The reformed Nowell Codex and the *Beowulf* manuscript

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ABSTRACT

Lichfield Cathedral had a scriptorium and library in the early eleventh century. As a non-monastic establishment run by bishops and secular canons, Lichfield was not dissolved during the Reformation and undoubtedly kept some of its books. In 1563, Laurence Nowell, Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, subscribed the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, the main tenets of the Anglican Church. That year, someone wrote Laurence Nowell and the momentous date 1563 on the first page of the codex. The damage to the beginning and end of the codex suggests that a Reformer, deeming them unsuitable on religious grounds, excised the surviving texts from their original contexts. For a Reformer, the *Life of St Christopher* supported the Papist superstition of invoking and venerating saints, while *Judith* unduly showcased a non-canonical story from the Apocrypha. In this light, the Reformers unintentionally saved *Beowulf* and the rest of the Nowell Codex because they disapproved of them.

In *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: a Tenth-Century Cultural History*, Patrick Conner marshals a wealth of information relating to the eleventh-century cathedral that Bishop Leofric established after moving his see of Devon from Crediton to Exeter.[1] The chapter on 'Bishop Leofric's Scriptorium and Library' is a much needed reminder that non-monastic cathedrals under the auspices of bishops and secular clerics, instead of monks, might assemble significant collections of manuscripts outside the tight orbit of the Benedictine Revival. Conner's survey of sixty-seven, mostly dispersed, tenth- and eleventh-century manuscripts from Exeter puts in context its most famous possession, *The Exeter Book*, which is one of only seven Anglo-Saxon manuscripts remaining at Exeter.[2] His survey reveals that Archbishop Matthew Parker (fl. 1559–75) alienated many

[1] 'The Record of Moving the See of Devon from Crediton to Exeter', Appendix IV, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: a Tenth-Century Cultural History* (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 215–25.

[2] Two of the sixty-seven are a leaf from an eighth-century Gospel-book (now fol. 75 in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. v) and a ninth-century Bede manuscript, likely written in France (now Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 849), both containing tenth- and eleventh-century notes by Exeter scribes.

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Exeter manuscripts during the Reformation, which he later bequeathed to his own college (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge), to the University Library, Cambridge, and to the archbishop's residence at Lambeth Palace, London.[3] But unlike the monasteries and monastic cathedrals, the 'Old Foundation' cathedrals like Exeter, run by secular canons, were not dissolved, and these cathedrals retained books, such as *The Exeter Book*, that were of no interest to the Reformers. A sixteenth-century signature of ownership and the peculiar mutilation of the texts of *St Christopher* and *Judith* at the beginning and end of the Nowell Codex raise the possibility that the secular canons of Lichfield Cathedral were responsible for our only surviving copy of *Beowulf*.

The Nowell Codex, the second of two codices bound together in the seventeenth century in London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, gets its name from a dated signature of ownership, 'Laurence Nowell, 1563', on its first page.[4] There are two men by that name, however. Until 1974, scholars had taken for granted that Laurence Nowell, the Dean of Lichfield, and his cousin Laurence Nowell, the antiquary and proto-Anglo-Saxonist who compiled the first Anglo-Saxon 'dictionary',[5] were the same person. In 'Laurence Nowell and the Discovery of England in Tudor Times', a 1935 address to the British Academy, Robin Flower embodied this view so well as to influence a generation of key scholars, including Albert Marckwardt, Kenneth Sisam, N. R. Ker and Kemp Malone.[6] For instance, combining the Laurence Nowell biographies, Sisam could convincingly say that the Dean of Lichfield's 'pluralities, ranging from Chichester to Lichfield and York, gave him many opportunities of acquiring MSS', which he, as the antiquary, could then give to his patron, William Cecil, 'when he abandoned his Anglo-Saxon studies in 1566–7'.[7] Indeed, it is not so obvious how an antiquary without privileged access to

[3] The Dean and Chapter of Exeter themselves alienated eighty-one manuscripts (Conner's survey identifies forty-six), when they presented them to Thomas Bodley in 1601 for the founding of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Other books on the list became gifts or bequests of Archbishop Parker's son, John, or succeeding archbishops of Canterbury.

[4] For a comprehensive description, see K. Kiernan, 'The History and Construction of the Composite Codex', *Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript* (1981: rev. Ann Arbor, 1996), pp. 68–170 (hereafter *BBMS*); see also 'Cotton Vitellius A. xv' at the *Electronic Beowulf* website, http://ebeowulf.uky.edu/#vitelliusoverview (viewed 13 March 2017).

[5] *Laurence Nowell's 'Vocabularium Saxonicum'*, ed. A. H. Marckwardt (Ann Arbor, 1952). See also Marckwardt, 'The Sources of Laurence Nowell's *Vocabularium Saxonicum*', *SP* 45:1 (1948), 21–36.

[6] *PBA* 21 (1935), 46–73.

[7] 'The Beowulf Manuscript', *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), p. 62, n. 3; although he wrote this essay in 1916, Sisam added this note discussing 'Flower's researches' in 1953 for the previously published essays in *Studies*. According to R. M. Warnicke, Dean Nowell did not receive a prebend at York Minster until 1566, three years after the name appears on the codex. 'Nowell, Laurence (1530–c.1570), *antiquary*', *Oxford Dictionary of*

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medieval libraries might have come to own the Nowell Codex. In 1974 Retha Warnicke proved that the dean and the antiquary were two different people.[8] The next question is therefore which Nowell, the dean or the antiquary, owned the codex. Subsequent scholars, notably Kevin Kiernan, Carl Berkhout and Rebecca Brackmann, have concluded without explanation or apparent evidence that it was Laurence Nowell the antiquary whose name appears on the first page of the Nowell Codex.[9] As far as I know, no one has yet challenged this assumption.

If the antiquary Nowell in fact owned the Nowell Codex in 1563, one must ask why he did not use any of its five texts as lexical sources for his *Vocabularium Saxonicum* or for the thousands of Old English equivalents he wrote into his copy of Richard Howlet's *Abcedarium Anglico-Latinum*. Neither Albert Marckwardt in 'The Sources of Laurence Nowell's *Vocabularium Saxonicum*'[10] nor Rebecca Brackmann in 'The *Abcedarium* Glossary: Sources and Methods of Nowell's Old English Lexicography'[11] identify the Nowell Codex in Vitellius A. xv as a source of Nowell's lexicographical work. Marckwardt observes that 'the only indication within the *Vocabularium* of Nowell's familiarity with Old English poetry occurs in the definition of *dogor*, which is labelled as a poetical word.[12] Moreover, the dictionary, so far as can be determined, contains no words peculiar to *Beowulf* or to *Judith*'.[13] The word first occurs in *The*

National Biography (Oxford University Press, 2004–13), http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/69731 (viewed 13 March 2017, hereafter *ODNB*).

[8] 'Note on a court of requests case of 1571', *ELN* 11 (1974), 250–6. In 1979 K. Sharpe still presents Laurence Nowell the Dean as the same person as the antiquary in *Sir Robert Cotton, 1586–1631: History and Politics in Early Modern English*, Oxford Hist. Monographs (Oxford, 1979).

[9] *BBMS*, p. 120; C. Berkhout, 'Laurence Nowell (1530–*c.* 1570)', *Medieval Scholarship; Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, II: *Literature and Philology*, ed. H. Damico (New York, 1998), pp. 3–17; Brackmann, an Early-Modernist, says that Nowell the Antiquary is 'probably most famous to Anglo-Saxonists as the first known owner of the *Beowulf* manuscript (sometimes even called the Nowell Codex). . .' (*The Elizabethan Invention of Anglo-Saxon England: Laurence Nowell, William Lambarde and the Study of Old English* (Cambridge, 2012), , pp. 34–50, at 7). While Brackmann here conflates the Nowell Codex and the *Beowulf* part of it, Warnicke conflates the Nowell Codex with Vitellius A. xv, leaving out the Southwick Codex: 'He also owned what is now BL, Cotton MS Vitellius A. xv in the British Library', she says, 'the collection of Anglo-Saxon writings sometimes known as the Nowell codex, which contains the only surviving text of *Beowulf*' (*ODNB*). See also P. Stokes, 'Laurence Nowell' (8 October 2006), in *The Literary Encyclopedia*, 1.2.1.03, *English Renaissance: Elizabethan and Jacobean Periods, 1485–1625*, ed. H. Magennis, http://www.litencyc.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=11744, accessed 28 February 2017.

