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# Editor's Introduction: Comparative Studies on Medieval Europe

Walter Pohl

This volume of *Medieval Worlds* focuses on comparative studies of Europe. Within this limited scope, the topics range from transcultural Iberia to Old Norse literature, and from early Irish identities to late medieval Byzantium. The main cluster of six papers continues a theme already addressed in Issue 3 under the heading »Tribes, Ethnicity and the Nation«. This time, the papers are derived from an Oxford project on »Ethnicity and the Nation«, which the two project leaders, Ilya Afanasyev and Nicholas Matheou, present in their introduction. Ethnicity and nationhood are not comfortable topics because they have often been used for identity politics, for chauvinist ideologies and worse. Therefore, many scholars prefer to regard ethnic groups and nations as rather irrelevant to their field of study as ideological constructions that had or have little basis in real life. However, rather than leaving ethnicity and the nation to those who misuse them, we should try to understand why they do become salient under certain circumstances. This requires historicizing ethnic and national identities, and looking at when they mattered and to whom. It also implies going beyond all the debates about words and their definitions. After all, it is secondary whether we call the early medieval Visigothic kingdom or high medieval England a ›nation‹ or not, or whether we use the label ›nationalism‹ for late medieval Scottish or Hussite rebels. Rather, we should aim at more precise and complex descriptions of the forms of collective agency, individual allegiance and symbolic representation in certain historical contexts, and of their changes over time. This is what the papers in this volume aim to achieve. We hope to continue this debate in one of the upcoming issues, and most importantly, extend it to a more global horizon.

Apart from the cluster, an important stand-alone paper by Lars Boje Mortensen looks at a key topic of literary history from a very broad comparative (and also rather controversial) angle: »The Sudden Success of Prose«. A companion paper has arrived too late and will hopefully make it into a later issue. The contribution by Richard Burgess and Michael Kulikowski responds to a critique on the first volume of their »Mosaics of Time«by Jesse Torgerson in *Medieval Worlds* 3. Behind the perhaps slightly arcane title »Could Isidore's Chronicle Have Delighted Cicero?«, there is the question »What is a chronicle?«, and ultimately, the fundamental issue of the temporal framing of historiography. We hope for more debates like this about problems relevant for the global Middle Ages. Both Mortensen and Burgess/Kulikowski address basic problems of how medieval texts could be framed, and how context and genre were related, in a very broad and long-term perspective. The horizon is European, but we hope for non-European approaches to similar issues in the near future. *Medieval Worlds* 5 is complemented by two project reports, one on a Digital Humanities project probing into ›patterns of power‹, and the other on the uses of the Bible in transcultural Iberian societies. We encourage submitting reports about projects relevant to issues of wide-ranging comparison, and addressing its methodological aspects. Issue 6, due out on December 1, 2017, will essentially be a thematic issue comparing »Religious Exemption in the Pre-Modern World.«-Submissions on other topics are always invited.

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# The Sudden Success of Prose: A Comparative View of Greek, Latin, Old French and Old Norse

Lars Boje Mortensen*

The article presents a new model for understanding the sudden success of prose in four literatures: Greek, Latin, French and Old Norse. Through comparison and quantitative observations, and by focusing on the success of prose rather than its invention, it is shown that in all four cases two or three decades were crucial for creating prose literature. This turn can be described by the term »librarization«: the fact that private book collections and reading habits emerged helps us understand the space into which a host of prose writers were suddenly writing. This reading habit factor (inlcuding reading aloud) has been underplayed in previous scholarship mostly focused on authorial choices and invention. For two of the literatures (Greek, French) the fast dynamics of the rise of prose has already been identified and discussed, but for the two others (Latin, Old Norse), the observation is new. It is also suggested that the exactly contemporary rise of French and Old Norse prose (c. 1200-1230) most probably is connected. The four literatures are each shown in chronological charts so as to visualize the timeline and the relation between poetic and prosaic works. The article furthermore reflects on a number of characteristics and implications of prose literature by drawing on comparisons and contrasts between the ancient and the medieval, important among which is the profound effect of prose librarization on the canonization of existing poetic literature.

*Keywords: medieval literature; prose; poetry; book history; French; Latin; Old Norse; Greek; library history; history of reading*

»So crowded were they [Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates etc.] into a brief epoch that there were no two worthy of mention who could not have seen each other. This phenomenon occurred among the Romans as well as among the Greeks. … Though I frequently search for the reasons why men of similar talents occur exclusively in certain epochs and not only flock to one pursuit but also attain like success, I can never find any of whose truth I am certain, though I do find some which perhaps seem likely …«[1]

My point of departure for this comparative study is the common observation that in most European literary cultures (and others to be sure), poetic works precede the prosaic – often by a remarkably long period. The first systematic intercultural reflection on the chronological primacy of the poetic mode was made, probably, by Giambattista Vico in his *Scienza Nuova* in the early eighteenth century. His twentieth-century admirer, Northrop Frye, adopts a

* **Correspondence details:** Lars Boje Mortensen, Department of History, Centre for Medieval Literature, Syddansk Universitet, Campusvej 55, 5230 Odense M, Denmark. Email: labo@sdu.dk.

1 Velleius Paterculus, *Historia Romana*, I. xvi-xvii , trans. Shipley, Loeb 1924.

Vico-inspired civilizational scheme in *The Great Code* (1982), and in this connection he takes up another seminal book, Eric Havelock's *Preface to Plato* (1963). Instead of focusing on the technology of literacy and the educational aspects of the Platonic turn identified by Havelock, however, Frye prefers »… to associate the Platonic revolution with the development of continuous prose. Continuous prose, though often regarded … as the language of ordinary speech, is a late and far from ›natural‹ stylistic development, and is much less direct and primitive than verse, which invariably precedes it in the history of literature.«[2]

Not only is the appearance of prose late, it is also, in many cases, sudden. It is this dynamic aspect I would like to explore in book-historical terms, focusing on the success rather than the invention of prose. The importance of a critical mass of prose books can, furthermore, be brought out more forcefully with the help of multiple comparisons.[3] I was first struck by some similarities between the dramatic expansion of writing in French and Old Norse in the decades around 1200. In French this development had already long been identified with, or at least seen as related to, the sudden rise of prose – but not so in Old Norse studies. My interest in the question was further aroused by the fact that in most literary histories of both French and Old Norse, the role of the surrounding sea of Latin prose is often downplayed and reduced to a discussion of »sources«, as if with no dynamics in itself. The clerical setting of the beginnings of both written French and Old Norse, and the importance of translations and adaptations of Latin texts, seemed to call for approaches which took more seriously the interaction between the more recent written language (»vernacular« or »demotic«) and the older high status language (»sacred«, »cosmopolitan«, or »imperial«).[4] This led to a consideration of the emergence of Latin prose itself in the second century BCE because the role of Greek for the Romans was very similar to that of Latin in the western Middle Ages. Applying models from medieval vernacular languages it became apparent that Latin actually displayed a very similar and dramatic sudden success of prose – a success that had been overlooked by classical scholars who, like their medievalist colleagues, had been occupied with separate genre histories. The rise of a new prose literature, had, on the other hand been well described by scholars of classical Greek for the period around 400 BCE, when a surprising new start was as clear as in the French case. As I want to capitalize on the insights of scholars of Greek literature for the other three cases, I therefore hope that medievalist readers will bear with a chronological structure in which the cases of Greek and Latin are treated before medieval French and Old Norse.

An important premise for the present study has been to register all kinds of writing in the first phase of prose in each language and to break out of both national and genre-driven canons. While some of the results of the comparison may be less certain than others, I aim at least to have convinced my readers by the end that any explanation of the sudden emergence of prose cannot operate by focusing only at one (modern) place (Athens without Syracuse; France or Flanders without England, or Outremer; Iceland without Norway), nor by privileging certain genres. The establishment of a new prose literature in Antiquity and the Middle

2 Frye, *Great Code,* 8; cf. also 81.

3 In spite of its title, Godzich and Kittay, *Emergence of Prose*, deals only with French literature and it has a clear emphasis on the late medieval and early modern periods.

4 For the concept of Latin, Greek, and Arabic as imperial languages, see Høgel, World Literature is Trans-Imperial.

Ages must instead be situated within each language, with all its literary and learned manifestations, and within a wider book culture. In order to make the case more succinctly and without a long narrative of literary history, I have devised four coloured charts which contain the most central information for each of the four literatures. We may not arrive at big data as in modern distant reading, but it does show that quantity and chronological patterns matter.

The value of comparison across Antiquity and the Middle Ages is not solely to list differences and similarities (although this is always a help against rash generalizations and exceptionalisms), but rather to generate critical questions that would never arise within a single field. Starting from the obvious case of French and supporting it with the case of Greek, I believe I can offer a new model for both Latin and Old Norse as well as point to a connection between French and Old Norse. But the implications of this reflect back on how we should understand the French case and in particular what it means to create a prose literature in a multilingual environment, as happened with Latin; I therefore hope that the classical parts will be valuable for medieval scholars and vice versa. At the end I suggest some general implications which, among other things, try to balance historical and book-historical framing with contingent factors, an area in which the ancient and medieval examples throw light on each other; I hope the wider implications may be useful for thinking about pre-print literatures in general, even when they do not display the pattern of a sudden success of prose that I argue for in these four cases.

It also needs to be specified at the beginning what is meant by a book and book-historical approach. The parameters of book history have mainly been defined by scholars within early modern and modern print culture, and it is now associated also with the material turn in literary studies: insistence on the importance of the physical framing of texts, their distribution and storing, reading habits, and the economy of books has made sure that we cannot deal only with abstract texts in literary history and theory.[5] The concrete historical embodiment of texts is always important for interpretation. As regards medieval (and ancient) textual culture the physical and social aspects of books have in many ways always been at the core of the philological disciplines, which are intensely aware of the uniqueness of each handwritten copy and the fragile transmission of texts. But book history and the history of reading can be still be an inspiration for pre-print scholars to study the larger framework of textual culture, even if our data behave differently.

For the sake of convenience I call both the ancient scroll (*volumen*) and the medieval codex books. Although they differ in some respects, including the somewhat limited capacity of a scroll containing one »book« of an ancient work, the important distinction here is bestween a continuous prose text of many pages and other writing, such as inscriptions, letters and glosses, which are sometimes also characterized as prose. I am concerned here with book prose that is composed for sustained reading (private or public) and for long-term preservation and mobility, and in these regards the scroll and the codex are very similar.

5 Some influential scholars, within a field of a very wide variety of viewpoints and topics, are Roger Chartier, Adrian Johns, and Franco Moretti; the key international forum, with conferences and journal, is the *Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP)*. Gillespie, History of the Book, makes an excellent case for integrating pre- and postprint book history (within Anglo-American research, but the plea applies well to other geographies).

The present comparison does not attempt to establish any single explanation for the lateness or the suddenness of prose literatures (in the four languages in question); rather I wish to add something to the *explanandum*: we should not only seek to understand why a few key authors »chose« to write prose instead of poetry (which ultimately might escape explanation), nor should we restrict ourselves to analysing the effects and potentials of prose writing within one literature (this has to a certain extent been done very well).[6] What needs to be explained is a distinctive pattern emerging from the comparison and the results of quantitative reasoning within book history: a case can be made for all four literatures that there is a strong correlation between the sudden success of prose and the rise of private libraries and readership, *and that this mutual reinforcement of prose production, dissemination and consumption reached a point of no return in a matter of a few decades, bringing along a fundamental change in the whole literary field.* The expectation that books would circulate and be stored and read in private collections brought with it a wholly different horizon for writers who responded – and helped create book collections at a highly dynamic moment – by composing complex narratives, treatises, etc. that could be of use only as a part of a library and within a new, elite »public sphere« of readership.

To understand this process in terms of classic literacy/orality studies, one needs to add the term »librarization« as a third phase after »Verschriftung« (»literization«) and »Verschriftlichung« (»literalization«): the first phase is simple alphabetization as is often seen in early epigraphy and marginal additions to books in authoritative languages, usually very short texts. The second phase is the taking down (or composition) of longer poetic narratives like the *Iliad* or the *Song of Roland*, or of Greek and Roman drama in their early phases.[7] The book medium made it possible to record and copy (and compose) such poetic works, but they were not part of a culture of book storage and exchange, because book collections dedicated to those languages did not yet exist. The book was a recording or composition and acted as an aide-memoire for the real work, the performance of the text.[8] When librarization occurred, however, prose books *were* the works; the relationship between work, text and book became much more intimate: prose books were both thought of by their authors as having an immediate impact (often through recitation), and conceptualized as adding to physical libraries where they could be retrieved, re-read, re-circulated and used for reference. While the first steps of such book-collecting were no doubt haphazard and seemingly inconsequential, this new horizon of textual existence, preservation and possible long-term fame, eventually implied an idea of *The Library*: the accumulated, canonical works of the culture or language domain in question. This horizon of writing, I will argue, must also be understood in statistical and book-historical terms. The appearance of prose books opened up new mindsets and intellectual practices within the educated part of the elites.

This approach is not at odds with those literacy/orality scholars who emphasise the impact of the writing process even on what passes as the most orally composed or orally derived works: length, structure, linguistic features etc. could all be heavily influenced by the record-

6 Particularly by Goldhill, *Invention of Prose*.

7 The two latter translations from German are taken from Pollock, *Language of Gods*, 4; Pollock's thesis about Latin and the term »librarization« is discussed in another context by Mortensen, Latin as Vernacular.

8 The performance horizon of Roman drama and poetry is powerfully argued for by Wiseman, Roman Audience.

ing and co-composition of scribes.[9] For early Greek and Roman playwrights, for example, writing was probably an important part of literary creation (whereas actors, at least in some contexts, were taught their lines orally). But in both cases these processes did *not* create a reading public, let alone book collections and expectations of future library- and school-supported canons.

### *Greek*

In ancient Greece prose was contrasted to both song/poetry (*aoide/poiesis*) and myth (*mythos*) by the ubiquitous term *logos* (speech); or rather the more restricted sense of *logos* when it was clear that writing was involved (»written discourse«), later sometimes specified as »discourse on foot« (*pezos logos*).[10] The other important, and more precise word for prose was *syngraphé* (»writing put together«), *syngraphein* (»to write together«/to write prose). These more or less technical terms show up in the decades just around 400 BCE, the precise *syngraphé* in the long and complex writings of Thucydides, Xenophon and Plato. Whether *logos* could already much earlier – as in the pre-Socratic philosophers – be a technical term for prose is impossible to tell as it can always be understood as »speech«, »discourse«, »reason«, and »argument« as well. *Syngraphé* obviously refers to the written composition of longer works and is not used about earlier letters or law inscriptions (from the sixth or fifth century); they are just writing, not »writing put together«.

In modern scholarship the issue of a new dynamic of writing around 400 BCE was powerfully raised by Eric Havelock in his *Preface to Plato* (1963), later revised and summarized in other works such as *The Muse Learns to Write* (1986). Havelock was a pioneer in arguing that we do not have a series of works of literature from Homer to the Hellenistic age, as their modes of existence, storage and diffusion differ so widely. Until the age of Plato (427-347 BCE) the dominant way of storing wisdom was in verse, and not necessarily verse composed with any idea of writing. The norms and cultural identity of Greek societies were encoded in various poetic forms, including epic, didactic poetry, drama, and lyric.

According to Havelock, Plato's passionate and consistent hostility towards the poets, which had never been properly explained before, had nothing to do with literary or aesthetic taste, but everything to do with his ardent wish to institute new norms and a new education based on his kind of philosophy. The insights of conceptual abstract thinking, made possible by the shift from the ear to the eye, from the oral to the written, had to oust the metaphorical and poetic as a basis for Greek education. This breakthrough by Havelock happened simultaneously with other important developments in the wider debate about orality and literacy (associated with Jack Goody, Marshall McLuhan and others) and became very influential outside of classical studies.[11] Havelock's work now ranks as a classic in the »Great Divide« debate where he is grouped with those in favour of technological explanations for change as opposed to scholars who put greater emphasis on the ideologies being furthered by writing. In studies of Homer, Plato and Greek literature, Havelock was severely criticized and subsequently largely ignored. This reaction seems to have been due to the provocative novelty of

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9 Cf. Skafte Jensen, *Writing Homer*; Gaunt, *Retelling the Tale;* Clover, Long Prose Form.

10 Cf. Hägg, *Art of Ancient Biography*, 32; Goldhill, *Invention of Prose*, 5.

11 E.g. with Ong, *Orality and Literacy.*

his views and perhaps also for what could be termed his idyllic depiction of the pre-literate Greek mentality; the primary reason, however, was that it undermined entrenched positions in teaching and scholarship about the antiquity of the Greek alphabet (where Havelock's late date around 700 BCE is now mainstream), about Homer as an author, Plato as a thinker and about the long continuities in Greek civilisation.[12]

When the emergence of Greek prose was put directly on the agenda in 2002 by Simon Goldhill in *The Invention of Prose,* he also ignored Havelock, while in essence taking up his views about the crucial dynamics around 400 BCE. Goldhill brilliantly analyses the effects of Greek prose over the entire range of genres, from history through rhetoric to philosophy and science and further ahead to the novel, the satire, the Gospels etc. This includes a focus on reasons/causes *(aitia)* in history, science and philosophy, and on the self-reflective aspects of a new kind of authorship and readership: Thucydides, for instance, famously launches the idea, later to become a historiographical topos, that the explanations and narratives are greater than the deeds themselves, clearly an observation that contrasts with the epic voice. Critically, Goldhill lays to rest the perception that was dominant in classical scholarship, and beyond, that prose could be seen as a natural and transparent development in literature.[13] Even more than Havelock, he shows how fully the Greeks capitalized on the potential of the new medium of prose in narrative literature and in organisation of theoretical knowledge from the late fifth century until the Hellenistic Age.

Some voices have been raised in favour of a much earlier revolutionary moment as the birth of Greek prose, namely the Milesian philosophers of the sixth century.[14] The views of Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes (impossible to date precisely) are known from Aristotle and later references, but they all survive in reports without any certain direct quotations of any length. As Havelock points out, it is even highly dubious whether the Milesians actually wrote anything.[15] Both Havelock and Goldhill are criticised by Markus Asper for ignoring this early discursive prose and he raises a number of interesting possibilities about how the invention of prose came about, for example, expanding on lists, its correlation with the writing of laws and more. It is not possible for a non-specialist to weigh the complex and late testimonies, but if the Milesian philosophers really did write prose treatises perhaps as early as c. 570-50, we cannot form any idea of what their prose was like, nor of a book medium (papyrus?) or the preservation and circulation of the texts. On the latter point, however, Asper clearly states that we should not imagine any book trade and that the decisive point for prose was »probably Athens of the late fifth century.«[16]

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12 See, among others, Solmsen's review in *American Journal of Philology* and Gulley's in *Classical Review*, 14, 1 (1964) 31-33.

13 Best seen in the underlying assumption of Norden's classic work *Antike Kunstprosa,* as if this were an extension of a »natural prose«.

14 By Wöhrle, Zur Prosa der milesischen Philosophen, and especially by Asper, Medienwechsel und kultureller Kontext.

15 Havelock, Linguistic Task.

16 Asper, Medienwechsel, 98: »Über einen organisierten Buchhandel dieser Zeit, überhaupt über die Zirkulation nich-geschäftlicher Texte sollte man sich keine Illusionen machen«; and 101: »Die entscheidende Phase des hier behandelten Medienwechsels ist aber wohl erst das Athen des ausgehenden 5. Jhr. gewesen.«

Criticism of the Havelock and Goldhill view of the triumph of prose rationality and discursivity in the late fifth century has also been levelled from another side, namely via the low, comical voice of Aesop. In Leslie Kurke's recent book *Aesopic Conversations: Popular Tradition, Cultural Dialogue, and the Invention of Greek Prose* the legendary fable teller is used as a lens for discovering the burlesque element of early prose works, especially in Herodotus and Plato. Both authors mention Aesop, and in Herodotus he is called a *logopoios* (story-maker), a description also used there for another early prosaist, the historian and geographer Hecataeus of about two generations before Herodotus himself.[17] Famously, Socrates is described in Plato's *Phaedo* (60d-61b) as having spent time in prison putting Aesop's fables into verse. To us Aesop is a mythical figure, but the much later *Life of Aesop* (from the Roman imperial age) seems to place him in the early sixth century with a traditional death date of 564. The same *Life* mentions that Aesop wrote down his stories and fables and deposited them in a library, perhaps, it has been imagined as that of King Croesus of Lydia.[18] In the Hellenistic and Roman period it seems that Aesop became the legendary inventor of this prose genre.[19] However, even if Kurke's readings are very illuminating, they do not have any consequences for a book-historical approach like the present one, because there is no evidence that Herodotus, Plato, or Socrates knew of any book containing Aesopic material. He was seen as the inventor of a certain kind of story (not in verse) and Kurke describes this, consistently with the evidence as an »oral prose genre«. But as pointed out by Frye (above), it is unfortunate that there is no distinction made between prose in the stricter sense (written in books) and oral storytelling. With this distinction in mind, one might list Kurke's contribution on the same side as Havelock and Goldhill, as she tries to highlight a common trend in the first generation of prose writers known to us, that beginning with Herodotus, Xenophon, and Plato.[20]

Before presenting my own understanding of the dynamics of Greek prose writing, I would like to illustrate by means of a quotation what I mean by the »degree of book culture« in the term librarization and the habits it involves.[21] Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus* opens with a setting that clearly shows how integrated papyrus books were seen to be in intellectual life. *Phaedrus* is usually placed among the middle or late Platonic dialogues, perhaps composed then around 360 BCE; there is no indication of when the conversation was supposed to have taken place, so the indeterminate time of the action is assumed to be somewhere in the decades before Socrates' death (399 BCE). In the dialogue, Phaedrus has visited the famous orator Lysias, and he wants to convey to Socrates the speech Lysias gave about love; Socrates is eager to hear it and urges Phaedrus to reproduce the speech:

»Socrates, my good fellow, what do you mean? Do you think that I, an amateur, will be able to repeat from memory in a way worthy of Lysias, what he, the cleverest of present writers, has put together at leisure over a long period of time?« Socrates teases him that he had surely rehearsed the speech by reading it as well but Phaedrus protests that he can only give the contents of the speech in his own words: »I did not learn it word for word« [...]

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17 Kurke, *Aesopic Conversations*, 371.

18 Ch. 100 of the G-version, cf. Hägg, *Art of Ancient Biography*, 116.

19 Hägg, *Art of Ancient Biography*, 117.

20 And she also acknowledges (p. 15), in the same way as Frye and others, the unnaturalness of prose, and here she must be thinking of prose written in books.

21 Cf. Mortensen, Latin as Vernacular.

Socrates: »Yes, my dear fellow, after you've first shown me just what it is you have in your left hand under your cloak; for I suspect you have the speech itself.«[22] After Phaedrus admits to his ruse, they go to a shady place and Phaedrus reads the speech aloud for Socrates. This snapshot of private book ownership and use shows us what had become the norm during Plato's lifetime; and it should not, I believe, be projected further back than the last quarter of the fifth century.

We are in fact looking at a very short timespan in which Greek literature took the qualitative leap from writing as merely recording or composing a performance for some practical convenience or ritual context (lyric, epic, dramatic), a state which lasted centuries, to the situation depicted in *Phaedrus* where books, readers and book collections were the horizon against which authors conceptualized written works in the new medium of continuous (book) prose. This is basically in line with both Havelock and Goldhill, although they are mainly concerned with the complex possibilities and effects of prose rather than the conditions for its rise and sudden success.

My argument is best presented by the help of *Fig. 1*.

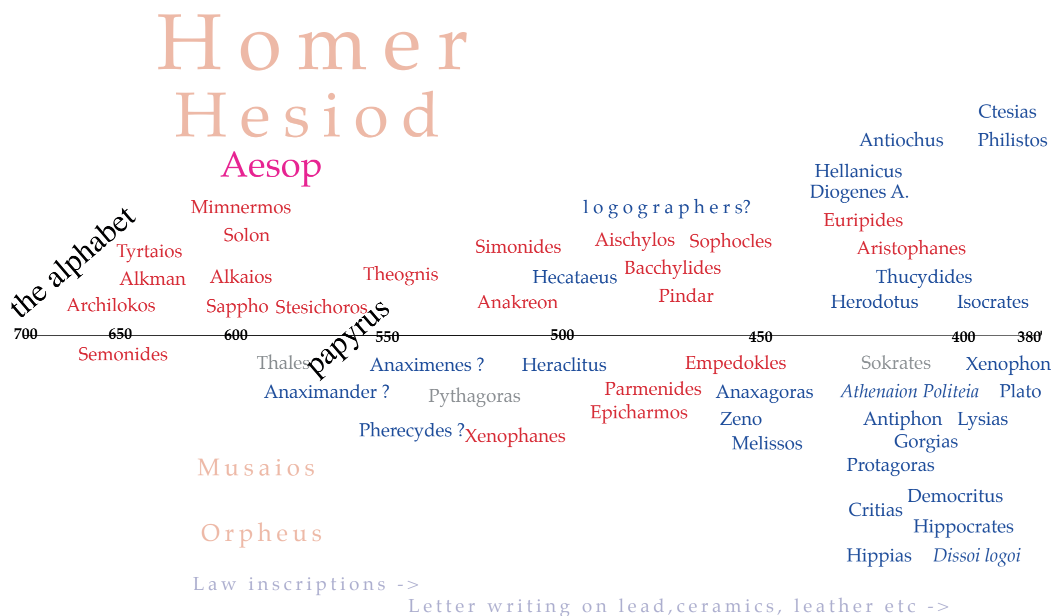


*Figure 1: Greek 700-380 BCE*

Main authors and texts are placed along a line starting with the spread of the alphabet around or just before 700 BCE and through to the period around 380 BCE which can be taken as a definite point of no return for librarization. The easy-to-handle-and-store papyrus book form was a crucial, though not sufficient, condition for the new book culture, but it is not known when papyrus was introduced as a writing material from Egypt to Ionia and mainland Greece. No early scraps survive, but it is usually presumed that long Greek texts like the Homeric poems presuppose papyrus as writing (and storing) material, and that,

22 Plato, *Phaedrus* 228, trans. Rowe, 23-24.

therefore, at least by the sixth century papyrus was used for books (although skin is certainly a possibility, and sometimes referred to as ancient writing material).[23] Shorter texts were no doubt inscribed in the early period on other surfaces, like stone, leather, wood, ceramics, wax and lead; one report tells us that the Hesiodic poems were kept in Boeotia on very old worn lead tablets.[24]

On the chart the dates for texts and authors follow standard handbooks, and the names are placed so that, as far as possible, they centre on the main timeframe of writing (for authors pre-dating the fifth century the dates are often very uncertain).[25] Poetic authors are indicated in red, prosaic in blue, and philosophers who were famous but left nothing in writing in grey. For the early period possible prose authors are listed among the completely dominant poetic ones, but in the late period (c. 430-380 BCE) it has not been possible to include all known poetic authors. This exclusion has no direct relevance for the argument which is about the explosive rise of complex prose in the decades around 400 BCE.

I am following the authority of Gregory Nagy in taking both Homer and Hesiod as personifications of oral poetic traditions covering a vast space, and furthermore in not opting for one of the many datings of their fixation in writing, spanning from the ninth to the late sixth century.[26] Again, this has no bearing on the present discussion, but it would be grossly misleading, also for understanding the prose turn, not to have them represented somehow in the figure. For the sake of completeness two other anthropomorphised poetic traditions of importance for the Greeks, Musaios and Orpheus, are also listed (although in contrast to Homer and Hesiod rejected as real poets by all modern scholarship!); so is Aesop as a similar personified inventor, in his case of non-versified fables or stories, rather than a real writer of prose (as discussed above).

Finally the inceptions of law inscriptions and letter writing have been indicated. The writing of laws and letters is potentially important for the habit of writing prose books. In the Greek case, however, it must be kept in mind that law inscriptions before the Gortyn inscription of c. 450 BCE are very short and do not have much in common with continuous prose.[27] Similarly the early extant Greek letters, beginning with lead letters of the second half of the sixth century, were basically conceived as short oral messages in writing; only in the late fifth century, coterminous with the prose turn, do letters become literary and much more common; finally, specific letter-writing formulas are developed during the fourth century, as pointed out by Paola Ceccarelli.[28] Another of her findings is also important for understanding the role of writing before c. 420 BCE: letters as represented in dramatic plots and even in Herodotus are seen as something sinister, deceitful or threatening. This complies well with the little we know of scribes who took down poetry in the sixth century; they have a reputation for tampering with the real, of course oral, wording of a poem or oracle.[29]

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23 Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing*, 28.

24 Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 9.31.4, ed. Jones et al.

25 In particular Zimmermann, *Literatur der archaischen und klassischen Zeit.*

26 Nagy, Hesiod and the Ancient Biographical Traditions.

27 Cf. Gagarin, *Early Greek Law*.

28 Ceccarelli, *Ancient Greek Letter Writing*, 28.

29 Skafte Jensen, *Writing of Homer*, 305.

Concentrating on the prose authors from left to right, there seem to have been three small clusters before the decades around 400 BCE, namely (1) the early Milesian philosophers; (2) Heraclitus, Hecataeus (and perhaps some other »logographers« already around 500 BCE) in Asia Minor; (3) Anaxagaros and perhaps two other philosophers from around 450 BCE (Zeno and Melissos). All three categories are poorly attested, like those covered by the blanket description given to earlier prose writers by Herodotus and Thucydides, »logographers«, who also include Hecataeus and Hellanicus. The first group have already been dealt with above: even on the most optimistic interpretation three or four Milesian philosophers wrote their opinions down in one book each. We have no way of knowing if their writing qualified as continuous prose, but given the lack of audience for such works, they can hardly have been anything else than recordings of opinions for safekeeping. Such was the case with Heraclitus' book which is better attested, and known to have been a collection of aphorisms deposited in a temple. The proverbial character of Heraclitus' text and its temple dedication rank it with other, poetic, wisdom literature of the Pre-Socratics, not as a forerunner of a prose literature destined for circulation and reading.

Hecataeus' works on geography and myths may have been the first books to feature continuous prose, although some of it seems to have had a list-like character too. As stated, the small group of »logographers« (and *logopoioi*, storymakers), with Hecataeus usually counted as the earliest example, can hardly be construed as a trend following his example; for this they are too poorly evidenced and dated, or simply too late.[30] The third group brings us to Athens with Anaxagoras and a more certain reference to his single work around 450 (Zeno and Melissos were not Athenians and their dating is less secure).

What these possibly early experiments of writing prose boil down to then – and on a critical reading only Hecataeus can be claimed to have used prose as more than a single recording of oral wisdom teachings (cf. Havelock) – is an emphatically secondary activity which evinces no inner development or traction of its own. It is to be likened to the poetic written texts which are agreed to have been taken down before the prose turn approximately in the century before (c. 525-425 BCE), beginning with the first attested Peisistratean writing of the Homeric poems and including first and foremost drama in Athens and Syracuse. The writing of drama was probably necessary as a creative tool for authors and as an aide-memoire for instructing actors, but it was based on a use-and-discard textual culture, which is why we possess almost nothing of the early drama today. Aischylos, Epicharmos, Sophocles and others constantly wrote new plays for competitions and little care was taken to preserve old ones, a situation which changed with Euripides. The performances were central to city life and culture, whereas the texts were not destined for a library or a canon, because book collections as canons of literature and repositories of written knowledge did not yet exist. There is an ancient tradition that the tyrant Peisistatros of Athens (d. 527 BCE) established the first library, but this is without a doubt a later projection giving a famous ruler more than he deserves (like the supposed library of Croesus mentioned above); the recording (or recitation) of the Homeric poems at his or his son Hipparchos' (d. 514 BCE) court led to this later inflated report.[31]

30 Cf. Goldhill, *Invention of Prose*, 10 on the prose predecessors of Herodotus and on his claim to be the first substantial and influential prose writer.

31 Too, *Idea of the Library*, 19-24.

When Herodotus completed his voluminous *Histories* around 430 BCE (or slightly later) he is very clearly perceived as having made a »radical departure«.[32] His book is indeed the first continuous prose book in the entire world we can still read from cover to cover, and it is not improbable that it might still claim this priority even if the texts of Hecataeus or another logographer or early philosopher had survived. What is often forgotten, however, is that Herodotus had contemporaries who also wrote continuous prose, some of them several or many works (also including poetic ones); these include sophists and philosophers like Protagoras, Hippias, Critias, Diogenes of Apollonia, the historians Hellanicus and Antiochus of Syracuse, and the orator and speech-writer Antiphon. The dates of the lost writings of all these politicians and intellectuals (and often both) are not known with precision, but their existence is attested with certainty. Judging from what we know of their lives and later references to their works, a good number of these writings fall within the 430s and/or 420s BCE, contemporary with Herodotus' work and also with the moment Thucydides claimed he had begun writing his magnum opus on the Peloponnesian War (it began in 431 BCE, and he continued writing towards its end in 401). So while Herodotus was no doubt breaking new ground, he may well have seen others around him who also composed books in prose. It is a common, and very relevant and valid observation, that while the prose of Herodotus, who is reported to have travelled about and given readings from his book, still has a flavour of oral tales that have been written down (although with a superb overall composition), the complex prose of Thucydides is on all levels a very written product, destined for reading and for the Library as he famously says in the opening: »a possession forever« (I, 22).

The book medium and the idea of keeping and reading books must have spread in this way, although still very thinly and experimentally, over most of the Greek world during the 430s and 420s BCE; this was significantly consolidated in the 410s and 400s BCE: many works, probably including the encyclopedic philosophical effort by Democritus, belong here, as do the written speeches of Gorgias, but again we have few precise datings. It is in the decades from 400-380 BCE, however, that we are on firmer ground, statistically and in terms of content and attitudes.

In these two decades the innovative authorships of Plato and Xenophon were conceived and begun, to be continuously expanded until their respective deaths in 347 and c. 355 BCE. Xenophon almost created a new genre every time he started writing – the war memoir, the biography, the Socratic dialogue (perhaps already begun by Plato), the technical treatise, the political treatise, the fabricated biography (Cyrus) and others. The massive output by the philosopher Democritus and the physician Hippocrates must at the latest also belong to this period, although many of their writings can have been composed already from c. 430 BCE onwards. There are other Athenian authors who certainly belong in the beginning of the fourth century, for example Lysias the speech-writer and Isocrates the orator and pedagogical theorist, but it is important to note that the vast expansion of the volume and remit of prose books was not confined to Athens. Two decidedly non-Athenian treasures are lost, but they belong to these decades without a doubt: one is the works of the Greek physician and historian in Persian service, Ctesias, who authored several treatises, an account of India and a 23-book history of Babylonia, Assyria and the Persian Empire down to 398 BCE. The other is by Philistos, an influential Syracusan aristocrat, who began writing a comprehensive history of Sicily when he was exiled in 386 BCE, a work that was praised in Antiquity.

32 Goldhill, *Invention of Prose*, 10.

Figure 1 should not be read simply for the significant conglomeration of prose authors around 400, but also for the volume and variety that hide behind the names. The full register of prose genres, ways of writing, domains of knowledge and sheer number of papyrus rolls (voluminous works intended for copying) presents a striking break-through in these decades. One possible book by Anaximander (c. 550 BCE), one or two by Hecataeus (c. 500 BCE), and one by Anaxagoras (c. 450 BCE) may all have been exciting experiments in their own right, but they had nowhere to go, and they certainly did not create any new space or dynamic of reading. The book culture and the »librarization« that comes after Herodotus and the sophists is essentially different.[33] By c. 380 BCE we have reached a point of no return, a critical mass when books have become an elite habit instead of a curiosity (cf. the quote from Plato above).

Apart from the technical side and the advantages of collecting (*syngraphein*), storing and retrieving stories, philosophy, medicine etc. in rolls, can we get any closer to the human momentum injected into this new technology? Tomas Hägg writes perceptively about one of the main figures of the Greek prose turn, Xenophon: »Now, Xenophon's choice of Agesilaus [as the object of a biography] was no accidental decision – the Spartan king had been his own patron and benefactor since the 390s BCE – nor was his purpose solely to establish a model for imitation. He had embarked on the *Memorabilia* to defend Socrates's memory in a current war of pamphlets, and he presumably composed his *Anabasis* in reply to another work that played down his own role in the Persian expedition. By the same token, he was now moved to write an apology of Agesilaus against what looks like an ongoing campaign to belittle the king's achievement.«[34] The fact that the elite turned to the writing and reading of books as a new means of positioning themselves is a significant part of the story. Aristocratic pamphleteering is also key for a new prose dynamic when we turn to Rome.

### *Latin*

In Latin the same expression for prose-writing is used as in Greek: *conscribere* »to write together«, or, alternatively, *componere,* »to put together«.[35] It reflects the same basic idea that prose consists of many parts, whether imagined as already written in small parts or simply elements of speech or thought. A book, or even shorter pieces like laws and letters, are »put«or »written together«, which involves, in modern terms, both careful or artful formulation and the addition of a textual structure. Our word, »prose«, is of course also Latin, *pro(r)sa oratio* (»straightforward speech/discourse«), but this expression was only coined in the early imperial period (first attested in Seneca and Quintilian, 60s and 90s CE) and does not belong to the period of the emergence of Latin prose.[36]

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33 Cf. Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees,* 5, for a similar quantitative/qualitative turn in the spread of the modern novel: »And at this point [when a new novel is published every week], the horizon of novel-reading changes. As long as only a handful of new titles are published each year, I mean, novels remain unreliable products that disappear for long stretches of time, and cannot really command the loyalty of the reading public; they are commodities, yes – but commodities still waiting for a fully developed market.«

34 Hägg, *Art of Ancient Biography*, 42.

35 Both are attested also for writing poetry together, *conscribo* often used for shorter non-book texts, *conscribo tabellas.* Cf. dictionaries, *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae,* Lewis and Short.

36 The expression *oratio soluta* (»unbound speech«) was also used as opposed to poetry (*carmen*), but this could equally well characterize a looser style of prose as opposed to rhythmic prose.

In Rome again we encounter a long period, of about a hundred and fifty years, completely dominated by various kinds of poetic writing, including drama, before real continuous prose in books is attested. This period overlaps almost precisely with the long century that comprised the Punic Wars (264-146 BCE) and which was crucial both for the dominance of Roman power as well as for the development of Latin literature. The two are obviously connected as (from the Roman point of view) the shock of Hannibal's invasion, the heroic mobilization and ultimate triumph are prominent elements of the cultural memory expressed by the early epic poets and playwrights.

In recent years a highly interesting discussion has emerged about the ultimate reasons and contexts for the rise of literature in Latin, a discussion in which scholars like Thomas Habinek, Dennis Feeney, Joseph Farrell, Sander M. Goldberg, Peter Wiseman, and others in different ways have rebutted the longstanding nineteenth and twentieth century belief that any civilized people simply and gradually develop their own literary language and traditions.[37] The chronology, and even the fact of early Latin literature was simply taken for granted with the wisdom of hindsight.[38] I shall not venture into this discussion here as it is mainly concerned with the poetic and dramatic-performative beginnings from the third and second centuries BCE (and their entirely oral origins in the sixth to fourth centuries). The following section will be confined to the period between the two towering figures of early Latin prose, Cato the Censor (»The Elder«, 234-149) and Cicero (106-43). The overall chronology can be illustrated in this way (ritual texts and poets again in red, prose authors in blue, other writing in grey):

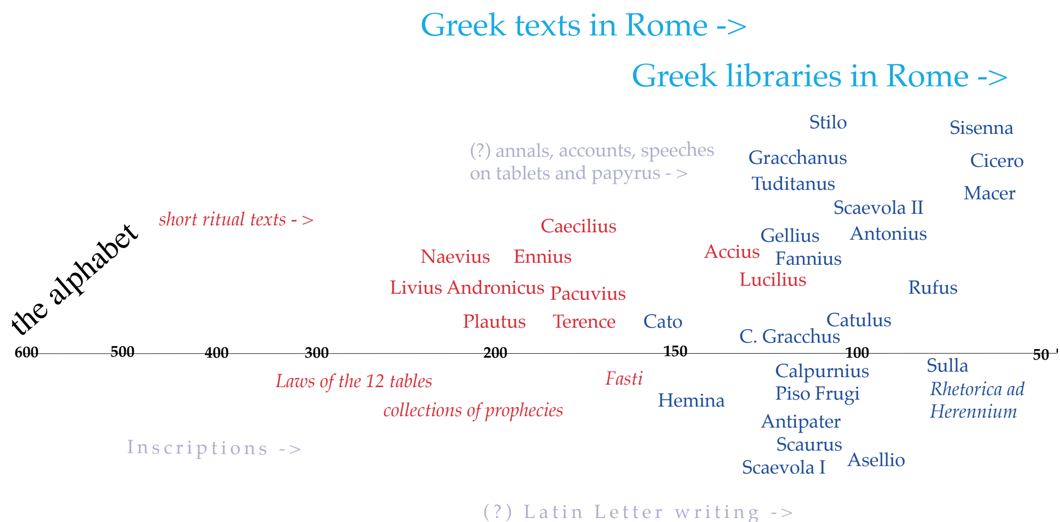


*Fig. 2: Latin 600–50 BCE*

37 Farrell, *Latin Language and Latin;* Habinek, *World of Roman Song*; Feeney, Beginnings of Roman Literature; Goldberg, Constructing Literature in the Roman Republic; Wiseman, *Unwritten Rome* and Wiseman, *Roman Audience.*

38 Cf. Goldberg, Early Republic, 16.

The early contact with Greek and Etruscan culture gave rise to the Roman alphabet and to inscriptions, short ritual and legal texts (probably on many materials), but, for a very long time, *not* to books in Latin.[39] And when longer poetic texts *were* composed and written in books, beginning with Livius Andronicus, Naevius and Plautus, the performances were at the centre, the written texts mainly an aid. The theatre companies kept their own texts and there was no idea of a public or private archive or library to which they might ultimately belong as part of any canon.[40] This was similar to the compose-use-discard habits of early Greek drama, and with the same result that very little has survived. Looking at the entirety of early Latin literature, we should not imagine a series of works from beginning to blossoming which obeyed the same rules of composition, storing, and dissemination. Just as with the Greek case in Havelock's analysis, what to us is a neat series of works of literature next to each other on the shelf or listed in a literary history, hardly belonged at that time to the same category at all. An important feature in this chronology is the circulation of Greek books among the Roman aristocracy from the second half of the third century, and the acquisition of entire Greek libraries, most famously the Macedonian library after the battle of Pydna in 168. This framework helps us to understand why Roman senators wrote prose in Greek through around half a century before Cato introduced prose writing in Latin (Fabius Pictor and others).

There is both a clear modern and an ancient consensus that Cato created or invented Latin prose. In his late rhetorical dialogue *Brutus* (46 BCE), Cicero offers a rich narrative of the history of roman eloquence in which Cato is the early watershed figure (*Brutus* 61-96), but framing the story in which Cicero himself is cast as the culmination. Cicero does have opinions about speeches before Cato, but most of this probably derives from orally transmitted reputation, indirect descriptions (e.g. from Roman historiography in Greek), and so on. It cannot be ruled out that earlier senators drafted speeches on *tabulae*, but Cato is treated as the first whose speeches could be studied, and Cicero specifically mentions that he managed to collect 150 of them (*Brutus* 65). Cato therefore was probably the first to edit and transmit his own speeches in books.[41]

This link between Cato's rhetorical self-fashioning and papyrus books recurs clearly in his (now mostly lost) *Origines*, the ground-breaking late ethnographical and historical work in seven books which took the narrative of Roman history down to 149 BCE, the year he himself died at the advanced age of 85. In this first Latin book of Roman history (on the earlier *Annals* see below) he seems to have pursued several ideas consistently: one was to describe both Rome and other cities and societies (e.g. Carthage) by origin stories and cultural characteristics, another was to emphasize the role of the Roman people in the Punic Wars at the

39 While the immigrant story of the first Latin poets and playwrights has received attention (e.g. Sciarrino, *Cato the Censor*), the question of why this did not already happen a century or more before with massive contacts with the Hellenized world, has not been dealt with to the same extent. I owe to Christian Høgel (personal communication) the simple imperialistic point that once the Romans had Greek theatres, gymnasia, poets, intellectuals, books, etc. *within their own territory*, the question of appropriating (or discarding) this culture took on an entirely new urgency. This happened for Sicily and southern Italy during the First and Second Punic Wars and, of course, for Greece itself after 168 BCE.

40 Suerbaum, *Archaische Literatur*, 222; Goldberg, Early Republic, 17; Wiseman, *Roman Audience*, 48; cf. Suerbaum, *Archaische Literatur*, 250 on the canonization of Terence »In der Gracchenzeit beginnt die literarhistorische Würdigung« and the implications (3) below for poetic literature.

41 Von Albrecht, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, vol. 1, 317. Cf. Narducci, *Cicerone e l'eloquenza romana,* 111.

expense of singling out great men; but he still made room for his own spectacular career, as a military leader, magistrate (consul and censor), politician, moral landmark and orator (a number of his own speeches were included) – in other words, a strong autobiographical statement.

The *Origines* was merely the culmination of a sustained effort of generating and transferring knowledge into Latin books. Cato was an avid consumer of Greek literature on all kinds of topics and his alleged disdain for some parts of Greek culture did not stop him from being inspired to launch an entire Latin prose book programme.[42] We know of a lost treatise on warfare (*De re militari*) and of a series of didactic works written for his son Marcus.[43] These didactic works probably resembled the only surviving book by Cato, the treatise on agriculture *(De agricultura)*, in their *raison d'etre* that systematic knowledge in all these practical fields should engage with and express actual Latin practices, conceptualisation and usage instead of taking a detour around Greek equivalents. The advice contained in these books was designed to systematize and extend already existing communication with subordinates in the military campaign or in the fields – hence the seamless linguistic interface.[44] This still does not explain Cato's new idea of transferring Latin knowledge into books, nor does it elucidate why Cato wrote the *Origines* in Latin as such an account might still be better written in Greek, and find more readers even among Roman senators.

A recent book by Enrica Sciarrino, *Cato the Censor and the Beginnings of Latin Prose: From Poetic Translation to Elite Transcription* attacks the problem from a novel theoretical angle but still expands on the widely accepted comparison between the two champions of Latin prose, Cato and Cicero, and their status as outsiders (*homines novi*). Although both noble and wealthy, their different sense of having to earn honours and careers through hard work pervades and inspires their attitude as conveyors of written knowledge. Their books become, in Sciarrino's phrasing, an additional *embodiment* of their virtue.[45] As the title of her book shows, she also strongly links Cato's style and his embodiment of ritualistic speech and poetry to his new prose; in fact more than half of the book is concerned with analysing poetic and dramatic works as a context for understanding Cato. These links were no doubt strong and they illuminate the social and poetic, linguistic and ritual framework of Cato's efforts; one may add that the ultimate reasons for his choices will of course continue to elude us. From a book-historical point of view Cato did not exactly »create«Latin prose; one could perhaps use the less elegant but more precise phrase that he extended and regimented certain registers for writing in books. Alternatively, one could claim that he launched an imaginative experiment: what if we Romans actually had a standard of writing and a library for books in our own language? His experiment did not catch on right away.

Apart from *Brutus*, concerned only with rhetoric, there is a passage at the beginning of Cicero's *On the Laws (De legibus)* which is key for our appreciation of the period of prose between Cato and Cicero's own time, and it is worth quoting in full. In the opening dialogue, Cicero's friend Atticus is presented as urging Cicero to take up history writing:

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42 See the balanced view already in Astin, *Cato the Censor,* 157 ff.

43 Suerbaum, *Die Archaische Literatur*, 409-413; Von Albrecht, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, vol. I, 317-319.

44 A phenomenon which is similar to the early law codes written in many medieval vernaculars: the actual wording of oaths, punishments, economic entities etc. was so important for their validity that extra effort was taken to put the unstandardized vernacular language into writing.

45 For Cicero the extra complication was that, in marked contrast to Cato, he did not have military clientele or virtue; see Dugan, *Making a New Man* on Cicero's anxious compensation through texts and cultural ideals.

> Therefore take up the task, we beg of you, and find the time for a duty which has hitherto been either overlooked or neglected by our countrymen. For after the annals of the chief pontiffs, which are records of the driest possible character, when we come to Fabius [Pictor], or to Cato (whose name is always on your lips), or to Piso, Fannius or Vennonius, although one of these may display more vigour than another, yet what could be more lifeless than the whole group? Fannius' contemporary, Antipater, to be sure, blew a somewhat more forceful strain, and showed some power, though of a rough and rustic character, lacking in polish and the skill that comes from training; nevertheless he might have served as a warning to his successors that they should take greater pains with their writing. But lo and behold, his successors were those fine specimens, [Gellius,][46] Clodius and Asellio! These two are not to be compared with Coelius [Antipater], but rather with the feebleness and clumsiness of our earlier historians. And why should I even mention Macer? His long-winded style shows indeed some little acumen (though borrowed not from the Greeks' wealth of knowledge, but from the Roman copyists), but his speeches contain many absurdities, and his elevated passages are exaggerated beyond all bounds. His friend Sisenna has easily surpassed all our other historians up to the present time, with the exception of those whose works may not yet have been published, and therefore cannot be estimated. Yet he has never been considered an orator of your rank, and in his historical writing he has an almost childish purpose in view, for it seems that Clitarchus is absolutely the only Greek author whom he has read, and that his sole desire is to imitate him. And even if he had succeeded in this, he would still be considerably below the highest standards. Therefore this task is yours; its accomplishment is expected of you, that is if Quintus agrees with me.[47]

Obviously a large host of historians between Cato and Sisenna, who wrote in the 70s, were at Cicero's disposal, but none of these are household names today. Except for some quotations, their works are all lost, and on *our* shelves Latin historiography begins with Caesar and Sallust in the 40s and 30s BCE. A brief overview of these names with some additions displays a significant pattern (see figure 2 above).[48]

In the midst of the political struggles within the nobility of the 130s and 120s BCE were the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, both assassinated for their agenda of land distribution running against traditional interests of most of the nobility. Both were known orators, and Gaius Gracchus had his speeches from the later years written down and circulated. He also wrote what has been taken to be a historical and/or autobiographical piece.[49] One adversary of the Gracchi, Gaius Sempronius Tuditanus (consul 129) and one supporter, Marcus Junius »Gracchanus«, both wrote long treatises on constitutional law each defending their position in the 120s BCE (*Libri magistratuum* and *De potestatibus*, the first works of their kind).[50]

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46 Not in the Loeb translation, but inserted here from Ziegler's edition of *De legibus*.

47 Cicero, *De legibus* I.6-7, trans. Keyes.

48 The ancient references are collected in Suerbaum, *Die Archaische Literatur*, and Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians,* gives a full exposition.

49 Candau, Republican Rome, 133, finds the evidence too weak for an autobiography.

50 Suerbaum, *Archaische Literatur*, 568, 572.

Returning to Cicero's list, the first to be mentioned is Lucius Calpurnius Piso Frugi, a nobleman and senator, consul in 133 BCE and censor in 120 BCE. He belonged to the conservative faction opposed to the Gracchus brothers, published speeches and wrote *Annales* in seven books, probably like Cato and many others, late in life, so possibly in the 120s BCE, but probably in the 110s BCE. They might have gone down to 112 BCE, and his historical writing seemed to have had a self-apologetic tone.[51]

Fannius was originally allied with the Gracchi, but at the second crisis and as consul in 122 BCE he turned against the remaining brother, Gaius Gracchus. His historical work belongs to the period after the death of Gaius Gracchus in 121 BCE and it brought the narrative down to at least 129 BCE.[52]

The next on the list, Vennonius, is very poorly attested, but can probably, from his place in Cicero's text, be considered contemporary with Piso and Fannius. Coelius Antipater is a much better known entity, as his lost monograph on the Second Punic War is often referred to by Cicero and also by Livy. Antipater may be the first professional intellectual in the list: he was known for his legal and rhetorical expertise as well; he never held office, but had ties with key people like Gaius Gracchus, Lucius Crassus and another non-noble intellectual attached to senatorial circles, the grammarian Aelius Stilo (see below). The dating of Antipater's *History* to the 110s BCE is fairly secure as it must have been finished after 121 BCE (due to its reference to the death of Gaius Gracchus).[53]

Gellius is an elusive figure, but he appears to have compiled – according to the best estimate probably in the 120s BCE[54] – an enormous Roman history from the origins to his own day in at least 97 books. Cicero next mentions Clodius who is identified with Claudius Quadrigarius, a contemporary of Sisenna whose history included the time of Sulla, and then Sempronius Asellio who follows the pattern of a nobleman writing contemporary history in his old age. We know that Asellio took part in important campaigns as a young man in the 130s BCE and wrote about them, but in a work that also included a reference to events in 91 BCE. The final name dropped by Cicero is the hapless Licinius Macer, a contemporary of his and a political enemy; Macer's equally lost *History of Rome* also seems to have favoured his own family, the Licinii.[55]

The passage from *The Laws* only focuses on historians, and it is important to supplement the picture with some other prose writers to fully document the breadth and creativity of those final decades of the second century.

In one group there is more aristocratic pamphleetering and self-promotion. At the very centre of Roman politics in this period we find Marcus Aemilius Scaurus (163/62-c. 89 BCE), consul in 115 BCE, censor in 109 BCE and appointed leader of the senate (*princeps senatus*). Some of his speeches circulated in written form and he composed a remarkable political autobiography in the first person (*De vita sua*) possibly completed just after the consulship, perhaps later or updated later.[56] Like almost everything else from this period, it is lost, but

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51 Suerbaum, *Archaische Literatur*, 422; Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 230-239.

52 Suerbaum, *Archaische Literatur*, 426; Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 247-248.

53 Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 257.

54 Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 253–55.

55 Schanz and Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, 320.

56 Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 269; Suerbaum, *Archaische Literatur*, 442, puts its publication at the very end of his life. On Scaurus and his writings cf. Candau, Republican Rome, 133-139.

through other authors we can glimpse the combative apologetic style of an influential man with many political enemies who often dragged him to court (politics were as a matter of course conducted through legal cases). In any case the move from a history of Rome with special emphasis on the author and his family to a straightforward autobiography shows the vitality of prose writing at this juncture. The most famous of these extensive lost political autobiographies would be that of the general and dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla (c. 138-78 BCE) towards the end of our period. He completed it in his last years, but not from a sudden confessional urge – instead he was continuing a tradition of defending his and his family's honour which was probably initiated by Scaurus.

Add to these a hero from the pages of Cicero, Quintus Lutatius Catulus (c. 150-87 BCE), consul in 102 BCE and an ally of Marius until he sided with Sulla in 88 BCE and committed suicide in 87 BCE after the Marian party had regained Rome. In the words of T. J. Cornell: »Catulus was an extremely important figure in the literary and intellectual history of the late second and early first centuries BC«.[57] In fact he was a leading general, politician, patron, poet, promoter of Greek literature, and, most importantly in our context, he wrote speeches as well as a self-promotional treatise *On his Consulate and His Deeds (De consulatu et de rebus gestis suis).* The latter focused on the campaign of the year 102/101 BCE against the Cimbrians; its main point was to establish his heroic role in the decisive battle of Vercellae, from which the co-consul Marius had harvested most of the glory.[58]

In the same timeframe and political environment, an opponent of Scaurus, Publius Rutilius Rufus (c. 155-75 BCE), also resorted to writing in order to justify his actions. He had a long military career, was consul in 105 BCE, but lost a court case in 92 BCE which forced him into exile in Asia Minor. There he wrote a long autobiography, like Scaurus's in the first person. The rationale of writing this, far from Rome, could only have been an idea of circulation and preservation among leading Roman circles and book collections. Rufus can serve here as a link to the second group of prosaists, of a more intellectual or professional type, because he was known for his stoic allegiance and his position as a major expert on law.[59]

Rufus had studied law with Publius Mucius Scaevola (Scaevola I, c. 175-115 BCE), the Pontifex Maximus from 130 to 115 BCE. According to Cicero and others, Scaevola took the important step, after 130 BCE, of transferring the pontifical annals from disparate wooden tablets into 80 (papyrus) volumes.[60] If the assessment by Michael von Albrecht is valid, this in effect ended the tradition of pontifical annals and inaugurated that of literary historiography, and this link between a new medium of storage and new ways of writing would tie in well with the book-historical dynamics in the period argued for here.[61]

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57 Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 272.

58 On Catulus see Candau, Republican Rome, 147-154.

59 On his intellectual side, cf. Candau, Republican Rome, 139-147.

60 Suerbaum, *Archaische Literatur*, 353; but this is subject to dispute, cf. Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 141-159.

61 Von Albrecht, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, I, 299: »Mit Scaevola endet die Tradition der Pontifikalannalen; an ihre Stelle tritt von nun an die literarische Geschichtsschreibung.« Similarly Musti, Il pensiero storico romano, 192.

The son of the pontifex, Quintus Mucius Scaevola (Scaevola II, c. 140-82 BCE), consul in 95 BCE and also Pontifex Maximus from 89 BCE, was the first great compiler and commentator on Roman law: his eighteen books of *Civil Law* is probably the product of his later years, in the 90s or 80s BCE.

An intellectual from the equestrian order of great importance in the history of literature is Lucius Aelius Stilo Praeconinus (c. 150-90/85 BCE), grammarian, philologist, the dedicatee of Coelius Antipaters *History of the Second Punic War* and teacher of both Cicero and Varro. Stilo wrote speeches for noblemen, but more ground-breaking was his interest in the remains of old Latin: he studied and commented on the *Comedies* of Plautus and analysed the language of the Law of the Twelve tables, old ritual songs etc. His was the first codification and canonization of poetic, legal and ritual works that might otherwise have been entirely lost.

A final entry in this group is Aurelius Opillus, a freedman teacher and writer who was active c. 100-75 BCE, partly in Rome, and partly in Smyrna in the entourage of the exiled (and just discussed) Rutilius Rufus. He wrote a philological miscellany in nine books called *Musae*, which, similar to Stilo's writings, collected, canonized and commented on pre-prose monuments of Latin.

It has been necessary to go through these normally obscure Roman aristocratic and professional writers in some detail in order to make the case for a sudden success of prose. The success was not achieved by Cato, and with the exception of Lucius Cassius Hemina's four books of *Annales* from the 140s BCE,[62] his experiment was isolated and might well not have turned out to break new ground.

What stands out is the quantitative and qualitative leap in the period c. 130-90 BCE, reaching a point of no return before the age of Cicero, but one that has been invisible in literary history: literary scholarship has considered prose as already well established by Cato. We may add that a further reason for this oversight is that lost authors and writings make poor chapters in literary history. Indirectly, Sander Goldberg comes close to the view presented here, but without reference to any prose after Cato as he is dealing only with poetry: »It took the joint effort of writers and of men of letters to ensure that by the time of Sulla there was an ample stock of texts to read, to value, and to call by the name of literature.«[63] Otherwise, such readership of Latin literature is usually taken for granted only in the mid-first century BCE. This is what comes across indirectly in the great multi-volume literary history with special emphasis on production and consumption, *Lo Spazio letterario di Roma antica*, and other literary histories as well: the lost writers of the decades c. 130-90 are only mentioned as obscure forerunners of separate genres that would later flourish. In a book on Cicero and the publication of speeches, Emanuele Narducci states that this expansion of readership only happened in the age of Cicero; however he does acknowledge in a footnote that the last decades of the second century formed a certain prelude to this.[64] But if all these prose works from the period are seen together across genres, three features stand out: (1) aristocratic self-fashioning in writing; (2) a short time span for the emergence of a vast prose literature; and (3) the expansion of the domains of knowledge covered by Latin books (jurisprudence, grammar, commentary, editions, history, autobiography, speeches, rhetoric).

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62 Or from c. 150, cf. Cornell, *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, 219-223.

63 Goldberg, Early Republic, 29.

64 Narducci, *Cicerone e l'eloquenza romana*,158, n.6: »Probabilmente un certo allargamento del pubblico potenziale si era avuto a partire dagli ultimi decenni del II secolo, come dimostrano tra l'altro le allusioni all'esistenza di una pubblicistica politica di Gaio Gracco.«

While the success of books in Latin can hardly be fully explained by a specific political environment, the aristocratic power game *did* constitute an important framework around the new habit of writing and circulating prose works among senators, their families and retinues. In the context of the history of the historical drama, the period has recently been described in these terms by Patrick Kragelund:[65] »[…] leading politicians had, from the late second century onwards, begun to adopt new, ever more aggressive methods of self-promotion, with memoirs and *commentarii,* epics, dedications, paintings, reliefs and statues celebrating their *res gestae* in ways that repeatedly went far beyond what had hitherto been considered appropriate.«Once this dynamic spilled over into writing in the vernacular instead of Greek, it quickly proved unstoppable. But as in the Greek case, critical mass was reached via a fortuitous route, not through a steady increase over a century. The first experimenters, such as Herodotus and Cato, wrote long prose texts into a non-existent space of private book collections and reading habits. Nor did they did create this space: it was formed suddenly and unpredictably by a network of people within a short time span.

There is a fundamental difference, of course, between the Greek and the Latin case: most Romans interested in books had access to an immense body of literary, scientific, technical and philosophical writing in Greek. This helps to explain why the transfer of all domains of knowledge into Latin took much longer than their original establishment in Greek books (philosophy, medicine, geography and more were only gradually added in Latin): the Greek Library served perfectly well in many domains for specialists and intellectuals and retained its authoritative status among educated Romans. We can observe the same long process in the Middle Ages when the vast authoritative body of Latin learning and literature continued to play the same role, even when written vernaculars like French and Old Norse had established themselves as literary channels and fields in their own right.

*French*

Latin continued to expand its domain throughout the imperial age, most importantly by adapting Christian literature and learning; with the Christianisation of the Empire Latin became the all-dominant learned and imperial language of the West, easily outlasting the Empire itself. As both the medieval literatures we are concerned with here, French and Old Norse, emerged in the twelfth century through the work of clerical authors who drew heavily on Latin writing, and as both literatures flourished in the thirteenth century and continued to live alongside a much more voluminous Latin book culture, we cannot ignore, as is usually done in language-based literary history, what this Latin framing meant for the emergence and success of vernacular prose.

The pervasive and continuously growing presence of authoritative books in Latin included, at the centre, the Sacred Scriptures themselves; most books of the Latin Bible were, since their canonization in Late Antiquity, perceived as continuous prose texts, which created a framework for Latin prose. But it took many centuries of book culture before non-Latin prose was actually written on the Continent (Irish and Anglo-Saxon were the exception, and in the early Middle Ages even these produced comparatively few continuous prose texts apart

65 Kragelund, *Roman Historical Drama*, 64, cf. also 57.

from law codes, legal writing and adaptations from Latin).[66] What *did* happen in the half millennium between c. 600 and 1100 was a steady growth of Latin prose texts, which were composed like sediments around the Scriptures: commentaries on the Bible and the church fathers, history writing conceived as updates or extensions of biblical history, theological treatises, liturgical and hagiographical compositions, accumulations of canon law etc. When this heavy textual »grounding« in and around the Scriptures was eventually broken in the twelfth century, both in new Latin writing and in new vernacular experiments, it is difficult to say whether the accumulated traditional, mostly monastic, Latin writing impeded or inspired the process.[67] But the important fact remains that numerous authoritative prose texts in Latin, of argumentative, collective and narrative kinds, were available and set prose books higher on the hierarchy of learning than in the Greek and Roman schools of antiquity where epic and dramatic poetry enjoyed a special status (although teachings by philosophical/religious school founders entailed the same authority for their followers as did theology in the medieval world).

In Italy some of the new Latin writing specifically theorizing prose emerged as early as the end of the eleventh century in the context of the Investiture Struggle, a new legal culture, and the steadily growing cadre of lay notaries.[68] The art of letter and treatise writing was theorized in the body of literature on *ars dictaminis* and peaking in the twelfth century; its practice became highly influential in almost all of Latin Europe, beginning in the thirteenth century.[69] Here it suffices to note that in the same decades around 1200 when French and Old Norse prose take their significant quantitative leaps, there is a lively discussion about prose writing among *ars dictaminis* teachers in France and Italy, and in general an avalanche of writing in the arts, and in law, medicine and theology flowing from the first university environments forming in Bologna, Paris, Oxford, Naples etc.[70] While one should be careful not simply to claim direct connections between the Latinate world of university teachers, lawyers, notaries, chanceries etc. on the one side and the emerging vernacular reading habits of aristocrats on the other, this general proliferation of books and book collections should be kept in mind as a broader framework.

Was there a ready-made definition and conceptualisation of »prose« in Latin during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that the emerging vernacular literatures could lean on? Although the classical *prosa (oratio)* was available and used in some of the rhetorical and *ars*

66 The extraordinary translations into Old High German around 1000 by Notker Labeo of Boethius, Martianus Capella, the Book of Job etc. remained an experiment without consequences; on the disconnected nature of early German texts, cf. Müller, Gute Geschichte/n. See also »Implications« below.

67 On the move from this traditional »grounded« writing to new modes, cf. Mortensen, Comparing and Connecting. Cf. also chapter 3 »The Golden Age of Traditional Book Culture and the Birth of a New Book Culture« in Witt, *Two Latin Cultures*, 116-178.

68 Witt, *Two Latin Cultures*, 181-290.

69 Grévin, *Rhétorique du pouvoir médiéval*; Grévin, Les frontières du ›dictamen‹.

70 Witt, *Two Latin Cultures*, 384-397.

*dictaminis* literature,[71] it was, surprisingly, still not yet the standard notion of the opposite of verse or poetry that it became in the later Middle Ages (from which the dichotomy was *then* bequeathed to us). It *can* be found also outside rhetorical literature,[72] but the main association of the Latin word *prosa*, probably until the fourteenth century, was actually liturgical, originating from a late antique distinction between classical quantitative verse and new rhythmic (and rhymed) verse (*prosa*): it referred either strictly to a sequence (*sequentia*) or more loosely to other types of chants; metonymically it would then also refer to the »story« or narrative of the saint praised in the chant, as in the common type of heading *prosa de sancto/-a* etc. In medieval Latin we also find the expressions used in ancient Rome for writing a prose work, *conscribere* and *componere*.[73] Again these are not category-specific words but appear in many connections, including that of letter writing, poetry and so on.

In other words, the Latin vocabulary available for what we perceive as prose was quite loose and flexible. The case is the same in French where *prose* consolidated itself as the standard word in our modern sense only in the fourteenth century and after.[74] What we meet in the first period of French prose writing are expressions like *escrire, mettre en escrit, composer*, combined sometimes with *conte* (»account«, »narrative«), but these are also used for verse narratives.[75] There is scholarly consensus that the first time *prose* is used in French is in Brunetto Latini's encyclopedia, *Trésor* (3.10), from c. 1265, and that before that the category was just referred to, if at all, as texts »without rhyme«.[76]

While the precise terminology only came later, the phenomenon of a sudden and voluminous narrative prose literature in French around 1200 has been a commonplace in scholarship at least since the 1950s. It can be visualized as in figure 3:

71 Most famously by Buoncompagno da Signa who gives the following definition in his treatise *Palma* (c. 1198, ed. Sutter, 106), claiming the priority of prose to poetry: *Quid sit prosaicum dictamen. Prosaicum dictamen est oratio secundum libitum dictantis extensa nullisque metrorum legibus obligata. Vel prosaicum dictamen est ars, secundum quod est collectio preceptorum. Set non debet dici ars, immo artium mater, quia tota scriptura trahit originem a prosa. Nam rithmi et metra sunt quedam mendicata suffragia, que a prosa originem trahunt.* (Partly quoted by Dembowski, Learned Latin Treatises in French, 258 and Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 57). Buoncompagno's disavowal of poetry is of course a way of selling his own goods as an expert in a certain prose style (cf. Witt, *Two Latin Cultures*, 384-397 and the remarks below on Nicholas of Senlis).

72 As in Aldhelm (7th c.) and Bede (8th c.), see »prosa« in *Dictionary of Medieval Latin*.

73 Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch II, 1089, *componere* II.A.2.b = *conscribere (liber bene conscriptus et bene compositus – litteras, chronicam composuit). Conscribere* I.B.2 (=verfassen, *componere*) *regulam conscripsit, sermones conscriptos Slavicis verbis.*

74 »Prose« in *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (1330-1500).

