

FLORILEGIUM 11, 1992

RESPECTING THE BOOK: EDITING OLD ENGLISH LITURGICAL POEMS IN THEIR MANUSCRIPTS

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“For early vernacular works (whether oral or written in origin), the transmitting manuscript does not merely ensure the survival of the work as a text through the operation of a technology of preservation; it actually determines conditions for the reception and transmission of the work” (O’Keeffe 1990, 5). This statement raises the critical issue that forms the focus of this discussion. The way in which we apprehend that which we call “text” when it is written down, is primarily governed by the manuscript versions in which it appears. This is particularly true for poetry, both because it frequently remains in only one copy, and because it has traditionally been respatialized into half-line pairs, emended to conform to our perception of alliteration rules, and in general “cleaned up” by editors throughout the twentieth century. Many of these editors have been inclined to disregard the physical evidence contained in the grubby, fire-damaged, ink-smudged, or scribally-imperfect page, and have instead sought to provide the scholarly world with the poems “as they should have appeared.”

Initially, this might seem to be an overstatement. Michael Lapidge addresses the issue of editing vernacular poetry in his 1990 Toller Memorial Lecture. He asks that his audience note “how many editions of Old English verse are manuscript-oriented . . . rather than author-oriented. . . . The

manuscript, rather than the author, has come to dominate the consciousness of editors of Old English verse" (39). He ultimately argues that "every manuscript copy of an Old English poem is, in effect, a 'scribal version,' and as such deserves to be treated on its own. . . . [I]n their concern with manuscripts and scribes, modern editors of Old English poetry may risk doing a disservice to their authors" (41). But while the care taken to preserve a sense of the transmitting manuscript by the majority of editors can be seen in the presence of the critical apparatus in the page-foot below the text presentation, it is nevertheless essential to realize the degree to which the phenomenon known as "the Old English verse edition" has become an influential medium in modern scholarship. O'Keeffe draws our attention to "the Platonic abstraction of the modern edited text . . . which presents us with a remade, often hybrid, work, stripped of its context, its spatial arrangement and its points. The brilliant and indispensable philology which produced the edition we study today nonetheless privileges an *idea* of composition over actual, *realized* texts . . . the poetic work as it appears in the manuscript, the word, in fact, made thing" (O'Keeffe 1990, 78). In fact, some of the best examples of the twentieth-century "verse edition" have become so well established as teaching and research tools that the printed text and not the written page is more frequently resorted to as the embodiment of the ultimate transmission authority. Almost all beginners in Old English receive their introduction to Anglo-Saxon literature through the medium of the edition, and thus, when even an advanced scholar thinks of *Beowulf*, a mental image of Klaeber's pages may well come as readily to mind as the damaged leaves of Cotton Vitellius A.xv. One might be justified in saying that both are what Lapidge would call "scribal versions," but of the two, the imperfect vellum stands chronologically closer to the author or the pre-Conquest scribe of *Beowulf*, despite its errors, than do the printed pages of Klaeber, 3rd edition.

Our growing awareness of the relationship between text and reader has opened the way for new philosophies and for a new sensitivity to the problems of editing Old English verse. Lapidge is timely in his caveats concerning excessive reverence for versions of poetry that were not "fixed" as we understand the term to apply to other historical texts, but there is evidence to be gleaned, and perhaps some sense of Anglo-Saxon aesthetic sensibilities to be apprehended, if we pay careful respect to the "thing" on the page. The accompanying plates show sections of two poems, taken out of three different manuscripts dated between 970 and the mid-twelfth century. Each is from a poem in Old English primarily based on the liturgy; the

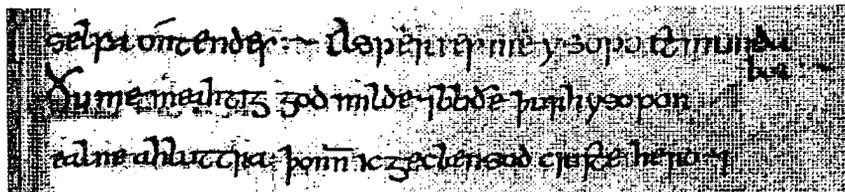
first contains Latin verses from the liturgical original, and the second is a wholly-vernacular compendium of liturgical and homiletic sources. My examples do not consist of contentious readings that may or may not require emendation: thus, I can sidestep the chasm between Etmüller's "*collegit, correxit and edidit*" (Lapidge 39) and the full-blown diplomatic transcription. They are, instead, detective-work exercises that hunt through the clues of scribal presentation, clues which nevertheless have been overlooked and generally obscured by previous editors intent instead on creating readily accessible texts. As we look at the evidence itself, and at the implications to be drawn from the material texts that contain this evidence, we must ultimately consider alternative solutions available to the conscientious editor of Old English verse.

Cotton Vespasian D.vi is a late tenth-century miscellany from Canterbury, dated ca. 975, which preserves examples of Kentish in its vernacular material. Contained in folios 68 to 73 are three Old English pieces, the first and third being liturgical poems and the second a chronology in prose. The *Kentish Psalm 50* is the last of the three, and contains within it as rubrics the Latin verses of its source, the fiftieth psalm *Miserere mei*, apparently drawn from the *Romanum* psalter-text. These Latin verses stand in the manuscript as part of the body of the poem itself, and are written in red ink.

