Two Cambro-Latin sequences
from the Welsh Church

I. 'Arbor eterna'

The textual history of the only extant sequence from the early Welsh Church is short.[1] Let us begin with a transcript of the unique manuscript, Cambridge University Library MS Ff.4.42, folio 55vb.[2]

Arbor eterna diua summa apostolorum
pectora sonans summa celi regna-
bilis bina proclamata tripoda ten-
trix fidei mensa orientalis regina
trinis linguis resultet iubila probet
maxima federa erectos nae experi
atque uoluens sidera mater una ec-
clesia quaterna singula ad corporis
instar uirtute acti trina sensu
intellectu uiget et memoria. soli-
mandio alexandria roma. – eo his
ut caput xpi recolentes. – arectos
et aromam manus pedes tangamus
crucis pipum plagis gesta difu-
sa mistice relegunt noua ue-
tera bis senos intima prosper patra
archa israelitica fabili prosa-
pia sena profluxerat sensiæs mil-
ia tandem derelicta mater fu-
gitiua que peperit et deflens pigno-
ra audita denique uox est in ra-
ma flaminis uetustati lac-

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[1] Michael LAPIDGE & Richard SHARPE, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature 400-1200*, Royal Irish Academy Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources Ancillary Publications 1 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1985), n° 120, p. 40.

[2] Helen MCKEE, *The Cambridge Juvencus Manuscript* (Aberystwyth: CMCS, 2000), facsimile f. 55v, text and commentary, transcription p. 412.

tis ubera que peti, prosentemur
absque macula regis intrando
uita

This is Scribe D's only contribution to the Cambridge Juvencus (which is regrettable, since he was probably the most calligraphically-accomplished of any of the manuscript's Celtic scribes). The metre of his Latin poem (a sequence to the Virgin) is rather complex, and the poem requires a full edition; as a starting-point, it has seemed sensible here to provide as accurate as possible a transcript. The sequence was edited first (with numerous errors) by Haddan & Stubbs, *Councils*, I, pp. 622-23; Dronke has recently discussed it, and re-edited a few lines, in 'Arbor Caritatis', pp. 225-27. Its layout is compromised by the fact that Scribe D was writing after Scribe C had filled half of f. 55v with his own Latin poetry, and Scribe D made no apparent attempt to adapt his flourishing script to the limited space available. (It is possible that he was not confident of the correct scansion of his poem.)

Let us consider second the text published by Haddan and Stubbs.[3]

A Sequence, (probably) Welsh and of the 10th or 11th century$^{a'}$.
Arbe$^{1'}$ terna Diua summa,
Apostolorum pectora
Sonans summa
Cœli regna,
Bi$^{2'}$ bis bina proclamata,
Tripoda tentrix fidei mensa,
Orientalis Regina!
Trinis linguis resultet iubila!
Probet maxima federa,
Erectos nae experi$^{3'}$ atque uoluens sidera!
Mater una Ecclesia, quaterna, singula,
Ad corporis instar uirtute acti trina,
Sensu, intellectu uiget, et memoria,
Solimandio, Alexandria, Roma.
Eo$^{4'}$ his ut caput Christi recolentes,
Arectos, et aromam, manus, pedes,
Tangamus Crucis pipum.
Plagis gesta difusa
Mistice relegunt noua uetera.
Bis senos intima,
Prosper Patraarcha$^{5'}$,
Israelitica fabili prosapia,
Sena profluxerat sensiæs$^{6'}$ milia.
Tandem derelicta,
Mater fugitiua,

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[3] Arthur West HADDAN & William STUBBS, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1869), vol. I, p. 622-623.

Q[uæ] peperit et deflens pignora.
Audita denique uox est irama[7']
Flaminis uetustati lactis ubera:
Q[ua] f[r]eti, presentemur absque macula
Regis intrando uita.

