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ABBREVIATIONS

AB  Annals of Boyle
AClon Annals of Clonmacnoise
AFM Annals of the Four Masters
AI Annals of Inisfallen
ARC Annals of Roscrea
ASC Anglo-Saxon Chronicle
ASE Anglo-Saxon England
AT Annals of Tigernach
AU Annals of Ulster
CCCM Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSL Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CS Chronicum Scotorum
CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
EETS Early English Text Society
EHR English Historical Review
FAI Fragmentary Annals of Ireland
MÆ Medium Ævum
MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Epist. Epistolae Aevi Carolini
NM Neophilologische Mitteilungen
OEN Old English Newsletter
PBA Proceedings of the British Academy
PL Patrologia Latina, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844-64)
RS Rolls Series

PREFACE

This publication is the outcome of an initiative taken in 1999 by members of the post-graduate community in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic. That they have brought their venture so successfully to fruition is testimony not only to their commitment and enthusiasm, but no less importantly to the professionalism which they have displayed at every stage of the process. The Department is proud indeed to be associated with the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, and wishes it every success in the future.

Professor Simon Keynes
Head of the Department of ASNC
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COLLOQUIUM REPORT

The fifth annual Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic took place on Saturday, February 7th, 2004, in the Winstanley Lecture Theatre, Trinity College, Cambridge. Papers on the theme of 'Roots' were presented in four sessions:

Session I (Chair: Flora Spiegel)
Judith Jesch, 'Skaldic Verse and the Roots of History'

Session II (Chair: Elizabeth White)
Bridgitte Schaffer, 'Statements of power in the language of genealogy: St Ailbe’s roots'
Andrew Rigby, ‘The Roots of the Eastern Forest in the Icelandic Imagination’

Session III (Chair: Carys Underdown)
Jonathan Miles-Watson, ‘Roots Metaphors Revealed: The problem of the lion in Ítarlað í Ffynnewn’
Emily Lethbridge, ‘Ok eru köld kevna rág: Getting to the bottom of the three versions of Gísla saga Súrssonar’
Michael Connaughton, ‘Roots of Alcuin’s Computus’

Session IV (Chair: Tim Bolton)
Peter Stokes, ‘Shoots and Vines: some models for the ascenders and descenders of English vernacular minuscule’
Flora Spiegel, ‘The heroic biography of Æðelhðæg of Mercia and the roots of the Old English Ælfdith’

The members of the colloquium committee for 2003-4 were:
Flora Spiegel (Chairman) and Bridgitte Schaffer (Secretary).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Skaldic Verse and the Roots of History

Judith Jesch
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It is generally recognized that a substantial proportion of the original prose literature of medieval Iceland is written in a historical mode: works like Íslendingabók, Landnámabók, Kristni saga and the sagas of kings and bishops obviously so, while the sagas of Icelanders are classified as historical fiction, if not actually history, and even the fóraldarþígr show a strong historical bent.1 Explanations for this obsession with the past usually include the effects of the transplantation of social and cultural forms to a terra nova,2 and the encounter with the learned literature of Europe which famously ‘did not teach the Icelanders what to think or say, but it taught them how to say it’.3

Turville-Petre and others since have shown how Icelandic historical prose has its roots in this European learning.4 In this paper, however, I propose to dig rather speculatively for some native roots of the historical obsession of the medieval Icelanders. In particular, I will explore whether and to what extent the skaldic verse of the

4 E.g. several of the chapters in H. Bekker-Nielsen, T. Damsgaard Olsen and O. Widding, Norrøn fortællingstid (Copenhagen, 1965).
eleventh century, that is the century before the writing of historical prose began, can be understood as ‘history’ or, more precisely, historiography. For the purposes of this discussion I will assume that the surviving written versions of skaldic stanzas found in manuscripts from the thirteenth century or later give us a reasonable approximation of the texts that were produced and consumed in an oral context in the eleventh, without rehearsing all the arguments for and against. My argument will be that this oral culture of the eleventh century had a concept resembling that of historiography, more usually associated with a literate culture, at least to a sufficient degree to make comparisons between the two illuminating.

I have two prongs to my digging implement. First, I will compare some skaldic verse with the chronicle genre, specifically the annals of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, to explore the nature of some similarities between them. Secondly, I will analyse one eleventh-century skaldic poem in detail to explore the ways in which it seems to reveal itself as historiography.

**RECORDING EVENTS**

Many skaldic poems from the late Viking Age have the primary function of recording the exploits of a particular king or chieftain, and in this they conform quite closely to the description of a chronicle given by the early twelfth-century author Gervase of Canterbury:

> The historian proceeds diffusely and elegantly, whereas the chronicler proceeds simply, gradually and briefly.

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1 For a similar attempt to find some of the roots of historical writing in twelfth-century skaldic poetry, see B. Fidjestol, ‘Sogekvæde’, Deutsch-nordische Boggungs, ed. K. Braunmüller and M. Brondsted (Odense, 1991), pp. 57–76.

2 See J. Jesch, Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age: The Vocabulary of Runic Inscriptions and Skaldic Verse (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 15–33.

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Skaldic Verse and the Roots of History

The chronicler computes years *Anno Domini* and the months and kalends and briefly describes the actions of kings and princes which occurred at those times; he also commemorates events, portents and wonders. Gervase’s description of a ‘chronicle’ is probably more like what modern historians would call a set of annals than what they would call a ‘chronicle’, though the distinction can be hard to sustain. For the purposes of my comparison with skaldic poetry, I will not attempt to split hairs any further, but simply hide behind the convenient fact that we still use the name ‘Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’ for the various sets of annals that conform quite closely to Gervase’s description.

The stanzas of Sigröd Ólafsson’s *Vikingavísur* provide a numbered list, in chronological order, of the battles fought by St Olaf in England and on the European continent, at some time which we deduce from other sources was between 1007 and 1013. The poem provides details of place- and personal names throughout. Thus stanza thirteen records events in a place which was probably in Spain:

> þrætunda vann Þrenda,
> þat var flótta þal, dróttinn
> snjalls f Seljupollum
> sunnarla styr kunnan.
> Upp lét grant f gamla
> Gunnvalds borg of morgin,

---


Although Sigvatr was not present at this event, the point of view is of course that of his patron, the victor, who was, and the fleeing enemy are seen from behind. Though this record of events is in verse, there is hardly anything ‘poetic’ about it; it is little more than a fairly simple statement of facts and names.

Similarly, Amörð Þórdarson jarlabak’s *Þórfinsdísipa* records the earl of Orkney’s raids on mainland Scotland in the 1020s:

> Úlf’s tuggu raði eggjar, 
> dírt þar’s Torfinns hétir, 
> ungri olfi þvi þengill — 
> (at vas mántanag) fránar. 
> Sungu þar, til þinga, 
> þann fyr Ekkjal sunnan, 
> sverð, es síkingr barðsk 
> snarr við Skotland’s harna.  

This stanza is slightly more ‘poetic’ than Sigvatr’s, making use of tropes such as ‘the wolf’s mouthful’, and using descriptive as well as 

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9 Text and translation from C. Fell, *Vikingarríðir*, *Speculum Norrornum: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. U. Dronke, Gudrún P. Helgadóttir, G. W. Weber and H. Bekker-Nielsen (Odenese, 1981), pp. 106-22 (at 120-21). The valiant lord of the Þresdrír fought the thirteenth famous battle in the south at Seljúpolar: that was misfortune for those who fled. The prince caused all his troops to go up into the ancient stronghold of Gunnvald in the morning and the earl to be captured. He was called Geirðrív.

10 Date from D. Whaley, *The Poetry of Amörð Þórdarson, An Edition and Study* (Turnhout, 1998), p. 335; text and translation from ibid. pp. 236-7. ‘Bright blades grew red on the wolf’s mouthful [carrión] at a place called Torfinnes. Young, the råter caused that. It was a Monday. Slender swords sang there south of the Ekkjall, as the princeling, swift into conflict, fought with Scotland’s lord.’

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*Skaldic Vers and the Roots of History*

evaluative adjectives (for example, ‘young’ rather than ‘valiant’). But it shares the same concern for naming the significant places, and has an even more precise concern with chronology, specifying the day of the week on which the battle took place (‘Monday’).

Oddr kkinaskald’s poem on Magnús the Good shows similar concerns in describing a battle in the mid-1040s:

> Væs fyr Mikalsmessu 
> malmgrim háló ríma. 
> Fellu Vinir, en þóndus 
> váphliðiði miðk þjóðr. 
> En fyr jól va þunnar, 
> óhlínulí, líta. 
> Upp höfsk grím muð gumnum 
> Gunnar fyr Ávós sunnan.  

Again we have the specific place-name (Àrhus), and the precise chronology which by now uses Christian festivals to date the battles (Michaelmas and *jól*, here meaning ‘Christmas’ rather than ‘Yule’). The stanza also shows an annalistic-type succession of one event by another in the same stanza, signalled by an adverbial phrase giving a chronology. Sigvatr’s *Vikingarríðir* also has a kind of annalistic succession, with each battle in its own stanza, but there the succession is indicated entirely by the numbering of the battles, without any time adverbials.

These three stanzas can be compared with some passages from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, chosen from a similar date range in the eleventh century, and reflecting the same kind of raiding activity. As 

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11 Date from ibid. pp. 332-3; text from *Snorr Sturluson: Heimskringla*, ed. Bjarni Ásíbjarnarson, III, 63-4. ‘A metal-grim battle was held before Michaelmas. Wends fell, and the peoples got very used to the sound of weapons. And a little before Christmas was another, undecided. Grim warfare began among men to the south of Àrhus’.
in the skaldic stanzas, individual raids are distinguished by a dating based on religious festivals and by the naming of those captured. Of course, in the Chronicle’s account of the raids of 1011, the point of view is that of the English victims, rather than the Viking perpetrators:

7 þa on ðissum geare betweoct Natisitas Sancte Mariæ 7 Sancte Michaeles messan hi ymbsetan Cantwareburh, ... 7 hi þær ða genaman þone arcebisceop Ælfheah 7 Ælfweard cynges gerefan 7 Leofwine abbatisa 7 Godwine bisceop. 7 Ælfmaer abbod hi leton aweg. ... 7 hi ða hæfdon a burh ealle asmeade, wendon hi þa to scypan 7 laddon þone arcebisceop mid him.12

Another annal (for 1016) shows a numbered sequence of battles fought by King Edmund, though only two, in contrast to the at least thirteen in Sigvatr’s Vikingarvisur:

7 raede æfter þam he gefealt wîð þone here æt Peonnan wîð Gillingham, 7 oþer gefeoh he gefealt æfter middanumera æt Secorstanæ, þær mycel wæl feoll on ægðre healfe, 7 ða heras him sylfe toewadan.13

12 The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS C, ed. K. O’Brien O’Keeffe, The AS Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition 5 (Cambridge, 2001), 95–6. ‘And then, in this year, between the Nativity of St Mary and Michaelmas, they besieged Canterbury ... Then they captured there Archbishop Ælfheah, and the king’s reeve Ælfweard, and Abbess Leofrun and Bishop Godwine; and they let Abbot Ælfric escape. ... And when they had then ransacked the whole borough, they went to their ships and took the archbishop with them’, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Revised Translation, ed. D. Whitelock, with D. C. Douglas and S. I. Tucker (London, 1961; rev. 1963), p. 31.

13 ASC MS C, ed. O’Brien O’Keeffe, pp. 101–2. ‘And soon after that he fought against the Danish army at P跟随wood near Gillingham, and he fought a second battle after midsummer at Sherston; and a great number on both sides fell there, and the armies separated of their own accord’, ASC, ed. Whitelock et al., p. 95.
This has an even more precise dating than previous examples, and, like the skaldic verse, is written from the point of view of the victor (despite authorial disapproval of his burning of Hereford’s ‘glorious minster’), with a snapshot of his fleeing opponents.

Without wishing to overstate the similarities between the two genres, I suggest that it is useful to see the skaldic poems as a kind of oral equivalent to written annals (or what Gervase called a ‘chronicle’): at least one of their functions is to record the basic facts about certain important events involving kings and chieftains, naming names where possible. In this recording function, they also have the rudiments of the annalistic form, with their stabs at chronology, both absolute and relative, even though the skaldic poems lack the annals’ fundamental characteristic of dating events to a specific, enumerated year.

ÖTTARR THE BLACK SAVES HIS HEAD
To demonstrate further the ways in which this recording function works in one skaldic poem, I analyse the drípa known as Höfðablausn ‘Head-Ransom’ composed in praise of King (later Saint) Óláfr Haraldsson of Norway. An anecdote recorded in several versions of the saga of this king purports to explain the circumstances in which Öttarr the Black composed the poem. Apparently, he needed to propitiate the king because he had in his youth composed a suggestive poem about the princess who later became Óláfr’s wife. The anecdote does not actually quote the drípa, which is however preserved in quite different prose contexts. It has been usual to regard the poem as probably historical (in the sense that it was composed by that poet for that king), and the anecdote as probably fictional (in the sense that the poem was not composed in the circumstances described). In the anecdote, then, a fictional or fictionalized context has been provided for a poem originally composed for quite a different context, what we might call the oral skaldic culture of the eleventh century.

Although classified as a praise poem, there is relatively little direct praise in Höfðablausn. The poet does start with a conventional introduction requesting the attention of his audience (using the formulaic höfði ‘listen!’) and outlining his eulogistic task, which is at dýrka gifti guðhnutanda. Following this introduction, the bulk of the poem (around twenty stanzas survive in all) consists of a narrative, an account of some of the events of the king’s life, containing relatively little evaluation, let alone praise, of any sort. Such evaluation as there is comes at the end of the poem, in two stanzas which mirror the

Hereford town and ravaged it, and burnt the glorious minster which Bishop Athelstan had built, and killed the priests inside the minster and many others as well, and captured all the treasures and took them away. And when they had done the greatest damage, it was decided to reinstate Earl Ælfgar and give him his earldom, and all that had been taken from him. This devastation happened on 24 October, ASC, ed. Whitelock et al., pp. 130–31.

A drípa is a long praise poem with a refrain.


\[ The standard edition of the reconstructed poem is in Den norsk-isländske skjaldedigtning, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen, 1912–15), Al, 290–6 and Bl, 268–72. However, individual stanzas are cited from more recent text editions, as given in the notes, below.\]

\[ ‘to glorify the feeder of the horse of the trollwoman’. The ‘horse of the trollwoman’ is a wolf, and the ‘feeder’ of the wolf is a warrior.\]
opening of the poem.\textsuperscript{20} In these, the poet brings the audience back to the here and now of the performance, making reference to the current extent of the king's power and comparing it favourably to that of other (unspecified) kings. In between the introduction and the conclusion, however, the praise is implicit in the narrative of events, rather than explicitly articulated. These events involve a series of successful journeys to a series of places where Óláfr was successful in war, followed by his return to Norway, where he became king.

A simple definition of 'narrative' as 'the narration of a succession of ... events' suggests that it can be fruitful to employ a narratological perspective on Háfnirallen.\textsuperscript{21} The techniques of narratology, as first demonstrated by Genette, provide a clear and more precise understanding of narratives of all kinds.\textsuperscript{22} The term 'narrative' actually refers to three different things: (1) narrative as 'text', that is the verbal artifact itself; (2) narrative as 'story', that is the succession of events, real or fictitious, that are narrated in the text, but that can be considered in abstraction from the text; and (3) narrative as 'narration', or the act of narrating, that is the process by which the story becomes text. While more general studies of narrative often focus on the interpretation or significance of the 'text', the verbal artifact itself, narratology both brings out and is concerned with the relationships between all three of these aspects of narrative. Moreover, where the concern is with narrative and history, a narratological focus on 'story' and 'narration' can help to clarify issues both of the genesis of the 'text' and its historiographical status.

Although Háfnirallen, along with most skaldic poetry, is not traditionally thought of as a 'narrative', it fulfills the requirements of a 'narration', that is to say it is a 'communication process in which the narrative as message is transmitted by addressee to addressee' and 'the medium used to transmit the message' is 'verbal', while it is also true that this message concerns a 'succession of events'.\textsuperscript{23} I suggest therefore that a narratological analysis of the poem will help to reveal the ways in which it interacts with 'history', the past events which form its 'story'.

Viking Age praise poems often relate a series of events. It can be shown that Óttarr's Háfnirallen is partially dependent on the poem about Óláfr's youthful exploits already mentioned, the Víkingasörir composed by Óttarr's uncle and mentor Sigvatr.\textsuperscript{24} As we have seen, this comprised a numbered catalogue of battles, one per stanza, usually naming the location and characterizing the opponents. To call such poems 'praise poems', though not wrong, is misleading, for one of their functions, as important as that of praise, was to record events for a pre-literate culture. Such poems later proved to be useful evidence for medieval historians such as Snorri Sturluson precisely because they were intended as historiography from the start; they were composed with an eye on posterity as well as on the flattering moment of performance and reward. Insofar as historiography is basically narrative, therefore, all of the poems in this genre are potentially narrative, or have narrative elements or components.

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\textsuperscript{20} The concluding stanzas are numbered 18 and 19 in the standard edition; the half-stanza traditionally numbered 20 probably belongs earlier in the poem if, indeed, it belongs to this poem at all, see B. Fidjestøl, \textit{Det norrøne fyrstedeiktet} (Øvre Ervik, 1982), p. 124.

\textsuperscript{21} The definition is adapted from S. Rimmon-Kenan, \textit{Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics} (London, 1983), p. 2. She is primarily concerned with fictional narratives, but recognises that 'some of the procedures used in the analysis of fiction may be applied to texts conventionally defined as “non-fiction”' (p. 3).


\textsuperscript{23} Rimmon-Kenan, \textit{Narrative Fiction}, p. 2.

Admittedly, skaldic praise poems are highly unusual types of narrative. Narrativity does not immediately spring to mind as their main characteristic, yet closer inspection reveals that narrativity is an important part of the way these poems work.

One immediately obvious characteristic of Óttarr's Höfðablaðs is that it is a second-person narrative, in which the poet tells the king his own life story to date, using a large number of second-person verbs in the past tense (stanza four):

Óttuð örum skreytum
austr í salt melð flaustum.
Bóruð lind af landi,
landvörðr, á skip randir.
Neytuð segls ok settuð
sundvarpaði sundum.
Sleit mjök rón mikla
mön gö und þér börů.

This device is relatively unusual even in the skaldic corpus: poets might address the king directly at certain points in the poem (unless it is a posthumous poem), but their accounts of the events in which he was involved are generally told more indirectly in the third person. This is certainly what Sigvatr does in his Vikingamvisur. The use of second-person narration, however, derives from the original performance context, as does the poet's use of hearsay.

Both Sigvatr and Óttarr (and many other poets, who were often brought in to do their versified propaganda after the fact) make clear that they were not actually present at the events they are recounting.

25 Snorri Sturluson: Heimsþingla, ed. Bjarni Ádalsbjarnarson, II, 6. 'You set out east to sea with ships, adorned with oars. Guardian of the land, you carried spears from the land, shields onto ships. Now and again you used the sail and set it against the strait-disturber [wind]. Many a heavily-rowed oar tore the great swell beneath you'.

but that their information is based on hearsay, as Óttarr does in Höfðablaðs (stanza three):

Ungs hræsat á vit vengis,
vígskár konungi, blákki,
þó hefir dýrum þræk, dreyra
Danmarkar, þik vanðan.
Varð nýlagist nordan,
úu es tík af hvööt sílki,
frák til þess, es fómð,
fór þín, konungi, görra.26

To stand up in front of a king and tell him what he has accomplished, based on hearsay, is extremely flattering. The poet is saying that the king is so renowned for his deeds that news of them has reached the poet, who now wishes to put them into words that will make them even more memorable. In this stanza the 'I have heard' formula (fráð) is ambiguously placed between the general reference to the king's power, and the specific reference to his first youthful viking voyage, making it applicable to both.

The relatively frequent emphasis in the skaldic corpus on the secondhand nature of the poet's information arises from his awareness of his role as oral historian, with a scrupulous distinction between what he has seen and what he has only heard of. There are examples of poets who stress that they were present at the events they are describing, and it is also clear that the medieval historians

26 Íbíd., p. 5. ‘Bale−bold king, [you were] young [when] you launched the stead of the lifeblood of the plain [lifeblood of the plain = water; stead of the water = ship] to go to Denmark; you have accustomed yourself to glorious strength. Your voyage from the north, king, was most successful; you are now powerful from such prowess; I have heard all about when you journeyed’.
who used their evidence particularly valued this type of stanza. The skaldic use of the ‘I heard’ formula should therefore be distinguished from the Old English instances, which ‘characteristically allude to the world of oral discourse and oral tradition’, invoking ‘legendary tradition and a body of “sayings” orally transmitted’. Skaldic verse does not ‘allude to oral discourse and oral tradition’, it is still very much a part of them. The skaldic poet is also quite unlike the Anglo-Saxon oral poet who ‘cannot assume the kind of stability in discourse and in the matter of discourse which the literate poet can’. The difference lies in the strict forms of drøttkvétt, which are designed precisely to ensure as much fixity in the text as possible in an oral culture, and which also ensured that the texts survived reasonably intact until they were written down, thus giving later readers an insight into that particular ‘oral discourse and oral tradition’.

Thus, in Óttarr’s Höfðablaðs, and in skaldic praise poetry more generally, the use of second-person narration and the not-so-formulaic references to hearsay and tradition may survive as indicators of the original performance context of the oral poems, despite their preservation only as dismembered written texts, presented as their sources by the medieval Icelandic historians. As already indicated, this original performance context involved the

direct address of the king by the poet. If a second-person narrative is unusual in skaldic praise poetry, it is at least not surprising there, given these circumstances of the composition and performance of this genre. Yet it is uncommon in narrative more generally, and not all narratologists even recognize the possibility. Where they do, they assume that the second person is a fictional character in the narrative (a ‘narratee’, the recipient of narration), addressed by an equally fictional narrator:

A narratee is a visible fictional character whom we witness being addressed by an even more visible second-order narrator, and behind their fake dialogue is some storyteller ... whom we take to be the agent of all their words.

Much writing on narrative is of course concerned with modern fiction, and such theorists struggle to distinguish the ‘real’ author and ‘real’ reader from their counterparts in the text, the ‘narrator’ and the ‘narratee’, as does Parks in his study of Old English poetry: The poetic narrator is the teller within the tale, the narrative voice within the context of the work itself, as distinguished from the actual, real-world author. Yet, in the non-fictional Höfðablaðs we have a narrative that arose when a real poet addressed a real king in the second person to tell him the story of his own deeds: author and audience are thus equivalent to narrator and narratee.

In assessing the poem as ‘real’ in this sense, it is significant that the possibility of second-person narration within a narrative is not taken up by the king’s saga authors who cite the poems as evidence. When they quote from such poems, they choose not to describe, in their narratives, a context of performance which would make the citation of a verse with second-person narration natural, instead they

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27 For some examples, see J. Jesch, ‘History in the “Political Sagas”’, ME 62 (1993), 210–20, at 212–14.
29 Parks, ‘The Traditional Narrator’, 47.
30 The extent to which skaldic verse was available in written or oral form to writers of the thirteenth century is not clear and needs more research. Recent work by Gísli Sigurðsson suggests that some stanzas by eleventh-century poets were still circulating orally in the mid-thirteenth century: Óláfr Fördarson hvískald and Oral Poetry in the West of Iceland c. 1250, Old Icelandic Literature, ed. M. Clunies Ross, pp. 96–115.
merely cite the stanzas as evidence for their narrative, just as they do with other stanzas that are narrated in the third person. For instance, stanza four of Óttarr’s Höfðablaðs is introduced by Snorri with the words ‘Óttarr svarti segir þat heimrun ofrðum, at hann fór þá austr ór Danmörk’, with the third-person pronoun (hann ‘he’) of this prose introduction contrasting awkwardly with the second-person verb form (Óttul) that is the first word in the stanza. In the original context of performance, however, the second-person address made perfect sense. This clear disjunction between the discourse mode of the quoted stanza (second-person) and that of its surrounding prose (third-person) confirms the fact that the saga-author is quoting from a pre-existing poem, and illustrates the various narrative levels at work. First, there is the ‘story’, the actual events that took place in the early eleventh century. Then, there is the first, oral, ‘narration’, when the poet speaks directly to the king soon after those events and recounts them to him, sometimes in the second person. This poem is then transmitted, probably in both oral and, later, written form. It is subsequently used as a source for the second ‘narration’ by the thirteenth-century historian, who recounts the events, this time in the third person and in written prose, but also embeds in his account the actual transmitted stanzas which are his source for that account. The two narrations together form the ‘text’ (for example, Snorri’s Heimskringla), the verbal artifact that has survived to the present day and is our only available object of study, and our only access to the ‘story’, the actual historical events.

