

Moucan's prayers again

The *Orationes Moucani*, which survive uniquely in an eighth-century Mercian manuscript, London, British Library, MS Royal 2.A.XX, once seemed to be unremarkable centos, composed largely of *cola et commata* 'clauses and phrases' from the Latin Bible.¹ In 1992 I tried to demonstrate that a Welshman named Moucan composed these prayers in nine units, of which each exhibits rhyming rhythmical prose in a discrete text that also contributes to a unified comprehensive structure.² In a second attempt to understand these prayers, because of the rhymes in *Orationes* II 15-16 and IX 19-20,

mare æneum luteris multæ
labantes animae suapte

in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum suapte
ne dormiam in morte,

supposing that the original orthography was internally consistent and the rhymes pure, I inferred from *morte* and *suapte* in *Oratio* IX that in *Oratio* II Maugan had written *suapte* and *multe*, and consequently normalized the inconsistent scribal presentation of the Classical diphthong as *e caudata* in *ęthram* I 8, *æ* in *præparasti* II 4, *ae* in *scientiae* II 8, and *e* in *pene* II 10 to putatively authorial *e* throughout, also changing lower case *v* to *u*, *chirubin* to *cherubin* II 8, *Christo* to *Xpisto* II 12, *Ihesu* to *Iesu* V 3, IX 15, IX 17, *incurbata* to *incuruata* VI 8, and *suapte* to *suapte* II 16.³ I hoped to show in the former publication that the author had composed with arithmetic punctilio, in the latter that he had infixed pictures, verbal and actual, within the text. Moucan's place in the Cambro-Latin tradition is secure, demonstrable both from his debts to Gildas and from the debts of later writers, Rhygyfarch ap Sulien, Ieuau ap Sulien, Lifris of Llancarfan, and Caradog of Llancarfan, to him.⁴ Here I would like to consider some phenomena that escaped notice earlier, phenomena that, once noticed, enhance our understanding of the way in which

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^o. 29, p. 13-14.

² 'Orationes Moucani: Early Cambro-Latin Prayers', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (1992), p. 55-74. D. HOWLETT, *The Celtic Latin Tradition of Biblical Style* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1995), p. 193-213.

³ 'Seventh-Century Prayers in an Eighth-Century Manuscript', *Cambro-Latin Compositions: Their Competence and Craftsmanship* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1998), p. 57-68.

⁴ Ibid. p. 65. 'Little Lections in Cambrian Composition', *Peritia* 15 (2001), p. 31-47. Charles THOMAS & D. HOWLETT, 'Vita Sancti Paterni, The Life of Saint Padarn and the Original *Miniua*', *Trivium*, 33 (2003), p. 60, 100-101, 115-125.

Moucan thought and composed and increase our admiration for his finished composition.

In the text that follows boldface capital letters and punctuation marks represent features of the manuscript. To the right of the text columns note numbers of lines within discrete prayers and consecutively throughout the composition, rhyme schemes, and numbers of words, syllables, and letters.

Orationes Moucani

I

Deum Patrem Deum Filium		a	4	9	20
Deum deprecor Spiritum Sanctum		a	4	10	27
cuius magnitudo inmensa		b	3	9	21
giro conplectitur uniuersa.		b	3	10	24
Trinum in personis atque unum	5	c	5	10	25
in natura. simplum et trinum[.]		c	5	9	23
terram super limphas ponderantem.		d	4	10	29
ethram cum astris suspendentem.		d	4	9	27
mihi ut propitius peccatori fiat.		e	5	13	28
qui omnes impios pie iustificat	10	e	5	12	27
uiuuit uiuens continue. fiat		e	4	10	23
Deus benedictus in secula		f	4	10	22
Amen fiat fiat:—		e	3	6	12
Eloe. Sabaoth. Ia. Adonai.		g	4	10	19
Eli. Eli. laba. sabacthani.	15	g	4	10	20

