

## Dublin, Trinity College, MS 492:

### A New Witness to the Old English Bede and its Twelfth-Century Context

This article draws attention to a series of seven English annotations in a mid-twelfth-century copy of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* from Bury St Edmunds. It demonstrates that the annotations reflect the comparison of Bede's Latin with a now-lost manuscript of the Old English Bede shortly after the twelfth-century codex's production. The annotations are shown to hold a respect for the authority of the Old English Bede that contrasts with the prevailing twelfth-century attitude of gentle suspicion towards earlier vernacular translations.

## 1. Introduction

Dublin, Trinity College, MS 492 is a mid-twelfth-century copy of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, written at Bury St Edmunds.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript is known to Anglo-Saxonists because it also contains a copy of Cuthbert's *Epistola de obitu Bedae*, which includes a somewhat lacunose copy of Bede's Death Song (Ker 1957: no. 104). Far less well-known are a series of annotations on the opening leaves of the manuscript, added not long after it was produced:<sup>2</sup>

fol. 4rb/27	uituli marini glossed .seolas.
fol. 4r/outside margin	octo hund mile long. 7 tpa hund mile brad.  hronas.  <p>eolocscælle.
fol. 4v/outside margin	.peolocas.
fol. 8v/outside margin	.munuc.
fol. 9r/outside margin	half mile a muro.

These annotations were transcribed by Marvin Colker (1991: II, 902) in his catalogue of the Latin manuscripts of Trinity College, and were subsequently re-transcribed by Peter Lucas (1997: 25) as part of his description of the codex for the Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in

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I am grateful to Alice Jorgensen as well as the two anonymous *Anglia* reviewers for their helpful comments, but particularly to Christine Wallis, who generously put her knowledge of the Old English Bede at my disposal as I began to contextualise the annotations in TCD MS 492.

<sup>1</sup> The manuscript is described by Colker (1991: II, 901–903). For its Bury origin and date, see McLachan (1986: 319–320).

<sup>2</sup> The limited number of annotations makes it difficult to say more than that they are in a hand that is similar to, but not identical with, that of the text. For translations of the annotations, see Table 1 below.

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Microfiche Facsimile series. Neither transcription is however entirely accurate. Apparently missed by Ker (1957: no. 104) when he examined the copy of Bede’s Death Song for his description of the manuscript in his *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, and recorded by Colker too late for inclusion in either the Supplement of 1976 or the Addenda and Corrigenda of 1982, the annotations also go unnoticed in two recent surveys of newly-discovered Old English.<sup>3</sup>

Though in a twelfth-century hand, the annotations are unquestionably Old English rather than Middle English. Among other orthographical features that suggest this, one might note the preservation of <hr-> in *hronas*, the use of <sc-> rather than <sh->, <sch-> or other spellings for /ʃ/ in *-scælle*, the use of the digraph <eo> in <p>eoloc-, *seolas* and *peolocas*, and the maintenance of nominative and accusative plural masculine <-as>, where early Middle English scribes tended to write <-es>. From the 1130s, or perhaps a decade or so earlier, scribes were generally only able to produce Old English orthography when they had an Old English exemplar in front of them, so it would seem likely these annotations had an antecedent source.<sup>4</sup>

The exemplar for the annotations in TCD MS 492 proves to have been a manuscript of the Old English Bede. Each of the annotations can be shown to correspond to the rendering of Bede’s Latin in that text, which constitutes a correlation too close to be coincidental. In the table below are set out the annotations in the order they were intended to be read, the corresponding Latin from MS 492 and its location in the edition of Bede’s *Historia* by Colgrave and Mynors (1969) and the relevant phrase in the Old English Bede from Miller’s (1890–1898) edition. Translations of the English are mine; those of the Latin are taken from Colgrave and Mynors. As the reader will notice, in all cases the relevant Latin occurs directly opposite the annotation on the manuscript’s page.

*Table 1: Correspondences between annotations in TCD MS 492 and the Old English Bede*

Location of Annotation	Text of Annotation	Location of Corresponding Latin	Text of Corresponding Latin	Text of Old English Bede

<sup>3</sup> Ker (1976), Blockley (1982), Gneuss (2008), Wilcox (2008).