While its consistent use of the second-person form is unusual (even in the skaldic corpus, though this may be a result of the transmission process), other aspects of Óttarr’s poem place it more comfortably in the narrative mode, in particular its concern with a ‘succession of events’. The sequence is chronological, and firmly located in the past. Although the battles are not numbered the way they are in Vikingarvísur, the poet makes liberal use throughout of time adverbials such as söulan ‘afterwards’, enn ‘again’, áðun ‘previously’, forþum ‘previously’, and áðr ‘before’ to indicate the relative order of events. The very first word of the narrative part of the poem (stanza three), ungr ‘young’, refers to the king at the time of the events being narrated, and suggests that the poet will cover the sweep of the king’s career to date, from his most youthful battles, to the present time of the performance, as indicated by the use of nú ‘now’ in the same stanza. Again, there is a clear distinction between the time of the ‘story’ and the time of the ‘narration’.

The events in which the king has excelled are the usual ones: he has been successful in war and (a pre-requisite for this if he goes abroad) he has been a successful sea-captain (for example, stanza four). A different kind of eulogy might just praise the king for his success in naval warfare in very general terms, as in Edmund Waller’s classic royalist panegyric ‘To the King, on his Navy’, the king in question being Charles I:

Where’er thy navy spreads her canvas wings,
Homage to thee, and peace to all she brings;

35 ‘Óttarr says clearly that he then went east from Denmark’.
34 See above, p. 12, n. 25.

37 See above, p. 12, n. 25.
Judith Jesch

The French and Spaniard, when thy flags appear,
Forget their hatred, and consent to fear. 38

But Háfnólausn, though it has a eulogistic purpose, has narrative form, and is therefore quite different, for 'narrative shies away from abstraction and thrives on concreteness. It concentrates on the particular and not the general. Rather than presenting sequences which are true to any set of circumstances, it tends to present sequences which depend on a specific set. 39 In the conventional world of Old Norse court poetry, all kings are generous, and all kings are successful at war and at sailing. But to actualize the praise of any individual king, it is necessary to give specific examples, and a good way of doing this is in narrative form, as a sequence of examples of his success in war and sailing, and, in some other poems, of his generosity. The praise of the king is therefore inherent in the telling of the 'story', in the 'narration' itself, rather than in the more overt and generalised praise of eulogies like Waller's.

Óttarr's poem ends with a deictic reference to the here and now of the moment of performance, the actual 'narration' of the 'story', as indicated by the adverbial nú 'now' and the present tenses in stanza eighteen:

Nú séð þú fyr þeini,
þík rénumir Gaut múklu,
told, es forðum heldu
þínn bragningar, gagni.
Breið eru austri til Eiða
ættlendi und þer. Göndilar

40 Snorri Sturluson: Heimskringla, ed. Bjarni Áðalbjarðarson, II, 107. 'Now you rule over that land which was previously held by five princes; God strengthens you with great victory. The ancestral lands under you are broad, east to Eiðar. No wielder of the fires of Göndull has previously reigned over such a realm. Göndull is a valkyrja, her 'fires' are swords, their 'wielder' is a warrior.'

41 Prince, Narratology, p. 148.


43 Prince, Narratology, p. 152.
summing up of the "meaning" of the chain of events with which it
deals that we normally expect from the well-made story." Stanzas
eighteen and nineteen of Ötarr's Höfðablaðs provide precisely this
closure that sums up "the "meaning" of the chain of events".

Having established that Ötarr's poem conforms to the
structures of narrative, we might well ask what the purpose is of using
this mode. Why stand up before a king and tell him the story of his
life, however 'well-made', the one story that he of all people already
knows? Would it not be simpler and more flattering to compose a
flowery eulogy, a celebratory ode, as Edmund Waller did for Charles
I? In answering this question it is important to note that the king is
not the whole of the audience for Ötarr's poem which, though
addressed to the king, was performed before an audience of his
followers. There were undoubtedly some in that audience who had
not yet heard this particular story. Those who did know the story may
have got pleasure from hearing it again, especially if they were
involved in some of the events. Thus, the story allows a collective
reliving of past experiences. But the poet also has his eye on posterity,
and a public recital ensures that the events are fixed in the collective
memory. The use of both personal and place-names helps to fix the
most important facts, providing the particularity that Prince
identified as a characteristic of narrative. Narrativity thus both demonstrates
and is essential to the historiographical aims of the genre.

44 H. White, 'The Value of Narrativity in The Representation of Reality', On
45 The dangers of telling a king the story of his own life are alluded to in
'Porstein's fárrr og athvöld', Auszifnings Ígar, ed. Jón Jóhannesson, Íslensk fornrit
11 (Reykjavik, 1950), 333-6; a different version is translated as 'The Tale of the

Skaldic Verse and the Roots of History

CONCLUSION

Skaldic narrative had the function of telling the past in such a way
that it was fixed for the future. The skaldic poet appears as an
authorial presence in his text, drawing attention to his sources.
Moreover, his authorial personality is also of importance outside the
text, guaranteeing its authenticity and authority. Skaldic poetry is
unusual among early medieval poetic genres in not being anonymous:
the name of the poet is very firmly attached to the individual stanzas
as they are recycled in the historical texts. For historians like Snorri,
the poet is the authority for the information they take from his
poems. But it is also clear to us that the poet is in some sense the
creator of that information. Handsomely rewarded for his poem, he
presents a flattering and definitive version of the life and works of the
king or chieftain being praised, securely enmeshed in the strict and
complex forms of dröttkvætt which would ensure its enduring
testimony.

Although Viking Age praise poetry is not at first glance an
obviously narrative genre, it responds well to analysis as narrative,
because it had a function, and because 'the study of narrativity can
illuminate not only the functioning of a given ... narrative but also the
meaning of the narrative moment.' In the case of the fictional
Ötarr, the character in the anecdote, the 'meaning' was all-important,
for in the narrative moment, the moment in which he recited his
poem in praise of the king, he saved his head. For the historical poet
Ötarr, who composed the poem now known as Höfðablaðs from this
story, it is much more likely that the meaning of the narrative
moment lay in the recognition of his role as recorder of events for
posterity. This is 'the more usual "meaning" of such Viking Age

46 Prince, Narratology, p. 161.
narrative moments: not only to flatter a powerful king, but also to ‘write’ history in a pre-literate age.⁷

Statements of Power in the Language of Genealogy: St Ailbe’s Roots

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Who was St Ailbe?

A dog, according to Kim McCones who has argued that Ailbe is ‘a Christianised version of a pagan hound guardian of the Otherworld’.¹

McCones has pointed out that the name of Ailbe’s father was Olchú, that is, ‘big dog’.² Furthermore, in the ‘Life of St Ailbe’ the infant saint is fostered by a she-wolf until found by a British Christian.³ And every first-year student in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic here at the University of Cambridge who is initiated into the wonders of Old Irish knows that Ailbe is the name of the famous

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⁷ The ideas presented in this paper are developed more fully in two forthcoming articles, ‘Skaldic Verse: A Case of Literacy avant la lettre?’, Literacy in Medieval and Early Modern Scandinavia, ed. P. Hermann (Odense, 2005), 169–92, and “The Meaning of the Narrative Moment”: Poets and History in the Late Viking Age’, in a volume on narrative edited by Ross Balzaretti and Elizabeth Tyler (Turnhout, 2006?).

dog who met a sorry end in Séala Muice Meic Dathó, or ‘Tidings of Mac Datho’s Pig’.3

St Ailbe was a member of the Araid, according to the genealogies of that people and according to Vita S. Albei. (See Figure 1.) In Vita S. Albei the saint is stated to have been the son of Sant, a slave of the king of the Artraige, and a randy fellow named Olcnais, who, after getting Sant pregnant, flees never to be heard from again.5 The Artraige were one of the peoples of the Araid.6 The Araid are now an obscure people. They were a forfhiath, or external people, of Munster.8 This status is neatly reflected in their genealogies, in which they descend from Fer Tlachtga, presented as the son (or brother) of Fergus mac Róich (Fergus mac Rossa), or the son of Celtchair mac Uithcheair, both prominent figures in the so-called Ulster Cycle of Irish literature.9 Geographically, the Araid were far from external.

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1 Séala Muice Meic Dathó, ed. R. Thurneysen (Dublin, 1935).
2 Vita S. Albei, §1: Vitas, ed. Heist, p. 118.
3 Corpus, ed. O’Brien, I, 32: (161/27) and 386 (326/55).
5 Forthiath were external in the sense that they were not genealogically related to the overking to whom they paid tribute. On the distinction between forfhiath (‘free kingdoms’), forthiath and aithbiath (‘unfree kingdoms’), see Mac Neill, ‘Early Irish Population-Groups’, Proc. of the R. Irish Acad. 29 (1911–12), 59–114, at 93 (§102). For references to dā forfhiath Araid see Corpus, ed. O’Brien, I, 137 (140/25) and 280 (157,50); what specifically these two forfhiath were is not stated. See also Corpus, ed. O’Brien, I, 321 (161/27) and n. 9. The Araid are usually presented as divided into four population-groups: see Mahon, ‘Glasraige’, pp. 19–21.
6 Fer Tlachtga is linked with Fergus at Corpus, ed. O’Brien, I, 97 (128a37) — note that the heading at the top of the page should read Dal Càthrin Araid, not Leath: see J. V. Kelleher, The Pre-Norman Irish Genealogies, Irish Hist. Stud. 16 (1968), 138–53, at 152. Fer Tlachtga is also associated with Fergus at Corpus, ed. O’Brien I, 320–1; Corpus, ed. Ó Riain, p. 32 (§189) and n. f; Corpus, ed. Ó Riaín, p. 102 (§662.190). Fer Tlachtga is associated with Celtchair at Corpus, ed. O’Brien, I, 137 (140/25) and Corpus, ed. Ó Riaín, p. 23 (§135) but see n. 1 and p. 68 (§486). This confusion over the parentage of Fer Tlachtga is acknowledged at Corpus, ed. Ó Riaín, p. 65 (§436).
7 E. Hogan, Onomasticon Gaedilicum Locorum et Tribunorum Hiberniae et Scotiae (Dublin, 1910), p. 34.
9 The genealogical material contained in O’Brien’s Corpus was compiled in the twelfth century; much material, and especially genealogies pertaining to Munster dynasties, is earlier. For an introduction to this work, see Kelleher, The Pre-Norman Irish Genealogies; see also P. Ó Riaín, Irish Saints’ Cults and Ecclesiastical Families, Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 291–302, at p. 292.
figure in the way that we think of him – the bishop who founded the church of Emly (Ionlach Ithair).\textsuperscript{13} Cumméne, in his letter on the controversy over the date of Easter, written in 632 or 633, mentions the successor (
isco
or) of Bishop Ailbe.\textsuperscript{14} This letter was written a century after the saint’s death, as recorded in Irish chronicles, by which time it was accepted that Ailbe had been a bishop and had founded a church.\textsuperscript{15} The problem is that the dates given for Ailbe’s death in the chronicles are constructs.

This investigation into St Ailbe’s roots is really an investigation into who wanted to claim him, why and when.\textsuperscript{16} Of course, St Ailbe

13 Cumméne is in the extreme west of what is now Co. Tipperary.


16 For an overview of the study the genealogies of Irish saints see P. Ó Ruairí, ‘Irish Saints’ Genealogies’, Nomina 7 (1983), 23–9; and for a particularly relevant study of Ailbe of Shancough, see Ó Ruairí, ‘Irish Saints’ Cults’.

may have existed, and he may have been of the Araid. But, barring the discovery at Emly of a human skeleton with a tail, we are left with the figure presented to us in the genealogies and hagiography, rather than with a man. An explanation for the interest of the Araid in St Ailbe is discernible, however. In 1945 Liam Ó Buachalla published an article entitled ‘The Ecclesiastical families of Cloyne’.\textsuperscript{17} In this article, he argued that the Munster churches of Cloyne and Emly were intermittently ruled by members of the Araid and the Eoganachta. The latter were an amalgamation of kingdoms which controlled the overkingship of Munster from the seventh century to the mid-tenth century.\textsuperscript{18} The interest on the part of the Eoganachta in Emly is well-documented, and Donnchadh Ó Corráin has even suggested that this interest has been underestimated.\textsuperscript{19} The role of the Araid at Emly is less well acknowledged or understood. Ó Buachalla cited four families of the Araid who were active at Emly and Cloyne,\textsuperscript{20} all of whom appear in the genealogies of the Araid in Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh’s ‘Book of Genealogies’ which has recently been edited for the first time by Nollaig Ó Muraíle.\textsuperscript{21} One of these families, Ul
hArrochtáin, produced a lector and an abbot of Emly in the eleventh century.22 I have, as yet, been unable to discover evidence for the involvement of the other three families at Emly.

Ó Buachalla was mainly concerned with evidence for ecclesiastical dynasties at Cloyne and Emly from the tenth century onwards. However, there were members of the Araid active at Emly much earlier as well:23 Senchán, abbot of Emly (†780/1)24 and his uncle Brócán (†771).25 I would also suggest, tentatively, that Conamail, abbot of Emly (†708),26 be identified with Conamail sapiens, who appears among the genealogies of the Araid.27 All three of these men belonged to Dál Cairpre Arad who also appear under the name Töceerca.28 (See Figure 1.) Ó Buachalla suggested that Dál Cairpre Arad were overlords of the Araid.29 While a number of pedigrees of

22 Al 1024.4.
23 Senchán and Brócán were identified in passing as members of the Araid by Mahon (Glasraige, p. 20). The identification of Senchán as a member of the Araid has been accepted by Ó Riaín, ‘Irish Saints’ Cuhs’, 293, n. 9.
25 Al 771.2: Brócán mac Aedhmar ó Ímlech (‘Brócán son of Aedmar from Emly’). According to the pedigree cited in the previous footnote, the father of Senchán, abbot of Emly, was Adoer mac Folachtrim meic Brócán. It would seem, therefore, that Brócán of Emly was the nephew of Senchán, abbot of Emly. The appearance of the name Brócán in Senchán’s pedigree is suggestive.
26 Al 708.1, in which his father’s name is given as Carthach.
27 Corpus, ed. O’Brien, I, 96 (128a13). The name of Conamail’s father is not given in the genealogies.
29 Ó Buachalla, ‘The Ecclesiastical Families’, p. 84.

members of the Araid survive,30 it is difficult to identify individuals mentioned therein for the simple reason that the Araid were a politically insignificant people and therefore rarely appear in the chronicles. Further, most of the extant pedigrees of the Araid are of branchers of this people other than those which supposedly produced Ailbe, Brócán, Senchán and Conamail.

From about the year 700, one can extract from the chronicles a list of the abbots of Emly which, on account of its substantial length, must be not far from complete. However, very few of these men can be securely fitted into a pedigree in the genealogical collections. In fact, between the first appearance of an abbot of Emly in the chronicles (661) and the mid tenth century, the period on which I have concentrated most of my efforts, I have only been able to identify the three abbots mentioned above, and, very tentatively, an abbot of Emly who was of the Eoganachta and died in 720.31 In addition to these four fellows, another four abbots of Emly who were

30 Corpus, ed. O’Brien, I, 95–7 (the heading at the top of these pages should read Dál Cairpre Arad, not Lethbo) and 386–7.
31 The earliest abbot of Emly to appear in the chronicles is Conaing ua Daint, who died in 661: AB §211, AClon 657.2, AFM 660.2, Al 661.1, ARC §130, AU 661.1, AT 661.3, CS 657.3. Cellach, abbot of Emly, died in 720: Al 720.1. Muchtighern mac Cellach died in 785 as abbot of Iris Cathaig (Scattery Island, Co. Clare): AU 785.1. D. Ó Corráin, review of Byrne, Irish Kings, p. 164, has identified him as a member of Ui Éndae, a branch of Eoganacht Áine which produced four ninth-century abbots of Emly. This argument was accepted by F. J. Byrne, in his second edition of Irish Kings and High-Kings (Dublin, 2001), pp. xxiv–xxv. It is possible that Cellach, abbot of Emly, was Muchtighern’s father, although I acknowledge that this identification treads uncomfortably close to the edge of chronological impossibility. An investigation into the connections between Emly and local Munster royal dynasties up to the mid-tenth century is the subject of one chapter in my PhD dissertation, ‘ Royalty and the Church in Ireland and Britain to A.D. 1050’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Cambridge Univ., forthcoming).

29
of the Eoganachta have been identified for this period. The identification of eight ecclesiastics of Emly out of the total twenty-six mentioned in the chronicles between 661 and 950 does not constitute a resounding success. All, some, or none of the other sixteen ecclesiastics may have been of the Araid or the Eoganachta and our picture of the dynastic make-up of Emly in the seventh through the mid-tenth centuries is probably skewed. But it is perhaps nevertheless significant that the dynasts which can be identified were of the Eoganachta, the most powerful group of dynasties in Munster at this time, and the Araid, the people who claimed Ailbe as their own.

The association of the Eoganachta and the Araid with Emly is mirrored in Vitae S. Albei. Richard Sharpe has argued that Vitae S. Albei is part of a group of Latin Lives of Irish saints which were drawn together to form a collection between roughly 750 and 850. Sharpe’s argument requires that the individual Vitae were in existence before being drawn together into a collection, pushing back the date of the composition of the individual Vitae into the eighth century. As yet no scholar has mounted a detailed attack on these early dates, although some have voiced their misgivings, either in print or orally. On the other hand, Máire Herbert has attempted to anchor Vitae S. Albei more firmly to a historical context. She has dated the Life to the reign of Cathal mac Finnugui, who was overking of Munster from 713 to 742. The potential eighth-century date for the composition of Vitae S. Albei draws this discussion of the dog-man saint’s roots into the quicksand of the debate over the wisdom of attempting to precisely date the composition of any given Irish saint’s Life. In Vitae S. Albei, the saint only briefly comes into contact with the overking of Munster, who is of the Eoganachta, but relations between the two are cordial. With one possible exception, which I shall discuss later, St Ailbe is not presented as beholden to the overking of Munster. The carefully articulated way in which St Ailbe is brought into contact with the overking of Munster is consistent with a historical context in which Emly was allied to, but not dependent upon, the overkings of Munster who were of the Eoganachta. That is, Vitae S. Albei may be the product of a period during which Emly was not controlled by dynasts of the Eoganachta. Because Sharpe has dated the composition of the Life to roughly 750-850 and I have found evidence for the Araid having a degree of influence at Emly within this date-range, it is worth investigating the possibility that Vitae S. Albei was written at a time when the Araid were powerful at Emly.

A brief history of the church of Emly may be useful at this point. As already mentioned, Emly was associated with a bishop named Ailbe and was a prominent church by the 630s. The first abbot of Emly to be mentioned in the chronicles, one Cunaig, died in 661. Emly was apparently one of the most important churches to assent to Cás Adomnáin or ‘The Law of Adomnán’, promulgated at Biri in 697, for the abbot of Emly, Diblaine, appears in the list of guarantors

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32 Rechabr mac Muchthigim (†819), Ólchobor mac Cnaeda (†851), Cen-mhifealad na Muchthigim (†872) and Eoghan mac Cinn-mhifealad (†890). On these see Byrne, Irish Kings, 176; O Corráin, review of Byrne, Irish Kings, p. 164.

33 The identification of abbots of Emly during this period is discussed in detail in my dissertation, ‘Royalty and the Church’.


second only to the bishop of Armagh.\textsuperscript{37} Beginning in the eighth century, a list of abbots of Emly can be extracted from the chronicles that appears to be fairly complete. It is in the annals of this century that we first find evidence of a close relationship between Emly and the Eoganachta.

As I mentioned earlier, the Araid were located in a district called Clu, which straddled Counties Limerick and Tipperary. To their east, south, and west were powerful branches of the Eoganachta: Eoganacht Chaisil, Eoganacht Glendamnach, and Eoganacht Locha Léin. To the north was the territory of Uí Flhídeint — wannabes of the Eoganachta. And right on top of the Araid were two more branches of the Eoganachta. One, Eoganacht Airthir Chliach, was, as their name implies, located in the eastern part of Clu. This branch had faded into political insignificance by the beginning of the seventh century. \textsuperscript{38} Eoganacht Áine were also located in Clu and they had control over the territory in which the Araid, and Emly, lay.\textsuperscript{39}

In 742, Cathal mac Finnguiini died.\textsuperscript{40} He was an unusually powerful overking of Munster who made himself troublesome to both the Leinstermen and Uí Néill. His obit in "The Annals of


\textsuperscript{38} The last overking of Munster from Eoganacht Airthir Chliach was Fergus Scandal, who died in 583: AFM 580.1, AT 584.3 (K.u.), CS 583.1.

\textsuperscript{39} This branch was centered around what is now Knockaney, in the barony of Small County, Co. Limerick.

\textsuperscript{40} AB §232, AClon 739.1, A7 742.1, AT 742.3, AFM 737.6, AU 742.3.

\textsuperscript{41} ‘In Emly / Which Ailbe has ennobled by his crozier, / One famous thing about it is / Its earth covering the brow of Cathal’.

\textsuperscript{42} I leave aside the question of whether the poem was composed on the death of Cathal in 742, or to what extent it may be used as evidence that Cathal actually was buried at Emly, Ó Cuív thought that Cathal’s obit in ‘The Annals of Inisfallen’, as it now stands, took shape long after Cathal’s death: B. Ó Cuív, ‘Literary Creation and Irish Historical Tradition’, PBA 49 (1963), 233–62, at 243–4.

\textsuperscript{43} AT 737.5 and AU 737.9.

\textsuperscript{44} AClon 734.3, AT 737.6, AU 737.10. T. M. Charles-Edwards, The Early Medieval Gaelic Lawyer, Quiggin Pamphlets on the Sources of Mediaeval Gaelic History 4 (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 50–1, has postulated a connection between the meeting at Terryglas and the promulgation of Loead Pátriciú; cf. Ó Cuív, ‘Literary Creation’, p. 244.
with the levying of fines or paying of tribute. Wealth generated by *Lex Patrisii* in 737 would have been funnelled into the coffers of the church of Armagh. If Cathal was a party to the promulgation of *Lex Patrisii*, Emly, a church surrounded on all sides by the Eoganachta, must have assented to this assertion of the power of the church of Armagh. It is not possible to determine whether Emly did so willingly or grudgingly. One suspects the latter, but if the former, circumstances had presumably changed by 784 when 'The Annals of Inisfallen' note the promulgation of *Cáin Ailbe* 'The Law of Ailbe' over Munster.\(^{45}\) In 793 *Cáin Ailbe* was renewed.\(^{46}\) Also in 793, Artri mac Cathail was ordained (ordinatio) overking of Munster.\(^{47}\) In 'The Annals of Ulster' these two events occur in the same annal-entry—suggesting that they were connected. In general, the promulgation of *cúna* over 'provinces' seems to have been carried out through the cooperation of a prominent ecclesiastic and the provincial overking.\(^{48}\) In the events of 793, then, we have evidence for the authority of the church of Emly being promoted by the overking of Munster. Given that it was Ailbe's law which was being promulgated, it seems almost certain that the ecclesiastic who ordained Artri was the head of the church of Emly. A precedent was being set which associated Emly with the successful candidate to the overkingship of Munster.

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\(^{45}\) AI 784.1.

\(^{46}\) AClon 790.1, AFM 788.3, AU 793.3.

\(^{47}\) AClon 790.3, AU 793.3. The branch of the Eoganachta to which Artri belonged is uncertain; he does not appear in the published genealogies. Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 293, has identified him as a son of Cathal mac Firnuingi (†742). This identification is problematic as Artri lived until 821: AI 821.1. It is worth noting that Cathal's daughter Tuathlaithe died in 754: AClon 749.6, AFM 749.5, AT 754.2.

\(^{48}\) See the overview of *cúna* given by Charles-Edwards, *Early Medieval Gaelic Lawyer*, pp. 43–52.

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There are two further dimensions to the events of 793 that need to be highlighted. First, the head of the church of Emly in 793 appears to have been Rechtabra, who, as Donnchadh Ó Corráin has shown, was of a branch of Eoganacht Áine called Uí Óidre.\(^{49}\) The mutual back-scratching of 793 was a family affair. Second, 'The Law of Connúin' was promulgated over Connaught by the overking of Connaught and the abbot of Roscommon in 793.\(^{50}\) The proclamation by two provincial overkings of two ecclesiastical laws associated with local saints in a single year may indicate that a new, independent, stance was being taken with regard to Armagh. Power-relations had shifted between 737, when it seems Cathal was involved in the promulgation of *Lex Patrisii* over all Ireland, and 793, when a man identified by some as Cathal's son promulgated 'The Law of Ailbe' over Munster.

