

# THE OLD ENGLISH ACCOUNT OF THE SEVEN HEAVENS

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THESE is only one ‘seven heavens’ text in Old English; like all but one of the other versions, it does not survive independently. It is preserved in a larger composite homily on Doomsday in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College (hereafter CCC) 41, pp 287–95, the relevant section being on pp 292–5. The homily, often referred to as Homily III or the homily on Doomsday, has been edited only in parts, by Max Förster and Rudolph Willard.<sup>1</sup> The division was largely due to the editors’ interests: Förster edited the first half of the homily because it contains a version of the apocryphal text the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, while Willard edited the second half, containing the ‘Seven Heavens’ section, as part of his ongoing research into the homilies in this manuscript. As a result of these varying priorities, the last paragraph of the homily, which Willard curiously omitted, remained unedited until 2003, when Sharon Rowley printed a diplomatic transcript as an appendix to her discussion of Homily III.<sup>2</sup> The edition of the Old English *Seven Heavens* presented here includes the exordium at the end of the homily and is based on a new reading of the manuscript,<sup>3</sup> collated with Willard’s and Rowley’s editions where applicable. The text also now appears in translation for the first time.<sup>4</sup>

1 M. Förster, ‘A New Version of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* in Old English’, *Anglia* 73 (1955) 17–27; R. Willard, ‘The Apocryphon of the Seven Heavens’ in *idem*, *Two Apocrypha in Old English Homilies*, *Beiträge zur englischen Philologie* 30 (Leipzig, 1935), pp 1–30 (pp 4–6).

2 S. Rowley, ‘“A wesendan nacodnisse and þa ecan þistru”’: Language and Mortality in the Homily for Doomsday in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41’, *English Studies* 84:6 (2003) 493–510. To date, the homily has not yet been printed as a whole. I plan to publish the full homily elsewhere.

3 Numbers V–VII according to Willard’s summary of the homily (thus *op. cit.*, p. 2).

4 Parts of the text are translated in the footnotes to Rowley, ‘A wesendan nacodnisse’.

## Background and Context

The most significant study on the Old English *Seven Heavens* was carried out by Willard, whose excellent edition was accompanied by a lengthy discussion and a detailed comparison of the Old English text to the Irish and Latin versions. Willard's analysis of the homily includes in particular the difficulties concerning the names of heavens, doors and angels, and the virgins with the iron rods (whom he identifies as the cardinal virtues). From a comparison with the other versions printed in this book it will be obvious that each has something of its own to offer, complicating any attempt to unearth the original. Whilst our text is verbally closest to the version preserved in *Fís Adomnáin* (hereafter *FA*; see pp 00–00 above), the latter does not preserve the names which are plentiful in this version. At some points, difficulties of language may have affected transmission, as when *FA* describes a whirlpool in the fifth heaven, where the Old English and Latin texts describe a revolving wheel reminiscent of one of the redactions of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*.<sup>5</sup> Whilst the Latin version (hereafter *K*; see pp 00–00 above) has clearly suffered some corruption in its transmission, the more significant differences between these three versions are not usually the result of error: in the greater part of its account, *FA* consistently omits all names, while for its part *K* omits almost all reference to the righteous souls, though it lists the names of the heavens. Consequently, we must regard the existing versions as independent from each other and concede that the textual evidence is too ambiguous to support an assertion that the homily is likely to have come to England from Ireland.<sup>6</sup> Richard F. Johnson supports Jane Stevenson's observation that the *Seven Heavens* was possibly known in Ireland first on the grounds that our version is unique in Old English and shows striking similarity to the Irish versions.<sup>7</sup> Yet it is evident from the Latin preserved in some of the Irish copies, and from the independent similarities to *K* in the present text, that the ultimate source must have been in Latin.<sup>8</sup> The copy of our homily in CCC 41 is, however, not

5 Cf. D. N. Dumville, 'Towards an Interpretation of *Fís Adomnáin*', *StC* 12/13 (1977–8) 62–77 (p. 67).

6 R. F. Johnson, 'Archangel in the Margins: St. Michael the Archangel in the Homilies of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 41', *Traditio* 53 (1998) 63–91 (p. 79).

7 *Ibid.*, p. 79. Johnson's table of comparisons on p. 78, however, is misleading in that it only shows three heavens, leaving out those which exhibit most variation. Relying solely on his summary one would be led to believe that the Old English version is closest to the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum* version (pp 00–00 above), which is not in fact the case.

8 This is also the opinion of Dumville, 'Towards an Interpretation', p. 66; and see p. 000 above. I am, however, not inclined to agree with Richard Bauckham's appraisal of *K* as the best surviving copy of the original, nor with his hypothesis that the work itself could, on the basis of its contents, be as ancient as the second century AD. See R. Bauckham, 'The Apocalypse of the Seven Heavens: the Latin Versions', *Apocrypha* 4 (1993) 141–73, reprinted in *The Fate of the Dead: Studies*

likely to be the original translation. Rowley observes that the marginalia are mostly written by a single scribe, whose Latin, as demonstrated by the liturgical marginalia, is not particularly good, whilst Förster's analysis of the first half of the homily led him to conclude that the text is a very literal rendering of the Latin of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*.<sup>9</sup> This discrepancy suggests that the scribe was copying, not composing the work. In addition, it has recently been suggested that the exemplar of CCC 41's closest parallel, the copy in *EA*, might in fact have been written on the Continent.<sup>10</sup> This raises questions not only about the homily's exemplar and the milieu from which it came, but equally about its relations to other Old English homilies.

Though no other Old English copy survives, our text does not stand entirely by itself. Both the inexpressibility topos of the 'iron voices' (or tongues) and the description of the soul's passage through twelve dragons, which are placed at the end of the homily, are paralleled in another Old English homily entitled *Be Heofonwarum and be Helwarum*, which is preserved in two manuscripts from the late eleventh/early twelfth and the first half of the twelfth century respectively.<sup>11</sup> The 'iron voices' motif, deriving from Vergil's *Aeneid*, has a long history in Irish and Anglo-Saxon literature and, due to its inclusion in several of the Redactions (I, IV, V, VIII and X) of the *Visio Sancti Pauli* as a numerical inexpressibility topos, became one of the stock elements in descriptions of hell.<sup>12</sup> The *Visio* alters the description in the *Aeneid* to a reduplicating *gradatio* motif and describes not an iron voice but iron tongues.<sup>13</sup> The phrasing in our homily is actually the closest to the *Aeneid* of the examples preserved in Old English, transforming Vergil's hundred tongues and voice of iron into someone with *.c. tungena 7 ðara ægbwylc hæbbe isene stafne* 'a hundred tongues, and each of those would have an iron voice'. It varies from the original source by applying the *gradatio* motif with *ægbwylc*. The text in *Be Heofonwarum* reads:

on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses (Leiden, 1998) 304–331 (p. 372).