<sup>4</sup> This judgement is primarily based on the author’s familiarity with twelfth-century English writing, but compare the discussions of Clark (1992: 320) and Roberts (2009: 38), both of whom put the loss of the ability to produce Old English orthography without recourse to an exemplar slightly earlier, around 1100.

fol. 4r/outside margin/16–26	octo hund mile long. 7 tpa hund mile brad.  '800 miles long and 200 miles broad'	fol. 4ra/21–24	quae per milia passuum octingentorum in boream longa, latitudinis habet milia ducenta ( <i>HE</i> I. 1 = 15/4– 5)  'it extends 800 miles to the north, and is 200 miles broad'	ehta hund mila lang, 7 tu hund mila brad (26/1)  '800 miles long and 200 miles broad'
fol. 4rb/27	uituli marini <i>glossed</i> .seolas.  'seals' <i>glossed</i> 'seals'	fol. 4rb/27	uituli marini ( <i>HE</i> I. 1 = 15/18)  'seals'	seolas (26/7)  'seals'
fol. 4r/outside margin/28–29	hronas.  'whales'	fol. 4rb/29	balene ( <i>HE</i> I. 1 = 15/18)  'whales'	hronas (26/8)  'whales'
fol. 4r/outside margin/beneath text block	<p>eolocscælle.  'whelks, cockles, shellfish'	fol. 4rb/30	conchiliorum ( <i>HE</i> I. 1 = 15/19)  'shellfish'	weolcscylle (26/7–8)  'whelks, cockles, shellfish'
fol. 4v/outside margin/7–8	.peolocas.	fol. 4va/7	cocleę ( <i>HE</i> I. 1 = 15/23)	weolocas (26/10)

	'whelks, cockles'		'whelks'	'whelks'
fol. 8v/outside margin/3–5	munuc.  'monk'	fol. 8va/1–2	habitu id est caracalla qua uestiebatur ( <i>HE</i> I. 7 = 28/26–27)  'the garment, that is to say the cloak, which he [the cleric] was wearing'	munucgegyrelan (34/27)  'monastic garb'
fol. 9v/outside margin/1–3	half mile a muro.  'half a mile from the wall'	fol. 8vb/1–2	quingentis fere passibus ab arena situs est ( <i>HE</i> I. 7 = 32/16)  'lay about about five hundred paces from the arena'	on healfre mile fram þære ceastre wealle (40/3)  'half a mile from the city wall'

The annotations thus fall into two broad groups: the first five which pertain to the description of Britain in Book I, Chapter 1, and the final two which are concerned with St Alban's martyrdom in Book I, Chapter 7. The first five simply replicate the Old English Bede's translation of particular phrases from the *Historia*'s account of the dimensions and marine life of Britain.<sup>5</sup> The final two, by contrast, seem to represent a more complex response to the text, in that they pick up details of Alban's martyrdom unique to the Old English Bede,

<sup>5</sup> One of the anonymous reviewers plausibly suggests that one aspect of the annotator's interest here might have been securely identifying the native wildlife denoted by the Latin terms used by Bede.

introduced in the course of the translator's attempt to make the narrative more readily understandable to a later, non-Latin-speaking audience.

The first of the two annotations to Bede's *passio* of St Alban comes when he is describing Alban's conversion by a certain cleric (*clericum quendam*) whom he has invited to stay at his house.<sup>6</sup> Bede gives very little further information about this cleric, but does mention that when the house was subsequently raided, Alban disguised himself as the cleric so that he should be arrested instead of his visitor. To do this, he put on 'the garment, that is to say the cloak, which the cleric was wearing' (*ipsius habitu id est caracalla qua uestiebatur*). In the Old English Bede, this cloak is described as *munucgegyrelan* (34/27), 'monastic garb'. Whether or not the translator of the Old English Bede intended to imply by his use of this word that Alban's guest was a monk in the strict sense, this seems to be how the twelfth-century annotator took it, and is the most reasonable explanation for his writing *munuc* in the outside margin beside this passage.

Somewhat more complex is the second of his two annotations to Bede's account of the martyrdom of St Alban. The first issue to consider with this annotation is the correct transcription of what the scribe wrote. Both Colker (1991: II, 902) and Lucas (1997: 25) read *half mile amurg*. However, *amurg* is not a recognisable word, and the supposed *g* does not resemble the *g* in *long* on fol. 4r in its construction. Rather, though somewhat malformed, this character appears to be an *o*, hence the reading suggested above *a muro*, 'from the wall' (the reader will note the parallel vacillation between English and Latin in the annotation given Britain's length as *octo hund mile*).

