

FEEDING THE DRAGON

An Eschatological Motif in Medieval Europe

Edited by Claudia Di Sciacca and Andrea Meregalli





FEEDING THE DRAGON

An Eschatological Motif in Medieval Europe

edited by Claudia Di Sciacca and Andrea Meregalli

di/segni

Dipartimento di Lingue, Letterature, Culture e Mediazioni
Università degli Studi di Milano

Ledizioni

© 2023 degli autori dei contributi e dei curatori per l'intero volume
ISBN 978-88-5526-757-1

ILLUSTRAZIONE DI COPERTINA:

Courtesy of the British Library Board: London, British
Library, Cotton Nero C.iv ('Winchester Psalter'), fol. 39^r

n° 44

Collana sottoposta a double blind peer review
ISSN: 2282-2097

Grafica:

Raúl Díaz Rosales

Composizione:

Ledizioni

Disegno del logo:

Paola Turino

STAMPATO A MILANO
NEL MESE DI FEBBRAIO 2023

www.ledizioni.it
www.ledipublishing.com
info@ledizioni.it
Via Boselli 10 – 20136 Milano

Tutti i diritti d'autore e connessi sulla presente opera appartengono all'autore.
L'opera per volontà dell'autore e dell'editore è rilasciata nei termini della licenza
Creative Commons 3.0, il cui testo integrale è disponibile alla pagina web
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/it/legalcode>



Condirettori

Monica Barsi e Danilo Manera

Comitato scientifico

Nicoletta Brazzelli Andrea Mereggali
Marco Castellari Laura Scarabelli
Simone Cattaneo Sara Sullam
Raffaella Vassena Nicoletta Vallorani
Giovanni Iamartino

Comitato scientifico internazionale

Albert Meier Sabine Lardon
(Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel) (Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3)
Luis Beltrán Almería Aleksandr Osipov - Александр Осповат
(Universidad de Zaragoza) (Высшая Школа Экономики – Москва)
Patrick J. Parrinder
(Emeritus, University of Reading, UK)

Comitato di redazione

Elisa Alberani Angela Andreani
Valentina Crestani Laila Paracchini
Paola Mancosu Cristina Dozio

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	II
CLAUDIA DI SCIACCA AND ANDREA MEREGALLI	
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	15
<i>Feeding the Dragon. A Foreword</i>	19
CLAUDIA DI SCIACCA	
<i>Recedite, ecce draconi ad devorandum datus sum. The Devouring Dragon Topos in the Works of Gregory the Great</i>	39
LUCIA CASTALDI	
<i>Efne her is cumen an draca þe me sceal forswelgan. Ælfric's Take on Gregory the Great's Swallowing Dragons</i>	57
CLAUDIA DI SCIACCA	
<i>"Their Souls Will Shine Seven Times Brighter Than the Sun". An Eschatological Motif and Its Permutations in Old English Literature</i>	105
THOMAS N. HALL	
<i>Þær bið æfre ece fyr and undeadlic wyrm. The Worm of Hell in Ælfric's Corpus.</i>	153
FEDERICA DI GIUSEPPE	
<i>From Gulping Dragon to Harmless Mouse. Christ's Deception and Entrapment of Satan in Niðrstigningar saga</i>	179
DARIO BULLITTA	

<i>Index of Manuscripts</i>	195
<i>Index of Texts Cited and Discussed</i>	199
<i>Index of Names</i>	213
<i>Abstracts</i>	221
<i>Contributors</i>	225

INTRODUCTION

The idea of this volume originated in the workshop *Feeding the Dragon. An Eschatological Motif in Early Medieval Europe*, held online on 17 September 2020, as the concluding act of the project ‘Feeding the Dragon. An Eschatological Motif in Old English Homilies and Hagiographies (FEEDEM)’, coordinated by C. Di Sciacca and funded by the University of Udine (PRID - PSA 2017).

The book consists of six original essays concerning two popular eschatological motifs of medieval Europe: the devouring devil, especially in the guise of a dragon, and the zoomorphic mouth of hell, arguably a distinctive English adaptation of the anthropomorphic mouth of hell of classical antiquity.

The opening essay (C. Di Sciacca, “Feeding the Dragon. A Foreword”) offers a survey of the topos of the devouring demonic monster, a veritable commonplace across cultures and ages. Focusing on the analysis of some key Old English (OE) homilies and hagiographies, C. Di Sciacca argues that the pervasive imagery of the devouring dragon in early medieval England coalesced with the mouth of hell, thereby contributing to popularise it, and that such a coalescence was triggered by the special currency of two apocrypha, the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, especially the *Descensus Christi ad inferos* section of the latter text.

One of the most influential exegetical interpretation of the devouring dragon in Rev. 12 can be found in Gregory the Great’s *Moralia in Iob*. Moreover, Gregory used the devouring dragon as an iconographic symbol of the devilish tempter in two exempla of the *Homiliae in Evangelia*, eventually incorporated into the *Dialogi* (of disputed authorship). Thus, the Gregorian homiletic and hagiographic works were instrumental in spreading the topos of the devouring dragon in subsequent medieval literature, as well as providing some revealing case-studies of the distinctive modes of production and transmission of Gregory’s texts. (L. Castaldi, “*Recedite, ecce draconi ad devorandum datus sum*. The Devouring Dragon Topos in Gregory the Great’s Works”).

The Gregorian exempla of the swallowing dragons were adapted into OE by the major Anglo-Saxon homilist and hagiographer, Ælfric of Eynsham (c. 950 – c. 1010). Moving on from L. Castaldi's study, the third essay discusses Ælfric's take on the imagery of the swallowing devil in three of the Catholic Homilies: the homily for the twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost (CH I. 35), the homily for St Benedict's Day (CH II. 11), and the homily for Palm Sunday (CH I. 14). In all three homilies, the antecedent of the demonic devourer has ultimately been traced to Gregory the Great, although, as is often the case with Ælfric, the ultimate patristic source has been mediated by Carolingian transmitters and integrated with echoes of ingrained biblical reading, exegetical learning, liturgical drill, and familiar stories of monastic literature. Through a detailed comparative analysis of the primary sources, this essay discusses the relationship between Ælfric's homilies and their source-texts, both ultimate and intermediate, as well as assessing Ælfric's distinctive contribution to the imagery of the devouring dragon. (C. Di Sciacca, "efne her is cumen an draca þe me sceal forswelgan. Ælfric's Vernacular Take on a Gregorian Dragon").

In his eschatological imagery, Ælfric also made use of the worm as a symbol of evil as well as of death and decay. In particular, the punishment of unrepentant sinners involves two scriptural motifs ultimately deriving from Mark 9:43-50, namely the eternal Worm and the unquenchable fire. The fourth essay discusses how Ælfric articulates such motifs within three relevant texts of his homiletic and hagiographic corpus. While the homily *On Auguries* focuses on those guilty of idolatry and the *Homily for the Third Sunday after Epiphany* conveys the spiritual meaning of Christ's healing miracles, the *Passion of St Julian and His Wife Basilissa* presents an exemplary tale of resistance against hostile forces. These three texts offer a way to consider how both the Worm of Hell and the maggots devouring the flesh are embedded in Ælfric's approach to the conflict between Good and Evil, inciting people to follow a Christian conduct that will save them from the jaws of the *undeadlic wyrm*. (F. Di Giuseppe, "þær bið æfre ece fyr and undeadlic wyrm. The Worm of Hell in Ælfric's Corpus").

The role of apocrypha into the shaping of the imaginative and eclectic eschatology and cosmology of the Middle Ages cannot be overemphasized. One of the most distinctive debts of early Insular eschatology to apocryphal lore is the frequency of motifs structured around numbers: the three utterances of the soul, the three hosts of Doomsday, the four kinds of death, the seven journeys of the soul, the seven joys of heaven, the seven heavens, the seven pains of hell, the fifteen tokens of Doomsday, etc. Though fixed by number and at least structurally resistant to alteration, these motifs are nevertheless subject to creative reformulation. T.N. Hall's comprehensive study aims to reconstruct the literary history of these seemingly interrelated ideas, ultimately demonstrating the role of medieval apocrypha and Hiberno-Latin florilegia in transmitting them ("Their Souls Will Shine Seven Times

Brighter Than the Sun'. An Eschatological Motif and Its Permutations in Old English Literature").