[a'] 'This corrupt and scarcely intelligible sequence (deciphered with the kind help of Mr. Bradshaw of King's Coll. Camb.) is written on a fly-leaf at the end of the Welsh Juvencus, now in Cambr. Univ. Library, Ff.4.32 [*sic*]; for the history of which see above on pp. 198, 207. It is later in date than the two hymns on the same page, which were certainly written (in Ireland) in the latter part of the 9th century. Its contents resemble closely in enigmatic grandiloquence what would probably have been the sacred compositions of the countrymen of Taliessin. And as the MS. certainly found its way back to Wales after its 9th century sojourn at Armagh, this sequence is probably an early Welsh imitation of Notker of S. Gall.'

[1'] i.e. "Orbe." [2'] So in MS. [3'] So in MS. [4'] Perhaps for "ergo." The whole sentence is corrupt. And the divisions of lines are not marked, down to the word "milia." [5'] So in MS. [6'] i.e. "centies." [7'] i.e. "in Rama."

Let us consider third the text as greatly improved by Peter Dronke.[4]

	1 Arbor eterna,		
	diva, summa,		
2a	apostolorum pectora	2b	celi regnabilis, bina
	sonans, summa		proclamata,
3a	tripoda tentrix, fidei mensa,	3b	trinis linguis resultet iubila,
	orientalis regina		probet maxima federa,
4a	erectos nae experi<ens>	4b	mater una Ecclesia,
	atque volvens sidera,		quaterna, singula,
5a	ad corporis instar	5b	sensu, intellectu
	virtute acti trina		viget, et memoria,
6	Solim*a* dia,		
	Alexandria,		
	Roma.		
7a	Eo is*tic* caput Christi	7b	*adorantes* manus, pedes,
	recolentes ar<r>ectos,		tangamus crucis *t*ipum.
8a	Plagis gesta difusa	8b	mistice relegunt
	<salutifera>		nova, vetera:
9a	bis senos intima<t>	9b	prosper patr*i*archa,

[4] Peter DRONKE, '*Arbor eterna*: A Ninth-Century Welsh Latin Sequence', in *Britannia Latina, Latin in the Culture of Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Charles BURNETT & Nicholas MANN, Warburg Institute Colloquia 8 (London & Turin, 2005), p. 14-26 at 16, 25-26.

10a Israelitica   10b sena profluxera<n>t
         fabili prosapia   sensiæs milia.

11a Tandem derelicta   11b mater, fugitiva

12a que peperit et   12 b audita denique
         deflens pignora;   vox est in Rama,

13a flam*en dan*s vetustati   13b qu*o* feti pr*e*sentemur
         lactis ubera,   absque macula,

                        14 regis intrando vita.

It was a great pleasure to hear Dronke present his work at the Warburg colloquium, and a greater pleasure to read it in the published proceedings of that colloquium. Dronke is first to have recognized that

> the figure who dominates the poem, from the *arbor* of the opening to the Rachel of the close, is Ecclesia and not Mary, and that, if this sequence was composed for a liturgical context, it may well have been *in dedicatione Ecclesiae*, for the dedication of a particular Welsh church.

Lovers of the Cambro-Latin tradition owe him thanks for a magisterial restoration of this precious text, which

> must be pre-Notkerian. It may indeed be one of the oldest sequences we still possess.

Infixed within the text of this poem are phenomena that Dronke did not consider, phenomena that can be paralleled scores of times in other Cambro-Latin and Welsh texts and hundreds of times in other Insular texts, Latin and vernacular alike, that confirm the authenticity and integrity of undamaged parts of the composition and guide a reader toward restoration of damaged passages.

The text that follows differs slightly from Dronke's in the arrangement of lines and in the supply of some readings *metri causa*. By representing rhymes in italics one sees that rhyme is much more extensive than might appear from casual perusal of the ends of verses. As this text was composed so that words of the b-verses would be sung to the same music as words of the a-verses, the rhymes are rather structural than ornamental, the literary complement of musical parallelism.