[10] *SP* 45:1 (1948), 36.

[11] 'Manuscript Sources'.

[12] *Vocabularium Saxonicum*, 'Dogor. Day, poetice', p. 56.

[13] *Ibid.* p. 35.

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Exeter Book in the poem *Christ I* (*dæleð dogra gehwæm*, 428a).[14] As Conner notes, Nowell the antiquary wrote interlinear glosses for *Christ I* on folios 9r and 10r of the Exeter Book.[15] If he owned the Nowell Codex, it is surprising that the antiquary does not use the prose texts in it. As Marckwardt says,

> Nowell's *Vocabularium Saxonicum* is based upon a remarkably wide range of prose material, much wider, in fact, than anyone has hitherto indicated. His sources include the Lindisfarne Glosses to the New Testament, and to a lesser extent, the West Saxon and so-called Kentish translations of the Gospels, the homilies of Ælfric and of Wulfstan, the Rule of St Benedict, the translations of Bede's history and of Paulus Orosius, at least two manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the grammar of Ælfric, the laws, and a number of glosses, particularly those contained in MS. Cleopatra A. 3.[16]

In marked contrast to the use of these sources, there is no word at all plausibly coming from the Nowell Codex.[17]

Berkhout assumes that it was Nowell the antiquary who added 'a single modern gloss (imprecise "feared" for Old English "egsode") on fol. 129r[131r]'[18] of *Beowulf*, but this assertion is doubtful for several reasons. First, a short word with only five different letters is not enough evidence for a definitive identification of a typical sixteenth- or seventeenth-century hand; second, the letterforms and features of the twelve lines of interlinear glosses that this Nowell

[14] See *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3, ed. G. P. Krapp and E. v. K. Dobbie (New York, 1966), 15; uninflected and unsyncopated *dogor* appears in *Guthlac* line 1038, p. 79. In her new edition of *The Seasons for Fasting*, Richards along with other recent editors rightly assumes that Nowell misread *dogera gerim* (with weakened *e* for unstressed *o*) as nonsensical *do geara gerim* in London, British Library, Additional 43703, his transcription of London, British Library, Cotton Otho B. xi, which was mostly destroyed by fire in 1731. See *The Old English Poem 'Seasons for Fasting': a Critical Edition*, ed. M. P. Richards (Morgantown, 2014), p. 115.

[15] Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter*, p. 249.

[16] *Vocabularium Saxonicum*, p. 36.

[17] Nowell's studies of Old English covered a short span of years, 1561–7 at the most (perhaps only 1563–6), most of them while he was working for Cecil. In her article on 'Laurence Nowell antiquary' for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Warnicke says, 'It was probably not until 1561 that he began to study Anglo-Saxon, which he learned by using as cribs the Latin equivalents of the Old English Bede, the Old English Orosius, the Anglo-Saxon laws, and Aelfric's *Grammar and Glossary*, all of which he was in part at least to transcribe or translate. By early 1563 at the latest he was residing at Sir William Cecil's house in the Strand, London, where he made a transcription (BL, Add. MS 43703) of several Anglo-Saxon texts, including the Old English Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'. He left for France in 1567 and died abroad *c.* 1571.

[18] 'Laurence Nowell', p. 10; the folio number in square brackets in Berkhout's '129r[131r]' should be 132r in the 'official' 1884 British Library number; fol. 131 in the 1884 foliation is the penultimate page of *Alexander's Letter*. *Beowulf* fol. 131 in the manuscript foliation is properly numbered 147A(131), indicating its current correct location (before fol. 147) and its former incorrect location (between fols. 130 and 132). The 1884 foliation renumbers it fol. [149], which obliterates its history.

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unquestionably wrote in *The Exeter Book* do not support the claim;[19] and third, a quite dissimilar hand wrote 'Laurence Nowell' on the first page of the codex. It would be more accurate to say with Malone, 'The gloss "feared" for *egsode* 6 may be Nowell's (it is in a hand of his time)', provided we keep in mind, as Malone presumed, that Nowell may also denote the Dean of Lichfield,[20] or perhaps more likely, one of the dean's subordinates. Laurence Nowell the antiquary and diligent lexicographer would presumably know that *egsode* meant 'terrified', the opposite of 'feared'. Both Marckwardt and Brackmann accordingly list Vespasian D. xiv as a source for *egsode*, where the word is clearly used in context.[21]

To return to the Nowell Codex, Berkhout himself seems troubled that Nowell the antiquary may have written his name in a book he did not own. 'Whether Nowell once owned the *Beowulf* manuscript, in which he wrote his name and the date 1563, is uncertain', he says of the antiquary, admitting 'there is no evidence that it passed through Lambarde's or even Cecil's hands before its record in the Cotton collection half a century later'.[22] As Queen Elizabeth's Secretary of State and head of the Privy Council, Sir William Cecil, patron of Nowell the antiquary, had little personal time for Anglo-Saxon studies. Moreover, as Brackmann has recently shown, Cecil, no doubt through his employee Nowell and Nowell's student, friend, and beneficiary of his library, William Lambarde, were all focused on English nationalism: 'The English language, the English countryside, and the English legal system could serve as focal points of English identity by claiming to have deep roots in the past, and Cecil wanted exactly such identity fostered. The *Abcedarium* demonstrates how Nowell's manuscript study and production focused on key areas of secular nationalism.'[23] When seen in this light, the Nowell Codex contains the opposite of what Nowell and Lambarde were demonstrably researching, transcribing and collecting. Neither of these men ever showed any interest in

[19] Nowell's glosses in *Christ I* are more upright and follow a straight line, unlike the curving gloss, 'feared', on fol. 129r6, the first page of *Beowulf*. The exaggerated ascender of the 'd' is unlike any of the 16 'd's' in *Christ I*, whose ascenders invariably turn inward at the top. Still, I would not discount the possibility that the Dean, knowing his interest in Old English, showed his first cousin and namesake the *Beowulf* manuscript, and that the antiquary jotted down a faulty 'feared' for *egsode* on its first page; if so, he may have misled himself by the ambiguous gloss he derived from fol. 44 of London, British Library, Cleopatra A. iii, 'Egesian. To feare, to make afraid', *Vocabularium Saxonicum*, p. 62.

[20] *Nowell Codex*, p. 50.1.

[21] *Dictionary of Old English*, *egesian*, *egsian*, '1. to terrify, inspire with fear / awe' and '2. to threaten.'

[22] 'Laurence Nowell', p. 9. Both Brackmann and Warnicke, though relying on Berkhout, do not harbour the same doubts: they both flatly assert that the antiquary owned the codex.

[23] 'The Anglo-Saxonists and Their Books', *Elizabethan Invention*, p. 20.

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Eastern myths and monsters, in the correspondence of Alexander the Great, or in Scandinavian history and legend – the chief topics of the Nowell Codex.

Without supporting evidence for the antiquary, therefore, the weight of negative evidence would seem to favour the dean. While there is no proof that Laurence Nowell Dean of Lichfield owned the codex, he had many opportunities, as Sisam says, and no doubt official requests, to acquire medieval books. Matthew Parker, after he was installed as archbishop of Canterbury in 1559, had unrestricted access to medieval libraries, including cathedral libraries like Exeter and Lichfield. Parker and his secretary John Jocelyn would thus have had access to Lichfield Cathedral, where Nowell was dean by 1560.[24] Just as he had taken many manuscripts from Exeter Cathedral, leaving behind *The Exeter Book* as irrelevant to his concerns, so Parker may have taken and passed over books from Lichfield and environs. There was a library at Lichfield at least as early as the late tenth century, because the eighth-century *St Chad Gospels* were there and bear witness in dateable notations and dry-point glosses to a library and a scriptorium in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The name and title, Wynsige *presul* ('protector'), who was bishop of Lichfield from *c.* 963 to *c.* 975 occurs on page 1; the name Leofgar, one of King Cnut's appointments who was bishop *c.* 1017 × 1020 to *c.* 1026, appears in a note on page 4. M. K. Lawson suggests that Leofgar was one of the churchmen who was 'willing to make the best of the new regime'.[25] Leofgar may have provided an atmosphere that encouraged the copying of *Beowulf*, which begins with praise for Cnut's Danish Scylding dynasty. Leofgar's episcopate falls within Ker's dating range of s. x/xi (*c.* 975–1025) for the manuscript.[26]

Gifford Charles-Edwards and Helen McKee, writing about the dry-point glosses in the *St Chad Gospels*, argue that the 'simplest explanation for the

[24] In 'A Mighty Collector of Books', R. I. Page notes that 'Parker had collected printed books and manuscripts for much of his life and manuscripts particularly since the Privy Council's broadsheet of 1568 authorizing him to take possession of "auncient recordes or monumentes written" so that they could be examined and recorded', *Matthew Parker and His Books* (Kalamazoo, 1993), p. 2. The order was presumably issued because some repositories were resisting Parker and Jocelyn.

