscripts dating from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. This narrative is often titled *Aided* (or *Oidheadh*) *Con Culainn*, and comprises three main parts: *Brisleach Mhór Mhaighe Muirthemhne*, *Deargruathar Chonail Chearnaigh*, and *Laoidh na gCeann*. At its earliest, it may date to the fifteenth century.⁶ This recension has received less academic attention than its medieval predecessor, and at the time of writing there is still no full scholarly English translation available. In 1933, A. G. van Hamel produced an edition of the oldest surviving manuscript, the sixteenth-century Gaelic MS 45 in the National Library of Scotland (NLS), supplemented by Dublin, Royal Irish Academy (RIA) MS 23.K.37, an eighteenth-century manuscript seemingly based on the same exemplar.⁷ Although the latter contains some poetry, van Hamel only edited the prose. In her 2008 Ph.D. thesis, Lára Ní Mhaoláin produced a critical edition of the text from NLS 71.1.38, including the poetry, with commentary in modern

⁴ Bettina Kimpton, *The Death of Cú Chulainn: A Critical Edition of the Earliest Version of Brisleach Mór Maige Muirthemni, with Introduction, Translation, Notes, Bibliography and Vocabulary*, Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts, 6 (Maynooth: NUI Maynooth, 2009), hereafter *BMMM*.

⁵ *BMMM*, p. 1.

⁶ A.G. van Hamel, 'Aided Con Culainn', in *Compert Con Culainn and Other Stories*, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series, 3 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978), pp. 69–133 (p. 69), hereafter *ACC*.

⁷ Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland (NLS), Gaelic, MS 45 and Dublin, Royal Irish Academy (RIA), MS 23.K.37; *ACC*, pp. 70–71.

Irish.⁸ Despite its limitations, van Hamel's edition remains the most accessible edition of the text, and so forms the basis of my translations here, but reference to Ní Mhaoláin's edition will be made when discussing the verse.

The two recensions have essentially the same basic plot. Cú Chulainn's heroic deeds (most of them violent) have made him a substantial number of enemies, predominantly the children of those he has killed, and they are now allying against him. Killing him is no easy feat, and requires them to learn magic and acquire special weapons with which to fight him. His death is foreshadowed by a number of omens, which he ignores or is unable to acknowledge, and eventually he meets his enemies in battle. He slays a significant number of them before being fatally wounded, and dies tied to or leaning against a standing stone. Following his death, Conall Cernach avenges him, and his wife Emer mourns. The details vary considerably between the two versions, however, and Version B is substantially longer. Julia Kühns summarises many of the differences in her 2009 Ph.D. thesis, but one divergence omitted from her list is Láeg's fate.⁹ This is an oversight, as his role is notably different in the two versions, informing our understanding of the development of Láeg's character in later texts and symbolising the different functions he fulfils in each recension.

Arguably, Láeg's primary function in Version A is as a double of Cú Chulainn: he dies, and his death prefigures the hero's own. It serves as an omen and a signal that this is one fight from which Cú Chulainn will not walk away. The sons of Calatín have prepared three magical spears, each destined to kill a king. Lugaid mac Con Roí casts the first of these spears, but instead of striking Cú Chulainn, it hits Láeg, 'co tarlaic a mbuí do innib ina medón'.¹⁰ When Erc mac Cairpri questions the accuracy of the prophecy, the

⁸ Lára Ní Mhaoláin, 'Brisleach Mhór Mhaighe Muirtheimhne agus Deargruathar Chonail Cheamaigh: Eagrán Criticiúil' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Maynooth University, 2008).

⁹ Julia Kühns, 'The Pre-19th-Century Manuscript Tradition and Textual Transmission of the Early Modern Irish Tale *Oidheadh Con Culainn*: A Preliminary Study' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2009), pp. 30–31.

¹⁰ *BMMM*, ll. 316–17, translation p. 41, 'so that the innards in his belly spilled forth'.

sons of Calatín assert that it was true, because Láeg was ‘rí arad hÉrend’.¹¹ Cú Chulainn and Láeg bid farewell, and Cú Chulainn declares that he will now be both warrior and charioteer, before going to his death alone.¹² Later, he returns as a spectre to make a final speech, in which he briefly reflects on Láeg’s loss: ‘At:bath Lóeg | iruilled nach bad trummu turbaid’.¹³ Láeg’s ability to act as Cú Chulainn’s double is one of the qualities that makes him an effective messenger: he is able to step into Cú Chulainn’s role and act on his behalf. In *Serglige Con Culainn*, he goes to the Otherworld for Cú Chulainn’s sake;¹⁴ in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (hereafter *TBC*), he visits the Connacht camp since Cú Chulainn cannot.¹⁵ This ‘double’ function is further elaborated in the Stowe version of *TBC*, where Láeg ends up fighting his brother Idh, here acting as Fer Diad’s charioteer.¹⁶ Just as Cú Chulainn and Fer Diad are two foster-brothers whose loyalty to their people outweighs their loyalty to each other, so is Láeg and Idh’s brotherly bond superseded by their loyalty to their respective masters. Stowe thus positions Láeg as Cú Chulainn’s narrative foil, functioning, like Cú Chulainn, as an outsider whose family and provincial connections are being severed by conflict. Láeg’s function as double in Version A is therefore in keeping with his broader characterisation in the Ulster Cycle, and reflects the idea of the charioteer as a warrior’s ‘alter ego’ or

¹¹ *BMMM*, l. 336, translation p. 41, ‘king of the charioteers of Ireland’. Note that for this translation to be correct, we would expect *arad* to nasalise the following word. Perhaps this phrase should be emended to ‘ri[g]arad hÉrend’, ‘royal charioteer of Ireland’. A similar phrase is used to designate the Líath Macha as the ‘king of horses’, although she is female. Reading this as the prefix *ríg-* (frequently found without the final guttural), meaning ‘royal’, may then make better sense, describing either their high status or their position as the best of their kind, rather than identifying them as literal kings.

¹² *BMMM*, p. 41.

¹³ *BMMM*, ll. 527–28, translation p. 46, ‘Lóeg died, an incurment than which there would be no heavier misfortune’.

¹⁴ *Serglige Con Culainn*, ed. by Myles Dillon, Medieval and Modern Irish Series, 14 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1953), ll. 144–232 and ll. 453–576.

¹⁵ *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster*, ed. by Cecile O’Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967), ll. 1858–82, hereafter *TBC-II*.

¹⁶ *The Stowe Version of Táin Bó Cúailnge*, ed. by Cecile O’Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1961), ll. 3190–254.

twin.¹⁷ In this capacity, Láeg's death *must* anticipate Cú Chulainn's, since the two are an inseparable pair. However, Version A is unusual in one respect: rather than Láeg stepping into Cú Chulainn's role, as we see most frequently, his loss forces Cú Chulainn to step into *his*, and act as his own charioteer.

Version B offers a substantially different picture of Láeg, from his fate to his function. There are still three magical spears, this time obtained by the children of Calatín from Bholcán (Vulcan) after a trip to Hell, but the order of injury is different: the Líath Macha is hit first, and it is the second spear, thrown by Erc mac Cairpri, which hits Láeg. Moreover, it does so *through* Cú Chulainn:

... tuc Erc mac Cairbri urchar díchra dianathlum dá innsaighi, co tarra in gérga gormnimnech glsrinnach a mullach a láirgi clí don chathmíled, gurob ann do chothuigh a cenn coimlethan na cráisighe etir a fordruinn 7 a imlinn a Láegh.

... Erc mac Cairpri made an eager, swift and nimble throw towards him, so that the poisonous blue sharp spear with a green-pointed tip came into the left thigh of the champion, so that the broad, wide head of the lance was pressed between his loins and his navel into Láeg.¹⁸

Unlike in Version A, Láeg survives the injury, and Cú Chulainn sends him away from the battle, begging him to take news to Emer and Conall of what has happened. Láeg is reluctant to leave Cú Chulainn, addressing him as his 'comalta inmain'.¹⁹ Cú Chulainn acknowledges his loyalty and friendship, saying, 'óntís do chenglamar aráen re chéile in cétlá, nach tarra ar n-imscarad ná ar n-imrisin re chéile do lá nó d-oidchi riam co háes na huairi so'.²⁰ Rather than immediately returning to Ulster, Láeg stays to watch the battle;

¹⁷ Joseph Falaky Nagy, *Conversing with Angels and Ancients: Literary Myths of Medieval Ireland* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 216 and p. 227.

¹⁸ ACC, §37. Translations are my own.

¹⁹ 'beloved foster-brother'.

²⁰ ACC, §38, 'since the first day we bound ourselves together, we never before separated or quarrelled, day or night, until this very moment'.

afterwards, he goes to Cú Chulainn and treats his wounds, and Cú Chulainn asks for his help to go to a nearby standing stone so that he might die upright. Láeg helps him there, passing him his weapons and staying to witness his death. Only when Cú Chulainn is dead does Láeg leave and ride back to Emain Macha with the news, remaining with Emer as she grieves.²¹

These developments are, undeniably, deeply emotional, and highlight the depth of Cú Chulainn and Láeg's relationship. While Version A tells us only that Láeg *celebraid* 'bids farewell' to Cú Chulainn while dying, Version B offers an extended dialogue in which the pair affirm their friendship. Moreover, the fact that Láeg addresses Cú Chulainn as his *comalta* has significant implications for how we interpret Version B in relation to other Ulster Cycle material. It is rare for Láeg to be identified as one of Cú Chulainn's foster-brothers — to my knowledge, the only other text which does so is the version of *Compert Con Culainn* found in RIA MS D.iv.2 (hereafter *CCC-D*). The manuscript is fifteenth-century, but Kaarina Hollo has suggested that the text dates to the eleventh or twelfth century.²² While its initial section is functionally identical to other copies of *Compert Con Culainn*, there is an addition of almost four hundred words at the end. This tells of how Cet mac Mágach names the newborn child 'Sédana' at Dechtire's request (in other versions, the baby is called 'Sétanta'), and gives him to his own foster-parents, Srian and Gabur, so that Gabur might act as a wet-nurse for the child. Srian and Gabur are accompanied by their own infant, Láeg, who is still young enough to be 'ar cich'.²³ Cú Chulainn and Láeg thus grow up together from infancy, nursed by the same woman. The verse portion of this passage adds: 'gor comalta comluinn neirt. | ba hara ar seinseirge ngliaigh'.²⁴ The word *comalta* is identical to that used in Version B of *The*

²¹ *ACC*, §§38–52.

²² Kaarina Hollo, 'Cú Chulainn and Síð Truim', *Ériu*, 49 (1998), 13–22 (p. 15).

²³ 'on the breast'.

²⁴ RIA MS D.iv.2, f. 46v(b), l. 39, 'so that the equally fierce strong foster-brother | was a charioteer, because of a special love of fighting'. This edition and translation is my own. There is no full English translation of this version of the story, though the text has been edited and translated into German by Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Compert ConCulaind nach D. 4. 2', in 'Zu irischen Handschriften und Litteraturdenkmälern [I]', *Abhandlungen der*

Death of Cú Chulainn. While it is impossible to prove a direct connection between Version B and *CCC-D*, it is certainly an interesting similarity, particularly as a foster-brother relationship between the two is not emphasised elsewhere.

Depicting Láeg and Cú Chulainn as foster-brothers articulates their closeness, and provides a societal framework for Láeg's loyalty. It also creates a comparison between Cú Chulainn's relationship with Láeg and his relationship with Conall Cernach, who plays a significant part in this text as Cú Chulainn's avenger. In his discussion of Cú Chulainn's foster-brothers and parents, Tom O'Donnell observes that there is mention of 'only one foster mother and one foster brother' in accounts of Cú Chulainn's early fostering, despite his many foster-fathers. He is referring to Finnchóem and Conall, and Conall's foster-relationship with Cú Chulainn is specifically articulated in terms of his mother's position as Cú Chulainn's foster-mother. In *Tochmarc Emire*, Cú Chulainn states that, 'Finnchóem has cared for me so that Conall Cernach the victorious is my equally vigorous foster brother [*comaltae comlíuid*]'.²⁵ Notably, this version of *Tochmarc Emire* is also from RIA D.iv.2, although a similar description is found in the *Lebor na hUidre* text.²⁶ O'Donnell is apparently unaware of *CCC-D* and never mentions Láeg, but these traditions seem like reflections of each other: the son of Cú Chulainn's nurse becomes his well-matched foster-brother, equally fierce or vigorous. Conall is better established as Cú Chulainn's foster-brother than Láeg, but that does not mean the *CCC-D* text is necessarily an imitation of the Conall-centred tradition: if *CCC-D* is eleventh-century as Hollo suggests, it would be roughly contemporary with this recension of *Tochmarc Emire*, and so may be a parallel development.²⁷ Either way, the similarities are worth

königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, 14.2 (1912), 41–48.

²⁵ Tom O'Donnell, *Fosterage in Medieval Ireland: An Emotional History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), p. 72.

²⁶ *Lebor na hUidre: Book of the Dun Cow*, ed. by Richard Irvine and Osborn Bergin (Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1929), p. 312; Dublin, RIA, MS 23 E 25.

²⁷ It is worth noting that *CCC-D* is followed in the manuscript by *Feis Tige Becfholtaig*, in which Finnchóem acts as Cú Chulainn's foster-mother, bringing the two traditions together.

considering. The idea that ‘being raised alongside one another, in the same house, would create the strong emotional bonds that would last well beyond the scope of the fosterage itself’ certainly provides an explanation for Láeg’s commitment and loyalty to Cú Chulainn; this bond of fosterage from infancy is distinct from foster-brother connections formed later in life, such as those Cú Chulainn creates while training with Scáthach, and is not easily broken.²⁸ Arguably, Cú Chulainn’s bond with Láeg is even stronger than his connection to Conall. O’Donnell observes that ‘Conall Cernach is present at the beginning and end of Cú Chulainn’s life, but is absent from the middle, the action of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*’.²⁹ *CCC-D* and *The Death of Cú Chulainn* would place Láeg similarly at the beginning and end, and he is at Cú Chulainn’s side throughout *TBC* — a continuity of brotherhood no other character can claim. Moreover, O’Donnell’s claim that Conall is present at Cú Chulainn’s death is debatable, for although he avenges Cú Chulainn, he arrives only after his death. By contrast, in Version B Láeg is present at the moment of death, and is charged with bringing Conall the news.

After Láeg leaves Cú Chulainn, there is a second, deeply emotive scene in which Emer, watching from the ramparts of Emain Macha, sees a sad injured horseman approaching: ‘7 is mall ainéscaidh táinic’.³⁰ She knows immediately that it must be Láeg, riding on the Dub Sainglend, and the sight fills her with dread. For the charioteer to have become a rider shows that something has gone badly wrong. Riders are so rare in early texts that Version B includes a triad naming Conall as ‘in tres fer do-rinne marcúighecht ar srian áeneich a nÉrinn riam .i. Lug Lámfhada a cath Muighi Tuired ac marbad fine Fomhra, 7 Subalthach Sídech arin Liath Macha ar sluagad Tána bó Cuailgne, 7 Conall arin Dergruathar’.³¹ The emphasis on the ‘single horse’ may suggest

²⁸ O’Donnell, p. 70.

²⁹ O’Donnell, p. 71.

³⁰ *ACC*, §44, ‘and it is slow and spiritless he came’.

³¹ *ACC*, §45, ‘the third man [or ‘one of three men’] who ever rode on the rein of a single horse in Ireland, that is, Lug Lámfhada in the Battle of Mag Tuired, killing the Fomoire, and Subaltach Sídech on the Liath Macha upon the hosting of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, and Conall on the Red Rampage’.

that this refers specifically to single horses *from a chariot pair*, and the two identifiable incidents support this: Súaltaim rides the Líath Macha, presumably leaving the Dub Sainglend with Cú Chulainn,³² and Conall rides the Derg Drúchtach, after his second horse, the Conchenn Crónfada, has died.³³ No surviving version of *Cath Maige Tuired* depicts Lug riding a horse as described in this triad, suggesting either that the author had access to a version that was subsequently lost, or that he invented this detail; Lug may have been chosen because he, like the other two figures, has a connection to Cú Chulainn. It is surprising, however, that Láeg is omitted from the triad, despite his journey on the Dub Sainglend — a single horse, from a chariot pair — having occurred before Conall’s arrival. This may be because the triad does not originate from *ACC*, but from an earlier tradition more similar to Version A, in which Láeg has died before this episode occurs, although no such textual ancestor survives. Alternatively, it may be a question of class, where Láeg’s messenger status makes him an unremarkable rider, compared to the upset of the social order in the other incidents.

Láeg’s arrival on the Dub Sainglend is a practical necessity, since the Líath Macha was wounded and a single horse would struggle to pull a chariot, but it also symbolises the collapse of Láeg’s role and identity. He is fundamentally defined as Cú Chulainn’s charioteer: his role is his identity. Even his name, *mac Riangaibra*, reflects it. Two texts provide information about Láeg’s parentage: *CCC-D* and *Fled Bricrenn ocus Longes mac nDúil Dermait*.³⁴ Both split the name into two parts, (S)rían and Gabur. These figures are imagined as probable Otherworldly beings, with *CCC-D* locating them at Síd Truim and *Longes mac nDúil Dermait* on an Otherworldly island. However, the most literal meaning of the names is *srían*, ‘bridle’,³⁵ or *rían*,

³² *TBC-II*, l. 4009, ‘Táinic Sualtaim reime forin Líath Macha d’óeneoch go robtaib leis do Ultaib’, ‘Sualtaim set forth on the Líath Macha as his only horse, to take these warnings to the Ulstermen’. This phrase uses the same word, *óeneoch*, as that used here in *ACC*.

³³ In *BMMM*, Conall rides the Derg Drúchtach with no reference to a second horse.

³⁴ *CCC-D*; *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDúil Dermait and Its Place in the Irish Literary and Oral Narrative Traditions*, ed. and trans. by Kaarina Hollo, *Maynooth Medieval Irish Texts*, 2 (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish NUI, 2005).

³⁵ *eDIL*, s.v. *srían*.

‘path’,³⁶ and *gabor*, ‘a horse (esp. a white one), a mare’.³⁷ It is likely that ‘Riangabra’ was originally an epithet designating a charioteer, which was interpreted later as a patronymic.³⁸ Láeg without a chariot is a disruption of the natural order, and Emer knows at once that tragedy has occurred. His arrival on the Dub Sainglend can mean only one thing: he comes to her ‘ar fágáil Con Culainn 7 in Liath Macha do fágbáil marbh ar Mag Muirthemne fo linnibh cró 7 fo cháebaibh fola’.³⁹

It is therefore apparent that Láeg’s role in Version B has developed substantially from Version A. In Version A, he plays a comparatively minor role as the charioteer and double whose death anticipates Cú Chulainn’s own; his loss isolates the hero before his final defeat so that his ‘last stand’ is made without anyone at his side. In Version B, he fulfils the function of companion and messenger rather than narrative double; more emphasis is placed on his friendship with Cú Chulainn, and he is given responsibility for carrying the story back to Emain Macha. While he is conveniently removed from the battle to allow Cú Chulainn to make his heroic last stand alone, he returns before Cú Chulainn’s death and assists him in his final moments. It is to Láeg that Cú Chulainn appears to address his dying words: ‘da bhfionnainnsi gomadh croidhe fola nó feóla do bhí ionnam, nach dénainn leth a ndernus do ghaisgedh nó do ghniomhartaibh’.⁴⁰ The result is a substantially more

³⁶ eDIL, s.v. ríán.

³⁷ eDIL, s.v. 2 gabor.

³⁸ Other charioteers with this name include Sedlang and Idh mac Riangabra in *Fled Bricrenn* (Lóegaire Búadach and Conall Cernach’s charioteers respectively). As mentioned above, Idh appears in the Stowe version of *TBC* as Fer Diad’s charioteer. Both the ‘bridle’ and ‘path’ interpretations are plausible; ‘straight-driving’ is one of the three charioteering gifts as recounted in *Fled Bricrenn*, supporting the ‘path’ reading, but the use of *riangabrae* in *Tecosca Cormaic* to mean ‘keeping bridled steeds’ suggests ‘bridle’ is at least as likely (eDIL, s.v. ríán); *Fled Bricrenn*; *Stowe TBC*; *The Instructions of King Cormac mac Airt*, ed. and trans. by Kuno Meyer, Todd Lecture Series, 15 (Dublin: Hodges Figgis, 1909).

³⁹ *ACC*, §44, ‘after leaving Cú Chulainn and the Líath Macha dying on Mag Muirthemne under pools of gore and under clots of blood’.

⁴⁰ *ACC*, §41, ‘if I knew that it was a heart of blood or flesh which was in me, I would not have done half of that which I did of arms or of deeds’.

emotionally developed character, one who is positioned as Cú Chulainn's foster-brother and granted a unique status as the sole witness to events.

Aided Con Culainn is not the only early modern text in which Láeg's role has developed from his medieval counterpart. He is absent in the medieval *Aided Óenfhir Aife*, but present in the later version of the narrative tradition known as *Oidheadh Chonlaoich (mic Con gCulainn)*, where his role seems to draw on his actions in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* in terms of enabling Cú Chulainn's use of the *gáe bolga*.⁴¹ The Stowe version of *TBC*, dating to around the fifteenth century, contains a developed version of the 'Comrac Fir Diad' episode, in which Láeg and Idh mac Riangaobra come into conflict with each other in their attempts to support their masters; in this episode, the *gáe bolga* seems to require considerably more involvement from Láeg than in earlier texts. But perhaps most interesting when it comes to Láeg's late appearances is *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus*, an early modern romance with no medieval predecessor.⁴² Láeg is given a significant role, described as a champion in his own right who is able to fight on behalf of Cú Chulainn, and their close friendship is emphasised: they are 'an dias rérbh'annsa a chéile san domhan'.⁴³ It is clear, then, that there are parallels and precedents for an increased focus on Láeg as a character and the foregrounding of his friendship with Cú Chulainn as we move into the early modern period.

But *why* is there a new interest in Láeg? One important factor may be class. Much has been made of the 'folk' influences in romance literature, although the relationship between the written texts and the oral tradition remains contentious.⁴⁴ The earlier, 'epic' literature is predominantly focused

⁴¹ Paul Walsh, ed., 'Oidheadh Chonlaoich mic Con gCulainn', in *Éigse Suadh is Seanchaidh*, ed. by Cuallacht Chuilm Cille (Dublin: Gill, 1909), pp. 13–28 (p. 21).

⁴² *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus: The Pursuit of Gruaidh Ghriansholus*, ed. and trans. by Cecile O'Rahilly, Irish Texts Society, 24 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1924).

⁴³ *Tóruigheacht*, pp. 74–75, 'the two who held each other dearest of all the world'.

⁴⁴ Murphy argued for the stories originating in the oral tradition and then entering the written record, while Bruford argued that they originated from written texts and were subsequently developed and retold orally. See Gerard Murphy, *The Ossianic Lore and Romantic Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Three Candles Press, 1961); Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Mediaeval Romances: A Study of the Early Modern Irish 'Romantic Tales' and Their Oral Derivatives* (Dublin: Folklore Society of Ireland, 1969).

on elite, aristocratic figures like kings and heroes; servants such as Láeg are mentioned only in passing, and rarely given much character development. The shift from epic to romance, however, brings a new interest in these marginal figures and the position they occupy within the story, and while Version B of *Aided Con Culainn* is not in and of itself a romance text, its late date means those influences are reflected in its approach to the material. This interest is probably not because the stories were by and for ‘peasant’ audiences, as Murphy claimed: Ruairí Ó hUiginn has demonstrated that early modern texts continued to be utilised for legal and genealogical purposes by the elite, remarking that ‘is cinnte nár don chosmhuintir amháin a bhí na scéalta seo á scríobh’.⁴⁵ Rather, this new class awareness highlights some of the concerns of a changing world. Michael Neill, in a discussion of *Hamlet*, notes that the word *friend* was undergoing considerable ‘social pressure’ during the sixteenth century: ‘[t]he hierarchical arrangement of human relationships in the dispensation of universal service, which early moderns inherited from the feudal system, meant that “friend” and “servant” could be virtually synonymous.’⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Emily Steiner recounts Jean Froissart’s fourteenth-century story of Irish kings learning ‘English manners’ in Dublin following submission to Richard II, and how the kings shocked others present by inviting their ‘minstrels and principal servants’ to sit with them and eat off their plates.⁴⁷ Some details of this account may have been exaggerated to highlight the Otherness of the Irish compared to their English counterparts, but it suggests a certain intimacy between lords and servants in late medieval Ireland, with the fourteenth century representing a turning point where English hierarchies were being imposed. Láeg’s loyalty and affection for Cú Chulainn may reflect this medieval conflation of friend with servant, a

⁴⁵ Ruairí Ó hUiginn, ‘Rúraíocht agus Rómánsaíocht: Ceisteanna Faoi Fhorás an Traidisiúin’, *Éigse*, 32 (2000), 77–87 (pp. 81–82), ‘it is certain that these stories were not written solely for the common people’.

⁴⁶ Michael Neill, “He that thou knowest thine”: Friendship and Service in *Hamlet*, in *A Companion to Shakespeare’s Works, Volume I: The Tragedies*, ed. by Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons), pp. 320–38 (p. 320).

⁴⁷ Emily Steiner, ‘Lords, Servants, and the Ethics of Medieval English Literature’, in *Medieval Literature: Criticism and Debates*, ed. by Holly Crocker and D. Vance Smith (New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 407–21 (p. 410).

paradigm that considers friendship and service as essentially intertwined. As a new recension of an existing story rather than a brand new composition, Version B is fundamentally looking *back* to the medieval tradition rather than pioneering new literary concepts, despite its early modern date; its relationships are thus medieval, from an early modern perspective.

Yet the changing norms of the early modern period introduce a tension between friendship as something that should occur between equals — an idea many humanist writers took from Aristotle — versus something that could co-exist with or be formulated by societal inequality.⁴⁸ Despite the obvious affection involved, Láeg and Cú Chulainn's relationship is fundamentally a hierarchical one, something of which Version B seems more conscious than Version A. In the Irish literary context, the 'disproportion of actual power and authority'⁴⁹ may be smaller than in the English tradition, particularly when the 'sovereign figure' in the relationship is a warrior rather than a king, and the 'vassal' a charioteer rather than a voiceless servant given no responsibility for proceedings.⁵⁰ That the Ulster Cycle texts are set in an imagined distant past would also have given the authors a certain freedom in how they portrayed this power balance, since it did not directly reflect a present-day social institution. The result is a pairing where hierarchies are fluid and complex: Láeg refers to Cú Chulainn as his *tigerna* 'lord', and *trénchodnach* 'strong master', in the same breath as addressing him as 'a comalta inmain'.⁵¹ Indeed, the use of hierarchical terms like *tigerna* for Cú Chulainn and *gilla* for Láeg is characteristic of this recension. Neither term is ever used in Version A, but they appear in both dialogue and prose throughout Version B. At the same time, Láeg calls Cú Chulainn *Cúagáin*, an affectionate diminutive one might translate as 'little Hound', and Cú Chulainn addresses him as *popa*, a term of respect usually used for an elder or social superior.

⁴⁸ See Neill, pp. 320–22.

⁴⁹ Neill, p. 322.

⁵⁰ See Nagy, pp. 216–28, on the charioteer's role as advisor and mirror image of the warrior.

⁵¹ ACC, §38, 'beloved foster-brother'.

The use of nicknames is not unique to this text. Láeg calls Cú Chulainn *Cúcuc* or *Cúcán* in *TBC*,⁵² and *popa* is used both in Version A⁵³ and in *TBC*.⁵⁴ However, they are worth highlighting here because they are contrasted with the hierarchical terms in a manner that disrupts our understanding of the power balance within the relationship. eDIL notes that *popa* is occasionally used ‘familiarily to an inferior’, but of the examples given, only Cú Chulainn’s use of the word for Láeg would fit this description.⁵⁵ Rather than suggesting that the word is flexible in terms of the status it confers on the subject, this implies that the hierarchy between Láeg and Cú Chulainn may be more complex than it initially seems. Alf Hiltebeitel remarks that, ‘[t]he repeated use of this appellative thus suggests that in essential matters their friendship overturns distinctions of seniority or rank’, contrasting it to Fer Diad’s use of *gilla* in *TBC*.⁵⁶ Indeed, while Láeg is *described* as Cú Chulainn’s *gilla* in Version B, both by Cú Chulainn and by himself,⁵⁷ Cú Chulainn never *addresses* him as such, instead calling him *popa*. While *popa* may be a term of respect, *Cúcuc* and *Cúcán* are diminutives; in *TBC-I*, the only person aside

⁵² *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I*, ed. by Cecile O’Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies, 1971), hereafter *TBC-I*, ‘a Chúcán’ (at l. 2090), ‘a Chúcacán’ (at l. 2702). *TBC-II*, ‘a Chúcúcán’ (at ll. 1488 and 2139), ‘a Chúcúc’ (at ll. 545, 1579, 1635, 1843, 3275, 3381, 3551, 4612, 4628).

⁵³ *BMMM*, l. 72.

⁵⁴ Elsewhere in *TBC*, Cú Chulainn uses *popa* to address Fergus (his foster-father), Conchobar (his uncle and his king), Lugaid mac Nóis (his foster-brother and a king of Munster), and Súaltainn (his father). During the *Macgnímartha*, he also uses it to address Culann (his elder and host), Conall (his foster-brother and elder), and Cathbad (his grandfather and an authority figure). All of these figures are Cú Chulainn’s elders, and in some sense his social superiors or authority figures. While Láeg is probably older than Cú Chulainn, he is not socially superior.

⁵⁵ eDIL, s.v. *popa*.

⁵⁶ Alf Hiltebeitel, ‘Brothers, Friends, and Charioteers: Parallel Episodes in the Irish and Indian Epics’, in *Reading the Fifth Veda: Studies on the Mahabharata*, ed. by Vishwa Adluri and Joydeep Bagchee, *Texts and Sources in the History of Religions*, 131 (2011), pp. 461–83 (p. 469).

⁵⁷ See, for example, *ACC* §38, ‘adaraid óig na hEmhna rim-sa gurobam gilla gan tigerna gan trénochdach agum aniu’, ‘the youths of Emain said to me that I would be a *gilla* without a lord or a strong master today’.

from Láeg to address Cú Chulainn in this way is Lug, his Otherworldly father.⁵⁸ In *TBC-II*, where Láeg uses the phrase more often, Lug's usage is absent due to his diminished role in this recension, but Fiacha mac Fir Aba addresses Cú Chulainn once as 'a Chúcúc'.⁵⁹ Cú Chulainn's relationship with Fiacha is not clear, but he later addresses him as his *derbchomalta*, 'foster-brother', and this fosterage connection may provide the clue to understanding Láeg's affectionate use of the term and the fluidity of hierarchy implicit in it.⁶⁰ We have already examined the evidence for Láeg as Cú Chulainn's *comalta*: if the two were raised together, and Láeg were the elder (even if only by a few months, as *CCC-D* suggests is the case), he may fulfil the role of an older brother. His use of diminutives and Cú Chulainn's use of the term *popa*, more commonly used for foster-fathers and authority figures, might then be evoking this familial relationship.

Version B also emphasises the *mutuality* of their relationship. This is clearest in Cú Chulainn's phrase 'do chenglamar aráen re chéile in cétlá'.⁶¹ The idea that they are bound to each other, rather than the *gilla* bound to the *tigerna* in a one-way deferential relationship, highlights their mutual obligation. On a basic level, Cú Chulainn is reliant upon Láeg for transport and service, while Láeg, as a person 'of one skill', is dependent on Cú Chulainn for his status and honour price.⁶² On a more complex level, *TBC* portrays Láeg as Cú Chulainn's intellectual and strategic equal, able to win every other game of *fidchell* or *búanbach* from him and capable of offering legal advice, to which Cú Chulainn listens.⁶³ Moreover, Láeg's responsibility for goading Cú Chulainn into rage seems to grant him a level of power over

⁵⁸ *TBC-I*, l. 2176.

⁵⁹ *TBC-II*, l. 1903.

⁶⁰ *TBC-II*, l. 2579.

⁶¹ *ACC*, §38, 'the first day we bound ourselves together'.

⁶² See Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law*, Early Irish Law Series, 3 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), p. 67.

⁶³ Scenes of winning at *fidchell* and *búanbach*: *TBC-II*, ll. 1577–79 and *TBC-I*, ll. 2703–05; for its significance, see Donna Wong, 'Combat Between Fosterbrothers in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 13 (1993), pp. 119–44 (p. 135). For Láeg offering legal advice, see *TBC-I*, ll. 1935–36.

the *ríastrad*, and therefore over Cú Chulainn.⁶⁴ This adds a layer of complexity to their relationship even before emotional bonds are taken into account. Furthermore, while Láeg is primarily given responsibility for bringing news to Emer because he is the only survivor, their conversation suggests the two have a meaningful connection of their own, albeit via Cú Chulainn. Emer remarks that ‘dobudh suaimhnech ar ccumann gus anois a n-aonionadh’⁶⁵ and asks Láeg, ‘nár aithin Cú Chulainn misi dhíot-sa’.⁶⁶ Since their subsequent conversation concerns the issue of whether Emer will remarry, it almost seems that she is asking whether Cú Chulainn intended *Láeg* to marry her, or at least to look after her and take responsibility for her protection. At a first glance, this seems unlikely, given Láeg’s lower status, but, after taking into account the fluidity of his position here, it may not be impossible. Thus Version B both emphasises the class distinction between Láeg and Cú Chulainn *and* subverts it, and this hierarchically nuanced relationship underlines the intimate and interconnected position of a master and his servant. Their friendship symbolises the tension of affection in an unequal pairing, and changes to societal understandings of class and friendship mean that it becomes a focal point of interest and is developed, expanded, and emphasised in early modern Ulster Cycle material.

However, while Láeg’s role has undoubtedly developed in Version B, his ultimate fate is more similar to that of Version A than it might initially appear. Both narratives ultimately represent the end of Láeg’s story, whether or not we see him die on the page, and both represent the silencing of his voice. This silence is unexpected, because when Cú Chulainn tells him, ‘7 ber mo bennachtain leat duit féin 7 d’innsaighi Emire 7 Conchubair 7 Conaill, 7 innis dóibh mo chumusc-sa 7 mo chathugud acum díghailt féin ar feraibh Érenn’,⁶⁷ he positions him within a broader Irish tradition of survivors, revenants, and storytellers, whose eyewitness accounts give stories

⁶⁴ For example, *TBC-II*, ll. 3269–75.

⁶⁵ *ACC*, §52, ‘our company was peaceful before now, in one dwelling place’.

⁶⁶ *ACC*, §52, ‘did Cú Chulainn not entrust me to you’.

⁶⁷ *ACC*, §38, ‘and take my blessing with you for yourself and seek out Emer and Conchobar and Conall and tell them of my conflicts and my battle-waging to avenge myself upon the men of Ireland’.

authority.⁶⁸ In *Scél Tuáin meic Cairill*, we are told that ‘ní gnáth orcain cen scéola n-eisi do innisin scél dara n-éisi’,⁶⁹ and texts like *Acallam na Senórach* are deeply concerned with the idea of survivor-narrator and the transmission of stories.⁷⁰ Yet Láeg is not given the opportunity to fulfil this function. The story as a whole is recounted in an impersonal style, with no identified narrator, and although he takes word to Emer, this is shown only via indirect speech: we do not hear Láeg’s perspective or feelings. This has the benefit of avoiding repetition, as the audience has already ‘witnessed’ the events, but upon closer inspection, the loss of Láeg’s speech is both striking and significant.

In considering this silence, we must look first at Láeg’s final line in Version A. After being struck by Lugaid’s spear, he says, ‘Goirt rom gaeth. 7c.’⁷¹ This *et cetera* is a sign that the scribe has omitted something from his exemplar, and Ruth Lehmann suggests it was a *rosc*, the obscure rhetorical poetry which characterises much of the text.⁷² It may have been omitted due to its obscurity, or because the scribe assumed that the passage was sufficiently well-known or well-attested not to need recounting in full. Since there are no other complete manuscript witnesses to this text, the rest of Láeg’s speech is lost. He has been silenced by the manuscript tradition, his power of speech denied in his final moments. Version B, however, offers two possible survivals of the substance of this lost ‘Goirt rom gaeth’ *rosc*. The first is a poem, spoken at approximately the same point in the story after Láeg has been wounded; the second is a *rosc* spoken by Conall Cernach upon learning of Cú

⁶⁸ Emma Nic Cárthaigh, ‘Surviving the Flood: Revenants and Antediluvian Lore in Medieval Irish texts’, in *Transmission and Transformation in the Middle Ages: Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Jason Harris and Kathleen Cawsey (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), pp. 40–64.

