

The visual craft of Old English verse: *mise-en-page* in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts

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I, Rachel Ann Burns confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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## Abstract

It is standard editorial practice to abstract Old English verse lines from the unlineated layout of their manuscript witnesses, and rearrange them as discrete metrical lines arranged vertically, broken by a medial space at the caesura. The ubiquity of this practice, and its correspondence with the graphic conventions of modern print editions more generally, may account for the widespread scholarly assumption that the unlineated *mise-en-page* of Old English verse *in situ* arises from its status as low-grade vernacular, with scribes lacking either the resources or the sophistication to apply Latinate standards of lineation to Old English texts. This thesis challenges such assumptions, proposing instead that an unlineated format was the preferred arrangement for Old English verse, and that vernacular *mise-en-page* is capable of conveying important structural, prosodic and semantic information about its texts.

Chapter Two surveys the development of lineation in Anglo-Latin manuscripts, establishing a context for the subsequent writing of Old English verse. The chapter hypothesises that the different *mise-en-page* conventions for Latin and Old English reflects their distinct metrical structures. A study of inter-word spacing in Chapter 3 suggests that scribes may have been cognisant of metrical structures as they wrote, and that these structures influenced the process of writing.

Chapters Four and Five move away from structural resonance between text and *mise-en-page*, towards aesthetic and semantic resonances. Chapter Four argues that a preference for dense, unlineated *mise-en-page* is grounded in the traditions of surface-design in vernacular art. Chapter Five shows a scribe arranging and ornamenting the elements of *mise-en-page* to highlight the narrative structure,

textual allusiveness and esoteric theme of the text. The thesis concludes by reviewing the state of play in Old English textual editing with regards to manuscript features, giving some thoughts on how the findings of this thesis might speak to future editorial work.

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I want to thank my mother Trish and my father Daryl for all their love and their patience. When I went to work as a consultant in London, they were quietly sceptical; when I decided I would return to university to study for my Master's degree, they were loud with pride and support. They still hope I will end my days in a garret writing poetry. Final thanks are reserved for Kitson, with whom my time will now be less fragmented by distance. Οἱ μὲν ἰππήων ζτρότον, οἱ δὲ πέζδων, / οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖς' ἐπ[ι] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν / ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὄτ- / τω τίς ἔραται.

## Abbreviations

Add.	Additional Manuscripts (series of the British Library)
<i>ANQ</i>	<i>ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews</i>
<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
<i>ASPR</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records</i>
BL	British Library
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
CUL	Cambridge University Library
<i>DOE</i>	<i>Dictionary of Old English</i>
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>JEL</i>	<i>Journal of English Linguistics</i>
<i>MÆ</i>	<i>Medium Ævum</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
<i>NM</i>	<i>Neuphilologische Mitteilungen</i>
<i>N&amp;Q</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>OEN</i>	<i>Old English Newsletter</i>
<i>RES</i>	<i>Review of English Studies</i>

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## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction<sup>1</sup>

It is an unfortunate irony that the posthumous publication of John Josiah Conybeare's *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* is prefaced by eight lines from Alexander Pope's *Temple of Fame*.<sup>2</sup> Given that Conybeare's substantial scholarship has been received with such limited and uncertain acclaim, Pope's satire on the folly of seeking praise inadvertently cuts close to the bone.<sup>3</sup> In a note at the start of *The Temple of Fame*, Pope himself states his debt to Chaucer's *The House of Fame*, and so the epigraph seems a suitable accompaniment to Conybeare's work, which includes Modern English renderings of *Beowulf*.<sup>4</sup> The lines are excerpted from Pope's description of the northern wall of the Temple of Fame, which represents the literatures of northern and Celtic Europe:

Of GOTHIC structure was the NORTHERN side,  
O'erwrought with ornaments of barbarous pride :  
There huge Colosses rose, with trophies crown'd,

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<sup>1</sup> The work of this thesis builds upon the ideas and findings of my MSt thesis. I am grateful for the support I received from my then-supervisors, Francis Leneghan and Daniel Wakelin.

<sup>2</sup> John Josias Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (1826), p. (i). Web. Accessed 9 December 2017 <<http://dbooks.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/books/PDFs/300004187.pdf>>; William Daniel Conybeare, 'Prefatory Notice', in John Josias Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (1826) (iii)-(vi), p. (vi). Robyn Bray, 'A Scholar, a Gentleman, and a Christian': *John Josias Conybeare (1779-1824) and his 'Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry' (1826)* (2013) <<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/4709/1/2013BrayPhD.pdf>> [PhD thesis, University of Glasgow], pp. 195 n. 234, 283-84.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Magennis notes 'Conybeare's uncertain grasp of the sense of the Old English, reflective of the state of knowledge of the language of the poem at this time' in Hugh Magennis, *Translating Beowulf: Modern Versions in English Verse* (2011), p. 49. Roy Liuzza takes a more positive view in R. M. Liuzza, 'Lost in Translation: Some Versions of *Beowulf* in the Nineteenth Century', *English Studies* 83 (2002), 281-295, p. 284. On the chequered reception of Conybeare's work by various critics from the time of his death onwards, see Bray, pp. 16-20, 134-39.

<sup>4</sup> Pope's opening lines are in fact indebted to those of *The Canterbury Tales*. Alexander Pope, ed. John Butt, *The poems of Alexander Pope: a one-volume edition of the Twickenham text with selected annotations* (1968), p. 172.

And Runic characters were grav'd around.  
There on huge iron columns, smear'd with blood,  
The horrid forms of Scythian heroes stood ;  
Minstrels and Scalds (their once loud harps unstrung),  
And youths that died, to be by Poets sung.<sup>5</sup>

Whether Conybeare had intended the Popean epigraph to accompany his text, or whether it was a posthumous addition by his very active editor, and brother, William Daniel Conybeare, we do not know for sure; Robyn Bray suspects it to be an editorial addition.<sup>6</sup> A stanza from a work on literary fame would have a decidedly different tone if attributed by the author to his own achievements, rather than by his brother. The functionality of the Popean epigraph to the *Illustrations* is, at first glance, 'canonical'; it 'indirectly specifies or emphasizes' the meaning of the text.<sup>7</sup> It invites the reader to associate the literature of Anglo-Saxon England with the heroic poetry of two great authors in the later English tradition, Chaucer and Pope, and ties Conybeare's achievement as a translator of the *Beowulf*-poet to Pope's fame as an imitator of Chaucer.<sup>8</sup>

More obliquely, the epigraph also symbolises the neoclassical pressures influencing this early landmark of modern Anglo-Saxon scholarship, and serves to contextualise the opening concern of my thesis: the impact of Latinate models on the layout of Old English verse on the edited page. The verse extract, though originally composed almost a century before the publication of the *Illustrations*, espouses an

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<sup>5</sup> Pope's text as presented in John Conybeare, *Illustrations*, p. (i).

<sup>6</sup> Bray, pp. 195, 283-84. From here, J. J. Conybeare shall be referred to as 'Conybeare', while W. D. Conybeare shall be referred to as 'William Daniel'.

<sup>7</sup> Quotations from Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, transl. Jane E. Lewin (1997), p. 157.

<sup>8</sup> See Bray, pp. 195, 183-84.

interpretation of Saxon history, society and literature which corresponds with Conybeare's editorial approach. The martial clash of 'iron columns', 'barbarous pride' and 'horrid forms' against the more whimsical 'MINSTRELS and SCALDS', 'harps' and 'youths that died', plays to that strain of savage dignity characteristically ascribed to medieval verse by critics of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and beautifully characterised by Roberta Frank in her imagined 'oral-poet theme-park', with its 'dark and stormy' aspect, adorned with 'a decorative precipice or two'.<sup>9</sup> 'The Gothic mythology by being more nobly wild,' writes Joseph Warton, editing Pope's works in 1797, 'is more affecting to the imagination than the classical'.<sup>10</sup> This conjunction of the rough and barbaric with the noble and artistic can be found again, albeit in more apologetic guise, in Conybeare's own commentary on *Beowulf* in the *Illustrations*:

he who makes due allowance for the barbarisms and obscurity of the language (...) and for the shackles of a metrical system at once of extreme difficulty, and, to our ears at least, totally destitute of harmony and expression, will find that *Beowulf* presents many of those which have in all ages been admitted as the genuine elements of poetic composition.<sup>11</sup>

Conybeare's interpretation here, that from beneath the obstructive characteristics of Old English metre and language we may glean some *true poetic sentiment*, is paralleled in the structure of the Popean epigraph: once the layers of pride and blood

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<sup>9</sup> Liuzza discusses the 'romantic model of literary history' in 'Lost in Translation', pp. 282-83; Roberta Frank, 'The Search for the Anglo-Saxon Oral Poet', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 75 (1993), 11-36, pp. 15-17. Web. Accessed 18 December 2017 <<https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/jrul/item/?pid=uk-ac-man-scw:1m2141>>.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph D. D. Warton, ed., *The works of Alexander Pope, Esq. In nine volumes, complete. With notes and illustrations by Joseph Warton, D.D. and others* (1797), p. 70.

<sup>11</sup> Conybeare, *Illustrations* pp. 80-81.

and iron are peeled back (ll. 120-26), we reach those ‘genuine elements of poetic composition’ that can be pointed to in wider classical traditions: a poet on the harp, singing the heroic deaths of young men (ll. 127-28). Conybeare approaches poetry in search of what Roy Liuzza calls ‘transhistorical elements of literary quality’, a fixed set of aesthetic ideals which he believes to be latent in Old English texts, and which must be drawn out and emphasised for the reader.<sup>12</sup>

The epigraph further presents us with a methodology for this drawing-out and emphasis. Pope’s fleeting nod to a romantically stylized vision of Saxon and Celtic literatures is presented in and nestled amongst explicitly classical or non-Germanic prosodic features: the epic couch of iambic pentameter; the rhyming couplets; the Horatian model of Pope’s satire on fame.<sup>13</sup> The passage on ‘Gothic’ culture is inevitably to be compared with classical modes and styles of writing, and Warton (still commenting on these lines in his edition) pushes on: ‘Let French critics and French heads prefer, if they please, the *Canidia* of Horace and the *Erictho* of Lucan, to the bold, severe, and irregular strokes of Shakespeare in his *Macbeth*’.<sup>14</sup> Neither Pope’s imitation nor Conybeare’s translation can be said to be metrically ‘irregular’.<sup>15</sup> Liuzza notes that Conybeare, who had inherited from previous scholarship the belief that *Beowulf* was a piece of epic verse, found the Old English text ‘as unsatisfying to the neoclassical taste as it was to the romantic’:<sup>16</sup>

Conybeare then set out to make *Beowulf* sound like an epic by

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<sup>12</sup> Liuzza, ‘Lost in Translation’, pp. 285-86.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285; On *The Temple of Fame* as Popean Horatian satire, see David Wheeler, ‘“So Easy to Be Lost”: Poet and Self in Pope’s *The Temple of Fame*’, *Papers on Language & Literature* 29 (1993), 3-27.

<sup>14</sup> Pope and Warton, p. 71.

<sup>15</sup> On Conybeare’s use of iambic pentameter, and the style of the title-page quotation from Pope, see Bray, pp. 283-84.

<sup>16</sup> Liuzza, ‘Lost in Translation’, p. 284.

translating it in the epic register – he presented the poem in graceful Miltonic blank verse.<sup>17</sup>

The use of iambic pentameter dramatically changes the aural landscape of the poem, as can be seen in the opening lines alone:

LIST! We have learnt a tale of other years,  
Of kings and warrior Danes, a wondrous tale,  
How æthelings bore them in the brunt of war.<sup>18</sup>

The alliteration on ‘b’ in line three suggests that Conybeare sought to incorporate the alliterative aspect of Old English prosody; the use of alliteration in Old English and other Germanic vernacular verse is the subject of frequent commentary in the introductory material to the *Illustrations*.<sup>19</sup> Conybeare’s translation of *Beowulf* is only partial, selecting a number of different sections; in the following description of Heorot, the use of alliterative ‘s’, ‘p’, ‘m’, ‘g’, ‘h’, ‘w’ and ‘b’ in six of the seven lines offers more conclusive evidence of his retention of alliteration as an ornamental feature:<sup>20</sup>

A hall of mead, such as for space and state  
The elder time ne’er boasted; there with free  
And princely hand he might dispense to all  
(Save the rude crowd and men of evil minds)

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 285.

<sup>18</sup> Conybeare, *Illustrations*, p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> See for example, Conybeare, *Illustrations*, pp. vii, viii n. 1, xxviii; William Daniel Conybeare, ‘Addenda, by the editor’, in John Josias Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (1826), xxxvi-lxxv, p. xxxvii.

<sup>20</sup> With thanks to Winfried Rudolf for noting the ‘p’-alliteration.

The good he held from Heaven. That gallant work,  
Full well I wot, through many a land was known  
Of festal halls the brightest and the best.<sup>21</sup>

The notes to the *Illustrations* repeatedly identify trochaic and dactylic stress-patterns as being characteristic of Old English metre; they further suggest that this is a function of ‘dialect’, and is fundamentally in conflict with the ‘iambic’ and ‘anapaestic’ bent of the Modern English lexicon.<sup>22</sup> While it is therefore consistent that Conybeare does not fully emulate Old English metrical patterns in his modern translations, his approach was criticised by *The Westminster Review*:

Saxon verses were short, and the little rhythm they have is dactylic, or trochaic, (we use the terms loosely for want of better,) the English version moves in a ponderous iambic.<sup>23</sup>

Recent commentators have been less critical. Roy Liuzza believes that

[he] was perfectly justified in releasing the poem from its shackles, presenting it in a form his readers would recognize as natural, attractive, and heroic. In this he sought equivalence rather than imitation, a re-creation of the effect of the poem rather than a restoration of its original sound.<sup>24</sup>

Bray takes a similar view:

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<sup>21</sup> Conybeare, *Illustrations*, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. ix, xi, xiv; William Conybeare, ‘Addenda’, pp. xxxvi, lxx-lxxi.

<sup>23</sup> Noted in Bray, p. 227.

<sup>24</sup> Liuzza, ‘Lost in Translation’, p. 286.

Rather than attempting to represent the accentual Old English verse, he instead used blank verse. In some respects this could be regarded as appropriate: John Josias was attempting to invoke a feeling of the past similar to that which was found in translations of classical poetry<sup>25</sup>

Caught with an Old English text that could not satisfy the romantic appetite for medieval verse, Conybeare turned to neoclassical ideals of the heroic and the epic for inspiration in his rendering; like Pope, he located his Saxon material in an epic style, reformulating it according to contemporary tastes.

The classicizing effect is compounded by Conybeare's creation of facing-page Latin translations for his Old English texts. His motivations here are well-stated, and not explicitly revisionist: he feels that Latin word-order better represents Old English word order than Modern English, and so is more suitable for a page-facing translation; he is also following in the footsteps of earlier Swedish layout traditions.<sup>26</sup> In his facing-page Latin, Conybeare claims that he 'endeavoured to preserve with the most scrupulous fidelity both the sense and verbal construction of the original', and that his aim is pedagogic; suitable, given that Latin was certainly more widely taught and read than Old English.<sup>27</sup> The foundational work of Eduard Sievers on the metrical system underlying Old English verse was not to appear until the late nineteenth century. The *Illustrations*, first appearing some half a century or more earlier, are nevertheless prefaced with a series of essays on Germanic metre, which William Daniel presents as a posthumous collaboration between himself and his late brother.<sup>28</sup> The first of these, written by Conybeare before his death, critiques

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<sup>25</sup> Bray, p. 283.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 193 n. 231, 267, 285.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 267, 285.

<sup>28</sup> William Daniel Conybeare, 'Prefatory Notice', p. (vi); William Daniel Conybeare,

the metrical studies of George Hickes, ‘leader of the great generation of Anglo-Saxon scholars’.<sup>29</sup> Hickes’ ‘desire of reducing every thing to some classical standard’ led him to argue that Anglo-Saxon poets writing in Old English ‘observed the legitimate rules of Latin prosody’, producing quantitative verse.<sup>30</sup> Conybeare also calls up the contrasting view of a later author named ‘Mr. Tyrwhitt’, presumably the eighteenth-century scholar Thomas Tyrwhitt, who claims to see no ‘difference between the poetry and the prose’ of Old English.<sup>31</sup> Dissenting from both of these scholars, Conybeare advocates an interpretation of Old English metre as a system which substitutes ‘emphasis for quantity’; that is to say, in which rhythmic patterns are achieved through stress, rather than through vowel quantity (although we now know, through the work of R. D. Fulk and others, that vowel length is a component of stress-determination in Old English verse).<sup>32</sup> The majority of Anglo-Saxon verses, he says, are characterised by ‘feet of two or three syllables each’ which are ‘analogous’ to trochaic or dactylic forms, and sometimes to spondees.<sup>33</sup> Conybeare is, then, conscious of a historic tendency towards a classically-informed interpretation of Saxon verse, and indeed suggests that such a tendency was a prejudice of Hickes’ era.<sup>34</sup> Conybeare’s theories of Saxon ‘emphasis’ and the difference between the rhythms of Old and Modern English, however, still rely

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‘Advertisement’, in John Josias Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (1826), iii-iv.

<sup>29</sup> Quotation from “Hickes, George.” in ed. Dinah Birch, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (2009), Web. Accessed 11 November 2017

<<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192806871.001.0001/acref-9780192806871-e-3604>>.

<sup>30</sup> Conybeare, *Illustrations*, pp. v-vi.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. vi; see “Tyrwhitt, Thomas.” in ed. Dinah Birch, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (2009), Web. Accessed 11 November 2017

<<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780192806871.001.0001/acref-9780192806871-e-7699>>.

<sup>32</sup> Conybeare, *Illustrations*, pp. ix-x; Fulk and others’ work on vowel quantity in Old English verse will be handled in Chapter Two.

<sup>33</sup> Conybeare, *Illustrations*, pp. x-xi.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. v-vi.

heavily upon analogizing the foot-structure of classical prosody.

The repositioning of Old English verse into a classical context that aims to expose its *true poetic form* is the kind of editorial practicality into which we are still liable to fall. Liuzza suggests that readers look upon past phenomena as a ‘distant mirror’ that reflects modern constructs; this may be especially true when we are charting unfamiliar academic territories.<sup>35</sup> The epigraph in the *Illustrations* was presumably intended to draw a sort of chiasmic parallel: between the fame of Pope’s imitations and the hoped-for success of Conybeare’s efforts on the one hand, and the disconnect between the fame of Chaucer’s medieval text and the obscurity of Old English verse on the other. But further, it offers us a warning about the way in which editors may reposition unfamiliar textual elements into familiar arrangements. The selection of Pope’s satire as preface was perhaps more fitting than the fickleness of Fame could have designed.

### **Organisation of the page**

Throughout the history of Old English textual editing, one element which has consistently been repositioned is the arrangement of verse lines on the page. Since the later middle ages, the visual standard for English vernacular verse has been highly consistent, laid out with one metrical line of verse inscribed horizontally on each line of designated writing space on the page, a form which henceforth will be referred to as ‘lineation’. Lineation is not a prerequisite for poetry, but alternative layouts indicate a deviation from the standard, resulting in such categories as ‘prose

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<sup>35</sup> Liuzza, ‘Lost in Translation’, p. 281.

poetry’, ‘concrete poetry’ and ‘circle poetry’. An early example of concrete poetry is ‘Easter Wings’, a poem shaped in the likeness of its titular wings, published in George Herbert’s volume *The Temple* in 1633:

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,  
Though foolishly he lost the fame,  
Decaying more and more,  
Till he became  
Most poore:  
With thee  
O let me rife  
As larks, harmoniously,  
And sing this day thy victories:  
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.<sup>36</sup>

Such repositioning, bending and manipulation in concrete poetry has remained a popular but distinctive form into the twenty-first century.<sup>37</sup> Heather Yeung’s recent book, *Spatial Engagement with Poetry*, reviews a number of contemporary poets whose work transgresses or manipulates the border of the line-ending, including that of contemporary poet Alec Finlay.<sup>38</sup> Finlay experiments with the circle poem, a form which ‘plays on the linguistic, syntactically puzzling, heritage of the *scriptura continua*’.<sup>39</sup> Here is one example of his work, which we will return to in Chapter Four:

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<sup>36</sup> George Herbert, ‘Easter Wings’, in eds. Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, Jon Stallworthy, *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 5th ed. (2005), p. 369.

<sup>37</sup> See for example, the reference to ‘Easter Wings’ ahead of the collection of concrete poetry in Victoria Bean and Chris McCabe, eds., *The New Concrete: Visual Poetry in the 21st Century* (2015), pp. 2, 20-207.

<sup>38</sup> Heather H. Yeung, *Spatial Engagement with Poetry* (2015), pp. 28-30.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

**Image 1: ‘the seas hold the skies colour’, in Alec Finlay, *Change what changes* (2007)**

Finlay offers some thoughts on the circle poem form:

#### ON CIRCLE POEMS

a circle poem is not a flat line drawn in a loop

a circle poem is an arc in time

circle poems favour rhythm over syntax

a circle poem demonstrates

that an end can be a beginning

and a beginning an end

in a circle poem there should be no visible joins

the classical subjects of circle poetry are

time and tide

a year contains four circle poems<sup>40</sup>

The loop of the line or lines in the circle breaks through its own illusory line-breaks; Yeung suggests that Finlay's text 'eschews all relation with modern poetry's formal *versus* (...) aligning itself more readily with classical, non-lineated, precedents.'<sup>41</sup> These and other such experiments in form remain outside the standard presentation of modern verse, the lineated strip of lines down the page.

This lineated standard did not apply to Old English vernacular verse, which was mostly written prior to the Norman Conquest and the subsequent influx of French and Latinate models.<sup>42</sup> *In situ* on the manuscript page, Old English verse runs from margin to margin without line-breaks or additional blank framing space, and is typically conceived of as being 'written continuously, like prose'.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, editors from the early modern period onwards have sought to present Old English verse in a manner more apparently befitting its metrical composition.

Francis Junius was the first Anglo-Saxonist to publish a serious edition; his text of *Genesis* (1655) was laid out like prose, but pointed at each half-line (a practice which Timothy Graham points out is likely indebted to the heavy pointing in

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<sup>40</sup> Alec Finlay, *Change what changes* (2007).

<sup>41</sup> Yeung, p. 29.

<sup>42</sup> On the influence of French vernacular verse on the *mise-en-page* of manuscripts produced in England after the conquest, see Rosemary Huisman, *The Written Poem: Semiotic Conventions from Old to Modern English* (1998), pp. 101-07.

<sup>43</sup> Peter S. Baker, *Introduction to Old English*, 3rd ed. (2012), p. 124.

his model, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11).<sup>44</sup> Graphic separation of the metrical half-line began with Christopher Rawlinson's 1698 edition of the Old English *Boethius*.<sup>45</sup> William Daniel Conybeare, writing in the introductory notes to his brother's work, is conscious of the weight of different *mise-en-page* approaches. Of what we now call the half-line, he writes, 'Some discussion has taken place on the continent whether these short metrical systems should be regarded as entire lines, or hemistichs only'; he gives examples of two possible organisational approaches to layout: a column of single half-lines, or a column with two half-lines per page line, separated by a medial punctus.<sup>46</sup> William Daniel does not see the decision between these forms as critical to the reading of Old English, but as a concern of 'the typographer rather than the critic'.<sup>47</sup> While he rather opaquely claims that 'use and authority' fall on the side of hemistich columns, he recognises that the edited line has the potential to reflect the needs of the modern reader:

it must be allowed that the second method would have the advantage of rendering the alliteration more prominent, and illustrating the identity of the Saxon metre.<sup>48</sup>

Following Conybeare, the next major edition of *Beowulf* was produced by John Kemble in 1833; he arranges the text in a single column of half-lines per page, providing only a prose translation in Modern English.<sup>49</sup> Liuzza suggests that

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<sup>44</sup> Timothy Graham, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies: Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries', in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, eds. Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (2001), 415-33, p. 427. Roberta Frank identifies four publications of Old English verse before 1655, the earliest of which was Serarius' *A Proverb from Winfrid's Time* (1605), in Frank, p. 20.

<sup>45</sup> Graham, p. 428.

<sup>46</sup> William Daniel Conybeare, 'Addenda', *Illustrations*, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxvii.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> John M. Kemble, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon poems of Beowulf, The Traveller's Song, and The Battle of Finnes-burh* (1833). A list of full and partial editions of *Beowulf* can be found at 'Editions',

Kemble's movement away from the evocative imitations of Conybeare stem from 'a "philological" attitude towards the poem', a perspective more directed towards reading the text as 'artifact' than as 'part of a living poetic tradition'.<sup>50</sup> The abandonment of parallel Latin translation is sustained in subsequent editions, but presentation of the verse line remains in flux. Nikolai Grundtvig (1861) and Rasmus Rask (1865) present the text with two columns of half-lines per page, with each column to be read vertically, one after the other. Christian Grein (1867) includes two half-lines in each printed line, but does not visually mark the caesura. With the editions of Francis March (1873), James Harrison and Robert Sharpe (1883) and Friederich Klaeber (1923), we encounter the scheme now universally familiar to readers of Old English verse: a single line graphically demarcating two half-lines, punctuated by a caesura.<sup>51</sup>

### **Traditional approaches to Old English verse *mise-en-page***

The implication that sits behind these visual reconstructions of the Old English metrical line is that metrical lineation is in some way the natural standard of verse presentation, which editors must reinstate, correcting the disordered texts of the manuscript page. The editorial rearrangement of the prosaic text block into a

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*Supplementary materials for the study of Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg 4th edition*, University of Indiana Bloomington. Web. Accessed 7 March 2016  
<<http://www.indiana.edu/~klaeber4/editions.htm>>.

<sup>50</sup> Liuzza, 'Lost in Translation', p. 287.

<sup>51</sup> Nikolai Frederik Grundtvig, ed. *Beowulfes Beorh eller Bjovulfs-Drapen, det Old-Angelske Heltedigt paa Grund-Sproget* (1861); Rasmus Kristian Rask, ed., Benjamin Thorpe, transl., *A Grammar of the Anglo-Saxon Tongue: from the Danish of Erasmus Rask*, 2nd ed. (1865); Christian Wilhelm Grein, ed. *Beowulf, nebst den Fragmenten Finnsburg und Valdere, in kritisch bearbeiteten Texten neu herausgegeben mit Wörterbuch* (1867); Francis Andrew March, ed. *Introduction to Anglo-Saxon: An Anglo-Saxon Reader, with Philological Notes, a Brief Grammar, and a Vocabulary* (1870); James Albert Harrison and Robert Sharpe, eds. *I. Beowulf: An Anglo-Saxon Poem. II. The Fight at Finnsburgh: A Fragment. With Text and Glossary on the Basis of M. Heyne* (1888); Friedrich Klaeber, ed. *Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg* (1922).

lineated, caesura-punctuated form returns the metrical line to visual prominence, and clearly identifies a text as verse to a modern readership. Of course, such an approach requires an explanation of why lineation has been redacted with such remarkable consistency from the manuscript witnesses. Three common explanations for the unlineated layout of Old English verse will be reviewed here, and the validity of all three will be addressed and challenged. Following this, I will seek to reframe the issue of the Old English verse line, and present a suitable question and hypothesis for research.

**1. Scribes did not know how to lay out Old English verse more innovatively.**<sup>52</sup> This first explanation is demonstrably false. By the tenth century, when the majority of the Old English verse that survives to us was being written down, lineation was the standard for the presentation of Latin verse.<sup>53</sup> Often this lineation is highly detailed, making full use of punctuation, capitalisation and coloured inks to accentuate line-breaks.<sup>54</sup> Given the higher recording and survival rate of Latin verse than Old English, it seems inevitable that at least some of those scribes recording Old English verse would have encountered Latin texts in their scriptoria, and therefore would have been aware of the correspondence between lineated form and verse.<sup>55</sup> The production of very learned and esoteric works of Old English verse, showing a great reliance upon Latin source materials and Latin verse, makes it impossible to convincingly argue that the creators of Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>52</sup> I have never encountered this argument in written form, but it was listed by Thomas Bredehoft as an example of common explanations in a conference paper of 2015: Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'Lineated Manuscript Layouts of Old English Verse', 50th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo (14-18 May, 2015) [conference paper].

<sup>53</sup> Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (1990), p. 26 n. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Chapter Two will review in detail the changing trends in Latin verse layout and lineation in England prior to the tenth century.

<sup>55</sup> This point is also made in E. G. Stanley, Review of 'O'Keeffe, K. O'B., *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse.*', *N&Q* 38 (1991), 199-200, p. 199.

verse could have been so universally ignorant of Latinate layout conventions.<sup>56</sup>

**2. Readers did not require lineation, because in a highly oral culture**

**they were very familiar with the prosodic patterns of vernacular verse.** The

critical view that lineation of Latin arises as a readers' aid to visually demarcate

unfamiliar Latin metre, and particularly the decreasingly familiar element of

quantity, simultaneously implies that readers did not need visual aids to engage

with familiar vernacular verse.<sup>57</sup> Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe also implies this

view, suggesting that the paucity of graphic markers in Old English verse indicates

that readers approached their texts with 'a great deal of predictive knowledge'.<sup>58</sup>

While it is indeed a *necessary* condition that readers were able to digest lines of Old

English verse without graphic cues, I would argue that it is nevertheless not

*sufficient* to explain why scribes did not adopt those same cues which were so very

prevalent in Latin texts.<sup>59</sup> Despite the ability of readers to engage with unlineated

vernacular verse, it is unlikely that this format was a more efficient form than

lineation, either for the speed or comprehension of reading. Furthermore, *mise-en-*

*page* cannot be addressed in purely utilitarian terms; it is also representative of

aesthetic preferences. This is especially relevant when we consider the degree to

which Old English verse experiments with Latin source material, or the 'fusion of

Latin rhetoric and Old English versecraft'; it is noteworthy that the creators of Old

English were interested in drawing upon Latin source texts for such elements as

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<sup>56</sup> One such highly learned set of texts, *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, will be discussed fully in Chapter Five.

<sup>57</sup> See Huisman, p. 110; for Emily Thornbury's comments on contemporary familiarity with quantity see below, pp. 125-26. Mary Franklin-Brown argues against such an interpretation of the appearance of lineation in Latin texts written in medieval Europe, and this phenomenon will be addressed fully in Chapter Two (Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (2012), p. 234).

<sup>58</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 190.

<sup>59</sup> The kinds of markers used in Latin texts will be reviewed in Chapter Two.

their narrative, rhetorical devices and lexicon, but apparently not their shape.<sup>60</sup>

**3. Parchment was too expensive to waste on the space required to introduce lineation into vernacular verse.** This final explanation on the subject of parchment economy feels intuitively plausible, as we know the process of parchment-making to have been laborious and resource-intensive.<sup>61</sup> The practice of lineation requires wastage of parchment surface-area around the discrete metrical lines on each page line. It follows, then, that ‘the necessity of conserving precious parchment and the relative unimportance of vernacular poetry in a monastic environment’ would prohibit the wastage of parchment on the lineation of Old English verse.<sup>62</sup> In reality, this is a difficult claim to substantiate. To be valid, it relies upon three key conditions which all need to be true: that parchment is an expensive commodity; that Old English poetry would be lineated if there were no constraints of economy; that Old English poetry is, in general, resource efficient in its presentation on the page.

Determining the ‘expensiveness’ of parchment is difficult for modern readers, for ‘[t]he practical organisation of parchment production in early Britain and Ireland is lost to us, as is tangible indication of its overheads’.<sup>63</sup> Richard Gameson observes that the English climate was extremely suitable for animal husbandry, and that

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<sup>60</sup> Quotation from Jackson J. Campbell, ‘Learned Rhetoric in Old English Poetry’, *MP* 63 (1966), 189-201, p. 198. See also Janie Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity: The Adaptation of Latin Rhetoric in Old English Poetry* (2008).

<sup>61</sup> Full description in Richard Gameson ‘The Material Fabric of Early British Books’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 1: c.400–1100, ed. Richard Gameson (2011), 11-93, pp. 16-17.

<sup>62</sup> Quotation from Calvin Kendall, who questions this approach in his review of O’Brien O’Keeffe’s *Visible Song*: Calvin B. Kendall, Review of ‘Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse.*’, *South Central Review*, 9 (1992), 80-81, p. 80. Bruce Mitchell and Susan Irvine see Old English verse *mise-en-page* as ‘the result of economy’: Bruce Mitchell and Susan Irvine, eds. *Beowulf Repunctuated*, *OEN Subsidia*, 29 (2000), p. 6. On the complexities of parchment value, see Richard Gameson, ‘The Cost of the Codex Amiatinus’, *N&Q* 237 (1992), 2-9.

<sup>63</sup> Gameson, ‘Material Fabric’, p. 15.

hundreds of thousands of sheep are recorded in the 1086 Domesday survey; but he also points out that the disruption caused in times of disaster, such as Viking incursions, would have stunted the availability of parchment-suitable pelts.<sup>64</sup> Timothy Stinson notes the wildly variant sizes of contemporary flock holdings, from the ‘few sheep owned by a private farmer to herds comprising tens of thousands of animals owned by noblemen or industrious monastic orders’; in this way, records of books which required the skins of ‘an entire herd or flock’ may be interpreted hyperbolically by modern readers.<sup>65</sup> Gameson notes other practicalities around the commercial and domestic management of animals: regular slaughter was necessary for the management of other animal products (such as meat, bone and hide); the onset of cold weather would have demanded an annual winter slaughter, increasing the availability of hide in the winter season.<sup>66</sup> Parchment, he ultimately suggests, was a commodity of value, ‘but not essentially expensive’.<sup>67</sup> Even if Gameson’s own statement on the difficulty of data-gathering on ‘value’ brings such a claim into question, he succeeds in challenging blanket assumptions regarding parchment’s ‘expensiveness’.

Moving from the production of parchment to its deployment, Gameson notes that ‘the quality of the membrane provides a clear indication both of the importance of a project and of the standards of the scriptorium responsible’.<sup>68</sup> The parchment used for Latin texts in later Anglo-Saxon England was typically of a higher quality than that used for Old English texts, with ‘particularly poor parchment ... rare

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>65</sup> Timothy Stinson, ‘Counting Sheep: Potential Applications of DNA Analysis to the Study of Medieval Parchment Production’ in *Kodikologie und Paläographie im digitalen Zeitalter 2*, eds. Franz Fischer, Christiane Fritze, Georg Vogeler (2010), 191-207, p. 197.

<sup>66</sup> Gameson, ‘Codex Amiatinus’, pp. 6-8.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> Gameson, ‘Material Fabric’, p. 17.

outside Old English manuscripts, [and] very few books with especially fine parchment ... principally in the vernacular'.<sup>69</sup> While Gameson believes that the highly variable parchment quality of the later Anglo-Saxon period casts doubt upon the importance of professional, urban parchmenters, we might alternatively be witnessing an industry with a developed sense of product differentiation, manufacturing and allocating different grades of material to different projects.<sup>70</sup> This would have enabled scriptoria to take greater control of the cost of manuscript production in their decisions to deploy lower-quality parchment for lower-value texts, diminishing production costs. Therefore, to a degree, the 'expensiveness' of producing vernacular verse texts can be manipulated, and does not have to be seen as 'expensive' in the same way as the production of other, higher-grade texts. The quantifiable value of parchment is not within our grasp, it would have varied by year and season, by the size and status of the farmholding, and by the quality of parchment produced, among other variables.

Lineation would not always have made significantly higher demands on parchment resources. The table below shows the number of folios currently occupied by a series of verse texts, and the number of folios that would have been required to encode the poem in lineated form.<sup>71</sup> Particularly in the case of *Beowulf*, the additional parchment required for lineation would not have been a significant proportion of the total:

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.

<sup>71</sup> This takes the largest number of lines ruled and written on a folio of the given text and divides the number of metrical lines in the poem by that number, resulting in the number of folios needed, had the scribe ruled at the maximum capacity for every page.

**Table 1: Difference in parchment requirements for lineated vs. unlineated texts**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Unlineated sides<sup>72</sup></b>	<b>Total sides required for lineation</b>
<i>Beowulf</i> <sup>73</sup>	140	146.5
<i>Dream of the Rood</i> <sup>74</sup>	3.9	4.9
<i>Juliana</i> <sup>75</sup>	21.3	33.2

If parchment expense were the driving factor behind the ‘prosaic’ layout of Old English, we would expect that same verse to be lineated if we could remove the constraints of economy. Such a scenario is modelled well in a single verse text preserved in London, BL, Cotton Claudius A. iii, fols. 31-86 and 106-50, a manuscript of the tenth or eleventh century.<sup>76</sup> *Thureth*, a poem of only eleven metrical lines, is set amidst an otherwise blank page. The parchment is brown, fairly thick, and not cut particularly straight along-the fore-edge, unlike the leaves of the pontifical that follow. As we can see in Image 2 (see below), there is a significant amount of space around the text. To the best of my knowledge it has not yet been suggested that *Thureth* is a palimpsest, but the appearance of what appear to be the surviving strokes of a couple of letters above the first line, and the presence of ink-coloured scratch marks over what look like pen-strokes in the triangular section of the poem suggest that something was erased before *Thureth* was written. From the

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<sup>72</sup> Approximate current surface-area occupation of the text in its manuscript witness, including any blank space from gaps or sectional divisions internal to the text.

<sup>73</sup> 3182 verse lines, plus 42 fitt-breaks (no break for the first fitt) at 22 lines per side; for figures, see Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (2004), pp. 20-21.

<sup>74</sup> 156 verse lines at 32 lines per side; N.B. in the MS the first folio of the poem (fol. 104v) has only 18 lines.

<sup>75</sup> 731 verse lines at 22 lines per side.

<sup>76</sup> Dating from Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (2014), p. 242. Unless otherwise noted, the contents, dating, provenance and origins of manuscript material throughout this thesis generally follow Gneuss and Lapidge.

recto side, geometrical sketches and the remnants of some writing are visible, including an early modern hand and a much earlier hand. It appears that *Thureth* may have been written on a repurposed piece of parchment. The scribe has ample room to arrange the poem as desired, and at first glance, the poem looks as though it may be lineated: it is written down the right-hand side of the page, with a wide border of blank space on the left. However, the scribe consistently breaks the manuscript line just before or just after the break of a full metrical line. The layout is as follows, with a single ‘/’ representing the half-line break, and a double ‘//’ for the full line:

Ic eom halgungboc / healde hine dryhten • //  
 þeme fægere þus / frætepum be  
 legde • // þureð toþance / þus het meþyr  
 cean • // toloue 7topurðe / þam þe leoht  
 5 ge sceop • // gemýndi ishe / mihta gehþýlc  
 re // þæsþe he onfoldan / gefremian mæg • //  
 7himge þancie / þeodapaldend // þæsþeþe  
 ongemýnde / madma manega // þýle ge  
 mearcian / metode tolace • //  
 10 7 he sceal ece lean / ealle findan //  
 þæs þe he  
 onfoldan /  
 fremap  
 to •  
 15 rýh

te :~ //<sup>77</sup>

The space that the scribe has assigned to the text is almost as wide as a full line – but not quite. There is certainly room in the left-hand margin to expand the writing space by the five letters required to accommodate the full line. However, the ninth and tenth lines on the folio have potentially been designed to correspond with metrical lines 9 and 10: after ‘lace’ at the end of line 9, the scribe has left the remainder of the manuscript line blank, a space which could accommodate about nine letters when compared to the line above. Elsewhere, the scribe shows no concern for leaving space after a completed metrical line, and allows unfinished metrical lines to run over manuscript line-breaks. The treatment of line 9, then, is unusual, especially when we see that the scribe has drawn a triangular shape under

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<sup>77</sup> This is my own transcription of the text from London, BL, Cotton Claudius A. iii, fol. 31v, and the translation below is my own, both with reference to Christopher A. Jones, *Old English Shorter Poems*, Vol. I (2012), p. 129, and Craig Ronalds and Margaret Clunies Ross, ‘Thureth: A Neglected Old English Poem and its History in Anglo-Saxon Scholarship’, *N&Q* 48 (2001), 359-70, p. 360. As the discussion here concerns the manuscript presentation of the text, I have retained as many features of the original text as are feasible, namely: capitalisation, punctuation, word-division (note especially the running-together of words, as with ‘þæsþehe’ at line 7) and characters, including ‘wynn’ (p) and the tironian ‘et’ (7). Line numbers here refer to the manuscript lines, not the metrical lines. In line with the editions cited above, I have transcribed the flamboyant *e*-caudata of ‘ęce’ in line 10; discussing the *e*-caudata in Old English texts, Christopher Cain notes the tendency for editors to omit ‘ę’ as part of spelling normalization. He further notes that although ‘ę-spellings’ are rare in Old English verse, they appear more where the broader manuscript has a context of Latinity, something which the pontifical of London, BL, Cotton Claudius A. iii certainly provides for *Thureth*. Although, as Cain notes, ę is not simply a substitution for æ, ‘æce’ is among the alternative spellings for ‘ece’ recorded in the *DOE*. See: Christopher M. Cain, ‘Some Observations on *e*-caudata in Old English Texts’, in *Old English Philology: Studies in Honour of R.D. Fulk*, eds. Leonard Neidorf, Rafael J. Pascual, Tom Shippey (2016), 233-55, pp. 246, 249; ‘ēce adv.’, *Dictionary of Old English: A to H Online*, eds. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette dePaolo Healey, et al. (2016), Web. Accessed 17 August 2018 <<https://tapor-library-utoronto-ca.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/doe/>>. I am grateful to Jane Roberts for drawing my attention to the *e*-caudata of this text.

‘I am a liturgical book; may the Lord protect him who covered me in this manner attractively with ornaments. Thureth ordered me to be made thus, in thanks [to Him]; in praise and in honour, to him who created the light. [Thureth] is mindful of each of the mighty works which [the Lord] can accomplish on earth; and may the ruler of nations reward him, because he desires in his mind to appoint of many treasures as offering to the Lord. And he will completely find eternal reward, because he correctly does good on earth.’

**Image 2: *Thureth*, in London, BL, Cotton Claudius A. iii, fol. 31v<sup>78</sup>**

the final section of the poem, beginning on the left-hand side at line 10, and finishing on the right-hand side at line 9. Line 10 fits into the wide, uppermost part of this triangle, whilst line 11 is broken into progressively smaller parts to fit the tapering end. The scribe is evidently interested in crafting an unusual visual layout for the

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<sup>78</sup> Manuscript titles, shelfmarks and sigla in this thesis generally follow those used in Gneuss and Lapidge.

poem, and sensible to the potential for interaction between metrical lines and a visual scheme. Nevertheless, the available blank space is not used to lineate the poem, a negligible opportunity cost in terms of parchment surface area. This raises the question of whether cheaper or more plentiful parchment would have led other scribes to lineate their texts.

There are moments, too, when scribes utilise significant amounts of parchment-space for non-textual features. Almost half of the writing area of Book I of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11 is occupied either by illustrations, or by blank space awaiting illustration. In Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fols. 94-209 (the ‘Nowell Codex’), the prose text *Wonders of the East* (fols. 98v-106v) is studded with mesmerising images of the creatures described within the text, which collectively occupy around a third of the total writing area. The biblical texts of the Old English Hexateuch in London, BL, Cotton Claudius B. iv are host to vibrant illustrations which frequently take up almost the entirety of the page. These are exceptional examples, but they demonstrate that scribes were sometimes able to commit writing space to decorative elements, both in a higher-grade, religious verse manuscript like Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11, and a lower grade, secular prose text like *Wonders of the East*. Despite this, we do not see lineation being deployed as a decorative feature in verse texts.

Ultimately, it is not possible to demonstrate that the expense of parchment prohibits the lineation of Old English. Lineation is not adopted even where spare parchment space is available, or where scribes are able to utilise parchment area for other decorative features. Traditional explanations for the *mise-en-page* of Old English verse, which implicitly address the ‘prosaic’ layout of Old English as an

erosion of the lineated standard, in which metrical line-breaks have been in some way redacted, have proven insufficient. We need an explanation that accounts for the consistency of unlineated *mise-en-page* in Old English verse texts.

### Questions and hypotheses

Walter Ong writes that ‘intelligence is relentlessly reflexive, so that even the external tools that it uses to implement its workings become “internalized”, that is, part of its own reflexive process’.<sup>79</sup> This recalls the comments of William Daniel Conybeare, who saw in the modern editorial standard of two half-lines divided by a caesura a reflection of reading practice, of the conscious process of identifying the metrical form of Old English across a-line and b-line.<sup>80</sup> The overall implication of the traditional editorial approach to Old English *mise-en-page*, in which the layout of the material on the manuscript page is determined by material and economic factors, and not by the form of the text itself, is that Old English texts do not have much potential for productive visual engagement. However, a slight shift in the framing of the core assumption may help in pursuing a new explanation: rather than asking why metrical lineation has been redacted from the record of vernacular verse on the manuscript page, we should simply ask why Old English is written as it is, and whether the layout *in situ* can be meaningfully exploited by the scholar in a reading of Old English texts. These are the research questions which guide my thesis.

The hypotheses with which I have begun my research fall broadly into two

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<sup>79</sup> Walter J. Ong and John Hartley, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word, with additional chapters by John Hartley*, 30th anniversary ed. (2012), p. 80.

<sup>80</sup> William Daniel Conybeare, ‘Addenda’, p. xxxvii.

parts:

Firstly, that the distinct *mise-en-page* presentations of Old English and Latin verse correspond meaningfully with features of that verse, whether prosodic, performative or aesthetic. Further, that the unlineated layout of Old English was deliberately applied, and considered appropriate.

Secondly, that the page is a site of useful information for the interpretation of texts, both for exploring the ‘craft’ of the scribe’s writing habits through the generic, unlineated layout of Old English verse, and for observing moments of the scribe’s ‘art’, in texts with unusual elements of visual design in the *mise-en-page*. Ultimately, *mise-en-page* encodes information not only about the material environment of a text, but also about scribal engagement with that text, and the scribe or author’s interpretation of the text. It is therefore a useful tool for scholars, and a consideration of *mise-en-page* ought to accompany study of any manuscript text.

### **Literature review and critical approaches**

Unsurprisingly, when the layout of Old English verse is not perceived to have a meaningful relationship with the text it encodes, scholarship is less likely to explore *mise-en-page* as a site of creativity. Writing in 2005, Fred Robinson commented that ‘[e]ditors of Old English texts have usually shown little interest in the *mise-en-page* of the manuscripts which they are editing’; more specifically, he focuses on the silent suppression or introduction of sectional divisions present or not present in the manuscript witness, respectively.<sup>81</sup> While Robinson’s analysis may be true in the

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<sup>81</sup> Fred C. Robinson, ‘*Mise en page* in Old English Manuscripts and Printed Texts’, in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, eds. Katherine O’Brien

realm of editing, this thesis has drawn from and been directed by a variety of work relating to *mise-en-page*, particularly from the turn of the twenty-first-century onwards.

Of the critical background from which this research impetus arises, foremost is Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe's formidable book of 1990, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse*. This volume hypothesises that Old English verse writing operates in a 'transitional' period between oral and literate modes of communication, during which 'spatial and graphic conventions' develop as 'interpretative signals'.<sup>82</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe's evidence is largely drawn from the appearance of Old English verse on the manuscript page. She argues that the systematic deployment of spatial signals like lineation, capitalisation, punctuation, and so forth, which demarcate the metrical lines of Latin verse written in Anglo-Saxon England, demonstrate the necessity of those signals for the Anglo-Saxon reader, and the more 'literate' state of engagement with Latin; the lesser and inconsistent application of such cues in Old English verse, on the other hand, signals the intense familiarity of the reader with Old English metrical structure, and the transitional status of Old English verse between the imagined poles of oral and written cultural literacies.<sup>83</sup>

O'Brien O'Keeffe's work has proven to be a significant and influential model for theoretical and methodological approaches to Anglo-Saxon verse and manuscript studies. In a review of 1992, Martin Stevens commented that the book 'very much reflects recent trends in the study of codicology (...) [and] what has come to be

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O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard, Vol. 1 (2005), 363-75, quotation at p. 363.

<sup>82</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. x.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 136-37; to be explored in greater detail in Chapter Two.

called “the new philology”<sup>84</sup>. In an essay of 2010, M. J. Driscoll identified first among the key principles of the New Philology the fact that

Literary works do not exist independently of their material embodiments, and the physical form of the text is an integral part of its meaning; one needs therefore to look at the “whole book”, and the relationships between the text and such features as form and layout, illumination, rubrics and other paratextual features, and, not least, the surrounding texts.<sup>85</sup>

He notes two further principles: that the objects are created by processes which might involve a number of people, and are conditioned by contemporary circumstances and environment; that the continuing dissemination and consumption of texts from creation onwards is also conditioned by circumstances and environment.<sup>86</sup> The roots of the New Philology had already run some decades deep, in the idea of *mouvance* (the ‘mobilité essentielle du texte médiéval’, the ownerless, re-workable text which undergoes variation in its reproductions) and in the postmodernist tension with the stemmatising or ‘best text’ approaches of traditional philology.<sup>87</sup> The New Philology posits

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<sup>84</sup> Martin Stevens, Review of ‘Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe. *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse.*’, *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 24 (1992), 295-97, p. 295.

<sup>85</sup> M. J. Driscoll, ‘The words on the page: Thoughts on philology, old and new’, in *Creating the Medieval Saga: Versions, Variability, and Editorial Interpretations of Old Norse Saga Literature*, eds. Judy Quinn and Emily Lethbridge (2010), 87-102, p. 90.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>87</sup> Bella Millett, ed. ‘What is *mouvance*?’, *Wessex Parallel WebTexts*. Web. Accessed 14 August 2018 <<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/~wpwt/mouvance/mouvance.htm>>; Paul Zumthor, *Essai de Poétique Médiévale* (1972), p. 71; Susan Yager, ‘New Philology’, in *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms – Methods – Trends*, ed. Albrecht Classen (2010), 999-1006, pp. 999-1001. See also Leonard E. Boyle, below, on traditional philology.

a return to and a re-emphasis on the medieval manuscript as the focal point of study, with attention to all the elements of the manuscript – not only the text but also the manuscript’s markings, illustrations, layout, and marginalia, as well as its transmission history and treatment by readers and writers.<sup>88</sup>

In 1990, the movement was the subject of a special issue of *Speculum*, where Stephen G. Nichols outlined the discipline’s advocacy both of a ‘return to the medieval origins of philology, to its roots in a *manuscript* culture’, and of ‘[minimising] the isolation between medieval studies and other contemporary movements in cognitive methodologies’.<sup>89</sup> He points also to the work of Bernard Cerquiglini, who challenged the idea of an authoritative authorial original in existence behind the error and pollution of scribal variance; Cerquiglini states that ‘variance’ is the nature of medieval writing.<sup>90</sup> Summarizing the objectives of one branch of traditional philology, Leonard E. Boyle writes:

The object of an edition (...) is not solely to recover a text from the witnesses. Rather it is to uncover a textual tradition by which to see beyond the text encased in that tradition to that text as it was before it was launched on the devious path of variation.<sup>91</sup>

The value-laden and pejorative tenor of words like ‘encased’ and ‘devious’ play a

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<sup>88</sup> Yager, p. 999.

<sup>89</sup> Stephen G. Nichols, ‘Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture’, *Speculum* 65 (1990), 1-10, p. 1

<sup>90</sup> Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante. Histoire critique de la philologie* (1989), p. 111, quoted in Nichols, p. 1; Millet.

<sup>91</sup> Leonard E. Boyle, ‘Optimist and Recensionist: ‘Common Errors’ or ‘Common Variations’?’, in *Latin Script and Letters A.D. 400-900: Festschrift Presented to Ludwig Bieler on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, eds. John J. O’Meara and Bernd Naumann (1976), 264-74, p. 273.

demonising role in a school of thought that sees the work of scribes as interfering, obfuscating and even dangerous.<sup>92</sup> While the New Philological approach has obvious implications for the work that survives in multiple manuscript texts, it also impacts upon the methodologies used to assess texts that survive in single copies, as is true of the majority of the Old English verse corpus, placing emphasis upon materiality and manuscript studies.

O'Brien O'Keefe's palaeographical approach is rooted in this sea-change, and she speaks explicitly of the need to rebalance our attention towards the "realized" text, which is 'the poetic work as it appears in manuscript'.<sup>93</sup> This focus on 'the concrete text as an artefact created within a particular social context' offers an alternative form of engagement with a work to that provided by print editions.<sup>94</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe observes that the modern print edition dissociates the text from its original layout, and she turns to a palaeographical reading of the encoded text *in situ* to reconstruct the methods of engagement between scribe and text.<sup>95</sup> As Stevenson notes, for O'Brien O'Keefe, the graphic signals of the page 'have much to tell us about how Anglo-Saxons *experienced* written-down poems in their own language'.<sup>96</sup> While the 'cueing' investigated by O'Brien O'Keefe tends towards palaeographical features like pointing and capitalization, her holistic attitude to the value of *mise-en-page* provides a methodological precedent for the work of this thesis. This is especially true given that, in the course of examining the *mise-en-page* of Old

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<sup>92</sup> An example of the impact of such an approach to scribal influence on the editing process can be found in Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (1987), p. 97.

<sup>93</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, p. 78.

<sup>94</sup> Quote from Jane Stevenson, Review of 'Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse*', *MÆ* 61 (1992), 117-18, p. 118.

<sup>95</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, p. 78.

<sup>96</sup> Stevenson, Review, p. 118 (emphasis my own).

English verse, the boundaries of the category of ‘verse’ will be questioned, particularly with regard to how scribes and readers are *experiencing* verse, and how this experience influences the appearance of verse and other forms on the written page.

However, the New Philology raises important questions about the boundaries and value of the acts of writing that we engage with critically: whether, for example, the interpolation or alteration of textual information by scribes is to be approached as an editorial or even collaborative act, whether each iteration of a work that survives in multiple manuscript artefacts is equally valuable, both to the work of criticism and as literary work in its own right.<sup>97</sup> As Driscoll points out:

No-one, to my knowledge, has ever claimed that all manuscripts of a particular work were equally “good”; from a new- or material-philological perspective, on the other hand, one certainly can claim that all manuscripts of a given work are equally interesting (...) for what they can tell us about the processes of literary production, dissemination and reception to which they are witnesses.<sup>98</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis, these problems raise questions about the space between scribal and authorial interaction with the page, for typically the palaeographic and *mise-en-page* details that will be observed in the recording of any given text will be either likely scribal, or of ambiguous origin, though on occasion it may be possible to identify or explicitly eliminate features from an authorial programme of design. This problematizes the issue of what exactly we are observing

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<sup>97</sup> See E. M. Kennedy, ‘The Scribe as Editor’, in *Mélanges de Langue et de Littérature du Moyen Âge et de la Renaissance offerts à Jean Frappier* (1970), 523-31.

<sup>98</sup> Driscoll, pp. 91-92.

when the *mise-en-page* has resonance with the particular text it encodes, whether structurally, thematically, or in any other sense. If it is not part of an authorial plan, in what sense can it be said to contribute to a literary critical reading of the text, rather than simply a historical one? Accordingly, the general approach of this thesis is to value *mise-en-page* not necessarily or solely as an act of authorial expression, but as the product of a reading and response process. *Mise-en-page* is a frame that presents to us the text according to the way it has been engaged with by the scribe, or perhaps by an author or designer prior to graphic encoding by the scribe. The encoding of visual information within the programme of the page may of course have been derived from an exemplar, but at some stage in the text's history, it represents a visual and material response to the form and subject matter of the text(s). As above, we are examining the *experience* of interaction with verse texts, the way in which they are conceived of and read.

This thesis will take the opportunity to work from various scholarly criticisms of O'Brien O'Keefe's approach in *Visible Song*. An objection that appears in a few guises is that she is led more by her model of a consistent, diachronic shift from the low levels of graphic signalling in a primarily 'oral' culture, to the more concentrated use of such signals in a primarily 'literate' culture, than by the idiosyncrasies of the manuscript evidence. When considering the pointing of the four major codices, she concludes that Junius 11 (those parts containing Old English verse of the second half of the tenth century) is 'forward-looking' because of its 'system' of pointing, whilst Exeter, Cathedral Library, 3501, fols. 8-130 (the 'Exeter Book') and Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, CXVII (the 'Vercelli Book'), both s.x<sup>2</sup>, and the Nowell Codex (s.x/xi) are 'conservative and backward-looking', because of

their sparse use of visual cues.<sup>99</sup> Such manipulation of the chronology appears to pair the evidence to the hypothesis in a problematic manner: John D. Niles asks whether the greater deployment of visual cues in certain texts might be related more to their status as ‘prized’ literature, than to a chronological progression of development; Peter Lucas is troubled by the implication that ‘pointing suddenly became metrical in the eleventh century’, and suggests instead an earlier recognition of this function of pointing, but with a more sporadic rate of use.<sup>100</sup> This raises the possibility that we might consider the use of pointing as more in line with the use of diacritics in Old English manuscripts: suspended marks signifying vowel length and ‘other textual difficulties’ appear in Old English texts, especially those of the tenth century; according to Anna Grotans, accent marks in Old English manuscripts represent ‘a paratextual commentary that is used sporadically and on problematic words, much like accentuation in medieval Latin manuscripts’.<sup>101</sup> Analysis of their function is beset by issues, such as the difficulty of identifying intentional marks from one another and from accidental marks, and their apparently inconsistent functionality (Niles notes that in the poems of Nowell Codex they are used exclusively to identify long vowels, but that this is not the case in the prose works of the same volume).<sup>102</sup>

Andy Orchard notes that the ‘perceived binary opposition between literacy and orality in Anglo-Saxon literature’ has been challenged through a holistic study which considers the relationship between Old English and Anglo-Latin composition,

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<sup>99</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 186; dating from Gneuss and Lapidge, pp. 201, 491, 682, 322.

<sup>100</sup> John D. Niles, Review of ‘Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse.*’, *Speculum* 68 (1993), 851-53, p. 852; Peter J. Lucas, Review of ‘*Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse.* By Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe.’, *RES*, 44 (1993), 401-03, p. 402.

<sup>101</sup> Anna A. Grotans, *Reading in Medieval St. Gall* (2010), p. 277.

<sup>102</sup> R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, John D. Niles, eds., *Klaeber’s Beowulf and The Fight at Finnsburg*, fourth edition (2008), p. xxxi.

and in particular the appearance of formulaic phrasing (a supposed marker of oral composition) in contemporary Latin literature and Old English religious prose, both deeply literate genres.<sup>103</sup> While Orchard points to a ‘native and ultimately oral tradition’ behind poems like *Beowulf*, he reminds us that the Old English verse which survives to us does so through literate contexts, in codices produced for monastic use, or alongside Latin or Latinate materials; he reminds us, too, that vernacular and Anglo-Latin verse were able to draw on the characteristics and source materials of both oral and literary precedents.<sup>104</sup> Niles too embraced this acceptance of hybridity, suggesting that we find vernacular verse like *Beowulf* in ‘the borderlands where literacy meets orality’; writing in the early years of the twenty-first century, he identified the state of the field as an ‘integrated study of orality and literacy’.<sup>105</sup>

Accordingly, this thesis will be cautious when considering reasons for trends that apparently develop over time, and notes that *mise-en-page*, as part of the process of manuscript production, is a function of literate modes of production. In using *mise-en-page* as a tool to read vernacular verse, this thesis will engage with the relationship between Old English verse and literate modes of thought, centring on the *writtenness* of manuscripts, and the contexts of their material production. This does not, however, mean that orality and the oral characteristics of verse will be neglected: the analyses of the demarcation of metrical lines in Chapters Two and Three draw in part upon Paul Saenger’s work on word-spacing in the Latin West,

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<sup>103</sup> Andy Orchard, ‘Looking for an Echo: The Oral Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Literature’, *Oral Tradition*, 18 (2003), 225-27, pp. 225-26. Web. Accessed 1 December 2017 <[journal.oraltradition.org/files/articles/18ii/8f\\_orchard.pdf](http://journal.oraltradition.org/files/articles/18ii/8f_orchard.pdf)>.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> John D. Niles, ‘Prizes from the Borderlands’, *Oral Tradition*, 18 (2003), 223-24. Web. Accessed 1 December 2017. <[http://journal.oraltradition.org/files/articles/18ii/8e\\_niles.pdf](http://journal.oraltradition.org/files/articles/18ii/8e_niles.pdf)>.

which itself considers the changing needs of readers in the context of silent or voiced reading; Chapter Three further considers the relationship between written forms and vocal or sub-vocal performance of metrical rhythms by scribes; the verse case-study in Chapter Five addresses the way in which *mise-en-page* is used to represent elements of verbal dialogue in the narrative.

Martin Stevens suggests that O'Brien O'Keeffe 'is not sufficiently concerned with the physical production of manuscripts, the interference of editors, and even the lapses of scribes'.<sup>106</sup> The hypothesis at the heart of my thesis is very much concerned with scribal experience of Old English verse (in comparison with both Latin verse and Old English prose), and I will address both the curation and alteration of texts by scribes who may be said to operate within an editorial role, and the resulting problems and possibilities for modern editors. One of the more practical outcomes of the New Philology ought to have been a revolution in editing practices; in reality, such editions still appear 'revolutionary', rather than having altered the standard model.<sup>107</sup> Driscoll notes that:

few would now question the notion that 'the text' cannot be divorced from the physical form of its presentation. For the most part, however, we continue to edit texts as though it could.<sup>108</sup>

This is something O'Brien O'Keeffe addresses in the course of *Visible Song*. She suggests that our pre-existing notions of text and literacy obstruct our understanding of medieval experiential engagement with encoded texts:

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<sup>106</sup> Stevens, p. 296.

<sup>107</sup> A number of such 'revolutionary' editions will be discussed further on in this chapter and in Chapter Six.

<sup>108</sup> Driscoll, p. 102.

This difficulty arises from the Platonic abstraction of the modern edited text, be it optimist or recensionist, which presents us with a remade, often hybrid, work, stripped of its context, its spatial arrangement and its points.<sup>109</sup>

O'Brien O'Keefe is, here, operating quite consciously within the material tradition emergent from the work of postmodernist thought, for she cites Jerome McGann's comments on the inseparability of any given text from the 'interventions' inherent in the 'passage to publication', which need not be seen as 'contamination'.<sup>110</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe's 1993 essay, 'Texts and Works: Some Historical Questions on the Editing of Old English Verse', explicitly situates itself in a recent critical tradition that says 'no text is innocent, no criticism objective'; most pertinently, she reminds the reader that editing practice is a vital component in the construction of critical trends, for it is 'the body of procedures on which any criticism of Old English verse texts necessarily depends'.<sup>111</sup> Of William Daniel Conybeare's disinterest in the issue of typographical layout, she observes that '[t]hat information may be contained in the manuscript's format, spacing, and punctuation is never entertained (...) To all appearances, a reader simply transcends such details'.<sup>112</sup>

In 1998, O'Brien O'Keefe wrote the introduction to a collection of essays jointly edited with Sarah Larratt Keefer, *New Approaches to Editing Old English Verse*. Here, she reminds us that our visual engagement with verse should not

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<sup>109</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, p. 78.

<sup>110</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, p. 78; Jerome McGann, *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (1983), p. 51.

<sup>111</sup> Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Texts and Works: Some Historical Questions on the Editing of Old English Verse', in *New Historical Literary Study: Essays on Reproducing Texts, Representing History*, eds. J. N. Cox and L. D. Reynolds (Princeton, 1993), 54-68, p. 54.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

assume that Anglo-Saxon readers themselves had no such form of engagement; she urgently questions the nature of editorial ‘faithfulness’ to a medieval text, and the impact of digital media on the role of the editor.<sup>113</sup> Of particular relevance to this thesis is the idea of conservatism and faithfulness, for ‘conservatism’, in the most literal sense of preservation and conservation, should be the approach most suited to the prioritisation of retaining information about original manuscript witnesses in the modern edition.<sup>114</sup> And yet, despite George Krapp’s ‘highly conservative posture’ in the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (that the edition is ‘a faithful record of the manuscript’ and ‘as free as possible of scholarly intrusions’), his text, and the majority of Old English verse editions produced since, lineate the Old English text block, introduce titles and clear inter- and intra-textual sectional divisions, and punctuate and capitalise according to modern convention.<sup>115</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe’s thesis is ultimately that the unlineated layout of Old English verse is a visual signal of the orality inherent in the production and reproduction of vernacular poetry. If this were true, the introduction of a lineated style might be appropriate in the context of a more literate modern society, so long as the *mise-en-page* emendation and its rationale were fully addressed by the editor. However, this thesis will suggest that the unlineated layout of Old English verse *in situ* is a reflection of its metrical form, in which case it is not so clear how suitable a lineated layout would be. This is a problem which will be fully addressed in Chapter Six.

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<sup>113</sup> Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Introduction’, in *New Approaches to Editing Old English Verse*, eds. Sarah Larratt Keefer and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (1998), 1-9, pp. 2, 4.

<sup>114</sup> The relevant *OED* definition of ‘conservative’ here is, ‘That conserves, or favours the conservation of, an existing structure or system; (now esp.) designating a person, movement, outlook, etc., averse to change or innovation and holding traditional ideas and values’, in ‘conservative, n. and adj.’ *OED Online* (2017), Web. Accessed 27 November 2017 <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/39569](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/39569)>.

<sup>115</sup> First quotation from O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Texts and Works’, p. 55; subsequent quotations from George Phillip Krapp, ed., *The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR I (1931), p. v, quoted in O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Texts and Works’, p. 55. This series of commonly re-edited visual features are mostly noted by O’Brien O’Keeffe in ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

This is not to suggest that the material principles of the New Philology have not been adopted by numerous editors in the production of highly useful scholarly editions. Daniel Anlezark's *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* (2009) contains full editions of the *Dialogues* as they appear in each of the two manuscript witnesses, including each of the variant versions of *Solomon and Saturn I* in full. He does not alter the narrative order of the material or relegate *Solomon and Saturn Prose* to an appendix as previous editors have done, although he does introduce clear breaks between discrete sections, which are much less clear in the manuscripts.<sup>116</sup> Chapter Six will consider twentieth-century experimental editions and their relationships with manuscript witnesses, including A. N. Doane's edition of *Genesis A* (1978), and Bruce Mitchell and Susan Irvine's *Beowulf Repunctuated* (2000), both of which experiment with retaining different palaeographic elements from the original manuscript witnesses. O'Brien O'Keefe and Keefer's *New Approaches* is a call to arms on these issues, and a rich source of work on *mise-en-page*, representing the work of two panels delivered at the International Medieval Congress at Western Michigan University.<sup>117</sup> The volume pays attention to both the formalist possibilities of a revolution in editing practice on the one hand (as in Edward B. Irving Jr.'s 'Editing Old English Verse: The Ideal', which includes a suggestion that verse might be visually arranged to represent rhetorical as well as metrical form) and what we might usefully call the 'material conservatism' that may be drawn from the tenets of the New Philology, on the other (Keefer's essay 'Respect for the Book' and its thoughts on 'the need for an editorial practice responsible to the physical information of the text as object'; Doane's essay, 'Spacing, Placing and Effacing', with its focus

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<sup>116</sup> A full codicological overview of these manuscripts, and descriptions of their treatment in key editions, is given in Chapter Five.

<sup>117</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Introduction', pp. 4-5.

on ‘significant patterns of layout and spacing’, and his attention to the creative role of the scribe).<sup>118</sup> William Schipper’s essay in the same volume explicitly approaches Old English *mise-en-page* as a site of historical information.<sup>119</sup>

The collection closes with essays by Paul E. Szarmach and Patrick W. Conner on the intersection between editorial practice and computing, both of which consider the multivalence of textual and data output made possible by digital technology, and the likelihood of ‘editorship’ becoming a multilateral engagement between a number of people (although Szarmach also posits the ‘death of the editor’ in the face of digital-text multivalence, while Conner hypothesises the shifting of the editorial role towards the job of a technician).<sup>120</sup> While this thesis is concerned primarily with the representation of *mise-en-page* information in the edited text, rather than the medium of that edition, Chapter Six will also address the potential for digital editions to incorporate elements of page-layout in ways that are distinct from strategies employed on the static, printed page. Furthermore, it is necessary to note how indebted the analysis of this thesis is to ever-developing programmes of digital publishing, and to the publishing of digital facsimiles in particular. This ‘growing “data footprint” of medieval studies’, is, as Nichols observes, a way for scholars to access material otherwise closed off to them.<sup>121</sup> The manuscript texts examined in

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<sup>118</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Introduction’, pp. 5-6; Edward B. Irving Jr., ‘Editing Old English Verse: The Ideal’, in *New Approaches to Editing Old English Verse*, eds. Sarah Larratt Keefer and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (1998), 11-20, pp. 14-15; A. N. Doane, ‘Spacing, Placing and Effacing: Scribal Textuality and Exeter Riddle 30a/b’, in *New Approaches to Editing Old English Verse*, eds. Sarah Larratt Keefer and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (1998), 45-65, quotation on p. 64.

<sup>119</sup> William Schipper, ‘Style and Layout of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts’, in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, eds. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (2003), 151-168.

<sup>120</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Introduction’, pp. 8-9; Paul Szarmach, ‘Abbot Ælfric and His Rhythmical Prose in the Computer Age’, in *New Approaches to Editing Old English Verse*, eds. Sarah Larratt Keefer and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (1998), 95-108, p. 95; Patrick W. Conner, ‘Beyond the ASPR: Electronic Editions of Old English Poetry’, in *New Approaches to Editing Old English Verse*, eds. Sarah Larratt Keefer and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (1998), 109-26, pp. 111, 114-16.

<sup>121</sup> Quote from Alexandra Gillespie, ‘In Praise of small Data (Medieval Studies in the Age of Big Data VII).’ Burnable Books. Blog by Bruce Holsinger. 1 March 2013. Web. Accessed 12 December

the following chapters have been accessed either as manuscript artefacts, or as reproductions in digital and print facsimiles. Depending on the analysis in question, there are strengths and weaknesses in the use of each such edition: measurements, for example, are easily taken from printed facsimiles, and might also be taken from digital facsimiles with the aid of appropriate software; it may be more difficult from a manuscript artefact, where conservation requires physical contact with the writing area to be as minimal as possible. Equally, there is much of a text's materiality that cannot be inferred from a facsimile alone (see, for example, the analysis of *Thureth* above, where the notes on parchment quality and the possible palimpsest are made possible or more convincing through access to the original manuscript in the British Library). It must also be remembered that facsimiles are not identical to the artefact they represent: they are reproductions, and their form is mediated and altered by the conditions of production, much as we can observe the conditions of production mediating and altering medieval copies of texts. The facsimile is a particular shot of a page at a certain angle, in certain light and at a certain temperature, on a certain day in the long life of the artefact.<sup>122</sup> It is visible from whatever dimensions are chosen by the digitizer (likely a single, top-down view), and is couched in a series of digital frames that we might see as analogous to the paratextual frames that surround and influence the printed text of an edition.

In the twenty years since O'Brien O'Keefe and Keefer's volume was published, a number of works of immense importance to the study of Old English *mise-en-page* have been produced. In 1998 Rosemary Huisman's work, *The Written*

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2014. Gillespie quoted in Stephen G. Nichols, 'Materialities of the Manuscript: Codex and Court Culture in Fourteenth-Century Paris', *Digital Philology: A Journal of Medieval Cultures* 4 (2015), 26-58, p. 29; Nichols, 'Materialities', pp. 26-29.

<sup>122</sup> I am grateful to Peter Stokes for his comments to me on this, for which see below, p. 188 n. 90.

*Poem: Semiotic Conventions from Old to Modern English*, produced a historical analysis of changing *mise-en-page* in the Anglo-Norman period, which will provide an important perspective in Chapter Two of this thesis. Published in 2005 was Jane Roberts' volume, *Guide to Scripts used in English Writings up to 1500*; the layout of this volume directs the student towards a keen awareness of the page, its dimensions and its layout.<sup>123</sup> On each double-page spread, a full-page image of a manuscript folio faces a transcription, which is bordered with bibliographic details, and information on the scribal hand and any textual variants. This right-aligned chronological succession of images cannot help but draw the reader's attention to changing modes of presentation over time, not only of script (which is the central subject of the volume) but of related and other aspects of the *mise-en-page* including text-block arrangement, display characters and illustration. Roberts' approach to transcription is sensitive to the shape of the page, as can be seen in the facing-page transcription to London, BL, Add. 47967, fol. 48v (Plate 9), where lines 7-9 of the transcription are indented in proportion with the indentation of the original Old English prose text, caused by the protrusion of an ornamental zoomorphic 'A' character into the area of the text-block.<sup>124</sup> Roberts' text encourages the student of palaeography to engage with the full dimensions and features of the page.

Anlezark's edition of *The Dialogues* adopts a transparent and respectful approach to *mise-en-page*, amply exploring and representing the difficult sectional divisions and palaeographic features of the manuscripts.<sup>125</sup> More recently still, work by art historians, such as Catherine Karkov's *Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (2011),

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<sup>123</sup> Jane Roberts, *Guide to Scripts used in English Writings up to 1500* (2005).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>125</sup> Daniel Anlezark, ed. and transl. *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* (2009); these divisions are discussed in Chapter Five.

Leslie Webster's *Anglo-Saxon Art* (2012) and Jeffrey Hamburger's *Script as Image* (2014), have occupied a space between art history and textual criticism, presenting images in terms of a 'stylistic vocabulary', and texts in terms of their visual properties.<sup>126</sup> These works encourage a melding of methodological approaches which will be critical in Chapter Four of my thesis.

I have also drawn upon and been inspired by the scholarship of more recent entrants to the field, whose research can be situated within the broad remit of *mise-en-page*, including Johanna Green's work on presentation features in the Exeter Book (2012), Victoria Symons' and Thomas Birkett's frequently complementary analyses of *runica manuscripta* (2016 and 2017), and Simon Thomson's work on scribal and textual layout in the Nowell Codex (2016 and forthcoming).<sup>127</sup>

Thus, while traditional approaches to the very specific issue of an unlineated layout for Old English texts may be misplaced, there has been much scholarly work on other aspects of Old English and Anglo-Saxon *mise-en-page*. By providing a rationale for Old English verse layout, I hope that this thesis will bring greater legitimacy to the idea that page-design of Old English verse texts can be used by scribes to encode semantic, structural and metrical information about texts, and so can be 'read' by scholars for literary critical and historical purposes.

There is a body of recent critical work which adopts the same overarching

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<sup>126</sup> Catherine E. Karkov, *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* (2011); Leslie Webster, *Anglo Saxon Art: A New History* (2012), esp. p. 17; Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Script as Image* (2014).

