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**The Old English Orosius
Writing an Anglo-Saxon History of the World**

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The Old English *Orosius*: Writing an Anglo-Saxon History of the World

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English,
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Abstract

The Old English *Orosius* (OE *Orosius*) shares a significant relationship with the fifth-century Latin *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem* (*Historia*) by Paulus Orosius – its principal source of information. But the OE *Orosius* is also an Anglo-Saxon history of the world on its own terms. This thesis aims to examine, firstly, how the OE *Orosius* is engaged actively with the historiography and historicity of the *Historia* and, secondly, how humans of temporal and geographical distance from Anglo-Saxon England are conceptualized. I approach the OE *Orosius* as a product of an Anglo-Saxon culture that is broadly conceived, considering the intersections of classical influences, Germanic traditions and Anglo-Saxon reception that can be located within the text. Each chapter of this thesis uses a different methodology to ‘read’ the OE *Orosius*. Chapter 1 interprets the geographical description of the first chapter of the text as a cartographical framework for Anglo-Saxon perspective, knowledge and historiography. Chapter 2 focuses on the role of gender in the establishment of models, *bysena*, and the movement of power, *translatio imperii*, using three parallels from the text (Ninus of Assyria and Semiramis and the Amazons, King Cyrus of Persia and the Scythian Queen Thamyris, Babylon and Rome) to appreciate how world and Roman history are rewritten according to Anglo-Saxon hindsight. Chapter 3 addresses how the ‘Matter of Rome’ is negotiated in the OE *Orosius* through representations of materiality, subject matter and materials. In Chapter 4, I use the theories of queer time and entanglement to explore responses to paganism in the schemes of Christian cosmology and world history. The arguments that are woven through my chapters add to our understanding of the OE *Orosius* as a piece of historiography. They might also contribute to our knowledge of the historical consciousness of the late Anglo-Saxons.

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I dedicate this thesis to grandad, who inspired my desire to learn, and nanny, who was always rooting for me. I hope this would have made them proud.

Abbreviations

<i>Anglia</i>	<i>Anglia: zeitschrift für englische philologie</i>
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
ASPR	<i>Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records</i> , ed. by William Philip Krapp and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, 6 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931-1953)
Bodley Fragment	Oxford, Bodleian, MS English History e. 49 (30481)
CUP	Cambridge University Press
Cotton Manuscript	London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B.i
Cotton Map	London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B.v, fol 56v
DOE	<i>Dictionary of Old English</i> , ed. by Angus Cameron and others
EETS o.s.	Early English Text Society, original series
EETS s.s.	Early English Text Society, supplementary series
GLQ	<i>GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies</i>
<i>Historia</i>	<i>Orose: Histoires contre les Païens</i> , ed. by Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, 3 vols (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 2003)
<i>History</i>	<i>Orosius: Seven Books of History against the Pagans</i> , trans. by A.T. Fear, Translated Texts for Historians 54 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010)
Lauderdale Manuscript	London, British Library, MS Additional 47967
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
OE <i>Orosius</i>	The Old English <i>Orosius</i> , ed. by Janet Bately, EETS s.s. 6 (Oxford: OUP, 1980)
OUP	Oxford University Press
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
Vatican Fragment	Vatican City, MS Regula Latina 497, fol 71

All quotations from the OE *Orosius* are from the Bately edition; these are referenced in parentheses in the body of the chapters. Following Bately's system, book and chapter numbers are in roman numerals and page and line numbers in arabic numerals; line numbers are distinguished from page numbers with a forward slash e.g. II.iiii.44/29. References to material from Bately's introduction, glossary and notes are provided in footnotes.

All translations from Old English into Modern English are my own, unless otherwise stated.

All quotations from the *Historia* are from the Arnaud-Lindet edition; these are referenced in parentheses in the body of the chapters. For clarity, book, chapter, page and line numbers are in arabic numerals, otherwise following the same format as references to the OE *Orosius*, e.g. 1.4.43/3. All translations from the Latin into the Modern English are from Fear's translation, which follows the Arnaud-Lindet edition, unless otherwise stated; page numbers are referenced in parentheses before quotations. References to material from Fear's introduction and notes are provided in footnotes.

Introduction

Her onginneð seo boc þe man Orosius nemneð¹

(Here begins the book which is called/ they call Orosius)

– Rubric from the Cotton Manuscript

The title of this thesis makes a strong claim: that the OE *Orosius* is an Anglo-Saxon history of the world. But what makes this history Anglo-Saxon? What about its principal source of information, the *Historia* by Paulus Orosius, which was written in Latin for a Roman audience in the early fifth century? We identify the history known to us as the OE *Orosius* by the name of the author of the *Historia*, whilst qualifying that this Anglo-Saxon text, which was composed between the late ninth and early tenth century in Wessex, is written in the West Saxon vernacular: it is the Old English *Orosius*. The rubric from the eleventh-century Cotton Manuscript witness of the OE *Orosius* also refers to the Old English history as *Orosius*. An interpretation of the OE *Orosius* must, therefore, engage with the *Historia*. But how does the significant relationship between these Old English and Latin histories actually work in practice as well as in theory? How do the temporalities of Anglo-Saxon England, early fifth-century Rome and world history come together in the OE *Orosius*? The questions I have posed here are the questions this thesis sets out to explore.

It is well known that that the OE *Orosius* is very different to the *Historia*. After all, the *Historia* was written by Orosius with a topical motivation and purpose, which can be summarized as follows. The sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 had encouraged some Romans to blame Christianity for the attack on their city and to consider a reversion to paganism. Orosius strived to use the events of history to prove to the Romans that their logic was misguided. So Orosius compiled the *Historia*, as A.T. Fear explains, to prove that ‘the unfolding of history shows the unfolding of God’s plan on earth, and that the arrival of Christianity therefore necessarily marks an improvement in man’s condition.’² Orosius used history to contextualize the sack of Rome within a larger pattern of providence and, in Fear’s words, the ‘*longue durée*.’ The relevance of the sack of Rome to Anglo-Saxon England was not so immediate, therefore. But this event still held meaning for an Anglo-Saxon audience in terms of religion, empire and identity. The event was perceived by the Anglo-Saxons to have triggered the fall of the

¹ Cotton MS, fol. 3r. Bately, OE *Orosius*, 1/1.

² Fear, *History*, p.8. For a very useful discussion of the purpose and scope of the *Historia*, see Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400-1500* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp.64-78. For a literary reading of the *Historia* as a rhetorical text, see Peter van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford: OUP, 2012).

Roman Empire in the West and, in turn, the removal of Roman rule from Britain.³ Tangentially, it also offered a narrative for the shift of Rome's status from an imperial to a Christian centre, as the representation of this event in the OE *Orosius* Book VI.xxxviii illustrates. The Empire fell but Rome's Christianity was protected.

The different relevance of the sack of Rome for an Anglo-Saxon audience means that Orosius' polemical strategies have a different impact in the OE *Orosius*. Indeed, it is one of the central concerns of this thesis to consider how Orosius' polemic works in an Anglo-Saxon context. Yet even setting the polemical aspects of the OE *Orosius* aside, we find that the historical content of the *Historia* is neither translated 'word by word' nor 'sense for sense' in the OE *Orosius*. That is, if we measure the text according to the phrases used in the prose preface to the *Pastoral Care* to describe how the *Cura Pastoralis* has been translated, '[h]wilum word be worde, hwilum andgit of andgiete' (sometimes word by word, sometimes sense for sense).⁴ The OE *Orosius* and the *Historia* differ in their structure, length and coverage of historical events.

The substantial differences between the Latin source and Old English translation have been noted frequently. René Derolez has argued that the OE *Orosius* 'can be called a translation only up to a point.'⁵ Janet Bately describes the Old English as a 'transformation' of the Latin.⁶ Malcolm Godden has formulated the OE *Orosius* as 'a lively and effective series of stories from ancient history, not a mere digest of [the *Historia*].'⁷ Scholarship on the OE *Orosius* is nevertheless often focused on how the content of the *Historia* is construed and adapted by the author of the OE *Orosius*: what the author has moved around, cut, decided to keep in or added and for what purpose these changes were made. This attention to the processes of translation, or transformation, limits interpretations of the OE *Orosius* to the time and location of the history's composition. Indeed, the association of the OE *Orosius* with King Alfred and

³ M.R. Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths: rewriting the sack of Rome,' *ASE* 43 (2002), 47-68.

⁴ *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, ed. and trans. by Henry Sweet, EETS o.s. 45 and 50, 2 vols (London: OUP, 1871), p.7, lines 19-20. This phrase about the process of translation from Latin into Old English also appears in the prose preface to the Old English *Boethius*. See *The Old English Boethius: With Verse Prologues and Epilogues Associated with King Alfred*, ed. and trans. by Susan Irvine and Malcolm R. Godden, *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* 19 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), p.2.

⁵ René Derolez, 'The orientation system in the Old English *Orosius*' in *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. by Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge: CUP, 1971), pp.253-68 (p.254).

⁶ Janet M. Bately, 'The Old English *Orosius*' in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. by Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul E. Szarmach (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp.313-43 (p.323). Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.xciii. See also Janet M. Bately, *The Literary Prose of King Alfred's Reign: Translation or Transformation?: an Inaugural Lecture in the Chair of English Language & Medieval Literature Delivered at University of London King's College on 4th March 1980* (London: King's College London, 1980).

⁷ M.R. Godden, 'The Old English *Orosius* and its Sources,' *Anglia* 129 (2011), 297-320 (319).

the programme of translation that is launched in the preface to the *Pastoral Care* has been a significant factor in positioning the OE *Orosius* at a specific moment and place in Anglo-Saxon history, as we shall see.

In this thesis, I consider the OE *Orosius* in the broader cultural context of its composition, transmission and reception between the ninth and eleventh centuries. I unshackle interpretation of the OE *Orosius* from the historical context of the late ninth century, therefore, to view the history in more heterogeneous terms as a work influenced by Anglo-Saxon perspectives and literary traditions. I am just as interested in how the OE *Orosius* might have been read when it was copied and circulated in the Cotton Manuscript in the eleventh century as when it was written in the ninth or tenth century. Circulating between these centuries are the versions of the OE *Orosius* witnessed by the tenth-century Lauderdale Manuscript and the partial records of the Bodley Fragment and the Vatican Fragment, both of which have been dated to the first half of the eleventh century.⁸ However, my close reading of the OE *Orosius* here is predominantly literary in approach. There is further work to be done to identify the contextual, perhaps political, reasons for the production and circulation of the individual manuscript witnesses we have of the OE *Orosius*. I have not addressed in detail within this thesis questions that should be posed and explored elsewhere: why was the OE *Orosius* first composed in the late ninth or early tenth century? Why was the text copied and circulated again in the tenth and eleventh centuries? Who were the manuscripts intended for and on whose behalf were they produced? As Rosamond McKitterick has highlighted, in a manuscript culture there is no such thing as a definitive version of a history – ‘the text’ – only each individual version – ‘a text’ – which should be interpreted in relation to a local perspective and audience; additionally, ‘[e]very manuscript containing that text has to be examined with a view to determining for whom that particular copy may have been intended.’⁹

It is worth underlining at this point that the *Historia* was copied, circulated and read throughout the medieval period and so the Latin history was in these respects not only as unstable as the OE *Orosius* but also contemporary with its transmission and reception in late Anglo-Saxon England. The translation of the Latin into Old English can be understood as well within the context of abbreviations of the *Historia* made across continental Europe between the ninth and fifteenth centuries. Lars Boje Mortensen has explained that these abbreviations were not merely condensed versions

⁸ See N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: OUP, 1990). Catalogue numbers and page numbers for the MSS containing the OE *Orosius* are as follows: Lauderdale MS, 133, pp.164-66; Cotton MS, 191, pp.251-53; Bodley Fragment, 323, p.384; Vatican Fragment, 391, p.459.

⁹ Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), p.36.

of the *Historia*, ‘a shortcut through the tedious copying of a long text. On the contrary, they demanded a thorough reading and selection which testifies to a serious interest in the narrative of Roman history’; a process, purpose and scope that are paralleled by the translation project of the OE *Orosius*.¹⁰ It should be noted here that the copy of the *Historia* used by the author of the Old English has not been identified and has probably not survived. There are in fact no known extant manuscript witnesses of the *Historia* from Anglo-Saxon England.¹¹ And yet, as Godden suggests, both the very high number of manuscript witnesses that survive from the post-Conquest period (around two hundred and fifty) and the evidence of the text serving as a source for Bede, Aldhelm and glossaries indicate the transmission of the *Historia* throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.¹² Moreover, McKitterick has demonstrated that a large number of manuscripts containing the *Historia* were catalogued in Carolingian libraries in the ninth century and ‘used and altered in various ways by different copyists and compilers.’¹³ Anglo-Saxon England and the Carolingian Empire shared a ‘close connection’ during Alfred’s reign in the ninth century, as Susan Irvine has outlined, with scholars circulating between the two, promoting an ‘exchange of ideas,’ texts and scholarly practice.¹⁴ Of course, the translation project of the OE *Orosius* is the strongest evidence for the circulation of the *Historia* in late Anglo-Saxon England.

Despite its contemporaneity with the OE *Orosius*, however, the *Historia* would have been understood as of its time and place when it was read and interpreted in the context of Anglo-Saxon England, especially given its polemical style. I argue in this thesis that the OE *Orosius* deals with this temporal and cultural discontinuity by engaging with the *Historia* in two, overlapping ways:

- i.) as an ongoing and current source of information and knowledge in the Anglo-Saxon present;

¹⁰ Lars Boje Mortensen, ‘The diffusion of Roman histories in the Middle Ages: A list of Orosius, Eutropius, Paulus Diaconus, and Landolfus Sagax manuscripts,’ *Filologia mediolatina* 6-7 (2000), 101-200 (113).

¹¹ Godden, ‘OE *Orosius* and its sources,’ 302. For a list of the manuscripts of the *Historia* potentially connected to the exemplar used by the Old English author see Bately, OE *Orosius*, pp.lv-lxiii, and J.M. Bately, ‘King Alfred and the Latin MSS of Orosius’ History,’ *Classica et Mediaevalia* 22 (1961), 69-105. For a list of all manuscripts of the *Historia*, including abbreviations, see Mortensen, ‘The diffusion of Roman histories in the Middle Ages.’

¹² Godden, ‘OE *Orosius* and its sources,’ 302-03. Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.lv.

¹³ McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p.46.

¹⁴ Susan Irvine, ‘English literature in the ninth century’ in *The New Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. by Clare A. Lees (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp.209-31 (p.213). Irvine also suggests here (at p.214) that the Alfredian translations may have been inspired by the translation of ‘Scripture and other religious texts into the Germanic vernacular’ in the East Frankish kingdoms.

- ii.) as a historiographical and polemical approach to history, written in a specific set of circumstances in the early fifth-century Roman past.

In these two ways, the *Historia* is represented in the OE *Orosius* as not only productive of the historical record as a source but also as constituting a part of history. This paradox is suggested by the deployment of Orosius in the narrative of the Old English history, signalled by the phrase, *cwæð Orosius* (said Orosius). I discuss how the voice of Orosius is used by the Old English author in the chapters of this thesis so I will not go into great detail here. I will note, however, that as Orosius speaks in the Old English vernacular in direct speech, he is accredited as a historian and formulated as a character in history at the same time. In both respects, he is shaped by Anglo-Saxon perspective. When I refer to ‘Orosius’ in the Old English, therefore, I do so in figurative terms, acknowledging that he is connected to but only a representation of the author of the *Historia*. Similarly, the ‘fifth-century Romans’ I identify as the objects of Orosius’ rhetoric in the OE *Orosius* are only approximations of the intended targets of the polemic in the *Historia*, and they do not necessarily map to the intended audience of the Latin history.¹⁵

As Orosius communicates with the early fifth-century Romans in his Old English context, a moment of history is traced: that is, just before the fall of the Roman Empire, when Roman Christianity was called into doubt. Godden has described the OE *Orosius* in these terms as ‘a monument to the fallen Roman world, a snapshot of a moment when the empire tottered on the brink of dissolution and yet contemporaries could insist that all was well.’¹⁶ I would suggest, however, that it was the *Historia* that represented this monument for its Anglo-Saxon readership. The OE *Orosius* does not capture the circumstances of the *Historia*’s composition like a static photograph of a still monument but, rather, provides an active response to the historiography of the *Historia* to create its own Anglo-Saxon historiographical project.

The OE *Orosius* and King Alfred

My thesis comes just in time for the publication of a new edition and translation of the OE *Orosius* by Godden, *Old English History of the World: An Anglo-Saxon Rewriting of Orosius*.¹⁷ This is the first edition since Bately’s authoritative version for the EETS in

¹⁵ van Nuffelen has suggested that the intended audience of the *Historia* is not, as usually assumed, the lower classes or the Romans challenging Christianity. Rather, he proposes that the audience is likely to be intended to be more elite Christians or would-be Christians, reading a rhetorical debate between Orosius and critics of Christianity as in Augustine’s *De civitate dei*. See van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, pp.16-17. Either way, it is the target of Orosius’ polemic (the critics) that is drawn into the OE *Orosius* as an intra-textual audience.

¹⁶ Godden, ‘The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,’ 61.

¹⁷ *Old English History of the World: An Anglo-Saxon Rewriting of Orosius*, ed. and trans. by Malcolm R. Godden, *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* 44 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

1980 and the first published translation in well over a hundred years.¹⁸ Godden's edition has a potentially great significance for the field of Anglo-Saxon studies, making the OE *Orosius* accessible to a new generation of students and scholars by presenting an accompanying translation, which Bately's edition does not do, and reinvigorating critical engagements with the text. The coincidence of my thesis – the first full-length study on the OE *Orosius* – with this new edition is a happy one. A new version of the OE *Orosius* presents an important and timely opportunity to reconsider our interpretation of the earliest world history in the English vernacular.

The titles that editors and translators have assigned to the OE *Orosius* between Daines Barrington's *The Anglo-Saxon Version, from the Historian Orosius, by Ælfred the Great*, published in 1773 and Godden's *Old English History of the World* can be used to track changes in attitude towards the text in centuries of scholarship.¹⁹ These evolving attitudes correspond to shifts in thinking about the literary legacy of King Alfred, who was once believed to have translated the OE *Orosius* personally. In the prose preface to the *Pastoral Care*, to which I have already alluded, an author speaking in Alfred's first-person voice laments ailing Latin literacy in England and launches a remedial campaign to translate: 'sumæ bec, ða ðe niedbeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne [...] on ðæt geðiode wenden ðe we ealle gecnawan mægen' (some books, which are most necessary for all men to know into the language we can all understand).²⁰ The OE *Orosius* was first associated with this campaign and Alfredian authorship by William of Malmesbury in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, completed in 1125.²¹ However, this attribution of the OE *Orosius* to Alfred is unsupported and sketchy. Dorothy Whitelock has noted that William of Malmesbury is 'our only

¹⁸ For editions, studies and translations of the OE *Orosius* before the publication of Bately's edition, see Stanley B. Greenfield and Fred C. Robinson, *A Bibliography of Publications on Old English Literature to the End of 1972* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp.321-28.

¹⁹ *The Anglo-Saxon Version, from the Historian Orosius by Ælfred the Great. Together with an English Translation from the A-S*, ed. and trans. by Daines Barrington, with notes on the first chapter of the Anglo-Saxon by J.R. Forster (London: S. Baker, 1773). William Elstob had started an edition previously – the title page and two specimen leaves were published in 1699 – upon which Barrington's edition was based, but the project lacked sufficient funding. *Hormesta Pauli Orosii quam olim patrio sermone donavit Ælfredus magnus, Anglo-Saxonum rex doctissimus*, ed. by William Elstob (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1699). See Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Elstob, William (1674?-1715),' *ODNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8762>> (accessed 29 April 2016).

²⁰ Sweet, *Pastoral Care*, p.7, lines 6-7. The preface's description of low rates of Latin literacy may have been inflated – see Jennifer Morrish, 'King Alfred's letter as a source on learning in England' in *Studies in Earlier English Prose*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), pp.87-107. For a succinct discussion of the rise of the vernacular in the long ninth century and Alfred's involvement, see Irvine, 'English literature in the ninth century.'

²¹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. by R.A.B. Mynors, completed by R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), vol 1: Book 2, Chapter 123, pp.192-93.

authority for Alfred's authorship of the *Orosius*, and that the mention of King Alfred in the OE *Orosius* Book I.i (13/29) is likely to be the only evidence upon which his assumption was based.²² The idea of Alfred's personal authorship of the OE *Orosius* held for many centuries and even beyond Whitelock's queries in the mid-1960s. Yet Bately concluded in 1980 that 'the assumption of Alfredian authorship is unfounded.'²³

Alfred is no longer believed to have authored the OE *Orosius* but the opinion that he commissioned the text – or at the very least that the text was part of his translation programme – is largely upheld. Indeed, when Bately provided a date range for the composition of the OE *Orosius* in her EETS edition, her judgements were dictated by Alfred's lifetime and legacy. She cited 889 as the earliest possible date of composition as this would 'link [the text] in a most satisfactory manner with Alfred's educational schemes' and Alfred's death in 899 as a *terminus ante quem*.²⁴ In a more recent study on the OE *Orosius*, Bately has reflected that the composition 'could well have been during Alfred's lifetime, but [...] a very slightly later date cannot be ruled out.'²⁵ Bately's updated view comes as part of a wider challenge to Alfred's involvement with the OE *Orosius*. In 2007, Godden first proposed a then radical theory that Alfred had not composed any text himself including the prose preface to the *Pastoral Care*, whose real author may have taken his voice by proxy.²⁶ Godden's untethering of a frequently rehearsed narrative around Alfred's legacy as a translator and promoter of education can be recognized in his broader dating of the OE *Orosius* between 870 and 930 and in the title of his 2016 edition. Here there is no mention of Alfred and the text's Anglo-Saxon perspective on history is prioritized over its classical Latin source.²⁷ In recent years, Francis Leneghan has explored the possibilities of a later dating for the OE *Orosius* in more detail. Leneghan argues that the production and circulation of the Lauderdale Manuscript in the early tenth century suggest a political manoeuvre on the part of the West Saxon court, when the opportunity for a new Christian empire had been opened by the fall of the Carolingian Empire. He asserts that the themes of

²² Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Prose of Alfred's Reign' in *Continuations and Beginnings*, ed. by E.G. Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966), pp.67-103 (p.70).

²³ Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.lxxxvii.

²⁴ Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.xciii.

²⁵ Janet M. Bately, 'The Old English *Orosius*,' p.342.

²⁶ M.R. Godden, 'Did King Alfred write anything?,' *Medium Aevum* 76 (2007), 1-23. Bately responded with a counterargument in the same journal a couple of years later – Janet Bately, 'Did King Alfred actually translate anything?,' *Medium Aevum* 78 (2009), 189-215. For a more recent discussion of Alfred's authorship, see Janet M. Bately, 'Alfred as author and translator' in Discenza and Szarmach (eds.), *Companion to Alfred*, pp.113-42.

²⁷ For the dating of the text to between 870 and 930, see Godden, 'OE *Orosius* and its sources,' 297.

translatio imperii and providence in the OE *Orosius* lent themselves to these aspirations.²⁸

My own concern with King Alfred's historical legacy and his relationship to the OE *Orosius* ends in this Introduction because I am keen to move away from the idea of a commissioner with primacy over the OE *Orosius* and how it should be read. I am interested purely in the symbiotic and figurative significance of 'Alfred' as he relates to the OE *Orosius*. For example, the literary presence of King Alfred in Book I.i of the text when he is described as the *hlafor[d]* (13/29; lord) of the Norwegian explorer, Ohthere. Moreover, I have not contributed to the debates on the date of the composition of the OE *Orosius* or the reasons behind the text's commission in this thesis because I wish to emphasize the ongoing reception of the text in late Anglo-Saxon England.

Within these motivations, I use the terms 'author' and 'audience' liberally to avoid attaching specific identities or agendas to the composers, readers or listeners of the OE *Orosius*. When I discuss the 'audience' of the OE *Orosius*, I do so with resistance to the assumption of a fixed position in time or space for the text; that is, with the purpose of allowing interpretations other than those that relate persistently to authorship and the powers that might have controlled the text's initial circulation. The OE *Orosius* may have been written by more than one person and so the term, 'author' does risk the suggestion of singularity.²⁹ Yet when I speak of the 'author' of the OE *Orosius* I am also applying a convenient description for the Old English voice that mediates, collates and constructs temporalities and perspectives in the narrative, including those of Ohthere, Wulfstan (Book I.i.13/29-16/37), Orosius, and the ancient humans and objects who speak, like Queen Thamyris (Book II.iiii.45/8-9) and an anthropomorphized Babylon (Book II.iiii.44/3-6). I suggest that the author of the OE *Orosius* creates a multi-layered text, not just a rehashing of the *Historia* for an Anglo-Saxon audience. However, my use of the term 'author' is not intended to conceal the translation work involved in the project of the OE *Orosius*. The author does translate, or convert, history from Latin to Old English and early fifth-century Rome to Anglo-Saxon England. Indeed, Orosius and his Romans are translated, or moved, from the context of the *Historia* to inside the narrative of the OE *Orosius*. Yet, the term 'translator,' when used of the OE *Orosius*, bears the freight of Alfredian association and points back persistently to the *Historia* as its principal source. I explore here how intellectual responses to world history are conveyed through Anglo-Saxon perception, and how the Old English author works with the material in the *Historia* from this perspective. I see the 'author' and 'audience' as shaping the history of the OE *Orosius*

²⁸ Francis Leneghan, 'Translatio imperii: the Old English *Orosius* and the rise of Wessex,' *Anglia* 133 (2015), 1-50.

²⁹ See Bately, 'Old English *Orosius*,' pp.315-23.

together and in multifarious ways over time, first in Anglo-Saxon culture in all its plurality and then beyond in modern engagements with the text such as my own.

The Cotton Manuscript rubric

In order to introduce the methodologies and approaches of my thesis and the concepts that underpin them, I shall present a discussion of the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript, which sits at the top of this Introduction. The rubric very rarely receives attention and has not been analysed in any great detail before but it is an important example of the reception of the OE *Orosius* in the latter century of Anglo-Saxon England: '[h]er onginneð seo boc þe man Orosius nemneð' (1/1; here begins the book which is called/ they call Orosius).³⁰ The words and sentiments of the rubric might reinforce for us the Anglo-Saxon historiography of the OE *Orosius*. They also offer a sense of the cultural familiarity with the Old English history at least by the eleventh century. Importantly, there is no corresponding detail in the Lauderdale Manuscript so we are dealing specifically here with the eleventh-century reception of the OE *Orosius*. With equal weight, the rubric highlights the intricate connections between the Old English and the *Historia* in the late Anglo-Saxon imagination.

The very first word of the rubric, *her* (here) is significant. The adverb strikes an immediate chord for the early medieval scholar with the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and so the practice of writing history in Anglo-Saxon England. The positioning of the adverb, *her* at the beginning of each annal of insular history in the *Chronicle* should not be seen in separation to the *her* that announces the start of the world history in the Cotton Manuscript. Peter Clemons first argued for the significance of *her* in the 890 entry of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: he emphasized the Anglo-Saxon originality of the system for linking dates to events; the system's binding of 'present token to past event in a single, compact span' and its confluence of 'physical presence and meaning.'³¹ Nicholas Howe has added that *her* 'signals a rich and complex sense of place: in the *Chronicle*, *her* means conventionally "in this year" because it marks the place in the manuscript where the year's record is to be written [...] But [...] *her* also marks the larger location of England.'³² In both the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript of the OE *Orosius*, the adverb *her* relates the historical past to the Anglo-Saxon present, connecting space to time and time to place. As Tim Cresswell has outlined, space is an

³⁰ I have only seen the rubric acknowledged in a study on the OE *Orosius* once, in Bately, 'Old English *Orosius*,' p.313. Here, Bately simply states that the rubric gives a title to the OE *Orosius* and is 'the work of an eleventh-century scribe,' and that it tells us nothing of the authorship of the text.

³¹ Peter Clemons, 'Language in context: *Her* in the 890 Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', *Leeds Studies in English* 16 (1985), 27-36 (27-30).

³² Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), p.177.

‘abstract concept’ with area and volume – so *her* is a spatial term – but places like England and the Cotton Manuscript ‘are material things’ with a location and ‘some relationship to humans and the human capacity to produce and consume meaning.’³³ Deictic in nature and spatial in scope, *her* points the attention of the reader towards the physical manuscript that contains the historical record. The act of recording the history of England and the world is formulated through *her*, then, as a process that requires the participation of the author, the manuscript, and the reader.

Indeed, the functions of *her* that can be identified in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and in the rubric of the Cotton Manuscript are relevant to Chapter 1 of this thesis: ‘Verbal mapping and the voices of Ohthere, Wulfstan and Orosius,’ in which I focus on the geographical description of the world that opens the Old English history. I argue that the description functions as a ‘verbal map’ for the places inhabited by humans and the spaces that surround them and I consider the historiographical methods that the verbal map introduces to the OE *Orosius*. I also think further about the relationship between time and space or place, history and geography, and find that the distance of the past is both temporal and spatial. Paradoxically, a spatial understanding of time also brings the past and the present together: the past can be travelled to in representations of space and in the narrative of the OE *Orosius*. History is brought into contact with the *her* and now of both Anglo-Saxon England and the Cotton Manuscript.

Her and now are oblique concepts because they are so tied to context. They intrude with insistence into the present moment, whenever that moment may be, and so disrupt the notion that time is linear; equally, nonlinear time needs to be supported by space. ‘Temporal asynchrony’ – a phrase used by Carolyn Dinshaw to theorize the experience of nonlinear time or ‘queer time’ – provides a very helpful way of answering the question of how the temporalities of Anglo-Saxon England, early fifth-century Rome and world history come together.³⁴ The assumption that time is asynchronous, Dinshaw argues, leads to the understanding that the ‘now’ is ‘expansive’ and inclusive of the past, present and future. Dinshaw elaborates that ‘[t]his means fostering temporalities other than the narrowly sequential. This means taking seriously lives lived in other kinds of time.’³⁵ The lives lived in other kinds of time in the OE *Orosius* can be distinguished into three categories, which constitute the three temporalities of the OE *Orosius*. There are the (mostly) pagan lives from the first humans to name the earth (Book I.i.8/11-15) until the Romans whose city has been sacked by the Goths in

³³ Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp.7-8.

³⁴ Carolyn Dinshaw and others, ‘Theorizing queer temporalities: A roundtable discussion,’ *GLQ* 13 (2007), 177-95 (190). See also Carolyn Dinshaw, *How Soon Is Now?: Medieval Texts, Amateur Readers, and the Queerness of Time* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), pp.4-5.

³⁵ Dinshaw, *How Soon Is Now?*, p.xv and p.4.

410 (Book VI.xxxviii.156/11-23). Then there are the early fifth-century Romans addressed by Orosius. Finally, there are the Anglo-Saxons who we observe in the OE *Orosius* from a twenty-first-century perspective: the Anglo-Saxon author of the history, the compiler of the chapter headings, the manuscript scribes and illuminators, and the reading or listening audience; the lives that created and engaged with the OE *Orosius* in the early medieval period. The movement between these temporalities and our own present day – the past, present and future of the Anglo-Saxons – within the *her* and now of the OE *Orosius* can be defined as an expression of temporal asynchrony.

The next three words of the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript, *onginneð seo boc* (begins the book) can also be read in terms of the phenomenon of temporal asynchrony and in terms of materiality. *Seo boc* begins whenever and for whoever it is read and so it is constantly reconstituting within the changing present moment: it translates, or moves, in time. Yet the book also has an origin or model in the *Historia* as the acknowledgement of *Orosius* in the rubric attests. Further, the book begins at a fixed point in the script of the Anglo-Saxon manuscript, *her*, or the modern edition. The historical narrative also has a beginning or two: the verbal map that opens the OE *Orosius* includes the humans who first divided and named the world (Book I.i.8/11-5); following this, Ninus starts a history of sovereignty and empire when he becomes the first of all humans to rule on the *middangeard* (Book I.ii.21/24-5). As the OE *Orosius* has a beginning, it also has an ending, which is looped back to the world map: the sack of Rome by Alaric and the Goths, and the subsequent migration of the Goths who settle in Italy, Spain and Africa (Book VI.xxxviii.156/20-3). This interplay of origins, models, endings and translation forms the theme of Chapter 2: '*Bysena* and *translatio imperii*: three parallels of gender and power.' The movement of power from one empire to another, or *translatio imperii*, is predicated on the origins and endings of power and the replication of models, or *bysena*, such as the model of kingship that is established by Ninus. Chapter 2 also explores the Anglo-Saxon hindsight that views the Roman Empire within the pattern of *translatio imperii* and knows that the Empire came to an end; knowledge not shared by the *Historia*, as discussed already. In brief, the model or exemplar of the *Historia* changes as it is translated into Anglo-Saxon perception and into *seo boc*.

The phrase, *seo boc*, then, fields the different planes of the material manuscript (or the printed edition) and the historical subject matter, the physical and the abstract: vellum, paper and ink are merged with concept and knowledge. I draw together some of the connections generated between materiality, subject matter and materials, whilst extending my consideration of Anglo-Saxon responses to Rome in Chapter 3: 'Material history and the Matter of Rome.' I suggest in this Chapter that the 'Matter of Rome' – a

conventional phrase that conflates the Roman Empire and emperors, the city, and the Christian centrality of Rome – for an Anglo-Saxon audience can be read through a series of material descriptions in the OE *Orosius*. I also think about how the manuscripts that witness the OE *Orosius* bring the Anglo-Saxon past into our present moment. Metonymy and metaphor are important devices in the argument that I present in Chapter 3 as pieces of material can represent much greater associations and pasts: ruins, described elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon literature as the *enta geweorc* (the work of giants), for example, can serve as metonyms in the OE *Orosius* for the former rule of the Roman Empire in *Brittania* before the origins of Anglo-Saxon England. Indeed, the book referred to in the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript is a metonym for a much larger framework that includes the other extant manuscript witnesses and any other versions of the OE *Orosius* that may have been lost.³⁶

The description of the OE *Orosius* as *seo boc* in the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript – which we could read as a kind of preface for the text – also relates the history to a larger framework still: the prefaces and epilogues of the other texts that have been associated with Alfred at one point or another, that is, the texts in the so-called ‘Alfredian canon.’³⁷ The book is a recurring theme in many of the Alfredian verse and prose prefaces and epilogues, not just in the prose preface to the *Pastoral Care* where ‘Alfred’ refers to the Latin works (or ‘some books,’ *sumæ bec*) that everyone ought to know. Like the rubric that appears in the eleventh-century Cotton Manuscript but not the tenth-century Lauderdale Manuscript of the OE *Orosius*, the Alfredian prefaces and epilogues are not necessarily found in every extant manuscript witness or in the earliest manuscript witnesses of the texts that they accompany. They remind us, therefore, as the rubric does, that reception and transmission are considerations as significant as authorship. That ‘[w]hether or not [the prefaces] are “authorial” or “original,” they are an integral part of the on-going process of textual presentation [...] within and well beyond the Alfredian era,’ as Irvine argues.³⁸ The book is a concept with various levels of meaning in these prefaces and epilogues, which correspond to the layered significations of *seo boc* in the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript. As Irvine illustrates, the book, or *boc*, is represented as a ‘physical object’ and an ‘emblem of an authority that that text represents’ – the authority of the classical authors, like Orosius, and the Old English translators – when it takes the first-person voice, as in the metrical prefaces to the Old English *Dialogues*, the Old English *Boethius*, and the *Pastoral*

³⁶ See Bately, OE *Orosius*, pp.xxvi-xxxi, for a discussion of potentially ‘lost manuscripts.’

³⁷ For editions and translations of the verse prefaces and epilogues to the texts in the Alfredian canon, see Irvine and Godden, *The Old English Boethius*.

³⁸ Susan Irvine, ‘The Alfredian prefaces and epilogues’ in Discenza and Szarmach (eds.), *Companion to Alfred*, pp.143-70 (p.170).

Care.³⁹ In other words, the material manuscript witness and the valuable information that it conveys are conjoined concepts. In light of the Alfredian prefaces, it seems that the author of the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript witness of the OE *Orosius* has used *seo boc* as shorthand to introduce an Old English translation, or interpretation, of a classical Latin text – a relationship sealed when the book is given the name, *Orosius* – whilst indicating the physical object of the manuscript that includes the text. He or she may well have added the rubric with the intention of grouping the OE *Orosius* thematically with other vernacular translations.

Yet the name given to the book, *Orosius*, requires closer consideration. Does the book *þe man [...] nemneð* (which is called) *Orosius* refer to the *Historia* or does it refer more directly to the Old English history? The answer to this question is both: the title by which the Anglo-Saxon history of the world is known refers to the *Historia* and this very title also refers directly to the OE *Orosius* as witnessed by the Cotton Manuscript. We might think of the OE *Orosius* and the *Historia* in theoretical terms as ‘entangled’ texts, therefore. ‘Entanglement’ is a term with roots in Quantum Physics but it has infiltrated the social sciences and the humanities to provide a theoretical discourse for networks of interrelations and mutual dependencies.⁴⁰ Indeed, in an Anglo-Saxon context, the OE *Orosius* and the *Historia* are mutually dependent and intricately connected; we cannot disentangle where the historiography of one ends and the other begins in the OE *Orosius* or the Anglo-Saxon imagination. To explain this idea further, we might think back to my suggestion that the *Historia* would always have been read as of its time and place in Anglo-Saxon England. When we remember the reality of the co-existence of the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* in the *her* and now of Anglo-Saxon England, we start to recognize that the *Historia* was read with the cultural perspectives and approaches that are encoded in the OE *Orosius*. At the same time, the OE *Orosius* could not have been composed without the source material of the *Historia*; a relationship that is more readily recognized. Furthermore, the *Historia* and its author are entangled according to Anglo-Saxon interpretation: the book *is* its author and the author *is* the book. This view is crystallized when we come to consider the representation of Orosius throughout the Old English history, providing history as an author and becoming history at the same time.

I explore some of the possibilities the theory of entanglement can offer to literary interpretation in Chapter 4: ‘Entanglements: queer time and faith.’ In this Chapter, I use the principles of entanglement to consider the Anglo-Saxon approach to

³⁹ Irvine, ‘Alfredian prefaces and epilogues,’ p.150. See also Irvine and Godden, *The Old English Boethius*, p.xvii.

⁴⁰ Ian Hodder, *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) provides a good introduction to the theory of entanglement.

pagans. I find in the OE *Orosius* a holistic and heterogeneous Anglo-Saxon view towards paganism, which is drawn from engagements with the polemic of the *Historia*. Indeed, the models of Christian theology that are represented in the OE *Orosius* – and representative of a Christian Anglo-Saxon worldview – support the idea that paganism and Christianity are in fact entangled. I read examples in the OE *Orosius* that elucidate the asynchronies of faith in Chapter 4: just as the transcendent God and incarnate Christ, the first man, Adam and all mankind are understood to be entangled concepts in Christian theology, Christianity could not have existed without pagan sin.

The final point to make about the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript concerns the people who call the book *Orosius* in eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon England. I have offered the translation ‘they call’ for *þe mon nemneð* as an alternative to the passive voice of the construction (which is called) in order to make visible the people and the culture behind the name, and to emphasize the plurality of these categories. Naming is a way of knowing, as well as taking ownership, and of creating a connection between people over time. As Cresswell has reflected, naming is also a way of giving meaning to space: ‘[w]hen humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is one such way) it becomes a place.’⁴¹ This is the effect that the name *Orosius* has on the spatial and material adverb *her* in the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript; it gives it meaning and value. When we name the OE *Orosius*, we invest in the text too. Those who called the text that we know as the Old English *Orosius*, ‘Orosius’ in the eleventh century connect to us and to all the Anglo-Saxons who knew the text in the same way. This connection doubles back on itself as we and the Anglo-Saxons connect again to the fifth-century Romans and the humans at the beginning of world history.

In its essence, the OE *Orosius* is about how people in Anglo-Saxon England might align themselves with and view the humans in the world from the beginning of history to their own present by way of early fifth-century Rome. For our own twenty-first-century historical purposes, the OE *Orosius* teaches us about historiographical approaches and cultural engagements with world history in late Anglo-Saxon England. We must reach these approaches and engagements through our own mechanisms of interpretation and our own cultural perspectives.⁴² Consequently, I use the terms ‘anthropology’ – which is defined in the *OED* as the ‘study or description of human beings or human nature’ – and ‘anthropocentric’ in this thesis.⁴³ These words can

⁴¹ Cresswell, *Place*, pp.9-10.

⁴² For this mode of thinking and an anthropological approach towards the analysis of medieval literature, see Seth Lerer, *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p.8.

⁴³ *OED*, s.v. ‘anthropology’ (accessed September 2016).

recognize the emphasis in the OE *Orosius* on humans and culture without needing to ground to anthropological theory, and they can acknowledge the multiple cultural perspectives – early fifth-century Roman, Anglo-Saxon and modern – that interpret human history.

The chapters of my thesis

Each of the chapters in this thesis offers a different way of navigating the relationships between Anglo-Saxon perception and global history, composition and reception, and the OE *Orosius* and the *Historia*. My chapters are based respectively around the mapping of time, space and voice (Chapter 1), gender and *translatio imperii* (Chapter 2), materiality, matter and materials (Chapter 3), and entanglement, queer time and faith (Chapter 4). There are crossovers between the chapters. The theme of time features prominently in both Chapter 1: ‘Verbal mapping and the voices of Ohthere, Wulfstan and Orosius’ and Chapter 4: ‘Entanglements: queer time and faith.’ In the former, I explore the construction of the different temporalities of the OE *Orosius* in Book I.i (the geographical description that I call a ‘verbal map’) and the shifts between these temporalities that take place throughout the text. In the latter, on the other hand, I am interested in the methods of periodization and measuring time that are employed by the Old English author and how these are influenced by the *Historia*. My considerations of time in both Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 address the positioning of Orosius and his early fifth-century Roman audience against the Anglo-Saxon sense of the present: their *her* and, in the words of Dinshaw, ‘expansive now.’⁴⁴

I look at engagements with Rome, past and present, in both Chapter 2: ‘*Bysena* and *translatio imperii*: three parallels of gender and power’ and Chapter 3: ‘Material history and the Matter of Rome.’ Whilst in Chapter 2 my focus is centred on the rise and fall of Roman imperial power in the scheme of history viewed from the position of Anglo-Saxon England, in Chapter 3 I read Anglo-Saxon responses to imperial and Christian Rome through material representations of Roman history. The destruction of Babylon features in the arguments of both Chapters 2 and 3 but framed through these different approaches. In Chapter 2, I explore how Babylon’s anthropomorphosis, as she speaks with a female voice after her destruction by Cyrus, foreshadows Rome’s imperial downfall with unique Anglo-Saxon insight. Reflecting on Christian, material and imperial transience she warns: ‘nanuht mid eow nabbað fæstes ne stronges þætte þurhwunigean mæge’ (Book II.iii.44/5-6; nothing you have with you, however fixed or strong, can last). In Chapter 3, I think about Babylon’s destruction in relation to the fall of the Roman Empire in material terms and alongside the poetic trope of the *enta geweorc*. These examples of some of the crossovers between my chapters demonstrate

⁴⁴ Dinshaw, *How soon is now?*, p.xv.

the chiasmic structure of my thesis: my reading of the OE *Orosius* is nonlinear to mirror the nonlinear representation of time in the OE *Orosius* and the entangled relationship that I note between the Old English and its principal Latin source. A chiasmic approach also allows different theoretical and discursive angles to converge in one example or theme, such as in the example of Babylon or the theme of time.

In Chapter 1: ‘Verbal mapping and the voices of Ohthere, Wulfstan and Orosius,’ I look closely at the role of the first chapter of the text (Book I.i), which I trace within the genre of medieval *mappa mundi*. I describe Book I.i as a ‘verbal map’ because of its written form but cartographical properties. These capacities become particularly apparent in the comparisons and contrasts that I identify between the description of the world in the OE *Orosius* and the Cotton Map. I argue that the verbal map of Book I.i is foundational to the OE *Orosius* as it is in this chapter that the scope of Anglo-Saxon world history is first established.⁴⁵ The relationship shared between the OE *Orosius* and the *Historia* is also fielded for the first time in this verbal map, which opens with Orosius’ voice (8/11-15). Broadly speaking, in Chapter 1, I consider the multiple perspectives, voices, temporalities and cultures that are layered in the verbal map in addition to the places that are located in the known or inhabited world. My discussions here include a consideration of the reports of the Northern European explorers, Ohthere and Wulfstan (13/29-18/2) and the oral traditions that they bring to the literacy of the verbal map and historiography – traditions that can also be identified in the device of Orosius’ voice.

Chapter 2: ‘*Bysena* and *translatio imperii*: three parallels of gender and power,’ is centred on the origins and ‘examples’ or ‘models,’ *bysena*, of power and sovereignty and the theme of *translatio imperii*. Although *translatio imperii* means the movement or translation of power from one empire to another, I use the concept broadly. I present three parallels that I have located in the text to narrate the beginning, end and translation of power across genders and bodies, cultures and empires. The first parallel I draw is between the account of Ninus, and the accounts of Semiramis (Book I.ii) and the Amazons (Book I.i). Semiramis and the Amazons provide alternative models and legacies for queenship and warrior women to the model of kingship that can be traced back to Ninus. The second parallel I discuss is between the characters of Cyrus, King of the Persians, and Thamyris, a Scythian Queen. Cyrus and Thamyris come into direct confrontation in Book II.iii, when Thamyris overpowers Cyrus in revenge for the death of her son and then orders his head to be cut off and cast into a leather bag. I consider

⁴⁵ Simeon Potter’s mid twentieth-century commentary on the OE *Orosius* disregards the first chapter completely with the justification that it is ‘limited to the History proper, and it therefore opens with the second chapter of Book I.’ Simeon Potter, ‘Commentary on King Alfred’s *Orosius*,’ *Anglia* (1953), 385-437 (385).

this denouement to Cyrus' bloodthirsty life in relation to a series of historical episodes involving Cyrus that anticipate his downfall: for example, when he first gains significant power he is noted to have divided his army into three, placing the third part behind him (Book I.xii); when Thamyris overcomes Cyrus, she divides her army into three as an important strategy for her victory over the king (Book II.iiii). My final parallel is between the representations of Babylon and Rome. I consider the hindsight that reorients the relationship between these empires from Orosius' patrilineal view of power moving providentially from pagan Babylon to Christian Rome to the Anglo-Saxon conception of the fallen Empire of Rome following Babylon's example of imperial and Christian transience. These distinct perspectives are offered narratively in terms of gender: Orosius describes Rome and Babylon as like a father and son (Book II.i), but the alternative Anglo-Saxon Babylon is constructed as female (Book II.iiii).

In Chapter 3: 'Material history and the Matter of Rome,' I explore how the Matter of Rome is materialized throughout the OE *Orosius*. I offer a series of examples that represent aspects of the Matter of Rome through materiality, combining literary descriptions of materials with subject matter. My first example focuses on the material symbolism in the account of the sack of Rome in Book VI.xxxviii, which identifies this historical event as marking the end of the Roman Empire. I then draw upon the poetic convention of the *enta geweorc* to inform my readings of the fallen empires of Rome and Babylon in the OE *Orosius*: the crumbling walls of Rome and Babylon in Book II.iiii can be mapped to the symbolism of ruins in the Anglo-Saxon imagination, as metaphors for the loss of power and empire. My next example from Book IV.xiii of the OE *Orosius* highlights the specifically lithic associations of the Romans in the Anglo-Saxon imagination. Orosius' rhetoric about the destruction of Carthage is translated into an extended stony metaphor in the Old English history. In this Anglo-Saxon context, Orosius likens his polemical task to the act of sharpening 'hnescestan mealmstan' (113/8; soft malmstone) into 'hwetstan' (113/2; whetstone), as he tries to get his fifth-century Romans to see the sack of Rome in the context of providential history. Orosius' polemic is materialized in the Old English in both narrative and metaphorical terms in this neat rhetorical device. I end this Chapter by thinking about the dating system of the OE *Orosius*, which points towards the *Historia*, the foundations of Rome and Anglo-Saxon England. I argue that as the chapters of the OE *Orosius* are structured according to when Rome was 'timbered' (*getimbred*), the Anglo-Saxon historiographical techniques are revealed, metaphorically building Roman history in an Anglo-Saxon timber frame. Reading this dating system closely against the material descriptions of Rome's foundation by Romulus and Remus in Book II.i and the city's reconstruction by Augustus after a fire in Book VI.i, I find that even this Roman

subject matter is couched within an Anglo-Saxon historiographical, ideological and linguistic structure.

Finally, in Chapter 4: ‘Entanglements: queer time and faith,’ I explore the themes of paganism and Christianity in the OE *Orosius*. The Old English history is frequently described as either Christian or secular in focus but I aim to demonstrate that it is not possible to make such distinctions for a text composed and received in Christian Anglo-Saxon culture. Instead, we might think in terms of the ‘entanglement’ of Christianity, paganism, secularity and the Anglo-Saxon worldview. I begin by thinking about modern conceptions of the Anglo-Saxon perception of time as linear and teleological, conceptions that are grounded in attempts to periodize the medieval past in terms of a unilateral movement from paganism to Christianity to salvation, as Kathleen Davis has argued.⁴⁶ I then consider the plurality and asynchronies of both time and faith in the OE *Orosius*, focusing in particular on two methods of time measurement that at once demarcate the past and the present and entangle them: Orosius’ comparison between the pagan past and the Christian present of the Roman Empire, which constructs these periods as *tida* or ‘times’ in history; and the phrase, ‘in those days’ (*on ðæm dagum*), which is used to access the pagan past, conceptualizing history as a matter of days. I then discuss how the transcendence of the *middangeard*, as the framework for the passing of time or days and all humans, past, present and future, is supportive of this temporal asynchrony; indeed, I find in the OE *Orosius* a distinction between the ideological and cosmological *middangeard* and the material *eorþe* that is more directly affected by sin and religious contexts. These arguments about time and space provide the backbone to my discussions about the interrelationships between paganism and Christianity represented by the OE *Orosius*. For example: the entanglement of the first man Adam and all mankind, which necessitated a period of pre-determined paganism to atone for the Original Sin before the redemption of Christ; the integral role, therefore, of paganism in the existence of Christianity; and the distinctions between the pagans who lived before the birth of Christ and those who live after the institution of the Christian faith. I conclude with the descriptions of the pagans Himilco and Hannibal enacting a kind of ‘queer faith’ in Book IV.v – that is, momentarily breaking out of their pagan condition before Christianity to connect with God and to understand his workings.