Four ninth-century abbots of Emly, beginning with the aforementioned Rechtabra, can be securely identified as dynasts of the Eoganachta.\(^{51}\) Further, two of these, Olchobor and

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\(^{49}\) D. Ó Corráin, review of Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 164. Rechtabra died in 819: AFM 817.1 and AI 819.2. He may have ruled Emly from the death of Cúán, abbot of Emly, in 787: AFM 782.2 and AI 787.1.

\(^{50}\) AClon 790.1, AFM 788.2, AU 793.2. In AClon, the promulgation of 'The Law of Ailbe' and of 'The Law of Connúin' appear in the same annal-entry.

\(^{51}\) Rechtabra's nephew, Cenn-bhifaelad, was abbot of Emly and overking of Munster, and died in 872: AI 872.1, AFM 870.3, FAI § 403. FAI: *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland*, ed. J. N. Radner (Dublin, 1978). Other chronicles only record that he was abbot of Emly: AT 872.2, AU 872.3, CS 872.2. Eogan, a son of Cenn-bhifaelad, died in 890 after a brief reign as abbot of Emly: AFM 886.1, AI 890.1, AU 890.3. These three men were of Uí Óidre of Eoganacht Áine. Olchobor mac Cinaed, abbot of Emly and overking of Munster, was of a different branch of this dynasty, he died in 851: AI 851.1. Other chronicles call Olchobor (over)king of Munster only: AFM 849.2, AU 851.1, CS 851.1. The
Cenn-bhfaelad, were also overings of Munster. Over the course of the
nineth century, Munster and Uí Neill came into increasing conflict
with each other. Munster also suffered heavily from the effects of
Viking activity in the ninth century. In the mid-tenth century, the
Eoganachta lost control of Munster to the upstart kingdom of Dál
Caí, and by the end of the tenth century, the Eoganachta had also
temporarily lost control of Emly.\footnote{For a concise overview see \textit{O Corráin, Irela\n\textit{nd before the Normans, pp. 114–17.}}}

As I mentioned earlier, \textit{Vita S. Albei} depicts a very particular type
of relationship between the saint, the overking of Munster, and
indeed St Patrick. One can extrapolate from the relationships
between these figures something about the relationships between
Emly, the ruling Eoganachta, and Armagh at the time that the Life
was composed.

1) Relations between Emly and the overkings of Munster were
good.
2) Relations between Emly and Armagh were superficially good.
3) Relations between the overkings of Munster and Armagh
were good.
4) Eoganachta Glendamnach or Eoganachta Chaisil were
powerful.

identification of Ólchobair as a member of Uí Ó Neill was made by \textit{O Corráin,
review of Byrne, \textit{Irish Kings}, p. 164.}

\footnote{In 986, Cétfaidh, \textit{sliotha Riata, ‘foster son of Riata’ was intruded into the
abbacy of Emly: A.I 986.3. He was of Dál Caí, see see \textit{O Dochartaigh, ‘The Ecclesiastical
Families’, p. 85; O Corráin, \textit{Ireland before the Normans}, p. 127; D. \textit{O Corráin, ‘Dál
Caí – Church and Dynasty’, \textit{Ériu} 24 (1973), 52–63, at 53 n. 4. The year after
Cétfaidh’s death, Marcáin, brother of the overking of Munster, Brian Bóruma,
took the abbacy of Emly: A.I 990.2.}}

A few examples from the \textit{Vita} may serve to illustrate these
relationships. In \textit{Vita S. Albei}, the saint comes into contact with
Patrick and the overking of Munster, Oengus mac Nad-fraech, only
briefly. Oengus was the ancestor of both Eoganacht Glendamnach
and Eoganacht Chaisil. (See \textit{Figure 2.}) These two branches of the
Eoganachta, together with Eoganacht Áine, produced most of the
overkings of Munster in the eighth and ninth centuries. Eoganacht
Áine, as mentioned earlier, produced four ninth-century abbots of
Emly, two of whom were also overkings of Munster. Eoganacht Áine
are said to have descended from another son of Nad-fraech, Ailill. If
\textit{Vita S. Albei} was composed at a time when Eoganacht Áine
controlled both Emly and the overkingship of Munster, or perhaps
Emly only, we might expect the overking of Munster to have been
depicted as an ancestor of Eoganacht Áine rather than as an ancestor
of Eoganacht Chaisil and Eoganacht Glendamnach. Cathal mac
Fing Quinni, whose noble brow was covered by the dirt of Emly, was of
the Eoganacht Glendamnach.

The first, and only, occasion on which SS Albe and Patrick
interact in \textit{Vita S. Albei} is when Albe travels to Cashel and meets
with Patrick and the overking of Munster, Oengus.\footnote{\textit{Vita S. Albei, §29: \textit{VitaSanctorum Hiberniae, ed. Heist, p. 125.}}} In their accounts
of this meeting, the two published versions of \textit{Vita S. Albei} differ.
The version in TCD 175 states that Patrick and Oengus granted that
the archiepiscopal dignity (\textit{archiepiscopatus}) of Munster should always
be in the principal church of Albe.\footnote{\textit{Vita S. Albei, §22: \textit{VitaSanctorum Hiberniae, ed. Plummer, I, 55.}}} The version in \textit{Codex
Salvianensis}, which is generally agreed to more closely follow the
wording of its exemplar, states that Patrick gave jurisdiction over the
Munstermen to Albe, and gave Oengus over into Albe’s hands: \textit{Tunc
Patricius obtulit Algbeo omnes nivos Munuscinum, ut esset eorum patre, et regem}
This statement is extremely interesting because while Ailbe is presented as beholden to Patrick, he is not presented as beholden to the overking of Munster. This indebtedness to St Patrick is, however, tempered by other events. For example, Patrick asks Ailbe to discover the paternity of a child born to a slave of Patrick’s. In the version of the Life in the *Codex Salamanensis*, the offending fornicator is a member of Patrick’s retinue. Further, Ailbe is brought into contact with Palladius, a useful trump card when trying to deflect the power-hungry ambitions of the Patrician church. The get-together at Cashel is the sum-total of Ailbe’s dealings with Patrick. Ailbe only comes into contact with Oengus twice more. On one occasion Ailbe resuscitates the king’s dead horses. On the other occasion, St Óenae of Arann asks Ailbe to help him obtain a grant of land from Oengus. Oengus wanted to see for himself the piece of land that Óenae was after, and Ailbe performed a miracle which enabled this.

These several relationships which I have highlighted are all consistent with a date for the composition of *Vita S. Albei*

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56 *Vita S. Albei*, §29: *Vita Sanctorum Hiberniae*, ed. Heist, p. 125. Then Patrick gave all the Munstermen to Ailbe, so that he would be their father, and [Patrick gave over] King Oengus into Ailbe’s hands.


somewhere in the second half of the eighth century. The chronicle-evidence and the genealogical information combine to place two ecclesiastics at Emly who were of the Araid during this period. As noted earlier, between 737 and 793 there was a shift in the stance of the overkings of Munster away from visible co-operation with Armagh towards visible co-operation with Emly. The appearance of Oengus mac Nada-fraech as the overking of Munster points to a time when either Eoganacht Glendamnach or Eoganacht Chaisil were powerful — and I deliberately stop short of saying ‘when Eoganacht Glendamnach or Eoganacht Chaisil controlled the overkingship of Munster’. In the later eighth century, a king of Eoganacht Locha Léin, Mael-dúin mac Aeda, was overking of Munster. He died in 786. As Thomas Charles-Edwards has pointed out, a significant amount of medieval ink was split by certain of the Eoganachta (Eoganacht Chaisil and Eoganacht Glendamnach) to assert that other branches of the Eoganachta (in particular Eoganacht Locha Léin) were excluded from holding the overkingship of Munster. It is especially interesting, then, that the only appearance of the Araid as a fighting force in the annals for the eighth century is in battle against Mael-dúin. The appearance of the Araid in both military and ecclesiastical contexts in the second half of the eighth century, when they are otherwise largely invisible in the chronicles underscores the impression that this period was one of particular prominence for them.

The information that can be gleaned about the Araid in pre-Norman Ireland is scanty. One has to speak, not of gaps in our
knowledge, but rather of weak areas of light in an otherwise dark void. While the neat mirroring of the chronicle-evidence relating to the second half of the eighth century and the relationships depicted in *Vita S. Albe* is strong enough that it should catch our attention, it is largely circumstantial. Much more work needs to be done before the evidence presented in this paper can be brought to bear on the question of the date at which *Vita S. Albe* was composed.

To return to the question I asked at the beginning of this paper: Who was St Ailbe? According to the surviving genealogies, St Ailbe was a member of the Araid. Ultimately, this tells us more about the Araid, or whoever composed and tinkered with their genealogies, than it does about St Ailbe. It is an assertion of the power of a people — the Araid or groups within the Araid — in relation to a church represented by St Ailbe. It is a statement of power in the language of genealogy. As the Araid were a small, obscure, largely insignificant people, this conclusion might at first seem to be a let-down. But the connexion between Ailbe and the Araid, as I have attempted to show in this paper, points us towards a better understanding of the history of Emly, one of the most important churches in the south of Ireland, and its changing relationship with the overkings of Munster.
Who Says What in Gísla saga Súrssonar?
Speaker Attribution in the Three Versions of the Saga

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Gísla saga Súrssonar is one of the pre-eminent Icelandic ‘family sagas’ and tells the story of the famous tenth-century outlaw Gíslason.\(^1\) The saga is thought to have been composed some time in the second half of the thirteenth century,\(^2\) and it survives in a number of manuscripts which preserve three notably differing versions of the saga-text: a longer version, a shorter version, and a fragmentary version.\(^3\) In this paper I will outline the manuscript evidence for the

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2 It is difficult to come to any definite conclusions over the composition date of most sagas in the Íslendingasögur genre as there is no secure basis for dating them, but general consensus places Gísla saga in the ‘classical’ period of saga-writing, from around 1240–1310. See T. M. Andersson, ‘Some Ambiguities in Gísla saga: A Balance Sheet’, Bibliography of Old Norse-Icelandic Stud. (1968), 7–42, at 11; see also the appendix of dates and classifications of the Íslendingasögur in Vésteinn Ólason, ‘Family Sagas’, pp. 114–16.


4 Loth, p. 41; Jónsson, p. 33; Helgason, p. 51.

5 Articles published in the 1979 volume of the journal Gríðra were among the earliest critical attempts to assess the longer and shorter versions of the saga systematically. See, in particular, Guðri Kolbeinsson and Jónas Kristjánsson, ‘Gerðir Gíslavögu’, Gríðra 3 (1979), 128–162.
indeed. The upshot of this situation is that at the expense of the longer and the fragmentary versions, the shorter version of the saga-text has been used as the basis for virtually all printed editions and translations of the saga, and until recently, almost all critical studies on the saga.

On the whole, this attitude is not one based on sound analysis and criticism of the texts of the different versions, but rather reflects an outlook that has been heavily influenced by deep-rooted perceptions about the configuration of the ‘classical’ saga as a consistently objective and stylistically economical narrative. In this paper I hope to demonstrate that all three versions of the saga-text preserve interesting variants which are equally worthy of analysis, and that the very existence of such variants can enrich our comprehension of the saga, because they force us to re-examine and re-align established interpretations of characters and events.

The text of the shorter version of Gísla saga is represented principally in the parchment AM 556a quarto. General consensus has been reached over the date and origin of this manuscript: on the basis of its palaeographic and orthographic features, it is thought to have been written around 1475 or in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, somewhere in the West Fjord region of Iceland. The text of the shorter version of Gísla saga is also found in a number of later paper copies which all derive directly or indirectly from AM 556a quarto; these will not be considered here.

The preservation and transmission of the longer version of Gísla saga is not as clear-cut. The text of this version was originally preserved in a fourteenth-century parchment that has become known as the ‘Membrana Regia Deperdita’, because the manuscript was subsequently lost without a trace sometime in the eighteenth century. Fortunately however, two independent paper copies were made of the manuscript before it went missing: AM 149 folio and NKS 1181 folio. It is clear that, by the time these eighteenth-century copies were made, the fourteenth-century parchment was already damaged: both AM 149 folio and NKS 1181 folio indicate a point in the text, towards the end of the introductory section known as the ‘Norwegian Prelude’, where there was a significant lacuna.


9 See Loth, pp.xxxix–lxxviii.
10 AM 149 folio is held in the Arnarargæl Collection in Reykjavik. See Kálund, Katalog over den Arnamagnæanske håndskrifter, I, p. 104; Jónsson, pp. iv and pp. vi–vii; Loth, pp. xiii–xvii. NKS 1181 folio is held in den Nye Kongelige Samling in Copenhagen. See K. Kálund, Katalog over de oldnorske-islandske håndskrifter i det store Kongelige Bibliotek og i universitets-bibliotek (Copenhagen, 1900), pp. 13–31; Jónsson, pp. iv–vii; Loth, pp. xii–xxvii.
The third version of *Gísla saga* is extant only in the early
fifteenth-century fragment AM 445c quarto. This manuscript
consists of five damaged parchment leaves containing part of
*Vígs-Gríms saga* on the first leaf, and a fairly lengthy section of *Gísla saga*
(corresponding to about sixteen chapters of the other versions) on
four subsequent leaves. The text in the fragment is laid out in two
columns per page but the text is often not continuous, as the leaves
have been trimmed at the top and bottom, and in some places the
outside column on a couple of pages has been badly damaged,
rendering sections almost totally illegible. Nevertheless, several scenes
are preserved relatively intact, and thus the fragment can play an
important part in interpreting the saga when analysed in conjunction
with the corresponding material in the two other versions.

Turning now to the content of the saga: while the substance of
the introductory section of the saga—the so-called ‘Norwegian
Prelude’—diverges to a significant degree in the longer and shorter
versions (the corresponding text does not survive in the fragment),
on the whole, the overall chronological and sequential presentation
of the elements that make up the narrative of the saga is almost identical
in each of the three versions. On a verbal and phrasal level, however,
we find widespread variation frequently: individual words and,
sometimes, whole phrases in parallel sections of text vary from
version to version. Consequentially, these variations can have the
effect of slightly, and sometimes profoundly, altering the presentation
of a character, event, or the general tone of the narrative in a version.

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11 AM 445c I quarto is held in the Arnamagnæan Collection in Reykjavik. See
vii; Helgason, pp. 3–7; J. McKinnell, *The Reconstruction of Pseudo-
Vatnsheym*’, *Opuscula* 4, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana XXX (Copenhagen, 1970),
286–87.

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12 The mystery of the murderer’s identity has engaged critics of the saga for
many years. See, amongst others, A. Holtsmark, ‘Studies in the *Gísla Saga*’,
*Studia Norvegica Ethnologica et Folkloristica*, II, 6 (1951), 3–55, and T. M.
Andersson, ‘Some Ambiguities’.

13 The Old Norse text and a translation of the scene as it is represented in the
three versions may be found in tabulated form at the end of this article.
of loyalty to Ægþríðr accompany him some of the way. In all three versions, Börkr asks his wife to tell him why she was so unhappy the previous autumn at the local ball-games, and reminds her that she promised to tell him before he journeyed south. While they are talking, they reach Ægþríðr’s burial mound. Here, Ægþríðr stops short and refuses to go any further. The narrator describes how Ægþríðr tells Börkr about the verse that she overheard Gísli speak at the ball-games, and recites the verse to her husband. Then, in powerful contrast to Ægþríðr’s reported speech, we hear her add directly to Börkr: ‘and I think that you do not need to look elsewhere about Ægþríðr’s death’.14 Thus she unequivocally assigns the responsibility of her first husband’s death to her brother, and then unremittingly states that Gísli ‘must be rightly brought to justice’.15

The fact that Ægþríðr has kept this momentous knowledge to herself for several months is intriguing and worthy of brief consideration. On a structural level, Ægþríðr’s conscious silence over her brother’s guilt acts as a dramatic, suspense-building device: the situation which is played out in this scene has been set up earlier in the narrative so that it must be staged at a later point. From an emotional point of view, it is understandable that, when Ægþríðr looks at the burial mound, love and grief for her dead husband might induce her act of revelation, but this along cannot explain the delay.

Vésteinn Ólason has addressed this conundrum and argues that the answer lies in Ægþríðr’s son Snorri, who was conceived before Ægþríðr’s death but born after Ægþríðr had married Ægþríðr’s brother Börkr as her second husband. He writes, ‘it seems obvious, although critics have not noted it, that Ægþríðr must at this time have been even more concerned about her son than her dead husband.

The possibility of raising a son with an obligation to take revenge for the killing of his father by killing her brother is too much for her, and she decides to get the matter resolved at once.16

At any rate, when Börkr learns that Gísli is responsible for his brother’s death, he becomes enraged and exclaims furiously that he wants to turn back at once to kill Gísli.17 In addition to this, in the longer version and the fragmentary version we are told that Börkr resolves then not to put off this killing.18 A quick glance at the texts will demonstrate that until this point, the three versions are, on the whole, very close, with no significant divergences between the three texts.

However, following Börkr’s reaction to Ægþríðr’s statement, we hear the famous proverbial words ok eri kóld kvenna ríð.19 This phrase is also found in chapter 116 of Njáls saga, where it is spoken by Flosi Þorðarson in reaction to what he considers Hildigunnr’s monstrous goading of him to vengeance.20 Sarah M. Anderson writes in the introduction to a recent volume of essays entitled Cold Counsel: Women in Old Norse Literature and Mythology, ‘[t]his proverb about women’s counsels raises compelling questions. At stake here is not women’s nature, but rather ... their ‘ríð’ – their advice, their readings.’21 In

14 See no. 10 in the table below.
15 See no. 11 in the table below.
16 See nos. 12–13 in the tables below.
17 See no. 14 in the tables below.
18 See no. 17 in the tables below.
Gísla saga, Dórdís’s counsel in revealing her brother’s guilt is based on a physical reading: a reading, that is, of Gíslí’s own enigmatic verse.

The phrase ok eru köld kvína ráð is preserved in all three versions of Gísla saga, but each version attributes the words to a different character, and there are also slight differences in the exact wording between the versions. In the longer version the phrase is spoken by Dórdís. We learn that Börkr determines not to put off taking vengeance on Gíslí, and Dórdís responds by stating she cannot consent to such course of action, that she does not know the exact truth in her reading of the verse, and that ‘women’s counsels are always cold’. In the shorter version it is Börkr who, evaluating Dórdís’s words, speaks the proverb after his uncompromising declaration that he wants to turn back to kill Gíslí, he wavers, continuing: ‘but I do not know what truth there is in this, which Dórdís says, and it seems to me less likely that it is reliable, and often women’s counsels are cold’. Finally in the fragment it is Dorkell who advises Börkr not to go back after Gíslí, casts doubt on the veracity of Dórdís’s words and then speaks the proverb as simply ‘women’s counsels are cold’.

At a first, cursory reading, the differences in the three accounts over which character advises Börkr not to go back to kill Gíslí, who casts doubt on the truth behind Dórdís’s words, and who speaks the proverb may seem slight. However, these variations have the potential to influence our attitudes towards, and our understanding of, the characters and their motivation in this scene significantly, as I shall attempt to make evident now. From a wider, albeit indirect, perspective, our responses to these characters might be subject to subtle adjustments throughout the rest of the saga too.

22 See nos. 15–18 in the tables below.
and the complicated social matrix in which a bereaved woman found herself.

The parallel between Dórdís and Guðrún Gjúksdóttir—the heroine in Old Norse heroic poetry who first betrays her brothers to her husband and then kills her husband to avenge her brothers—is drawn later by Gíslí when he learns of what he considers his sister’s betrayal: Guðrún is also torn between diametrically conflicting loyalties.24 However, Dórdís’s behaviour in the longer version, which could be interpreted as an attempt at least to put off the inevitable consequences that must follow her acknowledgement of her brother’s self-incrimination, might soften our initial, harsh response to her actions to an extent.

Much later in the saga, after Gíslí has finally been killed, Dórdís stabs Bókr’s kinsman, Eyjólfr Bóðarson, who was finally responsible for killing Gíslí, and then Dórdís divorces herself from Bókr: she is finally able to demonstrate her contempt for the way in which revenge on Gíslí has been executed and, as Vésteinn Ólason comments, can ‘give expression to her family loyalties and adherence to the moral code of her father and brother’.25 And, we must also remember that while overtly, the weight of judgement is on Dórdís, both Gíslí and Dórkell—more of whom below—are also implicated in the situation.

In the shorter version, as I mentioned above, we see Bókr first determined to turn back immediately in order to kill Gíslí, but then vacillating, as he weighs up the truth or reliability in his wife’s words. His use and wording of the proverb ‘women’s counsels are often cold’ both implies his scepticism about Dórdís’s ability to interpret

24 Guðrún appears in a number of Eddic poems: see, for example, Sigurðarkvida in skamma, Atlaskvida, and Atlamál; see also the legendary saga, Völungs saga.

Who Says What in Gísla saga Súrssonar?

Gíslí’s verse accurately (on the basis that she is a woman), and, arguably, functions as an expression of his procrastination and reluctance to fulfil his duty: that is, to avenge his brother.

Bókr’s cowardice is brought out more strongly later on in all three versions of the saga when, together with the band of men whom he enlists to hunt down Gíslí, he suffers a series of humiliating setbacks. In the shorter version, however, there is a strong case for suggesting that Bókr’s citation of the proverb reveals his weak disposition at an earlier point in the narrative than is found in either the longer or the fragmentary version of the saga.

Finally, in the fragment, it is Dórkell (Gíslí and Dórdís’s brother, who has received no mention in the other two versions) who tries to restrain Bókr from going after Gíslí in the heat of the moment and casts doubt on the veracity of his sister’s words. Dórkell too is a character with conflicting loyalties: having previously sworn an oath of loyalty to Óðrgrimr, he has an obligation to exact vengeance for his death.

In fact, Dórkell is the only character who knows, or at least has a strong suspicion of, Gíslí’s guilt even before Gíslí recites his incriminating verse: straight after the murder, a party from Óðrgrimr’s farm, including Dórkell, goes over to Gíslí’s farm to break the news. On a stormy night when no one has a reason to be outside, Dórkell sees that Gíslí’s shoes are covered in fresh snow and he kicks them under the bed, out of sight, before anyone else notices them.

Thus Dórkell is in fact implicated in Gíslí’s guilt before Dórdís is, yet it is Dórdís who takes action; perhaps Dórdís is under a heavier social obligation to reveal her knowledge because she has been widowed and is expecting a posthumous child. In the fragmentary version, Dórkell dissuades Bókr from pursuing Gíslí himself, again protecting his brother at the expense of his oath to Óðrgrimr; however, Dórkell’s behaviour later in the fragment, when the
outlawed Gíslason goes to him for help, is consistent with the shorter and longer versions, where his support extends only so far as it does not endanger himself.

In a recent article, Vésteinn Ólason and Þórdur Íngi Guðjónsson have drawn attention to the differing accounts preserved in the three versions and considered the ways in which such differences between versions arise.26 Simple scribal error is one obvious way by which such discrepancies creep into texts, though another possibility is that a copyist might have had to take on a more creative role where he was faced with an unclear abbreviation of a character’s name in his exemplar. His interpretation and recontextualisation of the proverb, for example, would then be dependent on his understanding of the personality and motives of the characters involved in the scene.

However these differences between the versions have come about, it cannot be denied that each version gives us an equally compelling insight into the character and motivations of Þórdis, Börkr, and Þorkell. Elevating one version’s representation of this scene over the others would be a restrictive and subjective stance, as such conclusions are inevitably influenced by the personal taste of the individual reader and their perceptions of the characters and events in the saga.

