The Liturgy of ‘Charms’ in Anglo-Saxon England

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Abstract

This thesis undertakes a re-evaluation of the concept of 'charms' in Anglo-Saxon culture, and reconsiders three core issues that lie at the heart of this genre: the definition of *galdor* as 'charm'; the manuscript contexts of rituals that have been included in this genre; and the phenomenon of 'gibberish' writing which is used as a defining characteristic of 'charms'. The thesis investigates the different meanings of *galdor* from the entire corpus of Old English before reconsidering its meaning in ritual texts. It then explores the liturgical nature of these seemingly unorthodox rituals, and argues that 'charms' were understood to be part of the Anglo-Saxon liturgy. The manuscript contexts of 'charms' indicate that Anglo-Saxon scribes did not distinguish between these rituals and other liturgical texts, and I take a case study of one manuscript to demonstrate this. Some rituals from the *Vitellius Psalter* have been included in editions of 'charms', and this case study reinterprets these texts as components of a liturgical collection. The *Vitellius Psalter* also reveals intertextual relationships between 'gibberish' writing in some of its rituals and exercises in encryption, suggesting that several texts encode meaning in this manuscript. The findings of this case study are then developed to reconsider the phenomenon of 'gibberish' writing that is used as a defining characteristic of 'charms', and it offers an alternative way of reading abstract letter sequences in ritual texts according to Patristic philosophies of language. This study does not aim to analyse every ritual that has been included in the corpus of 'charms' but each chapter will take case studies from a range of manuscripts that are representative of the genre and its sub-categories. The thesis challenges the notion that there was any such thing as an Anglo-Saxon 'charm', and it offers alternative interpretations of these rituals as liturgical rites and coded texts.

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Introduction

'Anglo-Saxon charms prove that Christianity could not hold back the pagans' faith in their magical powers and attest to the enduring quality of a deep-seated belief in magic'.[1]

Scholars have consistently presented the Anglo-Saxon 'charms' as evidence of a pre-Christian Germanic past. These texts have been understood as witnesses to a continued paganism that became Christianised in Anglo-Saxon England. The genre of 'charms' is constantly used as a point of entry for discussions of paganism and heterodox Christianity, but these texts provide very important information about the diverse nature of late Anglo-Saxon liturgical practices. A new critique of this topic is worthwhile because when traditional perceptions of Anglo-Saxon paganism are challenged, the vibrant nature of early medieval Christianity can be exposed. In this thesis I re-evaluate the concept of 'charms' in Anglo-Saxon culture, and offer an alternative reading of these rituals as mainstream Christian texts.[2] I engage with three principle issues that lie at the heart of this genre: the translation of the Old English noun 'galdor' as 'charm'; the manuscript contexts of the rituals that are included in this corpus; and the phenomenon of 'gibberish' writing that is used as a defining characteristic of 'charms'. This study is structured according to these core issues which also parallel three important concerns of late Anglo-Saxon Christianity, when the majority of 'charms' were written. Firstly, there are different descriptions of *galdor* as both an acceptable Christian ritual and a dangerous spiritual practice. Secondly, the manuscripts in which 'charms' were written elucidate experimentations with Christian literary traditions and liturgical practices, rendering a study of these rituals in their manuscript contexts extremely

[1] Paola Tornaghi, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms and the Language of Magic', *Aevum*, 84 (2010), 439-64 at 464.

[2] 'Ritual' is used throughout to refer to a text that prescribes the performance of acts and utterances for spiritual purposes within a specified set of circumstances. These texts are scripts for performance and they may not have been followed closely, thus the rituals that survive indicate only an intended performance and do not reflect possible innovations in actual performance. For discussions of the definition of a 'ritual', see Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: OUP, 1992); *Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: OUP, 1997); Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), esp. 23-58.

important. Finally, the study of language gained great momentum in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and understandings of the cosmological power of letters were significantly developed by English theologians. Taking account of these approaches to language opens alternative readings of obscure writing and 'gibberish' in Anglo-Saxon rituals.

In this thesis I argue that 'charms' were written down as experimental Christian rituals in late Anglo-Saxon England. Even the most obscure features of these texts – particularly their use of 'gibberish' writing – can be understood as belonging to Christian philosophical traditions that were being taught in late Anglo-Saxon minsters. Once the 'charms' are re-read in their manuscript contexts, they reveal information about the particular ecclesiastical milieus in which they were written. These rituals provide evidence of experimentations with liturgical practices that were influenced by Patristic philosophy in late Anglo-Saxon England. Exploring how the so-called 'charms' censored, harnessed, and encoded spiritual power raises important questions about Anglo-Saxon paganism, and offers exciting new insights into early English Christianity.

In order to reconsider 'charms', it is first necessary to outline how these texts have been understood and classified to date. This introductory chapter provides an overview of the genre, how 'charms' have been identified, and it outlines the historical context of when the rituals were written down. Given that the Old English noun *galdor* has been consistently equated with the Modern English 'charm' – which did not enter the English language until after the Anglo-Saxon period – I then explore the meaning of this noun in the Old English corpus in Chapter One. Perhaps surprisingly, *galdor* is sometimes used to signify wisdom, Christian discernment, and divine revelation, and in Chapter Two I reconsider the meaning of this word in 'charm' rituals. Another related concern is how and why 'charms' draw upon the liturgy if they are considered to provide evidence of pre-Christian practices, and I address this feature of these rituals in Chapter Three. Indeed, the close correspondences between some

'charms' and liturgical rites suggests that it is more beneficial to consider them as part of the Anglo-Saxon liturgy. In Chapter Four I focus on the importance of the manuscript contexts of rituals which uncover connections between them and other surrounding Christian texts. I then take a case study of the *Vitellius Psalter* which is believed to contain a number of 'charms' as well as many other texts associated with the liturgy. Finally, in Chapter Five I explore the nature of 'gibberish' writing in 'charms', and offer an alternative way of understanding this phenomenon as a ritual application of Patristic philosophies of language.

i. Editions of 'Charms'

In order to understand how the genre of 'charms' has been constructed, it is first necessary to ask how these texts are described in printed editions. Collections of Anglo-Saxon 'charms' have been gathered for almost one hundred and fifty years, and this genre of ritual texts has now been firmly established. In 1866, the antiquarian Thomas Oswald Cockayne completed his seminal three-volume work *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*.[3] Cockayne identified a total of thirty-two rituals from ten Anglo-Saxon manuscripts as belonging to the 'charm' tradition, which he described as follows:

> We may perchance wonder at the slavery in which people were held by the Church, during the earlier ages of our modern period; at the saying of medicine masses, at the blessing the worts out of the field, at the placing them upon the altar; but the Church had delivered men from a worse servitude than this, from the tyranny and terror of the poisoner and the wizard… Let the scornful reader, in good health, not toss his head on high at the so called superstition of the simple Saxon, but consider rather how audacious an infidel that man, in those ages, would have seemed, who had refused to pray in the received manner for the

[3] Thomas Oswald Cockayne, ed. and trans., *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England: Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never Before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in this Country Before the Norman Conquest*, 3 Vols (London: Longman, 1864-6).

> restoration of his health… The Catholic Church of the day, unequal to root out these superstitions and rarely beneficial ideas, tried to fling a garb of religion round them to invoke holy names to drive out devils by exorcisms.[4]

Cockayne's opening discussion of Anglo-Saxon 'charms' reflects attitudes to early medieval religion in the mid nineteenth century. He did not explicitly define the 'charm' but he saw it as a form of ritual that incorporated Christian elements into an otherwise superstitious, folk custom.

Cockayne's work gave careful consideration to the content and ordering of the manuscripts in which the rituals survive, and he edited the entirety of two other manuscripts (London, British Library, MSS Harley 585, Royal 12 D. xvii) which later became key sources in charm studies. A recent criticism of Cockayne's edition asks 'just how accurate is it to place all this material together, when it covers such a wide range of interests and applications?'.[5] The eclecticism of his edition, however, does reflect the diverse range of texts that coexist with 'charms' in manuscripts, including medical works, Patristic writings, computus, prognostications, riddles, poetry, and liturgical texts. The later editions of Anglo-Saxon 'charms' extracted these rituals from their manuscript contexts and separated them from their surrounding texts.[6]

In 1909, Felix Grendon published the first exclusive corpus of 146 Anglo-Saxon 'charms' from nineteen manuscripts, although only sixty-two rituals were printed in the edition.[7] Grendon did not define what he understood by the word 'charm' but the extent to which this genre was imposed on these texts is clear from titles which he made up for some

[4] Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, Vol. I, xxviii, xxxiii. The 'charms' are printed in Vol. I, 384-405; Vol. III, 286-95.
[5] Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Carolina Escobar-Vargas, *Magic and Medieval Society* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 13.
[6] On the value of Cockayne's edition for other genres in Anglo-Saxon studies, see Lázló Sándor Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics, 900-1100: Study and Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 17-20.
[7] Felix Grendon, 'The Anglo-Saxon Charms', *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, 22 (1909), 105-237 at 160-4. Most of the eighty-seven unprinted 'charms' are taken from Cockayne and Günther Leonhardi, ed., *Kleinere angelsächsische Denkmäler I*, Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Prosa, Vol. 6 (Hamburg: H. Grand, 1905).

rituals. He used the Old English term *galdor* (pl. *galdra*) to form the titles 'Siðgaldor' ('A Journey Spell'), 'Nigon wyrta galdor' ('Nine Herbs Charm'), and 'Be galdorstafum' ('Concerning Magic Writings').[8] Grendon's terminology was left largely undefined but he associated incantations, remedies, 'gibberish', and superstition with the 'charm' tradition.[9] Grendon divided his collection into five categories of magic, and he believed that the texts' magical elements reveal a native Germanic religion that was subsumed into English Christianity:

> Pagan charms had to be met by Christian charms; and wherever heathen names of deities were used, authorized canonical names had to be substituted. From this want of single-hearted aim in its war on magic usages, the Church met with but slight success; so that Christian and Pagan ceremonies came to be strangely mingled... the interdicted practices were winked at or flatly approved by the clergy, and were thus carried on even until recent times… A sequel to the conciliatory policy of the Church was the active participation of the clergy in the old superstitious customs. This was not as unnatural as it may seem. The very air of the time was heavy with irrational beliefs; and priests, like other people, breathed in what they were far from recognizing as Pagan superstitions.[10]

These rituals were presented as evidence of a heterodox Christianity that embraced animism and the irrational superstitions of pre-Christian religion. Grendon also depicted Anglo-Saxon clergymen as susceptible to the superstition which he believed saturated early English culture.

[8] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 176-7, 190-1, 202-3.
[9] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 110-22.
[10] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 144-5, see also 124-39.

Grendon attempted to trace diachronic connections between these native English customs and contemporary folklore.[11] He claimed that modern children's rhymes have their origins in heathen formulas that were deliberately corrupted in 'gibberish' words and phrases:

> This fact points to the possibility of a common Germanic origin for the rhymes, – an origin which must be set at a remote pre-Christian period… The permitted survival both of the jingle spells and of the children's rhymes is explicable enough: for whether the original theurgic phraseology was replaced by outright gibberish, as in the spells, or by harmless lingo, as in the rhymes, the obtrusive Heathenism of the Anglo-Saxon compositions would alike have disappeared, so that the Church could afford to wink at the persisting forms.[12]

Grendon viewed 'gibberish' as a remnant of the heathen past in both the rituals and his contemporary society. Little is known about his personal life and beliefs, and further research on his other publications may reveal interesting information about his interest in pre-Christian religion.[13] For example, Grendon was an apologist for Samuel Butler's animistic philosophy (*God the Known and God the Unknown*, 1917), and there are indications of his socialist sympathies in his commentary on Harry Laidler's *Socialism in Thought and Action* (1920).[14] Grendon's personal interests seem to have influenced much of his scholarly edition of 'charms', and more research on his academic, religious, social, and political environments would reveal more about his historiographical agendas.[15]

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[11] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 123-7.
[12] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 125-6.
[13] A summary of his main work can be found in *The Campus* journal of the City University of New York (between 1909 and 1923), and his obituary in *The Shaw Review*, 8 (1965), 110.
[14] Felix Grendon, 'Samuel Butler's God', *North American Review*, 208 (1918), 227-86; 'Socialism in Thought and Action by Harry W. Laidler', *Political Science Quarterly*, 35 (1920), 484-6.
[15] A good starting point for this research could begin by considering the following relevant works: F. R. Ankersmit, 'The Dilemma of Contemporary Anglo-Saxon Philosophy of History', *History and Theory*, 25 (1986), 1-27; J. R. Hall, 'Mid-Nineteenth-Century American Anglo-Saxonism: The Question of Language', Gregory A. VanHoosier-Carey, 'Byrhtnoth in Dixie: The Emergence of Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Postbellum South', and John D. Niles, 'Appropriations: A Concept of Culture', in *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles, eds (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1997), 133-56, 157-72, 202-28; Eric G. Stanley, 'The Early Middle Ages = The Dark Ages = The Heroic Age of England

In 1919, Charles Singer – a British historian of science and medicine – expanded Grendon's discussion of 'charms' to a wider corpus of magical texts from early medieval England.[16] Singer identified a number of different sources which he believed had influenced the 'charms', and he claimed that these were transmitted to Anglo-Saxon England from continental monasteries.[17] Singer emphasised that native Teutonic magic had the greatest influence on Anglo-Saxon 'charms', and he argued that this could be identified by four 'obviously pagan' doctrines of specific venoms, the number nine, the disease-causing worm, and elf-shot.[18] In addition to Teutonic magic, Singer believed that 'charms' were also influenced by Celtic magic, European plant-lore, Byzantine magic (including 'gibberish'), and pagan Roman spells.[19] He followed Grendon in claiming that once all classical and ecclesiastical elements are removed from the rituals, the remains of original, pagan Anglo-Saxon compositions are exposed.[20]

In 1942, Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie included twelve 'charms' in his collection of Anglo-Saxon poetry.[21] He provided descriptions for the five manuscripts from which the rituals were selected, and he criticised Grendon's system of classification as 'far from satisfactory'.[22] Dobbie grouped these twelve 'charms' according to their use of meter, which he associated with the Old English term *galdor*:

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and in English', and Laura Kendrick, 'The American Middle Ages: Eighteenth-Century Saxonist Myth-Making', in *The Middle Ages After the Middle Ages in the English Speaking World*, Marie-Françoise Alamichel and Derek Brewer, eds (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 43-78, 121-36; J. R. Hall, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Nineteenth Century: England, Denmark, America', in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne, eds (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 434-54; Robert Scott Nokes, 'Borroughs Wellcome & Co., the American Medical Association and *Anglo-Saxon Leechcraft*: Popular Study of Anglo-Saxon Remedies in the Early Twentieth Century', *OEN*, 37 (2004), 38-43; Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin, eds., *Folklore and Nationalism in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[16] Charles Singer, 'Early English Magic and Medicine', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 9 (1919), 341-74.

[17] Singer, 'Magic and Medicine', 346-7, 352-3.

[18] Singer, 'Magic and Medicine', 351-9.

[19] Singer, 'Magic and Medicine', 360-73.

[20] See in particular Singer, 'Magic and Medicine', 358-60.

[21] Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR, Vol. 6 (New York: Columbia UP, 1942), 116-28.

[22] Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, cxxx-cxxxii.

> when, as here, twelve of the charms are to be edited separately, selected from the whole body of Anglo-Saxon charm literature because of their metrical form, the problem of classification by content becomes less important. Occasionally, as in the study of other Anglo-Saxon poems, we are tempted to distinguish sharply between heathen and Christian materials, but such distinctions are not easy to justify… It is possible to set off Charm 2 and Charm 7 as 'herbal charms', as Grendon does, but each of these charms contains an incantation (*galdor*) as well as a recipe, and little would be gained by separating them from the rest.[23]

Despite his critique of Grendon's edition, Dobbie did not reject Grendon's corpus of charms, and he also followed previous editors in identifying their non-Christian features, claiming that metrical incantations are 'much more heathen in tone than the prose introduction'.[24] His edition of metrical 'charms' associated the Old English noun *galdor* with poetic features of seemingly pagan rituals.

The second principle corpus of Anglo-Saxon 'charms' was published in 1948 by Godfrid Storms. This work drew upon a wider range of sources than Grendon's corpus as it used twenty-three manuscripts for its eighty-six rituals.[25] Storms followed Singer in attempting to uncover features of native Germanic religion in 'charms', which he defined according to James Frazer's anthropological theory of magic.[26] Storms believed that the Old English noun *galdor* defines this tradition of Germanic magical practice in Anglo-Saxon contexts:

> The Anglo-Saxon expressions mainly refer to the way in which the magic actions were performed, rather than to magic in general. The commonest O.E. word is Anglian *galdor*,

[23] Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, cxxxii-cxxxiii.
[24] Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, cxxxvi.
[25] Godfrid Storms, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1948), vi-viii, 25-6.
[26] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 36-40, 117-18; see also James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, abridged edn (London: MacMillan, 1974), 14.

> West Saxon *gealdor*. Occasionally we find O.E. *galung*. They are derived from O.E. *galan*, to sing, so their meaning is song, magic song, charm. In Germanic dialects we find O.S. *galdar*, O.H.G. *galdar*, *galstar*, *kalstar*, O.N. *galdr*. To indicate a magician or any person singing charm songs we have O.E. *galere*, *gealdorgalere*, *wyrm-galere*, *wyrt-galere*. Practising charms is called O.E. *galan*, *agalan*, *begalan*, *gegalan*, *ongalan*, all meaning to sing, to charm.[27]

Although only twelve surviving rituals from Anglo-Saxon England prescribe a *galdor*, Storms used this term to define an entire corpus of 'charms'.[28] He also associated the following pagan characteristics with this genre: vernacular instructions; a 'magical atmosphere'; alliterating verse; surviving references to Germanic deities; 'gibberish' and 'incomprehensible doggerel'; and superstitious beliefs in herbal power.[29] While Storms outlined some of the predominant Christian elements that are found throughout these texts – such as invocations of saints, liturgical objects, and the use of Latin and Greek – he also questioned whether they are 'mere additions or whether they are pagan elements preserved in a Christian garb'.[30] As a result, Storms proposed that the Christian and pagan elements of 'charms' should be separated 'because both have marked characteristics that have little in common with each other'.[31] Storms firmly believed that all of these pagan elements can be easily identified in Anglo-Saxon rituals, and that they collectively define the genre of 'charms' or *galdra*.

Storms' pursuit of a pure, Germanic religion was inspired by the earlier scholarly endeavours of German philologists.[32] There are also indications that his contemporary

[27] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 113.
[28] For these rituals, see Chapter Two.
[29] See Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 116-25.
[30] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 114.
[31] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 117.
[32] On the nationalist agendas of the early German philologists, see Eric G. Stanley, *Imagining the Anglo-Saxon Past: The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism and Anglo-Saxon Trial by Jury* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1975);

environment heavily influenced his approach to these Anglo-Saxon texts because he traced the historical unity of Germanic nations through the idea of the pre-Christian 'charm':

> If we want to know how magic was performed among the Germanic peoples we must go to the O.E. charms… The original unity existing between the Anglo-Saxons and other Germanic tribes makes it pretty certain that they all used the same charms… Leaving out of account a few minor differences the same charm is found in England, Scotland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Esthonia, Finland and Hungary… There are positive proofs that an Indo-European linguistic unity existed, comprising both the Germanic and the Aryan peoples, which, even if we reject the unity of race, admits the possibility of a common origin of the charm.[33]

Storms viewed Anglo-Saxon 'charms' as the oldest surviving evidence of Germanic magic that can be traced back to an Indo-European past when the Teutonic nations were united. With the exceptions of England and Scotland, all of the countries that he included in this history were either occupied by the Nazis or allied to Germany during the Second World War. Storms worked on this edition during the War before its publication in 1948 and, given that he was living in Holland throughout the country's occupation, these sentiments about Anglo-Saxon 'charms' may have been influenced by his contemporary political environment.[34] Like Grendon's first edition of 'charms', Storms' edition may reveal more about his academic, social, and political pressures than it does about Anglo-Saxon ritual

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Robert Leventhal, 'The Emergence of Philological Discourse in the German States 1770-1810', *ISIS*, 77 (1986), 243-60; Clare A. Simmons, '"Iron-Worded Proof": Victorian Identity and the Old English Language', in *Medievalism in England*, Leslie J. Workman, ed (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992), 202-14; Jeffrey M. Peck, '"In the Beginning Was the Word": Germany and the Origins of German Studies', in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols, eds (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996), 127-47.

[33] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 108-11.

[34] Storms was to later resume this approach to Germanic history in an article on *Beowulf*, where he patriotically situated Nijmegen in the drama of the Anglo-Saxon poem: 'I lay so much stress on Nijmegen, partly because I have been living in or near the town for more than sixty years, but mainly because it must actually have been the goal of Hygelac's force', Godfrid Storms, 'How Did the *Dene* and the *Geatas* Get Into *Beowulf*?', *ES*, 80 (1999), 46-9 at 47.

practice. More research could be conducted on Storms' historiographical agendas but for the sake of this study it is important to note how he used the idea of Anglo-Saxon *galdra* to reconstruct a history of a Germanic cultural legacy that survived the conquests of Rome and the Roman Catholic Church.

ii. Scholarly Understandings of *Galdra* and 'Charms'

The definition of *galdor* as a magical performance prompted a rich tradition of charm scholarship in Anglo-Saxon studies. In their 1952 edition of magic and medicine, George Grattan and Charles Singer defined *galdor* as 'a common word always associated with singing for a magical purpose'.[35] Other studies developed this view of Anglo-Saxon magic and argued that evidence of continued pagan worship can be found in the 'charms', as seen, for example, in William Chaney's influential 1960 article:

> the terms in which the newly converted Anglo-Saxons interpreted the Christian religion were shaped by the tribal culture, impregnated, as it was, by the heathenism of the old religion… However much the merging of the two strands [of Christianity and paganism] complicates the problem of survival, the latter is well attested – perhaps especially in the Anglo-Saxon charms – and the resulting syncretism at times makes for a virtual neo-polytheism… One need not go so far, however, to see more heathenism lurking behind the manuscripts and artifacts than is visible to the twentieth-century eye.[36]

Case studies of individual 'charms' also reflect Chaney's views of paganism, as seen in Bruce Rosenberg's 1966 analysis of the eleventh-century *Æcerbot* field ritual: 'old West Saxon magic is mixed with the new because the worshipper, be he shaman or plowman, has

[35] George H. G. Grattan and Charles J. Singer, eds. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine* (London: OUP, 1952), 38.
[36] William Chaney, 'Paganism to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England', *Harvard Theological Review*, 53 (1960), 197-217 at 197, 199, 217.

not yet accepted Christianity exclusively nor rejected paganism completely'.[37] In 1967, Paul Beekman Taylor also attempted to uncover pagan elements in a number of heroic poems through their apparent references to 'charms'. He claimed that the 'usual Old English designation for charm is *galdor*' that 'denotes a ritual song or incantation'.[38] Taylor assumed that the Anglo-Saxons recognised a form of ritual that is equivalent to the modern understanding of a 'charm'. The scholarship that immediately followed the two main editions of 'charms' consistently depicted these rituals as evidence of a reluctance or refusal to abandon pagan beliefs.

In 1963, Jane Crawford upheld the view that *galdor* denotes a magical practice but she also highlighted that the word is 'irrevocably linked' to the word *sige* (victory) in other Christian texts.[39] She rendered *galdor* as an 'incantation',[40] and challenged traditional views of Anglo-Saxon paganism by emphasising the historical contexts of 'charms' and their manuscripts:

> The manuscripts containing these charms were written mainly in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but the texts themselves point to many varied sources and periods. Although some of the formulae have often been considered the oldest relics of English and of all Germanic literature, the evidence they provide must be sifted carefully. To recognize Christian emendations and additions is simple by comparison with the virtually impossible task of separating out the different pagan strands… The Anglo-Saxons supplied their own words for

[37] Bruce A. Rosenberg, 'The Meaning of Æcerbot', *Journal of American Folklore*, 79 (1966), 428-36 at 431. For other case studies, see Wilfrid Bonser, 'The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in Anglo-Saxon and Later Recipes', *Folklore*, 56 (1945), 254-6; *The Medical Background of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study in History, Psychology, and Folklore* (London: Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 1963); Howell Chickering, 'The Literary Magic of *Wið Færstice*', *Viator*, 2 (1972), 83-104; Marie Nelson, 'An Old English Charm against Nightmare', *Germanic Notes*, 13 (1982), 17-18; Edward Pettit, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Barlow 35', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 43 (1999), 33-46; Lázló Sándor Chardonnens, 'An Arithmetical Crux in the Woden Passage in the Old English *Nine Herbs Charm*', *Neophilologus*, 93 (2009), 691-702.

[38] Paul Beekman Taylor, 'Some Vestiges of Ritual Charms in *Beowulf*', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 1 (1967), 276-85 at 277.

[39] Jane Crawford, 'Evidences for Witchcraft in Anglo-Saxon England', *Medium Ævum*, 32 (1963), 99-116 at 103.

[40] Crawford, 'Evidences for Witchcraft', 103.

> much of the Latin terminology of magic, but this does not constitute evidence for the existence of a similar native tradition of magic.[41]

Crawford usefully argued that condemnations of magic reveal important information about the monastic communities which produced the manuscripts containing 'charms' instead of providing evidence of surviving pagan religion.[42]

Audrey Meaney also took this approach to the apparent evidence of pagan cults in England: 'it would be unwise to imagine anything more than attenuated half-memories of paganism, however much accompanied by strong superstitions, persisting after the late eighth century'.[43] Like Crawford, Meaney developed interesting interpretations of supposed pagan practices in England according to the sources' historical, political, and ecclesiastical contexts.[44] Thomas Hill also published extensively on the Anglo-Saxon 'charms' and offered alternative sources of inspiration for these rituals from liturgical texts.[45] These counter-arguments are still crucial for understanding when, why, how, and by whom these rituals were written. Their most important contribution to the field is that they highlight the ecclesiastical environments in which many of these rituals were written down that were previously discarded by their editors.

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[41] Crawford, 'Evidences for Witchcraft', 105, 108.

[42] For a recent study of the Christian construction of paganism, see Calvert S. Watkins' chapter 'Inventing Pagans' in his book *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 68-107.

[43] Audrey L. Meaney, 'Woden in England: A Reconsideration of the Evidence', *Folklore*, 77 (1966), 105-15 at 109.

[44] See also Audrey L. Meaney, 'Women, Witchcraft, and Magic in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Superstition and Popular Medicine in Anglo-Saxon England*, Donald G. Scragg, ed (Manchester: Centre of Anglo-Saxon Studies, 1989), 9-40; 'The Anglo-Saxon View of the Causes of Illness', in *Health, Disease and Healing in Medieval Culture*, Sheila Campbell, Bert Hall, and David Klausner, eds (London: MacMillan, 1992), 12-33; '"And we forbeodað eornostlice ælcne hæðenscipe": Wulfstan and Late Anglo-Saxon and Norse "Heathenism"', in *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: The Proceedings of the Second Alcuin Conference*, Matthew Townend, ed (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 461-500.

[45] See Thomas D. Hill, 'An Irish-Latin Analogue for the Blessing of the Sods in the Old English *Æcer-bot* Charm', *N&Q*, 213 (1968), 362-3; 'The *Æcerbot* Charm and its Christian User', *ASE*, 6 (1977), 213-21; 'The Theme of the Cosmological Cross in Two Old English Cattle Theft Charms', *N&Q*, 25 (1978), 488-90; 'Invocation of the Trinity and the Tradition of the Lorica in Old English Poetry', *Speculum*, 56 (1981), 259-67. See also John D. Niles, 'The Æcerbot Ritual in Context', in *Old English Literature in Context*, John D. Niles, ed (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1980), 44-56; Heather Barkley, 'Liturgical Influences on the Anglo-Saxon Charms against Cattle Theft', *N&Q*, 44 (1997), 450-2.

From the mid 1980s, scholars returned to the problem of defining *galdor* as a magical practice. In his 1985 article, Karl Wentersdorf highlighted how *galdor* is used to denote a Christian ritual performance in the Exeter Book:

> OE *galdor*, denoting 'heathen prayer, pagan incantation,' retained this meaning in Christian decrees and sermons as late as the eleventh century; and most critics take this to be its meaning in *R[iming] P[oem]*. Heathen incantations, however, were sometimes 'converted' by the insertion of Christian elements and such mixtures continued to be thought of as *galdras*... in the Exeter Book Riddle no. 48, a tongueless shining *hring*, while keeping silent, cries out 'Save me, helper of souls'; wise men are urged to intuit the mystery, the *galdorcwide* of the gold, and to entrust their salvation to God. The *hring* is clearly either the chalice or the paten used in the eucharistic rite, and the *galdorcwide* is a liturgical formula inscribed on the vessel. Hence when the persona in *R[iming] P[oem]* talks of chanting *galdorwordum*, he is probably thinking either of participation in Christian liturgies or of his spontaneous offering of prayers of thanksgiving.[46]

Wentersdorf drew attention to non-condemnatory uses of *galdor* in texts outside of the 'charms' corpus, and argued that ecclesiastics surrounded this word with Christian concepts to justify its usage. Wentersdorf's suggestion that this word could denote an explicitly liturgical performance raises critical questions about the genre which I will consider in the first two chapters.

Karen Jolly also contributed important discussions of how ecclesiastical authorities perceived *galdra* in late Anglo-Saxon England:

> The difficulty is with words said over herbs, charms or *galdra*. Although some extremists forbid all *galdor* except prayer itself… Ælfric in his homilies is condemning *galdra* with

[46] Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The Old English "Rhyming Poem": A Ruler's Lament', *SP*, 82 (1985), 265-94 at 280-1.

> pagan, magic connections: the context is always a discussion of witches, enchanters, sorcerers. However, he allows Christian words to be said over the herbs.[47]

Jolly argued that the wrong types of *galdra*, along with other condemned practices, reflected 'an illegitimate or false use of nature'.[48] She defined *galdor* according to the Latin *carmen* (song) and claimed that 'it refers specifically to any verbal formula used in a remedy, and is usually associated with ritual actions'.[49] In 1996, Jolly expanded this discussion and critiqued scholarly understandings of this word which arose from the edited collections: '[the] editions present a picture of charms and medicine very different from what the Anglo-Saxons would have understood'.[50] Jolly further suggested that *galdor* could signify a liturgical performance as well as a heathen incantation:

> to what vocal production this [word] refers is unclear in the texts we have… In many cases the recipe specifies sing (*singan* or *besingan*, 'enchant') this *galdor*, in the same way that it might direct the healer to sing a psalm or prayer, which implies that the performer chanted it in a fashion similar to the Gregorian. In other contexts, such as law codes prohibiting sorcery and witchcraft, *galdor* seems to refer to something akin to an incantation.[51]

[47] Karen Jolly, 'Anglo Saxon Charms in the Context of a Christian Worldview', *Journal of Medieval History*, 11 (1985), 279-93 at 285-6.
[48] Karen Jolly, 'Magic, Miracle, and Popular Practice in the Early Medieval West: Anglo-Saxon England', in *Religion, Science, and Magic: In Concert and Conflict*, Jacob Neuser, and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds (Oxford: OUP, 1989), 166-84 at 170.
[49] Jolly, 'Context of a Christian Worldview', 285.
[50] Karen Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 100.
[51] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 99.

According to Jolly, *galdra* were not always condemned as harmful supernatural practices and they could have strong liturgical connections. In her more recent work, she abandons the term 'charm' and refers to these rituals as medicinal and protective 'formulas'.[52]

Despite Jolly's extensive work on the Christian nature of some *galdra* and 'charms', traditional views of pre-Christian magic persisted. Numerous scholars such as L. M. C. Weston returned to Dobbie's edition to define metrical 'charms' as magical poetry that 'depend primarily upon incantations: in them the language, the poetry is the vehicle for the magical act'.[53] In 1993, Louis Rodrigues produced another edition of twelve metrical 'charms', describing them as 'Germanic cultural inheritances of the Anglo-Saxons' with 'Christian religious substitutions [that] seem to have been chosen because they hardly differed in spirit from the magical atmosphere of their pagan originals'.[54] Scholars continued to view the metrical 'charms' as examples of surviving paganism in Anglo-Saxon England, and this has been upheld in recent years.[55]

Other scholars have used the etymology of *galdor* to trace diachronic and geographical developments of the English 'charm' tradition. In 1992, Lea Olsan connected its Indo-European root *ghel-* to Modern English 'yell' and 'yelp'.[56] She defined *galdor* according to the Latin *carmen* that is 'a solemn ritual utterance, usually sung or chanted in

[52] See Karen Jolly, 'On the Margins of Orthodoxy: Devotional Formulas and Protective Prayers in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41', in *Signs on the Edge: Space, Text and Margin in Medieval Manuscripts*, Sarah L. Keefer and Rolf Bremmer, eds (Paris: Peeters, 2007), 135-83, esp. 143-6.

[53] L. M. C. Weston, 'The Language of Magic in Two Old English Metrical Charms', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 86 (1985), 176-86. See also Judith A. Vaughan-Sterling, 'The Anglo-Saxon Metrical Charms: Poetry as Ritual', *JEGP*, 82 (1983), 186-200; Stephen Glosecki, *Shamanism and Old English Poetry* (New York: Garland, 1989).

[54] Louis J. Rodrigues, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Verse Charms, Maxims, and Heroic Legends* (Pinner, Middlesex: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1993), 29-30.

[55] Tornaghi, 'Language of Magic'; Thomas D. Hill, 'The Rod of Protection and the Witches' Ride: Christian and Germanic Syncretism in Two Old English Metrical Charms', *JEGP*, 111 (2012), 145-68; James Paz, 'Magic that Works: Performing *Scientia* in the Old English Metrical Charms and Poetic Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 45 (2015), 219-43. See also John D. Niles, 'Pagan Survivals and Popular Belief', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, eds (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 126-41 at 129-30.

[56] Lea Olsan, 'Latin Charms of Medieval England: Verbal Healing in a Christian Oral Tradition', *Oral Tradition*, 7 (1992), 116-42 at 117.

metrical form'.[57] Olsan equated *carmen* with 'a religious hymn' and 'a magical chant, spell or incantation', and she drew attention to its Middle English cognate *charme*.[58] Olsan has highlighted geographical and chronological connections between English and Latin ritual traditions. However, although Olsan acknowledges the porosity of any distinction between 'charms' and prayers, she also maintains that *galdor* and *carmen* distinguish 'charms' from other genres in both early and late medieval rituals.[59]

Jonathan Roper has also engaged with the etymology of 'charms'. He traced the historical changes in the meaning of *galdor* from its origins as an ancient Germanic magical practice to its connotations of trickery in Middle English and its final association with singing in the Modern English 'nightingale'.[60] Roper defined Old English *galdor* and Middle and Modern English *charm* as 'a series of sung, or at the least, half-chanted, vocables',[61] and he drew connections between these nouns and terms in other European languages denoting 'speech' (Slavic *govor*, German *besprechen* and *spruch*, Czech *zařikat*, and Estonian *sõnad*).[62] Roper's approach brings together different European ritual traditions in an effort to establish a cross-cultural and trans-historical corpus of 'charms'.[63]

For the focus of this study, the most important insight of these scholars is that certain types of English rituals were labelled as 'charms' after the Anglo-Saxon period. Olsan and Roper follow conventional scholarship in claiming that *galdor* denoted a magical performance, and they believe that this Old English term is a direct precedent of later 'charm'

[57] Olsan, 'Latin Charms', 116-17.
[58] Olsan, 'Latin Charms', 116-17.
[59] See also Lea Olsan, 'The Inscriptions of Charms in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts', *Oral Tradition*, 14 (1999), 401-19 at 401-2; 'The Marginality of Charms in Medieval England', in *The Power of Words: Studies on Charms and Charming in Europe*, James Kapaló, Éva Pócs, and William Ryan, eds (Budapest and New York: Central European UP, 2013), 135-64 at 150-3.
[60] Jonathan Roper, 'Towards a Poetics, Rhetorics and Proxemics of Verbal Charms', *Folklore*, 24 (2003), 7-49 at 38-9.
[61] Roper, 'Towards a Poetics', 8.
[62] Roper, 'Towards a Poetics', 8.
[63] See also Jonathan Roper, 'Typologising English Charms', in *Charms and Charming in Europe*, Jonathan Roper, ed (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 128-44.

traditions.[64] The original Germanic root of *galdor* seems to have denoted a supernatural ritual utterance but the meaning of this word and its cognates underwent significant change over time. Furthermore, later recensions of English rituals were classified as 'charms' *after* the Anglo-Saxon period but this does not necessarily mean that *galdor* had the same significance as later understandings of charms. Indeed, the latest prescriptions of *galdra* are found in mid-eleventh-century manuscripts, and none survive after the Conquest.[65] Traditional definitions of this Old English word have not taken into account its full range of semantic meanings which do not satisfactorily reflect modern understandings of a 'charm'.

In 2011, Rebecca Fisher criticised the way in which *galdor* has been understood in charm studies: '[*galdor*] appears in texts as diverse as glosses (for *incantata*), homilies, psalms and biblical translations… referring to witchcraft, spells and enchantments… many of the equivalent words that one might consider as an alternative ("spell", "incantation") also carry inappropriate connotations'.[66] However, Fisher only makes mention of proscriptive uses of *galdra* in the Old English corpus, and she fails to offer an alternative translation:

> An alternative might be to refer to the charms simply as 'texts', but this does not allow for a differentiation between the charms and their surrounding texts, potentially leading to a loss of clarity in discussion and to a loss of the sense that in the charms, something is happening that is not necessarily happening in the other texts in a manuscript. Therefore, the term 'charm' is used in this thesis as the best option, but it should be acknowledged that the term is still not completely satisfactory.[67]

[64] See especially Olsan, 'Marginality of Charms', 137, 153.
[65] See Chapter Two.
[66] Rebecca M. C. Fisher, *Writing Charms: The Transmission and Performance of Charms in Anglo-Saxon England*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (University of Sheffield, England, 2011), 9.
[67] Fisher, *Writing Charms*, 9.

Fisher elsewhere discusses Anglo-Saxon rituals collectively as 'curative supernatural texts' but she maintains sub-genres of 'charms' and 'prayers' within this all-encompassing category and the definition of *galdor* is left unresolved.[68]

In addition to these definitions of *galdor* as 'charm', this corpus of Anglo-Saxon rituals has also been defined according to speech-act theory. Scholars have used this theory to distinguish these rituals from other texts through their prescribed utterances.[69] These studies simply equate 'charms' with speech-acts according to the theories of John L. Austin and John R. Searle, and no thorough application of these theories has been conducted.[70] However, speech-act theory was not designed for historical linguistic analysis as it is a philosophy of contemporary language usage, and it is based on language intuition and intentionality – evidence of which cannot be recovered from medieval scripts for performance.[71] Furthermore, any information about how 'charms' were performed simply does not survive; even if they were performed, the prescriptions may not have been followed closely, and distinctions between these prescribed utterances and those of other ritual texts are difficult to maintain.

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[68] Rebecca M. C. Fisher, 'Genre, Prayers and the Anglo-Saxon Charms', in *Genre – Text – Interpretation: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Folklore and Beyond*, Frog and Kaarina Koski, eds (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 2013), 1-25.

[69] See, for example, Marie Nelson, '"Wordsige and Worcsige": Speech Acts in Three Old English Charms', *Language and Style*, 17 (1984), 57-66; Stephanie Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms": Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses', *Anglia*, 115 (1997), 139–64; Francisco Alonso-Almeida and Mercedes Cabrera-Abreu, 'The Formulation of Promise in Medieval English Medical Recipes: A Relevance-Theoretic Approach', *Neophilologus*, 86 (2002), 137-54; Lea Olsan, 'Charms and Prayers in Medieval Medical Theory and Practice', *Social History of Medicine*, 16 (2003), 343-66; Lori-Ann Garner, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in Performance', *Oral Tradition*, 19 (2004), 20-42; Francisco Alonso-Almeida, 'Oral Traces and Speech Acts in a Corpus of Medieval English Healing Charms', *ANQ*, 23 (2010), 6-14.

[70] John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd rev. edn by J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975); John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[71] See Austin, *How to Do Things*, 131, 144; Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, vii, 119, 162-79. For critiques of using this theory in literary disciplines, see Barry Smith, 'Towards a History of Speech Act Theory', in *Speech Acts, Meanings and Intentions: Critical Approaches to the Philosophy of John R. Searle*, A. Burkhardt, ed (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1990), 29-61; Lester K. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993), 113-18; David Gorman, 'The Use and Abuse of Speech-Act Theory in Criticism', *Poetics Today*, 20 (1999), 93-119.

The corpus of Anglo-Saxon 'charms' has been continuously defined according to the Old English noun *galdor*. Scholars have consistently isolated these texts from other rituals and regrouped them according to traditional understandings of magic and paganism. However, an approach that has thus far not been fully explored in contemporary research is to look at how the scribes themselves organised each of these rituals in their manuscripts. While several scholars have discussed some 'charms' in their manuscript contexts,[72] unhelpful distinctions between 'charms' and other rituals have been upheld, and this approach to these texts has not been applied to the genre as a whole. An investigation into how Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics understood and recorded these rituals requires a brief discussion of the historical contexts in which they were written.

iii. Historical Contexts of 'Charms'

From the middle of the tenth century, the movement known as the Benedictine Reform was underway in key monastic centres in England, and a number of manuscripts containing 'charms' were written at this time.[73] Some of the main objectives of the Benedictine Reform were to regularise liturgical observances, to improve monastic training and study, and to increase pastoral care in the wider community. The principle leaders of this movement were Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald, and King Edgar (r. 959-975) was one of the Reform's leading patrons.[74]

After Dunstan's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury (959-988), Christ Church cathedral gradually became a monastic community, and Dunstan established strong connections with Continental monasteries.[75] Several manuscripts containing 'charms' were

[72] See Chapter Four.
[73] See Appendix.
[74] See Simon Keynes, 'Edgar, rex admirabilis', in *Edgar, King of the English 959-975: New Interpretations*, Donald G. Scragg, ed (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), 3-59 at 3, 8-16, 41.
[75] John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 352. See also Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century: The Ford Lectures* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1943), 293-4; N. P.

written at Christ Church after Dunstan's reform, and I will consider some of these in Chapters Three and Four. Æthelwold was Bishop of Winchester from 963-984 and he began his career by dramatically expelling clerics from the Old Minster, replacing them with monks from Abingdon in 964.[76] One of Æthelwold's most important initiatives was the production of the *Regularis Concordia* which outlines how the *Rule of Benedict* should be observed in English monasteries.[77] Æthelwold advocated the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, and he translated the *Rule of Benedict* into English for the education of monks.[78] A programme of standardising Old English vocabulary also took place at Æthelwold's school in Winchester and, as I argue in Chapter One, *galdor* may have been one of the terms that was restricted in usage to signify a dangerous spiritual practice. The third of these English reformers was Oswald who was a politically active figure during his archiepiscopacy in York (972-992). As Oswald was born of a Danish family, his kinship made him a well-connected political and religious leader in the aftermath of the Danish settlements, and his elevation to the archbishopric of York testifies to his political abilities.[79] Many of the most vehement

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Brooks, 'The Career of St Dunstan', Tim Tatton-Brown, 'The City and Diocese of Canterbury in St Dunstan's Time', and Alan Thacker, 'Cults At Canterbury: Relics and Reform under Dunstan and His Successors', in *St Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult*, Nigel Ramsay, Margaret Sparks, and Tim Tatton-Brown, eds (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), 1-24, 75-88, 221-46.

[76] 'Cleric' is used throughout to signify the ecclesiastics who did not observe the monastic *Rule of Benedict*. They are also referred to as Canons and secular clergy in scholarship.

[77] Thomas Symons, ed. and trans., *The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation: Regularis Concordia* (New York: OUP, 1953). On a version of the *Concordia* which was probably written for nuns at Nunnaminster, see Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women I: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 85-110, 145-98, 199-208; Joyce Hill, 'Rending the Garment and Reading by the Rood: *Regularis concordia* Rituals for Men and Women', in *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, M. Bradford Bedingfield and Helen Gittos, eds., HBS Subsidia Series, Vol. 5 (London: Boydell, 2005), 53-64; Julia Barrow, 'The Chronology of the Benedictine "Reform"', in *Edgar, King of the English 959-975*, Scragg, ed., 211-23; Stephen Vanderputten, 'Debating Reform in Tenth- and Early Eleventh-Century Female Monasticism', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 125 (2014), 289-306.

[78] Henri Logeman, ed., *The Rule of S. Benet: Latin and Anglo-Saxon Intelinear Version*, EETS, Vol. 90 (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1888), xxxiv. See also Patrick Wormald, 'Æthelwold and his Continental Counterparts: Contact, Comparison, Contrast', Barbara Yorke, 'Æthelwold and the Politics of the Tenth Century', and Michael Lapidge, 'Æthelwold As Scholar and Teacher', in *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, Barbara Yorke, ed (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1988), 13-42, 65-88, 89-117.

[79] See Catherine Cubitt, 'The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England', *Early Medieval Europe*, 6 (1997), 77-94 at 84. See also D. J. V. Fisher, 'The Anti-Monastic Reaction in the Reign of Edward the Martyr', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 10 (1952), 254-70; Alan Thacker, 'Saint-Making and Relic Collecting by Oswald and his Communities', in *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, Nicholas Brooks and Catherine

condemnations of *galdor* as a heathen custom were written in monasteries under Oswald's rule, and these indicate his strict stance on religious practices in their surrounding areas.

Ælfric of Eynsham, Wulfstan the Homilist, and Byrhtferth of Ramsey continued the efforts of these leading reformers into the eleventh century. Ælfric (d. c. 1010) became Abbot of Eynsham in 1005 under the patronage of a nobleman called Æthelmaer the Stout.[80] He wrote an extensive number of works, most notably his series of *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* which contain many condemnations of *galdra*.[81] Ælfric significantly developed Æthelwold's 'Winchester vocabulary', he wrote homilies for Wulfstan of York, and he was also a strong opponent of religious customs that were not sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority.[82] Wulfstan ruled as Bishop of Worcester and Archbishop of York from 1002-1016, during which time he wrote the *Canons of Edgar* for the instruction of clerics, which contains proscriptions against practising *galdra*.[83] In 1016, Wulfstan relinquished the see of Worcester, ruling only in York until his death in 1023. As archbishop, he drew up law codes for King Æthelred (978-1013 and 1014-1016) and Cnut (1016-1035), and wrote many homilies with further condemnations of *galdra*.[84] Like his contemporary Ælfric, Wulfstan wrote extensively in English to reinforce Christian principles that were put forward by his reformist predecessors. Byrhtferth of Ramsey (c. 970-1020) was also a strong proponent of the Reform's agendas. He was a pupil of Abbo of Fleury and a friend of Dunstan, and he also

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Cubitt, eds (London: Leicester UP, 1996), 244-68; Catherine Cubitt, 'Sites and Sanctity: Revisiting the Cult of Murdered and Martyred Anglo-Saxon Royal Saints,' *Early Medieval Europe*, 9 (2000), 53-83.

[80] See Joyce Hill, 'Ælfric: His Life and Works', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, Hugh Magennis and Mary Swann, eds (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 109-37.

[81] Walter W. Skeat, ed. and trans., *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, 2 vols (London: EETS, 1881-1890); Malcolm Godden, ed., *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text*, EETS Supplementary Series, Vol. 5 (London: OUP, 1979); Peter Clemoes, ed., *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text*, EETS Supplementary Series, Vol. 17 (Oxford: OUP, 1997).

[82] See Malcolm Godden, 'Ælfric's Changing Vocabulary', *ES*, 61 (1980), 206-23; Mechthild Gretsch, 'Ælfric, Language and Winchester', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, Magennis and Swann, eds., 35-66.

[83] Roger Fowler, ed., *Wulfstan's Canons of Edgar* (London: EETS, 1972).

[84] Dorothy Bethurum, ed., *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971); James E. Cross and Andrew Hamer, eds., *Wulfstan's Canon Law Collection* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999). For further, see Dorothy Whitelock, 'Wulfstan and the So-Called Laws of Edward and Guthrum', *EHR*, 56 (1941), 1-21; 'Wulfstan and the Laws of Cnut', *EHR*, 63 (1948), 433-52; M. K. Lawson, 'Archbishop Wulfstan and the Homiletic Element in the Laws of Æthelred II and Cnut', *EHR*, 107 (1992), 565-86.

promoted the use of the vernacular in monastic education and study.[85] Byrhtferth's most famous work the *Enchiridion* demonstrates his extensive interest in computus, cosmology, and grammar.[86] In Chapter Five I explore how Byrhtferth's philosophies of language and the cosmos inform the obscure writing of 'charms', and indicate that some of these rituals were produced in highly academic environments in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. Despite the efforts of some reformers who condemned uncensored ritual practices – in particular *galdra* – several manuscripts containing 'charms' were written in reforming minsters in Winchester, Canterbury, Worcester, Exeter, and Ramsey.[87] I explore this perhaps surprising outcome of the Reform in the first three chapters before taking a case study of a Winchester manuscript that is believed to contain 'charms' in Chapter Four.

The historical context of the Benedictine Reform is of paramount importance for situating some 'charms' and their manuscripts in their respective ecclesiastical milieus. However, there has been a tendency in scholarship to represent the Reform as a highly successful movement that had a widespread impact throughout Anglo-Saxon England.[88] A number of important factors should be borne in mind when considering manuscript evidence from this period: monastic centres underwent reform at different times;[89] reformed minsters had distinctive individual leaders and ritual customs;[90] not all minsters were exclusively run by reformed monks and some appear to have had a mix of clerics, monks, and lay people;[91]

[85] See Rebecca Stephenson, 'Scapegoating the Secular Clergy: The Hermeneutic Style as a Form of Monastic Self-Definition', *ASE*, 38 (2009), 101-35; *The Politics of Language: Byrhtferth, Ælfric, and the Multilingual Identity of the Benedictine Reform* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).
[86] Peter S. Baker and Michael Lapidge, eds. and trans., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion* (Oxford: EETS, 1995).
[87] See Appendix.
[88] For a very good recent criticism of this view, see Jesse D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597 – c. 1000*, HBS Subsidia Series, Vol. 7 (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 6-10.
[89] See Christopher Hohler, 'Some Service-Books of the Later Saxon Church', in *Tenth-Century Studies: Essays in Commemoration of the Millenium of the Council of Winchester and 'Regularis Concordia'*, David Parsons, ed (London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1975), 60-83; Christopher A. Jones, 'The Book of the Liturgy in Anglo-Saxon England', *Speculum*, 73 (1998), 659-702.
[90] See, for example, the recent case study of Canterbury by Helen Gittos, 'Sources for the Liturgy of Canterbury Cathedral in the Central Middle Ages', *British Archaeological Association*, 35 (2013), 41-58. On the diversity of liturgical customs more generally, see Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 291-340.
[91] See Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, 352; Christopher A. Jones, 'Ælfric and the Limits of "Benedictine Reform"', in *Companion to Ælfric*, Magennis and Swann, eds., 67-108; Billett, *Divine Office*, 163-4; Julia

and reformed communities were even replaced by clerics, as seen in mid-eleventh-century Exeter under Bishop Leofric.[92] Considering these factors, great care must be taken to avoid generalising how certain ritual practices were understood as each manuscript provides unique information about a particular compiler, community, or scribe at a particular time.

Jolly has argued that 'charms' were Christianised during the Reform to increase pastoral care in the wider community, and that these rituals reflect the efforts of reformers to control and censor religious practice.[93] While Jolly usefully highlighted the Christian nature of 'charms', she presented these texts as evidence of heterodox Christianity in rural areas: 'Christianity expanded at the local level, not necessarily from a top-down effort but from a grassroots movement of lay piety and, hence, popular religion'.[94] Some of these rituals may have been re-written to control devotional practices beyond reforming minsters but I argue that the manuscript evidence of 'charms' provides more information about how the Church hierarchy understood, controlled, and experimented with rituals than it does about what was actually practised on a grassroots level. For instance, in Chapter Four I discuss the relationships that exist between agricultural 'charms', liturgy, astronomy, and secret writing, and in Chapter Five I explore the learned, philosophical inspirations for popular 'gibberish charms'.

There are texts from the corpus of 'charms' that lie beyond the scope of this work. Some 'charms' were written down after the Norman Conquest, appearing as twelfth-century

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Barrow, *The Clergy in the Medieval World: Secular Clerics, Their Families and Careers in North-Western Europe, c. 800-c. 1200* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), 269-309.

[92] Richard W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge and New York: CUP, 2009), 130. See also Elaine M. Treharne, 'Producing A Library in Late Anglo-Saxon England: Exeter 1050-1072', *RES*, 54 (2003), 155-72; 'Bishops and their Texts in the Later Eleventh Century: Worcester and Exeter', in *Essays in Manuscript Geography: Vernacular Manuscripts of the English West Midlands from the Conquest to the Sixteenth Century*, Wendy Scase, ed (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 13-28; 'The Bishops' Book: Leofric's Homiliary and Eleventh-Century Exeter', in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, Stephen Baxter, Catherine E. Karkov, Janet L. Nelson, and David Pelteret, eds (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 521-37.

[93] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 40-66.

[94] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 58.

additions, and others are found in seventeenth-century transcriptions.[95] Scholars must be cautious when using these sources as the appearance of 'charms' in later books reveals more about the interests of later scribes and collectors than it does about Anglo-Saxon ritual practice. While the afterlives of the 'charms' would be fascinating studies in their own right, this thesis cannot pursue a reception history of 'charms' after the Old English period. I include manuscripts that were still being read and used in the twelfth century as the Anglo-Saxon period did not simply end with the Norman invasion of 1066, as Treharne and others have recently demonstrated.[96] However, it is important to note that nine of the twenty-three manuscripts that Storms used for his edition contain rituals that were written down *after* the Conquest, and at a time when ritual practices may have been understood in different ways.

iv. Chapter Outline

This study begins by addressing the first core issue of the 'charms' genre and reconsiders the meaning of *galdor*. The first part opens a number of alternative interpretations of this word that impact directly on how we understand these 'charms' as liturgical texts. The second part compares the so-called 'charms' to other Anglo-Saxon rituals and reconsiders them in their manuscript contexts. This approach is fundamental to understanding how scribes recorded 'charms', it reunites the texts with their manuscript sources, and it uncovers the intertextual relationships that exist between these rituals and their surrounding materials. The third part of the thesis then reconsiders the principle characteristic of 'gibberish' writing that has been used to identify pre-Christian 'charms', and it offers a different way of interpreting this obscure writing as belonging to Patristic philosophies of language. These three approaches to 'charms' address fundamental issues with this constructed genre.

[95] See Appendix.
[96] Elaine M. Treharne, *Living Through Conquest: The Politics of Early English, 1020-1220* (Oxford: OUP, 2012); Elaine M. Treharne, Orietta Da Rold, and Mary Swan, eds., *Producing and Using English Manuscripts in the Post-Conquest Period* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).

In Chapter One I review the etymology of *galdor* and expose the broad semantic range of its possible original meanings. As well as signifying a type of ritual utterance, cognates of *galdor* denote secrecy, spiritual mystery, prophecy, and healing. The chapter then considers the meanings of this noun in non-ritual texts from the Old English corpus to understand the wider contexts in which it was used by Anglo-Saxon scribes. There are a small number of appearances of the term in non-proscriptive contexts which indicate that *galdor* could signify explicitly Christian concepts. These are mostly found in the Vercelli and Exeter Books that were copied from exemplars which predate the Benedictine Reform. The meanings of *galdor* in these manuscripts indicate that it signified Christian wisdom, discernment, revelation, and even sacramental mystery. The majority of appearances of *galdor*, however, are found in proscriptive contexts where the term is condemned as a dangerous spiritual practice. Many of the texts that proscribe *galdra* were written by leading reformers, indicating that the word was restricted in use to describe ritual practices that were harmful to Christians, and these condemnations follow conventional formulaic constructions. When the noun is condemned, *galdor* is being used to refer to specific types of forbidden religious practices.

In Chapter Two I develop these findings by reconsidering the meaning of *galdor* in Anglo-Saxon rituals. There are only four manuscripts in which the term is used in ritual contexts and three of these were written in Winchester after the Reform had begun. The fourth manuscript was written in the south-west of England where the meaning of *galdor* may not have been redefined by reformers. In many of these rituals, *galdra* are frequently prescribed with the Eucharist, indicating that the word signified a powerful liturgical performance. A number of texts also provide 'gibberish' sequences for their *galdra,* suggesting that the original words were lost or deliberately obscured. These abstract sequences may function to conceal the meaning of a *galdor,* and this perhaps provides one

explanation of why the term is consistently condemned in other contexts. Reformers presented *galdor* as a dangerous spiritual practice if used by unauthorised people, and these 'gibberish' *galdra* may reflect a deliberate obfuscation of meaning that could only have been understood by highly educated clergy. *Galdra* were sometimes sanctioned by reformers in particular monastic milieus, and the strong connections between *galdor*, Christian wisdom, liturgy, and the Eucharist call for a reconsideration of the concept of 'charm' in the small number of rituals in which it appears. In Chapter Two I propose an alternative understanding of *galdor*, and this has significant implications for all of the other rituals that are classified as 'charms' but which do not use this term.

In Chapter Three I consider samples of other 'charms' that do not prescribe the performance of a *galdor*. These rituals also contain extensive amounts of liturgical material, and they engage with the pastoral needs of the sick, the possessed, married lay people, and pilgrims. The chapter highlights the overlaps between these texts and other liturgical rites and blessings, and I address the second core issue of the 'charms' genre by considering the manuscripts in which these texts appear. In some cases, there is strong evidence to suggest that scribes had liturgical *ordines* open before them as they wrote the 'charm' rituals. In this chapter I argue that 'charms' are better understood as being closely associated with the liturgy, and that some, if not all, should be considered as liturgical texts.

In Chapter Four I develop this argument by highlighting the importance of reading every 'charm' in its unique manuscript context and alongside its surrounding Christian texts. I then focus on one manuscript as a case study, which was written in Winchester in the mid eleventh century. The *Vitellius Psalter* provides a very good example of how one liturgical book has been carved up for its apparent inclusion of 'charms'. However, when these 'charms' are considered in their wider manuscript context, it becomes clear that they are intricately connected to surrounding liturgical, astronomical, and coded texts. The rituals

draw upon cosmological signs, liturgical feasts, and spiritual mysteries to address a wide range of agricultural issues that affected a monastic community. The manuscript also contains an interesting exercise in secret writing that offers an alternative way of reading the rituals' most enigmatic content, including their apparent 'gibberish'. The chapter raises this third core issue of the genre by reading 'gibberish' as a complex form of coded writing.

In Chapter Five I develop these findings and engage with the phenomenon of 'gibberish' in Anglo-Saxon rituals, and I review the texts that have been classified in this way in the 'charms' genre. The chapter then pursues possible sources of inspiration for this form of writing in Christian philosophy from Late Antiquity, Carolingian Europe, and Anglo-Saxon England. I argue that, rather than providing evidence of native Germanic religion and magic, the apparent 'gibberish' of these rituals could have arisen out of Patristic and medieval theologies of the divine origin of language which assigned great cosmological significance to individual letters. This final chapter offers one alternative field of study to Anglo-Saxon 'charms' by re-reading a significant proportion of these texts as coded rituals which developed from Christian philosophical traditions.

The conclusion of this study argues for an early English tradition of secret writing that preceded the expansive later medieval systems of encryption as seen, for example, in the *Secretum secretorum* and the *Secretum philosophorum*.[97] The thesis as a whole challenges the idea that there was any such thing as a 'charm' in Anglo-Saxon England. It reviews how this corpus of texts has been constructed, and it engages with three fundamental issues of this genre. I argue that scholars should abandon the concept of 'charms' and pursue alternative readings of these rituals in their surrounding liturgical and manuscript contexts. When these rituals are resituated in the religious and philosophical environments of the tenth and eleventh

[97] See Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 122, 143; John B. Friedman, 'Safe Magic and Invisible Writing in the *Secretum Philosophorum*', in *Conjuring Spirits: Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, Claire Fanger, ed (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), 7-86.

centuries, new perspectives are opened about how ecclesiastics used ritual practices in response to a wide variety of concerns in late Anglo-Saxon England.

1

Anglo-Saxon Understandings of *Galdor*

'connotations of *gealdor* in sophisticated, and Christian, literature seem to be entirely evil'.[1]

The first part of this study engages with one core issue of the 'charms' genre: the translation of the Old English noun *galdor* (pl. *galdra*) as 'charm'. It explores the different texts that use this word and the surrounding contexts that inform its meaning, before re-evaluating the meaning of *galdor* in Anglo-Saxon rituals. The corpus of Old English highlights the range of texts in which *galdor* appears, and in a small number of cases *galdor* is endorsed as a Christian concept denoting spiritual wisdom, divine revelation, and sacramental mystery. However, the noun mainly occurs in the proscriptive contexts of law codes, homilies, and religious guides. Given that *galdor* is a crucial word for modern historiographies of 'charms', this chapter reconsiders its meanings in non-ritual texts to investigate how Anglo-Saxon scribes understood this term.

The Etymology of *Galdor*

The noun *galdor* and its verbal counterpart *galan* have cognates in other Germanic languages that indicate many different original meanings for these words. Etymological studies by Ivar Lindquist and F. Ohrt traced pre-migration 'galder-forms' across Scandinavian languages.[2] Vladimir Orel's comprehensive *Handbook of Germanic Etymology* also collects Proto-Germanic lexemes from the main branches of Germanic languages.[3] Orel connects 'ʒalðran'

[1] Bethurum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, 319.
[2] Ivar Lindquist, *Galdrar: De gamla germanska trollsångernas stil undersökt I samband med en svensk runinskrift från folkvandringstiden* (Göteborg: Wettergren och Kerber, 1923); F. Ohrt, 'Om Galdersange', *Danske Studier*, 23 (1923), 186-89; 'Om Merseburgformlerne som Galder', *Danske Studier*, 35 (1938), 125-37.
[3] Vladimir Orel, *A Handbook of Germanic Etymology* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

to 'ON *galdr* "song, witchcraft", OE *ȝealdor* "incantation, charm", OHG *galtar*', and 'ȝalanan' to 'ON *gala* "to crow, to sing", OE *ȝalan* "to sing", OHG *galan* "to incantate"'.[4] Orel also draws connections with the Slavic '**galiti* "to triumph, to laugh" <**ghōl-eịo-*'.[5] These cognates connect *galdor* and *galan* to vocalised sounds or utterances of exultation.

Germanic cognates of *galdor* expose possible original meanings of the Old English noun before it was used to denote specific religious concepts in the late Anglo-Saxon period. The noun often appears in compounds and the *Toronto Dictionary of Old English* (hereafter *DOE*) records a number of different forms of *galdor,* providing the following definitions for these variations: 'poem', 'song', 'incantation', 'charm', 'spell', 'illusion', 'deception', 'snake-charmer', 'enchanter', 'wizard', 'divination', 'soothsaying', 'prophesying', 'necromancy', 'communication with the dead', 'sorcery', and 'sound / call of a horn'.[6] Forms of this word could signify general sounds and utterances as well as suspicious supernatural practices.

The Old Norse equivalent to *galdor* is *galdr* (pl. *galdar*) and it is defined by Mindy MacLeod and Bernard Mees as 'incantation, magical charm'.[7] Forms of *galdr* may reflect positive supernatural qualities, such as *galdraumr* ('great sorcerer'), as well as curses and harmful rituals.[8] Indeed, the fifteenth-century *Galdrabók* contains a large collection of rituals, reflecting the positive reception of *galdar* in Iceland.[9] Old English *galdor* and Old Norse

[4] Orel, *Handbook*, 123-4.
[5] Orel, *Handbook*, 124.
[6] *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English, 2009): <http://0-tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/> accessed 28 August 2015. Forms of the noun that are recorded in the *DOE* include *galdor, galdra, galdras, galdre, galdres, galdru, galdrum, galdur, gealdor, gealder, gealdra, galder, galdere, galendes, galyndra, galendra, galdrigean, galdriggan, galere, ɑaleres, ɑalunɑe, ɑælstre*. See also Joseph Bosworth**,** *A Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary* (London: John Russell Smith, 1848), 102; John R. Clark-Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 2nd rev. edn (New York: CUP, 1916), 115.
[7] Mindy MacLeod and Bernard Mees, *Runic Amulets and Magic Objects* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 10.
[8] Geir T. Zoëga, *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 158.
[9] For an edition see M. V. Sæmundsson, ed., *Galdrar á Íslandi: Íslensk Galdrabók*, 2nd edn (Reykjavik: Almenna Bókafélagið, 1992). For other nouns that are linked with *galdr*, such as *formáli* ('formula, charm'), *seiðr* ('spell, enchantment') and *taufr* ('charms, talismans'), see E. V. Gordon, ed., *An Introduction to Old Norse*, A. R. Taylor, ed., 2nd rev. edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 345, 379, 389; Nils Århammar, ed., *Aspects of Language: Geolinguistics, Studies in Honour of Mario Alinei*, Vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1986),

galdr also have cognates in the Old High German nouns *galtar* (‘chant’), *gougalari* (‘fortune-teller’), *gougal* (‘deception, magic’), *galstar*(*āra*) (‘magic, magician’), *agalstra* (‘magpie’), *tougali* (‘secrecy’), and *swegala* (‘sound of a flute’).[10] These cognates are inclusive of supernatural practices, secrecy, prophecy, and more general vocalised sounds.

The stem ‘gal-’ is also found in adjectival and adverbial cognates. Old High German adjectives include (*bi*)*trogallīh* (‘unnatural, delusive, fantastic’), *tougal*(*i*) (‘concealed, dark’), *galt* (‘bewitched’), *gougallīh* (‘magical’), *kalgalīn*/*h* (‘lamenting, miserable’), and *agaleizo*/*i* (‘cleverly, eager, importunate’).[11] Old Norse adjectives include *galinn* (‘enchanted’), *hugall* (‘thoughtful’), and *þagall* (‘silent’).[12] These adjectives signify supernatural outcomes, wisdom, secrecy, grief, and qualities of the mind.

The Old English verb *galan* likewise has cognates in other Germanic languages. It is given many different definitions such as ‘to sing, cry, yelp, chant’, ‘speak formally’, ‘cast a spell’, and it is used in contexts ‘of birdsong’ and of ‘the sound of a horn’.[13] In this wide range of meanings it is clear that *galan* could signify general vocal expressions of both animate and inanimate things. In Old Norse the verb *gala* is defined as ‘to scream, sing, chant, chant magic songs over one’ and is related to the verb *kalla* (to call, shout, cry).[14] Interestingly, the metrical verses that are chanted in the sagas are commonly signified by the verb *kveða* (‘to say, utter, compose, say aloud, sound’), rather than *gala* or *kalla*.[15]

Old High German cognates of *galan* are found in *gougalōn* (‘bewitch, conjure, foretell’), *bigalstarōn* (‘bewitch, enchant’), *fogalōn* (‘tell fortunes from the flight of birds’),

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372-3; Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), 130-7.

[10] All OHG definitions are taken from Gerhard Köbler, *Neuenglisch-althochdeutsches Wörterbuch* (2006): <http://www.koeblergerhard.de/germanistischewoerterbuecher/althochdeutscheswoerterbuch/neuenglisch-ahd.pdf> accessed 12 June 2015, ‘galtar’, 74; ‘gougalari’, 175; ‘gougal’, 111, 273; ‘galstar(āra)’, 273; ‘agalstra’, 273; ‘galāri’, 273; ‘tougali’, 389; ‘swegala’, 169.

[11] Köbler, *Wörterbuch*, ‘(bi)trogallīh’, 114, 477, 155; ‘tougal(i)’, 89, 107; ‘galt’, 46; ‘gougallīh’, 272, ‘kalgalīn/h’, 249, 288; ‘agaliezo/i’, 80, 134, 229.

[12] Zoëga, *Dictionary of Old Icelandic*, 158, 213, 507.

[13] *DOE*, s.vb. 6, galan.

[14] Zoëga, *Dictionary of Old Icelandic*, 158, 235.

[15] Zoëga, *Dictionary of Old Icelandic*, 252.

tougalen (‘conceal’), and *galan* (‘conjure, enchant’), showing common linguistic roots for spiritual practices, prophecy, and concealment.[16] The Germanic forms of *galan* are indicative of religious rituals and verbal performances but they are also sometimes applied to signify other, more general vocal expressions of humans, birds, and inanimate objects. While *galan* is clearly a verbal form of *galdor*, the verb appears much more frequently in Old English than the noun, suggesting that it had wider, more general meanings for vocal utterances. This chapter can only therefore consider forms of the noun but it should be noted that *galan* is often closely related to *galdor*.

Other Germanic languages reveal that cognates of the Old English *galdor* could signify supernatural vices like bewitchment and curses, and supernatural virtues like prophecy and wisdom. They are also linked to secrecy, singing, and sounds of objects. The verb *galan* has a wider range of uses and meanings that also reflect secrecy and vocal utterances as well as more general sounds. It is clear that we cannot limit the Old English *galdor* and *galan* to mean ‘charm’ and ‘chant’ exclusively when other meanings are evident in their Germanic cognates. These original linguistic roots developed different meanings over time, and *galdor* in particular seems to have denoted several specific concepts in later Anglo-Saxon England. *Galdor* is mainly found in texts that condemn it as a spiritual practice that threatened Christian authority but in other contexts it has a wider semantic range of possible meanings, which has not been considered in previous translations of this word.

Appearances of ‘Galdor’ in Old English

In order to understand the meaning of *galdor* in Anglo-Saxon rituals, it is essential to trace the occurrences of this word in the corpus of Old English. The proscriptive uses of *galdor*

[16] Köbler, *Wörterbuch*, ‘gougalōn’, 46, 91, 174; ‘bigalstarōn’, 46, 141; ‘fogalōn’, 47; ‘tougalen’, 89; ‘galan’, 91, 141. The second Old High German *Merseburg Charm* employs triple repetition of the verb *bigalan* in a ritual to bind a sprain, see Susan Fuller, ‘Pagan Charms in Tenth-Century Saxony? The Function of the Merseburg Charms’, *Monatschefte*, 72 (1980), 162-70.

show a clear concern over its spiritual nature, and they condemn this word in similar formulaic ways. There are, however, a number of texts that present *galdor* in Christian terms where it signifies wisdom, spiritual discernment, and divine revelation. Although there are only eleven such appearances of *galdor* in Old English, it is beneficial to begin with a discussion of these Christian depictions because they indicate a greater range of meanings for this word than has been traditionally perceived.

Non-Condemnatory Uses of 'Galdor'

Some scholars have argued that *galdor* is always condemned by Christian writers in non-ritual texts.[17] However, this is not always the case as some sophisticated Christian works use *galdor* in a non-condemnatory way. Indeed, the contexts that surround this word reflect its rich connotations with spiritual wisdom and liturgical power. These non-proscriptive occurrences of *galdor* are found in *Beowulf*, two glosses, saints' lives, wisdom poems, and two riddles.

i. *Beowulf*

The dragon's hoard in *Beowulf* is described as being protected by *galdre*, and this passage is often quoted in relation to the word's 'magical' connotations:

> Þonne wæs þæt yrfe eacen-cræftig,
> iu-monna gold, galdre bewunden,
> þæt ðam hring-sele hrinan ne moste
> gumena ænig, nefne God sylfa,
> sigora Soð-cyning, sealde þam ðe he wolde

[17] See, for example, Bethurum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, 319; Jolly, 'Context of a Christian Worldview', 285-6; Fisher, *Writing Charms*, 9.