There is a substantial amount of physical evidence to be gleaned from an examination of the manner in which the Latin psalm-verses are set down within the Old English psalm-poem context, and from a comparison of the Vespasian D.vi pages that contain the first poem, *Kentish Hymn* and prose chronology, with those on which *Kentish Psalm 50* appears. This evidence points to two important conclusions. The first is that the scribe for this part of Vespasian D.vi had a material problem to solve; to recognize this fact is crucial because the solution that he chose has "determined the condition for the reception" (O'Keeffe 1990, 5) of this poem, as no other text of *Kentish Psalm 50* exists. The second conclusion, which derives from the first, is that the scribe was working from an exemplar; that this is so, has important ramifications for our dating of this poem.

A recognition of the scribal problem in folios 70^v-73^r is essential if we are to gain access to the clues in this part of Cotton Vespasian D.vi. This problem and its solution centre on the simple matter of too much text and not enough vellum to copy it into.¹ The Latin verses embedded in this poem are complete up to the end of verse 5, but thereafter they are truncated, creating sentences that frequently make no syntactic or grammatical sense

“Kentish Psalm 50”; manuscript date ca. 975



Diplomatic Transcription: silent expansions and word division; black OE text in bold, red Latin in Roman:

selfa ontendes:— Aspēries me ysope Et munda
 bor:—
 Ðu me meahtig god milde 7 bliðe þurh ysopon
 ealne ahluttra þonne ic geclænsod criste hero 7

Figure 1

(From London, B.L. MS Cotton Vespasian D.vi, folio 72^r
 by permission of the British Library.)

at all. Internal examination of scribal lineation shows that the Latin truncations tally exactly with the line ends: when abbreviating his rubrics, the scribe filled in Latin to the end of a line and no further. Figure 1 shows this clearly: it is a digital scan of one verse of *Kentish Psalm 50* from a British Library photograph of folio 72^r, with a transcription below it. Latin is in red ink, Old English in black. Here we see an incomplete Latin verse—the full *Romanum* text reads *Asparges me ysopo et mundabor, lavabis me et super nivem dealbabor*—and we see that the final word *mundabor* is split into the morphemes *munda* and *bor* by subscription, to avoid running onto the next line. We must ask what the scribe’s rationale might have been. Close examination of the manuscript shows that, for our triad of vernacular pieces, the scribe was working within one gathering of vellum, and here in his third item was running out of space. The truncation of his Latin rubrics was one way of compensating for this shortage.

When he began to copy *Kentish Psalm 50*, the scribe included the complete Latin verses, paying no attention to whether they occupied more than one line of his text. In fact, the fifth rubric verse, *Tibi soli peccavi et malum coram te feci ut iustificeris in sermonibus tuis Et vincas dum iudicaris* takes up the bottom line of fol. 71^r and the top line of fol. 71^v. But it is here, on the page turn shown in Plate 1, that the scribe apparently

noticed that he had not enough vellum to accommodate the rest of the poem. Therefore, midway down this page we find the sixth Latin verse, which in the *Romanum* psalter-version should read *Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum et in delictis peperit me mater mea*. But only the words *Ecce enim in iniquitatibus* appear in red, and they are confined to the end of line 11. The scribe ultimately had to take a single extra sheet, folio 73, on which to complete *Kentish Psalm 50*, a sheet that came to be fitted into another piece of parchment which in turn became part of the next gathering. By now, he was taking no chances, and on the recto side of the new leaf increased his number of lines per page from 17 to 21, as an additional measure.

What can be inferred from this simple case of truncation and subscription? The first conclusion is that, because Latin verses 1–5 are complete but scribal economy required truncation thereafter, we can posit the use of an exemplar with complete Latin verses, the second important conclusion identified above. And because we must consider that the scribe appears to *notice* his vellum shortage on the page turn of folio 71, it may be suggested that he made a visual comparison between copying space available and copying space needed. Thus we may assume that he was transcribing from another material text, and not taking down dictation read aloud by someone else. Indeed, evidence of eyeskip elsewhere in the poem reinforces this supposition.² The existence of an earlier text exemplar would push the latest date of composition back somewhat from the *Vespasian D.vi* manuscript date of ca. 975, in order to accommodate its own copying into text form.

Secondly, we may observe that, in the late tenth century, the presentation of his text on the page was not as major an issue for our scribe as the preservation of his vellum. This may tell us something about the value, or availability, of vellum to him, and thus, the way in which vellum was provided to scribes within the scriptorium where this manuscript was being compiled. It may contain some hint as to the amount of vellum on which the exemplar poem itself was preserved: an estimate based on the exemplar's physical appearance may have been involved in figuring the amount of vellum that the *Vespasian D.vi* scribe felt constrained to work within. But more important, it may also provide implications as to the aesthetic sensibilities concerning the copying of texts, namely, whether the *form* of an exemplar mattered to the copyist, or only the content of the material to be reproduced. The issue of spatialization must be raised at this stage in our discussion, because the shape of the poem on the physical page is

the central scribal concern in one of the two other manuscripts to which we shall turn in a moment.

