The Historical Writing of Alfred of Beverley

Submitted by John Patrick Slevin to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History in August 2013.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

Signature……………………………………………………………

Date ....

Abstract

This thesis examines the historical writing of the twelfth-century Yorkshire historian Alfred of Beverley, compiler of a Latin chronicle covering the history of Britain from its supposed foundation by Brutus down to the time of Henry I. From the late Middle Ages until the eighteenth century Alfred enjoyed a considerable reputation amongst chroniclers, antiquaries and topographers but by the mid-nineteenth century scholarly opinion had come to consider his work highly derivative, uninformative and of little historical value. The chronicle was printed by Thomas Hearne in 1716, but was never edited in the Rolls Series and the text has remained largely neglected until today.

Alfred's sources in the chronicle have been identified and his use of them examined. The circumstances and date of compilation have been reconsidered and supported by internal evidence from the text, a date of compilation of c.1148 - c.1151 x 1154 is proposed. Alfred's purpose and intended audience of the work has been considered and evidence for the work's dissemination and reception from the twelfth to the seventeenth century has been gathered in order to assess the place of the work in medieval historiography.

This study finds the *Historia* to be a text of considerable historical interest and value. It shares common features with historical narratives of the first half of the twelfth century in attempting to provide a comprehensive account of the island's past, but does so in a more concise, less discursive literary manner. It reveals the application of the methodologies of scholastic exegesis to the writing of history, in its language, textual organization and in the interrogation of authorities that it engages in to determine the veracity of historical data.The text is an important witness for the dissemination of the important twelfth-century source texts it uses. It is the first Latin chronicle to incorporate Geoffrey of Monmouth's British history into its narrative fabric (Henry of Huntingdon's c.1139 abbreviation of Geoffrey's history was inserted as a self-standing 'Letter to Warinus'). Alfred's critical reception of the Galfridian material is examined in the thesis. The extensive borrowings from Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth, John of Worcester and the Durham *Historia Regum*, provide important evidence for the dissemination of these texts, which the thesis examines. A finding of the study is that the *Historia* has been powerfully influenced by Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* in its structure and thematic approach. The later reception of Alfred's *Historia* by Ranulph Higden in his Universal Chronicle *Polychronicon* is examined and the impact that this had on Alfred's later reception in historiography, from William Caxton to William Camden is traced and explored.

Acknowledgements

This study grew out of a Master's degree at Birkbeck College completed in 2005 and more specifically to the class 'Historical Writing in the Twelfth-Century', given by Professor emeritus John Gillingham. My first thanks must therefore go to Professor Gillingham who suggested Alfred of Beverley as a subject of study to me. I have found the chronicle and its context, twelfth-century Anglo-Norman historical writing and literature, to be both an absorbing and challenging subject to study. My thanks also to Dr Ian Short who so generously provided me with his translation of the prologue of Alfred's *Historia,* which at a time when my Latin needed a lot to be desired, was a vital help to getting me started. I wish also to express my thanks and appreciation to previous members of Birkbeck College history department. I completed an undergraduate history degree at Birkbeck in the 1970s where I was lucky enough to have known and have been taught by Michael Wilkes †, Patrick McGurk and Emma Mason. In more recent times Dr John Arnold was always a great source of help.

Most of all my thanks are due to Dr Julia Crick, who has been a tireless, patient and inspiring superivisor over a long doctorate period. Her comments have forced me to think harder, express arguments more soundly, write more clearly and research more effectively and have steered me in the right research direction. It is also thanks to her also that I have been able to consult many scholars in the field from whom I have received generous help and advice. Amongst these are Dr Paul Russell, Dr Paul Brand, Dr Bruce O'Brian, Professor Nicholas Orme, Dr Christopher Holdsworth and David Rollason.

Finally I would like to thank my family and friends for their response. To my brother and sisters who have shown great interest in the remote area of twelfth-century historical writing. To the memory of my parents, who I know, would have been pleased for me to have both started and completed have the study. To Marylin, who helped me transcribe the text of Alfred's *Historia* as a first step in its translation. Thanks also must be given to the ever-helpful staff of the University of Exeter history department, Post Graduate Administration, Library, and I.T. department.

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Abbreviations

ASC	*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. D.Whitelock et al (London, 1961)
BAA	British Archaeological Association
BCA	*Memorials of Beverley Minster; The Chapter Act Book of the collegiate church of St John of Beverley 1286-1347*, ed. A. F. Leach. 2 vols., SS, 98, 108 (Durham, 1898-1903)
BL	London, British Library
BMIH	R. Horrox, ed*. Beverley Minster. An illustrated history* (Beverley, 2000)
BnF	Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France
Bodl.	Oxford, Bodleian Library
CBMLC	Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues (The British Library in association with The British Academy, 1990-)
CCMBB	*Catalogi Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothechae Bodleianae, Pars v, Viri Munificentissimi Ricardi Rawlinson,* ed. W.D.Macray (Oxford, 1862-1900)
Chron. Steph.	*Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R.Howlett, 4 vols., RS 82 (London, 1884-9)
CS	*Councils and Synods with Other Documents ReLating to the English Church,* I (AD 871-1204), eds. D.Whitelock, M.Brett and C.N.L.Brooke (2 parts:Oxford, 1981)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna)
CUL	Cambridge University Library
EAW	*Epistola ad Warinum* in *HA* viii, pp.558-583

EEA V	*English Episcopal Acta V York 1070-1154* ed. J.Burton (Oxford, 1988)
EETS	Early English Text Society
EYC I-III	*Early Yorkshire Charters,* Vols. I-III, ed. W.Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914-16), with *Consolidated Index*, ed. C.T.Clay and E.M.Clay, YASRS Extra Series 4 (1942)
EYC IV-XII	*Early Yorkshire Charters*, vols. IV-XII, ed. C.T.Clay, YASRS Extra Series 1-3 and 5-10 (Wakefield, 1935-65)
Gesta Steph.	Gesta Stephani, ed.and trans.K.R.Potter and R.H.C.Davis (2nd edition, Oxford, 1976)
GRA I, II	William of Malmesbury *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, vol. I eds. R.A.B.Mynors, R.M.Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998) and vol. II, *General Introduction and Commentary* eds. R.M.Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford,1999)
Gransden *HWE* I, II	A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c.1307* (London, 1974)
HA	Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon; *Historia Anglorum, The History of the English People,* ed. and trans. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996)
HAB	*Aluredi Beverlacensis Annalium, sive Historiae de gestis regum Britanniae,* ed.T.Hearne (Oxford, 1716)
Hardy, *DC* II, III	*Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the End of the Reign of Henry VII* ed. T. D.Hardy. 3 vols (London, 1862-71), vol II.
HBC	*Handbook of British Chronology*, ed. E.B.Fryde et al. 3rd edition (London, 1986)
HCY I-III	*The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops,* ed. J. Raine. 3 vols., RS 71 (London, 1879- 1894)
HE	*Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B.Mynors (Oxford,1969)

HN	William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella,* ed. E.King and trans.K.R.Potter (Oxford, 1998)
HR	Symeon of Durham , *Historia Regum* in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia,* ed. T. Arnold, 2 vols., RS 75 (London, 1882-5), II, pp. 3-283.
HRB	*Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain* ed. M. D.Reeve and trans.N. Wright (Woodbridge, 2007)
HRB First Variant	*The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth II. The First Variant Version: a critical edition*, ed. N.Wright (Woodbridge,1988)
J.Hexham	John of Hexham, continuation of '*Historia Regum'* in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia,* ed. T. Arnold, vol II (London, 1885), pp. 284-332.
JW Chron. II, III	*The Chronicle of John of Worcester*. Vol II 450-1066, ed. R.Darlington and P. McGurk. Vol III 1067-1140 ed. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1995-1998)
Leckie, *Passage*	*The Passage of Dominion. Geoffrey of Monmouth and the periodization of insular history in the twelfth century* (Toronto, 1981)
McDermid, *BMF*	R.T.W.McDermid, *Beverley Minster Fasti*, YASRS, vol. 149 for 1990 (Leeds, 1993)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MHB	*Monumenta Historica Britannica*: or, *Materials for the history of Britain, from the earliest period*, ed. H. Petrie and J.Sharpe. Volume I, Extending to the Norman Conquest (London, 1848)
MHB FW	*Florentii Wigorniensis* in *MHB*, pp. 522-644.
NLW	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales
NMT	Nelson's Medieval Texts
'Observations'	P. Hunter Blair,' Some Observations on the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham' in *Celt and*

Saxon. Studies in the Early British Border ed. Nora Chadwick et al (Cambridge,1963), pp.63-118.

ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eds., H.C.G.Matthew and B.Harrison (Oxford, 2004)
OV	*The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed.and trans. M.Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford, 1969-80)
PL	*Patrologia Cursus Completus Series Latina*, ed. J.-P.Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1841-64)
Priory Hexham	*The Priory of Hexham*, ed. J.Raine, 2 vols., SS 44, 46 (Durham,1864-5)
RH Poly.	*The Polychronicon of Ranulf Higden, monk of Chester,* eds. C.Babington, 9 vols (vols I-II) and Rev. J. R. Lumby (vols III-IX), RS (1865-86)
RHS	Royal Historical Society
RRAN III	*Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154, III Regesta Regis Stepani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici Ducum Normannorum,* ed. H.A.Cronne & R.H.C.Davis, in continuation of the work of the late H.W.C.Davis (Oxford, 1968)
RS	The Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during The Middle Ages, published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls ('Rolls Series'), 99 vols (London, 1858-96)
Rufford I-IV	Rufford Charters, ed.C.J.Holdsworth, Thoroton Society Record Series, 29-34, 4 vols (Nottingham, 1972-81)
SS	Publications of the Surtees Society, est. 1834, Durham.
TRHS	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society
YAJ	Yorkshire Archaeological Journal
YASRS	Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series

VCH Bev.   *A history of the County of York East Riding,* ed.
                    K.J.Allison*, Vol 6, The Borough and Liberties of Beverley.*
                    Victoria History of the Counties of England (Oxford, 1989)

VCH Bev.Horrox   R.Horrox, 'Medieval Beverley' in *VCH Bev* pp. 2-62

WN *HRA* I, II   William of Newburgh*, Historia Rerum Anglicarum*,
                    in *Chron.Steph.* i, I-408, ii, I -385.

The naming of Alfred's history in the dissertation

Alfred's history is referred to throughout the dissertation as *The History of Alfred of Beverley, Historia Aluredi Beverlacensis*, not as *Alfred's Annals, Aluredi Beverlacensis Annales,* which is how the work has come to be known since it was edited and printed by Thomas Hearne in 1716. The short title *Historia* is used to refer to the work in the dissertation. Footnotes and references use the abbreviation *HAB.*

Hearne's title of *Annals* has little textual justification. Annular entries are rarely used by Alfred in the chronicle and the text provides a continuous narrative account built on a series of nine books, each addressing a different historical 'theme'; for example, the establishment of the seven English kingdoms (book six), the Danish attacks (book seven), the rule of the Norman kings (book nine). Hearne may have sensed that the description *annales* was misleading for he offered the alternative title, *Historia de Gestis Regum Britanniae, History of the deeds of the kings of Britain.* This is closer to the title provided in the introductory rubric to the manuscript on which Hearne based his edition *- Hystoria de gestis regalibus regum Britanniae -* but both are unsatisfactory because from book six, the history deals with the English, Scandinavian and Norman kings of a gradually emerging *Anglia.*

There is ample evidence from the text that Alfred thought himself to be writing a 'History'; the word *Historia* for example is used seventy-three times in the text; 'annals' never and 'chronicle' once. Most uses of the term *Historia* occur when Alfred cites and quotes historical authorities, but on three occasions Alfred refers to his own compilation as a 'a history':

> 'Haec de immanitate Diocleciana persecucionis et de constancia Britonum in fide Christi tunc temporis secundum fidem utriusque hystoriae, tam Britonum quam Anglorum, dicta sint. Nunc ad hystoriam redeamus.'
> *HAB* 3.1003-06

> 'Talis extitit Britannici regni quartus status, absque rege vel principe, sine defensore vel duce, miseriis plenus, aerumpnis resectus, calamitatibus oppressus, irrupcionibus laceratus, sicut quarta praesentis

opusculi particula ex Britonum, Anglorum et Romanorum superius
comprehendit hystoria.'
HAB 4.1290-95

'Amodo de monarchis regibus dicturi, ad ordinem historiae revertamur.'
HAB 7. 2924-25

'The *Historia* of Alfred of Beverley", is therefore considered a more
appropriate title for the compilation and more in line with what the author
intended.

Introduction.

Purpose and objectives of the thesis.

This thesis has as its object the in-depth study of the Latin historical text, the *Historia* of Alfred of Beverley, compiled in the East Riding of Yorkshire during the years c.1148 – c.1151 x 1154. The text was edited and printed in the early eighteenth-century (May 1716) by Thomas Hearne but relatively few copies were printed and, with no modern edition of the text since produced, the text's limited accessibility has been a contributory factor in its neglect in scholarship.[1] In 2003 the *Historia* became more widely accessible with its inclusion in the *Eighteenth Century Texts Online* series.[2] Neglect of Alfred's *Historia* has meant that an important Anglo-Norman historical text has remained on the fringes of medieval historical scholarship; an underutilized witness and resource in the historical literature of the period.

This study has as its main objective a critical assessment of the content and character of Alfred's history and an evaluation of its historical value, with two main areas of focus. The first is an exploration of the place of Alfred's history in twelfth-century Insular historical literature. The second is an examination of the later dissemination and influence of the text. In c.1327 Ranulf Higden published the first version of his influential universal chronicle, *Polychronicon* and in it Alfred of Beverley was extensively cited for matters concerning the historical geography and identity of Britain. From that point until the seventeenth century Alfred enjoyed a strong historical reputation and was one of the Insular medieval 'authorities' regularly called on and quoted in the historical and topographical literature, and this study traces how and why Alfred's reputation as an authority arose. The historiographical place of Alfred of Beverley's *Historia*, assessed over time, is therefore a feature of this study.

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[1] 48 large and 100 small copies of 'Aluredus' went to press in May 1716. See D W.Rannie, ed. *Hearne's Remarks and Collections*, vol., v, Dec I 1714 - Dec 31 1716 (Oxford, 1901), p.219.

[2] Gale, *Eighteenth Century Texts Online*. Title, *Aluredi Beverlacensis Annales, Sive Historia de Gestis Regum Britanniae, libris ix.* Author listing, *Alfred, of Beverley*. Gale document no. CW3301710058.

Methodology and approach.

A twofold methodological approach has been adopted. The starting point has been to produce a comprehensive critical analysis of the text of the *Historia*, which has not previously been undertaken. A review of Alfred in scholarship has shown that only selected parts of the *Historia* have been subject to scholarly commentary, but the work as whole has never been closely examined. Antonia Gransden has discussed the prologue of the *Historia*. [3] R.William Leckie has illuminatingly discussed Alfred's critical reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*HRB*) in the first five books of the *Historia*.[4] Leckie's discussion however is primarily concerned with the conclusion of book five of the *Historia* and much of the earlier Galfridian content of the *Historia* remained outside the scope of his enquiry.

The first step in undertaking a textual analysis has therefore been to 'dissassemble' Alfred's narrative account for the purposes of distinguishing Alfred's own words from material reproduced from other texts. This has been done by collating the text of the *Historia*, as represented in the present Hearne edition of the text, against that of Alfred's sources, as represented in scholarly printed editions of those texts. [5] Modern critical editions of the texts of a number of Alfred's important sources exist: for example Henry of Huntingdon (*HA*), Geoffrey of Monmouth (*HRB*) Bede *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (*HE)* and *Historia Brittonum* (*HB*). Scholarly nineteenth-century critical editions exist for the other main source texts used in the *Historia*: Symeon of Durham *Historia Regum* (*HR*), the preliminary dynastic accounts and genealogies of the chronicle of John of Worcester, Orosius *Historiarum Adversum Paganos* (*HAP)* Paul the Deacon *Historia Romana* (*PHR*) and Hegesippus's Latin translation of Josephus's *Jewish War*. The availability of modern critical editions of a number of Alfred's main source texts and the advances in historical scholarship which this has brought, has

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[3] A Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England' in id., *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), p.130.
[4] Leckie, *Passage*, pp. 86-92.
[5] Full bibliographic details for the critical editions of Alfred's source texts are supplied in the apparatus of this study: footnotes, bibliography and abbreviation list.

greatly facilitated the present study. For example, Diana Greenway's 1996 OMT edition of Henry of Huntingdon's *HA* traced the evolution of the text through five recensions over the years 1129 to c.1155, and identified the textual additions at each stage, supplying dates. This has enabled the present study to establish which of the recensions of the *HA* Alfred made use of, thus advancing our knowledge of the *Historia's* date of compilation.

Resulting from the process of collation, an annotated typescript of the *Historia* with an apparatus identifying the sources of the text of the *Historia* has been developed.[6] The transcript, compiled in digital format, has facilitated textual analysis of the *Historia* by enabling word and phrase searches and textual cross-referencing to be more easily and efficiently undertaken.

The second step in the textual analysis has been to study the manner in which Alfred has reproduced material from his sources. What material Alfred has chosen to use has been examined and the material he has omitted has been noted. How Alfred has arranged 'borrowed' narrative to create his own account in the *Historia* is central to this study, and the analytical tools it uses to help read and understand the text and assess its historical value, are drawn from the discipline of literary criticism, as it is recognised in this study that the *Historia* is first and foremost a literary artefact.[7] Reading and understanding the text requires interrogating it and asking questions such as why was the text written, for whom was it written, how was it intended to be received and used. These questions are essential for the place of the text in twelfth-century Insular historiography to be determined and its historical value to be properly assessed.

The second approach taken in this study has been to examine the historical, political, social and cultural background to the production of the text. The

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[6] J.P.Slevin, An annotated transcription of Thomas Hearne's *Aluredi Beverlacensis Annalium, sive Historiae de gestis regum Britanniae* (Oxford, 1716). Unpublished typescript (August, 2013).
[7] How literary criticism has become 'an indispensible part of the historical investigator's toolbox' is discussed by Robert M.Stein, 'Literary criticism and the evidence for history' in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. Nancy Partner (London, 2005), pp.67-87.

meaning of the text cannot be divorced from the circumstances in which it was produced. As Gabrielle Spiegel has noted, texts occupy social space; they are the products of the social world of their authors and act as agents in that world.[8] A wide range of historical documents has been consulted in undertaking this including the examination of charters, chronicles both printed and unpublished, cartularies, hagiographic texts, medieval library catalogues, and other artefacts such as medieval church folding 'tablets.' Studying the historical, political and social context of the *Historia* has required addressing questions such as when the *Historia* was compiled, how extensive was its dissemination, what were the resources which enabled Alfred to produce his text and where and how might he have obtained them. The social context of the text has required considering the evidence for the community and the intellectual and cultural milieu in which the text was produced: for Alfred the man, his role and his range of institutional contacts. An assessment of the political and social 'context' of the *Historia*, in parallel with a textual and narrative analysis are the twin methodologies employed in this study to help achieve the stated objectives.

Alfred in scholarship.

A second and more important reason for the neglect of Alfred's *Historia* has been the assessment in scholarship that the text is of little historical value. A summary of scholarly and antiquarian commentary on Alfred's *Historia* has been compiled and is included as an appendix to this study and this reveals a pattern of severe assessment of the *Historia* in nineteenth and twentieth century historical scholarship. Some example assessments from leading scholars of the day serve to illustrate this point. 'This work does not contain a single fact which may not be found in Beda, Florence of Worcester, Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Simeon of Durham' (H.Petrie, *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, 1848). 'Upon the whole, this work is of no value, as it does not, perhaps, contain a single fact which may not be found in the authors above mentioned' (T.D.Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials ReLating to the History of Great Britain* II,1865). 'This Chronicle is of no real

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[8] Gabrielle M.Spiegel, *The Past as Text. The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), p. 24.

use to the historical student, since it adds no new fact to the information to be found in well-known earlier authorities, (Sidney Lee, *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1917). 'The work is little more than a recapitulation of parts of Geoffrey's history… despite this the *Annales* are not informative' (J.Taylor, 1961). 'A worthless compilation taken mainly from Geoffrey of Monmouth and Symeon of Durham' (Charles Gross. *A Bibliography of English History to 1485,* ed. E.B.Graves,1975).

Underlying these comments is a positivist view of history where historical texts act as transparent windows on the reality of the past and where documents and texts were seen as repositories of 'facts.' Historical value was judged on the quantity and quality of the facts and information that the document or text contained. As Alfred's history was derivative, compiled from other texts whilst adding little new information or 'facts' of its own, its value to the historical student was judged to be low. Such a manner of viewing historical evidence and assessing historical value is not adopted in this study and has, in any case, long ceased to dominate historiographical theory and practice. Since the so-called 'linguistic turn' (c.1970-c.1990) historical documents are now seen as literary artefacts, layers of language upon language, and not just repositories of facts.[9] A chronicle such as Alfred's *Historia*, as a literary creation, can be read for levels of meaning which exist outside its status as an immediate source of historical 'facts.'

The most recent scholarly comments on Alfred of Beverley reflect the changed outlook and approach of modern historiography and Alfred has been more generously judged. Dauvit Broun noted Alfred's speed of response and impressive 'repackaging' of Geoffrey of Monmouth's British history, as English history.[10] Helen Birkett has commented on Alfred's creative editing of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB*.[11] Behind her comment lies the recognition that rarely if ever can there be a mere 'recapitulation' of a text. A compiler selects

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[9] Nancy Partner, *Writing Medieval History* (London, 2005), p. xiv.

[10] Dauvit Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain. From the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh, 2007), p. 42.

[11] Helen Birkett, *The Saints' Lives of Jocelin of Furness. Hagiography, Patronage and Ecclesiastical Patronage* (York, 2010), p. 255.

and arranges the narrative and in doing so makes choices and demonstrates preferences. The form of the narrative participates in the meaning of the text.[12] The compiler's choices will also reflect the social context of the text and in Alfred's *Historia* this point is felt to be strongly reflected. Comments made by Alfred both in the prologue and at the conclusion of book five suggest a 'communal' dynamic involved in the text; both in terms of encouraging its creation and in the manner in which it was compiled; a point discussed in further detail in chapter 4.2 of this study.

Positive reviews, however, are scarce and Alfred remains largely unreported in modern historical scholarship. Recent monographs on twelfth-century historical writing in England and on medieval historiography fail to note him.[13] Alfred merited only a passing mention and a single footnote in a 2004 survey of medieval historical writing in England. [14] Surveys of Anglo-Norman historical writing and literature have generally overlooked him.[15] An important recent survey of post-Galfridian Latin historiography failed to mention Alfred despite the *Historia* representing the earliest and most extensive incorporation of Galfridian material in a Latin chronicle in the twelfth century.[16] On matters when Alfred might profitably have been included in the discussion, the important evidence of the *Historia* is overlooked. So, for example, Leah Shopkow in discussing the relatively rare instances of medieval historians

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[12] Elizabeth M. Tyler and Ross Balzaretti, eds., *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West* (Turnhout, 2006), p. 2.

[13] See for example Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England 1066-1200* (Cambridge, 2007); *C.S.Watkins History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007); M.Kemphsall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History 400-1500* (Manchester, 2011).

[14] C. Given-Wilson, *Chronicles. The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London, 2004), pp. 4, 242 note 81.

[15] See for example R. Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225* (Oxford, 2000), 'Cosmologies', pp. 616-633. Elizabeth van Houts, 'Historical Writing', in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, eds., C.Harper-Bill and E.van Houts (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 103-121. Earlier important surveys of twelfth-century Anglo-Norman literature and historical writing also overlook Alfred. See for example M.Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford, 1963).

[16] Ad Putter, 'Latin Historiography after Geoffrey of Monmouth' in *The Arthur of Medieval Literature*. *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* VI, ed. Siân Echard (Cardiff, 2011), pp. 85-108.

criticising the work of other historians, compared with the scholastics where mutual criticism was very common, cites William of Newburgh's and Gerald of Wales's criticisms of Geoffrey of Monmouth, but says nothing on Alfred of Beverley's, even though Alfred's comments, made during Geoffrey's lifetime, are of particular interest.[17]

Scope of study and presentation of thesis.

The dissertation comprises seven chapters. Chapter one examines the biographical evidence for Alfred and explores the social context of the compilation of the *Historia* by examining extant charters, hagiographical literature and commemoration of Alfred in later medieval York and Beverley literature. A study of the charters which Alfred attested provides important evidence for the milieu in which he lived, the range of institutions and communities with whom he is associated and the dates when he was active. An examination of the charters has revealed a co-attestation with a son, Ernaldus, in a charter in favour of the Cistercian abbey of Rufford. The knowledge that Alfred was a secular clerk with a family is information of value when later considering Alfred's textual and narrative strategies. For example, understanding why Alfred retained some material from a source text whilst omitting other material and why he presented the narrative in the way that he did can be assisted by a fuller understanding his cultural and social background. The circle of charter co-attestors; their positions and backgrounds, provides valuable information for the potential audience of the *Historia* and suggests possible routes through which Alfred might have sourced the texts he used to compile the *Historia*.

Chapter two examines the manuscript evidence for the *Historia.* The late fourteenth-century provenance of the manuscript on which the Thomas Hearne's edition of the *Historia* is based (Bodl. MS Rawlinson B 200) is discussed. This manuscript takes Alfred's account down to 1129. Two new manuscript witnesses of the *Historia* have been identified during the course of the study, one of earlier provenance than Bodl. MS Rawlinson B 200, the

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[17] Leah Shopkow, *History and Community. Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington, 1997), p. 272.

other an early modern transcript, NLW, Wynnstay 11. The medieval witness is BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra A.I, the chronicle of Furness Abbey, believed to have been compiled c.1300 and which provides a history of Britain from Brutus to 1298. An almost complete copy of Alfred's *Historia* is contained between folios 12 r and 115 v of the manuscript. In this witness Alfred's account continues from 1129 to the death of Henry I in 1135. The discovery of Alfred's *Historia* embedded in what has appeared to be a Latin Brut provides valuable new information for the dissemination of Alfred's *Historia*. A further medieval manuscript, BnF, MS Lat. 4126 (c.1360), containing book nine of the *Historia,* has also been found in this study to continue Alfred's history to 1135, in almost identical form to that of the Furness manuscript. BnF, MS Lat. 4126 is additionally of interest because, in the extracts of the *HRB* of Geoffrey of Monmouth which the manuscript also contains, there is considerable marginal commentary in the hand of the Carmelite friar, Robert Populton, quoting material from Alfred's *Historia* to corroborate Geoffrey's account.