The most widespread and influential New Testament apocryphon in medieval Europe was the *Gospel of Nicodemus*. The earliest Icelandic translation of the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, *Niðrstigningar saga* or 'The Story of the Descent' (c. 1200), is not a translation *sensu stricto* but rather an adaptation of the second section of the original Latin text, the *Descensus Christi ad inferos*. D. Bullitta discusses two of the four interpolations of *Niðrstigningar saga* containing two divergent descriptions of Satan: the former as the terrifying seven-headed dragon of Rev. 12:3, who threatens to destroy the world; the latter as the fish swallowing the dying Christ, whose body serves as a human bait and the Cross as a divine hook. The essay traces this metaphor to Augustine's *Sermo 265D (De Quadragesima Ascensione Domini)*, which the Icelandic compiler might have known in the form of a marginal gloss to Peter Lombard's *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae* (c. 1157) ("From Gulping Dragon to Harmless Mouse. Christ's Deception and Entrapment of Satan in *Niðrstigningar saga*").

The three indexes have been put together by Dr Dario Capelli, whom we wish to thank for his generous help. Our gratitude goes of course also to the colleagues and friends who participated in the original workshop (Dario Bullitta, Lucia Castaldi, Tom Hall, and Giorgio Ziffer, who delivered their papers under the competent and good-humoured chairmanship of Rosalind Love), as well as to those who have eventually accepted to contribute to this volume and have ever since gracefully put up with our requests and demands during the (alas) long stages of editing the manuscript. We would also like to thank the reviewers for taking the time and effort to comment on the individual contributions.

Last but not least, we wish to express our gratitude to the Directors and Editorial Board of the series 'di/signi' for their interest in our editorial venture and for accepting our manuscript for publication.

It has been a long and winding road, but it is now a pleasure to bring this book to fruition and an even greater pleasure to make it available to students and scholars open access.

Claudia Di Sciacca and Andrea Meregalli
St George's Day, 23 April 2023

Note: Throughout this book, 'Anglo-Saxon' is used to refer to the history and culture of pre-Norman England.

Latin, Old English, and Old Norse spellings have not been standardised.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANF	<i>Arkiv för nordisk filologi</i>
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
BHG	Halkin, François, ed. [1895] 1957. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 8a)
BHG Auct.	Halkin, François, ed. 1969. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca. Auctarium</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 47)
BHG Nov. Auct.	Halkin, François, ed. 1984. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca. Novum Auctarium</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 65)
BHL	Socii Bollandiani. 1898-1901. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 6)
BHL Suppl.	Fros, Henrik. 1986. <i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis. Novum Supplementum</i> . Brussels: Société des Bollandistes (Subsidia Hagiographica 70)
BL	British Library
BM	Bibliothèque Municipale
BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
Cameron	Cameron, Angus. 1973. "A List of Old English Texts." In <i>A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English</i> , ed. Angus Cameron and Roberta Frank, 27-306. Toronto: UTP (Toronto Old English Series 2)
CANT	Geerard, Maurits. 1992. <i>Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti</i> . Turnhout: Brepols
CAVT	Haelewyck, Jean-Claude. 1998. <i>Clavis Apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti</i> . Turnhout: Brepols
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina

CH I	Clemoes, Peter, ed. 1997. <i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. The First Series. Text.</i> Oxford: OUP (EETS s.s. 17)
CH II	Godden, Malcolm R., ed. 1979. <i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. The Second Series. Text.</i> Oxford: OUP (EETS s.s. 5)
CPG	Maurits, Geerard. 1974-98. <i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum.</i> 5 vols. and Supplement. Turnhout: Brepols
CPL	Dekkers, Eligius and Emil Gaar. [1951] 1995. <i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum.</i> Turnhout: Brepols
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DOEC	<i>Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus</i> , compiled by Antonette diPaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang. Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project 2009.
EETS	Early English Texts Society
e.s.	extra series
o.s.	ordinary series
s.s.	supplementary series
G & L	Gneuss, Helmut, and Michael Lapidge. 2014. <i>Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts. A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100.</i> Toronto: UTP (Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series 15)
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
Ker [1957] 1990	Ker, Neil R. [1957] 1990. <i>Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon.</i> Oxford: Clarendon Press
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MS	<i>Mediaeval Studies</i>
OUP	Oxford University Press
PG	Migne, Jacques-P., ed. 1857-66. <i>Patrologia Graeco-Latina.</i> 161 vols. and Index. Paris
PL	Migne, Jacques-P., ed. 1844-55. <i>Patrologia Latina.</i> 217 vols. Paris; Index. 1864. 4 vols. Paris
PLS	Hamman, Adalbert G. ed. 1958-74. <i>Patrologiae Latinae Supplementum.</i> 5 vols. Paris
SASLC I	Biggs, Frederick M., Thomas D. Hill, and Paul E. Szarmach, eds., with the assistance of Karen Hammond. 1990. <i>Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture. A Trial Version.</i> Binghamton, NY: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies. State University of New York at Binghamton

SASLC AASS	Biggs, Frederick M., Thomas D. Hill, Paul E. Szarmach, and E. Gordon Whatley, eds., with the assistance of Deborah A. Oosterhouse. 2001. <i>Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture Volume I. Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-Germain-de-Prés, and Acta Sanctorum</i> . Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University. Medieval Institute Publications.
SASLC Apocrypha	Biggs, Frederick M. 2007. <i>Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture. Apocrypha</i> . Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University. Medieval Institute Publications (Instrumenta Anglistica Mediaevalia 1).
SH	Pope, John C., ed. 1967-68. <i>Homilies of Ælfric. A Supplementary Collection</i> . 2 vols. Oxford: OUP (EETS o.s. 259-60).
UL	University Library
UP	University Press
UTP	University of Toronto Press

FEEDING THE DRAGON. A FOREWORD

Claudia Di Sciacca
UNIVERSITY OF UDINE

O. INTRODUCTION

The project of which this volume is the concluding act (see *supra*, 11), but hopefully also a springboard into further research, has concerned two popular eschatological motifs of early medieval England: the devouring demonic monster, especially in the guise of a dragon, and the zoomorphic mouth of hell, arguably a distinctively English adaptation of the anthropomorphic mouth of hell of classical antiquity (Di Sciacca 2019b, 53-61).

The devouring monster, visualising the unrelenting rapaciousness of death and/or of the underworld, can be said to be immemorial and cross-cultural, being rooted in the universal experience of the ruthlessness of death. As I have tried to show elsewhere, the early English elaborations of this topos syncretically blend crucial themes of Christian theology and demonology – the bait-and-hook metaphor, the soteriology of the Cross, *Christus victor*, the baptismal symbolism –, with elements of diverse origin, from classical mythology to the Celtic ‘Monster of Hell’ and the lupine or serpentine monsters of Germanic lore (Di Sciacca 2019b, 53-71, 93-99). I would argue that in early medieval England the pervasive imagery of the devouring monster coalesced with the mouth of hell and, at the same time, contributed to popularise it, and that such a coalescence was arguably triggered by the special currency enjoyed by two apocrypha, the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, with their imaginative cosmology and eschatology (Di Sciacca 2019a, 368-74; 2019b).

I. ST MARGARET AND THE DRAGON

All of the above (and the following) had the most casual starting-point at a *kjallara*-party held in the cellar of the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykavík over ten years ago on 13 July, that is St Margaret's day,¹ as the namesake party-planners merrily explained to their bemused Italian guest. At the time I was a newcomer to the Institute, having just taken up a Snorri Sturluson Fellowship to work on the reception of the *Elucidarium* by Honorius Augustodunensis in early medieval England and Scandinavia, and was totally as oblivious to St Margaret as I was to the caloric threats and alcoholic traps of Icelandic parties. However, I made use of the Arnarnagnæan library also to get introduced to a saint that seemed to be so popular in Iceland (Wolf 2013b, 217-19) and in England (Clayton and Magennis 1994; Di Sciacca 2015; 2019a), as I was indeed to find out pretty soon, much to my embarrassment both as a Germanic philologist and a Catholic.

Sehnsucht of my happy times at the Árnastofnun apart, the legend of the formidable dragon-fighting St Margaret, with its swallowing of the saint by the demonic dragon – a distinctive, indeed unique, narrative twist into the commonplace hagiographic tradition of the dracomachia (Ogden 2013, 196-256 and 383-426; Rauer 2000, 174-93; Riches 2003) –, has proved the veritable cornerstone of my investigations. St Margaret's popularity in early medieval England cannot be overestimated: her life² is attested in at least two Latin witnesses³ and four Old English versions.⁴ The flamboyant demonology of St Margaret's hagiographic tradition has long attracted the attention of scholars and has already been traced to a complex net of

1 On the cult of St. Margaret in Iceland, see Cormack 1994, 121-22, and Wolf 2013b. On the varying dates of St Margaret's feast day as well as name, see Di Sciacca 2019a, 356-57 note 9. In the *Old English Martyrology*, St Margaret is commemorated on 7 July under her Eastern name, Marina: see below, note 4.