As mystery plays such a large part in Gísla saga, perhaps it is appropriate that the exact process by which the variants in the three versions of this scene have arisen, and the motivation behind these differences remain essentially a mystery to us, too. From a wider perspective, I hope that my focus on the longer and fragmentary versions of the saga-text, as well as on the shorter version, has gone a little way towards redressing the critical imbalance that exists between the three versions, not through favouring the longer or the

26 Vésteinn Ólason and Þórdur Íngi Guðjónsson, ‘Sammenhængen’.


## APPENDIX

### Longer version
(Text from Agnete Loth, 1960, pp. 40-41)

### Shorter version
(Text based on Finnr Jónsson, 1929, pp. 32-33)

### Fragmentary version
(Text from Jón Helgason, 1956, pp. 50-51)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Longer version</th>
<th>Shorter version</th>
<th>Fragmentary version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>þa melti Baurkr,</td>
<td>Þaa melti Borkr,</td>
<td>oc nu melti baurkr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>nu vil ec Dordis at þu segir mer þat er ec hefi þic stundum eptir spurt,</td>
<td>'nu vil ek, at þu segir mer,</td>
<td>nu uil ek þad. at þu segir mer þat er ek hefi þik miók opt at frett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>hvat er þat s(egir) hon,</td>
<td>þvi þu vart sva oglaud ef þyRa haust er vár lukum leiknum, oc þvi hefír þu mer heitiit at segia mer aðr ec reðnum suðr í Þórsnes,</td>
<td>hví þu uart svo oglaud í fyrn haust er vár slíum leiknum, oc þu hefír þi heitiit, at segíia mer, aðr enn ekk fára híman.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>oc nu eru þau kominn mioc inn at haugnum Dorgims er þau talaz þetta við,</td>
<td>þáu eru nu ok komin at hauginnum dorgims, er þau ræda þetta.</td>
<td>oc nu eru þau komin at hauginnum þorgims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>oc nu stíngr hon fotum við oc qvez eigi gangs mundu lengra,</td>
<td>þáu stíngr hon við fotum ok kvæzt eigi fára lengra,</td>
<td>oc kuaz hun eigi munu leingra fára</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>oc segir honum nu þetta er hann spyR at,</td>
<td>segíir hon nu ok,</td>
<td>oc segir honum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>hvath Gisli hafði kveðit visuna er hann gerði at knattredu of haustit, oc hann leit til haugens við er hann gýtr visuna,</td>
<td>hvath Gisli hafði kveðit, þá er hann leit hauginn dorgims, oc nu melti baurkr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>oc hversu G(ísli) hafði qveðit visuna, þá er hann leit hauginn dorgims,</td>
<td>hvath Gisli hafði kveðit, þá er hann leit hauginn dorgims,</td>
<td>oc nu melti baurkr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>sýðan kveðr hon visuna fýrir Börrki,</td>
<td>ok kvæðt fyrir honum visuna,</td>
<td>oc nu melti baurkr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>oc ætsla ec s(egir) hon at ei þurfr þu annann veg eptir leita, enn her um vig Dorgims, þar sem G(ísli) jotti sialfr í visumne</td>
<td>'ok ætsla ek', segíir hon,</td>
<td>oc ætsla ek s. bon at þu þurfr ei annan veg eptir at leita um vig borgims, þar sem G(ísli) jotti sialfr í visumne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>oc munu reyt buinn mal a hendr honum,</td>
<td>oc munu reyt buinn malit honum aa hendr.'</td>
<td>oc mun honum reyt buinn mal a hendr honum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>B(orkr) varð við þetta öðr,</td>
<td>Borkr veðir við þetta akafjóra reik ok meliti:</td>
<td>Baukr veðir við þetta öðr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>oc vil ec nu s(egir) hann aptir snua oc dreya Gísla</td>
<td>'nu vil ek þegar aptir snua ok dreya Gísla,</td>
<td>oc vil ek nu aptir huerfa s. hann oc dreya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>oc er nu rað at dvelia ekki við,</td>
<td>oc er nu rað at dvelia ekki við,</td>
<td>oc er nu rað at dvelia ekki við</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Bords s(egir) at hon mun eigi við þat samþykki,</td>
<td>enn þú eigi s. at hann man eigi við þat samþykki,</td>
<td>enn þú eigi s. at hann man eigi við þat samþykki,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>oc veit ec en eigi, hvét þetta er satt eðr eigi s(egir) Bords,</td>
<td>enn þú veit ek eigi, hvét þetta er satt eðr eigi s(egir) Bords,</td>
<td>oc veit ec en eigi, hvét þetta er satt eðr eigi s(egir) Bords,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emily Lethbridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who Says What in Gísli saga Súrssonar?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2. Translation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Longer version</th>
<th>Shorter version</th>
<th>Fragmentary version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Then Börkr spoke</td>
<td>Then Börkr spoke: And now Börkr spoke:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>'Now Dórdís I want you to tell me what I have sometimes asked of you.'</td>
<td>'Now I want you to tell me,' 'Now Dórdís I want you to tell me what I have very often asked of you,'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>'What is that?' she says.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Why you were so unhappy last autumn, when we broke up the games, and you promised to me then that you would tell me before I journeyed south to Borðnæs.'</td>
<td>why you were so unhappy in autumn, when we broke up the games, and you promised to tell me, before I travelled home.' why you were so unhappy last autumn when we broke up the games and you promised me that you would tell me before I journeyed south to Borðnæs.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>And now they have almost arrived at Bǫgrímr's burial mound as they speak with each other.</td>
<td>Now they have arrived at Bǫgrímr's burial mound, while they spoke. And now they have arrived at Bǫgrímr's burial mound,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Now she stops short and says she will not go further, and she says she will not go further,</td>
<td>Then she stops short and says she will not go further, and tells him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>and tells him now what he asked,</td>
<td>and says now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>how Gísli had spoken a verse when he played at the ball-games in autumn, and he looked at the what Gísli had spoken, when he looked at Bǫgrímr's burial mound</td>
<td>that Gísli had spoken a verse when he looked at the burial mound,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| 17 | oc eru jafnann kauluð kvenna ráð | oc eru oppi kauluð kvenna ráð | oc eru kolluð kvenna radu |
|<strong><strong><strong><strong>|</strong></strong></strong></strong><strong><strong><strong><strong><strong><strong><strong><strong><strong><strong><strong><strong>|</strong></strong>____________________________|</strong></strong></strong></strong></strong></strong></strong></strong></strong></strong>____________|
| 18 | enn þott svo illa se sem nu er rett, þa er þat ráð Bórkr at fara landslagum fram um þetta mal, oc gera mann sekann, þviat þu heftr mala efri sva bryn at bita mun Gísla saukinn, þott honum væri nochkr vorkun til þessa verks a manom vær þa oc leiða hia os þetta mal sem vær megom ef þannig er af þarit, enn þer er betra at spilla eigi mala efnum þinum, oc rasa sva fyrir ráð fram | oc getr hon þetta niðr batit | oc getr hann þetta af radit |
| 19 | oc riða þeir eptir þat Sanda leið... | Ok riða þeir Sanda leið... | oc riða þeir sanda leið... |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>burial mound when he spoke the verse.</th>
<th>and she recites the verse for him.</th>
<th>and she speaks the verse for him.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 After, she speaks the verse to Börkr,</td>
<td>and he will rightly be brought to justice.</td>
<td>and he will rightly be brought to justice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 'and I think,' she says, 'that you do not need to look elsewhere about Óðrfrir's death, as Gísli acknowledged it himself in the verse</td>
<td>'And I think,' she says, 'that you do not need to look elsewhere about Óðrfrir's death, as he acknowledged it himself'</td>
<td>'And I think,' she says, 'that you do not need to look elsewhere about Óðrfrir's death, as he acknowledged it himself'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 and he will rightly be brought to justice.'</td>
<td>and he will rightly be brought to justice.'</td>
<td>and he will rightly be brought to justice.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Börkr becomes furious at that,</td>
<td>Börkr becomes vehemently angry and spoke:</td>
<td>Börkr becomes furious at that,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 'and I want to turn back now and kill Gísli,' he says.</td>
<td>'now I want to turn back at once and kill Gísli,'</td>
<td>'I want to turn back, he says, 'and kill him.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 And he now determines not to put it off.</td>
<td>And he now determines not to put it off.</td>
<td>And he now determines not to put it off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Bórdís says that she cannot consent to that.</td>
<td>But Bórdís says that he cannot consent to that.</td>
<td>But Bórdís says that he cannot consent to that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 'And I do not know, what truth there is in this,' says Bórdís, although I do not know,' he said, 'what truth there is in this, which Bórdís says, and it seems to me less likely that it is reliable,</td>
<td>'and I do not know, what truth there is in this, which Bórdís says,</td>
<td>'and I do not know, what truth there is in this, which Bórdís says,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 and the counsels of women are always cold.</td>
<td>and the counsels of women are often cold.</td>
<td>and the counsels of women are cold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Yet though that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who Says What in Gísla saga Súrssonar?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>19 And she gets her way.</th>
<th>and he [Börkr] takes that advice.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 and they ride on to Sandaleið...</td>
<td>And they ride to Sandaleið... And they ride to Sandaleið...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alcuin's Computus: A Case for Alcuin's Authorship of *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae*

M. T. Connaughton
St John's College, Cambridge

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEBATE

In his *Patrologia Latina*, Jacques-Paul Migne reprinted six short computistical works attributed to Alcuin of York. They were 1) *Ratio de luna XV*, 2) *De cursu lunae*, 3) *De saltu lunae*, 4) *De bissecto*, 5) *Argumentum de bissecto*, and 6) *Calculatio Albinii Magistri*. These six works were first assembled as a collection by Frobenius Forster in his *Beatit Flacci Alcuini Opera* of 1777, which drew heavily on still an earlier collection created by André Dachesne. The PL texts are a direct reproduction of Forster's work. Migne accepted Forster's attributions on account of the resemblance of the 'style and method' of the works to Alcuin's personal correspondence on the topic of computus. As Migne put it, 'Alcinum sapient, [these works] smell like Alcuin.' Unfortunately, he does not articulate his intuition in any further detail.


3 *scribendi stylo et calculandi methodo Alcuinum sapienti*, PL, col. 981.

In the early 1940s, Charles Jones, the renowned historian of computus, dismissed Migne's assessment of these texts in his article, 'The 'Lost' Simond Manuscript', and later in his book entitled, *Bedae Opera de Temporibus*. In those works, Jones identified significant portions of *De saltu lunae* and *De bissecto* as items 6–8 of the computistical compilation transmitted by the so-called 'Simond group of manuscripts', which he considered to be an accurate, uninterpolated transcript of the computus which Bede created in the same volume with *DTR [De temporum ratione]*. That is to say, Jones identified *De saltu lunae* and *De bissecto* as preceding Bede. Jones's discovery that two of the six works in Forster's collection were inauthentic cast a shadow of doubt over the authenticity of the remaining four. As a result, the remaining four works, which include *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae*, were seemingly dismissed without further review as pre-Bedan Irish material falsely attributed to Alcuin.

This doubt surrounding *De saltu lunae* and *De bissecto* (and, by association, the four other works) was reinforced forty years later, in an article by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, in which he determined that the dating formula in the Simond group of manuscripts thus set the date and location [of that group's composition] as c. AD 658, in the southeast region of Ireland nearly seventy-five years before the birth of

4 C. W. Jones, , ed., *Bedae opera de temporibus* (Cambridge, MA, 1943), p. 106 and his 'The 'Lost' Simond Manuscript of Bede's 'Computus'' *EHR* 52 (1937), 204–19, at 214, nos. 6–8. Note that 'The 'Lost' Simond Manuscript' has also been reprinted in his *Bede, the Schools and the Computus* (Aldershot, 1994), as item X.


6 Lohmann, 'Alcuins Korrespondenz', p. 79.

Alcuin of York. Of course, copying verbatim large portions of other peoples’ work\(^8\) and not citing them is a common practice of Alcuin.\(^9\) What modern scholars call plagiarism was, to Alcuin, the preservation of knowledge. Simply linking a portion of any of these works to an earlier source does not rule out the pieces in question from having been transmitted by Alcuin. Indeed, it would be characteristic of Alcuin to draw heavily from sources he considered authoritative, and to edit and reorganise them with ‘the same judgement of a teacher as to the abilities of a particular audience’.\(^10\) Nor does Ó Cróinín claim otherwise. He, rather, is inclined to reject even Alcuinian transmission of *De saltu lunae* and *De bissecto* because they are, in a sense, too Irish.\(^11\) As Ó Cróinín states, they make ‘use of sources which were Irish and rarely found outside Irish sources’.\(^12\) Ó Cróinín believes Alcuin was unlikely to have had access to these sources (in particular Pseudo-Morinus) because ‘Bede nowhere cites this work’.\(^13\) This entirely reasonable, though ultimately inconclusive, criticism pertains only to *De saltu lunae* and *De bissecto*. For it must be remembered that the direct association of the six short computistical works found in PL is an eighteenth century creation of Frobenius Forster. The collection as a whole does not share a common manuscript tradition.

Doubt surrounding three of the remaining four short computistical texts began to be challenged In 1993. In his article

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\(^8\) E.g., Priscian, Boethius, Isidore of Seville, Bede and Donatus, *et al.*


\(^10\) J. Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Aquincum* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 31


\(^12\) *Ibid.*

\(^13\) *Ibid.*


\(^15\) A calculated example [in the *Calculatio*] selected the present year [as] 776: ‘Bede, ‘Bede und die Enzyklopädie’, p. 59.

\(^16\) ‘the [Calculatio] betrayed exact knowledge of Bede’s work *De temporum ratione*’, ibid.


Alongside Borst in the same collection of papers, Dietrich Lohrmann published a partial defence of Alcuin’s authorship of Ratio de luna XV, De cursu lunae\textsuperscript{19} and the Calculatio.\textsuperscript{20} In his article, Lohrmann cross-references Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae (which he believes to be fragments of the same document, the complete text of which is now lost)\textsuperscript{21} with statements made by Alcuin in his undisputed computistical epistles to Charlemagne. He points out that Alcuin’s letters make reference to a text that is, at least, quite similar to Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae. Lohrmann notes among other things, ‘Noch wichtiger ist die direkte Bestätigung Alcuins in epist. 155, daß er einen solchen Brief an Karl tatsächlich gesandt hat oder (besser) senden will: “Die Aufteilungen der Tierkreiszeichen nach Stunden und (eine Erklärung), wie neun Mondstunden in Entsprechung stehen zu fünf Sonnen tagen, halte ich im Sinne, Euch in einem anderen Brief zu senden...”’.\textsuperscript{22} ‘Nine moon hours stand in correspondence to five sun days’ is the thesis of De cursu lunae. Neither document, however, is written in epistolary format, which led Lohrmann to adopt the position that the two texts were fragments.

Ratio de luna XV and De salut lunae are clearly instructions to be read by (or possibly to) an individual student. This is made evident by the repeated use of the second-person singular verb form. As such, they do resemble the style of a letter. But there is neither a salutation nor ending, nor is mention made of the person for whom they were intended. Indeed, there is no indication that they were intended to be read by any person in particular, and despite the similarities in their content, there is no indication that Ratio de luna XV and De salut lunae are fragments of the missing letter to Charlemagne. Furthermore, the two texts were not included in any assemblages of Alcuin’s letters compiled during his lifetime. They are more likely drafts or teaching notes from which the promised letter’s explanation would have derived.

TWO NEW ARGUMENTS FOR ALCUINIAN AUTHORSHIP

Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae survive together on two ninth century manuscripts, in which they are paired amid nearly identical collections of the personal correspondences of Alcuin of York.\textsuperscript{23} As stated above, neither document is written in epistolary format; nor are they related to the subject matter of the letters appearing immediately before or after the pair. The older of the two manuscripts is Troyes Bibliothèque Municipale 1165,\textsuperscript{24} known as T. Bullough dates T to the earlier years of the abbacy of... Fridugis\textsuperscript{25} and localises its origin to the Abbey of St Martin at Tours.\textsuperscript{26}

The final years of Alcuin’s life were spent as abbot of Tours. After his death in A.D. 804, his pupil, Fridugis, succeeded him as abbot. Fridugis, who goes by the name ‘Nathaniel’ in Alcuin’s correspondences, had been a student of Alcuin since Alcuin was headmaster of the Cathedral School at York, and accompanied him to

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 86.
\textsuperscript{22} In epist. 155, there is direct confirmation that he actually sent such a letter to Charles or (rather) intends to send one: ‘I have in mind to send you in another letter the allocations for the sign of the zodiac in hours and (an explanation), like nine moon hours stand in correspondence to five sun days...’’, Lohrmann, ‘Alcuins Korrespondenz’, p. 87.
\textsuperscript{25} Fridugis (Fredegis or Fridugisus) reigned AD 804–34.
\textsuperscript{26} Bullough, Alcuin, p. 57.
the Continent, where he continued his studies under Alcuin at the Palace School. The two men were close, and it does not seem unlikely that Fridugis would order the preservation of the personal correspondences of Alcuin to which he had access.

Assuming the veracity of Bullough's dating and localization of T, the process of assembling its exemplar was conducted within living memory of Alcuin, quite possibly by monks who knew him personally as their abbot and teacher. The collection, a monument to Alcuin, would indubitably have been reviewed by Abbot Fridugis, who was intimately familiar with his late teacher's work. These facts and circumstances surrounding the origin of the texts provide a compelling argument for the authenticity of *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae*. For it is the least likely scenario that people with firsthand knowledge of Alcuin's writings would mistakenly include among them a false document.

The second new argument in favour of the Alcuin's authorship of *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae* is linguistic. Upon examination of the texts, one notes certain features within that are worthy of mention. The dating method employed is that of the old Roman 'Kalends', 'Nones' and 'Ides'. The names of months, however, are sometimes adjectival (as would occur Classically) and sometimes substantive.27 This feature is consistent with Alcuin's undisputed works. Also, the Latin word *ex*, not *è*, is employed even when followed by consonants.28 This runs contrary to the Classical preference, but is again consistent with the usage followed in Alcuin's undisputed works. These tendencies, however, are not so peculiar to Alcuin, as they are to Alcuin's time period. They do not themselves prove, nor even suggest that he is necessarily the author, for these features are common to many authors, only one of whom was Alcuin.29

Examination of the computistical terminology employed by the author, however, leads one to a different conclusion. In particular, the terms *punctus*, *ostentum*, *bisse* and *trien* are used extraordinarily. As shall be discussed below, these terms, unlike the previous examples, rule out most other authors of Alcuin's time. For they necessitate an authorship derived from the Bedan school of *computus*, a school which, on the Continent in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, revolved closely around the personage of Alcuin of York.

**PUNCTUS AND OSTENTUM**

_Punctus_, in normal Latin parlance, simply means a 'point', and was used in every way the English word 'point' can be used. That is to say _punctus_ can be used to mean, among other things, 'a point of logic', 'a geometric point' or 'a point in time'; the word itself is quite ordinary. In *De cursu lunae*, however, the term is given a very technical and specific computistical definition, namely, 'one-fifth of a lunar hour', a rather extraordinary definition.

Classical Latin authors never use _punctus_ in this manner. Indeed, the first known author to do so was the Venerable Bede,30 who employed it throughout his _De temporum ratione_.31 In the Bedan system, _punctus_ may mean 'one-fifth of a lunar hour' or 'one-quarter of a solar

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27 These two practices are used interchangeably in the texts.
28 Classical usage generally places 'ex' before vowels and 'è' before consonants.
29 Nor should we assume that every work bearing features of the time in which Alcuin wrote was his. Cf. E. M. E. Bohn, _Alcuin's Hours: the Early reception of Alcuin's De rhetorica and De dialectica_ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2003), pp. 1 and 17.
30 However, the unassigned _De causis quibus nomina acceperunt duodecim signa_ (ed. Jones, CCSL 123C pp. 665–667), which dates from somewhere between the sixth and eighth centuries, also uses _punctus_ in this way.
hour턒. After Bede, there are only two other known scholars who used punctus in this way before the mid-ninth century. They are Alcuin of York and Rabanus Maurus, who studied under Alcuin at Tours in A.D. 802.

Ostentum is a slightly less common word than punctus; it normally means a 'portent' or a 'wonder'. Whilst it is fairly clear how punctus might come to be used as a unit of short time, it is not so apparent why ostentum was chosen for computistical use to mean 'one minute', as it is employed in De cursu lunae. Again, as with punctus, Bede is the first person known to have used ostentum in this fashion. After Bede, there are only two other known scholars who employed ostentum with this definition before the mid-ninth century. They are Alcuin of York and Alcuin's student, Rabanus Maurus.

The transmission of this terminology seems fairly straightforward. The terms originated with Bede, whose works were widely studied at the Cathedral School of York, where Alcuin learned them. Alcuin took their use with him to the Frankish realm, where he passed his knowledge of Bede on to his students, one of whom was Rabanus Maurus.

TRIEN AND BISSE

The remaining two terms, trien and bisse, are outstanding in a different way. Whereas punctus and ostentum have standard forms but non-standard definitions, trien and bisse are non-standard forms with nearly standard definitions.

The Latin word triens, meaning 'one-third', is the obvious origin of the indeclinable computistical term trien found in Rato de luna XV, in which text it means specifically 'one-third of an hour'. The variant first appears in Augustine of Hippo's De consistu evangelistiarum, where it likewise is used to mean 'one-third of an hour'. The form is extremely rare, however. Augustine's single passage is the only time trien occurs before Bede included it in his De temporum ratione. Bede knew this precise passage from Augustine very well, and it can be

32 According to the Revised Medieval Latin Wordlist from British and Irish Sources, ed. R. E. Latham (London, 1973), the term punctus is no: used to mean 'one fifth of an hour' until c. 1263.
33 Bullough dates T to 'the earlier years of the abbacy of... Fridugis' and localises its origin to the Abbey of St Martin at Tours (Alcuin, p. 57). Wilmart dates T to the mid-ninth century (A. Wilmart, Codices Regienses Latini, 251–500 (Vatican City, 1945), p. 66); this is confirmed by Bischoff, who localises its origin to Rheims (Bullough, Alcuin, p. 58, n. 134). Cf. Lohrmann, 'Alcuin's Korrespondenz', p. 86.
34 In Alcuin's Letters 126, 148 and 155 (ed. Dümmel, pp. 186–7, 238–9 and 250–1).
37 In Alcuin's Letter 155 (ed. Dümmel, p. 251).
38 In Rabanus (Hrabanus) Maurus De computo i. 12 (ed Stevens, p. 219).
39 The letters of Alcuin's in which these terms appear are all addressed to his student and patron Charlemagne.
40 'Numquam autem isti dicerunt, quinta et quadrans aut quinta et trien, aut quinta semis, aut aliquo huiusmodi' (ed. F. Weichr, De consistu evangelistiarum, CSEL 43 (Vienna, 1904), p. 325, lines 1–3).
41 Bede, De temporum ratione, ch. 4 (ed. Jones, pp. 184–6). On p. 184, line 14 of his edition, Jones mistakenly lists trien as the proper reading. His apparatus reveals that trien appears in the earliest manuscripts, and that the scribes of the other manuscripts 'corrected' it in various other ways, which indicates they were likely encountering an unfamiliar form. Whilst Jones indubitably based his decision on the uniformity found in the majority of the manuscripts, he should have abided, in this instance, by letio difficilior. Trias is simply the most likely (and, thus, most frequent) scribal correction of the unfamiliar triem, which was being used in the text for the first time at that point. Faith Wallis erroneously records trien for all instances of triem in her translation, cf. F. Wallis, Bede: the Racking of Time (Liverpool, 1999), pp. 16–18 and 58.
stated with certainty that he is mimicking Augustine’s usage here: Bede quotes Augustine’s passage verbatim at the end of his fourth chapter.

The undisputed works of Alcuin provide neither an example of him employing *triem*, nor an example of him using any other term to express a ‘third of an hour’. The situation simply does not arise. His student, Rabanus Maurus, does use it, however. Because it is part of the Bedan system of reckoning short time, it seems highly unlikely that Alcuin would not have employed this rare variant in a computistical context as well, as he has expressed a preference for this very obscure system of describing short-time. Nevertheless, after Bede, only the author of *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae* and Rabanus Maurus are known to have used *triem* before the mid-ninth century.

The Latin word *bes*, meaning ‘two-thirds’, has the Classical variant *bisse*. *Besse* is the origin of the orthographical variant *bisse*, which can be found in the Classical period only once in Martianus Capella’s *De astronomia*.33 There, it is used to mean two-thirds of a day. Bede uses it repeatedly in his *De temporum ratione*. Bede, however, was also aware of the word’s Classical form and employs *besse*, in his *De natura rerum*.34 He seems to prefer *bisse* in a computistical context, and specifically to mean ‘two-thirds of an hour’. One should note that Bede’s *bisse*, like the Classical *bes*, is declinescible as seen when Bede writes the accusative form as *bissem*.35 In *Ratio de luna* and *De cursu lunae*, *bisse* has degraded into an indeclinable form.

Alcuin cites *bisse*, not *besse*, in his *De orthographia* as the proper variant of *bes*.36 He uses *bisse* thrice elsewhere all of which are found in his computistical Letter 155. There, it means ‘two-thirds of an hour’, and, just as it is found in *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae*, it is indeclinable.37 Nor was this likely due to ignorance. Rather, Alcuin probably used *bisse* indeclinably in computistical contexts to denote its special meaning of two-thirds of an hour, and thereby differentiating the technical term from its standard usage of ‘two-thirds’. This would be in imitation of its compliment *triem*, which, as stated above, is also indeclinable.