<sup>127</sup> See Johanna M. E. Green, *Judgement Day I, Resignation A and Resignation B: A Conceptual Unit in the Exeter Book* (2012) [PhD thesis, University of Glasgow]; Victoria Symons, *Runes and Roman Letters in Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts* (2016); Thomas Birkett, *Reading the Runes in Old English and Old Norse Poetry* (2017); Simon Thomson, "'Whistle While You Work': Scribal engagement with Old English poetic texts", in *Sensory Perception in the Medieval World*, eds. Simon Thomson and M. Bintley (2016), 99-122; Simon Thomson, *Communal Creativity in the Making of the 'Beowulf' Manuscript: Towards a History of Reception for the Nowell Codex, British Library Cotton MS Vitellius A. xv (Second Part)* (forthcoming).

method as this thesis, i.e. in approaching the scribe or reader's *experience* of Old English verse (as a category) through palaeographical and *mise-en-page* evidence. In two books of 1968 and 1975 Robert Stevick explored a system of inter-word spacing, which he has termed 'graphotactics'.<sup>128</sup> The premise was that the degree of spacing between words in a manuscript text functioned as an encoded piece of information that could communicate details about the metrical or linguistic structure of the verse. Stevick's approach was heavily criticised, and ultimately presents an overly systematizing approach to the issue of inter-word spacing.<sup>129</sup> Thomas Bredehoft's much more recent essay on the palaeographical distinctions between verse and prose surveys the use or neglect of graphic signs (i.e. pointing, capitalisation, unusual spacing) at points of transition between prose and Old English verse.<sup>130</sup> Bredehoft's approach is highly sensitive to the idea of difference between individual scribal approaches to the same problem, and his material observations offer a narrative on the way the scribe(s) experienced Old English verse as they encoded it on the page.

There are two further scholarly works which must be commented on in the course of this review: Malcolm Parkes' *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West*, and Thomas Saenger's *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading*.<sup>131</sup> These texts both approach the layout of the encoded page as a structure built by historical influences: I will draw on Parkes'

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<sup>128</sup> Robert D. Stevick, *Suprasegmentals, Meter, and the Manuscript of Beowulf* (1968); Robert D. Stevick, *Beowulf: An Edition with Manuscript Spacing Notation and Graphotactic Analyses* (1975).

<sup>129</sup> Stevick's work, and the critical responses to it, will be fully addressed in Chapter Three.

<sup>130</sup> Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'The Boundaries Between Verse and Prose in Old English Literature', in *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context*, ed. Joyce Tally Lionarons (2004), 139-72, esp. pp. 168-69.

<sup>131</sup> Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (1992); Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (1997).

analysis of the development of punctuation as a reading aid in societies where careful preparation of texts for oral recitation was giving way to an appreciation of the written text as a medium ‘apprehended as much by the eye as by the ear’; the examination of inter-word spacing in Chapter Three utilises Saenger’s account of the development of spacing in the medieval west.<sup>132</sup> Neither text is much concerned with the work of literary criticism, but they offer excellent models for the historicization of palaeographic features not simply as datable signs, but also as participants in the complex and ever-shifting experience of literacy in the medieval West. This is certainly the approach taken by the examination of Latin lineation in Chapter Two, although as a whole this thesis will strive to demonstrate how such historical analyses can be brought to bear upon literary critical readings of the texts we are physically examining.

### **Terminology and methodologies**

This thesis predominantly interrogates the research question by palaeographical and codicological methods, and through a wide range of approaches, including metrical study, literary criticism, and editing practice. Before explaining how this will work, it is critical to explore the often amorphous terminology around some of these methodological tools, and consider their suitability for this research project.

Different definitions of the term ‘*mise-en-page*’ offer different premises as to what the objects of a study of *mise-en-page* might be. This term translates literally as ‘placement on the page’, implying that the objects of study are the signs applied *to*

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<sup>132</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, see esp. pp. 9-10, 19, 34; Saenger, esp. pp. 1-51.

the page, whether text, image or other graphic mark. The definitions offered by the *OED* and J. A. Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* are more ambiguous in their identification of such objects, defining *mise-en-page* as '[the] design of printed pages, including the layout of text and illustrations; (also) the composition or layout of a picture' and 'those features of a written or printed text which derive from practical considerations of design and layout', respectively.<sup>133</sup> Interestingly, Cuddon excludes 'the choice and order of words, or the lineation of verse' from the remit of *mise-en-page*, while including 'the choice of fount, the degree of leading, the pagination, and all ancillary material (illustrations, ornaments, page numbers, etc.)'.<sup>134</sup> Lineation, he implies, is intrinsic to the text, rather than a matter of editorial choice; this is something we have already observed to be untrue. One of the sample usages of *mise-en-page* provided by the *OED*, excerpted from a 1972 issue of *The Guardian* newspaper, focuses on the use of 'big blank spaces', identifying spacing as a feature of *mise-en-page* as much as graphic signs.<sup>135</sup>

The term 'palaeography', meaning 'old writing', was officially coined in 1708 and adopted into English during the latter half of the century.<sup>136</sup> According to the *OED*, the definition had broadened by the early nineteenth century, from 'ancient writing; an ancient style or method of writing', to encapsulate the idea of study, or a scholarly field: 'The study of ancient writing and inscriptions; the science or art of deciphering and interpreting historical manuscripts and writing systems'.<sup>137</sup> This

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<sup>133</sup> 'mise-en-page, n.' *OED Online* (2017), Web. Accessed 27 November 2017. <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/119504](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/119504)>; J. A. Cuddon, 'mise-en-page', *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 5th ed. (2012), p. 439. Web.

<sup>134</sup> Cuddon, p. 439.

<sup>135</sup> 'mise-en-page, n.' *OED Online* (2017), Web. Accessed 27 November 2017.

<sup>136</sup> Leonard E. Boyle, *Medieval Latin Palaeography: A Bibliographical Introduction* (1984), p. xi; 'palaeography | paleography, n.', *OED Online* (2017), Web. Accessed 27 November 2017 <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/136180](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/136180)>.

<sup>137</sup> 'palaeography | paleography, n.', *OED Online* (2017), Web. Accessed 27 November 2017 <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/136180](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/136180)>.

definition from the *OED* leaves room for interpretation: it does not define which particular aspects of ‘writing’ or ‘manuscripts’ are under scrutiny, nor the particular methodology of the ‘study’ or ‘deciphering’ at work. This laxity of definition encompasses an established ambiguity, for as Julian Brown writes:

Palaeography means, in the strict sense, the study of ancient handwriting, and its basic objects are these: first, to read ancient texts with accuracy; secondly, to date and localize their handwriting. As such it is a major component of two other more complex disciplines; of diplomatic, which studies all aspects of documents and records; and of paleography in the wider sense, which studies all aspects of books produced by hand (manuscripts).<sup>138</sup>

This proposes a narrowly defined conception of palaeography encased within a broader one, centring upon handwriting as the object of study, and the deciphering/dating of handwriting as the modes of study, but broadening to encompass the entirety of manuscript studies. The British Library offers a complementary interpretation of this core of palaeographical study: ‘paleography is the study of the history of scripts, their adjuncts (such as abbreviation and punctuation), and their decipherment’.<sup>139</sup> Just two of the eight usage examples accompanying the definition of ‘Palaeography’ (as a field of study) in the *OED* explicitly refer to the study of handwriting, but one seems specifically to take up the issue of defining ‘palaeography’ within the taxonomy of manuscript studies: ‘The

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<sup>138</sup> Julian Brown, ‘What is Palaeography?’. Web. Accessed 28th November 2017 <[http://people.umass.edu/eng3/fcd/documents/Brown\\_WhatIsPalaeography.pdf](http://people.umass.edu/eng3/fcd/documents/Brown_WhatIsPalaeography.pdf)>.

<sup>139</sup> Emphases on quotation removed. *Glossaries: ‘P’*, *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, British Library. Web. Accessed 27th November 2017. <<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/GlossP.asp>>.

English usage whereby palaeography is taken to include, as a matter of course, every aspect of the manuscript book.. [sic] is worth keeping'.<sup>140</sup> In his bibliographical introduction, *Medieval Latin Palaeography*, Boyle takes a generous approach to the objectives of palaeography, and therefore the modes and objects of study:

Writing is a medium of communication, no matter where one finds it  
(...) To understand any given sample as the medium of  
communication it is, one has to see it in all its circumstances: how it is  
couched, what the material is to which it is entrusted, where it  
originated, when it made its first appearance, who its practitioners are,  
what exactly it communicates, why it is there at all.<sup>141</sup>

The study of 'codicology' might be seen to fall within the broader of these definitions of 'palaeography'. Again, definitional ambiguity abounds: the *OED* defines 'codicology' simply as 'The study or science of manuscripts and their interrelationships'; the British Library provides a much more nuanced perspective of 'codicology' as 'The study of the physical structure of the book, which promotes a better understanding of its production and subsequent history.'<sup>142</sup> In their recent book, *Writing Europe, 500-1450: Texts and Contexts*, Orietta da Rold and Marilena Maniaci take note of the 'multifaceted... taxonomies used to define the discipline' of medieval manuscript studies, including the slipperiness of defining 'codicology' in relation to 'palaeography'; they note that a more precise vocabulary (e.g. 'material

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<sup>140</sup> 'palaeography | paleography, n.' *OED Online* (2017), Web. Accessed 27 November 2017. <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/136180](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/136180)>.

<sup>141</sup> Boyle, *Medieval Latin Palaeography*, p. xi.

<sup>142</sup> 'codicology, n.' *OED Online* (2017), Web. Accessed 27 November 2017 <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/35601](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/35601)>; *Glossaries: 'C', Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, British Library Web. Accessed 27th November 2017 <<https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/GlossC.asp>>.

codicology’ and ‘structural codicology’) has at times been utilised.<sup>143</sup> Natalie Tchernetska offers a simple set of definitions which neatly compartmentalises the two disciplines:

Manuscript studies includes palaeography, the study of scripts, and codicology, the study of the material properties of a manuscript, such as writing material and ink, manuscript format, and page layout.<sup>144</sup>

If we adopt these two terms in their narrower applications, ‘palaeography’ as the study of scripts on the one hand, and ‘codicology’ as the study of the structure of the codex on the other, then the subject matter of this thesis, which is the layout of the page, seems to fall inbetween. Descriptions of page-layout will of course frequently take recourse to palaeographic observations, while the codicological positioning of these pages as part of the programme of a given manuscript may also contribute to our reading of the text in question. However, the question of the arrangement of the page taken as a whole, as a collective structure rather than a series of graphs, sets it apart from palaeography. In this thesis page design will be referred to as *mise-en-page* or ‘page layout’, and the terms ‘palaeography’ and ‘codicology’ will be invoked only in the context of the narrower definitions cited above. To refer to the overall field of study which encapsulates all three of these categories, and which might discuss any aspect of manuscript production or use, I will use the term ‘manuscript studies’. More broadly still, where these issues apply to text-objects

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<sup>143</sup> Orietta Da Rold and Marilena Maniaci, ‘Medieval Manuscript Studies: A European Perspective’, in *Writing Europe, 500-1450: Texts and Contexts*, eds. Aidan Conti, Orietta Da Rold and Philip Shaw (2015) 1-24, pp. 1-2.

<sup>144</sup> Natalie Tchernetska, ‘Manuscript Studies’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, eds. Barbara Graziosi, Phiroze Vasunia and George Boys-Stones (2009) Web. Accessed 6 December 2017 <[www.oxfordhandbooks.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286140.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199286140-e-65](http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286140.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199286140-e-65)>.

which may not only be manuscripts, but tablets, rolls, monuments, books, websites and so on, I will refer to the field as ‘the history of the book’.

This taxonomy does not indicate mutually exclusive categories; the features of one typically contribute to the makeup of the others. In Chapter Two, close palaeographical observation of punctuation schemes will be a fundamental part of identifying the different grades of lineation which show changing trends in *mise-en-page* amongst Latin texts. At the same time, an appreciation of the codicological history of the book and roll in classical Europe will help to locate the development of graphic demarcation of the verse line in the Anglo-Saxon *mise-en-page* within the panorama of western manuscript history. In Chapter Three, analysis of the spacing in scribal hands will be used to propose the existence of a footprint of metrical structure in the *mise-en-page*. In Chapters Four and Five, it will be a palaeographic reading of the scribe’s manipulation of specific textual features which builds the sense of a programme of page layout, which can then be used to enhance a literary-critical reading of the poem.

The objective of the thesis is to present the original *mise-en-page* of Old English verse in its manuscript context as a relevant interpretative tool to a range of scholars, including not only historians and palaeographers, but also those who engage in metrical or other linguistic study, or literary criticism. As such, while the language and methodologies of book history are deeply ingrained in the programme of the thesis, they must work in tandem with consideration of these other areas of research as methodologies in their own right. So the thesis will rely as much on a convincing explication of the distinctions between Latin and Old English metrical features, or of the thematic treatment of eastern learning in *The Dialogues of*

*Solomon and Saturn*, as it does upon close observation of palaeographical, *mise-en-page*, and codicological features. The interplay of these distinct approaches is detailed in the chapter plan, below.

A material approach has attendant difficulties and limitations. The thesis is solidly centred upon manuscript studies, and much of the necessary manuscript data can be gathered online via digital facsimiles; more can be gleaned from printed facsimiles, or from manuscripts available in library holdings. These sources each provide different challenges for the gathering of data. For example, measuring inter-word spacing is impossible from a manuscript source, and is most easily done on a computer screen, where digital files can be marked up; however, this raises questions about image quality and digital replication.<sup>145</sup> Further, not all desired manuscripts will be available for viewing, due either to their fragile condition and high value, or being held in libraries which are too difficult to access. Broader still is the problem presented by the manuscript witnesses that do not survive: often the samples sets identified in this thesis are very small, due to the fairly low quantities of Latin and Old English verse that survive from Anglo-Saxon England. Drawing conclusions about changing trends must in these cases be done with a sense of caution and due regard to the weight of absent evidence. My approach has been at all times to be transparent about the dating, origins and provenance of manuscripts in sample sets, and to highlight issues with data as they arise.

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<sup>145</sup> See below, p. 188, n. 90.

## **Full chapter plan**

The order and progression of my thesis are intended to create a process through which the research question is thoroughly explored, featuring distinct methodological approaches, historical analyses and material case studies in each chapter. Certain elements of the chapter plan have already been touched upon above, and will now be fully laid out:

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

The present chapter undertakes the work of challenging and ‘undoing’ the consensus approach to the layout of Old English, by presenting the modern editorial layout consensus as the product of a historical process. It establishes the issue of editorial recasting of Old English verse *mise-en-page* into a more Latinate form by considering the impact of romanticism and classical studies on the handling of nineteenth-century editions of *Beowulf*. It examines the development of the modern consensus of Old English layout as the outcome of a process of graphic revision from the early modern to the modern period, and suggests that the form used by modern editors has been imposed on the text as a reflection of our own reading practices. Having problematized the *mise-en-page* of the modern edited page, the introduction tackles traditional explanations for the prosaic layout of Old English verse *in situ*, and presents its hypotheses in response, which centre on the proposition that Old English verse *mise-en-page* is a site of meaning, and of use to a variety of scholars.

### **Chapter Two: Demarcation of the metrical period in the Latin verse texts of Anglo-Saxon England**

This chapter furthers the agenda established in the introduction, approaching *mise-*

*en-page* as a product of socio-historical, intellectual, physical and material processes by embarking upon a historical analysis of Anglo-Saxon page layout. The objective of this approach is to counter a critical tendency to view Old English verse layout as ‘absent’ or ‘neutral’, and to recognise the presentation of the Old English verse line in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts as part of a longer history of verse writing in England and Europe. In particular, the chapter identifies those surviving Latin verse texts written or owned before the tenth century in England and assesses their level of lineation according to a scale devised for this thesis. The chapter suggests that lineation is valued as a tool of organisation in early Anglo-Latin texts that have a thematic reliance upon linear order (for example, acrostics and metrical calendars). From these data, we can evaluate the context in which scribes subsequently opted not to present Old English verse in a lineated format. The interplay of form and *mise-en-page* drives my hypothesis that the different presentation of the verse lines of these languages lies in their distinctive metrical structures, with a focus on the sense of aural ‘shape’ engendered by metrical form, and the much more variable length of the Old English verse line. The chapter will move to consider the manner in which aurally distinct forms might be encoded or ‘impressed’ in variant ways on the page by scribes. In this way, the chapter suggests that the application of a ‘prosaic’ form for Old English verse may have been seen as a suitable presentational format for its metrical form, in comparison to quantitatively even, lineated Latin. The final piece of evidence is a short analysis of the treatment of Latin rhythmical verse, which, like Old English, is accentual-syllabic, and is also unlineated in medieval manuscripts.

### **Chapter Three: inter-word spacing in *Beowulf* and the neurophysiology of scribal engagement with Old English verse**

Chapter Three takes as its focus the relationship between metrical form and *mise-en-page* posited in Chapter Two. It suggests that although Old English is unlineated, inter-word spacing reflects the pattern of metrical units on the page. This idea has been voiced by previous scholarship, but never sufficiently explored. I review the history of word-spacing in the Latin West, before examining the body of existing scholarship on inter-word spacing. In particular I address the highly controversial work of Robert Stevick, who also posits a connection between metrical structure and inter-word spacing, but uses a problematic methodology. After laying out the parameters of a new methodology, I present the results of a sample set, and analyse the correlation of spacing with metrical structure in *Beowulf*. The results clearly show that the scribes deploy on average a greater quantity of inter-word space at metrical boundaries; however, the range of spacing values found at metrical boundaries is high, and typically has a broad distribution. These results indicate that metrical structure influences scribal deployment of inter-word space, but that this is not likely to be a systematic approach by scribes, as suggested by Stevick. The chapter reaches a conclusion with greater physiological and psychological likelihood: that these patterns show scribes engaging with the mnemonic and rhythmic qualities of metre as part of the act of copying, and act as a *mise-en-page* footprint of their physical engagement with exemplar and copy. Finally, I suggest that this methodology can be used to interrogate and challenge our perceptions of other forms of writing, including prose and hypermetric verse.

**Chapters Four and Five** move away from the utilitarian treatment of *mise-en-page*

in Chapters Two and Three, where layout is seen to convey and accommodate formal textual features and the physical processes of writing, and in particular is seen to reflect metrical structure. As an alternative and complementary line of enquiry, these two chapters take an aesthetic approach to the question of Old English *mise-en-page*. Chapter Four examines the possibility that an unlineated format plays to an aesthetic preference for density in the design of art and crafts in Anglo-Saxon England and Germanic arts more broadly; Chapter Five explores the semantic purpose behind features of visual design in the two manuscript witnesses of *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*.

#### **Chapter Four: ‘Restless surfaces’: an aesthetic approach to Old English verse layout**

Chapter Four suggests that unlineated layouts arise in part from a contemporary preference for dense surfaces in Anglo-Saxon art. This is explored through a historical survey of the components of ‘density’ in Anglo-Saxon crafts, which emerges as a particularly vernacular characteristic. A series of textual examples show scribes striving to eliminate space on the manuscript page, suggesting a preference for ‘fullness’. Finally, the chapter analogises the metrical structure of Old English verse with geometric patterning in contemporary art, drawing on John Leyerle’s comparison of knotwork in Germanic graphic design with the narrative structure of *Beowulf*.

#### **Chapter Five: Alphabets and *litterae* in *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn***

This chapter departs from the theoretical analyses conducted by previous chapters, in order to provide a full case study addressing how an aesthetic approach to *mise-en-page* can be used as a tool of literary criticism. Where Chapter Four examined broad

cultural ideas of ‘style’, and their effects upon manuscript design, Chapter Five explores the potential for the scribe to utilise page layout as a semantic tool in the transmission of individual texts. The chapter takes as a case study a series of poems known as *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, preserved in a tenth century manuscript, CCCC 422. The graphic features of these manuscript texts are shown to contribute to the esoteric interests of their narratives, highlighting narrative structure, partaking in complex punning, and heightening allusions to contemporary texts, particularly Isidore’s *Etymologies*. The case study shows that Old English verse *mise-en-page* is not simply responsive to, or reflective of, the pressures of utility or aesthetics; rather it is a tool which scribes sometimes deploy to contribute to the semantic force of their text. In this way, the chapter seeks to demonstrate that *mise-en-page* is useful to the literary critic, just as previous chapters have shown it to be useful to the editor, the book historian, the metrist and the art historian.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusions**

This final chapter summarises the thesis, foregrounding the following conclusions: that Old English *mise-en-page* is the product of a historical and material process and can be analysed; that Old English *mise-en-page* is reflective of metrical structure, scribal practice and contemporary aesthetics; that scribes leave the footprint of their engagement with verse in the *mise-en-page*, and may actively deploy elements of page layout as meaningful elements of the text *in situ*. The conclusion will address the impacts of the thesis, particularly the question of whether current editorial practices of lineation should be amended, and review recent scholarship around this question. It will consider recent editorial history, in particular the production of editions that challenge standard presentational paradigms, as well as examining the

potential for new forms of engagement with Old English texts made possible by current digitization projects. I argue for transparency around any alterations to manuscript *mise-en-page*, at the same level of detail that we would expect for textual emendations; I do not, however, advocate the necessity of replicating the original *mise-en-page* in the majority of editions, rather seeing different layout choices as useful and legitimate for different readers.

## CHAPTER TWO: Demarcation of the Metrical Period in the Latin Verse Texts of Anglo-Saxon England

The process of writing a text always involves decisions about its physical encoding, the way the text and its paratextual apparatus are ideally positioned upon the page, and how in turn the dimensions and materiality of the page impose upon that ideal positioning of the text. No such process of encoding can occur in a vacuum of influence; rather, the output of every such activity represents a negotiation between competing forces.

One such critical force is the writer's consciousness of the shape of the language and text in which they are writing. This can include aural shape, derived from prosodic features like stress, elision and end-rhyme. The layout of the Old English metrical line in modern editions is an exhibition of this *par excellence*, with the alliterative and rhythmic order of both half and full line demonstrated by use of lineation at the full line and a visible caesura at the half-line. The layout both reflects the shape given to Old English lines by metricists and invites students to apply this shape to their own reading.

Association of the 'shape' of writing in the *mise-en-page* with some aspect of its 'shape' as language seems to be expressed by Isidore in Book I of his *Etymologies*.<sup>1</sup> Of prose, he writes:

Prose (*prosa*) is an extended discourse, unconstrained by rules of meter. The ancients used to say that prose is extended (*productus*) and

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<sup>1</sup> See Jean-Yves Tilliette, 'Verse Style', trans. Emily Blakelock, in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*, eds. Ralph Hexter and David Townsend (2012) 239-64, p. 240.

straightforward (*rectus*)... Others say that prose is so called because it is profuse (*profusus*), or because it ‘rushes forth’ (*proruere*) and runs expansively with no set limit to it. (I.XXXVIII.1)<sup>2</sup>

Verses, on the other hand,

are so called because when they are arranged in their regular order into feet they are governed within a fixed limit through segments that are called caesurae (*caesum*) and members (*membrum*). Lest these segments roll on longer than good judgment could sustain, reason has established a measure from which the verse should be turned back; from this ‘verse’ (*versus*) itself is named, because it is turned back (*revertere*, ppl. *reversus*). (I.XXXIX.2)

The straightforwardness that Isidore attributes to prose, and the segmented aspect he attributes to verse, are conceptual applications of shape to some of the essential prosodic differences between metrical and unmetrical writing; simultaneously, they reflect the standard shaping of verse and prose on the page, particularly in the ‘turning back’ of the verse ‘members’, which is graphically realised as lineation.

Syntactic, semantic and rhetorical structures also influence our interpretation of a text’s shape, narratively and graphically, breaking texts into chapters, fitts, paragraphs, footnotes, addenda, and so on. The copying of the same textual material at different times and in different places (or just by different people) can result in radically different graphic iterations, a phenomenon evident in the varying *mise-en-*

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<sup>2</sup> Translation from Stephen Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, eds. *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (2006), p. 64. Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Isidore’s *Etymologies* will be from this source.

*page* formulations used by modern editors of *Beowulf*, discussed in Chapter One.

A second competing force in the physical encoding of text encompasses the limitations and possibilities afforded by the material environment. This includes the conditions of the page itself: its dimensions and ruling; the material, whether rock, papyrus, wax, wood, parchment or paper; the quality and affordability or otherwise of the materials. It also includes physical writing conditions: the tools and practices that writers use to encode, which might, for example, make longer or shorter stints possible, necessitate the sharpening of pens, or require collaboration or education of scribes. These material limitations and their *mise-en-page* responses might tell us something about the conditions of production for a particular book or text. We might watch how a scribe navigates holes in low-grade parchment, or we might contrast the value of particularly large folios cut from calf's vellum.

Thirdly, the anticipated needs of the designated readership will influence the encoding of the page, both at the level of an individual text's purpose for a certain audience, and at a broader level of the graphic cues required to facilitate reading in a given milieu. We can see this element at work in highly localised design choices; for example, the large amount of parchment space dedicated to high-quality religious images in Junius 11 points to a different kind of audience and usage than the religious texts anthologised at the start of the Exeter Book.<sup>3</sup> The needs of an audience inform much of the scholarly work critical to this thesis: as discussed in Chapter One, O'Brien O'Keeffe's *Visible Song* posits a correlation between the quantity of such graphic cues as pointing, lineation and capitals, and the degree to

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<sup>3</sup> On the illustration of Junius 11, see Joyce Hill, 'Confronting *Germania Latina*: Changing Responses to Old English Biblical Verse', in ed. R. M. Liuzza, *The Poems of MS Junius 11: Basic Readings* (2002), 2-19, p. 3.

which anticipated readers engage with texts in literate rather than oral modes. Paul Saenger's account of the development of inter-word spacing in medieval texts rests in part upon the idea that ancient readers, preparing texts for oral recitation, would consume them slowly, while the late antique development of spacing and punctuation facilitates autonomy and faster reading in a society more focused on academic literacy and the consumption of more volumes of material by more readers.<sup>4</sup> Luigi Battezzato, disagreeing with Saenger's interpretation, suggests that changes in the *mise-en-page* of ancient Greek texts show a desire to aid swift and silent reading long before the medieval period.<sup>5</sup>

These collective forces are responsive both to the individual predilections of scribes, and to conditions common to particular periods of time and geography. When scribes came to encode Old English verse texts *en masse* in the tenth century, trends and protocols already existed which had informed the writing of Latin poetry for hundreds of years, from the framing of the metrical line, to processes of ruling and the manufacture of ink, to assumptions about status of readership. The *mise-en-page* of Old English verse cannot be read in isolation from such contemporary practices; it should be compared with the layout of Latin verse, exposing correspondences and divergences of approach to each language's verse shape, material possibilities, and audience. Certainly, we ought not to interpret the statement that Old English verse was 'laid out like prose' as meaning that this verse essentially had a 'neutral' or absent layout: it is subject to these forces, and therefore to analysis, like any other form of *mise-en-page*.

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<sup>4</sup> Saenger, pp. 11, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Luigi Battezzato, 'Techniques of Reading and Textual Layout in Ancient Greek Texts', *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 55 (2009), 1-23, esp. pp. 5-6, 8-13.

The modern editing of Old English into a lineated format presents a problematic approach to the relationship between Latin and vernacular models. Such reformatting proposes the supremacy of a particular page layout with its roots in Latinate poetry, while failing to assess the real process of exchange between the encoding of Latin and vernacular verse critically. The warnings of the previous chapter on the uncritical or opaque application of Latin models to Old English writing is not meant to dissuade us from thinking about the influence such models might have had in the medieval scriptorium. Indeed, if we are to approach a theory of the way Old English verse is being laid out in the tenth century, we need to understand the way that scribes already conceived of the relationship between verse and *mise-en-page*, and the relationship between Latin and Old English verse. The Latin verse record significantly pre-dates the writing of Old English verse in manuscripts and continues to be written throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. While the Old English verse text of *Caedmon's Hymn* can be found inserted as marginal or peripheral material in the earliest manuscripts of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* from the eighth century, it is not until significantly later that Old English verse is preserved as part of a page's main text, in a context where it stands alone or as an independent unit, rather than as a gloss to Latin prose material.<sup>6</sup> Early Latin verse texts, then, form the best baseline from which to assess the later appearance of Old English verse, by identifying those *mise-en-page* elements that are either adopted or discarded by scribes. This is not a straightforward comparison, for the presentation of Latin verse between the sixth and tenth centuries is far from homogeneous. However, by understanding the material and cultural conditions that effected changes in Anglo-Latin *mise-en-page*, we may come to a more sophisticated

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<sup>6</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, pp. 24-35, esp. pp. 24-28, 32-35.

understanding of its relationship to the page- design of Old English texts, and in particular, the decision not to lineate.

In this chapter, I will survey the history of *mise-en-page* in Anglo-Latin manuscripts, seeking to identify a history of development in the use of lineation and other page design features in the presentation of metrical lines, beginning with the early history of the verse line in relation to the Greek and Latin poetry of classical and late antiquity. This history will then act as a control, against which to appraise the features of Old English verse layout. Previous proposals made by scholars on lineation in this period will be addressed, in particular O'Brien O'Keefe's work on the changing format of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* in the eighth century, and Rosemary Huisman on the appearance of lineated vernacular verse after the conquest. In *Visible Song*, O'Brien O'Keefe proposes that the gradual adoption in Latin verse texts of graphic cues that delineate metrical structure (including lineation, but focusing on pointing) was an element of the 'transitional literacy' which was discussed in Chapter One.<sup>7</sup> The use of graphic cues in Latin verse texts, she proposes, 'points to an awareness that Latin required extralinguistic cues to help the reader work through the verse'.<sup>8</sup> She substantiates her comments through a study of the eighth-century manuscripts containing Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*; however, it will be shown that these manuscripts are not, in isolation, a particularly suitable sample set. This chapter will conduct a more comprehensive review of the manuscripts produced and owned in Anglo-Saxon England up until the end of the ninth century, to identify the rationale behind the change in *mise-en-page* trends, and the environment from which early Old English writing emerges.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. ix-x, 143.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

My historical approach will provide the necessary context in which to present the results of the new sample set, and will highlight those issues which have not been sufficiently treated by existing studies. Case-studies from the sample set will illustrate hypotheses for the development of lineated *mise-en-page*.

### **Latin verse on the page: classical and late antiquity**

The blank space surrounding a poem is a sign. The first thing it represents is the poetical nature of the black print that it surrounds: it is a frame saying ‘this is poetry.’ Thus it constitutes a buffer between the poem and the rest of the world.<sup>9</sup>

Van Dijk’s reading of the *mise-en-page* of modern verse posits an intrinsic otherness to texts ‘laid out like poetry’. The framing blank space is clearly conceived of in symbolic rather than purely material terms: it is a ‘sign’, a ‘buffer’, something that removes the contained text from the organically laid-out category of prose, which simply fills the space into which it is poured. Consequently, the frame sets the poetry at odds with the material conditions of the page, couching it within an artificial blankness, alerting the reader’s senses to the otherness of what she is seeing.

This sort of remodelling of the page to create a sense of artifice, this disassociation of material and literary processes from one another, is far removed from the role of the verse line in classical antiquity. The fifth century BC saw the development of a book trade in Greece, with text encoded as one or more columns

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<sup>9</sup> Yra Van Dijk, ‘Reading the form: the function of typographic blanks in modern poetry’, *Word & Image* 27 (2011), 407-15, p. 411.

(*selis*, or plural *selides*) on rolls of papyrus.<sup>10</sup> The Derveni Papyrus, containing a mixture of religious teaching and literary commentary, is possibly the oldest surviving Greek papyrus text, dating from the second half of the fourth century BC.<sup>11</sup> While William Johnson and Frederic Kenyon cite the average width of a papyrus column-line as 15 to 25 characters or 18 to 25 characters respectively, the text of the Deveni Papyrus is wider, averaging 30-45 characters per line (there is no inter-word spacing in ancient Greek writing).<sup>12</sup> This can be explained by looking to the use of verse lines, for according to Kouremenos, the line-width of this particular papyrus is ‘determined by the length of the quoted hexameters which take up only one line each’; Battezzato suggests that this hexameter-determined line-width is a feature of early practice, while the adoption of shorter lines of the 15-25 character type, is adopted later as an aid for readers.<sup>13</sup> He goes on to argue that the length of the hexameter line continues to be an important structure in the *mise-en-page* of the roll, and an instrument of critical economic value. The practice of *stichometry*, where a text is counted by number of lines (or *stichoi*), was an important element of the book trade, with one of its uses being the calculation of the price of a book.<sup>14</sup> Battezzato, surveying a number of works on stichometry, concludes that ‘quite consistent’

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<sup>10</sup> L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 4th ed. (2013), p. 2; Leila Avrin, *Scribes, Script, and Books: The Book Arts from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (1991), pp. 142, 147; David Diringer, *The Book Before Printing: Ancient, Medieval and Oriental* (1982), p. 135; Herwig Maehler, ‘books, Greek and Roman’, in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, eds. Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (2014), Web. Accessed 4 December 2017 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198706779.001.0001/acref-9780198706779-e-107>>.

<sup>11</sup> Kyriakos Tsantsanoglou, ‘Introduction to the Text’, in *The Derveni Papyrus: An Interdisciplinary Research Project*, eds. Leonard Muellner, G. Nagy, and Ioanna Papadopoulou. Web. Accessed 30 November 2017 <<https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5418>>.

<sup>12</sup> William A. Johnson, ‘Toward a sociology of reading in classical antiquity’, *American Journal of Philology* 121 (2000), 593-627, p. 611; Frederic G. Kenyon, *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome*, 2nd ed. (1951), pp. 58-59; Battezzato, pp. 3, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Theokritos Kouremenos, George M. Parássoglou and Kyriakos Tsantsanoglou, eds. *The Derveni Papyrus* (2006), p. 8; see also Battezzato, pp. 8-10.

<sup>14</sup> Battezzato, pp. 8-10.

evidence puts the average length of a *stichos* at 34-38 characters, or 15- 16 syllables, which is the approximate length of a hexameter verse.<sup>15</sup> Even in later papyrus rolls, where narrower columns cannot accommodate this length of line, Battezzato provides examples of scribes tailoring *stichos* notation to identify the number of *stichoi* in a text (i.e. where the width of a roll-line is half a *stichos*, the 100 *stichoi* mark comes after 200 roll-lines).<sup>16</sup> The hexameter line thus becomes a standard ‘economic unit of measurement’.<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, stichometry ‘was taken up in Alexandrian editions ... and transmitted from them through Roman times to Medieval Greek manuscripts’.<sup>18</sup>

Different critics and historians have taken different perspectives on how readers would have interacted with these lines. Huisman points out that the graphic line of the roll is related to ‘the longest metrical unit used when speaking poetry’, and Saenger approaches antique literature as something that was designed to be read aloud; Huisman’s focus on the early ‘aurality’ of the verse line perhaps best suits her theory of diminishing aurality and changing scribal conventions in early medieval Ireland.<sup>19</sup> Battezzato, on the other hand, sees the diminishing widths of roll-lines after the Derveni Papyrus as indicative of readers’ desire to engage with texts swiftly and even silently during antiquity.<sup>20</sup> Regardless, the metrical verse line is clearly integral to the material life of the text: the hexameter determines the widths of columns in early texts like the Derveni Papyrus; when the pressures of meeting

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 8; Huisman, p. 108. Huisman also presents a brief overview of the development of lineation in the West as part of her account of changing *mise-en-page* in the Anglo-Norman period, but her conclusions differ from mine, centring more on engagement with O’Brien O’Keeffe’s theory of ‘transitional literacy’; Huisman herself posits ‘loss or even absence of orality’ as a trigger for early medieval *mise-en-page* change (p. 110).

<sup>16</sup> Battezzato, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Huisman, p. 108.

<sup>18</sup> Battezzato, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Huisman, pp. 108-10; Saenger, p. 11; Battezzato, pp. 5-6.

<sup>20</sup> Battezzato, pp. 6-13.

readers' visual needs changes this *mise-en-page* element, the hexameter continues to be marked on the page in *stichoi*, becoming a unit in the economy of book production. And it is, as Battezzato rightly observes, 'striking that the first books adopted that format also for prose texts'.<sup>21</sup> Note that not all ancient poetic texts were lineated, with pre-Hellenistic lyric metres laid out indistinguishably from prose.<sup>22</sup>

By the late second century BC, scribes were making use of *mise-en-page* features to delineate not only Latin verse, but particular types of Latin verse; this was based upon the use of two different stances of the metrical line in relation to the lefthand rule: *eisthesis*, in which the metrical line is indented; and *ekthesis*, in which it is aligned with the rule.<sup>23</sup> Parkes identifies 'three basic layouts' of verse, in all of which each metrical line corresponds with a discrete line on the page: hexameter verse lines are all presented in *ekthesis*; in elegiac verse the hexameter maintains this form, with the alternating pentameters in *eisthesis*; for lyric verse, the first line of each stanza is presented in *ekthesis*, and the remainder are in *eisthesis*.<sup>24</sup> Indentation of this kind is used neither in Greek papyri nor in early Greek texts, and so represents further development in the relationship between metrical lines and page organisation.<sup>25</sup> This development is of the same symbolic ilk that Van Dijk identifies in the modern 'blank' frame, for the indentation is an organisational sign intended to distinguish the metrical line from the standard of the prosaic page, where before the metrical line had been a defining element of that organisation. This set of layouts

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Reynolds and Wilson, pp. 4-5; Huisman, p. 108.

<sup>23</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 97; on dating of earliest indentation of pentameters, see Johanna Haninck, 'The Epitaph for Atthis: a Late Hellenistic Poem on Stone', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 130 (2010), 15-34, p. 22; Haninck directs us to Sterling Dow, 'Corinthia VI: the Latin elegiacs of ca. 101 B.C. VII. Greek elegiacs of the Roman Empire', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 60 (1951), 81-100, pp. 86-87.

<sup>24</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> R. D. Anderson, P. J. Parsons and R. G. M. Nisbet, 'Elegiacs by Gallus from Qaṣr Ibrîm', *The Journal of Roman Studies* 69 (1979), 125-55, p. 130.

was adopted by practitioners of book-production in late antique Western Europe.<sup>26</sup>

And yet, early Anglo-Saxon manuscripts containing Latin are not consistently lineated; this is something O'Brien O'Keefe mentions before examining the presentation of Latin verse in copies of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>27</sup> There is no obvious explanation as to why the lineation observed by Parkes in the transmitted classical texts of late antique Italy should disappear when the texts are copied in England during the early Anglo-Saxon period. This problem calls to mind Julian Brown's interest in the disconnect between the decoration and scripts employed in early English and Irish manuscripts, and those employed in contemporary continental manuscripts:

the character of the oldest surviving Insular books was determined by the cultural dependence of the Irish Church in the fifth and sixth centuries on a British Church which was 'provincial' even before the withdrawal of the Roman civil and military administration after AD 410, and which apparently lost touch with Rome between 454 [...] and 457.<sup>28</sup>

The influence of continental manuscripts was not absent in Brown's culturally isolated Britain, but nevertheless, it developed unique traits of book-decoration.<sup>29</sup> A survey of manuscripts containing Latin verse texts, written outside of England and subsequently imported into Britain before the end of the ninth century, may give

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<sup>26</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 97.

<sup>27</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Julian Brown, 'The oldest Irish manuscripts and their late antique background', in *Irland und Europa: die Kirche im Frühmittelalter*, eds. Michael Richter and Próinséas Ní Chatháin (1984), 311-27, p. 311.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

some sense of the *mise-en-page* models that early Anglo-Saxon scribes could have laid eyes on. From Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge's *Bibliographical Handlist*, three such manuscripts have been identified by this present study, which increases to five if we include two manuscripts which were produced before the ninth century, but the date of their entry into England is unknown.<sup>30</sup> Of these, the two earliest texts are the Codex Fuldensis (produced in South Italy before 547), which shows some attention to lineation, fully discussed below, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, e Mus. 66 (written in Northern Italy or France, during either the sixth or the seventh century).<sup>31</sup> This latter text of dactylic hexameters by Arator survives only as an imprint on the glue of the boards binding Oxford, Bodleian Library, e Mus. 66, where it once formed the hidden side of a now-removed pastedown.<sup>32</sup> The imprint shows that the Arator text is unlineated. CCCC 304, written in the eighth century in Italy, contains excerpts from Isidore's *Versus in Bibliotheca*, and Iuvenius' *Evangelia*.<sup>33</sup> These verse texts are presented in a variety of ways. The opening part of the Isidore text is presented as coloured display capitals within decorative frames. The scribe's approach to word-division varies, between clear presence of interword-spacing (as found on fol. 1r) and *scriptio continua* (as on fol. 1v):

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<sup>30</sup> These are: CCCC 304; Fulda, Hessische Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, Bonifatianus 1 (the 'Codex Fuldensis'); Fulda, Hessische Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, Bonifatianus 3. The two manuscripts of uncertain provenance are Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Grimm 132, 1 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, e Mus. 66 (offsets). Gneuss and Lapidge, pp. 102, 592-94, 565-66, 475-76.

<sup>31</sup> For analysis of layout in the Codex Fuldensis, see below, especially pp. 104-05; Gneuss and Lapidge, pp. 592, 475.

<sup>32</sup> Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Marilina Cesario, 'Handling Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts', in *Working with Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, ed. Gale R. Owen-Crocker (2009), 7-27, pp. 17-18; Gernot R. Wieland, 'A survey of Latin manuscripts', in *Working with Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts*, ed. Gale R. Owen-Crocker (2009), 113-157, p. 149.

<sup>33</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 102.

**Image 3: From CCCC 304, fol. 1r**<sup>34</sup>

**Image 4: From CCCC 304, fol. 1v**

His approach to lineation varies too, presenting an inconsistent treatment of the verse line, but persistent attention to the relationship between sectional divisions and line-breaks. On fol. 1r, the scribe clearly separates lines 1 and 2 of the *Versus in Bibliotheca* (which form half of *Carmina 1*), starting each metrical line on a new manuscript line, and running each metrical line over four manuscript lines to fit within the key-hole shaped frame.<sup>35</sup> The first two lines of fol. 1v, which form *Carmina 2*, are not distinguished by lineation: metrical breaks are signalled by subtle

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<sup>34</sup> Images 3-4 obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

<sup>35</sup> Division of the text into the different *Carmina* discussed throughout this section is derived from 'Isidorus Hispalensis *carmina 1*', eds. Paolo Mastandrea, Raffaele Perrelli, Gilberto Biondi, Lorianò Zurli, Valeria Viparelli, *Musisque Deoque: A Digital Archive of Latin Poetry* (2007), Web. Accessed 12 February 2018 <[www.mqdq.it/public/testo/testo/ordinata/of2164103/query/a#mark](http://www.mqdq.it/public/testo/testo/ordinata/of2164103/query/a#mark)>.

semi-colon-like marks amidst the text, a system which continues over the next few folios. Across the remainder of fol. 1v and the first half of fol. 2r (*Carmina* 3), the disconnect between metrical breaks and manuscript line-breaks appears to continue, except that halfway down fol. 1v, the second of every two metrical lines falls at a manuscript line-break ('rui' at manuscript line 8, and 'viros' at manuscript line 11). This might well be accidental, but halfway down folio 2r, where the scribe shifts to *Carmina* 4, such a system of organisation seems to begin in earnest, with 'premunt' (manuscript line 8) and 'suum' (manuscript line 10) followed by subtle punctuation, but also blank space and the same ornamental 's' shape used to signal the end of lines on fol. 1r, before breaking to a new line. This system continues at the top of fol. 2v. These two clearly demarcated distichs at the bottom of fol. 2r and top of fol. 2v are *Carmina* 4 and *Carmina* 5. Although the remainder of the text on fol. 2v appears haphazard, it is the text of *Carmina* 6, of which the final word 'tibi' is aligned with the end of the manuscript page, apparently by design, for the scribe has squeezed the letters more closely together on the final line of that folio. A line-break, an ornamented s-character, and a series of dots between lines on fol. 3r coincides with a shift from *Carmina* 15 to *Carmina* 20. The text of Iuvencus' *Evangelia* begins on fol. 4r; the initial verses on the evangelists are written in the same ornamented capitals as the *Versus in Bibliotheca*, but without decorative frames; the text is not lineated, but breaks to a new manuscript lines for each evangelist's section, with subsequent lines then running on like a paragraph of prose. After the *Praefatio*, the scribe switches to a non-ornamented uncial script, which is unlineated; metrical lines are generally demarcated through a combination of punctuation (semi-colons) and accentuated capital letters.<sup>36</sup> The manuscript, then, shows an inconsistent approach to

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<sup>36</sup> On uncial style in scripts, see Michelle P. Brown, *A Guide to Western Historical Scripts from*

lineation: the scribe uses punctuation and line- breaks as visual markers of metrical and sectional division, but the alignment of metrical line-ends and visual line-breaks remains more a marker of sectional than metrical division.

Lines on the evangelists, from the *Praefatio* to Iuvencus' *Evangelia*, are preserved on folios 19r, 33r and 51r of Fulda, Hessische Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, Bonifatianus 3, inscribed in the blank space preceding portraits of Mark, Luke and John, and were written in Ireland in the eighth century.<sup>37</sup> These begin each metrical line afresh on a new manuscript line, but make no attempt to contain the metrical period within the manuscript line. Indeed, this text appears to have been dashed out in a hurry: the script is far larger than the hand used elsewhere in the book, with a wide horizontal aspect and poorly-formed letters suggestive of less physical control of the pen. The verses are disorganised, with lines on Luke and Mark preceding their images, lines on Matthew, Luke and Mark preceding the image of John, and no lines preceding the image of Matthew; they are not being presented in an idealised format for a future reader, but rather have the appearance of usage notes. Finally, the copy of Bede's *Vita S. Cuthberti* preserved in an eighth-century manuscript, possibly of Fulda and now held in Berlin, is discretely lineated like modern verse.<sup>38</sup>

This very limited corpus leaves a sense of uncertainty about the models being transported into England prior to the tenth century, and doesn't fit with the

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*Antiquity to 1600* (1990) pp. 24-29, 50-51.

<sup>37</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 593.

<sup>38</sup> Image from Tilo Brandis, et al., *Zimelien: Abendländische Handschriften des Mittelalters aus den Sammlungen der Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz Berlin* (Wiesbaden: L. Reichert, 1975), p. 25. Text from 'Vita metrica S. Cuthberti', Phillip Roelli, ed., *Corpus Cōrporum: repositorium operum Latinorum apud universitatem Turicensem*, Universität Zürich. Web. Accessed 12 September 2018 <[www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/verzeichnis4.php?tabelle=Beda\\_cps2&id=Beda\\_cps2,%20Vita%20metrica%20S.%20Cuthberti,%20%20%20%20%20p1&level=4&nummer=&corpus=2&step=&lang=0](http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/verzeichnis4.php?tabelle=Beda_cps2&id=Beda_cps2,%20Vita%20metrica%20S.%20Cuthberti,%20%20%20%20%20p1&level=4&nummer=&corpus=2&step=&lang=0)>.

continental standards of lineation laid out by Parkes. Such influence will, then, have to be taken on a manuscript-by-manuscript basis on the likelihood of localised impact; we are unable to make broad hypotheses on the impact of, say, ‘Italian models’ or ‘Irish models’.

### **Latin verse in early Anglo-Saxon England: identifying sample sets**

In the second chapter of *Visible Song*, O’Brien O’Keeffe establishes a timeline for the development of graphic cues used to demarcate the metrical period in Latin verse texts. ‘From the eighth century on, Latin poetry in England was copied in lines of verse’, she writes, implying that prior to this period, Latin verse was unlineated.<sup>39</sup> Afterwards, the ‘old’ style of merely pointing between verses gave way to the ‘new’ style of assigning each metrical line to a discrete manuscript line (she uses the Damasus and Sedulius texts of CCC 173, and Aldhelm’s *Aenigmata* of St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. I. 15, respectively, as examples, although Gneuss and Lapidge date both of these manuscripts to the second half of the eighth century).<sup>40</sup> By the tenth century, Latin poetry is ‘consistently formatted in lines of verse’.<sup>41</sup> However, despite this introduction, lineation is not really O’Brien O’Keeffe’s focus; she is interested primarily in the extent to which scribes visually signal the metrical structure of verse, with a view to developing an assessment of pointing and other punctuation through the Anglo-Saxon period.

This objective is reflected in her choice of case study: a comparison of poetic layout in manuscripts containing Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* from the eighth and

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<sup>39</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 26.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26 n. 9.

tenth centuries. The selection seems reasonable: there are a number of verse compositions in each manuscript, and by looking at the different way these compositions are displayed over time she aims to trace changing trends in the use of graphic cues. However, there are problems with treating the history of lineation through a study of the eighth-century iterations of the *Historia ecclesiastica* alone. Of the five surviving manuscripts from the eighth century, three are laid out with two columns of text per page (London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A. xiv, London, BL, Cotton Tiberius C. ii and St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. I. 18), while the remaining two are laid out with a single block of text per page (Cambridge, CUL, Kk. 5. 16 and Kassel, Gesamthochschulbibliothek, 4° MS.theol. 2). For those manuscripts with folios ruled in columns, the *mise-en-page* makes it impossible to write a full metrical line on a single manuscript line, presenting a challenge for the layout of verse sections. Furthermore, the verse selections in the *Historia ecclesiastica* are generally brief, and embedded in the prose text rather than standing as independent textual units: the longest verse section, at 54 lines, is the alphabetic acrostic ‘Alma Deus Trinitas’ (IV.20) on the virginity of Æthelthryth, which directly follows an account of her life. In these *mise-en-page* circumstances, the layout of the occasional poetry is at risk of being subsumed within that of the main prose. The *Historia ecclesiastica* manuscripts, therefore, are not necessarily going to represent standard contemporary patterns of verse layout. They remain both useful and interesting to a study of the development of lineation in the period, but they cannot in isolation direct the conclusions of that study. They must rather be considered alongside a wider corpus of manuscripts containing Latin verse from the period. A wider corpus would also make for a broader chronological sweep: O’Brien O’Keefe’s sample set does not contain any ninth-century texts, which means that the

supposed crystallization period for lineated formatting (between an eighth century of presentational fluidity and a tenth century of consistent lineation) is absent from our bank of evidence. Furthermore, the difficulty of working with such a small sample set sometimes becomes apparent, as when O'Brien O'Keeffe states a preference for Parkes' pre-737 dating of St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. I. 18 (the 'Leningrad Bede'), which then becomes a model of 'early development of graphic conventions'; Gneuss and Lapidge date the manuscript to the second half of the eighth century.<sup>42</sup> With only five manuscripts in the sample set, this difficult dating decision is overly impactful. O'Brien O'Keeffe explicitly ties up *mise-en-page* into her transitional theory, writing that '[a]s information in a text shifts from purely linguistic to partially visual', verse arrangement (e.g. the use of lineation) becomes 'increasingly conventional'.<sup>43</sup> This implies that pre-existing forms of verse arrangement are not 'conventional', that they are, in a sense, non-arrangements; this is the same assumption behind the opaque re-editing of Old English verse into lines. Despite these limitations, O'Brien O'Keeffe's section on the *Historia ecclesiastica* comes to some interesting and useful conclusions, and these manuscripts will form part of this chapter's enlarged dataset.

Other critical accounts of the shift from unlineated to lineated formatting for Latin verse in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts are sparse. Malcolm Parkes addresses the influence which the formatting of psalms had upon western punctuation; he draws attention to a shift in their presentation, from *per cola et commata* in early copies (including Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1, known as the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp. 27-28; Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Orality and the Developing Text of Caedmon's Hymn', in ed. R. M. Liuzza, *Old English Literature: Critical Essays* (2002), 79-102, pp. 81-82; Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 607.

<sup>43</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 26-27.

‘Codex Amiatinus’, copied before 716) to the application of a semi-lineated formatting ‘when the Psalms became more widely recognized as non-metrical verse’ (his example is London, BL, Cotton Vespasian A. i, copied during the first half of the eighth century).<sup>44</sup> Mary Franklin-Brown rejects the notion that the lineation of hexameters is a reflection of decreasing scribal familiarity with Latin quantity and prosody, positing instead a desire on the part of scribes ‘to adhere to some vestige of classical tradition’ in the design of the page.<sup>45</sup>

### *New approach*

For these reasons, this chapter will assess a new, wider sample set, consisting of all manuscripts containing Latin non-liturgical verse, written or owned in England during the eighth and ninth centuries. The exclusion of liturgical material is necessary because of the distinct tradition for layout of psalm materials as discussed by Parkes above, and the potential for different layouts to apply to texts that have musical accompaniment.<sup>46</sup> The inclusion of manuscripts owned in the period, though written earlier, is crucial to considering the influence of foreign manuscripts that entered England; these manuscripts are frequently written at least a century prior to their known provenance in England, and while they may have influenced the *mise-en-page* choices made by Anglo-Saxon scribes, it is also possible that scribes were aware that the manuscripts and their style were old. Therefore, the geographical origins of all manuscripts in the sample set have been recorded in Table 3, alongside the composition date of the Latin verse material.

The manuscripts of the new sample set were to be assessed for the standards

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<sup>44</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 103-104, 178-79, 234-35.

<sup>45</sup> Franklin-Brown, p. 234.

<sup>46</sup> See also Parkes’ comments on layout of material for singing, Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 103-05.

of lineation applied to their Latin verse texts; I devised five groups for the purposes of classification: A, B, C, D, and E. No hierarchy of value ought to be attributed to this taxonomy, but a sliding scale from one pole to another was necessary to show the possibility of movement (in either direction) between ‘neighbouring’ standards of lineation (and also the potential for overlap or intermediate states). The different grades are illustrated by the first three lines of ‘Alma Deus trinitas’ from Liber IV of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* in Table 2, below, and can be defined as follows:

Grade A is the correspondence of a single metrical line with a single manuscript line. Regardless of how many graphic cues are used to demarcate the line (for example, *litterae notabilior* or line-end punctuation), it remains Grade A. Grade B lineation begins each new metrical line on a new manuscript line; however, unlike Grade A lineation, the metrical lines frequently or always run over onto a new manuscript line (or lines). The break between these manuscript lines falls at a *metrically meaningful position*, likely a caesura, or else is *strongly graphically defined* (for example, if the second manuscript line is written in *eisthesis*, or if the break is determined by a consistent aesthetic principle rather than simply being defined by page or column width. Grade C lineation is like Grade B, but the line break neither falls at a metrically meaningful position, nor is the break graphically emphasised, being rather a function of fitting the metrical text into the allocated writing space. Grade D lineation has no consistent correspondence of metrical and manuscript lines, and is written in blocks ‘like prose’; however, metrical lines *are* demarcated as entities through other graphic signs, such as punctuation, colouring, or special characters (i.e. those which are larger, capitalized, or in a different script). These signs do not have to be absolutely consistent (there will be variance within each of these grades). Grade E is like Grade D, but the metrical lines are not

distinguished by graphic signs to a greater degree than a prose text (so where a metrical line corresponds with a sentence or other semantic unit which might merit graphic distinction in a prose text, such as an initial capital or concluding punctus, it may demonstrate these features).

Internal groupings, for ease of reference and to identify similarities, are as follows: Grade A is ‘fully lineated’, Grades B and C are ‘semi-lineated’, while Grades D and E are ‘unlineated’. The taxonomy allows us to group comparable systems of organisation, between a completely lineated layout and a layout that makes no visual reference to metrical lines.

**Table 2: A grading system for verse lineation in medieval manuscripts**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Illustration</b>
A	<p>Alma Deus Trinitas, quae secula cuncta gubemas,  <b>Ad</b>nue jam coeptis, alma Deus Trinitas.</p>
B	<p>Alma Deus Trinitas,                quae secula cuncta gubemas,  <b>Ad</b>nue jam coeptis,                alma Deus Trinitas.</p>
C	<p>Alma Deus Trinitas,                quae secula cunc                ta gubemas,  <b>Ad</b>nue jam coeptis</p>

D	Alma Deus Trinitas, quae secula cuncta gubemas;; Adnue jam coeptis, alma Deus Trinitas;; <b>Bella Maro</b> resonet, nos pacis dona canamus;;
E	Alma Deus Trinitas, quae secula cuncta gubemas, adnue jam coeptis, alma Deus Trinitas, bella Maro resonet, nos pacis dona canamus

### *Identifying a sample set*

The parameters of the new manuscript sample set are defined by a group of characteristics, all of which must apply to at least one text in the manuscript. The text or texts:

- must have been written in Anglo-Saxon England, OR have been written abroad into manuscripts or manuscript fragments which were subsequently owned in Anglo-Saxon England
- must be Latin verse
- must not be hymns, psalms, or for other liturgical use

The identification of the set was carried out via two key reference guides:

*Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, edited by Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge; *Poetria Nova: A CD-ROM of Latin Medieval Poetry*,

650-1250 A. D., edited by Paolo Mastandrea and Luigi Tessarolo.<sup>47</sup>

The final set comprised a total of 458 texts in 202 manuscripts. For this study, only those manuscripts written or owned in England up until the end of the ninth century were required, producing a much smaller set of twenty-five manuscripts. This chapter has so far investigated those manuscripts either held in England, or accessible via electronic resources, printed facsimiles or written descriptions.

### **Basic results from the sample set**

The twenty-five manuscripts were classified according to three features: their dating; their contents; their geographical origins (including provenance in England, where relevant).<sup>48</sup> The manuscripts of the *Historia ecclesiastica* are graded separately in Table 4, below.

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<sup>47</sup> Paolo Mastandrea and Luigi Tessarolo, eds. *Poetria Nova. Latin Medieval Poetry (650-1250 A.D.). With a Gateway to Classical and Late Antiquity Texts*. (2001) [CD-ROM]. It is likely that a vast majority, but not the entirety of this corpus has been successfully gathered. Given the far more significant survival rates of manuscripts written or owned in England from the tenth century onwards, it is unlikely that manuscripts as yet undiscovered by the database will impact significantly upon the material in the chapter, which only focuses upon poetry written or owned in England prior to the tenth century.

<sup>48</sup> Images from the majority of these manuscripts can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 3: Lineation grade of verse texts in manuscripts written or owned in England before the end of the ninth century, excluding the *Historia ecclesiastica*<sup>49</sup>**

Shelfmark	Date of writing	Origins	Title	Grade <sup>50</sup>
Fulda, Hessische Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, Bonifatianus 1	vi <sup>1</sup> (before 546 or 547)	S Italy	Damasus, epigram on St. Paul (fols. 503r-v). <sup>51</sup>	B
Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1	s. vii ex. or viii in. (before 716)	Monwearmouth-Jarrow	Dedicatory verse (fol. 1v)	B
			Titulus (fol. 4r)	A
Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal.	viii in.	Northumbria	Paulinus of Nola, <i>Carmina Natalitia</i> <sup>52</sup>	E (/D)

<sup>49</sup> 'Date of writing' information taken from Gneuss and Lapidge.

<sup>50</sup> Where multiple grades are separated by commas, this indicates that the title exhibits different grades of lineation at different points; where an additional grade is provided in brackets, this indicates uncertain grading, and is discussed further in the commentary below.

<sup>51</sup> '(PL 13 0378B) CARMEN VII. De S. Paulo apostolo', *Corpus Córporum*. Web. Accessed 24 December 2017 <[www.mlal.uzh.ch](http://www.mlal.uzh.ch)>; for the text marked up metrically, see 'DAMASI – EPIGRAMMATA', in ed. Giuseppe Frappa, *Voci dal mondo antico*. Web. Accessed 24 December 2017 <[http://www.poesialatina.it/\\_ns/Testi/Damas/Epigr.htm](http://www.poesialatina.it/_ns/Testi/Damas/Epigr.htm)>.

<sup>52</sup> 'Paulinus Nolanus *carmina* 15', *Musisque Deoque*. Web. Accessed 25 December 2017

lat. 235, fols. 4-29				
St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. XIV. 1	viii <sup>1</sup>	Northumbria (Lindisfarne?)	<i>Carmina</i> <i>Natalitia</i>	E, D
St Paul in Carinthia, Stiftsbibliothek, 2 <sup>1</sup> (25. 2. 16)	viii <sup>2/3</sup>	Unknown	Poem (SK 3536)	N/A <sup>53</sup>
CCCC 304	viii <sup>1</sup>	Italy	Excerpts from <i>Versus in Bibliotheca</i> <sup>54</sup>	B, C, D
			<i>Euangelia</i> <sup>55</sup>	D

<[www.mqdq.it/public/testo/testo?codice=PAVL\\_NOL%7Ccarm%7C015](http://www.mqdq.it/public/testo/testo?codice=PAVL_NOL%7Ccarm%7C015)>.

<sup>53</sup> Not readable. See Appendix A, Image 37.

<sup>54</sup> 'Isidorus Hispalensis *carmina* 1', *Musisque Deoque*. Web. Accessed 26 August 2018

<<http://www.mqdq.it/texts/SISEB|hymn|001>>.

<sup>55</sup> 'Patrologia Latina: Aquilinus Iuvenius, Historia evangelica', *Corpus Córporum*. Web. Accessed 25 December 107

<[http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/xanfang.php?tabelle=Aquilinus\\_Iuvenius\\_cps2&corpus=2&allow\\_download=0&lang=0](http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/xanfang.php?tabelle=Aquilinus_Iuvenius_cps2&corpus=2&allow_download=0&lang=0)>.

Fulda, Hessische Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, Bonifatianus 3	viii <sup>1</sup> or viii <sup>2</sup>	Ireland	Verses on the gospels (Iuvencus) 19r, 33r, 51r.	C
Miskolc, Lévy József Library, s.n.	Viii	S England	Aldhelm, <i>Enigmata</i>	A
CCCC 173 fols. 57-83	viii <sup>2</sup>	S England	Epigram on St Paul (fols. 81r-81v)	D
			<i>Carmen Paschale</i> (fols. 59r-79v) <sup>56</sup>	D
			Sedulius <i>hymni</i> 1 (81v-82v)	C
St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. I. 15	viii <sup>2</sup>	SW England	Acrostic poem; <i>Aenigmata</i>	A <sup>57</sup>
Gotha, Forschungs- und	viii <sup>ex</sup>	S England or possibly Anglo-	Three poems by	B <sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> 'Patrologia Latina: Coelius Sedulius (fl. 342), Carmen Paschale', *Corpus Corporum*. Web. Accessed 25 2017

<[www.mlal.uzh.ch/MLS/xfromcc.php?tabelle=Coelius\\_Sedulius\\_cps2&rumpfid=Coelius\\_Sedulius\\_cps2,%20Carmen%20Paschale&id=Coelius\\_Sedulius\\_cps2,%20Carmen%20Paschale&corpus=2&lang=0&von=overview\\_by\\_author](http://www.mlal.uzh.ch/MLS/xfromcc.php?tabelle=Coelius_Sedulius_cps2&rumpfid=Coelius_Sedulius_cps2,%20Carmen%20Paschale&id=Coelius_Sedulius_cps2,%20Carmen%20Paschale&corpus=2&lang=0&von=overview_by_author)>.

<sup>57</sup> According to a description in O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Caedmon's Hymn', *Old English Literature*, p. 98 n. 12.

<sup>59</sup> The image from CLA VIII shows an extract of Alcuin's verse identified in Dieter Schaller, Ewald Könsgen, John Tagliabue and Thomas Klein. *Initia carminum Latinorum saeculo undecimo*

Landesbibliothek Mbr. I. 75, ff 1-22		Saxon centre on continent	Alcuin <sup>58</sup>	
London, BL, Harley 2965	viii/ix (or ix <sup>1?</sup> )	Mercia or S England?	<i>Lorica</i> of Laidcenn (fol. 38). <sup>60</sup>	D
Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 195 (187)	ix <sup>in</sup>	S England?	Carmina (66v, 88r-89r, 89r- 89v). <sup>61</sup>	A, A, C
Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 671	ix <sup>1</sup>	SW England, Cornwall or Wales	Two poems addressed to King Alfred (acrostic)	A

*antiquiorum* (Göttingen; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), no. 301, and the text is recorded in Wilhelm Meyer, *Gildae Oratio Rhythmica* (1912), p. 678. Web. Accessed 25 August 2018 <<https://archive.org/details/studiesmedieval02meyer>>. Between the line identified in Schaller et. al., and the apparently hemistich rhyme highlighted by the layout of this verse in Meyer, the manuscript text appears to be lineated at Grade B or higher. See also the layout of an extract from this text in P. Von Moos, 'Gottschalks Gedicht *O mi custos* - eine *confessio*, II', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien Berlin* 5 (1971) 317-58, p. 357. Web. Accessed 25 August 2018 <<http://www.mgh-bibliothek.de/dokumente/z/zsr10026130+0002.pdf>>. Due to the limited information on this manuscript, it has not been further assessed in this chapter.

<sup>58</sup> I was unable to examine the Sedulius verse of this manuscript, including the *Carmen Paschale*, due to the lack of readily available images. An image from the Alcuin poetry can be found in E. A. Lowe, ed., *Codices Latini Antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century. Part VIII, Germany, Altenburg-Leipzig* (1959), no. 1206.

<sup>60</sup> 'Lathcen lorica', *Musisque Deoque*. Web. Accessed 26 December <<http://www.mqdq.it/public/testo/testo/ordinata/pf2180940>>.

<sup>61</sup> Texts of *De ratione animae* and *De fide S. Trinitatis* accessed via 'Patrologia Latina: Alcuinus (730-804)', *Corpus Córporum*. Web. Accessed 25 August 2018 <[http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/xanfang.php?table=Alcuinus\\_cps2&corpus=2&allow\\_download=0&lang=0](http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/xanfang.php?table=Alcuinus_cps2&corpus=2&allow_download=0&lang=0)>.

Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3363	ix <sup>1</sup>	Loire region	Boethius, <i>De consolatione philosophiae</i>	A
London, BL, Cotton Vespasian B. vi, fols. 104-9	805*814	Mercia	Metrical Calendar of York (fols. 4r- v). <sup>62</sup>	A
Cambridge, CUL Ll. 1. 10	820*840	Mercia	Acrostic poem	A
			<i>Lorica</i> of Laidcenn	D
London, BL, Add. 23211	871*899	Wessex	Computistical verses	A
Leiden, Universiteitsbibl iotheek, Voss. lat. Q. 2, fol. 60	ix <sup>ex</sup>	Wales or SW England?	<i>Lorica</i> of Leiden <sup>63</sup>	A
London, BL, Royal 15. A. xvi	ix <sup>4/4</sup> or ix/x	N France or England?	Enigmata	A

<sup>62</sup> Kazutomo Karasawa, *The Old English Metrical Calendar (Menologium)* (2015), pp. 138-45.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas D. Hill, 'Two Notes on the Old Frisian *Fia-Eth*', in *Approaches to Old Frisian Philology, Amsterdamer Beiträge zur Alteren Germanistik Band 49*, eds. Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. et al. (1998), 169-78, p. 172.

			<i>Libri</i>	A
			<i>Evangelorium</i>	
			<i>Quattuor</i> <sup>64</sup>	

**Table 4: Lineation grade of key verse texts of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, in manuscripts written or owned in England before the end of the ninth century<sup>65</sup>**

Shelfmark	Date	Origins	Lineation Grade					
			I.10	II.1	IV.18	V.7	V.8	V.19
Cambridge, CUL Kk. 5. 16	viii c. or after 737	Northumbria	D	D	D	D	D	E
London, BL, Tiberius A. xiv	viii med.	Monkwear mouth- Jarrow	D	C	C	C	C	C
St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. I. 18	viii <sup>2</sup>	Monkwear mouth- Jarrow	D	A	B	C	C	C, D

<sup>64</sup> Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600-899* (1996), pp. 473-74.

<sup>65</sup> 'Date' information taken from Gneuss and Lapidge.

Kassel, Gesamthoch- schulbiblio- thek, 4° MS.theol. 2 (Books IV and V of <i>HE</i> )	viii <sup>2</sup>	Southumbria (Kent?)	N/A	N/A	D	A	A	A
London, BL, Tiberius C. ii <sup>66</sup>	ix <sup>2/4</sup>	S England	-	-	C	C	C	D

Immediately obvious from the sample set is the dearth of pre-eighth-century evidence; indeed, none of the poetic manuscripts is unambiguously datable to this period. The Codex Amiatinus was written in England, at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow prior to 716.<sup>67</sup> Unlike the other early manuscript of the sample set, the Codex Fuldensis, the verse texts of the Codex Amiatinus were produced in England; nevertheless they do not present an unlineated *mise-en-page*, as O'Brien O'Keefe implies is the case for manuscripts of this date.<sup>68</sup> The codex was closely modelled upon a pandect imported from Italy (most likely the Codex Grandior, a copy of the bible made in Italy during the sixth century), from which it presumably derives its approach to verse layout.<sup>69</sup> The Northumbrian manuscript contains two Latin verse

<sup>66</sup> This manuscript has been graded through descriptions given in Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Orality and the Developing Text of Caedmon's *Hymn*', *Speculum* 62 (1987), 1-20, pp. 6-7.

<sup>67</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 589.

<sup>68</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Caedmon's *Hymn*', *Speculum*, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Calvin B. Kendall, ed. and transl., *Bede: On Genesis* (2008), pp. 48-49; Ian Wood, 'Art and

texts, which present their lines in distinct ways (and so have been classified separately in the results, in order of appearance in the manuscript). The first text is a set of dedicatory hexameters.<sup>70</sup> The first part of each verse is presented in *ekthesis*, while the second is in *eisthesis*. This regular graphical signal of the indentation classifies the text at Grade B. The second verse text is an elegiac couplet written above a portrait of a writing man, named in the couplet as ‘Esdra’ (Ezra), although the portrait was likely copied from that of Cassiodorus in the original codex.<sup>71</sup> The two metrical lines are written discretely, one below the other, in a very early example of Grade A lineation. It is worth noting, however, that in contrast to the elegiac verse that Parkes describes in late antique Latin manuscripts, the pentameter verse of the second line is not indented.

The other very early manuscript is the earlier of the two, the Codex Fuldensis, which was written in Italy during the first half of the sixth century; it arrived in Wearmouth-Jarrow during the seventh century or at the start of the eighth.<sup>72</sup> As a model of lineated style early in the period, it might be anticipated that its layout would influence the subsequent writing of verse texts in the region. The text in question is Damasus’ epigram on St Paul: a twenty-eight line poem on folio 503r-v, of which the title and first four lines at the top of 503r, and lines 19b-24 at the top of 503v, are partially or wholly obscured by what appears to be a large burn. Each metrical verse begins with a capital that is larger than the main script, and is placed on a new manuscript line, presented in *ekthesis*. The scribe generally writes

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architecture of western Europe’, in *The New Cambridge Medieval History: Volume 1: c.500-c.700*, ed. Paul Fouracre (2005), 710-734, p. 772.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Manuscripts from the Scriptoria’, St. Peter’s Wearmouth-Jarrow (2013-17), Web. Accessed 12 December 2017 <[www.stpeters-wearmouth.org.uk/Manuscripts.html](http://www.stpeters-wearmouth.org.uk/Manuscripts.html)>.

<sup>71</sup> Kendall, *On Genesis*, p. 49.

<sup>72</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 592.

up to the right-hand ruling line, occasionally writing across it to avoid creating a line-break in the middle of the syllable. At this point, the metrical line breaks to a new manuscript line, which is indented by about the width of the large character used to begin the metrical verse in the line above. The line breaks in these verses are defined by the limitations of the page-dimension, but the run-over lines exhibit regular indentation, and it therefore classifies as a Grade B text.

This framing of metrical structures in these two early manuscripts can be compared firstly with the presentation of other verse texts written in the temporal and geographical region, and secondly with the appearance of the same Damasus text of the Codex Fuldensis in a later manuscript from the sample set, CCCC 173. There are two manuscripts in our sample set with texts written in Northumbria in the early eighth century: St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. XIV. 1 and Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 235, fols. 4-29. In both cases, the verse text is Paulinus of Nola's *Carmina Natalitia*, and both copies classify as unlineated. The Russian manuscript exhibits both Grades D and E lineation: on fol. 2 (Image 5, below) the metrical lines are initially undistinguished by any form of graphic cue. In the second section of the page, beginning, 'Ex surge igitur', metrical lines are demarcated internally within the text block, sometimes by use of capitals or enlarged letters at the start of metrical lines, and more often by colon-like punctuation symbols.

**Image 5: St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. XIV. 1, fol. 2<sup>73</sup>**

In the Vatican manuscript, graphic signals made of dots and slashes are similarly used at line-breaks, but not on a consistent basis. Moreover, the shade of ink used for the graphic signals is browner and paler than that of the main text, and the slashes and dots are frequently squeezed between words placed very closely

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<sup>73</sup> Source: Matti Kilpiö, Leena Kahlas-Tarkka, *Ex Insula Lux: Manuscripts and Hagiographical Material Connected with Medieval England* (2001), Plate 14, p. 90.

together, while large gaps sit between words at positions which do not correlate with metrical line breaks. This evidence indicates that the punctuation may have been added at a later date. This raises the question of how to classify texts where punctuation or other indicators of metrical form are added subsequently to the initial writing of the text. I suggest that, where such phases of writing are identifiable, that the classification be given according to the main hand of the text, as subsequent additions, while providing interesting information about how later readers engaged with the *mise-en-page*, is not indicative of the conditions in which text and *mise-en-page* were encoded, and may furthermore be difficult or impossible to date accurately. Here, then, the *Carmina Natalitia* is likely lineated at Grade E; if the punctuation were provided by the original scribe, it would be lineated at Grade D. Both manuscripts do, therefore, graphically demarcate the metrical period, but, unlike in either the Codex Fuldensis or Codex Amiatinus, neither does so in a way that creates a specially conceived space for verse as an alternative literary form on the page.

The later Damasus text in the composite manuscript of CCCC 173 (fols. 81r-81v) falls within a booklet made up of folios 57-83.<sup>74</sup> This was produced in the South of England in the second half of the eighth century, probably in Kent, and subsequently travelled to both Winchester and Canterbury.<sup>75</sup> The unit contains both prose and verse, and a variety of layouts: the opening letter from Sedulius to Macedonius (fols. 57r-58v) is written across the page, without columns; the remainder of the unit, containing a mixture of prose, verse and hymns, is arranged in

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<sup>74</sup> This and further details on contents, unless otherwise noted, from 'Manuscript Description: 173', *Parker Library on the Web*. Web. Accessed 24 December 2017 <[https://parker-stanford-edu.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/parker/actions/manuscript\\_description\\_long\\_display.do?ms\\_no=173](https://parker-stanford-edu.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/parker/actions/manuscript_description_long_display.do?ms_no=173)>. Since the submission of this thesis, the *Parker Library on the Web* site has been altered.

<sup>75</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 62.

two columns per page.<sup>76</sup> Damasus' epigram is contained within this latter scheme, and so we must take care when comparing it with the single column of verse text in the Codex Fuldensis. In CCCC 173, the metrical lines of the epigram run one after another, and do not break to new manuscript lines to indicate new metrical lines. Metrical structure is sometimes indicated by a concluding medial point, or possibly an extended limb, tail, or other unusual graph-specific feature (for example, see in the final line of Image 6, below, the elongated tongue of the 'e' in 'uitae'). However, such visual signals are not consistently applied, and the same marks may be used for other purposes (e.g. the use of a medial point indicating a sense break between 'rerum' and 'subito', see the first and second lines of Image 6). The poem does therefore make some visual indication of its metrical form, but not in a consistent or methodical way, placing it at the lower end of Class D.