- he is manna gehyld – hord openian (3051-7).[18]

> And this gold of former men was full of power,
> the huge inheritance, hedged about with a spell [*galdre*]:
> no one among men was permitted to touch
> that golden store of rings unless God Himself,
> the true King of Victories, the Protector of mankind,
> enabled one He chose to open the hoard.[19]

The hoarded wealth of an ancient tribe is guarded by the dragon and surrounded by *galdre* ('galdre bewunden'). In this context, the *galdor* is a protective force that has been activated by some entity with supernatural power. John Tanke argued that the thief who stole a cup from the hoard simultaneously unleashed a curse that ultimately led to Beowulf's death; the passage 'represents an explicit and unambiguous statement that Beowulf died as a result of the curse'.[20] This type of curse may be the kind of practice that is elsewhere wholeheartedly condemned as heathen by Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics, but the surrounding context of this passage indicates that this *galdor* is subject to the Christian God ('God sylfa', 3055):

> God is the ultimate owner of the treasure, and he controls the fate of all who would make it their own… Success with the gold hinges on the will of God, and specifically on his willingness to exempt Beowulf from the curse… In any event, his [Beowulf's] fate is death and not damnation… This explains why the poet mentions the exemption in the first place

[18] Charles L. Wrenn, ed., *Beowulf*, 2nd edn (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1958), 175.
[19] Michael Alexander, trans, *Beowulf* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 147. On the magical connotations of this passage, see Taylor, 'Ritual Charms in *Beowulf*', 277. For a criticism of this interpretation, see Crawford, 'Evidences for Witchcraft', 109.
[20] John Tanke, 'Beowulf, Gold-Luck, and God's Will', *SP*, 99 (2002), 356-79 at 363.

and why he makes it clear that he is speaking of the Christian God, not an ancient pagan one.[21]

God alone may decide who accesses the hoard and nobody but His chosen one is permitted to touch it ('hring-sele hrinan ne moste / gumena ænig', 3053-4). It may be that the *galdor* surrounding the hoard is multivalent as it protects the wealth of a pre-Christian people but simultaneously works according to the will of the Christian God. The passage depicts *galdor* as a spiritual force that adheres to divine providence.

The other occurrence of *galdor* in *Beowulf* describes the sound of a horn. After Beowulf's death, a messenger recounts past glories of the Geats, and he describes how the horn of King Hygelac declared their victory over the Swedes:

Frofor eft gelamp
sarig-modum somod ær-dæge,
syððan hie Hygelaces horn ond byman,
gealdor ongeaton, þa se goda com
leoda dugoðe on last faran (2941-5).[22]

With break of day
what comfort came to those care-oppressed men
when they heard Hygelac's horn and trumpet
giving voice [*gealdor ongeaton*], as that valiant man came up
with the flower of his host, following on their tracks![23]

[21] Tanke, 'God's Will', 364, 369-70.
[22] Wrenn, ed., *Beowulf*, 172.
[23] Alexander, trans., *Beowulf*, 144.

Ongentheow, king of the Swedes, killed Hygelac's brother Hathkin and drove the surviving Geats into a forest. Hygelac then arrived to rescue them and avenged the death of his brother by killing Ongentheow. The victory was signalled by the *gealdor* of Hygelac's horn, and the term is evidently used to denote a heroic victory.

ii. Glosses

There are two instances of non-condemnatory uses of *galdor* in glosses to Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. According to the *DOE*, over eighty of the proscriptive uses of *galdor* are found in glosses and translations of Latin texts, reflecting the rarity of these two instances. The meaning of these glosses, however, is highly significant for other non-condemnatory meanings of *galdor*.

In a late ninth-century copy of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius C. ii), the term 'optimatibus' (nobles, advisors) is glossed by 'galdermonnum'.[24] The glosses were probably added in Worcester or Canterbury, according to textual parallels with other Mercian manuscripts and the scribe's Kentish spellings.[25] On the basis of paleographical evidence, Neil Ker and Helmut Gneuss dated the Old English glosses to the tenth century but Timothy Graham believes that they were added earlier in the ninth century.[26] The glosses were written in an ecclesiastical minster in the late ninth or early

[24] Herbert Dean Meritt, ed., *Old English Glosses: A Collection* (Oxford: OUP, 1945), 10. On the dating of this Latin version of Bede's *Historia*, see Sharon M. Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011), 58.

[25] On the manuscript's possible origin in Worcester, see Michelle P. Brown, 'Mercian Manuscripts? The "Tiberius Group" and Its Historical Context', in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, Michelle P. Brown and Carol A. Farr, eds (London: Continuum, 2001), 278-94; Gernot R. Wieland, 'A Survey of Latin Manuscripts', in *Working with Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, Gale R. Owen-Crocker, ed (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2009), 113-58 at 142, note 6. For the scribe's Kentish spellings, see Henry Sweet, ed., *The Oldest English Texts* (London: EETS, 1885), 179. For possible Anglian spellings, see Sherman M. Kuhn, 'Review of Herbert Dean Meritt, ed., *Old English Glosses: A Collection* (Oxford: OUP, 1945)', *JEGP*, 45 (1946), 344-6.

[26] Neil R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), 261; Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, Arizona: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), 69; Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 301; Timothy Graham, 'Glosses and Notes in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts', in *Working*

tenth century, indicating that at that time *galdor* could be used to translate a Latin word for advisors.[27] The gloss appears in the final chapter of Book Three of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which describes King Sighere's relapse into paganism:

> Quae uidelicet prouincia cum praefatae mortalitatis clade premeretur, Sigheri cum sua parte populi, relictis Christianae fidei sacramentis, ad apostasiam conuersus est. Nam et ipse rex et plurimi de plebe siue optimatibus [*galdermonnum*], diligentes hanc uitam et futuram non quaerentes, siue etiam non esse credentes (III, 30).

> When this kingdom was suffering from the disastrous plague described above, Sighere, together with his part of the nation, deserted the sacraments of the Christian faith and apostatized. For the king himself and the majority of both commons and nobles [*galdermonnum*] loved this present life, seeking no other and not even believing in any future existence.[28]

This passage portrays King Sighere as a heathen as he relapsed into his old religious customs that were incompatible with Christianity. It is also clear that Sighere's people and noble advisors became unbelievers with their king. The glossing of 'optimatibus' with 'galdermonnum' would seem to suggest that the Old English term was used to describe pagan advisors. However, this reference to the king, commoners, and *galdermonnum* does not explicitly associate any of these nouns with non-Christian vices. There is no reason to suspect that the *galdermonnum* gloss is anything other than a translation of 'optimatibus' as wise noblemen who offer counsel to their king.

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with Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, Owen-Crocker, ed., 159-204 at 179. See also *British Library Catalogue Online* (London: British Library Catalogue, 2012): <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery> accessed 28 August 2015.

[27] It is also possible that the glosses were copied from an earlier glossed manuscript.

[28] Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, eds. and trans (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 322-3.

The only other non-condemnatory use of *galdor* as a gloss is found in a late tenth-century copy of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 214).[29] The glosses were added by one scribe in the early eleventh century, probably at Canterbury.[30] In Book Three of the *De Consolatione*, the term 'senatorii' is glossed with 'gealderdomlices', indicating that *galdor* was still being used as a term for wisdom at that time.[31] This gloss is found in a passage where Wisdom describes the nature of authority and states that virtue and reputation are not inherent in positions of high office:

> inter eos vero, apud quos ortae sunt, num perpetuo perdurant? Atqui praetura [*gerefscip*] magna olim potestas, nunc inane nomen et senatorii [*gealderdomlices*] census gravis sarcina; si quis quondam populi curasset annonam, magnus habebatur, nunc ea praefectura quid abiectus? (III, 4).[32]

> but high offices don't last forever, do they, among those people with whom they had their origin? In fact, the praetorship was once a great office, but it is now an empty name and a heavy burden for a senator's [*gealderdomlices*] resources. Once, if a man had control of the public grain supply he was called The Great; now, what is more disreputable than that particular prefecture?[33]

[29] Gneuss suggests a late tenth or early eleventh-century date for the main text, Gneuss, *Handlist*, 34; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, 89. The *Parker Library on the Web* provides an eleventh-century date: <http://parkerweb.stanford.edu> accessed 28 August 2015.
[30] See Ker, *Catalogue*, 91-2; Donald G. Scragg, *A Conspectus of Scribal Hands Writing English, 960-1100* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 13.
[31] See W. C. Hale, ed., *An Edition and Codicological Study of CCCC MS. 214*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (University of Pennsylvania, USA, 1978), 3, 4, l. 56.
[32] Boethius, *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii Scriptorum Partum IV: Philosophiae Consolationis*, Wilhelm Weinberger, ed (Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, 1934), 53-4.
[33] Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy*, Joel C. Relihan, trans (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2001), 58-9.

Other Old English versions of the *De Consolatione* translate 'senatorii' as 'heretogan', 'domeras', 'maðmhirdas', and 'þa wisestan witan'.[34] The passage describes the senator's weakened reputation but the *galdor*-gloss of Corpus 214 does not reflect this deterioration in status. In a similar way to the Bede gloss, *gealder-domlices* is used to denote the judgment ('dom') and wisdom required of this office.

iii. The Exeter Book

The remaining seven non-condemnatory uses of *galdor* are found in the Exeter Book and the Vercelli Book. These two manuscripts contain similar texts that are thematically related, and they use *galdor* in similar ways. The Exeter Book (Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3501) is a collection of spiritual texts and wisdom poetry, containing elegies, riddles, biblical poems, saints' lives, homilies, and maxims. These genres are not as distinct as printed editions have indicated and all demonstrate a focus on wisdom, Christian discernment, and spiritual edification. A number of these texts use *galdor* to signify explicitly Christian concepts, and it is therefore important to try to situate when and where the manuscript was written so that we may understand how a particular community or group of individuals perceived this term.

Scholars agree that the Exeter Book was written by a single scribe in the second half of the tenth century but there has been great disagreement over its place of origin.[35] Editors of the Exeter Book concluded that it was written in Exeter on the basis of a reference to the manuscript in the famous 'Leofric inventory', which records its donation to the cathedral library by Leofric, Bishop of Exeter 1050-1072.[36] Ker identified the same handwriting of the

[34] See Boethius, *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius'* De Consolatione Philosophiae, Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine, eds. and trans., 2 Vols (Oxford: OUP, 2009), Vol. I, 300, 447; see also Vol. II, 353-4 for other glosses of this passage.

[35] Krapp and Dobbie claimed that it was probably written 'seventy or eighty years before Leofric became the first bishop of Exeter', placing its production around 970-980, George Philip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, eds., *The Exeter Book*, ASPR, Vol. 3 (New York: Columbia UP, 1936), x.

[36] See R. W. Chambers, Max Förster, and Robin Fowler, eds., *The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry* (London: P. Lund, Humphries & Cp., 1933), 28; Benjamin J. Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501*, 2 Vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), Vol. I, 3. See

Exeter Book scribe in two other early eleventh-century manuscripts which he believed were also produced in Exeter. The hand appears in a note concerning Ealdorman Æthelweard in London, Lambeth Palace, MS 149, and in a continuous gloss to Isidore's *De miraculis Christi* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 319.[37]

The likelihood of the manuscript being produced in Exeter has, however, been strongly contested. Richard Gameson agreed with Ker that Lambeth 149 and Bodley 319 contain the same scribal hand as the Exeter Book but he argued that these two manuscripts were unlikely to have been produced in Exeter.[38] Gameson demonstrated that these manuscripts actually have strong paleographical connections with books from Christ Church, Canterbury.[39] After his appointment as archbishop, Dunstan maintained connections with his previous monastery at Glastonbury, and Gameson concluded that the Exeter Book was likely to have been produced there:

> [It was] written by a skilful scribe at a centre that was not short of resources and that had access to an interesting range of texts both in Latin and the vernacular… We would seem, therefore, to be looking for a major scriptorium in the south-west which was active in the mid- to third quarter of the tenth century, which included a talented calligrapher who was skilled in the native tradition of script, which had connections with Canterbury and whose other products seem largely to have disappeared. There can be little doubt that the place which best fits this profile is Glastonbury.[40]

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also P. W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993), 1-20, 48-147. On the contents of Leofric's inventory, see Richard Gameson, 'The Origin of the Exeter Book of Old English Poetry', *ASE*, 25 (1996), 135-85 at 140-3, 162-3; Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 56-7, 139-40.

[37] Ker, *Catalogue*, 153, 340, 360-1. See also Jane A. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 12-13; Gameson, 'Origin of the Exeter Book', 163-79.

[38] Gameson, 'Origin of the Exeter Book', 169-71. See also Gneuss, *Handlist*, 93.

[39] Gameson, 'Origin of the Exeter Book', 177, see also 163-8, 173-5. Gneuss believes that it was probably produced in the south-west of England but he also suggests a possible origin in Christ Church, Canterbury, Gneuss, *Handlist*, 54. See also Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, 201-2.

[40] Gameson, 'Origin of the Exeter Book', 179. Matthew Hussey has also argued that this scribe worked in the intellectual circles of Æthelwold and Dunstan in Glastonbury, Matthew T. Hussey, 'Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Isidorean Exegesis in Old English Glosses: Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 319', *RES*, 60 (2009), 681-704.

Robert Butler argued that connections between Lambeth 149, Bodley 319, and the Exeter Book indicate that they were all written in the same scriptorium.[41] From the evidence of an inscription in Lambeth 149 recording the manuscript's donation by Ealdorman Æthelweard to a monastery dedicated to St Mary in 1018, Butler proposed the monastery of St Mary's at Glastonbury as the likely scriptorium that produced all three manuscripts.[42] He argued that this donar was likely to be the same Æthelweard who was an associate of Æthelmær, a patron of Ælfric of Eynsham and the Benedictine Reform movement.[43] Butler concluded that, as well as the donation inscription, the 'literary milieu of Glastonbury under Dunstan, the concerns of several Exeter Book poems, the very few palaeographical analogues at hand, and the apparent transactions between Glastonbury and Exeter' all indicate that the manuscript was written at Glastonbury during or shortly after Dunstan's abbacy there.[44]

Elaine Treharne has recently proposed Exeter, Crediton, and Glastonbury as possible places of production for the Exeter Book, and she dates the manuscript to circa 970.[45] Treharne concludes that the manuscript was written by one highly skilled scribe who had access to a good range of resources, and that it was compiled from three booklets that were written at different stages.[46] She also argues that the manuscript's thematic content reflects clerical as well as monastic interests, thus indicating that it was written for a variety of audiences in the early years of the Benedictine Reform in one of these south-western monasteries.[47]

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[41] Robert M. Butler, 'Glastonbury and the Early History of the Exeter Book', in *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context*, Joyce Tally Lionarons, ed (Morgantown: West Virginia UP, 2004), 173-215 at 175-82.
[42] Butler, 'Early History of the Exeter Book', 186-215.
[43] See also Joyce Hill, 'The Exeter Book and Lambeth Palace Library MS 149: A Reconsideration', *ANQ*, 24 (1986), 112-16; 'The Exeter Book and Lambeth Palace Library MS 149: The Monasterium of Sancta Maria', *ANQ*, 1 (1988), 4-9.
[44] Butler, 'Early History of the Exeter Book', 215.
[45] Elaine M. Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources of Old English Poetry', in *Working with Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, Owen-Crocker, ed., 88-111 at 90, 99.
[46] Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources', 100.
[47] Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources', 99-101.

The language of the Exeter Book has also been used to locate its origin. The manuscript was copied from one or more exemplars of unknown date, and the appearances of *galdor* may have simply been copied by a scribe who did not wish to make any alterations to the texts' language.[48] N. F. Blake contrasted spellings in the Exeter Book with standardised West-Saxon spellings in the glosses of Bodley 319, and concluded that the glosses were written in the scribe's native language.[49] Æthelwold's school in Winchester promoted the standardisation of West-Saxon spelling and there emerged 'some source of conscious language manipulation' during the second half of the tenth century.[50] This project of language revision had a significant impact on the redefinition of certain words and their use in written sources, and it may have been the case that *galdor* was one such word that came to be reconceived as a forbidden spiritual practice. The appearances of *galdor* in the Exeter Book probably reflect earlier views of this word before its revised usage spread from Winchester. However, it also shows that the meaning of *galdor* as a Christian concept was not scrutinised by the manuscript's commissioners, owners, and scribe when it was copied in the first few decades of the Benedictine Reform.

Regardless of the contention over the Exeter Book's exact place of production, scholars propose that it was written at a reforming monastic house around 970. We are dealing with a manuscript that was probably copied from an earlier, pre-Reform codex in a reforming minster after it was commissioned by patrons or leading ecclesiastics of the Reform movement. The Exeter Book provides important information about how those involved in the manuscript's production understood and viewed the Christian nature of

[48] See Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1953), 102-3.
[49] See N. F. Blake, 'The Scribe of the Exeter Book', *Neophilologus*, 46 (1962), 316-19.
[50] Helmut Gneuss, 'The Origin of Standard Old English and Æthelwold's School at Winchester', *ASE*, 1 (1972), 63-83 at 69. See also W. Hofsetter, 'Winchester and the Standardization of Old English Vocabulary', *ASE*, 17 (1988), 139-61; Helmut Gneuss, 'The Study of Language in Anglo-Saxon England', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 72 (1990), 3-32 at 25-6; Ursula Lenker, 'The Monasteries of the Benedictine Reform and the "Winchester School": Model Cases of Social Networks in Anglo-Saxon England', *European Journal of English Studies*, 4 (2000), 225-38 at 231.

galdor before it became predominantly associated with dangerous religious practices. This word is used to describe wisdom, Christian discernment, and spiritual revelation in poems about St Guthlac, Christian morality, the transient nature of the earthly life, and two riddles for liturgical objects.

Guthlac B

Galdor is used to describe sacred wisdom in the Exeter Book's *Guthlac B*. This poem is usually considered to be separate from *Guthlac A* (1-818) according to differences in style and sources.[51] *Guthlac B* is based on Chapter 50 of Felix's Latin *Life of Saint Guthlac* and it gives an account of the saint's relationship with his disciple Beccel. Catherine Clarke says that the poem presents

> a model of spiritual friendship which is both didactic and intensely affective... the central bond between Guthlac and Beccel forms the basis of an idealised representation of spiritual patronage, adaptable as a model for a range of overlapping relationships relevant to its monastic audience such as those of teacher-pupil, master-disciple, senior-novitiate.[52]

Guthlac's superior authority is the central focus of the poem and his wisdom is demonstrated through his edifying lessons to his disciple. Daniel Calder has argued that this focus on authority serves to distinguish the saint from the ordinary man to the point where 'Beccel does not, nor will he ever, grasp the meaning of the mystical transfiguration that will occur in

[51] For an overview of these differences, see Krapp and Dobbie, *Exeter Book*, xxx-xxxi. On *Guthlac A*, see Alaric Hall, 'Constructing Anglo-Saxon Sanctity: Tradition, Innovation and Saint Guthlac', in *Images of Sanctity: Essays in Honour of Gary Dickson*, Debra Higgs Strickland, ed (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 207-35. Catherine A. M. Clarke provides a very good discussion of the relationships between the two poems, *Writing Power in Anglo-Saxon England: Texts, Hierarchies, Economies* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012), 11-43. See also Roberts, *Guthlac Poems*, 19-48

[52] Clarke, *Writing Power*, 16.

his presence'.[53] Guthlac is a mystical figure who edifies and reveals divine mysteries to his servant.

The poem uses *galdor* in terms of the saint's spiritual wisdom. When the saint is on the point of death, Beccel begs Guthlac to comfort him before he dies:

> Ongon þa ofostlice
> to his winedryhtne wordum mæðlan:
> 'Ic þec halsige, hæleþa leofost
> gumena cynnes, þurh gæsta weard,
> þæt þu hygesorge heortan minre
> geeþe, eorla wyn. Nis þe ende feor,
> þæs þe ic on galdrum ongieten hæbbe.
> Oft mec geomor sefa gehþa gemanode,
> hat æt heortan, hyge gnornende
> nihtes nearwe, ond ic næfre þe,
> fæder, frofor min, frignan dorste' (1201-11).[54]

> Hurredly then he addressed these words to his friend and master: 'I beg you, most beloved man among humankind, by the Guardian of souls, that you, men's joy, might ease the anxious curiosity in my heart. The end is not far from you, according to what I have understood from your divinations [*galdrum*]. Often my troubled understanding, ardent at heart, my nagging thought would remind me of these anxieties in the confine of the night, but I have never dared to question you, my father and comforter.[55]

[53] Daniel G. Calder, 'Theme and Strategy in *Guthlac B*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 8 (1972), 227-42 at 237.
[54] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 83.
[55] S. A. J. Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London: Everyman, 1982), 279.

Beccel laments the fact that he had not asked Guthlac about some conversations which he had overheard. We are then told that the saint spoke with God's angel during his time in retreat (1227-69). A little earlier in the poem, Guthlac describes this exchange of divine speech, and it is referred to as a revelation of the lord's mystery: 'ne swa deoplice dryhtnes geryne / þurh menniscne muð areccan on sidum sefan' (1121-2).[56] Clarke claims that this passage describing Guthlac's spiritual revelation is climactic in the poem:

> This revelation is a powerful moment within the poem, in which the reader's horizons are suddenly extended just as they are for Beccel, listening to his master speak these words. Having been presented as the spiritual authority throughout the poem… Guthlac is now revealed himself to be a pupil, receiving tuition and consolation from his own angelic protector.[57]

Guthlac is shown to be a mediator between God's messengers and his fellow men. Beccel understands that Guthlac is going to die because of the *galdrum* spoken (1206-7); he comes to this knowledge through Guthlac's *galdrum*, and the term is used to signify the saint's wise teachings and exhortations.

This description in *Guthlac B* departs slightly from the account found in Felix's *Life of Guthlac*:

> Audiens autem haec praefactus frater exorsus inquit: 'Obsecro mi pater, quia infirmitatem tuam intelligo, et moriturum te audio, ut dicas mihi unum, de quo olim te interrogare non ausus diu sollicitabar. Nam ab eo tempore, quo tecum, domine, habitare coeperam, te loquentem vespere et mane audiebam, nescio cum quo. Propterea adiuro te, ne me sollicitum de hac re post obitum tuum dimittas'.

[56] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 81; 'nor the mystery of the Lord so deeply expounded in breadth of understanding out of human mouth', Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 277.
[57] Clarke, *Writing Power*, 25-6.

> When the same brother heard this he began to say: 'I beseech you, father, since I understand that you are ill, and I hear that you are like to die, that you will tell me one thing which I have long been troubled about but have not dared to ask you. From the time I first began to live with you, my lord, I have heard you talking, evening and morning, with someone, I know not whom. Therefore I adjure you not to leave me troubled about this matter after your death'.[58]

In Felix's version, Beccel says that he understands the saint's mortal condition ('quia infirmatem tuam intellego') according to what he hears ('moriturum te audio'). He grasps the situation through his intellect and hearing but in *Guthlac B* it is the saint's *galdrum* that are grasped and understood. These *galdrum* describe the spiritual insight of a saint who has conversed with angels and is about to leave the human world. The Old English poem diverges from Felix's *Vita* to stress that *galdrum* communicate a saintly revelation.

Guthlac's *galdrum* bring knowledge and spiritual wisdom to men on earth. Clarke emphasises the role of the poem in its wider manuscript context and its reception history: 'For audiences in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, the Guthlac poems of the Exeter Book present a range of monastic concerns and values, engaging with the renewed emphasis on Benedictinism in the period'.[59] This occurrence of *galdor* in *Guthlac B* indicates that the term was also used to emphasise moral instruction and the discernment of spiritual mysteries. Other instances of *galdor* in the manuscript also show that it signified Christian discernment, spiritual wisdom, and divine revelation.

Vainglory

[58] Bertram Colgrave, ed. and trans., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac* (Cambridge: CUP, 1956), 156-7.
[59] Clarke, *Writing Power*, 42.

The Exeter Book's *Vainglory* also links *galdor* to concepts of wisdom. This poem concerns the discernment of the good and evil man, and it instructs its reader or listener in Christian moral values. At the beginning of *Vainglory* the poet explains how a wise person, who is learned in the teaching of prophets, taught him how to discern the good man:

> Hwæt, me frod wita on fyrndagum
> sægde, snottor ar, sundorwundra fela!
> Wordhord onwreah witgam larum
> beorn boca gleaw, bodan ærcwide,
> þæt ic soðlice siþþan meahte
> ongitan bi þam gealdre godes agen bearn (1-6).[60]

> Listen, an old advisor in former days,
> a wise messenger, told me of many special wonders.
> The man learned in books opened his word-hoard,
> the prophets' teaching, with ancient sayings of the prophet,
> so that I may now truly know
> by these *gealdre* God's own son.[61]

Vainglory is a homiletic poem about the dangers of pride and its remedy of humility.[62] The proud and the humble man are contrasted throughout the poem, and it has been referred to as one of the 'poems of advice' that has strong resonances with the teachings of the Church Fathers.[63] The word *gealdre* is inextricably linked to surrounding phrases denoting wise men and their learning: 'frod wita' (1), 'snottor ar' (2), 'witgam larum' (3), 'boca gleaw' (4),

[60] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 147.
[61] Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
[62] See Roy M. Liuzza, *Old English Poetry: An Anthology* (Ontario: Broadview, 2014), 59.
[63] Tom A. Shippey, *Old English Verse* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1972), 67; Catharine A. Regan, 'Patristic Psychology in the Old English "Vainglory"', *Traditio*, 26 (1970), 324-35.

'bodan ærcwide' (5). The special wonders of divine knowledge ('sundorwundra fela', 2) are also revealed through these *gealdre*, in a similar way to the saint's *galdrum* in *Guthlac B.* *Vainglory* explicitly uses *galdor* to signify the ancient sayings of the prophets, and true knowledge of God's sons.

Riming Poem

The *Riming Poem* of the Exeter Book also uses *galdor* to signify wisdom and poetic skill. This poem is a very enigmatic text and bears strong resemblances to the riddles. It opens with an expansive range of blessings that were enjoyed by a leader during his or her reign, and half way through the poem the ruler describes how he or she lost everything and fell into misery. Critics have claimed that the poem is merely about this ruler's series of misfortunes and loss of earthly wealth and lordship.[64] Others have claimed that it is an allegory of death and time in purgatory, and that its overall message is about God's will and human existence.[65]

Among the many blessings that the leader enjoyed, we are told that he or she sang *galdorwordum* in the height of his or her glory:

> Swa mec hyhtgiefu heold, hygedryht befeold,
> staþolæhtum steold, stepegongum weold
> swylce eorþe ol, ahte ic ealdorstol,
> galdorwordum gol. Gomen sibbe ne ofoll.
> ac wæs gefest gear, gellende sner,
> wuniendo wær wilbec bescær.
> Scealcas wæron scearpe, scyl wæs hearpe,

[64] W. C. Robinson, *Introduction to Our Early English Literature* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1885), 181; Doris Grübl, *Studien zu den angelsachsischen Elegien* (Marburg: Elwert-Gräfe, 1948), 61-3.
[65] G. K. Anderson, *Literature of the Anglo-Saxons* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1949), 175; Kemp Malone, 'The Old English Period (to 1100)', in *A Literary History of England*, A. C. Baugh, ed., 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1967), 1-106 at 84; R. P. M. Lehmann, 'The Old English Riming Poem: Interpretation, Text, and Translation', *JEGP*, 64 (1970), 437-49 at 440-1.

hlude hlynede, hleoþor dynede,

sweglrad swinsade, swiþe ne minsade (21-9).[66]

So joy dwelt within me, a family troop encompassed me, I possessed estates, where I stepped I had command over whatever the earth brought forth, I had a princely throne, I sang with charmed words [*galdorwordum*], old friendship did not grow less. Moreover, there was a year rich in gifts, a resounding harp-string, lasting peace cut short the river of sorrow. The servants were active, the harp was resonant, loudly rang; sound pealed, music made melody, did not greatly abate.[67]

This passage focuses on the leader's joys in family life, friendship, authority, and music. The hall occupies the centre of this narrative where the leader sat upon a throne and sang *galdorwordum* (23-4), where harps were played (27), and where music resounded (28-9). This passage evidently connects the *galdorwordum* to both the music in the hall and the ruler's authority. A little later the ruler also describes the quality of wisdom ('freaum frodade', 32), echoing other associations of *galdor* with wise words.

Karl Wentersdorf interprets this singing of *galdorwordum* as a liturgical practice:

galdor took on a Christian and even liturgical meaning… when the persona in *R[iming] P[oem]* talks of chanting *galdorwordum*, he is probably thinking either of participation in Christian liturgies or of his spontaneous offering of prayers of thanksgiving… the persona's intoning of prayer (24a) is followed by revelry in his *burgsele* (27a-30b).[68]

[66] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 167.
[67] Translation from W. S. Mackie, 'The Old English "Rhymed Poem"', *JEGP*, 21 (1922), 507-19 at 513.
[68] Wentersdorf, 'Ruler's Lament', 281, 285.

Wentersdorf also interprets the overall musical imagery of this passage as a liturgical performance.[69] The ruler's reminiscence of glory is described in an overtly Christian context, and the speaker associates his or her previous prosperity with God's grace at the very beginning of the poem: 'Me lifes onlah se þis leoht onwrah, / ond þæt torhte geteoh, tillice onwrah' (1-2).[70] It is clear that the leader's singing of *galdorwordum* is included among nostalgic memories of the past and other aspects of a well-ruled kingdom. The songs, hymns or prayers of this fallen kingdom and bygone, glorious era reinforce the association of this word with right-ruling and Christian wisdom.

Riddles

Two of the Exeter Book riddles also present *galdor* as an explicitly Christian concept. These two texts share features with other riddles that concern 'writing as a material form of speech' but their uses of *galdor* distinguish them in a particular way.[71] In *Riddle* 48 a 'hring' is said to cry out in *galdorcwide*:

> Ic gefrægn for hæleþum hring endean,
> torhtne butan tungan, tila þeah he hlude
> stefne ne cirmde, strongum wordum.
> Sinc for secgum swigende cwæð:
> 'Gehæle mec, helpend gæsta.'
> Ryne ongietan readan goldes
> guman galdorcwide, gleawe beþencan
> hyra hælo to gode, swa se hring gecwæð (1-8).[72]

[69] Wentersdorf, 'Ruler's Lament', 281-5.
[70] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 166; 'He granted me life who revealed the sun, and formed that brightness, well displayed'.
[71] Peter Ramey, 'Writing Speaks: Oral Poetics and Writing Technology in the Exeter Book Riddles', *PQ*, 92 (2013), 335-56 at 336.
[72] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 205-6.

I heard of a ring singing for heroes,
bright without a tongue, rightly though he cried out
without a voice, with strong words.
The treasure for men spoke silently:
'Save me, Helper of souls!'
May men perceive the mystery [*ryne*] of the red gold,
the enchanting song [*galdorcwide*], may the wise entrust
their salvation to God, as the ring said.[73]

The 'hring' that speaks in this riddle could refer to several different things: a 'ring, fetter, mail shirt, sphere of influence or globe'.[74] This 'hring' may refer to the world of believers who are still fettered by sin, thus expounding the Christian doctrine of fallen Man to the audience. Wentersdorf claims that the speaker is either a chalice or a paten and the words that it speaks are 'a liturgical formula inscribed on the vessel', and 'chalice' is the generally accepted solution.[75]

One of the fascinating features of this riddle is that the object speaks without a tongue ('butan tungan'), without a voice ('stefne ne cirmde'), and silently ('swigende cwæð'). *Riddle* 59 also describes a chalice that is dumb but able to bring the name of the Saviour to the listener's mind: 'dumba brohte / ond in eagna gesihð'.[76] The use of paradox is characteristic

[73] Translation from Ramey, 'Writing Speaks', 344. Ramey emends 'hring endean' of line 1 to 'hring gyddian', rendering the ring as a singing object. See also Krapp and Dobbie, *Exeter Book*, 347.
[74] Clark-Hall, *Dictionary*, 185.
[75] Wentersdorf, 'Ruler's Lament', 281. See also Marie Nelson, 'The Paradox of Silent Speech in the Exeter Book Riddles', *Neophilologus*, 62 (1978), 609-15; Dieter Bitterli, *Say what I Am Called: The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book and the Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 26; Patrick J. Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Book Riddles* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State UP, 2011), 100. John Niles interprets the word 'hring' as 'husel-disc' to pose the solution of a paten, *Old English Enigmatic Poems and the Play of the Texts* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 112.
[76] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 209. 'Dumb, it brought the Lord's name clearly into the mind', translation from Ramey, 'Writing Speaks', 345.

of riddling texts and it often misguides the reader or listener through prosopopoeia.[77] Elizabeth Okasha has highlighted the possible connection between the silent 'hring' and the verb 'hringan' (to sound).[78] Interestingly, the 'hring' cries silently in *galdorcwide* so that the wise may be directed towards God through its words (7-8). The riddle emphasises the 'quality of the speech' as well as the paradox of audible utterance and silence,[79] and *galdor* is deliberately chosen to describe the object's plea. Peter Ramey offers an important insight into the affectivity of this silent voice:

> the mysterious riddle-object is not presented as a message decoded by a reader but as an utterance *enacted* upon a hearer or group of listeners… speech is conferred upon an article of a profoundly sacred character (probably an engraved communion chalice), which imbues its religious function with a deepened sense of mystery and power… silent declaration, perceptible only to those capable of understanding it, obviously refers to writing.[80]

Ramey's insight is extremely useful for interpreting the meaning of this riddle. The chalice was used during an inaudible performance in the Mass as the Canon was said quietly by a priest.[81] This may suggest that *galdorcwide* does not necessarily indicate an 'enchanting song', as Ramey translates, but rather an inaudible utterance.[82] The chalice's 'silent declaration' may also refer to these silent utterances of the liturgy.

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[77] See especially Miriam Edlich-Muth, 'Prosopopoeia: Sharpening the Anglo-Saxon Toolkit', *ES*, 95 (2014), 95-108.
[78] Elizabeth Okasha, 'Old English hring in Riddles 48 and 59', *Medium Ævum*, 62 (1993), 61-9 at 64-5.
[79] Nelson, 'Silent Speech', 612.
[80] Ramey, 'Writing Speaks', 344-5.
[81] On the developments of this inaudible performance in the Mass from the sixth century, see Geoffrey G. Willis, *Further Essays in Early Roman Liturgy* (London: S. P. C. K., 1968), 125. See also Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, Francis A. Brunner, trans., 2 Vols (New York: Benziger, 1951), Vol. II, 90-7.
[82] 'Cwide' can be translated as 'speech', 'word', 'utterance', and 'homily'; Clark-Hall, *Dictionary*, 63. Nelson translates *galdorcwide* literally as 'sound-saying' to further the riddle's paradox with silence, 'Silent Speech', 612.

Belief in the mystery of Christ's sacramental presence in the Eucharist requires the faith and inner understanding of the believer rather than a literal message vocalised by Christ, as the riddle itself indicates: 'Ryne ongietan readan goldes / guman' (6-7). The word for divine secret or mystery ('geryne') is elsewhere used in glosses to translate 'sacramento' (sacrament), 'misterio' (mystery), and 'typicum, .i. mysticum' (symbolic and mystical): 'the various forms of geryne are not used for pagan belief… [but] the "mistery" of Easter, of baptism, of the sacrament, of the Trinity'.[83] The term is also used in *Guthlac B* to describe the angelic revelation of the lord's mystery ('dryhtnes geryne', 1121).[84] *Ryne* has a liturgical and doctrinal significance and its direct correlation with *galdorcwide* demonstrates that *galdor* is used in this context to denote another form of authoritative spiritual insight. There are two layers to this silent speech as the transformation of wine into the Precious Blood is literally carried out through a priest's silent utterance, and as Christ's voice silently communicates with the believer through the mystery of the Eucharist.

The most striking thing to note about this Eucharistic speech is that the 'hring' speaks in *galdorcwide*. The focus is more on this silent utterance than the nature of the object itself: 'What is surprising about this scene is the way it attributes efficacy less to the sacred contents of the communion cup than to the enchanting effect of its speech… here writing animates the object by conferring upon it a voice'.[85] While Ramey is right to highlight the importance of speech, the *galdorcwide* does not necessarily denote an inscription and it is not as dissociated from the 'hring's' contents as he suggests. Instead of an animated inscription that confers a voice and silent declaration *upon* a liturgical object, it could be the silent voice of Christ speaking in this way *through* and *from* the 'hring'. Christ 'speaks' without a voice and appears in the form of 'red gold' in his sacramental presence, and this divine language is

[83] Christine Fell, 'Runes and Semantics', in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, Alfred Bammesberger, ed (Heidelberg: Winter, 1991), 195-229 at 206. For examples, see Arthur S. Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1900), 30, 56, 78.
[84] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 81.
[85] Ramey, 'Writing Speaks', 344-5.

conveyed through *galdorcwide*. Interestingly, this Eucharistic union is also reflected in the plea that the 'hring' makes. The prayer 'Gehæle mec, helpend gæsta' is one of a sinner and this may be interpreted as Christ's prayer to God on their behalf. As the Eucharist is a liturgical re-enactment of the Passion and Resurrection, this line may also be interpreted as an echo of Christ's petitions on the cross. The riddle's paradox forms the basis of an exercise in discernment, and it uses *galdor* to communicate this Eucharistic mystery that ultimately leads the wise listener to salvation.[86]

The final occurrence of *galdor* in the Exeter Book is found in *Riddle* 67. This is an extremely difficult text to translate as it is missing many words in its opening lines. However, the surviving text has strong connections with *Riddle* 48 as it speaks without a mouth ('nænne muð hafað'),[87] and it describes a liturgical object (most likely the Bible):

> The familiar elements again appear: a speaker tells of a wondrous, gold-adorned creature (*wrætlice wiht*) placed within a hall scene where men are at drink; it causes wonder on account of its enchanting song (*wordgaldra*); and it teaches wisdom that leads to eternal life, although it has no mouth.[88]

In the second line of the riddle the word 'wordgaldra' appears with the surrounding terms 'snytt' ('wise'), 'wisdome', and 'wundor', thus directly associating *wordgaldra* with words of wisdom.[89] The book's message is evidently found in written form but the riddle emphasises that the sacred message is conveyed through *galdra* and silence in much the same way as the chalice.[90] When considered together, the two appearances of *galdor* in these riddles could reflect the two liturgies of the Word and Eucharist in the Mass. As the chalice

[86] It is worth noting that 'ongietan' is the same verb used to describe Beccel's understanding of Guthlac's *galdrum* ('galdrum ongieten hæbbe').
[87] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 231.
[88] Ramey, 'Writing Speaks', 340.
[89] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 231.
[90] See Ramey, 'Writing Speaks', 340.

speaks with the voice of Christ through *galdorcwide*, so too does the holy book speak with the voice of God through *wordgaldra*. The fact that these two riddles describe these objects in terms of *galdor* inextricably associates the word with these liturgical performances. Like the chalice, the holy book of *Riddle* 67 uses *galdor* to signify wisdom, discernment, and divine power.

These appearances of *galdor* in the Exeter Book reflect similar meanings of wise advice that are found in the glosses to Bede and Boethius. However, these descriptions also indicate that the word may have been used to denote divine revelation, interpretations of Christian morality and wisdom, and even the voice of God in the liturgy. The Exeter Book indicates that Anglo-Saxon perceptions of *galdor* were not limited to proscribed spiritual practices, and that the term was sometimes actively incorporated into explicitly Christian contexts.

iv. The Vercelli Book

The Vercelli Book (Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS cxvii) is another manuscript that uses *galdor* in similar ways to the Exeter Book. It contains saints' lives, homilies, and wisdom poems, and it was also written by a single scribe in the second half of the tenth century.[91] The manuscript's place of production is unknown but it is again important to try to situate when and where it was likely to have been written. Max Förster, the first editor of the Vercelli Book's homilies, drew comparisons between the language of the Vercelli Book and manuscripts from Worcester, and he believed that it was written in this minster.[92] George Krapp claimed that the manuscript was commissioned by the same patron as the Exeter Book,

[91] See George Philip Krapp, ed., *The Vercelli Book*, ASPR, Vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1932), xvi-xvii; Ker, *Catalogue*, 460-4; Michelle P. Brown, *Manuscripts from the Anglo-Saxon Age* (London: British Library, 2007), 137.

[92] Max Förster, ed., *Der Vercelli-Codex CXVII nebst Abdruck einiger altenglischer Homilien der Handschrift* (Halle: Verlag, 1913), 16-19; *Die Vercelli-Homilien* (Hamburg: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), 18-20, 34-5. Rudolf Vleeskruyer also held that it is a Mercian compilation, *The Life of St Chad: An Old English Homily* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1953), 58.

suggesting that a supporter of the Reform from the south-west of England was also responsible for this collection.[93] Pamela Gradon commented on the similarity of content in the Exeter and Vercelli Books – both contain a *Soul and Body* poem, signed poems by Cynewulf, a text on St Guthlac, among other textual similarities – but she argued that there is 'no cogent reason for associating the Vercelli Book with the west' on these grounds.[94] Gradon instead proposed Canterbury as a probable place of origin on the basis of the scribe's Kentish spellings and the abbreviation 'xƀ' that is common to the Vercelli Book and other Canterbury manuscripts.[95]

Donald Scragg believes that the Vercelli Book was compiled in the south-east of England in the second half of the tenth century.[96] He suggests St Augustine's, Canterbury as the most likely place of origin according to evidence from other manuscripts that have connections with some of the Vercelli Book's homilies.[97] Scragg believes that Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 340/2 (s. xi^{1}), for example, was likely to have been written at St Augustine's, and that its compiler had access to the same library as the Vercelli scribe.[98] He also highlights other features of the Vercelli Book that indicate a Canterbury production, including sporadic Kentish spellings by the scribe, similarities between certain homilies in other Canterbury manuscripts, and possible ninth and tenth-century sources that would have been available in Canterbury minsters.[99] Treharne also suggests St Augustine's, Canterbury as the Vercelli Book's place of origin and dates the manuscript to circa 970.[100] She argues

[93] Krapp, *Vercelli Book*, xvi.
[94] Pamela O. E. Gradon, ed., *Cynewulf's Elene* (London: Methuen & Co., 1958), 3-5.
[95] Gradon, *Elene*, 3, 5. See also Sisam, *History of Old English*, 153. Karen Jolly also notes that this abbreviation is used in the *Durham Collectar*, 'Prayers from the Field: Practical Protection and Demonic Defence in Anglo-Saxon England', *Traditio*, 61 (2006), 95–147 at 104.
[96] See Donald G. Scragg, 'The Compilation of the Vercelli Book', *ASE*, 2 (1973), 189-207; *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts* (Oxford: EETS, 1992), xxiii, xli; 'Manuscript Sources', 80-1; *Conspectus*, 85.
[97] Scragg, 'Compilation of the Vercelli Book', 196-207; *Vercelli Homilies*, lxxv-lxxvi.
[98] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, lxxviii-lxxix. For a more thorough study of these connections, see Donald G. Scragg, 'Studies in the Language of Copyists of the Vercelli Homilies', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, Samantha Zacher and Andy Orchard, eds (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 41-61.
[99] Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, xxxviii-xxxix, xli-lxxiii.
[100] Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources', 101.

that the scribe had access to a reasonable library, 'probably within a monastic environment', and that the manuscript's homilies contain 'Benedictine prejudices' which indicate that it was a product of the Reform movement.[101]

Other scholars have, however, contested that the manuscript was written in a reforming minster. Celia Sisam favoured the unreformed minster at Rochester as a likely place of origin according to a particular description in *Homily XI* to the destruction of churches by heathens, bishops, kings, and ealdormen. Sisam interpreted this as a reference to the destruction of the bishopric of Rochester in 986 during King Æthelred's reign, and she suggested a later date of the last decade of the tenth century.[102] David Dumville also disagreed with the Vercelli Book's production at St Augustine's on paleographical grounds according to the scribal features of other contemporary manuscripts from St Augustine's, and he also favoured Rochester as the manuscript's place of origin.[103]

Éamonn Ó Carragáin likewise made a compelling argument about the Vercelli Book's origin in an unreformed minster according to the manuscript's thematic organisation:

> we can most clearly see the recurring, almost obsessive, preoccupations of a single compiler. It was not a book suitable for communal use… it reflects the devotional tastes of one single person in tenth-century England… Even though the compiler could draw on a wide range of sources, there is little in the Vercelli collection to indicate that it was produced by an organized scriptorium… the idiosyncratic nature of the compilation seems to indicate that the foundation, wherever it was, was then in a stage earlier than the reforms of the reign of

[101] Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources', 102; 'Form and Function of the Exeter Book' in *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, Alastair J. Minnis and Jane A. Roberts, eds (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 253-66 at 253.
[102] Celia Sisam, ed., *The Vercelli Book: A Late Tenth-Century Manuscript Containing Prose and Verse, Vercelli Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1976), 220. Gneuss also suggests Rochester as well as St Augustine's, Canterbury as probable places of origin, Gneuss, *Handlist*, 145; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, 682.
[103] David Dumville, 'English Square Miniscule Script: The Mid-Century Phases', *ASE*, 23 (1994), 133-64 at 140, note 9.

> Edgar – indeed, that it was then the sort of place against which the reforms of Edgar were directed.[104]

Ó Carragáin's suggestion has implications for the non-condemnatory meaning of *galdor* in this manuscript as it may reflect the views of a single compiler in a non-Reform setting. He concludes by speculating on the possibility that the manuscript was taken away to Vercelli shortly after the Reform because its texts were seen to be out of date by reformers.[105] Charles Wright also situates the manuscript within the context of the early years of the Reform, arguing that *Homilies XI-XIII* reveal a pointed clerical reaction against the principles of the movement, in particular the prohibition of private property.[106] More recently, Samantha Zacher follows arguments that have been made for Rochester as the Vercelli Book's likely place of production, and adds that the manuscript collection reflects a 'non-reformist spirit' which was compiled to accommodate a clerical community.[107] Zacher believes that Bodley 340/2 and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 162 (both s. xi[1]) were also produced in Rochester, and that they reflect similar non-Reform interests as the Vercelli Book.[108]

The language of the Vercelli Book has also been used to locate its origin. At least five different exemplars were used for the manuscript's compilation, and some items (especially

[104] Éamonn Ó Carragáin, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli: "The Dream of the Rood" and the Italian Connection', in *Vercelli tra Oriente ed Occidente tra Tarda Antichità e Medioevo*, Vittora D. Corazza, ed (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 1999), 59-99 at 94-5.
[105] Ó Carragáin, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli', 96. A scribbled note indicates that it was in Italy by at least the twelfth century, see Ker, *Catalogue*, 464; Sisam, *History of Old English*, 113-16; Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, xxiv; Zacher and Orchard, 'Introduction', 3. Scragg, however, notes two Canterbury hands in a pen-trial from the first half of the eleventh century and interlinear insertions from the second half of the eleventh century, suggesting that the manuscript remained in England until this time, Scragg, *Conspectus*, 85.
[106] Charles D. Wright, 'Vercelli Homilies XI-XIII and the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform: Tailored Sources and Implied Audiences', in *Preacher, Sermon, and Audience in the Middle Ages*, Carolyn Meussig, ed (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 203-27 at 224.
[107] Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 17-21.
[108] See also Samantha Zacher and Andy Orchard, 'Introduction', in *New Readings in the Vercelli Book*, Zacher and Orchard, eds., 3-11 at 3.

its poems) seem to have been copied from earlier sources.[109] There are also disruptions of continuous copying that are evident throughout the manuscript, suggesting that the wide range of materials was written over a long period of time.[110] Scholars generally agree that the scribe copied his texts mechanically, paying little attention to errors in the exemplars and faithfully copying the source materials that appear to have been in late West Saxon.[111] This would indicate that the appearances of *galdor* were simply copied directly from their exemplar(s) without any scribal interference. There are instances where the scribe introduced his own Kentish spellings, suggesting that deliberate attempts were made to improve the exemplar texts.[112] However, given the small frequency of these corrections, and the Anglian forms of *galdor* in only two of the manuscript's poems, it is safe to assume that the *galdor* references were copied without much atttention by the scribe. Given that Æthelwold's school in Winchester promoted the standardisation of West-Saxon spelling, as well as the likelihood of an earlier date for the Vercelli Book's poems that contain references to *galdor*, we are probably dealing with a manuscript that includes some pre-Reform texts which reflect earlier views of *galdor* before it became associated with dangerous ritual practices.

Scholars generally agree that the Vercelli Book was written at a minster in the south-east of England around 970. We are here probably dealing with a manuscript that was copied from several exemplars that predated the Reform. Some texts appear to engage critically with contemporary issues of the Reform movement, although the manuscript was perhaps surprisingly copied in a reforming minster – most likely St Augustine's, Canterbury. The Vercelli Book provides important information about how certain individuals who were involved in the manuscript's production understood *galdor* as a Christian concept in the

[109] See Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources', 102; Scragg, 'Compilation of Vercelli Book', 205; *Vercelli Homilies*, xxiv, xxxviii-xxxix.
[110] See Krapp, *Vercelli Book*, xi-xii; Scragg, *Vercelli Homilies*, xxiv, lxxiii.
[111] Scragg, 'Compilation of Vercelli Book', 196; *Vercelli Homilies*, xliii, lxxi-lxxii; Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources', 101-2.
[112] Gradon, *Elene*, 3; Scragg, 'Compilation of Vercelli Book', 204-7;

south-east of England in the later tenth century. The term is used to describe exegetical skill and prophetic vision in two poems: *The Fates of the Apostles* and *Elene*.

The Fates of the Apostles

Galdor is used in the *Fates of the Apostles* to signify Christian exegesis. The poem is a martyrology of the twelve apostles in verse and it provides a brief account of each of their martyrdoms. At the end of the poem and immediately following Cynewulf's runic signature, the poet concludes by asking the reader to pray for him:

> Nu ðu cunnon miht,
> hwa on þam wordum wæs werum oncyðig.
> Sie þæs gemyndig, mann se ðe lufige
> þisse galdres begang, þæt he geoce me
> ond frofre fricle (105-9).[113]

> Now you may know,
> in these words, those who were known to men.
> May that man be mindful, he who loves
> this *galdres* veneration, so that he seeks for me
> help and comfort.

The speaker refers to their account of the apostles' deaths after Christ's Ascension as 'þisse galdres begang' (108). He or she claims to have edified the audience (107) and ask for prayers in return (108-9). The noun 'begang' generally denotes 'course', 'practice' or 'exercise' but it can also mean 'reverence' or 'veneration'.[114] The *galdor* of this poem is

[113] Krapp, ed., *Vercelli Book*, 54.
[114] Clark-Hall, *Dictionary*, 32.

explicitly associated with reverencing the apostles and venerating their deaths. Like *Vainglory* in the Exeter Book, the poet's Christian knowledge is transmitted through this *galdor* so that the audience may come to greater spiritual understanding through exegesis. The word signifies a poetic skill that expounds Christian hagiography and reveals divine knowledge to its audience.

Elene

The other text that uses *galdor* to signify Christian wisdom in the Vercelli Book is *Elene*, which is another poem marked with Cynewulf's signature. *Elene* recounts the finding of the true cross in the Holy Land by St Helen and it concludes with the conversion story of a Jew called Judas. The legend is traceable to Patristic writings from the fourth and fifth centuries, and the source of the Old English poem is believed to be the *Acta Cyriaci*.[115] *Elene* opens with a description of the Emperor Constantine's victory over the Hunnish peoples ('Hunna leode', 128).[116] The Huns are defeated when the cross is raised as a battle standard, and Constantine's army sings a song of victory ('sigeleoð galen', 124).[117] In the Exeter Book's *Guthlac B*, the angels also sing a 'sigeleoð' as the saint's soul enters heaven (1314-15).[118] After the battle, Constantine summons a council of men skilled in wisdom ('snyttro cræft', 154) to explain why the sign of the cross brought such a crushing victory:

> Þa þæs fricggan ongan folces aldor,
> sigerof cyning ofer sid weorod,
> wære þær ænig yldra oððe gingra
> þe him to soðe secggan meahte

[115] See Gradon, *Elene*, 15.
[116] Gradon, ed., *Elene*, 31.
[117] Gradon, ed., *Elene*, 31.
[118] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 86.

galdrum cyðan hwæt se god wære (157-61).[119]

Then the people's lord began to ask,
the king strong in victory over the expansive host,
if there were any old or young
who could say to him in truth,
to reveal through *galdrum*, what god it was.

Like the glosses to Bede and Boethius, Constantine's advisors are depicted in terms of their ability to offer counsel through *galdrum*. Gradon defines *galdrum* as 'speech', and Bradley translates it as 'divination', but 'wise words' or 'discernment' may be a better translation in this context.[120] However, as seen in other wisdom poems, the term also evokes the ability to interpret divine revelations. This is made explicit when the wisest among them affirms that this spiritual power could only have come from the King of Heaven (169-71). The counsellors are then inspired to recall Christ's Passion and Resurrection and they are described as being wise in spiritual mysteries: 'Ðus gleawlice gastgerynum / sægdon' (189-90).[121] As seen in *Guthlac B* and *Riddle* 48, these *galdrum* are directly connected to spiritual mysteries, and Constantine's advisors respond with 'gastgerynum'.

This connection between *galdor* and *ryne* is further extended when Elene lands on the shores of the Holy Land and calls another council:

Heht ða gebeodan burgsittendum,
þam snoterestum side and wide,

[119] Gradon, ed., *Elene*, 33.
[120] Gradon, *Elene*, 91; Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 169.
[121] Gradon, ed., *Elene*, 34; 'Thus they wisely said in spiritual mysteries'. On the significance of this passage for a contemporary Anglo-Saxon audience, see Heide Estes, 'Colonization and Conversion in Cynewulf's *Elene*', in *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England*, Catherine E. Karkov and Nicholas Howe, eds (Tempe, Arizona: ACMRS, 2006), 133-51 at 144.

geond Iudeas gumena gehwylcum,
meðelhegende on gemot cuman
þa ðe deoplicost dryhtnes geryno
þurh rihte æ reccan cuðon (276-81).[122]

Then she ordered the hall-sitters muster,
the wisest far and wide
of every man throughout Judea
to come to council, those deliberating ones,
most deeply skilled in the lord's secrets [*geryno*],
who were able to expound the law through truth.

Elene summons advisors to expound Christian doctrine in the same way that Constantine summons his council. Emphasis is placed on the counsellors' wisdom and their ability to interpret spiritual signs (280).[123] In a similar way to the angelic revelation in *Guthlac B* and the Eucharistic mystery in *Riddle* 48, *Elene* connects *galdrum* with *ryne* to denote ways of discerning Christian mysteries and divine secrets. These two texts of the Vercelli Book use *galdor* in very similar ways to the Exeter Book; the *Fates of the Apostles* shows how it expounds knowledge of Christian hagiography, and *Elene* demonstrates its intimate connection with concepts of wisdom, advice, and divine mysteries.

v. Observations

These appearances of *galdor* in *Beowulf*, glosses, and wisdom poems cast much light on how the word was used in a non-condemnatory manner by some late Anglo-Saxon scribes. These eleven surviving occurences of the word indicate that it denoted wise words and sacred

[122] Gradon, ed., *Elene*, 37-8.
[123] See also Shippey, *Old English Verse*, 61.

knowledge, and that it could be used in explicitly Christian contexts to refer to wisdom and the discernment of spiritual mysteries. The non-condemnatory uses of *galdor* indicate earlier meanings of this word before it became predominantly associated with harmful religious practices. Aside from ritual texts, all other appearances of *galdor* in the Old English corpus occur in proscriptive contexts, and in these cases the word has been interpreted as referring to evidence of pagan practices that inform our understanding of 'charms' in Anglo-Saxon England.

Condemnations of 'Galdor'

The *DOE* records over one hundred occurrences of *galdor* in a proscriptive context, and these are found in saints' lives, homilies, laws, guides, glosses, and translations.[124] In these texts, *galdor* is used alongside other terms denoting dangerous religious practices to establish a dichotomy between different types of spiritual knowledge:

> Magic was an illegitimate or false use of nature that imperiled the soul as well as the body and was always associated with evil results, working against God and nature. The homilies, laws, and canons strongly condemned magic, sorcery, enchantments, and witchcraft… as heathen practices diametrically opposed to Christianity.[125]

Such uses of *galdor* are explicit condemnations of specific types of spiritual knowledge. The proscriptions are constructed in similar ways and many forms of the word are compounded, indicating particular types of *galdor* that are condemnable. When the word does not appear as

[124] The numbers from the *DOE* record do not take into account multiple copies of a text in different manuscripts. For example, Wulfstan's homily *On Baptism* appears in five different manuscripts but I have only included it as one text, according to the *DOE* record. For variatiant spellings of the noun, see note 6.
[125] Jolly, 'Magic, Miracle, and Popular Practice', 170-1.

a compound, it is described as a harmful spiritual practice in formulaic ways.[126] *Galdor* is also employed in word-for-word translations and glosses to describe evil customs according to the surrounding contexts of Latin sources. To avoid laborious repetition, I will consider examples that are representative of the key literary techniques which are employed in all of these texts.

i. Hagiography

Despite the non-condemnatory meanings of *galdor* in the wisdom poems of the Exeter and Vercelli Books, these manuscripts also contain texts that condemn the term. In *Juliana* and *Andreas*, compounds of *galdor* are used to depict the evil utterances of God's enemies. The *Old English Martyrology* also contains a reference to an evil snake-charmer who is described as a practitioner of *galdra*.

Juliana

The Old English *Juliana* is found in the Exeter Book and, like the *Fates of the Apostles* and *Elene*, it is also marked with Cynewulf's signature. This poem is based on a lost Latin source but it introduces some minor differences to Latin versions of the story.[127] The poem tells the story of the virgin daughter of Africanus of Nicomedia who is promised in marriage to a pagan senator, Eleusias. As Juliana had converted to Christianity, she refuses to marry and is subjected to a long list of tortures. Her sanctity is proven through her ability to overcome physical and spiritual trials until she is martyred. When Juliana is put into prison, she is visited by a demon and heroically overcomes its temptations (236-88). The demon reappears

[126] For common constructions of *galdor* compounds and their frequency in Old English, see Peter Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 78-9.
[127] See Krapp and Dobbie, *Exeter Book*, xxxvi-xxxvii. *Juliana*, like *Elene*, may be based on the *Acta Sanctorum*; see Shippey, *Old English Verse*, 167. There are also two twelfth-century English versions of this life, neither of which use *galdor*, see Joseph Hall, ed., *Selections from Early Middle English 1130-1250*, 2 Vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1920), Vol. I, 138-49.

just before Juliana is decapitated, and it exhorts her executioners to take revenge on the saint for her defiance:

> Ða cwom semninga
> hean helle gæst, hearmleoð agol,
> earm ond unlæd, þone heo ær gebond
> awyrgedne ond mid witum swong,
> cleopade þa for corþre, ceargealdra full (614-18).[128]

> Then suddenly an abject spirit from hell arrived and wailed a song of woe, wretched and miserable – the cursed creature whom she had previously snared and scourged with torments; full of anxious incantations [*ceargealdra*], he cried out in front of the crowd.[129]

This passage describes the demon as a vile spirit from hell who chants harmful songs and *ceargealdra* (615, 618). The advice of this cursed demon contrasts with other descriptions of *galdor* in the Exeter Book but it is also formed in a different way. In *Juliana*, the noun appears in compound form with the adjective 'cear' ('anxious', 'sorrowful'), and it is surrounded by terms denoting evil counsel ('inwitrune', 610), an abject spirit from hell ('hean helle gæst', 615), and harmful songs ('hearmleoð agol', 615). This type of *galdor* is compounded and placed in direct relation to other terms denoting evil so that it is distinguished from the Christian *galdra* of other wisdom poems in the Exeter Book.

Andreas

The Old English *Andreas* also uses *galdor* to describe God's enemies and their evil utterances. This poem is found in the Vercelli Book and it likewise uses *galdor* in the

[128] Krapp and Dobbie, eds., *Exeter Book*, 130.
[129] Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 317.

opposite way to the manuscript's other poems. *Andreas* is based on a Latin version of a Greek source, and it recounts the apocryphal life of St Andrew the Apostle and his conversion of the Mermedonians.[130] Andrew undergoes many trials at sea, he rescues St Matthew and other Christians who are being killed and eaten, he is tortured for three days before exacting God's punishment on the Mermedonians, and finally he converts the repentant enemy.

Before Andrew travels across the sea to save his fellow apostle Matthew from prison, the Mermedonians prepare to eat their prisoners. Matthew is meanwhile comforted by Christ who takes pity on him and remembers his own imprisonment by the Jews:

> Þa wæs gemyndig, se ðe middangeard
> gestaðelode strangum mihtum,
> hu he in ellþeodigum yrmðum wunode,
> belocen leoðubendum, þe oft his lufan adreg
> for Ebreum ond Israhelum;
> swylce he Iudea galdorcræftum
> wiðstod stranglice (161-7).[131]

> The he who established the world by his mighty powers was mindful of how Matthew remained in misery among alien people, locked in shackles, who had often exercised his love for the Hebrews and for the Israelites; also he had sternly opposed the necromantic practices [*galdorcræftum*] of the Jews.[132]

[130] On the Greek source, see Krapp, *Vercelli Book*, xxxvi. There are two other Old English prose versions of this text, but only this poem uses *galdor*. The prose versions are contained in the manuscript of the *Blickling Homilies* (Princeton, Princeton University Library, Scheide Library 71, s. x/xi, Mercia) and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 198 (s. xi[1], Worcester?), see Richard J. Kelly, ed.and trans., *The Blickling Homilies: Edition and Translation* (London: Continuum, 2003), xlvi-xlvii.
[131] Krapp, ed., *Vercelli Book*, 7.
[132] Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 115.

The contrast between the Christians and their enemies is clearly established; as the Jews imprisoned and killed Christ in a foreign land, so too does Matthew undergo imprisonment in Mermedonia and he faces the threat of being eaten by his captors. Interestingly, Christ is said to have strongly withstood the Jews' *galdorcræftum* (166). Unlike the Christian *galdra* in other poems of the Vercelli Book, the word is compounded and related to Christ's misery ('yrmðum', 163) in order to depict the Jews' spiritual attacks against him.

The poem also uses the verb *galan* to describe the cry of a boy who is offered in sacrifice for his father's life: 'ða se geonga ongann geomran stefne, / gehæfted for herige, hearmleoð galan, / freonda feasceaft, friðes wilnian' (1126-8).[133] As seen in other formulas, like the demon's cry in *Juliana*, the boy's lament for his father is an outcome of the demonic practices of the Mermedonians. The same formula appears later in the poem when Andrew drives a demon away by the sign of the cross: 'Ongan eft swa ær ealdgeniðla, / helle hæftling, hearmleoð galan' (1341-2).[134] Like *Juliana*, *Andreas* compounds *galdor* and also uses *galan* in a formulaic way to describe God's evil enemies.

Old English Martyrology

The *Old English Martyrology* uses *galdor* in a similar way. This text is 'one of the most impressive examples of encyclopaedic writing from the European Middle Ages', and it provides short narratives of saints' martyrdoms throughout the liturgical year.[135] The *Martyrology* has also been viewed as a Cynewulfian composition, suggesting that *galdor* was employed for various purposes by an individual composer.[136] There are six surviving

[133] Krapp, ed., *Vercelli Book*, 34; 'Then the youth, enchained in front of the crowd, with plaintive voice began to wail a lament and, being badly off for friends, to plead for a reprieve', Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 139.
[134] Krapp, ed., *Vercelli Book*, 40; 'Again as before, the old enemy, hell's captive, began to wail a lament', Bradley, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, 144.
[135] Christine Rauer, ed. and trans., *The Old English Martyrology: Edition, Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2013), 1.
[136] See Rauer, *Martyrology*, 14.

fragments of this text that date from the late ninth to late eleventh centuries.[137] The *galdor* reference is found in the late-tenth or early-eleventh century manuscript London, British Library, MS Cotton Julius A. x, which is possibly from Glastonbury.[138] This is the most extensive of the fragments and it contains an entry for the feast of Saints Anatolia and Audax on 10th July, which summarises how Anatolia was imprisoned on account of her faith:

> Þeahhwæþre sum hæþen dema het hi belucan on stænenum cleofan, ond he het sumne wyrmgaldere micle næddran hire into gelædan þæt seo hi abitan sceolde ond hire ban begnagan… Ða gelyfde se wyrmgaldere to Gode þurh þæt wundor, ond he sealde his feorh for Criste mid þære fæmnan, ond his noma wæs Sanctus Audax.
>
> Nevertheless a pagan judge ordered her to be locked into a stone cell, and he ordered a snake-charmer [*wyrmgaldere*] to put in a big snake along with her so that it would bite her and knaw at her bones… Then the snake-charmer [*wyrmgaldere*] believed in God on account of that miracle, and together with that virgin he gave up his life for Christ, and his name was St Audax.[139]

In a striking parallel with Juliana, Anatolia is put into prison because she refused to marry a pagan. She is also attacked by an evil agent during her imprisonment, and she overcomes a harmful type of *galdor*. Unlike Juliana, Anatolia is able to convert her adversary and this *wyrmgaldere* forsakes his heathen beliefs to die with her. Interestingly, the attacker is named as Audax once he becomes a Christian and prior to his conversion he is only identified by his sinful profession. Once again, *galdor* is compounded to signify its harmful spiritual nature,

[137] Rauer, *Martyrology*, 18-23.
[138] Christine Rauer, 'Usage of the *Old English Martyrology*', in *The Foundations of Learning: The Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages*, Rolf H. Bremmer Jr and Kees Dekker, eds (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 125-46 at 130-1; *Martyrology*, 20. See also Ker, *Catalogue*, 205-6, Gneuss, *Handlist*, 64; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, 259-60; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 40-1.
[139] Rauer, ed. and trans., *Martyrology*, 134-7.

and this is made explicit in the surrounding terms for snakes ('wyrm', 'næddran') and snake-attacks ('abitan', 'begnagan'). This emphasis on the serpent also recalls the Fall and explicitly associates this type of *galdor* with Satan. In the same way as *Juliana* and *Andreas*, the meaning of *galdor* in the *Old English Martyrology* is dependent upon its surrounding vocabulary. Given that this fragment was likely to have been produced in Glastonbury – which may also be the place of the Exeter Book's production – different types of *galdor* could be used in poems to signify both Christian wisdom and evil attacks.

ii. Homilies, Rules, and Guides

Other didactic sources that condemn *galdor* include the laws of *Ine* and *Alfred*, the *Penitentials* of *Pseudo-Theodore* and *Egbert*, the *Vercelli* and *Blickling* homilies, homilies by Ælfric and Wulfstan, the *Canons of Edgar*, a confessor's *Handbook*, and the *Ancrene Wisse*. Some of these texts reflect early condemnations of *galdor* as the laws of *Ine* were drawn up in the late seventh century, and those of *Alfred* date to the late ninth century.[140] The Pentitentials of *Pseudo-Theodore* and *Egbert* are also probably translations of ninth-century Frankish sources.[141] Many condemnations of *galdor* are found in texts from the tenth and eleventh centuries, indicating that there was an increased effort to censor, improve, and regulate Christian practice by ecclesiastical reformers and royal authorities at this time.[142] These texts circulated in similar collections, and they are traceable to a network of ecclesiastics who used *galdor* to refer to a dangerous form of spiritual knowledge and consistently condemned it alongside other forbidden practices.

[140] F. L. Attenborough, ed. and trans., *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1922), 34; Eric G. Stanley, 'On the Laws of King Alfred: The End of the Preface and the Beginning of the Laws', in *Alfred the Wise*, Jane Roberts, Janet L. Nelson, and Malcolm Godden, eds (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 211-21.
[141] Thomas Pollock Oakley, *English Penitential Discipline and Anglo-Saxon Law in their Joint Influence* (Clark, N.J.: Lawbook Exchange, 2003), 201.
[142] See Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 49-58.

Wulfstan and the Danes

Many of the texts listed above are found in manuscripts that also contain writings by Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester (1002-1016) and Archbishop of York (1002-1023). Although the manuscripts originate in minsters outside of the old Danelaw – predominantly in Canterbury, Winchester, Worcester, and Exeter – they were written for audiences in many other parts of England.[143] As Archbishop of York, Wulfstan's works show an acute sensitivity to the Danish presence in Northumbria and the threat of non-Christian religious beliefs. In addition to many homilies, Wulfstan wrote laws for King Æthelred and King Cnut which, according to Bethurum, were written to counter 'pagan practices, resurgent under Danish influence'.[144] He included types of *galdor* among the many popular customs that were infiltrating Christian communities: 'In *galdor* and *hwata* Wulfstan is striking at foolish superstition rather than actual idolatry'.[145] Wulfstan's writings show that he intended to leave his audiences in no doubt about what types of *galdor* were spiritually harmful to their Christian faith.

Wulfstan always condemned *galdor* in relation to other forbidden practices and he never renounced it in isolation. For example, he connected the word with terms denoting the Antichrist in his homily *De Temporibus Anticristi*:

[143] These include Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MSS 173, 190, 201, 265, 320, 419; London, British Library, MSS Burney 277, Cotton Nero A. i, Cotton Otho B. xi, Cotton Vespasian D. xv; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Bodley 343, 718, Junius 121, Laud Misc. 482. Only Cotton Nero A. i may have been written in York. See Ker, *Catalogue*, 57-9, 70-3, 82-90, 92-4, 105-6, 115-17, 171-2, 211-15, 230-4, 277-8, 368-75, 412-22; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 32-6, 38, 61, 64, 67, 71-2, 96, 101, 103; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 7-10, 12-16, 33, 42, 44, 77-8.
[144] Bethurum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, 319.
[145] Bethurum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, 320.

> Antecrist hæfð mid him drymen and unlybwyrhtan and wigleras and þa, ðe cunnan galder agalan, þa ðe hine mid deofles fultume fedað and lærað on ælcre unrihtwisnesse and facne and manfullum cræfte.[146]
>
> The Antichrist has with him sorcerers and poison-workers and soothsayers and those who know how to chant *galder*, those who with the devil's aid feed and tempt him to every iniquity and wretchedness and evil craft.

Those who chant *galder* are condemned through their association with the devil ('deofles'), sorcerers ('drymen'), poison-workers ('unlybwyrhtan'), and soothsayers ('wigleras'). In another homily on baptism (*Sermo de Baptismate*), Wulfstan included *galdra* among the many illusions of the devil: 'And ne gyman ge galdra ne idelra hwata, ne wigelunga ne wiccecræfta; 7 ne weorðian ge wyllas ne ænige wudutreowu, forðam æghwylce idele syndon deofles gedwimeru'.[147] Wulfstan warns new catechumens to avoid *galdra* as well as the harmful influences of soothsayers, witchcraft, and the devil which lead Christians astray. According to Jane Crawford, Wulfstan associated these harmful practices with Danish communities and their suspect beliefs.[148] The meaning of *galdor* in this context is knowledge of spiritual practices that are incompatible with the Christian religion.