[25] *Cnut: the Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (London, 1993), p. 147. Unfortunately, practically nothing is known about Leofgar. William of Malmesbury includes him in a list of bishops of Lichfield. *William of Malmesbury, Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, I: *Text and Translation*, ed. M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 2007), iv.172.3, pp. 466–7. There is an online facsimile of the *St Chad Gospels* at *Manuscripts of Lichfield Cathedral*, https://lichfield.ou.edu/ (viewed 13 March 2017). The interface includes tools for viewing the pages in ultraviolet, infrared and the visible spectrum.

[26] See K. Kiernan, '*Beowulf* and the Continued Use of Square Old English Minuscule in the Age of Cnut', *The Anglo-Danish Empire: From Æthelred II to Cnut the Great*, ed. R. North, E. Goeres and A. Finlay, The Northern Med. World (Med. Institute Pub., Kalamazoo, MI, forthcoming).

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personal names scratched into the Lichfield Gospels is that they represent informal commemorations of nine individuals from tenth- or eleventh-century Lichfield, presumably members of the religious community there'. They conclude that 'the names have been written by hands accustomed to writing: we might speculate that the authors of the scratched glosses were in some way involved in the keeping of a library, or the workings of a scriptorium'.[27] If early-eleventh-century episcopal scribes, secular canons from Lichfield or environs, copied the codex, it makes sense that someone at Lichfield Cathedral would inscribe the name of its Dean on the first page in 1563, when Archbishop Parker was collecting manuscripts from monasteries, cathedral libraries and their dependencies.

The sacrist's roll for Lichfield Cathedral in 1345 listed fifty books in the cathedral library, including *duo libri vetustissimi qui dicuntur libri beati Cedde* ('two most ancient books which are called the books of Blessed Chad'), the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon *St Chad Gospels*.[28] The roll has nothing that obviously fits the description of the Nowell Codex, but the codex reached its current state in 1563, not 1345. It is quite possible, therefore, that the *Judith* fragment and the texts beginning with the *St Christopher* fragment came out of two separate books listed in the 1345 roll.[29] The sacrist describes three items as *duo collectaria quorum. j. eum manuali. et tercium vetus usus ignoti* ('two collectars, of which one is with a manual, and the third ancient, of an unknown use'). He knows that the first two are Collectars, but does not know the use of the third, which is ancient. If it were in Latin, French or Middle English, he would know. A group of Old English texts would be an ancient mystery (*vetus usus ignoti*) to a fourteenth-century sacrist. A sixteenth-century Reformer, however, looking for biblical texts in Old English would be happy to find this third collection if it contained them, but he would want to discard the 'non-canonical' *Judith*. The sacrist's list also includes *duo libri qui vocantur Martilog' quorum unus non ligatur* ('two books which are called Martilogia, one of which is not bound').[30] If it was unbound and included legends in Old English, the Reformer could have taken

[27] 'Lost Voices from Anglo-Saxon Lichfield', *ASE* 37 (2008), 86–7. The dry-point glosses may be read in various lighting at *Manuscripts of Lichfield Cathedral*, https://lichfield.ou.edu/search/node/drypoint (viewed 13 March 2017).

[28] 'Sacrist's Roll of Lichfield Cathedral Church, A.D. 1345', transcribed and trans. by W. H. St. John Hope and J. Charles Cox, *Catalogue of the Muniments and Manuscript Books pertaining to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield*, published in *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, ed. William Salt Archaeol. Soc., vol. VI, part 2 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1886), pp. 199–221, at204 and 211.

[29] I am indebted to Richard North for these astute insights.

[30] The editors note that these Martyrologies 'were the volumes of legends of martyrs and saints read as lections in church in service time, or in the chapter house of secular and religious fraternities' ('Sacrist's Roll', 220 n. 63).

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the *Martyrology* and left behind the Old English texts at the end that were of no polemical interest to him.

There are of course other ways and times that the texts in the codex might have come to Lichfield. Many of the books on the 1345 roll were gifts, and many more gifts of books surely followed in the next two centuries. A sacrist's roll in 1563 would look very different from the one that survived from 1345. The eleventh-century secular canons of Lichfield did not live in a community and had their own dwellings, where some of them, conceivably former monks, may have kept their own books. Nearby Burton Abbey, a Benedictine monastery, was dissolved in 1539, briefly founded again in 1541, and permanently dissolved in 1545. Its first abbot, Wulfgeat (fl. 1004–1026 /7), served for more than ten years under both Æthelred and Cnut.[31] The Nowell Codex may have eventually come into the Lichfield library in one of these ways. One of Nowell's successors could then have sold the book to Sir Robert Cotton to raise money for the chapter.

Considering its foreign subject matter, it is not surprising that Parker and Jocelyn (or their agents) might have seen and rejected the works now combined in the Nowell Codex as antithetical to their interests. Their concerns with Old English manuscripts were overwhelmingly native and polemical. In 1563 Parker presided over the Canterbury Convocation that produced the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, which remain today the main tenets of the Anglican Church. As Dean of Lichfield, Laurence Nowell was a member of the Convocation and subscribed the Articles. Finishing its work in the same year, 1563, the long-running Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545–63) overlapped with one of the most polemical periods of the English Reformation.[32] Many of the same doctrines were discussed and settled both at Trent and Canterbury in at times a purposeful point-counterpoint fashion.[33] In his edition of the Thirty-Nine Articles, Edgar Gibson compares the two Councils

[31] 'Annales Monasterii Burtonensis', *Annales Monastici,* vol. I, ed. Henry Richard Luard (London: Longman, 1864), p. 184. *The Heads of Religious Houses, England and Wales I, 940–1216*, ed. David Knowles, C. N. L. Brooke, and Vera C. M. London, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2001), p. 30.

[32] Citations to the Council of Trent are from the edition and translation by J. Waterworth, *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent* (London, 1848), hereafter Waterworth. This edition is conveniently available online at http://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/trentall.html (viewed 13 March 2017).

[33] The controversies are well discussed in the nineteenth-century edition of Edgar C. S. Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, I (Articles I–VIII) (London, 1896), https://archive.org/stream/thirtyninearticl01gibsuoft and II (Articles IX–XXXIX) (London, 1897), https://archive.org/stream/thirtyninearticl02gibsuoft (both viewed 13 March 2017). All citations of the Thirty-Nine Articles are from this two-volume edition, hereafter Gibson. For a recent study of the Great Controversy, see H. Magennis, 'Not Angles but Anglicans? Reformation and Post-Reformation Perspectives on the Anglo-Saxon Church, Part 1: Bede, Ælfric and the Anglo-Saxon Church in Early Modern England', *ES* 96 (2015), 243–63.

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to establish the precedence of their treatment of the same doctrinal issues. Noting the coincidence of topics and goals, Gibson felt that it was 'a matter of importance to ascertain in each case whether our reformers were confronted with the authoritative statements to which Rome was formally committed by her representatives at Trent, or whether they had before them merely the popular doctrine and current practices'.[34] Two of those doctrinal issues that are relevant to respectively the poem *Judith* and the prose *Life of St Christopher* of the Nowell Codex – namely the establishment of the Biblical canon and the invocation of saints – were the subject of two sessions in Trent and two Articles in Canterbury.