In his account of the martyrdom, Bede describes Alban being brought to his execution (*ad mortem*), and reaching a river, running between the town wall (*muro*) and the arena where he was to be executed. The only bridge across the river thronged with onlookers, Alban miraculously made the river bed dry so that he could continue his journey. He thereby reached the place appointed for his execution (*locum destinatum morti*), but, instead of stopping there, continued onward, ascending a hill about five hundred paces from the arena (*montem [...] quingentis fere passibus ab arena situs est*), where he was eventually martyred. The account in the Old English Bede is largely similar, save that it describes the hill (*dune*) as 'about half a mile from the wall of the town and from the brook which he crossed before dry

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<sup>6</sup> Again, the Latin readings are those of TCD MS 492. There are no substantive differences between them and Colgrave and Mynors (1969).

shod' (*hwæthwugu on healfre mile fram þære ceastre wealle 7 fram þære burnan þe he ær drigum fotum ofereode*, 40/2–4). What seems to have struck the annotator, therefore, is the disparity between Bede's description of the hill being 500 paces (half a Roman mile) from the arena and the Old English translator's statement that the hill was half a mile from the town wall and its adjacent river. Both this annotation and his comment that Alban's guest was a monk seem therefore to have been the product of a remarkably close and sensitive reading of Bede's *Historia* against its Old English translation.

The remainder of this article considers when, where and why these annotations were made and evaluates their significance to the study of the Old English Bede, on the one hand, and to that of twelfth-century English, on the other. While the annotations do partly overlap with tenth-century glosses partially derived from the Old English Bede in another manuscript of Bede's *Historia*, there are good reasons to believe this correspondence is coincidental and that the annotations reflect spontaneous comparison of the Latin against the Old English in the mid-twelfth century.

## 2. The Glosses as a Witness to the Old English Bede

The only other manuscript of the Latin Bede known to have been glossed with reference to the Old English Bede is London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius C. ii, copied in the second quarter of the ninth century and annotated by a variety of tenth-century hands, using ink and, more commonly, dry-point.<sup>7</sup> Three of the annotations in TCD MS 492 are paralleled here: two in dry-point (*uituli marini: sealas* and *delfines: hron<as>*), and one in ink (*on healfre mile* glossing *quingentis [...] passibus*).<sup>8</sup> Given that the majority of the glosses in MS Cotton Tiberius C. ii are written in dry-point, a medium in which annotations are notoriously difficult to detect, it might be wondered if the manuscript did once contain glosses corresponding to those in TCD MS 492 but not now to be discerned in the former manuscript.<sup>9</sup> However, a genetic relationship between these two sets of annotations is made unlikely by two factors: first, the correspondence is not especially close, given the orthographical differences and the absence from the third annotation in MS Tiberius C. ii of anything equivalent to the *a muro* that makes the TCD MS 492 annotation so distinctive.

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<sup>7</sup> The dry-point glosses are edited by Meritt (1945: no. 4) and discussed by Waite (2013).

<sup>8</sup> Meritt (1945: no. 4, glosses 5, 6, 48n). For the possibility the second was intended as a gloss to "ballenae" as in TCD MS 492, see Lendinara (1999: 42). For the final gloss, cf. Ker (1957: no. 198, art. c), who reads 'healfne'.

<sup>9</sup> Meritt (1933: 307) detected traces of "about thirty" other glosses than those he was able to fully decipher in MS Cotton Tiberius C. ii.

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Second, as Waite (2013: 11) admits, few of the glosses in MS Tiberius C. ii that cover Book I, Chapter 1 (as the first five in TCD MS 492 do) come from the Old English Bede, and it is implausible that if the annotations in TCD MS 492 were drawn from those in MS Tiberius C. ii, the annotator would have selected only glosses from the Old English Bede. The annotations in TCD MS 492 are therefore likely to be independent, at least of those in MS Tiberius C. ii.