Chapter three explores the political and ecclesiastical circumstances which occasioned the *Historia*'s compilation, and associated with this, addresses the issue of the text's date of compilation. Internal evidence from the text of the *Historia* is presented indicating that it could not have been written before c.1147 and internal evidence is also presented which indicates that the work must have been completed before December 1154. The political and ecclesiastical circumstances in the Yorkshire church during the first archiepiscopate of Archbishop William fitz Herbert from 1141 until his deposition in 1147 and the subsequent election of Archbishop Henry Murdac are considered in detail. These circumstances are then matched to the information provided by Alfred in his prologue and serve to provide further evidence for the date of compilation of the *Historia*. The chapter sets out an argument that the *Historia* was almost certainly compiled during the years c.1148 to c.1151 x 1154.

Chapter four represents the central part of this study and examines in detail the sources Alfred has drawn on in compiling the *Historia*. The chapter identifies the material Alfred has reproduced from each source and examines the manner in which Alfred has created a new narrative. A summary analysis

of sources initiates the chapter followed by detailed discussion of each of Alfred's primary sources: Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae,* the chronicle of John of Worcester, the Durham *Historia Regum*, and the *Historia Brittonum.* The use made of Bede, Orosius and Paul the Deacon is considered in the discussion of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The chapter ends with an examination of unattested narrative contained in the *Historia.* Two narratives, the story of the death of Earl Godwine and the story of William I and St John of Beverley are discussed. Alfred's account of the death of Earl Godwine is examined as part of the twelfth-century evolution of the story, where Alfred's represents a variant version of this story and where both textual and oral traditions converge. Although the literary tradition of Earl Godwine's death has been much reported in historical scholarship, Alfred's version of the story has gone unnoticed.

Chapter five considers in detail Alfred's 'description of Britain' with which he opens the *Historia.* This survey represents a verbal *mappa mundi*, and provides a survey of the historical, political and geographical identity of Britain. How Alfred adds to the earlier prefatory surveys in Insular chronicles; those of Gildas, Bede, Pseudo- Nennius, Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth is discussed. Although Alfred's description of Britain absorbs much from these earlier surveys his survey in particular was to have lasting influence. This influence is examined in chapters six and seven of the study, the afterlife of Alfred of Beverley. Chapter six examines Ranulf Higden's use of the *Historia* in the *Polychronicon.* Alfred's description of Britain is extensively quarried by Higden in book one of the *Polychronicon* and his use of the material is considered. The reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* by Higden in the *Polychronicon* and Alfred's considerable influence on this reception, is also considered in this chapter.

The final chapter of the study provides a preliminary catalogue of usage of Alfred of Beverley in the later historical, topographical and bibliographic literature, to assess Alfred's later historiographical influence. Eighteen historical sources have been surveyed, commencing with John of Tynemouth's *Historia Aurea* (c.1350) and extending to William Camden's

Remaines of a Greater Worke Concerning Britain (1605). Included in the survey are William Caxton's Middle English *Descripcion of Brytayne* (1480) and Holinshed's *Chronicles of England Scotland and Ireland* (1577).

In this study extensive presentation of historical information and data is set out in figures and in tabular format. This has been done where it was considered the most efficient manner of presenting the data. It has been used, for example, in presenting lists of charters, manuscripts and in cross-comparison of textual passages. Relevant illustrations / plates have been included in order to illustrate and reinforce points made in the thesis text. Nine of the thesis' chapters and sub-sections include concluding summaries containing the main findings of the chapters.

Summary overview of the historiographical value and place of the *Historia.*

Only fourteen percent of the c. forty thousand words which comprise the text of the *Historia* are Alfred's (Fig.4), the remainder being reproduced from source texts, yet Alfred has compiled a narrative account with its own distinctive character. This study endeavours to show how Alfred has achieved this, by identifying the sources used and examining how Alfred has used them. Whilst Alfred's greatest debt in terms of reproduced narrative in the *Historia* is the Durham *HR*, it is the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon which this study finds to be Alfred's most influential source. The narrative structure and thematic approach of the *Historia* appears to have been closely modelled on Henry's *HA*, and Alfred has recycled a number of Henry's most important historical ideas. Alfred's interest in producing a synthesised narrative; gathering together several different accounts in order to produce one comprehensive narrative history of the island from its foundation (*HAB* Prologue 65-79) also shares Henry's outlook and interest in the *HA*. This text also had the objective of producing a coherent and synthesised account of Britain's past.

In 1148, when Alfred began to compile the *Historia*, Geoffrey of Monmouth's newly-revealed British history was available and Alfred set himself the task of assimilating that history into a conventional historical framework. To achieve this, Geoffrey's two thousand year continuous narrative was reconfigured and

re-presented as five distinct periods, forming the first five books of the *Historia.* Alfred's is thus not just a recapitulation of parts of Geoffrey's history, as stated by John Taylor (1961), [18] but a substantial reworking. The reworking fits Geoffrey's history into themed books, designed to be read serially; much the same narrative structure as that adopted in the *HA.* It will be further argued in this study that Alfred's decision to repackage Geoffrey's continuous narrative into *quinqe status* may also have been an idea evolved from Henry's five *plagas* theme*,* the central organising idea of the *HA.*[19]

The first and most practical historical value of the *Historia* therefore derives from the evidence it supplies for the dissemination of important twelfth-century texts such as the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon and the *HRB* of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Alfred, however, makes use of many additional sources. Bede, Orosius and Paul the Deacon, whom Alfred knew as Eutropius, are essential to the narrative account and rarer texts such as the *Cosmography* of Aethicus Ister are also consulted. Hegesippus too, is known and selectively mined. Hagiographic literature; Constantius's *Life* of St Germanus and Sulpicius Severus's *Life* of St Martin of Tours are creatively quarried. Of Alfred's contemporary sources, the preliminary sections of the chronicle of John of Worcester and the Durham *HR* are also of central importance. The extensive use of these two sources is discussed in detail in chapters 4.3 and 4.4. A text circuLating in the twelfth century which Alfred also consults is the *Historia Brittonum* and from the reproduction of its narrative in the *Historia*, it has been possible to determine, with reasonable certainty, which of the several variants of this text Alfred knew and used.

The Durham *HR* accounts for some thirty-two percent of the text of the *Historia* (Fig.4) and alongside the unpublished *Historia Post Bedam* is the earliest twelfth-century witness to the *HR*.[20] From Alfred's reproduction of material from the *HR*, discussed in chapter 4.4, it has been possible to show that the version of the *HR* Alfred worked with in Beverley in 1148-1151 x 1154 was similar to that of its only surviving copy, contained in the Sawley-owned

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[18] See p. 291 note 523.
[19] Discussed in chapter 4.1 pp. 101-2.
[20] For discussion of the *Historia Post Bedam* see p.170 and note 310.

Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 139. This tells us that the joined-up nature of the miscellany known as the *HR* must therefore have been produced prior to 1148, historical information of importance. The chronicle of John of Worcester is perhaps the least well-reported of Alfred's sources, but his use of it supplies historical information of value. A conclusion of this study is that Alfred knew the Worcester chronicle only through the dynastic accounts and genealogies, contained in the chronicle's preliminary sections. Alfred does not appear to have known, or at least to have used, the main Worcester chronicle annals, suggesting that he may have had access to an independently-circulating text of the dynastic accounts and genealogies at Beverley.[21] Alfred use of the Worcester material is confined to book six of the *Historia*, a book of particular interest in the text because it marks two important historical transition points in the *Historia*; that of the passage of dominion from the British to the English kings, and that of the heptarchic English kingdoms to the dominion of the West Saxon monarchy. Alfred draws on multiple sources to fashion the account. Henry of Huntingdon is once again an influential source. The book opens by describing the transition of power from the British to the English kings on the island and Alfred uses Henry's heptarchy model to facilitate the narrative transition from book five. The dynastic accounts and genealogies of the English kingdoms as supplied in the Worcester chronicle provide the bulk of the book's textual content (Fig.4, sixty-one percent) but Alfred adds a short account of the South Saxon kingdom, not found in the Worcester chronicle, which he takes from Henry's *HA*. In so doing, Alfred ensures that the number of English kingdoms described in the book is seven.

The considerable influence of the Worcester chronicle on Alfred is apparent in the manner in which Athelstan is singled out in the *Historia* as the first of the English kings to hold the monarchy of all England. Alfred describes Athelstan in the same words that are found in the marginal gloss in the West Saxon genealogy and in its dynastic account and does so on more than one

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[21] See p.152 and note 278.

occasion in the *Historia.* [22] Alfred, indeed, formalises Athelstan's position as the first of the English kings to rule over a national *regnum*, in the *Historia.* [23] Book eight narrates the '*status'* of the monarchy of the English kings in the kingdom of Anglia and its line of kings starts with Athelstan and ends with Harold. To emphasise that a transition from a heptarchy of disparate English kingdoms to one unified *regnum* has now taken place, Alfred opens book eight by reminding his readers that Athelstan's predecessor had been king of the West Saxons only:

> 'Anno ab incarnacione Domini nongentesimo xxiiii defuncto rege Westsaxonum Edwardo Seniore, successit ei in regnum primogenitus filius suus Adelstanus'

> *HAB* 8.2933-35

What then are the defining characteristics of the *Historia* as a category of historical writing and where might the text be placed in twelfth-century historiography? The work supplies a continuous account of Britain's history from its foundation by Brutus to the time of Henry I, but that narrative is built on a series of sub-narratives. Each of its nine books is its own entity and narrates a historical period with a specific theme and these historical periods are described by Alfred as *status*, 'states.' The epitomisation of Geoffrey's *HRB* within the *Historia* might also be considered a 'narrative within a narrative' because, at the conclusion book five*,* Alfred singles out the moment with an appeal to his readers, pleading their forgiveness for any deficiency on his part in narrating Geoffrey's history satisfactorily.[24] Alfred clearly believes that, having concluded his abbreviation of the *HRB*, he has reached a milestone in the compilation. The chronological thread of the *Historia* is maintained by use of synchronisms and regnal years, but the text is not dominated by a chronological outlook; for one eminent scholar of medieval historiography, the characteristic which distinguishes a 'history' from a

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[22] See Plate 4, p. 164 and the statement on the left hand margin of Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 157 page 53, '*Strenuus et gloriosus rex Aethelstanus solus in totam Angliam primus regum Anglorum regnavit'*.

[23] See *HAB* 6. 2131-32; 2524-26. *HAB* 8. 2979.

[24] Further discussed on p. 147.

'chronicle.' [25] Annular entries are found in book seven, when Alfred starts to reproduce material from the Durham *HR*, a text organised in annular format, but this clashes with Alfred's thematic approach and is abandoned in books eight and nine of the *Historia.*

The literary format of the *Historia* is firmly based on the Latin rhetorical tradition and the principles of rhetoric taught in the schools. A prologue opens the account and this contains a suitable humility *topos*, a classical rhetorical technique advocated by Cicero and Quintilian to disguise the guile and art of the orator (*Calliditas Occulta*).[26] Classical sources are quoted to adorn the narrative and invest it with *elocutio* - language appropriate to the serious nature of the narrative. Alfred, for example, opens the *Historia* with an arresting quotation from *Hegesippus* describing Britain as '*alter orbis.*'[27] The use of epitome and abbreviation in the compilation is as taught in the rhetorical manuals.[28] Rhetorical tropes are used by Alfred, for example *similitudo,* where the orator invokes comparison with a subject silently, in order to arouse the suspicions of his audience. This is used by Alfred to raise questions in his readers' minds about the plausibility of Geoffrey of Monmouth's account. An example of Alfred's use of *similitudo* is when Geoffrey's description of the four royal roads of Britain built by the British king Belinus is silently compared to that of Henry of Huntingdon (*HAB* I.470).[29] Rhetorical techniques also included the art of paraphrase; rendering a set piece in different styles, using different vocabulary in the process of abbreviation.[30] Alfred employs this technique throughout the *Historia* and in Fig.12 some sixty-seven instances are noted where Geoffrey's vocabulary and syntax have been altered stylistically whilst the original sense has been

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[25] Antonia Gransden, 'The Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland', in id. *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp.199-238 at pp. 199-201.

[26] E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (London, 1953), pp. 83-85. Kemphall, *Rhetoric*, p. 28 and note 100.

[27] Discussed pp. 219-26.

[28] Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation', pp. 106-109.

[29] For tropes and figures of speech used in rhetorical practice see Kempshall, *Rhetoric*, pp. 28-29.

[30] Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation', pp. 107-108.

accurately retained. Good rhetorical practice is also evident in the manner in which the text of the *Historia* is designed to imprint itself on the memory. This is evident in the text's clear and organised structure and in the formulaic endings of each book, where recapitulated lists of kings are provided. The presence of explanatory linking comments, opening and closing each book, where readers are reminded of what has just been covered and what is about to come, also indicates this intent. In rhetorical theory, the impression of the *inventio*, the argument or case, on the *Memoria,* was one of the five constituent elements of speech or text.[31]

A number of these rhetorical practices may be indebted to the influence of Henry of Huntingdon's *HA* on Alfred, as they are all present in that text. However Alfred's *Historia* has features which set it apart. It is far less 'literary' in its ambition than the *HA*. Whereas the *HA* embraces *expansion* and *amplification* as a rhetorical strategy, [32] the *Historia* adopts a contrary strategy; that of abbreviation, brevity and lucidity. Henry amplifies his account through invented speeches, poetry, letters, interlaced digressions, such as, for example, his long excursus on the first crusade whilst narrating William Rufus's campaign against the Welsh in 1095.[33] Alfred's text however, whilst concise,   maintains high standards of Latinity, a rhetorical requirement. [34] What is markedly distinct in the *Historia* is the frequency with which reference to authority is made in order to authenticate another historical text, which Alfred does on thirty occasions (Fig.13). In this textual cross-examination Alfred exhibits close knowledge of the authors cited in the character of *accessus ad auctores*. When he quotes a passage from Bede and compares it with Geoffrey of Monmouth's version of events, Alfred demonstrates

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[31] Kempshall, *Rhetoric.* p. 19. Constituent elements in addition to *memoria* were *inventio*, convincing or persuasive argument; *dispositio*, the order and arrangement of the argument; *elocutio,* the choice of language appropriate to the argument; *pronuntiatio*, the manner of presentation or delivery of the argument.

[32] For the rhetorical strategies adopted by Henry of Huntingdon in the *HA* see Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation', p. 108.

[33] *HA* VII, chps. iv –xix. See Nancy Partner, *Serious Entertainments* (Chicago, 1977), pp. 201-211, for amplification and narrative interlacing practiced by Henry of Huntingdon, William of Newburgh and Richard of Devizes.

[34] Complimentary comments on the quality of Alfred's Latin are made by both Thomas Hearne; see p. 52, note 88, and by John Leland, see p. 275, note 487.

knowledge of the source of Bede's information; for example '*haec Beda secundum Orosium'* (HAB 3.927-28) or '*Haec Beda, cui astipulatur et Eutropius in Romana Hystoria, scribens ita'* (HAB 5.1536-47). A clearly laid out, highly organised, concise text which demonstrates an interest in testing one text against another in order to establish its verisimilitude, suggests the influence of scholastic exegesis, as taught in the schools. The term *status* used by Alfred throughout the *Historia* as his central periodising idea, also suggests a writer versed in biblical exegesis. The term *status* to denote periods of historical time is nowhere found in Alfred's main historiographical sources, but it is a word frequently encountered in works of scholastic theology and biblical study. In Hugh of Saint Victor's *de Sacramentis Christianae fidei* (c.1134) for example, the term *status* (*statibus, statu*) is used forty times and on occasion, in a clearly historical periodising sense.[35]

Two further important features of the *Historia* also are its non-parochial character and its secular outlook. There is no interest in the church of York or Beverley exhibited in the account, other than Alfred's digression on the intervention of St John of Beverley to protect the Beverley community during King William I's 'Harrying of the North.' With no institutional or diocesan interest, the *Historia* cannot therefore be categorised as a local or institutional history or even a regional history.[36] The *Historia's* secular outlook is at its most evident in books seven to nine when Alfred is dependent on the Durham *HR,* a text which is the product of a Benedictine monastic community. In Alfred's abbreviation of the *HR*, most matter of ecclesiastical interest is

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[35] Discussed on p. 103 and note 210.

[36] Elizabeth M.C.van Houts, *Local and Regional Chronicles*, Typologies des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental 74 (Turnhout, 1995), pp. 13-16. This provides a very useful discussion on the problems of demarcation between genres of medieval historical writing. A more recent discussion on the distinctions between chronicles, annals and histories is Sarah Foot, 'Annals and Chronicles in Western Europe' in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing. Vol 2 400-1400'*, eds., Sarah Foot and Chase F.Robinson (Oxford, 2012), pp. 346-367 at pp. 350-52. A valuable discussion on the character of twelfth-century annalistic historical writing is provided in Julian Harrison, 'Cistercian Chronicling in the British Isles' in *The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey. A Stratigraphic Edition*, eds., Dauvit Broun and Julian Harrison (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 13-28. Also see B.Guenée, *Histoire et Culture Historique dans l'Occident Médiéval* (Paris, 1980), pp. 203-07.

discarded (Figs. 22, 23) whilst secular-related content; the *gesta* of kings, dramatic episodes and good stories, are retained. A further characteristic of the *Historia* is the course of neutrality and discretion it maintains throughout the narrative. Issues of political and ecclesiastical controversy; for example, clerical marriage, investiture, the Canterbury-York controversy, are all avoided by the omission of such matter in the process of abbreviation. Harsh or critical comments of the Durham compiler, for example on the Normans, on King William I and William Rufus, Malcom III of Scotland and on nobles such as William d'Eu, are similarly omitted (Fig 24).

In his compiling of the *Historia* and his reworking of the texts of others, Alfred presents a narrative which attempts to gather together various accounts 'scattered here and there in the writings of several different authors';[37] undertaken to provide a consolidated view of the island history, embracing all its peoples including its original inhabitants, the Britons. In this 'assimilative' sense the *Historia* looks back to the historical narratives of the first half of the twelfth century, which sought to systematize the materials for early Insular history.[38] But Alfred's concise, non-literary text, where the close interrogation and cross-comparison of authors is used to test the verisimilitude of an account, looks forward. Accompanying this is the text's pedagogic tone where readers are reminded, at regular steps throughout the course of the narrative, what has and is about to be covered, so that the text's content is better understood and absorbed.The structure of the text; self-contained books of relatively short length of which none contain more than eight thousand words (Fig.4), the clear Latin sentence structures and the formulaic book endings providing recapitulated lists of kings, suggest a text which may have been intended to be read or delivered serially. Given what is known about the

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[37] *HAB* Prologue 74-75, '..*Quod quae sparsim in plurimorum leguntur scriptis*..'
[38] The intense interest of English monks during the period 1090-1130, primarily in the Benedictine communities, in collecting, sifting and organising historical evidence from the past in order to understand the present, is discussed by Sir Richard Southern in 'Aspects of the European Tradition ofHistorical Writing: iv.The sense of the Past', *TRHS*, 5th series, 23 (1973), 243-63. Also see Martin Brett, 'John of Worcester and his contemporaries' in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages*, eds., R.H.C.Davis and J.M.Wallace Hadrill (Oxford, 1981), 101-26. For interest in collecting historical information on the Britons at that time, see Leckie, *Passage*, pp.18-19.

collegiate church of Beverley at the time, this may have included public readings at communal refectory sittings.[39] The most likely intended audience of the text would therefore appear to have been the members of the church of Beverley: the canons, the church dignitaries and officers, visiting diocesan clergy, members of the local aristocracy of the church of Beverley and their families.

Alfred's *Historia* is therefore a work of considerable historical interest. It is an important example of historical writing undertaken by a secular clerk in a collegiate church at a time when most historical writing still originated in monastic communities. The range of literary resources used in its compilation in a religious community with an otherwise little-known intellectual tradition, attests the extent of the spread of learning and literature in mid twelfth-century England. It is the first Latin history to assimilate Geoffrey of Monmouth's British history into a continuous narrative of the island past, and it does so whilst demonstrating critical historical awareness. Alfred appreciates the tensions which exist between Geoffrey's version of Insular history and those of conventional accounts and he edits his narrative account to provide a more convincing chronology. Open scepticism and silent doubt mark points in his abbreviation of the *HRB*. A generation before William of Newburgh's denunciation of Geoffrey's history, Alfred had more politely voiced much the same concern. That Alfred has a strong sense of Britain's island identity and its ethnicities is attested by his *mappa mundi,* the geo-historical description of Britain and its peoples with which he begins the *Historia,* and which was later to be of such considerable influence on Ranulf Higden and successor chroniclers and topographers.[40] Alfred is also, alongside Robert of Torigni, the first Latin chronicler to incorporate the influential ideas of Henry of Huntingdon. The idea of the heptarchy is embedded into the *Historia* as also is Henry's strong sense of English kingdom; encapsulated by Henry's explanation of the historical evolution of the naming of the island: first Albion, then Britain, and finally Anglia, an idea which Alfred recycles in the *Historia*.

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[39] Discussed further on p. 100 and note 204.

[40] The idea of Britain is discussed by R.R.Davies, *The First English Empire, Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093 -1343* (Oxford, 2000), 'Island Mythologies', pp.31-53.

Alfred's is a text which is lost to sight from its compilation in the mid twelfth century until its reappearance in the early fourteenth century, where it was an important source for Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* and as chapters six and seven of this study show, it was the immense medieval success of the *Polychronicon* which largely created Alfred's later reputation with the historians and antiquarians of the Tudor and Elizabethan period. The *Historia* is a text which appears to have achieved only limited dissemination; the surviving manuscripts are few and are all of northern provenance: from York, Chester, Furness and also possibly Jervaulx in the North Riding of Yorkshire. The text as it is presented in the current Thomas Hearne edition of the *Historia* ends abruptly in 1129, one short paragraph earlier than the Durham *HR*, from whom Alfred was taking his readings at that point in the narrative.This study however, has identified two earlier medieval manuscripts of the *Historia* than Bodl. MS Rawlinson B 200, which supply brief regnal year entries extending the account to the death of Henry I in 1135. However in none of its surviving manuscript witnesses does the final book of the *Historia* end as it does in its previous eight books. These books all contain summarising statements about the *status* of the line of kings just narrated and provide recapitulated list of kings. In both its ending the present edition of the *Historia* and in its continuations to 1135 in the other manuscript witnesses, the *Historia* bears the hallmarks of a work brought to a hurried conclusion and indeed one which has been left unfinished.

Chapter 1. Alfred, man, milieu and memory.

What is known of Alfred the man derives from three principal sources: the surviving charters in which Alfred appears as a witness, internal evidence from the *Historia* and the manner in which he is remembered and described in later historical and hagiographical sources.

The most important biographical evidence for Alfred comes from the first of these categories, the surviving charters, of which there are five:

Fig. I. Charters attested by Alfred.

	Where Printed	Date	Details of Charter	Names of Principal Witnesses
1	EYC I, no. 104 EEA V. no 32	c.1135-43	Confirmation of Thurstan Provost and the Beverley Chapter of alms to canons of Bridlington priory as was originally granted by Thomas, Provost and the canons of his time.	William dean of York, Simon, Ralph, Roger canons of Beverley. *Aluredus Sacrista.* Total witnesses 14. 5 ecclesiastic, 9 lay. .
2	EYC I, no. 105 EEA V. no. 86	c.late 1143 - 47	Grant by Archbishop William fitz Herbert as first granted by Archbishop Thurstan to the town of Beverley of free burgage as per York.	Earl William of Aumale and Robert de Stuteville (III), Everard de Ros. Thurstan provost, Ivo abbot of Warter, Simon, Ralph canons of Beverley, *Magistro Alfrido sacrista.* Total witnesses 20. 5 ecclesiastic, 9 lay.
3	EYC II, no.1108 EEA V. no. 129	Jan 1, 1151 - Oct 14 1153	Notification by Archbishop Henry Murdac before the Beverley chapter of confirmation of the gift of Eustace fitzJohn to the nuns of Watton priory. To support 13 canons of the order of Sempringham to minister to nuns.	Adam abbot of Meaux. William cantor and Robert archdeacon of York. Canons of Beverley; Aildwardus, Ralph, Simon, Roger, Willelmus Morin. *Aluredus sacrista,* Warin clerk of the counts, William of Warter, Hugh and Richard Murdac and their sons Hugh and Stephen Total witnesses 26. 8 ecclesiastic, 18 lay.

4	EYC X, no. 67 EEA V. no.128	c. 1151?	Confirmation by Archbishop Henry Murdac and notification to Robert the dean and the chapter of York of the grants made to the church of St James and the canons of Warter priory for the construction of an abbey by William de Roumare, earl of Lincoln, and family.	William cantor and Robert the archdeacon of York. Aeldwardus, Ralph, Simon, Nicholas, William, Philip canons of Beverley. *Alveredus Sacrista.* Total witnesses 8, all ecclesiastic.
5	EYC XII, no. 109 Rufford II no. 303	1146 - 54	Grant in free alms by William Tison to Rufford Abbey (Cistercian) of land in 'Arthes' in Averham in East Riding of Yorkshire.	Simon et Roger Canons of Beverley. *Alveredo sacrista, Ernaldo filio Alveredi* Stephano Murdac. Total 17 witnesses. 3 ecclesiastic, 14 lay.

The five charters confirm that Alfred was active during the period c.1135-c.1154 and supply information about the religious communities outside Beverley with which he had contact. In the East Riding of Yorkshire these include the Augustinian priories of Bridlington (founded before 1114), Warter (founded 1132) and the Gilbertine priory of Watton, a double house of canons and nuns founded in c.1150 x 1153 by Eustace fitzJohn and his wife Agnes. [41] Of particular interest is Alfred's attestation of William Tyson's confirmation of a gift of land in Averham (ER) to the Cistercian Rufford Abbey, Nottinghamshire, founded in 1146.[42] The charter, which is preserved in the fifteenth century Rufford cartulary, not only shows Alfred associated with a Cistercian abbey located over sixty miles from Beverley, but also names *Ernaldo filio Alveredi* on the witness list. The name *Ernaldus* is not listed immediately after *Alveredo Sacrista* – he is the twelfth named and Alfred is the third – but there are reasonable grounds to consider this evidence that Ernaldus was indeed the son of Alfred the sacrist. If so, we learn from this charter that Alfred was either married, or in common with many clerks of the period, lived in concubinage. In terms of Alfred's status, in one charter he is described as *magister*; that in favour of the burgesses of Beverley given by Archbishop William fitzHerbert in c.1143 (no 2 above). In all five charters, he is described as sacrist.

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[41] Janet Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire, 1069-1215* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 137.

[42] *Rufford I,* pp. xx-xxi.