**Image 6: From CCCC 173, fol. 81r<sup>77</sup>**

These texts do not chime with O'Brien O'Keefe's implication of a generally chronological, gradual development of texts from unlineated to lineated style through the eighth century. Instead, the early lineated styles of the codices Fuldensis

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<sup>76</sup> '173: Manuscript Description', *Parker Library on the Web*.

<sup>77</sup> Image obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

and Amiatinus are not adopted in other near-contemporary, locally-written, verse manuscripts; the text of Codex Fuldensis even precedes a later version of the same poem in a less lineated style (though written on the other side of England). A look at the wider results of the sample set further complicates the idea of a chronologically-defined shift. Certainly, there are more Grade D texts in the earlier part of the sample set, and more Grade A texts in the later part; however, Grade D texts appear throughout the eighth century and into the ninth, and the presence of lineated texts at Grades A to C in the seventh and eighth centuries, and the scattering of Grade C semi-lineation throughout, should perhaps warn us that the sample set is on the small side for making a firm chronological generalisation, given the outliers. Without entirely disregarding the idea of chronological movement towards a ninth-century lineated norm, we might first question how elements of these manuscript texts *other* than their relative chronology might interact with the design-functionality of lineated *mise-en-page*. If we can identify specific factors that cause lineation to be adopted by particular eighth-century texts, we might deduce the point at which lineation shifts from serving a particular feature or function to becoming an ubiquitous format for the vast majority of Latin verse texts written in England.

#### *Manuscript origins and lineation*

The sample set is too small and widely spread in both time and geography to demonstrate sufficiently whether particular English centres had established trends in their approach to textual lineation. Even where there are small regional groupings, patterns do not emerge, and regions do not display a particular affinity with a certain grade of lineation. For example, six of the manuscripts were written in Northumbria (three of these at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow). Of these (in chronological order): the

Codex Amiatinus has Grade A and B lineation; the two manuscripts containing Paulinus of Nola's *Carmina Natalitia* are unlineated; the copy of the *Historia ecclesiastica* in Cambridge, CUL Kk. 5. 16 uses D- and E-grade lineation, that of London, BL, Tiberius A. xiv presents its verse in lineation of Grades C and D, while verse in the Leningrad Bede is variously lineated at Grades A, B, C and D.

The influence of foreign origins is much clearer. The earliest two manuscripts to adopt highly lineated styles are either modelled upon a known Italian source (the Codex Amiatinus), or sourced from Italy (the Codex Fuldensis). The appearance of Grade D lineation in one of the later manuscripts of the set, Cambridge, CUL Ll. 1. 10, may be attributable to an Irish exemplar; Michelle Brown observes the scribe switching to just such an exemplar on fol. 37r, where the new text of the Irish prayer takes on Irish 'calligraphic features' and decorative style.<sup>78</sup> These characteristics are carried through the verse *Lorica*. However, the absence of a body of Latin verse surviving from pre-ninth-century Ireland makes this proposition difficult to substantiate.

#### *Order and lineation: acrostic verse*

Neither chronology nor geography offer a comprehensive explanation of the evidence. However, if we turn to consider the form and genre of the particular Latin verse texts that adopt lineated styles in the eighth century, a pattern can be observed: that manuscripts containing texts with a clear functional dependency upon a linear order tend to exhibit higher grades of lineation.

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<sup>78</sup> Michelle Brown, *The Book of Cerne* (1996), pp. 117-18, 154. For more on the *Lorica*, see Juliet Mullins, 'Aldhelm's Choice of Saints for his Prose *De Virginitate*', in *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. Stuart McWilliams (2012), 33-53, pp. 50-51.

Seven of the manuscripts in the sample set contain acrostic texts. St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. I. 15 and London, BL, Royal 15. A. xvi both contain copies of Aldhelm's *Aenigmata*, with the latter manuscript also containing Iuvencus' *Evangelia*.<sup>79</sup> A fully lineated, single-block *mise-en-page* template is applied to the verse of both Aldhelm and Iuvencus in London, BL, Royal 15. A. xvi: in the *Evangelia*, the metrical lines are arranged discretely on the page, one beneath another, with *litterae notabiliores* of various sizes heading up each line, usually with a small gap between the *littera* and the second letter of the initial word. In the *Aenigmata*, the first line of each riddle is treated in this way, while the subsequent lines are indented by the width of the first line's *littera notabilior*, and do not themselves begin with a capital initial. On the first folio of the riddles (fol. 70r), this indentation is filled by a medial horizontal line, punctuated above and below by points, in a shape resembling an obelus (÷). These texts are, then, both fully lineated, but laid out in distinct ways that reflect the form of a series of short verse texts on the one hand, and a long, sustained text on the other. Of particular interest is the acrostic-telestic verse on folio 69v which prefaces the *Aenigmata* and explicitly relies upon the visual functionality achieved by lineation. Both the acrostic and the telestic spell out the line: 'Aldhelmus cecinit millenis versibus odas' ('Aldhelm has sung songs in thousands of verses').<sup>80</sup> The *Evangelia* precedes the *Aenigmata* in the present manuscript, and while it is of course possible that the planned acrostic form has influenced the layout of the manuscript as a whole, it is not necessarily so. The manuscript is in fact the latest in the sample set, with these two texts dated by

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<sup>79</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, pp. 395, 606.

<sup>80</sup> Latin and translation from Andy Orchard, 'Performing Writing and Singing Silence in the Anglo-Saxon Riddle Tradition', in *Or Words to That Effect: Orality and the Writing of Literary History*, eds. Daniel F. Chamberlain, J. Edward Chamberlin (2016), 73-92, p. 76.

Gneuss and Lapidge to the late ninth century or its turn into the tenth. Well-demarcated, lineated schemes are being routinely applied by the tenth century, so the layout of this particular manuscript perhaps exhibits the progression towards this norm, rather than necessarily being influenced by the presence of the acrostic.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, the layout of the texts in the manuscript as described above shows scribal responsiveness to subtle differences in form and structure.

The *Aenigmata* of St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. I. 15 are, according to a description given by O'Brien O'Keeffe, lineated at Grade A.<sup>82</sup> In addition to the Aldhelm text, the manuscript carries a telestic-acrostic poem, 'Iohannis celsi rimans mysteria caeli', the handwriting of which has been identified with Boniface, though authorship is more dubious.<sup>83</sup> Dated by Gneuss and Lapidge to the second half of the eighth century, the manuscript is one of only three from the eighth century or before to exhibit grade A lineation (excluding the Codex Amiatinus, which has an explicit continental model). One of these three is Miskolc, Lévy József Library, s.n., a single-page binding fragment written sometime in the eighth century, which, like St Petersburg, Russian National Library, Q. v. I. 15, contains material from Aldhelm's *Aenigmata*; specifically, one side of the fragment bears lines 28-43 and 56-71 of Aldhelm's 'Creatura', while the other carries an extract from *De metris et enigmatibus ac pedum regulis*.<sup>84</sup> There is no indication of what else the original manuscript might have contained, but Aldhelm's engagement with and popularization of the acrostic form, and his composition of the prefatory

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<sup>81</sup> See O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 26 n. 9.

<sup>82</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Caedmon's Hymn', *Old English Literature*, p. 98 n. 12.

<sup>83</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 606; Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's Synonyma in Anglo-Saxon England* (2008), p. 72; David Robert Howlett, 'A Possible Author of "Iohannis Celsi Rimans Misteria Caeli"', *Peritia* 21 (2010), 158-61.

<sup>84</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 612; Zoltán Mády, 'An VIIIth century Aldhelm Fragment in Hungary', *Acta Antiqua: Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Tom. 13 (1965), 441-453, pp. 441, 444, 445.

‘Aldhelmus cecinit’ acrostic for his *Aenigmata*, makes it likely that an acrostic verse might have been included either in the full manuscript, or else in its exemplar.<sup>85</sup> In a very thorough palaeographical analysis of the fragment from Miskolc, Zoltán Mády observes that on one side of the folio, the placement of ornamental ‘delta’ (Δ) and ‘mu’ (M) characters, patterned with red dots, ‘precisely corresponds to the placement of the decorations shown in the text of the most up to date Aldhelm edition published by Ehwald’.<sup>86</sup> The scribe, then, is alive to decorative patterning presumably found in an exemplar. The third of the eighth-century manuscripts exhibiting high-grade lineation is Kassel, Gesamthochschulbibliothek, 4° MS.theol. 2, which contains books four and five of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, including the alphabetic acrostic on Saint Æthelthryth. The sample set manuscripts containing all or part of the *Historia ecclesiastica* will be treated separately, below.

Two of the sample set manuscripts produced during the first half of the ninth century also contain acrostic texts: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 671, which contains two acrostic poems, both addressing King Alfred, and Cambridge, CUL Ll. 1. 10, which contains a variety of verse texts, including an acrostic poem, and Laidcenn mac Baith’s *Lorica*. In the Bern manuscript, the two acrostics together take up half a folio, arranged one after the other like a single poem. The lineation is Grade A: each metrical line beginning on a new manuscript line, opening with a large initial capital; the final letter of each line is separated from the line itself by a little space, but there is still a ragged right-hand edge to the poem. The variety of verse in Cambridge, CUL Ll. 1. 10 exhibits different standards of and approaches to lineation: The *Lorica* of Laidcenn is unlineated but metrically marked, perhaps copied from an Irish

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<sup>85</sup> A. M. Juster, *Saint Aldhelm's Riddles* (2015), pp. 77-79.

<sup>86</sup> Mády, p. 442.

exemplar as discussed above, while the acrostic on folio 21r, which appears to have been written mainly to fill space after the accidental run-on of the previous text, is lineated at Grade A.

The five manuscript copies of the *Historia ecclesiastica* also contain acrostic verse, in the alphabetic acrostic on Æthelthryth (Book IV.18). The use of bicolumnar layouts in three of the manuscripts and single block text layouts in the remaining two has been noted above, but this does not determine lineation: while the single-block Cambridge, CUL Kk. 5. 16 has unlineated verse at Grades D and E, the Kassel manuscript has three poems lineated at Grade A; the three bicolumnular manuscripts each contain both lineated and unlineated verse. O'Brien O'Keeffe tells us that in the five eighth-century *Historia ecclesiastica* manuscripts, 'verse is formatted spatially according to the complexity of verse form', although this is not forcefully demonstrated in the case of the alphabetic acrostic on Saint Æthelthryth (Book IV.18).<sup>87</sup> It is never presented as the most lineated verse text in any of the manuscripts, and in the Leningrad Bede it is superseded by the more lineated verse extract at Book II.1. In the Kassel manuscript the acrostic is unlineated at Grade D, while other texts are lineated at Grade A. However, in four out of five cases, the acrostic is amongst the most highly lineated poems in the manuscripts, which is in line with the practice of the other manuscripts containing both acrostic and non-acrostic verse in the sample set.

The evidence regarding acrostics, then, is twofold. Firstly, manuscripts containing acrostic verse tend to include Grade A lineation, whether that is applied only to the acrostic, or to the full collection of verse within the manuscript (of the ten

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<sup>87</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 28-32.

manuscripts with Grade A lineation, six contain acrostics). This is not true of the *Historia ecclesiastica* manuscripts, though the widths of columns in the bicolomnuar manuscripts make Grade A lineation impossible. Secondly, of the manuscripts which feature both acrostic and regular verse, many give a higher grade of lineation to the acrostic than to at least some of the other verse. Acrostic and telestic poetry contains an additional plane or planes of information, which the reader identifies by isolating the first and/or last letters of each metrical line. While lineation is not *necessary* for such identification, it certainly aids the reader, and draws attention to the very existence of the acrostic and telestic planes. From the evidence above, we might hypothesise that scribes generally applied high-grade lineation to acrostic texts in order to facilitate the linear visual identification of such planes, and that (in some cases) this use of high-grade lineation in one area of the manuscript made it a readier layout option for regular verse elsewhere in the manuscript.

Layout, in this hypothesis, is sensitive to the requirements of the reader, based on the form and structure of the text. We can expand this hypothesis by looking to another kind of verse text reliant on a sense of linear order, this time based on genre rather than form: the genre of calendrical materials.

*Order and lineation: computistical verse and calendars*

Two further texts are the recipients of a Grade A lineated scheme, both written in England during the ninth century. In London, BL, Cotton Vespasian B. vi, fols. 104-109, written between 804 and 815, we have an early copy of *The Metrical Calendar of York*. These folios are now preserved as separate bifolia between Perspex sheets, and it is folio 104r and 104v that is of interest to this study. We do not have the opening of the calendar; rather the surviving text begins at line 16, at the top of folio

104r, and runs onto folio 104v.<sup>88</sup> The calendar's text is plain in aspect, written in a consistent minuscule script; metrical lines are discretely lineated, with a capital letter at the start of each line. Decorative features are thin on the ground: the capitals are not rubricated or set off from the line, but they are occasionally filled with a red or dark ink, or decorated with dots (as in the long 'I' of 'Iunius' and 'Iulius'); there is no line end punctuation; there are no decorative letters or other images. However, the *mise-en-page* is demonstrably appropriate to the structure of the text, and its relationship to the other texts that run alongside it on folio 104r-v (see below). The application of perfect lineation chimes with the functional structure of the text, which moves chronologically through the months ('Iani... Februi...Martis... Maiae...', ll. 1, 8, 14, 19), and through the corresponding saints' days and feast days that make up the liturgical calendar.<sup>89</sup> This linear structure is emphasised by the parallel positioning of lists of Greek and Latin numerals, letters and alphabets alongside the calendar. There are three such vertical columns on folio 104r, to the right of the poem: first, a series of Roman numerals, then a list of corresponding Ionic numerals (Α, Β, Γ, Δ...) and finally a corresponding list of the names of Greek numbers (*mia, dia ... penta, exa, ebda, ogda, nia, deca*).<sup>90</sup> On folio 104v there are only two columns: again, a list of Roman numerals, this time succeeded by a column of the names of Latin numbers (*duo, tria, quattuor, quinque...*); these two columns do not reach the full length of the page, but instead have a second set of two columns beneath them: the first of these columns is a set of Roman numerals, this time in no

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<sup>88</sup> For the text of the Metrical Calendar, see Karasawa, p. 140.

<sup>89</sup> On Marian feast-days in the Metrical Calendar of York, see Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (1990), pp. 38-39.

<sup>90</sup> This description is based on my own observation of the manuscript, supplemented by the description in K. Dekker, 'Anglo-Saxon Encyclopaedic Notes: Tradition and Function', in eds, Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. and K. Dekker, *Foundations of Learning: The Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages* (2007), 279-315, p. 301.

discernible order, and with repetitions; the second is a list of Roman alphabetical forms.<sup>91</sup> Kees Dekker has considered this calendar in the light of various encyclopaedic notes preserved in the fragment: drawing on the work of Simon Keynes, he portrays the calendrical text as ‘the framework of [a] new, Christian world order’, to which the encyclopaedic notes on key biblical and human physiological measurements lend weight.<sup>92</sup> The layering of the alphabetical-numerical columns alongside the chronologically-ordered column of the calendar similarly emphasises the logical, computistical nature of the world-order offered by the calendar. The visual correspondence creates semantic force: the parallel applications of numbers and dates within the calendar adopts the same clarity, rationale and universality as the alphabets and numerical systems.

The second Grade A lineated text is the computistical composition of London, BL, Add. 23211, which was used to calculate the date of Easter; this fragment, of which only two leaves now survive, preserved in a Victorian binding, also contains two Old English texts, one genealogical and one a martyrology.<sup>93</sup> The leaves have been trimmed very severely, damaging the texts on both sides, and obscuring the first characters of each metrical line of verse. Similarly to the calendar text of London, BL, Cotton Vespasian B. vi, the surviving text is sparse in decoration: we cannot see the openings of the lines, and so remain ignorant of the possible capitalisation, rubrication or other demarcation of the metrical line; the text is, however, fully lineated, with minor flourishes of punctuation at the end of each

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Dekker, pp. 279-80.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Detailed record for Additional 23211’, *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, British Library. Web. Accessed 10 December 2017  
<[www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6788](http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6788)>; Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 217.

line.

### *Conclusions from the sample set*

As O'Brien O'Keeffe's study observes, the standards for verse lineation were in a state of flux throughout the eighth century.<sup>94</sup> However, rather than following a simply chronological progression from unlineated to more lineated states, the *mise-en-page* of Latin literature was likely determined by a number of related factors, namely: the influence of foreign models, the layout of other prose and verse texts in the same manuscript, and the form and genre of the verse itself. This last point is of particular interest, for the evidence suggests that more metrically demarcated and lineated formatting is applied to texts with a strong formal or narrative reliance upon linear structures and order, here, acrostic and calendrical verse.

The question of why this layout style spread to encompass all of Latin verse is beyond the scope of this chapter, but some hypotheses immediately present themselves. If, prior to the ninth century, lineation was indeed typically the preserve of texts with a 'linear' organisational scheme, it was nevertheless also the historical layout mode for the writing of Latin verse in continental manuscripts. Chapter Four will address the appropriation of iconic *mise-en-page* features, but for now it suffices to suggest that the gradual adoption of lineated style for *all* verse texts might have conferred the appearance of authority on certain manuscripts, in a similar vein to Franklin-Brown's suggestion that lineation indicates a connection between a text and a 'classical tradition'.<sup>95</sup> If we recall Walter Ong's suggestion, discussed above, that the processes by which we learn often become the frameworks through which we

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<sup>94</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>95</sup> Franklin-Brown, p. 234.

create output, then the adoption of lineation might also show scribes moving to reflect in graphic form their own (and their readers') patterns of engagement with the linear and metrical structures of Latin verse. In this way, the metrical line as a tool of learning for students of Latin verse might eventually have become embedded as a mode of visual output, but, interestingly, not until lineation's links with ideas of order and linearity have already been established. Certainly, such a shift can have only helped the efficiency with which readers were able to digest metrical units.

These alternative proposals are not in conflict with one another: the rationality of representing Latin in the mode in which it is learned can work in tandem with the inheritance of continental lineated styles, or a sense that acrostic verse requires a particular visual presentation. For the present, these must remain hypotheses.

### **Divergence from Old English**

This analysis of early Anglo-Latin *mise-en-page* practices provides a context within which to locate an examination of the *mise-en-page* of Old English verse, and its persistently unlineated formatting throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. The pre-tenth-century manuscript record of Old English poetry is so sparse that there is nothing which can usefully be compared with the Latin texts from this period of transitional *mise-en-page* practice. The earliest surviving Old English poetry recorded in a manuscript is found in five of the eighth- and ninth-century manuscripts in our sample set: *Caedmon's Hymn*, preserved in Book IV of Bede's

*Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>96</sup> However, these early texts do not offer a strong indication of how contemporary approaches to lineation and *mise-en-page* might have applied to Old English verse in particular. As O'Brien O'Keefe notes, the Old English text is a marginal insertion where it is included in the Latin versions of Bede's text; it is visually subordinated to the main prose text by peripheral positioning on the page, and sometimes by the size of the scribe's hand.<sup>97</sup> In these circumstances, it is difficult to suggest that the layout of the Old English verse is uncoloured by the layout of the main prose text; it does not give us a clear indication of how Old English verse might be presented if it were itself the main text, or if it were preserved as an independent text within a collection of verse texts. We should, however, take note of O'Brien O'Keefe's meticulous analysis of the layout of *Caedmon's Hymn* in the two early Northumbrian manuscripts, Cambridge, CUL Kk. 5. 16 and the Leningrad Bede: each is written in unlineated 'long lines'; each has a single capital, placed at the start of the poem; neither is metrically pointed.<sup>98</sup> Another early Old English poem is 'Bede's Death Song', which forms part of the *Epistola Cuthberti de Obitu Bedae*, and is attested in the ninth-century manuscript of St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 254.<sup>99</sup> As with the early copies of *Caedmon's Hymn*, the *Death Song* has few cues: it is unlineated and unpointed; the only

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<sup>96</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, p. 24.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26, 34.

<sup>98</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe, *Visible Song*, pp. 34-35. My own examination of the lineation of verse in these manuscripts is recorded above in Table 4, using the EEMF facsimiles: P. H. Blair, ed. *The Moore Bede: An Eighth-Century Manuscript of the Venerable Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in Cambridge University Library MS Kk. 5. 16*, with a contribution by Roger A. B. Mynors, EEMF 9 (1959); O. Arngart, ed., *The Leningrad Bede: An Eighth Century Manuscript of the Venerable Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in the Public Library, Leningrad* (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1952).

<sup>99</sup> Howell D. Chickering, Jr, 'Some Contexts for Bede's *Death-Song*', *PMLA* 91 (1976), 91-100, p. 91; E. V. K. Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Caedmon's Hymn and Bede's Death Song: With a Critical Text of the Epistola Cuthberti de Obitu Bedae* (1937), pp. 49-51. See also O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Caedmon's Hymn', *Speculum*, p. 2 and Scherrer Gustav, *Verzeichniss der Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek von St. Gallen* (1875), pp. 95-96. Web. Accessed 25 August 2018 <<https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/description/csg/0254/>>.

indication of its difference from the surrounding Latin is that the first metrical line opens with a capital ‘F’, while the line of Latin which follows the poem opens with a capital ‘C’; the scribe may have deliberately positioned the poem to end at the close of a full column line, but this is unclear.<sup>100</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe rightly contrasts the graphic treatment of the Old English *Hymn* with the use of pointing and lineation as cues of metrical demarcation for Latin verse texts elsewhere in the *Historia ecclesiastica*; she suggests that the absence of graphic cues in the Old English is a sign of their redundancy for readers, who did not require them ‘either for scansion or sense’, and of the ‘[strong] oral component in the *Hymn*’s transmission and reception’.<sup>101</sup>

That readers did not require such cues to read verse is indisputable, for the vast majority of the Old English verse corpus is metrically unpointed. However, the absence of markers does not equate to the presence of a unified yet uncodified reading practice, as O’Brien O’Keeffe implies when she speaks of scribal ‘predictive knowledge’; palaeographic evidence shows readers placing punctuation marks, such as points and slashes, in different places, which suggests that different readers were liable to interpret metrical structures differently.<sup>102</sup> Alongside the absence of any surviving contemporary treatise on Old English prosody, the absence even of metrical pointing in the majority of Old English verse texts might go some way to explaining metrical variance across the Old English corpus as the result of an inductive system, constantly re-interpreted anew.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> ‘St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 254, p. 253 – Jerome, Commentary on the Old Testament book of Isaiah. Includes the most authentic version of the Old English “Death Song” by the Venerable Bede’, *e-codices*. Web. Accessed 21 August 2018 <<https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/csg/0254/253/0/Sequence-438>>.

<sup>101</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 46.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21; Thomson, ‘Whistle While You Work’, pp. 111-14.

<sup>103</sup> Emily Thornbury discusses the writing of ‘Anglo-Saxon authors (...) who read a great deal of

To find Old English verse which is presented as part of the central body of text, and which can be read as standalone verse, we must wait until the tenth century, when lineation is an entrenched practice in the encoding of Latin verse. Old English verse, however, is not lineated; we might say that it continues to be laid out in the old fashion of eighth-century Latin verse, or, conversely, that it is laid out like contemporary prose. Although Old English verse is being written after the entrenchment of new *mise-en-page* practice for Latin verse, this use or maintenance of an old style of *mise-en-page* for Old English suggests that practices may have *diverged* due to differences between Latin and Old English verse.

Given that the shift from unlineated to lineated form in Latin may have some correspondence with acrostic form, we might begin by considering acrostic elements in Old English verse. While acrostics were a popular form for Latin texts, the same was not true of Old English. Cynewulf's signatures to *Fates of the Apostles*, *Elene*, *Juliana* and *Christ II* are the primary examples of acrostic-style play in Old English texts, but they do not operate in the same way as Latin acrostics. There are two major points of difference: firstly, the acrostic elements are *runes*, rather than alphabetic characters, and so each represents a word as well as a letter; secondly, these acrostic elements do not take the same position at the beginning (or, for telestic verse, end) of each metrical line, but may occur at any point within it. So in *Fates of the Apostles*, the acrostic signature runs as follows:

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verse, and inferred from their reading what the rules ought to be' in Emily Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (2014), p. 162, see also p. 35.

Her mæg findan foreþances gleaw,  
 se ðe hine lysteð leoðgiddunga,  
 hwa þas fitte fegde. ƿ þær on ende standeþ,  
 eorlas þæs on eorðan brucaþ. Ne moton hie awa ætsomne,  
 woruldwunigende; Ʀ sceal gedreosan,  
 Ɔ on eðle, æfter tohreosan  
 læne lices frætewa, efne swa Ƨ toglideð.  
 þonne Ƨ ond Ƨ cræftes neosað  
 nihtes nearowe, on him † ligeð,  
 cyninges þeodom.  
 (ll. 96-105a)<sup>104</sup>

Here, runes appear at the beginning of an a-line (once), at the beginning of b-lines (twice), at the end of an a-line (once), mid-way through an a-line (once) and mid-way through b-lines (twice). While the identification of a Latin acrostic relies on the reader's line of sight down the page, the acrostic elements on the Old English page cannot be so arranged; instead they leap out at the reader through the use of the alternative runic alphabet.<sup>105</sup> This does not mean that their positioning on the page is

<sup>104</sup> 'Here one of keen forethought, he who finds delight in songs, may discover who constructed this song. *Feoh* (wealth) stands there at the end, nobleman partake of that on earth. They are not allowed always to be together, dwelling on earth. *Wynn* (joy) must collapse, *Ur* (ours) in the homeland, afterwards the transitory ornament of the body must fall apart, even as *Lagu* (water) slips away. Then *Cen* (torch) and *Yr* (bow) seek out power in the confinement of the night, on them lies *Nyd* (need), service of the king.'

Text from 'Fates of the Apostles', in ed. George Phillip Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, ASPR II (1932), pp. 53-54. Translation my own, with reference to Charles W. Kennedy, transl. *Cynewulf: The Fates of the Apostles* (2000) Web. Accessed 07 August 2018  
 <[http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/Fates\\_Apostles\\_Kennedy.pdf](http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/Fates_Apostles_Kennedy.pdf)> and Aaron K. Hostetter, 'The Fate of the Apostles', *Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry Project*. Web. Accessed 29 January 2018  
 <<https://anglosaxonpoetry.camden.rutgers.edu/the-fate-of-the-apostles/>>.

<sup>105</sup> On runes as differentiated within the Old English text, see Robert DiNapoli, 'Odd Characters:

inconsequential: in her introduction to the 1976 facsimile of the Vercelli Book, Celia Sisam suggests that the scribe has designed quire 7 of the manuscript such that the ‘runic signature’ is not ‘split’ across two folios, but instead occupies ‘a prominent position near the top’ of fol. 54r.<sup>106</sup> Given the popularity of the lineated acrostic form amongst contemporary Anglo-Latin writers, and its consistently different manifestation in Old English as a form free from the visual structures of lineation, Old English acrostics are perhaps designed to be as visually arresting as their Latin counterparts, within the paradigm of Old English *mise-en-page*. In other words, Old English verse has not been shoehorned into an unlineated format, but has been designed for that format. If *mise-en-page* has creatively impacted composition, it becomes harder to approach that *mise-en-page* as defective, or ‘absent’.

The remainder of this thesis will move to consider firstly the question of why lineation was not adopted as a regular *mise-en-page* feature in the encoding of Old English verse, and secondly the ways in which other *mise-en-page* elements are used meaningfully in the encoding of Old English verse. In what remains of this chapter, I will examine the differences between Latin and Old English prosodic and metrical structures as a potential driver of the difference in their respective page layouts; further, I will suggest that correspondences between Old English verse and Latin rhythmic verse might further explain contemporary *mise-en-page* practices.

### *Learning Latin in Anglo-Saxon England: the ‘shape’ of verse*

In her recent book, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England*, Emily Thornbury

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Runes in Old English Poetry’, in Antonina Harbus and Russell Poole, eds., *Verbal Encounters: Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse Studies for Roberta Frank* (2005), 145-62, p. 156. For Symons and Birkett on the alterity of rune-forms, see below, p. 326 n. 110.

<sup>106</sup> Celia Sisam, ed. *The Vercelli Book: A Late Tenth-Century Manuscript Containing Prose and Verse*, EEMF 19 (1976), p. 38.

reviews the pedagogical environment for students learning to read and write Latin in the early Anglo-Saxon period, including the most popular forms of verse for composition, the methods by which students were taught Latin prosody, and the varying degrees of competency in Latin metre and quantity exhibited by Anglo-Latin writers.<sup>107</sup> Thornbury writes that while ‘[t]he study of verse seems to have been integral to learning throughout the Anglo-Saxon period’, few students learned to compose in Latin, and those who did ‘frequently taught others’.<sup>108</sup> This education in verse was, however, beset by problems: Thornbury points to the absence of a ‘universally agreed-upon structure to the “curriculum” of an aspiring Latinist’, and the difficulties of engagement with some of the available textbook material, as well as deficiencies in the contemporary understanding of verse quantity.<sup>109</sup> In Vulgar Latin (the name for spoken Latin, ‘especially from about the third century AD on’) the distinction between long and short vowels had been lost.<sup>110</sup> For the students of Latin poetry in the middle ages, this translated to a need to learn about and memorise quantity as an artificial system; Anglo-Saxon speakers of Latin would not have automatically been familiar with long and short vowels, but they might have been able to access ‘the authority of poets and grammarians’ through teachers and textbooks.<sup>111</sup> Thornbury says that such a study of quantity ‘formed part of the most basic level of instruction’; however, command of this system varied, with ‘[f]ew poets’ developing the skills necessary ‘to compose quantitative verse in complex lyric metres’, and no evidence of quantitative metre being composed in Ireland

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<sup>107</sup> Thornbury, esp. pp. 37-94.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>109</sup> Quotation from Ibid., p. 42; for a critique of Aldhelm’s obtuse style in the metrical section of his *Epistola ad Acircium*, see Ibid., p. 44; on difficulties with quantity see Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>110</sup> Benjamin W. Fortson IV, *Indo-European Language and Culture: An Introduction*, 2nd ed. (2010), pp. 287-88; Thornbury, p. 41.

<sup>111</sup> Thornbury, p. 41; R. James Goldstien, *The English Lyric Tradition: Reading Poetic Masterpieces of the Middle Ages* (2017), p. 21.

during Aldhelm's time, or in the north of England prior to Theodore's arrival.<sup>112</sup> In particular, she points to Aldhelm's own perspective on the 'obscurity' of a study of quantity, and the lack of learning around it.<sup>113</sup>

Something that Thornbury and other scholars have pointed to is the highly 'stichic' style of the verse composed by Aldhelm and his contemporary, Ceolfrith, Abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow to 716.<sup>114</sup> This frequent co-occurrence of the metrical line with a 'complete sense-unit' is taken by Lapidge as 'the mark of an inexperienced poet', and Thornbury takes this idea a little further, imagining Ceolfrith 'picking his way slowly across the rocky terrain of a quantitative line'.<sup>115</sup> Bede, by contrast, achieves a more accomplished command of those tools with which he could aurally manipulate or transgress the borders of feet and lines: elision and enjambment.<sup>116</sup> Thornbury's extension is important: it makes explicit the probable reliance of the learning process upon the structure of the individual line, an approach supported by the generally 'modular approach to verse' espoused by Aldhelm's 'fill-in-the-blank' lists of words organised by part of speech and foot-type conformability.<sup>117</sup> If the very limited pool of poets competent in the composition of Latin quantitative verse exhibit such a reliance upon stichic structure, and if this perspective is reflected in one of the three surviving contemporary treatises on metre, then it seems reasonable to hypothesize what we might already have supposed: that the Anglo-Saxon student's education in Latin was heavily based on stichic structures, and that a strictly linear approach might inform the activities of readers

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<sup>112</sup> Thornbury, pp. 41, 80, 137.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 139; 'Ceolfrith 1 (Male)', *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* (2010), Web. Accessed 21 December 2017 <[pase.ac.uk/jsp/DisplayPerson.jsp?personKey=1045](http://pase.ac.uk/jsp/DisplayPerson.jsp?personKey=1045)>.

<sup>115</sup> Thornbury, p. 139; Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature*, p. 255, cited in Thornbury, p. 139.

<sup>116</sup> On Bede's more extensive use of these features than Aldhelm, see Thornbury, p. 192.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

and scribes as much as the creative outputs of authors like Aldhelm and Ceolfrith.<sup>118</sup> That is to say, scribes may have gravitated towards the lineated formatting initially reserved for such texts as acrostics and metrical calendars, or discovered in continental exemplars, because of its prioritisation of that key prosodic element upon which their education had been based. As we have observed above, the same can be said for *mise-en-page* in modern editions of Old English texts, and their visualisation of the caesura.

What emerges from this hypothesis is an idea that readers, writers and authors may mentally attribute a certain ‘shape’ to the verse they engage with. Nor is the definition of this shape limited to the influence of pedagogy. Thornbury reminds us that ‘[i]n monasteries, *everyone* was a trained performer’, that psalms might be chanted before they were even understood.<sup>119</sup> That the rhythms of chant could precede the structure or semantics of the words adds an exciting dimension to the idea of the ‘aural shape’ of verse. She also points out that the arrangement of Aldhelm’s word-lists into parts of speech and compatible feet in his *Epistola* ‘encourage students to think of words as shapes, rather than units of meaning’.<sup>120</sup> The idea that verse has an essential ‘shape’ can be found in contemporary theoretical texts. We might recall Isidore’s suggestion that ‘verse’ takes its name from ‘reveritur’ (“because it is turned back”, I.XXXIX.2). What precisely is meant by ‘turned’ back is unclear, for although it could refer to visual formatting of lines on the page, there is no mention of any of the paraphernalia or contexts of writing. Rather, Isidore calls upon ‘good judgement’ and ‘reason’ as the arbiters of the line’s

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<sup>118</sup> The three surviving treatises are Aldhelm’s *Epistola ad Acircium*, Bede’s *De arte metrica* and Boniface’s *Caesura uersuum*: see *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

shape: its ‘measure’ and ‘turn’. The shape of the line, then, is not made dependent upon a visual context. Aldhelm adopts a very different approach to the idea of ‘shape’ in the verse line, with a house-building metaphor in his prose *De virginitate*: ‘the rhetorical foundation stones were now laid and the walls of prose were built, so I shall [...] build a sturdy roof with trochaic slates and dactylic tiles of metre’.<sup>121</sup>

Where Isidore’s sense of shape was abstracted from a physical medium, expressed as a function of value-judgement, and meted out vaguely as a ‘measure’, Aldhelm’s shapes are concrete, with feet slotting like tiles alongside one another until they form a complete line. Despite the physicality of the metaphor, there is once again no reliance upon the idea of shape as a function of the written medium. Aldhelm’s references to the ‘rhetorical foundation stones’ and ‘walls of prose’ do not suggest a written form any more or less than an oral one. Of these two extremely different expressions of ‘shape’ as it applies to verse, neither couches that shape in an explicitly written environment. ‘Shape’ is presented as being inherent to verse, a product of interpretation.

#### *Contrasting ‘shapes’: Latin and Old English composition*

If the metrical features of Latin verse establish for scribes and commentators a conceptual sense of ‘shape’, we might ask what ‘shape’ arises from the metrical features of vernacular verse, and in what ways it differs from that of Latin. The absence of contemporary treatises or grammars on the writing of Old English means that there is no direct comparative analysis of Latin and vernacular metres written during the Anglo-Saxon period, and little by way of indirect comparison.<sup>122</sup>

However, we can reach some initial conclusions by conducting our own comparative

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<sup>121</sup> Michael Lapidge and Michael W. Herren, transl. *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (2009), p. 131.

<sup>122</sup> Bede’s reference to vernacular and rhythmic verse metres is discussed at p. 148.

analysis of Latin and Old English verse form.

This begins with selecting what ‘kind’ of vernacular and Latin metres will be compared. While the rules governing Old English verse vary, and perhaps even ‘relax’, during its written history, it employs what we might call a ‘unitary’ metrical system: while, as in Latin, there are different formulations of feet which combine to create the different ‘types’ of half-line as classified by Sievers, these have not been organised to create different ‘families’ of metre. This in contrast with what we might call the ‘complex’ system of Latin quantitative verse, in which the arrangement of morae within feet (iambic, trochaic, anapaestic, etc.) and the number of feet within a line (monometer, dimeter, trimeter, etc.), and the arrangement of such lines within the poem (stichic, distichic, etc.), locates a particular verse text within one of a number of such metrical ‘families’, and sub-types within those ‘families’.<sup>123</sup>

If we want to capture a sense of the ‘shape’ of Latin verse in scribal consciousness, we must look to the biases and preferences of Anglo-Saxon readers. Thornbury notes that all three of the Anglo-Latin grammatical treatises place an ‘emphasis’ on dactylic hexameter; the ‘dactylic hexameter is presented as the paradigmatic form of Latin verse’, and the form commands ‘dominance’ in the corpus of Anglo-Latin verse.<sup>124</sup> It therefore seems a suitable metre to take as our point of comparison with Old English verse. In Section X of his *De metris*, Aldhelm employs a dialogue between the figures of a ‘discipulus’ (capital delta, Δ) and his ‘magister’ (medieval western ‘mu’) to give an account of the features of dactylic hexameter.<sup>125</sup> It contains six feet, each of which is either a dactyl (a foot of one long

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<sup>123</sup> Bruce Mitchell, *A Guide to Old English*, 7th ed. (2007), p. 161. See also David J. Califf, *A Guide to Latin Meter and Verse Composition* (2002), esp. pp. v-vii.

<sup>124</sup> Thornbury, p. 41

<sup>125</sup> Walter Berschin, *Greek Letters and the Latin Middle Ages: From Jerome to Nicholas of Cusa*,

and two short syllables, - ˘ ˘) or a spondee (a foot of two long syllables, - -); the fifth foot is always a dactyl, except in the rare case that all six feet are spondaic; the sixth foot always ought to be a spondee.<sup>126</sup> The Magister observes that these rules result in lines which range from twelve syllables (- - / - - / - - / - - / - -) to seventeen syllables (- ˘ ˘ / - ˘ ˘ / - ˘ ˘ / - ˘ ˘ / - ˘ ˘ / - -); lines may appear longer on the written page, containing up to as many as twenty syllables; however, this includes syllables which will be elided in verbal recitation.<sup>127</sup>

Of crucial importance to this system, then, is the isochrony of the line, dependent on syllabic quantity which was so alien to medieval speakers of Latin.<sup>128</sup> Ictus (falling on the first long syllable of each foot) and word-accent (which may or may not coincide with ictus) are features of Latin prosody, but it is vowel length which defines the structure of the metrical foot.<sup>129</sup> Although the number of syllables in the verse line may vary, its quantity (and hence, its spoken duration) remains the same: from the minimum length of twelve-syllables (six spondees), each foot except the last can be changed for a dactyl, effectively swapping the second long syllable of each foot with a pair of short syllables; each such pair has the same quantity (and so,

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transl. Jerold C. Frakes (1988), pp. 99-100; Neil Wright, trans., 'Appendix: Aldhelm's Prose Writings on Metrics', in *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, eds. Michael Lapidge and James Rosier (1985), 183-219, pp. 195-211. On the medieval 'mu', see Berschin, *Greek Letters*, p. 30, and Walter Berschin, 'Greek Elements in Medieval Latin Manuscripts', in *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks: The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Michael W. Herren (1988), 85-104, p. 87. The medieval form of 'mu', being a variant on the original Greek form (μ) does not, to the best of my knowledge, have a unicode character. For an example of this character, see the right-hand marginal alphabet in Image 29 (Oxford, Queen's College 320): the 'mu' is the second character in the second line of the marginal alphabet.

<sup>126</sup> Wright, pp. 195-96 (here I have used standard scholarly notation by representing a long syllable with a dash (-) and a short syllable with a breve (˘), as used by Wright).

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196-97.

<sup>128</sup> Franklin-Brown, p. 234; Harvey S. Gross, 'prosody', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (2017), Web. Accessed 30 November 2017 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/prosody>>; The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, 'quantitative verse', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (1999), Web. Accessed 30 November 2017 <<https://www.britannica.com/art/quantitative-verse>>.

<sup>129</sup> See 'Meter and Scansion', Iona College. Web. Accessed 20 November 2017 <<https://www2.iona.edu/faculty/latin/meter.html>>.

duration) as a long syllable.<sup>130</sup> The result is not only a series of isochronous lines, but also lines interspersed at regular temporal intervals with long, ictic syllables. This regularity and isochrony at the level of feet evokes the regularity of Aldhelm's tiling metaphor.

Turning to compare these features with the workings of Old English verse, we immediately encounter the obscurity engendered by the absence of any formal contemporary commentary on the prosody of vernacular poetry. Without the assistance of an explanatory discipulus-magister dialogue, Old English metrists necessarily engage in 'an inductive process'.<sup>131</sup> The questions of rhythm, tempo, quantity and ictus in Old English verse, being essentially performative, are fundamentally unanswerable; Stockwell and Minkova make the point that it is not simply the absence of 'hard evidence' which makes it impossible to fully know the performance contexts of Old English verse, but that it is quite possible to 'imagine' these performances in different, even contradictory ways, and in either isochronous or anisochronous form.<sup>132</sup>

The scholarly consensus around Sievers' late nineteenth-century account of Old English metrics, in part reinforced by Fulk's championing of his system in *A History of Old English Metre*, has led to a general consensus that Old English verse is anisochronous.<sup>133</sup> This arises from Sievers' characterisation of the basic anatomy of the Old English verse line, in which each verse contains four positions, each of

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<sup>130</sup> See Wright, pp. 185-86.

<sup>131</sup> Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'What are Old English Metrical Studies For?', *OEN*. Web. Accessed 30 November 2017 <[www.oenewsletter.org/OEN/print.php/essays/bredehoft39\\_1/Array](http://www.oenewsletter.org/OEN/print.php/essays/bredehoft39_1/Array)>.

<sup>132</sup> Robert P. Stockwell and Donka Minkova, 'Prosody', in *A Beowulf Handbook*, eds. Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (1977), 55-83, p. 59.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 58-59; Rafael J. Pascual, 'Sievers, Bliss, Fulk, and Old English Metrical Theory', in *Old English Philology: Studies in Honour of R.D. Fulk*, eds. Leonard Neidorf, Rafael J. Pascual, Tom Shippey (2016), 17-33, p. 17; R. D. Fulk, *An Introduction to Middle English* (2012), p. 131.

which may be either a *lift* (a stressed syllable) or a *dip* (one or more unstressed syllables); whether or not a word receives stress is determined by a combination of word class and syllable length.<sup>134</sup> Alliterative correspondence may determine a poet's choice of stress-words, but does not in and of itself confer stress, though the somewhat transgressive placement of alliteration on unstressed words can be used to poetic effect. The number of unstressed syllables allowed in a *dip* is 'highly regulated', but also variant; each of Sievers' five types of half-line allow a different maximum and minimum number of unstressed syllables in each *dip* position.<sup>135</sup> In a Type A verse, for example, the initial dip can accommodate between one and five unstressed syllables in the first position (typically, it employs two), but only one in the final position.<sup>136</sup>

/ (x – xxxxx) / x

In a Type B verse, the number of unstressed syllables in the first dip can be even greater, and the final dip can accommodate up to two unstressed syllables.<sup>137</sup> These fluctuating syllabic counts result in lines of extremely variant syllabic length, especially when we take into account the potential for a lift to be made not from a single long syllable, but the resolution of two syllables. We can see this line-length variation clearly on the page of modern print editions of Old English verse, where the pairs of half-lines and their central caesura form a 'river', undulating down the page. This is reasonably distinct from the visual formation of the Latin hexameter: as noted above, Aldhelm points out that with elision, the hexameter line can (rarely)

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<sup>134</sup> Jun Terasawa, *Old English Metre: An Introduction* (2011), pp. 27-48.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 35-43.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

reach a full twenty *written* syllables (in spoken form, these additional syllables will, of course, be elided and so not impact the duration of the line).<sup>138</sup> The longest written hexameter line, then, is about 67% longer at twenty syllables, than the shortest at twelve syllables. In Old English, on the other hand, the perhaps anomalous but not rare occurrence of three-syllable verses means that the longest half-line recorded in Terasawa's *Introduction*, at nine syllables (*Beowulf*, l. 722b), is 200% longer than the shortest half-lines, at three (such as *Beowulf* ll. 947a, 1759a, 1871b).<sup>139</sup> If Old English verse is indeed anisochronous, as it appears under Sievers' system, then it possesses in comparison to Latin verse an essential 'unevenness' which might influence a scribe's conceptual perception of its aural 'shape'. Moreover, the potential for unstressed syllables to be distributed in groups of different magnitudes at different points in the line, while 'highly regulated', is not regular in the same manner as the substitution of short vowels for long in Latin hexametrical feet.<sup>140</sup>

The consensus view on anisochrony has not held unanimous sway across the field of Anglo-Saxon metrics, but has rather been punctuated by challenges throughout three-hundred years of scholarly thought. George Hickes, among the earliest of these scholars, argued for the quantitative nature of Old English metre, based on his experience of classical verse; Andreas Heusler's contemporary challenge to Sieversian metrics posited a isochronous approach; in 1942, John C. Pope developed an isochronous system based on ideas of performativity and the integration of the harp; his work, and work on metrical isochrony, was subsequently developed by Jess B. Bessinger Jr., Robert P. Creed and John M. Foley.<sup>141</sup> More

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<sup>138</sup> Wright, pp. 196-97.

<sup>139</sup> Terasawa, pp. 38, 50; on three-syllable lines and the 'Four-syllable Principle', see Terasawa, pp. 49-52.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>141</sup> On Hickes, see Chapter 1, pp. 24-26 (above); Stockwell and Minkova, pp. 55-58; Terasawa, pp.

recently, the role of quantity in Old English verse has been the subject of discussion in a 2016 honorandum for R. D. Fulk, edited by Leonard Neidorf, Rafael Pascual and Tom Shippey.<sup>142</sup> Pascual and Thomas Cable write consecutive chapters, each reviewing and to some degree building upon Fulk's analysis of syllable length in *A History of Old English Meter*. Both writers follow Fulk in suggesting that there has been a misplaced 'general assumption' amongst metrists and scholars that stress is the 'primary phonological correlate of ictus in Old English verse'.<sup>143</sup> Cable notes that common descriptive terms such as 'accentual meter' and 'strong-stress meter' belie this approach.<sup>144</sup> Of importance to both Pascual and Cable is Fulk's conclusion that syllable quantity exerts significant influence in the construction of Old English metre, defining ictus 'at every level', unlike stress.<sup>145</sup> Rhythmic stress falls generally on syllables which are either long, or part of a resolved sequence, and resolution itself rests in part upon conditions of syllable quantity, both in that the first syllable must be short, and in the suspension of resolution where the second syllable is both long and unstressed, according to Kaluza's Law; in addition to this correlation between syllable quantity and primary and secondary stress, Fulk demonstrates that tertiary stress is determined by syllable length alone.<sup>146</sup> Fulk writes:

Now it appears that syllable length plays a greater role than previously imagined (...) It strains credibility to suppose that stress and length

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37-38.

<sup>142</sup> See Neidorf, Pascual and Shippey, *Old English Philology*.

<sup>143</sup> R. D. Fulk, *A History of Old English Meter* (1992), p. 223; Pascual addresses 'the widespread belief among Old English scholars that stress is the essential correlate of ictus', Pascual, p. 23; Thomas Cable notes that '[g]eneral handbook and anthology summaries of Old English meter usually fail to take up syllable length', in Thomas Cable, 'Ictus as Stress or Length: The Effect of Tempo', in *Old English Philology: Studies in Honour of R.D. Fulk*, eds. Leonard Neidorf, Rafael J. Pascual, Tom Shippey (2016), 34-51, p. 34.

<sup>144</sup> Cable, 'Effect of Tempo', p. 34.

<sup>145</sup> Fulk, *History*, pp. 233-34; Cable, 'Effect of Tempo', p. 34; Pascual, p. 23.

<sup>146</sup> Terasawa p. 56; Fulk, *History*, pp. 223-24.

both played such pervasive roles; and since length now appears to be of particular importance, the question arises whether the role of stress has been overestimated, and ought to be simplified.<sup>147</sup>

In Pascual's review of Fulk's argument, Sieversian metrics comes in for particular critique for its failure to recognise that features other than stress had a defining relationship with metrical ictus. Pascual's chapter treats ictus, not stress, as the basic building-block of metrical feet, meeting Fulk's call to shift emphasis towards the role of vowel quantity in Old English metre:

the traditional description of Sievers' five basic verse types as patterns of stress should be abandoned. They are rather patterns of metrical ictus, for whose establishment syllable quantity plays a more pervasive role than phonological stress.<sup>148</sup>

Cable builds upon this same area of Fulk's analysis by questioning the role of 'tempo' in Old English verse, and specifically by proposing the idea that 'variable' tempo might be a 'structural' feature of the four-position half-line, rather than simply a feature of 'performance', as posited by John C. Pope; specifically, he suggests that at a higher tempo, 'we can hypothesize differences in syllable division, and thus differences in meter and rhythm'.<sup>149</sup> In the course of this argument, Cable reaches towards some of the principles of isochrony, namely in suggesting that strings of unstressed syllables may be 'crushed' together and spoken faster, which he adopts from a description of 'stress-timed languages' by Kenneth Pike, who himself says

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<sup>147</sup> Fulk, *History*, pp. 223-24.

<sup>148</sup> Pascual, p. 30.

<sup>149</sup> Cable, 'Effect of Tempo', pp. 37-38, 41-42.

that ‘rhythm units’ (here, verse lines) possess ‘a similar time value’.<sup>150</sup> He proposes that the occupation of a single initial *dip* by a series of unstressed words, each capable of taking stress alone, while the final two light, unstressed syllables of a trisyllabic word like *tryddode* may each occupy a separate *dip*, ‘must’ be explained by differences in ‘timing’.<sup>151</sup>

Ultimately, the mechanics of an isochronous Old English line, where a position might hold either a single unstressed syllable, or five unstressed syllables, is hard to imagine, and assertions about timing may be implied by the metrical structure, but have an essential performativity which renders them impossible to prove. Fulk himself, while suggesting that the importance of syllable quantity locates Old English prosody ‘closer to classical and Indo-European models’ than had previously been acknowledged, defines Old English verse as anisochronous.<sup>152</sup>

This presents us with a verse form with a very different aural ‘shape’ from Latin hexameter, and indeed from any kind of regular Latin quantitative verse. The adoption of word-separation and minuscule scripts in manuscripts following the Carolingian period resulted in a ‘more uneven’ right-hand edge of the poetic word-block.<sup>153</sup> Despite this, lineation as a system is a visual imitation of isochrony itself, aligning verse lines above one another on the page so that they are of broadly equivalent duration visually, just as they are metrically and aurally. We must not assume that an early scribe of Old English verse, used to experiencing the aural difference between Latin and the vernacular, would automatically apply such a

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-41.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>152</sup> Fulk, *History*, p. 234; Fulk, *Introduction*, p. 131

<sup>153</sup> Franklin-Brown, p. 233.

layout to the variable linear aspect of the anisochronous Old English line.

*Hybrid layouts, and the failure of lineated Old English verse*

In the introduction to this thesis I commented that, if lineation were not for some reason disallowed as a *mise-en-page* format for Old English verse, we would expect to encounter some instance of a scribe testing a lineated format on an Old English verse text, given the breadth of engagement with Latin source materials by Old English authors. These authors relied upon a Latin tradition of Christian writing, translating and adapting Latin material, writing Latin-Old English macaronic verse, and integrating features of Latin language, rhetoric and genre into their own compositions.<sup>154</sup> In fact, I have identified a single instance in which a scribe *does* attempt to apply a type of lineation to Old English verse. I say ‘attempt’ deliberately, as the effort is ultimately a failure, apparently due to the highly variant line-lengths of the verse.

The text in question is The Verse Epilogue to the Old English *Pastoral Care*, a thirty-line poem dominated by an extended metaphor of God’s wisdom as ‘scirost wætra’ (‘the purest of waters’, l. 29).<sup>155</sup> The poem is preserved on the final folio of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 20, occupying the final five manuscript lines of folio 98r, and a further eighteen manuscript lines on folio 98v (see Images 7 and 8, below). The final fourteen lines of writing on folio 98r are arranged into a downwards-pointing funnel.

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<sup>154</sup> See for example, Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity*.

<sup>155</sup> All Old English quotations from The Verse Epilogue to the Old English *Pastoral Care* are from Irvine and Godden, *The Old English Boethius* (2012), pp. 411-12. Translations are my own, with reference to the translation in Godden and Irvine’s edition.

Of primary interest here is the layout of the poem's first twenty-one lines, which are laid out in distichs. Each manuscript line contains two lines of verse (four half-lines in total), and the scribe demarcates the mid-distich break between these two lines with either a medial punctus, or extended inter-word space: large spaces at the end of verse lines 1, 5, 7 and 9 on folio 98r, and verse line 13 on folio 98v separate them distinctly from lines 2, 6, 8, 10 and 14, with which they share manuscript lines; pointing after verse line 3 on folio 98r and verse lines 11, 15 and 17 on folio 98v provides the same function of separation from lines 4, 12, 16 and 18, respectively. There is no obvious rationale for the choice between spacing or pointing as mid-line, inter-distich punctuation; the only such break to coincide with a major syntactic break is marked by a punctus (line 15), but puncti also occur where there are only minor syntactic breaks, or even no syntactic break at all (see lines 3 and 11).

**Image 7: From Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 20, fol. 98r<sup>156</sup>**

Verse text  
line numbers

1, 2  
3, 4  
5, 6  
7, 8  
9, 10

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<sup>156</sup> N. R. Ker, ed. *The Pastoral Care: King Alfred's Translation of St. Gregory's Regula Pastoralis. MS Hatton 20 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, MS Cotton Tiberius B. XI in the British Museum, MS Anhang 19 in the Landesbibliothek at Kassel*, EEMF 6 (1956), fol. 98r-v.

**Image 8: From Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 20, fol. 98v<sup>157</sup>**

Verse text  
line numbers

10, 11, 12

13, 14, 15

15, 16, 17

17, 18, 19

19, 20, 21

21, 22

22, 23

23, 24, 25

25, 26

26, 27

27, 28

28, 29

29

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30

30

30

What the punctuation *does* make clear is that visual demarcation of the metrical units was important to the scribe, and therefore provides strong evidence that the distich-arrangement of the nineteen lines of verse has been deliberately applied. This is important, because the system is not entirely successful. Line 10, ‘siððan hine gierdon / ða ðe Gode herdon’, begins at the mid-distich break on the last line of folio 98r, but the penultimate word ‘Gode’ overruns the right-hand edge of the text block, forcing ‘herdon’ onto the beginning of the first line of folio 98r, where it is separated off from the beginning of line 11 by a medial punctus.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

Together, lines 9 and 10 have twenty-five written syllables (that is, not taking resolution into account, which only shortens the line in its aural form). In terms of syllabic count, this is the longest distich in the poem (the remainder range from seventeen to twenty-two syllables). The loss of ‘herdon’ to the following manuscript line, then, shows the scribe having to break the system due to an over-long distich, though the medial punctus after ‘herdon’ maintains the demarcation of metrical division. The second manuscript line on folio 98v contains the distich of verse lines 13 and 14; however, the scribe carries on to include the word ‘ðæt’ from the beginning of line 15, even though it protrudes beyond the right-hand edge of the text block. This sets a pattern for the remainder of the text: the third manuscript line contains the distich of verse lines 15 and 16, and the first word ‘ðurh’ from line 17; the fourth manuscript line contains the distich of verse lines 17 and 18, and the first two words ‘riðum to’ from line 19. Lines 19 and 20 form the final distich before the introduction of the tapering triangle, but the end of this distich includes the word ‘To’ from the start of line 21. It is unclear why the scribe has broadly yet inconsistently adhered to a distich-form, but a few things are possible: writing the distich of lines 13 and 14, the scribe may have momentarily forgotten to leave off the old practice of continuing to write past the end of the metrical line, and so included ‘ðæt’ from the beginning of line 15. It is also worth pointing out that ‘ðæt’ is not only unstressed, but the first of a series of three unstressed syllables at the start of line 15: the location of ‘ðæt’ between the unstressed final position of line 14 and the unstressed first position of line 15 might have made its placement more flexible, and facilitated its location at the end of the second manuscript line instead of at the start of the third.<sup>158</sup> However, this positioning affects the aspect of the following lines: if

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<sup>158</sup> Graphic clustering of unstressed words and syllables will be treated further in Chapter Three.

the scribe had returned to the original distich-organisation, while maintaining the same degree of script-size and word-spacing, small blank gaps would have been left at the end of the third manuscript line after ‘breostum’, the fourth manuscript line after ‘landscare’, and (to a lesser extent) after the fifth manuscript line after ‘undiop’.

The next chapter explores in detail the idea that Anglo-Saxon scribal practice is informed by a broader cultural aesthetic preference for designed surfaces to be entirely covered, and looks at a number of examples where scribes can be seen to go out of their way to fill even small gaps that appear at the end of lines of text.

Therefore, the scribe of the epilogue may have been more invested in preserving the ‘fullness’ of the space than in preserving the experimental lineated layout. Certainly, an objective of fullness would explain the choice of distichs that reach across the whole writing space, rather than, say, lineation of the text in single lines bordered by blank space, in the manner of contemporary Latin verse lineation. An alternative explanation for the choice of distich-lineation over single-line lineation might be found in Janie Steen’s observation that in the Old English translations of two Latin riddles and the *De die iudicii*, a single Latin verse line is typically rendered as a pair of lines in the vernacular.<sup>159</sup> The near-distich organisation of lines 1-20 of the poem is beset with problems, and so it can only be guessed, rather than proven, that this was the scribe’s objective. However, the use of space and punctuation to mark lines, as well as the triangular-shape of lines 21-30 of the poem, points to a scribe who is interested in the graphic layout of the text. Coupled with the near-regularity of the placement of one distich per manuscript line, and the initial disruption of this near-regularity at the occurrence of an extremely long line of Old English, we can

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<sup>159</sup> Steen points to lines 4 and 5 of Aldhelm’s *Lorica*, which are translated respectively as lines 9-10 and 7-8 of Exeter Book *Riddle 35*: Steen, *Verse and Virtuosity*, pp. 89, 95, 169, 180.

reasonably hypothesise that the scribe was aiming to utilise verse lines to shape the written text, but encountered difficulties.

The final thirteen manuscript lines are arranged in a triangle which tapers downwards to a point. The triangular shaping of the denouement of a textual unit is found in two other Old English texts: *Thureth*, discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, and the Old English *Orosius* of London, BL, Add. 47967.<sup>160</sup> The tapering triangles of both *Thureth* and *Orosius* are ornamented: *Thureth* with a very rudimentary line drawing of a triangular shape around the tapering section of the poem, and some extremely minor flourishes; *Orosius* with a series of ornamented flourishes around the tip of the triangle. In Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 20 there is no graphic ornamentation, though the triangle in fact concludes not only the poem, but the manuscript as a whole. Such ornamentation at the close of a text evokes the use of larger script size or ornamentation at the end of papyrus rolls and early codices, where such features served to hermeticise the text, preventing the addition of material by later writers.<sup>161</sup> Beyond such hermeticising function, and its signification of the poem's terminal section, Susan Irvine has discussed how the triangle-shape of the Verse Epilogue potentially correlates with the poem's semantic interests in channelling water.<sup>162</sup> It is interesting that such exuberance in *mise-en-page* design converges upon the final text of the manuscript: the rhetorical flourish of the extended liquid metaphor is matched first by the scribe's experimentation with lineated Old English verse, and then with the terminal triangle.

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<sup>160</sup> This latter text was drawn to my attention in a private communication from Malcolm Godden.

<sup>161</sup> Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, transl. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín and David Ganz (1990), pp. 188-89; I am also indebted to Winfried Rudolf for his private comments on the hermeticisation of texts.

<sup>162</sup> Susan Irvine, 'The Alfredian Prefaces and Epilogue', in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, eds. Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul E. Szarmach (2015), 143-70, pp. 158-60.

Although the precise process of rationale or error behind the layout of this text is still open to debate, the demarcation of the metrical period is evidently a priority for the scribe, who has struggled, for whatever reason, to carry out with consistency a system of distich lineation. The scribe's reasons for attempting such a system may be illuminated by Malcolm Godden's analysis of the prologues and epilogues attached to the *Pastoral Care*, and particularly his suggestion that

the Alfredian writer was probably following Carolingian precedents in his use of a verse epilogue, such as Alcuin's commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes or his *De animae ratione*, which similarly use a verse epilogue to a prose text to address the readers directly, to recommend and justify the work.<sup>163</sup>

The allusive paratext may 'invoke the idea of a Charlemagne-like renewal of learning', conferring a borrowed authority on Alfred's own programme of textual production.<sup>164</sup> The choice of a lineated *mise-en-page* furthers this allusiveness, and the Latin tradition more broadly. Here, the dimensions of the page are capable of socio-political statement.

Christopher Abram suggests that *The Rhyming Poem* of the Exeter Book is another text in which we can identify evidence of lineated formatting being applied to a text as a 'reflection' of Latinate qualities.<sup>165</sup> Abram hypothesises that errors in the poem are attributable to 'line-end dittography', with the scribe copying from a lineated exemplar; where two visually-similar words appear at the ends of nearby or

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<sup>163</sup> Malcolm Godden, 'Prologues and Epilogues in the Old English *Pastoral Care*, and Their Carolingian Models', *JEGP* 110 (2011), 441-73, p. 466.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 453.

<sup>165</sup> Christopher Abram, 'The Errors in *The Rhyming Poem*', *RES* 58 (2007), 1-9, pp. 6-7.

adjacent lines, a combination of their vertical closeness and corresponding horizontal position at the right-hand edge of the text block facilitates the scribe's erroneous eye-skip back to the first of these words, when the second should be copied.<sup>166</sup> For example, Abram says that 'colað' at the end of line 69b 'is almost certainly an error for the near-synonymous 'cealdað'; the error, Abram suggests, arises from the occurrence of 'colað' in the same right-hand text block position only two lines earlier, at the end of line 67b.<sup>167</sup> Abram points out that the Exeter Book scribe's tendency to 'parablepsis' in the copying of *The Rhyming Poem* may have been exacerbated by an 'unfamiliar' lineated layout.<sup>168</sup> He suggests that the use of a distinctly Latinate system of lineation in the exemplar may have been a *mise-en-page* reflection of the 'influence of Latin poetics' in the poem, notably its sustained use of end-rhyme, a distinctly Latinate feature 'almost unparalleled in the Old English corpus'.<sup>169</sup>

These examples show scribes handling lineation in two texts, each with distinct elements of Anglo-Latin hybridity. Moreover, they show the scribes struggling either to apply or to process this unusual *mise-en-page*. This evidence points us towards two important conclusions: firstly, that there is a contemporary awareness of the potential for page layout to convey status and authority; secondly, that scribes consciously align different forms of *mise-en-page* with different linguistic categories, and are sometimes willing to experiment meaningfully with transgressions of these categories. Both of these ideas will be explored further in the course of this thesis.

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-6.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

### *Correspondences with Latin rhythmic verse*

This chapter has shown metrical structure to be a primary correlate of *mise-en-page*, from the rolls of classical antiquity, to the codices of Anglo-Saxon verse, where the prosodic differences between quantitative Latin and Old English poetry may account for contrasting *mise-en-page* practices. However, the Latin verse read and written in Anglo-Saxon England was not written solely in quantitative metres. There is also a long and well-attested tradition of rhythmic verse composition: Emily Thornbury notes that ‘Rhythmic hymns were common from the very beginning of the Anglo-Saxon period’, and she credits eight of the fifty poets in her ‘handlist of named authors of Old English or Latin verse in Anglo-Saxon England’ with composition of rhythmic forms of verse, particularly in hexameters or octosyllables.<sup>170</sup> Perhaps the most famous such verse is the *Carmen rhythmicum* of Aldhelm, now preserved only in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 751.<sup>171</sup>

Lines of rhythmic verse are measured not by the duration of syllables, but by syllabic number and stress. As has been discussed above, a general pedagogical focus on the ‘accentual’ or ‘strong-stress’ characteristics of Old English metre has, in the estimation of Fulk and his followers, masked the defining role of vowel quantity in Old English verse. However, a correlation between vowel quantity and ictus in Old English remains a very different system from Latin metres, where quantity is not only the determiner of ictus, but is equal from foot to foot and line to line. The metres of both Old English verse and Latin rhythmical verse are defined less by quantity and more by stress than Latin quantitative verse. We might note in particular an affinity between the structures of Old English metre and of Latin

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<sup>170</sup> Thornbury, pp. 81, 243-47.

<sup>171</sup> Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm* (1994), p. 19.

rhythmic octosyllables: the anatomy of the octosyllabic rhythmic line, with its set of four stressed and four unstressed syllables, is not dissimilar from that of the full Old English line, with its eight positions of four lifts and four dips; Andy Orchard notes this specifically in the context of Æthilwald's alliterative octosyllabic verse.<sup>172</sup>

What makes these similarities pertinent here is the issue of page layout: like Old English verse, Latin rhythmic verse is unlineated.<sup>173</sup> The distinction of the identity of rhythmic verse from quantitative verse given by this *mise-en-page* approach is reinforced by the terminology applied to rhythmic verse, which is referred to not as *versa*, like quantitative verse, but *prosa*, like prose.<sup>174</sup> We touched above on Isidore's impression of the 'shape' of verse; of prose, he says this:

Prose (*prosa*) is an extended discourse, unconstrained by rules of meter. The ancients used to say that prose is extended (*productus*) and straightforward (*rectus*). (...) Others say that prose is so called because it is profuse (*profusus*), or because it 'rushes forth' (*proruere*) and runs expansively with no set limit to it. (I.xxxviii.1)

'Rhythm', too, is addressed in this manner, listed after both 'prose' and 'metres', and seems to refer to the characteristics of rhythmic verse:

And related to this is rhythm (*rhythmus*), which is not governed by a specific limit, but nevertheless proceeds regularly with ordered feet. (I.xxxviii.3)

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>173</sup> Huisman, p. 110; Franklin-Brown, p. 234.

<sup>174</sup> See Franklin-Brown, p. 234; Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, transl. Willard R. Trask (1953), p. 150.

Rhythmic, then, is not metrically ‘unconstrained’ like prose, nor ‘governed by a specific limit’, like verse, and this intermediate status is equally suited to Old English verse. There are structural reasons why these systems may not have been seen to ‘turn back’ on themselves in the same way as quantitative metres. Thomas Bredehoft has suggested that the unlineated encoding of Old English texts implies a ‘structural linearity’, rather than the two-dimensional structure of lineated verse, with the horizontal element of its line, and the vertical element of its line-breaks.<sup>175</sup> What this ‘structural linearity’ means outside of a manuscript context is unclear. As Thornbury notes, the metrical principles of Old English and Latin rhythmic verse are not codified, but must have been deduced by ‘practitioners’ from existing verse.<sup>176</sup> Both Old English and Latin rhythmic verse share the freedom to vary their metrical patterning from line to line. While a poem written in quantitative hexameters must use fixed combinations of long and short syllables to achieve the correct overall quantity, Old English verse can more freely select from the various acceptable half-line ‘types’ (conventionally, pairings of certain types are preferred by poets, but this impetus does not arise from metrical requirements).<sup>177</sup> Similarly, rhythmical verse does not demand a consistent metrical scheme of stressed and unstressed syllables from line to line: in an analysis of Aldhelm’s *Carmen rhythmicum*, Andy Orchard notes that beyond the use of octosyllabic couplets, there is ‘no clear metrical structure’ at work.<sup>178</sup> By examining patterns of ‘natural stress’ in lines 53-60 of the *Carmen rhythmicum*, Orchard shows Aldhelm applying common patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables to pairs of lines; however, these paired lines are not always

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<sup>175</sup> Thomas A. Bredehoft, ‘Old English Verse in Two Dimensions’, Modern Language Association Convention, Vancouver (2015) [unpublished paper].

<sup>176</sup> Thornbury, p. 35.

<sup>177</sup> Terasawa, p. 34.

<sup>178</sup> Orchard, *Aldhelm*, p. 20.

consistent with one another, nor are ‘consecutive couplets’ consistent, except for the use of proparoxytonic stress, preceded by one unstressed syllable and followed by two unstressed syllables, in every line.<sup>179</sup> The strong alliterative patterning of Aldhelm’s octosyllables gives an additional level of sympathy with Old English verse characteristics.<sup>180</sup> Nor is this evocative style unique to Aldhelm; the same combination of proparoxytonic rhythmic octosyllables with alliterative patterning is, for example, found in a poem of the late eighth-century missionary Berhtgyth, written to her brother in England.<sup>181</sup> Orchard refers to this combination of prosodic features as part of an ‘“Aldhelmian” model’ of writing.<sup>182</sup>

The association of rhythmic and vernacular verse is supported by one of the rare contemporary references to the art of Old English poetry, made by Bede in his *De arte metrica*:

Videtur autem rithmus metris esse consimilis, quae est uerborum modulata compositio, non metrica ratione, sed numero syllabarum ad iudicium aurium examinata, ut sunt carmina uulgarium poetarum.

Moreover, *rithmus* seems to be entirely similar to *metris*, which [*rithmus*] is the measured arrangement of words, not through a metrical method, but through the number of syllables, having been weighed according to the judgement of the ears, as are the songs of vulgar poets.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid. pp. 20-21.

<sup>180</sup> See Ibid. pp. 43-54.

<sup>181</sup> Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (2005), pp. 94-95.

<sup>182</sup> Orchard, *Aldhelm*, p. 21.

<sup>183</sup> Latin text from Margaret Clunies Ross, *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics* (2005), p. 148,

The nominal and visual identification of Latin rhythmical verse with ‘prosa’ indicates that rhythmical verse was likely considered as a separate and medial category between the poles of metrically ‘constrained’ quantitative verse, and the ‘straightforward’ flow of prose. Such a positioning is supported by references to prose and the two kinds of verse as equally distinct categories in a brief request sent by an English missionary in Germany:

Similiter obsecro, ut mihi Aldhelmi episcopi aliqua opuscula seu  
prosarum seu metrorum aut rithmicorum dirigere digneris<sup>184</sup>

Æthilwald, a pupil of Aldhelm, sends his tutor a letter containing three Latin compositions, which he says are in ‘two varieties’, quantitative verse and rhythmic verse, each of which he goes on to describe in terms of metre, feet, measure, syllable counts and alliterative patterning.<sup>185</sup> If rhythmic verse is indeed considered to sit between quantitative verse on the one hand, and prose on the other, then it is possible that Old English verse, sharing with rhythmical verse both page layout and a syllabic-accentual system, is also considered to sit between these poles, as an intermediate form.

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translation my own with reference to Ross, *A History*, p. 148 and Jonathan Davis-Secord, *Joinings: Compound Words in Old English Literature* (2016), p. 5. On the reference to vernacular verse, see Davis-Secord, p. 5.

<sup>184</sup> Michael Tangl, ed., *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus* (1916), 144-4. Translation my own, with reference to that in Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (2006), p. 78.

‘Similarly I implore that you deign to direct to me some works of bishop Aldhelm, either of prose or of verse or of rhythmic verse’

<sup>185</sup> Orchard, *Aldhelm*, pp. 22-23. See also, Thornbury, pp. 148-49.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I have sought to demonstrate that *mise-en-page* is the product of multiple forces, influenced by material, social and historical conditions, sensitive to the form and genre of the texts it presents. Lineation is a format which is gradually adopted for Latin texts, perhaps as a reflection of linear order or continental heritage, but it is not deployed in Old English, excepting experimental episodes. I have proposed that the differences in *mise-en-page* between Old English and Latin quantitative verse in Anglo-Saxon England may be attributed not primarily to their relative status, but to their distinct metrical structures. Drawing attention to manuscript evidence of scribes interacting with lineated Old English verse, and considering the different aural ‘shapes’ of Old English and Latin quantitative poetry, we have seen that it is problematic to assume that the experiences of Old English and Latin verse were so similar as to leave scribes with the impression that their visual manifestation could be the same. A key idea arises from this: that *mise-en-page* is influenced by the scribe’s ‘experience’ of a text. This will be further explored in the next chapter, on the relationship between inter-word spacing and metrical structure in Old English manuscripts.

### **CHAPTER THREE: Inter-word Spacing in *Beowulf* and the Neurophysiology of Scribal Engagement with Old English Verse**

In Chapter One, I briefly observed that ‘blank space’ is as much a concern of *mise-en-page* as the organisation of graphic signs, such as writing or illustration. Blank space, as the status quo of the page, comprised solely of the absence of graphic marks, cannot be materially applied to the page in the same way as those marks. Nevertheless, the act of writing reforms and relocates blank space, as well as eradicating it, so that it plays a calculated role in the life of the page: the differences in the degree of space applied to headers, footers, margins and between paragraphs, on pages containing peripheral material or central texts, at the breaks between letters, words, sections and chapters, all contribute to the reader’s navigation of the text, the paratext, and any sectional divisions. Under various modern *mise-en-page* conventions, distinctions in spacing can indicate different genres and forms of writing, as with the difference in textual density of writing in broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, the layout of prose and verse in editions, or the indentation of extended citations in academic writing. Even the evenness of spacing within individual letters, which is the product of print culture, gestures towards the perceived stability of print over the ephemerality of handwriting. Through erasure, spacing may even be applied in a mode analogous to writing: this is particularly evident in medieval manuscript culture, in the surviving remnants of words scraped from the vellum.

The object of *mise-en-page* study may therefore be the location or creation of space and the utilisation of absence on the page, as much as the placement of graphic objects; we might address spacing as something which is ‘deployed’ rather than

‘applied’. The use of inter-word spacing will be the focus of this chapter. We have established in previous chapters that Old English metrical lines are not set off by line-breaks and space, while their Latin counterparts are. This chapter, however, will investigate a pattern noted by existing scholarship, yet never sufficiently explained: that the degree of blank space between words in Old English verse appears at least some of the time to reflect metrical structure, with larger spaces falling at the end of half-lines. This chapter will look for the presence and consistency of any such pattern within sample sets, before turning to consider a rationale for such deployment of spacing by contemporary scribes.