The metrical punctilio of undamaged parts of the text invites one to restore the parts that remain slightly damaged. In stanza 4b2 read *quaterna[que]* to provide both a missing syllable and rhyme with *uoluens* in stanza 4a2. In stanza 8b1 read *re[col]legunt* to provide a missing syllable, comparing *recolentes* in stanza 7a2. In stanza 10a2 understand synizesis in *prosapia*. In stanza 10b2 although *sensiæs* offers important evidence of an oral stage of the history of transmission of this composition, a literate Cambro-Latin poet of the eighth or ninth century is likely to have written *centies*. In stanza 12a1 for *et* read *atque* to retain the sense but provide a missing syllable and rhyme with *denique* in stanza 12b1, comparing *atque* in stanza 4a2 above. In stanza 7a1 following the manuscript spelling *xpi* read *Xpisti*, and restore the Classically correct double consonants in *arrectos* 7a2 and *diffusa* 8a1. The result is a text faultless in orthography, syntax, and metre, as one would expect from an early Cambro-Latin author who composed in the

tradition of Pelagius, Patrick, Faustus, Gildas, Moucanus, Nennius, the diplomatists of Llandeilo Fawr, and Asser of Saint David's.[5]

		syllables	
1			
Arbor eterna diua summa		9	
2a	**2b**		
apostolorum pectora	celi regnabilis bina	8	8
sonans summa	proclamata	4	4
3a	**3b**		
tripoda tentrix fidei mensa	trinis linguis resultet iubila	10	10
orientalis regina	probet maxima federa	8	8
4a	**4b**		
erectos nae experiens	mater una ecclesia	8	8
atque uoluens sidera	quaternaque singula	7	7
5a	**5b**		
ad corporis instar	sensu intellectu	6	6
uirtute acti trina	uiget et memoria	7	7
6			
Solima dia Alexandria Roma		12	
7a	**7b**		
Eo istic caput Xpisti	adorantes manus pedes	8	8
recolentes arrectos	tangamus crucis tipum	7	7
8a	**8b**		
Plagis gesta diffusa	mistice recollegunt	7	7
salutifera	noua uetera	5	5
9a	**9b**		
Bis senos intimat	prosper patriarcha	6	6
10a	**10b**		
Israelitica	sena profluxerant	6	6
fabili prosapia	centies milia	6	6
11a	**11b**		
Tandem derelicta	mater fugitiua	6	6
12a	**12b**		
que peperit atque	audita denique	6	6
deflens pignora	uox est in Rama	5	5

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[5] D. HOWLETT, *Cambro-Latin Compositions: Their Competence and Craftsmanship* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998), *Sealed from Within: Self-Authenticating Insular Charters* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1999), p. 62-69, 'Little Lections in Cambrian Composition: *Vita Sancti Gundleii* and *Vita Sancti Iltuti*', *Peritia* 15 (2001), p. 31-47, *Insular Inscriptions* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2005), p. 28-59, 176-183. Charles THOMAS & D. HOWLETT, '*Vita Sancti Paterni*, The Life of Saint Padarn and the Original *Miniu*', *Trivium* 33 (2003), p. 1-129.

13a   13b
flam*en* dans u*etus*ta*ti*   quo *f*eti presen*t*emur   7   7
     *l*actis uber*a*   *a*bsque macul*a*   5   5