An examination of the background and composition of Alfred's co-witnesses in the five charters is also a fruitful source of information. The witnesses number some seventy in total, of which fifteen are senior clergy: dignitaries and officers of the chapters of York and Beverley and abbots and priors of East Riding religious houses. The remaining witnesses represent a cross section of the landowning aristocracy of the East Riding of Yorkshire. Amongst the most prominent is William le Gros, count of Aumale (c.1110-1179) who was the leading lay opponent of Archbishop Henry Murdac in the disputed election in 1141, but later, having reconciled with Archbishop Henry, founded the Cistercian abbey of Meaux in January 1151. William also founded the priory of Thornton (1139), the abbey of Bytham (1147) and was co-founder of North Ormsby Priory (1148-54). [43] Aristocratic witnesses also of note are Robert de Stuteville III (d.1183) a benefactor of Meaux Abbey and probable founder of Keldholme Priory[44] and Everard de Ros, nephew of Walter Espec, Lord of Helmsley and one of William of Aumale's principal tenants in the strategically important lordship of Holderness in the East Riding.[45] Everard's presence as a witness alongside Alfred (no 2 above) is noteworthy because it places Alfred within touching distance of a leading literary patron of the period. Everard's uncle, Walter Espec, founder of the Augustinian priory of Kirkham (c.1121) and Fountains (1132) and lover of history, was the magnate who lent lady Constance fitzGilbert the copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* which Geoffrey Gaimar used as a source text for his *Estoire des Engleis*, as he himself informs us in the *Estoire.* [46]

Amongst senior ecclesiastical figures in the group of co-witnesses are William of Sainte-Barbe dean of York and supporter of Henry Murdac in the York archiepiscopal election of 1141 and later bishop of Durham (1143-1152),

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[43] Paul Dalton, 'William le Gros, count of Aumale and earl of York (c.1110-1179)', *ODNB*, 59 (Oxford, 2004), pp.122-23.

[44] Hugh M.Thomas, 'Stuteville, Robert (III) de (d.1183), *ODNB*, 53 (Oxford, 2004), p.259.

[45] Paul Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship, Yorkshire 1066-1154* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 182.

[46] Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis,* ed. I.Short (Oxford, 2009), lines 6435-6483.

William d'Eu the precentor (c.1140-c.1178) [47] and Robert Butevilain, archdeacon and later dean of York (1158-1186). Robert is described as *magister* in a charter of Henry Murdac in favour of Kirkstall abbey [48] in which one of the co-attestors was Nicholas de Trailly, the same York canon whom Geoffrey Gaimar had singled out, in the epilogue of the *Estoire des Engleis*, as a source who could attest the veracity of his historical account in the *Estoire*.[49] Alfred co-attests with two prominent monastic leaders in the region: Adam, first abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Meaux and formerly monk of Fountains (1151-60) and Ivo abbot of Warter priory, which during its Arrouaisian phase (c.1142- c.1197), assumed the title of abbey.[50]

The five charters are therefore an important source of information for Alfred and the social milieu in which he moved and lived. The assembled group of some seventy senior clergy, lay aristocrats patrons and local gentry provides a snapshot of the potential community in, and for whom, Alfred's text might have been composed. The networks through which Alfred could have sourced the texts needed to compile the *Historia* are also suggested. In the charters we see Alfred linked to well-established religious communities such as Warter, Kirkham and Bridlington, the latter with known library resources. The priory of Bridlington, some twenty miles to the north east of Beverley, with known links to Beverley (charter I above) was a centre of some literary accomplishment at the time. Its prior was Robert, 'the Scribe' (c.1147-50 – c. 1160), author of *The Bridlington Dialogue* and glosses on Exodus, the Minor Prophets and St Paul. Robert's commentary on the Minor Prophets was requested of by Gervase, abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Louth Park in Lincolnshire, founded in 1139 by Bishop Alexander of Lincoln. Bridlington was therefore in contact with other communities with scholarly interests, extending

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[47] D.Carpenter, 'The Dignitaries of York Minster in the 1170s: A Reassessment', *Northern History*, xliii (March, 2006), pp. 21-31. Based on the evidence two previously unpublished charters, it has been established that William d'Eu survived until 1178 or later.

[48] *EEA* V, no 121.

[49] Short, *Gaimar Estoire*, Line 6482.

[50] Burton, *Monastic Order*, pp. 97-98.

beyond the East Riding of Yorkshire. [51] Bridlington's scholarly interests are attested by its five surviving books from the period.[52] A book list from Bridlington is preserved in a late twelfth century glossed copy of the gospel of St Mark (BL MS Harley 50) which lists some seventy-seven major titles and some forty '*parvi libelli*' books contained in the priory's '*magnum armarium*.'[53]

Internal Evidence

Alfred reveals only very little of himself in the *Historia* and most of what we learn comes very early in the *Historia*. In the prologue Alfred tells us of his interest in history. He tells us also, with due modesty, that he was considered by his peers to be an accomplished writer; the comment providing the suggestion that community encouragement might have been a factor involved in his historical project:

> 'Ferebantur tunc temporis per ora multorum narraciones de hystoria
> Britonum, notamque rusticitatis incurrebat, qui talium narracionum scienciam
> non habebat. Fateor tamen propter antiquitatis reverenciam, quae mihi
> semper veneracioni fuerat, tamen propter narrandi urbanitatem, quae mihi
> minime, junioribus vero memoriter et jocunde tunc aderat, inter tales
> confabulatores saepe erubescebam, quod praefatam hystoriam necdum
> attigeram. Quid plura? Quaesivi hystoriam, et ea vix inventa, leccioni ejus
> intentissime studium adhibui. Dumque rerum antiquarum nova leccione
> delectarer, mox mihi animus ad eam transcribendam scatebat, sed temporis
> opportunitas, et marsupii facultas non suppetebat.'

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[51] A. Lawrence, 'A Northern English School? Patterns of production and collection of manuscripts in the Augustinian Houses of Yorkshire in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries', in *Yorkshire Monasticism: Archaeology, Art and Architecture from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. L.R.Hoey *BAA Conference Transactions,* 16 (Leeds, 1995), 145-153, p.147.

[52] N.R.Ker, ed. *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: a List of Surviving Books*, 2nd edition (London, 1964)*,* p. 12.

[53] T.Webber and A.G.Watson, eds., *The Libraries of the Augustinian Canons*, CBMLC, 6 (London, 1998), pp. 8-10.

HAB Prologue. 38-50

 'At that time stories of the History of the Britons were being much talked about by different people, and anyone who had no knowledge of such stories acquired the label of being an ignoramus. I admit that, because of an attachment to the past, for which I always had particular respect, and because of some small facility for writing elegantly that I then enjoyed, as my junior colleagues jokingly recall, I would frequently blush in such conversations because I had not yet come into contact with the particular *History* I am referring to. What more need I say? I sought out this *History* and hardly had I found it when I devoted myself to studying it by an extremely close reading of it. Whilst I was delighting in this new reading of old matter, a desire to copy it out soon took hold of me, but the time was not opportune and the cash in the purse was insufficient'

A further item of biographical interest is supplied by Alfred at the conclusion of the introductory geographic survey, which follows the prologue and prefaces the *Historia.* Alfred comments on the removal of the Flemings by Henry I to Rhos in Dyfed, Pembrokeshire, Wales (c.1110), noting that this event occurred, 'in our own time':

'Itaque Britannia in praesenti quinque gentibus inhabitatur, id est Britonibus in Gualliis, in septentrionalibus partibus Pictis, in Albania Scotis, principaliter vero per totam insulam Normannis mixtim et Anglis. Additur hiis et nostro tempore sexta nacio, id est Flandrenses, qui de patria sua venientes, in regione Mailros in confinio Gualiarum jubente rege Henrico habitacionem acceperunt.'

HAB I. 245-52

'Thus now Britain is inhabited by five peoples, that is the Britons in Wales, the Picts in the northern regions, the Scots in Albany, and the rest of the island by the Normans and English together. In addition to these and in our own time, is a sixth people, that is the Flemings, who coming from their native land received a home in the region of Rhos in Dyfed in Wales at King Henry's command.'

From this comment it would appear that Alfred was alive in the first decade of the twelfth century. Given that Alfred appears to have been dead by the middle years of the 1150s, his birth might be assumed to date from the turn of the century or even from the last decades of the eleventh century; but of this there is no certainty.

Commemoration

Two items from the late fourteenth century, one from Beverley, the other from York, indicate that Alfred's memory as a scholar and historian was actively preserved in both churches down to the later medieval period.

1. The Liberties of Beverley

The Beverley commemoration is found in the late fourteenth century Beverley Cartulary (BL, MS Add 61901) an expensively produced volume, commissioned by the chapter of Beverley and containing Folcard's *Life of St John of Beverley* (c.1060-69), collections of his miracle stories and royal, papal and episcopal privileges of the church of Beverley. Contained within the cartulary is a short tract, *The Liberties of Beverley*, attributed to Alfred, setting out the ancient liberties of Beverley and giving details of the extent and operation of its sanctuary and 'peace league.' [54] The tract opens with a foundation account for Beverley claiming that its liberties and privileges were granted by King Athelstan, after his victory over the Scots at the battle of Brunanburgh (934), in return for St John of Beverley's aid in securing the victory. Alfred's authorship of the tract is described in the introductory rubric as follows:

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[54] The *Liberties* occupies folios 60 ᵛ- 69 ʳ of the cartulary's 90 folios. The first 66 items in the cartulary concern St John's life and miracles. The *Liberties* text begins the section of the cartulary dealing with secular matters.

Libertates Ecclesiae Sancti Johannis de Beverlic, cum privilegiis Apostolicis et Episcopalibus, quas Magister Aluaredus Sacrista ejusdem Ecclesiae de Anglico in Latinum transtulit.

Incipiunt libertates Ecclesiae Sancti Johannis Beverlacensis, a Regibus et Princibus [Principibus] Anglorum largitur [largiter] collatae, et usque in hodiernum diem usu et consuetudinis attrictione celebres obtentae, quas Magister Alveredus, vir vitae venerabilis et praenominatae ecclesiae Sacrista, Scripturarum studiosus indagator, sicut a predecessoribus suis audierat et viderat, scripto commendavit; et ne posteritatis injuriam sustinerentur stilo suo perpetravit [f.perpetuavit].[55]

The Liberties of the church of Saint John of Beverley, with its papal and episcopal privileges, which Master Alfred, sacrist of that church, translated from English into Latin.

Here begin the Liberties of the church of St John of Beverley, munificently bestowed by the kings and princes of England and observed as famous up to the present day, by usage and the attachment of custom, which Master Alfred, a man of venerable life and an ardent student of the scriptures and sacrist of the aforementioned church, has committed to writing as heard from his predecessors and seen and so that they suffer no wrong by posterity, he wrote them down with his own pen.

An examination of the *Liberties* text undertaken in the early stages of this study found no good grounds to consider the author of the *Historia* and the

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[55] The text above is taken from the edition of the *Liberties of Beverley* printed in *Sanctuarium Dunelmense et Sanctuarium Beverlacense,* ed. J. Raine, Surtees Society, v. (Durham, 1837), pp. 97-108. Raine's edition was printed from BL MS Harley 560, a seventeenth century copy of an earlier transcript, BL, MS Cotton Otho. Cxvi, a manuscript extensively damaged in the Cottonian fire of 1731. Words in brackets are Raine's suggested corrections to what he himself pointed out in his edition, was a defective manuscript. The Beverley Cartulary was then in private ownership and unavailable to Raine and it remained so until 1981 when acquired by the British Library.

Liberties to be one and the same person, although it found considerable textual evidence of an early, possibly Anglo-Norman, provenance of the text. The significance of the *Liberties* for the present study however, lies in the fact that it provides evidence for the manner in which Alfred's memory was preserved in later medieval Beverley. The presentation of the *Liberties* text within the cartulary: its introductory page is distinguished with elaborate marginal decoration setting it off, even within an expensively produced volume,[56] indicates its importance to the compilers of the cartulary. In a matter central to the identity of the church of Beverley at that time, it was Alfred's name which was attached to the tract, as both scholar- he was able to translate ancient privileges from English into Latin - and as historian, the collector and redactor of oral traditions.

2. The York Minster Tablets

Extracts from the *Historia* of Alfred from Beverley formed part of a medieval historical artefact from York Minster, indicating that his memory as an historical authority was preserved there, as well as in Beverley. In the collection of York Minster library are two tablets, large folding wooden (oak) boxes, each consisting of three panels (triptychs) and on which are fastened parchments. They are believed to date from the time of Archbishop Thomas Arundel (1388-97) and were observed on display in the Minster by John Leland in 1534, who defaced portions of panel text reLating to papal authority in Britain. [57] Although constructed from the same tree stock - originating from the Eastern Baltic- the two tablets are not identical in construction, the smaller

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[56] R.Morris and E.Cambridge, with an Appendix by I. Doyle, 'Beverley Minster Before the Early Thirteenth Century' in Wilson, C., ed. *Medieval Art and Architecture in the East Riding of Yorkshire*, BAA Conference Transactions, 9 (1989), p. 21. Ian Doyle describes the decoration of the opening page of the Liberties on f. 60 [v] as 'a fully illuminated vinet, occupying each margin and the intercolumnar space.'

[57] On the date of the tablets see Raine, *HCY* II, p. xxviii. N.Ker and A.J.Piper, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, IV, Paisley-York (Oxford, 1992), pp. 824-6, list the tablets as Add 533 and 534. Leland's defacement is noted in James P.Carley, 'Leland, John (c.1503-1552)', *ODNB*, 33 (Oxford, 2004), pp. 297-301.

being of more expensive and sophisticated design. [58] The text on all the triptychs' panel parchments is in the same hand in Latin and there is no illustrated material. On the left hand panel of the larger triptych are historical notices from Geoffrey of Monmouth, Henry of Huntindgon, William of Malmesbury, '*Martinus in chronicis de pontificibus*' [59] and '*Alfridus beverlacens' thesaurarius.*' The central panel of the larger triptych titled '*Prologus de origine et statu ecclesie Eboracensis*' and contains a 512 line verse account of the foundation of the church of York which the writer says he composed at the time of the archiepiscopate of Thomas Arundel.[60] The remaining panel of material consists of papal bulls, archiepiscopal grants and indulgences privileges in favour of the church of York and notices of its metropolitan status over the Scottish bishops. The smaller panel contains biblical material, including an account of the seven ages of man.

The York tablets were known to James Raine in the nineteenth century, who remarked on their then poor state. [61] In 1920 the tablets were discovered in the coal cellars of York Minster and, in overenthusiastic restoration work, sections of the text were rendered illegible. The nine lines of text attributed to Alfred of Beverley are presently mostly illegible. [62] Decipherable words are Line 2, 'flamines', 'Londoni.' Line 3, Humber (red letter marking noted).Line 4, 'Loegria.' Line 6, 'Ethel..' Line 7, 'hodie.'

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[58] 'The Tables of the Vicars Choral of York Minster', Woodworking Technology Report by Steven Allen, *Conservation Laboratory*, *York Archaeological Trust* (2005).

[59] A reference to Martin of Troppau's highly popular thirteenth-century chronicle of the popes and emperors. Currently printed in *Martini Oppaviensis Chronicon Pontificum et Imperatorum*, ed. I. Weiland, *MGH* SS, 22 (1872), pp. 377- 475. I am indebted to Professor E. van Houts for drawing my attention to this.

[60] Printed in Raine, *HCY* II, pp.446-63.

[61] Raine, *HCY* II, p. xxviii.

[62] A research programme to enable the text to be fully recovered using ultra-violet photography has been under discussion. See Dr Richard Hall, 'York Minster Tables', *Yorkshire Archaeology Today*, *Yorkshire Archaeology Trust* (Sept, 2004), p. 3.

A historical analysis of the tablets and a translation of portions of legible text was provided by Canon J.S. Purvis in 1966. [63] Purvis's contention that the tables originated with the York vicars-choral is based on a 1294 statute of the Minster where there is an entry ordering the succentor to take an oath from the vicars- choral that ' they will repeat their histories on pain of expulsion.'[64] There is nothing however in the content of the panels which links them to the vicars-choral and both Ker and Piper and B. Dobson dismiss the association, the latter claiming the tables 'were almost certainly prepared for the edification of pilgrims and visitors to the minster.'[65] The quite detailed historical and scriptural content, Latinity, and lack of illustration would certainly suggest a literate audience was primarily intended to be engaged by this artefact.

Hagiographical

Alfred is recalled as an active participant in a miracle story from a collection of St John of Beverley's posthumous miracles known as *Alia Miracula, Auctore ut Plurimum Teste Oculato.* The collection is printed in volume I of Jame Raine's *Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops* (1879).[66] The miracle story in question is set in the anarchy of King Stephen's reign and involves the powerful baron (and charter co-attestor with Alfred) Robert de Stuteville III, who had imprisoned a clerk of Lincoln in his castle at Cottingham, some three miles from Beverley, holding him for ransom. On a certain night St John appears and frees the clerk from his chains and leads him to the safety of Beverley. In the morning the clerk informs the Minster clergy of the miraculous intervention of St John and a remaining iron ring falls from his leg in front of their eyes. The ring is then hung up in the church near the tomb of St John as a testimony to the saint's miraculous powers. The

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[63] J.S.Purvis, 'The Tables of the York Vicars Choral', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 41 (1966), pp. 741-8. A recent survey of the usage of wooden tablets in medieval churches is Jeanne Krochalis, '*Magna Tabula*: The Glastonbury Tablets' in James P. Carley, ed. *Glastonbury Abbey and the Arthurian Tradition* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 435-567.

[64] Purvis, 'Tables', p. 741.

[65] B.Dobson, 'The Later Middle Ages 1215-1500' in *A History of York Minster* eds., G.E.Aylmer and R.Cant (Oxford, 1977), pp. 44-109 at p.108 note 227.

[66] *HCY* I, pp. 293-320.

clerk's feet had been injured by the sharp reeds of the marshy land he had crossed during his escape and in the morning these are tended and healed by Alfred the sacrist, using his knowledge of medicine. In the story Alfred is recalled as both wise in the laws of the church and as being of advanced age at the time:

> 'Sacrista eiusdem ecclesiae tunc temporis fuit Alveredus, bonae memoriae, senex, ecclesiastica institutione sagax.' [67]

> 'The sacrist at those days was Alfred of happy memory, an old man and wise in the laws of the church.'

Alfred's involvement in the story of the imprisoned clerk of Cottingham castle is preserved in the version of the story printed by James Raine in his *Historians of the Church of York* (*HCY)* edition of 1879. [68] However, the same story of the imprisoned clerk, whilst found in the collection of St John's miracles contained in the Beverley Cartulary (folios 20 ʳ – 21 ʳ), contains no mention of Alfred of Beverley.

Raine's *HCY* edition of Folcard's *Life of St John* and the four sets of posthumous miracle stories requires brief explanation to enable its evidence for Alfred of Beverley to be properly assessed. The *HCY* edition is eclectic in its use of sources and has to be read attentively. Raine used a medieval manuscript, BL, MS Cotton Faustina B IV, a volume from the Cistercian abbey of Holm Cultram in Cumberland and written in a hand of the later twelfth century, [69] to print Folcard's *Life* and the first miracle story collection.[70] The Cotton manuscript ends abruptly, just before the ending of the miracle collection, and from that point Raine used an edition of Folcard's *Life of St John* and miracles printed in the *Acta Sanctorum* series of the Bollandists in

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[67] *HCY* I p.304.

[68] *Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana, Folcard's Vita Sancti Johannis*, Maii, vii vols., ii (Antwerp, 1688), pp. 166-194. For discussion on the lost manuscript see *HCY* I, p. lvii.

[69] Morris and Cambridge, 'Beverley Minster', p. 13 and note 52. Ian Doyle dates the manuscript to c.1175.

[70] Printed in *HCY* I, pp. 239-290. For Raine's sources see id. pp. lvi-lvii.

1688. The Bollandists' edition was based on a now lost original manuscript, '*Ex Ms Anglicano*' sent to them by Leander Pritchart, a Benedictine monk. [71] The lost manuscript supplies not only Alfred of Beverley's involvement in the Cottingham castle miracle story but the name of the author of the first posthumous collection, William Ketell and the names of the two clerks to whom he dedicated his collection, *Ethal* and *Thur*.[72] The Beverley Cartulary, for example, supplies no such prologues, author names or dedicatees. Many of its miracle stories are much abridged versions of those found in the lost Bollandist manuscript.

The twelfth century source, BL, MS Cotton Faustina B IV, however, contains matter of direct relevance to Alfred of Beverley and the *Historia.* The set of miracle stories following Folcard's *Life of St John* contains a considerably expanded version of a story of which our earliest source is the *Historia*. This is Alfred's account in book nine (*HAB* 9 3526-59 and discussed further in chapter 4.6) of the intervention of St John, protecting refugees fleeing from the soldiers of William I and seeking the sanctuary of Beverley I during the 'Harrying of the North' (1069-70). James Raine assumed the author was quoting Alfred.[73] If this were so it would provide evidence of early dissemination of the *Historia* in Cistercian channels but the conclusion appears fragile. The story contains much matter not found in Alfred's version. The tone of outrage at those involved in the rebellion and sympathy with William's harsh response are not present in the *Historia.* It would seem highly unlikely that this story of St John originated with Alfred. In the *Historia* he appears to be retelling a story in common circulation and therefore the Holm Cultram scribe may well have been drawing on another tradition of the story, of earlier provenance than Alfred's.

The author of *Alia Miracula, Auctore ut Plurimum Teste Oculato* which preserves the memory of Alfred in the clerk of Cottingham miracle, writes in a

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[71] *Acta Sanctorum Folcard*, p.168.
[72] *HCY* I, p.261, note I. It is Raine who has named William as *Ketell.* In the *Acta Sanctorum* edition he is *Kecell*.
[73] *HCY* I, liv.

manner suggesting he is a member of the church of Beverley. [74] A number of the author's statements, if taken at face value, give grounds to believe that c.1170 x c.1180 may have been the story's date of origin. James Raine, set out those grounds. [75] The author tells us the story of a young man who had been deaf and dumb since birth and who was present at a mass being celebrated by Archbishop Gerard of York (d. Southwell 1108) on the archbishop's first visit to Beverley. When the congregation began to sing the hymn *Gloria in excelsis* the youth, much to everyone's amazement, began to speak in both English and in French. The young man lived on in Beverley, a baker by trade, and died towards the end of Archbishop Thurstan's days (d. 1140). The author, as a young man, often used to see the baker and he heard the story of the miracle from many people who witnessed it themselves. If the writer of the miracle story was a boy before 1140 and remembered Alfred the sacrist who died in the 1150s, then he is unlikely to have lived much beyond c.1180. On these grounds Raine suggested the compilation might have originated from the period c.1170-80.

It is a perilous undertaking to attempt to assign a date of compilation with any degree of confidence from the content miracle stories, which can be so easily adapted and changed. The same miracle collection begins with a story of King Athelstan in which, at the end of his Scottish campaign and through the intercession of God, Athelstan was able to pierce the rock of Dunbar and through this sign, show that Scotland was rightfully subject to England. This story suggests an origin which might be closer to the time of Edward I's Great Cause at the end of the thirteenth century. That said, whether the collection *Alia Miracula; Auctore ut Plurimum Teste Oculato* dates from either the late twelfth or the late thirteenth century, or even later, it does not alter the central point of importance to the present enquiry. The collection preserves the memory of Alfred and firmly associates him with learning and wisdom. If we are to believe the author of the story of the clerk of Cottingham and Alfred was

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[74] Susan E. Wilson, *The Life and After Life of St John of Beverley* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 12, notes that the author frequently refers to "us" and "we" when referring to the clergy of Beverley.

[75] *HCY* I, p.lv and supported by Wilson, *The Life and Afterlife*, p. 12.

an old man at the time of the anarchy in the 1140's, it gives further grounds to believe that Alfred was probably born in the later decades of the eleventh century.

Chapter 2. The manuscripts of the *Historia.*

Alfred's history survives in ten manuscripts, including extracts and post-medieval transcripts. Two new witnesses have been identified during the course of this study; one a seventeenth century transcript, the other an almost complete copy of the *Historia*, contained within the early fourteenth century manuscript, BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra A. I, the chronicle of Furness Abbey, which supplies a history from the foundation of Britain by Brutus to 1298. Two medieval manuscripts, including London BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra A.I, contain text which extends Alfred's history from 1129 - where it ends in the present printed edition of the *Historia* - to 1135 and the death of Henry I. A third medieval manuscript, NLW Peniarth 384, also continues a continuation to 1135, but this additional text has been added in a different and later fifteenth-century hand (see Plate 3).

Fig. 2. List of manuscripts of the *Historia.*

Date	Manuscript	Short Description
s.xiv/xv	Bodl. MS Rawlinson B 200	The present T. Hearne edition is printed from this manuscript. See below.
s.xv[76]	NLW, MS Peniarth 384	There is some evidence suggesting a Jervaulx provenance for this book. A later hand extends the history from 1129 to 1135.
s.xvii	NLW, MS Wynnstay 11	Transcript of NLW, MS Peniarth 384 made in 1663 by William Maurice of Llansilin. **New witness.**
s.xiv	BnF, MS lat. 4126	Folios 242 v – 252 r of this volume contains book nine of Alfred's *Historia*. The work was commissioned by the Carmelite Robert Populton, prior of Hulne, Northumberland, in 1364. See below.
s.xiii/xiv	BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra A.I	This volume, dating from c.1300 from the Cistercian abbey of Furness, contains from folios 12 r to 115 v almost a complete copy of Alfred's *Historia* with some expansions noted on folios 39-41, 44 r, 50 v, 66-67, 72 v. **New witness**. See below.

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[76] Unpublished notes on NLW, Peniarth MS 384, National Library of Wales (2012). These unpublished and unattributed catalogue notes are informative. An erased inscription, 'liber de ….uall', at the top of folio.1, the author of the catalogue notes suggests, might be *Jorevall* indicating the provenance of this book might be the Cistercian abbey of Jervaulx, Yorkshire. On folio 62 in a mid s.xvi hand is copied the article on Alfred of Beverley from John Bale's *Illustrium* (1558) which the author of the unpublished NLW notes suggests might be the hand of Nicholas Brigham (d.1558). See Plate 3, p. 60.

s.xvii	BL, MS Harl.1018, art.1	A late seventeenth century transcript of Alfred's *Historia* which entered the Harley collection in 1707 from the collection of Edward Stillingfleet, bishop of Worcester (d. March 1699). The manuscript takes the narrative down to the death of Henry 1st in 1135.
s.xvii	Cambridge, Trinity College, MS O.2. 52	A seventeenth century transcript. The manuscript was one of the collection of five hundred volumes bequeathed in 1738 by Roger Gale, Hearne's contemporary antiquary (b.1672, d.1744), to Trinity College Cambridge. The text of the manuscript takes Alfred's *Historia* down to the death of Henry 1 in 1135.
s.xvi	BL, MS Cotton Vespasian A.V	A miscellany of historical excerpts from English chronicles. Folios 18 r- 19 v contain notes made by William Lambarde (d.1601) from a copy of Alfred of Beverley's *Historia* owned by William Darrell, canon of Canterbury. The notes are taken from all sections of the history and dated 1568.
s.xv	BL, MS Cotton Vespasian D.IV	A fifteenth century collection of five items one occupying folios 73 v-125 r, with the rubric, 'Godfridi Malmesburiensis a Saxonicum adventum' is books vi- ix of Alfred's *Historia*. The text continues to 1129 ending at the word, 'acceperat.' First half of s.xv.
s.xvii	Glasgow University Library, MS Hunter 318 (s.xvii), art.1	The manuscript catalogue[77] describes this MS as follows;- 'a seventeenth century MS bound volume containing Alfred of Beverley's chronicle, the prologue of Robert de Torigni, Henry of Huntingdon's letter to Warin, Nennius's Historia.' It notes that the Rev. Joseph Stevenson refers to the MS in his edition of Nennius (pp.xxvii and 4) stating that he considered it a transcript of Ff.i.27 in University Library Cambridge.'