Two further considerations suggest, indeed, that the comparison of the Latin *Historia* and the Old English Bede reflected in TCD MS 492 took place in the mid-twelfth century, shortly after the production of the manuscript, and not at some point earlier, with the glosses simply copied along with the text when the Trinity manuscript was produced. The first is palaeographical, for, as was noted above, the hand of the annotations is similar to, but not identical with, the text; had the annotations been in the exemplar, we would expect them to be in the same hand as the text. The second is stemmatic. TCD MS 492 is part of a group of manuscripts where the *Historia* is followed by Cuthbert's *Epistola de obitu Bedae* and a Latin translation of the Old English *Secgan be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande ærost reston* often referred to as the *De sanctis* (Liebermann 1889: 1-20). No English glosses have been recorded in any of the other manuscripts from this group. To conclude that the glosses in TCD 492 were copied along with the Latin text from an exemplar, rather than added after direct consultation of the Old English Bede, would thus be to posit a further, otherwise unattested, sub-group of manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> In what follows I accordingly take it that the comparison of the *Historia* and the Old English Bede that underlies the annotations took place in the mid-twelfth century, contemporary with their entry into the manuscript.

The annotations in TCD MS 492 thus provide significant evidence for the esteem with which vernacular translations were held one hundred years after the Conquest, but before we discuss their broader cultural importance in the next section of this article, it is necessary to consider their significance for the understanding of the transmission of the Old English Bede. No manuscript of the translation is otherwise known to have been at Bury, where TCD MS 492 was produced and kept. While provenance is far from secure for some of the five surviving

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<sup>10</sup> At any rate, it may be that the earliest the glosses could date is the first quarter of the twelfth century, since there seems to be consensus that TCD 492 derives from London, British Library, Harley MS 3680, an early-twelfth-century manuscript from Rochester (Colgrave and Mynors 1969: lviii; library note by Rev. C. M. Lawson cited by Colker 1991: II, 902), which contains no English annotations. The arguments advanced below about the significance of the annotation in a twelfth-century context should thus stand regardless of whether they are original to TCD MS 492.

manuscripts of the Old English Bede, none has previously been associated with Bury.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, no copy of the Old English Bede appears in the list of books, primarily liturgical, compiled in the time of Abbot Leofstan, the more extensive list compiled in the late eleventh century, or the heavily supplemented list of around 1200 that includes TCD MS 492 itself.<sup>12</sup> There is however room for a copy to have been at Bury in the fourteenth century, when Henry of Kirkstead produced a catalogue, now lost, of the around 2000 books then at Bury. Kirkstead assigned each book an alphanumeric pressmark, grouping books of the same author together and copies of the same text sequentially. Copies of Bede's *Historia* occupy the pressmarks B. 295 and B. 296 in this system, but no other book between B. 292 (Bede on the Apocalypse) and B. 305 (Bernard of Clairvaux on the Song of Songs) survives: B. 293, B. 294 and B. 297–B. 304 may therefore conceivably also have been manuscripts of the *Historia*, in Latin or English.<sup>13</sup> But it is equally possible that a manuscript of the Old English Bede would not have interested Kirkstede or the other cataloguers, or that it was merely on loan to the annotator and never a Bury book as such.

While the annotations derived from this copy of the Old English Bede are too short to say very much about it, there are hints that its language contained a substantial non-West-Saxon element, or was a faithful copy of such manuscript, a feature that, in the context of the text's transmission history, suggests a manuscript of early date. These hints come from four spellings used by the annotator, *long* and *hronas*, apparently with <o> for [ã], *half*, seemingly showing retraction rather than breaking, and “-scælle”, ostensibly with the absence of palatal diphthongisation. Though it has already been established above that the annotator was a literatim copyist, literatim copyists occasionally lapsed into more current forms of spelling, so it is important to establish that each form is early, and not a consequence of twelfth-century orthographic trends. In the discussion of these forms that follows, relevant readings are noted from the two manuscripts of the Old English Bede to preserve Book I, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41[B] and Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk. 3. 18 [Ca].

The most securely non-West Saxon spelling is *-scæll* (-scilla B; -scylle Ca). The vocalism of the West-Saxon equivalent, *sciell*, later *scyll*, is the product of palatal diphthongisation followed by *i*-umlaut; the <æ> spelling here seems likely to reflect the failure of palatal

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<sup>11</sup> For the surviving manuscripts, see most recently Rowley (2011a: 15–35).