⁶⁹ John Carey, ed. and trans., ‘Scél Tuáin Meic Chairill’, *Ériu*, 35 (1984), 93–111 (p. 101, translation p. 105), ‘it is not usual for there to be a calamity without a fugitive (escaping) from it to tell the tale thereafter’.

⁷⁰ Kevin Murray, *The Early Finn Cycle* (Dublin, Four Courts Press: 2017), p. 31.

⁷¹ *BMMM*, l. 318, ‘Keenly have I been wounded, etc.’. Kimpton actually omits the ‘7c’ in her edition, but it is present in the manuscript. See TCD MS 1339, p. 121a, l. 3.

⁷² Ruth P. M. Lehmann, ‘Poems from the Death of Cú Chulainn’, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 49–50 (1997), 432–39 (p. 438).

Chulainn's death.⁷³ While the poem may seem a more likely candidate, spoken as it is by Láeg within the same narrative context, Kühns and Lehmann both argue on the basis of linguistic evidence that Conall's *rosc* is more likely to reflect and preserve at least some elements of the lost passage from Version A.⁷⁴ If this is the case, although the suggestion is tentative, then Láeg's words have been transplanted into the mouth of Conall Cernach — another form of silencing. Conall is allowed to grieve aloud; Láeg is not.

As such, Láeg speaks no verbal lament for Cú Chulainn in Version B, despite his survival. Instead, this role is given to Emer and Conall, who verbalise their grief for Cú Chulainn in a number of poems, both in the presence of his body and from a distance.⁷⁵ Amy Mulligan argues that keening and poetic lament are gendered female, stating that while there are textual exceptions, the mourning in most of these cases is still led by women.⁷⁶ Kristen Mills disagrees that this is the case in early texts, but seems to acknowledge that by the early modern period, this form of mourning is primarily the domain of women.⁷⁷ Despite its late date, this is not the case in Version B, and gender cannot be the primary reason for Láeg's exclusion from the role of verbal mourner: as well as Conall's laments, we see 'óglach Uladh ac caoinedh Con Culainn'.⁷⁸ Perhaps it is once again a question of class. Emer and Conall are appropriate mourners because they are of equal status with Cú Chulainn; if Láeg is perceived as a social inferior, he might be a dishonourable choice of mourner. But we have seen that he is presented as Cú Chulainn's foster-brother, and Cú Chulainn's respect for him is clear, making the absence of a lament intriguing. It may be a remnant of Version A's narrative: Láeg gave no lament there because he was already dead, so there is no space for him to give one here. But the mourning process is substantially

⁷³ Ní Mhaoláin, §64 and §75 respectively.

⁷⁴ Kühns, p. 275.

⁷⁵ Ní Mhaoláin, §§75, 80, 82, 91, 93, and 111.

⁷⁶ Amy C. Mulligan, 'Poetry, Sinew, and the Irish Performance of Lament: Keening a Hero's Body Back Together', *Philological Quarterly*, 97.4 (2018), 389–408 (p. 392).

⁷⁷ Kristen Mills, 'Grief, Gender and Mourning in Medieval North Atlantic Literature' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2013), p. 65.

⁷⁸ ACC, §52, 'the young warriors of the Ulaid keening Cú Chulainn'.

developed in Version B, and it is hard to imagine its redactors hesitating to include an additional poem on those grounds. Moreover, Láeg is not only denied a lament, but all direct speech whatsoever. His account of Cú Chulainn's fate is relegated to a quick summary in indirect speech, and although he accompanies Emer to Dún Dealgan, he does not participate in the conversations that follow. After his final line to Cú Chulainn before his death — 'Beir buaidh, a Chúagáin [...] ní tánic do saegal fós, 7 dígail tú féin ar feraibh Érenn' — he is given no direct speech for what in van Hamel's edition amounts to fourteen pages, or approximately 410 lines, almost a quarter of the length of the full text.⁷⁹ He only speaks again when Emer addresses him directly:

'Dursan ar sgaradh re chéile anois, 7 dobudh suaimhnech ar ccumann gus anois a n-aonionadh.'
'Dob fhíor sin,' ar Laogh, '7 ní bhíusa a ngillas d'aonduine eile go bráth tair éis mo thigerna féin.'

'Sorrowful our parting from each other now, and our company was peaceful until now, in one dwelling place.'
'That was true,' said Láeg, 'and I will not be the *gilla* of any other person forever after my own lord.'⁸⁰

By asserting this, Láeg lays down his social and narrative role and surrenders his identity. We have already seen that even his name describes his role: if he is not a charioteer, who is he, and what part can he play? The answer is nobody, and none. Shortly after this, he fades from the narrative entirely and is never mentioned again. His first act of direct speech after Cú Chulainn's death is to erase himself from the story.

Láeg's lack of direct speech is a deliberate narrative choice that cannot simply be attributed to a stylistic quirk of the tale. While other texts sometimes swap to a summary-style account, *Aided Con Culainn* continues

⁷⁹ ACC, §41, 'Take heart, little Hound [...] the end of your life has not yet come, and take revenge on the men of Ireland'.

⁸⁰ ACC, §52.

in the same florid manner, and there is plenty of direct speech and dialogue within these fourteen pages where Láeg is silent — more if the verse is taken into account. Emer, Leborcham, Medb, and Conall are all given the power of speech. Indeed, as we have noted, Conall's first expression of grief may be, in origin, a version of Láeg's death-poem. Láeg's silence also does not reflect his established character — his role is often a verbal one, speaking both to and on behalf of Cú Chulainn, and this text is no exception in that regard. Earlier in the story, he speaks a poem addressed to the Líath Macha, enters into dialogue with Cú Chulainn on numerous occasions, and generally displays his capacity for discourse.⁸¹ His silence here is thus markedly significant. We are denied his perspective on the battle, although he is the only eyewitness to Cú Chulainn's final moments; on a narrative level, he refuses the role of narrator that would otherwise be a survivor's place. Other eye-witnesses are questioned about the events they have witnessed, hence the *agallamh* ('colloquy' or 'dialogue') tradition. Láeg enters into no such conversation: his act of narrative transmission is brief, distant, and impersonal. Where we might expect to hear his voice, we are instead given only his act of self-erasure.

In this silence, we see a different kind of loss, and a different grief. Láeg may not have died on the battlefield as he does in Version A, but nor does he truly survive. With the collapse and subsequent surrender of his role as charioteer, he takes himself out of the narrative, and is himself lost. It is a version of Láeg reminiscent of the one we see in *Tóruigheacht Gruaidhe Griansholus*. Faced with an opponent he fears will defeat him, Cú Chulainn begs his charioteer to kill him and take his head back to Ireland so that his enemy may not dishonour him. Láeg refuses, asserting that not only will he not kill Cú Chulainn, he will accompany him into combat and die by his side: 'Óir is fearr liom sin ná a bheith beó tar h'éis agus go ndailfidhe maitheas na talmhan dhamh [...] iodhlaicfior misi ionnat' fheart, bu h-ionann leacht dhuit-si is dúinn'.⁸² Neither the medieval nor the early modern tradition gives

⁸¹ Ní Mhaolain, §§39–40.

⁸² *Tóruigheacht*, pp. 71–74, 'for better do I deem that than to be alive after thee, though endowed with all the goods of the earth. [...] I shall be buried in thy grave, one tombstone shall we have'.

Láeg the closure of sharing a grave with Cú Chulainn, but both represent the end of his story as much as the end of Cú Chulainn's: the literal death of Version A, the symbolic one of Version B. His narrative part is played out, and he has no more lines. Láeg is faithful to the end, and when Cú Chulainn departs the stage, so does he.⁸³

It is clear that *The Death of Cú Chulainn* represents an important text for examining the character of Láeg mac Riangabra. It depicts the culmination of a lifelong companionship, and its evolution over time offers significant character development for Láeg. The importance of class and identity to these changes means that Láeg can be positioned as a focal point through which we can explore how the Ulster Cycle's development after the medieval period reflects the new concerns and ideas of its authors and audiences. Moreover, a close reading of Láeg and Cú Chulainn's relationship in Version B contributes to our understanding of intertextual links: the claim that Láeg is Cú Chulainn's *comalta* suggests a connection with *CCC-D*, another neglected text whose position within the Ulster Cycle would warrant further exploration. In particular, examining *CCC-D*'s relationship to *Tochmarc Emire* and the parallels between Láeg and Conall in both texts would be a productive avenue for further research. There is much still to be done on both *Aided Con Culainn* and the character of Láeg mac Riangabra,

⁸³ One other text makes reference to Láeg's survival: the fifteenth-century bardic poem 'Cread tarraidh treise Connacht', in which Cú Chulainn's daughter, Bé Tuinne, comes looking for her father after his death and instead meets Láeg, who breaks the news to her. See Mary Leenane, 'The Role of Cú Chulainn in Old and Middle Irish Narrative Literature with Particular Reference to Tales Belonging to the Ulster Cycle' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Maynooth University, 2014), p. 188. This suggests that the tradition of Láeg outliving Cú Chulainn was circulating in the bardic tradition by the fifteenth century, and perhaps earlier, although as this daughter of Cú Chulainn is not attested elsewhere, the poem's usefulness for establishing narrative continuity is limited. By contrast, the Old Irish tale *Síaburcharpat Con Culainn* aligns with the medieval tradition of Láeg's death at Cú Chulainn's side: he is with Cú Chulainn in Hell when they are summoned as phantoms by St Patrick to aid in the conversion of Lóegaire, king of Tara. Láeg's presence is neither explained nor remarked upon, as though the author considered it inevitable — the two are inseparable in death as in life: see Kuno Meyer, ed., 'Síaburcharpat Conculaind', in *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, ed. by Osborn Bergin, R. I. Best, Kuno Meyer, and J. G. O'Keefe, 5 vols (Dublin: Hodges Figgis 1910), III, pp. 48–56.

but I hope that this preliminary exploration demonstrates the importance of both within the broader tradition of the medieval and early modern Ulster Cycle.

The Faithful Leading the Wise: Authority and Wisdom in *Solomon and Saturn II*¹

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Solomon and Saturn II is one of three related Old English poems preserved in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422, pp. 13–26, dating to the mid-tenth century.² The poem takes the form of a dialogue between the biblical king Solomon, and Saturn, a pagan noble from Chaldea. The characters discuss the nature of the world and the virtues of Christianity, covering themes such as book-learning, fate, and free will, until Saturn is satisfied that Solomon's is the true faith and agrees to convert.³ The fragmentary nature of *Solomon and Saturn II*, and the obscure nature of many of its allusions, makes it difficult to grasp as a work of literature. Most critics have approached the poem by identifying its connections with other texts and attempting to place it within the wider Old English literary tradition; links have been identified with the Bible and apocrypha such as the *Visio Pauli*, with Old Norse texts such as *Vafþrúðnismál*, and with other Old English poems such as *Genesis* and *Christ and Satan*.⁴ This has illuminated many obscure aspects of *Solomon and*

¹ I would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewer of this article for their insightful comments. I am also grateful to Rachel Burns for sharing her as yet unpublished work on *Solomon and Saturn II*; to the editors of *Quaestio* for their patience and guidance in the review and editing process; and to Richard Dance for supervising the dissertation on which this article is based.

² Neil Ripley Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 119; Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge suggest a date in the early- to mid-tenth century in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2014), p. 118.

³ The poem is fragmentary, and the ending is found in another part of the manuscript, detached from the main body of the poem. Most editors, however, believe that it belongs with *Solomon and Saturn II*: see Joseph A. Dane, 'The Structure of the Old English *Solomon and Saturn II*', *Neophilologus*, 64 (1980), 592–603 (p. 592).

⁴ *The Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, ed. by Robert J. Menner (London: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 54–70; Daniel Anlezark, 'The Fall of the Angels in *Solomon*

Saturn II, in addition to highlighting other aspects which will most likely never be understood. However, few have attempted to analyse the poem as a cohesive work of literature. In this article, I explore the poet's use of authority in *Solomon and Saturn II*, focusing on the dynamics between the two main characters and the ways in which authority is used to further the poet's stylistic aims.

The poem's two characters are set in opposition to each other, with Solomon representing Christian wisdom and Saturn representing pagan wisdom.⁵ However, the two are by no means equal, and the ways in which the poet represents authority undermine Saturn's intellectual standing, as Solomon dominates the wisdom debate, and the final victory of Christianity is marked by Saturn's admission of Solomon's superiority. In this article, I will show how the protagonists' respective authority is developed throughout the poem, and how Saturn's authority is gradually undermined in relation to that of Solomon, in order to reinforce the superiority of Solomon and his Christian worldview.

THE GEOGRAPHIC LIST

Of the two characters, the poet introduces Solomon first, simply designating him as *bremra* (more famous), before launching into an extensive description of Saturn's character. The audience's first impressions of Saturn are shaped by the list of places he is said to have visited, in lines 4b–23. This list suggests a long quest in search of learning and wisdom, highlighting the sincerity of his search and the worldliness of his experience.

Land eall geondhwearf,
Indea mere, East Corsias,

and Saturn II, in *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Kathryn Powell and Donald Scragg (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), pp. 121–34 (p. 123); Patrick P. O'Neill, 'On the Date, Provenance and Relationship of the "Solomon and Saturn" Dialogues', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 26 (1977), 139–68 (p. 147).

⁵ Jonathan Wilcox, 'Eating Books: The Consumption of Learning in the Old English Poetic *Solomon and Saturn*', *American Notes and Queries*, 4 (1991), 115–18.

Persea rice, Palestinion,
Niniuen ceastre, ond Norð Predan
[...]

He wandered through all the lands: the land of India, the East Cossias,
the kingdom of the Persians, Palestine, the city of Nineveh, and the
North Parthians [...]⁶

Saturn stands in contrast to Solomon, who is associated with his throne of Jerusalem and the divine wisdom invested in that city. Anlezark takes a rather negative view of the implications of Saturn's itinerary, arguing that:

Saturn's wanderings echo the fragmentation of the human race into nations at Babel, and it is possible the poet imagines him as a refugee from the biblical dispersal. Implied in the opposition between Jerusalem and Babel is the problem of knowledge. At Babel proud humanity reached upwards towards God, a gesture resulting in confusion; at Jerusalem, God reaches down, granting wisdom and peace.⁷

Burns also argues that wandering, both physically and mentally, carries negative connotations in Old English texts and that 'the act of wandering is connected to distress, ignorance and sin'.⁸ While there are parallels to Saturn's itinerary which might suggest that his list has negative connotations, there are also positive representations of travel in Old English literature such as the poem *Widsith*. Here, there is a prominent sense of movement and *wanderlust*,

⁶ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 7–10 (ed. and trans. by Daniel Anlezark in *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, Anglo-Saxon Texts, 7 (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2009), pp. 78–79).

⁷ Anlezark, *Old English Dialogues*, p. 46.

⁸ This quotation is taken from a draft version of Rachel Burns's book chapter, unpublished at the time of writing: Rachel A. Burns, 'The Wanderings of Saturn: A Psychogeographical Reading of the Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn', in *Ideas of the World in Early Medieval English Literature*, Studies in Old English Literature, 1, ed. by Mark Atherton, Kazutomo Karasawa, and Francis Leneghan (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

amounting to the impression that the narrator is experienced and knowledgeable about the peoples he lists.⁹ The closing lines of *Widsith* in particular express respect for the scope of the itinerant poet's sense of perspective and his ability to judge the moral virtues (or otherwise) of his patrons.¹⁰ Saturn's wanderings may therefore imply more ambiguity than is admitted by Anlezark and Burns. It is possible that the implications are twofold: as Saturn is still a pagan, his geographical wanderings may reflect the lost wandering of his spirit prior to converting to the true faith. Conversely, however, his travels may indicate worldly wisdom and knowledge which, although inadequate in comparison with Solomon's faith, still contribute to the construction of Saturn's authority as a man of knowledge and experience.

Wallis notes that several of the kingdoms in the itinerary are associated with unsavoury biblical events, such as Nineveh, Gilboa, Egypt, Philistia, and Jericho. She concludes:

Together, the locations on the itinerary are the geographical reflex of the fallen world in all its strife and iniquity. In an ironic reworking of the epic formula, the kingdoms visited by Saturn and from which, one assumes, he garners his wisdom are the exemplars of depravity and instability in the world of men. Not only do these typological meanings counter Saturn's prestige as the strong and wise intruder-*rival*, but they also epitomise the moral and physical decay of the fallen world that will dominate Saturn's later questions to Solomon.¹¹

⁹ See Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 'The Geographic List of *Solomon and Saturn II*, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 20 (1991), 123–42.

¹⁰ *Widsith*, ll. 135–43 (ed. by Raymond Wilson Chambers, in *Widsith: A Study in Old English Heroic Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), pp. 223–24; trans. by Sidney Arthur James Bradley, in *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: Dent, 1982), p. 340; see also Nicholas Howe, *The Old English Catalogue Poems*, *Anglistica*, 23 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1985), pp. 175–88.

¹¹ Mary V. Wallis, 'Patterns of Wisdom in the Old English "Solomon and Saturn II"' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Ottawa, 1997), p. 167.

The places Saturn visits are not, however, solely associated with sin and evil; his itinerary is cut off at his visits to

‘Cristes eðel
Hieryhco, Galilea Hierusalem’

Christ’s homeland – Jericho, Galilee, Jerusalem.¹²

It is doubtful, therefore, that the poet’s sole purpose in recounting Saturn’s itinerary is to undercut him. Despite the association of some of his destinations with death and destruction, it might be argued that his visits to significant biblical locations suggest a pilgrimage, an idea reinforced by Saturn’s claims of seeking wisdom. The placement of the geographic list in the poem’s introduction, which otherwise seems intended to establish Saturn’s credentials as a wise man, demonstrates his commitment to seeking knowledge as well as the range of sources of learning he has encountered before meeting Solomon. The insistent tone created by the length of the list contributes to Saturn’s characterisation as an opponent of formidable proportions, if one whose intellectual background is open to question. He is unable to benefit from the holy places he has visited due to his lack of access to divine wisdom, but equally his commitment to finding that divine wisdom protects him somewhat from being tainted by the sinful places in his itinerary. His questions to Solomon certainly display an attitude that is erroneous from a Christian viewpoint, but there is also an implication that there is hope of salvation for Saturn, if only he can embrace divine truth and convert to Christianity.

BOOK-LEARNING

Saturn’s access to book learning is also key in establishing his authority, and this motif continues to be developed later in the poem. The poet’s initial characterisation of Saturn reads thus:

¹² *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 22b–23 (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 78–79).

Saturnus sumra hæfde
bald breosttoga, boca cæga,
leornenga locan.

Saturn, the bold strategist, had the keys of certain books in which learning was locked.¹³

The reference to keys can be interpreted literally, evoking the image of books locked in chests or chained to lecterns, but unless we picture the bindings of books themselves being fitted with locks, this image is somewhat unsatisfactory.¹⁴ The poet's assertion that Saturn possesses the keys to these books strongly implies that he is able to access the wisdom contained within, and thus books are established as a basis for Saturn's authority in the poet's introduction. This idea is, however, undercut later in the poem, as the poet suggests that Saturn has been unable to benefit effectively from the knowledge he has consumed from books, when Saturn confronts Solomon with a book-riddle:

SATVRNVS CVÆÐ:

Ac hwæt is se dumba, se ðe on sumre dene rested?
Swiðe snyttrað, hafað seofon tungan,
hafað tungena gehwylc . xx . orda,
hafað orda gehwylc engles snytro,

¹³ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 5–7a (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 78–79).

¹⁴ Few original bindings have survived from Anglo-Saxon England, so it is difficult to tell whether locked bindings were common (see Ian Andrews, 'Design Structures of Treasure Book Covers from the 6th to the 12th Century' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2010)), though it is perhaps more likely that books were kept in protective boxes, since there is evidence for these: Michael Gullick, 'Bookbindings', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, Volume 1: c.400–1100*, ed. by Richard Gameson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 294–312 (pp. 304–05). There are also some references to books being kept (likely locked) in chests or bookcases, though no examples of these survive: Mary Garrison, 'Library of Alcuin's York', in *The Cambridge History of the Book*, ed. by Gameson, pp. 633–64 (p. 640, n. 38).

ðara ðe wile anra hwylc uppe bringan,
ðæt ðu ðære gyldnan gesiehist Hierusalem
weallas blican ond hiera winrod lixan,
soðfæstra segn. Saga hwæt ic mæne.

SALOMON CVÆÐ:

Bec sindon breme, bodiað geneahhe
weotodne willan ðam ðe wiht hygeð,
gestrangað hie ond gestaðeliað staðolfæstne geðoht,
amyrgað modsefan manna gehwylces
of ðreamedlan ðisses lifes.

Saturnus cwæð:

Bald bið se ðe onbyregeð boca cræftes,
symle bið ðe wisra ðe hira geweald hafað.

SALOMON CVÆÐ:

Sige hie onsendað soðfæstra gehwam,
hælo hyðe, ðam ðe hie lufað.

Saturn said: but what is that mute thing, which rests in a certain valley?
It is very wise, has seven tongues, each tongue has twenty tips, each tip
has the wisdom of an angel; each of these will carry you up, so that
there you will see the golden walls of Jerusalem gleaming, and their
chorus shining, the standard of the righteous. Say what I mean.

Solomon said: books are famous, they abundantly proclaim the ordered
mind to the one who thinks at all. They strengthen and establish
resolute thought, make merry the mind of each man against the mental
oppressions of this life.

Saturn said: Bold is he who tastes the power of books, he will always
be the wiser who has control of them.

Solomon said: they present victory to each of the righteous, a harbour
of safety for those who love them.¹⁵

¹⁵ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 52–68 (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 80–83).

The wisdom contained in books is characterised here in explicitly oral terms. In his initial riddle, Saturn refers to the books' tongues, suggesting that the ultimate purpose of the learning contained in books is to be spoken aloud — to be shared, discussed, and practised by its recipients. Wisdom, in this sense, is interactive; as a key component of the wise man's authority, it must be demonstrated aloud and tested against the wise man's opponents just as the warrior's strength must be tried against adversaries in order to be proven. This motif is developed further in Saturn's second statement, where he connects possession of knowledge to power and power to wisdom, thus constructing an image of authority based upon wisdom. Possession and control of knowledge, for Saturn, equates to wisdom, a quality which he suggests is useful in maintaining one's power.

The degree to which Saturn's concept of wisdom is in opposition to Solomon's has been the subject of extensive debate. Tiffany Beechy has argued that this passage forms 'a moment in which the riddle form exemplifies the two figures' rhetorical cooperation', and that the characters' statements ought to be viewed as complementary instead of being in opposition.¹⁶ Wilcox, meanwhile, notes the biblical parallels to Saturn's metaphor for tasting the power of books in Apocalypse 10.9–10, Jeremiah 15.16, and Ezechiel 3.1–3, concluding that 'Saturn benefits from books no more than the bookworm of Riddle 47, who "word fræt"'.¹⁷ Powell concurs with Wilcox, arguing that:

The key to Saturn's inability to find these truths lies in his improper use of books, indicated by his repeated use of metaphors of consumption to describe them. What is particularly inadequate about Saturn's choice of metaphors is that it emphasises the status of books as containers of knowledge and confuses the container with its contents.¹⁸

¹⁶ Tiffany Beechy, 'Wisdom and the Poetics of Laughter in the Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 116.2 (2017), 131–55 (pp. 144–45).

¹⁷ Wilcox, pp. 116–17.

¹⁸ Kathryn Powell, 'Orientalist Fantasy in the Poetic Dialogues of *Solomon and Saturn*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34 (2005), 117–44 (p. 123).

Metaphors of consumption are found in both positive and negative contexts in Old English literature. While the bookworm's mode of consumption in Riddle 47 is ultimately destructive, the (metaphorical) digestion of texts could also be constructive when it symbolised rumination or meditation over the texts' meaning.¹⁹ The implications of Saturn's tasting of books therefore depend on whether he ought to be read as analogous to the bookworm or to the ruminating monk. Saturn's paganism disqualifies him from the latter category, but Wilcox's argument that Saturn might as well sit gnawing on a book for all the benefit he gains from it does not, in my view, capture the poet's depiction of this ostensibly learned character. The answer lies somewhere in between, and the details of how each character describes books provide important context.

Saturn emphasises the importance of controlling books, and of knowing what is within them, while Solomon's emphasis lies more on the understanding and interpretation of books' contents. Books are useful, according to Solomon, as an aid to the righteous mind, not as a source of power in themselves. In terms of authority, each character approaches the book-riddle from a different centre: Saturn views books as a source of authority in and of themselves, claiming that whoever can control books will hold power. Solomon, on the other hand, considers books to be a useful supplement to anyone who is able to understand them, but not as an ultimate

¹⁹ On the connotations of consuming books in Old English literature, see John Scattergood, 'Eating the Book: Riddle 47 and Memory', in *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Language and Literature Presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer*, ed. by Helen Conrad-O'Briain, Anne-Marie D'Arcy, and John Scattergood (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp. 119–27 (pp. 122–23); Philip J. West, 'Rumination in Bede's Account of Caedmon', *Monastic Studies*, 12 (1976), 217–26 (pp. 218–21); Erik Wade, 'Language, Letters and Augustinian Origins in the Old English Poetic *Solomon and Saturn I*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 117.2 (2018), 160–84; Rachel A. Burns, 'Solomon and Saturn I, 89a, "prologa prim": An Exercise in Monastic Reading Practice', *Anglia*, 138.4 (2020), 618–48 (pp. 622–23 and 641); Anlezark, *The Dialogues*, pp. 41 and 101; and Irina Dumitrescu, *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 47.

source of authority within themselves.²⁰ For Solomon, ultimate authority always lies with God, who may grant or withhold worldly power as he pleases, while men act as mediators for this power, proclaiming the Word of God to others. The difference, therefore, is that Saturn has failed to grasp that the contents of books do not speak for themselves. Saturn takes the information he has obtained from books at face value but is unable to apply his own intellect to interpret and understand the material. What Solomon has to teach Saturn is that book-learning is not useful on its own; it requires a *stādolfast gedōht* to make sense of it, and that such strength of mind is found only in the Christian faith.

The exchange shows that Saturn's understanding of books does not reach beyond the surface level. As Beechy argues, the two characters are not in opposition. Rather, Solomon's statements build upon Saturn's and expose the incompleteness of his worldview. Thus, the poet is able to build the authority of both protagonists by indicating that Saturn is aware of the nature of books to such an extent that he is able to engage Solomon in a discussion about them. Solomon, however, remains superior, as his faith enables him to access their wisdom fully in ways that Saturn, as a pagan, cannot.

RIDDLING ABILITY

The poet also evokes respect for Saturn by demonstrating his ability to manipulate language, one expression of which is Saturn's ability to pose riddles. The book-riddle functions similarly to many of the Exeter Book Riddles in its characterisation of an object in antithetical terms.²¹ The Exeter Book Riddles work by describing objects in oblique or opposing terms, thus measuring the solver's understanding of the riddled object by their ability to

²⁰ The idea of reading as public performance rather than private pursuit in Anglo-Saxon England is supported by the work of scholars such as Nicholas Howe, in 'The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Ethnography of Reading*, ed. by Jonathan Boyarin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 58–79 (p. 60).

²¹ Craig Williamson, *A Feast of Creatures: Anglo-Saxon Riddle-Songs* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 3–4.

reconcile the poet's contradictory description into a coherent concept.²² Just as the rake of Riddle 34 is described in terms which invite us to assume that it is a living creature rooting around in a backyard, or as the body and soul of Riddle 43, which are described as separate figures, leading the solver to conceive of them as two separate entities, the book-riddle portrays an inanimate object as a being capable of speech.²³ The poet is thus able to demonstrate Saturn's ability to think flexibly and obscure the character of his subject by describing it in terms of its opposite. Saturn's characterisation of the book as a creature that can speak, therefore, is in line with the logic of the Old English Riddles and can be seen to demonstrate his understanding of the nature of books, as opposed to a lack thereof. Despite his lack of understanding of the deeper nature and spiritual significance of books, therefore, Saturn's ability to riddle the book shows that he has grasped them, at least as far as it is possible for him to do so without access to their Christian meaning.

In lines 104–23, Solomon answers another of Saturn's riddles, this one on old age. Shared features with the Exeter Book Riddles may suggest that the riddles contribute to the characterisation of both protagonists as insightful and intelligent, thus establishing them as authoritative sources of wisdom. Saturn follows the Exeter Book Riddles' convention of miscategorising the riddle's subject: he resists personifying old age, using instead the neuter pronoun *hit*, creating the impression that it might be a wild animal. He refers to it initially as a *wundor*, and conjures an image of it stalking the earth, destroying all as it goes:

Ac hwæt is ðæt wundor ðe geond ðas worold færeð,
 styrnenga gæð, staðolas beateð,
 aweceð wopdropan, winneð oft hider?

²² Patricia Dailey, 'Riddles, Wonder and Responsiveness in Anglo-Saxon Literature', in *Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. by Clare A. Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 451–72 (p. 468); John D. Niles, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), p. 4.

²³ F. H. Whitman, *Old English Riddles* (Ottawa: Canadian Federation for the Humanities, 1982), pp. 187 and 197.

But what is that strange thing that travels throughout this world,
sternly goes, beats the foundations, arouses tears, often forces its way
here?²⁴

Saturn continues to elaborate this image by variation, emphasising the creature's consumption of all worldly things and the impossibility of escape. Saturn's skill, one might argue, lies in both his ability to describe one thing (old age) in terms which naturally draw one to an alternative conclusion (a wild animal in this case — 'dragon', for example, would fit the riddle's description).²⁵ This ability to describe one thing in terms of another demonstrates an understanding of the riddled concept, as well as ability to view that thing from various perspectives; from a Christian standpoint, it might highlight the interconnectedness of God's creation. By having him pose a riddle to Solomon, therefore, the poet shows that Saturn has a certain understanding of the way the world functions and, by extension, builds his authority by characterising him as wise and insightful.

Saturn's next question demonstrates that despite his considerable ability to observe the world accurately and understand its processes, he is ignorant of why these processes take place:

Ac forhwon fealleð se snaw, foldan behydeð,
bewrihð wyrta cið, wæstmas getigeð,
geðyð hie ond geðreatað, ðæt hie ðrage beoð

²⁴ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 104–06 (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 84–85).

²⁵ Based on the description of the dragon in *Beowulf* — it is a destructive force to all creatures and hoards gems and stones; just as Saturn's subject cannot be deceived by any living thing, the *Beowulf* dragon is crafty and avaricious; *Beowulf*, ll. 2211–311 (ed. by Robert Dennis Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, in *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008)). There is some incongruence as Saturn mentions that stars cannot escape his subject, which seems unlikely in the case of dragons, but this is again a typical feature of the Exeter Book Riddles — the solver is expected to recognise that the category they are being led to is inappropriate because of small incongruencies, and it is only the right answer which fits all the features described in the riddle.

cealde geclungne?

But why does snow fall – it covers the earth, encloses the shoots of plants, binds things that grow, crushes and inhibits them, so that for a long while they are withered with cold?²⁶

Olsen identifies a certain progression in the questions Saturn poses to Solomon; he begins by asking ‘probing questions and riddles’, then transitions to ‘genuine inquiries into universal concepts like fate, mutability and worldly injustice’.²⁷ With the caveat that we cannot tell what has been said in the poem’s lacunae, it appears that this is the first time Saturn asks Solomon to explain the nature of the world, instead of trying to test his intellect with riddles. Where before Solomon’s superiority to Saturn was indicated through his portrayal as the wiser character, with sharper insight, the poet now has Saturn acknowledge Solomon’s authority by asking him to share his wisdom concerning the state of the world. Later in the poem, Saturn resumes this vein of questioning:

Ac forhwon ne mot seo sunne side gesceafte
scire geondscinan? Forhwam besceadeð heo
muntas ond moras ond monige ec
weste stowa? Hu geweordeð ðæt?

But why can’t the sun shine brightly across the ample creation? Why does it shade mountains and moors and many other deserted places as well? How does that happen?²⁸

²⁶ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 124–27a (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 84–85).

²⁷ Karin E. Olsen, ‘Shining Swords and Heavenly Walls: In Search of Wisdom in *Solomon and Saturn II*’, in *Calliope’s Classroom: Studies in Didactic Poetry from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. by Annette Harder, Alasdair A. MacDonald, and G. J. Reinink (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), pp. 203–20 (p. 203).

²⁸ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 162–65 (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 86–87).

Saturn's questions tend to return to similar themes. He seems interested in the fates of men and the general functioning of the world; his questions imply an interest in a deeper meaning of existence to which he lacks access. His questions approach this theme from various angles, just as his riddles treated their subjects in a creative and indirect fashion. Nonetheless, by asking, his ignorance of this deeper meaning is revealed and, consequently, his authority is diminished. Solomon, on the other hand, answers Saturn's direct questions with the same playfulness he displayed earlier in the riddles. At times, he answers Saturn's questions with queries of his own, challenging Saturn to arrive at the solutions himself by interpreting his words. His reply to the question above is a case in point:

Ac forhwam næron eorðwelan ealle gedeled
leodum gelice? Sum to lyt hafað,
godes grædig; hine God seteð
ðurh gearnunga eadgum to ræste.

But why are earth's goods not all shared out equally among people? A certain one, greedy for good, has too little. Because of his merits God will place him at rest among the blessed.²⁹

Solomon links the situation of men with the state of the natural world, suggesting that God has created inequality throughout the world in order to enable people to prove their faith and moral fortitude, so that they may gain glory in heaven. Instead of directly answering Saturn's specific question, therefore, he seeks to teach Saturn a different perspective: one which will allow him to understand the world for himself. Rather than giving specific answers, he leads Saturn to answer his own questions, and thus come to perceive the presence of God in all things. The nature of the opponents' relationship, therefore, changes when Saturn begins to ask his questions: where before Saturn sought to test Solomon's wisdom, to determine whether it is worth seeking advice from him, he now recognises Solomon's (and, by

²⁹ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 166–69 (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 86–87).

extension, God's) authority over himself as he allows Solomon to teach him to understand the Christian faith. Solomon's authority, in this context, is built on Saturn's recognition of him as mentor and teacher. Solomon, in turn, confirms Saturn's trust by demonstrating his ability to explain the phenomena that spark Saturn's curiosity.

CHRISTIAN LEARNING

When Saturn asks about the nature of the world, Solomon often replies with reference to God, implying that he is intrinsic to the functioning of the world. He stresses that the wise man is one who recognises God and God's work.³⁰ He frames himself as a mediator of God's word, and thus by deferring authority to a higher power he exposes the arrogance of Saturn. Saturn faces a glass ceiling which Solomon has circumvented by appealing to a higher authority. In his explanation of the state of the world, for example, Solomon does not rely upon his own knowledge, as Saturn does in his questioning of Solomon, but rather on his understanding of the Christian faith. It is God, therefore, who is the ultimate source of authority, and upon whom Solomon draws for his own authority in order to defeat and convince Saturn. Yet in order to make Solomon's victory more convincing, the poet has Saturn question the very nature of God:

Ac hwa demeð ðonne Dryhtne Criste
on domes dæge ðonne he demeð eallum gesceaftum?

But who will then judge the Lord Christ on Doomsday, when he judges all creatures?³¹

Saturn demonstrates his intelligence by questioning the events foretold for the Day of Judgement; if God judges all living things, and Christ was alive,

³⁰ This is a recurrent theme in Old English wisdom poetry; Carolyn Larrington, *A Store of Common Sense: Gnostic Theme and Style in Old Icelandic and Old English Wisdom Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 1–5.

³¹ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 158–59 (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 86–87).

then surely Christ must be judged? This question is likely to have been perceived as highly provocative by the medieval audience, attacking the very core of Christian belief. But the error committed by Saturn here is simple: God, in his threefold nature, is separate from Creation, and therefore cannot be subject to judgement.³² To an audience which understands Christian doctrine, which recognises Saturn's error and does not feel threatened by his challenge, Saturn's comment also has the potential to be humorous. I would argue that the sense of play we see in the riddles is apparent here too. Saturn's wit is expressed in his ability to play with words and ask incisive questions. At the same time, however, the shallowness of his understanding is revealed; just as the poet builds up his authority as an intelligent noble, so they undermine it by exposing the flaws in his worldview.

Towards the end of the poem, as Solomon's superiority has become clear and Saturn begins to ask him more genuine questions, the debate is drawn increasingly towards discussion of opposing concepts, such as fate and foresight or good and evil. Here, Solomon's authority is increasingly conspicuously shown to rest upon the power of God. In lines 273–97 Solomon explains the fall of the angels to Saturn; while the story is familiar, Solomon's telling of it is tailored to the purposes of the poem. The following extract from this section is a case in point:

Ða wearð se æðela ðeoden
 gedrefed ðurh ðæs deofles gehygd, forlet hine ða of dune gehreosan,
 afielde hine ða under foldan sceatas, heht hine ðær fæste gebindan.
 Ðæt sindon ða feondas, ða usic feohtað on;
 forðon is witena gehwam wopes eaca.