- 9 Rowley, 'A wesendan nacodnisse', p. 497; Förster, 'A New Version of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*', p. 13.  
 10 J. Carey, 'A Vision and its Context: Further Steps Towards the Interpretation of *Fís Adomnáin*', John Strachan Memorial Lecture on Celtic and Gaelic Studies 4, Aberdeen (forthcoming).  
 11 Full details can be found in the most recent edition by L. Teresi, 'Be Heofonwarum 7 be Helwarum: A Complete Edition', in *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. E. Treharne and S. Rosser, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 252 (Tempe AR, 2002), pp 211–44. See her discussion for full references to previous editions.  
 12 C. D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 6 (Cambridge, 1993), p. 147; and H. L. C. Tristram, 'Stock Descriptions of Heaven and Hell in Old English Prose and Poetry', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 75 (1976) 102–13 (pp 107–8).  
 13 Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

*þeah ænigman hæfde hund heafda, 7 þæra hæfda ægbwylc hæfde hund tungan, 7 hi wæron ealle isene, 7 ealle spræcon fram frymðe þysse worulde oð ende, ne mihton bi aseccgan þæt yfel þe on helle is.*<sup>14</sup>

The homily slightly expands the motif from CCCC 41, but describes iron tongues rather than an iron voice and is thereby closer to the variants of this motif preserved in the redactions of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*. In fact, though the examples vary significantly from text to text, most of the Old English versions which include this reference describe an iron voice.<sup>15</sup> A less frequently quoted example may be found in Napier 43, which describes, in a series of clauses beginning with *ægbwylc*, an inexpressibility topos in which the men *ægbwylc hæfde seofon heafda*, and *þara heafda gebwylc seofon tungan*, and *þara tungena gebwylc isene stemne*, and still they are unable to recount the torments of hell.<sup>16</sup>

The ‘twelve dragons’ motif, which our text shares with the other ‘seven heavens’ texts, is related to the ‘monster of hell’ motif, which generally presents itself in a numerical *gradatio* pattern in Insular texts and which was very likely inspired by the dragon Parthemon.<sup>17</sup> The latter comes once again from the Redactions (I–III, VII, VIII, X and *Br*) of the *Visio Sancti Pauli*, which describe a horrible dragon with multiple heads and teeth.<sup>18</sup> Willard prints the passage in *Be Heofonwarum*, which shares with the CCCC 41 text the iron walls surrounding hell, on which sit twelve fiery dragons, which swallow and disgorge the sinful soul. Where *Be Heofonwarum* goes on to describe the Devil using

14 *Op. cit.*, p. 229, lines 59–63. Cf. Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 149 (cites an older edition). Translated by Rowley, ‘A wesendan nacodnisse’, p. 503 n. 56: ‘though any man had a hundred heads and each of the heads had a hundred tongues, and they were all iron, and all spoke from the creation of this world until the end, they could not tell the evil that is in Hell’.

15 Wright, *op. cit.*, pp 148–51. A variant which refers to the seven heavens – though not to iron tongues – may be found in a Rogationtide homily (*In Uigilia Ascensionis*, MS CCCC 303, pp 223–6) published by Bazire and Cross and previously discussed in this context by Tristram (*op. cit.*, p. 107). In his own discussion of the motif Wright prints the relevant passage and compares it to another example in Vercelli IX as well as to a second Rogationtide homily discussed by Tristram (MS Hatton 114, ff 111r–114v), also providing examples from Irish literature.

16 Napier 43 ‘Sunnandæges spell’ (CCCC 419 and 421, pp 1–2, 38–73, s. xi’ according to the *Dictionary of Old English List of Texts* <<http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/st/index.html>>), in A. S. Napier, ed., *Wulfstan*, *Sammlung englischer Denkmäler 4* (Berlin, 1883), reprinted as *Wulfstan – Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre Echtheit* (Dublin and Zurich, 1967; with appendix by K. Ostheeren); the full section of the motif is found on p. 214 l.25 – p. 215 l.3. Trans. ‘(though) each had seven heads, and each of the heads [had] seven tongues, and each of the tongues [had] iron voices’.

17 Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 165; Willard, *Two Apocrypha*, pp 24–8, esp. p. 15 n. 121.

18 T. Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli: The History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts* (London, 1935), pp 66–7; Wright, *op. cit.*, pp 156–8.

a *gradatio* motif, CCCC 41 merely continues to describe Satan as bound on his back. The phrasing in the two versions is very similar, but not close enough to posit a direct relationship. References to the soul being swallowed do not seem as plentiful as the ‘monsters of hell’ descriptions, but we may observe an analogue in Vercelli IV, a homily on Judgement Day, in a section describing the punishment for ‘witches and sorcerers and wizards and occultists’, who are never to come back from the pit of serpents and of *þæs dracan ceolan, þe is Satan nemned*.<sup>19</sup> This same homily also refers to Christ’s reception of the good soul in *þone beofon þære halgan þrynesse* ‘in the heaven of the holy Trinity’, using the same turn of phrase found in Homily III of CCCC 41.<sup>20</sup> A further parallel is found in Napier 29, which states that

*ða deoflu hi ða læddon and bescuton hi anum fyrenan dracan innan þone muð  
and he hi þærrihte forswearh and eft aspaw on þa hatostan brynas bellewites.*<sup>21</sup>

A parallel to the description in our homily of Satan bound on his back appears in another Vercelli homily (I), which states that

*þæne be þær ure Drihten Crist mid sarum bendum geband 7 hine in ece susl  
ge-sette 7 eallum his mihtum hine be-reafoðe.*<sup>22</sup>

In the introduction to his edition, Willard suggested that the material in the homily belongs to the ‘unreformed, or pre-Ælfric, period, and to the stratum of the Blickling Homilies, the Vercelli homilies, and many of those attributed to Wulfstan’.<sup>23</sup> Our brief overview shows that he was certainly right in suggesting these associations. These

19 M. Förster, ed., *Die Vercelli-Homilien*, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 12 (Hamburg, 1932), p. 77 line 53. The full sentence reads *Ða þe her bioð þa mæstan dry-igean 7 scin-lacan 7 gealdor-cræftigan 7 lyblacan, ne cumað þa næfre of þæra wyrma seaðe 7 of þæs dracan ceolan, þe is Satan nemned* (p. 77, lines 50–53). Translated in L. E. Nicholson, *The Vercelli Book Homilies: Translations from the Anglo-Saxon* (Lanham MD and London, 1991), p. 38: ‘Those who here are the greatest witches and sorcerers and wizards and occultists, they will come never then from the pit of the serpents and from the throat of the dragon that is named Satan’.

20 Cf. below. Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 265.

21 Napier, no. 29 (Oxford, Bodleian Junius 99, f. 66), *op. cit.*, pp 134–43 (p. 141 lines 23–5). Trans. ‘the devils led them and shot them into the mouth of a fiery dragon and he immediately swallowed them and spat them back out into the hottest torments of hellfire’.

22 Förster, *Die Vercelli-Homilien*, lines 364–6. Trans. Nicholson, p. 26: ‘that one, He our Lord Christ there bound with bands of sorrow and set him in eternal torment, and stripped him of all his powers’.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

connections, however tenuous, are significant, as we shall see, even if some of the parallels represent variations of a stock motif. The *gradatio* motif, for instance, is of limited occurrence in Old English outside of the context of the 'iron voices' and the 'monster of hell' motifs.<sup>24</sup> Charles D. Wright is of the opinion that the technique was likely transmitted to Anglo-Saxon writers through Irish sources and he reckons that 'its appearance in these Old English texts is either a mannered and decadent imitation of an Irish rhetorical technique or a translation of Irish or Hiberno-Latin models'.<sup>25</sup> The presence of these and similar motifs in the homilies mentioned above, therefore, points to a shared literary *milieu*.