Gibson gives as an example a case that relates to the *Judith* fragment. He says, 'in regard to the number and authority of the canonical books, the subject was discussed at Trent during the fourth session of the Council in 1546', illustrating 'that the compilers of the [1552–3] Edwardian as well as of the [1563] Elizabethan Articles had the formal decisions of the Council [of Trent] before them'.[35] The thrust of the 'Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures' was that the Roman Catholic Church receives and venerates all the books of the Old and New Testament, as authored by God, either through Christ's own words or through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has maintained this belief through continuous succession. Fully aware that Reformers rejected the canonicity of certain books of the Bible, the Trent decree provided a specific list, including the Book of Judith, 'lest a doubt may arise in any one's mind, which are the books that are received by this Synod'. The Synod of Trent was speaking directly to the Reformers when it concluded, 'But if any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin vulgate edition; and knowingly and deliberately contemn the traditions aforesaid; let him be anathema.'[36] Under Parker's auspices, Canterbury Article VI specifically mentions Judith as among 'the other books' of the Old Testament, known as the Apocrypha,[37] or as Deuterocanonical by Catholics. In fact, 'The only books of the Apocrypha mentioned in 1563 were 3 and 4 Esdras, Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach, Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees'.[38] Parker's more stringent attitude toward the Apocrypha in 1563 removed from the 1553 version the ameliorating statement, 'although it be some time received of the faithful as godly, and profitable for an order and comeliness', and

[34] Gibson, I, p. 11.
[35] *Ibid.* pp. 10–11.
[36] Waterworth, pp. 18 and 19.
[37] Gibson, I, pp. 274–9.
[38] *Ibid.* p. 232 note 1.

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emphasized instead that no one should be constrained to believe these books as an article of faith.

Gibson also discusses Trent's treatment of the veneration and invocation of Saints, which has relevance to the first text of the Nowell Codex, the *Life of St Christopher*. Gibson notes:

> the doctrine of Purgatory, invocation of saints, adoration of images and relics [were not considered] till the very last session of the Council held in December 1563, some months after the publication of the Elizabethan Articles. On all these matters, therefore, priority of treatment belongs to the Anglican formulary and it is impossible to take its statements as intended to refer directly to the formal decrees of the Council of Trent.[39]

Here, however, Gibson overlooks Chapter IX of 'Doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass' in the twenty-second Trent session held in 1552, prior to the Edwardian Forty-Two Articles of 1553 (Parker attended the 1552–3 Canterbury Convocation as Dean of Lincoln). Trent's Canon V states, 'If any one saith, that it is an imposture to celebrate masses in honor of the saints, and for obtaining their intercession with God, as the Church intends; let him be anathema.'[40] Reactively in England in 1553, Article 23 of the Forty-Two Articles countered Trent's Canon V of 1552 with: 'The doctrine of Schole aucthoures concerning Purgatorie, Pardones, worshipping, and adoration as well of images, as of reliques, and also invocation of sainctes, is a fonde thing vainlie feigned, and grounded upon no warraunt of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the woorde of God.'[41] Nonetheless Gibson is right that the Council of Trent's position 'On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics, of Saints, and on Sacred Images', was written in its twenty-fifth and final session in December 1563, after and partly in response to Article 22 of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Canterbury. The Trent Council strongly reaffirmed its position on the intercession and invocation of saints, stating that 'they think impiously, who deny that the saints, who enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, are to be invocated; or who assert either that they do not pray for men; or, that the invocation of them to pray for each of us even in particular, is idolatry'. While reaffirming the veneration of saints (as distinct from the adoration of God), this Council condemned the many abuses and superstitions that had become rampant in a cult of saints.[42] In this respect, Trent and Canterbury agreed.

The canonicity of the Book of Judith and the veneration and invocation

[39] *Ibid.* p. 12.
[40] Waterworth, p. 159.
[41] Gibson, I, p. 80; Article 23 of the 42 Articles of 1553 is vastly expanded in Article 22 of the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563; Gibson, II, pp. 537–72.
[42] Waterworth, pp. 234 and 235–6.

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of saints were hot issues in both places. The Nowell Codex begins with a mutilated text, bearing the momentous date, 1563, along with the name of a Reformer who signed the Thirty-Nine Articles; it ends with a sixteenth-century hand restoring the still available concluding lines. There is accordingly sufficient reason to conclude that the codex came to grief during Parker's primacy in 1559–75. It is impossible to investigate this issue using the faulty 1884 foliation, which the British Library Department of Manuscripts unfortunately uses without cross-referencing the manuscript foliation on its Digitised Manuscripts website.[43] One must examine the earliest foliation written on the recto leaves of Vitellius A. xv to understand the history of the Nowell Codex as a book when it was unbound, pilfered, and left in disarray, and to understand what happened to it after the 1731 fire, when it was restored and rebound by the British Museum in 1845.[44] Dating back nearly 400 years and still in use by knowledgeable *Beowulf* scholars and editors today, the manuscript foliation had three distinct iterations between *c.* 1628 and 1802.[45] Sir Robert Bruce Cotton's binder presumably wrote the first iteration when the Southwick and Nowell codices were bound together before Cotton's death in 1631. The Southwick Codex was numbered 1–90 and the Nowell Codex 91–206 at this time. Sometime after 1628, when he transcribed the *Judith* fragment, Francis Junius used this foliation when he correctly cited fol. 199 as the first page of

[43] A. Prescott, curator in the Department of Manuscripts at the British Library 1979–2000, has explained that the 1884 foliation was 'the work of relatively low-grade staff who were not manuscript scholars', but only concerned with numbering the leaves to reveal any subsequent losses. 'What's in a Number? The Physical Organization of the Manuscript Collections of the British Library', *Beatus Vir: Studies in Early English and Norse Manuscripts in Memory of Phillip Pulsiano*, ed. A. N. Doane and K. Wolf (Tempe, AZ, 2006), p. 480. This essential function can be met without destroying the historically important manuscript foliation by assigning the prefixed leaves roman numerals, as is now standard practice in the Department of Manuscripts.

[44] Both the manuscript foliation and the British Library numbers may be viewed with images of the manuscript in the online fourth edition of *Electronic Beowulf*, ed. Kiernan, http://ebeowulf.uky.edu/ebeo4.0/start.html (viewed 13 March 2017).

[45] Two years before the 1884 foliation, J. Zupitza used the manuscript foliation in his facsimile, *Beowulf: Autotypes of the Unique Cotton MS. Vitellius A. xv in the British Museum*, EETS 77 (1882). Following Zupitza, the editors A. J. Wyatt, W. J. Sedgefield, R. W. Chambers and F. Klaeber all ignored the 1884 foliation. Anyone attempting to adopt the 1884 numbers, such as S. Rypins, K. Malone and N. Davis, were obliged to provide tables of correspondences to account for the numbers on the manuscript. Although he says he is following the 1884 foliation, Davis in fact reprints Zupitza's transliteration identifying each folio by its manuscript foliation number in *Beowulf Reproduced in Facsimile from the Unique Manuscript British Museum MS. Cotton Vitellius A. xv*, 2nd ed., EETS 245 (1959). For recent use of the manuscript foliation, see A. Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Cambridge, 2003), *Klaeber's Beowulf, Fourth Edition*, ed. R. D. Fulk, R. E. Bjork and J. D. Niles (Toronto, 2008), and *Electronic Beowulf, Fourth Edition*, ed. Kiernan (2016).