As this thesis is the first full-length study of the OE *Orosius*, I have been able to contribute multiple ways of interpreting the history, reaching out to themes of gender, time, materiality, culture, faith and place. Scholarship on the OE *Orosius* in the last

⁴⁶ Kathleen Davis, ‘Time’ in *A Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Studies*, ed. by Jacqueline Stodnick and Renée R. Trilling (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp.215-34 (p.216).

thirty years – since Bately’s edition was published – has not been vast but equally it has not been negligible. As I have noted, existing scholarship has tended to focus on processes of translation, which pertains to how the OE *Orosius* was translated from the *Historia* and why. Godden has looked at the sources of the OE *Orosius* to suggest that the text was composed using a glossed copy of the *Historia*, whilst Omar Khalaf has compiled a list of omissions from the *Historia* in the Old English.⁴⁷ Deborah VanderBilt has proposed that poetic traditions influenced the translation of the OE *Orosius* from its source, especially in relation to the presence of oral tradition in the Old English text.⁴⁸ Mary Kate Hurley has most recently discussed time and translation in relation to authorship and authority and the phrase, *cwæð Orosius*.⁴⁹ The device of Orosius’ voice and its acknowledgement of the *Historia* as a source text have been discussed widely, including by Irvine and Godden.⁵⁰ Nicole Guenther Discenza, Daniel Anlezark and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. have considered the geography of the text, particularly in relation to Book I.i, and have discussed how this positions an Anglo-Saxon identity in global time and space.⁵¹ Godden and Stephen J. Harris have consolidated the Germanic responses to history that the OE *Orosius* contains.⁵² William A. Kretzschmar views the OE *Orosius* as filling in the blanks of English history left by Bede and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to promote an English historical presence and divinely-ordained power, yet without political motive.⁵³ Leneghan has, on the other hand, addressed the political utility of the OE *Orosius* as a text composed and produced in the West Saxon court, as discussed.⁵⁴ This brief overview of some of the most recent and original engagements with the OE *Orosius* highlights some of the theories and suggestions that my own arguments draw upon and, more crucially, can also put together. Articles in journals

⁴⁷ Godden, ‘OE *Orosius* and its sources.’ Omar Khalaf, ‘A study of the translator’s omissions and instances of adaptation in the *Old English Orosius*: the case of Alexander the Great,’ *Filologia Germanica* 5 (2013), 195–222.

⁴⁸ Deborah VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the Old English *Orosius*,’ *Oral Tradition* 13 (1998), 377–97.

⁴⁹ Mary Kate Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities: time and translation in the Old English *Orosius*,’ *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 112 (2013), 405–32.

⁵⁰ Irvine, ‘English literature in the ninth century,’ p.223. Godden, ‘Did King Alfred write anything?’, 7. Godden, ‘The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,’ 62.

⁵¹ Nicole Guenther Discenza, ‘A map of the universe: geography and cosmology in the program of Alfred the Great’ in *Conversion and Colonisation in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Catherine E. Karkov and Nicholas Howe, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Studies* 2, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 318 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2006), pp.83–108 (pp.89–91, 94–95, 100). Daniel Anlezark, ‘The Anglo-Saxon world view’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, 2nd edn (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), pp. 66–81 (pp.71–79). Rolf H. Bremmer Jr., ‘Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world’ in Lees (ed.), *The New Cambridge History*, pp.185–208 (pp.193–95).

⁵² Godden, ‘The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,’ 59–64. Stephen J. Harris, *Race and Ethnicity in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), pp.88–105.

⁵³ William A. Kretzschmar, ‘Adaptation and *anweald* in the Old English *Orosius*,’ *ASE* 16 (1987), 127–45.

⁵⁴ Leneghan, ‘*Translatio imperii*.’

and chapters in books will always inevitably limit scope and focus; my thesis is able to look at the close details and the bigger picture.

The main challenge in my interpretation of the OE *Orosius* is to tread the line between emphasizing the Anglo-Saxon originality, shaping of history and cultural contexts of the OE *Orosius* and not undervaluing the material that the *Historia* provides as a principal source. Yet, although the authority and influence of the *Historia* are to be acknowledged – as they are by the appearances of Orosius speaking in the Old English and by the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript – the world history that the Anglo-Saxons encountered in the OE *Orosius* was theirs.

Chapter 1: Verbal mapping and the voices of Ohthere, Wulfstan and Orosius

The human history of the OE *Orosius* opens with a description of the geography of the world in Book I.i. This geographical description, which might be termed a ‘preface’ or ‘introduction’ but which I refer to as a ‘verbal map,’ has a direct basis in the *Historia* Book 1.2.¹ Indeed, Andrew Merrills has credited the *Historia* Book 1.2 as ‘central [...] within the evolution of Latin historiography [...] it set the standard for Christian historical writing of the next half-millennium.’² Both the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i and the *Historia* Book 1.2 can be correlated to the description of Britain and Ireland that precedes Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* – which is likely to have been influenced by the approach of the *Historia* – and, in turn, to the description of the island of Britain at the beginning of the D, E and F texts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.³ In these respects, Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* follows an exemplary classical model and belongs to a group of Anglo-Saxon historiographical texts. The geographical descriptions in these classical, Anglo-Saxon, Latin and vernacular texts serve the historiographical function of setting out the scope of the history that follows. The local geographies of the *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Chronicle* befit their insular histories, just as the descriptions of the places in the known world in the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* provide a worldwide scale for their human histories.

Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* shares points of connection with Book 1.2 of the *Historia* but it should nevertheless be considered a separate text. Their differences go further than language. As René Derolez has pointed out, ‘long stretches [of the Old English] do not correspond to anything in the Latin.’⁴ Indeed, the descriptions demonstrate different knowledge of the world, as this chapter outlines, because they were produced by different cultures and times. Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* adds detail to the early fifth-century knowledge of the *Historia*, a text centred on Rome, with late ninth- or early tenth-century Anglo-Saxon knowledge of Europe. Moreover, Book I.i of

¹ In recent studies, for example, Leneghan calls Book I.i a ‘geographical preface’ and Discenza refers to the chapter as a ‘geographical introduction.’ Leneghan, ‘*Translatio imperii*,’ 1. Discenza, ‘A map of the universe,’ p.90. For use of the term, ‘verbal map’ elsewhere, see Alfred Hiatt, ‘*Beowulf* off the map,’ *ASE* 38 (2009), 11-40 (21).

² A.H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought Fourth Series 64 (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), p.1.

³ For the connections between the geographical descriptions in Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius*, see Nicholas Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.116. See also Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, p.2. For an edition of Bede, see *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), Book 1, Chapter 1, pp.14-21 (Latin and translation). For editions of the D, E, and F texts of the *Chronicle*, see *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, ed. by David Dumville and others (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1983-), vol 6: *MS D*, ed. by G.P. Cubbin (1996), vol 7: *MS E*, ed. by Susan Irvine (2004), vol 8: *MS F*, ed. by Peter S. Baker (2000).

⁴ Derolez, ‘The orientation system in the OE *Orosius*,’ p. 254.

the OE *Orosius* features the original and very well-known reports of two explorers in Northern Europe, Ohthere and Wulfstan, and mentions the West Saxon King Alfred. Paradoxically, Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* also diverges from Book 1.2 of the *Historia* because of the interactions that are established between the Old English and the Latin histories, which mark out the temporal and cultural differences of these texts. For instance, Orosius' voice is woven into the Old English and Latinate place names are borrowed from the *Historia* and positioned in vernacular syntax. In short, like the *Historia* Book 1.2, the OE *Orosius* Book I.i fits places together along rivers, past mountain ranges and over seas in order to construct history both from the ground up and across the borders, boundaries and territories of the world. But it does so with an Anglo-Saxon perspective: it maps out its own version of time, space and culture. The OE *Orosius* and the *Historia* 'meet,' therefore, in the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i, where the borders of culture, time and perspective are identified between the texts and transgressed and where the OE *Orosius*' historiographical approach is first mapped out. Indeed, Book I.i can be aligned with David Woodward's definition of medieval *mappae mundi* (maps of the world) as 'projections of history on a geographical base.'⁵ Not only does Book I.i project multiple temporalities – ancient human, early fifth-century Roman and Anglo-Saxon – in its geographical description but it also provides a significant 'geographical base' to the history as a whole.

This chapter will work through some of the claims I have made above about the OE *Orosius* Book I.i – which I will refer to as a verbal map from now on – and will lay the groundwork for the chapters and arguments that follow. I will focus on the multiple temporalities, cultures and voices that are negotiated in the verbal map and throughout the Old English history. I will first position the verbal map within the corpus of medieval world maps, from T-O maps to more detailed *mappae mundi*, to understand how time is mapped in the OE *Orosius*. Here, the Cotton Map provides a useful graphic parallel to the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i, especially as it shares the *Historia* as a source and is included in a manuscript book.⁶ An analysis of the Cotton Map also emphasizes the close ties between language, knowledge, and culture; categories that inflect time, people and place. There are useful analogies to be made

⁵ David Woodward, 'Medieval *mappaemundi*' in *The History of Cartography*, 6 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987-), ed by J.B. Harley and others, vol 1: *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. by J.B. Harley and David Woodward (1987), pp.286-370 (p.342).

⁶ The Cotton Map has been compared to the OE *Orosius* frequently before. See, for example: Alfred Hiatt, 'Maps and margins: other lands, other peoples' in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English*, ed. by Elaine Treharne and Greg Walker (Oxford: OUP, 2010), pp.649-76 (p.663); Anlezark, 'The Anglo-Saxon world view,' p.72; Martin K. Foys, 'The virtual reality of the Anglo-Saxon *Mappamundi*,' *Literature Compass* 1 (2004), 1-17 (9-11). See also Martin K. Foys, *Virtually Anglo-Saxon: Old Media, New Media, and Early Medieval Studies in the Late Age of Print* (Gainesville FL: Florida University Press, 2007).

between the place-names, or toponyms, on the Cotton Map and in the OE *Orosius* in Book I.i and elsewhere, as Latin loan words sit alongside vernacular terms in both these visual and verbal contexts. I look closely at the morphology and lexicology of these names in the OE *Orosius* to consider how they represent the sharing of knowledge between the *Historia* and the Old English history and the differentiation and entanglement of the perspectives of these two texts.

The most famous vernacular name in the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i is that of King Alfred, who is addressed as the *hlaford* of the Norwegian explorer, Ohthere (13/29). The presence of King Alfred in the Northern European section of the map puts Wessex on the map by association, and signals the position of late Anglo-Saxon England in relation to Europe and the world. ‘Alfred’ is also a literary device for the introduction of Ohthere’s report to the narrative. Indeed, Ohthere addresses Alfred to bring personal experience and knowledge of the geography of Northern Europe to the verbal map and to history; the personal experiences of Wulfstan follow Ohthere’s account. I shall argue that Ohthere and Wulfstan’s reports should not be treated as exceptional in the OE *Orosius* because they are not in the *Historia* and because the personalized style of the reports differs to the style of the rest of the verbal map. Instead, I embrace the similarities that can be identified between the project of the OE *Orosius* and the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan, such as the Anglo-Saxon oral tradition that influences both their reports and the device of Orosius speaking in the Old English.

If the *Historia* is defined by its singular authorship, the OE *Orosius* is a text of collaborative knowledge and fluid conceptions of written voice.⁷ Ohthere and Wulfstan are two vocal contributors to the verbal map of Book I.i and the knowledge it offers; their voices emerge from and dissolve back into the Old English narrative. Orosius’ voice is materialized in a very similar manner but enters intermittently throughout the entire OE *Orosius* in short speech acts distinguished by the phrase, *cwæð Orosius* (said Orosius). This chapter will establish how Orosius’ voice is used by the Old English author in the verbal map and beyond. It will identify the roles of Orosius within the Anglo-Saxon history as his persona is moved, or translated, from one language and text to another and migrated culturally from the early fifth-century Roman perspective of the *Historia* to the Anglo-Saxon perspective of the OE *Orosius*.

Mapping time

In their *History of Cartography*, John Harley and Woodward describe all maps as ‘graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts,

⁷ Cotton MS, fol. 3r. Bately, OE *Orosius*, 1/1.

conditions, processes, or even events in the human world.’⁸ If we extend Harley and Woodward’s definition to verbal representations it is possible to incorporate Book I.i of the OE *Orosius*. In this verbal map, place provides the context for the history of humans that begins with the first king, Ninus of Assyria (Book I.ii), albeit somewhat loosely. Without providing a strictly correlative topography or roadmap for the peoples and places featured in the historical narrative of the OE *Orosius*, Book I.i conceptualizes the world. Put another way, the verbal map invites the audience of the OE *Orosius* to envision the parameters of the known world in which the history takes place.⁹ The verbal map is also a spatial introduction to the historiographical approaches of the OE *Orosius*. It maps out the temporalities of the history, which are bound to place – the ancient humans who have lived across the world, the early fifth-century in Rome and late Anglo-Saxon England – and the perspectives that transmit and interpret history, from Orosius in the *Historia* to the author of the OE *Orosius* to the Anglo-Saxon readers of these texts.

The famous opening lines of the OE *Orosius* demonstrate how Book I.i maps out a ‘spatial understanding’ of human history, following Harley and Woodward’s definition, and sets up an interplay between multiple temporalities and perspectives:

Ure ieldran ealne þisne ymbhwyrft þises middangeardes, cwæþ Orosius, swa swa Oceanus utan ymbligeþ, þone mon garsæg hateð, on þreo todældon 7 hie þa þrie dælas on þreo tonemdon: Asiam 7 Europem 7 Affricam, þeah þe sume men sæden þæt þær nære buton twegen dælas: Asia 7 þæt oþer Europe.

Asia is befangen mid Oceano þæm garsecge suþan 7 norþan 7 eastan 7 swa ealne middangeard from þæm eastdæle healfne behæfð. Þonne on ðæm norþdæle, þæt is Asia on þa swiþran healfre, in Danai þære ie, ðær Asia 7 Europe hiera landgemircu togædre licgað. Ond þonne of þære ilcan ie Danai suþ andlang Wendelsæs 7 þonne wiþ westan Alexandria þære byrig Asia 7 Affrica togædre licgeað. (8/11-22; my emphasis.)

(Our ancestors divided the whole circle of this *middangeard* into three, said Orosius, just as the Ocean, which people call *garsecg* surrounds from the outside and they named the three parts in three: Asia and Europe and Africa, although some men said that there were just two parts: [one] Asia and the other Europe.

⁸ J.B. Harley and David Woodward, ‘Preface’ in Harley and Woodward (eds.), *Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe*, pp.xv-xxi (p.xvi).

⁹ The geographical description in the *Historia* Book 1.2 is also more about the conceptualization of the world than the naming and description of the places covered by the history. According to Fear, *History*, p.16, the *Historia* Book 1.2 ‘does describe the known world at the time and its ostensible purpose is to give a geographical context for the rest of the *Histories*. However, no further use is made of it, nor does it describe all the areas later found in the body of the work.’ For a discussion of the discrepancies between the geographical description of the *Historia* Book 1.2 and the rest of the historical narrative, see Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, pp. 65-69.

Asia is surrounded by the Ocean, the *garsecg* from the south and the north and the east and so the whole earth is divided in half from the eastern side. Then in the northern part, which has Asia on the right-hand side, Asia and Europe join together their borders in the river Don. And then south of the same river Don along the Mediterranean Sea and then against the west of Alexandria the cities of Asia and Africa join together.)

In the very first statement of the OE *Orosius*, the ancient human, Anglo-Saxon and early fifth-century Roman temporalities negotiated in the history are mapped out. The first of these temporalities is represented by the ‘ancestors’ or ‘ancients’ (*ieldran*): the humans who lived in the world a long time before both the author and audience of the OE *Orosius* and before Orosius and his contemporary Roman audience. These ancient humans are connected simultaneously to the second and third temporalities of Anglo-Saxon England and fifth-century Rome: the ‘ancients’ (*ieldran*) are claimed as belonging to the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius*, as the opening statement declares to that audience in their vernacular that they are *ure*, ‘ours’; but ‘Orosius told’ (*cwæþ Orosius*) his fifth-century Roman audience that the ancients were their forebears too. As Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. argues, the author of the OE *Orosius* ‘appropriates for himself and his Anglo-Saxon readership/ audience a natural participation in the learned legacy of the Roman world.’¹⁰ These three temporalities share the one world, this *middangeard*, as well as emerging together at the beginning of the Old English history. They come together within the *her* and now of the OE *Orosius*.

The ancients bring together human history with geographical space and as they do so they translate space into place. They divide the space of the world into ‘territories’ or ‘parts’ (*dælas*) and they name each portion, *Asia*, *Europe* and *Affrica* to create places that are meaningful for humans. As Tim Cresswell explains, ‘[n]aming is one of the ways space can be given meaning and become place.’¹¹ In the OE *Orosius*, then, history starts at the stage when humans have formed distinct ethnic and cultural identities in line with the places they name and occupy. This is the precedent for the first kingdoms and empires to be formed, beginning with Ninus as the first of all men to rule (Book I.ii; see Chapter 2). It should be noted that history starts in the *Historia* with the Original Sin of Adam in Book 1.1 and Book 1.3, framing the geographical description of Book 1.2. The different perspectives of the intended or assumed audiences of the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* can be recognized, therefore, in the beginning of each text. The prominence of the ‘ancient humans’ or ‘ancestors’ (*ieldran*) in the opening lines of the OE *Orosius* reflects the anthropocentric, or human-orientated, focus of the Old English history but this focus does not preclude a Christian worldview, it assumes one.

¹⁰ Bremmer Jr., ‘Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world,’ p.194.

¹¹ Cresswell, *Place*, p.9.

Indeed, implicit to a description of the *middangeard* is the Christian Anglo-Saxon knowledge that the world was the creation of God (see Chapter 4). This needs to be laid out clearly for the targets of Orosius' fifth-century polemic – the group of Romans who were questioning the Empire's Christianity – as part of the *Historia*'s polemical goals but not for the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius*.

The connection of the ancient humans to space shows that human history and physical geography are entangled: that is, that they are mutually dependent and intricately linked. As Merrills has stressed, the distinctions between history and geography are arbitrary, their disciplinary division the conceit of the 'modern schoolroom' since both 'are concerned with the activity of humanity in time and space.'¹² Indeed, the connection of history and geography to the early fifth-century Romans and the Anglo-Saxons demonstrates that although humans can divide space into place, and can be divided into ethnicities, cultures and temporalities, all humans are entangled too. The very first word of the OE *Orosius*, *ure* or 'our' encapsulates these entanglements by conjoining the Anglo-Saxons and the fifth-century Romans. The claims placed on the ancient humans by the Anglo-Saxon and fifth-century Roman temporalities in the opening statement of the verbal map are an index of how both temporalities look back on a chronological sequence of human history from Ninus (Book I.ii) to the sack of Rome by the Goths (Book VI.xxxviii). Yet the Anglo-Saxon temporality is continuous, open-ended and connected to the time and place of England outside of the text. The author of the OE *Orosius* and the audiences of the history throughout its Anglo-Saxon transmission existed within their own present moment and therefore possessed subjectivity. The fifth-century Roman temporality exists within this Anglo-Saxon temporality, on the other hand, bound inside its perspective objectively and static in time and place. This temporality includes Orosius as the author of the *Historia* and the Romans he addresses: an intra-textual audience in the OE *Orosius*. The Romans are especially apparent when Orosius' rhetoric wades in to the Old English to refute their belief that times were better when they worshipped the pagan gods rather than the Christian God. Orosius informs the history of the OE *Orosius* as a historian and the author of the *Historia* but his persona, and the Romans he addresses, are the objects of Anglo-Saxon subjectivity.

The temporalities of the ancient humans, Anglo-Saxon England and fifth-century Rome exist synchronically in the OE *Orosius* in the verbal map of Book I.i and throughout. The movement between these temporalities in the narrative, however, suggests the phenomenon of 'temporal asynchrony' – a phrase coined by Carolyn

¹² Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, p.6 and p.8; for a wider discussion of the connections between 'history' and geography' see pp.6-20.

Dinshaw to express the experience of a nonlinear conception of time.¹³ In Dinshaw's definitions of temporal asynchrony, the present moment is interpreted as 'a kind of expanded now in which past, present, and future coincide.'¹⁴ Indeed, the sense that time is linear or sequential is disrupted in the OE *Orosius*. The *her* and now of Anglo-Saxon England occupies the present moment of the text but embraces within this same moment the past that was experienced by the ancient humans and Orosius and his Romans, as well as the future. Indeed, our own present moment – the twenty-first century in which we read the OE *Orosius* – is one manifestation of the future for the Anglo-Saxons.

One of the examples of temporal asynchrony that I shall note here and return to later in this chapter (and in Chapter 4) is the device of Orosius' speech, which comes from the (Christian) Roman past and is distinguished from the authorial voice – marked by the third person preterite phrase, *cwæð Orosius* – but steps into the Anglo-Saxon Christian present in the Old English vernacular. On account of Orosius' voice, Bremmer Jr. has described the opening statement of the OE *Orosius* as 'a proclamation that connects and blends two worlds: classical Rome and contemporary England.'¹⁵ Bremmer's phrasing uses the ideological sense of 'world' to mean culture and worldview. In a cosmological sense there is only one world, which supports both the synchronization of temporalities and the asynchrony of time that results from the movement between them.

The mapping of space, then, is conceptually important for the layering and entanglement of multiple temporalities in the OE *Orosius*. Space provides a constant foundation to changes to human borders, boundaries and culture and to the movement of time, whether this is expressed in linear or asynchronous terms. The map as a form allows this combination of constancy and flux to be expressed in one textual space, whether verbal or graphic. Indeed, the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i encourages the visualization of space and the relationship between space, place and time through semantics. For example, *Alexandres herga* (9/1; Alexander's temples) and *Ercoles syla* (9/15; the pillars of Hercules) rise out of the map as verbal images that signify the material and spatial contact between past and present, whilst monumentalizing what was then and now is; they are traces of the past that exist in the 'expanded now' of the present *middangeard* conceived of by the Anglo-Saxons.

¹³ See Dinshaw and others, 'Queer temporalities roundtable,' 190.

¹⁴ Dinshaw and others, 'Queer temporalities roundtable,' 190. See also Dinshaw, *How soon is now?*, p.5.

¹⁵ Bremmer Jr., 'Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world,' p.194. See also Hurley, 'Alfredian temporalities,' 409.

In the context of cartographical history and tradition, the description of Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* as a verbal map is not too great a stretch. Graphic maps and verbal descriptions have a far-reaching relationship that can be traced through manuscripts produced and disseminated across medieval Europe. P.D.A. Harvey has described the origins of the term, *mappa mundi*:

[t]he phrase *mappa mundi*, literally cloth of the world, is unknown to classical Latin. It is first recorded in the ninth century, and it was what a world map was normally called in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, whether drawn on cloth or not.¹⁶

The *OED* lists the earliest recorded use of *mappa mundi* in English in the late fourteenth century.¹⁷ The term is especially useful for making comparisons between a graphic and a verbal map because it was used in the medieval period in England and Europe for written texts, not just visual forms, from at least the twelfth century, as Patrick Gautier Dalché has outlined: ‘dès le début du XII^e siècle, *mappa mundi* en vient à désigner aussi un texte de géographie descriptive.’¹⁸ Indeed, Dalché describes the term as polysemous.¹⁹ Some of the graphic medieval maps that have survived to us are entirely and purposefully independent of written texts, such as the late thirteenth-century Hereford Mappa Mundi. More commonly, though, graphic maps are found in extant manuscripts alongside written texts, like the Cotton Map. According to Woodward, ‘some 900 of the 1,100 surviving *mappaemundi* [sic] are found in manuscript books.’²⁰

Graphic maps have also provided source material for written texts and vice versa.²¹ It has been suggested that Orosius used a graphic map to compose the geographical description of the world in his *Historia* and Derolez, among others, has argued that the ‘author of the OE *Orosius* relied on a map’ during the process of translating the Latin history.²² Whether or not this is the case – and Janet Bately has

¹⁶ P.D.A. Harvey, *The Hereford World Map: Introduction* (Hereford: Hereford Cathedral, 2010), p.44. For a more detailed description of the origins and use of the term, *mappa mundi*, and a list of its occurrences between the fourth and fourteenth centuries, see Patrick Gautier Dalché, ‘Les sens de *mappa (mundi)*,’ *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 62 (2004), 187-202.

¹⁷ *OED*, s.v. ‘*mappa mundi*’ (accessed August 2016).

¹⁸ Dalché, ‘Les sens de *mappa (mundi)*,’ 189. See also Woodward, ‘Medieval *mappaemundi*’ pp.287-88.

¹⁹ Dalché, ‘Les sens de *mappa (mundi)*,’ 189 and 191.

²⁰ Woodward, ‘Medieval *mappaemundi*,’ p.286.

²¹ Orosius is named on the Hereford Mappa Mundi. Although it is debatable as to whether the inscription of Orosius intends to credit the author of the *Historia* as the main source for the map, his work was an undoubtable influence. See Harvey, *The Hereford World Map*, p.71.

²² For arguments on whether a map was used for the *Historia* see Fear, *History*, p.16; Evelyn Edson, *Mapping Time and Space: How Medieval Mapmakers Viewed Their World*, The British Library Studies in Map History 1 (London: British Library, 1997), p.31; Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, p.69. Merrills expands upon the potential sources of the *Historia* Book 1.2 at pp.70-79. For similar discussions about the OE *Orosius*, see Derolez, ‘The orientation system in the OE *Orosius*,’ p.264. See also Bately, OE *Orosius*, pp.lxiii-lxvii

refuted the notion that a map was drawn upon directly either for the OE *Orosius* or its principal source – the opening lines of the OE *Orosius* gesture explicitly to the form of a T-O map, which was a schematic style of graphic medieval map inherited from the classical Roman period. The T-O map represents Asia, Europe and Africa as positioned within the three spaces created by a T- (or sometimes Y-) shape placed within an O-shape depicting the ocean and, as Harvey explains, ‘covers only the inhabited world’ as ‘a conventionalised form – a kind of projection – of what really occupied perhaps rather more than half the surface of a dome, the northern hemisphere of the world.’²³ The verbal T-O map of the OE *Orosius* accordingly sets out a conventional representation of the known world to align the Old English history against the authority of a classical tradition of mapping and historiography and so to reference the authority of classical wisdom and knowledge. Most directly, the verbal T-O map of the OE *Orosius* replicates the model of the *Historia* in the Old English vernacular, translating what Orosius refers to in the Latin history as the *trifariam* (1.1.12/16; p.35: threefold scheme) of the world.²⁴ The verbal T-O map in the OE *Orosius* also reinforces the human focus and scope of the history, which records events in the inhabited world only. This focus is reinforced again by the role the ancient humans play in creating the verbal T-O map, as they divide and name the *middangeard* in three portions.

As a verbal map, multiple perspectives and visualizations can be expressed at once in Book I.i of the OE *Orosius*. Unlike the graphic map, the verbal map is not limited to one mode of representation or style or to one interpretation of the world. It is this potential that makes the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* such a dynamic and malleable form and that allows this verbal map to use the geographical description or verbal map of the *Historia* Book 1.2 as a base that can be altered, redesigned and reorientated. As Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* progresses, the verbal T-O map opens out into a more detailed verbal *mappa mundi*, again using the *Historia* Book 1.2 as a framework.²⁵ It is here that useful comparisons can be made with the Cotton Map, which Woodward has categorized within the ‘“Orosian” tradition’ as one of the ‘maps

(especially p.lxvii), where Bately counters Derolez’s suggestion that a map was used to compose the OE *Orosius*.

²³ Harvey, *The Hereford World Map*, p.40.

²⁴ Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, pp.70-71 suggests that the first chapter of the *Divisio orbis terrarum* – a treatise of ‘fourth-century composition that survives in Dicuil’s ninth-century geographical tract, *De mensura orbis terrae*’ – can be compared with the ‘discussion of the tripartite division of the world that introduces [Orosius’] geography.’

²⁵ Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity*, pp.70-71 further suggests that the fourth- or fifth-century treatise, the *Dimensuratio provinciarum* can be paralleled with the more detailed sections of the geographical description in the *Historia* Book 1.2. Merrills explains at p.71 that ‘[b]oth the *Dimensuratio* and the *Divisio* appear to have descended, either directly or indirectly, from the seminal Agrippa ‘map’ of the first century AD. Although the original has been lost, references to the work in the *Historia naturalis* [by Pliny the Elder] imply that its geographical scope was very similar to those displayed in the later treatises.’

based directly on the *Historia adversum paganos* of Paulus Orosius.²⁶ Most significantly, the eleventh-century Cotton Map is the earliest surviving map of English composition, making it a suitable graphic counterpart to the earliest world history in English, contemporary to the transmission and reception of the OE *Orosius* and not too far removed from its composition. Martin Foys has described the Cotton Map ‘as not merely a measurement, but [...] a creation of the world known to Anglo-Saxon England.’²⁷ Indeed, the graphic form of the Cotton Map allows us to see how classical knowledge, predominantly from the *Historia*, has been used in the process of an Anglo-Saxon projection of the world. Both the Cotton Map and the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i layer contemporary topographical and ethnographical knowledge and perspectives alongside the knowledge and perspective of the *Historia*. The Lapps, for instance, a people unknown to Orosius in the fifth-century, are included in Scandinavia on the Cotton Map as *Scridefinnas* and in the description of Europe in the OE *Orosius* Book I.i as *Scridefinne* (13/27).²⁸

Both the Cotton Map and the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i can be thought of, therefore, as Anglo-Saxon products and multi-temporal documents that map the past and the present alongside one another on a cartographical base, passing epistemology between Anglo-Saxon England and the early fifth-century Latin *Historia*. The Cotton Map and the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* are both confluences of temporality and geography, allowing the past to be encountered within the spatial representation of the present. The pagan past and the fifth-century Roman past – that is, ‘history’ – become accessible and reachable through these respective graphic and verbal maps and remote times, cultures and places become relative to the more local and familiar. Admittedly, there are distinctions between how the Cotton Map and the OE *Orosius* construct and entangle the past and the present on account of their different forms. The Cotton Map starts with topography and image and translates this into time. Conversely, the OE *Orosius* begins with time and history and configures and expresses these concepts in spatial terms in the verbal map of Book I.i.

The names on the map

The synchronism of disparate temporalities on the Cotton Map and in the OE *Orosius*, which develops paradoxically the sense that time is asynchronous rather than linear, can be explored in relation to semantics, lexicology and morphology. These factors are instrumental in the construction and entanglement of the past and the present on the

²⁶ Woodward, ‘Medieval *mappaemundi*,’ p.347. The Hereford Mappa Mundi is also placed within this category; see also Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought: The Hereford Paradigm* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2001), p.63.

²⁷ Foys, ‘The virtual Anglo-Saxon *Mappamundi*,’ 3.

²⁸ See Derolez, ‘The orientation system in the OE *Orosius*,’ p.267.

Cotton Map and in the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i, especially with regards to toponymy, the naming of place. The toponyms that appear on and in these maps, graphic and verbal, are indicative of the relationship between classical geographical knowledge (the perspective of the *Historia*) and Anglo-Saxon ways of understanding and viewing the world.

Toponyms point towards identity in two directions. First, they conceptualize and identify an external location and, second, they point back reflexively to the culture and language from which they originate. In other words, toponyms assign meaning to space from the perspective of a particular culture. Even when they are loaned into a different language and culture they maintain a degree of the authority and identity of the source language. Cresswell's description that naming is one of the ways in which 'humans invest meaning in a portion of space' can be expanded, therefore, to highlight that investing meaning is also about taking some linguistic and cultural control or ownership over a place.²⁹ In a discussion of the American English place-names that appear on Google Earth, Asa Mittman summarizes the philosophical belief that 'to name is to grant a measure of control over a people or region [...] To do so in a given language is to emphasize one's Dominion.'³⁰ The toponyms on maps do not just suggest the imperial control or power to which a place is or was subjected, although they can. They also reveal the specific perspective with which a culture views the world or the perspective that is imposed by, inherited from or shared with another culture.

The opening lines of the OE *Orosius* demonstrate at a narrative level how the act of naming space at once lends space meaning, transforming it into place, and takes possession of this place. When the ancient humans give the three names of Asia, Europe and Africa (8/14) to the *þrie dælas* (8/13; three territories) of the inhabited world – the verbal rendering of a T-O map – they take ownership over these territories. In turn, the territories define the ancients' ethnic and cultural identities, as discussed. Moreover, the qualification that 'sume men sæden þæt þær nære buton twegen dælas: Asia 7 þæt oþer Europe' (I.i.8/14-15; some men said that there were only two regions: Asia and the other, Europe), underscores how toponyms map to perspective. Thus, interpretations of the world are shaped by language and language can shape interpretations of the world. Significantly, the names for the continents *Asia*, *Europe* and *Affrica* are loaned to the Old English vernacular from Latin and so they root back to the classical perspective on historical events and on the geographical world that is found in the *Historia*.

²⁹ Cresswell, *Place*, p.10.

³⁰ Asa Mittman, 'Inverting the Panopticon: Google Earth, wonder and earthly delights,' *Literature Compass* 9 (2012), 938-54 (948).

There is a discernible narrative interest in naming throughout the OE *Orosius*, not only in the verbal map of Book I.i. The verb, *hatan* recurs over two hundred times in the Old English history with the specific sense of ‘to call’ or ‘to name.’³¹ Clauses such as *þe mon hæst* (which are called) or *þe we hatað* (which we call), followed by either a toponym, the name of a geographical feature or an ethnonym, sometimes mirror similar phrases in the *Historia*, which use the passive verbs *appellatur*, *vocatur* and *nominatur* (is called/ is named). Elsewhere, clauses of this kind do not correspond to the Latin, however, and so they seem to relate directly to Anglo-Saxon perspective. Examples can be provided for each of these scenarios but they also serve to highlight the difficulty – and ultimate futility – of separating classical and Anglo-Saxon interpretations of the world and its peoples. In the section of Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* that describes Asia, for instance, the identification of ‘þon garsecg mon hæst Sericus’ (9/28; the ocean called the Sericus) can be compared directly to the Latin: ‘oceanus Sericus appellatur’ (1.2.16/14), which Fear translates as ‘the Ocean [...] called the Chinese ocean’ (p.38). Yet the Old English does not use the Latin word for the ocean, *oceanus* but rather the vernacular term, *garsecg*. By contrast, in Book III.vii of the OE *Orosius* when Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, is described as attacking the Illyrians, the Old English author explains to the Anglo-Saxon audience that the Illyrians are the people ‘we Pulgare hatað’ (61/23; we call the Bulgarians). This bears no correlation to the *Historia* Book 3.12 or to its fifth-century perspective but the Latin word for the Bulgarians, *Bulgari*, has been loaned into the Old English as *Pulgare*.³² The other thing to note about this example is that when the author identifies the Illyrians with the Bulgarians, he or she confuses multiple temporalities and geopolitical situations. Janet Bately suggests that the author might make the identification on the basis of their knowledge of the Roman province of Illyricum, which included the province of Pannonia; Pannonia was taken by the Bulgarians in the ninth century.³³ There are clearly some temporal displacements occurring here – or temporal asynchrony – as the Bulgarian territories contemporary to the Anglo-Saxons in the ninth century are muddled with the province of the Roman Empire, Illyricum, and the place, Illyria, that was invaded by Philip in ancient Greek history.

If we return to the opening lines of the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i, we find the first instance of the verb, *hatan* and we also find the juxtaposition of the

³¹ DOE corpus search, excluding instances where the verb *hatan* is used with alternative senses e.g. ‘bid, order, command.’ The verb, (*ge*)*naman*, ‘to call,’ or ‘to name’ is far less common in the OE *Orosius*, appearing only a handful of times.

³² See ‘Glossary’ in Bately, OE *Orosius*, s.v. ‘Pulgare.’ The Latin mentions only the ‘Illyrians’ (*Illyrios*); *Historia*, 3.12.152/5.

³³ See Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 61/23 for her notes on the association of Illyria with the Bulgarians. For the Bulgarian territories in the ninth century, see Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 13/7-8.

Latin and Old English terms for the ocean that forms the encircling ‘O’ of the verbal T-O map: ‘*Oceanus* utan ymbligeþ, þone mon *garsæcg* hateð’ (8/12-13, my emphasis; the *Oceanus*, which is called the *garsecg*, surrounds from outside). Bremmer Jr. has argued that in this statement ‘the translator links the mythical world of Rome to that of the Anglo-Saxons by providing for “Oceanus” the explanatory gloss “garsecg.”’³⁴ In addition to linking the name, *Oceanus* to Anglo-Saxon England and explaining its meaning with the inclusion of the vernacular term, *garsecg*, the author consciously asserts an Anglo-Saxon perspective on the world and the history that follows in the OE *Orosius*, which takes place within the perimeter of the same world, whilst honouring and acknowledging the classical perspective of the *Historia*. History and the ownership over its transmission are shared between the temporalities of early fifth-century Rome and Anglo-Saxon England. Between these temporalities, cultural perspectives are, therefore, exchanged. This reading of the opening lines of the verbal map is supported by the appearance of *Oceanus* and *garsecg* side-by-side a few lines later when the equivalence of the terms has already been established: ‘Asia is befangen mid *Oceano* þæm *garsecge*’ (8/16, my emphasis; Asia is surrounded by the *Ocean*, the *garsecg*).

Garsecg is a particularly interesting, if elusive, Old English word and so it is worthy of brief discussion here. As its juxtaposition with *Oceanus* indicates, *garsecg* ostensibly means ‘sea’ or ‘ocean’ and seems in the OE *Orosius* to serve as a technical term for the encircling ocean of the *middangeard*, as distinct from the Mediterranean Sea, *Wendelsæ* (‘Sea of the Vandals’ – see Book I.i.8/21; 9/9, 14; 10/16, 29; 11/17), which is also offered in Old English on the map instead of the Latin, *Mare Nostrum* (Book 1.2.13/2, 14/6, 17/23, 19/26).³⁵ By this definition, Bremmer Jr. describes *garsecg* as ‘a term that quite naturally comes with “middangeard,” for the earth lies in the middle when it is surrounded by the sea.’³⁶ Yet, the use of the term, *garsecg* across the Old English corpus shows wider meanings than that of the OE *Orosius* – it can be used for any sea or ocean, not just the encircling ocean of the world. The etymology of *garsecg* is complex and so its exact definition is contested. Whilst both ‘spear-ocean’ and ‘spear-warrior’ have been suggested as literal translations into Modern English, an up-to-date, comprehensive study of *garsecg* is very much wanting.³⁷ What can be noted

³⁴ Bremmer Jr., ‘Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world,’ p.194.

³⁵ *Garsecg* is also discussed by Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities,’ 412-13, and VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,’ 393. For *Wendelsæ*, see Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 8/21, and Anlezark, ‘The Anglo-Saxon world view,’ p.72.

³⁶ Bremmer, Jr., ‘Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world,’ p.194.

³⁷ See *DOE*, s.v. ‘garsecg’ (accessed September 2013). Variations of *garsecg*/*garsæcg* appear 89 times in the entire Old English corpus in diverse contexts e.g. riddles, homilies, *Beowulf*, the Old English version of *Bede’s Historia ecclesiastica*, etc. Twenty-nine of these are in the OE *Orosius*, which features the word twenty-five times in Book I. See also *Exodus*, ed. by Peter J. Lucas (London: Methuen, 1977), fn to line 490B (‘garsecg wedde’) for a discussion of the various meanings ascribed to *garsecg*, and R.L.M. Derolez, “– And that difficult word, *garsecg*”

with confidence, however, is that *garsecg* appears in both poetry and prose works from Anglo-Saxon England as diverse as the OE *Orosius*, *Beowulf* and the Old English poem, *Exodus*. *Garsecg* might remind us that the interpretive divisions that we set between prose and poetic works, secular and Christian (or Jewish) texts are to some degree arbitrary. This argument becomes especially important when we consider the orality of the OE *Orosius* – and the voices of Orosius, Ohthere and Wulfstan – later in this chapter, since this Old English history is usually thought of as a conventional prose work.

Latinized place names, ethnonyms and anthroponyms emerge from the Old English vernacular throughout the OE *Orosius* and its verbal map in Book I.i, bringing the two languages into unison, along with the cultures, temporalities and perspectives that they represent. For example, the OE *Orosius* borrows the Latin for: names of countries, interestingly including *Brittania* for Britain (Book I.i.13/15, 18/27; Book VI.xxx.147/8 – Latin, *Britannia*), which I will discuss further, below; seas and rivers such as *Danai* for the River Don (Book I.i.8/19, 12/11, 12/17 – Latin, *Tanai*); mountains such as *Caucasus* for the Caucasus Mountains (Book I.i.9/29; Book III.viii.71/11, xi.78/4) or *Alpis* for the Alps (Book I.i.13/5, 18/21; Book IV.viii.99/22 – Latin, *Alpes*); peoples such as the *Cartainiense* for the Carthaginians (Book IV.v.91/5, vi.94/5, xiii.112/11 – Latin, *Carthaginienses*), and *Romane* for the Romans (Book II.i.36/20; Book IV.i.83/20; Book VI.xxxvii.156/1 – Latin, *Romani*); and, finally, individuals such as *Philippus* for Philip (Book III.vii.61/5, 66/3, viii.67/23).³⁸ Most personal names are in Latin, with the obvious exceptions being *Ælfred* (Book I.i.13/29), *Ohthere* (Book I.i.13/29, 16/1), and *Wulfstan* (Book I.i.16/21). These Latinized loan words refer back to the *Historia* and to the classical knowledge that has been assimilated into an Anglo-Saxon understanding and awareness of the world. Put another way, the toponyms point towards and come from the early fifth-century Roman past as they are translated from the *Historia* but they also have both utility and meaning in the Anglo-Saxon present. In the majority of cases the author of the OE *Orosius* would have borrowed names from the *Historia* or other Latin sources because there was no Old English equivalent and Latin provided the appropriate word.

Indeed, unsurprisingly, ethnonyms and toponyms with Scandinavian and Germanic etymologies are prevalent in the descriptions of Europe in the verbal map of Book I.i of the OE *Orosius*, including Ohthere and Wulfstan's reports. These names

(Gummere), *Modern Language Quarterly* 7 (1946), 445-52. The latter is the last dedicated study of the word, *garsecg*.

³⁸ Latin nominatives are given where these differ slightly from the Old English nominative toponyms, all following Bately's glossary in her edition of the OE *Orosius*. The references provided are exemplary rather than exhaustive.

speak for Anglo-Saxon identity, both in terms of the geographical location of Anglo-Saxon England in Northern Europe and in terms of the Germanic origins of the Anglo-Saxons. Some of the Old English and Germanic proper names in these sections of the verbal map include: *Eastfrancan* for the East Franks (12/25); *Regnesburg* for Regensburg or Ratisbon (12/27); *Ealdseaxan* for the Old Saxons (12/28); *Frisland* for Frisia (12/30); *Ongle* for Angeln (12/31); *Dene* for the Danes (12/31); *Hæfeldan* for the Havolans (13/22); *Winedas* for the Wends (13/22); *Norþmenn* for the Norwegians (13/27-8); and *Cwenas/ Cwenland/ Cwensæ* for the Lapps/ the land of the Lapps/ the Lappish Sea (15/34; 13/26; 12/22). Indeed, in her introduction to the OE *Orosius*, Bately notes that ‘it is possible to consider the whole section [on Europe] as rewritten to conform to the ninth-century situation known to the author of [the OE *Orosius*] or his immediate source.’³⁹ This part of the world has meaning for the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius* and so its places and peoples have Old English names. Northern Europe is not a significant part of the classical Roman worldview but it is significant to the Anglo-Saxons and their perception of the world beyond the island.

We can return here to the Cotton Map, where toponyms and ethnonyms in the Old English vernacular and loaned from Latin also appear side-by-side. Many of these Latin toponyms have been traced back to the *Historia* as a source, as I have already gestured.⁴⁰ The Cotton Map is renowned for its very detailed representation of the British Isles, which highlights the Anglo-Saxon composition of the map and the identities it promotes.⁴¹ The Cotton Map also emphasizes the connections of Anglo-Saxon England to Northern Europe, like the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i, with the toponyms that are used to label this part of the world. As Foys has argued, the high density of place names in Scandinavia ‘highlights northern [...] continental connections’ – a crossover with the mapping of Germania in the OE *Orosius*.⁴² Foys also suggests that the Cotton Map ‘celebrates the origin of Anglo-Saxon culture’ through these northern, ‘not southern connections.’⁴³ This is a more conjectural point, however, especially since the British Isles are labelled with the Latin toponym, *Brittania* rather than ‘the more contemporary *Angelcynn*,’ as Foys himself points out; from this, he concludes that ‘[f]rom a literary, if not literal standpoint [...] the Cotton Map remains centred on its inheritance of Roman geography.’⁴⁴

³⁹ Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.lxvii.

⁴⁰ Derolez, ‘The orientation system in the OE *Orosius*,’ p.267.

⁴¹ Harvey, *The Hereford World Map*, p.46: ‘[c]ompared with the Hereford map, the relative accuracy of [the Cotton Map’s] outlines of Jutland, the Frisian coast, Britain, Ireland, the Peloponnese, the Dardanelles and the Nile Delta is striking.’

⁴² Foys, ‘The virtual Anglo-Saxon *mappamundi*,’ 9.

⁴³ Foys, ‘The virtual Anglo-Saxon *mappamundi*,’ 9.

⁴⁴ Foys, ‘The virtual Anglo-Saxon *mappamundi*,’ 5.

We also find the Latin name, *Brittania* in the OE *Orosius*, as already noted. In the verbal map of Book I.i, the British Isles are identified through a classical geographical perspective – imbuing them with a historical depth – and one that offers far less detail than the depiction offered by the Cotton Map. As Nicole Guenther Discenza has observed, the OE *Orosius* ‘reduces Britain to a speck, and one inhabited by Britons.’⁴⁵ And yet, this marginalization in the OE *Orosius* and the anachronism of the toponym, *Brittania* in the OE *Orosius* and on the Cotton Map are not necessarily straightforward concessions of Anglo-Saxon subjugation to Rome or deference to classical authority. They also serve as astute geographical reflections of the place of the Anglo-Saxons in history; they exhibit an awareness both of the Germanic ethnographical origins of the Anglo-Saxons before they came to inhabit the British Isles and of the imperial Roman occupation of *Brittania* before their settlement there. These examples of historical and geographical awareness represent a strong sense of the plurality of Anglo-Saxon identity – an understanding of where this people came from and their pre-origins – which can be mapped into the world as they know it in their own *her* and now. The fifth-century Roman perspective of the *Historia* and the Anglo-Saxon perspective of the OE *Orosius* complement one another here.

If we look more closely at the toponyms and ethnonyms that are loaned from Latin in the OE *Orosius*, we find a morphological and linguistic expression of the synchronization of fifth-century Roman and Anglo-Saxon perspectives on geography and history. Latin and Old English converge as the knowledge of the *Historia* is shaped by the vernacular of the OE *Orosius*. The visual form of the Cotton Map and the prominence of isolated place names – which, Evelyn Edson explains, is ‘unlike some larger medieval maps which are covered with paragraphs of text’ – means a lack of syntax.⁴⁶ The syntactical placement of the names loaned from Latin in the vernacular of the OE *Orosius*, on the other hand, has resulted in the hybridization of names with Latin roots and Old English inflections. In her introduction to the OE *Orosius*, Bately identifies three main categories of inflection of proper names:

- i.) ‘[t]he appropriate Latin inflexion is used’
 - a) ‘taken over by the translator’
 - b) ‘introduced, apparently by the translator, when the construction of the original is altered in the translation’

⁴⁵ Discenza, ‘A map of the universe,’ pp.91, 94-5. See also, the Editors’ ‘Introduction’ in Karkov and Howe (eds.), *Conversion and Colonisation*, pp.xi-xx (p.xvii): ‘Some of the texts translated during the reign of Alfred – *Orosius* or some of the Psalms, for example – either marginalize or are silent about England.’

⁴⁶ Edson, *Mapping Time and Space*, p.17. Edson puts this down to the manuscript context: ‘the Anglo-Saxon map, relatively small and bound in a book, limits itself mostly to place-names. Only around the interesting edges of the map [...] are the more extended notes.’

- ii.) '[t]he Latin inflexion is replaced by one belonging to the language of the translator'
- iii.) '[t]he native inflexion is added to the [Latin] [nominative] form.'⁴⁷

The liminality of these names – at once cultural and linguistic – enmeshes the language and perspective of the fifth-century Roman past and the Anglo-Saxon temporality and vernacular of the OE *Orosius*. In tandem, the names document the transitions between Latin and Old English literacy in the 'long ninth century,' as Susan Irvine frames it, witnessing and encoding morphologically the topical shift towards the acceptance of the vernacular as a literary register in addition to Latin.⁴⁸

The near familiarity but difference of these hybrid toponyms and ethnonyms to both Latin and Old English, which further underscores their liminality, lends them an inherent otherness or 'alterity.' Alterity is a term used by Seth Lerer to describe the 'otherness [of the medieval period] as a source of both pleasure and anxiety, that is, as an object of study as well as a mirror to ourselves.'⁴⁹ And yet, the concept of alterity works just as well for the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius* encountering humans from the spatially, culturally and temporally remote past; humans who are represented through the medium of the Old English vernacular but who are translated from the Latin. Indeed, the alterity of the names in the OE *Orosius* that hybridize Latin and Old English is compounded by the foreign locations they denote outside of Europe. Many of the places featured in the OE *Orosius* are unlikely to have been well-known to the Anglo-Saxon audience, for example, Pannonia (Book VI.xxiii.145/11, xxxiii.152/6), Sidon (Book III.v.58/22), and Illyria (Book III.xi.77/26), which, as we have seen, the Old English author attempts to familiarize for their audience as the home of the Bulgarians elsewhere. Lerer elaborates that:

the critic of the Middle Ages, much like the anthropological fieldworker in a distant country, enters a strange society armed only with the interpretive devices of his or her own world. Reading the past becomes a way of coming to terms with both the other and the self.⁵⁰

As much as modern critics use their own scholarly 'interpretive devices' when looking for the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius*, the Anglo-Saxon author and audience 'rea[d] the past' through a cultural lens that is indexed by the Old English vernacular. The toponyms that are loaned from Latin and situated in this vernacular represent both

⁴⁷ Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.cvi.

⁴⁸ Irvine, 'English literature in the ninth century,' p.209.

⁴⁹ Lerer, *Literacy and Power*, p.8.

⁵⁰ Lerer, *Literacy and Power*, p.8.

the peoples and places of the Old English history and the fifth-century historiographical perspective of the *Historia* that also reads the past; others to the Anglo-Saxon self.