75 »Escrire« and »mettre en escrit« in the prologue to *Li fet des Romains* (c. 1210; ed. Flutre and Sneyders de Vogel, 2), the latter also in the epilogue of Robert de Clari (c. 1215; *La conquête de Constantinople*, ch. 120, ed. J. Dufournet, 212). »Conte« e.g. in the prologue to Philippe de Navare, *Les Quatre ages de l'homme* (c. 1265; ed. de Fréville, 1). Cf. also *Anglo-Norman Dictionary.*

76 Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 57; Armstrong and Kay, *Knowing Poetry*, 5-6.

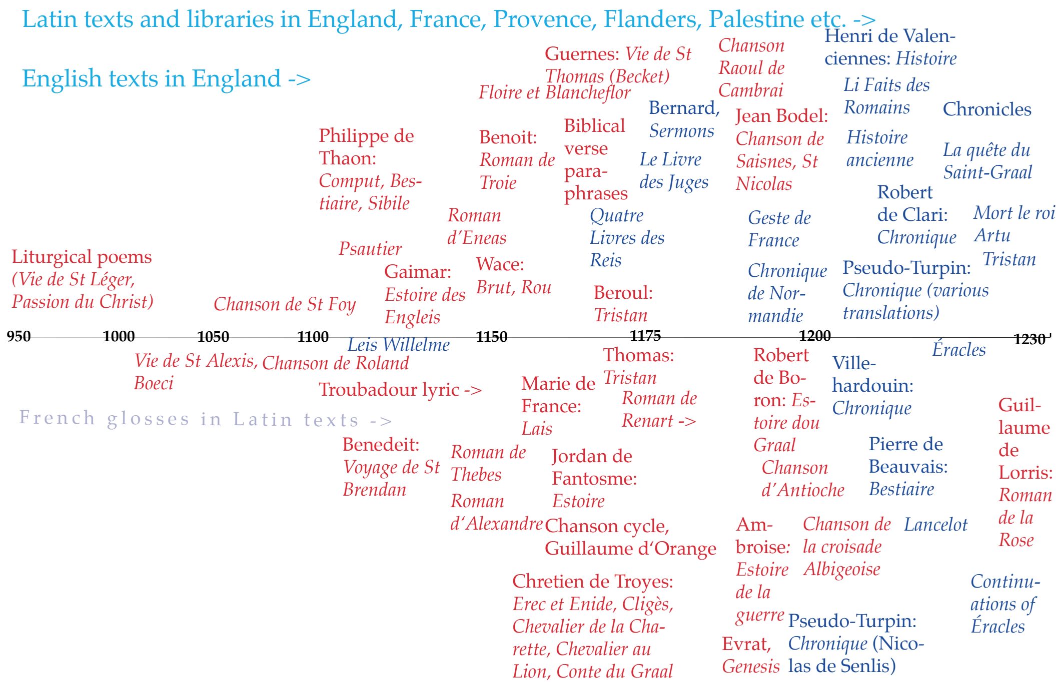


*Fig. 3: French 950-1230*

Again this graphic representation does not claim to be exhaustive, and in the period after 1200 more romances and other types of verse composition indeed appeared; but the chart does include the canonical works and illustrates the near absence of prose writing before 1200 and its abundance in the following decades. It covers literature in French irrespective of geography[77] (and also mentions troubadour lyric in Occitan), and basically conforms to the pattern we have seen in antiquity: a very long period of complete dominance of poetic composition before a distinctive prose turn. One exception is the so-called *Leis Willelme/Laws of William* (the Conqueror) dating from c. 1130. One should perhaps not regard this as continuous prose – it is a list of brief laws – but in any case the impulse to take down short legal prose very early is recognizable from Greek, Roman, Nordic and other contexts. Such early written collections were reference tools for legal professionals/advisors/magistrates, and not made for a reading public. The other early appearances of prose are two biblical translations, the four *Books of the Kings* and *Judges*, and translations of some of Bernard of Clairvaux's *Sermons* – the first real attempts at continuous French prose known to us.

Otherwise, the chart displays in red all the highlights of French medieval poetry stretching from before the *Song of Roland* up to the early thirteenth-century *Roman de la Rose.* Most of these texts were based on Latin models. The first known works are adaptations into the vernacular of liturgical poems and saints lives, and in the twelfth century they are supplemented by Biblical paraphrases. Since the nineteenth century the texts considered great canonical pieces are those which do not rely directly on Latin models, such as the *Song of Roland,* troubadour lyric, *Tristan*, the verse short stories by Marie de France and the trend-

77 For a discussion of how to define French literature, see Gaunt, French Literature Abroad.

setting Arthurian verse romances by Chrétien de Troyes. The verse Romance genre, however, also originated in the mid-twelfth century, first in a number of adaptations of Roman classical texts, the so-called Romances of antiquity *(Roman d'Eneas, Roman de Troie, Roman de Thèbes, Roman d'Alexandre)*. In any case, almost all of these texts, including the *Song of Roland* and other *chansons de geste*, were penned by Latinate clerics.[78]

While it is tempting to characterize the new prose literature as a means of individual self-promotion by non-Latinate aristocrats – obvious in the case of the chronicles/memoirs by Villehardouin, Henri de Valenciennes, Robert de Clari and, later in the thirteenth century, Phillippe de Novare – in fact most prose texts are anonymous, either adaptations from Latin historiography or elaborations on the Arthur material.[79]

The chronicles deal with the history of Normandy and of France, with the Crusades, and with ancient Roman history. Among the earliest are probably the mostly neglected *Geste de France* and *Chronique de Normandie*.[80] From the very large number of extant copies and versions, the most popular early prose texts seem to have been the Pseudo-Turpin chronicle on Charlemagne's legendary »crusade« against the Muslims in Spain, and the voluminous translation of the Latin *History of the Kingdom of Jerusalem* by William of Tyre, known as *Éracles* (Paris, around 1220). In volume, though not quite in popularity, these were soon matched by the enormous Lancelot prose cycle, consisting of *Lancelot, Mort le roi Artu, La quête du Saint-Graal* in different combinations and redactions.[81] Add to this the prose *Tristan* and the continuations of *Éracles* (both begun around 1230) and the massive and much copied collections on Roman history from around 1210, the *Histoire ancienne* and *Li Faits des Romains,* and it is easy to see that the number of unique pages available for reading in French was disproportionately higher in 1230 than in 1200; more importantly, the number of books available in French (including copies of twelfth-century texts) must have been on an entirely different scale than in the twelfth century (see below, on verse romances). Copies of the new prose literature were made and circulated very widely with an epicentre in France and Flanders, but with readers and redactors in England, Normandy, Italy, Palestine and Cyprus. Some texts also spawned extensions, translations and imitations in Iberia, the Eastern Latin Empire, in the Western German Empire and Scandinavia.[82] Thirteenth-century French prose writing remained, in a sense, »pre-Ciceronian«, as it was predominantly narrative and paratactic and »unlearned« in its style.[83] With a few thirteenth century beginnings (including Jean de Meung's translations and Brunetto Latini's *Trésor)*, it was in the fourteenth century – culminating with Nicole Oresme's (c. 1320-1382) translations of Aristotle – that French prose really began its extension into abstract vocabulary and complex syntax and was able to take over philosophical and scientific domains of knowledge from Latin.[84]

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78 Cf. Gaunt, *Retelling the Tale*, 25-37.

79 Cf. Stempel, Anfänge der romanischen Prosa, 593.

80 The early versions were put together around or just before 1200. I am grateful to Gregory Fedorenko for giving me access to his unpublished dissertation *Texts, Manuscripts and Historical Significance.*

81 Gaunt, *Retelling the Tale*, 71-92.

82 *Éracles* is perhaps the most European of these texts; for the wide dissemination see Handyside, *Old French William of Tyre.*

83 Cf. Stempel, Entwicklungsperspektiven des historiographischen Diskurses; Baumgartner, Le choix de la prose.

84 Baumgartner, Le choix de la prose, 16; Dembowski, Learned Latin Treatises in French.

The sudden presence of a large amount of prose writing in the beginning of the thirteenth century has naturally attracted scholarly attention; it was already thematized in the work of Brian Woledge (1953, 1964), and later by Wolf-Dieter Stempel (1972, 1987) and Wlad Godzich and Jeffrey Kittay (1987). The question of its emergence became more focused with the ground-breaking work of Spiegel (1993), followed by a thematic journal issue in *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* edited by Baumgartner (1998): »Le choix de la prose«.[85] More recently Gregory Fedorenko (2012) has returned to the general question while researching two forgotten early prose texts, and Adrian Armstrong and Sarah Kay (2011) have discussed the conditions of vernacular poetry after the rise of prose which – with a well-chosen metaphor – they characterize as the continued existence of black-and-white photography after the invention of colour reproduction.

Much of the discussion has been predicated on the acceptance of a claim made by Nicholas of Senlis, the first French translator of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*. Not only does he seem to be very straightforward, but his statement can even be dated to 1202, at the very beginning of French prose literature.[86] I quote from Gabrielle Spiegel's English translation (p. 55-56):

> I wish to begin the history of how the good Emperor Charlemagne went to Spain in order to conquer the land under the Saracens. Many people have heard it told and sung, but what these singers and jongleurs sing and tell is nothing but a lie. No rhymed tale is true [»Nus contes rimes n'est verais«]. Everything they say is lies, for they know nothing about it except through hearsay. The good Baldwin, the count of Hainaut, dearly loved Charlemagne, but he did not want to believe anything that was sung about him. Thus he had all the good abbeys of France and all the libraries searched to see if one might find the true history.[87]

This truth claim for prose has been taken, with few exceptions, as both sincere and as a testimony of a common attitude at the time.[88] The major concern of Nicholas, however, is to make sure that it is known that there is a book behind his account, not just a song. More importantly, we find outrageous truth claims in all kinds of writing from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, poetic and prosaic, and in the vast spectrum between fiction and history.[89] Nicholas is positioning himself and his version of the story in relation to a certain type of oral entertainment, and, in the interest of lending authority to this one piece of writing, he is either exaggerating

85 No. 5, 1998; only a small part of the issue, however, discusses the early period.

86 On Nicholas and the context, see Spiegel, *Romancing the Past,* 61-65. His quotation is used directly by Godzich and Kittay, *Emergence of Prose,* 13-15, Spiegel, *Romancing the Past,* 55-56, Zink, *Medieval French Literature*, ch. 6.; Dembowski, Learned Latin Treatises in French, 258.

87 »Voil commencer l'estoire si cum li bons enpereires Karlemaine en ala en Espagnie par la terre conquere sore les Sarrazins. Maintes genz si en ont oi conter et chanter mes n'est si menconge non co qu'il en dient e chantent cil chanteor ne cil iogleor. Nus contes rimes n'est verais. Tot est mencongie co qu'il en dient car il n'en sievent rienz fors quant par oir dire. Li bons Baudoins li cuens de Chainau si area molt Karlemaine ni ne veut onques croire chose que l'om en chantast. Ainz fit cercher totes les bones abeies de France e garder par totz les armaires por saver si l'om i trouveroit la veraie ystoire ...« (B.N. fr. 124, fol. Lr, quotation from Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*).

88 Baumgartner, Le choix de la prose, is skeptical of identifying prose and truth very broadly on the basis of this one quotation, and Fedorenko, *The Texts, Manuscripts and Historical Significance*, 230, agrees that prose authority in Nicholas too is more about sources than form.

89 Often an invented book is called upon, most famously in the case of Geoffrey of Monmouth; cf. Agapitos and Mortensen, Introduction. Cf. also the quotation by Buoncompagno da Signa, above n. 71.

or he is actually not drawing a *modern* distinction between prose and poetry; in fact he only speaks of rhymed tales (he may be thinking only of *chanson de geste)*; he cannot be dismissing poetry in general. Latinate cleric that he was he would have been aware of the unassailable truth claims made in the highly popular contemporary Biblical epic (e.g. Petrus Riga), historical epic (e.g. Gauthier de Chatillon, Guillaume le Breton), or didactic theological poetry (e.g. Alain de Lille), not to speak of time-honoured Biblical epics like those of Juvencus, Sedulius and others, nor indeed of (rhymed) hymns, or the *Psalter* and the *Song of Songs* themselves. A similarly explicit and strong statement is even made about French verse a few decades before, namely by Guernes in 1174, stating in regards to his verse life of Thomas Becket: »Never before was such a good French poem made or invented. Made and corrected at Canterbury, there is not a single word that is not the truth.«[90] Finally, Nicholas's position cannot be read as valid for the subsequent prose literature – which includes blatant fictions like the Lancelot cycle.[91]

In her *Romancing the Past* from 1993, Gabrielle Spiegel brought the discussion forward by emphasizing the political context of some of the new prose literature. Due to the successes of the French king Philip Augustus in acquiring Normandy in 1204 and in routing the English and imperial armies at Bouvines in 1214, the Flemish (and other) aristocrats on the losing side compensated culturally by »romancing the past« through this literature (with its supposedly stronger truth-claim). While this context makes very good sense for a number of texts, including some of the ancient history narratives in French, it still leaves out significant pieces of prose writing – some of which were connected to the French crown, like *Geste de France* and *Éracles*[92] – from the crucial decades. There was a wider literary space in which many different political and cultural agendas could be played out in French prose. What literary and communicative framework was necessary to make prose writing this sudden success across a very widely spread aristocracy with French as their first or second language?

The larger framework is implied by Martin Aurell in his excellent survey, *Le chévalier lettré – Savoir et conduite de l'aristocratie aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles.* The dynamic that Aurell describes unfolds over two centuries in which the ruling warrior class of Western Europe assimilated book culture and some of the key values it expressed. This worked both ways: the entertainment, refinement and instruction that writers and performers provided, were extended, upgraded and developed by direct patronage (instead of indirectly through ecclesiastical institutions, one might say). Aristocratic ownership of books and book collections became one of the hallmarks of a more civilized ruling class (along with new fashions, refined manners, ideals of courtly love etc.). Not only did the knights and their female peers own books, they listened to them, read them, were instructed by their value systems and even sometimes dictated or wrote them. Such an intense exchange between the aristocracy and the world of books could not have happened without capitalizing on clerical Latinate culture – but also not without breaking its written monopoly and in the process, launching a number of vernacular literatures.

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90 I quote from O'Donnell, Anglo-Norman Multiculturalism, 339.

91 Although they are in some ways packaged as history, cf. Burns, 1209?.

92 Cf. Fedorenko, *Texts, Manuscripts and Historical Significance*; Handyside, *French William of Tyre.*

It is within this broader picture of aristocratic men and women embracing books that the prose turn of French between c. 1190/1200 and c. 1230 should be placed.[93] Libraries outside ecclesiastical institutions are increasingly attested from the second half of the twelfth century; these are mainly royal or princely book collections or private libraries of high-standing clerics.[94] These libraries still almost exclusively consisted of Latin texts, but the beginnings of vernacular books are to be found there too, at least in the later twelfth century as is proven by references in the verse romances.[95] The most conspicuous concrete link between a princely Latin book collection and French literature in this period is that of the Count of Champagne, Henri le Liberal (1127-1181) and his wife, Marie (1138-1198), daughter of Louis VII and Eleanor of Aquitane. The library of the Count at Troyes was, according to the findings of Patricia Stirnemann, partly created on demand by copyists and artists working outside the usual monastic or episcopal setting – which would soon become the norm for thirteenth-century vernacular literature. It contained patristic learning, exegesis and more, and had a clear princely emphasis on historiography, ancient and modern (including Geoffrey of Monmouth). The library of Marie of Champagne, as a separate or added entity, is attested by the author Evrat who dedicated his French verse adaptation of *Genesis* to her (begun in 1192 but completed after her death in 1198), and who refers also to her reading habits.[96] Her collection must at least have had copies of other French works dedicated to her, including *Lancelot* by Chrétien de Troyes. Stirnemann furthermore places a very early French prose work (c. 1180-1190) in her library – or at least in a noble library of the same character, period and region – namely a translation of some of Bernard of Clairvaux' *Sermons*.[97]

The correlation between the emergence of extra-ecclesiastical book production and storage and the first small aristocratic collections including works in French in the decades around 1200 is furthermore evidenced in a striking manner by a testimony from the Latin *History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* by Lambert of Ardres; this work was composed between c. 1198 and 1206 and describes at length the illiterate and yet learned Count Baldwin II (1169-1206) and his library. The description ends by mentioning another lay person who had been converted to books:

93 The significant role of aristocratic women readers/listeners becomes more visible from the end of the twelfth century onwards (see below on Marie of Champagne), and is well documented especially for French and German literature, cf. Green, *Women Readers*, and Aurell, *Chevalier lettré*, 208-261. High-standing women may have played some or even similar roles in the Greek, Roman and Old Norse cases too, but this is poorly documented.

94 On aristocratic libraries, Aurell, *Chevalier lettré*, 106-114 and Stirnemann, Quelques bibliothèques princières. For a comprehensive survey of twelfth-century libraries in Latin Europe, Munk Olsen, *Classiques dans les bibliothèques médiévales.*

95 Duggan, *Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, 44-46. Another good example is that of the poet Guernes, writing about Thomas Becket in French verse in 1174, as noted by Thomas O'Donnell, ›The Ladies Have Made Me Quite Fat‹, 110, n.31: »Guernes himself testifies to the growing demand for vernacular books when he accuses scribes of circulating the early, uncorrected version of his work.«

96 He refers to her »armaire« (book-cabinet), cf. Stirnemann, Quelques bibliothèques princières, 32. For a full account of the literary environment around Henri and Marie see Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality.*

97 Stirnemann, Quelques bibliothèques princières, 33-34. This work is distinct from the Old French translation of Bernard's *Sermons on the Song of Songs*, edited by Gregory; interestingly, they are both dated to the last decades of the twelfth century on palaeographical grounds (cf. Stewart's introduction, xi-xii), and thus confirm that a role was played by translations from Latin in the very first phase of French prose.

> »What more? He was rich with such an abundance of so many kinds of books, that he might be thought to rival Augustine in theology, Dionysius the Areopagite in philosophy, Thales of Miletus, the fabulist, in popular entertainments, and the most renowned troubadours in epic songs, whether the deeds of the nobles or even the fables of the common folk. If one had not seen and heard of it, moreover, who would believe that Hasard of Aldehem, who was completely a layman, learned letters and in an entirely lay manner was similarly made literate by Baldwin? The man I just called Hasard, indeed, while keeping and guarding the whole library of the count, read and understood all the books he had that were translated from Latin to French.«[98]

These books and some of their translators are mentioned before this passage, including prose translations (one must surmise) of a commentary of the *Song of Songs*, a book of *Physics* (presumably Aristotle), a *Life of St Anthony*, the *Polyhistor* by Solinus and more. What we see, then, in the cases of Marie de Champagne and Baldwin of Guines is the extension of *private* Latin libraries already designed for a specific form of noble learning to include French works, much in the same way we can imagine some Roman aristocrats extending their private Greek libraries with the new phenomenon of Latin prose books. Patricia Stirnemann underlines that the existence of private noble book production and collection at Troyes and at Guines should not be seen as anomalies in the decades around 1200, and that similar aspirations could probably be found in Paris, Rouen, Sens, Reims, Amiens and other minor and major courts.[99]

While codicology, palaeography and records of library history usually give crucial support to fill the gaps in textual and literary history, I would argue that in this (as in the other three cases) the reverse can also be true: the prolific output of French prose texts in the decades c. 1190/1200-1230 is in itself a source of book and library history; to translate, compose and copy a large number of books made for reading (aloud and silently)[100] in the vernacular indicates that such texts were destined for, and helped to create, new storing and reading practices. These were first attached to Latinate personnel and book collections in private aristocratic contexts; and as books in French went from being a curiosity in the twelfth century to becoming a habit in certain circles in the thirteenth, the road was paved for private collections consisting mainly of vernacular books in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[101] While the documentation for this development is uneven, it is important to note that in spite of our lack of more contemporary library lists or securely datable and localised early book production in French, the dating and the ideological and social context of most of the early prose works are uncontroversial and therefore valuable for assessing aristocratic book collections from the period.

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98 Lambert of Ardres, *History of the Counts of Guines*, ch. 81, 114-115. Baldwin of Guines is also discussed by Stirnemann, Quelques bibliothèques princières, 36-37 and Aurell, *Chevalier lettré,* 99–100.

99 Stirnemann, Quelques bibliothèques princières, 37.

100 Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading,* has convincingly shown how the late twelfth and early thirteenth century romances in German were destined both for reading aloud in groups and for individual reading – and that these results can be considered valid also for French romances; cf. Green, *Women Readers,* 7-23. Cf. also Duggan, *Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, 34, who emphasizes the book-historical aspect: »But the primary mode of existence of the romance as we define it [...] was in manuscript copies.« For a perceptive in-depth description of aristocratic reading in the private-cum-public space of the *chambre*, see Rector, En sa chambre. What he characterizes »as a fully articulated literate culture« (88) for Anglo-French around 1150, however, I would, for quantitative reasons and for the absence of prose books, describe as the early beginnings of a new reading culture (see below on Chrétien etc.).

101 Aurell, *Chevalier lettré*, 109-110.

One possible objection to this short dynamic phase I am arguing for emerges from comparison (also with Old Norse below): the development of French as a book language no doubt owes much to the success of the verse romances in the second half of the twelfth century. Such a phase stands out in contrast to the other cases where there is no similar long poetic narrative form meant for reading before the prose turn. Furthermore, the romances of Antiquity as well as those with Breton material by Wace and Chrétien de Troyes are very »bookish« texts: long and complex, either directly dependent on learned models or playing with them, and obviously works by Latinate clerics who had an eye on long-term library and intertextual fame. While this »run-up«phase to the prose turn might very well be considered a necessary preparation, there also seems to be the possibility that in the beginning these ground-breaking romances had a restricted impact, a more experimental status, and that their reception was mostly in connection with the specific environments in which they were composed and used for entertainment. What would have become of them if the thirteenth century expansion of aristocratic book culture had not taken place? The authoritative study of Chrétien by Joseph J. Duggan agrees that »The early thirteenth century is a crucial period in the history of reading.«[102] While referring to the results of a complete mapping of the extant copies of Chrétien's romances (pp. 34-46), Duggan establishes that the earliest copy we know is from around 1200 and that many of the important manuscripts date from the first half of the thirteenth century. Furthermore, from around 1225, Chrétien's works begin to appear in combination with other texts and in larger volumes – a clear sign of canonization. Both scenarios are possible: either the prose expansion followed as a »natural«second phase after the verse romances had paved the way for an idea of long books in French, or the survival, canonization and proliferation of the verse romances (and their material) were basically due to the aristocratic book culture emerging in the decades after c. 1190/1200.[103]

*Old Norse*

Turning finally to the case of Old Norse, the terminology is somewhat unprecise again. The closest we come to a *mot propre* for writing prose is a cognate of the Latin *componere: setja saman* (put together) and it can be supplemented with *bók* and *sǫgu*, to put a book or a story together (attested from the late thirteenth century). The much broader *rita* (to write) is of course often used as well in the context of writing books. The Latin *prosa* also turns up a few times as a loan word, but only in the main medieval meaning of a liturgical composition.[104]

The chronology of Old Norse literature is fraught with problems as so many texts are anonymous and devoid of clear historical references to their time of composition. Although some fragments survive from the twelfth century and a number of manuscripts from the early thirteenth century, the period of our interest here, most texts from this period have been transmitted only in copies from the second half of the thirteenth century and especially from the fourteenth century and even later. Many of the items presented below in figure 4

102 Duggan, *Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, 44.

103 Cf. Würth, *»Antikenroman« in der isländischen Literatur,* 128, who emphasizes the importance for the prose versions of the fact that the material had been thoroughly dealt with by Chrétien.

104 Entries from *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* (onp.ku.dk/; retrieved on 12 June 2017). On the terminology also Sørensen, *Kapitler af Nordens,* 170-171.

are therefore placed in a chronology on the basis of scholarly consensus, such as it is, rather than on biographical knowledge or clearly dated references that were mostly the case in the previous three examples.[105]

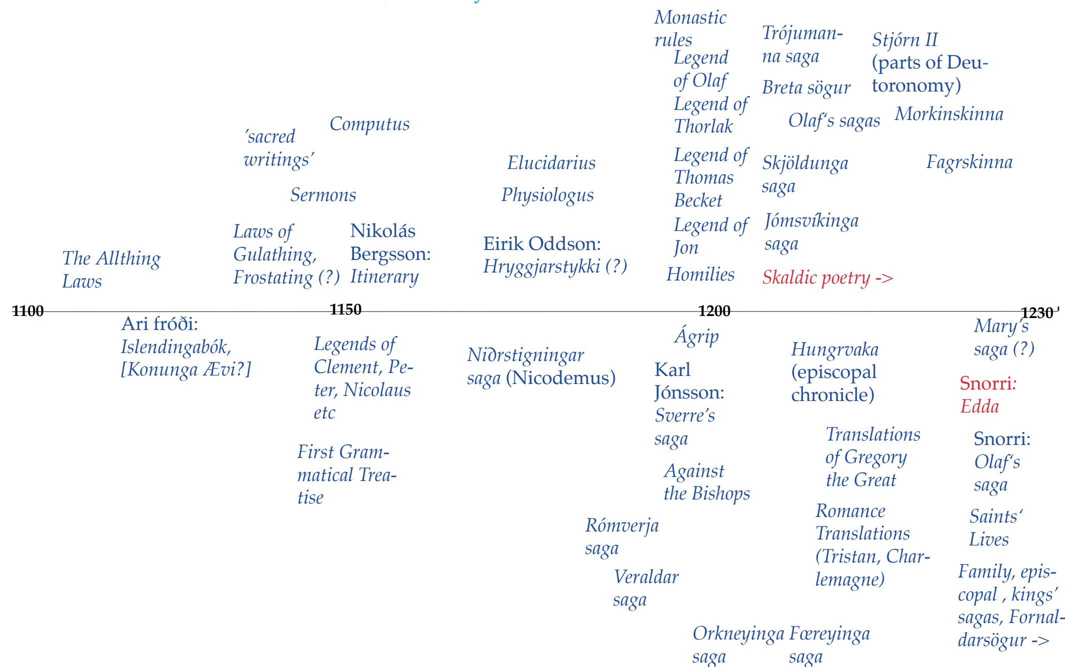


*Fig. 4: Old Norse 1100-1230*

The illustration runs counter to all standard histories of Old Norse literature which invariably begin with the two main poetic forms: the Eddaic mythological and heroic poetry and the prestigious complex form of Skaldic poetry which always carried the skald's name. In some sense, then, Old Norse literary history complies with the general pattern that poetry precedes prose by a century or more. As we are presently concerned with the book-historical development, however, the old poetic forms are late as they only turn up when they are actually taken down in writing in the early thirteenth century, embedded in an already established prose reading culture: the Eddaic (and skaldic) poetry in Snorri's prosimetrical poetological anthology of the 1220s (»Snorri's Edda«/*Prose Edda*) and the (probably later) collection, the *Poetic Edda* (ms. c. 1275, but copied from an older exemplar), while Skaldic poems are quoted in sagas, beginning with the fragmentary Norwegian chronicle *Ágrip* (c. 1190), and with an increasingly strong presence from the early thirteenth-century sagas and onwards in the later parts of the century (e.g. in *Heimskringla,* 1230/40s).[106]

105 The timeframes for some of the works are disputed. I rely mainly on Mundal, Introduction; Mundal, Sagalitteraturen; Würth, *»Antikenroman« in der isländischen Literatur;* Meulengracht Sørensen, *Kapitler af Nordens litteratur;* Wellendorf, Lærdomslitteratur; Andersson, *Growth of the Medieval Icelandic Sagas;* Andersson, From Tradition to Literature; Andersson, *Partisan Muse*; McTurk, *Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic.* I have included Fornaldarsagas (sagas of ancient times) in the table around 1220-1230 although they are only testified with certainty somewhat later; however, the earlier date of their origin has been generally accepted; Cf. Tulinius, *Matter of the North*; the hypothesis that they may have been preceded by lost Latin models further strengthens the view that Old Norse literature was clerical in its first phases; cf. Jensson, Earliest *fornaldarsögur*, and Lassen, *Origines Gentium.*

106 A few runestones before the age of books in the North contain short poetic inscriptions.

What is sufficiently clear from the titles in the chart is how Old Norse book writing, like French, emerged with the work of twelfth-century clerical writers (in both Iceland and Norway) who took down law collections, and translated and adapted saints lives, theology, chronicles, etc. from Latin.[107] Before addressing the apparent dynamic around 1200, it is worth quoting the locus classicus about early twelfth-century learning. This comes from the so-called *First Grammatical Treatise*, dated to c. 1150 (though more safely within the range 1125-1175). This small work analyses the sound system of Old Norse in order to establish a systematic and workable orthography for the newly written language. From its clearly pioneering spirit, it is tempting to date it to the second quarter of the century. It opens with a broader picture of languages and alphabets:

> In most countries men put into books either the great events that have come to pass within their country, or whatever seems most memorable that has occurred abroad, or men put their laws into books, each people in its own language. [He goes on to mention Greek, Latin, Hebrew as using different alphabets and English which adapted the Latin alphabet]. Now according to their example [the English], since we are of the same tongue, although there has been much change in one of them or some in both, I have written an alphabet for us Icelanders also, in order that it might become easier to write and read, as is now customary in this country as well, laws, genealogies, or sacred writings, and also that historical lore which Ari Thorgilsson has recorded in his books with such understanding wit.[108]

The passage is famous as it is the only one in the twelfth century which attempts to state what is available in writing in Old Norse. Laws are well attested to have been written in Iceland in 1117/18, but most probably only in very few copies as reference for the legal specialists (law speakers).[109] The »sacred writings« (Þýðingar helgar) could be exegetical works, or include the computistical, theological or hagiographical writing which is also attested around 1150 or slightly before. Finally, of the writings of Ari we possess versions of the very brief *Book of Icelanders* (*Íslendingabók*), a kind of shorthand chronicle.

It is therefore certain that some minor pieces of prose writing were available in Iceland before c. 1150, and perhaps also some law codes in Norway. But this was all on a very small scale, and can be characterized as a »scribe-writing-for-other-scribes« pattern,[110] and also as a phenomenon which accompanied the major concerns of establishing a Latin scribal and

107 Cf. Mortensen, Den formative dialog; Wellendorf, Lærdomslitteratur.

108 *First Grammatical Treatise*, ed. Haugen, 13.

109 Hoff, *Hadifli Másson*, 379. The dates of the first written version of the Norwegian *Laws of Frostating* and *Gulating* cannot be established, but they are likely to be among the first books written in Norway. Helle, *Gulatinget og Gulatingslova,* dates the writing of the *Gulating Law* as early as around 1080, which in book-historical terms would be striking, the invention of Old Norse writing thus being contemporary with the advent of Latin literacy and decades before the oldest known writing in Iceland. The oldest manuscripts are from the early thirteenth century. Cf. Mortensen, Den formative dialog, 255-256.

110 Cf. Van der Toorn, Scribal Culture, 51, describing the culture of the Second Temple before the arrival of Hellenistic book culture (approximately the period c. 500-350), the environment where the oldest books of the Hebrew Bible were composed: »Moreover, the books that the scribes produced were not books in the modern sense of the term. They were not comparable either in form or function. Scribes wrote scrolls (rather than books) for the benefit of other scribes (rather than for private readers). A book market did not exist, nor were there public libraries; in fact there was no reading public of any substance.«

clerical culture at the time. What happened around 1200 in the whole Old Norse realm was of an entirely different magnitude. The suddenness of this is sometimes acknowledged in Old Norse literary history, e.g. by Else Mundal:

> Since we do not know the exact date for any of the sagas belonging to these genres [sagas of Kings, of Bishops, of early Icelanders [=family sagas]], we do not know for sure which of these genres developed first and the nature of the relationship between them. However, in any case, all these Icelandic genres devoted to Icelandic subjects developed during a short period of time. We are in fact talking about a phenomenon that can be described as a »literary explosion« in Iceland.[111]

Even if a very productive phase is acknowledged as setting in around 1200, the sudden success of prose has either been ignored or put in very different terms than those referred to above for Old French literature.

There have been several reasons for assuming a slow, gradual rise of the prose register in Iceland and Norway. First, the iconic status of the founding father of Icelandic literature, Ari fróði, had this effect. Although his known piece is modest and partly to be characterized as a list, it became canonical as a starting point for the historical saga writers a century later; this continuity was sanctioned by Snorri and others in the thirteenth century and has perhaps made literary historians overlook the actual gap in significant prose writing in the mid-twelfth century.[112]

Secondly, most scholarly energy has been directed towards solving the problem of the origin and characteristics of the most canonical literary genre, the Family Sagas (or Sagas of Icelanders/Sagas of early Icelanders), especially the question of the oral basis of the sagas as we read them today. These sagas are only just mentioned in the graphic overview above, and their written beginnings around 1230 (or slightly before) are not controversial. A few famous pieces are usually dated around here, like that of the warrior-poet *Egil's saga*, while the epic *Njal's saga* is usually located in the second half of the thirteenth century. Do they transmit a long oral narrative form relatively directly, or did the writing of the sagas contribute considerably both to the length and the complexity of such stories? Following the thesis of the so-called free-prose theory (the oral form was also supposed to have been long and complex) came the antithesis represented by the book-prose theory (positing strong authorial acts for the greatest and most complex masterpieces),[113] and later, various differing syntheses of modern orality studies,[114] we are in a way back to square one where both the influence of writing is allowed, but so too is a high evaluation of an oral transmission of plots and modes of storytelling. But whichever position one takes in this debate, the general acknowledgement of the volume and quality of oral storytelling in Iceland over a long time invariably results in an assumption of long continuities as being necessary for understanding the emergence in writing of classical family sagas in the thirteenth century. Therefore no prose turn or new prose register has been needed to explain the blossoming of (all types of) sagas just after 1200.

111 Mundal, Introduction, 3.

112 For this point, cf. Mortensen, Nordic Medieval Texts.

113 Theodore Andersson's helpful translations of these terms are »traditionalist« and »interventionist« (From Tradition to Literature, 8).

114 Especially by Gisli Sigurdsson and Tommy Danielsson, cf. Andersson, From Tradition to Literature.

Looking at the big picture in book-historical terms, however, there may still be a case for comparing the role of prose books in the early thirteenth century with the Old French scenario. Before c. 1190/1200 we can only observe small texts in the wake of the foundational acts of Ari fróði, the early laws and the *First Grammatical Treatise.* They are concerned with supporting the edifice of Latin Christian learning and story-world and probing only very tentatively into the new medium of a written vernacular. But in the three decades from c. 1190/1200 we suddenly have in Old Norse prose all of the following: voluminous translations of Latin chronicles (world history, Roman history, History of the Britons and of Troy), thick adaptations (and expansions) of Latin legends (of the two Olav's (Tryggvason and Haraldsson), of Thomas Becket, probably of Mary and more) and of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues,* massive volumes of Kings' sagas culminating in Snorri's *Heimskringla*, prose adaptations of Romances (Charlemagne, Tristan and more), the first batch of family sagas including probably the famous Egil Skallagrimson's saga, episcopal chronicles and more. And looking ahead just two decades further, to the mid-thirteenth century, we can include such different canonical prose masterpieces as *Laxdæla saga* and the *King's Mirror.* As in the cases of Greek, Latin, and Old French, it is important not only to count the number of separate works, but equally to appreciate their volume and, in many cases, their multiple copies and redactions.

Among the first texts in this new wave were adaptations of classical and contemporary Latin mythological and historical narratives: first and foremost, very well-compiled works of Trojan, Roman and world history, as well as of parts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's history, all of which is very similar to what was happening in French literature at the time.[115] Another remarkable early text was the apparently first contemporary king's saga, the story of the Norwegian pretender Sverrir (d. 1202), his successful struggle for power, and his conflict with other pretenders and with the bishops (also known through his polemical treatise *Against the Bishops*). The first, smaller, part was written by an Icelandic abbot under the instruction of Sverrir himself already in the years c. 1185-1188, while the bulk of the text was only composed somewhere between 1214 and 1223.[116] Among the early narratives one should also count one or more versions of the long saga of Norway's patron saint, Olav Haraldsson. Within a decade or two such texts broke new ground and spawned rewritings, additions, new translations and new narratives. Two characteristics of this prose production are important to note here. In terms of authorship, subject matter and circulation most of these texts travelled back and forth between Iceland and Norway – it was a commonwealth of literature. Secondly, they established a specific concrete, paratactic style of narration, even when translated from Latin, which had many similarities to the anonymous early French prose; they were both attuned to a certain non-Latinate aristocratic audience.

As in the other cases, laws were taken down early, as were some texts related to ecclesiastical learning, but in volume and range they were negligible in comparison with the avalanche of texts around 1200. So, as in French literature, we see a new idea of composing prose for an immediate audience as well as for an accumulating vernacular library and cultural memory. Such a scenario does not solve the problem of the origin of the sagas of early Icelanders, but it can frame it in a new way: the idea of writing and reading sagas could simply not have

115 These were later supplemented with the Alexander story adapted from Gauthier de Chatillon's *Alexandreis;* for all these texts see Würth, *»Antikenroman« in der isländischen Literatur.*

116 For this text see Bagge, *From Gang Leader;* for the dates *ibid.*, 15-17.

occurred to anyone before the book-historical turn in the period c. 1190/1200-1230 – and this turn came about, on the basis of clerical writing, in exactly the same decades as did the French.

### *Implications*

#### *1. Chronology and contingency*

By shifting the research question away from the ›origin‹ or ›invention‹ of prose to its *success,* and by insisting that the success of prose must be understood as much by the *horizon of writing* in terms of dissemination, storing and reading as in terms of authorship, a dynamic pattern for the four literatures in question can be observed: in a matter of three or four critical decades a whole new literary field is established: for Greek c. 420-380, for Latin c. 130-90, for French and Old Norse c. 1190/1200-1230. In those same decades, we must assume, the relevant aristocratic networks also became characterized by their relationship to books written in the same language (though different in register, length or complexity) as that of their oral communication.

The significant clustering, or »breakthrough«, in all four cases, however, should not lead to any conclusions about the inevitability of this new book culture. It is possible to point to specific cultural and political environments which employed prose writing in the four languages considered – and both medieval cases have been framed by leading scholars in political terms – but one should not refrain from asking the counterfactual question: could the prose turn have happened fifty years earlier or fifty years later than it actually did? A number of social, cultural, educational, and technological factors certainly need to be in place, but in none of the cases do I see any constraints that would have made its rise unthinkable half a century earlier, nor its deferral until fifty years later. While we may eventually be able to line up more factors which favoured exactly these short periods (including specific political scenarios), it is worth keeping in mind that the interplay between elite cultures, knowledge, entertainment, education, book technology, book markets, literary forms, and reading and storage habits are so complex that we have to accept an element of contingency. We can point to a series of necessary conditions and strong arguments can be made for why prose emerged in a larger chronological frame, but the fact of those exact decades of the catalytic effect cannot be fully explained.[117]

From this it furthermore follows that the great artistic, philosophical and scientific potential of having a prose literature covering most genres and domains of knowledge in one's own language, which seems so self-evident from a modern perspective, was anything but obvious in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Even in the unique Greek case where almost all genres of history, philosophy and science burst on the scene almost in a brief intense moment, there is a strong element of contingency and sleep-walking: If the momentous consequences had been known, this development could well have been triggered earlier in the fifth century. For the other three cases it is perhaps tempting to ask why they took so long when the power of prose was completely well known in the learned, imperial language (Greek for Latin, Latin for French and Old Norse). But even when a dike had been breached, it took centuries to

117 Cf. Moretti *Graphs, Maps, Trees,* 26: »And problems without a solution are exactly what we need in a field like ours, where we are used to asking only those questions for which we already have an answer.«

overflow the whole known terrain. The perspective should rather be inverted: the imperial language continued to do its comprehensive work very efficiently, and the transfer of literary forms, scientific structures and specialized vocabulary was always a laborious process. In Latin it took about two centuries to conquer all fields from Greek (from c. 100 BC to the Flavian age, though continuously with new input from and direct use of Greek); in French it was completed only by the sixteenth or seventeenth century (with continuous and even expanding use of Latin); and Old Norse fell into disuse as a written standard by the same time while only having conquered some domains.[118] In all cases there was a long period with a division of labour between the imperial language and the vernacular in question; from a modern, nationalizing perspective this seems to have been a »slowing down«of the independence and full control of the national language, even when prose books had already become a habit in the vernacular.

In assessing the possibly contingent circumstances of the four cases treated here one should also sustain a sideways glance at written languages which failed to acquire a critical mass of prose book writing even after they had had their Cato. Notker Labeo's elaborate translations from Latin to German from c. 1000 did not create any new space and had been forgotten when a thriving German book culture emerged in the thirteeenth century; medieval Danish remained an exotic experiment until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in spite of a strong opening with the *The Jutish Law* of 1241; Gothic was launched on a high level already in the fourth century with Wulfila's *New Testament*, but in spite of the interest and support of Gothic rulers during the fifth and sixth centuries never appears to have moved beyond sporadic document writing. With the wisdom of hindsight these can be thought of as false starts, but interestingly, they conform in their material to the successful cases: adaptations of classical texts, laws and Biblical translations formed the basis of the experiments.

While the four suggested short chronologies should be judged each on its own merit, their comparison in any case entails two other observations which are usually neglected in mono-lingual literary history. First, the rise of prose in a vernacular language (including Latin in Rome) cannot be accounted for without considering the division of labour between the learned/imperial language and the vernacular; it is not enough to refer to Greek/Latin as just a »source« or background for certain texts. There is a continuous dynamic between the new and the established which is operative centuries beyond the birth of a new prose literature. Secondly, the coincidence between the chronologies of Old French and Old Norse prose strongly suggests a connection. Influences from French literature on Old Norse have always to a certain extent and in specific cases been acknowledged, but the connection may be more about fundamental social values than just textual convergences. The whole idea of an aristocracy that appreciates stories and learning from vernacular books may simply be the same fashion expressed at the same time in two transregional elites with wide-ranging and overlapping overseas networks.

118 Written Old Norse gave way in the sixteenth century in Iceland to modern Icelandic and in Norway to Danish. As an early modern example of »slow conquest« of language domains one could refer to the role of Finnish: Mikael Agricola shaped the written prose language in his New Testament translation from 1548 (see Häkkinen, *Spreading the Written Word*), but Finnish prose, in both literature and scholarship only emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. Literary Finnish was in the meantime restricted to poetic forms, and the imperial languages, Swedish, German and Latin (and to a lesser degree Russian) were successfully shouldering the load of scholarly, scientific and fashionable literary prose in learned institutions and among the very restricted reading public with Finnish as a first or second language.

*2. Authorship and authority*

In broad outline all four literatures in question experienced a prose turn when storing and reading books (alone or aloud) *in that language* became attractive among the highest echelons of society. But the self-fashioning and social positioning through the new medium played out in two very different ways. In both classical literatures the emergence was tied to a rhetorically minded culture which shared a competitive public urban space (in Athens, Syracuse and Rome) and in which identifiable authorship was intrinsic to the success of prose. The new books (scrolls) were circulated in order to bolster individual social, political (and philosophical and scientific) positions: even when the real political or ideological effect was foreclosed, for instance through exile or other kinds of marginalization, the pursuit of honour and the justification of opinions were nonetheless amplified through writing as an extension of a persona of power (or previous or imagined power).

While anonymous or anonymised prose writings were the exception in the original expansive phases of prose in Greek and Latin, it was the rule in the decisive decades of the development of French and Old Norse. The medieval scenario turned on very different constellations of learning and learned personnel servicing the new aristocratic fashion. With a few exceptions such as *Sverris saga* and Villehardouin's *Chronicle,* the new vernacular prose literatures did not promote named authors (and rarely patrons), but instead provided the aristocracy with a rich anonymous historical, learned and fictional material which catered to entertainment, education and the formation of a collective memory across wars, travels, and generations.[119] Much of this anonymous material derived from translations and adaptations, both in French and Old Norse, and as such sometimes acknowledged ultimate authorship, ancient or medieval, though often only vaguely so.[120] The very fact of clerical/specialist intervention and the making of elaborate vernacular books for princely or other aristocratic collections seems to have lent the material sufficient authority in itself. As the perhaps most striking example of anonymisation we might quote the most widespread Old French chronicle produced in the first decades of prose, the adaptation of the archbishop William of Tyre's *Chronicon* (updated to 1184), the so-called *Éracles* (known in 51 medieval copies). William's original work bears the stamp of a clear authorial personality through his prefaces, opinions, moralization and his own presence in the text – one could almost call it homodiegetic history writing. This continues until the end when William became side-lined in the power-games of the Kingdom – in fact his work can be read as a very clear self-fashioning and self-promoting piece. The *Éracles* does not write William entirely out of the book, it is acknowledged in a couple of places that one William was behind the Latin original, but his eastern perspective, his learning, his opinions, and his own role in the history are completely obliterated.[121] What was wanted in Paris in 1220 was the web and chronology of crusader stories which could serve as an aristocratic and partly royal mirror as well as a collective memory, untainted by any disturbing authorial voice. This mode of anonymous, seemingly self-unwinding, story-

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119 *Sverris saga* was partly co-authored by King Sverrir to support his claim of legitimacy, cf. Bagge, *From Gang Leader,* 15-19. On the complex authorial presence of Villehardouin in his Chronicle, see Beer, *In their Own Words,* 38-56.

120 The *Prose Lancelot* circle borrows the authority of Walter Map, and *Li Fets des Romains* only occasionally credits its Latin models (cf. Beer, *In their Own Words*, 69 ff.).

121 Cf. Handyside, *Old French William of Tyre.*

telling was a main recipe of narrative prose in both Old French and Old Norse in the formative decades, both in translated and original pieces. Thus the first bursts of prose literatures were, respectively, very strongly authored (Greek and Latin) and very weakly so (Old French, Old Norse).

*3. Survival and canonization of poetic literature*

The emergence of prose book storing and reading habits exercised a profound impact on poetic literature, and one might say with Sander Goldberg, it helped constitute it as literature, or with Marisa Galvez, it turned songs (and songbooks) into a literary object.[122] The presence and dissemination of prose books drew previous poetic writing into a canon under formation and made sure that at least a few precious bits of it survived – the »librarized« book culture grammaticized poetry and enabled a poetological meta-discourse.

These effects can easily be exemplified in the Greek, Latin and Old Norse cases.[123] Homer was in one sense saved for posterity when the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were taken down in writing in the sixth century BCE (or seventh according to a majority of scholars) in one or two copies, but in another by the proliferation of the text by Plato's generation; the same holds true for the small corpus we possess of early Greek lyric poetry. The immense losses of fifth century drama from Athens and Syracuse speak for themselves: a few plays only survived because they became library and reading material in the fourth century; both epic and drama were canonized and theorized by Plato, Aristotle and other intellectuals during or after the breakthrough of prose. In Rome too we recognize these stages. The saving operation of third- and second-century BCE epic and drama was contemporary with the prose turn in the late second century and the rise of a (prose) grammatical and poetological meta-discourse. In Old Norse, skaldic verse owes its written existence to prose chronicles, and the *Edda* is only known from the prosimetric poetology by Snorri and a possibly contemporary anthology – all texts made possible by the success of prose. Occitan troubadour lyric also largely survived due to partly prosimetric anthologies from the thirteenth century (the Italian chansonnieres) and through its theorization by Ramon Vidal (exactly around 1200),[124] while the relationship between the long verse romance form and the success of prose, as discussed above, can be understood in at least two ways, both of which gives a significant role to early thirteenth-century vernacular book culture and reading habits.

*4. The power of prose books*

It has been assumed throughout this paper that books, including scrolls and booklets, with prose should be treated as a phenomenon distinct from shorter forms such as glosses, lists, inscriptions, and letters. The argument for this has mainly been one of storing and reading: prose books are written within a broader space of survival and use than a list, a gloss or a

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122 Goldberg, *Constructing Literature,* 18; Galvez, *Songbook*, 17.

123 This large question falls outside the scope of the present article and I can only just mention the new status of poetry as something that is quoted, anthologized and canonized in *writing* and its link to the prose turn. For comprehensive treatments of the major poetic forms within an established book culture I refer to Skafte Jensen, *Writing Homer,* 261-280; Goldberg, *Constructing Literature*; Nordal, *Tools of Literacy*; Armstrong and Kay, *Knowing Poetry*; Galvez, *Songbook.*

124 Cf. Galvez, *Songbook*, 57-97. For an excellent large-scale contextualisation of Ramon Vidal's »vernacular manifesto« *(Razos de trobar),* Beecroft, *Ecology of World Literature*, 168-170.

letter. Prose books for circulation also represent a different kind of written speech act than books of very restricted access such as poetic works, biblical translations and laws, all usually authorized by their poetic professionalism, their scriptural exegesis or the legal expertise of law-code keepers. Without a widened horizon of reading, the composition and copying of Thucydides' *History*, Scaurus' *Autobiography*, the *Éracles* and the *Legendary Saga of Olav,* and all of the other contemporary works listed above, make little sense.

The long-term effects of a successful prose mode are too many to be summarized here, and they can furthermore only be properly analysed for the entire system of relevant languages, because, to stay in this context, Greek remained a crucial resource for Latin, and Latin likewise for a large number of medieval and early modern European languages. But I would like to end by just mentioning at least two consequences of those distant dynamic starts which are still with us today.

One is related to the length and complex structuring of texts that prose enables on a larger scale than poetic forms. While long and complex poetic forms obviously existed both before and alongside prose texts, the sheer amount and flexibility of prose histories, biographies, diaries, romances, novels, treatises, instructions and more, adds continuously and immensely to an ever-growing cultural archive and memory in a discursive and accumulative mode that goes radically beyond what could be achieved by poetic forms. By the modern age prose writing has become such a given that it makes it difficult to understand why it is not natural; it is perceived as an integrated part of all written languages, and the almost infinite archive of prose texts of all sorts is understood as an equally natural part of cultural memory in that language. The accumulation of knowledge stored in writing saw a fresh start with the success of prose.

A qualitative point can also be made. Writing prose became a new way of thinking – one that is familiar to all academics and authors today. The creative side of writing longer texts is facilitated by the space opened up by prose between concepts, arguments and narrative; this potential was already fully exploited in the Greek prose turn while the other literatures in question took on new layers of complexity more gradually. From scientific, philosophical and theological texts on one hand to historical, biographical and fictional narratives on the other, one will always find a balance between a key conceptual framework, an argumentative and a narrative line; no argument is entirely without narrative, and no narrative entirely without an argument;[125] and neither arguments nor narrative can be sustained without being anchored in key concepts which are displayed and negotiated along the way. As most authors would agree, this way of thinking would not exist without prose writing.

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125 Lang, *Anatomy of Philosophical Style*; White, *Content of the Form.*

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# Could Isidore's Chronicle Have Delighted Cicero? A Response

Richard W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski*

In *Medieval Worlds* 3, Jesse W. Torgerson asks whether the work of Isidore of Seville, known in its several recensions as the *Chronica*, could have delighted Marcus Tullius Cicero.[1] Torgerson uses the first volume of our *Mosaics of Time* as a jumping-off point to think about the concept of genre, and about chronicles ancient and medieval. When we wrote this *Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from its Origins to the High Middle Ages,* we intended it as mere prolegomenon to the editions and commentaries that will follow in later volumes. As the volume grew into a full-length monograph and we dove into scholarly waters far from our native shores, we knew full well we would hit some rocky shoals along the way. We welcomed the controversy that we knew we would prompt in some circles, and we have since been extremely encouraged by the discussions and the challenges we have prompted, particularly amongst Byzantinists.[2] We approached Torgerson's piece in that same spirit. Trained as classicists and ancient historians, we were expecting a good scholarly rough and tumble, but we appreciate the decorous manner in which Torgerson unfolds what he takes to be critique. For our part, we are impressed by the way Torgerson delivers a remarkable amount of insight, into both genre theory and the work of Isidore, within a small compass. By contrast, we were somewhat disappointed in Torgerson's misapprehensions about our (admittedly very dense) argument in *Mosaics I*. It seems to us that Torgerson could easily have published his fascinating exposition of Isidore's thought without reference to a word we had written. When the editor of this journal kindly offered us the opportunity to clarify our position, we felt some obligation to do so: we wrote *Mosaics I* for multiple, sometimes highly compartmentalized, scholarly audiences, and we would not want the audience of medievalists to draw conclusions about our argument from misrepresentation rooted in misunderstanding.

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* **Correspondence details:** Richard W. Burgess, Department of Classics and Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, Desmarais Building, 55 Laurier Ave. East, Ottawa ON Canada K1N 6N5. Email: rburgess@uOttawa.ca. Michael Kulikowski, Department of History, Penn State University, 108E Weaver Building, University Park , PA 16802. Email: mek31@psu.edu.

1 Torgerson, Could Isidore's Chronicle Have Delighted Cicero?

2 E.g., Scott, Review: Weltchronik des Johannes Malalas; and *idem*, Byzantine Chronicles. See also various papers in Meier *et al., Weltchronik des Johannes Malalas*. Reviews have been universally constructive and engaged, and generally positive: Adler, Review: Burgess, R. W., and Michael Kulikowski; Brendel, Review: R. W. Burgess u.a.; Brix, Review: R. W. Burgess & Michael Kulikowski; Bruce, Review: R. W. Burgess, Michael Kulikowski; Fischer, Review: R. W. Burgess/Michael Kulikowski; Flower, Review: Mosaics of Time; Hilkens, Review: R. W. Burgess and M. Kulikowski; Kelly, Review: Mosaics of Time. It is the engagement with our arguments, rather than the approbation, that is essential.

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Torgerson frames his article as a defence of the chronicle (as medievalists understand the word) against our seeming depreciation of it by comparison to the classical genre (or the ›Ancient Greek Chronicle‹ as he calls it, though the latter is not a *terminus technicus* in anything we have ever written). After attempting to summarize our argument, he proceeds to a miracle of scholarly compression, in three excellent pages outlining current genre theory. We wholeheartedly endorse the conclusions Torgerson draws from Daniel Chandler[3] and John Frow[4], and especially from the excellent textbook of Anis Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff[5], a book we recommend to anyone in need of orientation in the field.[6] No one can doubt that, to borrow the language Torgerson quotes from Frow, genre has a social existence and exists in the space created by an author's model for writing and a reader's horizon of expectation (*mutatis mutandis* the same thing is true of all speech acts). We are unaware of having denied the socially negotiated/constructed nature of genre (or rather its ›ontology‹ to use the modish formulation), in *Mosaics I* or elsewhere. But if we inadvertently did so, we hereby and happily retract. In the same way, we would by and large also accept the way Torgerson characterizes Isidore's characterization of what he (Isidore) was trying to achieve in his chronicles, not least because it closely follows the virtuoso interpretation of Henderson's *Medieval World of Isidore of Seville*[7]. Again, who could dispute that one can extract from Isidore's own words in the *Etymologies* a political and time-bound as well as a teleological and eschatological meaning, in all his recensions of the *Chronica* and in his discussion of generic words in the *Etymologies.* The precise interpretation elaborated by Henderson might be subject to dispute, but as a heuristic for discussing Isidore's possible authorial intentions (also his expectations about the expectations of his audience), it cannot be gainsaid.

But let us turn now to the relevance of *Mosaics* to all this, such as it is. Below we present a brief summary of what we believe ourselves to have argued in *Mosaics*, both about the chronicle genre and about why we regard the recensions of Isidore's so-called *Chronica* as a different, and indeed new, genre. We don't propose to engage with the individual misstatements in Torgerson's text and notes, lest we seem to pick and choose only the most embarrassing. We do, however, invite interested readers (of whom there cannot be many) to read the first eighty pages of *Mosaics I* and compare them with the respective summaries. There is, however, one misprision that must be corrected explicitly at the start. On his pages 74-75, Torgerson suggests that we reject the possibility of a text's being an ›Ancient Greek Chronicle‹ (again, his not our *terminus technicus*) if it has an indelibly Christian structure. If what Torgerson means by his ›Ancient Greek Chronicle‹ is ›pre-Christian‹ then, on the purely lexical plane, that is a perfectly defensible tautology. But, one wonders, is Torgerson suggesting that we regard (his) ›Ancient Greek Chronicle‹ genre as an ideal from which divergence represents decline, and that *a fortiori* we not only depreciate Christian chronicles but actually deny them status as chronicles?

3 Chandler, *Introduction to Genre Theory.*

4 Frow, *Genre.*

5 Bawarshi and Reiff, *Genre.*

6 We recommend it especially to those late medievalists we have met who, working with late medieval and early Renaissance vernacular sources, assert that there is no such thing as genre. We would also recommend that in addition to textbooks Torgerson consult Claudio Guillén's seminal *Literature as System,* which turned György Lukács strictures on the mediation of genre into a functional hermeneutic tool.

7 Henderson, *Medieval Worlds of Isidore of Seville.*

We do not. Had we done so, we should have had little rational motive for taking our discussion down to Sigebert of Gembloux in the twelfth century. Indeed, *Mosaics I* is replete with examples of indelibly Christian chronicles (not surprisingly, as there had ceased to be non-Christians writing Latin, Greek, or Syriac chronicles after the sixth century at the latest). That is, we nowhere argue for the inferiority or superiority of any one genre, still less any temporal instantiation of any one genre.[8] Christian chronicles exist, and they are not inferior to non- or pre-Christian chronicles. We have never argued nor will ever argue the contrary. We *are*, however, arguing that no recension of the Isidorian work generally known as the *Chronica* is a chronicle by our definition.[9] To contend that we do so because Isidore's work is indelibly Christian is to manifest a preference for fighting strawmen rather than engaging with scholarship.

Let us be very clear. Indelibly Christian works can be chronicles and were. But the indelibly Christian Isidore of Seville never wrote a chronicle.

Onward, then to our definition of the chronicle genre. We derive it from the characteristics of extant early works, which contemporaries described with the term ›χρονικά/*chronica*‹. They had in turn derived that title/descriptor from the title of a popular Greek work, now extant only in fragments and attestations, written by Apollodorus in the second century BC. Chief among the extant works from whose characteristics we derive our definitions are the *Chronici canones* of Eusebius of Caesarea (325) and its translation by Jerome (381), along with the many late Roman continuations of Jerome, from Prosper of Aquitaine to John of Biclar (433 to 605). Having begun there, we then subsumed within this chronicle genre other extant works that shared its characteristics. These works are the Babylonian Chronicle series and many other early Assyrian and Babylonian chronological works; the Parian Marble (263 BC); fragments of Greek Olympiad chronicles on papyrus from the second and third centuries AD covering the fourth to third centuries BC; the chronicle of Phlegon of Tralles of the mid second century AD; epigraphic Latin consularia of the first century BC and first century AD; later manuscript consularia in both Latin and Greek from 342 to 630; the *Chronographia* of Theophanes (ca. 814); literally hundreds of medieval Latin chronicles that medievalists have tended to call ›annals‹ since the days of Georg Pertz; and many of the very late Byzantine *Kleinchroniken*. Observe that this list includes Christian as well as non- and pre-Christian texts. Indelible Christianity is an irrelevance to the definition of the genre.

The characteristics shared by all these texts are as follows, and no one of these characteristics is on its own sufficient to make a text a chronicle. Our definition (which is argued for at length in *Mosaics I* pp. 8-58, 278-96), is briefly as follows:

1. The first and fundamental characteristic of a chronicle is its preoccupation with time, χρόνος. Therefore, every chronicle provides an explicit and often elaborate annalistic chronological structure. The unit into which events are lemmatized is the year. This chronological framework is primary; the content secondary. When practical, therefore, every year can be noted, even if no content exists for some or many years. Conversely, content that cannot be dated cannot be included. That is, chronology can exist without content, but content cannot exist without chronology.

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8 Torgerson seems here to be channeling unconsciously the discourse of Georg Pertz in the earlier nineteenth century and R. L. Poole in the earlier twentieth, best characterized as Medievalist Inferiority Complex: this manifests as a need to defend whatever (putatively medieval) genre one is considering against tacit comparison to the glories of Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, or Tacitus. We have no dog in this fight.

9 We find that definition reasonable, but others have not, and the ensuing debate has helped us refine our thoughts.

2. Within these explicitly marked annalistic structures, the events of each year are briefly noted in chronological order. It is this unusual attention to the chronological succession of time that gives the χρονικά its name, since no other historical genre prioritizes specific chronologies and the natural succession of time in the way that chronicles do.[10] However, brevity is not a term that can be defined precisely, and different authors and compilers understood the concept differently: some, like Eusebius, offered only a sentence or two per event or even per year; others, like the compilers of Olympiad chronicles, were more expansive in recounting the detailed events of each year. For that reason, chronicles can fill a single book or many books. But in comparison to classicizing narrative histories, all are very brief recountings of the past.

3. The starting point is ›the beginning‹, however that is defined, whether it be the beginning of the world, as in Babylonian or Christian chronicles, or the beginning of history, as from the first Attic king, the first Olympiad, the Trojan War, or Abraham the first Christian.

4. The end point is usually, if not invariably, quite near to the time of the writer.

5. As a function of points 1 to 4, chronicles are extensive in their chronological coverage – if not in the work of an individual chronicler, then in the chain of works to which an individual chronicler was contributing or continuing. The extensiveness of chronology tends necessarily to give the chronicle genre an air of ›universal‹ coverage. It is, however, a mistake to think that universality is the fundamental characteristic of a chronicle. Other kinds of historical works (like Isidore's, or the Byzantine Cedrenus and Zonaras) are ›universal‹ in the same way, but they are not chronicles. The fundamental characteristic of the chronicle is *not* ›universality‹, but instead its formal treatment of time. That formality is what makes it unique. (As a corollary, and because of this extensive chronological coverage, chronicles are never considered as complete, finished works, but are simply ever-continuing records of history: the tendency to produce continuations of pre-existing chronicles goes back at least to Apollodorus.)

6. Finally, as a result of points 4 and 5, chronicles are also characterized by parataxis: ›and‹ rather than ›because‹; (Barthesian) *consécution* rather than *conséquence*. This parataxis leads to the close textual juxtaposition of what have been called ›incommensurables‹: events of differing natures and importance sit side by side, a local drought beside the succession of a king. This is the natural result of a brief annalistic record of the past preserved in chronological order.

As should be clear, Cicero's remarks on Atticus' chronicle, which Torgerson appears to think have crucial bearing on our definition, in fact have no such bearing whatsoever. Our reading of Cicero, and indeed of Atticus, plays no role in our definition of the chronicle genre. Atticus' chronicle survives solely in dubious fragments and attestations, but enough does survive to demonstrate that it shared the characteristics with which we define chronicle (see the foregoing points 1 to 6). We quote Cicero to make only one point, a point that has nothing to do with defining the chronicle genre but instead addresses the insecurity or status anxiety expressed by scholars writing on chronicles, from R. L. Poole, to Michael McCormick, to recent encyclopedias on the subject. That anxiety derives from a very old, and

10 For a critical appreciation of subjective (Augustinian) vs. natural (Aristotelian) time, and the relevance of each to history, see the literary critic Fredric Jameson's *Valences of the Dialectic*, 473-612, which wrestles more effectually with Husserl and Heidegger than most philosophers of history have managed.

frankly spurious, contrast between annalist or chronicler on the one hand, and proper historian on the other. That is to say, we quote Cicero to demonstrate that educated writers of the highest calibre (among whom we also include Cassiodorus) did not reflexively look down their nose at chronicles, and that was the case because they considered the chronicle to be a specific genre with specific generic functions. The chronicle of Atticus could obviously not do what a history like Livy's could do, but the reverse was equally true, and that observation involved (and involves) no value judgement. For Cicero, the virtue of Atticus' chronicle was to have provided a clear, distinctive, and easy-to-use annalistic superstructure within which to contain a highly selective and abridged version of Roman history, a Roman history that was in more expansive form already well known to Cicero. The chronicle allowed one to grasp the temporal relationship of known historical events with an ease and clarity that one had to extract laboriously from narrative history. As we noted above, it is its unique presentation of chronology that distinguishes a chronicle from all other forms of history, and we can see from Cicero's treatises that it was precisely Atticus' presentation of chronology that so delighted him, allowing him to hopscotch through Roman history. We know from other comments that Cicero did not think chronicles were a substitute for history, but he did believe there was nothing better than a chronicle for seeing *explicatis ordinibus temporum uno in conspectu omnia.*[11]

There is no need to continue. Interested readers can look at *Mosaics I* p. 63-187 for the stages by which we arrive at our definition, and at p. 20-62 for our taxonomy of genre.[12] From the foregoing, it should be clear that Isidore never wrote a work that fits our definition of a chronicle, and the fact that he never wrote one has nothing to do with his indelibly Christian content. In all three editions/recensions, Isidore's basic chronological unit was the patriarch/king/judge/emperor, not the year. He houses these chronological units (rather ineffectually) within a simple count of the number of years since the creation of the world, noted at the end of each leader's life or reign, just as anyone today would list the year BC or AD of each leader's birth or accession. For Isidore, it was the content that was primary, not the chronology. To all intents and purposes, his was simply an annotated list of the succession of leaders from Adam to the Byzantine emperors of his own day. This list and its random historical annotations matter; the chronology is incidental. It is of course true that his historical content is largely derived from Jerome, but that does not make Isidore's work a chronicle. It is closer to the annotated and extended Biblical genealogies that originate at least as early as the *Liber generationis* of AD 235 and that enjoyed a massive vogue in Byzantium from the ninth century onwards. Because Isidore (and Bede, after him and in part because of him) both took some inspiration, some chronology, and some content from the chronicle, while entirely disregarding its chief structural characteristics, we regard him as founding a new genre. In *Mosaics I*, we called this genre ›chronicle epitome‹, though we have already been rethinking that choice in the face of reasoned criticism from reviewers and debates with Byzantinist colleagues. Now, Torgerson's feat of misconstrual confirms that we need to find a different term that better conveys generic distinctness, and thus provokes debate rather than error.

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11 That Cicero illustrates an ancient author (and reader) discussing how he read and used a work that fits our definition of a chronicle is wholly secondary. The definition precedes the examination of Cicero.

12 See also a defence and refinement of these definitions, particularly with reference to Byzantine universal historiography, accompanied by extensive, analytical excerpts from most surviving such works, in Burgess, Origin and Development.

Finally, though, could Isidore's ›chronicle‹ have delighted Cicero? Isidore has many merits, as demonstrated most recently by Henderson, but none of the things for which Cicero praised Atticus can be accomplished with it – one cannot correlate the dates of different events at a glance, or work out how long before or after event *x* event *y* took place. That Isidore's Augustinian thought-world was entirely alien to Cicero is neither here nor there, nor is the fact that Roman history as Cicero understood it is effectively absent. What matters is that the continuous annalistic chronology that made Atticus so useful has been stripped out of the Isidorian chronographic frame altogether, at which point nothing Cicero could recognize as historical remains.

Delight Cicero? Isidore would have puzzled him momentarily. Then he would have turned the page and scribbled his shopping list on the verso.