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this text. The second iteration emerged from a commission appointed in 1703 to correct foliations in the Cotton collection; the committee found that two leaves in *Beowulf* had been numbered fol. 154 and so gave the total number of folios as 205, instead of 206. Thus, *Judith* only began on fol. 199 for Junius because number 154 was used twice. Two years later, Humfrey Wanley, who was a member of the committee, cited numbers from the prose texts that showed that they were out of order too. Moreover, Wanley's count of folios from *Beowulf* to *Judith* revealed that a folio was missing from *Beowulf*, a tally confirmed by G. J. Thorkelin, when he prepared to make his transcripts of the manuscript in the late eighteenth century.[46]

The 1731 Cottonian Library fire, which destroyed the original binding of Vitellius A. xv, vexed our understanding of the foliations even more. In the Nowell Codex the numbers from these two early stages of the manuscript foliation were lost when the fire destroyed the upper right corners (recto) of all folios. The numbers one sees today on the manuscript are from the third iteration of the manuscript foliation, which Joseph Planta wrote in the British Museum sometime between 1793 and 1801.[47] His numbers reveal that when the foliation was written the missing *Beowulf* folio had been restored, but that two other folios from *Beowulf* were out of place, and misnumbered as fol. 131 and fol. 197. Kiernan has explained how fol. 197 came to be the penultimate leaf in *Beowulf*.[48] Whoever pulled what is left of *Judith* from its original codex in 1563 must have used the outside bifolium of the final *Beowulf* gathering, fols. 189A(197) and 198, as a cover for what is now the *Judith* fragment. In this way, the misplaced fol. 197 became both the last folio of *Beowulf* and the front cover of the *Judith* fragment.[49] Ker had noticed that marks of exposure on the last page of *Beowulf* show that 'Beowulf was once at the end of the manuscript and not followed, as it now is, by Judith'.[50] In fact, a large burn-hole on *Beowulf* fol. 198v17–18 corresponding to a much smaller one on *Judith* fol. 206v17, as well as overall scorching on 198v, but not 206v, prove that the last page of *Beowulf* came after the last page of *Judith* at the time of the fire.[51] It is possible that Cotton's binder used the already damaged last folio of *Beowulf* inside the back

[46] Preceding his transcript, Thorkelin noted there were sixty-nine, rather than seventy, folios in *Beowulf* on a flyleaf reproduced in Malone, *The Thorkelin Transcripts of 'Beowulf' in Facsimile*, EEMF 1 (Copenhagen, 1951), p. c.

[47] 'History of the Multiple Foliations', *BBMS*, pp. 85–110.

[48] 'The *Judith* Fragment', *BBMS*, pp. 154–7.

[49] The last gathering of *Beowulf* consists of folios 189A(197), 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 198. The corrected manuscript foliation number 189A(197) indicates both where 197 should be and where it was formerly misplaced. The 1884 foliation totally obscures its history by renumbering the leaf [192].

[50] *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (1957; Oxford, 1990), p. 282.

[51] *BBMS*, pp. 98 and 154–58.

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cover, which would explain why the last page of *Judith* was not more burnt and why the meticulous Humfrey Wanley counted 205, instead of 206 folios, for the Nowell Codex. The number 197, instead of 189, on the first leaf of the last gathering shows that this leaf was misplaced as the penultimate leaf of *Beowulf* when the last folio was returned to its place as fol. 198 after the fire. We can confidently attribute to Thorkelin or his scribe James Matthews the replacement of fol. 198 from the end of the Nowell Codex to the end of *Beowulf*. There is no evidence that anyone was reading *Beowulf* between 1731 and 1787. The manuscript foliation became the official foliation when it was used in 1802 for Joseph Planta's *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library, Deposited in the British Museum*. It is worth emphasizing that it was written after the fire of 1731, because the destruction of Cotton's seventeenth-century binding made it possible to put misplaced folios back where they belonged.[52]

In 1981 Kevin Kiernan first suggested that a Reformer might have pulled the *Judith* quire from its original codex because it occurred in a canonical context – for example, among poems on Genesis, Exodus and the Psalms, all subjects of extant Old English poems.[53] Ker, while he drew attention to a pattern of wormholes in the last gathering of *Beowulf*, but not in *Judith*, did not notice other evidence that *Judith* formerly belonged to another codex, rather than to another place in the Nowell Codex.[54] A striking difference in format may be seen in the capital *H*'s, which occur on fols. 199r and 202r13 [BL 202 and 205] in *Judith* and on fols. 192v8 and 198r12 [BL 196 and 201] in the second scribe's part of *Beowulf*. In *Judith*, the flamboyant loops of the *H*'s both terminate in a bud-like adornment unlike anything anywhere in *Beowulf* or the prose texts. It is possible that a rubricator added them later, a common practice in Old English manuscripts.[55] Whoever drew them had to lavish time on them, particularly the one on 202r13 [BL 205], which has additional finishing touches on the main bar and the loop. As Kiernan pointed out in 1981, the fitt numbers *X* and *XI* preceding these capitals, as well as fitt number *XII* on fol. 204v11 [BL 207], were written by someone other than the scribe, who never makes an *X* in this manner. This scribe in both *Beowulf* (in fitt numbers and text) and *Judith* (in text) always draws an *x* with three strokes (first a strong diagonal bar from upper-left

[52] Thorkelin or Matthews doubtless found and replaced both *Beowulf* folios, 147A(131) and 189A(197), because they both copy these folios in their proper places.

[53] 'The *Judith* Fragment', *BBMS*, pp. 150–67.

[54] *Catalogue*, p. 282.

[55] See, for example, the spaces left for initials in London, British Library, Cotton Otho A. vi, the earliest manuscript of Alfred's *Boethius*, or the spaces left for titles and pericopes in London, British Library, Royal 7. C. xii, the oldest manuscript of Ælfric's First Series of *Catholic Homilies*. If *Judith* once preceded the prose texts, as some scholars have supposed, it is surprising that this rubricator was not also enlisted to rescue the following prose texts from their amateurish capitals.

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to lower right; next, a strong hook in the upper-right; and last, a thin right-to-left diagonal tail beneath the bar).[56] It is plausible that the same rubricator who drew the unusual capital *H*'s also supplied the unusual fitt numbers, which continued a sequence begun on whatever text or texts preceded *Judith* in the original *Judith* codex. Considering the inept attempts at Anglo-Saxon minuscule by a Renaissance hand on the last page of *Judith*, Martina Häcker's suggestion that the fitt numbers were supplied by 'a fifteenth or sixteenth century humanistic script' seems quite wrong.[57] It is more credible that an Anglo-Saxon scribe drew these three *X*'s with the same kind of oak gall ink.

It seems most sensible to conclude that the *Judith* fragment first became a fragment when its surviving quire was pulled from the middle of a codex in the same scriptorium that produced the *Beowulf* codex. The few lines that ended *Judith* did not fall off in the course of time in the Nowell Codex, for they had stayed with their original codex. The fact that a sixteenth-century hand could complete the last lines from *Judith* proves that its last folio was then in situ. Thus, a sixteenth-century agent removed *Judith* from its original codex. This person may have also copied the now lost opening of *Judith* on a separate sheet of paper or vellum, if the beginning of the poem was as short as I and others believe it was.[58] If so, it seems likely that Cotton's bookbinder would have discarded it as an inept facsimile, which Sir Robert would not admire. If, moreover, we admit the possibility that Parker or his agents might have taken the texts that preceded and followed *Judith*, then Parker would not have hesitated to erase the seven lines concluding *Judith* to contrive a tidy opening for the other extracted text he wanted to preserve. Häcker has objected that 'the postulated identity of a preserver with a destroyer of manuscripts greatly detracts from the plausibility of Kiernan's hypothesis'.[59] Yet as Ker has shown in detail, Matthew Parker was just such a preserver and destroyer of manu-

[56] P. J. Lucas is mistaken when he says that the *X* on fol. 192v7 [BL 196] in *Beowulf* 'has a similar duct to those in *Judith*'. 'The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript [i.e. Nowell Codex]', *RES*, n.s. 41:164 (1990), 477 n. 37. As is evident in the high-resolution image on the British Library Digitised Manuscripts site, the cross of the *X* in fitt-number *XL* was made with one stroke, not two, showing that the *Beowulf* scribe did not make the correction; the large ultraviolet image in *Electronic Beowulf* shows that the *Beowulf* scribe had written *LX*, with the usual three-stroke *X* later erased by the corrector.

[57] 'The Original Length of the Old English *Judith*. More Doubt(s) on the "Missing Text"', *Leeds Stud. in Eng.* n.s. 27 (1996), 1–18, at 7.

[58] A. S. Cook was the first to argue that 'the poem seems virtually complete as it now stands'. *Judith: an Old English Epic Fragment* (Boston, 1904), p. 21, n. 1. J. F. Doubleday made the case in a convincing structural analysis in 'The Principle of Contrast in *Judith*', *NM* 72 (1971), 436–41. See also Kiernan, *BBMS*, pp. 158–9. Lucas ('The Place of Judith') and Häcker ('The Original Length of the Old English *Judith*') are recent converts.