Wulfstan also wrote the *Canons of Edgar*, which is a collection of ecclesiastical law codes compiled around 1005-1008.[149] This text associates *galdra* with other heathen practices like the veneration of objects and creatures: 'forbeode wilweorþunga, and licwiglunga, and hwata, and galdra, and manweorðunga, and þa gemearr ðe man drifð on mistlicum

[146] Arthur S. Napier, ed., *Wulfstan: Sammlung Englischer Denkmäler* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1883), 194.
[147] Bethurum, ed., *Homilies of Wulfstan*, 184; 'And do not heed *galdra* nor the soothsayer, nor enchantments nor witchcrafts; and do not venerate wells nor any trees of the wood, because all the devil's illusions are empty'.
[148] Crawford, 'Evidences of Witchcraft', 110-11.
[149] Two eleventh-century copies are found in Corpus 201, from Winchester, and Oxford, Bod., Junius 121, from Worcester. See Ker, *Catalogue*, 82-90, 412-18; James M. Ure, ed., *The Benedictine Office: An Old English Text* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1957), 3-14; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 34, 101; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 12-13, 77-8.

gewiglungum…and eac on oðrum mistlicum treowum and on stanum'.[150] Another version of this text in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121 (s. xi^2, Worcester) adds the detail of pulling children through the earth ('þær man þa cild þurh þa eorðan tihð').[151] In a mid eleventh-century manuscript from Worcester (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 482), a copy of the *Penitential of Pseudo-Egbert* is included with other writings by Wulfstan.[152] This *Penitential* is a translation of a Latin text by Halitgar, Bishop of Cambrai 817-831, and it contains one law code that proscribes 'wyrta gaderunga mid nanum galdre butan mid pater noster and mid credo oððe mid sumon gebede þe to gode belimpe'.[153] The specification that *galdra* are not to be practised without clear reference to Christian prayer indicates that Wulfstan's condemnations were also directed towards unauthorised *galdra*. It is clear that Wulfstan followed Carolingian writers in conceiving of an opposition between popular customs and mainstream Christian worship, and that he believed that *galdra* should be censored or supervised by Christian authorities.

Ælfric

Although Ælfric (d. c. 1010) uses *galdor* in similar ways to Wulfstan, Christopher Jones has recently highlighted the differing approaches of these writers to religious reform according to the environments in which they worked.[154] Ælfric was educated under Æthelwold in Winchester during the standardisation of vernacular writing before he became a novice

[150] Fowler, ed., *Canons of Edgar*, 4; 'We forbid well-worship, and necromancy, and witchcrafts, and *galdra*, and man-worship, and those errors that men practise in various sorceries… and also about many other trees and stones'.
[151] Fowler, ed., *Canons of Edgar*, 5; 'where he draws those children through the earth'. Ælfric also expressed remarkably similar concerns, indicating a common source for these Old English didactic writings, see Jolly, 'Context of a Christian World View', 285-7.
[152] See note 143. On Wulfstan's indebtedness to Frankish writings, see Bethurum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, 70.
[153] J. Raith, ed., *Die alternglische Version des Halitgar'schen Bussbuches* (Hamburg: H. Grand, 1933), 29; 'herb gathering with no galdre except with the Paternoster and the Creed or with some prayer that belongs to God'. See also Francisco José Álvarez López, 'Monastic Learning in Twelfth-Century England: Marginalia, Provenance and Use in London, British Library, Cotton MS. Faustina A. X, Part B', *Electronic British Library Journal* (2012), no. 11, 1-8 at 5.
[154] Jones, 'Limits of "Benedictine Reform"', 67-108.

master at Cerne Abbey around 987 and eventually Abbot of Eynsham in 1005.[155] Catherine Cubitt claims that Ælfric's 'desire to provide correct doctrine for pastoral preaching must have been influenced by the involvement of Cerne in the religious life of the neighbourhood'.[156] This suggests that Ælfric wrote for local audiences in the diocese of Sherborne but he also targeted wider readerships.[157] For instance, Ælfric corresponded with Wulfstan and wrote homilies for his usage.[158] He also dedicated homilies to Sigeric (Archbishop of Canterbury, 990-994), he had connections with Æthelmær the Stout (an ealdorman of Devonshire), and he addressed a certain Ealdorman Æthelweard in his preface to his translation of the book of *Genesis*.[159] Ælfric had great influence beyond Cerne Abbey and Eynsham, and his high-ranking connections indicate that he had ambitions of reaching nationwide audiences of monks, secular clergy, and laity, as well as the Latinate and those who knew no Latin.[160]

Ælfric uses *galdor* in similar ways to Wulfstan. In his sermon *On Auguries*, for example, he translates St Augustine's description of dangerous religious practices that threaten the Christian soul:

> Nu alyse ic me sylfne wið god and mid lufe eow for-beode
> þæt eower nan ne axie þurh ænigne wicce-cræft
> be ænigum ðinge oððe be ænigre untrumnysse
> ne galdras ne sece to gremigenne his scyppend

[155] See Gneuss, 'Origin of Standard Old English', 70-83; Malcolm Godden, 'Ælfric's Changing Vocabulary', *ES*, 61 (1980), 206-23; Mechthild Gretsch, 'Ælfric, Language and Winchester', in *Companion to Ælfric*, Magennis and Swann, eds., 35-66.
[156] Catherine Cubitt, 'Ælfric's Lay Patrons', in *Companion to Ælfric*, Magennis and Swan, eds., 165-92 at 178.
[157] See especially Jonathan Wilcox, 'Ælfric in Dorset and the Landscape of Pastoral Care', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Francesca Tinti, ed (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 52-62.
[158] See especially Bernhard Fehr, ed. and trans., *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in Altenglischer und Lateinischer Fassung*, 2 Vols (Hamburg: H. Grand, 1914), Vol. II, 68-9; Bethurum, *Homilies of Wulfstan*, 83, 87.
[159] See Mary Swan, 'Identity and Ideology in Ælfric's Prefaces', in *Companion to Ælfric*, Magennis and Swan, eds., 247-70.
[160] See especially Helen Gittos, 'The Audience for Old English Texts: Ælfric, Rhetoric and "the Edification of the Simple"', *ASE*, 43 (2014), 231-66 at 234-6, 240, 253-4.

forðan se ðe þys deð se forlysð his cristen-dom
and bið þam hæðenum gelic þe hleotað be him sylfum
mid ðæs deofles cræfte þe hi fordeð on ecnysse.

Now I deliver myself as regards God, and with love forbid you, that any of you should enquire through any witchcraft concerning anything, or concerning any sickness, or seek *galdras* to anger his Creator; for he that does this lets go his Christianity, and is like the heathen who casts lots concerning themselves by means of the devil's art, which will destroy them for ever.[161]

This passage inextricably connects *galdras* with witchcraft ('wicce-cræft'), heathens ('hæðenum'), casting lots ('þe hleotað'), and the devil's arts ('deofles cræfte'). In a similar way to Wulfstan, Ælfric warns Christians against dangerous spiritual practices that would imperil their souls. Ælfric drew upon the *Penitential of Pseudo-Egbert* for this passage and he also used material by Caesarius, Hrabanus Maurus, and Martin of Braga throughout the homily.[162] This suggests that these types of proscriptions developed from translations of Latin homiletic materials, and that *galdor* was reused as a conventional term in such formulaic passages.

Ælfric also uses the term in his saint's life *Natale Sancti Mauri* to describe an accusation made against St Maurus that he illegitimately healed a priest through heathen *galdrum*: 'cwædon þæt he mid galdrum na mid godes cræftum þyllice geworhte'.[163] Another type of usage can be seen in Ælfric's homily for the *Feast of St Lucy*. Like *Juliana* and the *Old English Martyrology*, this *vita* describes a spiritual attack on a saintly virgin who refuses to apostatise: 'het him gelangian þa leasan drymen to þæt hi þæt godes mæden mid heora

[161] Skeat, ed. and trans., *Lives of Saints*, Vol. I, 368-71. I have slightly altered Skeat's translation.
[162] See Audrey L. Meaney, 'Ælfric's Use of his Sources in his Homily on Auguries', *ES*, 66 (1985): 477-95 at 486.
[163] 'saying, that he, by enchantments [*galdrum*], not by God's power had wrought this', Skeat, ed. and trans., *Lives of Saints*, 158-9.

galdrum oferswyðdon'.[164] The *galdrum* that are used against Lucy come from 'leasan drymen' who are in complete opposition to God.

In the same way as Wulfstan, Ælfric included *galdor* in his repetoire for translating formulaic source material, and he used it to refer to illegitimate forms of spiritual knowledge that is in opposition to Christianity. Ælfric and Wulfstan associated *galdor* with a range of dangerous spiritual practices to describe malignant spiritual leaders who led Christians astray and attacked the Church.

Other Homilies, Rules, and Guides

Galdor is also explicitly associated with evil practices in other didactic writings. One of the *Vercelli Homilies* condemns 'dryicgan and scinlacan and gealdorcræftigan and lyblacan', and another proscribes the love of *galdor*-songs: 'ne lufian we ne scyncræftas, ne herien we ne galdorsangas, ne unriht lyblac onginnen we'.[165] Very similar descriptions are used in the laws of Alfred and Wulfstan's homily for Rogation Tuesday, suggesting that earlier proscriptions of *galdor* from law codes were being formulaically reused by ecclesiastics for homilies and other religious texts.[166] In the Vercelli Book, *galdor* is used in non-condemnatory ways in its wisdom poems, and yet it is condemned in *Andreas* and the homilies, so the manuscript brings together a number of literary traditions that use forms of *galdor* in different ways.

One of the *Blickling Homilies*, probably written in late tenth or early eleventh-century Glastonbury, also clarifies exactly what the Church condones and condemns through

[164] '[He] bade false magicians be brought unto him, that they with their enchantments [*galdrum*] might overpower the virgin of God', Skeat, ed. and trans., *Lives of Saints*, 216-17.
[165] Scragg, ed., *Vercelli Homilies*, 92**,** 198; 'sorcery and *gealdor*-crafts and poisons'; 'Nor do we love sorcery, nor do we glorify *galdor*-songs, nor do we try wicked poisons'.
[166] Felix Liebermann, ed., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen: Herausgegeben im Auftrage der Savigny-Stiftung*, 2 Vols (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1916), Vol. I, 38; Napier, ed., *Wulfstan*, 253.

galdor.[167] The homily for the fifth Sunday in Lent outlines the sorts of sins that lead to damnation in hell:

> On helle beoþ þeofas, ond flyteras, ond gitseras þe on mannum heora æhta on woh nimaþ, ond þa oformodan men, ond þa scinlæcan þa þe galdorcræftas ond gedwolan begangaþ, ond mid þæm unwære men beswicaþ ond adwellaþ, ond hi aweniaþ from Godes gemynde mid heora scinlacum ond gedwolcræftum.
>
> There are in hell thieves, gangsters and covetous men who deprive men wrongfully of their property, proud men, and magicians who practise enchantments [*galdorcræftas*] and deceptions and deceive and mislead unwary men thereby and wean them from the contemplation of God by means of slights and deceptions.[168]

This passage places *galdorcræftas* in the context of theft and deception to describe it as a form of misleading knowledge that threatens the Christian.[169] Those who practise *galdor* to lead others astray target the ignorant and rob them of true knowledge of God ('Godes gemynde'). The homily emphasises the danger of practising certain rituals, and it depicts the spiritual consequences of this disobedience. Like other didactic writings, this text uses *galdor* in compound form and relates it to other evil practices in order to condemn certain types of dangerous spiritual knowledge.

Another text that condemns *galdor* in this way is the *Handbook for a Confessor*. The *Handbook* has close connections with Wulfstan's writings and the *Penitentials* of *Pseudo-Theodore* and *Egbert*.[170] This text provides a guide for penance according to the severity of

[167] Kelly, *Blickling Homilies*, xlvi-xlvii; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 139.
[168] Kelly, ed. and trans., *Blickling Homilies*, 42-3.
[169] See also Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 75-6.
[170] See Roger Fowler, 'A Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor', *Anglia*, 83 (1965), 1-34; Melanie Heyworth, 'The "Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor": Authorship and Connections', *N&Q*, 54 (2007), 218-22; Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Homiletic Writings of Archbishop Wulfstan*

sins, and one entry describes an attempt to gain another's love through *galdor*: 'Gyf hwa wiccige ymbon oðres lufu and him sille on æte oðde on drence on galdorcræftum, gif hit beo læwede man fæste healf gear Wodnesdagum and Frigedagum on hlafe and on wætere'.[171] Like many Wulfstanian texts, the *Handbook* condemns *galdor* in compound form and with the surrounding context of witchcraft ('wiccige') to depict it as a dangerous spiritual practice that can be harmful to Christians.

There are many other examples of didactic writings that condemn *galdor* in these ways. The word is consistently compounded and connected to a wide range of vocabulary denoting devilry, witchcraft, and illegitimate religious rituals. The great overlaps between these prohibitions indicate that the term was incorporated into formulaic reworkings of earlier laws and Latin materials from Continental sources. The circulation of these texts as collections in manuscripts also indicates that reforming ecclesiastics particularly associated *galdor* with religious practices that ought to be censored. Although the word predominantly appears in proscriptive contexts, its condemnation always depends on other vocabulary and it is never denounced in isolation.

iii. Glosses

Old English glosses condemn *galdor* in the same ways as other didactic writings. In her study of the *Durham Collectar* (Durham, Durham Cathedral Library, MS A.IV.19), Jolly emphasises the gloss' important function of expounding a word or phrase for reflective reading:

(Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), 9-22, 133. See also note 143 for manuscripts containing copies of this text. On penitential literature more generally in Anglo-Saxon England, see Sarah Hamilton, 'Remedies for "Great Transgressions": Penance and Excommunication in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Tinti, ed., 83-105.

[171] Fowler, 'Old English Handbook', 25; 'If any were to use witchcraft for another's love and were to give him *galdor*-crafts in food or in drink, if it is a layman, fast for half a year on Wednesdays and Fridays with bread and water'.

> Although a vernacular gloss was not a full translation, it functioned like a commentary gloss in that it often considered the meanings attributed to the text from a patristic and church tradition. Vernacular glosses thus went well beyond a dictionary function to engage the reader in a reflection on the text and sources of understanding invoked by it.[172]

Galdor-glosses are also found in Patristic texts, and the word was used to encourage the reader to reflect on forbidden practices in their own cultural environments. The majority of these glosses were added to copies of Aldhelm's *De Laude Virginitatis* and to Psalm 57 of glossed psalters, while others appear in three alphabetical glossaries, Ælfric's glossary and translation of the *Heptateuch*, Wærferth's translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, the *Meters* of Boethius, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and a gloss to a prognostic text.[173]

The glossators of these texts chose *galdor* to translate and expound particular Latin terminology. Aldhelm's prose *De Laude Virginitatis* is a collection of female saints' lives that survives in twelve Anglo-Saxon manuscipts.[174] Some of the manuscripts seem to have been produced for personal use (like London, British Library, MS Royal 7 D. xxiv, s. x^1, Glastonbury?) while others appear to be classroom study books (like Brussels, Royal Library

[172] Jolly, 'Prayers from the Field', 134. See also Gernot R. Wieland, 'The Glossed Manuscript: Classbook or Library Book?', *ASE*, 14 (1985), 153-73.

[173] J. H. Hessels, ed., *An Eighth-Century Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary: Preserved in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, (MS No. 144)* (Cambridge: CUP, 1890), 69; W. G. Stryker, ed., *The Latin-Old English Glossary in MS. Cleopatra A. III*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (Stanford University, USA, 1951); 113, 246, 324, 1264, 3891; J. J. Quinn, ed., *The Minor Latin-Old English Glossaries in MS. Cotton Cleopatra A. III*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (Stanford University, USA, 1956), 1191, 1277, 2005; R. T Oliphant, ed., *The Harley Latin-Old English Glossary* (The Hague: Netherlands, 1966), C 218; Richard Marsden, ed., *The Old English Heptateuch and Ælfric's Libellus de Veteri Testamento et Novo*, EETS, Vol. 330 (London: OUP, 2008), 98, 134, 165; Julius Zupitza, ed., *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1880), 303; H. Heht, ed., *Bischof Waerferths von Worcester Üebersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen* (Leipzig: Verlag, 1900), 73; George Philip Krapp, ed., *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, ASPR Vol. 5 (New York: Columbia UP, 1932), 194; Thomas Miller, ed., *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2 Vols (London: EETS, 1890), Vol. II, 362; Max Förster, 'Vom Fortleben antiker Sammellunare im Englischen und in anderen Volkssprachen', *Anglia*, 67 (1944): 1-171 at 92-6.

[174] Five manuscripts are from Canterbury, two are from Abingdon, and the remainder have provenance in Waltham Abbey (Essex), Glastonbury / Winchester, Worcester, Exeter, and the origin of one has not yet been identified; see Ker, *Catalogue*, 6-7, 107-8, 321-3, 330, 356-7, 381-3, 449; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 36, 80-2, 87, 91, 98, 109, 120, 132. See also Mechthild Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), 137-9, 142-9.

MS 1650, s. xi^{in}, Abingdon).[175] Given that Aldhelm's Latin is 'explicitly religious and didactic, if highly polished and self-consciously ornate' and makes 'heavy demands of its readers', the Old English glosses were probably added to guide its readers through the text.[176] A significant number of these glosses 'were doubtless coined specifically to translate Aldhelm's Latin phrases', and indicate the specific socio-cultural environments of the glossator and target reader.[177] The different forms of *galdor* that are employed were likewise coined to condemn specific religious knowledge.

There is a wide range of Latin vocabulary that is glossed with forms of *galdor* in Aldhelm's prose *De Laude Virginitatis*. Some examples include the following:

> necromantia(e) (necromancy); *deofolices galdres*, *galdres*, *mid galdre*, *galdre*;
>
> marsorum, marsi, marsum (incantations); *wyrmgalera*, *wyrmgalere*, *iugeleras*;
>
> auruspicum / aruspicibus (soothsayer); *iugelera*, *galdrum*;
>
> prestrigiarum, prestigie (delusions); *galdra*, *galdres*;
>
> incantationum (incantation); *galdra*, *galunge*.[178]

Like other didactic writings in Old English, these forms of *galdor* are compounded (e.g. 'wyrmgalere' and 'iugalera') and associated with other terminology to signify dangerous spiritual knowledge.[179]

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[175] See Scott Gwara, 'Further Old English Scratched Glosses and Merographs from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS 326 (Aldhelm's *Prosa De Virginitate*)', *ES*, 3 (1997), 201-36; J. A. Kiff-Hooper, 'Classbooks or Works of Art? Some Observations on the Tenth-Century Manuscripts of Aldhelm's *De Laude Virginitatis*', in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor*, Ian Wood and G. A. Laud, eds (London: Hambledon, 1991), 15-26.

[176] Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, 'Women and the Origins of English Literature', in *The History of British Women's Writing, 700-1500*, Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt, eds (New York: Palgrave, 2012), 31-40 at 34. On the origin of the glossing tradition in Theodore's Canterbury school in the seventh century, see Gneuss, 'Study of Language', 19-20.

[177] See Alaric Hall, 'Glosses, Gaps and Gender: The Rise of Female Elves in Anglo-Saxon Culture', in *Change in Meaning and the Meaning of Change: Studies in Semantics and Grammar from Old to Present-Day English*, Matti Rissanen, ed (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 2007), 139-70 at 153.

[178] Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses*, 52, 54, 78, 87, 106-7, 109-10, 116, 121, 126. Additional glosses are recorded in Louis Goosens, ed., *The Old English Glosses of MS. Brussels, Royal Library, 1650 (Aldhelm's* De Laudibus Virginitatis*)* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1974).

Galdor-glosses also appear in a large number of psalters. These books reflect a consistent transmission of liturgical glossing that began with the mid tenth-century *Royal Psalter* from Winchester:

> practically all surviving glossed psalters from the eleventh century draw (often heavily) on the Royal Psalter. The Royal Psalter gloss is of striking quality, revealing the Glossator's proficiency in Latin as well as his remarkable competence and resourcefulness in choosing or coining his Old English *interpretamenta*.[180]

Mechthild Gretsch notes that, despite differences in style, register, and method, there are strong correspondences between the psalter and Aldhelm glosses.[181] This suggests that there were networks of glossators and translators in key monastic centres that introduced standardised vocabulary and Old English 'interpretamenta' of particular Latin terminology.

The glosses that differ from the *Royal Psalter* draw upon the ninth-century glosses in the *Vespasian Psalter* (of Mercian origin),[182] and the early tenth-century glosses in the *Lambeth Psalter* (of late West-Saxon origin).[183] The appearances of *galdor* in these glosses are restricted to Psalm 57, verse 6: 'quae non exaudiet uocem incantantium et uenefici quae

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[179] 'iugalera' is interesting in its formation as the prefix 'iu' indicates a practice of former times, i.e. religious practices from a bygone pagan era.

[180] Mechthild Gretsch, 'The Roman Psalter, its Old English Glosses and the English Benedictine Reform', in *Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, Gittos and Bedingfield, eds., 13-28 at 19. For the date and origin of the *Royal Psalter* in Winchester with later Canterbury additions, see Ker, *Catalogue*, 318-20; Phillip Pulsiano, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile, Vol. 2: Psalters I*, A. N. Doane, ed (Binghamton, New York: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1994), 57. See also Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 17-131; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 79; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 55-6.

[181] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 185.

[182] Ker, *Catalogue*, 266-7; Pulsiano, *Psalters I*, 43-9; Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 35; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 70; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 50. Scholars have also proposed a Canterbury origin although, as Pulsiano points out, there is little evidence to support this view, Pulsiano, *Psalters I*, 43.

[183] Ker, *Catalogue*, 342-3; Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 19, 27; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 87; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 63. The *Paris Psalter*, written in Canterbury in the twelfth century, also uses a different gloss with *galdor* ('heahgealdor'), and this psalter is different to all others in that it provides a full prose translation of psalms 1-50 (attributed to Alfred) and a full verse translation of psalms 51-150, see Krapp, ed., *Paris Psalter*, xvii, 10; Peter J. Lucas and Jonathan Wilcox, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile, Vol. 16: Manuscripts Relating to Dunstan, Ælfric, and Wulfstan; the 'Eadwine Psalter' Group*, A. N. Doane, ed (Tempe, Arizona: ACMRS, 2008), 111-18.

incantantur a sapiente'.[184] The slight variations in Old English glosses to this verse reflect different interpretations by glossators.

The psalters that use *galdor*-glosses and draw upon the *Royal Psalter* are from the tenth to twelfth centuries, and are of late West-Saxon origin.[185] These manuscripts were written in Winchester, except for the *Salisbury Psalter* which was written in south-west England (probably Shaftesbury), and the *Eadwine Psalter* which was produced in Christ Church, Canterbury.[186] The *Royal Psalter* glosses this verse from Psalm 57 with 'þa na gehyrað stefne ongalendra 7 ætrene þa beoð begalene fram wisum'.[187] All of the psalters that draw on *Royal* have this wording, with the exception of the later *Eadwine Psalter* that has the minor difference of no prefix in 'galdendra'.[188] The translations of 'incantantium' as *ongalendra* and 'incantantur' as *begalene* came from Winchester and probably became the standardised gloss for this psalm.

Another recension of glosses that use *galdor* comes from the *Vespasian Psalter* (s. ix, Mercia). The *Vespasian* gloss was copied in the *Junius Psalter* (s. x^1, Winchester) and the *Cambridge Psalter* (c. 1000, Ramsey).[189] The *Vespasian Psalter* glosses the psalm with 'sie ne gehered stefne galendra 7 galdurcreftas ða bioð agalæne from ðæm snottran'.[190] The *Junius Psalter* follows this gloss in its word formation but it has different spellings in 'galdorcræftas' and 'agelene', and the *Cambridge Psalter* also differs with 'galyndra'.[191]

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[184] Fritz Roeder, ed., *Der Altenglische Regius-Psalter: Eine Interlinearversion in HS. Royal 2 B. 5 des Brit. Mus.* (Halle: Verlag, 1904), 104; 'so that it does not hear the voice of *incantantium* nor the wise enchanter's *incantantur*'.

[185] These are the *Salisbury* (x^2), *Vitellius* (xi^{med}), *Arundel* (xi^2), *Tiberius* (xi^{med} / $xi^{¾}$), and *Stowe* psalters (xi^{med} / $xi^{¾}$), and the second set of glosses in the *Eadwine Psalter* (c. 1155-1160); see Ker, *Catalogue*, 135-6, 167-71, 262, 298-301, 336-7, 449-51; Pulsiano, *Psalters I*, 13, 38, 50, 65; Lucas and Wilcox, *Dunstan, Ælfric, and Wulfstan*, 43; Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 26-7; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 33, 49, 52, 60, 83.

[186] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 18-20; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 83.

[187] Roeder, ed., *Regius-Psalter*, 104.

[188] Fred Harsley, ed., *Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter*, 2 Vols (London: EETS, 1889), Vol. II, 97.

[189] Ker, *Catalogue*, 11-12, 408-9; Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 18; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 26, 101; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 19-20.

[190] Conrad Grimm, ed., *Glossar zum Vespasian-Psalter und den Hymnen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1906), 4, 77.

[191] Eduard Brenner, ed., *Der Altenglische Junius-Psalter: Die Interlinear-Glosse der Handschrift Junius 27 der Bodleiana zu Oxford* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1909), 74; Richard Jente, ed., *Die Mythologischen Ausdrücke im Altenglischen Wortschatz* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1921), 316.

Despite the differences in spellings, these three psalters show an alternative approach to glossing the psalm with forms of *galdor* and *galan*, indicating that glossators were experimenting with different formations of this noun and verb.

The *Lambeth Psalter* (s. x^{in}) is also of late West-Saxon origin but it is different from all of these manuscripts as it demonstrates an 'encyclopaedic character' in its vocabulary.[192] Gretsch believes that this psalter's glosses provide an 'important witness of the so-called Winchester vocabulary (presumably taught at Bishop Æthelwold's school at the Old Minster)'.[193] Multiple glosses are given in places and some freely draw upon the *Royal* and *Vespasian* traditions.[194] The *Lambeth Psalter* glosses the verse from Psalm 57 with 'seo ne geherð stemne galendra 7 atterwyrhtan galendes wislice'.[195] This shows a significant departure from other glosses and demonstrates that various *galdor*-glosses were being used in eleventh-century Winchester.

As seen from the Aldhelm and psalter glosses, various forms of *galdor* were used to translate specific Latin terminology that denoted dangerous spiritual knowledge. Like all other proscriptive uses of *galdor*, the glosses demonstrate a dependency upon surrounding vocabulary and contexts in both the Latin original and the Old English translation for the condemnation of this word.

iv. Observations

Clear patterns emerge in these condemnatory uses of *galdor*. The word is often compounded, it is dependent on other terminology for its proscriptive meaning, and it is never condemned in isolation. In Old English texts, *galdor* is consistently surrounded by other condemned

[192] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 27.
[193] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 27.
[194] Gretsch, *Intellectual Foundations*, 27.
[195] U. Lindelöf, ed., *Der Lambeth-Psalter: Eine Altenglische Interlinearversion des Psalters in der HS. 427 der Erzbischöflichen Lambeth Palace Library*, Vol. I (Helsingfors: Druckerei der Finnischen Litteraturgesellschaft, 1909), 91.

practices like ‘wiccecræft’, ‘scinlac’ (witchcraft), ‘lyblacan’ (poisons), ‘hæðenum’ (heathens), ‘wigelunga’ (enchantments), ‘hwata’ (soothsayer), and ‘leasung’ (deceit). When the word is used in glosses and translations of Latin, it is directly associated with diabolical concepts like ‘necromantia’ (necromancy), ‘marsorum’ (incantations), ‘auruspicum’ (soothsayer), ‘prestrigiarum’ (delusions), and ‘incantatium’ (incantations).

Many of the condemnatory uses of *galdor* were written by a network of reforming ecclesiastics – including Ælfric and Wulfstan – who produced didactic materials to censor religious practices. These ecclesiastics sought to clarify what the Church condoned and condemned, and they emphasised the spiritual dangers that led the ignorant to damnation. These proscriptions of *galdor* use the term in a formulaic way and show that it signified certain *types* of harmful spiritual knowledge.

Conclusions

The Old English word *galdor*, which has been used to define Anglo-Saxon ‘charms’, is etymologically connected to other terms denoting supernatural utterances as well as secrecy, wisdom, prophecy, and more general vocalised sounds. The corpus of Old English highlights the many texts that use *galdor* in different ways and exposes a broad range of meanings for this term. It is used in *Beowulf* to describe a supernatural barrier protecting the dragon’s hoard, and when a thief breaches this *galdor*, a curse which works according to divine providence is brought down on Beowulf and his people. A small number of other texts use *galdor* to signify Christian wisdom, discernment, and even Eucharistic mystery. The Exeter and Vercelli Books in particular reveal meanings of *galdor* before the word was predominantly used to denote condemnable practices. These manuscripts were written in the second half of the tenth century, and at a time when Old English vocabulary was undergoing standardisation in Æthelwold’s school at Winchester. The debate over the origins of these

manuscripts has significant implications for Anglo-Saxon understandings of *galdor*. The Exeter Book was copied from an earlier exemplar that predated the Benedictine Reform but its possible production in a reforming minster like Glastonbury would indicate that *galdor* was viewed as a permissible Christian practice in Benedictine monasteries of the later tenth century. The Vercelli Book was likewise copied from a number of earlier exemplars, and it contains texts that seem to reflect both reformist and anti-reformist agendas, suggesting that a single compiler chose certain materials according to his or her personal taste. The manuscript's possible production in St Augustine's, Canterbury would suggest that *galdor* could signify a Christian concept in another reforming minster of the later tenth century. On the other hand, if the Vercelli Book was produced in an unreformed minster, like Rochester, its uses of *galdor* may reflect how a non-reformist compiler and scribe understood this term. The two glosses that use *galdor* to translate Latin terms for wise advisors were also perhaps written in reforming minsters during the tenth and eleventh centuries. These non-proscriptive meanings of *galdor* provide important information about how this term was understood as a Christian concept before it was almost exclusively associated with dangerous, forbidden practices by other ecclesiastics.

Nearly all other appearances of *galdor* occur in proscriptive contexts. Some law codes and translations of Latin sources were written between the seventh and ninth centuries, indicating that *galdor* was understood as a dangerous ritual practice before the Benedictine Reform. However, many didactic texts that proscribe *galdra* were written in monasteries associated with the Reform to censor and control ritual practices. The evidence indicates that reformers drew upon earlier English laws and Continental writings and reworked formulaic condemnations of spiritual practices to describe rituals that were harmful to Christians. The connections between these increased condemnations of *galdor* and reformist writings may indicate that this word was redefined in Æthelwold's 'Winchester vocabulary'. Ecclesiastics

like Wulfstan and Ælfric used *galdor* in translations of Latin sources and in their own compositions to signify ritual practices and spiritual knowledge which were not sanctioned by Christian authorities.[196] However, these proscriptions never condemn *galdor* in isolation as it consistently appears in formulaic compounds and phrases, indicating that the term was incorporated into standardised didactic tropes and translations.

While there was an evident effort to condemn practices described as *galdor* in early laws, penitentials, and reformist texts, the scope of this word's meanings in Anglo-Saxon England is much broader than has been traditionally understood. Modern understandings of *galdor* must include the explicitly Christian contexts that depict it as a form of wisdom, mystery, and revelation. Its meaning cannot be limited to 'charm' and it cannot be used to define an entire genre in Anglo-Saxon studies, especially because the evidence from the corpus reveals a diversity of meanings. It was not used to explicitly describe pagan rituals, but spiritual knowledge and words of power that could be deceptive and misleading. When *galdra* were used by Christian saints and authorities they were seen as powerful Christian rituals, but when they were used by malignant spiritual leaders they led the Christian soul astray.

Having seen how *galdor* is used in texts from across the Old English corpus, it is important to return to the rituals that actually prescribe the performance of a *galdor*. Nearly all of these rituals were written down in reforming minsters during the late tenth and eleventh centuries, and they underscore the conclusions of this chapter that *galdor* was not universally condemned, and that it could signify a powerful, legitimate Christian ritual that was often accompanied by other liturgical practices.

[196] See also Victoria Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), 101.

2

Galdor in Anglo-Saxon Rituals

'*galdor* took on a Christian and even liturgical meaning'.[1]

There are twelve surviving Anglo-Saxon rituals that instruct a reader to write or recite a *galdor*, and these are found in four manuscripts which were written in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. The word *galdor* is used in these manuscripts to refer to an explicitly Christian ritual performance. As seen in Chapter One, many texts use *galdor* to signify dangerous spiritual customs, but these manuscripts show that the term was also used in rituals with liturgical formulas and objects. Indeed, these g*aldra* actually counter the same hostile forces that are connected to the noun in other proscriptive texts, such as 'lyblace' ('poison'), 'egsa' ('monster'), 'lað' ('enemy'), 'drycræft' ('witchcraft'), 'malscrunge' ('enchantments'), and 'leodrunan' ('sorceresses'). The meaning of *galdor* in these rituals reflects the use of the term in the Exeter and Vercelli Books to denote Christian wisdom, divine revelation, and Eucharistic power. These prescriptions of *galdra* were written in high status monasteries associated with the Benedictine Reform, and this suggests that this ritual practice was endorsed by some ecclesiastics in Christian, liturgical contexts. This chapter reconsiders how some Christian scribes understood *galdor* in the late Anglo-Saxon period when these rituals were written down.

i. London, British Library, MS Royal 12 D. xvii

London, BL, Royal 12 D. xvii, commonly known as *Bald's Leechbook*, consists of remedial prescriptions for a comprehensive range of illnesses. The manuscript is made up of three

[1] Wentersdorf, 'Ruler's Lament', 281.

different books, and it was written by the same scribe as the *Parker Chronicle* at the Old Minster, Winchester, in the third quarter of the tenth century.[2] The manuscript was copied shortly after the expulsion of clerics from the Old Minster in 964, and at a time when written Old English was being standardised at Æthelwold's school. Given that Ælfric was educated at the Old Minster before 987,[3] and that he consistently condemned *galdor* as a dangerous ritual practice, this manuscript's non-condemnatory uses of *galdor* suggest that some ecclesiastics perceived this ritual performance in a different way to authorities like Ælfric.

Different dates have been suggested for the composition of the texts in this collection. One reference to King Alfred's trade with Elias, Patriarch of Jerusalem, on folios 105v-106r has been interpreted by Malcolm Cameron and Robert Nokes as evidence that the original compilation was made in the late ninth or early tenth century.[4] Stephanie Hollis suggests that it originated in Theodore's school at Canterbury in the seventh century on the basis of its classical content, and she dates the manuscript's exemplar to c. 900 on linguistic grounds.[5] The end of Book II also contains a verse colophon concerning a certain 'Bald' who ordered 'Cild' to copy the manuscript (fol. 109r):

> Bald habet hunc librum cild quem conscribere iussit;
>
> Hic precor assidue cunctis in nomine Xristi.
>
> Quo nullus tollat hunc librum perfidus a me.
>
> Nec ui nec furto nec quodam famine falso.
>
> Cur quia nulla mihi tam cara est optima gaza.

[2] See Alger N. Doane, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile, Vol. 1: Books of Prayers and Healing* (Binghamton, New York: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1994), 60. See also Ker, *Catalogue*, 332-3; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 83; M. Brown, *Manuscripts*, 144.
[3] Hill, 'Ælfric: His Life and Works', 35.
[4] See Malcolm L. Cameron, 'Bald's *Leechbook*: Its Sources and their Use in its Compilation', *ASE*, 12 (1983), 153-82 at 153; 'Bald's *Leechbook* and Cultural Interactions in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE*, 19 (1990), 5-12 at 6; Robert Scott Nokes, 'The Several Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', *ASE*, 33 (2004), 51-76.
[5] Stephanie Hollis, 'Scientific and Medical Writings', in *Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, Pulsiano and Treharne, eds., 188-208 at 194-8.

Quam cari libri quos Xristi gratia comit.[6]

Bald is the owner of this book, which he ordered Cild to write;
earnestly here I beg everyone in the name of Christ
that no deceitful person should take this book from me,
neither by force nor by stealth nor by any false statement.
Why? Because no richest treasure is so dear to me
As my dear books which the grace of Christ attends.[7]

This declaration indicates Bald's personal ownership of the first two books but no further information is known about these two people.[8] Nokes thinks that Books I and II were originally conceived of as a single unit and compiled by a network of medical practitioners as a catalogue for future use, with Book III being added later by the scribe.[9] Whatever the origins of this book of healing, it was perceived as a learned collection by the time it was copied in Æthelwold's Old Minster in the later tenth century.

The possible origins of this collection in Theodore's school or Alfred's court indicate that *galdor* was understood as an important Christian ritual practice in earlier centuries. As the manuscript was probably copied during Æthelwold's episcopacy, the collection also seems to have been endorsed by a reforming monastic community. This has significant implications for perceptions of *galdor* as the term was also being used to denote forbidden spiritual practices in Æthelwold's school, and Ælfric condemned *galdra* which were not performed by Christian authorities after he was educated at the Old Minster. Indeed,

[6] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 298.
[7] Charles E. Wright, ed. and trans., *Bald's Leechbook: British Museum Royal Manuscript 12.D.xvii* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1955), 13.
[8] Cameron proposes that Bald was a lay physician, Malcolm L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 20-1 and 20-4 for two other names that appear in the manuscript. See also Richard Gameson, *The Scribe Speaks? Colophons in Early English Manuscripts* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, 2001), 51.
[9] See Nokes, 'Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*', 51-2, 74.

Wulfstan condemned *galdor* in similar ways to Ælfric but he may have also known about this collection as he owned an eleventh-century manuscript (London, British Library, MS Harley 55) which seems to have been copied directly from *Bald's Leechbook*.[10] This suggests that reforming ecclesiastics like Wulfstan may have viewed *galdor* as a powerful ritual that drew upon ancient Christian wisdom.[11] It may also be the case that *galdor* was more narrowly defined as a powerful ritual performance that could be used by authorised Christians but became dangerous and heretical if it was used by unsanctioned performers.

Bald's Leechbook contains the largest number of rituals that prescribe a *galdor*; this word appears twelve times in six rituals from Books I and III. All three books in the manuscript have their own list of contents, and that of Book I provides an entry for a remedy against sorcery and elf-sickness (fols. 5rv):

> LXIIII. Læcedomas wiþ ælcre leodrunan and ælfsidenne þæt is fefercynnes gealdor and dust and drencas and sealf and gif sio adl netnum sie and gif sio adl wyrde mannan oðde mare ride and wyrde seofon ealles cræfta.[12]

> Leechdoms against all sorcery and elf-sickness; that is a fever *gealdor*, and powder, and drinks, and a salve; and if the disease is on cattle and if it harms a man, or if a mare ride him and hurts [him], [there are] all seven crafts.

This contents description separates *gealdor* from the powder, liquid, and salve treatments. The text to which this entry refers (fol. 52v-53r) does not use the word *gealdor*, and the first part of this ritual against elf-sickness prescribes the writing of Greek letters ('greciscum

[10] See Hollis, 'Medical Writings', 197.
[11] Christine Voth has recently undertaken a comprehensive analysis of this manuscript from its compilation before the Benedictine Reform to its later uses after the Anglo-Saxon period, *An Analysis of the Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Manuscript London, British Library, Royal 12. D. xvii*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (Cambridge University, England, 2014).
[12] Cockayne, ed. *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 14. All translations for this manuscript are my own.

stafum').[13] This is followed by a series of instructions to make the powder, drink, and salve from a wide range of ingredients. The *gealdor* of this ritual is therefore the series of Greek letters that include Christ's title as alpha and omega: '++ A ++ O + y^{o}HρBγM +++++ BερρNN | κNεTTAN |'.[14] This abstract sequence may be a corruption of a Greek phrase that is now illegible, as Cameron believes: 'there is no evidence that Anglo-Saxons other than those under the immediate teaching or influence of Theodore and Hadrian at Canterbury could handle Greek well enough to be able to use medical texts in Greek'.[15] However, there is an evident attempt to signify Christ in the alpha and omega as well as the cruciform markings, and Æthelwold is known to have developed grecisms at his Winchester school in the second half of the tenth century.[16] Greek was used in rituals for its associated spiritual power as one of the principle languages of Scripture, and it is used in some *galdra* because of their association with ancient words of Christian wisdom.

It may also be the case that these letters were deliberately obscured to conceal the meaning of this *gealdor*. There are many examples of encryption in Anglo-Saxon texts and this ritual's use of a different alphabet suggests that its meaning is concealed within the graphemes.[17] Whatever the meaning of these Greek letters, it is clear that they form the 'fefercynnes gealdor' which counters the hostile spiritual forces of 'leodrunan' and 'ælfsidenne'.[18] This *gealdor* uses Greek to encode biblical power, and its Christian nature is confirmed by ensuing instructions to sing nine Masses, administer the drink at monastic hours (Terce, Sext, None), and use holy water and incense in the remedies.[19]

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[13] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 138.
[14] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 149. See also Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 138.
[15] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, 65.
[16] Michael Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature', *ASE*, 4 (1975), 67-111 at 85-90, 101.
[17] I will return to this idea in Chapters Four and Five.
[18] On the spiritual nature of these illnesses, see Alaric Hall, 'Calling the Shots: The Old English Remedy Gif Hors Ofscoten Sie and Anglo-Saxon "Elf-Shot"', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 106 (2005), 195-209; *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, 105, 119-22. Jolly defines 'leodrunan' as 'evil wise woman', Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 146.
[19] See Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 138-40.

The next entry that follows this text is a ritual against spring fever (‘lencten adle’, fol. 53r), and it combines a *gealdor* with a *gebed* (prayer). The text opens with instructions to make a drink and sing many Masses over it (‘fela mæssan’).[20] The *gealdor* of this ritual is then given and it is intimately connected to prayer and the evangelists:

+++

Feower godspellara naman y gealdor y gebed +++ Matheus +++++

+++

+++

Marcus +++++ lucas +++ Iohannes ++ Intercedite

+++ ++++

pro me. Tiecon. leleloth. patron. adiuro uos. Eft godcund gebed. In nomine domini sit benedictum. beronice. beronicen. et habet In uestimento et In femore suo scriptum rex regum et dominus dominantium. Eft godcund gebed. In nomine sit benedictum. D E E R E þ . N y . þ T X D E R E þ N y . þ T X. Eft sceal mon swigende þis writan and don þas word swigende þis on þa winstran breost and ne ga he in on þæt gewrit ne in on ber and eac swigende þis on don. HAMMANŷEL . BPONice . NOŷepTAŷEPΓ.[21]

The names of the four evangelists and a *gealdor* and prayer + Matthew + Mark + Luke + John + Intercede for me. I command you Tiecon, Leleloth. Again a divine prayer. In the lord’s name be blessed. Veronica. Veronica. And he has written on his robe and on his thigh ‘king of kings and lord of lords’. Again a divine prayer. D E E R E þ . N and . þ T X D E R E þ N and . þ T X. Again, a man shall write this silently, and silently put these words on the left breast, and he [should] not go in [with] that writing, nor into bed, and [he should] also silently put this on. HAMMANŷEL . BPONice . NOŷepTAŷEPΓ.

[20] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 140.
[21] Transcription follows that in Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 140. Storms interprets different runic markings, which can be transliterated as ‘D E E R E þ. N S. P T X D E R F P N S. P T X’, Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 270.

The *gealdor* of this ritual begins with an invocation of the four evangelists and concludes with the adjuration of 'Tiecon' and 'Leleloth'. However, there is no indication of how this *gealdor* is to be performed but its cross markings and simple petition in Latin indicate a vocal utterance with bodily gestures. Two divine prayers ('godcund gebed') that follow use abstract language and echo the use of obscure Greek in the previous ritual against elf-sickness.

The first divine prayer consists of passages from Scripture (*Ps.* 112; *Rev*. 19: 16) and most likely an invocation of St Veronica. The second *gebed* is formed by a sequence of runic and Roman letters and, unlike the previous sections of the ritual, it is specified that these letters must be written down in silence ('Eft sceal mon swigende þis writan'). The final inscription that is to be carried on the body in silence also uses obscure Greek. However, no satisfactory rendering of these prayers and the inscription have been proposed. Cockayne translated the runic prayer as 'thine hand vexeth, thine hand vexeth' ('DEEREÞ HAND ÞIN DEREÞ HAND ÞIN') but this interpretation requires a liberal reading of the runes.[22] Grendon called these letters 'mystic' and thought that they 'may have been substituted for earlier runes'.[23] Cameron believed that the runes are 'pagan symbols' that were combined with other Christian elements like the 'attempt to write *Emmanuel* and *Veronica* and a third undecipherable word or phrase all in Greek letters' in the final inscription.[24] Once again, it is possible that these obscure phrases are corrupted and that their surviving forms stem from a misunderstanding of their meanings. However, in a similar way to the ritual against elf-sickness, the sequences in this ritual for spring fever may have been deliberately obscured to conceal their meaning. This is implied in the runic prayer by the inclusion of the abbreviated conjunction 'y' ('and') among the runes 'N y þ' ('N and þ'), which indicates that the names

[22] Cockayne, ed. and trans., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 141.
[23] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 223. He also argued that the same sequences of letters are to be used in another remedy in this manuscript (fol. 111v, Book III) that works against a range of physical and spiritual illnesses including 'lenctenadle' and 'yfelum gealdorcræftum', pp. 200-1.
[24] Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, 133-4.

of the runes should be pronounced aloud or rearranged.[25] According to Jolly, the prescriptions for 'silence and prayer evoke a monastic setting', and the emphasis on silence also implies that the ritual's performance was secretive.[26] The different parts of this ritual that were written in abstract ways may conceal utterances that were to be decoded by a performer who could interpret the letters and vocalise its *gealdor* and divine prayers.

Whatever the meaning of these runic and Greek letters, the ritual clearly associates its key components with Christian prayer. The *gealdor* is prescribed with prayers ('gealdor and gebed'), it invokes the names of the four evangelists, and multiple signings of the cross accompany this petition ('Intercedite pro me'). It also includes an adjuration of 'Tiecon' and 'Leleloth' which are probably two demons, thus demonstrating that the *gealdor* simultaneously harnesses divine power and exorcises demonic forces.[27] This first ritual performance is followed by prescriptions for two 'godcund gebed', implying that the *gealdor* was understood in a similar – if not the same – way as divine prayers. The focus on silence in the last section of the ritual further indicates that it conceals its powerful meaning, and the final instructions restrict locations in which these letters can be carried. All of these stages of the ritual demonstrate that the *gealdor* was intimately connected with Scripture, the names of important biblical figures, the sign of the cross, divine prayers, and secrecy.

Book I of *Bald's Leechbook* also contains a series of rituals against snake poison (fols. 42r-43r), and each entry prescribes specific ingredients to make drinks and salves. The description of these rituals in the contents (fol. 4r) says that they are 'a prayer and *gealdor* of John, the holy thane of Christ, and also another proven Irish *gealdor* against each and every

[25] This is a feature of other runic signatures in the Exeter Book riddles and the *Husband's Message*, see Tom Birkett, 'Runes and *Revelatio*: Cynewulf's Signatures Reconsidered', *RES*, 65 (2014), 771-89.
[26] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 150.
[27] See Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 141. See also Eleanour Sinclair Rohde, *The Old English Herbals* (London: Longmans, 1922), 33. Grendon claimed that these are the names of Arabian gods, Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 114.

poison'.[28] The first *gealdor* is found in an entry against 'nædran slege' (snake-strike) that requires earwax to be applied to the wound before singing 'þriwa þæs halgan Sancte Iohannes gebed and gealdor'.[29] Like the ritual against spring fever, this ritual combines its *gealdor* with *gebed* and associates it with an evangelist. The *gealdor* opens with an address to the Trinity ('deus meus et pater et filius et spiritus sanctus'), it is composed entirely in Latin, it lists poisonous creatures over which God has power, and it concludes by claiming that St John used this *gealdor* before signing himself with the cross and receiving the Eucharist: 'Et cum hoc dixisset, totum semet ipsum signo crucis armavit, et bibit totum quod erat in calice'.[30] This *gealdor* is intricately related to the gospel (through reference to St John the Evangelist), the sign of the cross, and the Eucharist, and it harnesses Christian power to overcome the evil poison of a snake. It is worth remembering that in the *Old English Martyrology,* St Audax was a 'wyrmgaldere' before he converted to Christianity, and he used *galdra* to summon snakes to attack St Anatolia. This *gealdor* of St John is used in the opposite way to counteract evil snakes, and this indicates that *galdra* were perceived to be dangerous and illegitimate if they were not used by Christian authorities. Furthermore, the close connection between this *gealdor* and the chalice ('bibit totum quod erat in calice') may be compared with the *galdorwide* that is uttered by a chalice in Riddle 48.[31]

The second ritual that is called a 'proven Irish *gealdor*' ('scyttisc gecost gealdor') is against flying venom or infection ('fleogendrum atre', fol. 43r). It opens with an instruction to prepare a salve for the wound, and continues with prescriptions to sing nine litanies, nine

[28] 'þæs halgan cristes þegnes Iohannes gebed and gealdor and eac oþer scyttisc gecost gealdor gehwæþer wiþ ælcum attre', Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms,* Vol. II, 10.
[29] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 112; 'thrice the holy Saint John's prayer and *gealdor*'.
[30] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 112; 'And when he had said this, he armed his whole self with the sign of the cross, and drank all that was in the chalice'.
[31] See Chapter One.

Paternosters, and 'þis gealdor' nine times.[32] The passage that follows is yet another sequence of abstract words and phrases:

> Acræ ærcræ ærnem nadre ærcuna hel ærnem niþærn ær afan buiþine adcrice ærnem meodre ærnem æþern ærnem allū honor ucus idar adcert cunolari raticamo helæ icas xpita hæle tobært tera fueli cui robater plana uili.[33]

The obscure Irish words of this *gealdor* echo the use of other exotic and ancient languages in the manuscript.[34] Grendon stated that this formulaic passage is 'plainly a rhythmical one of the jingle type', indicating that he thought this *gealdor* was to be uttered rather than written.[35] Jacqueline Borsje also claims that it is a vocal utterance and offers a literal word-for-word interpretation of it:

> The urging of a claim (*acra*(*e*))
> against gore (*ar crú*),
> against the poison (*ar nem*) of a snake
> against wounding (*ar guin*) [is] his *éle*
> against the poison of a snake
> *aer . asan . bui þine . adcrice*
> against the poison of a snake
> against the poison of a snake (or: against venomous poison).
> against poison
> *allū . honor* . and (*ucus* = *ocus*) water (*idar*)
> *ad cert* with the drink (*cu n-ol*) against them (? *ari* = *airi*)
> May my *éle* heal you. [It is] Christ in whom is (*i ta*) healing.

[32] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 112.
[33] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 112.
[34] See also Gameson, *The Scribe Speaks?*, 21.
[35] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 230.

Put (or: I will put; *tobær*) the *ttera* of urine (*fuel*) in (*i*[*n*]) a place (for *cui* read *ait*).

They have all become healthy.

[Or:] I placed / uttered [it] (*tobært*) upon (*ter* = OIr. *tar*) his (*a*) wounds (*fueli* for *fuili*) so that (*cui* = OIr. *co*?) they have all become healthy.[36]

Borsje thinks that the words to be uttered conclude at 'ærnem æþern ærnem' and that the words from 'allū honor ucus' signal instructions for a separate performance that have connections with other Irish rituals, including a holy salve in London, British Library, MS Harley 585 (discussed below).[37] The *gealdor* seems to refer to the first set of words in Irish (and also some Old English and Latin) that are heavily corrupted or deliberately obscured. The Christian nature of this *gealdor* is clear from its association with the singing of litanies and the Paternoster. It is clear that these Anglo-Saxon *gealdra* are words of mysterious spiritual power that appear in different languages and alphabets.

In the contents of Book III (fol. 110r), another ritual is identified as a *gealdor* and this term is repeated in the main ritual itself. The ritual is against 'water-elf disease' and the description in the contents reads: 'Tacnu hu þu meaht ongitan hwæþer mon sie on wæter ælf adle and læcedom wiþ þam and gealdor on to singanne and þæt ilce mon mæg singan on wunda'.[38] This *gealdor* is distinguished from a remedy ('læcedom') and marked off as a separate component of the ritual. The main text (fols. 125rv) also makes this distinction as the 'læcedom' consists of a list of nineteen ingredients, after which the 'gealdor' is given:

[36] Jacqueline Borsje, 'A Spell Called *Éle*', in *Ulidia 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, G. Toner and S. MacMathúna, eds (Berlin: Curach Bhán, 2013), 193-212 at 204-6.
[37] Borsje, 'Spell Called *Éle*', 206. See also Edward Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms, and Prayers from British Library MS Harley 585: The 'Lacnunga'*, 2 Vols (New York: Edwin Mellen, 2001), Vol. II, 22-9.
[38] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 304; 'Signs for how you may know whether a man is in the water-elf disease, and a leechdom against it, and a *gealdor* to sing on it, and a man may also sing that on wounds'.

> sing þis gealdor ofer þriwa. Ic benne awra[ð] betest beado wræda swa benne ne burnon ne burston ne fundian ne feologan ne hoppetan ne wund waco sian ne dolh diopian ac him self healde hale wæge ne ace þe þon ma þe eorþan on eare ace. Sing þis manegum siþum eorþe þe on bere eallum hire mihtum 7 mægenum. þas galdor mon mæg singan on wunde.[39]
>
> Sing this *gealdor* over [it] three times: 'I have bound round the wounds the best of war clasps, so the wounds neither burn nor burst, nor go further nor spread nor throb; nor may the wounds be wicked, nor the sore deepen, but may he himself hold on in a healthy way, nor ache you more than the earth aches in ear'. Sing this many times: 'May earth bear on you with all her might and strength'. A man may sing these *galdor* over a wound.

The words of this sung *gealdor* describe the performer as winding healing power around the wounds so that they may not develop into wicked wounds ('wund waco') and so that the individual may be brought to health. The *gealdor* serves 'to bring out the natural potency of the herbs' and it imitates the 'nec' formula often found in exorcisms.[40] Although no explicitly Christian terminology is included in this *gealdor*, it combats the wicked effects of the disease and restores physical and spiritual health to the sick subject.

The final appearance of *gealdor* in *Bald's Leechbook* is found in a ritual against joint pain ('liþwærce', fol. 116r). This entry is very short and it opens with a simple instruction to 'sing VIIII siþum þis gealdor' and spit on the site of the pain.[41] The *gealdor* is then given and it consists of three Latin phrases that describe the development of the pain and God's healing power: 'malignus obligauit; angelus curauit; dominus Saluauit'.[42] The text concludes with the statement 'him biþ sona sel' to reinforce the *gealdor*'s success.[43] Although this ritual is very

[39] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 350-2.
[40] See Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 167-8.
[41] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 322; 'sing this *gealdor* nine times'.
[42] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 322; 'The evil one tied, the angel cured, the Lord saved'. For a comparison of this ritual with another from Harley 585 (fol. 183r), see Olsan, 'Latin Charms', 127-8.
[43] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 322; 'He will soon be well'.

short, it is clear that this sung utterance conveys a message about the evil origin of the pain (with the 'malignus'), the curative process by which the pain is overcome (with the 'angelus'), and the source of restored health (in 'dominus'). This simple progression reflects the Anglo-Saxons' spiritual interpretation of physical suffering because the minor pain of joints is presented in terms of the cosmic battle between good and evil.[44] The health of the individual that is at stake is spiritual as well as physical, and the *gealdor* gives an eschatological meaning to the physical pain. The source of pain is evil (like the Fall), the medium of healing is divine (like the Incarnation, announced by an angel), and the source of restored health is in God (through the Second Coming). As it also facilitates this curative process, the *gealdor* assumes the same role as the angel who cured the pain ('angelus curauit'), showing it to be a powerful Christian utterance that mediates between God and man. This use of *gealdor* may be compared with the *galdrum* spoken by St Guthlac when he describes his angelic revelation to his servant in *Guthlac B*, as discussed in Chapter One.

Bald's Leechbook contains the largest number of ritual texts that refer to elements within them as *galdra*. Because it seems to have been composed some time before the surviving manuscript was written, it is possible that these usages reflect an understanding of *galdor* that predates a redefinition of it by reformers like Ælfric and Wulfstan. However, the manuscript was copied in Æthelwold's monastery at the Old Minster and this suggests that *galdor* was viewed as a Christian ritual by some ecclesiastics in this monastic milieu in the late tenth century. Like other non-proscriptive uses of *galdor*, the term is intimately connected with Christian wisdom, prayers, and the Eucharist. Some *galdra* conceal their divine utterances by employing ancient, foreign alphabets or languages and by instructing silent performances. This provides one explanation for the many condemnations of the term in non-ritual texts as these *galdra* were perceived to be powerful utterances that could be

[44] See Meaney, 'Causes of Illness', 12-33; Karen Jolly, 'Father God and Mother Earth: Nature Mysticism in the Anglo-Saxon World', in *The Medieval World of Nature: A Book of Essays*, Joyce E. Salisbury, ed (New York: Garland, 1993), 221-52.

dangerous if they were used by unauthorised people. Their secretive language might conceal the words of the ritual from those who should not try to use them, and it may have been the case that particular authorities were skilled in interpreting these *galdra* for their performance. The *galdra* often invoke the evangelists and other saints (Veronica and the litanies), they are sometimes directly connected with the Eucharist, and they contain Scriptural passages. They also exorcise evil forces that cause physical and spiritual suffering, and they facilitate communication between God and men like the angels. The manuscript often uses *galdor* with other Christian prayers, and liturgical elements consistently accompany its performance.

ii. London, British Library, MS Harley 585

London, BL, Harley 585 is similar to *Bald's Leechbook* as it is also a book of healing. It contains translations of the *Herbarium Apuleis* (fols. 1-66v), pseudo-Dioscorides' *De herbis femininis* and *Curae herbarum* (fols. 66v-101v), Sextus Placitus' *Liber medicinae ex animalibus* (fols. 106v-114v), and a collection of remedial texts and rituals commonly referred to as the *Lacnunga* (fols. 130r-193r).[45] The manuscript dates to the first quarter of the eleventh century on palaeographical grounds but its place of origin remains unknown.[46] There are many correspondences between texts in *Bald's Leechbook* and Harley 585, and Audrey Meaney believes that sections of the Harley manuscript were copied from the same exemplar as *Bald's Leechbook*.[47] Meaney also drew attention to similar textual parallels in other healing books that were written in Winchester in the late tenth and early eleventh-century.[48] Alger Doane suggested that it was written in the west of England, and he

[45] See Ker, *Catalogue*, 305-6.
[46] Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 26. See also Gneuss, *Handlist*, 75; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 53.
[47] Audrey L. Meaney, 'Variant Versions of Old English Medical Remedies and the Compilation of *Bald's Leechbook*', *ASE*, 13 (1984), 235-68 at 258-64.
[48] The manuscripts are London, British Library, MSS Additional 34652, Cotton Galba A. xiv, and Cotton Otho B. xi. Cotton Galba A. xiv was mostly written at the Nunnaminster c. 1000, Meaney, 'Compilation of Bald's *Leechbook*', 263-4.

highlighted the influence of a Winchester style in the manuscript's zoomorphic capitals.[49] Edward Pettit also proposes a Winchester origin for the manuscript, and he draws connections between the *Lacnunga* and a number of private prayer books for women containing Irish materials that were in Winchester by the eleventh century.[50] Hollis believes that the *Lacnunga* was compiled from a number of earlier sources according to its corrupted texts and disordered organisation.[51] She also claims that four prayerbooks, written in two south-western monasteries in the late eighth century, influenced the collection, particularly its focus on poison.[52] It may be the case that Harley 585 was compiled in the eleventh century from a number of older exemplars that were available at the Old Minster (housing *Bald's Leechbook*'s exemplar) and the Nunnaminster (possibly housing the private prayer books).

Although the place of production of Harley 585 may never be known, it is apparent that the compiler had access to a range of materials from at least one well-resourced library in the early eleventh century. Given the manuscript's close connections with other books that were available in reforming minsters, it is likely that it was written in a monastery or nunnery that was associated with the Reform. Multiple scribal hands are evident in the manuscript suggesting that a team of scribes worked on the collection; the main scribe wrote most of the manuscript (up to fol. 179r), and at least two scribes finished the collection and added in capitals and a contents for the *Herbarium*.[53] The range of materials that seem to have been gathered and the number of scribes that wrote the collection indicate that Harley 585 was a well-resourced and rather large project. The uses of *galdor* in this manuscript are akin to those in *Bald's Leechbook*, although slight differences indicate that more care was taken to distinguish *galdra* from other ritual practices.

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[49] Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 26, 29.
[50] See Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, xxix-xxxii, li-liii, 135, 159-60. See also Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 5, 15, 37, 49, 52.
[51] Hollis, 'Medical Writings', 199, 201.
[52] Hollis, 'Medical Writings', 201. See also Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 273-327.
[53] Ker, *Catalogue*, 305-6; Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 27.

The *Lacnunga* of Harley 585 (fols. 130r-193r) contains four texts that instruct the singing of a *galdor,* and all appear in the first stage of scribal copying before folio 179r. The first appearance of *galdor* is found in a ritual against a worm ('wið wyrme', fol. 136v). Doane and Pettit interpret the text as a response to 'accidental ingestion of worms or poison' and 'infestation in unhygienic conditions by tapeworms, roundworms, and threadworms'.[54] L. B. Pinto believed that 'a kind of Platonic "ideal worm", i.e. the demon-worm' is common in medieval medical texts, and the rituals of this manuscript certainly associate worms and snakes with evil.[55] Victoria Thompson discusses the eschatological significance of the *wyrm* in the *Lacnunga* and Anglo-Saxon culture more generally, as 'worms are often presented as the agents of punishment, eliding with the tormenting serpents of hell'.[56] The *galdor* that works against worms simultaneously drives out the source of evil that physically afflicts the patient and restores spiritual health to the subject, cancelling out the sin that caused their punishment.

The ritual opens with instructions to sing a 'leoð' (song, poem) into the right ear if the afflicted subject is male, and into the left ear if they are female. The passage that follows this instruction is an obscure sequence with elements of Irish and Old English: 'Gonomil orgomil marbumil marbsai ramum tofeð tengo docuillo biran cuiðær cæfmiil scuiht cuillo scuiht cuib duill marbsiramum'.[57] The first three words of this *leoð* have been identified as an Irish formula meaning 'I slay the beast, I slaughter the beast, I kill the beast' that have parallels in ninth and tenth-century Old High German and Old Saxon rituals.[58] Pettit offers a tentative translation of the whole passage based on many different scholarly interpretations:

[54] Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 30; Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, xxxiii.
[55] L. B. Pinto, 'Medical Science and Superstition: A Report on A Unique Medical Scroll of the Eleventh-Twelfth Century', *Manuscripta*, 17 (1973), 12-21 at 14-15.
[56] Thompson, *Dying and Death*, 93, see also pp. 132-69.
[57] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 14.
[58] Calvert S. Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), 522-3, 527.

> I wound the animal, I hit the animal, I kill the animal. Kill the (?)persistent creature! Its tongue will fall out. I destroy the little spear with verse. Against the (?)dear-animal. (?)An ending. I destroy. (?)An ending (?to the) (?)dear-animal. Kill the (?)persistent creature![59]

As this sequence is very obscure and indecipherable in places, it may be that 'the original Irish had almost certainly become opaque to the scribe' who still regarded it 'as a string of *uoces magicae*'.[60] As seen with *Bald's Leechbook*, the use of different languages in some *galdra* may be an attempt to conceal meaning, and these sequences 'illustrate the propensity of ritual language for switching into an obscure or downright incomprehensible code'.[61] This passage is immediately followed by an instruction to sing 'þis galdor' nine times with one Paternoster.[62] The entry that immediately follows this ritual opens with a prescription to sing this same *galdor* ('þis ylce galdor') to counteract penetrating worms ('smeogan wyrme').[63] The *galdor* is therefore equated with a song ('leoð') that is to be sung about the patient's head, and it consists of a formula that incorporates at least one different language, working alongside the Paternoster in driving out the hostile enemy and restoring spiritual health as it is uttered.

The second text that uses *galdor* is a ritual prescription for a holy salve ('haligre sealf', fols. 146v-149r). It opens with an extensive list of ingredients required to make the salve before holy water is finally added. The concoction is then stirred with a stick inscribed with the names of the four evangelists, and a series of psalms, prayers, and litanies are then sung:

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[59] Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. II, 33. For an overview of the different interpretations of this text, see Vol. II, 31-4.
[60] Alderik Blom, '*Linguae Sacrae* in Ancient and Medieval Sources: An Anthropological Approach to Ritual Language', in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, Alex Mullen and Patrick James, eds (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 124-40 at 137.
[61] Blom, '*Linguae Sacrae*', 137.
[62] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 15.
[63] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 16.

ðu sing ofer ðas sealmas, ‘Beati immaculati’…, ælcne ðriwa ofer, and ‘Gloria in excelsis D(e)o’, and ‘Credo in D(eu)m Patrem’, and letanias arime ofer, þ(æt) [i]s ðara haligra naman and ‘D(eus) m(eu)s et pater’, et ‘In principio’, and þ(æt) wyrmgealdor; and þis gealdor singe ofer.

sing these psalms over it, ‘Blessed are the undefiled’…, each one three times over it, and ‘Glory to God in the Highest’, and ‘I believe in God the Father’, and recite litanies over it, that is the names of the saints and ‘My God and Father’, and ‘In the Beginning’ and the ‘worm’-incantation [*wyrmgealdor*]; and sing this incantation [*gealdor*] over it.[64]

These liturgical prayers complement the inscribed names of the evangelists, thus establishing a highly Christian response to a wound.

Two types of *gealdor* accompany these liturgical prayers and are named as distinct ritual utterances. The ‘wyrmgealdor’ probably refers to the ritual against a worm on folio 136v, particularly because it also identifies itself as *gealdor*. The second prescribed *gealdor* follows the same (but much shorter) formula as the ritual against flying venom in *Bald’s Leechbook*: ‘Acre arcre arnem nona ærnem beoðor ærnem. nidren. arcun cunað ele harassan fidine’.[65] Borsje provides a literal translation of this passage:

The urging of a claim
Against gore
Against poison *nona*
Against poison they struck (?)
Against the poison of a snake

[64] Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 32-3.
[65] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 32.

Against wounding with a *nath* 'poem' *éle* (*cunað* = *cu nath*: *co* 'with' + *nath* 'piece of verse')

[Or:] Against wounding with another poem

[Or:] Against wounding with the poem (*nath*) of a satire (*ail*)

harassan fidine.[66]

Another version of this 'acre' formula is used in Harley 585, and it also appears in earlier manuscripts that include Irish material such as the *Book of Cerne*, the *Book of Nunnaminster*, and the *Irish Liber Hymnorum*.[67] This sequence evidently emerged from an Irish tradition but only this ritual and the version in *Bald's Leechbook* identify it as *gealdor*. The *Leechbook*'s version uses the formula against flying venom whereas the *Lacnunga*'s salve ritual specifies that it protects against harmful utterances ('cunað'), indicating that this sequence could be adapted for different rituals.

The text then instructs that this *gealdor* is to be sung nine times before the ingredients are blessed by a priest. Following this, a number of prayers are to be sung ('singe ðas orationis ofer') that are also found in rites of exorcism and liturgical blessings for the sick and for new fruit.[68] This ritual makes careful distinctions between the types of texts to be said and sung as it designates 'ðas sealmas', 'letanias', 'ðara haligran naman', two *gealdra*, and 'orationis'. Unlike *Bald's Leechbook*, the *gealdra* are distinguished from other types of prayer, they are included as separate ritual utterances, and they are intermingled with texts used in the liturgy.

[66] Borsje, 'Spell Called *Éle*', 207.
[67] See Michelle P. Brown, *The Book of Cerne: Prayer, Patronage, and Power in Ninth-Century England* (London: British Library, 1996), 136-8, 152; Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, xxix-xxxiv, Vol. II, 22-4; Karen Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross: Who and for Whom?", in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, Catherine E. Karkov, Sarah Larratt Keefer, and Karen Louise Jolly, eds (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 58-79 at 60-1. Jolly also notes later copies in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 163 (s. xi), and Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College, 379 (s. xii).
[68] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 32-6.

The third text of Harley 585 that uses *galdor* is commonly referred to as the *Nine Herbs Charm* (fols. 160r-163v). It is viewed as one of the most important examples of an Anglo-Saxon 'charm' with pre-Christian origins because of its mention of Woden alongside other 'heathen elements and botanical animism'.[69] However, as Meaney pointed out, it 'seems very probable that all memory of him [Woden] as one of the great gods had faded by this time', and 'whether he was regarded as anything more than a powerful wizard it is impossible to say'.[70] The mention of Woden is immediately followed by a reference to the crucified Christ ('þa wyrte gesceop witig Drihten, halig on heofonu(m), þa he hongode'), and the text concludes with a declaration of Christ's power over all poisons: '+ Crist stod ofer alde ængancundes'.[71] Rather than providing evidence of surviving paganism in Anglo-Saxon England, this single surviving copy is found in a markedly Christian context.[72]

The ritual comprises a list of nine different types of herbs with accompanying legends recounting their healing qualities. As there are no opening instructions for performance, the text reads like a practitioner's compendium of herbal lore that should be memorised. The legendary stories that recount the herbs' healing qualities aid in this task of memorisation, and they specify the illnesses that each herb successfully counteracts.[73] All of the herbs are useful in treatments for poison and infections ('attrum'), and others are particularly powerful against malicious demons ('wreceð heo wraðan'), snakes ('wið wyrm'), and bewitchment

[69] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. II, 103. For an overview of scholarship on this texts, see Vol. II, 99-100.
[70] Meaney, 'Woden in England', 110, 114. See also Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 127-8.
[71] '+ Christ, (?)being of a unique nature [?(*or*) in a way that was unique], stood upon (?)disease [?(*or*) the ancient ones]', Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 66-7. Ferdinand Ohrt drew comparisons between this text and later traditions of belief that plants grew in Christ's blood at the foot of the cross, *'Herba, Gratia Plena': Die Legenden der älteren Segenssprüche über den gottlichen Ursprung der Heil- und Zauberkräuter* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1929), 1-30. Willy L. Braekman also drew comparisons with *Mark* 16. 15-18, 'Notes on Old English Charms', *Neophilologus*, 64 (1980), 461-9.
[72] Similar arguments against surviving paganism in references to Woden have been made in studies of the Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies, see especially Kenneth Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 39 (1953), 287-348; David Dumville, 'The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *ASE*, 5 (1976), 23-50; Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), 111-32.
[73] For other memorisation techniques employed in rituals, see Lea Olsan, 'Charms in Medieval Memory', in *Charms and Charming in Europe*, Roper, ed., 59-88.

('malscrunge').[74] These are all ailments that are identified elsewhere in other rituals, and the surrounding manuscript context highlights the obvious benefit that a practitioner would have in memorising this text. It is also worth remembering from Chapter One that *galdra* are condemned alongside these and other similar terms, indicating that certain types of *galdra* were understood to be evil if they were used by the wrong people.

Following this list of herbs, a recipe for a salve concludes the text. It instructs the practitioner to 'sing þæt galdor' on each of the prescribed herbs before they are blended, and to sing it again ('þæt ilce gealdor') into the patient's mouth, ears, and on their wound.[75] The *galdor* evidently refers to the list preceding this salve, suggesting that it was recited in a ritual summoning of the herbs' powers: 'the activation of the herbs' inherent virtues in combating such spiritual ills required the mana of a trained person relying on ancient knowledge'.[76] As seen in the wisdom poems of the Exeter and Vercelli Books, *galdor* could signify ancient wisdom and spiritual insight. This *galdor* similarly refers to the practitioner's knowledge of herbs and their understanding that their potency came from Christ who has power over all poisons. These references to *galdor* show that it signified words of healing wisdom that were to be sung over herbs in a Christian ritualistic way.