2 Although strictly speaking a 'passion', St Margaret's legend is commonly referred to as a 'life' in Anglo-Saxon studies. Similarly, although I am aware that 'homily' and 'sermon' are not synonymous, they will not be differentiated in the course of this essay. Finally, although they have recently proved controversial, the adjectives 'Anglo-Saxon' and 'Insular' will be used in their most proper historical and geographical sense.

3 Paris, BnF, lat. 5574 (s. ix/x or x^{1/4}, Mercia?; provenance: France, s. xii), and Saint-Omer, BM 202 (s. ix², North-East France; provenance: England [Exeter?]) by s. xi^{med}): see G & L, nos. 885.5 and 930.5, and Clayton and Magennis 1994, 7-8, 95-96, and 192; a corrected text of the Paris *Life of St Margaret* with facing-page English translation is provided *ibid.*, 191-223. On the Saint-Omer manuscript, see Cross and Crick 1996.

4 1) Entry (7 July) in the *Old English Martyrology* (s. ix), though under the Eastern name of Marina: Rauer 2013, 132-33, 271; 2) Prose life in ms. London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A.iii (s. xi^{med}, Canterbury, CC): G & L, no. 363; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 186, art. 15; Cameron B3.3.16; Clayton and Magennis 1994, 112-39; 3) Prose life in ms. CCCC 303 (s. xii¹, Rochester): Ker [1957] 1990, no. 57, art. 23; Cameron B3.3.14; Clayton and Magennis 1994, 149-80; 4) Prose life once in ms. London, BL, Cotton Otho B.x (s. xi¹), destroyed in the Cottonian fire of 1731 and known only from the transcript of the *incipit* and *explicit* by H. Wanley: G & L, no. 355; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 177, 228; Cameron B3.3.15; Clayton and Magennis 1994, 95.

Judaeo-Christian apocryphal traditions (Di Sciacca 2015, 43-47; 2019a, 361-68). A recent contribution to the debate has argued that the swallowing dragon motif shows significant analogues with the cosmology of two apocrypha, the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* and the *Pistis Sophia*, both associated with Egyptian Gnosticism (Di Sciacca 2019a, 368-74).

2. THE SEVEN HEAVENS APOCRYPHON

The *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* is so-called because it describes the journey and purgation of the souls, both blessed and sinful, through seven heavens, until they reach the throne of God and are there handed over by St Michael for the Lord to pass His judgment (Di Sciacca 2002, 244-46; 2019a, 368-72; 2019b, 72-76). The sinful souls are then plunged into hell, which is also a composite region, consisting of twelve walls, above which there are twelve fiery dragons, and the sinful soul is progressively swallowed and then spewed out from the outermost dragon to the lower one, until it ultimately reaches Satan (see below, 21-22).

The tradition of the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* in the West amount to five attestations, all traceable to the British Isles and to Insular centres on the Continent.⁵ Though the five surviving witnesses agree in significant places and obviously betray what must have been a shared source, they are textually unrelated (Carey 2014a; Volmering 2014, 286-87). The Old English *Seven Heavens* text attests to the most detailed description of the peculiar itinerary of the sinful soul to its final destination, as well as featuring the most thorough portrayal of Satan bound on his back with fiery bonds at the bottom of hell and in a position that resembles Christ's cross:

Sio helle hafað iserne weal 7 .xii. siðum. H[e] 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 oðrum in muð þa sawla, ðe bioð gebundene mid þam bendum ðara eahta synna ealdorlicra. Se yetemesta draca þæt is þæt ealordeoful se [bið] gebunden onbecing

5 The five *Seven Heavens* texts are: 1) a fragmentary Latin homily within the *Apocrypha Priscillianistica* (item no. 2 in ms. Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Aug. perg. 254, s. viii/ix, Novara; Carey 2014b); 2) an Irish version contained within the *Fís Adamnáin*, or *The Vision of Adamnán* (s. x/xi; Carey 2019); 3) the Irish *Na Seacht Neamha*, or *The Seven Heavens*, within the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum* (s. xv; Ó Dochartaigh 2014); 4) an Irish version contained within the third recension of *In Tenga Bithnúa*, or *The Evernew Tongue* (Ní Cárthaigh 2014); 5) an Old English version within a text of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* (G & L, no. 39; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 32, art. 12; Cameron B3.4.12.2; Volmering 2014).

mid raceteage reades fyres to tacne Cristes rode in hellegrunde
(Volmering 2014, 300).⁶

These swallowing dragons can be said to be highly syncretistic creatures, having been associated with the ‘Monster of Hell’, a motif popular in medieval Insular eschatology (Volmering 2014, 288 and 305; Wright 1993, 156-65), whose “ultimate progenitor” has, in turn, been identified with the dragon Parthemon (Wright 1993, 165) of several Latin redactions of the *Visio S. Pauli*,⁷ the “complete Baedeker to the other-world”, according to Silverstein’s iconic definition (1935, 5). This ‘Pauline element’ is intriguing, since the cosmology of the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* has been traced to a Gnostic *Apocalypse of Paul* from the Coptic library of Nag Hammadi (Stevenson 1983, 30-33; Dumville 1977-78, 67-69).

The very manuscript context of the Old English Seven Heavens piece is also revealing. This is uniquely attested within a vernacular homiletic adaptation of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 32, art. 12; Cameron B3.4.12.1; Förster 1955), itself also an apocryphon where Christ purportedly reveals to the Apostle Thomas the fifteen signs that will herald Judgement Day (CAVT 326; Biggs and Wright 2007). In turn, this version of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* is the third of a set of six Old English homiletic items, added, together with other *marginalia*, in the margins of ms. CCC 41.⁸ Collectively considered, the six homiletic items⁹ make up a small

6 “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.” (Volmering 2014, 301).

7 For an overview of the *Visio S. Pauli* and its circulation in the Insular world, see at least Wright 1993, 106-74, and diPaolo Healey 2007. The Latin tradition of the *Visio S. Pauli* has generally been divided into the Long Versions, more faithful to the Greek original and relating Paul’s visit to both heaven and hell, and the Redactions, abridged accounts focusing on Paul’s journey to hell. On the Long Versions, see Silverstein 1935 and Silverstein and Hilhorst 1997. More recently, L. Jiroušková has proposed a new way of grouping the Latin tradition of the *Visio* (2006, 5-17 and 29-35).

8 This codex is a copy of the Old English version of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (s. xi¹), to which a slightly later hand (s. xi¹ or xi^{med}) added a number of *marginalia* both in Latin (mass sets, office chants, prayers, charms) and in Old English (homilies, charms, a medical recipe, fragments from the *Old English Martyrology*, and the poem *Solomon and Saturn I*): G & L, no. 39; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 32; the vernacular *marginalia* are Ker arts. 2-18; see also Volmering 2014, 290-96, Olsen 2010, and further bibliography in Di Sciacca 2019b, 79 note 103.

9 The six Old English homiletic *marginalia* are: a version of Vercelli iv (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 32, art. 9; see below, note 14); an abbreviated adaptation of version B² of the *Transitus Mariae* by pseudo-Melito, uniquely attested in CCC 41 (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 32, art. 11; Cameron B3.3.21; Clayton 1998, 216-28); the homiletic adaptation of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, including the Seven Heavens narrative (on which, see above, 21-22 and note 6); an Easter homily (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 32, art. 13; Cameron B8.5.3.2; Hulme 1903-04, 610-14); a homily in praise of St Michael, uniquely attested in CCC 41 (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 32, art. 17; Cameron B3.3.24;

compendium of apocryphal eschatology and demonology, their recurring themes being the fate of the soul, Doomsday, and the resurrection. As has already been noted, their thematic (and, at times, also stylistic) consistency suggests a shared literary milieu, namely one that was imbued with apocryphal lore of likely Eastern origin and mediated by Irish sources (Johnson 1998; Volmering 2014, 292-96).

Particularly relevant to the present study is the fifth item, namely a homily in praise of St Michael, not only or rather not so much because St Michael is the Christian dragon slayer *per excellence*, as because some distinctive elements in this homily, especially some idiosyncratic eulogistic epithets bestowed upon the saint, “could reasonably reflect a degree of Coptic influence mediated by a Hiberno-Latin source” (Johnson 1998, 90; Ruggerini 1999). St Michael enjoyed a special popularity within Coptic Christianity, particularly as the most effective and sympathetic intercessor on behalf of mankind (Johnson 1998, 87-90). In turn, St Michael seems to play a crucial role within the six homiletic *marginalia* of CCCC 41, as he occurs also in the account of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, where he features as guardian and conveyor of Mary’s soul, in keeping with his traditional role as psychopomp and guardian of souls of the living and the dead; in the Seven Heavens piece, where St Michael guards the door of the first heaven and presents the souls before the throne of the Lord; finally, in the Easter Homily, where St Michael together with the Virgin Mary and St Peter intercede on behalf of sinners on Judgement Day. Furthermore, other non-homiletic *marginalia* of CCCC 41, in particular charms and loricas, that is texts which purport to offer protection, both material and spiritual, are in line with St Michael’s apotropaic power, although they do not explicitly mention the saint (Johnson 1998, 65-85).