Thirdly, the Vespasian D.vi scribe's immediate solution of truncating the psalm verses indicates that he assumed his readers could fill in the missing Latin words, either for themselves or if reading the poem aloud to others. This in turn must suggest a monastic reading audience, or at least readers who were expected to be both familiar enough with this psalm to supply the missing words from memory, and accustomed to rubric abbreviation in the books from which they read. Both communal and personal liturgical texts from pre-Conquest England contain many such abbreviations, and the assumption that the readers of this poem were also readers of the liturgy is a compelling one.

When we add such a familiarity with rubricized reading to lexical elements common to this and other liturgical material that is unquestionably the product of the Tenth-Century Reform, we must certainly place *Kentish Psalm 50*'s earliest date of composition within the Reform period, that is, probably after 960 (Keefer 56–61). Because we have posited the existence of an earlier exemplar, and thus have to move the latest date of composition back to accommodate its own copying, we may suggest that the *Kentish Psalm* was comparatively new when copied into Vespasian D.vi around 975, and that it had already been set out as material text at least once. Was it composed by someone of importance, to warrant such zeal in preservation? I have elsewhere³ used internal philological elements and lexical source study, together with this external palaeographic evidence, to support my proposal that *Kentish Psalm 50* was perhaps composed by a West Saxon in Kent, possibly by one of Dunstan's retinue.

No indication of this evidence of the vellum shortage has been preserved in the modern editions of *Kentish Psalm 50*. Whitelock removes the Latin from her text (208–14), relegating it to footnotes, and supplies the missing verse-ends in square brackets with only the observation that they "or more often only the first few words of them, are placed in the manuscript before the lines which paraphrase them" (208). Dobbie includes the Latin phrases in the body of his text (88–94), but provides no explanation for the truncations in his apparatus. The form of the transmitting manuscript has been sacrificed for content by both editors who were, justifiably enough, concerned with the needs of readers who wanted to focus on the text as a text. Unfortunately, this has not only obscured important information about the poem itself, but has the deleterious effect of making the poem's

use of Latin appear to be the product of ignorance or irrationality, when it is of course no such thing at all.

We turn from a Reform period scribe to two much later hands. The poem called *Prayer* is partially preserved in one manuscript at the very end of the Anglo-Saxon period, and stands complete in another that was written during the Anglo-Norman era. A sensitivity to content and context is apparent in the earlier partial version that is found in the Lambeth Psalter, but the visual patterns of form that are inherent in its composition were identified, perhaps from a lost original, and set out by the scribe in the complete text preserved in the Anglo-Norman manuscript Cotton Julius A.ii. If we look carefully, the manuscript witnesses thus provide us with clear evidence of the way that the transmitting scribes of this poem apprehended the shape and sense of what they were copying.

The two manuscripts in which *Prayer* remains to us are entirely unrelated to one another. The Lambeth Psalter, Lambeth Palace MS 427, is an interlinear glossed Gallican psalter text, where we find the poem's first fifteen pairs of half-lines in a space at the bottom of folio 183^v (Plate 2), following a partially-glossed confessional prayer at the end of the Psalter proper. The canticles, also glossed in English, begin at the top of 184^r directly after the *Prayer*-poem fragment. The Psalter, confessional material, and canticles are in hands of the early eleventh century; the poem-lines were added in the late eleventh century, possibly even after the Conquest. Dobbie calls this Lambeth version of the poem "incomplete." "It is probable," he says, "that the manuscript once contained a complete text of the *Prayer*" (lxxxvi). Foliation of the Lambeth Psalter, however, militates against this suggestion, and Ker's note that the poem's fragment was "added, s xi², in the blank space before the beginning of the canticles" (342) more readily satisfies Ockham's Razor. As we shall see, this particular section of the *Prayer*-poem was in all probability added in the blank space to which Ker refers, for reasons of its content, as that content related to the context of the psalter-book section that was to contain it.

The *Prayer*-poem's only whole version stands on three pages of the B.L. MS fragment Cotton Julius A.ii, folios 136-44; these nine folios date from the mid-twelfth century, and contain other English material after *Prayer*. Although Dobbie describes shelfmark Julius A.ii as a unit (lxxxv), Ker separates the eleventh-century copy of Ælfric's *Grammar* which precedes the later nine folios in its present binding, giving them two discrete entries in his *Catalogue* (Ker #158 and #159). Both parts are badly fire-damaged, and were apparently already bound together by 1731. *Prayer*

begins the "nine folios" part of the manuscript, and seems intended to stand out on its own in whatever collection the complete twelfth-century book was to present. It starts a new page at the top of what is now 136^r (Plate 3) with a once-glorious blue-green capital "Æ," its internal sections are set off with elegant coloured capitals of red minium, yellow, blue, and green, and it contains two red ornamental division notae indicating where words from one line have been added at the end of the next line which itself is carrying text (Plate 4). Finally, we find blank space following the last line of the poem to the page end on 137^r (Plate 5).