[59] 'The Original Length of the Old English *Judith*', p. 7.

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scripts.[60] As Ker says, 'there is much evidence that Parker disliked loose ends and was at pains to destroy, erase, or cover up the remains of texts which either began or ended imperfectly, especially if they came first or last in a volume (cf. no. 43, art. 16)'.[61] When the *Judith* quire was pulled from its original codex, the hiatus created in the original codex both an imperfect ending (i.e. the beginning of *Judith*) and an imperfect beginning (the ending of *Judith*). Parker would have erased both of these scraps of *Judith*, following his well-documented practice.

Ker bolsters his criticism of Parker's destructive ways by pointing to several pertinent examples. 'A new text began in line 22 on f. 394v' at the end of the homily on St Andrew in CCCC 198, Ker says, 'but the five lines containing it have been erased and nothing is now legible, except the large initial H'. Parker's table of contents (fol. ii verso) even lists the next homily as *De Virginitate*, and his agent Joscelyn actually cited it in London, Lambeth Palace, 692, fol. 23.[62] 'Probably', Ker surmises, 'Parker deliberately scrapped the homily because it was incomplete.'[63] For the *Regularis concordia* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201, Ker reports that 'the fragment is imperfect at the beginning and has been made more so by the erasure of the first thirty-eight lines on p. 1, where only traces of writing can now be seen . . . The erasure is probably due to Parker's wish to contrive a tidy beginning (cf. no. 48).'[64] There is ample evidence to support the suspicion that the ending lines of *Judith* were also erased, both to provide a clean start for Parker's newly created book, sans *Judith*, and (as we have seen with the Reformers' dim view of some Apocrypha) to conceal the occurrence of *Judith* in a canonical setting. On page 1 in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303 'The last four lines of a homily . . . have been erased and pasted over, but a few letters can be made out. Remains of letters appear also on the verso of the preceding leaf, now cut away except for a narrow strip to which the last of the flyleaves is attached.'[65] There are many examples of Parker

[60] The incriminating evidence in Ker's *Catalogue* includes Ker 32, CCCC 41, *Bede, Homilies*; Ker 35, CCCC 140+111, *Gospels, Manumissions, Homily*; Ker 38, CCCC 162, *Homilies*; Ker 43, CCCC 188, *Homilies*; Ker 48, CCCC 198, *Homilies*; Ker 49, CCCC 201, *Regularis Concordia, Bede, De die judicii*; Ker 56, CCCC 302, *Homilies*; Ker 57, CCCC 303, *Homilies*; Ker 63, CCCC 367, pt. II, *Homilies*; Ker 71, CCCC 449, *Ælfric's Grammar*; and Ker 73, CCCC 557, *Legend of the Cross*. See also P. Stokes, *English Vernacular Minuscule from Æthelred to Cnut c. 990–c. 1035* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 28 and 33.

[61] *Catalogue*, p. 122.

[62] A full facsimile of this manuscript, including this page and Parker's table of contents listing the deleted homily, is now online at 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 198: Old English Homilies, mostly by Ælfric', fol. 394v. *Parker Library On the Web: Manuscripts in the Historic Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/fh878gz0315).

[63] *Catalogue,* Ker 48, p. 81.

[64] *Ibid.* p. 83.

[65] *Ibid.* Ker 57, p. 99.

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or his agents shifting material from one manuscript to another, manufacturing a neat opening or ending by erasing some text, or supplying missing material still in their possession, as in the case of *Judith*.

Häcker ends up suggesting 'that an early reader of an Old English poem whose beginning was obviously missing assumed, like many eminent scholars after him, that the text before him corresponded in length to the Apocryphal book of *Judith* and indicated his guess at the amount of text lost by inserting the section numbers that still puzzle us today'.[66] To be fair, the first scholar we know of to make this conjecture was Max Förster, 400 years after Parker's time, when this kind of textual criticism was in practice.[67] While there are sound reasons for believing that nothing much is gone from the lost opening of *Judith*,[68] there is likewise nothing to recommend an early reader with flawless Anglo-Saxon penmanship supplying the fitt numbers. He or she could not be the same person who wrote the gloss on the first page of *Beowulf*, nor whoever haplessly tried to imitate Anglo-Saxon minuscule on the last page of *Judith*. We know that two early eminent scholars, Francis Junius in the first half of the seventeenth century and Edward Thwaites in 1698, when he produced the first edition using the Junius transcript, did not speculate on the original length of *Judith*.[69]

The undamaged condition of the first page of *Judith*, and the knowledge that its ending was intact in Nowell's time, suggests rather that *Judith* once belonged to a group of texts that were numbered seriatim, as *Daniel* is in the Junius Manuscript, and not that we have lost sections I–IX of *Judith* at the beginning. These deductions about the *Judith* fragment encourage new speculation about the extent of the damage to the *St Christopher* fragment at the beginning of the Nowell collection. It is as likely as not that the beginning of the codex was dismembered at the same time, when Archbishop Parker's or Dean Nowell's men removed the *Judith* quire from its original codex and wrote Nowell's name and the date 1563 at the top of the first folio. As with *Judith*, it appears that the beginning of *St Christopher* was sacrificed in order to keep intact the conclusion of whatever text preceded it. Whereas the *Judith* fragment was neatly placed inside the *Beowulf* bifolium 189A(197)–198 by the person who removed *Judith* from its original collection, the prose texts at the beginning of the Nowell Codex were themselves victim of textual extraction. They endured harsh and

[66] 'The Original Length of the Old English *Judith*', p. 14.

[67] 'Die Beowulf Handschrift', *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klass* 71 (1919).

[68] See *BBMS*, pp. 150–67.

[69] The Junius transcript of *Judith* is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 105. The first edition of Judith is *Heptateuchus, Liber Job, et Evangelium Nicodemi; Anglo-Saxonice. Historiae Judith Fragmentum; Dano-Saxonice*, ed. E. Thwaites (Oxford, 1698).

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careless treatment, leaving the first ten folios, comprising all of what was left of *St Christopher* and the start of the *Wonders of the East*, in great disorder (93, 94, 91, 92, 97, 98, 99, 100, 95, 96) and two entire gatherings reversed in *Alexander's Letter*.[70] The reversed gatherings corroborate the natural deduction that the binding was taken apart in this part of the codex. Considering the disorder of the first ten leaves, it further appears that the folds of the original gatherings were deliberately severed to keep together the full text that preceded *St Christopher*.

Scholars have always assumed that the acephalous *St Christopher*, like *Judith*, begins with an intact gathering, and have only differed about whether it began with a natural gathering of four sheets or with a five-sheet gathering. There are 16 folios preceding the reversed gatherings after fol. 106. Förster thought that the best explanation for the disorder was that the first ten folios constituted a five-sheet gathering, and the next six folios a three-sheet gathering. Malone, Dobbie and Kiernan, among others, concurred. But in the end Förster opted for two four-sheet gatherings, called quires, and Ker describes them as natural quires in his collation, too.[71] However, an analysis of the unambiguous hair and flesh arrangements on fols. 95, 96, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105 and 106 proves that they could not form a natural quire: fols. 95 and 96 both have flesh on the outside, while their supposed conjugates, fols. 105 and 106, both have hair on the outside. Fols. 101–6 are in fact a three-sheet gathering with hair sides out for the two outer sheets and flesh side out for the central bifolium (103–4). This result left the preceding ten folios looking like what seemed the only possible alternative, a five-sheet gathering. These ten folios are the most soiled in the Nowell Codex, and it is very difficult, if not in some cases impossible, to distinguish hair from flesh side on these folios. However, with high-resolution in the recently mounted images on the British Library's *Digitised Manuscripts* website, it now seems possible to identify another three-sheet gathering for fols. 95(97)–100(96) [BL 98–103].