The movement or translation of the history and geography of ancient humans between the fifth-century temporality and the Anglo-Saxon temporality, therefore, serves to multiply the sense of historical otherness in the OE *Orosius*. History becomes slippery, changeable and plural. Indeed, the names that hybridize Latin and Old English in the OE *Orosius* encode this unstable and heterogeneous potential of historiography. Many of these names traverse the boundaries of onomastic category as well as language, culture and time. Their unusual inflections – their liminality and alterity – open multiple potential meanings. *Gallie*, for instance, can be translated into Modern English as ‘Gaul’ if understood as nominative singular or ‘the Gauls’ if taken as nominative plural; it can serve as a toponym or an ethnonym, as the place or the people who live there (see, for example, Book VI.xxxiii.152/4). Further, *Armenie* is translatable as ‘Armenia’ or ‘the Armenians’ (see Book III.xi.78/8), *Affrice* as ‘Africa’ or ‘the Africans’ (see Book IV.ii.86/8). The surrounding syntactical context usually resolves any confusion, as in this example: ‘on þæm dagum þe Gallie Roma awest hæfdon’ (III.i.53/9; in the days when the Gauls had laid Rome to waste). Here we can comfortably translate *Gallie* as the people rather than the place. But there are moments in the OE *Orosius* when names remain ambiguous and their meanings can change. The following extract from Book III.xi describes the conquests of Alexander the Great’s successors with a disorientating list of anthroponyms, ethnonyms and toponyms. Particular attention should be paid to the italicized phrases, where neither the subject nor the object are unequivocal:

Parapamenas hæfde Uxiarches æt þæs beorges ende Caucasus, 7 Arachasihedros hæfde Siburtus, 7 Stonos hæfde Dranceas 7 Areas þa þeoda, 7 Omintos hæfde Atrianus, 7 Sicheus hæfde Sostianos þæt folc, 7 Itancor hæfde Parthos, 7 Philippus Ircanus, 7 Fratauernis hæfde Armenie, 7 Theleomommos hæfde Meþas, 7 Feucestas hæfde Babylonias, 7 Polausus hæfde Archos, 7 Archolaus Mesopotamiam. (78/39; my emphasis.)

(Oxiarches had the Parapameni at the end of the end of the Caucasus mountain range, and Siburtus had the Arachossi, and Stanator had the Dranchei and the Arei peoples, and Amyntas had the Bactriani, and Scythaeus had the Sogdiani people, and Itacantor had the Parthians, and Philip the Hyrcanii, and Phratephernes had the Armenians and Tlepolemus had the Medes, and Peucestes had the Babylonians, and Archon had the Pelassi, and Archelaus Mesopotamia.)

This section correlates with Book 3.23 of the *Historia*:

Parapamenos fine Caucasi montis Oxyarches accepit. Arachossi Chedrosique Sibyrty decernuntur. Drancheos et Areos Statanor, Atrianos Amyntas sortitur, Sogdianos Sichaeus Itacanor, Parthos Philippus, Hyrcanios Fratafernes, Armenios Tlepolemus, Persas Peucestes, Babylonios Archous Pelassos, Archelaus Mesopotamiam adepti sunt. (180-181/12-13)

(p.147: ‘Oxiarches received the Parapameni from the end of the Caucasus Mountains. The Arachossi and the Chedrosians were decreed to Sibyrty. Stanator was left the Dranchei and the Arei, Amyntas the Bactriani, Itanacor of *Scythaeus* [...] obtained the Sogdiani, Philip the Parthians, Phratephernes the Hyrcanians, Tlepolemus the Armenians, Peucestes the Persians, Archous Pelassos the Babylonians, Archelaus the Mesopotamians.’)

On a first reading, there are immediate discordances between the Old English and Latin accounts, specifically in relation to the territories or peoples each ruler receives following Alexander’s death. These may be attributed to issues of interpretation when the author of the OE *Orosius* worked with their source material or possibly to the version of the *Historia* used by the Old English author. Yet, when we focus on the reception of the OE *Orosius* rather than its composition and set aside our knowledge of the *Historia* – our scholarly practices of reading the Latin closely against the OE *Orosius* – to assume that an Anglo-Saxon audience might take the account here at face value, we find an ambivalence of meaning and the dulling of the distinction between subject and object, the oppressor and the oppressed. Looking back to the phrases I have emphasized in the Old English account, *Parapamenas* and *Uxiarches* might both be taken as nominative or accusative, singular or plural, allowing the alternative translation and understanding of: ‘Parapamenas had the Uxiarches.’⁵¹ *Polausus* and *Archos* could be translated as ‘Polausus had the Archons’ on similar grounds.⁵² As meaning can change so too can history, therefore – the history that is believed, learnt and transmitted. The intricate accuracy of the historical account is not so important here, however. What matters is the overall effect, which the OE *Orosius* and the *Historia* do share, of the influence of Alexander through his followers and the extent of power he had to pass on.

Alfred, Ohthere and Wulfstan on the map

Studying the names in the OE *Orosius* highlights the symbiotic connections between person and place in the history and the fluidity of their categorization, both linguistic – in terms of the etymology and morphology of names – and symbolic, in terms of concepts of identity, belonging or power. Peoples and places can overlap, interchange, and synonymize as the examples of *Gallie*, *Armenie*, and *Affrice* demonstrate. This

⁵¹ See Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 78/3-4.

⁵² See Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 78/9.

close interplay between person and place maps to the conventionalized understanding of place as closely connected to people and identity in the Anglo-Saxon imagination; an understanding that is evidenced throughout the OE *Orosius*.⁵³ In Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius*, for instance, there is a powerful example of an Anglo-Saxon interpretation of place in human terms, when the city of Babylon is transformed into a feminized human form that decays and dies as a metaphor for the end of the Babylonian Empire, and one that speaks out about her suffering. Babylon is not anthropomorphized with this degree of agency in the *Historia* Book 2.6; there, she does not speak for herself to lament her downfall (see Chapter 2). Another example of peoples and places being closely associated can be found in references to Scythia in the OE *Orosius*. The founders of the all-female Amazonian tribe originate ethnically from Scythia (Book I.x) and so when Scythia is mentioned later in the narrative there are usually warrior women nearby.

If we return to the verbal map of Book I.i of the OE *Orosius*, we find a further example of this interplay between human identity and place. When King Alfred appears in the Ohthere and Wulfstan section of the verbal map – a section crucial to marking out the OE *Orosius* as a work of Anglo-Saxon composition – his name serves as a metonym or shorthand for ninth-century Wessex. The king and his kingdom are entwined concepts and so as Alfred is inserted into history, Wessex is plotted on the verbal map of the world:

Ohthere sæde his hlaforde, Ælfrede cyninge, þæt he ealra Norðmonna norþmest bude. He cwæð þæt he bude on þæm lande norþweardum wiþ þa Westsæ. He sæde þeah þæt þæt land sie swiþe lang norþ þonan, ac hit is eal weste, buton on feawum stowum styccemælum wiciað Finnas, on huntoðe on wintra 7 on sumera on fiscaþe be þære sæ. (13/29-14/4.)

(Ohthere said to his lord, King Alfred that he lived the north-most of all the Norwegians. He said that he lived in the northern part of the land against the sea west of Norway. He said that the land nevertheless goes very far north from there, but is all waste, except for a few places here and there where the Lapps camp, hunting in the winter and fishing in the sea in the summer.)

Alfred's name imbues this section of the verbal map with a local, insular sense of history as well as with the aspirations of a culture recording its place in European and world geography and history for an imagined future. In these respects, the OE *Orosius* is aligned with the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, which was translated into Old English in the ninth century. All three histories exhibit attempts to imprint local Anglo-Saxon history against the backdrop of the spatial and temporal

⁵³ See, for example, Catherine A.M. Clarke, *Literary Landscapes and the Idea of England, 700-1400* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006).

world with a view to establishing a legacy for the future. In Bremmer Jr.'s formulation: '[t]ogether these three works, no matter how different in origin and content they are, were intended to position the Anglo-Saxons in time and space, relative both to their place in the world at large and to the Catholic Church within it.'⁵⁴ In addition, as Rosamond McKitterick reminds us of the Carolingian period, 'the writing of history was not simply a matter of keeping a record for posterity. Its purpose was also to make the past comprehensible and to relate it in some way to the present.'⁵⁵ Indeed, Francis Leneghan has recently found connection between the examples of the past provided in the OE *Orosius* and the concerns of early tenth-century Wessex. Focusing on the earliest witness of the OE *Orosius*, the Lauderdale Manuscript, Leneghan suggests that 'the figure of Alfred [...] reorients the text to a specifically West Saxon royal perspective' but that the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan enclose greater political aims in an early tenth-century context.⁵⁶ He argues that the inclusion of the reports served the function of 'inviting readers of the [OE *Orosius*] to consider the status of the West Saxon kingdom in relation to the wider narrative of imperial history' following the fall of the Carolingian Empire, when there was an opportunity for a new Christian Empire to be formed.⁵⁷ These two directions, West Saxon and worldly, give a breadth to the Anglo-Saxon Christian temporality of the OE *Orosius*, whilst locating the perspective of that temporality in Wessex during Alfred's lifetime at the very earliest.

It is worth remembering that when the extant manuscripts that witness Ohthere and Wulfstan's reports – the Lauderdale Manuscript and the Cotton Manuscript – were circulating in the tenth and eleventh centuries, Alfred would already have been a figure from the past, albeit one instilled in the cultural memory. For the Anglo-Saxons after his lifetime, Alfred was one of the significant West Saxon kings documented in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the king recorded in Asser's biography, *The Life of Alfred*.⁵⁸ Equally, the naming of Alfred in the first chapter of the OE *Orosius* does not suggest unequivocally that the king commissioned the text but it does give the history and Ohthere's report some gravitas. Any reader, Anglo-Saxon or otherwise, is entitled to make a connection with the literacy programme launched in the Alfredian preface to the *Pastoral Care* (see Introduction) but the link is academic and allusive rather than

⁵⁴ Bremmer Jr., 'Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world,' p.193.

⁵⁵ McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p.30.

⁵⁶ Leneghan, 'Translatio imperii,' 21.

⁵⁷ Leneghan, 'Translatio imperii,' 23.

⁵⁸ For the annals in the *Chronicle* that cover Alfred's lifetime, see Dumville and others (eds.), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* vol 5: *MS C*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (2000), pp.58-71, annals 872-901. *Asser's Life of King Alfred: Together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, ed. by William Henry Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904). A large proportion of Ohthere's report and all of Wulfstan's report (and the narrative up to Book I.viii) are missing in the Lauderdale MS and replaced with a transcription attributed to Thomas Marshall. See Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.xxiii.

explicit in the OE *Orosius*, regardless of whether it was intended. A more productive way of considering Alfred's name can be found in Irvine's arguments about literary credibility. That through Alfred '[r]oyal power is being harnessed to convey textual authority' in the Alfredian translations, 'offer[ing] assurance to readers that these vernacular versions are authoritative in their own right.'⁵⁹ Crucially, Alfred does not speak in the OE *Orosius* as Orosius does but rather he listens to Ohthere. In other words, his presence and role in the narrative take symbolic precedence over his voice or knowledge: he is a figurehead of the West Saxon court, signalling West Saxon European power as the Norwegian Ohthere holds him as his lord; his kingship touches the history of the OE *Orosius* with royal approval and confirms its Anglo-Saxon composition; and, in turn, his position on the map of the world bolsters the importance of the West Saxon court on insular and worldwide scales. Alfred, then, is part historical figure, part historiographical tool in the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i. As a literary device, his name and status as a *hlaford* put a claim on Ohthere's knowledge and experience, and provide narrative contact between Anglo-Saxon England and Northern European culture.

Wulfstan is not associated with Alfred directly but there are thematic links between his report and that of Ohthere in Book I.i. Both reports show England to be networked – socially and ethnographically – across the sea, especially when they meet in the trading town of Hedeby:

Ða [Ohthere] þiderweard seglode fram Sciringesheale, þa wæs him on þæt bæcbord Denamearc 7 on þæt steorbord widsæ þry dagas; 7 þa, twegen dagas ær *he to Hæþum come*, him wæs on þæt steorbord Gotland 7 Sillende 7 iglanda fela – on þæm landum eardodon Engle, ær hi hider on land coman – 7 hym wæs ða twegen dagas on ðæt bæcbord þa igland þe in Denemearce hyrað.

Wulfstan sæde þæt he *gefore of Hæðum*, þæt he wære on Truso on syfan dagum 7 nihtum, þæt þæt scip wæs ealne weg yrnende under segle. (15-23; my emphasis.)

(Then [Ohthere] sailed from there to Skiringssalr, when Denmark was on the portside and a wide sea was on the starboard for three days; and then, two days before he came to Hedeby, Gotland and Sillende and many islands were on his starboard – the Angles lived in those lands, before they came to this land here – and the island that belongs to Denmark was on his portside for two days.

Wulfstan said that he travelled from Hedeby, that he was in Druzno for seven days and nights, when the ship was running under sail the whole way.)

⁵⁹ Irvine, 'English literature in the ninth century,' p.228.

Hæþum or Hedeby serves as a meeting point for the journeys of Ohthere and Wulfstan and for their stories, which recount these journeys; the explorers' reports are thus bound through place. As such, Hedeby provides a coordinate for human contact on the map alongside the coordinate of Alfred and Wessex. It has often been noted that the circulation between these two mapping points in Ohthere and Wulfstan's reports emphasizes the trading paths between Anglo-Saxon England and Germania at the same time as gesturing towards further-reaching ethnic links.⁶⁰ In the excerpt I have cited, Ohthere's report seems to acknowledge the Anglo-Saxon origins in Scandinavia explicitly, when he gestures that 'the Angles lived in those lands, before they came to this land here' (*on þæm landum eardodon Engle, ær hi hider on land coman*).⁶¹ Indeed, Daniel Anlezark has connected the ethnic significance for the Anglo-Saxons of the descriptions of Europe in Book I.i, including Ohthere and Wulfstan's reports, to the sack of Rome at the end of the Old English history (Book VI.xxxviii), arguing that Book I.i 'anticipates and recontextualizes the [OE *Orosius*]' end for the English reader looking at a Europe ruled by the Goths' followers.'⁶² Stephen J. Harris deserves a mention here for his argument that the entire project of the OE *Orosius* 'may have contributed to the process by which the Anglo-Saxons began to understand themselves as a single people constituted both ethnically and religiously.'⁶³

This is an opportune moment to pull back a little and to consider in more detail how the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan function within the broader narrative of the OE *Orosius*. Most scholarship to date stands Ohthere and Wulfstan apart from the rest of the OE *Orosius* as Leneghan summarizes:

[t]reating the reports as an interpolation, scholars have tended to read them in isolation from the main body of [the OE *Orosius*], either as a source of early northern geography [...] or as evidence for the Anglo-Saxon sense of place.⁶⁴

Leneghan highlights the 'presence of the reports in both of our major manuscripts' – a not insignificant factor for consideration given that these are the versions of the OE *Orosius* that we read today – which 'points towards [their] incorporation into [the OE

⁶⁰ See, for example: Leneghan, '*Translatio imperii*,' 22-23; Bremmer Jr., 'Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world,' p.195; Anlezark, 'The Anglo-Saxon world view,' pp.73 and 78. See also Roberta Frank, 'Germanic legend in Old English Literature' in Godden and Lapidge (eds.), *Cambridge Companion*, pp.82-100 (p.87) for a brief summary of the development of an Anglo-Saxon appreciation of their ethnic kingship to the Goths, Burgundians and Lombards as well as the Frisians, Danes and Saxons, between the time of Bede and the Carolingian Empire.

⁶¹ See Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 16/18-19, which acknowledges that *Engle* might refer to the specific tribe of *Angles* rather than the English, for which *Angelcynn* was used more often, '[h]owever, the proper names used in [the OE *Orosius*] not infrequently take different forms from those in the surviving texts and since there is no other reference in [the OE *Orosius*] to either the Angles or the English, the translator's usage must remain a matter of conjecture.'

⁶² Anlezark, 'The Anglo-Saxon world view,' p.72.

⁶³ Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, p.90.

⁶⁴ Leneghan, '*Translatio imperii*,' 20.

Orosius] soon after the main text's composition.'⁶⁵ Bately has suggested that the tenth-century Lauderdale Manuscript and the eleventh-century Cotton Manuscript are unlikely to be related directly but may have shared a 'common ancestor,' so we can deduce that Ohthere and Wulfstan's reports were copied across multiple versions of the OE *Orosius* over a period of at least a century.⁶⁶ For Leneghan, the importance of the reintegration of the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan to how we read the OE *Orosius* hinges on two connected questions: '[f]or what purpose [...] might this section have been included in [the OE *Orosius*] and what can its inclusion tell us about how the [OE *Orosius*] was read in early tenth century [sic] West Saxon court culture?'⁶⁷ I share the aim of reading Ohthere and Wulfstan's accounts as part of the OE *Orosius*, although by way of a literary reading rather than from a political angle. As Anglo-Saxonists especially we should allow the OE *Orosius* the possibility of textual variation over time and we should be as sensitive to the reception of the text during its transmission in Anglo-Saxon England as to its original composition. Irvine calls for this sensitivity to the 'fluid manuscript culture' of the early-medieval period in her argument that the prefaces and epilogues found in copies of the texts in the Alfredian canon are 'framing texts [that] offer us a rare insight into how readers and writers contributed to and engaged with vernacular literary tradition both within and well beyond the Alfredian era.'⁶⁸ Although Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* is not grouped with the prefaces and epilogues that Irvine discusses – it does not deal explicitly with processes of translation, authorship, commissioning and manuscript production as these prefaces do, the somewhat oblique naming of Alfred aside – it too evidences engagement with the translation project of the OE *Orosius* in the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan. The reports are used to draw attention to the connections between a classical source text and Anglo-Saxon interpretation.

Ohthere and Wulfstan's reports continue to describe and to locate places and peoples in space in line with the rest of the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i and, therefore, following the model of the *Historia* Book 1.2. Yet, the reports are also much more detailed and subjective than the geographical descriptions that precede and follow them in the verbal map (and more detailed and subjective than the entirety of the *Historia* Book 1.2). As Alfred Hiatt has argued, the reports

introduce the mode of the itinerary, in which a narrator gives an account of a journey, including reports of an ethnographic nature. The effect is to supplement – to supply, add to, but also interrupt – geographic description. A regional chorography emerges;

⁶⁵ Leneghan, '*Translatio imperii*,' 21.

⁶⁶ Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.xxxiii.

⁶⁷ Leneghan, '*Translatio imperii*,' 21. See 21-23 for his subsequent discussion in response to these questions.

⁶⁸ Irvine, 'Alfredian prefaces and epilogues,' p.170.

not, that is, a map, nor a history, but a verbal description of a coherent set of spatial juxtapositions and ethnic interrelationships.⁶⁹

‘Chorography,’ as Hiatt defines it, is ‘the description of regional space’ and so it is more detailed and specific in scope than geography.⁷⁰ By this reading, the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan enrich the verbal map of Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* with an attention to human experience and culture in the process of suspending that same verbal map. They steer the focus of the Old English history towards humans and their place in the world. The reports create microcosmic connections between descriptions of place and peoples, therefore; connections that are made at a macrocosmic scale at the beginning of the OE *Orosius* when the *ieldran* (8/11; ancient humans) divide and name the entire *middangeard*, as discussed, forging geography and history together.

A comparison between the description of Scythia in the Northern Asian part of the verbal map (example 1, below) and a section of Wulfstan’s report about the lands around the River Vistula (example 2) shows up the stylistic continuities and dissonances that are threaded through these narratives, and the thematic crossovers of Wulfstan’s report with the subsequent chapters of the OE *Orosius*:

- i. Ponne be westan þæm sæ Caspia oð Danais þa ea 7 oþ þæt fenn þe mon hætt Meotedisc 7 þonne suþ oþ þone Wendelsæ 7 oþ þone beorg Tauros 7 norþ oþ þone garsecg is eall Scipþia lond binnan, þeh hit mon tenemne on twa 7 on þritig þeoda. Ac þa lond on easthealfe Danais þe þær nihst sindon, Albani hi sint genemde in Latina, 7 we hie hataþ nu Liubene. (I.i.12/7-13.)

(Then by the west of the Caspian Sea until the River Don and up to the fen they call Maeotis and then south up to the Mediterranean Sea and up to the Taurus Mountain and north up to the ocean inside the land of Scythia, which is actually named separately as twenty-three tribes. But the lands which are nearest the eastern half of the Don, are named *Albania* in Latin, and we now call them *Liubene*.)

- ii. þonne cymeð Ilfing eastan in Estmere of ðæm mere ðe Truso standeð in staðe, 7 cumað ut samod in Estmere, Ilfing eastan of Estlande 7 Wisle suðan of Winodlande; 7 þonne benimð Wisle Ilfing hire naman 7 ligeð of þæm mere west 7 norð on sæ: for ðy hit man hætt Wislemuða.

Þæt Estland is swyðe mycel, 7 þær bið swyðe manig burh, 7 on ælcere byrig bið cyningc, 7 þær bið swyðe mycel hunig 7 fiscoð, 7 se cyning 7 þa ricostan men drincað

⁶⁹ Hiatt, ‘*Beowulf* off the map,’ 27.

⁷⁰ Hiatt, ‘*Beowulf* off the map,’ 11.

myran meolc, 7 þa unspedigan 7 þa þeowan drincað medo. Ðær bið swyðe mycel gewinn betweenan him. (I.i.16/32-17/5.)

(Then the Elbing comes from the east into the Vistula lagoon where Druzno stands on the shore of the lake, and the Elbing east of the land of the Ests and the Vistula to the south of the land of the Wends come into the Vistula lagoon at the same time; and then the Vistula deprives the Elbing of her name and flows west from the lake and north into the sea; so people call this the Vistula Mouth.⁷¹

The land of the Ests is very great, and there are very many towns there, and there is a king in each town, and there is a great deal of honey and fishing, and the king and the richest men drink mare's milk and the poor and the slaves drink mead. There is such great conflict between them.)

Each of these descriptions moves along bodies of water and is orientated according to the cardinal points, whilst charting landmasses and tribes nearby. Each demonstrates an interest in naming, which is characteristic for the verbal map and the rest of the OE *Orosius*, as we have seen. Wulfstan's report describes how the 'River Elbing' (*Ilfing*) changes name to the 'Vistula' (*Wisle*) when it flows through and out of the Vistula Lagoon. Similarly, the Asian portion of the verbal map features equivalent names for Albania in Latin and Old English: the Latin for the lands by the eastern section of the River Don is *Albania* but, the Old English author claims, 'we now call them *Liubene*' (*we hie hataþ nu Liubene*). The Asian section of the verbal map is not associated with originality as the European section is but here we have an example of an assertion of the Anglo-Saxon author and audience that joins with a classical perspective on the world at every stage of the Old English history. Although, as Bately notes, 'the authenticity of the name *Liubene* is doubtful' a distinction is still made between the language, audiences and temporalities of the *Historia* and those of the OE *Orosius*.⁷²

Then the differences between these excerpts from Book I.i are revealed. The description of Asia highlights the high number of peoples that constitute Scythia as a fleeting geographical detail. Wulfstan's description, on the other hand, indicates where the Ests live and then goes on, beyond the example I have given, to dwell on the Ests for over thirty further lines (17/1-18/2). The Ests are unpacked in the report from simply a place and a people into a culture with social structures and customary practices. Some

⁷¹ I have used the Modern English name for *Estmere*, the Vistula Lagoon, rather than the glosses provided by Bately: *Swiezy Zalew* (descending from the Polish) or *Frisches Haff* (the Modern German). 'Glossary' in Bately, OE *Orosius*, s.v. 'Estmere.'

⁷² Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 12/12-13. Bately identifies 'we hie hataþ nu Liubene' as an addition but qualifies that '[i]t is hard to believe that the Anglo-Saxons of the late ninth century were familiar enough with the inhabitants of the Roman province of Albania [...] to have a name for them other than the Latin one, though Scandinavians appear to have visited this remote area. It is more likely that the name arose as a result either of textual corruption [...] or of wrong identification.'

of the social details given about the Ests are familiar to an Anglo-Saxon audience such as the model of kingship, albeit one that is exaggerated: Wulfstan explains that ‘on ælcere byrig bið cyningc’ (17/2; there is a king in each town). Alterity becomes a useful term again here to describe the otherness of the Ests, who are just recognizable enough to the Anglo-Saxons to incite both their fascination and their self-reflection. A seemingly English man – according to the Old English etymology of Wulfstan’s name – encounters the Ests with the ‘interpretive devices’ of his own culture, to repeat Lerer’s sentiments, and reports back their customs to his own culture; at the very least, a culture that might understand Wulfstan to be Anglo-Saxon, whatever his actual biography.⁷³ The Old English vernacular and the vicarious travel and narration of Wulfstan bring the Ests into proximity with the Anglo-Saxon audience, therefore, but at a comfortable spatial distance. Wulfstan is a mediator between the otherness of the Ests and the Anglo-Saxon self, just as the OE *Orosius* mediates the otherness of ancient humans and fifth-century Romans. We see again the microcosm of Ohthere and Wulfstan’s reports working within the macrocosm of Anglo-Saxon world history.

Indeed, in both the historical narrative of the OE *Orosius* at large and Wulfstan’s report in the verbal map of Book I.i, we are dealing with pagans at a distance from the Anglo-Saxons but this distance is more spatial than temporal in the case of the Ests. There are connections to be made, however, between the pagans in the contemporary world of the Anglo-Saxons nearly a thousand years after the coming of Christ and the pagans of ancient history. In the *Historia*, Orosius attempts very deliberately to mark out a pagan past full of war and disease, a turn towards global Christianity, and the improvements brought to the world by a Christian present and future – rhetoric aimed to stamp out the murmurs of criticism towards Christianity in the early fifth-century Roman Empire. Book I.i of the OE *Orosius*, specifically Wulfstan’s report, anticipates a history of pagans by suggesting that not only is paganism far from bound to the past but, contrary to Orosius’ stance, it is also not entirely reprehensible and destructive. In another expression of temporal asynchrony, Wulfstan’s report implies that the past and the present cannot be easily divided in the context of space. The geographical description of the *middangeard* in the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i and of the *orbis* in the *Historia* Book 1.2.13/1 make the same implication but more obliquely.

⁷³ Lerer, *Literacy and Power*, p.8. For discussion on Wulfstan’s name and provenance, see Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.lxxi, and Judith Jesch, ‘Who was Wulfstan?’ in *Wulfstan's Voyage: The Baltic Sea Region in the Early Viking Age as Seen from Shipboard*, ed. by Anton Englert and Athena Trakadas, Maritime Culture of the North 1 (Roskilde: Viking Ship Museum, 2009), pp.29-36 (pp.29-31).

Moreover, Wulfstan's description of the Ests indicates curiosity towards pagan practice, touching on some of the notable interests in pagans that emerge throughout the OE *Orosius*. One such interest is in kingship or power, which is commented on by Wulfstan as I have noted above; Ohthere's report is also concerned with kingship by association with King Alfred. Indeed, kingship and sovereignty are recurring themes in the OE *Orosius* from Book I.ii when Ninus of Assyria sets a model for all the kings who follow in the time and space of the world as he becomes the very first man ever to rule (21/24-5). Another discernible theme in the OE *Orosius* is war and again this theme is referenced in both Wulfstan and Ohthere's reports. Ohthere tells Alfred that he did not dare go past a river during his exploratory journey to the north of his homeland in Norway, 'for unfriþe' (14/19; in case of hostility), whilst Wulfstan notes that among the Ests, there is 'swyðe mycel gewinn' (17/4; very great conflict) between the rich and the poor. Accordingly, the noun, *gewinn*, meaning 'war' or 'conflict,' appears over a hundred and twenty times in the OE *Orosius*, although it is usually used to refer to wars between peoples in the OE *Orosius* rather than civil conflict as in the example of the Ests; civil conflict is described elsewhere in the Old English as *ingewinn* (Book II.vi.50/24). The very high number of occurrences of the noun, *gewinn* in the OE *Orosius* is a reflection of how '[on]e of the apparent enthusiasms of the Old English translator, as has often been remarked, is the use of stratagems in battle,' as Godden notes.⁷⁴

A further and final example of a prominent theme in the OE *Orosius* that comes up in Wulfstan's report is that of the ritualistic behaviour of pagans. There are two words for 'custom' in the Old English history: *gewuna* and *ðeaw* or *þeaw*, which appears twice in Wulfstan's description of the funeral and burial practices of the Ests (17/6, 31); together these words occur twenty-seven times in the OE *Orosius*.⁷⁵ The first custom Wulfstan identifies is that the Ests leave their dead un-cremated for a number of months and then on the day of the funeral compete to win the possessions of the deceased in a horse-racing competition (17/6-31) – a very famous excerpt from the OE *Orosius*. The second custom related by Wulfstan is as follows: 'sceal ælces geðeodes man beon forbærned, 7 gyf þar man an ban findeð unforbærned, hi hit sceolan miclum gebetan' (17/31-3; every dead man must be cremated, and if anyone finds a bone that is not burnt there, it must be atoned for greatly). Anlezark has argued that Wulfstan's interest in the customs of the Ests offers a 'morally neutral treatment of Northern pagan practice [which] presents a striking parallel to the presentation of religion in

⁷⁴ Based on a DOE corpus search for *gewin*, including *ingewinn* (civil war) in the OE *Orosius*. Godden, 'OE *Orosius* and its sources,' 310.

⁷⁵ DOE corpus simple searches for *þeaw*/*ðeaw* bring up 16 matches in the OE *Orosius*. There are 11 matches for *gewuna*.

both *Alexander's Letters* and [*The*] *Wonders [of the East]*.⁷⁶ These textual comparisons are very appropriate as the *The Letter of Alexander the Great* and *The Wonders of the East* are more about otherness and the delight in difference than about passing Christian moral judgement on pagans. But there are also internal comparisons to be made in the OE *Orosius*. The 'neutral treatment' of the Ests in Wulfstan's report might reflect a generally neutral approach towards pagans in the history at large.

Voice, convention and perspective

The reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan multiply the number of voices that contribute to the OE *Orosius* with important implications. They put the Anglo-Saxon perspective of the history in historiographical conversation with Orosius' fifth-century Roman perspective in two ways. Firstly, they share knowledge of peoples and places and personal experiences of journeys through space. In this way, they insert the Anglo-Saxon literary traditions of storytelling and orality into the classical model of a geographical description, whilst disrupting the 'geography' of the map with the modes of 'itinerary' and 'chorography,' according to Hiatt's observations.⁷⁷ Secondly, and in conjunction, the voices of Ohthere and Wulfstan add to the pattern of collaborative and fluid authorship that is established in the OE *Orosius* with the device of Orosius speaking in the vernacular. The similarities that can be identified between the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan and the interjections of Orosius in the Old English history are elucidated when the opening statements of each figure are read in juxtaposition:

- i. Ure ieldran ealne þisne ymbhwyrft þises middangeardes, *cwæþ Orosius* [...] on þreo todældon. (8/11-13; my emphasis.)

(Our elders divided the whole circle of this *middangeard* into three, said Orosius.)

- ii. *Ohthere sæde* his hlaforde, Ælfrede cyninge, *þæt* he ealra Norðmonna norþmest bude. *He cwæð þæt* he bude on þæm lande norþweardum wiþ þa Westsæ. (13/29-30-14/1; my emphasis.)

(Ohthere said to his lord, King Alfred that he lived the north-most of all the Norwegians. He said that he lived in the land in the north by the West Sea.)

- iii. *Wulfstan sæde þæt* he gefore of Hæðum, *þæt* he wære on Truso on syfan dagum 7 nihtum. (16/21-22; my emphasis.)

(Wulfstan said that he travelled from Hedeby, that he was in Druzno for seven days and nights.)

⁷⁶ Anlezark, 'The Anglo-Saxon world view,' p.79.

⁷⁷ Hiatt, '*Beowulf* off the map,' 27.

All three examples constitute inscribed vocal acts that come from the past, whether near or distant to the Anglo-Saxons. This is not to imply that they work in exactly the same way. Indeed, the examples above show up the differences in style between the three voices. The style of Orosius' speech acts is closer to direct speech as his first person voice is followed by the phrase, *cwæþ Orosius* (more usually, *cwæð Orosius*). Ohthere and Wulfstan's voices are reported in the third person, with the construction: *he sæde/ cwæð þæt/ ðæt*. Ohthere's voice is maintained in this manner but Wulfstan's voice moves fluidly into the plural first person and direct speech, referring to the situation of places against the boat (on the portside or starboard) while he sailed in relation to us: 'Weonodland *him wæs on* steorbord 7 on bæcbord *him wæs* Langaland [...] 7 þonne Burgenda land *wæs us on* bæcbord' (16/23-26, my emphasis; the Wends' land *was on his* starboard and Langeland was on his portside and then the land of the Bornholm citizens *was on our* portside). Moreover, Ohthere and Wulfstan's speeches begin in the past tense to relate journeys that have happened – their starting-point, what was on their starboard as they sailed, who they met on their travels – but they move into the present tense to discuss the chorographical and ethnographical details that transcend their personal movements in time and space. Shifts into the present tense are intermittent in Ohthere's report: '[h]e sæde ðæt Norðmanna land wære swyþe lang 7 swyðe smæl. Eal þæt his man aþer oððe ettan oððe erian mæg, þæt lið wið ða sæ' (15/21-3; he said that the Norwegians' land was very long and very narrow. Everything that men can either graze or plough on it, lies against the sea). Wulfstan's report turns at the River Vistula from a past-tense description of a personal but shared journey to a present-tense description of natural features: '7 Weonodland wæs us ealne weg on steorbord oð Wislemuðan. Seo Wisle is swyðe micel ea' (16/28-30; and the Wends' land was on our starboard all the way until the mouth of the Vistula. The Vistula is a very great river). The report changes again into a present-tense documentary of the Ests when the description reaches *Estlande* (16/34), 'the land of the Ests.'

Differences of authorship have been noted between Ohthere and Wulfstan's individual reports and between both and the narrative at large.⁷⁸ Moreover, Ohthere and Wulfstan's reports are very often described as entering the narrative of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i abruptly. Bately, for example, has recently described the reports as apparently 'inserted after [the OE *Orosius*]' completion, very clumsily and by someone who lacked the author's demonstrable ability to weave new material seamlessly into his translation.⁷⁹ But critiques of the lack of narrative continuity of the reports amount to modern critical expectations that do not reflect the transmission and reception of the

⁷⁸ See Bately, *OE Orosius*, p.lxxii.

⁷⁹ Bately, 'The OE *Orosius*,' p.316. See also: Leneghan, '*Translatio imperii*,' 20; Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.115.

OE *Orosius* in Anglo-Saxon culture. Deborah VanderBilt has also addressed how the sense of discontinuity that the reports engender is not related to how they integrate with the rest of the OE *Orosius* but rather how we read the OE *Orosius* differently to the Anglo-Saxons:

the inclusion of these stories is not seen as disruptive by the author or by the copyist. They allow what is extremely disjunctive to a modern reader – the intrusion of a different voice, different time-frame, different style – to exist in the text without remark. This situation argues for a flexibility in the translator’s and the audience’s conception of text; the passages are recognized by the reading or listening audience as material acceptable for inclusion within the Old English *Orosius*.⁸⁰

Compounding this issue of different narrative expectations is the fact that the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan do not have a precedent in the *Historia*.

If we start to look for continuities rather than disruptions and to explore why the reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan make sense in the context of the OE *Orosius*, we can note that their voices come into and retreat from the narrative no differently to Orosius’ voice. Orosius enters the narrative with a verb of speech and identified personally by name to comment on a particular event in the Old English history. Ohthere and Wulfstan also impart personal knowledge and experience through the medium of voice and their position in the verbal map of Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* is acknowledged in the narrative. The verbal map moves into Ohthere’s report at Norway (13/27-30), which Bately herself describes as the ‘trigger’ for the change in narrative style and direction, as this is where the explorer lives and begins his adventure.⁸¹ The verbal map moves out of Wulfstan’s report with a starker change of direction but this is signposted: ‘[n]u wille we secgan be suðan Donua þære ea ymbe Creca land, hu hit lip’ (I.i.18/3-4, my emphasis; *now we will talk about* how the land lies around Greece by the south of the Danube). The sense of knowledge as something that is voiced and shared is sustained even in this change of key.

This assertion in the verbal map of Book I.i that knowledge is transmitted orally is of prime importance to Anglo-Saxon historiography. Orosius is very clearly named in the OE *Orosius* because of the record of events he shares as the author of the *Historia*. The phrase, *cwæð Orosius* accredits Orosius as a historian and acknowledges his classical authority; as Irvine has noted, ‘[c]itations of the names of Gregory, Augustine, Boethius, Bede and Orosius in the vernacular translations [associated with Alfred] meant that their implicit authority was bestowed on the new vernacular versions of

⁸⁰ VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,’ 392.

⁸¹ Bately, ‘The OE *Orosius*,’ p.316. Cf. Leneghan, ‘*Translatio imperii*,’ 20.

their works.⁸² Bremmer Jr. has argued along these lines that in the opening of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i, ‘the interrupting information “cwæð Orosius” introduces the original author of the book not as a writer but as a speaker, thus drawing his authority out of the realm of foreign Latin literacy into that of native English orality.’⁸³ Yet orality and literacy are conjoined concepts in the OE *Orosius* and the Old English literary corpus, and authority also draws from the Anglo-Saxon orality itself. In the words of McKitterick, ‘[o]rality and literacy are not mutually exclusive [...] Oral modes of discourse and communication complement literary ones.’⁸⁴ McKitterick observes further that in eighth- and ninth-century Carolingian culture across the seas from Anglo-Saxon England, orality and literacy ‘interacted with each other constantly and creatively. They coexisted.’⁸⁵ Indeed, VanderBilt has argued in an Anglo-Saxon context that the adherence to insular traditions such as orality, which might descend from poetry but are not limited there, suggests commitment to respected and distinctive conventions from ‘a specialized form of language.’⁸⁶ If ‘one valued function of language is the communal expression of traditional thought and [...] authority comes from aligning oneself with a tradition,’ VanderBilt argues, then *Orosius*, *Ohthere* and *Wulfstan*’s orality holds as much cultural importance and literary discipline in the OE *Orosius* as the deference to *Orosius*’ classical authorship.⁸⁷ This oral authority ‘is associated with the vernacular’ – and so vernacular literacy – and ‘stems from the necessity for [the] speaker to bring the past into the present, to ensure its ongoing life.’⁸⁸ In short, the traditional and cultural backgrounds of the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* come together and enhance one another in the Old English representation of *Orosius*. *Orosius* is ascribed an even greater authority in the context of the OE *Orosius* and Old English vernacular literacy because of his Anglo-Saxon orality.

Orosius and the Old English author

The flow of the narrative between the Old English representation of *Orosius* and the anonymous Anglo-Saxon authorial voice is, therefore, a critical indicator of the complex relationship between OE *Orosius* and the *Historia*. Although the Old English author remains in the background of the OE *Orosius* as a more or less impartial vessel for the narrative, his or her presence comes to the fore on occasion, for example to explain to the Anglo-Saxon audience that the vestal virgin *Minucia* ‘on heora wisan sceolde nunne

⁸² Irvine, ‘English literature in the ninth century,’ pp.226-27. See also Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities,’ 410 for the argument that the ‘absence of any preface to the Old English *Orosius* [...] necessitates the location of authority in another form, that of a narrator-figure who is constructed in such a way as to support the authority of the translator.’

⁸³ Bremmer Jr., ‘Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world,’ p.194.

⁸⁴ McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p.173.

⁸⁵ McKitterick, *History and Memory*, p.173.

⁸⁶ VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,’ 377.

⁸⁷ VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,’ 378.

⁸⁸ VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,’ 389.

beon' (Book III.vi.60/8-9; would have been a nun in their culture); *their* culture is Roman and so applies not just to the culture of Minucia but also to that of the audience of the *Historia*. Further, the device of Orosian speech acts in the OE *Orosius* feigns a distinction between the Old English author and the author of the *Historia* but the two voices cannot be disentangled entirely. This entanglement is particularly apparent when the distinctions between these voices are deliberately ambiguous, such as instances when the plural first-person voice is used and there is nothing to identify the voice to the fifth-century context of the *Historia* or to Anglo-Saxon England. In the statement that follows Wulfstan's report in the verbal map of Book I.i, for example – '[n]u wille we secgan be' (I.i.18/3; now we will discuss) – the declaration that *we* will *now* move on suggests that the Old English author and Orosius are collaborating and guiding their Anglo-Saxon audience through the text with them. As Wulfstan has just finished speaking, the idea of multiple voices and authorities conversing with the audience is especially pertinent: the OE *Orosius* is not confined to any one single view on the world or history and, as a vernacular work, it straddles orality and literacy. Equally, the singular first-person voice can sometimes be assigned to either Orosius or the anonymous Old English author in the absence of the phrase, *cwæð Orosius*, such as in this example from Book I.i: 'Europe hio onginð, swa ic ær cwæþ, of Danai þære ie' (I.i.8/23; Europe starts, as I said before, from the river Don).⁸⁹ The identity of the first-person voice here is ambiguous.

The entanglements between the Old English author and Orosius also mean that it can be difficult to discern where Orosius' voice begins and ends in the OE *Orosius*. There are instances where some lines before the phrase, *cwæð Orosius* the narrative seems to shift into Orosius' voice. One example comes in Book VI.ii when the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius is described. Tiberius is presented as a mild ruler to begin with, who turns against the Romans when he tells his senators for the first time about Christ and they reject his leadership:

Hu God þa þa mæstan ofermetto gewræc on þæm folce, 7 hu swiðe hi his anguldon from heora agnum casere; þeh hit eallum þæm folcum of oþrum londum swa swiþe gewrecen ne wurde swa hit oft ær wæs!

On þæm twelftan gear Tiberiuses rices wearþ eft Godes wracu Romanum, þa hie æt hiora theatrum wæron mid heora plegan, þa hit eall tofeoll 7 heora ofslog xx m.
Wyrþigre wrace hie forwurdon ða, cwæð Orosius, þæt þa heora synna sceoldon

⁸⁹ See Discenza, 'The map of the universe,' p.89, for the opposing view that phrases that 'include "we" or use the third person, [give] responsibility for the geography to Orosius and not the Old English translator.'

hreowsian 7 dædbote don swiþor þonne heora plegan began, swa hiora gewuna wæs ær þæm cristendome. (134/24-135/3; my emphasis)

(How God avenged the greatest arrogance in that people, and how greatly they atoned for it from their own emperor; though it was not avenged so greatly on all the peoples from other lands as it often had been before!

In the twelfth year of Tiberius' reign the vengeance of God came to the Romans again, when they were in their theatre playing their sports, when it all fell down and killed twenty thousand of them. *They died then with fitting vengeance, said Orosius, as they had to repent for their sins and do penance rather than practise their sports, as was their custom before Christianity.*)

Does Orosius start speaking in the narrative here at 'fitting vengeance' (*wyrþigre wrace*) and finish at 'Christendom' (*cristendome*)? Or does he begin at 'how God' (*[h]u God*) or 'in the twelfth year' (*on þæm twelftan gear*)? Where Orosius' speech acts are perceived to begin and end in the narrative is often determined by context and tone but, ultimately, it is down to the interpretation of the audience, both modern and Anglo-Saxon, to decide if Orosius is speaking or not. The ambiguity and entanglements between Anglo-Saxon interpretation and the knowledge and perspective offered by the figure of Orosius heighten the temporal asynchrony in the OE *Orosius*, obscuring the boundaries between the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* and the identities of their authors and audiences.

At the same time, the device of Orosius speaking into the Old English allows the author to characterize his persona in the series of speech acts that occur throughout the history, both as an author and as a polemicist. At an authorial level, Orosius is brought in to guide sections of the narrative and even to take some responsibility for its content, such as in this example from Book I.viii: 'Ic wat gear, cwæð Orosius, þæt ic sceal her fela oferhebban, 7 þa spell þe ic secge ic hi sceal gescyrtian [...]' (27/22-3; I know well, said Orosius, that I shall brush over a lot, and the story I tell will be skirted around).⁹⁰ Mary Kate Hurley has noted how Orosius 'performs two crucial tasks that are associated with narrative boundaries' in both the OE *Orosius* and the *Historia*. Bridging the gap between the texts, she suggests, '[h]e decides when and where to begin and end both individual narratives and the books in which he records them. Similarly, he delimits the boundaries of what should and should not be included in history.'⁹¹ And yet the figure of Orosius is not given complete control over narrative boundaries in the OE *Orosius*. The phrase, *cwæð Orosius* and therefore the implication of his voice and input do not appear in the final chapter of the Old English history, which describes the

⁹⁰ This quotation comes from an extended commentary about stories Orosius will not relate in full (I.viii.27/22 – 28/11).

⁹¹ Hurley, 'Alfredian temporalities,' 411.

sack of Rome (Book VI.xxxviii). Moreover, Orosius does not have full agency in the OE *Orosius* as his authorship is refracted into its narrative from the *Historia*, construed by the Old English author and signalled in the narrative at the author's discretion. This does not mean that possible omissions in the history and decisions to gloss over or move on from events in history cannot be attributed to the source material that Orosius has provided.

The figure of Orosius can be described most accurately as balanced between subjectivity (*ic*, I) and objectivity (*cwæð Orosius*, Orosius said) in the OE *Orosius*. This balance reconciles Orosius' paradoxical roles as the author of the *Historia* and the main source of information in the Old English history and as a character of that history. An example of Orosian polemic in Book III.xi of the OE *Orosius* demonstrates both of these roles particularly well. Just prior to the description of the conquests of the successors of Alexander discussed previously – which also happens to field shifts between subjects and objects, as we have seen – there is a rhetorical interjection by Orosius, based on the *Historia* Book 3.22-23.⁹² Orosius speaks to his intra-textual Roman audience to link the legacy of Alexander indirectly to the sack of Rome:

Swa oft swa Galli wið Romanum wunnan, swa wurdon Romane gecnysede. For þon *ge Romane*, *cwæð Orosius*, þonne ge ymb þæt an gefeoht alneg ceoriað, þe *eow* Gotan gedydon, hwy nyllað ge geþencan þa monegan ærran þe *eow* Gallie oft rædlice bismertlice þurhtugon?

Ic sceal eac gemyndgian be sumum dæle þæs þe Alexandres æfterfylgendas dydon on þæm tidun þe þis gewearð on Romebyrg, hu hie hie selfe mid missellican gefeohtum fordydon. Hit is, *cwæð he*, þæm gelicost, þonne ic his geþencean sceal, þe ic sitte on anre heare dune 7 geseo þonne on smeðum felda fela fyra byrnan: swa ofer eall Mæcedonia rice, þæt is ofer ealle þa maran Asiam 7 ofer Europe þone mæstan dæl 7 ealle Libium, þæt hit na næs buton hete 7 gewinum. Þa þe under Alexandre firmest wæron, þær þær hie æfter him ricsedon, hie ðæt mid gewinum awestan; 7 þær þær hie næron, hie gedydon þone mæstan ege, swelce se bitresta smic upp astige 7 þonne wide tofare. (77/3-18; my emphasis.)

(As often as the Gauls waged war against the Romans, the Romans were overcome. Since *you Romans*, *said Orosius*, then murmur continually about that one attack which the Goths made on *you*, why do *you* not want to think about the many before which the Gauls often shamefully carried through with *you*?

I shall also call to mind a small part of what the successors of Alexander did at the time this took place in Rome, how they destroyed themselves with many battles. It is, he said, when I come to think about it, just as if I am sitting on a high dune and

⁹² Cf. *Historia*, 3.22.178/15 – 23.179/5

seeing many fires burn on level plains: so across the whole kingdom of Macedonia – that is, across all Greater Asia and across the majority of Europe and all of Lybia – it was nothing but heat and wars. Those under Alexander were the greatest, where they ruled after him, they laid it to waste with wars; and where they were not, they produced the greatest awe, as the bitterest smoke rises up and spreads afar.)

Here Orosius addresses his contemporary Romans directly in the second-person plural voice as ‘you Romans’ (*ge Romane*) and ‘you’ (*eow*), differentiating this audience from the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius*. The phrase, *cwæð Orosius* then makes explicit what is already implied: that despite Orosius’ first-person voice and his continuing authority as a historian who can inform Anglo-Saxon historiography, both he and his contemporary Romans are objects of history and from another time and place. The one attack by the Goths – that is, the sack of Rome – is now as much a part of Roman history as the many attacks by the Gauls to which Orosius refers. As Orosius’ polemic is migrated from fifth-century Roman culture to Anglo-Saxon culture, Latin to Old English, the historical moment that forms the focus of the *Historia* is put in its proper place in world history.

This process of the contextual, linguistic and cultural migration of Orosius’ polemic from the *Historia* to the OE *Orosius* also allows a less judgemental view of the pagans of history than the one that is offered by Orosius in both his Latin and Old English contexts. The polemic is so channelled towards the sack of Rome and the reaction of the fifth-century Romans to this event in the OE *Orosius* that it is diluted upon reaching the Anglo-Saxon audience. In other words, the Anglo-Saxon audience can read the ancient humans of history through Orosius’ polemic but they do not have to do so. Orosius’ extended imagery of fire and smoke – a simile for the devastation caused by Alexander’s successors – can be used to explain this further. As in the *Historia* Book 3.23, Orosius imagines himself sitting on a dune and watching the spread of wildfire. He conjures himself as the observer of history as if it plays before him in real time; as Matthew Kempshall has commented of such rhetorical imagery in the *Historia*, ‘[i]t is from this vantage-point that Orosius is able to ‘measure’ (*permetior*) the quality of one period of time against another.’⁹³ He can see the destruction of large parts of Asia and Europe caused by Alexander’s successors from above and from the future, in the wake of the sack of Rome, and he can also see – as the smoke in the metaphor visualizes – the less tangible effects of the warfare on those in fear of the successors. The simile of Orosius sitting on a high dune emphasizes and legitimizes his identity as an author and a historian for both his intra-textual Roman and extra-textual Anglo-Saxon audiences, therefore. But as Orosius speaks directly to

⁹³ Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p.76.

the Romans his pejorative view of pagans is framed and contained in rhetoric about the Goths' attack on Rome. Orosius' reflections on how the many attacks by the Gauls on Rome pale the sack of Rome into insignificance lend themselves to his description of the legacy of Alexander, since these events were contemporaneous; Alexander's successors were claiming their new lands 'at the same time' (*on þæm tidun*) as the Gauls attacked Rome.