The manuscripts of immediate relevance to the present study are Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 200, the source text for Hearne's edition of the *Historia*, and the two medieval manuscripts which present the extended text of Alfred's history : Paris, BnF, MS lat. 4126 and BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra A.I.

Bodl. MS Rawlinson B 200

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[77] J.Young and P. Aitken, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow* (Glasgow, 1908), pp. 252-254.

Thomas Hearne's edition of the *Historia* was printed from this manuscript. [78] Neil Ker considered it to be a late fourteenth-century compilation originally forming one volume with Bodl.MS Rawlinson C 162, consisting of Bede's *HE, Ymago Mundi* and *Epistola Cuthberti de obitu venerabilis Bedae Presbyteri*, and with Bodl. MS Rawlinson B 199: William of Malmesbury's *De gestis pontificum Anglorum*. [79]

Additional information about both the provenance and the commissioning of the volume is available from other sources. Thomas Hearne collaborated closely with its owner, the book collector Thomas Rawlinson (1681-1725), in the publication of Alfred's history in 1716, as correspondence between them confirms. On Feb 12 1716, in a letter to Rawlinson, Hearne wrote, 'I take great care of your M.S. of Aluredus Beverlacenis which you have bound very finely… You insinuated that Aluredus hath been printed already. If so, I will not undertake him. But perhaps you may be mistaken.'[80] On Thomas's death in 1725, [81] his collection was inherited by his younger brother Richard (1690-1755) and eventually came to rest in the Bodleian after Richard's death in 1756.[82]

The will of John de Newton, treasurer of York (1393-1414) tells us that three historical tracts of Bede, William of Malmesbury and Alfred of Beverley, in one volume, were among a very large collection of books bequeathed to the chapter of the metropolitan church of York for the purpose of establishing a library by the bibliophile, de Newton:

[78] Hardy, *DC* II. p. 172. See also, *CCMBB*, i (Oxford, 1872), p. 530, no. 200, *Aluredi Beverlacensis Annales Britanniae*, 'Hoc codice usus est Hearne in edition sua, Oxonii, 1716'.

[79] N.R.Ker, ed. *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: a list of surviving books*, 2nd edition (London, 1964), p. 216.

[80] Rannie, *Hearne's Remarks*, p. 172.

[81] Theodor Harmsen, 'Rawlinson, Thomas (1681-1725), *ODNB*, 46 (Oxford, 2004), pp.166-68.

[82] Mary Clapinson, 'Rawlinson, Richard (1690-1755)', *ODNB*, 46 (Oxford, 2004), pp. 162-64.

'Item librum Bedae de gestis Anglorum, Alfridi Beverlac' et Willielmi Malmesburiensis de Pontificibus, in uno volumine'[83]

A modern study of northern book owners and makers in the Middle Ages by J.B.Friedman provides further evidence for John de Newton's books and the origin of Hearne's Alfred of Beverley manuscript.[84] His contention that Bodl. MS. Rawlinson C 162 was rebound as three separate volumes by Thomas Rawlinson [85] (now Bodl. MS Rawlinson C.162, B.199, B.200) receives support from the correspondence between Hearne and Rawlinson quoted above. Friedman states that the original codex of three historical works, with its wide margins and well written text, was an 'expensive and luxurious book of English workmanship and presumably made for Newton' which could not have been made much earlier than its citation in Newton's will in 1414. [86]

Bodl.MS Rawlinson B 200 consists of thirty-eight folios. Each page measures 30 cms (height) x 22 cms (width) consisting of two columns of 7 cms width and 21 cms height with 48 lines of text per column. The introductory rubric is in red ink and page numbers are marked in blue. The manuscript is written in a clear hand and appears to be the work of one scribe. There are several brief marginal notes and glosses distributed across the folios of the volume, the most important of which are noted in the printed edition. There is only one book division in the work; that found on folio 9 where the scribe inserts in red ink *Explicit Iº liber incipit secundus.* This falls at *HAB* I.637 in the text.

Hearne took receipt of Thomas Rawlinson's manuscript in early February 1716 and the edition was printed and circulated to its subscribers by the middle of July of that year. One hundred and forty copies were printed; forty-eight in large format and one hundred in small.[87] The progress of the edition is

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[83] *Testamenta Eboracensia*, ed. W.Raine, SS (1836), p. 366.
[84] J.B.Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, 1995). See in particular p. 25, pp. 114-15, pp. 203-06.
[85] Ibid., p.114.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Rannie, *Hearne's Remarks*, p. 219. Letter from Hearne to T.Rawlinson dated May 11 1716.

monitored in the correspondence which Hearne maintained with Thomas Rawlinson and with the various subscribers. In one letter, May 25 1716, Hearne comments on the rapid progress of the edition because of the excellence of Alfred's Latin style: 'This work of Aluredus is a most excellent book. The author was master of a good style. Much better than many of his successors.'[88]

BnF, MS lat. 4126[89]

The manuscript consists of a miscellany of geographical, historical and biblical material and the hands of several scribes of the earlier to later fourteenth century are evident. [90] The name of the Carmelite friar Robert Populton, prior of Hulne, Northumberland, in 1364, appears on several occasions in the margins of the manuscript. On folio 211 v appears '*Ora pro Popilton qui me compilavit Eboraci.'* The work suggests itself to be a two-stage compilation where Populton has extended an existing historical collection, dating from the earier fourteenth century. [91] The date of Populton's birth is noted in a library catalogue of Hulne compiled that year and contained in the cartulary of the convent, BL, MS Harley 3897, which also notes that Robert died in 1368.[92] The codex shows evidence of original careful planning and the control of an overseer [93] possibly using the resources of the York Austin Friars library.

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[88] Ibid., p. 229.

[89] Sources for details of Paris, BnF, MS Lat. 4126 are as follows. Hardy *DC* II, pp. 170-1. Julia C. Crick, *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, III. *A Summary Catalogue of the Manuscripts*, pp. 256-61. *The Friars' Libraries*, ed. K.W. Humphreys, CBMLC (London, 1990), p.xxviii, pp. 159-60. Jacob Hammer, 'Note on a manuscript of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*', *Philological Quarterly* 12 (1933), pp. 225-234. Also discussed in Friedman, *Northern English Books,* pp. 41-52 and earlier by M.O.Anderson, 'The Scottish Materials in the Paris Manuscript Bib.Nat., Latin 4126' *The Scottish Historical Review* 28, 105 (April, 1949), pp. 31-42. 112-114.

[90] Crick, 'Summary Catalogue', p. 261. On fols 11 r, 13 v, 134 v, 212 v, 213 r, 252 r.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Humphreys, *Friars' Libraries*, p.160.

[93] Friedman, *Northern English Books*, p. 47.

Twelve of the items in the manuscript are found in the Austin convent's collections which very probably was the source of Populton's copies.[94]

From folio 242 v, commencing with the words '*Incipiunt excerpta de gestis regum Normannorum in Anglia secundum Alfridum Beverlacensum',* there are extracts from the final book of Alfred's *Historia* and these extend to folio 252 r, ending in 1135 at the death of Henry I.

Material of historical interest in the manuscript in addition to the passages relevant to Alfred of Beverley include extracts of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* and Henry of Huntingdon's *HA.* In the section of the manuscript containing the *HRB* material (f.134 v – 211 v), there is considerable marginal commentary in which passages from the collations in Alfred's *Historia* are used to authenticate Geoffrey's account. Jacob Hammer described this as demonstrating 'the critical spirit of a later age.'[95] At the end of the *HRB* extracts, in a concluding summary (f. 212 r - v), Populton uses Alfred's five *status* model (discussed in chapter 4.1) as a chronological reference point in the margin for the reader. The marginal notes show that Robert was familiar with Alfred's entire compilation not just its final book.

Marginal commentary on the *HRB* is found on folios 151 r, 153 v, 154 r, v, 155 r, v, 156 r, v, 157 r, v, 159 v, 162 v, 163 r, 164 r, 167 v, 168 v, 169 r, 172 r, v, 173 r, v.

Other references to Alfred before the main extracts from the *Historia* are:

211 v. Explicit Cronica Galfridi Monumetensis in Hystorium Britonum. Sequitur continuatio regum Saxonum secundum cronicas Alfridi Beverlacencis et Henrici Huntingdonensis.Ora pro Popilton, qui me compilavit Eboraci.

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[94] Humphreys, *Friars' Libraries*, p. xxviii.
[95] Hammer, *Note* p. 230.

212 v - 213 r. 'Finito regno Britonum …. Reges habere coeperunt.' This is supplied by the opening thirteen lines of book six of Alfred's historia (*HAB* 6 2078-90)

Folio 213 r is headed *Alfridus* but commences a section (213r- 242r) containing extracts from Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*. The rubrics state '*incipiunt excerpciones de historiis Anglorum et unde Angli venerunt et originem duxerunt* .'

Then 'Advenerunt autem Saxones sicut Bedae refert.' (*HAB* 6.2112)

The additional text f 251v –r

After the word *acceperat,* which is the concluding word in Hearne's edition, BnF, MS lat. 4126 supplies the following text:

> 'Datus est etiam episcopatus Coventrensis qui et Cestrensis Rogero nepoti Goffridi de Clynton qui ut dignior tanto honore esset tribus hunc marcarum millibus promeruit. Ordinati sunt autem xv. Kal. Decembris Cantuar. a Willielmo eiusdem ecclesiae archiepiscopo. Anno XXX fuit Rex in paschua apud Wodstok ubi Galfridus de Clintona infamatus est apud eum et accusatus de proditione ejus est. Inde ad festivitatem Sancti Michaelis transit in Normanniam. Anno XXXI rediit in aestate in Angliam ducens secum filiam suam. Congregatis autem apud Northampton omnibus principus Angliae, deliberatum est quod filia sua redderetur viro suo comiti Andegavensi, et ita factum est. Anno XXXII fuit magnum placitum Londoniae inter episcopum Sancti David et episcopum Glamorganciae de finibus parochiarum suarum. Eodem anno dedit rex episcopatum Eliensem Nigello et episcopatum Dunelmensem Galfrido Cancellario suo. Anno XXXIII fecit rex novum episcopatum apud Carleil quo anno transivit in Normanniam, ibidem moratus usque ad obitum suum. Anno igitur XXXV^o cum Rex a venatu venisset apud Sanctum Dionisium in Silva Leonum contra prohibitionem medici comedit carnes muraenarum quae ei semper

nocebant. Quae commestio senile corpus letaliter refrigidans, subeunte febre acuta, cum nulla posset ei medicina valere, decessit rex magnus Henricus, cum regnasset XXXV annis et quatuor fere mensibus.' [96]

Given Populton's direct involvement and interest in the compilation of the Alfredian material in the book, his death in 1368 provides a *terminus ante quem* for the Alfred of Beverley related material.

BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra A.I

This volume, containing 213 leaves and which T.D Hardy[97] considered to have been compiled by a monk of the Cistercian abbey of Furness, is an octavo volume written in double columns, and provides a history from Brutus down to 1298. It was a book formerly in the ownership of Archbishop Ussher, as located on the fly-leaf is the note – *Cottonianae Bibliotechae donavit Jacobus Usserius Armachanus*. From folio 1 to 115 v and from folio 174 to the end it is written in one hand. The section in between is written in separate hand (s). The volume appears to have been produced shortly after the end date of 1298. Folios 115 v ends with the death of Henry 1. From folio 12 r to 115 v the chronicle consists of almost a complete copy of Alfred of Beverley's *Historia* with some expansions noted on folios 39 r - 41r, 44 r, 50 v, 66-67, 72 v. The ending supplied on folio115 v takes Alfred's history down to 1135 with the same text as that found in BnF, MS lat. 4126 but provides the name *Aduulphus* as the recipient of the newly created bishopric of Carlisle by Henry I in 1133. This manuscript represents the earliest witness of Alfred of Beverley's history presently known.

The manuscript is considered by Antonia Gransden to be a copy and a continuation of a chronicle produced at the Cistercian abbey of Stanley in Wiltshire.[98]

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[96] This additional text is printed in Hardy, *DC* II. p. 171.
[97] Hardy, *DC* III. pp. 258-9.
[98] Gransden *HWE* I, p. 406.

Additional text, folio 115 v (the underlined text marks the additions and variant readings to the additional text in BnF, MS lat. 4126)

'Datus est etiam episcopatus Coventrensis qui et Cestrensis Rogero nepoti Goffridi de Clinton qui ut dignior tanto honore esset tribus hunc marcarum millibus promeruit. Ordinati sunt autem xv. Kal. Decembris Cantuar. a Willielmo eiusdem ecclesiae archiepiscopo.[99] Anno XXX fuit Rex in pascha apud Wodstok ubi Galfridus de Clintona   infamatus est apud eum et accusatus de proditione ejus est.[100]   Inde ad festivitatem   Sancti Michaelis transit in Normanniam.[101] Anno XXXI   rediit in aestate in   Angliam ducens secum filiam suam. Congregatis autem apud   Northampton omnibus principus Angliae, deliberatum est quod filia sua   redderetur viro suo comiti Andegavensi, et ita factum est.[102] Anno XXXII fuit magnum placitum apud Londoninium/ae inter episcopum Sancti   David et episcopum Glamorganciae de finibus parochiarum suarum. Eodem anno dedit rex episcopatum Eliensem Nigello et episcopatum Dunelmensem Galfrido Cancellario suo.[103] Anno XXXIII fecit rex novum episcopatum apud Carleil[104] et <u>dedit illam adeluulpho</u> quo anno transivit mare et moratus est in Normanniam usque ad obitum suum. Anno igitur <u>XXXIV</u> cum Rex a venatu venisset apud Sanctum Dionisium in Silva Leonum contra prohibitionem medici comedit carnes muraenarum quae ei semper nocebant et <u>semper eas amabat</u>. Quae commestio senile corpus letaliter refrigidans, subeunte febre acuta cum nulla posset ei medicina valere decessit rex magnus Henricus, cum regnasset XXXV annis et quatuor fere mensibus.'[105]

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[99] *HR* § 214, *Goffridi Dedintun.* JW *Chron* III, annal for 1129.
[100] *HA* VII. 41.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.
[103] *HA* VII. 42.
[104] Ibid.
[105] *HA* VII.43.

The Furness text supplies the information that in 1133 Henry I gave the new bishopric of Carlisle to Adelulf, a detail not found in BnF, MS lat. 4126.[106] In NLW, MS Peniarth 384 the additional text added by the later hand is that found in BnF, MS lat.4126. The additional information that the two manuscripts supply for the years 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134 and 1135 is found in the Durham *Historia Regum*, the chronicle of John of Worcester, and Henry of Huntingdon *HA*. The locations are footnoted.

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[106] Judith A. Green, *Henry I King of England and Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 264. Adelulf, prior of Nostell, was consecrated first bishop of Carlisle in 1133. M.Brett, *The English Church Under Henry I* (Oxford, 1975), p. 26, notes that Archbishop Thurstan of York, given authority by Pope Innocent II to divide dioceses and constitute new bishoprics, consecrated Adelold (Adelulf) prior of Nostell, first bishop of Carlisle c.1133.

Plate I. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B 200. Page 1.

Reproduced with the kind permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

Plate 2. Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B 200. Page 76.

Reproduced with the kind permission of The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

Plate 3. NLW, MS Peniarth 384.

By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / National Library of Wales
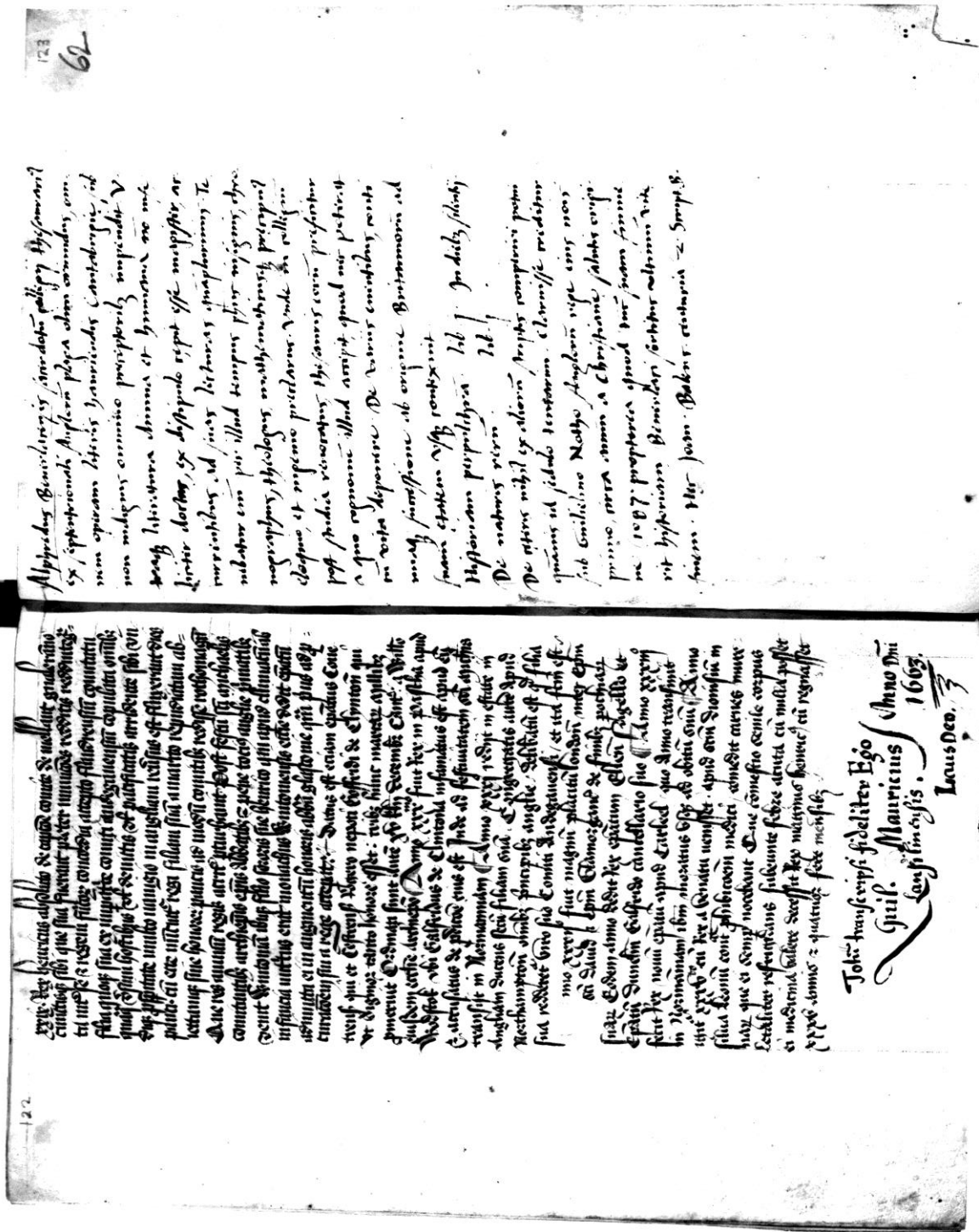
The final page of the *Historia* (f. 61 ᵛ) containing text after the word 'acceperat', added in a later hand (XV[2]) bringing the account down to 1135. A note dated 1663 states that Maurice Llansilin has transcribed the manuscript (NLW, MS Wynnstay 11). Note on page 62 is the entry on Alfred of Beverley from John Bale's *Illustrium* (1548), written possibly by Nicholas Brigham (d.1558).

Chapter 3. The circumstances and date of the *Historia.*

Introduction

An examination of the turbulent political and ecclesiastical circumstances in the church of York which gave rise to Alfred of Beverley's *Historia* is the subject of this chapter. Detailed consideration is also given to the question of the *Historia's* date of compilation; an issue which presently remains a matter of considerable uncertainty and is of importance to establish securely. For example, as this study will show that Alfred draws extensively on Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, the chronicle of John of Worcester, the *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the *Historia Regum*, attributed to Symeon of Durham, the dating of the appearance of the *Historia* with more precision will advance our understanding of the spread and influence of these important texts in the course of the twelfth-century; as indeed would it extend our knowledge of the circulation of historical texts which Alfred does not appear to know or use.

In recent years the appearance of the *Historia* has been most often assigned to the year 1143 although prominent scholars of northern history of an earlier era believed the text belonged to the period c.1150. So, for example, thought James Raine in his *Historians of the Church of York* (1879-94) [107] as also Arthur Leach in his *Memorials of Beverley Minster* (1898-1903).[108] In the modern period, H.S.Offler also thought the text dated from c.1150.[109] The year 1143 was however attached to the work by Antonia Gransden in her influential book, *Historical Writing in England* (1974) [110] and in a later article, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-century England', she repeated this view:

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[107] *HCY* I, p.liv.

[108] *BCA* I, p.xxi.

[109] H.S.Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, vol. II (1970), pp. 51-62, at p. 61, note 41.

[110] Gransden, *HWE* I, p. 212.

'Alfred of Beverley, a secular clerk, wrote his *Annales* to prevent himself from wasting time. He explains in the prologue that, owing to an interdict (i.e. in 1143) the celebration of the divine office in his church had temporarily stopped.' [111]

Gransden's proposed date of 1143 appears to closely reflect the view of the nineteenth-century scholar, T.D. Hardy, who wrote of Alfred's compilation in his *Descriptive Catalogue* (1865):

' the author appears to have made his compilation soon after 1143 as he states that in consequence of decrees of the council of London, the number of persons excommunicated was so great as to prevent the performance of divine service in his church.' [112]

The Galfridian scholar J.S.P.Tatlock, in discussing Alfred of Beverley in *The Legendary History of Britain* (1950), recycled T.D.Hardy's view. [113] R. William Leckie, *The Passage of Dominion* (1981), citing both Tatlock and Gransden, wrote, 'The Annales were begun in 1143.' [114] Richard Sharpe, *Handlist of Latin Writers* (1997), following Gransden, tentatively listed the work as dating from c.1143.[115] D.M.Palliser, writing in 2000, suggested the work was written somewhat earlier, c.1140. [116] Most recently, M.D.Reeve and Neil Wright, suggested 1143 as the likely date of composition. [117]

This chapter will set out a case arguing that there are no grounds for dating the *Historia* to c.1143 and that it almost certainly owes its origins to the period

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[111] A Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England' in id., *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), p.133.
[112] Hardy, *DC* II, pp. 172-3.
[113] J.S.P.Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1950), pp. 210-211.
[114] Leckie, *Passage,* p.131, note 51.
[115] R.Sharpe, ed. *A Handlist of Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540* (Turnhout, 1997), p. 54.
[116] D.M.Palliser, 'The Early Medieval Minster' in *Beverley Minster. An Illustrated History* (Beverley, 2000), p. 23.
[117] *HRB* I, p. xiv, note 31. Neil Wright, 'Twelfth-Century Receptions of a Text: Anglo-Norman Historians and Hegesippus', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 31 (2010), pp.177 - 95, at p.178.

c.1148 - c.1151, as suggested by Raine and Leach, more than a century ago.
A number of statements made by Alfred in the prologue of the *Historia*,
describing the background to his historical project, will be examined and
matched to the political and ecclesiastical events which took place in the
diocese of Yorkshire at the time and these point clearly to the period 1148-51
as the date of the *Historia's* composition, not 1143. In addition, internal
evidence from the text of *Historia*, identified during the course of this study,
provides a *terminus post quem* for the *Historia* of c.1147 x 1149. A *terminus
ante quem* of December 1154 is indicated in the text although it will be
suggested that the *Historia* is very likely to have been completed before this
date, perhaps during the course of 1151 itself. January 1151 is the date when
a quarrel between the archbishop of York Henry Murdac and King Stephen of
England was settled and the crisis in the Yorkshire church, which had given
rise to the writing of the *Historia*, was resolved.

The prologue statements in the *Historia* and their dating implications.

Alfred's prologue, described by Antonia Gransden as 'illuminating', [118] opens
with a passage containing a series of statements describing the
circumstances which gave rise to the *Historia* and these statements contain
important information enabling a date of the *Historia's* composition to be
estimated with some precision. The relevant statements are marked in bold
type:

> 'In diebus silencii nostri, quando non poteramus reddere deo quae dei erant,
> et tamen cogebamur reddere Caesari quae Caesaris erant, **quod propter
> praesentem excomunicatorum multitudinem secundum Londoniensis
> concilii decretum** a divinis cessabamus **et regiis exaccionibus afflicti**
> vitam taediosam agebamus, grassante oppressione qua, **expulsis ad regis
> edictum de sedibus suis ecclesiae nostrae** columpnis, diu graviterque
> vexatus sum, pene en desperacionem cum pene solus essem decidi.'
>
> *HAB* Prologue, 17-33

[118] Gransden, 'Prologues', p.130.

'In the days of our silence, when we could not render unto God the things that were God's but were forced to render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's**, *because* we ceased divine services on account of the large number of people excommunicated according to the decree of the Council of London and, afflicted by taxes of the King,** we were leading a life of boredom, **and with threatening encroachment, the pillars of our church were driven from their sees by command of the King a**nd when, because of this, I myself was for a long time in a state of considerable distress, and because of being more or less left on my own, almost fell into a state of despair.'

Four main points of information relevant to the dating of the *Historia* are provided in this opening passage. Each will be discussed in turn:

1. The suspension of divine services and the excommunications.

2. The decree of the London Council authorising the excommunications.

3. The afflictive taxes imposed by the king.

4. The edict or command of the king dismissing senior churchmen.

1. Suspension of divine services and large numbers of excommunications.

The impact of the death of Archbishop Thurstan of York

The death of Archbishop Thurstan in February 1140 at the Cluniac priory of St John of Pontefract was a landmark not only for the Yorkshire church but in the affairs of the country as a whole. John of Hexham describes Thurstan's death as heralding an immediate breakdown of social order and stability throughout the kingdom and loss of respect for the church. It was almost as if John saw the archbishop's death as the tipping point for England's descent into the anarchy of Stephen's reign:

'Post mortem eius continuo emersit insolentia, et indisciplinatae dissensionis vaga licentia in clericos, impudensque contemptus, irreverentia laicorum

adversus ecclesiasticas leges et personas; regnique integritas dissoluta est, quia unicuique quod libuit licuit.'[119]

'After his death there arose arrogance, disputes were allowed to run on without restraint among the clergy and there was shameless contempt and irreverence of the laity towards church laws and dignitaries. The unity of the Kingdom was broken, because everyone did as he pleased.'