### **Thesis & hypothesis**

Previous analyses of inter-word spacing conducted by Robert Stevick and A. N. Doane have centred on the idea of equivalence between spacing on the page on the one hand, and features of verbal utterance on the other, with the deployment of spacing indicating a scribe’s interpretation of the text’s prosodic features, particularly timing.<sup>1</sup> This theory plays to a longstanding scholarly interest in the relationship between oral and literate modes of textual production and consumption. This was a particularly timely subject for Doane, who was writing shortly after the publication of O’Brien O’Keeffe’s theory of ‘transitional literacy’ in *Visible Song*. Equally important to the theory is the idea of time as a commodity of performance which can be mapped and manipulated through the dimensions of the page. It is this

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<sup>1</sup> The work of both scholars will be explored below. See A. N. Doane, ‘The Ethnography of Scribal Writing and Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Scribe as Performer’, *Oral Tradition* (1994), 420-39. Web. Accessed 22 August 2017 <<http://journal.oraltradition.org/issues/9ii/doane>>; Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*.

possibility of inter-word spacing functioning as an indicator of temporal movement which will inform the work of this chapter.

Indeed, the idea of spacing as a marker of time has already been raised as part of the investigation of the development of lineation in Latin texts carried out in Chapter Two: here, the frame of blank space around a column of hexametrical lines creates a system of visual organisation based on metrical and quantitative equality, and indicates the pause between temporally equal segments. Another example already discussed is the production of a visual caesura between the a-line and b-line in modern editions of Old English verse texts, which may imply or create a brief temporal pause in recitation. In both cases, the temporal and formal elements of the text are not accentuated simply by the absolute presence or absence of space, but also through the comparative size and positioning of spacing around and between text.

The potential for correlation between inter-word spacing and metrical structure in Old English verse texts can be readily seen on the manuscript page. In Chapter One we examined an image of the poem *Thureth* (Image 2, above); returning to this image, it is evident that many of the words which conclude a metrical half-line seem to be followed by spaces which are larger than the spaces which follow words which do not conclude a half-line.<sup>2</sup> The final line of the poem is broken into an unusual triangle-shape at the base of the poem, and so cannot be assessed alongside regular inter-word spacing; lines 1b and 10b finish at the right-hand margin and so their final words are not followed by inter-word spacing. On

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<sup>2</sup> The words which end the half-lines are: 'halgungboc', 'dryhten', 'þus', 'belegde', 'þance', 'wyrcean', 'wurðe', 'gesceop', 'he', 'gehwyrc', 'foldan', 'mæg', 'geþancie', 'waldend', 'gemynde', 'manega', 'gemearcian', 'lace', 'lean', 'findan'.

closer inspection of the remaining eighteen half-lines, we find that thirteen of them are followed by a space that is evidently larger than the space between words which do *not* fall at a metrical break. The space between ‘halgungboc’ and ‘healde’ in the first line, or ‘þus’ and ‘fraetewum’ in the second are clear examples. The majority of the lines are punctuated with a punctus after the b-line, suggesting that the scribe was not only conscious of the poem’s metrical organisation, but interested in displaying it; accordingly, in this particular text, the use of half-line metrical spacing may be deliberate.

Let us turn to an earlier Old English text, with less evidence of a creative design scheme than *Thureth*. Image 9, below, shows the opening lines of *The Wanderer* from folio 76v of the Exeter Book. Of the nine half-line breaks shown in this image, at least six can be clearly identified as larger than surrounding inter-word spacing.<sup>3</sup> Only after ‘miltse’ (line 2a) and ‘sae’ (line 4b) is this pattern not apparent, and given that ‘miltse’ falls close to the margin, its succeeding spacing could have been compressed by the scribe aiming to fit ‘þeahþe’ into the manuscript line.

**IMAGE 9: Opening of *The Wanderer* (from The Exeter Book, fol. 76v)<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> These are the spacings following ‘anhaga’ (line 1a); ‘gebideð’ (line 1b), ‘mod cearig’ (line 2b), ‘lagu lade’ (line 3a), ‘hondum’ (line 4a), and ‘wræc lastas’ (line 5a). It is possible that the spacing after ‘sceolde’ (line 3a) fits this pattern too. Quotations from *The Wanderer* in this paragraph are taken from the manuscript source, and original manuscript spacing replicated, with reference to Jones, *Shorter Poems*, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> Image from Bernard J. Muir, ed. *The Exeter DVD: The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry* (2006) [CD-ROM].

What we have observed in these two brief samples is an apparent pattern in which metrical order is reflected in inter-word spacing, where the horizontal width of the spacing after the concluding word of any given a-line or b-line tends to be greater than the horizontal width of the spacing following words which do not fall at a metrical boundary. The pattern is not entirely consistent: between the two images above there are a total of twenty-seven half-lines in which we are able to visually assess the inter-word space: of these, twenty half-lines (74% of the total) were followed by wider space evidently visible to the reader's eye. The remaining seven half-lines could be measured empirically rather than visually (i.e. using a ruler or similar tool) to determine whether any of them also fit the pattern; some, however, evidently do not. Any analysis of inter-word spacing would need to account for the presence of such inconsistencies.

This chapter will examine the presence and patterning of inter-word spacing, with a particular focus on extracts from *Beowulf* in the Nowell Codex. There are a number of questions the chapter seeks to answer: whether, in the absence of lineation, the comparative word-spacing of Old English poetic texts *in situ* provides some indication of metrical structure; whether the spacings might alternatively or additionally be influenced by syntactic structures; whether this corresponds or contrasts with what we know about the conditions of scribal activity; whether we are witnessing the scribe's own reading of metrics on the page, and whether spacing might indicate 'footprints' which are unique to different scribes.

Before coming on to address these questions, I will establish some background by reviewing the development of inter-word spacing in the Latin West,

before moving on to review existing scholarship on word-spacing in Old English verse texts, and Robert Stevick's theory of 'graphotactics' in particular. Building on this work, the chapter will undertake to measure and analyse sample sets of text from *Beowulf*, laying out a full methodology. The chapter will be aiming to locate its explanation of any spacing patterns within a psychologically and materially realistic view of scribal activity, and will address the psychological concept of 'chunking' information for retention in working memory. Finally, the chapter will consider the potential impact of inter-word measurement for Anglo-Saxon scholarship, and make suggestions for future study.

#### *Introduction of word-spacing in the Latin West*

For a while during the first century, the words of Latin manuscripts were separated by points, but this gave way to *scriptio continua*, continuous writing without either graphic or spatial indicators as to where words began or ended, which was the norm for scribes of the early medieval period.<sup>5</sup> In the seventh century, Irish scribes adopted inter-word spacing, probably in imitation of Syriac Gospel books, and the practice spread to England in the eighth century, when the practices of script separation and other methods of textual notation developed by the Irish were being taught to Anglo-Saxon writers.<sup>6</sup> Parkes presents inter-word spacing alongside a broader set of graphic innovations developed by Irish scribes to bring clarity to Latin texts, including the development of symbols of abbreviation, punctuation and sectional division.<sup>7</sup> These developments show scribes treating the non-native Latin

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<sup>5</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Saenger, pp. 83-84; Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 23-26.

<sup>7</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 23-26; on how the development of various graphic cues and punctuation from the late seventh century aided the physiological process of reading, see Saenger, p. 32.

language as a *written* language, broken into its grammatical parts in a reflection of the learning process engendered by engagement with ‘the works of ancient grammarians’; Parkes further observes a converse practice in early Irish writing in the vernacular, where ‘those words which are grouped round a single chief stress, and which have a close syntactical connexion with each other, have been copied as a single unit’.<sup>8</sup> This blurring of the boundaries between words which might have been linked in verbal recitation is something we will encounter in our examination of inter-word spacing, below.

The separation of words by space in the Anglo-Saxon period had not yet developed into what Saenger calls ‘canonical separation’ (the application of space after *every* word), but adhered to an earlier phase of development which he calls ‘aerated script’.<sup>9</sup> We can see aeration in later records of vernacular English poetry, in which prepositions and short function words are often combined with the word that follows, and in which space frequently delineates morphemic blocks rather than single words (for example, separating prefixes or the elements of compound words).<sup>10</sup> To a degree, this can be seen in my transcription of *Thureth*, in Chapter One, where short, single-syllable words are often combined, or attached to the beginning or end of a neighbouring word: the words ‘7hinge þancie’ are particularly interesting, with the ‘ge-’ prefix separated from ‘þancie’, and attached to two short words, abbreviated ‘ond’ (7) and ‘him’.

Saenger accounts for the development of inter-word spacing in European Latin manuscripts as part of a broader cultural shift in the purposes and contexts of

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<sup>8</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>9</sup> Saenger, pp. 32-44.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 41-42.

textual engagement: unseparated scripts corresponded with a specifically classical mode of textual consumption, in which well-educated readers had access to a small corpus of works, which they prepared slowly for oral recitation, subvocalizing as they read; the words needed to be divided mentally for reading (*lectio*) before the text could be understood (*enarratio*).<sup>11</sup> Saenger characterizes medieval needs as different, where the reader might aim to read faster and from a wider corpus of materials, for academic and reference purposes; here, the introduction of inter-word spacing allowed the eyes to move faster across the page, facilitated silent reading, and made the activity of reading more accessible in a generally more educated society.<sup>12</sup> The clear division of words could also aid a reader for whom neither Latin nor Greek was a native language.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, Saenger suggests that the development of spacing practice reflects a motion towards methods of encoding that treat the ‘word’ as a grammatical rather than verbal unit.<sup>14</sup>

Saenger’s account of the development of inter-word spacing approaches reading as a neurophysiological process; applying this to a reading of Old English verse texts requires the definition of a small number of key terms. When a reader looks across a text, her eyes do not move in a smooth motion, but in jumps (called ‘saccades’) between points of rest (called ‘fixations’).<sup>15</sup> The ‘eye-voice span’ is ‘the variable quantity of text that a reader has decoded but not yet pronounced at any given moment during oral reading’; the ‘foveal vision’ is ‘the area of acute vision’, while the ‘parafoveal vision’ is made up of letters on either side of the fovea, which remain visible, but less acutely so (for modern readers this is fifteen to twenty

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter One, p. 77 (above); Saenger, pp. 8-9, 11, 85.

<sup>12</sup> Saenger, pp. 11, 13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97; see also Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Saenger, pp. 44-45.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

characters on either side of the fovea).<sup>16</sup> On the relation of vision to inter-word spacing, Saenger writes:

The suppression of space between words causes a ... reduced visual field, or tunnel vision, in adults... they experience a reduction of the span within which preliminary details of words or letters can be recognized. They also experience reduced peripheral vision... Only scripts that provide a consistently broad eye-voice span to oral readers can sustain rapid, silent reading as we know it.<sup>17</sup>

For classical and medieval readers of *scriptio continua*, the reader's parafoveal vision was significantly smaller than that of a modern reader of separated texts, and these readers relied upon 'ocular regressions' (reading back along the line) to determine whether they had identified the different words correctly.<sup>18</sup> Aerated script 'helped the reader to reduce ocular regressions by providing points of reference for orientation of the eye movements within a line of text'.<sup>19</sup> Fixations of vision are not on space, but on words (in particular, the end of long words), and the motion of the modern eye is 'determined by graphic units delineated by space'; Saenger believes it was similar for the medieval reader.<sup>20</sup>

We might then wonder about the implications of the apparent presence of metrical spacing in Old English verse texts. Old English vernacular texts, according to Saenger, are written in 'hierarchical word blocks', a system that utilises 'a larger

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<sup>16</sup> Saenger, p. 6; See also, Adrian Staub and Keith Rayner, 'Eye movements and on-line comprehension processes', in eds., M. Gareth Gaskell and Gerry Altmann, *The Oxford Handbook of Psycholinguistics* (2007), 327-42, p. 328.

<sup>17</sup> Saenger, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

quantity of space placed exclusively between words and a smaller quantity of space placed indiscriminately between either syllables or words'.<sup>21</sup> If we can identify a third degree of spacing, a larger quantity of space following words that conclude the metrical unit of an a-line or a b-line, we can speculate as to how this might affect the reader's ocular physiology. If the eye is not drawn to spacing, but to 'graphic units delineated by space', then perhaps the larger spacing on either side of a metrical unit would facilitate the movement of the reader's saccades not simply between words or clusters of words, but between visually delineated metrical units. The text, then, may be capable of helping a reader to recognise metrical structure and to read metrically, despite the absence of lineation. In two of the texts we have examined, such use of spacing appears to be deliberate: the Verse Epilogue to the *Pastoral Care* utilised large spaces mid-distich; similarly in *Thureth*, the heavy use of metrical pointing raises the possibility that the larger spacing applied at the majority of half-line endings is deliberate. Julia Crick has commented that certain manuscripts are 'deliberately designed to assist the delivery of acoustic texts', and spacing could conceivably be one such design feature, for certain scribes.<sup>22</sup>

Understanding whether spacing in the broader corpus of Old English verse could have been deployed by scribes as a systematic aid to reading will rest upon a statistical analysis of spacing patterns. In the two brief samples from *Thureth* and *The Wanderer* discussed above, 24% of relevant half-lines were not followed by spacing that was clearly larger than the spacing deployed elsewhere in the line. If the half-line spacing pattern were intended to be a system, this seems a remarkably high

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 35, 42, 44.

<sup>22</sup> Julia Crick, 'English vernacular script', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 1, c. 400-1100, ed. Richard Gameson (2011), 174-86, p. 182, quoted in Thomson, 'Whistle while you work', p. 99.

instance of anomaly. If such a high rate of ‘anomalies’ were present in other sample texts, it would certainly challenge the idea that half-line spacing is being applied systematically. We would then face the task of assessing how a pattern of spacing could come into being, without that pattern being the product of an applied system.

### **Previous scholarship on the significance of inter-word spacing**

In 1970, Norman Eliason reviewed a monograph by Robert Stevick titled *Suprasegmentals, Meter, and the Manuscript of Beowulf*, itself published two years earlier. Eliason writes:

besides its function as a morphological separator of some kind or other, spacing also seems to serve sometimes as a syntactic or metrical indicator. This has often been noticed before but only in passing or incidentally...<sup>23</sup>

He goes on to comment that spatial separation between half and full-lines of Old English verse in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts had been noted before, but suggests that the inconsistency of this spacing had been an obstacle to study of the phenomenon.<sup>24</sup> Stevick’s book was just such a serious study, and over the course of four and a half decades following this initial publication, Stevick continued to work on the analysis of inter-word spacing.<sup>25</sup> More precisely, his analysis centred on what he called

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<sup>23</sup> Norman E. Eliason, Review of ‘Robert D. Stevick, *Suprasegmentals, Meter, and the Manuscript of Beowulf*.’, *Speculum* 45 (1970), 175-78, p. 175.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Some of the other works are Stevick, *Beowulf: An Edition*; Robert D. Stevick, ‘Graphotactics of the Old English ‘Alexander’s Letter to Aristotle’’, *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia: International Review of English Studies* 40 (2004), 3-13. Further, Stevick has created a digital resource: Robert D. Stevick, *Old English Graphotactics* (1999), Web. Accessed 10 December 2017 <<http://faculty.washington.edu/stevickr/graphotactics/>>.

‘graphotactic features’; he defines these as,

the incidence and measure of spacings between strings of written symbols of a text, where both the graphic symbols and the spacings carry linguistic information.<sup>26</sup>

In other words, his interest is not so much in the presence or absence of space, so much as the relative size of that spacing at different points in a text, and the correspondence of that relative spacing with information encoded in the text.

Stevick’s work is the most critical predecessor to this chapter, and before I come to assess its strengths and weaknesses, I will locate it within the wider context of other scholarly approaches to inter-word spacing. Much of this scholarly work centres on the idea of word-division rather than graphotactics, focusing on the presence or absence of space in absolute terms between words and morphemes (what Stevick calls ‘the simple binary distinction of space vs. no-space’), rather than on the width of that space.<sup>27</sup> Julius Zupitza’s 1882 facsimile edition of *Beowulf* includes a facing-page transcription, which retains many features of the original manuscript text (including original line-breaks). Of his approach to word-division, Zupitza writes:

I have also adhered to the punctuation of the manuscript, but I have hyphenated words or syllables belonging together; and, on the other hand, I have separated by a vertical line two words wrongly written as one.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Stevick, *Old English Graphotactics*. Web. Accessed 22 August 2018 <<http://faculty.washington.edu/stevickr/graphotactics/>>.

<sup>27</sup> Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*, p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> Julius Zupitza, *Beowulf: Autotypes of the Unique Cotton ms. Vitellius A XV in the British Museum, with a transliteration and notes* (1882), pp. xix-xx.

Zupitza's language is heavily value-laden, with denomination of what 'belongs' and what is 'wrong'; there is no consideration here of what these apparently transgressive word-divisions in the manuscript might mean, or what purpose word-division might serve beyond the signification of discrete lexical units, though Zupitza does acknowledge the difficulty of identifying 'whether the scribe intended one or more words'.<sup>29</sup> He appears to handle word-division alongside or within the category of 'punctuation'.

For a more recent approach to preserving manuscript features in editions of *Beowulf*, we can look to Bruce Mitchell and Susan Irvine's *Beowulf Repunctuated*, published in 2000. The editors adopt an approach of 'no punctuation where the sense is clear without any', avoiding the interpretative implications of imposing modern punctuation on a text which is sparsely punctuated in its manuscript witness.<sup>30</sup> Mitchell and Irvine touch upon the categorisation of word-division with or alongside punctuation when they cite Lass, who writes about the scribe's apparent expectation that the reader could parse semantic units without the aid of punctuation as part of the same 'matter of interest' as the scribe's elision of space between certain unstressed words and adjacent stressed words.<sup>31</sup> *Beowulf Repunctuated* does not reproduce the manuscript word-spacing. This is perhaps for the same reason that the editors do not reproduce the original unlineated layout: the application of modern conventions of lineation is deemed 'fundamental to the success of [their] attempt to clarify the text and to enhance the reader's appreciation of *Beowulf*', with the original absence of lineation seen merely as 'the result of economy'.<sup>32</sup> Adopting

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. xx.

<sup>30</sup> Mitchell and Irvine, see esp. pp. 1-2, 26-30.

<sup>31</sup> Roger Lass, 'Interpreting vs. Disappearing: On Texts as Historical Objects', *Selim* 3 (1993), 7-25, pp. 19-20, quoted in Mitchell and Irvine, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Mitchell and Irvine, p. 6.

modern word-division allows the reader clear access to *Beowulf*'s lexical information, in exchange only for the loss of spacing information of uncertain value.

Scholarly uncertainty around the value of original word-spacing has already been noted in Eliason's review of *Suprasegmentals*, above. Eric Stanley, reviewing O'Brien O'Keeffe's *Visible Song* in 1991, suggests that scribes were uninterested in spacing, and indeed, that 'the incidence of spacing in the great poetic codices seems to be as random as that of punctuation'.<sup>33</sup> To make his point he considers the contrasting spacing used between the *ge-* prefix and main constituent element of words in parallel sections of *Soul and Body I* and *Soul and Body II*, finding no pattern.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, this kind of scepticism regarding the value of word-spacing has not yet prevented scholars from viewing Old English word-division as part of an 'authentic' manuscript representation of the text, elided from modern editions in much the same spirit of correction and accessibility as other forms of graphic and textual emendation. Fulk and Cain agree that the 'normalization of manuscript spacing' is an inevitable adjustment by editors who want to help their modern readership, but they further suggest that Anglo-Saxon scribes,

tended to treat unstressed words as affixes and words bearing more than one stressed syllable as if they were not a single word

and that,

Old English texts of this period organize syllables not into words but

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<sup>33</sup> Stanley, Review, p. 199.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

into groups arranged around a primary stress.<sup>35</sup>

The manner in which unstressed words or elements may be graphically attached to neighbouring words is flexible. For example, Stanley observes that scribes often affixed *ge-* as a suffix to a preceding word, rather than as a prefix to the word ‘to which it belongs’, and suggests that the entry for *ā-ge-fyllan* in the *DOE* is, in consequence, based on an erroneous reading of ‘æge fille’.<sup>36</sup> This example hints at the importance of gathering data on inter-word spacing, and the potential impact of this study on linguistics and literary criticism.

We can examine the spatial grouping and separation of words in two verse lines:<sup>37</sup>

	/ x	x	/ x	/	\	x	x	/	
<i>Beowulf</i> 14	folce <sup>27</sup>	to <sup>0</sup>	frofre <sup>66</sup>	fýren <sup>42</sup>	ðearfe <sup>60</sup>	on <sup>EL</sup>	geat <sup>80</sup>		
	x	/	x	/	x	x	/	/	x
<i>Beowulf</i> 1082	þæt <sup>51</sup>	he <sup>0</sup>	ne <sup>36</sup>	mehte <sup>63</sup>	on <sup>37</sup>	þæm <sup>87</sup>	me <sup>EL</sup>	ðel <sup>84</sup>	stede <sup>118</sup>

These lines have been marked up in two ways: above the lines, conventional notation demarcates stressed (/) and unstressed (x) syllables; between each letter-string, superscript numerals represent the width of the space between the end of the concluding letter of one word, and the start of the opening letter in the next. This

<sup>35</sup> R. D. Fulk, Christopher M. Cain, *A History of Old English Literature*, 2nd ed. (2013), pp. 65, 2.

<sup>36</sup> E. G. Stanley, ‘Unlikely-looking Old English verb forms’, in *Meaning in the History of English: Words and texts in context*, eds. Andreas H. Jucker, Daniela Landert, Annina Seiler and Nicole Studer-Joho (2013), 39-60, pp. 53-54.

<sup>37</sup> Text marked up with spacing is taken straight from the manuscript, with reference to the emendations and word-division of *Klaeber’s Beowulf*. All other quotations from *Beowulf* are from this edition, and translations are my own.

width has been measured in pixels, using high-resolution images from the British Library. This means that in line 14, between the rightmost tip of the tongue of the minuscule ‘e’ at the end of ‘folce’, and the leftmost tip of the crossbar of the minuscule ‘t’ at the start of ‘to’, there are 27 pixels of space containing no ink.

In line 14, the unstressed ‘to’ is written continuously with ‘frofre’, the first syllable of which is stressed; ‘fyrenðearfe’ takes primary stress on the resolved syllables of ‘fyren’, and secondary stress on the first syllable of ‘ðearfe’, and each composite element is encoded as a standalone visual unit. These divisions can be accounted for according to the rules laid down by Fulk and Cain, above. In line 1082, we see the short unstressed ‘ne’ (‘not’) affixed not to the following stressed initial syllable of ‘mehte’, but to the preceding short stressed word ‘he’ (‘he’). The two other shortest inter-word spaces in the line fall between the ‘ne’ and ‘mehte’ (thirty-six pixels) and between ‘on’ and ‘þæm’, both unstressed (thirty-seven pixels). The single word ‘meðelstede’ (‘meeting place’) is broken not into two, but into three parts: the two syllables of ‘meðel’ are resolved, taking primary stress, but nevertheless they are broken across the line-break. Apparently the scribe was concerned more with filling the line than with preserving the resolved morpheme as a single visual unit. The first syllable of ‘stede’ also takes primary stress, and is separated from the end of ‘meðel’ by a significant eighty-four pixels; this could be an attempt to differentiate the stress-break between ‘meðel’ and ‘stede’ from the enforced line-break between ‘me’ and ‘ðel’, but we would need additional, comparable data to make such a claim.

Addressing the use of spacing around short, unstressed elements, Geoffrey Russom suggests that ‘prepositions, conjunctions, and similar unstressed constituents

have a rather weak identity as words, an identity often lost altogether when they are absorbed by neighbouring stressed words.<sup>38</sup> In a very similar way we might see the ‘absorption’ of these constituents as arising from speech patterns: Saenger explains that the non-separation of monosyllabic prepositions and other short function words in Latin is a feature derived from ‘ancient rules of pronunciation, where proclitic and enclitic words received neither tonic nor rhythmic accentuation’.<sup>39</sup> The advent of ‘canonical separation’ meant that the text ‘ceased to reflect speech’.<sup>40</sup> Lass makes a similar point about Old English, when, in a discussion about *Beowulf*, he assumes that,

the scribe was (generally) writing ‘by ear’ ... and that therefore he perceived certain adverbs and prepositions as clitics, and contrariwise certain (what we consider) affixes as independent ‘words’.<sup>41</sup>

O’Brien O’Keefe’s *Visible Song* was published seven years before *Space Between Words*, but in a parallel vein the development of word-division is one of the features she utilises in her argument for the developing literacy in versions of *Caedmon’s Hymn*.<sup>42</sup>

Word-spacing, then, has been approached as a feature of the manuscript text which may indicate grammatical information, and which may expose the way scribes interact with the texts they are copying. This has allowed scholars to utilise word-

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<sup>38</sup> Geoffrey Russom, *Beowulf and Old Germanic Metre* (2009), p. 13.

<sup>39</sup> Saenger, p. 31.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>41</sup> Lass, pp. 19-20, quoted in Mitchell and Irvine, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> R. M. Liuzza, ‘Introduction’, in ed. R. M. Liuzza, *Old English Literature: Critical Essays* (2002), pp. xi-xxxvi, p. xvii.

division as a tool in broader discussions of prosodic structure, which is perhaps the kind of ‘incidental’ usage to which Eliason refers in his review. In 2003, Thomas Bredehoft examined word-divisions in compound names in *Beowulf*, using the evidence of spacing to suggest that ‘monosyllabic secondary elements were given secondary stress’.<sup>43</sup> More recently, Megan Hartman has utilised spacing features to examine stress in Old English verse, suggesting that the irregular spacing of quasi-compounds in poetry of the Nowell Codex, Exeter Book and Junius 11 is a scribal indication of stress falling on the second constituent element.<sup>44</sup> Nor are such studies limited to texts written on vellum, as shown in Elisabeth Okasha’s 2003 chapter on Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon inscriptions.<sup>45</sup>

The idea that scribes were purposefully and systematically deploying spacing in a way that meaningfully represented their interpretation of linguistic, metrical, syntactic or other structures of the text requires some assessment both of scribal capabilities and scribal inventiveness. Debates about the relative competence or incompetence, creativity or conservatism of scribes, as they transferred texts from exemplar to page, have been recently summarised by Simon Thomson; his overview highlights a shift in Anglo-Saxon studies, from the idealisation of the undetectable and highly mechanical scribe towards a critical appreciation of scribal work as both interesting and potentially creative.<sup>46</sup> Scribes also come in for explicit criticism, with Michael Lapidge, Douglas Moffat, Leonard Neidorf and Kenneth Sisam all

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<sup>43</sup> Thomas A. Bredehoft, ‘Secondary Stress in Compound Germanic Names in Old English Verse’, *JEL* 31 (2003), 199-220, p. 199.

<sup>44</sup> Megan E. Hartman, ‘Stressed and Spaced Out: Manuscript-Evidence for Beowulfian Prosody’, *Anglo-Saxon* 1 (2007), 201-20.

<sup>45</sup> Elisabeth Okasha, ‘Spaces Between Words: Word Separation in Anglo-Saxon Inscriptions’, in *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300-1300*, ed. Martin Carver (2003), 339-49.

<sup>46</sup> Thomson, ‘Whistle While You Work’, pp. 106-111

challenging the abilities and understanding of the *Beowulf* scribes.<sup>47</sup> The issue of scribal comprehension and incomprehension of textual features is an important one for this chapter: if spacing is somehow reflective of a scribe's engagement with metre, syntax and semantics, how do we handle an apparently anomalous deployment of spacing, which has no apparent correlation with any of these metrics? Can we assess such an anomaly as the result of 'scribal incomprehension', as Neidorf has in his work on proper names, or might the anomaly be the result of an alternative mechanical factor, perhaps one over which the scribe had limited control?<sup>48</sup> Neidorf uses the work of Stevick and Hartman to suggest that 'when names are spaced into divisions that are senseless and devoid of metrical information, this may be taken as a sign of scribal incomprehension', and more broadly uses the apparent scribal unfamiliarity with many proper names to propose a 'centuries-old' date of composition for *Beowulf*.<sup>49</sup> Alternatively, might the apparent anomaly in fact indicate some further information which we, as modern readers, are unaware of?

Thomson examines 'the sensory experience of producing [texts]', suggesting that scribes were actively engaged with the sound of the poetry they copied, and '[represented] metrical rhythms in their writing'.<sup>50</sup> One way he approaches this issue is to observe the scribal habit of ending folios with a complete half-line across the four major codices, aligning the metrical and the *mise-en-page* boundary. Within each codex this occurs on more than 40% of the folios, rising to 75% in Junius 11.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>48</sup> Leonard Neidorf, 'Scribal errors of proper names in the *Beowulf* manuscript', *ASE* 42 (2013), 249-69, p. 254.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp. 254, 249.

<sup>50</sup> Thomson, 'Whistle While You Work', p. 100.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 118.

Thomson interprets this high incidence as evidence of a deliberate effort by scribes, albeit one that was not fulfilled at least 20% of the time, and therefore ‘was not absolutely necessary, or perhaps (...) was challenging to achieve’.<sup>52</sup> He notes that although Old English verse lines tend to be semantic units, and that scribes could therefore conceivably be ending folios at semantic rather than metrical breaks, the scribes do end folios with verse lines which are not breaks in the semantic flow, and they do not seem to attempt to end pages of prose at semantic breaks. He concludes:

it is clear that scribes sometimes organised their copying around the contents of the texts and that they seem to find it easier to do so when those texts were structured metrically, and, further, that they sometimes ... organised their copying on purely metrical criteria...<sup>53</sup>

Thomson’s work hints at scribal practice which is conscious of metrical form, and to a certain degree interested in representing that form.

*Robert D. Stevick’s theory of ‘graphotactics’*

The idea that scribes may be graphically aligning their writing with metrical patterns (as well as syntactic and linguistic patterns) is considered in the aforementioned series of works on inter-word spacing carried out by Robert Stevick between 1968 and 2004. In 1968, Stevick published *Suprasegmentals, Meter, and the Manuscript of Beowulf*, a monograph which was followed by *Beowulf: An Edition with Manuscript Spacing Notation and Graphotactic Analyses* (1975). Stevick’s initial objective in *Suprasegmentals* is summarised in the introduction to the edition of

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 118-19.

<sup>53</sup> Thomson, ‘Whistle While You Work’, p. 121.

*Beowulf*:

I have tried to show that there is a clear set of correlations among linguistic, metrical, and graphic features of the manuscript text: specifically, patterns in the positions of spacing in letter-strings and the measure of spacings, on the one hand, correlate in complex but definite ways to features of syntax and meter, on the other.<sup>54</sup>

In 2004, Stevick published an article on graphotactics in *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*, which immediately precedes *Beowulf* in the Nowell Codex, and is also copied by Scribe A.<sup>55</sup> Electronic introductions and editions for both the *Letter* and *Beowulf*, complete with notation to indicate measures of inter-word spacing, have been published online by Stevick.<sup>56</sup> Together, this series of works lays out an innovative and intriguing, if problematic, thesis for the patterning and purpose of inter-word space in *Beowulf* and beyond. I will begin with a review of Stevick's general thesis, and his mode of notation, before moving on to some methodological and analytical issues that call his conclusions into question. Finally, I will consider how the approaches of this present chapter might build on Stevick's work, while looking to rectify these issues and move towards new conclusions.

Much of the groundwork is laid out in *Suprasegmentals*. Stevick's starting point is that the words in *Beowulf* are not spaced evenly, as in modern print editions, but variably.<sup>57</sup> He is interested not only in word-division (i.e. the absolute presence or absence of space around and within lexical units), but in the variable quantity of

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<sup>54</sup> Stevick, *Beowulf: An Edition*, p. x.

<sup>55</sup> Stevick, 'Alexander's Letter to Aristotle'.

<sup>56</sup> See above, p. 161 n. 25.

<sup>57</sup> C. J. E. Ball, Review of '*Suprasegmentals, Meter, and the Manuscript of Beowulf*. By Robert D. Stevick.', *RES* 21 (1970), 476-78, p. 476.

space employed for such divisions. Crucially, Stevick rejects the notion that ‘variation’ of inter-word spacing can be attributed to ‘chance or unskillfulness’.<sup>58</sup> Rather, the 1968 monograph seeks a set of principles for which the variable spacing might act as ‘a system of notation’, looking to grammatical, syntactic, metrical and phonological structures in the text.<sup>59</sup> His initial examination of ‘continuous text’ in *Suprasegmentals* is an analysis of lines 433-455 of *Beowulf*: he, like Eliason, notes that ‘[t]ypically, spacing between half-lines of verse ... is greater more often than not than is spacing between morphs within the half-lines’, but also notes that in his sample set this rule fails to apply in at least ten percent of cases.<sup>60</sup> His response to the issue of inconsistencies in the pattern of wider spacing at half-line and line endings is to reject the idea ‘that the spacing is specifically a device to mark verse divisions’; instead he proposes that ‘something more than half-line marking’ lies behind the deployment of space in the manuscript.<sup>61</sup> Stevick suggests that spacing in poetic texts is related to the features of oral delivery, ‘to represent rhythm of timing features or the correlated features of pitch and stress variation’.<sup>62</sup> In *Suprasegmentals*, his examination of sample material from *Beowulf* leads him to conclude:

Variation in spacing – between half-line phrases, within fixed-phrases, among elements of free phrases – corresponds to variation in interval between morphic sequences with such regularity as to be attributable only to the scribe’s sense of speech rhythms.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Quotation from Robert D. Stevick, ‘Scribal Notation of Prosodic Features in *The Parker Chronicle*, Anno 894 [893]’, *JEL* 1 (1967), 57-66, p. 57.

<sup>60</sup> Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*, pp. 61-64, also 13-14.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

He accounts for such ‘variation in interval’ through an isochronous reading of Old English metre (for example, proposing an increased ‘rate of syllable-utterance’ where there is a higher number of syllables between major stresses), following the work of John C. Pope, and rejecting the objections to an isochronous system raised by A. J. Bliss.<sup>64</sup> This alignment with Pope, though fairly major in Stevick’s thesis, as well as controversial in the broader context of metrical studies in Old English, is not given extensive discussion in the monograph.

Stevick develops his own ‘system of notation’ for the indication of inter-word spacing, in which the text is laid out in lineated verse lines, with superscript numerals between letter-strings representing the degree and character of spacing between those words and morphs (my own practice in this chapter is based on this). The main weakness of the system is that non-measurement figures, such as the end of a manuscript line, are also represented numerically, which creates some visual confusion for the reader. Stevick initially employs this system for the short textual extracts used in *Suprasegmentals*, before applying it to the entirety of *Beowulf* in his edition. Here follows an extract from the opening of the online edition:<sup>65</sup>

[ B E O W U L F ]

0001 HWAET<sup>3</sup> WE:<sup>2</sup> GA:R<sup>-1</sup>-DE<sup>9</sup>na<sup>3</sup> in<sup>0</sup> ge:ar<sup>-3</sup>-dagum.<sup>6</sup>  
 0002 the:od<sup>-2</sup>-cyninga<sup>9</sup> thrym<sup>2</sup> ge<sup>-2</sup>-fru:non<sup>4</sup>  
 0003 hu:<sup>0</sup> dha:<sup>3</sup> aethe<sup>2</sup>lingas<sup>3</sup> ellen<sup>9</sup> fre<sup>2</sup>me<sup>1</sup>don.<sup>6</sup>  
 0004 Oft<sup>3</sup> scyld<sup>3</sup> sce:fing<sup>3</sup> sceathena<sup>9</sup> thre:a<sup>1</sup>tum<sup>4</sup>  
 0005 mone<sup>1</sup>gu=<sup>4</sup> mae:gthum<sup>4</sup> meodo<sup>-3</sup>-setla<sup>9</sup> of<sup>-2</sup>-te:ah<sup>3</sup>

This innovative work on inter-word spacing received support from a number of reviewers. Eliason felt that the initial monograph had convincingly linked spacing

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 64-65, 67-68.

<sup>65</sup> Robert D. Stevick, ed., ‘Beowulf: An Edition with Manuscript Spacing Notation’, *Old English Graphotactics* (1999), Web. Accessed 13 December 2017  
 <faculty.washington.edu/stevickr/graphotactics/beowulf\_html.html>.

with stress and successfully shown spacing to reflect the ‘timing features’ of ‘terminal contours’, but that Stevick had only confirmed the consensus view on degrees of stress, and had been less successful in arguing for evidence of pitch.<sup>66</sup> Thomas Cable recalled his own work on ‘timing features’ in Old English verse, and found that these were ‘generally’ reflected in the manuscript spacing; he writes, ‘I believe that coherent patterns are there, waiting to be abstracted by the patient investigator’.<sup>67</sup> C. J. E. Ball writes that ‘[t]he suggestion that variation in spacing often correlated with the syntactic and the syllabic structure of the text will readily be admitted’.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, many of the ideas Stevick puts forward are appealing and persuasive: that inter-word spacing in *Beowulf* suggests some kind of a pattern, though not a straightforward representation of metre; that spacing is capable of conveying information which may be metrical, syntactic, linguistic, or of an otherwise systematic nature; that the positioning or absence of space may be evidence of a scribal response to the oral rhythms of the text; that the scribes’ mental processes are an integral feature of the production of spacing. However, there are serious weaknesses in Stevick’s approach, both in the methodology used for the gathering of raw data, and with the logic employed for the analysis of those data.

The chief methodological issue is one of accuracy in measurement. Stevick’s concern is with the comparative widths of the spaces between letter- strings, and it is therefore a measurement of these spaces which must form this raw data. However, Stevick rightly observes a fundamental problem in taking such measurements. What he calls ‘contextual variations’ in the written text (perhaps primarily changes in hand

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<sup>66</sup> Eliason, pp. 176-77.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Cable, Review of ‘Beowulf: An Edition with Manuscript Spacing Notation and Graphotactic Analyses, Robert D. Stevick, Ed.’, *Computers and the Humanities* 11 (1977), 49.

<sup>68</sup> Ball, p. 477.

size, and therefore spacing size) create a constantly fluctuating scale of measurement across folios, or even the page.<sup>69</sup> So if a scribe turns a page or begins a new stint and writes in a somewhat larger hand and with larger spacings than previously, the absolute values of the measurements of the new spacings will not be directly comparable with those of the last page or stint. Stevick's response to this difficulty is yet more difficult: he rules out any 'simple mechanical means of measuring spacing'; instead he assigns a value on a scale of 1 to 7 to each inter-word space by looking at each in comparison to his wider view of spacing in the line; he includes a tree diagram to explain the scale as follows:<sup>70</sup>

**IMAGE 10: Key to Stevick's inter-word numeration<sup>71</sup>**

Stevick's system, then, relies purely on his visual impression of the page. No matter how experienced a reader of manuscript material, we cannot hold this methodology up as mechanically accurate. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult for subsequent scholars to check or challenge the values he produces. Ball criticises Stevick's lack of transparency on the difficult issue of what indeed constitutes the

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<sup>69</sup> Robert D. Stevick, 'The measure of spacing', *Old English Graphotactics* (1999), p. xxii. Web. Accessed 1 December 2017

<[http://faculty.washington.edu/stevickr/graphotactics/PDF\\_files/Measure.pdf](http://faculty.washington.edu/stevickr/graphotactics/PDF_files/Measure.pdf)>.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxi-ii; private email communication from Robert D. Stevick (22 June 2016).

<sup>71</sup> Stevick, 'The measure of spacing', p. xxi.

‘space’ between words, noting for example that Stevick ‘consistently ignores the hair-line run-off strokes of final *e*, *l*, and *r*’.<sup>72</sup>

A second methodological issue lies with the selection of datasets. *Suprasegmentals* relies on small clusters of lines which behave in grammatically or metrically congruous ways, between which Stevick can contrast spacing practice and devise rules. Where there are exceptions or lines which are unusable, Stevick sometimes draws his observations from extremely small sample sets.<sup>73</sup> Ball is unconvinced that Stevick has uncovered any ‘statistically significant’ relationship between spacing and prosodic or suprasegmental features.<sup>74</sup> He goes on to observe a further limitation in terms of the quantity of text assessed, for Stevick’s work in 1968 was limited to *Beowulf*.<sup>75</sup>

There are also two key problems with Stevick’s analytical approach to the data gathered. The primary issue is his early assumption that ‘spacing features now appear to be as much an intentional part of the manuscript text as are the alphabetic and other symbols’.<sup>76</sup> He characterises the production of spacing in terms of ‘manipulation’ and ‘conventions’, and specifically as a ‘system of notation’.<sup>77</sup> Stevick does not provide a reason for this assumption that spacing is deliberate and systematic, but it lies behind his approach to the entire project: he is searching for a totalizing system of rules that will explain the variation of all inter-word spacing according to some kind of linguistic, semantic, syntactic, metrical or other criteria, excepting an acceptable level of anomaly, as we would expect to find within other

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<sup>72</sup> Ball, p. 476.

<sup>73</sup> As in his analysis of ll. 433-55 of *Beowulf* (see pp. 172-73, above), or of differences in the spacing of Hrothgar’s name (Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*, pp. 26-27).

<sup>74</sup> Ball, p. 476.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 477.

<sup>76</sup> Stevick, *Beowulf: An Edition*, p. x.

<sup>77</sup> Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*, pp. 7, 18; Stevick, ‘Scribal Notation’, p. 57.

conventions, such as spelling.<sup>78</sup>

Stevick struggles to find any such correspondence. In *Suprasegmentals* he attempts to account for changing patterns in the spacing of Hrothgar's name by looking at the grammatical and metrical differences in the lines, but ultimately he produces no consistent patterns. In this way he is forced towards an assessment of suprasegmental criteria, such as pitch.<sup>79</sup> Ball is particularly critical of this approach, writing:

In the case of suprasegmentals this difficulty is simply that we have no knowledge whatsoever of Old English intonation and juncture, so that the establishment of a correlation between two independently described variables (spacing and suprasegmentals) is out of the question.<sup>80</sup>

Ultimately, it seems that in the absence of a clear correlation between spacing and the known features of Old English verse, Stevick has been forced to resort to an interpretation of features which remain unknown, which appears to have been coloured by his own interpretation of spacing patterns.<sup>81</sup>

We can run a simple test on Stevick's assumption of systematic spacing by looking at all instances of full metrical lines which are repeated verbatim or near-verbatim in *Beowulf*: we would expect the spacing in these lines to be identical or very similar. Andy Orchard has listed all of the repeated lines in *Beowulf*, and they

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<sup>78</sup> On spacing accuracy and anomaly in conventions, see Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, see esp. p. 81.

<sup>80</sup> Ball, p. 477. See also C. L. Wrenn, Review of '*Suprasegmentals, Meter, and the Manuscript of Beowulf*' by Robert D. Stevick.', *MÆ* 38 (1969), 309-10, p. 310.

<sup>81</sup> See also Ball, pp. 477-78.

are recorded below, along with their inter-word spacing.<sup>82</sup> This spacing is not, as above, provided in pixels, as differences of scale and hand-size between digital images means that absolute pixel-values are not comparable between folios; instead measurements are provided as ‘units’ relative to hand size, and the process for devising these measurements will be fully explained in the ‘New Methodology’ section, below. A double forward-slash indicates a manuscript line-break (“//”), while a capital ‘X’ indicates an unreadable or otherwise unmeasurable value. Lines written by Scribe B are in bold, to distinguish them from the lines of Scribe A.

It is immediately clear that the identical or near-identical lines have not had spacing applied to them in a highly consistent manner, although there are some similarities.

**Table 5 (a – i): Comparative measure of spacing in repeated lines of *Beowulf***

a)

<b>Line no.</b>	<b>Line spacing</b>
75	Manigre // mægþe <sup>2.1</sup> geond <sup>1.6</sup> þis <sup>0.6</sup> ne <sup>1.9</sup> middan <sup>1.4</sup> gearð
1771	Manigum <sup>2.8</sup> mægþa <sup>1.3</sup> geond <sup>2.5</sup> þýsne <sup>1.8</sup> mid // dan <sup>2.1</sup> gearð

<sup>82</sup> Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 86. I have only included Orchard’s examples where the repeated line occupies the same number of positions: l. 500, ‘þē æt fōtum sæt frēan Scyldinga’, occupies only the on-verse at l. 1166a, and so has not been included here. As above, marked up text is transcribed from the manuscript, with reference to *Klaeber’s Beowulf*.

b)

Line no.	Line spacing
197	on // þæm <sup>1.7</sup> dæge <sup>1.9</sup> þýsses <sup>1.6</sup> lifes
790	on <sup>1.2</sup> þæm <sup>3.3</sup> dæge <sup>1.3</sup> þýs <sup>0.7</sup> ses <sup>2.9</sup> lifes //
806	on <sup>0</sup> ðæm <sup>1.7</sup> dæge <sup>1.5</sup> þýs <sup>0.8</sup> ses // lifes

c)

Line no.	Line spacing
371	Hroðgar <sup>2.1</sup> maþelode <sup>1.4</sup> helm <sup>1.9</sup> scýldinga
456	Hroð <sup>1.1</sup> gar <sup>2.1</sup> maþelode <sup>2.6</sup> helm <sup>1.6</sup> scýldinga
1321	Hroð <sup>0.7</sup> gar <sup>2.1</sup> maþelode <sup>1.9</sup> helm <sup>1.8</sup> scýldinga

d)

Line no.	Line spacing
529	Beowulf <sup>1.5</sup> maþelode <sup>1.1</sup> bearn <sup>1.5</sup> ecgþeowes
631	Beowulf <sup>0.3</sup> maþelode <sup>1.8</sup> bearn <sup>1.8</sup> ecgþeowes
957	beowulf // maþelode <sup>2.1</sup> bearn <sup>1.6</sup> ecþeowes
1383	BEOwulf <sup>3.3</sup> maþelode <sup>1.7</sup> bearn <sup>1.5</sup> ecgþeo//wes
1473	BEOwulf <sup>4.1</sup> maþelode <sup>2.8</sup> bearn <sup>1.8</sup> ecgþeowes
1651	BEOwulf <sup>1.6</sup> maþelode <sup>2.7</sup> bearn <sup>2.3</sup> ecg <sup>0.6</sup> þeowes
1817	Beowulf <sup>3.2</sup> maþelode <sup>2.6</sup> bearn <sup>2.4</sup> ecg <sup>0.7</sup> þeowes
<b>1999</b>	<b>Bio<sup>0.7</sup> wulf<sup>1.2</sup> maþelode<sup>1</sup> bearn<sup>1.9</sup> ecgðioes</b>
<b>2425</b>	<b>Bio<sup>0.9</sup> wulf<sup>?</sup> maþelade<sup>0.3</sup> bearn // ecgðeowes</b>

e)

Line no.	Line spacing
1271	gim <sup>1</sup> fæste <sup>1.4</sup> gife // ðe <sup>0.4</sup> him <sup>0.2</sup> god <sup>1.5</sup> sealde
<b>2182</b>	<b>gin<sup>0.5</sup> fæstan // gife<sup>1.3</sup> þe<sup>0</sup> him<sup>1.3</sup> god<sup>1.2</sup> sealde</b>

f)

Line no.	Line spacing
1685	ðæm <sup>1.6</sup> selestan <sup>1.2</sup> be /// sæm <sup>2.2</sup> tweonum
<b>1956</b>	<b>Þæs<sup>0</sup> se<sup>1.3</sup> lestan<sup>0.9</sup> bi<sup>0.8</sup> sæm<sup>1.1</sup> tweo // num</b>

g)

Line no.	Line spacing
<b>2052</b>	<b>Æfter<sup>0.6</sup> hæleþa<sup>0.3</sup> hryre // hwate<sup>1.1</sup> scýldungas</b>
<b>3005</b>	<b>Æfter<sup>0</sup> hæleða<sup>1.1</sup> hryre<sup>1.2</sup> hwate<sup>0.6</sup> scildingas</b>

h)

Line no.	Line spacing
1646	hæle <sup>1</sup> hilde <sup>0.5</sup> deor <sup>2.25</sup> hroðgar <sup>1.9</sup> gretan
1816	helle <sup>2.8</sup> hilde <sup>1.2</sup> deor <sup>1.5</sup> hroð // gar <sup>2.1</sup> grette

i)

Line no.	Line spacing
<b>2862</b>	<b>wiglaf // maðelode<sup>1.5</sup> weohstanes<sup>0.9</sup> sunu</b>
<b>3076</b>	<b>Wig<sup>X</sup> laf // maðelode<sup>1.1</sup> wihstanes<sup>1.6</sup> sunu</b>

We can begin with the first such line to appear in the text, ‘manigre mǣgþe  
 geond þisne middangeard’ (‘to many a people throughout this middle-earth’, l.75),  
 which is repeated at line 1771 with only an apparent change of number to ‘manigum  
 mǣgþa’, and the use of ‘y’ for ‘i’ in ‘þysne’. The spacings following ‘manigre’ and  
 ‘manigum’ cannot be compared because of the positioning of the line break in l. 75.  
 Through the rest of the two lines, only the spacing between ‘þisne’/‘þysne’ and  
 ‘middangeard’ is similar, at 1.9 and 1.8 units respectively. In l. 75 ‘þisne’ is broken  
 by a very small gap of 0.6 units, but remains whole in l. 1771; in l. 1771, the  
 morpheme ‘middan’ is divided into its two constituent syllables by the line break,  
 but remains whole in l. 75. Nor is it simply the case that one line has bigger gaps  
 across the board: between ‘mǣgþe’/‘mǣgþa’ and ‘geond’ the spacing is significantly  
 wider in l. 75 than l. 1771, while between ‘geond’ and ‘þisne’/‘þysne’ it is notably  
 wider in l. 1771. The two lines are grammatically very close, and metrically parallel,  
 yet they are graphically very different.

Lines 197, 790 and 806 present us with near-identical lines (‘on þǣm [ðǣm]  
 dæge þysses līfes’, ‘on that day of this life’) which handle their spacings in distinct  
 ways. Lines 197 and 790 are the closest semantically, both referring to Beowulf, and  
 following depictions of his strength; line 806 refers to Grendel caught in Beowulf’s  
 grip. All three lines present the space between ‘on’ and ‘þǣm’/‘ðǣm’ differently:  
 with a line break, a small gap, and no gap respectively. Lines 197 and 806 place the  
 same degree of spacing between ‘þǣm’/‘ðǣm’ and ‘dæge’ at 1.7 units, but in line  
 790 this is almost doubled with a space of 3.3 units. Nor are lines 197 and 806

otherwise similar: it is hard to compare the space between ‘on’ and ‘þāem’/‘ðāem’ or ‘þysses’ and ‘līfes’ because of the positioning of line breaks in the two lines, but the spacing between ‘dæge’ and ‘þysses’ is not strikingly similar, and l. 806 breaks ‘þysses’ into syllables with a small break, as does l. 790, while l. 197 does not.

Ball has comprehensively dismissed the idea that we can assess the suprasegmental features of Old English in the way Stevick describes, but if we were to assume that any among these identical lines certainly shared congruent features of delivery (such as timing, pitch contours, intonation and stress), surely it would be the formulaic speech-openings of Hrothgar, Beowulf and Wiglaf, and particularly where these occur in the same narrative position of a fitt-opening. Ll. 1383, 1473, 1651 and 1817 (‘Bēowulf maþelode [maðelode], bearn Ecgþeowes’, ‘Beowulf spoke, son of Ecgtheow’) occur at the openings of fitts 11, 22, 25 and 27 respectively. The large spacing following Beowulf’s name is possibly related to a deliberate effort to draw attention to the name graphically, rather than representing features of oral delivery, as shown by concurrent use of capitalization in three of the fitt-opening lines (in ll. 1383 and 1473, the name is entirely capitalized, in l. 1651, only the first three letters are capitalized, and in l. 1817 the name is not capitalized at all). The very large spacings following ‘Bēowulf’ in ll. 1383, 1473 and 1817 are indeed much bigger than those in the equivalent position in those lines which do not open fitts (ll. 529, 631 and 957 from Scribe A, and ll. 1999 and 2425 from Scribe B). Three of the lines (1473, 1651 and 1817) have very similar spacing between ‘maþelode’/‘maðelode’ and ‘bearn’, with ll. 1651 and 1817 using similar spacings after ‘bearn’ and between the first two syllables of ‘Ecgþeowes’, and ll. 1383 and 1473 opting for smaller gaps after ‘bearn’, and not splitting ‘Ecgþeowes’. Ll. 1651 and 1817 are extremely similar in terms of spacing, but do not share this high level of similarity with the other two

identical lines.

Ultimately, our analysis of identical and near-identical lines does not suggest that spacing operates as a ‘system of notation’, although it might show that scribes are more likely to apply similar spacing in certain similar circumstances. What these circumstances are, and why such similarity is only sporadically applied, will be the subject of the second part of this chapter.

The final issue with Stevick’s analytical approach is a lack of concern with what spacing as a system of notation would mean for scribes, or how it would fit into the work of a scriptorium. He hypothesizes about what graphic signs would have been available to scribes if they had wished to indicate timing features in their work, settling on spacing as the most likely option, and acknowledges that scribes would not have needed to consciously choose such a system from a series of options.<sup>83</sup> These hypotheses and his solution are not rooted in sufficient thought about manuscript contexts or the working conditions of scribes. While this chapter will consider scribal habits further in the analysis of new material below, we might briefly consider some evidence against spacing as a system of notation. Firstly, the absence of any written sources discussing such a system is somewhat damning, for we do have various accounts of other forms of notation. In Alcuin’s poem on scribes and their craft, he prays that they do their job well:

Let them zealously strive to produce emended texts and may their  
pens fly along and follow the correct path. May they distinguish the  
proper meanings by colons and commas / and put each point in the

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<sup>83</sup> Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*, pp. 18-20.

place where it belongs.<sup>84</sup>

There is clear reference to punctuation, and euphemistic reference to the ‘path’ of the pen writing letters, but no distinct reference to the use of space; of course, if spacing-as-notation was utilised only in vernacular texts, we might not expect there to be any record of the practice. We should also consider the additional time pressure such practice would place on scribes who were required not only to copy out their exemplars, but also accurately to represent the timing and delivery features of their text in spacing; a rigorous and consistent system of inter-word spacing would certainly have impacted the pace of production dramatically, requiring far more intervention than the application of other occasional cues such as punctuation and capitalisation. Stevick’s theory that inter-word spacing was a conventional system of notation, with every space (bar reasonable anomalies) representing suprasegmental or other linguistic and metrical information, does not account for the psychological or material realities of scribal interaction with texts.

This evidence, and the remaining evidence of the sets, demonstrates primarily that there is no evidence of a rigorous, systematic application of spacing; even those lines which we could most reasonably expect to share the various features of intonation and pace are not recorded identically on the page. There are moments of apparent correlation between lines, but given the smallness of the sample set, and the failure of such correlations to appear with consistency, it is not possible to suggest that these form a pattern approaching the rigorousness that Stevick posits, nor in Stevick’s samples do we find explicit evidence of even isolated intentionality

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<sup>84</sup> From Gameson, ‘Anglo-Saxon Scribes and Scriptoria’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 1: c.400–1100, ed. Richard Gameson (2011), 94-120, p. 113.

attached to spacing, as there is to other inconsistent systems, such as punctuation.<sup>85</sup>

‘Applied’ marks may be erroneous, but they must be actively encoded; spacing, on the other hand, can be ‘deployed’ incidentally and passively during the process of writing.

We cannot assume, then, that spacing is conventional or systematized, even where clear patterns are found; nor on the other hand can we assume that scribes were necessarily entirely unwitting of any such patterns. The problem of a non-systematic pattern is an interesting one which will prompt us to fully consider the impact of the physical and material conditions of the scriptorium on the production of spacing. This approach is necessarily more amorphous and perhaps less satisfying than Stevick’s attempt to create an inductively-devised and rigorous set of rules. These differences of approach perhaps arise from the half-century that lie between Stevick’s first book and the writing of this chapter. In the mid-twentieth century, high-profile revisions to Eduard Sievers’ metrical theories were in vogue, and the meticulous, mechanical scribe was idealised; today, manuscript and material studies have moved into the central ground of Anglo-Saxon scholarship, and credit for the creative potential of scribes has received greater appreciation from critics.<sup>86</sup>

### **A New Methodology and data collection**

To build on Stevick’s research, we require a quantity of raw data, showing us word-spacing relative to other structural features in a sample set of text; from this we can determine the degree of any discernible pattern in inter-word spacing, and theorise

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<sup>85</sup> For an example of apparently intentional use of spacing as punctuation, see above, pp. 137-39.

<sup>86</sup> On metrical theories, see above, pp. 133-36; on scribal creativity, see Simon Thomson, above, pp. 168-70.

how such a pattern arises. While my methods for selection, processing and analysis of these data will distinguish this study from Stevick's, it is important to note how indebted any research in this area must be to his work; the design of a new methodology will, hopefully, serve to build upon the promise of his initial observations.

Firstly, it is preferable to work from samples of continuous text (as Stevick does in one chapter of *Suprasegmentals*) rather than isolated lines which provide only small quantities of data, and which have likely been chosen to exhibit some particular feature (and may therefore not be representative of spacing in the text more widely). For continuity with Stevick's work, I have opted to use *Beowulf* as my sample text, selecting three pages written by Scribe A, and three pages written by Scribe B. The pages were chosen with no criteria other than that they provided a good level of legibility, while pages with significant amounts of wear or smudging have been avoided. While this chapter takes *Beowulf* as its focus, it will go on to consider other verse and prose material, notably *The Wanderer*. While it is not possible to do a full-scale examination of these texts in a single chapter, a broad overview should indicate patterns, provoke questions and identify lines of future enquiry.

Secondly, the approach taken in this chapter relies upon a more mechanically accurate method of measurement than that adopted by Stevick. Spacing figures have been extracted using image-manipulation software, with high-quality facsimile images obtained through the British Library's digitized collections and Bernard Muir's Exeter Book CD-ROM.<sup>87</sup> Although the beginnings and ends of letter-strings

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<sup>87</sup> Bernard J. Muir, ed. *The Exeter DVD: The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry* (2006) [CD-ROM].

are often difficult to determine, the use of pixels as a system of absolute measurement keeps the potential margin of error as small as possible.

Despite devising this method to construct a more accurate numerical model of the page, it is important to understand the serious limitations on any such exercise, both in terms of modelling the page, and in terms of identifying precisely what the page itself consists of, and which ‘version’ of the page we are choosing to use. In the first place, as we have seen from Ball’s criticism, and will further encounter in the methodological difficulties discussed below, determining what constitutes the beginning and end of a word is beset by mechanical and categorical problems.<sup>88</sup> It can be difficult to identify what is part of the scribe’s stroke, and what may be a subsequent ornamental addition, or even a smudge. The general principle of determining beginnings and endings has been to include any part of a stroke clearly intended to be part of the letter by the scribe, whether ornamental or more apparently ‘standard’, and including graphic marks above or below the *x*- height and baseline respectively, so long as they are part of the morpheme. Graphic marks which are not clearly a part of the character, or appear to be smudging, have not been included. Human measurement creates a likelihood of inconsistencies in measurement, but by taking a large number of measurements, and using a very small unit of measurement (the pixel), it is possible to create a good impression of patterns on the page. The production of a database also allows results to be checked and challenged by other researchers.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> See above, pp. 175-6; and below, p. 187 n 89, p. 188 n. 90.

<sup>89</sup> The major challenges of consistency I found in this project was firstly the difficulty of determining what was contained ‘within’ a letter, and the secondly question of whether to rotate digital images to make written lines fully horizontal before measurement. This latter practice was extremely time-consuming, and presented a problem when scribes wrote unevenly, or a page had heavy warping. Some experimentation measuring the spacing of both rotated and un-rotated texts suggested it was unnecessary, with consistent spacing values emerging under both conditions. It was therefore

Beyond this, the choice and analysis of a ‘base image’ from which to take measurements has attendant difficulties. Photographic images may be manipulated or distorted, and the manuscript itself will expand and contract according to conditions of humidity and temperature, raising the question of what, precisely, is being captured and measured.<sup>90</sup> Digital images are not always uniform in quality, and while some words survive clearly on the vellum, others will not: smudging, warping and burning all affect the readability of the manuscript, and of course there may have been slight bleeding of the ink from the edges of the pen-stroke over time. Often the ink is not an entirely dissimilar colour from the vellum, and it can be difficult to identify the border between the presence and absence of ink. Warping and curvature of the page at the internal margin also risks manipulating the original word-spacing of the manuscript. Ultimately, some spaces between words will not be measurable at all, due to extreme warping, partial erasure, or other obscuration. These measurements, therefore, can never be a completely accurate representation of the page; the best way to overcome this difficulty is not to abscond from accuracy altogether, but to devise a set of principles and to produce the best set of measurements possible under the conditions, as well as to approach the resulting statistics with caution, as broadly representative of the shape of the text.

As discussed above, fluctuations in handwriting size make comparison of spacing between folios problematic. Furthermore, we cannot guarantee that each digital image presents the manuscript page at exactly the same scale. For example, if

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abandoned as a practice during the data collection process, and heavily warped sections were excluded from measurement. A computerized system, while a significant task to program, could eliminate these issues.

<sup>90</sup> I am grateful to Peter Stokes for making these observations in a private email communication (12 March 2015), and for stressing the problems and difficulties in taking measurements from the page, which has informed my approach here.

the image of one folio is slightly larger than the image of another folio due to camera position, then a pixel will represent a smaller amount of real-world space in that image. To overcome this difficulty, I have adopted a version of the method described by Paul Saenger in *Space Between Words*, and indexed the pixel widths to a uniform feature of handwriting, to produce final measurements which are units of local handwriting size.<sup>91</sup> I have selected the largest letter ‘o’ on each page, and measured the internal width ( $x$ ). By dividing the number of pixels between any two words ( $y$ ) by the value  $x$ , we get a numerical value ( $z$ ) which represents the space *relative to local handwriting size*, rather than an absolute value of the space itself. I refer to these  $z$ -values as ‘handwriting units’. In this way the spacing of different texts, and different pages within the same texts, can be compared with one another more directly. For example, we know from Table 5, part d), above, that the space following the word ‘Bēowulf’ in line 1473 is greater in relation to the hand size of fol. 165v (at 4.1 handwriting units) than the space following the same word in line 1651 in relation to the hand size of fol. 169r (at 1.6 units).

Therefore, in the analysis of results below, all inter-word spacing is measured not in terms of absolute space, such as millimetres or pixels, but *in relation to local hand size*. So if ‘amounts of spacing’ on different folios are shown to be identical, it does not mean that they would necessarily have an identical measure in millimetres, but rather that if the hand size differs on one of the folios, the spacing only differs to the same degree. For example, if the spacing between words A and B (value  $x$ ) on Folio 1 is measured at 40 pixels, and width of the largest ‘o’ on the page is 10 pixels (value  $y$ ), the distance between A and B will be  $40/10 = 4$  units (value  $z$ ). For each

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<sup>91</sup> Saenger, p. 27.

individual measurement, value  $x$  must be re-calculated, and for each folio, value  $y$  must also be re-calculated. So, if on Folio 2 the space between words C and D (value  $x$ ) is measured at 80 pixels, and the largest 'o' on the page is 20 pixels wide (value  $y$ ), then the distance will be measured at  $80/20 = 4$  units (value  $z$ ). In these two cases, the absolute widths (value  $y$ ) are different, but the widths in relation to the varying hand size on each page, as indicated by the 'o'-width (value  $x$ ), both measure at 4 unites (value  $z$ ).

What emerges from the critiques of Stevick's method and the limitations of the new methodology is both the difficulty of producing a definitive base image, and the problematic nature of measuring it accurately once it has been produced. The methodology presented here has attempted to mitigate these difficulties through the use of high-quality images and a new measuring system based on numerical accuracy, but it is important to recognise that it is not possible to produce a watertight set of numbers that accurately recast the page in numerical dimensions. The page is constantly shifting in material terms, and the definition of what constitutes its boundaries is open to debate. Therefore, the new methodology produces an image, a sense of how the spacing is working, and there is probably constant potential to improve it and to make the measurements more representative of the page. By taking a range of measurements across a number of texts, one can collect enough data to overcome the inherent inaccuracy of the measurement process well enough to produce an image that is informative and useful; however, single measurements are subject to enough difficulties that great caution must be exercised if they are considered individually.

### *Presenting the data*

The database in which spacing data have been collected comprises Appendix B. Selected annotated transcriptions of the material written by Scribe A comprises Appendix C, and extracts of this have been included for analysis in this chapter, below. I have retained Stevick's use of superscript numerals; here, the number represents spacing units. I have made several changes to Stevick's system: 'EL' represents a line break in the manuscript ('end line'); 'POINT' is inserted after a value where the space between words contains a point; 'X' represents an unmeasurable value, which is generally the result of excessive warping, burn marks, smudging, or wear. Absent values due to obscuration are more common close to margins, where the page is more susceptible to damage from exposure, and where curvature is less avoidable.

The text has been only sparsely emended, with all spellings, word-spacings and capitalisation appearing as *in situ*; a few formatting changes have been introduced: metrical lineation is used to highlight the relationship between spacing and metrical structure; unreadable material is represented by an ellipsis framed by square brackets ([...]); superscript and interlinear material is flagged with a circumflex on either side (^); abbreviations are expanded and italicised. Klaeber's *Beowulf* has been used as a guide. Ultimately, this results in a layout which benefits from Stevick's notation system while improving legibility for the reader. Sometimes words are written continuously or near continuously which we know to be separate lexical units (for example, 'in' and the first element of 'geārdagum' in l. 1a). In these cases, the space in between these units has been measured. In situations where space sometimes appears, but the separated elements are not discrete lexical units (for

example, the elements of compound words, or the ‘ge-’ prefix) I have not measured any intervening space where there does not appear to be any. This of course involves a decision to prioritise our understanding of what comprises a lexical unit within the measurement of spacing, and may call for further exploration. It is also not always entirely clear if a lexical unit has been visually divided. See, for example, ‘forgeaf’ on l.17 of fol. 132r, which has here been treated as a single unit, but might be argued to have a space between its two syllables.

### **Data analysis**

The individual measurements between words across the three folios were gathered into three groups: spaces which fall at the end of a half-line (labelled as ‘Position 1’), spaces which fall at the end of a full line (labelled as ‘Position 2’) and spaces which do not fall at a metrical break (these make up the majority of values, and are labelled as ‘Position 0’). From these groups, average values were produced for each folio, to show the average amount of space found at each position. The highest and lowest values for each position were also recorded, to show the range of values around the average.

In the tables below, these groups have been split to distinguish the values of Scribe A from Scribe B. There are two main observations from which to begin an analysis of spacing practice, which we will look at in turn.

**a) On average, the scribes use a greater amount of space at Positions 1 or 2, than at Position 0.**

Below is a table showing the average units of spacing deployed at each position, broken down by scribe and folio.

**Table 6: Average spacing units at different metrical positions across six folios of *Beowulf***

Scribe/Folio	Positions			
	0	1	2	Average across positions
<b>Scribe A</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.2</b>
132r	0.9	1.4	2.1	1.2
156v	1.0	1.4	2.0	1.2
173r	1.0	1.8	1.8	1.3
<b>Scribe B</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>
177v	0.7	1.3	1.3	0.9
180v	0.8	1.5	1.6	1.0
195r	0.7	1.0	1.2	0.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.1</b>

This is a strong trend, being true of both scribes, on all of the tested folios.

This first and most immediately striking observation has, as discussed above, already been noted by Stevick and others, but here for the first time it has been demonstrated statistically. We are witnessing an apparent hierarchy of spacing in relation to metrical structure. Stevick instinctively rejects the idea that patterns in spacing are merely a matter of chance, and the data here offer support for that rejection.

Furthermore, spacing at Position 2 is on average larger than spacing at Position 1. Such a hierarchy is entirely in line with modern metrical understandings of Old English verse, and is mirrored in modern editorial layout conventions: the

least spacing is applied after words which do not conclude a metrical unit (a single space at Position 0); more space is applied after words which conclude the a-line (a caesura at Position 1); the most space is applied after words which conclude the b-line (a line-break at Position 2). In both modern and manuscript texts, spacing patterns indicate that half-lines are subordinated within the structure of the full line.

The ratios of difference between the spacing applied to gaps of different positions is broadly similar across the sample set. Spacing at Position 2 is, on average, around twice as much as spacing at Position 0 (ranging from 1.7 to 2.3 times), while the spacing at Position 1 ranges from 1.4 to 1.9 times on average the amount of spacing at Position 0. This gestures towards some degree of consistency in the graphic representation of metrical hierarchy. However, the idea that this consistency is evidence for a systematic deployment of spacing is challenged by the next finding.

**b) The range of spacing values within a single position is high.**

If spacing were being used systematically to indicate metrical structure, we would expect to see a scribe producing the same or almost the same amount of spacing (relative to hand size) at each metrical position.<sup>92</sup> There might be anomalies, but we would anticipate a set of unit measurements with a fairly narrow range, and the vast majority of those measurements falling at or very close to an average value.

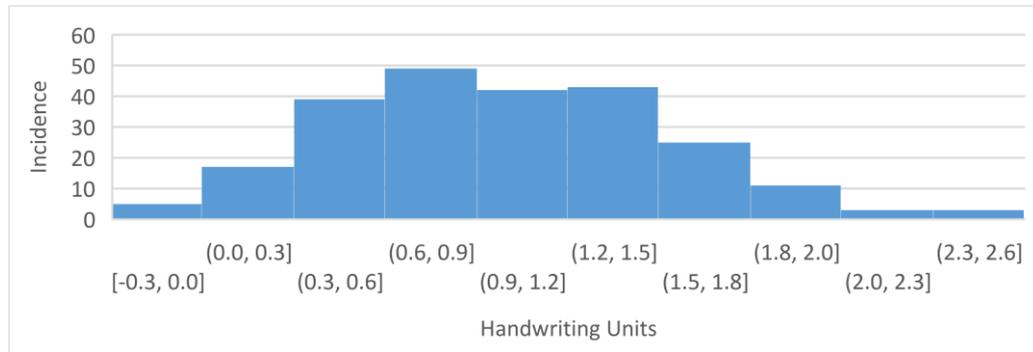
This is not what we see in the measurements taken from *Beowulf*. As suggested above, the averages for each position point to an apparently clear hierarchy in spacing; however, the range of values within each position is in fact

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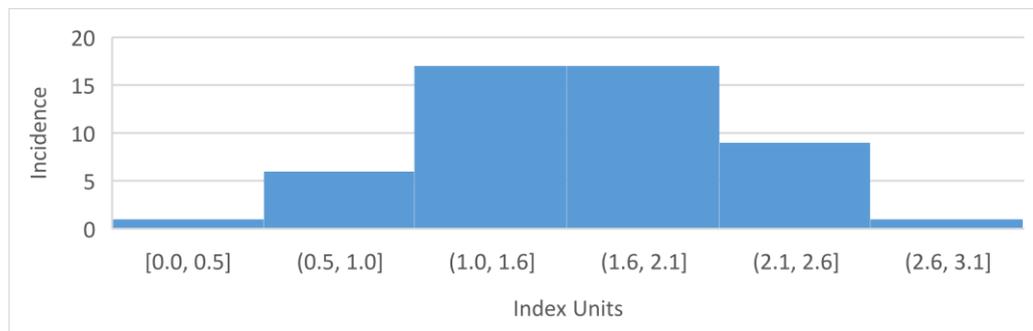
<sup>92</sup> N.B. Stevick does *not* propose that scribes are systematically representing metrical structure alone.

very broad, and while the measurements tend towards the average, there is a reasonable spread of occurrences across the range, particularly at Position 0. The distribution charts below illustrate the spread of results at each position, for each scribe.<sup>93</sup>

**Figure 1: Distribution of Position 0 Values for Scribe A**

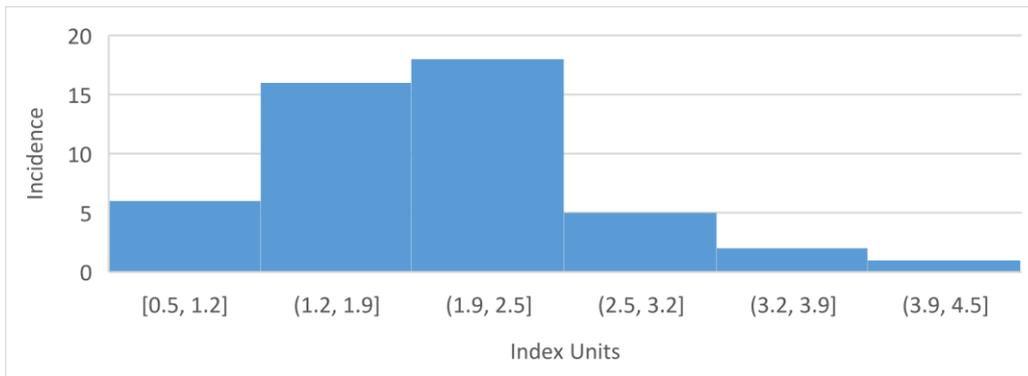


**Figure 2: Distribution of Position 1 Values for Scribe A**

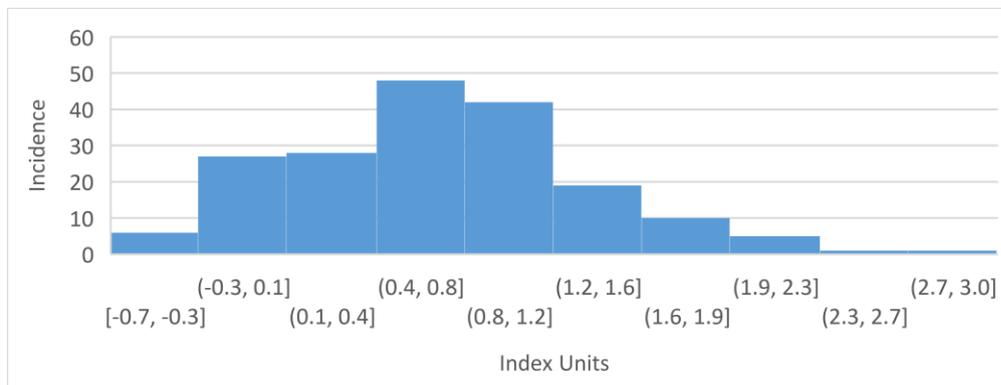


<sup>93</sup> See also Appendix B.