14
                                  Regis intrando uita   7

    Tree, eternal, divine, most lofty,
    beating time [lit. 'sounding'] with the breasts of the apostles, loftiest point
    of the ruleable heaven, twice proclaimed [in the Old and New Testaments, but
    also 'twice foretold' by the Trees of Paradise, of Life and of Knowledge of
    Good and Evil, as antetypes of the Church],
    retentive tripod [of a prophetic oracle], table of faith, oriental queen [of Sheba
    as antetype of the Church],
    may she re-echo jubilations in the three tongues [Hebrew, Greek, and Latin],
    may she put to the test [or 'prove the validity'] of the greatest covenants,
    truly testing by experience upright men and revolving [the courses of] stars,
    the one mother Church, fourfold, unique,
    after the example of a body driven [or 'acted upon'] by trinal virtue [faith, hope,
    and charity]
    she thrives in sense, intellect, and memory,
    in Holy Peace [Jerusalem], Alexandria, Rome.
    There in that place venerating again the head of Christ,
    adoring the outstretched hands [and] feet let us touch the image of the cross.
    Salvation-bearing deeds diffused through the lands
    mystically gather together again new things, old things.
    The favoured patriarch [Jacob] intimates twice-six men [the sons of Israel as
    antetypes of the twelve apostles].
    From fabled [lit. 'that can be (well) spoken of'] Israelite lineage
    six hundred thousand had flowed forth.
    At last the derelict mother [Rachel, wife of Jacob],
    who gave birth to and bewailing fugitive offspring,
    finally a voice was heard in Rama,
    the Spirit giving to the old dispensation breasts of milk,
    with which may we, fruitful, be presented without blemish,
    entering in the life of the King.

    The structure involves consistent play on 1, 2, and 3. Three stanzas are unpaired, 1, 6, and 14. Of these the first contains three adjectives, *eterna*, *diua*, and *summa*, the second names three cities, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome, and the third contains three words. Two stanzas, 9 and 11, are paired, but with a single verse in each half. Nine stanzas are paired, with two verses in each half, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13. The sequence therefore begins with one unpaired verse stanza, followed by four paired two-verse stanzas, one unpaired verse stanza, two paired two-verse stanzas, one paired one-verse stanza, one paired two-verse stanza, one paired one-verse stanza, two paired two-verse stanzas, concluded by one unpaired verse stanza. The first six stanzas form a symmetrical pattern ABBBBA, and the last nine stanzas form a symmetrical pattern ABBCBCBBA.

The poet describes the Church in stanza 1 in three adjectives. He describes it in stanza 2 three ways, as consonant with the apostles, as the loftiest place in heaven, and as proclaimed twice by the Old and New Testaments. He describes it in stanza 3 in three ways, as tripod, table, and queen, rejoicing in three sacred tongues. In stanzas 3 and 4 the Church acts in three verbal forms, *probet*, *experiens*, and *uoluens*, then exists, described with three adjectives, *una*, *quaterna*, and *singula*. In stanza 5 the Church is acted upon by three virtues and flourishes in three respects, *sensu*, *intellectu*, and *memoria*, in stanza 6 in three cities, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome. In stanza 7 three verbal forms, *recolentes*, *adorantes*, and *tangamus*, express the veneration of three parts of Christ's body, *caput*, *manus*, and *pedes*. The sequence ends with a stanza of three words. These twelve groups of three are consonant with the importance of the number 3 both in orthodox Trinitarian theology and in the tradition of Welsh triads.

The poet has made numerical words illustrate their meanings by their positions, in the second half of the second stanza the word *bina*, in the third stanza the first half beginning *tripoda* and the second half beginning *trinis*, the fourth part of the fourth stanza beginning *quaterna*. The eleven words of stanza 4 divide by duple ratio 2:1 at 7 and 4, at I *una*. The third part of stanza 5 ends with the word *trina* I. The eleven words of stanza 5 divide into thirds at I *trina*. Stanza 9, beginning *bis senos*, contains twelve syllables. In stanza 10 there are six words before and after I *sena* I, and each of the four parts of the stanza contains six syllables. There are six words between *senos* I in stanza 9 and I *sena* in stanza 10.