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# Revisiting Pre-Modern Ethnicity and Nationhood: Preface

Ilya Afanasyev* and Nicholas S. M. Matheou**

The articles published here are the first studies to emerge from a project begun a few years ago with a conference we organised around revisiting the old debate over ›ethnicity‹ and ›nationhood‹ before ›modernity‹. Our starting point was a historiographical paradox: over the last few decades there has been a steady stream of publications on pre-modern ethnicity and national identity. Despite this fact, however, the same period saw the establishment of ›modernism‹ – the view that nationhood is an essentially modern phenomenon, non-existent or unimportant before ›modernity‹ – as the dominant paradigm in ethnicity and nationalism studies (Anderson, Breuilly, Gellner, Hobsbawm). We found ourselves somewhat dissatisfied with both the hegemonic modernist paradigm and the way scholars of pre-modern history studying ›ethnicity‹ and ›nationhood‹ were responding to it. We do not have space to go into a detailed critique of this vast historiographic field (or, rather, fields), but, to put it very briefly, modernism appears highly problematic because it ignores or caricatures pre-modern evidence for collective identifications and ethnonational phenomena, as well as, more dangerously, reifying the ›nation‹ as an objective product of ›modernity‹, tangible and out-there-in-the-world, in spite of the superficially constructivist language of the modernist canon's classics, not least the famous ambiguity of Anderson's ›imagined communities‹. At the same time, the various responses to modernism seem either outright detrimental or otherwise not fully satisfactory, not least for their failure to unsettle the hegemony of modernists. Any form of primordialism only serves to compound the problem, whether by asserting the general existence of ancient or medieval ›nations‹, or identifying the first nation(alism) and/or ›nation-state‹ in the shape of some particular pre-modern polity/identification. ›Third-way‹ approaches, most commonly based on Anthony D. Smith's prolific theorising, are similarly unhelpful, accepting the ›modernist‹ paradigm that restricts ›real‹ nations to the modern and contemporary worlds, while asserting ancient and medieval ›ethnicity‹ in the form of ethno-cultural groups or *ethnie*. Thus the primordialist teleology reappears in a different guise, as ancient and medieval *ethnie* are seen to develop inexorably into modern nations, while those that ›failed‹ are explained away by their essentially ›non-ethnic‹ characteristics. Finally, while scholars suggesting that we should take medieval evidence on collective identifications on its own terms have produced impressive conceptual and empirical work (to which our project is self-evidently indebted), ultimately this position leads to a theoretically untenable and historiographically self-defeating parochialism. Even if it was ever possible to discuss pre-modern evidence on its own terms, this approach restricts the relevance of researching pre-modern collective identifications to self-contained fields that cannot aspire to seriously challenge dominant paradigms in ethnicity and nationalism studies.

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* Ilya Afanasyev, Birmingham Research Institute for History and Cultures, School of History and Cultures, Arts Building, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, UK, B15 2TT. Email: I.Afanasyev@bham.ac.uk.

** Nicholas S.M. Matheou, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, 197 Goldhurst Terrace, London, UK, NW6 3ER. Email: nicholas.matheou@pmb.ox.ac.uk.

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Alongside these theoretical considerations a central problem with research on pre-modern collective identifications is the artificial chronological boundaries within the field itself. These divisions have created sometimes widely differing approaches, only loosely brought together by common reference to the few existing synoptic studies of pre-modern collective identities, such as those by Smith. These artificial chronological boundaries, and the different approaches taken by each sub-discipline, in themselves contribute to further false teleologies – whereby, in the post-Roman West for example, the image is that of early medieval ›ethnic groups‹, central medieval ›communities of the realm‹, and late medieval/early modern *nationes.* When our conference ›Identity, Ethnicity and Nationhood before Modernity: Old Debates and New Perspectives‹ took place in April 2015, we hoped that by bringing together specialists of varying periods, we would problematise these artificial distinctions, deconstruct such false teleologies, and create a real basis for cross-comparison. Out of the conference we developed an international research network based at The Oxford Centre for the Humanities (TORCH) that includes established, leading figures in the field, as well as young scholars engaged with the theme (torch.ox.ac.uk/identity). All members subscribe to common notion that there is much more to be done with integrating pre-modern examples into the broader field, as well as in developing further cooperation between scholars working on different regions, periods and materials relevant to the debate over modern and pre-modern ethnic phenomena.

The articles brought together here – four of which originate in papers presented at the conference – reflect this intention, ranging the full span of the middle ages from Late Antiquity to the fifteenth century. James M. Harland's contribution starts us in the fourth to sixth centuries, with the much disputed reconfiguration of self-identifications in the period between the end of Roman imperial rule and the emergence of ›Anglo-Saxon England‹. The author masterfully deconstructs both literary and archaeological approaches that seek to construct and reify the image of a fixed ›postcolonial‹ British identification, one which explicitly Others both the Roman imperial order and incoming ›Germanic‹ Anglo-Saxons. But rather than stop at a simple deconstruction, Harland goes on to demonstrate that there *are* salient identifications and semiotic systems present in both literary and material evidence, not in terms of fixed ethnicities, but of new military ideologies grounded in particular iterations of Romanness and respondent to specific conjunctural conditions.

Patrick Wadden's article takes us across the sea to early medieval Ireland, addressing the undeniable fact that from the earliest seventh-century Irish texts onwards there are consistent discursive explorations of Irish historic unity as an ›imagined community‹ – so much so that it appears that learned elites ›were preoccupied with this very notion‹. Traversing the various instantiations, the author shows how, despite differences in specifics, each variation attempts to deal with perceived ethno-cultural unity among the scholars writing early Irish texts and their patrons in the political elite, despite the social reality of political and ecclesiastical fragmentation. Yet Wadden shows how this perceived ›national unity‹ is likely to have been novel (and not without opponents drawing on older traditions that ethnicised different social-legal classes), having been ›forged by seventh-century churchmen‹ in specific times and places for specific purposes. Claire Weeda's contribution moves us into the central middle ages, examining both synchronically and diachronically how monks in continental Europe from the tenth century on constructed discourses of ethnic stereotypes – the characteristics, virtues and vices of various peoples. In the new context of the ›Twelfth Century Renaissance‹, however, and under the influence of Galen's views on the body and its humours, writers began to tie these stereotypes to bodily characteristics and bodies' climactic conditioning.

As such, they developed a discourse in which the body's materiality – and its concomitant ability to act as a stand-in ›ethnotype‹ – was instrumentalised as part of a conjunctural redefinition of ethnic phenomena, a moment in the ›constant process that engages with social reality and at the same time shapes it‹.

Ioannis Stouraitis' article brings much needed perspectives from the eastern medieval world, in the shape of the Eastern Roman Empire or ›Byzantium‹. The author explicitly situates his material in the context of the broader debate over ethnicity and nationhood before modernity, as well as the emerging debate within Byzantine studies over the nature of ›Byzantine Romanness‹, forcefully argued in recent scholarship to be an example of medieval nationhood. Ranging from the seventh to fifteenth centuries, and across various times, places and sources, Stouraitis argues instead that despite the undisputed continuity of Roman self-identification in the eastern empire, this is a remarkable case of radical transformation in a pre-modern social order's collective identity discourse, with shifting social conditions in each conjuncture producing very different content and associations for the Roman category. Finally, Andrea Ruddick's contribution turns to late medieval England, and the phenomenon of actors ›becoming English‹ by changing in political allegiance, despite dominant contemporary discourses' construction of ›racial‹ understandings of ethnic phenomena and nationhood, grounded in birth, blood, and heredity. The author demonstrates how these apparently anomalous formulations are intended to highlight the antithetical quality of actors changing allegiances to those other than their ›natural‹ national identification. Indeed, the fixed and essentialised understandings of ethnicity were such that, Ruddick argues, even denization – a kind of ›civic naturalisation‹ granting the rights of native-born English – did not change how such actors were perceived, but merely permitted them to be treated in certain circumstances *as if* they were English, leaving them vulnerable to persecution in moments of ›national‹ wars and revolts.

These articles then provide a more than fitting start to the project of revisiting both modern and pre-modern ethnicity and nationhood. We are currently in the process of editing a volume specially dedicated to this topic. There we will provide an in-depth theoretical critique of previous approaches and set out a new direction able to both recognise the socially-constructed nature of ethnic phenomena across time and place, as well as their potentiality to be turned into a material force under specific political-economic, social, cultural and ideological conditions.

# »Becoming English«: Nationality, Terminology, and Changing Sides in the Late Middle Ages

Andrea Ruddick*

Late medieval English chronicles contain several puzzling references to the idea of people ›becoming English‹ by changing allegiance, usually in the context of war. How does this fit in with the predominantly ›racial‹ understanding of nationhood that permeated late-medieval English literary texts and official rhetoric, based on well-established ideas about birth, blood and heredity? These assumptions provided a powerfully persistent backdrop to late-medieval English writers' constructions of national identity and culture, which had an impact not only in literary spheres but also on government rhetoric and policy. Was it possible for a person to change nationality by changing sides? It is argued that these scattered references by certain chroniclers to ›becoming‹ English, French or Scottish refer not to an actual change in nationality as a legal and political status but act as a shorthand way of describing an anomalous change of political allegiance. Such instances of changing sides went against the grain of the political behaviour expected from a person born into a certain nationality but they did not change that nationality, which was associated with blood and birth. The essay goes on to examine the language of denization, by which foreigners were granted the legal rights and privileges of a native-born English person. From a close examination of the range of Latin vocabulary used in official documents, it is argued that even denization did not effect a change in the perceived nationality of the recipient, but only allowed for them to be treated as if they were English, in certain circumstances. Moreover, this new legal status did not automatically remove the alien social and cultural identity of recipients in the eyes of local political society, particularly at times of political tension such as the Glyn Dŵr revolt in Wales or outbreaks of war with France. By teasing out the implications of these puzzling uses of language and terminology, it is possible to refine and complicate our understanding of the intersection of ideas about race, subject-hood, allegiance, and nationality in both the texts and the politics of late medieval England.

*Keywords: nationality; medieval England; English; race; ethnicity; national identity; war; denization; Welsh; allegiance; aliens; immigration*

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* **Correspondence details:** Dr Andrea Ruddick, Exeter College, Oxford, OX1 3DP. Email: andrea.ruddick@exeter.ox.ac.uk / andrearuddick.online@googlemail.com.

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This paper began life as a puzzle. When, in 1355, the Northumbrian knight Sir Thomas Gray was captured by the Scots and imprisoned in Edinburgh castle, he decided to make productive use of his captivity by beginning to write a chronicle, which became the *Scalacronica.*[1] At one point in this account of the Anglo-Scottish wars, he used a surprising phrase. Describing how the earl of March changed sides in 1333, Gray wrote that the earl ›became English‹ (or, in his original French, *deueint Engles*).[2] Why is this surprising? In late medieval England, much of the written evidence – literary, ecclesiastical and governmental - points to an understanding of national identity along the lines of what might today be described as an ›essentialist‹ model. That is, Englishness was most commonly assumed by contemporary writers to be something that a person was born with, rather than something that could change.[3]

Ethnographic discourse differed across time and space in medieval Europe in respect of the relative importance placed on the possible defining features of a people, such as descent, law, language, customs, and territory.[4] Late medieval English identity certainly entailed a geo-political dimension. From at least the mid-thirteenth century, references to the English people in official rhetoric were increasingly closely associated with the kingdom of England and to the rule of the English king.[5] However, a great deal of the language used to describe the English people also reflected what we might now call racial thinking. Birth was a dominant theme; both birthplace, usually within the kingdom of England, and birth to English parents. More than this, ideas about birth, blood, descent, and heritage were frequently (although not always) used to explain the different cultural characteristics of the English, their neighbours, and their enemies.[6] Some historians, notably Robert Bartlett, have argued that from around the late-fourteenth century, there was a shift in European political thought from a flexible cultural definition of peoples in terms of laws, customs and language to a more rigidly biological and racial understanding of what constituted a people.[7] With regard to medieval England, however, assumptions about the role of race and heredity in defining Englishness can be detected as early as the twelfth century in the work of chroniclers such as Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury.[8] Even English chroniclers' acknowledgement of the hybrid nature of the English people, following multiple waves of invasion and settlement, reinforced this basically racial understanding of what defined a people, as the ›mixed‹ background of the English was cited by chroniclers as a way to explain some of their character traits, such as instability and a propensity to regicide.[9] Thus even perceived changes to national character were explained using a racial model, and English identity was generally assumed to be an essential, immutable fact, fixed at birth rather than something

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1 Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. King.

2 Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. King, 116-117.

3 An argument I have developed at length elsewhere, e.g. Ruddick, *English Identity.*

4 Bartlett, Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race, 47-48; Bartlett, *Making of Europe,* 197-198; Pohl, *Strategies of Distinction*, 17-18; Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 257.

5 Ruddick, *English Identity*, 183-204.

6 Ruddick, *English Identity*, 132-155.

7 Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 197-8, 236-241; Kim, *Aliens in Medieval Law,* 9-15.

8 Gillingham, *English in the Twelfth Century.*

9 Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. King, 95-97; *Brut*, ed. Brie, 220; *Polychronicon*, II, ed. Babington and Lumby, 164-166; Ruddick, *English Identity*, 140-141.

that could change. This is not to say that all people in medieval England thought in the same way about being English in every context; simply that most writing about national identity at the time was underpinned by these assumptions. All of which makes Sir Thomas Gray's comment somewhat puzzling on first inspection.

Their essentialist content notwithstanding, these expressions and constructions of national sentiment in medieval chronicles, sermons, poetry and official rhetoric primarily drew on and appealed to subjective ideas about belonging culturally, historically, and sometimes racially to the English people. From the late fourteenth century, however, a more objective official definition of ›nationality‹ as a legal status was also emerging. Initially, English nationality law developed in a fairly *ad hoc* way, often in response to changing social or political circumstances. In the mid-fourteenth century, for example, in the midst of military campaigns in France, parliament issued legislation to confirm the English nationality of children born to English parents overseas, including two royal princes.[10] As different circumstances and questions arose, the official definition of English nationality was gradually refined. If anything, however, special provision in these exceptional cases only served to emphasise that the norm was for English nationality to be defined by birth in England, to English parents.[11] What also gradually emerged over the later middle ages was the idea of certain rights and privileges associated with legal English nationality. This included the right to trade freely, to use English courts, and the ability to buy and sell property and pass it on to one's heirs. These privileges became more clearly defined by virtue of occasionally being granted to foreigners, through a process which became known as denization. By the end of the fourteenth century, the acquisition of these rights by foreigners had also become associated with a more formal change of allegiance to the English crown.[12] Consequently, what had emerged by the end of the fourteenth century was an increasingly well-defined package of these rights and privileges, which English people automatically acquired by birth but which could also be granted to foreigners in special circumstances. Whether this made them ›English‹ or not, however, is open to question.

The situation was further complicated in medieval England by the fact that the kingdom of England was not the only political structure through which power was mediated by the English crown. As is well known, the king of England also claimed dominion over a number of other lands, as, for example, duke of Normandy (until 1204), lord of Ireland (from 1171), overlord of Scotland (expressed more assertively from 1296), lord of the Channel Islands, and duke of Aquitaine (from 1154), a title he retained even after his claim to the French throne in 1337. Consequently, although all English people were subjects of the king of England, not all subjects of the king of England were English. This created an ambiguous relationship in English official rhetoric between specifically English national identity and the broader notion of political allegiance – or, as I have called it elsewhere, allegiant identity – which did not always coincide.[13] Once again, however, these anomalous situations only served to reinforce the underlying assumption that English nationality was something a person was born with, and which remained unchanged, even if their allegiance shifted.

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10 *PROME,* Edward III: Parliament of April 1343, item 19, ed. Ormrod; *PROME,* Edward III: Parliament of February 1351, item 41, ed. Ormrod; *Statutes of the Realm*, I, ed. Raithby, 310; Griffiths, English Realm and Dominions, 89, 93-95.

11 Ruddick, *English Identity*, 100-108; Parry, *British Nationality Law*, 5-13.

12 Ormrod and Lambert, Friendly Foreigners, 1-24.

13 Ruddick, *English Identity*, 217-256.

What, then, are we to make of comments such as Thomas Gray's about the earl of March, which seem to suggest that a person had ›become English‹? Cases of denization, too, are sometimes portrayed by historians as if they had effected a real change in the recipient's nationality. Could a person really ›become English‹ in the late middle ages? The rest of this paper explores some instances where medieval writers – and modern historians – have used the language of ›becoming English‹ in an attempt to answer to this question, looking first at some further occurrences of ›becoming English‹ in literary contexts before turning to an official perspective and examining the language of denization. By scrutinising these examples, what started out as one historian's growing collection of puzzling case-studies can help to refine our understanding of the intersection of ideas about race, subject-hood, allegiance, and nationality in late medieval England.

First, then, some more literary references to ›becoming English‹. These invariably come in the context of a person or group changing sides during the Hundred Years War against France and the related Anglo-Scottish conflict. For example, in a newsletter sent home from France by Henry of Lancaster, the earl of Derby, in 1346, Lancaster recorded the capture of the French town of St Jean d'Angély by the English, as a result of which ›those of the town swore an oath to us and became English‹.[14] Thomas Gray also used similar phrases elsewhere in *Scalacronica* to describe shifts of allegiance and, in one case, the opposite: Robert de Bruce's nephew Thomas Randolph, the future earl of Moray, was captured at the battle of Methven in 1306 but released and ›remained English‹ *(demora Engles)*, at least until his recapture by the Scots in 1308.[15] Another example is provided by the case of Peter Libaud, the constable of Edinburgh castle at the time of its siege in 1314, who had reportedly ›become Scottish in the allegiance *(a la foy)* of Robert de Bruce‹.[16] In these examples, as in the case of the earl of March, it seems fairly clear that these writers did not mean that those who switched sides had literally changed their nationality of birth. What is much more likely is that the language of ›becoming‹ English or Scottish acted as a shorthand for a shift in allegiance. The chosen form of this shorthand reflected the contemporary assumption that opposing sides in a conflict were largely made up of two clearly defined national groups. This use of the phrase is particularly evident in Gray's descriptions of Peter Libaud, whom he variously described as ›English‹ or ›Scottish‹, depending on his allegiance at the time, until Libaud's eventual execution for treason because Robert Bruce suspected that Libaud ›had always been English at heart.‹[17] These shifts in classification occur despite the fact that, as Gray and every other chronicler who mentions him make clear, Libaud was in fact neither English nor Scottish by birth, but Gascon.[18] In other words, the term ›English‹ here was an abbreviated reference to being on the king of England's side, which reinforced the idea of a world in which political loyalties usually fell along national lines, even though the writers were well aware that reality was often more complex.

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14 Robertus de Avesbury, *De Gestis Mirabilus*, ed. Thomson, 373.

15 Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. King, 53-55 and 222, n. 31. See also Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. King, 177 (English soldiers who had captured the French commander Lewis de Harcourt in the Black Prince's 1359-1360 campaign in Normandy released him and ›deueint Fraunceis‹).

16 Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. King, 73. For further biographical details of Peter Libaud, see Ruddick, Gascony and the Limits, 81.

17 Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica*, ed. King, 73.

18 E.g. Galbraith, Extracts From *Historia Aurea*, 210; *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, ed. Denholm-Young, 48; John Barbour, *Bruce*, ed. Duncan, 376-379, 398-399.

This is not unlike the way in which, elsewhere in chronicles, writers repeatedly demonstrated their understanding that the ›English‹ army was made up of a mixture of nationalities, which included not only Gascon subjects but also Welsh archers and foreign mercenaries.[19] Nonetheless, chroniclers always reverted to the simple convention of describing the two sides as ›the English‹ and ›the French‹ or ›the Scots‹ when it came to composing battle accounts.[20] This figurative sense of ›becoming English‹ to mean a change of allegiance to the English side is also reinforced by a more light-hearted use of the phrase by Henry Knighton, the Augustinian canon and chronicler, in the late fourteenth century. Knighton repeated the well-known political joke about the Anglo-French conflict that ›the pope has become French and Jesus has become English!‹[21] In other words, the language of ›becoming‹ English – or French or Scottish - was used in these contexts to signal allegiance, and not to express a change in a person's nationality or, indeed, in their ethno-cultural self-identification. Nationality, in the sense of a legal status assigned by birthplace and parentage, remained a separate category from allegiance in chroniclers' minds even if the latter might sometimes be given a ›national‹ label as a convenient shorthand.

In fact, the language of ›becoming English‹ is relatively rare in English sources, aside from the few chronicles and newsletter cited above. However, it does crop up in some contemporary French governmental sources, where it is used in a very similar way. One such example is the case of Hannequin de Bos, a Frenchman who was captured by the English in 1385 while on an expedition to Scotland. According to the French judicial records, de Bos was persuaded by his English captors to ›become English and to take the side of the English‹ *(d'estre Englez et de tenir la partie de Engles)* by becoming a spy. He was evidently not a very good spy, however, as we know about his case from the records of his confession before his execution by the French in 1390.[22] The language of becoming English was similarly used to denote a change of allegiance in a case that was heard by the Paris Parlement in 1437. In this case, the Parlement blocked the marriage of a young Frenchwoman called Jeanette Roland to an English soldier she had met during the occupation of the city. The marriage was forbidden by the Parlement on the grounds that they could not allow Jeanette to ›become English‹ *(devenir anglesche)* by marrying an English soldier during the war.[23] Was marriage to an Englishman enough to change this woman's nationality? In England at the time, marriage to an English person in itself did not change an alien spouse's nationality, although it might bring certain legal or financial protections.[24] Alien wives were exempt from the alien subsidies of the 1440s, for example, but were still regarded as aliens and thus in need of exemption in the first place. In this French case, what seems to have triggered the use of the phrase ›become English‹ was not the marriage itself but its wartime context, which would have involved allowing a French subject to leave one kingdom and ally herself to another.

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19 Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, 92-95, 99-100, 108-110, 112, 183-184.

20 Ruddick, *English Identity,* 152.

21 *Knighton's Chronicle*, ed. Martin, 150 [my translation]; Barnie, *War in Medieval Society*, 12; McKenna, How God Became an Englishman, 30.

22 Alban and Allmand, Spies and Spying, 84.

23 Bossuat, L'idée de nation, 55. I am grateful to Dr Craig Taylor for drawing my attention to this reference.

24 Ruddick, Immigrants and Inter-Marriage.

These examples are few and far between, spanning a century-long time range, and coming from opposite sides of the Channel and several different genres of writing. Nevertheless, it is striking that the language of ›becoming English‹ seems to have been used by French authorities in the above cases in much the same way that it was used by fourteenth-century English writers. Given that the comparative rarity of the phrase in English chronicles, it is notable that both Sir Thomas Gray and Henry of Lancaster were members of the aristocratic military classes who participated in Edward III's wars. Henry of Lancaster spent much of his adult life serving Edward III overseas and although Gray spent the greater part of his career on the Anglo-Scottish borders, he also served in Flanders in 1338-40 and in France in 1359.[25] It is possible to speculate that the vocabulary of ›becoming English/French‹ may have been more common in French governmental or legal contexts and that it may, perhaps, have been picked up by these particular English writers precisely because of their francophone military context. Such conjecture aside, this recurrent turn of phrase in a variety of sources associated with the Hundred Years War highlights the close yet politically fraught relationship between nationality, allegiance, and expectations of political behaviour in the context of a dynastic war that was being framed as a conflict between two national sides.[26] In this context, the rhetorical device of ›becoming English‹ reflects the need to describe and explain anomalous political behaviour which did not match normative expectations created by nationality labels.

So far, there is nothing to suggest that the vocabulary of ›becoming English‹ was anything other than a shorthand way to describe changing sides, rather than changing nationality. When we find similar vocabulary applied to cases of denization, however, the relationship between ideas about nationality, race, and political allegiance can seem less straightforward. Most denizations were granted to resident aliens in England in the context of exemption from taxation or wartime expulsion orders. One more unusual case recorded on the Parliament Rolls of 1439 concerned not a resident alien but one William ap Gwilym ap Griffith, a man who was described as ›English on his mother's side… and Welsh on his father's side‹.[27] William petitioned the English parliament that they might ›make the said William an Englishman‹ *(de faire le dit William Engloys)*, on the basis of his English mother (Joan, the daughter of Sir William Stanley) and his long history of allegiance to the English king, noting that ›his pleasure in times of Welsh rebellion and in all later times for his whole life was faithful allegiance to our lord the king and to his noble progenitors‹.[28] The features of William's case reveal various ideas about nationhood and subject-hood; the role of birth and parentage takes centre-stage, yet importance is also placed on loyalty to the king. However, personal feelings of attachment to the English crown were not the prime motivation behind this petition. Although it is possible that his anglicised forename represented a conscious preference for an English self-identification (although equally it could have been a way of playing up his English ancestry for an English audience, or a designation chosen by the parliamentary scribe), this petition was not primarily a matter of personal sentiment. The reason for William's request was specific and practical: he wanted to be declared legally English in order to escape the restrictions on land tenure and office-holding that had been imposed

25 Thomas Gray, Scalacronica, ed. King, xxxv-xxxvi, xlii.

26 Curry, *Hundred Years War*, 28-50.

27 *PROME*, Henry VI: Parliament of November 1439, item 29, ed. Curry.

28 *PROME,* Henry VI: Parliament of November 1439, item 29, ed. Curry.

on the Welsh since the Glyn Dŵr revolt in Henry IV's reign. William asked to be able to buy lands in England and Wales and pass them onto his heirs, to plead and be impleaded in English courts, to hold office, and to enjoy all other liberties of faithful Englishmen. Being ›made an Englishman‹ in this context implied access to the full set of legal rights and privileges associated with English nationality by this point.

In the event, William was only partly successful. Although he was granted the right to buy and pass on land and to use English courts, he was still banned from holding office, and the whole grant was only made on the condition that he did not marry a Welsh woman. It seems that his Welsh blood still made him suspect in a politically sensitive context such as office-holding, and this suspicion would be reinforced if he married a Welsh wife and produced children who had more Welsh blood than he did. The ruling also reflects the wider climate of Anglo-Welsh political tensions in the early fifteenth century; Englishmen with Welsh wives had been banned from holding office in Wales since the Glyn Dŵr revolt. Although the need for laws regulating inter-marriage in itself suggests that not all Englishmen viewed relations with their Welsh neighbours in quite so hostile a light as the English government, there were renewed petitions for this ruling to be enforced in the parliaments of 1431 and 1433.[29] As in the case of Jeanette Roland, noted above, marriage to a foreigner did not effect a legal change in nationality (for a partner of either gender), but in certain contexts it constituted a highly political act which rendered the person ›marrying out‹ an object of suspicion.

The issue of restrictions on office-holding for men with Welsh blood or Welsh wives came up again in 1445, with the added request that no more Welshmen ›shall be made denizen or English‹, whether they were ›Welshmen of whole blood or half blood on the father's side.‹[30] The reason for this request, the petition in 1445 explained, was fear that if the Welsh were made equal to Englishmen in Wales through denization, they might use their new powers to take revenge on the English, ›for whom they have great hatred in heart, countenance and word… on the grounds of the slaughter and destruction of their rebel ancestors in the time of rebellion‹.[31] The extent to which such fears were well-founded, or even representative of genuine concerns on the part of the English in Wales, is less relevant here than the fact that it was in partly racial terms that the argument was framed. Even if men like William ap Gwilym were able to separate the legal and political concept of becoming a denizen, with the same privileges as a full Englishman, from racially-charged views of their Welsh blood, the two were not easily separated in wider political culture, especially in the climate of official paranoia that followed the Glyn Dŵr revolt. This is highlighted by William's second attempt at getting permission to hold office in 1442.[32] This time, he appears to have tried to beef up his claims to English nationality by making his father sound less Welsh. His English-language petition now described him as ›Englissh of his moderside… and *aparte Englissh* on his faderside‹. He also talked up his father's faithfulness to Henry IV during the Welsh rebellion. And, this time, he had more success; he was granted permission to hold office for life or for a fixed term, although his request to hold hereditary office was referred.[33]

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29 *PROME*, Henry VI: Parliament of January 1431, item 32, ed. Curry; *PROME*, Henry VI: Parliament of July 1433, items 29-30, ed. Curry. See also *Statutes of the Realm,* II, 140-141.

30 *PROME,* Henry VI: Parliament of February 1445, item 26, ed. Curry.

31 *PROME*, Henry VI: Parliament of February 1445, item 26, ed. Curry.

32 *PROME*, Henry VI: Parliament of January 1442, item 16, ed. Curry.

33 *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1441-1446,* 164.

To be ›made English‹ in this context was evidently different from the literary formula of ›becoming English‹ to denote a change of sides – but it still did not amount to a wholesale change of ›nationality‹. William ap Gwilym was seeking to be made legally English in order to remove the particular legal disadvantages of his Welsh ancestry, but he was only partly successful on account of his mixed ancestry. Indeed, not only did the possession of certain rights and privileges of English nationality not ›make‹ William English, but his Welsh heritage debarred him from access even to the same full set of legal rights as a denizen who originated from elsewhere. It also seems unlikely that William ap Gwilym felt any more or less ›English‹ than he had before, simply as a result of acquiring the right to hold office; his petition was evidently motivated more by pragmatism than by national sentiment. As we can see from official attitudes towards the Welsh in this period, national identity in the eyes of English political society remained a matter of birth and blood rather than simply a choice of allegiance and a matter of acquiring certain legal rights – even when the need to accommodate anomalous cases like William ap Gwilym's presented an obvious challenge to this conceptual framework.

Looking more broadly at some further examples of denization may also shed light on the conundrum of whether a person could officially ›become English‹ in this period. There has been a recent renewal of interest in denization, partly as a result of the *England's Immigrants 1330-1550* project on resident aliens in medieval England, which has built up a database of foreigners living in the kingdom using records including letters of denization.[34] In particular, Bart Lambert and Mark Ormrod's recent work has provided a much more coherent narrative of how and why denization emerged in English society during the late middle ages.[35] Should denization be equated with a change of nationality, however? I would argue that we need to be very careful about the terminology we use to describe it, and particularly the dangers of conflating denization with nationality.

To take a well-known early example that is often cited by historians, in August 1295, Edward I declared that Elias Daubenay, who was originally from Brittany, was to be treated as an Englishman *(ut Anglicus)* in the royal courts, as a mark of special royal favour.[36] The document stated that Daubenay was:

> to be heard as an Englishman *(ut Anglicus)* in all English royal courts, and that he is to be answered as an Englishman *(ut Anglico)*, and that he is not to be rejected by the exception that he is an alien and born overseas *(alienigena est et natus in partibus transmarinis)*, because the lord king holds the same Ellis to be a pure Englishman *(quia dominus rex ipsum Elyam Anglcium purum tenet)*, and wishes him to be so considered and held by others in his realm.[37]

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34 *England's Immigrants, 1330-1550: Resident Aliens in the Late Middle Ages,* an AHRC-funded project led by Professor W. M. Ormrod, as a collaboration between the University of York, The National Archives and the Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield. For the database, see www.englandsimmigrants.com (retrieved on 20 April, 2017).

35 Ormrod and Lambert, Friendly Foreigners, 1-24.

36 E.g. Beardwood, Mercantile Antecedants, 66; Griffiths, English Realm and Dominions, 89; Kim, *Aliens in Medieval Law,* 119-120; Ormrod and Lambert, Friendly Foreigners, 2; Parry, *British Nationality Law*, 18; Pollock and Maitland, *History of English Law*, 463-464.

37 *PROME,* Edward I: Roll 10, item 6, ed. Brand.

Taken alone, the statement that the king regarded Daubenay as a ›pure Englishman‹ might appear to suggest that Daubenay had officially changed nationality and become English. Certainly, this is how the case is often written up by legal historians looking for precursors to modern forms of naturalization. However, the repeated use of the Latin word *ut*, ›as‹, in the surrounding document may suggest that this was not the case – the words also admit the possibility that what Daubenay had been granted was the right to be treated *as if* he were an Englishman in one particular context, the royal courts. If anything, the insistence of the grant that Daubenay was to be treated like a ›pure Englishman‹ *despite* his birth overseas reinforces the centrality of birthplace as the normative criterion for English nationality.

I want to suggest that Latin words like *ut* could be quite telling when we examine letters of denization, which became increasingly standardised over the next two centuries.[38] Repeatedly, in these documents, people were granted the right to be treated ›as if‹ they were English, through the use of words like *ut*, *velut*, *sicut*, and, most frequently, *tamquam Anglicus* – all of which to a varying degree could carry the sense of the recipient being treated ›as if‹, ›just as if‹, ›just as‹, ›just like‹, or ›as though‹ they were English, particularly the most commonly used, *tamquam*.[39] These tell-tale little phrases may make a difference to how we understand the relationship of denization to nationality, because they suggest that denization did not actually make a person English in the eyes of the English Chancery, but simply allowed them to be treated ›as if‹ they were in certain limited contexts, creating a legal fiction of English nationality.[40] Even after denization regularly began to feature a more formal transfer of allegiance to the crown by swearing an oath of fealty from the 1370s, perhaps we should hesitate to describe this in terms of a formal change of nationality, at least in cases where a recipient's new status was prefixed with equivocal language such as *tanquam* or *sicut.* In 1397, for example, when the German merchant John Swart was granted the right to hold property, to pass it on to his heirs, and to use English courts, the record on the Patent Rolls stated twice that he was to be treated ›*just as if* he were one of our true and faithful lieges born within the kingdom of England *(sicut unus de veris et fidelibus ligeis nostris infra regnum nostrum Anglie oriundus)*‹.[41] The same kind of language can be seen in the wartime grants of corporate denization obtained by alien priories to avoid financial exploitation by the English crown as a result of their suspicious connections with their French mother-houses. In November 1414, when Henry V ordered the seizure of all alien priories in England, the prior and convent of St Neots, originally a daughter-house of the French abbey of Bec, reminded the king that his father, Henry IV, had granted their priory denization in 1409. The terms of this grant were that the prior and convent ›should be considered, regarded and treated as if denizens and English *(tanquam indigene et Anglici)*, and should exist in the same status as the true English born within our realm of England do *(sicut sunt veri Anglici infra regnum nostrum Anglie nati)*, in perpetuity.‹[42] This kind of language implies two things: first, that denization had

38 See examples transcribed in Beardwood, Mercantile Antecedants, 74-76; and examples cited Ormrod and Lambert, Friendly Foreigners, 18-22.

39 E.g. Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary.*

40 For similar arguments about the use of *tanquam* to draw an analogy between the legal status of Jews and that of serfs in particular contexts, see Jordan, Jew and Serf, 248-254; Langmuir, *Toward a Definition,* 176-188. I am grateful to the anonymous reader of a draft of this paper for bringing this parallel to my attention.

41 *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1396-1399*, 84, cited in Beardwood, Mercantile Antecedants, 75.

42 *PROME*, Henry V: Parliament of November 1414, item 25, ed. Given-Wilson.

given the likes of the St Neots monks and John Swart the right to be treated ›as if‹ they were native English denizens, but secondly that they were still not, in fact, ›true English‹ because they had not been born in the kingdom of England.

Of course, the diplomatic of the English Chancery was not completely stable in this period, its formulaic nature notwithstanding, and nor was the use and intended meaning of the words themselves in official rhetoric, let alone how they may have been understood by wider political society. The ambiguity of these words may even have been part of their usefulness in this context. Nonetheless, the language used in these documents merits close scrutiny as evidence of how the English royal government attempted to grapple with the variegated and evolving legal, fiscal and political distinctions between English people, other subjects of the king of England, and friendly aliens living in the kingdom of England in relation to established concepts of nationhood.

At the end of the day, this distinction may not have mattered much in purely legal terms – actually to have ›become‹ English or simply to have the right to be treated ›as if‹ English in a law court may not have looked very different in practice. But in another, important, sense, the recipients of these documents had not ›become English‹. Even if they were legally English (or as good as), a switch of allegiance or a grant of denization did not make them English in the sense of changing the national identity of their birth, with all its attendant cultural, linguistic and social expectations in the eyes of political society, regardless of the financial and legal privileges they had acquired. As the case of William ap Gwilym shows, legal privileges did not necessarily protect a person with alien blood from ethnic hostility and suspicion when the political temperature changed. This is borne out by the experiences of resident aliens who lived in the kingdom of England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Some of these people had lived in England for decades, had married an English spouse, and were well integrated into their local community, but they were still readily identified as foreigners by the authorities (and by members of the local population who provided those authorities with information) when political circumstances changed and punitive measures against resident aliens were imposed.[43] Whether during the confiscations of French property in 1294, 1324 and 1337, the expulsion orders of 1377-1378, or the alien subsidy assessments of the 1440s, people knew who the foreigners were in their community; indeed, this was often the point at which aliens sought denization, in order to acquire legal protection from the consequences of their foreign origins. Tellingly, even Elias Daubenay, declared a ›pure Englishman‹ in August 1295, had his lands temporarily seized by the sheriff of Lincoln a few months later as a result of the war with France.[44] The sheriff was soon ordered to return Elias' lands to him, but this episode and others like it suggest there was some gap between the acquisition of some of the legal rights and privileges associated with English nationality and a wholesale and widely accepted change of national identity.

So, could people in late medieval England ›become‹ English? From side-switching soldiers in the Hundred Years War to resident aliens seeking the protection and legal privileges associated with English nationality, I would argue not. Even if the boundaries between categories of nationality and allegiance in the king of England's lands were complex, and possibly converging, by the end of the middle ages, they remained two very different things

43 Ruddick, Immigrants and Inter-Marriage.

44 *PROME*, II, ed. Brand, 27.

in the political culture of late-medieval England. Changes in allegiance, whether described as ›becoming English‹ in the context of war against France and Scotland or expressed through the increasingly formal processes of denization that developed back at home, could not erase the underlying assumption that nationality was something a person was born with. Contemporary beliefs about blood, descent, and race provided a powerful backdrop to official and literary constructions of national identity in England between the late thirteenth and early fifteenth centuries. These ideas infused both literary and official expressions of Englishness in the late middle ages as the royal government interacted with the changing political circumstances that required the development of a more tightly-defined English nationality law. Of course, there is no reason to suppose that medieval English society, and the individuals and groups within it, held any more coherent or consistent a view of what it meant to be English than people in any other period of history. Historians have long been wary of assuming that words or symbols meant the same thing to everyone, and this danger is particularly clear where the evidence is sporadic and covers a long period of time. Individual people might play around with these definitions, or adopt a certain flexibility towards the labels they gave themselves in different contexts. Moreover, questions of race, national identity and political allegiance were unlikely to have been overriding concerns at the forefront of most people's minds, most of the time. Nonetheless, in certain political contexts the question of a person's nationality became salient, and this generated the need for a vocabulary to describe anomalous situations in which race, nationality, allegiance, and associated expected political behaviour did not match up. The need to describe, negotiate, and contest the spaces (whether perceived by others or experienced personally) between a person's changing legal and political status and their past and present cultural identities is not a problem unique to northern Europe in the middle ages. In this particular historical and geographical context, however, the language of ›becoming English‹ offered one possible solution to this conundrum.

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# Reinventing Roman Ethnicity in High and Late Medieval Byzantium

Yannis Stouraitis*

This paper seeks to position the Byzantine paradigm within the broader discussion of identity, ethnicity and nationhood before Modernity. In about the last decade, there has been a revived interest in research into collective identity in Byzantine society, with a number of new publications providing various arguments about the ethno-cultural or national character of Byzantine Romanness as well as its relationship to Hellenic identity. Contrary to an evident tendency in research thus far to relate Byzantine, i.e. medieval Roman, identity to a dominant essence – be it ethnic Hellenism, Chalcedonian orthodoxy or Roman republicanism – the approach adopted here aims to divert attention to the various contents and the changing forms of Byzantine Romanness as well as to its function as a dominant mode of collective identification in the medieval Empire of Constantinople. The main thesis of the paper is that the development of Roman identity in the East after the turning point of the seventh century and up to the final sack of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453 needs to be examined as one of the most fascinating cases of transformation of a pre-modern social order's collective identity discourse, one which culminated in an extensive reconstruction of the narrative of the community's historical origins by the educated élite. Last but not least, the problematization of the function of Romanness as an ethnicity in the Byzantine case offers an interesting example for comparison in regards to the debated role of ethnicity as a factor of political loyalty in the pre-modern era.

*Keywords: Byzantine identity; Romanness; Hellenism; ethnicity*

In roughly the last decade, a number of new publications have revisited the question of collective identity in Byzantium.[1] This revived research interest testifies to a shift of focus. Departing from an established consensus in the field, which does not question the self-designation of the so-called Byzantines as *Rhomaioi* (Romans), almost all of these recent publications focus on the development of the form and content of Byzantine Romanness. Here, two basic approaches can be discerned: the first points to the configuration of a dominant Roman ethnicity within the framework of the medieval eastern Roman imperial community – at the latest from the twelfth century onwards[2]; the second suggests that Romanness had already taken the form of a civic or state-framed national identity in the late-Roman Empire and that the medieval *Rhomaiōn politeia* was a nation-state and not an empire.[3]

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* **Correspondence details:** Yannis Stouraitis, Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, University of Vienna, Postgasse 7/1/3, 1010 Vienna, Austria. Email: ioannis.stouraitis@univie.ac.at.

1 Beaton, Antique Nation; Kaldellis, *Hellenism*; idem, From Rome to New Rome; Rapp, Hellenic Identity; Page, *Being Byzantine;* Koder, Byzantium as Seen by Itself; Malatras, Making of an Ethnic Group; Stouraitis, Roman Identity; Papadopoulou, *Συλλογική ταυτότητα*; Smarnakis, Rethinking Roman Identity.

2 Page, Being Byzantine, 72 f.; Malatras, Making of an Ethnic Group, *passim*; Stouraitis, Roman Identity in Byzantium, 206 f.

3 Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, 42-119; idem, From Rome to New Rome, *passim*.

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Regarding pre-modern group-identity, the use of terms and categories, such as city-state, ethnic group, nation, empire or nation-state, is more often than not a question of a historian's taste and choice. Modern historians can be roughly distinguished between those that choose to employ terms and categories in a manner intended to lump together different phenomena and those that do it in order to distinguish between them. One way or the other, the applicability of analytical concepts (such as nationhood, ethnicity etc.) as means that help us to clarify certain complexities and to think about historical phenomena is interrelated with their ability to provide a coherent interpretation of the evidence of our sources.[4]

The dominant theoretical paradigm, which defines nations and nation-states as recent historical phenomena related to the rise of nationalism in the context of the social conditions of Modernity, has come under sustained criticism since the 1990s, especially from the so-called ethnosymbolist approach[5]. This criticism has certainly offered useful corrections to what had become a stifling modernist orthodoxy, but one cannot help noticing that now the pendulum seems to be swinging a bit too far in the opposite direction. Once again it is *très à la mode* to speak of nations and nation-states in all eras and historical cases where state formation coincided with a dominant ethnic or cultural discourse.[6] This trend is often complemented by a tendency to caricaturize the modernist thesis and to downplay how this has evolved since the influential works of Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson – and partly too in response to ethnosymbolist criticism.[7]

From an analytical point of view, the nation is defined as an imagined political community which is not only characterized by a congruence of cultural/ethnic and political boundaries, but also by the habitual mass identification of its members with the idea of the sovereign people as the principal unit of human solidarity and political legitimacy. This identification is the product of (so-called banal) nationalism as a dominant operative ideology that pervades national communities and reproduces their groupness on a daily basis.[8] Nationhood as a political claim and not as an ethno-cultural fact marks the difference between the national community as a phenomenon of modernity and the pre-modern ethnic group as a non-stable and non-coherent collectivity of notional common kinship and selected cultural markers that need not circumscribe its members' political loyalty.[9] Moreover, it distinguishes nation-states from pre-modern forms of state-framed communities such as kingdoms and empires with a dominant (élite) culture or ethnicity, and where the body politic was structured in a centripetal and hierarchical manner around the authority of the king or the emperor.

In the context of a comparative approach to identity, ethnicity and nationhood before Modernity, my intention in the current paper is to depart from such clear-cut definitions of nationhood and ethnicity as analytical categories in order to examine the development of

4 On analytical categories in the study of group-identity, see Brubaker and Cooper, Beyond Identity, 4-6.

5 Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*; idem, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism*; cf. Ichijo and Uzelac, *When is the Nation.*

6 See the endorsement of Gat, *Nations,* by Smith, Book Review.

7 Malešević, *Identity as Ideology,* 109-153 (a critique of both Smith's and Gellner's theories about the nation); idem, »Divine Ethnies« and »Sacred Nations«, *passim.*

8 E.g. Brubaker, Rethinking Nationhood, 3-14; Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, esp. 37-59 and 93-127; Malešević, *Identity as Ideology,* 89-108; idem, *Nation-States and Nationalisms,* 1-88;

9 On ethnicity, see Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity*, 3-16 and 77-89; Smith, *National Identity*, 19-25; Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups,* 1-87.

Byzantine Romanness regarding: 1) continuities and discontinuities in the vision of imperial community; 2) political and cultural identifications, and the salience of a dominant Roman ethnicity in high-medieval Byzantium; 3) the relationship between dominant ethnicity and political loyalty; and 4) the reconstruction of the community's past in late-medieval Byzantium.

***Rome was humbled but did not fall***

In chapter 27 of his political treatise *De administrando imperio*, written in the mid-tenth century, Emperor Constantine VII (913-959) remarked that the *imperium* had crossed to Constantinople when Rome stopped being governed by an emperor – an allusion to late-fifth century developments.[10] The late-twelfth century history of John Kinnamos presented a full-blown version of this Byzantine claim: the title of empire had disappeared in Rome, since the attributes of power had passed after Augustulus to Odoacer and then to Theoderic, for which reason the current rulers in the West had no rightful claim to the title of Roman Emperor, but instead they and the pope had to accept that the throne of the empire in Byzantium was the throne of Rome.[11] From the view-point of the Byzantine élite, the major event of *translatio imperii* was a historical process that began with the transfer of the imperial capital from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine I[12] and was concluded with the dethronement of the last emperor of Rome. This historical scheme was conducive to the Byzantine vision of an unbroken continuity of Roman imperial community in the East: since the late-fifth century there had remained a single city-state and a single emperor as the sole legitimate bearers of Roman imperial culture in the *Oecumene,* whose limits of authority circumscribed the boundaries of the Roman political-territorial community.

The central role of the city-state of New Rome and its emperor in determining the form of the medieval East Roman community as an imperial political order is currently a matter of debate.[13] The thesis that Byzantium was not an empire but a nation-state was recently elaborated through the argument that the medieval *Rhomaiōn politeia* was a monarchical republic *(res publica)* whose operative political ideology and political practice were defined by popular sovereignty.[14] This argument has been criticized for downplaying the political structures and the social and material conditions into which the reproduction of Roman republican tropes in the political discourse of the Byzantine élite was embedded, as well as for taking rebellions against the emperors as evidence of popular sovereignty.[15] Besides this criticism, a closer look at the discourse of late Roman and Byzantine sources demonstrates that the Byzantine conception of the *Rhomaiōn politeia* had very little to do with the nation as an imagined political community with culturally and territorially finite boundaries.[16]

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10 *De administrando imperio*, 27, 1-12, ed. Moravcsik, 112.

11 Kinnamos, *Epitome*, ed. Meinecke, 218-220.

12 Cf. the testimony of Liutprand of Cremona, *Legatio*, 51, ed. Chiesa, 209, 830-835.

13 On the nation-state thesis, see n. 3 above. Contra, Stouraitis, Roman Identity, 185-206.

14 Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic,* 2-31.

15 Haldon, Res publica Byzantina, 4-16; idem, *Empire That Would Not Die,* 16-17; Stouraitis, Book Review.

16 On this main difference between the nation-state and imperial or regnal communities, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities,* 6-7 and 15; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalisms,* 176. On analogies between empire and nation-state, see Kumar, Nation-States as Empires.

In an excerpt from the early-fifth century history of Eunapius, for instance, one reads that »it was clear to all that if the Roman imperial power rejected luxury and embraced war, it would conquer and enslave all the world. But God has set a deadly trait in human nature, like the poisonous gall in a lobster or thorns on a rose. For in high authority he has implanted love of pleasure, with the result that, while they have all means with which to unite mankind and turn it into a single polity *(politeia)*, our Emperors in their concern for the transient turn to pleasure without taking into account and showing interest in the immortality of glory«.[17] This late-Roman vision of an elusive *pax romana* demonstrates that the boundaries of the Roman polity were not conceived in culturally exclusive terms. They were determined by the limits of imperial authority, which could be expanded through means of war in order to include as many peoples as possible, thus making them members of a single Roman political community.[18] The term *Rhomaiōn politeia* – like the terms *Rhomaiōn archê, Rhomaiōn basileia* or *Romania* – was bound to the vision of a territorial empire *sine fine* whose Roman identity was determined by an imperial city-state, Rome and New Rome, respectively.

In the early-tenth century, Leo VI (886-912) reasserted the image of the *Rhomaiōn politeia* as a geopolitical order demarcated by the fluctuating boundaries of Roman imperial authority. He remarked that the Saracens bordered on his *politeia* and harmed his subjects *(to hypêkoon)*, thus causing no less trouble to him than the former neighbouring people of the Persians did to the emperors of old.[19] A few decades later, Constantine VII designated Constantinople as the reigning city of the whole world and distinguished between the changes that had taken place within the limits of the current Roman realm *(politeia)* and those that had occurred within the limits of the Roman Empire *(Rhomaiōn archê)* in different times.[20] It has been suggested that for Constantine VII *politeia* did not refer to the whole realm currently under imperial rule but mainly to the city-state of Constantinople.[21]

In my view, the two interpretations need not be mutually exclusive. For the Byzantines, the image of the *Rhomaiōn politeia* was archetypally bound to the city of New Rome and its emperor. It was through the expansion of the emperor's enforceable legal, fiscal, and military authority over regions and their populations that the territoriality of the empire as an extended polity of Roman law and order came into being. For instance, the author of the deeds of Emperor Basil I (867-886) wrote that due to lack of time he decided to treat the reign of a single emperor, even though his wish was to narrate the more noteworthy deeds accomplished throughout the entire duration of the Roman power in the city of Byzantium: the deeds of emperors, of officials serving under them, of generals and their lieutenants, and so on.[22] In another part of the text, he reported on an impending Muslim attack against the seas and the lands that paid tribute *(hypoforoi)* to the *Rhomaioi*.[23] In the mid-tenth century,

17 Eunapius, *Fragmenta*, ed. Dindorf, 251, 3-15.

18 The same stance was still held in mid-twelfth century Constantinople; Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, VI 11, 3, ed. Reinsch and Kambylis, 193.

19 Leonis VI Tactica, XVIII 135, ed. Dennis, 488, 690-692.

20 *De thematibus,* 1, 1-4 and 1, 39-40, ed. Pertusi, 84; *De administrando imperio,* Proem 22-24, ed. Moravcsik, 46; For this interpretation, Sode, Untersuchungen, 160-161.

21 Magdalino, Historical Geography, 39.

22 Vita Basilii, 1, 3-14, ed. Sevčenko, 8-10.

23 Vita Basilii, 68, 6-7, ed. Sevčenko, 235.

the history of the *Rhomaioi* (their *Zeitgeschichte*) was that of the people of a reigning city-state whose boundaries could extend in geopolitical terms to include all subject populations and regions that paid tribute to the imperial power of Constantinople and were governed by its laws through its agents, the members of the imperial élite of service.

That the populations of the empire had a clear image of belonging to an imperial political order demarcated by the fluctuating limits of the Roman emperor's authority is made evident in provincial texts as well as in hagiography. The seventh-century *Doctrina Jacobi* presented a Jewish merchant in Carthago stating that up to those times the territory of the Romans had extended from Spain in the West to Persia in the East and from Africa in the South to Britain in the North, and that the Roman boundaries were still visible due to the marble and bronze monuments of the emperors. All these peoples had been subordinated to the Romans by the will of God, but now one could see the Roman realm *(Romania)* been humbled.[24]

A similar geopolitical image of the Roman community can be found in the most popular version of the ninth-century collective *martyrion* of the 42 Martyrs of Amorion. According to the author, the *Romania* – the realm of Roman imperial authority – had taken its current shape after the territorial contraction of Roman imperial rule in the seventh century due to the rulers' heresy that had brought the Muslim conquest.[25] By the end of the seventh century the lost eastern provinces and their populations – that had been for centuries under Roman rule – were no longer viewed as Roman, even though Christian identity played an important role in maintaining certain bonds with the Christian Empire, as testified by the various ways eastern Christians of different doctrines continued to look upon the Roman power of Constantinople.[26]

Within this framework, developments of the late-sixth century brought an end to the division of Roman élite culture between Latin and Greek. In the seventh-century Vita of St Anastasios the Persian, the Greek language was referred to as the Roman way of speaking *(rhomaisti)*[27]. This seems to be a unique use of the adverb *rhomaisti*, since Byzantine authors consistently employed it to refer to the Latin language, as opposed to *graikisti* or *hellênisti* for the Greek language.[28] Nonetheless, in the aftermath of the so-called dark centuries a main presupposition for becoming Roman was a knowledge of Greek – which was designated as the voice or language of the *Rhomaioi*.[29] Due to these changes, Byzantine Romanness now fulfilled many of the basic criteria of a dominant ethnicity according to Anthony D. Smith's definition.[30] It was based on a single script and language, a single religion determined by the Chalcedonian doctrine, Roman law and canon law as well as by the political customs of the Roman imperial power.

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24 *Doctrina Jacobi* III, 10, ed. Déroche, 169.

25 Evodius, *Vita martyrum XLII Amoriensum,* ed. Nikitin/Vasilievskij, 63 and 75. Cf. *De thematibus,* 1, 8-21, ed. Pertusi, 59-60. For the opposite image of expansion of the Roman political boundaries in the tenth century, Theophanes Continuatus *(liber VI)*, ed. Bekker, 426-427.

26 On the development and change of the content of Byzantine Romanness during the period of the Muslim expansion, see Haldon, *Empire That Would Not Die,* 79-119.

27 Anastasios the Persian, *Life and Miracles*, 43, ed. Flusin, 89.

28 Koder, Sprache als Identitätsmerkmal, 10-16.

29 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. De Boor, 455, 24-25; Vita Basilii, 68, 10, ed. Sevčenko, 234; Theophanes Continuatus *(liber VI)*, ed. Bekker, 407, 15-16.

30 Smith, *Cultural Foundations of Nations,* 30-31.

However, a closer look at the identity discourse of Byzantine authors in the wake of the reform period of the »dark centuries«shows that the *Rhomaioi* did not conceptualize their identity in terms of common ethnic descent. Prominent examples that showcase this are Roman emperors such as Leo V (813-820) and Basil I (867-886) whose Armenian origins are highlighted in the sources. The former had migrated from Armenia to the Empire at a young age and through a career in the army had managed to usurp the throne.[31] Basil I's case is even more interesting because he was a native of the empire. Nevertheless, his grandson and biographer Constantine VII not only spoke of Basil as an Armenian by origin, but also presented his Armenian identity as a factor in his social relations at the court.[32] Constantine's only concern was to hush up Basil's humble origin from Armenian peasant settlers in the region of Thrace by inventing a fictitious descent from families of royal pedigree, such as the Armenian Arsacids on his father's side and the families of Constantine I and Alexander the Great on his mother's side.[33]

Such practices of ethno-cultural classification of Roman subjects by Byzantine authors, which are omnipresent in the sources, indicate that despite the extensive political and cultural changes of the previous period Byzantine Romanness maintained the character of a dominant political discourse. This political discourse was underpinned by a reshaped dominant (élite) culture and promoted the vision of an imperial body politic in which various subaltern visions of community (e.g. ethnic or religious) were accommodated. This development needs to be assessed in relation to the policies of the Roman imperial state after the late-seventh century, which had consistently reinforced and expanded the political body of Roman subjects through the injection of a large number of ethno-culturally diverse populations, such as Slavs, Armenians, Syrians, and Paulicians, to name some of the most prominent groups that the emperors of Constantinople either subjugated along with their areas of settlement (for instance, Slavs in Greece) or transplanted into depopulated regions of the Empire (Armenians and Syrians in Thrace, Slavs in Asia Minor).[34] Byzantine law demonstrates that what differentiated the legal-political status of new and old members of the imperial *politeia* was not ethnic background or indigeneity, but religious doctrine. Chalcedonian Christianity was the main precondition for a Roman subject to enjoy the full legal-political rights of Romanness, thus promoting its ethno-religious content.[35] Underneath the normative surface of imperial law, however, the evidence of other sources reveals a more nuanced reality about the relationship of the imperial state with its non-Chalcedonian subjects.

The case of the Christian sect of the Paulicians is indicative of this social reality. In his effort to depict a dark picture of Emperor Nikephoros I (802-811), Theophanes the Confessor accused him – among other things – of having a lenient attitude towards the sects of the Paulicians and the Athinganoi, reporting that »these were given leave during his reign to

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31 Theophanes Continuatus *(libri I-IV)*, 1-12, ed. Featherstone and Codoñer, 12-39.

32 Vita Basilii, 12, 24-27, ed. Sevčenko, 48, where the friendly relationship between Basil and a patrician named Constantine at the court is related to their common Armenian origin.

33 Vita Basilii, 2-3, ed. Sevčenko, 10-19. Cf. Markopoulos, Roman Antiquarianism, 287.

34 Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen*, 123-305. On ethnic diversity as a factor of social relations within the empire, see Curta, Burial in Early Medieval Greece, *passim*.

35 On the restricted rights of heretics that excluded them from public office, see *Basilicorum Libri LX,* 1, 1, ed. Scheltema, 1-14.

conduct their own way of life *(politeuesthai)* without fear so that many light-headed people became corrupted by their illicit doctrines«.[36] The martyrion of Kallistos, one of the 42 Martyrs of Amorion, written in the second half of the ninth century, indicates that this ›lenient‹ attitude – which had little to do with tolerance but rather more with the weakness of a pre-modern state to pervade and control society in the way the modern infrastructural state is able to do – was not confined to a single emperor: Paulicians held minor positions in the provincial administration in Asia Minor during the reign of Emperor Theophilos (829-842).[37]

The emergence of an autonomous Paulician principality with Muslim support in the East in the mid-ninth century is regarded as a reaction to imperial persecution, but its subjugation by Emperor Basil I in 878 led neither to the community's elimination nor to forced conversion. Evidently instead, a part of the Paulician population was integrated to the imperial body politic and, almost a century later, John I Tzimiskes (969-976) resettled them to Thrace, where they functioned as an ordinary and productive population that paid taxes and, despite their heretic identity, served in the emperors' armies – at least until their persecution by Alexios Komnenos (1081-1118).[38]

This evidence indicates that religious identity may have differentiated the rights and the degree of loyalty of Roman subjects to the imperial power of Constantinople, as well as the potential of their members for social advancement, since – at least nominally – conversion to the Chalcedonian doctrine was a main precondition to enter the Roman elite and make a career at court.[39] Nonetheless, the largest part of non-Chalcedonian subjects shared with their Chalcedonian counterparts similar obligations towards the state and the same basic perception of being members of an imperial order, demarcated by the limits of the emperor's enforceable authority.

### *Imperial Romanness vs. dominant Roman ethnicity*

If Romanness was the only meaningful identity to perform for any person that advanced socially and exceeded the limits of the regional homeland within the Empire, it is worth taking a closer look at the content of this collective identity at the level of common provincials. The early-tenth century *Tactica* of Emperor Leo VI (886-912) is a particularly valuable source of evidence in this regard, for it provides information on the real mechanisms of collective identity-building on the battlefield, namely the transmission – in various languages – of clear-cut messages to each small unit *(bandon)* before battle by the so-called *kantatores* or *mandatores*.[40] Contrary to the rhetorically charged military harangues in Constantinopolitan histories, which were never delivered to the common soldiers in the reported manner and whose content was usually an invention of the educated author adapted to the literary

36 Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. de Boor, 488. In this context, the verb *politeuesthai* does not refer to citizenship rights (as translated in Mango and Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 671), but rather to the heretics' ability to maintain and publicly profess their confession.

37 Michael Synkellus, *Encomium*, ed. Nikitin and Vasilievskij, 29.

38 Skylitzes, *Synopsis*, ed. Thurn, 286, 62-6. Cf. Lilie, Minderheiten in Byzanz, 312-215.

39 On converted Muslims (with some exceptions of non-converts) in the imperial administration, see Cheynet, L'apport arabe à l'aristocratie byzantine, 137-146. On the important role of Armenians in the empire, both Monophysite and converts, see Garsoian, Armenian Integration, 53-124.

40 Leonis Tactica, IV 7, XII 56-57, ed. Dennis, 50, 248.

expectations of an élite audience,[41] the exhortations of the *Tactica* provide an insight into those common ideas that in the Constantinopolitan ruling élite's view appealed to common provincials, from whence the main bulk of the recruits came. Therefore, they are the closest we can get to a collective identification of Roman subjects. According to the author, the heralds should:

> First, call to mind the reward for their faith in God and the benefactions of the emperor, and some of their previous victories; and that the struggle is on behalf of God and their love to him and on behalf of the entire people *(ethnos)*. Furthermore, it is on behalf of their brothers of the same faith and, if it applies, for their wives and children and their fatherland *(patris)*. Eternal indeed remains the memory of those who have valiantly striven against the foe on behalf of the freedom of their brothers, and the whole struggle is against the enemies of God. We have God as our friend who has power over the outcome of war, whereas they have him as opponent due to their faithlessness towards him.[42]

These lines have been interpreted as a patriotic manifesto containing the principal values of Byzantine (sic) nationalism that united soldiers of various ethnic origins in what had become a national army after the seventh century.[43] This interpretation relies on a decontextualized and anachronistic interpretation of the terms *ethnos* and *patris*. To begin with, in Byzantine usage the term *ethnos* could denote an army, the people of a city or a province, a community of common culture (an ethnic group) or even the members of a world-religion. The author of the *Tactica* – like his contemporary historiographers – never uses the term *Rhomaiōn ethnos* to designate the Roman community. He only refers once to a struggle on behalf of the entire *ethnos Christianōn* in another part of the treatise.[44] This is usually interpreted as an allusion to the Roman people as a Christian people (in the sense of a ›Chosen People‹) because Byzantine authors often employed the collective designation *Christianoi* as a substitute for *Rhomaioi* in their writings. However, in Byzantine perception – just as in social reality – the boundaries of the *ethnos Christianōn* exceeded those of the Roman community.[45]

In light of this, the term *ethnos* in the passage cited above – if not an allusion to the army[46]– had very little to do with a vision of community based on a shared ethnic or, even less so, national Roman identity as the discourse concerning brothers of the same faith – instead of Roman brothers – indicates. In the author's view, what could promote solidarity among indigenous and foreign recruits of various ethnic and doctrinal backgrounds, and

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41 Lilie, Reality and Invention, 208; On Byzantine written sources as mainly the products of an educated élite for an élite audience, see Lilie, Byzantinische Gesellschaft, *passim*; Croke, Uncovering Byzantium's Historiographical Audience, 25-53.

42 Leonis VI Tactica, XII 57, ed. Dennis, 248. The designation »enemies of God«, against which the Byzantines fought with God's help, was equally applied to (orthodox) Christian enemies that attacked the Christian Empire because they violated the Christian principle of brotherhood and peace, see Stouraitis, *Krieg und Frieden*, 304-327, esp. 308-310.

43 Ahrweiler, *Ideologie*, 29-36; Browning, Greeks and Others, 14.

44 Leonis VI Tactica XVIII 19, ed. Dennis, 444.

45 E.g. Nikolaos I Mystikos, *Epist.* 32, 472-473, ed. Jenkins and Westerink, 242.

46 For the frequent use of the term *ethnos* as an equivalent of army in the text, see Leonis VI Tactica XII 27 and 106, XIII 13, XIV 99, XV 62, XVIII 57 and 72, epilogue 44, ed. Dennis, 232, 272, 284, 346, 378, 456, 462, 630.

make them identify with these populations for whose freedom they were called to fight, was a shared religious culture. Moreover, the image evoked of a community of Christian brothers was ambiguous enough to refer to Christians both within and outside the boundaries of Roman rule – in particular those Christians under Muslim rule in the East, where the Constantinopolitan power sought to expand its authority, as testified by contemporary texts.[47] In this context, the imperial power heeded the fact that neither all its soldiers nor all Christians in the empire's geopolitical sphere adhered to the Chalcedonian doctrine.[48] Chalcedonian orthodoxy may have been the state's official ideology, but a closer look at the propagated religious ideals indicates that these were uttered in a manner free of any theological concern for orthodoxy, so that they could include and apply to Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Christians alike.

The propagated notion of *patris* in the exhortations to the common soldiers further confirms that the operative ideology employed to underpin the loyalty of common provincials to the Roman imperial rule of Constantinople had little to do with a broader vision of Roman patriotism (i.e. proto-nationalism), either of religious (Chalcedonian) or of political (republican) content. The bulk of the provincial armies of the early-tenth century consisted of indigenous soldiers who were recruited from the area of the *thema* (province) in which their unit (also called *thema)* was permanently stationed.[49] When the author instructed that the soldiers should be exhorted to fight on behalf of women, children and homeland (when this applied), it is evident that such a message was relevant only when the thematic soldiers were called to defend the region where their families lived in their own hometowns. The ruling élite was well aware that for common provincials a politicized image of the *patris* could only refer to their regional homeland and not to a territorially abstract and indefinable entity like the Empire, the *Romania*, an alleged *patria communis* of all Christian-Romans.

Other sources verify the distinction between an élite vision of imperial patriotism bound to the city-state of Constantinople as the archetypal *patria communis* of the *Rhomaioi,* and the predominant perception of *patris* among common provincials as the local/regional homeland. According to Theophanes Continuatus, when Emperor Romanos Lekapenos (919-944) exhorted the leaders of the imperial regiments to march out against the Bulgars that were attacking the Constantinopolitan suburbs in order to protect the fatherland *(patris)*, they readily agreed to die on behalf of his imperial power and the Christians (i.e. the *Rhomaioi)*.[50] This image of the imperial city as a common homeland of the Christian-Romans appealed both to the high-ranking officers of the imperial regiments as well as the élite audience of the text.[51]

47 Arethas, Scripta Minora II 33, 14-34, 6, ed. Westerink, 62.

48 On Monophysite Armenians and Paulicians as recruits in the imperial armies, see Lilie, Minderheiten in Byzanz, 305-308 and 314.

49 Brubaker and Haldon, Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, 744-755.

50 Theophanes Continuatus *(liber VI)*, ed. Becker, 402-403. The designation of the *Rhomaioi* as *Christianoi* in a conflict against the (also Chalcedonian) Christian Bulgars relates to the role of religion in justifying Byzantine defensive warfare against enemies of the same faith; cf. n. 42 above.

51 For similar images of imperial patriotism, cf. Kinnamos, *Epitome,* ed. Meinecke, 173; Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 529, 20-26.

In a contrary instance, in an anonymous military treatise on campaign organization, written in the late-tenth century, the author refers to the soldiers dwelling on the borders of the Roman realm and observes that they should be protected from the excesses of tax-collectors and be respected and honoured as defenders of the Christians in order to »to eagerly endure dangers for our holy emperor and their own homeland«.[52] Here, the author's discourse demonstrates once again that, while the emperor as the common leader of all Romans (our *basileus*) was the main point of reference that united politically the borderlands with the imperial centre, the political *patris* which provincial soldiers were called to defend referred to their own regional homeland *(tês heautōn patridos)* and not to some common broader Roman land.[53] Similarly, Niketas Choniates reported, in regard to an impending clash with the Turks in the spring of 1199, that the soldiers were assembled to fight the enemy and either defeat him or die gloriously on behalf of their homelands (*patrides*).[54]

It is in this ideological context that the author of the *Tactica* instructed the generals of the provincial armies to inspire those soldiers that were found lacking of patriotic sentiments with love of the homeland and obedience to their officers either through affection or through fear![55] Moreover, the general should also promise the soldiers rewards and benefactions from the emperor and recompense *(misthon)* for their loyalty to the *politeia* in the days preceding battle.[56] The imperial power was well aware that the indigenous recruits were not volunteers, but an army of mercenaries.[57] Their loyalty to the imperial polity of Constantinople was not determined by ideals of nationhood, but by regular reward from their employer, the Roman imperial power. Along these lines, the late-eleventh century treatise of the provincial magnate Kekaumenos advised the emperor to take great care of his soldiers and don't cut their pay, because they were selling him their own blood.[58]

The evidence presented so far sets the background against which the salience of a full-blown discourse of Roman ethnicity in high medieval Byzantium needs to be addressed. The late-tenth century history of Leo the Deacon testifies to an image of the *Rhomaioi* as a distinct ethno-cultural category within the boundaries of the Roman imperial polity. The author reports that after the reconquest of Crete from the Muslims in 961 General Nikephoros Phokas settled families of Armenians, *Rhomaioi*, and other rabble there in the process of the island's re-Romanization.[59] In this case, the labels Roman and Armenian were not employed to distinguish between members and non-members of the imperial *politeia*, respectively. Evidently both groups were considered and treated as full members (i.e. subjects) of the Roman imperial polity with equal rights and obligations, since they were transferred and given lands on Crete.

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52 *De re military* 28, ed. Dennis, 319-321: καὶ προκινδυνεύειν ἐκθύμως τοῦ βασιλέως ἡμῶν τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ τῆς ἑαυτῶν πατρίδος.