If this analysis of the hair/flesh arrangements is correct, it leaves four formerly misplaced folios, 91(93), 92(94), 93(91), and 94(92), at the beginning of

[70] Fols. 107(115)–114(122) and 115(107)–122(114), using the corrected manuscript foliation in *Electronic Beowulf*, which also puts in proper order the 'official' 1884 British Library foliation as [BL 118–125 and 110–117]. Users of the British Library *Digitised Manuscripts* website should note that these quires are still reversed on its website (http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_vitellius_a_xv_f094r, viewed 13 March 2017) and in the current manuscript binding. A penciled note at the top of fol. 115(107)r [BL 110] reads, 'Ff. 110–117 should follow f. 125'; a corresponding note on fol. [BL 125v] reads, 'ff. 110–117 follow here'.

[71] Förster (*Die Beowulf-Handschrift*, pp. 7–8) gave three possible constructions for the opening ten folios. Cf. Ker, *Catalogue*, 282.

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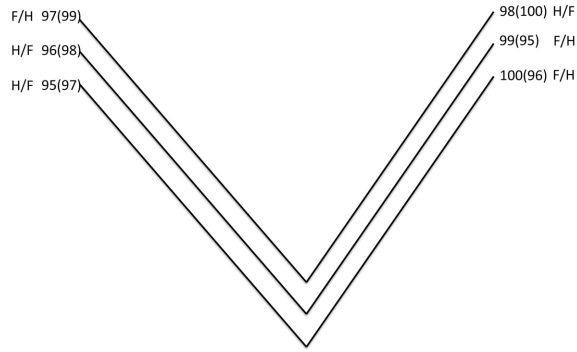


Figure 2: Revised Nowell gathering 1b.

the codex. As *St Christopher* is now headless, it should not be surprising that the opening leaves are missing. Given the three-sheet arrangement of all the other gatherings in the prose part of the codex,[72] it would be consistent if these first four folios were formerly part of another three-sheet gathering, as well. Although the surfaces of the first four leaves are too soiled and napped to be certain, scrutiny of the high-resolution images indicates that the first and fourth leaves may have flesh, rather than hair, on the rectos. The first, fol. 91(93)r [BL 94r], has a duller, flatter appearance than the verso, which has a smoother, more yellow appearance, with a characteristic sheen, especially notable at the left top of the page (compare the same area around the rip and the wrinkles in the top right on the recto). Similar differences in texture and colour may be detected on the recto and verso of fol. 94(92) [BL 97], particularly around the slit in the vellum in line 7.

What, then, is the best explanation for the first four leaves, fols. 91(93), 92(94), 93(91), and 94(92) [BL 94–97]? If once part of a three-sheet gathering, the first two leaves, 91(93)–92(94) [BL 94–95], were the central bifolium. The last two leaves, 93(91) [BL 96] and 94(92) [BL 97], were once conjugate with two folios that were cut away from the Nowell Codex, leaving *St Christopher* a fragment. In this case, the makeup of the gathering, with X1 and X2 representing the excised leaves, was as shown in Figure 3.

If someone for some reason wanted the text that preceded *St Christopher* (but did not want or care about the text of *St Christopher*) and the first page of *St Christopher* shared the last page of this text on the same folio (i.e., X2), a collector with Parker's proclivities would not hesitate to cut off the parts he did not want. A comparable dismemberment of a codex by Parker may be seen in Ker

[72] Even the reversed gatherings, 107(115)–114(122) and 115(107)–122(114), were constructed with three sheets with two half-sheets folded on them. See *BBMS*, pp. 124–6.

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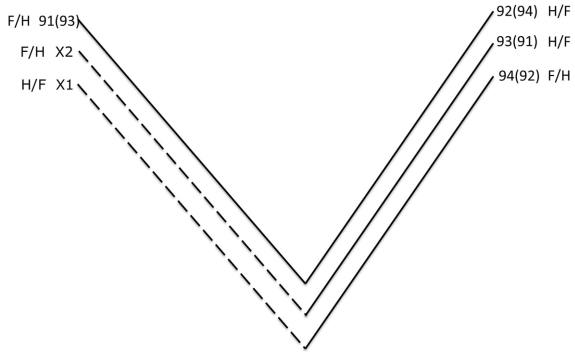


Figure 3: Revised Nowell gathering 1a.

57, CCCC303, a collection of homilies mostly by Ælfric.[73] Page 1 begins with the 'erased and pasted over' final four lines of the preceding homily, a fate likely endured by the closing lines of *Judith*, as well. As in the diagram above illustrating the proposed dismemberment of the first *St Christopher* gathering, Parker has cut off the first two leaves of the quire, as Ker's collation describes: '1^8 wants 1, 2 before p. 1'.[74] A sharp knife, cutting through vellum and severing binding cords in the first gathering, easily explains the subsequent dislocation of the first ten leaves of the Nowell Codex, as well as the reversal of the following two gatherings.

What might it mean if the same Reformer who dismembered the original *Judith* codex by pulling an intact quire from its midst also dismembered *St Christopher* in the Nowell Codex, effectively cutting it off from the texts that preceded it in an original three-sheet gathering? As with *Judith*, it appears that whatever preceded *St Christopher* was more important than *St Christopher*. If the gathering was dismembered, moreover, it might also be the case that the version of the *St Christopher* story in the Nowell Codex was considerably shorter than current estimates, which are based on Latin versions that diverge significantly from each other as well as from what remains in the codex. If the Reformer had to decapitate *St Christopher* to keep the end of the text he wanted, it means that the lost opening of *St Christopher* took up less than two pages on a single folio. It is of course possible that additional loose folios from the beginning of *St Christopher* were lost after its dismemberment, but the signature on the first page of the surviving Nowell Codex, a bit after the time when it was most plausibly dismembered, makes that possibility less viable. It is significant that MS fol. 91(93) [BL94], the first page of what remains of *St Christopher*, had not yet been misplaced when someone wrote 'Laurence Nowell' on it.

[73] *Catalogue*, p. 99.
[74] *Ibid.* p. 105.

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We can readily understand why Parker, Nowell or their agents might have mutilated the *Life of St Christopher*, if we keep in mind the religious controversies of the period. By 1563 and the ratification of the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Reformers were doctrinally antagonistic to the veneration and invocation of the saints, perhaps St Christopher more than some others. Already in 1548, they had dissolved the powerful guild of St Christopher in York, where Dean Nowell later held a prebend.[75] Reformers were contemptuous in general of the belief that a saint would pray for individual sinners who invoked them. At the end of the *Life of St Christopher* in the Nowell Codex, the narrator marvels at the efficacy of St Christopher's prayers on behalf of believers: 'Wuldorgeworc synd nu lang to asecgane þe Drihten þurh hine geworhte to herenesse his naman 7 nu oð þyssne dæg wyrcð, forþon þe þær nu blowað 7 growað his þa halgan gebedu.'[76] His prayers and his miracles are unending, as his homiletic passion seems to conclude with the formulaic invocation of the Trinity.

Ker thought that the version of the *Life of St Christopher* in the burnt Otho B. x was probably the same as the one in the Nowell Codex, because its explicit, preserved by Humfrey Wanley, is the same as in the Nowell Codex, fol. 95(97) r6–11 [BL 98]. Ker did not mention, however, that in the Vitellius version of the homily, St Christopher gets the last word. After the formulaic ending invoking the Trinity, St Christopher himself, as if to provoke the Reformers, prays to God to bless anyone who venerates him by writing about his sufferings: 'Þyses eac bæd se halga Cristoforus of þære nihstan tide ær he his gast onsende 7 cwæð, Drihten min god syle gode mede þam þe mine þrowunga awrite 7 þa ecean edlean þam þe hie mid tearu[m] ræde.'[77] His closing prayer, soliciting literary veneration and invocation, which manifests itself in the few

[75] See E. White, *The St Christopher and St George Guild of York* (York, 1987), pp. 19–28.