II

Da capiti meo fiebilem aquam		a	5	11	24
et oculis meis lacrimarum undam.		a	5	12	27
quia obscuratum est aurum templi		b	5	11	28
quod in me [filio] preparasti.		b	5	10	23
et sunt dispersi lapides sanctuarii	5 20	b	5	12-13	31
pulcherrimi olim et quadrati.		b	4	10	25
Caldaica motauit. flamma [? l. motauit Caldaica flamma]		c	3	9	21
duo cherubin. deaurata		c	3	9	19
candelabrum scientie uelum		d	3	10	24
castitatis pene discissum.	10 25	d	3	9	23
et oleum unctionis ad mensam		a	5	11	24
Patri Xpisto Spiritui preparatam.		a	4	12	29
Due colonne altaris bina		c	4	10	21
intus et foris opera mira:		c	5	10	21
mare eneum luteris multe	15 30	e	4	10	21
lebetes anime suapte		e	3	9	18
pelti fidei amuli scutri		f	4	10	21
uasa innumera argenti et auri.		f	5	12	25
hec in plateis o demolita		c	5	10	21
anime mee atque conspersa.	20 35	c	4	10	22

heu mihi meus quia incolatus	g	5	11	24
cum domibus Cedar prolongatus.	g	4	10	26
multum incola fuit anima mea.	c	5	12	24
patris cum adulteris consumsi bona:—	c	5	12	30
Eloe. Sabaoth.	25 40 h	2	6	11

Item alia

III

Nunc penitudinis uerba	a	3	8	20
sedula mihi sunt fatenda.	a	4	9	21
A quo stolam immortalitatis	b	4	10	24
spero et anulam dignitatis.	b	4	10	23
qui meo aduentui uitulum	5 45 c	4	10	21
de armentis iugulat saginatum.	c	4	11	26
Cuius cruore totius mundi	d	4	10	22
machina repleta est sparsi	d	4	9	23
cuius et in figura agni	d	5	9	19
sanguis et in limina picti	10 50 d	5	9	22
per quem Didimi signatur manus [? l. manus signatur]	e	5	10	26
Raab meretricis saluatur domus. [? l. domus saluatur.]	e	4	10-11	27
Eloe.	f	1	3	4

IV

Pater peccaui in celum et coram te	a	7	12	28
miserere mei et exaudi me.	55 a	5	11	21
iam non sum dignus uocari filius tuus.	b	7	13	31
in adiutorium meum intende Deus.	b	5	13	27
Fac me sicut unum de mercennariis tuis.	5 c	7	14	32
ignosce et parce peccatis meis.	c	5	11	26
quia ualde esurio tibi.	60 d	4	10	19
dele impietatem peccati mei.	d	4	12	24
Propitius esto mihi Domine peccatori.	d	5	15	32
erue animam meam de manu inferni.	10 d	6	14	27
memento mei Domine in tuo regno	e	6	13	26
Eripe me de peccati luto.	65 e	5	10	20
et Spiritum Sanctum tuum ne auferas a me.	f	8	14	33
Neque in furore tuo corripas me.	f	6	13	27
ad te confugio Patrem piissimum	15 g	5	12	27
non habens preter te refugium.	g	5	10	25
Solent et ad patres fugere nati	70 h	6	11	26
licet post uulnera uel uerberati.	h	5	11	28
Pone me iuxta te Domine Deus uirtutum	i	7	14	31
quia cognosco [meum] peccatum.	20 i	4	10	24
Domine Deus uirtus salutis mee	a	5	12	26
ne derelinquas me usquequaque.	75 a	4	10	26
Eloe.	a	1	3	4

V

Fortitudo mea Domine diligam te		a	5	13	27
sub umbra alarum tuarum protege me.		a	6	13	29
Iesu fili Dauid miserere mei.		b	5	12	24
Vt aperias oculos cordis mei.	80	b	5	12	24
Post te clamabo cum Cananica uidua	5	c	6	13	29
quia uulnerata est anima mea		c	5	12	24
etiam catuli comedunt		d	3	8	19
micas que de mensa Domini cadunt.		d	6	11	27
Dic uerbo et sanabor sanitas mundi.	85	e	6	12	29
Remitte impietatem peccati mei.	10	e	4	13	27
Fimbrias tui si tetigero		f	4	10	21
saluus fiam a peccato meo.		f	5	10	21
Eloe Sabaoth.		g	2	6	11

VI

Osanna rex Nazarene	90	a	3	8	17
meo ex ore laudem perforce.		a	5	10	21
quia tacui inueterauerunt		b	3	11	23
peccata mea et preualuerunt.		b	4	11	24
alieni in me insurrexerunt	5	c	4	11	23
et porte mortis concluderunt.	95	c	4	9	25
Supergressi sunt caput meum mea delicta.		d	6	14	34
et anima mea est incuruata[.]		d	5	11	22
conturbauerunt me		e	2	6	16
dolores mortis	10	f	2	5	13
et torrentes iniquitatis	100	f	3	9	22
suffocauerunt me.		e	2	6	15
Quare me dereliquisti		g	3	8	19
longe a salute mea Deus meus conuerte mihi.		g	8	17	35
Eloe. Sabaoth.	15	h	2	6	11