The final ritual of Harley 585 that uses a *galdor* is against a dwarf ('wið dweorh', fol. 167r). The affliction of a dwarf is enigmatic and may refer to nightmares or fever, but its sinister nature is evident.[77] The ritual opens with an instruction to write the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus on communion wafers: 'man sceal niman VII lytle oflætan swylce man mid ofrað, and wri[t]an þas naman on ælcre oflætan: Maximian(us), Malchus, Iohannes,

[74] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 62-4.
[75] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 68.
[76] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 127.
[77] See Nelson, 'Charm against Nightmare', 17-18; David E. Gay, 'Anglo-Saxon Metrical Charm 3 Against a Dwarf: A Charm against Witch-Riding?', *Folklore*, 99 (1988), 174-7; B. R. Hutcheson, '*Wið Dweorh*: An Anglo-Saxon Remedy for Fever in its Cultural and Manuscript Setting', in *Secular Learning in Anglo-Saxon England: Exploring the Vernacular*, Lázló Sándor Chardonnens and Bryan Carella, eds (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), 175-202. See also Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, xxxiii; for further scholarship on this text, see Vol. II, 172-6, 183.

Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion'.[78] There are other rituals against fever that invoke the Seven Sleepers, and there is one other example of inscribing these names on communion wafers in a twelfth-century medical manuscript from Rochester (London, British Library, MS Royal 12 E. xx).[79] The Christian nature of this ritual is immediately made clear with the use of a Eucharistic object and the invocation of these figures from Christian legend. The ritual then prescribes that a *galdor* is to be sung into each ear and above the patient's head: 'Þænne eft þ(æt) galdor þ(æt) heræfter cweð man sceal singan, ærest on þ(æt) wynstre eare, þænne on þæt swiðre eare, þænne [b]ufan þæs mannes moldan'.[80] Grendon distinguished between these opening instructions, claiming that the inscription forms 'a Christian preface to the superstitious ritual', and that the *galdor* utterance is 'a characteristic Heathen spell'.[81] However, the close proximity of the vocal utterance and the written performance show that the *galdor* cannot be separated from the inscription on the hosts, and that it is inextricably linked to the Eucharist.[82] The instruction concludes with a prescription to have a virgin hang one inscribed host about the patient's neck, thus completing a cruciform shape around the head as the *galdor* is sung in both ears and above the head.

The words of the *galdor* then follow and open with a narrative account of an 'inspidenwiht' that left its mark on the person's neck ('Leg[d]e þe his teage an sweoran').[83] Although the concept of a malevolent spirit in the form of a spider is Germanic in origin, the spirit is later referred to as a beast ('deores'), suggesting possible parallels with the apocalyptic sign of the beast that is forcibly marked on the heads of doomed sinners (*Rev*. 13:

[78] 'one must take seven little sacramental wafers such as one makes offertory with, and write these names on each wafer: Maximianus, Malchus, Iohannes, Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion', Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 72-3.
[79] See Wilfrid Bonser, 'The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in Anglo-Saxon and Later Recipes', *Folklore*, 56 (1945), 254-6; Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990), 349.
[80] 'Then afterwards one must sing the incantation [*galdor*] that is related hereafter, first into the left ear, then into the right ear, then above the crown of the person's head', Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 72-3.
[81] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 215.
[82] For the ritual's probable Christian origin in the second half of the tenth century, see Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. II, 184.
[83] 'It laid its reins [*teage* / 'mark'] on your neck', Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 72-5.

16-17). The mark of this creature is countered by the inscribed host that is placed on the same area of the body, and the end of this sung narrative refers to the *galdor* as a special ritual practice that can only be performed by a skilled practitioner:

> Þa co(m) ingangan deores sweostar.
> Þa g(e)ændade heo, and aðas swor
> ðæt næfre þis ðæ(m) adlegan derian ne moste,
> ne þæm þe þis galdor begytan mihte,
> oððe þe þis galdor ongalan cuþe.
> Am(en). Fiað.
>
> Then came walking in the beast's sister.
> Then she interceded, and swore oaths
> That this (*i.e.* this beast) might never harm the sick person,
> Nor the person who could obtain this incantation [*galdor*],
> Or who knew how to recite this incantation [*galdor*].
> Amen. Let it be done.[84]

This *galdor* forces the beast's sister ('deores sweostar') to submit and swear oaths to never harm the person again. The mark of the beast is overcome by a sacramental object and this *galdor* completes the spiritual protection by subduing its kin, concluding with 'Amen, fiat', as do other liturgical curses and sanctions from late Anglo-Saxon England.[85] Given that the ritual opens with an inscription on a host that is used in conjunction with the *galdor*, the 'Amen' is not, as Grendon claims, 'tacked on at the end to save appearances'.[86] It is a fitting

[84] Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 74-5.
[85] Little, *Benedictine Maledictions*, 57; Petra Hofmann, *Infernal Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Charters*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis (University of St Andrew's, Scotland, 2008), 47-9, 256-337.
[86] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 215.

liturgical end to a Christian ritual that uses the *galdor* as part of a repertory of spiritual weapons with which to overcome demonic influence. This text explicitly depicts *galdor* as a ritual practice that can only be obtained and performed by a skilful and knowledgeable person. This is interesting because it indicates that other *galdra* can only be performed by those who know how to read them, and this possibility helps to explain why obscure language features in many of these *galdra* to prevent them from becoming known.

In Harley 585, *galdor* is used in similar ways to *Bald's Leechbook*. This shows that it was viewed by at least some people as an important ritual practice in an eleventh-century minster, probably associated with the Reform and located in Winchester. Some of its texts use obscure sequences of letters and words for their *galdra*, and the term is used alongside liturgical texts and objects. In contrast to *Bald's Leechbook*, Harley 585 provides clearer distinctions between *galdor* and other vocal performances, indicating that it was understood as a separate type of ritual practice that could complement others used in the liturgy, such as psalms, prayers, and litanies.

iii. London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. vii

London, BL, Cotton Caligula A. vii contains the C version of the *Heliand* and the *Æcerbot* field ritual which prescribes the performance of a *galdor*. According to palaeographical evidence, *Heliand C* was written in the second half of the tenth century, and the *Æcerbot* was written in the early eleventh century.[87] Close textual correspondences between these two texts indicate that the *Æcerbot* was added to the *Heliand* by an Anglo-Saxon compiler, if not by the *Æcerbot* scribe.[88] The *Heliand* is an Old Saxon heroic rendering of the gospel story in verse, and the *Æcerbot* is an Old English agricultural ritual which uses a *galdor* to heal an

[87] Ker, *Catalogue*, 172; Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 1; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 61; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 34.
[88] See Ciaran Arthur, 'Ploughing through Cotton Caligula A. VII: Reading the Sacred Words of the *Heliand* and the *Æcerbot*', *RES*, 65 (2014), 1-17; 'Three Marginal Notes in London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. vii', *N&Q*, 62 (2015), 211-17.

infertile field. *Heliand C* was copied in England by a single scribe from a lost exemplar, probably at Winchester.[89] Alger Doane and Rolf Bremmer suggest that it was given to Æthelwulf of Wessex in 856, whereas Malcolm Godden believes that it may have been recited at Alfred's court along with other biblical poetry that would have been known to Alfred's Frankish connections, such as his priest John the Old Saxon.[90] The Old English poem *Genesis B* is also known to have circulated with the *Heliand* as witnessed by another ninth-century manuscript, Rome, Vatican Library, MS Palatinus Latinus 1477. The *Æcerbot* was written by an eleventh-century scribe, and there is evidence to suggest that the *Heliand* inspired the composition or re-writing of this ritual. A marginal note appears on folio 17r of the *Heliand*, and it is written in a hand very similar to the *Æcerbot* scribe. The note draws attention to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Annunciation scene, and there are close correspondences between the Annunciation and Marian elements in the *Æcerbot*.[91] The *Æcerbot* shows that *galdor* was viewed as an important Christian ritual utterance that could resurrect crops and the faith of the community.[92]

The *Æcerbot* spans two full folios at the end of the manuscript (fols. 176r-178r), and the term *galdor* appears only once in this text.[93] The ritual opens with instructions to cut sods from each corner of the field that has been made infertile by evil forces ('lyblace'). The first set of prescribed words that is to be uttered is taken from *Genesis* 1. 28 and given in an inter-lexical translation:

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[89] See R. Priebsch, *The Heliand Manuscript: Cotton Caligula A VII in the British Museum* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1925), 27-9; James E. Cathey, ed., *Hêliand: Text and Commentary* (Morgantown: West Virginia UP, 2002), 23; Malcolm Godden, 'Prologues and Epilogues in the Old English *Pastoral Care*, and their Carolingian Models', *JEGP*, 110 (2011), 441-73 at 457. G. Ronald Murphy claims that it was copied in East Anglia, 'The Old Saxon *Heliand*', in *Perspectives on the Old Saxon Heliand: Introductory and Critical Essays, with an Edition of the Leipzig Fragment*, V. A. Pakis, ed (Morgantown: West Virginia UP, 2010), 34-62 at 35-6.

[90] Alger N. Doane, ed., *The Saxon Genesis: An Edition of the West Saxon Genesis B and the Old Saxon Vatican Genesis* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 53; Rolf Bremmer, 'Continental Germanic Influences', in *Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, Pulsiano and Treharne, eds., 375-87 at 383-4; Godden, 'Prologues and Epilogues', 457.

[91] Arthur, 'Three Marginal Notes', 214-17.

[92] See Hill, '*Æcerbot* Charm'; Niles, 'Æcerbot Ritual in Context'; Arthur, 'Ploughing through Cotton Caligula A. VII', 10-11.

[93] No cognates of *galdor* appear in the Old Saxon *Heliand.*

Crescite, wexe, *et multiplicamini*, and gemænigfealda,

et replete, and gefylle, *terre*, þas eorðan. *In*

nominee patris et filii et spiritus sancti sit benedicti.[94]

Crescite, grow, *et multiplicamini*, and multiply, *et replete*, and fill, *terram*, the earth. *In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti sitis benedicti*'.[95]

These words are God's command to Adam to multiply and they confirm man's supremacy over the earth and all of Creation. This biblical passage provides a central motif that is repeated throughout the entire ritual like a refrain. After these words are said for the first time, the sods are placed beneath an altar and four Masses are sung over them before the end of the day. Four wooden crosses bearing the names of the evangelists are then placed into the field and the names are recited as this is done, thus encompassing the land with the power of the gospels.[96] After the sods have been placed above the crosses, the *Crescite* passage is recited nine times with the Paternoster.

Following this, an instruction 'cweð þonne þas word' marks a lengthy passage that is to be uttered before further the ploughing of the field:

Eastweard ic stande, arena ic me bidde.

Bidde ic ðone mæran domine, bidde ðone miclan drihten,

bidde ic þone haligan heofonrices weard.

Eorðan ic bidde and upheofon,

and ða soþan Sancta Marian,

[94] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 173.
[95] Translation from Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 7.
[96] Thomas D. Hill has drawn comparisons between this instruction and the *Kollektaneum Bedae*, Hill, 'Irish-Latin Analogue'.

and heofones meaht and heah reced,
þæt ic mote þis gealdor mid gife drihtnes
toðum ontynan, þurh trumne geþanc
acweccan þas wæstmas us to woruldnytte,
gefylle þas foldan mid fæste geleafan,
wlitigigan þas wancgturf.[97]

Eastwards I stand, for mercies I pray, I pray the great domine [lord], I pray the powerful lord, I pray the holy guardian of heaven-kingdom, earth I pray and sky and the true sancta [holy] Mary and heaven's might and high hall, that I may this charm [*galdor*] by the gift of the lord open with [my] teeth through firm thought, to call forth these plants for our worldly use, to fill this land with firm belief, to beautify this grassy turf.[98]

The passage identifies the *galdor* as a ritual utterance that is capable of resurrecting crops ('acweccan þas wæstmas'), filling the earth ('gefylle þas foldan'), and replenishing fields ('wlitigigan þas wancgturf') through God's grace ('mid gife drihtnes'). Its Christian nature is made explicit in its invocation of God, Mary, and the whole of heaven, its emphasis on the need for faith ('þurh trumne geþanc'), and its focus on resurrection.

Following this utterance, the plough is blessed with holy water and three sets of prescribed words are to be said as the field is ploughed. These passages are also heavily dependent upon Christian references, and one addresses Mother Earth in the following way:

Hal wes þu folde, fira modor,
beo þu growende on Godes fæþme,

[97] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 174.
[98] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 7.

fodre gefylled firum to nytte.[99]

Whole may you be (Be well) earth, mother of men! May you be growing in God's embrace, with food filled for the needs of men.[100]

This address has parallels with the Archangel Gabriel's greeting to the Virgin Mary at the Annunciation in *Heliand C*, near to where the *Ærcerbot* scribe made a marginal note:

'Hel uuis thu, Maria' quathie, 'thu bist thinon herron lief,
uualdandi uuirðig, huand thu giuuit haƀs,
idis enstio ful. Thu scealt furi allon uuesan
uuiƀon giuuihid' (259-262).[101]

'Health be with you, Mary. The Lord is very fond of you. You are precious to the Ruler for your wisdom, woman full of grace. You are to be sanctified more than any other woman'.[102]

Towards the end of the ritual a bread offering is made when a loaf is placed into the earth, perhaps bread consecrated in the previous Masses, suggesting connections between this *galdor* and the Eucharist.[103] Finally, the ritual concludes with the triple repetition of the *Crescite* passage and the Paternoster.

Although the word *galdor* appears only once in the *Ærcerbot* it occupies a central position just before the field is ploughed. It is a declaration that Mother Earth's crops and the community's faith are resurrected, and it shares many similarities with the angelic revelation

[99] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 176.
[100] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 8.
[101] Eduard Sievers, ed., *Heliand* (Halle: Verlag, 1878), 22.
[102] G. Ronald Murphy, trans, *The Heliand: Saxon Gospel* (Oxford: OUP, 1992), 12. See also Arthur, 'Three Marginal Notes', 214-17.
[103] See Arthur, 'Ploughing through Caligula A. VII', 13-16.

of Mary's conception in the *Heliand*. The *galdor* reveals God's power and exorcises the poison that is in the earth, and it is accompanied by biblical passages, Masses, and invocations of the Christian deity and saints. Caligula A. vii demonstrates that *galdor* could be used to describe words of power that were used in a liturgical context.

iv. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41

The final manuscript that includes a reference to *galdor* in a ritual context is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41. This manuscript dates to the first quarter of the eleventh century on palaeographical grounds, and it was probably written in the south of England before it came into Leofric's possession in Exeter (1050-1072).[104] The main text of this manuscript is the earliest full copy of the Old English version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and a single scribe later added a number of texts into the manuscript's margins.

The marginal additions include seven rituals that have been classified as 'charms', the *Solomon and Saturn I* verse dialogue, homilies, chants, and Mass texts.[105] Richard Pfaff believes that the marginal additions point 'to a model that was not influenced by monastic reform (the office material among the marginalia is for the secular form of Sunday matins in nine lessons)'.[106] However, Christopher Hohler argued that the focus on Irish saints in some of the manuscript's marginal texts indicates that these were added by a cleric living near Glastonbury (where Irish monks also resided) at the instruction of a reforming bishop, possibly Dudoc, bishop of Wells (1033-1061).[107] Sarah Larratt Keefer believes that Corpus 41 was likely to have been produced 'in a provincial scriptorium of no great size' with 'a

[104] Ker, *Catalogue*, 45; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 31. See also Gameson, 'Origin of the Exeter Book', 141-2.
[105] For the 'charms', see Raymond J. S. Grant, ed., *Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41: The Loricas and the Missal* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979), 3, 5-22. There are many Irish parallels with the marginalia of this manuscript, in particular the *Solomon and Saturn* poem, see Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), 237-42.
[106] Pfaff, *Liturgy in Medieval England*, 66. For the monastic office, see Milton M. C. C. Gatch, 'The Office in Late Anglo-Saxon Monasticism', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss, eds (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), 341-62
[107] Christopher Hohler, 'Review of Raymond J. S. Grant, ed., *Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41: the Loricas and the Missal* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979)', *Medium Aevum*, 49 (1980), 275-81.

minimal library, or possibly for an individual'.[108] Jolly also argues that it was written for 'a smaller religious community of some kind for whom the book would be of practical use'.[109] Robert Butler suggests that Irish elements in the marginal texts indicate that they were added to Corpus 41 in Glastonbury or Beckery (about a mile from Glastonbury).[110] He also believes that Leofric bought Corpus 41 – along with other manuscripts containing his inscription, including the Exeter Book – in Glastonbury before he brought them to Exeter.[111] However, Jesse Billett has most recently argued that some pre-Gregorian chants in the manuscript's marginalia indicate that these were copied at an unreformed minster 'well outside the influence of Winchester'.[112] Regardless of where the manuscript was written, the rituals were copied alongside homilies and prayers for the Mass and Office, indicating that *galdor* was considered by its compiler as entirely compatible with these liturgical materials in the south-west of England in the early eleventh century.

The *Old English Bede* contains a condemnatory reference to *galdor*, listing it among the evil practices against which St Cuthbert fought:

> Forðon ðe monige ðone geleafan, þe hie hæfdon, mid unrihtum weorcum idledon, ond swylce eac manige in ða tid þæs myclan woles & moncwildes gymeleasedan ðæm gerynum þæs halgan geleafan, mid þæm hie gelærede wæron, & to ðæm dwoligendum læcedomum deofulgylda ofsetton & scyndon; swa swa hie þæt sende wite from God Scyppende þurh heora galdor oþþe lyfesne oððe þurh hwylce hwugu deogolnesse deofolcræftes bewerian mehton (IV, 27).[113]

[108] Sarah Larratt Keefer, 'Margin as Archive: The Liturgical Marginalia of a Manuscript of the Old English Bede', *Traditio*, 51 (1996), 147-77 at 147.
[109] Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 137. On the manuscript's use for teaching, see George Molyneaux, 'The *Old English Bede*: English Ideology or Christian Instruction?', *EHR*, 124 (2009), 1289-323. See also Sharon M. Rowley, 'Nostalgia and the Rhetoric of Lack: The Missing Exemplar of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Manuscript 41', in *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context*, Lionarons, ed., 11-35.
[110] Butler, 'Early History of the Exeter Book', 211-13.
[111] Butler, 'Early History of the Exeter Book', 213-15.
[112] Billett, *Divine Office*, 223, see also 227-36.
[113] Miller, ed., *Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. II, 362.

> For many of them profaned the creed they held by wicked deeds and some of them too, in times of plague, would forget the sacred mysteries of the faith into which they had been initiated and take to the false remedies of idolatry, as though they could ward off a blow inflicted by God the Creator by means of incantations [*galdor*] or amulets or any other mysteries of devilish art.[114]

In a similar way to other texts considered in Chapter One, this condemnatory use of *galdor* presents the term as a dangerous ritual when it leads Christians astray. This passage associates *galdor* with other evils ('lyfesne', 'deogolnesse deofolcræftes') to condemn it as a harmful practice. This is one particular use of *galdor* that is harmful to the Christian, and it is depicted as a useless attempt to overcome God's just punishments.

The ritual that prescribes the performance of a *galdor* is commonly referred to as the *Journey Charm*; it appears in the margins of folios 350-353 alongside Book I of the *Old English Bede*.[115] It immediately opens with the subject's self-reflective description of drawing a protective circle before setting out on a journey:

> Ic me on þysse gyrde beluce and on godes helde bebeode wið þane sara sice, wið þane sara slege, wið þane grymma gryre, wið ðane micela egsa þe bið eghwam lað, and wið eal þæt lað þe in to land fare, syge gealdor ic begale, sigegyrd ic me wege wordsige and worcsige, se me dege.[116]

> I encircle myself with this rod and entrust myself to God's grace, against the sore stitch, against the sore bite, against the grim dread, against the great fear that is loathsome to

[114] Colgrave and Mynors, trans., *Ecclesiastical History*, 433.
[115] On the potential connections between this section of the *History* and the *Journey Charm*, see Katrin Rupp, 'The Anxiety of Writing: A Reading of the Old English *Journey Charm*', *Oral Tradition*, 23 (2008), 255-66 at 263; Olsan, 'Marginality of Charms', 145-9.
[116] Based on Jolly's transcription, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 170.

> everyone, and against all evil that enters the land. A victory charm [*syge gealdor*] I sing [*begale*], a victory rod I bear, word-victory, work-victory. May they avail me.[117]

In this opening declaration, the instrument which marks a perimeter around the performer has parallels with the power of the cross because it is referred to as a victory rod ('gyrde', 'sigegyrd').[118] The *gealdor* is also presented as victorious through the compound 'syge-gealdor', and through this it is closely associated with other compounds describing the performer's words and deeds ('wordsige and worcsige') and the saints ('sigerofra').[119]

The Christian nature of this victory-*gealdor* is further affirmed by the invocation of Old Testament patriarchs and New Testament saints so that the individual may be protected from a range of hostile forces:

> moyses and iacob and davit and iosep and euan and annan and elizabet, saharie and ec marie modur Christes, and eac þæ gebroþru petrus and paulus and eac þusend þira engla clipige… biddu ealle bliðu mode þæt me beo hand ofer heafod matheus helm, marcus byrne leoht lifes rof, lucos min swurd scer(a)p and scir ecg, scyld Iohannes.[120]

> Moses and Jacob, and David and Joseph, and Eve and Anna and Elizabeth, Zacharias and also Mary, Christ's mother, and also the brothers, Peter and Paul, and also thousands of thy angels, I call on… In blithe mood I bid them all that Matthew be my helm, Mark my coat of mail, strong light of my life, Luke my sword, sharp and bright-edged, John my shield.[121]

[117] Rodrigues, trans., *Verse Charms*, 157.
[118] On the meaning of this word see Heather Stuart, '"Ic me on þisse gyrde beluce": The Structure and Meaning of the Old English "Journey Charm"', *Medium Ævum*, 50 (1981), 259-73; Hill, 'Rod of Protection', 152-3.
[119] See also Nelson, 'Three Old English Charms'.
[120] Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 171.
[121] Rodrigues, trans., *Verse Charms*, 157.

This passage is similar to Irish Christian *loricae* that adapt St. Paul's *Letter to the Ephesians* (*Eph*. 6. 10-17) which describes the armour of God.[122] The *gealdor* that is written in the first person is also referred to as an invocation ('clipige') and a form of prayer ('biddu'), and this is later repeated when God and the saints are called upon to protect the traveller ('bidde ic nu sigere godes miltse').[123]

The *gealdor* of this ritual is therefore closely connected to Christian victory, invocations of saints, Scripture, and prayers to God. It has the power to overcome all evil that goes throughout the land ('eal þæt lað þe into land fare'), and it has the ability to summon the whole hosts of heaven for the protection of the travelling individual. It is clear that *galdor* was considered an appropriate word to describe a powerful Christian utterance by this scribe in the early eleventh century.

Conclusions

The four manuscripts that use *galdor* in ritual texts reflect how a variety of Anglo-Saxons understood this term in the tenth and eleventh centuries. *Bald's Leechbook* was copied from an earlier exemplar in Æthelwold's Old Minster in Winchester when the term was perhaps restricted in meaning to denote a harmful spiritual practice. Harley 585 was compiled from manuscripts that were housed in Winchester in the early eleventh century, and the *Æcerbot* ritual in Caligula A. vii was also copied, if not composed, around this time, perhaps in a Winchester scriptorium. The evidence from these manuscripts indicates that *galdra* were compatible with prayers, Masses, and other liturgical rites. The marginal texts of Corpus 41 were copied from sources that were not influenced by Winchester productions, and the appearance of *galdor* in one of its rituals denotes a powerful Christian formula that could summon divine protection.

[122] See Hill, 'Invocation of the Trinity'.
[123] Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 171.

The appearance of *galdor* in only twelve surviving rituals perhaps suggests that the word was deliberately avoided for its problematic connotations. However, the origins of the manuscripts in which these rituals appear provide important information about how the term was used in the tenth and eleventh centuries to describe powerful Christian utterances. Certain ecclesiastics evidently viewed *galdor* as an appropriate component of Christian ritual practice, and they incorporated it into the liturgy at when other authorities such as Ælfric and Wulfstan were condemning its use. It may be the case that many clergy considered *galdra* to be part of mainstream Christian practices if they were used in the right context by authorised practitioners.

We have seen that the term *galdor* does not satisfactorily define an entire genre of 'charms', especially as it only appears in twelve ritual texts. When the word does appear in these rituals it refers to powerful verbal formulas that are used in conjunction with the liturgy. The obscure language of many of these *galdra* may conceal their meaning, and they seem to have required specialised skill and knowledge for their performance. This helps to explain why *galdor* is consistently presented as a dangerous practice by ecclesiastical authorities, as it could lead Christians astray if it was used by the wrong people. It therefore seems more appropriate to understand *galdor* as a component of Anglo-Saxon liturgical practice than it is to view this term as evidence of pre-Christian magic and religion. The few surviving references to *galdor* in ritual contexts are in fact far removed from traditional understandings of 'charms', and this calls into question all of the other rituals that have been classified thus and included in this genre. Reconsidering the rituals' liturgical content and manuscript contexts reveals more information about how some Anglo-Saxons understood these texts and what cultural and environmental concerns prompted scribes to write them down.

3

The Liturgical Nature of 'Charms'

> 'Ecclesiastical elements are found throughout the whole corpus of Anglo-Saxon medicine and magic. Paternosters accompany every conceivable medical process. Such elements are perhaps the least interesting of the factors in A[nglo-]S[axon] medicine, since they are known from many sources, are easily recognized, and still survive in folk-custom'.[1]

This view of Charles Singer epitomises the traditional scholarly approach to the liturgical elements of Anglo-Saxon 'charms', and – to use an analogy – it is an unsatisfactory way of avoiding the elephant in the room. The extent to which these rituals draw upon liturgical texts makes it difficult to maintain distinctions between 'charms' and liturgy. Many 'charms' incorporate formulas from liturgical *ordines*, most prescribe the use of liturgical objects and prayers (including the Eucharist, holy water, incense, the Paternoster, the Creed, and litanies), and some are explicitly to be performed by priests in churches.[2] Although some scholars have discussed possible liturgical sources for some of the 'charms', they have still tended to maintain distinctions between ritual genres.[3]

Some manuscripts that contain 'charms' also include texts which are uncontroversially associated with the liturgy. London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii, for example, contains Æthelwold's translation of the *Rule of Benedict*; London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius E. xviii contains calculations of liturgical feasts; and the

[1] Singer, 'Magic and Medicine', 351.
[2] On the importance of the church building in 'charms', see Ciaran Arthur, '*Ex Ecclesia*: Salvific Power beyond Sacred Space in Anglo-Saxon Charms', *Incantatio*, 3 (2013), 9-32.
[3] See Barkley, 'Liturgical Influences'; Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 113-23; Debby Banham, 'The Staff of Life: Cross and Blessings in Anglo-Saxon Cereal Production', in *Cross and Cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon World: Studies to Honor the Memory of Timothy Reuter*, Sarah Larratt Keefer, Karen Louise Jolly, and Catherine E. Karkov, eds (Morgantown: West Virginia UP, 2010), 279-318. See also Hill, 'Irish-Latin Analogue'; '*Æcerbot* Charm'; 'Cosmological Cross'; Niles, 'Æcerbot Ritual in Context'.

margins of Corpus 41 include homilies, chants for the clerical Office, and Mass prayers.[4] The evidence of such manuscripts indicates that some Anglo-Saxon compilers and scribes grouped 'charms' with other texts that were concerned with the liturgy. There was great diversity in the rituals practised in Anglo-Saxon England in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and in this period new liturgies were often created and other ones were revised and adapted.[5]

Part two of this study reconsiders the manuscript sources in which 'charms' appear, and this chapter compares 'charms' with contemporary liturgical texts that were written in similar ecclesiastical centres. I argue that some, if not all, of the rituals that have been traditionally categorised as 'charms' are better considered as liturgical texts that are part of this ecclesiastical culture of diversity, innovation, and experimentation. The chapter takes case studies of 'charms' and liturgical rites and blessings that address similar socio-cultural concerns of healing, exorcism, marriage, politics, and travel. These themes are based loosely on the organisation of texts within benedictionals and pontificals to demonstrate how similar 'charms' are to other liturgical texts that were written for use by bishops and priests.[6] Several 'charms' were written for use by local priests and lay people – particularly pregnant women – indicating that some functioned to encourage liturgical practice in the wider community. The thematic and textual similarities between 'charms' and liturgical texts demonstrate how difficult it is to sustain distinctions between these rituals.

i. Visiting the Sick

[4] For the 'charms' in these manuscripts, see Appendix.
[5] See also Andrew Prescott, 'The Text of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold', in *Bishop Æthelwold*, Yorke, ed., 119-47; David Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England: Four Studies* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), 85; Christopher A. Jones, 'The Chrism Mass in Later Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, M. Bradford Bedingfield and Helen Gittos, eds., HBS Subsidia 5 (London: Boydell, 2005), 105-42; Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 221-56; 'Researching the History of Rites', in *Understanding Medieval Liturgy: Essays in Interpretation*, Helen Gittos and Sarah Hamilton, eds (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), forthcoming.
[6] As connections between 'charms' and agricultural blessings have been firmly established, I will postpone analysis of this particular concern until the next chapter, which undertakes a case study of the *Vitellius Psalter*.

Sickness is possibly the most predominant concern of the so-called 'charm' rituals, and the majority of these healing texts are found in *Bald's Leechbook* and Harley 585 (discussed in Chapter Two).[7] Many of these rituals have close correspondences with liturgical texts associated with healing. For example, one 'charm' for healing internal and external sickness provides evidence of an attempt to extend liturgical practice beyond the monastery. The *Gewrit of Heofonum* is found in London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. xv (fol. 140r), the original parts of which were written in Christ Church, Canterbury in the mid eleventh century.[8] The text claims that it was delivered by an angel from heaven to Saint Peter's altar in Rome, and that its recitation is equivalent to praying the entire psalter: 'Se engel brohte þis gewrit of heofonū(m). 7 lede hit on uppan þēs petrus weofud on rome. Se þe þis gebed singð on cyrcean þoṅ forstent hit hī(m) sealtera sealma'.[9] This would have obvious benefits to monks who were under the obligation of praying the Office but it may also have encouraged lay devotions which were presented as equivalents to monastic prayer. This may also be indicated in the instruction to sing it each night before going to sleep: 'sing þis ylce gebed on niht ær þu to þinū(m) reste ga'.[10]

A more remarkable claim of this text, however, concerns its equivalence to the Eucharist: 'And se þe hit singð æt his ende dæge þonne forstent hit him husel gang'.[11] As noted in Chapter Two, there are other rituals that use the Eucharist in their prescribed performances but this text is unique in its claimed equivalence to receiving the Eucharist on

[7] See also Stanley Rubin, *Medieval English Medicine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974); Marilyn Deegan and Donald G. Scragg, eds., *Medicine in Early Medieval England: Four Papers* (Manchester: Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 1989); Donald G. Scragg, ed., *Superstition and Popular Medicine in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 1989); Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*; Barbara Brennessel, M. Drout and R. Gravel, 'A Reassessment of the Efficacy of Anglo-Saxon Medicine', *ASE*, 34 (2005), 183-95.

[8] See Ker, *Catalogue*, 173; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 74; Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 169; Roy Liuzza, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics: An Edition and Translation of Texts from London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius A iii* Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), 9-12; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 35.

[9] 'The angel brought this letter from heaven, and laid it upon Peter's altar in Rome. He who sings prayer in church benefits by it as by the psalms of the psalter'. Transcriptions and translations of this text are my own.

[10] 'Sing this same prayer at night before you go to your bed'.

[11] 'And he who sings it at his end days (i.e. at his time of death) benefits by it as by the Eucharist'.

the death bed. If in emergency the dying person could not receive the Eucharist in the administration of Extreme Unction, the singing of these sacred words seems to have sufficed instead.[12] Following this statement, the text instructs that it can be effective against all unknown evil forces: 'wið æghwilcum uncuþum yfele ægðer gefleogendes gefarendes'.[13] If the evil is internal the words are to be sung over a drink, and if it is external they are to be sung over butter that is then used to anoint the body.[14]

Another 'charm' against elf-disease from Book III of *Bald's Leechbook* (s. $x^{3/4}$, Old Minster, Winchester) uses a number of liturgical formulas with the administration of an herbal drink:

> Writ þis gewrit. Scriptum est rex regum et dominus dominantium. byrnice. beronice. lurlure. iehe. aius. aius. aius. S*anctu*s. S*anctu*s. S*anctu*s. dominus deus Sabaoth. amen. alleluiah. Sing þis ofer þam drence 7 þam gewrite. Deus omnipotens pater domini nostri iesu cristi. per Inpositionem huius scriptura expelle a famulo tuo .N. omnem impetum castalidum. de capite. de capillis. de cerebro. de fronte. de lingua. de sublingua. de guttore. de faucibus. de dentibus. de oculis. de naribus. de auribus. de manibus. de collo. de brachiis. de corde. de anima. de genibus. de coxis. de pedibus. de compaginibus. omnium membrorum intus et foris. amen. Wyrc þonne drenc… writ .III. crucem mid oleum infirmorum 7 cweð. pax tibi. Nim þonne þ*æt* gewrit writ crucem mid ofer þam drince 7 sing þis þær ofer… wæt þ*æt* gewrit on þam drence 7 writ crucem mid him on ælcum lime 7 cweð signum crucis xpi consueruate In uitam eternam. amen. Gif þe ne lyste hat hine selfne oððe swa gesubne swa

[12] Records survive from eighth-century Irish traditions that used rites for healing and 'which are built around the communion service of the Mass'; Frederick S. Paxton, 'Anointing the Sick and the Dying in Christian Antiquity and the Early Medieval West', in *Health, Disease and Healing in Medieval Culture*, Sheila Campbell, Bert Hall, and David Klausner, eds (London: MacMillan, 1992), 93-102 at 95.
[13] 'against every unkown evil, both flying (ie. airborne) and death-causing (ie. terminal)'.
[14] 'Gif hit innon bið sing þis on wæter syle him drincan. sona him bið sel. Gif hit þonne utan si sing hit on fersce buteran. 7 smere mid þ(æt) lic. sona hī(m) kymð bot'; 'If it is internal, sing this over water and give it him to drink; he will soon be whole. If it is external, sing it on fresh butter and smear the body; he will soon come to health'.

he gesybbost hæbbe 7 senige swa he selost cunne. þes cræft mæg wiþ ælcre feondes costnunge.[15]

Write this writing: 'It is written, King of kings and Lord of lords. byrnice, beronice, lurlure, iehe, aius, aius, aius, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Amen, alleluia. Sing this over the drink and the writing: 'God, omnipotent Father of our lord Jesus Christ, through the imposition of this writing expell from your servant (Name) all enemy attacks from the head, from the hair, from the brain, from the forehead, from the tongue, epiglottis, from the throat, from the gullet, from the teeth, from the eyes, from the nose, from the ears, from the hands, from the neck, from the arms, from the heart, from the soul, from the knees, from the hips, from the feet, from the joints, and all internal and external members. Amen'. Then work up a drink [of numerous herbs and holy water]… Write three crosses with oil of unction and say: 'peace be with you'. Then take the writing, write a cross with it over the drink and sing this over it… Wet the writing in the drink and write a cross with it on every limb and say: 'May the sign of the cross of Christ keep you for eternal life. Amen'. If you do not have instruction, order (the person) himself or as close a kinsman as he has and sign (the cross) as best he can. This practice is powerful against all the fiend's temptations.[16]

The sacred writing that is used in this ritual is composed of scriptural references, and contains the *Sanctus* of the Mass. Some of the words are difficult to interpret but there is an evident inclusion of Greek in the triple repetition of 'aius' which is probably supposed to be 'agios', the Greek equivalent to 'sanctus'. The words that precede this liturgical invocation have been interpreted as names of saints, particularly 'byrnice' and 'beronice' as 'Veronica', and 'iehe' as 'Yahweh' or 'Jesus'.[17] The word 'lurlure', however, is more obscure and has not been

[15] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 348-50.
[16] Other similar instructions can be found in this manuscript, see Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 334-6, 344-6. See also Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 154-60; Rolf Bremmer, 'Old English "Cross" Words', in *Cross and Cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon World*, Keefer, Jolly, and Karkov, eds., 204-32 at 212-15.
[17] See Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 233; Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 163.

identified. This particular word could be deliberately obscured, as seen in other rituals in this manuscript that may use encryption, or it could refer to some spiritual entity that has since been forgotten. Whatever the meaning of these words, it is clear that the ritual opens with writing holy words and names before they are applied to the sick subject.

The ritual then prescribes the singing of a prayer listing no fewer than twenty-one body parts which are to be protected by the power of God. The blessing 'pax tibi' is then said as each limb is anointed with the oil of unction and the sign of the cross. Following this, the written text is dipped into the herbal drink and used to mark another sign of the cross on each limb, during which an invocation of Christ's cross is repeated. Finally, the ritual explicitly states that the sick person or next of kin can perform the ritual if the performer does not know what to do ('Gif þe ne lyste'). This suggests that the ritual could be performed by any literate person, and this final instruction may indicate that it could have been used by a lay person.[18] It could also have been written for use in a monastic infirmary; the ritual allows for a monk who can read but not write, and in this context the sick monk may have known how to perform the ritual.

There are many liturgical texts concerned with healing, especially votive Masses and liturgical *ordines* for the infirm and dying. Visiting the sick was an important pastoral responsibility of monks, as stressed in the *Rule of Benedict* (Chapter 36).[19] Chapter Twelve of the *Regularis Concordia* also outlines the performance of a ritual involving the whole monastic community for a sick brother.[20] Prescriptions for this type of ceremony are found in other rites for visiting the sick. For example, Part A of the so-called *Leofric Missal* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 579, written c. 860-920 in Canterbury) contains a number of Masses for the sick and dying (fols. 228r, 238r, 239r), as well as a full *Ordo ad uisitandum et*

[18] On lay uses of death-related rituals, see Thompson, *Dying and Death*, 62-3.
[19] Logeman, ed., *Rule of S. Benet*, 67-8.
[20] See Symons, ed. and trans., *Regularis Concordia*, 64.

unguendum et communicandum Infirmum (fols. 319r-324r).[21] Thompson has also discussed several eleventh-century manuscripts that contain devotions for the sick and dying, including Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 482, the *Red Book of Darley* (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422), and the *Lanalet Pontifical* (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS A. 27 (368)).[22] Thompson suggests that penitential devotions that were to be said at the death bed originated in King Alfred's reign and gained popularity in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[23]

A later version of the rite for visiting the sick is found in the *Missal of Robert of Jumièges* (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS Y.6 (274), fols. 207r-212v).[24] This manuscript is an English Mass-book which was written sometime between 1014 and 1023.[25] It was probably written for a monastic bishop at Ely or Peterborough before it came into the possession of Robert of Jumièges, Bishop of London (1044) and Archbishop of Canterbury (1051).[26] The *ordo*, like ones of this period, opens with the asperging of a house with holy water before the priests enter and say 'pax huic domui' three times.[27] This resonates with the instruction to write three cross with oil and say 'pax tibi' in the 'charm' for elf-disease. Following this, the interior of the house and the sick subject are to be sprinkled with water

[21] Nicholas Orchard, ed., *The Leofric Missal, 1: Introduction, Collation Table, and Index; 2: Text*, 2 Vols., HBS, Vols. 113-114 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), Vol. II, 343-4, 356, 358, 444-50. A similar *ordo* for the housebound sick is found in G. H. Doble, ed., *Pontificale Lanaletense (Bibliothèque de la Ville de Rouen A. 27. Cat. 368)*, HBS, Vol. 74 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1937), 131-9; Nicholas Orchard, ed., *The Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, HBS, Vol. 116 (London: Boydell, 2005), 411-16. On the dating of *Leofric A*, see Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. I, 10-13, 16-20.
[22] Thompson, *Dying and Death*, 67-88.
[23] Thompson, *Dying and Death*, 67. See also Alan Frantzen, 'The Tradition of Penitentials in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE*, 11 (1982), 23-56 at 49-52.
[24] On the Latin sources of this alternative rite, see Henry A. Wilson, ed., *The Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, HBS, Vol. 11 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896), lxxi-ii.
[25] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, xxiv-vi; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 141; Brown, *Manuscripts*, 163; Wieland, 'Latin Manuscripts', 121; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 83. See also J. B. L. Tolhurst, 'An Examination of Two Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts of the Winchester School: the Missal of Robert of Jumieges, and the Benedictional of Aethelwold', *Archaeologia*, 83 (1933), 27-44.
[26] See Ker, *Catalogue*, 449; Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, 87; M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), 15-16. Dumville also offers an alternative possibility that it was copied from an exemplar from Ely or Peterborough at Christ Church, Canterbury, David Dumville, *English Caroline Script and Monastic History: Studies in Benedictinism, A.D. 950-1030* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1993), 118-19.
[27] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 287.

before penitential psalms are sung.[28] A prayer is then said which refers to the Roman Centurion who asked Christ to heal his servant (*Matt*. 8. 5-13), and a litany of the saints follows which includes Cuthbert, Guthlac, Brigid, Æthelthryth, Sexburg, and Wihtburg.[29] The elf-disease 'charm' similarly uses scriptural references and what seems to be a short litany in the text to be written down.

Another prayer then follows the litany in the *ordo*, and it petitions the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to drive out all hostile forces and grant the protection of His angels: 'expelle omnes inimici insidias. mitte ei domine angelum pacis qui hanc domum pace perpetua custodiat'.[30] The elf-disease 'charm' also drives out evil forces in the same way ('expelle a famulo tuo .N. omnem impetum castalidum').[31] The *ordo* then instructs that the sign of the cross is to be marked on the individual's body:

> Þonne wyrc se sacerd cristes rodetacen mid þan halig wætere 7 mid þam axun ofer his breost 7 onlecge hæran oððe wyllen 7 smirie hine mid þon haligan ele. 7 oðre betrynan þan syngan þa sealm(as) þe her gemearcode sint.[32]
>
> Then the priest must make the sign of the cross with the holy water, and with the ashes over his breast, and lay on the sackcloth or wool, and smear him with the holy oil. And the others who are well should then sing those psalms that are noted here.

An antiphon and psalm are then given, and a series of alternative prayers are listed with further antiphons and psalms.[33] These stages of the *ordo* echo the marking of the sign of the cross with the holy oil and drink in the 'charm' for elf-disease.

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[28] For further comparisons between 'charms' and liturgical blessings of houses and rooms, see Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 277-9 and Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 202, 206.
[29] See Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 288-9.
[30] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 289-90; 'Expel all the enemies' treachery, send him, Lord, an angel of peace who may guard this house in perpetual peace'.
[31] 'expel from your servant (Name) all enemy attacks'.
[32] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 290.

Following this initial anointing, the *ordo* provides vernacular instructions outlining the parts of the body that are to be marked with the oil along with an accompanying prayer of anointing:

> Þonne se untrumne bið gesmyred on þam mold gewinde 7 on foranheafde. 7 on þan þunwengon. 7 on his nebbe. Þonne cweðe se sacerd þis gebed.
>
> Unguo te .N. oleo sancto in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti sicut unxit samuel dauid regem et prophetam. ut non lateat in te spiritus inmundus. neque in membris. neque in medullis. neque in nulla † compagine membrorum. sed in te habitet uirtus Christi altissimi et spiritus sancti. quatenus per huius operationem mysterii. et per hanc sacrati olei unctionem atque nostrum deprecationem uirtutute sanctae trinitatis medicatus siue sanatus pristinam et melioratam recipere merearis sanitatem. per.[34]

> When the sick person is smeared all around the top of the head, and on the forehead, and on the temples, and on his nose, then the priest must say this prayer:
>
> 'I anoint you, (Name), with holy oil in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit just as Samuel anointed David as king and prophet; so that the unclean spirit does not lurk in you, nor in your limbs, nor in your marrow, nor in any of your limbs' joints, but may the power of Christ the most high and the Holy Spirit live in you. Through this work of mystery here, and through this oil of sacred unction, and our prayer, by the power of the Holy Trinity, may you merit to regain, be cured or be healed to former and better health'.

Once this prayer is said and the sick subject is placed in relation to the biblical past (through the reference to Samuel and David), all other bodily extremeties are then anointed. The

[33] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 290-2.
[34] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 292. On the appearance of this 'neque' formula in other ritual traditions, see Jolly, 'Magic, Miracle, and Popular Practice', 165; Edina Bozóky, 'Medieval Narrative Charms', in *The Power of Words*, James A. Kapalo, Eva Pocs, and William F. Ryan, eds (Budapest and New York: Central European UP), 2013, 101-16 at 103.

bodily members are identified by a vernacular instruction, and every prayer that is said over each member is consistently identified as 'þis gebed'. The bodily members are the eyes ('þa eagan'), ears ('earan innan 7 utan'), nose ('nosu fore wearde 7 innan'), lips ('weleras'), throat and heels ('hrace 7 spyran'), shoulders ('sculdru'), breast ('breost'), hands ('handa'), and feet ('fet').[35] These body parts differ in order of appearance from the elf-disease ritual, and the *ordo* instructs the priest to recite this list over the sick person whereas the 'charm' instructs that it is to be sung over a drink. The ritual for elf-disease also identifies roughly double the number of bodily members that are to be protected than those identified in the *ordo*. However, the comprehensive anatomical protection of both texts demonstrates a very close overlap in their content.

Following the anointing of each body part and towards the end of the *ordo*, another prayer is to be said that reinforces the earlier petitions to drive out evil, restore health to the body and soul, and grant the sick subject remission of sins. Instructions then follow to consume both the bread and wine of the Eucharist, and to recite two more prayers: 'Onbyrie þonne godes lichaman 7 blodes þus cweðene… On þære fyllednysse þissere þenunge'.[36] After the final prayer, the priests pray silently over the sick person, but if there is a bishop present then he is to recite another prayer which is provided in the *ordo*: 'Þissun eallun þus gefylledon cweðum þa sacerdas þas gebedu ofer þone untruman swa fela swa þær beo synderlic. Gif þær þonne bisceop beo his þenung þæt bið'.[37] The *ordo*, the elf-disease 'charm', and the *Gewrit of Heofonum* all demonstrate flexibility in their performance, showing how certain measures were taken to ensure that this pastoral duty of visiting the sick and dying could be carried out by bishops, priests, the sick patients themselves, or their related kin.

[35] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 292-3.
[36] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 294; 'Then consume God's body and blood, saying thus… Upon the fulfilment of this ministry (say then)'.
[37] Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 294; 'This is all fulfilled (when) the priests say these prayers over the sick person with as many more (said) silently. If the bishop is there in his ministry, that is…'.

The significant number of overlaps in theme and content in the *ordo* and so-called 'charms' indicate that distinctions between their performances may not have been easily perceived. The *Gewrit of Heofonum* shows how devotional rituals were perhaps used in cases of emergency when a dying person could not receive the Eucharist. As the elf-disease ritual predates the *ordo* in the *Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, it may be the case that some of the so-called 'charms' influenced developments in some liturgical rites. These healing 'charms' have many features in common with liturgical texts, and there is no evidence to suggest that they were perceived as belonging to different genres in late Anglo-Saxon England.

ii. Exorcism

Closely related to the pastoral concern of ministering to the sick is the theme of exorcism. There are two forms of liturgical rites relating to exorcism in extant Anglo-Saxon sources: that of exorcising people and things such as salt, water, oil, palms, and catechumens; and the ordination of an exorcist.[38] Jolly has discussed in detail the connections between 'charm' rituals and rites for exorcising water and salt in the *Leofric Missal*, the *Durham Collectar*, and Corpus 41, and there is no need to redraw these comparisons here.[39] Some so-called 'charms' also demonstrate overlap with features of the rite for ordaining an exorcist. For example, in the *Benedictional of Robert* (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, Y.7 (369), written in Winchester c. 975) the rite opens with the exorcist receiving a letter of authority from his

[38] On the development of these rites, see Jones, 'Chrism Mass', 108-9, 124; Florence Chave-Mahir, *L'exorcisme des possédés dans l'Église d'Occident (Xe-XIVe siècle)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011). For versions of these rites see Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 394, 414-15, 434-55, 465-6; *Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, 58-9, 147; D. H. Turner, ed., *The Claudius Pontificals (from Cotton MS Claudius A. iii in the British Museum)*, HBS, Vol. 97 (London: Boydell & Brewer, 1971), 32, 45; Doble, ed., *Pontificale Lanaletense*, 7-9, 51, 81-2, 111-16, 123-5; Henry A. Wilson, ed., *The Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, HBS, Vol. 24 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1903), 44, 116; *Missal of Robert*, 94-6, 100, 275-6; H. M. J. Banting, ed., *Two Anglo-Saxon Pontificals: (The Egbert and Sidney Sussexd Pontificals)*, HBS, Vol. 104 (London: Boydell & Brewer, 1989), 19-20; Reginald M. Woolley, ed., *The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum Harl. MS. 2892)*, HBS, Vol. 51 (London: Harrison & sons, 1917), 23, 37, 134.

[39] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 116-22 166; 'Prayers from the Field', 105-9, 122; 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 163-4. See also Bremmer, 'Cross Words', 212-15; Ursula Lenker, 'Signifying Christ in Anglo-Saxon England: Old English Terms for the Sign of the Cross', in *Cross and Cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon World*, Keefer, Jolly, and Karkov, eds., 233-75 at 273.

bishop.[40] He is then ordered to memorise the document so that he may have power over the possessed, the baptised, and catachumens: 'Accipe et commenda memoriae. et habeto potestatem inponendi manum super inerguminum. siue baptizatum. siue caticuminum'.[41] The fact that the exorcist has to commit the document to memory indicates that exorcisms were perceived as powerful rites that must be closely guarded and known only to those who were authorised to perform them.[42] The term 'inerguminum' (the possessed) is found mainly in Anglo-Saxon liturgical books, but it also appears outside of this context in Aldhelm's *Prosa de Virginitate*.[43] In Aldhelm's work the word is used to describe St Anatolia's cure of a man bound by demons, and it is glossed with the Old English word 'deouelseocne'.[44] The Latin word for possession was rendered as 'devil-sickness', and this condition is identified in a number of 'charm' rituals.

The bishop gives the exorcist power over the possessed provided that he commits the written testimony of his ordination to memory. A blessing follows this opening instruction and it emphasises the exorcist's power over the demon and the many evils it brings: 'ut sit spiritalis imperator ad abiciendos demones de corporibus obsessis cum omni nequitia eorum multiformi'.[45] The exorcist is presented as a master of spirits that manifest their demonic effects in the corporeal world. An alternative blessing follows this which also outlines the exorcist's ability to coerce demonic forces through his words and through the imposition of his hands: 'ut per inpositionem manum et officium oris eum eligere digneris ut imperium habeat spirituum inmundorum cohercendo et probabilis sit medicus eclesiae tuae gratia

[40] For the origins of this manuscript see Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, 369; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 141; Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 280-1.
[41] Wilson, ed., *Benedictional of Robert*, 117; 'Accept (it) and commit (it) to memory, and hold power in setting (your) hands over the possessed, or the baptised, or catechumens'.
[42] See also Gittos, 'History of Rites'.
[43] See, for example, Orchard, ed., *Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, 416-19.
[44] Napier, ed., *Old English Glosses*, 82, 126. For a description of this passage, see Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, 149-50.
[45] Wilson, ed., *Benedictional of Robert*, 117; 'so that he may be the master of spirits to cast down demons dwelling in bodies with all of their many evil forms'.

curarum uirtute confirmatus'.[46] The exorcist's mouth and hands are given spiritual power to command hostile forces, and he is depicted as a physician of the Church ('medicus eclesiae').

There are ten Anglo-Saxon 'charms' that identify the devil and use exorcism formulas that combine symbolic hand gestures with commands to drive out evil. There are many more that claim to have power over the 'feond', 'ælfsidene' (elf-sickness), or other creatures associated with evil, and some personally address demons to maximise power over them.[47] Two of these ten 'charms' are in Book III of *Bald's Leechbook*, and they specifically identify the devil and his evil effects in society: 'Wyrc sealfe wið ælfcynne and nihtgengan and þam mannum þe deofol mid hæmð'; 'Wiþ deofle liþe drenc and ungemynde… Drenc wiþ deofles costnunga'.[48] The first ritual is for a salve that draws out the evil influences of elves, night-walkers (maybe nightmares), and those who have had intercourse with the devil. It is likely that these hostile forces had significant effects within the community, and the afflicted subject would have probably come under serious social scrutiny before their spiritual liberation. The second ritual is for a drink that was used as a defence against evil states of mind ('ungemynde') and other general temptations ('costnunga').

Eight other 'charm' rituals employ exorcism formulas; most identify the 'diabolus', and they all follow similar formulaic imperative and subjunctive constructions:

(London, BL, MS Royal 2 A. xx; s. viii^{1}-viii^{med})

[46] Wilson, ed., *Benedictional of Robert*, 117; 'so that through the imposition of hand and duty of mouth you may deem it worthy to choose him, so that he may have power to coerce unclean spirits, and may be an acceptable healer of the pains of your Church, confirmed by your powerful grace'.
[47] Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 166-7. See also Peter Dendle 'The Demonological Landscape of the *Solomon and Saturn* Cycle', *ES*, 80 (1999), 281-92.
[48] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 344, 352; 'Work a salve against elves and night-walkers and men with whom the devil has intercourse'; 'A sweet drink against the devil and mental disturbance… A drink against temptations of devils'.

Adiuro te satanae diabulus aelfae. per deum unum ac verum. et per trementem diem iudicii ut refugiatur ab homine illo qui (h)abeat hunc a Cristo scriptum secum (fol. 45v).[49]

(*Bald's Leechbook*; s. $x^{3/4}$)

per Inpositionem huius scriptura expelle a famulo tuo .N. omnem impetum castalidum (fol. 125r).[50]

(London, BL, MS Harley 585; s. x^{ex}/xi^{1})

per impositionem manuum mearum refugiat inimicus diabolus… ut non habeat potestatem diabolus (fol. 149r).[51]

ut del(e)as omnia opera diaboli. ab isto homine inuoco s(an)ctam trinitatem in admini(cu)lum meum (fol. 149r).[52]

Sanetur animalia in orbe terre et ualitudine uexantur in nomine dei patris et filii et spiritus s(an)c(t)i extinguatur [extingunt] diabolus per inpositionem manuum [manum] nostrarum (fol. 182v).[53]

(Corpus 41; s. $xi^{1/4}$)

ut non habeant potestatem diabulus ab homine isto (fol. 272v).[54]

[49] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 294; 'I adjure you elf-demon of Satan, through the one true God, and through the fearful day of judgement, that (you) flee from this man who may have this letter of Christ with him'.
[50] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 348; 'through the imposition of this writing expel from your servant (Name) all enemy attacks'.
[51] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. III, 26; 'through the imposition of my hands, flee enemy demon… so that you, demon, may not have power'.
[52] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. III, 26; 'so that you may remove all works of the demon from this man'.
[53] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. III, 64; 'May the animals of the earth that are vexed in health be healed in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, may the demon be driven out through the imposition of our hands'.
[54] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 285; 'so that the demon may not have power over this man'. This formula is slightly corrupted as the noun 'diabolus' does not agree with the plural subjunctive 'habeant'. This ritual opens with a quotation from Psalm 117. 16-17.

(Oxford, Bodleian, MS Junius 85; s. xi^{med})

Fuge diabolus, Christus te sequitur. Quando natus est Christus fugit dolor (fol. 17v).[55]

(London, BL, MS Harley 464; s. xvii)

adjuro et obtestor vos diaboli, ut non habeatis ullam (fol. 177).[56]

All of these examples correspond closely with the role of the exorcist in driving out demons from the corporeal world through his speech and the imposition of his hands. The similarities between these formulas are quite clear, and they all draw upon the key features of liturgical exorcisms.

Very literal parallels can also be found between 'charms' and some exorcism rites. For example, the formula for animals that are vexed in health by demons in Harley 585 ('Sanetur animalia in orbe terre et ualitudine uexantur') is strikingly similar to an earlier prayer in the *Leofric Missal* (fol. 307v):

ORATIONES SVPER EOS QVI A DAEMONIO VEXANTVR. Omnipotens sempiterne deus, pater domini nostri ihesu christi te supplices exoramus, impera diabolo qui hunc famulum tuum .ill. detinet, ut ab eo recedat et extinguatur per impositionem manuum nostrarum.[57]

Prayers over those who are vexed by a demon. Omnipotent, everliving God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we implore you, command the demon who controls your servant (Name) here, so that it may depart from him, and may be driven out through the imposition of our hands.

[55] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 279; 'Flee demon, Christ pursues you. When Christ was born, suffering fled'.
[56] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 276; 'I adjure and charge you, demons, that you may not have any [power]'.
[57] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 434.

Although this prayer refers to a person who is vexed by a demon, whereas the Harley ritual refers to animals, certain spellings are common to both texts ('uexantur', 'extinguatur', 'manuum'), and it is quite possible that the scribes of these 'charms' drew directly upon liturgical rites and prayers.[58] The close correspondences between 'charms' and exorcisms indicate that many 'charm' rituals were understood as liturgical rites of exorcism that were likely to have been performed by an authorised exorcist. Indeed, the similarities in the texts' language and formulaic commands suggest that Anglo-Saxon scribes did not distinguish between these exorcism rituals.

iii. Marriage and Childbirth

Marital relations and childbirth are another theme that is common to 'charms' and liturgical texts. One so-called 'charm' against miscarriage from Harley 585 (fols. 185rv) instructs that the woman should utter prescribed words over a dead man's grave, in bed with her lord, in front of the church's altar, at her dead child's grave, beside running water, and in a different house to the one she previously left. The ritual begins at the site of the grave where a mother confronts her grief over her previous miscarriage, and defies the forces of evil that threaten her fertility.[59] After visiting the grave, she must then recite more words in the marital bed:

> and þon(ne) þ(æt) wif seo mid bearne and heo to hyre hlaforde on reste ga, þon(ne) cweþe heo:
>
> 'Up ic gonge, ofer þe stæppe
>
> mid cwican cilde, nalæs mid cwe[l]endum,

[58] Jolly notes that these exorcisms from the *Leofric Missal* were censored in the twelfth century, Jolly, 'Father God and Mother Earth', 235.
[59] See Marie Nelson, 'A Woman's Charm', *Studia Neophilologica*, 57 (1985), 3-8; L. M. C. Weston, 'Women's Medicine, Women's Magic: The Old English Metrical Childbirth Charms', *Modern Philology*, 92 (1995), 279-93.

mid fulborenum, nalæs mid fægan'.

And when the woman is with child and goes to her husband in his rest (*or* bed), then let her say:

'Up I go, over you I step;

With a living child, not with a dying one,

With a child brought to full-term, not with a doomed (*i.e.* premature) one'.[60]

The mother confidently declares that her actions will give her a 'cwican cilde' ('living child') and resurrect her fertility.

The mother is then instructed to go before a church altar to confirm the conception in Christ's name:

and þon(ne) seo modor gefele þ(æt) þ(æt) bearn si cwic, ga þon(ne) to cyrican, and þon(ne) heo toforan þan weofude cume cweþe þon(ne): 'Criste, ic sæde, þis gecyþed'.

And when the mother feels that the child is alive, then let her go to church, and when she comes before the altar then let her say: '(?)To Christ, I have said, this is made manifest'.[61]

To my knowledge, the only other 'charm' that prescribes a verbal utterance inside the church building is the *Gewrit of Heofonum* from Caligula A. xv, and this reference in the Harley ritual is highly significant as it provides evidence of female ritual practice before an altar.[62] The first two recitations at the grave and in the marital bed anticipate this performance at the church where the mother's pregnancy is paralleled with Mary's conception and her child's life is correlated with Christ. Finally, the locations following the church safeguard against the

[60] Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 112-13.
[61] Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 112-13.
[62] On the significance of these two prescriptions, see Arthur, '*Ex Ecclesia*', 27-8.

mother's past from being repeated by visiting her child's grave, drinking running water from a stream, and returning to a different house.

Another so-called 'charm' for childbirth is found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 85 (fol. 17r, s. xi^{med}, SE England), and this ritual instructs the writing of prescribed words on unused wax before fastening them to the mother's right foot. These words invoke specific biblical figures including Elizabeth, John the Baptist, Christ, the Virgin Mary, and Lazarus:

> Wiþ wif bearn eacenu.
>
> Maria virgo peperit Christum, Elisabet sterelis peperit Iohannem baptistam. Adiuro te infans, si es masculus an femina, per Patrem et Filium et Spiritum sanctum, ut exeas et recedas, et ultra ei non noceas neque insipientiam illi facias. Amen.
>
> Videns dominus flentes sorores Lazari ad monumentum lacrimatus est coram Iudeis et clamabat: Lazari veni foras. Et prodiit ligatis manibus et pedibus qui fuerat quatriduanus mortuus.
>
> Writ ðis on wexe ðe næfre ne com to nanen wyrce, and bind under hire swiðran fot.[63]

> For a pregnant woman.
>
> The Virgin Mary gave birth to Christ, sterile Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist. I adjure you, infant, whether you are male or female, through the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, that you come out and move, and no longer cause any harm or foolishness. Amen.
>
> Seeing the sisters of Lazarus weeping at the tomb, the Lord wept before the Jews and he cried out: 'Lazarus come forth'. And he who had been dead for four days came out with hands and feet bound.
>
> Write this on wax which has never been used before, and bind it under her right foot.

[63] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 283.

These references to biblical events have clear associations with fertility and child-bearing as the Virgin Mary and the infertile Elizabeth both conceived Christ and John the Baptist through divine assistance. The woman's child is commanded to come forth immediately before the story of Lazarus is recounted, thus correlating the unborn child with this biblical narrative so that it is summoned from the mother's womb in the same way that Lazarus was called forth from his tomb. This ritual draws parallels between the wife's fertility and mothers from the New Testament to overcome pregnancy problems with biblical power.

Thompson argues that such Anglo-Saxon 'charms' against miscarriage 'attest to a culture of unregulated and quasi- or non-liturgical activities around the grave'.[64] However, these rituals have some close similarities with marriage blessings for brides and bridegrooms which also invoke biblical characters and correlate the couple with Adam and Eve, Tobias and the archangel Raphael, and Christ and the Virgin Mary. For example, one of the blessings in the *Benedictional of Robert* (s. $x^{3/4}$, Winchester) reads:

> Benedictio sponsi et sponsae.
>
> Omnipotens deus qui primos parentes nostros adam et euam sua uirtute creauit suaque benedictione sanctificauit et in sua societate copulauit… Quique ad preparandas tobiae et serrae nuptias raphaelum angelum misit… Et qui unigentum filium suum dominum nostrum ihesum christum redemptorem mundi uoluit de virgine nasci.[65]

> Blessing of a husband and wife.
>
> Almighty God, who created our first parents Adam and Eve in virtue, and sanctified them by blessing, and joined them in fellowship… And He sent the angel Raphael to prepare the marriage of Tobias and Sarah… And His only-begotten son our Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world, willed to be born of the Virgin.

[64] Thompson, *Dying and Death*, 96.
[65] Wilson, ed., *Benedictional of Robert*, 55.

Such references are common in blessings for marriages. God is asked to bless the spouses as He blessed the union of Adam and Eve, and the reference to the first parents of man ('primos parentes') emphasises the couple's role in having children.[66] The reference to Tobias and Sarah from the book of *Tobit* recalls an event when God brought the spouses together through the archangel Raphael.[67] Sarah's previous seven marriages had been cursed by a demon (*Tobit* 3. 8-10) until it was driven away by Raphael so that Tobias could marry her, thus restoring marital unity through angelic assistance. The blessing's final reference to the Incarnation shows the fulfilment of these two prophetic narratives. Christ is the second Adam and Mary is the second Eve, and they restore the order of Creation that existed before the Fall. Through the message of the archangel Gabriel, Mary becomes the mother of God and assumes Eve's title of the mother of men as heaven and earth are united through Christ's conception. In this blessing, the husband and wife are thus placed in these biblical contexts of divine matrimony and childbirth.

The *Benedictional of Robert* also includes a nuptial Mass in which there is a blessing that invokes Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel.[68] Sarah was the wife of Abraham who was unable to bear children before she conceived Isaac through God's assistance (*Genesis* 17. 16-22). Rebecca was the wife of Isaac and the mother of Esau and Jacob. She was also infertile and conceived her two sons through God's help (*Genesis* 25. 19-28). Rachel was the second wife of Jacob who had difficulty bearing children before she also gave birth to Joseph through divine help (*Genesis* 30. 23-4). All three women from *Genesis* are invoked for their roles as both mothers and wives. A similar invocation is made in a blessing for infertile women in

[66] This is echoed in a ritual against labour pain in the margins of Corpus 41 which refers to God's command to Adam to fill the earth, and aligns the mother with Eve before her curse of labour pain, see Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 169, note 137.
[67] Other liturgical blessings for fields also invoke the book of *Tobit*, see Jolly, 'Prayers from the Field', 116-19, 138-40.
[68] Wilson, ed., *Benedictional of Robert*, 150-1. Similar blessings also appear in Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 424-6; Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 270; Turner, ed., *Claudius Pontificals*, 72, 82.

Leofric A (fol. 300r), which asks for the intercession of the Virgin Mary who did not refuse to give birth for the redemption of mankind.[69]

The liturgical blessings for spouses and mothers share very similar features with Anglo-Saxon 'charms' for childbirth. Biblical wives and mothers from *Genesis*, *Tobit*, and Luke's gospel are invoked in relation to their marriages and miraculous conceptions, along with other narratives such as Lazarus' resurrection. The nuptial blessings sanctify the spouses by placing them in the context of biblical history, and the 'charm' rituals invoke divine assistance with fertility. The Harley ritual for childbirth prescribes utterances for the mother to say in the marital bed, and it encourages her to return to the church building – possibly the same church in which she was married – to confirm the conception before an altar. The Junius ritual instructs that the mother must carry inscribed biblical passages which are similar to those used in liturgical blessings, thus allowing her to transport words of Christian power to a number of different locations beyond the church. The female user would have been greatly empowered by the ability to perform such rituals in domestic, public, and sacred spaces, reflecting efforts to encourage lay participation in the liturgy.

iv. Kings, Coronations, and Councils

One 'charm' ritual and some Anglo-Saxon liturgical texts address contemporary political concerns. The 'charm' is found in Cotton Caligula A. xv (fol. 140r) immediately after the *Gewrit of Heofonum* (fol. 140r). One Anglo-Saxon scribe wrote the original part of this manuscript which includes computistical materials, calendrical tables, prognostications, and annals for the years 925 to 1076, providing a *terminus ante quem* of 1076 for the first stage of writing. The manuscript also contains later additions, including a copy of Ælfric's *De*

[69] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 426.

temporibus anni (Chapters 4-11), a list of the archbishops of Canterbury, and further annal entries up to the year 1268.[70]

The so-called 'charm' in Caligula A. xv was written by the main scribe, and it claims to be able to win the favour of one's lord or king or council:

> Gif þu wille ga[…] þ[in]um hla[forde] oþþ[e] to kyninge
> oþþe to oþrum menn oððe [t]o gemote þonne bær þu þas
> st[a]fas [ ]lc þæ[ ] þonne bið h[ ] þ[ ] liþa bli[ ] x x [ ] h .d.e.o.e.
> o.o.e.e.e.laf.d.R.U.fi.ð.f.p.A.x.Box.Nux. In nomine
> patris Rex.M.ꝑ(er).X.xix.xcs.xħ.iħ. + Deo.eo.deo.deeo.
> Lafdruel.bepax.box.nux.bu. In nomine patris rex marie.
> iħs xpē dūs ms iħc. + Egrific[ ] senioribus. Hubr[i?]it lir her
> letus contra me. hee. larrhibus. excitatio pacis inter uirū(m)
> & mulierū(m). [……] .A.B. & alfa tibi reddit
> uota fructu Leta lita tota tauta uel tellus ł ade uirescit.

> If you wish to go to your lord or to the king or to other men or to a council, then carry these letters with you. [Each of these will] then be […] gracious [and pleasant]:
> x x [ ] h .d.e.o.e.o.o.e.e.e.laf.d.R.U.fi.ð.f.p.A.x.Box.Nux.
> In the name of the Father, King. M. through. X. xix. xcs. xħ. iħ. + Deo. eo. deo. deeo. Lafdruel. bepax. box. nux. bu.
> In the name of the Father, King, [and] Mary. Jesus Christ my Lord, Jesus.
> + Egrific[ ] to the wise. Hubr[i?]it lir her death (?) against me. hee. larrhibus. rouse up peace among men and women. [……] .A.B. and Alpha he returns to you, do not oppose with delight. Kill, accept in sacrifice, all tauta or the earth or ade grows green.[71]

[70] Ker, *Catalogue*, 173-6; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 61, 74. For an overview of this manuscript, see P. J. Willetts, 'A Reconstructed Astronomical Manuscript from Christ Church Library Canterbury', *British Museum Quarterly*, 30 (1965), 22-30.

From the very little commentary that has been given to this ritual, it has been described as 'a cruciform shaped text' with 'angelically derived stafas (letters) that contain and transmit virtue'.[72] The political concerns of this ritual may be reflected in the annals that were written by the same Anglo-Saxon scribe and which contain an interesting omission for the year 1066:

> [1061] Her forð ferde godwine ƀ 7 wulfric aƀƀ
>
> [1066] Her forð ferde eadward kyng {7 her co(m) willehm}
>
> [1067] Her on þison geare barn xpēs cyrce
>
> [1070] On þison geare co' landfranc aƀƀ 7 hine / man halgode to bisceope to xpēs cyrce.

> [1061] Here bishop Godwine and Abbot Wulfric died.
>
> [1066] Here King Edward died. {And here came William}
>
> [1067] Here in this year Christchurch was burnt.
>
> [1070] In this year Abbot Lanfranc came and he consecrated a man as bishop of Christchurch.[73]

The kings that are recorded by this scribe earlier in the annals include 'ægelred' (d. 1016), 'cnut' (r. 1017), 'harold' (d. 1040), 'harðacnut' (d. 1042), and 'eaweard' (r. 1043), as well as archbishops and other political figures like 'godwine eorl' (d. 1053). Following Edward the Confessor's death in 1066, the scribe records nothing about any other secular ruler, and focuses exclusively on ecclesiastical authorities. The entry '7 her co(m) willehm' is added into the year 1066 by a later scribe in a distinctively Norman hand. This Norman scribe also wrote annals for the years 1085-1109 in English, and he evidently returned to complete the

[71] Transcription and translation my own. Other interpretations of this text are printed in Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. III, 290; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 300-1; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 64.
[72] Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 64.
[73] Transcription and translation my own. An edited version of these annals can be found in Felix Liebermann, ed., *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen: Herausgegeben* (London: Trübner, 1879), 1-8.

Anglo-Saxon scribe's previous entry.[74] What is interesting is that the Conquest was overlooked until at least the year 1076, and this suggests a possible political context for the 'charm' to obtain favours that was written by the same Anglo-Saxon scribe.[75]

Despite the illegibility of some words in this ritual, its opening instruction makes it clear that its user may gain the political favour of their superiors. If it were used by a monk, their 'hlaforde' would be the abbot or bishop, and the 'gemote' would possibly be a chapter meeting. If it were used by a lay person, then their lord would be a nobleman or even the king himself ('kyninge'). Given that the manuscript was probably owned by the archbishop (the annals focus mainly on the succession of archbishops and their activities in Christ Church), his lord would be the pope or the king, and the meeting may refer to the king's council. This ritual may reflect the changing political environments of the mid eleventh century, and it was included in a manuscript which was written for the highest religious authorities in Canterbury around the time of the Conquest.