The polemic from Orosius is strongly associated, therefore, with the fifth-century Roman temporality of the OE *Orosius*. Christianity had not made war worse for the Roman Empire, Orosius argues against its critics, but had softened its effects. The Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius* can enjoy this polemic for the historical moment that it condenses and encapsulates just after the sack of Rome, without being its intended target. Accordingly, the ancient pagans in the OE *Orosius* can be freed from rhetorical interpretation by the Anglo-Saxons. William Kretzschmar Jr. has argued that '[l]ittle remains of Orosius's rhetoric in the general tone of the translation; actual deeds and their sequential narration took precedence for the translator.'⁹⁴ Although I would dispute the suggestion that Orosius' rhetoric is negligible because it is still very much a feature of the Old English, the deeds of the pagans are offered to the Anglo-Saxons without explicit moral judgement; indeed, the device of Orosius' voice in the Old English makes this possible. As Orosius vocalizes his Christian moralistic stance, the Anglo-Saxons can take pleasure in the awe (III.xi.77/17; *ege*) that is provoked by the deeds of pagans like Alexander and his successors; the horror, fascination and admiration that these deeds incite. We might remember Wulfstan's encounters with the Ests in the verbal map of Book I.i, which also represent a non-judgemental approach towards paganism and otherness.

Yet how does this removal of moral judgement from paganism align with Anglo-Saxon Christianity? The Anglo-Saxon present can be defined against and above the fifth-century Roman past through the polemic of Orosius in the Old English. A power-play develops between the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius* and the text's intra-textual Roman audience as the figure that unites them, Orosius, marks out the gap between them in time, space and ideology as well as textual context. Hurley has argued in this vein that Orosius is characterized 'as a judge who is privy to a longer view of history than an ordinary man would generally have. The Orosius narrator stands as the arbiter [...] between Christian and non-Christian worldviews.'⁹⁵ Hurley further suggests that in the OE *Orosius*, Orosius speaks for an Anglo-Saxon Christian audience as part

⁹⁴ Kretzschmar, 'Adaptation and *anweald*,' 133. See also, Batley, OE *Orosius*, p.xciii for a similar view.

⁹⁵ Hurley, 'Alfredian temporalities,' 411.

of a ‘community that exists across time’ – a community from which the pagans in the ancient human temporality are excluded, and from which Orosius’ early fifth-century Roman targets are threatening to exclude themselves.⁹⁶ The Anglo-Saxon audience might feel elevated spiritually over the fifth-century Romans constructed by the text, who are defined purely by their ignorance of Christian wisdom and their challenges to the faith they have converted into. These fifth-century Romans, if not the character of Orosius, are constrained to this one-dimensional representation and consigned to a temporal vacuum within the narrative of history. Just as the *Historia* constructs a version of the pagan past to suit the polemical means of the text for its specific context of composition, the Old English author of the OE *Orosius* presents an Anglo-Saxon idea of the pre-Christian world, the early fifth-century Romans and Orosius himself.

Conclusion

Exploring the deployment of Orosius’ voice can offer a way of reading the OE *Orosius* and understanding how the Old English history reads the past within the Anglo-Saxon present; a past that means both ancient humans and the *Historia*’s early fifth-century Roman audience, as imagined by the author of the OE *Orosius*. We can form an appreciation of the distancing of the OE *Orosius* from the *Historia*’s polemic against pagans, which is confirmed through Wulfstan’s neutral observations of the Ests in contrast to the moral judgements made by Orosius. Orosius’s polemic and the accounts of Ohthere and Wulfstan each contribute different perspectives to the OE *Orosius*, which are all transmitted through the literary device of oral speech acts. Moreover, Orosius, Ohthere and Wulfstan are used to represent and to locate different places but they are also used to personalize and to humanize geographical and historical knowledge. They carve out a historiography that blends classical conventions and approaches with insular oral and textual traditions, combining two interpretations of the world: early fifth-century Roman and late Anglo-Saxon. In summary, comparing the voices of Orosius, Ohthere and Wulfstan can provide significant avenues into how we interpret the relationship between the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius*. The voices are vital signifiers of the translation project of the OE *Orosius*.

It seems no accident that Orosius, Ohthere and Wulfstan all appear on the verbal map of Book I.i of the OE *Orosius*, which itself plays a vital role in orientating the history of the world around an Anglo-Saxon approach and setting the text up as an Old English translation. The reports of Ohthere and Wulfstan are far from disconnected from the OE *Orosius* as critics tend to suggest. Quite to the contrary, their positioning on the verbal map reinforces the engagements between geography and history established by the *Historia* Book 1.2 and makes sense of the place of Anglo-Saxon

⁹⁶ Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities,’ 417.

England in the world. The reports also emphasize the intricate connections between person and place that unfold in the OE *Orosius* from the opening lines of Book I.i; connections that navigate temporalities, texts and cultures, and that centralize the human in the time and space of the world. It is clear from the outset of the OE *Orosius* that people are defined by when and where they live. That this Old English history is not about the beginnings of human existence but about the genesis and evolution of culture and territory. The *ieldran* (I.i.8/11; ancient humans) divide the world and as they do so, they set a precedent for topographical borders and ethnic and cultural distinctions; for the units of people and power that I shall turn to in my next chapter.

Chapter 2: *Bysena* and *translatio imperii*: three parallels of gender and power

The OE *Orosius* tells a history of the origins of sovereignty, power and empire in the world from Book I.ii onwards; of the exemplars, or *bysena*, of kingship, queenship, and kingdom. The Old English history charts the rise and fall of the first four major empires – Babylonian, Greek, African and Roman – and the *translatio imperii*, or ‘translation of empire,’ between them.¹ These empires are inseparable from the rulers who make, sustain and unmake them, such as Ninus, the first king of Assyria and the first king in the world (Book I.ii). These empires and the process of *translatio imperii* between them are, therefore, also gendered.

This Chapter explores the connections between sovereignty, *translatio imperii* and gender in the OE *Orosius*. I consider here also the Anglo-Saxon perspectives that influence readings and representations of power and empire; perspectives that are demarcated from the interpretation of *translatio imperii* offered by Orosius in the *Historia*. Taking the concepts of exemplification and *translatio imperii*, I present three parallels that demonstrate the construction and enactment of the movement of power between men and women. Each parallel is associated directly or indirectly to the empires of Assyria and Rome. In my first parallel, I look at the history of kingship that is established in the OE *Orosius* with Ninus (Book I.ii) alongside an alternative history of ruling queens and warrior women. This parallel female history can be traced from Ninus’ queen, Semiramis in Book I.ii and the all-female tribe of the Amazons in Book I.x; in each of these accounts, history is rewritten in female terms. My second parallel turns on the direct confrontation between King Cyrus of the Persians and Queen Thamyris of Scythia, which is recorded at the end of Book II.iii. I read this episode as the culmination of a series of descriptions that involve Cyrus exerting power on the battlefield (Book I.xii) or on the River Gyndes and the River Euphrates, which he divides into tributaries on his way to destroy Babylon (Book II.iii). The readings in this parallel show that Cyrus’ rise and downfall are closely related as he eventually becomes his own victim through the actions of Thamyris. My third and final parallel focuses on the relationship between Babylon and Rome. I argue that the gendering of Babylon is crucial to the distinctions between the Anglo-Saxon view of the fallen Roman Empire and Orosius’ fifth-century perspective of an empire still in power. Whilst a female, anthropomorphized Babylon speaks out in Book II.iii to warn that everything must

¹ The concept of *translatio imperii* refers to the successive movement of power between empires. According to this model, when an empire falls, its power shifts, ‘or translates,’ to another empire, which rises; one principal empire has power at a time.

fade, a patrilinear relationship is constructed by Orosius between the father, Babylon and the son, Rome in Book II.i.

Parallel 1 – *Bysena* and origins: Ninus and Semiramis, and the Amazons

Directly after the verbal map of Book I.i of the OE *Orosius* is an account of the aetiology of human kingship in Book I.ii:

Ær ðæm ðe Romeburh getimbred wære þrim hund wintra 7 þusend wintra, Ninus, Asyria kyning, ongan *manna ærest ricsian* on ðysum middangearde. 7 mid ungemætlicre gewilnunge anwaldes he wæs heriende 7 feohtende fiftig wintra, oð he hæfde ealle Asiam on his geweald genyd suð fram þæm Readan Sæ 7 swa norð oþ þone sæ þe man hæf Euxinus, butan þæm þe he eac oftrædlice for mid miclum gefeohtum on Sciððie þa norðland, þa ðe gecwedene syndon ða heardestan men, þeah hy syn on þyson woroldgesælþon þa unspedgestan. 7 hy ða, under ðæm þe he him on winnende wæs, wurdon gerade *wigcræfta*, þeah hi ær hyra lif bylwetlice alyfden; 7 hy him æfter þæm grimme forguldon þone *wigcræft* þe hy æt him geleornodon; 7 him ða wearð emleof on hyra mode þæt hi gesawon mannes blod agoten swa him wæs þara nytana meolc þe hy mæst bi libbað. And he Ninus Soroastrem Bactriana cyning, *se cuðe manna ærest drycræftas*, he hine oferwann 7 ofsloh 7 þa æt nyhstan he wæs feohtende wið Sciððie on ane burh 7 þær wearð ofscoten mid anre flane (21/23-22/7; my emphasis).

(One thousand and three hundred years before Rome was built, Ninus, king of Assyria, began *first of men to rule* on this *middangeard*. And with immeasurable desire for power he was raiding and fighting for fifty years until he had forced all of Asia into his power from south of the Red Sea and as far north as the sea that men call the Euxine, not to mention that he also often took great battles into the north of Scythia, where they are declared the hardest men, though they are the poorest in worldly possessions. And (it was) then, while he was fighting with them, that they became expert in *war-craft*, whilst they had previously lived their life simply; and they paid him back grimly later for the *war-craft* they had learned from him; and seeing the shed of a man's blood became as dear to their heart as the cows' milk that they mostly lived off. And Ninus overcame and killed King Zoroaster of the Bactriani, *who knew magical arts first of all men*, and then finally he fought against the Scythians in a fortress and was shot down there by an arrow.)

Firsts are keenly stressed in this description of the reign of Ninus of Assyria. According to the OE *Orosius*, Ninus is the first king in the history of the world: 'the first of all men to rule in this *middangeard*' (*manna ærest ricsian* on ðysum middangearde). During his lifetime and leadership Ninus kills King Zoroaster of the Bactriani, who is identified as the first magician. Incidentally, the OE *Orosius* follows the *Historia* Book 1.4 in confusing this King Zoroaster with the prophet Zoroaster who lived many years before

Ninus.² However, the explanation that Ninus was the first of all kings is not matched by the *Historia*, in which Ninus is acknowledged as the first king of Assyria only.³ In Book I.ii of the OE *Orosius*, then, the significance of Ninus is heightened in the context of world history and the theme of *translatio imperii* that is explored in the text.

The narration of Ninus' life in the OE *Orosius* Book I.ii also sets up the inextricable pairing of power and warfare as power is won, expressed and lost in violent action. This pairing is especially evident in his encounters with the Scythians. The narrative moves momentarily from a description of Assyrian history to note that the Scythians are reputed to be tough – 'they are said to be the hardest men' (*gecwedene syndon ða heardestan men*) – in order to mark out another first: that is, that the present reputation of the Scythians can be traced back to their historical encounters with Ninus, who traded violence with them. For the Scythians were educated in the skills of warfare, or *wigcræfte*, during their conflicts with Ninus: 'they learned from him' (*æt him geleornodon*). It was then that bloodshed became their spiritual nourishment and an object of desire, as dear to their hearts as their staple diet of cow's milk. The Scythians 'requited' (*forguldon*) Ninus for the skills in war that they had learned from him – as the repetition of *wigcræfte* in this account reinforces – when they shot him with an arrow. Ninus' legacy is therefore also his downfall.

Ninus is at the head of a lineage of Assyrian rulers as the first king of the Assyrian or Babylonian Empire. This lineage comes to an end when Assyrian power topples under King Sardanapallus, as recounted in Book I.xii of the OE *Orosius*: 'ricsade Sardanopolus se cyning in Asiria, þær Ninus se cyning ærest ricsade. 7 Sardanopolus wæs se *siðmesta* cyning þe on ðæm londe ricsade' (13-16, my emphasis; King Sardanapallus ruled in Assyria, where King Ninus ruled first. And Sardanapallus was the last king to rule in that land).⁴ As the first king in the world, Ninus also offers a more transcendent model of sovereignty. The significance of Ninus' example in this regard is emphasized a few chapters after the account of his life in the OE *Orosius*, in Book I.v:

Wæs se hunger on þæs cyninges dagum on Egyptum þe mon hæf Amoses, þeah ðe hiora þeaw wære þæt hi ealle hiora cyningas hetan Pharaon. On ðære ylcan tide ricsade Baleus se cyning in Assirin, þær ær wæs Ninus. On þæm leodum þe mon Argi hæf

² See Fear, *History*, fn to 1.4.3. Cf. the *Historia* Book 1.4.43/3-44/3: '[n]ouissime Zoroastrem Bactrianorum regem eundemque magicæ ut ferent artis repertorem pugna oppressum interfecit.' (p.51: '[h]is last deed was to defeat in battle and slay Zoroaster, the king of the Bactrians, whom men say was the discoverer of the art of magic.')

³ See Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 21/24. See also Godden, 'OE *Orosius* and its sources,' 306. Godden suggests that a gloss in the copy of the *Historia* used by the Old English author led to the detail that Ninus was the first of all kings.

⁴ Ninus is not referenced in the *Historia*'s corresponding passage in Book 1.19.68-69/1.

ricsade Apis se cyningc. On þære tide næs na ma cyninga anwalda butan þysan þrim ricum. *Ac syþþan wæs sio bysen of him ofer ealle world.* (24/16-22; my emphasis.)

(There was a famine in Egypt in the days of the king they call Amasis, although it was their custom to call all their kings ‘Pharaoh.’ In the same time the King Baleus ruled in Assyria, *where Ninus was before*. In the lands that people call the Argives the King Apis ruled. In that time there were no more dominions of kings apart from these three kingdoms. *But since then their model has been around the whole world.*)

Here Ninus’ importance in both Assyrian and world history is underscored. The reign of King Baleus of Assyria is related back to Ninus, reminding us of his legacy and status as the first king of the world. This reminder also attributes the ‘model’ or ‘example’ (*bysen*) of kingship that was established by the Pharaoh Amasis, King Baleus of Assyria and King Apis of the Argives to Ninus as the founding king; their example was replicated across the world but Ninus came before Baleus. Interestingly, the Old English history shapes the model of kingship and the legacy of Ninus in ways that the *Historia* does not. In Book 1.8 of the Latin, which corresponds to this excerpt from the OE *Orosius* Book I.v, Ninus is not mentioned and there is no suggestion that Amasis, Baleus and Apis set an example for all the kingdoms that followed them in history.⁵ A history of kingship is developed consciously in the OE *Orosius*, therefore. History is masculinized.

The implications of the model or example, *bysen*, of kingship that is set down by Ninus and the kings who follow him extend further than the narrative of the OE *Orosius*. The adverb *syþþan*, ‘since’ or ‘afterwards,’ reaches out of the text to invite the audience of the OE *Orosius* to draw a line of inheritance to their own Christian kings, contemporary and past, and to regard themselves in the context of world history. The literary examples of *Ælfred cyning* (13/29) in the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i, as well as the kings of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* can be traced from this pagan model regardless of their faith.⁶ Admittedly, the convention of exemplification as expressed by the word, *bysen* is usually found in Christian contexts, where it relates to idealized spiritual conduct. The *DOE* entry for *bysen* references instances of the noun in a variety of pedagogical, theological and

⁵ Cf. *Historia*, Book 1.8.51/10: ‘[f]uit itaque haec fames magna sub rege Aegyptiorum Diopolita, cui nomen erat Amosis, quo tempore Baleus Assyrios, Argiuos Apis regebat.’ (p.56: ‘[t]he great famine occurred in the reign of the Egyptian king Diopoli whose name was Amosis. He lived at the time when Baleus ruled over the Assyrians, and when the Argives were ruled by Apis.’) The absence of an equivalent statement in the Latin about the model of kingship is noted by Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 24/20-2. Ninus appears thirteen times in the OE *Orosius* in Book I, II and VI and in the list of chapter headings, 1/3-4: ‘[h]u Ninus, Asiria cyning, ongon monna ærest ricsian on þiosan middangearde.’ (how Ninus, king of Assyria, began to rule first of all men in this *middangeard*).

⁶ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*. O’Brien O’Keeffe, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS C*.

liturgical texts such as the homilies, the Old English *Dialogues*, saints' lives, the *Pastoral Care*, Old English glosses to the Latin Gospels and the Old English version of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*.⁷ Indeed, we see the word *bysen* used in terms of a Christian example in Book V.xiii of the OE *Orosius*, although the exemplum is still a pagan ruler. The Roman Emperor Augustus is said to act 'unwitende [...] on Godes *bisene*' (131/5-6, my emphasis; unwittingly according to/ as God's *example*) because his reign coincides with the birth of Christ. Augustus is, therefore, a pre-Christian anticipatory model of Christian sovereignty, who forges a link between pagan and Christian kings through exemplification rather than by calling attention to their differences. The model, *bysen*, and history of kingship in the OE *Orosius* includes a spectrum of kings that cuts across conversionary histories and exists outside of religious categorization, incorporating the Christian, the pagan and the somewhere in between like Augustus; the ancient human inside the text and the Anglo-Saxon beyond its narrative.

However, the history of kingship in the OE *Orosius* is interrupted by a parallel history of queenship and warrior women. Most immediately, this interruption occurs between the reigns of Ninus and Baleus when Assyria is under the leadership of the wife of Ninus, Queen Semiramis. Following the account of Ninus' life in Book I.ii, the story of Semiramis' leadership does not map directly to the model of queenship in Anglo-Saxon England where, as Stacy Klein points out, 'queens were almost always queens consort; that is, they became queens through marriage rather than through inheritance.'⁸ Semiramis is first a queen consort and then a queen in her own right. Yet Semiramis does exemplify the cultural suspicion of excessive female power.⁹ When the OE *Orosius* was transmitted in the ninth and early tenth centuries, female power was especially contentious in Wessex. Pauline Stafford has noted that the title for a queen, *cwen* 'is not lightly used in West Saxon sources' from this period, such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, because it was a status rarely awarded to the wives of kings.¹⁰ As Klein illustrates, Asser provides an explanation for the low status of the wives of kings in ninth-century Wessex in his *Life of Alfred* when he describes how Queen Eadburh tarnished the role.¹¹ Eadburh, he records, abused her position, afflicting her husband

⁷ DOE, s.v. 'bysen' (accessed September 2016).

⁸ See Stacy S. Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2006), p.10.

⁹ See Andrew Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes: A Study of Allusion and Myth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), pp.24-26 and pp.127-29 for Semiramis' image in the Babylon myth in Western culture.

¹⁰ Pauline Stafford, *Gender, Family and the Legitimation of Power: England from the Ninth to Early Twelfth Century*, Variorum Collected Studies Series CS850 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p.144. See pp.139-154 for the West Saxon attitude towards women and the wives of kings.

¹¹ Klein, *Ruling Women*, pp.12-13. Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, pp.11-13.

and his people, and causing subsequent royal wives to be excluded from the throne both literally and symbolically.¹²

Despite thematic crossovers between the West Saxon example of Eadburh recorded by Asser and the example of Semiramis from ancient history in the OE *Orosius*, their excessive female power has different consequences. Whilst Eadburh's example can be viewed in the context of royal wives being written out of the historical record of ninth-century Wessex, the account of Semiramis in the OE *Orosius* writes a queen back in to ancient history. Semiramis is not mentioned in the first part of Book I.ii, which relates the life of Ninus from his kingship to his death. When she is introduced to the narrative, therefore, history is rewritten in female terms:

7 æfter his deaðe Sameramis his cwen fengc ægþer ge to þæm gewinne ge to þæm rice, 7 hio þæt ylce gewin þe hio hine on bespon mid manigfealdon firenlustum twa 7 feowertig wintra wæs dreogende. 7 hyre þagyt to lytel þuhte þæs anwaldes ðe se cyningc ær gewunnen hæfde. Ac hio mid wiflice niðe wæs feohtende on þæt underiende folc Æthiopam 7 eac on Indeas, þa nan man ne ær ne syððan mid gefeohte ne gefor buton Alexander. Hio wæs wilniende mid gewinum þæt hio hy oferswiðde, ða hio hit ðurhteon ne mihte. Sio gitsung þa 7 þa gewin wæron grimlicran þonne hy nu syn, for ðon hy hyre nane bysene ær ne cuðan swa men nu witon, ac on bilwitnesse hyra lif alyfdon.

Seo ylce cwen Sameramis syððan þæt rice wæs on hyre gewearde, nales þæt an þæt hio ðyrstende wæs on symbel mannes blodes, ac eac swelce mid ungemetlicre wrænnesse manigfeald geligre fremmende wæs, swa þæt ælcne þara þe hio geacsian myhte þæt kynekynnes wæs, hio to hyre gespon for hyre geligernesse, 7 syððan hio hy ealle mid facne beswac to deaðe. 7 þa æt nehstan hyre agene sunu hio genam hyre to geligere, 7 for ðon þe hio hyre firenluste fulgan ne moste butan manna bysmrunge, hio gesette ofer ealle hyre rice þæt nan forbyrd nære æt geligere betwuh nanre sibbe. (22/8-28; my emphasis.)

(And after his death his queen Semiramis took both to the war and to the kingdom, and she continued the same war that *she had incited in him with manifold lusts* for forty-two years. And yet the power that the king had won before meant little to her. But *with womanly spite* she fought the harmless Ethiopian folk and also the Indians, who no one before or since has approached with an attack aside from Alexander. She wanted to overcome them with wars, although she could not follow this through. Greed and war

¹² Asser's Eadburh can be compared to *Beowulf's* Modthryth. Whilst Modthryth's disruption of the expectations of a King's wife to peace-weave is corrected in the poem by an alternative marriage to Offa, Eadburh's behaviour was corrected in the West Saxon court by a denigration of the status of subsequent queens-consort. *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by R.D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp.65-66, lines 1931-62.

were grimmer than they are now, because *they did not know any previous example of them as men know now*, but lived their life in innocence.

The same queen Semiramis, after the kingdom was in her power, was not only always *thirsting for men's blood*, but she also committed manifold illicit intercourse with most immeasurable wickedness, so that anyone she discovered to be of royal blood she enticed into intercourse with her, and then she deceptively tricked them to death. And then finally she took her own son to bed with her, and because she could not indulge *her lust* without people's condemnation, she established across her whole kingdom that incest was not forbidden.)

According to this account, the success of Ninus as a king and oppressor needs to be re-evaluated. We learn that the wars Ninus fought in Asia, which had led to his domination of that region, were actually motivated by Semiramis. Ninus' 'ungemætliecre gewilnunge anwaldes' (21/25; immeasurable desire for power) is re-orientated as the sexually-fuelled desire of Semiramis, who had spurred him on; she picks up the war that she had 'incited' (*bespon*) Ninus to fight because of her own 'various lusts' (*manigfealdon firenlustum*). Here Semiramis' power, both as a royal wife and a ruling queen, is expressed in terms of sexual desire. Indeed, the entire account of the reign of Semiramis is freighted with her femininity and her sexuality as the quotation above demonstrates. Semiramis not only thirsts for blood but also commits incest with the 'royal kin' (*kynekynnes*) and then murder, merging gastronomic desire, sexual desire and violent desire. Lusting after those of royal blood leads to sex with 'her own son' (*hyre agene sunu*) and changing the laws of Assyria to condone incest. Semiramis' sexual appetite and her identity as a ruling queen are thus inseparable. Her excessive female power is expressed in terms of excessive and deviant lust.

Andrew Scheil has noted that 'incest and cross-dressing were [...] standard components of [Semiramis'] legend throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages.'¹³ Interestingly, whilst the author of the OE *Orosius* emphasizes Semiramis' incestuous nature, he or she does not include her transvestism. In Book 1.4 of the *Historia*, on the other hand, Semiramis is described as assuming the spirit of Ninus when he dies and cross-dressing as her son: '[h]uic mortuo Semiramis uxor successit, uirim animo, habitu filium gerens.' (I.4.44/4; p.51: 'On his death his wife, Semiramis, succeeded him. She had her husband's spirit and took on his son's appearance.') So whilst the Latin seeks to contain and explain Semiramis' feminine violence within a male mould, the Old English focuses on the dangerous potential of extreme and undiluted female power.

¹³ See Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes*, p.128: 'incest and cross-dressing were [...] standard components of the Queen of Babylon's legend throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages.'

Semiramis' violence is not mimetic: she does not imitate Ninus' male example but instead strikes out a paradigm of female power and violence in the OE *Orosius*.

Indeed, we might note the differentiation between Semiramis' style of war-waging and that of Ninus in Book I.ii of the OE *Orosius*, which compares and contrasts their female and male power. Semiramis fights with specifically *wiflice nið*, that is, 'womanly' or 'wifely spite.' It is with this womanly spite that Semiramis attacks the Ethiopians and the Indians in parallel to Ninus' wars with the Scythians; just as the Scythians had lived without war before Ninus fought against them, the Ethiopians and the Indians are described as 'harmless' (*underiende*) and unversed in war. At this point in the narrative, Book I.ii returns to the idea of war having an origin in world history in tandem with the origins of kingship and queenship. Here we are offered the first explicit use of an example, or *bysen*, in the Old English history: '[s]io gitsung þa 7 þa gewin wæron grimlicran þonne hy nu syn, for ðon hy hyre nane *bysene* ær ne cuðan swa men *nu* witon, ac on bilwitnessse hyra lif alyfdon' (as above, my emphasis; greed and war were grimmer than they are now, because they did not know any previous *example* of them as men know *now*, but lived their life in innocence). The desire for power and the enactment of violence are paired once again. Ancient history is also pitched against the present day of the Anglo-Saxons, distancing and enjoining these disparate temporalities within the convention of exemplification. Before the time of Ninus and Semiramis, there was no model, example or *bysen* for war as there is in the world of the Anglo-Saxons, *nu*. Equally, the concept of war and conflict that the Anglo-Saxons know now can be traced back to the reigns of the first king and queen.

The examples of Ninus and Semiramis are, therefore, both interwoven and distinctive. These rulers create models for sovereignty, war and violence but both the rulers and their models are distinguished by gender. In the same way that a history of kingship can be read through the OE *Orosius* – most notably in Book I.v when Ninus, Amasis, Balaus and Apis are framed as the model for all kings – there is a lineage of queens and warrior women in the history following Semiramis. The all-female tribe of the Amazons are a prominent example of this lineage in Book I.x of the OE *Orosius*.¹⁴ Like Semiramis, the Amazons interrupt the notion of masculine hegemony in the scheme of history. The tribe is formed when two princes are killed in the land they sieze between Cappadocia and Pontus, following exile from Scythia:¹⁵

¹⁴ Karma Lochrie finds connection between Semiramis and the Amazons in medieval narratives in *Heterosyncrasies: Female sexuality when normal wasn't* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp.131-33. Lochrie deals with later medieval representations of the Amazons.

¹⁵ The location of the Amazon tribe varies according to different accounts – see Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p.107.

Du wurdon hiora wif swa sarige on hiora mode 7 swa swiðlice gedrefed, ægbær ge þara æþelinga wif ge þara oþerra monna þe mid him ofslægene wæron, þætte hie wæpna naman, to þon ðæt hie heora weras *wrecan* þohton, 7 hi þa hrædlice æfter þæm ofslogan ealle þa wæpnedmen þe him on neaweste wæron. For þon hie dydon swa þe hie woldon þætte þa oþere wif wæren emsarige him, þæt hie siþþan on him fultum hæfdon, ðæt hie ma mehten heora weras *wrecan*. Hi þa þa wif ealle togædere gecirdon 7 on ðæt folc winnende wæron 7 þa wæpnedmen sleande, oð hie þæs londes hæfdon micel on hiora onwalde. Þa under þæm gewinne hie genamon friþ wið þa wæpnedmen, siþþan wæs hiera þeaw þæt hie ælce geare ymbe twelf monað tosomne ferdon 7 þær þonne bearna striendon. Eft þonne þa wif heora bearn cendon, þonne feddon hie þa mædencild 7 slogon þa hysecild. 7 þæm mædencildum hie fortendun þæt swiðre breost foran þæt hit weaxan ne sceolde, þæt hie hæfdon þy strengan scyte. For þon hi mon hæst on Crecisc Amazanas, þæt is on Englisc fortende. (29/19-35; my emphasis.)

(Then their wives – both the wives of the princes and of the other men who were slain with them – became so sore in their minds and so greatly aggrieved that they took up arms, as they intended *to get revenge* for their husbands, and shortly afterwards they killed all the warriors who were in the area. They did this because they wanted the other wives to be as sorry as them, so that then they would have the support *to get more revenge* for their husbands. Then the wives all rallied together and they waged war on the people and killed the warriors, until they had much of the land in their power. Then during the war, they made peace with the warriors; afterwards it was a custom of theirs that they came together at around the twelfth month each year and produced children. After the women gave birth to their children, they brought up the girls and killed the boys. And they burned away the right breast of the girls so that it would not grow so that they could shoot more powerfully. It is for this reason that people call them in Greek *Amazons*: that is in English, ‘seared.’)

This description of the origin of the Amazons begins with women enacting male power and violence in response to the deaths of the princes and the other men who are killed. The women are ‘so aggrieved’ (*swa [...] gedrefed*) that they take up ‘arms’ (*wæpna*) and kill all the ‘warriors’ (*wæpnedmen*); here the linguistic crossovers between the Old English words for ‘warriors’ (or, more broadly, men) and ‘arms’ highlight the close association between violence and masculinity. So, when the wives take up these male weapons they are acting for the purpose of avenging the deaths of their husbands, not only on their murderers but also on the entire system of masculine violence. This participation in and retaliation against masculine violence can be construed in the repetition of the verb, *wrecan*, ‘to avenge.’ The verb is used first in relation to the wives whose husbands have been killed but the second use relates to the wives of the men who are killed by the original grieving wives. The wives in this latter category do not get revenge on the wives who kill their husbands as the code of vengeance familiar from

Old English heroic poetry would dictate. Instead, they join forces with the original grieving wives to form an army that kills the warriors of the land and gains its own female-centred power.

Indeed, as female grief and victimization transform into empowerment, the wives become a distinctive tribe outside the structure of patriarchy; it is at this point in the narrative of Book I.x of the OE *Orosius* that the Amazons are formed. The alternative matriarchal society of the Amazons operates with its own customs and practices, or *þeawas*, which are explored in the Old English account with anthropological interest. Like all the ancient humans in the narrative of the OE *Orosius*, the Amazons are particularly interesting because they are human; their culture and society represents other ways of being human for an Anglo-Saxon audience. In the Amazons' society, for instance, men are disposable in the sense that they are used by the women for procreation every twelve months and in the sense that the male children are weeded out and killed because they do not fit the model of the culture. These customary acts create and sustain the all-female society of the Amazons and contort and confuse expectations of female behaviour in Christian Anglo-Saxon society. The act of filicide that is committed routinely by the Amazons might well horrify an Anglo-Saxon audience and is far from desirable but the act of sex purely for procreation is idealized Christian behaviour.

The most defining feature of the Amazons, however, is the practice of burning away their right breast that lends them their name.¹⁶ The bodies of the Amazons, then, are the most powerful statements of their identity. This social and cultural function of the body can be elucidated with reference to anthropological theory and practice. The anthropologist Christoph Wulf has argued that in any culture the body must be understood as 'both the product and the agent of its own socialization and enculturation.'¹⁷ This definition can apply to the literary example of the Amazons in the OE *Orosius*, who adapt their bodies because of their cultural practice of archery – searing away a breast allows for 'stronger shooting' (*strengan scyte*) – and who mark out their society and identity on their bodies at the same time. Wulf connects the role of '[t]he performativity of the body, how it is staged and enacted' in culture with language, explaining that '[h]uman corporeality is shaped by language and imagination.'¹⁸ The account of how the Amazons evolve in Book I.x of the OE *Orosius* illustrates these connections between language and the performance of a body in culture, as the women

¹⁶ Fear, *History*, fn to 64/3: '[t]he derivation of 'Amazon' from the Greek *a-mazon*, meaning 'without a breast', was popular in antiquity but its validity is dubious.'

¹⁷ Christoph Wulf, *Anthropology: A Continental Perspective*, trans. by Deirdre Winter and others (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p.x.

¹⁸ Wulf, *Anthropology*, p.x.

in the narrative are transformed from grieving wives in a patriarchal culture to participants in and producers of a matriarchal society. Whilst the wives who grieve their husbands use the ‘arms’ (*wæpna*) associated with the male body of the ‘warrior’ (*wæpnedmen*) to take revenge on male violence, the Amazons reject these weapons to develop their own distinctive practices as female warriors. As Kathryn Schwarz has argued, these practices ‘challeng[e] the convention that weapons define and protect male bodies’ – and they do so linguistically as well as symbolically and performatively.¹⁹ The cultural identity of ‘the Amazons’ is mapped directly, therefore, to their mutilated female bodies in the tribal name. As the name of the Amazons is translated from Greek (*Amazanas*) to Old English (*fortende*) and to Modern English (‘seared’), the mythical presence of the Amazons is shaped over time and across the world.²⁰

Karma Lochrie has noted the temporal elasticity of the narratives of the Amazons in later medieval literary culture, which negotiate the presence of the tribe in history and contemporary medieval geography:

[t]hey occupy [...] the medieval imagination [as] a fantasy not only of something lost but of something that remains to be encountered, of a time both past and enduring, and of an exotic *terra incognita* at the edge of the known world and, at the same time, a dangerously proximate space with respect to Western culture.²¹

Lochrie’s analysis here engages not only with the place of the Amazon on the Eastern margin of medieval world maps, along with monsters, giants and other strange races, but also with how the rituals and practices of the Amazons at once subvert and resonate with medieval Christian culture. There are some similarities between the customs of the Amazons and idealized Christian female behaviour, as I have noted briefly, but these are disrupted by non-Christian motives. The Anglo-Saxon familiarity with the mutilated body of the female saint – the paradigm of the female Christian – only serves

¹⁹ Kathryn Schwarz, *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000), p.5. Schwarz writes about the Amazon legend in the Early Modern period and beyond. See also Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p.106. Lochrie notes, here, that there is ‘a daunting absence of medieval scholarship on the subject of Amazons.’ The significance of the Amazons in the OE *Orosius* has long been overlooked.

²⁰ The endurance and scope of the Amazon myth is evidenced by the representation of Amazons in later-medieval culture – see Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, pp.103-38. For the early modern fascination with the Amazons see Schwarz, *Tough Love* and Gale Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp.234-38. For a discussion of the modern applications of the term, ‘Amazon,’ as it is applied to women in contemporary culture, see Schwarz, *Tough Love*, pp.xi-xiii; see also *OED* s.v. ‘Amazon’. Heaney’s translation of *Beowulf* is of note here for likening Grendel’s mother to an Amazon – a likeness that might well have been identified by an Anglo-Saxon audience: ‘Her onslaught was less/ only by as much as an Amazon warrior’s strength is less than an armed man’s/ when the hefted sword, its hammered edge/ and gleaming blade slathered in blood,/ razes the sturdy boar-ridge off a helmet.’ Seamus Heaney, *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, ed. by Daniel Donoghue (New York: Norton, 2002), p.35.

²¹ Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p.104.

to magnify the violent, pagan, and self-serving intentions of the Amazons' mastectomy ritual; their 'aggressive, self-determining desire' in the words of Gail Kern Paster, who has studied the Amazons in early-modern literature.²² Moreover, Lochrie has highlighted how the 'uncanny nod' of the annual sexual custom 'to the theologically derived ideal of female chastity and procreation as the *teleos* for all sexual acts threatens to dismantle that very ideal through hypertrophy and mimicry.'²³ This sexual custom is not a way of controlling bodily desire so much as channelling a desire for power over and above men through sexual means, especially as the Amazons are said to have 'killed the boys' (*slogon þa hysecild*) they produce. In this respect, the Amazon is closer to the Old Norse Valkyrie who chooses who lives and dies in battle than the virgin saint of hagiography.

In short, narratives of the Amazons exemplify the confusion of binary distinctions between good and bad, Christian and pagan, woman and man and, finally, past, present and future. In the OE *Orosius* Book I.x, the story of the Amazons also demonstrates that power and warfare are not axiomatically male domains, even if they are represented predominantly as such. Moreover, the concept of *translatio imperii* is expressed in this story through the medium of the translation of power between genders: from patriarchy to matriarchy, men to women, and then back. The power of the Amazons is increased to the scale of a world empire in Book I.x and then lost altogether, as we shall see, mimicking the pattern of rise and fall in *translatio imperii*:

Heora twa wæron heora cwena, Marsepia 7 Lampida wæron hatene: hie heora here on tu todædon, oþer æt ham beon heora lond to healdanne, oðer ut faran to winnanne. Hie siþþan *geodon Europe 7 Asiam þone mæstan dæl 7 getimbredon Effesum þa burg 7 monege oðere on ðære læssan Asiam, 7 siþþan hiera heres þone mæstan dæl ham sendon mid hiora herehyþe, 7 þone oþerne dæl þær leton þæt lond to healdonne. Þær wearð Marpesia sio cwen ofslagen, 7 micel þæs heres þe mid hiere beæftan wæs. Ðær wearð hire dohtor cwen Sinope. Seo ilce cwen Sinope toeacan hiere hwætscipe 7 hiera monigfealdum duguþum hiera lif geendade on mægðhade.*

On þæm dagum wæs swa micel ege from ðæm wifmonnum þætte Europe ne Asiam ne ealle þa neahþeoda ne mehton aþencean ne acræftan hu hi him wiðstandan mæhten, ær þon hie gecuron Ercol þone ent þæt he hie sceolde mid eallum Creca cræftum beswican; 7 þeah ne dorste he geneðan þæt he hie mid firde gefore, ær he ongan mid Creca scipun þe mon dulmunus hætt, þe mon sægð þæt on an scip mæge an þusend manna; 7 þa nihtes on ungearwe hi on bestæl 7 hie swiþe forslog 7 fordyde, 7 hwæðere ne mehte hie þæs londes benæman. On ðæm dagum þær wæron twa cwena, þæt wæron gesweostor, Anthiopa 7 Orithia, 7 þær wearð *Orithia gefangen. Æfter hiera*

²² Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed*, p.234.

²³ Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p.104.

feng to ðæm rice Penthesilia, sio on þæm Troianiscan gefeohte swiþe mære gewearð.
(30/1-23; my emphasis.)

(Two of their queens were called Marpesia and Lampeto: they divided their army into two, one half to defend their land at home, the other half to wage war abroad. Then *they conquered Europe and most of Asia and built the city Ephesus* and many others in Lesser Asia, and afterwards they sent the largest part of their army home with their booty and they left the other part to hold onto that land. Queen Marpesia was killed there and much of the army with her was left behind. Her daughter Sinope became queen there. The same Queen Sinope, in addition to her bravery and manifold virtues, ended her life in *maidenhood*.

In those days there was such awe of the women that neither Europe nor Asia nor all the surrounding territories could think or plot how they could withstand them, before they chose the giant Hercules to overcome them with all the skills of the Greeks; although he did not dare to approach them with an army, before he attacked them with the Greek ships they call *dromons*, which people say will hold a thousand men in one ship; and then at night he caught them off guard and killed many of them and destroyed them, yet he still could not take control of their land. In those days there were two queens, who were sisters, Antiope and Orithyia, and *Orithyia was snatched*. *Afterwards, he took her to the kingdom of Penthesilea, which became very famous in the Trojan War.*)²⁴

This account demonstrates how the influence and power of the Amazons has moved from a regional to a worldwide and imperial scale in the context of ancient history (that is, *on þæm dagum*, ‘in those days’ – see Chapter 4). The Amazons have taken over the majority of the known world, conquering Europe and Asia and they have made an enduring monument to their power by building the city, Ephesus. The tribe has also civilized. The Amazons now have a social hierarchy, which they did not have before, with a distinctive model of sovereignty and a designated army: one queen leads an army abroad in pursuit of power, a second queen protects the land at home. Incidentally, as Janet Bately notes, ‘this particular strategy’ was once thought to have been adopted by King Alfred ‘in his campaigns against the Danes’; a theory that fitted conveniently with the assumption that the OE *Orosius* was the work of the king but one that also serves to upend a gendered binary between kings and queens.²⁵

Even in these worldwide and civilized contexts, however, the female body and sexuality of the Amazon continue to bear significance. Queen Sinope is praised for her

²⁴ The account given in the *Historia* is different. In the Latin, Antiope’s two sisters are abducted, Melanippe by Hercules and Hippolyta by Theseus. Penthesilea is not a kingdom but the queen who succeeds Orithyia and was involved in the Trojan War. See *Historia*, Book 1.15.65/8-66/10.

²⁵ Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 30/2-3. For an example of the argument in action, see Potter, ‘Commentary on King Alfred’s *Orosius*,’ 395.

‘bravery’ (*hwætscipe*), her ‘many virtues’ (*monigfealdum dugubum*) and, finally, for her ‘virginity’ (*mægðhade*). We see again here the convergence of the conduct of the Amazon with three characteristics of a female saint – courage, virtue and chastity – confusing the supposed binary of pagan practice and Christian ideals, and imbuing a narrative that demonstrates the threat of female power with admiration of the same. Indeed, Sinope offers a stark contrast to Semiramis, whose pagan queenship is defined by her illicit desire and voracious sexual appetite and so represents a clearer distinction between desirable and undesirable femininity. Moreover, the connections that are forged between the female body of the Amazons and their eventual domination of two of the three continents in the known world of the Anglo-Saxons, *Europe* and *Asia*, inscribe and enact the growth of their power from a tribe to a kind of empire. As Clare Lees and Gillian Overing have described more generally, ‘the map of empire is written across the body’ and so gender and empire are closely related.²⁶ Sinope’s body reminds us that the power of the Amazons is entirely female and, as her virginity symbolizes, achieved without male input.

Crucially, the ‘Amazonian empire’ as we might interpret it ends in the OE *Orosius* Book I.x. when Orithyia is ‘abducted’ (*gefangen*) by Hercules and taken to Penthesilea. Power thus passes back to male hands symbolically and narratively. Lochrie has coined the phrase *translatio amazoniae* to describe the conventional dissolution of Amazonian culture in later medieval narratives, which is required ‘to defuse their threat’ to medieval Christian culture.²⁷ This phrase is also intended to acknowledge that ‘[p]articlar Amazons, such as Camilla and Penthesilea [the author of the OE *Orosius* mixes up the Amazon and the kingdom], found their way into narratives of *translatio imperii* that constructed a Trojan genealogy for later European nations, including England in its capacity as “New Troy.”’²⁸ As Elizabeth Tyler has demonstrated, ‘[u]nlike many European ruling houses, the Anglo-Saxon royal dynasties did not claim Trojan origins,’ and there are no suggestions of Trojan genealogies here.²⁹ But Lochrie’s arguments about the association of the Amazons with narratives of *translatio imperii* and the legend of Troy still apply to the early medieval portrayal of the Amazons in the OE *Orosius*. Here the legend of the Amazons and the legend of Troy are intersected in the act of Hercules moving Orithyia physically to Penthesilea, which, according to this Old English account, ‘became very famous in the Trojan War’ (*on*

²⁶ Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, ‘Signifying gender and empire,’ *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34 (2004), 1-16 (12).

²⁷ Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p.123.

²⁸ Lochrie, *Heterosyncrasies*, p.105.

²⁹ Elizabeth M. Tyler, ‘Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England: precedent without descent,’ *The Review of English Studies* 64 (2004), 1-20 (1).

þæm Troianiscan gefeohte swiþe mære gewearð). The intersection of these legends is the site of *translatio amazoniae* in the OE *Orosius*.

Although the Amazons gain and lose power within the narrative of Book I.x, occupying only a small portion of the history, they do have historical significance and a textual legacy. Just as Ninus is referenced explicitly on ten occasions after the account of his life in Book I.ii to reinforce his importance to the history of kingship (Book I.v.24/19, xii.32/14; Book II.i.36/12, 36/25, 37/5, 37/7, 37/25, 43/21; Book VI.i.133/1, 133/23), there are implicit reminders of the Amazons following Book I.x. On a number of occasions, queens and warrior women appear in Scythia, which was the homeland of the founders of the Amazons (Book I.xiii.34/25-7; Book II.iv.45/2; Book III.vii.30/27-30; III.viii.71/5). One prominent example of an Amazonian descendent is the Scythian warrior queen Thamyris, who I discuss in the next parallel of this Chapter. The Amazons and Queen Semiramis before them, then, set the model or precedent for female violence and sovereignty in history.

Most potently, however, the narrative of the Amazons in Book I.x of the OE *Orosius* offers an alternative history of female power within a history of empires that is largely dominated by men. The history of the world is interrupted, reorientated and feminized by the Amazons in the interlude of Book I.x, much in the same way that the account of Semiramis' life rewrites the history of the first king in Book I.ii. Indeed, the extent of the Amazons' power in the context of world history is illuminated in the commentary of Orosius when he addresses his intra-textual Roman audience:

Hit is scondlic, cwæð Orosius, ymb swelc to spreccanne hwelc hit þa wæs, þa swa earme wif 7 swa elðeodige hæfdon gegan þone cræftgestan dæl 7 þa hwatestan men ealles þises middangeardes, þæt wæs Asiam 7 Europe, þa hie forneah mid ealle aweston 7 ealda ceastra 7 ealde byrig towurpon, 7 æfter ðæm hie dydon ægþer ge cyninga ricu settan ge niwu ceastra timbredon, 7 ealle þa worold on hiora agen gewill onwendende wæron folneah c wintra. (30/24-30; my emphasis.)

(It is scandalous, said Orosius, to speak about how it was then, when such wretched and foreign women had taken over the most powerful part and the bravest men of this whole *middangeard*, that was Asia and Europe, when they nearly completely wasted it and destroyed every city and every town, and after they did so they both set up kingdoms and built new cities, and *the whole world was turning on their own will for nearly a hundred years*.)

In this instance of polemic, Orosius condemns the 'wretched' (*earme*) and 'foreign' (*elðeodige*) Amazons as part of a longer discussion that frames the women as a symbol of the chaos of the pagan world (30/24-31/21). The chapter ends with Orosius asking his Romans: '[h]u wene ge hwelce sibbe þa weras hæfden ær þæm cristendome, þonne

heora wif swa monigfeald yfel donde wæron on þiosan middangearde?’ (I.x.31/19-21; how can you believe that men had such peace before Christendom, when their wives did so many evil things on this *middangeard*?) At the same time, however, Orosius’ words underscore the impact of the Amazons, lending their command over the world an almost cosmological energy. These are not warrior women at the edges of the known world with other anomalous races and creatures; they are ruling it. The Amazons have rebuilt all the towns and the cities in Asia and Europe to construct a world on their own female terms. They have established seats of power that are nominally reserved for men, that is, ‘kingdoms’ (*cyninga ricu*), reinventing masculine sovereignty for women. Indeed, their power is so great that even the world itself seems to spin at their control, ‘turning on their own will’ (*on hiora agen gewill onwendende*) for almost a century.

We might pause for a moment to reflect on the implications and effects of Orosius speaking here. Why does the Old English author include this construction of Orosian polemic for the early fifth-century Romans? It should be noted that a significant part of the polemic that follows the quotation above is, in Bately’s words, ‘virtually independent’ of the Latin.³⁰ As well as characterizing Orosius and the Romans and narrativizing the intended function of the *Historia*, the polemic also draws upon the authority of Orosius as a historian. If we return to Mary Kate Hurley’s argument that Orosius ‘stands as the arbiter [...] of what is worthy of record in history and what ought be [sic] left out’ in the OE *Orosius* (see Chapter 1), his decision to hold the Amazons up as an example to the Romans of what the world looked like before Christianity lends them a deserved place in the record of human history.³¹

This parallel between the account of the reign of Ninus of Assyria and the narratives of Semiramis and the Amazons in the OE *Orosius* has explored the history of the first kings and the first ruling queens and warrior women in the world. In these narratives, I have identified the origins and the models or examples, *bysena*, of sovereignty and violence. I have also highlighted the crucial role of gender in the development of culture, power and empire. The movement of power between kings and queens in the OE *Orosius* can be used both to demonstrate and to consider the process of *translatio imperii*. As the accounts of Semiramis and the Amazons rewrite history in female terms, they anticipate the Anglo-Saxon hindsight that re-reads the role of the Roman Empire in the pattern of *translatio imperii* in the OE *Orosius*. As discussed further at the end of this Chapter, this Anglo-Saxon hindsight is apparent in the

³⁰ Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 31/2-21. The account of the Amazons in the *Historia* is in Book 1.15; a polemical comment appears at the beginning of Book 1.16.

³¹ Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities,’ 411.

comparisons made in the history between Babylon – the city built by Ninus and Semiramis – and Rome.

The narratives of Semiramis and the Amazons in the OE *Orosius* also attest to an Anglo-Saxon awareness of the crucial and powerful role of women in the history of the world albeit as interruptions within a masculine hegemonic framework. The paganism of Semiramis and the Amazons and their position in ancient history places them at a remove from Christian Anglo-Saxon culture; in this respect, their behaviour is not necessarily desirable but nor is it directly threatening. They are, however, not completely detached from the complex ideals, expectations and representations of women in that Anglo-Saxon culture, from queen Eadburh to female saints.

Parallel 2 – Cyrus, King of the Persians and Thamyris, Scythian Queen

The second parallel I draw in this Chapter is between the representation of King Cyrus of the Persians and that of the Scythian Queen Thamyris, who kills him. Cyrus and Thamyris can be situated broadly against the examples and legacies of Ninus, Semiramis and the Amazons identified in my first parallel, as a king and a Scythian warrior queen. Their cultural and imperial identities also put them at odds with these precedents, however: Thamyris has a son, immediately differentiating her from Amazonian practice, and Cyrus is responsible for the destruction of Babylon, which was built by Semiramis and Ninus. Indeed, Cyrus' role in ending the Babylonian Empire and shifting power from Babylon to Rome anticipates the final parallel of this Chapter. This second parallel is based around literary readings of the historical contact between Cyrus and Thamyris in Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius* and the series of events that lead up to their confrontation. My readings here will offer additional ways of thinking through the interplay of *translatio imperii* and gender.

The final defeat of Cyrus by Thamyris in Book II.iiii can be read very productively in the context of two earlier descriptions in the Old English history. These descriptions involve Cyrus' strategy in his battle to win control of the Medes from his uncle, Astyages and his division of the River Gyndes into lots of tributaries to allow his crossing to Babylon. The continuities that emerge from these accounts become significant to the overthrowing of Cyrus: the accounts gesture towards power dynamics between men and women, which culminate in the full male-to-female combat of Cyrus and Thamyris; the characteristic strategies of Cyrus that are set up in these accounts play a crucial role in his own downfall.