VII

ERue a framea animam meam	105	a	5	12	21
et de manu canis solue eam.		a	6	10	21
miserere mei Deus miserere mihi.		b	5	14	27
parce Omnipotens quia peccaui.		b	4	11	26
penitentem ex corde suscipe.	5	c	4	10	24
pauperem de stercore erige.	110	c	4	10	23
Si iniquitates meas obseruaberis.		d	4	13	29
sicut cera liquefiam a facie ignis.		d	6	14	29
plumbi pondere pregrauata		e	3	9	23
uelut arena peccata mea.	10	e	4	10	20
Verbum Dei mei semen	115	f	4	8	17
suffocat in me spinarum noxium gramen.		f	6	13	32
Eloe. Sabaoth.		g	2	6	11

VIII

Vre renes meos et cor meum		a	6	10	21
ut non intres in iudicio mecum		a	6	11	25
usque uiuens natus de luto.	120	b	5	9	22
Super anime mee naturalia		c	4	12	22
sata seminavit inimicus homo lolia.	5	c	5	15	30
Angustie undique occurrunt mihi.		d	4	12	28
Infelix ego homo tibi soli peccaui		d	6	14	29
Quis me liberavit de corpore huius mortis	125	e	7	14	35
nisi gratia Domini Saluatoris.		e	4	12	26
Qui abstulit uasa gigantis	10	f	4	9	23
de nobis tyrannidem uindicantis.		f	4	11	28
Deum meum laudans inuocabo		b	4	10	23
Dominum et ab inimicis meis saluus ero.	130	b	7	15	32
Bonum mihi Domine		g	3	7	15
quod humiliasti me	15	g	3	7	16
ut non extollar in conspectu tuo		b	6	11	27
Domine quia perimus exsurge in naufragio		b	6	16	35
istius mundi nocte.	135	h	3	7	16
Da mihi Domine		h	3	6	12
manum fragili lintro pene demerso.	20	i	5	12	29
porrectam Petro clauso		i	3	7	20
ore querellam Mosi.		d	3	7	16
meam suscipe ut suscepisti	140	d	4	10	23
quia uulneratus sum in heremi uia		j	6	13	28
et super iumentum tuum me subleua.	25	j	6	12	28
Domine Deus:—		k	2	5	10

IX

Erraui in montibus Pastor bone		a	5	11	26
me in umeros tuos inpone.	145	a	5	10	20
Sicut ceruus desiderat fontem aque uiue.		b	6	14	34
ita anima mea tibi sitiati sancteqe		b	6	15	30
in medio maneat uberum meorum.	5	c	5	13	25
qui pascis et cubas ad meridianum.		c	6	12	28
Custodi me ut pupillam oculi tui.	150	d	6	13	27
et introduc me in domum uini		d	6	10	23
fasciculis gutte in uineis Engaddi.		d	5	13	30
Patruelis meus mihi et ego illi.	10	d	6	13	26
Anima mea sicut terra sine aqua		e	6	13	26
Exarserunt uelut igne uiscera mea.	155	e	5	13	29
Ignem tui amoris et timoris cor meum igneat.		f	8	17	35
tuus amor sanctusque timor qui cedere nescit.		f	7	15	38
Da mihi Iesu salientem aquam in uitam eternam.	15	g	8	17	38
Animam meam unam petii a Domino hanc requiram		g	8	18	38
ut in eternum sitiam numquam. Domine Iesu suscipe	160	b	8	18	41
spiritum meum quia anima mea turbata est ualde.		b	8	18	39

In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum suapte		h	7	16	37
ne dormiam in morte	20	h	4	7	16
ut non timeam a timore nocturno		i	6	12	26
neque a demonio meridiano.	165	i	4	12	22
Recipe me in requiem Abrahe		j	5	11	23
ubi patrum requiescunt anime		j	4	11	25
Qui cum Patre uiuis dominaris una	25	e	6	12	28
cum Sancto Spiritu in secula tuta.		e	6	12	28
Eloe. Sabaoth. Ia. Adonai	170	d	4	10	19
Eli Eli laba sabacthani.	28	d	4	10	20