Prayer was edited first by Francis Junius in 1655. Since then it has been sporadically translated and included in *compendia minorium*⁴ where it languished unloved until Barbara Raw's really excellent discussion of it in her 1978 study *The Art and Background of Old English Poetry*. Where Greenfield and Calder describe *Prayer* somewhat unkindly as a "79-line poem in which the speaker rather tearfully and melodramatically beats his breast" (235), Raw is more perceptive about its tensions and direction: "The meaning is conveyed through a series of oppositions, and this is reflected in the syntax, with its parallels and variations" (123), which "provide a structure for the poem as a whole" (124). Raw's awareness of "this patterned kind of writing," and the use of "rhetorical device" and "encomiastic verse" technique indicates a more sophisticated construct than Greenfield and Calder's survey would have us believe. Dobbie's note that it has "an effect of studied unity" (lxxxvii) serves to reinforce the poem's craftedness. The study in hand, however, picks up where Raw has left off, by examining the presentation of its physical form in the transmitting manuscripts, in order to better understand the impulse behind its poetic conception, and the process implicit in its scribal reception.

Prayer can be linked to the rest of the liturgical verse canon in Old English through common vocabulary, a task undertaken elsewhere.⁵ But it differs considerably from its liturgical companions in the manuscript witnesses that contain it. The way in which it has been preserved on the pages of Julius A.ii demonstrates what might be termed compositional "text-consciousness," or deliberate construction of the piece so that letters or words will create a pattern when set down on a page. There was apparently a "right" way to copy this poem down so that its visual balances and contrasts are highlighted by their positions relative to one another. The Lambeth scribe, as we shall see, does not perceive these patterns; the Julius A.ii scribe, on the other hand, does. An awareness of its ultimate appearance on manuscript lines was therefore at work as part of this poem's

inherent creative impulse. This is not to suggest that it is the only poem to contain the kind of intentional pattern which points to a text-consciousness on the part of the poet: it is, however, true that *Prayer*'s presentation in Cotton Julius A.ii constitutes the *clearest* evidence that we possess for such a text-consciousness behind a liturgical verse composition. Scribal awareness of the poem's pattern is incontrovertible, and just as incontrovertible is the corollary that the pattern shown by the scribal witness in Julius A.ii must have been an integral part of the poem's structural conception. Modern humanity takes this phenomenon as a precondition of communications, in an age ruled by the universally visual and literate. However, O'Keeffe points out that "the physical evidence of the writing of [Old English] poetic works—their irregular spacing of free morphemes, highly individual and sporadic capitalization and punctuation, and copying of verse without regard to length of line—argue that the visual conventions which provided necessary information for the reading of contemporary verse in Latin . . . were unnecessary in Old English" (1990, 21–22). What she says holds true for most of the Old English verse canon: however, it does not apply when we look at the copy of *Prayer* in Julius A.ii. Whoever composed *Prayer* did so with a clear sense of how it should appear on the lines of a written page. That this seems so, opens a fascinating dimension to the practice of respatializing Old English poetry into pairs of half-lines. Scribal punctuation, the presence of alliteration, and a perception of interpretable metrical patterns were the means by which the modern verse edition acquired its form. The *Prayer* poem was constructed *as* a poem but with the apparent intention that it stand on its manuscript lines so as to reveal semantic relationships through visual patterns; yet these patterns are evident, both in the prose-like "copying of verse without regard to length of line" (O'Keeffe 1990, 22) and the rearrangement of that verse into the traditionally-accepted half-line pairs.⁶

Æla, drihten leof! Æla, dema god!
 Geara me, ece waldend.
 Ic wat mine saule synnum forwundod;
 gehæl þu hy, heofena drihten,
 5 and gelacna þu hy, lifes ealdor,
 forþan ðu eðest miht ealra læca
 ðæra þe gewurde side oððe wyde.
 Æla, frea beorhta, folkes scippend!
 Gemilsa þyn mod me to gode,
 10 sile þyne are þynum earminge.

- Se byð earming þe on eorðan her
 dæiges and nihtes deofleampað
 and hys willan wyrco; wa him þære mirigðe,
 þonne he ða handlean hafað and sceawað,
 15 bute he þæs yfeles ær geswyce.
 Se byð eadig, se þe on eorðan her
 dæiges and nihtes drihtne hyræð
 and a hys willan wyrco; wel hym þæs geweorkes,
 ðonne he ða handlean hafað and sceawað.
 20 gyf he ealteawne ende gedreogeð.

Both Dobbie and Raw observed aspects of this poem's unusual structure. Dobbie notes the rhetorical repetitions of "the *Eala* formula . . . immediately followed by an exhortation" (lxxxvii). Raw goes much farther, and analyzes verse-lines 11–20 for lexical balance: "much of part two of the prayer consists of two sentences whose words and rhythms parallel each other exactly. The simple framework accentuates the few words which differ" (124). However, she does not take the final step and show, by returning to the manuscript, how these words work in balance on the page itself to create the additional symmetry of vision, described above.