3. THE *PISTIS SOPHIA*

The Gnostic background of the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* has also been further corroborated by recent *Quellenforschung*, which has identified the closest antecedent of the apocryphon with an Egyptian Gnostic text, the *Pistis Sophia* (Carey 2003; 2014a, 156-57; Touati 2014, 176-83).

A treatise dated to the third century, the *Pistis Sophia* features a gigantic serpentine monster, the dragon of the outer darkness, that encircles the earth and bites its own tail (Schmidt and Macdermot 1978). When the soul reaches the dragon, the latter takes its tail from its mouth in order to swallow the soul, which now has to go through twelve chambers of punishments

Grant 1982, 42-77); finally, a homily on Palm Sunday based on the account of Christ’s passion in Matt. 26 and 27, uniquely attested in CCCC 41 (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 32, art. 18; Cameron B3.2.19; Grant 1982, 78-110).

inside the dragon's body, each provided with its own gate and presided over by an archon with bestial features. Once the soul has completed its ordeal of atonement, the dragon again takes it tail from its mouth and disgorges it (III, §102: Schmidt and Macdermot 1978, 256-62).

This composite structure of the underworld and the kind of circuit of purification and punishment the soul has to go through has been associated in particular with the Gnostic sect of the Ophites (Carey 2003, 134-35; Touati 2014, 179-83). However, this vision of the otherworld is highly syncretistic in that it is also paralleled in other esoteric doctrines of Graeco-Roman Egypt and, further back, in the ancient indigenous Egyptian doctrines of the after-life (Carey 1994, 25 note 70; 2003, 135-36; Touati 2014, 173-83). Intriguingly, the environment “that might well have fostered such a fusion of elements” has been pinpointed by Carey in the heterodox monastic communities thriving in fourth- and fifth-century Egypt and whose “hybrid heritage lived on in the apocrypha of the Coptic Church” (Carey 1994, 32). Similarly, the production and usage of the apocrypha of the Nag Hammadi codices have been situated within the intellectual and spiritual context of the Pachomian monasticism of Upper Egypt (Lundhaug and Jenott 2015; Dechow 2018). The hint at an association between Coptic apocryphal eschatology and early Egyptian monasticism is most intriguing, in view of the contribution that Desert monasticism and the related corpus of homiletic and hagiographic exempla gave to the definition of Anglo-Saxon eschatology and demonology (see below, 28-29).

4. THE SWALLOWING DRAGON IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

Unfortunately, there is no evidence of the circulation of the *Pistis Sophia* in pre-Conquest England. As to the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon*, the unique Old English version is probably just the tip of a wider iceberg. The vernacular piece itself has arguably been derived from a now lost Latin (presumably Hiberno-Latin) exemplar (Carey 2014a, 164, 170, and 190; Volmering 2014, 286-87). In addition, the Old English version is probably a copy, hence at least another vernacular witness of the apocryphon should be taken into account (Volmering 2014, 286-87). Furthermore, echoes of the idiosyncratic cosmology and eschatology of the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* have been detected in a distinctive group of Old English anonymous homilies (Di Sciacca 2019a, 377-78; 2019b, 80-84). Fiery dragons that swallow and then regurgitate the sinful soul *en route* to its afterlife destination feature in a composite anonymous homily for the third Sunday after Epiphany, *Be heofonwarum and be helwarum*,¹⁰ and in two composite anonymous homilies

¹⁰ G & L, no. 86; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 56, art. 10, and no. 153, art. 4; Cameron B3.2.5; Teresi 2002, 226-29.

relating a *post-mortem* vision ultimately associated with a putative Desert Father Macarius (Di Sciacca 2010, 329-38), the so-called Macarius Homily¹¹ and Napier xxix.¹²

In particular, *Be heofonwarum* and *be helwarum* features a twelve-fold hell very similar to the surviving versions of the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon*, albeit more concise and independent of them (Teresi 2002, 228, ll. 40-52). Also, as Wright has noted, the Seven Heavens section of *Be heofonwarum* features a detail, namely the fire of hell is nine times hotter than the fire of Doomsday (Teresi 2002, 228, ll. 55-56), unparalleled in all the other surviving versions of the apocryphon but present in the *Pistis Sophia*, where different kinds of fires are arranged in a numerical *gradatio* (Wright 1993, 220).

The Macarius Homily and Napier xxix feature a dragon that swallows and then regurgitates the sinful souls.¹³ Vercelli Homily iv too features a dragon, called Satan, whose throat is the place where witches and wizards receive their eternal punishment,¹⁴ as well as containing an allusion to the heaven of the Holy Trinity, the seventh heaven (Scragg 1992, 94, ll. 90-103). Notably, a variant text of Vercelli iv is attested as the first of six homiletic *marginalia* in ms. CCCC 41 (see above, note 9).

Finally, devouring dragons feature in many an exemplum in the oeuvre of Gregory the Great, and as such circulated both in Latin and the vernacular in medieval England (Castaldi, *infra*; Di Sciacca 2019b, 84-85; *Eadem, infra*).

5. THE HARROWING OF HELL AND THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS

The dragon's swallowing of St Margaret and her emerging from inside the dragon's belly after making the sign of cross has been likened to the Harrowing of Hell, when Satan entices Christ into hell only to be inevitably vanquished when Christ sets His cross – the sign of victory – in the midst of hell (Di Sciacca 2019a, 367-68).

The chief ultimate source for the Harrowing has generally been considered the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, especially its latter section, the *Descensus Christi ad inferos*.¹⁵

¹¹ G & L, no. 66; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 50, art. 2; Cameron B3.4.55; Zaffuto 1999, 178-97.

¹² G & L, no. 637; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 331, art. 22; Cameron B3.4.26; Napier [1883] 1967, 134-43.

¹³ Zaffuto 1999, 192, ll. 116-18, and Napier [1883] 1967, 141, ll. 23-25. On the textual relationship between the Macarius Homily and Napier xxix, on the one hand, and between the latter two with other Old English eschatological homilies, see also Di Sciacca 2006, 365-81.

¹⁴ G & L, no. 941; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 394, art. 4; Cameron B3.4.9; Scragg 1992, 87-107, at 92, ll. 45-47.

¹⁵ *CANT* 62; *BHG* 779t and *BHG Nov. Auct.*, 779tb-te (Recension A); *BHG* 779u, v, and w (Recension B). The *Gospel of Nicodemus* was composed sometime between s. ii and s. vi probably in Greek; its prolific Latin tradition consists of two texts, the *Acta Pilati* and the *Descensus*

The *Gospel of Nicodemus* was the most widespread New Testament apocryphon in the medieval West, as attested by the impressive number of both the surviving Latin witnesses and its vernacular translations, as well as by its impact on both the literary culture and the visual arts (Di Sciacca 2019b, 86-89). In particular, the *Gospel of Nicodemus* enjoyed a special and enduring popularity in England throughout the Middle Ages (Hall 1996, 57-58; Tamburr 2007, 102-47). Five versions have survived from pre-Conquest England: two of them in Latin¹⁶ and another three in Old English, the so-called *NicA*,¹⁷ *NicB*,¹⁸ and *NicC*.¹⁹ Both the Latin and the vernacular versions of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* that circulated in pre-Conquest England all attest to the Latin recension A, also known as the Majority Text, by far the most widespread Latin recension of the Gospel,²⁰ and all three Old English versions have been shown to derive ultimately from the Latin A-text in ms. Saint-Omer, BM 202 (Cross 1996c, 82-87, 90-97, and 100-04; Orchard 1996, 105-08 and 123-30; Thornbury 2011).

Besides the three Old English versions of the Gospel, the motif of the Harrowing of Hell is attested in at least five anonymous homilies for Easter Sunday.²¹ Notably, in one of these five items, a homily uniquely attested in ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121 (Cameron B3.2.28; Luiselli Fadda 1972), Christ, having defeated death, becomes Himself the death of hell, as well as the *devourer* of hell, thereby fulfilling Hosea's prophecy (Hos. 13:14), which is explicitly quoted in Latin.²² This passage is closely echoed in

Christi ad inferos, which originally circulated independently before being conflated sometime between s. v and s. viii: see Izydorczyk 1989, 170-76; 1997b; Hall 1996, 37-47; Bullitta 2017, 3-5.

16 Contained in mss. London, BL, Royal 5.E.xiii (s. ix^{ex}, North France or Brittany; provenance England by s. x^{med}; G & L, nos. 459), and Saint-Omer, BM 202, on which see above, note 3.