Cyrus appears in the OE *Orosius* for the first time in Book I.xii, when he enters into battle with his uncle, Astyages, the king of the Medes.³² In the account of the battle in which Cyrus first wins significant power, a detail emerges about how Cyrus arranges his army:

7 he Cirus Persea cyning hæfde þriddan dæl his firde beæftan him, on þæt gerad, gif ænig wære þe fyr fluge þe on ðæm gefeohte wæs þonne to þæm folce þe þær beæftan wæs, þæt hine mon sloge swa raðe swa mon hiora fiend wolde. Þa þeahhwæðre gebyrede him þæt hie hwæthwara gebugan to fleonne. Hi þa hiera wif him ongean iernende wæron 7 hie swiþe tornwyrdon 7 acsedon, gif hie feohtan ne dorsten, hwider hie fleon woldon; þæt hie oðer gener næfdon, buton hie on heora wifa hrif gewiton. Hi þa hrædlice, æfter þæm þe þa wif hie swa scondlice geræht hæfdon, gewendan eft ongean þone cyning 7 ealne his here gefliemdon 7 hiene selfne gefengon. (33/15-25; my emphasis.)

(And Cyrus, the king of the Persians, kept a third of his army behind him, with the intention that, if anyone further were to flee in the battle they would meet the army that was behind, which would kill the men as keenly as they would their enemy. Then it happened to him regardless so a few of them turned to flee. Then their wives ran towards them and they shouted at them and asked: if they did not dare to fight, where did they want to flee? They did not have any other refuge, unless they went into the belly of their wives. Then soon after the wives had pulled them up so shamefully, they turned towards the king again and made his whole army flee and seized him.)

This account differs from that of the *Historia* Book 1.19, which does not report that Cyrus placed ‘a third part’ (*þriddan dæl*) of his army behind him but notes instead that Astyages threatened that any of the men who were thinking about fleeing ‘ferro exciperetur’ (1.19.70/8; p.68: ‘would meet him, sword in hand’). Malcolm Godden remarks on this discrepancy in his argument that the OE *Orosius* was composed from a glossed copy of the *Historia*. Indeed, the *Historia* offers a shortened version of the narration of the battle by Justinus, who explains that Astyages positioned a third of his army to catch any troops who fled on his side; Godden hypothesizes that the Old English author misapplied a marginal gloss about Astyages to Cyrus.³³ Godden points out the incongruity in the Old English account between the description of Cyrus’ strategy and the subsequent intervention of the wives in the narrative, who are the real reason the warriors return to battle not the men waiting behind.³⁴ The qualification that Cyrus’ strategy anticipated that ‘further’ (*fyr*) men might flee also points towards

³² Astyages was actually the grandfather of Cyrus, as noted correctly in the *Historia*, Book 1.19.70/6: ‘Astyages, uirili prole uacuuus, Cyrum nepotem apud Persas genitum habuit.’ (p.68: ‘Astyages had no male offspring, but had a grandson, Cyrus, born among the Persians.’) See Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 33/3.

³³ Godden, ‘OE *Orosius* and its sources,’ 311-12.

³⁴ Godden, ‘OE *Orosius* and its sources,’ 311.

the Old English author's confusion over the turn of events. Just before the excerpt quoted here, there is a brief description of how the 'alderman' (*ealdormenn*) of Astyages, Harpalus, causes many of his army to flee and hands power over to Cyrus (Book I.xii.33/9-12). It is not clear, however, that Harpalus handed over those who escaped from Astyages' army to Cyrus in an act of treachery, as recorded in the *Historia* Book 1.19 (70/8); this is presumably what the Old English author is thinking of when he or she writes, 'further.'

The unquestionable issues with logic and consistency within the description of the battle in the OE *Orosius* Book I.xii can be reinterpreted when the broader characterization of Cyrus is considered. The same inconsistent detail about Cyrus dividing his army is consistent with the actions of Cyrus later in the OE *Orosius* as I will demonstrate in this parallel. Divisions and the connection between intention and action are recurring themes in the episodes that include Cyrus in the Old English history. These themes can be identified, for example, when Cyrus enacts his strategy of positioning a third of his army behind him in Book I.xii as he does so 'with the intention' (*on þæt gerad*) of stopping his men from fleeing. The description of the battle in Book I.xii is also significant in terms of the relationships and tensions between men and women that are negotiated in Cyrus' encounters with the River Gyndes, which he distributes into tributaries on the way to Babylon, and Queen Thamyris in Book II.iiii. The women who run on to the battlefield here in Book I.xii shame the men into fighting by emphasizing the subversion of gender roles and using their female bodies as the sites of metaphor and signification: they suggest that there is nowhere for the men to take 'refuge' (*gener*), other than their 'belly' or 'womb' (*hrif*). In other words, not only do the men have no option than to face the battle but their cowardice in trying to flee is described as infantile. The women are shaped as the protectors and, for a moment, they hold the power of the battle. But unlike the Amazons and Queen Thamyris, as we shall see, they are out of their proper place on the battlefield because they are not Scythian; their action is so shaming for the men because they have stepped into a male domain.

The points that I have signposted in the account of Cyrus' battle with Astyages – divisions, intention and action, and the imagery of the female body – can also be identified in the episode that sees Cyrus diffusing the River Gyndes and the River Euphrates in Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius*. As in the *Historia* Book 2.6, there are specific details in the OE *Orosius* about why and how Cyrus divides the Gyndes, which offer reflections on Cyrus' male dominance and reinforce the power that he has obtained:

Cirus, Persa cyning, þe we ær beforan sægdon, þa hwile ðe Sabini 7 Romane wunnon on þæm westdæle, þa hwile wonn he ægþer ge on Scipþie ge on Indie, oþ he hæfde mæst ealne þone eastdæl awest, 7 æfter ðæm fird gelædde to Babylonia, þe þa welegre wæs þonne ænig uoþeru burg. Ac hiene Gandes seo ea þæs oferfæreldes longe gelette, for þæm þe þær scipa næron. Þæt is ealra ferscra wætera mæst buton Euftrate. Þa gebeotode an his ðegna þæt he mid sunde þa ea oferfaran wolde mid twam tyncenum, ac hiene se stream fordraf. Ða gebeotode Cirus ðæt he his þegn on hire swa gewreacan wolde, þa he swa grom wearð on his mode 7 wiþ þa ea gebolgen, þæt *hie mehte wifmon be hiere cneowe oferwadan*, þær heo ær wæs nigon mila brad þonne heo fledu wæs. *He þæt mid dædum gelæste 7 hie upp forlet* an feower hund ea 7 on lx 7 siþþan mid his firde þær oferfor. 7 æfter þæm Euftrate þa ea, seo is mæst eallra ferscra wætera 7 is irnende þurh middewealde Babylonia burg, he hie eac mid gedelfe on monige ea *upp forlet 7 siþþan* mid eallum his folce on ðære ea gong on þa burg færende wæs 7 hie gerahte. (43/1-18; my emphasis.)

(While the Sabines and the Romans fought in the West, Cyrus, king of the Persians, as we said before, fought both in Scythia and in India, until he had laid waste to almost the entire East, and afterwards he led an army to Babylon, which was wealthier than any other city. But the River Gyndes stopped him by the long passage across, because there were no ships there. It is the greatest of all bodies of fresh water apart from the Euphrates. Then one of his thanes boasted that he would get across the river by swimming with two small casks, but the current carried him off. Then Cyrus boasted that he would avenge his thane on it, as he became so fierce in his mind and swollen with anger against the river, so that *a woman might be able to wade over with it up to her knees*, where it was nine-miles wide when it was flooded before. *He followed it through with deeds and divided it up* into four hundred and sixty streams and then marched across with his army. And afterwards he also *distributed* the Euphrates, which is the greatest of all bodies of fresh water and runs through the middle of Babylon, by digging it into lots of rivers and then he marched into the city with all his troops along the river bed and seized it.)

Here Cyrus has moved on from dividing his troops on the battlefield to dividing up rivers. These acts of division are both exertions of the military power of Cyrus, whether over the warriors in his army or the waterways obstructing his journey to Babylon. They are also enacted in the context of Cyrus seeking to extend his power in each setting. The apocryphal historical episode of Cyrus being unable to cross the River Gyndes, losing a member of his retinue to the current of the water, taking vengeance on the river and lowering the waterlevel to the height of a woman's knees is not unique to the OE *Orosius* and its details correspond more or less to the account in the *Historia* Book

2.6.³⁵ But the description of the episode in Old English bears association with the tropes of heroic literature, which construct a distinctive Anglo-Saxon identity for Cyrus as a powerful male warrior. Whilst the extant manuscript witnesses of the *Historia* note that either one of the king's horses or horsemen drowned in the river, depending on the version offered, the Old English account of the episode records that it was a 'thane' (*þegn*) of Cyrus who died.³⁶ Deborah VanderBilt has argued in another context that the use of the word *þegn* or *ðegn* in the OE *Orosius* recalls the convention of *comitatus* between a lord and his warriors found in texts such as *Beowulf*: '[t]his attention to the thanes is in conformity with other Old English literature concerned with martial themes; the loyal *comitatus* is a necessary part of the praiseworthiness of a lord.'³⁷ Insular tradition, VanderBilt argues, influences how the author presents the history sourced from the *Historia*, as 'certain situations fit a conceptual "grid" with which he is already familiar through his everyday use of the vernacular and his familiarity with its traditions'; the audience interprets the history from a similar position, as certain 'scenes spark the appearance of a traditional idiom.'³⁸ VanderBilt's arguments can be applied to Cyrus reacting to the death of his thane by taking vengeance on the river as if it is a human or monstrous adversary. The relationship, or *comitatus*, between Cyrus and his men that is captured by the word, *þegn* bolsters his identity as a ruler and expresses his power and status. The extent of his anger, as he becomes 'swollen with rage' (*gebolgen*), is a statement of the strength of this lord-to-thane relationship and so works to heighten his status even further. The significance and meaningfulness of Cyrus' diffusion of the river is increased, therefore, as his desire 'to avenge' (*[g]ewreca*) the river is construed through the conventions of the heroic code and the loyalty between a lord and his thane. Falling within this theme of heroic vengeance is the conventional process of a warrior converting words into deeds: Cyrus 'boasted' (*gebeotode*) that he would avenge the river – as his thane 'boasted' (*gebeotode*) he could swim across – and then 'he followed this through with deeds' (*[he] þæt mid dædum gelæste*).

The act that Cyrus follows through is to divide up the Gyndes – which, we are told, is nine miles across and the second largest body of fresh water in the world – into hundreds of streams. This feat is measured using the female body, which offers a way of emphasizing how low Cyrus brings the level of the water; even a woman can wade across comfortably with the water below her knees once Cyrus has finished his work.

³⁵ See Bately's commentary for so-called 'additions' in the OE *Orosius* and disagreements between the Latin and Old English accounts – Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 43/1-2 – 43/12-13.

³⁶ See Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 43/7-8. Cf. *Historia* Book 2.6.96/3: 'unum regiorum equorum.' (p.83: 'one of the king's horses.')

³⁷ VanderBilt, 'Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,' 387.

³⁸ VanderBilt, 'Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,' 388.

Indirectly, the association of the level of the water with the height of a woman frames femininity in opposition to Cyrus, boosting his masculine persona and dominance in contrast to the feminine river, which was previously described in the terms of an adversary. Indeed, as a literary device, the river navigates and genders Cyrus' pursuit of power in various ways in the episode of Book II.iii. The Gyndes and the Euphrates first block and then enable Cyrus' passage to Babylon with his army once he has divided them both. As the Euphrates 'flows' or 'runs' (*is irnende*) through the centre of Babylon, Cyrus is able to walk along it to storm the city and bring about the end of the Babylonian Empire. In addition, Babylon is anthropomorphized as both male and female in the OE *Orosius* as explored in the next parallel of this Chapter. The 'running' (*irnende*) of the Euphrates into Babylon signals back to the women who 'ran' (*iernende wæron*) onto the battlefield in Book I.xii, setting the conflict back on course for Cyrus to win the power of the Medes from Astyages. In both contexts, then – battlefield and riverbed – the female body is used as an analogy to propel Cyrus' quest for power and to move the narrative forward. The episode of Cyrus dividing up the Gyndes and then the Euphrates (Book II.iii) bridges the accounts of Cyrus dividing his army (Book I.xii) and being overthrown by Thamyris at the end of Book II.iii. This episode, therefore, connects the rise and fall of Cyrus' power, which is in turn framed around the description of the downfall of Babylon; that is, the point in the narrative at which imperial power passes from Babylon to Rome.

Indeed, the denouement of the account of Cyrus' kingship comes immediately after his destruction of Babylon in Book II.iii. Cyrus first travels into Scythia from Babylon across the River Araxes, sustaining his association with rivers and traversing the sites of the Assyrian Empire and Amazonian heritage. According to the Old English account, Thamyris' son – who remains unnamed but is identified as *an giong cyning* three times (44/17-8, 23, 27; a young king) – allows Cyrus' passage across the river in the belief that he can overcome him once he is inside the border (44/21-3). Notably, in the *Historia* Book 2.7, Thamyris is identified as the ruler of the people from the beginning of the account not her son and it is she who is said to have let Cyrus in when he could have been held back:

Quem Thamyris regina quae tunc genti praeerat cum *prohibere transitu Araxis fluminis posset, transire permisit*, primum propter fiduciam sui, dehinc propter oportunitatem ex obiectu fluminis hostis inclusi. (98/1; my emphasis.)

(p.85: 'Although Queen Thamyris who at that time ruled this race *could have stopped him crossing the river Araxes, she allowed him to cross* both because of her own

confidence and because this gave her a chance to trap her enemy as he would have the river to his rear.')³⁹

In contrast to the Latin account, the judgement of the Old English *Thamyris* is not challenged and Cyrus' access to Scythia is put down instead to the inexperience of a young king. Cyrus learns of the young king's strategy to overthrow him and so pretends to flee, planting wine in his camp for the young king to find with his army. The power of Cyrus unravels from here, as the strands of his representation in the OE *Orosius* are pulled together at the end of Book II.iii:

Hie ðær þa mid micelre bliðnesse buton gemetgunge þæt win drincende wæron, oð hi heora selfra lytel geweald hæfdon. He þa Cirus hie þær besyrede 7 mid ealle ofslog; 7 siþþan wæs færende þær ðæs cyninges modor mid þæm twæm dælum þæs folces wuniende wæs, þa he *þone ðriddan dæl* mid ðæm cyninge beswicen hæfde. Hio þa seo cwen Dameris mid micelre gnornunge ymb þæs cyninges slege hiere suna þencende wæs, hu heo hit *gewrecan* mehte, 7 *þæt eac mid dædum gelæste* 7 hiere *folc* on tu *todælde*, ægþer ge wifmen ge wæpnedmen, for þon þe þær wifmenn feohtað swa same swa wæpnedmen. Hio mid þæm healfan dæle beforan þæm cyninge farende wæs *swelce heo fleonde wære*, oð hio hiene gelædde on an micel slæd, 7 se healfa dæl wæs Ciruse æfterfylgende. Þær wearþ Cirus ofslægen, 7 twa þusend monna mid him. Seo cwen het þa ðæm cyninge þæt heafod of aceorfan 7 beweorpan on anne cylle, se wæs afylled monnes blodes, 7 þus cwæð: 'Þu þe þyrstende wære monnes blodes xxx wintra, drync nu þine fylle.' (44/29-45/9; my emphasis.)

(They drank the wine with great joy but no moderation, until they had little control over themselves. Then Cyrus trapped them there and killed them all; and as he was leaving the king's mother was waiting with two parts of the army, as *the third part* had been tricked with the king. Queen *Thamyris*, with much grief for him, thought about how she could *avenge* the murder of her son on the king, and *she also followed that through with deeds* and *divided her army* into two parts, both women and men, because women fight the same as the male warriors there. She marched ahead of the king with one half *as if she were fleeing*, until she led him into a great valley, and the other half followed after Cyrus. Then Cyrus was killed, with two thousand of his men. The queen ordered the king's head to be cut off and thrown into a bag, which was filled with men's blood, and she said this: 'you have thirsted for men's blood for thirty years, now drink your fill.')

Cyrus and *Thamyris* are aligned very closely in this account as the tactics and tropes now associated with Cyrus are repeated here. Indeed, *Thamyris* subverts the power of Cyrus so effectively because she follows his example; her strategies are modelled on his own. First, as *Thamyris* seeks to 'avenge' (*gewrecan*) the death of her son there are

³⁹ Emphasis here preserved from Fear.

parallels with Cyrus' vengeance on the River Gyndes for the death of his thane. Just as Cyrus translated a boast into deeds in that earlier episode in Book II.iiii (*[h]e þæt mid dædum gelæst*; 43/13), Thamyris 'considered' (*þencende wæs*) how to get revenge and 'also followed through with deeds' (*eac mid dædum gelæste*); the adverb, 'also' (*eac*) is instrumental to the mirroring of Cyrus and Thamyris here. Crucially, however, the vengeance of Cyrus and Thamyris is gendered: whilst Cyrus' vengeance was that of a king for a thane, Thamyris seeks revenge for the death of her son as both a 'mother' (*modor*) and a 'queen' (*cwen*). Thamyris also mimics the strategy of staged flight that Cyrus uses to capture her son and the strategy of dividing up her army that we saw Cyrus effect on the battlefield in Book I.xii, when he put 'a third of his army behind him' (*þriddan dæl his firde beæftan him*; 33/15-6) to stop his men from fleeing. She ensnares Cyrus in a valley by pretending to flee with one half of her remaining army, after 'the third part' (*þone ðriddan dæl*) was killed with her son. Again, the gender differences between Cyrus and Thamyris are reinforced, this time in relation to their armies. Thamyris' army includes both male and female warriors, because 'the women fight the same as the men' (*wifmenn feohtað swa same swa wæpnedmen*) in Scythia, the homeland of the founders of the Amazons. Cyrus' army, on the other hand, is comprised only of men, as demonstrated by the act of the women running onto the battlefield from its margins in Book I.xii.⁴⁰ Thamyris achieves a kind of poetic justice when she overpowers Cyrus and his two thousand strong army, using his tactics and techniques but with her own distinctive female approaches as a mother and a queen.

The passing of power from king to queen is ritualized when Thamyris orders the head of Cyrus to be 'cut off and thrown into a leather bag' (*aceorfan 7 beweorpan on anne cylle*) and then apostrophizes his severed head: "you have thirsted for men's blood for thirty years, now drink your fill" (*[þ]u þe þyrstende wære monnes blodess xxx wintra, drync nu þine fyll*).⁴¹ Thamyris' final act of vengeance and subversion is to make a metaphor literal: Cyrus' thirst for blood is granted to him with his own blood, which he can never drink up completely in his inert state; in other words, Cyrus becomes the object of his own oppression. This end to Book II.iiii bears similarities to the Old English poem, *Judith* from the London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A.xv manuscript (the *Beowulf* manuscript).⁴² Judith, a jewess in the poem's Latin Vulgate

⁴⁰ See Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 45/1-6: '[t]he inclusion of women in the army [in the OE *Orosius*] could be due either to [the *Historia*'s] description of Thamyris herself as participating in the fighting, or to earlier references to the Amazons as warriors.'

⁴¹ See DOE, s.v. 'cylle' (accessed July 2016) for alternative definitions of *cylle*, such as, 'sack,' 'leather bottle,' 'wineskin' and 'vessel.' The *Historia* Book 2.7.99/6 has *ultrarius*, 'vessel' or 'water-carrier': 'utrem humano sanguine oppletum' (p.86: 'a wine skin filled with human blood').

⁴² London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius A xv, fols. 202r–209v. I have used R.D Fulk's edition of *Judith* in *The 'Beowulf' Manuscript: Complete Texts and The Fight at Finnsburg*,

source, is represented asynchronously in the Old English through a Christian lens.⁴³ Unlike Thamyris in the OE *Orosius*, therefore, she works with the support of and believes in God. But she too cuts off the head of a heathen oppressor, Holofernes, and puts this into a ‘vessel’ or *fætelse*.⁴⁴ Judith uses Holofernes’ head as an example of the triumph of her piety over his heathen evil when she addresses the citizens of Bethulia, who had suffered at his hands.⁴⁵

In both *Judith* and in the account of Thamyris overthrowing Cyrus in Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius*, the female destruction of male power is used as a conduit for the expression of broader narratives. The holy woman, Judith and the male heathen, Holofernes are gendered embodiments of the contrast between morality and immorality – a contrast that takes on a Christian significance in the Old English poetic retelling of *Judith* from the Jewish origins of the story. Holofernes’ lust for Judith emphasizes his pagan depravity and brings the two together in the narrative of the poem, enabling a confrontation that symbolizes the power and virtue of God. The outwitting and murder of Cyrus by Thamyris also offers a very immediate suggestion of the transference of power, but from king to queen in the context of the exploration of the theme of *translatio imperii* in the OE *Orosius*. This is especially pertinent because Cyrus has just destroyed Babylon, passing the city’s imperial power over to Rome and transforming her into a lamenting woman, as we shall see. Indeed, these Old English interpretations of their Latin sources are actively exploitative of the narrative potential of gender. R.D. Fulk notes that the Old English version of Judith is ‘a more unambiguously virtuous figure’ than in the poem’s Vulgate source where ‘she is more devious, willing to lie and to use her charms to encourage Holofernes in his folly, plotting all the while his assassination.’⁴⁶ The Old English, *Judith* maintains a clearer moral distinction between Judith and Holofernes. Similarly, whilst Thamyris is described in the *Historia* Book 2.7 as cursing Cyrus’ head in a ‘unwomanly’ (*non muliebriter*; 99/6) fashion, in the OE *Orosius* her actions are not in conflict with her femininity. The punishment and denigration of Cyrus in the Old English history is even more powerful because it is enacted by a woman.⁴⁷

Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 3, ed. and trans. by R.D. Fulk (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp.297-323. As Fulk explains, p.xxii: ‘[t]he fragmentary *Judith* is a very free rendering of portions of the deuterocanonical book of Judith, which was regarded as canonical in Anglo-Saxon times.’

⁴³ See Paul de Lacy, ‘Aspects of christianisation and cultural adaptation in the Old English “Judith,”’ *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 97 (1996), 393-410.

⁴⁴ Fulk, *The ‘Beowulf’ Manuscript*, p.306, lines 103-31.

⁴⁵ Fulk, *The ‘Beowulf’ Manuscript*, p.310, line 171-p.312, line 208.

⁴⁶ Fulk, *The ‘Beowulf’ Manuscript*, p.xxiv. Fulk puts this down to ‘the general omission of most features in the Latin text that are not essential to the plot.’

⁴⁷ This is my translation of the Latin. Fear, *History*, p.86 renders *non muliebriter*: ‘as a man would curse.’

Parallel 3 – Babylon and Rome

Klein has argued that Anglo-Saxon authors took full advantage of the rhetorical and literary power of positioning women in their narratives:

[p]lacing a woman in the middle of a text, particularly in a traditionally male role or story [...] or asking readers to view an event through the eyes of a woman [...] is an effective strategy for upsetting an audience's expectations, forestalling their primary reactions and creating a space of cultural critique.⁴⁸

Certainly, the speech of Thamyris at the end of Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius* frames the rise and downfall of King Cyrus within a female perspective and so encourages a deeper consideration of his power in the context of world history. This speech act is one of two examples of direct speech from women in the OE *Orosius*, both of which occur in Book II.iiii. The other example is the speech of Babylon, who is morphed into a female form to eulogize her destruction by Cyrus and to lament the fragility of power. Babylon's speech offers a reflection on *translatio imperii* and an alternative Anglo-Saxon view on the power of the Roman Empire to that of the fifth-century perspective of the *Historia*, as this third and final parallel will explore.

Babylon speaks in the narrative of the OE *Orosius* between the account of Cyrus storming the city and the description of his encounters with Thamyris and her son in Scythia in Book II.iiii:

Seo ilce burg Babylonia, seo ðe mæst wæs 7 ærest ealra burga, seo is nu læst 7 westast. Nu seo burg swelc is, þe ær wæs ealra weorca fæstast 7 wunderlecast 7 mærast, gelice 7 heo wære to *bisene* asteald eallum middangearde, 7 eac swelce *heo self sprecede* sie to eallum moncynne 7 cweþe: 'Nu ic þuss gehroren eam 7 aweg gewiten, *hwæt*, ge magan on me ongietan 7 oncnawan þæt ge nanuht mid eow nabbað fæstes ne stronges þætte þurhwunigean mæge.' (43/33-44/6; my emphasis.)

(The same city Babylon, which was the greatest and the first of all cities, is now the smallest and most desolate. Now the city is such, when before it was the most secure and most wonderful of all creations, as if she were *an example* set down for the whole *middangeard*, and in this way *she herself might speak* to all mankind and say: 'Now I am fallen and passed away like this, *take heed*, you can recognize and realize through me that nothing you have with you, however fixed or strong, can last.')

The anthropomorphosis of Babylon is unique to the OE *Orosius*. In the *Historia* Book 2.6, a quotation from Cicero about the limits of man-made materials is used to comment on Babylon's downfall: 'quidquid enim est opera et manu factum, labi et consumi uetustate.' (98/13; p.84: 'whatever is built by the work of men's hands,

⁴⁸ Klein, *Ruling Women*, p.9.

collapses and is consumed by old age.’)⁴⁹ The Old English history lends Babylon a female persona – presenting the stock image of a lamenting woman in contrast to the lord and warrior, Cyrus – that allows her to speak for ‘herself’ (*heo self*) whilst maintaining her material form. In this hybrid state of materiality and womanhood, Babylon can speak about not only material decay but also *translatio imperii* and the transience of human culture and power. As VanderBilt and Janet Bately have both noted, the connections between oral vernacular culture and the theme of transience in Old English poetry are very likely to have informed this representation of Babylon.⁵⁰ Equally, a Babylon who speaks out about her experience of transience would have ‘appealed to an Anglo-Saxon audience,’ as Bately puts it, because of their familiarity with these oral conventions.⁵¹

The characterization of Babylon as a woman speaking in the OE *Orosius* has various implications. Firstly, there is the ‘space of cultural critique’ enabled by her female perspective, a narrative effect that Klein has identified in Anglo-Saxon literature more generally.⁵² An Anglo-Saxon audience is urged to pay attention to the universal messages of Babylon’s personal experience of loss through the device of a female lament and the image of disempowerment she evokes. Moreover, the audience is called upon in their own vernacular and in the oral conventions of their culture to ‘listen up’ or ‘take heed’ (*hwæt*). The use of the poetic exclamation, *hwæt* here creates further association between Babylon and the oral tradition, as VanderBilt has noted as an aside to her argument: ‘[t]he appearance of the evocative *hwæt* (“lo!”) in the *burg*’s speech is especially interesting, since it is one of the traditional ways to open a poem or mark a point of special interest within it.’⁵³ Babylon is also framed within the rhetorical practice of exemplification: as a ‘model’ or ‘example’ (*bisene*) for ‘all mankind’ (*eallum moncynne*), her warning that ‘nothing can last’ (*nanuht [...] þurhwunigean mæge*) should be heeded by a Christian Anglo-Saxon audience. Babylon is pagan but her example is transcendent and freighted with divine Christian purpose: it is as if she has been ‘set down’ (*asteald*) as a model.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ This quotation comes from Cicero’s *Speech in defence from Marcellus (Pro Marcello)* – see Fear, *History*, fn to 84/13.

⁵⁰ VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,’ 384–86. Bately, ‘The OE *Orosius*,’ p.339.

⁵¹ Bately, ‘The OE *Orosius*,’ p.339.

⁵² Klein, *Ruling Women*, p.9.

⁵³ VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,’ 385.

⁵⁴ The Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius* might well have brought biblical association to their reading of Babylon, even in a pagan context. As noted by Scheil in *Babylon under Western Eyes*, p.9: ‘in the Western tradition, particularly in the Middle Ages, it is difficult to talk about Babylon without considering its bright opposite, Jerusalem. The two cities are paired together most powerfully in the patristic writings of the Western Church Fathers, especially Augustine: the City of Man – Babylon, and the city of God – Jerusalem.’

Secondly, Babylon's female characterization in the OE *Orosius* Book II.iiii plays on the association of the city with Queen Semiramis – the model for queenship and human violence: 'Membrað se ent angan ærest timbran Babyonia 7 Ninus se cyning æfter him. 7 Semiramis his cwen hie geendade æfter him on middewardum hiere rice.' (43/21-3; Nimrod the giant began to built Babylon first and Ninus the king [continued] after him. And after him, his queen, Semiramis completed her in the middle of her reign.) As Scheil has explained, 'Semiramis and her femininity become part of Babylon's mythic image' in representations of the city that go back to antique sources.⁵⁵ Reminding of her material and imperial origins after she has been destroyed by way of her femininity, Babylon invites us to consider the rise and fall of her power as the precedent for the trajectory of all empires. Babylon's founders, Ninus and Semiramis, were the models for sovereignty and empire as the first king and queen in world history in Book I.ii. Babylon, therefore, 'the first of all cities' (*ærest ealra burga*), is the 'model' (*bisen*) for the rise and fall of empire and the first empire to experience the process of *translatio imperii*.⁵⁶

Crucially, Babylon's warning and example are fuelled by hindsight. The fragility and fleetingness of human power and empire can only be understood 'now' (*nu*) that Babylon has 'fallen' (*gehroren*) and 'passed away' (*aweg gewiten*). The function of hindsight here is not only poignant because it expresses the pathos of Babylon's destruction, but also because it acknowledges the innocence of an empire in the throes of power. In the Anglo-Saxon present perspective indexed by Babylon's speech, when she addresses the audience of the OE *Orosius* using the oral conventions of their own 'now' (*nu*), the Roman Empire has followed Babylon's example. The Orosian polemic that appears across the OE *Orosius* constructs a dynamic between the innocence of Orosius and his fifth-century Roman audience, who are unaware that their Empire is about to fall, and the knowledge and hindsight of the Anglo-Saxon audience who interpret this polemic.⁵⁷ It is important to outline now that the sack of Rome, which forms the focus of Orosius' polemic, was bestowed with a particular significance in late Anglo-Saxon texts. Godden has identified 'an Anglo-Saxon tradition, evident in other

⁵⁵ Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes*, p.26.

⁵⁶ Babylon is part of the Assyrian empire and legacy but also detached from it and transcendent. Although the city is built by Ninus and Semiramis, it passes into the power of the Medes when the last Assyrian king, Sardanapallus, dies – see Book I.viii.27/22-6, xii.32/13-23; Book II.i.36/325-30, 37/9-16; Book VI.i.132/27-133/4. Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes*, p.4-5 collects Babylon's various peoples, places, events and characters under the umbrella of the 'Matter of Babylon.'

⁵⁷ van Nuffelen has offered an alternative view to the generally accepted argument that Orosius believes the Roman Empire has escaped collapse in the *Historia*, suggesting that 'book 2 of the [*Historia*] engages directly with arguments about the sack of Rome and explicitly explores the possibility that Rome would decline, fall, and disappear.' See van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, pp.45-62 (quotation from p.45).

works as well as the Old English *Orosius*, that Alaric's sack of Rome marked the collapse of Roman power, despite the claims of Orosius himself and other historians.⁵⁸ As Godden argues, for an Anglo-Saxon audience reading Orosius' polemic in the OE *Orosius* 'the realities of history – that the western empire did soon fall, to be parcelled out among Goths, Lombards, Vandals, Franks and of course Anglo-Saxons – were evident.'⁵⁹

Notably, the entirety of Book II.i of the OE *Orosius*, which focuses on the relationship between the Babylonian and Roman Empires and their respective pagan and Christian identities, is delivered in the voice of Orosius.⁶⁰ Orosius' perspective on *translatio imperii* – and his construction of Babylon – are thus differentiated from that of the Old English author and audience. The male gender that Orosius ascribes to Babylon and Rome in his rhetoric here is worthy of close consideration:

An wæs Babylonicum, þær Ninus ricsade. Ðæt oðer wæs Creca, þær Alexander ricsade. Þridda wæs Affricanum, þær[r] Ptolome ricsedon. Se feorða is Romane, þe giet ricsiende sindon. Þas feower heafodricu sindon on feower endum þyses middangeardes mid unasegendlicre Godes tacnunge. [...] *Babylonisce þæt æreste 7 Romane þæt siðmeste* hie wæron swa *fæder 7 sunu*. Þonne hie heora willan moton wel wealdan, þæt Crecisce 7 þæt Affricanisce wæron swa swa hie him hiersumedon 7 him underþieded wære. (36/12-23; my emphasis.)

(One [empire] was the Babylonian, where Ninus ruled. The second was the Greek, where Alexander ruled. The third was the African, where Ptolemy ruled. The fourth is the Roman, *which is still ruling*. These four main kingdoms are in the four corners of this *middangeard* as the unquestionable sign of God. [...] *The Babylonian the first and the Roman the last* were like *father and son*. Then they were able to wield their power so well, that it was as if the Greek and the African obeyed them and were subject to them.)

Here we have a male Babylon: a father to the son, Rome, who inherits his power; this is in keeping with the representation of Babylon and Rome in the *Historia* Book 2.1.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,' 63. See 47-48 for the thrust of Godden's argument that whilst the sack of Rome by the Goths played little role in the fall of the Roman Empire – as both Roman and contemporary historians have recognized – 'the event acquired remarkable prominence, and a distinctive significance, in the Anglo-Saxon perception of their past, especially in the Alfredian period: it is mentioned prominently in two of Bede's historical works, in four of the Old English prose works associated with King Alfred, and in Æthelweard's *Chronicle*; it is the context and end-point of the Old English version of Orosius's *History of the World*; and it is the starting-point of King Alfred's account of Boethius.'

⁵⁹ Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,' 62.

⁶⁰ This is, of course, my interpretation. Book II.i opens with Orosius speaking, signalled by the phrase, *cwæð Orosius*. The first person voice, 'I,' (*ic*) continues across the chapter, punctuated by the aforementioned phrase, to suggest that Orosius is speaking throughout.

⁶¹ Cf. *Historia*, Book 2.1.85/6: 'quorum inter primum ac nouissimum, id est inter Babylonium et Romanum, quasi inter patrem senem ac filium paruam, Africanum ac Macedonicum breuia et media, quasi tutor curatorque uenerunt, potestate temporis non iure heridatis admissi.' (p.74:

Whereas Semiramis is evoked by the female characterization of Babylon in Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius*, the detail that the Babylonian Empire is ‘where Ninus ruled’ (*þær Ninus ricsade*) seals Orosius’ masculine fashioning of Babylon. Further, as Ninus is not referenced in this way in the *Historia*, we are served with a reminder that Orosius himself is being fashioned in the Old English history. According to this Old English interpretation of Orosius, the Roman Empire is ‘the last’ (*þæt siðmeste*) of the four empires in the world and so the process of *translatio imperii* has concluded with early Christian Rome; he suggests that it is a process that can be, and has been, completed. Yet this Orosius speaks on behalf of a Rome that is ‘ruling still’ (*giet ricsiende*) in the early fifth century, just after the sack of Rome but before its implications have set in.

The patrilinear relationship that Orosius constructs between Babylon and Rome in the OE *Orosius* is representative of his providential view of history in the *Historia*. As Scheil has argued, in the *Historia* ‘Orosius adapts the Babylon myth to a scheme of Christian sacred history, imparting symmetry, shape, and order (*ordo*) to the political myth of Babylon,’ using an Augustinian ‘*translatio imperii* motif.’⁶² This expression of *translatio imperii* by Orosius is conveyed in the OE *Orosius* Book II.i by the statement that the arrangement of Babylon and Rome in the East and the West – the one as ‘the first’ (*þæt æreste*) empire, the other as ‘the last’ (*þæt siðmeste*) – can be understood as an ‘unquestionable sign of God’ (*unasecgenðlicre Godes tacnunge*). According to this divine arrangement, the Roman Empire is positioned favourably in time and space. Babylon is a pagan progenitor for Christian Rome.

This Orosian idea of spiritual and historical progression from the pagan empire of Babylon to the Christian empire of Rome, concluding the process of *translatio imperii*, is expanded upon further in Book II.i:

Hu gelice onginn þa twa byrg hæfdon 7 hu gelice heora dagas wæron, ægðer ge on ðæm gode ge on ðæm yfele! Ac hiora anwalda endas wæron swiþe ungelice; for þon þe Babylonie mid monigfealdum unryhtm 7 firenlustum mid heora cyninge buton ælcra hreowe libbende wæran, þæt hie hit na gebetan noldan ær þon hie God mid þæm mæstan bismere geeaðmedde, þa he hie ægðres benam *ge heora cyninges ge heora anwaldes*. Ac Romane mid hiora *cristnan cyninge Gode þeowiende* wæron, þætte he him for þæm ægbres geuþe, *ge hiora cyninges ge heora anwaldes*. (38/16-24; my emphasis.)

‘[b]etween the first and the last of them, that is to say Babylon and Rome, just as in the interval of time between an old father and his young son, come the short-lived and immediate period of the African and Macedonian kingdoms. These fulfilled roles like those of a teacher and a guardian, and came into being through force of circumstances rather than from any right of succession.’)

⁶² Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes*, p.47 and p.55.

(How alike the two cities had begun, and how alike their days were, both in good and in evil! But the ends of their power were very unlike; since the Babylonians were living with manifold injustices and lusts with their king without any regret, so that they did not ever want to atone for it before God humbled them with the greatest infamy, when he deprived them of both their kings and their power. But the Romans were obedient to their Christian king, God so that he granted them both their kings and their power.)

Orosius identifies the similarities between Babylon and Rome but these are limited to the origins of the cities and the rise of their power. The citizens of each city began pagan but only the Romans came to acknowledge the 'Christian king, God' (*cristnan cyninge Gode*), whose sovereignty transcends that of human empire: that is, the connection between human 'kings' (*cyninges*) and 'power' (*anwaldes*) shared by Babylon and Rome. For Orosius, the different faiths of the Babylonians and the Romans have determined the outcomes of their respective empires, since the continuation of human power is conditional on subservience, or *þeowdom*, to the higher power of God. Seeing the world from a fifth-century vantage point, Orosius believes, therefore, that the power of Christian Rome has concluded not with imperial downfall but with perpetual security. In the bigger picture of Orosius' polemic to the Romans doubting Christianity, this security is an argument for sticking with the Christian faith.

Reading Orosius' interpretation of events in Book II.ii against the example, or *bysen*, of the anthropic Babylon who laments the transience of all earthly power in Book II.iiii illustrates how the different perspectives of the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* are demarcated by the Old English author. The speaking Babylon who is distinctively Anglo-Saxon, as we have seen, undercuts the rhetoric of Orosius. This Babylon recognizes that even Christian power is finite on earth because it is human; the human shape that Babylon takes to deliver her gnomic warning is a vital part of this message, emphasizing that both humans and power will always pass on. This Babylon also speaks with the Anglo-Saxon hindsight that Orosius does not have. She knows that Rome replicated her example after the *Historia* was written and, according to cultural tradition, as a direct consequence of the sack of Rome. That in addition to the linear movement of power in time and space, *translatio imperii* is defined by the cycles of the rise and fall of power, loss as well as gain.⁶³ The female gender of Babylon is, therefore,

⁶³ Cf. van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, p.147. van Nuffelen argues that in the *Historia*, Orosius is aware that Rome would have participated within the cyclical model of the four empires were it not for Christianity – and might one day still do so: '[t]he theory of four empires is explicitly cyclical, and in a very precise way: the empires go through the same stages, after identical intervals [...] [in the *Historia*] Rome is indeed exceptional in escaping the cycle of rise and decline, but only thanks to Christianity. It is here that Orosius' chronological accuracy comes into play: the exact sequence of, and parallelism between, the various empires is presented by Orosius as a proof of God's agency. Only He can be responsible for such a

a mode of destabilization and differentiation, reorientating Orosius' patriarchal representation of Babylon and Rome to offer an alternative Anglo-Saxon view on *translatio imperii* and history.

Conclusion

This Chapter has provided three separate yet interconnected parallels for exploring the theme of *translatio imperii* in the OE *Orosius*. Each parallel engages with gender as a catalyst and metaphor for the translation of power as it shifts across people(s), places and time. Masculine hegemonies or patrilineages are undercut, challenged and re-routed by female alternatives to suggest the fragile condition of gender, the body and power, and to imply the significant roles of these three categories in historical representation and the making of empire.

The history of kingship that starts with Ninus and is traced through the OE *Orosius* and beyond into Anglo-Saxon England is not uninterrupted. Rather, Semiramis and the Amazons reconstitute and feminize a history that is otherwise overridingly male, writing women back in where ninth-century Wessex excludes queens from the records. These pagan warrior women and queens offer both pejorative and empowering visions of women that can subvert Christian ideals or divert moral judgement through a lens of alterity; they exist in different cultures, faiths and systems to Anglo-Saxon England but their humanity provokes overlaps with Christian exempla or their antitheses. The Amazons mutilate and control the desires of their bodies as a female saint might to connect to God, for example, but they do so to enculturate and to imperialize their matriarchal model. Indeed, Lees and Overing's description of empire as both 'performative and ritualistic' resonates deeply with the Amazons' practices of self-mutilation, procreative sex acts and female war waging.⁶⁴ The Scythian Queen Thamyris and the Persian King Cyrus belong to but divert from the female and male histories of the Amazons and Semiramis and Ninus, fleshing out the connections between history and its literary representation in the OE *Orosius* – a connection that is rarely explored in scholarship on the text. Their eventual direct queen-to-king confrontation becomes a metaphor for *translatio imperii* as Cyrus' destructive male power is decapitated with the removal of his body from his head and as Thamyris vocalizes her triumph. Thamyris and Cyrus are two sides of one coin as their strategies interlink: they portray rise and downfall as close companions, and remind that men and women are deeply co-implicated in the construction and translation of power, however much their influence can be read along separate lineages. These conclusions

precision. As a consequence, Rome's escape from the cycle must also be due to Christianity, which raised morality and influenced God to overlook his own decrees.'

⁶⁴ Lees and Overing, 'Signifying gender and empire,' 4.

are reinforced by Babylon, a form that is at once male and female, material and human, and a power parented by Ninus and Semiramis. Rome is patterned on Babylon's power whatever gender the cities are ascribed.

However, the OE *Orosius* leaves open a question about what the sack of Rome and the concept of *translatio imperii* might mean for an Anglo-Saxon audience. The audience of the OE *Orosius* might be prompted to reflect on the events that led to the origins of Anglo-Saxon England and the history that pre-dated their settlement. As Godden suggests, the prominence of the sack of Rome in the final chapter of the history (Book VI.xxxviii) and in Orosius' polemic throughout signals towards a tradition of Anglo-Saxon narratives in which the power of Rome falls with the invasion of the Goths early in the fifth century.⁶⁵ By this reading, the end of the OE *Orosius*' world history dovetails with Bede's account of English history, which Godden cites as the first Anglo-Saxon rendering of the sack of Rome as central to the Empire's collapse in Britain:⁶⁶

Fracta est autem Roma a Gothis anno millesimo CLXIII suae conditionis, ex quo tempore Romani in Brittania regnare cesserunt, post annos ferme quadringentos LXX ex quo Gaius Iulius Caesar eandem insulam adiit.

('Now Rome was taken by the Goths in the eleven hundred and sixty-fourth year after its foundation; after this the Romans ceased to rule in Britain, almost 470 years after Gaius Julius Caesar had come to the island.')

⁶⁷

The absence of the military protection of the Romans in *Brittania* would eventually lead to the settlement of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes and the establishment of Anglo-Saxon England.⁶⁸

The OE *Orosius* might also encapsulate or prompt Anglo-Saxon reflections on acquiring power when it falls elsewhere, evolving a history of *translatio imperii* into a site of opportunity. It is along these lines that Francis Leneghan argues that the probable production of the Lauderdale Manuscript in Winchester in the early tenth century indicates political intent (see Chapter 1).⁶⁹ The OE *Orosius* was copied and circulated, Leneghan suggests, in response to the fall of the Carolingian Empire at the

⁶⁵ Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,' 59-62.

⁶⁶ Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,' 50.

⁶⁷ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, Book 1, Chapter 11, pp.40-41 (Latin and translation).

⁶⁸ Cf. Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, Book 1, Chapter 15, pp.48-53 (Latin and translation).

⁶⁹ Leneghan, '*Translatio imperii*.' See '*Translatio imperii*,' 6 for the tenth-century Winchester provenance of the Lauderdale Manuscript: the same scribal hand has been identified in the Lauderdale Manuscript's version of the OE *Orosius*, the Parker Chronicle and the Junius Psalter, grouping these texts together; '[t]he likely provenance of this group of texts at Winchester c.920-930 suggests that the copying of the Lauderdale Orosius can be connected to the interests of the West Saxon royal house in this period.'

end of the ninth century and in light of the recent move towards West Saxon overlordship in England: ‘the conquests of West Saxon kings in the early tenth century appear to have encouraged some contemporaries to believe, however briefly, that Wessex was to inherit the Roman imperial mantle from Francia.’⁷⁰ However, Leneghan’s views can only account for a very specific period in the transmission of the OE *Orosius*.

Ultimately, the meaning of the sack of Rome and *translatio imperii* in the OE *Orosius* for an Anglo-Saxon audience is for our conjecture. The political and historical implications of the OE *Orosius* need not come at the expense of literary interpretation. As I have strived to show in this Chapter, the OE *Orosius* works with a number of associations and responses to history, which are channelled through Anglo-Saxon tradition, convention and perspective. These responses to the rhetoric of Orosius, *translatio imperii* and Rome, together with the dynamic potential of gender to rewrite history, imply that it is not only power that shifts but also the way events are shaped. The OE *Orosius* interprets both world history and the historical moment of the *Historia* and the sack of Rome through an Anglo-Saxon understanding of *translatio imperii* that is charged with gender.

⁷⁰ Leneghan, ‘*Translatio imperii*,’ 42.

Chapter 3: Material history and the Matter of Rome

In *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*, Ian Hodder has argued:

[t]here is more to history than a linear account of sequences and events; there is also the material history, the heritage of past acts, the detritus of past millennia that bumps up against us in a non-linear way. It is this material history that continues to play a role in the present.¹

As an archaeologist, Hodder is concerned primarily with how we might understand the people of the past by looking closely at their material things, which continue to exist and signify in the twenty first century. The manuscripts that witness the OE *Orosius* – the Lauderdale Manuscript, Cotton Manuscript, Bodley Fragment and Vatican Fragment – are material things that provide us with a written Anglo-Saxon history of the world. We can access the manuscripts in a library or, in digitized form, on the internet and we can read the subject matter contained in their folia in our modern printed editions.² These manuscripts also bear witness to the ‘past acts,’ in Hodder’s words, of the Anglo-Saxons who commissioned them, composed their content, produced them, and interpreted their historical subject matter. Indeed, the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript draws attention to the physical presence of the manuscript book and the intellectual presence of the text it contains – both of which can be construed in the phrase, *seo boc* – as it announces: ‘[h]er onginneð seo boc þe man Orosius nemneð’ (1/1; here begins the book which is called, Orosius).³ The manuscripts function still as both purveyors of history, or subject matter, and as physical objects of Anglo-Saxon provenance.

Ann Brower Stahl has explained further that the approach of material history acknowledges how ‘our historical understandings will be enriched by taking inter-relationships between humans and materials into account.’⁴ Paying attention to the materiality of the manuscript witnesses, therefore, helps us to gain a better insight into the culture in which the OE *Orosius* was composed and received. Palaeographical studies can emphasize the role of the text in the tenth and eleventh centuries in England. For instance, the scripts used for the OE *Orosius* indicate that it was categorized and conveyed as a vernacular work. The Square Miniscule in the

¹ Hodder, *Entangled*, p.100. For an introduction to ‘material history,’ see Ann Brower Stahl, ‘Material histories’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, ed. by Mary C. Beaudry and Dan Hicks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.150-72.

² The Lauderdale Manuscript and the Cotton Manuscript have been digitized by the British Library and can be viewed on their website < <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/> > (accessed July 2016). See Ker, *Catalogue*, 133, 191, 323 and 391 for descriptions of the manuscripts.

³ Cotton MS, fol 3r. Bately, OE *Orosius*, 1/1.

⁴ Brower Stahl, ‘Material histories,’ p.151.

Lauderdale Manuscript witness and the Insular (or Vernacular) Miniscule in the Cotton Manuscript both developed from insular tradition.⁵ When the Cotton Manuscript was produced in the eleventh century, Insular Miniscule was used exclusively for vernacular works, whilst Latin texts were inscribed in Caroline Miniscule.⁶ The scripts of the manuscripts, then, are closely tied to the assertions that are made by the vernacular language of the OE *Orosius*: that is, that although the text is based on a classical Latin source, it is a work of Anglo-Saxon historiography.

Moreover, the manuscript evidence offers clues as to how the Anglo-Saxons engaged with the themes of the OE *Orosius*. Scribal evidence points towards the production of the Lauderdale Manuscript in Winchester in the tenth century, suggesting that the OE *Orosius* might have been commissioned and circulated by the West Saxon court with political motive (as noted in Chapter 2). The Cotton Manuscript has been located tentatively to Abingdon and Worcester and dated to the eleventh century and also contains the C-text of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the *Menologium* and the *Maxims II*.⁷ Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe has argued that these three texts were likely to have been added to the OE *Orosius* contemporaneously – rather than bound together at a later stage – and so the manuscript presents an Anglo-Saxon collection of texts from the traditions of history, knowledge and wisdom.⁸ As O'Keeffe herself puts it, 'the three texts forming the Chronicle matter were selected to be added to the [OE] *Orosius* to create a book of histories – one containing world history [...] chronology and English history.'⁹ But even beyond the commissioning and grouping of the OE *Orosius*, there are traces of medieval readership in marginalia, emendations and doodles, such as the runes etched on the fly leaves of the Lauderdale Manuscript and the annotations in the Cotton Manuscript that appear to be the work of the Tremulous Hand.¹⁰ In short,

⁵ For the script of the OE *Orosius* in the Lauderdale Manuscript, see Ker, *Catalogue*, p.165. For the script in the Cotton Manuscript, see Mary Swan, 'Annotations to *Orosius*, Chronicle: London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B.i.' in *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220*, ed. by Orietta Da Rold and others (Leicester: University of Leicester, 2010)

< <https://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.BL.Tibe.B.i.htm> > (accessed July 2016). For the insular development of the Vernacular Script, see Julia Crick, 'English vernacular script' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, ed. by Richard Gameson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.174-86 (p.174).