<sup>12</sup> Lapidge (1985: nos. VII, XII), Sharpe et al. (1996: B13.211).

<sup>13</sup> For Kirkstede's lost catalogue, see Sharpe (1998). TCD MS 492 is B. 296; B. 295 survives as Cambridge, Sidney Sussex College, MS 102.



diphthongisation in non-West Saxon dialects of Old English.<sup>14</sup> Also apparently indicative of a non-West-Saxon exemplar are *long* (lang BCa) and *hronas* (hranas B; hronas Ca). By the late twelfth century, <o> could occur in words like *long* as a result of the homorganic lengthening of nasalised /a/ to /a:/ and subsequent rounding and raising of that /a:/ to /ɔ:/, but neither change is more than sporadically represented in the orthography of twelfth-century texts, nor do such changes explain *hronas*. Coupled with the general literatim habits of the annotator, these considerations make it more likely that <o> here is carried over from the annotator's exemplar. The spelling of nasalised [ã] as <o> is generally accepted as an Anglian feature (Hogg 1992: §5.5). The spelling of *half* (healf- BCa) is somewhat more vexed, and could derive either from the eleventh- and twelfth-century sound change (the monophthongisation of /ea/ to /æ/ and subsequent merger of this sound with /a/), or the failure of first fronting to /æ/ before velarised /l/ and consequent unavailability of /æ/ for breaking to *ea*, but in the light of the other three spellings arguably reflects conservatism rather than innovation and should therefore be seen as another non-West Saxon feature (Hogg 1992: §5.15).

These three non-West-Saxon features have implications for the date of the manuscript the annotator used. It has long been accepted that the surviving manuscripts show a steady West-Saxonisation of the Old English Bede from a Mercian original.<sup>15</sup> More substantively, Christine Wallis (2013: 203–204) has compiled “a list of features which are likely to have belonged to the Mercian archetype”, and this includes all three features discussed above: <o> + nasal, retraction before *l*+consonant, and the absence of palatal diphthongisation. Wallis (2013: 94–98) provides data that shows that retracted spellings are preserved with any frequency only in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 10, copied early in the tenth century, and the earliest surviving complete manuscript of the Old English Bede, and that this manuscript is also the one which most frequently preserves <o> + nasal.<sup>16</sup> The presence of four non-West-Saxon spellings among the sixteen Old English words the annotator added to TCD MS 492, coupled with the evidence from the surviving manuscripts that such features were generally effaced over time, strongly suggests his copy of the Old English Bede was an early one. It could have been Tanner 10 itself, since this manuscript was definitely in East Anglia (at Thorney) in the fourteenth century, but the absence of Book I there makes direct

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<sup>14</sup> For the spellings that occur in this context in Middle English, see Jordan (1974: §77). That the vowel is <æ> rather than <e> may reflect occasional twelfth century interchange of <æ> and <e>, or the much earlier failure of /æ/ to *i*-umlaut to /e/, which is sporadically attested where a non-geminate consonant intervenes between the tonic vowel and the umlaut-causing /i/ (Hogg 1992: §5.80).

<sup>15</sup> Whitelock (1962: esp. 57 and 79n6), Campbell (1951), and, most recently, Waite (2014).

<sup>16</sup> Wallis does not survey the persistence of spellings without palatal diphthongisation.

comparison impossible; at any rate, the annotator's exemplar seems to have been as early or even perhaps earlier.

### 3. The Annotations and the Reception of Old English Literature in the Twelfth Century

What, then, was the annotator's purpose in annotating the Latin text in TCD MS 492 from this early manuscript of the Old English Bede? Any attempt to account for this activity needs to consider the annotator's evident mastery of both Old English and Latin, apparent not only in the switches between the two languages in two of the annotations, but also in his ability to align the Old English and Latin translations.<sup>17</sup> Whatever his motives were in annotating the text, they therefore did not derive from any deficiency in his comprehension of either of these languages. Moreover, while Old English translations of Latin works did attract the attention of other readers at this time, the typical twelfth-century annotator seems to have been concerned to test the authority of the English against the Latin, rather than use the English as a subsidiary source of information to supplement the Latin, as our annotator appears to have done. The most spectacular example of these attempts to validate pre-Conquest translations is undoubtedly the Laud manuscript of the Old English Hexateuch, which was supplemented around 1100 with a large number of interlinear Latin glosses in an unidentified hand.<sup>18</sup> The glosses are taken from the Vulgate, and the glossator's concern to check the accuracy of the English translation is apparent from his marking of unsignalled omissions with the comment *derelictus*, '[something] has been omitted'. Such processes of collation must also underlie twelfth-century corrections to the English of other biblical translations, for instance those that a hand of the first half of the twelfth century made to a copy of the Old English Gospels from Exeter.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, while the annotator of the Old English Hexateuch, active around 1180, was primarily concerned to supplement the English translation with marginal commentary drawn from Peter Comester, he also examined the translation itself and supplemented or corrected it against the Vulgate where he felt it necessary.<sup>20</sup>