### The Manuscript and its Marginalia

N. R. Ker dates CCCC 41 to the early eleventh century (s. xi'), coming to Exeter by the late eleventh century.<sup>26</sup> A colophon at the end of the manuscript (p. 488) records its donation by Bishop Leofric to the cathedral of Exeter. The main text in the manuscript is the B text of the Old English translation of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. The manuscript has, however, been supplied with a substantial amount of surrounding marginalia, which include Latin homilies, masses, liturgical material (mostly Latin), prayers and charms, a fragment of the question-and-answer text *Solomon and Saturn*, and six Old English homilies.<sup>27</sup> The homily containing the 'seven heavens' account is the third Old English homily in this series, though only four of them are written consecutively (pp 254–301).<sup>28</sup> In this part of the manuscript the homilies occupy the full upper, lower and outer margins.<sup>29</sup>

The manuscript was possibly originally written in Wessex,<sup>30</sup> most likely in 'a minor

24 Wright, *op. cit.*, pp 173–4. By contrast it occurs in Irish vernacular literature as far back as the eighth century (p. 252).

25 *Ibid.*

26 N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957), pp 43–5, no. 32.

27 Ker, *loc. cit.*; M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1912), i.81–5.

28 The fifth homily is written at pp 402–17, the sixth at pp 484–8.

29 For a full discussion of the scribe's various approaches to filling the margins see T. A. Bredehoft, 'Filling the Margins of CCCC 41: Textual Space and a Developing Archive', *Review of English Studies* n.s. 57 (232) (2006) 721–32.

30 R. J. S. Grant, *The B Text of the Old English Bede: A Linguistic Commentary* (Amsterdam, 1989), p. 446. Rowley more cautiously states that it was written in an 'unidentified, but probably southern, English scriptorium': 'Nostalgia and the Rhetoric of Lack: The Missing Exemplar for Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Manuscript 41', in *Old English Literature in its Manuscript Context*, ed.

foundation of no great size';<sup>31</sup> but Ker and Förster share the opinion that the marginalia were most likely added to the manuscript at Exeter, after it was bequeathed to the cathedral there.<sup>32</sup> Though Ker dates the entries to the period s. xi<sup>1</sup> or s. xi<sup>med.</sup> and R. J. S. Grant dates the gift to the period 1069–1072 – which does not exclude the possibility that some material was added before the manuscript found its way to the Exeter cathedral – the consensus is that the entries were added afterwards. They are in a third hand distinct from those of the two scribes who worked on the main text.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, Grant states that the colophon recording the gift of the book to Exeter is in the same hand as that of the marginalia.<sup>34</sup> Thomas Bredehoft has recently argued that the marginalia were added in four stages and, though he does not speculate on the consequence of his findings for dating the various texts, his research shows that the four stages reveal a grouping together of different types of material.<sup>35</sup>

There has been some debate in recent years concerning the nature of the marginalia in this manuscript and how they are to be interpreted in their context.<sup>36</sup> Sarah Larratt Keefer has demonstrated that the liturgical marginalia on pages 2–17 represent a 'group of disparate texts that have a broader base than a simple missal', but which are in part 'common to a body of Anglo-Saxon pontificals, benedictionals and a unique liturgical compendium'.<sup>37</sup> She suggests the collection represents an idiosyncratic collection or archive, into which diverse texts were collected as part of an early stage of compendium-making.<sup>38</sup> Christopher Hohler proposes that the scribe of the marginalia was probably 'a priest in charge of a small minster' attempting to add to his collection what was lacking in his own missal.<sup>39</sup> What surfaces initially from these studies, then, is

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J. T. Lionarons (Morgantown, 2004), pp 11–35 (p. 13).

31 Grant, *The B Text*, p. 445; S. L. Keefer, 'Margin as Archive: The Liturgical Marginalia of a Manuscript of the Old English Bede', *Traditio* 51 (1996) 147–77 (p. 147).

32 Förster, 'A New Version of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*', p. 11.

33 Ker, *loc. cit.*, describes it as 'an angular hand of s. xi<sup>1</sup> or xi med.'; cf. Grant, *The B Text*, p. 445. The last Old English homily is not in the margins but on the final leaves and is in yet another hand again.

34 R. J. S. Grant, *Three Homilies from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41: The Assumption, St Michael and the Passion* (Ottawa, 1982), p. 4.

35 Thus he groups all but one of the Old English homilies into his category 3: 'Filling the Margins', p. 730.

36 A session was dedicated to this manuscript at The Ninth Biennial Meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists, 'Imagined Endings: Borders, Reigns, Millennia', University of Notre Dame, 8–14 August 1999, where precisely these issues were discussed. The abstracts of the relevant papers can be found in the *Old English Newsletter* archive.

37 *Op. cit.*, pp 148 and 149.

38 *Ibid.*, pp 150–1.

39 C. Hohler, 'Review of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41: the Loricis and the Missal', *Me-*

a focus on pastoral care and consequently an interest, on the scribe's part, in gathering material suitable for the liturgy and ministry in general. In fact, some of this comes to the fore in some of the less obvious elements in the marginalia. In her study of the cattle-theft charms in this manuscript, Stephanie Hollis concludes that the – only superficially Christianised – charms represent the 'outgrowth of a pastoral ministry which endeavoured to accommodate the laity's customary reliance on magical aids by the creation and adaptation of secular rituals'.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the items previously categorised by Grant as *loricas* have been identified by Hohler as 'prayers to be uttered by some officiant, and not *loricas*, which are personal prayers to God'.<sup>41</sup> John Damon has argued that the homily on St Michael 'contains a verbal echo of a distinctive antiphon, *Estote fortes in bello*, commonly associated in early English liturgy with the Common of an Apostle, which also appears in the liturgy for the feast of Michael'.<sup>42</sup> And finally, the extract from *Solomon and Saturn*, which might initially seem out of place amongst homilies and liturgical material, discusses the efficacy of the Paternoster and must, therefore, also be read in the context of the liturgy. Despite the great variety in the texts added in the margins, the interests of the scribe thus begin to emerge.

A similar thematic unity may be discerned in the homiletic marginalia. Whilst Grant, following Willard, considers the marginal homilies to be filled with 'ecclesiastical fiction' with probable Irish connections,<sup>43</sup> Johnson observes their focus on the protection of the body and soul.<sup>44</sup> The term 'ecclesiastical fiction' here refers to the apocryphal content which is evident in some of the homilies in the manuscript. The homilies on pp 254–301 centre on major themes of the liturgical year, such as the Last Judgement, the Assumption,

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*dium Ævum* 49 (1980) 275–8 (p. 276). Hohler also notes various copying errors, as a result of which the scribe missed or misplaced various sections of some of the blessings, and suggests that he did not know very much Latin.

40 S. Hollis, 'Old English "Cattle-Theft Charms": Manuscript Contexts and Social Uses', *Anglia* 115 (1997) 139–64 (p. 139).

41 *Op. cit.*, p. 278.

42 J. Damon, 'The Old English "In Praise of St. Michael" and the Antiphon *Estote fortes in bello*', 9th Meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame IN, August 1999. Abstract published in *Old English Newsletter* 32:3 (1999). J. E. Cross had earlier pointed to a similar connection for two sections on St. Michael in the Pembroke collection, the homilist of which employs phrases of eulogy which are 'found as antiphons and responses of the liturgical feast for the archangel' in 'An Unpublished Story of Michael the Archangel and its Connections', in *Magister Regis: Studies in Honor of Robert Earl Kaske*, ed. Arthur Groos *et al.* (New York, 1986), pp 23–35 (p. 26).

43 Willard, *Two Apocrypha*, p. 2; Grant, *The B Text*, p. 445.

44 *Op. cit.*, pp 67–8.