⁶ For a discussion of the distinctive scripts used for the vernacular and Latin in the late Anglo-Saxon period, see Crick, 'English vernacular script.'

⁷ Ker, *Catalogue*, p.253. Swan, 'Annotations to *Orosius*, Chronicle.' See also, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Reading the C-text: the after-lives of London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. I' in *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts and their Heritage*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine M. Treharne (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp.137-60.

⁸ O'Brien O'Keeffe, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS C*, pp.xxii-iii. See also, O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Reading the C-text,' pp.138-41. For a recent discussion of the relationship between the *Menologium*, *Maxims II*, the OE *Orosius* and the *Chronicle*, see Kazutomo Karasawa, 'The *Menologium* and *Maxims II* in the manuscript context,' *Notes and Queries* 62 (2015), 353-56.

⁹ O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Reading the C-text,' p.140.

¹⁰ Ker, *Catalogue*, p.252. Swan, 'Annotations to *Orosius*, Chronicle.'

the manuscripts of the OE *Orosius* are, like all manuscripts, sites of human, material and textual interaction; they provide us with material histories.

But what about the historical subject matter in the OE *Orosius*? We are dealing here, after all, not only with a text that can inform us about the Anglo-Saxon past but with an Anglo-Saxon history of the world. History is doubled and then redoubled when we consider that the OE *Orosius* is sourced from and responds to the fifth-century *Historia*. Do the approaches of material history have any relevance to the way the past is represented and interpreted in the OE *Orosius*? The OE *Orosius* is ostensibly an example of a history in which the past is organized in terms of its ‘sequences and events,’ to paraphrase Hodder (notwithstanding the temporal asynchronies of the text).¹¹ Put another way, the humans of ancient history and the fifth-century Roman past are understood in terms of historical subject matter rather than in terms of materials per se. Yet this historical subject matter is offered a material presence in the Old English vernacular: Babylon and Rome are ‘broken apart’ by Cyrus in Book II.iii and Alaric in Book VI.xxxviii (the verb, *abrecan* appears in both episodes); Rome and Babylon have ‘walls’ (*wealles*) that ‘crumble’ (*brosnian*) as a consequence of imperial downfall and material decay (Book II.iii.44/12-13); and the verb, *getimbrian*, ‘to build’ or ‘to timber,’ is an integral part of the dating system that measures time according to the foundation of Rome. In this Chapter, I find materiality in the fabric of the vernacular of the OE *Orosius*: in metaphors and instances of metonymy, in word choices and their significations and associations.

This Chapter will explore, therefore, the connections between the materiality of the descriptions of history in the OE *Orosius*, the material traces of former empires in the Anglo-Saxon imagination and the ‘Matter of Rome,’ as it is conventionally termed.¹² I will begin with a close reading of the account of the sack of Rome in the final chapter of the OE *Orosius* (VI.xxxviii), focusing on the materiality of the descriptions of Alaric and the Goths storming the city and the significance of this event for the Anglo-Saxons. I will then consider how the depictions of Rome and Babylon in Book II.iii, as cities that are crumbling or have fallen, conform to the Old English poetic trope of the *enta geweorc*, ‘the work of giants.’ I consider the associations between ruins, stone and the Roman Empire in my next example, which is centred on the destruction of Carthage and Orosius’ commentary in Book IV.xiii. After Carthage is smashed stone by stone by the Romans in the narrative, the figure of Orosius reflects on the contrast between the sharp-witted ancient Romans and his indulgent fifth-century contemporaries, using imagery of hard and soft stones. Finally, I turn to the foundations of pagan and

¹¹ Hodder, *Entangled*, p.100.

¹² Within the concept of the ‘Matter of Rome,’ I include the Roman Empire and its emperors, the Christian significance of Rome for the Anglo-Saxons and the city of Rome.

Christian Rome: the founding of the city by Romulus and Remus in Book II.ii and the reconstruction of the city by the emperor Augustus in Book VI.i. I read these accounts of construction alongside the dating system of the OE *Orosius*, which points towards the foundation of Rome but builds the city and the history within an Anglo-Saxon structure; both the historical narrative and the city of Rome are ‘timbered’ (*getimbred*).

The sack of Rome

The account of the sack of Rome in the final chapter of the OE *Orosius*, Book VI.xxxviii, marks out a crossroads between the separate histories of the Anglo-Saxons and the Romans in the context of the history of the world. In this succinct account of Alaric and the Goths storming the city of Rome, the fall of the Empire and the preservation of Roman Christianity can be read in terms of materiality and metonymy:

Æfter þæm þe Romeburg getimbred wæs m wintra 7 c 7 iiiii 7 siextegum, God gedyde his miltsunge on Romanum, þa þa he hiora misdæda wrecan let, þæt hit þeh dyde Alrica se cristena cyning 7 se mildesta, 7 he mid swa lytle niþe *abræc* Romeburg þæt he bebead þæt mon nænne mon ne sloge, 7 eac þæt man *nanuht* ne wanade ne ne yfelade þæs þe on þæm *ciricum* wære, 7 sona þæs on þæm þridan dæge hie aforan ut of þære byrig hiora agnum willan, swa þær ne wearð *nan hus* hiora willum forbærned. (156/11-18; my emphasis.)

(One thousand, one hundred and sixty-four years after Rome was built, God showed his mercy to the Romans, when he let their wrongdoings be punished, albeit by the Christian and the most merciful king Alaric, and he *broke into* Rome with such little hostility that he ordered [the Goths] not to kill anyone, and also they should not taint or harm *anything in the churches*, and soon on the third day they travelled out of the city of their own accord, so *no house* burned there of their accord.)

The operative word in this account is *abræc*. Alaric has ‘broken into’ the city of Rome, which was ‘built’ (*getimbred*) one hundred and sixty-four years beforehand.¹³ The *DOE* offers a wide range of meanings and uses for the verb *abrecan*, which has the primary sense of ‘to break apart’ but is extended to the sense of ‘to destroy’ or ‘to raze’ a city or fortification.¹⁴ I have translated *abræc* as ‘broke into’ in line with Malcolm Godden’s rendering of the note about the sack of Rome in annal 409 of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: ‘[h]er Gotan *abrecon* Romeburg, and næfre siþan Romane ne ricsodon on Bretone’ (‘in this year the Goths *broke into* the city of Rome and never afterwards did

¹³ The *Historia* Book 7.40.117/1 reads: ‘Anno itaque ab Vrbe condita MCLXIII inruptio Urbis per Alaricum facta est.’ (p.404: ‘[a]nd so 1,164 years after the foundation of the City, the City was breached by Alaric.’)

¹⁴ See *DOE*, s.v. ‘abrecan’ (accessed August 2016). Bately, glosses *abrecan* as ‘take by storm,’ ‘destroy’ or ‘violate’ – see ‘Glossary’ in Bately, OE *Orosius*, s.v. ‘abrecan.’

the Romans rule in Britain'; my emphasis).¹⁵ Godden explains in his footnotes that in this context the use of *abrecan* 'presumably reflects Bede's *fracta*' for the attack of the Goths on Rome.¹⁶ Indeed, the same verb, *abrecan* is used in the account of the sack of Rome in the metrical preface to the Old English *Boethius* and, as we shall see, in the Old English Bede's account.¹⁷ In each of these examples, the material associations of the verb, *abrecan* symbolize the imperial downfall of Rome: it is as if Rome is an object or thing that can be broken into pieces. In turn, Alaric's act of breaking Rome is a metonym for the figurative breaking apart of the Empire. Indeed, during this metonymic act, the Matter of Rome is fragmented into separate material pieces that symbolize the Empire, Roman Christianity and the city. Alaric enacts punishment on imperial Rome whilst ordering that 'nothing' (*nanuht*) should be harmed 'in the churches' (*on þæm ciricum*) and leaving the houses in the city intact: 'no house burned at their will' (*ne wearð nan hus hiora willum forbærned*). The power of imperial Rome falls but the Christianity of the city and the city itself are preserved.

The description of the sack of Rome in Book VI.xxxviii of the OE *Orosius* coordinates the multi-directional identity of Rome for the late Anglo-Saxons, therefore: a historical city and a contemporary place that can still be travelled to and from, a once-imperial power that had controlled *Brittania* and a current Christian centre for *Englaland*.¹⁸ It is the role of Alaric in this account to mediate between the imperial and Christian significance of Rome, whilst rationalizing the development of Anglo-Saxon Christianity. This role is expressed in the oxymoron of Alaric 'breaking' Rome with 'little hostility' (*lytle niþe*) and with the sanction of God; God 'allowed' (*let*) him to attack the city because he was a 'Christian and very mild king' (*cristena cyning 7 se mildesta*). Stephen J. Harris and Godden have both remarked on the favourable, and rather unlikely, description of Alaric and the Goths storming Rome in the OE *Orosius*, which is very different to the *Historia*'s account.¹⁹ Alaric's Germanic identity is crucial here, uniting Roman and Germanic Christianity. The preservation and galvanization of Christian Rome is historicized as attributable to the actions of a Goth, who shared ethnic connections to the Anglo-Saxons.²⁰ By this reading, Alaric was a Germanic

¹⁵ Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,' 57. Both the Old English and translation cited here are lifted from Godden's article. For the annal in context, see O'Brien O'Keefe, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, MS C*, p.27, annal 409.

¹⁶ Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,' 57.

¹⁷ Godden and Irvine, *The Old English Boethius*, p.6, line 18. For a discussion of the sack of Rome in the Old English *Boethius*, see Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,' 62-7.

¹⁸ Howe has written about these Anglo-Saxon responses to Rome at length. See, in particular, 'Englaland and the postcolonial void,' pp.75-100 and 'Rome as capital of Anglo-Saxon England,' pp.101-24 in Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*.

¹⁹ Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, pp.98-9, Godden, 'The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,' p.60. Cf. *Historia*, Book 7.39.113/1-117/18 and translation in Fear, pp.401-404.

²⁰ See Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, p.100 and Frank, 'Germanic legend in Old English literature,' p.87.

Christian agent in the development of Roman Christianity, before Rome had become a strong papal centre and well before the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons by Roman missionaries in the late sixth century. As Harris has argued:

[the OE *Orosius* is] concerned to see Rome as the birthplace of Christendom, the community to which both Alaric and Alfred belonged [...] [the text] asserts the Germanic Christian salvation of Christendom in the person of Alaric, thereby proposing in storied form a very important (mythic) link between Anglo-Saxon England and the history of Christendom.²¹

When we consider the wavering faith of the Romans who are fashioned in *Orosius*' polemic in the OE *Orosius*, the integral role of Alaric in strengthening Roman Christianity as a Germanic outsider has an even greater emphasis for Anglo-Saxon identity and faith. Importantly, despite the sack of Rome providing the focus of *Orosius*' polemic, the account of the sack of Rome in the climactic chapter of the OE *Orosius* is not associated with him; the phrase, *cwæð Orosius* does not appear and there is no suggestion of the first person voice, *ic*. *Orosius* does feature in the penultimate chapter, dismissing the Romans' response to the sack of Rome as overreaction (Book VI.xxxvii.156/1-10), and so there is some irony to the account of the fall of the Empire that follows. However, the description of the sack of Rome is ultimately – and perhaps against expectation – not granted to *Orosius*. The history ends on the terms of the Anglo-Saxon author and audience.

In the very final lines of the OE *Orosius* Book VI.xxxviii the aftermath of the sack of Rome is recorded also with a bias towards Anglo-Saxon perspective:

Pær genom Hettulf, Alrican mæg, Onorius sweostor þæs cyninges 7 sibban wið hine geþingade 7 hi him to wife nam. Sibban sæton þa Gotan þær on lande, sume be þæs caseres willan, sume his unwillan; sume hi foron on Ispanie 7 þær gesæton, sume on Affrice. (156/19-23.)

(There Athaulfus, Alaric's kinsman, took the sister of king Honorius and made an agreement with him afterwards to have her as his wife. Afterwards the Goths settled in that land, some at the emperor's will, some against his will; some travelled into Spain and settled there, some into Africa.)

In this brief summary of events, there is suggestion of an almost amicable agreement between the Romans and the Goths. The marriage of the sister of the emperor Honorius to Athaulfus implies the convention of peace-weaving between the two peoples. Further, whilst some of the Goths settled in Rome 'against' the emperor's 'will' (*his unwillan*), some settled 'with the emperor's approval' (*be þæs caseres willan*); the

²¹ Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, p.100.

other Goths settled in Italy, Spain and Africa, seemingly without conflict. Godden has highlighted that this is a ‘quite different outcome’ to that of the *Historia*, where the Goths are all put to flight, and has argued that the decision to end the OE *Orosius* almost immediately after the sack of Rome is reflective of the historical importance of this event to the Anglo-Saxon author (see Chapter 2).²²

Rome, Babylon and the *enta geweorc*

The effect of the sack of Rome upon the island of *Brittania* is described by Bede in his *Historia ecclesiastica*. Bringing the Roman Empire into the ‘immediate landscape’ of the Anglo-Saxons, to paraphrase Nicholas Howe, Bede notes the material constructions that were established by the Romans when *Brittania* was a Roman province.²³ A vernacular account is offered in the Old English version of Bede’s history, which was translated from the Latin in the ninth century, closer to the composition of the OE *Orosius*:

Da wæs ymb feower hund wintra 7 seofone æfter Drihtnes menniscnysse; feng to rice Honorius casere, se wæs feorða eac feowertigum fram Augusto þam casere – twam gearum ær Romaburh *abrocen* 7 forhergad wære. Seo hergung wæs þurh Alaricum Gotena cyning geworden. Wæs Romaburh *abrocen* fram Gotum ymb þusend wintra 7 hundteontig 7 feower 7 syxtig ðæs þe heo geworht wæs. Of þære tide Romane blunnun ricsian on Breotene. Hæfdon hi Breotona rice feower hund wintra 7 þæs fiftan hundseofentig, ðæs ðe Gaius, oðre naman Iulius, se casere þæt ylce ealond gesohte. 7 *ceastre 7 torras 7 stræta 7 brycge on heora rice geworhte wæron, þa we to dæg sceawian magon*. Eardædon Bryttas binnan þam dice to suðdæle, þe we gemynegodon þæt Seuerus se casere het þwyr ofer þæt ealond gedician. (My emphasis.)²⁴

(At around four hundred and seven years after the incarnation of the Lord, the Emperor Honorius, who was forty-fourth [emperor] after the Emperor Augustus, came to rule – two years before Rome was *broken into* and plundered. The raid was brought about by Alaric, the king of the Goths. Rome was *broken into* by the Goths around one thousand, one hundred and sixty-four years from when it was built. From that time, Roman rule ceased in Britain. They held the kingdom of *Brittania* for four hundred and seventy-five years, from when the emperor Gaius, whose second name was Julius, sought out that same island. And *the towns and towers and roads and bridges that were built under their rule, we can see still to this day*. The Britons dwelled to the south of the rampart,

²² Godden, ‘The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,’ 59-60. At 60, Godden notes that there is no known source for the settlement of the Goths in Italy after the sack of Rome: ‘it is perhaps just a deduction from the known presence of the (Ostro-)Goths in Italy in the sixth century, which is a central concern of two other works of the Alfredian circle, the Old English versions of Gregory’s *Dialogues* and Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*.’

²³ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.77.

²⁴ *The Old English Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Miller, EETS o.s. 110, 2 vols (London: Trubner, 1898), vol 1, Book 1, Chapter 9, p.42, line 24 – p.44, line 8. Cf. Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, Book 1, Chapter 11, pp.38-40.

which we have recalled the emperor Severus ordered to be dug out right across the island.)

History, materiality and the Matter of Rome are brought together in Bede's description, in which the intricate relationship between peoples and materials is recognized. The 'towns,' (*ceastre*), 'towers' (*torras*), 'roads' (*stræta*) and 'bridges' (*brycge*) that the Romans built before the end of the Empire – and so before Rome was 'broken into' (*abrocen*) by Alaric and the Goths – have outlived the Roman occupation of *Brittania* but continue to represent this period of history in the Anglo-Saxon present. It is the endurance of the materials that reconciles their temporal and cultural dissonance with the Anglo-Saxon present and their existence within its landscape. They have witnessed the cultures of both the Romans and the Anglo-Saxons and they are material witnesses of the history of the island before the Anglo-Saxons settled there; 'they can still be seen today' (*to dæg sceawian magon*). As Elizabeth Tyler reminds us, the Anglo-Saxons were 'deeply conscious of the Roman past of Britain' but they did not share this history, 'they had neither been conquered by the Romans (like the British) nor had they forcibly settled themselves within the Empire while it was still Roman (like the Franks).'²⁵ They saw the remnants of Roman towns, towers, roads and bridges as material symbols, therefore, of a history that predated their own settlement and cultural origins.

There are connections to be made between the Roman constructions in Bede's history – monuments to a former culture, age and empire – and the Anglo-Saxon poetic concept of the *enta geweorc*, 'the work of giants.' As Howe explains:

[t]he Anglo-Saxons historicized their sense that everything built on the earth was ephemeral, that is, they interpreted this knowledge that nothing human-made endured by setting it within the temporal sequence of human history. In poems such as *The Ruin* and *Maxims II*, the Anglo-Saxons described the remains of stonework construction they saw on their landscape as "enta geweorc" (the work of giants) or "orðanc enta geweorc" (the skilful work of giants) that had distantly preceded them on the island.²⁶

The concept of the *enta geweorc* is tied in more broadly to Anglo-Saxon imaginative responses to ruins as material symbols of Christian transience. The image of a degraded and decaying building or wall that was constructed skilfully and once meaningful to a distant culture offers a powerful material metaphor for the passing of people and time. In the first two lines of *The Ruin*, which may refer to Roman Bath but may not, the poet ruminates: '[w]rætlic is þes wealstan [...] / broснаð enta geweorc' (wondrous is this wall-stone/ the works of giants crumble).²⁷ The artful masonry of the 'giants' is still

²⁵ Tyler, 'Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England,' 4.

²⁶ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.51.

²⁷ *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, ASPR, vol 3 (London: Routledge, 1936), p.227, lines 1-2. My emphasis.

visible in the fragments of the ruin. Moreover, imaginary cities are depicted as the *enta geweorc* in *Maxims II*, which appears in the Cotton Manuscript witness of the OE *Orosius*:

Ceastra beoð feorran gesyne,
orðanc enta geweorc, þa þe on þysse eorðan syndon,
wrætlic weallstana geweorc. (My emphasis)²⁸

(Cities are seen far-off, the *skilful work of giants*, which are on this earth, the *wondrous working of wall-stones*).

Although, *ceastra* is a Latin loan-word, often used ‘specifically of Roman cities, towns and fortifications in England,’ the message of the *Maxims II* is universal.²⁹ The transience of these wondrous cities – and the ‘giants’ who crafted them – is invoked by their association with the mythic *enta geweorc* and their distance, as they are witnessed ‘from afar’ (*feorran*). As Kazutomo Karasawa puts it, ‘[t]he spatial distance mentioned here may also imply a temporal distance, which is more directly expressed by *enta geweorc* “works of the giants.”’³⁰

These conventional reflections on human transience in terms of ancient and decaying walls are also to be found in the descriptions of Babylon in Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius*. Indeed, as Andrew Scheil has illustrated, the fall of Babylon into ruin is a ‘topos’ in classical and medieval narratives including the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius*.³¹ Scheil argues that the ‘Babylon ruin topos stands behind’ the poetic responses to the ruined cities in *The Ruin*, the *Maxims II* and the *Wanderer*, since Babylon is ‘the primal model of the exulting city [...] falling to wrack, doom, and ruin.’³² In the following examples from Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius*, I will explore how Babylon is situated as the original work of the giants and so the original ruin in the Anglo-Saxon imagination. I will also demonstrate how Rome is drawn into these ruin narratives in the OE *Orosius*, converging traditional conceptions of material transience and the Matter of Rome.

Just after Cyrus has dissipated the River Euphrates and walked along the river bed with his army into Babylon in Book II.iiii (see Chapter 2), the narrative pauses to

²⁸ *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, ASPR, vol 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p.55, lines 2-3.

²⁹ *DOE*, s.v. ‘ceaster’ (accessed September 2016).

³⁰ Karasawa, ‘The *Menologium* and *Maxims II* in MS context,’ 3.

³¹ Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes*, p.208-15.

³² Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes*, p.215. VanderBilt, ‘Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,’ 384-85, also argues that there is a connection between *The Ruin* and Babylon in the OE *Orosius*, as well as *Advent Lyric I*. VanderBilt suggests that the anthropomorphosis of Babylon in Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius* was triggered by the theme of transience in the *Historia* Book 2.6 and influenced by poetic traditions dealing with this theme.

describe the city in the present tense. The dimensions and strength of the city walls are offered particular emphasis in this account, which contrasts the grandeur of Babylon with her eventual devastation:

Swa ungeliefedlic is ænigum menn þæt to gesecgenne, hu ænig mon mehte swelce burg gewyrca swelce sio wæs, oðþe eft abreca. *Membrað se ent* angan ærest timbran Babylonia 7 Ninus se cyning æfter him. 7 Sameramis his cwen hie geendade æfter him on middewardum hiere rice. Seo burg wæs getimbred an fildum lande 7 on swiþe emnum. 7 heo wæs swiþe fæger an to locianne. 7 heo is swiþe ryhte feowerscyte, 7 þæs *wealles micelness 7 fæstness* is ungeliefedlic to secgenne: þæt is, þæt he is 1 elna brad 7 ii hund elna heah, 7 his ymbgong is hundseofontig mila 7 seofeða dæl anre mile, 7 he is geworht of tigelan 7 of eorðtyrewan. 7 ymbutan þone *weall* is se mæsta dic, on þæm is iernende se ungefoglecesta stream; 7 wiðutan þæm dice is geworht twegea elna heah *weall*, 7 bufan ðæm *maran wealle* ofer ealne þone ymbgong he is mid *stænenum wighusum* beworht.

Seo ilce burg Babylonia, seo ðe mæst wæs 7 ærest ealra burga, seo is nu læst 7 westast. (43/19-34; my emphasis.)

(It is so unbelievable for anyone to speak of, how a city such as her could be constructed, then afterwards destroyed. *Nimrod the giant* began to build Babylon first and King Ninus after him. And his queen Semiramis completed her after him, in the middle of her reign. The city was built on flat and very level land. And she was very beautiful to look at. And she is a very even square, and the *stature and the strength of the wall* is unbelievable to speak of: that is, it is one ell broad and two hundred ells high, and its circumference is seventy miles and one seventh of a mile, and it is made of bricks and earth-tar. And a great ditch surrounds *the wall*, in which flows a most immense stream; and outside the ditch is *a wall* built two ells high, and above *the greater wall* the entire circumference is covered over with *stone turrets*.)

The same city of Babylon, which was the greatest and the first of all cities, is now the smallest and most desolate.)

The contrast that is set in the opening of this passage between the construction of Babylon, when she is first ‘wrought’ (*gewyrca*), and her deconstruction, when she is ‘broken apart’ (*abreca*), introduces an exploration of what the city was like between these two states. On the cusp of her downfall, Babylon is conjured momentarily and materially in the present tense as if she can be viewed as she was in the midst of her power. However, the sense of presence and prestige that is related here is tinged with the pathos of her inevitable ruin. Indeed, even the description that Babylon was founded by ‘the giant Nimrod’ (*Membrað se ent*) is infused with a sense of transience. Although Nimrod is acknowledged as Babylon’s founder in the *Historia* Book 2.6 – in line with conventional Babylonian narratives in classical and medieval sources – there

are additional associations and traditions at work in the OE *Orosius*.³³ The giant Nimrod's act of construction, establishing the 'first of all cities' (*ærest ealra burga*), might be traced as the precedent to the stonework of the conceptual *enta*, who mythologize ancient and lost cultures in the cities of Old English poetry. The conventional associations between the *enta geweorc* and stone walls are certainly channelled and magnified in this description of Babylon. Her gigantic and legendary provenance is built into the huge stature of her two city walls; the first, perimeter wall is also crowned with 'stone turrets' (*stænenum wighusum*). Crucially, the stone turrets and the second, slightly smaller wall beyond the moat described here seem to be the invention of the Old English author, as Janet Bately notes.³⁴ In other words, these features conform to the idea of the ruined city in the Anglo-Saxon imaginary (that is, the idea of skilfully crafted wall-stones that have crumbled), fuelled by the conventional association of Babylon with the craftsmanship of a giant.

Following this description, Babylon is anthropomorphized in the narrative of Book II.iiii, assuming a female form to articulate her own experience of downfall and transience, as we have seen (43/34-44/6; see Chapter 2). This personification of a Babylon who speaks for herself is fitting, since both her walls and the rise and fall of her power are only just within the limits of human comprehension and expression; the proclamation that Babylon is 'unbelievable to speak of' (*ungeliefedlic to secgenne*) is repeated twice in the passage cited above to convey the extraordinariness of Babylon's example of a ruined city. Although Babylon's *bisene* (44/2) of transience is universal, applying to all humans, empires and ruins, it is also unique. In the context of 'ealra weorca' (43/34-44/1; all the works) of giants in the Anglo-Saxon imagination, Babylon is 'fæstast 7 wunderlecast 7 mærast' (44/1; strongest, most wondrous and the most well known), before and after her fall into ruin.

The tropes of the Anglo-Saxon ruin tradition that are threaded through these descriptions of Babylon are extended to the representation of Rome in Book II.iiii of the OE *Orosius*, as a city whose empire has also fallen. When Cyrus' act of storming Babylon is recounted, the ageing walls of Rome are compared to the ruined walls of Babylon:

On ðæm dagum þe Cirus Persa cyning Babylonia *abræc*, ða wæs Croesus se Liþa cyning mid firde gefaren Babylonium to fultume. Ac þa he wiste þæt hie him on nanum fultome

³³ *Historia*, Book 2.6.96/7: '[n]amque Babylonam a Nembroth gigante fundatam, a Nino uel Semiramide reparatam multi prodidere.' (pp.83-84: '[f]or this was the Babylon that, according to many authorities, was founded by the giant Nebrot and refounded by Ninus or Semiramis.') Fear, *History*, fn to 2.6.7 notes that the notion that Babylon was founded by Nimrod was '[a] common belief in the early church based on Genesis 10.10,' also expressed by Augustine in the *City of God*. For further discussion of this, see Scheil, *Babylon under Western Eyes*, pp.52-54.

³⁴ Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 43/30-1 and 43/32.

beon ne mæhte, 7 þæt seo burg *abrocen* wæs, he him hamweard ferde to his agnum rice. 7 him Cirus wæs æfterfylgende oþ he hiene gefeng 7 ofslog. Ond nu *ure cristne Roma* bespricð þæt hiere *wealles for ealdunge brosnien*, nales na for þæm þe hio mid forheriunge swa gebismrad wære swa Babylonia wæs. Ac heo for hiere cristendome nugiet is *gescild*, ðæt ægþer ge hio self ge hiere anweald is ma *hreosende for ealddome* þonne of æniges cyninges niede. (44/7-16; my emphasis.)

(In those days Cyrus, the king of the Persians, *broke (into)* Babylon, when Croesus, the king of the Lydians, took an army to Babylon for reinforcement. But when he realized that they could not be of any assistance there, and that the city was *broken apart*, he took the army home to his own kingdom. And Cyrus followed after him until he captured and killed him. And now *our Christian Rome* complains that her *walls might crumble from old age*, not at all because they were shamed with devastation as Babylon was. But she is *shielded* yet for her Christianity, so both she herself and her power is *falling into ruin from age* rather than the compulsion of any king.)

As anticipated before the description of Babylon at the height of her prominence and power, the city is ‘broken into’ (*abræc*) and ‘broken apart’ (*abrocen*) by Cyrus here; this anticipates, in turn, the breakdown of the Roman Empire by Alaric in Book VI.xxxviii, discussed at the beginning of this Chapter. Indeed, whilst Bately notes that ‘the translator strengthens the parallelism between Rome and Babylon’ at the end of Book 2.6 in the *Historia*, Harris has elaborated that the parallel in the Old English account is ‘that they are both fallen empires.’³⁵ Harris considers the participle, *hreosende*, ‘falling into ruin,’ as instrumental to the inscription of the fall of the Roman Empire in the historical record.³⁶ Imperial fall is couched, therefore, within the cultural symbolism of material ruin. This is evident from the city walls of Rome, which are imprinted on the example of the walls of Babylon and so descended from her provenance as the original *enta geweorc*. Like the Roman constructions in England that Bede describes in his account of the sack of Rome in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, the city walls of Rome have witnessed the height of imperial power, the end of the Empire and the world beyond. Moreover, like the walls of all the ruins in the Anglo-Saxon imagination, the walls of Rome function as figurative and material delineations of the past and the present, of power and its passing. We see the same verb, *brosnian*, ‘to decay’ or ‘to crumble,’ in this

³⁵ Bately, *OE Orosius*, fn to 44/12-16. Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, p.96. Cf. *Historia*, Book 2.6.98/14: ‘[i]ta ad proxima aduentatis Cyri temptamenta succubuit magna Babylon et ingens Lydia, amplissima Orientis cum capite suo brachia unius proelii expeditione ceciderunt: et nostri incircumspecta anxietate causantur, si potentissimae illae quondam Romanae reipublicae moles nunc magis inbecillitate propriae senectutis quam alienis concussae uiribus contremescunt.’ (p.85: ‘In this way great Babylon and mighty Lydia fell on Cyrus’s first attack – the most powerful limbs of the East falling along with its head and collapsing through the outcome of one single battle. And the people of our time are looking round in unreflecting distress and asking whether the once-mighty foundations of the Roman state are now tottering not from the blows of foreign foes, but rather from the weakness of its own old age.’)

³⁶ Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, p.96.

description of Roman walls that we saw in opening lines of *The Ruin*; we might recall how in the poem, the wall-stones made by giants ‘crumble’ (*brosnað*).³⁷ This verb, *brosnian* refers to material, human, and intellectual decay – to material erosion, bodily decomposition, and mental corruption. When used adjectivally, *brosnian* refers to something perishable and transitory.³⁸ Combining these semantic associations, the city walls of Rome are described as crumbling from ‘old age’ (*ealdunge*); Rome is metaphorically materialized, personified and temporalized.

The transience of Roman constructions – an index for the transience of the Empire – is framed within the transcendence of the Christian faith in this passage. Whilst the earthly, human and material vestiges of the Roman Empire have crumbled and decayed in history, enduring only in the traces of ruins, the Christianity of Rome has sustained: ‘Rome is shielded yet for her Christianity’ (*heo for hiere cristendome nugiet is gescild*). Moreover, this Christianity is shared by post-Conquest Anglo-Saxon England (unlike the history of the Empire in *Brittania*). For the Anglo-Saxon author and audience of the OE *Orosius*, it is ‘now our Christian Rome’ (*nu ure cristne Roma*).

Roman stones

In *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen has argued that ‘[i]f stone teaches us anything it is that ruin is a beginning, a going from which something vital arrives.’³⁹ Cohen does not discuss the OE *Orosius* in his study of stone in medieval narratives. However, his suggestion that stone in and of itself is ‘a material metaphor’ that ‘brings story into being’ is relevant to my reading of the account of the ruin of Carthage, which is destroyed by the Romans in the OE *Orosius* Book IV.xiii.⁴⁰ Lithic imagery is traced through this account, which moves between the description of the destruction of Carthage and the polemical commentary of Orosius. As stones are shifted from the ruin of Carthage to the rhetoric of Orosius, materials are transformed into metaphor and subject matter. The fifth-century Romans are compared to stones by Orosius and, in extended imagery, the polemical task of Orosius in the *Historia* is likened to the act of whetting soft stone. In other words, the fifth-century Romans and Orosius’ polemical project are historicized in lithic imagery.

Orosius is entered into the narrative of Book IV.xiii to offer an outline of Carthage alongside the account of Scipio razing the city to the ground. This historical

³⁷ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p.227, line 2.

³⁸ DOE, s.v. ‘brosnian’ (accessed August 2012).

³⁹ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), p.66.

⁴⁰ Cohen, *Stone*, p.4.

episode is set up, therefore, in a similar manner to the account of Babylon's destruction by Cyrus but positioned within a fifth-century Roman perspective from the outset:

Nu ic wille, cwæð Orosius, secgean hulucu heo wæs. Hiere ymbegong wæs xxx mila, 7 eall heo wæs mid sæ utan befangen, butan þrim milum, 7 *se weall* wæs xx fota sxx fota ðicce 7 xl elna heah, 7 þær wæs binnan oþer læsse fæsten on ðæm sæs clife, þæt wæs twegea mila heah. Hie þa Cartainenses æt þæm cirre þa burg aweredon, þeh þe Scipia ær *fela þæs wealles tobrocen* hæfde, 7 siþþan hamweard for. (112/7-13; my emphasis.)

(Now, said Orosius, I will speak about how she was. Her circumference was thirty miles, and she was completely surrounded outside by sea, apart from three miles, and *the wall* was twenty feet thick and forty ells high, and inside there was another smaller fortress on the sea cliff, which was two miles high. On that occasion the Carthaginians defended their city, although Scipio had *broken many of the walls* before, and afterwards he travelled home.)

As in the description of Babylon in Book II.iiii but on a smaller scale, a contrast is constructed between the thickness and height of 'the wall' (*se weall*) and inner 'fortress' (*fæsten*) of Carthage and the walls that have been 'broken' (*tobrocen*) by Scipio. Scipio's destruction of Carthage on behalf of the Romans is at first gradual and staved off by the Carthaginians – during ongoing conflict – and then absolute. Indeed, when Scipio returns to Carthage for the third and final time in the narrative, following the excerpt above, he orders 'ælcne hiewestan tobeatan' (112/22-3; every hewn-stone to be smashed) so that no wall can stay standing. As in the *Historia* Book 4.23 and the ruin narratives of Old English tradition, Carthage's destruction is both material and social. Yet the Romans' pulverization of every trace of Carthage, hewn-stone by hewn-stone, distinguishes this city from Babylon, Rome and the imaginary ruined cities in Old English poetry; Carthage's hewn-stones are not the *enta geweorc*. These cities – and the power and prestige they once held – are still traceable in the remnants of their wall-stones.

This effective effacement of Carthage from the landscape is significant to the characterization of the Romans in the Orosian commentary that follows. The commentary to the fifth-century Romans hinges on the explanation for why the Romans of the past had destroyed Carthage in the context of years of successful conflict (Book IV.xiii.112/26-32): that is, they wanted to remove the threat of the Carthaginians rather than to live with the possibility of attack, fearing that a period of peace would make them 'sluggish' (*aslawoden*; 112/32), 'slothful' (*aeargoden*; 112/32) and unprepared for battle.⁴¹ In response to this turn towards complacency in the Roman

⁴¹ Cf. *Historia* Book 4.23.74-75/9 and translation by Fear, p.205.

psyche, Orosius addresses his contemporary Romans with a series of striking material metaphors in Book IV.xiii:

Swa þæt eow Romanum nu eft cup wearþ, siþþan se cristendom wæs, cwæð Orosius, þæt ge eowerra ieldrena *hwetstan* forluran eowerra gewinna 7 eowres hwætscipes, for þon ge sindon nu utan fætte 7 innan hlæne, 7 eowre ieldran wæron utan hlæne 7 innan fætte, stronges modes 7 fæstes. Ic nat eac, cwæð he, hu nyt ic þa hwile beo þe ic þas word sprece, butan þæt ic min geswinc amirre. Hit biþ eac geornlic þæt mon heardlice gnide þone hnescestan *mealmstan* æfter þæm þæt he þence þone soelestan *hwetstan* on to geræceanne. Swa þonne is me nu swiþe earfeðe *hiera mod to ahwettane*, nu hit nawþer nyle beon, *ne scearp ne heard*. (113/1-10; my emphasis.)

(So it becomes evident again to you Romans, since Christendom, said Orosius, that you lost the *whetstone* of your ancestors, that of your wars and of your courage, because you are now fat on the outside and lean on the inside, and your ancestors were lean on the outside and fat inside, of strong and steadfast mind. I also do not know, he said, how useful I am while I speak these words, or if I am wasting my effort. It is also desirable for one to rub the softest *malmstone* hard if he intends to get the best *whetstone* as a result. So then it is now for me, with great difficulty, *to whet their mind*, which is neither unprepared, nor sharp nor hard.)

Cohen's view that stone is productive of stories is illuminated in this commentary, in which the lithic and the literary are conjoined. Whilst Cohen conceives of the material stone as a metaphor, however, the materiality of stone – its variability and its transformative potential – is played upon within the metaphorical constructions here. Indeed, there are multidirectional significations at work in the association of different types of stone – specifically, hard 'whetstone' (*hwetstan*) and 'soft malmstone' (*hnescestan mealmstan*) – with various states of mind, cutting across the different temporalities of the OE *Orosius*. Broadly speaking, the 'strong and steadfast mindset' (*stronges modes 7 fæstes*) of the pagan 'ancestors' (*ieldran*) of the fifth-century Romans is attributed to the metaphorical whetstone of Carthage, which ensured that the ancestors were prepared for attack. On the contrary, the slack minds of the fifth-century Romans living in Christendom are represented figuratively as malmstone, which is 'neither sharp nor hard' (*ne scearp ne heard*); malmstone is a soft, chalky type of rock.

Although Orosius' praise for the pagan Romans is slightly incongruous with his usual polemic, the subtext of his message to the fifth-century Romans is that they lost their military power themselves, long before adopting Christianity. Furthermore, the apparent contradiction between Orosius' polemic and his positive representation of the pagan Romans is resolved as the lithic imagery is sustained. It is Orosius' task – and challenge – to 'whet' (*ahwettane*) the softened minds of the fifth-century Romans, who

are nevertheless ‘not unprepared’ (*nyle*) to resist his argument. His polemic is intended to turn the Romans away from looking back ruefully to paganism and towards Christianity and so the imagery of the whetstone is converted accordingly. At the end of the passage above, the ‘whetstone’ (*hwetstan*) no longer refers to Carthage, which kept the pagan Romans ready for war and in good mental and physical shape: that is, ‘lean on the outside and fat on the inside’ (*utan hlæne 7 innan fætte*). The ‘whetstone’ (*hwetstan*) refers instead to the sharpened minds of the Romans if Orosius achieves his polemical aim. Orosius himself must become a whetstone, metaphorically speaking, to bring about this ideological shift.

As Bately has noted, the passage above is the Old English author’s ‘independent’ interpretation of Orosius’ polemic in Book 4.23 of the *Historia*; the metaphor of sharpening a malmstone into whetstone is not in the Latin but it is prompted by other whetstone imagery in the *Historia*.⁴² (Incidentally, the reference to the malmstone in the OE *Orosius* is the first recorded use of this word in English.)⁴³ Regardless of whether the lithic metaphors are based on the *Historia* or not, however, the materiality of stone offers the Romans in these metaphors – those of the fifth century and their pagan ancestors – and Orosius a material presence for the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius*. In addition, the polemic of Orosius in the *Historia* is given texture and shape in Book IV.xiii of the OE *Orosius*; it is lithified and materialized within an Anglo-Saxon perspective.

Timbering the Matter of Rome

The places, cultures and empires of history are associated materially with stones, ageing walls and ruins in the OE *Orosius* and the Anglo-Saxon imagination, as I have argued. However, the Anglo-Saxon perspective of the OE *Orosius* also has a distinctive material presence; one associated with timber and related to origins and regeneration. The familiar Old English verb, *getimbrian*, ‘to build’ or ‘to timber,’ refers to the act of construction throughout the OE *Orosius*. This verb is used in relation to the lithic

⁴² Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 113/1-10 and 113/7-9. Cf. *Historia*, Book 4.23.75/10-11: ‘cur Christianis temporibus inputant hebetationem ac robiginem suam, qua foris crassi, intus exesi sunt? qui porro ante sescentos fere annos, sicut sui prudentes timentesque praedixerant, cotem illam magnam splendoris et acuminis sui Carthaginem perdiderunt. Itaque finem uolumini faciam ne forsitan conlidendo uehementius discussa ad tempus robigine ubi necessarium acumen elicere non possum, superuacuam asperitatem inueniam. Quamquam obuiantem asperitatem nequaquam expauescerem, si interioris spem acuminis inuenirem.’ (p.205: ‘why do they blame on these Christian times their sluggishness and decay which leaves them bloated on the outside and eaten away within? They are the men who lost almost 600 years ago, as their wiser and more fearful compatriots predicted, that great whetstone of their splendour and glory, namely Carthage. And so I shall put an end to this volume, in case it should turn out that while arguing too fiercely about this matter, I should remove my opponents’ sluggishness for a moment, but then encounter mindless hostility where I am unable to draw forth from them insight which they need – though I would be in no way afraid of confronting such hostility, if I could find some hope of creating that deeper insight.’)

⁴³ *OED*, s.v. ‘malmstone’ (accessed September 2016).

places, cultures and empires of the past but it is rooted semantically to Anglo-Saxon cultural practice, as Howe has explained:

[t]he Anglo-Saxons were so accustomed to building in wood, rather than stone, that the usual verb in their language for “to construct” or “to erect” was *getimbran* or *getimbrian*, literally “to timber.” This verb was used for all types of buildings and cities, even those rare ones made from stone.⁴⁴

When we see the verb, *getimbrian* in the OE *Orosius*, therefore, we might be reminded of how the historical subject matter of the text, including that which relates to the Matter of Rome, is constructed within the cultural perspective of the Anglo-Saxon vernacular.

The dating system of the OE *Orosius* is a very good example of the implications of the verb, *getimbrian* and the significance of its material and semantic associations. The OE *Orosius* follows the system for measuring time that is used in the *Historia*, relating events in the history of the world to the date of Rome’s founding. Most of the chapters open with one of the two following stock phrases:

- i.) Ær ðæm ðe Romeburh getimbred wære þrim hund wintra 7 þusend wintra.
(Book I.ii.21/23-4; one thousand three hundred years before Rome was built.)

- ii.) Æfter þæm þe Romeburg getimbred wæs m wintra 7 c 7 iiiii 7 siextegum.
(Book VI.xxxviii.156/11-12; one thousand, one hundred and sixty-four years after Rome was built.)

Because the dating system in the OE *Orosius* is translated from the *Historia* and features Rome as a pivotal point, it is conventionally considered as deferring to Roman authority and perspective. Howe, for instance, has argued that the ‘events included in the [OE] *Orosius* happen in a world that understands why dates are based on the founding of Rome, that is, in a place that acknowledges that city as a capital.’⁴⁵ Howe uses the term ‘capital’ here ‘in its etymological sense as the head (*caput*) city of a culture rather than as the central political city of a nation-state’; to refer to the imprints of the former Roman Empire on the landscape of the Anglo-Saxons and to the contemporary centrality of Rome as a spiritual and educational centre.⁴⁶ Karasawa has also recently contrasted the ‘foreign’ subject matter of the OE *Orosius* with the insular perspective of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in the Cotton Manuscript, arguing that ‘the difference in their perspectives is tellingly reflected in the change of the dating systems’; the *Chronicle* uses the *Anno Domini* system.⁴⁷ Whilst I do not dispute the

⁴⁴ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.49.

⁴⁵ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.114. See also p.101.

⁴⁶ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.110.

⁴⁷ Karasawa, ‘The *Menologium* and *Maxims II* in MS context,’ 2.

arguments of Howe and Karasawa, I would suggest that the dating system is also more nuanced than they allow. The repetition of the verb, *getimbrian* in the dating system provides coordinates for both Anglo-Saxon England and Rome. In turn, the system offers an index for the Anglo-Saxon historiographical framework of the OE *Orosius*.

To appreciate the material and historiographical implications of the dating system in the OE *Orosius* it is necessary to look at the focal point: that is, the description of the foundation of Rome in Book II.ii. The destruction of Troy is used as an alternative point of temporal reference here: '[y]mb feower hunde wintra 7 ymb feowertig þæs þe Troia, Creca burg, awested wæs, wearð Romeburg getimbred from twam gebroðrum, Remuse 7 Romuluse' (38/31-39/2; around four hundred and forty years after Troy, the Greek city, was wasted, Rome was built by two brothers, Remus and Romulus). The positioning of the origins of Rome against the destruction of Troy juxtaposes an urban ending with an urban beginning, suggesting a version of the process of *translatio imperii*. This manoeuvre from the legend of Troy to the Matter of Rome also has a greater historical relevance, alluding to the Trojan foundations of Rome by Aeneas and so combining the mythical and historical origin narratives for the city. Indeed, as Tyler has illustrated, the legend of Troy was well known to the Anglo-Saxons but considered to be fictional.⁴⁸ Tyler argues that when the Trojan War is recounted briefly in Book I.xi of the OE *Orosius*, as in the *Historia* Book 1.17, there is no suggestion that the author needed 'to expand [on the material in the Latin] for an ignorant Anglo-Saxon audience.'⁴⁹

As the opening of Book II.ii moves from the abstract to the concrete – from Rome's mythical Trojan foundation to its historical one – the city is materialized in the narrative. The crucial phrase in this opening statement, *wearð Romeburg getimbred*, 'Rome was built' (literally, 'Rome became built'), is layered with Anglo-Saxon material association, acculturating the description of the founding of Rome in the *Historia* Book 2.4: 'urbs Roma in Italia a Romulo et Remo geminis auctoribus condita est.' (90/1; p.78: 'the city of Rome was founded in Italy under the twin leadership of Romulus and Remus.') Firstly, the urban *locus* of Rome is fixed in the vernacular suffix of the toponym *Romeburg*, *-burh* or *-burg*. This suffix also refers to the walls or fortifications of the city, consistent with the lithic associations of the Romans and other cities of distant temporal and spatial descent in the Anglo-Saxon imagination.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Tyler, 'Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England,' 1-2.

⁴⁹ Tyler, 'Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England,' 7. The destruction of Troy is not even noted in the OE *Orosius* Book I.xi.

⁵⁰ *Burg* or *Burh* has various meanings in literary and toponymical applications. See *DOE*, s.v. 'burh' (accessed August 2016). See also John Baker and Stuart Brookes, *Beyond the Burghal Hidage: Anglo-Saxon Civil Defence in the Viking Age*, *History of Warfare* 84 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), pp.90-98.

Secondly, both the material construction of the city and the conceptual foundations of Rome as an imperial (and later, Christian) centre are realized in the verb, *getimbrian*, ‘to build’ or ‘to timber.’ This conflation of the material and conceptual senses of our modern English word, ‘foundation’ can be unpacked a little further. The verb, *getimbrian* offers a literal Old English interpretation to the foundation of Rome, configuring the city as a material thing built by the hands of the ‘two brothers, Remus and Romulus’ (*twam gebroðrum, Remuse 7 Romuluse*). Moreover, the cultural specificity and semantic associations of the verb, *getimbrian*, as discussed, build the history of Rome according to an Anglo-Saxon perspective; the city of Rome is constructed, metaphorically, with Anglo-Saxon building techniques.

Indeed, the repetition of the phrase, *Romeburg getimbred* in the dating system of the OE *Orosius* situates the entire history within this metaphorical and historiographical ‘timber’ Anglo-Saxon structure. The idea that building a wooden construction can serve as a metaphor for the process of translating and composing a text is found in the preface to the Old English *Soliloquies* – another translation associated with King Alfred.⁵¹ As Irvine has argued, in this preface:

an extended metaphor of gathering wood from the forest to build houses, [is] used to describe the process of collecting excerpts from Latin authors to construct one’s own literary works for the purpose of spiritual improvement [...] self-referentially through the preface itself, the author creates a structural frame for his own literary work.⁵²

In the OE *Orosius*, the association between material construction and literary composition is embedded and implicit within the dating system. The history is built, metaphorically speaking, using the materials of the *Historia* and additional classical sources but it is productive of something new and distinctly Anglo-Saxon in texture and shape.

At an additional level of materiality – at the level of the inscription of the OE *Orosius* – the construction and foundation of Rome in Book II.ii locates the turn in the dating system to a specific place in the manuscript. The system shifts from referring to ‘before’ (*ær þæm þe*) to ‘after’ (*æfter þæm þe*) Rome’s foundation materially as well as historically: that is, in the manuscript book as well as the narrative. Indeed, as Peter Clemoes has argued in relation to the use of *her* in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ‘[w]ritten language itself was understood to be a combination of physical presence and meaning, distinguishable from one another and yet complementary.’⁵³ In this respect,

⁵¹ *King Alfred’s Version of St Augustine’s Soliloquies*, ed. by Thomas A. Carnicelli (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp.47-48.

⁵² Irvine, ‘Alfredian prefaces and epilogues,’ p.165.

⁵³ Clemoes, ‘*Her* in the 890 *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,’ 30.

the dating system of the OE *Orosius* might be compared with the use of *her* in the *Chronicle*, which refers to the immediate inscription in the manuscript, to the date of the historical event and to the perspective of Anglo-Saxon England (see Introduction). The phrase, *Romeburg getimbred wæs* has comparable directions of reference in the OE *Orosius*: spatial, temporal, cultural, textual and material; that is, in relation to the manuscript and to the materiality of Rome's construction in Book II.ii.

Howe has previously likened the dating system in the OE *Orosius* to the use of *her* in the *Chronicle*, not in relation to materiality as I have but to the similar 'locative force' of each system.⁵⁴ His argument views the dating system of the OE *Orosius* as looking out towards Rome, as I have noted, connecting this approach to an Anglo-Saxon understanding of the *pax Romana*:

[a]n Anglo-Saxon reading through the Old English *Orosius* would thus be able to interpret it as recording a kind of cultural conversion: the history of the world mattered as an eschatological preparation for the *pax Romana* under Augustus Caesar and the birth of Christ. From that time and place came, in turn, the religion that was transported to England.⁵⁵

Howe's identification of the conversion of Rome from a pagan to a Christian centre is borne out in the accounts of the construction of Rome by Romulus and Remus in Book II.ii and the reconstruction of Rome by Augustus in Book VI.i. It is these two interconnected material descriptions of the foundations of Rome that are of significance to an Anglo-Saxon audience (not the relationship between the foundation of Rome by Aeneas in Trojan legend and that by Remus and Romulus). The Anglo-Saxon interpretation of these events in Roman history is just as reflexive as the dating system, pushing back to the historiographical perspective of Anglo-Saxon England.

Crucially, Rome's founding by Remus and Romulus in Book II.ii of the OE *Orosius* is staged as a first attempt. The materiality of Rome is connected to the murderous acts of Romulus and so steeped in pagan blood:

Swa weorðlice 7 swa mildelice wæs Romeburg *on fruman gehalgod*, mid broðor blode 7 mid sweora 7 mid Romuluses eame[s] Numetores, þone he eac ofslog, ða he cyning wæs 7 him self siþþan to ðæm rice feng! Þuss gebletsade Romulus Romana rice *on fruman: mid his broðor blode þone weall 7 mid þara sweora blode þa ciricean 7 mid his eames blode þæt rice.* (39/16-22; my emphasis.)