Alcuin’s student, Rabanus Maurus, uses *bisse* thrice in his *De computo* with the definition of ‘two-thirds of an hour’.38 But unlike his teacher, Rabanus’ *bisse* is declinescible, as can be seen by his use of the accusative *bissem*.39 Hence, this terminological nuance was not necessarily passed along to Alcuin’s students. Indeed, his only student to use the term at all in surviving literature adopted a more Bedan usage. This leaves Alcuin as the only known author to use an indeclinable *bisse* for computistical purposes, and otherwise.

Neither of the two texts have ever been attributed to Bede, nor otherwise directly associated with him. Furthermore, they survive only on two Continental manuscripts and bear no indication of

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42 Rabanus (Harbanus) Maurus, *De computo* i.8 (ed. Stevens, p. 215).
45 3rd declension, masculine.
46 Bede, *De temporum ratione*, ch. 4 (ed. Jones, p. 185, line 42).
47 Alcuin, *De orthographia* (PL 101, ccl. 905).
48 In particular, this is apparent in the third instance when it is used as one of a double accusative construction, but is not rendered *bissem*, but *bisse*. Cf. Dümmler, *Epitoma Karolini*, p. 251, line 1.
49 Rabanus (Harbanus) Maurus, *De computo*, i.8, lines 4 and 38, and 40, line 19 (ed. Stevens, pp. 214-15 and 252).
50 *Ibid.*, i.8, line 38 (ed. Stevens, p. 15).
British origin. Assuming they originated on the Continent, the likely terminus post quem of their composition would be c. A.D. 781, the year in which Alcuin became master of Charlemagne’s Palace School, from which point the works of Bede began to find favour on the Continent.

Bullough’s dating of T as ‘not long after Alcuin’s death’ places the terminus ante quem for their composition before the time of the earliest writings of Rabanus Maurus. Nevertheless, even if this date could be pushed forward to A.D. 820, the year Rabanus Maurus wrote his De computo, it would be of little consequence. For Rabanus Maurus wrote his works at Fulda, several hundred miles east of Tours. Additionally, Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae are clearly not part of De Computo, which is written as a dialogue. Nor do they match Rabanus Maurus linguistically. Rabanus Maurus, like Bede, employs a declinable bisse, whereas the author of Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae treats bisse as indeclinable, as Alcuin did. Therefore, by this evidence alone, the author of Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae must either have been Alcuin of York himself or a close associate of his at Tours, who has left us no other computistical writings.

From the very beginning, however, the two texts have been attributed to Alcuin himself, not an associate, as is evident by their inclusion among a collection of his epistles. This attribution, furthermore, was made only several years after Alcuin’s death and under the supervision of individuals who had first-hand knowledge of Alcuin’s work. As stated above, the content of De cursu lunae presents an explanation corresponding to one which Alcuin himself claimed to employ in his undisputed epistles. And the two texts also match Alcuin’s idiosyncratic version of Bede’s already obscure terminological system for the reckoning of short-time. It would seem, therefore, that the evidence directly implicates Alcuin of York as being the author of Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae, beyond any reasonable doubt. The authorship of the two texts, therefore, should not be regarded as dubious. Rather, they should be numbered among the accepted works of Alcuin of York.

PREFACE TO THE CRITICAL EDITION

Introduction to the Edition and Manuscripts

This critical edition is based on the only two surviving manuscript copies of Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae. The manuscripts are Troyes Bibl. mun. 1165 (T) and Vatican Reg. lat. 272 (T*). Both date from the first half of the ninth century and include these computistical instructions among what are otherwise collections of Alcuin’s letters.

The designations of T and T* were first devised by Ernst Dümmler, who believed Troyes Bibl. mun. 1165 to have been the exemplar of Vat. Reg. lat. 272. Theodor Sickle used the designations of T for the Troyes manuscript and N for the Vatican manuscript. Donald Bullough, however, utilises Dümmler’s nomenclature. So, in the interests of continuity, the present edition follows suit.

This critical edition follows T in most instances where textual differences arise between the two manuscripts. The reasons for this

51 Bullough, Alcuin, p. 60.
are as follows: $T$ is considered to be the earlier of the two manuscripts,\textsuperscript{58} seems to contain fewer corruptions and is more orthographically consistent than $T^*$. The standard printed edition of *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae* is Jacques-Paul Migne’s *Patrologia Latina* (PL) edition of 1851, which provides no critical apparatus and was printed without direct recourse to either of the two surviving manuscript copies. Because of the significance of Migne’s version to modern scholarship, however, and the manageably short and linear history of the printed transmission of these texts, this edition also reconstructs its critical apparatus the development of the texts in their printed forms. The printed editions, it must be noted, are not used as witnesses for the present critical edition and their variants are not considered authoritative. Rather, they are included in the interest of providing the reader with a complete and thorough history of transmission of *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae* down to the present standard edition in PL and to illustrate any deficiencies found therein.

Migne’s PL edition of *Ratio de luna XV* and *De cursu lunae* is a meticulous reprint of Frobenius Forster’s 1777 edition. Indeed, the two editions are, with only two exceptions, identical. Migne has even preserved Frobenius’ marginal notes, placing them in brackets within the text itself. For this reason, Migne is noted separately from Frobenius in the critical apparatus except for those two instances.

As stated above, Ernst Dümmler believed that $T^*$ was copied from $T$. Theodor Sickel concurred with Dümmler’s general analysis of the two manuscripts,\textsuperscript{59} regarding $T^*$ to be a later, more complete copy of $T$ (which is now missing folios), but was quick to point out that $T$ was not the archetypal codex.\textsuperscript{60} Donald Bullough, however, disputes this interpretation of the manuscript tradition, believing instead that $T^*$ was copied from a ‘collateral’ manuscript of $T$.\textsuperscript{61} His opinion draws from discrepancies in the headings of certain epistles and the addition in $T^*$ of marginalia, which he believes indicates the collection to have been re-edited for ‘public reading’,\textsuperscript{62} and he frequently cites personal correspondences with Bernhard Bischoff to corroborate his views. I am inclined to agree with the theory of Bullough and Bischoff.

Introduction to Numbers and Time Reckoning

The Bedan computistical day (a twenty-four hour period) begins and ends with sunset. This means that, ‘night’ precedes ‘day’ on a given date.\textsuperscript{63} ‘Night’ is averaged as the first twelve hours of a computistical day, and ‘day’ (i.e., ‘daytime’) the final twelve.\textsuperscript{64} It should be noted that the Latin word ‘dies’ is used in both the more narrow sense of ‘day’ (i.e., the twelve hours of light) and the broader sense of ‘day’ (i.e., the full twenty-four hour period including ‘night’).\textsuperscript{65}

The texts at hand reckon the date according to the ancient Roman method of ‘Kalends’, ‘Nones’ and ‘Ides’. Unlike the modern calendar, which counts forwards from a fixed point in time (i.e., the beginning of each month), the Roman calendar counts down toward fixed points in the month. The Classical form taken to express a date

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\textsuperscript{58} This opinion that the Troyes manuscript ($T$) is of an earlier date than the Vatican manuscript ($T^*$) has been universally held by scholars since the rediscovery of the former.

\textsuperscript{59} Sickel, ‘Alcuinstudien’, p. 500.

\textsuperscript{60} ‘T nicht der Codex archetypus einer Sammlung ist’, *ibid*.

\textsuperscript{61} *T* must be regarded as either an independent copy of the exemplar of the Troyes manuscript or, which seems more likely, as a copy of a collateral (‘twin’) of the latter’ (Bullough, *Alcuin*, p. 58).


\textsuperscript{63} Bede, *De temporum ratione*, ch. 5 (ed. Jones, p. 190).


counting toward the April Kalends (i.e., April 1), for example, was
‘ante diem’ [ordinal number agreeing with diem] Kalendas Aprilis’,
meaning ‘the [ninth] day before the April Kalends’. Note that the
names of months are adjectival, not substantive, and ‘Kalends’ is in
the accusative case. In Ratio de luna XV and De cursu lunae, the phrase
‘ante diem’ is omitted. The names of the months are sometimes
substantive, and ‘Kalends’ (or whichever relevant point in the month)
can be either accusative or genitive interchangeably. This is consistent
with the practice of Alcuin cf York (and many others). The Roman-
style dates have been preserved in the translation with footnotes
revealing their modern equivalents. 66

The system of counting employed by Ratio de luna XV and De
cursu lunae is ‘inclusive’. That is to say, for example, the ‘Third before
the Kalends’ is followed by the ‘Day before the Kalends’, which, in
turn, is followed by the ‘Day of the Kalends’. There is never a
‘Second before the Kalends’ because that is the ‘Day before’, as the
‘Day of’ is included in the count of preceding days.

Hours and other units, which are counted forward from some
point of origin, may be called by their ordinal or cardinal names. So,
for example, the ‘seventh hour’ may also be called ‘hour six’, as it is
the hour that begins after six full hours have passed and ends at
the point of seven full hours. Likewise, the ‘fifteenth part’ of a zodiacal
sign may also be called ‘part fourteen’.

In his De temporum ratione, Bede states that ‘if you want to divide
[an hour] by three, you will call the third a trien, and the remaining
two-thirds a bisse’. 67 The term residus could be interpreted as implying
that a trien, strictly speaking, is the first-third of an hour and a bisse the
two-thirds that are left afterward. Whether or not Bede intends this,
both terms clearly can be used in the looser sense to mean simply
‘one-third’ and ‘two-thirds’ of an hour, respectively. Bede defines
punctus as ‘one-fifth of a lunar hour’, 68 as it is used in De cursu lunae. An
ostentum is ‘one sixtieth of an hour’, or one minute. 69

In total, there are eight numerical corruptions in the manuscript
tradition. Of these eight, seven are the result of a scribe having added
‘one’ to the actual number. All seven of the corruptions are numbers
that, when written numerically, end in a series of minim strokes. It is
the opinion of the present author that some sort of punctuation mark
was originally placed after these seven numbers in a common
manuscript ancestor of T and T*. Later (by the time of the copying of
T and the exemplar of T*), this punctuation mark had been
misinterpreted as an additional Roman numeral ‘I’.

Further support for this hypothesis is found in T, in which the
scribe frequently ends his numbers with a final ‘I’ extending below the
baseline of the text. This is the case with five of the seven relevant
corruptions. Since T is the earliest manuscript, and originates at
Tours, it probably shares this practice in common with its exemplar.
If the original punctuation mark resembled something similar to a
comma, it may well have been confused with the extended final ‘I’,
thus, introducing our corruptions at an early stage of the manuscript
tradition.

66 E.g., ‘the fifteenth day before the April Kalends’ (unless ‘dies’ is present in the
text) is normally rendered ‘the Fifteenth before the April Kalends’. Since the
accusative and genitive are used for the three points of the month
interchangeably, no difference is made in their translation.
67 Porro si per tria quid dividere cupis, tertiam partem trien, duas residus
bissem nuncupabis’, Bede, De temporum ratione, ch. 4 (ed. Jones, p. 185, lines 41–
2).
68 Ibid., ch. 17 (ed. Jones, p. 215, line 5).
69 Ibid., ch. 3 (ed. Jones, p. 183, line 33).
Editorial Procedure in the Critical Edition

1. This critical edition observes modern punctuation and capitalisation norms.

2. Italicised words are expansions of manuscript abbreviations that are non-standard, or in some way ambiguous in their exact meaning or proper expansion. Italics are also used in the case of numbers (whose meanings are unambiguous), which have been expanded from Roman numerals. The aim of this is to preserve for the reader in which instances numbers and certain other words appear written out in full in the manuscripts. Abbreviations for ‘Kalends’, ‘Nones’ and ‘Ides’ have been expanded as Classical usage would dictate unless the manuscripts indicated that another form was intended.

3. Underlined letters are used to show abbreviation in the apparatus when it is desirable to record such abbreviation and when the original symbols of abbreviation cannot otherwise be reproduced satisfactorily herein.

4. Numbers: Ordinal numbers have been written out in their full Latin forms. Cardinal numbers are represented in their numeral form, unless written out in the original text.

5. (Parentheses) are used to set off parenthetical statements found in the text.

6. NOTE: The letter ‘r’ frequently occurs in the manuscripts with an abbreviation stroke above it. This is represented in the critical apparatus by the following symbol: r

7. NOTE: When the final Roman numeral ‘r’ extends below the baseline of the text, it is represented by ‘r’ in the critical apparatus.

Editorial Procedure in the Translation

1. Italicised words are special Latin terms, which have been intentionally left untranslated. The only instances of this in Ratio de

luna XV are bisse and trien. In De cursu lunae there are also punctus and attenuum.

2. Numbers less than 100 have been written out. Numbers greater than 100 have been recorded in Roman numerals.

3. (Parentheses) are used to set off parenthetical statements found in the text.

4. NOTE: The days of the month have been capitalized to help differentiate them from the many other numbers that occur throughout the text.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE CRITICAL APPARATUS

Manuscripts:

T – Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, 1165 (St Martin’s, Tours, s. IX), fols. 45r – 47r (Ratio de luna XV); fol. 47r (De cursu lunae)

T* – Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Codex Regnensis Latinus 272 (Rheims, s. IXc), fols. 40r – 41r (Ratio de luna XV); fol. 42 ([Item ratio] de cursu lunae)

Printed Editions:

F – Forster, F. (Frobenius), ed., Beati Flacci Alcini Opera 2 (Regensburg, 1777), pp. 356–57 (Ratio de luna XV); pp. 357–58 (De cursu lunae)


Q – Duchesne, A. (Quercetanus), ed., Alcini Opera (Paris, 1617), cols. 1526–1528 (Ratio de luna XV); col. 1529 (De cursu lunae)
RATIO DE LUNA XV

Luna, uerbi gratia, quintae decaæ Kalendas Aprilis hora noctis prima intrat in arietem 'quinta dieina.' Quartum dieinum Kalendas manet in arietem et VI horis 'tertiæ decimi' Kalendariam et bisse (hoc est duabus partibus) VI horæ noctis eiusdem 'tertii desimi' Kalendas. Egregiatur de arietem et sunt horaeæ. IIIII. et bisse unius horaeæ quod mansit in arietem, quo numero horarum semper utere per singula signa.

Deinde intrat tertia parte horææ septimae noctis in taurum, hoc est 'tertiae decimiæ Kalendas Aprilis.' Computa inde IIIIII. horas tauro cum bisse suo. Remanent eiusdem noctis, qua intrat in taurum, trien

\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]

The title 'Ratio de Luna XV' does not appear in T.

2 By context, this originally must have been 'XIII' before the Kalendae, as it is included here, and not 'XIII' as witnessed by the surviving manuscripts. The six hours and a bisse, with which this date is associated, are being added in addition to the full twenty-four hours of the 'XIII' before the Kalendae. Confirmation for this interpretation is found when the six hours are said to be added to forty-eight, equaling the fifty-four hours in Aries. The forty-eight hours were comprised of the twenty-four from the Fifteenth before the Kalendae and the twenty-four from the Fourteenth. This is an example of a scribe having added an additional Roman numeral 'T' to the correct number. See above, 'Introduction to Numbers and Time Reckoning', pp. 76–8.

3 Here the scribal mistake is repeated. See above, n. 2.

4 Again, the scribe has added an 'T' to the correct numeral. The point at which the moon enters Taurus should be the beginning of the final third of the seventh hour of the 'Thirteenth' before the Kalendae, not the 'Fourteenth'. The author later states that the moon leaves Taurus and enters Gemini upon the completion of the first third of the second hour of the day of the Eleventh before the Kalendae. By subtracting fifty-four hours and a bisse from that latter point, the reader returns to the Thirteenth before the Kalendae, not the Fourteenth.

et V. horææ et XIIIIII horææ sequentis diei. Junge his IIII horæ duodecimi Kalendae Aprilis, quod sunt XLI. Et addes his ex undecimo Kalendariam horas. XIIII horas et primam horam diei sequentis et trien aliud secundaeæ horaeæ diei ut habeat taurus bisse suum plenum ex trien, quo intrat Luna et ex eo quo exuit de tauro.

Et intrat IIII horas secunda diei inchoante bisse illius horae in geminos. Et remanent tibiæ sextæ et .IIIIII partesæ diei undecimiæ Kalendae. Adde his .XXXIII. horas de decimo Kalendariam, et sunt horææ. .XXXIII. Junge his de uno Kalendariam .XXIIII horas ut possis peruenire ad .IIIII horas et peueniensæ usque ad octauam plenum ipsius diei, quod exit de geminis. Et habent haece tria signa .CLXIIII horææ et alias duas, quaeæ ex bisse trium signorum adgregataæ sunt. Et fiunt horæ trium signorum .CLXIII.

Die nono Kalendariam, hora sextima prima intrat in cancerum; et habebis ipsius diei .IIIII horas. Has junge ad octauas et septimam Kalendae, et habebis horas .IIII. His addes ex octae sextæ Kalendariam duas horas (ex principio noctis) et bisse tertiae horae. Et per hos nonos dies

\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]
\[\text{ omitted } F \]

There actually remain 'ten hours and a bisse' at this point in the day of the Eleventh before the Kalendae, not 'twelve hours' as witnessed by the surviving manuscripts. The original text must have read decim et duas partes horae, 'ten hours and a bisse.' At some point partes was dropped from the phrase in a common ancestor of the two manuscripts, leaving decim et duas horae, 'twelve hours'.

6 The surviving manuscripts here have 'XIIII', but the context indicates that these hours must belong to the Eleventh before the Kalends. Cfr. above, p. 82, n. 2.

7 The three signs actually have CLXII hours altogether before adding the bisseæ, not CLXIII as witnessed by the surviving manuscripts. The author also states that adding two hours to this number will make CLXIII. Cfr. above, p. 82, n. 2.
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luna percurrit .III. signa, additis duabus horis et bisce tertiae horae ex die decimo.

Et intrat in leonem tertiae parte tertiae horae noctis sextae Kalendarii Aprilium et habebis ipsius diei .XXII. horas. 8 Adde his .XXIII. ex qvinto9 Kalendarii et fiunt horae .XLV. Adde et his .VIII. horas ex quarto Kalendarii die, et fiunt horae .LIII. Adde et his trien desceae horae.9

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8 By the context, the word for 'hour' should be plural, not singular as it is found in T#. The statement clearly speaks of the twenty-one hours remaining on the Sixth before the Kalends and not of the 'twenty-first hour'. Furthermore, the following sentence refers back to this statement with the singular hui T# abbreviates the word in question to 'hora'. T# spells out the singular hui horae without abbreviation. Whether the abbreviation in T stands for horae or horae, it is abnormal. Were a nasal suspension implied, the abbreviation stroke would normally have appeared over the 'a' and not the 't'. Yet, the generic abbreviation in this text for the various cases of hui is 'hora' with an abbreviation stroke over the 'y' and no 'a' present. It should be noted, however, that this word appears in T running over the justification at the end of a line. Indeed, this word extends farther to the right than any other word on the page. The scribe may have intended to write out horae without abbreviation, only to realise after he had written the 'a' that he had no more room on the line. He, therefore, placed an abbreviation stroke above the 'r' lest it be confused with a nasal suspension (as it certainly would be were he to have placed the abbreviation stroke above the 'a'). The variant in T# lends itself to the position of Duimiler, who believed T to have been the exemplar of T#. For the presence of the 'a' in the abbreviation and a hairline embolism extending over it from the abbreviation stroke could well lead a reader to think it a simple nasal suspension. Assuming that the exemplar of T in fact contained the word horae, it would be an odd coincidence for a collateral copy of T to also contain at this same point an ambiguity or corruption that could lead a scribe to believe falsely that the intended word was horae.

9 Though the manuscripts have 'VI', it is clear from the context that these hours belong to the fifth. Cf. above, p. 82, n. 2.
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sectum Idus et habebis horas .XXXVI. His adde horas ex quinto Idus .XVIII. (quod est eiusdem diei hora sexta). Adde et bisse horae septimae.

Quo completo, exiet de capricornio ingrediens in aquarum inchoante trien horae septimae. Et remanent .V. horae eiusdem diei. Has adde ad quartum et tertium Idus, et habebis horas .LIII. Adde his unam horam ex pridie Idas et trien secundae horae noctis. Quo exiet de aquario ingrediturque in piscis inchoante bisse horae secundae noctis pridie Idus Aprilis.

Et remanent de pridie Idus Aprilis horae .XXII. His adde ad Idus, et erunt horae .XLVI. His adde .VIII. horas ex duodecimno Kalendas Maias, et habebis horas .LIII. His uero computatis inuenies a quinto decimo Kalendas Aprilis unde crepidinem construximus huius calculationis .XXVII. dies usque in duodecimno Kalendas Maias, in cuius diei noctem .VIII. horae decurunt. In quibus luna .XXVII. diebus et .VIII. horis luna .XII. signa peruolat. Habens horas .XXVII. dierum quod sunt horae .CCLVI. superadditis .VIII. horas.8

Si uero uis ad tertium decimum signum lunarum cursum11 peruenire computa a nova hora noctis duodecimno Kalendas in quam horam .XII. signa peruenunt.1 Computa inde .LIII. horas et bisse; quaram habes .XVI. ex duodecimno Kalendas. Adde horas sequentis diei (id est, septimi

1 in quo ante T 7 secundae T 8 secundae T 8 1 habentur F b horae T om. Q F Q F 1 pervenentur T 1 pervenent Q 1 pervenentur F 1 horae T 1 horas Q F 1 ex VIII T 1 ex VIII T 1 ex VIII Q 1 ex XVIII F

11 It would have been plainer for the text to read cursum, or 'course', instead of currus, or 'chariot', as witnessed by the surviving manuscripts. Nevertheless, currus makes grammatical sense and could be interpreted as an allusion to the chariot of Luna, the Roman goddess of the full moon. So, by reason of lectio difficilior, currus has been preserved in the present critical edition.
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currit an aliquid addendum sit in caelo\(^12\) .CCCLX. partibus, uel .V. dies diuidendi sint per singulas partes (habent enim .V. dies .CXX. horas),\(^d\) an danda sit uniuqueque parti tertia pars horae (id est, trien unum). Nec enim VIII horae\(^c\) lunaris cursus uacuae\(^e\) sint,\(^d\) dum computata est in .XXVII. diebus si uniuqueque diei additur tertia pars .XIII. partis ut possit legitimus\(^b\) numerus partium impleri (hoc est, ad .CCCLX. partes peruenire) sicut in uestra acustissima et bene exquisita supputatione inuenim us agendum esse.

\(\text{\textsuperscript{c}}\) caelo | coelo \(T\)\(^*\) horis | horas \(Q\) \(F\) sunt \(F\) \(\text{\textsuperscript{a}}\) horis \(T\)\(^*\) | horae \(Q\) \(F\) \(\text{\textsuperscript{f}}\) vacue \(T\) | vacue \(T\)\(^*\) | vacuae \(Q\) \(F\) \(\text{\textsuperscript{g}}\) sunt \(F\) \(\text{\textsuperscript{b}}\) legitimus \(T\)\(^*\)

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\(^{12}\) Duchesne spells \textit{caelo} as \textit{cele} in his edition as a means of freeing up space on a line that had become too cluttered. A. Duchesne, \textit{Alhunimi Opera} (Paris, 1617), col. 1528.

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\(^{13}\) No title appears in \(T\) and the title in \(T^*\) reads, 'Item ratio de cursu lunae'. \textit{De cursu lunae} was chosen here because it is the standard title by which the work is known.

\(^{14}\) contr. of \textit{omnes}.
RECKONING FROM THE FIFTEENTH MOON

The Fifteenth Moon\(^1\) enters into Aries at the first hour of the night on, for example, the Fifteenth\(^2\) before the April Kalends. It abides in Aries on the Fourteenth before the April Kalends, and for six hours of the night on the Thirteenth before the Kalends and a \textit{bisse} (that is, for two-thirds) of hour six of the same Thirteenth before the Kalends. It passes beyond Aries; and so the hours during which it lingered in Aries are fifty-four plus the \textit{bisse} of one hour. You shall always use this number of hours for each sign.