Then the chief of princes was disturbed by the devil's thought, caused him to fall down, brought him under the surfaces of the earth, ordered him to be bound fast there. They are the enemies, those who fight against us; therefore there is an increase of woe for each of the wise.³³

³² Olsen, p. 211.

³³ *Solomon and Saturn II*, ll. 278b–82 (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 92–93).

The fallen angels' sin is pride, the failure to acknowledge the authority of God; Solomon implicitly warns Saturn against making the same mistake and damning himself. The difference between Saturn and the angels, however, is that the angels understood the authority of God while Saturn did not, and his ignorance can therefore be excused if, upon recognising the power of God, he converts and submits. The poet emphasises the dichotomy between Christians and their opponents, which can be understood as an effective rhetorical tactic to persuade Saturn to Solomon's side. Having established the glory of God and the sinfulness of the fallen angels, Solomon asserts that one can only be with God or against God, thus putting pressure on Saturn to see himself on the Christian side and submit or else set himself up in opposition to all that Solomon and his religion stand for. This Saturn can scarcely do, having found himself outmatched throughout the dialogue, and he is left with no feasible course but to submit to Solomon and, ultimately, God.

As the *Solomon and Saturn Poetic Fragment* suggests, however, this does not necessarily spell disaster for Saturn. In fact, only defeat can result in redemption, as it is the failure to recognise God's authority that would be a true mistake on Saturn's part.³⁴ The superiority of Christianity is defined, in part, by its inclusivity; it is personal choice and individual action which determine one's fate, not birth or status, and it is possible to repent a life of sin and redeem oneself, if one has been hitherto ignorant and is presented with the opportunity to learn better. Saturn's capitulation in the face of superior authority is acknowledged as virtuous and noble, not humiliating:

*** swice, ær he soð wite,
 ðæt ða sienfullan saula sticien
 mid hettendum helle tomiddes.
 Hateð ðonne heahcining helle betynan
 fyres fulle ond ða feondas mid.
 Hæfde ða se snotra sunu Dauides

³⁴ The poetic fragment that precedes the rest of the poem in the manuscript, most likely belongs at the end of the poem: Thomas Alan Shippey, *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1976), pp. 138–39.

forcumen ond forcyðed Caldea eorl.
Hwæðre was on sælum se ðe of siðe cwom
feorran gefered. Næfre ær his ferhð ahlog.

[Solomon said:] *** should weaken, before he knows the truth, that the sinful souls should be stuck with tormentors in the middle of hell. Then the High-King will order hell to be closed up, full of fire, and the enemies likewise.

The wise son of David had then overcome and rebutted the nobleman of the Chaldeans. Nevertheless, he was joyful, he who had come on the journey, travelled from afar; never before had his heart laughed.³⁵

Solomon here continues in the vein of the ‘fall of the angels’ passage, detailing the horrors which await those who refuse to acknowledge the authority of God. The poet, meanwhile, concludes the poem by proclaiming the triumph of Christianity over the pride of mortal men. The emotional impact of defeat upon Saturn is emphasised; in Old Norse wisdom contests such as *Vafþrúðnismál*, the loser can expect death or abject humiliation, but the inclusivity of Christianity allows the roles of the opponents to be recast into those of teacher and pupil, with the final outcome of Saturn’s enlightenment as a joyful occasion for both.³⁶ The teacher–pupil relationship is exemplified in other Old English wisdom poems such as *Precepts*, but in *Solomon and Saturn II* it takes on a particularly dynamic and decisive form. As the debate progresses, the poet increasingly casts Solomon in the role of teacher, but unlike in *Precepts*, his authority is constantly questioned by his opponent. Solomon is successful in teaching Saturn wisdom, but it is a wisdom that is not defined by knowledge only, rather by the ability to interpret facts and to apply this insight to practical situations — to use knowledge to gain an edge over one’s opponents and defeat them physically or intellectually.

³⁵ *Solomon and Saturn Poetic Fragment*, ll. 1–9 (ed. and trans. by Anlezark, pp. 78–79).

³⁶ Elaine Tuttle Hansen, *The Solomon Complex: Reading Wisdom in Old English Poetry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 150–52.

CONCLUSION

Within the text, the authority of both protagonists is developed in multiple ways: Saturn's authority is based upon his worldly experience, his wit, and his intelligence, but Solomon, in addition to matching Saturn in his ability to craft words, relies upon God's authority to support his case, and is thus able to defeat his opponent. The poet explores the complexities of the relationship between knowledge, wisdom, power, and authority; as demonstrated by Saturn, knowledge is a prerequisite for wisdom but not identical to it, while power only translates to authority if exercised in conjunction with wisdom. Solomon's example of the fallen angels demonstrates the disastrous consequences of ill-judged exercises of power. Throughout the poem, Solomon subverts the authority that Saturn tries to establish for himself, by referring to the sins of the Chaldeans, for example, or demonstrating the uselessness of knowledge without the proper Christian context to interpret it. Despite Saturn's wit and learning, therefore, by the end of the poem it is clear that unless he converts to Christianity, he will always remain in a class below Solomon, unable to truly grasp the functioning of the world. After proving himself by answering Saturn's riddles at the beginning of the poem, it is Solomon who sets the terms of the debate, teaching Saturn that not just knowledge but understanding and interpretation constitute true wisdom, and compelling him to convert by establishing a dichotomy between good and evil, insisting that one can only be with God or against God. All these strands of authority combine to serve the poet's purpose of conveying a convincing and lively wisdom dialogue, encouraging the audience to respect the wisdom of ancient wise men while teaching the importance of independent thinking and interpretation, without neglecting to emphasise the overwhelming authority of God as the ultimate source of wisdom.

“You’ve Got a Friend in Me”; Chirographs, Transfers of Wealth and Demonstrative *Freondscipe* in Early English Lawsuits¹

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In the early 990s, two rival parties arrived at the ancient ridgeway near Cwichehm’s Barrow. They each hoped to persuade the Berkshire *scirgemot* ‘shire meeting’ that they were the rightful owner of the estates at Bradfield and Hagbourne (990×993).² To a modern spectator, Wynflæd was bound to win the case and see her opponent Leofwine’s claim dismissed. The charter S 1454 — known to modern scholarship as the Cuckhamsley Chirograph — records that high-profile figures, like King Æthelred’s (978–1016) mother, Ælfthryth, Archbishop Sigeric, Bishop Ordbriht, and Earl Ælfric had acted as Wynflæd’s oath-helpers when she first brought her grievance to Æthelred at an earlier royal assembly at the king’s estate at Woolmer.³ In the absence of a professional legal class, oath-helpers played a crucial role in the daily operation of the law in Anglo-Saxon dispute settlements.⁴ According to contemporary law codes, the role encompassed various responsibilities: an

¹ I would like to thank Alisa Valpola-Walker, Sarah Hanlon, and my anonymous peer reviewer for their helpful feedback on earlier drafts of this article.

² S 1454 (*CantCC* 133), ed. and trans. by A. J. Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 136–39. See also *Charters of Christ Church, Canterbury Part 2*, ed. and trans. by N. P. Brooks and S. E. Kelly, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, 18, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), II, pp. 987–93. For an in-depth analysis of the Cuckhamsley Chirograph, see Simon Keynes, ‘The Cuckhamsley Chirograph’, in *Languages of the Law in Early Medieval England: Essays in Memory of Lisi Oliver*, ed. by Stefan Jurasinski and Andrew Rabin (Leuven: Peeters University, 2019), pp. 193–210; Patrick Wormald, ‘Giving God and King Their Due: Conflict and Its Regulation in the Early English State’, in *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London: Hambledon Press, 1999), pp. 333–55 (pp. 343–52 and 356–57).

³ S 1454, p. 136–37; Keynes, ‘Cuckhamsley’, p. 197.

⁴ John Hudson, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England: 871–1216*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), II, p. 72.

oath-helper acted as witness, mediator, testifier, and warrantor.⁵ Wynflæd's prominent oath-helpers therefore strengthened her plea by asserting that Leofwine, the rival claimant, had committed a great wrong against her. Ælfthryth and the others swore that they had previously witnessed Earl Ælfric give Wynflæd the estates at Hagbourne and Bradfield in return for the estate at Datchet. In stark contrast, there is no mention of the names of those who had acted as witnesses for Leofwine, nor was he present when Wynflæd first raised the dispute at Woolmer.⁶

Upon Leofwine's request, the king referred the case to the shire meeting, with the instruction that the presiding judicial authority — the witan — should settle the case between Wynflæd and Leofwine 'geseman swa him æfre rihtlicost þuhte'.⁷ The dispute was consequently 'battled out in court' where the litigants were probably each able to present their own side of the argument.⁸ The finer details of the claimants' testimonies are not recorded in the chirograph but the text acknowledges that Wynflæd 'gelædde hio þa ahnunga mid Ælfpryþe fultume þæs cyninges modor' along with her numerous other high-ranking supporters.⁹ Wynflæd was close to swearing the oath that would confirm her rights to the estates. However, the chirograph's retelling of the case then presents an unexpected turn of events.

The witan declared, 'þæt betere wære þæt man þene aþ aweg lete þonne hine man sealde forþan þær syþþan nan freondscype nære'.¹⁰ The witan reached a compromise which benefitted both parties with no outright winner or loser because, as the chirograph implies, failing to pursue a friendly agreement may have provoked further conflict. The terms of this agreement dictated that Wynflæd should give Leofwine the gold and silver which belonged to his father in exchange for Leofwine's surrender of his claim and

⁵ Andrew Rabin, 'Old English *forespeca* and the Role of the Advocate in Anglo-Saxon Law', *Mediaeval Studies*, 69 (2007), 223–54 (p. 226).

⁶ S 1454, pp. 136–37.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 'as justly as they could'.

⁸ Hudson, pp. 49–50.

⁹ S 1454, pp. 136–37, 'adduced proof of her ownership with the help of Ælfthryth, the king's mother'.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 'that it would be better for the oath to be dispensed with rather than sworn, because thereafter friendship would be at an end'.

his departure from Bradfield and Hagbourne.¹¹ The text does not elaborate on the identity of Leofwine's father nor does it clarify why Wynflæd possessed some of his money in the first place.¹² Yet the chirograph reports that this agreement resulted in Leofwine and Wynflæd's exit from the shire meeting as 'friends' in an apparently uneasy truce.

This dispute's closure seems strange to a modern audience given the chirograph's description of the strength of Wynflæd's case. Nevertheless, the decision to reach a compromise between disputing parties and to seek *freondscipe* 'friendship', even when one litigant's claim is described as having outshined another, is a recurring feature of late Anglo-Saxon charters.¹³ Scholars have established the Old English noun *freondscipe*'s definition. David Clark surmises that *freond* was a fluid term that was not restricted to the modern standard sense of 'friend'.¹⁴ *Freond*'s meaning is context-dependant; it can be translated as 'kinsman', 'relative', 'lover', 'ally', 'one who is responsible for another', and 'supporter'.¹⁵ When recorded in charters like the Cuckhamsley Chirograph, it seems that *freond* signifies the less intimate but more diplomatic sense of 'one who is on good terms with another, not at variance'.¹⁶ Julia Barrow's analysis of *freondscipe* in Anglo-Saxon legal texts supports the term's translation as 'people not engaged in dispute' in the Cuckhamsley Chirograph. She observes that Anglo-Saxon kings often referred to their most powerful supporters as 'friends' to appeal to their

¹¹ S 1454, pp. 138–39.

¹² On the identity of Leofwine's father as Earl Ælfric, see Wormald, 'Giving', pp. 356–57.

¹³ For examples of compromise reached in vernacular property disputes, see S 939 (*CantCC* 137); S 1456 (*Roch* 37); S 1472 (*CantCC* 169); S 1474 (*Sherb* 17). See also Kathryn Lowe, 'Lay Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and the Development of the Chirograph', in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts and Their Heritage*, ed. by P. Pulsiano and E. M. Treharne (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 161–204 (p. 171); Andrew Rabin, 'Anglo-Saxon Women Before the Law: A Student Edition of Five Old English Lawsuits', *Old English Newsletter*, 41 (2008), 33–56 (pp. 34–37).

¹⁴ David Clark, 'The Semantic Range of *wine* and *freond* in Old English', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 114 (2013), 79–93 (pp. 79–80).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80 and 81–83.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

subject's loyalty whilst also asserting their own political authority.¹⁷ In addition, Els Schroder remarks that the use of *freondscipe* in late Anglo-Saxon wills is set within the discourse of social exchange where obligation and ties between past and future generations were created.¹⁸ Recent analysis of *freondscipe*'s meaning reveals that consensus-building lies at its heart in a legal setting. The importance of consensus-building in assembly politics is also well attested by historians, as Chris Wickham states:

Every polity needs to have techniques for creating public consensus, both in local society and around the affairs of rulers; if rulers do not establish such consensus, they fail in the end, and indeed if local judicial figures do not take the views of their neighbours into account, they will fail in the end as well. Assemblies are not an essential part of societies, even early medieval societies; but consensus is, however it is obtained.¹⁹

The connection, however, between the vocabulary of friendship and the actual techniques of consensus-building that it represents has yet to be fully explored; more analysis is required to fully understand the sudden transition from rivals to diplomatic friends. This article's argument is two-fold. Firstly, the language of *freondscipe* functioned as a carefully chosen narrative strategy that was designed by charter draftsmen (usually writing in favour of one involved party) to reinforce the practical methods used by litigants and the witan in attempts to settle late Anglo-Saxon disputes. Secondly, the practical methods of consensus-building and its corresponding language are

¹⁷ Julia Barrow, 'Friends and Friendship in Anglo-Saxon Charters', in *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Julian Haseldine (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999), pp. 106–23 (pp. 107 and 111–13).

¹⁸ Els Schroder, 'Friendship and Favour in Late Anglo-Saxon Élite Culture: A Study of Documentary and Narrative Sources, c. 900–1016', 2 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2012), I, p. 116.

¹⁹ Chris Wickham, 'Consensus and Assemblies in the Romano-Germanic Kingdoms: A Comparative Approach', in *Recht Und Konsens Im Frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by Verena Epp and Christoph H. F. Meyer, Konstanzer Arbeitskreis fuer Mittelalterliche Geschichte Vortraege und Forschungen, 82 (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2017), pp. 389–426 (p. 401).

connected by their requirement to be carried out in what was then deemed as the rightful setting for legal procedure: that is a public setting, in the presence of witnesses. The concept of narrative strategy and the publicity surrounding these agreements will be explored through three peacekeeping methods: the effect of charter draftsmen's use of 'friendly' language, the relationship between transfers of wealth and anthropological theories of gift-giving, alongside the role of ritual and smaller demonstrative acts of *freondscipe* in conflict resolution. The evidence to be examined are the lawsuit documents that appear in both Patrick Wormald's handlist of Anglo-Saxon lawsuits and Simon Keynes' checklist of vernacular documents generated by processes of litigation. They record disputes influenced by local legal traditions and, therefore, provide an insight into how consensus-building manifested itself both inside and outside of the royal assembly.²⁰

ON FRIENDLY TERMS

There are two sides to every story. Yet when reading lawsuit documents, one party's perspective is inevitably obscured. These texts are not non-partisan minutes of a courtroom case, but rather carefully constructed narratives designed to support a litigant's claim to property.²¹ It is widely recognised that the Cuckhamsley Chirograph was written to defend Wynflæd's interest in the estates at Hagbourne and Bradfield.²² This is evidenced by select narrative strategies operating in the main text of the charter, such as the naming of all Wynflæd's high-profile supporters and the corresponding failure to mention any of Leofwine's, as well as the assertion that Wynflæd was nearer to the oath than her rival.²³ Wynflæd's payment to Leofwine,

²⁰ Rabin, 'Women', pp. 67–69; P. Wormald, 'A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Lawsuits', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 17 (1988), 247–81.

²¹ Wormald, 'Giving', p. 348.

²² Keynes, 'Cuckhamsley', pp. 199–206.

²³ T. Valerij, 'Narrative Strategies', in *The Living Handbook of Narratology*, ed. by P. Hühn et al (Hamburg: Hamburg University, 2014); E. Mishler, 'Models of Narrative Analysis: A Typology', *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 5.2 (1995), 87–123. Narrative strategy is defined as the use of certain techniques and practices by authors to achieve a certain goal.

therefore, could be read as a sign that Wynflæd's case was not as strong as the partial record makes it seem: what we have in the Cuckhamsley Chirograph is a negotiated settlement in which Leofwine surrenders his claim in return for a financial consideration, all of which is summarised by charter draftsmen as *freondscipe*. As mentioned in the introduction, *freondscipe*'s meaning has been well explored by scholars, yet an examination of other 'friendly' phrases employed by charter draftsmen can further historians' understanding of how the written word could be 'weaponised' and used to reinforce the actual practices of consensus-building.²⁴

The Snodland Settlement (S 1456), 995×1005, is reminiscent of the Cuckhamsley Chirograph. It presents Godwine, Bishop of Rochester, as having a stronger claim to the estate at Snodland in Kent than his rival, Leofwine.²⁵ This document is littered with small phrases that were selected to prove that both litigants were content with the decision made at the shire-meeting. The draftsmen's aim was to promote the image that 'gifts', like Wynflæd's transfer of wealth to Leofwine, left both participants with a 'sense of completeness', eradicating any desire to continue disputing.²⁶ For example, like in the Cuckhamsley Chirograph, the Snodland Settlement reports that King Æthelred sent his seal and asked that the presiding witan settle the case as justly as they could. The phrase used to describe the instruction to settle the case fairly was *gesemdon*, formed from the verb *geseman*, which connotes 'reconciliation' and 'making peace' with another individual and is related to the noun *geseman*, which signifies 'to reconcile adversaries'.²⁷ In addition, the

²⁴ Warren Brown, 'Charters as Weapons. On the Role Played by Early Medieval Dispute Records in the Disputes They Record', *Journal of Medieval History*, 28 (2002), 227–48.

²⁵ S 1456 (*Worc*), ed. and trans. by Robertson, *Charters*, pp. 140–43. See P. Wormald, 'Charters, Law and the Settlement of Disputes in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 149–68 (pp. 157–62).

²⁶ J. Nelson, 'The Settings of the Gift in the Reign of Charlemagne', in *The Languages of Gifts in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 116–48 (p. 116).

²⁷ Joseph Bosworth, 'geseman', in *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. by Thomas Northcote Toller, Chis Sean and Ondrej Tichy <<https://bosworthtoller.com/49626>> [accessed 19 July 2021].

text makes clear that the process from discord to harmony was a fair one; the witan considered both *ontale 7 be oftale* ‘claim and counterclaim’.²⁸ After equal consideration, the bishop is described as having the necessary evidence to successfully defend his claim to Snodland.

The witan intervened at this point, with similar timing to the witan presiding at Cuckhamsley. They *eaðmodlice* ‘humbly’ asked that the bishop should allow Leofwine to remain on the estate until his death, then Snodland would revert to Rochester’s ownership.²⁹ *Eaðmodlice* is typically found in the opening formulae of contemporary vernacular writs. In these, the sender would greet the recipient with the verb *gretan*, modified by the adverb *freondlice* ‘friendly’ either alongside or in place of *eaðmodlice*, demonstrating the centrality of the ‘language of friendship and favour’ in the late Anglo-Saxon charter tradition.³⁰ Moreover, the Snodland Settlement draftsmen then used the verb *sibsumian* to describe Godwine and Leofwine’s reconciliation, which was the result of the witan successfully brokering this deal.³¹ The noun *sib* — meaning a relationship, ‘peace’, or ‘freedom from agitation’ — is the important component of this verb due to its widespread application in a variety of contemporary vernacular texts.³² The term is found, for example, in the royal law code *VI Æthelred*, which proclaims that on holy festivals, all Christian men should pursue *sibb* ‘peace’ and all disputes should be set aside.³³ In this instance, *sibb* seems to reflect the Anglo-Saxon kings’ broader anxieties surrounding the whole kingdom’s spiritual welfare. *Sibb* was also expressed on a grander, more heroic scale as in the epic poem *Beowulf*, where Queen Wealhtheow is described as *friðusibb folca*, translated by Joseph Bosworth and

²⁸ S 1456, pp. 140–41; Keynes, ‘Cuckhamsley’, p. 204.

²⁹ S 1456, pp. 142–43.

³⁰ Albert Fenton, ‘Anglo-Saxon Writs: Aspects of Their Language, Form and Function’, *Quaestio Insularis*, 16 (2016), 106–16 (p. 109).

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140–41.

³² Bosworth, ‘sib’, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online* <<https://bosworthtoller.com/27571>> [accessed 19 July 2021].

³³ *VI Æthelred* 25:1, ed. and trans. by A. J. Robertson, *The Laws of the Kings of England: From Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), pp. 98–99.

Thomas Toller as ‘the protecting peace of nations’.³⁴ By referring to Godwine and Leofwine’s reconciliation as *sibb* in a local judicial setting, charter draftsmen seemingly elevated the status of the agreement formed therein. It is possible to argue that a common vernacular framework was emerging in the Æthelredian era on how charter draftsmen should portray compromise; *freondscipe* seems to have been one component of a vocabulary concerned with promoting the resolution of regional conflicts.

Charter draftsmen also urged litigants to uphold those agreements by repeatedly emphasising the righteousness of the pursuit of *freondscipe* with moral, quasi-religious language. For example, the witan of the Snodland Settlement were described as *ærendracan*, translated by Robertson as the ‘negotiators of the settlement’.³⁵ The Old English term *ærendraca* appears in Ælfric of Eynsham’s (955–1010) homilies in the late tenth-century. He uses this term to describe the apostles, referring to them as God’s messengers on earth: ‘þa we hatað apostolas þæt sind ærendracan’.³⁶ The early eleventh-century Latin to Old English glossaries found in MS 32, 246 also translate the Latin phrases, *caduceatores uel pacifici* ‘messengers of peace’ and *apostolus* ‘apostle’ as *ærendraca*.³⁷ Associating those who sued for peace and *freondscipe* with apostolic virtue signals the contemporary perception of the witan’s moral duty to rule as King Æthelred commanded in the Cuckhamsley Chirograph ‘as justly as they could’.³⁸

³⁴ Bosworth-Toller, ‘friðusibb’, *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*; see Alaric Hall, ‘Hygelac’s Only Daughter: A Present, a Potentate and a Peacemaker in *Beowulf*’, *Studia Neophilologica*, 78.1 (2006), 1–7 (p. 5).

³⁵ S 1456, pp. 142–43.

³⁶ Ælfric of Eynsham, *De initio creaturae*, ed. by P. A. M. Clemoes, *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: The First Series. Text*, The English Text Society, 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 187, ‘whom we call apostles, that is messengers’, my translation.

³⁷ London, British Museum, MS 32, 246, fol. 14., ed. by Lowell Kindschi, ‘The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus MS 32 and British Museum MS Additional 32 246’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Stanford University, 1955), p. 162; my translation.

³⁸ S 1454, pp. 136–37.

The moral importance of reaching a peaceful land settlement is reaffirmed by the eventual destination of S 939, the Cookham Chirograph (995×999).³⁹ This chirograph describes how a widow, in the presence of the royal assembly at Cookham, offered the lands that formed her ‘morning-gift’ to Christ Church, Canterbury.⁴⁰ However, this grant of land could only take place if King Æthelred confirmed her late husband Æthelric’s will, which bequeathed his lands at Bocking, Essex to Christ Church, and acquitted him of all prior accusations of treachery.⁴¹ Æthelred agreed to this compromise and the assembly divided up the chirograph and gave a portion each to the widow and the Christ Church community with the third portion sent to the king’s *haligdome*.⁴² Whitelock translated this term as ‘the king’s sacred treasury’, while according to Brooks and Kelly, *haligdome* suggests that the king kept the chirograph in his reliquary.⁴³ The decision to translate the chirograph to a holy place possibly constitutes an act of symbolic political communication, inspired by contemporary penitential influence on royal governance, to emphasise Æthelred’s humility and his role as the mediator at the assembly in Cookham.⁴⁴ It is striking that Æthelred pursued compromise at Cookham, ‘for xpes lufan. 7 sea Marian. 7 see Dunstanes. 7 ealra þæra haligra ðe æt Cristes cyrcean restað’.⁴⁵ The connection made between divine authority and agreement shows an awareness on the part of charter draftsmen and participants of royal assemblies alike of the religious implications of their

³⁹ S 939 (*CantCC* 137), ed. and trans. by D. Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 44–47 (pp. 45–46).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46; Keynes, ‘Cuckhamsley’, p. 197.

⁴¹ S 939, pp. 45–46.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*; N. P. Brooks and S. E. Kelly, *Charters of Christ Church, Canterbury* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2013), pp. 1004–05.

⁴⁴ Charles Insley, ‘Charters, Ritual and Late Tenth-Century English Kingship’, in *Gender and Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford*, ed. by J. Nelson, S. Reynolds, and S. Johns (London: University of London Press, 2012), pp. 75–90 (pp. 77–83); Levi Roach, ‘Apocalypse and Atonement in the Politics of Æthelredian England’, *English Studies*, 95 (2014), 733–57 (pp. 747–51).

⁴⁵ S 939, pp. 45–46, ‘for the love Christ, of St Mary, and of St Dunstan and all the saints who rest at Christ Church’.

actions in a judicial context. Another vernacular will issued in Leofgifu's name, S 1521 (1035×1044), stated that one copy of the agreement would remain in the the king's sanctuary.⁴⁶ The charter's place amongst the king's relics suggests that draftsmen endeavoured to heighten the physical document's moral status.⁴⁷

Rendering the formation of *freondscipe*, and the conditions it represented, as a moral act, meant that any future challenge would be viewed as an immoral measure with dire consequences. This is demonstrated by the increasing use of 'curses', as found in contemporary diplomas and wills, which threatened those who might disrupt the peace with eternal damnation.⁴⁸ For example, S 1474 (1045×1046) — the agreement formed between Bishop Ælfwold of Sherborne and Care, son of Toki — reads, '7 se þe þis awendan wylle oþþe ætbredan þænca þære halgan stowe; si he awend fram Gode on domes dæg 7 fram eallum his halgum . 7 si he besenct on middan þam weallendan bryne helle'.⁴⁹ The compromises formed in the Snodland Settlement and Worcester Chirograph were similarly protected by a curse.⁵⁰ Danet and Bogoch observe that curses were a prominent linguistic feature of contemporary wills and land grants; they were mobilised in order to protect the document and to 'strengthen the acts of bequeathing performed in them'.⁵¹ The curse in lawsuit documents functioned in a similar way to that in wills, operating alongside phrases loaded with moral weight. Early English

⁴⁶ S 1521, ed. and trans. by Whitelock, *Wills*, pp. 76–77.

⁴⁷ Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 149.

⁴⁸ Brenda Danet and Bryna Bogoch, 'Orality, Literacy, and Performativity in Anglo-Saxon Wills', in *Language and the Law*, ed. by J. P. Gibbons (London: Longman, 1994), pp. 100–35 (pp. 114–16).

⁴⁹ S 1474 (*Sherb* 17), ed. and trans. by Robertson, *Charters*, pp. 200–03, 'and if anyone attempts to alter this or intends to take it away from the holy foundation, he shall be cast out by God and by all his Saints on the Day of Judgement and plunged into the midst of the surging fiery torment of hell [...]'.
⁵⁰ See S 1460 (*Worc*), ed. and trans. by Robertson, *Charters*, pp. 162–65 and S 1456.

⁵¹ Brenda Danet and Bryna Bogoch, 'From Oral Ceremony to Written Document: The Transitional Language of Anglo-Saxon Wills', *Language and Communication*, 12 (1992), 95–122 (pp. 102–04).

charter draftsmen called on divine authority to bolster transfers of land and wealth in return for the rival litigant withdrawing their claim. *Freondscipe* and the ‘gift exchange’ that it represented, was not merely diplomatic but increasingly came to be seen as a spiritual phenomenon, as well as being legally binding, and seems to have been part of the draftsmen’s mental checklist when writing up agreements during the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁵²

WITNESSING FRIENDSHIP

The legitimacy of, in Rory Naismith’s words, ‘payments which were not in any way intended as a purchase, but rather as a sweetener or gift to express goodwill or forestall a possible challenge to the beneficiary’, lies in the degree of ‘publicity’ surrounding the exchange of money.⁵³ What we would term bribery today is associated with private and personal gain, and such activities are usually conducted in secret, behind closed doors.⁵⁴ In their investigation of bribery in preindustrial societies, Bo Rothstein and David Torsello note that certain cultures perceive a ‘bribe’ as a wrongdoing when members of the community turn a ‘public good’ into a ‘private good’.⁵⁵ The definitions of public and private goods vary per society and the environment in which the community resides.⁵⁶ They observe that the pursuit of private gain is often avoided or kept secret as it is perceived as ‘endangering the delicate collaborative structure’.⁵⁷ Such a collaborative structure was evident in the tenth- and eleventh-century charter draftsmen’s choice of ‘friendly’ language.

⁵² Ibid., p. 104.

⁵³ Rory Naismith, ‘Payments for Land and Privilege in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 41 (2012), 277–342 (p. 281).

⁵⁴ Bo Rothstein and Davide Torsello, ‘Bribery in Preindustrial Societies: Understanding the Universalism-Particularism Prize’, *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 70 (2014), 263–84 (p. 270); Leslie Holmes, *Corruption: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 1–17.

⁵⁵ Rothstein and Torsello, p. 265.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 269.

This section explores the apparent need to reassure audiences that *freondscipe* was conducted out in the open, for all to see.

Many facts surrounding disputes recorded in lawsuit documents seem to be taken as assumed knowledge on the audience's part or alternatively are not deemed sufficiently important to be set down in writing or remembered by future generations. The draftsmen of the Cuckhamsley Chirograph do not state, for example, information about when the shire-meeting was held or how many months passed between Wynflæd's first attempt at claiming the lands and the dispute's settlement. However, listing the names of witnesses at the end of the text remained consistently important as a convention of vernacular lawsuit documents across time and space. The Cuckhamsley Chirograph reports that the witnesses to Wynflæd and Leofric's final agreement were, 'Ælfgar þæs cyninges geref a to gewitnesse 7 Byrhtic 7 Leofric æt Hwitecyrca 7 menig god man toeaca him'.⁵⁸ The number of names cited as witnesses to an agreement and transfers of wealth could, however, be much higher.⁵⁹ The Worcester Chirograph, S 1460 (1010×1023), the narrative of which will be discussed in the subsequent section on ritual, lists the names of fourteen individuals who witnessed the transfer of money from the 'winning' litigant Bishop Æthelstan to Wulfstan and his son, Wulfric who had presented a rival claim to the land at Inkberrow, Worcestershire.⁶⁰ On the page, the sequential listing of names resembles the witness lists commonly found in earlier royal Latin diplomas, but lacks the cross signatures and the column-like structure.⁶¹ The draftsmen apparently sought to emulate the convention of diploma witness lists, which supports

⁵⁸ S 1454, pp. 138–39, 'Ælgar, the king's reeve, and Brihtic and Leofric of Whitchurch and many good men in addition to them'.

⁵⁹ S 877 (*WinchNM* 25), ed. and trans. by Robertson, *Charters*, pp. 128–31. S 877 lists over forty names.

⁶⁰ S 1460, pp. 164–65.

⁶¹ On Latin royal diplomas' formulae, see Pierre Chaplais, 'The Origin and the Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 3.2 (1965), 48–61 (p. 56); Simon Keynes, 'Church Councils, Royal Assemblies and Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas', in *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker and Brian Schneider (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 17–182 (pp. 43–51 and 66).

the idea that early English charters were constructed as a body of inter-related texts.⁶² Vernacular lawsuits documents, for example, ranked the witnesses like diplomas in order of precedence: king, bishops, ealdormen, and thegns. Such is demonstrated by S 1460's witness list which begins with *ærest se bisceop* 'first the bishop', who is later followed by Ægelwig the *munuc* 'monk' and then a number of named priests.⁶³ Replicating the diploma formulae in this way invokes the diploma's long-established authority as effective evidence of property ownership. By listing the names of witnesses, draftsmen clearly sought to present the formation of the agreement and *freondscipe* as a public act or 'ceremony' like the ceremony of conveyance potentially used in the granting of royal diplomas.⁶⁴

The draftsmen of the Worcester Chirograph also asserted that there was present 'mænig god cniht toecan þysan'.⁶⁵ Stressing the presence of many unnamed others suggests that relationships of *freondscipe* were performed, and a successful performance required a large audience in real time. The recording of elite witnesses' names evinces that the authority of others was intended to authenticate the proceedings, lending both validity and longevity to *freondscipe*. Those present at the shire meeting were not the only intended audience for the chirograph: lawsuit documents were also intended for internal consumption by the heirs of the litigants who might refer to the written record of the agreement, along with the names of the original witnesses, should a later challenge arise. The witness-list demonstrated that *freondscipe* was formed amongst external agents, not solely personally assembled bodies like Wynflæd's named advocates. As noted by Alan Kennedy, the author of the *Libellus quorundam insignium operum beati Æthelwoldi episcopi* (hereafter the *Libellus*) makes the location and constituency of their dispute settlements explicit, asserting that the shire-meeting could serve as the appropriate venue for the necessary 'public

⁶² Keynes, 'Church', p. 68.

⁶³ S 1460, pp. 164–65; Levi Roach, *Kingship and Consent in Late Anglo-Saxon England 871–978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 27–44 (p. 27).

⁶⁴ Keynes, 'Church', pp. 66–67.

⁶⁵ S 1460, pp. 162–65, 'many a good *cniht* besides these'.

elements' of land transfers.⁶⁶ Vernacular lawsuit documents are similarly explicit about the type of public forum where suits took place; the Cuckhamsley Chirograph, for example, notes the locations of the royal assembly at Woolmer and the shire-meeting at Cuckhamsley itself.⁶⁷ The reason for listing names whilst omitting other pieces of information likely had a similar purpose to the recording of the suit's forum: both authenticated the public nature of the exchange and the contract formed between litigants.⁶⁸

The importance of publicising the settlement's terms and making *freondscipe* widely known is equally apparent in the chirograph's transmission. The Cookham Chirograph was 'þeos swutelung þærrihthe gewriten 7 beforan ðam cincge 7 ðam witon gerædd'.⁶⁹ The draftsman refers to this chirograph as a *swutelung* 'a declaration', echoing a chirograph's formulaic opening lines: 'Her swutelað on þison gewrite hu [...]'.⁷⁰ *Swutelað* is formed from the verb *sweotolian*, meaning 'to make clear' or 'to make manifest'.⁷¹ The reading aloud of the chirograph at the royal assembly evokes Julie Mumby's observation that late Anglo-Saxon wills were declared publicly in the presence of witnesses to discourage future challenge, given the implied approval of those who witnessed the occasion.⁷² The chirograph's transmission, like the will, was evidently perceived as an announcement for all present to hear, not a private agreement behind closed doors.

In line with Rothstein and Torsello's comments on the importance of conserving society's collaborative structure, the Worcester Chirograph and

⁶⁶ Alan Kennedy, 'Law and Litigation in the *Libellus Æthelwoldi episcopi*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 24 (1995), 131–83 (pp. 142–45). The *Libellus* is a twelfth-century chronicle, based on earlier now lost vernacular charters, commissioned by Bishop Hervey Le Breton (1109–1131) concerning land disputes in Ely during the tenth century's closing decades.

⁶⁷ See S 1460; S 1456.

⁶⁸ Roach, *Kingship*, p. 27.

⁶⁹ S 939, pp. 45–46, 'immediately written and read before the king and witan'.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 'Here in this document is declared how'. See also S 1454, S 1460, S 1462, and S 1472.

⁷¹ Bosworth, 'sweotolian', *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, <<https://bosworthtoller.com/29730>> [accessed 19 July 2021].

⁷² Julie Mumby, 'The Descent of Family Land in Later Anglo-Saxon England', *Historical Research*, 84 (2011), 399–415 (p. 401 and p. 415).

Cuckhamsley Chirograph both suggest that the agreement was made for the ‘greater good’.⁷³ It seems that *freondscipe* and compensation benefitted not only the two litigants previously locked in conflict but also the public at large.⁷⁴ One risk was the repeated reopening of a settled case, which would prolong judicial proceedings and drain the time, resources, and well-being of all those involved. In his handlist of Anglo-Saxon lawsuits, Wormald categorised the Fonthill Letter (S 1445) as four separate lawsuits carried out across a twenty-four-year period.⁷⁵ While the letter does not provide a complete objective view of the separate cases, it seems that a failure to broker a compromise (or *freondscipe*) between Helmstan and his rival Æthelhem may have caused this prolonged conflict. The frustrations of a prolonged debate are encapsulated by the Ealdorman Ordlaƿ, Helmstan’s advocate and most likely the author of the Fonthill Letter. He makes an exasperated plea to King Edward the Elder (899–924): ‘Leof, hwonne bið enġu spæc geendedu gif mon ne mæg nowðer ne mid feo ne mid aða geendigan?’⁷⁶ The ealdorman acted as the highest secular office below the king, a ‘form of provincial governor’; his primary role was the administration of localised justice.⁷⁷ Ealdorman Ordlaƿ even acted as a member of the presiding witan in the earlier stages of the Fonthill dispute.⁷⁸ It is significant that one closely acquainted with the

⁷³ S 1460, pp. 162–65.