[76] 'The miracles are now too long to list which the Lord through him wrought to the glory of His name, and until this day it works, because there now blossom and grow his holy prayers.' Fol. 95(97)r3–7 [BL 98]; my edition and translation, unless otherwise noted. The line numbers in the posthumous edition by Phillip Pulsiano refer to the total number of manuscript lines (lines 136–9); but the printer, presumably to eliminate a jagged right margin, has run the manuscript lines together. While presenting a neater page, this printing decision makes it needlessly tedious to locate the corresponding manuscript lines in the facsimiles. See 'The Passion of St Christopher', *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. E. Treharne and S. Rosser (Tempe, AZ, 2002), pp. 167–99. In his recent edition and translation, Fulk does not locate the readings by manuscript folio and line, at all, making it difficult to find the sources of his sentences in the manuscript or facsimiles. His textual notes refer to mostly unnumbered *sentences* in his edition, which differ from the sentences in other editions. *The Beowulf Manuscript* (i.e. the Nowell Codex), Dumbarton Oaks Med. Lib. (Cambridge, MA, 2010).

[77] 'For this also prayed St Christopher at the last hour before he sent forth his spirit, and said: "Lord my God, give good meed to whomever of my sufferings writes, and eternal reward to whomever reads them with tears."' Fol. 95(97)r12–17 [BL 98].

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surviving Latin and Old English versions and genres of his passion, does not occur in the seemingly closely related version in the burnt Otho B. x. The person who wrote the version in the Nowell Codex has demonstrably added a distinct variation in the final paragraph, and this unique conclusion opens the possibility of other significant variations, particularly as the Otho and Vitellius homilies are intended for different groups of *leofestan men*.

One can examine what a shorter version of the *St Christopher* homily might have entailed at Aaron Hostetter's *Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry* website.[78] Hostetter restores the lost opening from George Herzfeld's translation in the *Old English Martyrology*, a much shorter version of the *Life of St Christopher* than scholars have traditionally presumed for the Nowell Codex. The *Martyrology* nonetheless furnishes a streamlined introduction to the fragment, illustrating that not much narrative is required to lead into the Nowell fragment:

> In the days of the emperor Decius [Christopher] came into the town called Samos from the nation where men have the head of a dog and from the country where men devour each other. He had the head of a dog, his locks were exceedingly thick, his eyes shone as brightly as the morning star, and his teeth were as sharp as a boar's tusk. In his heart he believed in God, but he could not speak like a man. When he prayed to God to give him human speech, a man in a white robe stood near him and breathed into his mouth; after that he could speak like a man. The emperor then sent two hundred soldiers to conduct him to him: if he would not come to him, they were to slay him and to bring him his head that he might see what it was like. When the soldiers came to him, they dared not approach him, and yet he set out with them. As he came to the emperor and he saw his countenance, he was so astonished that he fell from his royal throne. Then the emperor offered him gold and silver in order to seduce him from the belief in Christ. As he would not submit to this, he ordered him to be tormented with various tortures . . .[79]

By quickly and sufficiently leading into St Christopher's interrogation, the restoration from the *Martyrology* is surprisingly satisfying. The differences in the versions are, however, also evident in the names and states of the tormentors (Decius is emperor, *se casere*; Dagnus is king, *cyninge*) and in the sensationalism in the monstrous description of St Christopher in the *Martyrology*, for which there is no inkling in the remaining part in the Nowell Codex. There are other differences between the two versions, but Lichfield's 1345 sacrist roll suggests that one thing they may have in common is that they both come from Martyrologies.

Another useful comparison might be made to the Incipit of the version in

[78] http://anglosaxonpoetry.camden.rutgers.edu/saint-christopher/ (viewed 13 March 2017).

[79] For more reliable editions of the Old English than Herzfeld's, see *The Old English Martyrology: Edition, Translation and Commentary*, ed. C. Rauer (Cambridge, 2013), p. 90, and *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, ed. G. Kotzor (München, 1981), pp. 68–70.

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Otho B. x, a variant homily on St Christopher. The Otho manuscript, mostly lives of saints by Ælfric, was nearly destroyed in the Cottonian Library fire in 1731, but Wanley also copied the Incipit before the fire: 'Men þa leofestan on þære tide wæs geworden þe Dagnus se cync rixode on Samon þære ceastre þæt sum man com on þa ceastre se wæs healf hundisces manncynnes. Ac he ne cuðe nan þinge to þam lyfiendan gode ne his naman ne cigde. Þa wæs him ætywed fram urum drihtne þæt he sceolde fulluhte onfon.'[80] The homily begins by addressing a congregation. The transformative word in this passage is the conjunction, *ac*, which usually means 'but'. As the Toronto *Dictionary of Old English* records, it is also used 'suggesting a causal relationship, serving to explain: seeing that; because, for'.[81] Clearly, the translation 'but' makes no sense here and is in fact a non-sequitur in this context: 'a certain man came into the city who was half-dog, half-man, *but* he knew nothing about the living God'.[82] On the other hand, the translations 'because' and 'for' (both 'suggesting a causal relationship, serving to explain') fit the context well. The homiletic sense is that a man without knowledge of God is like an animal. It is consonant with the Boethian theme that a man who turns from the good is not really a man, but an animal:[83] thus, 'a certain man came into the city who was half-dog, half-man, *in the sense that* (i.e., because, for) he knew nothing about the living God nor invoked His name. Then it was shown to him from the Lord that he should receive baptism.' After his baptism, Christopher speaks with eloquence, converting his enemies, making fun of his torture, and loquaciously welcoming his martyrdom, while his canine attributes are nowhere featured in the rest of the narrative. Both the common explicit and St Christopher's personal addendum to it in the Nowell Codex, supporting as they do the invocation of St Christopher and the building of his cult, would not resonate well with a Reformer in 1563.

[80] 'Dearest people, in that time it happened when King Dagnus ruled in the city of Samos that a certain man came into the city who was half-dog, half-man, for he knew nothing about the living God nor invoked His name. Then it was shown to him from the Lord that he should receive baptism.'

[81] The Toronto *Dictionary of Old English* and the Bosworth–Toller *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* cite different examples from *Beowulf* elsewhere in the Nowell Codex.

[82] In his translation Fulk forces sense out of *ac* as 'but' by recasting the sentence. Instead of translating the Old English syntax, 'a certain man *came into that city* who was of the half-canine race, *but* he did not know anything about the living God', Fulk rewrites it to read, 'a certain man who was of the half-canine race *came into that city, but* he did not know anything about the living God', pp. 345–6 note 1.

[83] 'Forþæm gif ðu swa gewlætne mon metst þæt he bið ahwerfed from goode to yfle, ne meaht þu hine na mid ryhte nemnan man ac neat' ('Therefore if you meet such a debased person that he is diverted from good to evil, you cannot rightfully call him a man, but an animal'), C Prose 26.69–1 (I, p. 504, my translation); cf. B 37.92–117 (I, pp. 348–9). *The Old English Boethius. An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. M. Godden and S. Irvine (Oxford, 2009).

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It is instructive to observe that the copying and compilation of the Nowell Codex in the early eleventh century was not influenced by the monastic Benedictine Reform of the tenth century. There is no discipline in the mixture of scribal hands and no appeal to religious contemplation in the Wonders of the East, the self-described conquests of Alexander the Great, or the prevailing desire for earthly fame by a Scandinavian hero. Indeed, one motivation of the monastic reform was to oust undisciplined secular clergy with their worldly preoccupations from cathedrals and replace them with monks. Lichfield Cathedral was one of the places that retained its secular canons. When he appointed Leofgar as bishop of Lichfield *c.* 1017–26, Cnut the Great presumably chose someone who accepted the legitimacy of the Danish conquest and wanted to move on. Perhaps Leofgar encouraged the kind of rapprochement with Cnut's dynasty that appears in the genealogy of the Danish Scyldings in the opening pages of *Beowulf*. The Nowell Codex somehow survived the next five hundred years, when another reform movement took issue with the remaining topics, the veneration of saints epitomized in the *Life of St Christopher* and the canonicity of *Judith*. We can understand the damage inflicted on the Nowell Codex in 1563 by recognizing that the texts that survived were rejected by the Reformers. In later years, the Dean and Chapter at Lichfield, having no use for such 'Papist' material as the Apocryphal Book of Judith or the invocation of saints, may have sold the Nowell Codex to Sir Robert Cotton or his son to help build the great Cottonian Library, which became one of the founding collections of the British Museum in 1753. If the reformation of the Nowell Codex happened at Laurence Nowell's Lichfield Cathedral, as now seems likely, it would mean that *Beowulf* was the flotsam and jetsam of a Reformer's destructive visit to Lichfield in 1563.

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