As in the literary cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world, Hebrew and Greek and Latin, so in the cultures of the British Isles, there was an unbroken tradition of gematria, the reckoning of numerical values of letters of the alphabet.⁵

In *Oratio I* each couplet contains the same number of words in each of its lines: 4-4-3-3-5-5-4-4-5-5-4-4-3-4-4. The sixty-one words divide by sesquialter ratio 3:2 at 37 and 24, at *trinum* | I 6. The first twenty-four words divide in turn by the same ratio at 14 and 10, at | *trinum* | I 5. The ten words from | *trinum* | I 5 to *trinum* | I 6 divide by symmetry 1:1 at *unum* | I 5. In the same prayer there are from | *Deum* | I 1 to *Deus* | I 12 forty-seven words, coincident with the alphanumeric value of DEVS, 4 + 5 + 20 + 18 or 47. There are from | *Deus* | I 12 to the first of *Eloe* | I 14 thirty-five letters, coincident with the alphanumeric value of ELOE, 5 + 11 + 14 + 5 or 35. From *Eloe* | to the end of the prayer there are also thirty-five letters. Between *Deus* | I 12 and | *Eli* | I 15 there are twenty-five syllables, coincident with the value of ELI, 5 + 11 + 9 or 25. This first of nine prayers contains 147 syllables, coincident with the number of years in the life of the patriarch Jacob and the life of Saint David, three times the number of words in the Lord's Prayer.⁶

There are from the beginning of *Oratio I* to the first of *mihi* | I 9 seventy-seven syllables, coincident with the value of the dative singular form of the name implied by the manuscript spelling, MOVCANO, 12 + 14 + 20 + 3 + 1 + 13 + 14 or 77, though one would achieve the same result from the philologically correct form of the name also found in Cambro-Latin, MAVCANNO, 12 + 1 + 20 + 3 + 1 + 13 + 13 + 14 or 77.

From *fiat* | I 11 to *fiat* | *fiat* | I 13 there are thirty-five letters and spaces between words, coincident with the value of FIAT, 6 + 9 + 1 + 19 or 35.⁷ From | *fiat* | I 11 to | *Amen* | I 13 there are thirty-one letters and spaces between words, coincident with the value of AMEN, 1 + 12 + 5 + 13 or 31.

Oratio II contains twenty-four lines in the prayer proper, twelve in each half, and 126 syllables in each half. The twenty-four lines divide into quarters at line 6, the last word of which is *quadrati* 'quartered'. The entire prayer contains 105 words, which divide into

⁵ For an account of the system see the preceding article 'Two Cambro-Latin Sequences', p. 241-242, n. 6-7. For explicit reference to the twenty-three-letter alphabet see Ieuan ap Sulien's *Carmen Iohannis de uita et familia Sulgeni*, D. HOWLETT, *Celtic Latin Tradition*, p. 233-242 at 235.

⁶ For the ages of Jacob and David see Genesis 47.28 and Rhygyfarch ap Sulien's *Vita Sancti David* §§1, 58, D. HOWLETT, *Cambro-Latin Compositions*, p. 113-114. For other play on three times the number of words in the Lord's Prayer see D. HOWLETT, 'Little Lectons', p. 47.

⁷ For another example of play on *fiat* in a seventh-century Insular Latin text see D. HOWLETT, *Muirchú moccu Maethéni's 'Vita Sancti Patricii'*, *The Life of Saint Patrick* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), p. 147.

two halves at 53, at *due columne* | *altaris* | *bina* II 13. The first fifty-three words divide by sesquialter ratio 3:2 at 32 and 21, at | *duo* II 8. There are from | *Cedar* II 22 to the end of the prayer proper at | *Eloe Sabaoth* II 25 thirty syllables, coincident with the value of CEDAR, $3 + 5 + 4 + 1 + 17$ or 30.

There are from | *meo* II 1 to | *me* II 4 seventy-seven letters, coincident with the value of the dative and ablative forms MOVCANO and MAVCANNO. There are from | *mee* II 20 to | *mea* II 23 101 letters and spaces between words, coincident with the value of the nominative forms MOVCANVS, $12 + 14 + 20 + 3 + 1 + 13 + 20 + 18$ or 101, and MAVCANVS, $12 + 1 + 20 + 3 + 1 + 13 + 13 + 20 + 18$ or 101.