The fragmentary state of the ritual's sequence of letters is due to an erasure on the parchment, and this is the only erasure that is evident in the entire quire. Specific parts of the ritual's letter sequence have been removed, perhaps because its 'stafas' were believed to be powerful enough to influence the highest authorities, and they certainly indicate heavy encryption. Despite the erasure, it is clear that the ritual invokes God ('deo'), Jesus Christ ('iħs xpē dūs ms iħc'), Mary ('marie'), and a mysterious 'Lafdruel', which may be the name of an angel. The Lord and King of heaven is invoked in a ritual that is to influence earthly lords and kings, and Mary's invocation as Queen of heaven may parallel the earthly queen and her potential influence over the king. Much more research needs to be undertaken about this ritual and its surrounding texts; the manuscript contains another obscure runic inscription (fols. 123v-124r), and it focuses on angelic power in the Pachomius legend (fols. 122v-123r)

[74] All entries following the death of Anselm in 1109 are in Latin.
[75] For other manuscripts that remain silent about the conquest of Cnut, see Treharne, *Living through Conquest*, 48-68, 91-121.

and in the *Gewrit of Heofonum* (also fol. 140r).[76] However, for the present argument it is clear that political preoccupations can be gleaned from this 'charm' from a mid eleventh-century Canterbury manuscript, and these are also reflected in contemporary liturgical rites.

Pontificals often contain rites for the consecration of a king, and this would have been one of the most high-profile performances of an archbishop's career.[77] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 44 is a mid eleventh-century pontifical that was produced in Canterbury some time after 1012, as St Ælfheah appears in some litanies.[78] Dumville places the manuscript in the 'middle quarters of the eleventh century' according to its style of Anglo-Caroline miniscule, and Mildred Budny suggested that the manuscript was made at St Augustine's, Canterbury for either Stigand (r. 1052-1070) or Lanfranc (r. 1070-1089).[79] Percy Schramm thought that this particular version of the coronation rite was written for William the Conqueror on the basis of its distinctive phraseology which he believed reflected William's own personal circumstances.[80] Ker recorded the presence of some Old English glosses, which he believed are contemporary with the main text, and Gittos suggests that these may indicate a production for Stigand.[81] The mid eleventh-century dating indicates that, like Caligula A. xv, this particular manuscript was produced in Canterbury under high political tension around the time of the Conquest.

[76] For an interpretation of the runic inscription, see MacLeod and Mees, *Runic Amulets*, 120-1. On the legend of Pachomius, see Chapters Four and Five.
[77] For a discussion of particularly English adaptations of Continental coronation rites in the tenth century, see Hohler, 'Some Service Books', 66-9.
[78] Ker, *Catalogue*, 46; Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. I, 141. See also Gneuss, *Handlist*, 31; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 4.
[79] Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, 71; Mildred Budny, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon, and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge: An Illustrated Catalogue*, 2 Vols (Kalamazoo, M.I.: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997), Vol. I, 676-9.
[80] Percy E. Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), 28-9. Janet Nelson disagrees with this view and believes that the rite in Corpus 44 was meant 'to generalise the suitability of the Second English Ordo', Janet Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London: Hambledon, 1989), 381.
[81] Ker, *Catalogue*, 46; Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 282.

Corpus 44's lengthy *ordo* is the latest extant version of the second English recension of coronation rites that was likely imported from the Continent in the early tenth century.[82] George Garnett noted that eleventh-century versions of this rite stress Englishness and reflect the political motives of Harold Godwinson and William the Conqueror.[83] As 'the number of English allusions is considerably augmented in CCCC 44', this version seems to have been produced in a particularly sensitive environment around the time of the Conquest.[84] It opens with the king's promise to serve the bishops, Christ's Church, and all Christian people. This is followed by a responsory, a bishop's prayer over the king, an antiphon, and the archbishop's prayer of anointing which makes reference to Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, and Solomon. These Old Testament patriarchs reflect particular qualities of leadership under God's protection: 'predicti abrahe fidelitate firmatus. moysi mansuetudine fretus. iosue fortitudine munitus. david humilitate exaltatus. atque salomonis sapientia decoratus'.[85] Following this explicit association of the king with biblical rulers in the hope that he will replicate their qualities, the archbishop's prayer then petitions for divine assistance so that the king may protect his people from all visible and invisible enemies:

> hic domine quaesumus totius regni anglo saxonum aecclesiam deinceps cum plebibus sibi commissis ita enutriat. ac doceat. muniat. et instruat. contraque omnes uisibiles et inuisibiles hostes idem potenter regaliterque tuae uirtutis regimine regat et defendat. ut in regale solium uidelicet anglorum uel saxonum tua gratia sublimatus.[86]

[82] See Turner, ed., *Claudius Pontificals*, xxxiii; Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, 361-74.
[83] George Garnett, 'The Third Recension of the English Coronation *ordo*: The Manuscripts', *Haskins Society Journal*, 11 (1998), 43-72 at 69.
[84] Garnett, 'Third Recension', 69.
[85] John W. Legg, ed., *Three Coronation Orders*, HBS, Vol. 19 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1900), 55; 'The aforesaid Abraham with fixed loyalty, Moses with gentle confidence, Joseph with secure fortitude, David with exalted humility, and Solomon adorned with wisdom'. All translations from this text are my own.
[86] Legg, ed., *Three Coronation Orders*, 55. The *Sacramentary of Ratoldus* identifies the 'albionis ecclesiam', Orchard, ed., *Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, 49.

> We beseech you, Lord, that he may hereafter support all who reign over the Anglo-Saxon Church together with the people themselves. And may he instruct, protect, and marshal against all visible and invisible enemies, and may he mightily and royally lead and defend the same with your strength's guidance; so that on the royal throne, namely of the Angles or Saxons, he may be placed under your grace.

This emphasis on protection and guidance continues throughout the whole *ordo* but what is of particular interest is the underlying political significance of the rite's focus on the Anglo-Saxon Church and people. Explicit mention is made of the Angles and Saxons, and this is again repeated at the very end of the rite: 'Sicque tua protectione anglisaxonicum cum fac regere populum. sicut salomonem fecisti regnum obtinere pacificum. ut post cursum uite huius percipiat iugiter regna celorum. Amen'.[87] This final emphasis on the Anglo-Saxon people is not found in the earlier coronation rites of the *Sacramentary of Ratoldus* (Canterbury? c. 950), the *Pontifical of Egbert* (possibly Worcester, s. x^{mid}-x^{ex}), the *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert* (Winchester, s. x^{ex}), and the *Claudius Pontifical II* (s. xi).[88] On the other hand, the later twelfth-century *Claudius Pontifical III* from Canterbury (probably Christ Church) contains no reference to the Anglo-Saxon Church or people at all, indicating that this particular emphasis was dropped after Norman rule was firmly established.[89]

This minor detail that is found in Corpus 44 indicates an important social and historical context for the *ordo* in mid eleventh-century Canterbury. Assuming that a similar (if not the same) *ordo* was used in coronations around this time, this added emphasis on the

[87] Legg, ed., *Three Coronation Orders*, 61; 'And thus with your protection establish rule of the Anglo-Saxon people, just as you made Solomon sustain peaceful kingship. Amen'.
[88] The blessings read 'Da ei a tuo spiramine (cum mansuetudine ita) regere populum, sicut salamonem fecisti regnum obtinere (/optinere) pacificum'; Orchard, ed., *Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, 55; Banting, ed., *Two Anglo-Saxon Pontificals*, 110; Wilson, ed., *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, 146-7; Turner, ed., *Claudius Pontificals*, 94. See also Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 43-4, 280-1.
[89] See Turner, ed., *Claudius Pontificals*, vi, 115-22, esp. 115-16, 120; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 62.

king's obligation to guide and protect the Anglo-Saxon Church and people carries political significance. If the subject of this coronation was Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), who was raised in exile in Normandy, faced local opposition from Earl Godwin, and appointed many Normans to court, his loyalty to the English populace would have been stressed. Edward was succeeded by his brother-in-law Harold Godwinson who was not of royal blood, and this emphasis would have also served to remind Harold of his duties to the Church as well as to the people. If the king was William the Conqueror (r. 1066-1087), who was consecrated by Archbishop Ealdred, he would have been left in no doubt about his spiritual as well as political obligations to his new subjects. Archbishop Stigand, who may have owned Corpus 44, was present at the consecrations of both Harold Godwinson and William. Finally, if the rite was conducted by Lanfranc in the coronation of William Rufus in 1087, there are implications about the continued identities of the Anglo-Saxon people and Church under Norman occupation.[90] The politically sensitive details of this coronation *ordo* from mid-eleventh-century Canterbury quite possibly reflect the same preoccupations of the so-called 'charm' for political favours in Caligula A. xv. While the 'charm' does not appear to contain liturgical formulas – although some may be concealed in its obscure writing – we are better informed about its possible meanings when it is compared with contemporary liturgical rites.

Other related blessings for councils over which the king usually presided may also reflect contemporary political concerns. The *Canterbury Benedictional* (London, British Library, MS Harley 2892) contains one of these blessings. This manuscript was written after 1023 according to a blessing for the feast of St Ælfheah's translation, and possibly as late as 1052 on the basis of its style of Anglo-Caroline miniscule, making it contemporary with Corpus 44.[91] The *Benedictional*'s blessing petitions God to grant charity to the members of

[90] See especially Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, 380-3; Garnett, 'Third Recension', 69.
[91] Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, 79-80; Alicia Corrêa, ed., *The Durham Collectar*, HBS, Vol. 107 (London: Boydell & Brewer, 1997), 108-9; Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 281-2.

the council, to deliver them from their sins, and to make them faithful until the Second Coming:

> Christus dei filius qui est initium et finis. complementum uobis tribuat caritatis. *Amen*.
>
> Et qui nos ad expletionem huius fecit peruenire concilii. absolutos uos efficiat ab omni contagion delicti. *Amen*.
>
> Ab omni reatu liberiores effecti. absoluti etiam per donum spiritus sancti. felici redditu uestrarum sedium cubilia repetatis illesi. *Amen*.
>
> Semper proficiat cura uestra. ut quando iudex uenerit. euigilet fides uestra. uigilantie premium de domino receptura. *Amen*.[92]

> May Christ, the Son of God who is the beginning and end, grant you the fullness of charity. Amen.
>
> And may he who brought us to completion of this council absolve you from every taint of sin. Amen.
>
> May you be made free from all guilt and also absolved through the gift of the Holy Spirit, may you regain your rest by the happy return to your thrones. Amen.
>
> May your care be always productive so that, when the Judge will come, your faith may remain active through vigilance, ready to receive reward from the Lord.

This blessing is also found in earlier liturgical books that would have had different political contexts surrounding their production.[93] In the context of the *Canterbury Benedictional* in mid-eleventh-century Canterbury, the blessing's focus on the members' absolution from sin and removal of guilt may be interpreted as a reminder of their loyalty to the king, whom they may not have previously supported in his claim to the throne. The blessing reinforces the

[92] Woolley, ed., *Canterbury Benedictional*, 124.
[93] See Wilson, ed., *Benedictional of Robert*, 153; Banting, ed., *Two Anglo-Saxon Pontificals*, 106-7.

need for unity among the king's council and for reconciliation of hostilities between its members. Treharne has highlighted that this emphasis on unity and the king's obligation to the Church is found in earlier prayers that were written by Wulfstan following Cnut's coronation.[94] The subtle phraseology of liturgical rites and blessings may have carried particular political significance during the succession claims of the mid eleventh century, and the context surrounding this blessing's potential usage may reflect similar concerns of the 'charm' to obtain political favours and the coronation rite.

All three of these texts were probably written around the same time in Canterbury during a period of political upheaval, and the preoccupations of Caligula A. xv's so-called 'charm' are very likely to be reflected in contemporary liturgical rites and blessings. The coronation *ordo* declares the king's sovereignty over the native populace and reminds him of his duties to the Church and people, and the blessing for the king's council subtly imposes an obligation to the king on the members of the council. The 'charm' to obtain favours from one's lord or king or council uses obscure words of power to influence political circumstances and figures, in much the same way as other liturgical texts which compel high-ranking authorities to maintain political stability. Given the origins of these three manuscripts in mid-eleventh-century Canterbury and the political environments in which they were likely to have been produced, it is more beneficial to read the 'charm' for political favours alongside other contemporary liturgical texts than it is to distinguish it from other ritual practices.

v. Travellers (*Pro iter agentibus*)

[94] Treharne, *Living through Conquest*, 54-68.

There are many liturgical blessings and votive Masses associated with travelling, and it is also given special attention in the *Rule of Benedict*.[95] The most obvious example of an Old English ritual for travel is the 'Journey Charm' of Corpus 41 (added s. xi$^{1/4}$, SW Eng, possibly Glastonbury). As discussed in Chapter Two, the Corpus ritual begins with the performer drawing a protective circle with a victory-rod ('sigegyrd') and reciting a victory-*galdor* ('syge gealdor'). This ritual utterance invokes a number of biblical figures to protect the traveller, including angels ('þusend þira engla', 'soðfæstra engla', 'eall engla blæd'), Old Testament figures ('abrame 7 isace', 'moyses 7 iacob 7 dauit 7 iosep', 'euan', 'saharie'), and New Testament saints ('annan 7 elizabet', 'marie', 'petrus 7 paulus', the four evangelists).[96] This 'charm' has been interpreted as an allegory of life's journey as well as a practical spiritual defence: 'the speaker hopes for aid not only on a particular expedition on which he is about to set out, but throughout the journey of life'.[97] The ritual's literal meaning reinforces the power of Christianity against all hostile forces, and its eschatological meaning serves to edify its audience about their spiritual journey through life.

The physical and spiritual dangers that the traveller faces in the 'Journey Charm' are reflected in liturgical blessings for those on a journey.[98] For example, when the *Leofric Missal* was at Exeter in the mid eleventh century (*Leofric C*), a lengthy Mass for travellers was added (fols. 28v-30v).[99] It is likely that the *Leofric Missal* was brought to Exeter with Corpus 41 by Leofric (Bishop of Exeter 1050-1072) as both manuscripts contain an *ex-dono*

[95] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 24, 41-3, 335-6; *Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, 399-400; Woolley, ed., *Canterbury Benedictional*, 126; Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 260; *Benedictional of Robert*, 55; Banting, ed., *Two Anglo-Saxon Pontificals*, 105-6; Doble, ed., *Pontificale Lanaletense*, 109; Turner, ed., *Claudius Pontificals*, 27. For travel in Chapters 50 and 67 of the *Rule of Benedict*, see Logeman, ed., *Rule of S. Benet*, 86, 113.
[96] Transcriptions from Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 171. For a discussion of the potential dangers faced by the traveller, see Wilfrid Bonser, 'Anglo-Saxon Laws Relating to Theft', *Folklore*, 57 (1946), 7-11; Hill, 'Rod of Protection', 145-68.
[97] Rupp, 'The Anxiety of Writing', 255. See also Stuart, 'Old English "Journey Charm"', 268-9.
[98] See Hill, 'Rod of Protection', 155.
[99] See Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. I, 206-34; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 69-70. Another Mass blessing for travellers (fol. 16r) was added when the manuscript was in Canterbury (*Leofric B*), see Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 24.

inscription.[100] The first reading of this Mass is taken from *Genesis* 24. 7 which describes Abraham's request to his servant to find a wife for his son Isaac from his own people:

> LECTIO LIBRI GENESIS. *IN DIEBVS ILLIS*. Locutus est dominus ad Abraham dicens. Dominus deus cęli qui tulit me de domo patris mei, e terra natiuitatis meę. Qui locutus est mihi, et iurauit dicens. Semini tuo dabo terram hanc, ipse mittet angelum suum coram te.[101]
>
> Reading from the book of *Genesis*. In those days; the Lord spoke to Abraham saying: 'The Lord, God of heaven, who took me from my father's house, from the land of my birth, who spoke to me, and swore (to me) saying: "To your seed I will give this land"; He will send His angel before you'.

The chapter from *Genesis* is suitable for travellers as it describes an angel's protection of Abraham as he enters his new land. Abraham and Isaac are also invoked in Corpus 41's journey 'charm', and the traveller calls upon the angels for protection: 'abrame 7 isace 7 swilce men… 7 eac þusend þira engla clipige to are wið eallum feondum'.[102] The Gradual and Preface of the Mass also reiterate the traveller's protection by angelic hosts:

> GRADVALE. Angelis suis deus mandauit de te ut custodian[t] te in omnibus uiis tuis…
> PREFATIO […] Quatinus angelorum tuorum presidio fultus et intercession sanctorum munitus, a cunctis aduersitatibus tua miseratione defensus.[103]
>
> Gradual. The Lord has commanded his angels concerning you, to guard you in all your ways…

[100] Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 56.
[101] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 41.
[102] 'Abraham and Isaac and such men… and also a thousand of the angels, I call to my help against all foes', Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 171.
[103] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 42, 43.

> Preface. […] In so far as [he] is helped by the guidance of your angels, and protected by the intercession of the saints, he is defended from all adversities by your mercy.

This prayer for protection against danger resonates strongly with the ritual's petition to be protected against all evils ('simbli gehaleþe wið eallu*m* feondum'; 'wið þa laþan se me lyfes eht').[104]

The gospel reading for this votive Mass in *Leofric C* is *Matthew* 10. 7-15 which describes Jesus sending his disciples out to preach, forbidding them to take anything with them including a staff, and instructing them to bless any house in which they are made welcome. Thomas Hill has noted the comparisons between this gospel passage and the journey 'charm' of Corpus 41:

> [In *Matthew*], Jesus explicitly forbids his disciples from taking a *uirga* on their jouney… One authoritative response to this difficulty is that of Augustine, who in *De consensu Euangelistarum* squarely confronts this apparent conflict… Augustine's answer is to point out that the term *uirga* is used in a variety of senses in the Bible and that Jesus was telling his disciples not to carry a *uirga* as a sign of authority and power which might make their audiences afraid, yet at the same time to carry a *uirga*, if not necessarily a literal one, in that they are protected by the power of God, which is signified by the term *uirga*… Whatever we may think of Augustine's solution to this difficulty, in this tradition of exegesis, the *uirga*, the Latin equivalent of OE *gyrd*, is associated with the power of God protecting a Christian undertaking a potentially dangerous journey, a person whose situation parallels the 'speaker' of the 'Journey Charm' quite closely… he is a Christian, and it is at least possible that he is

[104] 'ever secure against all foes'; 'protected from the evil one who seeks my life', Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 171-2. On the importance of angels in other marginal texts in Corpus 41, see Richard F. Johnson, 'Archangel in the Margins: St. Michael in the Homilies of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41', *Traditio*, 53 (1998), 63-91. Blessings for travellers in the *Egbert Pontifical* refer to the book of *Tobit* which also involves angelic assistance, see Banting, ed., *Two Anglo-Saxon Pontificals*, 133-4.

> going on a pilgrimage or some other trip authorized by the Church, so he protects himself by invoking the *gyrd* or *uirga* of divine protection.[105]

Although the journey 'charm' predates the additional texts of *Leofric C*, it may be the case that scribes in Exeter – where the votive Mass for travellers was written – were aware of the close connections between this gospel narrative and rituals for travel. It may even be the case that the scribes of *Leofric C* knew of the journey 'charm' after Corpus 41 was brought to Exeter.

In addition to the journey ritual's use of a victory-*gyrd*, there are further correspondences between this 'charm' and the readings from the votive Mass. The 'charm' concludes with a desire for peace in foreign lands under the protection of God and the angels, echoing God's promise to Abraham that an angel will protect him on his journey to new lands, and Jesus' instruction to bless the houses in which the disciples are made welcome:

> bidde ic nu {sigere godes miltse} god siðfæt godne smylte 7 lihte wind wereþum… gehaleþe wið eallu*m* feondum freond ic gemete wid þ*æt* ic on þis ælmihgian on his frið wunian mote belocun wið þa laþan se me lyfes eht on engla bla blaed gestaþelod 7 inna halre hand hofna rices blæd þa hwile þe ic on þis life wunian mote am*en*.
>
> I pray for good favour from the God of victory, for a good voyage, a calm and light wind to the shores… Ever secure against all foes, I meet with friends, that I may live in the peace of the Almighty, protected from the evil one who seeks my life, established in the glory of the angels, and in the holy hand, the glory of the kingdom of heaven, as long as I may live in this life. Amen.[106]

[105] Hill, 'Rod of Protection', 150-1, 153.
[106] Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 171-2.

There are many connections between liturgical blessings and this ritual for travellers, and they draw upon common biblical motifs. Further comparisons can be made with other 'charms' that are related to travel, such as those against stitches and sprains that may occur whilst travelling, and amuletic rituals that protect those moving between locations.[107] All of these texts served the dual purpose of securing immediate protection for a literal journey and placing the traveller in the context of salvation history. The biblical motifs and invocations of the 'Journey Charm' are also found in liturgical blessings and Masses for travellers, and the close connections between these texts indicate that the ritual in Corpus 41 was perceived as a liturgical prayer for those on a journey. Indeed, the scribes of *Leofric C* which contains the votive Mass for travellers may not have viewed the journey 'charm' in Corpus 41 as anything other than a liturgical text.

vi. Observations

These common themes and scriptural references demonstrate that so-called 'charms' and liturgical texts were written to respond to similar remedial, spiritual, conjugal, political, and socio-cultural concerns. A large number of healing 'charms' use formulas and objects from liturgical *ordines* for visiting the sick, and some offer liturgical devotions for lay people in times of emergency. These rituals also frequently draw upon liturgical rites of exorcism to respond to spiritual sickness. Other 'charm' rituals for childbirth use similar biblical references to nuptial blessings, and provide a pregnant mother with ritual practices in different locations including the marriage bed and at a church altar. One 'charm' that attempts to win the favour of political authorities was written in Canterbury around the time of the Conquest, and contemporary coronation rites and liturgical blessings reflect similar political tensions. Finally, a lengthy votive Mass for travellers was written when the so-called

[107] See Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 248-51, 284, 286.

'Journey Charm' was in Exeter in the mid eleventh century, and both texts use the same biblical references to protect those on a journey. The significant overlaps in the rituals' content indicate that 'charms' offered liturgical responses to particular needs within ecclesiastical and lay environments. Cross-comparisons of these texts show that it is difficult to maintain distinctions between 'charms' and liturgical texts: they appear in similar manuscripts, they draw upon the same ideas, and they sometimes use the same sacred objects and liturgical formulas. Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that Anglo-Saxon scribes distinguished between what we traditionally call 'liturgy' and 'charm' rituals.

Conclusions

In addition to these overlaps in theme and content, manuscripts containing 'charms' provide further evidence that they were perceived as components of the liturgy. Some 'charms' were written in manuscripts that were probably used as study books in a monastery (e.g. London, BL, MSS Cotton Faustina A. x, Cotton Tiberius A. iii), indicating that they were useful for monastic training. Others appear alongside homilies, saints' lives, psalm commentaries, and calculations of liturgical feasts (e.g. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 367; London, BL, MS Royal 4 A. xiv; Oxford, St John's College, MS 17), suggesting that they often complemented hagiography, biblical exegesis, and astronomical enquiry. Some 'charms' were probably used for private devotional practices in a convent (London, BL, MS Royal 2 A. xx) or for confession (London, BL, MS Cotton Vespasian D. xx). At least one other manuscript also indicates that some scribes of these 'charm' rituals were inspired by texts that expounded the gospels (e.g. London, BL, MS Cotton Caligula A. vii, as discussed in Chapter Two).[108]

[108] See Appendix for details of these manuscripts.

The thematic overlaps considered in this chapter show how it is better to consider 'charms' as liturgical texts that are part of an innovative and experimental ecclesiastical culture in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The diversity in Anglo-Saxon ritual practice is also evident in the manuscripts that contain 'charms'. It is therefore of paramount importance to resituate these rituals in their manuscript contexts which reflect the ecclesiastical environments in which they were produced. Reading the rituals as components of new and experimental liturgies allows us to overcome the restrictive category of 'charms' with all of its associated terminology that disregards their rich liturgical nature. Even the most enigmatic references that are found in these texts can be better understood by considering their liturgical sources that are often found in the rituals' surrounding materials.

4

The Prefatory Collection of the *Vitellius Psalter*: A Case Study

> 'they were concerned with transmitting and concealing the sacred, the wisdom inaccessible to those unable to decode it… [and] secrets open only to those who are able to discover and then apply their codes, in order to disclose their mysteries'.[1]

Having demonstrated that it is more beneficial to consider 'charms' as part of diverse, mainstream ecclesiastical traditions, it is now important to consider how these rituals appear in their manuscripts. Editors of the 'charms' extracted texts from a large number of manuscripts for their editions. The rituals have therefore been isolated from their manuscript contexts, and their many connections with surrounding texts in the manuscripts have been overlooked. Reading the 'charms' alongside other texts in their manuscripts uncovers intertextual relationships that exist between these rituals and their surrounding materials. This approach challenges modern distinctions between textual genres because it uncovers (sometimes obscure) connections between different types of texts that were made by Anglo-Saxon scribes. It is therefore of paramount importance to resituate the 'charms' in their manuscript contexts to understand how Anglo-Saxon scribes viewed these rituals.

Some scholars have already conducted case studies of 'charms' in their surrounding manuscript contexts. Stephanie Hollis analysed four manuscripts containing different versions of three cattle-theft 'charms' (in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MSS 41, 383; London, British Library, MS Tiberius A. iii; and the *Textus Roffensis*).[2] Lea Olsan provides an overview of how some 'charms' are copied in manuscripts, arguing that they were first

[1] Rafal Boryslawski, 'The Elements of Anglo-Saxon Wisdom Poetry in the *Exeter Book* Riddles', *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia*, 38 (2002), 35-47 at 36, 38.
[2] Hollis, 'Manuscript Contexts'.

recorded as marginalia before they were included in the main body of the manuscript page.[3] Rebecca Fisher has also investigated the 'charms' in the *Royal Prayerbook* (London, BL, Royal 2 A. xx), and argued that they are closely related to surrounding devotional materials for a female religious community.[4] Other studies of *Bald's Leechbook*, Harley 585, and Corpus 41 have highlighted correspondences between 'charms' and their surrounding texts.[5] However, all of these studies maintain that 'charms' are a distinct genre that was differentiated from other ritual practices by Anglo-Saxon scribes. Karen Jolly challenges this distinction in her study of Corpus 41, arguing that all of the marginal texts which were written by one scribe 'belong to the same genre in the scribe's archive'.[6] Jolly's approach to Corpus 41 needs to be extended to the many other manuscripts that have been plundered for editions of 'charms' because it focuses on how Anglo-Saxon scribes understood these rituals instead of how 'charms' should be classified by modern editors. Indeed, Phillip Pulsiano stressed 'how ultimately mistaken it is to disembody texts from the larger framework of the codices that contain them and the communities that produced them'.[7] When 'charms' are analysed in their manuscript contexts, it becomes difficult to uphold distinctions between these and other ritual texts.

This chapter takes a case study of the *Vitellius Psalter* (London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius E. xviii) which has been used in editions of 'charms', and it reconsiders its rituals in their wider manuscript context. One scribe wrote all of the psalter's prefatory texts

[3] Olsan, 'Inscription of Charms'; 'Marginality of Charms'.
[4] Fisher, 'Texts in Context'.
[5] See Linda Voigts, 'Anglo-Saxon Plant Remedies and the Anglo Saxons', *Isis*, 70 (1979), 250-69; Grant, *Loricas and the Missal*; Meaney, 'Compilation of Bald's *Leechbook*'; Malcolm L. Cameron, 'Bald's *Leechbook*'; 'Anglo-Saxon Medicine and Magic', *ASE*, 17 (1988), 191-215; 'Cultural Interactions'; Keefer, 'Margins as Archive'; Nokes, 'Compilers of *Bald's Leechbook*'; Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'Filling the Margins of CCCC 41: Textual Space and a Developing Archive', *RES*, 57 (2006), 721-32.
[6] Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy', 144.
[7] Phillip Pulsiano, 'The Prefatory Matter of London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius E. xviii', in *Manuscripts and their Heritage*, Pulsiano and Treharne, eds., 85-116 at 104. See also Graham Caie, 'Codicological Clues: Reading Old English Christian Poetry in its Manuscript Context', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, Paul Cavill, ed (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 3-14.

and Old English glosses to the psalms, and the close connections that exist between these texts demonstrate that this scribe did not distinguish between 'charms' and liturgy. The rituals in the prefatory matter of this manuscript form an important component to a holistic collection of materials concerned with the cosmos, liturgy, hidden knowledge, and divine language.

The *Vitellius Psalter*

The *Vitellius Psalter* is a glossed Gallican psalter with a prefatory collection of computistical texts, prognostications, agricultural rituals, and exercises in secret writing. Several of its agricultural rituals have been extracted from its manuscript context and categorised as 'charms', despite the fact that the psalm glosses and all of the prefatory texts are written in one scribal hand. The manuscript was written between 1060 and 1087 according to a cross marking that is found in an Easter table (fol. 13v) which was likely to have been made by the original scribe.[8] Pulsiano suggested a more accurate dating of 1062 on the basis of another marker that appears in the same column of the Easter table, and which 'appears to be original'.[9] In the final text of the prefatory collection, the name '*Æ*lfwine' appears in an encrypted exercise, indicating that the manuscript was copied in the New Minster, Winchester from an exemplar dating to *Æ*lfwine's abbacy in this monastery between 1031/2 and 1057.[10] There are also strong connections between the *Vitellius Psalter* and *Æ*lfwine's personal *Prayerbook* (London, BL, MSS Cotton Titus D. xxvi/ii), providing further evidence that the psalter's prefatory texts originated in *Æ*lfwine's New Minster.[11]

[8] Karl Wildhagen, *Das Kalendarium der Handschrift Vitellius E XVIII (Brit. Mus.): Ein Beitrag zur Chronologie und Hagiologie Altenglands* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1921), 117-18.
[9] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 102-3. For other descriptions of this manuscript, see Appendix.
[10] See Phillip Pulsiano, 'Abbot *Æ*lfwine and the Date of the Vitellius Psalter', *ANQ*, 11 (1998), 3-12; Catherine E. Karkov, 'Abbot *Æ*lfwine and the Sign of the Cross', in *Cross and Cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon World*, Keefer, Jolly, and Karkov, eds., 103-32 at 103-4.
[11] For details of *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, see Appendix.

As the *Vitellius Psalter* was written in the second half of the eleventh century, it is possible that the materials of the prefatory collection were added at this time to an original exemplar which contained the Latin psalter and Old English gloss. This possibility would suggest that the psalter and gloss can be associated with Ælfwine's school and that the additional prefatory texts were not originally integral to the manuscript's exemplar. However, the final text that contains a cryptogram of Ælfwine's name indicates that at least some, if not all, of these additional materials were also composed during Ælfwine's abbacy in the New Minster. The commissioner and scribe of the *Vitellius Psalter* may have therefore gathered and copied different materials from Ælfwine's school that were perceived to be useful for a glossed psalter. It is clear that at least one Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastic saw important connections between the 'charm' rituals, the other prefatory texts, and the manuscript as a whole.

It is very likely that the Vitellius scribe either copied an already complete collection of computus, prognostics, rituals, and ciphers, or that he or she brought together a range of materials that were associated with Ælfwine and his school. Given that one of these prefatory texts can be directly attributed to Ælfwine's authorship, it is also possible that other texts in this collection which have close intertextual links to their surrounding materials were also composed by Ælfwine. It is impossible to say with confidence that the psalter's so-called 'charms' were originally written by Ælfwine, but their intricate connections with the surrounding diagrams, astronomical calculations, and coded writing make it tempting to speculate on Ælfwine's involvement in their compilation or composition.

The Scope of the Prefatory Collection

The *Vitellius Psalter* was badly damaged in the Cottonian fire of 1731 and its opening two folios are now lost.[12] The prefatory collection is found on folios 2r-16r, and it is primarily concerned with the divine ordering of the cosmos and the Easter season. Computistical calculations of Easter dominate the first eleven folios of the collection; this information is then used in predictions of lunar movements and favourable times of the year for environmental and medical issues. The series of rituals extends these prognostications and offers a range of spiritual responses to some of the predicted concerns. Finally, an encrypted riddle and an exercise for secret writing conclude the collection. These prefatory texts share many features and serve similar purposes, and the overlap in their thematic content demonstrates a coherent and cohesive investigation into cosmological signs, symbology, astronomy, and liturgy.

Computistical calculations are common in medieval psalters, and they were fundamental for the ordering of the liturgical year and monastic life. As well as providing practical guides and points of reference, these calculations indicate the spiritual environment in which they were used: 'This emphasis on numerical counting and measuring unites both science and liturgy as a way of understanding the divine order of the world, on both a macrocosmic and microcosmic level'.[13] There is spiritual significance in numerology throughout the prefatory collection, and the importance of such calculations in determining times for ritual performance cannot be overstated.

Prognostications follow these computistical calculations and they predict the most opportune times in the year for blood-letting and childbirth.[14] One particular prognostic for

[12] From the mid nineteenth century the foliation was rearranged a number of times until it was rebound in 1954 with what is now believed to be its correct foliation; see Ker, *Catalogue*, 299; Pulsiano, *Psalters I*, 50; 'Prefatory Matter', 106-7, 116.
[13] Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 63.
[14] On the impact of the lunar movements on blood and birth, see Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove, *The Wise Wound: Menstruation and Everywoman*, rev. edn (London: Paladin Grafton, 1986); Tory Vandeventer Pearman, *Women and Disability in Medieval Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), esp. 108-9; Sophie Page, *Astrology in Medieval Manuscripts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 54-60.

childbirth in the psalter is a translation of a Latin text found in *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, but it makes a significant addition:

> [Titus D. xxvi, fols. 4rv]
>
> Tres dies sunt in anno cum totidem noctibus, ut fertur, in quibus mulier numquam nascitur, et uir qui natus fuerit in ipsis numquam corpus illus putredine soluetur usque ad diem iudicii, id est nouissimus de thebet et duo primi de sabath.[15]

> [Vitellius E. xviii, fol. 15r]
>
> [Þ]ry dagas syndon on twelf monðum mid þrim ni[ht]um o[n þam ne bið] nan wif accened ac swa hwilc wæpman swa on ðam dagum ace[ned bið ne] forealdað his lichama næfre on eorðan ær domes dæge, þæt is an [ðæra] daga on æfteweardan decembre 7 tweigen on foreweardan ia[nuarii]; *feawma manna syndon þe þas dagas cunnon* (emphasis mine).[16]

The psalter's prognostication presents knowledge of the cosmos as a rare secret, thus anticipating the enigmatic rituals and encrypted texts that follow later in the prefatory collection.[17]

The six ritual texts that follow the prognostics on folios 15v-16r offer a range of spiritual responses to agricultural concerns. A number of these rituals have been categorised as 'charms', although editors and commentators differ in opinion about which rituals belong

[15] Beate Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine's Prayerbook: London, British library, Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii*, HBS, Vol. 108 (London: Boydell & Brewer, 1993), 145; 'There are three days in the year with the same number of nights, that is held, in which no woman is born, and the man who is born in them will never decay in body until the Day of Judgement, that is the newest of Tebet (Hebrew month of approximately December) and the first two of Sabat (Hebrew month of approximately January)'. Translation my own.

[16] Pulsiano, ed., 'Prefatory Matter', 101; 'There are three days in twelve months with three nights on which no woman is born but the man who is born in these days, his body will never grow old on the earth before Judgement Day, that is one of the days following December and two before January; *there are few men who know of these days*'. Translation my own.

[17] This emphasis on secrecy is also found in versions of this prognostic in the *Red Book of Darley* (Corpus 422, fol. 49) and Caligula A. xv (fol. 131r), which are contemporary with the *Vitellius Psalter*, Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 6, 232-3.

to this genre.[18] Two of them have been consistently labelled as 'charms' because they employ abstract diagrams and 'gibberish' writing, but Jolly notes that all of the rituals relate to the preceding computus and prognostics 'either by reference to particular times of the year – Midsummer, Lammas – or in the use of diagrams similar to the spheres and charts'.[19] Indeed, two prognosticatory diagrams of the Sphere of Life and Death bookend this series of rituals, and two exercises in secret writing conclude the collection on folio 16v. The Sphere diagram and coded texts provide clues about how these abstract rituals were understood as encrypted spiritual responses to specific agricultural concerns. The prefatory material of the *Vitellius Psalter* is a coherent collection of texts which seek to decode the signs of the cosmos, predict astronomical movements and effects, overcome agricultural problems, and re-conceal knowledge in secret writing.

The Rituals in Context

The order of the manuscript is as follows (* denotes texts that have been classified as 'charms'):

> Fols. 2r-13r – calendar; feast limits; Easter tables; calculations for Septuagesima, Lent, and Easter.
>
> Fols. 13r-15r – prognostications for blood-letting and childbirth; first Sphere of Life and Death.
>
> Fol. 15v – ritual instructions for protecting bees*; *Columcille's Circle**; theft diagram*; ritual for sick cattle and sheep*.

[18] Cockayne printed eight texts from this manuscript, Grendon edited two, and Storms edited three; Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. I, 386-9, Vol. III, 290-1; Grendon, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 204-7; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 287, 309-11. For different classifications by commentators, see Ker, *Catalogue*, 300; Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 89-90; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 66-7; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 14; Banham, 'Staff of Life', 314.

[19] Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 66-7.

Fols. 15v-16r – livestock ritual*.

Fol. 16r – barn ritual*; second Sphere of Life and Death.

Fol. 16v – encrypted riddle; exercise in secret writing.

Fols. 18r-131r – Gallican version of the psalms with continuous Old English gloss.

Fols. 131v-146v – canticles; prayers; litany; lections.[20]

In order to understand the intimate connections between the so-called 'charms' and their surrounding materials, it is important to analyse each ritual on folios 15v-16r in order of appearance. I include discussions of the final texts of the collection because these are closely related to the agricultural rituals. As there has been very little commentary on this manuscript, the following analyses do not provide definitive solutions to the abstract, and often fragmentary, rituals that it contains. However, they do offer a number of alternative interpretations of these texts according to their wider manuscript context.

i. Protection of bees

The first legible entry on folio 15v has lost its opening lines due to fire damage but it is clear that it is a ritual for protecting bees against theft. The fragmentary text reads:

> [s?]e mæder cið on þinre hyfe þonne ne asponð nan man þine beon ne hi ma[n] ne mæg forstelan þa hwile þe se cið on þære hyfe bið.

> (when the?) madder shoot (is) in your hive, thereafter no man would be lured to your bees, nor is he able to steal them while that plant is in the hive.[21]

[20] For a more detailed manuscript description, see Pulsiano, *Psalters I*, 51-5.
[21] All transcriptions and translations from this manuscript are my own.

These instructions appear on lines 6-8 of the main writing space, and it is impossible to tell whether this was the first text of the folio (see fig. 1). The fragmentary instructions make it clear that a madder shoot ('mæder cið') should be placed inside the beehive to prevent the bees from being stolen. The madder plant has small yellowish-white flowers that grow in clusters with red stalks; perhaps the idea was that placing a plant with attractive flowers inside the hive would minimise the need for the bees to travel far to find other pollinating plants.

The movement of bees from one property to another was a socio-economic concern in Anglo-Saxon England, as Lori Ann Garner and Kayla Miller have argued in the context of the bee-ritual against a swarm from Corpus 41:

> the practice of 'tanging' [banging pots together to calm a swarm] was seen as potentially binding legally even in the relatively recent past… the incantation would have had much the same binding effect, provided the incantation were recited loudly enough. If a runaway swarm of bees appeared to settle in response to the performer's words, the apparent success could indicate ownership.[22]

Placing a madder plant inside the beehive could have been another preventative measure against the bees swarming onto somebody else's land, resulting in legal forfeit of the livestock and their 'theft' ('forstelan'). The ritual that is now lost due to fire damage may have had multiple meanings, but some thematic connections between this instruction and its surrounding texts can be gleaned through its focus on theft, bees, and a remedy for livestock.

ii. *Columcille's Circle*

[22] Lori Ann Garner and Kayla M. Miller, '"A Swarm in July": Beekeeping Perspectives on the Old English *Wið Ymbe* Charm', *Oral Tradition*, 26 (2011): 355-76 at 371-2.

The bee-ritual is immediately followed by the *Columcille's Circle* ritual, which was described as a 'gibberish charm' by Grendon and Storms.[23] St Columcille (d. 597) was a saint from Iona who was renowned for his influence on agriculture.[24] The circle was to be inscribed on stone and placed in the centre of a beehive. The instructions for *Columcille's Circle* read:

> Þis is s(an)c(t)e columcille circul :- Writ þysne circul mid þinnes cnifes orde on anum mealan stan 7 sleah ænne stacan on middan þam ymbhagan 7 lete þane stan on uppan þam stacan þæt he beo eall under eorðan butan þam gewritenan.
>
> This is Saint Columcille's Circle: Write this circle with your knife's edge on a malmstone, and thrust a stake in the middle of the beehive, and lay the stone above the stake so that it may be all under the earth except for the writing.

Like the madder plant, this circle was also to be placed inside the hive to protect the bees, and the two rituals may have been used together. The type of stone that is to be inscribed is probably malmstone – a chalky type that is easy to engrave.[25] These instructions are immediately followed by a template of the circle that is to be inscribed (fig. 2).

The inscription on the stone circle is divided into four quadrants with encompassing inner and outer circles. The use of a cruciform shape within this circle parallels other diagrams and ritual instructions in the prefatory collection.[26] Furthermore, the numbers that appear in the upper left, lower left, and lower right quadrants of the circle replicate those found in the Spheres of Life and Death (see figs. 2, 8). The upper right quadrant contains an

[23] Grendon, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 115, 204; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 297, 309-11.
[24] For the Columcille legend and its relevance to this ritual, see Martha Dana Rust, 'The Art of Beekeeping Meets the Arts of Grammar: A Gloss of "Columcille's Circle"', *PQ*, 78 (1999), 359-87 at 363-4.
[25] See Storms, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 309; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 78.
[26] See also Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 67.

abbreviated formula concerning the bees: 'cont apes ut salui sint & incorda eorum. Sā h'.[27] Pulsiano argues that this inscription 'seems rather to be a rubric to a charm, itself illuminated by the cryptic *S ā h*'.[28] Martha Rust, however, argues that the abbreviation stands for 'scribam hanc', and believes that the inscription glosses a passage from *Jeremiah* 31. 33:

> Having directed his reader to carve the 'Circle's' Latin inscription in stone, and having written the prayerful wish *ut salvi sint,* our monk (or author or scribe) may have been reminded of the salvatory covenant of the New Testament: that God's laws would then be written in people's hearts rather than in stone… moreover, a member of a monastic community would have been familiar with the precise phrase *et in corde eorum scribam eam*, for it appears not only in the book of Jeremiah but also in Paul's letter to the Hebrews, and in Augustine's commentary on Psalm 118.[29]

Earlier traditions of figurative poetry and enigmata, which were likely to have been brought to England in the late seventh century, also have spiritual texts written inside and around diagram structures.[30] Aldhelm (d. 709) and Boniface (d. 754) used these forms of poetry to encourage their readers to discern spiritual meanings beyond the text, and these may have provided a source of inspiration for diagrams like *Columcille's Circle*. Enigmatic abbreviations are also a feature of Carolingian glosses that use Greek to deliberately obscure the meaning of a text and 'to amplify rather than attenuate our sense of encoded knowledge'.[31] The abbreviated inscription of *Columcille's Circle* seems to follow these

[27] 'For bees so that they may be well and in their hearts. Sā h'.
[28] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 94.
[29] Rust, 'Art of Beekeeping', 376.
[30] David A. E. Pelteret, 'A Cross and an Acrostic: Boniface's Prefatory Poem to his *Ars grammatica*', in *Cross and Cruciform in the Anglo-Saxon World*, Keefer, Jolly, and Karkov, eds., 53-102 at 58, 81-2. See also Chapter Five.
[31] Sinead O'Sullivan, 'The Sacred and the Obscure: Greek and the Carolingian Reception of Martianus Capella', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 22 (2012), 67-94 at 82.

hermeneutic practices of deliberately obscuring knowledge by encoding a scriptural reference in an abstract image.

The prefatory collection contains other abstract epigraphy which supports Rust's view that the diagram requires the decoding of language and the discernment of spiritual meaning. It includes unconventional abbreviations in glosses to the psalms,[32] numerical equivalents for lunar letters in the Spheres of Life and Death, abstract letter arrangements in the theft diagram to the right of this ritual, and vowel substitution in the concluding cryptograms. All of these texts require the reader to discern their meaning, and they all indicate that letters were used in abstract ways to transmit and conceal spiritual knowledge.

Columcille's Circle is evidently not just a grammatical exercise to be fathomed in the middle of a beehive, nor was it expected to be a gloss to be discerned by bees. Rust develops an interpretation of its spiritual meaning that accounts for its ritual context:

> A complete expansion of the inscription would then be 'this circle is in case of a swarm of bees so that they may be safe, and in their hearts I will write my law'… in this rendering 'Columcille's Circle' quotes scripture in a manner that figures the beekeeper as a New Testament lord of bees' hearts even as it presents itself as a law to be written in stone… the presence of God is at once read, represented, and appealed to by means of the art of *grammatica*.[33]

If Rust's interpretation is correct, *Columcille's Circle* establishes a connection between the bees, the beekeeper, and God's Law. The spiritual meaning of this ritual is contained in a deliberately obscure abbreviation that demands discernment from the reader and performer. Pulsiano argued that perhaps only a few people may have known how to use this text:

[32] See James L. Rosier, ed., *The Vitellius Psalter: Edited from British Museum MS Cotton Vitellius E. xviii*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1962), xx-xxi.
[33] Rust, 'Art of Beekeeping', 377-8.

> Its presentation as an encoded text, at one level open to booklearned readers… at another moving beyond this level to lore (the Columkill folk-story) and further encoding that makes sense only to those who are familiar with its meaning (S ā h), makes St Columkill's circle a complex (if nonetheless ineffectual) and arcane text, one that discloses its function (a circle to protect bees) at the same moment that it moves into obscurity.[34]

As no other version of this ritual survives, *Columcille's Circle* is a unique diagram which brings together several traditions for a particular agricultural concern. Its abstract epigraphy adds to its uniqueness and relates to the surrounding texts that focus on spiritual mystery and coded writing.

While much has been discussed about the inscription and the purpose of the ritual, little has been said about where the abbreviated prayer appears in the diagram. As mentioned, the numbers in the other three quadrants replicate those in the Spheres of Life and Death. Pulsiano argued that the circle reflects 'a corrupt conflation of texts' during the process of copying but the same scribe evidently planned the writing space to accommodate this diagram between two Spheres on folios 14v and 16r.[35] Rust also comments that its numerals 'attest to the communicative power of the circle' but she does not explain how they do so.[36] The placement of the inscription in the upper right quadrant suggests a deliberate manipulation of these diagrams for a particular agricultural concern. The Sphere of Life and Death was used to diagnose illness according to the lunar cycle, the particular day of the week, and the numerical equivalence of a subject's name. When these values were obtained, a calculation was made and the numerical result was put back into the diagram to determine whether the subject would suffer or be in good health at that particular time. The values in the

[34] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 95.
[35] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 94.
[36] Rust, 'Art of Beekeeping', 374-5.

right side of the sphere signify a short illness and those on the left signify a prolonged illness. If the value fell into the upper quadrants the patient would live whereas the lower quadrants signify their death.[37] The inscription appears in the upper right quadrant of the circle, the place that would signify a short illness and survival in the Sphere. The formula's appearance in this section connects the bees to the best possible outcome of the Sphere that predicts their survival after a short-term illness. The *Columcille* ritual is a carefully composed diagram that relates to this wider prognosticative tradition. Its position in the manuscript reflects an awareness of the thematic progression from computus and prognostics to a practical use of such knowledge for the livestock of a monastery. This unusual diagram shows a scribe gathering material from astronomical traditions, and the encrypted name of '*Æ*lfwine' at the end of the collection also strongly suggests that this ritual was composed by this Abbot of the New Minster (see section ix below).

The safe-guarding of livestock and their produce was very important in monasteries, and apiaries were particularly significant. Honey was a valuable resource with medicinal properties, and it was used to make mead. The wax harvested from the bees was also vital for the production of candles.[38] The *Exultet* that was sung in the Holy Saturday procession associates the bee with the Virgin Mary; and Ambrose, Aldhelm, and *Æ*lfric (among others) depicted the bee as a figure of the Virgin and the Church.[39] The reproduction of bees and the increase of the colony would have symbolically reflected the growth of the Church. The religious significance of the bees' produce for monastic life is also extensive. The *Regularis Concordia*, for instance, compares the updating of monastic customs to 'honey [that] is

[37] The two Spheres in Vitellius E. xviii are only divided into upper and lower halves but other spheres are divided into four quadrants like *Columcille's Circle*, see Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 195-222.
[38] See Austin E. Fife, 'Christian Swarm Charms from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Centuries', *Journal of American Folklore*, 77 (1964), 154-59 at 154; Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 264, 266.
[39] Augustine Cassiday, 'St Aldhelm's Bees (*De Uirginitate Prosa*, cc. iv-vi): Some Observations on a Literary Tradition', *ASE*, 33 (2004), 1-22.

gathered by bees from all manner of wild flowers and collected into one hive'.[40] The cells of honeycomb were also likened to monastic cells, and the bee provided a model for the monk's life in its celibacy, continuous labour, and service to others.[41] Seen in this context, the protection and well-being of bees was symbolic of the monastic community's health. This ritual offers protection for the bee colony through the power of God's Law and Saint Columcille's intercession, but it also affirms that the spiritual sickness of the monastic community will be neither fatal nor prolonged. *Columcille's Circle* is an intricate component of the prefatory collection as it combines astronomical calculations, predictions of revived health, and an encrypted prayer for the physical and spiritual protection of livestock and the monastic community.

iii. Theft Diagram

The diagram to recover stolen property that is copied next to *Columcille's Circle* also uses abstract epigraphy, and it too was described as a 'gibberish charm' by Grendon and Storms.[42] Its instructions read:

> Þonne þema[n] hwet forstele awrit þis swigende 7 do on þinne wynstran scó under þinum hó þonne geacsaxt þu hit sona.
>
> When a man steals from you, write this silently and place (it) in your left shoe under your heel, then you will soon find out (about it).

The diagram accompanying these instructions is rectangular and contains a number of cruciform shapes that are layered within its rectangular frame (see fig. 3).[43] Certain letters are

[40] 'quaeque ex dignis eorum moribus honesta colligentes, uti apes fauum nectaris diuersis pratorum floribus in uno alueario', Symons, ed. and trans., *Regularis Concordia*, 3.
[41] See Debra Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 52-61.
[42] Grendon, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 115, 206; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 297, 311.

placed in every corner within the diagram, and the letters *h*, *x*, *n*, and *d* all mirror each other, with the exception of *er* in the top left corner.

Felix Grendon believed that the theft diagram contains 'mysterious letters and numbers [that] are the magic symbols in spells' and which are 'not in verbal form'.[44] The meaning behind these letters may never be recovered but it is likely that they encrypt their meaning like the Columcille abbreviation and the coded exercises at the end of the collection. Some of these letters may stand for the Greek delta (δ), eta (η), and chi (χ), and *xh* may be a conflated acronym of the Greek 'Xp' ('Christ') and Roman 'ih' ('Jesus'), but this does not seem very convincing. Rearrangements of these letters offer very tentative conclusions and they do not convincingly account for why they appear in specific places in the diagram. Jolly has argued that 'the cruciform lines dividing the rectangle have spatial significance, and perhaps the letters refer to the cardinal directions or symbols associated with them'.[45] It would make sense to use the cardinal directions in a compass-like diagram to locate stolen property. Other Anglo-Saxon prognostics, for instance, use the cardinal directions to predict agricultural disasters, and some of these are found in *Ælfwine's Prayerbook* (Titus D. xxvi, fols. 9v-10v).[46] However, there is no apparent correlation between the names of the winds and the letters of the theft diagram.

There are strong connections between theft and candles in other Anglo-Saxon texts, and the diagram's cruciform shapes and positioning of letters may be loosely compared to the inscription on the Paschal candle. Many of the surrounding texts in the prefatory collection focus on the Easter season, particularly the computistical calculations in the first eleven folios of the collection, and these may provide some context for the structure of this diagram. Other Anglo-Saxon theft rituals also use candles in processions and prescribe the singing of a 'Crux

[43] For further uses of cruciform shapes in the prefatory collection, see Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 68.
[44] Grendon, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 115, 135.
[45] Jolly, 'Tapping the Power', 68, note 31.
[46] See Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 248-69, 523.

Christi reducat' formula, perhaps echoing the singing of 'Lumen Christi' as the Easter candle was processed on Holy Saturday.[47] The *Exultet* which was sung during this procession compares the candle to the pillar of fire in *Exodus* and Christ the light of the world that dispels the darkness of night and sin.[48] It also claims that the candle expels evil, cleanses sin, and restores lost innocence.[49] The theft ritual may also seek to illuminate the thief's guilty soul, cleanse sin, and restore the stolen property to the owner through the power of the cross. The Easter candle was marked with a cruciform shape in the centre, grains of incense were fixed in each corner to signify Christ's wounds, and the Greek alpha and omega were marked above and below the cross, recalling Christ's title of 'the first and the last, the beginning and the end' (*Rev*. 1. 8; 21. 6; 22. 13).[50] Finally, the date of the year was marked around the cross.[51] The markings of the theft diagram are likewise inscribed around cruciform shapes and they are placed at each of their corners. The locations of the letters do not, however, correspond exactly to the markings on the Paschal candle.

The arrangement of letters around a cruciform shape is also a feature of an Anglo-Saxon church dedication rite, which underwent significant revisions in Canterbury around the same time as the production of this *Psalter*.[52] The revised rites open with the bishop's silent entrance into the church before he was to write two full alphabets diagonally across the floor.[53] A prayer then connects the letters to the tablets of the Ten Commandments (*Exodus* 3. 5) and Jacob's ladder to heaven (*Genesis* 28. 10-17): 'et uerba legis tue. in tabulis cordium

[47] For these rituals, see Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 202-6.
[48] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 170.
[49] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 171.
[50] The earliest record of the alpha and omega being marked on the Paschal candle is found in a tenth-century gradual from Leon, see Orchard, ed., *Sacramentary of Ratoldus*, clxiv.
[51] Bede remarks in his *De Temporum Ratione* (written around 725) how some monks from Wearmouth-Jarrow travelled to Rome in 701 and copied down this inscription from a Paschal candle to calculate the correct date of Easter, see Bede, *The Reckoning of Time*, Faith Wallis, trans (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1999), 128.
[52] See Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 229-36; 'Liturgy of Canterbury Cathedral', 45. For an earlier version of this rite from the *Romano-Germanic Pontifical* tradition, see Brian V. Repsher, ed. and trans., *The Rite of Church Dedication in the Early Medieval Era* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1998), 145-6, 176.
[53] For a discussion of this rite and St Andrew's cross, see Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish History and Chronology* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003), 293-4.

eorum misericordiae tuae digito asscribe… hic scala pacis et caritatis assurgat'.[54] The bishop's silent entrance and the writing of mystical letters in a cruciform shape resonate with the theft diagram's instructions. The scriptural reference to God writing his Law onto the hearts of his people is also found in the *Columcille* inscription, suggesting that this liturgical practice of alphabetic writing may have inspired the construction of the theft diagram. This liturgical parallel is, however, difficult to correlate with a diagram that is contained in a series of agricultural rituals.

Another possible explanation of the letters is that they may be linked to lunar calculations. Numerical equivalents for letters are used in the two Spheres of Life and Death, a table of lunar letters is found on folio 13v of this manuscript, and several manuscripts that have correspondences with the *Vitellius Psalter* also contain different lunar tables.[55] Alternatively, Byrthtferth of Ramsey's *Enchiridion* also contains a table that provides numerical values for the English and Roman alphabets (see fig. 4). According to Byrhtferth's table, when the letters 'er' are combined they equal ten, 'h' on its own equals 500, 'n' on its own equals forty, and when 'n' and 'd' appear together they equal five. The letters 'x' and 'h' have values of 1000 and 500 respectively when they appear on their own in the Roman alphabet, so a combination of these letters would require the use of both alphabets. It may be that the *Vitellius* scribe or Ælfwine himself was working with a different but similar table to the one found in the *Enchiridion*. All of these numbers are multiples of five, and Byrhtferth says that this is a perfect number with spiritual significance:

> Quinarius numerus perfectus est et in suis partibus constat diuisus, nam gloriatur se ternario atque binario esse computum. Ternarius ad sanctę trinitatis pertinet mysterium; binarius uero

[54] 'and write the words of your law on the tablets of their hearts with the finger of your mercy… here let the ladder of peace and truth rise up'; transcriptions and translations from Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 234.
[55] Such manuscripts include *Leofric A* (s. ix / x), Titus D. xxvi/ii (s. xi^{1}), Caligula A. xv (s. xi^{ex}), and Oxford, St John's College, MS 17 (s. xii^{in}).

> ad dilectionem Dei et proximi… Quinarius dupplicatus decalogum implet. Quinque sunt libri Moysi; quinque sunt sensus hominis (id est uisus, auditus, odoratus, gustus et tactus); quinque sunt termini in ecclesiasticis compotibus (id est Septuagessimalis, Quadragessimalis, Paschalis, Rogationalis et Pentecosten).
>
> The number five is perfect, and is divisible into two parts, for it rejoices to be adorned with three and two. Three pertains to the mystery of the holy Trinity; two pertains to love of God and of one's neighbour… Five when doubled makes the decalogue (ten). The books of Moses are five; the senses of man are five (that is, sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch); the number of terms in ecclesiastical computus are five (that is, Septuagesima, Quadragesima, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost).[56]

Exploring the numerical significance of letters in the diagram poses a very complex task that would be fraught with speculation, and it would require a full, specialised inquiry so I will not attempt to provide further possibilities here. Even if the correct numerical values of these letter combinations are discovered, some reasoning must be found for their values and positioning in the diagram. For the purposes of the present study, the surrounding manuscript context of the theft ritual indicates that the letters must have significance beyond their cruciform layout.

Although only some scribes or monks may have known the significance of these shapes and letters, the manuscript context of the prefatory matter exposes some major concerns that are likely to be deeply involved in this ritual. The diagram relates to the widespread use of numerology in other Anglo-Saxon texts and to inscriptions of letters around cruciform shapes in other liturgical rituals. Tentatively, I offer one other interpretation

[56] Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, 202-5.

that can address the positioning of all of the diagram's letters, and suggest that it may be a devotional, coded portrayal of the crucifixion.

A Coded Portrayal of the Crucifixion

The positioning of letters in specific locations around cruciform shapes may have been inspired by crucifixion iconography. The connection between Christ's cross and theft is made explicit in other Anglo-Saxon theft rituals that narrate the hiding of the cross.[57] Theft is also an important theme in the gospel accounts of the Passion as Christ is crucified between two thieves, one of whom repents and is redeemed (*Luke* 23. 42). The repentant thief is referred to in liturgies for Good Friday, as seen, for example, in *Leofric A* (s. ix^{ex} / x^{in}, Canterbury, fol. 107v) where a collect refers to the thief's salvation: 'Deus a quo et iudas reatus sui poenam et confessionis suae latro premium sumpsit'.[58] A text on the names of the crucified thieves is also found in Cotton Tiberius A. iii, which has many correspondences with the *Vitellius Psalter* and *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*.[59] Ælfwine had a deeply personal devotion to the cross, and he firmly associated himself with the crucifixion by inscribing his name above a crucifixion miniature in his *Prayerbook*.[60] As Ælfwine was probably involved in the compilation of the *Vitellius Psalter*'s exemplar, it is likely that this theft diagram is linked to similar devotions to the cross.

The theft diagram was to be placed in the left shoe and carried by the owner of the stolen property, and it is therefore designed as an 'all-purpose detective amulet'.[61] Another

[57] See Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 202-6.
[58] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 166; 'O God, from whom both Judas received the penalty of his crime, and the robber (received) the reward of his confession'.
[59] See Gneuss, *Handlist*, 67; Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 53-9; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 3-15. The thief also has an important role as a witness to the Resurrection in the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, which was well known in Anglo-Saxon England, see Michael Swanton, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Prose* (London: J. M. Dent, 1975), 139-57; Lenker, 'Signifying Christ', 259-61.
[60] See Karkov, 'Abbot Ælfwine', 106-7.
[61] Jolly, 'Tapping the power of the Cross', 68.

amuletic ritual in *Ælfwine's Prayerbook* (Titus D. xxvi, fols. 3rv) claims to be measured by the same length of Christ's body and the cross:

> De mensium saluatoris: Haec figura sedecies multiplicata perficit mensuram Domini nostri Iesu Christi corporis et est assumpta a ligno pretioso dominice. Crux Christi de .iiii. lignis facta est, qui uocantur cipressus et cedrus et pinus et buxus. Sed buxus non fuit in cruce, nisi tabula de illo ligno super frontem Christi fuerat, in qua conscriptum Iudei illud titulum habuerunt: 'Hic est rex Iudeorum'.[62]
>
> The measure of the Saviour: This multiplied figure completes sixteen measures of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it was adopted by the precious wood of the Lord. The cross of Christ was made from four types of wood, which are called cypress and cedar and pine and box-wood. But box-wood did not exist in the cross, unless the plank from that wood was above Christ's head, on which the Jews had written that title: 'This is the king of the Jews'.

This text originally appeared after a collection of prayers to the cross and prognostications similar to those found in the *Vitellius Psalter*.[63] *Ælfwine's Prayerbook* also concludes with a ritual for finding a thief (Titus D. xxvi, fol. 79v). A transcription of this text reads:

> Pro furto
>
> si habes aliquam rem perditam. Scribe has litteras in carta uirgine . & pone subtus capud tuum in nocte dum dormis & uideliis eum qui tibi abstulit
>
> T. R. N. I. e. ȝ ę □ ꞉ e ꞉ ʒm R. iii^{2} y ꞉ c A ii ꞉ c ꞉ c z ﻭ E ȝ o^{f} g' F iiii.
>
> For theft.

[62] Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, 144.
[63] See Roy Liuzza, 'Prayers and/or Charms Addressed to the Cross', in *Cross and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies in Honor of George Hardin Brown*, Karen Jolly, Catherine E. Karkov, and Sarah Larratt Keefer, eds (Morgantown: West Virginia UP, 2008), 276-320 at 286-7; Karkov, 'Abbot Ælfwine', 123-5.

> If you have lost anything, write these letters in a message by a virgin, and put it underneath your head at night when you sleep, and you will see him who steals from you.
>
> T. R. N. I. e. ȝ ę □ ꞉ e ꞉ ʒ̨ m R. iii^{2} y ꞉ c A ii ꞉ c ꞉ c z ﻭ E ȝ o^{f} g’ F iiii.

Pulsiano claimed that this theft ritual contains ‘magical and meaningless letters’, and Beate Günzel believes that it was ‘used by illiterate scribes’.[64] However, the letter sequence appears to be a heavily encrypted phrase with a range of graphemes from no fewer than four different alphabets. The letters may reflect certain features of the crucifixion, as the Roman capitals ‘R N I’ indicate a reverse reading of ‘INRI’ (‘Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudeorum’).[65] The number four also appears at the end of the sequence, perhaps reflecting the four types of wood used in the crucifixion. Given that many textual overlaps exist between *Ælfwine’s Prayerbook* and the *Vitellius Psalter*, the theft diagram could be an amulet that depicts the cross of Christ with deliberately encoded phrases. In a similar way to other obscure epigraphy in Anglo-Saxon texts – like the use of runes in riddles and wisdom poems – the letters require the reader to discern meaning beyond the immediate image.[66] The letters of these two theft rituals in *Ælfwine’s Prayerbook* and the *Vitellius Psalter* simultaneously conceal meaning through semantic negation and reveal the thief or the location of hidden property.

The layout of the theft diagram can be superimposed upon Anglo-Saxon depictions of the crucifixion, which follow a conventional structural pattern:

> In practically all Anglo-Saxon representations of the Crucifixion, the *dextera Dei* is shown above Christ’s head. In addition, artists included reminders of Christ’s divine status: images of the sun and moon to show his rule over the natural world; angels, who symbolize the

[64] Pulsiano, ‘Prefatory Matter’, 102; Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine’s Prayerbook*, 78.
[65] The first four letters might also signify ‘Trinitas’.
[66] For two very good recent studies of the hermeneutic nature of Anglo-Saxon runic writing, see Birkett, ‘Runes and *Revelatio*’; Jill Hamilton Clements, ‘Reading, Writing and Resurrection: Cynewulf’s Runes as a Figure of the Body’, *ASE*, 43 (2014), 133-54. I will return to this feature of abstract writing in Chapter Five.

> presence of heavenly beings at his death; a serpent beneath his feet as a sign that the prophecy of Genesis III.15 had been fulfilled; crowns or sceptres to indicate his kingship.[67]

Four figures also surround the crucified Christ in each corner of the cross, with Mary depicted in the bottom left and St John placed in the bottom right. Varying figures appear in the top corners but they are usually limited to angels or representations of the sun and moon. The crucifixion miniature from *Ælfwine's Prayerbook* (Titus D. xxvii, fol. 65v) demonstrates these features in great detail (see fig. 5). The sun and moon are depicted as human figures but both are significantly different from each other. The sun holds a circular object in its right hand with 'Sol' written in its centre, the figure is crowned, and it holds a torch in its left hand. The moon, however, is not crowned nor does it have anything in its right hand, which gestures towards Christ below. It also has a torch in its left hand, and the crescent moon is placed above its head with 'Luna' written inside its circumference. Mary and St John both have heads raised as they look up to the cross with Mary's hands upturned and John's shown to write in a book. The hand of God reaches down from the upper border and points towards an inscription above Christ's head reading 'Hic IHC Nazarenus Rex Iudeor[um]'. A halo also encompasses Christ's head and there is no object beneath Christ's feet.

This crucifixion scene from *Ælfwine's Prayerbook* is one of three drawings that divide collections of texts within the manuscript; the other two portray the Trinity with Mary, and St Peter in heaven.[68] The crucifixion image follows a text concerning alphabets (fols. 55v-56r), an explanation of the relation between the sea and the moon (fol. 56v), and the Passion according to *John* (fols. 57r-64v). It precedes a series of devotions to the cross (fols. 66r-74r) and the miniature of the Trinity (fol. 75v). Catherine Karkov states that these images function as 'icons, the visual *foci* for the prayers they accompany, and together they form a

[67] Barbara Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation in Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 178.
[68] See Karkov, 'Abbot Ælfwine', 105.

diagram of devotion and salvation'.[69] Barbara Raw argues that the image of the Trinity 'does not represent an actual scene; it is a diagram of the spiritual world, a way of making abstract theological ideas visible'.[70] The crucifixion image likewise forms a diagram of devotion and, in a similar way, the diagram of the theft ritual in the *Vitellius Psalter* places letters in locations that follow the conventional structure of crucifixion scenes. The theft ritual also seems to use a diagram of devotion that depicts this biblical scene in an abstract way.

The positioning of the letters in the theft diagram can be superimposed onto the crucifixion scene of *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*. The letters *er* and *hx* in the top left and right of the diagram correspond with the positions of the sun and moon. The difference between these letters could reflect the difference between the crowned sun and the uncrowned moon. In the inner rectangle of the diagram, the letters *h* and *d* correspond with the position of Christ's hands (*h*) and feet (*d*) on the cross. Below the inner rectangle are the letters *n* and *d* and these are placed in a similar position to Mary and St John below the crucified Christ. The fact that these letters are mirrored in the same way could reflect the close parallels between the saints' gestures.

Parallels for the letters *xh* and *hx* in the bottom corners of the diagram are more obscure. There are no figures in these positions in this crucifixion scene but a possible parallel can be found in the depiction of the Trinity in *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, where the traitors Arius and Judas appear in these positions (see fig. 6). This miniature of the Trinity also draws upon cruciform shapes and has strong connections with the manuscript's crucifixion image, as Karkov observes:

[69] Karkov, 'Abbot Ælfwine', 105.
[70] Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 183.

> While the cross itself may not be a prominent feature of the iconography of this miniature, it is nonetheless present in the cruciform haloes of Christ in both his natures, God the Father, and the dove of the Holy Spirit, and the drawing does preface the Office of the Holy Cross.[71]

Raw also argues that the Trinity image develops key aspects of the crucifixion scene, including the defeat and submission of Satan.[72] The positions of Satan, Arius, and Judas beneath Christ's feet evidently signify hell, and the two traitors mirror each other in the same way that the letters *xh* and *hx* are mirrored in the lower corners of the psalter's theft diagram. The difficulty with this interpretation is that the letters *hx* also appear in the top right of the diagram, corresponding with the position of the moon, and a further connection between these traitors and the moon would need to be made. One possibility could be that the darkness of the night (symbolised in the moon) represents hell, in contrast to the sun representing Christ in Scripture and the liturgy, but this seems rather tenuous.

All of the letters of the theft diagram mirror each other except for *er* in the top left corner, which may indicate a connection between the sun and the stolen property. Pulsiano argued that the psalms of this psalter inform obscure references in its prefatory texts, and the clue to this particular focus in the theft diagram may also be found in the psalms.[73] Psalm 18 certainly provides one possible connection between theft, the sun, the power of Christ, and God's Law:

> De aduentu Christi…
>
> Caeli enarrant gloriam dei et opera manuum eius annuntiat firmamentum. Dies diei eructat uerbum et nox nocti indicat scientiam… a summo cęlo ęgressio eius. Et occursus eius usque ad summum eius nec est qui se abscondat a calore eius. Lex domini immaculata conuertens

[71] Karkov, 'Abbot Ælfwine', 111.
[72] Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation*, 180.
[73] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 86.

animas… pręceptum domini lucidum illuminans oculos… iudicia domini uera iustificata in semetipsa. Desiderabilia super aurum et lapidem pretiosum multum et dulciora super mel et fauum.[74]

On the coming of Christ…

The heavens declare God's glory and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands. Day after day pours out speech, and night after night discloses knowledge… Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit is to the furthest end, and there is nothing concealed from its heat. The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul… the precepts of the Lord are bright, illuminating the eyes… the ordinances of the Lord are true and do justice completely. They are desirable over gold and many precious stones, and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.

The psalm is introduced in the *Psalter* as concerning the coming of Christ, and it outlines the cosmological power of the sun and its ability to reveal everything that is in the earth; the stolen property cannot be kept hidden from the illuminating light of the sun and Christ. The psalm's focus on God's Law is also highly applicable to this ritual; it is to be trusted, obeyed, and valued above all other possessions. Finally, the description of the Lord's ordinances as sweeter than honey resonates with the ritual's surrounding texts for bees and the possible reference to God's Law in the abbreviated passage of *Columcille's Circle*. The transition from the letters *er* in the top left of the theft diagram to Psalm 18 is somewhat tenuous, and it relies on the assumptions that the letters correspond with the crucifixion scene and that they may refer to the psalms of the psalter; there is no obvious connection between the letters *er*

[74] The Old English gloss reads 'heofenas bodiað (cyðað) wuldor godes 7 [ ] handa his bodiað staðol (trumne, rador) dæg þam dæge forðroccette word 7 niht nihtes bicnað (gesæde) ingehyd (wisdom)… fram (of þam) hean heofen' utgang his 7 (his ongengang) edryne (gecnyr) his oð to heanesse his ne is se ðe hine behyde fram hætan his. æ driht unforgripendlicu gecyrrende sauwlæ… bebod drih beorht (leohton) lihtende eagan ege… domas drih soðe [ ]ih[ ] on him sylfum gegyrnendlice (þa wilsuman) ofer gold 7 stan deorwurðum swyðe 7 swetran ofer hunig 7 beobread'; Rosier, ed., *Vitellius Psalter*, 37-9.

and Psalm 18. However, it is clear that the reader's eyes are drawn to this particular place in the diagram, and that the ritual is closely related to the power of the cross. There must therefore be some logic behind the letters that surpasses 'gibberish' writing and 'magic symbols'.