(So worthily and so mercifully was Rome *first consecrated*, with the blood of a brother and of a father-in-law and with Romulus' uncle, Numitor, whom he also killed when he was king and then put himself in power! Romulus *first blessed* the kingdom of the

⁵⁴ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.114.

⁵⁵ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.114.

Romans thus: *with his brother's blood on the wall and with his father-in-law's blood on the church and with his uncle's blood on the kingdom.*)

Christian Rome is anticipated throughout this description of pagan Rome in the instrumental repetition of 'first' (*on fruman*) and the ironic subversion of Christian discourse. The language of homilies and martyrologies, this discourse entangles Christian rituals and pagan murder: Rome is 'first consecrated' (*on fruman gehalgod*) and 'first blessed' (*gebletsade [...] on fruman*) with the blood of pagan martyrs. The pagan and Christian identities of Rome are also entangled, therefore: pagan Rome is a precursor to Christian Rome but this means that Christian Rome was built from pagan origins. Here, the materiality of the *locus* of Rome becomes a signficatory site for the overall concept of the Matter of Rome. Firstly, the blood of Remus on 'the wall' (*bone weall*) suggests the pagan staining of the city itself; both its physical walls and its conceptual presence. If the walls of Rome have pagan veins, in a metaphorical sense, then so too do the walls left behind by the Roman Empire, including those conceived of by the Anglo-Saxon imagination. Secondly, the blood of Romulus' father-in law on 'the church' (*þa ciricean*) signifies that the Roman Church is infused with pagan blood. Bately glosses the use of *cirice* in this context as 'heathen temple' but *templ* (Book VI.vii.138/13, xiiii.141/19) or *hearg* (Book I.i.9/1; Book III.vii.62/28, viiii.69/20, 26) are used elsewhere in the OE *Orosius* with this meaning.⁵⁶ I read *cirice* in context here as serving two functions, material and conceptual like 'the wall' (*bone weall*). It can be understood contextually as a reference to the place in which the murder occurred, and so as an equivalent to a church, a 'temple.' But I would argue that *cirice* also refers deliberately to the Roman Church. In this broader conceptual sense, it is implied that the pagan foundations of Rome are intrinsic to the foundations of Roman Christianity. This is a conscious diversion from the *Historia* Book 2.4: 'regnum aui, muros fratris, *templum* soceri sanguine dedicauit.' (90/3; p.78: '[h]e dedicated his kingdom with the blood of his grandfather, its walls with the blood of his brother, and its *temple* with that of his father-in-law.') Thirdly, and finally, the pagan provenance of both the sovereignty and the Empire of Rome are expressed in the imagery of the blood of

⁵⁶ See 'Glossary' in Bately, OE *Orosius*, s.v. 'cirice.' Following Bately, the *OED* cites this example in the OE *Orosius* as the earliest usage in English of 'church' to denote: '[a] building for public worship belonging to a religion other than Christianity.' *OED*, s.v. 'church' (accessed August 2016). *Hus* (IV.ii.86/24) and *diofolgielthus* (VI.xxx.149/19) are also used to denote a 'pagan temple.'

⁵⁷ The emphasis in both the Latin and Modern English translations is mine. Whilst the *Historia* identifies Numitor as Romulus' grandfather rather than his uncle, both the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* are incorrect; Romulus actually killed his great uncle, Numitor's brother, Amulius. See Fear, fn to 2.4.3. See also Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 39/18: '[d]id the translator misunderstand a gloss or comment on this passage of [the *Historia*], which pointed out that Romulus killed not his grandfather but his great uncle? Or was he influenced by the discrepancy between this reference in [the *Historia*] to Numitor as grandfather and a subsequent reference, [*Historia* 6.1.164/14], to *Amulius auus*?'

Numitor on the 'kingdom' (*þæt rice*). The materiality of the pagans who are martyred by Romulus – or, more specifically, that of their blood – symbolizes the relationship that flows between pagan and Christian Rome; their blood also circulates around the *locus* of the city and the Matter of Rome.

The pagan origins of Rome – and its Empire and Church – cannot be expunged conceptually but the materials stained by the murders committed by Romulus can be removed and rebuilt. In Book VI.i of the OE *Orosius*, Rome is regenerated by the emperor Augustus, transforming the city from the centre of the pagan Empire to the centre of an Empire that is destined to become Christian. Indeed, the following passage is framed by the rhetoric of Orosius – introduced by the phrase, *cwæð Orosius* – about the providential pattern of history that had privileged the Roman Empire (132/24-134/10):

Ymb vii c wintra 7 ymb lytelne eacon, com micel fyrcyn 7 micel bryne on Romeburg, þæt *þærbinnan* furburnon xv tunas, swa nan mon nyste hwonan þæt fyr com. 7 þær forwearð mæst eall þæt *þærbinnan* wæs, þæt þær uneaþe ænig *grot stapoles* aðstod. Mid þæm bryne hio wæs swa swiþe forhiened þæt hio næfre sibþan swelc næs, ær hie eft Augustus swa micle bet *getimbrede* þonne hio æfre ær wære, þy geare þe Crist geboren wæs, swa þætte sume men cwædon þæt hio wære mid *gimstanum* gefrætwed. Þone fultum 7 þæt weorc Augustus gebohte mid fela m talentana. (133/11-20; my emphasis.)

(At a little over seven hundred years, a great kind of fire and a great conflagration came upon Rome, which burned fifteen villas *within*, so no one knew where the fire came from. And almost everything that was *within* [the city] was destroyed, so that each *particle of the foundation* struggled to stay up. As a consequence of the conflagration, she was brought lower than she ever has been since, before Augustus *built her* again so that she was much better than she ever was before, in the year that Christ was born, so that some men said that she was decorated with *gemstones*. Augustus paid for the reinforcements and for the work with many thousands of talents.)

In 'the year that Christ was born' (*þy geare þe Crist geboren wæs*), the emperor Augustus mediates between the pagan and Christian identities of Rome. The spiritual regeneration of Rome and the Empire at this time is illustrated in this description of the material regeneration of the city. Everything in the *locus* of Rome that was marked by the blood of pagan murder is destroyed in the fire; not a single 'particle of the foundation' (*grot stapoles*) remains. Whereas the account of the pagan consecration of Rome after it is first built in Book II.ii moves out from the confines of the city to the greater aspects of the Matter of Rome – from the walls (*weall*; 39/21) to the Roman Church (*ciricean*; 39/21) to the Roman Empire (*rice*; 39/22) – this account of Rome's destruction by fire in Book VI.i is confined to the city itself. It is noted twice that the fire happens 'inside' (*þærbinnan*) the city. Rome is shaped as a centre that is looked

towards, therefore, rather than a pagan centre that expands outwards into an Empire; the centrality of Rome for the Christian Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius* can be identified here. Indeed, when Rome is ‘built again’ by Augustus (*eft [...] getimbrede*), she is established prognostically as a place of Christian significance. ‘Adorned with gemstones’ (*mid gimstanum gefrætweð*), if only apocryphally, Rome is reminiscent of Jerusalem. The implicit connection between the gemstones of Rome here and the precious stones that decorate the walls of Jerusalem in The Apocalypse of Saint John situates Rome’s material and pre-Christian presence in terms of Christian transience once again.⁵⁸

However, the reference to Romulus’ consecration of Rome in Book II.ii of the OE *Orosius* as the first pagan attempt at establishing the city does not point solely towards the account of Augustus rebuilding Rome as a Christian centre in Book VI.i. The description of Romulus’ initiation of Rome also anticipates the sack of Rome as it is recounted from an Anglo-Saxon perspective in Book VI.xxxviii. As we have seen, the Christianity of the city founded by Remus and Romulus and reconstructed by Augustus is protected by the Goth Alaric in the OE *Orosius*. There are similarities across the descriptions of these three events in Roman history. The characterization of Alaric and Romulus can be compared and contrasted. For instance, whilst Romulus is described ironically as first consecrating Rome ‘[s]wa weorðlice 7 swa mildelice’ (Book II.ii. 39/16; so worthily and so mercifully), Alaric is praised for conducting his attack on Rome in a manner befitting ‘se cristena cyning 7 se mildesta’ (Book VI.xxxviii.156/13-14; the most merciful Christian king). Moreover, whilst everything inside Rome burns down before Augustus reforms the city, neither the houses nor the churches are harmed in the sack of Rome. In the OE *Orosius*, then, the end of the Roman Empire at the sack of Rome is written into its origins. The Christianity latent in Rome’s imperial and material foundations and nurtured by Augustus’ reconstructed Rome outlasts the end of the Empire because of a Germanic Christian king. This turn of history is implicit to the references in the dating system to a Rome that is ‘timbered’ (*getimbred*).

To conclude, the Matter of Rome in the OE *Orosius*, including the dating system that consolidates and references it, is not only Roman-orientated but also the object of Anglo-Saxon construction. In the words of Cohen, ‘history forms its matter in the sense of both substance as well as subject.’⁵⁹ The substance and subject of Rome in the OE *Orosius* are the matter of Anglo-Saxon history.

⁵⁸ Apocalypse of Saint John/ Revelations 21.19.

⁵⁹ Cohen, *Stone*, p.10.

Chapter 4: Entanglements: queer time and faith

There is no consensus of opinion as to whether the OE *Orosius* is a Christian or secular world history. Typically, discussions have sought to reconcile the polemical focus on the sack of Rome in the *Historia* and the Anglo-Saxon composition of the OE *Orosius*, assuming that this event cannot possibly be relevant to an audience in England in the ninth to eleventh centuries (a point that Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis have disputed). Janet Bately, for example, argues in the introduction to her EETS edition that the ‘general theme’ of the Old English history ‘has as its focal point not the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 – the reasons for which were hardly a burning issue in late ninth-century England – but the birth of Christ and the coming of Christianity.’¹ Bately takes her lead from Dorothy Whitelock, who suggested previously that the Old English author downplays the sack of Rome but emphasizes the themes of the *pax Romana* and providential history in the Latin: ‘the translator [...] seems careful to preserve a general theme [...] What comes out clearly from his work is that all history is in accord with God’s purpose.’² As we have seen in Chapter 3, Nicholas Howe took up this view, arguing that the OE *Orosius* ‘becomes, in this large process of cultural adaptation, a celebration of the *pax Romana* and the spread of the true faith [...] This theme of imperial Roman expansionism prepares for the spread of Christianity outwards from Rome.’³ William Kretzschmar states that the OE *Orosius* is ‘more objective’ than the *Historia* ‘but still Christian world history.’⁴

More recently, however, the assumption of a purely Christian focus in the OE *Orosius* has been countered and nuanced. Francis Leneghan’s study on the theme of *translatio imperii* in the text, which frames the providential view of history in terms of its political value as discussed, concludes that the protection of Christian Rome provided a strong argument for Christian sovereignty.⁵ Omar Khalaf has highlighted the ‘omission of any reference to the birth of Christ’ in Book VI.i, which ‘would constitute the watershed between the ancient era and the contemporary one in the eyes of the translator’ if they were working to a Christian theme.⁶ Comparing the OE *Orosius* directly to the *Historia*, Khalaf proposes that the biblical episodes in the OE *Orosius* are there for the military themes they also contain, such as ‘the struggle between the leaders of two nations represented by Moses and the Pharaoh’ in Book I.vii.⁷ Malcolm Godden has stated that ‘the Old English author’s decision to launch the historical

¹ Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.xciv.

² Whitelock, ‘The prose of Alfred’s reign,’ p.90.

³ Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.113.

⁴ Kretzschmar, ‘Adaptation and *anweald*,’ 127.

⁵ Leneghan, ‘*Translatio imperii*,’ 4-5, 41-42.

⁶ Khalaf, ‘Omissions and adaptation in the OE *Orosius*,’ 200.

⁷ Khalaf, ‘Omissions and adaptation in the OE *Orosius*,’ 200.

account with Ninus, rather than with the Biblical story of the Fall of Man as Orosius does, is a striking signal of the Old English work's secular focus.⁸ It is telling that different scholars can offer such wildly differing views on the approach towards history and faith in the OE *Orosius*; more telling still that scholars are quick to categorize a text that is not sourced predominantly from the Bible or otherwise allegorical as secular. I contend in this Chapter that the OE *Orosius* is not either Christian or secular in focus – that is, more about Christian and biblical history, including Jewish history, or more about pagan and Roman history – it is both. History cannot be disentangled in these terms because of the Christian worldview that would have informed the composition and interpretation of the OE *Orosius* across its late Anglo-Saxon transmission history.

Indeed, in this Chapter, I will argue that the concept of 'entanglement' provides a productive way of understanding the interrelationships between biblical and secular history (as defined above), and paganism and Christianity in the OE *Orosius*. Theories of entanglement have found their way through to the social sciences and the humanities from the field of quantum physics.⁹ Ian Hodder's archaeological study of the relationship between things and humans comes to define entanglement as 'the dialectic of dependence and dependency.'¹⁰ Building on the theories of materialism and new materialism, including 'thing theory,' Hodder proposes that both humans and things are equal acting agents within this dialectic.¹¹ Hodder's definition of entanglement will underlie the arguments of this Chapter as I explore the co-dependence of paganism and Christianity within the Christian worldview that is presented in the OE *Orosius*. I do not frame the Christian and the secular, Christianity and paganism in binaries here. None of the aforementioned categories can be viewed outside of the Christian ideologies of post-Conversion Anglo-Saxon culture.

Although the term 'syncretism' is often used of Old English texts that negotiate themes of paganism and Christianity, such as *Beowulf*, I find entanglement to be a more useful and more culturally-sensitive approach. Syncretism is defined in the *OED* as, in its principal use, the '[a]tttempted union or reconciliation of diverse or opposite

⁸ Godden, 'OE *Orosius* and its sources,' 305.

⁹ The *OED* defines 'entanglement' in physics as: '[a] correlation between the states of two separate quantum systems such that the behaviour of the two together is different from the juxtaposition of the behaviours of each considered alone.' *OED*, s.v. 'entanglement' (accessed July 2016).

¹⁰ Hodder, *Entangled*, p.89.

¹¹ Hodder, *Entangled*, pp.1-2 looks at the approaches of materialism and new materialism. James Paz has brought 'thing theory' to the study of Old English literature. See James Paz, 'Æschere's head, grendel's mother, and the sword that isn't a sword: Unreadable things in *Beowulf*,' *Exemplaria* 25 (2013), 231-51. See also his forthcoming book, unpublished at the time of writing – James Paz, *Talking with Things: Nonhuman Voices in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Material Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

tenets or practices.’¹² When applied to early medieval literature, therefore, it is predicated on the opposition of paganism and Christianity and the assumption that these categories can only be merged or fused together incoherently within one text or system of thought. The ‘union’ or ‘reconciliation’ of Christian and pagan themes is taken to be a conscious and imposed process rather than one that evolves with the development of culture. The concept of entanglement, on the other hand, allows a more holistic understanding of the interactions between Christianity and paganism in the Anglo-Saxon imagination. The provocations of the archaeologist Timothy Insoll for his field over a decade ago are useful referents here:

where does secular life end and religious life begin? Is religion as a concept really only the result of a desire to classify what is in effect an unclassifiable and invisible facet of life for much of the world’s population today and in the past?¹³

Insoll invited the tenets of queer archaeology to be applied to religious archaeology, calling for greater attention to ‘the notions of syncretism and *religious dualism*, of multiple elements comfortably coexisting, and in so doing *defying neat categories* [my emphasis].’¹⁴ Whilst Insoll uses the term ‘syncretism’ to express the defiance of neat categories, his reflections have informed my approaches towards interpreting the dynamics of paganism and Christianity in the OE *Orosius* in terms of entanglement. Indeed, the arguments of this Chapter are underpinned by theories of queer time, including Carolyn Dinshaw’s concept of ‘temporal asynchrony’ – theories that resist the conceit of linear time and identify a relationship between temporality, human experience and the body.¹⁵ In a special issue of *GLQ* on queer time, Elizabeth Freeman notes that one of the conclusions to come out of a roundtable discussion on the topic is that ‘queer temporalities do seem to involve some kind of faith.’¹⁶ The connections that I find between nonlinear time and faith in the OE *Orosius* are ultimately grounded in Christian theology and the Christian body: that is, in the inherent temporal asynchrony of the model of a God who transcends time and space, and a Christ who is embodied and born into human history (his eternal divine presence notwithstanding).

I have gestured towards entanglement already throughout this thesis, suggesting that the temporalities and perspectives of Anglo-Saxon England and fifth-century Rome in the OE *Orosius* are entangled in Chapter 1 and that the pagan and

¹² *OED*, s.v. ‘syncretism’ (accessed August 2016).

¹³ Timothy Insoll, ‘Are archaeologists afraid of gods? Some thoughts on archaeology and religion’ in *Belief in the Past. The Proceedings of the 2002 Manchester Conference on Archaeology and Religion*, ed. by T. Insoll (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), pp. 1-6 (p.1).

¹⁴ Insoll, ‘Are archaeologists afraid of gods?’, p.2.

¹⁵ For two useful introductions to queer time, see Dinshaw, *How soon is now?*, and the special edition of *GLQ*, edited by Elizabeth Freeman, *GLQ 13 (Queer Temporalities)* (2007).

¹⁶ Elizabeth Freeman, ‘Introduction’ (*Queer Temporalities*), 169.

Christian identities of Rome are entangled in Chapter 3. I have also suggested that the OE *Orosius* and the *Historia* might be thought of as entangled texts within the context of their reception in late Anglo-Saxon England (see Introduction). In brief, I argue that whilst the Old English history relies on the Latin as its principal source, the late Anglo-Saxon reception of the *Historia* cannot be extricated from the historical perspectives indexed by the OE *Orosius*. In this fourth and final Chapter I will consider how the entanglement of paganism and Christianity can be interpreted in relation to: methods of periodization and describing time; the Anglo-Saxon understanding of cosmology, the earth and human experience; and the Christian concepts of the Original Sin, redemption and conversion as they are expressed in the OE *Orosius*. I will conclude this Chapter with two anecdotal examples that demonstrate the entanglements of Christianity and paganism and their union with concepts of queer temporality. The first is a description of Himilco in Book IV.v, the second an account involving Hannibal in Book IV.x. These pagans are represented as acknowledging and recognizing God before the birth of Christ in the chronological sequence of the narrative and history. In each description, the body plays a significant role in the interaction of the pagans with Christianity. We are offered, therefore, two examples of ‘queer faith.’

The potential significance of the theory of entanglement to time and faith in the OE *Orosius* spans out more widely to Anglo-Saxon and cultural studies. Nearly two decades ago, Clare Lees and Gillian Overing discussed the reductiveness of the distinctions set up between secularity and faith in cultural studies. They raised as well the problematic but frequently rehearsed presentation of Anglo-Saxon history as ‘*progressing from pagan to Christian, “primitive” to “civilized”, oral to literate.*’¹⁷ The reprisal of these discussions by Kathleen Davis within the past five years has reaffirmed the need to unravel the sense of temporal linearity that we impose upon Anglo-Saxon conceptions of identity; to re-evaluate also the arbitrary shifts of identity that we place around their cultural conversions (whether religious, social or communicatory).¹⁸ The scope of the OE *Orosius* as a history of the world provides us with an opportunity to understand some of the ways in which the Anglo-Saxons perceived time and their Christian and cultural relationships to paganism.

Þas tida/ on þæm dagum

Davis argues that critical methods of periodization, which construct the medieval versus the modern, have inhibited our awareness of Anglo-Saxon perceptions of time:

[w]ith regard to temporality, the stakes are doubled for medievalists, in that medieval/modern periodization relies largely upon an imagined divide between modern

¹⁷ Clare A. Lees and Gillian A. Overing, ‘Before history, before difference: bodies, metaphor, and the Church in Anglo-Saxon England,’ *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 11 (1998), 315-35 (317).

¹⁸ Davis, ‘Time.’

historical consciousness and a theologically entrapped, static Middle Ages incapable of history, let alone an appreciation of coexisting multiple times, of nonlinear operations of memory, of embodied duration, of the conflicted temporality of subject formation, or, especially, of an open future.¹⁹

In other words, if we were to remove the ‘imagined divide’ between the historical consciousness that we feel capable of in the twenty first century and the lack of historical consciousness that we assign to the people of Anglo-Saxon England (a periodizing term with its own frequently acknowledged deficiencies), we would unlock our understanding of early medieval perceptions of time.²⁰ Freed from the binary constructed by this periodization, we would both pluralize our sense of history and time and recognize the plurality of early medieval conceptions of time.

Echoing the phrase ‘historical consciousness’ but angling this towards Anglo-Saxon England, Roy Liuzza underscores how ‘[t]echniques of time measurement are deeply implicated in historical consciousness and the assertion of identity.’²¹ It is for this reason that the study of time measurement in Anglo-Saxon texts is so important to our knowledge of this culture. Indeed, the range of techniques of time measurement, modes of periodization, and representations of time in the OE *Orosius* demonstrate an Anglo-Saxon appreciation of ‘coexisting multiple times,’ to return to Davis’ argument. I have highlighted some of these engagements with nonlinear time in my chapters so far. For instance, the dating system that hinges on the foundation of Rome but is constructed, and structured, by the Old English vernacular; the system entangles the historiographical approaches of the fifth-century *Historia* and Anglo-Saxon England (discussed in Chapter 3). Moreover, the multiple temporalities of the text – ancient human, fifth-century Roman and Anglo-Saxon – that can be identified in the verbal map of Book I.i imply that the transcendent *middangeard* supports all humans, temporalities and places (see Chapter 1). As these temporalities are layered and entangled throughout the OE *Orosius*, the representation of time becomes asynchronous; the *middangeard* and the Old English history are constituted as the *her* and ‘expanded now in which past, present and future coincide,’ to adapt the phrasing of Dinshaw.²²

The most prominent example of temporal asynchrony in the OE *Orosius* – and, as we have seen, the most widely discussed – is the interplay between the Old English author and Orosius, fielded by the phrase, *cwæð Orosius*. The direct speech of Orosius

¹⁹ Davis, ‘Time,’ p.216.

²⁰ For the deficiencies of the terms, ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘Anglo-Saxon England,’ see, for example: Davis, ‘Time,’ pp.215-16; Lees and Overing, ‘Before history, before difference,’ 317; Karkov and Howe, *Conversion and Colonisation*, p.xi; Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, p.35.

²¹ Roy Liuzza, ‘The sense of time in Anglo-Saxon literature,’ *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 89 (2013), 131-53 (131).

²² Dinshaw and others, ‘Queer temporalities roundtable,’ 190.

in the Old English vernacular is a good example of the entanglement of the OE *Orosius* and the *Historia*: the OE *Orosius* relies on Orosius' authorship of the *Historia* but the identity of the author of the *Historia* in the OE *Orosius* is contingent on Anglo-Saxon interpretation and its expression in the vernacular. This entanglement is touched on by Mary Kate Hurley, who argues that the Old English version of Orosius speaks to and on behalf of a Christian Anglo-Saxon audience, disrupting the linearity of time. As Hurley puts it, 'the voice represented in the [OE] *Orosius* as that of Paulus Orosius is out of its proper time, and the active role it plays in shaping the history contained in the text can be understood as both Latinate and Anglo-Saxon in origin.'²³

However, I am interested here in the asynchrony of Orosius' rhetorical techniques as they are represented in the OE *Orosius*, including the portrayal of his methods of periodization, and as they are combined with Anglo-Saxon perceptions of time. Although Orosius shares a Christian ideology with the Anglo-Saxon author and audience and speaks transcendentally in their present vernacular, he is also characterized within his fifth-century Roman context as I have argued. Within this characterization, Orosius divides time rhetorically according to the pagan and Christian 'periods' or 'times' (*tida*) of the Roman Empire; dividing these two periods are the birth of Christ, the Roman conversion and the establishment of the Roman Church.²⁴ In addition to this overarching periodization, however, Orosius does acknowledge the co-dependency and permeability of paganism and Christianity as we shall see later in this Chapter and as his polemic implies; Orosius is defending the Christianity of the Empire precisely because the presence of the Church does not preclude paganism within or outside of the Empire. As well as looking at Orosius' description of 'the times' (*tida*) in this Chapter to lay the groundwork for my discussion of the entanglements of paganism and Christianity, I wish to explore another phrase that conceptualizes and asynchronizes time in the Old English and one that is not defined in terms of the evolution of the Roman Empire: 'in those days' (*on þæm dagum*). Imagining the movement of time as the passing of days the phrase, *on þæm dagum* is not related directly to Orosius' rhetoric and so counterbalances his teleological periodization of time; it can be mapped more broadly to Anglo-Saxon perceptions of time.

²³ Hurley, 'Alfredian temporalities,' 416.

²⁴ See Janet Bately, 'On some words for time in Old English literature' in *Problems of Old English Lexicography: Studies in Memory of Angus Cameron*, ed. by Alfred Bammesberger (Regensburg: Pustet, 1985), pp.47-64. At p.54 of this article, Bately discusses the use of *tid* and *tima* in the OE *Orosius* and the Alfredian canon. She identifies that *tid* is used far more frequently than *tima* in the OE *Orosius* and most often with the sense of "a period of history in the world, a particular time, a period characterised in some way or contemporary with someone" as per the *OED*. The *OED* entry for 'time' has been updated since Bately's article: see *OED*, s.v. 'time.'

In the Old English history, the noun, *tida* is used by Orosius in its plural form, *tida*, with the sense of ‘the times,’ to denote a distinction between Christian ‘times’ and pagan ‘times’ in the Roman Empire; the phrase, *cristnan tida* is used once, in the example I present below, but the distinction is otherwise implied. Orosius’ description of the pagan ‘times’ or *tida* encompasses also the history that precedes the founding of Rome but can be used to exemplify his rhetorical point that conditions and war were worse before the Incarnation. Out of twenty-one occurrences, *tida* only appears once outside of Orosius’ polemic in Book II.v: ‘Leonīþa sæde þæt þa tida þa yfele wæron 7 wilnade þæt him toward beteran wæron’ (49/3-5, my emphasis; Leonidas said that *the times* then were evil and wished that they were better towards him). Orosius is brought into the narrative just five lines later, however (at 49/10). One other use of *tida* is not in proximity to the phrase, *cwæð Orosius* but the polemical context implies that it is intended to be Orosius speaking:

For hwi besprecað nu men þas *cristnan tida*, 7 secgað þæt nu wýrsan tida sien þonne þa wæren, þa, þeh þe hwa wære mid þæm cyningum on hiora gewill yfel donde, þæt hie swa þeah æt him ne mehton mid þy nane are findan? (Book I.xii.34/15; my emphasis.)

(Why do men now speak in these *Christian times*, and say that the times are now worse than they were, when, even if someone was doing something evil for the kings at their request, they might not find any mercy from them?)

To put this recurrence of the plural noun, *tida* in the speech acts of Orosius in context, the phrase, *cwæð Orosius* is repeated forty-six times.²⁵ Put another way, the plural noun, *tida* is not only rarely used outside of Orosius’ polemic in the narrative but it also comes up frequently in his polemic. The use of *tida* as a way of dividing and periodizing time is developed into an identifiable trope in Orosius’ speech acts in the OE *Orosius*, therefore, emphasizing one of his rhetorical devices in the *Historia*.²⁶ As Peter van Nuffelen has observed, ‘[c]omparisons between the pagan past and the Christian present are ubiquitous’ in the *Historia*, right from the preface in which ‘he announces that he has converted to the view that things are now much better than they were previously.’²⁷ This frequent use of comparison or *synkrisis*, van Nuffelen explains, ‘was a standard rhetorical technique’ in late antique and classical writing.²⁸

²⁵ Irvine, ‘English literature in the ninth century,’ p.223.

²⁶ In the *Historia*, Orosius refers in his polemic to the ‘times’ (*tempora*) or sometimes, ‘days’ (*dies*), in the sense of ‘periods,’ both of the pagan past (see, e.g., *tempora*, 2.11.108/8; *temporis*, 2.18.124/4; *tempora*, 2.3.89/9) and his early fifth-century Christian present (see, e.g., *in diebus nostris*, 3.3.143/2; *temporis Christiani*, 3.4.145/4; *temporis Christiani*, 7.5.26/3).

²⁷ van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, p.63. See also Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p.65 and pp.77-78.

²⁸ van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, p.63.

As a device for periodization, the concept of ‘the times,’ or *tida*, measures time according to faith. At once vague and specific, the concept suggests that time is plural when it is experienced within a period or timeframe but dual when it is considered within a larger-scale historiographical context. According to this view, time can be divided meaningfully into an overarching scheme that progresses from a pagan past to a Christian present. The aim of such a comparison in the *Historia*, as Matthew Kempshall puts it, was ‘to teach Christians what they needed to learn from the past as a means of responding to the sufferings of the present’; that is, to prove to the Romans that the sack of Rome had such great impact only because they ‘had become so accustomed to such relative peace and tranquillity’ with Christianity.²⁹ This rhetorical strategy can be seen in the representation of Orosius’ polemic in the OE *Orosius*. In Book II.viii, for example, Orosius comments on a historical attack on Rome by the Gauls, contrasting ‘the times’ when the Roman Empire was pagan and ‘the times’ since its cultural conversion to Christianity:

Pæt wæron þa *tida* þe Romane nu æfter sicað, & cwepað þæt him Gotan wýrsan *tida* gedon hæbben þonne hie ær hæfdon, 7 næron on hie hergende buton þrie dagas; 7 Gallie wæron ær siex monað binnan þære byrig hergende. (52/23-6; my emphasis.)

(those were the *times* for which the Romans now sigh and say that the Goths have made the *times* worse for them than they had before, and they only raided for three days; and the Gauls were raiding inside the city for six months.)

In this example, Orosius frames the attitude of his fifth-century Roman target audience towards Christianity within his model of periodization: the Romans consider the period of paganism in the past to have treated them better than their current period of Christianity. By viewing the current period as ‘worse’ (*wýrsan*) for them, the Romans are thinking linearly but regressively, sighing for the paganism of their ancestors ‘before’ (*ær*) them; implicit to Orosius’ polemical comment, therefore, is the assumption that Christianity has brought improvement. Orosius wants his Roman audience to understand history and the sack of Rome in relation to this progressive teleology and so other references to time in his polemic in Book II.viii support this view: whilst the Gauls raided the Romans for ‘six months’ (*siex monað*) in pagan times, the Goths only raided them for ‘three days’ (*þrie dagas*) in their own Christian times. The use of the concept of ‘the times’ (*tida*) to refer to both pagan and Christian periods, past and present, has two effects. On the one hand, it suggests that paganism and Christianity are mutually exclusive conditions in time, transforming or converting at the birth of Christ and the establishment of the Church. On the other, the interchangeable nature of ‘the times’ (*tida*) for the past and the present, the pagan

²⁹ Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, pp.66-67.

Roman Empire and the Christian one, suggests the entanglement of times and faiths. Like its creator, God, time or *tīd* is transcendent of human faith.

We might pause to consider the techniques of periodization that the Old English author associates with Orosius alongside Davis' argument about the modern periodization of the medieval past in *Periodization and Sovereignty*. Davis defines periodization as follows:

[p]eriodization as I address it [...] does not refer to a mere back-description that divides history into segments, but to a fundamental political technique – a way to moderate, divide, and regulate – always rendering its services *now*. In an important sense, we cannot periodize the past.³⁰

Further, Davis argues that studies on the 'politics of time' have faltered because they have assumed a 'divide between a religious Middle Ages and a secular modernity'; they have entrenched the narrative that 'medieval people subordinated all concepts of time to the movement of salvation history and the inevitability of the Last Judgment and therefore had no sense of *real*, meaningful historical change.'³¹ It might seem counterintuitive to bring Davis' critique of this reductive narrative to an analysis of Orosius' providential, teleological construction of history in the OE *Orosius*. However, reading the Old English representation of Orosius against Davis' argument can, paradoxically, illuminate complex, rich and, to paraphrase Liuzza and Davis, 'historically conscious' Anglo-Saxon engagements with time.³² Indeed, the emphasis that Davis places on the motive of periodization, 'always rendering its services *now*,' is relevant to the development of Orosius' rhetoric. Orosius' periodization of paganism and Christianity is mapped consciously to his fifth-century perspective and the context of the sack of Rome within the history of the Roman Empire; the reference that Orosius makes to 'now' (52/23) in the previous example from Book II.viii reinforces the topicality of Orosius' polemic and the agenda behind his periodization of the Empire's pagan past. At the same time, this reference to 'now' complicates the idea that for the Anglo-Saxons post-Conversion, time was one-dimensional. Orosius and his Roman targets are drawn into an Anglo-Saxon 'now' in the Old English vernacular, participating in the *her* and *now* of the OE *Orosius* and confounding their position in history. This moment of temporal asynchrony in the narrative reminds us of the 'slipperiness' of the 'now,' as Dinshaw puts it:

³⁰ Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of West Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p.5.

³¹ Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, p.1.

³² Davis, 'Time,' p.216; Liuzza, 'Time in Anglo-Saxon literature,' 131. Davis also uses this phrase in *Periodization and Sovereignty*, p.1.

[a]s soon as you fix on it, it's a has-been, and we're onto the next *now*. In fact, the *now* is never purely there at all: it is a transition, always divided between no longer and not yet; each present *now* is stretched out and spanned by a past *now* and a future *now*.³³

The Romans' longing for the paganism that came before their conversion is repeated over time between cultures, languages and contexts.

Crucially, the Anglo-Saxons did not believe that paganism and Christianity could be divided along the lines of temporality, nor that their own cultural Conversion to Christianity precluded pagan culture. The inclusion of the stories about the Ests described by Wulfstan in the verbal map of the OE *Orosius* Book I.i confirms an awareness of the existence of paganism well after Conversion and conveys a curiosity towards cultural difference (see Chapter 1). As Daniel Anlezark remarks on this section of the OE *Orosius* and in relation to the Anglo-Saxon worldview:

[t]he Anglo-Saxons knew that across the world, in both the past and present, there were many races who did not share their Christian faith, but they did not always feel the need to condemn or even comment on this difference.³⁴

At an insular level too, Conversion did not equate to the effacement of paganism, as is well known, from the appropriation of pagan sites of worship for Christian churches to genealogies linking the pagan Gods to Adam.³⁵ Using different terminology, John D. Niles has noted the entanglements of paganism and culture, which in turn entangled with Christianity:

[s]ince "cultural paganism" encompassed not just religious ideas but also the beliefs, customs, values, hopes, fears and collective memories of a people, it did not die with Conversion, but rather lived on in both the form of odd survivals and, more importantly, in deep-set patterns of belief.³⁶

The phrase, *on þæm dagum* (in those days) in the OE *Orosius* represents some of these Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards paganism, since it turns on the distance of time rather than on a shaping of time that is based on the culture's Conversion. It can be compared with the 'no longer' that Dinshaw situates against the 'not yet,' and that precedes the transitional 'now.'

³³ Dinshaw, *How soon is now?*, p.2.

³⁴ Anlezark, 'Anglo-Saxon world view,' p.76. Frank, 'Germanic legend in Old English literature,' p.86 also notes that 'in translations of the Alfredian period [...] Pagan Germanic legend is increasingly treated as if it had intellectual value and interest for Englishmen.'

³⁵ For genealogies, see Malcolm Godden, 'Biblical Literature: The Old Testament' in Godden and Lapidge (eds.), *Cambridge Companion*, pp.214-33 (pp.215-16). See also Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, pp.86-87 for genealogies linking the Angles, Saxons and Goths to Adam.

³⁶ John D. Niles, 'Pagan survivals and popular belief' in Godden and Lapidge (eds.), *Cambridge Companion*, pp.120-36 (p.134).

The phrase, *on þæm dagum* is used fifty-five times in the OE *Orosius*, occasionally within the interjections of *Orosius* but, unlike the plural noun, *tida*, more frequently outside of them.³⁷ It is a stock phrase to introduce an event – such as a murder, the start of a war, or a birth – in loose connection to the dating system. The specific date given at the beginning of a chapter in relation to the foundation of Rome provides a temporal reference for the events that occurred ‘in those days.’ The phrase measures the past against the present but with a more neutral and non-specific sense than ‘the times’ (*tida*), and without the pivotal-point of the introduction of Christianity to the Roman Empire. This sense of *on þæm dagum* can, therefore, be correlated with that of the phrase, *in geardagum* or ‘in the days of yore,’ in the opening line of *Beowulf*.³⁸ Indeed, Liuzza discusses the first line of *Beowulf* to illustrate ‘how the Anglo-Saxons talked about the passage of time.’³⁹ He notes that the poem contains a combination of vague references for when something takes place, such as the phrase *in geardagum*, and specific temporal units, such as the hour Beowulf surfaces from the mere (*non dæg*, the ninth hour).⁴⁰ From these descriptions of time, he argues, we can learn ‘how the Anglo-Saxons imagined themselves in the temporal world, the large sweep of history, as well as the small repetitions of daily life.’⁴¹ Similarly in the OE *Orosius*, the phrase, *on þæm dagum* carries with it a sense of expanse – of a long duration of time that cannot be quantified and has no fixed beginning or end. Its vagueness contrasts to the specific dates provided at the beginning of a chapter and to the precise measurements of time that are offered in *Ohthere* and *Wulfstan*’s accounts in the verbal map of Book I.i: the ‘syfan dagum 7 nihtum’ (16/22; seven days and nights) that *Wulfstan* spends in *Druzno* or the ‘fif dagan’ (16/13; five days) it takes *Ohthere* to travel from *Skiringssalr* to *Hedeby*; measurements that are closer to the temporal experience of the Anglo-Saxons and forged on their present day world map.

Importantly, therefore, the phrase, *on þæm dagum* is not used for the purpose of critiquing, periodizing or alienating paganism. Rather, it serves to express the distance of history and time. Like *in geardagum*, *on þæm dagum* evokes some nostalgia for the past and foregrounds the stories that can be shared from history. Liuzza describes *in geardagum* in this respect as ‘the heroic equivalent of “once upon a time.”’⁴² We might think of *on ðæm dagum* as bearing the sense of ‘those were the

³⁷ DOE corpus search for *on þæm dagum* and *on ðæm dagum* and variations.

³⁸ Fulk, Bjork and Niles, *Klaeber’s Beowulf*, p.3, line 1.

³⁹ Liuzza, ‘Time in Anglo-Saxon literature,’ 132.

⁴⁰ Liuzza, ‘Time in Anglo-Saxon literature,’ 131-32. Fulk, Bjork and Niles, *Klaeber’s Beowulf*, p.54, line 1600.

⁴¹ Liuzza, ‘Time in Anglo-Saxon literature,’ 132.

⁴² Liuzza, ‘Time in Anglo-Saxon literature,’ 131.

days.’ In one of the few instances of the phrase, *on þæm dagum* in the polemic of Orosius, this nostalgic potential is presented with sarcasm:

Eala, cwæð Orosius, hu lustbærlice *tida on ðæm dagum* wæron, swa swa secgað þe þæs cristendomes wīderflitan sint, þæt us nu æfter swelcum longian mæge swelce þa wæron, þa swa micel folc on swa lytlan firste æt þrim folcgefeotum forwurdon.

(Book II.v.48.26-30; my emphasis.)

(Oh, said Orosius, how lovely *the times were in those days*, just as those who are opponents of Christianity say, which we can now long for just as they were, when so many people died in such a short space of time in three staged battles.)

Here Orosius’ periodization of the Empire’s pagan past in terms of ‘the times’ (*tida*) is juxtaposed with his fifth-century Roman target audience’s sense of the past as something to ‘be longed for’ (*æfter longian*). Moreover, the progressive teleology of Orosius’ approach of distinguishing between pagan and Christian ‘times’ (*tida*) in the Empire is positioned starkly against the more fluid and favourable conception of paganism as ‘in those days’ (*on ðæm dagum*) for certain Romans. This confrontation of a temporal system (that of *tida*) and temporal scale (*on ðæm dagum*) is, by Dinshaw’s definition, an example of temporal asynchrony: that is, the phenomenon of ‘different time frames or temporal systems colliding in a single moment of *now*.’⁴³

When we consider the OE *Orosius* in relation to the greater context of Old English literature, it becomes evident that the Anglo-Saxons employed a great range of techniques for measuring, dividing and describing time. As Liuzza explains, for example, medieval authors such as Bede ‘were well aware that the divisions of time that appear to mark the regular rhythms of the moon or the sun are only appropriations of their natural counterparts’; they appreciated that ‘time may arise from nature, created by God [...] but our ways of measuring and describing it are human conventions.’⁴⁴ God’s time was transcendent to the Anglo-Saxons and so only human practice could regulate time into linearity. Accordingly, the imperial *Anno Domini* system that Bede uses for his *Historia ecclesiastica* – an Old English history that promotes the idea of paganism converting completely to Christianity – is not the only Anglo-Saxon interpretation of time. Even Bede uses other methods within the same text, as Liuzza points out, some of which are Roman in focus.⁴⁵ Indeed, the Cotton Manuscript witness

⁴³ Dinshaw, *How soon is now?*, p.5.

⁴⁴ Liuzza, ‘Time in Anglo-Saxon literature,’ 136-37.

⁴⁵ Liuzza, ‘Time in Anglo-Saxon literature,’ 143: ‘[e]ventually, of course, the method of counting years from the *Anno Domini* became standard in the West, but even Bede, who is generally credited with its popularity, did not use it exclusively. His *Historia ecclesiastica*, for example, uses *Anno Domini* dating but often supplies other points of reference such as the reign of an emperor or king, or the founding of Rome.’ See also Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, p.1: ‘[w]ell attuned to the stakes of time as a regulating principle, Bede [...] became the first author to use *anno domini* (A.D.) dating in a historical narrative, thereby attaching history, in the form

of the OE *Orosius* contains three different dating practices as Kazutomo Karasawa has outlined: in addition to the overarching Roman dating system in the OE *Orosius*, the *Menologium* uses a mixture of Latinate and Anglo-Saxon terms for peoples and dates in the calendar of the Christian year, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* uses the *Anno Domini* system for insular history.⁴⁶ These examples of temporal asynchrony in the corpus confound the ‘singularized Middle Ages’ that Davis rightly argues our modern periodization of the medieval past necessitates. They unravel as well the assumption that the Anglo-Saxons conceived of time solely in relation to a linear progression from paganism to Christianity. Appreciating this multidimensional Anglo-Saxon perception of time is vital, therefore, to our understanding of the entanglement of paganism and Christianity in the OE *Orosius*.

Middangeard and eorþe

There is no time without space. *Genesis A* provides an Old English poetic account of how God created the world (*woruldgesceaft*), then day (*dæg*) and night (*nihte*), and then Adam and Eve; space (‘heaven and earth,’ *heofon* and *eorðan*), time (*tid*), and humanity (‘mankind,’ *moncyn*).⁴⁷ All humans, pagan, Christian or otherwise (other monotheists, for example, such as the Jews), exist within this time and space and the repetition of day and night from the origins of the earth:

Nergend ure
hie gesundrode; siððan æfre
drugon and dydon drihtnes willan,
ece ofer eorðan.⁴⁸

(Our saviour divided them; ever since they have honoured and performed the will of god, eternally over the earth.)

The phrase, *on þæm dagum* in the OE *Orosius* concords with an understanding of time in these Christian Anglo-Saxon terms: if time is a matter of days, then history is too. Whereas time is a series of repetitions of day and night, the space of the world is a constant. The world is supportive of temporal asynchrony, therefore; it holds the past, the present and the future within its space. This is the post-Conversion Anglo-Saxons’ cosmology, informing their interpretations of history and geography.

of Christian politics, to the sacred at the point of a division in time. This periodization, which is not entirely attributable to Bede of course, continues today to regulate calendars and political life.’

⁴⁶ Karasawa, ‘*Menologium* and *Maxims II* in MS context,’ 354. See also Dobbie, *Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, pp.lxii-lxv, for a discussion of the dates in the *Menologium*.

⁴⁷ *The Junius Manuscript*, ed. by George Philip Krapp, ASPR, vol 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), pp.6, line 110, 140; p.7, line 143; p.6, line 113; p.6, line 135; p.8, line 193 (*monna cynes*).

⁴⁸ Krapp, *The Junius Manuscript*, p.6, line 140-p.7, line 143.

For the Christian Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius*, then, the *middangeard* described in the verbal map of Book I.i is the work of God's creation and all of the events in human history happen in God's world. Once we acknowledge this worldview it becomes impossible to make a distinction between Christian and secular history; that is, biblical and non-biblical human history. (Godden proclaims a secular focus in the OE *Orosius*, as noted already, because Book 1.1 of the *Historia*, which includes a discussion of Adam and the Original Sin, has not been translated.)⁴⁹ Indeed, we might recall Insolls' rhetorical question: 'where does secular life end and religious life begin?'⁵⁰ The notion that Christianity and secularity are discrete concepts – and thus that a late Anglo-Saxon text like the OE *Orosius* can be either Christian or secular in focus – is a modern scholarly conceit rather than a reflection of Anglo-Saxon experience and belief. Indeed, Kempshall's reminder that '[f]rom Augustine onwards, techniques of classical historiography and scriptural hermeneutics were fundamentally intertwined' reinforces why medieval history-writing cannot be described accurately as secular.⁵¹ Influenced by Augustine, who influenced Orosius, medieval historians approached the past rhetorically 'with the principles to which they were themselves conditioned through familiarity with the Bible.'⁵² To look at this from the opposite direction, as Godden has highlighted elsewhere, '[f]or the Anglo-Saxons the Old Testament was in the first place a history book, a record of events in antiquity.'⁵³

Accordingly, much of the world history covered in Book I of the OE *Orosius* is from Scripture, as Nicole Guenther Discenza has observed, alongside the non-scriptural history covered in the other books.⁵⁴ It should be noted here that the historical events that the OE *Orosius* shares with the Old Testament imply as well the entanglements of Christian and Jewish theology. At one level these events outline pagan sinfulness before the birth of Christ, including that inflicted against the Jews and its punishment by God, as in the episodes in Book I.v and Book I.vii when Moses and the Israelites are driven out of Egypt and God punishes the Pharaoh, before sending a heatwave across the world. At another level, these events also serve to devalue pagan authority, following the model of the *Historia*. As van Nuffelen has pointed out in his analysis of the *Historia* and its historiographical relationship to classical rhetoric: '[i]n a Christian context, synchronism became a crucial aspect of chronicle writing, permitting

⁴⁹ Godden, 'OE *Orosius* and its sources,' 305. Cf. *Historia*, Book 1.1.10/1-12/17. The Prologue in the *Historia*, in which Orosius dedicates his work to his commissioner, Augustine (*Historia* Book 1.Prol.6/1-9/16), is also left out of the OE *Orosius*.

⁵⁰ Insoll, 'Are archaeologists afraid of gods?', p.1.

⁵¹ Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p.5.

⁵² Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p.4.

⁵³ Godden, 'Biblical literature,' p.215.

⁵⁴ Discenza, 'A map of the universe,' p.90. Discenza summarises the contents of each book and notes that 'Book I is largely biblical, involving mainly Assyria, Egypt and Israel.'

[historians] to demonstrate that the Judeo-Christian tradition was older than the pagan one.’⁵⁵

The account of Sodom and Gomorrah in Book I.iii of the OE *Orosius* is an example of such scriptural history – from the Hebrew and Christian bibles – embedded within the overall historical narrative. Interestingly, this account demonstrates the entanglements between time and space in the created world and represents time asynchronously:

Ær ðam ðe Romeburh getimbred wære þusend wintra 7 an hund 7 syxtig, þæt wæstm bære land on þæm *Sodome 7 Gomorre ða byrig on wæron*, hit wearð fram *heofonlicum fyre* forbærned, þæt wæs betuh Arabia 7 Palastina. Ða manigfealdan wæstmas wæron for þam swiþpost ðe Iordanis seo ea ælce geare þæt land midde ward oferfleow mid fotes þicce flode, 7 hit þonne mid ðam gedunged wearð. Ða wæs þæt folc þæs micclan welan ungemetlice brucende, oð ðæt him on *se miccla firenlust* oninnan aweox. 7 *him com of þæm firenluste Godes wraco*, þæt he eal þæt land mid *sweflenum fyre* forbærnde, 7 seððan ðær wæs standende wæter ofer þam lande, swa hit þære ea flod ær gefleow; 7 þæs dæles se dæl se þæt flod ne grette ys *gyt todæg* wæstmberende on ælces cynnes blædum; 7 ða syndon swyþe fægere 7 lustsumlice on to seonne, ac þonne *hig man on hand nymð, þonne weorðað hig to acxan*. (22/29-23/11; my emphasis.)

(One thousand, one hundred and sixty years before Rome was built, the fruit-bearing land *where the towns Sodom and Gomorrah were*, which was between Arabia and Palestine, was burned by a *heavenly fire*. There were many fruits largely because the river Jordan overflowed across the land each year with a thick foot of floodwater, and so [the land] was nourished by that. Then the folk enjoyed immeasurably great wealth, *until a great lust grew in them*. And the *wrath of God came to them for that lust*, so that all the land burned with *sulphurous fire*, and afterwards there was standing water across the land, as flood water had flowed over it previously; and the part of the place that the floodwater had not reached is *still today* productive of every kind of fruit; and they are very fair and pleasurable to see, but *if a man takes one in his hand, it turns to ash*.)

In the full context of the OE *Orosius*, the inclusion of this well-known episode from the Old Testament is a clear indication of the overlaps and entanglements between secular and biblical human history. The example of Sodom and Gomorrah is further deployed in the OE *Orosius* (as in the *Historia*) to reinforce the Christian understanding that the human or worldly and the divine or heavenly are deeply co-implicated. So the fire that burns the Sodomites’ land is ‘heavenly’ (*heofonlicum*) as well as ‘sulphurous’ (*sweflenum*). Moreover, after the abundance of fruit in their fertile land brings them ‘immeasurably great wealth’ (*micclan welan ungemetlice*), the ‘great lust’ (*miccla*

⁵⁵ van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, pp.49-50.

firenlust) that grows in the Sodomites is punished by God; the fire is directly attributed to ‘the wrath of God for that lust’ (*þæm firenluste Godes wraco*).