As in cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, so in these islands, there was an unbroken tradition of composition in gematria, Hebrew בימטריא, perhaps borrowed from Greek γεωμετρια, the reckoning of numerical values of letters of the alphabet.[6] In the twenty-two-letter Hebrew alphabet, as א = 1, ב = 2, ג = 3, the name הבל 'Abel' bears a numerical value of 5+2+30 or 37 and the name כלב 'Caleb' a value of 20+30+2 or 52. In the system based upon the twenty-four-letter Greek alphabet, as A = 1, B = 2, Γ = 3, the name AΔAM 'Adam' bears a numerical value of 1 + 4 + 1 + 40 or 46, the name MAPIA 'Maria' a value of 40 + 1 + 100 + 10 + 1 or 152, and the name IHCOYC 'Jesus' a value of 10 + 8 + 200 + 70 + 400 + 200 or 888. In the twenty-three-letter Latin alphabet, as A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, the name BRITTANNIA bears a numerical value of 2 + 17 + 9 + 19 + 19 + 1 + 13 + 13 + 9 + 1 or 103, the name GILDAS a value of 7 + 9 + 11 + 4 + 1 + 18 or 50, the name DAVID a value of 4 + 1 + 20 + 9 + 4 or 38, the name DEVVI a value of 4 + 5 + 20 + 20 + 9 or 58.

The text of the Hebrew Old Testament is filled with this artifice, a notable example occurring in the Book of Judges 3.7-11, in which the name כלב 'Caleb', of which the

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[6] For a tabulation of the Hebrew system see *Gesenius' Hebrew grammar*, ed. E. KAUTZSCH, 2nd Eng. ed. A.E. COWLEY (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910; rept 1985), §5.2, p. 26. For evidence of knowledge of the shapes and names of letters of the Hebrew alphabet see the seventh-century Old-Irish text *Auraicept na n-éces, the scholars' primer* ed. George CALDER (Edinburgh, 1917 repr. Dublin: Four Courts, 1995), p. 86-87, 229-230. For early Insular explications of the Greek system see Bede, *De temporum ratione*, ed. Charles W. JONES, *Bedae Venerabilis Opera Pars VI Opera Didascalica II*, CCSL 123B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1977), p. 272-273, the seventh-century *Auraicept na n-éces* p. 230-231; for actual calculation of Greek values see the mid-eighth-century Hiberno-Latin manuscript, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana F.60 sup., f. 61rb. For explicit discussion of the system in a fourteenth-century Anglo-Norman poem see D. HOWLETT, 'Gematria, Number, and Name in Anglo-Norman', *French Studies Bulletin* 60.4, n° 101 (2006), p. 90-92.

alphanumeric value is 52, is the fifty-second word.[7] The most famous example in the Greek New Testament occurs in Apocalypse 13.18, in which the number of the beast, εξακοσιοι εξηκοντα εξ, 666, exhibits descending value of the Roman numerals DCLXVI. This number is the sum of the letters of the Latin name NERO CAESAR, spelled in Hebrew letters קסר נרון, 50 + 200 + 6 + 50 + 100 + 60 + 200 or 666. The example best known in a Latin literary text is Martianus Capella *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, in which at the beginning of book II Philologia reckons multilingual gematria on her name and that of Mercury to determine their compatibility. Our poet was fully aware of this mode of composition.

There are sixty-one words before | *crucis* 7b2, coincident with the alphanumeric value in the twenty-three-letter Latin system of CRVX, 3 + 17 + 20 + 21 or 61.

The *prosper patriarcha* at the end of stanza 9 is Jacob or Israel, the referent of *Israelitica* at the beginning of stanza 10. From the New Adam *Xpisti* | to *Israelitica* | there are twenty-two words, coincident with the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet, the twenty-two books of the Hebrew Bible, the twenty-two things created in Genesis 1, and the twenty-two generations from the Old Adam to Israel. From | *Xpisti* to | *Israelitica* there are sixty-one syllables, coincident with the alphanumeric value of ISRAEL, 9 + 18 + 17 + 1 + 5 + 11 or 61.

In stanza 4 there are fifty-five letters before and after | *mater una ecclesia* |, coincident with the alphanumeric value of ECCLESIA, 5 + 3 + 3 + 11 + 5 + 18 + 9 + 1 or 55.

After *mater* | 4b1 the fifty-fourth word is *mater* | 11b, coincident with the alphanumeric value of MATER, 12 + 1 + 19 + 5 + 17 or 54.