53 Cf. the case of a Muslim attack against Attaleia in the early-ninth century, where local patriotism and common Christian identity inspired the local garrison, Life of St Antony the Younger, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 186-216.

54 Choniates, *Historia,* ed. Van Dieten, 496, 17-24. Elsewhere, Choniates explicitly relates the notion of a fight for women and children with the defence of the hometown, ibid. 30, 7-15.

55 Leonis VI Tactica XVIII 16-17, ed. Dennis, 442-444.

56 Leonis VI Tactica XIII 4, ed. Dennis, 278.

57 Stouraitis, Just War, 256-258.

58 Kekaumenos, *Consilia et Narrationes*, VII, ed. Rouché, 94, 24-95, 2.

59 Leo Diakonos, *Historia*, ed. Hase, 28; Talbot and Sullivan, *The History of Leo the Deacon,* 80.

Therefore, in this context the content of the term *Rhomaios* was not political but rather ethno-cultural, demarcated by certain selected cultural markers – primarily the Chalcedonian doctrine and the Greek language. This is further supported if one juxtaposes Leo the Deacon's discourse with the discourse of *De administrando imperio* in an analogous case a few decades earlier. The latter distinguished between the Slavs and the *Graikoi* as two ethno-cultural categories of imperial subjects in the region of the Peloponnese.[60] In this case the label *Graikoi* demarcated the Greek-speaking Chalcedonian subjects of the emperor, that is, the same category of imperial subjects that Leo the Deacon chose to designate as *Rhomaioi.*

By the late-eleventh century notions of Romanness as an identity of descent had become salient in Constantinopolitan historiography. John Skylitzes reported that the Bulgar ruler Boris summoned a painter, »a monk named Methodios, who was *Rhomaios* by birth«to decorate his new house.[61] What makes this report interesting is that Skylitzes changed the discourse of his source, namely the mid-tenth century text of Theophanes Continuatus, which reported on »a certain monk from amongst us *Rhomaioi*«.[62] Furthermore, twelfth-century historiographers broke with the normative practice of previous centuries that confined Romanness to populations within the boundaries of the imperial polity – a common exception being prisoners of war – and occasionally labelled Christian populations in the Seljuk territories of Asia Minor as *Rhomaioi*.[63]

Taking these developments into account, it is worth noticing that Roman ethno-cultural identity functioned neither as a precondition nor as a marker of loyalty to the Roman imperial polity.[64] For instance, John Kinnamos labelled the indigenous Christian population at Lake Pousgouse in Seljuk Asia Minor as *Rhomaioi* despite the fact that these people were outside the borders of the *Rhomaiōn politeia* and showed no sign of political loyalty to it by actively resisting John II's (1118-1143) effort to reintegrate them.[65] Here, the author opted for Romanness as a fixed ethno-cultural identity of shared cultural markers free of any political content. Contrarily, his contemporary Niketas Choniates labelled them as Christians and characterised them as enemies of the *Rhomaioi*, even though he, too, was inclined to acknowledge bonds of common kinship and religion with them.[66] Thus, he justified John II's actions to destroy them by stating that they had no right to their land as it was an ancient possession of the *Rhomaioi.*[67] Here, the *Rhomaioi* were not envisaged as a people demarcated by common kinship and shared cultural makers within an abstract (ethnic) homeland, but as the political community of the city-state of New Rome, whose territorial boundaries extended as far as the boundaries of imperial authority.

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60 *De administrando imperio*, 49, 4-9, ed. Moravcsik, 228. Cf. Stouraitis, Roman Identity, 208-209. For a similar discourse of ethno-cultural contradistinction between *Graikoi* and Bulgars, see *Vita Clementis,* ed. Milev, 68, 1-4.

61 Skylitzes, *Synopsis,* ed. Thurn, 91; On similar ethnic discourses cf. Kinnamos, *Epitome,* ed. Meinecke, 56 and 251; Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 37 and 190.

62 Theophanes Continuatus *(libri I-IV)* IV 15, ed. Featherstone and Codoñer, 232-234.

63 Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, XI 8, 2, ed. Reinsch and Kamvylis, 346; Kinnamos, *Epitome*, ed. Meinecke, 22. Cf. Page, *Being Byzantine*, 79-84.

64 Stouraitis, Roman Identity, 201-202.

65 Kinnamos, *Epitome*, ed. Meinecke, 22.

66 Choniates, *Historia,* ed. van Dieten, 37; cf. Page, *Being Byzantine*, 83.

67 Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 38.

Choniates' choice to propagate Romanness as an identity of loyalty to the imperial polity in this case corresponds to the socio-political reality of high medieval Byzantium, in which the role of ethnicity remained marginal in circumscribing political identifications and state-organisation. Christian identity and loyalty to the emperor continued to be the main criteria for becoming a full member of the Roman imperial *politeia.* For instance, a eunuch of Saracen origin could perform a Roman identity as a leading officer of the imperial army under Emperor Constantine IX (1042-1055) due to his loyal service to the emperor since before the latter's rise to the throne.[68] Similarly, groups of Pechenegs could be integrated into the Roman imperial polity through baptism and become taxpaying imperial subjects with both basic rights to land and an obligation for military service as all other common subjects of the emperor did. Even though such populations maintained their generic image as barbarians in cultural terms in the discourse of the educated Roman élite,[69] this hardly hindered some of their members to advance socially and enter the imperial élite of service by acquiring higher ranks and titles.[70]

There are numerous examples of newcomers of various ethnic origins – mainly Bulgars and Armenians after the subjugation of their lands in the eleventh century, as well as Latins in the twelfth century – who received Roman titles and offices, thus performing Romanness as an identity of loyalty to the emperor and the Roman political order.[71] In this regard, when Choniates in retrospect criticized the practice of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180) of preferring barbarians over *Rhomaioi* for offices in the provincial administration and the army,[72] his stance implies a proto-national approach to the organization of the state, an approach that had indeed very little to do with the functioning of the Roman order as an imperial-political community of subjects whose rights and privileges were not determined by ethnic origin and indigeneity, but by religious affiliation and degree of loyalty to the imperial power of Constantinople.

Within this framework, the role of the reigning city of New Rome as the principal source of Roman peoplehood and political legitimacy was central in the construction of the historical past of the *Rhomaioi* by the educated élite. In the introduction of his world-chronicle, written in the first half of the twelfth century, John Zonaras mentions that within the framework of world-history his main goal is to narrate the history of the Romans, which stretched from the foundation of the city of Rome to the emperors of his own days. According to him, the major events of this history concerned the changes of the political system of the city of Rome (from kingship to tyranny and from aristocracy to democracy, and then to autocracy); the Christianization of the empire by Constantine I and the transfer of the imperial power by him from Rome to New Rome – Constantinople; and, finally, the deeds of all of the emperors that had succeeded Constantine I up to the author's time.[73]

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68 Skylitzes, *Synospis,* ed. Thurn, 438.

69 In the discourse of the educated élite common *Rhomaioi* were occasionally presented as barbarian in culture as well; Stouraitis, Roman Identity, 198-200.

70 Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Pérez Martín, 66. Cf. Stephenson, *Balkan Frontier,* 96-98.

71 E.g. Skylitzes, *Synopsis,* ed. Thurn, 344, 346, 354-355, 357-358, 359, 436-437; Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 171, 202.

72 Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 205, 4-26 and 209, 1-14.

73 Zonaras, *Epitome,* ed. Dindorf, I 8-11.

An analogous scheme of historical continuity was already introduced in the late-eleventh century *Historia Syntomos* of Michael Psellos, which began with the foundation of Rome and briefly portrayed Roman kings, consuls and emperors up to the time of Basil II (976-1025).[74] In this view of the historical past, cultural and territorial discontinuities between the ancient and the medieval Romans were completely irrelevant for the authors and their audience. What determined their notion of historical Roman peoplehood and legitimized their perception of Roman political culture as their ancestral culture was a belief in the unbroken continuity of a Roman city-state due to the *translatio imperii* that had sealed the relocation of Roman imperial culture along with the archetypal Roman city-patria from the banks of Tiber in the West to the shores of the Bosporus in the East. This image of the past legitimized the educated élite to label subject populations as *Ausones* in a classicizing manner[75] and entitled Emperor Constantine VII to speak of Latin as the ancestral Roman language,[76] although he was a Greek-speaker who presented his own grandfather as Armenian by origin.

***Ethnicity without a group***

Considering that the configuration of a dominant Roman ethnicity changed very little in the form and function of the high-medieval eastern Roman community as an imperial political order, the swift loss of Anatolia to the Seljuks in the 1170s and the events of the following period up to the disintegration of the Empire in 1204 indicate that eastern Roman ethnic discourse neither promoted a stronger *Wir-Gefühl* nor enhanced provincial loyalty to the *Rhomaiōn politeia* of Constantinople. Loyalty or disloyalty to the centre remained principally a matter of power relations, personal ties of provincial magnates to the imperial court and the bilateral relationship between the local/regional community and the imperial capital. In this context, provincial élites and populations surrendered and cooperated with the enemies of the *Rhomaioi* when this seemed to be in their local interest.[77] The loyalty of the provinces to the centre waned incrementally, with provincial populations actively or passively supporting lords that pursed political separatism.[78] Last but not least, *Rhomaioi* under Seljuk rule were often disinclined to return to Roman authority when the possibility occurred.[79]

The detailed account of Niketas Choniates on the events that followed the sack of Constantinople demonstrates that loyalties and identifications at the local/regional level came first, supplanting ethnic bonds or any identification with the common good and interest of a united Roman community.[80] The author explicitly criticized the *Rhomaioi* of western Anatolia because after having escaped the Latin danger they did not seek to support their fellow countrymen in Thrace who were under Latin attack. Instead, he stated, they chose to remain divided into factions, fight against one another and incite cities to revolt, thus

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74 Markopoulos, Roman Antiquarianism, 294-295.

75 E.g. Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Pérez Martín, 31.

76 *De thematibus,* I 24-25, ed. Pertusi, 60.

77 See e.g. Anna Komnene, *Alexias,* V 4, 1 and X 3, 1, ed. Reinch and Kamvylis, 149 and 287; Kinnamos, *Epitome,* ed. Meinecke, 22; Choniates, *Historia,* ed. van Dieten, 37-38, 72-73, 75-76.

78 For the phenomenon of provincialism before 1204, see Hoffmann, *Rudimente*, 5-76; Lilie, Macht und Ohnmacht, 9-120; Cheynet, *Pouvoir,* 379-404, 446-74.

79 Kinnamos, *Epitome*, ed. Meinecke, 22, 296; Choniates, *Historia*, ed. van Dieten, 37-38, 495-496.

80 Choniates, *Historia,* ed. van Dieten, 599-610.

ignoring the bonds of kinship.[81] The same was true for the *Rhomaioi* of Greece, where many local magnates either submitted willingly to the Latins or were more concerned with creating their own autonomous principalities.[82] This criticism, besides confirming the proto-national traits in Choniates' thought in the wake of 1204, testifies to the role of the Fourth Crusade in revealing the lack of an operative ideology that could promote ethnic or, for that matter, national solidarity among the *Rhomaioi* in the face of a deteriorating imperial political superstructure. By the end of the first decade of the thirteenth century, various Byzantine principalities (Nicaea, Epirus und Trebizond being the three major ones) had emerged next to the Latin domains in the former Roman realm with conflicting political interests.

These developments are indicative of the ideological background of Romanness as a dominant political discourse of collective identification in the previous centuries. It was neither shared cultural markers nor a shared belief in an alleged republic of the sovereign Roman people that had determined the unity of the eastern Roman political community, but the charisma of the imperial office, underpinned by the predominant belief in the divinely-ordained monocracy of the Christian-Roman emperor of New Rome. The regression of this operative ideology among the members of the élite culminated with the loss of the imperial city. This is testified in an elucidating manner by a letter from the bishop of Naupaktos John Apokaukos (representing the interests of the ruler of Epirus) to the Patriarch of Nicaea Manuel I in 1222.

Apokaukos claimed that, even though the notion that there should be only one emperor over worldly affairs and a single shepherd of ecclesiastical affairs respectively was correct, the sins of the Romans had caused the empire's division into many parts. So, despite the common religion that united them all, they remained divided under various political and religious authorities due to God's will.[83] This statement pinpoints how the belief in divine ordainment was now employed to legitimize a new status quo in which the *Rhomaioi*– as a collectivity of a common culture – were allowed by God's will to create various polities, each with its own ruler to whom political loyalty was due.[84] For the archbishop of Ochrid, Demetrios Chomatenos, the ruler of Epirus was no less legitimate than the ruler of Nicaea, since the practice of imperial monocracy had been relinquished along with the loss of Constantinople.[85]

In this context, when Nikephoros Blemmydes argued from a Nicaean point of view that all those of the same origin (*omogeneis*) should be under a single authority, or when Michael Choniates exalted the ruler of Nicaea as the future liberator of the *Romania*, their statements had little to do with a shared proto-national vision among the *Rhomaioi*.[86] This is confirmed by the fact that after the recapture of Constantinople by Michael VII of Nicaea in 1261 the other Roman polities were not willing to be reunited into a single imperial *politeia*. The restored Constantinopolitan state sought to reinstate imperial Romanness by claiming that the ruler of Epirus had no longer the right to hold his lands since the emperor was no more

81 Choniates, *Historia,* ed. van Dieten, 625 and 639.

82 Choniates, *Historia,* ed. van Dieten, 637.

83 Vasilievsky, Epirotica saeculi XIII, 276, 27-277, 14.

84 A similar stance adopted the bishop of Corfu George Bardanes in his letter to the Patriarch of Nicaea Germanos II; George Bardanes, *Epistula ad Germanum II*, 18, ed. Loenertz 117, 413-422.

85 Chomatenos, *Πονήματα διάφορα,* 114, 37-97 (cf. 8, 118-128), ed. Prinzing, 372-373 (cf. 50-51).

86 Nikephoros Blemmydes, *Curriculum vitae*, 1, 23, 4-10, ed. Munitiz, 14; Michael Choniates, *Epist.* 138, 20-26, ed. Kolobou, 226.

outside the *patris* (i.e. Constantinople). Michael II Angelos' response that his family had taken the territory from the Latins and not from the Romans demonstrates that this identity remained a dead letter.[87]

Notions of common ethno-cultural identity remained irrelevant in the long-drawn process of reunification of the *Rhomaioi* under Constantinopolitan overlordship after 1261. During the negotiations for the surrender of the city of Arta in the Despotate of Epirus in 1339/40, the representative of Emperor Andronikos III John Kantakouzenos argued that it was unjust that the Arteans had accepted the barbarian Tarantines[88] as their rulers instead of the Roman power of Constantinople, which had ruled their ancestors since the time of Caesar. For this reason, he justified the emperor's campaign against the city as a divinely-ordained restoration of his rightful ancestral authority over the territory, since he was by means of continuous succession the descendent of the ancient Roman emperors.[89] In their response the Arteans argued that, although their loyalty to the local Angeloi dynasty had been just, they would surrender to the emperor due to their hopeless military position, which threatened to destroy them and their fatherland (*patris*) instead of preserving their freedom.[90]

From the Constantinopolitan point of view, political unity was not claimed in terms of common kinship and cultural peoplehood (or, for that matter, identification with the vision of a united Roman republic), but as recognition of the ancestral right of the holder of the Roman throne of Constantinople to exercise centralized authority over those territories and populations that had been ruled by his predecessors since the time of Augustus.[91] The response of the Arteans provides further evidence that for provincial populations local/regional identities and loyalties prevailed over any identification with a *Rhomaiōn genos* or a *Rhomaiōn politeia* as a cultural or political entity.[92] Their patriotism referred to the notion of the freedom of their city-patria, whereas they regarded subordination to the Roman imperial power of Constantinople as subservience (*douleia*).

The vision of the *Rhomaioi* as a people of common kinship and culture remained at odds with the vision of a Roman political community whose boundaries were demarcated by the limits of imperial authority. Late-Byzantine Constantinopolitan historiographers remained faithful to the latter concept and propagated Romanness as an identity of membership and loyalty to the polity of the imperial power of Constantinople (or Nicaea for the period of exile).[93] Within this framework, they employed the term *emphylios polemos* (internal armed conflict) in the traditional strictly political manner in order to designate only those conflicts over the throne within the late-Byzantine imperial state-frame and not the wars between the *Rhomaioi* of Constantinople (or previously Nicaea) and those of the other polities.[94]

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87 Pachymeres, *Historiae,* ed. Failler, I 272, 22-275, 15.

88 This is a reference to the alliance of the Angeloi dynasty of Epirus with Philip of Taranto.

89 Cantacuzenus, *Historiae,* ed. Schopen, I 520, 1-521, 19.

90 Cantacuzenus, *Historiae,* ed. Schopen, I 523, 1-524, 6. On various notions of *patris* in late Byzantium, see Kiousopoulou, *Emperor or Manager*, 141-165

91 Fatouros and Krischer, *Geschichte II,* 245, n. 332. This legitimized the emperor to use Turkish mercenaries to impose his direct rule over dissident *Rhomaioi*, cf. Kyriakidis, *Warfare,* 32.

92 Cf. the case of the local *archontes* of Ioannina who pledged loyalty to their despot Carlo Tocco (1411-1429), promising that they would not exchange him for the emperor, see *Chronicon Toccorum*, IV 5, 1236, ed. Schirò, 310.

93 On Roman identity discourse in post-1261 historiography, see Page, *Being Byzantine,* 102-121, 146-158; cf. Macrides, *History,* 94.

94 Kyriakidis, Idea of Civil War, 248-254.

Eastern Roman ethnicity probably played a more important socio-political role in the areas under Turkish and Latin rule. Marino Sanudo wrote in 1330 about the Greeks (i.e. *Rhomaioi*) living under the Turks in Asia Minor or the Latins in Greece that they were distinguished by their Greek rites and inclination towards the sect of the Greek Church, to which they showed loyalty.[95] This ethno-cultural demarcation of the *Rhomaioi* in terms of religious doctrine and language marked their generically subaltern status in the conquered areas but did not make them *a priori* hostile to the new rulers. The conditions of co-existence with the Turks in Anatolia or the cases of the well-integrated *archontes* in the Frankish principality of Achaia, as well as of *Rhomaioi* serving as loyal soldiers under Latin lords, suggest that political loyalty or disloyalty to the new rulers remained primarily a matter of the latter's ability to integrate local identities and interests.[96]

### *A new vision of ethnogenesis of the Rhomaioi*

The role of political and cultural identifications in the post-1204 Byzantine world provides the point of departure for examining the debated issue of a change in the historical content of Byzantine Romanness. As mentioned above, before 1204 the educated eastern Roman élite propagated a historical identity of the *Rhomaioi* that went back to ancient Rome, based on the vision of *translatio imperii* and the relocation of the Roman city-patria from Rome to New Rome. This historical construct of unbroken continuity received a serious blow after the Latin capture of the imperial city, since the new holders of Constantinople claimed imperial Romanness.

This new status quo forced a part of the Byzantine élite to look for an alternative historical source of legitimacy for its Romanness. The self-image of the *Rhomaioi* as an indigenous collectivity of finite cultural boundaries, which were detached from the boundaries of the Roman imperial *politeia* and demarcated by the Chalcedonian doctrine and Greek cultural markers, paved the way for a reconstruction of the community's historical past. The educated élite was able to complement the historical scheme of continuity of a people of a political culture bound to a city-state with an image of continuity of a people of historic cultural markers that had diachronically dominated the lands around the Aegean basin, i.e. the current homeland of eastern Roman ethnicity.[97] A latent ideological tendency to identify ethnic Romanness with Hellenic ethno-cultural identity had been underway within certain circles of literati already before 1204.[98] The emperors of Nicaea John III (1222-1254) and Theodoros II (1254-1258) went a step further and propagated that the *Rhomaioi* were Hellenes, the descendants of the historical people of the Ancient Greeks.[99]

95 *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites et peu connues*, ed. Hopf, 143.

96 Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey,* 202-215; Ducellier, *Chrétiens d'Orient et islam au moyen âge,* 260-275; Balivet, *Romanie byzantine et pays de Rûm turc,* 30-39, 47-53; idem, Intégration et exclusion,107-124. Jacoby, Encounter of Two Societies, 889-906; Lock, *Franks in the Aegean,* 284-290. On revolts against Latin rulers, see Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 185-254; Wright, Byzantine Authority, 253-254.

97 For the notion that the lands around the Aegean basin were the ›homeland‹ of Hellenic culture, see *Michaelis Pselli oratoria minora*, ed. Littlewood, 19, 30-46.

98 Stouraitis, Roman Identity, 210-214.

99 On Hellenic identity in Nicaea, see Koder, Die Hellenis als Mitte der Ökumene, 195-210; Papadopoulou, *Ῥωμαῖος Ἕλλην Γραικὸς*, 167-172; eadem, *Συλλογική ταυτότητα,* 330-340.

As I have recently argued, this identification indicates a purposeful reconstruction of the community's historical past, inspired by a distinct political goal that had little to do with an ideological or – even less so – political movement of Greek proto-nationalism.[100] For the Nicaeans, asserting Hellenic ethnicity was interrelated with their claim that the Hellenes were the only rightful heirs to Roman imperial culture, which Constantine I had bestowed upon them through the transfer of the imperial capital from Rome to Constantinople.[101] The main aim of this claim was to add an ethno-cultural dimension (Latins/Greeks) to the traditional geopolitical vision of *translatio imperii* from the West to the East. Ethnic Hellenism was emphatically politicized by the Laskarids but not with the intention to marginalize imperial Romanness and the Roman past. Theodore II may have designated the land and the subjects of the Nicaean polity as Hellenic, but the Laskarids equally identified themselves as the only legitimate emperors of the *Rhomaioi,* their people whose archetypal homeland remained Constantinople.[102] Hellenic ethnicity and Romanness were not two distinct or, even less so, contrasting identities for the Nicaean élite, but constitutive parts of one and the same identity – that of the contemporary *Rhomaioi*.

This reconstruction of the historical content of Byzantine Romanness in the successor state whose last ruler Michael VII Palaiologos recaptured Constantinople was conducive for the reinvention of the historical origins of the *Rhomaioi* in late Byzantium. The Constantinopolitan restoration of 1261 may have fully reinstated Roman imperial ideology and the link to ancient Rome, but did not unmake the Nicaean ideological heritage of convergence between Romanness and ethnic Hellenism. Under emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos (1282-1341), his chief advisor Theodoros Metochites presented the *Rhomaioi* as partakers and successors of the kinship and the language of the Hellenes, and could address the emperor in a sermon at court as someone that had devoted himself to the salvation of his Hellenic subjects.[103]

There are a number of similar utterances on Hellenic identity by members of the late-Byzantine élite, which have been over- or understated within the framework of modern approaches that sought to present the *Rhomaioi* of late-Byzantium as bearers of an exclusively Greek or Roman national culture, respectively. What both these approaches have in common is the tendency to ignore the malleability of schemes of historical identification in a pre-modern world, where nationalism was not yet the dominant operative ideology of states and societies, in order to dictate a rigid unchangeable view of historical identity. Keeping this in mind, a closer look at the evidence demonstrates that the ideological innovations of the Nicaean court were elaborated in late-Byzantine Constantinople.

In his »Comparison of the Old and the New Rome«, addressed to emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1391-1425), Manuel Chrysoloras presented Rome as the mother and Constantinople as the daughter which was founded by the two most powerful and wise peoples of the world, the Romans and the Hellenes, who had come together there in order to create a city that would be able to rule over the whole world.[104] In a sermon to the same emperor, he sta-

100 Stouraitis, Roman Identity, 215-218.

101 John III Ducas Vatatzes, *Epistula ad Gregorium papam*, 18-52, ed. Pieralli, 123-124.

102 On Constantinople as the common *patria* of the exiled *Rhomaioi*, see Choniates, *Orationes* 15, ed. van Dieten, 147, 16-17; John III Ducas Vatatzes, *Epistula ad Gregorium papam*, 56-11, ed. Pieralli, 125-126. On the use of the ethnonym *Rhomaios* in Nicaea, see Papadopoulou, *Ρωμαῖος Ἕλλην Γραικὸς*, 163-167.

103 Metochites, *Miscellanea,* 93, 3, ed. Agapitos, Hult and Smith, 38-40; Metochites, *Orationes*, 2, 8, ed. Polemis, 336, 1-3.

104 Chrysoloras, *Comparatio*, 33-38, ed. Billò, 16, 12-17, 31.

ted that the *Rhomaioi* were the offspring of the Romans and the Hellenes, thus being entitled to use both names.[105] Such statements delivered to the imperial court testify, in fact, to the crystallization of a new vision of ethnogenesis of the *Rhomaioi*, in which the Nicaean claim to historical Hellenic ethnicity had merged with the Constantinopolitan claim to an ancestral Roman political culture.

A full-blown version of this new myth of ethnogenesis is found in a sermon held at the court of emperor John VIII Palaiologos (1425-1448) by bishop Isidore of Kiev in 1429[106]. Isidore devoted the largest part of the speech to the history of Constantinople, which he presented as the city and *patris* of the *basileus*, the reigning metropolis of all cities and the whole *Oecumene*, and the cradle and mother of the *Rhomaioi*.[107] He referred to its foundation and colonization by the Hellenes and its conquest by the Roman imperial power in the course of the subjugation of the whole *Oecumene*.[108] From there he went on to praise the perceptiveness of Constantine the Great who had acknowledged the splendour of the location and transferred the imperial power from old Rome to this city, the New Rome. He had brought there »holy relics and unspeakable hoards of treasures and the noblest and bravest among the Romans who he had mingled and united with the noblest of the Hellenes, so that the people of this city became the most distinguished, honourable and noble people of the whole human kind. And this was proper. No other people under the sun was equal to, or greater than, the Hellenes and the Romans, but the one to the other. Thus, it was right and felicitous that the equals were adapted and put together, so that from both these distinguished peoples emerged the most distinguished and honourable of all, which one could rightfully call *Rhomellenes*«.[109]

This evidence reflects the culmination of an ideological process of reinvention of Roman ethnicity, which had been triggered through the events of 1204 and 1261. By the early-fifteenth century the dominant approach of the members of the late-Byzantine élite to the community's past had amalgamated the Roman and the Hellenic historical heritage, based on the axiom of *translatio imperii* and the archetypal binding of Roman peoplehood to a city-state. The *Rhomaioi* of late Byzantium had little interest in their self-imaging as only Roman or only Greek in modern national terms – contrary to some modern historians' eagerness to prove them the one or the other. They rather propagated a historically distinct and unique identity. As their historical homeland, the cradle of their civilization, they regarded neither Ancient Rome nor Ancient Greece but Constantinople, the city where the best from the ancient *genê* of the Romans and the Hellenes had mingled to give rise to a new people, the *Rhomaiōn genos*. This reinvented historical past legitimized them to use the ethnonyms Roman and Hellene interchangeably. Moreover, it represents the ideological background against which the proto-national traits in their identity discourse need to be examined, as a response to a changing world where rhetorical claims to an ecumenical imperial culture made little sense.[110]

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105 Chrysoloras, *Oratio in imperatorem Manuelem II*, 18, 4-18, ed. Patrineles and Sophianos, 117.

106 Schmitt, Kaiserrede, 209-242.

107 Isidore of Kiev, *Panegyricus,* ed. Lampros 145, 28-30.

108 Isidore of Kiev*, Panegyricus,* ed. Lampros, 149, 23-151, 29.

109 Isidore of Kiev, Panegyricus, ed. Lampros, 151, 29-152, 17.

110 See Kiousopoulou, *Emperor or Manager,* 146-150.

Among the post-1453 Byzantine historiographers, the author of the Pseudo-Sphrantzes chronicle Makarios Melissenos was the only one to reproduce the late-Byzantine élite's vision of historical identity. In his version of Constantine XI's last speech before the fall, he depicts the emperor as having addressed his audience as the descendants of the Hellenes and the Romans, asking them to defend their *patris*, Constantinople, the hope and joy of the Hellenes.[111] In contrast, Michael Doukas was less keen to allude to some glorious ancient past of the *Rhomaioi*, either Roman or Hellenic, beginning his introductory chronological overview of Roman emperors with Constantine I, whereas in the original chronicle of Georgios Sphrantzes it was neither Roman nor Hellenic, but only Christian identity that mattered.[112] At the other end, Laonikos Chalkokondyles, influenced by his master George Plethon Gemistos,[113] was keen to fully erase the ethnonym *Rhomaios* from the historical record by referring to the Constantinopolitan Empire as the Empire of the Hellenes.[114]

These different approaches are a good reminder of the medieval historian's arbitrary prerogative to construct or reinvent the historical past according to his/her patron's or circle's political concerns and ideological priorities, respectively. When these histories were written, the *Rhomaioi* had sunk in the melting pot of the Ottoman Empire as an ethno-cultural category of Greek-speaking Christians. Their popular historical memory was marked neither by the glories of Ancient Rome nor by whitewashed Hellenism, but by legends that lamented the loss of the Christian homeland, Constantinople, and highlighted the myth of its last emperor, prophesizing his return for the reconquest of the city in times to come.[115]

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111 Pseudo-Sphrantzes, *Chronicon sive Maius*, ed. Grecu, 414, 21-420, 33.

112 On a detailed examination of these historians' different approaches, see Smarnakis, Rethinking Roman Identity, *passim.*

113 George Plethon Gemistos was the main representative of a diverging strand of thought in late Byzantium. His outline of a political program for the creation of a Hellenic ethnic kingdom in the Peloponnese indicates a genuine vision of Hellenic proto-nationalism; cf. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon,* 102-109; Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism,* 327-359.

114 Laonikos Chalkokondyles*, Historiae*, ed. Darkó, I 1-7. Cf. Kaldellis, *New Herodotos*, 216-228.

115 Nicol, *Immortal Emperor,* 88-108; Papayianni, He Polis healo, 37-42.

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# Characteristics of Bodies and Ethnicity c. 900-1200

Claire Weeda*

Examining synchronic and diachronic discourses of the body in relation to groups sheds light on concepts of ›ethnicity‹ from an emic perspective. From the tenth century, monks, first in Spain and later in North-Western Europe, began to compile lists of ethnic characteristics, summing up the virtues and vices of peoples. By the twelfth century, such enumerations of ethnic diversity featured in textbooks of rhetoric, collections of proverbs, and in poetry and prose. The ontology of ethnic characteristics likewise transformed from the religious-ethical to the medical. Early medieval monks catalogued the virtues and vices of groups loosely arranged according to an Evagrian or Gregorian ethical system of seven or eight cardinal sins and virtues, expounding the function of groups‹ moral dispositions, which were, in the eschatological history of salvation in both the past and the present, subject to free will. However, from the twelfth century, under the impact of Galenic humoral theory, students of the liberal arts began to attribute ethnic characteristics on biological grounds, referring in particular to the heredity influence of climate. In the same period, ethnic groups were now considered as entities dwelling in bounded territories that bore the stamp of their name, sometimes envisaged as a body politic. As such, the ethnotype, and its ruler, could stand as a *pars pro toto* for the ›nation‹.

*Keywords: Central Middle Ages; ethnic character; virtues and vices; eschatology; rhetoric; Galenic humours; body politic*

From the tenth century, first Asturian monks, followed slightly later by members of the religious orders stretching from Anglo-Saxon England and Normandy to the present-day Swiss Alps, undertook the compilation of lists cataloguing the virtues and vices of ethnic-religious groups. These might speak of, for instance, the envy of the Jews, the pride of the Romans or the ferocity of the Franks[1]. These early ethnic lists feature in manuscripts often containing encyclopaedic-topographical knowledge or computus material, and in some cases alongside listings of the region's characteristic products.[2] From the late eleventh century, these catalogues, sometimes jotted down in the margins or on the front or back folio cover of manuscripts, transform into a marriage of traditional knowledge and contemporary obser-

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* **Correspondence details:** Claire Weeda, Institute for History, P.O. Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands. Email: c.v.weeda@hum.leidenuniv.nl.

1 The oldest known list, beginning *Sapientia Graecorum, Fortia Gothorum*, can be found in the Codex Aemilianensis (Madrid, Biblioteca Real Academia MS 39), dated to about 950. It was afterwards copied into other Spanish manuscripts. It is printed in *Chroniques Asturiennes,* ed. Bonnaz, 11, and in *Chronica minora saec. iv. v. vi. vii*, ed. Mommsen, 389-390. In the eleventh century, a list beginning *Invidia Iudeorum, Perfidia Persarum* was inserted in the Codex Matritensis v 191, and also recorded in Bern MS 48 f. 1 and in Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 1406 (Y.41) Av-Bv. It is printed in Burnam, Miscellanea Hispanica, 169; cf. Omont, Vices et vertus des différents peuples, 580-581.

2 For example the list beginning with *Polla de Narbona, Vini de Bilasç,* in the tenth-century Codex Aemilianensis, Madrid Biblioteca Real Academia MS 39, printed in *Chroniques Asturiennes,* ed. Bonnaz, 8-13.

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vation. Lists of ethnic affects make their way into rhetorical textbooks and poetry produced at cathedral schools and universities, as well as in letters and collections of proverbs, in some cases even culminating in ethnic slanging matches attacking the Other. Expanding the catalogue ›Envy of the Jews, Perfidy of the Persians‹, English manuscripts thus now speak of the rapacity of the Normans or the cunning of the Saracens.[3] By this period, the context and underlying ontology of catalogues of ethnic character had transformed from the monastic religious-eschatological to the contemporary urban world of learning, where students practiced literary embellishment and satire, and were informed by newfangled ideas about the humoral make-up of ethnic groups based on Galenic medicine.[4] Although the catalogues of ethnic groups still often remained an enumeration of peoples arranged under the umbrella of Christendom, with Rome as its pinnacle, derision, satire and literary forms such as the priamel thus put their stamp on catalogues of ethnic character in the later Middle Ages.[5]

In the past, such specimens of the belief that ethnic groups had shared characteristics were downplayed as mere utterances of ethnic animosity, or, on the other side of the spectrum, as evidence that a national consciousness or even a sense of ›nationalism‹ existed in the later Middle Ages.[6] In accordance with post-Second World War historiographical trends, scholars have looked towards burgeoning bureaucratization and state centralization as explanatory frameworks for the ›rise of the nation-state‹.[7] In addition, departing from sociological-anthropological perspectives, some have emphasized the relational aspect of ethnicity, referring to the increase in mobility and international contacts;[8] some pointed to the expansion of Europe's frontiers and colonization rhetoric;[9] or attempted to engage with a comprehensive emic approach identifying the building blocks relevant to ethnicity and their interplay in the period at hand, such as narratives of descent, language, shared customs, and laws.[10] Above all, these multifarious approaches and interpretations indicate the complexity of researching the what, when and why of nationhood, as scholars were and are doomed to

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3 For instance in Corpus Christi MS 139. f. 166v., probably dating to the late twelfth century, and Corpus Christi MS 139 f. 179 r. of the thirteenth century, printed in Wright and Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae*, vol. 1, 127.

4 Eliav-Feldon *et al., Origins of Racism in the West,* for the impact of Galenic medicine on thinking about ethnicity from the twelfth century. For the rise of stereotyping in this period and the role of university education, see Weeda, Ethnic Stereotyping in Twelfth-Century Paris.

5 Many examples presented in Kot, Old International Insults and Praises.

6 For ethnic stereotypes as utterances of animosity and xenophobia, see Brühl, *Deutschland, Frankreich,* 275. Examples of viewing the application of ethnic stereotypes as evidence of a sense of nationalism, for instance in Koht, Dawn of Nationalism in Europe; Coulton, Nationalism in the Middle Ages, Tipton, *Nationalism in the Middle Ages;* cf. also Mohr, Zur Frage des Nationalismus im Mittelalter. Kirn, *Frühzeit des Nationalgefühls,* offers a wealth of sources but these are interpreted, in Nazi Germany, within the context of demonstrating the ›centuries-old‹ ethnic consciousness of the German and French peoples. Recently, Hirschi, *Origins of Nationalism,* argued for the impact of the ancient concept of the imperium on the rise of nationalism in the late Middle Ages. See Weeda, Ethnic Identification and Stereotypes for an extensive bibliography.

7 For instance, Guenée, *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe*; Clanchy, *England and its Rulers;* Ehlers, *Entstehung des deutschen Reiches.*

8 Schmugge, Über »nationale«Vorurteile im Mittelalter.

9 Bartlett, *Making of Europe.*

10 Davies, Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400 I; Davies, Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400 II; Davies, Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400 III and Davies, Peoples of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400 IV. Bartlett, Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity; Blaicher, Zur Entstehung und Verbreitung nationaler Stereotypen; Ehlers, Elemente mittelalterlicher Nationsbildung in Frankreich.

work with categories and concepts shaped by modern phenomena and are thus exposed to the dangers of subsequently identifying ›similar‹ building blocks of ethnicity in social group formation in medieval times. Attempting to pinpoint what a nation was, and how, when and why it came about, may therefore seem a fruitless endeavour, like attempting to catch soap bubbles, particularly because of the absence of medieval discussions on what a nation might be.

The challenge therefore remains to examine concepts of groups that are perceived as being of common descent and bound to a certain territory, without succumbing to the pitfalls of self-referentiality by identifying factors that neatly fit into concepts of the modern nation. Utterances of stereotyping the ›ethnic‹ Other might indeed occur *outside* the nation-state, leaving us with the question what such ›ethnicity without groups‹ entails.[11] In that light, ethnic identity formation should be viewed as an ongoing process that engages with social reality and at the same time shapes it, constantly redefining what a nation itself might be.

In recent scholarship, attention has shifted to thinking about the relationship between the body and categories of ethnicity. This is a fruitful approach, in view of the fact that the body is the only given constant in ethnicity, and a nexus for three pertinent elements related to the concept of nationhood.[12] First, the generic fact applies that the sum of bodies makes up nations, whose fluid or more fixed boundaries are drawn based on biological, cultural, religious or legal definitions, or a combination thereof (and in modernity mapped in the census). Second, the body may (although not necessarily) be viewed as the historical product of biological descent, encapsulated in origin myths and recalled in the collective memory in narratives, rituals, and artefacts; and the demise of the body – dying for the nation – viewed as a sacrifice for the future of the nation.[13] Thirdly, the body's materiality – skin and hair colour, physical build and accompanying cultural artefacts – may serve as a marker for a sense of ›natural membership‹, together with its perceived national ›character‹ and mental characteristics (identified in later periods as *Volksgeist* or identity), which are shaped in part by its culture and collective memory.[14]

Approaches in order to understand this correlation between the body and the nation or ethnic group, may involve looking at word clusters attached to the words *gentes* or *nationes*, and examining the concepts grafted onto these groups of bodies of perceived common descent. What are the ontological meanings attached to these bodies, within a configuration of other factors such as the application of common law, geographical boundaries, the presence of communication networks, events such as warfare, inter-relational contacts, and processes such as that of bureaucratization? Are these clustered bodies for instance considered as inherently bound by a certain physicality (skin colour); tied to a certain territory (birth rights); to certain rights and duties (later bureaucratically encapsulated in the passport)? And how does

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11 Cf. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups.*

12 For general approaches to the body and ethnicity, see Burton, *Culture and the Human Body,* 51-68.

13 For origin myths, see for instance Eley, Myth of Trojan Descent and Perceptions of National Identity; Reynolds, Medieval *Origines Gentium*; Garber, Trojaner – Römer – Franken – Deutsche; Graus, Troja und die trojanische Herkunftssage; Hoppenbrouwers, Dynamics of National Identity. For the idea of dying for the *patria* in the later Middle Ages, see Post, Two Notes on Nationalism in the Middle Ages, 288-291; Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies,* 247; Guenée, *States and Rulers,* 54; and Hirschi, *Origins of Nationalism.* See also Braude, The Sons of Noah. For collective Frankish memory, Gabriele, *Empire of Memory*.

14 For skin colour see Van der Lugt, La peau noire.

the individual body stand as a *pars pro toto* for the whole nation, as an ethnotype? Such an approach might enter into a fruitful alliance with the field of ethnosymbolism, that ›regards the central components of ethnic and national phenomena as both sociocultural and symbolic, i.e. language, dress, emblems, rituals, artefacts, consisting in memories, myths, values and traditions‹.[15] Accordingly, distinctive clusters of such symbolic components are said to delineate and guard the boundaries of ethnic groups. Myth-symbol complexes are thereby both constitutive, helping to structure an ethnic group's social relations and cultural institutions, and subjective, appealing to members' perceptions and beliefs. In this light, Smith has advocated focusing on processes wherein an ›ethnic past‹, encapsulated in myths, symbols, cultural traditions and values, is appropriated into new contexts on both the individual and communal level. Thus, instead of searching for the ethnic origins of nations in the past, the emic ethno-symbolic approach looks at how people defined and perceived themselves through their myths and symbols (›doing‹ ethnicity), and how these were employed throughout various periods, in relation to politics and religious ideologies, and economic, cultural and social developments.

Such an approach also stretches to the body in its manifestation as an ›ethnotype‹, and in particular to the conceptual constitutive and subjective typology of mental and physical traits ascribed to ethnic group members within various different religious, social and political contexts. Looking at the contexts and beliefs underlying the employment of these ethnic character types may thus help us firstly to understand the saliency of ethnicity, and secondly to pinpoint instances where its potentiality was capitalized upon. From the twelfth century, the dissemination of medical Galenic thought and its impact on concepts of ethnicity and race are said to have spurned geographically determined, biological ethnotypes, such as the ›melancholy Jew‹.[16] These types were later – for instance in a fourteenth-century treatise by John of Newhouse – medically theorized as ethnic-biological categories that were passed down through parental transmission.[17] The idea of the ethnotype as a *pars pro toto* for the group was further ensconced in the concept of the body politic, where the monarch was sometimes considered the embodiment of the nation.[18] A specific aspect of these ethnotypes – the topic of this paper – is the grafting onto the body of shared *mental* characteristics or ›ethnic character‹. In the period discussed here, the ninth to the thirteenth century, we can thus identity a shift in the underlying meaning and context of shared characteristics attached to the body, which were viewed first as shaped by culture, religion and God's plan for humanity, but thereupon shifted, from the twelfth century onwards, to medically conceived categories based on humoral theory.

For my research on the concept of ethnic character and its employment in the later Middle Ages, I have identified over one hundred and fifty sources from the period 1100-1250 containing substantial comments on ethnic groups and their characteristics in Western Europe

15 Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism,* 23-40.

16 Biller, A ›Scientific‹ View of Jews from Paris; Johnson, Myth of Jewish Male Menses; Bauchau, Science et racisme. For late medieval impact of humoral theory on general thinking about ethnicity, see especially Biller, Proto-racial thought in medieval science, and Ziegler, Physiognomy, Science, and Proto-Racism.

17 See Weeda, The Fixed and the Fluent, and the references there.

18 For the concept of the body politic and humoral theory, see Kaye, *History of Balance*; Syros, Galenic Medicine and Social Stability; Shogimen, Treating the Body Politic.

in this period.[19] The sources range from historiographical texts, *chansons de geste,* and encyclopaedias, to letters, poetry and classroom textbooks on rhetoric. A dominant feature in these sources is the listing of ethnic characteristics in catalogues. It was possible to discern at least three developments pertaining to these catalogues. Firstly, that the early lists of ethnic characteristics, dating back to the tenth century, are embedded in a religious-eschatological context; secondly, that from the late eleventh century, as translations from Arabic into Latin on humoral and climate theory entered the Latin West, listed virtues and vices of ethnic groups are increasingly ensconced in medical-humoral climate theory; and thirdly, that from this period onwards stereotypes are no longer based primarily on images from classical antiquity, but instead are more attuned to contemporary life worlds. Accordingly, an ontological shift occurs in the perceived relationship between shared characteristics and the ›ethnic body‹, from biblical-moral eschatological concepts of salvation and ideas about chosenness, to medicalized and territorialized concepts of ethnic groups.

### *Monastic lists*

To date, research on early medieval ethnic catalogues is scant, with no substantial explanation offered for their sudden appearance in tenth-century manuscripts.[20] I have identified about 25 manuscripts containing various examples of such lists for the period of the tenth to the thirteenth century.[21] Many of these lists are in manuscripts containing computus-material calculating time, and embedded in encyclopaedic texts concerning geographical information and historiography.

The ethnic virtues and vices enumerated in the lists, are the reaping of centuries of learned religious and historiographical tradition.[22] Knowledge of the diversity of humanity was gathered partly from classical, secular traditions – the stereotypes in these lists often are, perhaps unwittingly, grounded on climate theory, attributing violence, lack of intelligence, and unbridled emotions to groups dwelling in the northern territories of Europe, and wisdom to southerners and easterners – and partly from biblical exegesis, focusing on the proclivity to sin and receptiveness to the Christian message. For example, two Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the eleventh century list the following vices or virtues:

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19 Weeda, Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe.

20 Although aware of these earlier lists, Stanzel, discussing the birth of catalogues of nations, remarked that it is not possible to trace how these catalogues first arose, and little order has been detected within the catalogues. See Stanzel, Nationalitätenschema in der Literatur. Such lists are also mentioned, without an explanation, in Meyvaert, Voicing National Antipathy, 747; Brühl, *Deutschland, Frankreich,* 274; Fichtenau, Gentiler und europäischer Horizont, 80; Bartlett, Medieval and Modern Concepts, 49. See also Kot, Old International Insults and Praises, 181-209, for the development of these catalogues in the late Middle Ages in Eastern Europe. Stanzel, Zur literarischen Imagologie, 20, remarks upon the relationship between medieval catalogues and virtues and vices, but only in very general terms. Jeay, *Le commerce des mots*, is a recent study of the rise of lists in medieval literature, but does not specifically address ethnic catalogues.

21 See Weeda, Images of Ethnicity in Later Medieval Europe, Appendices, for a list of these manuscripts.

22 Stanzel, Nationalitätenschema in der Literatur, 85, notes that stereotypes in early modernity were mostly drawn from an ethnographic-literary treasure store. I would however like to emphasize here the influence of biblical exegesis, whose commentators reinforced traditional stereotypes.

| The wisdom of the Greeks | The victory of the Egyptians |
|---|---|
| The envy of the Jews | The envy of the Jews |
| The pride of the Romans | The wisdom of the Greeks |
| The generosity of the Longobards | The cruelty of the Picts |
| The sobriety of the Goths | The strength of the Romans |
| The raising up of the Franks[23] | The generosity of the Longobards |
| The gluttony of the Gauls | The gluttony of the Gauls |
| The wrath of the Britons | The pride or ferocity of the Franks |
| The stupidity of the Saxons | The wrath of the Britons |
| The passion of the Scots | The stupidity of the Saxons or Angles |
| The cruelty of the Picts.[24] | The passion of the Scots.[25] |

The listings here of the Franks' ferocity, the wrath of the Britons, the stupidity of the Saxons, etc., are commonplaces based upon the unfavourable opinion formed in Antiquity of northern peoples as harsh, headstrong, and fierce.[26] The envy of the Jews, on the other hand, goes hand in hand with references to them from the Christian perspective of their ›stubborn‹ rejection of Christ as the Messiah, an image prominent in many of the catalogues similar to the above examples.[27] Several characterizations in the lists accordingly stem either directly from, or in exegetical commentaries upon, the Pauline letters in the New Testament – letters written to evangelize and spread the message of the Messiah's arrival upon earth and the incumbent heavenly kingdom. Thus, for example in his early medieval exegetical commentary on Paul's Epistle to Titus about the Galatians' purported character trait of foolishness (foolish, that is, for choosing the Mosaic Law above the Christian faith), Jerome comments that ›the Cretans are denoted as liars, the Galatians as stupid, and the Israelites as stiff-necked, or each province according to its own vice‹.[28] A monk subsequently condensed Jerome's

23 Whether *elevatio* refers to baptism, Christianization, enthronement, moral raising up or even self-elevation or arrogance is very difficult to ascertain.

24 British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A. XV f. 122 v.: *Sapientia Grecorum. Invidia Judeorum. Superbia Romanorum. Largitas Longobardum. Sobrietas Gothorum. Elevatio Francorum. Gula Gallorum. Ira Brittonum. Stultitia Saxonum. Libido Scottorum. Crudelitas Pictorum.* The manuscript further contains entries on medicine, the moon, stars and winds. The reference to the Picts may reflect the ethnic origin of the scribe.

25 MS Harley 3271 f. 6v.: *Victoria Aegiptiorum. Invidia Judeorum. Sapientia Graecorum. Crudelitas Pictorum. Fortitudo Romanorum. Largitas Longobardorum. Gulla Gallorum. Superbia vel ferocitas Francorum. Ira Britanorum. Stulticia Saxonum vel Anglorum. Libido Hibernorum.* A facsimile is printed in Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons* II, plate 53, 388. The list is attached to the Tribal Hidage; cf. Anlezark, Understanding Numbers in London, 154-155, for the dating of the manuscript.

26 See Fraesdorff, *Der barbarische Norden,* 187-194.

27 The stiff-necked Jews is a reference to Exodus 32:9 and Deuteronomy 9:13, where the Israelites break the covenant by constructing a golden calf in the absence of Moses, while he is receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Horeb. God's wrath threatens to destroy the idolators. In the twelfth century, Germans are sometimes also called stiff-necked, for instance in Suger, *Gesta Ludovici Grossi* x. Cf. Kirn, *Frühzeit des Nationalgefühls*, 46; Dümmler, Über den Furor Teutonicus, 120-121; Curta, Furor Teutonicus, 62-76.

28 Jerome, *Commentariorum in epistolam ad Titum Liber unus*, PL 26, col. 0574C: *Quomodo autem vel Cretenses mendaces, et stulti Galatae, vel dura cervice Israel, vel unaquaeque provincia proprio vitio denotetur.* See also Hrabanus Maurus, *Enarrationes in epistolas Beati Pauli*, PL 112, col. 0672A.

exegesis in the catalogue ›The envy of the Jews, the astuteness of the Greeks‹ and inserted it in a tenth-century computus manuscript, which was again copied and expanded by the English theologian and philosopher Robert Grosseteste around 1230.[29] The ›envy of the Jews‹ equally runs through the New Testament and biblical exegesis and is, for example, evoked in a passage on Paul and Barnabas' preaching in Antioch, where their proselytizing success among non-Jewish audiences was said to incite ›envy among the Jews‹, the latter ridiculing the evangelists and displaying ›stubbornness‹ in their refusal to accept the Christian message.[30] Jews, it was said, had failed to comprehend their own divinely prophesized destiny and therefore lived ›in error that they should have readily been able to understand and rectify‹.[31]

The lists themselves are in some cases supplemented with catalogues of the apostles and their geographical destinies spreading Christianity to the four corners of the world, and may be placed within an eschatological context. For upon the spread of Christendom to the utmost corners of the world, Christ was expected to return in the end days. This explains the prominent position of the ›envious Jews‹, who often head the lists, as Augustine had taught that Jews played a crucial role in humanity's salvation, as their repentance and conversion to Christianity were deemed incumbent to Christ's Second Coming.[32] The ontology of characteristics here thus entails the proclivity to enact sinful or virtuous behaviour, placed within a temporal-geographical schema.[33]

Most of the early examples of these ethnic lists commence with the ancient peoples of the East: Greeks, Jews, Chaldeans, and Egyptians. Catalogues subsequently migrate towards Rome and finally westwards to the Franks, the Britons, the Saxons, and the Picts.[34] As such, these lists can be placed on the patristic East-West axis of identity. Both in space (from East to West) and time the lists reflect the progression of knowledge and power, known as the *translatio,* and the spread of Christianity.[35] They conclude with the ethnic groups pertinent to the scribes' own life worlds – Goths, Franks, Picts. This westward progression was related to a specific strain of medieval theology that expounded that throughout time events passed from East to West, where eventually God's realm would bring this sublunary world to its end.[36] Humanity, thus, was created in the East – the location of Paradise on the *mappae*

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29 In the tenth-century Einsiedeln Stiftsbibliothek MS 321 f. 136: *Judei duri cervice et gravi corde Greci leves Cretenses mendaces Dalmate feroces Mauri vani Franci tumidi Athenienses ingeniosi Galate indociles, vecordes, tardiores ad sapientiam. Robert Grosseteste, Expositio in epistulam sancti Pauli ad Galatas iii 1, ed. MacEvoy: ut Cretenses mendaces, malae bestiae, uentres pigri; Mauri uani; Dalmatae feroces; Phrygae timidi; Athenienses ingeniosi; Graeci leues; Iudaei graues corde et dura ceruice.* Cf. Meier, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum qui in Bibliotheca Monasterii Einsidlensis*, vol. 1, 292-294.

30 Acts 13:45. See Lewis, Tractatus adversus Judaeos in the Gulbenkian Apocalypse, 552, for apocalyptical images of Jewish obstinacy.

31 Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism,* 11.

32 Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* xvii 46 and xx 29 and *Tractatos adversus Judaeos*, PL 42, col. 51-67; Sermo 200, 2 in PL 38, col. 1030. See Lewis, Tractatus adversus Judaeos in the Gulbenkian Apocalypse, 544, note 4 for further references, and Richards, *Sex, Dissidence and Damnation,* 93; Blumenkranz, Augustin et les juifs, 225-241.

33 Foucault, *Order of Things*, xviii.

34 Howe, *Old English Catalogue Poems,* 24-25.

35 Krämer, *Translatio imperii et studii;* Gassman, *Translatio studii.*

36 MacKenzie, Westward Progression of History on Medieval Mappaemundi, 335-344; Edson, Medieval World View, 508.

*mundi* – and would cease to exist when events reached the farthest boundaries of the West, whereupon the day of reckoning would dawn.[37] In the twelfth century Hugh of St. Victor (c. 1096-1141), who taught at the Augustinian school of St. Victor in Paris, stated this clearly:

> The order of space and time seems to be in almost complete correspondence. Therefore, divine providence's arrangement seems to have been that what was brought about at the beginning of time would also have been brought about in the East – at the beginning, so to speak, of the world as space – and then as time proceeded toward its end, the centre of events would have shifted to the West, so that we may recognize out of this that the world nears its end in time as the course of events has already reached the extremity of the world in space.[38]

Among some theologians, including Hugh of St. Victor, this apocalyptical concept of the world's termination in the West was additionally tied to the idea that this would be achieved when Christianity had reached the farthest reaches of the West, the British Isles and Spain. This westward progression of peoples throughout time echoes the eschatological prophesy in the Old Testament Book of Daniel.[39]

The virtues and vices listed in the catalogues reflect the willingness of peoples to embrace the Christian message and overcome any ethnic tendencies to fall into vice. Just as the apostles brought Christianity to the boundaries of the world, such as in the Old English poem *The Fates of the Apostles*, so the enduring vices of peoples, both ancient and contemporary, were thus viewed as agents of events past, present and future.[40] As medieval peoples each were considered to fulfil their role within the temporal and spatial context of the past creation in the East and future Christianisation in the West, upon which the earth would end, these ethnic catalogues offered a rhetorical-ethical mnemonic device for pondering ethnic virtues and vices, God's designs for humanity, and the fleeting nature of the world as well as its hidden meanings. Searching through the ›pockets of memory‹ in their mind (to use Carruthers' terminology), and chewing on these images, monks were turning their minds to the specific roles of their ethnic communities vis-à-vis the fate of humanity, hoping to recognize sin through picturing the images of sinful peoples in their minds.[41] In this sense, these lists were not so much about confronting the ethnic Other with its supposed fallacies, but rather meant for introspection, reviewing the virtues, vices and role of all nations in the history of mankind. Concurrently, the ethnic virtues and vices enumerated in the lists were not so much considered as hereditary physical characteristics, but rather as moral proclivities within the system of cardinal sins, shaped by time and space, yet subject to free will – for by controlling

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37 See for the location of Paradise in the East, Scafi, *Mapping Paradise.*

38 Hugh of St. Victor, *De Arca Noe morali* iv 9, in Patrologia Latina 176 Col. 677D: *Ordo autem loci, et ordo temporis fere per omnia secundum rerum gestarum seriem concurrere videntur, et ita per divinam providentiam videtur esse dispositum, ut quae in principio temporum gerebantur in Oriente, quasi in principio mundi gererentur, ac deinde ad finem profluente tempore usque ad Occidentem rerum summa descenderet, ut ex ipso agnoscamus appropinquare finem saeculi, quia rerum cursus jam attigit finem mundi;* quoted from Edson, Medieval World View, 507-508.

39 Daniel 2:31-45, who speaks of the successive realms of gold, silver, bronze and iron.

40 Howe, *Old English Catalogue Poems*, 24. See also Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World.* For the relationship between territory and peoples in early medieval geography, Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity.*

41 Carruthers, *Craft of Thought,* 30-1, 136, 146.

the passions of the soul, these sins could be overcome.[42] Territorially, the location of the ethnic groups was related to the groups' roles in the biblical past and proselytizing present, rather than to any comtemporary political entity. In addition, in the eastern tradition, the lists sometimes enumerated various linguistic traits.[43]

Knowledge of the etymology of ethnic names offered an supplementary tool for understanding the ›essence‹ of peoples and ultimately for understanding the Bible's hidden messages.[44] As Howe explains, for the early medieval encyclopaedist Isidore of Seville ›a fact is the name or word because from it may be derived knowledge of the thing itself‹.[45] Such knowledge was obtained through etymological deduction, ›a hermeneutical principle according to which knowledge of a given thing may be realized from an understanding of its name‹.[46] According to Isidore, at the moment of creation Adam spoke ›true words‹ when assigning names to things; and if two words were similar, they must also somehow be inherently related, for names referred to the active lives and behaviour of their owners.[47] Thus, in learned medieval encyclopaedic thought, ethnonyms – one of the six main attributes of an ethnic community according to Smith and viewed as pivotal to ethnic awareness – were believed to reflect a transcendental entity; by examining the form of a word, one might learn to understand the essence of the entity.[48]

*Medicine and rhetoric*

If in the tenth century ethnic characterizations should thus be interpreted ontologically as agents in providential history, where some ethnic groups perhaps presented themselves as ›chosen peoples‹,[49] from the twelfth century we see an ontological shift in which aspects of heredity, fed by medical theory, come to the fore. Ethnotypes now commence to be viewed as biological categories, wherein for example the Jews are presented as melancholy. The rhetoric of *heredity* is for instance present in a twelfth-century sermon by Raoul Ardent of Poitou,

42 Bloomfield, *Seven Deadly Sins,* 66. There is assuredly some relation to the cardinal sins, catalogued in the sixth century by Gregory the Great as vainglory, envy, wrath, sadness, avarice, gluttony and lust – all stemming from the sin of pride. In Nationalitätenschema in der Literatur, 87, Stanzel relates the early catalogues to the seven deadly sins.

43 In an Armenian text of the early eighth century, recorded (although not composed) by archbishop Stephen of Siunik, ten peoples and their speech characteristics are summed up. Borst, *Turmbau von Babel*, vol. 1, 282; de Lagarde, Agathangelos, 150-163. In the thirteenth century, this list was incorporated by the Armenian Wardan Areveltsi in his history of the world up to 1267. As de Lagarde, Agathangelos, 151, has remarked, in this list language is reflective of a group's putative character. The Greek language is soft-natured, the Latin strong, that of the Huns audacious, the Assyrian humble or suppliant, the Persian rich, the Alan friendly, the Goth pleasant, the Egyptian tongue guttural, the Indian twittering like birds, and the Armenian agreeable, attaining all the qualities of the other languages. De Lagarde conjectures that this list was probably put together in the fifth century by an inhabitant of the East Roman Empire.

44 Lozovsky, *The Earth Is Our Book,* 48.

45 Howe, *Old English Catalogue Poems*, 34.

46 Idem, 60; cf. De Bouard, Les encyclopédies médiévales , 286; Kästner, Der groβmächtige Riese und Recke Teuton, 75-77. For a discussion of ethnic names, see Rübekeil, Völkernamen Europas, 1330-1343; Haubrichs, Veriloquium nominis, 231-256.

47 Friedman, *Monstrous Races,* 110.

48 Smith, *National Identity*, 21.

49 Smith, *Chosen Peoples*; Garrison, The Franks as the New Israel?; Murray, Bede and the Unchosen Race, Gabriele, The Chosen Peoples.

in a homily on John 3, where he urges his audience ›to rise above the vice of his own people. If you are a Jew, take pains to rise above your innate disbelief. If you are from France, take pains to overcome your innate arrogance. If you are from Rome, take pains to overcome your innate avarice.‹[50] As mentioned above, in the late Middle Ages, humoral and climate theory and the concept of the body politic likewise gained currency: envisaging city-states and kingdoms as a body, whose rulers, institutions, officials and social groups represented its limbs and organs. Accordingly, the ethnotype would evolve into a *pars pro toto* for city-states or monarchies, thereby gaining meaning as a benchmark for membership of a now more clearly embodied and delineated ethnic group (defined by, among others, body shape, hair and skin colour, and character), to be contrasted with the ethnic Other. Thus, in the late thirteenth century, discussions crop up about whether the French monarch should necessarily be born and sired in his perceived natural environment of Paris, as locality now had to dovetail with natural categories of ethnicity.[51]

In addition, at the end of the twelfth century, a number of fresh manuals on grammar appeared, such as Alexander of Villedieu's *Doctrinale* (1199) and Évrard (or Eberhard) of Béthune's *Graecismus* (1212), and in the field of poetry, Matthew of Vendôme's *Art of Versification* (early 1170s), Gervase of Melkley's *Art of Versification* (late twelfth century) and Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *New Poetry* (1200). These manuals explicitly prescribed how to apply ethnic images in order to create convincing literary types through description and invention, and were in themselves repositories of stereotypes, teaching their students to use commonplaces. They also reflect the territorialisation of the habitat of ethnic groups. The drawing of boundaries, although in these kinds of text by approximation, nonetheless shows an understanding that named groups displaying communal characteristics were perceived to inhabit specific territorial entities and were commonly recognized as such.[52] For example, in one of the most popular of medieval treatises on the art of poetry, the *Poetria Nova* (written circa 1208/1213), Geoffrey of Vinsauf advises to let territories stand for their peoples, embellished by the ethnic group's reputation:

> Use the container for the contained, aptly employing either a noun or an adjective.
> Apply the noun thus:
> Tippling England; weaving Flanders; boastful Normandy.
> Thus use the adjective:
> The noisy forum; the silent cloister; the doleful prison; the happy house; the quiet night; the busy day.[53]

The tight relationship between territory and inhabitants is now expressed in explanations

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50 Raoul Ardent, *Homilia* ii, 2 »In die Trinitatis«, PL 155, col. 1949C-D: *Conemur unusquisque vitium populi sui superare. Si Judaeus es, stude Judaeis innatam incredulitatem superare. Si Gallus es, stude Gallis innatam superbiam superare. Si Romanus es, stude Romanis innatam avaritiam superare*. Cf. Meyvaert, Rainaldus est malus scriptor Francigenus, 748. For concepts of heredity in the late Middle Ages, see Van der Lugt and De Miramon, *L'hérédité entre Moyen Âge et Époque modern.*

51 Pierre Dubois*, De recuperatione terrae sanctae.*

52 For the rise of rhetorical manuals see Martin, Classicism and Style in Latin Literature, 538.

53 Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova* vs. 1006-1017, ed. and trans. Gallo, 67-69: *Rem vice contenti quae continet accipe, ponens / Verbum, vel fixum, vel mobile quodlibet, apte. / Insere sic fixum: Potatrix Angia; Textrix / Flandria; Jactatrix Normannia. Mobile nomen / Sic appone: Fora clamosa; Silentia claustra; / Luctisonus carcer; Domus exhilarate; Quieta / Nox; Operosa dies.*

of the metonymic figure of speech known as the *continens pro contento*, wherein a word is substituted by another on the grounds of a close connection. In some manuals, this form of metonymy is expounded using the example of a territory – ›the container‹ – replete with an ethnic group – ›the contained‹. Thus, in a thirteenth-century rhetorical poem from the monastery of Clairmarais in Saint Omer, the container – Flanders – ›flowers with delights‹ as does France with teaching (with Paris considered the location of the *translatio studii*).[54] The advice is elucidated with the explanation: ›Flanders stands for the Flemish, France for the French‹.[55] The same development can be discerned in the visual depiction of the world in *mappae mundi*, for example in the Beatus map drawn circa 1065 in the abbey of Saint-Sever in southern France, where Gascony, Poitiers and now Aquitaine are visualized as separate entities.[56]

Partly as a result of this new and heightened attention to composition, ethnic characterizations increasingly entered verse composition either praising and blaming, debating (in so-called *Streitgedichte*, battle poems) or satirizing peoples. In Matthew of Vendôme's advice on depicting character derived from *natio* and *patria* – the latter making reference to the location of origin – he engages with the topical attack on Roman avarice: ›Rome thirsts for gold, loves those who give; without the dative, Rome refuses to favour the accusative.‹[57] Complaints against Rome were highly popular in contemporary parody and satire, first develolping in the eleventh century as invective against the practice of simony and the power of money at the Roman curia, whereto the world's riches flowed.[58] The Church, whose institutions were becoming more powerful, thereby remained the reference point for the diversity of the regions, and their relative wealth. As in the tenth century lists, ethnicity is still conceived as related to local produce, which is also attested to in the collections of ›proverbial knowledge‹ from this period, compiled as material out of which to draw readymade and convincing typologies.[59] However, now the context no longer is salvation history, but the taxation of territories by the institution of the Church. In the early part of the twelfth century, an anonymous cleric, perhaps from Lotharingia or Gallia, enumerates the natural resources of the world's regions, ranging from east to west, in the anti-Roman invective ›The Cunning People of Rome‹.[60] Moving from east to west, Rome, the pinnacle of nations, now hankers after the riches of the world, worshiping the gold of Arabia, the ornate robes of Greece, the

54 Lusignan, L'Université de Paris comme composante de l'identité du royaume de France.

55 In Saint Omer MS. 115 f. 53B. Printed in Fierville, Notice et extraits des manuscripts de la bibliothèque de Saint-Omer 106, no. 40: *Flandria deliciis [...] Flandria designat Flandrenses, Gallia Gallos.*

56 Baumgärtner, Die Welt im kartographischen Blick, 540. Cf. Englisch, *Ordo Orbis Terrae,* 336-364.

57 Matthew of Vendôme, *Ars versificatoria i* 82, ed. Munari, 98-99: *Aurum, Roma sitit, dantes amat, absque dativo, / Accusativis Roma favere negat.*

58 Benzinger, *Invectiva in Romam,* 74-76; Lehmann, *Parodie im Mittelalter,* 51-52.

59 For instance, an early Old French collection of proverbs, known under the title ›Dit de l'Apostoile‹, contained in a thirteenth-century manuscript, served this very purpose and is thus replete with lists characterizing peoples, professions and regions of France, including types of wines and cheeses, such as *fromage de Brie*. See ›Proverbes et dictons populaires‹, printed in Prompsault, *Discours sur les publications littéraires du moyen-age,* 114-140.

60 Benzinger, *Invectiva in Romam,* 111-113; Yunck, *Lineage of Lady Mead,* 80-81; Lehmann, *Parodie im Mittelalter,* 25-68.

ivory and jewels of India, the delightful produce of France, the silver and gold of England, the milk and butter of Flanders, and the stallion and mare mules of Burgundy. ›Rome devours them all completely, with no worthiness left at all.‹[61]

These lists could be read out loud to international student communities, feeding off and shaping social relations within them. The Italian master Boncompagno da Signa, for example, used lists of ethnic characteristics in his lectures on rhetoric in early thirteenth-century Bologna.[62] This also gives context to Jacques de Vitry's famous and oft-quoted remark that students in Paris engaged in verbal and physical altercations, deriding the English as drunks, the Brabanders as rapists and the Flemish as butter balls.[63] Although in part a continuation of the older monastic lists, the context of the characteristics is now in part political; Boncompagno for instance repeatedly refers in his lists to Italian *libertas*. The bodily characteristics of the French crusaders, likewise, are extolled as ideal characteristics of fighters who, as protectors of the Church, might stake a claim to yielding *imperium*.[64] All of these examples are evidence of a consciousness that individuals were affiliated to groups that shared certain characteristics and that were linked to a territory or to a past that now might take on *political significance.*

Examining the specific context and employment of ethnotypes, encapsulating various aspects of the ethnic body in relation to space, time, law, language, religion and politics, may thus help shed light on concepts of how nations developed. We can identify a shift from thinking about ethnic virtues and vices in relationship to a providential history of mankind to thinking of ethnotypes as a hereditary *pars pro toto* for increasingly territorialized ethnic communities (sometimes represented by the monarch). How these concepts of the body were related to other processes, including bureaucratization, the development of a written culture, the materialization of parliaments, and the development of concepts of public welfare and political thought will require research from multifarious perspectives in which the situational aspects and processes are constantly re-evaluated.