Easter, and of course the signs of Doom and the seven heavens, followed by homilies on St Michael (pp 402–17) and on the Passion (pp 484–8). In keeping with the pastoral tenor of the manuscript, they are generally concerned with the fate of the soul and, according to N. R. Thompson, with the Resurrection.<sup>45</sup> The first homily concerns the Last Judgement and contains an extended dialogue between the body and the soul. The homily on the Assumption, preceding the Doomsday homily, is a loose version of the B text of the Pseudo-Mellito *Transitus Mariae* independent from Blickling homily 13.<sup>46</sup> The fourth homily, on Easter, contains an extended passage on the Harrowing of Hell, the Last Judgement and an address to sinners by Christ, much of which is taken from the *Gospel of Nicodemus*.<sup>47</sup> This text is also the basis for, among others, *Christ III* and Vercelli VIII, and therefore offers another link between CCCC 41, the Vercelli Book and Exeter.<sup>48</sup> The homily in praise of St Michael, previously mentioned, which appears to be unique, and the homily on the Passion, based on Matthew 26 and 27, follow further on in the manuscript. Whilst some of these homilies certainly incorporate apocryphal material, their topics are common enough and, though their sources may not have been accepted by more conservative scholars such as Ælfric, they are no less effective. Indeed, we have seen that some of the material found in CCCC 41 is also found in some of the Vercelli homilies (I, IV, VIII), Pseudo-Wulfstan homilies (29 and 43<sup>9</sup>) and other anonymous homilies such as *Be Heofonwarum* 7 *be Helwarum*. There is therefore no reason to treat the material in the marginalia as unusual ‘ecclesiastical fiction’. Rowley, too, has cautioned against overemphasising the unusual aspects of these homilies and points out that the tendency to attribute apocryphal or troublesome material to the Irish is perhaps due to the nervousness of the scholar attempting to categorise it.<sup>49</sup>

Whilst the case has sometimes perhaps been overstated,<sup>50</sup> there are indeed indications that some of the material in the marginalia has ‘Irish connections’. It is important, however, not to polarise and create non-existent ‘corrupted Irish’ vs ‘pure Anglo-Saxon’ categories, as scholars have occasionally been tempted to do. Scribes are known to adapt sources freely on occasion, assimilating all sorts of material in the process – the type

45 N. M. Thompson, ‘The Limits of Orthodoxy: The Homilies of CCCC 41’, 9th Meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists; abstract published in *Old English Newsletter* 32:3 (1999).

46 Grant, *Three Homilies*, pp 6, 13–5.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 7.

48 *Ibid.*

49 Rowley, ‘A wesendan nacodnisse’, pp 497–8; *eadem*, ‘Nostalgia’, pp 30–1, 33–4.

50 Some of the attributions to ‘Irish traditions’ are doubtful. Johnson unconvincingly argues (‘Archangel in the Margins’, pp 64, 75) that the function of St Michael as protector of souls and psychopomp in the homily on the Assumption is ‘Irish in spirit’ (as opposed to Roman) even though St Michael is described as a psychopomp in the Coptic and Syriac accounts of the Assumption as well as in the Pseudo-Melito version.

of material consulted merely represents the limits the author or scribe has set himself.<sup>51</sup> Ultimately, the presence of ‘mixed’ elements in any one given text may mean no more than that the scribe consulted a variety of sources or that certain motifs had become ‘assimilated’ stock descriptions, as is perhaps the case with the motif of the ‘iron voices’ and certainly also for the inexpressibility topos in our Doomsday homily. Likewise, existing analogues between Irish and Old English texts may mean no more than that the texts belong to a wider Insular, or even Continental, tradition. This appears to be true for CCCC 41 in particular.

Among the textual analogues that point to a shared textual history with Irish sources is the Latin portion in charm 4 (p. 206), which contains the stanzas for A, X, Y and Z, as well as an antiphon of *Audite omnes amantes*, a hymn in honour of St Patrick attested in, among other manuscripts, the Antiphony of Bangor, the Irish *Liber hymnorum* and the *Leabhar Breac*.<sup>52</sup> The charm invokes a collection of saints including Patrick and Brigit, which has been taken as an indication, though tenuous, of Irish connections. The last three stanzas of this hymn, with the antiphon appended, were commonly substituted for the entire hymn, as they were believed to hold the same power as the whole, and, consequently, it is plausible that the scribe did not have the whole work in front of him.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, its presence in various Continental offices means that the work could have reached the scribe through a variety of collections and makes it impossible to say whether he actually had a Hiberno-Latin source before him.<sup>54</sup>

Grant’s attempts to find an Irish source for the homily on St Michael, which contains some unorthodox claims regarding the feats of the saint,<sup>55</sup> did not prove entirely

51 For instance, Ælfric’s reluctance to use any source he could not verify and his wariness of Hiberno-Latin texts limit the content of his homilies. This, however, does not entitle us to presume that his work represents the standard.

52 Grant, *The B Text*, p. 445. This hymn is part of an office designed to ward off the plague in the *Second Vision of Adomnán* (pp 00–00 below). Grant points to the association between Patrick and Michael in this hymn in an attempt to draw the homily on St Michael into an Irish-influenced context by proposing that the charm may have inspired the homily, though he acknowledges that there is not the slightest resemblance between the two (Grant, *Three Homilies*, pp 51–2).

53 J. H. Bernard, and R. Atkinson, ed. and trans., *The Irish Liber hymnorum*, 2 vols (London, 1898), i. xxxv, ii. 98 and J. Carey, *King of Mysteries*, pp 147, 161. It may be noted that the ninth-century gospel book of St Mulling also only preserved the last three stanzas instead of the whole work.

54 P. Jeffery, ‘Eastern and Western Elements in the Irish Monastic Prayer of the Hours’, in *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography*, ed. M. Fassler and R. Baltzer (Oxford, 2000), pp 99–144. Hollis (‘Cattle-charms’, pp 146–8) has argued convincingly that the presence of this section in the middle of what is otherwise an Old English charm is, in fact, due to a copying error resulting from a leaf turned back to front, which would imply that the source was bilingual (at the very least) as well.

55 Grant, *Three Homilies*, p. 51.

unfounded either, as the text has an analogue in a sequence in praise of St Michael in the *Leabhar Breac* beginning *Is é Michel*.<sup>56</sup>

The *Solomon and Saturn* fragment mentioned above, however, is demonstrably related to Irish or Hiberno-Latin sources. The fragment in CCCC 41, which is a copy of part of *Solomon and Saturn I*, has been classified by Grant as a lorica which ‘has Irish demonology as a main interest’.<sup>57</sup> Though I would not say that demonology is at the heart of this text, which describes a highly dramatised combat between the Paternoster and the Devil, the text’s naming of the archangels Uriel and Rumiël and the devil Sathiel is considered one of the many Irish ‘symptoms’ of this text.<sup>58</sup> However, the main indications of this text’s background – whether it be based on a Hiberno-Latin original or has drawn from Irish sources – are the description of the twelve ‘victories’ of the wind, which represents a piece of Hisperic diction,<sup>59</sup> and its ‘extravagant rhetorical style’, in particular the hyperbole and the litanic runs favoured by the author of *Solomon and Saturn I*.<sup>60</sup> It had previously been suggested by R. J. Menner that the hypostasis in the poems finds its closest parallels in Irish prayers and litanies<sup>61</sup> and Wright adduces Irish parallels to the use of the Paternoster as a protective charm similar to the personification in *Solomon and Saturn* of the Paternoster as a weapon against demons.<sup>62</sup> He furthermore argues that Vercelli IV, which has close parallels with *Solomon and Saturn II* and shares the litanic style of *Solomon and Saturn I*, echoes the Three Utterances exemplum, which describes a good and bad soul being led to heaven or hell by angels or demons at the moment of death.<sup>63</sup> The Old English versions of this exemplum are all based on Hiberno-Latin models<sup>64</sup> and a copy of it is contained in the homily *Be Heofonwarum 7 be Helwarum*, which shares with our Doomsday homily the ‘iron voice’ and ‘twelve dragons’ motifs. A copy of this exemplum is also preserved in the Karlsruhe manuscript which contains the Latin ‘seven heavens’ account. Wright thus presents us with a wider Hiberno-Latin context for some of the marginalia in CCCC 41 as well as for the text edited here.