Thereupon it enters into Taurus in the final third\(^3\) of the seventh hour of the night, that is, the Thirteenth before the April Kalends. Count thereafter the fifty-four hours in Taurus with its \textit{bisse}. Five hours and a \textit{trien} remain of the same night, in which it entered into Taurus, and twelve hours of the following day.\(^4\) Join to these the twenty-four hours of the Twelfth before the April Kalends, which brings the number to forty-one. Now to these add twelve hours from the night of the Eleventh before the Kalends, plus the first hour of the following day and another \textit{trien} from the second hour of the day so that Taurus, with the addition of that last \textit{trien}, may have its own complete \textit{bisse}, from the time the moon entered to the time it departed from Taurus.

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\(^1\) The term 'Fifteenth Moon' is used by the author to describe the point in time beginning with 'Moon Fourteen' and ending with 'Moon Fifteen'. Hence, the 'Fifteenth Moon' is referring to 14 Nisan, or the Paschal Full Moon.
\(^2\) The April Kalends is April 1, hence the Fifteenth before is March 18, the Fourteenth before is March 19, and so on.
\(^3\) That is, at the beginning of the final third of the hour.
\(^4\) Note that 'night' and 'day' are each considered to be twelve hours long, and that 'night' always precedes 'day' on a given date.

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It then enters into Gemini in the second hour of the day, at the beginning of the \textit{bisse} of that hour.\(^5\) There now remain for you ten and two-thirds hours of the Eleventh day before the Kalends. Add to these the twenty-four hours from the Tenth before the Kalends, and there are thirty-four hours. Join to these twenty hours from the Ninth before the Kalends so that, running up to the full octave of that day,\(^6\) you can come up with the fifty-four hours when it departs from Gemini. And these three signs have CLXII hours plus two more, which are formed from the \textit{bisse} of the three signs. So, the hours of the three signs equal CLXIII.

It enters into Cancer at the twenty-first hour on the Ninth day\(^7\) before the Kalends, and you will have four hours of that day leftover. Join these to the Octave and Seventh before the Kalends, and you will have fifty-two hours. To these, add two hours from the Sixth night before the Kalends (from the beginning of the night) plus the \textit{bisse} of the third hour. So, the moon has passed through four signs over the course of these nine days once the two hours and a \textit{bisse} of the third hour from the tenth day have been added.

It then enters into Leo in the third part of the third hour of the Sixth night before the April Kalends and you will have twenty-one hours of that day leftover. Add to these the twenty-four from the Fifth before the Kalends, and they make forty-five hours. Now to

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\(^5\) Note the Bedan definition of \textit{bisse} as the second two-thirds of an hour.
\(^6\) The word \textit{ipsius}, translated as 'that', is reflexive, referring to \textit{Kalendarum}. So, the \textit{octauum plenum} is the octave day anticipating the April Kalends, i.e., 'that day'.
\(^7\) The octave is described as 'full' because none of its hours has yet been relegated to the moon's stay in any zodiacal sign.

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these add nine hours from the Fourth day\(^8\) before the Kalends, and they equal fifty-four hours. Add to these the \textit{trien} of the tenth hour of the night; and fourteen hours remain from the Fourth before the Kalends. Join these to the Third before the Kalends, which together with the hours already tabulated\(^9\) make thirty-eight. Add to these sixteen from the Day before the Kalends (that is, the fourth hour of day has ended), and these six signs have thirteen days\(^10\) plus sixteen hours of the fourteenth day: indeed all hours come to CCCXXVIII.

Now, the moon enters Libra at the fifth hour of the fourteenth day, which is the Day before the April Kalends, from which day remain eight hours. Join these eight to the hours of the Day of the April Kalends, and there are thirty-two. To these, add twenty-two hours from the Fourth before the Nones,\(^12\) and they equal fifty-four hours. Now, to these, add a \textit{bisae} of the twenty-third hour of the same day, at which time it passes beyond Libra entering into Scorpio at the beginning of the \textit{trien} of that same twenty-third hour.

Now one hour remains for you from the Fourth day before the Nones. Add this hour to the Third and the Day before the Nones, and there are forty-nine hours. From the Day of the Nones, reserve five hours of its night (and you will have the fifty-four hours in Scorpio) and the \textit{trien} of the sixth hour of the night.\(^13\)

Thereupon it enters into Sagittarius at the beginning of the \textit{bisae} of the same sixth hour of the night; and eighteen hours remain from the April Nones. Join these to the Octave before the Ides,\(^14\) and there are forty-two hours. Join to these twelve hours from the Seventh\(^15\) before the Ides, and you will have the fifty-four hours in which the moon whirled about Sagittarius.

At the very start of day in the first hour, it enters upon Capricorn. Now, there remain for you twelve hours of that day, on the Seventh before the Ides. Join these to the Sixth before the Ides and you will have thirty-six hours. To these, add eighteen hours from the Fifth before the Ides (which is the sixth hour of the same day). Then add a \textit{bisae} of the seventh hour.

That having been done, it departs from Capricorn entering into Aquarius at the beginning of the \textit{trien} of the seventh hour. Now five hours remain of the same day. Add these to the Fourth and Third before the Ides, and you will have fifty-three hours.

Add to these one hour from the Day before the Ides plus a \textit{trien} of the second hour of the night.\(^16\) At which time it departs from Aquarius and enters into Pisces at the beginning of the \textit{bisae} of the second hour of the night on the Day before the April Ides.

\(^8\) Here, ‘day’ is used broadly to mean the entire calendar date, including night.
\(^9\) The \textit{trien} of the tenth hour of the Fourth night before the Kalends is added to the previously mentioned final third of the third hour of the Seventh night to complete the \textit{bisae} needed for Leo.
\(^10\) ‘Hours already tabulated’ is a rendering of \textit{ductae}.
\(^11\) Here, ‘day’ is used broadly to mean the entire calendar date, including night.
\(^12\) The Nones is April 5.

\(^13\) The \textit{trien} of the sixth hour of the April Nones is added to the previously mentioned final \textit{trien} (the term is used loosely here) of the twenty-third hour of the Fourth before the Nones to complete the \textit{bisae} needed for Scorpio.
\(^14\) The Ides is April 13.
\(^15\) April 7.
\(^16\) The \textit{trien} of the second hour of the Day before the Ides is added to the previously mentioned \textit{trien} (the term is used loosely here) of the seventh hour of the Fifth day to complete the \textit{bisae} needed for Capricorn.
Now twenty-two hours remain from the Day before the Ides. Augment the Ides with these, and there are forty-six hours. To these, add eight hours from the Eighteenth before the May Kalends, and you will have fifty-four hours. Once these are counted, you shall indeed discover from where we constructed the basis of that calculation: the twenty-seven days from the Fifteenth before the April Kalends through to the Eighteenth before the May Kalends, into the night of which day eight hours are spent. In those twenty-seven days and eight hours, the moon flies through twelve signs. The hours of the twenty-seven days, when you throw those eight hours on the pile, come to DCLVI.

If indeed you want to reach a thirteenth sign of the lunar chariot, count from the ninth hour of the night of the Eighteenth before the Kalends, up to which hour twelve signs have come about. Count from there fifty-four hours and a bisse, of which you have sixteen from the Eighteenth before the Kalends. Add the hours of the following day (that is, the Seventeenth before the Kalends) and they become forty hours. And you will have, from the Fifteenth before the Kalends, twenty-nine days.

To these, add the twelve hours of the thirtieth night, which comes on the Sixteenth before the Kalends, and you will have the full hours of the thirteenth sign. In that twelfth full hour of the night, it reaches the junction of the sun, in which, as it is estimated, it stays two hours. And you will see that the next illumination is always after the twelfth hour.

Alcinus' Computus

Now, the first measure of this computation started at the evening hour in Aries, and only reached the morning hour of the day in the next change: Aries having been completed and Taurus begun. Pliny says, 'nine hours in the moon for five days counted.' That is, the moon accomplishes as much of its journey in nine hours as the sun does in five days. Each sign has thirty parts: the moon remains in each sign fifty-four hours with its bisse.

Divide the fifty-four hours into ninths, and you will get six nine times. Likewise the sun delays in each sign thirty days and ten-and-a-half hours. Divide thirty by five, and you will get six five times in the thirty. Now the sun reaches one sixth of any sign in five days, while the moon reaches one sixth of a sign in nine hours. It goes through CXX parts, however, in nine days; again, in nine days another CXX, and still another nine days another CXX, which total twenty-seven days of twenty-four hours, and CCCLX parts.

subsequent Roman computistical systems for 14 Nisan. According to the Alexandrian system, however, 14 Nisan must never occur before the vernal equinox on March 21. Should this situation arise, Easter Sunday would follow the next full moon (cf. Wallis, pp. xxxvi–lii). This latter method is the system espoused by Bede in his De temporum ratione, ch. 6 (ed. Jones, pp. 190–1). For this reason, Ratio de luna XV begins with 14 Nisan falling on March 18, and shows the reader how to compute the date of the next full moon, or 'illumination', after which Easter Sunday will fall.

Pliny never actually says this. The author has misattributed the adage, which is taken from Bede, De natura rerum, ch. 21 (ed. Jones, 123A p. 213, line 22).

According to this measurement, the sun will complete its journey through all twelve signs of zodiac after 365 1/4 days, or exactly one solar year.

120 parts = 4 signs, so, 1 part = 1/30 of a sign. This definition of 'part' is part of the Bedan system for time reckoning, cf. Bede, De temporum ratione, ch. 3 (ed. Jones, p. 183, line 31).

360 parts = 12 signs, i.e., the complete zodiac.

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It ought to be seen how the eight hours, which are left over in the moon, come to agree along with the five days, which are left over in the sun, so that you can continue this throughout the days of the whole year. For the sun does not travel apart from the zodiacal circle in these five days, nor must the CCCLX parts add something to the sky, but rather the five days ought to be divided among the individual zodiacal parts (for five days has CXX hours); and a third of an hour (that is, one trien) ought to be given to each zodiacal part. And neither may the eight hours of the lunar course be used up, unless it is counted in the twenty-seven days by adding a third to each day of a zodiacal part fourteen such that the proper number of parts can be satisfied (that is, reach CCCLX) just as what we discovered ought to be happening in your most astute and well considered computation.

CONCERNING THE COURSE OF THE MOON

The moon, because of the speed of its course, flies through each sign in two days, six hours and the bisse of one hour. Now, each sign has thirty zodiacal parts. If, therefore, you wish to know how large an interval the moon may linger in any one of the thirty zodiacal parts, tally up the hours of two days, which are forty-eight. To these, add six hours and a bisse. They become the fifty-four hours that: the moon lingers in each sign. Distribute these fifty-four hours to each zodiacal part in equal shares, giving, of course, single hours to the individual parts. Now there remain for you twenty-four hours. Multiply these by their components on the premise that an hour has five puncti, and the puncti equal CXX. Divide these by thirty, which is a good many times. Give four puncti to each zodiacal part, and a bisse will remain. Divide this by forty ostenta (for a full hour has sixty ostenta, and a bisse is two-thirds of one hour). And so, as I said, forty ostenta form the bisse of one hour. Give each zodiacal part a single ostentum, and ten ostenta remain. Multiply these by three (and they equal thirty) and you will see that the moon completes as much of its course in an interval of one hour, four puncti, one ostentum and one-third of an ostentum as the sun does in twenty-four hours and twenty-one ostenta.

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25 The previous tally simplified the length of time the moon remains in each sign from 'fifty-four hours and a bisse' to 'fifty-four hours'. By this estimate, the moon would complete its journey through the twelve signs of the zodiac in twenty-seven days. This is eight hours short of our actual time required. Hence, 'eight hours... are left over in the moon'.
26 The previous tally simplified the length of time the sun remains in each sign from 'thirty days and ten-and-a-half hours' to 'thirty days'. By this estimate, the sun would complete its journey through the twelve signs of the zodiac in 360 days. This is five days short of the calendar year, which is 365 days. Hence 'five days... are leftover in the sun'.
27 For the five days to be evenly redistributed over the twelve signs, the time spent by the sun at each zodiacal part (i.e., 1/30 of a sign) should be lengthened by a trien. This means the sun actually spends twenty-four hours and a trien in each zodiacal part, or thirty days and ten hours in each sign. The loss of the additional 'half-hour' previously appended to the 'thirty days and ten hours' spent at each sign is corrected every four years by means of the bissextile, so it is not mentioned here.
28 The 'eight hours' are recast as a singular grouping in this phrase, which describes them collectively as 'it'.
29 i.e., 'third of an hour'.
30 The 'part fourteen' is another name for the 'fifteenth part'. For the eight hours to be evenly redistributed over the twelve signs, a trien should be added at every fifteenth zodiacal part. This occurs every twenty-seven hours. A 'part fourteen', therefore, will not occur on every calendar day. Hence a 'third' should be added only 'to each day of a part fourteen'. This is in contrast with the sun, which added an additional trien every twenty-four hours.
31 i.e., the CXX puncti.
Shoots and Vines: Some Models for the Ascenders and Descenders of English Vernacular Minuscule

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It has long been recognised that the Square minuscule which was written by the Anglo-Saxons in the tenth century had transformed into a very different style of vernacular script by about the second quarter of the eleventh century. From the early tenth century to about 960 or so, both Latin and Old English texts were written in Anglo-Saxon Square minuscule, which – for the most part – was a well-established script practiced throughout the country. However, as part of the reforms brought about by SS Dunstan and Æthelwold, Latin script came to be written in Caroline minuscule, while Square minuscule was retained for vernacular texts. This change was then followed by a breakdown in the vernacular script-system, resulting ultimately in the demise of Square, and the birth of English Vernacular minuscules. We can first identify the beginnings of English Vernacular minuscule from about 990, but it was not until the second quarter of the

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5. For the comparative uniformity of scripts c. 930–960, see Dumville, ‘The Background’ and ‘Mid-century’.

6. For a complete facsimile of this manuscript, see The Parker Chronicle and Laws (CCCL 173): A Facsimile, ed. R. Flower and H. Smith (London, 1941).

that this style of script may be associated with the monastic communities at Winchester and Worcester, and that an alternative style, which is much closer in weight and proportions to Square minuscule, may have been associated with Canterbury. Rather than elaborating on this, however, I wish instead to turn to a different question. I have been searching for some time for the model behind this new style of elongated script and have already discussed charter-bounds as one possibility since their script shares many characteristics with Vernacular minuscule.9 Glosses are another possibility, as these often have long ascenders and descenders as well, but I want to save these for another occasion.9 Instead, I shall turn to a third option which has not yet been considered in this context and which has received very little attention at all: the reduced script in the chant sections of liturgical manuscripts. I should say at the outset that I do not in fact think this is the source which I am seeking. Nevertheless, I do think that the history of such reduced script in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts is an important subject which has not yet been investigated in sufficient depth. I therefore propose to explore the early use of this script by Anglo-Saxon scribes and finally to bring the fruits of this exploration back to the question of ‘shoots and vines’ in early English Vernacular minuscule.

**LITURGICAL MANUSCRIPTS**

Many liturgical manuscripts of the late-tenth and eleventh centuries were written in two different types of script: one for the main text, and one typically for passages which were sung.10 While the

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9 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 27 (‘Winchester, s. x’), is one example among many.
10 See Figures 1 and 2, below.

former is normally rotund, written with a thick pen, and often with short ascenders and descenders, the latter has much smaller bodies and the ascenders and descenders are often proportionally longer. The immediate explanation for this is that the letters are smaller to provide space for neumes to be written between the lines of text. However, such an explanation is not sufficient since very many such passages do not contain any musical notation at all. While such notation was no doubt intended to be added later in some such cases, it is by no means certain that this was always the case. Furthermore, if a scribe were writing smaller letters to allow space for musical notation, then why would he extend the ascenders and descenders, thereby filling up at least part of the space he had so carefully created? The scribes could have used other strategies, such as writing text and neumes on alternate lines; this was done in the early tropers, for example, but even then the scribes wrote the neumed passages in reduced script.11 An alternative explanation is that the smaller script was the result of conventions of page-layout and script-styles rather than of practical necessity. Such an explanation seems promising but raises questions about liturgical script in late Anglo-Saxon England: first, whether or not there ever was such a thing; and second, if it did exist, how it is to be characterised.

Such questions have been discussed by David Dumville, who has identified two distinct currents in liturgical book production for the

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11 S. J. P. Van Dijk, ‘An Advertisement Sheet of an Early XIVth-Century Writing Master at Oxford’, *Scriptorium* 10 (1956), 47–64, provides a discussion of the various layouts of noted passages in medieval books. An example of such layout in tenth-century England is the troper from the Old Minster at Winchester, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 473; part of this manuscript has been reproduced by M. Budny, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Illustrated Catalogue*, 2 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI, 1997) II, plates 386–87.
last quarter of the tenth century. The first of these seems to be associated with Winchester and Worcester and consists of a monumental, rotund Style-I Anglo-Caroline which perhaps derived ultimately from the scriptoria of ninth-century Corbie and Tours. The second was apparently practiced at Canterbury, where the script was also monumental and largely two-line, but this time was Square minuscule rather than Caroline. This distinction between Winchester/Worcester and Canterbury is a recurring theme in late tenth-century book-production, and has generally been attributed to the two currents of the Benedictine reforms in the second half of the tenth century. These two lines of development are associated on the one hand with Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury (960–988), and on the other with Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester (963–984); they produced different forms of Anglo-Caroline minuscule—Styles I and II—and different forms of hymnal, and so it is no great surprise to see differences in liturgical book-hands as well. However, Dumville’s discussion has been restricted to styles of script, and presumably to the main book-hand rather than any reduced script. The question must be asked, then, whether a similar distinction can be found in the reduced scripts as well. Interestingly, there seems to be no such connexion: liturgical manuscripts from both the Canterbury and Winchester groups show reduced scripts for sung passages, and reduced scripts from both scriptoria show extended proportions, if to varying degrees. This at least allows the possibility that the convention of reduced script existed in England before the development of Anglo-Caroline minuscule, or alternatively that the convention was practiced in both of the Continental centres from which the Dunstan and Æthelwold drew their inspiration. To decide between these possibilities, we must look further into the history of this script.

Unfortunately, the early development of musical notation in England is not especially well understood. This is partly due to the paucity of early noted manuscripts: although I am not aware of any complete catalogues of English noted books, Susan Rankin wrote in 1987 that ‘the earliest examples of musical notation in insular sources date from the last years of the 10th century, well after the monastic revival’. Indeed, the situation is even worse than this: she went on to note that ‘we are confronted not only by a lack of examples of notated music [from before 980], but worse, by an almost total lack of insular service-books, so that it is difficult to tell whether such books might have been prepared for musical notation or not’. Finally, she has concluded that ‘it is indeed possible that music was not notated in England before the Benedictine revival of the mid-10th century’. Nevertheless, some evidence does survive which can assist us here. Although we have no noted books from before 980, we do have three which contain chant written out in full, and therefore which could conceivably have been intended for musical notation. These books

14 The styles of Anglo-Caroline were outlined by Bishop, _English Caroline Minuscula_; the hymnals by H. Grézus, _Hymner und Hymnen im englischen Mittelalter_ (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 69–74.
16 Ibid., p. 131.
17 Ibid., p. 132.
are Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 183, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 10575, and Durham, Cathedral Library, A. iv. 19, dated to the 930s, the mid-tenth century, and the second half of the tenth century respectively. Of these three, Rankin has observed that the chant texts in the books at Paris and Durham were written in reduced script even though they have no neumes. In fact, this is also true of the book at Cambridge, since the antiphons on folios 94v–95v also follow this pattern.

We have established, then, that the practice of writing chant in reduced script pre-dates Dunstan and Æthelwold, and that it was certainly in England by the 930s; this seems to be as far as the Anglo-Saxon evidence will take us. But what, then, of Continental sources? Most of the extant Anglo-Saxon neumes bear close resemblance to those written at Corbie, and it is recorded that Æthelwold sent for monks from that house while he was abbot of Abingdon so that they could instruct his own community in singing; perhaps, then, this is the source of these examples. The remaining neumes are in the Breton style, and it has been suggested that these may have been brought to England during the reign of Alfred the Great by people such as Grimbald, who came from the Continent and was described by Asser as ‘cantatorem optimum’. Unfortunately, lack of evidence makes it impossible to make these any more than tentative hypotheses, and recent scholarship seems to downplay any such connexions. However, such hints do suggest that we should be looking across the Channel to see what practices were on the Continent.

Fortunately, we do have more extant examples of early music from Continental houses. The writing of chant in smaller script was widespread from the eighth century, and Van Dijk observed that this practice had become so ingrained by the tenth century that ‘it remained an accepted form, even in books which had no music at all and were never intended to have any’. The implication, then, is that the first examples of musical notation to come to England would have been written in reduced script. Unfortunately, we quickly become caught up in a ‘chicken-and-egg’ problem. Was the script reduced in order to allow space for the neumes, and then this became convention divorced from its original purpose? Or was the script reduced first to indicate that it was sung, and then musical notation added later? The first of these options – the reduction to allow space – seems the more plausible for the earliest Continental examples, and indeed this is what Van Dijk argued. However, the fact that the earliest Anglo-Saxon examples of reduced script predate the earliest examples of musical notation at least allows the possibility that the convention of reduced script crossed the Channel before that of the neumes themselves. Indeed, Rankin has questioned whether it is ever possible to tell if a given text was originally intended to receive

18 H. Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, AZ, 2001), nos. 56, 896, and 223 respectively.

21 See, for example, Rankin, ‘Notations’, pp. 131–32.
22 Van Dijk, ‘Advertisement’, p. 60. Early examples of differentiated script include Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale, 213 (St Amand, c. 860–80); the book now split between Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, 184, and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 9430 (Tours, c. IX); and Dusseldorf D.1 (Werdelen, c. 900). I wish to thank Nicholas Orchard for bringing these examples to my attention and for his subsequent discussions on this subject.
23 Ibid., pp. 60–62.
notation, agreeing with Van Dijk that 'although this [reduced script] obviously allows room for neumes to be added, the practice is by no means always associated with the presence of musical notation'.

**FUNCTION**

If we accept, then, that the Anglo-Saxons had conscious ideas about the layout of liturgical manuscripts in general and chanted texts in particular, then it is perhaps worth pausing for a moment to consider what the function of such layout might have been and why this particular style of script was used for chant. We have already discussed the immediate practical need for space for the neumes. The principle of using different scripts for different types of text may well apply here, since this concept was thoroughly entrenched in book production by this time, as demonstrated by the hierarchy of decorated and coloured initials, display capitals, rubrics, text, and gloss which was often used on a single page. Furthermore, there is a practical benefit in being able to distinguish between different sections of the text, in terms of finding one's place on the page and recognising when one is required to sing. But one question remains: why the lengthened proportions? I do not wish to discuss this in depth here, but I will run quickly over some of the possibilities. One is simply that it is for the scribe's convenience because it is quicker to write. Although this may hold true for glosses, and perhaps for Vernacular minuscule, it makes no sense in the context of a luxurious, high-status liturgical book. Another is that proportions and pen-width correlate directly with script-grade: that thicker pens and rounder proportions indicate higher grade. Again, this is plausible for glosses and vernacular script, but there is no obvious reason why the grade of chanted passages should be any lower than that of the main text. A more interesting possibility is that of legibility. Modern psychologists have conducted a great deal of research into the cognitive processes involved in reading, and while no conclusions have been reached, it seems that the overall shape of a word plays an important part in the reading process. Of course, this research is all based on modern subjects, and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe has rightly urged caution in projecting our assumptions about rapid, silent reading back onto the Anglo-Saxon world. However, it is quantitatively true that the upper part of a word contains more information than the lower, and that words are easier to read if they have more distinctive features in the upper part. Perhaps, then, the lengthened ascenders aided the

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24 Rankin, 'Notations', p. 131.
28 Bischoff, Latin Palaeography, p. 52.
29 K. O'Brien O'Keeffe, Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse (Cambridge, 1990), p. 18; but see also P. H. Saenger, Space Between Words: The Origin of Silent Reading (Stanford, CA, 1997), pp. 98–99 for Celtic and Anglo-Saxon descriptions of silent reading and emphases on the shapes of letters and words.
legibility of a necessarily small and cramped script and provided cues for a reader whose focus was presumably centred on the musical notation.