Similar kinds of annotation are also found in manuscripts containing Old English translations of non-scriptural works. Thus the copy of the Old English Bede made at Worcester during the

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<sup>17</sup> Intra-sentential code-switching is found in other twelfth-century English writing, for instance in the annotations to the Old English Illustrated Hexateuch, London, British Library, MS Cotton Claudius B. iv (e.g. 7 *ðær þa wæteræ diluuii ne ne come*, 'and the flood waters could not come there'; Doane and Stoneman 2011: 13–184 (no. 10)).

<sup>18</sup> Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 509, discussed by Marsden (2005).

<sup>19</sup> Cambridge, University Library, MS li. 2. 11, fols. 128–129, 158–159: see Liuzza (1994–2000: I, xviii).

<sup>20</sup> Most apparent in his introduction of a paraphrase of Gen. 33–35, detailing the rape of Dina, omitted from the original translation (Doane and Stoneman 2011: 13–184 (no. 181)).

episcopacy of Wulfstan in the third quarter of the eleventh century contains glosses in a hand of the early thirteenth century, if not earlier, to two short passages, drawn from Bede's Latin text. On fol. 8v, this annotator provided an almost continuous gloss to the opening of the description of Britain in Book I Chapter 1, while on fol. 67r he provided a similar gloss to the opening sentence of Book I, Chapter 17, where Bede narrates the marriage of Ecgfrith, King of Northumbria to Æthelthryth.<sup>21</sup> A short passage in a copy of Werferth's translation of Gregory's *Dialogues* received similar treatment from a twelfth-century hand in another manuscript, likewise probably at Worcester.<sup>22</sup> In this manuscript, just over one page of Book I, Chapter 8 has been sporadically glossed with the equivalent words from Gregory's Latin.

The precedent of the Laud copy of the Hexateuch, as well as the kind of corrections found in the Illustrated Hexateuch and Exeter copy of the West-Saxon Gospels, suggest that these twelfth-century annotations were primarily geared towards testing the accuracy and reliability of the translations made by Werferth and the anonymous translator of the Old English Bede. In each case, it is the Latin text that was authoritative, and the vernacular text which was tested or emended against that authority. In the account of the martyrdom of St Alban in TCD MS 492, by contrast, deviations from Bede's Latin in the Old English are treated not as errors, but as carrying information with which Bede's Latin ought to be supplemented. This makes them highly unusual and in need of further explanation. The annotator's rationale, I argue below, was that the OE Bede appeared to be a work of Bede, and consequently any details it contained but which were absent from the Latin *Historia* could potentially supplement the latter.

Medieval readers' attitudes towards differences between separate witnesses to a given text were diverse, but a common one was a maximalist desire to have as much of the text as possible. This desire is apparent in the English transmission history of the Latin text of Bede's *Historia*. One of the distinguishing features of the two main families of manuscripts of this text – *m* (after the Moore manuscript, Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk. 5. 16) and *c* (after London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius MS C. ii, a manuscript whose glosses have been discussed above) – is the presence of an additional miracle of St Oswald in *m*,

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<sup>21</sup> Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk. 3. 18, fols. 8v, 67r, part edited by Grant (1996). One might compare also the later, fourteenth-century annotations to the text of the Old English Bede in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 10, edited by Rowley (2011a: 215–227).