Possible interpretations of this diagram are evidently extensive, and the meaning behind its letters may never be recovered. Despite the letters' incomprehensibility, there are possible connections between the diagram's layout and the devotional images found in *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*. This theft ritual uses cruciform shapes and obscure writing to overcome the theft of one's property with what may be the hidden, encrypted presence of the crucified Christ.

iv. For Sick Cattle and Sheep

Directly below *Columcille's Circle* and the theft diagram is a ritual for cattle with lung disease. This text evidently continues the theme of agricultural protection and healing, and it is intimately connected to its surrounding rituals. The text opens with a set of instructions to burn something to ash on midsummer's day so that it may be used as a remedy (fig. 7):

> hryþeru beon on lungen coðon :-
>
> […] ton hylle . 7 bærn to axan on middan sumeres mæsse [dæg . do] þærto hali wæter . 7 geot on heora muð on middan [sumeres mæ]sse mergen . 7 sing þas þry sealmas þær ofer . [Deus misereatu]r nostri 7 Exurgat dominus [read deus] 7 Quicumque uult.
>
> (If) cattle […] are with (disease) of the lungs:
>
> […] (to the hill?), and burn to ash on midsummer's mass-day. Then put holy water on it, and pour in their mouths on midsummer's mass-morning. And sing these three psalms over (it):

> *May God have mercy on us* [Psalm 66], and *Arise lord* [Psalm 67], and *Whosoever wishes* [Athanasian creed].

The object to be burnt to ash is unknown but it clearly had a connection with treating lung problems or cattle. Another remedy for cattle with lung disease in Harley 585 instructs the grinding of a local plant before holy water is added for an oral treatment:

> Wyþ lungenadle hriðerum: þa wyrt on wordigum [read worðigum] (heo bið gelic hundes micgean ðære wyrte) þær wexeð blaco bergean eal swa micele swa oðre pysbeana, gecnuca; do in haligwæter; do þon(ne) on muð þæm hryþerum.
>
> For lung disease in cattle: the plant [(?)grows] in homesteads [*or* on roads] (it is like the plant 'dog's piss' [*i.e.* (?)hound's tongue] (?)where black berries grow as big as other (?)peas, pound; put into holy water, then put in the mouth of the cattle.[75]

The plant is also later burnt with incense, fennel, cotton, and hassuck. It may be the madder plant, which is also prescribed in the ritual for bees at the top of the folio, because it is elsewhere used in treatments for lung diseases in the *Herbarium Apuleis* of Harley 585 and Book II of *Bald's Leechbook*.[76] The specification to burn something to ashes at midsummer also reflects earlier calendrical concerns, and corresponds with ensuing rituals that identify similar times of the year in the grain harvest and Lammas day.

[75] Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 96-7. See also Vol. II, 264.
[76] See Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. I, 154; Vol. II, 268. The plant also had fertilising qualities, see C. P. Biggam, ed., *From Earth to Art: The Many Aspects of the Plant World in Anglo-Saxon England* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 233-7.

Cattle are prone to respiratory diseases after pasturing in warm, humid conditions, and this was most likely to occur around midsummer.[77] Placing ashes in the cattle's mouth may have had the practical value of making the animal cough to release any excess mucus in the lungs. The prescriptions of holy water and ashes, and singing psalms and the Athanasian Creed add a spiritual dimension to the ritual and reflect its penitential focus. For instance, ashes, holy water, and the same penitential psalms are used in the rite for visiting the sick, as seen in Chapter Three.[78] The first psalm reference is legible only by the word 'nostri' but Pulsiano interprets this as a reference to Psalm 66 (*Deus misereatur nostri*) which is 'a harvest song of praise for the blessing bestowed by God through the fruitfulness of the earth'.[79] This is most likely to be the case given that the incipit to Psalm 67 (*Exurgat deus*) immediately follows.[80] The relevance of Psalm 66 for an agricultural ritual is evident; the sick cattle are to become as fruitful as the bounty of the harvest: 'terra dedit fructum suum. Benedicat nos deus deus noster benedicat nos deus et metuant eum omnes fines terrę'.[81] The *Regularis Concordia* instructs the singing of this psalm during the distribution of ashes and before the procession on Ash Wednesday.[82] The *Canterbury Benedictional* also prescribes the singing of this psalm during the Ash Wednesday procession, and it was also used in the Mass on Tuesday of Holy Week and Maundy Thursday.[83] The singing of this psalm and the use of burnt ashes evoke a penitential response to this agricultural problem; the cattle's bodily

[77] See Richard F. Keeler and Anthony T. Tu, eds., *Plant and Fungal Toxins: Handbook of Natural Toxins*, Vol. I (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1983), 87; Hany Elsheikha and Jon S. Patterson, *Vetinary Parasitology* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2013), 201.
[78] See also Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert*, 287.
[79] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 93.
[80] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 89, 93, 110. Cockayne transcribed this as the beginning of Psalm 122 (*Miserere nostri*), although this is not the psalm's incipit, Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. I, 388.
[81] 'eorðan he sealde wæstm heora bletsa us god god ure bletsa us god 7 ondrædan hine ealle endas eorðan', Rosier, ed., *Vitellius Psalter*, 154; 'the earth yielded its harvest. May God bless us, may our God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth revere him'.
[82] Symons, ed. and trans., *Regularis Concordia*, 32. See also Christopher A. Jones, ed. and trans., *Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), 122-3.
[83] Woolley, ed., *Canterbury Benedictional*, 17; Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol II, 161, 164.

sickness was caused by the spiritual sickness of the monastic community, and this is countered with penance.

The second psalm (*Exurgat deus*) contrasts with the first as it is a song of triumph over God's enemies, and it contains a number of references that resonate with the ritual. Firstly, the psalm describes how God's enemies are driven away and melted like wax: 'sicut deficit fumus deficiant sicut fluit cera a facię ignis sic pereant peccatores a facię dei'.[84] In the same way, the hostile forces causing the cattle's illness and the community's spiritual sickness are driven away, and melted like the wax of candles. Secondly, God rains down blessings on all his people and creatures: 'Pluuiam uoluntariam segregabis deus hereditate tuę et infirmata est tu uero perfecisti eam. Animalia tua habitabunt in ea parasti in dulcedine tua pauperi deus'.[85] The psalm petitions God to bless the sick cattle and the monastic community. Thirdly, the psalm acknowledges God as saving His people from death, thus resonating with the ritual's curing of diseased cattle and the community's salvation from spiritual death: 'Deus noster deus saluos faciendi et domini domini exitus mortis'.[86] Finally, the psalm metaphorically refers to Egypt as a beast of the reeds, and a herd of bulls among innocent calves: 'Increpa feras harundinis congregatio taurorum in uaccis populorum'.[87] The sinful beasts of Egypt that attack innocent calves are humbled before God in the psalm, and the hostile forces that threaten the innocent cattle are made subservient to God's will in the ritual.

Unlike the *Deus misereatur nostri* that was used on Ash Wednesday and during Holy Week, the *Exurgat deus* was used in the Mass on Pentecost Sunday and the Wednesday

[84] 'swaswa teorade smic hy geteoriað swaswa flewð weax of ansyne fyres swa forwurðað synfulle fram ansyne godes', Rosier, ed., *Vitellius Psalter*, 154; 'as smoke is blown away may they be blown away, as wax melts before the face of the fire may the wicked disappear before the face of God'.
[85] 'ren wilsumne: syndrast god yrfewerdnesse þin 7 geuntrumod is þu soðlice fulfremedest him. nytenu þine eardiað on þam þu gearwadest on swetnesse þinre þearfan god', Rosier, ed., *Vitellius Psalter*, 155-6; 'You, God, will shed abundant rain on your heritage, and you restored it in your truth as it was weakened. Your flock lived in it, and you, God, provided for the poor in your goodness'.
[86] 'god ure god halne to donne 7 driht drihten utgang deaðes', Rosier, ed., *Vitellius Psalter*, 157; 'our God is a saving God, and to God, the Lord, (belongs) escape from death'.
[87] 'þu þrea wildeor hreodes gemot gaderung fearra on cuum folca', Rosier, ed., *Vitellius Psalter*, 158; 'Rebuke the beasts of the reed, the herd of bulls among the calves of the people'.

within the Octave of Pentecost.[88] The triumphant psalm declares the success of the first penitential petition to God to bless the land, livestock, and community. These psalms are also prescribed because they mark key stages of Lent and Eastertide, thus framing the most significant liturgical solemnities, and resonating with the earlier focus on Easter in the computistical calculations. Finally, the prescription to recite the Athanasian Creed confirms the power of God, the biblical events of the Easter season, and the renewed faith of the community:

> Quicumque vult salvus esse, ante omnia opus est, ut teneat catholicam fidem… Qui passus est pro salute nostra, descendit ad infernos, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis. Ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis… Haec est fides catholica, quam nisi quisque fideliter firmiterque crediderit, salvus esse non poterit.[89]
>
> Whosoever wishes to be saved, before all things the labour is that he may hold the Catholic faith… He who died for our salvation, he descended to hell, the third day he rose from the dead. He ascended into the heavens, he sits on the right of Almighty God the Father… This is the Catholic faith, which unless everybody believes faithfully and firmly, one is not able to be saved.

It is clear that the psalms were carefully chosen for their relevance to this ritual, and for their significance in the liturgical year.

The text that immediately follows the ritual for cattle with lung disease is a remedy for sheep. This has been edited as a separate 'charm' but it closely follows the prescriptions

[88] See Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 200, 202.
[89] Ferdinand Holthausen, 'Eine ae Interlinearversion des athanasischen Glaubensbekenntnisse', *Englische Studien*, 75 (1942-43), 6-8.

for treating cattle, and may be better thought of as an extension of its preceding text (see fig. 7).[90] The opening words for this ritual read:

> [Gif] sceap si on ylon [nima]n lytel niwes ealoð 7 geot innon ælc þæra sceapa muð 7 do þæt […]r swelgon þæt heom cymð to bote.
>
> If sheep are ailing, take a little new ale and pour it into each of the sheep's mouths, and do that […] swallow (so) that it provides a remedy for them.[91]

The instruction to put new ale into the sheep's mouth echoes the earlier prescription to put ashes into the mouths of the cattle. The new ale indicates a certain time of the year, probably 'a summer application when ale would be newly made after the grain harvest (e.g. August?)'.[92] This would make sense following the reference to midsummer in the preceding text, and it indicates that this oral treatment for sheep is an extension of the cattle ritual. The proximity and overlap of these two texts implies that the same psalms and Creed would also be sung around the sheep.

Applying fresh ale to sick sheep has no penitential significance, unlike the use of ashes mixed with holy water. However, the fact that the ale is new shows that the first fruits of the grain harvest were to be sacrificed for the sheep's health, reflecting the spiritual significance of new life. The sheep also has spiritual significance as a symbol for Christ's flock, the Lamb of God, and the enthroned Lamb in *Revelations*. The sheep's physical ailment and the community's spiritual sickness are reflected in the *Deus misereatur nostri* psalm, and their renewed physical and spiritual health is reflected in the *Exurgat deus* psalm. Once again, the liturgical significance of these psalms is paralleled in the treatment; the

[90] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. I, 388-9.
[91] The words preceding 'swelgon' are interpreted by Jolly as 'hi hraðor', allowing the translation 'make them swallow it quickly', Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 78.
[92] Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 67.

movement from Lent to Pentecost in the two psalms is reflected in the application of ashes and the fruits of the harvest. These ritual instructions for sheep are inseparably connected to those for cattle with lung disease, and they complete the ritual as a whole with its larger liturgical response to agricultural problems in the summer season.

v. Livestock Ritual

The text following the ritual for cattle and sheep has also been described as a 'charm' by some scholars.[93] Jolly compared this ritual to 'processionals around cemeteries at their dedication and Rogationtide processionals around the land'.[94] The text is marked off from others as its opening words are rubricated in red ink:

> Þis is þinan yrfe to bote: […] ymb þin yrfe ælce æfen him to helpe. ΛGIOS. ΛGIOS. ΛGIOS.
>
> This is a remedy for your cattle […] around your cattle every evening to help them. Holy. Holy. Holy.

This ritual closely corresponds to the previous rituals that focus on the health and protection of livestock through practical and spiritual means. The prescription also designates a time for performance as it is to be sung every evening around one's cattle, probably after Vespers. This feature of moving around one's livestock is also found in the rogation processions before the Ascension: 'We sculon… Cristes rodetacen forðeran and his þa halige godspell and oðre halignessa, mid þam we sceolon bletsian ure þa eorðlican speda, þæt synd æceras

[93] See Ker, *Catalogue*, 300; Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 89; Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. I, 386-7; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 287.
[94] Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 68, 78. See also Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 103-45.

and wudu and ure ceap'.[95] The ritual indicates that processions may have occurred on a daily basis during the summer around the monastery grounds in eleventh-century Winchester.[96]

The spiritual significance of this ritual is found in the biblical source for the *Agios* (*Sanctus*) and its liturgical usage. The *Sanctus* is a composite of the seraphic hymn from *Isaiah* 6. 3 and the cries of praise at Christ's entry into Jerusalem in *Matthew* 21. 9. Singing the hymn around the animals invokes God's divine presence among the livestock, as the hymn is used in the Mass immediately before the transformation of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood. The gospel account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem was recited during Palm Sunday processions that passed between ecclesiastical buildings and through public spaces, and this resonates with the previous ritual for cattle and sheep which uses a psalm from this period of Lent.[97] This simple ritual instruction to sing the *Agios* around cattle each evening uses a liturgical prayer to protect the community's livestock, and it has close correspondences with its surrounding materials.

vi. Barn Ritual

The line following the final 'Agios' of the livestock ritual is missing through fire damage, and the next legible words begin with 'lange sticcan feðerecgede' (see fig. 7). These words have been edited as a continuation of the previous text but they are probably the opening

[95] 'We ought to… carry forth the sign of Christ's cross and his holy gospels and other holy things, with which we must bless our worldly riches, that is fields and woods and our cattle'; Joyce Bazire and James E. Cross, eds. and trans., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 112.

[96] On processions within monastic precincts in Anglo-Saxon England, see Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 95-145. Another ritual from Harley 585 prescribes the singing of a number of liturgical prayers around livestock, see Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 96-7.

[97] See Symons, ed., *Regularis Concordia*, 34-5; Jones, ed., *Letter to Monks of Eynsham*, 124-5; Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 124. The *Regularis Concordia* also prescribes the triple repetition of 'Agios' in a response to the hymn *Populе meus* during the veneration of the cross on Good Friday, see Symons, ed., *Regularis Concordia*, 41. It is also worth remembering that other 'charms' prescribe the singing of the 'agios', as seen in the ritual against elf-sickness in *Bald's Leechbook* which draws heavily on the rite for visiting the sick (discussed in Chapter Three).

instructions for a related but different ritual.[98] The text runs from the bottom of folio 15v to line 8 of folio 16r (see figs. 7-8):

> […] lange sticcan feðerecgede . 7 writ on ægðerne sticcan […] ælcere ecge an pater noster að ende 7 leg[e] þone […]an þam berene on þa flore . 7 þone oðerne on […] ofer þam oðrum stic[c]an . [Fol. 16r] þæt þær si rode tacen on . 7 nim o[f] ðam gehalgedan hlafe þe man halgie on hlafmæssedæg feower snæda . 7 gecryme on þa feower hyrna [.] þæs berenes . Þis is þeo bletsung þærto . Vt surices garbas non noceant has preces super garbas dicis et non dicto eos suspendis hierosolimam ciuitate . ubi surices nec habitent nec habent potestatem . nec grana colligent . nec triticum congaudent . Þi‘s’ is seo oðer bletsung . Domine deus omnipotens qui fecisti cęlum et terram . tu benedicis fructum istum in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti . amen . 7 Pater noster.
>
> long four-edged sticks, and write on each edge of every stick one Paternoster to the end, and lay the (stick) on the floor of the barn, and the other on (top) above the other stick. [Fol. 16r] that there is the sign of the cross on (it). And take four pieces from the hallowed bread which man hallows on Lammas day, and crumble in the four corners of the barn. This is the blessing for that: So that mice may not harm plant sheaves, say this prayer above the sheaves ‘and I do not say you hang them in the city of Jerusalem, where mice may not live nor have power, nor gather seeds nor rejoice with wheat’. This is the other blessing: ‘Almighty Lord and God, who made the havens and the earth, you bless this fruit in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen’. And Paternoster.

These instructions make it clear that sticks are to be inscribed with the Paternoster and placed on the floor of a barn in a cruciform shape (‘rode tacen’). An interesting parallel with this prescription is found in the eleventh-century *Æcerbot* field ritual in Caligula A. vii, also

[98] Cockayne and Storms include an extra six lines up to the end of folio 15v; Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. I, 386; Vol. II, 290; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 287.

probably from Winchester (see Chapter Two). In the *Æcerbot*, four sticks are inscribed with the names of the evangelists and placed into each corner of the field to drive out evil from the land and resurrect crops by the power of the gospels. The rite for consecrating a cemetery also uses crosses to demarcate the cemetery with spiritual power.[99] The *Æcerbot* and cemetery rite offer parallels for this barn ritual, and indicate that certain liturgical practices could be adapted for different ritual practices.

The reference to Lammas day (1 August) also indicates a similar time of year for performance as the earlier references to midsummer and the time when new ale is made. Jolly comments on the significance of this ritual's reference to 'hlafmæssedæg':

> *Hlafmæsse* occurs in Anglo-Saxon texts as a date reference in the Chronicle, the Computus, and in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*, but it is not incorporated into Anglo-Saxon church rituals or calendars, where 1 August is the celebration of St Peter in chains (*ad vincula*) and / or Maccabees, as well as the deposition of Æthelwold in some cases… *Leechbook* I, lxxii says that Lammas (fifteen nights before, thirty nights after) is a bad time for blood-letting and other medicinal procedures because of venomous things in the air… I have not found in these 1 August celebrations any reference to new grain or bread, although there are liturgical manuals with blessings for new bread without any calendrical references.[100]

The Lammas bread was blessed as the first fruits of the grain harvest, echoing the use of new ale in the ritual for ailing sheep: 'the end-product of the agricultural cycle is used in a ritual to ensure its eventual success'.[101] The barn ritual instructs that the consecrated bread was to be crumbled in four corners of the building, thus forming a cruciform shape inside the barn.

[99] See Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 49. See also Helen Foxhall Forbes, *Heaven and Earth in Anglo-Saxon England: Theology and Society in An Age of Faith* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 273-8, 294-332.
[100] Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 69. See also Banham, 'Staff of Life', 299-300.
[101] Banham, 'Staff of Life', 302.

The first blessing that follows this instruction is obscure but it is apparent that it is a prayer over plant sheaves ('has preces super garbas') to protect them from the influence of mice ('surices').[102] The prayer states that the sheaves are not to be hung in the city of Jerusalem ('et non dicto eos suspendis hierosolimam ciuitate'). As Christ was hung on the cross in Jerusalem, the crops must not be killed by the power of rodents ('nec habitent nec habent potestatem'). This reference to the events in Jerusalem in Holy Week resonates with the song of Christ's entry into Jerusalem in the previous ritual, and with the penitential psalm from Ash Wednesday and Holy Week in the ritual for cattle and sheep. It may also relate to the theft diagram in that it refers to the crucifixion and protects against the theft of crops by mice. The prayer then makes reference to the gathering of wheat ('nec grana colligent . nec triticum congaudent'). This is probably an allusion to the parable of the darnel seed that is sown among the wheat by the devil to ruin the harvest (*Matthew* 13. 24-30). The darnel is gathered in a separate bundle and burnt whereas the wheat is gathered in a barn (*Matthew* 13. 30), and this may also recall Psalm 67 (*Exurgat deus*) from the ritual for cattle with lung disease where the wicked are compared to smoke that is driven away ('sicut dissipatur fumus'). Similar language from *Matthew*'s gospel is found in this prayer, as the wheat is referred to as 'triticum', the produce is 'herba et fructum', and the darnel is 'zizania' that is gathered ('colligent') and burnt.[103] This passage from *Matthew* is also the gospel reading for Septuagesima Sunday, reflecting the previous rituals' focus on Lent and Easter.[104] The gospel passage is highly relevant to this ritual that counters the power of hostile forces that attack crops. The second prayer is much shorter and simply petitions the Creator of heaven and earth to bless the produce in the name of the Trinity ('qui fecisti cęlum et terram tu benedicis

[102] Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 385 (s. xiii) also contains a ritual to protect a barn from rats, see Jolly, 'Prayers from the Field', 110.
[103] Other blessings for barns incorporate similar gospel parables about agriculture, see Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, 279; Jolly, 'Prayers from the Field', 96, 107-8.
[104] Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 122.

fructum istum'), and this formula is commonly found in liturgical blessings for palms and new fruit.[105]

The two prayers of this barn ritual have close liturgical analogues. The first blends an allusion to Christ's Passion with a gospel passage, and the second employs a liturgical formula from Mass blessings. This text is a unique ritual that uses liturgical prayers, readings, and objects, and it is closely related to the previous texts in the collection. It continues the rituals chronologically (from midsummer to Lammas), it marks the physical space of a barn with a cruciform shape, and it instructs the recital of liturgical prayers inside an agricultural enclosure.

vii. Sphere of Life and Death

Immediately following this barn procession is an introduction to the second Sphere of Life and Death (identified as the Sphere of Apuleius, 'Spera Apulei') with the diagram drawn below (see fig. 8).[106] The diagram is akin to the first Sphere on folio 14v (identified as the Sphere of Pythagoras, 'spere pitagore [p]hilosophi') and *Columcille's Circle* on folio 15v.[107] It is directly linked to these Spheres in determining the outcome of an illness by lunar calculations, and it draws upon the computistical calculations and lunar prognostications found earlier in the prefatory collection. Like other rituals in this collection, this prognosticatory diagram was used to calculate the spiritual health or sickness of the monastic community as well as the health or sickness of humans, livestock, and crops.

The prose text that introduces this Sphere explains how to use the diagram, and numerical values for letters are provided beside the Sphere. Other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts containing the Apuleian Sphere also have a verse introduction beginning 'Collige per

[105] See Wilson, ed., *Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, 280-2; Turner, ed., *Claudius Pontificals*, 63-5; Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, Vol. II, 416-20.
[106] For a transcription of this introduction, see Chardonnens, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 195.
[107] Facsimiles of the two Spheres of Life and Death are printed in Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 196, 216.

numerum' which is associated with the legend of St Pachomius.[108] According to the legend, Pachomius received a divine message from an angel about the monastic rule and the correct dating of Easter:

> in Byrhtferth's version [in Oxford, St John's College, MS 17] Pachomius receives a method for calculating the Paschal feast rather than a monastic rule; he received his Paschal rule in a message delivered by an angel and written in 'gyldenan stafas' (golden letters). The Leofric Missal illustrates this divine transmission of Easter calculations, depicting Pachomius beneath the giant hand of God that reaches down with a mnemonic verse in multicolored letters written along the length of each finger.[109]

The contexts surrounding other versions of the Sphere reveal a connection between this prognosticatory device and divine secrets from heaven that are transmitted through mystical letters. While the two Spheres of the *Vitellius Psalter* do not contain this verse introduction, they were probably copied from a version that contained the Pachomius legend.

The Apuleian Sphere is an appropriate addition to the collection as it links the previous calculations and encrypted rituals to the final texts about secret writing. Indeed, another version of the Sphere from Oxford, St John's College, MS 17 includes 'Greek labels and a form of cryptographic writing, which contribute to its scientific appeal'.[110] The same cryptographic system of vowel substitution follows immediately after this Sphere in the *Vitellius Psalter*, indicating that this prognostication was sometimes closely related to coded writing.

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[108] London, BL, MSS Harley 3667 (fol. 4v), Cotton Tiberius C. i (fol. 7v), Cotton Tiberius C. vi (fol. 6r), Cotton Caligula A. xv (fol. 125v), Arundel 155 (fol. 9v); *Leofric A* (fol. 50r); Oxford, St John's College, MS 17 (fol. 8r). See also Linda Voigts, 'The Latin Verse and Middle English Prose Texts on the Sphere of Life and Death in Harley 3719', *The Chaucer Review*, 21 (1986), 291-305; Roy M. Liuzza, 'The Sphere of Life and Death: Time, Medicine, and the Visual Imagination', in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard, eds (Toronto: Toronto UP, 2005), 28-52.
[109] Edward Christie, 'By Means of a Secret Alphabet: Dangerous Letters and the Semantics of *Gebregdstafas* (*Solomon and Saturn I*, Line 2b)', *Modern Philology*, 109 (2011), 145-70 at 166.
[110] Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 31, 221-2. For details of this manuscript, see Chapter Five.

viii. Encrypted Riddle

The final folio (16v) of this prefatory collection begins with an encrypted riddle that is followed by an explanation of secret writing. These texts are designed to educate the reader in composing and deciphering secret messages, and they provide entertaining exercises in code-breaking. The encryptions follow a simple substitution of vowels for their following consonants, and this system was used by Boniface, Dunstan, and Carolingian writers.[111] On folios 17rv, three later scribes added prayers using the same code, indicating that these exercises were still being read after the Anglo-Saxon period.[112] The encrypted riddle in the *Vitellius Psalter* reads:

> Nys þks frfgfn sy:llkc þknc to rædfnnf. [Þu þe færst on þone weg gret ðu minne broðor minre modor ceorl] þone acende min agen wif . 7 ic wæs mines broðor dohtor . 7 ic eom mines fæder modor . geworden . 7 mine bearn syndon geworden [m]ines fæder modor.[113]

> This question is not a strange thing to explain. [When you go by the way, greet my brother, my mother's husband] then it begot my own wife. And I was my brother's daughter, and I am become my father's mother, and my sons are become my father's mother.

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[111] See Levison, *England and the Continent*, 292 and Chapter Five. It is also found in Riddle 36 of the *Exeter Book*, and in Hrabanus Maurus' *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* (Cambridge, Trinity College, B.16.3, fol. 1r), see Simon Keynes, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Trinity College*, OEN Subsidia 18 (Binghamton: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1992), 13; Gerhard F. Strasser, 'Ninth-Century Figural Poetry and Medieval Easter Tables – Possible Inspirations for the Square Tables of Trithemius and Vigenère?', *Cryptologia*, 34 (2009), 22-6.

[112] For incipits of these texts, see Pulsiano, *Psalters I*, 53.

[113] See also Max Förster, ed., 'Ein altenglisches Prosa-Rätsel', *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 115 (1905), 392-3 at 392. Förster based his transcription on Wanley's in 1705 but the words from 'Þu þe færst' to 'modor ceorl' – about a quarter of a line – are now illegible in the Vitellius manuscript. I have indicated this and adapted other minor features of Förster's transcription. Another version of the Vitellius riddle is also found in a mid-eleventh-century hand in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 572 (fol. 40r). This manuscript originated in Wales at the end of the tenth century, and it was later brought to the New Minster, Winchester where the riddle was added, see Gneuss, *Handlist*, 95; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 15. This version reads 'A^{b} E^{f} I^{k} O^{p} V^{x}: c:.:nn· n:.s m·g· ð:.: aræd·n hwæt þ:·s m·g: b:on kc w:n: þ(æt) h:·t nis n· :ð ræd: Is ðks frfgfn sfllkc þknge to rædfnf', transcription my own. When deciphered this reads 'cunna nis magað ðu arædan hwæt þis mage beon ic wene þæt hit nis ne eð ræde. Is ðis fregen sellic þinge to rædene'.

The opening line is encrypted and when it is decoded it reads 'Nys þis fregen syellic þinc to rædenne'. The riddle that follows is 'a kinship riddle' and a solution of 'hound and hind' has recently been proposed.[114] In its monastic context, the riddle can be interpreted in a spiritual way as all human relationships are relinquished to become a member of the fraternity. The monks are brothers, they are all sons of God, and the ordained monks are fathers. This also applies to nuns as all are sisters, they are brides of Christ, and they are subordinate to an abbess or Mother Superior.

The coded sentence acts as a title for the riddle, indicating that the task of solving it is not difficult. However, the phrase can also stand alone as a riddle in its own right as the reader must decipher its meaning before solving the kinship riddle. It must be remembered that the explanation for how to use this form of coded writing comes *after* this text, and so the reader is immediately challenged with decoding this sentence before it is explained below. The code is relatively simple and its appearance at the top of the folio indicates that the reader is confronted with a different type of enigmatic text as they turn the page after reading the Sphere of Life and Death. The riddle's appearance at the end of this collection of calculations, predictions, and rituals indicates a spiritual function of encrypted writing and hidden knowledge that must be discerned. This is developed in the final text of the prefatory collection which provides examples from religious texts to explain how to use the code.

ix. Explanation of Secret Writing

The text that immediately follows the riddle begins with a short introduction in Old English:

[114] See R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain, eds., *A History of Old English Literature*, 2nd edn (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005), 347; Niles, *Enigmatic Poems*, 98-9; Murphy, *Exeter Book Riddles*, 10.

> A. E. I. O. U. a^{b} e^{f} i^{k} o^{p} u^{x} – Ðis is quinque uocales . mid þysum fif stafum man mæg writan swa hwæt swa he wile . hit is lytel cræft . ac þeah man mæg dwelian manega [m]en mid . ægðer ge ware . ge unware :-.
>
> A. E. I. O. U. a^{b} e^{f} i^{k} o^{p} u^{x} – This is the five vowel [system]. With these five letters a man is able to write that which he wishes. It is a small skill, although he may dwell with many men, both the enlightened and the ignorant.

This form of encryption offered a practical way to communicate in secret. It would have been very useful in a monastic context as it would have provided a monk under the vow of silence with an alternative method of communication. This system would have helped to conceal messages so that they would not be easy for others to read if they were intercepted, whether they were learned or unlearned (‘ægðer ge ware . ge unware’).

The examples that follow this introduction begin with a simple demonstration of how to substitute letters but they become increasingly more complex as multiple different methods of encryption are introduced. Punctuation marks, dots, horizontal and vertical lines, and the letter ‘x’ are all used to mark the vowels; ‘a’ has one dot or line or ‘x’, ‘e’ has two, ‘I’ has three, ‘o’ has four, and ‘u’ has five. All of the examples are in Latin with the exception of the final exercise, which contains a complex anagram in the vernacular.[115] Among the Latin examples are two references to the psalms: ‘Omnium inimicorum suorum dominabitur’ (Psalm 9. 26); ‘Omnes gentes plaudite manibus’ (Psalm 46. 2).[116] The use of psalm references in these exercises is not surprising in a glossed psalter, although this is the only Anglo-Saxon psalter which contains this text.[117] The first reference is interesting for its context of a deceitful enemy who misleads with his tongue (‘sub lingua eius labor et dolor’,

[115] For solutions to these exercises, see Pulsiano, ‘Prefatory Matter’, 97-9.
[116] ‘He will rule over all his enemies’, ‘All people clap your hands’.
[117] See Pulsiano, ‘Prefatory Matter’, 97.

9. 28).[118] The reference indicates that such misleading enemies will be overcome by God's help, and may playfully refer to the code as a laborious task which must be overcome like God's enemies. The second reference contrasts with the first as it calls on the faithful to clap their hands in joy, and 'might be construed as applauding the reader for having succeeded thus far in deciphering the text'.[119] The other Latin examples include a phrase from Origen's homily for Palm Sunday which explains the meaning of the town Betheage ('Betheage domus maxilli interpretatur'),[120] a comment on the mysteries of the Law ('Quia in ea ruminabant sacerdotes misteria legis'),[121] the Paternoster, and the name of God ('in nomine dei summi').[122] The increasingly complicated examples are taken from an exegetical text (Origen's homily), Scripture (the Paternoster), and commentaries on divine mysteries and the unknowable name of God.

The final exercise is the most complex, and it uses an encrypted anagram in the vernacular. Pulsiano demonstrated that the solution to this exercise reveals the name of the text's author:

> The encoded final line… can be transliterated as follows: Æluunfei emuuart deræ cðeðuenen. Rearrangement of the letters in this cryptogram reveals the solution to the puzzle: Ælfuuine me uurat . ræde ðu ðe cenne (Ælfwine wrote me. Read you who might be able)… If an argument can be sustained in favour of Ælfwine, abbot of the New Minster, as the scribe of the prefatory matter and the Old English gloss of Vitellius E xviii… we receive intimations of a rudimentary portrait of the controlling mind behind these works.[123]

[118] 'under tungan his gewinn 7 sar', Rosier, ed., *Vitellius Psalter*, 17; 'under his tongue are labour and pain'.
[119] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 98.
[120] 'Betheage is interpreted as the house of jawbones', see M. F. Toal, ed., *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, Vol. II (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 159, 168.
[121] 'Because in it the priests were ruminating on the mysteries of the Law'. I do not know of any source for this reference.
[122] 'In the name of God the most high'.
[123] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 99-100, 102.

Anagrams that use runic letters are also found in Riddles 19 and 75 of the *Exeter Book*, and Cynewulf's encrypted signatures have been viewed in a similar way.[124] Formulaic inscriptions of proprietorship that utilise both Roman and runic script are also found in many engraved objects from Anglo-Saxon England.[125] However, unlike these other examples, Ælfwine's identity as the text's author is deliberately concealed in the most difficult cryptogram of the manuscript.

The solution to this cryptogram presents an ecclesiastical authority who actively engaged with the composition of coded texts, and this evidence is corroborated in other codes contained in *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*. Folio 13v of Titus D. xxvii contains a cryptogram of the name Ælsinus who was a scribe that worked under Ælfwine. Ælsinus was also the main scribe of the *Liber Vitae* that was composed after 1031 when Ælfwine became Abbot of the New Minster.[126] The *Vitellius Psalter* was produced after *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, and Pulsiano concluded that 'we are dealing not with an original composition by Ælfwine but with a transmitted text in Vitellius E xviii' from an earlier exemplar.[127] It is possible that Ælfwine may have composed or compiled all of the psalter's prefatory texts, and his interest in encryption that is evident in *Ælfwine's Prayerbook* offers an interesting connection between the psalter's abstract epigraphy and secret writing. This final text of the prefatory collection complements the initial decoding of the cosmos in the computistical calculations of Easter at the very beginning of the psalter. The divine ordering of the world is initially deciphered, predictions of cosmological movements are then made, rituals use liturgical

[124] See Lois Bragg, 'Runes and Readers: In and Around "The Husband's Message"', *Studia Neophilologica*, 71 (1999), 34-50 at 38; Birkett, 'Runes and *Revelatio*', 774-8; Clements, 'Cynewulf's Runes', 148-54.
[125] See Ramey, 'Writing Speaks', 342-3. Another Anglo-Saxon formula that is similar reads 'Wulfwi me wrat', see Gameson, *The Scribe Speaks?*, 18.
[126] See Simon Keynes, ed., *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester: British Library Stowe 944, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A. VIII and British Library Cotton Titus D. XXVII* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1996), 111-13.
[127] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 103.

prayers and abstract letters to harness spiritual power, and this exercise engages with secret writing to reveal and re-conceal Scriptural and exegetical knowledge.

Conclusions

When the texts of the prefatory collection are read as a whole, it becomes clear that the *Vitellius Psalter* is a liturgical book that seeks to decode and predict God's will in the heavenly movements, to anticipate agricultural problems and offer liturgical responses to them, and to re-conceal knowledge by encrypting language:

> In broad perspective, the texts begin by elucidating mysteries and end by instructing how to encode secrets… A reader coming to the end of the prefatory matter – perhaps unsuccessfully grappling with the encoded final line – and turning the (originally) blank fol. 17rv surely must have felt the impact of the ornate, visually complex initial *B* of the *Beatus vir* page with its interlined text that, very literally, translates the divine Word.[128]

The *Vitellius Psalter* reveals that scribes from the monastic school at the New Minster, Winchester used language in particular ways to understand, engage with, and conceal divine mysteries. When considered in their manuscript contexts, it is clear that the texts from the *Vitellius Psalter* which have been traditionally categorised as 'charms' form part of a coherent unit within this manuscript. There is no reason to think that contemporaries would have seen them as different to other kinds of useful knowledge or that they distinguished them from other rituals that developed from mainstream liturgical practices.

[128] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 103.

List of Figures

Figure 1: London, BL, Cotton Vitellius E. xviii, fol. 15v

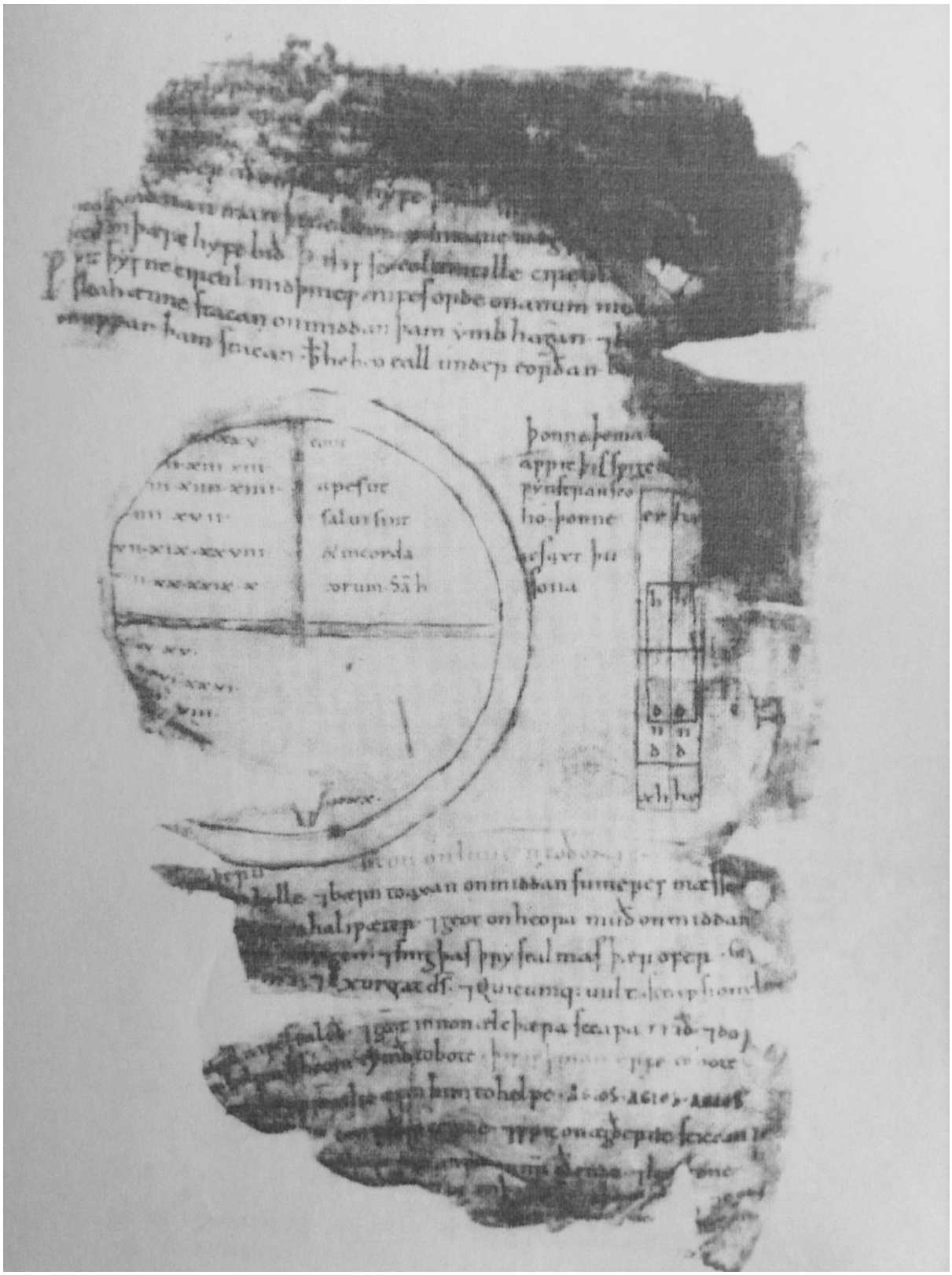


Figure 2: London, BL, Cotton Vitellius E. xviii, fol. 15v

(*Columcille's Circle* and Theft Diagram)

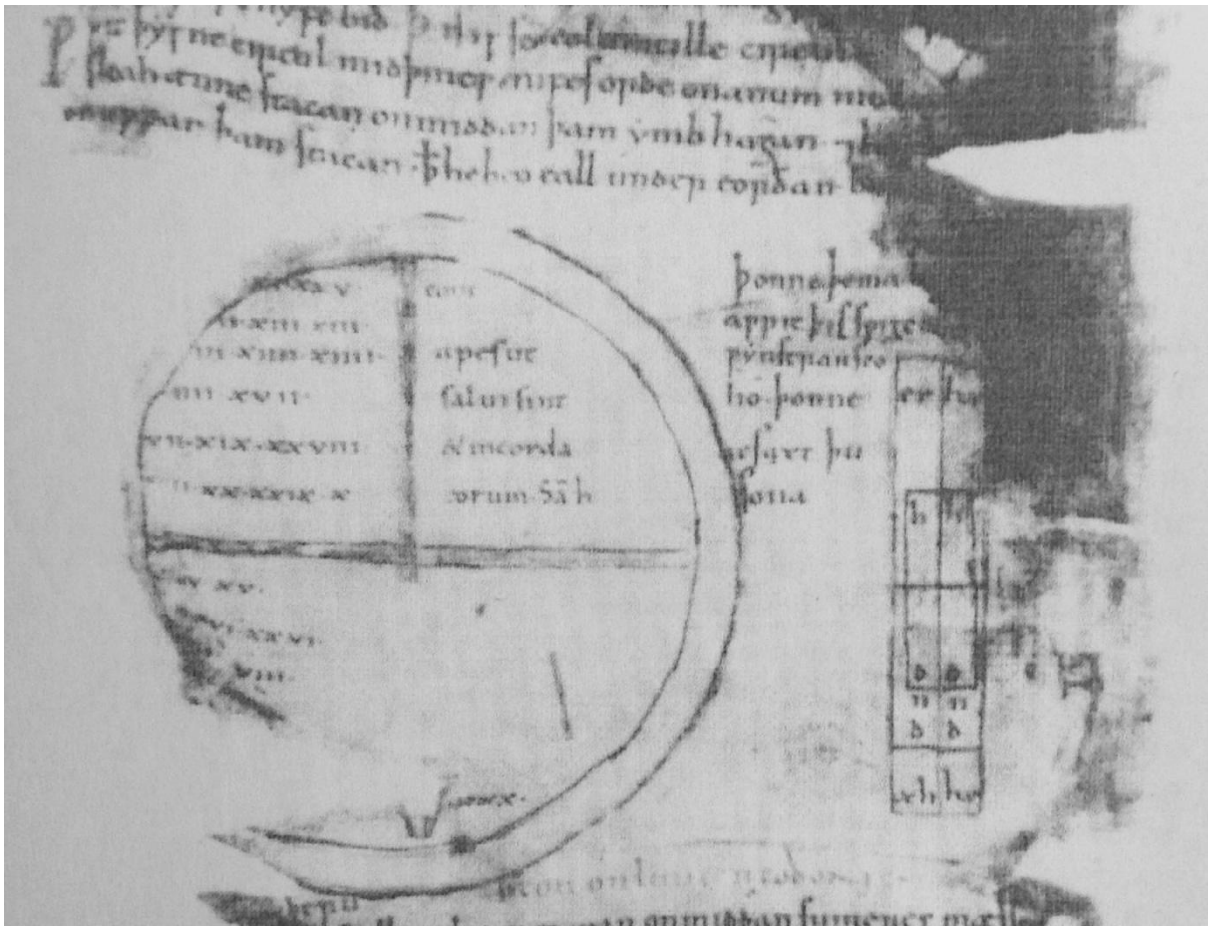


Figure 3: London, BL, Cotton Vitellius E. xviii, fol. 15v

(Theft Diagram)

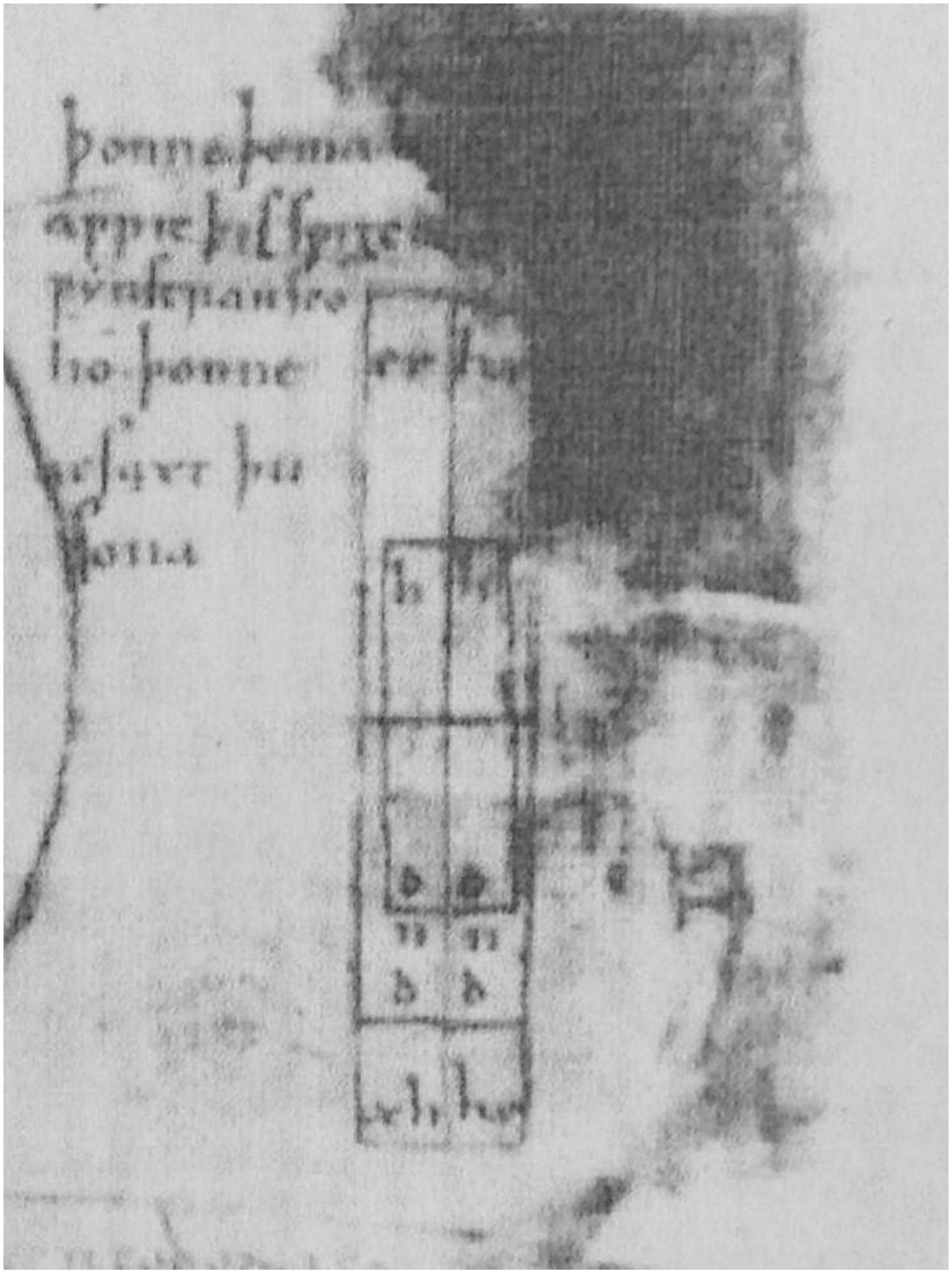
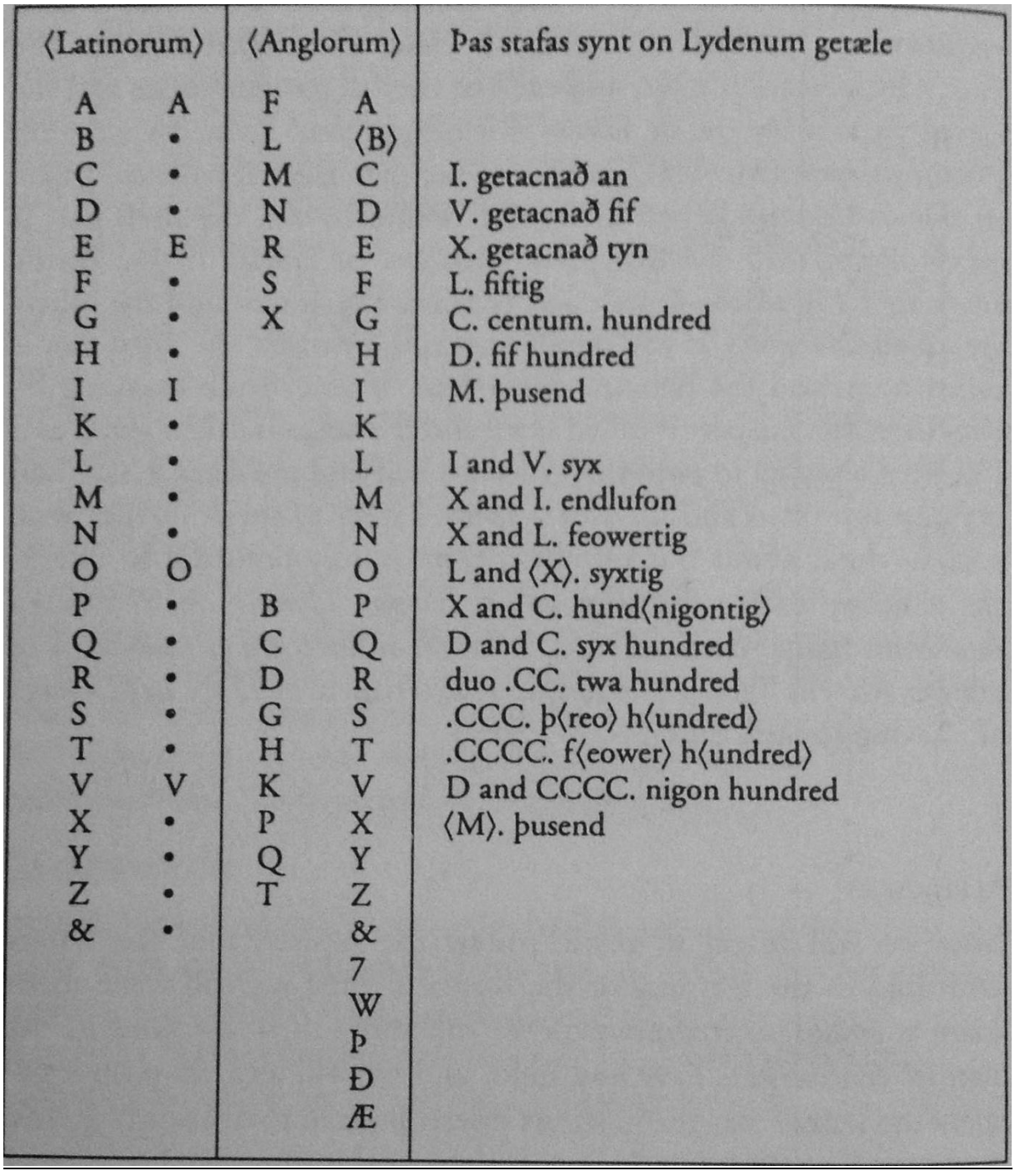


Figure 4: Numerical Values of the Roman and English Alphabets
Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, 186.



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B	•	L	⟨B⟩	
C	•	M	C	I. getacnað an
D	•	N	D	V. getacnað fif
E	E	R	E	X. getacnað tyn
F	•	S	F	L. fiftig
G	•	X	G	C. centum. hundred
H	•		H	D. fif hundred
I	I		I	M. þusend
K	•		K	
L	•		L	I and V. syx
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Figure 5: London, BL, Cotton Titus D. xxvii, fol. 65v

(Crucifixion scene, *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*)
Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, Plate I.

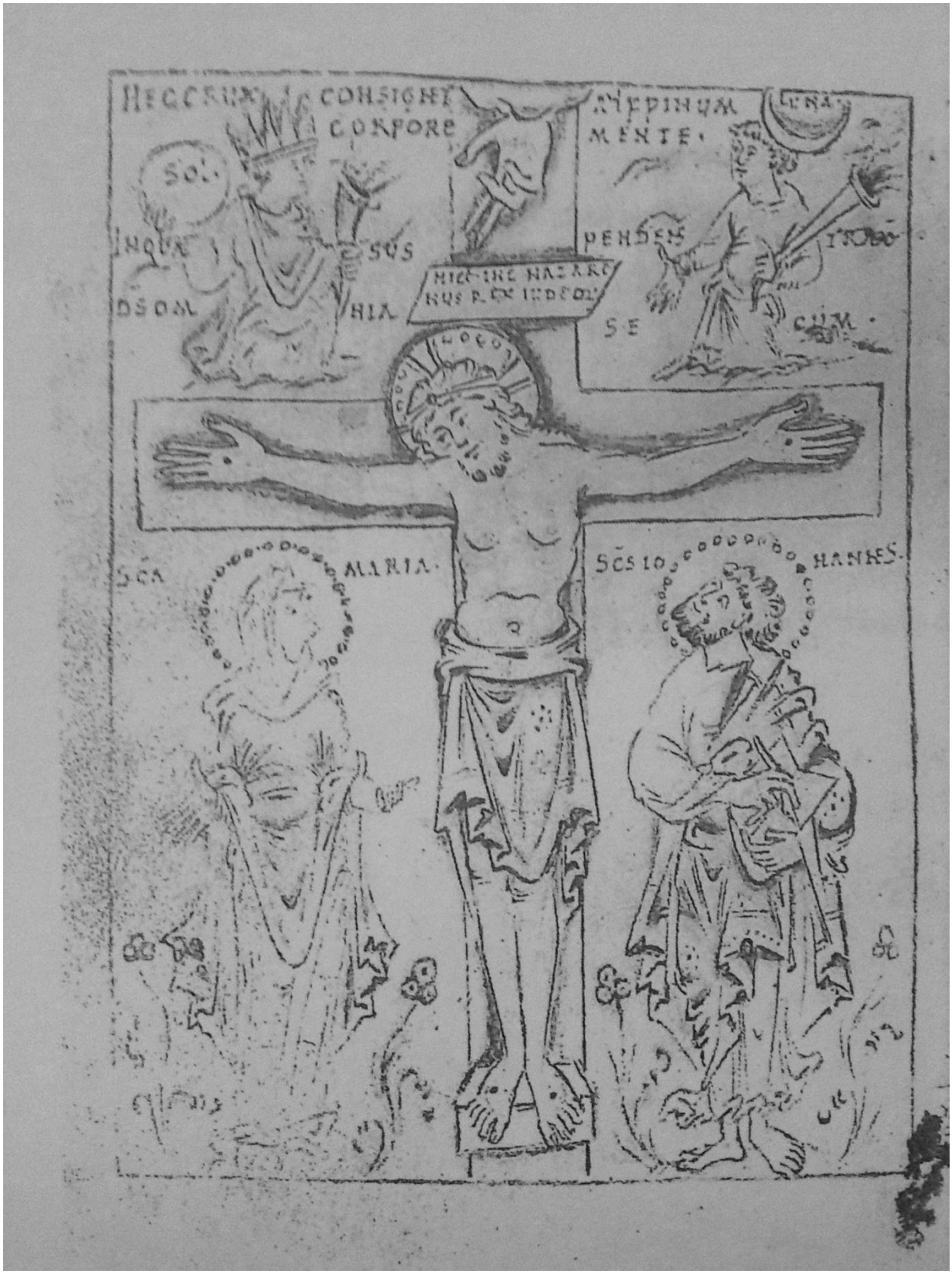


Figure 6: London, BL, Cotton Titus D. xxvii, fol. 75v

(Miniature of the Trinity, *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*)
Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, Plate II.

Figure 7: London, BL, Cotton Vitellius E. xviii, fol. 15v

(For cattle with lung disease; remedy for sheep; opening instructions for livestock ritual)

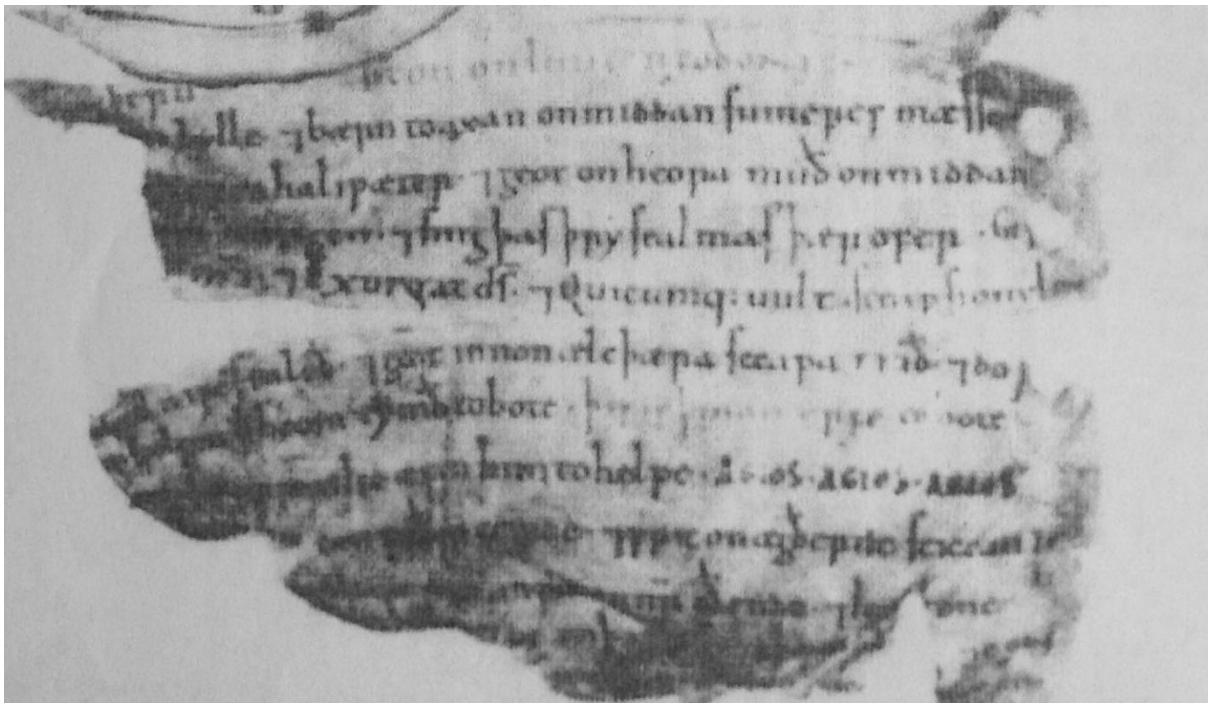
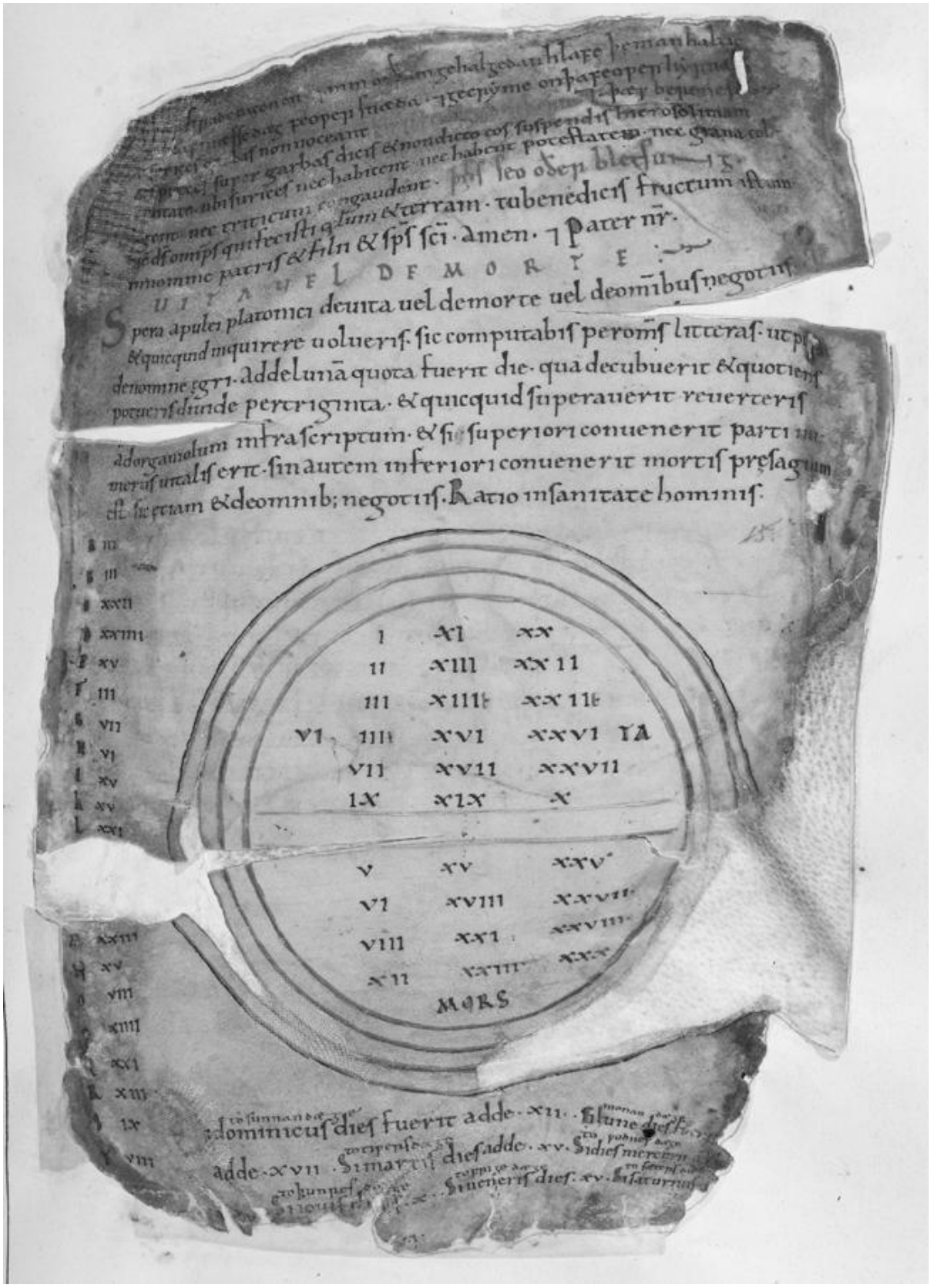


Figure 8: London, BL, Cotton Vitellius E. xviii, fol. 16r

(Sphere of Life and Death)
Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 196.



5

In the Beginning Was the Letter: The Cosmological Power of 'Gibberish'

> 'Like their ancient predecessors, learned Anglo-Saxons perceived in writing the ability to make knowledge secret by transposing one thing into another. This secrecy might be created by using encryption, by jumbling or substituting letters'.[1]

Some of the rituals of the *Vitellius Psalter* have been described as 'gibberish charms' by editors, but the surrounding manuscript context may inform their abstract epigraphy. The final part of this thesis engages with this phenomenon of apparent 'gibberish' writing which features consistently in rituals that have been categorised as 'charms'. The *Vitellius Psalter* reveals the interest in obscure writing in late Anglo-Saxon monasteries, in this case specifically the New Minster, Winchester. The explanation of coded writing in this manuscript explicitly states that letters can be manipulated to communicate in secret ('mid þysum fif stafum man mæg writan swa hwæt swa he wile'),[2] and its rituals use individual letters to encode meaning. *Ælfwine's Prayerbook* also contains a number of texts with abstract sequences of letters, particularly the ritual against theft that instructs the writing of 'has litteras' from at least four different alphabets. We have also encountered a comparable use of letters in the 'charm' to obtain favours in Caligula A. xv, which was discussed in Chapter Three. This ritual claims that a specific sequence of 'stafas' has the power to influence important political authorities ('Gif þu wille ga[…] þ[in]um hla[forde] oþþ[e] to kyninge oþþe to oþrum menn oððe [t]o gemote þonne bær þu þas stafas').[3]

[1] Christie, 'Secret Alphabet', 169.
[2] 'With these five letters a man is able to write that which he wishes'.
[3] 'If you wish to go to your lord or to the king or to another man or to a council, then carry these letters with you'.

Chapter Two also showed that a number of *galdra* and *gebed* contain obscure letters, words, and phrases from several languages. In *Bald's Leechbook,* for example, a ritual for spring fever prescribes a *galdor*, two 'godcund gebed' (divine prayers) which use the runic and Roman alphabets, and the writing of obscure Greek letters in silence ('sceal mon swigende þis writan').[4] Other rituals in this manuscript prescribe the writing of 'greciscum stafum' for a *galdor* against elf-sickness,[5] and the singing of an obscure Irish *galdor* ('Acræ ærcræ ærnem') against flying venom.[6] Two rituals against worms in Harley 585 also provide obscure Irish, Old English, and Latin words and phrases for their *galdra* (beginning 'Gonomil orgomil marbumil' and 'Acre arcre arnem' respectively).[7] These texts combine individual 'stafas' to form powerful prayers, *gebed*, and *galdra*. There may have been a deliberate element of secrecy and concealment deployed in these rituals, indicating that they were understood to be too powerful to become common knowledge.

The obscure language of these and other rituals has often been described as 'gibberish', and it has been interpreted as evidence of the unlearned, folk nature and oral transmission of 'charms'. Building on the manuscript contexts already discussed in previous chapters, I argue that it makes far more sense to read these rituals in the context of learned, Patristic traditions that were interested in alphabets, letters, numerology, and codes. This chapter provides an overview of how 'gibberish' has been used to classify a significant proportion of texts in the 'charms' corpus, and it considers examples of texts that have been classified in this way. It then outlines philosophical approaches to language in late Anglo-Saxon England, and argues that this is the context in which 'gibberish' rituals were understood. There is much work yet to be done to understand these rituals better, and reading

[4] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 140.
[5] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 138.
[6] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 112.
[7] Pettit, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. I, 14, 32.

them in this context could help to uncover liturgical, Scriptural, or apocryphal details that may be hidden in their secret writing.

'Gibberish' in Anglo-Saxon Rituals

In his 1909 edition of Anglo-Saxon 'charms', Felix Grendon claimed that a large proportion of these texts are characterised by their use of 'powerful names or magical formulas composed of senseless words'.[8] According to Grendon, these formulas consist of an 'incoherent jumbling of words, miscellaneously derived from Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Gaelic, and other tongues'.[9] He suggested that these apparent meaningless, jumbled words may have been corrupted from classical sources but concluded that 'since gibberish spells have been found among peoples widely different in race, it may fairly be argued that English spells arose among the English themselves'.[10] Grendon therefore created a large sub-category of 'gibberish charms' which he believed reflected a distinctively English, heathen tradition:

> These conjurations, unlike the preceding ones, are crude, formless pieces, destitute of literary merit. Their distinguishing feature is a meaningless formula composed of a jumble of more or less obscure words. Occasionally a Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Gaelic, or Anglo-Saxon word appears, and a few words seem to have had their origin in one or other of those languages; but the derivation of a majority of the words is not ascertainable… [in some 'charms'] the formula consists, not of meaningless words strung together, but of unintelligible collocations of liturgical Latin. As a rule, the ceremonies prescribed are of Heathen ancestry.[11]

[8] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 114.
[9] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 114.
[10] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 124.
[11] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 124, 127.

Grendon selected ritual texts from three manuscripts (*Bald's Leechbook*; London, British Library, MS Cotton Faustina A. x; Harley 585) for their use of 'gibberish', and he associated rituals in Caligula A. xv and the *Vitellius Psalter* with this sub-category.[12] He thought that the letters in these rituals are 'formless pieces' but it may be the case that they were not meant to be readily accessible to the reader; prior knowledge of deliberately obscured language and foreign alphabets would have been required to understand and use their 'unintelligible collocations'.[13]

Examples of texts that Grendon classed as 'gibberish charms' include rituals for toothache, a dwarf, and theft from Harley 585:

> *Wið Toðece* (fol. 135v)
>
> Sing ðis wið toðece, syððan sunne beo on setle, swiðe oft: 'Caio laio quaque, uoaque ofer sæloficia sleah manna wyrm'. Nemne her þone man and his fæder, cweð þonne: 'Lilumenne, aceð þæt ofer eall þonne alið; coliað, þonne hit on eorðan hatost byrneð; finit, amen'.[14]
>
> *Wið Dweorh* (fol. 164v)
>
> Writ ðis ondlang ða earmas wiþ dweorh: + t + w A and gnid cyleðenigean on ealað. Sanctus Macutus, sancte Victorici.
>
> Writ ðis ondlang ða earmas wiþ dweorh: + t + p + N + w + t + m + M + w A and gnid cyleðenigean on ealað. Sanctus Macutus, sancte Victorici.[15]
>
> *Wið Þeofentum* (fol. 178r)

[12] See Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 116, 168-73, 202-7, 210, 217-19, 233-51.
[13] Grendon, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 124, 127.
[14] Grendon, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 170; 'Sing this against toothache very often, when the sun sets: "Caio laio quaque, uoaque ofer sæloficia sleah manna wyrm". Here name the man and his father, say then: "Lilumenne, aceð þæt ofer eall þonne alið; coliað, þonne hit on eorðan hatost byrneð; finit, amen"'.
[15] Grendon, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 210; 'Write this along the arms against a dwarf: + t + w A and crumble calendine into ale. Saint Macutus, Saint Victoricus. Write this along the arms against a dwarf: + t + p + N + w + t + m + M + w A and crumble calendine into ale. Saint Macutus, Saint Victoricus'.