CONCLUSION

On that note, we can conclude this discussion of liturgical manuscripts and look back once again to the elongated style of Vernacular minuscule. As noted at the outset, I do not think that the Old English script was influenced directly by the liturgical one. Indeed, if one compares a page of even a relatively plain liturgical manuscript to a page of elongated Vernacular minuscule, the differences in status are immediately apparent. Most, if not all, of the early extant examples of elongated English Vernacular script have no decoration, little or no colour, little script-hierarchy, and seem to be far more concerned with recording words than with any pretense to luxury. Although it may be unfair to expect a contemporary copy of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to compete with some of the best de luxe liturgical books produced in Anglo-Saxon England, it seems that this high standard of production was maintained across the Latin texts written in the Æthelwoldian style of Anglo-Caroline. In particular, the very characteristics of this Caroline script include its rotundity and its markedly short ascenders and descenders, reminiscent almost of the litterae tonsae by which the earlier Insular scribes characterised their own script. Such a contrast between Latin and vernacular is even more striking if my suspicions are correct that this elongated minuscule was also associated with the Winchester scriptoria, the very home of the monumental Style-I Anglo-Caroline. Whether or not this is the case, the implications of this study for the status of vernacular writing and for the establishment of script-grade are significant and

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The Heroic Biography of Æthelflæd of Mercia and the Old English Judith: A Re-examination

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In a now-obscure 1892 monograph on the Old English Judith, a poetic account of the biblical book of Judith and currently the final item in London, BL Cotton Vitellius A XV (hereafter 'the Nowell Codex'), T. G. Foster suggested that the Anglo-Saxon poet had intended the poem as an oblique panegyric to Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians. Æthelflæd was the eldest child of Alfred the Great and the foster mother of his grandson Æthelstan. As a young woman she married Ealdorman Æthelred of Mercia, a thegn loyal to Alfred and at least 20 years her senior, in what essentially amounted to a diplomatic

1 T. G. Foster, Judith: Studies in Metre, Language, and Style, with a View to Determining the Date of the Old English Fragment and the Home of its Author, Quellen und Forschungen 71 (Strasbourg, 1892). Judith's present position following Beowulf at the end of the Nowell Codex is almost certainly not its original placement in the manuscript, if indeed it was originally part of the Nowell Codex at all. Sisam, Malone, Chubb, and Kieman all regard Judith as a separate poem produced in the same scriptorium as Beowulf, added to the Novell Codex at a later date, perhaps as late as the manuscript's rebinding in the late-sixteenth century by a curator who perceived the correspondence in scribal hands between Judith and Scribe B of Beowulf. Others, such as Lucas, believe that Judith may have originally preceded the prose life of Saint Christopher which begins incomplete at the beginning of the Nowell Codex. For a summary of these and other codicological issues pertaining to Judith, see M. Griffith, ed., Judith (Exeter, 1997).
posting to consolidate West-Saxon control of Mercia. 2 Æthelred was in poor health, suffering from chronic illness that by 904 had so incapacitated him that Æthelflæd had assumed the day-to-day duties of running Mercia in his name. 3 The couple had only a daughter, Ælfwine, and when Æthelred died in 911 without a male heir, Æthelflæd assumed direct control of Mercia until her death in 919, working in cooperation with her brother Edward in a programme of fortress-building to combat the invasions of Irish-Norwegian Vikings. 4 She personally led the Mercian forces into at least three major victories at Tamworth, Derby and Leicester; all documented in the B-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Æthelflæd’s role as a female general is otherwise unheard of in an Anglo-Saxon context, and on the surface would appear to render her a most likely candidate to have inspired the warleader-widow heroine of the Old English Judith.

However, Foster never offered any specific evidence from the poem to back up this theory, which he had articulated in a particularly cloying late-Victorian prose style. As with Cook’s rival theory associating Judith with the 856 marriage of Æthelwulf to the daughter of Charles the Bald, 5 Foster had then used this supposed correspondence between Æthelflæd and Judith as his main piece of evidence in dating the Old English poem to 919, and locating its composition in Mercia:

Æthelflæd, then, is Mercia’s Judith, for she by no ordinary strategy, we are told, raised her Kingdom and people to their old position. She, like the Hebrew Judith, abandoned the older strategy of raid and battle, not indeed to murder the Danish chief, but to build fortresses and beleaguer her enemies. Æthelflæd, then, is a suitable and worthy heroine to have stirred a contemporary poet to his theme…This suggestion would place our poem between the years 915 and 918 or soon after, during which she obtained her greatest victories, dying in the last-mentioned year. 6

Foster’s theory has not been taken seriously since 1952, when B. J. Timmer gave it a systematic refutation in the introduction to his Methuen edition of Judith. 7 It is currently standard critical practice to dismiss any possibility of a connection between Æthelflæd and Judith with a brief citation of Timmer, as in a recent article by Paul Szaramach, or to ignore the issue entirely, as does Mark Griffith’s commemoration in verse on this occasion, particularly in a version which omitted all mention of chastity and went out of its way to portray Judith as a warleader in the absence of any character that might conceivably represent Æthelwulf himself. Furthermore, the total absence of any early-West Saxon features in the language of Judith suggests that the poem was written substantially later than 856. We can safely discard this theory from further consideration, particularly as Hupé’s only reason for supporting it was his agenda of interpreting Judith as an allegorical figure of virginity, in the absence of any internal evidence for such thematic interest in the Old English poem itself. See B. F. Hupé, The Web of Words: Structural Analyses of the Old English Poems ‘Caiinglas’, ‘The Wonders of Creation’, ‘The Dream of the Rose’, and ‘Judith’, with Texts and Translations (Albany, 1970).

Foster, ‘Judith’, p. 90.

recent edition of Judith. Here, however, I shall argue that certain developments in scholarship over the past fifty years give us good reasons to question Timmer’s dismissal of Foster, and to re-examine the possibility (though by no means establish as a certainty) that the heroic biography of Æthelflæd of Mercia somehow stands at the root of the Old English Judith.

THE DATE AND GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN OF OLD ENGLISH ‘JUDITH’

Timmer’s chief objection to any possible implicit correspondence between Æthelflæd and Judith, (or Judith and any other Anglo-Saxon historical figure, for that matter) appears to have been Cook and Foster’s inappropriate uses of such historical identifications as dating evidence for the poem; indeed, Timmer’s refutation of the Æthelflæd theory was included under the heading ‘Date’. Although modern dating methods for Old English poetry still constitute something of an uncertain art, they do allow us to separate the issue of dating from the question of characters’ real-life historical identifications. The current consensus on the linguistic and metrical dating of Judith is still consistent with the poem having been written during or within a generation of the life of Æthelflæd (d. 919), though not exclusively so. Even Timmer admitted that ‘the dates are not impossible’ in

9 Other modern dating methods are of limited use for Judith. As Judith is in the same hand as the second half of Beowulf, its palæographic dating is intrinsically tied up with that of Beowulf and the rest of the Nowell Codex (for which various estimates cluster roughly around the year 1000). However, palæographic dating of the Nowell Codex gives us no indication of Judith’s date of composition, particularly as the substantial differences in metre, vocabulary, and spelling between Judith and Beowulf indicate different compositional and transmission histories for both. Analysis of Old Latin versus Vulgate readings of the biblical text is also of limited use in Judith. While it is possible to argue for a relatively early date for Genesis A based upon its unusually high number of Old Latin readings, Judith does not follow its biblical source closely enough for the reader to confidently identify whether its author had consulted an Old Latin or Vulgate text. Griffith manages to identify two details possibly derived from Old Latin readings and one more typical of the Vulgate, and speculates that the author of Judith had probably consulted a mixed text of Vulgate type, which gives no help in dating the poem, as these types of bible texts were used as early as Bede and at least as late as Ælfric. On this, see Griffith, Judith, pp. 47–50
10 Timmer, Judith, p. 10.
Chamberlain's admittedly tentative suggestion that Judith refers to 'the crisis under Æthelred from 990 to 1010', as being slightly too late, particularly when considered in conjunction with the palaeographic dating of the Nowell Codex to c. 1000 and the multiple transmissions of Judith proscribed by the discontinuous section numbers retained in the poem from at least one previous manuscript incarnation.\(^{13}\)

If Judith had originated within Æthelflæd's royal circle in Mercia, we might expect to find signs that the poem had originally been composed in a Mercian dialect. Early editors, such as Cook and Förster, had insisted that an (older) Anglian original underlay the present West-Saxon version, but more recent editors, beginning with Timmer, have regarded Judith as less conclusive on this point.\(^{14}\) In the most recent edition, Griffith identifies five words 'as possible remnants of an underlying non-WS original, all of which are consonant with that original being Mercian', but stresses that all but one of these (scarrow) are traditional, exclusively-poetic words whose normal spellings in West-Saxon poetry may in fact be a retained Anglian form.\(^{5}\) This is also a relatively small number of Anglian features when compared with other Anglian poems known to have been transcribed into West-Saxon, and Griffith concludes that Judith is therefore either West-Saxon in origin, or that it has been particularly thoroughly West-Saxonised from a Mercian dialect. Consequently, if we are to associate Judith with Æthelflæd, we had


\[^{15}\text{Griffith, \textit{Judith}, pp. 21–2}\]

best regard the poem as a West-Saxon production, either composed by a West-Saxon member of Æthelflæd's entourage, or more likely, given the sporadic alliteration of palatal and velar g that suggests a slightly later tenth-century date, one composed at the West-Saxon court after her death, perhaps commissioned by Edward in memory of his sister, or by Æthelstan in memory of his aunt and foster-mother.\(^{16}\) Since one distinctively late-West Saxon word in Judith (boipan, 117, instead of the earlier byggen) is otherwise only attested in Alfred's Boethius and in the \textit{Metres of Boethius} (which also shares Judith's sylabic use of –g in poetic metre) this theory of Judith having some connection to other vernacular literary productions of the West-Saxon court is perhaps more promising.\(^{17}\)

\[\text{LITERARY PROPAGANDA AND THE HOUSE OF WESSEX}\]

Timmer's second objection was one of genre. Lumping Judith with Juliana and Elene as 'the religious epic describing the deeds of a fighting saint', Timmer felt that the poem was written in a strict hagiographical genre which would not deliberately cultivate an identification with a contemporary historical figure, particularly not a non-ecclesiastical figure. He wrote: 'The person is glorified in this poetry only on account of his or her belief. This makes it very unlikely that a religious heroine like Judith would represent a secular queen, like Æthelflæd', and moreover, 'There is no evidence that in the tenth century—or in any previous century, for that matter—poems were written about religious figures which symbolized historical figures'.\(^{18}\) Certainly when an Anglo-Saxon author wished to

\[^{16}\text{On the mixed witnesses for the alliteration of velar and palatal g in Judith, and for a refutation of widely-held theory that the presence of this feature automatically places Judith later than Brunnanburgh, see Griffith, \textit{Judith}, pp. 25–6.}\]

\[^{17}\text{For these late and West-Saxon features, see Griffith, \textit{Judith}, pp. 44–6.}\]

\[^{18}\text{Timmer, \textit{Judith}, pp. 7–8.}\]
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glorify the piety of a secular leader in the genre of a saint’s life, he did it very explicitly, as in Æthelric’s version of Abbo of Fleury’s Passio S. Edmundo, or if he wished to celebrate the military deeds of a king in verse, he composed a secular panegyric in the fashion of Maldon or Brunanburh, with little mention of hagiographical or religious themes. For Timmer, Judith’s complete lack of resemblance to either of these genres, and its failure to name its supposed real-life object, made it extremely unlikely to have been composed as an oblique praise-poem for any real-life figure, least of all Æthelflæd.

However, the secular verse panegyrics in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle are all late productions that significantly postdate Æthelflæd’s career, the earliest being the seventy-three line Brunanburh commemorating Æthelstan’s victory as the entry for 937. Nor were these secular alliterative verse compositions the only forms of literary propaganda used for Anglo-Saxon kings. In the Alfredian period, the house of Wessex made a habit of cultivating literary parallels with the heroes of the Old Testament. King Alfred, Æthelflæd’s father, was explicitly presented as a latter-day Solomon by his biographer Asser, reflecting both a convention of Asser’s native Welsh historiography, and a convention of Carolingian court propaganda exemplified by Einhard’s V. Karnih Magni which repeatedly celebrated Charlemagne as a second ‘King David’:

querelaretur et assiduo gemenbat suspicio, eo quod Deus Omnipotens cum expertum divinae sapientiae et liberarium arium fecisset: in hoc pium et opulentissimum atque opulentissimum Salomonem Hebraeorum regem aequiparents, qui primius, despecta omni praesenti gloria et divinitis, sapientiam a Deo deposita, et etiam utramque inventit, sapientiam scilicet et praesentem gloriem, sicut scriptum est, ‘Quaerite

ergo primum regnum Dei et iustitiam eius, et haec omnia praestabuntur vobis.’

A charter (S 333, c. 864) issued by Alfred’s predecessor Æthelberht of Wessex also included an oblique portrayal of the king as Solomon. Alfred aligned himself with Moses on occasion in public documents, opening his law code with a vernacular version of the Decalogue and an account of its reception by Moses. As Alfred’s law code was one of the most widely-distributed documents in Anglo-Saxon England, it is likely that parallel was well known, and that the praise of Moses in the extant Old English poetical version of Exodai in MS Junius 11 might have been understood as an oblique panegyric to Alfred, particularly given Moses’s stress upon his people’s acquisition of holy wisdom through booklearning in the poem. We do, in fact, have evidence for the presence of a scribe or court official in Æthelflæd’s circle early in her career employing the West-Saxon rhetorical device of aligning the leader(s) with Solomon in public documents, as a 901 charter issued jointly by Æthelred and Æthelflæd (S 201) includes the phrase ‘ut sapiens Salomon ait “generatio venit generatio recedit . et quos vidi non video et quos

__19__ Text from W. H. Stevenson, ed., Asser’s Life of Alfred (Oxford, 1904), pp. 60–71: ‘…he used to moan and sigh continually because Almighty God had created him lacking in divine learning and knowledge of the liberal arts. In this respect he resembled the holy, highly esteemed, and exceedingly wealthy Solomon, king of the Hebrews, who, once upon a time, having come to despise all renown and wealth of this world, sought wisdom from God, and thereby achieved both (namely, wisdom and renown in this world), as it is written, ‘Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things will be given to you’ [Matt. 6.33]’, (tr. S. D. Keynes and M. Lapidge, Alfred the Great: Asser’s Life of King Alfred and Other Contemporary Sources (London, 1983), p. 92.

__20__ All charters numbered and text cited as in P. H. Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List And Bibliography, Royal Historical Society Guides And Handbooks 8 (London, 1968); hereafter designated ‘S’. 

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Te probitas fecit nomen habere viri.
Te mutare decet, sed solam, nomina sexus,
Tu regina potens, rexque trophaea parans.
Jam nec Caesaris tantum meruere triumphi,
Caesare splendidior, virgo virago, vale.24

None of these pre-existing (and presumably Anglo-Saxon) Latin sources are likely to have resembled Judith; the point, rather, is that an Old English epic in honor of Æthelflæd would not be quite the anomaly of Insular literary history that Timmer claimed. Nor would it be surprising that such an Old English epic should not make the correspondence with Æthelfled as explicit as Brunanburh’s praise of Æðelstan, or that it should cultivate a parallel between an Old Testament figure and a member of Alfred’s royal line.

PROBLEMS WITH THE HAGIOGRAPHICAL MODEL

Hagiography is in fact not an adequate model for Judith for the same reasons of genre that Timmer raised in the first place, the least of which is that Judith is not a canonized saint. She is an Old Testament heroine who, despite the poet’s anachronistic device of having her pray to the Trinity (lines 83–4), cannot imitate the life of Christ because she predates his historical incarnation. On this most basic level, the Old English Judith violates the classic definition of hagiography set out by Hippolyte Delehaye: ‘To be strictly hagiographic the document must be of a religious nature and aim at edification. The term then must be confined to writings inspired by religious devotion to the saints and intended to increase that devotion.’25 No liturgy, Insular or otherwise, ever assigned a feast day to commemorate Judith of Bethulia or included her in a litany of saints; there were no churches dedicated to her; and no reliquaries purported to contain a lock of her hair or one of her fingerbones. An Anglo-Saxon with a very basic level of religious education could reasonably be expected to understand that the character of Judith belonged in a different category of sacred superheroes than Juliana and Elene.26

Despite this, there is the possibility that Judith had originally been paired with the prose account of St Christopher at the start of the Nowell Codex, which suggests that at least one Anglo-Saxon compiler had regarded the poem as a hagiography, although this solution to the apparent codicological dislocation of Judith is not uniformly accepted by critics.27 There are also stylistic traits that superficially align Judith with Cynewulf’s verse hagiographies of Elna and Juliana, summarised most recently by Griffith, ‘The ideology of Judith shows a simple opposition of the forces of good and evil, and this reflects the world of hagiography, in which the saint, the soldier of God, is threatened or assailed by the devil and his servants, but finally triumphs over evil. The heroine is called seo balige meowe (56), balige (98), seo balige (160), ha balgan mago (260), and as O. E. balig means both ‘holy’ and ‘saintly’, her holiness may have been construed as saintliness?’28 However, these (and other) ‘hagiographical’ features are also present in Old Testament vernacular poetry of MS Junius 11. The adjective balig ‘holy, saintly’ is applied to Abraham in Genesis A (2040a), to Moses in Exodus (307b), and collectively to the Israelites in Exodus as well (357b, 382a, 385a, 568a); although admittedly nowhere near as frequently as the word appears in Judith where it is suggested

26 cf. R. Frank, ‘Some uses of paronomasia in Old English scriptural verse’, Speculum 47 (1972), 207–26, at n. 220 who speculates that the Anglo-Saxons may have regarded the Anglo-Saxons may have regarded the biblical books of Judith and Daniel as hagiographies.
27 See above, n. 1.
28 Griffith, Judith, p. 81.
by the Vulgate's mulier sancta at 8.29.29 While Judith does share other vocabulary with the verse saints' lives (such as the epithet caldebroð, line 135)30 and with late Anglo-Saxon prose hagiography (such as the emphasis on ribl geolfan, line 97)31, Judith also shares an equal amount of vocabulary with the poems of Junius 11. At one juncture (229b–31a) Judith also echoes the phrasing and word order of Genesis A (991b–3a)32, and at another (198) reproduces a full line of Exodus (262). Like the poetry of Junius 11, Judith also owes a substantial debt to secular heroic poetry, including the full formulaic apparatus of battle-accounts, and the application of secular male heroic adjectives to the heroine, including ellenrof (109a), modige (334a), and colenférðe (134b), epithets used only of men elsewhere in Old English poetry.33 The designation of Judith as a hagiography is therefore much more problematic than Timmer’s assessment would suggest, with the poem occupying something of a middle ground between verse hagiography and the genre of vernacular Old Testament poetry with which it more logically belongs.

If the Nowell Codex poem had been intended as a hagiography, it is also surprising that it omitted the Vulgate’s mention of Judith’s chastity, a typical thematic focus of female saints’ lives which also provided the basis for most patristic interpretations of the Judith story. This omission is not typical of other Anglo-Saxon retellings of the Judith story in a ‘hagiographical mode,’ Aldhelm’s prose Carmen de

29 For the biblical citation see Griffith, Judith, p. 80.
31 Chamberlain, Judith, p. 158; Griffith, Judith, p. 81.
32 For the parallel with Genesis A, see Griffith, Judith, p. 63
33 Griffith, Judith, pp. 68–9

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Virginitate uses Judith as his primary example of chaste widowhood being a close second to genital intactness, including her in a list of mini-vita of saintly virgins:

LVII. 1DITH, filia Merari, post obitum Manasse sumpsit viduitatis thatistro et sproto sponsali peolo blanda procurum lenocina contempnensis, nondum resultantibus apostolicæ salpicas clangoribus: Dioo immiquit et viduiis bonum est illis, si sic permanent, quas candidus lilium pia castitute florescens atque a publicis conspectibus dellescens in cenaculi solario pudica conversabatur.34

Ælfric’s homiletic version, offered to nuns, draws a similar explicit moral lesson 200 years later from the Judith-story, and both prose his and Aldhelm’s prose treatments celebrate Judith’s divinely-assisted preservation of her virtue against the lecherous advances of Holofernes.35 This theme is largely downplayed by the version in the Nowell Codex, where the heroine’s priority is to defend her city rather than her hymen, and Holofernes’ lechery is presented as only one facet of his immoderate behavior. Although Judith repeatedly

34 Text in R. Ehwald, Aldhelmii Opera, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi 15 (Berlin, 1919), pp. 316–7; Judith, the daughter of Merari, scorned the flattering allusions of suitors after the death of Manasses, taking up the weeds of widowhood and rejecting a wedding dress — and (this at a time) when the clarion-calls of the apostolic trumpet had not yet put out the call: ‘But I say to the unmarried and to the widows; it is good for them if they so continue’ [I Cor. 7:8]. Flowering like a bright lily in her devout chastity and hiding from the public gaze she lived a pure life in an upstairs solar’. (fr. M. Herren and M. Lapidge, Aldhelm, The Prose Works, (Ipswich, 1979). pp. 126–7).

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describes the heroine as magi, this word does not necessarily connote virginity, being used not only of Mary and St. Julian, but also of Beowulf’s mother and of the 90-year-old Sarah in Genesis A, both of whom are decidedly not virgins. The poem makes no attempt to present Judith as a model of chaste widowhood; nor, in fact, is there any discussion of her marital state in the surviving portion of the poem, or particularly sustained emphasis on Holofernes’ predatory intentions.

For Chamberlain, Judith’s omission of the chastity-theme was a significant reason to discount the possibility that its heroine might have been intended to resemble Æthelflæd, in light of a legend recorded by the twelfth-century Norman historian William of Malmesbury ‘who says that after a very hard first childbirth Æthelflæd refused permanently the pleasures that led to such troubles’. However, no contemporary historical source ever mentions Æthelflæd’s chastity, or draws particular attention to her widowhood; the focus of the Mercian Register, as in Judith’s treatment of its heroine, is on Æthelflæd’s leadership and military abilities. As Szarmach has argued, this childbirth legend was probably one of William’s own manufacture, designed as a ‘rhetorical foil to highlight Edward’s failures as a king and as a man in contrast with Æthelflæd and Alfred. Henry of Huntingdon’s address of Æthelflæd as O terror virorum ‘O virgin, terror of men’ is likely a deliberate pun on vir, used in the sense of ‘young woman’ rather than stressing Æthelflæd’s virginity as such, of which Henry’s verse makes no further mention. The treatment of the issue of chastity in Judith, therefore, is in

complete accord with its treatment in conjunction with Æthelflæd in Anglo-Saxon sources; that is to say, wholly absent.

THE JUDITH STORY IN ÆLFRIC’S LETTER TO SIGEWEARD

Although the Judith story was typically treated as the individual biography of a saintly virgin in Anglo-Saxon pastoral interpretation, there is evidence that by the beginning of the eleventh century the Judith story had for some reason suddenly begun to be read as having contemporary significance for the English as a nation. Ælfric’s Letter to Sigeward On the Old and New Testaments includes a summary of the Judith story which differs radically from his longer homily in omitting all mention of chastity, perhaps in deference to the thematic interests of his male patron, instead presenting Judith as an example of martial courage for English leaders to emulate in resisting Viking invasion:

Judith seo wuduwe, þe ofer-wann Holofermem þone Sriscean ealdorman, hef þe hire agen be twecx þisum becnum be hire agenum sige; seo ys ec on Englisc on ure wisan gesett eow mannum to bysne, þet ge eowerne eard mid wernnum bewerian wif onwinnende here.

Ælfric’s references to contemporary events in the Letter to Sigeward are not numerous, which suggests that there may have already been a strong tradition of interpreting the Judith story as a commentary on the Viking harassment of England. Whether such a tradition had existed eighty years before when Æthelflæd repelled the Irish-

37 Chamberlain, ‘Judith’, p. 158.
Norwegians from Chester and Tamworth is impossible to assess. However, given that the Old Testament is replete with examples of Israel's successful defence of itself against pagan invasion, and given that most of these do not feature a female heroine whose violent and seductive behavior must be simultaneously excused in a woman and re-interpreted as an example for men, it seems likely that something other than patristic exegetical precedent had pushed the Judith story into prominence for Ælfrie’s purposes here.

ÆTHELFLÆD’S REPUTATION IN ENGLAND AND THE FRAGMENTARY ANNALS OF IRELAND

Timmer’s third objection to an association between Æthelflæd and Judith was that Æthelflæd was simply not famous enough in her own time to have inspired a vernacular verse-epic in the tenth century. On the basis of the relatively scanty accounts of Æthelflæd’s activities preserved in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Timmer was understandably reluctant to accept an oblique identification between Judith and the Lady of the Mercians. He wrote: ‘The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle does not go into raptures over Judith, but simply calls [Æthelflæd] Myrena hlafðige, and only gives information about her deeds. Not until the twelfth century do we find her treated like a heroine,’ referring to the accounts of William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon. For Timmer, Æthelflæd’s fame was a construction of later historians, owing more to the literary fictions of historiography and the legendary accretions of oral tradition than to the reality of Æthelflæd’s actual reputation in England during her lifetime and immediately afterward.