Roger of Howden, writing in the 1190's reported Thurstan's death as creating immediate division within the Yorkshire church. [120]

Thurstan's death came at a critical moment in King Stephen's fortunes. By the end of 1139 the empress Matilda was enjoying a revival of fortunes, controlled the West Country and was challenging Stephen's hold on the throne supported by her uncle, David King of Scotland.[121] David himself, though defeated at the battle of the Standard in 1138, was intensifying his hold over much of the north, intent on forging a new 'Scoto-Northumbrian kingdom' and adopting a policy of castle-building, military overlordship, the establishment of religious foundations and endowments and aristocratic colonization to achieve this objective. [122] In the north, an area which Stephen only occasionally visited during his reign, Thurstan was a vital ally, instrumental in maintaining loyalty to King Stephen amongst the barons and knights of the region. [123] Thurstan had used a strong relationship which he enjoyed with Stephen to

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[119] *J.Hexham*, p. 305.

[120] *R.Howden*, I. p. 198, '*Eodem anno obit Turstinus archiepiscopus Eboracensis, quo defuncto statim fit schisma in ecclesia Eboracensi de electione pontificis*'. '*That same year Thurstan archbishop of York died and on his death there immediately arose a division in the church of York as to the election of an archbishop*'.

[121] R.H.C.Davis, *King Stephen* (London, 1967), p. 39.

[122] K.J.Stringer, 'State-Building in Twelfth-Century Britain: David I, King of Scots, and Northern England', in *Government, Religion and Society in Northern England 1000-1700*, eds., J.C.Appleby and P.Dalton (Stroud, 1997), pp. 40-62 citing G.W.S.Barrow at p. 44. For King David's political ambitions in the north of England at the time of King Stephen see also G.W.S.Barrow, 'The Scots and the North of England' in *The Anarchy of King Stephen's reign*, ed. Edmund King (Oxford, 1994), pp. 231-53. Dalton, *Conquest*, pp.196-230.

[123] *RRAN* III, pp. xxxix-xliv. Stephen made visits to Yorkshire in 1136, 1138 (?), 1142 (?), 1148, 1149, 1154.

consolidate the position of the northern church which had been built up during the course of his archiepiscopate (1114-40), from the very outset of Stephen's reign.[124] One of the king's few northern visits occurred within two months of his coronation (Dec 25, 1135) to deal with King David's invasion of Northumbria and his seizure of the towns of Carlisle, Carham, Alnwick, Norham and Newcastle after the death of Henry I. During this visit Thurstan obtained from the king charters of confirmation for the Yorkshire collegiate churches of York, Ripon and Beverley and the abbeys of Fountains, Rievaulx and Whitby which had been either endowed or founded by himself or by other leading lay magnates, such as Walter Espec and Eustace fitzJohn.[125] In the lead up to the battle of the Standard in 1138, Thurstan conducted truce negotiations with King David at Roxburgh and, according to the chronicle of Richard of Hexham, Stephen's victory at the battle of the Standard in August 1138 was largely orchestrated by the archbishop.[126]

Thurstan's considerable reputation is illustrated by the tributes paid to him by the northern chroniclers of the time. John of Hexham provides a mini *vita* of Thurstan in his chronicle, eulogising his achievements.[127] Ailred of Rievaulx does likewise in his account of the Battle of the Standard.[128] Hugh of Kirkstall, the historian of Fountains abbey, which Thurstan helped found in 1132, referred to him as '*Homo magnarum rerum et totius religionis amator.*'[129]

The election of William fitzHerbert and its aftermath. 1141-1147

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[124] D.Nicholl, *Thurstan, Archbishop of York 1114-1140* (York, 1964), pp. 215-16.

[125] *RRAN* III, Beverley Minster no. 99. Fountains Abbey, no. 335. Rievaulx Abbey, no. 716. Ripon Minster, no.717. Whitby Abbey no. 942. York Minster, no. 975.

[126] Richard of Hexham, *de Gestis Stephani et de Bello Standardii,* in *Chron. Steph,* iii, p.160.

[127] *J. Hexham*, pp. 302-5.

[128] Ailred of Rievaulx, *Relatio de Standardo of St. Aelred, abbot of Rievaulx*, in *Chron. Steph.* iii, pp.182-85.

[129] Hugh of Kirkstall, *Narratio de Fundatione Fontanis Monasterii*, in *Memorials of the Abbey of St Mary of Fountains*, I, ed. J. R. Walbran, SS, 42 (Durham, 1862), pp. 1-129, at p. 8, 'A man of great achievements and a lover of all monks.'

According to John of Hexham, the York chapter prevaricated for an entire year before finally sitting down to elect Thurstan's successor.[130] When eventually in January 1141 the election did take place and the treasurer of York, William fitzHerbert, was elected, it set in train a series of events which started with conflict but which ended with crisis, schism and interdict in the Yorkshire church in 1148.[131] The ramifications of the York election lasted for nearly twenty years and involved "nearly every person of importance in England and many on the continent." [132] The affair occupied the attention of five successive popes [133] and St Bernard of Clairvaux (d.1153) was a central player in the dispute. Of the forty-seven surviving letters of St Bernard which concern English affairs, twenty-two deal with the issue of the York archiepiscopal election. [134] The election came soon after the second Lateran Council called by Pope Innocent II in 1139 to rectify the abuses of eight years of papal schism and to establish the qualifications for, and process of choosing, good bishops. One of the council's decrees, canon twenty-eight, had stipulated that the *viros religiosos* (regular clergy) were not to be excluded from the election of bishops and if they were, the election would be deemed null and void.[135] The Yorkshire election of 1141 was in fact a high profile test case of how a senior ecclesiastic, fit for purpose in the reformed church, should be elected.

During the course of 1140 two candidates were in turn considered by the York chapter but their nominations were unsuccessful. Waltheof, prior of Kirkham, was rejected by King Stephen because of his close connections to King David

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[130] *J.Hexham*, p.306,

[131] Christopher Norton, *St William of York* (York, 2006). Chapters 3 and 4 provide the most recent survey of the disputed election and its ramifications. A summary overview of the issues involved in the dispute is provided on pp.76-79.

[132] David Knowles, 'The case of Saint William of York' in id. *The Historian and Character* (Cambridge, 1963), p.76. See also D. Baker, 'Viri Religiosi and the York election dispute', *Studies in Church History* 7 (1971), pp. 87-100.

[133] Innocent II (1130-43), Celestine II (1143-44), Lucius II (1144-45), Eugenius III (1145-53), Anastasius IV (1153-54).

[134] Christopher Holdsworth, 'St Bernard and England', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 8 (1985), pp.138-153 at pp. 141, 149.

[135] Baker, 'Viri Religiosi', p. 89 and note 1.

and the Scottish court.[136] Henry of Sully, abbot of Fécamp and nephew of King Stephen, was then canvassed on the recommendation of the papal legate and bishop of Winchester Henry of Blois, only to be rejected by Pope Innocent II because he was unwilling to first resign his abbacy.[137] Finally in January 1141, the electors, under pressure from Earl William of Aumale on behalf of King Stephen, elected William fitzHerbert, a former royal chaplain of Stephen and the long- time treasurer of York. William was the son of Emma, an illegitimate daughter of Stephen Count of Blois, and half-sister to King Stephen and connected to a number of other French and Norman noble houses. He was also an experienced administrator and had been treasurer of York since the days of Archbishop Thomas II (1108-1114). William was quickly recognised as archbishop by Stephen and confirmed in his temporalities in Lincoln, shortly before the King was defeated and captured at the battle of Lincoln in February 1141.

The election was immediately contested and appeals were launched both to Rome and the papal legate Henry of Blois. William was opposed by the reformist Yorkshire Cistercian abbots William of Rievaulx and Richard II of Fountains and the priors of the Augustinian houses of Guisborough and Kirkham. From within the York chapter itself there was opposition from the archdeacons Walter of London and Osbert of Bayeux and William d'Eu, the precentor.[138] William was accused of having been intruded, of unchaste living and of simony; three cardinal sins of the reformist party. [139] Despite his consecration by Henry of Blois in September 1143, William remained under relentless pressure to secure his position as archbishop in a campaign of opposition orchestrated largely by the pen of St Bernard. William's itinerary during these years attests this campaign of opposition: [140]

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[136] Norton, *St William*, p. 81.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Baker, 'Viri Religiosi', pp. 95-96. Knowles, 'The case', pp. 80-81. *EEA* V, p. 122.
[139] Greenway, *York Fasti*, p. 3.
[140] Norton, *St William*, pp. 239-241. From 1141 onwards, this expands the itinerary provided in *EEA* V, pp.118-119. William's presence in York, Ripon and Beverley in 1143 is added by C. Norton.

- 1142 before 22 April. At Rome for hearing on the appeal before Pope Innocent II.
- 1143 7 March. At Rome for further hearing on the appeal, before Pope Innocent II.
- 1143 September. Probably appeared at the legatine council at Winchester.
- 1143 26 September. Consecrated archbishop by Henry of Blois at Winchester.
- After September 1143. Visits Ripon. Beverley ?
- 1144 18 October. At Durham for enthronement of William of St Barbe.
- 1146 before February 21. At Rome for hearing of his case before Pope Eugenius III. William is suspended from office.
- 1146 visits Sicily
- 1147 no later than May 1147. Deposition by Pope Eugenius III.
- 1147-1153. In exile in Winchester.

William journeyed to Rome on three occasions for appeals against his election to be heard in the papal curia, spending only the period from end 1143 to end 1145 in continuous residence in England. His movements in the diocese of Yorkshire during this period are mainly known through surviving archiepiscopal *acta* which can be attributed to his first archiepiscopate (1143-47) of which some eleven genuine *acta* remain. [141] Six of these relate to York and the East Riding, where William had been archdeacon before his election in 1141 and the town of Beverley was a beneficiary of the archbishop. William, using the late archbishop's seal, confirmed and extended privileges to the town's burgesses which had been granted earlier by Archbishop Thurstan.[142] There are no York attestors named, indicating that the charter is likely to have been issued at Beverley. [143]

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[141] Norton, *St.William*, p.113.
[142] *EEA* V, no. 86, pp. 68-70.
[143] Norton, *St William,* p.112.

Summary: There is no historical record in William fitzHerbert's first archiepiscopate (1141-47) of the archbishop issuing interdicts or excommunications resulting in the suspension of Divine Office, in York or Beverley. The itinerary of the archbishop from his consecration in September 1143 to 1145 shows him to have been resident and active in his diocese. During this period, possibly in late 1143 or early 1144, he issued a major charter in favour of the town of Beverley, probably given in the town of Beverley itself.

The suspension and deposition of William fitzHerbert, election of Henry Murdac and schism in the Yorkshire church. 1146-1148

The election of Pope Eugenius III in February 1145, a former Cistercian monk of Clairvaux and a disciple of St Bernard, witnessed an intensification of St Bernard's efforts to secure William's deposition. At the hearing in Rome in early 1146 William was suspended by Eugenius until he secured an oath from the bishop of Durham, William of St Barbe, that his election had been canonical. William, as former dean of the chapter of York, had been present at the election. The oath was never secured. After William's suspension, the situation in Yorkshire rapidly began to deteriorate. Supporters of Archbishop William raided Fountains abbey and burned down a number of the monastery buildings, destroying materials and produce. An eye-witness account of the attack provided by Serlo, monk of Fountains, is preserved in Hugh of Kirkstall's early thirteenth- century account of the foundation and history of the monastery of Fountains. [144] St Bernard immediately appealed to Pope Eugenius for final sentence on William and in early 1147 William was deposed and a new archiepiscopal election was ordered. [145] The following year, at the council of Rheims (March 1148), the deposition was formalised.

The second York election which took place in the archdeaconry of Richmond in July 1147 was as divided as the first. King Stephen's party included Earl

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[144] Hugh of Kirkstall, *Narratio,* pp. 100-102.
[145] Norton, *St William*, p. 120, note 150. Knowles, 'The case', pp. 88-90.

William of Aumale, Stephen's most powerful supporter in the north [146] and senior York chapter members such as the dean, Robert de Gant and the treasurer and archdeacon of the East Riding, Hugh du Puiset,[147] nephew of King Stephen. Both Robert and Hugh, according to John of Hexham, had been promoted to these high offices in the York church by Archbishop William. They supported Master Hillary, a prominent canon lawyer who had served as clerk to the Bishop of Winchester. However, the remaining archdeacons, William d'Eu and the suffragan bishops of Carlisle and Durham, Athelwold and William of Ste. Barbe, were in favour of Henry Murdac. Pope Eugenius – who had been a monk of Clairvaux at the time of Henry Murdac – ruled in Henry's favour and Master Hilary was compensated by Pope Eugenius with the see of Chichester.

The election was the first time since the Norman conquest that an English archbishop had been elected without the approval of the king.[148] John of Salisbury, commenting in his *Historia Pontificalis* (c. 1164), [149] had made clear that the election was conducted in open defiance of the king's expressed wishes. Describing the debates of the assembled bishops at the council of Rheims (1148), at which John had been present, he recalled archbishop Theobald's complaint to Pope Eugenius that Henry Murdac had taken up his seat in the north as though it were of equal dignity to Canterbury, whereupon the pope replied that 'one who had as yet no seat could not supersede.' John then added:

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[146] WN *HRA* I, p. 103. William of Newburgh describes him as a third king in the north, placed in between Stephen in the south and David in Scotland.

[147] G.V.Scammel, *Hugh du Puiset Bishop of Durham* (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 7-12. Hugh, born c.1125, was a great- grandson of William the Conqueror on his mother's side and closely associated with the Blois attempts to strengthen its position in the north under Stephen.

[148] Janet Burton, 'English Monasteries and the Continent' in *King Stephen's reign 1135-54*, eds., Paul Dalton and Graeme J. White (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 98-114 at p.111.

[149] *John of Salisbury's Memoirs of the Papal Court*, ed. and trans. M.Chibnall, NMT (London, 1956), p.xxviii.

> ' … convenire dicens hoc, quia Stephanus rex Anglorum eundem archiepiscopum sede sua privabat, quia contra voluntatem et prohibitionem suam electus fuerat et a dominio papa Autisiodori consecratus. [150]

> 'which is true enough, since Stephen, king of the English, had deprived Archbishop Henry of his seat on account of his election against the king's wishes, indeed his express prohibition, and his consecration by the pope at Auxerre.'

In December 1147 Henry Murdac was consecrated and given the pallium by Pope Eugenius at Treves in France. In March 1148 Henry attended the council of Rheims with the four English bishops whom Stephen had delegated to represent the English church along with Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury and members of his familia who had attended in defiance of the King's orders[151]. Stephen refused to recognise Henry's election. When Henry returned to England in 1148 after the Rheims council, he was prevented by the king's supporters from entering the city of York and taking his archiepiscopal seat. Henry gave Stephen no customary oath of fealty on appointment to high ecclesiastical office and the king deprived him of his temporalities.

1148 - Interdict and excommunications

A situation of crisis now enveloped the church of York, described by John of Hexham in the following terms:

> 'Henricus archiepiscopus Eboracensis in Angliam venit, quem recipere rex Stephanus et civitas Eboracensis non acquievit; factaque est confusio maxima infidelitatis in ea. Quisquis enim ad eum egredi praesumeret, a civitate, si in manus civium recideret, cum tormento et damno rerum quas

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[150] Ibid., p. 5. John erred in giving Auxerre for Treves.
[151] In addition to John of Salisbury the group included Henry Murdac, Roger de Pont l'Eveque and Thomas Becket.

habebat ejectus est. Praebendae in fiscum regium redactae sunt, et homines Sancti Petri violentiis et direptionibus expositi.' [152]

'Henry archbishop of York, came to England but King Stephen and the city of York refused to receive him and a grievous disturbance took place there; for whoever attempted to leave the city to join him, if he fell into the hands of the citizens, was expelled with torture and confiscation of his property. The revenues of the canons were appropriated to the king's exchequer and the men of St Peter were subjected to violence and spoliation.'

The Fountains historian and John of Hexham tell us that after these acts of violence and unable to enter York, Henry took refuge in the church of Ripon, close to the abbey of Fountains where he had retained his abbacy. [153] From Ripon he placed the city of York under interdict and pronounced sentence of excommunication on Hugh du Puiset, William of Aumale, the inhabitants of the city of York and 'all of his opponents.' [154] According to John of Hexham, Hugh refused to allow ecclesiastical services to be suspended within York itself and issued a counter excommunication on Henry Murdac and his supporters. From this point until January 1151 Henry was effectively an exile in his own diocese and his precise movements are mostly unknown. His presence in Beverley, where the archbishops of York were temporal lords, is recorded in the cartulary of Whitby Abbey. In Beverley, in Lent 1148, he accepted the resignation of Abbot Benedict of Whitby.[155] John of Hexham says that he journeyed to Durham where he was received with honour by Bishop William and he adds that when he went to visit King David in Carlisle he was also received with honour by Bishop Athelwold but it is not clear from John's account whether these visits of Henry Murdac took place in 1148 or in

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[152] *J. Hexham*, p. 322.

[153] Hugh of Kirkstall, *Narratio,* pp 102-103. Henry continued to hold the abbacy of Fountains until his death in 1153 and ruled through a succession of suffragan abbots, Maurice (1148), Thorald (1148-50) Richard (c.1150-53).

[154] *J. Hexham* I, p. 322, '*In Ripun Henricus archiepiscopus se recepit, et in Hugonem Putheacensem thesaurarium anathematis sententiam dedit, et in omnes in civitate Eboraci consistentes*'.

[155] *Cartularium Abbathiae de Whiteby Ordinis S.Benedicti*, ed. J. C. Atkinson, SS, 69 (Durham, 1879), pp. 8-9.

the following year at Easter when King David knighted Henry, prince of Anjou, with full pomp at Carlisle.[156]

Summary: It was the suspension and deposition of Archbishop William fitz Herbert, the election of Henry Murdac in July 1147 and the refusal of the citizens of York to allow Archbishop Henry to enter his diocesan Cathedral in York, augmented by the acts of violence perpetrated against supporters of the archbishop, attested by the chronicler John of Hexham, which led to the interdicts and excommunications imposed on the city of York. Hugh du Puiset's counter interdicts, imposed on the supporters of the archbishop, date also from this time, spring 1148, after the return of Henry Murdac from the council of Rheims which ended on March 21. In John of Hexham's words, a state of 'shameful discord and angry contention arising in the archbishopric' prevailed in the archbishopric. [157]

2. The decree of the London Council authorising the excommunications.

The principal councils of Stephen's reign (1135-54) were the legatine councils of Alberic of Ostia (London 1138), Henry, bishop of Winchester (1129-71), and those of Archbishop Theobald whilst papal legate (from early 1150).[158] Three of these councils produced a significant body of ecclesiastical legislation, much of it relating to protecting church property and clergy from the violence of the anarchy and laying out disciplinary sanctions to be taken against 'disturbers of the peace.'[159] The legislation specified the activities for which a sanction of excommunication was to be imposed and how and under what circumstances the excommunicate could obtain absolution and the further penalties for not doing so.

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[156] *J. Hexham,* pp. 322-3.

[157] *J. Hexham,* p. 322, '*Facta est foeda in archiepiscopatu super hac re dissension et zeli contentio*'.

[158] The exact date when Theobald's legateship began is a matter of some doubt. Saltman, based on close study of Theobald's charters and his receipt of papal bulls bearing the legatine title, considers it to date from early 1150. Saltman, *Theobald*, p. 31. See also *CS,* p. 814 and p.120.

[159] Barlow, *The English Church,* p. 131.

Fig. 3. Westminster councils 1138-51 issuing significant disciplinary legislation for the protection of the clergy and their property.

Council	Date	Location	Principal Chronicle Sources	Legislation [160]
Legatine Council of Alberic cardinal bishop of Ostia	December 1138	Westminster – Church of St Peter the apostle. 18 Bishops and 30 abbots plus numerous clergy.	Richard of Hexham, John of Hexham, John of Worcester, Gervase of Canterbury.	**17 canons promulgated. First 9 mainly a reissue of Westminster council of 1125, but canons x–xiii contain new emphasis on defence against violence of every kind.**
Legatine Council Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester. King Stephen present	c.14 March 1143	London	Henry of Huntingdon Robert de Torigni, Roger of Howden, William of Newburgh. Gervase of Canterbury.	**17 disciplinary canons dealing with disturbers of the peace of the church probably ascribable to this council (CS pp.800-803)**
Legatine Council of Archbishop Theobald. King Stephen, Eustace his son and the nobility of England present	**18 March 1151**	**London**	**Henry of Huntingdon**	**8 canons concerned with the situation of confusion brought on by the anarchy. 'Owed something to the 1143 council both verbally and in the substance of one or two of its canons' (CS p. 822)**

The legatine council of Henry of Blois which took place in London during Lent 1143 is described by Henry of Huntingdon, who may have been present as an eye witness to the council accompanying Bishop Alexander of Lincoln: [161]

> 'In the eighth year, King Stephen was present at a council in London in mid-Lent. The Bishop of Winchester, the legate of the city of Rome, held this council at London because of the clergy's urgent needs: for plunderers were

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[160] Legislation found in *CS*, pp. 768-828.

[161] *HA* p. liv.

paying no respect either to clerks or to God's church, and clerks were being taken captive and ransomed just like laymen. At this council it was decreed that anyone who laid violent hands on a clerk could be absolved only by the pope, and that in person. Thanks to this, clerks enjoyed a bare measure of tranquillity.' (*HA* 10, 21)

The decree which Henry summarises is likely to have been canon two of the seventeen canons ascribed to this council: [162]

'Si quis clerico vel aliis ecclesiasticis personis manum iniecerit vel in carcerem vel in vincula miserit vel redemerit, anathema sit, nec solutionem mereatur nisi mortis articulo instante priusquam a domno papa solvatur. Locus vero in quo clericus vel alia ecclesiastica persona tenta fuerit, vel vinculis mancipata, et omnia circumiacentia castella et rura, civitates etiam vicine que capientis vel tententis vel tenentis fuerint, a divino officio cessent et cum lugente lugeant' (*CS*, p.800).[163]

'If anyone assaults a cleric or other ecclesiastical persons and throws him into prison or bondage or tries to ransom him for money, he shall be excommunicate. Nor is he entitled to absolution unless at the point of death or sooner being absolved by the Lord Pope. The place in which the clerk or other ecclesiastic is held or committed to prison and all places surrounding the castle and in the countryside and towns and localities of the jailors must cease the Divine Office and mourn with the mourner.'

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[162] *HA* X. 21, p. 742, note 119 and see also *CS*, p. 800.
[163] *CS*, p. 800, note 2. The *CS* editors point out that this canon is similar to canon 15 of the Lateran II council of 1139. It appears as canon 10 of the 1138 legatine council of Westminster.

The seventeen canons of the London council of 1143 placed emphasis on the protection of the clergy from physical violence, and specify the circumstances where excommunication is to be imposed. Canon one, for example, prescribed:

> 'Sanctorum Patrum vestigiis inherentes novis morbis nova remedia procuramus. Statuimus igitur ut si quis possessiones ecclesiasticas invaserit, diripuerit vel depopulatus fuerit vel quoquo modo distraxerit, anathema sit.'[164]

> 'Following the footsteps of the Holy Fathers we are bringing new remedies to new ailments. We ordain therefore that anyone who attacks, damages, plunders or in any way removes ecclesiastical property, he shall be excommunicate.'

The council also introduced legislation ordering the suspension of the Divine Office where excommunicates were present. Canon five prescribed:

> 'Prohibemus nichilominus ne divinum officium celebretur, sed nec campana pulsetur in urbe vel in castro vel in rure, ubi aliquis excommunicatorum presens fuerit.' [165]

> 'We verily forbid that the Divine Office is celebrated, nor the ringing of bells in town, hamlet or countryside, where any excommunicate person is present.'

Canon eight imposed strict penalties on clerks who failed to implement the cessation of divine services as prescribed :

> 'Decernimus ut sacerdotes qui divina officia celebrare inhibiti nichilominus celebraverunt et ob hoc anathemate vincti sunt, degradentur et bonis ecclesiasticis priventur, nisi a domno papa veniam consequantur. Qui vero

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[164] *CS*, p. 800
[165] *CS*, p. 801

eandem sententiam nondum passi sunt, nisi infra xl dies resipuerint, eadem pena plectantur.' [166]

'We decree that priests who have celebrated divine office when it has been forbidden to celebrate the divine office and are restrained by this anathema, are degraded and stripped of their ecclesiastical benefices, unless subsequently absolved by the Lord Pope. Those who have not yet suffered that sentence, unless they repent within forty days let them be punished by the same penalty.'

The editors of Councils and Synods (published 1981) suggest that it is this council which Alfred referred to in his prologue.[167] More recently, Christopher Norton noted that canon five of the 1143 council prescribed the conditions for the suspension of church services in Beverley. [168] Supporting this is the chronology of the events under discussion. If the interdicts and excommunications occurred in spring 1148, this indicates that Alfred's statement in the prologue .'.*quod propter praesentem excomunicatorum multitudinem secundum Londoniensis concilii decretum a divinis cessabamus…*' (*HAB* Prologue.19-28) referred to the 1143 council. No other London council which issued relevant disciplinary legislation is known to have been held between 1143 and spring 1148. A London council may have taken place in November 1143, but this issued no relevant disciplinary legislation.[169]

Summary: The Westminster legatine council of 1143 introduced important new disciplinary legislation aimed at protecting church property and clergy. No other London council issuing similar disciplinary legislation is known to have occurred after 1143 and before spring 1148, thus it appears that it is the March 1143 legatine council and its decrees to which Alfred refers to in the prologue. In canon five there is prescriptive legislation mandating the suspension of divine services in churches where excommunicates were present. Canon two suspends divine services in places where clerks are

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[166] *CS,* pp. 801-2.
[167] *CS,* p.795, note 1.
[168] Norton, *St William*, pp.127-128, note 9.
[169] *CS*, pp. 804-810.

being imprisoned. Canon eight imposes severe penalties on priests who do not implement the rules governing suspension of divine services.

3. King Stephen's tax on Beverley and its background.

We have the evidence of John of Hexham's chronicle to tell us that King Stephen visited Beverley and imposed a fine on the town for having received and sheltered Archbishop Henry without his permission:

> 'Et Stephanus rex, suggerentibus civibus Eboracensibus, ad Beverlacum divertens, pecuniaria poena in homines loci illius ultus est, qui Henricum archiepiscopum eo inconsulto in villam recipere praesumpserunt.'[170]

> 'At the instigation of the citizens of York, King Stephen went to Beverley and imposed a fine on that place, who had dared, without his leave to receive into their town the archbishop Henry.'