Beginning with the first *Se byð* on Plate 3, we can readily see that twinned or contrasted phrases and expressions are placed in exactly the same space on their respective manuscript lines. This is a pattern that holds true for the individual word-pair, whether in semantic contrast, as with *earming* and *eadig* (first word, manuscript lines 8 and 12), or *deoflon* and *drihtne* (first word, manuscript lines 9 and 13), or as repeated elements like the two initial words *Se* (first word, manuscript lines 8 and 12), the first with its capital unfortunately obliterated from its gutter by the Cottonian fire and subsequent water damage. This balancing holds true for the doubled phrases *dæiges 7 nihtes* (manuscript lines 8 and 12) and *hafað 7 sceawað* (manuscript lines 10 and 14) at the ends of their lines, and for *on eorðan her* (manuscript lines 8 and 12), *hys willan wyrco* (manuscript lines 9 and 13) and *þonne he ða handlean* (manuscript lines 10 and 14) in the centres of theirs. In fact, it holds true for the entire sections concerning *earming* and *eadig*, each begun with a red *S*, each ending with space to the line-end. The semantic balance in these passages is set carefully off between the sinner and the servant of God, wretched or blessed, underscoring the spiritual choices that humanity has to make. Nevertheless it is essential to recognize that visual form is in play here as well as semantic content.

At this point it is important to remember the quotation from *Prayer* in Lambeth 427 (Plate 2), which ends with *butan he þæs yfes ær geswice*. In

that quotation, comprising verse-lines 1–15, the poet speaks only of sinners and beseeches his Creator to heal the wounds of his soul. But the penitential mood breaks off when the *Prayer*-poet turns to the blessed, *Se byð eadig*, in the second part of the contrast beginning at verse-line 16a. Yet only the first fifteen verse-lines, the penitential lines, are contained in Lambeth 427, carefully fitted into the space after the confessional prayer at the bottom of 183^v. We have already noted that the foliation of Lambeth 427 appears to preclude Dobbie's suggestion of a complete version of the poem once preserved in this psalter, and that Ker's assumption that it was "added . . . in the blank space before the beginning of the canticles" (342) is more likely to have been the case. One of two other possibilities must therefore be true: only the first fifteen lines of the poem actually existed at the time of the inclusion in Lambeth 427, or a complete exemplar was available, from which this first section was deliberately excerpted. Again Ockham's Razor may be applied to this mysterious quotation from *Prayer* in the Lambeth Psalter. Given the very existence of the rest of the poem, which bears lexical resemblance to other verse already written by the late eleventh century, the latter, a complete exemplar, is the more obvious assumption. And based upon this assumption, I would therefore suggest that the thematic division of verse-lines 1–20 of *Prayer* was appreciated and adopted by the Lambeth scribe, who copied only that part of the poem, the penitential section, which suited the theological context surrounding the available space: a glossed confession before it, and the glossed canticle of Isaiah's penitential song, beginning *Confitebor tibi*, directly after it.

- 30 Ne mæg þe aherian hæleða ænig;
 þeh us gesomnie geond sidne grund,
 men ofer moldan, geond ealne middaneard,
 ne mage we næfre asæcgan, ne þæt soðe witan,
 hu þu æðele eart, ece drihten.
- 35 Ne þeah engla werod up on heofenum
 snotra tosomne sæcgan ongunnon,
 ne magon hy næfre areccean, ne þæt gerim wytan,
 hu þu mære eart, mihtig drihten.
 Ac is wunder mycel, wealdend engla,
 gif þu hit sylfa wast, sigores ealdor,
 hu þu mære eart, mihtig and mægenstrang,
 ealra kyninga kyning, Crist lifende,
 ealra worulda scippend, wealdend engla,
 ealra dugeþa duguð, drihten hælend.

The contrast and parallelism of verse-lines 11–20 in *Prayer* are only one part of its composer's text-consciousness. Dobbie and Raw, who is apparently using A.S.P.R. VI, both ignore a scribal clue in the manuscript witness of Julius A.ii, and by their edition and discussion respectively, create a text which is different from the one in the actual manuscript pages. On folio 136^v (Plate 4), we have three phrases beginning with coloured capital *N*'s beginning manuscript lines 1, 3 and 5. One is yellow, one is red, and one is blue: clearly a contrast of sorts is intended. Yet in Dobbie's text we find the second of these capitalized phrases *Ne mage we næfre asæcgan*, verse-line 33 above, uncapitalized and wholly subordinated to the first. Raw follows Dobbie's design, and in fact suggests that the first phrase beginning *Ne mæg þe aherian* (verse-line 30a) and the third phrase beginning *Ne þeah engla werod* (verse-line 35a) are a binary parallel, referring to "the perplexity of men and of angels . . . which suggests a third and higher level of mysteriousness" (125), heralded by the phrase *Ac is wunder mycel* (verse-line 39a), which both she and Dobbie capitalize after a full stop, but which in the manuscript does not follow any terminal punctus, and carries no capital to mark it off. Raw sees the second capitalized *Ne* phrase, *ne mage we næfre asæcgan* (verse-line 33a), as the counterpart of *ne magon hy næfre areccean* (verse-line 37a), an observation which is reinforced by the fact that these two statements turn on the parallel phrases *ne þæt soðe witan* (verse-line 33b) and *ne þæt gerim wytan* (verse-line 37b). Such perception is well and good and true, but it is not perhaps enough. Clues remain in the manuscript to another configuration that has been obscured by editorial decision, and with those clues, another interpretation has been overlooked.