> Wið Þeofentum: Luben luben niga efið efið niga fel ceid fel, delf cumer fel orcgaei cuefor dard, giug farig fidig delou delupih.[16]

These 'gibberish' texts show that a number of languages were used in such formulas. The ritual for toothache shows elements of Old English ('sleah manna wyrm'), phonetic Greek ('Caio laio'), and Latin ('quaque, uoaque'; 'finit'). The ritual against a dwarf abbreviates names or words or phrases with single letters, and it separates each with markers for the sign of the cross. The theft ritual also seems to use obscure Irish with Anglo-Saxon letters (namely 'ð'). Grendon classed many more texts as 'gibberish charms' according to their similar uses of language.[17]

In the second main corpus of Anglo-Saxon 'charms', Godfrid Storms described how foreign languages appealed to English scribes: 'The Anglo-Saxons borrowed from diverse sources, Greek, Irish, Hebrew and especially Latin, and a number of charm formulas evidently owe their effect to the mystification of a foreign tongue'.[18] He also maintained that 'gibberish' is one of the main criteria that can be used to identify 'charms':

> [Against tooth-ache] This and the next twenty formulas may be called 'gibberish or jingle charms', because the contents have become incomprehensible for the most part. The reason lies in the introduction of foreign elements whose meaning soon became unknown, with the result that the words gradually developed into unintelligible, meaningless sounds.[19]

Storms greatly added to Grendon's collection of 'gibberish' rituals as he included twenty-one out of eighty-six texts in this category. They are taken from nine of the twenty-three

[16] Grendon, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 168; 'Against theft: Luben luben niga efið efið niga fel ceid fel, delf cumer fel orcgaei cuefor dard, giug farig fidig delou delupih'.
[17] See Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 113-16.
[18] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 1.
[19] Storms, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 297. See also pp. 5, 38, 119, 271.

manuscripts that Storms used for his edition, demonstrating that 'gibberish' constitutes a significant proportion of his corpus of 'charms'.[20]

Examples of texts that Storms classified as 'gibberish charms' include rituals against a dwarf, black blains, and fever:

> *Wiþ Dworh* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 3. 6, fol. 2v, s. xi)
>
> and thebal guttatim aurum et thus de. + albra Iesus. + alabra Iesus + Galabra Iesus. +
>
> Wið þone dworh. on. III. oflætan writ: THEBAL GUTTA.[21]

> *Black Blains* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 163, fol. 227, s. xi^{med})
>
> Tigað. Tigað. Tigað. calicet ac locluel sedes adclocles arcre encrcre erernem Nonabaioth arcum cunat arcum arcua fligata soh wiþni necutes cuterii rafaf þegal uflen binchni. arta. arta. arta. tuxuncula. tuxuncula. tuxuncula.
>
> Querite et invenietis. pulsate et aperietur vobis. Crux Matheus. crux Marcus. crux Lucas. crux Iohannes. Adiuro te pestiferum virus per patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum. ut amplius non noceas neque crescas sed arescas. Amen.[22]

> *Wiþ Gedrif* (London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. xv, fol. 129r, 1072 × 1076)
>
> Wið gedrif . + In nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi. tera. tera. tera. testis. contera. taberna. gise. ges. maude. leis. bois. eis. audies. maudies. moab. lib. lebes.
>
> Dominus deus adiutor sit illi. illi. eax. filiax. artifex. Amen.[23]

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[20] The manuscripts are: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 367 (fol. 52r); Cambridge, Gonville & Caius College, MS 379 (fol. 49r); Caligula A. xv (fols. 129r, 140r); Faustina A. x (fol. 116r); the *Vitellius Psalter* (fol. 15v); Harley 585 (fols. 135r-137r, 178rv, 182rv, 185v-186v); *Bald's Leechbook* (fols. 20r-v, 43r-v); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. 7-3-6 (fols. 1, 2v); and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 163 (fol. 227), see Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, viii, 297-311.

[21] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 305; 'and thebal guttatim aurum et thus de. + albra Iesus. + alabra Iesus + Galabra Iesus. + Against the dwarf write this on three Hosts: THEBAL GUTTA'.

[22] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 302.

[23] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 300; 'Against fever: + In nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi. tera. tera. tera. testis. contera. taberna. gise. ges. maude. leis. bois. eis. audies. maudies. moab. lib. lebes. Dominus deus adiutor sit illi. illi. eax. filiax. artifex. Amen'.

In the same way as Grendon, Storms classed these and other rituals as 'gibberish' according to their use of obscure languages. The ritual against a dwarf uses Latin ('aurum et thus') and what appears to be Hebrew ('thebal'), and it includes markers for the sign of the cross. It was written by an eleventh-century scribe on a flyleaf of a manuscript containing poetry by Prudentius (with added glosses in Old English and Latin), and verses on the *Passion of St Romanus*.[24] When the obscure language of this ritual is considered with the manuscript's texts, it is possible that the scribe of this ritual had read the manuscript and was interested in mystical languages and Christian poetry. The ritual for black blains uses Latin and apparent Irish, and it was added in the mid eleventh century to a copy of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which dates to the early eleventh century. Other mid eleventh-century additions to this manuscript include a West-Saxon version of Cædmon's *Hymn*, excerpts from Jerome and Orosius, and a Latin-Old English glossary.[25] The surrounding context for this 'gibberish charm' suggests that the scribe of this ritual was interested in exotic languages and Patristic writings. The ritual against fever from Caligula A. xv forms part of a short series of texts for healing, and the ritual immediately below this explicitly states that it was written for an abbot ('ora pro me N peccatore & abbot').[26] As seen in Chapter Three, this part of the manuscript was written by one scribe from Christ Church, Canterbury. The manuscript context surrounding this fever ritual indicates that ecclesiastics from high-status minsters like Canterbury Cathedral were interested in – if not able to read – obscure language in these ritual texts. Despite these possibilities, Storms followed Grendon in claiming that such rituals form a distinctive type of 'charm' because they incorporate foreign elements that were

[24] Ker, *Catalogue*, 354-5. See also Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 140, 328-30; Scragg, 'Old English Prose', 68-9; *Conspectus*, 77; Mary Swan and Owen Robertson, 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220': <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220> accessed 24 August 2015.
[25] Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), 30-7; Daniel Paul O'Donnell, *Cædmon's Hymn: A Multi-Media Study, Edition, and Archive* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), 81; Owen Robertson, 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220': <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220> accessed 24 August 2015.
[26] Transcription my own.

evidently misunderstood by their scribes. According to these editors, meaningless, garbled sounds replaced heathen formulas and were recorded because their mysterious epigraphic appearance was appealing.

These views of Grendon and Storms have led scholars to continue to say that 'gibberish' is a defining characteristic of 'charms'. Paul Cavill, for example, believes that it was used to console superstitious patients:

> Charms are the literature of desperation. Ideas from any source, which might give hope to the suffering, found a place. Other charms have strings of 'magical' gobbledegook, meaningless syllables, bits of Latin, instructions on ritual actions such as culling herbs at dawn, crossing rivers and keeping silent – anything to enhance the air of mystery and lend authority to the charmer. These things apparently co-existed with a predominantly Christian world view. Sometimes Christian mumbo-jumbo has replaced heathen elements.[27]

According to Cavill, sick subjects and poorly educated monks turned to mysterious languages that they could not understand simply to aid their belief in a reality beyond their immediate suffering. R. A. Banks also discusses the function of liturgical elements in 'gibberish' rituals:

> The *Pater noster* has clearly not been added to make the gibberish acceptable to the Church: it is much more likely that its Latin, with all its miraculous Christian associations, is seen as a powerful chant equal with, or superior to, the gibberish that follows… It occurs in such formulae within the context of other liturgical material or of mere gibberish and superstitious incantation.[28]

[27] Paul Cavill, *Anglo-Saxon Christianity* (London: Harper Collins, 1999), 25.
[28] R. A. Banks, 'The Uses of Liturgy in the Magic, Medicine, and Poetry of the Anglo-Saxons', in *The Timeless and the Temporal: Writings in Honour of John Chalker by Friends and Colleagues*, Elizabeth Maslen, ed (Exeter: Short Run Press, 1993), 19-40 at 29.

Banks views the rituals' Christian elements as equal to their more abstract content as they both serve a superstitious purpose. This not only overlooks the potential for obscure writing to signify something more than mere nonsense but it also disregards the importance of liturgical references in the rituals. As seen with the *Vitellius Psalter*, some of these rituals use biblical and liturgical references for very specific purposes, and it may be that their abstract epigraphy conceals information from similar sources.

It is well known that Anglo-Saxon scribes sometimes confused and miscopied their source materials, and textual corruptions abound in medieval manuscripts. However, the learned ecclesiastical contexts that surround the rituals' manuscripts do not support the conclusion that abstract writing is simply a result of scribal error. David Pelteret has argued that such a dismissive view of scribal practice is not always helpful: 'if the text appears slovenly, we should ask ourselves why this is so, rather than descry it'.[29] Even if these letter sequences are corrupted, attempts should be made to make sense of their combinations, and this requires scholars to entertain the possibility that the writing is not meaningless. It may be that abstract letters were deliberately obscured in the process of copying from an exemplar or it may also be the case that these sequences were composed at the time of copying. Ælfwine's apparent involvement in the composition of ciphers reminds us how some learned Anglo-Saxons were interested in coded writing, and the ritual for favours in Caligula A. xv demonstrates that these letter combinations were also of interest to high-status ecclesiastics in Canterbury.

Abstract letter combinations have been consistently portrayed as corrupted copying of aesthetically attractive languages that are only related to liturgical materials because of their superstitious appeal.[30] However, the manuscript evidence of these 'gibberish' rituals shows

[29] Pelteret, 'Cross and an Acrostic', 63.
[30] For further commentaries on 'gibberish', see George Hardin Brown, 'Solving the "Solve" Riddle in B. L. MS Harley 585', *Viator*, 18 (1987), 45-51; Fisher, *Writing Charms*, 145; Rosanne Hebing, 'The Textual Tradition of

that they were written in monastic schools that were investigating the movements of the cosmos and experimenting with forms of secretive communication. When one considers the cosmological significance of the individual letter in Late Antique and early medieval philosophy, 'gibberish' writing in rituals can be understood to harness letters and symbols for spiritual communication and power.

Gibberish in other Anglo-Saxon Writings

'Gibberish' writing is also found in other Anglo-Saxon texts, and studies of abstract epigraphy in wisdom poems, riddles, and scribal signatures can inform our understanding of this phenomenon in 'charms'. Lois Bragg proposes that the runic sequence in the *Husband's Message* is 'alliterating gibberish' that was used as 'a kind of stage prop appropriate to his [the poet's] legendary setting'.[31] Bragg also believes that the scholar's inability to interpret such writings demonstrates how Anglo-Saxon scribes and readers must not have been able to understand the sequences either:

> When we recall the frequency of errors that Moltke has reported and consider that modern runologists, armed with comprehensive, edited collections of inscriptions recovered with recently developed technology, cannot make head nor tail of most of the inscriptions, it is unlikely that post-Alfredian Anglo-Saxons could read them. Perhaps, finding the inscriptions illegible, they assumed that they were cryptographic.[32]

Bragg takes a traditional approach to obscure writing in Anglo-Saxon texts, and believes that it provides evidence of scribal error and textual corruption. However, the modern reader's inability to understand these sequences is no basis to claim that they are meaningless.

Heavenly Letter Charms in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts', in *Secular Learning in Anglo-Saxon England*, Chardonnens and Carella, eds., 203-22 at 207; Olsan, 'Marginality of Charms', 136-7.

[31] Bragg, 'Runes and Readers', 40.

[32] Bragg, 'Runes and Readers', 45.

Tom Birkett's recent work on Cynewulf's runic signatures has opened interesting interpretations of how these graphemes were used to unlock as well as conceal hidden meanings in texts:

> Even when not explicitly deployed as the solution to a riddle, runes often appear in literary contexts connected with unlocking or uncovering hidden meaning… Clearly a further important association of the runic script in literary contexts was this connection with the process of concealing and revelation… [This] enables the poet to enact his theme of moving beyond the signifier, moving the reader from a passive reception of the poetry to the model of meditative engagement.[33]

Jill Clements also argues that these runic signatures were used by Cynewulf to signify his own corporeality, and to add an eschatological dimension to his poetry:

> Like the decayed body and sinful man, Cynewulf's signature is shattered, its individual letters functioning as a reduction of the word to its most elemental form, or, as grammarians such as Isidore of Seville would describe it, an anatomic level… Read through the lense of the word-as-body analogy, these runic letters may be regarded as the poet's physical presence on the page.[34]

Like the Cynewulfian signatures, some riddles and wisdom poems incorporate runic writing to enhance their enigmatic nature, and the graphemes force the reader to look for meaning beyond the immediate, literal sense of the text. These texts reflect an interest in letter manipulation, alphabet substitution, and encryption that were used in different Christian literary traditions. Objects, concepts, and letters are given multiple meanings, and it is likely

[33] Birkett, 'Runes and *Revelatio*', 774, 776.
[34] Clements, 'Reading, Writing and Resurrection', 138, 149, 153.

that different alphabets are used in 'charms' to deliberately conceal the spiritual power of the ritual.

In addition to this role of graphemes in concealing information and encoding knowledge, letters were also believed to possess apotropaic power. A poetic version of the *Solomon and Saturn* dialogue, contained in Corpus 41, depicts the letters of the Paternoster as engaging the devil in military combat, as Marie Nelson observes:

> The source of his [Solomon's] power is a written *Pater Noster*, but what is particularly interesting about this is not the fact that it is a *written* text, nor that it is written in runes… nor even that it is a prayer (the *Pater Noster* does not *function* as a prayer in this poem), but the way Solomon gives individual life to each of its runic and Roman letters. Wrenching each letter from its *Pater Noster* context, separating each signifier from its normal alphabetic function, the great magician hypostasizes his units of power as he utters their names. One by one, the named letters become warriors ready to serve the will of Solomon.[35]

Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe also argues that the *Solomon and Saturn* poem focuses on how letters transmit spiritual power that is activated in their vocalisation: 'Speaking the words of the prayer (a notion implicit in an oral mentality) invokes its power, which the poem conceptualizes as being situated in its letters (a notion suggesting a literate mentality)'.[36] A prose version of this text also contains a passage that describes Mercury as the inventor of letters, and scholars have interpreted this as a reference to Woden's creation of the alphabet.[37]

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[35] Marie Nelson, 'King Solomon's Magic: The Power of a Written Text', *Oral Tradition*, 5 (1990), 20-36 at 29. See also O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 47-76; Andy Orchard, 'The Word Made Flesh: Christianity and Oral Culture in Anglo-Saxon Verse', *Oral Tradition*, 24 (2009), 293-318; Tom Birkett, 'Unlocking Runes? Reading Anglo-Saxon Runic Abbreviations in Their Immediate Literary Context', *Futhark*, 5 (2015), 91-114 at 108-12.

[36] O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 57.

[37] J. S. Ryan, 'Othin in England: Evidence from the Poetry for a Cult of Woden in Anglo-Saxon England', *Folklore*, 73-4 (1962-3), 460-80 at 476; H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 141; Edward O. G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 71. On the prose version of this text more generally, see John Hermann, 'The Pater Noster Battle Sequence in *Solomon and Saturn* and the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius', *Neuphilologische*

Rolf Bremmer disputes this and highlights the many possible transmissions of the Mercury legend from classical sources.[38] Classical sources that engage with the origins of language are also likely to have influenced other Anglo-Saxon writings that harness the cosmological power of letters and alphabets.

Other combinations of graphemes are also found in non-manuscript sources from England. The coffin of St Cuthbert, for example, contains an inscription that combines Roman and runic letters which spell the names of seven angels.[39] Leslie Webster believes that 'word play, encryption, the complexities of orthography and of parallel scripts' arose out of Christian traditions in Anglo-Saxon England.[40] The twelfth-century Bridekirk font from Cumbria has a Middle English couplet carved in Scandinavian runes, and reads 'Rikarþ:he:me:iwr[o]kte:ᛉ:to:þis:me:rÐ:ᛉer:**:me:brokte' ('Rikarþ wrought me, and to this [ᛉer:**] brought me').[41] The inscription identifies those responsible for making the font, and their names are encoded and fastened to this liturgical object. Coded inscriptions abound in early medieval objects,[42] and there is good evidence that some scribes of manuscripts also consciously used distinctively abstract forms of writing from a range of different alphabets to conceal the meaning of a text. Even if the meanings of these texts were known only to a small group or community, there was likely to be a specific purpose behind their seemingly

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Mitteilungen, 77 (1976), 206-10; Thomas D. Hill, 'The Devil's Forms and the Pater Noster's Powers: The Prose Solomon and Saturn *Pater Noster* Dialogue', *SP*, 85 (1988), 164-76; Dendle, 'Demonological Landscape'.

[38] Rolf Bremmer, Jr., 'Mercury-Hermes and Woden-Odin as Inventors of Alphabets: A Neglected Parallel', in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, Alfred Bammesberger, ed (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1991), 409-19.

[39] See J. M. Cronyn and C. V. Horie, 'The Anglo-Saxon Coffin: Further Investigations', and R. I. Page, 'Roman and Runic on St Cuthbert's Coffin', in *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to A.D. 1200*, Gerald Bonner, David W. Rollason, and Clare Stancliffe, eds (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), 247-56, 257-65; Ernst Kitzinger, 'The Coffin-Reliquary', in *The Relics of St. Cuthbert*, C. F. Battiscombe, ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1956), 202-307.

[40] Leslie Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills, eds (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 227-46 at 227-8.

[41] See R. I. Page, *An Introduction to English Runes*, 2nd edn (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), 207-8. Page suggests that the sequence 'ᛉer:**' could be another personal name of one who commissioned or embellished the font.

[42] See Leslie Webster, 'Visual Literacy in a Protoliterate Age', in *Literacy in Medieval and Early Modern Scandinavian Culture*, P. Hermann, ed (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2005), 21-46; 'Encrypted Visions: Style and Sense in the Anglo-Saxon Minor Arts AD 400-900', in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown, eds (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2012), 11-30.

erroneous content. The sequences of letters have in fact been successful (for now) in concealing their secrets, much to the frustration (and delight) of some scholars.

The Anglo-Saxon manuscripts that contain abstract epigraphy were written in minsters where astronomy was studied, where predictions were made for the forthcoming year, and where liturgical responses to cosmological events were carefully composed. Language played a crucial role in decoding the cosmos and encoding spiritual mysteries, and some Anglo-Saxon writers engaged directly with Patristic philosophy to understand how letters functioned in the ordering of the universe. It is therefore better to read Anglo-Saxon 'gibberish' writing according to learned, Christian traditions that engaged with the origin of language, alphabets, letter manipulation, numerology, and codes.

Anglo-Saxon Philosophies of Language

There is a wealth of evidence to suggest that leading Anglo-Saxon writers had a keen interest in language's role in the creation of the world and in the transmission of divine mysteries. They drew upon writings from Late Antiquity and Carolingian Europe which focus on the obscurity of language in Scripture, and which challenge biblical scholars to discern hidden spiritual meanings:

> Obscurity… was part of a much wider medieval interest in the strategy of concealment. This strategy was no vain exercise or decorative flourish, but a fundamental means of communicating knowledge. It was at the core of medieval hermeneutics and in line with well-established interpretative and cognitive practices aimed at the unravelling of meaning, at sustained and slow intellectual engagement, and at rending things less than immediate… The point was to require the reader to figure out obscured things, to lift the veil, and to work at uncovering knowledge.[43]

[43] O'Sullivan, 'The Sacred and the Obscure', 70. See also Stephenson, *The Politics of Language*, 14, 19.

Many Late Antique and early medieval texts provide interesting justifications for abstract uses of language and symbols. Three key issues arise from these writings: the biblical accounts of the fall of the Tower of Babel and Pentecost are used to interpret the spiritual nature of human languages; the individual letter is presented as the principle foundation of the art of grammar, which is essential for the translation of Scripture and biblical exegesis; and once languages are broken down into their smallest components they can be manipulated for secret communication. All of these ideas were developed by English theologians, and they inform our understanding of 'gibberish' writing in ritual texts.

A number of works by Jerome, Augustine, and Isidore of Seville were known in Anglo-Saxon England.[44] By the late seventh century, Theodore's and Hadrian's school at Canterbury probably had copies of works by Jerome and Augustine, as well as all twenty books of Isidore's *Etymologies*.[45] These and other Patristic writings influenced important Anglo-Saxon authors including Aldhelm, Bede, Boniface, and later Ælfric and Byrhtferth of Ramsey. These English writers offer different perspectives on how language transmits knowledge and encodes divine secrets, and their insights provide an important philosophical context for Anglo-Saxon 'gibberish' writing.

i. Jerome and Augustine

[44] See Peter Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970), 292; Gneuss, 'Study of Language', 8-9, 11-12; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 153-5, 168-9; Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 148, 217, 271, 315; Stephen Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof, eds. and trans., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), 24-6. See also Richard Marsden, 'Ælfric as Translator: The Old English Prose *Genesis*', *Anglia*, 109 (1991), 319-58 at 324; Robert Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2002), 77, 135-7; Christopher M. Cain, 'Sacred Words, Anglo-Saxon Piety, and the Origins of the *Epistola Salvatoris* in London, British Library, Royal 2.A.xx', *JEGP*, 108 (2009), 168-89 at 182-4.

[45] Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 202-5, 275-96; David W. Porter, 'Isidore's *Etymologiae* at the School of Canterbury', *ASE*, 43 (2014), 7-44.

St Jerome (c. 347-419/20) is famous for his comprehensive translation of the Bible into the Latin vulgate from Greek and Hebrew (begun in 391, completed in 406).[46] Ten years before this work was complete, Jerome wrote a letter to the Roman senator Pammachius in defence of his translation of a Greek letter into Latin. The letter reveals a number of important issues of language usage in biblical exegesis that continued throughout the medieval period, and Helen Gittos has argued that it is very likely that it was known to Ælfric.[47] In this work, Jerome described how every individual word is sacred in Scripture:

> Now I not only admit but freely announce that in translating the Greek – except of course in the case of Holy Scripture, where even the syntax contains a mystery – I render, not word for word, but sense for sense… Why, is it not forbidden to substitute one word for another? It is sacrilegious to conceal or disregard a mystery of God.[48]

Translating Scripture from Hebrew and Greek for exegesis was a dangerous venture in Jerome's day as, without official approval, it exposed the translator to charges of heresy.[49] However, Jerome also provided no fewer than fourteen examples of misquotations and incorrect references in the gospels to align his own sense-for-sense translations with the writings of the apostles: 'Far be it from Jerome, however, to speak like this about a follower of the Christ. The truth is that Matthew made it his business to formulate dogmas rather than

[46] David Howlett has closely compared Jerome's Latin with the original Greek and Hebrew of the Bible, and argues that Jerome employed similar techniques of chiasmus and parallelism as Scriptural authors which was in turn copied in some Anglo-Saxon charters, David Howlett, *Sealed from Within: Self-Authenticating Insular Charters* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1999), 1-12.
[47] Gittos, 'Audience of Old English', 243-4.
[48] Jerome, 'Letter to Pammachius', Paul Carroll, trans., in *Western Translation Theory: From Herodotus to Neitzsche*, Douglas Robinson, ed (Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997), 23-30 at 25, 27; 'ego enim non solum fateor, sed libera uoce profiteer me in interpretation Graecorum absque scripturis sanctis, ubi et uerborum ordo mysterium est, non uerbum e uerbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu', Jerome, 'Ad Pammachium de optimo genere interpretani', in *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, Isidorus Hilberg, ed., CSEL, Vol. 54, rev. edn (Vienna: Verlag, 1996), 503–26 at 508.
[49] See especially Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2009), 168-96.

scurry after words and syllables'.[50] In his letter, Jerome also wrote that the most difficult part of translating a text is accurately reflecting 'the peculiar vernacular marrow of the language itself'.[51] The fine balance between a correct literal translation and a rendering of sense became the principle concern of later translators, and this proved particularly important in Scriptural exegesis.[52]

In his preface to the *Book of Kings*, Jerome advised that the reader of his Latin translation should return to the original Hebrew of Scripture in order to understand the true meaning of a word or passage: 'If you are incredulous… read the Greek and Latin manuscripts and compare them with these poor efforts of mine, and wherever you see they disagree, ask some Hebrew'.[53] He believed that the sacred mysteries of Scripture are contained in the original language of Hebrew, which should be consulted for correct theological interpretation.

Jerome offered another interesting insight into language's role in the transmission of divine mysteries. He translated the monastic *Rule of Pachomius* into Latin from Greek which, according to the legend, was dictated to Pachomius by an angel. In his preface to the *Rule*, Jerome stated how Pachomius communicated with his bishops through a secret alphabet following his angelic visitation: 'angelus linguae mysticae scientiam dederit, ut scriberent sibi et loquerentur per alfabetum spiritale'.[54] This mystical alphabet came directly from heaven and allowed Pachomius to converse with his fellow ecclesiastics about spiritual matters, such as the correct celebration of the Easter liturgy. Another account of Pachomius' secret

[50] Jerome, 'Letter to Pammachius', 27; 'sed absit hoc de pedisequo Christi dicere, cui curae fuit non uerba et syllabas aucupari, sed sententias dogmatum ponere', Hilberg, ed., *Epistulae*, 513.
[51] Jerome, 'Letter to Pammachius', 26; 'ipsum postremo suum et, ut ita dicam, uernaculum linguae genus', Hilberg, ed., *Epistulae*, 510.
[52] See especially Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), 37-62.
[53] Quoted in Bruce R. O'Brien, *Reversing Babel: Translation among the English during an Age of Conquests, c. 800 to c. 1200* (Newark, D.E.: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 24.
[54] Amand Boon, ed., *Pachomiana Latina: Règle et épîtres de S. Pachôme, épître de S. Théodore et 'Liber' de S. Orsiesius* (Louvain: Universitebibliotheek, 1932), 9; 'The angel gave knowledge of mystical speech so that they themselves might write and speak through a spiritual alphabet'.

language is found in Gennadius's continuation of Jerome's work *De uiris illustribus*: 'He wrote letters also to the associated bishops of his district, in an alphabet concealed by mystic sacraments so as to surpass customary human knowledge and only manifest to those of special grace'.[55] Jerome introduced the Pachomius story into the Latin speaking world, and with it a legend about a divine alphabet that was given to ecclesiastical authorities directly from heaven for secret communication. As seen in Chapter Four, the Pachomius legend was known in Anglo-Saxon England, and images of this story appear in Caligula A. xv immediately before the *Gewrit of Heofonum* (which also claims to have been delivered by an angel), and the ritual to obtain political favours with 'gibberish' writing. Jerome emphasised the need to read the original languages of Scripture to understand spiritual mysteries, and he wrote about the divine origin of a mystical alphabet for spiritual discourse. Some of Jerome's works were available in Anglo-Saxon England, and it is possible that they influenced abstract writings in other texts which use Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and which claim to be of divine origin.

St Augustine (354-430) was a contemporary of Jerome, and his writings had possibly the greatest influence on Western Christianity. Augustine touched on many issues about translation, particularly concerning faithful renderings of Scriptural texts. In his *De Doctrina Christiana*, Augustine distinguished between human language and divine signs in Scripture:

> signs are those which living things give to each other, in order to show, to the best of their ability, the emotions of their minds, or anything that they have felt or learnt. There is no reason for us to signify something (that is, to give a sign) except to express and transmit to another's mind what is in the mind of the person who gives the sign. It is this category of

[55] Ernest Cushing Richardson, trans., *Theodoret, Jerome, Gennadius, and Rufinus: Historical Writings*, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd series, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Clark, 1892, repr. 1979), 387; 'In quibus alphabetum mysticis tectum sacramentis, velut humanae consuetudinis excendentem intelligentiam, clausit solis credo eorum gratiae vel meritis manifestum', Ernest Cushing Richardson, ed., *Hieronymus liber de viris inlustribus: Gennadius liber de viris inlustribus* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1896), 63–4. See also Christie, 'Secret Alphabet', 166.

> signs – to the extent that it applies to humans – that I have decided to examine and discuss, because even the divinely given signs contained in the holy scriptures have been communicated to us by the human beings who wrote them (II, 3).[56]

Augustine's statement that the divine signs of Scripture were written down by men has an important implication for the origin of language. The literal meaning of the Bible reflects its human transmission through writing but divine mysteries are to be found in the signs themselves.

In the same work, Augustine associated ambiguous language with the Fall and the building of the Tower of Babel, when the one language spoken by humans was divided because of man's pride:

> These signs could not be shared by all nations, because of the sin of human disunity by which each one sought hegemony for itself. This pride is signified by the famous tower raised towards heaven at the time when wicked men justly received incompatible languages to match their incompatible minds. Consequently even divine scripture, by which assistance is provided for the many serious disorders of the human will, after starting off in one language, in which it could have conveniently been spread throughout the world, was circulated far and wide in the various languages of translators and became known in this way to the Gentiles for their salvation. The aim of its readers is simply to find out the

[56] Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, R. P. H. Green, trans (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 57, 59; 'signa sunt, quae sibi quaeque viventia invicem dant ad demonstrandos, quantum possunt, motus animi sui, vel sensa, aut intellecta quaelibet. Nec ulla causa est nobis significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad depromendum et trajiciendum in alterius animum id quod animo gerit is qui signum dat. Horum igitur signorum genus, quantum ad homines attinet, considerare atque tractare statuimus; quia et signa divinitus data, quae in Scripturis sanctis continentur, per homines nobis indicata sunt, qui ea conscripserunt', Augustinus Hipponensis, *S. Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi De Doctrina Christiana Libri Quatuor*, Patrologia Latina, Vol. 34 (1865), col. 0037. An eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon copy of this text is found in Salisbury, Cathedral Library, MS 106, see Gneuss, *Handlist*, 110.

> thoughts and wishes of those by whom it was written down and, through them, the will of God, which we believe these men followed as they spoke (II, 4-5).[57]

According to Augustine, the Tower of Babel symbolised the division of language and the breakdown of communication between nations because of the sin of pride. However, Augustine also pointed out that this division of language allowed the conversion of the Gentiles, and that readers of the Bible constantly seek to understand God's will through different human languages.

Later in this work Augustine, like Jerome, offered a straightforward solution to the correct interpretation of Scripture:

> An important antidote to the ignorance of literal signs is the knowledge of languages. Users of the Latin language – and it is these that I have now undertaken to instruct – need two others, Hebrew and Greek, for an understanding of the divine scriptures, so that recourse may be had to the original versions if any uncertainty arises from the infinite variety of Latin translators (II, 11).[58]

According to Augustine, the task of the biblical exegete is to adhere to the languages in which Scripture was written. While Augustine maintained the prominence of Hebrew and Greek as the principle languages of Scripture, he followed Jerome in advocating the use of

[57] Green, trans., *De Doctrina Christiana*, 61; 'Ista igitur signa non potuerunt communia esse omnibus gentibus, peccato quodam dissensionis humanae, cum ad se quisque principatum rapit. Cujus superbiae signum est erecta illa turris in coelum, ubi homines impii non solum animos, sed etiam voces dissonas habere meruerunt. Ex quo factum est ut etiam Scriptura divina, qua tantis morbis humanarum voluntatum subvenitur, ab una lingua profecta, qua opportune potuit per orbem terrarum disseminari, per varias interpretum linguas longe lateque diffusa innotesceret gentibus ad salutem: quam legentes nihil aliud appetunt quam cogitationes voluntatemque illorum a quibus conscripta est, invenire, et per illas voluntatem Dei, secundum quam tales homines locutos credimus', Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana Libri Quatuor*, col. 0038.

[58] Green, trans., *De Doctrina Christiana*, 61; 'Contra ignota signa propria magnum remedium est linguarum cognitio. Et latinae quidem linguae homines, quos nunc instruendos suscepimus, duabus aliis ad Scripturarum divinarum cognitionem opus habent, hebraea scilicet et graeca; ut ad exemplaria praecedentia recurratur, si quam dubitationem attulerit latinorum interpretum infinita varietas', Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana Libri Quatuor*, col. 0042.

vernacular Latin for spiritual edification. As long as biblical scholars had knowledge of Scripture's original languages, their interpretations and translations in their own language would be useful in revealing divine mysteries.

Jerome's and Augustine's views of the correct interpretations of divine mysteries by returning to the languages of Scripture have correspondences with the appearance of Greek and Hebrew in 'gibberish' rituals. One 'charm' against dysentery in Harley 585, for example, claims to have been brought by an angel from heaven, and it instructs the writing of a passage containing Hebrew, Greek, and Latin words:

> Þysne pistol se ængel brohte to Rome, þa hy wæran mid utsihte micclum geswæncte. Writ þis on swa langum bocfelle þæt hit mæge befon utan þæt heafod…
>
> Ranmigan. adonai. eltheos. mur. O ineffabile. Omiginan. midanmian. misane. dimas. mode. mida. memagartern. Orta min. sigmone. beronice. irritas. venas. quasi dulaþ. fervor. fruxantis. sanguinis. siccatur. fla. fracta. frigula. mirgui. etsihdon. segulta. frautantur. in arno. midoninis. abar vetho. sydone multo. saccula. pp pppp sother sother.
>
> Miserere mei deus deus mihi deus mi.
>
> A Ω N Y Alleluiah. Alleluiah.[59]

The passage that was apparently delivered by the angel contains some evident Latin ('Miserere mei deus deus mihi deus mi'), Hebrew ('adonai') and Greek ('A Ω N Y', an abbreviation of the Hebrew 'adonai'). There are many other rituals that use Hebrew and Greek words which also appear to be very corrupted.[60] However, deliberately obscure Greek was used by Carolingian scribes to gloss texts in Latin (see below), and these Anglo-Saxon passages may also use Hebrew and Greek to deliberately obscure the rituals' spiritual

[59] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 274; 'The angel brought this letter to Rome, when they were greatly afflicted with dysentery. Write this on parchment so long that it can surround the head… etc'.
[60] See, for example, Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 268, 282, 291, 294-6, 302.

meaning. Augustine emphasised that languages were divided after the fall of Babel, and he recommended that the biblical scholar should return to the original languages of Scripture to uncover its divine mysteries. These rituals, on the other hand, bring together the languages of Scripture, and sometimes explicitly present the 'gibberish' amalgamation as divine writing that was transmitted from heaven itself. The incomprehensible language of this 'gibberish' relates to the theological interpretation of linguistic division; the combination of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin may be an attempt to reconstruct the original language of mankind before the Tower of Babel, and it may encode spiritual mysteries in this composite language.

ii. Isidore of Seville

The *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636) was a highly influential work in early medieval Europe. In the first book of the *Etymologies*, Isidore stated that the art of grammar is constructed by the letters of the alphabet. These letters form every word and sign, and their power to communicate meaning endures throughout time:

> The common letters of the alphabet are the primary elements of the art of grammar, and are used by scribes and accountants. The teaching of these letters is, as it were, the infancy of grammar… Indeed, letters are tokens of things, the signs of words, and they have so much force that the utterances of those who are absent speak to us without a voice, (for they present words through the eyes, not through the ears) (I, 3, 1).[61]

[61] Isidore, *Etymologies*, 39; 'De litteris communibus. Primordia grammaticae artis litterae communes existent, quas librarii et calculators sequuntur. Quarum disciplina velut quaedam grammaticae artis infantia est… Litterae autem sunt indices rerum, signa verborum, quibus tanta vis est, ut nobis dicta absentium sine voce loquantur. (Verba enim per oculos non per aures introducunt)', Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum*, W. M. Lindsay, ed., 2 Vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), Vol. I, I, 3, 1.

According to Isidore, the letter has a transcendental significance in the history of mankind.[62] Following this discussion, he elaborated on language's role in the creation of the world before man was made:

> It is hard to determine what sort of language God spoke at the beginning of the world, when he said (Genesis 1:3) 'Be light made', for there were not yet any languages. Or again, it is hard to know with what language he spoke afterwards to the outer ears of humans, especially as he spoke to the first man… God speaks to humans not through an invisible substance, but through a bodily creature, through which he even wished to appear to humans when he spoke (IX, 1, 11-12).[63]

While letters transcend generations and preserve memory, Isidore viewed language as a vehicle only for human communication. In this interpretation of *Genesis*, he argued that God created the world by speaking through His creation rather than through a literal linguistic act, as God is beyond the rules of grammar.

Isidore followed Augustine in stating that Hebrew was the original language that was spoken by all nations before the building of the Tower of Babel, after which language was divided on account of man's sinful pride. Among these diverse languages were Greek and Latin, and Isidore maintained that these have divine significance because of their ability to communicate God's mysteries:

> The diversity of languages arose with the building of the Tower after the Flood, for before the pride of that Tower divided human society, so that there arose a diversity of meaningful

[62] See also O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 51-2.
[63] Isidore, *Etymologies*, 192; 'Cuiusmodi autem lingua locutus est Deus in principio mundi, dum diceret: "Fiat lux", inveniri difficile est. Nondum enim errant linguae. Item qua lingua insonuit postea exterioribus hominum auribus, maxime ad primum hominem loquens… Loquitur autem Deus hominibus non per substantiam invisibilem, sed per creaturam corporalem, per quam etiam et hominibus apparere voluit, quando locutus est', Lindsay, ed., *Etymologiarum*, Vol. I, IX, 1, 11-12. See also Stanton, *Culture of Translation*, 68.

> sounds, there was one language for all nations, which is called Hebrew. The patriarchs and prophets used this language not only in their speech, but also in the sacred writings… There are three sacred languages – Hebrew, Greek, and Latin – which are preeminent throughout the world. On the cross of the Lord the charge laid against him was written at Pilate's command in these three languages (John 19: 20). Hence – and because of the obscurity of the Sacred Scriptures – a knowledge of these three languages is necessary, so that, whenever the wording of one of the languages presents any doubt about a name or an interpretation, recourse may be had to another language (IX, 1, 1, 3).[64]

According to Isidore, if any of these three principle languages fails to reveal scriptural meaning, the biblical scholar should consult the other two languages to understand the passage. Divine mysteries are conveyed through Hebrew, Greek, and Latin but these human languages have limitations, which is why Scripture remains obscure.

Isidore elsewhere commented on the value of Scripture's obscurity: 'Some things in Holy Scripture are clear, others obscure, in order to increase the understanding and diligence of the reader. For if everything were immediately comprehensible, it would be cheapened'.[65] Isidore also followed Jerome in arguing that Scripture can and should be translated into the vernacular because of the inherent capacity of all languages to convey divine truths, as Robert Stanton observes:

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[64] Isidore, *Etymologies*, 191; 'Linguarum diversitas exorta est in aedificatione turris post diluvium. Nam priusquam superbia turris illius in diversos signorum sonos humanam divideret societatem, una omnium nationum lingua fuit, quae Hebraea vocatur; quam Patriarchae et Prophetae usi sunt non solum in sermonibus suis, verum etiam in litteris sacris… Tres sunt autem linguae sacrae: Hebraea, Graeca, Latina, quae toto orbe maxime excellent. His enim tribus linguis super crucem Domini a Pilato fuit causa eius scripta. Unde et propter obscuritatem sanctarum Scripturarum harum trium linguarum cognitio necessaria est, ut ad alteram recurratur dum siquam dubitationem nominis vel interpretationis sermo unius linguae adtulerit', Lindsay, ed., *Etymologiarum*, Vol. I, IX, 1, 1, 3.

[65] Translation from Vivien Law, *Wisdom, Authority and Grammar in the Seventh Century: Decoding Vigilius Maro Grammaticus* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 94; 'Ideo in libris sanctis quaedam obscura, quaedam aperta reperiuntur, ut intellectus lectoris et studium augeatur. Nam si cuncta paterent, statim intellecta vilescerent', Isidore, *Sententiae*, I, 18, Patrologia Latina, Vol. 83 (1862), col. 576C-577A.

> Isidore consecrated the three languages because of *usage*: they are the media of divine truth… Isidore's philosophy of language was one that not only allowed but implicitly encouraged the idea of using vernacular language as a vehicle for expressing religious truth.[66]

Isidore established a spiritual significance for language and letters that influenced later Anglo-Saxon writers. According to Isidore, God does not speak in human language but He speaks through His creation, and His Word can be discovered by understanding the created world. This requires an interpretative skill that is also needed to understand the divine mysteries of Scripture.

A number of scholars have argued that the use of biblical languages in 'charms' adds to their 'sense of magic and mystery', and that the power associated with Scripture adds to their efficacy.[67] However, as seen with the 'charm' against dysentery in Harley 585, there may be a more theological purpose to the appearances of these languages in ritual texts. Most of the 'gibberish' rituals contain vernacular instructions before obscure words and phrases from different languages are provided. The three languages of Scripture – Hebrew, Greek, and Latin – are frequently found in combination but they also appear with Irish and Old English. One ritual against black blains in Harley 585, for example, instructs the singing of a *gebed* that appears to include a number of these languages:

> Sing ðis gebed on ða blacan blegene VIIII syþðan ærest Pater noster.

[66] Stanton, *Culture of Translation*, 68. On Isidore's description of exposition through the study of words, see Jones, 'Book of the Liturgy', 666-9.
[67] Fisher, *Writing Charms*, 145. See also Judith A. Vaughan-Sterling, 'The Anglo-Saxon Metrical Charms: Poetry as Ritual', *JEGP*, 82 (1983), 186-200 at 192-3; Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 119; Claire Jones, '"Efficacy Phrases" in Medieval English Medical Manuscripts', *Neophilologische Mitteilungen*, 99 (1998), 199-210; Tornaghi, 'Language of Magic', 445-6.

> Tigað tigað tigað calicet. aclu cluel sedes adclocles. acre earcre arnem. nonabiuð ær ærnem niðren arcum cunað arcum arctua fligara uflen binchi cutern. nicuparam raf afðegal uflen arta. arta. arta trauncula. trauncula.
>
> Querite et invenietis. Adiuro te per Patrem et Filium et Spiriturn sanctum, non amplius crescas sed arescas. Super aspidem et basilliscum ambulabis et conculcabis leonem et draconem. Crux Matheus crux Marcus crux Lucas crux Iohannes.[68]

In this passage there is evidence of Irish (in the 'acre' formula), Old English ('niðren'), and Latin ('Adiuro te per Patrem'). Another version of this ritual which is found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 163 also includes apparent Hebrew ('Nonabaioth'), and it was added to the manuscript alongside a Latin-Old English glossary and excerpts from Patristic writings by Jerome and Orosius.[69] A number of *galdra* and *gebed* in *Bald's Leechbook* also consist of 'greciscum stafum' (Greek letters) and what appear to be Hebrew names ('Tiecon. leleloth. patron. adiuro uos'; 'HAMMANẏEL . BPONice . NOẏepTAẏEPΓ').[70]

Whilst it is highly likely that the rituals' scribes included phonetic spellings of foreign words, it is also possible that they were deliberately brought together to reconstruct a homogenous language with theological significance.[71] Furthermore, the deliberately abstract language of these rituals parallels Isidore's claim that Scriptural obscurity increases the diligence of the reader, for if it were 'immediately comprehensible, it would be cheapened'. The 'gibberish' rituals use Scriptural languages as well as the vernacular to form powerful *gebed* and *galdra* which conceal – and through doing so also reveal – divine mysteries.

iii. Bede

[68] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 301; 'Sing this *gebed* on the black blains nine times before the Paternoster… etc'.
[69] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 302. See also page 218 above.
[70] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 138, 140.
[71] A modern parallel for this interest would be the attempts to reconstruct Indo-European by philologists.

Isidore's philosophy of language had a fundamental influence on the study of grammar in Anglo-Saxon England. A number of other sources also seem to have been known in late seventh-century England, including grammatical works by Donatus, Priscian, Martianus Capella, and Cassiodorus.[72] The study of grammar was of fundamental importance to a monk's education, and it formed the basis of their training in liturgical observances, knowledge of Scripture, and biblical exegesis.[73] Bede had access to several Latin grammars in his monastery at Jarrow (between c. 682 and his death in 735), and he had knowledge of works by Jerome, Augustine, and Isidore.[74]

In his commentary on *Genesis*, Bede followed Augustine and Isidore in associating the Tower of Babel with the division of human languages:

> Language was deservedly cast into confusion, because it had wickedly combined into impious speech. The power of language was taken from the proud rulers lest in contempt of God they might be able to teach their subjects the evils that they had begun.[75]

Bede, however, added to this linguistic history by claiming that the language of each nation was given as a gift from God after the fall of Babel:

> Notice that Adam named the animals of the earth and the birds of heaven in that language which the whole human race spoke up to the building of the tower at which time languages

[72] Gneuss, 'Study of Language', 6-10.
[73] For an overview of the divisions within grammar, see Gneuss, 'Study of Language', 10-11. Significant libraries which held such works were in Canterbury, York, Jarrow, Wearmouth, Malmesbury, and Nursling (Hants.), among others, see Helmut Gneuss, 'Anglo-Saxon Libraries from the Conversion to the Benedictine Reform', *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull' alto medioevo*, 32 (1984), 643-88; Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 31-44, 63-90, 275-342.
[74] See also Roger Ray, 'Bede's Vera Lex Historiae', *Speculum*, 55 (1980), 1-21; Mark Amsler, *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1989), 184-7; A. H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 244-5.
[75] Bede, *On Genesis*, Calvin B. Kendall, trans (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2008), 231; 'Merito confusum est labium in dispersionem, quia male conjuraverat in locutionem nefariam: ablata est potestas linguae superbis principibus, ne in contemptum Dei subditos possent quae coeperant mala docere', Beda, *Hexaemeron, sive libri quatuor in principium Genesis, usque ad nativitatem Isaac et electionem Ismaelis*, Patrologia Latina, Vol. 91 (1862), col. 0126A.

> were divided. But in casting down the tower, when God assigned to each people its own separate language, he must also be supposed at that time to have specified for them the names of the animals as also of other things, for each according to their own language – although it is also no secret that men afterwards throughout the different peoples gave names at their own pleasure to many things, both to innovations that by chance occurred and to living things, and even now are accustomed to do so.[76]

This passage strongly indicates that Bede developed the philosophies of Augustine and Isidore, and followed Jerome in claiming that languages have a divine origin.[77]

Bede arrived at the same conclusions as earlier writers about the use of vernacular languages for biblical study, and he also seems to have advocated their use in the liturgy. Cuthbert's *Epistola de obitu Bedae* says that he was translating the gospel of *John* into English on his deathbed,[78] and scholars have viewed his homage to Cædmon's poetry as his own statement that the English language was capable of communicating divine mysteries.[79] Indeed, Bede viewed the exegete's ability to interpret Scripture as a key tool for evangelisation, as Rita Copeland eloquently put it: 'To evangelize is to re-enact the Word through commentary on the Word: the oratorical office of re-enactment is achieved through – and on behalf of – the "grammatical" office of exegesis'.[80] Within this programme of

[76] Bede, *On Genesis*, 121; 'Constat Adam in ea lingua, qua totum genus humanum usque ad constructionem turris, in qua linguae divisae sunt, loquebatur, animantibus terrae et volatilibus coeli nomen imposuisse. Caeterum in dejectione turris, cum Deus suam cuique genti propriam atque diversam tribueret linguam, tunc eis credendus est etiam animantium vocabula quomodo et rerum caeterarum juxta suam cuique distinxisse loquelam: quamvis etiam non latet homines postea plurimis, quae sive nova forte occurrerunt rebus, haec animantibus per singulas gentes juxta suum placitum indidisse vocabula, et nunc etiam indere solere', Beda, *Hexaemeron*, col. 0050C-0050D. On Bede's engagement with the Hebrew language, particularly in his *Commentary on Genesis*, see Damian Fleming, '*Hebraeam scire linguam*: Bede's Rhetoric of the Hebrew Truth' in *Imagining the Jew: Jewishness in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture*, Samantha Zacher, ed (Toronto: Toronto UP, forthcoming).

[77] Bede also knew of the Pachomius legend through the writings of Cyril of Alexandria, see Bede, *Reckoning of Time*, 118.

[78] Cuthbert, 'Epistola de obitu Bedae', in *Ecclesiastical History*, Colgrave and Mynors, eds. and trans., 580-7 at 583-3.

[79] See especially Bruce Holsinger, 'The Parable of Cædmon's *Hymn*: Liturgical Invention and Literary Tradition', *JEGP*, 106 (2007), 149-75; Gittos, 'Audience of Old English', 260-6.

[80] Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, 60.

vernacular exegesis, Bede saw all languages and their individual components as divinely inspired instruments for spiritual communication, discernment, evangelisation, and worship. Similar views of the divine nature of language are perhaps reflected in the combinations of vernacular English and Irish with Scriptural languages in several Anglo-Saxon rituals, and in prescriptions to recite the opening of the *Prologue* to John's gospel ('In principio erat verbum').[81] The writing of two alphabets diagonally across the floor of a church in dedication rites also indicates that language was perceived to be the foundation of the Christian faith in Anglo-Saxon liturgy.[82]

In addition to the revealing of divine mysteries through language, Bede also described how language can be manipulated to conceal meaning. In his *De Temporum Ratione*, he described the substitution of letters for numerical values:

> From the kind of computation I have just described, one can represent a sort of manual language, whether for the sake of exercising one's wits, or as a game. By this means one can, by forming one letter at a time, transmit the words contained by those letters to another person who knows this procedure, so that he can read and understand that even at a distance. Thus one may either signify necessary information by secret imitation, or else fool the uninitiated as if by magic… It can be written down in this manner, if greater secrecy is demanded. But this can be more easily learned and manipulated using the letters and numbers of the Greeks, who do not, like the Latins, express numbers by a few letters and their duplicate forms… Thus whoever has learned to signify numbers with his fingers knows without hesitation how to shape letters with them as well.[83]

[81] See Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 232, 236, 258, 292,
[82] See Repsher, ed. and trans., *Rite of Church Dedication*, 145-6, and Chapter Four.
[83] Bede, *Reckoning of Time*, 11-12; 'Potest autem et de ipso quem praenotavi computo quaedam manualis loquela, tam ingenii exercendi quam ludi agenda gratia figurari; qua literis quis singillatim expressis verba, quae hisdem literis contineantur, alteri qui hanc quoque noverit industriam, tametsi procul posito, legenda atque intellegenda contradat, vel necessaria quaeque per haec occultis innuendo significans vel imperitos quosque quasi divinando deludens… Potest et ita scribe, si causa secretior exigat. Sed haec graecorum computo literisque facilius disci simul atque agi possunt, qui non, ut latini, paucis hisdemque geminatis suos numerous solent

Secretive communication was used by the elite in Bede's time, and coded messages were carried by ecclesiastics to prove their identity and authority, as Faith Wallis observes:

> Bede and his contemporaries would probably have encountered the Greek letter-numbers *only* as a code, in the so-called *litterae formatae*. These were official documents – in the early Middle Ages, usually papal or episcopal 'passports' for travelling clergy – which were protected from forgery by a special numerical cryptogram. If the numbers of the cryptogram were resolved according to the *computus Graecorum*, they would yield the initial letters of the sender, recipient, place of origin, and date.[84]

Bede's comparison of this communication to a 'game' that may 'fool the uninitiated as if by magic' resonates with later Anglo-Saxon encrypted riddles and wisdom poems which served to entertain, challenge, and edify their audiences.

This manual language gained greater secrecy when it was written down and when it included letters from other alphabets, and this is a key feature of other abstract letter sequences. Many of the 'gibberish' phrases in Anglo-Saxon rituals are to be written down – sometimes in silence – and all demonstrate the use of more than one language or alphabet. As seen in the Sphere of Life and Death in the *Vitellius Psalter*, letters were also substituted with numbers so that calculations could be made to determine the length and severity of illness. The abstract letters of the psalter's theft diagram may also have numerical significance, and the system of vowel substitution demonstrates a form of language manipulation that strongly parallels Bede's secretive sign language. Other Anglo-Saxon rituals also indicate that abstract

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experimere literis… Qui et ideo mox numerous digitis significare didicerint, nulla interstante mora, literas quoque partier hisdem praefigere sciunt', Charles W. Jones, ed., *Bedae Opera De Temporibus* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1943), 181. On Bede's knowledge of the so-called 'Sirmond manuscript' from Ireland, see Wallis' commentary in Bede, *Reckoning of Time*, 260-1.

[84] Wallis, ed., *Reckoning of Time*, 262.

letters must be manipulated into different shapes to signify their meaning. For example, Jolly has argued that the ritual to obtain favours in Caligula A. xv 'suggests a cruciform shaped text' which may have been understood if its letters were rearranged correctly.[85] Letter rearrangement is also a key feature of a childbirth ritual containing the 'Sator' formula that is found in Corpus 41 (fol. 329).[86] The theft ritual at the end of *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, which was discussed in Chapter Four, also uses at least four alphabets, and its letters probably require rearrangement in a cruciform shape.[87]

Bede's philosophy of language and knowledge of secret communication provide another possible source of inspiration for later Anglo-Saxon coded writing and 'gibberish'. According to Bede, all languages are capable of communicating God's Word and unlocking divine secrets through exegesis, and they could also be used to obscure meaning and conceal information. Given also that Bede believed in the divine origin of languages, their individual components could be manipulated, recombined, and substituted to imitate the secretive and mysterious nature of God's Word.

iv. Continental Influences

Ideas about the origin of language, the art of grammar, and the manipulation of letters were significantly developed by early medieval writers. Complex acrostic poetry probably reached Theodore's school at Canterbury in the late seventh century, and it was continued in the literary works of Aldhelm (d. 709) and Boniface (d. 754).[88] Their figurative poetry used arrangements of words and phrases for devotional purposes that required the reader to discern

[85] See Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 64.
[86] See Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 281. O'Keeffe has argued that this formula informs us of the scribe's use of letters in the manuscript's other marginal texts: '*Solomon and Saturn I* and 'Sator' are the visual reflexes of the *sygegealdor* of the charms in the marginalia of that manuscript', *Visible Song*, 70.
[87] See Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, 144.
[88] See Pelteret, 'Cross and an Acrostic', 56-68, and his appendices pp. 87-102; Michael Lapidge, 'Aldhelm's Latin Poetry and Old English Verse', *Comparative Literature*, 31 (1979), 209-31. See also Vivien Law, *Grammar and Grammarians in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Longman, 1997), 92-101, 16-7, 169-97.

the meanings of both images and texts.[89] Pelteret emphasises that while these compositions are not cryptographic, they force the reader to contemplate the many meanings of a poem:

> This kind of poetry thus was *not* cryptographic. It was the very opposite in fact: the use of colour helped draw attention to the *versus intextus* that formed the acrostic or figure that might otherwise not be noticed by the person who was concentrating on reading the work aloud… [Aldhelm] was familiar with acrostic poetry because the prefaces to both his *Enigmata* and his *Carmen de uirginitate* are in this form… To appreciate such imaginative endeavours requires a receptive and contemplative mind, frequently a willingness to seek knowledge beyond the work itself, patience in unravelling its complexities and finally a sense of joy and wonderment at what is revealed… before they tried to understand the meaning(s) of a word, they might well have to interpret what the word was from an abbreviated form that appeared in the manuscript.[90]

These acrostics use letters and shapes to emphasise a poem's spiritual significance, and they require the reader to contemplate the meanings behind both text and image. The 'gibberish' sequences in Anglo-Saxon rituals also demand interpretation from the performer, and their letters may require rearrangement from a linear structure to reveal their meaning.

Aldhelm also assigned spiritual and cosmological significance to individual graphemes in his *Elementum* riddle which depicts letters as principle components of the world as they 'are born from iron, and by iron return to death' ('Nascimur ex ferro rursus ferro moribundae').[91] Edward Christie describes this riddle as a depiction of the divine nature of individual letters:

[89] See Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, 60.
[90] Pelteret, 'Cross and an Acrostic', 57-8, 82.
[91] Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren, eds. and trans., *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Ipswich: Brewer, 1979), 76. See also O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 53.

> Aldhelm entitles this riddle 'Elementum', a word for a letter that thus groups it with elemental physical particles, and suggests that, like the atom, the letter is a fundamental constituent of the fabric of the world. This same view of the letter is clearly expressed a century later in a didactic dialogue of Alcuin of York… The initial position of the letter in the construction of such a definitive series suggests it holds a particular elemental significance in a causal chain of existence, that leads quickly to the life and death of man.[92]

Aldhelm was evidently influenced by Patristic interpretations of the origin of language and the art of grammar, and he assigned cosmological significance to letters. The individual letter was believed to be a foundational component of language, grammar, and the cosmos.

Boniface was directly influenced by Aldhelm's work and he also composed a number of figurative poems.[93] In his letter to Sigeberht, Boniface stated that the study of grammar is fundamental to spiritual understanding:

> peritia grammaticae artis in sacrosancto scrutinio laborantibus ad subtiliorem intellectum, qui frequenter in sacris scripturis inseritur, ualde utilis esse… Hunc autem circulum in scemate noui ac ueteris instrumenti figurari non nescias.

> knowledge of the art of grammar is extremely useful to those who are toiling over their sacred studies to find the subtler meaning which is often concealed in the Holy Scriptures… You should not be unaware that this circle represents an image of the Old and New Testament.[94]

[92] Edward Christie, 'The Image of the Letter: From the Anglo-Saxons to the Electronic Beowulf', *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 44 (2003), 129-50 at 133.
[93] See Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 21-8; 'Old Sources, New Resources: Finding the Right Formula for Boniface', *ASE*, 30 (2001), 15-38. See also Lapidge, 'Hermeneutic Style', 73-6.
[94] Text and translation from Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 172, 174-5.

Boniface followed Patristic writers in connecting the study of language to knowledge of Scriptural mysteries, and he used language in such a way as to represent the Bible and imitate the obscurity of God's Word by concealing spiritual meaning in his own figurative poetry.

Boniface is also said to have introduced cryptography to the Continent from England.[95] Two copies of a text which was probably written by Hrabanus Maurus survive in an eleventh-century manuscript from Vienna and a twelfth-century manuscript from Heidelberg, and this text ascribes authorship of the vowel substitution system to Boniface (all square brackets indicate twelfth-century variations of the text):

A E I O V

: …· :: ::

·NC·P·T V···RS:·: B::N·:C·· :RCH···P·SC::P· GL::R·::S·Q:·:··· M:RT·R·S·

Genus vero huius descriptionis, tam quod supra cum punctis V et vocalibus quam subtus cum aliis vocalibus quam solitum est informatum continetur, fertur quod sanctus Bonifacius archiepiscopus ac martyr, de [ab] Angulsaxis veniens, hoc antecessoribus nostris demonstraret [demonstrarit]. Quod tamen non ab illo inprimis coeptum est, sed ab antiquis istius modi usus crevisse comperimus.

kbrxs xpp fprtks tkrp knstbr sbffkrp brchktenens scrkptpr [brchktfnfns scptrp rfgnk xt dfcxs bxrk].[96]

A E I O V

: …· :: ::

Incipit versus Bonifacii archiepiscopi gloriosique martiris.

(Here begins the verse of Boniface, archbishop and glorious martyr).

[95] See also Rolf Bremmer, 'The Anglo-Saxon Continental Mission and the Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge', in *Foundations of Learning*, Bremmer and Dekker, eds., 19-50.

[96] Transcription from Levison, *England and the Continent*, 291-2. Also printed in Hrabanus Maurus, *B. Rabani Mauri Fuldensis Abbatis et Moguntini Archiepiscopi: Omnia Opera*, Patrologia Latina, Vol. 112 (1852), col. 1581-1582.

> Truly this type of description that is used, which is above with five dots and vowels, and with the other vowels beneath, contains information, it is held that the holy archbishop and martyr Boniface, coming (all the way) from the Anglo-Saxons, showed this to our ancestors. This, however, was not first begun by him, but we learn to discern this kind of practice from the ancients.
>
> Karus Christo fortis tiro instar saffiro architenens scriptor [sceptro regni ut decus auri].
>
> (Beloved Christ, mighty soldier, image of sapphire, archer, writer [with kingdom's sceptre and gold's beauty]).

This system of vowel substitution is evident in a range of other continental writings. It appears in a manuscript dating to about 800 from Heidenheim, where the name of an Anglo-Saxon nun (Hugeburc) is concealed in a highly complex cryptogram.[97] This cryptogram appears between the saints' lives of Wynnebald and Willibald, two contemporaries and companions of Boniface. It also appears in a letter which was sent to Dunstan from Fleury after 974, and it is used extensively in tenth and eleventh-century Old High German and Latin glosses of Prudentius' *Psychomachia* that draw heavily on Isidore and Bede.[98] An English manuscript (Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.16.3) that was carefully copied from a Carolingian exemplar in about 930 also contains this form of coded writing (fol. 1r) as well as Hrabanus Maurus' poem *In honorem sanctae cruces*.[99] Letter substitution spread throughout Europe after Boniface introduced cryptography to the Continent, and the presence of different letters, medial points, and crosses in 'gibberish' rituals suggests that a number of different substitutions may be involved in these sequences.

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[97] Transcribed in Levison, *England and the Continent*, 294. See also Lapidge, 'Hermeneutic Style', 73-4.
[98] See Levison, *England and the Continent*, 293-4; Sinead O'Sullivan, *Early Medieval Glosses on Prudentius' Psychomachia: The Weitz Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 38-40, 46-8, 56-8, 73-4.
[99] William Schipper, 'Hrabanus Maurus in Anglo-Saxon England: *In honorem sanctae crucis*', in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, Stephen D. Baxter, Catherine Karkov, Janet L. Nelson, and David Pelteret, eds (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 283-300 at 285-6. See also Chapter Four, note 111.

Hrabanus Maurus' works were well known in Anglo-Saxon England. Hrabanus was a Frankish monk who studied under Alcuin before he became Abbot of Fulda (822-842) and archbishop of Mainz (847-856), and he had many connections with England.[100] In addition to his knowledge of vowel substitution, Hrabanus was also interested in the origins of alphabets and other forms of coded writing. He recorded the Hebrew letters that Moses discovered ('Primo omnium litterae Hebraicae linguae a Moyse inventae sunt'), Greek and Latin alphabets, and a strange alphabet of combined Hebrew and Greek attributed to Aethicus and Jerome:

> Litteras etiam Æthici philosophi cosmographi natione Scythica, nobili prosapia, invenimus, quas venerabilis Hieronymus presbyter ad nos usque cum suis dictis explanando perduxit, quia magnifice ipsius scientiam atque industriam duxit: ideo et ejus litteras maluit promulgare.[101]

> Yet these letters are also of the cosmographical philosophy of Aethicus, from noble stock in the Scythian nation, who the venerable elder Jerome explained continuously to us with his words, because he brought his great knowledge and industry: therefore he chose to expound his letters.

Hrabanus also used the runic alphabet to form symbols and diagrams of biblical names.[102] These experimental uses of alphabets reflect his keen interest in the obscure origins of language, and the formation of divine words through the manipulation of letters and alphabets. The conflation of Greek and Hebrew letters indicates that Hrabanus may have

[100] On Hrabanus' influence in England, see Charles W. Jones, 'A Legend of St. Pachomius', *Speculum*, 18 (1943), 198-210 at 198-200; Michael Lapidge, 'Dunstan and Hrabanus Maurus: zur Hs. Bodleian Auctarium F.4.32', *Anglia*, 96 (1978), 136-48; Els Rose, *Ritual Memory: The Apocryphal Acts and Liturgical Commemoration in the Early Medieval West (c. 500-1215)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 57-77. See also Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 137, 232.
[101] Hrabanus Maurus, *Omnia Opera*, 1579-80.
[102] Hrabanus Maurus, *Omnia Opera*, 1581-4.

attempted to reconstruct the original language that was spoken by humans before the building of the Tower of Babel, and they closely parallel the combination of these languages in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. Hrabanus' diagrams and alphabets have much in common with the 'gibberish' of Anglo-Saxon rituals; they indicate that Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon scribes were interested in the divine nature of language, and they enclose spiritual mysteries in ancient alphabets and letters.

By the second half of the ninth century more complex forms of epigraphy were being developed. The manipulation of letters according to Greek numerology that was outlined by Bede is found throughout John Scottus Eriugena's (d. 877) glosses of Martianus Capella's grammatical work *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, as Sinead O'Sullivan observes:

> Glossators also examined the numerical values and meaning of Greek letters, especially *litterae mysticae*… which were often supplied by the glossators with their numerical values and used as arithmological cyphers… the use of difficult and arcane vocabulary, of which Greek was a part, was only one of many devices. Acrostics, puzzles, word games, riddles, as well as grammatical or rhetorical techniques such as hyperbaton and *scinderatio*, provided further strategies for concealment, many of which were used by the Carolingian glossators.[103]

In his *Periphyseon*, Eriugena also claimed that while God is beyond all human knowledge, symbols, letters, and language are embodiments of the human mind that reflects God's divine Creation.[104] Eriugena believed that letters and symbols are components of the created world, and his philosophy connected human language to a divine cause.

[103] O'Sullivan, 'The Sacred and the Obscure', 84, 88. For Eriugena's other glosses, see John J. Contreni, 'The Biblical Glosses of Haimo of Auxerre and John Scottus Eriugena', *Speculum*, 51 (1976), 411-34.
[104] John Scottus Eriugena, *Periphyseon (De Diuisione Naturae)*, *Liber Primus*, I. P. Sheldon-Williams, ed. and trans., 3 Vols (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1968), Vol. I, 191. See also Donald F. Duclow, 'Divine Nothingness and Self-Creation in John Scotus Eriugena', *Journal of Religion*, 57 (1977), 109-23.

Abbo of Fleury (945-1004) was also interested in alphabetic writing, and he had considerable influence in Anglo-Saxon England. Shortly after Ramsey Abbey was founded in 969, Abbo visited the English monastery from 986 to 988.[105] At this time Abbo was a deacon and he held the position of *armarius* in Fleury which meant that he was in charge of the monastery's school, library, and archives.[106] From the vast resources that were available in Fleury, Abbo brought many manuscripts with him to England:

> during this period he was successful in establishing a small outpost of new learning. He brought with him copies of all relevant works on the computus, culled from his own writings and those of earlier scholars including Bede, Hrabanus Maurus, Helperic of Auxerre, Macrobius, Dionysius Exiguus, Isidore of Seville, Jerome, and Martianus Capella.[107]

Although Abbo's visit to Ramsey was brief, it had a lasting impact on English monastic training and study. Abbo also established important contacts during and after his trip to England. After his arrival he was ordained by Oswald, Archbishop of York (972-992) and Bishop of Worcester (961-992), and he developed close friendships with Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury (960-978), and Wulfric, Abbot of St Augustine's, Canterbury (c. 1044-c. 1060).[108] Abbo's most famous pupil was Byrhterth of Ramsey, and Ælfric was heavily influenced by his hagiographical works.[109] Abbo evidently had connections with

[105] See Cyril Hart, 'The Foundation of Ramsey Abbey', *Revue Bénédictine*, 104 (1994), 295-327; Elizabeth Dachowski, *First Among Abbots: The Career of Abbo of Fleury* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 269-71.
[106] Marco Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury: A Study of the Ideas about Society and Law of the Tenth-Century Monastic Reform Movement* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1987), 32-40; Janneke Raaijmakers, *The Making of the Monastic Community at Fulda, c. 744 – c. 900* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 189-90.
[107] Hart, 'Byrhtferth and his Manual', 96.
[108] See Mostert, *Abbo of Fleury*, 40-1; 'Relations between Fleury and England', in *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876-1947)*, David Rollason, Conrad Leyser, and Hannah Williams, eds (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 185-208 at 191.
[109] See Ciaran Arthur, 'Giving the Head's Up in Ælfric's *Passio Sancti Edmundi*: Postural Representations of the Old English Saint', *PQ*, 92 (2013), 315-34.

some of the most influential ecclesiastics of late Anglo-Saxon England, and his teaching and writings were held in the highest regard.

Abbo's grammatical treatise *Quaestiones grammaticales* provides information about his teaching at Ramsey.[110] Marco Mostert has shown that this text reveals his interest in Anglo-Saxon runes and other writing systems:

> In chapter 28, Abbo compares the pronunciation of certain letters used to render spoken Latin with the Anglo-Saxon thorn, wynn, and yogh. Clearly, Abbo was interested in the writing systems current in Anglo-Saxon England, including runes (from which the yogh was borrowed). Possibly he could reciprocate by offering some symbols which can be found in manuscripts then in the Fleury library. Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS Voss. lat. F 12 d, of the ninth century, written at Fleury, has on folio 37v a well-known text on *litterae formatae*. Usually, this text is followed by a Greek alphabet, with the Latin equivalent of each Greek letter. Here, the Greek alphabet is written between the two columns of the text with, in the upper margin, a runic alphabet with a Latin transliteration. Three of these runes can be found in the copy of notes taken by Byrhtferth, Abbo's best pupil at Ramsey – and in no other manuscript.[111]

Abbo's interest in runes and their equivalent forms in other alphabets echoes Hrabanus' earlier combinations of graphemes and parallels the use of runic and Roman letters in Anglo-Saxon 'gibberish' rituals. Abbo also composed acrostic poems in honour of his close friend Dunstan, who also tried his hand at figurative poetry.[112] Finally, some of Abbo's astronomical works survive, and Byrhtferth was greatly indebted to his teaching for the

[110] Abbo of Fleury, *Quaestiones grammaticales*, A. Guerreau-Jalabert, ed (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1982).
[111] Mostert, 'Fleury and England', 192-3.
[112] See Scott Gwara, 'Three Acrostic Poems by Abbo of Fleury', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 2 (1992), 203-35 at 215-26; Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature 900-1066* (London: Hambledon, 1993), 151-6.

composition of the *Enchiridion*, which emphasises the cosmological significance of language (see below).[113]

There was evidently a close connection between studies of language and grammar and the interest in language manipulation in Anglo-Saxon England. There is considerable evidence for early medieval systems of encryption, and coded texts survive in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts from the tenth century. Michael Lapidge has claimed that by the close of the tenth century, 'the English curriculum was quite different from any continental curriculum of the [earlier] tenth century: at no continental centre was so important a position given to the study of hermeneutic texts'.[114] Language study in Anglo-Saxon England was significantly influenced by Patristic philosophy, the *Ars grammatica*, and an increase in experimentation with writing systems. Two of the most prolific English writers of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries drew directly upon these traditions to develop their own philosophies of language which emphasised the cosmological power of letters.

v. *Æ*lfric

In the last decade of the tenth century, *Æ*lfric (d. c. 1010) wrote his own *Grammar* to educate monks in both English and Latin, and he drew upon works by Donatus and Priscian for this work.[115] However, as Joyce Hill argues, *Æ*lfric did not seek to imitate the complex features of his Latin sources:

> Glosses and glossaries will have been used for learning vocabulary, and practice dialogues or colloquies are likely to have been employed to exercise grammatical features, develop

[113] See R. B. Thomson, 'Two Astronomical Tractates of Abbo of Fleury', in *The Light of Nature: Essays in the History and Philosophy of Science Presented to A. C. Crombie*, J. D. North and J. J. Roche, eds (Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1985), 113-33; 'Further Astronomical Material of Abbo of Fleury', *Mediaeval Studies*, 20 (1988), 671-3.

[114] Lapidge, 'Hermeneutic Style', 76. This proliferation of language study is reflected in the number of manuscripts that were in England which contain works by Isidore, Priscian, Donatus, Eutyches, Phocas, Alcuin, Martianus Capella, and Hrabanus, see Gneuss, 'Study of Language', 11-12.

[115] Thomas N. Hall, '*Æ*lfric as Pedagogue', in *Companion to Ælfric*, Magennis and Swan, eds., 193-216 at 200.

> lexical range and, at a more advanced stage, to exercise skill in the use of hermeneutic Latin. There is plenty of evidence that this abstruse style of Latin was studied and practised at Winchester but there is no sign of it in Ælfric's writings. This may be because he did not see it as appropriate for his purposes, as would certainly be the case with his *Grammar* and *Colloquy*… Instead, he exercised his literary skills in writing Old English and, when writing in Latin, largely restricted himself to abridging his source materials.[116]

Ælfric stated in the preface to his first series of *Homilies* that he translated his works into English not because of any confidence in obscure words ('nec obscura posuimus uerba') but to correct the errors of the unlearned ('simplicem Anglicam').[117] He also acknowledged a wide range of sources for his *Homilies* including works by Augustine, Jerome, Bede, Gregory the Great, Smaragdus, and Haymo.[118] Ælfric was influenced by prolific Latin writers but he deliberately chose to present his material in simple vernacular writing to edify his English audiences and to present English as equal to the traditional languages of exegetical study: 'Ælfric saw himself as participating in this apostolic and patristic tradition by presenting Christian knowledge and biblical texts *in* English *for* the English'.[119] Ælfric's continuation of Patristic traditions is evident in his *Grammar*, which engages with the spiritual significance of language.

In the *Grammar*'s preface, Ælfric stated that 'God ought not to be subject to rules of grammar' ('nec deus arti grammaticae subiciendus est').[120] He immediately aligned his work with Isidore's position that God's Word can never be fully conveyed in human language, and there are Isidorean influences elsewhere in the *Grammar*.[121] Ælfric gave this work the title of

[116] Hill, 'Life and Works', 48-9. See also Lapidge, 'Hermeneutic Style', 101; Law, *Grammar and Grammarians*, 200-24.
[117] Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies*, Clemoes, ed., 173.
[118] 'Augustinum. Ypponiensem. Hieronimum. Bedam. Gregorium. Smaragdum, et aliquando Hægmonem', Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies*, Clemoes, ed., 173.
[119] Gittos, 'Audience of Old English', 264.
[120] Ælfric, *Grammatik*, 2.
[121] See Ælfric, *Grammatik*, 293.