<sup>22</sup> Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 322, fol. 20rv, edited by Yerkes (1978: 245–247).

constituting Book IV, Chapter 14.<sup>23</sup> Pre-Conquest manuscripts from England were generally of the *c*-type, but by the early twelfth century, if not before, *m*-type manuscripts circulated increasingly commonly. Scribes who compared pre-existing *c*-type manuscripts with *m*-type texts noticed the disparity, and generally resolved it by supplying the *c*-type manuscripts with the extra chapter, a decision it would seem not motivated by the sense that *c*-manuscripts were in any particular way better, but rather a sense that it was desirable to have as much of Bede's text as possible.<sup>24</sup>

A similar desire may also have been at play for the annotator of TCD MS 492. One feature that distinguishes the Old English Bede from other vernacular translations from the Anglo-Saxon period is its occasional willingness to preserve Bede's first-person pronouns and verbs (Rowley 2011b). Thus the first words of the text are *Ic Beda Cristes þeow and mæssepreost* ('I Bede, servant of Christ and mass-priest'), and the first person is also used in the epilogue.<sup>25</sup> Even though such first-person statements are mingled with third-person narrative interjections like *cwæð Beda* ('Bede says'), the prominence of the first person at the beginning and end of the text might have led a reader to believe the Old English text had been written by Bede himself. It would in that case represent a witness as important as the Latin to what Bede wrote, and it may be for this reason that the annotator noted the seemingly additional information the Old English Bede supplied regarding the religious affiliation of Alban's guest and the location of his martyrdom in the Latin text in TCD MS 492.

Such a supposition might also explain the exceptionally unusual mise-en-page of the annotations, which are written in the extreme outer margins of the leaves, perpendicular to the original text block. The only other writing found in this position in the manuscript are single letters, written to guide the rubricator as to which initial he needed to insert at the beginning of each chapter of the text. It seems safe to infer that these guide-letters were written in a deliberately inconspicuous position so that they could be removed with no additional labour when the manuscript was trimmed. (Indeed it is possible that the reason why the annotations do not continue beyond Book I, Chapter 7 is that subsequent leaves were more extensively trimmed than these folios, though the survival of guide-letters on these

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<sup>23</sup> For discussion of the textual tradition of the *Historia*, see Colgrave and Mynors (1969: xxxix–lxx) and Lapidge (2008–2010: I, xciv–cxv).

<sup>24</sup> Two examples are Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R. 7. 5 (743) (s. xi<sup>m</sup>), fols. 151–152 (supplied s. xii<sup>l</sup>); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 163 (s. xi<sup>m</sup>), fols. 136–137 (supplied s. xii). For discussion, see Faulkner (2008: 90–92).

<sup>25</sup> Miller 2/1, 480/22 etc., 480/22 etc.

leaves makes this unlikely). It is therefore conceivable the English annotations were likewise intended to be inconspicuous and transitory. One possible explanation for this self-effacement might be to suggest the annotator was sensitive to the prejudices against English that some scholars have detected in the twelfth century and feared his use of English would not meet with the approval of his fellow monks, and so carefully wrote it in a subordinate position in the anticipation that it would shortly thereafter be trimmed away.<sup>26</sup> However, it is notable that the second of his annotations is positioned interlinearly within the Latin text block, suggesting that bashfulness was not his motive for placing the other annotations in the margin. Rather, one might suggest that like the guide letters they were eventually intended to be transferred into the text. Of course, the actual process of transfer never took place – testament perhaps to the ambiguous status of the two annotations concerned with Alban's martyrdom, not glosses, because they did not correspond directly to anything in Bede's Latin, and not corrections because it was impossible to decide which reading was correct, but nonetheless information worthy of recording.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The seven annotations in TCD MS 492 thus provide evidence for the presence of an otherwise unattested copy of the Old English Bede at Bury in the second half of the twelfth century. The annotator appears to have copied the orthography of his exemplar closely, and his conservatism in this regard allows us to see that this exemplar was probably early. His annotations are the product of the close and accurate comparison of two chapters of the Latin *Historia* with its English translation. The two annotations to the Bede's account of Alban's martyrdom, indeed, show a respect for the authority of the Old English translation that contrasts with what seems to have been the prevailing twelfth-century attitude of gentle suspicion towards earlier vernacular translations. The annotator's activity therefore provides us with another tantalising glimpse of the extent to which Old English texts continued to be read and used well into the Early Middle English period.

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<sup>26</sup> For these prejudices, see, for instance, Treharne (2012: 147–152).

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