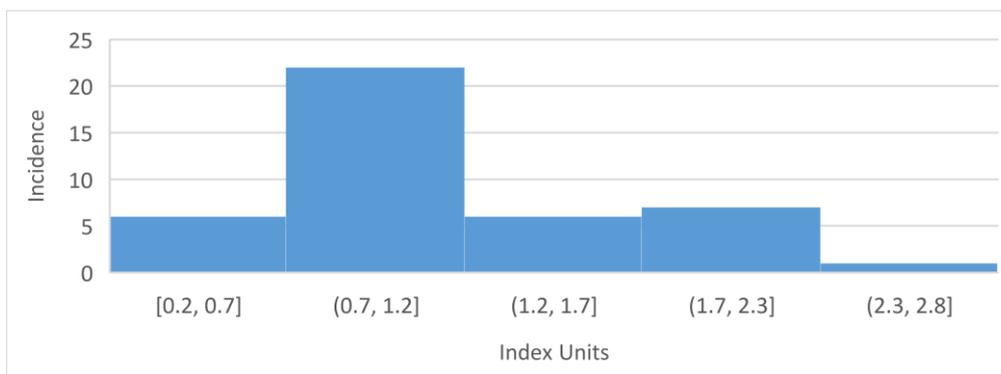
**Figure 3: Distribution of Position 2 Values for Scribe A**



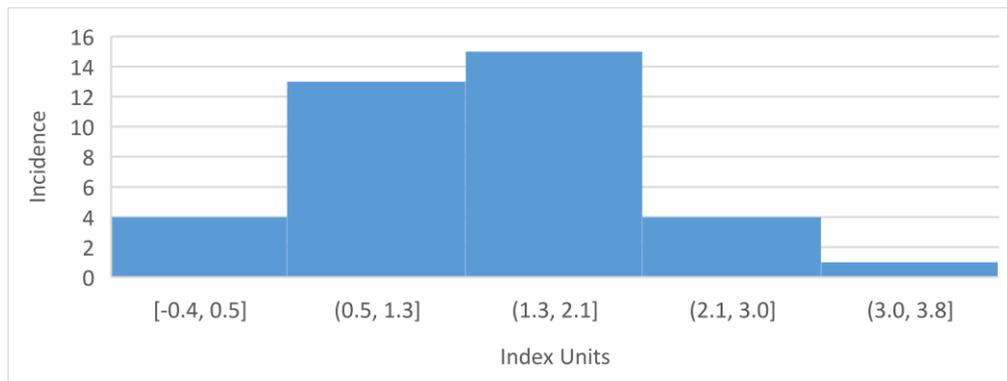
**Figure 4: Distribution of Position 0 Values for Scribe B**



**Figure 5: Distribution of Position 1 Values for Scribe B**



**Figure 6: Distribution of Position 2 Values for Scribe B**



The charts show that there is a greater tendency towards the average at Positions 1 and 2 for both scribes, but that the total range of values remains broad; indeed, the broadest range is at Position 2 for both scribes. Scribe A's spacing at Position 0 averages at 1.0 units, but the scribe deploys a wide range of spacing values, from -0.3 (between 'ne' and 'þa' on fol. 156v) to 2.4 (between 'efne' and 'swa' on fol. 156v, and between 'egesan' and 'þywað', and 'feorh' and 'hafast' on fol. 173r).<sup>94</sup> The distribution of spacing values across this range is quite broad, with a high number falling between 0.3 and 1.8 units.

This breadth of distribution across a wide range represents the inconsistency in spacing practice which simultaneously intrigued and discouraged earlier scholarship. While sufficient numbers of spacings in each position tend to the average to create a striking pattern, there is enough deviation from these averages

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<sup>94</sup> In the measurements, a negative value indicates that not only is there no space between the final letter of one word and the first letter of the next, but there is in fact identifiable overlap between the letters, usually due to an overhanging ascender or underhanging descender. Such measurements obviously rely upon a modern sense of word-division, as these words are not divided on the manuscript page, and negative measurements are only taken where the break is between letter-strings that we would consider to be lexically distinct units.

within the set of values for each position that the pattern cannot be said to be systematic. An analysis of the figures must find a convincing explanation as to why the average values for positions are consistently hierarchical, when there is such wide variation at the level of individual measurements.

We can illustrate these data with a short annotated transcription. The following lines from *Beowulf* on folio 132r of the Nowell Codex (ll. 3-5, 10-13) are demonstrative of the issues described above:

hu <sup>0.0</sup> ða <sup>1.2</sup> æpelingas <sup>1.4</sup>	ellen <sup>EL</sup> fremedon. <sup>3.3</sup>
Oft <sup>1.0</sup> scýld <sup>1.6</sup> scefing <sup>1.7</sup>	sceaþen[... <sup>EL</sup> þreatum <sup>1.9</sup>
monegum <sup>1.8</sup> mægþum <sup>1.5</sup>	meodo <sup>1.4</sup> setla <sup>EL</sup> of <sup>0.6</sup> teah <sup>1.8</sup>
...	
ofer <sup>0.4</sup> hron <sup>X</sup> rade <sup>1.4</sup>	hýran <sup>1.2</sup> scolde <sup>1.2</sup>
gomban <sup>EL</sup> gýldan <sup>1.1</sup>	þæt <sup>0.1</sup> wæs <sup>0.7</sup> god <sup>1.3</sup> cýning. <sup>2.7</sup>
ðæm <sup>1.2</sup> eafera <sup>0.7</sup> wæs <sup>EL</sup>	æfter <sup>0.8</sup> cenned <sup>1.5</sup>
geong <sup>1.1</sup> in <sup>0.5</sup> geardum <sup>1.3</sup>	þone <sup>0.8</sup> god <sup>EL</sup> sende <sup>0.9</sup>

These lines are characterised by the tendencies and exceptions identified in the statistical data, above. Within each half line, the largest width tends to fall at the end of the unit (Position 2), but lines 10b and 13b are exceptions. The spacing at full-lines (Position 2) features some of the largest values in the set, but also one of the lowest (line 13b). Three values in lines 4a, 5a and 5b fall within the highest spacing values for the folio as a whole, and yet are not at half- or full-line breaks; meanwhile, the endings of 10b, 11a, 13a and 13b are not characterised by wide spaces.

The fact that Position 1 and Position 2 spacings in line 13 are the largest

within the line, even though they are certainly not among the highest values for folio 132r as a whole, suggests that a pattern of metrical spacing may be more localised than general. Indeed, in 76% of the half-lines for Scribe A, across all three sample folios, the spacing at the end of the half-line was greater than any of the other spaces within the half-line, even where the spacing at the end of the half-line was not amongst the higher values within its respective folio as a whole: in over three-quarters of measurable cases, larger spacing within the line delineated metrical structure.<sup>95</sup>

The similarities between the spacing practice of two different scribal hands engaging with two parts of a single continuous text is an encouraging sign that the application of a hierarchy in spacing is not merely an idiosyncrasy. More encouraging still is the appearance of similar patterns across two sample folios taken from *The Wanderer* in the Exeter Book.<sup>96</sup> On folios 76v and 78r there are 215 measurable data points from the text of *The Wanderer*, and the patterns identify heavily with those found in *Beowulf*. The collation of the data into averages is shown in the table below:

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<sup>95</sup> Measuring only the half-lines for which at least one non-position space and one first or second position space was measurable.

<sup>96</sup> Measurement data for this sample are also available in Appendix B.

**Table 7: Average spacing units at different metrical positions across two folios of *The Wanderer***

Folios	Positions			
	0	1	2	Total
76v	0.7	1.1	1.4	0.9
78r	0.8	1.2	1.4	1.0
Grand Total	0.7	1.2	1.4	0.9

Spacing at Position 0 averages out at 0.7 units, compared to 1.2 after words at Position 1 and 1.4 after words at Position 2. As broadly found in the samples from *Beowulf*, the average spacing at Position 2 represents a doubling of that at Position 0, while the spacing at Position 1 is closer to one and a half times the average spacing at Position 0. Range is still broad, with a wide distribution for values at Positions 0 and 2. There are also differences from the patterning of *Beowulf*: negative values only occur at Position 0, and the range of values is broadest at Position 0.

#### *Semantic and metrical units*

Although the pattern described above is expressed in terms of the apparent relationship between spacing and metrical units, it has not been demonstrated that any such pattern is in fact driven by metre rather than by semantic or syntactic structures that coincide with metrical form. The frequent co-incidence of syntactic and metrical units in Old English verse is well-noted.<sup>97</sup> We must consider whether the spacing patterns identified above might be reflective of syntactic order, or of rhetorical and semantic breaks mediated by syntax (such as the ends of sentences, or

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<sup>97</sup> Calvin B. Kendall, *The Metrical Grammar of Beowulf* (1991), p. 89; Bruce Mitchell, *Old English Syntax: Subordination, Independent Elements, and Element Order*, Vol. II (1985), p. 989.

anaphoric elements of dependent clauses in lists). This is a problem also raised by Simon Thomson in his investigation of the scribal tendency to conclude a page of parchment with the end of a complete metrical half-line: was the scribe seeking to finish with a complete metrical unit, or a full sense unit? Thomson believes that it is more likely to be a metrical phenomenon: he presents an example where the scribe makes a special effort to fit a full metrical line before a page-break, when it would have been equally possible to position the page-break at the end of a syntactic and semantic unit; he further observes that Scribe A does not frequently align the end of 'a unit of meaning' with the end of a page in the prose texts.<sup>98</sup>

We can examine whether semantic and syntactic breaks of greater or lesser significance correspond in any way with spacing patterns. There are certainly indicators that meaning plays a role in the level of spacing assigned to particular words. On folio 132r, there are seven spaces which measure at over 2.0 units; each one of these falls at a moment of semantic or rhetorical significance, including the conclusion of major syntactic units.<sup>99</sup> The largest of these spaces, measuring 4.0 units, is also the largest of all the spaces measured in the sample folios from *Beowulf*. It occurs at the end of l. 19, after the initial recounting of the feats of Sycld Scefing and the birth of his son, Beow (ll. 4-19), and before five lines of maxims on the importance of generosity in young men. The formulaic opening and narrative introduction of ll. 1-3 are separated from the section on Scefing with a space of 3.3 units between the end of l. 3 and the start of l. 4. The individual clauses of the opening are also heavily marked by space, with gaps of 3 and 2.1 units falling at the

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<sup>98</sup> Thomson, 'Whistle While You Work', pp. 119-21.

<sup>99</sup> These seven spaces make up ~8% of the sample set; the inclusion of values at 1.9 units would take this group to over 10% of the set.

ends of lines 1 and 2. Both of these gaps mark shifts between variant apposite phrases: the end of line 1 falls between descriptions of the Danes who ‘we’ have apparently already heard about (‘Gār-Dena in ġeārdagum’, ‘of spear-Danes in bygone days’ and ‘þēodcyninga’, ‘of nation-kings’), and the end of line 2 falls between the ‘glory’ which was ‘learned about’ these Danes (‘þrym ġefrūnon’) and ‘hū ðā æþelingas ellen fremedon’ (‘how then princes accomplished acts of courage’). Whether the spaces here are larger than between other phrases and clauses on the folio because of the rhetorical force of the variation, or the semantic weight of the opening of the poem, or because the scribe is getting into his or her stride, or even by chance (the sample set being so small) is unclear, however we might note that the other three probable moments of variation or apposition on the folio are marked by the largest breaks under 2.0 units (all at 1.9): between lines four and five (‘sceaþena þrēatum’, ‘the troops of the enemies’, and ‘monegum mægþum’, ‘many peoples’), at the caesura in line eight (between ‘wēox under wolcnum’, ‘waxed under the clouds’ and ‘weorðmyndum þāh’, ‘flourished with honours’), and at the end of line 18 (18a describes Beow as ‘brēme’ (‘glorious’), and he is referred to again as ‘Scyldes eafera’ (‘Scyld’s offspring’) in l. 19a). Three occurrences of spacing over 2.0 units remain to be accounted for. One occurs at the caesura in line 7, which marks the transition from Scefing’s war exploits after being ‘fēasceaft funden’ (‘found wretched’), and his success as king of the Danes. Whether or not these half lines ought to be read continuously, or as separate ‘sentences’ is unclear, and the spacing might indicate that there is indeed a significant pause at this point. The second remaining large space falls at the close of a phrase of semantic and rhetorical significance: ‘Þæt wæs ġōd cyning’ (‘that was a good king’). The final of the large spaces falls at the end of l. 17, where God has decided to honour Scyld; l. 18 begins

with a new clause introducing Beow.

The introductory text on folio 132r is more rhetorically heightened than the narrative stretch of text on folios 156v and 173r, and the incidences of larger spacing on these two latter folios are not evidently so consistently meaningful. Of the twelve largest spacings across each folio (twenty-four spacings in total), seven do not fall at key semantic or syntactic breaks, and the others fall at minor pauses or points of apposition, with the exception of the space between ‘wolde’ (‘would have wished’) and ‘ðā’ (‘then’) on fol. 156v, which falls at a major syntactic and semantic break.<sup>100</sup> Spacing might be utilised for meaningful purposes more frequently in certain parts of the text than in others. Simon Thomson has observed Scribe A creatively utilising small capitals as interpretative signs in *Beowulf*, suggesting that such capitals can often be found clustered around instances of ‘monstrous activity’ in Scribe A’s text.<sup>101</sup> The application of wider spacing at major syntactic or semantic breaks may similarly reflect scribal engagement rather than any kind of systematic application, which would allow for significant variance.

Old English syntactic structures and metrical structures are by no means identical, yet the two systems are too far interrelated to attribute spacing patterning simply to one or the other, and we can see the gaps between half-lines as carrying the subtly varied weights of different combinations of metrical and semantic borderlines. Certainly, the evidence of folio 132r suggests that larger spacing is sometimes reflective of semantic and syntactic breaks, while spacing at metrical borders without strong syntactic or semantic borders simultaneously suggests that scribes were

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<sup>100</sup> These twenty-four values are ~9% of the total on fol. 173r and ~10% of the total on fol. 156v, which in each case is as close to 10% of the values as possible, while including all incidences of a particular value.

<sup>101</sup> Thomson, ‘Whistle While You Work’, pp. 115-17.

affected by metrical formation. Extended examination of this issue is beyond the scope of this thesis, but future study should take a much broader set of syntactic or semantic structures, and a wider sample set of measurements to seek further patterns.

### **Explaining spacing patterns: conditions of scribal engagement**

In *Suprasegmentals*, Stevick does not consider at length the conditions in which scribes worked which might contribute to the system of writing he proposes. His only concession to a discussion of the historical materiality of scribal activity is to acknowledge that if spacing were applied as a system, we would anticipate anomalies and errors in that system, just as in any other, although in his discussion of such errors, he seems to conflate ‘accuracy’ with ‘consistency’, a great leap when the extent and precise nature of correlations between spacing and timing features has not yet been established.<sup>102</sup> ‘Inconsistency’ in a pattern is just as likely to reflect some element of which we are unaware, as an error on the part of the scribe, who, as Stevick acknowledges, in all likelihood ‘had native knowledge of Anglo-Saxon metrics’.<sup>103</sup> To make sense of the data and initial analysis above, we will consider scribal working conditions, proposing explanations which correspond with the material and psychological contexts of scribal activity.

The statistical outcome of the sample sets shows two things: firstly, that inter-word spacing is not random, with larger spacing regularly applied to metrical breaks; secondly, that this regularity is not consistent enough to reflect a programme of systematic notation. It is left to us to carve a middle way: I suggest that spacing

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<sup>102</sup> Stevick, *Suprasegmentals*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid..

reflects the scribe's physiological response to the process of reading and copying texts, specifically the parsing of metre. The individual and non-systematic nature of this response accounts for the inconsistent application of spacing patterns, while the broad patterns identifiable between folios and scribes indicates shared familiarity with Old English metrical structure.

Even if scribes are not regularly applying spacing systematically, this does not mean that they are unaware of it, or that in certain cases it might not have been entirely deliberate and systematic. The spacing following Beowulf's name where it opens fitts, as discussed earlier, is an example of spacing that might well be carefully and deliberately applied, much like the capitalisation also seen in three out of the four cases, or in the use of spacing as punctuation in *The Verse Epilogue to the Old English Pastoral Care* and *Thureth*, also discussed above.<sup>104</sup>

There is little surviving direct reference to the scribes of Anglo-Saxon scriptoria, or the conditions in which they worked.<sup>105</sup> Our understanding of the Anglo-Saxon scriptorium is characterised by uncertainty and diversity: in his overview of Anglo-Saxon scribes and their working environments, Gameson places great emphasis on 'the many variables that affected the nature, location, output and dynamic – the very existence indeed – of scriptoria', including available resources, connections abroad, weather, military incursion and location of scribal activity within (or without) the grounds of the monastery.<sup>106</sup> Seeking to uncover the dynamics or mechanics of the copying process itself, we must often turn to sources where such information is only incidental, such as images of writing scribes, or

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<sup>104</sup> See above, pp. 137-43, 153-54, 160-61, 179.

<sup>105</sup> Gameson, 'Anglo-Saxon Scribes', pp. 94-95.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 103-04, 106-07, 111-12, 116.

colophonic complaints.<sup>107</sup>

Saenger tells us that while some scribes will have vocalised as they wrote, others will have copied in silence, though likely with an ‘aural response (...) in the mind’s ear’.<sup>108</sup> Parkes goes on to point out errors that arise from aural engagement with the text, including the inaccurate separation of words from exemplars written in *scriptio continua*, and misspellings based upon ‘sounds in contemporary spoken Latin’, such as ‘cibitas’ for *ciuitas*.<sup>109</sup> I wonder, from this latter point, whether some scribes are copying not from an exemplar before them, but from another scribe’s oral recitation. Silent copyists, Parkes points out, also made particular kinds of errors, incorrectly recording one word as another with a ‘close graphic resemblance’, or failing to register abbreviation marks.<sup>110</sup> Simon Thomson imagines ‘a scriptorium where scribes did not have silently to process the individual graphemes of the texts they reproduced, but where they could hear and, to some degree, represent metrical rhythms in their writing’.<sup>111</sup> Looking to pictorial evidence of scribal activity is similarly fragmentary: the only surviving contemporary image of an Anglo-Saxon scribe at work to be produced in Anglo-Saxon England is found in an ornamental roundel punctuating the back of an initial ‘B’ on folio 21r of Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 12 (Image 11, below).<sup>112</sup> The small image presents a writer whose lower body appear to face the reader, but whose upper body is turned towards his desk. He writes with a pen onto a book laid flat;

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., pp. 95, 112.

<sup>108</sup> Malcolm B. Parkes, *Their Hands Before Our Eyes: A Closer Look at Scribes: The Lyell Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford, 1999* (2008) p. 66.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>111</sup> Thomson, ‘Whistle While You Work’, p. 100.

<sup>112</sup> Thomson, ‘Whistle While You Work’, p. 105; Gameson, ‘Anglo-Saxon Scribes’, p. 95.

both Thomson and Gameson comment on the simplicity of the image.<sup>113</sup>

**Image 11: Illustration of a scribe from Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 12, fol. 21r<sup>114</sup>**

Whether or not scribes copied visually from an exemplar, or aurally from verse being read or recited aloud, the sound and speaking of the verse plays an important role. Of this aspect of the copying process, A. N. Doane has written:

we can think of human responses to the voice, of a scribe obeying the somatic imperatives voice imposes, with text being as much act, event, gesture, as it is thing or product, with its origins not just in prior texts, but in memory and context.<sup>115</sup>

The act of copying, he suggests, involves the scribe responding to the aural effect of words. We might imagine that this happens through the scribe's own vocalisation or

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Image from 'Manuscript - Reg.lat.12', *Digital Vatican Library*. Web. Accessed 04 August 2018 <[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Reg.lat.12](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Reg.lat.12)>.

<sup>115</sup> A. N. Doane, 'Scribal Writing', p. 420.

sub-vocalisation of the text for mnemonic purposes while copying, or even via the internal ‘voice’ by which a silent scribe reads, retains and repeats sections of verse. The scribe’s response to a vernacular text is determined not, Doane suggests, like the response to Latin, where if reading aloud or sub-vocally, or even mentally, ‘they would *hear* forms of words fixed in their ears by liturgical practice, which was always aural’; he anticipates that the scribal response to the vernacular is more individualised, predicated on wider and more variable traditions of speech and orality which scribes may have been exposed to; in this way, spacing might act as a footprint of a scribe’s personal experience of the exemplar in the graphic properties of the copied text.<sup>116</sup> This is what Doane suggests when he writes of the two versions of *Soul and Body*:

Vercelli is in general spaced according to lexical categories—almost every word is separated by a minimum space, as in modern textuality, and thus a minimum of rhetorical meaning can be attributed to the spacing. Exeter, in contrast, is spaced according to phrase groups, so that there is a directed rhetorical effect that breaks the text into a series of imprecations by the indignant soul against the guilty body. On the face of it, the Exeter presentation encourages a rhetorical, “histrionic” oralization, which seems natural for a text occurring in an anthology of poetry, that is, rhetorically heightened pieces. Equally naturally in a text found in a book of homiletic and doctrinal material (mixed prose and verse), the Vercelli presentation is relatively flat and “prosy” in its

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., pp. 431-32.

presentation and is perhaps meant for private reading and meditative, private oralization.<sup>117</sup>

Testing Doane's assertions here would require further data gathering and empirical analysis, but he aptly demonstrates the potential for critical work which would arise from a wider study of inter-word spacing. In contrast to Stevick's search for a mechanical schema of spacing that reflects prosodic and suprasegmental form, Doane is interested in the way the way 'performing' scribes use spacing patterns to create variability between texts; he advocates the production of 'performance editions', in which '[t]he relative size of spacing indicates relative length of pause' and [t]he signal "-" indicates a measured beat, roughly equivalent to an eighth rest'.<sup>118</sup> This is still a highly systematizing approach, which places great significance on each incidence of spacing, something which this chapter has found to be problematic in Stevick's approach. Nevertheless, Doane's sense of the 'the scribe as performer' offers a more psychologically convincing route into the spacing patterns noted by Stevick. That the motion of the scribe's pen might be influenced by the mental rhythm of the segment they have memorised is certainly Doane's suggestion, and would account for the grouping of short, unstressed words together (where they might be vocally run together), or the attachment of short, unstressed words to neighbouring stressed words (where they adopt a proclitic or enclitic vocality). For the present, this can remain only in the realm of speculation, but it offers a rationale for the persistent yet inconsistent application of greater spacing at metrical borders.

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 427-28.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 428.

*Scribal performance and the rhythms of memory*

As we have seen, numerous commentators have proposed that temporal or performative features of Old English verse impact the graphic presentation of verse. Doane does not extensively explore spacing, but we can extrapolate a theory using his idea of performance. A scribe, reading from an exemplar set up within his or her eyeline, and copying it chunk by chunk onto vellum, is unlikely to copy letter by letter, or to read from the exemplar in a way totally alien from his or her usual engagement with text. Rather, the mnemonic requirements of the copying process, whereby the scribe must hold a portion of the text intact mentally, suspended between reading from the exemplar and re-recording on the new page, might benefit from mental, subvocal or vocal engagement with the parallelisms found in the metrical line or half-line. So, if we imagine the scribe looking at an exemplar and committing a reasonable portion of this to memory, we might expect that he or she chooses a complete metrical unit, or at least that he or she enunciates such a unit via a mental or (sub)vocal performance. The pen then records these memorized letters with some regard to the shape of this performance: proclitic or quickly spoken syllables may be attached to the succeeding letter-string as the scribe mentally shapes the words together; the enunciated metrical break may elicit a pause in the scribal hand, as he or she reaches mentally for the next letter-string, or indeed, as he or she raises the pen, looks back up at the exemplar to memorise the next line, and then lowers the pen back onto the vellum, leaving a larger space than elsewhere. Such a process is not systematic, and we can model scenarios in which the scribe's hand might not reflect his or her impression of the temporal features of the verse line: any need to silence sub-vocalisation, or a need to speed up the process of writing, or an interruption causing the scribe to lift the pen high might impact upon

spacing in a way that responds more to the material conditions of scribal engagement, rather than the features of the text.

Studies in the field of psychology focusing on short-term memory can offer us some grounds upon which to rest suppositions about the performative behaviour of scribes. In 1956, the psychologist George Miller proposed that the human short-term memory can store around seven items or ‘bits’ of information, with a ‘bit’ being a unit like a digit; by arranging ‘bits’ into groupings called ‘chunks’, it is possible for the brain to recall a greater number of ‘bits’.<sup>119</sup> This process of arrangement is called ‘recoding’.<sup>120</sup> An example of this theory from a study of 1970 presents a string of letters such as TVIBMUSNYMCA which, read swiftly as a whole, is unlikely to be accurately recalled by the reader, as it exceeds the ~7 unit maximum for working memory. However, once the grouping is recoded into ‘chunks’ which carry some meaning for the reader, such as TV IBM USN YMCA, it becomes easier to retain the entire letter-string in the short-term memory.<sup>121</sup> What a ‘chunk’ constitutes, however, is not fixed, and in 1974 it was argued that while short term memory can hold about five ‘chunks’, this number decreases as the number of ‘bits’ per ‘chunk’ increases.<sup>122</sup> In a much more recent overview of ‘chunking’, Dennis Coon and John Mitterer state that ‘[a] single chunk could be made up of numbers, letters, words, phrases, or familiar sentences’, and that ‘[c]hunking suggests that [short term memory] holds

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<sup>119</sup> George A. Miller, ‘The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on our Capacity for Processing Information’, *Psychological Review* 63 (1956), 81-97; Dennis Coon, John O. Mitterer, *Psychology: A Journey* (2014), p. 277.

<sup>120</sup> Miller, p. 93; Coon and Mitterer, p. 277.

<sup>121</sup> Coon and Mitterer, p. 277.

<sup>122</sup> Andrew M. Colman, ‘chunking, *n.*’ *A Dictionary of Psychology* (2008), Web. Accessed 11 December 2017

<<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199534067.001.0001/acref-9780199534067-e-1485>>.

about five to seven of whatever units we are using'.<sup>123</sup> There are, Miller writes,

severe limitations on the amount of information that we are able to receive, process, and remember. By organizing the stimulus input simultaneously into several dimensions and successively into a sequence of chunks, we manage to break (or at least stretch) this informational bottleneck.<sup>124</sup>

Certain features of 'chunking' seem to be applicable to the process of copying text from one written medium to another. Given that the scribe is unlikely to copy out the exemplar one discrete character at a time, the information must be arranged into 'chunks'. The letters in texts *post-scriptio continua* are of course already arranged into meaningful lexical 'chunks', and we might expect a scribe to memorise a small cluster of lexical units, rather than to copy one word at a time.<sup>125</sup> Much as readers memorising letter-strings are aided by meaningful patterns within those strings, the metrical features of verse offer an auxiliary framework which aids the memorisation of verse lines. Such mnemonic aids could therefore assist in recoding of the 'bits' into 'chunks', whether those are letters and words, or words and metrical positions, respectively. Our hypothesis can only be speculative: a 'chunk' might be an entire line, or a half-line, or a stressed position in conjunction with its adjacent dip. Coon and Mitterer's hypothesis is that we can retain five to seven units' worth of information, which approximates the word-count of full lines in *Beowulf*; alliterative patterning across the caesura might reinforce the mnemonic potential of the verse line. The coincidence of these features with semantic or syntactic breaks could

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<sup>123</sup> Coon and Mitterer, p. 277.

<sup>124</sup> Miller, p. 95.

<sup>125</sup> For a response to Leonard Neidorf's 'lexemic' approach, see pp. 213-14, below.

further help with the isolation of the line or half-line as a suitable mnemonic ‘string’. The scribe is provided with a framework for retaining portions of text in his or her working memory, between exemplar and copy.

Spacing, then, is perhaps indicative of mnemonics, driven by parallel aids to working memory: metrical and syntactic form, semantic and rhetorical weight, and the length of half-lines. This approach would allow for all kinds of variation in performance, based upon different reading habits between scribes, or a single scribe’s response to different kinds of text, or even to different parts of a single text. This need not be something of which scribes are unaware, but neither is it a systematic or even deliberate approach to spacing.

The theory I have laid out in this section contradicts that which is laid out by Leonard Neidorf in his recent book, *The Transmission of Beowulf*; Neidorf’s ‘lexemic’ approach posits that scribes were completely focused on the replication and modernisation of individual lexemes, and not on the semantic or metrical coherence of the material being copied.<sup>126</sup> Such an approach corresponds with the sceptical attitude to scribal involvement and creativity in the transmission of manuscript texts, discussed earlier in this chapter.<sup>127</sup> Part of Neidorf’s evidence lies in the comparison of variants in parallel texts, such as *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*; he argues that these differences are best explained as errors generated through the scribe’s interaction with individual words, rather than the ‘continuous sense of the text’.<sup>128</sup> However, some of these errors can be explained just as well by

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<sup>126</sup> Leonard Neidorf, *The Transmission of Beowulf: Language, Culture, and Scribal Behavior* (2017), p. 176; Megan E. Hartman, Review of ‘*The Transmission of Beowulf: Language, Culture, and Scribal Behavior* by Leonard Neidorf’, *Philological Quarterly* 96 (2017), 399-403, p. 399.

<sup>127</sup> Hartman, Review, p. 399.

<sup>128</sup> Dennis Cronan, Review of ‘Leonard Neidorf: *The Transmission of Beowulf: Language, Culture and Scribal Behavior*’, *Studia Neophilologica* 89 (2017), 1-3, pp. 1-2; Hartman, Review, pp. 401-02.

the theory of metrically-lead memorisation which I have put forward in this chapter, in particular: the replacement of unfamiliar older names and word-elements with familiar ones, or the replacement of one word with a similar yet different word. These are both processes which might easily occur in the fallible memory of the scribe who mentally holds a mnemonic ‘string’ between exemplar and copy. We have seen that short-term memory is more receptive to ‘chunks’ of information which make sense, than to strings of ‘bits’ with no clear relationship between them.<sup>129</sup> It follows, then, that the scribe holding a half-line of ‘chunks’ in the form of familiar words, but confronted with a string of ‘bits’ in the form of an unfamiliar word or element, might unintentionally alter it into a familiar form, and so optimise the string for short-term memory. This process of hearing something read aloud, and not being entirely sure we have retained it correctly, or finding that a word has been altered in transmission, is a deeply familiar one, and lies at the root of a game like ‘Chinese Whispers’. This counter-argument to Neidorf’s theory should be expanded upon more fully in the future, but at present it provides a psychologically realistic and cohesive theory of transmission and error.

### **Other texts: prose and hypermetric verse**

All of these observations handle the half-line and its concurrent metrical and syntactic structures. However, this approach raises the question of the encoding of prose texts. If spacing is indeed at least in part a physiological response to the mnemonic processes of ‘chunking’ in the short-term memory, then we would also anticipate some kind of patterning in prose texts, which rely upon the same physical

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<sup>129</sup> See above, pp. 211-12.

processes of reading from an exemplar and of committing material to a working memory from which it is recalled and encoded. We might begin with a hypothesis: if scribes in poetry can be seen responding to the metrical or syntactic structures of half-lines, or both, then perhaps scribes in prose may be seen utilising clause-boundaries as mnemonic markers.

A short sample of 210 data points was assessed from *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*, the text immediately preceding *Beowulf*, which was also copied by Scribe A, yielding a total 170 measurable data points.<sup>130</sup> This sample indicates the hypothesis ventured above: spaces which fell after words which did not conclude a clause averaged at 0.8 units; spaces which fell after words which concluded a clause but did not conclude a discrete semantic unit which we might call a 'sentence' averaged at 1.5 units; spaces which concluded both a clause and a discrete semantic unit which we might call a 'sentence' averaged at 2.2 units. This is an extremely small set and further work needs to be done, not least because of other potential patterns in the set. For example, of the largest three spacings in the first five manuscript lines of the text, two fall at clause boundaries, but all three follow long words naming or nationalising individuals: 'alexandres', 'macedoniscan' and 'aristotile'.<sup>131</sup> Of course, following the principles of 'chunking' laid out above, it is possible that longer and more unfamiliar words might inhibit the mnemonic powers of the scribe, necessitating a pause after the unfamiliar word, which could leave a larger gap on the page.

What remains to be considered here is the usefulness of this and further work on spacing. As we have seen, a number of scholars have used word-spacing to

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<sup>130</sup> These data may be seen in Appendix B.

<sup>131</sup> Quotations from this text are transcribed directly from the manuscript.

explore wider issues of metre in Old English verse, and the data handled in this chapter suggest that we might use spacing to interrogate scribal interaction with and recognition of formal structures at play in either prose or verse texts. An example of possible interest here is the set of measurements from the end of *The Wanderer* on folio 78r of the Exeter Book. Ll. 111-115 of the poem are hypermetric. In his *Introduction to Old English Metre*, Terasawa describes a typical hypermetric a-line as having ‘a normal two-foot verse (...) preceded by an additional falling foot’, and a hypermetric b-line as ‘formed by adding a relatively long sequence of unstressed syllables to a normal two-foot verse’ (this addition also precedes the verse).<sup>132</sup> Such a straightforward definition is not without complications or challenges from other scholars, including the suggestion that the additional material in a hypermetric line is affixed onto the *end* of a regular two-foot half-line, rather than the beginning.<sup>133</sup> Illuminating in the instance of the final five lines of *The Wanderer* is an extremely regular spacing practice which suggests that the scribe interpreted the hypermetric lines as regular half-lines *followed* by a further two positions. This pattern can be seen at a glance on the manuscript page, and is supported by the spacing measurements. Within each of these ten hypermetric half-lines, the largest spacings fall consistently in three locations: two of these, as we might predict from the discussion above, are the end of the half and full line; the other is the space that precedes the final two positions of the full line. In the final two verse lines, the end of each half-line coincides with the end of the manuscript line, and so these spacings are not measurable. We can illustrate this with a short transcription of the textual spacing. I have annotated the text from lines 9 to 14 of folio 78r, according to the

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<sup>132</sup> Terasawa, p. 47.

<sup>133</sup> See E. Clemons Kyte, ‘On the Composition of Hypermetric Verses in Old English’, *MP* 71 (1973), 160-65, p. 160; A. J. Bliss, *The Metre of Beowulf* (1958), pp. 89-90.

same conventions as my annotated extracts from *Beowulf*:<sup>134</sup>

Swa<sup>0.9</sup> cpæð<sup>1.3</sup> snottor<sup>1.4</sup> on<sup>0.0</sup> mode<sup>2.0</sup>  
gesæt<sup>0.1</sup> him<sup>x</sup> sundor<sup>1.4</sup> æt<sup>EL</sup> rune<sup>1.0</sup>  
til<sup>0.1</sup> biþ<sup>1.1</sup> se<sup>-0.3</sup> þe<sup>0.2</sup> his<sup>0.7</sup> treoþe<sup>1.4</sup> gehealdeþ<sup>1.6</sup>  
ne<sup>0.0</sup> sceal<sup>0.3</sup> næfre<sup>EL</sup> his<sup>0.4</sup> torn<sup>1.2</sup> to<sup>0.0</sup> rycene<sup>1.5</sup>  
beorn<sup>1.4</sup> of<sup>-0.5</sup> his<sup>0.7</sup> breostum<sup>1.6</sup> acyþan<sup>0.7</sup>  
nem<sup>EL</sup> þe<sup>1.0</sup> he<sup>0.4</sup> ær<sup>-0.4</sup> þa<sup>0.7</sup> bote<sup>1.1</sup> cunne<sup>1.7</sup>  
eorl<sup>0.5</sup> mid<sup>1.0</sup> elne<sup>2.0</sup> gefremman<sup>1.2</sup>  
wel<sup>EL</sup> bið<sup>0.5</sup> þam<sup>0.1</sup> þe<sup>0.3</sup> him<sup>0.6</sup> are<sup>0.7</sup> seceð<sup>1.1</sup>  
frofre<sup>0.8</sup> to<sup>0.2</sup> fæder<sup>1.3</sup> on<sup>-0.1</sup> heofonum<sup>EL</sup>  
þær<sup>0.3</sup> us<sup>1.0</sup> eal<sup>0.1</sup> seo<sup>1.0</sup> fæstnung<sup>1.5</sup> stondeð<sup>EL</sup>

In a pattern which is visible to the eye on the page, the scribe slightly sets apart the final two positions of each half-line. It should be noted that this pattern does not apply to the isolated hypermetric line at line 6 of folio 78r:

onwendeð<sup>1.7</sup> wyrda<sup>-0.7</sup> ge<sup>0.8</sup> sceaft<sup>1.3</sup>  
weoruld<sup>1.6</sup> under<sup>-0.1</sup> heofonum.<sup>EL</sup>

Here, if any pattern may be extrapolated from a single line, it appears as though the *first* two positions are isolated by larger spacing. Whether the scribe's approach varied, or whether the scribe did not recognise the isolated hypermetric line (l. 107), must remain a matter for speculation until more of the hypermetric material in this and other manuscripts is examined. However, the steady pattern of the final ten half-

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<sup>134</sup> The *ASPR* text of 'The Wanderer' has been used for guidance: George Philip Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, eds., *The Exeter Book*, *ASPR* III (1936), pp. 134-37.

lines invites the manuscript reader to see the scribe digesting the verse in a certain way, even if only for this sample, and this pattern may contribute to our understanding of the complexity of hypermetric verse: for example, manuscript-contemporary readers may have been able to navigate such lines flexibly in terms of what constituted the ‘normal’ and ‘additional’ positions.

### **Conclusions, questions and further study**

The idea that timing is marked out in physical space on the manuscript page was conceived of too systematically by Robert Stevick, who approached inter-word spacing as a notation system developed by scribes to indicate the correct navigation of isochronous verse lines. The alternative which I have suggested here places the idea of ‘timing’ less in terms of the timing of the metrical line, and more in terms of the aural-oral response of the individual scribe to the text being copied, the demands of that text upon the short-term memory, and the impression of the scribe’s mnemonic groupings on the copied page. The scribe’s mental or sub-vocal impression of the ‘shape’ of verse, including the running-together of short, unstressed words, or the accentuation of metrical and syntactic units, may have provided assistance in the scribe’s process of ‘recoding’ and ‘chunking’ the text for short term memorisation.

The examples and sample sets given above are small in comparison to the available corpus, and more work will need to be done to clarify or else challenge these suggestions. However, the consistency of certain elements in the results, particularly in the highlighting of metrical and syntactic structure, combined with complementary findings from small samples of prose and hypermetric verse,

together suggest that the patterns laid out here are viable hypotheses from which to conduct further investigation. Many complications attend the theory laid out in this chapter. If spacing is supposed to be based not on a universal system so much as the scribe's personal response to a text, it will make patterns harder to identify where scribal interpretation differs.<sup>135</sup> Such patterns would also be affected by whatever affected the hand of the scribe: extreme cold, external interruptions, misunderstanding of the text, or any other influence which might result in a departure from any readily identifiable pattern. It also makes it harder to identify anomalies in the dataset.

We might ask, finally, in what ways are the suggestions of this chapter useful, particularly if so many problems accompany the investigation of a non- systematic pattern of behaviour. On a basic level, we are able to watch a number of scribes, including those of *Beowulf* and the Exeter Book, engaging with the half- line unit as an entity different from and subordinate to the full line. Given the absence of a contemporary written treatise on Old English metre, this visual evidence may provide some support for modern understanding and presentation of Old English metrical lines. A future line of enquiry might concern those texts which fall more contentiously between the categories of verse and prose, to see if spacing reveals scribes responding to these texts in any identifiable way.

The difficulty of much of this work lies in its speculative nature; but as Simon Thomson has written of the same issue in his own work on scribal signs:

... as work continues to consider the evidence for how scribes worked and what they expected their readers to do with their texts,

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<sup>135</sup> On scribal difference in metrical interpretation, see above, p. 121, including n 102.

we draw closer to understanding some of the multiple contexts of scribal activity, and hence to appreciating the multiple sensory experiences provided by texts in Anglo- Saxon England.<sup>136</sup>

And certainly, in building on the work of Robert Stevick, while seeking to provide some credible alternative explanations of the evidence he uncovered, this chapter hopes to contribute to the fulfilment of C. J. E. Ball's early prediction:

The problem of manuscript spacing is undoubtedly a real one, and the author is right to draw attention to it: but one suspects that in the end it will be solved by palaeographers rather than linguists.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Thomson, 'Whistle While You Work', p. 122.

<sup>137</sup> Ball, p. 477.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ‘Restless Surfaces’: An Aesthetic Approach to Old English Verse Layout<sup>1</sup>

Thus far we have largely considered *mise-en-page* in utilitarian terms, as a set of possible graphic systems designed to contain and disseminate information, framed in accordance with the form of the text, the constraints of material resources and the needs of readers and writers. This approach, particularly in the context of the development of lineation in Latin verse texts, implies that scribes should gradually move towards those forms of *mise-en-page* which most effectively disseminate those features of the text prioritized by its audience, within the material constraints contemporary with its creation. Whether it is the shift to vellum folios due to the expense of papyrus, or the introduction of inter-word spacing to facilitate new modes of reading (as discussed by Saenger), we see scribes continually altering *mise-en-page* style to meet the needs of their audience and changing material contexts.<sup>2</sup> To this day, the formatting of the page within the anatomy of the book (or other textual object, including tablets, rolls and e-readers) evolves and adapts in response to new economic, social and literary realities.

This utilitarian outlook informs scholarly consensus: as the *mise-en-page* of Old English verse does not consistently disseminate metrical form, commentators assume that the page must have developed its unlineated state in response to some other sort of pressure, generally, the economic necessity of conserving high-value

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from Webster, *Anglo Saxon Art*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> On papyrus, see The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, ‘papyrus’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (2013), Web. Accessed 30 January 2018 <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/papyrus-writing-material>>; for Saenger’s work on inter-word spacing, see above, esp. pp. 156-59.

parchment.<sup>3</sup> The unlineated layout of Old English verse is broadly rejected as a legitimate or meaningful form of *mise-en-page*. The opening chapters of this thesis have challenged this assumption on its own terms: firstly, by questioning the nature of parchment expense and the evidence for waste and conservation in the encoding of Old English verse; secondly, by proposing that the variable ‘horizontal aspect’ of the Old English metrical line is better accommodated by an unlineated *mise-en-page* than a lineated one.<sup>4</sup>

However, we have also touched upon occasions when the utilisation of a certain *mise-en-page* system signals a shift from the functional to the iconic, with the choice of layout playing more to an aesthetic appeal than to any material or textual utility. In Chapter Two we saw that use of Grade A and B lineation in the Codex Amiatinus, written around the close of the seventh century or the start of the eighth, stands in stark contrast to the broader corpus of Latin texts copied up to the end of the eighth century in England (and particularly, in the north of England), which are almost entirely lineated at Grades E-C.<sup>5</sup> The lineation in the Codex Amiatinus is of course likely to be an imitation of the layout of its older, Italian model, the Codex Grandior, prioritising the continental style of metrical organisation over contemporary practice for the writing of verse in England.<sup>6</sup> As we have noted above, the gradual adoption of such lineation witnessed across the vast majority of Latin texts written in England by the end of the ninth century might arise from an aesthetic impulse to adopt the continental manner of presenting Latin verse, perhaps in the belief that imported manuscripts such as the Codex Grandior contained a layout that

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<sup>3</sup> Fully discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>4</sup> I am grateful to Bruce Gilchrist for the expression ‘horizontal aspect’ in this context.

<sup>5</sup> Dating of the Codex Amiatinus from Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 589.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter Two, p. 103 n. 69.

was more authentic or prestigious.<sup>7</sup> This separation of the utilitarian and the aesthetic is not a clean one, for aesthetics can and do have certain functions.<sup>8</sup> As discussed above, Godden has suggested that the adoption of Carolingian elements in the prologues and epilogues of the *Pastoral Care* serve a political function, presenting Alfred as a Charlemagnian figure.<sup>9</sup> Such functions, however, being ideological, political, or otherwise theoretical, are clearly of a different type to design features which are deployed to handle immediate material constraints, or the physical requirements of reader and writer.

Shaky as this faultline between a utilitarian and an aesthetic approach to *mise-en-page* may be, the formatting of the page is open to being abstracted from the material, textual and social conditions that directed its evolution; *mise-en-page* can be imitated, borrowed and even fetishized as a symbol in its own right. For a clearer example of this we might look forward to the late fifteenth century, and to the production of the earliest printed books. In terms of prestige, these early books did not supersede handwritten manuscripts, but ‘were initially marketed as less-expensive substitutes’.<sup>10</sup> Page design elements such as black-letter typography, columnar layout, the provision of space for illuminated initials and even the use of vellum as a base material were deployed (though not in all cases) to create a page that appealed to a readership familiar with manuscripts.<sup>11</sup> Such features may appear to be redundant to the functioning of the object, but they tell us something about the

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<sup>7</sup> Discussed fully in Chapter Two; Franklin-Brown, p. 234.

<sup>8</sup> See below, pp. 248-49.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 143, and Godden, ‘Prologues and Epilogues’, p. 453.

<sup>10</sup> Jeremy M. Norman, ed., *From Gutenberg to the Internet: A Sourcebook on the History of Information Technology* (Novato, California: historyofscience.com, 2005), ‘Introduction’.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. See also: ‘Features of early printed books’, *First Impressions* (University of Manchester Library), Web. Accessed 28 November 2017 <[www.library.manchester.ac.uk/firstimpressions/From-Manuscript-to-Print/Early-Printed-Books/Features-of-early-printed-books/](http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/firstimpressions/From-Manuscript-to-Print/Early-Printed-Books/Features-of-early-printed-books/)>.

motivations behind the creation of an object, and may even play a role in its contemporary use.<sup>12</sup> One such apparently redundant feature retained in some early printed books, as late as the seventeenth century, were the guidelines upon which medieval scribes had formerly relied in order to write their texts in straight horizontal lines.<sup>13</sup> Ruling was initially a functional graphic feature, executed in ink or drypoint between marginal prickings, to aid the production of the manuscript. By the later Middle Ages, even in manuscript form, the guidelines have developed redundant features which show their role shifting from the purely functional, to a combination of the functional and the aesthetic. A good example of this occurs in the description of Dennison Library Loose Leaves 21 and 22, a fragment of a fifteenth-century book of hours held at Scripps College, California. The fragment contains ‘16 long lines ruled in purple ink’: the functionally redundant coloured ink transforms a utilitarian ruling into an aesthetic element active in the flamboyant scheme of the page, alongside more clearly aesthetic features like the ‘Primary initials in gold on blue and pink spiky ground’ and ‘green floral sprays with gold buds’.<sup>14</sup> This paves the way for the skeuomorphic retention of ruling in printed books, where the printer has no need of such lines to produce straight, horizontal lines of text.<sup>15</sup> Gradually, printed books developed their own visual conventions, both in terms of the *mise-en-page* of the central text, and the development of paratextual units and their layout

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<sup>12</sup> On the interface of beauty and utility, and redundancy in aesthetics, see Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction* (2011), pp. 15, 17-18, 71-75. On the idea of redundancies as they apply to aesthetics, see Scruton, esp. pp. 71-77.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher de Hamel, *Medieval Craftsmen: Scribes and Illuminators* (1992), pp. 20-21; Nancy Stock-Allen, ‘A Short History of Books: Manuscripts / Documents and Books Written and Embellished by Hand’, *A Short Introduction to Graphic Design History*. Web. Accessed 8 December 2017 <[www.designhistory.org/BookHistory\\_pages/Manuscripts.html](http://www.designhistory.org/BookHistory_pages/Manuscripts.html)>.

<sup>14</sup> C. W. Dutschke, R. H. Rouse and Mirella Ferrari, eds., *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Claremont Libraries* (1986), pp. xi, 105.

<sup>15</sup> de Hamel, p. 21; Stock-Allen ‘A Short History’. A skeuomorph is ‘An object or feature copying the design of a similar artefact in another material’: from ‘skeuomorph, n.’, *OED Online* (2017) Web. Accessed 27 November 2017 <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/180780](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/180780)>.

conventions; however, the initial retention of familiar *mise-en-page* qualities suggests that printers (and, in all likelihood, readers) continued to prioritise the fulfilment of existing aesthetic preferences, even as they moved between technologies.<sup>16</sup>

The unlineated formatting of Old English verse is not perceived as fulfilling the standard utilitarian principle of verse layout (i.e. demarcation of the metrical period) and so has historically been seen as fulfilling a different principle: to fit as many words as possible into the available space. However, it has not yet been suggested that scribes and readers might in fact have an aesthetic *preference* for the mode in which they encode their verse. When compared with the use of space, colour and shape in various Latin verse manuscripts of the period, the dense script and sparse ornamentation of the majority of pages of Old English verse might imply a very spartan aesthetic, or a lack of interest in the text's visual properties; on the other hand, textual density might resonate aesthetically with contemporary attitudes to art and design.

This chapter will examine the viability of just such an argument. I will consider whether trends in Anglo-Saxon art and design can offer an aesthetic rationale for the layout of Old English verse, particularly with regard to the use of density and geometry in manuscript-based art. I will begin with the terms of engagement: how we approach a sense of Anglo-Saxon 'taste' and define a corpus of contemporary 'art', and how this applies to or is distinguished from the process of design on the page. I will go on to examine theoretical analyses of 'text as image' in

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<sup>16</sup> On design metaphors providing familiarity for users, see '5 Reasons Why Metaphors Can Improve the User Experience', *WebpageFX* (2012), Web. Accessed 04 January 2018 <<https://www.webpagefx.com/blog/web-design/5-reasons-why-metaphors-can-improve-the-user-experience/>>.

previous scholarship. The chapter will then examine the history and character of density in Anglo-Saxon art, particularly where text forms part of a graphic scheme. Ultimately, I will suggest that the same impulse to create fullness in vernacular art informs the work of scribes, and their creation of *mise-en-page*. This impulse will be demonstrated in two ways: firstly, through manuscript examples of the various techniques by which scribes attempt to fill empty areas of parchment; secondly, by assessing modern and contemporary conceptualisations of the Anglo-Saxon half-line as a geometric unit, and then comparing the deployment of these units in lines to the symmetry and asymmetry of such contemporary design features as carpet pages and interlace. This chapter will conclude by asking if a ‘dense’ layout may be perceived of as a particularly Saxon or Germanic form of graphic design, which has been deliberately deployed for the presentation of vernacular texts, in contrast to the model of lineation utilised for Latin.

### **Theoretical approach and existing scholarship**

The introduction above has already made a number of assumptions about the terms of engagement we will use to approach the idea of visual design. Before we begin an analysis proper, let us define some of the key terms to be used in this chapter, and acknowledge the status of such terms in academic study.

#### *Establishing a vocabulary: aesthetics, style, taste and art*

The term ‘aesthetics’ may refer to the appearance or form of an object, as well as to the philosophy informing that appearance or form; it concerns the idea of beauty or

‘fittingness’ (and, by extension, ugliness or ‘unfittingness’).<sup>17</sup> The idea of ‘fittingness’ relies upon the value-judgement of an observer, and accordingly aesthetics arise from the subjective experience and judgement of an object by an audience. This meaning connects the term ‘aesthetics’ with its ancient Greek etymon, ‘αἴσθησις’ (‘aesthesia’), which the *OED* defines as ‘of or relating to sense perception’.<sup>18</sup> While this chapter will review the development of certain aesthetic elements of Anglo- Saxon art across various objects and media, it will also seek to create a narrative by locating these elements within a broader context of Anglo- Saxon aesthetics. This means examining the way in which density and its associated design elements is *perceived* by an Anglo-Saxon audience. We must also address the term ‘style’, which in some instances may appear synonymous to ‘aesthetic’. ‘Style’ might, on the one hand, be a recurrent set of aesthetic elements rooted in the broad social contexts of production, discernible in relation to epoch or geography or contemporary social structure; on the other hand, the recurrent aesthetic elements of a given ‘style’ might be attributable to the individual temperament of an artist or designer, and so may pose a hindrance to a formalist assessment of art.<sup>19</sup> In his 1953 essay on ‘style’, Meyer Schapiro neatly draws both sides of this idea into a single definition: ‘the constant form – and sometimes the constant elements, qualities, and expression – in the art of an individual or a group’.<sup>20</sup> Nicholas Howe suggests that scholars of Old English literature have a more ‘circumscribed’ idea of ‘style’ than

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<sup>17</sup> ‘aesthetics, n.’, *OED Online* (2017) Web. Accessed 27 November 2017

<[www.oed.com/view/Entry/293508](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/293508)>; on ‘fittingness’, see Scruton, pp. 80-81.

<sup>18</sup> ‘aesthetic, n. and adj.’, *OED Online* (2018) Web. Accessed 11 September 2018  
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/3237#eid9579530>>.

<sup>19</sup> This tension emerges in Nicholas Howe, ‘What We Talk about When We Talk about Style’, in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, eds. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (2003), 169-78, pp. 171-74.

<sup>20</sup> Meyer Schapiro, ‘Style’, in *Anthropology Today*, ed. Alfred L. Kroeber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 287-312, p. 287, quoted in Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown, ‘Introduction’, in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, eds. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (2003), 1-10, p. 1.

Anglo-Saxon art historians, viewing ‘style’ largely ‘as a matter for linguistic or philological analysis’, rather than considering the ‘historical and cultural work’ done by style in Old English poetry.<sup>21</sup> He points to mid-twentieth-century scholarship, in which style becomes merely ‘a criterion for dating Old English poetry’, and even the subject of apologism for perceived stylistic deficiencies.<sup>22</sup> Howe himself embraces a position adopted from Schapiro: ‘that divergent styles can coexist in the same time and place’.<sup>23</sup> In this chapter, my analysis of a visual aesthetic in manuscript design will take an explicitly art-historical approach, assessing ‘density’ in Anglo- Saxon art not as a ‘constant form’, but as a shifting and hybrid aesthetic entity which evolves across time and media, translated and deployed for visual effect and cultural purpose.<sup>24</sup> I will bring this art-historical approach to bear on the study of vernacular literature by concluding this chapter with a comparative analysis of ‘density’ in Anglo-Saxon art and Old English verse, drawing on analogies between structures of artistic design, and structures of prosody.

An awareness of the vagaries of individual interpretation leads us to consider the idea of ‘taste’, which perhaps conveys more of a sense of the personal than either of the terms ‘aesthetics’ or ‘style’. The possibility of innovation or deviation from accepted ‘norms’ by an individual artist is problematic for our analysis of broad historical aesthetic trends, and Allen Frantzen duly warns us that ‘we have few means of determining how the aesthetic might reveal communal rather than individual preferences’.<sup>25</sup> Webster, on the other hand, recognises a changeability of ‘forms, modes, materials, and techniques’, particularly through Christianization, but

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<sup>21</sup> Howe, pp. 172-73.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 170-71; on apologism, see Allen J. Frantzen, *Anglo-Saxon Keywords*, Web. (2012), p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Howe, p. 174.

<sup>24</sup> Karkov and Hardin Brown challenge the notion of ‘constant form’ in their ‘Introduction’, pp. 2-3.

<sup>25</sup> Frantzen, p. 2.

suggests that ‘the underlying grammar and vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon style remained hardly altered’.<sup>26</sup> This ‘underlying grammar and vocabulary’, particularly as it applies to artistic works in manuscripts or involving textual elements, could help us to approach the manuscript page in a way that both captures communal trends among the variegations of individual taste, and judiciously applies learning from the most relevant domains of Anglo-Saxon artistic culture. Of course, in the identification of such ‘communal trends’, it is not only the individual style of an artist which is problematic, but the individual style of the scholar. Fred Orton reminds us that engagement with aesthetics requires scholarly acts of interpretation, and the very act of identifying style is an interpretation by the viewer or scholar; there are no neutral acts of description, for scholars necessarily select what they see, based on their own learnings about form and pattern.<sup>27</sup>

Applying the learnings of current scholarship on Anglo-Saxon art to an analysis of *mise-en-page* in contemporary manuscripts seems to be an ideal approach, given how much of the body of surviving Anglo-Saxon art is itself manuscript-based, and the degree to which major scholars in the field like Catherine Karkov and Leslie Webster address manuscript design in their work on Anglo-Saxon art. There are, however, attendant difficulties, not only in how the concept of ‘art’ relates to and differs from that of ‘design’, but in how we define the category of Anglo-Saxon ‘art’ itself. In 1990, Hans Belting argued that religious images are ‘devotional objects rather than works of art’; Catherine Karkov, however, argues that Anglo-Saxon ‘religious images’ sit outside of the ‘narrow’ iconic functionality

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<sup>26</sup> Leslie Webster, ‘Encrypted Visions’, in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, eds. Catherine E. Karkov, George Hardin Brown (2003), 11-30, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup> Fred Orton, ‘Rethinking the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Monuments’, in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, eds. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (2003), 31-67, pp. 40-41.

addressed by Belting.<sup>28</sup> While her analysis of art and design in *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England* places objects within the context of their historical evolution, her focus is on how a viewer ‘reads’ and engages with those objects, and how this ‘reading’ interacts with wider contemporary socio-political movement. The work of Catherine Karkov and Leslie Webster will be instrumental to this chapter, providing historical background and data that will allow us to trace systems of design from early Anglo-Saxon crafts, through to the production of Old English manuscripts in the tenth century and beyond; Karkov herself defines the relationship between her work and that of Webster as ‘complementary’.<sup>29</sup> Both scholars address the trend in previous art-historical studies of Anglo-Saxon culture of examining these kinds of objects ‘as artefacts rather than as art’ through questions of origin, composition and function, rather than by exploring the intellectual and emotional engagement of contemporary viewers.<sup>30</sup> Anglo-Saxon art, Karkov writes,

is full of movement, drama, narrativity and pattern. It confronts and interacts with the viewer, and it usually cannot be confined to an exclusively, even primarily religious function.<sup>31</sup>

Karkov and Webster include a diverse range of materials within the purview of their examinations of Anglo-Saxon art: metalwork and carpet pages, coin inscriptions and architecture, the ornament of such everyday objects as shoulder-clasps, alongside more easily recognisable *objets d’art*, such as the Franks Casket. The resulting

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<sup>28</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Catherine E. Karkov, ‘Anglo-Saxon Art.’, *Oxford Bibliographies* (2015), Web. Date Accessed 27 November 2017 <<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195396584/obo-9780195396584-0003.xml>>.

<sup>30</sup> See Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 6, 7-9; Webster, ‘Encrypted Visions’, p. 12; Frantzen, pp. 22-23.

<sup>31</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 8.

definition of Anglo-Saxon ‘art’ is a broad one, both chronologically and in its inclusion of what Allen Frantzen calls ‘simple objects such as drinking cups that are not ordinarily included in the world of the beautiful, beautiful though such things might be’; from such objects Frantzen suggests that we might be able to identify a ‘standard of general taste’.<sup>32</sup> Karkov and Webster both identify graphic design within the category of Anglo-Saxon ‘art’, chiefly through analyses of grand pieces of work, such as the carpet pages of London, BL, Cotton Nero D. iv (the ‘Lindisfarne Gospels’), or the apostolic images in Cambridge, CUL Ll. 1. 10.

#### *Anglo-Saxon aesthetic awareness*

‘[W]e have very little idea’, Carol Farr writes, ‘of Anglo-Saxon consciousness of visual style’.<sup>33</sup> There are no surviving contemporary treatises expounding an Anglo-Saxon approach to aesthetics.<sup>34</sup> Addressing our ‘incomplete’ understanding of contemporary ‘aesthetic standards’, Frantzen draws out the linguistic slipperiness of Anglo-Saxon textual treatment of beautiful objects, which are ‘often assessed spiritually’ or via non-visual cues (e.g. aural or tactile); he then highlights the multivalence of such terms as *ansyn* (for ‘physical beauty’ or ‘outward appearance’), *torht* (for ‘bright’ or ‘beautiful’) and *fægernes* (for ‘physical, moral or spiritual beauty’) as examples.<sup>35</sup> However, the absence of contemporary treatises on aesthetics does not mean an absence of aesthetic sense on the part of the Anglo-Saxons. Karkov and Hardin Brown comment on the Augustinian emphasis on ‘harmoniously ordered form’, before suggesting that ‘Anglo-Saxon styles in general

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<sup>32</sup> Frantzen pp. 2, 23; on the perceived separation of ‘art’ from ‘utilitarian media’ see The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, ‘art’, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (2016), Web. <<https://www.britannica.com/art/visual-arts>>.

<sup>33</sup> Carol Farr, ‘Style in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, eds. Catherine E. Karkov and George Hardin Brown (2003), 115-30, p. 115.

<sup>34</sup> Karkov and Hardin Brown, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> Frantzen, pp. 1-2.

are characterized by (1) ambiguity, and (2) a love of complex pattern and surface ornament'.<sup>36</sup> In the sections below we will address in greater detail the hybrid influences which come together to create a distinctive set of aesthetic elements which characterise one aspect of Anglo-Saxon style. The recurrent production of a particular style implicates the artist or designer in an awareness of the style itself, though it does not necessarily indicate that their engagement with the style is conscious or deliberate. Evidence of such consciousness, though speculative, is best explored through instances of 'translation' or 'transposition', whereby artists reproduce images or design elements from an original piece of art, either altering the reproduced element to meet new stylistic criteria, or retaining these elements in a new context to invoke memories of the original. *Mise-en-page*, too, can be the subject of such 'translation' or 'transposition'. In her 2003 essay on late Anglo-Saxon style, Carol Farr points to the retention of articulated characters in the Insular style in later Anglo-Saxon manuscript design, suggesting that these characters were intended to invoke the memory of old gospel-books.<sup>37</sup> These ideas will be addressed more fully below, to demonstrate the ways in which Anglo-Saxon artists introduced a sense of density and surface motion to images 'translated' from continental models.

### *Text and image*

Dissecting the *written* page in search of aesthetic preferences is an extension of well-established scholarly work which examines theories of text and image in medieval and Anglo-Saxon aesthetic culture. In his recent book, *Script as Image*, Jeffrey Hamburger points to the inherent transubstantive materiality of written words in an

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<sup>36</sup> Karkov and Hardin Brown, 'Introduction', p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> Farr, pp. 122-24.

age of Christian writing, for just as the Word of God became flesh, so ‘the words of Christian scripture participated in the realm of divine exemplars and simultaneously possessed bodily presence’.<sup>38</sup> Hamburger sweeps across the full breadth of the medieval period, interrogating script as iconography, as performance, as figurative expression and as code of meaning through such devices as display capitals, diagrams, epigraphic scripts, *carmina figurata* and deployment of colour. The pages and folios he discusses are not, for the most part, the standard pages of block text with which we are primarily concerned. In his introduction, Hamburger gestures towards the implications of his approach for a reading of these more ‘ordinary’ texts:

Scripts can serve as talismans, tokens, amulets and apotropaic devices. Even stripped of such associations, a well-written hand can impress by virtue of its calligraphic control, eloquence and expression. One does not necessarily have to be able to read a script in order to respond to it as a highly differentiated and expressive set of marks that produces one of the most immediate, recognizable physical traces of human presence, thought and activity. Within the realm of visual imagery, the written word can rise to a form of representation in its own right, prior to and independent of the complex phenomenon generally considered under the rubric of “text and image” (...) On the parchment page, the elaborately inscribed and decorated written word could also be seen as a form of imagery.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Hamburger, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

For Hamburger, it seems to be the act of elaboration or differentiation in the presentation of a written word which allows it to ‘rise’ to an imagistic form. However, through the example of the ‘well-written hand’, Hamburger reminds us that even the standard or ‘ordinary’ text block is capable of passing visually encoded information to the reader (whether that is through ‘calligraphic control’ or other visual elements, such as page layout). The visual aspect of the standard page is ripe for reading, though differently from the highly worked schemes at the heart of Hamburger’s book.

Catherine Karkov pays significant attention to the ‘tradition of text as decoration’, and particularly to the ‘unity of word and image’ in Anglo-Saxon art and Insular manuscripts.<sup>40</sup> This ‘unity’ is often required of the ‘reader’ through a performative viewing of the object; one example Karkov gives of such performative unity is the physiological aspect of a reader’s engagement with the textual and pictorial narratives of the Ruthwell Cross: the reader’s eyes must make the sign of the cross, as well as moving ‘along and across the vinescroll so that text and ornament merge’.<sup>41</sup> Elsewhere she points to unities of design that link text to ornament on an object’s surface, such as a shared use of colour in the text and line-drawing of St. Dunstan’s self-portrait in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auctarium F. 4. 32, or the ‘doubled’ prayer which matches the doubling of the zoomorphic creature on the Sutton Hoo Helmet.<sup>42</sup> It is the structural feature of these unities which I find most intriguing: the *imagistic* ornament, such as a cross, or a vinescroll, or a doubled

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<sup>40</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 181-82 and Chapter Five: ‘Books, Words and Bodies’.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>42</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 171, 154-56; Manuscript description via Orietta Da Rold, ‘Classbook of St. Dunstan: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 4. 32 (2176)’, in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, eds. Orietta Da Rold, Takako Kato, Mary Swan and Elaine Treharne (2010) Web. Accessed 28 November 2017.

<<http://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.Ox.Auct.F.4.32.htm>>.

animal figure, acts as a pictorial directive to help readers navigate the accompanying *textual* ornament, or vice versa, creating not only unity between text and image, but also symbiosis. The reading of one is necessary or beneficial to progression in the reading of the other.

An example of this in an object briefly discussed by Karkov is the Sutton Brooch, an eleventh-century silver disc, one side of which is ornamented with a set of geometric rings and zoomorphic creatures (Image 12, below). On the other side are three verse lines in Old English, inscribed in a circle around the edge of the brooch. Thomas Bredehoft makes a link between the circular inscription of the Sutton Brooch and the standard absence of lineation on the Old English verse page.<sup>43</sup> Bredehoft argues that the absence of metrical lineation for manuscript verse *in situ* means that the line-breaks which occur at the page-edge are ‘literally meaningless but unavoidable interruptions of a text that is conceptualized and understood as being essentially linear and uninterrupted’; he suggests that we therefore engage with Old English manuscript verse on a single, linear (horizontal) dimension, while we engage with lineated verse in two dimensions (the horizontal dimension of the lines, and the vertical dimension of the metrical line-breaks).<sup>44</sup> This association of the physical form of the poem with linearity, and implicitly, with an erasure of metrical breaks, is evocative of the theory behind Alec Finlay’s circle poems, briefly discussed in Chapter One, where the circular form is said to eradicate the demarcation of ‘beginning’ or ‘end’ in the verse line.<sup>45</sup> Bredehoft does not believe that the one-dimensional system of encoding Old English verse is either an accident or a problem,

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<sup>43</sup> Bredehoft, ‘Old English Verse in Two Dimensions’.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Alec Finlay, *Change what changes*; see above, Chapter One, pp. 27-29.

and sees *mise-en-page* emendation by modern editors as an obstacle to approaching what he calls the ‘structural linearity’ of Old English verse.<sup>46</sup> He argues that ‘We must learn to understand how Anglo-Saxon readers understood Old English verse as one-dimensional.’<sup>47</sup>

**Image 12: Front of the Sutton Brooch**<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Bredehoft, ‘Old English Verse in Two Dimensions’.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Images 12 and 13 both from ‘The Aedwen Brooch’, Museum number: 1951,1011.1, *The British Museum: Collection Online*, The British Museum. Web. Accessed 28 November 2017. <[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=64612&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=64612&partId=1)>.

### **Image 13: Back of the Sutton Brooch**

This theory is a departure from scholarly consensus, but is well-aligned with the approach of my thesis. Bredehoft reads the circularity of the inscription on the Sutton Brooch as a play on this linearity, and points out that, although the presumptive ‘start’ of the inscription is marked by a small cross, it is possible to start reading at any of the three metrical line-breaks. Critically, he notes that:

the two-dimensional circular presentation invokes or employs all of these alternative structures, even if they are to be ultimately dismissed or regulated by the presence of the crosses. The apposite comparison, I think, is to how alternative meanings in the Riddle tradition are both generated and dismissed by the finding of the ‘correct’ solutions.<sup>49</sup>

The circular arrangement of the Sutton Brooch verse line, he suggests, is a

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<sup>49</sup> Bredehoft, ‘Old English Verse in Two Dimensions’.

pun, reliant on both the essential linearity of metrical units in standard forms of encoding on the manuscript page, and upon multiple concurrent ‘structural’ re-alignments of those units around the edge of the disc.<sup>50</sup> To Bredehoff’s analysis I would add that the ‘riddling’ scheme of the circular verse line is paralleled by the form of the artistic design on the front of the brooch (see Images 12 and 13, above). Despite the crude rendering of the image noted by Karkov, conflicting schemes of structural organization are clearly visible.<sup>51</sup> Structured by a grid of nine points, the pattern of the brooch comprises four overlapping circles, which contain zoomorphic images. Whether one sees the image as four circles, however, or as twelve tear-drop shapes suspended between the nine points of the grid, depends upon which system of visual organization the eye prioritises at any given time. Adding to the compulsion of the visual riddle are the beginnings of inverted tear-drops which lead off from four points of the grid and on to the edge of the disc. These lines direct our view, not towards the apparently primary system of overlapping circles, but towards the grid of tear-drops, which contain scroll-like images, on the one hand, and towards the unseen reverse-side of the brooch on the other. The design, then, could act as an indicator of, or a parallel to, the multivalence of the circular inscription of the verse lines on the reverse side of the brooch.

As well as the way in which images may illustrate modes of reading, it is interesting to note the ways in which design schemes navigate and even erode the borders between text and image. Karkov notes that the use of *diminuendo* acts as a ‘bridge’ between imagistic display scripts and the standard script of the text proper,

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Karkov says the brooch ‘is of sub-standard workmanship’ in Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 157.

and that it also acts as a bridge ‘between image and word’.<sup>52</sup> We can expand upon this, suggesting that the sense of continuity created by diminuendo raises the possibility that ‘standard’ script can also be read for its display. *Solomon and Saturn II*, a poem preserved in the tenth-century CCCC 422, is a particularly flamboyant example of this approach. The display script of the opening line employs a gentle diminuendo towards the start of the text proper; the use of imagistic script does not halt at this border, but impregnates the textual scheme with large marginal ‘S’ initials, and with other capitals re-worked into ornamental shapes, which complement the text’s exoticised settings (for example, see Images 14, 19, 31-32).<sup>53</sup> This poem is unusual amongst Old English verse texts for its substantial use of alternative letter-forms and display characters in the main part of the text. Other examples of letter-form manipulation can be found in the Exeter Book, where Winfried Rudolf has pointed to the use of ‘logogriphs’ and ‘iconicity’ as indicators and keys amongst the *Riddles*.<sup>54</sup>

The movement between display capitals and text block crosses conceptual borders of arrangement *within* the frame of the page; the erosion of difference between what constitutes text and what constitutes image can also take place *across* this frame, between the central text or image, and its margins or periphery. An example of this in material craft is the Franks Casket, a carved whalebone box of the early eighth century: the panels which make up the sides and top of this box are carved with the images of various mythic and biblical scenes; around the edges of each panel are inscriptions carved in a mixture of runic and Roman letters,

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp. 182-83.

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter Five, below, for a full analysis of the design features in CCCC 422.

<sup>54</sup> For discussion, see below, pp. 349-50; Winfried Rudolf, ‘Riddling and Reading - Iconicity and Logogriphs in Exeter Book *Riddles* 23 and 45’, *Anglia* (2012), pp. 499-525.

**Image 14: CCCC 422, p. 13<sup>55</sup>**

describing some element of the depicted scenes, from which they are separated by a narrow border.<sup>56</sup> The use of both Latin and runic scripts immediately brings to the

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<sup>55</sup> Image obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

<sup>56</sup> R. I. Page, *An Introduction to English Runes* (1999), pp. 37, 86; 'The Franks Casket / The Auzon Casket', *The British Museum: Collection Online*, The British Museum. Web. Accessed 26 August

fore both the symbolic nature of writing and the imagistic properties of script, priming the viewer for an experience in which they must ‘read’ across different planes. The enclosure and containment of the scene within the inscription facilitates the semantic relationship between image and text; for example: a panel depicting the suckling of Romulus and Remus also depicts another wolf and four human figures, while the bordering text tells us that Romulus and Remus were brothers, that they were nursed by a female wolf in Rome, and that this was far from their home.<sup>57</sup> The text and image are not ‘translations’ of one another, but deliver distinct information; moreover, text and image are clearly related, but this is not automatically a ‘unity’ of the kind which Karkov discusses. The ‘unity’ of text and image on the Franks Casket is created by the breaking of the frame: the features of the carved runes repeatedly transgress the bounding-lines which enclose them, entering the central space of the panel, where they become involved in the image. Examples can be found on the front panel, which shows part of the story of Weland the Smith alongside the adoration of Christ by the Magi, on the back panel, depicting the siege of Jerusalem, and on the left-hand side-panel depicting the suckling of Romulus and Remus (see Images 15-17, below).<sup>58</sup> In the inscription above Weland’s scene, the base of the † (*lagu*), M (*dæg*) and N (*ur*) characters appear to continue on the other side of the frame which borders the inscription; having entered the imagery of the panel’s centre, these elongated rune-limbs coil into beam or branch-like shapes, forming part of the

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<[www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=92560&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=92560&partId=1)>.

<sup>57</sup> Catherine E. Karkov, ‘The Franks Casket Speaks Back: The Bones of the Past, the Becoming of England’, in *Postcolonising the Medieval Image*, eds. Eva Frojmovic, Catherine E. Karkov (2017), 37-61, p. 49; ‘The Franks Casket / The Auzon Casket’, *The British Museum: Collection Online*, The British Museum.

<sup>58</sup> For descriptions of the panels, see ‘The Franks Casket / The Auzon Casket’, *The British Museum: Collection Online*, The British Museum.

backdrop. In the right-hand compartment of the panel, this is paralleled by a clearer incursion of runes into the image space, where the word **MFxl magi** is spelled out. On the image of the siege of Jerusalem, the spears of the two leftmost soldiers intersect with the frame and appear to continue into the upwardly diagonal limbs of two **†** (*nyd*) and **X** (*gifu*) characters. There are no further slanting limbs for the spears of the two rightmost soldiers to coincide with, but they also meet the borderline at the same point as the base of a runic character above. The bases of runic characters above and below the image of Romulus and Remus appear to meld with the upper branches and roots of trees which form the backdrop to the scene. Around the casket, textual borders grow into the images and hostile imagery breaks out into the texts in a fusion of semantic and visual signification that truly captures a ‘unity’ of forms. These lines of motion between image and text, it is worth noting, are at odds with the motion of the eye required to read these elements. For the text, one must read around the panel, and for the images, one must read horizontally across it (and, in the case of the siege, vertically too). The introduction of a text-image fusion which draws the eye diagonally and vertically transgresses and transforms these processes of reading. What this perhaps reminds us is that the ‘unity’ of text and image is dynamic, frequently reliant upon the performative reading practice outlined by Karkov, employing particular angles and lines of viewing motion.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> See above, p. 234.

**Image 15: Franks casket panel (front)**<sup>60</sup>

**Image 16: Franks casket panel (back)**

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<sup>60</sup> Images 15-17 from 'The Franks Casket / The Auzon Casket', *The British Museum: Collection Online*, The British Museum.

### **Image 17: Franks casket panel (side)**

#### *Identifying a 'stylistic grammar'*

The texts and objects discussed above are widely dispersed in space and time, but we may still extract a common stylistic thread that runs through all of them. Leslie Webster, in her analysis of 'Style and Sense in the Anglo-Saxon Minor Arts, A.D. 400-900', identifies certain recurrent elements of Anglo-Saxon artistic design which contribute to 'traditional modes of visual literacy', including the establishment of 'control and divinely bounded order' through such devices as compartmentation, hierarchies and symmetries, and including an 'encrypted' or riddling aspect.<sup>61</sup> Most importantly, Webster points to the persistence of this 'stylistic grammar' at major points of transition in the intellectual landscape, and particularly in the context of Alfred's educational programme. The retention of a particularly 'Saxon' way of reading images lends credence to the common threads that pass through the imagistic treatment of text, whereby the processes at work within an image may indicate the

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<sup>61</sup> Webster, 'Encrypted Visions', pp. 20-21.

processes at work within a corresponding text, and whereby the compartmentalisation of text and image is eroded by a persistent unity.