In *Oratio* III there are from *Didimi* | III 11 to the end of the prayer proper at | *Eloe* III 13 forty-seven letters and spaces between words, coincident with the value of the name DIDIMI, $4 + 9 + 4 + 9 + 12 + 9$ or 47. There are from *Didimi* | III 11 to *Raab* | III 12 twenty-one letters and spaces between words, coincident with the value of the name RAAB, $17 + 1 + 1 + 2$ or 21.

There are from | *mihi* III 2 to | *meo* III 5 seventy-seven letters and spaces between words.

Oratio IV contains twenty-two lines in the prayer proper, eleven lines and 294 letters in the first half and eleven lines and 294 letters in the second half. In the complete prayer there are from the beginning to | *Deus* IV 4 forty-seven syllables, coincident with the value of DEVS. There are from the beginning of the prayer to | *Domine* IV 11 fifty-seven words, coincident with the value of DOMINE, $4 + 14 + 12 + 9 + 13 + 5$ or 57. There are also fifty-seven words from *Domine* | IV 9 to | *Domine* IV 19. There are 104 words from the beginning of the prayer to | *te Domine Deus*, coincident with the value of DOMINE DEVS, $4 + 14 + 12 + 9 + 13 + 5 + 4 + 5 + 20 + 18$ or 104. There are 104 letters and spaces between words from *Domine Deus* | to the end of *Eloe* | IV 23.

In *Oratio* V there are from *Domine* | V 1 to | *Iesu fili Daud* V 3 thirty-eight letters, coincident with the value of DAVID, $4 + 1 + 20 + 9 + 4$ or 38.

Oratio VII contains twelve lines in the prayer proper, six lines and sixty-seven syllables in the first half and six lines and sixty-seven syllables in the second half. There are from the beginning of the prayer to *Dei* | VII 11 forty-seven words, coincident with the value of DEVS. There are forty-seven letters and spaces between words from *Dei* | VII 11 to the end of the prayer proper at | *Eloe Sabaoth* VII 13.

In *Oratio* VIII there are from *Domini* | VIII 9 to | *Deum* VIII 12 sixty-one letters, coincident with the value of DOMINI, $4 + 14 + 12 + 9 + 13 + 9$ or 61.

In *Oratio* IX there are from | *Iesu* IX 17 to the end of the prayer proper at | *Eloe Sabaoth Ia Adonai Eli Eli laba sabacthani* IX 27 fifty-two words, coincident with the value of IESV, $9 + 5 + 18 + 20$ or 52. There are from | *Iesu* IX 15 to *Iesu* | IX 17 104 letters, that is twice the value of IESV. There are from *Iesu* | IX 17 to | *Abrahe* IX 23 thirty-four words, coincident with the value of ABRAHE, $1 + 2 + 17 + 1 + 8 + 5$ or 34.

Now let us consider phenomena that exceed the bounds of discrete prayers, beginning with diction that connects one prayer with the next. Compare *impietatem* IV 8 with *impietatem* V 10, *suscipe* VII 5 with *suscipe ut suscepisti* VIII 23 and *suscipe* IX 17, *semen* VII 12 with *seminauit* VIII 5, *spinarum noxium germen* VII 12 with *lolia* VIII 5.

Moucan connected discrete prayers also with alphanumeric values. There are from *Iesu* | *fili Daud* V 3 to *rex* | *Nazarene* VI 1 121 syllables, coincident with the value of REX NAZARENE, $17+5+21+13+1+23+1+17+5+13+5$ or 121.

There are from | *miserere mei Deus miserere mihi* VII 3 (107) at the crux of the chiasmus we will consider below to *Da mihi Iesu salientem aquam in uitam eternam* | IX 15 (158) fifty-two lines, coincident with the value of IESV.

Now let us consider phenomena that link the entire composition, beginning with a comprehensive chiasitic pattern of diction.

A1	1-2	Deum Patrem Deum Filium Deum Spiritum Sanctum
A2	12	in secula
A3	14-15	Eloe Sabaoth Ia Adonai Eli Eli laba sabacthani
B	22	Caldaica
C	31	anime suapte
D	35	anime mee
E1	37	Cedar
E2	38	anima mea
F	52	domus
G	72	pone
H	78	sub umbra alarum tuarum
I	82	quia uulnerata est anima mea
J	85	mundi
K	88	saluus fiam
L	88	a peccato meo
M	95	mortis
N	96	supergressi sunt caput meum mea delicta
O	97	anima mea
P1	100	iniquitatis
P2	101	suffocauerunt me
Q	107	miserere mei
R	107	Deus
Q'	107	miserere mihi
P'1	111	iniquitates
P'2	116	suffocat in me
O'	121	anime mee
N'	123	angustie undique occurrunt mihi
M'	125	mortis
L'	130	ab inimicis meis
K'	130	saluus ero
J'	135	mundi
I'	141	quia uulneratus sum
H'	145	in umeros tuos
G'	145	inpone
F'	151	domum
E'1	152	Engaddi
E'2	154	anima mea
D'	159-61	animam meam ... anima mea
C'	162	spiritum meum suapte
B'	166	Abrahe
A'1	168-9	Qui cum Patre uiuis cum Sancto Spiritu