In stanza 12b *audita denique uox est in Rama* there are from the space before | *audita* to *Rama* | thirty-one letters and spaces between words, coincident with the alphanumeric value of RAMA, 17 + 1 + 12 + 1 or 31.

The entire poem contains twenty-three lines, one for every letter of the Latin alphabet.

The poem contains 111 words and 111 rhyming syllables, coincident with the alphanumeric value of ARBOR ETERNA, 1 + 17 + 2 + 14 + 17 + 5 + 19 + 5 + 17 + 13 + 1 or 111.

The number of syllables in the unpaired lines in stanzas 1, 6, and 14, is 9 + 12 + 7 or 28, a perfect number and a triangular number, 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7. From the beginning of the poem to *absque macula* | there are 276 syllables, coincident with the number of days from the Annunciation, celebrated on 25 March, to the Nativity, celebrated on 25 December.[8]

There are exactly 801 letters and spaces between words, coincident with the alphanumeric value in the Greek system of alpha and omega, A + Ω, 1 + 800 or 801.

The poem is orthographically, syntactically, and prosodically perfect, its imagery coherent, its progress orderly. It affords a window into the spirituality of a Cambro-Latin composer, who has given us a significant monument in the history of the sequence.

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[7] D. HOWLETT, *The Celtic Latin Tradition of Biblical Style* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1995), p. 29-32; *British Books in Biblical Style* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997), p. 34-37.

[8] For other examples see D. HOWLETT, 'Five Experiments in Textual Reconstruction and Analysis', *Peritia* 9 (1995), p. 1-50 at 1-3, *British Books in Biblical Style*, p. 294 n. 59, *Caledonian Craftsmanship, The Scottish Latin Tradition* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), p. 84-97, 157-60.

II. 'Cum uenerunt angeli'

From the medieval Welsh Church one copy of another Cambro-Latin sequence, composed not later than the twelfth century, survives, in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 2, folios 2v-3r. As printed by Haddan and Stubbs, directly after their text of *Arbor eterna*, it looks corrupt.[9]

> IV. A Sequence[a], from Taliessin's "Elegy of the Thousand Sons," xvii. (in *Skene's Four Books of Ancient Wales*, vol. ii, p. 113).

Qui venerunt angli
In Natali Dñi,
Media i[n] nocte, in laudem,
Cum pastoribus in Bethleem; —
Nivem[b] angli de celo,
Cum Michaele archanglo,
Qui precedunt precelio[c]
Erga animas in mundo; —
Am nivem[d] angeli.
Precedunt confirmati,
Unistrati[e], baptizati,
Usque in diem Judicii; —
Quando fuit Christus crucifixus, ut Sibi
Ipsi placuisset, venissent ibi in auxilium
Plusquam duodecim legiones angelorum
Toto orbe terrarum,
Jesus Christus videntem[f] in agonia in mundo,
Ut sint[g] nostri auxilium,
Duodecim milia, mili[t]antem,
Ante tribunal stantem: —
Qui laudantie[h] laudantium
Tues[i] mores, Rex Regum.

[a] Embodied in Taliessin's poem, and kindly pointed out by Bishop Forbes of Brechin. It is as corrupt and unintelligible as that preceding it [*i. e. Arbor eterna* p. 622-623].
[b] ? novem. Or possibly the Welsh word "nifer" = number, which begins nearly all the short poems of the collection of which this sequence is one.
[c] ? prœlio.
[d] ? amplius novem.
[e] ? ministrati.
[f] ? Jesum Christum videntes.
[g] ? sit.
[h] ? laudantes.
[i] ? Tuos.

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[9] LAPIDGE & SHARPE, *BCLL*, n° 124 p. 41. HADDAN & STUBBS, *Councils*, vol. I, p. 623-624.