17 Contained in ms. Cambridge, UL, li.2.11 (s. xi^{3/4}, Exeter), *NicA* is the earliest Old English translation of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the closest to the lost archetype, as well as one of the two earliest vernacular translations in Europe together with the Old Church Slavonic version: G & L, no. 15; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 20, art. 11; Cameron B8.5.2.1; Cross 1996d, 138-247.

18 Contained in ms. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A.xv, pt I (s. xii^{med}), *NicB* corresponds very closely to *NicA*: Ker [1957] 1990, no. 215, art. 2; Cameron B8.5.2.2; Hulme 1898.

19 Contained in ms. London, BL, Cotton Vespasian D. xiv (s. xii^{med}, Canterbury or Rochester), *NicC* is a pretty drastic homiletic digest of the apocryphon: Ker [1957] 1990, no. 209, art. 31; Cameron B8.5.3.1; Hulme 1903-04, 591-610.

20 Bullitta 2017, 6-12. Besides the Majority Text, another three Latin recensions have been identified, i.e. B (originated in Northern Italy, the earliest witnesses dating to s. xi), C (originated in Spain in s. ix), and T (a hybrid text conflating A and C, probably originated in North France in s. xii¹): see *ibid.*, 12-17.

21 These homilies are Cameron B3.2.26 (or Blickling vii; Ker [1957] 1990, no. 382, art. 7; Morris [1874-80] 1967, 83-97); B3.2.27 (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 38, art. 32; Schaefer 1972, 249-59); B3.2.28 (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 338, art. 33; Luiselli Fadda 1972); B8.5.3.2 and B8.5.3.3: see Wright 2007, 43-44. On the latter two homilies, see above, note 9, and below, notes 24 and 26.

22 "Ac swa se witega cwæð be Cristes hade: *O mors, ero mors tua, morsus tuus ero, inferne*, þæt is on englisc: 'Eala þu deað, ic beo þin deað, and þu hell ic beo þin bite"; Luiselli Fadda 1972, 1008, ll. 182-84. ("And the prophet said about the condition of Christ [at the Harrowing]: *O mors, ero mors tua, morsus tuus ero, inferne*, that is in English: O, you death, I will be your death, and you hell, I will be your bite"; my translation).

Lambeth Homily xi,²³ and embedded within an adaptation of Ælfric's Palm Sunday Homily for the First Series of the Catholic Homilies (CH I. 14), where the Christ-Satan confrontation at the Harrowing is conveyed by a patristic permutation of the 'devouring motif', namely the bait-and-hook metaphor, with the Satanic devourer in the guise of a fish and Christ's mortal persona in the guise of the bait (see Di Sciacca, *infra*, 69-74).

6. FROM THE DEVOURING DRAGON TO THE MOUTH OF HELL

The concurrent imagery of the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* and the *Descensus ad inferos* were arguably conflated, and such a conflation in turn contributed to the distinctive pervasiveness of the devouring devil and mouth of hell in early medieval England (Di Sciacca 2019b). This hypothesis seems to me to be supported by the thematic correspondences that run through the two apocrypha and the derivative homilies and hagiographies so far discussed, as well as by the manuscript evidence.

The Old English version of the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* is immediately followed in its unique manuscript witness, CCC 41, by an Easter homily that includes an adaptation of the Harrowing of Hell narrative (*NicD*).²⁴ Secondly, the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the *Life of St Margaret* occur jointly in two manuscripts circulating in early medieval England, Saint-Omer, BM 202²⁵ and CCC 303.²⁶ The former codex reached England from Saint-Bertin by the mid-eleventh century and was probably housed at Exeter during the episcopacy of Leofric (1050-72) (Lapidge [1985] 1994, 132-39). Ms. CCC 41, the only witness of the Old English *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* and of *NicD*, was written at an unidentified southern English centre and eventually donated to Exeter by Leofric (Lapidge [1985] 1994, 133-34 note 104). Ms. Cambridge, UL, II.11.21, which attests to *NicA*, was produced at Exeter in Leofric's days (Hall 1996, 49-51; Lapidge [1985] 1994, 134 and 136-37). Finally, the manuscript containing the Macarius Homily, CCC 201,

23 "for hit wes awriten þurh þan prophete. *O mors ero mors tua morsus tuus ero inferne*. þæt is. Ðu deað ic wulle beon þin deað; and þu helle ic wulle beon þin bite": Morris [1868] 1988, 123, ll. 18-21 ("for it was written through the prophet, *O mors, ero mors tua, morsus tuus ero inferne*; that is, you death, I will be your death, and you hell, I will be your bite": trans. adapted from Morris [1868] 1988, 122). See Pelle 2014. On the Lambeth Homilies and their adaptation of pre-Conquest sources, see Swan 2007, 405-14, and CH I, 49-50.

24 See above, note 9. A version of this Easter homily is also attested in ms. CCC 303: see below, note 26.

25 See above, note 3. The first two items of the codex are a copy of the Latin A recension of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the *Passio S. Margaretae* (BHL 5303).

26 CCC 303 contains an Old English version of the *Life of St Margaret* and a version of the CCC 41 Easter Homily that includes *NicD*: see above, notes 4, 9, and 21. In the CCC 303 Easter homily the version of the apocryphal Gospel is identified as *NicE*: Ker [1957] 1990, no. 57, art. 17; Cameron B8.5.3.3; Hulme 1903-04, 610-14.

pp. 179-272, also originated in Exeter in the time of Bishop Leofric (see above, note 11).

Last but not least, Leofric's Exeter has been posited as "the most likely place for the original composition" (Cross 1996b, 9) of the Old English translation of both the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and of the related apocryphon *Vindicta Salvatoris* (Hall 1996, 58-81; Di Sciacca 2019b, 101-03). In sum, the cues pointing towards late eleventh-century Exeter as a centre nurturing an active interest in apocrypha, especially, though not only, the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the related *Vindicta Salvatoris*, are numerous and significant.

7. THE DEMONOLOGY OF THE DESERT FATHERS

Early English eschatology and cosmology have long been shown to depend on a creative conflation of motifs derived from an eclectic range of apocryphal sources, often of ultimate Eastern origin and Irish transmitted (Wright 1993).

Indeed, a further component could be pinpointed in the so-called *Vitas Patrum*, a vast corpus of *uitae* and *exempla* associated with the Desert Fathers.²⁷ The role of these narratives was acknowledged as far back as the early 70s by Mayr-Harting, when he concluded the chapter headed "Guthlac, Beowulf and Antony the Hermit" of his classic *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, by epitomizing the Christianisation of the Anglo-Saxons as "a fusion of two great and wildly separated traditions", the worlds of Germanic heroes and East Mediterranean hermits ([1972] 1991, 239). Revealingly, Mayr-Harting's point has been reiterated in a recent essay on the Latinity of the *Vita S. Guthlaci* by A. Orchard (2020, 54). Not unlike the demon-fighting St Guthlac, the demonology of the pugnacious St Margaret demonstrably owes to the legacy of the Desert Fathers and the whole legend of St Margaret unfolds along the saint-devil antithesis that defines the Desert Fathers narratives (Clayton and Magennis 1994, 35; Di Sciacca 2015, 44-45, 64-65; 2019a, 361-63 and 367).

A distinctive type of such *exempla*, centred on the exchanges between an anchorite and the devil, provided the narrative framework of the so-called Devil's Account of the Next World, one of the most popular eschatological tales in late Anglo-Saxon England (Wright 1993, 175-214; Di Sciacca 2010, 339-41). Notably, two of the eight surviving versions of the Devil's Account occur in the same manuscripts that contain the two Old English Lives of St Margaret.²⁸

²⁷ BHL 943-48; BHG III, 191-214. On the *Vitas Patrum* in Anglo-Saxon England, see Jackson 1990 and Di Sciacca 2010.

²⁸ See above, note 4. The two texts in question are contained in mss. Cotton Tiberius A. iii, featuring the most extensive Old English version of the Devil's Account narrative (Ker [1957]

Even the notoriously fastidious Ælfric adapted into Old English two visions of departing souls from the *Verba Seniorum*,²⁹ in particular the *Adhortationes Sanctorum Patrum*, in what is possibly the earliest translation from that corpus into a Western European vernacular.³⁰ Contrary to his trademark restraint, here Ælfric does not eschew a full rendition of the sensational and at times gruesome aspects of the *post-mortem* visions; indeed, sometimes he even adds some graphic elements to his source-text, thereby enhancing the dramatic character of the narrative (Di Sciacca 2018; *Eadem, infra*).

That even the most scrupulous representative of the Benedictine Reform, not unlike many anonymous homilists, drew on the Desert Fathers narratives to conjure up two dramatic *post-mortem* scenes is a further hint at the influential role played by such sources in the shaping of the creative eschatology and demonology of pre-Conquest England. Therefore, the study of their circulation and reception – and of their possible mediation through Gregory the Great’s *Dialogi*? (Keskiaho 2020; Menendez 2020; Di Sciacca, *infra*) –, is definitely a desideratum of the *Quellenforschung* of early English literary culture.