Paul Szarmach’s recent work on the Mercian Register and the publication of collaborative edition of the B-text of the Anglo-Saxon

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Chronicle have done much to address Timmer’s objection, at least on the superficial level of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’s apparent lack of interest in Æthelflæd, manifest in its failure to elaborate beyond bare factual detail in reporting her deeds. These recent studies have verified that the portion of the B and C texts that contains accounts of Æthelflæd’s deeds is actually part of an interpolated section drawn from a different chronicle, commonly known as the ‘Mercian Register’, which is written in a sparse, matter-of-fact style throughout. Following the interpolation of the Æthelflæd material in the ‘Mercian Register’ the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle resumes with Brunanburh, and it is understandable why Timmer should have regarded the Chronicle’s entries for Æthelflæd as paltry and unenthusiastic when set beside this monumental praise-poem for Æthalstan. However, what Timmer perceived here was the stylistic difference between two different source texts, rather than a difference in the attitude of the Chronicle to the accomplishments of Æthelflæd and Æthalstan.

In the D-text of the Chronicle, Æthelflæd is conspicuous by her absence. Although the scribe of the D-text, that is, the West-Saxon version of the Chronicle, apparently did have access to a similar text of the Mercian Register, he chose to downplay Æthelflæd’s activities, avoiding BC’s Myrena hlafðige and describing Æthelflæd only as Edward’s sister, omitting all references to her military triumphs, and recording only her death in 918. Wainwright views this original reticence of the D-text as reflecting a West Saxons fear of Mercian separatist sentiments in the years immediately following Æthelflæd’s

death. 44 Although Æthelflæd had been a staunch ally of Wessex, working in tandem with her brother Edward on a number of projects and military campaigns, her popularity in Mercia had the unfortunate potential to complicate the West-Saxon annexation, should the people choose to rally around her memory and insist that her daughter Ælfwyn continue the line of independent Mercian leaders. Accordingly, Wainwright believes that Edward deliberately chose to downplay Æthelflæd’s prominence in public memory, whatever substantial debt he may have acknowledged to her in private. There is certainly no indication that the relationship between Æthelflæd and Edward was ever unfriendly or anything but cooperative. 45 An Old Testament epic celebrating a heroine implicitly understood as Æthelflæd, but never explicitly identified as such, would have been an ideal means for Edward to express this gratitude quietly.

As for the broader question of Æthelflæd’s fame during the Anglo-Saxon period, clearly we must look for evidence outside the West-Saxon sphere. The ‘conspiracy of silence’ described by Wainwright with regard to Æthelflæd’s activities apparently did not extend beyond the boundaries of West-Saxon control, and Æthelflæd was one of only three English leaders, along with Alfred and Æthestan, to consistently merit mention in Irish and Welsh accounts. The Annals of Ulster describe her as famoussina regina Saxoni ‘most famous queen of the Saxons’ in recording her death in 918. 46 The Annales Cambriae records her death in the entry for 917 as Ælflæd regina obit. 47 Another Irish source, the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland, celebrates Æthelflæd’s military deeds at length and describes two battle scenarios which resembles the one in Judith on a number of points, as we shall discuss shortly. 48 These Irish and Welsh sources suggest that Æthelflæd’s fame was of a considerable magnitude to have reached so far outside of England, although Æthelflæd’s activities on the Welsh border and her military campaigns against the Irish-Norwegians in conjunction with Scot and Pict allies would certainly have been activities that brought her repeatedly within the Welsh and Irish chroniclers’ sphere of immediate political concern. The significance of these non-English chronicles as sources for Æthelflæd’s career had not been studied in depth when Timmer wrote his introduction to Judith in 1952, and in the intervening fifty years, it has become less easy to dismiss Æthelflæd’s contemporary reputation as a fictional construction of twelfth-century Norman historians.

The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland encapsulate a tradition of heroic biography for Æthelflæd which has no real resemblance to the accounts of William of Malmesbury or Henry of Huntingdon, except for its explanation of Æthelred’s having been incapacitated by illness for the last several years of his life, a detail which modern historians presently treat as fact. The Fragmentary Annals are now preserved in Brussels MS 5301-5320, which was made from a now-lost seventeenth-century transcription of a fifteenth-century manuscript. Its account of Æthelflæd is certainly nothing resembling a precise 10th-century eyewitness account, but shows signs of having been derived from earlier material and does seem to record genuine historical traditions. 49 Though its account of Æthelflæd’s battles against the Irish-Norwegian Ingimund exhibit a certain amount of

46 S. Mac Airt and G. Mac Niocaill, ed. and tr., The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1171), (Dublin, 1983)
chronological confusion and describe a battle at Chester that is not reported in the Mercian Register, F. T. Wainwright has established that the incursion of Irish-Norwegians into the Wirral peninsula was reported in the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Annals Cambriae* in 902, and that the *Fragmentary Annals* entry for '429' probably records a genuine account of Æthelflaed's having engineered a coalition of Welsh and Scot fighters to repel the invaders, albeit with a certain amount of legendary accretion in the details. The *Fragmentary Annals* also record a second battle of Æthelflaed's against the earl Óttir, which may refer to the battle between a Viking group and the joint armies of Mercia and Wessex recorded by all versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 911, which includes an *Óster eorl* among the slain, although the Chronicle makes no mention of Æthelflaed's presence, and the account in the *Fragmentary Annals* may represent a conflation of two battle accounts. Whatever basis these accounts likely have in credible historical events, their multiple layers of legendary accretion and syncretism are evidence for Æthelflaed's sustained, long-term fame, showing that Æthelflaed's deeds had the ability to generate myth as well as history, independent of the fictional constructions of Norman historians.

Whether due to common legendary accretion, or to a common origin in real historical events, the Irish Annals' accounts of Æthelflaed contain a number of similarities to the situation portrayed in the Old English *Judith*. The enemy is a coalition of pagan invaders from overseas, persecuting the native inhabitants in a city siege scenario. The invading force is focused around a single, villainous warleader, in this case the Irish-Norwegian Ingimund, who is overwhelmingly motivated by greed, and who plans the attack in secret council (reminiscent of Holofernes's predilection for *rume* (54a) in *Judith*):

> What resulted was that when [Ingimund] saw the wealthy city, and the choice lands around it, he yearned to possess them. Ingimund came then to the chieftains of the Norwegians and Danes: he was complaining bitterly before them, and said that they were not well off unless they had good lands, and that they ought to go and seize Chester and possess it with its wealth and lands. From that there resulted many great battles and wars. What he said was, "Let us entreat and implore them ourselves first, and if we do not get them[good lands] willingly like that, let us fight for them by force." All the chieftains of the Norwegians and Danes consented to that.

Ingimund returned home after that, having arranged for a hosting to follow him. Although they held that council secretly, the Queen learned of it. The Queen then gathered a large army about her from the adjoining regions, and filled the city of Chester with her troops. A woman gathers the troops, addresses the army, and partially directs the military strategy. As in Judith's beheading of Holofernes, the Queen finally defeats the invading army by a ruse, luring its leaders into an isolated area with promises of covert cooperation and then ambushing them while they are unarmed:

> It was then that the King (who was on the verge of death) and the Queen sent messengers to the Irish who were among the pagans (for the pagans had many Irish fosterlings), to say to the Irishmen, "Life and health to you from the King of the Saxons, who is ill, and from the Queen, who holds all authority over the Saxons, and they are certain that you are true and trustworthy friends to them .. This was

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51 For the text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, see, for instance, Taylor, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 47. For the association of this incident with the Óttir account, see J. O'Donovan, *Annals of Ireland, Three Fragments* (Dublin, 1860), p. 245. For the possibility that the annal has conflated accounts of two different battles at this juncture, see Radner, *Fragmentary Annals*, pp. 207–9.
the same as saying to them, "Since we have come from faithful friends of yours to converse with you, you should ask the Danes what gifts in land and property they would give to the people who would betray the city to them. If they will make terms for that, bring them to swear an oath in a place where it would be convenient to kill them, and when they are taking the oath on their swords and their shields, as is the custom, they will put aside all their good shooting weapons."

All was done accordingly, and they set aside their arms. And the reason why those Irish acted against the Danes was because they were less friends to them than the Norwegians. Then many of them were killed in that way, for huge rocks and beams were hurled onto their heads. Another great number were killed by spears and by arrows, and by every means of killing men.\(^{53}\)

In its account of the second battle (459), the Irish chronicle mentions that 'the Saxons won victory and spoils after massacring the pagans'. At the conclusion of \textit{Judith}, the poem dwells extensively upon this same motif, with the Bethulians pillaging the weapons and treasure of the pagan Assyrians.

At the conclusion of the 'Oittir'-episode in the \textit{Fragmentary Annals}, the chronicler alludes to Æthelflæd's fame and celebrates the Queen's cleverness as she strikes a strategic reciprocal military agreement with the Britons and the men of Alba:

> The pagans were slaughtered by the Queen like that, so that her fame spread in all directions. Æthelflæd, through her own cleverness, made peace with the men of Alba and with the Britons, so that whenever the same race should come to attack her, they would rise to help her. If it were against them that they came, she would take arms with them.\(^{54}\)

'Cleverness' (\textit{FA: glicca}) may be a stock component of praise for a general, but it is not a particularly prominent motif in either William of Malmesbury or Henry of Huntingdon's accounts of Æthelflæd,


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which praise her bravery and masculine leadership skills, but make no mention of her having a reputation for wisdom. It may be that wisdom was also a stock attribute of the heroine in Anglo-Saxon heroic biographies of Æthelflæd, just as Asser had made it a central component of Alfred's biography using the same device of comparison to Solomon that the proem to S 201 applied to Æthelthrand and Æthelred. In \textit{Judith}, the theme of the heroine's wisdom is utterly at the forefront of the narrative, communicated through a large collection of synonyms for wisdom which amplify this attribute of the heroine in a quite extreme fashion, although it is also a theme dictated by patriotic exegetical tradition, and alluded to by both Old Latin and Vulgate versions of Judith.\(^{55}\)

While these correspondences between the plot of \textit{Judith} and the Fragmentary Annals are certainly far too general to support an argument for direct influence of one upon the other, they nonetheless allow us to see that a legendary biography for Æthelflæd did circulate in the British Isles during the early-medieval period, but that the details of that legendary biography differed substantially from William of Malmesbury's account. The very rough resemblance in plot motif also allows us to consider that \textit{Judith} might conceivably be one of several literary manifestations of such an heroic biography of Æthelflæd, ultimately based upon a common oral tradition, regardless of the historical accuracy of such an oral tradition. It also allows us to speculate regarding what particular incident in Æthelflæd's career \textit{Judith} might have intended to represent in the slaying of Holferns, if

\(^{55}\) For a full examination of the 'wisdom-theme' in \textit{Judith}, particularly the large number of synonyms for 'wisdom' applied to the heroine, and for the patriotic and Old Latin precedent for such a theme, see R. E. Kaske, \textit{'Sapiens et fortitudo in the Old English Judith', The Wisdom of Poetry: Essays in Early English Literature in Honor of Morton W. Bloomfield}, ed. L. D. Benson and S. Wenzel (Kalamazoo, 1982), pp. 13–29.
it did in fact allude to Æthelflaed at all. As the FA’s accounts of both the siege at Chester in 907 and the Oittir-incident (911 or 912) ascribe personal responsibility to Æthelflaed for the death of the leader of an army of pagan invaders, they are certainly likely candidates, although both probably took place before Æthelflaed’s widowhood in 911. Æthelflaed also participated in a number of other battles after Æthelred’s death, such as those at Derby and Leicester, for which full literary accounts have not survived; and it is most likely that if Judith alludes to Æthelflaed, it is more of a composite account of her career.

ÆTHELFLEAED’S ROYAL STYLE
There is an odd stylistic ‘tic’ in the Mercian Register’s address of Æthelfind for the entries following her husband Æthelred’s death in 911. I have highlighted it in bold:

MR 913 Her Gode forgiftendum for Æpelflaed Myrcna hlædfige mid eallum Myrcnum to tamweordige 7 þa burh ðær getimbrede on forweardne sunor.

MR 917 Her Aepelflaed Myrca hlædfige Gode fulmigendum foran to Læfræmeshan begeat þa burh mid eallum þam þe þærto hyrde...

MR 918 Her heo begeat on hire gewæld mid Godes fulnum on forweardne gear gesimbsmumlice þa burh æt Lægræcestre, 7 se maesta del þes herges þe þærto hyrde wæard underbylded

This repeated, near-formulaic emphasis on divine grace or divine aid is not characteristic of the reports of other leaders’ military actions in

56 Text from S. Taylor, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 50. ‘[AD 913]: Here, God granting, Æthelflaed, Lady of the Mercians, went to Tamworth with all the Mercians, and built a fortress there in the early part of the summer. [AD 917]: Here Æthelflaed, Lady of the Mercians, God helping, before Lammas seized the fortress with all who obeyed [the fortress]... [AD 918] Here she peaceably acquired into her control, with God’s help, the fortress at Leicester in the early part of the year, and the greater portion of the forces that obeyed [the fortress] became subjected [to Æthelflaed].

57 For discussion of Plummer’s suggestion that the ‘Elfledes Boe’ mentioned in a list of manuscripts from Durham represents the Mercian Register, see Szarmach, ‘Æthelflaed’, p. 119. For the Mercian linguistic features retained in the MR portion of the Chronicle B-text, see Taylor, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, p. 45.
That this emphasis on traditionally masculine leadership abilities conferred by divine grace was also an important feature of Æthelflæd’s royal style is further suggested by its appearance in both surviving charters issued in Æthelflæd’s name after the death of her husband. S 224, an abbreviated version of a charter granting two hides at Stainton to Ealhelm, probably issued in 914 despite the miscopied date of AD 800, begins with the invocation ‘Aspiring by the Supernal Grace, I Æthelflæd, Queen of the Mercians, give to my faithful friend Ealhelm...’55 A second charter surviving in more complete form, S 225, dated 915, begins the bequest following a standard proem with ‘I Æthelflæd, with the help of supernal obedience and the generous mercy of Christ, reigning governor of the Mercians...’56 Both charters take pains to justify Æthelflæd’s rulership over Mercia as an act of obedience to divine command, accomplished through divine aid. Although it is quite common in Anglo-Latin charter bequests for the giver to justify his authority ceremonially with the formula ‘x’, by the grace of God, king over the x’, Æthelflæd’s anomalous political situation as a woman lends actual relevance to these formulas which is apparent in their retention by the Mercian Register. While a charter issued jointly by Æthelflæd and her husband Æthelred includes a similar formula in the bequest57, the surviving charters issued in Æthelred’s name alone do not include this formulaic justification of authority. The iconography of the Mercian coinage issued only during Æthelred’s reign also stressed this theme of divinely-sanctioned and divinely-aided leadership, including the Carolingian ‘hand-of-God’ motif as one of three otherwise anomalous designs that ceased to be used in England after Æthelflæd’s death.58

Consequently, it is possible that both the Mercian Register and the Nowell Codex Judith may preserve an element of Æthelflæd’s royal literary style. The ‘with the help of God’ formula is not, I think, distinctive enough a literary ‘tag’ to be treated as a diagnostic feature

55 Lines 185–98; text from Griffith, Judith, p. 102. ‘I deprived him of life, through God’s help. Now I wish to ask each of the men, city-people and shield-warriors, that you immediately hasten yourselves to battle as soon as the God of Creation, gracious King, sends radiant beams of light from the east. Carry forth the shields; boards before breasts; corselets and gleaming helmets into the troop of the enemies; cut down the folk-commanders, the death-doomed spear leaders, with shining swords. Your enemies are condemned to death and you have judgement, glory in conflict, as the mighty Lord has betokened through my hand’.”

56 + Superna aspirante gratia ego Ælfeld domina Merciorum dabo meo fidei amico Alchelme aliquam partem terram...

57 Regnante Christo mediatore nostro, filio Dei et salvatore mundi, qui sceptr regit et alta tociosaque telluris orbem post opere et umbrae conceptioneque sancti spiritus ex sacratissimo prossilibus urbibus alio, cuius imperio cuncta obtemperant celestia, tremuntque terrestria et formidant infermata. Huius gloriosissime incarnationis anno .æclxxxii, ego Ælfled, iuliana suprema pieta et largiente clementia Christi gubernacula regens Merciorum, cum

58 From S 221, AD 901, grant to the community of Much Wenlock: ‘Æðered Æ[thelflæd] quoq[ue] opitulante grauita Dei gratia monarchiam . Merciorum tenentes honorificeque gubernantes et defendentes...’; Æthelred and Æthelflæd, with the spontaneous grace of God aiding holding and honorably ruling and defending the monarchy of the Mercians...’

59 On Æthelflæd’s coinage, which also includes a representation of city gates, perhaps commemorating the siege at Chester or her victory at Derby, see C. Karkov, ‘Æthelflæd’s exceptional coinage’, OEN 29 (1995), 41. These coins bore the motto ‘Edward Rex’ on one side, just like West-Saxon coinage; and one of three distinctively Mercian designs on the other, probably symbolising Edward and Æthelflæd’s joint leadership of Mercia.
of a connection between the Old English Judith and the literary productions of Æthelflæd’s entourage. However, it is certainly another piece of evidence consistent with such an association.

OTHER ALTERATIONS TO THE BIBLE TEXT OF ‘JUDITH’ IN LIGHT OF ÆTHELFLEÁD’S CAREER

There is no doubt that Æthelflæd’s political position was anomalous among women in Anglo-Saxon society, particularly in West-Saxon society, which had historically held so intense an aversion to queens wielding political power that Asser felt the need to justify the tradition by recounting the story of the murderess Eadburh in his Vita Ælfrici. Vernacular Old Testament verse carried nearly the same weight of scriptural authority as the Latin Bible in Anglo-Saxon England, and one suspects that a work which presented overwhelming biblical precedent for Æthelflæd’s activities as a female warleader and ruling queen would have been of immense help in silencing her critics, regardless of whether such a work made the real-life correspondence explicit. It is also conceivable that Judith might have been written for Æthelflæd’s own spiritual comfort, and that she was meant to recognise herself in it, though the correspondence might have been less obvious to outsiders.

Several of the Old English poet’s otherwise-unexplained alterations to the Vulgate account do appear to deliberately deepen the parallel between Æthelflæd and the biblical Judith. Although the opening of Judith which would have contained an explanation of the heroine’s initial circumstances is missing from the manuscript, the large number of royal epithets applied to Judith in the remaining portion suggests that the Old English poem portrayed her as a royal

63 See, for instance, Szarmach, ‘Æthelflæd’, p. 119 for the appearance of the same Old English phrases and their Latin equivalents in Vercelli Homily XX and its variant versions.

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widow, rather than the surviving wife of a wealthy local merchant as in the bible. One of these epithets, sor Æðel (176a), not only displays the same principle of ad-hoc feminized male leadership terms as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’s references to Æthelflæd as Myræna blædfæge, but could very well be a deliberate echo of the first element of Æthelflæd’s compound name. While Ælfgifu is called þæo æþelan cwsw (‘the noble woman’, 275b), only in Judith does the word Æþel appear as a noun in the corpus of Old English, probably intended as a feminized form of Æþel ‘prince, noble man’.

Moreover, the Old English account does not stop at portraying Judith as a warleader, a Joan of Arc figure propelled by divine command toward military victory, but also as a queen fit to rule in peacetime. Where the Vulgate account has the citizens of Bethulia present Judith with Holofernes’s pots and pans and household effects (Jud. 15:11), the Bethualian lieutenants in the Nowell Codex version present Judith with Holofernes’s sword and armour in what essentially amounts to an Anglo-Saxon ceremony of fealty to a leader, resembling Beowulf’s offer to Hroðgar of the sword seized from Grendel’s mere. Although Belanoff points out that Judith does not seal her role as leader of the comitatus by distributing treasure to the warriors, Judith also does not offer the war-booty to the temple as she does at the conclusion of the biblical account, a motif much-embroidered in Ælfric’s homily where he presents Judith as refusing the treasure on the grounds that it had belonged to pagans and makes her an example of the shunning of worldly things. Nor is the redistribution of treasure always necessary of a warleader in biblical poetry. Judith seems to be following Exodat’s more sophisticated use

64 This significance of Judith’s reception of the war-booty was first noted by A. Rapetti, ‘Three Images of Judith’, Études de Lettres 2/3 (1987), 155–65, at 60.
of this stock-image, which has the Israelites themselves divide the spoils of the Egyptians on rib (587b) as a symbol of their new-found national cohesiveness. At a point where the bible strips Judith of any hint of a male leadership role, the Old English poem does the opposite, leaving the implication that Judith will continue to lead Bethulia long after the curtain has dropped.

CONCLUSIONS

The essential problem in using B. J. Timmer's objections to Foster as a foil in arguing for a correspondence between Æthelflæd and the Old English Judith is that in this case the burden of proof really rests with the claimant, rather than the defendant. Given that no contemporary source compares Æthelflæd to the biblical Judith, and that Judith does not unambiguously assert itself as a commentary on contemporary events, all of the correspondences I have here identified between Æthelflæd and the poem retain a certain hypothetical quality. While this study has shown that there is nothing about Judith (such as date, dialect, or genre) that is inconsistent with such an association, those pieces of additional evidence that I have identified as showing direct textual link between the poem and Æthelflæd: Judith's use of a common literary formula appearing (among other places in the Old English corpus) repeatedly in the Mercian Register's reporting of Æthelflæd, the poem's designation of Judith with the otherwise unattested form ðeo æthele as she addresses her troops, and the very rough correspondence on the level of plot motif with the account of Æthelflæd's deeds in the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland, at best constitute a collection of intriguing 'maybe's. However far Wainwright's theory of a West-Saxon 'conspiracy of silence' may go toward explaining Judith's hypothetical failure to explicitly name Æthelflæd as its inspiration, and toward justifying the choice of an Old Testament verse account rather than more explicit Brenanurb-

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style praise poem as a means of commemorating Æthelflæd, we can only argue so much on the basis of silence.

At the same time, Timmer's objections to the theory, by and large, are still those of modern critics, and do need to be addressed systematically. This study has hopefully demonstrated that the intervening half-century's worth of scholarship has reaffirmed the correspondence of dates between Æthelflæd's career and the composition of Judith, and disentangled any possible correspondence with Æthelflæd from the issue of Judith's date and dialect. It has reaffirmed the importance of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon literature and in the rhetoric of the Alfredian dynasty that encouraged its production. It has questioned the designation of Judith as a hagiography to the extent that we can no longer confidently place Judith in any known genre of Old English poetry, but must regard it as something of an anomaly, much like its hypothetical real-life inspiration herself. Above all, the life's work of F. T. Wainwright and recent research on the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle have demonstrated that Æthelflæd's fame in her own day was more than substantial; that it had inspired Latin prose accounts and possibly also Latin verse panegyrics during the Anglo-Saxon period; that it had extended beyond the political boundaries of Mercian and West-Saxon control into Ireland and Wales, inspiring at least one 'legendary' treatment in Irish historical prose that owed little to Norman historiography.

Paul Szarmach's dismissive mention of the Æthelflæd-Judith connection in a relatively recent footnote suggests that the present critical resistance to this theory may be in reaction to the modern appropriation of both Æthelflæd and the Old English Judith as Amazonian heroines by feminist authors writing in a popular vein.⁶⁶

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While it is beyond the mandate of this paper to address that issue, and beyond the capacity of any available evidence to demonstrate that the Old English *Judith* must be read only as a *roman à clef* about Æthelflæd, this study has hopefully demonstrated that many of the traditional scholarly objections to such a reading are longer valid. The question of *Judith*’s relationship to Æthelflæd should therefore be evaluated as a serious possibility, rather than dismissed as a quaint joke at the expense of romantic Victorians such as Foster, or at the expense of a few equally-romantic modern feminist authors whose roles as historiographers resemble those occupied by in an earlier age by Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury.

Princeton, NY, and Oxford: 1992), pp. 11–12, Szarmach complains that these “establish incorrect information of another kind in saying categorically: “The Anglo-Saxon poem *Judith* is modeled on [Æthelflæd].” Though in the history of the scholarship on this poem many have asserted a connection between Æthelflæd and Judith, that suggestion has never achieved the status of fact; it is a dubious proposition, moreover, that the suggestion is the current reigning opinion. See B. J. Timmer, ed., *Judith* (London, 1952), 6–8. I absolutely do not intend to accuse Szarmach of an anti-feminist agenda; his is a succinct and accurate reflection of current scholarship, right down to his standard citation of Timmer’s 1952 edition in support.