Napier 43, otherwise called a ‘Niall sermon’, which was mentioned above in relation

56 Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 262 n. 167.

57 Grant, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

58 Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 252.

60 *Ibid.*, pp 235, 244–5. Wright discusses the *Solomon and Saturn* tradition on pp 233–70; the present discussion owes much to his valuable insights.

61 Quoted *ibid.*, p. 236.

62 *Ibid.*, pp 238–41.

63 *Ibid.*, p. 264; and cf. pp 00–00 above. As noted above, the same Vercelli IV also contains a reference to a soul-swallowing dragon.

64 *Ibid.*, p. 259.

to the *gradatio* motif of the ‘iron voices’, is equally explicitly linked with Ireland.<sup>65</sup> In fact, Wright considers that *Solomon and Saturn I*, the *Three Utterances*, the *Seven Heavens* and the Niall sermons may all reasonably be placed in a single milieu in Mercia, between the last quarter of the ninth and the first three quarters of the tenth century,<sup>66</sup> testifying to the ‘continuing influence of Irish texts and traditions in later Anglo-Saxon England, especially in the realm of apocryphal eschatology and cosmology’.<sup>67</sup>

So what bearing does this have on the marginalia in CCCC 41? This brief overview leads to the conclusion that the marginalia are well rooted in both the vernacular and the Hiberno-Latin tradition. However, though each of the texts discussed above has a discernible Hiberno-Latin background, we have as yet little evidence that any Hiberno-Latin sources were directly available to our compiler apart from the Latin portion of charm 4.<sup>68</sup> The inclusion and distribution of such material, then, tells us more about the character of Anglo-Saxon devotional literature as a whole than about our compiler. We may surmise, however, that he had none of Ælfric’s scruples concerning apocryphal material – if he even considered his sources to be such. In the light of the concentration on the fate of the soul betrayed by the marginalia and the compiler’s pastoral interest, our text and its surrounding homilies provided him with excellent material with which to inspire and educate his community.

## Date

Willard did not provide a date for the homily other than the indication that it is pre-Ælfrician in nature. Förster, in his linguistic analysis of Homily III (including the portion edited by Willard), concludes that the text, which he calls the ‘Exeter version’, has all the marks of the pre-Ælfrician period and suggests its exemplar may have been composed as far back as *c.* 950.<sup>69</sup> He characterises the language as mainly Late West Saxon but identifies ‘a curious admixture of Anglian (Mercian) and perhaps Kentish forms’ and posits that

it is safe to assume that the form of the text as we have it before us ... has been copied from an Old West Saxon text of the first half of the ninth

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65 *Ibid.*, pp 221–4.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 266.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 224.

68 And this may not have been included intentionally. Cf. note 000.

69 Förster, ‘A New Version of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*’, pp 33–5.

century – and that this Old West Saxon text had been transcribed from an Old Mercian form of the text.<sup>70</sup>

Grant agrees that all the Old English marginalia are written in Late West Saxon but ‘seem to have been copied from exemplars having an Anglian (Mercian) colouring’.<sup>71</sup> This is congruent with Wright’s theory concerning the origin of the group of texts discussed above.

### Editorial Principles

The text has been edited with minimal alterations. Modern punctuation and capitalisation have been applied, though manuscript punctuation, which consists only of the *punctum elevatum* and some small capitals, has been taken into consideration wherever possible.<sup>72</sup> I have retained the Tironian 7 for ‘and’ as well as numerals (except where they were used as abbreviations within words; e.g. *.v.tan* is expanded as *fiftan*). I have not italicised any unambiguous contractions, such as *þ-* for *þæt*, *g-* for *ge*, suspension strokes for *m* and *n* or *nomina sacra*. The manuscript text, written in the margin of the page, has no paragraph division of its own and the paragraph division of the text below is accordingly mine, as are the paragraph numbers.

I have emended the text only where grammatical sense seems to require it or where there appears to be an error. The alterations have been indicated in the *apparatus* with minimal interference in the body of the text. Scribal alterations are noted in the *apparatus* only. I have not normalised lexical variants, but some suggested readings are noted in the *apparatus*. Where more detailed commentary is required the issue is discussed in the Textual Notes.

The following editorial signs have been used: in the text square brackets [x] mark an editorial addition or alteration to the body of the text and a straight line | represents a page break; in the *apparatus* <...> marks erasure of letters (the number of dots approximating the number of letters erased); [p. x] marks a new page; ] follows a lemma discussed; two inverted commas ` ` enclose items added to the body of the text in superscript, or in the margin as noted; *x < y* indicates a scribal alteration from *y* to *x*.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 13.

71 Grant, *The B Text*, p. 8

72 On occasion, I have broken a sentence up for better readability. E.g. § 2 *him. Ða* and *Estimatio. Ða*; § 9 *sidum. H[e]*.

## Text

- §1. Donne, *men þa leofestan*, hwæt, her sægeþ git forð be þam siofon heofonum. Siofon heofonas sindon in gewritum leornode, þæt is, se lyftlica heofon, 7 se oferlyftlica 7 se fyrena heofon, 7 se stronga heofon, þone we ‘rodor’ hatað, 7 se egeslica heofon, 7 engla heofon, 7 heofon þære halgan Ðrinnisse.
- 5 §2. Donne is þære dura nama þæs forman heofones Abyssus haten, þæt is, ‘deopnis’, 7 þære oðre dura nama is Sabaoth, þæt is, ‘weoroda duru’, for þon englas ðider ingað 7 manna sawla. Sanctus Mi[c]hael se heahengel wealdeð þære dura, 7 twa fæmnan hi healdað mid him. Ða sindon nemde Equitas [7] Estimatio Ða habbað byrnende gyrde on hira handum.
- §3. Donne sio duru ðæs oferlyftlican heofones is nemned Elioth. Donne healdeð Sanctus Uriel  
10 þa duru, se heahengel, 7 ða twa fæmnan mid him, ða sindon nemde Continentia 7 Contentia, 7 hi habbaþ fyrene girde in hira scetum mid þam hi sleað ða eagan þara sinfulra sawla. Be þam dura [p. 293] irnð fyren flod, ðam is nama haten Abiersetus. Ðær beoð ða sawla ærist ðwegene 7 clænsu[d] swa siolfor 7 gold. Ðonne is oðer flod neh þam flode, ðæs nama is Fons Roris, þæt is on ure geðeode ‘wednisse flod’. Ða sawla of ðæm byrnendan  
15 flode beoð sende in ðisne flod 7 ðær bioð þwegene 7 bebaðude oþðæt þa wunda beoð hale.
- §4. Gif hit beoð ðara monna sawla ðe soðe hreowe doð hira synna, þa englas þonne lædað þa sawle to ðriddan dura, 7 to ðam þriddan heofone, se is nemned Ioth. Ðær is fyren ofen geseted; .xii. þusenda fæðma in heanisse se lig bið þe of ðam ofne forðgæð. Ealle ða sawla þara soðfæstra 7 ðara synfulra farað þurh þone lig. Ða soðfæstan in anes eagan birhtme þone  
20 lig oferferað. Ðam sinfullan þynced in þam lig[e] .xii. wintra fyrst in ðisse worlde.
- §5. Siððan sio sawl bið læded to ðære feorðan dura, þære nama is Iohim. Ðær is fyren flod irnende, 7 ðær sind weallas ymbe þone flod, 7 ðæs flodes brædo is .xii. ðusenda fæðma, 7 ealle ða sawla ðara soðfæstra 7 sinfulra ferað ofer þone flod. 7 swa ic ær cwæð, þa soðfæstan in anes eagan birhtme oferferað hi, 7 ða sinfullan beoþ celde 7 cwilmde .xii.  
25 wintra lengo.