That second phrase, *Ne mage we næfre asæcgan*, is deliberately placed by the Julius scribe so that a capital *N* can be drawn in the capital gutter. This is only possible because manuscript line 3 on which it appears, has been disrupted: instead of running over onto the beginning of 3, *middaneard* from the previous line is brought down to the end of 3, and the first of the two ornamental notae stands as divider between the two parts. In addition to providing the circumstances by which the second of the three *Ne* phrases may carry a capital, this disruption also has the salutary effect of placing the words *ne þæt soðe witan* at the beginning of manuscript line 4. When we look to see where its lexical counterpart *ne þæt gerim wytan* appears, we find it at the beginning of manuscript line 7. This would seem to reinforce the connection that Raw suggested between the capitalized *Ne mage we næfre asæcgan* and the uncapitalized *ne magon hy næfre areccean*, although they do not occupy parallel spaces on their respective manuscript lines. Again

we find a lexical balance replicated spatially, despite, or as a result of the line disruption, which was a deliberate choice on the Julius scribe's part: *middaneard* could have stood at the beginning, not the end of manuscript line 3. Thus we have also to assume that the scribe intended three and not two capital *N*'s for a reason. Therefore, along with Raw's assumption that it is related to *ne magon hy næfre areccean* we must take seriously the second capitalized *Ne* phrase *Ne mage we næfre asæcgan* as a separate, and the central, element of three, and not two distinct sections.

What happens if we abandon Raw's division "men and . . . angels . . . constructed on the same pattern" (125), and move from a binary to a triune balance? We have "Nor can any hero praise you though he gather us throughout the wide deep, men on the earth, throughout the whole world. Nor can we ever say or know the truth, how noble thou art, eternal lord. Nor however can the host of angels up in heaven, the company of the wise, begin to say, nor may they ever reckon or know that magnitude, how glorious thou art, mighty lord." Throughout this section of the poem, we again find discrete phrase-pairs with their single-variant words—*hu þu æþele* or *mære eart*, and *ece* or *mihtig drihten*—occupying analogous space on their respective manuscript lines. But where by Raw's interpretation we had only two divisions, earth and heaven, we now have both the original two, and three: the two are earth and heaven as Raw perceived, but the terrestrial is also made up of *hæleða ænig*, any hero, and *we . . . men ofer moldan*, while the celestial consists of *engla werod*, the host of angels, three groups in all. Surely the earthly pair can be seen as the Church Triumphant, whose heroes are saints, and the Church Militant in which *we . . . men ofer moldan*, the living, are at issue and hence central to the whole impulse of prayer itself. An overview of this section of the poem in Julius A.ii reinforces such a suggestion. Three related phrases, *hu þu æþele eart*, *hu þu mære eart*, and again, *hu þu mære eart*, occupy the central position on manuscript lines 4, 7, and 9 of folio 136^v. For the first, we may suggest that saints and mortals have tasted God's grace in the redemption of humanity, so that the adjective *æþele* is not only alliterative but appropriate. For the first *mære* phrase, which governs the section on angels, we may suggest that *mære* itself is eminently suitable for the heavenly host who see God's glory above. Finally, following Raw's assertion that "the lines describing God's knowledge move . . . [to] a third and higher level . . . [and] . . . a hymn of praise" (125), we may propose that the final *mære* phrase best summarizes the glory of the Creator as He is perceived by earth and heaven alike.

Therefore the transmitting manuscripts for this poem preserve different kinds of information. The Julius A.ii scribe uses space to line end, nota dividers, coloured capitals, and parallel spatialization of his words and phrases to throw into high relief the structure already in place in the poem. The Lambeth Psalter scribe who excerpted from the piece for his confessional context, had no such interest in highlighting structure: those commands *geare me* and *gemilda þin mod* which follow the first two *Eala*'s are in no way set out to draw the eye to framework. Thematic content fitted according to context into available space informs the scribal treatment of the *Prayer* quotation in Lambeth 427; a more complex awareness of lexical structure and visual balance determines its transmission in Julius A.ii.

Lapidge presents a valuable maxim in the form of an opinion, that "it is the editor's first duty to delete error in the transmitted text and, if possible, remove it" (42). However, this creates a dilemma for those engaged in editing texts that contain physical evidence of the kind described above, which can be lost by the editorial vigilance advocated by Lapidge. "Indeed, the modern, critical reflex to recover an authorial text devalues the historical significance and meaning of the actual, realized texts which show us the poem working in the world" (O'Keeffe 1990, 193-94). Old English verse editing must enter a new phase of balance between responsible presentation of text that may require emendation or tidying, and responsible preservation of information that may ultimately affect the received scholarship on that text. The domination of the influential "verse edition" medium over the material it presents will remain inexorably "author"-itative until projects like the Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile make universally available the images of manuscript folios for us to teach from, together with the printed page. Only then will the "edition" recede in its authority (and, hence, move away from the subconscious sense of authorship that is somehow implicit in it), to occupy the position of "commentary upon" that better characterizes the subjectivity inherent from its inception. However, until that time, editors must be careful to balance the demands made by respecting the text and respecting the book. In 1973, Helmut Gneuss encouraged the continuation of "very conservative" editions that "could actually be called diplomatic, that is, they reproduce the text exactly as it stands in the MS" (Gneuss 15).⁷ Sixteen years later, O'Keeffe made a similar proposal to a Symposium on the Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture session at Kalamazoo:

If the production of a scholarly edition requires editorial intervention in the form of emendation, punctuation, and format to achieve readability, it also

demands responsibility to the historical situation of the poem in its realized manuscript text. These twin goals of modern readability and historical responsibility may be approached by a specific kind of facing edition where the poem, whether attested singly or in multiple manuscripts, is presented in an edited version faced by a scrupulously archaeological mapping of the manuscript in print. Such a format permits what is in effect a dialectical approach to surviving textual evidence, allowing the production of a readable edition which at the same time acknowledges itself as both an approximation to and an interpretation of the edited poem. The historical self-consciousness of such a text is made possible by the facing "diplomatic" printing of a manuscript version as each recovery of the text comments on the other.⁸

This dialectical approach with critical text and diplomatic transcription on facing pages is therefore one viable alternative, especially for the shorter verse pieces, which would allow the two sides of the dilemma to stand in immediate resolution. We might therefore be able to make available to the students of tomorrow, the best text possible "even if this means indulging in occasional editorial conjecture" (Lapidge 45) and at the same time a clear record of "the poem working in the world" (O'Keeffe 1990, 78).

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NOTES

I am grateful to the British Library and to the Lambeth Palace Library, both of London, for their permission to reproduce Figure 1 and Plates 1-5.

¹ A more substantial discussion of the truncated Latin psalm-verses in *Kentish Psalm 50* may be found in S. Keefer, *Psalm-Poem and Psalter-Glosses: The Latin and Old English Psalter-Text Background to "Kentish Psalm 50"*, pp. 22-26.

² On folio 72r, line 3, we can see the word *ðolienn* marked with cancellation points where *to healdenne* should stand; the scribe has carried it erroneously from *to ðolienne* on the line above.

³ Keefer, *passim*.

⁴ For a complete listing of these, see Greenfield and Robinson, p. 255.

⁵ S.L. Keefer and P. Hollahan. *Old English Liturgical Poetry: A Critical Edition* (working title). Under consideration The Research Group on Manuscript Evidence (Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge), Texts and Studies, Manuscripts and Contexts series.

⁶ I have used Dobbie's text from A.S.P.R. VI, pp. 94-96, despite the flaws that I identify, for reasons pertinent to my discussion.

⁷ Gneuss discusses the process of editorial emendation very lucidly in section 3.2. p. 15 of Frank and Cameron, eds., *A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English*.

⁸ I am grateful to Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe for making available to me the working proofs of her article "Texts and Works: Some Historical Questions on the Editing of Old English Verse."

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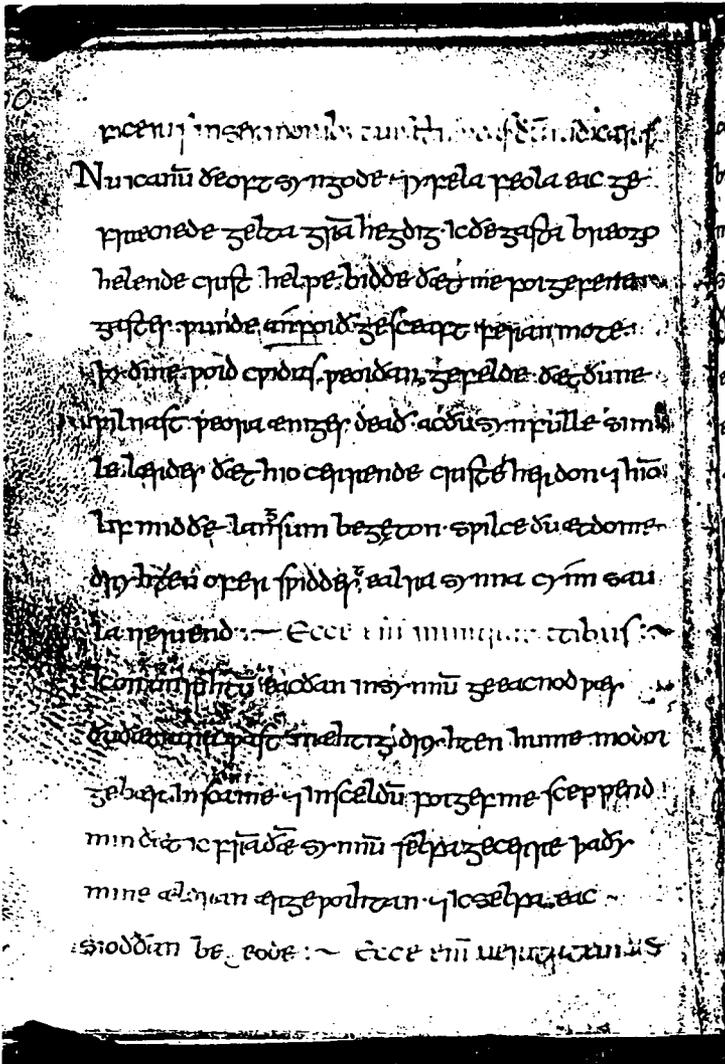