8. THE SCANDINAVIAN CONTEXT

The Scandinavian context presents some interesting analogues with the English one, opening up paths for further research.

The seven heavens cosmology seems to have been known in the Old Norse tradition as at least one list of the seven heavens is attested in Latin in the fourteenth-century Icelandic manuscript AM 736 b 4to (fol. 3^v).³¹ Admittedly, this list doesn’t correspond to any of its Irish and English counterparts and it could rather be explained as a pastiche of the names of the

1990, no. 186, art. 18; Cameron B3.4.15; Robinson [1972] 1994, 199-204), and CCC 303 (Ker [1957] 1990, no. 57, art. 40; Cameron B3.5.9; Luiselli Fadda 1977, 187-88).

²⁹ *CPL* 1079c; *BHL* 6525, 6527-28, 6529-30, 6531, and 6535. For a convenient résumé of these collections within the *Vitas Patrum*, see Di Sciacca 2012, 130-31. On the *Verba Seniorum* in Anglo-Saxon England, see Rudolf 2010, 33-44; 2014. On Ælfric and the *Vitas Patrum* in general, see Di Sciacca 2012.

³⁰ Ælfric’s Old English version is included within the homily SH II. 27 (775-79; Cameron B1.4.28). The two Latin exempla are printed in PL 73, §13, 1011-12, and §14, 1012. The first of the two exempla was also adapted within the medieval Irish text known as *The Two Deaths* (Ritari 2014, 101-11), and is attested twice in Old Icelandic, namely within the Old Icelandic version of the *Vitae Patrum*, as they were known in the Scandinavian context (Unger 1877, 632-34), and within the miscellaneous AM 764, 4to (fols. 38^v; Tveitane 1968, 20-21). I am grateful to A. Meregalli for his bibliographical help with the Old Icelandic tradition.

³¹ This is a small-sized, bilingual (Latin and Old Norse) miscellaneous codex, of which only eighteen pages survive, mostly filled with brief annotations of geographical, astronomical, and computational content: for a codicological description and edition of the items, see <http://invisibilia.hum.ku.dk/pages/data.aspx?ID=111&Type=MS>. Accessed 14 February 2021. My thanks to C.D. Wright for pointing out this list to me in the first place.

seven heavens and of their doors (and possibly also of the seven angels presiding over each door), further muddled by misreadings and/or misspellings occurred in the manuscript tradition (cf. Willard 1935, 7-11). While this Icelandic list of heavens is itself a significant attestation to the notion of the seven heavens also in the Old Norse tradition, its idiosyncrasies invite further research in order to assess if and to what extent this element of the medieval Scandinavian cosmology owed to Insular sources.³²

The *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and its *Descensus* section in particular, must have been circulating in Scandinavia from as early as the end of the twelfth century or beginning of the thirteenth and its vernacular version, *Niðrstigningar saga*, is one of the earliest Old Norse texts (Bullitta 2017, 86-96).

Notably, the description of Satan in *Niðrstigningar saga* echoes the early English tradition at least twice. Firstly, Satan undergoes a metamorphosis into a dragon as a consequence of the Harrowing of Hell (§xxi.1: Bullitta 2017, 141 and 157), which reminds of the third guise taken by devil in his sensational shape-shifting during his fight against the letters of the Paternoster in the Old English *Solomon and Saturn Prose Paternoster Dialogue*.³³ Secondly, in the description of the climactic scene of the Harrowing of Hell narrative, that is the binding of Satan, the *Niðrstigningar saga* supplements the Latin base-text by specifying that the bonds holding Satan are made of fire (*mep elldiglom bondom*) (Bullitta 2017, 146), in an intriguing parallel with the Old English version of the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon*, where Satan is described as bound with chains of red fire.³⁴

Furthermore, the *Gospel of Nicodemus* and the *Life of St Margaret* are associated also within the Icelandic manuscript tradition. The late fourteenth-century Icelandic ms. AM 233 a fol. contains as its last three items the older (defective) redaction of the *Margrétar saga*, the older (defective) redaction of *Niðrstigningar saga*, and the second (defective) redaction of the *Kross saga*, an Icelandic version of the *Inventio S. Crucis* (Bullitta 2017, 28-31). Such a cluster is unlikely to be accidental, given that the soteriology of the cross and related imagery is a key doctrinal aspect underlying both the *Life of St Margaret* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, and it resonates meaningfully in

³² The debt of medieval Scandinavian cosmologic and scientific lore to Insular source-texts has already been demonstrated: see the extensive study by Simek 1990.

³³ Di Sciacca 2019b, 67-68. The *Solomon and Saturn Prose Pater Noster Dialogue* also implies a seven-heaven cosmology, in that the heart of the Paternoster is said to shine twelve thousand times brighter than all the seven heavens: Di Sciacca 2019b, 83-84. Indeed, in the *Solomon and Saturn I* poem, the Paternoster itself is credited with the power to carry out a sort of Harrowing of Hell, by freeing the souls chained in hell: Anlezark 2009, 62 and 66, ll. 68-72. Also, *Solomon and Saturn I* explicitly identifies the devil with the dragon: *ibid.*, 60, ll. 25-26. On the association between Satan and the dragon in Anglo-Saxon wisdom literature, see Aldhelm's *Enigmata* lxxxi and lxxxii (Glorie and Pitman 1968, 498-501), and Boniface's *Enigma* iv (Glorie and Minst 1968, 324-27), discussed by Salvador-Bello 2015, 212-14.

³⁴ See above, 21-22. In *Be heofonwarum and be helwarum* the fire of hell is described as red (*readum fyre / mid readum lige*), while the chains fastening Satan are simply fiery (*mid fyrenum receteagum*): Teresi 2002, 228, ll. 41, 44, and 52.

the Anglo-Saxon context, where both the *Life of St Margaret* and the *Gospel of Nicodemus* are often associated with texts concerning the soteriological and apotropaic efficacy of the cross (Di Sciacca 2019a, 379-83; 2019b, 92-96).

Finally, an idiosyncratic elaboration of the swallowing dragon in Old Norse can be found in the *Eiríks saga víðförla* or Saga of Eiríkr the Far-Traveller (Jensen 1983), a short, anonymous saga, traditionally included within the *Fornaldarsögur* and dated to around 1300, which relates the quest for the Ódáinsakr, or the meadow of the undead, by the Norwegian prince Eiríkr (Di Sciacca 2019c, 173-77). The saga can be considered a brief theological and cosmographical compendium in the guise of an intriguing tale of travel and discovery, which has already been shown to be indebted to Insular texts such as the *Elucidarium* and the *Imago mundi* by Honorius Augustodunensis, as well as to one of the most influential and widespread visions of the Middle Ages, the Irish *Visio Tnugdali* (Di Sciacca 2019c, 163-71; Gardiner 2020).

In particular, the hero's journey culminates into him being swallowed by a dragon; only, in a bewildering twist of the narrative, the dragon's belly encases a paradisaic landscape (Di Sciacca 2019c, 177-95). The swallowing by the terrible dragon resulting in the entrance into some form of paradise, however, is not entirely unprecedented. As we have seen, in the Gnostic eschatology and cosmology as attested in the *Seven Heavens Apocryphon* and the *Pistis Sophia*, the locales of bliss and damnations are not rigidly distinct and the swallowing dragons are indeed the chief means of the souls' circuit of purification and punishment (see above, 21-24). I would suggest that such apocryphal lore, albeit in a variously mediated and digested form, could have reached Scandinavia as part of the rather vast and significant network of personal contacts, institutional connections, and, what is more, book exchanges that has already been demonstrated to have been in existence between England and Norway during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Di Sciacca 2019c, 198-200).

9. THE DEVOURING DRAGON AND THE MOUTH OF HELL: SOME CONCLUSIONS

As has often been pointed out by previous scholarship, medieval eschatology is a syncretistic, often capricious interweave of Christian dogma and apocryphal elements, of doctrinal subtleties and scraps of popular beliefs, theological orthodoxy and extravagant Eastern legends (Gurevich 1983). Or, to appropriate the famous definition of Old English anonymous homilies by Th. Hill, early medieval eschatological texts are "improvisations on a theme rather than fixed textual discourse with a clearly defined beginning and end" (1990, xx). Keeping track of these improvisations, that is the creative interaction of a wide range of influences, and detailing the various modes of

appropriation and adaptation of a vast stock of source material can admittedly be methodologically taxing, when not downright unsound.³⁵ On the other hand, it would be equally unsound not to pursue a more holistic, if somehow speculative, investigation of sources, since “any identification of a thought in a work is an aid to understanding, so to explication and, eventually, to evaluation” (Cross 1986, 229).