Webster frequently draws parallels between the stylistic features of Anglo-Saxon art on the one hand, and contemporary verse on the other. She identifies what she terms a ‘formulaic vocabulary’ of recurrent images, such as ‘interlace and geometric motifs’.<sup>62</sup> Her choice of the words ‘formulaic vocabulary’ is evidently designed to support her subsequent argument, that she finds the use of such imagistic ‘motifs’ ‘reminiscent of the way in which Anglo-Saxon poetry uses recurrent phrases to steer the narrative flow’ and aid memory.<sup>63</sup> On the face of it, this argument simply seems to say that one set of regular parallelisms in art somehow evokes another set of parallelisms in contemporary literature, without making a significant effort to explain why they are alike. However, this explicit connection between the features of Old English verse and the features of contemporary art is not without precedent or foundation, and it deserves some elaboration. John Leyerle’s essay of 1967, ‘The Interlace Structure of *Beowulf*’ (analysed more fully below), is one well-known analysis of such interplay, and Webster herself goes on to associate the riddling images in Anglo-Saxon metalwork with the ‘ambiguities and paradoxes’ of Anglo-Saxon literature.<sup>64</sup> Even if the link between Webster’s ‘formulaic vocabulary’ and the formulas of Old English verse needs more explication, her use of the term is a helpful way of recognising recurrent features which appear in the visual narratives of crafted objects. We will examine those recurrent features which relate to ‘density’.

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<sup>62</sup> Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 23.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> John Leyerle, ‘The Interlace Structure of *Beowulf*’, *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 37 (1967) 1-17; Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 34.

*The aesthetics of the standard page*

We must not forget that there is a great difference between the purpose and process behind the design of, say, the Lindisfarne Gospels' Chi-Rho page on the one hand, and any such purpose and process for the layout of a standard folio of Old English verse on the other. The imagistic properties of illuminated manuscript art do not provide ready points of comparison to the layout of most Old English verse, which is typically written as continuous text blocks from margin to margin, punctuated primarily by use of initials, blank lines, or small graphic cues (such as puncti or slashes) to indicate sectional divisions. While the 'art' of a highly ornamented page might evidently meet Karkov's defining criteria of 'movement, drama, narrativity and pattern', the construction of a page of Old English text does not meet these criteria intrinsically. Reaching for a more accurate terminology for this latter construction, we might usefully settle on 'craft', with its implications of an object that has been 'worked', and which may not produce the same 'narrativity' as a piece of 'art', yet which is not divorced from a sense of aesthetics either. Ordinary or everyday objects can be assessed for what Roger Scruton calls their 'fittingness'; he contrasts the 'minimal beauty' of such activities as 'laying the table' or 'designing a website' with the 'sacred' beauty of art or nature.<sup>65</sup> Of this minimal beauty, he writes:

looking right matters in the way beauty generally matters – not by pleasing the eye only, but by conveying meanings and values which have weight for you and which you are consciously putting

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<sup>65</sup> Scruton, pp. 7-8, 80-81.

on display.<sup>66</sup>

The potential for written text to take on imagistic properties, or to interact narratively and meaningfully with graphic design, as we have considered above, is enough to suggest that a ‘grammar’ of Anglo-Saxon manuscript art might also relate to what is considered ‘fitting’ on the ordinary, written page. The questions we must ask are as follows. If a unity of text and image is so powerful in Anglo-Saxon written and artistic culture, can an awareness of script and text as visual imagistic signifiers suddenly shut down when the scribe or designer reaches the main text block of a work? Or do the bridging effects that we have witnessed elsewhere suggest an inherent ‘shape’ to all text, of the kind which Hamburger implies? If text and image are fused in a continuum, what are the imagistic implications of the ordinary written page?

The present chapter seeks to examine whether the essential density of the typical Old English verse page might have been considered ‘fitting’, meeting a cultural aesthetic derived from a contemporary preference for density in Anglo-Saxon art. We have already considered a number of artefacts above which indicate that Anglo-Saxon artists and writers were fully cognisant of the potential for interplay and correspondence between the design of artistic patterning and the reading of a text. However, it is not enough simply to demonstrate that a graphic ‘fullness’ exists in both Anglo-Saxon art and in the design of the Old English verse page. Rather, I will look for moments when a scribe may be seen actively seeking to create fullness in the page, as well as looking for ways in which specific elements of the written text might correspond with elements of density in contemporary art.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

The aesthetic approach of this chapter may seem to be at odds with the utilitarian approach of the last chapter, in which I proposed that the layout of Old English verse is a function of metrical structure. To differentiate in such a way between the aesthetic and the utilitarian, however, would be to oversimplify. Scruton, in his consideration of the judgement of beauty, challenges such a distinction, citing the architectural example of a pillar which brings a sense of ‘dignity’ to the aspect of a building, as well as ‘support’ to its structure, and observing how our sense of an object’s attractiveness may be intertwined with the functionality of its design.<sup>67</sup> He makes a particular comment on this theme which strikes a chord with much of what we have already seen in this thesis:

knowledge of function is a vital preliminary to the experience of form.<sup>68</sup>

The utility and the aesthetic design of an object are not merely connected; rather, function can serve and be served by aesthetics. Scruton goes on to note that the differentiation of ‘art’ from ‘craft’ is not one that would have been recognised throughout history, and points to the origins of the word ‘poetry’ in Greek *poesis* (‘the skill of making things’), or the breadth of the Latin term *artes* (‘every kind of practical endeavour’).<sup>69</sup> Old English *cræft* may be added to Scruton’s list, with its breadth of possible meanings stretching from physical prowess, to mental skill, to the liberal arts.<sup>70</sup> The presence or absence of lineation in the formatting of verse may be

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<sup>67</sup> Scruton, pp. 15, 17-18, 75-76.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>70</sup> For these and other definitions, see ‘cræft’, Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette dePaolo Healey, et al., eds. *Dictionary of Old English: A to H Online* (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2016), Web. Accessed 26 February 2018 <<http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/doi/>>.

as much a utilitarian expression of metrical structure, as it is an aesthetic reflection of design features associated with distinct Latinate or Saxon styles.

### **Density in Anglo-Saxon style**

Of the ornamentation of Anglo-Saxon art objects, David Wilson says, ‘when restraint leaves a surface only partially decorated the viewer can be surprised and even worried’.<sup>71</sup> This propensity for the loosely defined category of ‘Anglo-Saxon art’ to exhibit a density of design is a matter of conventional knowledge referenced by a range of scholars in a wide variety of disciplines touching the Anglo-Saxon period.<sup>72</sup> This density is often termed *horror vacui*, which in English translates as ‘fear of empty spaces’, but conventionally refers to qualities of fullness or density in creative design. In this chapter I will continue to refer to this style as ‘density’, in line with Karkov’s critique of the term ‘*horror vacui*’ as a Eurocentric concept.<sup>73</sup> The terms ‘*horror vacui*’, ‘decorative’ and ‘ornamental’, she argues, are deployed ‘as a way of dismissing these styles as of less artistic and cultural value than the three-dimensional, figurative, narrative traditions of the classical world, the Renaissance, and later European art’.<sup>74</sup> Ornamentation, she says, is neither inherently

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<sup>71</sup> David M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Art from the Seventh Century to the Norman Conquest* (1984), p. 10.

<sup>72</sup> The *OED* definition offers a range of example usages for the headword ‘horror vacui’, the majority of which refer to art or a practical craft. See, ‘horror vacui, n.’ *OED Online* (2017) Web. Accessed 27 November 2017 <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/88578](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/88578)>. See further: Charles R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (1982), p. 38; Jack Goody, *The Culture of Flowers* (1993), p. 133; Tania M. Dickinson, ‘Translating Animal Art: Salin’s Style I and Anglo-Saxon cast saucer brooches’, *Hikuin* 29 (2002), 163-86, p. 163, who directly references G. Haseloff, *Die germanische Tierornamentik der Völkerwanderungszeit. Studien zu Salin’s Stil I* (1981), pp. 113-14, 486-521; Janina Ramirez, *The Private Lives of the Saints: Power, Passion and Politics in Anglo-Saxon England* (2015), p. 148.

<sup>73</sup> Catherine E. Karkov, ‘Insular Art’, *Oxford Bibliographies* (2015), Web. Accessed 27th November 2017 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780195396584-0014>>.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*; the concept of ‘*horror vacui*’ in pre-Carolingian art is referred to as ‘barbaric’ in Robert Deshman, ‘Anglo-Saxon Art after Alfred’, *The Art Bulletin* 56 (1974), 176-200, p. 198.

devoid of meaning, nor needs to confer meaning to be of importance.<sup>75</sup> Certainly here, we are not examining so much what is intended by the production of densely covered surfaces, but rather how this tradition developed, in what sense it conveys a particularly Anglo-Saxon aesthetic, and how it comes to influence manuscript art in particular.

For a demonstration of this artistic ‘density’ across the breadth of the half-millennium period, we can look through a vast array of metalwork at various design features: from the symmetrical coils and geometric blocks of fifth-century brooches and buckles in the Saxon Relief and Quoit Brooch styles, through the chaotic but balanced mess of animal and human parts in the Chessel Down Brooch, a typical Style I piece of the early sixth century, to the intricate interlace of Style II clasps and buckles found at high-status burials at Taplow and Sutton Hoo, or (from the same period) the geometrical garnet motifs set in gold fittings from the Staffordshire hoard, and the containment of animal figures within roundels on the ninth-century Fuller Brooch and eleventh-century Sutton Brooch.<sup>76</sup>

The technique of covering surfaces with ornamentation is by no means unique to or an invention of Anglo-Saxon style. Webster’s broad introduction to the development of Anglo-Saxon styles may be sifted for clues regarding the introduction and development of visual motifs which contributed to the development

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<sup>75</sup> Karkov, *Anglo Saxon England*, p. 181.

<sup>76</sup> These and other details and images of all of these objects can be found as follows. The fifth century quoit brooch: ‘Belt Fitting’, Museum number: 1970,0406.26.d, *The British Museum: Collection Online*, The British Museum. Web. Accessed 28 November 2017.

<[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=94345&partId=1&searchText=1970,0406.26.d&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=94345&partId=1&searchText=1970,0406.26.d&page=1)>. Staffordshire Hoard fittings: ‘Gallery: Gold and Garnet Fittings’, *Staffordshire Hoard*, Web. Accessed 30 January 2018

<<http://www.staffordshirehoard.org.uk/gallery/gold-and-garnet-fittings>>. The Sutton Brooch (or Aedwen Brooch): ‘The Aedwen Brooch’, *The British Museum: Collection Online*. All other objects, and an account of the trajectory between styles, in Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, pp. 15-17, 49-67, 153.

of this tradition, and the points of influence are numerous. The emergence of the Saxon Relief Style in early-fifth-century Germany carried with it geometric motifs which were ‘derived from the decoration on late Roman belt fittings, and other official and military metalwork’; this style was imported to England, where it outlived the fifth century.<sup>77</sup> ‘[D]ense and elliptical versions’ of Roman metalwork, which inform the earliest development of Animal Style I, migrated from Scandinavia into Anglo-Saxon England in the later fifth century, and differed from comparable art in late Roman and contemporary Celtic styles by containing a ‘highly compressed and schematic ornamental program’ within ‘clearly defined frames’, and central, zoomorphic patterns in particular.<sup>78</sup> Roman and Byzantine style again brought their influence to bear upon the development of Animal Style II in the second half of the sixth century, through ‘classical ideas of symmetry and of interlacing patterns’; in its later and now Anglian incarnation, this style went on to influence the practice of insular manuscript painting.<sup>79</sup> As briefly noted above, Webster coins the term ‘formulaic vocabulary’ to refer to the recurrent use of certain elements of these imported or developed traditions, including interlace, zoomorphic design, geometric or symmetrical patterns; she suggests that these act as ‘familiar images which can guide and reinforce understanding’.<sup>80</sup> Such adoption of recurrent elements from various sources does not imply a derivative kind of art, devoid of a definable local aesthetic. Rather, Karkov explains the emergence of new aesthetics in terms of

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<sup>77</sup> Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, pp. 49-51.

<sup>78</sup> Webster, ‘Encrypted Visions: Style and Sense in the Anglo-Saxon Minor Arts, A.D. 400-900’, p.14; Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 56.

<sup>79</sup> Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, pp. 61, 66.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23. ‘Visual grammar’ is a term used by Webster to indicate similarities between the Chessell Down Brooch, which displays ‘pagan symbolism’, and the ninth-century Strickland Brooch in its much more clearly Christian context; ‘stylistic vocabulary’ is a similar term which Webster uses, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, pp. 17-18.

‘spaces’ between pre- existing cultures:

The result of such encounters is a series of shifting hybrid identities, each of the original cultures leaving its mark on the other in a way that allows for the emergence of a third space, in the particular case at hand, Romano-Britain. From the Romano-British encounter with the Germanic peoples who settled in Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries comes the third space of Anglo-Saxon England, and so forth.<sup>81</sup>

Thus, having documented how these ‘formulas’ were imported into an Anglo-Saxon ‘vocabulary’ from various migrating influences, including Celtic, Germanic, Roman and Byzantine models, Webster addresses Anglo-Saxon style as a distinct cultural phenomenon which was capable of adopting and transforming these foreign stylistic elements, rather than of simply recycling them.<sup>82</sup> Usefully for us, her perspective centres on manuscript art:

manuscripts from the early eighth century onwards show how Italian and Byzantine models, and, later on, Carolingian versions, were influential in the figural art of Anglo-Saxons following the Conversion, though in the process of copying, these new models were also transformed into something recognizably within that older Anglo-Saxon tradition of surface patterning and movement.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

Of such surface patterning in the Lindisfarne Gospels, she notes that

The concept of pages entirely covered with ornament (...) is faithful to their eastern exemplars. But the rich interlacing menagerie of birds and animals, and complex spiral decoration, is wholly Anglo-Saxon in its love of intricate pattern and meticulously ordered structures.<sup>84</sup>

This Anglo-Saxon aesthetic that Webster moves to identify seems to be less about the specific elements of the ‘formulaic vocabulary’ identified above, and more about how those elements communicate an essential density and sense of motion across ‘restless surfaces’.<sup>85</sup> Within Anglo-Saxon style she identifies the ‘complex’, the ‘exuberant’, and the ‘turbulent’, with designs exhibiting a ‘delight in rich surfaces’.<sup>86</sup> The process of transformation does not end with the creation of a new aesthetic in this hybrid ‘space’; the space remains open to the continued influence of migrant styles, producing new, hybrid materials. The impression that Webster is not simply addressing a transformation of style created by the pressures of migration, but rather an ongoing process of translation, is compounded by her analysis of an image of the baptism of Christ in a late-tenth-century Anglo-Saxon benedictional, which appears to be related to the same scene on an earlier Carolingian ivory casket. While the image of the casket is ‘static’ and ‘classicizing’, Webster points to the ‘turbulence’ of the Anglo-Saxon imitation with its ‘busy surroundings’ and ‘rich patterning’.<sup>87</sup> By adding some detail to Webster’s description, we can further elucidate this idea of

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-20.

<sup>85</sup> Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 24.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 24, 187.

visual translation. On the ivory casket, of the late-ninth or early-tenth century, the central figure of Christ is baptised by John the Baptist; at a little distance two angels attend, and a figure pours out water from an urn on the leftmost end of the scene.<sup>88</sup> Between these figures the ivory is left unetched; the three-dimensionality of the figures intrudes slightly on to a narrow but busy border of vegetation, itself encased in a quieter border of abstract design, reminiscent perhaps of floral shapes; in the corners metal clasps secure the panel. The Anglo-Saxon illustration adopts most of these features, and emboldens them. The space between the figures of the panel is coloured purple and reduced, with all of the figures touching one another; the air above them is filled with smaller angels, and both above and below the scene is an initial border of turbulent waters. What is above could conceivably be a more naturalistic representation of cloud, but placing waters above the scene might equally evoke the division of the waters in Genesis, or might simply encase the scene in the waters of baptism. The outermost figures intrude upon the external borders of the illustration, with the angels' wings emerging beyond the border, which is made of small compartments containing patterns of vegetation. In place of the quiet metal border clasps of the ivory casket, the illustrator has created four ornate floral motifs. The illustration imitates features of the casket's materiality (its clasps, its three-dimensional qualities) as well as its basic design, but breaks borders and adds vibrant motion in a way not found in the ivory original.

### *Density on the page*

Webster writes that '[t]he dense textures shared by Anglo-Saxon verbal and visual art is one of their most striking and persistent characteristics'. Our aim is to discover

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<sup>88</sup> Dating from Ibid., p. 185.

whether such textures might affect the *mise-en-page* of written texts, and so we must seek a route by which the aesthetic preference for density found in early crafts, and particularly evident in our examination of metalwork, might come to influence manuscript art and broader elements of page design. Karkov's use of the word 'translation' in an art-historical context is not limited to the reproduction or change of art between cultures and nations, but also 'between objects and media'.<sup>89</sup> The 'small number of Anglian Style II artefacts' which survive to us are dominated by examples of metalwork, most notably those from Sutton Hoo; Webster points out that this style 'was to be especially influential in the development of insular manuscript painting in the seventh century', highlighting 'interlacing animal decoration' in Dublin, Trinity College, 57 (A. 4. 5) (the 'Book of Durrow') as an example.<sup>90</sup> Moving towards and into the eighth century, Karkov points to the Lindisfarne Gospels as a prime example of the 'translation of motifs, styles and iconographies from traditional art forms such as metalworking into new media and types of object such as the book'.<sup>91</sup> She notes the 'enamel- or jewel-like forms' of the evangelist portraits.<sup>92</sup> In a similar vein we can compare the key features identified in the earlier summary of density in Anglo- Saxon material art and craft (centring on Webster's 'formulaic vocabulary' of Anglo-Saxon design), and identify instances of their appearance in the carpet pages of the Gospels: the zoomorphic heads topping the ascenders of *l*, *i*, and *b* on the incipit page; the all-encompassing interlace of the St Matthew cross-carpet page; the geometric motifs in the corners of

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<sup>89</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 33.

<sup>90</sup> Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, pp. 64, 66, 76; on elements of Anglian Style II in manuscript art, see also Karen Høilund Nielsen, 'Style II and all that: the potential of the hoard for statistical study of chronology and geographical distributions', *Papers from the Staffordshire Hoard Symposium*, Web. Accessed 27th November 2017 <<https://finds.org.uk/staffshoardsymposium/papers/karenhoilundnielsen>>.

<sup>91</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 33.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

the St John cross-carpet page; the compartmentalisation of the St Luke cross-carpet page.<sup>93</sup> Michelle Brown reads yet more explicit evocations of material objects into the Gospels' design in the form of 'metalwork analogies', observing in the carpet pages 'the polychromy of Insular and Germanic metalwork', and the 'emulation of a raised metalwork glass boss or stud, of the sort which adorn the Ardagh chalice and the Derrynaflan patten'; she further suggests that 'gilded details' as found in the Luke and Matthew incipits might then have invoked 'processional crosses'.<sup>94</sup> Karkov, too, links the visual techniques of the evangelist portraits and carpet pages to the techniques applied to metalwork, and identifies the 'white circles' of the carpet pages with 'the bosses of the Sarre brooch'.<sup>95</sup> Janina Ramirez compares the ornamentation of Matthew's cloak in of the Book of Durrow with the cloisonné found on metalwork at Sutton Hoo.<sup>96</sup> Such imitations of metalwork in the Lindisfarne Gospels and other high- status religious manuscripts (and particularly the three-dimensionality noted by Brown) may also invoke the materiality of original bindings, incorporating metal and jewels, in much the same way that the corner flourishes on the image of Christ's baptism in the late-tenth-century benedictional discussed above seem to imitate the clasps in the corners of the model ivory panel.<sup>97</sup> Not merely an aesthetic preference for 'fullness', but the design tools and features used to create that fullness are translated into complex (and sometimes skeuomorphic) patterns on the manuscript page. The possible invocation of the Lindisfarne Gospels' own metal binding would be a conscious address to such

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<sup>93</sup> On Webster's 'formulaic vocabulary', see above, esp. pp. 244-45, 251-53.

<sup>94</sup> Michelle Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (2003), pp. 278, 316-17.

<sup>95</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>96</sup> Ramirez, p. 148.

<sup>97</sup> See 'Lindisfarne Gospels', *Turning the Pages*, British Library. Cover. Web. Accessed 26 February 2018 <[www.bl.uk/turning-the-pages/?id=fdbcc772-3e21-468d-8ca1-9c192f0f939c&type=book](http://www.bl.uk/turning-the-pages/?id=fdbcc772-3e21-468d-8ca1-9c192f0f939c&type=book)>.

translation between media.

The persistent use of what Webster calls a ‘formulaic vocabulary’ and ‘visual grammar’ in Anglo-Saxon art, particularly as part of the various ‘translations’ discussed above, may have meant that images featuring such ‘vocabulary’ and ‘grammar’ were explicitly recognised as exercising a cultural identity distinct from that of Continental and particularly Roman models.<sup>98</sup> It may even have meant that a sense of density, busyness and motion on the page evoked this identity. And yet, as we have seen in examples from both the benedictional described above and the Lindisfarne Gospels, these incidences of Insular and Anglo-Saxon art co-exist in their most extraordinary forms not alongside Old English texts, but alongside Latin texts. Anglo-Saxon scribes were quite capable of making close imitations of continental manuscripts, as indicated in our discussion of the Codex Amiatinus in Chapter Two, which makes their application of Anglo-Saxon design elements to the Latin texts and Roman features of the Book of Durrow or Lindisfarne Gospels all the more interesting.<sup>99</sup> The incorporation of Anglo-Saxon stylistic elements in the translation of Mediterranean design features demonstrates the distinctive nature of Anglo-Saxon style, while simultaneously breaking down the borders of that distinctiveness within a hybrid ‘space’. Following a process of conversion initiated by Roman missionaries from the late sixth century onwards, Christianity became central to Anglo-Saxon culture.<sup>100</sup> It cannot therefore be surprising that there is no aesthetic practice of separating Latin Christian texts from such ostentatious and thoroughly Anglo-Saxon art pieces as are found in the early gospel books.

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<sup>98</sup> Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 17.

<sup>99</sup> On the Codex Amiatinus as imitation, and insular influence on Mediterranean elements in the Book of Durrow, see Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, pp. 73, 76-77.

<sup>100</sup> Symons, p. 1.

We might suggest that Webster's 'dense textures' are also present in the *written* art of the Anglo-Saxons, in their pages of unlineated verse. From 'textures' then, to 'texts'; in almost all surviving Old English poetry, and in much Latin poetry preceding the tenth century, the absence of lineation results in pages which are solid with writing and quite compatible with a programme of, or with a preference for, density. However, if Anglo-Saxon manuscript art features so prominently alongside Latin religious texts, and is so frequently an influencing factor in the translation of Mediterranean features into hybrid manuscript and material art, we must ask why the Latin texts of the ninth and tenth centuries gradually develop and solidify a practice of lineation, while it is only vernacular verse which retains an unlineated form of *mise-en-page* density.<sup>101</sup> As was shown in Chapter Two, manuscripts written or owned in Anglo-Saxon England prior to the tenth century and exhibiting grade A lineation frequently contained verse reliant on visually linear order, such as acrostic verse or metrical calendars. It is only at the end of the ninth century, and moving into the tenth century, that we reliably see lineated style being applied to verse more generally. It is therefore possible that this *mise-en-page* development evolved as part of the broader response to Carolingian models of book-art and book design, which became particularly influential in the late ninth and early-to-mid-tenth centuries.<sup>102</sup> Such influences do not entirely displace Anglo-Saxon design elements in Anglo-Latin manuscripts; nor is there any reason their influence should be applied to vernacular manuscripts (which continued to be inscribed in insular scripts). Simply, there is a divergence in the *mise-en-page* treatment of Latin and Anglo-Saxon texts,

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<sup>101</sup> See Chapter Two, above, for the full analysis of page-layout in Latin verse manuscripts up to the end of the ninth century.

<sup>102</sup> Richard Gameson, 'The decoration of the Tanner Bede', *ASE* 21 (1992), 115-59, p. 157. On the emergence of English Caroline minuscule from the end of this period, particularly in Latin texts, see Roberts, *Guide to Scripts*, pp. 85-86 and Brown, *Western Historical Scripts*, pp. 66-67.

with a plausible connection between lineated Anglo-Latin layouts and continental models on the one hand, and dense vernacular layouts and native aesthetic modes of density on the other.

The idea that different scribes might apply different *mise-en-page* approaches to Latin and Old English texts has already been addressed in a somewhat different context by William Schipper, who notes that in later Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, Latin prose texts are often laid out in columns, while vernacular prose is presented in ‘long lines’.<sup>103</sup> Schipper suggests that this *mise-en-page* difference indicates a deliberate deployment of ‘layout style’ by scribes, which arose from the Alfredian push to produce more Old English texts, and was used to differentiate Old English from Latin.<sup>104</sup> Some of Schipper’s evidence is particularly compelling, including scribes who ignore pre-ruled columns in order to write Old English prose in unbroken lines.<sup>105</sup> This finding certainly tallies with Farr’s sense that scribes ‘translating’ elements of manuscript design had a conception of how layout could evoke particular kinds of text.<sup>106</sup> Although it is not within my remit to explore the history of Germanic *mise-en-page* more broadly, it must nevertheless be noted that medieval vernacular verse in both Old Saxon and Icelandic was initially unlineated in its manuscript form, suggesting a cultural correlation between Germanic verse and unlineated *mise-en-page*. This is worthy of future study.

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<sup>103</sup> Schipper, p. 151.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., pp. 151, 162-64.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>106</sup> Farr, pp. 122-24.

## Density and the written page

In the early parts of this chapter I have sought to establish the legitimacy of looking to Anglo-Saxon art for a broad aesthetic through which to approach the graphic design of the written page. To this end, I have used art-historical accounts of the period and numerous examples of art-objects, firstly to demonstrate and explore the idea of ‘density’ as an aesthetic mode in Anglo-Saxon art, and secondly to trace the path of this mode as it is translated from the ornamentation of early traditional craft media into the culturally and materially distinct forms of later manuscript art. I have suggested that a divergence in *mise-en-page* formatting opens up between Old English and Latin texts, and that this divergence, like other changes to script and layout, may have been influenced by Mediterranean and Carolingian models. Meanwhile, Old English verse texts retained a density of style evocative of traditional Anglo-Saxon craft. My argument does not challenge the hypothesis which I proposed in the last chapter, that *mise-en-page* developed in such a way as to align with the variant metrical structures of Old English and Latin verse. Rather, just as Scruton’s pillar brings both ‘dignity’ to the aspect of a building, and support to its framework, so the scribes of verse texts in Anglo-Saxon England developed sensitivities both to the utilitarian function of *mise-en-page* in representing metrical form, and to the page as a site of cultural aesthetics, capable of evoking different traditions through a range of graphic cues.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, the suitability of the former function may have helped to secure the fittingness of the latter.<sup>108</sup>

It is insufficient, however, simply to assume that the dense layout of Old English verse on the page is conceived of in the same way as the crowded and

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<sup>107</sup> For Scruton, see above, p. 248.

<sup>108</sup> Scruton addresses the interface between beauty and utility; see Scruton, pp. 17-18, 75-76.

undulating surfaces of Anglo-Saxon manuscript art, or as earlier exhibitions of density in traditional craft. Put another way: the written page is dense, but is this page-density conceived of as the same *kind* of density that is found in contemporary art, and does this page-density arise from a desire on the part of the scribe to fill as much space as possible? The absence of contemporary treatises on the aesthetics of book design hinders our understanding of scribal intention behind the layout of Old English verse; however, in some instances, the intentions of particular scribes and artists are recoverable from the manuscripts themselves. Specifically, manuscripts bear witness to the reluctance of scribes to leave empty space in Old English verse texts.

#### *Filling blank spaces*

In the last chapter, we addressed blank space as a tool of *mise-en-page*, with a particular focus on the deployment of inter-word spacing, and its relation to metrical structures in verse. Blank space is in fact deployed in numerous ways across the standard Old English verse page, sometimes highly planned, and at other times more incidental to the writing of the text. The planned deployment of spacing is a necessary part of defining the limits of a written text: such space indicates beginnings and endings, sectional divisions and the relationship between the main or original text and later additions or commentary that occur in the periphery. The non-standardised use of spacing across and even within Anglo-Saxon vernacular manuscripts means that these borders and divisions are often ambiguous.

This process begins early in the life of the page, when it is ruled for writing, and the margin areas are defined around the area set aside for text. In conjunction with interlinear spacing (which is also defined by the ruling phase, and continually

enacted during the process of writing), marginal space also establishes a hierarchy between the 'main' text of the ruled space on the one hand, and peripheral additions in the form of marginal or interlinear text on the other. Impositions upon this space might take the form of a single letter, as found alongside certain Exeter Book riddles, or alternatively might fill the entire margins with continuous text, as in the copy of the first ninety-four lines of *Solomon and Saturn I* written into marginal space in CCCC 41, which will be discussed more fully in Chapter Five. Within a text block, blank space is typically among the tools deployed to indicate sectional divisions; scribes may also choose to leave blank space for the later addition of words, images or ornamental characters, or to avoid holes or other damage to the parchment. Related to these deployments of space on the page are deployments of space around the book-object, such as large portions of blank space at the end of a codicological unit, or the use of blank flyleaves (or largely blank, as flyleaves are often used for sketches and pen trials).

Blank space is continually deployed as an incidental feature of the process of writing. Interlinear space, inter-word spacing, and the space left between the right-most end of the page-line and the marginal ruling are all quantities of space over which the scribe has control, but are less evidently the results of a planning process than the marginal or sectional spacing discussed above. Nonetheless, scribes can be seen to interact meaningfully with the deployment of incidental spacing. The last chapter argued that scribes' senses of metrical patterning influenced their deployment of inter-word spacing, and also drew on Simon Thomson's suggestion that scribes manipulate line-end spacing at the end of pages in order to finish with

complete lines or half-lines.<sup>109</sup> The space between and within letter-forms, which also constitutes a major portion of uninscribed parchment on the page, is again incidental to the act of writing, but inherently manipulable: it will be easier for a scribe writing in the narrow, pointed forms of early insular minuscule, if desired, to leave less space within letter-forms than for a scribe writing in a rounded, uncial script.

These, then, are the regions of blank space on the page. They are not inert, but interact meaningfully with the text. From a visual perspective, the deployment of sectional divisions is not unlike the use of compartmentalizing frames that Webster identifies as key to early Anglo-Saxon Style I ornamentation, and which survives as a persistent feature of later Anglo-Saxon design. It is not clear, then, to what degree the existence of blank space might be problematic from an Anglo-Saxon aesthetic perspective. However, there are numerous occasions where we can see scribes actively trying to eradicate blank space left by the incidental processes of writing, rendering space something which is ‘positioned’ on the page. There are three main methods or scenarios for such eradication: the manipulation and extension of letters, characters, punctuation or other graphic cues into blank space; the manipulation and shaping of the text block; the use of illustration. While the focus of this chapter has primarily been poetic texts, examples from prose have also been used where relevant. If it is indeed the case that an aesthetic preference for fullness is among the influences informing the page design of manuscripts, then we would expect prose no less than verse to exhibit such features.

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<sup>109</sup> Thomson, ‘Whistle While You Work’, pp. 119-21.

## 1. Extending the written line into blank space.

This method uses characters, parts of characters or punctuation to fill in blank space, commonly the redundant space between the end of a written line, and the right-hand ruling. A few consecutive examples of this tactic can be found on p.165 of CCCC 201, which contains the poetic text, *An Exhortation to Christian Living* (Image 18, below).<sup>110</sup> Line 300 of the poem concludes the penultimate section of the poem, preceding a conclusion (line 2 of Image 18), and as Tim Flight notes in his analysis of the manuscript text, graphic cues highlight this sectional division: the conclusion (ll. 301-306) begins on a new line of the manuscript, prefaced by a large red initial ‘h’; the final ‘s’ of ‘weardas’ at the end of line 300 has been extended to fill the space remaining between ‘weardas’ and the right-hand ruling.<sup>111</sup> Flight suggests that the extension of the ‘s’ is ‘unusual for the characteristically economical Scribe A’, and argues that the break created by these various cues offers the reader a moment of contemplation.<sup>112</sup> Flight’s explanation of the extended ‘s’ may be called into question by two other instances on the folio in which the scribe extends characters to eradicate space between the written line and right-hand rule. At the end of the fourth line of Image 18, the tongue of the final *e* of ‘werode’ is extended to fill the width of approximately another two characters, and touches against the right-hand rule. At the close of the next line, we might notice that the macron above the abbreviated ‘eade gum’, indicating the abbreviated word-final *m*, is further to the right of the

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<sup>110</sup> An edition of this text can be found in E. V. K. Dobbie, ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR VI (1942) pp. 67-69.

<sup>111</sup> I am grateful to Francis Leneghan for pointing out this example of character extension in Flight’s work to me. These sectional divisions at the break between penultimate section and conclusion are noted in Tim Flight, *Apophysis, Contemplation, and the Kenotic Moment in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (2016), pp. 128-29. Web. Accessed 29 November 2017 <<https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:16f34b87-8c3a-4fe1-9dbb-d8c6e3545bd8>> [DPhil thesis, University of Oxford].

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

word than the comparable macron above abbreviated ‘setlum’ at the start of the next line; this macron, displaced slightly rightward, fills the very little space left between ‘eadgu’ and the right-hand rule, a space which interestingly is too small to carry anything but another single-stroke letter. In the case of the extension of ‘weardas’, the space is created by the sectional division; in the case of the extension of ‘werode’, the space seems to be created by the scribe’s unwillingness to split a word over the end of a manuscript line (not even the first syllable of subsequent ‘eardian’ could have fitted after ‘werode’, and as we can see on the third line of Image 18, the scribe even avoids dividing ‘secgan’ into its two constituent syllables, instead running the word over the right-hand rule, and into the space between the tramlines). In the case of the displacement of the macron, the tiny amount of redundant space is just an incidental feature of writing: neither the word-final ‘m’ nor even the opening tall ‘s’ of ‘setlum’ on the next line could have fit into the gap. In all three cases, defined by different circumstances, the scribe seeks to extend the written line up to the margin (and even seems content to overrun the margin if necessary). On the sixth line of Image 18, the space between ‘forð’ and the right-hand rule is left blank, this acceptance of empty space signalling that we have reached the end of the poem. Blank space, then, does have a role among the graphic cues deployed by Scribe A, as a compartmentalizing frame around the edges of the poem. Such space, it seems, is not desirable at lesser breaks in the poem, such as between lines 300 and 301, nor is it desirable for such space to occur incidentally in the writing process. Of course, maintaining blank lines as the preserve of sectional divisions does not in itself demonstrate a preference for ‘fullness’; however, the scribe’s continuing determination to fill in the ever- diminishing remnants of space after ‘werode’ and particularly ‘eade gum’ points to a perceived value in eradicating even the smallest

appearance of space within the main body of the text.

These examples are not an isolated set of accidents. The hand which copied *An Exhortation to Christian Living* (pp. 165-66) also copied a series of other texts in CCCC 201: an incomplete Old English copy of the *Regularis Concordia* (pp. 1-7), the Old English poem *Judgement Day II* (pp. 161-65), and a macaronic poem in Latin and Old English (166-7).<sup>113</sup> The scribe's habit of filling the blank areas at the end of lines is visible throughout these texts. On pp. 2-7, we can see the scribe making use of: elongated ornamental 'n' characters; elongated 'e' tongues; lengthened 'r' tails; a widened 's' bowl; lengthened 'm' feet; lengthened 'a' tails; lengthened 't' crossbars; extended 'c' bases; sideways elongated 's' characters; a displaced macron. These lengthened characters appear also within the text block itself, in varying numbers; frequently they appear to be more numerous at the righthand margin, but more importantly, *when* they appear at the right-hand margin, they consistently extend the written line all the way up to the next tramline, and no farther. This consistent extension of the line to the tramline is clear, even within the rather exuberant style of the scribe, which also manifests itself in broadening letters into the blank space of margins: on pages 1, 3, 4 and 6, descenders on the lowest line of writing are extended into the lower margin; on pages 6 and 7 the ascenders of the topmost line rise into the header. The appearance of elongated letters within the text-block may be a sign of the scribe's creative style. Either way, the effect is one of determined and consistent density. The scheme breaks only for sectional divisions: on pages 2, 3, 5 and 6, blank space is left at the end of a written line, following

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<sup>113</sup> '201: Manuscript Description', *Parker Library on the Web*. Web. Accessed 29 November 2017 <[https://parker-stanford-edu.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/parker/actions/manuscript\\_description\\_long\\_display.do?ms\\_no=201](https://parker-stanford-edu.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/parker/actions/manuscript_description_long_display.do?ms_no=201)>.

punctuation and preceding a large, coloured display capital.

**Image 18: From CCCC 201, p. 165<sup>114</sup>**

Another mode of filling redundant lines is via punctuation, or punctuation-like markings. An example of this method may be found in another manuscript of the Parker Library, CCCC 422, which will be discussed in much greater detail in the next chapter; in the first part of the manuscript are *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, a set of prose and verse texts of fictional wisdom debates between the pagan Saturn and the biblical king Solomon. The debates are largely constructed of an alternating series of questions and answers, starting either ‘Solomon said’, or ‘Saturn said’. In *Solomon and Saturn II*, the speech of each debater is an individual section, starting on a new manuscript line, preceded by a large and sometimes ornamented initial ‘S’ in the left-hand margin. As each section breaks to a new manuscript line, the final line of each section is generally concluded by some blank space between text and right-hand rule. The amount of this redundant space varies, but in some cases can comprise over half of the manuscript line. Where the amount of space is significant, the scribe introduces punctuation-like markings to decorate the interior

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<sup>114</sup> Image obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

of the blank space. As an example, we can look to page 19 (Image 19, below). The third to fifth lines of the page feature a question by Saturn. The final word of this section, 'gelicost', falls about halfway along the fifth manuscript line: the scribe leaves a small space, then inserts an inverted triangle made of three dotted points; a larger space is then left before a series of angled criss-crossing lines are inserted, similar in appearance to a row of *x* characters and followed by a two-dotted symbol, much like a colon. A significant amount of blank space follows and runs all the way to the right-hand margin, where a further three-dotted triangle, slightly angled and underscored by an angled slash, has been placed in the tramlines. This tripartite system is replicated after other question-and-answer sections.

What is immediately clear is that the scribe in this case is not attempting to eradicate *all* blank space on the page. Even in the insertion of graphic patterning at the end of sections, the different elements are spaced out. Within the text blocks of each section, the scribe is happy to run a single word across the line-break of the page, but will only divide the word at a syllabic border. For example, on the seventeenth line of page 19, 'monnum' is split into 'mon' and 'num'; the scribe places 'num' at the start of the eighteenth line, even though there is room for the 'n' at the end of the seventeenth line. This system inevitably results in blank spaces occurring between the final word of a manuscript line, and the right-hand rule. The scribe does not make any effort to fill these line-end spaces; his or her sense, then, of what is problematic or desirable with regard to blank space differs from that of Scribe A of CCCC 201. However, the system of dots and lines described above is evidently a feature of primarily aesthetic purpose, contributing little to the text other

than to emphasize the break at the end of the section.<sup>115</sup> The initial triangle of dots

**Image 19: CCCC 422, p. 19**<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> The next chapter will address a further aesthetic function of these and other imagistic characters in CCCC 422, which is a contribution to the exoticism of the texts.

<sup>116</sup> Image obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

follows the final word of the section, marking its *textual* border, while the second tringle with its slash indicates the tramlines, marking the section's *mise-en-page* border; by comparison, the signification of the series of criss-crossed lines seems ambiguous, and even arbitrary. Stretching out at a length that is broadly similar from line to line, the crosses highlight and impede upon the blank space left by what the two more concrete, triangular markers signify: the space between textual border, and page border. They simply prevent the blank line from appearing blank.

## **2. Filling blank spaces with illustration.**

The Paris Psalter (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8824) is an English manuscript produced between 1025 and 1050; it contains a Latin text of the Psalms, and a facing Anglo-Saxon translation; the dimensions of the manuscript are tall and narrow (530mm x 190mm), and the folios are laid out in two columns: the left containing the Latin text, and the right containing the Anglo-Saxon translation.<sup>117</sup>

The Latin psalms are in the Roman version; the Anglo-Saxon version is in the West Saxon dialect, with the first fifty in prose, and the remaining hundred in verse.<sup>118</sup>

Each of these first fifty psalms is preceded by an Old English prose introduction, written in long lines across the full width of the folio.<sup>119</sup> Following this introduction, the psalm is laid out in verses: each verse begins on a new manuscript line, preceded

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<sup>117</sup> See, 'Informations détaillées' in the 'Psalterium duplex, latinum et anglo-saxonicum', *Bibliothèque Nationale de France: Gallica*, Web. Accessed 29 November 2017 <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8451636f/fl.image>>; 'Bilingual Psalter, in Latin and Old English', *Europeana Regia*, Web. Accessed 29 November <<http://www.europeanaregia.eu/en/manuscripts/paris-bibliotheque-nationale-france-mss-latin-8824/en>>.

<sup>118</sup> 'Psalterium duplex, latinum et anglo-saxonicum'; 'Bilingual Psalter, in Latin and Old English'; Richard Emms, 'The scribe of the Paris Psalter', *ASE* 28 (1999), 179-83, p. 179; N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (1957), p. 440.

<sup>119</sup> 'Psalterium duplex, latinum et anglo-saxonicum'.

by a large, coloured initial; the initial preceding the Latin version of the first verse is larger again.

The first line of each verse begins on the same manuscript line in both languages. So, for example, in Psalm 2 on fol. 1v, the fourth verse of the Latin version runs from the twenty-second to the twenty-sixth lines of the left-hand column, while the fourth verse of the Anglo-Saxon version runs from the twenty-second to the twenty-seventh lines of the right-hand column. Accordingly, the Latin version is followed by a one-line gap at line twenty-seven of the folio, and the fifth verse begins on the twenty-eighth line across both columns. As this brief example illustrates, the length of any particular verse may differ between the two language versions, creating a situation in which shorter versions would be appended by blocks of blank space, facing the longer version. We can see occasions where the scribe mitigates this through word-spacing at the end of the text blocks of the shorter versions. Looking back up fol. 1v to the first verse of Psalm 2, we can see that the final two lines of the Old English version (lines ten and eleven on the folio) have been arranged so that instead of filling one line (manuscript line 10), the text spreads over into line 11. Another example is the first verse of Psalm 5, on fol. 3v. The Latin text runs for 7 full lines of text and 1 partially filled line, while the Old English text runs for 5 full lines of text, and then 3 lines with gradually decreasing amounts of text, creating a tapering effect at the end of the block. It is unclear whether ‘minra’ would necessarily fit at the end of the fifth Old English line, but ‘geboda’ would certainly fit on the sixth line with ‘minra’. The words appear to have been spaced out deliberately, and the effect is a lengthening of the verse on the page, stretching it out opposite the longer Latin version. In terms of surface area, there is no difference in the quantity of blank space remaining either beneath or alongside a shorter verse,

whether such tapering is deployed or not; the space is merely repositioned. However, the lengthening downwards of the verse certainly penetrates what would otherwise be completely empty space and gives a sense of text ‘filling’ the page by being present on each line. Folio 12r shows the scribe twice creatively re-shaping the Latin text-block to fill the space left by significantly longer Old English versions, which are themselves written with a smaller hand. However, this technique is not enacted consistently, as the scribe regularly leaves a line of blank space at the end of one version.

It could be argued that the use of tapering is not so much about reaching after a sense of ‘fullness’ as of ‘evenness’, a desire to have text face text for the full length of the longer version, or for as much of that length as possible. There is an additional feature which is yet more suggestive that the scribe was in fact seeking to manage and fill the spaces on the page left by the uneven length of the bilingual versions, seeking ‘fullness’ rather than (or in addition to) ‘evenness’. This feature is the inclusion of small line-drawings depicting elements of the Psalms, which occur over the first six folios of the manuscript.<sup>120</sup> They uniquely appear where at least one blank line has been left following a verse, and are typically shaped to fit the blank gap left after the shorter version. In the cases of the images on fols. 5r and 6r, the images of a hand or angel respectively reaching down to the blank lines from the sky even fill in blank space at the right-hand edge of the column. These images suggest a desire to fill ungainly amounts of space on the page, and to do so in a way that is visually interesting and sensitive to the shape and subject of the text. These images

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<sup>120</sup> ‘Psalterium duplex, latinum et anglo-saxonicum’; Bertram Colgrave, John Bromwich, N. R. Ker, Francis Wormald, Kenneth Sisam and Celia Sisam, *The Paris Psalter: Ms. Bibliothèque Nationale fonds Latin 8824* (1958), pp. 14-15.

might have been additions by the scribe, but given their incomplete nature, they might also have been the addition of some later reader or illustrator. This ambiguity draws to the fore an important issue when discussing aesthetic taste and its presentation in book art, where subsequent designers and readers have the opportunity to alter or ‘improve’ an object. Here, either the scribe or a subsequent user has made alterations to increase the page’s sense of density and ‘fullness’.

Sometimes, the interaction of text and image exhibits spatial tension. The image of a hand reaching down from heaven on fol. 6r of the Paris Psalter runs over part of the text of the psalm it accompanies. The large, coloured images of Junius 11 not only fill the blank areas left to receive them, but frequently overrun any text block on the same page, as in this example from page 10 of the manuscript:

**Image 20: From Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11, p. 10<sup>121</sup>**

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<sup>121</sup> Image from ‘Browse All: MS. Junius 11’. Luna. Web. Accessed 18 December 2017 <[bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/view/all/what/MS.+Junius+11?sort=Shelfmark%2CFolio\\_Page%2CRoll\\_%23%2CFrame\\_%23](http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet/view/all/what/MS.+Junius+11?sort=Shelfmark%2CFolio_Page%2CRoll_%23%2CFrame_%23)>.

The Nowell Codex prose text, *Wonders of the East*, features a series of images interpolated within the text, depicting creatures described by the text. Initially, these images are framed by clear borders, contained within an area of the page around which the text is wrapped; however, as the text progresses the animals begin to burst their bounds, protruding over their borders and eventually breaking loose altogether. On fol. 102v, the body of a large serpent writhes across the page, cutting it at the midsection. In all cases, the text remains packed close around the images.

### **Text block shaping.**

This has already been touched upon above, in the form of the tapered verses found in the Paris Psalter. Another possible example of a scribe manipulating the text block to give text more presence amongst blank space is the Verse Epilogue to the *Pastoral Care* in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 20, the final folio of which features a triangle tapering down to a point, at the very end of the text. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, the same feature can be found at fol. 87r of the Old English *Orosius* in London, BL, Add. 47967, and at the end of the short poem *Thureth* in London, BL, Cotton Claudius A. iii. In all three cases, as with the tapering text of the Paris Psalter, there is no decrease in the total surface area occupied by blank space, as the text has simply been rearranged, rather than enlarged or expanded. Nevertheless, the ‘stretching’ effect of the triangles creates a textual ‘dent’ in the mass of blank space, which in all three cases is the space following the conclusion of a text.

We might also, in this context of text block shaping, return to Schipper’s observation that Old English prose texts were typically written in a single column of long lines across the full width of the page, even where the page had been ruled for a

multi-columned text. Schipper, as discussed above, has his own explanations for this phenomenon, but it undoubtedly adds a sense of density to the page, and eradicates the central blank line dividing columns, a line which may have seemed arbitrary in comparison with the function of blank lines acting as sectional divisions in the texts discussed above.

These examples demonstrate different moments at which we can see scribes making an effort to fill or break up blank space on the page. Whether such attempts are part of a deliberate preference for the positioning or eradication of such space, or whether they are part of a less conscious response to the aesthetic norm of density in much contemporary art, is less clear. Certainly, incidences such as the insertion of line-drawings and the manipulation of text-block shape in the Paris Psalter implies that the scribe, and perhaps later users, saw unfilled space as a problem; however, whether this is seen as existing within a broader context of filling space is not evident. In the absence of any treatise or account of the design of Anglo-Saxon pages, and minimal information about this process arising from other contemporary records or literature, the best indicators we have access to are these moments of expansion, contortion, manipulation and displacement which show scribes interacting with the physical dimensions of the page.

### **Metrical patterning as geometric shape on the page**

Density, as we have approached it in Anglo-Saxon art, is not simply about filling space; the elements of Webster's 'vocabulary' and 'visual grammar' are complementary to one another, and the density which we have identified as so key to

visual design across the breadth of Anglo-Saxon art and craftwork is made up of those interlacing symmetries and geometric motifs. What is the parallel then, on the written page, with the components of density in the book-art, the stone carvings and the metalwork which informs the broader aesthetic approach to graphic design?

We can gain some insight from direct comparison between the tools of prosody and the tools of physical craft. In our discussion of metrical form in Chapter Two, we encountered an analogy made by Aldhelm in his *De virginitate*, which compared the construction of a building to the construction of verse:

as if the rhetorical foundation-stones were now laid and the walls of prose were built, so I shall [...] build a sturdy roof with trochaic slates and dactylic tiles of metre.<sup>122</sup>

Metrical feet are reimagined as the tiles with which one might cover a roof; the pattern of dactyls and trochees in a verse line can be interchanged and alternated for aural effect, just as a craftsman might alternate and interchange coloured tiles in a row for visual effect. More specifically, the metrical unit is imagined as a physical element in a geometric pattern. Such analogizing is not alien to the approach we have encountered in Anglo-Saxon art. The Sutton Brooch, discussed at length above, with its fluid ring of verse lines which can be read differently according to which line-break is identified as the start or end, chimes with the riddling design of the grid inscribed on the brooch's front. The ambiguity of the prosodic units, and their capacity for visual rearrangement, is matched by the same process at work in the

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<sup>122</sup> Lapidge and Herren, p. 131.

ornamental inscription on the reverse. The unities of text and image addressed earlier in this chapter show various ways in which text is conceived of in terms of physical design, mirroring or melding with illustration. Here, the verse line and the formal patterning of its prosodic units are being compared with geometric patterning in contemporary art, both through Aldhelm's metaphor and through the design scheme of the Sutton Brooch.

Analogies between poetic structure and art have featured in the mainstream of Old English critical work since John Leyerle's 1967 essay on interlace, referenced above.<sup>123</sup> Leyerle draws a comparison between the woven structures of contemporary textile art and the interlace design of stonemasonry and metalworking, before connecting these to Anglo-Latin and Anglo-Saxon descriptions of poetry as something that is 'woven'.<sup>124</sup> More specifically, he considers the complexity of Old English syntax, where multiple semantic strands emerge, vanish and re-emerge within a single sentence-comparable unit, akin to the structure of a 'braid'; he poses the same reading of the emergence and re-emergence of major themes in *Beowulf*.<sup>125</sup> That these structural elements of *Beowulf*, and Old English verse more widely, might pose a literary analogy to visual interlace variously captured the imagination and scepticism of subsequent critics. Building on Leyerle, A. P. Campbell suggested that the 'weaving together of border and picture' in Anglo-Saxon manuscript art analogises the movements between the present story and historic 'framework' of *Beowulf*, and 'permits us to hold both ages together and to savour both the primal heroic virtues and the more sophisticated Christian *sententia* in the same poem'.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> See above, p. 245.

<sup>124</sup> Leyerle, esp. pp. 1-7.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 5, 10.

<sup>126</sup> A. P. Campbell, 'The Time Element of Interlace Structure in 'Beowulf'', *NM* 70 (1969), 425-35, pp. 431, 435.

Robert Stevick highlights an issue with the breadth of Leyerle's early theory, suggesting that by linking interlace with syntactic, narrative and thematic structures in *Beowulf*, the analogy is weakened; he is more persuaded by the specific braid-like structure of syntax than the more general emergence and resurgence of thematic elements.<sup>127</sup>

Before considering the validity of a connection between visual and metrical patterning, it is worth considering an objection raised by Morton W. Bloomfield, writing in 1986. Bloomfield proposes an essential obstacle to the comparison of visual and verbal forms of art, specifically in the context of Leyerle's work on interlace. He argues that 'neither the creator nor the audience can follow two different lines at the same time', and that 'Verbal art', in distinction to visual art, 'cannot indicate simultaneity simultaneously'.<sup>128</sup> This objection may be challenged in a way that further illuminates a connection between metrical and visual patterns. While an audience cannot meaningfully hear or engage with two separate verbal streams at once, the prosodic features of a particular line can be entirely reliant upon a simultaneous mental engagement with prosodic features that are present, and with prosodic features which have gone before. In a rhyming couplet, for example, the aural significance of the final word of the second line is established by its parallelism to the aural shape of the final word of the first line. In Old English verse, the semantic significance implied by the application of alliteration to a particular word in one half-line is enacted fully by the audience's simultaneous awareness of the

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<sup>127</sup> Robert D. Stevick, 'Representing the Form of *Beowulf*', in *Old English and New: Studies in Language and Linguistics in Honor of Frederic G. Cassidy*, eds. Joan H. Hall, A. N. Doane and Dick Ringer (1992), 3-14, pp. 5, 9, quoted in Ursula Schaefer, 'Rhetoric and Style', in *A Beowulf Handbook*, eds. Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (1977), 105-25, p. 122.

<sup>128</sup> Morton W. Bloomfield, 'Interlace' as a Medieval Narrative Technique with Special Reference to *Beowulf*, in *Magister Regis: Studies in Honor of Robert Earl Kaske*, ed. Arthur Groos (1986), 49-59, pp. 50, 52, quoted in Schaefer, p. 122.

corresponding alliterative word elsewhere in the half-line or in neighbouring half-lines. Some kind of simultaneity is therefore perhaps implicit in all parallelism, and so our ability to watch two lines of interlace intersect, or to hold in our view two mirrored coils on a carpet page, is not so distant from our ability to hold in our memory the stresses, rhythms and other aural parallelisms that connect metrical units in Latin or Old English verse.

*Metrical form and visual aesthetic*

In *The Art of Anglo-Saxon England*, Karkov develops a different approach to the broader significance of interlace which is not explicitly linked to literature, but which we can apply to an exploration of the metrical line as geometric unit.

Interlace, she writes:

consists of exact units of measure that both divide a pattern into linear segments and multiply those regular units of measure into a larger, ordered repeating whole.<sup>129</sup>

Taken out of context, this quotation could easily describe a system of metrical prosody. Karkov's particular focus is on interlace as a 'reflection' of time. It is particularly evocative of a quantitative system like Latin, while less so of a syllabic-accentual metre like Old English. Nevertheless, the basic observation of measured units that divide a linear whole into a segmented pattern is broadly descriptive of metrical systems in general. It is the accentual structures dividing Old English verse into lines and half-lines which establish this system of repetitive, linear segmentation, but it is the presence of alliterative structures which create a powerful

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<sup>129</sup> Karkov, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 75.

sense of undulation: as alliterative elements occur, they establish those moments of simultaneity which connect various points of neighbouring half-lines, as though the line of the verse were looping back and intersecting at those points of aural parallelism.

Taking these features together and seeking a visual parallel, we might also be drawn to the regular shapes of a geometric pattern like those found on the Sutton Hoo shoulder-clasps; the conceptualisation of lines or half-lines as interlocking glass and garnet ‘cloisonné cells’ chimes well with Aldhelm’s metaphor for poetic craftsmanship.<sup>130</sup> Equally, we might question whether Old English verse would or could have been considered to exhibit such an even regularity. There is an essential symmetry to the Old English verse line: its axis is the caesura; on each side the alliterative and accentual structures of the two half-lines mirror one another imperfectly. It is not a true symmetry, as even a glance at the uneven ‘river’ of the page will remind us: double alliteration in the off-verse is not metrically acceptable, and so in the vast majority of cases one half-line carries more alliteration than the other; paired half-lines tend not to be of the same ‘type’, and in part due to this, and in part due to the flexibility of unstressed ‘dips’, half-lines can vary enormously in length.<sup>131</sup> Thus, unlike the quantitatively equal segmentation of Latin metrical feet, the components of the Old English line are quantitatively and even visually unequal.

This paradox of symmetry and asymmetry in Old English verse creates interesting connections with Anglo-Saxon visual art. In the context of material art,

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<sup>130</sup> For a description of such cloisonné design on a Sutton Hoo shoulder clasp, see ‘shoulder-clasp’, Museum number: 1939,1010.4.a, *The British Museum: Collection Online*, The British Museum. Web. Accessed 27 February 2018 <[www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=86906&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=86906&partId=1)>.

<sup>131</sup> See Terasawa, pp. 4, 34.

and specifically in the case of a Pictish cross sculpture, Isabel Henderson uses the term ‘balanced asymmetry’ to refer to this phenomenon: ‘a deceptive symmetry created by using the same motif within symmetrical constructions that support markedly varied internal arrangements’.<sup>132</sup> In her article, ‘The Lindisfarne Gospels and the Aesthetics of Anglo-Saxon Art’, Alison Rosenblitt examines apparent anomalies in various examples of Anglo-Saxon symmetrical art, focusing particularly on the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Book of Durrow, and the Sutton Hoo shoulder clasps. She argues that

what has been interpreted as imperfection is more plausibly interpreted as an aesthetic device: the introduction of an anomalous or asymmetrical element into an otherwise symmetrical pattern, with a resulting play on levels of symmetry and asymmetry that has wide resonance in Anglo- Saxon art.<sup>133</sup>

For Rosenblitt, the presence of deliberate asymmetric anomalies within a broadly symmetrical base is an instance of ‘play’, enabled by ‘an aesthetic dependent on a sensitivity to symmetry and asymmetry’, which is particularly Anglo-Saxon.<sup>134</sup>

Rosenblitt suggests that ‘two levels of viewing’ occur when observing this art, and cites David Leigh to make a connection between the ambiguity and riddling of these symmetrical asymmetries on the one hand, and that of Anglo-Saxon riddles on the other.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Isabel Henderson, ‘Variations on an Old Theme’, in eds. Catherine E. Karkov, Michael Ryan and Robert T. Farrell, *The Insular Tradition: A Resource Manual* (1997), 143-66, p. 147.

<sup>133</sup> A. J. Rosenblitt, ‘The Lindisfarne Gospels and the Aesthetics of Anglo-Saxon Art’, in ed. Sarah Semple, *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 13 (2006), 105-17, p. 106.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 110.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

If we turn again to Karkov's thoughts on interlace, and other objects from the Sutton Hoo hoard, such as the elaborate gold belt buckle, overworked with interlace and occasional stylised zoomorphic heads, we can see that asymmetries are at work here too. Much like the Old English verse line, the total impression is one of evenness and mirroring across an axis that runs down the middle of the brooch at its longest point: animal heads mirror the positioning of one another on the edges, the raised bosses are positioned symmetrically, as is the general aspect of the looping and coiling of the interlace itself. Looking closer at the lacing, symmetry evaporates under the gaze: the units of interlace created by the design are, as Karkov says, 'regular', but they are not equal, and in the case of the knot at the heart of the buckle (Image 21, below), there is no mirroring at all in the design, so much as a graduated sequence of loops resulting in a shape not unlike a modern ampersand (&). We can see this central knot being formed of two rightmost hoops, and a leftmost bow that feeds into them: the upper of the hoops is larger than the lower, and the 'bow' feeds into a lace that passes under the topmost bow, but becomes a part of the lowermost. This is just one example from the brooch of how the segmentation of the lacing into units involves a structural system of irregularity, which from a distance presents an optical impression of symmetry.

## Image 21: The Sutton Hoo gold buckle<sup>136</sup>

We can make a similar analysis of the symmetrical whorls of the Lindisfarne Gospels. Looking at the St Matthew cross-carpet page, we encounter a riot of multi-layered, multi-coloured interlacing which is apparently symmetrical. However, antagonistic alterations of colour disrupt the balance, elements which are asymmetric in their immediate context, but contribute to a broader symmetry. Further asymmetric background detail emerges as the gaze goes deeper: each of the top two background segments contains twenty zoomorphic heads, five of which have pale blue necks; of these five, three are located in corners, but the upper, outer corner contains only a head with the standard yellow-coloured necks. Within each segment this creates a sense of imbalance, but across the page the imbalance is righted. Within the upper section of the cross itself, we can see two facing sections of knotwork (Image 22, below) arranged in a symmetrical fashion. However, closer observation shows the details of the knotwork operating very differently; the appearance of a zoomorphic head below the right-hand knotwork but not the left reinforces this imbalance.

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<sup>136</sup> Image from 'Great gold buckle / Sutton Hoo Ship Burial', Museum number: 1939,1010.1, *The British Museum Collection Online*. Web. Accessed 13 December 2017 <[www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=87202&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=87202&partId=1)>.

From such a perspective, and the perspective taken by Rosenblitt, the symmetrical asymmetries of Anglo-Saxon art and Old English verse analogise each other. On the written page these effects are aural rather than strictly visual, but their participation in an Anglo-Saxon preference for dense textures turns the page into another ‘restless surface’, inscribed with an undulating linearity, apparently symmetrical, but riddled with the play of imbalance.

**Image 22: St. Matthew cross page, Lindisfarne Gospels, fol. 26v<sup>137</sup>**

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<sup>137</sup> Image from ‘Lindisfarne Gospels - St Matthew ff.26v - 27’, *Online Gallery: Virtual Books: Images Only*, British Library. Web. Accessed 23 August 2018  
<<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/lindisfarne/accessible/images/page9full.jpg>>.

## Conclusions

In this chapter I have approached Old English verse as a system that resonates with contemporary visual aesthetics, both in its physical layout on the page, and by way of structural analogy with trends in Anglo-Saxon art. Exploring the contexts for an alignment of artistic density with the *mise-en-page* of a standard page of Old English verse leads us to note aesthetic similarities between the play of symmetry and asymmetry in the construction of prosodic and graphic systems. Such similarities may reflect a broad interest in play and riddling, symmetry and asymmetry, more than any conscious process of copying or replication. On the other hand, the metaphorical application of ‘woven’ and ‘coiled’ features in Old English verse might prove fruitful ground for further study of this phenomenon, from word-weaving in *Beowulf*, to ‘woven letters’ in *Solomon and Saturn I*, to paths of exile like ‘wound gold’ in *The Wanderer*.

In Chapter Two, I argued that the regular yet uneven prosodic form of Old English verse renders it more suitable for an unlineated layout; in this chapter, I suggest that this same unevenness ties Old English verse to the ‘balanced asymmetries’ and densities of contemporary material and manuscript art. Doubly ‘fitting’, then, is the distinctive *mise-en-page* of Old English verse, both to its form, and to its position in a vernacular aesthetic.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> For Scruton on ‘fittingness’, see above, pp. 246-7.

## CHAPTER FIVE: Alphabets and Litterae in The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn

In his *Etymologies*, Isidore touches upon the allusive materiality of *mise-en-page*, identifying the graphic organisation of the written page as an interface with the long multicultural history of writing and language. *Mise-en-page* elements, he implies, can be etymologised just as effectively as words. He tells us that

The Phoenicians first discovered the use of Greek letters... Hence it is that the chapter headings of books are written with Phoenician scarlet, since it is from the Phoenicians that the letters had their origin. (I.iii.5-6)

Phoenician scarlet is a red dye made from crushed snail shells; such dye was subject to highly lucrative commercial trade during classical antiquity.<sup>1</sup> Isidore draws on the parallel roots of these two Phoenician exports, letters and dye, and derives from them the scribal practice of rubrication, in the same fantastical way that he etymologises such words as '*littera*' from disparate units: 'a road (*iter*) for those who are reading (*legere*)' (I.iii.3). Scarlet dye acts as a memory of the linguistic and intellectual history of the ancient East, with homage paid in every rubricated chapter heading of the contemporary world. *Mise-en-page* features are not limited to organizational, decorative functions; the imagined history of the book is made manifest in the

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Cartwright, 'Tyrian Purple.' *Ancient History Encyclopedia* (2016), Web. Accessed 3 Dec 2017 <[https://www.ancient.eu/Tyrian\\_Purple/](https://www.ancient.eu/Tyrian_Purple/)>; William Cooke Taylor, *A Manual of Ancient and Modern History* (1847), p. 33; Caroline Stone, 'How Did the Romans Make and Use Textiles?'. *Bringing Pompeii and Herculaneum to Cambridgeshire Schools. Civilisations in Contact*. Web. Accessed 3 December 2017 <<http://www.schools1.cic.ames.cam.ac.uk/pdfs/Textiles%20at%20Pompeii.pdf>>.

written page.

The idea, then, that linguistic history, whether real, or imagined as much of Isidore's was, can be read or written into the visual design of a text (particularly by way of its use of letters) is not an alien concept to those early medieval readers and writers succeeding Isidore. In the previous chapters of this thesis, we have seen that the layout of Old English verse may be reflective of contemporary aesthetic ideals, and the structure of the verse itself. Nevertheless, we might not anticipate finding an approach to ornamented *mise-en-page* as complex as that expressed by Isidore, given that Old English verse is generally written without such overt ornamental trappings as titles, coloured inks, elaborate initials, and so forth. This chapter will examine just such an interest in the cultural and historical communicative potential of letter-forms through an unusually ornamented piece of Old English verse writing: the Old English *Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*. This collection of late Anglo-Saxon verse and prose texts is preserved in two manuscripts, and displays graphic features that are unique within the surviving corpus of Old English verse. The key vehicle for the scribe's visual scheme in these texts is manipulation of a main building block: the letter. I will propose that the structural and semantic features of the Old English *Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* utilise the potential of alternative alphabets, altered graphs and narrative discussion of letters: *Solomon and Saturn I (SSI)* will be shown to draw upon Isidorian alphabetic theories and linguistic history, while *Solomon and Saturn II (SSII)* will be shown to display its dialogue-structure through the *mise-en-page*. Further, both poems' creative use of letters and alphabets will be shown to accentuate the narrative's exoticised treatment of eastern learning and geography. Through an imaginative array of distinctive display capitals, foreign and alternative alphabets, cryptographic puzzles and exotic re-shaping of familiar

graphemes, the scribe creates a text meant to be seen as well as read; to read the poem in isolation from its *mise-en-page* is to compromise its communicative power.

The case-study of this chapter is intended to demonstrate how the hypothesis of this thesis, that the form of Old English verse on the page bears a meaningful relationship with the text, can be used for the work of literary criticism. Where past chapters have addressed processes of which scribes may or may not have been fully cognisant, such as inter-word spacing and the impact of culturally-defined aesthetic preferences, this chapter will address deliberate design, and the way scribes purposefully use *mise-en-page* as a semantic tool. I will therefore approach a reading of the two main poetic texts of the *Dialogues* through the lens of visual design. Following a material and textual overview of the *Dialogues*, I will examine the role of eastern geography in *SSI*, and the way this text invokes Greek linguistic history as part of an Isidorian intellectual scheme. To support this, I will survey the context for the study of Greek in Anglo-Saxon England, and examine the strong tradition of visual design that grew up around the language. I will then explore the use of runic scripts in *SSI*, and their relationship with the use of Greek characters in contemporary writing. Finally, we will consider how the scribe adopts a new approach in *SSII* to create a *mise-en-page* scheme that reflects the structure of the dialogue-text, and manipulates the graphs to create ornamental characters in aid of the poem's depiction of eastern learning as alien and exotic.

### **Textual overview and codicology**

*The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* are a varied collection of texts in verse and prose, evading homogeneous categorisation in a whirlwind of dialogue, catechesis,

pop-quiz, word-game, riddle-contest, folk-lore, history and prayer.<sup>2</sup> What binds them together is the simple premise of a wisdom-dialogue between two fixed interlocutors: the sagacious Biblical King Solomon, and the educated pagan Saturn. Their materiality is as enigmatic as their subject-matter, with the texts written into margins and flyleaves or sewn onto other codices, troubled by incompleteness and loss of leaves, damaged by reagents and marked with dubious divisions between verse and prose.

The texts are attested in three manuscripts; Table 8 provides an overview of their distribution:

**Table 8: Codicological background of manuscript witnesses of *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*<sup>3</sup>**

CCCC 422, pp.1-26 (‘s. x <sup>1</sup> or x <sup>2/4</sup> or x med.’)	CCCC 41, pp. 196-98 (‘s. xi <sup>1</sup> , with additions of s. xi <sup>1</sup> – xi med’, which include <i>Solomon and Saturn I</i> )	Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fols. 4r-93v (the ‘Southwick Codex’) (s.xii <sup>2</sup> )
<i>Solomon &amp; Saturn I</i> (verse)	<i>Solomon &amp; Saturn I</i> (incomplete)	<i>Prose Solomon &amp; Saturn</i> (B)
<i>Solomon &amp; Saturn Prose</i> (A)		

<sup>2</sup> Many of these categories are reviewed in Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 1-57, esp. pp. 12-41.

<sup>3</sup> Dating for the two Anglo-Saxon MSS and quotations from Gneuss and Lapidge, pp. 48-49, 118; dating for the Southwick Codex from ‘Cotton MS Vitellius A XV’, *Digitised Manuscripts*, British Library. Web. Accessed 03 December 2017

<[http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Vitellius\\_A\\_XV](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Vitellius_A_XV)>.

<i>Solomon &amp; Saturn</i> <i>Fragment</i> (verse)		
<i>Solomon &amp; Saturn II</i> (verse)		

The youngest manuscript, the Southwick Codex, is bound onto the front of the older Nowell Codex.<sup>4</sup> The unit post-dates the Anglo-Saxon period, written in the twelfth century with provenance at Southwick Priory.<sup>5</sup> For this reason the later *Prose Solomon and Saturn* (B), which is wholly different from *Solomon & Saturn Prose* (A), found in CCC 422, will not be treated in this chapter.<sup>6</sup>

The handling of *Solomon & Saturn Prose* (A) (henceforth *SSP*) and *Solomon & Saturn Fragment* (henceforth, *SSF*) has varied widely across editions. In *ASPR*, E. V. K. Dobbie excludes *SSP* and prints the verse texts in their manuscript order; John Kemble prints all of the texts in order, adding a note to identify *SSP* as a prose interpolation; Robert Menner prints *SSP* in an appendix and places *SSF* as a conclusion to *SSII*; Anlezark prints the texts in their manuscript order, but he separates them clearly from one another.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Richard North, Joe Allard and Patricia Gillies, eds., *Longman Anthology of Old English, Old Icelandic, and Anglo-Norman Literatures* (2011), p. 437.

<sup>5</sup> ‘What’s in the Beowulf Manuscript?’ *Medieval manuscripts blog*, British Library (2013) Web. Accessed 24 August 2015 <<http://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2013/04/whats-in-the-beowulf-manuscript.html>>.

<sup>6</sup> See Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘*Solomon and Saturn*, Prose’, in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, eds. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg, 2nd ed. (2013), 439.

<sup>7</sup> Anlezark and O’Brien O’Keeffe both address different editorial treatment and structuring of these texts in: Anlezark, *Dialogues*, esp. pp. vii-viii, 45; Daniel Anlezark, ‘The Stray Ending in the Solomonic Anthology in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422’, *MÆ* 80 (2011), 201-16; O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 47-76. Editions and related material: Dobbie, *Minor Poems*, pp. 31-48; John M. Kemble, *The Dialogue of Salomon and Saturnus: with an historical introduction* (1848); Robert James Menner, *The Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* (1941); O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 68-69; Arthur G. Kennedy, Review of ‘R. J. Menner, *The Poetical*

*SSI* is the only text of the set to be preserved in more than one manuscript, but the two copies have important textual and *mise-en-page* differences.<sup>8</sup> The most striking such difference is the positioning of the poem in the scheme of the page: in CCCC 422, the poem is written in the main writing area, in the standard manner; in CCCC 41, the poem is written by an eleventh-century hand into the margins of three pages of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>9</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe dismisses as 'a splendid graphic accident' the positioning of this poem on the conflict of pagan and Christian learning around a section of the *Historia* which handles early Saxon apostasy, but the possibility that the verse acts as a marginal commentary on the text deserves greater consideration.<sup>10</sup>

Of greater importance to this chapter is another visually arresting feature of page-design. In the poem the well-educated and well-travelled Saturn expresses to King Solomon a dissatisfaction with his vast consumption of pagan and secular knowledge, and poses a series of questions on the Pater Noster prayer. The verse exchange includes Solomon's description of a remarkable battle-scene, in which the anthropomorphised letters of the prayer assault the devil. Each copy of *SSI* is incomplete: that of CCCC 41 is unfinished, while the first page of CCCC 422 has eroded away. Both, however, contain at least a portion of the Pater Noster battle. In CCCC 422, the Roman letters of the *Pater Noster* are accompanied by their runic equivalents, while in CCCC 41 they are not (for the runes, see Images 23-24). This

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*Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn.*, *Speculum* 17 (1942), 430-432, pp. 430-31; Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 64-95.

<sup>8</sup> For an overview of lexical, grammatical and syntactic variation between the texts, see O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 60-67.

<sup>9</sup> For dating see N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (1990) p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 69. For further discussion of the use of marginal space in CCCC 41, see Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'Filling the Margins of CCCC 41: Textual Space and a Developing Archive', *RES* 57 (2006), 721-32.

absence in CCCC 41, combined with its inclusion of a line not recorded in the older CCCC 422 (l. 67), is thought to demonstrate that it was not copied from the older manuscript, while copy errors in CCCC 422 show that it was not an autograph.<sup>11</sup> In CCCC 422, two of the Pater Noster letters are not accompanied by runes ('N' and 'H') while 'O', 'I' and 'B' are 'missing'; furthermore, the runes are extrametrical, while the Roman letters participate in the metrical scheme of the poem.<sup>12</sup> This combination of the runes' extrametricality in CCCC 422, and their absence in CCCC 41 has led to a general consensus that the runes are not a feature of the original manuscript copy of *SSI*.<sup>13</sup>

**Image 23: From CCCC 422, p. 3**<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 58; Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>13</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 28-29; Kenneth Sisam, Review of '*The Poetical Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* edited by Robert J. Menner.', *MÆ* 13 (1944), 28-36, p. 35; O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 51 n. 10. O'Brien O'Keeffe writes, 'It is not possible to ascertain whether the runes are "authorial" or scribal', in *Visible Song*, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Images 23-28 obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

**Image 24: CCCC 320, p. 4**

However, this position can be contested. In CCCC 41, the only appearance of a rune is in the abbreviation ‘M̅’ for the final ‘man’ of ‘Saloman’ (l. 3 in the upper margin of p. 197, see Image 26, below), although Roman letters written in an angular style evocative of runes are occasionally deployed (for example, see the incidences of Solomon’s name on pp. 196 and 197 (Images 25 and 26, below)). The fact that both versions of *SSI* use runes in different ways, and at different points in the text, suggests at least a perceived appropriateness for runic forms in this cryptic text, and perhaps indicates use of runes in the original composition, which has been passed down.<sup>15</sup> If the runes had been included in an early or original version of the text, their extrametricality might have been reason enough for the scribe of CCCC 41 to remove them, the appearance of the abbreviating ‘M’ in CCCC 41 perhaps acting as a memory.<sup>16</sup>

While the text in CCCC 41 will be of some interest to us here, the primary focus of this chapter will be the text of CCCC 422. The strata of units of this composite codex expose a multiple-phase history: at the core is a 544-page eleventh-century missal, containing computistical and calendrical materials as well as liturgical material; to this 16 further pages of *liturgica* were affixed in the twelfth century; possibly concurrent with this addition, or else as late as the sixteenth century, was the rebinding of 13 pages of flyleaves into a new unit at the beginning of the codex: these are *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, written in a hand of the early to mid-tenth century, not in the margins, but in the main writing-area of the

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<sup>15</sup> This is also suggested in Thomas Birkett, *Reading the Runes in Old English and Old Norse Poetry* (2017), p. 86.