⁷⁴ Stephen D. White, ‘“The Peace in the Feud” Revisited: Feuds in the Peace in Medieval European Feuds’, in *Making Early Medieval Societies: Conflict and Belonging in the Latin West, 300–1200*, ed. by Kate Cooper and Conrad Leyser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 220–43 (pp. 220–23).

⁷⁵ Wormald, ‘Handlist’, p. 261.

⁷⁶ S 1445 (*CantCC* 104), ed. and trans. by S. Keynes, ‘The Fonthill Letter’, in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Presented to Helmut Gneuss On Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. by M. Korhammer (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), pp. 53–98 (pp. 76–77), ‘Sir, when will any suit be closed if one can neither end it with money nor with an oath?’

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* On the arguments in favour of Ordlaƿ’s identification as the Fonthill Letter’s author and possible scribe, see Mathilde Gretsch, ‘The Fonthill Letter: Language, Law and the Discourse of Disciplines’, *Anglia*, 123 (2005), 667–86. On doubts raised concerning Ordlaƿ’s authorship, see Mark Boynton and Susan Reynolds, ‘The Author of the Fonthill Letter’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 25 (1996), 91–95.

⁷⁸ Keynes, ‘Fonthill’, pp. 68–69.

daily operation of the law in the localities would openly pose a rhetorical question which alludes to disputes being ended through mutually agreed financial settlements. *Freondscipe* represented a desire to avoid breakdowns in public peace. Accordingly, it was performed in public with the presence of multiple witnesses that could attest to the suit's peaceful closure.

RITUAL AND PERFORMING *FREONDSCIPE*: PASSING ROUND THE CHIROGRAPH AND TRACING THE BOUNDS

The role played by gesture in late Anglo-Saxon political communication is often associated with 'demonstrative piety' and shows of repentance in early English narrative sources.⁷⁹ Recent studies of ritual in Anglo-Saxon England have increasingly focused on the role played by symbolic acts in early English charters, but they have so far been restricted to the actions described in Latin diplomas and specifically demonstrative aspects of kingship as part of the need to recreate regnal identity with the newly formed Kingdom of the English.⁸⁰ The smaller rituals to be found in local disputes at the level of the shire meeting have yet to receive equal attention. Public demonstrations of consensus-building played a significant role in early English dispute settlement. They were not simply restricted to empty rhetoric used by charter draftsmen in passing and may be identified as acts of 'demonstrative friendship'.⁸¹

The physical chirograph itself was particularly conducive to depicting and fostering consensus-building in public whilst also acting as a symbol of peaceful settlement. Little is known about the process of making a chirograph and its transmission. Kathryn Lowe has, however, observed that all the extant

⁷⁹ See Levi Roach, 'Penance, Submission and *deditio*: Religious Influences on Dispute Settlement in Later Anglo-Saxon England (871–1066)', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 41 (2012), 343–71; Nicole Marafioti, 'Seeking Alfred's Body: Royal Tomb as Political Object in the Reign of Edward the Elder', *Early Medieval Europe*, 23 (2015), 202–28.

⁸⁰ Levi Roach, 'Public Rites and Public Wrongs: Ritual Aspects of Diplomas in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England', *Early Medieval Europe*, 19 (2011), 182–203; Insley, p. 76.

⁸¹ Julia Barrow, 'Demonstrative Behaviour and Political Communication in later Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 36 (2007), pp. 127–150 (pp. 127–28, 137–40, 148–49).

pre-conquest chirographs recorded exclusively an agreement in some form as opposed to a complaint or instruction.⁸² The early English charter draftsmen's choice of the chirograph for recording the dispute's settlement is probably due to its unique design: the narrative was written out identically two or three times on a single piece of parchment before it was cut into separate portions and handed to each of the parties involved.⁸³ Keynes has remarked that the Cuckhamsley Chirograph is emblematic of a broader trend with variant forms that began during the tenth-century, whereby the charter draftsmen would write 'CYROGRAPHVM PLETVM EST' where the division would be made.⁸⁴ Attempts at forgery and the illegitimacy of rival claims could, therefore, be revealed if the separate portions did not match up when brought back together.

Nelson, in her discussion on how the Carolingian kings created consensus, states that the ritual aspects of royal assemblies evoked 'an atmosphere of *familiaritas*' and reinforced the participants sense of themselves as a group.⁸⁵ The creation of a chirograph surely acted as a comparable shared ritual in early English litigious settings, as all parties received a palpable symbol of the compromise they had reached on the day. This tangible sense of *freondscipe* is reaffirmed by the inclusion of what is known as a marker clause, which provides the destination of each portion, on later chirographs.⁸⁶ The Kent Chirograph's marker clause, S 1472 (1044×1045), reads, 'nu [sin]d þisse gewrite þreo an is æt Cristtes cyricean 7 oþer æt Sce Augustine 7 þridde hæfð Leofwine preost'.⁸⁷ This quarrel was between Leofwine the priest, and Abbot Ælfstan and the community at St Augustine's, and concerned St

⁸² Lowe, p. 171.

⁸³ Keynes, 'Cuckhamsley', pp. 207–08.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Janet L. Nelson, 'How Carolingians Created Consensus', in *Le monde carolingien: bilan, perspectives, champs de recherches*, ed. by W. Falkowski and Y. Sassier, Actes du colloque international de Poitiers, Centre d'Études supérieures de Civilisation médiévale, 18–20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 67–81 (pp. 70–71).

⁸⁶ Lowe, pp. 171–72.

⁸⁷ S 1472 (*CantCC* 133), ed. and trans. by Robertson, *Charters*, pp. 190–93, 'There are three of these documents. One is at Christ Church, the second at St. Augustine's and the priest Leofwine has the third'. See also S 939.

Mildred's property. With Earl Godwine's help, they reached a compromise whereby Leofwine would cease his claim in return for an annual payment of five pounds and a life-interest in one sulung at Langdon and Ileden, to revert to St Augustine's after his death.⁸⁸ Firstly, it is worth noting that Christ Church, Canterbury received a portion although their direct involvement in the dispute was minimal: the community was simply witnesses to the agreement and the legal proceedings had taken place in their diocese. Christ Church's reception of a portion, therefore, seems to echo, as previously discussed, the recurrent need to call on external agencies to legitimise *freondscipe* in both the written text and judicial practice. Leofwine's reception of a portion is significant as he could be loosely deemed as the 'unsuccessful' party: he did not retain the property at St Mildred's despite his initial protest that he had legitimately bought the land from King Cnut.⁸⁹ More than one party left the gathering with a written document that recorded the day's events, signifying a sense of mutual trust between former rivals as well as a sense of satisfaction with the agreed terms. The survival of the chirograph's individual portions are evocative of an unwritten ritual that surely created a sense of shared experience: the splitting and conveyance of the chirograph itself.⁹⁰ Historians are, therefore, forced to visualise the litigants and their witnesses crowded around the scribe on the hill at Cuckhamsley waiting for the production of the chirograph with its potentially binding force.⁹¹ The little peace-offerings like the chirograph pieces that appeared alongside transfers of wealth proposes that no single strategy formed *freondscipe* in litigation, but rather a range of practices that interacted on the page as well as in real life.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Nelson, 'How Carolingians', pp. 67 and 81.

⁹¹ Nelson, 'Legislation', p. 92; Keynes, 'Cuckhamsley', p. 207. This ritual of passing round the chirograph is alluded to in chapter twelve of the *Libellus*; it describes the splitting and transfer of Siferth of Downham's will in tripartite form, see *LA*, chapter 12, ed. by E. Blake, *Liber Eliensis* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1962), pp. 84–88; trans. by S. Keynes and A. Kennedy, *Anglo-Saxon Ely* (forthcoming).

The decision to measure an estate's boundaries constitutes performative behaviour and the lengths to which charter draftsmen went to communicate a win-win situation to their audiences, both those internal to the dispute and external, like the litigants' descendants.⁹² The Worcester Chirograph, as previously mentioned, records a dispute that took place sometime between 1010 and 1023 concerning an estate at Inkberrow, Worcestershire. Wulfstan and his son, Wulfric, claimed part of the estate owned by Bishop Æthelstan of Hereford, who had bought five hides of the land from Leofric of Blackwell.⁹³ As the boundaries of the estate formed the nexus of the debate, the witan asked that the same group of unnamed men who had originally measured the boundaries for the bishop when the deal between himself and Leofric took place, to remeasure the boundaries in order to clarify the issue.⁹⁴ The shire meeting determined that the tracing of the boundaries along with the testimony of the estate's original owner, Leofric, was sufficient proof that the bishop had proved his rights to the land.⁹⁵ Yet the witan did not close the proceedings there; they asked that the bishop, Leofric, Wulfstan, Wulfric, and their supporters meet on an appointed day and trace the boundaries together again: 'heo ealle þa þa landgemære geridan'.⁹⁶ This act resulted in a collective decision, which included the rival claimants, to approve Bishop Æthelstan's claim to Inkberrow. The collaborative nature of the settlement was emphasised by the charter draftsmen with the repetition of *ealle* 'all'. The closing lines, for example, pronounce that 'þis wæs ur[e] ealra seht'.⁹⁷ The Worcester Chirograph's rationale for pursuing agreement was reminiscent of Wynflæd and Leofwine's compromise formed in the name of *freondscipe*: both texts emphasised the importance of limiting debate. All those present at the Worcester meeting exclaimed that 'hit betere wære heora seht togæ...de

⁹² Sarah Foot, 'Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record, or Story?', in *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West*, ed. E. M. Tyler and R. Balzaretta (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 39–66 (pp. 40–42).

⁹³ S 1460, pp. 162–65.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 162–63.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 'they all rode round the boundaries'.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 164–65, 'this was the agreement made by all of us'. On the importance of presenting collective decision-making at the royal assembly, see Wickham, pp. 396–407.

þonne hy ænige [sa]ce hym betweenan heoldan'.⁹⁸ The respective parties agreed that Leofric should pay Wulfstan and Wulfric a pound while they swore an oath that they should hand over the estate to the bishop uncontested.⁹⁹ The clear concern to publicise the agreement's purpose suggests that if not a rigorous written blueprint, a mental checklist existed for charter draftsmen to follow when drawing up a lawsuit document in which the language of *freondscipe* played a powerful role.

Multiple instances in the dispute record of litigants collectively riding round the boundaries of an estate suggests that the Worcester Chirograph was not an isolated incident, nor was it a quirk of the regional politics: it was a response available to the witan and litigants should the boundaries specifically be at stake.¹⁰⁰ The *Libellus* tells of a similar case where representatives of both sides of a property dispute measured the bounds together as a public gesture of fair judicial process. Ælfwold and his wife tried to sell Abbot Byrhtnoth three hides of land at Chippenham but the couple were unable to prove that they possessed the hides intact on the appointed day of the sale.¹⁰¹ To resolve this issue, men from both sides, 'uidelicet de hominibus abbatis et de hominibus mulieris' were chosen to measure the boundaries.¹⁰² It is possible to surmise from the Worcester Chirograph and the *Libellus* that tracing the boundaries was an example of what Christina Pössel describes as harmony created by 'the ritualised frame'; it was a demonstrative action that conveyed peace and honesty between parties.¹⁰³ The estate at issue was an ideal location to settle a dispute concerning contested land boundaries; this decision reflected the value placed on visibility and accountability in the late Anglo-Saxon legal tradition.¹⁰⁴ The charter draftsmen of the Worcester Chirograph asserted that the witan sought to

⁹⁸ S 1460, pp. 162–63, 'it would be better for both parties to come to an agreement than to keep up any quarrel between them'.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 164–65.

¹⁰⁰ Rabin, 'Women', pp. 34–37.

¹⁰¹ *LA*, ch. 14, pp. 89–90.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 'that is from the supporters of the abbot and supporters of the woman'.

¹⁰³ Christina Pössel, 'The Magic of Early Medieval Ritual', *Early Medieval Europe*, 17 (2009), 111–25 (p. 122); Barrow, 'Demonstrative', p. 131.

¹⁰⁴ Kennedy, 'Law', pp. 138–42.

include and build trust with the opposing litigants, Wulfstan and Wulfric: those presiding over the debate did not simply accept the bishop's word that the boundaries had been assessed correctly. The inclusion of both parties indicates that compromise was not meant to be forcefully imposed on the plaintiff but was instead expected to involve the participation of both litigants.

The chirograph evidence also highlights the previous estate owners' (who held the estate before selling it to one of the warring parties in the current dispute) active participation in the consensus-building process.¹⁰⁵ That Leofric offered money to the rival litigants alongside his participation in the tracing of the bounds suggests he held a stake in the settlement's closure, and it is possible that he might have been required to return money paid by Bishop Æthelstan should he lose some of the lands at Inkberrow. I postulate that the payment by Leofric, as it appeared alongside Wulfstan and Wulfric's assent to the bishop upon tracing the bounds, was a further mark of goodwill that also functioned to generate an alliance of sorts.

The agreements in the Cuckhamsley and Worcester Chirographs resonate not only with Rothstein and Torsello's idea of public gain for public good but also Abel Polese's ethnographic study of informal payments in modern Ukrainian hospitals. Polese explains that although medical services are free, it is common practice that patients often pay a small fee to their doctor with the expectation that the doctor will reciprocate this with simple favours, such as wider appointment availability or extra medical advice.¹⁰⁶ One patient even stated that payment to her doctor enabled them to form a friendship.¹⁰⁷ These transactional unspoken agreements are more complex than simple bribes and instead reside in the blurred boundaries between bribery and gift-giving.¹⁰⁸ They are designed to create a mutual dependence, generating social obligations to receive and reciprocate.¹⁰⁹ The Worcester Chirograph certainly mirrors Polese's study on reciprocity through payment since all parties determined prior to Leofric's payment to Wulfstan and

¹⁰⁵ See Earl Ælfric's role as Wynflæd's witness in S 1454, pp. 136–37.

¹⁰⁶ Polese, pp. 386–90.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 387–89.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

Wulfric that Bishop Æthelstan was the rightful owner of Inkberrow in its entirety and that the deal between him and Leofric should stand. Polese's research, therefore, offers an alternative mode of thought about cash payments in early English disputing processes; they functioned as carefully crafted agreements based on notions of public friendship and not simply *ad hoc* 'sweeteners to the deal'.

CONCLUSION

This examination of transfers of wealth and the relationships of *freondscipe* in early English lawsuit documents, has demonstrated that there was no single strategy employed when resolving tenth- and eleventh-century property disputes. Financial considerations were often paired with other smaller acts of consensus-building, and carefully chosen phrases in the texts crystallised those acts in public memory and emphasised the importance of peace-offerings. These 'literary' and practical techniques established mutual dependence and trust between litigants so that they could accept and participate in exchanges of lands and money with the expectation that the deal would stand the test of time.¹¹⁰ The language of *freondscipe*, the survival of physical chirograph portions, and the recording of ritualised acts all worked together to deter future potential rivals from levelling another claim against the formerly disputed estate.

By bringing anthropological theories like those of Polese, and Rothstein and Torsello, into conversation with early English sources, one can associate offers of *feo* 'money' in the specialised context of the late tenth-century property dispute with concepts of public reciprocity. The exchange of money and lands in return for uncontested property rights, as seen in the Cuckhamsley and Worcester Chirographs as well as the Snodland Settlement, required an audience to be considered a legitimate legal response to civil conflict.¹¹¹ Charter draftsmen were eager to highlight the public aspects of these ceremonies by emphasising the presence of witnesses, the reading aloud

¹¹⁰ Pössel, p. 123.

¹¹¹ Barrow, 'Demonstrative', p. 141.

of documents, and the participation of both litigants at various stages of the disputing process, such as the collective tracing of the boundaries of an estate.

These texts are preserved in different archives and were produced in different localities with different individuals, over several decades. Nevertheless, the similarities between the texts' terms of compromise would suggest that lawsuit documents and legal procedures, and the ways in which charter draftsmen represented them, were not as disparate as previously thought by historians, as notions of gift-giving and public good prevailed in the late Anglo-Saxon judicial mindset.¹¹² Moreover, charter draftsmen's borrowing from other contemporary vernacular and Latin charter traditions — such as wills, writs, and diplomas — confirms that lawsuit documents that conveyed litigant interactions were not written in abstract, but were instead highly crafted written works.

Returning to Wynflæd and Leofwine's sudden transition from rivals to friends, it is impossible to know how content or reluctant they were when it came to pursuing compromise. Nonetheless, the zeal with which charter draftsmen and members of the witan attempted to demonstrate that *freondscipe* had been properly consolidated through collective ritual, collective participation, and collective agreement, shows how important it was that litigants were seen as content and that disputes would remain closed for all society's benefit.

¹¹² Rabin, 'Women', pp. 37–39.

*Lymbo yw or'nys dhodho: Does Gwreans an Bys Reflect Post-Reformation Belief in Cornwall?*¹

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Cornwall's rich history of medieval religious drama is almost unrivalled in Britain, although perhaps less well-known than the contemporary York and Wakefield mystery play cycles. The Cornish mystery and miracle plays were used, as with other dramas written prior to the Reformation, to illustrate Biblical, legendary, and apocryphal teachings to an illiterate population and thus were written in the vernacular language, in this case, Cornish. I shall be using the term mystery play to refer to the three-part *Ordinalia: Origo Mundi, Passio Christi*, and *Resurrexio Domini*, which tells the Creation story and events of Christ's Passion, and the term miracle play to refer to the plays *Bewnans Meriasek* and *Bewnans Ke*, which tell the stories of the lives of the Cornish saints Meriadoc and Kea interspersed with other stories.² There is a scholarly consensus that these plays and a Passion poem (*Pascon agan Arluth*), also written to entertain and teach an illiterate audience about the events of Holy Week, were written at Glasney College in Penryn.³ Glasney was the key centre of learning in Cornwall during the medieval period. Rather than being a monastery, it was a collegiate church and housed secular canons instead of monks. *Pascon agan Arluth* would appear to predate the *Ordinalia*

¹ *Gwreans an Bys*, ed. by Ray Edwards (Sutton Coldfield: Cornish Language Board, 2000), hereafter *Gwreans an Bys*, p. 56, l. 2062, 'Limbo is ordained for him'. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. I would like to thank my peer reviewers and the editors for their comments and assistance with the previous drafts of this paper which is an exploration of part of my PhD thesis.

² *Cornish Ordinalia*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 219; *Beunans Ke*, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, NLW MS 23849D; *Beunans Meriasek*, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth MS 105B.

³ *Pascon agan Arluth*, London, British Library, Harley MS 1782. Brian Murdoch, *Cornish Literature* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993), p. 41. See also Jane A. Bakere, *The Cornish Ordinalia, A Critical Study* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1980), pp. 12–49.

cycle, with both works most likely written in the fourteenth century.⁴ However, the earliest extant manuscripts date from the fifteenth century.⁵ Scholarship in the field of medieval drama agrees that the length of the extant plays suggests that they were staged over several days, and that as well as forming the intended audience, the local population would also perform the drama.⁶

Gwreans an Bys ('The Creation of the World') is a further mystery play written in Cornish. Its only source is a manuscript in the Bodleian Library with the following colophon: 'Here endeth the creacion of the world with Noyes flood written by William Jordan: the xiith of August 1611.'⁷ Although there are questions regarding both the date of its composition and its author, it is regarded by Neuss as the last surviving example of a mystery play written in Britain.⁸ Previous studies of the play have concentrated on its language, its possible date of composition, and its relationship to the earlier play *Origo Mundi*. However, these leave many questions still to be answered, not least of which are: does the play reflect post-Reformation belief in Cornwall? Why was the play written in Cornish? Why was a mystery play written at such a late date? Was this an attempt to preserve a mystery play for posterity or to slip a play with unpalatable ideas past censorship from London? Was Jordan himself a recusant?

Neuss has written the key studies analysing the play. Her examination of the relationship between *Gwreans an Bys* and *Origo Mundi* has been instrumental in understanding the composition of the play. Bruch and George, continuing the earlier work by Neuss, have shown through careful comparison of the texts that only seven percent of *Gwreans an Bys* is actually taken from the earlier play.⁹ Neuss previously noted that 'identical lines occur

⁴ Murdoch, *Cornish Literature*, p. 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁷ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 219, fol. 27^r.

⁸ Paula Neuss, 'Memorial Reconstruction in a Cornish Miracle Play', *Comparative Drama*, 5.2 (1971), 129–137; Paula Neuss, *The Creacion of the World: A Critical Edition and Translation* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1983), p. xvii.

⁹ Ken George, *Tybyansow Nowydh a-dro dhe 'Gwrians an Bys': New Ideas About 'The Creation of the World'*, unpublished paper given at the Cornish Language Weekend, 10

in only three episodes in the plays: the Creation and Fall, the Cursing of Cain, and the Noah sequence. More significantly, of the 178 lines, 127 are among the speeches of one character, God the Father.¹⁰ Neuss concluded that the author of *Gwreans an Bys* had access to the actor's part of the earlier *Origo Mundi*, and thus had included these lines within their own play.

There is evidence that actors in medieval plays would have their own lines written out for them separately. It is possible then that the author had either seen the written lines or remembered them from a performance of *Origo Mundi*. Neuss argued that Jordan was merely a scribe and that those lines in *Gwreans an Bys* which are from the earlier play but are spoken by other characters come either from the cues to speeches by God or occur elsewhere in scenes in which he was present.¹¹ However, it is interesting to note that all except one of God's speeches in the manuscript are marked by a manicule (the speech missing a manicule starts at line 962).¹² Two other speeches are also marked in this way: that by the Angel of God of the third degree beginning at line 206, and that of Michael beginning at line 307.¹³ Was Jordan an actor who performed as God the Father in *Gwreans an Bys*? Perhaps he also felt it necessary to mark lines from two other characters for dramatic reasons?

Neuss concludes there are similarities between *Origo Mundi* and *Gwreans an Bys*:

Some [of these] differences in treatment, however, may be conscious alterations by the dramatist, in accordance with his intention in the play, and need not necessarily militate against *Origo Mundi* as a source

April 2021. See Benjamin Frederick Bruch, 'Cornish Verse Forms and the Evolution of Cornish Prosody, c. 1350–1611' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 2005), pp. 349–80.

¹⁰ Neuss, 'Memorial Reconstruction', p. 131.

¹¹ Neuss, 'Memorial Reconstruction', p. 131.

¹² Manicules can be found in the following locations: MS Bodley 219, fols 1^r, 3^r, 4^r, 5^r, 5^v, 10^r, 10^v, 11^r, 12^v, 13^r, 14^v, 15^v, 22^v, 23^v, 24^r, 26^r, and 26^v.

¹³ MS Bodley 219, fols 3^r and 4^r.

for the episodes the plays have in common, even if the relationship is not as intimate as that for the three scenes where lines are duplicated.¹⁴

The antiquarians who studied Cornish in the nineteenth century and produced editions and translations of the plays also conclude that Jordan was not the author of the play, although this is because they believed the play was an altered copy of *Origo Mundi*. Davies Gilbert, in his 1827 edition, does not consider Jordan the author but does suggest that he translated another European mystery play into Cornish:

I presume, he translated it, more or less freely from some other language; since there seems very little probability of the work being original, as it nearly coincides in plan, in personifications, and in sentiment, with others, which for centuries before had delighted all the European nations, enclosed within the pale of the Church of Rome.¹⁵

Gilbert notes that the proportion of English words in *Gwreans an Bys* is greater than in the medieval plays and the Passion Poem, thus making its composition more recent than these other works.¹⁶ Following Gilbert, Whitley Stokes, in his 1864 edition, suggested that Jordan was the transcriber and dates the play as being written in the period before the Reformation:

We may remark that the author imitates and often copies the ordinals called 'Origo Mundi', [...] Some parts, however, are his own; for example the fall of Lucifer and his angels, Cain's death, Enoch's translation, Seth's prophecy and erection of the pillars. Who the author was remains uncertain. The William Jordan mentioned at the end may well have been only the transcriber, and the occurrence in stage-directions of such forms as *sortis, beastis, garmentis, every ch-on* 'every

¹⁴ Neuss, *The Creacion of the World*, p. xlvi.

¹⁵ William Jordan, *The Creation of the World with Noah's Flood, Written in Cornish in the Year 1611 by William Jordan; with an English Translation by John Keigwin*, ed. by Davies Gilbert (London: J.B. Nichols, 1827), p. vi.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

one' and *carieth* 'they carry' seems to indicate a date prior to 1611, when Jordan completed his manuscript. The author's mention of limbo, too, may tend to shew that the play was composed before the Reformation.¹⁷

One area for further study with regards to the dating of the play might be a comparison between changes in the English language and the language of *Gwreans an Bys*.¹⁸

The nineteenth-century antiquarians who studied Cornish raised questions as to both the authorship and date of composition of *Gwreans an Bys*, but without offering a definitive resolution to either issue. Later figures from the Cornish revival continued to conclude Jordan was merely the transcriber of the play, including Henry Jenner in his *Handbook of the Cornish Language*.¹⁹

Murdoch analysed all of the Cornish plays in the wider context of late medieval drama. He concludes *Gwreans an Bys* was written in the mid-sixteenth century, 'a judgement reached by comparing it with other dramatisations of Genesis from that period in different countries'.²⁰ Murdoch's work mainly focuses on the similarities and differences between *Gwreans an Bys* and *Origo Mundi*.²¹ Bruch and George's recent work analyses the rhyme schemes of all the Cornish medieval plays.²² They discovered that whereas the miracle plays *Bewnans Ke* and *Bewnans Meriasek* follow the rhyme schemes found in the earlier *Ordinalia* trilogy, only approximately a quarter of the rhyme scheme in *Gwreans an Bys* follows that used in the earlier plays.

¹⁷ Whitley Stokes, *Gwreans an Bys. The Creation of the World. A Cornish Mystery Edited with a Translation and Notes* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1864), p. 4.

¹⁸ For a discussion of concurrent changes in English see Roger Lass, 'Phonology and Morphology', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, ed. by Roger Lass, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), III, pp. 56–186.

¹⁹ Henry Jenner, *A Handbook of the Cornish Language* (London: David Nutt, 1904), p. 27.

²⁰ Murdoch, *Cornish Literature*, p. 75.

²¹ Brian Murdoch, 'The Cornish Medieval Drama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*, ed. by Richard Beadle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 211–39.

²² George, *Tybyansow Nowydh*; Bruch.

Bruch posits that the author of *Gwreans an Bys* cannot have seen the manuscripts of these earlier plays, possibly because it was written after the final dissolution of Glasney College in 1548:

The text is a work by a writer who was acquainted with the system of versification associated with Glasney, but who knew it more through oral sources — performances of dramas like the Ordinalia — rather than through close study of Middle Cornish manuscripts or even information obtained directly from the men who had written or copied those manuscripts.²³

George's conclusions regarding date aligns with Bruch's, based on analysis of the language of the play. George argues that it was written after the mergers in the Cornish sound change of around 1525.²⁴ He also notes that the play contains far more spellings in late Cornish.²⁵ These changes display some features associated with the decline of the Cornish language. George's conclusion is that the play was written during the reign of Mary I.²⁶

Words which can appear to be English are not necessarily so on further examination. Examining the point at which every word from English entered the Cornish language, either in its English form, or used in a Cornish manner is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is necessary to discuss some examples to assist in an assessment of when the play might have been written. The play does contain many loan words from English. 518 of the 2549 lines of the play contain at least one word that has either been assimilated from English or borrow an unassimilated English word and use it in a Cornish way, such as the mutation of *commandement* to *gommandement* in line 659. This is also just one example of an English word being used where a Cornish word, *arghadow*, exists. In most instances Jordan's use of English is confined to single words. However, just under one hundred lines of the play either contain

²³ Bruch, p. 353.

²⁴ George, *Tybyansow Nowydh*.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

more than one English word, or the entire line is written in English. Lines 274–77 are written entirely in English:

For well nor wo
I will not go
I say yowe so
This will not be.²⁷

Fudge highlights that these words are spoken by God, a difference from the *Ordinalia*, where the character of the Devil can be found speaking in English, perhaps as a device to compare him with the ‘good’ Cornish-speaking characters.²⁸ However, Bakere, in analysing the earlier work of Fowler on the use of Middle English in the *Ordinalia* cycle, points out that:

While it is perfectly true that the first English phrase is spoken by the devil during the temptation of Eve, infernal personages have a not inconsiderable part in the cycle, being between the four of them responsible for 20 speeches in *Origo Mundi*, 24 in *Passio Christi* and 19 in *Resurrexio Domini*, yet they only manage 2 English phrases in the whole cycle. Whether or not Cornish is the language of the playwright’s Heaven, English is not the language of his Hell.²⁹

Sections written in entirely in English can also be seen in *Bewnans Ke*, for example lines 86–90. Nicholas Williams and Graham Thomas consider this play dates from the middle of the fifteenth century thanks to a reference to John of Gaunt which implies Modred is associated with the House of Lancaster.³⁰ If *Bewnans Ke* was also written at Glasney College, this inclusion of English throughout the play does not rule out a pre-Reformation date of composition for *Gwreans an Bys*. Can further examples of the use of English

²⁷ *Gwreans an Bys*, ll. 274–77.

²⁸ Crysten Fudge, *The Life of Cornish* (Redruth: Truran Publications, 1982), p. 16.

²⁹ Bakere, pp. 8–9.

³⁰ *Bewnans Ke: The Life of St Kea. A Critical Edition with Translation*, ed. by Nicholas Williams and Graham Thomas (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), pp. xliv–xlvi.

in *Gwreans an Bys* assist in dating the composition of the play? Lines 1525 and 1529 of *Gwreans an Bys* both contain the same word, *owne* — however, in line 1525 it is used as the Cornish word meaning fear or afraid, ‘owne yma thym a bub dean l ganso tha vonas lethys’;³¹ and in line 1529 it is used as the English word ‘own’: ‘poran gans y owne dewla’.³² In line 1971 the Cornish word *gew*, meaning ‘spear’, is used, however in line 1995 the English word *spera* ‘spear’ appears. These few examples suggest that the use of English in the play is not a simple case of Jordan not knowing the Cornish word. We cannot know for sure when certain words in English entered common usage either in Cornwall as a whole, or in particular areas of Cornwall. Another possibility is that, in comparison with the audience of the *Ordinalia*, by 1611 Jordan, and his potential audience, had moved from being monolingual Cornish speakers to bilingual Cornish and English speakers who were, in fact, beginning to speak, or understand, a hybrid language as the use of Cornish began its decline. Padel believes that by ‘1400, west Cornwall had been a bilingual community for about half a millennium’.³³ Jordan was from Helston, which places the transcription of the play in a part of Cornwall known to still speak mainly Cornish at the time it was written.³⁴ Whiting, in his analysis of popular religion after the Reformation reminds us that:

In Cornwall, and particularly in its western parishes, a further barrier was presented by the linguistic factor. To the Cornish-speaking population, literature written in English was certainly alien and possibly — as the Cornish rebels maintained in 1549 — incomprehensible. But probably the most fundamental reason for the limited effectiveness of the written word as a medium of religious

³¹ *Gwreans an Bys*, ll. 1525–26, ‘I am afraid of every man l by him of being killed’.

³² *Ibid.*, l. 1529, ‘just with his own pair of hands’.

³³ Oliver Padel, ‘Where Was Middle Cornish Spoken?’, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 74 (Winter 2017), pp. 1–31 (p. 27).

³⁴ Ken George, ‘Cornish’, in *The Celtic Languages*, ed. by Martin Ball and Nicole Muller, 2nd edn (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2010), pp. 488–535 (p. 490).

propaganda, either Catholic or Protestant, was the persistence of widespread illiteracy.³⁵

The use of English within the play is not a clear indicator of its date of composition. It is clear that the play was written after the *Ordinalia* cycle from the similarities in three of the sequences. However, the difference in rhyme scheme as analysed by Bruch and George implies the author was unable to access full copies of the earlier plays, perhaps as a result of the final dissolution of Glasney College. What does appear to be clear is that *Gwreans an Bys* was written in for an audience which still mainly spoke Cornish.

Although it would seem there remained a linguistic need for a piece of literature to still have been written in Cornish rather than English at this time, the question remains as to why *Gwreans an Bys* was written, and then copied by Jordan in 1611. That the play mentions Limbo implies it was written before the Reformation, although it could also reflect post-Reformation belief in Cornwall as I shall go on to discuss. When Adam dies, Lucifer tells the devils that Adam will not be brought to hell but remain in Limbo as ordained by God: ‘Yn limbo barth awarthal ena ef a wra trega’.³⁶ The inclusion of Limbo could follow on logically from the use of *Origo Mundi* as source material. In addition to this, the play also includes the story of the Oil of Mercy, which is not Biblical, but is found in the *Ordinalia*.³⁷ A wide range of non-biblical source texts are likely and could imply the play was written by a Catholic. Longworth, in his analysis of *Origo Mundi* and *Gwreans an Bys*, found that:

Among these incidents which take place in the *Creation of the World* but not in the *Origo Mundi*, only one is based on biblical materials; most of the additions derive from apocryphal, legendary, or patristic sources. Even the one addition that is based on biblical evidence (the translation

³⁵ Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 197.

³⁶ *Gwreans an Bys*, ll. 2017–18, ‘in limbo above | there he will stay’.

³⁷ *Origo Mundi*, ed. by Ray Chubb, Richard Jenkin, and Graham Sandercock (Redruth: Agan Tavas, 2001), p. 329.

of Enoch) incorporates a great deal of apocryphal and legendary material.³⁸

With the advent of the Reformation and the introduction of the Bible in English, were these sources more likely to have been destroyed during the dissolution of the monasteries? If so, this raises questions as to what messages the author was aiming to include in the narrative of the play. It is, of course, entirely possible that tales continued to circulate through an oral tradition and not all texts were destroyed. As seen in morality plays, there are sections where the audience is given advice; they are preached to. Adam tells Seth: ‘gwayte an tas a neff, gordhya | ha pub ere orta cola | yn pub othan a vesta.’³⁹ In addition to this, there is a strong emphasis on Marian doctrine, a key feature of Catholic belief. As Neuss points out:

The Virgin Mary is incorporated, apparently uniquely, into the legend of Seth’s vision of the Tree of Life, while incense is used by Abel and Noah. These elements may suggest that the Creacion was put together in its present form before the Reformation: they might otherwise have been deleted, as were for example references to the Sacraments and Transubstantiation in the Townley plays. However, they might equally well have survived from an earlier version, or, since Devon and Cornwall resisted the Reformation much longer than the rest of England, these elements might actually have been included deliberately. Thus such material cannot really provide evidence of a pre-Reformation date, as Stokes thought, in fact the defiant emphasis on Marian Doctrine may indicate the opposite. The presence of Mary in the Tree of Life, for instance, has been added by the playwright to the legend, possibly in reaction to the Reformation.⁴⁰

³⁸ Robert Longworth, ‘Two Medieval Cornish Versions of the Creation of the World’, *Comparative Drama*, 21.3 (1987), 249–58 (p. 250).

³⁹ *Gwreans an Bys*, ll. 1947–49, ‘See that you respect the Father in Heaven | and at all times heed him | in whatever need there is’.

⁴⁰ Neuss, *The Creacion of the World*, p. lxxiii.

What evidence do we have for this religious conservatism and resistance to the Reformation in Cornwall? What can events in Cornwall between the beginning of the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 and the date of the manuscript in 1611 show us about what the Cornish believed at the time the play was likely to have been written? Due to decisions being made not only in mainland Europe but also closer to home, English, not Cornish, became the language of religion. These changes did not sit well with the common people of Cornwall. As Mark Stoye has shown, ‘during the 1530s and 1540s government attacks on the Catholic Church — a Church which had always proved itself extremely accommodating of Cornish language and culture — reawakened the spirit of defiance in West Cornwall’.⁴¹

This spirit of defiance culminated in the 1549 Prayer Book Rebellion. In January 1549, the First Act of Uniformity decreed that English would be used in all church services from Whitsunday that year (9 June). Cornish protestors, led by Humphry Arundell, gathered at Bodmin where they drew up articles of supplication to the King. These vary in number from eight to sixteen according to the sources and were ‘entirely conservative, concerned wholly with religious demands such as retention of usage with regard to baptism, confirmation, communion and so on’.⁴² Most significant, however, is the eighth article: ‘we, the Cornish men, whereof certain of us understand no English, utterly refuse this new English.’⁴³ This was not merely a rebellion against changes to worship and liturgy, but a defence of their language too. The ordinary Cornishmen did not want another language to be imposed upon them, even if, as the Lord Protector Edward Seymour himself pointed out at the time, they would not have understood the Latin used in the old Roman Catholic masses they had experienced thus far. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer, ‘retorted that there were more people in Cornwall who understood English rather than Latin, but he was missing the point, for

⁴¹ Mark Stoye, *West Britons: Cornish Identities and the Early Modern British State* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), p. 21.