And yet, in this same description history – whether conceived of as biblical or human – is brought into proximity with the present-day world of the Anglo-Saxons. The defining features of the history of Sodom and Gomorrah – the abundance of the land and the fire that punished their lust – can be encountered ‘still today’ (*gyt todæg*) in the miraculous fruit that grows on the site the ‘floodwater did not reach’ (*flod ne grette*). Firstly, the fruit grows plentifully, reminding of the fertility of the land that had led to the wealth and so lust of the Sodomites. Secondly, it looks ‘beautiful’ (*fægere*) and ‘pleasurable’ (*lustsumlice*) as a symbol of the lustfulness for which they were punished; their lustfulness is even encoded semantically in the adjective, *lustsumlice*. Thirdly, the fruit ‘turns to ash’ (*weorðað [...] to acxan*) when it is held in someone’s *hand*, recalling the fire that God sent to destroy the land in response to the Sodomites’ sins. The history of Sodom and Gomorrah is rehearsed continuously, therefore, in a wonder that takes place in the East; the kind of marvel that might indeed be found in an Old English text such as the *Wonders of the East*. The theories of queer time can crystallize how this miraculous fruit poses a resistance to the concept of linear time, re-enacting the history of the Sodomites as it grows and disintegrates in the present day world of the Anglo-Saxons. Freeman suggests that the

sensation of [temporal] asynchrony can be viewed as a queer phenomenon – something felt on, with, or as a body, something experienced as a mode of erotic difference or even as a means to express or enact ways of being and connecting that have not yet arrived or never will.⁵⁶

Indeed, the sense of temporal asynchrony that is offered in the description of the fruit is expressed in terms of bodily experience. The hand that holds the fruit plays a vital role in the completion of the loop that connects the fruit to the erotic history of the lustful Sodomites and their punishment from God. In the same act, the hand connects antique history and the Anglo-Saxon world ‘still to this day’ (*gyt todæg*). Space is a fundamental part of both the occurrence of the wonder – which happens where the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah once were but where the floodwater was not – and the contact of the past and the present, the history of both Hebrew and Christian Scripture, within the same world.

The example of Sodom and Gomorrah in Book I.iii of the OE *Orosius* is reflective of the symbiotic relationship between humans and the earth within a Christian worldview. The wonder of the fruit demonstrates this relationship on a small

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Freeman, ‘Introduction,’ *GLQ 13 (Queer Temporalities)* (2007), 159-76 (159).

scale: it is the act of holding the fruit by hand that causes it to turn to ash but the fruit only becomes meaningful because it is first looked at (it is ‘pleasurable to behold,’ *lustsumlice on to seonne*) and then held. The wonder signifies, in turn, the entanglement of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the land: the land gave fruit to the folk of Sodom and Gomorrah; their greed and lust led to the punishment of the land with heavenly fire and flood; their lust was curtailed; this cycle is then repeated in the wonder of the fruit. Hodder describes this kind of entanglement in terms of the interdependence of humans and things (that is, anything not human), as an equation of interrelationships: ‘[h]umans and things, humans and humans, things and things depend on each other, they rely on each other, produce each other.’⁵⁷ But the Christian worldview of the Anglo-Saxons lends a greater sense of purpose to the entanglement of humans and the earth or humans and things. According to this view, everything on the earth is a gift from God and everything that happens to the earth is a consequence of human behavior. From the first human, Adam, and the Original Sin, both humans and the earth have been punished for sinfulness by God.

This Christian Anglo-Saxon understanding of the world can be interpreted as an early staging of the Anthropocene, which is defined in the *OED* as ‘[t]he era of geological time during which human activity is considered to be the dominant influence on the environment, climate, and ecology of the earth.’⁵⁸ Indeed, the direct impact of human behaviour and sinfulness on the health of the earth is expressed in Christian terms in Book II.i of the OE *Orosius*. Orosius relates the knowledge of this entanglement to the concept of Christian wisdom:

Ic wene, cwæð Orosius, þæt nan wis mon ne sie, buton he genoh geare wite þætte God þone ærestan monn ryhtne 7 godne gesceop, 7 eal monncynn mid him. Ond for þon þe he þæt god forlet þe him geseald wæs 7 wyrse geceas, hit God siþþan longsumlice wrecende wæs, ærest on him selfum 7 siþþan on his bearnum gind ealne þisne *middangeard* mid monigfealdum brocum 7 gewinnum, ge eac þas *eorþan*, þe ealle twice wyhta bi libbað, ealle hier e wæstmbæro he gelytade. Nu we witan þæt ure Dryhten us gesceop, we witon eac þæt he ure recend is 7 us mid ryhtlicran lufan lufað þonne ænig mon. (35/28-36/7; my emphasis.)

⁵⁷ Hodder, *Entangled*, p.88. For Hodder’s explanation of why the term *thing* is more useful than *object*, see pp.7-8.

⁵⁸ *OED*, s.v. ‘Anthropocene’ (accessed September 2016). The term, ‘Anthropocene’ was coined by Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer in an article for *The International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) Newsletter*: ‘Considering [the] major and still growing impacts of human activities on earth and atmosphere, and at all, including global, scales, it seems to us more than appropriate to emphasize the central role of mankind in geology and ecology by proposing to use the term “anthropocene” for the current geological epoch.’ Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer, “The “Anthropocene,”” *IGBP Global Change Newsletter* 41 (2000), 17-18 (17).

(I believe, said Orosius, that there is no wise man, save he who knows well enough that God shaped the first man just and good, and all mankind with him. And because he gave up the goodness that was given to him and chose a worse path, God was avenging it on him for a long time, first on him personally and then on his children across this *middangeard* with many diseases and wars, and even the *earth*, which all living creatures live by, he decreased all her fertility. Now we know that our Lord shaped us, we also know that he is our ruler and loves us with a worthier love than any man.)

In this passage, the sinfulness of Adam is mapped directly to the ‘many diseases and wars’ (*monigfealdum brocum 7 gewinnum*) that have taken place across the *middangeard* and to the decreased ‘fertility’ (*wæstmbæro*) of the *eorþe*. In other words, both humans and the earth were punished for the Original Sin as any ‘wise man’ (*wis mon*) will know. As Hurley has argued, Orosius conveys truisms here about the existence of God and his divine intervention that are ‘applicable regardless of the temporal moment’ and whether believed by his fifth-century Roman audience or not.⁵⁹ Indeed, the Christian wisdom that is expressed by Orosius is shared by the Anglo-Saxon author and audience. Like Orosius, they know that God ‘shaped’ (*gesceop*) them, just as he ‘shaped’ (*gesceop*) Adam, and they know that they live under the governance of their ‘Lord’ (*Dryhten*) and ‘ruler’ (*reccend*), God. As Hurley puts it, this wisdom ‘binds together a community that exists across time.’⁶⁰

Perhaps most interesting about this passage, however, is the distinction made between the entangled concepts of the *middangeard* and the *eorþe*. I have left these words untranslated because Modern English is deficient of exactly equivalent terms but we might think of them broadly as ‘the world’ and ‘the earth.’⁶¹ In line with these definitions, the *middangeard* can be understood as the cosmological and ideological world and the *eorþe* the material and productive earth. As Orosius’ Christian wisdom suggests, war and disease sweep across the *middangeard* but God’s punishment is brought directly upon the *eorþe*, ‘which all creatures live off’ (*þe ealle cwice wyhta bi libbað*). The *eorþe*, then, is like the ‘earth’ that is impacted by human activity in the definition of the Anthropocene; the *eorþe* is constituted by, provides for, and is affected by everything that lives in the *middangeard*. The *middangeard*, on the other hand, is the transcendent and autonomous framework or system that contains humans,

⁵⁹ Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities,’ 417.

⁶⁰ Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities,’ 417.

⁶¹ In the *OED* ‘world’ is defined as: ‘human existence’; ‘the interests, pursuits and concerns associated with human existence on earth’; ‘the affairs and conditions of life (as they affect humans)’; ‘[t]he sphere of secular or lay (as distinguished from religious or clerical) life and interests’; ‘[a]n age or extended period of time in human (or earthly) existence or history’ and so on. ‘Earth’ is defined as: ‘[s]enses relating to the ground’; ‘[t]he ground considered as a solid stratum’; ‘[t]he soil as suitable for cultivation’; ‘[t]he ground considered as a place for burying the dead’ and so on. See *OED*, s.v. ‘world’ and s.v. ‘earth’ (accessed September 2016).

animals, nature, and the *eorþe* itself.⁶² Although not mentioned explicitly here, an Anglo-Saxon audience is likely to associate the creation of Adam with the *eorþe* of Orosius' description, triggered by the reference to how Adam was 'shaped' (*gesceop*) by God; there are numerous Old English sources that offer the narrative of God forming Adam from the *eorþe*.⁶³ Implicit to Orosius' description of the effects of the Original Sin is the knowledge that the same earth that was formed into Adam suffers from his sinfulness in return.

Orosius' words of Christian wisdom in Book II.i make clear that as Adam is both the 'first man' (*ærestan monn*) and the embodiment of 'all mankind' (*eal monncynn*), the consequences of his transgression are entangled with the sinfulness of all humans. Not only has Adam brought punishment upon all 'his children' (*his bearnum*) across the *middangeard* but his sinfulness is also mirrored and replicated by their sinfulness and further punishment by God. More precisely, however, this human sinfulness relates to the pagans and non-Christians who lived in the world in the finite period between Adam's transgression and the coming of Christianity. The detail that God's punishment for the Original Sin lasted for a 'long time' (*longsumlice*) discloses that this period of retribution came to an end with the coming of Christ. It can be quantified retrospectively by all 'wise' (*wis*) Christians, who, by definition, have come after the period of human penitence has completed. But when Orosius declares in the third person voice that 'we now know' (*[n]u we witan*) that God is 'our Lord' (*ure Dryhten*), aligning this with Christian wisdom, he calls attention to the ignorance of those who lived before the coming of Christ. In Hurley's words: '[a]s readers, we are asked to see a truth that might not be acknowledged by non-Christian actors in history both recognized and made clear by the Orosius narrator.'⁶⁴ There are important implications here about the dialectic between free will and pre-determinism in history. The same act of free will that saw Adam choose 'a worse path' (*wyrse*) caused a duration of pre-determined sinfulness for pagans and non-Christians (and inevitable suffering for the Jews, who were chosen to worship God); a time when pagans did not know about God but were still subjected to his judgement. These same non-Christians needed to exist and to be punished for the gift of free-will to be reinstated by God.

⁶² I have been influenced here by S.A.J. Bradley's translation of the 'framework' (*timber*) of the *middangeard* in *Genesis A*. See Krapp, *The Junius Manuscript*, p.6, lines 135-36: 'þa seo tid gewat ofer timber sceacan/middangeardes.' S.A.J. Bradley translates this as '[w]hen this period went slipping by above the *framework of middle-earth*.' (My emphasis.) *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, ed. and trans. by S.A.J. Bradley (London: Everyman, 1998), p.16.

⁶³ See *DOE* s.v. 'eorþe' (accessed September 2016). In other Old English texts *eorþe* is also used with the sense of the orbiting earth or in contrast to heaven and hell.

⁶⁴ Hurley, 'Alfredian temporalities,' 417.

Punishment, redemption and conversion

In Book V.i of the OE *Orosius*, the integral role of the sinful humans who lived before Christ in the foundation of Christianity is expanded upon in another example of Orosian polemic. Here Orosius provokes his target Roman audience to recognize the hardships their own pagan ancestors endured so that they could be Christian, emphasizing their luxury of free will and their ability to choose between Christianity and paganism:

Ac for þon hit is us uncuð 7 ungeliefedlic for þon þe we sint on þæm friþe geborene þe hie þa *uneaðe hiera feorh mid geceapedon*. Ðæt wæs siþþan Crist geboren wæs þæt we wæron of ælcum þeowdome aliesde 7 of ælcum ege, *gif we him fulgongan willaþ*.
(113/30-114/3; my emphasis.)

(But for this reason it is unknowable and unbelievable to us, because we are born into the peace that they *bought with difficulty with their lives*. It was after Christ was born that we were released of every servitude and every terror, *if we want to follow him*.)

The humans who lived before Christ are described emphatically in terms of their sacrifice. Like martyrs for the Christian faith they gave ‘their lives’ (*hiera feorh*) and lived in suffering (or ‘with difficulty/ unease,’ *uneaðe*) so that the Romans could have ‘peace’ (*friþe*). Their ‘servitude’ (*þeowdome*) allowed the people who lived after Christ to be freed (*aliesde*): that is, to have the agency to choose whether to be pagan or Christian and whether to live in the service of God or not. When Orosius qualifies that both agency and peace – the freedom from servitude and ‘terror’ (*ege*) – are conditional on whether ‘we choose to follow’ God (*we [...] fulgongan willaþ*), he emphasizes the care that needs to be taken with the free will afforded to Christians. In the context of his polemic, it is the fifth-century Romans who must choose between standing by their current Christianity or reverting to their former paganism as they oscillate between the two faiths. But the Anglo-Saxon audience of the OE *Orosius* can recognize the significance of Orosius’ words just as readily within their own experience of faith as an ongoing and active process, and as a choice. As the Old English gnomic poem, *Maxims I* warns a Christian Anglo-Saxon audience:

God sceal mon ærest hergan

fægre, fæder userne, forþon þe he us æt frymþe *geteode*

lif ond lænne willan; he usic wile þara leana Gemonian. (My emphasis.)⁶⁵

(Man shall first praise God, our father, fittingly because in the beginning *he gave us life and loaned will*; he wants us to remember those loans.)

⁶⁵ Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p.157, lines 4-6.

There is, of course, a crucial step between paganism and Christianity, unwitting sinfulness and Christian agency: conversion. Indeed, conversion is described by Orosius as the turning point between the paganism and Christianity of the Roman Empire in a further example of polemic in Book V.xv. In this example, Orosius is given the authorial responsibility and authority to mark out the shift in history between the events that occurred up to the coming of Christ and those that took place following the origins of Christianity, based on the transition between Book 6 and 7 in the *Historia*:⁶⁶

Nu ic hæbbe gesæd, cwæð Orosius, from frymþe þisses middangeardes hue all moncyn angeald þæs ærestan monnes synna mid miclum teonum 7 witum. Nu ic wille eac forþ gesecgan hwelc mildsung 7 hwelc geþwærnes sibþan wæs sibþan se cristendom wæs, gelicost þæm þe *monna heortan awende wurden*, for þon þe þa *ærran þing agoldene wæron*. (132/17-22; my emphasis.)

(Now I have described, said Orosius, from the beginning of this *middangeard* how all mankind atoned for the sins of the first man with great pains and punishments. Now I will also describe further what mildness and what peace there was afterwards since Christianity existed, just as the *hearts of men became turned*, because *the former things were requited*.)⁶⁷

Characteristically, as we have seen, Orosius periodizes paganism and Christianity here to signal the separate epochs or *tida* that can be used to define and measure both Roman and world history on a broad scale. A generalized conception of conversion marks the distinction between these periods in the history of the Empire: that is, when ‘the hearts of men became turned’ (*monna heortan awende wurden*). However, as Orosius periodizes history according to faith in this example, he also entangles paganism and Christianity within a transactional model. This model can be understood in relation to Hodder’s definition of entanglement as ‘the dialectic of dependence and dependency.’⁶⁸ If conversion could only happen once the punishment for the Original Sin had been completed – when the Original Sin had been ‘atoned for’ (*angeald*) by ‘all mankind’ (*all moncyn*) and when ‘the former things had been requited’ (*ærran þing agoldene wæron*) – then Christianity could not have come to the world without pagan

⁶⁶ *Historia*, Book 6.22.236/9-237/11.

⁶⁷ The sense at the end of Book 6 of the *Historia* is quite different. *Historia*, Book 6.22.237/11: ‘quoniam ab initio et peccare homines et puniri propter peccata non tacui, nunc quoque, quae persecutiones Christianorum actae sint, et quae ultiones secutae sint, absque eo quod omnes ad peccandum generaliter proni sunt atque singillatim corripiuntur, expediam.’ (p.317: ‘since from the beginning of this work I have not passed over in silence the fact that men sin and are punished for those sins, now too I shall expound what persecutions were inflicted on Christians, what vengeance followed them, and from this that all men are as a whole predisposed to sin and so are chastised individually.’)

⁶⁸ Hodder, *Entangled*, p.89.

sin and unavoidable human suffering. Without sin of any kind, there would be nothing for Christ to redeem.

Conversion is condensed in this example of Orosius' polemic into a collective process that took place as soon as mankind had been redeemed by Christ. Elsewhere in the narrative, however, conversion is conveyed as a more active process, dependent not only on the existence of Christ but also on teaching and learning; a process familiar to the Anglo-Saxons in their own cultural memory. The description of the Roman emperor, Augustus in Book V.xiii of the OE *Orosius* provides a good illustration of the necessity of education and knowledge to gaining Christian wisdom; a description infused with both fifth-century Roman and Anglo-Saxon perspectives. As the reign of Augustus is coincident with the birth of Christ – and as Rome is a place of Christian significance – it brings a number of prognostications for the coming of Christ (131/7-21). The greatest of these prognostications is Augustus himself, who performs signs of God but does so 'unwitende [...] on Godes bisene' (131/5-6; unwittingly according to God's model).

Augustus is then acknowledged as instigating the *pax Romana* in the year of Christ's birth:

Æfter þæm *eall þeos worold geceas Agustuses frið 7 his sibbe*, 7 eallum monnum nanuht swa god ne þuhte swa hie to his hyldo become 7 þæt hie his underþeowas wurden, ne ferþan þætte ænigum folce his ægenu æ gelicade to healdenne, buton on þa wisan þe him Augustus bebed. Ða wurdon *Ianes dura fæste betyned* 7 his loca rustega, swa hie næfre ær næron. On þæm ilcan gere þe þis eall gewearð – þæt wæs on þæm twæm 7 feowerteoþan wintra Agustuses rices – þa wearð geboren *se þe þa sibbe brohte eallre worolde*, þæt is ure Dryhten Hælende Crist. (Book V.xv.132/8-16; my emphasis.)

(Then the *whole world chose the peace and friendship of Augustus*, and nothing seemed so good to all men as being in his favour and so they became his subjects, so that it did not suit each people to have their own law, only the one that Augustus asked of them. Then the *doors of Janus were shut tight* and its locks went rusty, as they had never done before. In the same year that this happened – which was in the forty-second year of Augustus' reign – *he who brought peace to the whole world* was born, that is our Lord Holy Christ.)

The *pax Romana* and the birth of Christ are synchronized and entangled in this historical account. Each event is shown to have brought unification – whether that of a common 'law' (æ) or a shared religion (Christ is claimed as *ure*, 'ours') – and each has descended 'peace' (*sibbe*) on the whole world (*eall þeos worold / eallre worolde*). Moreover, the *pax Romana* occurs both because of the imminent coming of Christ and in its anticipation. The free will that will be reinstated when mankind has been

redeemed is foreshadowed by the whole world choosing to be Augustus' 'subjects' (*underþeowas*) rather than being prescribed a state of pagan *þeowdom*. Augustus is presented as an interesting figure here, therefore, at the intersection of paganism and Christian influence, the Roman Empire and the advent of Christianity.

Standing figuratively and narratively between the *pax Romana* of Augustus and the peace caused by the birth of Christ in this account are the doors of Janus. Like Augustus, they too are imagined at the crossroads between paganism and Christianity and political and Christian imperialism. In Book III.v of the OE *Orosius*, we are offered a description of how the doors of Janus symbolized war and peace in the Roman Empire: the opening of a door on one of the four sides of the temple of Janus signified that the Romans were at war with a people in that direction (Book III.v.59/3-13). The imagery of the doors of Janus being 'shut tight' (*fæste betyne*) in this description is consequently rich with material symbolism. Most readily, this imagery suggests that the Roman Empire was closed from war when Augustus effected the *pax Romana*. But the dual function of the house of Janus as a pagan temple is important. The unprecedented closure of all four doors is attributed clearly to the influence of the birth of Christ: in the very same year, 'the one who brought peace to the whole world was born' (*weardð geboren se þe þa sibbe brohte eallre worolde*). The temple that stood at the centre of the war-waging activities of the Roman Empire, drawing authority from a pagan god, is reimagined, therefore, as a sign of Christian power and peace. Rome's prominence as a Christian centre and its singling out by God on the world stage are thus underscored.

Significantly, however, Augustus is not a Christian emperor and so the closure of the doors of Janus is only temporary even following Christ's incarnation in the world. Despite his symbolic potential for the Christianization of the concept of the *pax Romana*, Augustus is still only an *unwitende* (Book V.xiii.131/5; unwitting) agent of God. When Augustus is not serving as a narrative prognostication for the birth of Christ, his pagan identity is exposed. In an episode in Book VI.i of the OE *Orosius*, for example, there is an account of how Augustus heard that his nephew had refused to pray to God in Jerusalem. Rather than condemning his nephew, 'herede he þa ofermetto 7 nanuht ne leahtrade' (134/5-6; he praised his arrogance and did not reprove it at all). The Romans are then struck by divine punishment, suffering a famine, and the peace of the Empire is interrupted when the doors of Janus are re-opened (134/8); in other words, paganism has not gone away. As the *pax Romana* falters in this episode so too does the scholarly argument that the *pax Romana* and the spread of Roman Christianity are central themes in the OE *Orosius* – an argument put forward by Whitelock, Bately and Howe, as we have seen. Indeed, whilst in the *Historia* Book 7.3 Augustus' praise of his nephew is put down to 'an error of judgement' (p.324), or

usu iudicio (21/5), no such excuse is provided in the Old English account. The representation of Augustus in Book VI.i of the OE *Orosius* is not a critique but an acknowledgement that the wisdom of Christianity needs to be learnt for conversion to take place. Just living after the incarnation of Christ and the institution of the Christian faith is not enough, you need to know that God exists.

The Anglo-Saxons were well aware of the human and intellectual aspects of the process of conversion and what this implied for their own pagan past. Indeed, their cultural Conversion was historicized in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* as a process that had involved the education of their kings by Roman missionaries, who brought with them classical texts to teach Christian wisdom, and one that took place many centuries after the birth of Christ. In turn, the conversion of the Romans is historicized for the Anglo-Saxons in Book VI.iii of the OE *Orosius*, where the significance of education is underlined: 'Petrus se apostol com to Rome, 7 þær wurdon ærest cristene men *þurh his lare*.' (136.13-14, my emphasis; Peter the Apostle came to Rome, and men first became Christian there *through his teaching*.) Although Rome might have been picked out as a Christian centre by God, its citizens still needed to undergo the human processes of teaching, learning and conversion. Crucially, the Roman and Anglo-Saxon conversions were not aligned historically but they were entangled intellectually. Orosius' periodization of pagan and Christian *tida*, or 'times,' is mapped to the conversion history of the Roman Empire but the conversion of the Romans was necessary for the Conversion in Anglo-Saxon England; wisdom was transmitted through teaching and learning, from Peter the apostle to the Romans to the Anglo-Saxons. Remembering the 'dialectic of dependence and dependency' that defines entanglement according to Hodder, we can also recall the instrumental role of the Christian Goth, Alaric in the preservation of Roman Christianity – a vital component within the transmission of wisdom between Rome and Anglo-Saxon England (see Chapter 3).⁶⁹

What comes out of the examples I have discussed in this Chapter is that paganism is recognized to be a pluralized, heterogeneous and nuanced concept in the OE *Orosius*. There is a distinction between the pagans who existed between the Original Sin and Christ and the pagans who came after Christianity, between a time of pre-determinism and free will. More precisely, there is a distinction between pagans who know about Christ and those who do not. The fifth-century Roman target audience of Orosius falls into focus here: are they not more sinful for preparing to reject their Christian knowledge and to return to their pagan faith than the pagans who 'bought' Christianity and redemption 'with their lives' (*hiera feorh mid*; Book V.i.114/1)?

⁶⁹ Hodder, *Entangled*, p.89.

Queer temporalities and queer faith

By way of a conclusion, I shall present two examples from Book IV of the OE *Orosius* that bring together the ideas of this Chapter. The first is an account of Himilco reacting to the deaths of many of the men in his army from a ‘sudden or unexpected evil’ (*færlíc yfel*; Book IV.v.89/13), the second an account of how Hannibal’s attempts to overthrow the Romans are thwarted by a rain miracle. In each example, pagans who lived before the coming of Christ are described as reaching towards an understanding of divine intervention and their place in history. These momentary dislocations of faith in the narrative of the OE *Orosius* can be read in terms of the experience of temporal asynchrony – an experience that is ‘felt on, with, or as a body’ as we have seen – and the theological entanglements of Christianity and paganism, God and Christ.⁷⁰ They offer us, therefore, examples of a kind of queer faith.

The first example in Book IV.v takes place when Himilco returns home to Carthage in the narrative, following the deaths of his men in Sicily:

Mid þæm þe þa burgware swa geomorlic angin hæfdon, þa com se cyning self mid his scipe 7 land gesohte mid swiþe lyþericum gegierelan, 7 ægþer ge he self wepene hamweard for, ge þæt folc þæt him ongean com, eall hit him wepene hamweard folgade. 7 he se cyning his handa wæs uppwardes brædende wið þæs heofenes, 7 mid oferheortnesse him wæs waniende ægþer ge his agene heardsælda ge ealles þæs folces. 7 he þagiet him selfum gedyde þæt þær wyrrest wæs, þa he to his inne com, þa he þæt folc þærute betynde 7 hiene ænne þærinne beleac 7 hiene selfne ofslog. (89/21-9; my emphasis.)

(Because the behaviour of the citizens had become so miserable, the king himself then arrived with his ship and sought land clothed very modestly, and both he himself went home weeping, and the people who came to greet him, all followed him homeward weeping. *And the king was extending his hands upwards towards heaven*, and with excessive feeling he lamented both his own misfortune and his people’s. And he did to himself that which was worst of all there, when he came inside, that is, he shut the people out and locked himself in and killed himself.)

As Himilco raises his hands ‘up to heaven’ (*uppwardes [...] wið þæs heofenes*) to express his grief, something bigger happens. He taps into Christian cosmology, forging a connection between ‘the land’ (*land*) beneath him and the heavens above him with his hands. The sensations and actions of his body – that is, the physical expression of his ‘excessive’ (*oferheortnesse*) grief – make contact between the realms of the mortal and

⁷⁰ Freeman, ‘Introduction (*Queer Temporalities*),’ 159. Cf. Freeman’s description of temporal asynchrony as a dislocation on the same page: ‘[w]hen Shakespeare’s Hamlet says “the time is out of joint,” he describes time as if its heterogeneity can be felt in the bones, as a kind of skeletal *dislocation*. In this metaphor time has, indeed *is*, a body’ (my emphasis).

the divine. Himilco is an exemplification, therefore, of the transcendence of God in time and space. Although Christ has not yet been incarnated to redeem mankind, God is omnipresent. Indeed, the ‘sudden evil’ (IV.v.89/13; *færlíc yfel*) that kills Himilco’s men can be construed as one of the inevitable punishments of the pagans who were still atoning for the Original Sin.

The temporal and spiritual asynchrony of the experience of Himilco in this account resides in the ambiguity of the term *heofen*, which can be read in a pagan context and according to a Christian perspective. (Similarly, in the *Historia* Book 4.6, Himilco is described as lifting his hands to the *caelum*, ‘heaven’ or ‘skies,’ which could be pagan or Christian.)⁷¹ If Himilco is reaching towards his own pagan gods, he finds the home and creation of the true God, as any Christian knows the *heofen* to be. If he is reaching for the Christian God, his identity as a pagan living before Christ becomes conflicted. Either way, a linear conception of time and faith is ruptured. He finds in heaven the ‘not yet’: the afterlife for Christians that is not available before the coming of Christ. Along this line of interpretation, his lamentation for ‘his own misfortune and that of all his people’ (*agene heardsælða ge ealles þæs folces*) takes on a new significance, extending from an admission of grief to an acknowledgement of his penitential pagan condition. Once his moment of queer faith has ended and his pagan condition is restored, Himilco is removed emphatically from the Christian afterlife in the act of suicide. Christian judgement is passed on this pagan act in the Old English account only: it is the ‘worst’ (*wyrrest*) thing a Christian can do.⁷²

My second example comes just a few chapters later in the narrative in Book IV.x. In this extended example, the interruption of the battle between Hannibal and the Romans by two miraculous rainstorms is recounted:

On þæm teoþan geare þæs þe Hannibal won on Italie, he for of Campaina þæm londe oþ þrio mila to Romebyrg 7 æt þære ie gewicade þe mon Annianes hætt, eallum Romanum to ðæm mæsten ege, swa hit mon on þara wæpnedmonna gebærum ongitan mehte, hu hie afyrhtede wæron 7 agælwede, þa þa *wifmen urnon mid stanum wið þara wealla 7 cwædon þæt hie þa burg werian wolden, gif þa wæpnedmon ne dorsten*. Þæs on mergen Hannibal gefor to þære byrig 7 beforan ðæm geate his folc getrymede þe mon hætt Collina. Ac þa consulas noldon hie selfe swa earge geþencan swa hie þa wifmen ær forcwædon, þæt hi hie binnan þære byrg werian ne dorsten, ac hie hie butan þæm geate

⁷¹ *Historia*, Book 4.6.22/14: ‘Inter haec procedit et ipse de nauī sua imperator sordida seruilique tunica discinctus; ad cuius conspectum plangentia iunguntur agmina; ipse quoque manus ad caelum tendens nunc suam nunc publicam infelicitatem accusat et deflet.’ (p.165: ‘[a]mid these scenes, the commander too disembarked from his ship in an ungirt, dirty, slave’s tunic. On his appearance, the weeping crowds joined together as one and he too lifted his hands to the sky, bemoaning and bewailing now his own, and now the state’s, misfortune.’ The highlighted text is preserved from Fear’s translation, with the note that it is ‘taken verbatim from Justin.’)

⁷² Bately, OE *Orosius*, fn to 89/28.

angean Hannibal trymedon. Ac þa hie togædere woldon, þa com swa ungemetlic ren þæt heora nan ne mehte nanes wæpnes gewealdan, 7 for þæm toforan. Ðe se ren ablom, hie foran eft togædere, 7 eft wearð oþer swelc ren þæt hie eft toforan. *Þa angeat Hannibal, 7 him self sæde, ðeh ðe he wilniede wære 7 wenede Romana anwealdes, þæt hit God ne geþafode.* (103/13-29; my emphasis.)

(In the tenth year that Hannibal waged war on the Italians, he travelled from the Campania region to three miles outside of Rome and set up camp at the river called the Anio, to the great concern of all the Romans, as you could tell from the behaviour of the warriors, how frightened and discouraged they were, when the *women ran towards the walls with stones and said that they would protect the city, if the men did not dare*. In the morning, Hannibal went to the city and drew up his men in front of the gate called the Colline. But the consuls did not want to consider themselves as cowardly as the women had accused them of being before, so they did not dare protect them from inside the city, but drew up for battle against Hannibal outside the gate. But when they would have confronted, such immeasurable rain came that none of them could wield any of their weapons, and so they dispersed. When the rain abated, they marched together again, and again there was more of the same rain so they dispersed again. *Then Hannibal understood, and himself said, though he wanted and wished for the power over the Romans, God did not allow it.*)

From the beginning of this account, we are provided with a sense of the immediate temporality and topography of Hannibal's attempts at besieging Rome: it is the 'tenth year' (*teoþan geare*) that Hannibal has been at war with the Italians; he sets up camp 'three miles' (*þrio mila*) outside of Rome at the 'River Anio' (*ie [...] Annianes*); and he attempts to commence battle 'in the morning' (*on mergen*) by the 'Colline Gate' (*Collina*). These details stage the battle very carefully in anticipation of the discontinuities and asynchronies that follow, not least of which in the battle itself. Indeed, both the battle and the narrative become cyclical when Hannibal's army and the Roman army meet. The words, 'together' (*togædere*), 'rain' (*ren*) and 'dispersed' (*toforan*) are repeated to convey the pattern that is repeated at the site of the battle:

Ac þa hie *togædere* woldon, þa com swa ungemetlic *ren* þæt heora nan ne mehte nanes wæpnes gewealdan, 7 for þæm *toforan*. Ðe se *ren* ablom, hie foran eft *togædere*, 7 eft wearð oþer swelc *ren* þæt hie eft *toforan*.

The two armies come together, the rain comes, they disperse; they come together, the rain comes, they disperse. In other words, the battle is stuck in a loop in both time and space. At this point, we are offered another example of spiritual asynchrony: the pagan Hannibal understands and articulates for *him self* that the rain is an intervention from God; that 'although he desired and wanted power over the Romans, God did not allow it' (*ðeh ðe he wilniede wære 7 wenede Romana anwealdes, þæt hit God ne geþafode*). Interestingly, in the account of this battle in the *Historia* Book 4.17, Hannibal looks to

his own religion to come to terms with his inability to take Roman power: '[t]unc conuersus in religionem Hannibal dixisse fertur potiundae sibi Romae modo uoluntatem non dari, modo potestatem.' (54/7; p.189: '[i]t is said that at this point Hannibal turned to his religion and declared that at times the wish, and at others the ability, to take Rome had not been given to him.')

The Christian insights that are ascribed to Hannibal in the OE *Orosius* Book IV.x, ahead of his (pagan) time, can be interpreted alongside the description of the Roman women who prepare to take the place of the warriors when Hannibal first approaches, running 'towards the walls with stones' (*mid stanum wið þara wealla*). Outside of Scythia – where 'wifmenn feohtað swa same swa wæpnedmen' (Book II.iii.45/2; the women fight the same as the men) – these women are deployed in the narrative to heighten the sense of the men's cowardice and fear towards Hannibal. This deployment works because the women step outside of their expected gender role away from the battlefield. They also have a greater part to play in the OE *Orosius*, however, as they start to break down expectation and categorization in their historical and cultural context. If these women can take up stones to defend their city, disrupting the gendered distinctions between men who ought to fight and women who should not, then a pagan can recognize the power of God without being Christian. The queering of gender roles and the queering of time in this account of the battle provide a framework for the queering of faith.

The description of the rain miracle in Book IV.x is followed by a commentary from Orosius to his fifth-century Romans, which reminds us of the theological asynchronies that underpin the entanglement of paganism and Christianity:

Gesecgað me nu, Romane, cwæð Orosius, hwonne þæt gewurde oþþe hwara, ær ðæm cristendome, þæt oþþe ge oþþe oðere æt ænegum godum mehten ren abiddan, swa mon sibþan mehte sibþan se cristendom wæs, 7 nugiet magon monege gode æt urum Hælendum Criste, þonne him þearf bið. Hit wæs þeh swiþe sweotol þæt se *ilca Crist* se þe *hie eft to cristendome onwende*, þæt se him þone ren to gescildnisse onsende, þeh hie þæs wyrþe næron, to þon þæt hie selfe, 7 eac monege oþere þurh hie, to ðæm cristendome 7 to ðæm soþan geleafan become. (103/30-104/7; my emphasis.)

(Tell me now, Romans, said Orosius, when or where it happened before Christianity that one or the other might get rain by praying to any of the gods, as you could after Christianity existed, and they can still get much goodness from our Saviour Christ, when they need it. It was nonetheless very clear that the *same Christ* who *converted them to Christianity afterwards*, sent the rain to them for protection, though they did not deserve this, so that they themselves, and also many others through them, came to Christianity and to the true faith.)

Christianity is periodized linearly here: it has a ‘before’ (*æŕ*) and ‘after’ (*sipþan*), divided by the birth of Christ and the nascence of the Church, and it has replaced the paganism of the Roman Empire. And yet, Orosius suggests that before the Romans ‘converted to Christianity’ (*to cristendome onwende*), ‘the same Christ’ (*se ilca Crist*) sent the rain to protect them from Hannibal. That is, the Christ who had not been incarnated at this point in history – his theological eternity notwithstanding – and whose Church could not yet, therefore, provide protection to his followers. On analysing this passage, Hurley has argued that Orosius is explaining to the Romans that ‘[t]hey were saved in the past so that the city of Rome might one day be Christian and so that other peoples might be converted through reading their history.’⁷³ She suggests that this can be contextualized in the Old English author’s asynchronous approach to time:

[in the Old English, Orosius] takes a point of view that is greater than that of men – he interprets history in the nonlinear terms of God’s providence. In the [OE] *Orosius*, the future always conditions (and touches) the past because for God, time is not chronological but exists in an eternal present.⁷⁴

Missing from Hurley’s discussion, however, is an attention to the terminology that is used in the account of the rain miracle, in which Hannibal recognizes the will of *God*, and in Orosius’ commentary, in which *Crist* is said to have sent the rain. This discontinuity gets to the heart of the asynchronies and entanglements this Chapter has sought to address. The entanglements of time, space and faith are underpinned by the co-eternity of God and Christ in Christian theology: time cannot be linearized, nor a pagan past and Christian present and future disentangled, because the *God* who brings punishment or mercy and the incarnated *Crist* who brings redemption are one and ‘the same’ (*se ilca*).

⁷³ Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities,’ 424.

⁷⁴ Hurley, ‘Alfredian temporalities’ 424.

Conclusion

I have used a variety of different methodologies in this thesis to approach the OE *Orosius* from different angles: mapping and language in Chapter 1; gender politics and *translatio imperii* in Chapter 2; materiality and matter in Chapter 3; and entanglement and queer temporalities in Chapter 4. Focusing on one text has allowed me the freedom to try out various ways of looking at the OE *Orosius*. It is my hope that this freedom will in turn encourage new ways of engaging with the OE *Orosius*, which can inform our understanding of the Anglo-Saxon perception of history. I have sought primarily to appreciate the OE *Orosius* as a cultural product: that is, to provide an analysis of the text that values its composition, transmission and reception in a heterogeneous culture; a culture that is open to multiple traditions and influences, classical and insular, that has its own rich history, and that views history with a unique perspective.

Like many of the theories that I have dealt with, my arguments have not been linear. I have considered the theme of time throughout the chapters of this thesis, with particular emphasis in Chapters 1 and 4. Ideas relating to space and place, and their interactions with time, have provided support to many of my discussions. Anglo-Saxon responses to Rome have featured prominently and have formed the focus of Chapters 2 and 3. I have returned frequently to the role of *Orosius* in the Old English, where the author of the *Historia* becomes a voice that unites the fifth-century Roman past with the Anglo-Saxon present. The web of connections and methodologies across the chapters of this thesis is reflective of the entanglements of the OE *Orosius* with Anglo-Saxon culture, a Christian worldview, and the *Historia*.

Indeed, the attention of the theory of entanglement to the co-dependency and agency of all things entangled lends itself very well to the OE *Orosius* and its basis in the *Historia*. In *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*, Ian Hodder outlines the background of theory and practice that intends to engage with things but does not ever quite get there: ‘a recurrent criticism of these diverse approaches to things is that despite their protestations to the contrary, they could look more closely at the things themselves.’¹ He continues:

[b]ut every now and then we actually look at the thing itself, as a whole object, a thing in its own right. We explore its grain, feel its weight, notice its color in different lights, marvel at its balance and delicate detail [...] there is sometimes a moment of realization that in order to understand the thing we have to look harder, anew, deeper, more fully.²

¹ Hodder, *Entangled*, p.1.

² Hodder, *Entangled*, p.2.

In many respects, Hodder's reflections serve as an analogy for my handling of the OE *Orosius*. I look at the fine details of the text against the broader arguments and I recognize the text's exclusive agency, texture and presence in addition to its relationship with the *Historia*, not in subordination to this relationship. My research into the OE *Orosius* has highlighted that however much scholars proclaim the major differences between the Old English history and its principal Latin source, their studies continue to read the OE *Orosius* directly through the *Historia*. In my thesis – and not without challenge – I have strived to consider the OE *Orosius* in relation to the *Historia* rather than through this Latin history, and to consider how the Old English text interacts with the *Historia*, and with world history and geography. I have thought about how the OE *Orosius* defines the past for an Anglo-Saxon audience, not misrepresents, censors or condenses a source that is – as we are aware and as is clear in the OE *Orosius* – very much an interpretation of events. Much more of the OE *Orosius*' narrative is revealed through this technique: the female rewritings of history by Semiramis and the Amazons; the reconstruction of Rome from Remus and Romulus to Augustus, and the timber structure of the dating system; the framing of events through the phrase, *on þæm dagum* or through the Orosian periodization of the Christian and pagan *tida* of the Roman Empire.

I would like to dedicate the remainder of this Conclusion to thinking about the phrase used by Kathleen Davis and Roy Liuzza with which I began Chapter 4: 'historical consciousness.'³ For Davis, this phrase represents the attitudes with which modern interpretations of medieval history periodize the past, reducing it to singularity. Liuzza uses the same phrase to express what can be learned broadly from measurements of time and, specifically, about the Anglo-Saxons' awareness of their place in time. A consideration of historical consciousness can, therefore, converge modern scholarly views on medieval history with Anglo-Saxon histories and perspectives. Here, I wish to think about what 'historical consciousness' means for the OE *Orosius*, based on the findings of my chapters.

Anglo-Saxon history and identity

The OE *Orosius* has been considered in relation to Anglo-Saxon identity in numerous studies, as I have discussed variously throughout my thesis and as my own analysis often reinforces. Identity here usually means Anglo-Saxon origins or the Anglo-Saxon present in the ninth to eleventh centuries. It is about the consolidation of knowledge, power and place in the world and the assertion of influence and significance. The geographical details in the verbal map of Book I.i and the inclusion of the stories of Ohthere and Wulfstan around the figure of Alfred promote an orientation of history,

³ Davis, 'Time,' p.216. Liuzza, 'Time in Anglo-Saxon literature,' 131.

geography and time from an Anglo-Saxon perspective: looking back to Germanic ethnicity and to Alfredian kingship and across to connections with Europe and the map of the world; looking forward to a time of the recognition of Anglo-Saxon imprints upon time and space. As I argued in Chapter 1, a historiographical identity also emerges on the map, combining the influence of the classical convention and model (to begin history with a description of the world) with Anglo-Saxon traditions of orality and literacy, where knowledge is voiced and shared. Voice and its conveyance of identity and knowledge are materialized again through the example of Babylon, as I have explored in Chapter 2 (and, slightly differently in Chapter 3). Anglo-Saxon hindsight is used to reinterpret events from a ninth- to tenth-century vantage point and to view the role of these events in Anglo-Saxon history. The fall of empire lamented by Babylon suggests the rise of power, first in Rome and then elsewhere. This provides both a sense of political opportunity for the West Saxon court and a reflection on how Anglo-Saxon England began.⁴

Babylon's vocalization of Christian transience as well as her personal experience of imperial downfall and material decay serve as reminders for how identity is situated in faith, materiality and matter. Rome was the source of Anglo-Saxon Conversion and a continuing site of significance for the Church in the context of the OE *Orosius*' composition and reception. Christian identities also widen out from Rome through Germanic ethnicity: that is, the hand of Alaric in the preservation of Christianity during the sack of Rome (Chapter 3). Nicholas Howe and Stephen J. Harris have presented respective arguments for the OE *Orosius*' presentation of the centrality of Rome for Anglo-Saxon Christianity and for the Germanic Christendom that the text promotes. But both are vital to Anglo-Saxon identity and faith. Daniel Anlezark finds the balance between the political and spiritual associations that intersect England, Northern Europe and Rome on the verbal map of Book I.i:

[t]here is no reason to doubt the Anglo-Saxon translator's belief in Rome's geographical and cultural importance – it was the primal see of the universal Church, and its historical prestige continued to shape imperial ideology in both East and West. But in Western Europe the centre of political gravity had moved to the north and the Germanic world, culminating in the coronation of Charlemagne as Emperor in 800.⁵

Identity also comes from language. Writing in Old English at a time when using the vernacular was still freighted with potential and empowerment, if not an entirely new concept, provided one way of taking cultural ownership over the recording and interpretation of world history. Language constitutes cultural knowledge and

⁴ Leneghan, '*Translatio imperii*'.

⁵ Anlezark, 'The Anglo-Saxon world view,' p.72.

experience, and offers ways of thinking through the world and negotiating distance and difference; it lends itself to morphological adaptiveness and epistemological exchange. These possibilities are demonstrated from the vernacular and Latinate toponyms and ethnonyms on the verbal map to the vernacular names and terms offered up throughout the history: the ocean is the *garsecg*; ruins are construed as works of creation, *weorca* and giants, *enta*; time is measured in *dagum*; the ground is the *eorþe* and the world is the *middangeard*. Space is shaped by Anglo-Saxon perception and culture, and charged with cosmology.

The Anglo-Saxon identity – or, more correctly, identities – that are forged in the OE *Orosius*, and to which the text bears witness, are continuations rather than origins (Harris, for instance, argues that the OE *Orosius* ‘may have contributed to the process by which Anglo-Saxons began to understand themselves as a single people constituted both ethnically and religiously’).⁶ These identities chime with the other Anglo-Saxon histories, prose and poetic, of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* and the Old English poem, *Widsith*, for example, which, as an ensemble, point towards the Roman, Germanic and insular inflections of the Anglo-Saxon self: its ethnicity, its faith, its politics, its language, its landscape, its history, and its position in Europe and the world; its literary and oral traditions and historiographical techniques.⁷ What differentiates the OE *Orosius* is the worldwide parameters of its narrative, which are frequently noted, and the Anglo-Saxon present that is carved within and around the time and space of the world and alongside the history of early fifth-century Rome. Yet queer temporalities start to unravel what the present is for the Anglo-Saxons and to break down the categorizations that are made between world, Roman and local insular history. These same asynchronous temporalities upend the linear relationship between the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* – the concept of a primary source and subsequent translation – as the early fifth-century, ancient human past, and Anglo-Saxon England exist within the time and space, geographical and textual, of the *her* and *nu*. The ‘kind of expanded [*nu*] in which past, present and future coincide’ (paraphrasing Carolyn Dinshaw) and the scope of the OE *Orosius* as an Anglo-Saxon history that begins with *her* in the rubric in the Cotton Manuscript.

Plural histories

Orosius and his early-fifth-century Roman audience in the OE *Orosius* do not just provide a commentary on history but form one of its layers as I have noted from the beginning of this thesis. Their presence – a word I use in all its senses here – is part of

⁶ Harris, *Race and Ethnicity*, p.90.

⁷ For a further discussion on the Germanic history of the Old English poem, *Widsith*, see Bremmer Jr., ‘Anglo-Saxon England and the Germanic world,’ pp.198-203.

what gives the text its plural understanding of history and its multispeed sense of time. The early fifth-century in Rome is fixed to time and place in Orosius' polemic throughout the Old English. And yet this same polemic invades the Christian Anglo-Saxon present, reconstituting history and the act of history-writing as representing 'lives lived in other kinds of time,' in Dinshaw's words.⁸ History is not just a written record or document but also a testament to human existence and experience, which was once lived with an 'open future' as Davis puts it.⁹ Orosius' voice is deployed to navigate between these two realizations of history and historiography by calling up the topicality and utility of history – its representation by an author and its function according to their agenda – whilst humanizing the context behind the *Historia's* composition and honouring it as a moment in time. In other words, the device of Orosius' voice embeds a literary, historiographical, and social and cultural history within the OE *Orosius*. Mary Kate Hurley argues that Orosius is 'the arbiter not only of what is worthy of record in history and what ought be [sic] left out but also [...] the arbiter between Christian and non-Christian worldviews,' but she places more importance on the employment of an Orosian authority-figure within the OE *Orosius* to express Anglo-Saxon views than on the dynamic created inside and outside of Orosius' voice.¹⁰ Similarly, Deborah VanderBilt identifies that 'the confrontation' between the *Historia* and the OE *Orosius* 'is an event in itself' but she does not read this through the active application and shaping of Orosius' voice, rather through the influences that the tradition of orality brings to the *Historia's* material in an Anglo-Saxon context.¹¹ William A. Kretschmar removes the importance of the polemic altogether, suggesting that the author of the OE *Orosius* 'replaced Orosius's polemical intent with an emphasis on individual deeds and on instruction by example.'¹² Kretschmar argues from here that the deeds themselves are 'in service to his own particular complex needs and complex culture,' specifically, the situation of the *anweald* of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom in a global scheme of providence.¹³ Dorothy Whitelock and Janet Bately also remove the sack of Rome from view, and so the polemic with it, when they stress the Christian theme of the OE *Orosius*, again with little attention to the role of Orosius in the Old English beyond that of providing a historical authority.¹⁴ Malcolm Godden counters this approach in his study on Anglo-Saxon narratives of the sack of Rome,

⁸ Dinshaw, *How soon is now?*, p.4.

⁹ Davis, 'Time,' p.216.

¹⁰ Hurley, 'Alfredian temporalities,' 411.

¹¹ VanderBilt, 'Translation and orality in the OE *Orosius*,' 393.

¹² Kretschmar, 'Adaptation and *anweald*,' 130.

¹³ Kretschmar, 'Adaptation and *anweald*,' 145.

¹⁴ Whitelock, 'The prose of Alfred's reign,' p.90. Bately, OE *Orosius*, p.xciv.

including that of the OE *Orosius*, as triggering the fall of the Roman Empire in Britain.¹⁵

The representation of the sack of Rome is one of the ways in which the OE *Orosius* joins up world, Roman and insular history and works towards the consolidation of multifarious Anglo-Saxon identities, providing a stepping stone between Roman *Brittania* and Anglo-Saxon *Englaland*. But it is not only Anglo-Saxon foundations or the inheritance of power, whether in its kingdoms or Christian empires, that make history matter to the Anglo-Saxons, nor is it only the inception of the Christianity that would eventually come across from Rome in the sixth and seventh centuries.¹⁶ These are undoubtedly important but so too is the recognition of transience and a lack of significance in the grand scheme of human history as well as divine cosmology; that the Anglo-Saxons contextualized themselves within human and earthly history, present and future. Historical consciousness means for us – those who periodize the past – a feeling of advancement and progression, of being on the precipice of the present and viewing the past as either inferior or surprising for its similarities to our modes of being. It also means feeling that we possess the intellectual insight to know that we are insignificant in the schemes of human history and universal space. That as much as we bolster our human and cultural identities in the here and now, we can self-deprecate within a universal and historical context; that we are plural. We assume that only we are only able to reflect with this kind of (self) awareness.

The OE *Orosius* exhibits an Anglo-Saxon ability to report and to interpret the past, to read their own cultural history within the time and space of the world, to feel a sense of social and spiritual advancement – which includes an appreciation of God’s role in pagan history – and to offer hindsight on events such as the outcome of the sack of Rome. The OE *Orosius* also offers a sense of the scale of human existence in the world and what has come before; the knowledge that everything that ever was, is or will be is co-existent in the here and now of cosmological space. The OE *Orosius* knows that the preservation of empires, cultures and events comes only through the traces of ruin or polemic, of materials and subject matter. That these traces themselves speak for the passing of cultures and earthly power, encoding a truth that ‘nanuht mid eow nabbað fæstes ne stronges þætte þurhwunigean mæge.’ (Book II.iii.44/5-6; nothing you have with you, however fixed or strong, can last.) It is with this human consciousness that the OE *Orosius* writes the history of the world.

¹⁵ Godden, ‘The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths,’ 59.

¹⁶ Cf. Kretzschmar, ‘Adaptation and *anweald*’; Leneghan, ‘*Translatio imperii*’; Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.113.

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