<sup>16</sup> I first formulated this argument before I had read Birkett’s *Reading the Runes*, where he too observes that if the runes are extrametrical, they might have been redacted from CCCC 41, and that the runic abbreviation in CCCC 41 may indicate ‘an established tradition in which the Pater Noster prayer is closely connected with the rune’, in Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, p. 86.

**Image 25: CCCC 41, p. 196**

**Image 26: From CCCC 41, p. 197**

page; p. 1, containing the first 29 lines of *SSI*, has been worn away and damaged so much as to be unreadable.<sup>17</sup> Anlezark suggests that ‘Parkerian pagination’ points to a sixteenth-century rearrangement of the *Solomon and Saturn* material; Richard Pfaff considers it likely that these leaves were attached when the later liturgical material was added.<sup>18</sup>

Table 8 presents the *Dialogues* of CCCC 422 according to Anlezark’s division of the material in his recent edition, but the transitions between sections are visually problematic.<sup>19</sup> The transition from the verse *SSI* to *SSP* occurs in the midst of line 12, page 6 (see line 6 of Image 27, below). It is marked only by a single medial punctus and a capital letter, punctuation which is used elsewhere in *SSI* to

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<sup>17</sup> Richard W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (2009), p. 94; Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 1; ‘422: Manuscript Description’, *Parker Library on the Web*, Web. Accessed 3 December 2017 <[https://parker-stanford-edu.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/parker/actions/manuscript\\_description\\_long\\_display.do?ms\\_no=422](https://parker-stanford-edu.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/parker/actions/manuscript_description_long_display.do?ms_no=422)>; Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 118.

<sup>18</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 1; Pfaff, p. 94.

<sup>19</sup> I have, however, simplified the naming system used by Anlezark: *SolSatI* and *SolSatII* to *SSI* and *SSII*, *SolSatPNPr* to *SSP* and *SolSatFrag* to *SSF*.

indicate the break between discrete sense-units.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, at four other points on the page (ll. 6, 9, 20-1 and 22) triple pointing is used before a capital letter, making the division between *SSI* and *SSP* one of the less graphically accentuated divisions on the folio. *SSP* retains the theme of the *Pater Noster* in combat with the devil, but in a seriously altered format: here, the *Pater Noster* is presented not as a series of anthropomorphised warrior-letters, but as a single entity undergoing a series of physical transformations to challenge the parallel transformations of the devil. Further, the debate structure is diminished in favour of long tracts from Solomon.<sup>21</sup> A missing folio following p. 12 (below) once contained the transition between *SSP* and the verse *SSF*, of which only seven metrical lines remain at the head of p. 13; the text appears to be the conclusion to an exchange, and has been variously approached as a conclusion to either *SSI* or *SSII*.<sup>22</sup>

**Image 27: From CCCC, p. 6**

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<sup>20</sup> This observation is also made in O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 68.

<sup>21</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 79. See further Anlezark, 'The Stray Ending'.

*SSII* follows on from *SSF*, breaking with the hitherto frugal or absent graphic indications of sectional divisions by employing firstly a line break, and secondly a set of large display initials with a slight diminuendo. The verse text offers us another wisdom debate, this time with a variety of thematic focal points, including heaven and hell, universal extremes, judgement, fairness, and the fate of man. The text is imperfect: on p. 14 a section has been erased and overwritten with a Latin excommunication; another folio is missing after page 22; the poem is unfinished, with no indication of how much has been lost.<sup>23</sup>

Anlezark posits the authorship of St Dunstan or his immediate Glastonbury circle for the collected *Dialogues*. He points to a number of interests shared between the *Dialogues* on the one hand, and the Glastonbury circle of the early tenth-century, the surviving manuscript record, and St. Dunstan himself on the other, including the creation of nonce-words, an interest in word-play, letters, riddles, demons, anthropomorphisation, Greek language and Irish learning.<sup>24</sup> Approaching the text with an eye to its physical design, the possibility of Dunstan's influence is of particular interest, as his biographers describe him as skilled in various artistic crafts, including calligraphy, painting, engraving and metalwork.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-57.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54 n. 246.

**Image 28: From CCCC 422, p. 12**

This chapter will observe not only the elements of graphic design utilised in the *Dialogues* of CCCC 422 (and, to a lesser degree, CCCC 41), but also the narrative concern with letters and text exhibited by the poems. In particular, we will see how the scribe's graphic manipulation of the alphabet interacts with the discussion of letters and learning in the *Dialogues* to create varied, imaginative and intellectual visual schemes through which to approach both poetic texts. These schemes and manipulations are very different in *SSI* and *SSII*, so the two texts will be treated separately. However, both texts exhibit a narrative interest in Greek learning and middle-eastern culture, and these interests emerge distinctly in the visual topography and character manipulation of each text. The main focus of the chapter will be the runic sequence of *SSI*, and the way in which the runes evoke Greek letters in contemporary manuscripts of the *Etymologies*. We will go on to consider the scribe's use of display capitals in *SSII*, which visually shape the debate-dialogue, as well as the manipulation of letters to create exotic-looking graphemes.

### **Establishing an eastern geography in the poems**

In order to appreciate how *mise-en-page* is designed to accentuate the sense of the exotic in the *Dialogues*, an overview of the poem's eastern elements as a whole is necessary. Both poetic dialogues open onto a panorama that is geographically non-specific: in *SSI* Saturn declares, 'Ic iglanda eallra hæbbe / boca onbyrged' (*SSI*, ll.1-2a, 'I have tasted of the books of all the islands'); in *SSII* the narrator tells us that he knows of an ancient debate between 'middangeardes ræswum' (l.2b, 'counsellors of middle-earth').<sup>26</sup> From this initial, global bird's-eye view, the narrative in each case

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<sup>26</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Old English text of the *Dialogues* is from Anlezark's edition, and

homes in on a setting that is broad, but explicitly Eastern in relation to Anglo-Saxon readers; in each case, the setting established for the debate is more intellectual than it is geographical. In *SSII*, Jerusalem, the seat of Solomon’s Temple and so the presumed site of the dialogue, sits at the heart of this vista; Anlezark challenges Patrick O’Neill’s assessment that the encounter takes place ‘somewhere in or near the Mediterranean’, pointing to the references to Solomon’s temple in *Solomon & Saturn Prose*, especially the phrase, ‘on ðeosum ilcan temple’ (‘in this same temple’).<sup>27</sup> Saturn makes his approach through an array of Eastern European, South Asian, Middle Eastern and North African sites:

Land eall geondhwearf,  
 Ind<e>a mere,      <E>ast Corsias,  
 Persea rice,      Palestinion,  
 Niniuen ceastre,      ond norð Predan,  
 Meda maððumselas,      Marculfes eard,  
 Saulus rice,      swa he suð ligeð  
 ymbe Geallboe      and ymb Geador norð,  
 Filistina flet,      fæsten Cre<t>a,  
 wudu Egipta,      <w>æter Mathea,  
 <cludas> Coreffes,      Caldea rice,  
 Creca cræftas,      cynn Arabia,  
 lare Libia,      lond Syria,  
 Pitðinia,      Buðanasan,

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translations are my own, with reference to Anlezark’s translation.

<sup>27</sup> Patrick P. O’Neill. ‘On the Date, Provenance and Relationship of the ‘Solomon and Saturn’ Dialogue’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 26 (1997), 139-168, p. 146; Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 39.

Pamhpilia, Pores gemære,  
Macedonia, Mesopotamie,  
Cappadocia, Cristes <eðel>  
Hieryhco, Galilea Hierusa<lem>

(*SSII*, ll. 7-23)<sup>28</sup>

It is a haphazard list: some place-names are objects of ‘geondhwearf’; others are possessive modifiers of (chiefly topographical) objects; all (bar Geallboe and Geador) are in apposition to ‘land eal’.<sup>29</sup> The sites are not arranged by geographic proximity to one another, and do not seem likely to present a single, coherent itinerary; O’Brien O’Keeffe attributes ‘little significance’ to the order of the place-names, pointing to their alliterative arrangement as an explanation for the narrative disorganisation.<sup>30</sup> However, between lines 8 and 23 there are only seven full lines in which the place-name of the a-line alliterates with the place-name of the b-line, while many of the words which take alliterative stress are not themselves place-names. For example, in ll.14-15 ‘Filistina’ alone of the four place-names alliterates,

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<sup>28</sup> Here, Anlezark interprets ‘East Corsias’ as ‘East Cossias’, and ‘North Predan’ as ‘the North Parthians’, Anlezark *Dialogues*, pp. 78-79. For further discussion of difficult names and these terms as corruptions, see Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘The geographic list of *Solomon and Saturn II*’, *ASE* 20 (1991), 123-141, p. 136. I have utilised these discussions on names in my own translation.

‘[Saturn] travelled the land completely: the sea of India, East Corsias, the kingdom of Persia, Palestine, the city of Ninevah, North Predan, the treasure-halls of the Medes, the land of Marculf, Saul’s kingdom, as it lies south by Gilboa and north by Gadara, the hall of the Philistines, the fortress of Crete, the wood of Egypt, the waters of Midia, the cliffs of Horeb, the kingdom of Chaldea, the arts of the Greeks, the Arabian race, the lore of Libya, the land of Syria, Bithinia, Buthanasan, Pamphilia, the border of Porus, Macedonia, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Christ’s native country, Jericho, Gallilee, Jerusalem’

<sup>29</sup> Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe also notes the haphazard nature of this section: ‘Syntactically, the thirty-two items in the list are in apposition to *land* and should be variations on it. Yet not every item is a land; some are people, and some, oddly, are neither people nor places but abstractions such as “Creca *cræftas*” and “*lare* Libya”. Towards the end of what remains of the list there are simply place-names without modifiers of any sort’; O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Geographic List’, p. 127.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

while ‘flet’, ‘fæsten’, ‘wudu’ and ‘wæter’ provide a comprehensive alliterative framework across the two lines. Deploying place-names as possessive modifiers of alliterating nouns would have allowed the poet to arrange the sites in any desired order; the topographical disorganisation is therefore more likely to be purposeful, expressing the senselessness of Saturn’s wanderings in pursuit of purely secular wisdom. This is further suggested by the restoration of geographical coherence between sites at line 22 when Saturn at last reaches ‘Cristes eðel’, and makes his way through the Biblical landscape to the poem’s locational core and seat of Christian learning, Jerusalem. While, as Anlezark notes, Saturn’s exile from Chaldea seems to be a self-imposed quest rather than the forced banishment of his euhemerized namesake, the alliterative communication of ‘wound gold’ and ‘exile’ (‘wunden gold’ and ‘wræclast’) in *The Wanderer* may offer an analogic image of the aimless and winding path of the exile, a theme that Solomon touches upon again in a speech on the miseries of the mother of a wayward son (*SSII*, ll.193-208).<sup>31</sup> In *SSI*, Saturn’s travels are handled more briefly; in his first-person address to Solomon (presumably in Jerusalem) he tells us that he has ‘larcræftas onlocen Libia and Greca, / swylce eac istoriam Indea rices’ (ll.3-4, ‘unlocked the learnings of the Libyans and the Greeks, also in the same way the history of the kingdom of the Indians’); Anlezark reads this as a summary of the travels in *SSII*, with one location from each region (Africa, Europe, and Asia) represented.<sup>32</sup> Saturn himself is of eastern origins, identified as a Chaldean in both texts by his promise to return there if Solomon can satisfy his quest for knowledge.

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<sup>31</sup> See Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 31; ‘Warað hine wræclast, nales wunden gold’ (l.32), from Krapp and Dobbie, *Exeter Book*, p. 134.

<sup>32</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 99.

This scene-setting is not merely ornamental exoticism, but asserts an intellectual context for the dialogue. Saturn's travels in *SSII* are not directed to foreign lands themselves, but to the learning they possess: he has 'tasted of the books of all the islands'; it is the 'learnings' and 'history' of Libya, Greece and India that he has unlocked. In *SSII*, the place-names chiefly modify topographical nouns or stand alone, but again the constituent elements of 'larcraeftas' appear with possessive place-names: 'Creca craeftas' (l.17, 'crafts of the Greeks') and 'lare Libia' (l.18, 'lore of the Libyans'). The Jerusalem that Saturn approaches is not only one from 'fyrndagum' (*SSII*, l.1b, 'ancient days') but specifically the days of King Solomon, who was gifted with extraordinary wisdom by God (2 Chronicles: 10-12). At this level, the attention drawn to Greek is slight, but also explicitly intellectual, with Greece being mentioned in both geographic lists in the context of its 'craeftas' and 'larcraeftas'.

As well as the attention to intellectualism within the texts, scholars have noted that the geography of the poems indicates a particularly learned environment of composition. O'Brien O'Keeffe has drawn attention to possible sources for the 'geographic list', notably the *Cosmographia* of Aethicus Ister.<sup>33</sup> Ister's fictional alphabet might therefore offer an interesting parallel to the runic alphabet in *SSI*.<sup>34</sup> Anlezark draws attention to *Epistle liii* of St. Jerome; in this letter, Jerome offers to Paulinus the example of pagans, including Apollonius of Tyana, who travelled the world in search of learning, and St. Paul, whose travels ended in Jerusalem; much as with the sudden appearance of geographical organisation on the approach to Jerusalem in *SSII*, ll.22-23, Jerome cuts through his own account of pagan wisdom

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<sup>33</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Geographic List', esp. pp. 128-29.

<sup>34</sup> Page, *Introduction*, p. 62; Bischoff, p. 177.

with the words:

But why should I confine my allusions to the men of this world,  
when the Apostle Paul ... after visiting Damascus and Arabia  
“went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen  
days.”<sup>35</sup>

The place-names and the trope of the pagan scholar moving through them are drawn from learned literature, and so while the landscape is explicitly intellectualized it is furthermore self-consciously composed in a learned environment; Kathryn Powell sees the poem as ‘a tenth-century fantasy of the East’ which sets up the pagan, ‘oriental’ intellect of Saturn against the Christian and even explicitly ‘occidental’ wisdom of King Solomon, ultimately ‘[supporting] a fantasy of English superiority relative to a foreign and pagan Other’.<sup>36</sup> Explicit references to the East and Middle East are typically invoked as part of the framework and setting of the debate, rather than the content of the riddles or the discussion itself (the description of the *Vasa Mortis* (ll. 75-103) and the reference to the ‘weallas blican’ of Jerusalem (ll. 56-8), both in *SSII*, are exceptions to this). Many of these references are positioned at the start of the texts: the geographic lists open *SSI* (ll.1-4) and *SSII* (ll.6b-23); references to Chaldea identify Saturn as challenger at the start of *SSI* (l.21b) and *SSII* (ll.26-32a) as he promises or is ordered to return over the seas to his homeland if defeated, while at the end of *SSF* he is identified as the ‘Caldea eorl’ (*SSF* l. 7, ‘Chaldean

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<sup>35</sup> Reference to Jerome’s letter in Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 36-37; text from Philip Schaff and Rev. Henry Wallace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series, Volume VI Jerome: Letters and Select Works* (2007), p. 97.

<sup>36</sup>Kathryn Powell, ‘Orientalist fantasy in the poetic dialogues of *Solomon and Saturn*’, *ASE* 34 (2005), Web. 117-43, esp. pp. 119, 143. See also O’Brien O’Keeffe, ‘Geographic List’, p. 140.

nobleman’) who has been defeated by Solomon.<sup>37</sup> Other references emerge during the debate and generally draw attention back to the structure of the debate itself: in *SSP* Solomon discusses a heavenly cloth in the likeness of another cloth which had hung ‘on ðeosum ilcan temple’; in *SSII* Solomon diverts from a lesson on ‘modgum monnum’ (l.149a, ‘arrogant men’) to chastise Saturn on the ‘inwitgecyndo’ (l.153b, ‘evil nature’) of his Chaldean countrymen; later in the text when Saturn questions Solomon on whether ‘wyrð ðe warnung’ (l. 250, ‘fate or foresight’) is stronger, he makes reference to the wise Philistines he has sat and debated with in the past.<sup>38</sup>

The texts’ shared interest in the east, then, seems generally to be deployed as part of the apparatus of the debates themselves, and as a proxy indicator of the intellectual breadth and prowess of various figures in the poems. But Powell theorises that the focus of this text is very much the praise of Christian and even *English* wisdom, and that Solomon’s own wisdom is formulated in these terms, against the pagan and foreign intellectualism of Saturn.<sup>39</sup> It must therefore be of great interest to us, as witnesses of the visual scheme, that the scribe chooses to insert an alternative alphabet of *English* runes into the text, rather than an alphabet with unfamiliar or eastern origins. However, as I will go on to argue, the inclusion of these runes in a poem with an explicitly eastern setting, and in a specifically Isidorian narrative, also act as allusions to the interpolation of Greek letters in Isidore’s *Etymologies*. To explore and explain this allusiveness fully, it is first necessary to provide an account of Greek scholarship and interest in the Greek Alphabet in Anglo-Saxon England.

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<sup>37</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> Translation of ‘warnung’ as ‘foresight’ from Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 91.

<sup>39</sup> See above, p. 305.

## **Greek learning and the use of alternative alphabets in Anglo-Saxon England**

Anlezark believes that the author of *SSI* had enough familiarity with Greek to produce the grammatically dubious nonce-term ‘prologa prima’ (1.89a), which he does not render in modern English in his edition, but which he translates as ‘initial letter’ in his introduction.<sup>40</sup> To substantiate this assertion, this chapter will briefly review a) the degree of Greek learning in Anglo-Saxon England, and the nature of scholastic engagement with Greek during the tenth century; b) the religious, historical and intellectual implications raised by the use of Greek in a given text. A body of critical work, led by Walter Berschin, Mary Bodden and Michael Lapidge, has helped renovate old assumptions about the paucity of Greek study in Europe in general, and Anglo-Saxon England in particular. Collectively, the remit of this work has been significant, mapping out where and how Greek texts were transmitted, how much Greek was known, who used it and what kind of innovations characterised the use of medieval Greek, as opposed to the Greek of antiquity or later humanist study. In this present work on *mise-en-page* and page design in Anglo-Saxon verse texts, my intention is to build upon the work of these scholars and trace the manner in which Greek language in England, atomised and abstracted from its classical roots, developed a strong *visual* aesthetic, with its usage in manuscripts typically relying upon the visual potential of a character or word, as much as or more than its linguistic meaning. This will provide a theoretical and historical base from which to examine the evocation of Greek and eastern forms in the visual schemes of *The Dialogues*.

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<sup>40</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 50-51, 107.

*The state of Greek scholarship in medieval Europe*

Around the time of the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the humanist heirs of fugitive Eastern scholarship revived the serious study of Greek language in western Europe.<sup>41</sup>

Prior to this in the medieval West, and certainly in Anglo-Saxon England, Greek could more frequently be invoked as a *symbol* of learning than a *subject*, a sign of erudition to be called up from the periphery of contemporary scholarly knowledge.

The poverty of Greek language instruction across Western Europe in the Middle Ages is typically attributed to the want of a thorough, authoritative account of Greek grammar.<sup>42</sup> In Anglo-Saxon England, the arrival of Greek-speaking bishops

Theodore and Hadrian in England in 669 initially entailed a period of serious Greek study in Canterbury, but this was not sustained.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, to have been credited as

*utriusque linguae peritus* in medieval Europe was not, in fact, a reliable indicator of a close familiarity with Greek.<sup>44</sup> Mary Bodden's research has revealed that later

readers and writers had access to 'a very considerable' Greek vocabulary available

from glossaries and other texts: she identifies over five hundred Anglo-Saxon

manuscripts which contain Greek, and from a sample of eight texts with a

'substantial amount of Greek', she identifies a vocabulary of around a thousand

Greek words available to the Anglo-Saxons from the ninth to the eleventh century.<sup>45</sup>

Nevertheless, the general command of Greek remained low; Bodden and Lapidge

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Angold, *The Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans: Context and Consequences* (2012), p. 103.

<sup>42</sup> Berschin, *Greek Letters*, p. 34.

<sup>43</sup> Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (1995), pp. 82, 133; Michael Lapidge, 'The Study of Greek at the School of Canterbury in the Seventh Century', in *The Sacred Nectar of the Greeks: The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Michael W. Herren (1988), 169-94, esp. pp.169-70.

<sup>44</sup> Berschin, *Greek Letters*, p.8.

<sup>45</sup> Mary Catherine Bodden, 'Evidence for knowledge of Greek in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 17 (1988), 217-46, p. 223; Mary Catherine Bodden, 'The Preservation and Transmission of Greek in Early England', in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, Studies in Medieval Culture XX, eds. P. E. Szarmach and V. D. Oggins (1986), 53-63, p. 56.

have suggested that errors of transmission in the few longer tracts of Greek copied in England testify to scribal unfamiliarity with continuous pieces of writing, and that the use of Greek words does not necessarily indicate familiarity with Greek on the part of the writer.<sup>46</sup>

Despite this difficulty, the importance of Greek as one of the three *linguae sacrae* (alongside both Hebrew and Latin) and as a liturgical language (alongside Latin primarily, and preserved in a tradition of bilingual liturgical texts) ensured its continuing appeal to Western scholars after late antiquity.<sup>47</sup> And so, rather than dying out, Greek survived in a tradition distinct from its use as a classical language, a survival that seems comparable to the ‘divorce’ R. I. Page identifies between the use of runic alphabets in early medieval Europe, and the later tradition of the *runica manuscripta*.<sup>48</sup> The new tradition made use of Greek as a *sign* of learning, for even if few scholars possessed the knowledge to engage with continuous Greek texts at a scholarly level, there were many who employed Grecian elements to enhance the appeal of their writing; the use of Grecisms and loan-words, of which ‘the most common source’ before 1100 was Greek, are among ‘the ostentatious parade of unusual, often very arcane and apparently learned vocabulary’ that defines the ‘hermeneutic style’.<sup>49</sup> The ‘mastery’ of Greek was ‘considered a sign of great erudition’, and its exercise in ornamental forms in western Europe was clearly capable of conferring intellectual privilege upon writers too, whether by the use of Grecism as literary ornament, or Hrabanus Maurus’ figural poems shaped after or

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<sup>46</sup> Bodden, ‘Preservation and Transmission’, pp. 56-57; Michael Lapidge, ‘The hermeneutic style in tenth-century Anglo-Latin literature’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1975), 67-111, pp. 67-68. See also Berschin, *Greek Letters*, p. 99.

<sup>47</sup> See Berschin, ‘Greek Elements’, p. 86; Berschin, *Greek Letters*, pp. 19, 38-39; Bodden, ‘Preservation and Transmission’, p. 54. See further below, pp. 310-11.

<sup>48</sup> Page, *Introduction*, p. 62.

<sup>49</sup> Lapidge, ‘Hermeneutic Style’, pp. 67-68.

utilising Greek characters, or the adoption of Greek terminology in technical texts, or the abbreviation of *nomina sacra*, such as ‘Δm’ for ‘deum’, or the concealment of an author’s name with Greek letters.<sup>50</sup>

### *Contemporary understanding of language history*

Concluding her review of the knowledge of Greek in Anglo-Saxon England, Bodden suggests that Anglo-Saxon scholars ‘understood ... that the history of man’s relationship to the world and to God lay somehow in the history of language’, and that this drove their persistent reverence for and preservation of Greek texts.<sup>51</sup>

Certainly, Anglo-Saxon scholars would have recognised the genealogical relationship of Latin to Greek, both as a tool for biblical interpretation and in terms of the historical development of the Latin language. Augustine discusses the supremacy of the Greek Septuagint, both in correspondence with Jerome and in his *Civitate Dei*.<sup>52</sup> Isidore lays out more explicitly the interdependence of Hebrew, Latin and Greek in western scholarship (IX.3-4): ‘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’. The difference and the inter-relation of Greek and Latin were preserved in a broad tradition of Greek-Latin liturgical bilingual materials, born of ‘[t]he Mediterranean

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<sup>50</sup> Quotation from Bodden, ‘Preservation and Transmission’, p. 55; Bodden, ‘Knowledge of Greek’, p. 220; Berschin, *Greek Letters*, pp. 29, 32, 128; Lapidge, ‘Hermeneutic Style’, throughout, and esp. pp. 68, 70, 84; Berschin, ‘Greek Elements’, p. 86; Padraic Moran, ‘Greek in early medieval Ireland’, in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, eds. Alex Mullen and Patrick James (2012), 172-92, pp. 174-75.

<sup>51</sup> Bodden, ‘Knowledge of Greek’, p. 232.

<sup>52</sup> On this, and other details of Augustine’s attitudes to the Greek Language, see: Berschin, *Greek Letters*, pp. 51-55, esp. p. 55; Cornelia Linde, *How to Correct the Sacra Scriptura? Textual Criticism of the Bible between the Twelfth and Fifteenth Century* (2011), p. 111; Philip Schaff, *St. Augustine's City of God and Christian Doctrine* (1890) Web. Accessed 30 January 2018 <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.iv.XVIII.42.html>> and <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.iv.XVIII.43.html>>. See also Frederick M. Biggs, ‘Introduction and Overview of Recent Work’, in eds. Kathryn Powell, Donald Scragg, *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England* (2003), 1-27, p. 11.

cultural symbiosis of the late Roman Empire'.<sup>53</sup> Berschin writes that in both scriptural and exegetical study, 'it was never forgotten that Greek was one of the original languages of the Scriptures', with the inclusion of the 'Α' (majuscule alpha) and 'Ω' (majuscule omega) characters in the Book of Revelations '[referring] the reader of the Latin Bible to the Greek original'.<sup>54</sup> The alterity of Greek letter-forms is capable of invoking historical roots; we will see that the same is true of runes.<sup>55</sup>

Further, the characters of the Greek alphabet were known to be ancestors of various Latin characters. Isidore adopts 'the genealogical method inherent to early medieval language theory' to trace the history of the *linguae sacrae*, and their alphabets:<sup>56</sup>

The Latin and Greek letters seem to be derived from the Hebrew, for among the Hebrews the first letter is called 'aleph,' and then 'alpha' was derived from it by the Greeks due to its similar pronunciation, whence A among Latin speakers. (I.iii.4)

His historical reading is less linear: Hebrew characters derive from the Law of Moses; Chaldean and Syrian from Abraham; the Phoenicians developed Greek letters; Latin letters were imported by the nymph Carmentis, the Carmentiae being associated with the Greek muses (I.iii.4, I.iv.1).<sup>57</sup> As John Henderson observes, this 'sackful of itemized data contrives to chart a story in three lines... – or are these 3

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<sup>53</sup> Berschin, *Greek Letters*, pp. 38-39; Bodden, 'Preservation and Transmission', p. 54.

<sup>54</sup> Berschin, *Greek Letters*, p.19.

<sup>55</sup> For critical commentary from Bredehoft, Seth Lerer, Symons and Birkett on the visual alterity and historical evocations of runic scripts, see below, pp. 325-26.

<sup>56</sup> David Rojinsky, *Companion to Empire: A Genealogy of the Written Word in Spain and New Spain, c.550-1550* (2010), p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> This link was first made by Ennius: 'Learn that we, whom they call the Muses, are the Carmentiae', as noted in Miriam R. Pelikan Pittenger, *Contested Triumphs: Politics, Pageantry, and Performance in Livy's Republican Rome* (2008) p. 212 n. 40.

parallel stories?’<sup>58</sup> If Isidore has not mapped out the precise historical relationship between Greek and Latin alphabets, he has certainly presented them visually: in I.iii.6, the seventeen listed Greek letters include eleven clearly identifiable as ancestors of Latin majuscule characters (Α, Β, Ε, Ζ, Ι, Κ, Μ, Ν, Ο, Ρ, Τ); Isidore’s account of the history of the Latin letters begins shortly after at Book I.iv, standing after the Greek in the order of the narrative, as well as in historical progression.

*Evocative usage of Greek forms, and Greek as visual ornament*

The adoption of Greek characters for the historical and esoteric resonances of their physical form is not alien to modern English-speakers. As a comparable melding of design, classical literary inheritance and the otherness of Greek writing, we might consider the inscription ‘ΑΠΙΣΤΟΝ ΜΕΝ ΥΔΩΡ’ (‘Water is best’) over the entrance to the magnificent Georgian pump rooms in the city of Bath.<sup>59</sup> Affixed in gold majuscule letters onto the entablature of the building’s neo-classical facade, above an imposing blind arcade, this first half of the first strophe of Pindar’s epinicion is a dazzling display that appears to speak to the Grecian architecture and neo-classical fashions of the city’s eighteenth-century heyday, tied to the spa water that generated the city’s wealth. If ‘Water Is Best’ were instead written in English onto the frieze, the literal meaning of the words would be clearer to a greater number of readers, and the historical reach of the visual display would be lost to most. Ultimately, the resonance of the letter-forms has been judged more important than that of the words.

We can see this prioritisation of the evocative power of the ‘otherness’ of Greek at work in Anglo-Saxon England, and the wider Latin West. For tenth-

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<sup>58</sup> John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (2007), p. 33.

<sup>59</sup> Diane Arnson Svarlien, ed. and transl., ‘Pindar: *Olympian*’ *Perseus Digital Library* (1990) Web. Accessed 13 August 2018 <<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Pind.%20O.>>.

century Anglo-Latin writers, the use of Greek ‘archaisms, neologisms and Grecisms’ as *literary* ornament became highly fashionable, a trend that passes into England through the work of Odo of Cluny and Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.<sup>60</sup> The highly symbolic nature of this trend did not pass unnoticed. Hincmar of Rheims criticised his nephew thus:

it would appear that you have inserted these words most  
unfortunately not out of humility but for the ostentation of those  
Greek words ... which you yourself don’t understand.<sup>61</sup>

Technical terminology was frequently Greek or derived from Greek, and authors had the ‘creative freedom to adapt Greek words to Latin usage’, which made ‘their Latin richer and more colorful’.<sup>62</sup>

From literary ornament, to visual ornament: in a culture that struggles to engage with continuous Greek writing, and therefore frequently cannot ‘read’ Greek, so much as ‘see’ it, it is unsurprising that Greek words and letters become objects of *visual* ornament and interest, maintaining their alterity against the backdrop of the Roman alphabet. Further, it may be relevant that Greek culture, as imported by religious, academic figures from the seventh-century onwards, and by others before, came packaged with striking graphic and material elements. Benedict Biscop, founder of the monasteries at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, was one of the first two named English visitors to Rome, travelling there in 653.<sup>63</sup> Webster notes, however, that Procopius writes of Anglo-Saxon travellers visiting Byzantium in 553; she

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<sup>60</sup> Lapidge, ‘Hermeneutic style’, pp. 68, 70, 71-73.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Lapidge, ‘Hermeneutic Style’, p. 70.

<sup>62</sup> Berschin, *Greek Letters*, pp. 30-33.

<sup>63</sup> Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (1991), pp. 120, 153.

traces the passage of various goods and luxuries from Byzantium and the east into England, including artefacts from the Sutton Hoo burial, and suggests that such objects ‘represent a relationship with and awareness of the Eastern Empire, long before the arrival of the Christian missions from Rome’.<sup>64</sup> These later missions had their own role to play in the gathering of Byzantine material culture in England: Webster suggests that the magnificent and imposing Greek display initials of the Lindisfarne Gospels, as well as other Byzantine design features in the manuscript, may have been the result of the Greek learning established by Theodore and Hadrian in Canterbury.<sup>65</sup> On his numerous journeys, Benedict Biscop gathered a crop of various ‘books and artefacts’, including icons which he brought back with him to Jarrow.<sup>66</sup> Among these imports were Greek texts, texts which later allowed Bede to develop his comparative competence in the language.<sup>67</sup> It was not only physical objects that Biscop brought back from the East, but the concept of *kosmesis* (which translates as ‘ornamentation’ or ‘adornment’); in Rome, *kosmesis* involved the production of ‘gospel-books de luxe with golden letters on purple grounds, ivory episcopal chairs... silk vestments and hangings, and ... mosaics’.<sup>68</sup> Biscop ‘carried out precisely a policy of *kosmeisis*’ at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow; his imports extended to foreign expertise, employing Gaulish glaziers and ‘the archchanter of St. Peter’s’.<sup>69</sup> Thus, the material culture and object design of Byzantium held a religious interest for Anglo-Saxon scholars from an early date.

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<sup>64</sup> Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 109.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>66</sup> Mayr-Harting, pp.121, 153; on Biscop’s souvenirs, see Herbert Norris, *Ancient European Costume and Fashion*, Vol. 1 (1924), p. 222.

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Lecaque, ‘Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of Byzantium: Myth of the Greek East’ (2012) Web. Accessed 11 December 2017 <[https://www.academia.edu/917375/Anglo-Saxon\\_Perceptions\\_of\\_Byzantium\\_Myth\\_of\\_the\\_Greek\\_East](https://www.academia.edu/917375/Anglo-Saxon_Perceptions_of_Byzantium_Myth_of_the_Greek_East)>.

<sup>68</sup> Mayr-Harting, p. 153. On earlier practices of *kosmesis*, see further Mathew Gervase, *Byzantine Aesthetics* (1963), pp. 84-93.

<sup>69</sup> Mayr-Harting, p. 153.

Scholars have noted various ways in which the visual alterity of Greek is exploited on the page in Anglo-Saxon and European writing, and I want to draw together some of these disparate examples, seeing them as a distinct part of the ‘new tradition’ of Greek usage in the Latin West. Medieval Irish scholarship can be seen utilising both Greek and Hebrew in etymological lexicography during the eighth or mid-seventh century, in the *Sanas Cormac* (Cormac’s Glossary).<sup>70</sup> Greek letters appeared in various Irish written contexts, including alphabetic lists and abbreviations, the influence of which can be seen in Aldhelm’s use of capital ‘delta’ (Δ) for ‘discipulus’ and the medieval ‘mu’ for ‘magister’.<sup>71</sup> These letter-for-word abbreviations display an interest not in the extended web of Greek language, but in the visual alterity of its individual characters. Their use as abbreviation marks or as an alternative alphabet has a riddling or puzzling quality; it is a visual game to be worked out.

Regular, non-cryptic scribal practices also contribute to the visual alterity of Greek on the page. ‘Although majuscule script was replaced by the minuscule in the Greek East, as well as in the Latin West during the eighth and ninth centuries’, writes Berschin, ‘Greek letters were consistently written in majuscules in the West’, with some unusual later exceptions.<sup>72</sup> Berschin goes on to point out that the Greek alphabet was confusing for Western scribes, who regularly confused theta (θ) with tau (T), epsilon (E) with eta (H), upsilon (Y) with iota (I), and omega (ω) with omicron (o), and who developed ‘a preference for the seemingly “more Greek”

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<sup>70</sup> Brent Miles, *Heroic Saga and Classical Epic in Medieval Ireland* (2011), p. 34; see also Paul Russell, Sharon Arbuthnot, and Pádraic Moran, *Early Irish Glossaries Database*. Web. Accessed 08 December 2017 <[www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/](http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/)>.

<sup>71</sup> Moran, ‘early medieval Ireland’, p. 175; Berschin, ‘Greek Elements’, p. 88.

<sup>72</sup> Berschin, *Greek Letters*, pp. 29-30.

letters' of theta, tau, upsilon and omega.<sup>73</sup> Such practices make Greek writing more identifiable by increasing the concentration of visual alterity in the foreign alphabet, which also makes its otherness more palpable.<sup>74</sup>

Isidore raises the idea of correspondence between a character's graphic form and its semantic function through five 'mystical' Greek characters, which will be fully discussed below: Upsilon (Υ), Theta (Θ), Tau (Τ), Alpha (Α) and Omega (Ω). As this work is a 'universally known repository of Greek terms' and words, the potential for visual play in manuscripts of the *Etymologies* is significant.<sup>75</sup> In London, BL, Harley 2713, a French manuscript with a late-ninth-century copy of the *Etymologies*, the string of Greek characters on fol. 3v is coloured with a green ink, which is also used to highlight other capital letters in the design scheme; in a tenth-century copy of the text in Oxford, Queen's College 320, the visual scheme is marked, though less so, with the characters demarcated by low-key medial pointing, a style of punctuation elsewhere used for numerals; in London, BL, Harley 2660, a German manuscript written in 1136, the characters are filled with a dark red ink, also used for display initials.<sup>76</sup> In a scholarly community which is only tentatively trilingual, the visual alterity inherent in an alternative alphabet system is heightened by the use of such punctuation and colour schema.

Intriguing are the occasions upon which writing practices demand the reader's close physical or verbal engagement with the material form of Greek letters

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>74</sup> N.B. however that Greek words may also be written in Roman letters in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, rather than in Greek.

<sup>75</sup> Quotation from Bodden, 'Knowledge of Greek', p. 221.

<sup>76</sup> For dating, origins and contents of the Harley manuscripts, see: 'Harley MS 2660', *Digitised Manuscripts*, British Library, Web. Accessed 19 December 2017

<[http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley\\_MS\\_2660](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_2660)>; 'Harley MS 2713', *Digitised Manuscripts*, British Library, Web. Accessed 19 December 2017  
<[http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?index=2&ref=Harley\\_MS\\_2713](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?index=2&ref=Harley_MS_2713)>.

as a vehicle for meaning (as opposed to, say, cryptic abbreviations which simply exchange letter-for-letter). Lecaque casts ‘sanctity, erudition, magic, mystery’ as attributes that Anglo-Saxon scholars would have associated with the Greeks, and that ‘[w]hether or not there was real contact, the idea of the magical, mysterious, high-culture East persisted’.<sup>77</sup> Nowhere is this clearer, perhaps, than in the Greek elements among surviving charms and rituals. In London, BL, Royal 2. A. xx, a charm to stop bleeding is interspersed with Greek words, including a command to depart, and a palindrome; this latter tool, Bodden suggests, ‘emphasizes the actual physical properties of a word’.<sup>78</sup> Certainly the eye is drawn up and down the line, and the meaninglessness of the phrase shows that it is the vocal and visual engagement with the letter-forms that is central to the ritual. Physical in a different manner is the ritual of consecration for a church recorded in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10575, written around the mid-tenth century or the turn of the eleventh.<sup>79</sup> The bishop is instructed to inscribe the Greek and Latin alphabets in the dirt across the floor of the church in the form of a great *crux decussata*, using his staff to write the Greek (‘oriente’) alphabet across one diagonal, and the Latin (‘occidentalis’) across the other.<sup>80</sup> In this context, Remigius of Auxerre says that the alphabet symbolises ‘the first principles and rudiments of sacred doctrine’.<sup>81</sup>

Greek is only one strand of ‘the complex matrix of languages and scripts’ available to Anglo-Saxon writers.<sup>82</sup> Runes, Hebrew script and even fictional

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<sup>77</sup> Lecaque.

<sup>78</sup> Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800* (1990), pp. 298-300; Bodden, ‘Preservation and Transmission’, p. 60; Lecaque; Lloyd W. Daly, ‘A Greek Palindrome in Eighth-Century England’, *The American Journal of Philology* 103 (1982), 95-97.

<sup>79</sup> Dating from Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 647.

<sup>80</sup> For this example, see Tineke Looijenga, *Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions* (2003) p. 59, and Berschin, *Greek Letters*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>81</sup> Berschin, *Greek Letters*, p. 25 (see here also, Berschin on ‘alphabet as symbol of the world’).

<sup>82</sup> Thomas A. Bredehoft, ‘Multilateralism in Anglo-Saxon Verse Inscriptions’, in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c.800-c.1250*, ed. Elizabeth M. Tyler (2011), 15-32, p. 32.

alphabets also appear in manuscripts.

### *Greek alphabets in the manuscript tradition*

Writing practices often paid close attention to the visual design of Greek writing, but we need to understand the nature of the ‘resonances’ suggested by the appearance of Greek letters in a text. For this, we might consider the Grecian alphabet-lists which were ‘ubiquitous’ in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, according to Bodden, and which Berschin says were viewed as a ‘symbol of the world’.<sup>83</sup> Of course, an intellectual interest in alphabets is not peculiar to Anglo-Saxon written culture: Victoria Symons, in her examination of runic alphabets in the late Anglo-Saxon period, observes that

[a]n interest in listing and recording written letters is exemplified in both epigraphic and manuscript contexts; it predates the invention of runes, being present in some of the earliest written literatures.<sup>84</sup>

According to Gneuss and Lapidge’s *Handlist*, there are twelve surviving manuscripts written or owned in Anglo-Saxon England containing Greek alphabets, and these are recorded in Appendix D. Of these, seven are written in the eleventh-century or later, too late to be contemporary with the work of St. Dunstan’s immediate circle and the writing of *Solomon and Saturn I*; nevertheless, as they are written within that same distinct tradition between the classical Greek of late antiquity and its counterpart in the humanist period, they have been included in the table, to see in what ways they speak to the earlier manuscripts.<sup>85</sup> The remaining five manuscripts are temporally scattered: London, BL, Cotton Domitian ix, fol. 8 from

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<sup>83</sup> Bodden, ‘Preservation and Transmission’, p. 54; Berschin, *Greek Letters*, p. 25.

<sup>84</sup> Symons, p. 192.

<sup>85</sup> Dating here and below from Gneuss and Lapidge, see the dating in Appendix D for greater detail.

the second half of the eighth century; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auctarium F. 4. 32, fols. 19-36 (the '*Liber Commonei*') from the first half of the ninth century; London, BL, Harley 3017 from the late ninth century; Exeter, Cathedral Library, 3507, from the second half of the tenth century; Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 338, fols. 64-126 from the second half of the tenth century, or the turn of the eleventh.

The variety of materials that these alphabets accompany are reminiscent of the varied curriculum taught alongside Greek language at the Canterbury school of Theodore and Hadrian, which included Roman Law, computus, astronomy, poetry and music.<sup>86</sup> Out of the twelve manuscripts with Greek alphabets, seven contain Latin verse, six contain treatises of a historical, philosophical or theological nature, six contain prognostic, calendrical or computistical material, and five contain scientific or mathematical works.<sup>87</sup> The role of the Greek alphabet in each manuscript is of quite individual character: for example, in Cambridge, Jesus College, 28 (Q. B. 11) the alphabet is solely accompanied by various *grammaticae* of Priscian. Alessandro Zironi has noted the use of 'the alphabetical series as a boundary element in a codicological unit devoted to grammatical matters', and in a discussion of Parisian manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 528 concludes that alphabets are seen as 'essential complements of the grammatical texts'.<sup>88</sup> In the *Liber Commonei* the Greek alphabet is attested alongside three very

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<sup>86</sup> On the range of subjects taught at Canterbury, see: Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 111; Lecaque; Bischoff and Lapidge, p. 61.

<sup>87</sup> Categories have been devised from the bibliographic details in Gneuss and Lapidge's *Handlist*. Each text has been allocated to a single category, which have been broadly construed to avoid overlap between categories to the maximum possible extent (for example, computistical, calendrical and prognostic materials form one group, while materials for delivery in religious worship such as offices, sermons, hymns, canticles and prayers form another). Nevertheless, such categorisation is at best an approximate and preliminary attempt to create a picture of the interests of these manuscripts, which could be refined for a future study on Greek in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.

<sup>88</sup> Alessandro Zironi, 'Marginal Alphabets in the Carolingian Age: Philological and Codicological

different groups of texts, from each of which it has the potential to absorb quite distinct resonances: the fictional alphabet of Nemnivus; ‘computistical material and notes on weight and measures’; biblical commentary followed by the Greek and Latin *Testimonia* and ‘lessons and canticles for the Easter Vigil’, written in both Latin and Greek.<sup>89</sup> Different alphabets are frequently attested together in manuscripts. Nemnivus, according to the story related in the *Liber Commonei*, invented his alphabet *ad hoc* as a challenge to the argument that the Welsh did not possess an alphabet, and it is based upon runic forms.<sup>90</sup> The display, then, is a creative response to ideas of language history, and shows the manipulation and cryptic substitution of characters in alternative alphabets. The biblical commentary and Greek-Latin bilingual liturgical material further on in the *Liber Commonei* draw out the sacred aspect of Greek writing, and the Greek history of sacred materials.

The relationship between the alphabet and the computus is more complex; indeed, all five of the earlier manuscripts contain computistical or calendrical material, as does London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xii, fols 4-77. The arithmetics of computation, a calendrical science focusing on the calculation of moveable feast-days, was not only a practical solution for the setting of church calendars, but represented a revelation of the ‘cosmic order beneath the chaos of passing time’.<sup>91</sup> In his introduction to the *De Temporum Ratione*, Bede lays out basic approaches to

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Considerations’, in *Rethinking and Recontextualizing Glosses: New Perspectives in the Study of Late Anglo-Saxon Glossography*, eds. Patrizia Lendinara, Loredana Lazzari, and Claudia di Sciacca (2011), 353-70, pp. 363, 365, 368.

<sup>89</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 430.

<sup>90</sup> Nora K. Chadwick, *Studies in the Early British Church* (1958), pp. 45-46.

<sup>91</sup> Quotation, likening prognostics and computus, from R. M. Liuzza, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics: An Edition and Translation of Texts from London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A.iii* (2011), p. 60; Peter S. Baker, ‘Computus’, in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, eds. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg, 2nd ed. (2014), 121-22; Faith Wallis, ‘Chronology and Systems of Dating’ in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, eds. Frank Anthony Carl Mantello and A. G. Rigg (1996), 383-87, esp. p. 383.

numeration and calculation in two methods: finger-counting, and the *computus Graecorum*. Greek numeration is more manipulable than Roman, he explains, for each number is represented by a different alphabetic character; this is also observed by Isidore.<sup>92</sup> In addition to their arithmetic functions, Bede explains that finger-counting and the *computus Graecorum* can be used cryptographically, a way of secretly speaking to ‘a friend who is among traitors’ by replacing the desired letters of a message with their numerical equivalents.<sup>93</sup> The use of Greek characters in computus manuscripts up until the twelfth century has been explained by Faith Wallis as in part a practical replacement for more unwieldy Roman numerals, but she also suggests ‘that their use was regarded as a kind of esoteric technique or quasi-secret knowledge, even when the intent was not cryptographic’.<sup>94</sup> Greek alphabets are frequently tabulated in ways that visually connect them to the computistical materials found in their manuscripts.<sup>95</sup> Two different shades of nuance, then, are applied to the Greek alphabet: on the one hand, its mathematical and computistical form, and therefore its potential to contribute to the ordering of time (suggested also by the calendrical material) and culture; on the other, its form as a literary language.

*Conclusions: contemporary appreciation of Greek language*

The deficiencies in the grammatical study of Greek and the inability of the majority of readers to process continuous Greek text centred appreciation on small units, like words and letters, inevitably preserving their strong visual alterity amongst standard Latin text. The visual symbolism and cryptic usages of the Greek alphabet were

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<sup>92</sup> See Faith Wallis, ed. and transl., *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* (2004), pp. 254-63, 11-12.

<sup>93</sup> Wallis, *Bede*, p. 11.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>95</sup> See, for example London, BL, Harley 3017, fol. 151v.

addressed in influential texts like Isidore's *Etymologies* and Bede's *De Temporum Ratione*, but were perhaps also aided by the influence of Byzantine art and design in the church, and the importance of Greek language to the biblical tradition. In the manuscript record, the Greek alphabet is attested alongside materials that explore world order, adding weight to Bodden's comment that 'man's relationship to the world' was understood to be related to the history of language.<sup>96</sup> But the use and knowledge of Greek also carries a mystique that makes it fitting for charms; associations of intellectualism and esotericism that make it suitable to ornament philosophical tracts and scientific texts; a hiddenness and a cryptic capacity that make it appropriate for word-games and cryptography.

### ***Solomon & Saturn I: alternative alphabets***

Saturn arrives in Solomon's presence with a specific challenge: unsatisfied by his vast survey of worldly learning, he seeks to be 'overawed' by 'cantices cwyde' ('saying of the canticle'), the *Pater Noster*.<sup>97</sup> In the course of recounting the prayer's virtues, Solomon describes an incredible metaphorical battle, in which the letters of the first two words of the prayer are anthropomorphised as warriors, taking up arms and launching vicious assaults on the devil. The *Pater Noster* battle occupies lines 84- 145 of *SSI*; as the text of *CCCC* 41 cuts off at line 94a, the passage is unfinished in the later manuscript. The key distinction in the handling of this passage between the two manuscripts is the encoding of runic letters alongside most of the Roman letters of the *Pater Noster* in *CCCC* 422, and their total absence in *CCCC* 41, as

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<sup>96</sup> See above on manuscripts containing Greek alphabets; Bodden, 'Knowledge of Greek', p. 232.

<sup>97</sup> 'Overawed' is Anlezark's translation of 'gebryrdded': see Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 100.

discussed above. The fight of the first five letters spelling ‘pater’, complete with runic equivalents, is as follows:

prologa prima      ðam is . ƿ . P . nama;  
hafað guðmæcga      gierde lange,  
gyldene gade,      ond a ðone gr<im>man feond  
swiðmod sweopað;      ond him on swaðe fylgeð  
. F . A . oferægene      ond hine eac ofslihð.  
. ↑ . T . hine teswað      ond hine on ða tungan sticað,  
wræsteð him ðæt woddor      ond him ða wongan brieceð.  
. M . E . hiene yflað,      swa he a wile  
ealra feonda gehwane      fæste gestondan.  
Ðonne hiene on unðanc . R . r .      ieorrenga geseceð,  
bocstafa brego  
(SSI, ll. 89-99)<sup>98</sup>

*Runica manuscripta* in England were a phenomenon of the tenth century, appearing only after the cessation of epigraphical runes in the ninth.<sup>99</sup> Page draws attention to the ‘divorce’ between the earlier epigraphic and later manuscript runic traditions, for while early epigraphers had used English runes as a primary writing system, manuscript compilers apparently viewed them ‘as just another curious script, perhaps

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<sup>98</sup> ‘... the angry one, *prologa prima*, who is named P. The warrior has a long staff, a golden goad, and swipes stout-hearted at the cruel foe; and A follows him on the path with overwhelming power, and also strikes him. T injures him and stabs him in the tongue, twists his mouth and shatters his cheekbone. E afflicts him, as he ever will stand fast against all fiends from every side. Then R seeks him angrily with ill-will, lord of letters’.

<sup>99</sup> Symons, p. 3; Aya Van Renterghem, *The Anglo-Saxon runic poem: a critical reassessment* (2014), Web. Accessed 10 August 2018 <<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/5134/>> [MPhil(R) thesis, University of Glasgow] p. 55 n. 164.

a secret one'.<sup>100</sup> For later writers, runes had currency as graphic, cryptic symbols, frequently appearing in esoteric and riddling contexts, much like Greek; Page writes:

it is interesting to see the runic script preserved in miscellanies of scientific knowledge, among computistical or mathematical lore, in company with etymological and grammatical treatises, or with lists of exotic alphabets, cryptograms and puzzles.<sup>101</sup>

Modern readers of Old English verse are likely to encounter such use of runes in the poetry of Cynewulf, where the author's name is woven in a runic acrostic through each colophon, and amongst the riddles and enigmatic elegies of the Exeter Book. As indicated by Birkett, these contexts often show Anglo-Saxon writers taking a mysticizing approach towards the largely-defunct runic alphabet, of which they were themselves inheritors and interpreters.<sup>102</sup> In both *Beowulf* and *Solomon and Saturn II*, runes make an appearance etched into swords. In *Beowulf* the runes are part of a detailed design scheme: carved into the 'snake-patterned' hilt of the sword (l. 1698a 'wyrmfāh'), they accompany an unspecified but possibly pictorial representation of 'or fyrngewinnes' (l.1689a, 'origin of ancient war'), and spell out the name of the sword's original owner (ll. 1694-7). A passage at the end of the first poetic segment of *Solomon and Saturn I* details cunning magic used by the devil to murder animals and men, including the inscription of 'death signs' (l. 161, 'wællnota') and 'evil letters' (l. 162, 'bealwe bocstafas') on a sword's blade, both of which likely refer to runes.<sup>103</sup> Where the letters on Beowulf's stolen hilt express a sense of history in the

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<sup>100</sup> Page, *Introduction*, p. 62.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>102</sup> See Thomas Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> See, for example, Marie Nelson, who theorizes that these 'could be victory-runes' or 'death-runes'; Marie Nelson, 'King Solomon's Magic: The Power of a Written Text', *Oral Tradition* 5 (1990), 20-

object's design which can stand within the epic narrative, the runes on the blade in *Solomon and Saturn I* have an explicitly malign magical function. Romance and mysticism are not solely the preserve of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholarship we examined in Chapter One; rather, they have been attached to these alternative character-forms by Anglo-Saxon authors.

Despite the re-introduction of Christianity and the Latin alphabet following the Augustinian mission of 597, runes continued to be used in various forms alongside Latin script.<sup>104</sup> However, the absence of significant amounts of continuous runic writing must have preserved the visual alterity of the runic system.<sup>105</sup> As Bredehoft notes, the absorption of the runic characters thorn (þ) and wyn (ƿ) into the Latin alphabet for the writing of Old English makes runic-Roman multiliteralism a part of standard English writing practice; this practice presumably helped to maintain strong associations between vernacular language and runic script.<sup>106</sup> Further, the graphic similarities between certain runes and their Latin counterparts cannot have passed unnoticed.<sup>107</sup> Bredehoft writes that 'texts in the two languages [Latin and Old English] so regularly employed different scriptural conventions and symbols that we should probably see multiliteralism as characteristic of most of the period in general'.<sup>108</sup> Seth Lerer sees runes as a site of cultural identification for English writers:

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36, p. 32. Web. Accessed 3 December 2017

<[http://journal.oraltradition.org/files/articles/5i/3\\_nelson.pdf](http://journal.oraltradition.org/files/articles/5i/3_nelson.pdf)>.

<sup>104</sup> Symons, pp. 3-4; René Derolez, 'Runica manuscripta Revisited', in ed. Alfred Bammesberger, *Old English Runes and their Continental Background* (1991), 85-106, p. 104.

<sup>105</sup> For Symons and Birkett on the alterity of rune-forms, see below, p. 326 n. 110.

<sup>106</sup> Bredehoft, 'Multiliteralism', p. 16; Page, *Introduction*, p. 4; see also Lerer's comments on runes, below, pp. 325-26.

<sup>107</sup> E.g. U, R, H, I, S, B, M, L. Page points to the difficulty in identifying whether 'B' and 'R' are intended to be in Roman or runic script in *Introduction*, p. 126.

<sup>108</sup> Bredehoft, 'Multiliteralism', p. 16.

As the distinctively Germanic form of writing, runes made available to English readers something offered to no other European culture: a system of representation that could, in its formal and its functional differences from the Roman alphabet, embody the literacy of a tribal or national vernacular.<sup>109</sup>

Just as Greek stood historically and culturally behind Latin, so runic writing stood historically and culturally behind vernacular English. This potential for embodiment of Germanic culture, or even Englishness, within an alternative alphabet is one that will be explored further in our examination of *SSI*. Certainly, the ‘otherness’ of interpolated runic script would have been readily apparent, in much the same way as Greek letters; Symons and Birkett point to the visual alterity of runes on the manuscript page, and the way that poetic texts play upon this alterity.<sup>110</sup> Symons draws attention to the inherent multivalence of runes, as characters which simultaneously represent ‘several different kinds of information’, making them ‘particularly adept at (...) expressing ideas about signification, interpretation, and the ability of written language to convey meaning’.<sup>111</sup> I would suggest that it is perhaps the combination of this visual alterity and multivalence which makes runes such suitable vehicles for ‘ideas about written communication’.<sup>112</sup> In other words, a reader cannot engage with runes passively, as they may do after long acquaintance with Latin script, but both in seeing and interpreting runes must consciously engage with language as written letter.

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<sup>109</sup> Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (1991), p. 11; cited in Bredehoft ‘Multilateralism’, p. 17.

<sup>110</sup> Symons, p. 193; Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>111</sup> Symons, p. 195.

<sup>112</sup> Quotation from Symons, p. 196.

### *Sources of wisdom*

As befits a wisdom debate, *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* are steeped in the influence of learned materials. In addition to the *Cosmographia*, the influence of the *Nomina Locorum*, Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, the *Collecteana Pseudo-Beda*, the *Catechesis Celtica*, the letters of Jerome and Isidore's *Etymologies* have been identified in the *Dialogues*.<sup>113</sup> The influence of the *Etymologies* has been assiduously explored across the texts by various scholars; in particular, Isidore's euhemerised depiction of the pagan god Saturn (see especially VIII.xi.29-33, XVI.xviii.3-4) has been identified with the Saturn of the *Dialogues*, and his wanderings in the poem have been connected with Isidore's account of Asian regions (XIV.ii-v).<sup>114</sup> To these correspondences I would add one more note: that Isidore describes an object in the hand of Saturn (VIII.xi.32), as follows:

He grasps a scythe, they say, in order to signify agriculture, or to signify the years and seasons, because scythes turn back on themselves; or to signify knowledge because it is sharp on the inside.

In *SSI*, many of the letters wield specific weapons in their battle against the Devil: 'R' carries a flint rock (l. 100, 'flint'); Q and U carry 'light-spears, long shafts' (l. 120, 'leoht speru, lange scaftas'); F and M also have spears (l. 128, 'scearp speru') but also a 'flight of arrows' (l. 129, 'earhfare'). What exactly N and O are carrying

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<sup>113</sup> Including: Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 12-41; O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Geographic List'. Isidore's *Etymologies* survives as volumes, books and excerpts in twenty-two manuscripts written or owned in Anglo-Saxon England (Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 916).

<sup>114</sup> See, for example, Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 29-30, 119-20, 129, and on the identification of the Old English Saturn with the Saturn of the *Etymologies*, Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 32 and 100-101; O'Brien O'Keefe, 'Geographic List', p. 132.

(l. 109a, ‘sweopan of siðe’) is a matter for debate; they sit in a passage ‘which has been much emended due to manuscript damage and because of difficulty with interpretation’.<sup>115</sup> Menner records that the two letters bring ‘affliction through a scythe’, while in Anlezark’s translation, they bring ‘a scourge from the journey’; so while ‘sweopan’ can be read literally or metaphorically (either as a whip or an affliction), ‘siðe’ can be read as either a journey or a scythe.<sup>116</sup> These distinct translations represent more than a point of editorial difference, both acting as viable readings that pun with one another. The inclusion of the scythe as a nod to Saturn’s scythe in the *Etymologies* works well, with Isidore according to the tool a signification of ‘knowledge’, and the letters of the Pater Noster representing the only truly sharp knowledge that will satisfy Saturn. Read as ‘journey’, the word is equally intrinsic to the identity of Saturn, the wanderer; indeed, the word represents both the journey, and the knowledge which is the object of that journey.

The historical and geographical details sifted from Isidore’s *Etymologies* add a richness and authority to the eastern setting of the text, but in the handling of the Pater Noster letters the author has also taken a more abstract interest in Book I of the *Etymologies*, which addresses *grammatica*. O’Brien O’Keeffe notes that ‘[t]he *power* of the prayer, anatomized in the poem, comes to be known through its physical state as a written object, but this power can only be *used* by one who speaks or sings the prayer’.<sup>117</sup> She suggests that Isidore’s explanation of the function of

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<sup>115</sup> Heide Estes, ‘A Note on *Solomon and Saturn I*, Lines 107B–108A’, *Notes and Queries* 55 (2008) 260–62, p. 260.

<sup>116</sup> Menner quoted in Estes, ‘A Note’, p. 260; Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 68–69, 108. Both the ‘literal’ and ‘figurative’ definitions are recorded in the *Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*; ‘swipu’, Joseph Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, eds. Thomas Northcote Toller and Others. Comp. Sean Christ and Ondřej Tichý (2010), Web. Accessed 3 December 2017 <<http://www.bosworthtoller.com/029845>>.

<sup>117</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 50.

letters provides an intellectual context for this conception of the powers of written and spoken language.<sup>118</sup>

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.iii.1)

For O'Brien O'Keeffe, however, there is a pejorative element to the passage: the absence of a speaker makes writing a 'technology of alienation'.<sup>119</sup> She carries over this sense of scepticism about the written word into her assessment of the *Pater Noster* battle, pointing to the prayer's superiority over Saturn's book-learning, and the Devil's 'death signs'.<sup>120</sup> However, this pejorative reading is not apparent in the Isidore passage itself. In *SSI*, the paradox of sound and silence in writtenness plays repeatedly around discussion of the 'cantic' ('cantic', 'sacred song'), with alternating terms contrasting verbal and written expressions of the prayer: Saturn challenges Solomon to 'overawe' him 'ðurh þæs cantices cwyde, / Cristes linan' (l.17, 'through saying of the cantic, Christ's line').<sup>121</sup> Here, 'linan' might be read as either 'line' or 'canon', both implying written material, and infusing the written 'line' with the potency of Christian law.<sup>122</sup> Solomon takes up the theme, placing 'word' as a neutral unit of both verbal and written expression at the core of his

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., esp. pp. 55-57.

<sup>121</sup> As above, I follow Anlezark's translation of 'gebrydded', Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 100. My argument here differs from but is indebted to O'Brien O'Keeffe's own discussion of sound and silence in the *Dialogues* and elsewhere, in O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 48-59, see esp. pp. 51-56.

<sup>122</sup> 'line', Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, Web. Accessed 28 February 2018 <<http://bosworthtoller.com/021725>>.

description:

Forðon hafað se cantic ofer ealle Cristes bec

widmærost word; he gewritu læreð

stefnum stereð

(*SSI*, 49-51a)<sup>123</sup>

*SSI* ‘presents itself as an oral event, a dialogue’, and yet is simultaneously communicated via ink and vellum; the runes inscribed on CCCC 422 are extrametrical, and so have a life in the visual but not the verbal expression of the text, while the poem calls upon the reader to name the letters of the Pater Noster aloud.<sup>124</sup> Though the letters that spell the prayer are largely present and ordered, the full prayer itself is never written out. Saturn perverts this equivocal balance between the spoken and written form of words, when he says that he has tasted books (l. 2). Jonathan Wilcox notes the ‘intellectual inadequacy’ of Solomon’s book-consumption, and ties it to the message of Exeter Book *Riddle* 47, in which the thieving book-moth is no wiser for its literal consumption of knowledge.<sup>125</sup> We can extend this interpretation of the book-moth to a reading of *SSI*: by presenting his mouth as a site of mastication rather than enunciation, Saturn disrupts the ideal communicative balance of the prayer.

Isidore goes on to suggest the sequential relationship of letter-sounds to grapheme-shapes:

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<sup>123</sup> ‘Therefore the cantic has above all Christ’s books the most far-famed words; it teaches scriptures, steers with voices’. Emphases added.

<sup>124</sup> Quotation from O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 48. On the extrametricality of the runes see O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 58; Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>125</sup> Jonathan Wilcox, ‘Eating Books: The Consumption of Learning in the Old English Poetic *Solomon and Saturn*’, *ANQ* 4 (1991), 115-18, pp. 116-17.

Indeed, nations assigned the names of the letters from the sounds in their own languages... After they paid attention to these sounds, they imposed both names and shapes on them. The shapes they formed partly by whim, and partly from the sound of the letters. For instance I and O – the first one is a thin sound, as it were, thus a slender twig, and the other a fat sound, thus a full shape. (I.iv.17)

Again, the written and verbal elements of letters and words are not in conflict; indeed, to some degree the graphic form of the letter is given a meaningful dependence upon its sound. This analysis comes towards the end of his section on ‘De litteris latinis’ (‘The Latin letters’), but clearly applies to the letters of the Greek alphabet as much as Latin, particularly as I and O are derived from iota (ι) and omicron (ο).<sup>126</sup> Alongside this account of the origins of graphic form, Isidore produces a list of the shared characteristics of letters:

There are three things associated with each letter: its name, how it is called; its shape, by which character it is designated; and its function, whether it is taken as vocalic or consonantal. Some people add ‘order’, that is, what does it precede and what does it follow. (I.iv.16)

Each of these four characteristics attributed to letters by Isidore are also applied to the battling letters of the Pater Noster in *SSI*, and this theme is enhanced by the interpolation of runes in *CCCC* 422. To explain this, we will go through each characteristic in turn: name; shape; function; order.

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<sup>126</sup> Isidore discusses the Greek alphabet directly prior to this section (I.iii.6-10).

**i) Name.** Isidore says each letter has a ‘name’, and more specifically, ‘how it is called’. Each letter in the Pater Noster Battle is named, sometimes descriptively through an epithet (‘P’ as ‘prologa prima’; ‘S’ as ‘engla geræswa’ (prince of angels); ‘B’ as ‘se ðridda’ (the third) CCCC 422, ll. 89, 111, 136), sometimes directly through the writing of each Roman character.<sup>127</sup> Three of the letters are not written down as characters (‘B’, ‘N’ and ‘O’): Heide Estes implies that the epithets may be sufficient to denote these letters, but while this may work in the case of ‘B’, which is referred to as ‘se ðridda’ (the third), and which Anlezark notes may have been seen as the third letter after ‘K’ and ‘B’, it is less clear why ‘N’ and ‘O’ would be inferred from the epithet, ‘ða cirican getuinnas’, which Anlezark translates as ‘the assembly twins’ but which, as he also points out, reads more literally as ‘the church twins’ (l.107).<sup>128</sup> The presence of the runes quietly impresses the existence of a second set of names running alongside the Roman letters, for like Greek letters, Old English runes each have a full name: ‘peorð’ for ‘p’, ‘ur’ for ‘a’, ‘tir’ for ‘t’, ‘eh’ for ‘e’, ‘rad’ for ‘r’ and so forth.<sup>129</sup> The military tenor of many of the rune- names contributes to the weight of the assault performed by the letters.

Looking at the wider extract, this process of naming becomes intrinsic to the action of the poem:

Ond se ðe wile geornlice      ðone Godes cwide  
singan soðlice      ond hine siemle wile  
lufian butan leahtrum,      he mæg ðone laðan gæst,  
feohtende feond,      fleonde gebrengan,

<sup>127</sup> On difficulties around the meaning of ‘prologa prima’, see below, p. 335 n. 139.

<sup>128</sup> Estes, ‘A Note’, p. 261; Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 51, 108, 109.

<sup>129</sup> Page, *Introduction*, pp. 67-76; Page accounts for the difficulty of identifying rune-names which change over time in *Introduction*, pp. 65-68.

gif ðu him ærest on ufan ierne gebrengest

prologa prima ðam is . ƿ . P . nama

(*SSI*, ll. 84-9)<sup>130</sup>

Each successive letter, and hence its name, must be brought upon the devil verbally, by one who will ‘sing truly’ (CCCC 422, l. 85, ‘singan soðlice’).

**ii) Shape.** The ‘name’ is therefore very much the verbalization of the letter(s) encoded on the page, while Isidore’s second characteristic, ‘shape’ depends upon the graphic materiality of those letters. Isidore addresses the issue of ‘shape’ more directly in Book I of the *Etymologies* in relation to five ‘mystical’ Greek letters: Upsilon (‘Υ’), Theta (Θ), Tau (Τ), Alpha (Α) and Omega (Ω) (I.iii.7-9). These characters are all attributed with deeper symbolism based upon complex and often oblique readings of their shapes: for example, Isidore says that the upper branches of Upsilon symbolise the choice between a hard and blessed life, and an easy and damned one, while the ‘spear’ through the middle of Theta is ‘a sign of death’. These letters are not read simply as components of the words they spell; they have become signs of abstract ideas that are graphically mapped onto their contours.

In the same way, there is frequently a possibility of correspondence between the graphic form of the Pater Noster letters and their role in the text, especially if we are prepared to undertake readings of the characters’ physicality as oblique as those Isidore takes of his ‘mystical’ letters. This possibility has been discussed by a number of early commentators on the text. Charles Kennedy proposed such a correspondence between shape and action for some of the characters, suggesting that

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<sup>130</sup> ‘And he who eagerly desires to sing truly the speech of God, and always always to love him without disgrace, he may bring the hated spirit, the fighting fiend, to flee, if you first from above bring down on him the angry one, *prologa prima*, who is named P.’

the tall ‘peorð’ rune accompanying the Roman ‘P’ might correspond with the ‘goad’; while the pointed ‘tir’ rune accompanying the Roman ‘T’ may represent a dart, which fulfils the corresponding action of stabbing the devil in the tongue.<sup>131</sup> Sisam believes that a ‘goad’ is a ‘straight, pointed rod’, and therefore that it might correspond with the ‘descender’ of the Roman ‘P’, but not the ‘two-pronged’ shape of the ‘peorð’ rune.<sup>132</sup> I think Sisam’s specificity of shape here is difficult to justify, as the *DOE* attests a range of definitions for ‘gyrd’ (from ‘gierde’, l. 90b), including the fairly ambiguous definition, ‘stick or pole used for various purposes’; the free-standing, barbed ‘peorð’ rune might be entirely suitable as a non-specific rod of torture. Sisam goes on to observe that the letters ‘C’ and ‘G’ are referred to by their shape (l. 134 ‘geapa’; ‘rounded’ or ‘curved’).<sup>133</sup> These moments of correspondence between physical form and narrative action are striking, but not consistent across the letters of the Pater Noster.<sup>134</sup> In an alternative, yet connected reading of ‘shape’ in the Pater Noster characters, Frederick Jonnasen suggests that a tradition of association between the shapes of letters and the human form might have informed the metaphor of the warrior-letters.<sup>135</sup>

Regardless, all of the letters have ‘shape’ simply as part of being encoded on the page. As discussed above, the visual alterity of the less common, alternative runic alphabet draws attention to the ‘otherness’ of their own shape, and, therefore, draws greater attention to the shape of the familiar Roman characters, which are all set off with pointing (see Images 23-24, above). These letters are not designed to be

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<sup>131</sup> Charles W. Kennedy, *The Earliest English Poetry* (1971), p. 313.

<sup>132</sup> Sisam, *Review*, p. 35 n. 3.

<sup>133</sup> Sisam, *Review*, p. 35; see also Frederick B. Jonassen, ‘The Pater Noster Letters in the Poetic “Solomon and Saturn”’, *The Modern Language Review* 83 (1988), 1-9, p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> Birkett gives an overview of scholarship on the potential relevance of the runes’ shapes in Birkett, *Reading the Runes*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>135</sup> Jonassen, ‘The Pater Noster Letters’, p. 7.

absorbed into the standard line of writing; they stand out through their unusual shapes.

**iii) Function.** In Isidore's text, 'function' refers to either the vocalic or consonantal pronunciation of the letter. The anthropomorphisation of the battling letters is supported by the metre: almost all of the Roman letters are stressed within the half-line in which they appear, participating in the alliterative scheme of the full line.<sup>136</sup> The other half-line generally contains some reference to the letter's action or one of its qualities. This scheme flags only when letters are crowded closely together in the text: I, L and C together occupy a full line (l.123); G, D and B run close together, meaning that D is named in l.135b and described in l.136a, and B is named in l.136b and described in l.137. Anlezark points out that the poet must vary between consonantal and vocalic pronunciation of these letters for the alliterative system to work: P, A, T, E, O, Q, I and G can alliterate according to their letter-sounds, while a vocalic prefix further allows R, N, S, L, F, M and possibly H and C to alliterate (i.e. pronouncing 'S' as 'ess'); U and D do not alliterate.<sup>137</sup> In accordance with this scheme, the poet, much like the devil, is initially faced by a difficult adversary, the letter 'P'; Anlezark, and Kenneth Sisam before him, note that '[t]he shortage of native Old English words beginning with *p* is well known'.<sup>138</sup> The poet's response to the challenge of seeking an appropriate *p*-alliterating word is the apparently ungrammatical half-line, *prologa prima*.<sup>139</sup>

A different and more literal interpretation of Isidore's 'function' would be the *purpose* and *action* of each letter in the text, i.e. the different attack of each letter or

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<sup>136</sup> On the pronunciation and stress of the Roman letters, and the extrametricality of the runes, see Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*; Sisam, Review, p. 35.

<sup>138</sup> Quotation from Sisam, Review, p. 34; see also Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 51 n. 233.

<sup>139</sup> 'prologa prima' is the reading attested in CCCC 422 (p. 3); in CCCC 41 (p. 198), l. 89a reads 'prologo prim'. For further discussion of this construction and its difficulties, see Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 51-57; Clive Tolley, 'Solomon and Saturn I's 'Prologa Prima'', *N&Q* 57 (2010), 166-68.

set of letters upon the devil, aided by the militarised names and shapes of some of the included runes.

**iv) Order.** The letters of the Pater Noster battle mostly appear in the order in which they occur in the prayer, but like an alphabet they each appear only once, rather than fully spelling out the words.<sup>140</sup> The sequentialism of these attacks are highlighted in the narrative through initial use of ‘ærest’ (ll.88a, ‘first’) to introduce the attack of ‘P’, repeated use of ‘ðonne’ (ll. 98a, 107a, 111a, 123a, 127a, 133a, ‘then’) to introduce the attacks of R, N, O, S, I, L, C, F, M and G, and ‘swilce’ (l. 118a, ‘in the same way’) to introduce Q and U, while D ‘færeð æfter’ (l. 135b, ‘travels after’).

The four points of Isidore’s account of *litteris* can all be applied directly to the behaviour of the Roman characters and narrative letters in *SSI*, and are further enhanced by the presence of the runes. This again raises the question of whether the runes were an interpolation of the Scribe of CCCC 422, or were in some way deployed in the original. Earlier I argued that there is likely some runic precedent in the original poem, but the Isidorian scheme of the text would operate even in their absence.

The graphic effect of this runic interpolation can be compared with the similar effect of the Greek letters in Book I of the *Etymologies*. Oxford, Queen’s College 320 is broadly contemporary with the composition of the *Dialogues*, written in the mid-tenth century, possibly at Canterbury (see Image 29, below).<sup>141</sup> Fol. 8

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<sup>140</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 50-51. N.B. that as Anlezark observes, O, I and B have been omitted, apparently erroneously, in the manuscript; Anlezark has emended the text and translation to include these letters; Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 29, 68-71. See also O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 51 n. 10.