## Apparatus

3 fyrena] MS fyrenan 7 Michael] MS mihael 7 heahengel] MS h`e`ahengel *superscript*  
7 healdað] MS hea`l`dað *superscript* 8 him] MS h<.>im 12 dura] MS durum

## Translation

§1. Then, beloved men, listen, as here it continues to tell of the seven heavens. The writings teach that there are seven heavens, that is, the aerial heaven, and the [heaven] above the air, and the fiery heaven, and the violent heaven, which we call 'firmament', and the terrible heaven, and the heaven of angels and the heaven of the holy Trinity.

§2. The name of the door of the first heaven, then, is called Abyssus, that is, 'depth', and the name of the other door is Sabaoth, that is, 'the door of hosts', because angels and souls of men enter there. St Michael the archangel guards that door, and two virgins guard it with him. They are called Equitas [and] Estimatio. They have a burning rod in their hands.

§3. Next, the door of the heaven above the air is called Elioth. St Uriel, the archangel, guards the door together with the two virgins, who are called Continentia and Contentia, and they have a fiery rod in their bosoms with which they strike the eyes of the sinful souls. Near the door flows a fiery stream, which is called Abiersetus. There the souls are first washed and purified like silver and gold. Then there is another stream near that stream, which is called Fons Roris, which is in our language 'moist stream'. The souls are sent from the burning stream into this stream and there they are washed and bathed until the wounds are healed.

§4. If they are the souls of men who truly do penance for their sins, the angels then lead the souls to the third door, and to the third heaven, which is called Ioth. There is a fiery furnace placed there; twelve thousand fathoms in height is the flame that goes up from that furnace. All the souls of the faithful and the sinful travel through that fire. The faithful pass through the fire in the twinkling of an eye. To the sinful it seems (that they are) in the flame for a period of twelve years in this world.

§5. Afterwards, the soul is brought to the fourth door, which is called Iohim. A fiery stream is flowing there, and there are walls around that stream, and the breadth of the stream is twelve thousand fathoms, and all of the souls of the faithful and the sinful cross that stream. And, as I mentioned earlier, the faithful cross it in the twinkling of an eye, and the sinful are slain and tortured for twelve years.

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12 irnð] MS ir`n`ð < irað *superscript* 13 clænsud] MS clænsuð 14 weðnisse] *read*  
 wætnisse 14 byrnendan] MS byrnenda 17 dura] MS durum 17 ðam] MS ðan 19 birhtme]  
 MS birh`t`me *superscript* 20 þam] MS added in left margin 20 lige] MS lig 23 sawla] s < r

- §6. Siððan hi bioð lædde to ðære fiftan dura, ðære noma is *Inditum*. Ðær is flod ymbirrende  
7 birrende hweowol in middum ðæm flode ymbhweor[p. 294]fende 7 hit scufeð ða  
synfullan ofðune in ðone birnendan flod. Ðonne ure Scippend ut wile ða sawla ðanon alisan,  
of ðam flowendan fyre, he sendeð þonne his englas mid heardum gyrðum, þa beoð in gemete  
30 hefigran þonne stanas. Se engel slihð mid ðære in þone byrnendan flod 7 aheaweð ða sawle  
up of þam floðe. Of æghwælcum anum slege aspringeð .c. spearçena; in æghwylcum anum  
bið mannes byrden. .C. sawlu ðara synfulra sweltað 7 forweorðað for ðam spearçum.
- §7. Siððan hi bioð læded to ðære sixtan dura 7 to ðam sixtan heofene, þære dura nama is  
Ieruð. Ac ne bið him þær nænigū tintregu geteled ne gerimed. Ac þær scineð þæt leoht þara  
35 dīorwyrþa eorclanan stana.
- §8. Siððan hi bioð læded to þam heofone 7 to þam heahsetle þære halgan Ðrinnisse, 7 him  
bið þær demed. Ðær Sanctus Michael agifeð þa sawla þæra soðfæstra 7 þæra sinfulra. Ðæt is  
þæt se wealdend cwið, ‘Syllað þa synfullan sawla þam grimman engle to cwilmianne 7 to  
besencanne in helle’.
- 40 §9. Sio helle hafað iserne weal 7 .xii. sidum. He beliet ða helle, 7 ofer þam .xii. fealdum  
þara wealla wæron .xii. dracan fyrene. Se grimma engel sende[ð] þa synfullan sawla þam  
ytemestan dracan 7 he hi forswolgeð 7 eft aspiweð þam niðeran dracan, swa hira æghwylc  
sendeð oðru in muð þa sawla, ðe bioð gebundenne mid þam bendum ðara eahta synna  
ealdorlicra. Se ytemesta draca þæt is þæt ealdordeoful [p. 295] se [bið] gebunden onbecling  
45 mid raceteage reades fyres to tacne Cristes rode in hellegrunde. 7 ðeah ðe hwylc mon hæbbe  
.c. tungena 7 ðara æghwylc hæbbe isene stefne, ne magon hi asec[g]an helle tintrego 7 ða  
fulnisse ðara dracena 7 ðone singalan hungor, 7 ðone unablinendan ðurst 7 ða awesendan  
nacodnisse 7 ða ecan þīstru 7 ðone bryme þæs sweartan fyres 7 þone unarefendlican cile  
7 þæt eala earmlicost is þæt he næfre God ne geþence ne God hine, ne ðæs nowiht elles bið  
50 gehired, nimðe wop 7 hrop 7 wea. Se ðe wile him ðæs trego bebeorgan, bewarnige  
he him unrih[t]gestreon 7 unrihthæmed 7 dierne geligero, eorre 7 æfeste 7 oferhyd 7 mæne  
aðas 7 wifsocne, mordor 7 wyrgnisse, forðon þe cweden is in þære rædinge þæt seo  
wirigcwedule tungene gestigeð heo næfre Godes rice, ne mæg næfre nænig mon  
asecggan heofonarices gefean, ne ðære fægernisse godes mihta 7 his micelnisse þurhgifeusses  
55 Dominis hælendes Christes se lifað 7 rixað in *ecnes* butan ænigum ende. amen.

26 fiftan] *MS* .v.tan 30 slihð] *MS* `slihð' *superscript* 30 ðære] *read* ðære [gyrde] 33 sixtan] *MS* .vi.  
tan 34 gerimed] *MS* `ge' rimed *superscript* 35 eorclanan stana] *read* eorclanstana 37 soðfæstra] *MS*  
o < <a> *superscript* 37 sinfulra] *MS* i < a *superscript* 37 Ðæt] *MS* <...> *before* Ðæt 39 besencanne] *MS*  
bescecanne 40 He] *MS* hio 41 sendeð] *MS* sende 43 gebundenne] *MS* gebunden `n' e *superscript*



§6. After that they are taken to the fifth door, which is called Inditum. There is a stream flowing around it and a burning wheel revolving in the midst of the stream, and it shoves the sinful down into that burning stream. When our Creator wants to release the souls out of it, out of the flowing fire, he sends his angels with hard rods, which are heavier in capacity than stones. The angel strikes with it into the burning stream and strikes the soul up out of the stream. From every single blow a hundred sparks burst forth; in each one is the weight of a man. A hundred souls of the sinful perish and die because of the sparks.