References

- Anlezark, Daniel, ed. and trans. 2009. *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*. Cambridge: Brewer (Anglo-Saxon Texts 7)
- Biggs, Frederick F., and Charles D. Wright. 2007. “Apocalypse of Thomas.” In *SASLC Apocrypha*, 71-72.
- Bremmer, Rolf H. jr, and Kees Dekker, eds. 2010. *Practice in Learning. The Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages*. Leuven: Peeters (Mediaevalia Groningana n.s. 16. Storehouses of Wholesome Learning 2).
- Bullitta, Dario M., ed. 2017. *Niðrstigningar saga. Sources, Transmission, and Theology of the Old Norse ‘Descent into Hell’*. Toronto: UTP (Toronto Old Norse and Icelandic Series 11).
- Carey, John. 1994. “The Sun’s Night Journey: A Pharaonic Image in Medieval Ireland.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57: 14-34.
- . 2003. “The Seven Heavens and the Twelve Dragons in Insular Apocalyptic.” In *Apocalyptic and Eschatological Heritage. The Middle East and Celtic Realms*, ed. Martin McNamara, 121-36. Dublin: Four Courts Press.
- . 2014a. “Seven Heavens: Introduction.” In *The End and Beyond*, I, 158-70.
- . 2014b. “The Reichenau Seven Heavens Homily.” In *The End and Beyond*, I, 189-95.
- , ed. and trans. 2019. “*Fís Adomnáin – The Vision of Adomnán*. Introduction, Edition, Translation, and Commentary.” In *Apocrypha Hiberniae II. Apocalyptica 2*, ed. Martin McNamara, Caoimhín Breatnach, Pádraig A. Breatnach, John Carey, Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, Máire Herbert, Caitríona Ó Dochartaigh, Erich Poppe, and Charles D. Wright, 15-170. Turnhout: Brepols (Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum 21).
- Clayton, Mary. 1998. *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*. Cambridge: CUP (CSASE 26).

³⁵ As Marchand has cautioned, the search for sources should not be at all costs and “the possibility of polygenesis” should always be born in mind (1976, 505).

- Clayton, Mary, and Hugh Magennis, ed. and trans. 1994. *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*. Cambridge: CUP (CSASE 9).
- Cormack, Margaret. 1994. *The Saints in Iceland. Their Veneration from the Conversion to 1400*, with a preface by Peter Foote. Brussels: Société des Bollandistes.
- Cross, James E. 1986. "Identification. Towards Criticism." In *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature. Essays in Honour of Stanley B. Greenfield*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown, Georgia R. Crampton, and Fred C. Robinson, 229-46. Toronto: UTP.
- , ed. 1996a. *Two Old English Apocrypha and Their Manuscript Source. 'The Gospel of Nichodemus' and 'The Avenging of the Saviour'*. Cambridge: CUP (CSASE 19).
- . 1996b. "Introduction." In Cross 1996a, 3-9.
- . 1996c. "Saint-Omer 202 as the Manuscript Source for the Old English Texts." In Cross 1996a, 82-104.
- , ed. and trans. (with contributions by Denis Brearley and Andy Orchard). 1996d. "Texts and Translations." In Cross 1996a, 133-293.
- Cross, James E., and Julia Crick. 1996. "The Manuscript: Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque Municipale, 202." In Cross 1996a, 10-35.
- Dechow, Jon F. 2018. "The Nag Hammadi Milieu: An Assessment in the Light of the Origenist Controversies." In *The Nag Hammadi Codices and Late Antique Egypt*, ed. Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jenott, 11-52. Tübingen: Siebeck (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 110).
- diPaolo Healey, Antonette. 2007. "Apocalypse of Paul." In *SASLC Apocrypha*, 67-70.
- Di Sciacca, Claudia. 2002. "Due note a tre omelie anglosassoni sul tema dell'anima e il corpo." In *Antichità Germaniche. II Parte*, ed. Vittoria Dolcetti Corazza and Renato Gendre, 223-50. Alessandria: dell'Orso (Bibliotheca Germanica. Studi e Testi 12).
- . 2006. "The *Ubi Sunt* Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies. Sources and Relationships." *JEGP* 105 (3): 365-87.
- . 2010. "Teaching the Devil's Tricks: Anchorites' *Exempla* in Anglo-Saxon England." In Bremmer and Dekker 2010, 311-45.
- . 2012. "Ælfric e le *Vitas Patrum*." In *Lettura di Ælfric*, ed. Vittoria Dolcetti Corazza and Renato Gendre, 125-70. Alessandria: dell'Orso (Bibliotheca Germanica. Studi e Testi 30).
- . 2015. "Battling the Devil. St. Margaret in the Early Middle English *Seinte Margarete*." *Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology* 7: 33-79.
- . 2018. "Translating the Fate of the Soul in Late Anglo-Saxon England. Ælfric of Eynsham and Two *Post-Mortem* Visions." In *Tradurre: un viaggio nel tempo*, ed. Maria Grazia Cammarota, 149-74. Venice: Edizioni Ca' Foscari (Filologie medievali e moderne 17. Serie occidentale 14).
- . 2019a. "The Old English Life of St Margaret in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. iii. Sources and Relationships." *JEGP* 118 (3): 354-88.
- . 2019b. "Feeding the Dragon. The Devouring Monster in Anglo-Saxon Eschatological Imagery." *SELIM. The Journal of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature* 24: 53-104.

- . 2019c. “Crossing the Bridge. Insular Eschatological Imagery in the *Eiríks saga víðfórla*.” *AION – Sezione Germanica* n.s. 29: 161-213.
- Dumville, David N. 1977-78. “Towards an Interpretation of *Fís Adamnán*.” *Studia Celtica* 12-13: 62-77.
- Förster, Max, ed. 1955. “A New Version of the Apocalypse of Thomas in Old English.” *Anglia* 73: 6-36.
- Gardiner, Eileen. 2020. “The *Vision of Tnugdál*.” In Pollard 2020, 247-63.
- Glorie, François, ed. 1968. *Collectiones aenigmatum Merovingicae aetatis*. Turnhout: Brepols (CCSL 133).
- Glorie, François, ed., and Karl J. Minst, German trans. 1968. *Aenigmata Bonifatii*. In Glorie 1968, 273-343.
- Glorie, François, ed., and James H. Pitman, English trans. 1968. *Aenigmata Aldhelmi*. In Glorie 1968, 359-540.
- Grant, Raymond J.S., ed. 1982. *Three Homilies from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41. The Assumption, St Michael and the Passion*. Ottawa: Tecumseh Press.
- Gurevich, Anton J. 1983. “Popular and Scholarly Medieval Cultural Traditions. Notes in the Margin of Jacques Le Goff’s Book.” *Journal of Medieval History* 9: 71-90.
- Hall, Thomas N. 1996. “The *Euangelium Nichodemi* and *Vindicta Saluatoris* in Anglo-Saxon England.” In Cross 1996a, 36-81.
- Hill, Thomas D. 1990. “Introduction.” In SASLC I, xv-xxix.
- Hulme, William H., ed. 1898. “The Old English Version of the Gospel of Nicodemus.” *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 13: 457-542.
- , ed. 1903-04. “The Old English Gospel of Nicodemus.” *Modern Philology* 1: 579-614.
- Izydorczyk, Zbigniew. 1989. “The Unfamiliar *Euangelium Nichodemi*.” *Manuscripta* 33: 169-91.
- , ed. 1997a. *The Medieval Gospel of Nicodemus. Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts in Western Europe*. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 158).
- . 1997b: “Introduction.” In Izydorczyk 1997a, 1-20.
- Jackson, Peter. 1990. “*Vitae Patrum*.” In SASLC I, 162-65.
- Jensen, Helle, ed. 1983. *Eiríks saga víðfórla*. København: C.A. Reitzel (Editiones Arnamagnæanæ. Series B 29).
- Jiroušková, Lena. 2006. *Die Visio Pauli. Wege und Wandlungen einer orientalischen Apokryphe im lateinischen Mittelalter unter Einschluss der alttschechischen und deutschsprachigen Textzeugen*. Leiden: Brill (Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 34).
- Johnson, Richard F. 1998. “Archangel in the Margins. St. Michael in the Homilies of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41.” *Traditio* 53: 63-91.
- Keskiaho, Jesse. 2020. “Visions and the Afterlife in Gregory’s *Dialogues*.” In Pollard 2020, 225-46.
- Kleist, Aaron J., ed. 2007. *The Old English Homily. Precedent, Practice and Appropriation*. Turnhout: Brepols (Studies in the Early Middle Ages 17).