De Arte Grammatica Anglice – the English people's own *Ars grammatica* – and it begins with a discussion of the alphabet, and the division of books into sentences, words, and letters:

> Littera is stæf on englisc and is se læsta dæl on bocum and untodæledlic. We todælað þa boc to cwydum and syððan ða cwydas to dælum, eft ða dælas to stæfgefegum and syððan þa stæfgefegu to stafum.[122]

> 'Littera' is 'stave' in English and it is the smallest part in a book and it is indivisible. We divide the book into sentences, and then those sentences into words, again those words into syllables, and then those syllables into staves.

The 'stæf' or letter is the smallest component of language upon which words, phrases, and books are constructed. Letters are evidently important for the formation of holy writings and Scripture; everything is signified through letter combinations: 'butan ðam stæfum ne mæg nan word beon awriten'.[123] Ælfric also provided three characteristics of every letter in its name, shape, and power: 'ælc stæf hæfð þreo ðing: Nomen, Figura, Potestas, þæt is, nama and hiw and miht'.[124] The name of the letter is how it is known in the alphabet, its 'hiw' is how it is shaped, and its might is how it functions between other letters ('miht, hwæt he mæge betwux oðrum stafum').[125] The letter gains power or might when it forms words through its interaction with other letters.

Ælfric based this opening chapter of the *Grammar* on Priscian's *Excerptiones* which comments on the similarity of the letter with the primary elements of the world: 'Yet again, letters are called after the words "elements" because of similarity with the natural

[122] Ælfric, *Grammatik*, 4-5.
[123] Ælfric, *Grammatik*, 5; 'without those staves no word may be written'.
[124] Ælfric, *Grammatik*, 5; 'each letter has three things: "Nomen", "Figura", "Potestas", that is, name, shape, and might'.
[125] Ælfric, *Grammatik*, 5; 'might, what it is able (to do) between other letters'.

elements'.[126] The individual letter assumes the same cosmological significance as the elements, and it occupies a central position in the creation of the world. Interestingly, Ælfric omitted this statement by Priscian, indicating that he was perhaps more reserved in explicitly connecting the creation of the world with language. His description of Creation in *De Temporibus Anni* closely follows the account in *Genesis*, and he does not labour any point about language's role in the division of the world into smaller components:

> Witodlice ða ða se ælmihtiga scyppend þisne middaneard gesceop þa cwæð he gewurðe leoht and leoht wæs ðærrihte geworden. Ða geseah God þæt þæt leoht wæs god and todælde þæt leoht fram ðam þeostrum and het þæt leoht dæg and ða þeostru niht… On ðam oðrum dæge gesceop God heofonan seo þe is gehaten firmamentum seo is gesewenlic and lichamlic.[127]

> Indeed when the Almighty Creator made this middle-world He then said 'let there be light', and light was immediately made. Then God saw that the light was good, and He divided that light from the darkness and called that light 'day' and the darkness 'night'… On the next day God made heaven that is called the firmament which is visible and bodily.

God 'spoke' ('þa cwæð he') when He divided the world ('todælde') into different parts, He named these different components ('het', 'gehaten'), and He gave them visible, bodily form ('gesewenlice and lichamlic'). However, Ælfric was careful not to contradict his view that God is beyond the rules of grammar and human language, and he simply reiterated the *Genesis* account. Like Isidore, Ælfric included language among the components of the

[126] 'Littere autem etiam elementorum uocabulo nuncupantur ad similitudinem elementorum mundi', David W. Porter, ed. and trans., *Excerptiones de Prisciano: The Source for Ælfric's Latin-Old English Grammar* (Rochester, N.Y.: Brewer, 2002), 44-5.
[127] Ælfric, *Ælfric's De Temporibus Anni*, Heinrich Henel, ed (London: EETS, 1970), 2.

created world but he did not explicitly engage with the question of whether God literally used language to perform His creative act, or what the nature of this language was if He did.

In his homily for Pentecost Sunday, Ælfric also followed Patristic interpretations of the division of languages following the fall of the Tower of Babel:

> Þa wæs an gereord on eallum mancynne. 7 þæt weorc wæs begunnen ongean Godes willan; God eac for þi hi tostencte: swa þ(æt) he forgeaf ælcum þæra wyrhtena seltcuð gereord: 7 heora nan ne cuðe oþres spræce tocnawan… Nu eft on þysum dæge þurh ðæs halgan gastes tocyme wurdon ealle gereord geanlæhte 7 geþwære: for þan ðe eall se halga heap cristes hiredes wæs sprecende mid eallum gereordum 7 eac þæt wunderlicor wæs: þa ða heora án bodode mid anre spræce. ælcum wæs geþuht þe ða bodunge gehyrde swilce he spræce mid his gereorde: wæron hi ebreisce oððe grecisce oððe romanisce. oððe egyptisce. oððe swa hwilcere þeode swa hi wæron þe ða lare gehyrdon.[128]
>
> There was one language among all mankind, and that work was begun against God's will. Therefore God drove them apart, so that he gave to each of the builders [of the tower] an unknown language, and not one of them knew how to understand the other's speech… Now also on this day, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, all languages were united and reconciled; because all the holy company of Christ's flock was speaking in all languages; and, furthermore, it was more wonderful when one of them preached in one language, it seemed to everyone, when that preaching was heard, as if he spoke in his language, whether it was Hebrew, or Greek, or Latin, or Egyptian, or of whatever people they were who heard that teaching.

[128] Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies*, Clemoes, ed., 358-9.

Like Jerome, Augustine, and Isidore, Ælfric claimed that human language was originally united before the building of Babel, and that it was divided as a result of sin.[129] This breakdown in communication was overcome at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit gave the apostles the gift of tongues, and they preached to peoples of all languages. However, Ælfric also questioned the nature of this miracle as a linguistic act:

> Ælfric's first two lines show his adherence to the orthodox view of the speaking miracle, but in the next lines he inquires into the miraculous nature of the events. The resemblance between Ælfric's '7 eac þæt wunderlicor wæs' and Bede's 'in eo potius erat mirabile' from his *Expositio in Actuum Apostolorum* strongly suggests that Ælfric based his suggestion of the possibility of a hearing miracle on Bede's commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. Ælfric omitted Bede's subsequent interpretation of the miracle of Pentecost as a gift of divinely inspired performative language having a powerful effect on speaker and listener alike. Instead, he chose to stress the importance of humility. The Pentecost homily from the First Series is the only time that Ælfric touches on the hearing miracle; elsewhere he states that the apostles 'knew' or 'had been given' knowledge of all languages.[130]

According to Ælfric, the Holy Spirit granted a translinguistic understanding to those who listened to the apostles' preaching, thus overcoming the inability to comprehend different languages following the fall of Babel. The diverse languages that were unanimously understood are not presented as God-given gifts; rather, the Holy Spirit granted the people mutual understanding. This subtle point reiterates Ælfric's view that human languages do not have a divine origin as God is beyond the rules of grammar.

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[129] On Ælfric's engagement with the Hebrew language, see Damian Fleming, 'Hebrew Words and English Identity in Educational Texts of Ælfric and Byrhtferth', in *Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Saxon England*, Rebecca Stephenson and Emily Thornbury, eds (Toronto: Toronto UP, forthcoming).

[130] Kees Dekker, 'Pentecost and Linguistic Self-Consciousness in Anglo-Saxon England: Bede and Ælfric', *JEGP*, 104 (2005), 345-72 at 359.

Ælfric maintained his position that God transcends the rules of grammar but, following Jerome, Augustine, and Isidore, he also claimed that language is a medium which is capable of communicating divine mysteries. In his homily for mid Lent Sunday, he stated that God's Word is manifested in many divine signs in the created world, including writing. Scripture is full of hidden signs concerning Christ that were revealed after the Incarnation:

> oft gehwa gesihð fægere stafas awritene. þonne herað he þone writere 7 þa stafas 7 nat hwæt hi mænað; Se ðe cann þæra stafa gescead. he herað heora fægernysse. 7 ræt þa stafas. 7 understent hwæt hi gemænað… Nis nah genoh þ(æt) ðu stafas scawie. buton þu hi eac ræde. 7 þ(æt) andgit understande… þa bec wæron awritene be criste ac þ(æt) gastlice andgit wæs ðam folce digle oð þ(æt) crist sylf com to mannum 7 geopenade þæra boca diglnysse: æfter gastlicum andgite.[131]
>
> Often someone sees lovely letters written then praises the writer and the letters, and not know what they mean. He who knows how to understand those letters praises their loveliness, and reads the letters, and understands what they mean… it is not enough that you behold letters without also reading them and understanding their sense… These books were written concerning Christ, but the spiritual sense was hidden from the people, until Christ himself came to men, and opened the books' secrets, according to the spiritual sense.

For Ælfric, the secrets of the Bible are hidden in its many letters, and although God cannot be subjected to the rules of grammar, divine mysteries are to be found in the powerful letter combinations of Scripture. After God created the world, the one language that was spoken among humans was divided after the building of the Tower of Babel, and divine mysteries were concealed until the Incarnation. Christ manifested God's own Word in visible form, he spoke in human language, and he revealed the secrets of the Bible which were then preached

[131] Ælfric, *Catholic Homilies*, Clemoes, ed., 277-8. See also Jolly, 'Magic, Miracle, and Popular Practice', 170.

to every nation after Pentecost. Ælfric believed that, following Pentecost, divine truths can be understood in any language, and that the diversity of language can be overcome through the same evangelising power given by the Holy Spirit.

One ritual that has been classed as a 'gibberish charm' is found in a composite manuscript (London, British Library, Cotton Faustina A. x) containing a copy of Ælfric's *Glossary* and *Grammar* (Part A, s. xi^{2}), and Æthelwold's translation of the *Rule of Benedict* with a Latin and Anglo-Norman wordlist (Part B, s. xii^{1}).[132] The ritual is against dysentery and it was added to Part B (fol. 116r) 'in a hand like that of the Rule [of Benedict]'.[133] Several other Latin 'charms' were also added at this time and the dysentery ritual reads:

> Þis man sceal singan nigon syþon wiþ utsiht on hrerenbræden æg þry dagas: + Ecce dol gola ne dit dudum bethe cunda bræthe cunda. elecunda ele uahge macte me erenum. ortha fuetha la ta uis leti unda. noeuis terre dulge doþ. Paternoster oþ ende. And cweþ symle æt þam drore huic. ð(æt) is.[134]

Ker believed that Part B of this manuscript was added to Part A in the early twelfth century according to twelfth-century additions in Part B.[135] The manuscript context of this ritual in Part B could therefore indicate that its 'gibberish' may be informed by the surrounding texts concerned with language and translation. It uses Latin ('Ecce', 'noeuis terre'), Old English ('doþ'), and other unidentifiable words ('dol gola') alongside the Paternoster. If Part A was together with Part B when this ritual was added, then its 'gibberish' may have perhaps been informed by some of Ælfric's understandings of language: its individual letters are found in

[132] Ker, *Catalogue*, 193-4; Elaine M. Treharne, 'The Dates and Origins of Three Twelfth-Century Old English Manuscripts', in *Manuscripts and their Heritage*, Pulsiano and Treharne, eds., 227-53 at 232-3.
[133] Ker, *Catalogue*, 194.
[134] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 307; 'A man should sing this nine times against dysentery on a lightly boiled egg for three days: + "Ecce dol gola ne dit dudum bethe cunda bræthe cunda. elecunda ele uahge macte me erenum. ortha fuetha la ta uis leti unda. noeuis terre dulge doþ". Then the Our Father to its end. And say continuously at that: "drore huic", that is'. For the other 'charms', see Ker, *Catalogue*, 195.
[135] Ker, *Catalogue*, 196.

strange combinations which may have increased their might; its blending of multiple languages may be an attempt to overcome the division of language after Babel, and it may even be an attempt to replicate the reunification of language after Pentecost. Furthermore, Ælfric's claims that God is not bound by the rules of grammar and that spiritual mysteries are concealed in the letters of Scripture may parallel the ritual's ungrammatical form and obscure epigraphy.

Ælfric's views of language reflect some Anglo-Saxon understandings of how language reveals and conceals divine mysteries, and these help us to understand how 'gibberish' may have been inspired by Patristic traditions. Each 'stæf' increases in might when it functions between other letters, and the rituals may use different letters from multiple alphabets to increase the power of concealed words and phrases. The combination of different alphabets may also have Pentecostal significance as the performer should be inspired by the Holy Spirit to overcome the multiplicity of languages and understand the ritual's meaning. Finally, Ælfric described how divine secrets were kept hidden in the letters of Scripture until they were revealed by Christ, and the rituals' obscurity seems to conceal divine meaning that can only be revealed by Christian authorities.

vi. Byrhtferth of Ramsey

Byrhtferth of Ramsey (c. 970-c. 1020) was a contemporary of Ælfric and a pupil of Abbo of Fleury. He was influenced by Oswald and Abbo and, like Ælfric, he promulgated the use of the vernacular in his most famous computistical work, the *Enchiridion*.[136] In the preface to this work, Byrhtferth presents his computus within the familiar framework of the principle languages of Scripture and ancient knowledge, but he also says: 'Her onginð gerimcræft æfter

[136] See Michael Lapidge, ed. and trans., *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 1-204. See also Heinrich Henel, 'Notes on Byrhtferth's *Manual*', *JEGP*, 41 (1942), 427-43; Peter S. Baker, 'Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* and the Computus in Oxford, St John's College 17', *ASE*, 10 (1981), 123-42. On the dating of the *Enchiridion*, see Cyril Hart, 'The Ramsey *Computus*', *EHR*, 85 (1970), 29-44; 'Byrhtferth and his Manual', 95-109; Stephenson, 'Scapegoating the Secular Clergy', 103.

Ledenwarum and æfter Grecum and Iudeiscum and Egiptiscum and Engliscum þeodum'.[137] English is presented as equal to the languages of Scripture and capable of conveying ancient knowledge, as Gittos observes:

> [The *Enchiridion* provides] another example of emphasizing transmission in a very unapologetic way – that the English are now heirs to this knowledge about time, and Byrhtferth's computus can take its place in a long chain of handed-down wisdom. Presenting these texts as being in the language of the people to help them know about God was to claim to be fulfilling the apostolic mission.[138]

In a similar but more explicit way to Ælfric, Byrhtferth used English for the same purposes as the languages of Scripture: to instruct God's chosen people in spiritual mysteries in their own tongue.

There are other sections of the *Enchiridion* which cast much light on Byrhtferth's understanding of how languages and letters convey spiritual mysteries. In Book Two, for instance, he discusses the division of the created world into its principle components:

> Fif untodælednyssa hiw synt. An bið on lichaman, oðer on þære sunnan, þridde on þam gebede, þæt ys on boclicum cræfte. Se læsta dæl on þam stæfgefege ys littera. Þonne we sumne dæl todælað on þære spræce oððe on þam gebede, þonne todælon we ærest þa syllabas… and syððan þæt stæfgefeg on þam stafum. Se stæf ne mæg beon todæled. (II, 3).
>
> There are five kinds of atom. One is in the body, the second in the sun, the third in speech [*gebede*] – that is, in the discipline of writing. The smallest division in the syllable is the

[137] 'Here begins the computus of the Romans and the Greeks and the Hebrews and Egyptians, as well as of the English'; 'Incipit compotus Latinorum ac Grecorum Hebreorumque et Egiptiorum, necnon et Anglorum', Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, 2-3.
[138] Gittos, 'Audience of Old English', 264.

> letter [*littera*]. When we divide a certain part in speech [*spræce*] or in prayer [*gebede*], then we first divide the syllables… and afterward we divide the syllable into letters [*stafum*]. The letters [*stæf*] cannot be divided.[139]

The first thing to note about this passage is the range of vocabulary employed by Byrhtferth. He uses the words 'gebede' and 'spræce' for speech, 'syllabas' and 'stæfgefege' for syllable, and 'littera' and 'stæf' for letter. Baker and Lapidge have argued that this section of the *Enchiridion* is 'derived ultimately from various parts of Hrabanus Maurus's *Liber de Computo*', and that he probably also consulted Isidore's *Etymologies* or Donatus' *Ars maior*.[140] However, Byrhtferth diverged from these sources, and he significantly developed Hrabanus' section on the division of language, which simply states that 'Atomos est in oratione littera' ('the atom is a letter in speech').[141]

Byrhtferth refers to speech as 'gebede' and 'spræce', and the dual meanings of these words are reflected in the translation by Baker and Lapidge, where 'gebede' is rendered as both 'speech' and 'prayer'.[142] Byrhtferth's deliberate obfuscation of speech and prayer as one of the principle components of the world is also evident in his invocation of the Holy Spirit which introduces his reckoning of Easter:

> Oratio patris Byrhtferði:
>
> Spiritus alme, ueni. Sine te non diceris umquam;
>
> Munera da lingue, qui das (in) munere linguas.
>
> Cum nu, halig gast. Butan þe ne bis(t) þu gewurðod;
>
> Gyf þine gyfe þære tungan, þe þu gyfst gyfe on gereorde.

[139] Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, 110-11.
[140] Baker, 'Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*', 136-7; Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Enchiridion*, 306.
[141] See Baker, 'Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*', 136. One version of the *Enchiridion* that is found in Oxford, St John's College, MS 17 contains a lengthy marginal note quoting Hrabanus' *Liber de Computo* beside this passage (fol. 15v), see Baker and Lapidge, eds., *Enchiridion*, 389-90.
[142] See also Lapidge, 'Hermeneutic Style', 90.

Father Byrhtferth's prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit: without your support your name cannot even be pronounced;

Grant the gifts of speech, you who give the gift of tongues.

Come now, Holy Spirit! Without you, you cannot be honoured.

Give your gift to the tongue, to which you give a gift of speech.[143]

Unlike Ælfric who stressed that the Holy Spirit's gift at Pentecost was the ability to *understand* many languages, Byrhtferth directly associated the Holy Spirit with the gift of speech ('qui das (in) munere linguas'). Speech must come from the Holy Spirit for it to be reciprocated in prayer, and in this context 'gebed' can be rendered as divine speech. Byrhtferth presents the 'gebed' as one of the major constituent parts of the cosmos. Where Ælfric described the book as the greatest combination of letters in which divine secrets are kept, Byrhtferth described the 'gebed' as the greatest formation of letters ('stafas') by which God can be both revealed and honoured.

When the 'gebed' (or divine speech) is divided into its smallest components, we are left with the 'stæf' (or letter). In Book III, Byrhtferth discusses the numerical significance of letters which can be used for the calculation of Easter. As letters and numbers are anatomical components of the world, they can be interchanged and substituted, and Byrhtferth describes this phenomenon as a mystery which he will explain to rustic priests: 'Heræfter we wyllað geopenian uplendiscum preostum þæra stafena gerena… and syððan heora todælednyssa we willað gekyðan on þa wisan þe þa boceras habbað and healdað' (III, 3).[144] The letters of the alphabet are mysterious in their varied functions ('gerena'), and this is elsewhere reinforced by Byrhtferth's account of the legend of Pachomius. Byrhtferth was evidently influenced by

[143] Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, 136-7.

[144] 'Now we will reveal to rustic priests the mysteries of the letters… and afterwards we will show their divisions in the manner that writers have and hold', Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, 184-5.

Jerome's account of this legend, and he elaborated on the mysterious nature of the letters which Pachomius received from the angel:

> Nu we habbað þæne Easterlice circul rihtlice amearcod and þa gerena þe him to gebyriað be dæle onem him awriten, nu gerist hyt to swutelianne mid ealre heortan meagolnysse hwanon he com and hwa hine gesette… 'Him sona of heofena mihte com unasecgendlic myrhð, engla sum mid blisse, se þas word geypte and þæne abbod gegladode and þas uers him mid gyldenum stafum awritene on þam handum betæhte, þe þus wæron on his spræce gedihte: None Aprilis norunt quinos eall to þam ende'. Nu we hig willað mid trahtnunge her geglengan and rihtlice heora gerena kyrtenum preostum gecyðan (III, 2).

> Now that we have correctly written out the Easter cycle and alongside it written some of the mysteries [*gerena*] that belong to it, it is fitting to expound with wholehearted earnestness where it came from and who established it… 'Immediately there came to him from the might of the heavens inexpressible joy, and a certain angel, with bliss, who disclosed these words and gladdened the abbot and delivered into his hands these verses, written with golden letters [*gyldenum stafum*], which were composed thus in his language [*spræce*]: The nones of April know five regulars all the way to the end'. Now we will adorn them here with a commentary and accurately explain their mysteries [*gerena*] to comely priests.[145]

Byrhtferth claimed to know both the correct dating of Easter and all of the mysteries ('gerena') that belong to it.[146] By recounting the divine origin of this liturgical calculation, Byrhtferth lent authority to his computistical knowledge of heavenly mysteries and justified his use of the vernacular in revealing them. Unlike Jerome's account, where the angelic alphabet was secretive and known only to Pachomius and his friends, Byrhtferth stated that

[145] Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, 138-9.
[146] It is also worth remembering that *galdor* is often connected to *ryne* in poems from the Exeter and Vercelli Books, see Chapter One.

the angel's golden letters ('gyldenum stafum') were in Pachomius' own language (i.e. Egyptian). Byrhtferth continued this vernacular transmission of spiritual knowledge to clergymen in the letters of his own work ('rihtlice heora gerena kyrtenum preostum gecyðan'). According to Byrhtferth, new combinations of letters are made in heaven for the discernment of the cosmos and the correct instruction of God's people.

The letters of any language and alphabet have power to convey and calculate spiritual mysteries. Byrhtferth also makes reference to how other writers conceal their own 'secrets' in the grammar and letters of their work: 'Fela we rihton ymbe þissum þingum maðelian, ac we asittað þæt þa boceras ascunion þæt we ymbe heora digolnyssa þus rumlice sprecað' (III, 3).[147] At the end of Book Three of the *Enchiridion*, Byrhtferth also included a number of tables containing numerical values of letters in the Greek and Hebrew alphabets: 'Ebreiscra abecede we willað geswutelian and Grecisra. and þæt getæl þæra stafena we þencað to cyðanne, forþon we witon þæt hyt mæg fremian' (III, 3).[148] As seen with Bede's explanation of manual language, these numerical values of letters were useful in calculating dates and communicating in secret. The previous chapter considered the possibility that tables such as these may have influenced some Anglo-Saxon rituals with abstract letter sequences, like the theft diagram in the *Vitellius Psalter*. It is clear that Byrhtferth assigned spiritual and numerical significance to individual letters regardless of the language or alphabet to which they belong. Every 'stæf' has a spiritual value, and it is the atom upon which all languages, prayers, and divine speech are constructed.

Byrhtferth gave special attention to prayer or speech ('gebed') as one of the five principle elements of the world which is divided into the smallest component of the 'stæf'. These terms are frequently found in 'gibberish' rituals, as seen in the ritual for elf-sickness in

[147] 'We could say a great deal about these things, but we are afraid that writers will hate it that we speak so amply about their secrets', Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion,* 168-9.
[148] 'we will expound the Hebrew and Greek alphabets. And we intend to make known the numerical value of the letters, for we know that it may be of use', Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion,* 186-7.

Bald's Leechbook which uses Greek 'stafum' for a *galdor*: 'Wiþ ælcre yfelre leodrunan 7 wið ælfsidenne þis gewrit him þis greciscum stafum: ++ A ++ O + y^{o}HρBγM +++++ BερρNN | κNεTTAN |'.[149] In Caligula A. xv, the *Gewrit of Heofonum* that was brought by an angel to Rome provides a 'gebed' which is equivalent to receiving the Eucharist, and the ritual to obtain political favours that follows this also prescribes the writing of divine 'stafas'.[150] Oxford, St John's College, MS 17 (s. xi^{ex} / xii^{in}) contains a copy of Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* as well as cosmological diagrams, and a ritual for nosebleed on folio 175r instructs the marking of a prayer from the Greek liturgy ('stomen calcos stomen metafofu') in a cruciform shape on the forehead.[151] Scriptural languages as well as Irish and English are also used in the 'gebed' of other rituals from *Bald's Leechbook*, Harley 585, and Corpus 41.[152] The rituals' divine *gebed* are encoded in their obscure 'stafas'. Finally, Byrhtferth's caution about revealing too many of the secrets of other writers resonates with encrypted rituals that sometimes instruct silent performances. Byrhtferth's contemporary theologians concealed their spiritual knowledge from undiscerning readers, and the composers and scribes of these rituals seem to have consciously used obscure epigraphy to conceal divine mysteries.

vii. Observations

Patristic philosophies of language influenced how Anglo-Saxon theologians understood the spiritual significance of languages and letters. Key biblical events were used to describe how languages had the capacity to transmit divine mysteries. Beliefs in the divine origins of language were divided as some thought that it was a gift given directly to man by God, and others thought that God does not literally use language as He is beyond the rules of grammar.

[149] Jolly, *Popular Religion*, 149; 'Against every evil sorceress and against elf-sickness, (write) for him this writing in Greek letters: ++ A ++ O + y^{o}HρBγM +++++ BερρNN | κNεTTAN |'. See also Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. II, 138-40 and Chapter Two.
[150] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 272, 300. See also Chapter Three.
[151] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 291.
[152] Grendon, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms', 184, 224; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 234, 258, 266, 308.

Despite this tricky theological point, Patristic writers maintained that language has the capacity to convey divine mysteries. Importantly, this was not limited to the principle Scriptural languages of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; other vernacular languages were also considered capable of transmitting the Word of God. These theological interpretations of language were enthusiastically developed by Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian ecclesiastics, and they offer a context within which to understand abstract writing in medieval 'charms'. Anglo-Saxon 'gibberish' rituals use alphabets and letters in ways that relate to these philosophical interpretations. Several different languages, including the vernacular, often appear in combination, indicating an attempt to reconstruct the original language that was spoken by mankind before the fall of the Tower of Babel. Individual 'stafas' are prescribed for the performance of divine 'gebed', and these letters assume cosmological significance as this form of divine speech is one of the principle elements of the universe. Finally, other rituals seem to employ different systems of encryption to conceal their spiritual meaning through letter manipulation, substitution, and rearrangement.

Conclusions

'Gibberish' has been used as a defining characteristic of Anglo-Saxon 'charms' in traditional scholarship, and abstract words and phrases have been viewed as evidence of scribal confusion and the deliberate obfuscation of heathen formulas. This view does not take into account complex philosophies of language that were being read and written by English theologians. The obscure epigraphy of Anglo-Saxon rituals arose out of philosophical traditions that assigned great spiritual and cosmological significance to individual letters. Many of the manuscripts containing these rituals were written in monasteries where these Patristic works would probably have been available, and where language and grammar were studied. From this philosophical basis, English writers developed interesting ways of

revealing and concealing spiritual mysteries in a wide range of literary outputs including riddles, wisdom poetry, exercises in encryption, inscriptions, and ritual texts. As Bruce O'Brien observes:

> Grammarians in England began their description of language with its smallest component – its litterae 'letters' – beyond which it could not be divided… Language, then, was something that could be broken down into its smallest parts to be examined and manipulated. The English showed particular interest in such smallest parts, collecting codes and alphabets, some used to represent numbers, some used to write contemporary languages, others representing no known language.[153]

Anglo-Saxon 'gibberish' writing reflects a long tradition of ideas about how the world was created, how it is sustained by language, and how divine speech can be formed by many different letters and alphabets.

The final part of this study has offered one alternative way of reading a significant proportion of texts that are included in editions of 'charms'. Rituals that contain abstract epigraphy comprise roughly one quarter of the texts in Storms' edition and they are taken from nearly one half of the manuscripts that he used. Furthermore, there are immediate correspondences between ritual *galdra* and coded writing, strongly suggesting that the very concept at the heart of the 'charms' genre is intricately bound up with Christian theology and philosophy. Reading 'gibberish' rituals as coded texts has the potential to transform our understanding of late Anglo-Saxon ritual practice, and it offers exciting possibilities for deciphering these divine secrets.

[153] O'Brien, *Reversing Babel*, 25.

Conclusion: Future Directions for ‘Charm’ Studies

i. Reviewing the Argument

The Anglo-Saxon ‘charms’ have been consistently understood as remnants of heathen religion or heterodox blends of Christianity and paganism. These texts have been extracted from their manuscript sources and often studied in isolation from them. As this thesis has demonstrated, there are significant problems with this approach as the concept of the ‘charm’ did not enter the English language until after the Anglo-Saxon period, and this calls into question how the manuscripts’ scribes and readers understood these rituals. As the Christian nature of ‘charms’ is crucial to understanding these texts, it is necessary to re-evaluate them as rituals that were embedded in the ecclesiastical culture of late Anglo-Saxon England, in places such as the New Minster, Winchester and Canterbury Cathedral.

This critique of Anglo-Saxon ‘charms’ has addressed three main issues which lie at the heart of the genre: the translation of *galdor* as ‘charm’; the manuscript contexts in which these rituals survive; and the phenomenon of ‘gibberish’ which has been used as a defining feature of these texts. By reconsidering the meanings of *galdor,* the rituals in their manuscript contexts, and the learned nature of ‘gibberish’ writing, we can understand more about how Anglo-Saxon scribes and ecclesiastics viewed these rituals as powerful Christian practices. While I have not considered every ‘charm’ in the corpus, I have examined a representative selection of texts from this ‘genre’ which are found in a range of manuscripts. I argue that scholars should abandon the concept of ‘charms’ in Anglo-Saxon England – with all of its connotations of paganism, superstition, and heterodox Christianity – so that we may better understand these texts as rituals that developed from Christian liturgy, theology, and philosophy.

Part one of this study has engaged with Anglo-Saxon understandings of *galdor*, which is often translated as 'charm'. Early condemnations of practising *galdra* appear in law codes, and these were later extended to homilies and other didactic texts by ecclesiastics associated with the Benedictine Reform movement, such as Ælfric and Wulfstan. The evidence indicates that efforts were made in the tenth and eleventh centuries to restrict meanings of this particular word to signify harmful spiritual practices, and I suggested that the noun may have undergone redefinition in Æthelwold's school in Winchester. However, as Chapter One has shown, Christian authorities proscribed this type of ritual in very formulaic ways: *galdor* never appears in isolation; its negative meaning is dependent upon surrounding terminology denoting other harmful spiritual practices; and it is frequently used in translations of Latin sources. When these specific types of *galdra* are condemned, they indicate dangerous, unauthorised ritual practices. Despite traditional scholarly opinion, *galdor* also appears in non-condemnatory ways in mainstream Christian texts which use the term to signify ancient knowledge, Christian wisdom, spiritual discernment, and divine revelation. These texts are found primarily in the Exeter and Vercelli Books which, because they were copied from exemplars predating the Reform, may reflect meanings of *galdor* before it was predominantly associated with forbidden practices. From the few times that *galdor* is used in a non-condemnatory way, the study has highlighted its very clear connections with important Christian concepts, and this gives liturgical significance to its appearance in ritual texts.

In order to better understand how *galdor* was used in ritual contexts, I focused in particular in Chapter Two on those texts that prescribe its performance. There are only twelve surviving rituals that instruct a reader to write or recite a *galdor*, and these are found in four manuscripts which were written in the late tenth and eleventh centuries. In these rituals, *galdor* is often closely associated with liturgical prayers, the Eucharist, and 'gibberish' writing. The appearances of *galdor* in these manuscripts provide crucial evidence that it was

understood by some ecclesiastics as a powerful Christian ritual that was compatible with the sacraments and obscure, sacred language. These findings have significant implications for the corpus of 'charms' because when *galdor* appears in ritual contexts it signifies a religious practice that is closely associated with the liturgy, rather than paganism or heterodox Christianity. Part one of this study argued that *galdor* did not signify 'charm' in Anglo-Saxon England and that it was often used to signify ancient Christian wisdom and revelation, and this has important implications for studies of 'charms', paganism, liturgy, and the standardisation of language during the Benedictine Reform.

Part two of the study engaged with the manuscript contexts of 'charms' because these texts have been consistently discussed in isolation from their manuscript sources and regrouped according to the criteria of modern editors. In Chapter Three, I explored some of the liturgical elements that are present in many 'charms', and compared a range of these ritual texts with contemporary liturgical rites. I argued that most, if not all, of these texts are best understood as Christian liturgical rituals; many were to be enacted by priests, and some which were written for use by lay people, such as pregnant women, demonstrate close interactions with the liturgy. In this chapter, I argued that it is often hard to maintain distinctions between 'charms' and liturgy because of the many close correspondences that exist between these ritual texts. Given the manuscript contexts in which these rituals are found and the places where they were written, it makes sense to read 'charms' as part of diverse Anglo-Saxon liturgical practices from a range of ecclesiastical centres.

I argued in Chapter Four that Anglo-Saxon rituals cannot be removed from their manuscript contexts without a detrimental effect on our understanding of them. Individual case studies of manuscripts which contain 'charms' show that these rituals were incorporated into larger collections of medical, religious, astronomical, agricultural, and educational materials. These manuscripts were written in Canterbury, Winchester, Worcester, Exeter, and

Ramsey, reflecting the diversity of spiritual practices in high-status minsters. The *Vitellius Psalter* provides a good example of the close intertextual relationships that exist between 'charms' and their surrounding texts. Its prefatory collection includes computistical calculations, astronomical predictions, agricultural rituals, and exercises in secret writing. The encrypted name of Ælfwine in the final text of the psalter's prefatory matter may also provide rare evidence for the identity of a composer of these 'charms' and his interest in obscure language. Cross-comparisons can be made between the psalter and other manuscripts from Canterbury and Winchester, and these expose interesting information about experimentations with the liturgy in late Anglo-Saxon monasteries. The case study demonstrates that it is much more beneficial to approach 'charms' as part of an ecclesiastical culture of diversity at a time when new liturgies were often created and other ones were revised and adapted. Part two of this study has argued that the manuscript contexts of 'charms' reveal how Anglo-Saxon scribes understood these rituals, and that it is better to think of them as liturgical texts. Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest that Anglo-Saxon scribes distinguished between 'charms' and other liturgical rituals, and this has important implications for a range of scholarly disciplines including studies of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, 'charms', and liturgy.

The *Vitellius Psalter* reveals Ælfwine's interest in secret writing, and it is likely that the abstract, 'gibberish' rituals in this manuscript have coded spiritual meaning. Part three of this study developed the findings of Chapter Four to critique the phenomenon of 'gibberish' in Anglo-Saxon rituals. The highly obscure language that is found in many rituals has traditionally been interpreted as evidence of Anglo-Saxon heathenism that was deliberately corrupted by Christian scribes, and as scribal misunderstandings of foreign formulas that had an epigraphic appeal. In Chapter Five I argued that complex systems of encryption were known in Anglo-Saxon England, and that Christian philosophies of language, grammar, and

textual concealment were developed from the eighth century. Patristic and medieval philosophies of language provide a convincing source of inspiration for this so-called 'gibberish' writing. Letters (*stafas*) were believed to have cosmological significance as they are the smallest units of speech (*gebed*) which is one of the principle elements of the world. The study of grammar was fundamental in monastic education and biblical exegesis, and this liberal art was founded upon the importance of individual letters. Finally, medieval scribes were interested in concealing and revealing the spiritual meaning of texts through language manipulation, where letters were rearranged, substituted with numbers, or combined with other alphabets.

This chapter has delineated that 'gibberish' is used in many of the rituals, including some which prescribe a *galdor* or *gebed*, to conceal its powerful spiritual meaning. Instead of providing evidence of heathen formulas which were deliberately corrupted by Christian scribes, these 'gibberish' rituals indicate that certain ritual practices, including *galdra*, were in fact deliberately obscured to prevent them from becoming easily known. This is a logical interpretation when one considers the efforts that reformers made to condemn certain types of *galdra* because they were dangerous if they were performed by unauthorised people. The close connections between prescribed *galdra* and the Eucharist, and the concealment of their prescribed words in coded language suggest that these rituals could only be performed as liturgical rites by highly trained priests. Indeed, one ritual against a dwarf from Harley 585 explicitly states that it requires skilful knowledge from the practitioner, and it uses the Eucharistic Host alongside a *galdor*. The powerful spiritual meaning of these rituals was deliberately concealed in abstract letters and multiple alphabets that would have been known only to the initiated. This reading provides an alternative interpretation of 'gibberish charms' as liturgical rituals which use obscure language to encode divine power. Indeed, other liturgical rites and devotional poems use letters in abstract ways to graphically encode

spiritual meaning. In light of these parallels, an alternative approach to these highly enigmatic rituals can be informed by Christian liturgy, theology, and philosophy. Part three of this study has argued that 'gibberish' rituals were understood within the context of philosophical approaches to language in late Anglo-Saxon England, and this can inform other studies of medieval encryption, astronomy, cosmology, and Patristic influences on other Anglo-Saxon texts. The study as a whole challenges the idea that there was any such thing as a 'charm' in Anglo-Saxon England, and it has offered alternative interpretations of these rituals as liturgical rites and coded texts.

ii. Directions for Future Research

It is my contention that future research should abandon the concept of 'charms' and pursue alternative readings of these rituals in their historical, liturgical, and manuscript contexts. It is my hope that, in problematizing traditional understandings of Anglo-Saxon 'charms', this thesis can contribute to a variety of fields. It has potentially complicated understandings of early medieval paganism, enriched codicological approaches to performative elements in texts and books, and problematized historical discourses of 'gibberish' writing. If we accept the arguments of this thesis – that 'charms' are in fact learned Christian rituals of a liturgical nature which sometimes employ highly complex coded language – then various possible lines of enquiry may be pursued. For example, the 'gibberish' of Anglo-Saxon rituals could be compared with the many different cryptographic and steganographic techniques that were developed in the later medieval and early modern periods. The *Secretum secretorum* was translated from Arabic sources in the mid twelfth century – surviving in over six hundred manuscripts – and this work outlines how to use cryptography in riddles and other formulas

to conceal ancient knowledge.[1] The thirteenth-century codex the *Secretum philosophorum* also provides seven methods of concealing meaning, including the use of different chemicals for ink, writing messages backwards for reading in a mirror, and writing on different materials for their particular properties.[2] Other studies have shown how complex coded systems were developed by individuals such as Roger Bacon (d. c. 1292), Raymundus Lullus (d. 1315), Leon Battista Alberti (d. 1472), Johannes Trithemius (d. 1516), and John Dee (d. c. 1608).[3] Indeed, some of the manuscripts considered in this study were used by Trithemius and Dee for their own compositions.[4] More recently, scholars have also returned to the famous Voynich manuscript which has caused much debate over whether it is an authentically encrypted work of the later medieval period, or an extremely elaborate hoax of the twentieth century.[5]

Later medieval and early modern examples testify to the more complex systems of coded writing that have much in common with the 'gibberish' of Anglo-Saxon texts, and more research on the early English tradition is required. These studies would aid in the research of Anglo-Saxon encryption, and it is very likely that early medieval forms of secret

[1] See Lynn Thorndike, 'The Latin pseudo-Aristotle and Medieval Occult Science', *JEGP*, 21 (1922), 248-9; Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 122, 143; Nicholas Perkins, *Hoccleve's* Regiment of Princes*: Counsel and Constraint* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 87-93. For distinctions between steganography and cryptography, see Klaus Schmeh, 'The Pathology of Cryptology – A Current Survey', *Cryptologia*, 36 (2012), 14-45 at 16.

[2] See Friedman, 'Safe Magic', 80-2; Sven Dupré, 'Images in the Air: Optical Games, Magic and Imagination', in *Spirits Unseen: The Representation of Subtle Bodies in Early Modern European Culture*, Christine Göttler and Wolfgang Neuber, eds (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 71-92; Frank Klaassen, *The Transformations of Magic: Illicit Learned Magic in the Later Middle Ages and Renaissance* (University Park, P.A.: Pennsylvania State UP, 2013), 42-8, 69, 226. For further examples of these codes in later medieval texts, see John B. Friedman, 'The Cipher Alphabet of John de Foxton's *Liber Cosmographiae*', *Speculum*, 36 (1982), 219-35.

[3] See, for example, J. M. Feely, *Roger Bacon's Cipher: The Right Key Found* (Rochester: Feely, 1943); Leon Battista Alberti, 'On Writing in Ciphers', Kim Williams, trans., in *The Mathematical Works of Leon Battista Alberti*, Kim Williams, Lionel March, and Stephen R. Vassell, eds (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2010), 171-88. See also Strasser, 'Ninth-Century Figural Poetry', 22, 24; Stuart McWilliams, *Magical Thinking: History, Possibility, and the Idea of the Occult* (London: Continuum, 2012).

[4] See Chapter Four, note 111, and Willetts, 'Reconstructed Astronomical Manuscript', 29.

[5] See R. Brumbaugh, *The World's Most Mysterious Manuscript* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1977); G. Kennedy and R. Churchill, *The Voynich Manuscript: The Unsolved Riddle of an Extraordinary Book which has Defied Interpretation for Centuries* (London: Orion, 2004); D. R. Amancio, E. G. Altmann, D. Rybski, O. N. Oliveira Jr, and L. F. Costa, 'Probing the Statistical Properties of Unknown Texts: Application to the Voynich Manuscript', *Plos One*, 8 (2013), 1-10; Klaus Schmeh, 'A Milestone in the Voynich Manuscript Research: Voynich 100 Conference in Monte Porzio Catone, Italy', *Cryptologia*, 37 (2013), 193-203.

writing inspired later scribes and authors to develop more complex types of codes. The work envisaged here might necessitate an interdisciplinary investigation: a team of scholars with expertise in language, mathematics, code-breaking, and information technology might yield a richer conception of texts that have been too often dismissed as ‘gibberish’. As such, this thesis offers a stepping-stone from the unconvincing traditional genre of ‘charms’ towards a plethora of new, exciting research for liturgy and secret writing in Anglo-Saxon England and beyond.

Appendix – Manuscripts

Ælfwine's Prayerbook

London, British Library, MSS Cotton Titus D. xxvii and xxvi.

Edition: Beate Günzel, *Ælfwine's Prayerbook: London, British library, Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii*, HBS, Vol. 108 (London: Boydell & Brewer, 1993).

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 202, pp. 264-6; Keynes, *Liber Vitae*, 111-23; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 380, p. 70; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 62-3; Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 57-9; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 13-14; Karkov, 'Abbot Ælfwine', 123-5; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 380, pp. 305-7.

Discussion: A private prayerbook, written between 1023 and 1031 for Ælfwine while he was still dean at the New Minster, Winchester (became abbot in 1031 or 1032). Ælfwine's name is found in a private prayer and a miniature of the crucifixion.[1] Three scribes wrote the *Prayerbook*, one of whom was Ælsinus who also wrote the *Liber Vitae*.[2] His name is found in an encryption on folio 13v of Titus D. xxvii ('{lsknxs mf scrkpskt', 'Ælsinus me scripsit'). Close textual correspondences, particularly in prognostications, can be found between the *Prayerbook* and other manuscripts from the New Minster, Winchester and Christ Church, Canterbury, such as the *Vitellius Psalter* (xi^{med}), Tiberius A. iii (xi^{med}) and Caligula A. xv (xi^{2}).[3] The *Prayerbook* is believed to contain a 'charm' for finding a thief with meaningless letters, and it focuses on alphabet writing in some other texts.[4] The *Prayerbook* was later divided into two manuscripts by Sir Robert Cotton.

Bald's Leechbook

[1] See Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, 187; Karkov, 'Abbot Ælfwine', 128.
[2] See Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, 3.
[3] Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 3-25. See also Chapter Four.
[4] Pulsiano, 'Prefatory Matter', 102; Karkov, 'Abbot Ælfwine', 125. See also Hollis, 'Medical Writings', 193.

London, British Library, MS Royal 12 D. xvii.

Editions: Thomas Oswald Cockayne, ed. and trans., *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England: Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never Before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in this Country Before the Norman Conquest*, 3 Vols (London: Longman, 1864-6), Vol. II; Charles E. Wright, ed. and trans., *Bald's Leechbook: British Museum Royal Manuscript 12.D.xvii* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1955).

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 264, pp. 332-3; Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 60-4; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 479, p. 83; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 75; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 479, pp. 390-1. For details about the later reception of this manuscript, see James P. Carley, *The Libraries of King Henry VIII* (London: British Library in Association with the British Academy, 2000), 329.

Discussion: See Chapter Two.

Caligula A. vii

London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. vii.

Editions: [*Heliand*] Eduard Sievers, ed., *Heliand* (Halle: Verlag, 1878); [*Ælcerbot*] Godfrid Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1948), 172-7.

Contents: Priebsch, *Heliand Manuscript*; Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, cxxx; Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 137, p. 172; Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 1-4; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 308, p. 61; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 308, p. 237; Arthur, 'Ploughing through Caligula A. vii'; 'Three Marginal Notes'.

Discussion: See Chapter Two.

Caligula A. xv

London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. xv.

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 139, pp. 173-6; Gneuss, *Handlist*, nos. 311, 411, pp. 61, 74; Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 36-7; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 9-12; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 411, pp. 336-8.

Discussion: See Chapter Three.

Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 379

Contents: M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, Vol. II (Cambridge: CUP, 1908), 430-3; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 77.

Discussion: A twelfth-century medical collection from a range of Continental sources, including a work on the simple virtues of medicine, the *Liber de compendio Salerni*, Matthaeus Platearius' work on medicine, as well as many other recipes for particular ailments. It is believed to contain a 'charm' against blains, earlier versions of which appear in Harley 585 and Junius 163 (with a 'thigat' formula).[5] This 'charm' is immediately followed by an alternative ritual that invokes the cross in Latin, which was also edited as a 'charm' by Storms.[6]

Cambridge, Queen's College, MS 7

Contents: Thomas Hartwell Horne, *A Catalogue of the Library of the College of St. Margaret and St. Bernard, Commonly Called Queen's College in the University of Cambridge*, 2 Vols (London: S. and R. Bentley, 1827), Vol. II, 999-1000; M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts in the Library of Queen's College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: CUP, 1905), 7-8.

[5] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 302; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 60, note 7.
[6] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 294.

Discussion: A twelfth-century manuscript of unknown origin. It contains Adalbert's *Speculum Gregorii* and his commentary on Gregory the Great's exegetical work *On the Song of Songs*. A Latin 'charm' for fever on folio 142v has the title 'Exorcismus ad Febres expellendas', and it includes phonetic spellings of Greek and Aramaic words.[7]

Corpus 41

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41.

Online Images: 'Parker Library on the Web': <http://parkerweb.stanford.edu>.

Editions: [Old English Bede] Thomas Miller, ed., *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2 Vols (London: EETS, 1890); [Marginalia] Raymond J. S. Grant, ed., *Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41: The Loricas and the Missal* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979).

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 32, pp. 43-5; Budny, *Illustrated Catalogue*, Vol. I, 508; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 39, p. 31; Jolly, 'Margins of Orthodoxy'; Billett, *Divine Office*, 222-36; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 39, pp. 48-50.

Discussion: See Chapters Two and Three.

Corpus 44

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 44

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 33, p. 46; Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, 381; Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, 71; Budny, *Illustrated Catalogue*, Vol. I, 676-9; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 40, p. 31; Orchard, *Leofric Missal*, Vol. I, 141; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 4; Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 282; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 40, pp. 50-1.

[7] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 295-6.

Description: See Chapter Three.

Corpus 190

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 190.

Online Images: 'Parker Library on the Web': <http://parkerweb.stanford.edu>.

Contents: Mary Bateson, 'A Worcester Cathedral Book of Ecclesiastical Collections', *EHR*, 10 (1895), 715; Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 45, pp. 70-3; Gneuss, *Handlist*, nos. 59, 59.5, p. 33; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 76; Wieland, 'Survey of Latin Manuscripts', 142; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 59, pp. 69-72.

Discussion: A version of 'Wulfstan's Handbook', of which the first 294 folios (Part A) were written in Worcester in the first half of the eleventh century.[8] Part A was originally a distinct manuscript to Part B, and both were bound together by 1327 according to a reference to both sections in the Exeter catalogue.[9] Part A is textually related to a number of manuscripts that were written or commissioned by Wulfstan.[10] It contains Wulfstan's Canon Law collection and *Homily VIII*, the *Penitentials of Pseudo-Theodore and Egbert*, Ælfric's pastoral letters, an *Ordo Romanus*, writings by Alcuin, Hrabanus Maurus, Amalarius, and Abbo of Saint-Germain, and excerpts from the *Regularis Concordia*. According to paleographical evidence, additions were made to Part A after it had travelled to Exeter in the mid eleventh century.[11] These include a 'charm' against theft of cattle (fol. 130), a hymn, Decrees and Councils, excerpts from an Irish collection of Canon Law, and records of the Councils of Winchester and Windsor (1070).[12]

According to paleographical evidence, folios 295-420 (Part B) were written in Exeter in the mid to late eleventh century. Part B contains further copies of Ælfric's letters, liturgical

[8] Ker, *Catalogue*, 70; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 33; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 10.
[9] Ker, *Catalogue*, 73.
[10] See James M. Ure, ed., *The Benedictine Office: An Old English Text* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1957), 3-46.
[11] Ker, *Catalogue*, 70, 73.
[12] Ker, *Catalogue*, 70; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 203-4.

ordines, excerpts from the *Rule of Chrodegang*, confessional materials, laws, and three homilies. Ker suggested that Part A may have been bound with Part B in the second half of the eleventh century according to a possible reference to the whole manuscript in Bishop Leofric's inventory reading 'canon on leden 7 scriftboc on englisc'.[13]

Corpus 367

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 367.

Online Images: 'Parker Library on the Web': <http://parkerweb.stanford.edu>.

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 64, p. 110; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 100, p. 37; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 77; Scragg, *Conspectus*, 15; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 100, pp. 107-8.

Discussion: Folios 45-52 were probably written in Worcester in the mid to late eleventh century. These folios were originally part of a mid-eleventh century life of St Kenelm, of which only the conclusion survives. In the second half of the eleventh century, a booklist and the *Vision of Leofric* (earl of Mercia, d. 1067) – both in Old English – were added with a Latin liturgical sequence. Ker identified a number of other Worcester manuscripts that appear in the booklist, providing a likely origin of this manuscript in Worcester.[14] Later twelfth-century additions on folio 52r include a Worcester document and a Latin 'charm' against fever with the title 'Medicina contra Febres'.[15] The manuscript was owned by Archbishop Parker and it was bound in or before 1575 with two twelfth-century copies of Ælfric's *De temporibus* and homilies, now folios 1-29.

Exeter Book

[13] Ker, *Catalogue*, 73.
[14] Ker, *Catalogue*, 110.
[15] See Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 306.

Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS 3501.

Editions: R. W. Chambers, Max Förster, and Robin Fowler, eds., *The Exeter Book of Old English Poetry* (London: P. Lund, Humphries & Cp., 1933); George Philip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, eds., *The Exeter Book*, ASPR, Vol. 3 (New York: Columbia UP, 1936); Benjamin J. Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501*, 2 Vols (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994).

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 116, p. 153; Roberts, *Guthlac Poems*, 12-14; Gameson, 'Origins of the Exeter Book'; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 257, p. 54; Butler, 'History of the Exeter Book'; Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources', 90-101; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 257, pp. 201-3.

Discussion: See Chapter One.

Harley 585

London, British Library, MS Harley 585.

Editions: Thomas Oswald Cockayne, ed. and trans., *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England: Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never Before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in this Country Before the Norman Conquest*, 3 Vols (London: Longman, 1864-6), Vol. III; Edward Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms, and Prayers from British Library MS Harley 585: The 'Lacnunga'*, 2 Vols (New York: Edwin Mellen, 2001).

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 231, pp. 305-6; Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 26-36; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 421, p. 75; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 75; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 421, pp. 343-4.

Discussion: See Chapter Two.

Leofric Missal

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 579.

Edition: Nicholas Orchard, ed., *The Leofric Missal, 1: Introduction, Collation Table, and Index; 2: Text*, 2 Vols., HBS, Vols. 113-114 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002).

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 315, pp. 378-9; Hohler, 'Some Service Books', 78; Nicholas Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (Leicester: Leicester UP, 1984), 173-4, 210-14; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 585, p. 95; Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places*, 284-5; Billett, *Divine Office*, 143, 306; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 585, pp. 456-7.

Discussion: See Chapter Three.

London, British Library, MS Cotton Faustina A. x

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 154, pp. 194-6; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 331, p. 63; Elaine M. Treharne, 'The Dates and Origins of Three Twelfth-Century Old English Manuscripts', in *Manuscripts and their Heritage*, Pulsiano and Treharne, eds., 227-53; Alger N. Doane, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile, Vol. 15: Grammars / Handlist of Manuscripts,* A. N. Doane and M. T. Hussey, eds (Tempe, Arizona: ACMRS, 2007), 4-6; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 76; Francisco José Álvarez López, 'Monastic Learning in Twelfth-Century England: Marginalia, Provenance and Use in London, British Library, Cotton MS. Faustina A. X, Part B', *Electronic British Library Journal* (2012), no. 11, 1-8; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 331, pp. 254.

Discussion: A manuscript of unknown origin that was originally written at the end of the eleventh century on palaeographical grounds. Part A of this manuscript (fols. 3-101) contains Ælfric's *Glossary* and *Grammar* which, according to Ker, was originally produced

for nuns before it was adapted for use by monks.[16] Treharne has suggested that it was written in the south-east of England, possibly in Rochester or Christ Church, Canterbury, according to a similar scribal hand in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 115 which is possibly from these south-eastern minsters.[17]

According to palaeographical evidence, Part B of this manuscript (fols. 102-148) was written at the beginning of the twelfth century.[18] Ker believed that the two parts of this manuscript were bound together at this time, as Part A contains many twelfth-century annotations.[19] Part B contains a copy of Æthelwold's translation of the *Rule of Benedict* and the only surviving version of Edgar's *Establishment of the Monasteries*. Folios 115v-116r were originally blank and some 'charms' were added by a scribe with similar handwriting to Æthelwold's *Rule* in the twelfth century.[20] Ker lists two eyesalve recipes, a 'nonsense charm wiþ utsiht', two Latin 'charms' against fever (*Contra frigora* and *Contra febres*), and later twelfth-century 'charms' for blains, headache, *ranca* (pride?), and *nerawað* (travel?).[21] Cockayne edited the salve recipes and the 'charms' for blains, headache, *ranca*, *utsiht*, and fevers.[22] Storms edited the two Latin 'charms' for fever, and the Old English 'charm' against *utsiht* (dysentery).[23] An earlier version of the ritual against *utsiht* is found in Harley 585 (fols. 185v-186r).

London, British Library, MS Cotton Julius C. ii

[16] Ker, *Catalogue*, 194.
[17] Treharne, 'Three Twelfth-Century Old English Manuscripts', 232-3.
[18] Ker, *Catalogue*, 196. See also Orietta Da Rold and Mary Swann, 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220': <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220>.
[19] Ker, *Catalogue*, 196.
[20] Ker, *Catalogue*, 194.
[21] Ker, *Catalogue*, 195.
[22] Cockayne, ed., Leechdoms, Vol. III, 292-4.
[23] See Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 278-9, 307.

Discussion: A late seventeenth-century transcript which contains a copy of a 'charm' against theft of cattle on folio 66v. Overleaf on folio 66r an inscription reading 'Ex textu Roff' indicates that this text was copied directly from the *Textus Roffensis*.[24]

London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian D. xx

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 212, p. 278; Frantzen, *Literature of Penance*, 132; Gneuss, *Handlist*, nos. 395, 395.5, p. 72; Thijs Porck, 'Two Notes on an Old English Confessional Prayer in Vespasian D. XX', *N&Q*, 60 (2013), 493-8; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, nos. 395, 395.5, p. 320; Alfred Bammesberger, 'The Corrupt Reading *Ealle Omo* (Manuscript Cotton Vespasian D. XX)', *N&Q*, 62 (2015), 206-7.

Discussion: Unknown origin. Folios 2-86 of this manuscript are a confessional manual that has been dated to the mid tenth century according to palaeographical evidence. Hamilton argues that confessionals were intended for public use by a bishop, and the large writing space of 152 x 95mm in 15 long lines with large Anglo-Saxon miniscule handwriting supports this argument.[25] At the end of the manuscript (fols. 87-93) is an Old English confessional prayer that has been given an earlier date of 910 x 930 by Gneuss, indicating that it was a separate composition which was later bound with the confessional.[26] At the end of this prayer (fol. 93r), a Latin 'charm' for toothache with an exorcism formula was added in the mid to late eleventh century.[27]

London, British Library, MS Harley 438

[24] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 204.
[25] Hamilton, 'Penance and Excommunication', 92.
[26] Gneuss, *Handlist*, 72. Ker dates it to the mid tenth century, making it contemporary with the confessional, Ker, *Catalogue*, 278.
[27] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 289-90.

Contents: A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum, 4 Vols (London: British Museum, 1808-12), Vol. I, 311-13.

Discussion: A manuscript containing a note that it was written in 1656 which includes a large collection of Old English materials, such as homilies by Ælfric, episcopal letters, laws, excommunications, and a 'charm' against theft of cattle. Storms believed that this 'charm' was transcribed from Corpus 190.[28]

London, British Library, MS Harley 464

Contents: A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum, 4 Vols (London: British Museum, 1808-12), Vol. I, 323.

Discussion: A seventeenth-century manuscript containing a large number of Anglo-Saxon documents, including transcripts of Latin and Old English charters, liturgical calendars, Chronicle entries, homilies by Ælfric, and a 'charm' against fever (*Wiþ Gedrif*).[29]

London, British Library, MS Royal 4 A. xiv

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 250, p. 320; Phillip Pulsiano, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile, Vol. 4: Glossed Texts, Aldhelmiana, Psalms* (Binghamton, New York: Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1996), 47-50; Gneuss, *Handlist*, nos. 454-6, p. 80; Wieland, 'Latin Manuscripts', 123, 130; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 454-6, pp. 374-6.

Discussion: An early to mid-tenth-century manuscript that probably originated in Winchester before it arrived in Worcester by the twelfth century. Early materials from the ninth century were used as binding leaves: the first two leaves of the manuscript were taken from a Continental missal (s. ix / x, France or Italy); and fragments from Felix's *Life of*

[28] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 202-4.
[29] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 276.

Guthlac (s. viii / ix^{in}, Mercia) were used at the end of the manuscript (fols. 107-108).[30] The similarities between the scribal hands of this manuscript and the *Royal Psalter* led Ker and Pulsiano to believe that it was written in Winchester.[31] The main texts of the manuscript are Jerome's *Commentary* on the Psalms, homilies on the *Book of Numbers*, and excerpts from Rufinus' translation of Origen. When the manuscript was in Worcester in the twelfth century, a 'charm' against wens was added in a blank space on folio 106v.[32] Ker believed that the 'charm' is written in a similar hand to an Old English gloss that was added to the *Life of Guthlac* fragment by a Worcester scribe.[33]

Missal of Robert of Jumièges

Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS Y.6 (274).

Edition: Henry A. Wilson, ed., *The Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, HBS, Vol. 11 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896).

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 377, p. 449; Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, 87; *English Caroline Script*, 118-19; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 921, p. 141; Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, 15-16; Brown, *Manuscripts*, 163; Pfaff, *Liturgy in Medieval England*, 89; Billett, *Divine Office*, 332; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 921, pp. 666-7.

Discussion: See Chapter Three.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. F. 3. 6

[30] Ker, *Catalogue*, 320; Gneuss, *Handlist*, 80.
[31] Ker, *Catalogue*, 320; Pulsiano, *Psalters I*, 57-8.
[32] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 154. See also Mary Swan and Owen Robertson, 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220': <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220>.
[33] Ker, *Catalogue*, 321.

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 296, pp. 354-5; Gameson, 'Origin of the Exeter Book', 150; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 537, p. 90; Wieland, 'Latin Manuscripts', 148; Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 140; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 60, 76; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 537, pp. 429-30.

Discussion: A manuscript of unknown origin that was written in the first half of the eleventh century in caroline miniscule. The main texts include verses on the *Passion of St Romanus* and works by Prudentius. According to Ker, continuous glosses 'of Exeter type' that are nearly contemporary with the main texts were made in the early eleventh century, and a later donation inscription shows that it was owned by Leofric.[34] Additional 'nonsense charms' against a nosebleed and against a dwarf were added 'in rough hands' by different scribes on flyleaves throughout the eleventh century.[35]

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 163

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 304, p. 358; O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 30-7; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 555, p. 92; O'Donnell, *Cædmon's Hymn*, 81; Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 143-7, 295, 323; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 60, 76; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 555, pp. 439-40.

Discussion: A manuscript that was written in the early eleventh century in English caroline miniscule.[36] It is of unknown origin but appears to have been in Peterborough by the early twelfth century, according to a booklist that was added around this time.[37] O'Brien O'Keeffe has drawn connections between this manuscript and others of Winchester origin.[38] Part A (fols. 1-227) contains an early eleventh-century copy of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*

[34] Ker, *Catalogue*, 355. See also Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 140, 328-30; Mary Swan and Owen Robertson, 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220': <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220>.
[35] Ker, *Catalogue*, 354-5; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 305.
[36] Ker, *Catalogue*, 358.
[37] See also Owen Robertson, 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220': <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220>.
[38] O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, 30-7.

'of the Winchester recension', Æthelwulf's *De abbatibus*, and excerpts from Jerome and Orosius.[39] Mid-eleventh-century additions to Part A include a West-Saxon version of Cædmon's *Hymn* (in the margin of fol. 152v), glosses to Bede's *Historia* (fols. 66r, 111v, 112r, 154r), and a 'charm' against blains in Latin and obscure Irish (fol. 227).[40] A close version of this ritual is found in Harley 585 (fol. 136rv), suggesting that the scribe knew the ritual from this Winchester manuscript.[41]

Part B (fols. 227-250) contains the *Historia Brittonum* and other historical texts. Part C (fols. 250-251) was written in the late eleventh century and it contains a Latin-Old English glossary, the beginning of a homily on St John the Baptist, and a booklist.[42] Part C was probably added when the manuscript was at Peterborough.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 85/6

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 336, pp. 409-11; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 642, p. 101; Scragg, 'Old English Prose', 68-9; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 76; Jonathan Wilcox, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile, Vol. 17: Homilies by Ælfric and other Homilies*, A. N. Doane, and M. T. Hussey, eds (Tempe, Arizona: ACMRS, 2008), 113-28; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 642, pp. 494-5.

Discussion: A mid-eleventh-century manuscript from the south-east of England. Scragg suggests that it was written in Kent, and argues that it was 'clearly intended to be carried by a preacher from place to place'.[43] The manuscript contains a series of homilies for specific occasions, including one by Ælfric and some copied from the *Blickling Homilies*.[44] On folios 17rv four Latin 'charms' with Old English titles were written immediately after the

[39] O'Donnell, *Cædmon's Hymn*, 81.
[40] O'Donnell, *Cædmon's Hymn*, 81; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 302. See also Chapter Five.
[41] Pettit, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Remedies*, Vol. II, 22-7.
[42] For the booklist, see Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, 143-4.
[43] Scragg, 'Old English Prose', 68-9; *Conspectus*, 77.
[44] Ker, *Catalogue*, 409-10.

first homily by the main scribe. These are for childbirth (*Wið wif bearneacenu*), a stitch (*Wið gestice*), an unknown swelling (*Wið uncuðum swyle*), and toothache (*Wið toðece*).[45] These 'charms' are immediately followed by another incomplete homily, a version of the *Visio S. Pauli* that was altered from West-Saxon spellings, and further homilies.[46]

Oxford, St John's College, MS 17

Contents: Henel, 'Byrhtferth's *Manual*'; Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 360, p. 435; Hart, 'Ramsey *Computus*'; 'Byrhtferth and his Manual'; Baker, 'Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*'; Hollis, 'Medical Writings', 190-4; Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 44; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 20-1; Stephenson, 'Scapegoating the Secular Clergy'.

Discussion: A collection of annals and computistical texts by Bede and Byrhtferth of Ramsey, written at Ramsey or Thorney Abbey in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. Cyril Hart and Peter Baker argued that the manuscript was compiled at Ramsey Abbey in the late eleventh century (between 1086 x 1092) before it was sent to Thorney Abbey.[47] Singer and Ker dated the manuscript to the early twelfth century as the scribe of its Old English marginalia and interlineations also wrote the Thorney annals up to the year 1111 (St John's College 17, fols. 139v-143v; London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero C. iv, fols. 80-84).[48] The manuscript's collection consists of astronomical diagrams, Easter tables, computistical calculations, and short treatises on medicine, botany, alphabets, geography, and arithmetic.[49] Folio 175r contains a 'charm' against a nosebleed that was written by the main scribe.[50]

[45] Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms*, Vol. I, 392-4; Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 279, 283, 286.
[46] Ker, *Catalogue*, 410. See also Owen Robertson, 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220': <http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220>.
[47] Hart, 'Ramsey *Computus*', 31-4; Baker, 'Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*', 125.
[48] Charles Singer, 'A Review of the Medical Literature of the Dark Ages, With a New Text of About 1110', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 10 (1917), 107-60 at 138; Ker, *Catalogue*, 435. See also Neil R. Ker, 'Two Notes on MS Ashmole 328 (*Byrhtferth's Manual*)', *Medium Ævum*, 4 (1935), 16-19.
[49] See Baker, 'Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*', 125.
[50] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 291.

Royal Prayerbook

London, British Library, MS Royal 2 A. xx.

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 248, pp. 317-18; Jennifer Morrish, 'Dated and Datable Manuscripts Copied in England During the Ninth Century: A Preliminary List' *Mediaeval Studies*, 50 (1988), 512-38; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 273-327; Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 52-9; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 450, p. 79; Michelle P. Brown, 'Female Book Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of the Ninth-Century Prayerbooks', in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, C. J. Kay, and L. M. Sylvester, eds (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 45-63; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 76; Fisher, 'Texts in Context'; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 450, pp. 370-1.

Discussion: Originally a private book of prayers from the ninth century. Morrish dates the manuscript to 818 x 830 according to close textual correspondences with the *Book of Cerne*.[51] Sims-Williams and Brown argue that it was originally written in Mercia (possibly Worcester) for an individual female owner, before additions were made in the tenth and twelfth centuries.[52] The original collection includes a number of 'charms' for bleeding in the main writing space (fols. 16v, 49r), along with liturgical readings and prayers.[53] In the tenth century, further additions were made at Worcester including Old English glosses and liturgical prayers from the Mass and Office, suggesting that the *Prayerbook* was used by a religious community by this time.[54] In the twelfth century further 'charms' were added on a

[51] Morrish, 'Datable Manuscripts', 519; Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 52.
[52] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 282; Brown, 'Female Book Ownership', 56-7.
[53] Storms edits six texts as 'charms' from these folios, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 292-3. Fisher identifies four, 'Texts in Context', 118-20.
[54] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, 290-2; Fisher, 'Texts in Context', 120-2; Billett, *Divine Office*, 189-90.

flyleaf (fol. 52r) to protect against all evils, sleeplessness, sore throats, bleeding, and small pox.[55] Fisher has argued that these later additions are closely related to the earlier materials.[56]

Textus Roffensis

Rochester, Cathedral Library, MS A. 3. 5.

Edition: Peter Sawyer, ed., *Textus Roffensis: Rochester Cathedral Library Manuscript A. 3. 5*, EEMF, Vol. 7 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1957).

Online Edition: 'Textus Roffensis Online': <http://www.rochestercathedral.org>.

Contents: Patrick Wormald, '*Laga Edwardi*: The *Textus Roffensis* and its Context', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 17 (1994/5), 243-66; *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London: Hambledon, 1999); Bruce R. O'Brien, 'Pre-Conquest Laws and Legislators in the Twelfth Century' in *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, David A. Woodman and Martin Brett, eds (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 229-74; Barbara Bombi, ed., *Textus Roffensis: Law, Language, and Libraries in Early Medieval England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015).

Discussion: A Norman manuscript written c. 1123 in Rochester. It is a large compilation of law codes from a range of sources, stretching from early Anglo-Saxon England to Henry I's Coronation Charter in 1100. Folio 95 contains an Old English 'charm' against theft of cattle, versions of which are found in Corpus 190 and Tiberius A. iii.[57]

Tiberius A. iii

London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii.

[55] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 278, 292, 316; Doane, *Books of Prayers and Healing*, 58; Fisher, 'Texts in Context', 115, 118-22.
[56] Fisher, 'Texts in Context', 118-24.
[57] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 204. See also Elaine Treharne, 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220': < https://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220>.

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 186, pp. 240-7; Joseph McGowan, 'Four Unedited Prayers in London, Cotton Tiberius A. iii', *Medieval Studies*, 56 (1994), 189-216; Helmut Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: The Case of Cotton Tiberius A III', in *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers; Essays Presented to M. B. Parkes*, P. R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim, eds (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 13-49; *Handlist*, no. 363, pp. 67-8; Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics,* 53-7; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*; Tracey-Anne Cooper, 'The Homilies of a Pragmatic Archbishop's Handbook in Context: Cotton Tiberius A. iii', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 28 (2006), 47-65; *Monk-Bishops and the English Benedictine Reform Movement: Reading London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A. iii in Its Manuscript Context* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015); Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, nos. 332, 363, pp. 255, 285-90.

Discussion: Folios 2-173 of this manuscript were written at Christ Church, Canterbury in the mid eleventh century, probably from a Winchester exemplar. There are many materials that are textually related to other eleventh-century manuscripts from the New Minster, Winchester (*Ælfwine's Prayerbook*, 1023 x 1031) and Christ Church, Canterbury (Caligula A. xv, s. xi^2).[58] The manuscript contains an interlinear version of Æthelwold's translation of the *Rule of Benedict*, a large number of prognostications, confessional prayers, Ælfric's letter to Wulfstan, and a 'charm' ritual against theft of cattle.[59] Tracey-Anne Cooper has recently argued that Tiberius A. iii was written for a bishop who used the manuscript to publicly exercise his legal power in his jurisdiction.[60]

Vercelli Book

Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, MS cxvii.

[58] Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 53-7; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 3-25.
[59] Storms, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, 203-4.
[60] Cooper, 'Archbishop's Handbook'; *Monk-Bishops*.

Editions: George Philip Krapp, ed., *The Vercelli Book*, ASPR, Vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1932); Max Förster, ed., *Die Vercelli-Homilien* (Hamburg: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964); Celia Sisam, ed., *The Vercelli Book: A Late Tenth-Century Manuscript Containing Prose and Verse, Vercelli Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1976); Donald G. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts* (Oxford: EETS, 1992).

Online Edition: 'Vercelli Book Digitale': <http://vbd.humnet.unipi.it/?p=2047>.

Contents: Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 394, pp. 460-4; Scragg, 'Compilation of the Vercelli Book'; 'Manuscript Sources', 80-1; Dumville, 'English Square Miniscule', 140; Ó Carragáin, 'Rome, Ruthwell, Vercelli'; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 941, p. 145; Treharne, 'Manuscript Sources', 101-2; Zacher, *Preaching the Converted*, esp. 17-21; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 941, pp. 682-4.

Discussion: See Chapter One.

Vitellius Psalter

London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius E. xviii.

Edition: James L. Rosier, ed., *The Vitellius Psalter: Edited from British Museum MS Cotton Vitellius E. xviii*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1962).

Contents: Wildhagen, *Kalendarium*, 117-18; Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 224, pp. 298-301; Pusliano, *Psalters I*, 50-6; 'Prefatory Matter', 85-98; Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 407, p. 73; Jolly, 'Tapping the Power of the Cross', 63, 77; Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 37-8; Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics*, 14-15; Gneuss and Lapidge, *Bibliographical Handlist*, no. 407, pp. 334-5.

Discussion: See Chapter Four.

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