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61 *Gens Romanorum subdola antiqua colit hydola* vs. 6-14, in *Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum saeculis xi et xii conscripti*, ed. Dümmler et al., iii, 705-706: *Roma deglutit penitus, / Digna perire funditus.* Cf. Mone, *Anzeiger für Künde der teutschen Vorzeit* 8 (1839), 597; Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter*, 52.

62 For instance in Boncompagno da Signa, *Palma* 45, *Quid sit clausula et ex quot distinctionibus consistere possit,* ed. Sutter, *Aus Leben und Schriften des Magisters Boncompagno*, 122-123.

63 Jacques de Vitry, *Historia Occidentalis,* ed. Hinnebusch, 92.

64 Weeda, Violence, Control, Prophecy and Power.

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# Rethinking Ethnicity and ›Otherness‹ in Early Anglo-Saxon England

James M. Harland*

This article considers a recent critical problematisation of the discussion of ›Otherness‹ in Merovingian archaeology,[1] and extends this problematisation to the early mortuary archaeology of post-Roman/early Anglo-Saxon England. The article first examines the literary goals of Gildas' *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, and especially its representation of military activity, to reject popular arguments that Gildas' conceptual framework described the emergence of an authentic, ›post-colonial‹ British ethnic consciousness that was grounded in a conscious rejection of Romanness and separation from a ›Germanic‹, barbarian other. The article then examines the early Anglo-Saxon cemetery of Wasperton, Warwickshire, and rejects previous interpretations of the site, which argue that its inhabitants expressed in burial the ideological demarcation of Romanness from a Germanic ›Other‹. Drawing upon the distinctions made by Gildas between legitimate and illegitimate military authority and the clear use of symbols of military ideology present at the site, the article suggests that such sites instead offer evidence for the material expression of a new military ideology which, though deviant from the normative expectations of civic Romanness, was primarily drawn upon by the inhabitants of early Anglo-Saxon England to make appeals for the inclusion of the deceased as key members of their communities.

*Keywords: Anglo-Saxon; archaeology; late Roman; Otherness; identity; ethnicity; Gildas; historiography*

›Otherness‹ has its conceptual origins in continental philosophy and psychoanalysis – origins often overlooked in its current popular usage. The ubiquity of the term is evident in its selection as the primary theme of the Leeds International Medieval Congress in 2017. But, as Guy Halsall has recently observed, the term's proper origins are not adequately considered in current archaeological work; Halsall proposes that too often in current scholarship expressions of *difference* are identified as ›Otherness‹, but the ›Other‹, as he puts it, »is not simply the unlike; it is the very negation of the same.«[2]

The problem he identifies has not escaped Anglo-Saxon archaeological scholarship, especially in those works which aspire to take a more theoretically nuanced approach to questions of identity. Let us take Toby Martin, as an example, discussing early so-called Anglo-Saxon furnished inhumation burials in the later fifth century:

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* Correspondence details: James M. Harland, Department of History, University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5DD. Email: djmh500@york.ac.uk.

1 Halsall, Otherness and Identity.

2 Halsall, Otherness and Identity.

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> …the elites who used cruciform brooches evidently saw themselves as distinct from, yet related to, the inhabitants of the homelands cited in their origin myths. Essentially, they were more interested in drawing links with the Germanic world than the Roman world, which alongside ongoing population movement into post-Roman Britain, *created a growing sense of superior otherness* from preceding Romano-British society [my emphasis].[3]

What such putative signs of otherness in the archaeological record might mean instead is discussed later in this article, through a study of the early Anglo-Saxon cemetery of Wasperton, ideal due to its recent comprehensive publication and its significance for scholarship on early Anglo-Saxon identity.[4] The first part of the article disputes the historical grounds for expressions of otherness, such as Martin proposes above, in the early Anglo-Saxon mortuary archaeology, clearing some ground regarding what can effectively be demonstrated about identity as it functioned in post-Imperial Britain. To clear such ground seems urgent as we witness a resurgence of nationalistic sentiments concerning the U.K. and its constituent nations, closely related to its departure from the European Union. Andrew Gardner has recently commented on the relevance of fifth- and sixth-century historiography in these contexts. He uncritically accepts, however, a common historiographical conception that there existed a resurgent, ›post-colonial‹ fifth- and sixth-century British identity, plainly separable from Germanic identity.[5] The following disputes this contention.

***Challenging a British ›post-colonialism‹***

Written sources are rare, but we have the polemical sermon by the ecclesiast, Gildas: the *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*.[6] The text is variably dated to between the late fifth and middle of the sixth centuries.[7] Though the meat of the text is a polemical section attacking Gildas' contemporaries, it begins with a historical description of the Britons' prior sins and eventual ruin at the hands of the Saxons.[8] Due to its apparently detailed discussion of events after the effective collapse of imperial authority in Britain, it has long been used as a fundamental source, in the absence of other options, for addressing all questions about the period.[9] Yet it is far from straightforward for such purposes. The text is a moralising tract, in which Gildas condemns the rulers and (mainly) priests of the day, in the guise of an Old Testament prophet. It is well recognised that use of the *De Excidio* for constructing a straightforward narrative history is impossible,[10] and no attempt to do so shall be made here.

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3 Martin, *Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England,* 184.

4 Carver *et al., Wasperton.*

5 Gardner, Brexit, Boundaries and Imperial Identities, 8.

6 Gildas, *De Excidio*, ed. Mommsen.

7 For the state of dating, see Wiseman, Derivation of Date.

8 Gildas, *De Excidio,* ed. Mommsen, 4-26.

9 Lapidge and Dumville, *Gildas: New Approaches;* Higham, *English Conquest*; George, *Gildas's de Excidio Britonum;* O'Loughlin, *Gildas and the Scriptures.*

10 O'Sullivan, *De Excidio*, 179-181; Lapidge and Dumville, eds., *Gildas: New Approaches,* x-xi; Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 53-55

But Gildas can still supply useful information. He has been shown to have been the product of rhetorical training in the Hellenistic classical tradition, rather than the late antique monastic tradition, known for its eschewal of secular classical texts.[11] This makes it especially interesting that Gildas' work, whatever its date, forms part of a clearly emergent transition towards Old Testament models of ideal kingship. This becomes clearest on the continent in the late sixth century, but Gildas could represent an early example.[12] This process is widely recognised as forming one component of a fundamental reworking of relationships between ruling authorities such as kings and the polities they ruled, which characterised the onset of the early middle ages. This new formulation, though taking much from Roman precedents, did not represent the classical ideal as it would have been taught by a *grammaticus* or *rhetor*.[13]

In terms of genre, the text is best described as a *casus*, the making of a persuasive argument through successive logical points.[14] In Gildas' narrative, the Britons are portrayed as a people, who thrive only through the provision of God's divine protection. In the first instance this is given to them after their adoption of Christianity, in the wake of Diocletian's persecutions. After numerous instances of rebellion this protection is removed, as punishment for the simultaneous rebellion of the Britons against both God and the Roman Empire. The latter is portrayed as the God-sanctioned legitimate ruler of the Earth, on account of the Romans' superior virtues. At various points in the text, contrasts are made between the moral qualities of the Romans, the Britons, and the Anglo-Saxons, always at the expense of the latter two.[15] We will subsequently examine these in detail. An obvious but simplistic reading of this, often the one put forward, would suggest that Britons had by this point become a distinct ethnic category which no longer regarded itself as Roman, and that this ethnic consciousness was also very much separate from, if not dichotomous to, the hated barbarian interlopers, the Saxons. Most scholarship has interpreted Gildas in just such a light, partially based on the alleged British separatism mentioned above.[16] Such interpretations lend too much credence to a singular interpretation of Romanness whilst insufficiently considering Gildas's intellectual milieu and the purpose of his text. Though our knowledge of these is imperfect, we have enough to reject such an interpretation.

As mentioned, Gildas likely received a traditional formal education in grammar and rhetoric, including schooling in the classics of the sort that was undertaken by elites and bureaucrats across the Empire in Late Antiquity. There is also evidence for links between the Romano-British and Northern Gallic churches in the fifth century, and of ecclesiastical correspondence networks that would ultimately link British ecclesiastics with the quintessentially Roman elites of southern Gaul.[17] We may assume similar educative and thus ideological norms were shared by those who underwent formal education in Britain.

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11 Lapidge, Gildas's Education.

12 Sutherland, Imagery of Gildas's *de Excidio Britannie*; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 312-313. For discussion on this as a wider phenomenon see Hen, Uses of the Bible and Wormald, Kings and Kingship, 571.

13 Wormald, Kings and Kingship, 575-581.

14 O'Loughlin, *Gildas and the Scriptures,* 26-27.

15 Gildas, *De Excidio*, ed. Mommsen, 2-26.

16 Jones, *The End of Roman Britain*; Laycock, *Britannia;* Higham, *King Arthur.* An especially egregious recent example is Hustwit, *The Britons in Late Antiquity*, aspects of which are now published as Hustwit, Britishness.

17 Wood, Continuity or Calamity?, 14; Petts, Christianity and Cross-Channel Connectivity, 74-76.

This education had a clear utilitarian purpose – the inculcation of the accepted ideology and normative values of the Empire among its administrators. This training was inseparable from the formal administrative structures of the Empire, and those who received it would have done so in the expectation that, in some respect, they would access and negotiate those hierarchical structures.[18] There is evidence that suggests that such structures were still regarded as important by people in the west of Britain as late as the late fifth century.[19] Gildas, then, was one whose education would have inculcated a very precise definition of what being ›Roman‹ meant. This included both ethnographic expectations of citizens of the various provinces and of the behaviour that would cause one to deviate from the normative expectations of civic Roman identity.[20]

We can interpret Gildas' apparent departure from these normative expectations with more subtlety than those arguing for a British ›post-colonialism‹ allow. Gildas never identifies himself as a Briton, and, as Halsall notes, even the crucial battle of Mount Badon is described as fought not between Saxons and Britons, but between ›citizens‹ and ›enemies‹ or ›rascals‹ (*hostes / furciferes*).[21] Gildas does, however, describe Britain as the *patria*. This word requires comment. Some scholars see Gildas' description of Britain as *patria* (homeland) as evidence for his putatively British, separate from Roman, ethnicity.[22] But the word *patria* had a long tradition of use by thoroughly Romanised writers all across the later Empire.[23] Imperial ideology promoted the unity of one's two *patriae*, that of one's origin and the adopted *patria*, the *res publica*.[24] The applicability of this to Britain in this period is normally contested on the grounds that some degree of separation between Romans and Britons emerges in Gildas' text. Turner, for example, proposes that a simple maintenance of any distinction *at all* of provincial from Roman identity was unprecedented, and that unique attempts at ethnic construction were present in Gildas' vision.[25]

To read so far into this distinction is unconvincing. Some scholars suggest this distinction contributed to the construction of a British post-colonial identity that they claim makes itself manifest in Gildas' text.[26] But the Britons were hardly the only victims of such portrayals of provincials. Ammianus Marcellinus in the late fourth century describes the Gauls as ›eager for quarrels‹ and ›overbearing in insolence.‹[27] Hustwit attempts to bypass the Gallic problem by adducing a putatively exceptional scale of hostility toward Britons, and through asserting that there took place in the later imperial period a process of provincial British ethnogene-

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18 Brown, *Power and Persuasion*, 37-41. See Gerrard, *Ruin of Roman Britain*, 120-155, for a discussion of possible evidence for the negotiation of such structures in British contexts.

19 Gerrard, *Ruin of Roman Britain,* 159-161.

20 Halsall, Gender and the End of Empire.

21 Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur*, 167.

22 Higham, *The English Conquest;* Higham, *King Arthur*; Turner, Identity in Gildas' *de Excidio;* Hustwit, *Britons in Late Antiquity.*

23 Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, 31.

24 See, on this unification, Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty*, 60-70.

25 Turner, Identity in Gildas' *de Excidio,* 39-40.

26 Hustwit, *Britons in Late Antiquity*; Higham, *King Arthur;* Jones *End of Roman Britain.*

27 *Celsioris staturae et candidi paene Galli sunt omnes et rutili, luminumque torvitate terribles, avidi iurgiorum, et sublatius insolentes.* Ammianus Marcellinus*, Res Gestae 15.12.1,* ed. Rolfe.

sis, brought about through their distinction from the Picts. He argues that the two groups nevertheless remained conflated by continental writers, and that the marginality that this engendered contributed to later British ethnic solidification. Though Hustwit makes many interesting observations, a large part of his argument here depends upon an *entirely speculative* reconstruction of a presumed, but non-extant, ethnographic description of Britain as it could hypothetically have been portrayed in Ammianus' works.[28] The erroneous claim is also made that by the fifth century, southern Britain was perceived as a theatre of war, indistinguishable from the *barbaricum*, on the basis of an excerpt from Claudian's *In Eutropium*.[29] The ›south‹ in Claudian's poetry here quite clearly refers *not* to the provincial Britons, but to the Moors in Libya, who are offered as the southernmost contrast with the far north of *Caledonia*. These regions represent the limits of the world. Given their clear association with the *Mauri* in the south, the pejorative discussion clearly concerns the *Picts*, and is easily explained by ethnographic convention. There is therefore nothing to support Hustwit's contention that in Claudian's words, a more barbaric perception of the provincial Britons pertained than the depiction of them as provincials as found in Ammianus Marcellinus.[30]

Likewise, the presence of such hostility in Gildas' works can be equally explained by ethnographic convention. It is likely that Gildas had read Orosius,[31] and it is plausible that many of his perceptions of Roman virtue were inherited from this source. Perception of the Roman right to rule and concomitant inability of the provincials to govern themselves was hardly unique to scenarios where imperial authority had collapsed. This trope was commonplace whenever authors discussed the relationship between the Empire and its provincials.[32] We can only assume that marginality formed a core, internalised component of British identity if we accept that authors such as Gildas were actively constructing a British *ethnos*. But Gildas' identity remains an open question. He never identifies himself as a Briton, and it is noteworthy that Gildas never once explicitly uses words suggesting his membership of this *patria*; a *patria* is mentioned, but we have no secure reason to believe that it was his. If the *De Excidio* as a text actively sought to create an *ethnos*, it is remarkable just how infrequently the word *Britannia* and its derivatives appear in it. *Britannia* in various declensions appears twelve times,[33] *Britannus*, ›Briton‹, a mere twice.[34] These hardly seem the markers of conscious ethnic boundary construction.[35]

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28 Hustwit, *Britons in Late Antiquity,* 132-139.

29 Hustwit, *Britons in Late Antiquity*, 151-152. *Caledoniis posuit qui castra pruinis, qui medios Libyae sub casside pertulit aestus, terribilis Mauro debellatorque Britanni litoris ac pariter Boreae vastator et Austri.* Claudian, *Carm.,* 5, 391-393.

30 Hustwit, The Britons in Late Antiquity, 150-152.

31 Wright, Did Gildas Read Orosius?

32 Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty,* 67.

33 Gildas, *De Excidio*, 1.14, 3.1, 4.3, 7.1, 10.1, 14.1, 21.4, 27.1, 33.2, 36.1, 39.1, 66.1, ed. Mommsen.

34 Gildas, *De Excidio*, 6.2, 20.1, ed. Mommsen.

35 Turner's sole evidence for ethnic construction is an apparent unity of common purpose imposed by Gildas on the Britons through their depiction in the singular, rather than the plural as well as perceived collective traits. Turner, Identity in Gildas' *de Excidio*, 32-33. It is perhaps noteworthy that the excerpt from chapter 4 of the *De Excidio* which Turner provides as evidence of British self-identity uses Winterbottom's translation, rendering the rebelling *cives* as ›countrymen‹.

Turner suggests that the sharpness of the distinction Gildas makes between Briton and Roman targets the ›pretensions to *romanitas*‹ which are adopted by the kings targeted in his polemic.[36] He identifies Gildas as an ethnic entrepreneur, but the notion that Gildas bemoans deviation from expected classical norms may offer an alternative reading. Turner suggests that such polities as Syagrius' ›Kingdom of Soisson‹ point to the possible presence of wider Roman political affiliation in the post-imperial British polities, though he suggests that a scarcity of documentary sources makes rendering such comparisons difficult.[37] Even the very existence of a Roman ›kingdom of Soissons‹ is doubtful.[38] An alternative might be to turn to parallel situations on the continent where similar processes were taking place. Heydemann has outlined the means by which exegetical commentary on the Old Testament and the psalms could be used to renegotiate relationships between new *gentes* and the imperial ideologies undergoing substantial alteration, of which these renegotiations were a part, in the fifth and sixth centuries.[39] In this case, in Ostrogothic Italy, a Latinate senatorial bureaucracy, epitomised by Cassiodorus, sought to harmonise and smooth over relations between their class and a barbarised, Gothic military class which now wielded hegemony over Italy under Theodoric the Great.[40] Heydemann argues that Cassiodorus' exegesis formed part of a process of renegotiation of the relationship of the *gens* he described with a formerly hegemonic Romanness, now in flux.[41]

Though such a situation does not correspond directly to that of Britain, Pohl has shown that the processes of renegotiation of Romanness which took place in Britain were far from unique across the former Western Empire.[42] The rough contemporaneity of Gildas to Cassiodorus suggests, when we consider Gildas' own exegetical style, that he was responding to the same wider geopolitical processes.

O'Loughlin's recent study of Gildas' exegetical method argues that its core function was the holding up of biblical scripture as a mirror to contemporary historical events. This mirror offered patterns in which could be found both the cause of problems and the remedy by which such problems would be solved.[43] This mirroring was not the cyclical repetition of historical patterns but was caused by two constants, human sinfulness, and God's faithfulness to his own nature, which shaped with consistent patterning what were otherwise discrete historical events.[44] The relationship Gildas identified between these historical events and the events described in scripture was therefore not that of ›an inherent link between dissimilar realities‹ but that of ›exactly comparable situations‹, which enabled the ›making [of] a diagnosis and prognosis‹ of one's contemporary situation ›on the basis of past experiences.‹[45]

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36 Turner, Identity in Gildas' *de Excidio*, 45.

37 Turner, Identity in Gildas' *de Excidio*, 45.

38 Halsall, Childeric's Grave, 127-128.

39 Heydemann, Biblical Israel and the Christian *Gentes.*

40 Heydemann, Biblical Israel and the Christian *Gentes,* 149-150.

41 Heydemann, Biblical Israel and the Christian *Gentes*, 149-150.

42 Pohl, Romanness, 416-418.

43 O'Loughlin, *Gildas and the Scriptures*, 94.

44 O'Loughlin, *Gildas and the Scriptures*, 95.

45 O'Loughlin, *Gildas and the Scriptures*, 97.

This has significant consequences for our understanding of how Gildas portrayed the Britons as a *gens*. O'Loughlin makes it clear that Gildas regarded the Britons as a *gens sancta,* imagining them through a biblical lens, whereby all of humankind were organised into *gentes* whom the apostles had been sent forth to baptise. It was the explicit welcoming of the *gens* into the ranks of the saved, through baptism, that made it corporeal.[46] Britain, like Israel, had a covenant with God. This could be broken or forged anew through acts of sin or repentance. But for Gildas it was always the nature of Britain's relationship with God, whether one of distance or proximity, that made it a discrete historical actor, capable of acting in the history of the world.[47]

Thus, there is limited scope to see Gildas as what Rogers Brubaker might call an ›ethnic entrepreneur‹ – that is, one consciously seeking the formation of an *ethnos* – but only in a substantially limited sense. Brubaker's ethnic sociology appeals for a move away from groupism, requiring that we reject the emic assumptions of such entrepreneurs when they appeal for the existence of the ethnic group *qua* group, asserting that ethnicity exists only in its iteration by such entrepreneurs.[48] It is only in a specific eschatological role that Gildas treats the Britons as a collective entity. We cannot infer from this that Britishness was a trait readily distinguishable from qualities such as Romanness or Saxonness in other discursive contexts. We cannot assume that Gildas actively attempted to construct secular sociopolitical groups. Nor can we assume that Gildas' chastised contemporaries would have seen their own secular activities as defined by specific affiliation with such discrete cultural groups.

Still, there may be something to Turner's suggestion that Gildas' making of sharp distinctions between Briton and Roman was intended to target ›pretensions to *romanitas*‹. A negative perception of secular warfare, and those who wage it, pervades Gildas' text. This owes, naturally, to the text's core purpose – to chastise the contemporary rulers and clergy of Britain for focusing on secular affairs – but something more significant for post-imperial society is identifiable. I will demonstrate that Gildas also deems the behavior of his contemporaries a deviation from ideals of normative civic Romanness, which he inherited from his educational background. This deviation is represented with the same schematic tools for all guilty of it, whether Roman usurper, Saxon federate, or post-Roman warlord.

Gildas' views about warfare and those who practice it appear at the very outset of his text:

> *Quia non tam fortissimorum militum enuntiare trucis belli pericula miti statutum est quam desidiosorum*
> It is not so much my purpose to narrate the dangers of savage warfare incurred by brave soldiers, as to tell of the dangers caused by the lazy.[49]

46 O'Loughlin, *Gildas and the Scriptures,* 113-114.

47 O'Loughlin, *Gildas and the Scriptures,* 114-115.

48 Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups.*

49 Gildas, *De Excidio*, 1.2, ed. Mommsen.

Soldiers are mentioned rather frequently for a putative non-subject so Gildas appears here to be making use of *preterition*. The end of his preface reads:

> *vile quidem, sed fidele, ut puto, et amicale quibusque egregiis Christi tironibus, grave vero et importabile apostatis insipientibus*
> [My work pays a debt] I think, true to the faith, and friendly towards every young soldier [tironibus] of Christ, though burdensome and insupportable for foolish rebels.[50]

*Tiro,* which usually refers to young recruits, though it also, of course, refers to monastic novices, is often Gildas' chosen term to describe soldiers of Christ. We have a direct separation of apostate rebellious *milites*, from the *tirones christi,* who learn from Gildas' spiritual teaching.

This comparative scheme seems intentional. Gildas writes *milites* into the text with no obvious reason to do so if not to contribute to this scheme. Take here, in discussion of the Emperor Tiberius:

> *comminata senatu nolente principe morte delatoribus militum eiusdem,*
> For though senate were unwilling, the emperor threatened death to the informers against the soldiers of that same religion.[51]

Gildas' source for this event, Rufinus of Aquileia, says:

> *Caesar in sententia mansit, comminatus periculum accusatoribus Christianorum*
> Caesar held fast in his opinion, threatening with peril the informers against the Christians.[52]

The insertion of *militum* is clearly Gildas' own. Meanwhile, there are two occasions when Gildas references soldiers in direct quotations from source materials. The first is taken from St. Paul's letter to Timothy.[53] In the quote, Paul *explicitly* exhorts Timothy to ›strive to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ‹. In the Gospel passage, Paul subsequently states: ›For he also that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully,‹ words that cannot have been far from the minds of Gildas' audience.[54] Gildas' other direct quote of a description of *milites* is form St. Ignatius' speech as he is led to martyrdom, as described by Rufinus of Aquileia. This speech emphasises the animalistic qualities of the *milites*:

> *a syria usque romam cum bestiis terra marique depugno, die ac nocte conexus et colligatus decem leopardis, militibus dico ad custodiam datis, qui ex beneficiis nostris saeviores fiunt*
> From Syria as far as Rome I have fought with beasts on the earth and in the sea. Night and day I am bound to ten leopards, by which I mean the soldiers set to guard me, who are the more savage because of what I do for them.[55]

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50 Gildas, *De Excidio*, 1.16, ed. Mommsen.

51 Gildas, *De Excidio*, ed. Mommsen, 8.

52 Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 2.2.6, ed. Schwartz and Mommsen.

53 Gildas, *De Excidio,* 10.5, ed. Mommsen; Paul, Tim. 2.2.3-4.

54 Paul, Tim. 2.2.5.

55 Gildas *De Excidio,* 74.2, ed. Mommsen; Rufinus of Aquileia, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 3.36.7-9, ed. Schwartz and Mommsen.

Both of these quotations are used in Gildas' polemic against the clergy, where a clear comparison emerges pitting the spiritual soldier against the secular soldier. The quote from Paul is especially striking, for its association with notions of legitimate military authority. Gildas therefore made use of soldier imagery to devise an explicit contrast between two types of soldier, to convey symbolic meanings in his polemic, and these meanings would have resonated with Gildas' depictions of rulers in the historical section and his polemic against contemporary rulers.

In his historical section, the illegitimacy of secular warfare becomes particularly striking in discussion of Magnus Maximus' usurpation:

> *itemque tandem tyrannorum virgultis crescentibus et in immanem silvam iam iamque erumpentibus insula, nomen Romanum nec tamen morem legemque tenens, quin potius abiciens germen suae plantationis amarissimae, ad Gallias magna comitante satellitum caterva, insuper etiam imperatoris insignibus, quae nec decenter usquam gessit, non legitime, sed ritu tyrannico et tumultuante initiatum milite, Maximum mittit.*
> At length the tyrant thickets increased and were all but bursting into a savage forest. The island was still Roman in name, but not in law and customs. Rather it sent forth a sprig of its own bitter planting, and sent Maximus to Gaul with a great retinue of hangers-on and even the imperial insignia, which he was never fit to bear: he had no legal claim to the title, but was raised to it like a tyrant by rebellious soldiery.[56]

The statement that the island ›held the Roman name but not its customs and laws‹ is surely significant. Maximus certainly exhibits non-normative traits:

> *qui callida primum arte potius quam virtute finitimos quosque pagos vel provincias contra Romanum statum per retia periurii mendaciique sui facinoroso regno adnectens, et unam alarum ad Hispaniam, alteram ad Italiam extendens et thronum iniquissimi imperii apud Treveros statuens tanta insania in dominos debacchatus est ut duos imperatores legitimos, unum Roma, alium religiosissima vita pelleret.*
> [Maximus], with cunning artifice rather than virtue, attached all of the neighbouring districts, indeed even all of the neighbouring provinces to his illegitimate kingdom, and against the Roman state, using perjuries and falsehoods. He extended one of his wings to Spain, the other to Italy, and he established the throne of his unjust authority at Trier. With such insanity did he rage against his lords that he drove two legitimate emperors, one from Rome, the other, a most religious man, from life.[57]

Here we find a classic depiction of deviancy: a tyrant who ›raged‹ with ›such great madness‹ against his master. This deviation lies, as Gildas takes great pains to emphasise, in a contest between legitimate and illegitimate authority.

After this, Britain becomes cut off from Rome, and suffers Pictish and Irish raids, before finally making an appeal for aid from Flavius Aëtius.[58] This section makes no mention of *milites* or other foot-soldiers; when the Empire intervenes to aid the Britons, it is described collectively, as a *legio*, or an *exercitus*.[59] The one exception is a mention of the *equites* and

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56 Gildas *De Excidio,* 13.1, ed. Mommsen.

57 Gildas *De Excidio,* 13.2, ed. Mommsen.

58 Gildas *De Excidio,* 6.2, 18.1, ed. Mommsen.

59 Gildas *De Excidio* 14-21, ed. Mommsen.

*nautae* who ›planted in their enemies' necks the claws of their sword-points‹.[60] This can be explained by Gildas' literary goals: he weaves here an illustration of the rapidity, efficiency, and justice of the Roman military machine.[61] It is here that Gildas tells us that the Britons, ›[like] frightened chicks huddling under the wings of their faithful parents … prayed that … the name of Rome, which echoed in their ears as a mere word, should not be cheapened by the gnawing of foreign insult.‹[62] The barbarian attacks, providential acts of God,[63] are therefore caused by British military action against legitimate Roman rule, and Gildas directly associates them with deviation from *romanitas*. Not for no reason does Gildas, when the Picts and Scots again launch their onslaught, describe the Britons as ›weak in beating off the weapons of the enemy but strong in putting up with civil war and the burden of sin.‹[64]

When the Saxons enter the equation, as federates recruited by the *superbus tyrannus,* possibly Magnus Maximus,[65] this scheme continues, and there is reason from this to believe that many of the binary divides assumed to have separated these two *gentes*, Briton and Saxon, were not as stark as is usually thought. As Halsall notes, once we reach this section of the text, where Britain has been stripped of its *milites*, the war becomes waged only between *cives* and *hostes*. Halsall suggests that this need not suggest battle between Saxons and Britons, but could instead signify civil war.[66]

The best evidence for this is the repetition of Gildas' plant growth metaphor, first used to refer to Maximus' rebellion, after the Saxons are invited to Britain:

> *inde germen iniquitatis, radix amritudinis, uirulenta plantatio nostris condigna meritis, in nostro cespite, ferocibus palmitibus pampinisque pullulat*
> Hence the sprig of iniquity, the root of bitterness, the virulent plant that our merits so well deserved, sprouted in our soil with savage roots and tendrils.[67]

The exact same word choices are used in this passage as in 13.1. The Saxons are depicted as a sprout of the same plant as Maximus. That they are little different should not be surprising. They, too, are rebellious soldiers:

> *igitur intromissi in insulam barbari, ueluti militibus et magna, ut mentiebantur, discrimina pro bonis hospitibus subituris, impetrant sibi annonas dari: quae multo tempore impertitae clauserunt, ut dicitur, canis faucem.*
> Thus, having been introduced to the island, the barbarians, as if soldiers who, as they falsely claimed, would accomplish hardships for their good hosts, were able to have the annona given to them. These provisions for some time closed the dog's mouth, so to speak.[68]

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60 Gildas *De Excidio* 17.2, ed. Mommsen.

61 Gildas, *De Excidio* 17.1, ed. Mommsen.

62 For more on the positive imagery and fundamental *romanitas* which Gildas associated with the Roman military see Sutherland, Imagery of Gildas's *de Excidio Britannie.*

63 Gildas, *De Excidio*, 14, 19, ed. Mommsen.

64 *infirma esset ad retundenda hostium tela et fortis esset ad civilia bella et peccatorum onera sustinenda.* Gildas, *De Excidio* 21.1, ed. Mommsen.

65 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, 519-526.

66 Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur,* 167.

67 Gildas, *De Excidio* 23.4, ed. Mommsen.

68 Gildas, *De Excidio* 23.5, ed. Mommsen.

Words like *annona* and *hospes* suggest familiarity with typical processes of federate settlement.[69] The Saxon's deceptive quality and comparison with dogs depict not merely barbarians, but soldiers behaving illegitimately. Sidonius Apollinaris' broadly contemporary portrayal of the Burgundian federates stationed on his estate offers a useful parallel.[70] The tropes used to depict these federates are obviously exaggerated, using humour to clearly cast as an outgroup those coming to possess real military power in Gaul.[71] Philipp von Rummel has suggested that such tropes were as much an aristocrat's disgust at the vulgarity of soldiers as any sort of reaction to ›real‹ barbarism,[72] and it is possible that Sidonius employed similar methods in his depictions of Saxons.[73] The Saxons' behaviour and its condemnation thus seems little different from that of Maximus and his rebellious troops.

We have established that Gildas, in his historical narrative and use of biblical *exempla,* treated the depiction of illegitimate military activity as deviant from his normative values, whether perpetrated by Romans, Britons, or Saxons. Gildas' reference to the *lugubri divortio barbarorum* (›grievous separation from the barbarians‹) might tell us more.[74] The phrase is usually assumed to refer to a geographic boundary separating Britons from Saxons, which Gildas lamented for its denial of access to the tombs of British martyrs.[75] Garcia argues that it should be understood better in a legal sense, referring to the breaking of the *foedus* under which the Saxons were settled, which entirely followed usual late Roman practice.[76] If Garcia is correct, Saxon settlers were more intimately woven into the Roman and Latinate socio-political structures of the province than Gildas' rhetoric might suggest.

Can we take this further? If no such partition can be held to exist, and we no longer assume that conflict in Britain was always between Britons and Saxons, might *both* parties in violation of this contract be the ›barbarians‹? We have already seen an animal metaphor used to illustrate Saxon barbarism, closely bound with their illegitimate military activity: the closing of the ›dog's mouth‹. This is far from the only such metaphor. Leonine metaphors also feature with great prominence, including in descriptions of the new Saxon recruits.[77] Lions are symbolically significant in early Christian thought because of their role in the deaths of the early Christian martyrs. St. Ignatius (whom we encountered above, cursing his leopard-esque guard of *milites*) was, Gildas tells us, ›crunched in the molars of lions at Rome.‹[78] Moreover, Ignatius is described as a spiritual soldier, an example for lax priests. Gildas again employs the dedicated word he reserves for soldiers of Christ: *tirones*. In selecting *exempla* for this purpose, he asks why he should restrict himself to the prophets of the Old Testament, when he can ›pluck a few flowers with extended arm from the wide and lovely meadow of the holy young soldiers of the New Testament.‹[79]

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69 Wood, End of Roman Britain, 20-21; Higham, *English Conquest,* 40-41.

70 Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmen* 12, ed. Anderson.

71 Halsall, Funny Foreigners, 95.

72 Von Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*, 171.

73 Harland, Imagining the Saxons.

74 Gildas, *De Excidio* 10, ed. Mommsen.

75 E.g., Sharpe, Martyrs and Local Saints.

76 Garcia, Gildas and the ›Grievous Divorce‹.

77 Gildas, *De Excidio* 23, ed. Mommsen.

78 *leonum molis Romae confractus est*. Gildas, *De Excidio* 74.2, ed. Mommsen.

79 *...carpentes paucos flores veluti summos de extento sanctorum novi testamenti tironum amoenoque prato*. Gildas, *De Excidio* 73.1, ed. Mommsen.

It is surely significant, then, that the proud tyrant (perhaps Maximus) associates with enemies described both as lions and as deceitful soldiers. Higham also notes the apparent comparisons that Gildas makes between other ignoble entities and the Saxons using leonine imagery.[80] For Higham, the pejorative power of these passages lies in the suggestion that other parties described as lions were *like the Saxons*.[81] But it seems difficult to believe that it was the Saxons who were the primary signified for Gildas' use of this metaphor. The metaphor of a lioness first occurs describing Boudicca's revolt against Claudian,[82] and is thus associated with rebellion against Roman legitimacy from its very outset, before any Saxons ever enter the picture. Sin, closely associated with illegitimacy, was surely the primary allusion.

This point is strengthened by the set of literary allusions present in one of the more well known leonine metaphors, that describing the Saxon ›lioness‹:

> *tum erumpens grex catulorum de cubili laeanae barbarae, primum in orientali parte insulae iubente infausto tyranno terribiles infixit ungues, quasi pro patria pugnaturus sed eam certius impugnaturus.*
> Then a pack of cubs burst forth from the lair of the barbarian lioness, first in the eastern part of the island, commanded by the ill-fated tyrant, they fixed their terrible claws, as if to fight for the homeland but in fact to fight against it.[83]

The above has been rendered thus in accordance with Woolf's proposal that the description of the Saxons' voyage across the sea is a later, non-Gildasian interpolation.[84] The passage's resemblance to the afore-mentioned description of Roman military aid – an example of legitimate force wielded by the Roman state – is striking. Halsall has suggested that this chapter (17) and chapter 23 fall within the appropriate subsections of a sequence of paralleled historical ›case studies‹, the former ›northern‹, the latter ›eastern‹, a point which Halsall uses to suggest the likelihood that Gildas' ›proud tyrant‹ was Maximus.[85] The high degree of similarity between the phrase describing Roman military action and that describing Saxon invasion has never, to my knowledge, been previously commented on. The Romans *tandem terribiles inimicorum cervicibus infigunt mucronum ungues*.[86] Meanwhile, the Saxons *in orientali parte insulae iubente infausto tyranno terribiles infixit ungues.*[87] Both parties plant their ›terrible claws‹.[88] Where the Romans plant theirs in the ›enemy‹, the Saxons' plant theirs in the island, doing so on the orders of the ›proud tyrant‹. The comparisons of legitimate versus illegitimate military authority are undoubted. If the ›proud tyrant‹ is indeed Maximus, this is reinforced even further.

80 Higham, *English Conquest,* 55-56.
81 Higham, *English Conquest*, 56.
82 Gildas, *De Excidio* 6.1, ed. Mommsen.
83 Gildas, *De Excidio* 23.3-4, ed. Mommsen.
84 Woolf, An Interpolation.
85 Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur,* 188-192, fig 9.1.
86 Gildas, *De Excidio* 17, ed. Mommsen.
87 Gildas, *De Excidio* 23, ed. Mommsen.
88 A similarity occluded completely by Winterbottom's translation.

Gildas' concern was not these events, but the behaviour of his contemporaries. His main criticism of them was that they waged *civilia et iniusta bella*. A lion metaphor is also used to described the soldiers murdered by a prominent contemporary target of Gildas' criticism, Maglocunus:

> *nonne in primis adolescentiae tuae annis auunculum regem cum fortissimis propemodum militibus, quorum uultus non catulorum leonis in acie magnopere dispares uisebantur…?.*
> Did you not, in the first years of your youth, use sword and spear and flame in the cruel despatch of your uncle and nearly his bravest soldiers, whose faces in battle were not very different from those of lions' whelps?[89]

These soldiers are clearly being associated with Maximus and the Saxons; all three deviate from legitimate behaviour through their participation in civil warfare. Gildas may even have been inspired by decorative motifs worn by some of these military men: the *notitia dignitatum's* depiction of shield patterns for *comitatensian* units generally believed to have been based in Britain includes beastly motifs easily interpretable as wolves or lions *(Fig. 1)*,[90] and such motifs are well known to have influenced later zoomorphic patterns found in such examples as early Style I jewelry and much later, the material at Sutton Hoo.[91] These motifs had longevity.

In his comment that the soldiers were not so different from lions' whelps, we perhaps see an admission that the activities of Saxons and Britons and the methods by which they legitimized and consolidated power were scarcely distinguishable. The ethnic and political affiliations of these ›lion whelps‹ were probably shifting, fluid, and uncertain. Gildas only ever clearly delineates ethnic boundaries in the ›historical‹ section of his text. Where the polemical sections of his argument are concerned, it is clear that deviation from acceptable behaviour was a far more important ideological component of Gildas' polemical thought than any putative separation of Romans or Britons from Saxons or Picts.

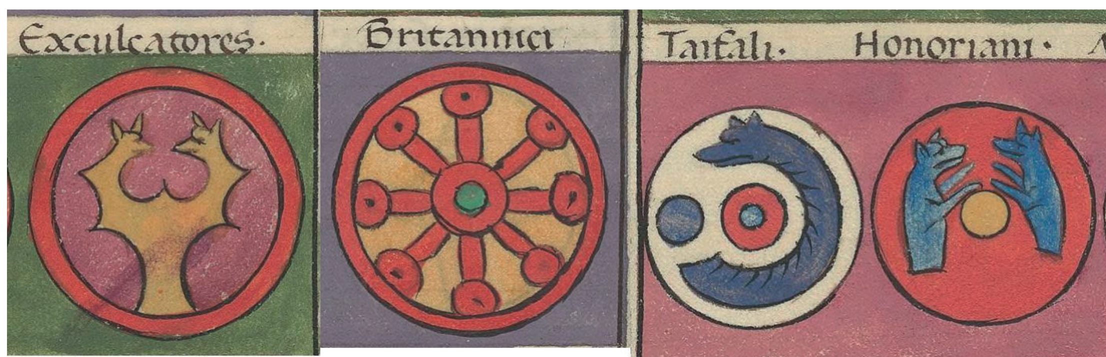


*Fig. 1: Comitatensian units of the Comes Britanniae in the ›P‹ Manuscript of the Notitia Dignitatum, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin ms. 9661, (fol.111v, 112v-114v). The manuscript is Carolingian but there is good reason to believe these shield patterns are authentic.*[92]

89 Gildas, *De Excidio* 33.4, ed. Mommsen
90 *Notitia Dignitatum* Oc. VII. 200-205.
91 Haseloff, *Germanische Tierornamentik.*
92 Brennan, Notitia Dignitatum, 159-160.

***Problematising Otherness in the archaeological record***

There is every reason to believe that the ideological frameworks of power after imperial collapse still operated by association with Roman authority. Expressions of authority in the *barbaricum* are also known to have been shaped by such conventions before imperial collapse.[93] The practice of burial in which we find putative archaeological evidence for ›otherness‹ took place in large communal cemeteries.[94] Large audiences participated in the funeral ceremony, drawn from the wider community and the buried's family. This audience, who normally held extensive feasts at these funerals, selected the repertoire of symbols deployed in burial.[95]

Wasperton (Warwickshire) is a mixed rite cemetery which has been fully excavated, containing 182 inhumations and 32 cremations. It is noteworthy for its putative evidence of continuity of burial from the late fourth through to the late sixth centuries, which is held to represent both the continuity and transformation of burial practice from that of late Roman to Anglo-Saxon. The site features ›Anglo-Saxon‹ cremation urns that are radiocarbon-dated to the late fourth or early fifth centuries alongside ›late Roman‹ inhumation burials. In the later fifth century its inhabitants began using so-called ›Anglo-Saxon‹ furnished inhumation burials which lasted until the early seventh century. The cemetery was first identified through aerial surveys which identified prehistoric cropmarks and field systems. The cemetery was first excavated in the winter of 1980/1, in a rescue operation in response to gravel extraction from the terraces on which the side is situated. By 1985 the entire cemetery, in addition to numerous features from surrounding fields, had been excavated.[96]

The site has been the subject of a few reports and one doctoral thesis.[97] A final study of the site commenced in 2005, and aimed to set Wasperton in the context of English cemetery studies, drawing upon more recent technological developments such as advances in radiocarbon dating, stable isotope analysis, and multi-variate statistical analysis, in addition to the post-processualist theoretical advances of the 1980s and 1990s. This was published in 2009.[98]

***The current interpretation***

Inker, in his study of Saxon Relief Style metalwork in the Avon Valley, including Wasperton, suggested that this metalwork bore ›testimony to the Anglo-Saxon settlement at an earlier date‹ than that historically attested by Bede. Inker thus drew a direct link between the material at sites such as Wasperton and Stratford and migrating Saxons.[99] Inker also suggested that where variation in manufacture was concerned (such as an apparent adoption of manufacturing techniques from Britain in the case of cast saucer brooches), such processes reflected ›incoming Saxons [...] utilising sub-Romano-British metalworkers to manufacture brooches and belt sets in lieu of brooches made by their own metalworkers.‹[100] Such was

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93 Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations.*

94 On which, see Lucy, *Anglo-Saxon Way of Death*.

95 See, e.g., McKinley, *Spong Hill, Part VIII,* 79-86; Halsall, *Settlement and Social Organization*, 247; Halsall, Burial Writes, 218-225; Williams, Well-Urned Rest, 107.

96 Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 1-10.

97 Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton;* Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 13.

98 Carver *et al.,* 13-14.

99 Inker, *Saxon Relief Style,* 75.

100 Inker, *Saxon Relief Style,* 56.

the impermeability of ethnic barriers for the transmission of manufacturing techniques, in Inker's view. That ethnic expression should be identified in isochrestic variation[101] appears to have been a core (albeit not consciously stated) guiding assumption in Inker's approach to the ethnic signification of material culture.[102] Such assumptions are now quite problematic.[103] Grappling with this is important because such assumptions are crucial to Inker's inference of a coherent Germanic culture identifiable in the material from this region, a conclusion which others who study this region rely upon.

In his original study of the site, Scheschkewitz accepted uncritically arguments that differences in items of jewellery, such as cruciform brooches, wrist clasps, or saucer brooches, formed components of regionally distinct *Trachten* that could possibly be tied to distinct ethnic groups, partly on the basis of their functioning as components of *peplos* dress.[104] Scheschkewitz proposed that it is problematic to take simplistic readings of ethnic expression as a component of such in material culture for granted, but he nevertheless follows Hines in asserting that the arrival of this material culture from Scandinavia and its subsequent spread across England represented an active declaration of ›group membership‹, which through the adoption of new performative traditions legitimised the presence of the new group.[105] For Scheschkewitz, early Anglo-Saxon artefacts at Wasperton such as chip-carved equal-armed brooches demonstrated the ›likely‹ Saxon ethnic origin of their wearers because of their geographic origin between the Elbe and the Weser.[106]

Scheschkewitz also proposed that the mixing of artefacts of ›Anglo-Saxon‹ or ›Romano-British‹ significance in the same chronological contexts or burials suggested the cohabitation of Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon populations, but argued that this did not clarify whether the presence of these artefacts was the result of an Anglo-Saxon ›takeover‹. Scheschkewitz was principally concerned with whether or not acculturation was the cause of cultural change at Wasperton, and argued in the affirmative on the basis of, for example, burials that adopted ›Anglo-Saxon‹ furnishings but followed the putatively ›Romano-British‹ grave orientation.[107] He suggested that possibilities for social protection, based on military power offered by federate Saxon migrants, enabled the Romano-British population to integrate into a social structure ›not so foreign‹ to ›Celtic‹ traditions of social power, based on systems of loyalty to small armed groups.[108] In this reading the archaeological material is thus assumed to give an indication of distinct Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon ethnic groups and distinct ›Germanic‹ and ›Celtic‹ traditions.

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101 The selection of particular options from equally viable alternatives to achieve a given manufacturing end. Sackett, Style and Ethnicity, 157.

102 As found, for example, in an assumption that re-use of *repoussé t*echnique indicated a desired connection with earlier ›Germanic‹ ancestors, Inker, *Saxon Relief Style,* 2-3.

103 Jones, *Archaeology of Ethnicity*, 111-116; Harland, *Deconstructing Anglo-Saxon Archaeology.*

104 Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton,* 183-185.

105 Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton,* 196.

106 Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton,* 196.

107 Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton,* 189-195. See especially discussion of Grave 169 from Spatial Group 3, 195. For more discussion on this see below.

108 Scheschkewitz, *Wasperton,* 198.

Carver, Hills, and Scheschkewitz are subtler in their final report on Wasperton. They propose that burial continued without interruption between the late Roman and Anglo-Saxon phases of the site,[109] though some of the chronological methodology underlying this argument has been problematised, suggesting that the authors cannot date artefacts as precisely through radiocarbon dating as they have suggested here.[110] As with Hills' and Lucy's final report on Spong Hill, a far more nuanced approach to questions of social identity is present. The authors state that questions of whether culturally ›Roman‹ versus culturally ›Saxon‹ grave-goods represent different ethnic or kin groups is ›not resolved by the Wasperton evidence‹ and they accept that objects cannot ›be equated with crude ethnic and religious terms.‹[111] The hypothesis that the authors propose suggests that Wasperton instead represented a small local community on a frontier of different intersecting cultural influences, who loosely selected cultural alignments based on varying political affiliations with no implications of shifts of the ethnic makeup of those making these affiliations, or necessary implication of large-scale population change.[112]

There are nevertheless problems. It is never made especially clear where, for these authors, ethnicity ends and political affiliation begins. A clear pair of cultural packages in opposition to each other, one ›Roman‹, one ›Germanic‹ is implicit in the statement regarding the possibility for resolution of the meanings of these grave-goods, no matter how multi-layered or fluid their precise iterations, no matter many references are made to ethnicity's multi-layered nature, or how often the authors suggest that an ›Anglo-Saxon‹ ideology, with no implications of the ethnicity of those expressing it, is what is discussed, rather than ethnicity.[113] Assumptions are present that production processes may be defined by broad cultural categories such as ›Germanic‹ or ›Romano-British‹, and that acculturation may be identified between the two.[114] It is also suggested that the arrival of the new cultural ›package‹ represented the arrival of incomers.[115] Positivist assumptions are made about the means by which ethnic identity might be inferred from the material record:

> It is probably worth pointing out that even with an immense programme of dating cemeteries with perfect bones, there is unlikely ever to be enough material to generalise about Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the manner of Bede.[116]

The unstated implication of such a statement is that a sufficient volume of material, rather than overcoming problems of epistemology, would enable us to make such generalisations. That such material represented such things is, of course, possible, but it is empirically unverifiable that ›Germanic‹ grave-goods represent any form of coherent cultural expression of material meaningfully, recognisably ›other‹ from Roman material.[117] What can be inferred instead?

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109 A pattern that bears similarities with sites in northern Gaul. Scull, Wasperton, 1210.

110 Scull, Wasperton, 1210.

111 Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 133.

112 Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 136-140.

113 Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 139.

114 Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 84-85.

115 Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 135.

116 Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 86.

117 Von Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus*; Von Rummel, Fading Power of Images.

Let us turn to the earliest arrival of the putatively ›other‹ burial rite at Wasperton: so-called ›Anglo-Saxon‹ style furnished inhumation. This is the sort of rite that Martin suggests expressed otherness from Romano-British communities.[118] Spatial Group 3 is an ideal case study *(Fig. 2).*

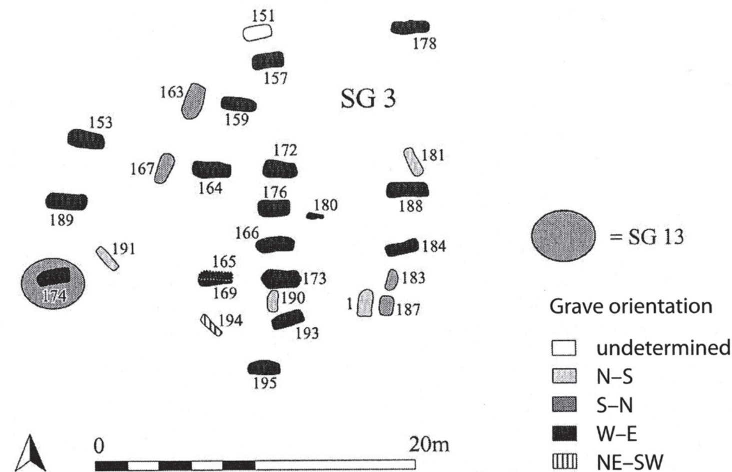



*Fig 2: Wasperton, Spatial Group 3 (Carver et al., 107, fig. 5.4). Reproduced with the permission of the Warwickshire County Museum.*

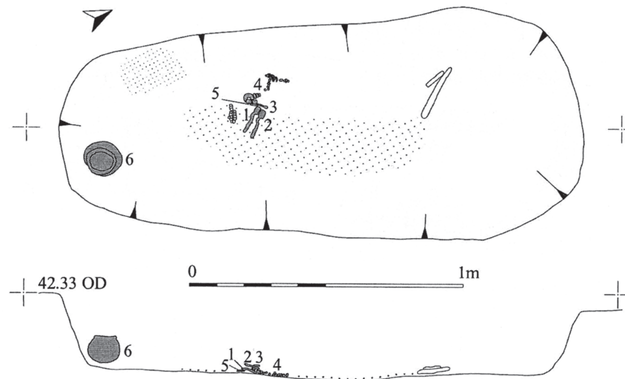
Burial in this spatial group begins either in the late fourth or early fifth century, in the form of inhumation of the dead wearing hobnailed boots, at first with disorderly orientation and no structural materials. As the fifth century progresses, the burials become consistently laid in a west-east orientation, and pieces of stone and planks line the interiors of the graves. Three burials with ›Anglo-Saxon‹ style grave goods appear around 475 AD. The earliest, inhumation 165, contained an iron buckle, a strap-end, and a knife. But it was buried in the same manner as the burials before it: a west-east orientation and wooden and stone lining: an implausible candidate for ›otherness‹. Two other burials also contained so-called Anglo-Saxon grave goods, and these are slightly more interesting: 167 *(Fig. 3)* contained the sort of item that Toby Martin claimed expresses otherness: a pair of cruciform brooches, perhaps fastening in a *peplos dress*. Inhumation 163 *(Figs. 4 and 5)*, meanwhile, had a pair of matching saucer brooches with chip-carved spirals and Style I decoration, as well as a pin, two iron belt buckles, various coloured beads and a small pot with decorations typically found on cremation urns from the period. These two burials deviated from the usual orientation, facing south-north.[119]

118 Martin, *Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 184.

119 Carver *et al., Wasperton.*

**Inhumation 167** F3107/C3616, C3630

[SG3, Period 4]




Detail of the plan above, rotated 90° (scale 1:2)

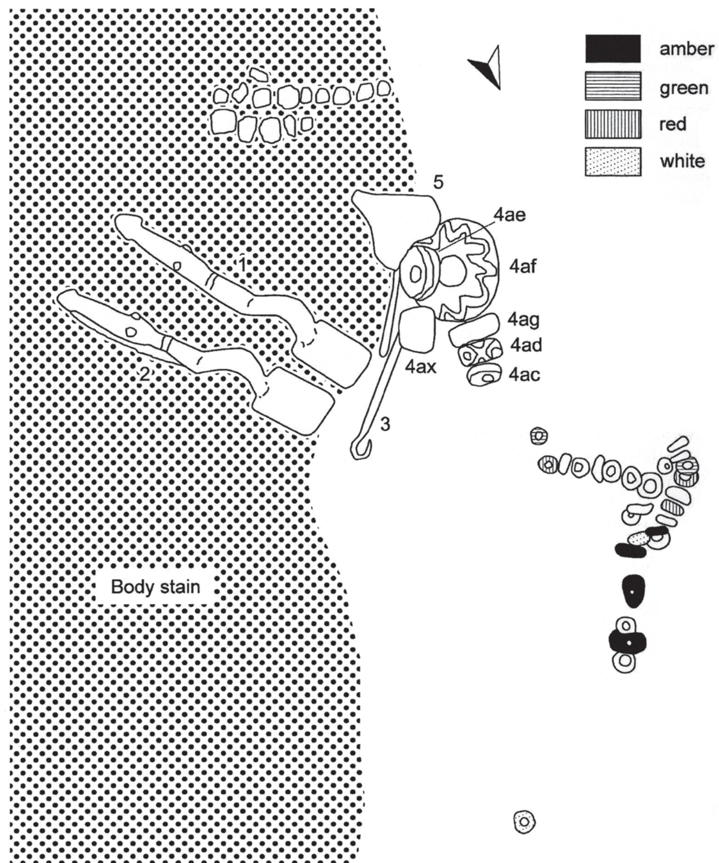



*Fig. 3: Wasperton, Inh. 167. (Carver et al., 309). Reproduced with the permission of the Warwickshire County Museum.*

**Inhumation 163** F3100/C3559–3560
[SG3, Period 4]

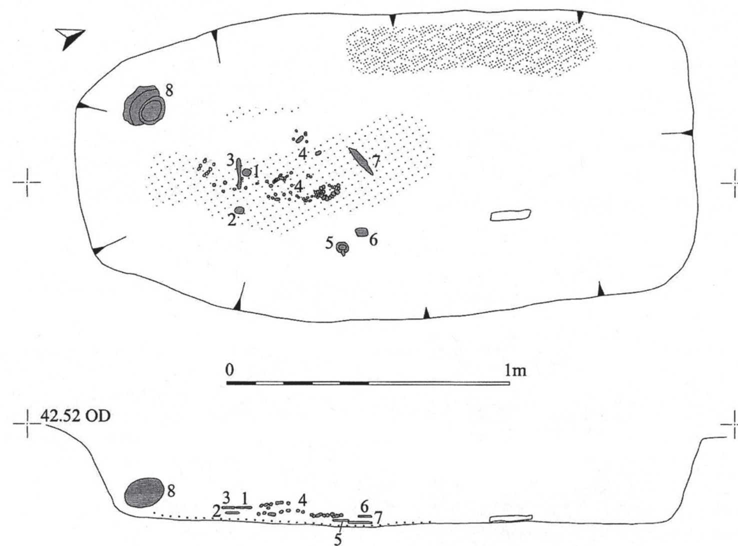



*Fig. 4: Wasperton, Inh. 163. Reproduced with the permission of the Warwickshire County Museum.*

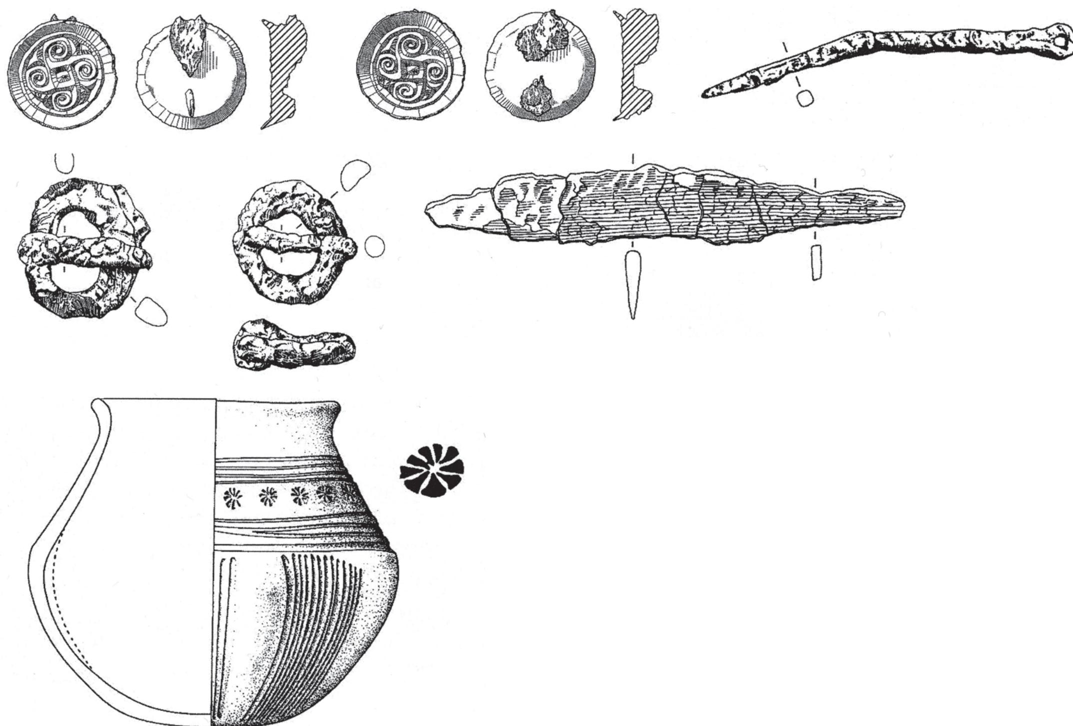


*Fig. 5: Wasperton, Inh. 163 grave-goods (not to scale) (Carver et al., 302-303). Reproduced with the permission of the Warwickshire County Museum.*

The authors of the site report propose that in the later fifth century, a group of what they call ›incomers‹ appeared, using furnished inhumation with grave goods in the north-western section of the cemetery, while the east-west oriented burials continue under management of a sub-Roman family, and suggest that the cemetery underwent a ›shift in cultural affiliation‹ as a result.[120] But proving cultural significance is problematic. The pattern of burial is defined largely by its absence of furnishings (that is, its Roman character being defined largely by an absence of Germanic grave goods).[121] Nevertheless, the two furnished inhumation burials do seem markedly different, and need explaining.

One simple possibility is that these two graves should be treated as part of a wider separation of the two types of funerary rite – the ›Saxon‹ style graves are restricted to the western edge of the Spatial Group *(Fig. 6).*

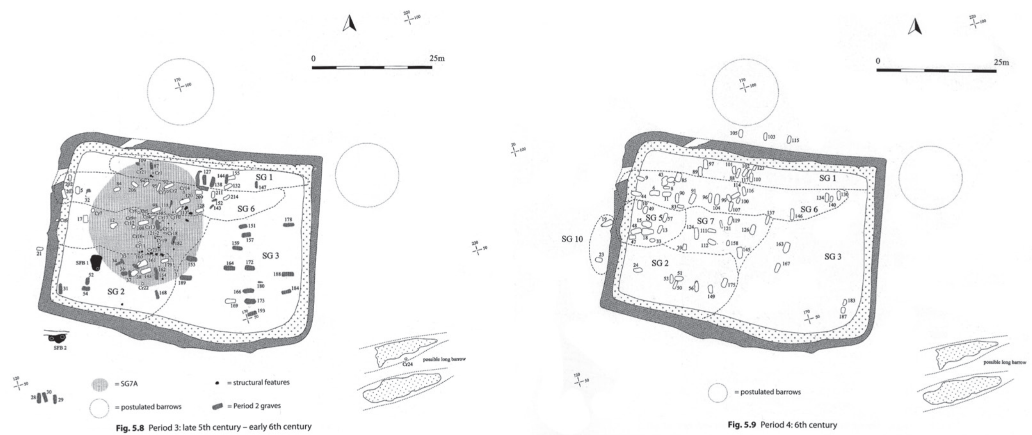



*Fig. 6: Burials from Wasperton period 3, (late 5th c. to early 6th c., left) and period 4 (early to mid 6th c., right) (Carver et al., 117, fig. 5.8, 118, fig. 5.9).*

Despite the problems noted above with the dating, there is no clear chronological break between the ›Roman‹ and the ›Anglo-Saxon‹ phases of burial and the example of ornament found on the saucer brooch in Inh. 163 is an early example of Style I's development from Nydam Style also found at Long Wittenham, making a mid-fifth-century date possible.[122] Assuming a hard and fast chronological separation thus seems to oversimplify matters. The two S-N aligned burials both contain Style I fibulae, both orient at the same angle, a mere metre apart, in the middle of the, perhaps earlier, unfurnished ›sub-Roman‹ graves of Spatial Group 3. The continuity of burial at the site suggests that any burial taking place in this area would have proceeded with an awareness the W-E ritual was present in SG3. Inh. 167 was one of the earliest ›Anglo-Saxon‹ style burials at Wasperton. We might ask whether these burials should in some way be deliberately read in relation to the burial rite at SG3. A traditional

120 Carver *et al., Wasperton*, 105.

121 The problems with such arguments will be discussed at length in Harland, *Deconstructing Anglo-Saxon Archaeology.*

122 Dickinson, *Anglo-Saxon Burial Sites*, 61.

reading would treat them as deliberate expressions of ›otherness‹ from the W-E rite, such as if we take Martin's understanding of Phase B cruciform brooches, for example. This seems unsatisfying. That Style I represents an emerging ›Germanic‹ consciousness has no empirical basis.[123] But Style I does definitely originate in provincial Roman military chip-carved metalwork.[124] We have a means of bridging the gap between our material and the intentions of those using it in the clear references this material makes, however mediated, to provincial Roman military styles. We have no such bridge where putative ›Germanicness‹ is concerned.

Cruciform brooches are rare this distant from East Anglia.[125] Nevertheless, despite the near complete absence of Martin Type 2 cruciform brooches from Warwickshire, another pair of the same precise type (2.1.2) found in Inh. 167 *(Fig. 7)*, nearly distinguishable from those at Wasperton, has been found less than ten kilometres away, in the cemetery at Alveston Manor, Stratford-Upon-Avon, and was buried in an inhumation grave, with a Hawkes and Dunning Type I B belt buckle *(Fig 8)*.[126] Type I Bs are first used towards the end of the fourth century and continue to see use throughout the fifth.[127] Interestingly enough, the same belt type is found with the female burial in grave 2, Dorchester-on-Thames, and Hawkes believed this to have definite military connotations.[128] This particular buckle type has few continental parallels, and Hawkes thought it likely to be a type of British manufacture, inspired by its continental antecedents.[129]

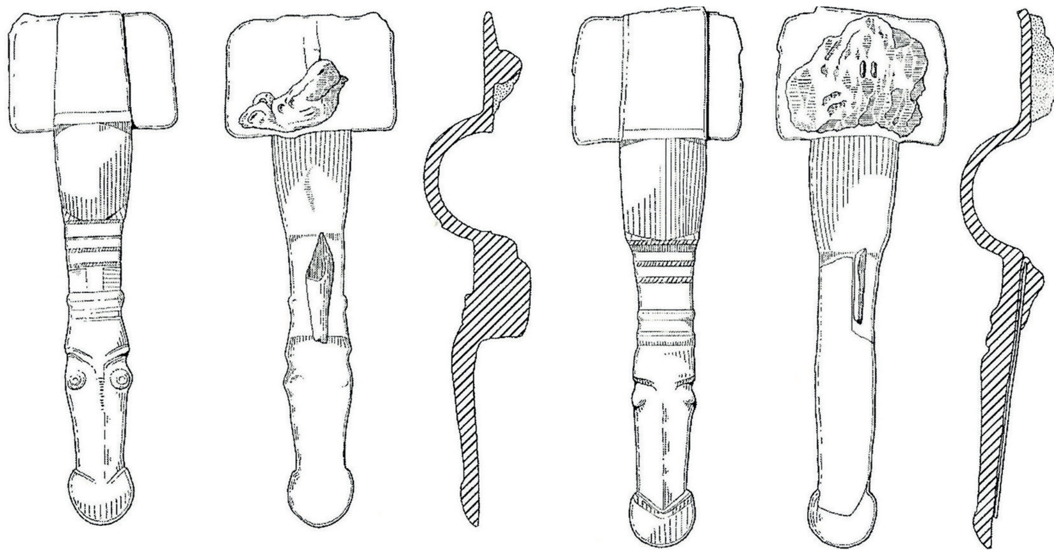


*Fig. 7: Cruciform brooches from Inh. 167, Wasperton (Carver et al., 310). Reproduced with the permission of the Warwickshire County Museum.*

123 Halsall, Space Between.

124 Haseloff, Germanische Tierornamentik, 16.

125 Martin, *Cruciform Brooch,* 31-32.

126 Hawkes and Dunning, Soldiers and Settlers, 48, fig. 16.

127 Hawkes and Dunning, Soldiers and Settlers, 26.

128 Hawkes and Dunning, Soldiers and Settlers, 28-9.

129 Hawkes and Dunning, Soldiers and Settlers, 28.

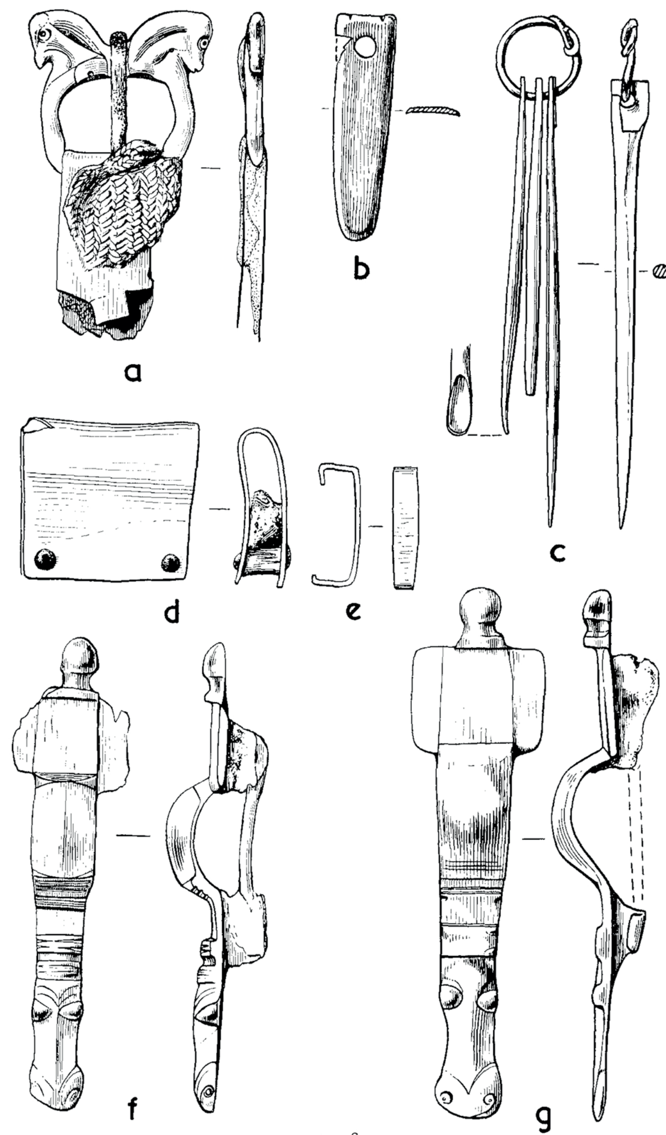



*Fig. 8: Items including a pair of cruciform brooches (f and g) and Type IB buckle (a), Alveston Manor G70 (Hawkes and Dunning, Soldiers and Settlers, 48. fig. 16). Reproduced with the permission of the Society of Medieval Archaeology.*

Type I B buckles, like other British-manufactured late Roman belt buckles, possess somewhat distinctive and individualistic patterns of manufacture, suggesting individual construction rather than mass production.[130] In Marzinzik's study of the type (II.1b as she calls it) the Alveston Manor find was noted to be exceptional for its discovery north of the Thames.[131] Jarrett suggests that the distribution of unfinished and low quality buckles of this type may suggest production focused on the Cotswalds.[132] Laycock argues that the distribution of Type IB buckles, as with the other types, is indicative of expression of a reemerging tribal *civitas* identity (in this instance Dobunnic), but we have no *prima facie* reason to accept such an argument.[133] Still, the *civitas* was one of the primary organising units for the raising of armies in most of post-Roman Europe, so such distributions may have represented similar processes, producing distributions of metalwork based on *civitas* units, that nevertheless need carry no necessary implications about active expressions of identity – tribal, ethnic, or otherwise.[134] Jarrett also suggests that the motif of confronted horse heads may have military resonances, perhaps suggestive of the *comitatensian* units of *equites* stationed in late fourth- and early fifth-century Britain.[135]

Their appearance in later burials needs a bit more thought. Hawkes attributed the presence of such belts in later fifth-century burials to the plundering of Roman sites by Anglo-Saxons.[136] This now clearly simplistic interpretation can be discarded. Type I B belts also did not survive long as a putatively military type without criticism. Hills rejected their identification as such on two grounds. First, that there was ›nothing »Germanic«about their theme‹, second, that owing to their usual burial with women, that they were possibly ›civilian, not military‹.[137] This argument employs two unhelpful binary distinctions. The first binary, that of Roman/Germanic, hinges upon a category of evidence defined by its other: it is difficult to think of a buckle type that *could* reasonably be called ›Germanic‹. Hills presumably had here in mind types with Saxon Relief Style decoration, but the reasoning for this depends upon an assumed cultural binary separating earlier, orderly, chip-carved metalwork (signifying Romanness) and later, disorderly chip-carved metalwork (signifying ›Germanicness‹). This separation has no *prima facie* basis – the only demonstrable aspect of the separation here, after all, is chronological, not cultural.[138] Marzinzik makes no further additions to this discussion, but instead simply follows the earlier analyses of Hawkes, Hills, (etc.) regarding

130 Laycock, *Britannia,* fig. 50a.

131 Marzinzik, *Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles,* 36.

132 Jarrett, *Ethnic, Social and Cultural Identity*, 202, figs. 4.25, 4.26.

133 Laycock, *Britannia.* For problems with this see Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur,* 176-181.

134 Halsall, *Warfare and Society,* 45-46.

135 Jarrett, *Ethnic, Social and Cultural Identity,* 203. *Notitia Dignitatum* Oc. VII., ed. Seeck, 200-205.

136 Hawkes and Dunning, Soldiers and Settlers, 28.

137 Hills, Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England, 305. This response came at a time when the nature of certain other ›Germanic‹ items as representing the settlement of Germanic *laeti* or *foederati* was undisputed.