⁴² Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Cornish Language and Its Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), p. 61.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Latin was familiar (if not always understood) all across Cornwall, whereas English was not'.⁴⁴

Other people from within the Protestant movement could see that there was still a clear need for people to use Cornish as a medium of worship. According to Stoye: 'clear evidence that the advanced Protestant party in England was not opposed, in principle, to the use of the Cornish language for religious instruction emerges from a puritan petition of c. 1560.'⁴⁵ This asked that children who did not speak English be allowed to learn the catechism in Cornish. That the need for Cornish-speaking children to be allowed to use their own language received Puritan support is unsurprising, given the importance placed on the individual's direct relationship with God.

There is also evidence that Cornish was being used in religious instruction and services after the beginning of the Reformation, and that its use was approved by the Church. Ellis cites the following example:

As late as 1538, John Veysey, Bishop of Exeter, specifically ordered that all or part of the Epistle or Gospel of the day, or else the Paternoster, Ave Maria, Creed and Ten Commandments, should be read in Cornish in those parishes where English was not spoken.⁴⁶

This implies there were still many monoglot parishes within the county at the time of the Reformation. The longest piece of extant Middle Cornish prose dates from the middle of the sixteenth century and was written by John Tregear. He translated a series of twelve sermons by the Bishop of London, Edmund Bonner, in around 1560. The set also includes a thirteenth, longer, homily known as *Sacrament an Alter* (SA), written by another clergyman whom D.H. Frost has identified as one Thomas Stephyn:⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Philip Payton, *Cornwall: A History* (Fowey: Cornwall Editions, 2004), p. 123.

⁴⁵ Stoye, *West Britons*, p. 46.

⁴⁶ Ellis, p. 34.

⁴⁷ D. H. Frost, 'Sacrament an Alter: A Tudor Cornish Patristic Catena', *Cornish Studies*, 11 (2003), 291–307 (pp. 293–94).

It may have been the work of Thomas Stephyn. This is the name appended distinctively to Homilies 11 and 12, which are also distinctive because of the marginal notes added in the hand of the author of SA. It seems at least possible that Stephyn was claiming the authorship of the annotations by signing the homilies under Tregear — not least because the text of the homilies itself is written throughout in Tregear’s hand. If so, Stephyn is the author of SA too.⁴⁸

Twelve of the homilies have titles in Latin; the last has a title in Cornish. Frost identifies Tregear as the Vicar of St Allen who presumably wanted his parishioners to hear the bishop’s sermons in a language they understood.⁴⁹ Bonner had initially supported the Reformation under Henry VIII but was imprisoned under Edward VI for opposing the first Act of Uniformity. Under Mary I he restored Catholicism to his diocese. How significant is it, therefore, that Tregear translated sermons written by a leading Catholic who took a major role in the prosecution of religious dissidents? Did Tregear and his parish remain faithful to Catholicism throughout the post-Reformation period? Did they wish to do so, or were they able to do so in the period after 1560, and therefore created for themselves a need for the translation of these sermons into Cornish for their own scriptural edification? Frost dates Tregear’s translation of the first twelve Homilies to the late 1550s.⁵⁰ However, the thirteenth homily, *Sacrament an Alter*, post-dates this. Its source material, as analysed by Frost, follows arguments from the 1554 Eucharistic Disputations held in Oxford, made widely available by their publication in John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments*, also known as the ‘Book of Martyrs’.⁵¹ By analysing the editions of this work, Frost concludes that *Sacrament an Alter*

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ D. H. Frost, ‘Glasney’s Parish Clergy and the Tregear Manuscript’, *Cornish Studies*, 15 (2007), 27–80 (p. 68).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ D. H. Frost, ‘A Critical Edition of *Sacrament an Alter* (SA): A Cornish Patristic *catena* Selected and Translated from Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* Attached to the Translation of Bishop Bonner’s *Homilies* in the Tregear Manuscript (BL ADD. MS 46397)’ (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Liverpool Hope University, 2019), p. 28.

was written after the publication of the 1576 edition.⁵² This therefore indicates a late sixteenth-century interest in the production of materials regarding elements of Roman Catholic doctrine written in Cornish. As late as the mid-seventeenth century, Cornish was being used by members of the clergy in their communications. Around 1636, Mr Drake, vicar of St Just, sent marriage banns written in Cornish to Mr Trythal, curate of Sennen.⁵³ William Jackman, vicar of Feock, was still using Cornish during Holy Communion because the older members of his parish did not understand English.⁵⁴ It would seem the Cornish language remained a necessity in daily and religious life throughout this period.

During a state visit by the Spanish King Philip III and his wife Margaret on 20 August 1600 to a Roman Catholic training college for English priests, the royal couple heard speeches in various languages including Cornish. Only one student at the college was registered from the diocese of Exeter at this time, Richard Pentrey, admitted to the college on 29 April 1600.⁵⁵ The Elizabethan period witnessed the removal of several members of senior clergy within the diocese of Exeter,

including James Turberville, the bishop, Thomas Reynolds, the dean, Thomas Nutcombe the sub-dean, John Blaxton the treasurer, 11 cathedral prebendaries (almost half the total), and around 30 incumbents, including some resignations. These departures — not least among the senior diocesan staff — suggest that the Elizabethan Settlement was far from being a smooth transition in the west.⁵⁶

Although this does not indicate a wholesale desire within the diocese to remain staunchly Catholic, it seems that despite the Reformation, pockets of

⁵² Frost, 'Sacrament an Alter', p. 32.

⁵³ *A Reader in Cornish Literature 900–1900: Looking at the Mermaid*, ed. by Alan M. Kent and Tim Saunders (London: Francis Bootle, 2000), pp. 212–13.

⁵⁴ Martyn F. Wakelin, *Language and History in Cornwall* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1975), p. 91.

⁵⁵ Ellis, pp. 71–72.

⁵⁶ Frost, 'Glasney's Parish Clergy', p. 45.

Catholicism continued in Cornwall, and therefore there was a continuing demand for men from the area to train for the priesthood, and, presumably, be able to minister to their flock in Cornish rather than English to cover an ongoing linguistic need alongside the spiritual one. Ellis concludes:

Those Cornish who kept their language also kept their religion which gave concessions to it. The training of Cornish-speaking clerics, such as Richard Pentrey, would encourage the language. In such circumstances there was a danger of Catholicism becoming synonymous with language.⁵⁷

If this conservatism continued into the seventeenth century, it implies such pre-Reformation traditions were still firmly held in 1611 when Jordan was writing his play manuscript. We witness the result of this link between the Cornish and religious conservatism during the English Civil War. At this time political and religious factors played an influential role over the language. Cornwall fell on the Royalist side. Why was this? Two of the main instruments of power within Cornwall, the Stannaries and the Duchy of Cornwall itself, were direct products of royal power and afforded Cornwall a degree of independence. These secular institutions, with their links to the Crown, might have come under threat from Parliament, and this in turn could have threatened both the economy and identity of Cornwall. The combination of the lack of Cornish translations of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer and pockets of recusancy meant Cornwall had remained religiously conservative, and as such the ‘Cornish Anglicanism’, which had developed over the century since the Reformation, was now under threat from a Puritan Parliament. As Stoye comments:

In Scotland and Ireland attachment to non-Anglican faiths was, at least in part, an expression of national independence, of resistance to the military, political and cultural hegemony of England. When these faiths were perceived to be under threat, as in Scotland in 1637 and Ireland in

⁵⁷ Ellis, p. 72.

1641, religious and racial tensions combined together to form a Molotov cocktail of hate. It seems probable that in Cornwall, too, a particular brand of religious faith — in this case conservative ‘Anglicanism’ — was seen as an integral part of national identity, and that, when this faith was threatened by Parliament, ethnic anxieties combined with religious ones to ensure that the bulk of the population fell in behind the King.⁵⁸

Stoyle has carried out extensive research on life in Cornwall during the Civil War period, including the beliefs and actions of the Cornish, as well as how Cornwall was viewed from the other side of the Tamar. He found that:

Some pamphleteers pushed the view of the Cornish as dupes: ignorant rustics who had been ‘seduced into the quarrell against the Parliament’ by Royalist agitators. Others depicted them as quasi-Catholics: religious conservatives who were hostile to the radical Protestantism associated with the Parliamentary cause. This point was touched on in January 1643, when a commentator noted that the King ‘[finds] his partie is most ... [in Cornwall] it being a place full of ... popishly affected persons’.⁵⁹

Therefore, if the Cornish were still religiously conservative a century after the Reformation, it is probable that they were so during the mid-sixteenth century when *Gwreans an Bys* was most likely written, and that Jordan might have been a recusant in 1611 when the surviving manuscript was written. Was that his motivation in transcribing the play at this late date, and if so, was this for a traditional mystery play performance by and to a group within the Helston area who still adhered to a brand of Cornish Catholicism? It is also worth remembering that Cornwall had its own traditions and particular saints associated with individual places and that although this had been encouraged by the Catholic Church, it had a far smaller place within the new Protestant theology:

⁵⁸ Stoyle, *West Britons*, p. 88.

⁵⁹ Mark Stoyle, “Pagans or Paragons?": Images of the Cornish during the English Civil War’, *English Historical Review*, 111.441 (April 1996), 299–323 (pp. 305–06).

Certain trees, for example, were revered on account of their supposed association with local saints. One, at St Breward, was believed to date from Breward's death; another, at St Endellion, was linked with St Mick [...] A hill near St Minver was honoured as the site of Minver's encounter with the Devil himself. Veneration was accorded also to the stone chairs in the churchyards at Germoe and St Mawes and on St Michael's Mount. These were associated with Germoe, a companion of Breage in the early medieval evangelization of Cornwall; Mawes, a bishop in Brittany; and Michael, who had allegedly visited the Mount in 'about the year of the Lord 710', and who appears frequently (as on an early-sixteenth-century bench-end at Altarnun) in the region's iconography. But more numerous than such trees, hills and chairs were the celebrated holy wells. Enclosed within small granite buildings, of which a good example survives at Laneast, these were invariably connected with saints. Two at St Endellion, for instance, were thought to have been frequented by Endellion herself, while the well at St Columb Major reputedly marked the place of Columb's martyrdom.⁶⁰

Within a geographically remote area such as Cornwall, such adherence and belief in the power of local saints, who were not only linked to specific places but also gave their names to many of the local parishes, was not going to disappear overnight.⁶¹

One aspect which has yet to be considered in relation to *Gwreans an Bys*, in both its original composition and the production of the manuscript in 1611, is whether or not it was an attempt to evade rules on censorship and what could or could not be performed as well as teaching Cornish people about Catholic doctrine. Elliot states: '[i]n 1543 Henry affirmed the right of all his subjects to stage whatever entertainments they pleased so long as they did not "meddle with interpretations of Scripture, contrary to the doctrine set

⁶⁰ Whiting, p. 55.

⁶¹ See for example Robert Hunt, ed., *Popular Romances of the West of England*, 2 vols (London: Chatto and Windus, 1903). This collection of folklore was collected and edited by Robert Hunt with assistance from amongst others William Bottrell. Volume II contains the legends of the Saints.

forth by the King's Majesty”.⁶² It seems that the definition of ‘meddling’ was not made clear. By Mary’s reign,

in August 1553, for the sake of public peace, she issued a proclamation which forbade all “Interludes, books, ballads, rhymes, and other lewd treatises in the England [sic] tongue, concerning doctrine in matters now in question and controversy, touching the high points and mysteries of Christian religion”.⁶³

By writing a mystery play in Cornish, rather than English, was the author, rather than attempting to teach the common man about matters of doctrine, choosing to avoid censorship? This is certainly one area for future research.

Gwreans an Bys follows at the end of a long tradition of miracle plays, both from Cornwall and written in Cornish, as well as those from elsewhere in England and further afield in Europe. The playwright, who would seem to have written it in the mid-sixteenth century, uses familiar material: recollections of earlier plays, biblical and apocryphal material as a means of both entertaining and instructing the local population in religious matters, in a language they used and understood. The play is religiously conservative, but we know that the Reformation was not an instant event, and changes in religious reform and legislation continued throughout the Tudor period from 1536, not least in the reign of Mary I. Evidence from the later sixteenth century and the popular Cornish reaction to both the Reformation and the Civil War a century later suggest the vast majority of the population of Cornwall remained religiously conservative. As Longworth concludes: “The Creation of the World neither explicitly nor implicitly acknowledges the issues over which the Reformation overtly occurred; but it clearly deals with theological and doctrinal matters out of which those issues arose.”⁶⁴ As such, the play would seem to both reflect religious belief in Cornish society of the post-Reformation period and raise interesting questions regarding the levels

⁶² John R. Elliott, *Playing God Seed* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Longworth, p. 254.

of tolerance and the conditions which allowed it to be written and, possibly, performed, both when it was written and in 1611 when it was transcribed by Jordan.

On *Ormesta*¹

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In the second decade of the fifth century, one Paulus Orosius produced a lengthy history of the world extending from the creation to his own time. His work is regarded as the first universalist history written from a Christian perspective. It became extremely influential in the decades following its composition and remained so for the whole of the European Middle Ages.²

Relatively little is known regarding Orosius's biography, so it is perhaps fitting that the title of his major work should be ambiguous to a certain degree. Since the early modern period, a broad consensus has formed around *Historiae adversus Paganos* or some variant thereof.³ This is justified by the earliest surviving manuscript witness and Orosius's own description of his motives for producing the work at vs. 13–14 of the preface. Consequently, this title has been adopted in all modern editions of the text.⁴ However, the

¹ I would like to thank, among many others, Mark David L. Gibbard, Brent Miles, Haruko Momma, Hannah Robinson, Jarrett Welsh, the anonymous reviewer, and the editors of this publication for their many helpful comments on various incarnations of this article. All remaining errors and omissions are my responsibility alone.

² For recent studies of Orosius and his *Historiae*, see Peter van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Victoria Leonard, *In Defiance of History: Orosius and the Unimproved Past* (London: Routledge, 2022). On his medieval reception, see Jocelyn Hillgarth, 'The "Historiae" of Orosius in the Early Middle Ages', in *De Tertullien aux mozarabes: VIe-IXe siècles: mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, ed. by Louis Holtz and Jean-Claude Fredouille, 3 vols (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1992), II, pp. 157–70; Heidi Eisenhut, *Die Glossen Ekkeharts IV von St. Gallen im Codex Sangallensis 621* (St. Gallen: Verlag am Klosterhof, 2009).

³ For example, *Historiae adversus Paganos* (Augsburg: Johann Schüssler, 1471) editio princeps; *Historiae adversus Paganos*, ed. by Aeneas Vulpes (Venice, 1499); *Adversus Paganos Historiarum Libri Septem*, ed. by Godefridus Hydorpius (Cologne, 1542); *Adversus Paganos Historiarum Libri Septem*, ed. by Andreas Scottus (Mainz: Petrus Cholinus, 1615) et al.

⁴ *Pauli Orosii Presbyteri Hispani adversus Paganos Historiarum Libri Septem*, ed. by Siwart Haverkamp (Leiden: apud Samuelem et Joannem Luchtmans, 1738); *Pauli Orosii*

early manuscript record shows a great diversity of titles. In those witnesses dating from prior to the mid-ninth century, the following titles and subtitles are attested: *VII Libri, Historiarum Liber, Chronica, Historia, Adversus Paganos, Adversum Paganos, Contra Paganos, Contra Accusatores Christianorum, Contra Accusatores Temporum Christianorum, Contra Detrahentes Temporum Christianorum, De Mundi Erumpnis, Rogante Augustino, Ad Augustinum Episcopum, De Malis Mundi, Ormesta, Ormista, and De Ormesta Mundi*.⁵ While most of these are relatively transparent, the last three merit further consideration.

At first glance, and indeed at least a few glances after that, *ormesta* resists easy definition. The word is not evidently Latin or Greek in origin, nor is it attested widely enough to merit inclusion in most standard dictionaries. Interestingly, as a title for the *Historiae*, it is found in some of the earliest surviving manuscripts. It first appears in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 23 superior (B, s. VII in., probably produced at Bobbio, *CLA* 3.328),⁶ the Bobbio

Historiarum adversum Paganos Libri VII, ed. by Carl Zangemeister (Leipzig: Teubner, 1882); *Orose Histoires (Contre les Païens)*, ed. by Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, 3 vols (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990–1991).

⁵ The titles attested in the early manuscript record are given in Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, *L'Orose de Wrocław: (Rehdigeranus 107); sa composition et sa place dans la tradition manuscrite des histoires d'Orose* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1997), p. 22, n. 86.

⁶ Unless otherwise noted, manuscript dates and provenances henceforth follow Lars Boje Mortensen, 'The Diffusion of Roman Histories in the Middle Ages: A List of Orosius, Eutropius, Paulus Diaconus, and Landolfus Sagax Manuscripts', *Filologia Mediolatina*, 6–7 (1999–2000), 101–200 (pp. 119–165). Sigla follow consensus, generally based on Zangemeister's edition, when possible, unless otherwise noted. On the date and origin of B, see Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, trans. by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and David Ganz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 83; T. Julian Brown, *A Palaeographer's View: The Selected Writings of Julian Brown*, ed. by Janet Bately, Michelle Brown, and Jane Roberts (London: Harvey Miller, 1993), pp. 194, 205, and 223; David Dumville, *A Palaeographer's Review: The Insular System of Scripts in the Early Middle Ages* (Osaka: Suita, 1999), pp. 28–29; Elizabeth Duncan, 'The Irish and Their Books', in *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe: Identity, Culture and Religion*, ed. by Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (London: Palgrave, 2016), 214–30 (p. 221). For an alternative view, that the manuscript was produced in Ireland, see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Orosius, Ireland, and Christianity',

Orosius, where it is found twice in rubrics. The first of these is on fol. 5^r, in a rubric following I.1.13, which reads: ‘Ormestae | incipit uolumen primum de trium partium terrae indicio.’⁷ The text is nearly illegible today, unfortunately, but readings were made independently by Nicholas du Rieu and Theodor Mommsen in the nineteenth century and Marie–Pierre Arnaud–Lindet in the twentieth. The second instance in this witness is found on fol. 33^r at the end of Book I. It reads: ‘Ormistae explicit uolumen primum | de trium partium terrae indicio | incipit eiusdem secundum | de mundi erumpnis.’⁸ The reading here is corrected in the left margin to ‘orlmesltae’ and ‘Orosii’ is added in the right margin in a contemporary hand.

In Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 829 (P, s. VIII ex., produced at Lorsch; Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 6557) the word appears in a gloss, likely considerably later than the rest of the manuscript, on the title page: ‘Ormista ergo⁹ miserabilis uel metiens sonat’.¹⁰ However, in two ninth-century Breton witnesses, this word stands as the title itself. Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Zanetti lat. 349 (Ve, s. IX med., produced in Brittany; Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 6975)¹¹ has on folio 1^r the following title: ‘INCIPIIT

Peritia, 28 (2017), 113–34 (p. 123); Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Clavis Litterarum Hibernensium: Medieval Irish Books and Texts (c. 400–c. 1600)*, 3 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), I, p. 462.

⁷ ‘Here begins the first volume of the *Ormesta* concerning the three parts of the earth.’ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the present author’s own. Arnaud–Lindet reads *ormesta* here (*Histoires*, I, p. 12); however, the faint outline of final *-e* can be glimpsed today and was visible to Nicolas du Rieu et al. when the manuscript was collated for Zangemeister’s edition (p. 8). See also Theodor Mommsen, *Chronica Minora Saec. IV, V, VI, VII*, MGH Auctores Antiquissimi, 13, 3 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1898), III, p. 22. While there is no chapter division after *Hist.*, I.1.13 in the critical text, a section division is marked here in P and, according to Zangemeister (*ibid.*), in the now-lost Rehdigeranus 108.

⁸ ‘Here ends the first volume of the *Ormesta* concerning the three parts of the earth. Here begins the following of the same, concerning the hardships of the world.’

⁹ The manuscript reads: *g*. Zangemeister (p. 1) reads this abbreviation as ‘ergo’. Leo Wiener suggests that it should be read ‘Gotice’. See Leo Wiener, *Contributions toward a History of Arabico-Gothic Culture: Volume III, Tacitus’ Germania and Other Forgeries* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1920), p. 9; the present article, p. 128, n. 100 *inf.*

¹⁰ ‘*Ormista* signifies therefore a miserable thing or measuring’.

¹¹ On the Old Breton glosses in both Ve and Q, see Bernhard Bauer, ‘Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, Zanetti Lat. 349 an Isolated Manuscript? A (Network) Analysis of Parallel

PROLOGUS | LIBRI OROSII DE OR|MESTA MUNDI.’ and on fol. 2^v, following 1.1: ‘EXPLICIT PROLOGUS | INCIPIT LIBER SANCTI | OROSII DE ORME|STA MUNDI.’¹² The latter title is duplicated almost exactly on fol. 2^r of Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 296 (Q, s. IX second half, produced in Brittany and later brought to Fleury, very closely related to Ve; Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 6652).

The title is found in numerous later manuscripts as well. Through a search of catalogues and digitized manuscripts, it has so far been possible to identify forty-six witnesses from the eleventh century or later that feature the title *Ormesta*, *Ormista*, *De Hormesta Mundi*, or *De Ormesta Mundi*; the last of these is by far the most common.¹³ This makes for forty-nine attestations as a title and a single attestation, in P, as a gloss. Of those identified so far, five are eleventh century, fourteen are twelfth century, five are thirteenth century, four are fourteenth century, and eighteen are fifteenth century witnesses. These numbers are more or less evenly proportionate to the total numbers of surviving manuscripts from each century as recorded by Mortensen: roughly, between fifteen and twenty percent of surviving later witnesses show an *Ormesta* title-form based on the current data. However, the regional

Glosses on Orosius’ *Historiae adversus Paganos*, *Études Celtiques*, 45 (2019), 91–106. All five of the Orosius manuscripts with Old Breton glosses feature either an *ormesta* title-form or the *Praefatiuncula*.

¹² This witness also features a much later title page with the heading ‘OROSIUS DE OROMESTA MVNDI CONTRA PAGANOS’ and a note in Modern Greek reading in part: “Ορόσιος ντε ὀρμέστα μοάνδι”. This likely dates from the period when the manuscript was owned by Basil Bessarion, immediately prior to its donation to the Biblioteca Marciana. See Lotte Labowsky, *Bessarion’s Library and the Biblioteca Marciana: Six Early Inventories* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1979), p. 181.

¹³ In all, *Ormesta* title-forms are found in the following witnesses (henceforth, manuscript numbers correspond to Mortensen’s catalogue): 2, 8, 13, 24, 25, 27, 40, 51, 53, 57, 66, 71, 78, 80, 85, 86, 88, 90, 91, 92, 94, 105 (B), 111, 125, 130, 131, 132, 134, 138, 139, 147, 150, 153, 161, 165, 166, 167, 180, 192, 206 (P), 208 (Q), 228 (Ve), 235, 238, 240, 242, plus El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo, M. III. 23, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 5029, which are not numbered as they contain only the geographic excursus, as well as Madrid, Real Biblioteca, II/222 and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. ser. n. 12702, both of which Mortensen did not record. It remains very likely that this list is not exhaustive.

breakdown of these witnesses is far less even: of the forty-six in question, the origin of some thirty-three is known or presumed. Of these, fourteen — a substantial plurality — are from England; thirteen are from France, and usually northern France; two are from Flanders; one is likely from Poland; and the remaining three are from German-speaking areas. While these figures certainly have their limitations, and the accident of survival through the modern period can no doubt obscure the original distribution of this title, the pattern that has begun to emerge — that of a cluster of manuscripts centred around England and northern France — is interesting and deserving of further consideration.¹⁴

Indeed, this pattern becomes more intriguing still when it is compared with what is known about the transmission history of Orosius's *Historiae*. Given that there are at least 275 extant manuscripts and fragments, it is perhaps rather unsurprising that no complete stemma exists. The most thorough and recent stemma to date was produced by Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet in 1990, with revisions published in 1997.¹⁵ Arnaud-Lindet collated seventeen manuscripts predating the mid-ninth century and distinguished three families: Class I/α, Class II/β, and Class III/γ. In her schema, the earliest witnesses with an *Ormesta* title, B and Q belong not only to the same family, but to the same subfamily β', a branch that Arnaud-Lindet identified as ultimately Insular in origin.¹⁶

As for the later manuscript record, the most extensive survey to date was undertaken by Janet Bately in 1961, with minor revisions published in 1980.¹⁷ Bately sought to ascertain the readings of the Latin exemplar of the

¹⁴ This broad pattern has been noted before, albeit without reference to data. As long ago as 1953, Valentino Fabris, in 'Il Commento di Nicola Trevet all'*Hercules Fugens* di Seneca', *Aevum*, 27.6 (November–December, 1953), 498–509 (p. 504, n. 10), noted that Trevet cited the *Historiae*, 'col titolo dato dagli Irlandesi ed Anglosassoni durante il Medioevo *De Ormesta mundi*.' ('with the title given by the Irish and Anglo-Saxons during the Middle Ages *De Ormesta mundi*.')

¹⁵ Arnaud-Lindet, *Histoires*, I, p. xc; Arnaud-Lindet, *L'Orose de Wrocław*, p. 60.

¹⁶ Arnaud-Lindet did not consult Ve and identifies P as a *codex mixtus* with readings from the β" and γ" subfamilies (*Histoires*, I, p. lxxxi–lxxxiii).

¹⁷ Janet Bately, 'King Alfred and the Latin MSS. of Orosius' History', *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 22 (1961), 69–105 (pp. 79 and 86); *The Old English Orosius*, ed. by Janet Bately, Early

Old English *Orosius*. Based on the rendering of uncommon proper nouns and shared interpolations, Bately identified some sixty-six manuscripts ranging in date from the late eighth to the fifteenth century as, in some way, related to the Old English translator's exemplar. Rather than produce a stemma, Bately opted for a classification system: four witnesses are identified as most closely related to the translator's exemplar and the rest are divided into four groups: A, B, C, and D, with the first three further divided into subgroups. Of the forty-nine total attestations of the title, some thirty-three are included in Bately's classification.¹⁸ While only the youngest of the four witnesses identified as closest to the Old English translator's exemplar features this title,¹⁹ it is attested in manuscripts of groups B, C, and D; in the latter two it appears in a large majority of witnesses.²⁰ In sum, as group D comprises

English Text Society Supplementary Series, 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. lvi–lviii. Sigla used in this discussion follow Bately's practice. While Arnaud-Lindet's and Bately's classifications have only one manuscript in common, Reg. Lat 296/Q, in the course of other work, the present author has found that several other witnesses used by Bately share significant readings with Arnaud-Lindet's β witnesses and that, by extension, the Old English translator's exemplar may well have been part of Arnaud-Lindet's β family, whether or not it itself was Insular in origin. In any case, Bately's classification system can be taken as broadly indicative of the later transmission of the ultimately-Insular β family. The present author intends to present elsewhere a revised stemma that integrates elements of both Bately's and Arnaud-Lindet's work.

¹⁸ Of the remaining sixteen, four were not included in Bately's classification system for various reasons: B was excluded due to its age; 192 (Trier 1095) was classified by Bately as more distantly related to the Old English exemplar; and Madrid, Real Biblioteca, II/222 and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. ser. n. 12702 were unknown to Bately at the time. The latter of these is a very small fragment of the prologue and thus does not preserve any of the forms relevant to Bately's analysis.

¹⁹ 125 (Ball.), which dates from the mid fifteenth century. Of the others, 233 (Vienna 366) is acephalous, 50 (Ricc.) features the *Praefatiuncula*, in which *ormesta* is defined, and 126 (Seld.) features the title *De Miseriis Mundi*, a possible *lectio facilior*. See below p. 125, n. 86 inf. and Appendix.

²⁰ *Ormesta* manuscripts appear in Bately's classification as follows: Closest: 125 (Ball.); B iv: all; C: 25 (Corp. Chr 23); C i: ([Paris] Ars. 983); C ii: 208 (Reg. 296), 228 (Venice 349); C iii: 8 (Berne 160), 147 (BN 4877), 2 (Antwerp 38), 66 (BPL 80); C iv: 141 (BN 4871), 13 (Boul. 126), 180 (St. Omer 717), 27 (Trinity 1264), 150 (BN 4880); C v: all; C vi: 78 (Leipzig 156); C vii: all; D: all except 26 (St. John's Cam 98), which is acephalous.

exclusively manuscripts of English origin, and group C consists predominantly of manuscripts with English and northern French connections, the geographic concentration of this title is further reaffirmed, with the addition of a strong indication that it is associated with a specific branch of the manuscript record.

Furthermore, *Ormesta* is the title by which Orosius's work was known to a wide range of medieval scholars.²¹ The earliest attestation found so far outside of manuscripts of the *Historiae* is in the *Cologne Computus* of 805.²² In the tenth-century *Cleopatra Glossaries*, the lemma 'ex ormista' is glossed 'middangeardes metend' ('measurer/measuring of the world').²³ In an eleventh-century copy of the *Periegesis* of Priscian, preserved in Cotton Tiberius B. v, the cosmographic hexameter is preceded by the following colophon:

Incipit liber Pergesis id est de situ terrae Prisciani grammatici Urbis
Romae Caesariensis doctoris quem de priscorum dictis excerpsit

²¹ For previous surveys of the wider attestation of *ormesta*, see: Charles du Fresne du Cange et al, *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis* (Paris, 1678), s.v. *ormesta*; Альберт Бекштрём (Albert Bäckström), 'Орозий и его петербургские списки', I–IV, *Журнал Министерства Народного Просвещения*, 330–32 (August–November 1900), I, 63–70; II, 71–100; III, 41–48; IV, 49–80 (III, pp. 46–47); Evan J. Jones, *History of Education in Wales*, 9 vols (Wrexham: Hughes and Son, 1931), I, pp. 279–83; Patrick Sims-Williams, 'Some Functions of Origin Legends in Early Medieval Wales', in *History and Heroic Tale: A Symposium*, ed. by T. Nyberg, (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983), 97–132 (p. 130, nn. 65 and 66); R. K. Ashdowne, D. R. Howlett, and R. E. Latham, eds, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), s.v. *ormesta*.

²² Arno Borst, ed., *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich von 721 bis 818*, MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 21.2 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2006), p. 935, l. 9. Here *ormista* is used as the attribution for a chronological interpolation that is found in several early manuscripts of the *Historiae* with Insular connections as well as the Old English *Orosius*, the *Cologne Chronicle* 798 (Add. Col. in the same manuscript), the Nennian recension of *Historia Brittonum* and several other chronicles.

²³ London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra A. III, fol. 34^{rb}; *A Volume of Vocabularies II*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London, 1873) p. 30, l. 18; *Old English Glosses in the Épinal-Erfurt Glossary*, ed. by J. D. Pheifer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. xlviiii.

ormistarum sed et huic operi de tribus partibus, uidelicet: Asia, Africa, Europa mappam depinxerat aptam, [...] ²⁴

Here begins the *Pergesis*, that is on the lay of the earth by the grammarian Priscian from the city of Rome, a teacher at Caesarea, which he selected from the sayings of the *Ormistas* of the ancients, but moreover he had painted a map attached to this work of the three portions, namely Asia, Africa and Europe [...]

In the *Vita S. Baboleni*, an eleventh-century life of a disciple of Columbanus, Orosius's *Historia* is 'quam de ormesta mundi composuit.'²⁵ In a quasi-hagiographical work on Simon de Montfort, copied into the *Chronicle of Melrose* in the late 1280s,²⁶ the work is quoted under the title 'de Ormetista [sic] mundi.'²⁷ The Hereford Mappa Mundi (post 1283), for which *Hist.* 1.2 is a principal source, bears an inscription on the lower right corner reading: 'Descriptio Orosii de Orlnesta [sic] mundi sicut interilus ostenditur.'²⁸ In an

²⁴ London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. v, 59^r. See also Patrick Gautier Dalché, 'L'Heritage antique de la cartographie médiévale: les problèmes et les acquis', in *Cartography in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Fresh Perspectives, New Methods*, ed. by Richard Talbert and Richard Unger (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 29–66 (p. 46).

²⁵ 'which he composed on the *ormesta* of the world.' Cited in Lellia Cracco Ruggini, 'Établissements militaires, martyrs bagaudes et traditions romaines dans la "Vita Baboleni"', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 44.1 (1995), 100–19 (p. 100).

²⁶ Dauvit Broun, 'Melrose Abbey and Its World', *The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey, A Stratigraphic Edition: Volume I, Introduction and Facsimile Edition*, ed. by Dauvit Broun and Julian Harrison (Cambridge: Boydell, 2007), p. 9.

²⁷ *Chronica de Mailros: E codice unico in Bibliotheca Cottoniana servato, nunc iterum in lucem edita*, ed. by Joseph Stevenson (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1835), p. 215. Stevenson identified 'ormetista' as a variant of *ormesta* in the English translation of the same chronicle published in Joseph Stevenson, *The Church Historians of England. Vol. IV-Part I. Containing The Chronicles of John and Richard of Hexham. The Chronicle of Holyrood. The Chronicle of Melrose. Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle. Documents Respecting Canterbury and Winchester* (London: Seeleys, 1856), p. 236, n. 1.

²⁸ 'Orosius's description, on the Ornesta of the world, as shown within.' Konrad Miller, *Mappaemundi: Die ältesten Weltkarten IV: Die Herefordkarte* (Stuttgart: J. Roth, 1896), p. 7.

anonymous florilegium compiled at Verona in 1329, Orosius is quoted under the title *De Ormesta* twice.²⁹ Orosius himself is mentioned in an interpolation in the *Worcester Annals* (ante 1377) under the year 433 as ‘qui 7 libros adversus gentes de Ormesta et de misericordia mundi edidit.’³⁰ Similarly, Orosius’s work is cited under the title *De Ormesta Mundi* several times in the *Opus Arduum Valde*, an anonymous Wycliffite commentary on the Book of Revelation written in England c. 1389–1390.³¹ A citation reading ‘O. M. Lib. III’ in the portion covering the year 1085 of the *Croyland Chronicle*, written c. 1469–86, may be a reference to *Ormesta Mundi*.³² In *Scripto sopra Theseu Re*, an anonymous Salentino commentary on Boccaccio’s *Teseida* written before 1487, Orosius’s work is cited as *De Ormesta Mundi*.³³ Finally, In Dublin, Trinity College, 632, a handbook of classical learning written in

See also P. D. A. Harvey, *Mappa Mundi: The Hereford World Map* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 54.

²⁹ Charles J. Gross, ‘The Verona Florilegium of 1329’ (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1959), p. 12, ll. 12–13, p. 80, l. 15. See also Remigio Sabbadini, *Le Scoperte dei Codici Latini e Greci ne’ Secoli XIV e XV*, 2 vols (Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1914), II, pp. 90–97.

³⁰ ‘who put forth seven books against the gentiles on the *Ormesta* and the mercy of the world.’ British Library, Cotton Caligula A. x, 68^r; Henry Richards Luard, *Annales Monastici Vol. IV: Annales Monasterii de Oseneia (A. D. 1016–1347), Chronicon Vulgo Dictum Chronicon Thomæ Wykes (A. D. 1066–1289), Annales Prioratus de Wigornia (A. D. 1–1377)*, Rolls Series, 36 (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1869), p. 362.

³¹ *Opus Arduum Valde: A Wycliffite Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, ed. by Romolo Cegna, Christoph Galle and Wolf-Friedrich Schäufele (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 116, 143, 191, 269, 274, and 569. Several of these citations are retained with the title *Ormesta* in the abbreviated version of this work, entitled *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, attributed to John Purvey. See *Commentarius in Apocalypsin ante Centum Annos Æditus* (Wittenberg, 1528), fols. 5^v, 54^v, and 56^v.

³² Henry T. Riley, *Ingulph’s Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the Continuations by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), p. 165, n. 60. Riley contended that this allusion was ‘probable’; however, it is not certain that this portion of the chronicle is drawn from Orosius at all.

³³ *Scripto sopra Theseu Re: Il commento salentino al «Teseida» di Boccaccio (Ugento/Nardò, ante 1487)*, ed. by Marco Maggiore (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 384, 636, and 641, ‘Paulo Orosiu de Ormesta mundi’, ‘Paulo Orosio de Ormesta mu(n)di’. One attestation here is in a quote from Nicholas Trevet.