Plate 1

British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D.vi, folio 71v
 by permission of the British Library

^{ne} ^{paepre} ^{gemunan} ^{fipra} ^{preolico}
 nec etiā remunerare ualeo. istarū deniq:
 & multarū aliarū qu. ^{pe} uolens nolens. aut
 sciens aut nesciens. contra uoluntatem
 tuā dñe feci & neglexi. tibi dñe facio con-
^{cedere} ^{que pop gemelur}
 fessionē. tu pius & misericors tribue mi
 hi plenā misericorditer indulgentiā:
 qui uiuis & regnas dī. p omnia sēta sctoy.

Eala drihten leof eala dema god. geaþre me ece paldend.
 lepat mine sauple synnum for pundoð. Ge hel
 þu hy heofona drihten. 7 gelucra þu hw lifer al
 doþ. for þon du eþest miht ealra læc a ðara þege
 purde 7 ide. odde pide Eala frea bpuhza folcer
 se yppend. gemilda þin mod me tozode. Syle
 ðine dre þinum earminze. Se bið earminz þeon
 wæn ðen hwi dezer 7 mihter droplū compað. 7 þis
 yllan pypod pabica þere myzude. þonne hand
 leas hand 7 forpað buzan he þa yfles. ege spice.

Plate 2

Lambeth Palace MS 427, folio 183v
 by permission of Lambeth Palace Library

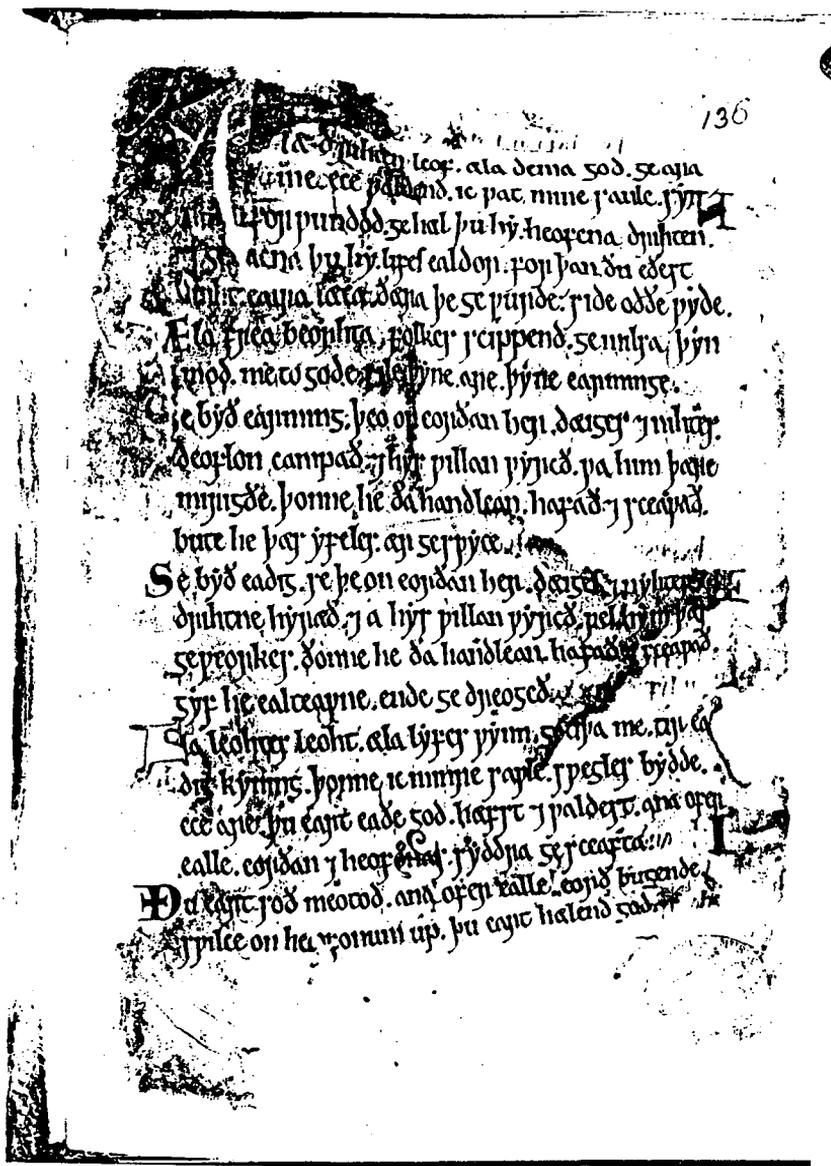


Plate 3

British Library MS Cotton Julius A.ii, folio 136^r
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