J. Gwenogvryn Evans presented a transcript of the manuscript.[10]

> **Q**vi venerunt angl'i in natale dñi media
> nocte in laudē cū pastorib3 in bethleem **.** ni-
> uem angl'i decelo cū michaele archangl'o qui
> p'cedunt p'celio erga animas in mundo **.** am
> niuem niuem angeli **.** p'cedunt 9firmati. vni-
> strati baptizati. usq3 indiē iudicij **.** quando fuit
> xp̄c crucifixus ut sibi ip̄i placuisset **.** venissēt
> ibi in avxiliū **.** pl'qᵃm duo decim legiones ange-
> lo4 toto orbe t'ra4. ih'c xp̄c uidentē in agonia
> in mundo **.** vt sint nrī auxiliū duodecim mi-
> lia miliantē ante tribunal stantem qui lau-
> dantie Laudantiū tu es mores rex regūm **.**

In a competently composed sequence the b-verse, sung to the same music as the a-verse, should have the same number of syllables as the a-verse, with which it frequently rhymes. If this composer wrote isosyllabic lines that usually rhymed, his text might origi-nally have looked something like what follows. Within the text capital letters and punctu-ation marks in boldface represent features of the manuscript, and italics suggest rhymes. To the right of the text columns note numbers of lines, rhymes, and numbers of syllables per line.

Text

Stanza 1a	1b		
Cum uenerunt *angeli*	in Natale Domin*i*	aa	7-7
media *i*n nocte in *l*aud*em*	cum pasto*ri*bus in Beth*leem* **.**	bb	9-9
nim*ii* ang*e*li de *celo*	cum *M*ichaele archan*gelo*	cc	9-9
qui prec*an*unt procul 'I*o*'	erga *a*nimas in mundo **.**	cc	8-8
iam nim*ii angeli* **.**	precedunt conf*irmati* **.** 5	aa	7-7
min*istr*ati *et* bapt*izati* **.**	usque in *diem* iudici*i* **.**	aa	9-9
Stanza 2a	2b		98
Quando fu*it* Xp*istus* crucif*ixus*	sicut sib*i ip*si placu*isset*	de	10-10
uenissent *i*bi in auxiliu*m*	plusquam *legi*ones duodec*im*	bb	10-10
angel*orum* sancto*rum*	toto *or*be terra*rum* **.**	bb	7-7
Iesu Xpisti u*identes*	agoniam *in mundo* **.** 10	dc	7-7
*ut s*int nostr*um* a*u*x*ilium*	d*u*odecim	bbb	4-4-4
milia mili*tantium*	ante tribunal s*tantium*	bb	8-8
laudantes lau*dantium*	tuos mores Rex reg*um* **.** 13	bb	7-7
			110

Translation

As angels came	at the Birth of the Lord
in the middle of the night for praise	with the shepherds in Bethlehem,
very many angels from heaven	with Michael the archangel,

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[10] J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *The Text of the Book of Taliesin*, Series of Old Welsh Texts 4 (Llanbedrog, 1910), p. 6-7.

who sing beforehand from afar 'Io'___to souls in the world,
now very many angels   go before   5
until the day of judgement   of the confirmed, the served, and the baptized
[or 'now very many angels strengthened go before until the day of judgement of
the ministered-to and the baptized'].
When Christ was crucified,   just as it would have pleased his very self,
there would have come there for aid   more than twelve legions
of holy angels   in the whole orb of lands,
seeing Jesus Christ's   agony in the world,   10
so may our   aid   be twelve
thousands of militant men   standing before the tribunal,
praising   your customs, King of praising kings.   13