England in the second half of the fifteenth century, two excerpts from the *Historiae* (I.10.8–18 and IV.8.10–15) are headed ‘ex Orosio de ornesta mundi.’³⁴

Orosius’s work is listed under an *ormesta* title-form in at least eight medieval library catalogues. The earliest of these is a late twelfth-century inventory of the library of Rievaulx Abbey in which ‘Orosius de ornesta mundi’ appears.³⁵ Entries identical to this are found in an inventory of the Austen Friars’ Library at York compiled in 1372³⁶ and the book list of St Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury, which was compiled between 1375 and 1420 but survives only in a fifteenth-century copy.³⁷ Likewise, two inventories of the Library of Durham Cathedral, one dating to 1391 and the other written somewhat earlier, both list ‘Orosius de ornesta nundi’.³⁸ An

³⁴ Marvin L. Colker, ‘A Classical Handbook from Medieval England’, *Scriptorium*, 43.2 (1989), 268–72 (p. 271).

³⁵ Anselm Hoste, *Bibliotheca Aelrediana: A Survey of the Manuscripts, Old Catalogues, Editions and Studies Concerning St. Aelred of Rievaulx* (Steenbrug: Abbatia Sancti Petri, 1962) p. 162. See also Birger Munk Olsen, *L’Étude des Auteurs Classiques Latins aux XI^e et XII^e Siècles. Tome 4, 2^e Partie* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2014), p. 75. As both Hoste and Munk Olsen point out, this is very likely a reference to London, British Library, Royal 6 C VIII (Re).

³⁶ M. R. James, ‘The Catalogue of the Library of the Augustinian Friars at York, Now First Edited from the MS. at Trinity College, Dublin’, in *Fasciculus Ioanni Willis Clark dicatus*, ed. by John Willis Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), pp. 2–96 (p. 37). For a closer study of this catalogue, see Sumithra J. David, ‘Looking East and West: The Reception and Dissemination of the *Topographia Hibernica* and the *Itinerarium ad partes Orientales* in England [1185–c.1500]’ (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of St. Andrews, 2008), pp. 279–86. This entry may be a reference to Lincoln, Cathedral Library, 102 (Ln), which is presumed to have been written at York, or a close relative thereof.

³⁷ M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), p. 293, n. 885. See also B. C. Barker-Benfield, *St Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury*, 3 vols, *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues*, 13 (London: The British Library, 2008).

³⁸ Beriah Botfield, *Catalogi Veteres Librorum Ecclesiae Cathedralis Dunelm: Catalogues of the Library of Durham Cathedral, at Various Periods, from the Conquest to the Dissolution, Including Catalogues of the Library of the Abbey of Hulne, and of the MSS. Preserved in the Library of Bishop Cosin, at Durham*, *Publications of the Surtees Society*, 7 (London: J. B. Nichols and Son, William Pickering, 1838), pp. 32 and 109. On these catalogues, see also H. D. Hughes,

entry reading ‘Horosius, De ormesta mundi, et alius liber De imagine mundi’ appears in an inventory of books belonging to Pedro Fernandez de Frias (d. 1420 at Florence), a pseudocardinal to the antipope Clement VII.³⁹ An inventory of the Bayeux Cathedral Chapter Library compiled on February 6th, 1436 lists one item as ‘continet Orosium de ormesta mundi’.⁴⁰ Another entry reading ‘Orosius de ormesta mundi’ appears in a catalogue from the late fifteenth century of the now-defunct Canterbury College, Oxford.⁴¹

The title *De Ormesta Mundi*, or a variant thereof, was familiar to numerous medieval authors, both canonical and minor, including Goscelin of Canterbury (c. 1035–post 1106),⁴² Hugh of Saint-Victor (c. 1096–1141),⁴³ Orderic Vitalis (1075–c. 1142),⁴⁴ Robert de Torigni (c. 1110–1186),⁴⁵ Ralph

A History of Durham Cathedral Library (Durham: Durham County Advertiser, 1925), pp. 55–68.

³⁹ Nelly Keller, ‘La Biblioteca del Cardinale Pietro Frias di Spagna’, *La Bibliofilia*, 40.8–9 (August–September, 1938), 317–28 (pp. 322 and 324).

⁴⁰ *Catalogue Général des Manuscrits des Bibliothèques Publiques de France: Départements*, 11 vols (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1889), x, p. 287. The entry reads: ‘Decimum sextum continet Orosium de ormesta mundi, et incipit primo folio, post prefaciunculam: “Preceptis tuis parui”’. This manuscript was likely destroyed, either when the library was ransacked by Protestants in 1562 during the French Wars of Religion, or in 1790 or 1791 when it was ransacked again during the French Revolution.

⁴¹ William Pantin, *Canterbury College, Oxford*, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), I, p. 4.

⁴² C. H. Talbot, ed., ‘The Liber Confortatorius of Goscelin of Saint Bertin’, in *Analecta Monastica: Textes et études sur la vie des moines au moyen age*, 3rd series, ed. by M. M. Lebreton, J. Leclercq, and C. H. Talbot, *Studia Anselmiana*, 37 (Rome: Herder, 1955), pp. 2–117 (pp. 80–81), ‘Respice [...] Orosium *De Ormesta Mundi* [...]’.

⁴³ Julian Harrison, ‘The English Reception of Hugh of Saint-Victor’s *Chronicle*’, *Electronic British Library Journal*, 1 (2002), 1–33 (p. 33), ‘*Orosius de Hormesta*’.

⁴⁴ Georg Heinrich Pertz, ed., *Ex Orderici Vitalis Historia Ecclesiastica*, MGH Scriptorum, 20 (Hannover, 1868), pp. 50–82 (p. 52, l. 3), ‘Hoc etiam advertimus in Eusebio et Orosio de Ormesta mundi [...]’.

⁴⁵ Joseph Stevenson, *The Church Historians of England. Vol. IV–Part II. Containing the History of William of Newburgh. The Chronicles of Robert de Monte* (London: Seeleys, 1856), p. xii, ‘De historia Orosii quam fecit de ormesta mundi.’ This reading is from Avranches, Bibliothèque municipale, 159, fol. 3^v, a leaf added by Robert in 1184 at Mont-Saint-Michel.

de Diceto (c. 1120–c. 1202),⁴⁶ Vincent of Beauvais (c. 1184x94–c. 1264),⁴⁷ Roger Bacon (c. 1214–1292),⁴⁸ Nicholas Trevet (1257x65–1334),⁴⁹ John Ridewall (d. 1340),⁵⁰ Paolino Veneto (c. 1270–c. 1344),⁵¹ John of Saint-Victor (d. c. 1351),⁵² Ranulph Higden (c. 1280–1364)⁵³ and his Middle-English

⁴⁶ ‘*Abbreviationes Chronicorum*’, in *Radulfi de Diceto Decani Lundoniensis Opera Historica: The Historical Works of Master Ralph de Diceto, Dean of London*, ed. by William Stubbs, Rolls Series, 68, 2 vols (London: Stationary Office, 1876), I, pp. 3–263 (p. 28), ‘*Orosius de Ormesta Mundi*’.

⁴⁷ Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Quadruplex sive Speculum Maius: Tomus Secundus, Speculum Doctrinale* (Duaci: Baltazar Belieri, 1624, repr. 1964), p. 803, col. 1585, ‘*Scriptis autem de Hormesta mundi [...]*’.

⁴⁸ ‘*Metaphysica*’, in *Opera Hactenus Inedita Rogeri Baconi*, Fasc. I, ed. by R. Steele (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1905), pp. 1–52 (p. 3, l. 30); ‘*Opus Tertium*’, in *Fr. Rogeri Bacon Opera Quaedam Hactenus Inedita*, ed. by J. S. Brewer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1859), pp. 3–310 (chapter 54, p. 206, l. 6); ‘*Opus Maius*’, in *The Opus Majus of Roger Bacon*, ed. by J. H. Bridges, 2 vols (London: Williams and Norgate, 1928), §4, p. 230, l. 13; §14, p. 264, l. 11; §4, p. 292, l. 6; §4, p. 302, l. 16; §4, p. 319, l. 4; §4, p. 330, l. 36; §4, p. 337, l. 15; §6, p. 221, l. 36.

⁴⁹ Cited in Fabris, ‘*Il Commento*’, p. 504, n. 10, ‘*De Ormesta Mundi*’. See also Thomas Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevii*, 4 vols (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1980), III, p. 189, ‘*quorum primum est quod Horosius lib. vii de Ormesta mundi*.’ Trevet cites Orosius under this title in several other works as well.

⁵⁰ ‘*Commentary Two: John Ridewall*’, in *Jankyn’s Book of Wikked Wyves: Seven Commentaries on Walter Map’s ‘Dissuasio Valerii’*, ed. by Traugott Lawler, Ralph Hanna, et al. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014), pp. 51–120 (p. 97, l. 575).

⁵¹ ‘*Chronologia Magna*’, in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 4939, fol. 9^v. See also Francesco Surdich, ‘*La Cultura Geografica di Paolino Veneto*’, in *Paolino Veneto: Storico, Narratore e Geografo*, ed. by Roberta Morosini and Marcello Ciccuto (Rome: Bristol, 2020), pp. 215–32, ‘*Orosii de ormesta mundi*’.

⁵² Cited in Isabelle Guyot-Bachy, ‘*Ambition Encyclopédique ou Influence du Genre Encyclopédique au Début du XIV^e Siècle? Le Memoriale Historiarum de Jean de Saint-Victor*’, in *Encyclopédire: Formes de l’Ambition Encyclopédique dans l’Antiquité et au Moyen Âge*, ed. by Arnaud Zucker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 125–38 (p. 131), ‘*De Ormesta Mundi*’.

⁵³ *Polychronicon Ranulfi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*, ed. by Joseph Rawson Lumby, 9 vols (London, 1874), v, p. 236.

translator John Trevisa (fl. 1402),⁵⁴ Jaume Domènec (d. 1384),⁵⁵ Benvenuto da Imola (1330–1388),⁵⁶ Johannes de Wasia (d. 1395),⁵⁷ Jean de Montreuil (1354–1418),⁵⁸ Pierre d’Ailly (1351–1420),⁵⁹ Alfonso Tostado de Madrigal (c. 1400–1455),⁶⁰ Antoninus of Florence (1389–1459),⁶¹ John Capgrave (1393–1464),⁶² John Whethamstede (c. 1392–1465),⁶³ Albrecht von Eyb (1420–

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 237–38.

⁵⁵ Maria Toldrà, ‘Pròleg del *Compendi Historial*, de Jaume Domènec’, *Vademècum*, 19 July 2014, <<https://mariatoldra.com/2014/07/19/proleg-del-compendi-historial-de-jaume-domenec/>> [accessed 31 July 2021], ‘si Oròsius, és en lo libre dit *De orimesta Mundi*, qui vol dir “de la misèria del món” (‘if Oròsius, it is in the book called *De orimesta Mundi*, which means “of the misery of the world”’).

⁵⁶ *Benevenuti de Rambaldis de Imola Comentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comœdiam*, ed. by William Warren Vernon, 5 vols (Florence: G. Barbèra, 1887), i, pp. 82, 392, ‘Et Orosius in *Orimesta Mundi* [...]’; v, p. 43, ‘ex eius opere quod intitulum Orimesta Mundi [...]’.

⁵⁷ Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, Dep. Erf. CA. 4to 99, fol. 147^r.

⁵⁸ Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 332, fol. 52^v. See also Sabbadini, *Le Scoperte dei Codici*, II, p. 66, n. 25.

⁵⁹ *Ymago Mundi de Pierre d’Ailly: Texte latin et traduction française des quatre traités cosmographiques de Pierre d’Ailly et des notes marginales de Christophe Colomb*, ed. by Edmond Buron, 3 vols (Paris: Maisonneuve frères, 1930), i, p. 252, ‘sequar Orosium in libro de *Orimesta Mundi*’.

⁶⁰ For example, Alfonso Tostado de Madrigal, *Opera I: Commentaria in Genesim cum indicibus copiosissimis*, ed. by Rainerius Bovosius (Venice: Typographia Balleoniana, 1728), pp. 5, 6, 7, 26, 39, 87, 88, 137, 139, 142, 150, 152, 155, 157, 159, 161, 173, 227, 255, 258, 275, 536, 564, 565, 586, and 730.

⁶¹ Antoninus of Florence, *Chronicon: secunda pars historialis venerabilis domini Antonini* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1484), fol. 38^{ra}, ‘Orosius [...] scripsit libros hystoriales, qui intitulantur de orimesta mundi’. Antoninus references Vincent of Beauvais’s *Speculum Historiale* as his source here.

⁶² ‘Abbreviacion of Chronicles’, in *Later Medieval English Literature*, ed. by Douglas Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008), pp. 167–68, ‘Orosius was also in this tyme, that was messenger betwix Jerom and Augustin, wech mad a book onto Seynt Augustin: it is clepid *Orimesta Mundi*’.

⁶³ Marianne Pade, ‘John Wethamstede: *Granarium*, Part One, “Paulus”’, in *Biography, Historiography, and Modes of Philosophizing*, ed. by Patrick Baker (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 109–15 (p. 114), ‘vide in Orosii de orimesta mundi [...]’.

1475),⁶⁴ William Worcester (1415–1480x85),⁶⁵ Antonio de Guevara (c. 1481–1545)⁶⁶, and Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1478–1557).⁶⁷ Overall, it can be seen from these examples that *Ormesta*, *Ormista*, and *De Ormesta Mundi* were well-established titles for the *Historiae* in medieval Europe, especially in the Insular world and adjacent parts of the Continent, for virtually the whole of the Middle Ages.

As the title was predominant in England, and indeed might well have been the standard title for Orosius's work there no later than the fourteenth century, it is perhaps not surprising that *Ormesta* title-forms also became attached to the Old English translation. The earliest instance of this found so far is by John Bale (1495–1563), who notes in his *Illustrium Majoris Britanniae Scriptorum*, first published in 1548, that *Hormestam Pauli Orosij* was among those that King Alfred 'ex Latino in uernaculum idoma (*sic*) uertit.'⁶⁸ The title *Hormesta* similarly became associated to two early modern transcripts of the Old English text. The first of these, a copy of Cotton Tiberius B.I undertaken by Francis Junius the Younger in the third quarter of the seventeenth century, now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 15, is listed by Humfrey Wanley in his

⁶⁴ For example, Albrecht von Eyb, *Margarita poetica: non solum poesim, sed medullam artis rhetoricae: oratorum et historiarum omniumque humanitatis litterarum completens* (Basel: Johannes de Amorbach, Johannes Petrus et Johannes Froben, 1503), pars. sec., tract. I, cap. v, 'De Auctoritatibus ac sententijs ex li. Pauli Orosij de Ormesta accæptis.'

⁶⁵ *The Boke of Noblesse: Addressed to King Edward the Fourth on His Invasion of France in 1475*, ed. by J. G. Nichols (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1860), p. 51. 'And who so wolde considre welle the histories of olde croniclers [...] Orosius de Ormesta Mundi, [...]'.
⁶⁶ *Fray Antonio de Guevara Obras Completas II: Relox de Príncipes*, ed. by Emilio Blanco (Madrid: Biblioteca Castro, 1994), p. 116, 'según dize Paulo Orosio, libro sexto *De Ormesta Mundi* [...]'.
⁶⁷ Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, ed. by Juan Pérez de Tudela y Bueso, 14 vols (Madrid: Ediciones Atlas, 1959), II, p. 214, n. 7, 'Paolo Orosio, *Ormesta Mundi*.' See also I. J. García Pinilla, L. Rivero García, et al., 'Las fuentes clásicas de la *General y Natural Historia de las Indias* de Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo', *Suplemento de Anuario de Estudios Americanos, Sección Historiografía y Bibliografía*, 48.1 (1991), 13–40 (p. 17). *Ormesta* is thus found in a work that is credited with introducing Europeans to the hammock, pineapple, tobacco, and barbecue.

⁶⁸ 'turned from Latin to the vernacular language.' John Bale, *Illustrium Majoris Britanniae Scriptorum, hoc est, Angliae, Cambriae, ac Scotiae Summarium* (Wesel, 1548), fols 65^v–66^r.

1705 catalogue as ‘Pauli Orosii historia *HORMESTA*, sive de Miseriis *mundi*, paraphrastice ab Ælfrædo Rege in linguam Saxoniam traducta.’⁶⁹ William Elstob, who made a copy of Junius’s transcript in 1698, now Oxford, Trinity College, 92, added the title *Hormesta Pauli Orosij quam Olim Patrio Sermone Donavit Ælfrædus Magnus* to his work. Elstob’s transcript in turn became the basis of Daines Barrington’s 1773 edition of the text and thus the title *Hormesta Orosii* was applied to the *editio princeps* of the Old English Orosius.⁷⁰

The word is found in a handful of non-Orosian contexts as well. It is used in a few works as a seemingly learned and obscure item of Latin vocabulary.⁷¹ Most significantly, though, *Ormesta* appears twice as an

⁶⁹ ‘Paulus Orosius’s history *Hormesta*, or on the Miseries of the world, translated non literally into the Saxon language by King Alfred.’ Humfrey Wanley, *Antiquæ Literaturæ Septentrionalis Liber Alter, seu Librorum Vett. Septentrionalium, qui in Angliæ Bibliothecis extant, nec non multorum Vett. Codd. Septentrionalium alibi extantium Catalogus Historico-Criticus, cum totius Thesauri Linguarum Septentrionalium sex Indicibus* (Oxford: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1705), p. 85.

⁷⁰ *The Anglo-Saxon Version from the Historian Orosius by Ælfred the Great*, ed. by Daines Barrington (London: W. Bowyer and J. Nichols, 1773), pp. iv and 13. On the transcripts, see also *King Alfred’s Anglo-Saxon Version of the Compendious History of the World by Orosius*, ed. by Joseph Bosworth (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1859), pp. xxix–xxxv; *The Tollemache Orosius (British Museum Additional Manuscript 47967)*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1953), pp. 24–25. Finally, a map of Pomerania based on Barrington’s edition of *Ohthere’s Voyages*, an interpolation within the geographical chapter of the Old English *Orosius*, that was printed in Jan Potocki, *Suite des Recherches sur la Sarmatie. Livre 3* (Warsaw: L’Imprimerie Libre, 1789), p. 199, bears the title ‘Carte Cyclographique: [...] de L’Hormesta du Roi Alfred’. This is the latest instance of *ormesta* being used without definition, comment, or analysis.

⁷¹ *Lettres d’Étienne de Tournai: nouvelle édition*, ed. by Jules Desilve (Valenciennes: Lemaitre; Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1893), p. 263, ‘Ormesta est, non parabola quam propono, cui et compassionem debeat benivolus animus, et consolationem benefica manus’, ‘It is an *Ormesta* that I set out, not a [mere] proverb, to which both a well-wishing soul should owe compassion and a generous hand consolation’; *Guiberti Tornacensis De Morte; De Septem Verbis Domini in Cruce*, ed. by Charles Munier, *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*, 242 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), pp. 95–174 (p. 167, l. 27), ‘Ormesta est, non parabola, quod proponimus, cui compassionis uiscera debet clerus’, ‘It is an *Ormesta* that we set out, not a [mere] proverb, to which the clergy owe the vitals of compassion’. In a letter dated 15 July 1423 at Milan, Leonardo Bruni references ‘Solinus, mendax, *De Ormesta*

alternative title for Gildas's *De Excidio Britanniae*. The first instance of this is in the *Vita S. Pauli Aureliani*, a life of a sixth-century British saint, which was compiled by Wrmonoc of Landévennec in 884:

Necnon et sanctum Gyldan cuius sagacitatem ingenii industriamque legendi atque in sacris canonum libris peritiam, liber ille, artificiosa compositus instructione, quem *Ormestam Britanniae* uocant declarat: [...]⁷²

And the holy Gyldas, whose wisdom of nature and industry in reading and expertise in the sacred books of canons, the book, well ordered by artful arranging, which they call *Ormesta Britanniae*, declares...

Likewise, in Cambridge, Pembroke College, 25, a ninth-century collection of ninety-six Latin sermons compiled on the Continent but known to have been influential in Anglo-Saxon England, Gildas's work is referenced on fol. 168^v: 'Hoc Gildas, commemorans in *Ormesta Britanniae*, explanat dicens [...]'.⁷³ Neil Wright has established that Gildas certainly read Orosius's *Historiae* and borrowed geographical information, vocabulary, and stylistic features from it in his *Excidio*, so the migration of the title is not entirely

Mundi, quem propter eius complura mendacia parum curo', 'Solinus, a liar, *De Ormesta Mundi*, for which I care little on account of his many lies'. See *Le Carte Strozziene del R. Archivio di Stato in Firenze: inventario*, ed. by Cesare Guasti, (Florence: Tipografia Gailieiana, 1884), pp. 564–65; Remigio Sabbadini, *Le Scoperte dei Codici*, 1, p. 104. As Sabbadini himself points out, Bruni doubtless had Solinus's *De Mirabilibus Mundi* in mind. Ubertino Carrara, *Columbus: Carmen Epicum* (Rome: Rocchi Bernabo, 1715), p. 286, l. 13, 'Illâ teste manus Ormistae absciderat, Orphneo | brachia, Nictolatrae tergum, caput Euridamanti', 'From that witness the hand cut for Ormesta, the arm for Orphneus, the back for Nictolatra, the head for Eurydamas'.

⁷² Charles Cuissard, 'Vie de Saint Paul de Léon en Bretagne', *Revue Celtique*, 5 (1881–1883), 413–60 (p. 421).

⁷³ 'Here Gildas, recalling the *Ormesta Britanniae*, explains, saying...', James E. Cross, *Cambridge, Pembroke College, MS 25: A Carolingian Sermonary Used by Anglo-Saxon Preachers*, King's College London Medieval Studies, 1 (London: King's College Press, 1987), p. 156.

surprising.⁷⁴ While *Ormesta* is not attested as a title for *De Excidio Britanniae* in any extant manuscript witnesses of the text itself,⁷⁵ a fragment of the *Excidio* of ninth-century Breton provenance survives as part of Reims, Bibliothèque municipale, 414, specifically fols 78–79. Referencing Ve, Q, and this fragment, Julia Smith notes that Orosius and Gildas are the only historians with direct attestations in ninth-century Brittany.⁷⁶ Caroline Brett takes that a step further, noting that, when read together, ‘the two texts would have formed a coherent, self-contained view of Christian history and the place of the Britons in it.’⁷⁷ This fact, and the apparent transposition of the title, might indicate that *Ormesta* served as a standard title element across related historical works, or a genre marker, perhaps reminiscent of the title-forms found in the medieval Irish tale lists.⁷⁸

It is therefore unsurprising that there has already been a considerable amount of discussion regarding the meaning and origin of *ormesta*; however, the matter was perhaps best characterized by William Cave when he wrote in 1688: ‘Opus istud à plerisque *Hormesta Orosii* appellatur, quâ de causâ,

⁷⁴ Neil Wright, ‘Did Gildas Read Orosius?’, *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 9 (Summer 1985), 31–42.

⁷⁵ See Theodor Mommsen, ‘Chronica Minora’, pp. 10–11; Michael Winterbottom, *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (London, 1978), p. 10, n. 3. Note also p. 125, n. 87 inf.

⁷⁶ Julia Smith, *Province and Empire: Brittany and the Carolingians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 171.

⁷⁷ Caroline Brett, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago, 450–1200: Contact, Myth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), p. 116.

⁷⁸ On this, see Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980); Gregory Toner, ‘Reconstructing the Earliest Irish Tale Lists’, *Éigse*, 32 (2000), 88–120. Although Toner (pp. 112–13) notes that the tale lists themselves are likely not earlier than the tenth century, that does not preclude the suggestion that individual texts might be assigned titles to mark their genre. A similar suggestion to that of the present author was made by Pierre Yves Lambert, in ‘“Style de traduction”. Les traductions celtiques de textes historiques’, *Revue d’Histoire des Textes*, 24 (1994), 375–91 (p. 379). Associating the word with *armes* (see pp. 129–136 inf.), Lambert posits that *ormesta* is a Brittonic parallel of the Irish *togail*.

divinare facilius est, quam certi aliquid statuere.⁷⁹ Among other ideas, it has been posited that it should be read ‘orchestra’ with the sense of ‘scene’,⁸⁰ that it was originally ‘historia’ and was changed by a series of scribal errors,⁸¹ and that it was a third name for Paulus Orosius, related to Persian Hormizd.⁸² In 1627, Baldassarre Bonifacio suggested that the word should be read ‘ormista’ and that it is a portmanteau, an abbreviation of *Orosii Mundi Historia*.⁸³ This idea is accepted by some scholars and has been restated by William Ramsay, Joseph Bosworth, Paget Toynbee, Konrad Miller, R. E. Latham, G. R. Crone, Fabrizio Fabbrini, P. J. Lukas, A. T. Fear, and numerous others.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ ‘This work is called by most the *Hormesta* of Orosius, the reason for which, it is easier to speculate than to propose anything certain.’ William Cave, *Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Historia Litteraria a Christo nato usque ad saeculum XIV*, 2 vols (London: Richard Chiswell, 1688), I, p. 304.

⁸⁰ du Cange, *Glossarium*, s.v. *ormesta*.

⁸¹ A. Anscombe, ‘Ormešta’, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 4 (1903), 462–63.

⁸² The lattermost suggestion was made most notably by Christoph August Heumann, *Programma quo Paulo Orosio Nomen Tertium Hormisdæ Restituitur* (Gottingen: Hagerus, 1732). This suggestion was taken up by Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet (*Histoires*, I, p. xiv, n. 21) who pointed out that the name is attested elsewhere in the wider Late Antique world: no fewer than eight Sasanian kings and two saints of Persian origin were named Hormizd, Hellenised as Ὁρμίσδος, and a pope Hormisdas reigned from 514 to 523.

⁸³ Baldassarre Bonifacio, *De Romanæ Historiæ Scriptoribus Excerpta a Balthassare Bonifacio ex Bodino, Vossio, aliisque* (Venice: Antonius Pinellus, 1627), p. 79.

⁸⁴ William Ramsay, ‘Orosius, Paulus’, in *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, ed. by William Smith, 3 vols (London: Taylor, Walton and Maberly, 1849), III, pp. 58–59 (p. 59). Bosworth, *King Alfred’s Anglo-Saxon Version*, p. iv, n. 1; Paget Toynbee, ‘Dante’s Obligations to Orosius’, *Romania*, 24 (1895), 385–98 (p. 386, n. 1); Paget Toynbee, *Dante Studies and Researches* (London: Meuthen and Co, 1902), p. 121, n. 2; Miller, *Mappaemundi*, IV, p. 7; R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 325; G. R. Crone, ‘New Light on the Hereford Map’, *The Geographical Journal*, 131.4 (December 1965), p. 448; Fabrizio Fabbrini, *Paolo Orosio: Uno Storico* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1979), p. 9, n. 9; P. J. Lucas, ed., *John Capgrave’s Abbreuacion of Chronicles*, Early English Text Society Original Series, 285 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 65, 266, and 396; A. T. Fear, trans., *Orosius: Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), p. 24. This interpretation of the word is common in scholarship on the Hereford Mappa Mundi and has been repeated several times in recent years.

However, there is ample evidence that *ormesta* was lexicalized in its own right. In most instances the word appears to inflect like a regular first-declension Latin noun or substantivized adjective. Among the attested forms are: nom. sg. *ormesta*, *ormista*, gen. sg. *ormestae*, *ormistae*, acc. sg. *ormestam*, abl. sg. *de ormesta*, *de hormesta*, *ex ormista*, *in ormesta*, and gen. pl. *ormistarum*. There is ample evidence as well that it had its own distinct semantic range that was perceived by medieval and early-modern readers. The word is defined in a group of closely related prefaces in at least twenty-six witnesses, the earliest being Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Zanetti lat. 349 (Ve). The vast majority of these prefaces give the following explanation of the word, with only minor variations: ‘Sciendum est quod haec ars nominatur *Ormesta*, id est miserabilis uel gemitus, eo quod miserias mundi continet.’⁸⁵ Likewise, several later manuscripts feature the title *De Miseriis Mundi* or *De Miseria Mundi*, and one eighth-century epitome is entitled *De Malis Mundi*.⁸⁶ Interestingly, a single manuscript of Gildas’s *De Excidio* also features *De Miseriis* as a title element.⁸⁷ These titles suggest the possibility that *miseriis*, *miseria*, and *malis* are *lectiones faciliores* for *ormesta*. This is confirmed explicitly, in multiple senses, by a colophon found at the end of the text in three related manuscripts, which reads in part: ‘Explicit liber septimus sancti Pauli Orosii presbiteri de *ormesta mundi*, id est de *miseriis huius saeculi*.’⁸⁸ A similar colophon in a later

⁸⁵ ‘It should be known that this work is called *Ormesta*, that is a miserable thing or a lamentation, that is because it contains the miseries of the world.’ See Appendix for further remarks on the prefaces and an edition.

⁸⁶ Among those with *De Miseriis Mundi* are 125 (Ball.) and 126 (Seld.), both of which Bately identifies as among the four closest surviving relatives of the Old English translator’s exemplar. The former of these also features *De Ormesta Mundi* as a running title. *De Miseria Mundi* appears in 7 (Bern 128), which is in Bately’s group A i. *De Malis Mundi* is found in 4 (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Preussische Kulturbesitz, Depot Breslau 3 (Δ, s. VIII, formerly Rehdigeranus 107)).

⁸⁷ Avranches, Bibliothèque Patrimoniaire, 162 (s. XII ex, written at Mont-Saint-Michel). See Mommsen, ‘Chronica Minora’, p. 10, ‘*liber de miseris et praevaricationibus et excidio Britanniae*’.

⁸⁸ ‘Here ends book seven by the holy presbyter Paulus Orosius on the *ormesta* of the world, that is on the miseries of this age.’ This colophon is found in 80 (Lincoln 102, 116^{va}), 86 (Burney 216, 88^{vb}), and 134 (St John’s Ox 95, 113^{ra}). In 90 (Royal 6 C VIII), an identical colophon is found on fol. 2^{rb} after 1.1.8: ‘Incipit liber primus sancti Pauli Orosii presbiteri

witness reads: ‘Explicit liber Orosii presbyteri et monachi de ormesta seu miseria mundi.’⁸⁹

It is very likely that this meaning underpins the expression ‘Ormesta est, non parabola’ used by Stephen and Guibert of Tournai.⁹⁰ This definition is also attested in Ranulph Higden’s *Polychronicon* (‘de ormesta, id est de miseria mundi’)⁹¹ and its Middle English translation, completed by John Trevisa in 1402 (‘de ormesta, þat is, of þe wrecchednesse of þis world’).⁹² The same definition is repeated in Catalan by Jaume Domenec: ‘de la misèria del món.’⁹³ The *Nuremberg Chronicle* notes: ‘Et De Ormista, id est de miseria mundi, intitulauit.’⁹⁴ This definition also seems to have been known to Maximilien Thieulaine (1585–1667), an early-modern monk and historian, who wrote in 1644 ‘Item de libro Orosij, qui intitulatur *Ormesta* de miseria mundi.’⁹⁵ Finally, as noted above, this definition was clearly known to Humfrey Wanley as of 1705.⁹⁶ Given this wealth of evidence, it is not surprising that the definition of *ormesta* as ‘miseria’ or ‘miseriis’ was recognised by the early editors of the *Historiae*. This remained the case as recently as the era of Siwart Haverkamp (1684–1742), who noted in the introduction printed in the 1767 reprint of his edition that *ormesta* must be a

de ormesta mundi, id est de miseriis huius saeculi’. All of these manuscripts were produced in England in the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries and together comprise Bately’s group C vii.

⁸⁹ ‘Here ends the book by the presbyter and monk Orosius on the *ormesta* or the misery of the world.’ The manuscript in question is 130 (Laud. Lat. 4), written at Glastonbury in 1406.

⁹⁰ See p. 121, n. 71 sup. In both instances, *ormesta* seems to refer to a true and tragic story in apposition to *parabola*.

⁹¹ Lumby, ed., *Polychronicon*, p. 236.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 237–38.

⁹³ Toldrà, ‘Prolèg’.

⁹⁴ Hartmann Schedel, *Registrum huius Operis Libri Cronicarum cum Figuris et Imaginibus ab Inicio Mundi* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1493), fol. 138^r.

⁹⁵ Maximilien Thieulaine, *Thesaurus Historiarum Selectissimarum, nec non dictorum factorumque memorabilium locupletissimus* (Cologne: Wilhelm Friess, 1644), fol. 2^r.

⁹⁶ See pp. 120–21 sup.

‘corrupt form’ of *miseria*: ‘id nihil aliud esse existimo quam corruptum, ex verbis *de miseria mundi*, et hunc verum esse titulum.’⁹⁷

There is, however, strong evidence of at least one alternative interpretation. This is provided by a gloss already mentioned, *middangeardes metend* in the *Cleopatra Glossaries*, and it is also reflected in *miserabilis* uel *metiens*, found in P. The parallel of *metiens* and *metend*, both meaning ‘measuring’, is striking. Given that P is written partially in a Continental variant of Insular script and incorporates readings from the Insular manuscript tradition, it is possible that these two glosses are linked in that they both reflect an alternative or secondary interpretation of this word that circulated mostly in Germanic-speaking areas. Finally, the range of meanings in P seems to underpin a variant preface found uniquely in Geneva, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, lat. 18 (s. XV/XVI, fol. 214^v):

Incipit *Ormista* quod utrum Grecum an Latinum sit penitus ignoratur, sed interpretatio uerbi putatur, sicut tradente magistro percepi, eiusmodi esse: si Grecum, esse debet interpretari ‘miserabilis’ eo quod de miserijs humani generis maxime disputat; sin uero Latinum, orbis⁹⁸ metiens sonat, quando distributionem finium locorumque diuersitatem primus instituit enarrare. *Scriptor*.

Here begins the *Ormista* which whether it is Greek or Latin is thoroughly unknown, but the meaning of the word is thought, as I realized when the teacher was handing it down, to be of this sort: if it is Greek, it must be interpreted ‘a miserable thing’ because it discusses the miseries of the human race most of all; rather if it is Latin, it means

⁹⁷ ‘I think it is nothing other than a corrupt form, from the words *on the misery of the world*, and this is the true title.’, Haverkamp, *Historiarum*, Praefatio. Haverkamp’s suggestion is followed by Ferdinand Lot, ‘De la valeur historique du “De excidio et conquestu Britanniae” de Gildas’, in *Medieval Studies in Memory of Gertrude Schoepperle Loomis*, ed. by Roger Sherman Loomis (Paris: H. Champion, 1927), pp. 229–64 (p. 230). In spite of the evidence that *ormesta* is a perfectly cromulent word, Lot nonetheless favours a paleographic explanation.

⁹⁸ The manuscript reads: ho’as. This emendation is rather speculative. It is possible that *horas* ‘hours, times’ may be meant here.

measuring of the world(?), since the first book sets forth to narrate the distribution of boundaries and diversity of places. The scribe.

In sum, the word clearly carried semantic force for readers in the Middle Ages and well into the early modern period. The great majority of sources define it as ‘misery’; however it seems to have carried the sense of ‘measuring’ in some centres as well.⁹⁹ That these clear definitions have been all but ignored since the mid-eighteenth century is utterly unaccountable.

While the preface to the Geneva witness seems to be the earliest surviving attempt to associate *ormesta* with specific languages, various explanations and etymologies have since been put forward. There have been numerous attempts to connect *ormesta* to assorted Greek words and the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw concerted efforts to posit a Germanic etymology.¹⁰⁰ A Celtic etymology was first suggested in 1726 in Valentin

⁹⁹ In addition to these two definitions, there is yet another: in the apocryphal *Omnimoda Historia*, reputed to be the work of Flavius Lucius Dexter (recte: Nummius Aemilianus Dexter) but in fact written by the Spanish Jesuit Jerónimo Román de la Higuera (1538–1611), Orosius is described as ‘mirifice auspicatur Hormestam, id est, Mundi Chronicon’ (*Chronicon omnimodæ historiæ*, in *PL*, ed. by J. P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844–64), XXXI (1846), cols. 9–636 (cols. 545–46)). This definition is doubtless a somewhat educated guess by Higuera.

¹⁰⁰ For surveys of other early explanations for the etymology of *ormesta* see Johann Albert Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Latina Mediæ et Infimæ Aetatis*, 6 vols (Florence: Typis Thomae Baracchi et F., 1858), v, p. 168; Theodor von Mörner, *De Orosii Vita Eiusque Historiarum Libris Septem adversus Paganos* (Berlin: Typis Schadeanis, 1844), pp. 178–181. A Germanic origin for *ormesta* was first proposed by Johann Georg von Eckhart in ‘De *Ormista Mundi*, quem titulum P. Orosius suis historiarum libris præfixit, dissertatio’, *Bibliotheca Historico-Philologico-Theologica Bremensis*, class. 1, fasc. 1 (1719), 325–34 (pp. 332–34), who posited that the word was derived ultimately from Gothic *arman* ‘misereri’ via a hypothetical †**armwist*. A similar argument is made by Robert Meadows White in *The Ormulum: Now First Edited from the Original Manuscript in the Bodleian with Notes and a Glossary*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1852), I, p. xlv, n. 59, who, following von Eckhart, associates the word with the Old English adjective *earm* ‘miserable’, superlative *earmost*. This argument is referenced in Bäckström, ‘Орозий’ IV, pp. 72–79; Leo Wiener, *Contributions*, pp. 9–10; however, in all its forms this etymology is dependent on multiple radical emendations and runs somewhat contrary to the distribution of the form in the manuscript record.