John incorrectly supplies the year 1150 for this event. In his chronicle he had placed Archbishop Thurstan's death in 1141, instead of 1140, and from that point on, the chronicle is consistently one year ahead. The events he describes therefore took place in 1149. [171] The itinerary of King Stephen has been identified by the editors of the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* and date Stephen's visit to Beverley to August 1149. [172] From the Whitby Cartulary there is evidence that Henry Murdac visited Beverley in Lent 1148, for it records that he received the resignation of Abbot Benedict of Whitby at that time. [173] The archbishops of York had been temporal lords of Beverley since the days of Edward the Confessor and possessed a residence in the town's market place.[174] No evidence for it survives, but it seems likely that the archbishop would have would have made regular use of his residence at

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[170] *J.Hexham*, p. 323.
[171] Ibid., p. 306. See the editor's note b.
[172] *RRAN* III, p. xliii.
[173] *Cartularium Whitby,* pp. 8-9.
[174] *VCH* Bev., p.14 and note 15. The residence was in existence by the 1160s and was known as the Dings. King Edward's writ, granting the archbishop sole lordship of Beverley under the king, is printed in *EYC* I, no. 87, pp. 85-6.

Beverley during the period of his shadow archiepiscopate. King Stephen's fine on the town in August 1149 suggests this may have been the case.

The background to King Stephen's fine on Beverley requires brief discussion. By August 1149 a serious local ecclesiastical quarrel arising out of a disputed election at York was overtaken by a national political crisis for Stephen. King David of Scotland had invited the now sixteen year old Prince Henry of Anjou and his mother, the empress Adela, to Scotland. On Whit Sunday (22 May) King David had knighted Prince Henry in the presence of Bishop Athelwold of Carlisle, Prince Henry of Scotland and Ranulf, earl of Chester. Henry Murdac may have been present at this same occasion.[175] John of Hexham states that King David, Prince Henry, duke of Normandy, and Ranulf had formed an alliance to act against King Stephen. Earl Ranulf of Chester had laid aside his claim to Carlisle, in return for King David granting him the lordship of Lancaster and then had cemented his alliance by doing homage to the Scottish king and arranging a marriage between his son and one of prince Henry of Scotland's daughters. The stage was thus set for a decisive step by David to extend Scottish control over the north and a key element in this was the capture of York. Stephen, however, alerted to this planned attack by his supporters within the city of York, acted decisively and came north with substantial military forces. According to the *Gesta Stephani,* Stephen's unexpected appearance outside York with a strong force of knights caused King David and his allies to lose heart and they dispersed and returned home individually.[176]

During the month of August and early September, Stephen remained in the north in order to secure the military situation and this involved both the construction of new castles and the destruction of those in hostile hands. Wheldrake castle, which was impeding access to York, was destroyed and Stephen raised the funds for doing this by taxing York and its nobles. It was at

[175] See Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 106 and note 17. It is argued that the archbishop's visit to Carlisle was made on the occasion of Prince Henry's knighting. On the basis of John of Hexham's account, this appears uncertain.
[176] *Gesta Steph*. p. 217.

the suggestion of the York citizens, according to John of Hexham, that Stephen went to Beverley and imposed a heavy fine on the pretext that Beverley had harboured Archbishop Henry without his approval. [177] Stephen's fine on Beverley might then have been imposed to help secure funds to support his campaign in the area.[178] John of Hexham noted that Stephen was intent on building a castle at Beverley, but was dissuaded 'by an apparition of St John and his threatenings.' [179] Once the military situation around York was secured, Stephen then moved to Lincoln in order to campaign against Ranulf of Chester, leaving his son Eustace in charge in the North.

John of Hexham reports further on the unfolding crisis of 1149 and 1150. Bishop Henry of Winchester had gone to Rome in 1150 'with profuse expense and great show of opulence' and whilst there, requested Pope Eugenius to persuade Henry Murdac to deal with his nephew Hugh du Puiset more leniently. Hugh left York to supervise the Winchester see in his uncle's absence and things then calmed down somewhat in York; - 'On his removal to this distance, his associates became more moderate in their opposition to the archbishop.' But the crisis rumbled on. Prince Eustace visited York and found the sacred offices discontinued there, indicating that with Hugh du Puiset absent, the interdict imposed by Archbishop Henry was enforced. Eustace immediately coerced the clergy to resume Divine Office again. When he heard of this, Archbishop Henry Murdac wrote again to Pope Eugenius in protest.

Summary: The sources make clear that there was a fine imposed on Beverley by King Stephen and the fine was imposed on Beverley in c. August 1149. An account of the military and political reasons for his having imposed the fine is provided by John of Hexham which is supported in the *Gesta Stephani*. Alfred's statement in the prologue about the king's fine could not therefore have been written in 1143.

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[177] Davis, *King Stephen*, p.108. Dalton, *Conquest,* pp. 174-176.
[178] Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 108.
[179] *J.Hexham*, p. 323, '*Revocatus est autem, ne castrum ibi construeret, beati johannis evidenti revelatione conterritus et comminatione'.*

4. The edict or command of the king dismissing senior churchmen.

Alfred's words, *ecclesiae nostrae columpnis, the pillars of our church* suggest he is referring to the dismissal of the leaders of the church of Beverley and York:

> 'grassante oppressione qua, expulsis ad regis edictum de sedibus suis ecclesiae nostrae columpnis.'

> *HAB*, Prologue, 30-31

> 'and with threatening encroachment, the pillars of our church were driven from their sees by command of the king.'

A similar form of words is used by Henry of Huntingdon in the *HA* to describe the participants at the legatine council of Archbishop William of Corbeil in London in 1129. The council was called to debate the prohibition of priests' wives and Henry may have been present; '*Hi columpne regni erant et radii sanctitatis hoc tempore.' 'These were the pillars of the kingdom and the sunbeams of holiness at this time.'*[180] Henry is here describing the two archbishops present at the council, William of Corbeil and Thurstan of York and the bishops of Lincoln, Salisbury, London, Rochester, Chichester, Bath, Worcester, Norwich, St David's and Ely. There can be little doubt therefore that Alfred is here referring to his own archbishop, Henry Murdac, and to the decision of the king to deny him access to his diocese and to the temporalities of his see. John of Hexham tells us that the 'revenues of the states were appropriated to the king's exchequer.'[181] Stephen's refusal to allow Henry Murdac to enter York effectively meant the archbishop was driven from office until January 1151. Stephen's fine on Beverley in August 1149 suggests that he intended his temporalities to be denied him in Beverley, as well as York.

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[180] *HA* VII, 40, pp. 484-5 and note 259.
[181] *J.Hexham*, p. 322, '*Praebendae in fiscum regium redactae sunt*..'

The prologue statements – summary and implications for the dating of the *Historia*

The London council and the decree to which Alfred refers in the prologue of the *Historia* is almost certainly the 1143 legatine council of Henry of Blois where some seventeen disciplinary canons were enacted, prescribing the excommunication of persons for causing injury or harm to persons or property of the church and ordering the suspension of church services where excommunicated people were present. However no interdicts or excommunications are known to have been imposed in Yorkshire during the first archiepiscopate of William fitzHerbert; between 1141 and 1147. Interdicts and excommunications were imposed by Henry Murdac in spring 1148, when he was refused entry to York and his retainers were treated with violence by his opponents. Counter-interdicts on Henry's supporters were issued by Hugh du Puiset, treasurer of York and archdeacon of East Riding. As a result of these excommunications, divine services were suspended in York and, as we also know from Alfred's testimony, also in Beverley. A tax was imposed on Beverley in c. August 1149 by King Stephen.

These details established, the period during which Alfred worked on his chronicle can be estimated with considerable confidence. The cessation of Divine Office took place over the period spring 1148 until, at the latest, January 1151, when Stephen and Henry were reconciled and, as John of Hexham reports, 'all hostilities between them were laid aside.'[182] Immediately after this agreement, Henry, having settled the affairs of the church of York, travelled to Rome on a diplomatic mission for King Stephen to seek papal support for the succession to the crown of England of Stephen's son Eustace. Alfred's comment on the tax imposed by King Stephen cannot have been made earlier than August 1149. It may be reasonable to conclude that work on the *Historia* ceased soon after normal church services resumed but this is not certain. Alfred may have continued working on the *Historia* after this date.

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[182] *J.Hexham*, p. 325.

A *terminus ante quem* of December 1154 however, is provided by internal evidence from the text, discussed below.

The assignment of the date of compilation of 1143 to the *Historia* first proposed by T.D.Hardy is therefore without historical foundation. First, the proposal conflates two quite separate historical events; the legislation of the 1143 council of London and the crisis in the Yorkshire church which broke out in 1148 and which lasted until 1151. Second, it takes no account of Alfred's statement about the fine on Beverley imposed by King Stephen in c. August 1149 and third, it takes no account of Alfred's statement about senior churchmen being driven from their see on the king's order which almost certainly refers to Archbishop Henry Murdac's exile from his diocese over the period March 1148 to January 1151.

The internal evidence from the text of the *Historia.*

There is good textual evidence that the *Historia* could not have been written before, at the earliest, 1147. A more tentative *terminus ante quem* of December 1154 is also indicated in the text.

Terminus post quem

At the conclusion of book six of the *Historia* Alfred lists the shires and bishoprics of England and Wales concluding with the following passage:

> 'Sed in occidentali parte Britanniae, quae vocatur Walia III. supersunt episcopatus, unus apud Sanctum David, alius apud Bangor, tercius apud Glamorgan. Sunt tamen hii tres nullarum urbium post desolacionem Walliae, quae sola devictis mansit Britannis. Tempore autem nostro recepit episcopus Sancti David palleum a papa, qui scilicet olim fuerat apud Keer legion, **sed statim amisit.'**

> *HAB* 6.2633-38

> 'But in the western part of Britain called Wales there are three additional bishoprics; one at St Davids, another at Bangor and a third at Glamorgan ie Llandaff). These three are without cities on account of the desolation of Wales, which was all that was left to the Britons after they had been conquered. In our time the bishop of St David's received from the pope the pallium which in ancient days had been at Caerleon, **but he very soon lost it.'**

Alfred had taken this passage from Henry of Huntingdon's *HA*, one of Alfred's main sources for the *Historia* (discussed chp 4.1), where it was part of Henry's introductory description of Britain, forming the opening chapters of the *HA*. In her 1996 edition of the *HA*, Diana Greenway has shown the various stages of the composition and circulation of the *HA* and for this particular passage, has identified that the words *tempore autem nostro, in our time* were added in 1140 (version three) but the words *sed statim amisit he very soon lost it* were only added from December 1146 to early 1147 or later, in the fourth recension of the *HA*.[183] The comment was of course present in subsequent versions of the *HA* and it is therefore possible that Alfred took the passage from version five of the *HA*, issued, Greenway suggested, in January 1149.[184] Version five, which represents the largest group of manuscripts of the *HA*, takes the narrative down to 1149 and the enthronement of Robert de Chesney as bishop of Lincoln.[185] Diana Greenway suggests that Henry might have prepared and presented this updated version of the *HA* to present to the new bishop in January 1149.[186] At present, it is not possible to be certain which of version four or five of the *HA* Alfred used, but further collation of Alfred's now identified borrowings with specific items of content which Henry added at the versions four and version five stage, may well provide answers to this question. In terms of how Henry's history reached Alfred at Beverley, the enthronement of Bishop Robert de Chesney in January 1149 suggests itself

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[183] *HA* I. 5. pp.18-19 and see note 25. Bernard bishop of St Davids (1115-1148) claimed metropolitan status for his church and the statement probably refers to a papal ruling of June 1147 that Bernard owed obedience to Canterbury.
[184] *HA* p.lxxvi.
[185] *HA* p. lxxv –lxxvi.
[186] Ibid.

as an opportunity, given the likelihood of senior representatives of the neighbouring church of Beverley and of York attending the events, where an exchange of books might have occurred.

Terminus ante quem

A passage from book nine of the *Historia*, which Alfred has taken from Symeon of Durham's *Historia Regum* and reworked, probably reached its present form before the accession of Henry II in December 1154. The passage in question forms Alfred's conclusion to a survey of the rule of the earls of Northumbria from Osulf (c.949) to the last Robert de Mowbray, imprisoned by William Rufus in 1095. Words marked in bold are Alfred's additions to Symeon's orginal text:

> 'Quo capto, **cessavit comitatus amministrari a comitibus, et ex tunc in** manu **regum scilicet Willielmi Magni**, et Willielmi **Minoris** et Henrici **demansit**. His ob noticiam personarum comitum Nordhimbrensium per excessum interpositis, ad continuandam interrupti ordinis seriem stilus revertatur.'
>
> *HAB* 9.3650-53
>
> 'On his imprisonment (Mowbray's) the earldom ceased to be governed by earls,   and since then it has remained in the hands of the kings, that is William the Great, William the Younger and Henry. These things having been clarified in a digression for the information of my readers, the pen must now return, to resume the course of its interrupted order.'

In the passage Alfred refers to kings William the Great, William the Younger and Henry, not referring to him as Henry the *first*. This suggests that the words were written before the accession of Henry II. Had they been written after this date then surely Alfred would have named Henry appropriately in the passage: as Henry the first. He distinguishes clearly between King William the Great and William the Younger in the passage, he surely would have distinguished between Henry I and Henry II, had he written after 1154.

Alfred's reworking of Symeon's text indicates he is not thoughtlessly copying Symeon; in other words that he refers to Henry in this manner only because that was how it was represented in the text in front of him. It is worth comparing Alfred's rendition with Symeon's original text:

(*HR* § 159)

'sed eo capto, rex junior Willelmus, hodieque rex Henricus, Northymbriam in sua tenet manu. His ad notitiam personarum per excessum interpositis ad continuandam interrupti ordinis seriem stilus revertatur.'

Alfred has added *Willielmi Magni, William the Great*. William Rufus is referred to as *Minoris* not *Junior*. The word *hodieque, and today* has been replaced with the phrase *ex tunc, since then*. Symeon's brief statement has been expanded slightly to read *cessavit comitatus amministrari a comitibus et ex tunc in manu regum scilicet Willielmi Magni, Willielmi Minoris et Henrici demansit*. With these changes Alfred alters the chronological perspective of the passage. Symeon's wording indicates a text written at the time of King Henry, Alfred's indicate words written at a more distant point in time. Alfred's reworking shows he is not simply copying Symeon's words. Thoughtless copying does not explain why Alfred refers to Henry in the way he does. It suggests he names Henry in this way because when Alfred wrote, Henry was not known as Henry I.

Summary and conclusions on the circumstances and date of the *Historia* and an early view on the date of the *Historia*.

Both from the statements made by Alfred in the prologue and from internal evidence from the text it has been shown that the *Historia* could not have been written in c.1143 and that it was almost certainly worked on from outbreak of the schism in the Yorkshire church in March 1148 until, on the balance of probability, the resumption of church services in Beverley in early 1151. Assigning the date 1143 as the *Historia's* date of composition, first proposed in Sir Thomas Hardy's *Descriptive Catalogue* of 1865, and

supported in Antonia Gransden's *Historical Writing in England* I (1974) conflated two separate historical events; the decrees of the council of London of 1143 and the interdicts in Yorkshire in March 1148, and laid a false trail for the dating of Alfred's *Historia* which has lasted until today. Ironically, historians of an earlier era were in no doubt as to the meaning of Alfred's words and the date when the *Historia* almost certainly was written. As far back as 1692 for example, Bishop William Lloyd of St Asaph (1680-92) wrote a long and learned letter to the book collector Thomas Price of Llanfyllin.[187] Thomas Price had sent the bishop a book containing various historical pieces transcribed by his friend and fellow antiquarian, William Maurice of Llansilin, into his book of collections and now in the National Library of Wales (NLW, Wynnstay MS 11). Maurice had transcribed Alfred's History from one of its earliest manuscripts (NLW, Peniarth MS 384) between 1661 and 1663, leaving an autobiographical note with date on the final folio of that manuscript (Plate 3). The pieces in Maurice's collection included the chronicle of Robert of Torigni, Henry of Huntingdon and Alfred of Beverley. The issue which concerned Bishop William and Thomas Price was, which chronicle borrowed from which and the bishop set out the true relationship in a remarkable piece of historical analysis. When discussing the relationship of Alfred's *History* to the other pieces, the bishop argued that Alfred had clearly borrowed from Geoffrey of Monmouth and he used Alfred's prologue statements to date the History to after the period 1148 x 1150. Bishop William then pointed out that the canons of the council of London of 1143, which Alfred refers to, were simply the authority which Henry Murdac invoked in pronouncing wholesale anathema in Yorkshire in 1148.[188]

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[187] This letter is printed in J.Glutch, ed. *Collectanea Curiosa* (Oxford, 1781), I, no 26, pp. 253- 269.

[188] Glutch, *Collectanea Curiosa*, p. 263.

Chapter 4. Alfred's sources.

Introduction

This chapter explores in detail the principal sources which Alfred used in compiling the *Historia* and examines his manner of working with them. In such scholarship as the chronicle has attracted, attention has mainly focussed on Alfred's debt to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie* (*HRB*) and Alfred's other sources have received little attention. [189]

The evidence set out in chapter four will show that in addition to the *HRB* of Geoffrey of Monmouth and the *HR* attributed to Symeon of Durham, Alfred made extensive use of Henry of Huntingdon's, *Historia Anglorum* (*HA*), the preliminary sections of the chronicle of John of Worcester, the *Historia Brittonum,* Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* and several classical, late antique and hagiographical texts. These include Orosius, *Historiarum Adversum Paganos*, Paul the Deacon, *Historia Romana*, Suetonius, *Lives of the Caesars,* Aethicus Ister, *The Cosmography*, Hegesippus's Latin translation of Josephus's *Jewish War*, Constantius, *Life of St. Germanus* and Sulpicius Severus, *Life of St. Martin of Tours.* In addition, Alfred names, but does not use Pompeius Trogus and quotes Solinus's *Collectanea Memorabilia*, taking the quote from the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon. Alfred also cites and appeals to Gildas as a historical source seven times in the *Historia* (Fig.25).

Fig. 4.below sets out the quantity of text supplied by each principal source in total and by individual book of the *Historia*, which enables their influence at different points in the *Historia* to be observed. [190] It can be seen, for example

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[189] See for example Graves, E., ed. *A bibliography of English History to 1485* (1975), p. 405, entry 2795, based on C.Gross, *The sources and Literature of English History from the earliest times to about 1485* (1900). Jacob Hammer, 'Notes on a manuscript', p. 226**.** J.S.P.Tatlock**,** *The Legendary History of Britain* (Berkeley, 1950), p. 210. J.Taylor, *Medieval Historical Writing in Yorkshire*, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, *St Anthony's Hall Publications* 19 (York, 1961), p. 8.
[190] The textual origins of the *Historia*, on which the data contained in Fig. 4 is based, are identified in John P.Slevin, An annotated transcription of Thomas Hearne's *Aluredi Beverlacensis Annalium, sive Historiae de gestis regum Britanniae* (Oxford, 1716).Unpublished typescript (August, 2013). The apparatus permits Alfred's textual contributions to be identified as also his borrowings from other authors.

that Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* is used extensively in the first five books of the *Historia*, but thereafter not. Symeon of Durham, in contrast, plays no role at all in the first five books of the *Historia*, but thereafter it is fundamental. Fig. 5 provides a summary of the textual contribution of the various sources in the *Historia*. Of the total text of 40,098 words, Symeon of Durham and Geoffrey of Monmouth supply approximately sixty percent. Alfred himself supplies some 5,826 words, some fourteen percent of the text. Alfred's summarizing conclusions and introductions, found in eight of the nine books of the *Historia*, and which consist of elements of borrowed text, are included in this figure. The summaries are used reflectively by Alfred to provide narrative perspective and have therefore been counted as Alfred's own contribution.

The proportion of Alfred's borrowings from particular authors provides, however, only a partial guide to their true influence in the chronicle. In the first of Alfred's sources now to be considered, the *Historia Anglorum* (*HA*) of Henry of Huntingdon, only c. 1,298 words have been borrowed, representing three percent of the text of the *Historia*, yet Henry's influence is far more profound than this figure indicates. Alfred's main sources are now examined in the order: Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth, John of Worcester, Symeon of Durham, Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum*. Alfred's use of Bede, Orosius, Eutropius and Paul the Deacon is examined in the discussion of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Both Hegessippus and Aethicus Ister as sources in the *Historia* will be considered in chapter five of this study, 'Alfred's prefatory description of Britain.' A final discussion on Alfred's use of unattested narrative sources in the *Historia* concludes the chapter.

Fig. 4. Wordcount by source and by book of the *Historia.*

Sources	Bk 1	Bk 2	Bk 3	Bk 4	Bk 5	Bk 6	Bk 7	Bk 8	Bk 9	Total words	% of text
Alfred of Beverley	1521	489	478	211	662	1083	202	638	542	5826	14.5
Symeon of Durham	-	-	-	-	-	-	2006	3499	7194	12699	**32**
Geoffrey of Monmouth	2788	724	1192	20	6580	-	-	-	-	11304	**28**
John of Worcester	-	-	-	-	-	3744	95 ?	141 ?	-	4010	**10**
Bede	131	350	483	905	577	837	-	-	-	3283	**8**
Henry of Huntingdon	519	-	-	-	-	414	290	75	-	1298	**3**
Historia Brittonum	350	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	354	**-**
Paul the Deacon	-	111	478	120	143	-	-	-	-	852	**2**
Orosius	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	62	-
Aethicus Ister	47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47	-
Suetonius	-	82	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	82	-
Hegesippus	46	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	-
Other	54	-	183	-	-	-	-	-	-	237	-
Total text words	5518	1756	2812	1256	7966	6108	2593	4353	7736	**40,098**	
	14 %	4 %	7 %	3 %	20 %	15 %	7 %	11 %	19 %		

Fig. 5. Alfred's borrowings by source in the *Historia*

- Alfred — 14.50%
- Geoffrey of Monmouth — 28%
- Bede — 8%
- Henry of Huntingdon
- John of Worcester — 10%
- Symeon of Durham — 32%
- Eutropius/ Paul the Deacon
- Other classical and hagiographical
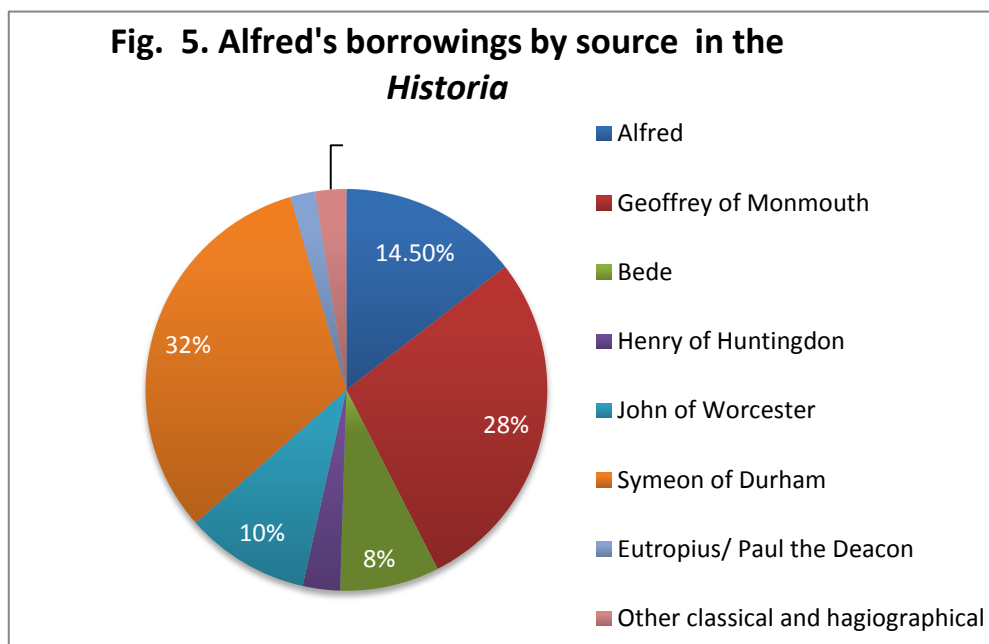
4.1 Henry of Huntingdon

Introduction

Textual borrowings from Henry of Huntingdon's *HA* are found in four of the nine books of the *Historia* (books one, six, seven, eight) but are particularly prevalent in book one. Between the end of the prologue (*HAB* I.79) and the commencement of the narrative proper, with the arrival of Brutus on the island of Britain (*HAB* I. 258), twenty-one percent of the text is taken from the *HA*. [191] Books six and seven of the *Historia*, which deal respectively with the establishment of the English kingdoms and the struggles of the West Saxon kings against the Danish 'Pagan' invasions and attacks, also see substantial borrowings. Henry's influence on the *Historia* is therefore indicated firstly by significant reproduction of text from the *HA* but it is also evident from the absorption and adaptation of a number of Henry's most central historical ideas. Alfred, for example, takes over Henry's theory of the heptarchy: the establishment of seven English kingdoms preceding the emergence of a dominant West Saxon kingdom and which creates a unified English *regnum* out of the heptarchy. [192] Robert de Torigni apart, Alfred is the first of the Anglo-Norman chroniclers to do so.[193] Alfred, however, applies Henry's heptarchy model in a quite distinct manner to both Henry and Robert, an issue to be further explored in the discussion of Alfred's reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* below. Henry's threefold naming of Britain in its historical evolution: first Albion, then Britain and then Anglia, is recycled by Alfred.[194] Henry's central organising idea of the five *plagas* (scourges) inflicted on Britain by God to punish the faithful as well as unbelievers - the invasions of

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[191] 400 words of a total of 1864.

[192] *HAB* VI. 2091.

[193] Robert of Torigni is generally believed to have begun his chronicle - a continuation of Sigebert of Gembloux's universal chronicle dealing with events in Normandy and in England from 1100 onwards- between 1147 and 1150 which is approximately the same time that Alfred worked on the *Historia*. For a recent view that Robert may have begun his chronicle somewhat earlier than 1147, see David Bates, 'Robert of Torigni and the *Historia Anglorum*' in *The English and Their Legacy. Essays in Honour of Ann Williams*, ed. David Roffe (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 175- 184, at p. 178.

[194] *HAB* VI. 2121-23.

the Romans, the Picts and Scots, the English, the Danes and the Normans – appears as if it may have influenced Alfred in his reception and reworking of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* in the *Historia.* Finally Henry's influence is considerable in Alfred's prefatory geo-historical description of Britain, discussed in detail in a chapter five of this study. The present discussion explores two principal issues related to Henry's influence on the *Histori*a. First, it considers the manner in which the structure and narrative approach of the *Historia* has been influenced by the *HA*. Second, it considers if Henry of Huntingdon's epitomization of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB*, included as the letter to Warin the Breton, *Epistola ad Warinum*, in version three of the *HA* which circulated from c.1140 , [195] influenced and informed Alfred's own abbreviation of the *HRB,* undertaken some ten years later.

The narrative structure and thematic approach of the *Historia*

In Alfred's *Historia* each of its nine books covers a distinct historical period, summarised in Fig. 6 below. Each of the periods represents an underlying historical theme. To define these periodizations, Alfred employs the word '*status*'; a term rarely encountered in historical writing of the period and discussed further below.