A'2 169 in secula
 A'3 170-1 Eloë Sabaoth Ia Adonai Eli Eli laba sabacthani

Much of this diction is unique in these prayers to the paired passages. All the parallels are immediately apparent, with the possible exception of B and B', and even those are explicable when one remembers that according to Genesis 11.31 Abraham came *de Ur Chaldeorum*.

The 171 lines of the composition divide by extreme and mean ratio at 106 and 65, at the crux of the chiasmus, *l miserere mei Deus miserere mihi*.

Orationes I, III, V, and VII occupy in the prayers proper twelve lines each (12×1), *Oratio* II in the prayer proper twenty-four lines (12×2), *Orationes* IV and V together thirty-six lines (12×3). *Oratio* I ends with three lines, *Orationes* II-VIII with one line each, *Oratio* IX with two lines, together twelve. In the conclusions to the nine discrete prayers Moucan invokes names and titles of God, *Eloë* eight times, *Sabaoth* six times, *Eli* four times, *Ia* twice, *Adonai* twice, *Dominus* once, and *Deus* once, together twenty-four times, partly because that is the number of hours in a day, partly because 24 is the number of the Trinity (3) multiplied by the number of perfection (8),⁸ partly because Moucan may have been twenty-four years old when he composed the prayers.⁹ Within the text of the prayers proper Moucan mentions *Dominus* thirteen times and *Deus* eleven times, together twenty-four. He mentions the Three Persons of the Trinity together three times: I 1-2, II 12, and IX 25-26. Between the first two mentions there are twenty-four lines. Before the third mention there are twenty-four lines in *Oratio* IX.

The entire composition contains 171 lines. With the divine invocations at the ends of the prayers detached the text of the prayers proper contains 160 lines, which divide by extreme and mean ratio at 99 and 61, 99 dividing by the same ratio at 61 and 38, 61 dividing by the same ratio at 38 and 23. The fifteen lines of *Oratio* I divide by the same ratio at 9 and 6, at *mihi ut propitius peccatori fiat* | I 9. The twenty-three lines of *Oratio* IV divide by the same ratio at 14 and 9, at *Propitius esto mihi Domine peccatori* |. The sixty-first line of the entire composition brings one to | *Propitius esto mihi Domine peccatori* IV 9. Between the line that follows immediately, *erue animam meam de manu inferni* IV 10, and *Erue a framea animam et de manu canis solue eam* VII 1-2 there are thirty-eight lines of prayers proper.

Moucan borrowed most of his words directly from the text of the Latin Bible, though occasionally he reversed the order of words to produce rhymes, which are faultless. With few exceptions his rhythms are faultless, and even the few lines about which there might be any question can be made faultless by simple reversal of word order. Moucan made his words for number, personal names human and divine, place-names, personal pronouns, and even words like *fiat* and *Amen* exhibit their alphanumeric value by their placement within discrete prayers and within the comprehensive composition.

⁸ *Venerabilis Bedae Opera Quae Supersunt*, ed. J. A. GILES (London: Whittaker, 1844), vol. XII, p. 441-442 [= *Patrologia Latina* 93 201A-B]. *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II Opera Exegetica I Libri Quatuor in Principium Genesis usque ad Nativitatem Isaac et Eiectionem Ismahelis Annotatum*, CCSL 118A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1967), p. 236-237. D. HOWLETT, *British Books in Biblical Style* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997), p. 121.

⁹ D. HOWLETT, *Cambro-Latin Compositions*, p. 67-68.

The number of occasions on which the present writer, returning to these profoundly engaging prayers after long intervals away from them, has noticed phenomena that had entirely escaped scrutiny before suggests that Moucan packed many more forms of artifice into his composition than have yet emerged. The same might be said of nearly all the extant texts of the Cambro-Latin tradition. Reading them with the attention they deserve would do us no harm.

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