Ernst Löscher's *Literator Celta*, but this was not taken up further at the time.¹⁰¹ In 1883, Charles Cuissard speculated in *Revue Celtique* that the word could be 'd'une racine orientale.'¹⁰² Henri Gaidoz finally cracked the case when he pointed out in a note appended to Cuissard's article that *ormesta* is, in fact, Celtic in origin: '*Ormesta*, pour *Wormesta*, est évidemment le même mot que le gallois moderne *Gormes* que les dictionnaires traduisent par "an oppression, violence, an encroachment, a plague".¹⁰³ This explanation stands to reason, for the most part, and has since been widely accepted, as will be shown anon.

It is, however, not without its problems. While Gaidoz proposed that *ormesta* was related to Welsh *gormes*, 'oppression, plague, destruction'¹⁰⁴ — a theory subsequently supported by Joseph Loth, Theodor Mommsen, Hugh Williams, Holger Pedersen, Evan J. Jones, Julius Pokorny, Léon Fleuriot, Claude Evans, Patrick Sims-Williams, Neil Wright, Thomas Charles-

¹⁰¹ Valentin Ernst Löscher, *Literator Celta: Seu de excolenda literatura Europaea, occidentali et septentrionali consilium et conatus*, ed. by Johann Augustin Egenolf (Leipzig: Johann Christian Martin, 1726), p. 101. In the preface, Egenolf notes (p. s.n. [v]) that the section in which this appears, Thesis XXXVI, is his own contribution. He follows von Eckhart's proposed etymology, since Celtic was assumed to be a branch of Germanic at the time. This proposal is not listed by Fabricius or von Mörner. On this work, see Archer Taylor, 'Valentin Ernst Loescher's *Literator Celta*', *Modern Philology*, 43.1 (August 1945), 40–43.

¹⁰² Cuissard, p. 459, 'From an oriental root'.

¹⁰³ Henri Gaidoz, in Cuissard, p. 459, '*Ormesta*, for *Wormesta*, is clearly the same word as Modern Welsh *Gormes*, which the dictionaries translate as "an oppression, violence, an encroachment, a plague."' Gaidoz's note was followed very soon afterwards by Joseph Loth, *L'Émigration bretonne en Armorique du V^e au VII^e Siècle de Notre Ère* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1883), wherein Loth noted in reference to the same passage from the *Vita* of Paul Aurelian: '*Ormesta* ou *Vormesta* est la forme archaïque du gallois actuel *Gormes* (*Vormes* au VIII^e – IX^e siècle), oppression, dévastation, invasion', '*Ormesta* or *Vormesta* is the archaic form of contemporary Welsh *Gormes* (*Vormes* in the eighth and ninth centuries), oppression, devistation, invasion' (p. 45). Gaidoz's note appeared in *Revue Celtique*, 5.4, dated April 1883; it is noted at the explicit that Loth's book was 'vu et lu en Sorbonne, le 29 janvier 1883' (p. 241). It is therefore likely that both items were in preparation more or less simultaneously. Whereas it might otherwise be difficult to establish priority, given that neither scholar cites the other, Loth cited Gaidoz on this matter many decades later in Joseph Loth, 'Notes étymologiques et lexicographiques (*suite*)', *Revue Celtique*, 40 (1923), 342–76 (p. 348), therein indicating that Gaidoz has priority on this discovery.

¹⁰⁴ GPC, s.v. *gormes*.

Edwards, Eugen Hill, the editors of the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, and most recently Caroline Brett¹⁰⁵ — Ifor Williams proposed that the word was, rather, derived from Welsh *armes*, ‘prophecy, prediction; calamity, destruction.’¹⁰⁶ This latter theory has the support of the editors of *GPC*, Édouard Bachellery, Pierre-Yves Lambert, Andrew Breeze, Rachel Bromwich, and Lynette Olson.¹⁰⁷ In the remainder of this article, we will go through *ormesta* more or less syllable by syllable to elucidate its derivation.

¹⁰⁵ Loth, *L'Émigration bretonne*, p. 45; Mommsen, ‘Chronica Minora’, p. 22, n. 1; Hugh Williams, *Gildae de Excidio Britanniae, Fragmenta, Liber de Paenitentia Accedit et Lorica Gildae* (London: D. Nutt, 1899), p. 319; Holger Pedersen, *Vergleichende Grammatik der keltischen Sprachen*, 2 vols (Göttingen, 1909), I, p. 136; Jones, *History of Education*, I, p. 283; Julius Pokorny, ‘Zur Urgeschichte der Kelten und Illyrier’, *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 20 (1936), 315–52 and 489–522, (p. 506); Léon Fleuriot and Claude Evans, *A Dictionary of Old Breton – Dictionnaire du Vieux Breton*, 2 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), I–II, s.v. *ormest*; Sims-Williams, ‘Some Functions of Origin Legends’, p. 116; Neil Wright, ‘Knowledge of Christian Latin Poets and Historians in Early Medieval Brittany’, *Études Celtiques*, 23 (1986), 163–86 (p. 185); Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kingship* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 296–97; Eugen Hill, *Untersuchungen zum inneren Sandhi des Indogermanischen. Der Zusammenstoß von Dentalplosiven im Indoiranischen, Germanischen, Italischen und Keltischen* (Bremen: Hempen Verlag, 2003), p. 262; R. K. Ashdowne et al., *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, s.v. *ormesta*; Brett, *Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago*, p. 166.

¹⁰⁶ Ifor Williams, ed., *Armes Prydein o Lyfr Taliesin* (Cardiff: Univeristy of Wales Press, 1955), pp. xlvi–xlvii; *GPC*, s.v. *armes*.

¹⁰⁷ *GPC*, s.v. *armes*; Édouard Bachellery, ‘Ifor Williams. *Armes Prydein o Lyfr Taliesin*. Caerdydd, Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1955’, *Études Celtiques*, 8.1 (1958), 220–26 (p. 222); Pierre-Yves Lambert, ‘Gloses à Orose: résultats d’enquête’, *Études Celtiques*, 25 (1988), 213–20, (p. 214); Andrew Breeze, ‘Orosius’s *Ormesta* and John Capgrave’, *SELIM: Journal of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature*, 18 (2011), 165–68; Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Triads of the Island of Britain*, 4th edn (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), pp. 91–92; Lynette Olson, ‘Armes Prydein as a Legacy of Gildas’, in *Prophecy, Fate and Memory in the Early Medieval Celtic World*, ed. by Jonathan M. Wooding and Lynette Olson (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2020), pp. 170–87 (p. 174).

If the closest Brittonic cognate is to be identified on linguistic grounds, the matter naturally hinges on the interpretation of the initial *o-*.¹⁰⁸ It will be noticed that it is shared by neither *gormes* nor *armes*. For this, several explanations have been put forward, none of which are completely without problems. In the former, the element *gor-* is well attested elsewhere with the sense of ‘on, over’.¹⁰⁹ It is cognate with the Old Irish preposition and prefix *for* and is itself attested in all three Brittonic languages.¹¹⁰ Ultimately, it is derived from the Proto-Indo-European root **uper*¹¹¹ via Proto-Celtic **uφer*¹¹² and Proto-British **wor*, which later became **wur* in the southwest.¹¹³ Over the course of the Old British period (100–800 AD) unlenited **w* became **gw*, and **g-* before rounded vowels. Whereas Kenneth Jackson dated this change to no later than the eighth century in Welsh¹¹⁴ and the mid-ninth century in Cornish and Breton,¹¹⁵ Patrick Sims-Williams has more recently argued that the available evidence indicates that the shift could have begun as late as the turn of the ninth century, and, in Cornwall at least, forms with *w-* could still

¹⁰⁸ Spellings with *h-* do not appear before the twelfth century and are thus exceedingly unlikely to be indicative of the original reading.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Middle Welsh *gorfot*, ‘victory, triumph, vanquishing’ and *gorffen*, ‘end, conclusion’.

¹¹⁰ Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946), p. 513.

¹¹¹ Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (1959), s.v. *uper*, *uperi*.

¹¹² Kim McCone, *Towards a Relative Chronology of Ancient and Medieval Celtic Sound Change* (Maynooth: Department of Old Irish, 1996), p. 45, asserts that **wor* developed as ‘an analogical reformation of **wer* under the influence of **wo*.’ Ranko Matasović accounts for this same *e > o* shift by suggesting that there must have been an intermediate stage with **ufor* but that it is not clear whether it is a variant or development of **ufer*. See *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), s.v. **ufor-* (p. 398).

¹¹³ Peter Schrijver, *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 113–14.

¹¹⁴ Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1953), pp. 385–94, s. 49.

¹¹⁵ Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, *A Historical Phonology of Breton* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1986), pp. 428–29, s. 612. Interestingly, Jackson dates this change largely on evidence from the glosses in Venice 349 and Reg. lat. 296.

be found at the beginning of the twelfth century.¹¹⁶ Therefore, in the absence of an early attestation of †**gormesta*, a connection to *gormes* must suppose that *ormesta* should be read *uormesta*. This is not supported by any extant early witness nor can this discrepancy be explained by any known regular sound change in the period.

In his *Dictionnaire*, Léon Fleuriot claimed that ‘(u)uor initial est parfois noté or- en v. Bret.’¹¹⁷ In support of this, Fleuriot noted that a personal name rendered *Uuordoital*, *Uuordoetal*, *Uuordoutal*, and *Uuordotal* in the eleventh-century *Cartulaire de Redon* is found written as *Orduthal* in the foundation charter for the monastery of Locmaria at Quimper.¹¹⁸ All of the attestations of this name with *Uuor-* in the *Cartulaire de Redon* are from ninth-century charters, whereas the Locmaria charter dates from between 1022 and 1058. Furthermore, the single occurrence of *Orduthal* is in a list of witnesses to the donation wherein many of the other names sound distinctly French or Germanic.¹¹⁹ Subsequently, Fleuriot and Claude Evans call attention to the name *Otelin*, otherwise *Uuotalin*, in a charter in the *Cartulaire de Redon* dating from between 1062 and 1067.¹²⁰ They also note that another

¹¹⁶ Patrick Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology c. 400–1200* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 288 and 291. See also Peter Schrijver, ‘Old British’, in *Brythonic Celtic: From Medieval British to Modern Breton*, ed. by Elmar Ternes (Bremen: Hemen Verlag, 2011), pp. 1–84 (p. 31).

¹¹⁷ Fleuriot and Evans, *Dict.*, I, s.v. *ormest* (p. 278), ‘initial (u)uor- is sometimes written or- in Old Breton.’ Later, in *Le Vieux Breton: Éléments d’une grammaire* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1964), Fleuriot restricted his argument somewhat, noting (p. 43): ‘Le o initial de ORMESTA “calamité” est dû à la notation du préfixe uuor- par or- dans cette forme latinisée et or- ne semble pas venir de ar- dans ce mot.’, ‘The initial o of ORMESTA “calamity” is due to the notation of the prefix uuor- by or- in this Latinized form and or- does not seem to come from ar- in this word.’

¹¹⁸ Acte 4517, in *Chartes originales antérieures à 1121 conservées en France*, ed. by Cédric Giraud, Jean-Baptiste Renault, and Benoît-Michel Tock (Nancy: Centre de Médiévistique Jean Schneider; electronic edition: Orléans: Institut de Recherche et d’Histoire des Textes, 2010).

¹¹⁹ This observation was made by Léon Fleuriot himself in ‘Recherches sur les enclaves romaines anciennes en territoire bretonnant’, *Études Celtiques*, 8.1 (1958), 164–78 (p. 169).

¹²⁰ Rennes, Archive de l’Évêché, *Cartulaire de Redon*, fol. 138^r. On the date of this charter, see Hubert Guillotel, André Chédeville, and Bernard Tanguy, *Cartulaire de l’abbaye Saint-*

Ourduythal is listed in the Bodmin manumissions among the slaves freed in the reign of King Edgar (959–975).¹²¹ To this may be added Ourdylyc, also attested as Wurdylic, a female slave also freed during Edgar’s reign.¹²² This evidence does leave something to be desired — Orduthal, Otelin, Ourduythal, and Ourdylyc are separated from the earliest attestation of *ormesta* by at least three centuries and, in the case of the latter two, the forms could reflect scribal metathesis, rather than the loss of **w-*.

The argument for *armes* has often been made on largely semantic grounds. This is the case for Bachellery, Breeze, and Olson. With the exception of Breeze, they make their arguments in reference to the use of *ormesta* as an alternative title for Gildas’s *De Excidio*, for which a prophetic motive might well seem appropriate. As the early attestations of *ormesta* in the Bobbio Orosius and P have hitherto not been well documented in Celtic scholarship, the use of the word as a title for the *Historiae* has been regarded as a secondary matter, not predating the ninth century. The *ar-* in *armes* is very well attested across all Celtic languages as, in turns, a preposition, a preverb, and a prefix.¹²³ When it carries semantic force, it generally means ‘on, in front of’. Joseph Vendryès proposed that it derives ultimately from PIE **peri*, ‘near’;¹²⁴ however, Ranko Matasović suggests on the grounds of the vocalism and semantics that it derives from PIE **prH(i)*, ‘in front of’ via Proto-Celtic **fare*.¹²⁵ Both proposals suppose an intermediate stage with **ari-*.¹²⁶ In either case, the lowering of /a/ to /o/ required for *ormesta* to be related to *armes*

Sauveur de Redon, 2 vols (Rennes: Association des Amis des Archives historiques du diocèse de Rennes Dol et Saint-Malo, 1998), I, p. 77.

¹²¹ Fleuriot and Evans, *Dict.*, II, p. 533 s.v. *ormest*; Whitley Stokes, ‘The Manumissions in the Bodmin Gospels’, *Revue Celtique*, 1 (1870–1872), 332–45 (p. 333). More recently, see the discussion in Oliver Padel, *Slavery in Saxon Cornwall: The Bodmin Manumissions* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, 2008).

¹²² Stokes, ‘Manumissions’, pp. 336, 344. The presence of this ostensibly female name in this corpus would seem to suggest against a connection of these forms with *gur* ‘man’.

¹²³ *GPC*, s.v. *ar*; *eDIL*, s.v. *ar* etc.

¹²⁴ Joseph Vendryès, *Lexique Etymologique de l’Irlandais Ancien, A* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1959), p. 37.

¹²⁵ Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary*, s.v. **fare*.

¹²⁶ Schrijver, *Studies*, p. 175.

is quite difficult to justify. Ifor Williams points to two attestations of *ormes* with the meaning *armes*. Both are from the verse text *Cyfoesi Myrddin a Gwenddydd ei Chwaer* ('Colloquy of Myrddin with His Sister Gwenddydd') as recorded in the *Red Book of Hergest*, (s. XIV ex. – XV in.). The first is as follows:

Dywedwŷf nyt odrycaŵr.
ormes | brydein pryderaŵr.
wedy meruyn rodri maŵr.¹²⁷

May I say there will be no delay; the *ormes* [here: 'prophecy'] of Britain will be pondered (?), after Merfyn, Rhodri Mawr.¹²⁸

And the second:

Dywedwŷf nyt odrycker
ormes prydein pryderer.
gwedy gruffud gwyn gwarther.¹²⁹

May I say there will be no delay; the *ormes* of Britain will be pondered (?), after Gruffud, Gwynn the Noble.¹³⁰

It is noteworthy that other instances of *armes* in the same text and manuscript are spelled with the expected *a-*, and initial *a-* is also found in these same stanzas in the other witness to this text, Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth 20, which may be nearly a century older. On these grounds, it is difficult to attribute these two errant *ormeses* to anything other than the whims of a scribe writing c. 1400.

¹²⁷ J. Gwenogvryn Evans, ed., *The Poetry in the Red Book of Hergest* (Llanbedrog, 1911), cols. 578–79, ll. 43–02.

¹²⁸ Rachel Bromwich, trans., *Armes Prydein: The Prophecy of Britain from the Book of Taliesin* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1972), p. xlvi.

¹²⁹ J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *Red Book of Hergest*, col. 580., ll. 4–6.

¹³⁰ Bromwich, *Armes Prydein*, p. xlvi.

The case for *armes* is weakened further still when one considers the seemingly unlenited /m/, or rather the /rm/ combination. This unlenited /m/ is, of course, found in both *gormes* and *armes*. In both cases, the *GPC* posits that the preposition must have been followed by another element that has been completely assimilated by syncope, leaving only the /m/ as an indication of its existence. There is no firm consensus on what exactly that element was in either case. The editors of *GPC* posit that the prefixes may have been followed by either *ym-, ultimately from PIE *H₂embhi-, ‘around, about’ via Proto-Celtic *ambi, ‘around’, or *eks-, from PIE *H₁eg^hs, via PC *exs.¹³¹ Writing of *gormes*, Hill favours the latter of these.¹³² In the case of *armes*, this explanation stands to reason. As the first element, *perilpr(H)i, historically ended in a vowel, it would indeed be expected to cause lenition and so an intermediate element must be posited. However, this element would have likely survived in some form until syncope, which Jackson dated to the mid to late sixth century.¹³³ Therefore, as there are no known early attestations of †*ormesta or a similar form,¹³⁴ and assuming that it became fossilized virtually as soon as it was borrowed into Latin, if *ormesta* is derived from an antecedent of *armes* the word must have been borrowed no earlier than a mere few decades before the writing of the Bobbio Orosius, its first attestation, in the early seventh century.

While this alone does not absolutely preclude the possibility that *ormesta* is derived from an antecedent of *armes*, an association with *gormes* provides a far more straightforward way of accounting for the unlenited /m/. In a series of articles, Eric Hamp called attention to the fact that numerous old compounds with *gor-* and a second element beginning with *m-* retain the unlenited *m-*. In addition to *gormes*, he noted *gormail* ‘oppress’ as well as *gormant* and *gormod*, both meaning ‘excess’. He suggested that they all

¹³¹ Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary*, s.v. *ambi-; *GPC*, s.v. *armes*, *gormes*.

¹³² Hill, *Untersuchungen zum inneren Sandhi*, p. 309.

¹³³ Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 654–56.

¹³⁴ The only exception located so far is ‘OROMESTA’ on the fifteenth-century title page in Ve. See n. 12 sup.

originally contained the prefix **uks*, derived ultimately from **uper* via **ups*.¹³⁵ As the prefix became opaque due to sound changes, it was reinforced by its cognate **wor*. While the semantic motivation of Hamp's account makes it more convenient than that in *GPC*, it may not be necessary to posit any preverb at all in this instance. Paul Russell has argued that the seemingly irregular mutations found after *-r-*, especially prevalent in compounds with *gor-*, are best understood as the product of a scenario where *gor-* originally triggered spirantization and only later were some forms analysed as lenition, eventually yielding the rule *gor-* + lenition.¹³⁶ If this is taken to be the case, *ormesta* could have either been borrowed before spirantization, or the *-m-* could be accounted for by the fact that /μ/, spirantized *m*, was written as *m* well into the Old Welsh period.¹³⁷

Finally, the matter of the *o-* can be resolved quite elegantly and in favour of *wor-* when one considers that, given that the Brittonic antecedent was almost certainly a feminine noun, it would have been heard very frequently, if not most frequently, in a context in which it was lenited, therefore it is entirely reasonable that the lenited form would be borrowed into Latin.¹³⁸ Jackson dates lenition to the second half of the fifth century, thus giving a very practical *terminus post quem*.¹³⁹ In sum, the linguistic evidence, and indeed the greater portion of the semantic evidence, seems to favour the suggestion that *ormesta* is more likely related to *gormes*.

¹³⁵ Eric P. Hamp, 'Intensives in British Celtic and Gaulish', *Studia Celtica*, 12 (1977), 1–13 (pp. 12–13); Eric P. Hamp, '*imbolc, óimelc*', *Studia Celtica*, 14 (1979), 106–13 (p. 109); Eric P. Hamp, '[1] *vch bob aelwyt*; [2] *ffuruf CLLaLl 134*; [3] *Corannyeit*; [4] *cerennydd*', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 29 (1982), 681–83 (p. 681). These articles are discussed in Paul Russell, 'The Celtic Preverb **uss* and Related Matters', *Ériu*, 39 (1988), 95–126 (pp. 117–18). I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer for bringing these items to my attention.

¹³⁶ Paul Russell, 'A Footnote to Spirantization', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 10 (1985), 53–56 (p. 54).

¹³⁷ Jackson, *Language and History*, p. 482; Paul Russell, '*Rowynnaiuc, Rhufoniog*: The Orthography and Phonology of /μ/ in Early Welsh', in *Yr Hen Iaith: Studies in Early Welsh*, ed. by Paul Russell (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2003), pp. 25–47 (p. 28).

¹³⁸ I am very grateful to Paul Russell for this suggestion.

¹³⁹ Jackson, *Language and History*, pp. 560–61.

Fortunately, the remaining elements of the word are rather more straightforward. The root itself poses few problems. The nominal root is ultimately derived from PIE **med-*, via Proto-Celtic **med-t-*.¹⁴⁰ The PIE root **med-* means ‘measure, give advice’.¹⁴¹ The verbal form of this root, **med-o*, gives Old Irish *midithir* ‘judge, measure’, Middle Welsh *meddu*, ‘possess, rule’ and potentially Cornish *medhes*, ‘say’.¹⁴² This nominal root, **med-t-*, is also found in Welsh *darmes*, ‘loss, grief,’ Old Irish *airdmes*, ‘estimate, opinion’¹⁴³ and, naturally, Old Irish *mess*, ‘judgement, opinion’.¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, the semantic force of this root seems to recall the glosses on *ormesta* in P, the *Cleopatra Glossaries* and Geneva 18, in which the word is equated with Latin *metiens* and Old English *metend*, ‘measuring, judging’. This does not preclude a connection to *gormes*, rather, it makes it all the more likely. It is generally established that *gormes* is the term used to refer to oppressive conquests, like the *adventus Saxonum*.¹⁴⁵ Recalling the Gildan interpretation of that conquest, it is not difficult to see how a word often glossed as ‘misery’ can simultaneously denote ‘divine judgement, retribution’, which in turn makes it a very apposite title for the works of both Orosius and Gildas.

It will be recalled that there are several attestations of the spelling *ormista*.¹⁴⁶ These are, however, mostly confined to witnesses and settings on

¹⁴⁰ GPC, s.v. *armes*, *gormes*.

¹⁴¹ Pokorny, *IEW*, s.v. *med-* 1.

¹⁴² eDIL, *midithir*; Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary*, s.v. *med-o*.

¹⁴³ I am grateful to Christopher Gwinn for bringing this and the previous word to my attention.

¹⁴⁴ eDIL, s.v. *mes(s)* 1. It is worth noting here that Irish *forfess*, ‘keeping a watch by night’, which Pedersen (*VKG*, I, p. 137) regarded as a cognate of both *gormes* and *ormesta*, is in fact most likely unrelated. Mac Cana (*Learned Tales*, p. 76) and eDIL (s.v. *forbais*) both contend that the second element is *feis*, vn. of *foaid*, ‘spend the night, etc.’.

¹⁴⁵ E.g. Sims-Williams, ‘Some Functions of Origin Legends’, p. 105; Charles-Edwards, *Kingship*, p. 296.

¹⁴⁶ The form *ormista* is found in the *Cologne Computus*, the *Cleopatra Glossaries*, the colophon on the *Periegesis* of Priscian, the gloss in P, the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, the Bobbio Orosius (although corrected contemporaneously), and four later manuscripts: 240 (Wolf. Guelf. 82.10, s. XI/XII), 235 (Vienna 480, s. XIV, Germany/Poland), 51 (Gdańsk, Mar. F 285, s. XV), and 53 (Geneva 18, s. XV/XVI). These last four manuscripts are all in Bately’s group B iv.

the Continent that are far removed from the British context in which the term was likely borrowed. Interestingly, a substantial number of them appear in witnesses produced in areas where the common language had a fixed stress on the initial syllable, like Old English or Old High German.¹⁴⁷ Therefore, as *e/i* flexion in an unstressed medial syllable is an extremely common feature, *ormista* may be taken to be indicative of settings in which the word was pronounced /or'məsta/, rather than /ormes'ta/, which is expected in Proto-Brittonic and, after an interlude in the Old-British period, again in all Brittonic languages at least as of the ninth century.¹⁴⁸

The final element that merits elucidation is the distinctive *-st-*. Whereas Gaidoz, and subsequently Hugh Williams, suggested that '*-ta* may have been added to Latinize the word,' neither seems to have been aware that there are attestations prior to the ninth century.¹⁴⁹ Pedersen, and later Pokorny,¹⁵⁰ pointed out that PIE *d(h)* or *t(h)* + *t*, which yielded /s/ in Italic and Germanic, had an intermediate /st/ stage in Celtic, attested most vividly by *ormesta*, before shifting to /ss/.¹⁵¹ Pokorny noted that this cluster was also found in Welsh *gwystl* 'pledge, surety, hostage' (< PIE **gheidh-tlo*) and Patrick Sims-Williams noted it as well in Welsh *arwest* 'string, cord, bundle' (< PIE **wedh-*).¹⁵² An alternative suggestion is provided by Eugen Hill, who posits

¹⁴⁷ Richard M. Hogg, *A Grammar of Old English Volume 1: Phonology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 45–46, s. 2.84.

¹⁴⁸ Schrijver, 'Old British', p. 41 notes that stress shifted from the initial to the penultimate syllable in Proto-Brittonic and, after an interlude of final stress following apocope, stress shifted back to the penultimate at a date 'which has been hotly debated'.

¹⁴⁹ Williams, *Gildae*, p. 319.

¹⁵⁰ Pedersen, *VKG*, I, p. 136, s. 87; Pokorny, 'Urgeschichte', *ZCP*, p. 506.

¹⁵¹ For the wider Indo-European context of this sound change, see references in Edgar Polomé, 'Germanic and Regional Indo-European (Lexicography and Culture)', in *Indo-European and Indo-Europeans: Papers Presented at the Third Indo-European Conference at the University of Pennsylvania*, ed. by George Cardona, Henry M. Hoenigswald, and Alfred Senn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 55–72 (pp. 58–59 and 70–71, nn. 24 and 25).

¹⁵² Sims-Williams, 'Some Functions of Origin Legends', p. 130, n. 66. Several Breton examples are noted in Fleuriot, *Grammaire*, p. 97. See also D. Ellis Evans, *Gaulish Personal Names: A Study of Some Continental Celtic Formations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

that a secondary collective suffix *-estā*, must have been added to the root, which, when the unstressed medial *-e-* was dropped, resulted in an unpronounceable consonant cluster — †^{*}*uormeststa* — that resolved as *-stā*.¹⁵³ Nonetheless, Pederson's suggestion continues to be the most plausible, especially if it is assumed that this is an old Latinisation, which stands to reason. The final *-a* is necessitated in the Latin borrowing to convey the gender of the word and to allow it to be declined.¹⁵⁴

To conclude, *ormesta* is most probably derived from an antecedent of Welsh *gormes*. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine on linguistic grounds where exactly the word was first borrowed into Latin. As late as the beginning of the seventh century, the Brittonic languages formed a dialect continuum, if not a single language area, extending from John o' Groats to the Bay of Morbihan. The widespread early attestations indicate that *ormesta* was used as a title for Orosius's *Historiae* first and was likely applied to Gildas's *De Excidio Britanniae* only in the ninth century, or slightly earlier. It is clear that it was a widely-recognised title for Orosius's work not only among speakers of Brittonic languages, but also communities throughout the Christianized parts of northern Europe prior to the year 1000 and that it persisted well into the early modern period. The word is attested from Poland to Iberia and from Scotland to Salento. To the Latinate literati, it meant in turns misery, lamentation, and divine judgement. The persistence of this little word demonstrates concisely the pivotal role that speakers of Celtic languages had in the preservation and transmission of Orosius's *Historiae*.

1967), p. 414, n. 1. The evidence that Evans references would seem to indicate that the *-st- > -ss-* shift occurred in Gaulish considerably earlier than it did in (Insular) Brittonic.

¹⁵³ Hill, *Untersuchungen zum inneren Sandhi*, pp. 307–09.

¹⁵⁴ An analogous case is *idama*, gl. *manus*, which appears once in the *Altus Prosator*, five times in the A-text of the *Hisperica Famina* and once each in the *Lorica* of Laidcenn mac Baíth Bannaig (d. 661) and two charters of Athelstan, dated 5 April 930 and 29 April 930 respectively. The word is derived from Hebrew יָדַיִם *yadayim*, 'two hands' and, although based on a Hebrew dual form, *idama* is treated as singular and declined like a first-declension Latin noun, e.g. acc. pl. *idumas* (*Hisperica Famina*, l. 281; *Lorica* l. 36). See Michael Herren, *The Hisperica Famina: I. The A-text* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), pp. 124–25; David Howlett, 'Insular Latin *idama*, *iduma*', *Peritia*, 9 (1995), 72–80.

APPENDIX:
Praefatio in Orosio

Numerous manuscripts of the *Historiae* append a brief preface to the work concerning Orosius, his biography, connections to Church Fathers and the nature of his work. The earliest witness with any sort of preface is Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, 137 (F, s. VIII med., *CLA* 6.765, fol. 4^v), in which Gennadius's account of Orosius in chapter XL of his continuation of Jerome's *De Viris Illustribus* (hereafter *DVT*¹) is given in a cruciform.¹⁵⁵ The use of Gennadius in this context is hardly surprising or novel; Rosamond McKitterick notes that the Jerome–Gennadius catalogue provided a list of authors free from heresy and useful for education and thus came to serve as a bibliographical checklist for monastic librarians.¹⁵⁶ In the following centuries,

¹⁵⁵ *DVT*¹, i.e. Gennadius's text as reconstructed, is presented in two modern critical editions: *Hieronymi de Viris Inlustribus Liber: accedit Gennadii catalogus virorum inlustrium*, ed. by Wilhelm Herding (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1879), pp. 88–89 (hereafter Herd); *Hieronymus liber De viris inlustribus; Gennadius liber De viris inlustribus*, ed. by Ernest Cushing Richardson (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1896), p. 76 (hereafter Rich). Herd, although based on only four witnesses, three of which are relatively late, features an extensive apparatus in which several variants relevant to the matter at hand are recorded. Rich is generally regarded as the standard reference and includes the most thorough account to date of the manuscript tradition; Richardson gave priority to readings from Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 12161 (A, s. VII). Estefanía Sottocorno, following Alfred Feder, has highlighted substantial problems with Rich and suggested convincingly that a new edition is called for in 'Problemas en torno del estudio y la edición crítica del *De Viris Illustribus* de Genadio De Marsella', *Actas y Comunicaciones del Instituto de Historia Antigua y Medieval*, 11 (2015), pp. 1–15. The text of this *accessus* in F is very close to *DVT*¹. Similarly, *DVT*¹, with generally only minor variations, is found as a preface in numerous later manuscripts of the *Historiae*.

¹⁵⁶ Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 200–01. The equivalent section of Gennadius's *De Viris Illustribus*, chapter XIII, is used as a preface in three manuscripts of Prudentius's *Psychomachia* reported in Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014): 70 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 223, s. IX^{3/4}, Arras), 246 (Durham, Cathedral Library, B. IV. 9, s. X med.), and 38 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 23 I, s. X², south England). Gennadius's

Gennadius's account was incorporated into a distinct preface that circulated in at least five — potentially six — recensions, four of which are edited together here.

The first of these (ss. 1.1–2.5) is found in the oldest surviving witness, Ve. In this recension, a distinct version of Gennadius's text (hereafter *DVF*) is combined with another, headed *Praefatiuncula*.¹⁵⁷ Arnaud-Lindet dubbed the combination of these two texts the 'préface composite' and, having not consulted Ve, dated its earliest attestation to the eleventh century.¹⁵⁸ Two

account of Cassian, chapter LXII, is found as a preface in London, British Library, Additional 16964, s. XII, Stavelot. I am grateful to Cillian O'Hogan for bringing this last item to my attention.

¹⁵⁷ *DVF*² does not closely correspond to the text found in any of the earliest manuscripts of Gennadius's work and its place in Richardson's stemma is unclear. It is possible that it may represent an early variant tradition that is yet to be traced. It differs from *DVT*¹ in the following respects: at 1.1 *DVF*² reads *Hispanus genere* for *DVT*¹'s *Hispani generis*; *et infamatores* is added after *querulos*; at 1.2 *in primis* for *in primo libro*; *intercisum* for *intercisam*; *numina* for *numerus*; *finitimo* for *finitimorum*; at 1.3 *missus* immediately follows *ab Augustino*; *sancti Stephani* for *beati Stephani*; *Claruit* is omitted in the final sentence and, finally, it reads *paene Honorio imperium tenente* for *DVT*¹'s *Honorii paene imperatoris tempore*. Interestingly, *DVF*² is quite similar to the text in the edition by Johann Albert Fabricius 'Liber Gennadii Massiliensis Presbyteri de Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis' in *Bibliotheca Ecclesiastica* (Hamburg: Christian. Liebezeit et Theodor. Christoph. Felginer, 1718), pp. 1–46 (pp. 19–20, hereafter Fab). This edition was reprinted by Migne in *PL*, LVIII (1847), cols 1080–1081.

¹⁵⁸ Arnaud-Lindet, *Histoires*, I, pp. 254–55. Arnaud-Lindet reports the copies in U², Z², Mf, and Mo edited here. She also reports that this preface is found in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 17757, which is not an Orosius witness but rather a chronicle of the Abbey of Corbie. It is possible that this is a typographical error for 17567 (Nv). Albert Bäckström (III, pp. 42–46) produced an edition of the preface based on Z² and Pt, with the sigla Π and π respectively. Olivier Szerwiniack provides transcriptions of the text from N and Va in 'Recherches sur l'Étude des Histoires latins par les Irlandais au Moyen Âge' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2000), pp. 246 and 262. These witnesses are also discussed in Jakub Kujawiński, 'Commenting on Historical Writings in Medieval Latin Europe: A Reconnaissance', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 112 (2015), 159–200 (pp. 174–75). The 1436 catalogue of the Bayeux Cathedral Chapter Library lists a now lost manuscript of Orosius in which the text begins 'post prefaciunculam'; this may have referred to the same *Praefatiuncula* discussed here, or another related preface. See n. 40 sup.

witnesses to this version, Ve and its probable copy Lp,¹⁵⁹ also include the account of Orosius given by Pseudo-Gelasius in his *Decretum*.¹⁶⁰ In Ve, the text appears at the bottom of the page after the main title of the work, so it may be a slightly later addition. A very similar arrangement of texts, dubbed the later composite by the present author, is found in Bl, Md, Pt, and Ut. In this version, a text of the Gennadian *accessus* far closer to *DVT*¹ is found with the *Praefatiuncula*, thus indicating that this version was reconstituted independently of the older composite preface. In two of these witnesses, Bl and Ut, the normal order of the two texts is reversed. Md also features the passage from Pseudo-Gelasius.

The *Praefatiuncula* (ss. 2.1–2.5 inf.) is a very interesting paratext indeed. The first and last sentences are a transparent paraphrase of Gennadius, with a significant addition in the former associating Orosius with the city of Tarragona or the Roman province of Tarraconensis. The wording is closer to *DVT*¹ than *DVP*², but the paraphrase is otherwise liberal enough that an attribution to one or the other cannot be made with certainty. This is followed immediately by three posited etymologies for the name Orosius itself. The second of these, ‘oros Grece, mons Latine’, suggests a connection to the Greek word ὄρος ‘mountain’. Paul Russell notes that the formula ‘X Grece, Y Latine’ is typical of Continental Greek-Latin glossaries of the eighth and ninth centuries, as well as Greek entries in early Irish glossaries.¹⁶¹ While

¹⁵⁹ This observation is original to the present author and is made on the basis of a collation of VII.1 in both witnesses for other purposes. In that section, the two witnesses share the following rare or otherwise unattested variants: at VII.1.1 *Pro Christo* is added before *Sufficientia* and they read *dominum* for *Deum*; at VII.1.2, these witnesses read *intelligo* for *intellego*; at VII.1.3, *esset* is added after *institutum*, they read *abusu* for *abusum* and *eo* is added after *ex*; at VII.1.4, *consequens* is read for *subsequens* and *utique antiquam* for *antiquae gratiae*; at VII.1.8, they both read *contentio* for *intentio* etc.