Fig. 6. The structure of the *Historia.* Books, periods and themes.

Book	'Status' (period and theme)	
1	..sicque primum Britannici regni **statum prima hujus opusculi particula** continebit…(lines 566-68)	Britain and its kings in a state of independence. Brutus to King Lud. Summary of 70 Kings.
2	Hactenus **secundus Britannici regni status** descriptus sit, qui a Cassibellauno incipiens, in Lucio desiit (lines 826-27)	From Cassibellaunus and the imposition of tribute by Julius Caesar to Lucius, and end of the line of British kings. Summary of eight kings.
3	**Tercius Britannici regni status** sub praedictis cucurrit regibus, in quo Romanorum in Britannia regnum & surrexit et cecidit (lines 1137-39)	Severus to Gratian. Direct rule of Roman kings in Britain. Summary of 11 Roman Emperors.
4	Talis extitit Britannici regni **quartus status**, absque rege vel principe, sine defensore vel duce, miseriis plenus…(1290-91).	Abandonment of Britain by Maximus and the Romans. Britain defenceless against the attacks of the Picts and Irish. The age of anarchy.

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[195] *HA* pp. lxx-lxxi.

5	Quintus, id est, ultimus Britannici regni status sub XII. cucurrit regibus (2055-56)	The rise of the house of Constantine. Vortigern, the arrival of Hengist and Horsa. Arthur to Carecius and end of British dominion on the island of Britain
6	Iste fuit **status** regni Occidentalium Saxonum a primo eorum Cerdico usque ad finem Edwardi Senioris, sub regibus XXIIII (2610-11)	The establishment of the heptarchy. Emergence of West Saxon dominance
7	Iste fuit **status** tocius Angliae quando regnante in Nordhimbria Edeldredo, qui et Edebrict, filio regis Moll, pagani primum de transmarinis partibus venientes…(lines 2909-11)	The Danish wars
8	Talis fuit **status** monarchiae Angliae, quam huc usque Anglici reges optinuere, quae a primo monarcha Adelstano usque ad ultimum Haroldum, in quo series Anglici stematis defecit, sub regibus XIII. per annos centum XLV. varia fortuna cucurrit (lines 3378-81)	The era of the English monarchy. From King Athelstan to King Harold
9	Talis fuit **status** Nordhimbrorum, qui a primo comite eorum Osulfo sub tercio Anglorum monarcha Edredo usque ad ultimum Robertum Mulbreio sub rege Willielmo per annos fere CXX. cuccurit sub comitibus XVI (lines 3642-45)	The kingdom of the Normans including excursus on the kingdom of the Northumbrians

Alfred's nine-book narrative arrangement, organised around distinct themes, recalls Henry of Huntingdon's in the *HA*. As noted (pp.82-3) Alfred made use of a post 1147 version of the *HA* which contained ten books as follows:

    Book 1 - The kingdom of the Romans in Britain
    Book 2 - The coming of the English
    Book 3 - The conversion of the English
    Book 4 - The kingdom of the English
    Book 5 - The Danish Wars
    Book 6 - The coming of the Normans
    Book 7 - The kingdom of the Normans
    Book 8 - Exalted matters
    Book 9 - The miracles of the English
    Book 10 -The present time

Alfred's integration of Geoffrey of Monmouth's newly- revealed British history into the *Historia* required the creation of new historical themes in its first five books. When the epitomization of the *HRB* concludes however, the remaining four books cover broadly the same themes as those of the *HA*: the establishment of the seven English kingdoms, the Danish attacks, the monarchy of the English Kings and the rule of the Norman kings. The *Historia's* structure of nine themed books therefore closely follows Henry's approach, adapted to accommodate the inclusion of the *HRB* abbreviation.

Alfred's chronological approach is also similar to Henry's whose preference is to date events by the regnal years of the king being described, or by synchronisms; dating events by referencing them to other known points in time.[196] Alfred adopts much the same approach. For example in book nine, narrating the rules of William I, William Rufus and Henry I, only two fixed dates are supplied, the date of the accession of William I, incorrectly given as 1065 (*HAB* 9.3452) and the death of William Rufus given as '*Anno M.C.IIII Nonas Augusti feria V^a Indiccione VIII*', '*On Thursday, 2 August, in the eighth indiction*' (*HAB* 9.3933). All other events in the book are dated by regnal year. A further example is the account of the shipwreck of the White Ship where King Henry's two sons, William and Richard, his daughter (Matilda) and other close family members lost their lives. Alfred supplies the day when the event occurred, ' *VI ^{o}. Kal. Decembris feria V ^{a}* ', '*November 26*' (*HAB* 9.4079) but tells us only that it occurred in the twentieth year of Henry's rule. In the entire *Historia,* fixed dates are found on only thirty-nine occasions. [197] Henry had supplied even fewer; only twelve incarnational dates are found in the *HA.* [198]

When the detailed narrative of each of the books of the *Historia* is examined, the influence of the *HA* becomes even clearer. In common with Henry, Alfred starts his books with explanatory remarks on what is to be covered in the

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[196] *HA* p.lxiv.
[197] Books 1-5 contain 5 fixed dates. Book 6 contains 12. Book 7 contains 12*.* Book 8 contains 8*.*
[198] *HA* p.lxiv.

book. In books two, three, five, six, seven, eight, he also opens with a brief reminder of what has been covered in the previous book. Alfred also ends his books in similar fashion to Henry. In each book of the *Historia* except book nine – which has the appearance of being left unfinished - Alfred provides a concluding summary and then lists all the kings who have been described in the book. At the conclusion of books four and eight, Alfred also informs readers what is going to be covered in the next book. Such clarificatory remarks and lists of kings are very similar to Henry's in the *HA*; as for example in *HA* books two, four, five and six. Alfred's choice of words, when explaining the reasons for supplying concluding lists of kings also recall those of Henry:

> 'Unde breviter quot reges in hoc statu regnaverint enumerandum, et sic finita secunda particula, ad tercium statum est transeundum.'

> *HAB* 2.830-32

> 'We ought therefore to briefly note how many kings reigned during this era and with the second chapter concluded, we must move on to the third era.'

> 'Unde nomina eorundem regum simul colligenda et ex ordine sunt ponenda, sicque tercia hujus opusculi particula est consumanda.'

> *HAB* 3.1139-41

> 'And now the names of these kings need to be collected and at the same time placed in sequence so that the third brief part of this little work can be concluded.'

Henry of Huntingdon *HA* II.40

> 'Nomina ergo regum omnium Angliae, qui usque ad hunc terminum fuerunt, quia confuse dispersa sunt, si secundum regna singula brevissime recapitulem, non tediosus ut estimo sed aperior et lectori gratior existam.'

> 'Since the names of all the kings of England who existed down to this period are scattered in different places, I shall recapitulate them very briefly under

the separate kingdoms, in the belief that this will not be tedious but will be clearer and more agreeable for the reader.' [199]

Henry of Huntingdon *HA* IV.31

'Verum ut in libro secundo factum est, ea que in hoc libro dicta sunt breviter repetenda sunt et regnorum singulorum progressio ex ordine dirigetur…..'

'As was done in the second book, those matters which have been described in this book must be recapitulated briefly and the progression of the separate kingdoms arranged in sequence..'

Henry's practice of reminding his readers in the *HA* where they are and where they are going was noted by Nancy Partner and James Campbell as a marked feature of his writing. Nancy Partner describes Henry's 'insistent orderliness.' [200] Campbell likens Henry's books in the *HA* to a series of carefully crafted lectures where 'methodical pains are taken to let the reader know where he is.'[201] Diana Greenway suggested that Henry wrote the *HA* to reach a wide audience, '*pluribus, id est minus doctis'*, [202] and cited its average book length of between eight and ten thousand words as evidence that each of its books of might have been read out aloud at a single sitting.[203] Alfred adopts a similar pedagogical approach in the *Historia*. He goes to considerable lengths at the start and end of each book to keep his readers abreast of where they are in the account. A summary of Alfred's opening and closing comments at the start and end of the books of the *Historia* illustrates this point:

Fig. 7. Alfred's explanatory commentary in the *Historia*.

Historia Book	Explanatory and clarifying comments

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[199] Translation supplied by D.Greenway, *HA* II. 40, p. 131.

[200] Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, p. 23.

[201] James Campbell, 'Some Twelfth-Century Views of the Anglo-Saxon Past' in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), pp.209-28 at p. 213.

[202] *HA* lviii, note 10.

[203] *HA* lix, seven of the books of the *HA* fall within the range of 8,000 – 10,000 words.

1	Verum antequam narrandi ordinem aggrediar pauca, quae ad rerum noticiam utiliter pertinent, braeviter praenotanda sunt, videlicet de situ Britanniae et ejus magnitudine, et cum ipsa insula sit… (Opening of book 1, lines 89-92)	Before undertaking the history, it will be useful to briefly note a few things which will usefully add to our knowledge namely concerning the geographic location of Britain and her size and of what the island consists….
2	Superiore particula comprehensum est quo tempore, vel a quibus primum habitari coepit Britannia, et quam diu in libertate stetit quae ve civitates et a quibus conditae sunt, quot eciam in ea reges libertate integra regnaverunt, qui ve inter eos tiranni, et qui virtute incliti claruerunt, quod singulare et proprium videtur mihi habere Britannicum (Opening of book 2, lines 647-52)	In the preceding brief account it was explained how in those days Britain was first inhabited, how long it remained in freedom, of its cities and by whom they were founded, how many of its kings ruled in freedom and how many tyrannically and those who stood out in shining virtue, and it seems to me that the account of the Briton is both remarkable and individual.
	Sequens vero particula declarabit quomodo per Gaium Julium Caesarem subjugata et a primitiva libertate dejecta, Romanis quidem aliquanto tempore facta est tributaria, sed tamen usque Lucium, primum eorum regem Christianum, Britannicis regibus subdita, sicut non solum Britonum sed et Romanorum et Anglorum ceterorumque in sequentibus testatur hystoria (Continuation of opening of book 2, lines 668-80)	The ensuing short account will therefore tell how Gaius Julius Caesar conquered (Britain) and how (Britain) was deprived of its original liberty by the Romans, and for the considerable length of time it was made hostage to Rome up to Lucius, the first Christian British king. With the British kings now conquered, the history of not only the Britons but also the Romans, English and of others is dealt with in sequence.
3	Dicturi deinceps de tercio statu regni, dicamus prius quomodo decursa serie paganorum regum Britanniae ventum sit ad serenitatem fidei Christianae (Opening of book 3, lines 846-48)	The third era of the kingdom will now be described, having earlier told of the manner in which the series of pagan kings came to the illumination of the Christian faith.
4	Descripto vel pocius deplorato Britanniae statu quarto, veniendum est ad quintum, in quo Britones resumpta audacia viriliter hostibus resistere, et contra multas insidias, prodiciones, debellaciones tam fortiter quam potenter pristinam dignitatem et libertatem recuperare, et cum gloria regnare coeperunt (Conclusion of book 4, lines 1296-1301)	Having described the misery of Britain's fourth 'era', now we must rather turn to its fifth, in which the Britons with renewed boldness, manfully resisted their enemies and against many traps, betrayals and battles, they recovered their former dignity and liberty even more strongly and effectively than ever and began to rule in glory.
5	Evacuata, ut praemissum est, superba temeritate tyrannorum, omni forte bellatore Britannia, ideoque Scottorum Pictorumque crebris irrupcionibus a mari usque ad mare ferro et flamma vastata,	Britain, emptied of every able-bodied warrior by the proud rashness of the dictators, as recounted, and lacking any Roman help with which to defend itself against its enemies, was

	cum Romanorum destitutam auxilio nullus esset qui contra hostes eam defensaret… (Opening of book 5, lines 1308-12)	therefore laid waste from sea to sea by sword and fire by constant attacks of the Irish and the Picts.
	Itaque a prima habitacione Britanniae usque ad desolacionem, quae sub Carecio facta est, totam naracionem in quinque particulas secans, quinque status regni breviter distinxi. (Conclusion of book 5, lines 2064-67)	Thus from the first inhabitation of Britain until its abandonment, which took place under Carecius, and dividing the entire history into five parts, I briefly highlighted five 'states' of the kingdom.
6	Finito regno Britonum, Britanniae regnum ad Anglos est translatum. Qui ob infestacionem Scottorum et Pictorum a rege Britonum Wortigerno invitati, patriam quidem primum ab eorum inrupcionibus liberaverunt... (Opening of book 6, lines 2078-81)	With the rule of the Britons having ended, the kingdom of Britain passed to the English. Invited in by Vortigern king of the Britons because of the invasion of the Picts and the Scots, they did indeed at first liberate the country from these attacks.
	Iste fuit status regni Occidentalium Saxonum a primo eorum Cerdico usque ad finem Edwardi Senioris, sub regibus XXIIII.per annos circiter quadringentos LIIII. (Conclusion of book 6, lines 2610-12)	This then was the era of the kingdom of the West Saxons from the first of their kings Cerdic until the last, Edward the Elder under twenty-four kings and (lasting) for approximately four hundred and fifty-four years.
7	Antequam de statu monarchiae Angliae dicamus, quoniam superius de paganis mencionem fecimus, opportunum videtur hoc in loco inserere quo tempore et unde in Angliam venere, et quanta mala eis permissum est facere in ea (Opening of book 7, lines 2673-76)	Before we discuss the era of the English monarchy, as we earlier made mention of the pagans, it would seem useful to cover at this point from where and at what time they came into England and how much evil was permitted into the country by them.
	Huc usque de immanitate paganicae feritatis qua per Angliam grassati sunt dixisse sufficiat. Amodo de monarchis regibus dicturi, *ad ordinem historiae revertamur* (Conclusion of book 7, lines 2922-25)	Up to this point sufficient has been said about the monstrosity of pagan savagery which ran unchecked through England. Let us return to the sequence of history where the kings and monarchies will be spoken of.
8	Anno ab incarnacione Domini nongentesimo xxiiii defuncto rege Westsaxonum Edwardo Seniore, successit ei in regnum primogenitus filius suus Adelstanus… (Opening of book 8, lines 2933-35)	In the year from our Lord's incarnation 924, the king of the West Saxons, Edward the Elder died. His first born son Athelstan succeeded him to the kingdom.
	..et debellandi Angliam justam causam genti Normanicae contulerunt. Quorum gesta quae Angliae monarchia gesserunt, sequens particula paucis comprehendit	Thus with just cause the Norman people united in order to conquer England. The following short book describes some of the deeds which they accomplished as monarchs of England.

9.	Primo ostendenda est origo causae, quae Willielmus dux Normannorum Angliam bello appeciit, et deinceps ad eorum gesta in Angliae monarchia veniendum (Opening of book 9, 3404-05)	First the original cause of William duke of the Normans invasion of England must be made clear and thereafter we need to return to the deeds of the monarchy in England

(Conclusion of book 8, lines 3391-93) appears at the top above row 9.

The opening and closing explanatory narrative and the provision of summarising lists of kings at the conclusion of each book suggest the influence of the *HA* on the *Historia.* The arrangement of its books and their lengths – the longest in the *Historia* being just under eight thousand words (Fig.4) – and the opening and closing summaries at each book suggest it was a work intended to be read serially or even to have been read aloud at different sittings. The anonymous chronicler of the archbishops of York, a work believed to date from shortly after the death of archbishop Thurstan (1140) reported that Archbishop Ealdred (1062-69) established a common dormitory and refectory for the canons of Beverley. [204]

Alfred's choice of words forming the linking passages, guiding his readers, step by step through the narrative, recalls Henry's. Compare Alfred's, '*nunc ad seriatim narrandi ordinem aggrediamur*' (*HAB* 5.1399) or, '*Amodo de monarchis regibus dicturi ad ordinem historiae revertamur*' (*HAB* 7. 2924-25), with Henry's '*nunc igitur his ita pertractatis, redeundum est ad contextum historie regum Anglorum*' (*HA* IV. 3), or '*Sed iam ad historie ordinem his explanatis redeundum est*' (*HA* V.Preface).

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[204] *Chronica Pontificum Ecclesiae Eboracensis, Pars Prima,* in *HCY* II, pp. 312-387 at p. 353. The chronicle extends to the death of Thurstan in February 1140. For a survey of the medieval church of Beverley see Leach, *BCA* I pp. ix-lxxv and on communal living specifically, see p.xxix. D.M.Palliser, 'The Early Medieval Minster' in *BMIH*, pp. 23-35 at p.31, argues that the canons of Beverley lived communally until the end of the twelfth century. There is evidence, however, that territorial-based prebends in Beverley may have been established from the early years of the archiepiscopate of Roger de Pont l'Eveque (1154-81). See *Beverley Minster Fasti,* ed. R.W.T McDermid, YASRS, 149 (Leeds, 1990), pp.xix-xx.

The five *status* of the kingdom of the British.

Alfred divides Geoffrey's history into five *status* (historical states) of the rule of the British kings (Fig.6) each forming its own book in the *Historia*. [205] In later books, Alfred continues to use the periodising idea of *status* but he describes it differently. Book six narrates the *status* of the seven English kingdoms ending with the West Saxon kingdom; described as '*Iste fuit status regni Occidentalium Saxonum*' (*HAB* 6.2610). In book seven there is, '*status tocius Angliae*' (*HAB* 7.2909), in book eight, '*status monarchiam Angliae*' (*HAB* 8.3378) and in book nine '*status Nordhimbrorum*' (HAB 9.3642). The sequence of five numbered '*status*' are exclusively reserved to describe the rule of the British kings. A question which arises here is why Alfred chose to divide Geoffrey's British history into precisely five '*status*'? As the influence of the *HA* is evident at so many levels in the *Historia*, might Henry's powerful organizing idea in the *HA* of the five '*plagas*' or scourges have been a contributory factor?

Henry had used the theme of five divinely ordained plagues to have visited Britain to provide a historical explanation for the dominion of the various peoples of the island of Britain; the Romans, the Picts and Scots, the Saxons, the Danes and the Normans. He introduces the idea in the *HA* book one (chapter four) and discusses it again in the mini prologue to book six, *The Danish Wars.* The metaphor was clearly of powerful descriptive force for it was how some contemporaries thought of Henry's history and described it in words. In the earliest catalogue of the library of the Cistercian abbey of Rievaulx (c.1190-1200) item *75 g* refers to a volume as *de quinque plagis Anglie in uno volumine.*[206] Henry uses the five *plagas* concept not only to better describe historical periods, but to serve his most important didactic purpose in the *HA*; to use his history as a reminder to his audience to retain a healthy *contemptus mundi*. As Henry says in the concluding paragraph of book 2 ' *Since nothing endures here, pay attention and take care that you*

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[205] The term *status* is used twenty-three times in the *Historia*; ten times in the first five books and thirteen times thereafter.
[206] *The Libraries of the Cistercians, Gilbertines and Premonstratensians*, ed. D.N.Bell, CBMLC, 3 (London, 1992), p.100.

acquire for yourself a kingdom and treasure that shall not fail.' Henry was much influenced by Bede's *HE* both for the content and the structure of the *HA* and he may have evolved the idea of the five *plagas* from Bede's discussion in the opening chapter of the *HE* of the five tongues of Britain, 'just as the Divine Law is written in five books.'[207] The theme of invasion by foreign peoples as punishment by God for sinful or faithless people is also proposed in Gildas and has Old Testament origins.[208]

As Henry appears to have evolved the five plagues periodising idea from earlier sources such as Bede - influenced by Gildas - it seems possible that Alfred's reconfiguration of Geoffrey's British history into five decisive periods, may have been evolved from Henry's idea of the five *plagas*, influenced also by Bede's powerful 'five tongues' description in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. As will be seen later in the discussion of Alfred's use of Geoffrey of Monmouth, Alfred was intimately familiar with Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

The use of the term *status* to describe historical periods, however, is used by none of Alfred's main sources in the *Historia* and appears to be rarely, if ever, encountered in the historical texts of the period. From where did Alfred derive the term? One possible source is from the field of scholastic theology and biblical exegesis which Alfred as a *magister* is likely to have studied as part of the *magister* curriculum. Amongst the closely-studied scholastic theologians of the time, in whose works the term *status* is frequently encountered is the Augustine canon, Hugh of Saint-Victor (b.1096 - d.1141). Hugh's major work, *de Sacramentis Christianae fidei* (c.1134) is a theological treatise organised on historical lines and in which Hugh based his thinking on a division of human history into three stages in a continuous process of ascent towards

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[207] *HE* I. I, p.16. See Antonia Gransden's discussion on Bede as the probable immediate source of Henry's five scourges theme in A.Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England' in id. *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp. 147-49.
[208] Discussed by D. Greenway in *HA* p.lix.

God after man's fall.[209] Hugh frequently uses the term *status* to denote 'states' and there are instances where the term carries a sense of historical periodization; for example in *de Sacramentis*, book one, part six, chapter ten is entitled *Tribus Statibus Hominis* where Hugh describes the three states of man: man before sin, man after sin and man after the resurrection of the dead. [210] Hugh's great interest in history as an essential tool for the study of theology is attested by his *Chronicle* (c.1130), a schoolbook of history entitled in most of the extant manuscripts, de *tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum, id est personis locis temporibus*, *On the three chief conditions of history, people, place and time* and used in the curriculum of the abbey of St Victor.[211] The influence and dissemination of Hugh's handbook in England in the twelfth century was formerly considered to have been limited [212] with only Ralph de Diceto known to have made extensive use of it [213] but the recent discovery of six copies of Hugh's *Chronicle* in the British Library, all of English provenance, has led to reappraisal of this view. Julian Harrison has shown that at least fifteen religious communities owned copies of the handbook, including convents of rich intellectual heritage.[214]

Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum*

Alfred's dependence of Henry is evident at such a number of levels in the *Historia*: textual borrowings, thematic structure, absorption of Henrican ideas

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[209] R.W.Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 2. Hugh of St Victor and the idea of Historical Development', *TRHS*, 5th series, 21 (1971), pp. 159-79, at p.166.

[210] A search on the *Patrologia Latina* electronic data base in the volume devoted to the printed writings of Hugh of St Victor (vol. 176) recovered over 40 uses of the word *status* and *statu* in the treatise *De Sacramentis* with frequent use of the term also noted in other of Hugh's treatises.

[211] William M.Green, 'Hugo of St Victor *de Tribus Maximis Circumstantiis Gestorum*', *Speculum*, 18. 4 (1943), pp. 484-93, at p. 484. This contains an edition of the prologue of the *Chronicon.*

[212] Southern, 'Hugh of St Victor', p.173.

[213] Grover A.Zinn, 'The Influence of Hugh of St Victor's *Chronicon* on the *Abbreviationes Chronicorum* by Ralph of Diceto, *Speculum*, 52, I (1977), pp. 38-61.

[214] Julian Harrison, 'The English Reception of Hugh of Saint-Victor's *Chronicle*', *British Library Electronic Journal* (2002), Article I, pp. 1-29.

such as the heptarchy and the emergence of a unified *regnum* under the West Saxon kings and finally in Alfred's introductory 'Description of Britain, that it is relevant to consider if Henry's abbreviation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* in any way guided Alfred's subsequent abbreviation in the *Historia*. Henry's epitomisation had appeared in the guise of the *Epistola ad Warinum* (*EAW*) included in the third version of the *HA,* which circulated from c.1140 onwards.[215] In an analysis of the *EAW's* epitomistion of the *HRB* (1991) Neil Wright described the *EAW* as not only the first epitomization of Geoffrey's history, but one which reflected 'the first faint adumbration of the misgivings with which some mediaeval historians (most notably William of Newburgh) received Geoffrey's *Historia*.' [216] Alfred, at approximately the same time as Robert de Torigni, was the second Anglo-Norman historian to incorporate Geoffrey's British history into a Latin chronicle. Robert, however, simply inserted Henry's abbreviation, almost verbatim, into his own chronicle, informing his readers in the prologue that he was doing so and naming *Henrici archidiaconi* as its author. [217]

The circumstances of the *EAW's* compilation are well attested but require brief recapitulation. In January 1139 Henry, in the company of other leading clergy - 4 suffragan bishops and 4 abbots - [218] had accompanied the newly elected archbishop of Canterbury, Theobald of Bec, to Rome to attend the second Lateran Council to be held in April 1139 at which Theobald was to receive the pallium from Pope Innocent II. In January the party stopped en route at Le Bec where Theobald had been abbot. [219] During this visit Robert of Torigni, a historian then working on a continuation of William of Jumièges *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, showed Henry a copy of Geoffrey's history, who

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[215] *HA* pp.lxviii-lxxi, viii, *de Summitatibus Rerum.* This included the *EAW* and appeared c.1140.

[216] Neil Wright, 'The Place of Henry of Huntingdon's *Epistola ad Warinum* in the text-history of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historium regum Britannie*: a Preliminary Investigation' in *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Essays by Members of Girton College Cambridge in Memory of Ruth Morgan*, ed. G. Jondorf and D.M.Dumville (Woodbridge, 1991), p. 90.

[217] *The Chronicle of Robert Torigni* in *Chron. Steph*. IV, p. 64.

[218] A.Saltman, *Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1956), p.14.

[219] Ibid., p. 13. Saltman suggests Theobald might still have been abbot of Bec at the time of his visit.

'immediately made excerpts from it.'[220] The letter to Warin may have been composed on Henry's return to England but in any case certainly in 1139 as in his introductory address to Warin Henry states ' *Hoc tamen anno, cum Roman proficiscerer, apud Beccensem abbatiam scripta rerum predictarum stupens inveni* '

Henry's Epistola ad Warinum – Did it influence Alfred's abbreviation of the HRB?

Neil Wright's meticulous analysis of the *EAW* published in his 1991 article demonstrated that Henry of Huntingdon had produced a very free abbreviation of the *HRB* differing from Geoffrey's account in several respects. The differences included events omitted, material added, subtle modifications to Geoffrey's account and simple errors which may have been the result of Henry's hasty note taking at Bec. Modifications appear to have been undertaken by Henry to make the *EAW* fit more closely to his existing account of the foundation of Britain in book one of the *HA*, which had been drawn mainly from the *Historia Brittonum* and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

Henry's points of differences to the *HRB* in the *EAW*, identified in Wright's 1991 analysis, are contrasted with Alfred's abbreviation of the same Galfridian material to observe if there are grounds to believe Alfred was guided by Henry's abbreviation.

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[220] Wright, 'The Place', p. 72 and see note 26. Wright points out the possibility that Henry composed the letter on his return to England because he may have needed time to check his Bec excerpts with source materials he there had available.

Fig. 8. Points of difference in the *Epistola ad Warinum* to the *HRB* (as identified by N. Wright). How does Alfred of Beverley compare?