138 On problems with such distinctions, Halsall Space Between. Hills no longer adheres to such a rigid binary categorization but this specific example has still not been challenged and so it is necessary to do so to further the present discussion.

these buckle types' putative ›Germanicness‹, or lack thereof.[139] Furthermore that such buckles were later buried with Style I jewellery should not be seen as an aberration needing additional explanation. Style I, after all, owed its decorative grammar to the same stylistic principles as the earlier jewellery.[140]

The second binary here reified, that of civil versus military decoration, also requires addressing. A point frequently made is that the late Roman *cingulum* was not merely a symbol of military authority, but rather a symbol of office, whether civilian or military.[141] It is noteworthy that the male burial excavated at Dorchester-on-Thames in 1874 and the much more recent male burial from 2010 both contain buckles of Marzinzik's types II.1a (Hawkes and Dunning's Type III B), with niello inlay, chip-carved decoration and accompanying weapons.[142] This type was almost exclusively found with men, both in Britain and on the continent, and usually dates, as Type I B, to the late fourth to early fifth centuries.[143] There is general agreement that this type could perhaps be associated with military authority, but it is also noted that such belts were also used to express civil authority, and there is disagreement over whether this expression represented the Roman military (in some cases with suggestions of production in continental *fabricae*), the militarisation of provincials (perhaps more applicable for those types which are of local production, such as the I B) or claims to power through the expression of aristocratic hunting symbolism.[144]

Whatever one makes of the intricacies of these debates, the belts certainly resemble a deviation from idealised Roman costume norms that nevertheless have their stylistic origins on the Rhine-Danube frontier.[145] That the Type II.1a should be associated with social competition, and expressions of authority based on the symbolic imagery of the Roman military frontier thus seems plausible.[146] There is good reason to believe that the Dorchester burials represent a family community.[147] Furthermore, multiple Type I Bs were found in excavations in non-burial contexts at Dorchester – an unusually high concentration which may suggest production took place at the site, which is not implausible given the site's military context and its continued importance well into the seventh century.[148] The Type I B was perhaps, therefore, the feminine accompaniment to the masculine militarised Type II.1a, but even the necessarily feminine associations of the belt cannot be securely determined. A mere five examples of the belt were used in Marzinzik's study, of which only three could be osteoarchaeologically sexed.[149] This hardly reveals a statistically significant gendered rite. We

139 Marzinzik, Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles, 4.

140 Martin, *Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 31-32.

141 Jones, *Later Roman Empire*, 566.

142 Booth, Late Roman Military Burial.

143 Marzinzik, *Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*, 35.

144 Hawkes and Dunning, Soldiers and Settlers, 161, Halsall, Origins of the *Reihengräberzivilization*, 205; Marzinzik, *Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*, 4, 84; Theuws, Grave Goods, Ethnicity, 307; Esmonde Cleary, *Roman West,* 82-90; Booth, Late Roman Military Burial, 268.

145 Von Rummel, *Habitus Barbarus.*

146 Fehr, Germanische Einwanderung oder kulturelle Neuorientierung?, 96-97

147 Booth, Late Roman Military Burial, 263-264.

148 Booth, Late Roman Military Burial, 265; Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* 3.7, ed. Colgrave and Mynors.

149 Marzinzik, *Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles*.

should perhaps hesitate to identify a gendered use of this belt type in the early fifth century, given other artefacts associated with this artefact, which have also previously been assumed to have been female gendered, have turned out to be less easily identified as such.[150] Thus, the full signification of the Type I B is difficult to determine but it cannot easily be separated from related, clearly militarised types.

Jane Hawkes noted over twenty years ago the multivalent and ambiguous signification of the animal art styles emerging in late fifth-century Britain.[151] It seems doubtful that those who selected items bearing such styles to bury with their dead at Alveston Manor recognised the firm ethnic or cultural boundaries imposed on material types by the modern typologist: they surely would have seen such items as participating in the same semantic field of signification, and deployed them accordingly. The cruciform brooches at Alveston and Wasperton are sufficiently similar to be the product of the same craftsperson, and they are close enough geographically that people and thus ideas were probably shared across these two cemeteries. That these two burials in Spatial Group 3 expressed an authority that used the language of military power seems reasonable.

### *Problematising Otherness*

But the acts of expression outlined above are not tantamount to ›otherness‹. Here, a recourse to the understanding of the concept as found in the philosophical school of differential ontology may be useful, to highlight how differing semiotic fragments are used, and what they signify. Let us consider Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the ›war-machine‹, forces of expression excluded from the norms of the state.[152] For Deleuze and Guattari, the state is the classic operation of the master-signifier, the coalescing embodiment of an ideology that proceeds by the necessary distinction of Self from Other.[153] The state maintains coherence by two methods: the violent method (control of legitimate force) and the judicial method (recourse to expected structures in the hierarchy of the state). These are

> the principal elements of a State apparatus that proceeds by a One-Two, distributes binary distinctions, and forms a milieu of interiority.[154]

The state survives through imposing categories of meaning on fluid social processes. These categories shape definitions of interiority and exteriority that are determined by conformance to these categories.

In Gildas, we see the survival of the state's modes of ideological expression; his educative norms manifest in his condemnation of those who deviate from the elevated signifier – civic (as opposed to military) Romanness. Yet, as seen above, such condemnation is not solely applied to the Saxons. Instead the same discursive framework is applied more broadly, across post-imperial British society as a whole. This suggests that this society embodied Deleuze

150 Martin, *Cruciform Brooch and Anglo-Saxon England*, 214.

151 Hawkes, Symbolic Lives.

152 Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*.

153 Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 351.

154 Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus*, 352.

and Guattari's inversion of the state, the ›war-machine‹. The term as, they intend it, need not necessarily carry military connotations, but can instead be thought of as a ›difference engine‹, ideological expression that deviates from the state, breaking its closed operations open. In sub-Roman Britain, where a collapse of the state produced a society where bands of armed men gained power from appeals to military ideology, the military metaphor seems apt. But these two opposed forces, the homogenising, hegemonic force of the state, and the heterogeneous, unstable ›war-machine‹, cannot exist without one another. Gildas' ideal behaviour could only be articulated through his identification of that which did not conform. Those who in Gildas's eyes would have been excluded from the expected civic norms of the Roman state now claimed power through expressions of military authority, using the shattered fragments of the formerly stable signifying regime.

This is why we cannot state that ›otherness‹ was present in Anglo-Saxon burial practice. In communal burial practice, where we find our evidence from early Anglo-Saxon England, the thing at stake is a claim for *inclusion*. Far from demonstrating a successfully achieved dramatic rupture from expected dress norms, expressions of difference in mortuary display emblemize attempts to ›smooth over‹ or play down the buried's putative alterity.[155] That is what we witness in our burials at Wasperton. Gildas would have condemned the people performing this practice, but could only do so in language that admitted the new normativity of the practice in post-Imperial British society. Meanwhile those who performed this practice demarcated themselves from those who did not, which possibly explains the deviation from West-East burial in Spatial Group 3 at Wasperton, but in deviating from the civic norm, they operated by the same rules. This burial rite's semiotic traces – some from north Germany and Scandinavia but with unknowable symbolic significance, some originating in Roman military imagery, do not express a ›Germanic‹ identity opposed to a declining Romanness. They appeal for the *inclusion* of this new community, using the only material resources available. These expressions of Roman authority might have been deemed barbarous and illegitimate by the likes of Gildas, but they were part of the normal symbolic grammar of authority in post-Roman Britain. This burial practice was far from ›other‹. It was a shining expression of participation.

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155 Halsall, Otherness and Identity.

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# Church, Apostle and Nation in Early Ireland

Patrick Wadden*

There is abundant evidence for the existence of the Irish nation as a concept in the early medieval period. A variety of texts, in both Latin and the vernacular, depict the people of Ireland as a community of birth, language, law, religion and, sometimes, politics. The creation and re-creation of ethnic and national identities elsewhere in late-antique and early medieval Europe, sometimes called ethnogenesis, has become a key concern of historians of this period in recent decades. This study of ethnogenesis prioritises interaction with the Roman Empire and political unity as precursors to the development of common identity among barbarian peoples. This model does not appear appropriate to explain developments in Ireland, where political fragmentation and divisions among the learned classes mitigated against the evolution of a common identity inclusive of all Irishmen. That such an identity emerged by the close of the sixth century, and gained popularity during the seventh, is discussed here in light of developments within the Irish Church, including the controversy around the Easter debate and attempts on behalf of Armagh to claim ecclesiastical primacy within Ireland. The process is elucidated through comparison with identity-formation in Anglo-Saxon England, as it can be observed primarily through the work of Bede. The result is to highlight the significance among early medieval ecclesiastical scholars of the perceived role of national apostles in establishing national churches. Ultimately rooted in their understanding of the Bible, these ideas could be deployed in both Ireland and England in support of the claims of specific churches to ecclesiastical authority.

*Keywords: Ireland; national identity; ethnogenesis; Columbanus; Armagh; Muirchú; Tírechán; Liber Angeli; St. Patrick; national apostles; Bede*

Writing in the late seventh century, the hagiographer Tírechán listed three petitions granted to St Patrick by an angel shortly before his death. In doing so, he repeatedly used second-person, plural pronouns in relation to the Irish *(Hibernenses)*, and contrasted this group explicitly with ›barbarian nations‹ *(barbaraea gentes)*, making his one of the most striking early medieval assertions of Irish national identity.[1] Tírechán was not alone – far from it – in his belief that the

* **Correspondence details:** Patrick Wadden, Department of History, Belmont Abbey College, Belmont, NC 28012, USA. Email: patrickwadden@bac.edu.

1 Notes Supplementary to Tírechán, ed. and trans. L. Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, 164-5: *Hae sunt tres petitiones Patricii, ut nobis traditae sunt Hibernensibus, rogans i. ut suscipiatur unusquisque nostrum poenitentiam agens licet in extremo uitae suae iudicii dei, ut non claudetur in inferno: haec est prima; ii. ne barbarae gentes dominentur nobis in sempiternum <:haec est secunda>; iii. ut ne superuixerit aliquis nostrum, id est Hibernensium, ante septem annos ante diem iudicii, quia septem annis ante iudicium delebuntur equore: haec est tertia.* For the date, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 439.

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Irish constituted a nation, or ›imagined community‹.[2] In fact, such is the abundance of textual sources from early medieval Ireland concerned with defining and exploring Irish identity that it has been said that her learned classes ›were preoccupied with this very notion‹.[3]

These texts, dating from as early as the seventh century, ascribe to the Irish the usual characteristics and criteria associated with ethnic and national identity in the early medieval period, including shared ancestry, language and law.[4] All demonstrate the influence of biblical sources and concepts, with Old Testament Israel standing as a model for what a nation should look like.[5] Perhaps the most famous of these is the national origin legend, which would attain canonical form in the twelfth century as *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, ›The Book of the Taking of Ireland‹.[6] This work traces the pseudo-history of the Gaels from the biblical Flood, through many travels, to Ireland.[7] The final leg of this journey, which brought the Gaels from Spain to Ireland, was undertaken by the sons of Míl Espáin, who was thus presented as the apical figure to whom all the Gaels could trace their ancestry. Máel Mura Othna, the ninth-century author of a verse account of the Irish origin legend, could use the term *Meic Míled,* ›the children of Míl‹, as a name for the Irish alongside the more common ›Scots‹ and ›Gaels‹.[8] This origin legend thus provided an anchor onto which the genealogies of the various Irish dynasties could be grafted. Indeed, the genealogical system it enshrined has been described as ›the most important aspect of the whole scheme‹ of *Lebor Gabála*.[9] The development of this legend, and the genealogical schema it enshrines, was gradual.[10] The reference to Éremón, traditionally one of Míl's two sons, in the seventh-century poem *Moín oín óba noíd*, ›Moen the lone, since he was a child‹, suggests that the process had begun already at that early date.[11]

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2 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. Following Charles-Edwards, Making the Nations, 11-12, and Reynolds, Idea of the Nation, I see no difficulty in using the terminology of nation and national identity to refer to communities in relation to the early medieval period. Some modernists, including Anderson, believe that the nation can only exist in the era of mass media, which allows historians to argue that a large portion of the population believed in its existence. The nature of the sources means that there is no way of telling how the majority of the Irish population felt about their identity in the early medieval period, but that in no way undermines the evidence for the existence of the concept of the Irish nation among the learned classes, which is the subject of the current study.

3 Ó Corráin, Nationality and Kingship, 5.

4 See, for example, Regino of Prüm, *Epistula ad Hothonem*, ed. Kurze, XX. See also Pohl, Telling the Difference.

5 On the importance of the biblical image of Israel as a model for medieval *gentes*, see Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood;* Smith, *Chosen Peoples.* For the centrality of biblical study to the learning of early medieval Ireland, see Ó Néill, *Biblical Study*. For Israel as a model for the Irish nation in the early medieval period, see Comerford, *Ireland*, 19.

6 *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, ed. and trans. Macalister. Macalister's editorial technique has come in for much criticism, but there is no other complete edition available. A translation of the first recension by John Carey is available in Koch and Carey (eds.), *Celtic Heroic Age*, 213-266. For the importance of origins legends in the early medieval period, see Reynolds, Medieval *origines gentium.*

7 For discussion, see Carey, *Irish National Origin-Legend.*

8 Máel Muru Othna, *Can a mbunadas na nGaedel*, ed. Best and O'Brien, *Book of Leinster*, 516-523 contains several examples. The translation published by Todd alongside his edition (*Leabhar Breathnach*, 220-271), while imperfect, is the only one currently available.

9 Carey, *Irish National Origin-Legend,* 10. Cf. Ó Corráin, Creating the past, 203, where the Milesian schema of *Lebor Gabála* is described as ›the sheet anchor of the genealogical tracts‹.

10 The gradual development of the schema is discussed by Holmberg, *Towards a Relative Chronology*, a recent PhD. thesis, which, unfortunately, was not available to this author in time for its conclusions to be considered in depth here.

11 *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, ed. O'Brien, 1, 334; Carney, Dating of Archaic Irish Verse, 46-47. See also Carney, Three Old Irish Accentual Poems, 73.

A different origin legend asserted that it was their common language that defined individuals' membership of the Irish nation. *Auraicept na nÉces*, ›The Scholars' Primer‹, the oldest surviving grammar of a European vernacular, was first written *c*.700.[12] It contains an account of the origins of the Irish language that claims it had been created at the school of Fénius Farrsaid ten years after the construction of the Tower of Babel. The students who learned the language and carried it with them to Ireland became the first Irishmen, regardless of the fact that they were of diverse racial origins, for ›it is everyone speaking the same language that went from there to his territory and not everyone of the same race‹.[13] This account prioritizes their common language as the defining characteristic of the Irish, and explicitly rejects the idea that they were of the same ancestral origins. With the exception of small numbers of British and Anglo-Saxon immigrants – missionaries, monks and scholars for the most part – there is very little evidence for the presence of other vernaculars in Ireland before the establishment of Scandinavian settlements during the ninth century.[14] But Old Irish, the form of the Gaelic language attested between roughly 600 and 900, was not restricted to Ireland; Gaelic speakers were present in northern Britain throughout the medieval period, as they are in Scotland today. Gaelic-speaking communities were also established in what is now Wales and Cornwall in the early medieval period, although they were not as resilient and had probably disappeared by the ninth century. There must have been considerable dialectal variation in Old Irish, considering the rural quality of Irish society and the dispersal of Gaelic speakers over such an extensive territory. Remarkably, however, surviving Old Irish texts show no evidence of this; the language of the Old Irish period is remarkably homogeneous, and the evidence for dialectal variation is tantalizingly sparse.[15] It is also the case, however, that Old Irish was not simply a *Schriftsprache.* It was a language spoken, presumably throughout Ireland and Gaelic-speaking Britain, at least by the scholars who wrote it, and presumably also by their patrons among the political elite.[16]

The racial and linguistic definitions of Irish identity included the Gaels of both Ireland and Britain. A slightly different emphasis can be found in the earliest Irish legal texts. The early Irish law tracts claim to depict a legal system common to all the inhabitants of Ireland, and have been described as one of the ›central pillars of Irish nationality in the seventh and eighth centuries‹.[17] Old Irish law differed from that of most other early medieval societies in that it was not promulgated by a king; rather, it was written and preserved by legal professionals who used the texts for instructional purposes.[18] The most important, and possibly the oldest Old Irish law book is known to modern scholars as the *Senchas Már*, or ›Great Tradition‹.[19] The opening words of the introduction to this collection of legal tracts, and perhaps

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12 *Auraicept na nÉces*, ed. Ahlqvist, 36.

13 *Auraicept na nÉces*, 1.4 ed. Ahlqvist, 47: *is cach combérlaid do.chuaid a suidiu dochum a chríche ⁊ ni cach comcheniúil.*

14 Russell, ›What was Bests of Every Language‹, 409.

15 Russell, ›What was Bests of Every Language‹, 439-443; Ó Muircheartaigh, *Gaelic Dialects,* 146-198.

16 Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 583; *idem,* Language and Society, 727-728; Russell, ›What was Bests of Every Language‹, 439-443.

17 Charles-Edwards, Making of Nations, 30. Cf. Ó Corráin, Nationality and Kingship, 7; MacNeill, *Early Irish Laws,* 74-82, 89-96; Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law*, 231-232. On the significance of written law to the identity of barbarian *gentes* more broadly, see Wormald, *Lex scripta; idem, Leges barbarorum.*

18 Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law*; Charles-Edwards, Early Irish Law.

19 On the significance of the *Senchas Már,* see Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law,* 242-246; Stacey, *Dark Speech,* 181, 223.

its original title, are *Senchas fer nÉrenn*, ›The tradition of the men of Ireland‹, which highlights the theme of national legal unity that runs throughout the collection.[20] The account of its origins contained in the *Senchas Már,* while certainly legendary, is probably not far from the mark in depicting the legal system it enshrines as the result of the blending of native and Christian elements. It asserts that, prior to the arrival of St Patrick, the Irish adhered to the ›law of nature‹, *recht aicnid*, which was maintained as an oral tradition. At a meeting of all the men of Ireland, convened by the king of Ireland, Lóegaire mac Néill, these laws were recited by a poet, revised by Patrick to align with Christianity, and committed to parchment for the first time.[21] The legend lays great emphasis on the unity of the men of Ireland as a community linked by their adherence to a common legal system in both the present and the distant past. As a means of linking the Irish of the early medieval period with their ancestors, the *Senchas Már* thus served as a ›vehicle of tradition‹ in a manner similar to the written laws of other barbarian peoples of the early medieval period.[22]

What makes the existence of Irish national identity distinctive within early Europe, though not unique, is the fact that the individuals believed to belong to this entity lived in a very fragmented society. Since the 1970s, students of ethnogenesis have come to emphasize the importance of political unity and interaction with the Roman empire as precursors to the development of common identities among barbarian peoples on the Continent.[23] In brief, the dominant theory holds that groups of barbarians united in loose federations in order to deal with the Roman Empire. Due to Roman expectations that they would interact with barbarian *gentes* through the person of their individual kings, leaders were appointed to act on behalf of these confederations. Depending on the success of these ›kings‹, the confederation might remain together over a long period, during which its members would adopt a common identity, generally that of the ruler, thus coalescing into a single *gens*. Recent work by Elva Johnston on the place of Ireland in late Antiquity proposes seeing the Irish Sea as a frontier zone comparable with those along the Rhine and elsewhere, and within which contact and communication were frequent.[24] Within this context, it is possible that the process of identity formation in Ireland had begun along the same path as was the case on the other frontiers of the empire. Writing in the fourth century, Ammianus Marcellinus claimed that attacks on Roman Britain were carried out by *Scotti* and *Atacotti,* who sometimes also collaborated with Picts and Saxons.[25] The *Scotti* and *Atacotti* were also associated with each other by

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20 Introduction to the *Senchas Már*, §1, ed. and trans. Breatnach, *Early Irish Law Text,* 4-5.

21 The fullest account of this episode is in the early eighth-century glossing known as the pseudo-historical prologue to the *Senchas Már*: Carey, Edition of the Pseudo-Historical Prologue. On the centrality of the episode to *Senchas Már* as a whole, see Breatnach, *Early Irish Law Text*, 34-38; *idem, Companion,* 313. For commentary, see Bracken, Immortality and Capital Punishment; Ó Corráin *et al.*, Laws of the Irish, 387; Wadden, Pseudo-Historical Origins.

22 Wormald, *Leges Barbarorum,* 32-33.

23 For an overview of some central ideas, see Chrysos, Empire, the *gentes* and the *regna*. The seminal work was Wolfram, *Geschichte der Goten*. In the last thirty years, the historiography of the topic has become vast. Some of the most important contributions to the discussion have been reprinted in Noble (ed.), *From Roman Provinces to Medieval Kingdoms.* For some critical approaches, see Gillett, Ethnogenesis; *idem, On Barbarian Identity.* The centrality of kings and kingdoms to the process of identity formation is highlighted in Goetz *et al.* (eds.), Regna *and* Gentes; Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities; eadem,* Idea of the Nation.

24 Johnston, Ireland in Late Antiquity. See also, Johnston, *Literacy and Identity,* 1-16 for some important points about the late-antique context of early Irish literacy.

25 Ammianus, *Res Gestae*, 26.4.5, cited from Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical World*, 95. Cf. Ammianus, *Res Gestae*, 20.1.1, 27.8.5, in Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical World*, 95-96.

St Jerome, and it seems possible that both groups might have been inhabitants of Ireland.[26] Charles-Edwards has suggested that these two groups might have represented Irish-based confederations of peoples, which he tentatively identifies with the Ulaid and the Laigin, the leading powers on Ireland's east coast in later centuries, and which might originally also have united primarily for the purpose of dealing with the Roman authorities.[27] As he points out, Ammianus' statement that the *Scotti* and *Picti* had broken an arranged peace presumes a degree of formal interaction between them and the imperial authorities. The fact that these authors referred to two groups, the *Scotti* and the *Atacotti*, might reflect Roman recognition that the inhabitants of Ireland – or at least those with whom they interacted – exhibited signs of ethnic diversity. The possibility certainly exists, therefore, that interaction with Roman authorities was an important factor in the development of communal identity in Ireland, though further research into the period will be necessary before much more can be said.

The Roman historian Tacitus, writing at the end of the first century, noted that the harbours of Ireland were well known to Romans in Britain, presumably from trade. On the basis of this familiarity with Ireland, his further comment that ›one of the tribal petty kings‹ driven out of Ireland had been given refuge by his father-in-law, Agricola, can be taken as evidence of the political disunity of Ireland at that date.[28] Whatever the possible results of Roman interaction with Ireland might have been, political unity was not one of them. When sources become abundant enough for historians to build up an image of the political scene in Ireland during the seventh century, it was clear that the island was still divided into numerous kingdoms, and such political fragmentation was to remain characteristic of Ireland through the medieval period and beyond. Early medieval Ireland was home to numerous kingdoms of varying size, strength and status, from the *túath*, the smallest political entity, of which there were scores, through a hierarchy of overkings and on to the provincial kings, of whom there were only ever three or four competing at the highest level.[29] Kingship of Ireland existed in theory, at least in some quarters, from as early as the seventh century, and the title of ›king of Ireland‹ was occasionally accorded to the most powerful of the provincial kings.[30] But the authority of these kings was unstable and ephemeral, unsupported by any institutional apparatus. The depiction of Lóegaire mac Néill in the pseudo-historical prologue to the *Senchas Már* convening an assembly of all the men of Ireland in his capacity as king of Ireland, while it may have been inspired by legislative assemblies that occurred in Ireland in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, is not an accurate reflection of either how the law book came into existence or the authority of the kings of Ireland in the period when it was written.[31]

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26 Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 2.7, and *Epistle* 69.3, both cited in Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical World*, 99-100.

27 Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 158-160.

28 Tacitus, *Agricola*, §24: *unum ex regulis gentis,* cited in Freeman, *Ireland and the Classical World*, 56-57.

29 Ó Cróinín, Ireland, 400-800. Cf. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings*; Ó Corráin, *Ireland Before the Normans* 1-27; Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland,* 41-62; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 8-67.

30 For references to the kingdom of Ireland and kings of Ireland, see Adomnán, *Vita Columbae,* I.14, 36, ed. and trans. Anderson and Anderson, 38-39, 64-67; *Annals of Ulster, s. a.* 703, ed. Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill, 163. For a recent reassessment of the law tracts' attitude toward a high-kingship, see Breatnach, King in the Old Irish Law Text. For a maximalist view of the kingship of Tara as an institution, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 469-521.

31 Wadden, Pseudo-Historical Origins.

It has previously been suggested that the political fragmentation of Ireland was counterbalanced by the unity of the learned classes, which has also been posited as a source for ideas about common identity.[32] But learned Irishmen were not members of a homogeneous community of common outlook.[33] Most famously, they were divided for most of the seventh century over the crucially important question of how to date Easter.[34] This issue divided the Irish Church from the 630s to the second decade of the eighth century. Its resolution might have precipitated the creation of the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis,* which was probably undertaken in the first quarter of the eighth century.[35] This collection of canon law includes decrees from synods convened by both sides of the Easter debate in Ireland, the ›Romans‹ and the ›Hibernians‹, demonstrating that the divisions of the seventh century were deep enough to create separate institutional allegiances.[36] Considering this evidence for diversity of opinion within learned circles in seventh-century Ireland, the possibility ought to be acknowledged that the image of the Irish as a single nation might reflect the perspective, not of the learned class as a homogeneous unit, but of a specific subsection of that group only.

This possibility is enhanced by the existence of alternative ways of depicting the identity of the inhabitants of Ireland. A small number of early texts present an image of the Irish population that is at odds with that depicted in the Milesian legend, but chimes with the image of a divided island discussed above. In the Old Irish laws, for example, the ethnonym Féni is most commonly used as a synonym for ›men of Ireland‹.[37] Less frequently, however, the Féni are presented as just one of three population groups inhabiting the island. According to the Old Irish text known as ›The Saga of Fergus mac Léti‹, in Fergus' time, ›there were three chief races in Ireland: the Féni, the Ulaid, and the Gáilni or Laigin‹.[38] This saga belongs to an eighth-century glossing of the law tract *Cethairṡlicht Athgabálae*, ›The Four Divisions of Distraint‹, one of the constituent tracts of the *Senchas Már.*[39] *Cethairṡlicht Athgabálae,* which probably dates from the seventh-century, itself makes reference to ›three free kindreds‹, although they are not named in the original tract.[40] These are ›free‹ or ›noble‹ kindreds, to be distinguished from the ›base, ›unfree‹, or ›rent-paying‹ *cenéla*.[41]

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32 This argument is ubiquitous in much recent historiography, but is discussed specifically in relation to the origins of national identity by Ó Corráin, Nationality and Kingship, 7.

33 Johnston, *Literacy and Identity*, 16-26.

34 Warntjes, Victorius vs Dionysius.

35 Thurneysen, Zur irischen Kanonensammlung; Flechner, *Hibernensis,* 15-17. I am very grateful to Dr. Flechner for providing me with access to his forthcoming edition and study of the *Hibernensis* prior to publication.

36 *Collectio canonum Hibernensis,* 17.9, 18.2, 20.3 (›Roman‹ synods), 18.3, 18.6 (›Hibernian‹ synods), ed. Wasserschleben, 63, 66-68, 72; Flechner, *Hibernesis*, 30-33.

37 *Bretha Crólige* §57, ed. and trans. Binchy 44-5; Introduction to the *Senchas Már* §§1, 9, 10, ed. and trans. Breatnach, *Early Irish Law Text*, 4-7.

38 Binchy (ed. and trans.), Saga of Fergus mac Léti, 37, 39: *batar tri primcinela in here .i. feni 7 ultaig 7 gailni .i. laigin.*

39 McLeod, Fergus mac Léti, 1-2; Breatnach, *Companion*, 338-346.

40 *Corpus Iuris Hibernici,* ed. Binchy, 356.6, 1897.27: *trí cenéla sáera*. For the identity of the tract, see Breatnach *Companion,* 24, 72, 286-287. For the date, see Breatnach, *Early Irish Law Text.*

41 For discussion, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 160, 530-534; Charles-Edwards and Kelly, *Bechbretha*, 133-134.

The distinction between these *cenéla,* a word that corresponds with Latin *gentes*, appears to have been based on the idea that they were of different ancestral origins. Among the earliest surviving examples of Old Irish verse, perhaps dating from as early as the first half of the seventh century, is a group of poems concerning the origins and ancestry of the Laigin that appear to present them as a distinct people.[42] *Énna, Labraid, luad caich*, ›Énna, Labraid, praised by all‹, for example, traces the ancestry of the leading dynasty of the Laigin back to Labraid Loingsech, who appears to have been the apical ancestor of the people.[43] Loingsech means ›voyager‹ or ›exile‹, and another of these early poems, *Moín, oín óba noíd*, relates the story of how he invaded and conquered territory in Ireland from overseas.[44] In the process, it explains the roots of his people's name, claiming that it was derived from the lances *(laigne)* that they used, and suggests that a degree of enmity existed between them and the Gaels. Another poem, *Dind Ríg rūad*, ›Dind Ríg (is) red‹, identifies Labraid's enemies as the sons of Áugaine Már, ancestor of the Uí Néill, political enemies of the Laigin in the seventh century.[45] Old Irish Goídel, from which modern Gael derives, was apparently a borrowing from Old Welsh into Irish in the early seventh century.[46] It might originally have been used in a more restrictive sense, before becoming a synonym of *Scottus*, as was the case with Féni. In other words, these poems incorporate many of the features associated with national origin legends, including an explanation of the roots of the people's name, a record of their arrival in and conquest of their territory, and the use of the image of their enemies to reinforce the unity of the group. There is good reason to think, therefore, that during the seventh century the Laigin were thought by some, and perhaps thought of themselves, as a distinct ethnic group with origins separate from those of their neighbours.[47]

The idea that the population of Ireland was divided into different ethnic groups, rather than united as a single people, may represent an earlier phase in the development of Irish identity, or evidence of opposition to the promulgation of ideas about Irish national identity. At the very least, these poems attest the existence of alternative viewpoints during the seventh century, prior to the Laigin and the Ulaid being subsumed within the Féni. As will be discussed below, the earliest recorded instances of Irishmen identifying themselves with an Irish nation date from the end of the sixth century. This was apparently not uncontroversial during the seventh century, but seems to have grown increasingly popular with time. In what remains of this article, it will be argued that the reasons for the increasing popularity of the idea that the Irish constituted a single *gens* was related to ecclesiastical concerns of the late seventh century. In pursuing this line of thought, it will prove useful to examine Irish evidence in light of that from Anglo-Saxon England, where a sense of national identity also existed in the absence of political unity.

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42 Carney (Dating of Archaic Irish Verse, 43-48) argued on linguistic and stylistic grounds that the poems were earlier than this, but Ó Corráin (Irish origin legends, 57-67) argued on the basis of a reassessment of the language and on historical grounds, for the later date.

43 *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, ed. O'Brien, 4-7. Dillon, Poem on the Kings of the Eóganachta, 10. The poem was extended, probably in the eighth century, by the addition of further material. Its original core is probably represented by stanzas 1-21. For the date of both portions of the text, see Carney, Three Old Irish Accentual Poems, 72-73; *idem*, Aspects of Archaic Irish, 430-435; *idem*, Dating of Early Irish Verse Texts, 177-216; *idem*, Dating of Archaic Irish Verse, 49-53; Ó Corráin, Irish Origin Legends, 60-67.

44 *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, ed. O'Brien, 1, 334; Carney, Dating of Archaic Irish Verse, 47.

45 *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae,* ed. O'Brien, 18; Wagner, Archaic *Dind Ríg* Poem, 1-2.

46 Charles-Edwards, Language and society, 723; Russell, ›What was Best of Every Language‹, 408.

47 Carney, Three Old Irish Accentual Poems, 73.

Credit for forging English identity and, indeed, for settling on ›English‹, rather than ›Saxon‹ terminology to express this sense of nationality has been given to Bede. As Nicholas Brooks has commented in relation to Bede's *magnus opus*, the ›boldness of [Bede's] conception [was] that there was a single English people *(gens Anglorum)* who had a single ecclesiastical history‹.[48] The idea that the English constituted a single *gens* was bold in the eighth century because the Anglo-Saxons lacked many of the trappings of national identity: they were divided into numerous kingdoms; some kingdoms possessed their own written laws, while others did not;[49] and, as Bede reported, the peoples of the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms did not share a common ancestry, but traced their origins to one or other of three Continental peoples, the Saxons, Angles and Jutes.[50]

The ›English‹ identity constructed by Bede transcended the political and ancestral distinctions that divided the Anglo-Saxons.[51] Among the factors he identified as indicative of the nationality of the English was their common language. Bede recognized English as one of the ›five languages of nations‹ spoken in Britain, alongside those of the British, the Gaels and the Picts, and Latin.[52] He could also recognize the dialectal differences that existed between ›Anglian‹ and ›Saxon‹ English, however, demonstrating that he acknowledged that the vernacular of the *gens Anglorum* was not as uniform or homogeneous as his earlier statement implied.[53]

As has been pointed out before, however, Bede's concept of the *gens Anglorum* was intimately entwined with the history of conversion. Nicholas Brooks made the insightful observation that it is only from the point at which Bede's history ›reaches the Gregorian mission that he begins to talk of preaching to the English gens‹.[54] Prior to that, when Bede refers to the pagan Germanic settlers who came to Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries he uses ›Saxon‹ terminology borrowed from his sources, including the sixth-century British polemicist Gildas.[55] Writing about the mission to convert the English, however, Bede reported that Augustine was consecrated ›archbishop of the English nation‹, and that he wrote to Gregory the Great from Britain to inform the pope that the English *gens* had received the faith.[56] In other words, it was their conversion and unification as a single community of faith, a single

48 Brooks, *Bede and the English*, 1.

49 The kingdoms of Kent and Wessex each had their own written laws by the time Bede wrote, for the texts of which see *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. and trans. Liebermann , I, 1-14, 88-123. Bede was aware of the existence of at least those of Kent (*HEGA* II.5, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 150-151).

50 Bede, *HEGA*, I.15, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 50-51: *Aduenerant autem de tribus Germaniae populis fortioribus, id est Saxonibus, Anglis, Iutis.* Eric John has pointed out (Point of Woden, 129) that some of the terminology used in this section of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* differs from that used by Bede in the rest of his work, which makes it likely that he was not the original author. His decision to incorporate it into the *Historia Ecclesiastica,* however, is evidence that he endorsed its version of events. Brooks, *Bede and the English*, 11-12.

51 The topic has been much debated. See, for example, Cowdrey, Bede and the English People; Richter, Bede's *Angli*; Wormald, Bede, The *bretwaldas; idem*, Venerable Bede; Jones, Chosen Missionary People?, 101-103.

52 Bede, *HEGA*, I.1, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 16-17: *quinque gentium linguis*; Charles-Edwards, Making of Nations, 12-24.

53 Bede, *HEGA*, III.7, III.22, IV.17, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 234-235, 282-283, 384-385; Brooks, *Bede and the English,* 8-9.

54 Brooks, *Bede and the English*, 12.

55 Bede, *HEGA,* I.14 *(Saxonum gentem)*, I.15 *(Saxones, Anglorum siue Saxonum gens)*, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 48-4, 50-51; Gildas, *De Excidio Brittanniae*, 23.1 *(Saxones)*, ed. and trans. Winterbottom, 97; Brooks, *Bede and the English,* 14-16. Much of what follows owes a debt to Brooks' insightful study of this topic.

56 Bede, *HEGA*, I.27, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, 78-79: *archiepiscopus genti Anglorum … gentem Anglorum.*

Church, that forged a single English nation from the Angles, Saxons and Jutes. For while there were many kingdoms, there was only one English Church: ›That was the church to which the successive missions of Augustine and Mellitus were sent from Rome and over which the metropolitan bishops of Canterbury … were to have authority.‹[57] This ecclesiastical structure, including ›an episcopal government under archbishops who oversaw the church of a whole *gens*‹ was later exported by Anglo-Saxon missionaries to the Continent.[58]

Bede's belief in the correspondence between *gens* and *ecclesia* is perhaps most apparent in the following statement regarding the missionary efforts of Gregory the Great:

> Well indeed may we, the English nation *(Anglorum gentem)* converted by his efforts from the power of Satan to the faith of Christ, give a somewhat full account of him in our *History of the Church.* We can and should by rights call him our apostle *(nostrum … apostolum)*, for though he held the most important see in the whole world and was head of Churches which had long been converted to the true faith, yet he made our nation, till then enslaved to idols, into a Church of Christ *(nostrum gentem eatenus idolis mancipatam Christi fecit ecclesiam),* so that we may use the apostle's words about him ›If he is not an apostle to others yet at least he is to us, for we are the seal of his apostleship in the Lord.‹[59]

As an example of self-identification with a *gens,* Bede's use of first-person pronouns here is reminiscent of the example of Tírechán cited above. In this passage, the coincidence of Church and nation is related to the crucial role of national apostle. It was the apostle's effort to convert the *gens* that created the corresponding *ecclesia*. The identification of Gregory as the national apostle of the English was adopted by Bede from the Whitby *Life of Gregory*, according to which it was Gregory's own opinion that

> when all the Apostles bring their own peoples with them and each individual teacher brings his own race to present them to the Lord in the Day of Judgment, he [Gregory] will bring us – that is, the English people *(gentem Anglorum)* – instructed by him through God's grace.[60]

The image of the people's apostle judging them is derived from Christ's words to the original twelve apostles that they would sit in judgment over the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). It was likely also influenced by Luke's statement (10:1) that Jesus had appointed

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57 Brooks, *Bede and the English,* 12, 14-15. Barbara Yorke (Anglo-Saxon *gentes* and *regna,* 390-391) has made the point that Bede also saw a correspondence between *ecclesia* and *gens* at a subordinate level. The various *gentes* that comprised the *gens Anglorum* were expected by Bede to have their own bishops under the authority of the archbishop of the *gens Anglorum.*

58 Jones, Chosen Missionary People?, 107.

59 Bede, *HEGA*, II.1, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 122-123: *De quo nos conuenit, quia nostrum, id est Anglorum, gentem de potestate Satanae ad fidem Christi sua industria conuertit, latiorem in nostra historia ecclesiastica facere sermonem. Quem recte nostrum appellare possumus et debemus apostolum quia, cum primum in toto orbe gereret pontificatum et conuersis iamdudum ad fidem ueritatis esset praelatus ecclesiis, nostrum gentem eatenus idolis mancipatam Christi fecit ecclesiam, ita ut apostolicum illum de eo liceat nobis proferre sermonem quia, etsi aliis non est apostolus, sed tamen nobis est; nam signaculum apostolatus eius nos sumus in Domino.*

60 *Vita S. Gregorii,* §6, ed. and trans. Colgrave, 82-8: *quando omnes apostoli, suas secum provincias ducentes / Domino in dei iudicii ostendent, atque singuli gentium doctors, nos ille, id est gentem Anglorum, eo miratius per se gratia Dei credimus edoctam adducer.*

seventy-two disciples to spread his message before him, seventy-two supposedly being the number of *gentes* into which mankind was divided.[61] Typologically, it appears that the Whitby author was comparing the constituent *gentes* of the *populus Christianorum,* including the *gens Anglorum*, with the twelve tribes that together constituted Israel.

Bede's attitude toward the *gens Anglorum* reflects a perceived equivalence between *gens* and *ecclesia,* and highlights the significance of a national apostle in the conversion process, both in establishing an archiepiscopal Church that held authority over the converted people and at the final Judgment. This may have reflected the view of Canterbury and, ultimately, Rome that there should be a single, unified Church, under Canterbury's leadership, as Wormald argued.[62] Certainly it endorsed Canterbury's status. Bede's influence and impact in forging the concept of the English *gens* was unparalleled, and it is likely due to him that the English are ›English‹ rather than Saxons.[63] Bede's concept of the *gens Anglorum* and its relationship to the *ecclesia Anglorum* was shaped by his reading of Scripture, but also by Gregory the Great, who was not only one of the heroes of the *Historia Ecclesiastica,* but also one of the great influences on its author's mode of thought, and from whom he borrowed both ideas and terminology.

On one level, Christianity was a universalizing religion.[64] St Paul's epistle to the Colossians (3:11) emphatically states that among Christians ›there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and is in all‹. In late Antiquity, as Christianity spread, exegetes struggled with how to define this new community. On the one hand, Christians were the new Israel, the chosen people of the new dispensation. On the other hand, they lacked the trappings of nationality – common ancestry, language and laws – that had defined the Hebrews as a community. Christians could therefore identify with two communities. On the one hand, they were members of the universal Christian people *(populous Dei, populus Christianus)*.

> On the other hand, Christians could identify with the *gentes*, who were called to believe in Christ and were destined to replace Israel as a people of God in the New Testament … This peculiar combination of claims to election and universalism was expressed through the notion of the Christians [as] a single people of God, but one which consisted of believers from many different peoples, a *populus ex (diversis) gentibus.*[65]

Gregory the Great was an influential proponent of these ideas about ›diversity within unity‹.[66] This outlook is apparent in Gregory's correspondence with the monk Augustine, chosen to lead the mission to the Anglo-Saxons, as recorded by Bede. From Britain, Augustine wrote to the pope a series of questions, the second of which enquired whether »Even though the faith

61 The notion that there were seventy-two languages and seventy-two *gentes* derived from the seventy-two descendants of Noah is ultimately based on Genesis 10, the Septuagint version of which lists the seventy-two. This became a common topos in early medieval scholarship. See, for example, Isidore, *Etymologiae,* IX.2.2, ed. Lindsay. For discussion, see Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel.*

62 Wormald, Bede, The *bretwaldas,* 125-129; *idem*, Bede and the Church, 18.

63 On Bede's significance in shaping the concept of English identity for later generations, see Brooks, *Bede and the English*, 21-22; Foot, Making of *Angelcynn*.

64 For what follows, see especially Heydemann, People(s) of God?; *eadem*, Biblical Israel.

65 Heydemann, People(s) of God?, 30-31.

66 Meyvaert, Diversity within Unity; Markus, *Gregory the Great,* 72-80. Charles-Edwards, Perceptions of Pagan and Christian, 271-276.

is one are there varying customs in the churches? And is there one form of mass in the Holy Roman Church and another in the Gaulish churches?«[67] Gregory's response was that Augustine should select whichever customs of the Roman and Gaulish churches he found most pleasing to God, and teach them to the ›Church of the English‹.[68] As Heydemann pointed out, the word *ecclesia* ›could either encompass the Christian world in its entirety … or be applied in quite specific terms to a concrete historical embodiment of such a Christian people‹.[69] Just as the *populus Dei* consisted of numerous *gentes*, so in Gregory's view the universal Church, *ecclesia*, was envisioned as comprising numerous *ecclesiae* corresponding to those *gentes.*

Gregory apparently conceived of the mission he sent to the Anglo-Saxons as directed toward the conversion of a *gens* into an *ecclesia*. In his own writings, he consistently presented the mission as being directed towards the *gens Anglorum*, ›the English nation‹, as a single unit.[70] Gregory's understanding of the mission's goal was shaped by Christ's instruction to his followers that they ›teach all nations‹ (Matt 28:19: *docete omnes gentes*), which emphasized the place of *gentes* in the conversion process.[71] A century or more later, this idea also inspired the Anglo-Saxon missionaries active on the Continent, as Miriam Adan Jones pointed out, citing the letter of Bishop Torthelm of Leicester in which he exhorted the missionary Boniface to ›make haste … to gather [the Saxons] together and dedicate them to Christ as a new people‹.[72] In this letter, as in Gregory's writing, ›[i]t is taken for granted that a people would have a common faith, and that conversion means collective conversion.‹[73] What exactly constituted the *gens Anglorum* in the late sixth and early seventh centuries is very uncertain – there is certainly no evidence that the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of Britain had begun to think of themselves as members of a single people at this date – but the influence of Gregory's words and thoughts on Bede more than a century later were of profound significance. See, for instance, Bede's statement above that Gregory was the head of many Churches, and that, through his efforts, the English nation had become another one among their number.

Gregory's attitude toward *gentes* and *ecclesiae* finds an echo in the letters of his contemporary and correspondent, the Irishman Columbanus. In a letter addressed to a Frankish synod in 603, Columbanus asserted ›we are all joint members of one body, whether Gauls or Britons or Irish, or whatever our *gens* may be‹.[74] Columbanus' letter to the Frankish synod,

67 Bede, *HEGA* I.27, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 80-81: *Cum una sit fides, sunt ecclesiarum diuersae consuetudines, et altera consuetudo missarum in sancta Romana ecclesia atque altera in Galliarum tenetur?*

68 Bede, *HEGA* I.27, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 80-83: *Anglorum ecclesia*. Gregory referred again to the *Anglorum ecclesia* in another letter to Augustine recorded by Bede (*HEGA* I.29, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 104-105).

69 Heydemann, People(s) of God?, 30.

70 See the letters to Mellitus (Bede, *HEGA*, I.30, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 106-107: *Anglorum … gens ipsa*), and King Æthelberht (Bede, *HEGA*, I.32, ed. and trans Colgrave and Mynors, 110-111: *gente Anglorum*). For further instances in letters not recorded by Bede, see Brooks, *Bede and the English*, 13.

71 See Pohl's comment (Introduction, 18) that the conversion of the barbarian peoples »tended to focus on peoples«.

72 *Epistola* 47, ed. Tangl, 296, ll. 10-11: *Festinet … uti novum christo populum coacervare et dedicare.*

73 Jones, Chosen Missionary People?, 101-102.

74 Columbanus, *Epistula* II.9, ed. and trans. Walker, 22-23: *unius enim sumus corporis commembra, sive Galli, sive Britanni, sive Iberi, sive quaeque gentes.* I have altered Walker's translation of *Galli,* which he rendered ›Franks‹. Cf. Columbanus's plea in the same letter (II.6, ed. and trans. Walker, 16-17): *Capiat nos simul oro Gallia, quos capiet regnum caelorum, si boni simus meriti; unum enim regnum habemus promissum et unam spem vocationis in Christo.*

like an earlier one to Gregory, was largely concerned with the thorny issue of Easter. In his letters to the popes, while vehemently asserting his and his compatriots' catholicity, orthodoxy and loyalty to Rome, Columbanus also defended their right to use a method of dating Easter distinct from that then favoured in Rome on the basis that national Churches ought to reflect the diversity of those nations they represented.[75] In one letter, Columbanus cited in support of this proposition a canon of the Council of Constantinople that ›churches of God planted in pagan nations should live by their own laws, as they had been instructed by their fathers‹.[76] Columbanus, like Gregory, believed that diversity could exist within the unity of the faith, and linked that diversity with the fact that Churches reflected the distinct identities of the nations among whom they had been established.

A key plank of Columbanus' argument was that distinct practices did not connote heresy or disloyalty. He therefore took pains to assert Irish loyalty to Rome as ›the head of the churches of the world‹, whose fame had spread throughout the world, which was a cause of great joy ›to almost all nations‹, including the Irish.[77] In a letter to Pope Boniface IV, Columbanus stated that the Irish were particularly closely connected to Rome because Christianity had been brought to them ›by you first, who are the successors of the holy apostles‹.[78] This has been read as evidence that he was aware of Prosper of Aquitaine's report, in his *Chronicon*, that Pope Celestine I had ordained Palladius and sent him ›as their first bishop, to the Irish *(Scotti)* believing in Christ‹ in 431.[79] In his *Contra Collatorem*, Prosper referred to this event again, this time in reference to converting Ireland to Christianity, and again stated that Pope Celestine I had ordained Palladius ›bishop for the Irish‹ *(Scotis episcopo)*.[80] If Columbanus was recalling the Palladian mission in this letter, then, like Bede, he would have been aware that the Christian community to which he belonged was one that had been defined, from its inception, in national terms. Columbanus used several terms to refer to the Irish, one of which was that used by Prosper in relation to Palladius' mission, *Scotti*.[81]

Columbanus has been called the first Irishman on the basis of his being the first identifiable individual to assert a sense of Irish identity.[82] But Columbanus' Irishness was situational.[83] He referred to it only rarely in his writings, and there is good reason to believe that he did

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75 Columbanus, *Epistula* V.3, ed. Walker, 38-39: *Nos enim sanctorum Petri et Pauli et omnium discipulorum divinum canonem spiritu sancto scribentium discipuli sumus, toti Iberi, ultimi habitores mundi, nihil extra evangelicam et apostolicam doctrinam recipientes; nullus hereticus, nullus Iudaeus, nullus schismaticus fuit; sed fides catholica, sicut a vobis primum, sanctorum videlicet apostolorum successoribus, tradita est, inconcussa tenetur.*

76 Columbanus, *Epistula* III.3, ed. Walker, 24-25: *ecclesias Dei in barbaris gentibus constitutas suis viverer legibus, sicut edoctas a patribus.* The reference is to 1 Constantinople (A.D. 381), c. 2.

77 Columbanus, *Epistula* V.11, ed. Walker, 48-49: *orbis terrarum caput … ecclesiarum; omnium prope gentium.*

78 Columbanus, *Epistula* V.3, ed. Walker, 38-39: *a vobis primum, sanctorum videlicet apostolorum successoribus.*

79 Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma Chronicon, s.a.* 431, ed. Mommsen, I.473: *Ad Scottos in Christo credentes ordinatus a papa Caelestino Palladius primus episcopus mittitur*. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 182-183, 239-240, 375.

80 Prosper of Aquitaine, *Liber Contra Collatorem*, c.21 (58), ed. Migne, PL 51:271. On Palladius' mission, see Charles-Edwards, Palladius, Prosper, and Leo the Great; Etchingham, Conversion in Ireland, 183-186.

81 For the Irish as *Hibernicis* and *Iber* see Columbanus, *Epistulae* II.4, II.8 and V.2 ed. Walker, 6, 22, 38. See note 85 below for Columbanus' reference to himself as a *Scottus.*

82 Bracken, Introduction, 5. See also Bracken, Rome and the Isles, 78: »[Columbanus'] letters are important not least because they are the earliest expressions of Irish identity in existence.«

83 Geary, Ethnic Identity.

so on these occasions for specific purposes. Charles-Edwards has argued that, in the context of the Three Chapters controversy, it was convenient for Columbanus to play the part of an outsider in his letter to Pope Boniface from the royal court of the Lombard king.[84] Columbanus was attempting to restore unity among the Catholics of Italy, and found his identity as an outsider distinctly useful in doing so. A ›dull Irish pilgrim‹ was clearly an outsider without his own horse in the complex race of intertwining loyalties that constituted the controversy.[85] As an Irishman, he was firm in his allegiance to Rome, but only to the Rome of Saints Peter and Paul; as he pointed out, the Irish had never been part of the Roman Empire, so he had no allegiance to Constantinople: ›For we, as I have said before, are bound to St Peter's chair; for though Rome be great and famous, among us it is only on that chair that her greatness and her fame depend.‹[86] At times, Columbanus presents his Irishness in geographical terms, referring, for example, to Ireland's peripheral location at the ends of the earth.[87] Damian Bracken has argued that this conceptualization of Irishness seems to have been shaped by a complex contemporary debate concerning orthodoxy, which must be ›interpreted in the context of earlier literature that considers the significance of establishing Christianity in barbarian lands‹.[88] Those who opposed the line taken by Columbanus in relation to Easter described Ireland's location by using rhetoric that connected geographical isolation with doctrinal waywardness.[89] Columbanus' emphasis on Ireland's geographical distance from Rome was presented in the context of his assertions of orthodoxy as a counter to these claims.

Columbanus might have been all the more aware of his Irishness from having traveled so widely on the Continent and having encountered its cultural diversity. But his expressions of his Irish identity were part of broader theological and ecclesiastical debates. At times, during the contentious conflicts that ravaged the Church in Italy, it suited him to be an outsider. At other times, when asserting the orthodoxy and catholicity of adherents to the controversial ›Celtic‹ Easter, it suited him to flatter the papacy by reminding the pope of his predecessor's achievement in establishing the faith in Ireland, which had remained beyond the reach even of the empire, and which had continued, since its foundation, to be orthodox and catholic. And sometimes it suited him to defend the method of dating Easter he and his compatriots used by asserting that the Irish Church, like those established among other *gentes*, ought to have its own national character, a view shared by Gregory the Great and others.

While Columbanus cited the canon from the Council of Constantinople that Churches established among the *gentes* should follow their own laws ›as instructed by their fathers‹, and possibly alluded to Palladius' mission to Ireland, he did not go so far as to identify Palladius, or anybody else, as the ›father‹ of the Irish Church. Within a generation of Columbanus' death, however, such a figure was beginning to emerge. Cummian, in his letter concerning

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84 For what follows, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 372-375.

85 Columbanus, *Epistula* V.14 ed. Walker, 52-53: *peregrinum … Scotum hebetem.*

86 Columbanus, *Epistula* V.11, ed. Walker, 48-49: *Nos enim, ut ante dixi, devincti sumus cathedrae sancti Petri; licet enim Roma magna est et vulgata, per istam cathedram tantum apud nos est magna et clara.*

87 Columbanus, *Epistula* V.3, V.11 ed. Walker, 38-39, 48-49.

88 Bracken, Rome and the Isles, 78.

89 Bracken, Rome and the Isles, 90. See, for example, Bishop Wilfrid's speech at Whitby, as reported by Bede (*HEGA,* III.25, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 300-301), where he refers to those who adhered to what he considered the heresy of the ›Celtic‹ Easter, including the Irish, British and Picts, as inhabitants of »two remotest islands of the Ocean«, *duabus ultimis Oceani insulis.*

the Easter controversy written in 632-633, referred to St Patrick as *papa noster*.[90] Cummian himself was associated with the churches of southern Ireland, possibly Clonfert, and one of the recipients of his letter, Ségéne, was the abbot of Iona, the island monastery off the coast of what is now Scotland. That he could use this honorific title, without further explanation, suggests that Patrick was held in high regard over a broad territory already at that date.[91]

Grander, and more detailed claims regarding Patrick's status were made in the Hiberno-Latin, abecedarian poem *Audite omnes amantes.*[92] *Audite omnes,* which survives in the Antiphonary of Bangor, was written at the end of the seventh century, and while the exact date of composition is debated, most would see it as a product of the early to mid-seventh century.[93] As Andrew Orchard has shown, its author demonstrates great skill in his use of biblical and other sources in his presentation of Patrick.[94] Here St. Patrick, in whose honour the hymn was composed is ›equal to the apostles‹ (line 4) and will ›reign with the apostles over Israel‹ (92); reflecting a theme of Patrick's own writing, the poem claims that he received his apostolate directly from God (11, 13); he is compared with St Peter, upon whom the Church is built (10); and with St Paul, like whom he was sent by God as an apostle to *gentes* (27). Crucially, there is no room here for other missionaries – Ireland was converted by Patrick and Patrick alone. Jean-Michel Picard has recently discussed the significance of the development of the image of Patrick's apostolicity in relation to a belief current in late Antiquity and the early medieval period that ›[t]he only churches who could claim to be orthodox were those who could prove a regular succession of bishops beginning with a disciple of the apostles or »apostolic men«, that is men who were companions of the apostles‹.[95] By identifying Patrick as the apostle of the Irish, the poem is, like Columbanus, arguing for the orthodoxy of the Irish Church in the midst of the Easter controversy.

Patrick never claimed to have converted all the people of Ireland, as reported by *Audite omnes,* but in other ways the poem does reflect some of its subject's own words as preserved in his *Confessio* and *Epistola ad milites Corotici*.[96] Charles-Edwards has recently argued that Patrick used the term *gentes* to refer to pagans, either as individuals or collectives.[97] So, while the crew of the ship on which Patrick returned to Britain after his enslavement in Ireland were *gentes*, the pagan Irish among whom he worked were collectively a *gens*, a term he also used with reference to the Franks.[98] Similar language is used in *Audite omnes* – Patrick was the rock upon which the Irish Church was built because he had been appointed

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90 Cummian, *De Controversi Paschali*, ll 208-209, ed. and trans. Walsh and Ó Cróinín, 84-85.

91 For the early development of Patrick's cult, see Sharpe, St. Patrick and the See of Armagh; Doherty, Cult of St. Patrick.

92 *Audite omnes amantes,* ed. and trans. Orchard, 166-173

93 Orchard, *Audite omnes*, 162-163; O'Loughlin, *Discovering Saint Patrick*, 103-4; Doherty, Cult of St Patrick, 88-92.

94 Orchard, *Audite omnes*, 53-65.

95 Picard, *Vir apostolicus*, quoted at 428.

96 Both are edited and translated in Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum*. For Patrick's concept of his own mission, see O'Loughlin, *Discovering Saint Patrick,* 58-59, 63-95; *idem,* Patrick on the Margins, 52-58; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 214-216. The literature on Patrick is far too abundant to be listed here, but for a recent, relatively brief, overview of his mission, see Etchingham, Conversion in Ireland, 187-196.

97 Charles-Edwards, Perceptions of Pagan and Christian, 263-265.

98 Patrick, *Confessio*, 18, ed. and trans. Bieler, 67-68; Patrick, *Epistola,* 10, 14, ed. and trans. Bieler, 96-97, 98-99.

by God apostle of the pagan Irish, *Hibernas gentes*.[99] *Audite omnes* was a source utilized by other Patrician hagiographers later in the seventh century. It represents the first stage in the development of the cult of Patrick that transformed him from the zealous yet occasionally human and vulnerable bishop of the fifth century into the miracle-working, vanquisher of druids he would soon become.

The next stage in Patrick's transformation occurred as part of a concerted campaign to elevate Armagh to primatial status within the Irish Church toward the end of the seventh century. Perhaps inspired by the establishment of Canterbury as the head of the Church in Britain, and the use of the archiepiscopal title by its metropolitan, the seventh century witnessed competition between rival foundations in Ireland for similar recognition.[100] The surviving records of this debate can be read in hagiographical texts from the period. For example, the earliest candidate for primacy within Ireland was Kildare, the church of St Brigit. Kildare's ambitions were asserted by Cogitosus, in whose Life of the founding saint he claimed for Kildare the status of ›head of almost all the Irish churches with supremacy over all the monasteries of the Irish, and its *parochia* extends over the whole land of Ireland, from sea to sea‹, and asserted that it was home to ›the archbishop of the bishops of the men of Ireland‹.[101] The term *parochia* (otherwise *paruchia*), referred to the territorial extent of episcopal authority.[102] Kildare's claim, therefore, was to archiepiscopal authority over the entire island.

Kildare's claims were ultimately unsuccessful, as Armagh eclipsed all its rivals in the race for primatial status. This was achieved in part through an astute political alliance with the most powerful dynasties in Ireland, the Uí Néill, but also through the assiduous promotion of the cult of St Patrick in a dossier of seventh-century hagiographical texts.[103] This dossier comprised the *Liber Angeli,* Muirchú's *Vita Sancti Patricii Confesoris*, and Tírechán's *Collectanea*, complex, multi-valent texts that tell us a lot about Armagh's politics, about theology and scholarship, and about a host of other things, and which should not be reduced to any single interpretation.[104]

Armagh's claims rested squarely on its association with Patrick, whose cult therefore needed careful cultivation. Its case is laid out relatively clearly in the *Liber Angeli,* probably the earliest of the three texts. Here it is implied that Patrick was responsible for the conversion of the Irish *(conuersionem Hibernensium)*, and would therefore judge all the Irish *(omnes Hibernenses)* at the final Judgment; that he loved Armagh, his primary foundation, more than any of the other lands or churches of Ireland; and that, therefore, God had given all the peoples of the Irish *(uniuersas Scotorum gentes)* as a *paruchia* to Patrick and Armagh, so that Armagh was »the see of the archbishop of the Irish, that is, (the see) of Patrick«*(cathedram*

99 *Audite omnes amantes*, l. 18, ed. and trans. Orchard, 168-169.

100 Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 416-440; De Paor, Aggrandisement of Armagh, 100–110.

101 Cogitosus, *Vita S. Brigidae, AAAS* Feb. 1, §2, col. 135B: *caput pene omnium Hibernensium ecclesiarum et culmen praecellens omnia monasteria Scottorum cuius parochia, per totam Hibernensem terra diffusa, a mare usque ad mare extensa est … archiepiscopus Hibernensium episcoporum*; translation adapted from Connolly and Picard, Cogitosus's *Life of St Brigit*, §§4, 6 (11-12).

102 Etchingham, Implications of *paruchia; idem, Church Organisation,* 105-125.

103 De Paor, Aggrandisement of Armagh; Binchy, Patrick and his Biographers.

104 O'Loughlin, Muirchú's Theology, 124-125, makes this point well.

*archiepiscopi Hibernensium, id est Patricii)*.[105] In other words, what is being claimed here is that the archbishop of Armagh, as the successor of St Patrick, also had a right to ecclesiastical authority over the entire island of Ireland and all of its inhabitants. The synonymous use of *Scot(t)i* and *Hibernenses* is common to the three documents that make up the Armagh dossier, and is reflective of Patrick's own vocabulary. For Patrick, the Irish were *Scotti* or *Hiberionaci.*[106] It was only natural that authors writing about the foundation of the Irish Church should draw on the language used by those involved in that process, as Bede had done.

These ideas were reasserted by Muirchú and Tírechán, who constructed Patrick's career around them and the evidence of Patrick's own writings. They each fleshed out the story of Patrick's missionary career in different, though equally unhistorical ways. Tírechán's concerns were often political, and his record of Patrick's travels around Ireland can be read as a commentary on the political alliances of Armagh in the late seventh century.[107] In relation to Armagh's status, he followed the path signposted by the *Liber Angeli*. God gave the whole island and its inhabitants to Patrick, who single-handedly converted them through preaching and baptism, as a result of which Patrick's heirs in Armagh were entitled to authority over ›almost the whole island‹.[108] Tírechán's record of the petitions granted to Patrick by an angel, referred to at the start of this article, outlined to Irishmen of Tírechán's own day and future generations what the benefits of this arrangement were for them. Patrick requested that any Irishman who did penance, even on his last day, would be accepted into heaven, and that the Irish would not be ruled over by *barbarae gentes*.[109] In other words, Patrick would protect the Irish nation in this life and the next.

Muirchú added further important elements to this theory. Again, as was to become standard, he depicted Patrick as having converted Ireland single-handedly. Muirchú's theology of conversion is detailed and subtle, however, as discussed by Thomas O'Loughlin, and is at the heart of his thinking about the identity of the Irish nation.[110] He associated conversion closely with both baptism and Easter, and, at the first Easter to be celebrated in Ireland, it was the Irish nation as a whole that was baptized and converted – having been prepared for the coming of Patrick as the Hebrews had been prepared for the coming of Christ.[111] Muirchú completes his overhaul of Patrick's story and the elevation of his cult – and with it the status of Armagh – by borrowing and developing the idea of Patrick's apostolicity from *Audite omnes*. Like Tírechán, Muirchú includes the story of Patrick being granted petitions by an angel shortly before his death, though in his telling the petitions are a little different. The first, that Patrick's ›preeminence shall be in Armagh‹, was concerned to ensure Armagh's status as Pat-

105 *Liber Angeli*, 4, 7, 8, 23, 28, ed. and trans. Bieler, 184-185, 188-189.

106 Patrick, *Confessio,* §§23, 41, 42, ed. Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum*, I:71, 81; Patrick *Epistola ad Milites Corotici*, §§2, 12, 16, ed. Bieler, *Libri Epistolarum*, I:2, 12, 16.

107 Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 8-67; Swift, Tírechán's Motives.

108 Tírechán, *Collectanea,* ed. and trans. Bieler, 138-139.

109 See footnote 1, above. Tírechán's reference to the *barbarae gentes* was probably related to the Northumbrian attack on Brega in 684. Though the episode was not characteristic of Anglo-Irish relations during the seventh century, it gained a certain notoriety in Ireland. References to the threat posed by English invaders appear in a host of late seventh- and early eighth-century texts, some of which seem to have been intended to bolster the unity of the men of Ireland. For discussion, see Wadden, First English invasion.

110 O'Loughlin, Muirchú's theology of conversion, 127-133; *idem, Discovering Saint Patrick*, 112-130. See also, Flanagan, Strategies of Distinction, 107.

111 O'Loughlin, Muirchú's Theology of Conversion, 131-133.

rick's primary foundation in the absence of his bodily relics.[112] The fourth petition granted to Patrick, as reported by Muirchú, is of greater interest to the current debate In this account, the angel says to Patrick ›that all the Irish on the day of judgment shall be judged by you (as is said to the apostles: »And you shall sit and judge the twelve tribes of Israel«), so that you may judge those whose apostle you have been‹.[113] Here we see a striking parallel with the claim in the Whitby *Life of Gregory,* written perhaps a generation later, regarding the relationship between apostles and *gentes* and founded on the author's reading of Matthew 19:28.