<sup>141</sup> Gneuss and Lapidge, p. 517.

(containing material from I.iii.5 to I.iii.9) shows a second scribe proposing alternative, more ornate Greek graphs than those encoded by the original hand. At line 4 of the manuscript, the seventeen Cadmean letters of I.iii.6 are written out once in the main body of the text in characters clearly distinguished from the surrounding insular minuscule. The ‘a’ for ‘α’ is given a large hook in the style of Caroline minuscule, while the other letters are written in their majuscule form: delta, lambda, pi and omega being the most clearly distinguishable among this set. Meanwhile, majuscule beta (B), zeta (Z), kappa (K), mu (M), nu (N), omicron (O), rho (P) and tau (T) all share forms with the equivalent Roman characters.<sup>142</sup> Epsilon (E/ε) is written as a standard minuscule ‘e’, iota (I/i) as a majuscule ‘Y’, and both gamma (Γ/γ) and sigma (Σ/σ) as a majuscule ‘C’.<sup>143</sup> In the right-hand margin, a smaller hand has re-recorded these letters, but uses a correct majuscule alpha (A) and gamma (Γ), replaces the incorrect sigma with a majuscule version of word-final minuscule sigma (‘ς’) and a more ornate ‘mu’, in a style adopted in medieval western Europe from a Syrian siglum.<sup>144</sup> As well as preferring Greek forms that are more distinguished from their Roman counterparts, which Berschin indicates was the trend, the marginal hand adds an ornateness of aspect through subtle curvature of the lines (compare, for example, the crossbar on the ‘N’ or the bar atop the ‘T’ between the main and marginal hands).<sup>145</sup> At line 14, a plain majuscule ‘Y’ has been supplemented with a more curved form of upsilon (Υ); at line 19, the word ‘theta’ has been superscripted with a small theta symbol (θ).

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<sup>142</sup> On the features of Caroline minuscule scripts, see Brown, *Western Historical Scripts*, pp. 66-71.

<sup>143</sup> Berschin notes that ‘C’ was the standard Western form for ‘sigma’ during the middle ages, Berschin, *Greek Letters*, p. 30.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

**Image 29: Oxford, Queen's College 320, fol. 8**

These and other examples on the page show the complexity involved in the employment of alternative alphabets in manuscripts. The page demonstrates that there are alternative modes of engagement within the scripting of Greek, the main

hand erring towards Roman forms and the marginal hand preferring forms more distinct from the Roman. Such traits are not unique to the Greek of Oxford, Queen's College 320: of runes, Symons notes that '[m]any of the scribes who used these letters took pains to preserve, even to maximise upon, the visual distinction between roman and runic script', pointing to 'romanised' thorn (Þ) and wynn (ƿ) against more clearly differentiated runic characters in the Exeter Book.<sup>146</sup> Different scripts are not, then, cleanly divided by culture or language, but can be deployed in differing degrees of intensity. As with multilingualism, multiliteralism involves borrowing, adaptation, and integration of different forms.

The visual effect of interpolating an alternative script within the Isidorian text of Oxford, Queen's College 320, using strings of characters or single characters, and making frequent but irregular use of pointing to set these off, is a close match for the effect achieved in *SSI*. The use of the runes, whether authorial or an addition of the scribe's, may then be an attempt to more closely reflect in the *Pater Noster* battle the Isidorian four-part approach to an understanding of *litteris* as expressed in the *Etymologies*, and further, to reflect Isidore's visual mode of presenting this understanding through the use of an alternative alphabet. In other words, the Old English poem, with its many allusions to Book I of Isidore's *Etymologies*, adopts a design feature of the Isidorian text to heighten that allusiveness. However, if the scribe or designer of the page had Isidore's scheme in mind, we might ask why runic rather than Greek characters are considered the right esoteric script here, especially given the *Dialogues*' eastern settings and the references to Greek learning. As we have discussed, runic script is linguistically and historically tied to Old English,

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<sup>146</sup> Symons, p. 193.

while Greek script stands very clearly behind Roman forms. Kathryn Powell offers an interpretation of the *Dialogues*' debates that hinges upon an identification of 'Solomon as a representative of Christian (and often specifically English) wisdom', and Saturn as the challenger to this wisdom:

The debate between Solomon and Saturn in this poem largely coheres around issues of the stability of kingdoms, the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, and the efficacy of faith – issues which were both central to English cultural identity in the mid-tenth century and potential sources of anxiety. By allowing the reader to displace any such anxieties onto the figure of Saturn and confining any lack of stability, knowledge or faith within the remote space of the East, the poem serves to support a sense of English identity, encouraging the reader to identify with Solomon's ideals and behaviours and to reject those of the foreign and pagan Saturn.<sup>147</sup>

Powell seeks to build upon O'Neill's assessment of *SSI* as a poem in which 'Saturn, the expert on all the alphabets of the ancient world, is humbled by the awesome power of the simple letters that underlie the *Pater noster* canticle', by bringing out issues of cultural identity in the text.<sup>148</sup> Indeed, it must be relevant that in CCCC 422, the scribe decides to represent these 'simple letters' not only in standard Roman characters, nor in the learned and esoteric characters of Greek or Hebrew suitable to the poem's characters and location, but in a script of *English* runes. The scribe uses

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<sup>147</sup> Powell, p. 143.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

the graphic form of this script to culturally etymologise the wisdom expressed by Solomon in the *Pater Noster* battle, relocating to an English context the intellectual and visual schema established by Isidore.

Such a moment of appropriation or replacement of Greek material with Old English is not without precedent: on Cuthbert's coffin the Greek chi-rho-iota (XPI) siglum for *Christi* is replaced with the runic equivalents as part of a 'north country practice (...) of using runic script in the company of Roman'.<sup>149</sup> Indeed, in graphic terms, there are moments of striking similarity in the presentation and use of Greek and runic characters as visual devices on the manuscript page. Greek and runic characters appear in close proximity as impressive display initials in illuminated manuscripts: Page points to the use of runic 'p' in the Greek XPI abbreviation of Christ's name in the Mark opening of Lichfield, Cathedral Library, 1 (the 'St Chad Gospels', see Image 30, below); we might also look to the famous XPI monogram of the Lindisfarne Gospels, beneath which capitals are arranged in 'runic angular forms'.<sup>150</sup> The Lindisfarne Gospels also make use of runic graphs as abbreviation marks, notably 'M' for 'man', which we have encountered in the *SSI* text of CCCC 41.<sup>151</sup>

Another *mise-en-page* context in which Greek and runic scripts are encountered together and alongside other scripts is collections of alphabetic tables or lists, such as that in London, BL, Harley 3017, fol. 61.<sup>152</sup> Tabulation and listing,

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<sup>149</sup> Quotation from R. I. Page, 'Roman and Runic on St Cuthbert's Coffin', in *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200*, eds. Gerald Bonner, D. W. Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (1989), 257-65, p. 265; see also Page, *Introduction*, p. 223.

<sup>150</sup> Page, *Introduction*, p. 222; Nancy Netzer, 'The design and decoration of Insular gospel-books and other liturgical manuscripts, c. 600 – c. 900', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 1: c.400–1100, ed. Richard Gameson (2011), 225-43, p. 233.

<sup>151</sup> On the replacement of rune-names with rune-graphs see Page, *Introduction*, p. 221.

<sup>152</sup> London, BL, Harley 3017, 'Detailed record for Harley 3017', *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, British Library. Web. Accessed 26 January 2018

often accompanied by names or numeration, highlights the encyclopedic, mathematical and computistical functions of alphabets, and emphasises a comparative view of the different elements (letter-forms) in comparable systems (alphabets). These moments of esoteric, cryptic and visual connection between Greek and runic characters have intriguing implications for the runes of *SSI*.

Thomas Birkett has written on the references to ‘unlocking’ that preface the usage of runes in the colophons of *Cynewulf*, in which the individual rune-characters must be re-read as their full names, so ‘unlocking’ the true narrative of the colophon.<sup>153</sup> We can perhaps see a distinct but related process at work in the *Dialogues*. Both *SSI* and *SSII* make early references to the idea of unlocking wisdom: in *SSI*, Solomon claims to have unlocked wisdom (CCCC 41, 3, ‘larcræftas onlocen’) on his travels, while in *SSII*, the narrator tells us that Saturn possessed keys that could unlock books of learning (*SSII*, ll. 5-7). Perhaps we are supposed, once again, to approach these runes as something to be ‘unlocked’, swapped and re-read. Anlezark translates the *hapax legomenon* ‘gebregdstafas’ as ‘woven letters’ (*SSI*, l.2b), but comments also on alternative meanings of ‘bregdan’, including ‘to make a sudden movement’.<sup>154</sup> Other definitions in the *DOE* include ‘to vary, change, especially in colour or appearance’.<sup>155</sup> It may be that the ‘woven letters’ of the words that Saturn so passionately pursues are also to be read here as physical graphs that ‘change’ in form as he shifts from nation to nation, language to language and script to script. Specifically, the relationship between Roman and runic letters on the page

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<[www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6599](http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6599)>.

<sup>153</sup> Thomas Birkett, ‘Runes and *Revelatio*: *Cynewulf*’s Signatures Reconsidered’, *RES* 65 (2014), 771-89.

<sup>154</sup> See Anlezark, *Dialogues*, pp. 60-61, 99.

<sup>155</sup> ‘bregdan’, *Dictionary of Old English: A to H Online*, eds. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette dePaolo Healey, et al. (2016), Web. Accessed 24 August 2018 <<https://tapor-library-utoronto-ca.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/doe/?E03963>>.

**Image 30: The Mark opening in the St Chad Gospels, p. 143<sup>156</sup>**

allusively echoes the Greek characters of Isidore's text, 'unlocking' the Isidorian programme of the Pater Noster battle: the Roman character of the prayer is rendered into a runic character on the page, and the runic character contains the memory of the

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<sup>156</sup> 'St Chad Gospels: Major Illuminations and Pages of Interest: Incipit for Mark's Gospel', *Manuscripts of Lichfield Cathedral*, Lichfield Cathedral. Web. Accessed 13 December 2017 <<https://lichfield.ou.edu/content/mark-11-12-incipit-pg-143>>.

Greek character of Isidore's text.

### ***Solomon & Saturn II: manipulating graphemes***

In *SSI*, the scribe's attention to the creative potential of the graph is entirely internal to the text block, with the alternative characters standing out amongst the standard Roman characters of the insular minuscule script. In *SSII*, the manipulation of letters is entirely different, and the scribe makes great use of letter-forms to help visually control the structure and tone of the text, fulfilling an organisational function as well as integrating with a theme of exoticism in the narrative.

The clearest manifestation of this is the alternating speech introductions that shape the dialogue: 'Salomon cwæð' and 'Saturnus cwæð' ('Solomon spoke' and 'Saturn spoke'). After an anonymous narrative introduction (ll.1-23), the entire poem is formed of the challenges and responses of the two interlocutors, each headed by these speech introductions. This is an unusual format for Old English verse, and it adopts an equally unusual layout: each speech introduction always begins a new manuscript line, with a large 'S' in the left-hand margin that extends beyond the baseline level, and typically into the level of the next line. The verse lines then run on in the standard unlineated fashion, until the end of the speaker's section, when the verse breaks to a new manuscript line for the new introduction; blank space at the end of a section is often partially filled with a series of crossed lines, as described in Chapter Four (see Images 19 and 31). In this way, the dialogue-structure of the text is signalled with a systematic and eye-catching pattern. The only comparable example of Old English verse *mise-en-page* which reflects the text's narrative structure is the layout of *Deor* in the Exeter Book (fol. 100r-v); the poem is not a

dialogue but a series of brief tales, with each new tale beginning on a new line, headed by an ornate initial. In *SSII* the binary exchange of dialogue is not only reflected in the structure of the capitals and punctuation which mark the beginning and end of each speaker's sections, but by the scribe's application of distinct graphic details to the introductions of Solomon and Saturn respectively. The scribe does this through variation of the graphs, employing different scripts, non-standard and stylised shapes, and varying use of majuscule/minusculer, abbreviation, punctuation and serifs.<sup>157</sup>

**Image 31: From CCCC 422, p. 20<sup>158</sup>**

**Image 32: From CCCC 422, p. 24**

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<sup>157</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe also conducts a review of the use of space and character in *SSII*, with some of the same observations but distinct conclusions: O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, esp. pp. 67-73.

<sup>158</sup> Images 31-32 obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

The text's sophisticated attitude to the visual demarcation of sectional divisions is signalled in the opening half-line on p. 13, which is also the first full manuscript line: 'HWÆT IC FLI TAN GEFRÆGN' (Image 14, above).<sup>159</sup> Having inscribed a large display minuscule 'h' (approximately five lines high) with an inward-curved right leg in the uncial style, highly typical of other Anglo-Saxon display initials (several such appear in the Exeter Book), the scribe appears to have then decided to supplement the character with some ornamentation, attaching trailing descenders in an unfilled style from each leg. The remainder of the line is written with thick strokes in heavily serifed majuscules; the strokes are highly angular (note the rectangular 'C' and two rectangular 'G' characters), which is reminiscent of epigraphical writing, although the bow of 'wyn', the crossbar of 'A' and the right leg of 'R' are curved. There is a slight diminuendo on the character heights from the 'wyn' of 'HWÆT' to the end of 'FLITAN'; 'GEFRÆGN' begins with a larger 'G' and again diminuendos towards the end of the word. Single pointing sets off each word internally within the line, and also breaks 'FLITAN' into two syllables; at the end of the line is a more ostentatious triple-pointed triangle with a diagonal slash; elsewhere in the poem, this mark is used as a sectional division, indicating the point at which a metrical line-break meets the right-hand tramlines (see Images 19, 31, 32). The first half-line, then, displays a mixture of styles as well as a visual differentiation between dominant and subordinated elements of the line (e.g. greater pointing at the line-end than between words; variant sizing of different characters). The mixing of styles, particularly the esoteric and archaic Germanic element of the angular, epigraphic letter-forms, which are evocative of runes, chimes with the

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<sup>159</sup> The text here is transcribed from CCCC 422, 'Manuscript 422', *Parker Library on the Web*. Web. Accessed 17 December 2017 <[https://parker-stanford-edu.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/parker/actions/page\\_turner.do?ms\\_no=422](https://parker-stanford-edu.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/parker/actions/page_turner.do?ms_no=422)>.

appearance of ‘fyrndagum’ (l. 1b, ‘ancient days’) as the setting of the debate in the next half-line, and the movement into the scattered ‘geographical list’. That this visual organisation of the full manuscript line also highlights the metrical half-line seems unlikely to be coincidental.

The scribe, then, is alert to the organisational potential of the characters, but also of their potential to evoke certain cultural and historical ideas. This utilisation of character form continues in the pattern of speech introductions through the poem. The first of the introductions is also on p. 13, and is fairly simple: the ‘S’ is large and has serifs, and the remainder of ‘Saloman’ is written in normal insular minuscule script; the only unusual element is an acute accent over the first ‘a’ of ‘Saloman’. Accents of this kind or similar appear rarely above the speakers’ names in the poem: twice above the first ‘a’ of ‘Saturnus’ on pp. 16 and 18, and once above the ‘n’ of ‘Saturnus’ on p. 21. They are not, then, a necessary part of the speakers’ names, but are rather among the many tools for visual variation or exoticism of those names. If we compare the first speech introduction with the next in the manuscript, which comes on p. 15 (p. 14 has been obliterated and written over with a later text), we can see this variation in action.<sup>160</sup> ‘Saturnus cwæð’ is written again with a large marginal initial ‘S’; the remainder is written in heavy, serifed majuscules with the same straight, runic- evoking angles on ‘C’ as in the opening line on p. 13. Beneath, ‘Salomon’ is written in apparently the same heavy, serifed majuscules, but with slight differences: the initial ‘S’ has no serifs; the second ‘o’ has two ornamental spikes on its sides; ‘cwæð’ is not included in the scheme of majuscules, but is rather written in the same minuscule hand as the continuous text. The scribe employs subtle

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<sup>160</sup> On the damage to p. 14, see Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 2.

variations of this sort throughout the text to ensure that almost every introduction is unique: the height, thickness and serifs of the initial ‘S’ are varied, and occasionally an initial epigraphic ‘S’ formed of straight lines, like an inverted ‘Z’, is used for Saturn’s name. This epigraphic ‘S’ imitates the shape of the *sigel*-rune.<sup>161</sup> This perhaps intentionally evokes the runic script of the prayer in *SSI*. The scribe also introduces stylized topbars for majuscule ‘A’ and ‘L’ and employs three kinds of non-standard ‘O’ in addition to the kind mentioned above (an inverse teardrop shape; a floral shape; a diamond shape with decorative spikes) as well as occasional other non-standard characters; sometimes ‘cwæð’ is excluded from the visual scheme of the name, and sometimes it is abbreviated to a ‘C’ or ‘Cð’ with a stylised tilde to indicate abbreviation; the scribe continues to vary between majuscule and minuscule forms (see Images 19, 31, 32). Nor is the distribution of this variation very consistent. On p. 15, after using majuscules to write both Solomon and Saturn’s names four times, the scribe switches and begins to use minuscule for Saturn and majuscule for Solomon.<sup>162</sup> However, on pp. 18, 21, 24 and 25 ‘Saturnus’ is written in majuscule, and on p. 22 ‘Salomon’ is written in minuscule. Therefore, while the scribe generally maintains a visual distinction between the two speakers on the page, this is not strictly codified, and relies more upon local alterations from one speech introduction to the next.

The dialogue-structure is enshrined in this scheme, particularly by the visually striking series of large ‘S’ and *sigel* characters down the left-hand side of each page. The decision to accentuate so boldly this letter in *SSII* may be a response

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<sup>161</sup> I am grateful to Winfried Rudolf for this observation, which is also utilised below, pp. 348, 350.

<sup>162</sup> O’Brien O’Keeffe comments on the prioritisation of Solomon’s name in the visual scheme, in O’Brien O’Keeffe, *Visible Song*, pp. 72-73.

to the powerful role of the letter ‘S’ in *SSI*, where it is one of the battling letters of the *Pater Noster*. In the battle, it is described as ‘engla geræswa, wuldores stæf’ (‘prince of angels, letter of glory’, ll.111b-112a). This description seems superlative amongst the other letters, even alongside ‘R’, ‘bocstafa brego’ (‘lord of letters’, l. 99a). ‘S’ strikes the devil in the mouth and strews his teeth on the ground; this image of broken teeth evokes Saturn’s perverse book-eating habits in both *SSI* (l. 2) and *SSII* (l. 65) and to his desire to be satisfied (*SSI*, l. 18, ‘gesemeð’).<sup>163</sup> Anlezark believes that Saturn’s demand for satisfaction, and the use of ‘gesemeð’ in this line, is an ‘etymological pun’ on Isidore’s account of how the aged Saturn came by his name: he is ‘sated with years’ (‘saturetur annis’, VIII.ix.29), and again Anlezark ties this to Saturn’s ‘great appetite’ and ‘eating of books’.<sup>164</sup> To this, we might add that ‘gesemeð’ alliterates on the letter ‘S’, linking this network of teeth, mouths and appetite through the medium of *litterae*. The letter ‘S’ not only holds a position of superiority amongst the battling letters, but perhaps also symbolises the useless gluttony of the bibliophagic Saturn, and the curative power of the *Pater Noster*, which knocks out the teeth of useless mastication and provides wisdom superior to anything Saturn has encountered in his books.

The meeting of metrical, narrative and visual significance in the form of a creative display capital evokes Rudolf’s analysis of ‘iconicity’ in the Exeter Book,

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<sup>163</sup> Anlezark translates this as ‘satisfy’, Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 61. In analysing this bibliophagy of dubious value in *SSI*, I am drawing upon what John Scattergood calls the ‘counter-productive’ consumption of the book-moth in *Riddle 47* (John Scattergood, ‘Eating the Book: *Riddle 47* and Memory’, in *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Learning and Literature Presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer*, eds. Helen Conrad O’Briain, Anne Marie D’Arcy and John Scattergood (1999), 119-27, pp. 121-22).

<sup>164</sup> Anlezark, *Dialogues*, p. 101, the Latin translation here is from Anlezark; note the observations made regarding another potential source text, the *Psychomachia*, in which ‘virtues’ violently assault the ‘vices’, with particularly close parallels with the assault of the letter ‘S’ on the devil in *SSI*, as explored in John P. Hermann, ‘The Pater Noster Battle Sequence in *Solomon and Saturn* and the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius’, *NM 77* (1976), 206-10, pp. 208-09.

and the ‘fusion of sign and image’.<sup>165</sup> A key example of grapheme manipulation in his article is the large capital ‘A’ at the start of Exeter Book *Riddle 23*.<sup>166</sup> The letter ‘is executed in an uncial script, but with a strong calligraphic tendency’, and Rudolf sees its uniquely unusual, bow-like shape as an ‘iconic clue to the solution’, *boga* (bow).<sup>167</sup> It is a different kind of ‘fusion’ that is enacted by the manipulation of letter-forms in *SSII*, where the letters do not represent a concrete object in the narrative, such as a bow, but rather stylistically capture both narrative order and the text’s interest in what it perceives as eastern and exotic. The eastern interest of the text is exhibited in the manipulation of grapheme-shapes. The adaptations of shape to the ‘S’, ‘A’, ‘L’, ‘O’, ‘R’, ‘N’ and ‘C’ characters in the text are generally only mild distortions, but with significant effect. As is noted above, the highly angular, epigraphic forms of the inverted Z-shaped ‘S’ characters, as well as the diamond-shaped ‘O’ and flat-sided ‘C’, are evocative of runic forms (and of the *sigel* rune in particular) in the same way that the very same letters evoke runic forms in their position on the Chi-Rho page of the Lindisfarne Gospels.<sup>168</sup> The unusual topbars used on ‘A’ and ‘L’, as well as the floral and teardrop-shapes of ‘O’ are ornaments that subtly alter the standard form of the encoded letter, alienating the letter-forms from the main script. These letters have been exoticised, shifted away from their standard presentation (again, perhaps, evoking the ‘gebredgstafas’ of *SSD*); they absorb the alterity of the eastern setting and come to symbolize the geographic otherness of the text. The moments of almost uncial curvature in the titular ‘h’ and

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<sup>165</sup> Rudolf, ‘Riddling and Reading’, pp. 505-08.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 506-07.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>168</sup> On angular letter-forms evoking runes in the Lindisfarne Gospels and Osgyth Stone see Netzer, p. 233; also ‘The Lindisfarne Gospels Learning: Seminar 2: Eadfrith and the Making of the Lindisfarne Gospels’, *British Library*. Web. Accessed 14 December 2017 <<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/lindisfarne/learningseminar2.html#>>. See also Michelle Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, esp. pp. 4, 131.

the ‘R’ and ‘N’ of ‘Saturnus’ on p. 21 show the influence of yet another alternative script running alongside the insular minuscule that appears both within the speech introductions and around them in the main text blocks. These certainly could hark back to the ‘gebredgstafas’ of *SSI*, letters that bend and change from iteration to iteration, identical messages woven in distinct forms.

## Conclusions

The aims of this chapter have been twofold. Firstly, I have presented a new rationale for the appearance of the runes in *SSI*, predicated upon contemporary interests in alphabets, and the correspondence of runic and Greek characters as visually ‘other’ yet culturally familiar modes of literacy, which help tie *SSI* to the account of letters in Isidore’s *Etymologies*. The second aim of this chapter relates to the thesis as a whole, in demonstrating the necessity of engaging with *mise-en-page* as part of literary critical study. Where my previous chapters have shown how metrical and historical information is encoded in the page, this chapter has explored the scribe’s methods for utilising layout in aid of the text’s exotic presentation of the east, dialogue structure, and Isidorian source material. *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* are amongst the most visually wrought Old English poetry that has come down to us, but they show us a scribe who is alive to the potential of *mise-en-page*, and offer us a series of examples of creative page-craft which can also be found in other texts. *Mise-en-page* is a tool for all forms of textual analysis, and its omission from editions leaves blank spaces in our understanding of texts.

## CHAPTER SIX: Conclusions

This thesis set out to examine the way in which Old English texts are written: challenging the automatic *mise-en-page* reformatting of modern editions, proposing new utilitarian and aesthetic motivations for the use of unlineated layouts by scribes, and examining how *mise-en-page* elements of Old English texts can contribute to literary critical, metrical and material studies. The main findings of my thesis are firstly, that the *mise-en-page* of Old English texts are entirely capable of holding a meaningful relationship with the texts they encode, and secondly, that *mise-en-page* is inevitably a product of the cultural, material and economic environment in which it was produced.

Through a series of case-studies and historical analyses, I have examined the *mise-en-page* both of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts generally, and of Old English verse texts particularly. Chapter One laid the foundations for a historicist approach to the question of Old English *mise-en-page*. It observed that the substitution of original unlineated layouts for the standard line-and-caesura layout of the modern print edition is the product of editorial experimentation in the nineteenth century, likely influenced by contemporary classicizing tendencies, and apologism for Old English ‘barbarisms’. Lineated *mise-en-page* is not, then, a neutral standard, but a format with its own history and meaning, into which Old English texts have been co-opted. The chapter challenged conventional approaches to the original manuscript layouts of Old English verse, particularly existing theories that the scribes were ignorant of lineation, or that unlineated formatting was used to conserve parchment, so reducing the costs of book-production. I made an alternative hypothesis: that the unlineated

layout of Old English was neither an expression of inelegance, nor a sign of inferiority, but rather was a *mise-en-page* chosen and deliberately applied by scribes.

Chapter Two expanded upon this agenda of historicization, moving further away from the choices of modern editors, towards the decisions of Anglo-Saxon scribes. The chapter began by establishing the broader contexts of *mise-en-page* in early Anglo-Saxon England, tracing the development of lineation from classical antiquity to its reappearance in England in Latin texts of the eighth century onwards. The chapter analysed the gradual adoption of a lineated standard in Latin texts and noted that manuscripts containing texts reliant upon a linear structure, such as acrostic verse or metrical calendars, are the most consistent early adopters of lineation. This correspondence of form and *mise-en-page*, as well as the shift in presentation of Latin texts, despite the maintenance of non-lineation for Old English when it came to be written in greater quantities in the tenth century, raised the possibility that the divergence in page layout might be a product of the very different metrical and prosodic features of Latin and Old English verse. An analysis of the failure of distich lineation in the Verse Epilogue to the *Pastoral Care* offered some support for this theory, showing that the variable lengths of Old English half-lines create difficulties for a scribe seeking to arrange them on the page. An initial foray was made into the correspondences between Old English verse and Latin rhythmical verse. The chapter concludes that Old English verse (and Latin rhythmical verse) may have been seen as an intermediary form between Latin prose on the one hand, and Latin verse on the other.

Chapter Three conducted an observational study of the way in which Old English *mise-en-page* interacts with prosody, namely the correspondence between

inter-word spacing and metrical structure. Having reviewed extensive but incomplete scholarly work in this area, I developed a new, digitally-driven methodology for measuring inter-word space, and measured a sample set from *Beowulf*. The results showed a correlation between metrical breaks and greater use of inter-word space, but also that the range of spacing found at metrical breaks is very broad. My initial conclusion and forward hypothesis is that metrical structure affects the deployment of inter-word space by scribes, but that this is not systematically applied. In other words, as part of the mnemonic process of reading and copying, scribes are more likely to pause and leave gaps at metrical breaks, but this does not necessarily constitute a deliberate attempt to reflect metrical structure on the page. The implications of this hypothesis for future work are significant, particularly for investigation of less common forms of writing such as alliterative prose, and hypermetric verse.

These first three chapters primarily explored utilitarian explanations for the layout of Old English verse, examining the ways in which *mise-en-page* responds to the material environment of book production, and to the essential prosodic features of the verse itself. They also touched upon the potential for models of *mise-en-page* to become iconic, whether it is the adoption of a traditional lineated page-layout in nineteenth-century editing, or the imitation of continental styles by Anglo-Saxon scribes. This iconicism, and the issue of influence more broadly, asks us to consider the question of Old English *mise-en-page* from an aesthetic as well as a utilitarian perspective. Chapters Four and Five took this approach, moving away from medievalism, book history and metrical studies, and towards art history and literary criticism, while maintaining a firmly historicist perspective.

Chapter Four explored what it means to consider aesthetic preference and art in Anglo-Saxon England, and surveys the history of ‘density’ as a graphic feature in medieval Germanic art and craft. The hypothesis under review was that such ‘density’ informed a scribal desire to cover the written surface of the vernacular verse page, in contrast to a more continental or classical mode of *mise-en-page*, which included verse lineation. This was demonstrated through a series of manuscript examples showing scribes manipulating letters and text blocks, and utilising illustrations to fill in empty areas of parchment, thus suggesting an active preference for ‘fullness’, rather than a merely incidental achievement of density. The chapter concluded by exploring analogies between the structures of Old English verse and the structures of contemporary art, and positing such a connection between Old English metrical organisation on the one hand, and the organisation of geometric patterning and knotwork in Anglo-Saxon art on the other. It pointed to contemporary analogies between verse-craft and geometric handicraft, making the comparison between the ‘density’ of verse layout and the ‘density’ of contemporary art more potent.

Where Chapter Four addressed aesthetic drivers of Old English *mise-en-page*, Chapter Five explored the ways in which an individual scribe may creatively manipulate and utilise *mise-en-page*, so that the page-layout contributes to a reading of the text. This was done through an in-depth case study of *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, found in two manuscripts now held at the Parker Library in Cambridge. The chapter explored the arrangement of text blocks, distortion of graphemes, positioning and design of display characters, deployment of unusual punctuation and engagement with multilateralism. These elements interact with the subject-matter of the text in different ways, including highlighting the dialogic

structure of the text in CCCC 422, heightening the *Dialogues*' esoteric interest in the east and the exotic, and contributing to puns and allusions in the text. Although the *Dialogues* are highly unusual in their level of *mise-en-page* complexity amid the corpus of Old English verse, they join a number of other texts which together demonstrate that some scribes were prepared to utilise *mise-en-page* as a creative tool, producing texts meant not only to be read, but to be *seen*.

These investigations provide a body of evidence showing that the various *mise-en-page* schemes and visual elements of Old English texts in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts have, to differing degrees, relationships with the formal and semantic features of the texts themselves. These can be exploited by scholars in the course of historical, metrical, artistic and literary analyses. In particular, the findings of the thesis demonstrate the importance of locating the development of even supposed low-grade materials within a historical trajectory of development and influence, looking to contemporary art and literature for counterpoints and analogues.

Each chapter has sought to demonstrate different modes of examining *mise-en-page* in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, coming together as a series to form a systematic and cohesive approach. *Mise-en-page* has been shown to be the product of social, cultural, material and historical influences, a product which can be assessed for information on 'standard' pages as much as on 'extraordinary' pages. Whether through scribal planning or unacknowledged influence, *mise-en-page* is sensitive to and revealing of cultural aesthetics, and the form and semantics of texts. Above all, these conclusions call upon us to approach the page as a medium that participates in the life of the poem, and to recognise the value of reading Old English poems in the context of their layout.

This present, final, chapter will consider the implications of the findings of this thesis for contemporary scholarship, the limitations of the thesis, and potential areas of further study which lead on from the work conducted thus far.

### **Impacts: editing Old English verse**

Between the pages of the manuscript witnesses of our surviving corpus of Old English poetry, and the printed paper of the modern edited page, the replacement of an original, unlineated *mise-en-page* has not generally been recognised as a form of loss. This is despite O'Brien O'Keeffe's reminder in *Visible Song* that the edited text is one that has been 'stripped of its context, its spatial arrangement'.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the consistent, silent imposition of a lineated layout implies that lineation is the restoration of a poetic visual mode. We must ask, then, what are the implications of this thesis for the current and future editing of Old English verse.

We can look to experimental treatments of classical verse for inspiration. The once-substantial corpus of Sappho's lyric verse survives almost entirely in fragments.<sup>2</sup> The causes of this fragmentation are binary: some texts were selectively quoted by later classical authors, whose partial citations now attest otherwise lost poems; for other texts, it is the physical degradation of the papyrus on which they are written which has left them fragmented.<sup>3</sup> In this latter circumstance, the task of editing requires the editor to excise surviving text from the damaged page, in which it co-exists with the holes and ragged edges of the damaged papyrus; these marks of decay are a visible sign of what has been lost. Anne Carson, classicist and poet, uses

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<sup>1</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song*, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Anne Carson, *If not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho* (2002), p. ix.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

the typographic capacities of the modern print edition to incorporate these signs into the *mise-en-page* of her recent edition of Sappho's verse, *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho*. Of her system, she writes:

I have used a single square bracket to give an impression of missing matter, so that ] or [ indicates destroyed papyrus or the presence of letters not quite legible somewhere in the line (...) Brackets are an aesthetic gesture toward the papyrological event rather than an accurate record of it.<sup>4</sup>

This approach demonstrates how traditional architectures of the codex and the page may be reimagined and rebuilt, and draws attention to the space between the original manuscript text and the reproduced copy in the reader's hands. The sensuality of Sappho's writing is complemented by the appearance of the brackets and the text they imply, which is always tantalisingly out of reach:

]
]you will remember
]for we in our youth
did these things

yes many and beautiful things
]
]
]

Carson's use of brackets seeks to accentuate rather than hide the problem of material that has been lost. In Carson's 2012 translation, *Antigonick*, the prophet Tiresias delivers a warning to the tyrannical Creon: 'you know the failing of the sign

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

is in itself a sign'.<sup>5</sup> Tiresias is interested not only in interpreting signs from the gods, but in the nature of those signs and the meaning of their absence. If the loss of Sappho's words from degraded papyrus can be seen as such a failure, then Carson's visual reproduction of this loss with brackets makes a sign from the lost sign, and invites us to interpret; Carson believes that they involve the reader in the 'drama' of the papyrus, '[implying] a free space of imaginal adventure'.<sup>6</sup>

The conclusions of this thesis must consider how its findings might be applied to the editing and reading of Old English verse. If Old English *mise-en-page* has a far more significant and meaningful relationship with Old English texts than has generally been realised, we must consider whether more elements of the original design ought to be represented in modern editions, and how this could be achieved. We will begin by examining a number of experimental modern editions of Old English texts.

*Reforming practices in the editing of Anglo-Saxon poetry: existing scholarship*

Reformist approaches to editing from the 1950s onwards have suffered from a lack of traction amongst the editorial mainstream. As an example we might consider another element of editing rooted in the processes of manuscript production and scribal behaviour: the punctuation of texts. In their 2000 edition, *Beowulf Repunctuated*, Bruce Mitchell and Susan Irvine point to the reticence or reluctance of editors to engage with the problems caused by the application of modern systems of punctuation to Old English texts, and verse texts in particular. For twenty years prior to the publication of *Beowulf Repunctuated*, Mitchell had been making the

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<sup>5</sup> Anne Carson, transl., *Antigonick* (2012).

<sup>6</sup> Carson, *If Not, Winter*, p. xi.

case, through lectures, articles and conference papers, that ‘modern punctuation (...) is not the proper replacement for the inadequate punctuation found in Old English manuscripts’; by imposing a modern punctuating schema on the page, as he and Irvine note, editors are creating interpretative marks which may miss or fail to convey the ‘nuance’ intended by the text’s Anglo-Saxon author, ‘distorting the flow of OE passages’.<sup>7</sup> In 1994, he complained of the lack of response to this challenge from other editors and scholars:

My failure so far to produce a system which satisfies myself, let alone others, explains why editors have stuck to modern or, more rarely and for prose texts only, manuscript punctuation. But it does not explain why the subject has not been taken more seriously.<sup>8</sup>

The introduction to *Beowulf Repunctuated* laments the poor response to Mitchell’s call to arms, and addresses various circumstances in which the application of modern punctuation fixes meaning in a way not well aligned with the nuances of Old English verse; for example, where the use of a comma to separate appositive phrases implies a subordination of the apposition not justified by the linguistic or graphic material of the manuscript text.<sup>9</sup> The edition of *Beowulf* which follows the introduction applies a system in response to Mitchell’s search, the guiding principle of which is ‘no punctuation where the sense is clear without any’.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, there has been no sea change in the application of punctuation to editions, and Leonard Neidorf’s recent volume on the dating of *Beowulf* makes no mention at all of *Beowulf*

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<sup>7</sup> Mitchell and Irvine, pp. 1-2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-17, esp. p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 26 (capitalization removed).

*Repunctuated*.<sup>11</sup>

There are a number of factors which might stand in the way of editors adopting a new system of punctuation *en masse*. One factor discussed in *Beowulf Repunctuated* is the desire to create editions that cater as much to learners of Old English as to established scholars.<sup>12</sup> Such readers, it is suggested, are naturally reliant upon such emendations as standardised spelling, lineation, and modern punctuation. The possibility of creating multivalent digital editions which can present more or less information for readers with different needs is raised by Mitchell and Irvine, as it is also raised in other contemporary discussions of editing Old English; this will be explored more fully below.<sup>13</sup>

This difficulty surrounding reformist approaches to punctuation illustrates more general problems with reforming editorial *mise-en-page*. Readers rely upon established systems when they engage with texts, including everything from the size and shape of a book, to the paratexts which guide their movement through it, to the punctuation which helps them digest the text. Replicating certain manuscript features in a print edition may therefore hinder access to the text for all but the most specialist readers. Nor would the adoption of new *mise-en-page* standards be simple: it is unlikely that there would be an early consensus, and each editor would be in a position to decide which features ought to be represented and in what ways. In the absence of a well-defined set of conventions, pluralities are likely to emerge which may be confusing or counter-productive to research work.

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<sup>11</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 1-5. I am grateful to a colleague for sharing this observation about Neidorf's work with me. Leonard Neidorf, ed., *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment* (2014).

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Mitchell and Irvine, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> See *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

These obstacles may account for conservatism amongst editors, but they have not prevented some scholars from experimenting with elements of page layout or design. We have considered both Mitchell's *Beowulf Repunctuated* and Robert Stevick's graphotactics project. In 1978, A. N. Doane produced an edition of the Old English poem *Genesis A*, in which he preserved manuscript readings which Edward B. Irving Jr. felt were 'unlikely'; Doane also dispensed with modern capitalisation in favour of retaining the original scheme of capitals from the manuscript text.<sup>14</sup> Irving himself, writing in 1991 on the future of textual editing in Old English, notes that the conventional layout of Old English in modern editions is itself 'remote' from the visual conventions common in modern verse.<sup>15</sup> He creates an experimental layout for lines 2444-49 of *Beowulf*, making use of 'white space' to re-organise the text:<sup>16</sup>

Swa bið geomorlic    gomelum ceorle  
to gebidanne  
þæt his byre ride  
giong on galgan  
þonne he gyd wrece    sarigne sang  
þonne his sunu hangað    hrefne to hroðre  
ond he him helpe ne mæg  
eald ond infrod  
ænige gefremman.

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<sup>14</sup> Edward B. Irving Jr., Review of 'A. N. Doane, ed., "*Genesis A*": *A New Edition*.' , *Speculum* 55 (1980) 104-106, p. 106.

<sup>15</sup> Irving, 'Editing Old English Verse', p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Irving's extract seeks to retain reference to the text's metrical structure, whilst moving the narrative itself into the visual realm through the use of 'rhetorical groupings'.<sup>17</sup> This experiment abstracts the text yet further from its form on the manuscript page, although Irving does suggest that his 'provisional' approach might relieve editors of the pressure to adopt 'misleading' modern punctuation in the manner criticised by Mitchell.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting and relevant that Irving presents *mise-en-page* as malleable, and as an important mode of communication in its own right. Indeed, he briefly alludes to the way in which a modern edition might represent performances of a medieval text *other* than the 'written' performance in the surviving manuscript:

We do indeed have newer conventions in modern printed poetry, where text is grouped and massed for the reader's eye and where 'white space' is used for emphasis, division and punctuation. Such a format might even suggest, faintly, the 'oral' performative nature of the verse.<sup>19</sup>

My own presentation of *Thureth* in Chapter One of this thesis used an experimental form of layout, producing a diplomatic edition of the text in all key respects: the text is unlineated; the ending is arranged in a tapering triangle, as in the manuscript; scribal word-division, capitalisation and punctuation are retained. The only difference is the insertion of single forward slashes at half-line breaks (/) and double forward slashes at full-line breaks (//). This kind of presentation has the advantage of foregrounding detailed information about the manuscript, while

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

retaining information that will help the reader navigate the text; a textual apparatus could extend this to indicate the disparity between manuscript word-division and lexical units. Such a form of presentation is of most use to specialists, and so is unlikely to be used as the main style for an edition; however, it might be a useful standard to adopt in scholarly publications where portions of text are being discussed, precisely as I have used *Thureth* in Chapter One.

*A new model of mise-en-page: audience, desirability and digital editing*

The history of editing, then, is punctuated with imaginative work that reconsiders *mise-en-page* or the retention of original manuscript features; nevertheless, this work has largely failed to be adopted into the broader consensus of contemporary scholarship. The question here is whether the findings of this thesis require us to advocate a radical new approach to *mise-en-page* in edited texts.

Having argued that unlineated formats are legitimate responses to the metrical demands of verse and the aesthetic preferences of scribes, it might seem naturally to follow that a new process of editing should stipulate an unlineated layout, or even the retention of other decorative and spatial features discussed in previous chapters, such as inter-word spacing, or unusual letter-forms. However, there are complications with such an approach, as well as legitimate objections. In the first instance, the provision of line-breaks and caesuras in verse is certainly an aid to readers, particularly those new to Old English, for whom alliterative, accentual verse is less familiar than the temporally regular metres of Latinate verse. That the parsing of metrical structure, and also syntactic structure, is a task already begun by the *mise-en-page* frees the reader to move directly into an analysis of text, and gives an instant, visual impression of the patterns of Old English prosody. Although the

unlineated format may have appealed to a native speaker's sense of the form of Old English verse, it is undeniable that this form is more readily accessible to a non-native speaker when broken up graphically into metrical lines. Furthermore, the evidence of inter-word spacing from Chapter Three indicates that the modern system of isolating the metrical line, with a break at the caesura, prioritises the elements of line and half-line in a manner comparable to their prioritisation in the sample sets from *Beowulf* and the *Wanderer*, where the spacing at position 2 is on average the largest, and the spacing at position 0 is on average the least. Modern lineation is, therefore, a more sensitive re-arrangement of the text's layout than we might have anticipated.

The system of layout which developed in the nineteenth century and which continues to be used in scholarly editions to this day, as more fully described in Chapter One, is a layout which caters for the needs of a wide range of readers, while remaining responsive to the form of the verse as indicated by manuscript witnesses. The movement to an unlineated format would obscure metrical organisation; it would not even fully represent the layout of words in the manuscript unless word-spacing were also replicated, an enormous task of limited value to the majority of readers. The question also arises of how the text would be arranged if there were multiple manuscript witnesses, and conflicting layouts.

For all these reasons, the findings of this thesis do not lead to a call for unlineated layouts or radical changes to *mise-en-page* in standard modern editions. This leaves us in need of an alternative solution, for (as Robinson has observed) the alteration of *mise-en-page* features by editors is frequently silent; the opacity of editing practice may leave readers unaware of the many ways in which the text they

are accessing differs from its arrangement *in situ*.<sup>20</sup> A wide variety of difficult *mise-en-page* elements are liable to be redacted during the editorial process, and, as a result, less studied and little understood: poorly-marked or apparently nonsensical sectional divisions in texts like *SSI* and *Beowulf*; pointing not attributable to metrical or semantic divisions; subtle use of iconicity or logographs of the kind detailed by Rudolf; text-block arrangements like those we have encountered in *Thureth*, *Deor* and *SSII*; variations in inter-word spacing, and the positioning of metrical lines in relation to the page, as explored by Stevick and Thomson, and in Chapter Three; scribal efforts to eradicate blank space via the processes identified in Chapter Four. Rudolf comments on these difficulties in the context of the Exeter Book *Riddles*:

This material encounter is so important that any attempt to edit these texts without the provision of a parallel facsimile must be declared a vain attempt, because the formal and technological conventions of modern printed editions tend to iron out or do not comment sufficiently on those ambiguities (e.g. homography, flexible punctuation, indefinite word-separation and inconsistency in spelling) which have a home in the singularities of medieval handwriting, and which are consciously exploited by the riddles.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, the alteration of the original *mise-en-page* could be treated like any other loss through emendation: with full notes from the editor on the nature of and rationale for the change, and a description of the visual features *in situ*. However, as is implied by Rudolf's comment above, the apparatus of an edition is

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<sup>20</sup> Robinson, esp. p. 363.

<sup>21</sup> Rudolf, 'Riddling and Reading', p. 523.

unlikely to provide a sufficient account of these redacted features. Costs associated with producing manuscript images in publications can be prohibitive, but the situation for readers is dramatically improved by the increasing availability of high-quality digital facsimiles made available online by manuscript libraries. A student may supplement descriptive notes on design features of *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* by accessing a digital copy of CCCC 422 and CCCC 41 on *Parker Library on the Web*, a digitised collection of the holdings from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, developed in conjunction with the Stanford University Libraries and Cambridge University Library.<sup>22</sup>

By continuing to think about expansion in digital capabilities, we can consider how current shifts in technology might support a radical revision of the page: not in print editions, but in electronic formats. Authoritative medieval texts have been published in a wide range of digital and online formats, such as Mastandrea and Tessarolo's *Poetria Nova* CD-ROM, Bernard Muir's CD-ROM and web application, *The Exeter Book Anthology of Old English Poetry*, the TEAMS Middle English Texts Series, or the University of Oxford Text Archive's text file of *ASPR*.<sup>23</sup> Some projects have experimented with interactivity between images of the manuscript page and transcription text, notably Muir's *Exeter Book Anthology* and *A Digital Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Junius 11*.<sup>24</sup> Two major digital editing projects currently in development, which handle Anglo-Saxon material,

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<sup>22</sup> 'About the Project', *Parker Library on the Web*. Web. Accessed 6 December 2017 <[https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/actions/page?forward=about\\_project](https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/actions/page?forward=about_project)>.

<sup>23</sup> Mastandrea and Tessarolo, *Poetria Nova*; Muir, *The Exeter Anthology*; Russell A. Peck, et al., eds. TEAMS Middle English Texts Series. Web. Accessed 6 December 2017 <[d.lib.rochester.edu/teams](http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams)>; Gregory Ray Hidley, ed., 'Anglo-Saxon poetic records', University of Oxford Text Archive. Web. Accessed 15 December 2017 <[ota.ox.ac.uk/desc/3009](http://ota.ox.ac.uk/desc/3009)>.

<sup>24</sup> Muir, *Exeter Anthology*; Bernard J. Muir, ed. *A Digital Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Junius 11* (2004).

demonstrate the potential capabilities of moving from the page to the screen. ‘A Consolidated Library of Anglo-Saxon Poetry’ (CLASP) is a project funded by a European Research Council grant, awarded to Andy Orchard at the University of Oxford. CLASP will produce ‘an online and interactive consolidated library’ of ‘all surviving verse of Anglo-Saxon England’; moreover, it will be ‘marked up through TEI P5 XML to facilitate the identification of idiosyncratic features of sound, metre, spellings, diction, syntax, formulas, themes, and genres across the entire corpus’.<sup>25</sup> Another ongoing project using XML as a mark-up language is the Electronic Corpus of Anonymous Homilies in Old English (ECHOE), created by Susan Irvine, Winfried Rudolf, and a team of researchers at the University of Göttingen. This project ‘foregrounds the compositional and variational aspects of these texts’, using mark-up language to allow comparison of different versions.<sup>26</sup>

The development of such intelligent digital editions raises the possibility of creating editions which are flexible in terms of their *mise-en-page*, where a reader may selectively manipulate the appearance of texts within an interface designed for reading. If a text can be marked up with indicators, say, of its metrical and manuscript line-breaks, or its inter-word spacing, a reader could move at will between an edition laid out in the standard modern lineated format, a representation of the letter-strings as they appear *in situ*, and a facsimile image of the manuscript page itself.

There is, then, the potential for editors to utilise digital media to produce

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<sup>25</sup> ‘CLASP’, *ERC Funded Projects*, European Research Council. Web. Accessed 06 December 2017 <[https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects/results?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=Consolidated+library+poetry](https://erc.europa.eu/projects-figures/erc-funded-projects/results?search_api_views_fulltext=Consolidated+library+poetry)>.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Conference “The Old English Anonymous Homily” in Göttingen’, *Göttingen International Newsletter*, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. Web. Accessed 6 December 2017 <[gi.newsletter.uni-goettingen.de/2017/05/30/conference-the-old-english-anonymous-homily-goettingen-june-30-july-1-2017/](http://gi.newsletter.uni-goettingen.de/2017/05/30/conference-the-old-english-anonymous-homily-goettingen-june-30-july-1-2017/)>.

distinct interfaces, including interfaces which respond to texts with markup indicating original manuscript features. However, at least in the short term, these alternative interfaces are likely to remain of most interest to specialists (manuscript scholars, palaeographers, book historians and so forth), and to exist as supplementary features to more traditional layouts.

### **Limitations of the study and future work**

In the course of writing this thesis, various limitations became apparent in the scope of the work, as did as a range of potential future projects which would improve and build upon its findings. These limitations include the exclusion of certain areas of study due to constraints of time and length in producing the thesis. Broadly, these exclusions align with the interests of different chapters, as follows:

- Chapter Two considers the development of the Latin verse page in England, in order to provide a context for the layout of the Old English verse page. In future, I would like to provide a broader context by focussing on the development of page layout in continental, Irish and Germanic manuscripts of the era and subsequent centuries.
- In Chapter Two, I have suggested that rhythmic verse might constitute a kind of ‘intermediate’ form between prose and poetry. Expansion of this work might include a more in-depth analysis of Latin rhythmic verse and its correspondences with vernacular verse; such an analysis would be indebted to Andy Orchard’s work on Anglo-Latin verse, particularly

Aldhelm's verse and its alliterative features.<sup>27</sup> This could also include a more detailed review of existing scholarly work debating the categorisation of Old English verse, and Old English rhythmic prose.

These limitations naturally provide starting points from which to consider future work which leads on from my thesis. The most major potential project would be an extension of the sample work undertaken in Chapter Three on word spacing. Such a project would measure the spacing for a wide sample of complete texts, particularly contrasting verse and prose, as well as different kinds of verse, and looking to assess in greater detail the existence of other patterns in spacing. A complex and rigorous model would be developed for statistical analysis of the data produced, and this would be coupled with extensive consideration of memory and writing practice in the medieval and Anglo-Saxon periods.

The work on aesthetics in Chapter Four would also provide excellent grounds for a complementary but distinct literary study on the treatment of ornamented objects and object aesthetics in Anglo-Saxon poetry. This might involve cataloguing ornamented objects and their descriptions in narrative texts and identifying networks, looking closely at lexical choices, categorising different kinds of ornamentation, and analysing the narrative functions of ornamented objects.

Equally critical to the findings of my thesis might be a series of literary-critical readings of the *mise-en-page* features of various Old English texts, in the same vein as the case study undertaken in Chapter Five. Few Old English texts are as distinctively visually crafted as *The Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn* in CCC 422, but revisiting texts with new attention to the alignment of text blocks, positioning of

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<sup>27</sup> Orchard, *Aldhelm*, esp. pp. 19-72.

words, use of initials, appearance of non-standard characters, and so forth, could provide new insight on well-studied texts. This could be done through a series of case-studies, each forming a chapter of a book on scribal creativity and page-design in Anglo-Saxon England.

### **Concluding thoughts**

Throughout this thesis I have sought to challenge conventional approaches to the question of the *mise-en-page* of Old English verse texts in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. While many scholars have made recourse to graphic and visual features of the manuscript page in their discussions of texts, there is nevertheless an overriding sense that Old English verse is not visually ‘crafted’, and that it lacks the sense of artistry which is applied to contemporary Latin texts. That Old English has a layout less overtly ornamented than much Latin material is incontestable, but the assumption that an unlineated layout in itself constitutes some kind of absence of design has been replaced with an examination of the sensitivity of Old English verse *mise-en-page* to formal and semantic textual features, and the place of Old English verse *mise-en-page* in the historical trajectories of manuscript design and Anglo-Saxon cultural aesthetics. The result is a reminder that all encoded texts are responsive to the various pressures and interests of their environments, and that their *mise-en-page* ought to receive more attention from editors and researchers as a source of information. *Mise-en-page* constitutes a distinct area of study, usefully grouped with the distinct yet overlapping practices of codicology and palaeography; together, these approaches can help us reach more nuanced conclusions about the relationships between text, page and writer.

## Appendix A: Manuscript images

**Image 33: Fulda, Hessische Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek, Bonifatianus 1,  
fol. 503r<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Image from ‘Tatianus, Epistulae Pauli, Actus Apostolorum, Epistulae Catholicae, Apocalypsis’, *Fuldaer Digitale Sammlungen*, Hochschul-und Landesbibliothek Fulda. Web. Accessed 20 December 2017 <fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/image/PPN325289808/3/>.

**Image 34: Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1, fol. 1v<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> Images 34-35 from 'Codex Amiatinus', *World Digital Library*. Web. Accessed 17 December 2017  
<<https://www.wdl.org/en/item/20150/>>.

**Image 35: From Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1, fol. 4r**

**Image 36: Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat.**

**235, fols. 4-29, fol. 4r<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> Image from 'Manuscript - Pal.lat.235', *Digital Vatican Library*. Web. Accessed 17 December 2017 <[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Pal.lat.235](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pal.lat.235)>.

**Image 37: St Paul in Carinthia, Stiftsbibliothek, 2<sup>1</sup> (25. 2. 16), fol. 21r<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> Digital image sent by email from Benediktinerstift St. Paul.

**Image 38: From CCCC 304, fol. 1r<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>5</sup> Images 38-41 obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

**Image 39: From CCCC 304, fol. 1v**

**Image 40: From CCCC 302, fol. 5r**

**Image 41: From CCCC 302, fol. 6r**

**Image 42: From Fulda, Hessische Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek,  
Bonifatianus 3, fol. 19r<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> Images 42-43 from 'Teil- Evangeliar', *Fuldaer Digitale Sammlungen*, Hochschul-und Landesbibliothek Fulda. Web. Accessed 17 December 2017 <[http://fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/image/PPN325292043/1/LOG\\_0000/](http://fuldig.hs-fulda.de/viewer/image/PPN325292043/1/LOG_0000/)>.

**Image 43: From Fulda, Hessische Hochschul- und Landesbibliothek,  
Bonifatianus 3, fol. 51r**

**Image 44: Miskolc, Lévy József Library, s.n.<sup>7</sup>**

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<sup>7</sup> Digital image sent by email from Lévy József Muzeális Könyvtár.

**Image 45: CCCC 173, fol. 81r<sup>8</sup>**

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<sup>8</sup> Images 45-49 obtained from *Parker Library on the Web*.

**Image 46: CCCC 173, fol. 81v**

**Image 47: From CCCC 173, fol. 59r**

**Image 48: From CCCC 173, fol. 59v**

**Image 49: CCCC 173, fol. 81v**

**Image 50: London, BL, Harley 2965, fol. 38<sup>9</sup>**

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<sup>9</sup> 'Harley MS 2965', *Digitised Manuscripts*, British Library, Web. Accessed 17 December 2017 <[www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley\\_MS\\_2965](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_2965)>.

**Image 51: From Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 195 (187), fol. 66v<sup>10</sup>**

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<sup>10</sup> Images 51-54 from 'Alcuin. « In hoc codice continentur de fide sanctae Trinitatis et de incarnatione Christi libri tres. — Quamvis enim in hujus exilii... » Dédicace à Charlemagne : « Presentis prosperitatis... » Le livre III finit au fol. 66 vo', Bibliothèque Nationale de France: Gallica, Web. Accessed 17 December 2017 <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84525921/f9.image>>.

**Image 52: From Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 195 (187), fol. 88r**

**Image 53: From Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 195 (187), fol. 89r**

**Image 54: From Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, 195 (187), 90v**

**Image 55: Rome Vatican, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,  
Vat. lat. 3363, fol. 1.v<sup>11</sup>**

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<sup>11</sup> Image from 'Manuscript - Vat.lat.3363', *Digital Vatican Library*. Web. Accessed 17 December 2017 <[https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.lat.3363](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.3363)>.

**Image 56: From London, BL, Cotton Vespasian B. vi, fols. 104-9, fol. 4r-v<sup>12</sup>**

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<sup>12</sup> Image from 'Cotton MS Vespasian B VI/1', *Digitised Manuscripts*, British Library. Web. Accessed 20 December 2017 <[www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton\\_MS\\_Vespasian\\_B\\_VI/1](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Vespasian_B_VI/1)>.

**Image 57: Cambridge, CUL Ll. 1. 10, fol. 21r**

**Image 58: Cambridge, CUL LI. 1. 10, fol. 43r**

**Image 59: From London, BL, Add. 23211, fol. 1v<sup>13</sup>**

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<sup>13</sup> Image from 'Detailed record for Additional 23211', *Digitised Manuscripts*, British Library, Web. Accessed 17 December 2017  
<[www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6788](http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6788)>.

**Image 60: Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Voss. lat. Q. 2, fol. 60<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>14</sup> Digital image sent by email by an academic in Leiden.

**Image 61: London, BL, Royal 15. A. xvi, fol. 2v<sup>15</sup>**

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<sup>15</sup> Image from 'Detailed record for Royal 15 A XVI', *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, British Library. Web. Accessed 20 December 2017  
<[www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7452](http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7452)>.

## **Appendix B: Inter-word spacing datasets**

This appendix is in the attached CD-Rom.

**Appendix C: Sample inter-word spacing transcriptions from Scribe A of  
*Beowulf***

Superscript roman numerals indicate endnotes, typically explaining decisions taken with part of the text. Pointing is indicated by a full stop, rather than by the superscript ‘POINT’ used in Chapter Three.

Contents:

- *Beowulf*, fol. 132r (Scribe A)
- *Beowulf*, fol. 156v (Scribe A)
- *Beowulf*, fol. 173r (Scribe A)

SCRIBE A

**fol. 132r**

*HWÆT WE GARDE*<sup>0.9</sup> na<sup>0.9</sup> in<sup>0.3</sup> gear<sup>1.1</sup> dagum.<sup>3.0</sup>  
 þeod<sup>1.3</sup> cyninga<sup>EL</sup> þrym<sup>1.4</sup> ge<sup>0.2</sup> frunon<sup>2.1</sup>  
 hu<sup>0.0</sup> ða<sup>1.2</sup> æþelingas<sup>1.4</sup> ellen<sup>EL</sup> fremedon.<sup>3.3</sup>  
 Oft<sup>1.0</sup> scýld<sup>1.6</sup> scefing<sup>1.7</sup> sceapen[...<sup>EL</sup> þreatum<sup>1.9</sup>  
 monegum<sup>1.8</sup> mægþum<sup>1.5</sup> meodo<sup>1.4</sup> setla<sup>EL</sup> of<sup>0.6</sup> teah<sup>1.8</sup>  
 egsode<sup>0.8</sup> eorl<sup>0.8</sup> sýððan<sup>1.8</sup> ærest<sup>1.1</sup> wearð<sup>EL</sup>  
 fea<sup>0.8</sup> sceaft<sup>1.0</sup> funden<sup>2.2</sup> he<sup>0.2</sup> þæs<sup>1.1</sup> frofre<sup>0.8</sup> geba[...<sup>EL</sup>  
 weox<sup>1.0</sup> under<sup>0.7</sup> wolcnum<sup>1.9</sup> weorð<sup>1.4</sup> mýndum<sup>1.3</sup> þah.<sup>EL</sup>  
 oð<sup>-0.2</sup> þæt<sup>1.1</sup> him<sup>1.4</sup> æghwýlc<sup>1.4</sup> þara<sup>0.8</sup> ýmb<sup>1.0</sup> sitten<sup>0.7</sup> dra<sup>EL</sup>  
 ofer<sup>0.4</sup> hron<sup>X</sup> rade<sup>1.4</sup> hýran<sup>1.2</sup> scolde<sup>1.2</sup>  
 gomban<sup>EL</sup> gýldan<sup>1.1</sup> þæt<sup>0.1</sup> wæs<sup>0.7</sup> god<sup>1.3</sup> cýning.<sup>2.7</sup>  
 ðæm<sup>1.2</sup> eafera<sup>0.7</sup> wæs<sup>EL</sup> æfter<sup>0.8</sup> cenned<sup>1.5</sup>  
 geong<sup>1.1</sup> in<sup>0.5</sup> gearðum<sup>1.3</sup> þone<sup>0.8</sup> god<sup>EL</sup> sende<sup>0.9</sup>  
 folce<sup>0.5</sup> to<sup>0.0</sup> frofre<sup>1.1</sup> fýren<sup>0.7</sup> ðearfe<sup>1.0</sup> on<sup>EL</sup> geat<sup>1.4</sup>  
 þæt<sup>0.4</sup> hie<sup>0.6</sup> ær<sup>0.3</sup> drugon<sup>1.9</sup> aldor[...]<sup>ase.</sup><sup>1.6</sup>  
 lange<sup>EL</sup> hwile<sup>1.0</sup> him<sup>0.7</sup> þæs<sup>1.0</sup> lif<sup>0.3</sup> frea<sup>1.1</sup>  
 wuldres<sup>0.9</sup> wealdend<sup>EL</sup> worold<sup>1.2</sup> are<sup>0.7</sup> forgeaf.<sup>2.6</sup>  
 beowulf<sup>1.2</sup> wæs<sup>1.2</sup> breme<sup>EL</sup> blæd<sup>1.0</sup> wide<sup>1.2</sup> sprang<sup>1.9</sup>  
 scýldes<sup>X</sup> eafera<sup>X</sup> scede<sup>EL</sup> landum<sup>1.7</sup> in.<sup>4.0</sup>

The initial units, *'HWÆT WE GARDE'*, written in large capitals, differ greatly from the main text, and so their spacing may not be suitable for comparison and has not been recorded here or in Appendix B. The text after 'scede landum in.' was unmeasurable, and has not been included.

**fol. 156 v**

...]e<sup>x</sup>      Ðæt<sup>0.3</sup> wæs<sup>0.6</sup> geomuru<sup>1.5</sup> ides<sup>1.3</sup>  
nalles<sup>1.3</sup> holinga<sup>EL</sup>      ...]ces<sup>1.3</sup> dohtor<sup>1.8</sup>  
meotod<sup>1.6</sup> sceaft<sup>1.7</sup> be<sup>0.6</sup> mearn<sup>EL</sup>      ...]ðan<sup>1.6</sup> morgen<sup>1.3</sup> com.<sup>3.7</sup>  
Ða<sup>0.0</sup> heo<sup>0.9</sup> under<sup>x</sup> swegle<sup>EL</sup>      ...]eon<sup>1.6</sup> meahte<sup>x</sup>  
morþor<sup>1.6</sup> bealo<sup>1.5</sup> maga<sup>EL</sup>      ...]r<sup>0.5</sup> he<sup>0.9</sup> ær<sup>0.7</sup> mo<sup>^</sup>æ<sup>^</sup>ste<sup>0.8</sup> heold<sup>1.5</sup>  
worolde<sup>0.8</sup> wýnne<sup>EL</sup>      ...]g<sup>0.9</sup> ealle<sup>1.0</sup> for<sup>0.5</sup> nam<sup>1.9</sup>  
fin<sup>0.8</sup> nes<sup>0.8</sup> þegnas<sup>1.6</sup>      nemne<sup>EL</sup> ]..ea<sup>^</sup>u<sup>^</sup><sup>0.6</sup> anum<sup>1.8</sup>  
þæt<sup>0.9</sup> he<sup>0.0</sup> ne<sup>0.6</sup> mehte<sup>1.1</sup>      on<sup>0.6</sup> þæm<sup>1.5</sup> me EL ...]el<sup>1.4</sup> stede.<sup>2.0</sup>  
wig<sup>0.7</sup> hengeste<sup>0.9</sup>      wiht<sup>1.4</sup> ge<sup>0.4</sup> feohtan.<sup>EL</sup>  
ne<sup>-0.3</sup> þa<sup>0.9</sup> wealafe<sup>0.9</sup>      wige<sup>1.0</sup> for<sup>0.7</sup> þringan<sup>1.9</sup>  
þeodnes<sup>EL</sup> ðegna.<sup>1.4</sup>      ac<sup>0.7</sup> hig<sup>1.1</sup> him<sup>1.0</sup> geþingo<sup>1.1</sup> budon<sup>1.9</sup>  
þæt<sup>0.4</sup> hie<sup>EL</sup> him<sup>1.9</sup> oðer<sup>1.2</sup> flet<sup>x</sup>      eal<sup>0.8</sup> ge<sup>0.6</sup> rým<sup>0.9</sup> don<sup>2.4</sup>  
healle<sup>0.6</sup> ond<sup>EL</sup> heahsetl<sup>1.7</sup>      þæt<sup>0.6</sup> hie<sup>1.4</sup> healfre<sup>1.2</sup> geweald<sup>2.0</sup>  
wið<sup>0.4</sup> eote<sup>EL</sup> na<sup>1.4</sup> bearn<sup>2.4</sup>      agan<sup>1.6</sup> moston<sup>2.2</sup>  
ond<sup>0.4</sup> æt<sup>0.8</sup> feoh<sup>1.1</sup> gýf<sup>EL</sup> tum<sup>x</sup>      folc<sup>1.3</sup> waldan<sup>1.8</sup> sunu<sup>1.7</sup>  
dogra<sup>1.1</sup> gehwýlce<sup>EL</sup>      dene<sup>1.3</sup> weorþode<sup>2.8</sup>  
hengestes<sup>1.3</sup> heap<sup>1.6</sup>      hrin<sup>EL</sup> gum<sup>1.5</sup> wenede<sup>1.7</sup>  
efne<sup>2.4</sup> swa<sup>1.4</sup> swiðe<sup>1.0</sup>      sinc<sup>0.9</sup> ge<sup>1.1</sup> streo<sup>EL</sup> num<sup>2.0</sup>  
fættan<sup>1.9</sup> goldes<sup>1.2</sup>      swa<sup>0.1</sup> he<sup>1.0</sup> fresena<sup>0.8</sup> cýn<sup>EL</sup>  
on<sup>0.5</sup> beor<sup>1.5</sup> sele<sup>1.8</sup>      býldan<sup>1.9</sup> wolde.<sup>2.3</sup>  
ða<sup>0.3</sup> hie<sup>x</sup> ge<sup>EL</sup> truwedon<sup>2.2</sup>      on<sup>0.3</sup> twa<sup>1.8</sup> healfa<sup>1.0</sup>  
fæste<sup>0.7</sup> frioðu<sup>EL</sup> wære<sup>2.0</sup>      fin<sup>1.1</sup> hengeste<sup>1.6</sup>  
elne<sup>0.9</sup> un<sup>0.6</sup> flit<sup>0.6</sup> me<sup>0.0</sup>      aðum<sup>EL</sup>

**fol. 173r**

...]fricge <sup>1.4</sup> ofer <sup>1.6</sup> floda <sup>1.3</sup> begang <sup>1.9</sup>

þæt <sup>X</sup> þec <sup>X</sup> ymb <sup>EL</sup> sittend <sup>2.3</sup> egesan <sup>2.4</sup> þýwað <sup>2.1</sup>

swa <sup>0.7</sup> þec <sup>1.7</sup> het[... <sup>EL</sup> hwilum <sup>1.4</sup> dýdon. <sup>2.5</sup>

Ic <sup>0.5</sup> ðe <sup>X</sup> þusen <sup>0.6</sup> da <sup>1.8</sup> þegna <sup>X</sup> br[... <sup>EL</sup> ge <sup>X</sup>

hæleþa <sup>1.1</sup> to <sup>0.8</sup> helpe <sup>1.8</sup> ic <sup>0.4</sup> on <sup>1.5</sup> hige <sup>X</sup> lac <sup>EL</sup> wac <sup>1.1</sup>

geata <sup>1.3</sup> drýhten <sup>2.3</sup> þeah <sup>1.0</sup> ðe <sup>0.5</sup> he <sup>0.0</sup> geon[... <sup>EL</sup> sý <sup>2.0</sup>

folces <sup>1.3</sup> hyrde <sup>1.1</sup> þæt <sup>0.6</sup> he <sup>0.5</sup> mec <sup>1.9</sup> frem <sup>0.8</sup> man <sup>EL</sup> wile <sup>2.1</sup>

weordum <sup>1.8</sup> ond <sup>0.3</sup> worcum <sup>2.5</sup> þæt <sup>0.4</sup> ic <sup>1.1</sup> þe <sup>0.9</sup> wel <sup>0.8</sup> heri[... <sup>EL</sup>

ond <sup>0.3</sup> þe <sup>0.5</sup> to <sup>1.3</sup> geoce <sup>1.7</sup> garholt <sup>1.1</sup> bere <sup>1.8</sup>

mægenes <sup>EL</sup> fultum <sup>2.5</sup> þær <sup>0.4</sup> ðe <sup>1.5</sup> bið <sup>0.4</sup> man <sup>0.6</sup> na <sup>1.4</sup> þearf <sup>X</sup>

g[... <sup>EL</sup> him <sup>X</sup> þonne <sup>X</sup> hreþrinc <sup>2.7</sup> to <sup>0.7</sup> hofum <sup>1.4</sup> geata <sup>EL</sup>

geþingeð <sup>1.6</sup> þeodnes <sup>1.7</sup> bearn <sup>2.0</sup> he <sup>0.8</sup> mæg <sup>0.5</sup> þær <sup>X</sup> f[... <sup>EL</sup> la. <sup>1.3</sup>

freonda <sup>1.2</sup> findan <sup>2.3</sup> feor <sup>1.3</sup> cýþðe <sup>1.7</sup> beoð <sup>EL</sup>

selran <sup>1.7</sup> gesohte <sup>1.5</sup> þæm <sup>1.3</sup> þe <sup>0.3</sup> him <sup>1.6</sup> selfa <sup>0.9</sup> deah <sup>EL</sup>

Hroð <sup>0.3</sup> gar <sup>2.1</sup> maþelode <sup>2.0</sup> him <sup>1.2</sup> on <sup>1.0</sup> and <sup>0.4</sup> sware <sup>0.5</sup>

þe <sup>EL</sup> þa <sup>0.6</sup> word <sup>1.1</sup> cwýdas <sup>1.7</sup> wig <sup>0.5</sup> tig <sup>1.3</sup> drihten <sup>X</sup>

on <sup>0.7</sup> sefan <sup>EL</sup> sende <sup>1.4</sup> ne <sup>0.7</sup> hýrde <sup>1.6</sup> ic <sup>0.5</sup> snotor <sup>0.5</sup> licor <sup>1.8</sup>

on <sup>0.7</sup> swa <sup>EL</sup> geongum <sup>2.2</sup> feore <sup>1.6</sup> guman <sup>2.1</sup> þingian <sup>2.4</sup>

þu<sup>0.7</sup> eart<sup>EL</sup> mægenes<sup>1.4</sup> strang<sup>2.2</sup>      ond<sup>0.5</sup> on<sup>0.8</sup> mode<sup>1.5</sup> frod<sup>1.6</sup>

wis<sup>0.5</sup> word<sup>EL</sup> cwida<sup>2.1</sup>      wen<sup>0.9</sup> ic<sup>1.3</sup> talige<sup>1.4</sup>

gif<sup>0.1</sup> þæt<sup>0.8</sup> ge<sup>0.8</sup> ganged<sup>1.2</sup>      þæt<sup>EL</sup> ðe<sup>0.3</sup> gar<sup>0.6</sup> nýmeð<sup>2.5</sup>

hild<sup>1.2</sup> heoru<sup>1.8</sup> grim<sup>1.3</sup> me<sup>0.5</sup>      hreþ<sup>EL</sup> les<sup>1.4</sup> eaferan<sup>2.3</sup>

adl<sup>1.2</sup> oþðe<sup>1.6</sup> iren<sup>2.0</sup>      ealdor<sup>0.8</sup> ðinne<sup>EL</sup>

folces<sup>1.4</sup> hýrde<sup>1.5</sup>      ond<sup>0.4</sup> þu<sup>0.5</sup> þin<sup>1.3</sup> feorh<sup>2.4</sup> hafast.<sup>1.0</sup>

þæt<sup>0.4</sup> þe<sup>EL</sup>

## Appendix D: Anglo-Saxon manuscripts containing Greek alphabets

### Key:

- 1 – Latin Verse
- 2 – Computistical / calendrical / prognostic
- 3 – Grammatica / glossaries
- 4 – Music
- 5 – Commentary on alphabet / letters
- 6 – Etymology
- 7 – Sciences / mathematics
- 8 – Laws / letters
- 8 – Materials for worship
- 9 – Commentary / treatise (theological, philosophical, historical)
- 10 – Charms

### Notes:

- a) Categories represented only in the CUL manuscript, and therefore excluded from the table, are: riddles, medical material and hisperic verse.
- b) Dunstan's Classbook is a composite manuscript, which gathers many pre-existing units. The *Liber Commonei*, one of these units, is the part of the manuscript into which the Greek alphabet was originally written, before it was gathered with the rest of the Classbook. Therefore, this unit in isolation provides the best context for this table.

MS <sup>1</sup>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
BL, Cotton Domitian ix, fol. 8 (viii2, possibly England)		✓	✓		✓						
Oxford, Bod, Auctarium F. 4. 32 fols. 19-36 (Liber Commonei) (ix <sup>1</sup> , Wales)		✓					✓		✓	✓	
BL, Harley 3017 (ix <sup>3/4</sup> , France)		✓					✓				
Exeter, Cathedral Library, 3507 (x <sup>2</sup> , S England)	✓	✓					✓				

<sup>1</sup> All dating information in this column is quoted directly from Gneuss and Lapidge, pp. 254, 432, 355, 203, 661, 25, 126, 186, 200, 212, 216, 321.

Rome, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Reg. lat. 338, fols. 64-126 (x <sup>2</sup> or x/xi, N France or Germany?)	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓
CUL Gg. 5. 35 (xi med., Canterbury St.A?)	✓			✓	✓					✓	
Cambridge, Jesus College, 28 (Q. B. 11) (xi ex., France)			✓								

Durham, Cathedral Library, B. II. 11 (xi ex., Normandy)	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates 18. 7. 8 (xi ex.)	✓				✓						
Lincoln, Cathedral Library, 106 (xi ex. or xi/xii, Normandy or England?)	✓							✓			

BL, Add. 19835 (xi/xii, Normandy or England)								✓	✓	✓	
London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xii, fols 4-77 (xi ex., Salisbury)	✓	✓					✓			✓	
TOTAL	7	6	2	2	4	1	5	2	3	6	1

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