§7. After this they are taken to the sixth door and to the sixth heaven, the door of which is called Ieruð. But there no tortures are reckoned and counted to them. But there the light of precious stones shines.

§8. After this they are taken to the heaven and throne of the Holy Trinity, and there they are judged. There Saint Michael hands over the souls of the faithful and the sinful. This is what the Lord says: 'Deliver the sinful souls to the fierce angel to (be) tortured and plunged into hell.'

§9. The hell has an iron wall and twelve sides. It surrounds the hell, and above the twelve folds of these walls were twelve fiery dragons. The grim angel sends the sinful souls to the outermost dragon and he swallows them and spews (them) out again to the lower dragon; so each one of them sends the souls, who are bound with the bonds of the eight cardinal sins, to the other into [his] mouth. The outermost dragon, that is the chief devil, he [is] bound on his back with chains of red fire as a sign of Christ's cross at the bottom of hell. And though any man would have a hundred tongues, and each of those would have an iron voice, they could not speak of the tortures of hell and of the foulness of the dragons and the everlasting hunger, and the unceasing thirst, and the everlasting nakedness and the perpetual darkness and the sea of black fire and the intolerable cold; and the most miserable of all is that he may never think of God, nor God of him, nor is of him anything else heard, except for weeping and lamenting and wailing. He who would like to protect himself from this affliction, he should guard himself from unrighteous gain and adultery and secret fornication, from anger and envy and arrogance, false oaths, desiring women, murder and cursing, because it is said in the lessons that the blasphemous tongues never ascend to God's kingdom, nor may any man ever speak of the joys of the kingdom of heaven, nor of the beauty of God's power, and his greatness through the grace of our Lord Christ the Saviour, who lives and rules for eternity without end. Amen.

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44 bið] *MS omitted* 45 hwylc] *MS 'h' wylc superscript* 46 aseccan] *MS asecan* 47 ða] *MS ðara* 47 ðurst] *MS ð 'u 'rst superscript* 47 awesendan] *MS awese 'n 'dan superscript over imperfect graph* 49 eala] *MS eara* 51 unrihtgestreon] *MS unrihgestr 'e 'on superscript* 51 oferhyð] *read oferhygd* 52 wifsocne] *MS superscript 'w 'if <.>if* 55 ecnes] *read ecnesse*

## Textual Notes

§1 *fyrena*] Willard had previously noted that forms without final *n* are occasionally found in the marginalia on this manuscript. This is the case only in adjectival endings in our short section, and only two examples of confusion present themselves: in line 2 the manuscript reads *fyrenan* with superfluous *n* and in line 14 it reads *byrnenda*, lacking one.

§2 It is noteworthy that our Old English text (hereafter *C*) describes two doors here, the names of which are translated as ‘depth’ and ‘door of hosts’. The second door, however, is unique to *C* and it is evident that the text has been interfered with somewhat at some earlier stage in its transmission. As it now stands, it is uncertain what the function of the first door ought to be, as the second is that used by ‘angels and the souls of men’. None of the other accounts of the seven heavens mentions a second door and it must, therefore, be considered a later introduction, possibly dating to the text’s first translation into Old English.<sup>73</sup> It seems to me that it may originally have been introduced in the form of a gloss, which was subsequently copied into the text. The case for this is strengthened by the reference to a single door in line 7 and by the following pronoun referring back to it, in the 3 sg. feminine.<sup>74</sup>

This is not the only place in the text, however, where the doors pose a problem. In §3.12 the manuscript reads *durum* where one would expect dat. sg. *dura* (referring back to line 9) and the same occurs again in §4.17. I have emended the text here for readability. The problem does not occur after §4.

§3 The two rivers in this paragraph, *Abiersetus* and *Fons Roris*, appear to have contrasting functions: the souls are first washed and purified in the fiery river, and then sent to the ‘moist stream’, where they are bathed until they are healed. A similar purification process is described in *EA*, where our *Fons Roris* is replaced by a radiant healing well, but this well only heals the righteous and burns the sinners – a differentiation which *C* does not make. The healing bath which the souls must take before proceeding through the heavens echoes the ritual of baptism.<sup>75</sup>

73 I am here following Rowley’s assertion that the Old English text from CCCC 41 is not the first Old English copy.

74 Theoretically the pronoun could also represent a plural, but the syntax suggests that it must refer back to *pare dura*.

75 Alan F. Segal, ‘Paul and the Beginning of Jewish Mysticism’, in *Death, Ecstasy, and Otherworldly Journeys*, ed. J. J. Collins and M. Fishbane (New York, 1995), pp 93–120 (p. 113), has pointed out that early Christian Pauline communities adopted baptism as a single rite of passage from apocalyptic and mystical Judaism, which promoted *tebilab* or ritual immersion as a ‘purification ritual preparing for the ascent into God’s presence’. Such an interpretation fits neatly into the pattern formed by the various heavens: the newly baptised righteous soul is allowed to pass through the fiery heavens unharmed, whereas the sinful soul is deemed unfit to appear before the Lord without due punishment.

The name for this stream, *Fons Roris*, presents some difficulty as it has no parallel in the Irish versions, other than that they all refer to some form of moisture. *K*, though missing the beginning of the text, starts with a reference to vapour or dew closer to the meaning of *Fons Roris*, suggesting that the reference is likely original to the common source and that we are dealing with variations of translation. It places the dew in a meteorological context however and, unlike the Old English and Irish versions, omits any reference to the dew's healing function. This could be the result of the fragmentary state of the text as we have it. Each version, then, seeks to explain and embellish whatever the original source contained; and the Irish, Old English and Latin versions each represent a unique interpretation. The same applies to the name *Abiersetus*, which in *EA* and *SN* designates the angel guarding the river, whereas our Old English text does not mention an angel.<sup>76</sup>

The source of such a 'Spring of Dew' is hard to trace. Willard suggests parallels with Aristotle's *Meteorologica*.<sup>77</sup> In addition to this, Bauckham adduced possible parallels from early Jewish apocalypses, which often describe meteorological phenomena in the heavens. Among the more plausible parallels he suggests are passages in 2 *Enoch*, the Syriac *History of the Virgin*, and the *Mysteries of John*.<sup>78</sup> The Talmud also describes chambers of dew in one of the heavens.<sup>79</sup> These analogies, however, can only serve as general background: there is no direct parallel between the texts. Further study of the function of dew in Biblical passages may shed more light on the matter.

§3 *hira scetum*] The meaning of the word *scēat* is varied and ambiguous. Here it means either 'lap' or 'bosom'. It is difficult to be more specific: Willard here translates 'laps', but John Carey translates the equally equivocal *ucht* as 'bosom' for the Irish text from *EA*,<sup>80</sup> and has suggested to me that this seems to be the primary sense in Irish.

§3 *clænsu[d] swa iolfor 7 gold*] The phrase echoes Malachi 3:3.

§4 *se is nemned Ioth*] Willard argues that the name is here assigned to the fourth heaven

76 Willard (*Two Apocrypha*, p. 14) seems to believe that an angel presides over the river here, though none is actually mentioned in the text.

77 *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

78 Bauckham, 'The Apocalypse', p. 316. The *Enoch* texts provide several references to dew: see e.g. 1 *Enoch* 60:20–3, 2 *Enoch* 3:7. 1 *Enoch* also associates dew with the winds (75), and with the north and south winds in particular (36); this might go some way to explain the connection between dew and the south wind in *K*.