The author of the *Liber Amgeli,* Tírechán and Muirchú all take it for granted that an Irish nation existed. In this they were influenced by their reading of Scripture, but also of Prosper of Aquitaine, Patrick and doubtless other sources. In terms of what it meant to them that the Irish were a single *gens*, it is noteworthy that all three referred in their texts to the Irish language, and Tírechán and Muirchú describe the Ireland of Patrick's time as politically united under Armagh's allies, the Uí Néill rulers of Tara.[114] But what mattered most for them was that the Irish were Patrick's people. He had converted them, he had established their Church, and he awaited them at the final Judgment. They were also to be united under the authority of his church at Armagh, just as the English were to be united under the church established by Gregory's authority at Canterbury. The unity of Patrick's people and Patrick's Church was conceivable in the late seventh century in the way it hadn't been for two generations. References in these Patrician texts to Armagh's possession of Roman relics, including relics of SS Peter, Paul, Lawrence and Stephen, and the assertion that legal cases that could not be settled in Armagh should be sent for adjudication to Rome suggest that Armagh had converted to the ›Roman‹ Easter (shortly) before these texts were written.[115] The way was now open for the (re-)unification of the Irish Church, and Armagh was attentive to the possibilities this presented.

The rapid spread of Patrick's cult, propelled by Armagh, promoted also the concept of Irish national identity. Recent research has also suggested that Armagh and its allies might have had a hand in providing the Irish with the trappings of national identity, a process which would have underscored its argument regarding Irish ecclesiastical unity. For example, Liam Breatnach has recently argued that the *Senchas Már* was the product of Armagh.[116] For nearly a century, the prevailing opinion regarding the origins of the *Senchas Már* was that it had been compiled in the eighth century, perhaps in response to the compilation of *Collectio canonum Hibernenses*, from individual tracts composed over several previous

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112 Muirchú, *Vita Sancti Patricii Confessoris* II.6.1 ed. Bieler, 116-117: *in Ardd Machæ fiat ordination.* On Patrick's burial and the location of his bodily relics, see Muirchú, *Vita Sancti Patricii Confessoris* II.9-14 ed. Bieler, 118-123.

113 Muirchú, *Vita Sancti Patricii Confessoris* II.6.3, ed. Bieler, 116-117: *ut Hibernenses omnes in die iudicii a te iudicentur (sicut dicitur ad apostolos ›Et uos sedentes iudicabitis duodecim tribu[bu]s Israel'), ut eos quibus apostolus fuisti iudices.* Muirchú had earlier (I.28, ed. and trans. Bieler, 100-101) referred to Patrick as an ›apostolic man‹.

114 For references to the Irish language, see *Liber Angeli,* 8, ed. and trans. Bieler, 184-185; Tírechán, *Collectanea* 4, 13, ed. and trans. Bieler, 126-127, 134-135; Muirchú, *Vita Sancti Patricii Confessoris* I.10 ed. and trans. Bieler, 76-77.

115 *Liber Angeli,* 19, 28-29, ed and trans. Bieler, 167-167, 188-191; Tírechán, *Collecanea*, II.3.5 and 48.3, ed. and trans. Bieler, 122-123, 160-161; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 438-440.

116 Breatnach, *Early Irish Law Text.*

decades at a number of different centres.[117] Breatnach's alternative view sees the *Senchas Már* as a unitary whole, ›an integrated coherent text, rather than a loose assemblage of individual tracts or groups of tracts‹, written in its entirety, between 660 and 680 at Armagh.[118] Breatnach's argument is based on what he has identified as a parallel focus on the unity and integrity of the island of Ireland in both the Latin hagiographical products of the Armagh scriptorium and the Old Irish text of the *Senchas Már.* Specifically, he cites the importance of Patrick's role in the story concerning the origin of written law in Ireland that is contained within the law tracts themselves, and the repetition of the phrases ›the island of Ireland‹ and ›this island‹, phrases not commonly found in other early Irish sources, in either Latin or vernacular texts.[119] The case can not be closed on the *Senchas Már*, however; as noted above, Patrick's special status was recognised in texts not associated with Armagh, including Cummian's Paschal letter and *Audite omnes amantes.* Nonetheless, Ireland's oldest and most important law book, in which the legal unity and homogeneity of the men of Ireland was proclaimed, certainly shared some concerns with Patrician hagiography, and was perhaps part of Armagh's literary arsenal.

Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh has also suggested a possible link between the homogeneity of Old Irish and the influence of Armagh. Where others had suggested a link between the political dominance of the Uí Néill and the emergence of a single dialect as a standard language,[120] or suggested that the role of the native learned classes was of great significance in maintaining that standard because of their mobility,[121] Ó Muircheartaigh argued from a socio-linguistic perspective in favor of the creation and promotion of the standard language by a network of churches linked to Armagh.[122] Charles-Edwards had previously suggested that the origin legend of Old Irish – that it was created and taught to students in a school – might have been reflective of the reality of many scholars' interaction with the standard form of the language.[123] Perhaps the network of churches associated with Armagh provided the classrooms. Armagh, Ó Muircheartaigh suggests, was the ›regulator‹ of the standard, which was likely based on the dialect of Ireland's northeast, whence Armagh might have adopted it at the same time it adopted the cult of St Patrick from much the same region.[124] Ó Muircheartaigh's argument is based on certain key premises that would not go unchalleng-

117 Thurneysen, Aus dem irischen Recht IV, 186-187; Thurneysen, Celtic law, 56; Binchy, Linguistic and Legal Archaisms, 112-113; *idem*, Linguistic and Historical Value, 86; Ó Corráin *et al.,* Laws of the Irish, 385; Kelly, *Guide,* 245; Charles-Edwards, *Early Mediaeval Gaelic Lawyer,* 6; *idem*, Early Irish Law, 342-350; Stacey, *Dark Speech,* 178-182.

118 Breatnach, *Early Irish Law Text,* 19-42, quoted at 34. For the evolution of some of these ideas, see also Breatnach, *Companion,* 310-314; *idem*, King in the Old Irish Law Text, 125-127.

119 Breatnach, *Early Irish Law Text*, 37-40.

120 Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 583; *idem,* Nations and Kingdoms, 34; Johnston, *Literacy and Identity,* 22.

121 Thurneysen, *Grammar of Old Irish*, 12; Mac Cana, *Cult of the Sacred Centre*, 277-278; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 583; Breatnach, On Satire, 34. For a criticism of this argument, see Johnston, *Literacy and Identity,* 22-23, where it is pointed out that not all learned communities shared the same interests.

122 Ó Muircheartaigh, *Gaelic Dialects*, 146-198. On Armagh's significance as an early center of learning, see also Ó Néill, *Biblical Study,* 13-15.

123 Charles-Edwards, Making of nations, 32.

124 Ó Muircheartaigh, *Gaelic dialects,* 217-236. On the significance of the northeast in the development of the earliest examples of vernacular Irish literature, see Mac Cana, Mongán mac Fiachna, 102-112; Ní Dhonnchadha Beginnings of Irish vernacular, 547.

ed by certain historians. His assertion that the ›use of Old Irish as both a literary and legal medium is closely if not exclusively associated with an ecclesiastical context‹,[125] would not satisfy those who believe there was a degree of literacy among non-ecclesiastical learned classes, for example.[126] That position has lost favor in recent decades, however, and Ó Muircheartaigh's argument is not out of line with the more general trend toward recognizing the pervasive influence of Christian scholars in the composition of vernacular texts of all genres.[127]

Ó Muircheartaigh's argument regarding the origins of standard Old Irish highlights another significant aspect of Armagh's history: even in the seventh century, it stood at the head of a network of monastic houses that was spread across a great swathe of Ireland. Tírechán's *Collectanea* recounting of Patrick's travels around Ireland establishing churches also has the purpose of demonstrating to its readers which ones belonged to this network.[128] These included churches throughout the northern half of the country, not restricted by kingdom or province. That Armagh's reach extended even further is evident from the so-called ›testament of Áed of Sletty‹, according to which the church of Sletty in the province of Leinster in southeast Ireland formally recognized Armagh's authority shortly before 688.[129] In other words, Armagh's network extended over a vast territory, far more than was governed by any single king. Furthermore, Armagh's network consisted of centers of learning – or at least centers of literacy – through which the ideas espoused in the various texts linked with Armagh could have found a broad audience. Evidence of this can be found in the work of Tírechán, which, while it certainly endorses the Armagh agenda with regard to Patrick and primacy, was probably not written at Armagh but in another Patrician church in the midlands.[130] Additionally, the role ascribed to St Patrick in the *Senchas Már* as reviewer of written Irish law is acknowledged in *Cáin Fhuithirbe,* a legal text written in Munster, in the southwest, between 678 and 683.[131] This possibly represents acceptance at an early date of Armagh's agenda within an ecclesiastical setting in Munster. On the other hand, there were clearly limits to Armagh's influence. There is only a single, passing reference to Patrick in Adomnán's *Life of Columba* (*c.*697), and the fact that Bede, who received most of his information about Irish affairs from Columban circles, appears to have been entirely unaware of Patrick.[132]

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125 Ó Muircheartaigh, *Gaelic dialects,* 147.

126 Whether or not such non-ecclesiastic scholars existed has long been debated among Irish historians. For the most cogent argument in favour of their existence, see Charles-Edwards, Review article: the *Corpus Iuris Hibernici.*

127 See, for example, Ó Corráin *et al.*, Laws of the Irish; McCone, *Pagan Past and Christian Present,* 1-28.

128 Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 10-67 traces Patrick's travels, as described by Tírechán. Doherty, Cult of St Patrick, 56-66, 75-80, identifies several of the churches in question.

129 For the text, see *Additamenta,* ed. ad trans. Bieler, 178-9. For commentary, see Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland,* 261-262; Byrne, Note on Trim and Sletty; Doherty, Cult of St. Patrick, 75-78.

130 Swift, Tírechán's Motives.

131 Breatnach, Ecclesiastical element. Ó Muircheartaigh, *Gaelic dialects*, 223-230, identified the *Senchas Már* as an important vehicle for the spread and acceptance of standard Old Irish also.

132 Adomnán, *Vita Columbae*, Second Preface, ed. and trans. Anderson and Anderson, 4-5.

The concept of the Irish nation was not born in Armagh in a way comparable to how the *gens Anglorum* appears to have been born in Northumbria. Columbanus is the first known individual to self-identify as an Irishman. His concept of what this meant was shaped by his understanding of salvation history as foreshadowed by Scripture, and by contemporary concerns, specifically the orthodoxy of diversity of practice within the unity of the Church. This debate, in Columbanus' time, was shaped by a view, characteristic of the outlook of Gregory the Great, of the Christian Church as comprising numerous ›national‹ Churches corresponding to the *gentes* called to become the new Israel. It is difficult to know how much traction this idea had in Ireland during Columbanus' time and the following decades, but it appears likely that political and ecclesiastical/cultural divisions within Irish society might have mitigated against its rapid acceptance. The defining moment in the early history of the concept appears to have occurred after one of those divisions was healed, namely that over the dating of Easter. Informed by similar ideas to those found in the writings of Columbanus and Gregory, authors working at the behest of Armagh promoted the idea that the Irish nation was united in the past, present and future by its place in salvation history. Having been converted by their national apostle, and awaiting his future judgment, the people of Ireland were to be united on earth as a national Church under the authority of his successors at Armagh. Similar ideas underscored Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* written a generation later, and while no single Irish author had the same impact on the development of Irish identity as Bede had for that of the English, the dossier of Patrician texts produced at the end of the seventh century to support Armagh's claims to primacy might collectively had a similar influence.[133]

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133 See, additionally, O'Loughlin, *Discovering Saint Patrick,* 123.

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# Digitising Patterns of Power (DPP): Applying Digital Tools in the Analysis of Political and Social Transformations in the Historical Region of Macedonia, 12th-14th Centuries

Mihailo St. Popović* and Veronika Polloczek

The project »Digitising Patterns of Power«(hereafter DPP) is funded within the programme »Digital Humanities: Langzeitprojekte zum kulturellen Erbe«of the Austrian Academy of Sciences for a period of four years (2015-2018). It is hosted at the Institute for Medieval Research (IMAFO) of the same Academy and unites as a cluster project various experts from the fields of medieval history, Byzantine studies, historical geography, archaeology, geography, cartography, geographical information science (GISc) and software engineering. The present article elaborates on the authors' case study, »The Historical Region of Macedonia (12th-14th centuries): The Transformation of a Medieval Landscape«within DPP. It focuses, on the one hand, on the macro-level of political concepts in the Southern Balkan Peninsula from the 12th to the 14th centuries (especially from the expansion of the Serbian medieval kingdom to the South under King Stefan Uroš II Milutin until the death of Tsar Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, i.e. from 1282 until 1355), and, on the other hand, on the micro-level on the border zones and cross-border societies between the medieval Serbian kingdom and the Byzantine Empire in Byzantine Macedonia in the same period. The initial point of research is formed by the medieval written sources, i.e. Serbian and Byzantine charters as the main corpus, as well as other selected written sources from the medieval Serbian kingdom. The sources are analysed from the viewpoint of the aforesaid research questions and strongly based on methods derived from Historical Geography (especially on those of the long-term project *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (TIB) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences). Special attention is given to the analysis of formulations with regard to the Serbian expansion within the area of research; the acquisition of new territories and their administrative incorporation on the macro-level; and to the localisation of conquered settlements with related settlement typologies, as well as to the change of local elites (prosopography) and their interaction with local nomads (i.e. Vlachs) on a micro-level. Finally, digital tools for storing data, mapping and visualisation, which have been developed by DPP, are presented.

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* **Correspondence details:** Doz. Mag. Dr. Mihailo Popović (Principal Investigator of DPP), Institute for Medieval Research, Department of Byzantine Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Hollandstraße 11-13, 1020 Vienna, Austria. Email: Mihailo.Popovic@oeaw.ac.at.

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## *Introduction*

The project »Digitising Patterns of Power (DPP): Peripherical Mountains in the Medieval World«(hereafter, DPP) is a digital cluster project of the Institute for Medieval Research (IMAFO; director: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Walter Pohl) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and is funded within the programme »Digital Humanities: Langzeitprojekte zum kulturellen Erbe«of the same Academy for the duration of four years (January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2018).[1] DPP unites various experts from the fields of Medieval History, Byzantine Studies, Historical Geography, Archaeology, Geography, Cartography, Geographical Information Science (GISc) and Software Engineering. In order to achieve the aims of the project the »Team Institute for Medieval Research«(Austrian Academy of Sciences) is cooperating with an external project partner, namely the »Team Department of Geography and Regional Research«(University of Vienna).[2]

DPP focuses on the depiction and analysis of space and place in medieval written sources, the interaction between built and natural environments, the appropriation of space and the emergence of new political, religious and economic structures of power. Moreover, DPP is a cutting-edge project within Digital Humanities and uses as well as develops digital tools for data-acquisition, data-management, processing and analysis, visualisation, communication and publication. By following such an approach, it envisages gaining new insights and innovative research results which could not otherwise be achieved solely by traditional methods. DPP compares five regions of the medieval world (cf. *Fig. 1*): the Carolingian Eastern Alps (8th-9th centuries), the March/Morava-Thaya/Dyje border region (7th-11th centuries), the Herzheimer Family Chronicle (613-1506), the historical region of Macedonia (12th-14th centuries), and historical Southern Armenia (5th-11th centuries).

## *The case studies*

Five case studies of the European as well as Asian Middle Ages furnish insights into the development and sustainment of power in a spatial context. A focus is put on mountainous areas and the interaction between the development of power and the natural environment. These case studies share a common basis in mountainous ecologies, in their position on the peripheries of imperial spheres (Frankish Realm, Byzantine Empire, Arab Caliphate), and the specific framework provided by these conditions for the emergence and dynamics of political and socio-economic structures.

1 This article derives from scholarly results achieved in the project »Digitising Patterns of Power (DPP): Peripherical Mountains in the Medieval World«within the programme »Digital Humanities: Langzeitprojekte zum kulturellen Erbe«(DH 2014/10) at the Institute for Medieval Research (IMAFO) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

2 Cf. on both teams of the project: dpp.oeaw.ac.at/index.php?seite=Team (retrieved 25 January 2017).

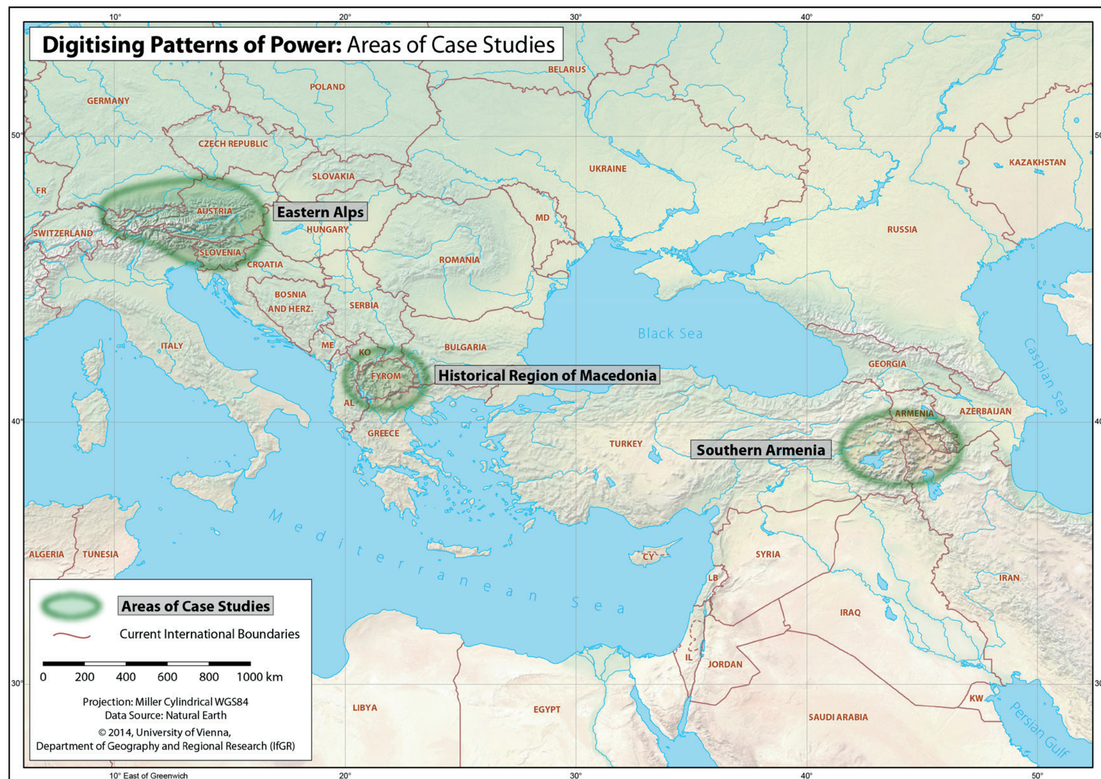


*Fig. 1: The Five Case Studies within DPP*

***Case study: »The Historical Region of Macedonia (12th-14th centuries): The Transformation of a Medieval Landscape«***

The present article focuses on the authors' case study within DPP, namely »The Historical Region of Macedonia (12th-14th Centuries): The Transformation of a Medieval Landscape«, and elaborates on several of the aforesaid aspects. This case study builds upon the manifold data provided by the volume *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (TIB) 16 entitled »Macedonia, Northern Part«by the same authors and focuses on the territory of present-day Macedonia (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).[3]

The historical region of Macedonia, being at the crossroads of Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Islam in the heart of the Balkan peninsula, is described in a large variety of written sources of the past and is distinguished by a remarkable richness of monuments (cultural heritage), especially for the period from the 12th to the 14th centuries. This case study focuses on the transformation of the historical region of Macedonia from a Byzantine province into an area of military expansion and political acquisition by the Serbian medieval kingdom/empire. This process had a direct impact on settlement patterns in the region, the redistribution of landed property, the monastic communities, the interplay between the resident population and nomads (especially the Vlachs) and the building of new infrastructure (monuments).

3 Cf. volume *TIB* 16: Popović, Mapping Byzantium.

Of special interest are the administrative centres and the venues of medieval state councils (as in-between category of temporary and durable places of settlement) of the Serbian rulers from the 12th to the 14th centuries. Research is conducted on four target areas, namely: the city of Skopje and its environs, the monastery of Lesnovo and its landed property, the city of Prilep and its surroundings, and on the valley of the river Strumica (cf. *Fig. 2*).

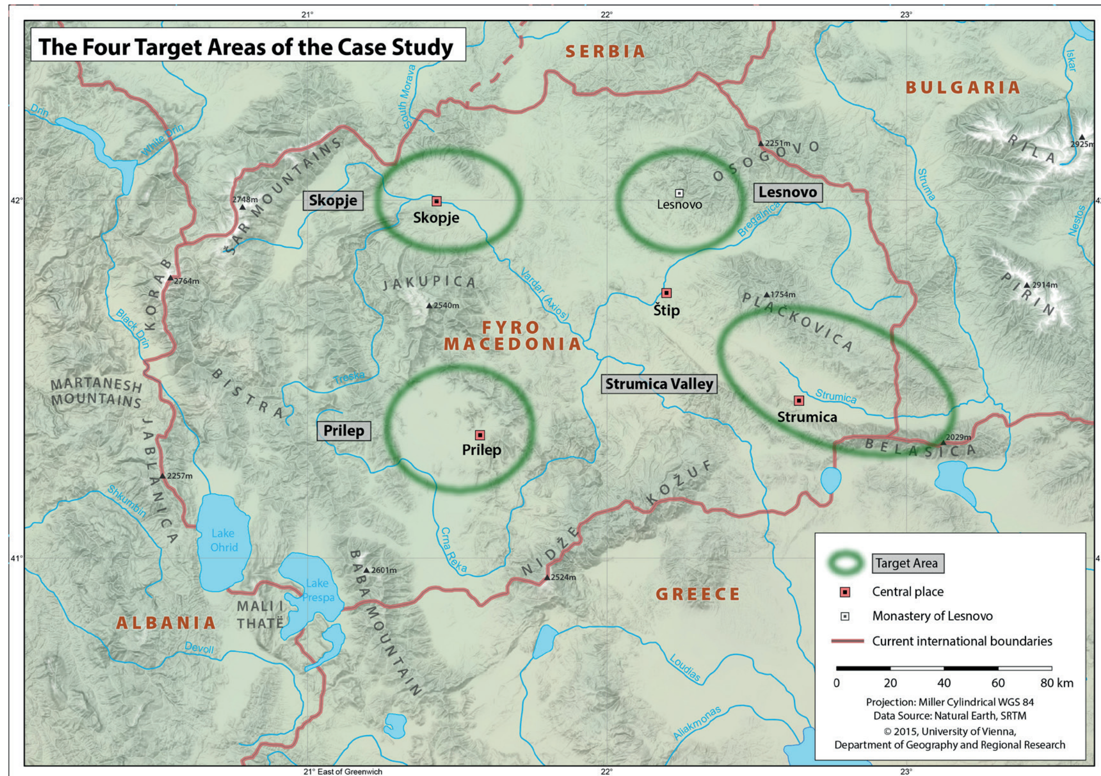


*Fig. 2: The Four Target Areas in the Historical Region of Macedonia*

*The sources*

As the main textual corpus for the analysis of this process, the case study draws primarily upon published Serbian and Byzantine charters, which have the capacity to shed new light on several aspects of settlement patterns, borders and migration in Byzantine Macedonia. Byzantine charters are taken into account selectively (i.e. from case to case): if they prove to be relevant for the same border zones as the Serbian ones, this enables a direct comparison of specific terms for the designation of settlements from a linguistic point of view, and us to illustrate a cultural transfer in the border zones between the two rival domains. Although these sources have been published with remarkable endeavour in the past 150 years, they have only been evaluated to a certain extent so far as regards the research topic being elaborated here. Since the case study is focusing on pre-Ottoman Macedonia, Ottoman charters and tax registers (*defter*) will not be taken into account in the envisaged research.

*Research questions*

The European continent as a whole and the European Union in particular are facing an increasingly dynamic period of internal as well as external immigration. News agencies frequently report on the latter by monitoring the current two main routes of immigration to the European Union, namely, via Southern Italy by sea and via the border between Greece and Turkey by land and by sea.

In medieval societies the question of migration is closely connected with the definition as well as the representation of borders. Maps in historical atlases are designed to provide clear-cut lines of political formations and empires[4]; but these do not reflect the reality of civilizations neither in Antiquity, nor in the Middle Ages and in Early Modern Times.[5] Of course, these atlases have the explicit aim of giving an overview to the general reader. Still, their representations are not helpful with respect to the question of interactions between different societies on a macro-level as well as on a micro-level. The dynamics of borders simultaneously shapes the dynamics of settlement patterns as well as of migration and of transportation networks. These factors in turn, lead directly to the notion of transterritorial history.

If we go into detail and focus on the borders of the Byzantine Empire, we immediately realize that relevant research is mostly focused on the macro-level be it in Byzantine Asia Minor[6] or in Byzantine Macedonia[7]. That is why the focus of this case study within DPP is put, on the one hand, on the macro-level of political concepts in the Southern Balkan Peninsula from the end of the 13th until the middle of the 14th century, and, on the other hand, on the micro-level, on the border zones and cross-border societies between the medieval Serbian kingdom and the Byzantine Empire in Byzantine Macedonia[8] in the same period. Although substantial publications exist on the population of as well as on migration in Byzantine Macedonia[9], there is still an urgent need for thorough research on the dynamics of cross-border societies based on written sources and toponyms.

The case study aims at explaining in a holistic approach (1) the confrontation of political concepts and actors in Byzantine Macedonia, and (2) the change of power starting from the expansion of the Serbian medieval kingdom to the South under King Stefan Uroš II Milutin until the death of Tsar Stefan Uroš IV Dušan (i.e. from 1282 until 1355), by addressing two interrelated research questions.

By combining the dynamics of borders and cross-border societies, we possess the means to reconstruct the medieval landscape of Byzantine Macedonia from the 12th to the 14th centuries.[10] Thus, it will be necessary and fruitful to expand the samples presented here (see below) with the aim of obtaining an overall picture of the entire area. Of vital importance is the analysis of additional border zones between the Serbian medieval kingdom and the Byzantine Empire – the target areas of the Strumica Valley, Lesnovo, Skopje and Prilep and their respective surroundings (cf. *Fig. 2*) – on the basis of the aforesaid written sources,

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4 Cf. for example: Blagojević *et al.*, *Istorijski atlas*; Putzger, *Historischer Weltatlas*.

5 See on this issue for example: Abulafia and Berend, *Medieval Frontiers*; Baramova *et al.*, *Bordering Early Modern Europe*; Jaspert, Grenzen und Grenzräume im Mittelalter; Schwara, Rediscovering the Levant; Smith, Networks; Smith, *Territories, Corridors, and Networks*.

6 Cf. for example: Haldon and Kennedy, Arab-Byzantine Frontier; Eger, *Islamic-Byzantine Frontier*; Kaegi, Frontier.

7 Bakalopulos, Limites de l'empire byzantin; Naumov, Istorii serbo-vizantijskoj granicy; Petrovski, Prilog; Popović, *Forteresses*; Škrivanić, Južnim i jugoistočnim granicama; Stephenson, *Byzantine Frontier in Macedonia*; Stephenson, Byzantium's Balkan Frontier; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*; Tomoski, Ispravki i dopolnenija; Živojinović, Frontière serbobyzantine.

8 Cf. on the definition of Byzantine Macedonia: Koder, Macedonians and Macedonia.

9 For example: Djoković, Stanovništvo istočne Makedonije; Kalić, Les migrations serbes dans les Balkans; Lefort, Population et peuplement; Moustakas, Demographic Crisis.

10 Cf. in detail: Popović, Siedlungsstrukturen im Wandel; Popović, Networks of Border Zones; Popović, Espace impérial.

a reconstruction of their settlement patterns and the visualisation of the development as well as of the degradation of the settlements themselves. A further field of research, which is closely connected to the shifting borders and is also addressed in the case study, is the change of ruling elites in these border zones. We will witness a flight of Byzantine noblemen and landowners from their landed properties in the wake of the expansion of the Serbian medieval kingdom and a redistribution of abandoned land and of privileges to Serbian noblemen by the Serbian rulers.

Moreover, the acquired data of the case study is embedded into the already existing DPP OpenAtlas Database (see below), which will enable a synoptic analysis and visualisation of the data with the means of modern GIS-based cartography for the interested public via a web-portal.

The two main research questions are outlined as follows:

*Rivalling political concepts: Byzantium and the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«*

In the year 1969 the geographer Francis W. Carter published a scholarly article based on graph theoretical methods entitled »An Analysis of the Medieval Serbian Oecumene: A Theoretical Approach.«[11] The first research question of the case study does not envisage a discourse on the potential usefulness of graph theoretical methods in the historical geography of Byzantium, but will focus on the very terminology of the title of Carter's article. An investigation of the usage of the expression »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«based on internet search engines reveals that Carter's application of this term in his article occurred then for the first and the last time. Thus, it has never since been taken into account by any other scholar for any further interpretation within the field of Byzantine and Serbian Studies.

The term »Oecumene«(»οἰκουμένη«) derives from the Greek word »οἶκος«for »house«and has a fundamental meaning for the study of settlements, of settlement patterns and finally for the historical geography of Byzantium. Johannes Koder has interpreted the »οἰκουμένη«as »den von Menschen besiedelten Raum«and »die von Menschen bewohnte Landschaft«in his many publications on this topic.[12] At this point it should be stressed that the term »Byzantine Oecumene«has not been universally accepted within the field of Byzantine Studies, but that it has been, for example, reshaped by Dimitri Obolensky into »Byzantine Commonwealth«.[13] Obolensky extracted several elements, which according to him were adopted by the ruling and educated classes of the East European peoples and which led to a common cultural tradition.[14] In his most recent monograph entitled »The Byzantine Republic. People and Power in New Rome«[15], Anthony Kaldellis criticizes the term »Byzantine Commonwealth«and argues that Byzantium must be understood as a republic in the Roman tradition and that the Byzantine *politeia* was the continuation of the ancient *res publica*.[16]

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11 Carter, Analysis of the Medieval Serbian Oecumene.

12 Koder, Räumliche Vorstellungen, here 16; cf. also: Koder, Zu den Folgen der Gründung; cf. also Schmalzbauer, Überlegungen zur Idee der Oikumene; Chrysos, *Βυζάντιο ως Οικουμένη*.

13 Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*. Cf. also: Rapp, Chronology, Crossroads, and Commonwealths.

14 Obolensky, *Byzantine Commonwealth*, 13-16.

15 Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*; cf. also: Haldon, Res publica Byzantina.

16 Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, IX.

So, while the discourse on the political, diplomatic, economic, ecclesiastical, religious and cultural sphere of Byzantium is evolving anew, we would like to leave aside the terms »Byzantine Commonwealth«and *politeia* and focus on the »Byzantine Oecumene«. The crucial question from the viewpoint of the aforesaid case study within DPP, and, specifically, on the macro-level of historical geography is, whether the existence of the »Byzantine Oecumene«would exclude the existence of any other »Oecumene«in Byzantium's (former) sphere of influence? Would Byzantium's universality render a »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«impossible from the start?

Firstly, this question shall be approached from a geographical point of view. Carter states on this issue: »In terms of the medieval period, with which we are primarily concerned in this article, this [scilicet »oecumene«] means a fertile soil, well cultivated within the limits of contemporary technology, a population dense enough to derive maximum advantage from local resources and generally a long distance commerce to enable it to obtain materials not locally available. [...] such an area must have considerable advantages in order to permit it to perform within itself against encroachment and conquest from neighbouring areas and it must have been capable at an early date of generating a surplus income above the subsistence level, necessary to equip armies and to play the role in contemporary power politics that territorial expansion necessarily predicates.«[17]

In accordance with this definition of an »oecumene«we shall question whether the medieval Serbian kingdom fulfilled the criteria elaborated by Carter. An assessment of this question is envisaged on the basis of, for the time being, selected medieval written sources and the related historic framework. A useful starting point for this line of thought is the Serbian conquest of Byzantine Macedonia, which according to Ljubomir Maksimović, was accomplished in four systematic phases in the period lasting from the early 13th century until the middle of the 14th century (i.e., *a.* the beginning of the 13th century; *b.* the middle of the 13th century; *c.* during the reign of king Stefan Uroš II Milutin 1282-1321; *d.* after the year 1332 under king Stefan Uroš IV Dušan).[18]

In one of our recent articles[19] we have argued that the third and fourth phases of the Serbian conquest of Byzantine Macedonia were of integral importance for the shaping of the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«. We approached the research question from the textual evidence and from expressions as well as concepts in selected Serbian medieval sources, and not from the viewpoint of political and military history nor from the exact dating of events within the framework of Byzantino-Serbian relations. If we turn, for the time being, to the Serbian medieval source of »The Lives of the Serbian Kings and Archbishops«written by archbishop Danilo II (ca. 1270-1337) and his disciples, we are able to trace the theoretical outline provided by Carter.

17 Carter, *Analysis of the Medieval Serbian Oecumene*, 40.

18 Maksimović, Makedonija; the same article was published in Modern Greek: Maksimović, *BYZANTINH MAKEΔONIA.* Also cf. Dinić, Hronologiju Dušanovih.

19 Popović, »The Medieval Serbian Oecumene«; the same article in Serbian: Popović, »Srednjovekovna srpska ekumena«.

In the *vita* of the Serbian king Stefan Uroš II Milutin Danilo II describes, how the Byzantine Empire posed a political and military threat to the Serbian kingdom and how king Milutin succeeded in spreading his sphere of control:

> »So, fürwahr, wollte der gütige Gott die Herrschaft über sein Vaterland ausbreiten, (wie es bis heute allen sichtbar ist). Es begab sich, daß sich in jenen Tagen das serbische Land in arger Bedrängnis (und Erniedrigung) befand. Denn der Machtbereich des griechischen Kaisertums reichte bis zum Ort Lipljan, und die Gewalttätigkeiten dieses Reiches mehrten sich, als wollte es die Herrschaft über das ganze Land dieses Christusliebenden ausdehnen und sogar ihn selbst [scilicet Stefan Uroš II Milutin] in die Rolle eines gehorsamen Knechtes zwingen.«[20]

What we find in this quotation is an obvious hint at a clear delimitation between the Byzantine Empire and the Serbian kingdom, between the »sphere of rule of the Greek Empire«*(drĭžava bo carĭstva grĭčĭskaago)* stretching to the place of Lipljan *(do města glagoljemaago Lipljana)* and the »fatherland«*(otĭčĭstvija jego)* of the Serbian king. This »fatherland«has to be understood as the »core area«defined by Carter and which is an area in which a state originates (see above). This notion becomes evident by the introductory remark of Danilo II that »God wanted to spread the rule of his [scilicet Milutin's] fatherland«to new territories.[21] The »core area«of the Serbian king, which is at the same time the »fatherland«, constitutes the nucleus for the expansion of the Serbian kingdom at the expense of the »Byzantine Oecumene«in Byzantine Macedonia.

Is the »Byzantine Oecumene«perceived as »Oecumene«at all by Danilo II? The answer to this question lies – in our opinion – in the title of the Byzantine emperor as reflected in the »The Lives of the Serbian Kings and Archbishops«. Danilo II uses several times the expression »Weltenkaiser«(*svetomu i vĭseljenĭskomu caru kirĭ Anĭdroniku*)[22] for the Byzantine emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1328), whose title bears witness to the fact that the Serbian side was well aware of the position of the emperor in Constantinople within the original »Byzantine Oecumene«. Furthermore, he is addressed as »Weltenkaiser des Neuen Rom, Konstantinopels, Kir Andronikos«(*vĭseljenĭskyimĭ caremĭ novago Rima Konĭstanĭtinopolja kirĭ Anĭdronikomĭ*)[23], and »Weltenkaiser der Griechen, Kir Andronikos«(*vĭseljenĭskyi carĭ grĭkomĭ kirĭ Anĭdronikĭ*)[24].

As stated above, the term »fatherland«designates the »core area«of the Serbian kingdom, which can regularly be found in the work of Danilo II and his disciples starting with the *vita* of the Serbian king Stefan Uroš I and leading up to that of Stefan Uroš IV Dušan.[25] Crucial for our research question is the moment when the »fatherland«of the Serbian kings in the sense of a »core area«was visibly transformed through territorial acquisition into the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«according to the term as defined by Carter. From our point of

20 German translation from: Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 150.

21 Cf. on the original quotations from the source: Danilo II, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*, ed. Daničić, 107.

22 Danilo II, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*, ed. Daničić, 126, also cf. 146, 164, 168; Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 169, also cf. 184, 189, 207, 211.

23 Danilo II, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*, ed. Daničić, 141; Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 184.

24 Danilo II, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*, ed. Daničić, 148; Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 191.

25 Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 54, 56-58, 62, 64, 71, 74, 84, 87, 94-96, 147f., 150f., 153, 155f., 160, 163-166, 171, 173f., 183, 187, 191f., 195f., 213, 215, 221-227, 229-235, 240-244, 251, 256f., 259-267, 269, 271, 273f.

view Danilo II describes this very process in the *vita* of King Milutin, when the Serbian ruler conquered the regions of Polog, Ovče Polje, Zletovo, Pijanec and the town of Skopje.[26] It is in the expressions »he added them [scilicet the newly conquered territories] to the domain of his fatherland«(*i priloži ihĭ kĭ drĭžavě otĭčĭstvija svojego*) and »after having pacified all places and bringing them to one single unity« (*umirivĭ že vĭsa města ta vĭ jedino sĭvĭkupljenije*) that the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«becomes manifest.[27] Indeed, king Milutin had started to expand into new territories that had the considerable advantages of being – in accord with Carter's definition – capable of performing against encroachment and conquest from neighbouring areas, generated a surplus income above the subsistence level[28] and had the potential to equip armies and to play a role in contemporary power politics that territorial expansion necessarily predicates – thus creating his very own »oecumene«.

After the conquest of this part of Byzantine Macedonia a significant change of local elites took place, which is attested by Danilo II in his work[29] and which forms at the same time the incentive for the second research question within the DPP case study.

Based on the quoted sources we would argue strongly, for the time being, that the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«had started to take shape during the rule of king Milutin; this will be further elaborated within the case study based on additional written sources. Milutin's policy was continued by his son and successor Stefan Uroš III Dečanski (1321-1331), who expanded his father's »oecumene«by winning over the Byzantine elite in Byzantine Macedonia or by empowering his noblemen, which is reported by »The Lives of the Serbian Kings and Archbishops«.[30]

Having in mind the reign of Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, both of his predecessors, Stefan Uroš II Milutin and Stefan Uroš III Dečanski, established their own »small Serbian Oecumene«besides the »huge Byzantine Oecumene«, in which we discern a parallel local concept and not an attempt to substitute the universal Byzantine concept. A new aspect of the Serbian approach was added by King Dušan; he used the then recently formed »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«in the power politics of his time with the clear aim of taking over the »Byzantine Oecumene«and replacing the emperor in Constantinople as the emperor of the Serbs and Greeks.[31] King Dušan reached out to the »Byzantine Oecumene«, but his attempt failed due to his unexpected death in 1355. What followed was not only a weakening of the dynamic of the Serbian expansion against the Byzantine Empire and a fragmentation of the Serbian Empire, but also a disintegration of the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«into confined local dominions. Neither were the local Serbian rulers and noblemen able to sustain the borders of Dušan's Empire, nor did they succeed in preserving the core of the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«.

Finally, we would like to shift our view from the macro-level of the definition of »oecumene«to the micro-level and the question of how we can determine the extent of the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«on the ground in Byzantine Macedonia; this is another core research question of this DPP case study. As the first possible parameter on the micro-level

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26 Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 152.

27 Danilo II, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*, ed. Daničić, 109.

28 Cf. on this issue: Koder, Macedonians and Macedonia, 23.

29 Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 152.

30 Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 243.

31 Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 266. Cf. on this issue: Pirivatrić, Ulazak Stefana Dušana.

we could resort to the venues of the Serbian state councils as markers of the extension of the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«. A succinct overview of this topic was given by Miloš Blagojević and Dejan Medaković.[32] They list the locations of state councils in the medieval Serbian kingdom/empire, which are shown on the map in *Fig. 3* (see below). [33]

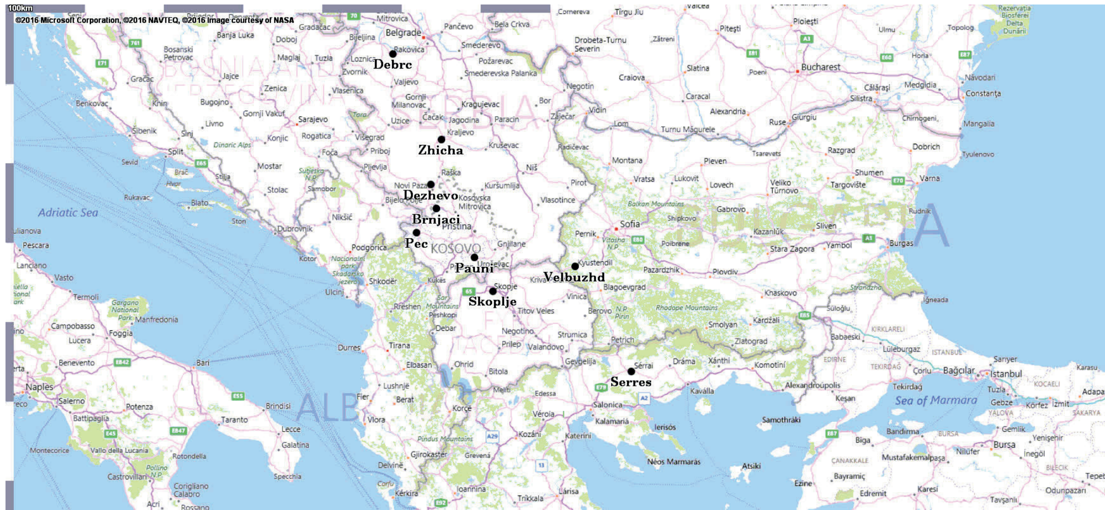


*Fig. 3: Venues of the Serbian State Councils as Markers of the Extension of the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«*

As for the second parameter, we could consider those locations from where the Serbian rulers issued their charters. In this respect a very vivid example is the reign of Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, during which sixteen different places are mentioned in the sources (see below, *Fig. 4).*[34] In both cases the data provided helps us to shape our picture of the extent of the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«by introducing these places as »Signs of Power«to the DPP OpenAtlas Database, on which we will elaborate below.

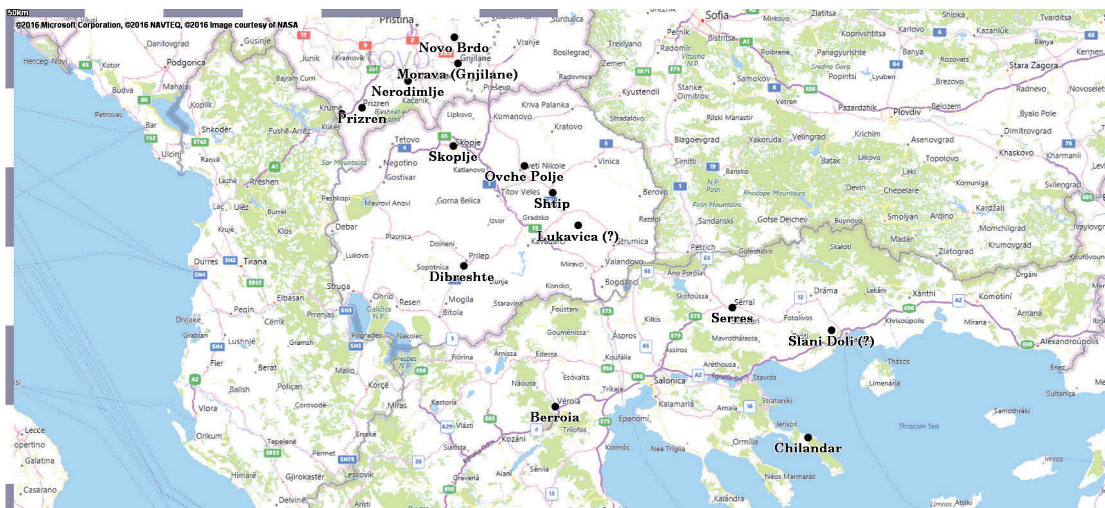


*Fig. 4: Places, where Stefan Uroš IV Dušan issued his Charters*

32 Blagojević and Medaković, *Istorija srpske državnosti*, 177-185.

33 Radojčić, *Srpski državni sabori*, 83-157; Ćirković and Blagojević, Zbor.

34 Based on: Slaveva and Mošin, *Srpski gramoti*.

*Cross-border societies and elite change in Byzantine Macedonia*
The area of this research topic comprises in principle the whole territory of (the former Yugoslav Republic of) Macedonia as well as the south-western part of Bulgaria, and in detail those four target areas (see above, *Fig. 2)* mentioned above. The correlation of the dynamics of settlement patterns and of changing borders is evident. Several scholars have tried to reconstruct on a macro-level in Byzantine Macedonia[35] the course of the border between the Serbian medieval kingdom and the Byzantine Empire. However, these approaches have so far neglected to use data on the development – that is, from hamlet to village – or on the degradation – from village to deserted village – of settlements deriving from medieval Serbian and Byzantine charters (see above) in order to comprehend the dynamics of the respective borders on a micro-level.

A vivid case study within this framework is, for example, the deployment of the border between Serbs and Byzantines in the upper valley of the river Strumica in the first half of the 14th century. Whereas the older bibliography focused exclusively on the dating of the Serbian conquest of the towns of Štip and of Strumica, we have looked for evidence to trace the border, that is the zones of influence and their contours, between both realms and the moment of its movement into one or the other direction according to alternating military successes and changing settlement patterns.[36]

The dynamics of borders simultaneously shapes the dynamics of settlement patterns as well as of migration and of transportation networks. The critique of the simplicity of the static image given by printed atlases (as above) requires the introduction of suitable alternatives from the field of Digital Humanities[37], which are offered by the digital tools developed by DPP (see below).

Rade Mihaljčić has highlighted the most important reasons for migration in the Serbian medieval kingdom, which hold true too for the Byzantine Empire, at least to a certain extent.[38] In order to profit from tax advantages, inhabitants of villages often fled to other feudal lords, to the towns or to foreign territories. They were also captured by various feudal lords and resettled or displaced by wars. In particular, the border zones between medieval realms in South-East Europe – that is the Byzantine Empire, Serbia and Bulgaria – witnessed a fluctuation in their populations. Further factors of migration were the clearing as well as the colonisation of new territories.

Basing himself on a Slavonic charter of the Serbian king Stefan Uroš IV Dušan from 1336, the renowned Byzantinist George Ostrogorski had already noted in 1951 that Byzantine noblemen living in the surrounding area of Štip, were deprived of their landed property and replaced by Serbian noblemen, who had arrived in the area in the wake of the Serbian expansion into Byzantine Macedonia. Moreover, Ostrogorski came to the conclusion that this

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35 Cf. for example: Bartusis, Settlement of Serbs; Bartusis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium*, 205; Ostrogorskij, Étienne Dušan.

36 Popović, Siedlungsstrukturen im Wandel; Popović, Altstraßenforschung; Popović, Flußtal.

37 Cf. on this topic for example: Popović, *Historische Geographie und Digital Humanities*, 66 f., 72.

38 Mihaljčić, Selišta.

was not an isolated case of redistribution of landed property, but part of a broader picture of rapid political and military change: »En d'autres termes, après l'occupation de la région de Štip, les biens des pronoïaires locaux furent retirés à leurs maîtres grecs et donnés à l'un des participants à la victorieuse offensive serbe. Il n'y a pas de doute qu'il ne s'agit pas ici d'un phénomène isolé. Le processus d'expropriation des feudataires byzantins au profit de la noblesse serbe, processus sur lequel ce document [scilicet the Serbian charter of 1336] nous conserve une donnée isolée, ne s'est pas limité à la région de Štip, mais accompagnait partout, inévitablement, le processus de la conquête des terres byzantines et fut certainement le but principal de cette conquête. [...]«[39] Still in 1998 Mark Bartusis underlined that: »As for the demographic changes brought about by Dušan's conquest of Byzantine Macedonia, the Byzantine sources say little, and the Serbian sources say even less.«[40]

For example, in 1300 the Serbian king Milutin issued a Slavonic charter for the Monastery of Saint George-Gorg in the vicinity of Skopje, which draws a vivid picture of a rapid change of elites as described by Ostrogorski, and of a redistribution of property in and around Skopje. A clear indicator in this context is the emergence of the specific term *exaleimma* (Greek »ἐξάλειμμα«; Slavonic »eksalimo«) in Milutin's charter. Mark Bartusis interprets *exaleimma* as »ruined properties«and states: »[...] an *exaleimma* was an escheated property, which reverted to the owner's lord (a private landlord or the state in its role as a landlord) as a result of the death or flight of its owner (usually a paroikos) without leaving a proper heir.«[41] Based on Milutin's charter we can localise *exaleimmata* in the village of Sulnje (today Gorno and Dolno Sonje). They are indicated as *exaleimmata* of Pasarel, Ilijas (Ἡλίας) and Ananze. In the vicinity of this village we find an *exaleimma* of the priest Kvočilo. Further *exaleimmata* are attested in the villages of (Markova) Sušica, Barovo, Gorno Sonje, Sopište, Krušopek and Preska. These passages from the respective medieval written source illustrate clearly that there was a process of devastation to the south and south-west of Skopje during the conflict between Byzantium and Serbia before the final Serbian conquest of the zone. Facing the Serbian expansion, the Byzantine proprietors fled the area, which is documented in the remarkable number of *exaleimmata*.[42]

In the town of Skopje itself we are also able to trace the change of elites. After the conquest of the town by King Milutin, a large number of ruined houses is mentioned in the 1300 charter, which is without doubt a consequence of the Byzantino-Serbian conflict. In a recent article we have undertaken an analysis of Skopje's urban structure in medieval times based on Milutin's charter.[43] In this context the Slavonic term »rĭpinije«requires our special attention: deriving from the Greek word »ἐρείπιον«, it is regularly used in the charter as a term for a ruin where the construction of a new building is possible. Basing ourselves again on Milutin's 1300 charter, we are able to discern that the Serbian king accomplished the change of elites in Skopje and its surroundings in three ways: firstly, by redistributing the *exaleimmata* of Byzantines, who had fled; secondly, by buying the property of Byzantines; and thirdly, there are hints in the charter that point to selected disappropriations.

39 Ostrogorskij, *Pour l'histoire de la féodalité byzantine*, 205.

40 Bartusis, Settlement of Serbs in Macedonia, 153.

41 Bartusis, Exaleimma, 766. Also cf. Bartusis, ’ΕΞΑΛΕΙΜΜΑ.

42 Popović, *Changement des élites*.

43 Popović, Topographie der mittelalterlichen Stadt Skopje.

***Innovative aspects, methods and workflow***

By combining medieval political concepts with the dynamics of borders and cross-border societies, addressed in the two research questions, we now possess the means to reconstruct the evolution of the respective Serbian political concepts and the related military expansion in the Southern Balkan Peninsula (namely in Byzantine Macedonia) from the 12th to the 14th centuries on the macro-level, and the related border zones and cross-border societies between the medieval Serbian kingdom and the Byzantine Empire on the micro-level. A thorough analysis of published medieval Serbian (and selected Byzantine) charters sheds new light on aspects of borders, migration and language. Although these sources were published a long time ago, they have until now only been evaluated to a certain extent in regards to this project's research topic. Thus, it is necessary and fruitful to expand the examples presented here with the aim of obtaining an overall picture of the entire medieval space. Of vital importance is the analysis of the indicated border zones, namely the Four Target Areas (cf. *Fig. 2*) between the Serbian medieval kingdom and the Byzantine Empire. A further field of research, which is closely connected to the shifting borders and which is also addressed in this case study, is the change of ruling elites in the border zones and their relation to local nomads (especially the Vlachs).

We witness, for example, a flight of Byzantine noblemen and landowners from their landed properties in the wake of the expansion of the Serbian medieval kingdom, and a redistribution of abandoned land and of privileges to Serbian noblemen by the Serbian rulers. The analysis of the written sources leads to a substantial enrichment of the prosopographic data provided by the »Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit (PLP)«[44], especially with regard to the still missing Slavonic personalities and, thus, form the starting point for a corpus of these personalities.[45]

The initial point of the case study comes from the medieval written sources, namely Serbian and Byzantine charters as the main corpus, as well as other selected written sources from the medieval Serbian kingdom as outlined by Gerhard Podskalsky;[46] sources from this group will be used selectively, i.e. if they prove to be useful and applicable for the aforesaid research questions. The sources are analysed from the viewpoint of the research questions and are strongly based on methods derived from historical geography (i.e. »Grundlagenforschung«), especially on the scholarly approach of the project »Tabula Imperii Byzantini (TIB)«[47]. Special attention is given to the analysis of formulations with regard to Serbian expansion in the area of research, the acquisition of new territories and their administrative incorporation on the macro-level, and to the localisation of conquered settlements with related settlement typologies as well as to the change of local elites (prosopography) on a micro-level.[48]

The methodology and the current workflow in the case study evolved since the beginning of the project in January 2015 as follows:

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44 Trapp, *Prosopographisches Lexikon.*

45 First steps in this direction were undertaken by: Šuica, *Nemirno doba.*

46 Podskalsky, *Theologische Literatur des Mittelalters*; Podskalsky, Briefe in der mittelalterlichen Literatur.

47 Cf. on the method of the *TIB* for example: Koder, Perspektiven der Tabula Imperii Byzantinii.

a) Collection and reading of the respective Serbian and Byzantine charters in the area of research (namely on the Four Target Areas; cf. *Fig. 2*) by taking into consideration new editions and corrected dating.

b) Analysis of the respective charters regarding the research question as outlined in *Rivalling Political Concepts: Byzantium and the »Medieval Serbian Oecumene«*. Here, the Serbian and Byzantine terminology of administrative terms and units as well as territories in the area of research is extracted, i.e. state council: *sŭborŭ*; administrative units: *župa; oblast; hora, chōra; predeo; strana, perichōros, ta merē; thema*; border zone: *krajište*.[49]

c) Analysis of the respective charters regarding the research question as outlined in *Cross-Border Societies and Elite Change in Byzantine Macedonia*, namely on the location of Byzantine/Serbian landed property, the related settlement, agricultural and economic terminology, to wit: village, *selo, chorion*; hamlet, *zaselĭk, agridion*; deserted village or place for a new settlement/settlement site, *selište, agridion*; ruined properties, *eksalimo, exaleimma;* clearing, *trěbežь*; (upper) town, *gradŭ*; lower town, marketplace, *trŭgŭ*; fair, *panagjurŭ*; monastery, *manastyrĭ*; church, *crĭkva*; ruined church, *crŭkŭvište*; a small monastic establishment, which is subordinate to a larger independent monastery, *metohŭ;* summer pasture, *planina*; winter pasture, *zimovište*; meadow, *paša, pašište, zabělĭ*; a temporary settlement of Vlachs, *katunŭ*; vineyard, *vinogradŭ*; water mill, *voděnica*; mill, *mlinŭ*; hunting ground, *lovište*; fishing ground, *ribarije*; mining, *ruda*; and the respective individuals involved (Byzantine/Serbian rulers, noblemen and feudal lords, *vlastelĭ; Vlachŭ, Vlasi; katunarĭ, čelĭnikĭ*.)

d) Evaluation and inclusion of further sources if useful and applicable (for example chronicles and rulers' biographies, historiography, the Lives of Saints, travel literature, itineraries, inscriptions, seals and coins) in order to augment the acquired data.

e) Embedding of the respective data into the existing DPP OpenAtlas Database.

Data that is acquired in this workflow is on the one hand published in an analogue way through scholarly articles.[50] On the other hand, the respective data is embedded into the existing DPP OpenAtlas Database, which is based on the open-source Database System OpenAtlas (www.openatlas.eu; retrieved 9 January 2017), and which stores its information based on the CIDOC-CRM (www.cidoc-crm.org; retrieved 9 January 2017), and is therefore, from a conceptual point of view, highly compatible and sustainable on an international level. Thus, we are able to store data on settlements and changing settlement typologies, agricultural and economic sites, the respective Byzantine and Serbian noblemen, their landed property, its localisation as well as the evaluated written sources in general (cf. *Fig. 5, Fig. 6* and *Fig. 7*).

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48 Cf. for example: Levi, On Microhistory; Szijártó, *Arguments for Microhistory*; Magnússon and Szijártó, Four Arguments for *Microhistory.*

49 Cf. on this issue: Božanić, *Čuvanje prostora.*

50 Popović, Herrschaftsgebiet des Zaren Samuel; Popović, Das Kloster Hilandar und seine Weidewirtschaft.

DPP Digitising Patterns of Power

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Profile | Logout
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Overview Source Event Actor Place Reference Hierarchy User Log Content Settings FAQ

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Place

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1 - 10 (565) 10 skopje

| Name | Type | First | Last |
|---|---|---|---|
| Skopje | Permanent Settlement | 1258 | 1300 |
| Skopje, Imperial Road | Infrastructure | 1300 | 1300 |
| Skopje, Lower Town | Urban Settlement | 1300 | 1300 |
| Skopje, Lower Town, Church of Saint George with its Residence | Existing Church | 1300 | 1300 |
| Skopje, Lower Town, Church of St. Marina | Existing Church | 1300 | 1300 |
| Skopje, Lower Town, Church of St. Mina | Church | 1902 | 2016 |
| Skopje, Lower Town, Church of St. Nicholas | Existing Church | 1300 | 1300 |
| Skopje, Lower Town, Church of St. Nicholas, Garden | Agricultural Site | 1300 | 1300 |
| Skopje, Lower Town, Church of St. Petka | Existing Church | 1300 | 1300 |
| Skopje, Lower Town, Church of St. Prokopije | Existing Church | 1300 | 1300 |

100 m
500 ft
Leaflet | © Google Maps

*Fig. 5: Entries of Data concerning the Upper Town of Skopje (Entity Place)*

DPP Digitising Patterns of Power

Hello bkoschicek
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DE EN | Frontend

Overview Source Event Actor Place Reference Hierarchy User Log Content Settings FAQ

Search term Search

Actor > Dimitrije Misinopolit

Info | Events (1) | Relations (0) | Sources (2) | Member of (3) | References (1) | Places

Edit Delete Bookmark

**Dimitrije Misinopolit**

| | |
|---|---|
| Alias | Δημήτριος Μοσυνοπολίτης<br>Димитрије Мисинополит |
| Gender | Male |
| Residence | Prilep, Upper Town |
| Appears first | Prilep, Upper Town |
| Appears last | Prilep, Upper Town |
| First | Sep 1, 1334 |
| Last | Aug 31, 1335 |
| Class | Person |
| Created | Mar 17, 2016 dschmid |
| Modified | Jul 14, 2016 dschmid |

**Description**

First evidence in the source Treskavec 1. Dimitrije Misinopolit was most probably already dead, when King Stefan Dušan promulgated his first charter for the monastery of Treksavec (Metohь Svetii Dimitrïe u Prilěpě, što priložihu Misinopolitova dětьca…). Moreover, he is mentioned in the second charter by Stefan Dušan in the context of the fair of Prilep (Vь gradě motohь Svetyi Dimitrie Misinopolitivь panagirь za dušnica Misinopolitovihь dětei sь nivijemь, sь vinogrady, sь voděnicijemь, sь vsěmi pravinami). He was the donor of the Church Sveti Dimitrija in the east of the medieval lower town of Prilep (today Varoš).

*Fig. 6: Biographical Sketch of a Byzantine Nobleman called Dimitrije Misinopolit in the Target Area of Prilep (Entity Actor)*

*Fig. 7: Entry on the First Serbian Charter for the Monastery of Treskavec, 1334/35 (Entity Source)*

In the second year of the project DPP (2016) various new map features were implemented for the DPP OpenAtlas web interface. In written sources very often only vague information is given regarding the spatial position of the named entities. For example, a village, which is mentioned in a charter, might be identified either with a still existing village, the exact extent or shape of which we know; or it might be identified with an abandoned village, which can be attributed to a certain area, and in which it was originally located. In order to be able to deal with this fuzziness of spatial information, we have developed a framework based on Leaflet and PostGIS. This allows the user to draw polygons with the aim of marking the spatial extent of a historical entity or simply to create a centre point of its position (cf. *Fig. 8*). The respective feature is implemented in the map interface of the web application. Therefore, it is possible to record in our DPP OpenAtlas Database any type of precise or vague localisation without loss of information.

*Fig. 8: Fuzzy Localisation of a Meadow and a Mill in the Vicinity of the Settlement Site (selište) of Běla Vodica*

Regarding the authors' case study »The Historical Region of Macedonia (12th-14th Centuries) – The Transformation of a Medieval Landscape«within DPP, the input of researched and interpreted data has advanced very well. Out of Four Target Areas (cf. *Fig. 2*) the city of Prilep and its surroundings has been completely embedded into the DPP OpenAtlas Database. The input of data concerning the city of Skopje and its environs has been nearly accomplished, while the analysis and interpretation of sources on the monastery of Lesnovo and its landed property has begun. These tasks are implemented by the authors and their Junior Scientist David Schmid, BA. Based on the settlement theories of Walter Christaller[51] and on calculations of radii regarding the boundaries of villages in Byzantine Macedonia by Vassiliki Kravari[52], the territories of villages are outlined as polygons in hexagonal shape in this case study and consequently in the DPP OpenAtlas Database (cf. *Fig. 8*).

***Outlook for 2017***

The DPP members of the Department of Geography and Regional Research (University of Vienna, Group Leader: Prof. Dr. Karel Kriz) are currently working on the first prototype of the map-based online application, which will be the prominent front end of the DPP project. This application, which is a key aspect of the project, will serve two equally important functions. One will be to enable DPP scholars to view the spatial data and explore spatial relations between different database entities and thus gain insight into the medieval landscape. The second function of the application will be to present the DPP research and its results to an interested public audience. In the final application key DPP results will be communicated via »story maps«, predefined views of the data, which will be complemented with a detailed description of the topic shown and information about its significance for historiography. The first prototype offers basic functionality, queries as well as dot representations of the data. It is a testbed for various representations of uncertain geometries to determine which one is best suited for the final application. Step by step, more advanced functions and queries will be implemented and tested in the prototype during the year 2017.

*»Signs of Power«*

One of the most important aspects of the joint research work in 2016/17 are the so-called »Signs of Power«. These are intended to serve as a designation for special places, in which rulers, or persons empowered by them, exercised and/or represented symbolic, but also concrete power. Papers and discussions at the First International Workshop of DPP entitled »Digitising Patterns of Power (DPP): Theory and Practice in Historical Geography and Digital Humanities«, which took place in September 2016 at the Institute for Medieval Research (IMAFO) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna[53], helped to establish a theoretical basis for the common research question of DPP, namely the definition of »Signs of Power«for all case studies and their representation as »Dynamic Types«within the framework of the DPP OpenAtlas Database. Following the Workshop, members of the DPP project team, namely

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51 Christaller, *Die zentralen Orte in Süddeutschland*; Christaller, *Grundgerüst der räumlichen Ordnung in Europa*; Christaller, How I Discovered the Theory of Central Places. Also cf. Koder, Land Use and Settlement.

52 Kravari, Habitat rural.

53 Cf. dpp.oeaw.ac.at/workshop/index.php?site=programme (retrieved 25 January 2017).

Katharina Winckler, Veronika Polloczek, David Schmid, Bernhard Koschicek and Mihailo Popović, defined the respective term »Sign of Power«, which was given preference over the term »Symbol of Power«, since the English word »Symbol«was seen as a concept, which mainly encompasses intangibles, and, therefore, was deemed too narrow for addressing the analysis of the description of space in written sources, the interactions between natural and cultural space and the rise of new political, religious and economic structures of power.
A type tree for the »Sign of Power«was developed by these scholars at the end of 2016 and has already been implemented in the DPP OpenAtlas Database. The »Signs of Power«will only be tagged within the entity »Places«(cf. *Fig. 9*).

*Fig. 9: The Form for the Entity Place and the Category Sign of Power*

The »Sign of Power«itself is divided into four large groups, i.e. political, economic, cultic and military, which are again subdivided (cf. *Fig. 10*):

**Political**

- Infrastructure (Residence, Palace, »Pfalz«, etc.)
- Vertical Interaction (the relationship ruler/subordinate; e.g. the ruler X is issuing a charter in the place X for subordinate X, *or* subordinate X is addressing the ruler X in the place X in order to acquire privileges)
- Horizontal Interaction (peers meet in the place X, e.g. state councils, synods, councils)
- Item (archaeological finds which represent political power or a specific concentration of finds in place X)

**Economic**

- Infrastructure (bridges, streets, roads, tolls etc.)
- Production Site (mills, vineyards, meadows; includes agricultural as well manual places of production)
- Item (archaeological finds which illustrate the aforesaid aspects; e.g. remnants of roads, coins, etc.)

**Cult (Religious)**
- Infrastructure (buildings: churches, monasteries, metochia, chapels etc.)
- Ritual (dedication, *patrocinia*, cult of Saints, relics, processions)
- Item (archaeological finds; e.g. traces of churches, crosses, reliquaries, etc.)

**Military**
- Troops (individuals who are representing military authority and are garrisoned in a certain place X, e.g. the Byzantine *kastrophylax*; garrisons, armies in certain places)
- Infrastructure (buildings, castles, watchtowers)
- Item (archaeological finds; e.g. weapons such as swords, armour, smithies, battle fields, etc.)

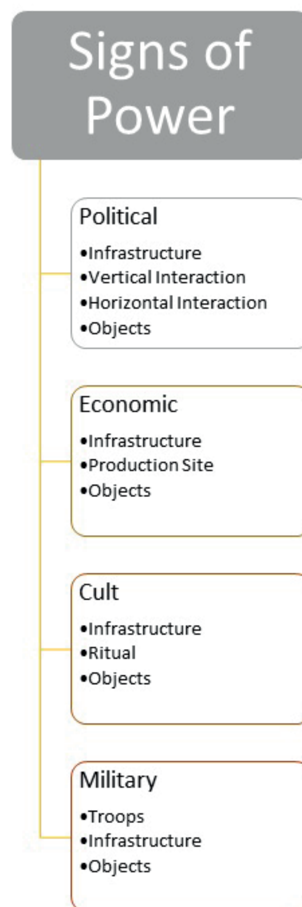


*Fig. 10: The Concept of »Signs of Power« and their Subdivision*

The DPP OpenAtlas Database allows the user to tag places with several »Signs of Power«in order to represent places of greater or lesser importance (cf. *Fig. 11*).

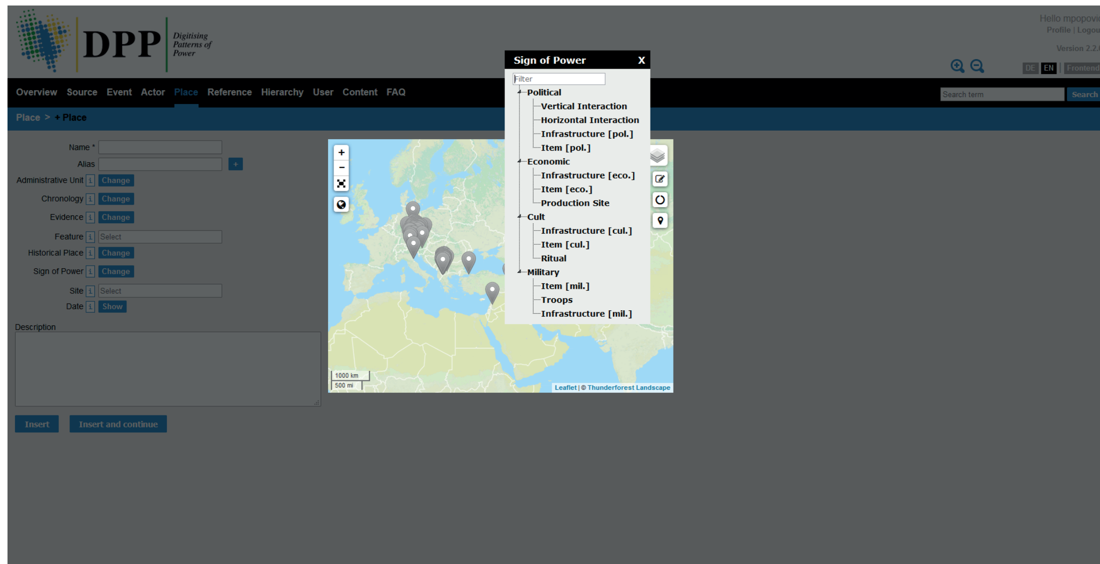


*Fig. 11: The Type Tree for the »Sign of Power«in the DPP OpenAtlas Database*

In 2017 the respective five case studies will achieve their foremost scholarly aim, which is to accomplish the thorough analysis and interpretation of their data as well as to embed it accurately into the DPP OpenAtlas Database. For the time being, they have to refrain from tagging places with »Signs of Power«. Only when a representative body of data in quantity as well as in quality from all five case studies has been stored, a joint, profound discussion within the entire DPP project team will follow, which will lead to a systematic comparison of all areas of research through time and space, the subsequent tagging of data and the visualisation of results – which is altogether the essence of the digital cluster project DPP.