    The form *qui* for *cum* 1a is easily explicable. *Q* written for *C* is found as early as the
eighth century in the Anglo-Latin *Corpus Glossary* Q78, *quur, quare*, but from the time
of the Norman Conquest of England and Wales, after introduction of Francophone habits
of pronouncing and writing Latin (influenced by pronunciation of *qu* – in Old French), *c*
for *q* and *q* for *c* became common.[11] The *ui* may have issued from misreading of three
minims in *m*. The spellings *angl'i* 1a, 3a, and *archangl'o* 3b can be normalized from the
internal evidence of *angeli* 5a. There is further confirmation in the rhyme of **celo** 3a with
archangelo 3b, which is a pure rhyme for a speaker of a Celtic language accustomed
to identity of unvoiced *c* with voiced *g*. *Niuem* for *nimii* 3a, 5a, may be explained as
misreading of eight minims and miswriting of *e* for unaccented *i*. Nonsensical *precedunt*
precelio is an easy misreading of *precanunt procul io* 4a, influenced by *precedunt* 5b.
Rhyme of *precanunt* 4a with **animas** 4b confirms restoration. *Am* for *iam* 5a may be
explained as omission of an initial *I* intended to be capitalized or coloured, perhaps like
initial *C* 1a. *Unistrati* for *ministrati* 6a may have issued from a misreading of minims.
Rhyme confirms *angelorum* 9a and *orbe* 9b. Supply of *sanctorum* 9a is required for
metre and rhyme with **terrarum** 9b. Grammar requires *Iesu Xpisti uidentes* for *Jesus
Christus uidentem* 10a. Grammar and metre require *agoniam* for *in agonia* 10b. Grammar
and rhyme require *nostrum* for *nostri* 11a, *militantium* for *miliantem* 12a, *stantium* for
stantem 12b, confirmed internally by rhyme with grammatically correct *laudantium* 13a.
Grammar requires *laudantes* for *laudantie* 13a, parallel with *uidentes* 10a, and *tuos* for
tu es 13b.
    The emended text allows one to understand the internal structure of the first stanza,
parallelism of *Cum uenerunt angeli, nimii angeli* from the past with *iam nimii angeli
precedunt* from the present. Compare also **precanunt** 4a with **precedunt** 5b. Note at the
end of the first line, from the past, *in Natale Domini*, and at the end of the last line, from
the present, *usque in diem iudicii*; from the past, *cum pastoribus in Bethleem*, and *animas
in mundo*, and from the present, *confirmati, ministrati, et baptizati*. The first stanza begins
with a couplet of 7-7-9-9 syllables and ends with a couplet of 7-7-9-9 syllables, round a
couplet of 9-9-8-8 syllables at the centre.

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  [11] *V. coqus* for *cocus*, *equonomo* for *economo*, *quotarios* for *cottarios*, *Nequam* for the surname
Neckam, **1232** *quissino* for *cussino*, **1257** *quoquinam* for *coquinam*, but also *condam* for *quondam*,
secuntur for *sequuntur*, *carantena* for *quarentena*, *cadrig[agio]* for *quadrigagio*, *corundam* for
quorundam, **1303** *carta* for *quarta*, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources s.v. qu –*.

In the second stanza note the parallelism of

> *Quando fuit ... sicut sibi ipsi ... in auxilium ... duodecim ... uidentes*

with

> *ut sint nostrum auxilium duodecim ... laudantes.*

Just before line 12 the twelfth syllable is the last of *duodecim*, which is the twelfth word from the end of the sequence.

There are further connections between the structures of the two stanzas. The first two words of the first are *Cum uenerunt*, and the first two lines of the second begin *Quando ... uenissent*. The first line of the first ends *Domini*, and the last line of the second ends *Rex regum*. In the first stanza the third word of the first line and the fifth is *angeli*, which recurs in the third line. In the second stanza the first word of the third line is *angelorum*. The fourth line of the first ends *in mundo*, and the fourth line of the second ends *in mundo*. There are forty-two words in each stanza, eighty-four in the complete sequence, alluding perhaps to the Annunciation on 25 March, the eighty-fourth day of a year that begins on 1 January, or to the Easter cycle of eighty-four years, or to the eighty-four-lined Easter hymn *Precamur Patrem* by Columban of Bangor.[12]

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Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources

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[12] David HOWLETT, 'Insular Latin Writers' Rhythms', *Peritia* 11 (1997), p. 53-116 at 70-75.