79 See K. Kohler, 'Angelology: The Seven Heavens in the Talmud', in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. C. Adler *et al.*, 12 vols (New York, 1901–6), i, 591–2, who describes a heaven called 'Makon, in which are the treasuries of snow and hail, the chambers of dew, rain, and mist behind doors of fire' and refers to 1 Kings 7:30 and Deuteronomy 28:12. For 1 *Enoch* and 2 *Enoch* see the preceding note.

80 Willard, *Two Apocrypha*, p. 13; for Carey's translation see p. 000 above.

erroneously, and that it properly belongs to the door.<sup>81</sup> He therefore suggests emending the pronoun to *f. seo*. The error is again likely the result of a gloss *i. to ðam þriddan heofone* incorporated into the text during copying.

§5 *celde*] Willard has put forward two possible candidates for this verb: *cwellan* and \**cyllan*.<sup>82</sup> He dismisses the verb *cwellan* because souls cannot be killed,<sup>83</sup> an argument which does not entirely hold in light of the reference to souls perishing in §6.32. Nonetheless, to read *cwealde* ‘killed, slain’ is not an ideal solution, because it seems unlikely that one is continuously killed for twelve years. That said, the verb seems to be used figuratively on occasion, especially in relation to souls.<sup>84</sup> Willard appears to prefer \**cyllan*, while conceding that this is an unattested verb and hence scarcely to be preferred to other hypotheses. Other solutions could also be considered. For instance, another possibility is to take the verb as a form of (*ge*)*cēlan* ‘to cool, become cold; refresh’. There are two ways to translate this verb, both of which seem to fit the context fairly well. If one were to read ‘are refreshed and tortured for twelve years’, this line would describe exactly the process to which the soul was subjected in the second heaven and thus could be taken to refer to a similar process repeated here, though now restricted to sinners. The translation ‘cooled and tortured’, however, could refer to a process whereby the souls are taken in and out of the fire described in this passage. This last reading, of an alternating hot and cold experience, is not unparalleled in other accounts of heaven and hell. However, there is no mention of a source of cold or of a respite from torture in this heaven. The evidence is thus ambiguous at best. Given the previous attestation of *cwellan* with reference to souls, I have tentatively opted for ‘killed’.

§6 *birnende hweowol*] The burning wheel here is unique to *C* and *K* (though in the latter it is placed in the fifth heaven). Such a fiery wheel is first attested in the *Apocalypse of Peter* and subsequently in, for instance, the *Acts of Thomas*, but it does not appear in the *Visio Sancti Pauli* previous to Redaction IV.<sup>85</sup> Theodore Silverstein appears to be of the opinion that Redaction IV has borrowed this motif from our text, though he is not specific. It is worth considering the possibility that the Latin and Old English versions could have been influenced by different sources here. If the wheel was part of the lost original of the ‘seven heavens’ texts, a Latin version must have made its way to Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England at some point (if it was not, indeed, composed there), before, theoretically, passing the motif on to Redaction IV,

81 *Op. cit.*, pp 7–9.

82 *Op. cit.*, p. 5

83 *Op. cit.*, p. 5 n. 30.

84 Though in cognate languages the root more often means ‘to vex, torture’ (cf. Dutch *kwellen*, Middle High German *quellen*), in Old English this meaning would not appear to be attested. For references to figurative use of this verb see the *Dictionary of Old English*.

85 Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli*, p. 76.

which has a provenance in Anglo-Saxon England in particular.<sup>86</sup> Redaction IV would then be the younger version. If it was the other way around and the source of the wheel is Redaction IV, the latter must predate our text. Since the oldest copy of Redaction IV is dated to the early ninth century and *K* was written *c.* 800 we unfortunately have no means of deciding upon either scenario. In *EA*, however, we have a description of a whirlpool evidently corresponding to the wheel. It is possible that the redactor misunderstood the description of the wheel, but it is equally possible that he was reminded of a different Redaction of the *Visio* when writing. In Redaction I of the *Visio*, when Paul first approaches hell, 'he discerns the whirling, mingling waves of the fiery rivers', a motif which, Silverstein suggests, the composer of the first Redaction took from Vergil's *Aeneid*.<sup>87</sup> Paul further sees, in a terrible place called Cochyton, *tria flumina que confluunt secum Stix, Flegeton, et Acheron. Et erant stillicidia super peccatores velut mons igneus*. The liquid falling down on the sinners like a mountain of fire is somewhat reminiscent of both the wheel and whirlpool of the 'seven heavens' texts. However, the evidence is inconclusive at best as, unlike Vergil, Redaction I does not actually mention a whirlpool.

§7 *ne bið*] One would expect 3 pl. *bið* here. Willard suggests it is either a monophthongisation or a discordant verb-subject construction with a singular verb preceding a plural subject.<sup>88</sup> I am more inclined to ascribe it to the pronominal construction with dative *him*. See also lines 36–7, *him bið... demed*.

§9 As mentioned above, the description of the twelve dragons which swallow the condemned soul is likely inspired in part by the description of the dragon Parthemon in the Redactions of *Visio Sancti Pauli*.<sup>89</sup> The description of this dragon is an amalgam of various descriptions of horrible creatures in Scripture, but it appears originally to have been part of a discourse on the sin of pride and the humbling of the proud in the Book of Job, which was adopted by Gregory in his *Moralia in Iob* for his description of Antichrist and the king Antiochus. Silverstein concludes 'in the Redactions the mouth of the fiery dragon is forever open like the jaws of Hell itself, to devour souls, and thus symbolic of the tormenting of pride':<sup>90</sup> this matches the function of the dragons at the end of our text. A possible origin for the motif of twelve dragons amongst Egyptian Gnostic texts has been proposed by John Carey.<sup>91</sup>

§9 *beliet*] The form probably derives from *beligeð*, a form of *beligan*, or alternatively from

86 *Ibid.*, p. 10, lines 52–6.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 65.

88 *Two Apocrypha*, p. 5 n. 35a.

89 Wright, *The Irish Tradition*, p. 165.

90 Silverstein, *Visio*, p. 68.

91 'The Seven Heavens and the Twelve Dragons in Insular Apocalyptic', in *Apocalyptic and Eschatological Heritage: The Middle Eastern and Celtic Realms*, ed. M. McNamara (Dublin, 2003), pp 121–36 (pp 133–5).

*belicet* (also *-lycð*) from *belucan*, both meaning ‘to surround’.<sup>92</sup> As it stands it is 3 sg., but Willard suggests that both this verb and *iserne weal* may once have been 3 pl., referring to *þara wealla*. He continues:

The whole sentence causes difficulty. Possibly what is now *iserne weal* was originally *iserne weallas* (cf. *þara wealla*, line 55), which in revision or in copying was changed to the singular. *Hio* could thus be taken as an Anglian form of *hie*, referring to the walls, and originally governing a plural, *belicgað*, which is now reduced to the singular, *beliet*.

As it stands the singular pronoun and verb have no clear antecedent, unless it be the *weal*. Consequently, rather than modifying the verb, I have here chosen to emend the pronoun to *he*, referring to *weal*. I owe this suggestion to Prof. R. Bremmer.

§9 *fealdum*] Willard points out that this is quite possibly the earliest instance of ‘fold’ as a noun, though *feald* is also recorded with the meaning ‘region, abode’.<sup>93</sup> I take it to refer back to the seven sides of the wall. I do not regard the plural *þara wealla* following it as an obstacle to this interpretation, as a wall with seven sides may easily be interpreted as seven walls. Whether the plural form was intentional or not remains open to question.

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92 Willard, *op. cit.*, p. 6. n. 43.

93 *Ibid.*, n. 43a.