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# The Bible in Historical Perception and Writing of the Transcultural Iberian Societies, Eighth to Twelfth Centuries

Matthias M. Tischler and Patrick Marschner*

In stark contrast to the Bible‘s paramount role of being the only book declared to have »World Heritage« status by the UNESCO, research on the »Book of Books« from a transcultural perspective is an almost neglected phenomenon: Neither the Bible's relationship to other »holy or sacred« scriptures as modes of religious and cultural perceptions and transformations of the Others' world, nor its decisive role as a »normative order« in the many modes of religious, social and cultural interaction in the Euro-mediterranean world have been comprehensively studied from a historical perspective. Because of their pretension of normativity, the religious laws of this world (Tanach, Talmud, Bible and Qur'ān) were competing against and confronting each other with alternative models of perceiving time, space and history. The diverse concepts of the three monotheisms had consequences for their common but nevertheless specific narratives, genres and books of exegetical, polemical and historiographical practice; yet, we do not have clear-cut ideas of the processes of possible entanglement between these modes of perceiving and transforming the Others' history; nor do we know their exact place and value in the systems of knowledge or their retroactive effects (on either side) on the interpretations of their own religious laws. Our project intends to give answers to these basic questions based on the evidence of the Christian biblical and historiographical legacy in the transcultural frontier societies of the medieval Iberian Peninsula. We thereby change the perspective on the biblical legacy of these societies: Bible manuscripts are no longer seen as testimonies of texts or text traditions alone, but as bearers of canons: theoretical and practical concepts of history and perceptions of religious alterities. We therefore re-contextualize these perceptions of »the Others' world« within, on the one hand, the larger context of the typological thinking of preserved biblical manuscripts, their materiality and mediality; and on the other hand, in their narrative framework of the related Iberian historiographical production.

*Keywords: Bible; historiography; canon; typology; identities; Iberian Peninsula; Christians, Jews and Muslims; transcultural studies*

* **Correspondence details:** Prof. Dr. Matthias M. Tischler, Institució Catalana de Recerca i Estudis Avançats/Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Edifici B, Campus de la UAB, E-08193 Bellaterra. Email: Matthias.Tischler@uab.cat. Patrick Marschner, M.A., Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Hollandstraße 11-13, A-1020 Wien. Email: Patrick.Marschner@oeaw.ac.at.

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### *1. Introduction: a changing perspective on Biblical studies in medieval history*

Traditional studies of the central role of the Bible in the Middle Ages were focused on exegesis, on biblical typology in historiography and biography, on the general role of the »Book of Books« as the central reference text of religious normativity in Jewish-Christian culture and on the relationship between the Bible and historical writing. We have learned through all this that ancient and medieval Christian historical and biographical writing could find its place only *after* the biblical revelation, being the recurring historical realization of its prophetic prefiguration. Yet, why did historiography always re-write this relationship between biblical prospect and historical retrospect? Our answer to this question is that Christian historiography, understood as a specific form of biblical exegesis, always tended to reformulate the written, canonized text following the norms, requirements and constraints of every new period of human history. The verification and affirmation of the world's order (*ordo*) always required an updated memory (*memoria*), all the more so when ground-breaking events and upheavals challenged the accustomed order.

Earlier research reflected this intrinsic relationship from an intracultural standpoint, but it did not qualify the role of the biblical legacy and the related historiography in frontier societies such as those of the Iberian Peninsula. One, if not *the* central ground-breaking event in early medieval world history was certainly Muḥammad's appearance and his religious movement called Islam. Yet, what were the consequences for the conception of Christian salvation history engendered by his very existence, and what did this mean for the veracity of the Jewish-Christian Bible tradition that had never announced the coming of a last Prophet after the Messiah or Jesus Christ? With regard to the Bible being the basis of Jewish-Christian identity, the emergence of this new religious tradition produced a mighty wave of polemics and apologetics from the very first moments of Muslim identity building that was centered on the question of the reliability or falsification of the central religious books of the Jews, Christians and Muslims. The new religious situation also forced Christians to rethink the relationship between polemics, apologetics, Bible exegesis *and* historical writing, for, as we know, historiography was a decisive means of memory and identity building as well. Finally, we should not forget the transcultural character of the Bible itself: the edition of the Christian Bible in its Greek, Latin, Arabic and vernacular forms was and is a permanent project of processes of transfer between languages, cultures and religions with the purpose of enculturation, mission and dialogue. This perspective on the Bible opens new horizons on the construction of cultural and religious memory, of which exegesis and historiography were and are an appropriate pair of modes. The working hypothesis of our research project on the Bible and historiography in the medieval transcultural Iberian Peninsula is that the specific societal conditions of this area engendered modes of transcultural historical perception in and through its proper Bible manuscripts.

### *2. The Bible as historiography: Bible manuscripts as modes of historical perception*

Let us first begin with some general statements on the Bible as a canonical text ensemble and a central reference text of religiously imbued cultures. Bible manuscripts were vivid and authentic examples of the »use of the Bible« in the Middle Ages, in which there was often demonstrated a tension between the theory and the practice of its canonicity, i.e. between a normative sequence of recommended texts and the reality of reading and copying activities. As a consequence, we have to scrutinize the sometimes erroneous understanding of the »sacral« or »holy« character of the Bible as God's revealed, inspired word and, as such, it being completely untouchable – a paradoxical conception in the »manuscript era« and its

inevitable implications on changing texts during copy activities. Neither the Latin text nor the order of the biblical books, nor the ever-changing framework of their para-texts (prologues, arguments or chapter lists) were ever actually untouchable. A biblical book could be an authority without fixed inner and outer form, simply through permanent lecture. The late antique ecumenical Church Councils made no official decisions on the biblical canon, but gave recommendations of reading, and we see a long process of authority-building among the biblical manuscripts up to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[1] We also have to rethink dogmatic characterizations such as »non-biblical« or even »apocryphal« texts within Bible manuscripts.[2] When we consider the Bible as the constitutive and normative framework of a religiously imbued society, it is quite normal to find traces of this constitutive and normative use for the specific Christian community's general orientation in its changing contexts.

Despite these insights into the character of editing the Bible since Late Antiquity, these activities were too much qualified from an often exclusively intracultural and theological standpoint,[3] neglecting the much more complex reality of the social, cultural and medial role of Bible editions in the vibrant era of cultural and religious transformations in the Euro-mediterranean world of the Early and High Middle Ages. Socially and religiously seen, editing the Bible was a permanent and total phenomenon, yet with discernible phases of intensified activities in periods of cultural and religious transformation and/or stabilization. Earlier research did not really reflect that Bible manuscripts – whether with the complete canon or only part of it – were at the end the best expression of Jewish-Christian world history.

A closer look at the medieval manuscript legacy uncovers many arguments for this chronological and even historical perception of Bible manuscripts in the Middle Ages. It is well known that the Visigothic bishop Theodulf of Orléans was, in his edition of the Bible, imitating the model of Isidore of Seville's Bible. These Bibles offer an annex of chronological and exegetical material, especially the *Minor Chronicle* drawn from the *Etymologiae* by Isidore (V 39).[4] Some later Iberian Bible codices, obviously descendants of a sixth-century Visigothic edition, provide the same Chronicle, but continue its horizon up to the time of the Visigothic king Receswinth (Spanish era 690, World era 5857, CE 652).[5]

Another, polymorphic phenomenon is that of »prolonged« Bible manuscripts that show global, regional and local perspectives on history. The Augustinian abbey of St. Victor in Paris preserved the first volume of a full Bible edition copied in Lower Lorraine during the eleventh century. This codex opens with the *Annales Leodienses* and the *Annales Fossenses* that offer global history from a regional standpoint.[6] We see further examples of this combination of globalizing Annals and full Bibles in the Premonstratensian context of the twelfth century: the two-volume Bible of Arnstein[7] offers the Arnstein Annals at its beginning, following the

1 Tischler, *Bibel in Saint-Victor.*

2 Research on the widely ignored phenomenon of »non-biblical« texts within Bible manuscripts will hopefully become one of the mighty paradigms of future Biblical Studies. We can present here only some first insights into the great potential of this perspective.

3 Fischer, Bibelausgaben.

4 Fischer, Bibelausgaben, 593 sq.

5 Ayuso Marazuela, Elementos extrabíblicos, 166-171. For other Iberian Bibles with various chronological text material see ibid., 171-175.

6 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. lat. 14239.

7 London, British Library, Harley 2798-2799.

model of the *Annales Floreffienses* at the beginning of the first volume of the Floreffe Bible,[8] while the now three-volume Parc Abbey Bible[9] presents the *Annales Parchenses* at the beginning of the second volume (opening with Kings). This historical perspective on the Bible is related to Peter Comestor's contemporaneous *Historia scholastica,* a rewritten biblical history that the finally Victorine canon enriched with exegesis and synchronized secular history, a synthesis of the Bible, exegesis and history that had already been prepared for in the new type of glossed Bible books since the late eleventh century in Laon, Paris and other places of early scholasticism.

The idea of editing Bible manuscripts with continuations of history is in fact much older: For instance, we have a Syrian Old Testament from the sixth century that complements the four books of Maccabees with the sixth book of Flavius Josephus' *Bellum Iudaicum* with the purpose of continuing the biblical history up to the year 70 CE *and* keeping it open for an ongoing exclusively Christian history.[10] And we find even other solutions: The famous Book of Armagh, an early ninth-century New Testament from Ireland, offers a continuation to the early history of the Irish and Gaulish Churches through biographical texts on St. Patrick and St. Martin of Tours.[11] In the twelfth century, the Augustinian abbey of St. Victor in Paris produced a whole collection of biblical and patristic manuscripts of comparable codicological size, and paleographical and artistic data.[12] Used in the refectory, this collection shows that biblical exegesis was the means to understanding the biblical canon in its internal and external history, and that unveiling the historical sense of the Bible and writing its history were two activities inextricably bound together.

All these phenomena make us aware that the Bible in its individual parts had always had the potential of continuing the Jewish-Christian history it so far represented up to the first century alone.

We can discover comparable intracultural, but also transcultural phenomena of integrating chronological and historical text material in the Iberian biblical legacy, as the following examples of local and regional settings of global Jewish-Christian history show. In the Visigothic Bible of Santa María y San Martín de Albares from 920,[13] the deacon John has copied between Job und Tobit a short *Vita S. Froilani* that depicts bishop Froilan († 905), the patron saint of the diocese of Léon, as a follower of the model of Job as God's perfect servant. The Visigothic Bible of San Miquel de Escalada, which was produced in San Pedro y San Tomás de Valeránica in the year 960,[14] shows texts on the archangel Michael, among them an early testimony of the famous apparition of the archangel on Monte Gargano copied at the end of the tenth century, on fol. 12v-13r and 11r. The already twelfth-century Carolingian Bible of Huesca Cathedral,[15] a Giant Bible, is virtually upgraded with biographical, historical and juri-

8 London, British Library, Add. 17737-17738.

9 London, British Library, Add. 14788-14790.

10 Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B. 21 inf.

11 Dublin, Trinity College, MS 52.

12 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. lat. 14395, Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, Ms. 47, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. lat. 14396, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. lat. 14245, II, etc.

13 León, Biblioteca de la Catedral, Ms. 6.

14 León, Biblioteca de la Real Colegiata de San Isidoro, Ms. II.

15 Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Ms. 1 (olim Ms. 485).

dical texts referring to the history of the diocese of Huesca. At the beginning are copied texts in memory of the venerated local Mozarabic bishop Vincent of Huesca. In addition to that, at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the manuscript are copies of six documents and texts, among them the famous *Divisio Wambae* and two papal charters. The Vallbona Heptateuch,[16] written in Catalan Gothic minuscule in the first half of the thirteen century was used for public lectures in the Cistercian female convent. Later on, a hand has added on the empty last pages of the final quire a copy of the *Life of Martha of Tarascon,* revealing the religious identity and spirituality of this important Catalan convent of noble Cistercian women.

These examples of »living with the Bible« prompt us to revisit older qualifications of non-biblical (non-canonical, apocryphal) texts in Bible manuscripts, because they are excellent indicators of local chronological and historical thinking, on the one hand, and on the other, of regional availabilities and interests of rare text material at the very moment of production. But there are even more complex concepts to discover. The Lleida Bible,[17] for instance, offers an interesting example of chronological orientation. Between the historical books and the Prophets and Maccabees, there is a double side with canon tables that synchronize the reigns of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah with the Empires of the Babylonians, Medes and Persians up to the Macedonians under Alexander the Great. Yet, we read here also the chronological order of the Prophets, so that these reorganized data build a bridge between the historical and prophetical books that gives chronological orientation and continues the story just up to the time this particular Bible was produced around the year 1165 *(Fig. 1)*.

Yet, this Bible also offers insight into the wider transcultural background of its time of production: at its very center, between David's Psalter and Salomon's books of Wisdom, it offers a combination of eschatological text material (an overview by St. Jerome on the 15 signs before the Last Judgement and a tract on the Antichrist) and the Tiburtine Sibyl *(Fig. 2)*. The latter text narrates world history, structured in nine ages *(generationes)*, and pays particular attention to the history of the Roman Empire and its last ruler, the »Last Emperor«, and to Christ's birth, life and death (in the middle of the text) respectively. Being available in Spain since the middle of the eleventh century,[18] this text is also transmitted in other Northern Spanish Bibles: originally in Calahorra in 1183, where the part concerned here is today fragmented,[19] in San Millán de la Cogolla at the end of the twelfth/beginning thirteenth century,[20] and in Vic in 1273.[21] In addition to this panorama of transmission, the same text was also used for the illustrations of the final eschatological parts of two famous picture Bibles from late twelfth-century Pamplona.[22] Taking into account that St. Augustine

16 Vallbona de les Monges, Arxiu del Monestir, Ms. 11.

17 Lleida, Arxiu Capitular, LC.0061 (olim s. n.).

18 The oldest copy of the text, written in Visigothic minuscule, is El Escorial, Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo, Ms. &. I. 3., with a thirteenth-century medieval provenance Toledo, but already dated in the year 1047: Holdenried, *Sibyl and Her Scribes*, 182. For further copies up to the 1120s, i. a. from Spain: ibid., Appendix B, 203-206 and Conspectus of Extant Manuscripts, ibid., 177-202.

19 Calahorra, Archivo Capitular de la Catedral, Ms. 2.

20 Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la Historia, Ms. 2 and Ms. 3.

21 London, British Library, Add. 50003. Holdenried, *Sibyl and Her Scribes*, 184, knows only this Bible, which is the youngest one of all mentioned Bibles.

22 Amiens, Bibliothèque municipale, Ms. 108 and Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Oettingen-Wallerstein, I. 2. 40 15.

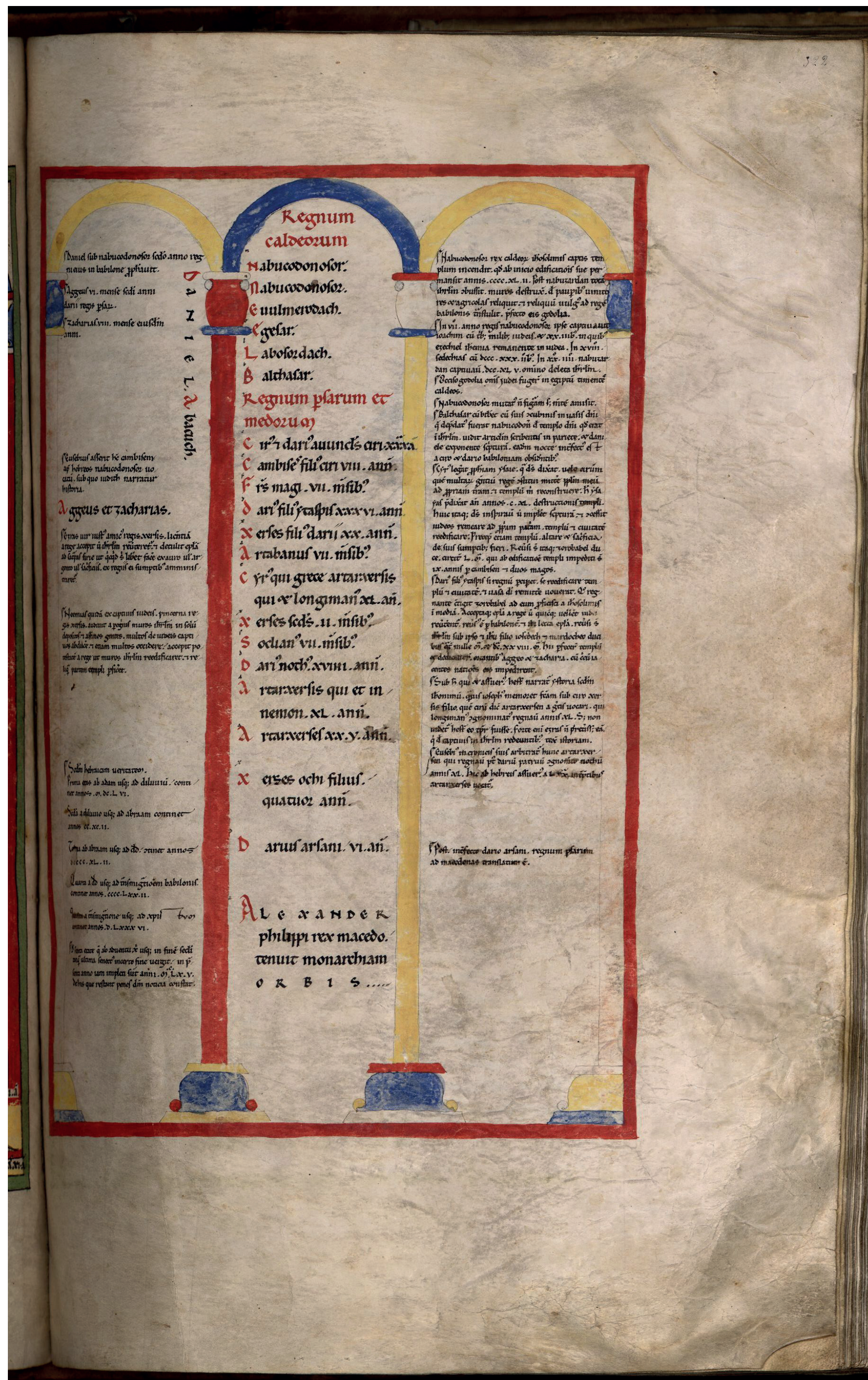

*Fig. 1: Lleida, Arxiu Capitular, LC.0061 (olim s. n.), fol. 322r*

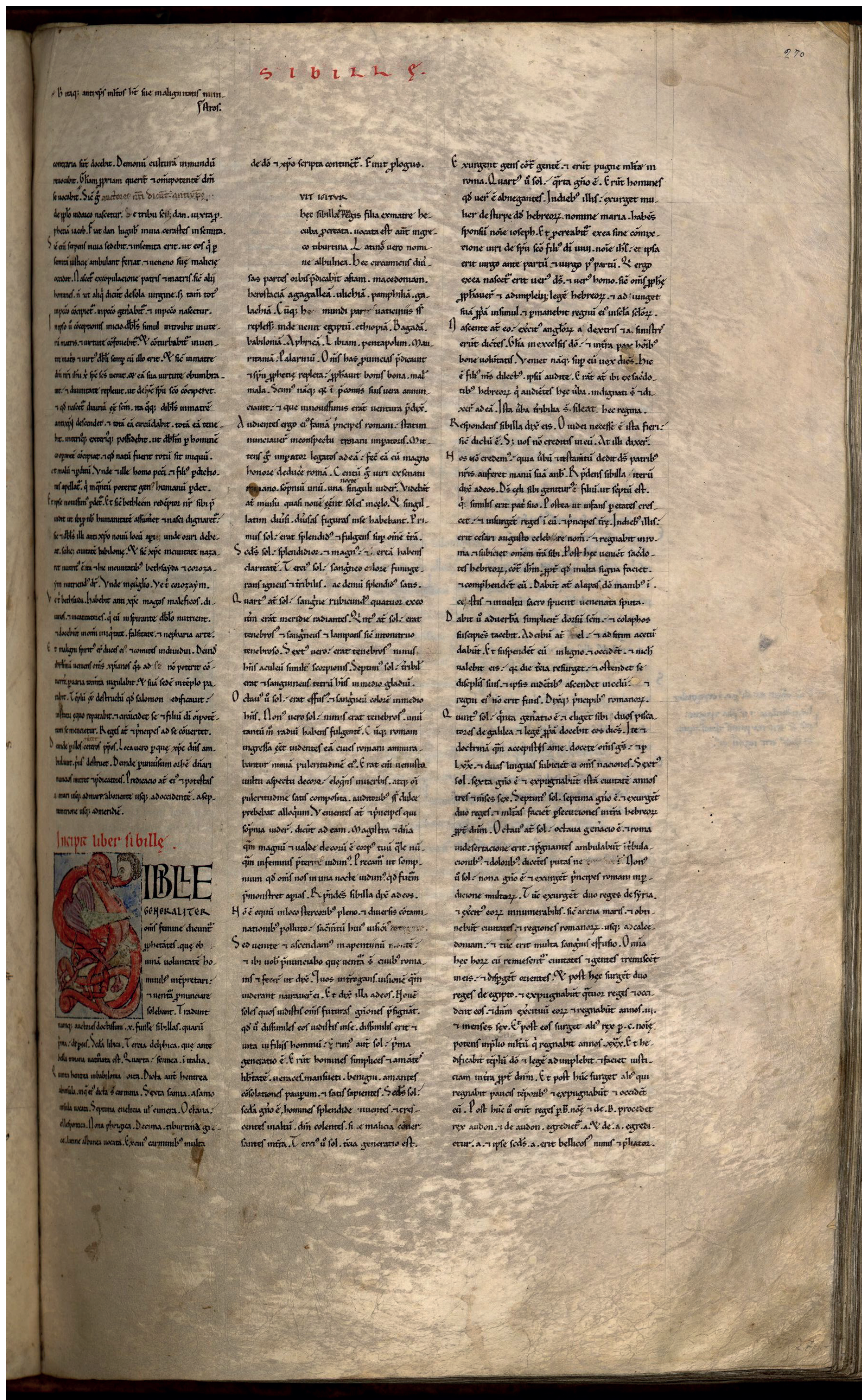

*Fig.2: Lleida, Arxiu Capitular, LC.0061 (olim s. n.), fol. 270r*

understood antique prophecies outside of the Biblical canon as testimonies of the Christian faith, and thus promoted their reception in the Middle Ages, we can suggest that we are dealing here *not* with a political prophecy concerning the Roman and medieval Empire, *but* with a Christological text transported into the specific context of some religious hotspots of the transcultural Iberian frontier societies. It was the deliberate decision of these Christian communities to perceive their current societal and religious situations from the perspective of the Tiburtine Sibyl as a prophecy of Jesus Christ's Second Coming.

*Pandects and multi-volume editions*

Even without these specific texts set within biblical contexts, we should not forget that re-editing the Christian Bible in the transcultural Iberian world meant establishing anew the best possible reference system of normative orders. Yet, earlier research had not actually realized that the world of the Iberian Bible was a fragmented one in a double sense. The transmission of old Bibles from late antique and Visigothic times, and the production of new Bibles from the later eighth century onwards were situated in a scattered, if not fragmented Christian society within an Islamic context; moreover, many of these earlier and new Bibles, especially those from medieval Catalonia, have survived only in a fragmentary state.[23] At any rate, this specific situation prevented more intensive research and thus fascinating new insights into a complex network of text transmission and identity building in the various regions of the transcultural Iberian world. Current fieldwork in the Iberian and non-Iberian archives and libraries nevertheless shows ways of how, through typological and medial observations on manuscript production, we can identify in a fairly secure manner many missing pieces and integrate these forgotten or neglected puzzle-pieces into the master narrative of a still very »Northern Spanish« story of the Iberian Bible tradition, one that has been too much focused on the production of Visigothic and Romanesque Bible pandects from Asturias, León and Old-Castile between the eighth and twelfth centuries. The paradoxical consequence of this basic work on manuscripts is that the rich fragmentary transmission is exactly what enables us to deconstruct a petrified narrative that was mainly built on well-preserved and thus selected material evidence alone. In order to break up this narrative, some further central Iberian phenomena from medieval Catalonia have to be implemented into our new narrative: we need to rethink the strong role that the Carolingian text and manuscript tradition of the Bible played in this middle ground between Italy, France and other regions of the Iberian Peninsula. We see its importance for instance in the still under-studied Urgell Bible (*Fig. 3*), but also in many other barely known manuscripts from this region, where Urgell, Girona, Ripoll and Vic were the most productive centers active from the ninth and tenth centuries onwards. What is not yet clear is the exact role that the Church of Narbonne played in the transmission of the biblical text in Catalonia. Moreover, we would not be surprised if more detailed research on the Vulgate text versions would show that their channels of transmission

23 Puig i Tàrrech, Bíblia llatina; Alturo i Perucho, Corpus biblicum medii aevi Cataloniae.

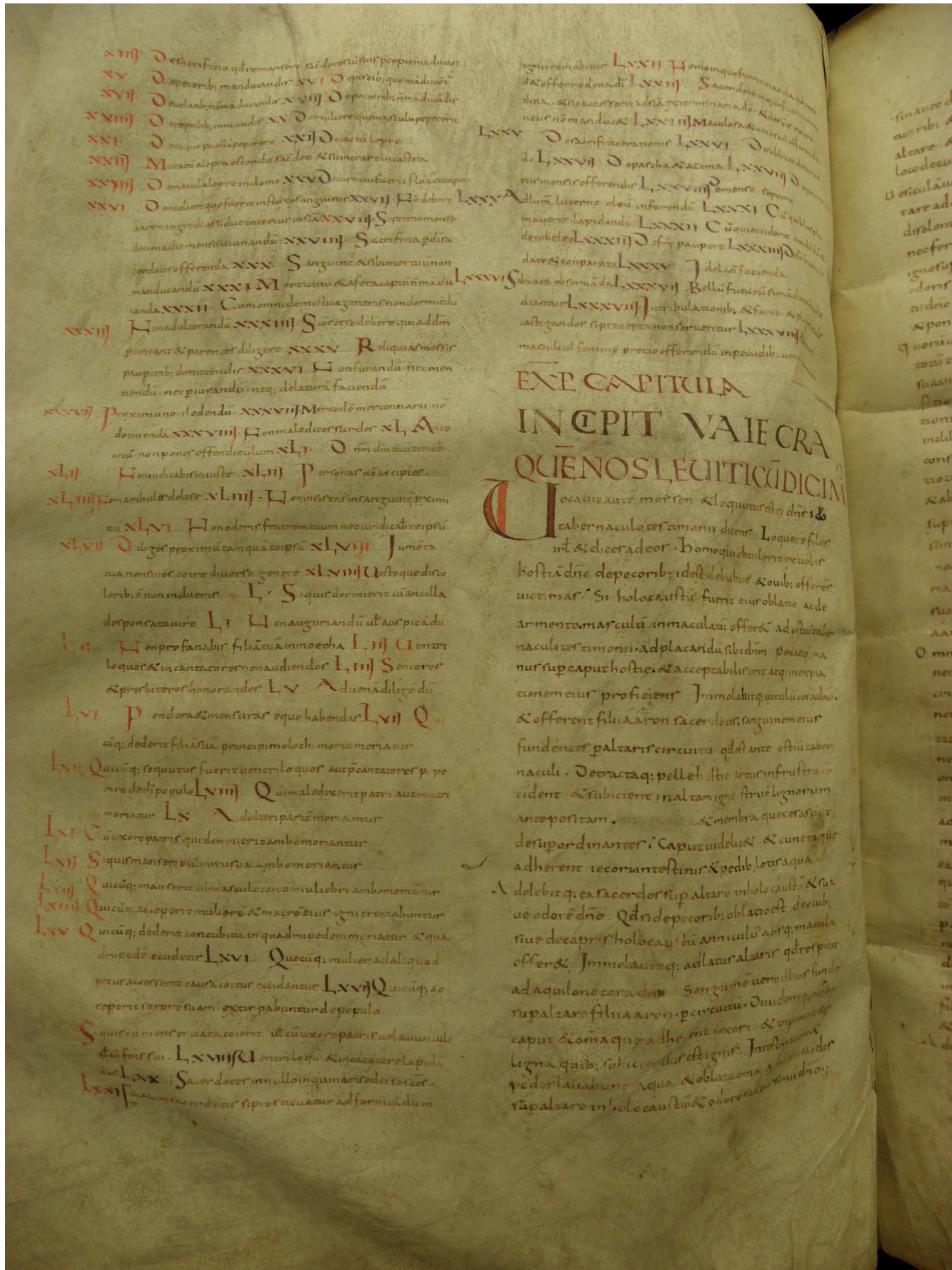

*Fig.3: La Seu d'Urgell, Biblioteca Capitular, Ms. 1.997, I, fol. 7v*

began in Italy, Burgundy and the Northern parts of the Western Frankish realm.

Another focus of research must lie in the various medial representations of the Bible texts: the size, the page design and the inner organization of the manuscripts. For instance, the production of Giant Bibles began already in Catalonia in the early eleventh century, hence decades before the well-known production of the famous Italian Giant Bibles.[24] These Catalan Giant Bibles, whose production center certainly was the late Carolingian abbey of Ripoll, were beacons of a cultural and religious renewal in the backyard of the movement we call the »Reconquista«. Their tremendous size, elaborate page-design and rich illumination of central stories of the Bible (especially of the Old Testament) certainly displayed a counter-model of what was the dominant religious law and reference text in Southern parts of the Iberian Peninsula: the Qur'ān. We currently know three magnificent Ripoll Bibles, one copy made for the abbey itself,[25] another produced for Sant Pere de Rodes,[26] and a third given to Sant Miquel de Fluvià (near Figueres), of which fragments are preserved today in several Catalan archives and libraries (*Fig. 4*).[27] Yet, there must have been further Giant Bibles made in Catalonia, as we can deduct from scattered fragments. One found in the small episcopal see of Solsona – a late eleventh-century fragment of the Acts of Apostles – bears the medieval folio number *.ccccxxxv.*; this allows us to say that it is the remainder of a Giant Bible of certainly more than 440 leafs, following in size and page-design the famous Carolingian model of the two-columned Tours Bibles (*Fig. 5*).

The traditional focus on single-volume Bible editions has produced the negative effect that the much more common editions in several volumes remained a widely under-studied phenomenon. This is not only true for Catalonia, but for the entire Iberian Peninsula. Was Ripoll the only Iberian production center of Giant Bibles, or did this and other cultural centers produce the new Romanesque Bible manuscripts of the twelfth century as well? For answering these questions, we need more codicological and paleographical comparison of the entire Iberian material, which amounts to hundreds of manuscript items already known, but not really evaluated; and in combination with that we require a systematic evaluation of the rich tradition of well-documented donations of manuscripts – especially rich in medieval Catalonia – and of the catalogues of medieval Iberian libraries and book collections in order to develop a much more precise panorama than we have today of the biblical legacy of the whole Peninsula.

24 The perspective on comparable Bibles in other European countries and regions will revise the well-established but too narrow narrative focused exclusively on the well-known Italian Giant Bibles; see even the latest publication on this topic by Togni, *Bibles atlantiques.*

25 Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5729.

26 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. lat. 6.

27 Barcelona, Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, Fragm. 322 and Montserrat, Arxiu i Biblioteca del Monestir, Ms. 821/IV and Banyoles, Arxiu Comarcal del Pla de l'Estany, Colleció de manuscrits, 1.

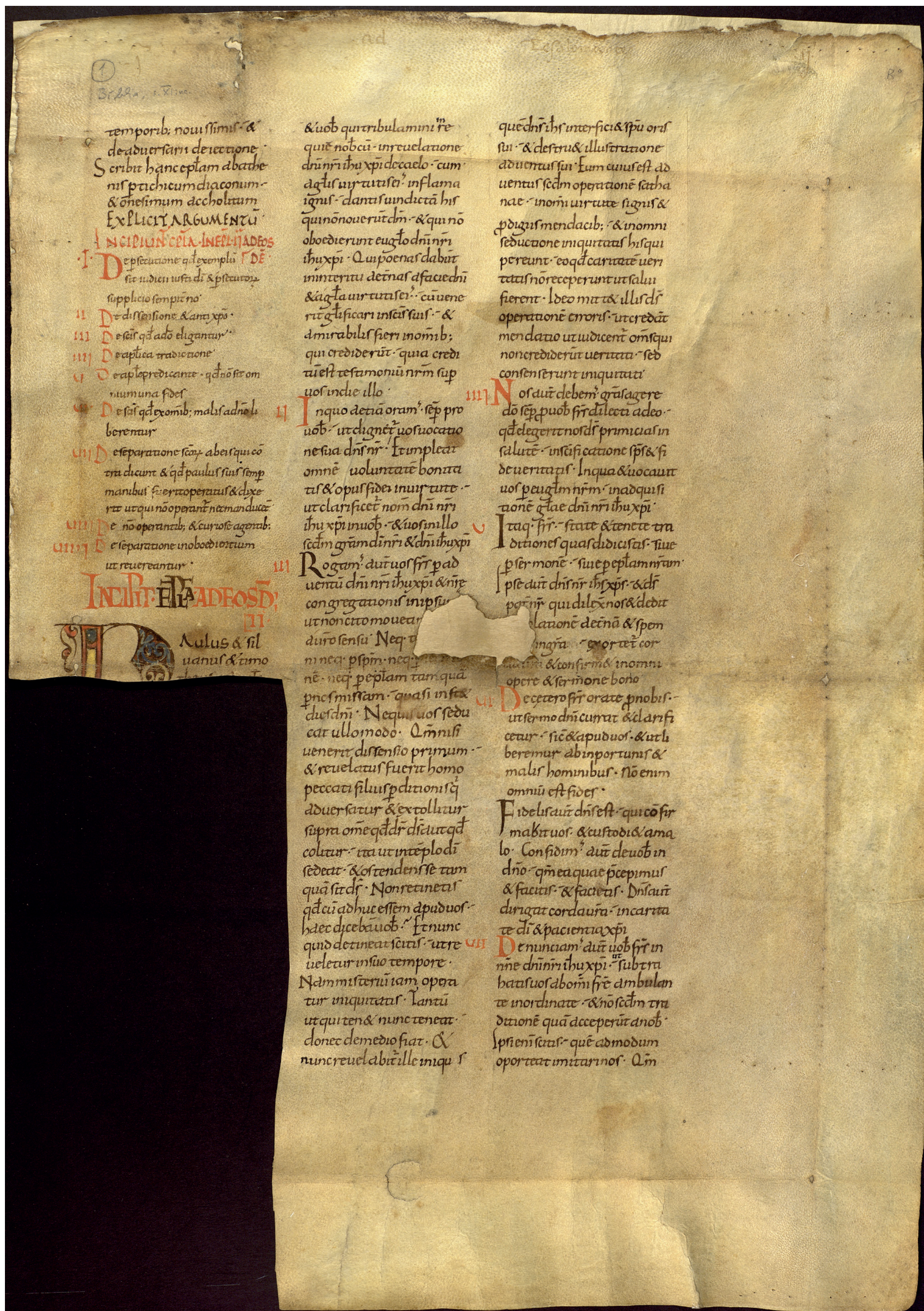

*Fig. 4: Banyoles, Arxiu Comarcal del Pla de l'Estany, Colleció de manuscrits, 1, recto*

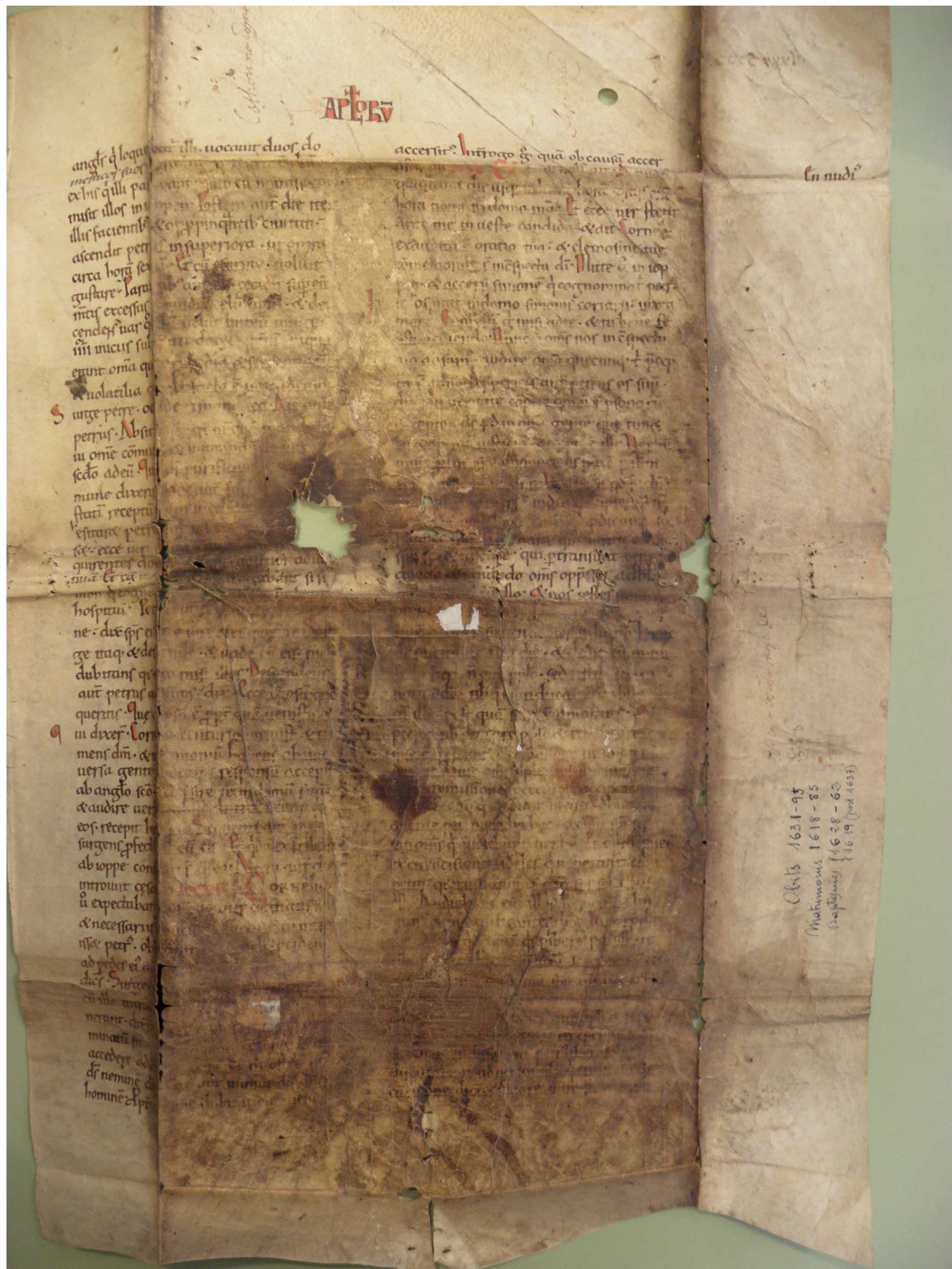

*Fig. 5: Solsona, Arxiu Diocesà, Còdex 82, fol. 1r*

### *3. The Bible in post-conquest Iberian historical writing*

The Christian-Latin chronicles written in the Iberian Peninsula after the Umayyad invasion offer an immense amount of biblical elements. While eighth-century chronicles from the South of the Peninsula show less biblical content, the presence of the Bible in historical writing increases during the ninth century. The manner in which the Bible appears in these chronicles seems to be more than simple comparisons of contemporary circumstances with biblical episodes. It seems more likely that the chroniclers favoured specific forms of both biblical exegesis and typology. This manner of reading the Bible helped them to understand their situation, to interpret the events of the world they experienced, and to find modes of identification of both themselves and the cultural and religious Other. The Bible was the Christian reference system par excellence by which to describe and decipher the events and protagonists of recent Iberian history under Muslim control that are recounted in these chronicles. This could only work with the tool of typology, a specific way of representing history and which was used by the chroniclers. Systematic research into this phenomenon of biblical appearances in the Christian-Iberian chronicles from the eighth to the twelfth centuries, and the reconstruction of the chroniclers' underlying world view, are the core issues of our research on Christian historical writing in the transcultural Iberian societies and their progressing multiple identities.

Post-conquest Christian historical writing in the Iberian Peninsula has been investigated intensively since the 1930s, mostly from the point of view of national history. Spanish scholars especially have attended to this subject,[28] mainly focusing on the political contents of the chronicles that emerged during the centuries after the Umayyad conquest of the Peninsula. Studies of the famous chronicles of Asturias, known as the »Asturian Cycle« or the »Asturian testimonials«, were published not only by Spanish and French but also by German researchers in the 1980s.[29] With Islam being increasingly present in Western media in the new millennium, interest in transcultural issues in history, especially encounters between Christians and Muslims in the medieval past, has also increased. Research in the field of transcultural medieval history focusses particularly on the mutual perception of different religiously imbued cultures, but also on their conflicts and their coexistence; in the case of the Iberian Peninsula, earlier research called this »convivencia.«[30]

The Christian chronicles of the post-conquest centuries have already been intensively explored, but none of these studies looked close enough at the biblical elements in these historical works.[31] Hence, an important element for our knowledge of this transcultural era of the Iberian Peninsula is missing. If the Bible was central for the depiction of the cultural and religious Other, then it is absolutely essential to understand biblical appearances in historical writing. But we still do not know exactly how the historical writing of the medieval Iberian Peninsula really worked. Through systematic research on biblical exegesis and typology in the Iberian chronicles, we can get one step closer to answering this question, while interpreting the sources in a way they have never been questioned before.

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28 Gómez Moreno, Primeras crónicas; Cotarelo Valledor, *Historia crítica y documentada*, 581-622; Dubler, Sobre la Crónica arábigo-bizantina; Sánchez-Albornoz, Sobre la autoridad; Díaz y Díaz, Historiografía hispana; López Pereira, *Estudio crítico.*

29 Prelog, *Chronik Alfons' III.*; Gil Fernández and Moralejo, Crónicas Asturianas; Bonnaz, Chroniques asturiennes.

30 Wolf, ›Convivencia‹ in Medieval Spain.

31 An exception is Bronisch, who in *Reconquista und Heiliger Krieg* searched for the idea of »Holy War« in the Iberian Peninsula of the Christian Reconquista. He therefore focused on biblical terms that appear in historical writing. But he never systematized these biblical elements or interpreted them from a typological standpoint.

***Typology***

A promising way to understand biblical elements in post-conquest Christian-Iberian historical writing is by analyzing its typology. The typological way of thinking had a long tradition in Christendom. Typological interpretations of Holy Scripture already appear in the New Testament. Furthermore, several parts of the Old Testament were understood as typological equivalents of other Old Testament passages. The basis of typology is the idea of a type, a »pre-announcement« of an event or person that will appear later, the fulfilment of the type being the anti-type. Types and anti-types substantialize Jewish-Christian salvation history. In the case of the Bible, this means that a person or event indicates a later person or event fulfilling it. So, pre-announcement and fulfilment are separated in time but connected through their common meaning.

A proof of this way of thinking as part of Christian theology is the word of Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount: »Nolite putare quoniam veni solvere legem aut prophetas non veni solvere sed adimplere«.[32] In this sense, Jesus is the fulfilment of several Old Testament episodes. Looked at the other way around, some figures of the Old Testament were pre-announcements of him: Moses, for instance, led the Israelites out of Egypt, which can be understood as the salvation of the Chosen People; while Jesus from the time of Easter led humankind to salvation. Another example is Jonah, who spent three days in the belly of a large fish and then returned and began to preach to the people of Nineveh; likewise, Jesus lay in his tomb for three days, returned and preached to the people before going heavenwards.

The same biblical principle can be found in historical writing too. While the given examples show typological thinking within Holy Scripture, it is possible to find typological links between the Bible and non-biblical, historical texts. This form of typology has been called »half-biblical« by the German philologist Friedrich Ohly. This is exactly the case in Christian-Iberian historical writing after the Umayyad conquest. For the Christian chroniclers, the Bible was their favoured reference system. By uncovering parallels between their own history and biblical history, they could show that what was written in the Bible became partly fulfilled in »Hispania« since the fall of the Visigothic kingdom. As the Old Testament tells the story of the Chosen People losing and regaining the grace of God, the chronicles tell the story of the Iberian Christians losing rule over their country and later reclaiming it. In so doing, the chronicles continue the story of salvation, connecting them typologically with both the Old and the New Testaments. For the authors of these chronicles, universal salvation history leads to the history of the Iberian Peninsula. The successors of the Visigoths – no matter if this is to be understood as the continuation of Visigothic rule or as its reinvention (»Neogothicism«) – are depicted as the new Chosen People. This works by means of displaying the invaders *and* the domestic population. In this perspective, a comprehensive theology of historical writing becomes discernible.

The use of biblical passages for the depiction of specific events in Iberian history was a means of adding weight to the chroniclers' statements. The Bible offered authority, and therefore history written in the setting of biblical typology appeared to be trustworthy. In any event, the chroniclers had a Christian audience that had to be convinced. The key decision for that was to show the at least partial fulfilment[33] of the Bible's episodes in history.

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32 Mt 5, 17.

33 Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror*, 72-77, 89, 286.

One can see the development of the use of biblical elements throughout the centuries after the Umayyad conquest. The first chronicles after the invasion, the so-called *Byzantine-Arabic Chronicle* from 741[34] and the *Mozarabic Chronicle* from 754[35] offer only a small number of typologically relevant passages. The most obvious one asserts Muḥammad's death in the Spanish era 666.[36] This presumably is a hint at the Antichrist, mentioned in the book of Revelations.[37] This suspicion becomes more likely if one keeps in mind all the calculations of time that can be found in this chronicle, and which comes to the conclusion that Iberia's Christians were living at the end of the sixth age of the world, which, following St. Augustine, had been prefigured in the sixth day of creation.

With increasing polemics against foreign Muslim rule, the amount of biblical elements in Christian Iberian historical writing increased. The so-called *Prophetic Chronicle* from 883 is especially a proof of this observation. It was seemingly influenced by the milieu of Mozarabic Christians guided by Paulus Alvarus and Eulogius of Córdoba in their intellectual struggle against Islam, and is based on a quotation adapted from the Prophet Ezekiel.[38] Instead of the Chosen People facing its enemy and their God-given punishment, i. e. the people of Gog, this chronicle summons the people of Gog to face »Ishmael.«[39] Obviously, the prophecy from Ezekiel has been adapted to the history of the Peninsula. As the chronicler tells us, »Gog« is to be understood as the people of the Goths, which means here the successors of the Visigoths, the Asturian kingdom under Alfonse III.[40] The idea of »Gog« as »Goths« is based on Isidore of Seville's work.[41] The chronicler thus combines his knowledge of the Bible and Isidore to create a new vision authorized by Holy Scripture. The chronicle claims an end of foreign domination 170 years after its beginning and connects this with a revised prophecy. Furthermore, it contains a life of Muḥammad in which the prophet is depicted in a completely negative way. This vita can be understood as a piece of anti-hagiography that shall prove that Muḥammad was no prophet, but an impostor, and someone who did not resurrect but simply decayed.[42] These are just a few examples that can show how polemical this chronicle is.

### *Ethnonyms*

According to these biblical tropes, quotes and structures, the chronicles work with another element from the Bible, ethnonyms. Chosen ethnonymic terms offer the possibility to draw conclusions about the perception of the cultural and religious Other. When the invaders are called »Arabs« – which is the ethnonym most commonly used for them in the *Mozarabic Chronicle* – there is no biblical connection, because this term does not appear in Holy

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34 *Chronica Byzantia-Arabica*, ed. Gil Fernández.

35 *Chronica Muzarabica*, ed. López Pereira.

36 *Chronica Muzarabica*, ed. López Pereira, 11. The Spanish era was an alternative system of calculating time. In this case, Muḥammad would have died in 628, which is not the common tradition. His death is usually dated at 632.

37 Apc 13, 17 sq.

38 Ez 38, 1-4 and 39, 1-4.

39 *Chronica prophetica*, ed. Bonnaz, 1.

40 *Chronica prophetica*, ed. Bonnaz, 2, 1 sq.

41 Isidore of Seville, *Historia Gothorum Wandalorum Sueborum*, ed. Mommsen, 1; Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. Lindsay, IX ii, 89.

42 *Chronica prophetica,* ed. Bonnaz, 4.

Scripture. Yet, when they are called »Saracens« – the primary ethnonym in the *Chronicle of Albelda* – or »Ismaelites« – the ethnonym used most frequently in the *Prophetic Chronicle* – there is a connection with the Bible, in fact with the story of Abraham and his sons.[43] In eighth-, ninth- and tenth-century chronicles all of these ethnonyms are used synonymously. Yet the author of the *Chronicle of Albelda* gives the following comment on this practice: »Sarraceni perberse se putant esse ex Sarra; uerius Agareni ab Agar et Smaelite ab Smael filio Abraam et Agar.«[44] This means first of all that the ethnonyms were used as synonyms; furthermore, that the invaders were actually »Ismaelites« or »Hagarenes,« but not »Saracens.« This statement is important, because there is a hierarchy in the Christian exegesis of the story of Abraham and his sons which levels up Isaac towards Ismael. This view is given in St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, where Isaac is understood as the promised son of the free woman, Sara, whereas Ismael is the naturally born son of a bondwoman, Hagar.[45] The chronicler therefore has to explain, that »Saracen« is the wrong name for a people of actually negative connotation. Unsurprisingly so, the far more polemical *Prophetic Chronicle* uses »Ismaelites« the most often, thus preferring a more suitable ethnonym than the author of the *Chronicle of Albelda.*

### *The Asturian foundation myth*

Later, the use of the biblical ethnonyms changed again. In the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* from the early tenth century, the ethnonym that is used most frequently for depicting the invaders is »Chaldeans.« The Chaldeans always appear as the enemies of the Chosen People in the Old Testament, and they always play the role of God's punishment for the misconduct of the Israelites. Thus, using several biblical tropes and naming the present political enemy after the people that represented God's anger against his Chosen People in the Old Testament shows that the Bible was more than a sheer medium of comparison for the author. The Bible was the authoritative reference system that offered a specific understanding of the past and present of the involved peoples, this had to be shown in a proper way. The Iberian Christians were the new Chosen People that had to do penance for their sins. This reasoning appears several times in the chronicles we have analyzed. Yet, only the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* gets more specific about what those sins really were: It was the Visigothic king Wittiza, who broke up councils, had many wives and forced the bishops, priests and deacons to have wives too. This resulted in »Hispania's« decline.[46]

The founding myth that is contained in the *Chronicle of Alfonso III* contributes to the history of salvation too. Pelayo, the former sword bearer of both Wittiza and the last Visigothic king Roderic (*Fig. 6*), led a rebellion against the invaders. In the mountains of the very North of the Peninsula, he was hiding in a cave that is known as »Covadonga«. A superior number of hostile Chaldeans besieged Pelayo and his rebels, but trusting in God he was able to defeat them, and those who were not killed by the sword fled and died when a landslide buried them alive. The chronicler himself offers an interpretation for this episode: »Non istud miraculum inane aut fabulosum putetis, sed recordamini quia qui in Rubro Mari Aegyptios Israelem

43 Gn 16 and 21.

44 *Chronica Albeldensia* XVI, ed. Gil Fernández, 1.

45 Gal 4, 21-31.

46 *Chronica Adefonsi III*, ed. Bonnaz, 4.

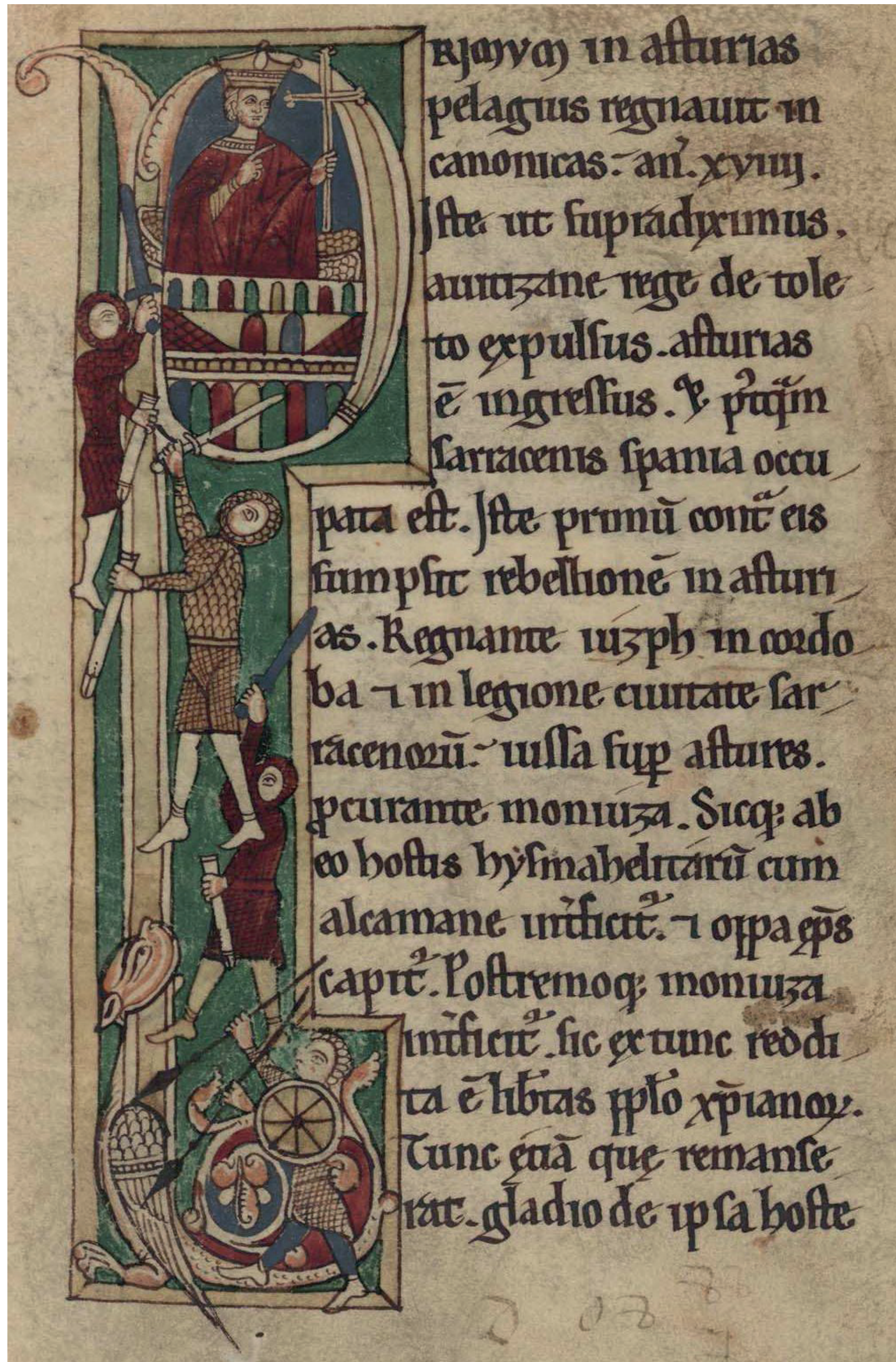

*Fig. 6: Madrid, Biblioteca nacional de España, Ms. 2805, fol. 23r*

persequentes demersit, ipse, hos Arabes Ecclesiam Domini persequentes, immensa montis mole oppressit.«[47] The invaders are depicted in the role of the Egyptians, whereas the rebels around Pelayo are the Chosen People guided by a second Moses.

In this chronicle, the word »Pagans«, used as an expression for the invaders of the Iberian Peninsula, appears for the first time. This term will later be used most frequently in the early twelfth-century *Historia Silensis.* No doubt, in the course of the five centuries covered, a discourse developed on the cultural and religious Other that can be deciphered from the biblical setting of the historical writing.

Our ongoing research will focus on further Christian Iberian chronicles until the end of the twelfth century. Based on the analysis of these chronicles and their possible influences, we should then be able to systematize the intertextual relationship between them and to highlight in detail the development of the discourse on the cultural and religious Other in the medieval Iberian Peninsula. A synthesis of the knowledge of these chronicles will provide deeper insights into the intellectual landscape of the transcultural medieval Iberian societies.

## 4. Iberian Bible manuscripts *and* historical production: the common intellectual background of Reconquista in transcultural medieval Iberia

First insights into the typical profile of Iberian Bible production since the eighth century raise the question of reliable statistical data in relation to the hazard and fate of manuscript transmission. We assume that the profile of production, reception and perception of specific biblical books or groups of books will open a common horizon of interests. The ground-breaking changes in the relationship between Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula between the eighth and twelfth centuries certainly produced profound effects on the neighbouring areas of Bible production, Bible exegesis and Christian historical writing. A recent overview article on biblical reception in the tenth-century Ottonian Empire could show that there was a strong relationship between preferred biblical books and passages, the current societal situation, and conceptions of time, space and history in the contemporary historical and biographical production.[48] But what was the situation in the contemporaneous Iberian world? We cannot now imagine a comparable profile of biblical production, reception and perception in the various Southern and Northern parts of the Peninsula, but must wait for the results of our ongoing research. What we can already see however, is that the historical books of the Pentateuch (or Heptateuch), of Kings and Maccabees, the anthropological books of Job and the Psalms, and especially the books of the Major and Minor Prophets obviously played an outstanding role in the Iberian Bible.

Hints at the privileged role of those particular books in the reading of the Iberian Bibles are the many traces of use and interest in specific passages. Glosses by readers and commentators tell us whole stories of living with the Bible in the transcultural Iberian societies: the Visigothic Bible of early ninth-century Oviedo, for instance, offers a rich corpus of apologetic glosses against Jews and heretics (Muslims?), but glosses also of a parenetic character in favour of the Church.[49] The ninth-century Urgell Bible possesses glosses that show, for instance, an eager interest in the history of the Israelites in the books of Kings, in the exegesis of the Psalter and in aspects of religious life reflected in the Proverbs (*Fig. 7*).

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47 *Chronica Adefonsi III* (versio Ovetensis), ed. Bonnaz, 6, 3.

48 Tischler, Mensch und Gemeinschaft.

49 La Cava de' Tirreni, Archivio e Biblioteca della Badia della SS. Trinità, Ms. Memb. I.

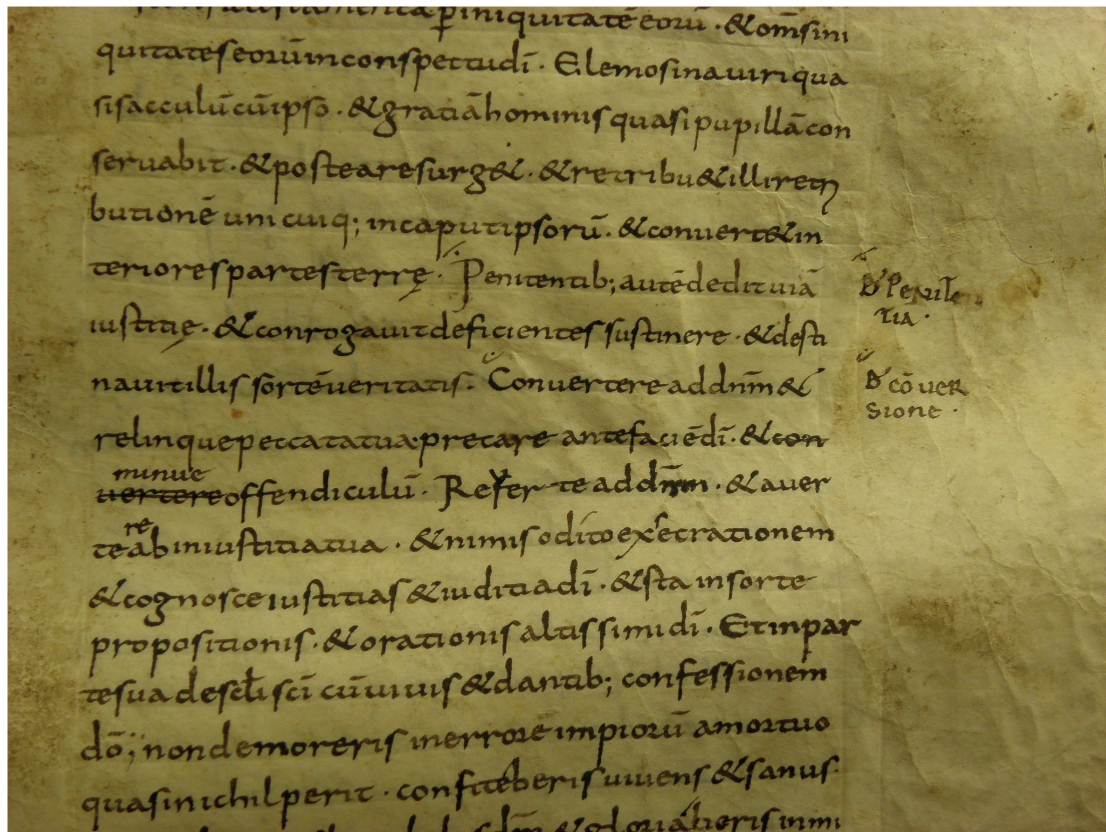

*Fig. 7: La Seu d'Urgell, Biblioteca Capitular, Ms. 1.997, II, fol. 48r*

Another corpus of sources showing specific text interest is offered by the rich illumination of the Northern Spanish and Catalan Bibles from the tenth and early eleventh centuries onwards. Seen against the backdrop of the Bibles from the late antique and early medieval Euro-mediterranean World,[50] many cultural and religious beacons of the Iberian Peninsula developed – beside the well-known Iberian Beatus-tradition – programmes of clearly anthropological, if not Christological illustrations in reaction to the prohibition of pictures of human beings and God in Islam. We mention here only the crop of naked men fighting with the Evil in the Lleida Bible at the beginning of the Fourth book of Kings, of 1 Chronicles and in the Letters of St. Paul (*Fig. 8*). It was an even more explicit confession of Christian convictions when the True Cross itself found its representation and veneration in a Bible. The most prominent case for this is the collection of the pages with the Holy Cross painted and written in different colours in the La Cava Bible from early ninth-century Oviedo. We find here Holy Crosses at the beginning of the Old and New Testaments, the Psalter and the Prophetical Books. These are thus building the typological and Christological framework of the Bible (*Fig. 9*).

50 Williams, *Imaging the Early Medieval Bible.*

*Fig. 8: Lleida, Arxiu Capitular, LC.0061 (olim s. n.), fol. 192r*

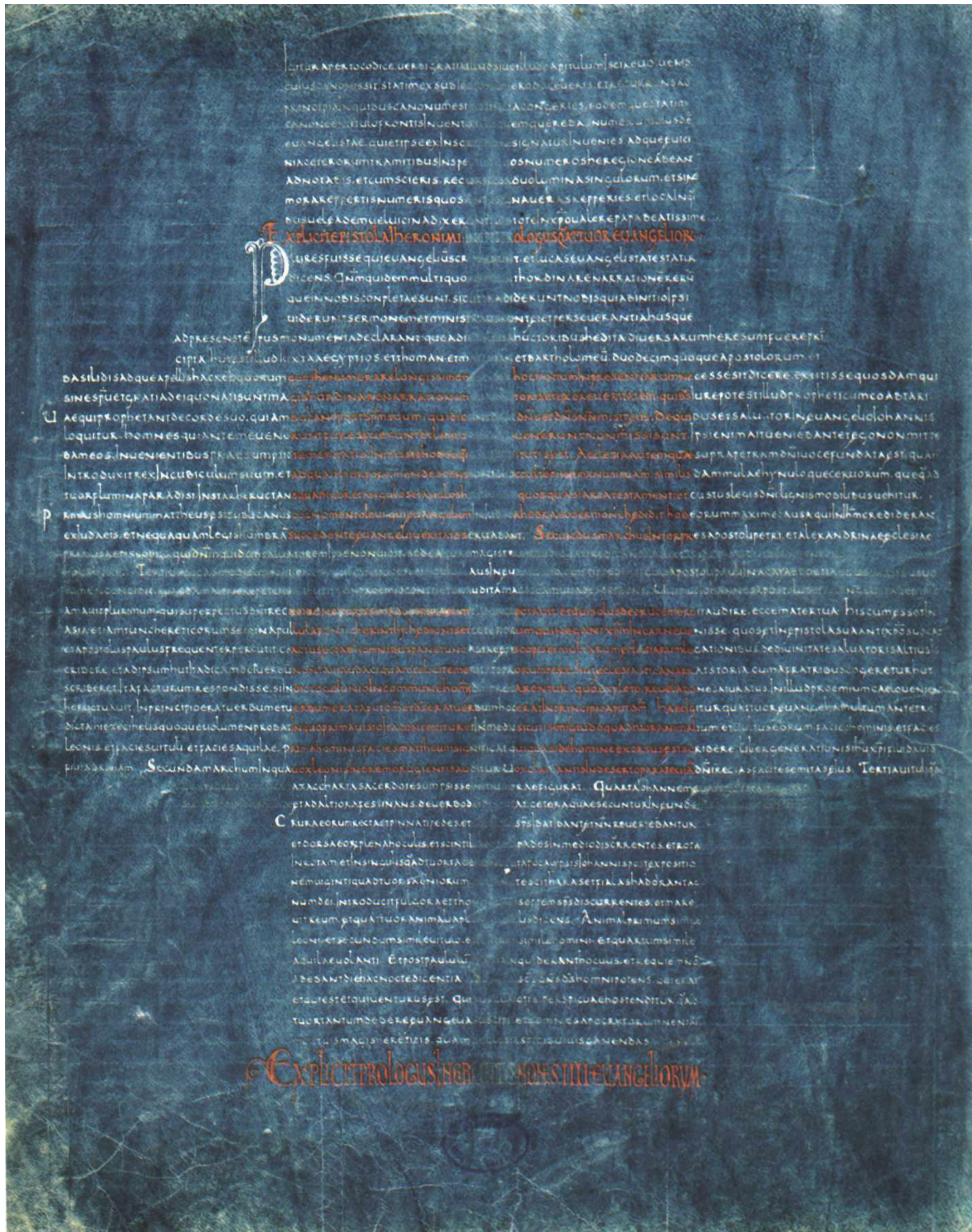

*Fig. 9: La Cava de' Tirreni, Archivio e Biblioteca della Badia della SS. Trinità, Ms. Memb. I, fol. 220v*

Nevertheless, unsolved questions remain, especially concerning which profile of long-term transmission of biblical books the Iberian transcultural societies exactly produced. Our aims remain more modest for the moment: we are content for now to reconstruct units of biblical and historical production at individual places, so that we can gain first insights into the laboratories of that spiritual, ecclesiastical and societal movement that history for many centuries now has called the »Reconquista.«

## *5. Visions for the future*

What we have presented here are pre-studies for a comparative »Handbook of the Bible in Transcultural Societies in the Euro-mediterranean World«. In this book project, preserved and reconstructed Bible manuscripts, together with parallel historical, biographical and other writing, will help us to identify the beacons of a cultural and religious renewal, a re-conquest of intellectual territory, and a reshaping of the collective cultural and religious memory of this World. This handbook should tell us the story of the rhythms of production, reception and perception of biblical books and passages answering the social and religious needs of the various transcultural societies of this globalized world. A new landscape of entangled regions and their various cultural and religious conditions should emerge and show us how this World was formed through oral and written communication, and how models of cultural and religious normativity acting against each other formed what we conceive today as a pluralized secular World order.

## *6. Presentations*

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