¹⁶⁰ *PL*, LIX (1847), col. 161; *Das Decretum Gelasianum de Libris Recipiendis et Non Recipiendis in kritischem Text*, ed. by Ernst von Dobschütz (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1912), p. 10; McKitterick, *Written Word*, pp. 202–03, notes that Pseudo-Gelasius’s *Decretum* served a bibliographical function very similar to that of the Jerome-Gennadius catalogue.

¹⁶¹ Paul Russell, ‘Graece...Latine: Graeco-Latin Glossaries in Early Medieval Ireland’, *Peritia*, 14 (2000), 406–20 (pp. 411–13). This entry is not found in the *Scholia Graecarum*

it does not appear in any of the surviving Irish glossaries, the entry ‘oros Grece, mons Latine’ is otherwise sufficiently pedestrian that it is found in both copies of the Glossary of Pseudo-Cyril and numerous surviving *idiomata*, *hermeneumata*, and Latin-Greek glossaries of the period.¹⁶² Yet more intriguing is the fact that the author of this preface was also aware of the correct — or at least a plausible — definition of *ormesta*. As this is the earliest surviving indication that this word carried any specific meaning for a Latinate audience, it is very likely that the presence of this definition can be taken to indicate that the author was either a speaker of a Brittonic language or had close contact with a British community. Finally, the author supplies a quote from one of Augustine’s letters to Jerome (*Epistula CLXVI*), but misattributes the passage to Jerome.¹⁶³ The *Praefatiuncula* is found independent of other parts of the composite preface in at least seven manuscripts. Although the oldest of these dates from the tenth century at the earliest, the fact that the first sentence paraphrases Gennadius is a strong indication that the *Praefatiuncula* had an independent circulation predating the composite preface. The most detailed study of this text to date was produced by Albert

Glossarum, which Russell identifies as a possible source for some of the Greek material in Irish glossaries.

¹⁶² London, British Library, Harley 5792 (s. VIII, Italy/France, *CLA* 2.203), 156^r; Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, 444 (s. IX^{3/4}, owned by Martin Hiberniensis), 172^v. Pseudo-Cyril and great majority of the surviving material of this sort were edited by Georg Goetz in *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*, 7 vols (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1888 and 1892), II and III. This entry, or one equivalent to it, is found in the following items, as edited by Goetz: Philoxenus glossary (II, p. 130), Glossae Seruii Grammatici *bis* (II, pp. 508, 516), Glosses from Laon 444 [fols. 306^r–309^r] (II, p. 557), Hermeneumata Amploniana (III, p. 78), Herm. Monacensia *bis* (III, p. 152, p. 199), Herm. Einsidlensia (III, p. 260), Herm. Montepessulana (III, p. 343), Herm. Stephani (III, p. 354), Herm. uaria: Glossarium Leidense (III, p. 411), Herm. uaria: Stephani I (III, p. 456), and Idiomata (Harl. 5792) (III, p. 501). For a recent discussion of the Insular connections of these items and further bibliography, see Pádraic Moran, ‘Greek in Early Medieval Ireland’, in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, ed. by Alex Mullen and James Patrick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 172–92.

¹⁶³ *PL*, xxxiii (1845), 720–21. *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi Epistulae III*, ed. by Alois Goldbacher, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 44 (Vienna: F. Tempesky, 1904), p. 547.

Bäckström, who dated its composition to between the sixth and eighth centuries. He used the date of Gennadius's *De Viris Illustribus* as a *terminus post quem*, which stands to reason, and the attestations of *ormesta* in B and P as *termini ante quos*.¹⁶⁴ Bäckström also made note of a suggestion, ultimately traceable to an early-modern catalogue of manuscripts in the Vatican, that this text was the work of Isidore of Seville.¹⁶⁵ Although not completely impossible, this idea is unsubstantiated. Rather, considering, *inter alia*, the wide circulation of *ormesta*, there is at this point no apparent external or internal reason to date this text to any earlier than the ninth century.

A fourth version of this preface (1.1–1.3, 2.3–2.4 inf.) is found in three manuscripts, all of them twelfth-century and English.¹⁶⁶ In this version, which the present author has dubbed the post-composite, the texts found in the composite preface are blended together in a more coherent manner: the redundant first sentence of the *Praefatiuncula* is omitted as is the discussion of

¹⁶⁴ Bäckström, 'Орозий', III, pp. 41–48. Following Zangemeister (p. x), Bäckström believed that B dated from the eighth century.

¹⁶⁵ *S. Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Hispaniarum doctoris opera omnia*, III, ed. by Faustino Arévalo, (Rome: Typis Antonii Fulgonii, 1797), p. 268: 'Initio voluminis [i.e. Vat. lat. 1974/N] ad Historiam Orosii apponitur praefatiuncula de Orosii vita: *Incipit praefatiuncula in Orosio*. In inuentario bibliothecae Vaticanae ita indicatur: *De vita Orosii quaedam ex Isidoro de illustribus viris*; sed reuera in codice auctoris nomen non exprimitur; neque ea vita in libro Isidori de illustr. vir. reperitur. Ad dubia ergo, vel supposititia Isidori opera eiusmodi caput de Orosio referendum est', 'At the beginning of the volume of the History of Orosius a short preface concerning Orosius's life is added: *Here begins the short preface on Orosius*. It is described in the inventory of the Vatican library as follows: *A certain thing about Orosius's life from Isidore's "On Famous Men"*, but in truth the name of the author is not mentioned in the codex, nor is this life found in Isidore's "On Famous Men". It is therefore doubtful whether the heading on Orosius should be ascribed to a work of this sort attributed to Isidore.' Similarly, Bäckström (III, p. 46) notes: 'Не знаю, какими соображениями руководился библиотекарь Ватикана, приписывая эту биографию Исидору' ('I do not know by what considerations the Vatican librarian was guided in attributing this biography to Isidore'); however, he refers to the text as 'Псевдо-Исидоровская биография' ('Pseudo-Isidorian biography'), throughout.

¹⁶⁶ It has only been possible to consult a few English manuscripts directly and cataloguing practices vary widely across repositories with respect to prefaces and paratexts, therefore it is likely that there are other witnesses to this recension.

the etymology of the name Orosius. The discussion of *ormesta* is retained, however. The redactor of this preface has also corrected the attribution of the quote from Augustine's letter. In Re, the entry from Pseudo-Gelasius is added.

Finally, there is a fifth preface that may be related to these four. In Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch. Selden B. 16 (Seld., 1129, Malmesbury, fol. 11^{ra}), Oxford, Balliol College, 125 (Ball., s. XV med., England, possibly a copy of Seld., fol. 99^r),¹⁶⁷ Eton, College Library, 133 (s. XII med., England, fol. 1^{ra-b}), London, British Library, Royal 13 A XX (s. XIII, England, fol. 1^{ra-b}), and Oxford, Jesus College, 34 (s. XIII, England, fol. 1^{ra-b})¹⁶⁸ the text from Gennadius is presented and immediately followed by the quote from Augustine's letter to Jerome and the entry from Pseudo-Gelasius. The Gennadian text here shares readings with both *DVT*¹ and *DVP*² in all witnesses except Ball., in which the text matches *DVP*². Furthermore, the quote from the letter features the variant readings *presbyter* and *repellendas*, for *compresbyter* and *refellendas* respectively, also found in the *Praefatiuncula*. Finally, as the passage from Augustine's letter is again misattributed to Jerome in all witnesses except Eton 133, in which no attributions at all are provided for these passages, it is very likely that this version is either derived from the composite preface, with all the material unique to the *Praefatiuncula* having been excised, or developed in parallel with it from a common source.¹⁶⁹ This version corresponds to 1.1–1.3 and 2.4 *Ecce*– in the text below.

As noted above, the text presented here is that of the composite preface, as all other versions except the later composite, which is effectively identical,

¹⁶⁷ In this witness, 2.3 and portions of 2.4 are found in a marginal gloss on the same folio. Several variants, i.e. *contineat* for *continet*, *idem* added after *ut*, *quamdiu* for *quamquam diu*, *tempus...illius* omitted, suggest that the gloss is based on the post-composite recension.

¹⁶⁸ I am very grateful to Graeme Ward for checking several Oxford manuscripts on my behalf and supplying me with a photograph of this preface.

¹⁶⁹ The Gennadian *accessus*, albeit *DVT*¹, is also found in several manuscripts preceding a hexameter relating Orosius's writings to those of Justinus. For discussion and an edition, see Lars Boje Mortensen, 'Orosius and Justinus in One Volume: Post-Conquest Books Across the Channel', *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-âge Grec et Latin*, 60 (1990), 389–99. Interestingly, all of the Orosius witnesses in which Mortensen found this preface are in Bately's C iii group.

can be ascertained by subtracting from this text. An extensive apparatus is provided in order to illustrate the tradition. In spite of the brevity of the text, the variants found across the witnesses are sufficiently significant and regular that a stemma can be posited. The witnesses of the composite preface and the post-composite all appear to derive from a common source, here designated α . The witnesses of the composite preface can be further divided into two subfamilies: β , comprising Ve, its likely copy Lp, Mf, and Nv, and γ , comprising Bm, its copy So,¹⁷⁰ U², Z², Tr, Co, Pa, and Ha.¹⁷¹ The witnesses in which the *Praefatiuncula* is found independently, N, its copy Va,¹⁷² Vd, Mo, Le, Rc, and Ms, likewise also derive from a common source, here designated δ .¹⁷³ While it is certainly adapted from the composite preface, the common source of post-composite recension, here designated ϵ , is not clearly affiliated with either β or γ and thus most likely descends independently from α .¹⁷⁴ Finally, ζ represents the putative common ancestor of the later Iberian witnesses, Ms and Md.¹⁷⁵ The text presented here is that of α ; however, due

¹⁷⁰ See Andreas Nievergelt, ‘Orosius, Althochdeutsche Glossierung’, in *Althochdeutsche und altsächsische Literatur*, ed. by Rolf Bergmann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), pp. 315–22 (p. 320).

¹⁷¹ Variants that distinguish γ are as follows: 1.1 γ reads *agnitor* for *cognitor* elsewhere; 1.2 *marisque (maris Pa) effusionem* for β ’s *interfusione*; 1.3 *inuenti* for *inuentas*; 2.2 *mons* is added after *Orosius*¹, *mons Latine* in other families is transposed as *Latine mons* in γ ; *Orosium* for *Orosius*³; 2.4 *est* is added after *autem*, and 2.5 *detulit* is transposed to after *Stephani*.

¹⁷² See Olivier Szerwiniack, ‘Un commentaire hibemo-latin des deux premiers livres d’Orose, *Histoires contre les païens* (suite)’, *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi*, 65 (2007), 165–207 (pp. 171 and 196); Bauer, ‘Venezia’, p. 92.

¹⁷³ The descendants of δ show some degree of internal variation, but the family may be distinguished by the following variants: 2.2 *uero* is omitted, *materia (m. uel maturitate Mo, maturia NVaVdLe, m. uel oratoria Rc, oratorio Pt)* for *oratoria* elsewhere and 2.3 *uero* is again omitted.

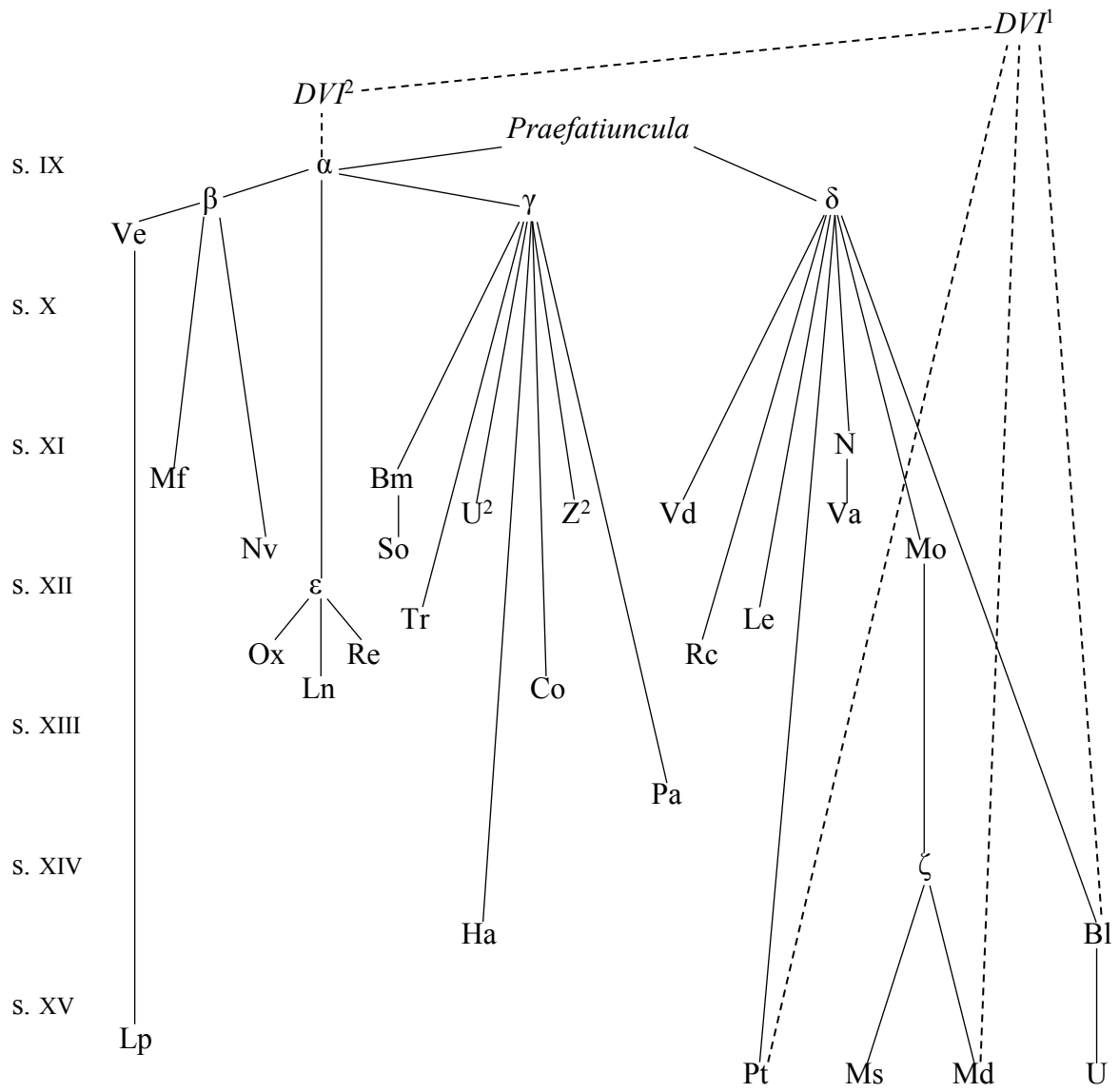
¹⁷⁴ The following readings may be confidently assigned to ϵ : 1.1 *mundani* for *mundi*; 1.2 *infusione* for *interfusione*, shared with β ’s Lp; 2.3 addition of *uero* after *sciendum*; *contineat* for *continet*; addition of *idem* after *ut*, in common with the δ witnesses N, Va and Vd; *quamdiu* for *quamquam diu*; omission of *tempus...illius*, in 2.4 interpolation of the first sentence; and *compresbyter* for *presbyter*.

¹⁷⁵ These witnesses clearly share some affinity with Mo. All read 2.2 *autumnant* for *putant*; *enim* is added after *oros*; 2.3 *Honorii et Archadii* are transposed as *Archadii et Honorii*; *et in*

to the early date and provenance of Ve, priority is given to β -family readings over those of γ where the original cannot otherwise be reconstructed.¹⁷⁶ The tradition as a whole is represented in the following tentative stemma.

fine illius is omitted; 2.4 *falsas* is omitted; 2.5 *Gennadius* is spelled *Jennadius* in the Iberian witnesses; *ab Augustino missus est* is moved to after *ratione* and, in the quotation from Pseudo-Gelasius, *bene* is written for *bonis*.

¹⁷⁶ The distribution of the quotation from Pseudo-Gelasius remains somewhat irregular. As it is found in two of the four β witnesses: Ve, where it is possibly a later addition, and Lp, none of the γ witnesses, Re but not Ox or Ln, and Le and ζ , it seems reasonable to posit that it entered the tradition on several separate occasions. The wide circulation of the text makes this entirely explicable; see n. 160 sup. While the version found in the majority of witnesses resists straightforward classification, the text of this passage in Re contains a variant, *nobis necessaria* for *necessariam nobis*, which von Dobschütz (p. 47, n.) traces to his O-group manuscripts, comprising a handful of French witnesses, and citations in French sources.



WITNESSES

Composite preface:

Ve Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Zanetti lat. 349, s. IX med., Brittany, fol. 1^{ra-b}.

Bm Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque municipale, 126, s. XI, France, St. Bertin, Saint-Omer, fol. 1^r.

Mf Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 12495, s. XI, France, Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, fols. 2^v–3^r.

Nv Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 17567, s. XI, Paris, Collège de Navarre, fol. 39^{va-b}.

So Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque municipale, 717, s. XI, France, Saint-Omer, fol. 1^{va}.

U² Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 545, s. XI, fol. 1^{ra-b}.¹⁷⁷

Z² Saint Petersburg, Российская национальная библиотека, F. v. I. 9, s. XI, fol. 1^v.

Tr Cambridge, Trinity College, O.4.34 (1264), s. XII in., England, Canterbury, fol. 1^r.

Co Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 23 II, s. XII ex., England, Dover, fol. 105^{ra}.

Pa Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 4880, s. XIII, fol. 1^{ra}.

¹⁷⁷ In this and the following witness, the preface is an eleventh-century addition to what is otherwise a ninth-century manuscript.

Ha London, British Library, Harley 654, s. XIV, fols. 31^{vb}–32^{ra}.

Lp Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Rep. I Fol. 15 (156), s. XV in, fol. 1^r.

***Praefatiuncula* only:**

N Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 1974, s. X, Brittany/France, fol. 5^v.

Mo Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 4871 I, s. XI, Moissac, fol. 98^v.

Va Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 691, s. XI, fol. 1^r.

Vd Vendôme, Bibliothèque municipale, 99, s. XI, fol. 1^r.

Rc Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, 627 I, s. XII, Italy, fol. 1^r.

Le Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Voss. Lat. F 13, s. XII, France, south, fol. 1^r.

Ms Montserrat, Biblioteca del Monestir, 1075, s. XV, fol. 5^v.

Post-Composite:

Ox Oxford, St. John's College, 95, s. XII med., England, Chichester, fol. 1^{ra-b}.

Re London, British Library, Royal 6 C VIII, s. XII med., England, north, fol. 1^{ra-b}.

Ln Lincoln, Cathedral Library, 102, s. XII second half, England, York, fol. 4^{va-b}.

Later composite:

Bl Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 110, s. XIV, fols. 1^{ra}–1^{va}.¹⁷⁸

Md Madrid, Real Biblioteca, II/222, s. XV, fol. 1^r.

Pt Saint Petersburg, Российская национальная библиотека, F. v. I. 305, s. XV, fol. 1^r.¹⁷⁹

Ut Utrecht, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, 121, s. XV, fol. 1^r.

¹⁷⁸ The text in this witness has been partially erased. Readings from 2.1 to 2.3 *Locus* are therefore speculative.

¹⁷⁹ It has not been possible to examine this manuscript directly. The readings given here are from Bäckström's apparatus (III, pp. 42–46).

GENNADIUS AUCTOR AIT

1.1 Orosius, presbyter, Hispanus genere, uir eloquens et historiarum cognitor, scripsit aduersum querulos et infamatores Christiani nominis qui dicunt defectum Romanae rei publicae Christi doctrina inuectum libros septem, in quibus, totius paene mundi temporis calamitates et miserias ac bellorum inquietudines replicans, ostendit magis obseruantiae Christianae esse quod, contra meritum suum, res Romana adhuc duraret et pace culturae Dei pacatum retineret imperium.

1.2 Sane in primis descripsit positionem orbis, oceani interfusione et Tanai limitibus intercisum, situm locorum, nomina et numina moresque gentium, qualitates regionum, initia bellorum et tyrannidis exordia finitimo sanguine dedicata.

Gennadius auctor ait] VeMfLp, incipit praefatio Z², incipit praefatio in orosio BmSoTr, incipit argumentum sequentis operis Re incipit praefatio in orosium Co, incipit prologus in liber pauli orosii Md 1.1-1.3] omit NMoVaVdRcLeMs 1.1 Hispanus genere] hispaniensis BlUt, hispane gentis Pt genere] omit Bl, generis Md eloquens] eloquentissimus BlMdPtUt cognitor] agnitor BmSoU²TrCoPaHa, non leg. Z² et infamatores] omit BlMdPtUt dicunt defectum Romanae] omit Bl dicunt] dicuntur Nv doctrina] doctrinam Md totius paene] pene tocius BlHaMdPtUt mundi] mundani OxReLn temporis] omit MdPtUt calamitates] clamitates Ha ac] omit Pt obseruantiae Christianae] Christiane obseruantie BlMdPtUt contra] circa Md res Romana] Romana res pa^{ca} Md adhuc duraret] adhoc durare Pt pacatum] p{l}acatum Ox retineret] retinere Pt 1.2 primis] primo libro BlMdPtUt descripsit] describit Ln interfusione] uel fusione Nv, marisque effusionem BmSoU²Z²TrCoHa, infusione OxReLnLp, maris effusionem Pa, interclusionem BlMdUt, interclusionem Pt Tanai] tanais SoTr, thanai U², t\h/anai Md, tanay BlUt et ante nomina add MdPtUt et numina moresque] urbium moresque OxLn, urbium mores Re numina] munerum Pt gentium qualitates regionum] ac qualitates gentium MdPt finitimo] finitimorum BlMdPtUt

1.3 Hic est Orosius qui ab Augustino missus pro discenda animae ratione ad Hieronimum, rediens reliquias sancti Stephani, primi martyris, tunc nuper inuentas, primus intulit occidenti extremo paene Honorio imperium tenente.

INCIPIT PRAEFATIUNCULA IN OROSIO

2.1 Orosius, presbyter Taraconensis, Hispanus genere, uir eloquens et historiarum cognitor, Augustini discipulus aduersus querulos Christiani nominis hos septem scripsit libellos.

1.3 ut ait gennadius *post* qui *add* OxReLn missus *post* Hieronimum *trans* BlMdPtUt animae] animi Ve, <...> U² sancti] beati BlPtUt primi] *omit* BlPtUt inuentas] VeMfNvOxReLnBlLpMdPtUt, inuenti BmSoU²Z²TrCoPaHa primus] primis So intulit] titulis So claruit (autem Pt) *post* occidenti *add* BlMdPtUt paene] *omit* BlMdPt Honorio imperium tenente] honorij imperatoris temporis (tempore Pt) BlMdPtUt INCIPIT PRAEFATIUNCULA IN OROSIO] alia praefatio Z² INCIPIT] ITEM SoCo, INITIO Ha PRAEFATIUNCULA] PRAEFATI{O}UNCULA VeMf OROSIO] orosium Co, orosi Pa, septem libros orosij de cladibus et miserijs antiquarum Bl, libro pauli orosii Md 2.1–2.2] *omit* OxReLn 2.1 Taraconensis] terraconensis MoTrCoBlMsPt, ta\r/raconensis Vd, tharac<...>nsis U², tharaconensis Rc, taracomnensis Ha, teraconensis Md, tarraconensis Ut querulos] querelas VeMfRcLeBlUt, quærelas NNvVaVd, querælos Bm, quæruolos So, querales Lp hos] *omit* Rc libellos] libros Nv

2.2 Orosius siue de ora ut quidam putant, diriuatur, siue, quod uerius, oros Grece, mons Latine, Orosius uero montanus exprimitur. Orosius de oratoria quidam existimant dici.

2.3 Sciendum est quod haec ars nominatur orimesta, id est miserabilis uel gemitus, eo quod miserias mundi continet. Locus huius artis Carthago est, ut Orosius in libris posterioribus ait: 'Quamquam diu nos Carthago retinet, forsitan externas clades alienorum ad memoriam reuocemus.' Tempus uero Honorii et Archadii, filiorum scilicet magni Theodosii, et in fine illius.

2.2 mons *post* Orosius *add* Bm²SoU²Z²TrCoPaHa putant] autumant MoMdMs est *post* uerius *add* VeMfSoU²TrCoHaLp oros] orios VeNMfVaVdRcLpPt, horosius Ha enim *post* oros *add* MoMdMs mons Latine] latine mons BmSoU²Z²TrCoPaHa Orosius] orasius U², rasius Le uero] *omit* NMoVaLeMdMsUt Orosius] Orosium BmSoU²Z²TrCoHa, orosii Pa oratoria] materia \uel maturitate/ Mo, maturia NVaVdLe, maturia uel oratoria Rc, materia MdMs, oratorio Pt existimant] existimauit So, estimant Pt 2.3 est *post* sciendum *omit* Ms uero *post* sciendum *add* OxReLn miserabilis] miseria Rc eo quod...Carthago est] *in marg.* Lp gemitus *post* mundi *add* Rc continet] contineat OxReLn Orosius] *omit* NVaVd idem *post* ut *add* NVaVdOxReLn ait] dicit Rc quamquam diu] quamdiu OxReLn diu] \diu/ Ms nos] \nos/ Ln externas] ef<.>teria Rc alienorum ad memoriam] ad memoriam alienorum Pt tempus...illius] *omit* OxReLn uero] *omit* NMoVaVdRcLeBlMdMsPtUt Honorii et Archadii] archadii et honorii MoMdMs et in fine illius] *omit* MoMdMs et] sed Rc

2.4 Persona autem Orosii discipuli Augustini de quo Hieronimus ait. ‘Ecce uenit ad me religiosus iuuenis, catholica pace frater, aetate filius, honore presbyter, noster Orosius, uigil ingenio, paratus in eloquio, flagrans studio, utile uas in domo domini esse desiderans ad repellendas falsas perniciosasque doctrinas.’

2.4 Persona...ait] Fuit autem discipulus beati augustini, sicut ipse ieronimo scribens ait OxReLn autem *omit* Rc est *post* autem *add* Bm²SoU²Z²TrCoPaHa Hieronimus] [AUGUSTI]nus Va catholica] catholicus MdPtUt, fide catholicus Ms et *post* frater *add* Ms presbyter] \com/presbiter Va, compresbiter OxReLn in] *omit* NMfMoNvVaVdOxRcLeReLnBlLpMdMsPtUt flagrans] fragrans Va, fragans Md nostri *post* domo *add* Rc esse] et Le falsas] *omit* MoMdMs perniciosasque] *omit* Ut

2.5 Gennadius dicit: ‘Hic est Orosius qui ab Augustino missus est pro discenda animae ratione ad Hieronimum, quique sancti Stephani ad occidentales plagas detulit reliquias.’

2.5 *omit* OxReLn Gennadius] gemma dei NVaVd, gennasius Rc, genna\d/ ius Le, Jennadius MdMs dicit] dicitur Vd qui] *bis* Mf discenda] discernenda Ms ab Augustino missus est *post* ratione *trans* MoMdMs sancti] beati Bl detulit *post* Stephani *trans* BmSoU²Z²TrCoPaHa EXPLICIT PRAEFATIUNCUA *add post* reliquias VeNMfNvVaVd EXPLICIT *add post* reliquias Rc EXPLICIT PRAEFATIO *add post* reliquias Lp Item Gelasius papa urbis Romae dicit (xv di *add* Md): item Orosium eruditissimum conlaudamus quia (quam Le) ualde bonis (bene MdMs) aduersum (aduersus Md, aduersus Ms) paganorum calumnias necessariam ordinauit historiam miraque breuitate contexit (contexuit Ms) *add post* reliquias VeLeLpMdMs In decretis quoque Gelasii pape sic scriptum inuenit: Orosium uirum eruditissimum collaudamus quia ualde nobis necessaria aduersus paganorum calumpnias ordinauit miraque breuitate contexuit Explicit argumentum *add post* doctrinas Re (EXPLICIT PRAEFATIUNCULA IN OROSIO Mo) Orosius id est montanus qui *ormestam* composuit id est miseriam christiani temporis (temporis christiani Ms) ob emulationem fidei in zelo accensus domini in familiaritate (familiaritatem Ms) christi omnium redemptoris nostri (nostri redemptoris Ms) per omnia secula AMEN *add post* reliquias Mo, *add at explicit* Ms¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Fol. 93^{ra}. The hand differs from the rest of the text.

TRANSLATION

The writer Gennadius says:

1.1 Orosius, a presbyter, Spanish by birth, an eloquent man, learned in history, wrote seven books against the accusers and defamers of the Christian name who say that the fall of the Roman state was caused by the Christian religion, in which, rehearsing the calamities and miseries of almost all the world of that period as well as the disturbances of wars, he showed that it was rather due to the Christian observance that the Roman state, against its own merits, was still lasting and maintaining an empire pacified by the peace of the worship of God.

1.2 Indeed in the first sections he described the position of the world, bounded by the flowing of the ocean and the limits of Tanais, giving the sitting of places, the names as well as gods and customs of peoples, the characteristics of regions, the origins of wars and the formation of tyranny sealed with the blood of neighbours.

1.3 This is the Orosius who was sent by Augustine to Jerome to study the nature of the soul, upon his return was the first, near the end of the reign of the emperor Honorius, to bring to the west the relics of Saint Stephen, the first martyr, which had recently been discovered.

Here begins the short preface to Orosius

2.1 Orosius, a presbyter from Tarragona/Tarraconensis, Spanish by birth, an eloquent man, learned in history, a disciple of Augustine, wrote these seven books against the accusers of the Christian name.

2.2 Orosius is derived either from *ora* ('border, coast'), as some think, or, what is more likely, as *oros* in Greek means 'mountain' in Latin; *orosius* then means 'mountainous'. Some reckon it is said that *Orosius* is from *oratoria* ('oratory').

2.3 It should be known that this work is called *Ormesta*, that is a miserable thing or a lamentation, that is because it contains the miseries of the world.

The place (of the writing) of this work is Carthage, as Orosius says in the later books: 'Although Carthage houses us for a long time, perhaps let us call to mind the external defeats of foreigners.' The time is that of Honorius and Arcadius, namely the sons of the great Theodosius, at the end of that period.

2.4 Concerning the person of Orosius, disciple of Augustine, Jerome says: 'Behold there has come to me a pious young man, a brother in catholic peace, a son by age, a presbyter by rank, our Orosius, sharp of mind, ready in refined speech, burning in zeal, desiring to be a useful vessel in the house of the lord for repelling false and pernicious doctrines.'

2.5 Gennadius says: 'This is Orosius who was sent by Augustine to Jerome to study the nature of the soul and who also carried away the relics of Saint Stephen to the western regions.'

NOTES

1.1 Hispanus genere] *DVT*¹ reads *Hispani generis* here, hence the reading *generis* in Md. Herding reports the reading *Hispanus genere* in Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. IV. 77, (s. XV) and the same reading is found in Fab.

eloquens] Herd. reads *eloquentissimus* here, akin to Bl, Md, Pt and Ut. The same reading is found in several Orosius manuscripts in which *DVT*¹ alone serves as the preface: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 4872 (s. XII); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 4877 (s. XII/XIII); Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 65. 37 (s. XIV, Italy); Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 89 sup. 21 (s. XIV); Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 10152 (s. XIV, Iberia); London, British Library, Harley 2765 (s. XV); Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Gud. lat. fol. 32 (s. XV).

et infamatores] This is not found in Herd. or Rich.'s editions of *DVT*¹, the paraphrase at the beginning of the *Praefatiuncula*, or in Bl, Md or Pt. It is, however, found in Fab. Fabricius notes there that the phrasing 'adversum quaerulos et infamatores' could have been borrowed from Gennadius's entry on Bachiarius in chapter XXIV of the same work.

totius paene mundi temporis calamitates] Herd. reads *paene totius mundi calamitates* here, akin to the reading in Bl, Md and Pt. Herding (ibid.) again reports the reading *mundi temporis cal.* in the Nuremberg manuscript and the similar reading, *mundi tempora*, in Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Patr. 84 (B. IV. 10, s. XII).¹⁸¹ The reading here, that of *DVT*², is again found in Fab.

retineret] Rich. reads *teneret* here. Richardson reports the reading *retineret* in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 2077 (s. VI/VII), Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, XXII (s. VI) and Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, CLXXXIII (s. VIII).

¹⁸¹ Herding dates this witness to the eleventh century (p. iii). See Hans Fischer and Friedrich Leitschuh, *Katalog der Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Bamberg*, 3 vols (Bamberg: C. C. Buchner, 1903), I, p. 459.

1.2 *intercisum*] All modern editions read *intercisam* here. The shift from *a* to *u*, found throughout the tradition of these prefaces, may be taken to suggest an exemplar written in Insular script favouring open *as*.

numina] All editions of Gennadius read *numerum* here, which fits the context far better than *numina*. The reading *numina*, stable throughout the manuscript tradition of the prefaces edited here, with the exception of *munerum* in Pt, suggests an exemplar with the reading *num* and a suspension stroke.

finitimo] Herd., Rich. and Fab., as well as Bl, Md and Pt, read *finitimorum* here. Herding notes that the reading *finitimo* is found in the Bamberg and Nuremburg manuscripts.

1.3 *inuentas*] Here β and γ divide between *inuentas* and *inuenti*. The context could support either reading; however, *inuentas* has the authority of *DVT*¹, Fab., Herd., and Rich, and Ve, the oldest witness, supporting it.

extremo paene Honorio imperium tenente] *DVT*¹ reads *extremo Honorii paene imperatoris tempore* here. This certainly is the origin of the readings in Bl, Md, Pt and Ut. Herding (p. 89) reports a reading identical to most of the prefaces here in the Bamberg witness and a similar reading, *extremo paene Honorii tempore*, in his Nuremburg witness.

2.1 *Tarraconensis*] The *Praefatiuncula* is the earliest piece of external evidence connecting Orosius to the city of Tarragona or the Hispano-Roman province of *Tarraconensis*. This association is suggested by Orosius's reference to 'Tarraconem nostram' at *Hist.*, VII.22.8 and numerous early-modern scholars regarded this as his place of origin.¹⁸²

2.2 *oros*] As noted above, the Greek word referred to here is ὄρος 'mountain'. The reading *orios* found in Ve, N, Mf, Va, Vd, Rc, Lp and Pt all either β - or

¹⁸² See von Mörner, *De Orosii Vita*, p. 17, n. 2.

δ-family witnesses, might suggest some conflation with ὄρειός (recte: ὄρεινός) ‘mountainous’, which is also well attested in the glossary corpus.

oratoria] The δ witnesses show considerable confusion here, with the original reading *vel sim.* found only in Rc and Pt. It is not immediately clear by what reasoning, or via which language, *Orosius* could possibly derive from *materia*, *maturia* or *maturitas*; however, an analogue to this reading may be found in the gloss ‘*orosius mutescens*’ in Goetz’s *Herm uaria: Glossae Bernenses* (III, p. 501) noted by Bäckström (III, p. 45).

2.3 *miserabilis uel gemitus*] This definition, in which *miserabilis* must be read as a substantivized adjective, finds its closest parallels in P (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 829) and Geneva 18, in which *ormista* (sic) is defined as ‘*miserabilis uel metiens*’.

‘*Quamquam...reuochemus*’] This passage is not taken verbatim from the *Historiae* or any of *Orosius*’s other surviving works. Bäckström (IV, pp. 75–76) suggested that this was a paraphrase of *Hist.*, v.2.2 and 8. Similarly, Jones (pp. 280–281) suggested that this passage was based on *Hist.*, III.7.1, IV.23.1, and V.1.5.

2.4 Hieronimus] The attribution of this passage to Jerome is incorrect. This quote is taken from Augustine’s *Epistula CLXVI* to Jerome. The misattribution may be accounted for by the fact that this letter often circulated in collections of Jerome’s letters.¹⁸³ Clearly, the redactor of the post-composite preface and a later reader of Va were aware of the real provenance of this passage.

presbyter] Augustine’s letter reads *compresbyter* here in both modern editions. The preservation of this reading in the post-composite recension, and its later addition in Va, further suggests some familiarity with the original text.

¹⁸³ Note MSS listed by Goldbacher in *S. Aurelii Augustini*, p. 545.

flagrans] The reading *fragrans*, found in Va, is also noted by Goldbacher (p. 547) in Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 355 (V, s. X, southern Italy?) and Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. perg. 52 (Q, s. IX, from Reichenau).

repellendas] Augustine's letter reads *refellendas* here, again in both modern editions. However, Goldbacher (*ibid.*) notes the reading *repellendas* in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1862 (P, s. IX, Micy Abbey) and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 4883 A (P³, s. X–XI, Limoges). Both of these manuscripts also contain texts by Insular writers: Alcuin and John Scottus Eriugena respectively