- Lapidge, Michael. [1985] 1994. "Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England." In *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England. Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss, 33-89. Cambridge: CUP. Rptd with corrections, additional references and a Postscript in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts. Basic Readings*, ed. Mary P. Richards, 87-167. London: Garland (Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England 2).
- Luiselli Fadda, Anna Maria, ed. 1972. "'De descensu Christi ad inferos': una inedita omelia anglosassone." *Studi Medievali* 3rd ser. 13: 989-1011.
- , ed. 1977. *Nuove omelie anglosassoni della rinascenza benedettina*. Florence: Le Monnier (Studi e Testi 1).
- Lundhaug, Hugo, and Lance Jenott. 2015. *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*. Tübingen: Siebeck (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 97).
- Marchand, James W. 1976. "Two Notes on the Old Icelandic Physiologus Manuscript." *Modern Language Notes* 91 (3): 501-05.
- Mayr-Harting, Henry. [1972] 1991. *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*. London: B.T. Batsford.
- Menendez, Katie. 2020. "Gregory the Great as Intermediary Figure between East and West: The Eleventh-Century Manuscript Context of the Old English *Dialogues*." *Viator* 51 (1): 241-71.
- Morris, Richard, ed. and trans. [1868] 1988. *Old English Homilies and Homiletic Treatises [...] of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries. First Series*. London: Trübner. Rptd as one volume. Millwood, NY: Kraus (EETS o.s. 29 and 34).
- , ed. and trans. [1874-80] 1967. *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century*. 3 vols. London: Trübner. Rptd as one volume. London and New York, NY: OUP (EETS o.s. 58, 63, and 73).
- Napier, Arthur S., ed. [1883] 1967. *Wulfstan. Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre Echtheit*, with an appendix by Klaus Ostheeren. Dublin: Max Niehans Verlag (Sammlung englischer Denkmäler in kritischen Ausgaben 4).
- Nic Cárthaigh, Emma, ed. and trans. 2014. "The Seven Heavens in the Modern Recension of *In Tenga Bithnúa*." In *The End and Beyond*, I, 211-83.
- Ó Dochartaigh, Caitríona, ed. and trans. 2014. "*Na Seacht Neamha* in the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*." In *The End and Beyond*, I, 201-09.
- Ogden, Daniel. 2013. *Drakōn. Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Oxford: OUP.
- Olsen, Karin. 2010. "Thematic Affinities between the Non-Liturgical Marginalia and the Old English Bede in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41." In Bremmer and Dekker 2010, 133-45.
- Orchard, Andy. 1996. "The Style of the Texts and the Translation Strategy." In Cross 1996a, 105-30.
- , 2020. "*Lege feliciter, scribe felicius*. The Originality of the *Vita S. Guthlaci*." In *Guthlac. Crowland's Saint*, ed. Jane Roberts and Alan Thacker, 25-54. Donington: S. Tyas.

- Pelle, Stephen. 2014. "Contextualizing the Anglo-Saxon Composite Homily" [Conference Paper]. University of Toronto: Toronto Old English Colloquium.
- Pollard, Richard M., ed. 2020. *Imagining the Medieval Afterlife*. Cambridge: CUP (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 114).
- Rauer, Christine. 2000. *Beowulf and the Dragon. Parallels and Analogues*. Cambridge: Brewer.
- , ed. and trans. 2013. *Old English Martyrology. Edition, Translation and Commentary*. Cambridge: Brewer (Anglo-Saxon Texts 10).
- Riches, Samantha J.E. 2003. "Encountering the Monstrous. Saints and Dragons in Medieval Thought." In *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. Bettina Bildhauer and Robert Mills, 196-218. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Ritari, Katja, ed. and trans. 2014. "The Two Deaths." In *The End and Beyond*, I, 101-11.
- Robinson, Fred. C., ed. [1972] 1994. "The Devil's Account of the Next World. An Anecdote from Old English Homiletic Literature." *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73: 362-71. Rptd with an afterword in *The Editing of Old English*, ed. Fred C. Robinson, 196-205. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Rudolf, Winfried. 2010. "The Old English Translation of the *Verba Seniorum* in Late Eleventh-Century Worcester." In *Lost in Translation?*, ed. Denis Renevey and Christiania Whitehead, 33-44. Turnhout: Brepols (The Medieval Translator/ Traduire au Moyen Age 12).
- . 2014. "The Selection and Compilation of the *Verba Seniorum* in Worcester, Cathedral Library, F.48." In *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England. Adopting and Adapting Saints' Lives into Old English Prose (c. 950–1150)*, ed. Loredana Lazzari, Patrizia Lendinara, and Claudia Di Sciacca, 183-227. Barcelona: Brepols (Textes et Études du Moyen Âge 73).
- Ruggerini, Maria Elena. 1999. "Saint Michael in the *Old English Martyrology*." *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 65, n.s. 23: 181-97.
- Salvador-Bello, Mercedes. 2015. *Isidorean Perceptions of Order. The Exeter Book Riddles and Medieval Latin Enigmata*. Morgantown, WV: West Virginia UP (Medieval European Studies 17).
- Schaefer, Kenneth G., ed. 1972. *An Edition of Five Old English Homilies for Palm Sunday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday*. Unpubl. PhD diss.: Columbia University.
- Schmidt, Carl, ed., and Violet Macdermot, trans. and notes. 1978. *Pistis Sophia*. Leiden: Brill (Nag Hammandi Studies 9).
- Scragg, Donald, ed. 1992. *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*. Oxford: OUP (EETS o.s. 300).
- Silverstein, Theodore. 1935. *Visio Sancti Pauli. The History of the Apocalypse in Latin together with Nine Texts*. London: Christophers (Studies and Documents 4).
- Silverstein, Theodore, and Anthony Hilhorst, eds. 1997. *Apocalypse of Paul. A New Edition of Three Long Latin Versions*. Geneva: Cramer.
- Simek, Rudolf. 1990. *Altnordische Kosmographie. Studien und Quellen zu Weltbild und Weltbeschreibung in Norwegen und Island vom 12. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert*.

- Berlin and New York: de Gruyter (Ergänzungsbände zum Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde 4).
- Stevenson, Jane. 1983. "Ascent Through the Heavens, from Egypt to Ireland." *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 5: 21-35.
- Swan, Mary. 2007. "Preaching Past the Conquest: Lambeth Palace 487 and Cotton Vespasian A.xxii." In Kleist 2007, 403-23.
- Tamburr, Karl. 2007. *The Harrowing of Hell in Medieval England*. Cambridge: Brewer.
- Teresi, Loredana, ed. 2002. "*Be Heofonwarum 7 be Helwarum*. A Complete Edition." In *Early Medieval Texts and Interpretations. Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. Elaine M. Treharne and Susan B. Rosser, 211-44. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 252).
- The End and Beyond*: John Carey, Emma Nic Cárthaigh and Caitríona Ó Dochartaigh, eds. 2014. *The End and Beyond. Medieval Irish Eschatology*. 2 vols. Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications (Celtic Studies Publications 17).
- Thornbury, Emily. 2011. "Building with the Rubble of the Past. The Translator of the Old English *Gospel of Nicodemus* and his Flawed Source." In *Anglo-Saxon Traces*, ed. Jane Roberts and Leslie Webster, 297-318. Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 405).
- Touati, Charlotte. 2014. "The 'Apocalypse of the Seven Heavens'. From Egypt to Ireland." In *The End and Beyond*, I, 171-87.
- Tveitane, Mattias. 1968. *Den lærde stil. Oversetterprose i den norrøne versjonen av Vitae Patrum*. Bergen: Norwegian Universities Press (Årbok for Universiteter i Bergen. Humanistisk serie 2).
- Unger, Carl R., ed. 1877. *Heilagra manna søgur. Fortællinger og legender om hellige mænd og kvinder*. 2 vols. Christiania: B.M. Bentzen.
- Volmering, Nicole, ed. and trans. 2014. "The Old English Account of the Seven Heavens." In *The End and Beyond*, I, 298-306.
- Willard, Rudolph, ed. 1935. *Two Apocrypha in Old English Homilies*. Leipzig: Tauchnitz (Beiträge zur englischen Philologie 30).
- Wolf, Kirsten. 2013a. *The Legends of the Saints in Old Norse-Icelandic Prose*. Toronto: UTP (Toronto Old Norse and Icelandic Studies 6).
- . 2013b. "Margaret of Antioch." In Wolf 2013a, 217-21.
- Wright, Charles D. 1993. *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*. Cambridge: CUP (CSASE 6).
- . 2007. "Old English Homilies and Latin Sources." In Kleist 2007, 15-66.
- Zaffuto, Rosanna, ed. 1999. *Edizione e analisi dell'omelia "Ic bidde and eadmodlice læren men þa lofestan"* (Ms. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201). Unpubl. PhD diss.: University of Rome 3.