EAW. Differences from the *HRB* identified by N.Wright	*How treated in Historia?*
1. *Omissions*	
Brutus's early career in Greece. *HRB* §§7-15	Alfred includes
Corineus and wrestling with Gogmagog. *HRB* §§ 17-24	Alfred includes
Belinus accompanies Brennus to Rome § 43	Alfred includes
Night of long knives and murder of 360 British earls. *HRB* §§ 104-105	Alfred includes
All mention of Merlin. *HRB* §§ 106- 206	Alfred includes
All mention of prophecies. *HRB* §§ 109-118	Alfred mentions existence but omits detail
Miraculous conception of Arthur. *HRB* §§ 137-139	Alfred includes
The battle with the giant of Tumba Helene. *HRB* § 165	**[Alfred omits]**
All mention of Brianus and cutting flesh from his thigh to feed Caduallo. *HRB* § 165	[**Alfred omits**]
1. *Additions*	
Giants wading into sea to confront Brutus on his arrival in Britain. *EAW* §2	Alfred follows *HRB*
Replies of Leir's daughters. *EAW* §3	Alfred follows *HRB*
Vortigern has Constans carried around on spears after crowning *EAW* §8	Alfred follows *HRB*
Arthur's two continental campaigns conflated to one. *EAW* §9	Alfred follows *HRB*
Place of final battlle of Arthur and Modred in Cornwall is changed. *EAW* §9	Alfred follows *HRB*
Statement on the Breton's hope of Arthur's return. *EAW* §9	Not found in Alfred
Several 'Sententiae ' of classical/other allusion added. EAW §3, 4, 5.	None found in Alfred
2. *Modifications*	
Brutus's journey to Britain is closer to *HB* and earlier in *HA*. *EAW* §2	Alfred follows *HRB*
Treatment of Brennius and Belinus is closer to *HE* and Orosius. *EAW* §4	Alfred follows *HRB*
Magnus Maximus spelled historically (Maximinianus in *HRB*) *EAW* §8	**[Alfred follows *EAW*]**
Vortigern summons the English to Britain from continent. *EAW* §8	**[Alfred follows *EAW*]**
Treatment of Allectus, Carausius and Asclepiodotus. *EAW* §8	Alfred follows *HRB*
3. *Errors*	
Brennius's Norweigan Bride. Henry's detail of account muddled. *EAW* § 4	Alfred follows *HRB*
Fulgentius called *Dux Pictorum. EAW* § 8	Alfred follows *HRB*
Uther Pendragon called son not brother of Aurelius Ambrosius. *EAW* § 8	Alfred follows *HRB*
Vortigern called *Dux Cornubie.* EAW § 8	Alfred follows *HRB*
English destroy *Urbs Legionum. EAW* § 9	Alfred follows *HRB*

The evidence set out in Fig. 8 suggests that Alfred abbreviated directly from the *HRB* and was not overtly guided by Henry's abbreviation in the *EAW*. Alfred includes nothing which Henry has added. He repeats none of Henry's errors. In three of the four instances highlighted where *EAW* influence might be suggested (Fig. 8 bracketed in bold type) there is an alternative explanation. Brianus cutting flesh from his thigh to feed the sick King Caduallo is omitted because the entire reign of Caduallo is excised in Alfred's abbreviation in the *Historia*. Alfred spells the name Maximus as does Henry in the *EAW* because he takes it from Eutropius and Bede's account, not from the

HRB. In the case of Vortigern's summoning of the English to Britain from the continent Alfred has here once again borrowed from the *HE*, not the *HRB*. Of the differences between Henry's *EAW* abbreviation and the *HRB* identified by Neil Wright, only Alfred's omission of Arthur's battle with the giant of Tumba Helene appears as if it might have been guided by Henry's abbreviation in the *EAW*. Henry also notably omitted all mention of Merlin and of his prophecies in the *EAW*. There is the suggestion of Henry's influence here on Alfred, for, although in the *Historia* Alfred does not omit Merlin from his account, he moderates his semi-supernatural character. Moreover, whilst Alfred notes that Merlin prophesied on matters reLating to the kingdom, he omits the prophecies from the text, discussed in greater detail in Alfred's reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth which follows.

Henry of Huntingdon. Summary and conclusions.

The influence of Henry of Huntingdon's *HA* on Alfred's *Historia* was therefore considerable. There are direct textual borrowings in four of the *Historia's* books (Fig.4).The organization of the narrative around book-themes closely follows that adopted by Henry in the *HA*. Alfred's general chronological approach; introducing relatively few fixed dates with dating mostly given by regnal year, is reminiscent of Henry's. The pedagogic, explanatory commentary at the start and end of each book, guiding readers through the narrative, recalls the practice of Henry. The manner of ending each book with recapitulated lists of kings, book nine excepted, is a characteristic feature of the *HA* (for example, found in books two, four, five and six). Many of Henry's important historical ideas are either recycled or have been reinvented in adapted form in the *Historia*. It has been suggested that Henry's central historical idea of the five *plagas*, the five peoples sent by divine providence to have either conquered or beleaguered Britain, might have been influential in Alfred's division of Geoffrey of Monmouth's continuous history of the British kings into five periods, the *quinqe status*. Another of Henry's ideas; the establishment of the seven English kingdoms eventually united under the West Saxon kings, is deeply embedded within Alfred's account. Alfred uses

Henry's heptarchy model in the beginning of book six of the *Historia* to help seamlessly narrate the transition of power from the British to the English kings on the island. Alfred recycles Henry's explanation of the threefold naming and identity of the island; first Albion, then Britain and finally Anglia. Finally, Alfred's considerable debt to the geo-historical survey with which Henry opens the *HA* will be examined separately in chapter five of this study, Alfred's description of Britain.

Such is Henry's pervasive influence in the *Historia* it is perhaps surprising that Alfred appears to have ignored Henry's abbreviation of the *HRB,* the *EAW*, in undertaking his own abridgement of the *HRB*, as the evidence discussed earlier suggests (Fig 8). There are, however, grounds to believe, that the *EAW* may have exerted influence on Alfred, in its treatment of the Arthurian material from the *HRB*. Henry provides only a brief description of King Arthur's achievements in his abbreviation. Fewer words are devoted to Arthur in *EAW* § 9 than are devoted to the story of Leir and his daughters in *EAW* § 3. There is also Henry's omission of the Merlianic material. Both the brevity and the silences of Henry's abbreviation of these centrepieces of the Galfridian narrative suggest misgiving about their historicity. These misgivings we see expressed by Alfred in his own abbreviation of the *HRB,* both overtly and implicitly, now to be discussed. Finally, the *EAW* may also have influenced Alfred in a more indirect but important way and this arises from what the *EAW* failed satisfactorily to do. The awkward way that Henry inserted Geoffrey's British history into the *HA* left many questions unanswered and introduced historical inconsistencies which Alfred would have recognised. The *EAW* ends with the abandonment of Britain by Cadwaldr - and the transfer of power to the English kings - chronologically well into the seventh century. This conflicts with Henry's earlier account in books one and two of the *HA* where the seven English kingdoms were established in the fifth and sixth centuries. In his prologue Alfred had commented on the earlier historical accounts which he had drawn on as follows:

> 'Similiter et post Bedam plures per Anglorum ecclesias regum tempora diligencius perscrutantes, ipsorum gesta sollerti indagine annotare

curaverunt, de quibus non nulla studiosius investigata huic opusculo sunt inserta.'

HAB Prologue. 69-72

'After Bede also, several people throughout the churches of England made thorough examinations of the times of the kings and took great care to record their deeds with intelligently conducted research, and some of these things, having been carefully investigated, have been inserted into the present work.'

Archdeacon Henry was one of the diligent church historians whose researches Alfred knew and used - the others being Bede, John of Worcester and Symeon of Durham. With Alfred's evident close knowledge and dependency on the *HA* which this chapter has discussed, one might be permitted to speculate that Henry's awkward incorporation of Geoffrey's British history in the form of the *EAW*, might have been a factor in encouraging Alfred to undertake his own work of historical assimilation.

4.2. **Geoffrey of Monmouth**

Introduction

At over eleven thousand words (Fig.4) and considerably longer than Henry of Huntingdon's abbreviation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*HRB*), the *Epistola ad Warinum* (*EAW*), [221] the *Historia* represents the most extensive twelfth-century abridgement of the *HRB* in a Latin chronicle of the period. Compiled little over a decade after the appearance of the *HRB* (c.1136), [222] the *Historia* also preserves a near contemporary reception of Geoffrey's British history. It is however a text which has remained largely unexplored for the evidence it provides for early reactions to Geoffrey's history. In modern scholarship only R.William Leckie [223] and, to a lesser extent, Antonia Gransden, have provided significant comment of Alfred's abbreviation of the *HRB*.[224] Indeed, in a 2011 survey of the reception of the *HRB* amongst later Latin chroniclers, Alfred did not even merit a mention.[225]

Alfred made his abridgement of the *HRB* from a 'vulgate' version of the text; a term first coined by Jacob Hammer in 1951 to describe the standard text when he published a text of the *HRB* differing considerably from this text and which he referred to as the 'First Variant' version. [226] Alfred's use of the

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[221] There are 308 lines of Latin text in the *EAW* as printed in D. Greenway's modern OMT edition of the *HA.* The word count is estimated to be c. 3,000 words.

[222] Gransden *HWE* I, p. 201. Tatlock, *Legendary History*, p. 437 gives 1130 - 1138. A more recent view is that of Short, *Gaimar Estoire*, p.xxv, who states that Gaimar's first redaction of the *Estoire was* completed between March 1136 and April 1137. As Gaimar used the *HRB,* this indicates a date of later than 1133 and before April 1137 for the appearance of the *HRB.*

[223] Leckie, *Passage*, pp. 86-92.

[224] Gransden's most detailed comments on Alfred and Geoffrey of Monmouth are found in A.Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as a Historian in Medieval England' in id. *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp. 1-29, at pp.19-20.

[225] Putter, 'Latin Historiography after Geoffrey of Monmouth', pp. 85-108. The fullest discussion of Alfred's use of Geoffrey of Monmouth other than that of Leckie and Gransden remains R.H.Fletcher, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles; Especially those of Great Britain and France* in *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 10 (Boston, 1906), p.171, p.182.

[226] *HRB First Variant*, p. xi.

'vulgate' text is attested by the presence in the *Historia* of material found only in that version of the *HRB*, for which the evidence is set out in Fig.15 below. No Latin abbreviator of the period makes such frequent reference to Geoffrey's history or to its author in the course of his abbreviation; an issue to be discussed in this chapter. The *Historia* attempts to take its abbreviation of the *HRB* further than Henry of Huntingdon's *EAW* which was included only as a self-standing piece in book eight of the *HA,* 'On Exalted Matters.' Alfred attempts to integrate the newly-revealed British history into an existing understanding of Insular history and this involves not only an abbreviation, but a considerable reworking of Geoffrey's account.

Alfred's reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* remains therefore largely unexplored and the objectives of this chapter are to offer a detailed examination and appraisal of this reception in the *Historia.* The chapter begins by considering Alfred's overt comments on the *HRB* made during the course of his abbreviation. The divergences between Alfred's account and Geoffrey's original will then be identified with Alfred's omissions, alterations or additions catalogued. Issues arising from Alfred's reproduction and representation of the Galfridian narrative in the *Historia* are then discussed including:

- Alfred's collations of material found in the *HRB* with historical authorities and the role of these collations in the *Historia.*

- The reconfiguration of Geoffrey's continuous historical narrative into five distinct historical periods or '*status.*'
- Alfred's omission of the post-Carecius narrative in book five of the *Historia.*
- The treatment of Merlin and the prophecies of Merlin.
- The depiction of King Arthur in the *Historia*.
- The naming and references to Geoffrey of Monmouth in the *Historia.*

1. Alfred's overt expressions of doubt in the *Historia*.

Alfred makes direct comments on the veracity on the *HRB* material he is abbreviating at several points in the *Historia*, as follows:

Fig. 9. Alfred's comments on the *HRB* in the *Historia*.

	Location in *Historia*	Comment
1	Prologue 50-60	Editorial principles of excerpting only credible material and colLating Geoffrey's material against authority.
2	2.650-68	Silence of continental and Insular historians on the British kings before Romans is noted and questioned.
3	5.1519-21	Historicity of Aurelius Ambrosius is questioned.
4	5.1546-56	Historicity of Aurelius Ambrosius is guardedly accepted.
5	5.2055-64	Silence of continental and Insular historians on the deeds of King Arthur is observed and questioned.

1.1. Prologue

In his prologue Alfred tells us how he intends to approach the abridgement of Geoffrey's history and, in so doing, provides early evidence of a critical attitude towards the work. Two primary editorial principles, he says, will be adopted. First, only 'those things, that is, that would not go beyond the bounds of credence, and would give pleasure to the reader' will be retained: a comment implying that he thought Geoffrey's account contained material which was not credible. Second, wherever possible, Geoffrey's account would be collated against other sources, in order to identify what material was unique to Geoffrey, and what was held in common. The words Alfred later uses to preface his collations, however, make it clear that these collations were not just an academic exercise to identify what was material unique to Geoffrey, but to test their veracity. Alfred's misgivings about aspects of Geoffrey's history are made clear, therefore, from the very outset of the *Historia*:

> 'Ut autem desiderio gliscenti aliqua exparte satisfacerem, ob revelandam aliquantisper dierum illorum maliciam, non eruditis, sed mihi meisque similibus talium rerum ignaris, de praefata hystoria quaedam deflorare studui,

ea videlicet quae fidem non excederent, et legentem delectarent, et memoriae tenacius adhaererent, et quorum veritatem eciam ceterarum historiarum collacio roboraret. Cujus rei gracia veteres revolvens hystorias, attencius indagavi quid prae ceteris singulare vel proprium, quidve cum ceteris commune vel dissonum contineat hystoria Britonum.'

HAB Prologue 50 - 65

'In order however to satisfy this growing desire, at least in part, and with a view to relieving for a short period of time for certain people the boredom of their days, not for scholars, but for myself and for people like me who were ignorant of such matters, I set myself the task of compiling an anthology of certain things from the History in question, those things that is that would not go beyond the bounds of credence,   and would give pleasure to the reader and remain firmly in his memory and would strengthen the truth of these things and of other histories through the process of colLating [different texts]. Thanks to which, by turning over old histories in my mind, I investigated more carefully what the History of the Britons contained that was unique or special in comparison with others, and what it had in common with others, and where it disagreed with them.'

1. 2. The silence of the historical authorities.

Alfred opens book two of the *Historia* by expressing misgivings about aspects of the account he has just narrated in book one. He finds the account of the Briton both remarkable and unique. He has searched through the works of the Roman histories which touch on Britain for evidence of these British kings: Pompeius Trogus, Suetonius Tranquillus, Eutropius and Paulus Orosius, but can find nothing to support Geoffrey's account. Nor do Gildas or Bede, in their writings, recall anything of the events described. Before continuing with book two, Alfred remarks:

'Itaque apud omnes usque ad Gaium Julium Caesarem par silencium de praedicta regibus Britonum habitum est.'

HAB 2.666-68

'Therefore until Gaius Julius Caesar there is silence in all these matters on the above mentioned British Kings.'

1.3. Aurelius Ambrosius

Further questioning of the historicity of the *HRB* occurs after the account of the British leader Aurelius Ambrosius in book five. Alfred concludes his description by commenting, ʻ*Haec secundum Britannicum'*, making it clear that the account he has narrated is that of the Briton, not necessarily his own. He then poses the question, can this Aurelius Ambrosius be the same as the British general Aurelius Ambrosius whom Bede describes in his history ?

> 'Requirat diligencior lector curiosus, an forte ille sit iste Ambrosius Aurelius, de quo Beda mencionem facit in sua historia?'
>
> *HAB* 5.1519-21
>
> 'The careful and inquisitive reader might seek to inquire if this by chance is the same Ambrosius Aurelius of whom Bede makes mention in his history?'

Alfred reviews the evidence of the relevant historical resources. He weighs up what both Eutropius in the *Roman History* and Bede have to say on Aurelius. He inserts relevant passages from the *HE* (*HAB* 5.1527-34) and from Eutropius (*HAB* 5.1537-45) into the text. Having tabled the available evidence, Alfred then guardedly concedes, on the basis of the several points the accounts share in common, that there is sufficient evidence to accept Geoffrey's account, even though in Bede's account Aurelius is not described as a king, merely as a general:

> 'Refert autem, Britannicum ipsum Aurelium filium fuisse Constantini Regis, qui uxorem de nobili Romanorum gente habuit, et ex ea Constantem et Aurelium et Uther generavit, de quibus ipse Constantinus pater, et filius Constancius prodicione Wortigereni interfecti fuerunt.Cum itaque in hiis tribus historiis omnia simul sibi conveniant, videlicet generis nobilitas, nominis ydemptitas, temporis status et parentum interitus, animi modestia et de hostibus victoria, videtur unus idemque qui in tribus historiis Aurelius

Ambrosius nominatur, licet in hystoria Anglorum dux appelletur, qui in ceteris historiis rex significatur.'

HAB 5.1546-56

'Moreover he reports that Aurelius the Briton was the son of King Constantine, who had a wife of noble Roman family and from her were born Constans, Aurelius and Uther of whom Constantine the father and the son Constans were killed by the treachery of Vortigern. Since in these three histories all things are in agreement; that is nobility of his birth, similarity in his name, conditions of the time, death of the parent/father, his moderate character and his conquests of his enemies. It appears in each of the three histories he is called Aurelius Ambrosius, granted that in the History of the English he is called a general, but in the other histories he is designated king.'

Alfred's reflection on Aurelius Ambrosius suggests the manner in which Geoffrey's account might have been received at the time by a critical reader. There is just sufficient verifyable historical content to tip the balance in favour of acceptance, but with some misgiving.

1.4. King Arthur

Alfred's final and clearest expression of doubt about the historicity of Geoffrey's material comes at the conclusion to book five of the *Historia* which brings to a close not just the fifth and final *status* of the rule of the British kings, but the chronicle as a whole to that point. The comments concern the deeds of King Arthur:

'Quintus, id est, ultimus Britannici regni status sub XII. cucurrit regibus, de quibus non parva parvitatem meam meditacio vexat, quid causae extiterit, quod de inclito rege Arturo nichil Romana, nichil Anglorum hystoria meminerit, cum tamen ipse non solum in Britannia contra paganos, sed et in Galliis contra Romanos res praeclaras ingenii audacia miraque probitate gesserit. Quas ego hystoricae fidei derogare non audens, studio brevitatis ista de Britonum hystoria excerpere curavi, ut quae incredebilia a quibusdam viderentur praetermitterem, et tamen virtuti nichil detraherem.'

> The fifth, that is the last era of the British Kingdom, comprised a sequence of twelve kings. Concerning this an issue which has given my humble self no little concern and is a matter which stands out is that of the illustrious King Arthur nothing is recalled either in the History of the Romans or in the History of the English especially as he undertook such deeds of astonishing genius, bravery and uprightness not only against the pagans in Britain, but against the Romans in Gaul. But while not daring to detract from their historical accuracy, I have done my best to briefly extract from the British history all those things of virtue whilst leaving out those things which might appear to certain people unbelievable.

The passage raises the same concerns which Alfred posed at the outset of book two. Why are such momentous deeds not recorded by any other historian or authority, continental or Insular ? The words Alfred here uses, '*ut quae incredibilia a quibusdam viderentur*'- mirror those used in the prologue when defining his approach to abbreviating the British history: matter will only be included if it does not exceed the bounds of belief - '*quae fidem non excederent.*'

Alfred's direct comments in the *Historia* clearly indicate that he harboured doubts about the authenticity of elements of the *HRB*. The wording of Alfred's final comments are thought provoking. Alfred intimates that ' to some people', '*a quibusdam*' the events described might appear to be '*incredebilia*' '*beyond belief*.' Did Alfred count himself amongst this group? Should we assume that because Alfred took on the task of abbreviating *HRB* he necessarily believed in its authenticity, at least in all its parts?

Alfred closes book five by posing the question: why the silence of the historians on such great deeds conducted on such a grand scale? This was one of William of Newburgh's several points of attack on the *HRB* in the *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* (c.1198).[227] There is, however, no evidence that

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[227] *William of Newburgh. The History of English Affairs*, ed. and trans. P.G.Walsh and M.J.Kennedy (Warminster, 1988), p. 34, '*Quomodo enim historiographi verteres, quibus ingenti curae fuit nihil memorabile scribendo omittere, qui etiam mediocria*

William knew Alfred's work. In the case of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* however (c.1327), this same question was later posed (*Polychronicon* V.V.6) and Alfred's influence on Higden's reception of the Arthurian content of the *HRB* is discussed in chapter six of this study.

2. Divergences from the *HRB* in the *Historia.*

Alfred compresses the *HRB* into an account of just over eleven thousand words.[228] Galfridian borrowings are effectively concentrated into four of the first five books of the *Historia* as twenty words only from the *HRB* are found in book four where Bede's *HE* and the *Historia Romana* of Eutropius (Paul the Deacon) provide the main narrative. The distribution of Alfred's borrowings from the *HRB* and the proportion of text that they represent of each of these books of the *Historia* is summarised as follows:

Fig. 10. Galfridian material in the *Historia.*
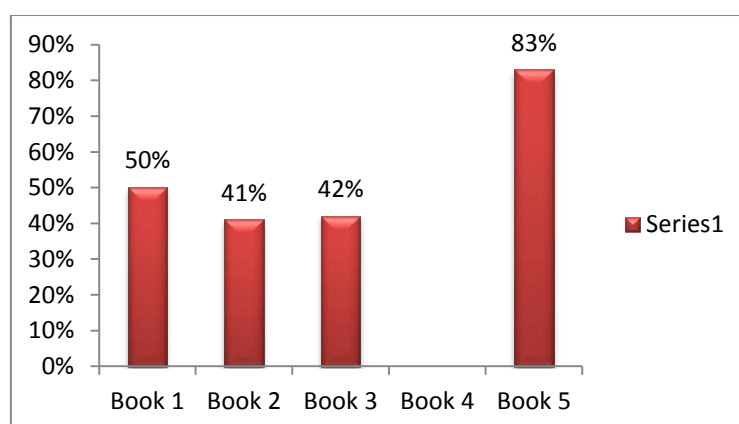
In his compilation Alfred both omits large sections of Geoffrey's text, and narrates what is retained in very concise manner. Given his promise to excerpt credible material only, the omissions and adaptations are particularly important to catalogue. They represent evidence which may cast important light on Alfred's reception of the *HRB*.

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memoriae mandasse noscuntur, virum incomparabilem ejusque acta supra modum insignia silentio praeterire potuerunt' 'For how could the historians of old, who took immense pains to omit from their writings nothing worthy of mention, and who are known to have recorded even modest events, have passed over in silence this man beyond compare and his achievements so notable beyond measure ?

[228] An initial estimate of the *HRB* indicates a text of over 50,000 words.

The main divergences from the text of the *HRB* in books one to three of the *Historia* will be summarised first followed by a comprehensive analysis of book five where all omitted content and alterations in Alfred's abridgement will be catalogued. Book five narrates the highpoint of the *HRB,* containing the history of the house of Constantine, the reign of Vortigern, the prophecies of Merlin, the coming of the Saxons and the *Arthuriad.* It offers the most fruitful opportunity to observe Alfred's handling of some of Geoffrey's most celebrated narrative.

2.1 *Historia,* books one to three.

The Galfridian narrative from Brutus's banishment from Italy and eventual arrival in Britain down to the arrival in Britain of Julius Caesar is retained in concise manner. All of Geoffrey's prominent royal personages are briefly described. The deeds of the sons of Brutus and their political division of Britain after Brutus's death are recorded. The city-building and law-giving British kings and queens are all described: Bladud founder of Bath, Dunwallo Molmutius, Leir founder of Carlisle and his three daughters, Belinus and Brennius with their continental campaigns. Geoffrey's spurious claims that King Alfred translated the laws of Dunwallo Molmutius from Latin into English – St Gildas having first translated them from British into Latin- and King Alfred's translation of the laws of Queen Marcia into English are recycled. King Lud and his renaming of London from Trinovantum to Kaer Lud is described.

The main omissions noted are the following. Twenty-seven invented speeches, letters and messages – all but one - down to and including the coming of Julius Caesar are omitted. Long passages of Galfridian description are discarded. For example, many details of Brutus's exile in Greece and of his journey to Britain, detailed information of the story of King Leir and his three daughters, description of the campaigns and battles of Belinus and Brennius. The history of the campaigns of Caesar and Cassibellaunus is radically pruned. A thirty-two name list of British kings between Elidurus and Beldgraber is omitted. Details of the giant-slaying exploits of Corineus and the fate of the twelve-cubit tall giant Goegmagog are omitted. Alfred covers the

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giant-cleansing activities of the Trojans on arrival in Britain with the following brief words:

> 'Post hoc proelium Brutus ad naves reversus, prosperis ventis promissam insulam petens, in Totonensium littore applicuit, repertosque gigantes ad cavernas montium fugando et occidendo patriam purgavit, et eam sibi <u>s</u>uisque habitabilem faciens, et insulam per ducatus et comitatus et per ceteras honorum dignitates distribuens, omnes regiae potestati subjecit, primusque super eos regnavit.'

> *HAB* I. 305-10

> 'After this battle Brutus returned to the ships and with favourable winds bearing them they came ashore at Totnes and killing and driving off into the mountains any giants encountered, Brutus cleansed the land, making it habitable for his people and he divided the island into dukedoms and earldoms and other dignities of honour, subjected all of the kingdom to his power and was the first to rule over them.'

Of interest is that the one invented speech of Geoffrey's which Alfred retains up to book five of the *Historia* is Brutus's prayer to the goddess Diana at her temple and her prophetic response and mandate to Brutus. The retention of this prophecy is commented further in discussion of Alfred's reaction to the prophecies of Merlin below.

Fig. 11. *HRB* content omitted in books 1-3 of the *Historia*.

HRB Book	Speeches and Letters Omitted And location in *HRB*	Events Omitted or Content Reduced In Abbreviation
1	Brutus to Trojans in Greece 1.91-103 Brutus to Anacletus 1.155-67 Anacletus to Greeks 1.176-80 Mempricius to Trojan troops 1.227-41 King Pandrasus to Trojans 1.247-65 Corineus to soldiers in Aquitaine 1.366-70 Goffarius king of Aquitaine 1.406-09	Trojans stay in Greece mostly omitted. Brutus's journey To Britain greatly reduced. List of 32 kings from Elidurus to Beldgraber.
2	Corineus to Locrinus 2. 32-36 Leir speech to Gonorilla 2.146-8 Cordeilla speech to Lear 2.156-62 Leir to Cordeilla 2.165-71 Leir soliloquy 2.214-231	Giant slaying exploits of Corineus. Goemagog and his 'Leap' omitted. Story of Leir and his 3 daughters greatly reduced.

3	Evil counsellors to Brennius 3.14-19 Tonwenna to her son Brennius 3.133-147	Story of Belinus and Brennius and their wars and campaigns greatly reduced.
4.	Caesar soliloquy 4. 6-15 Caesar letter to Cassibellaunus 4.18-32 Androgeus letter to Caesar 4.167-92 Androgeus soliloquy 4.236-46 Androgeus to Caesar 4.249-51 Androgeus to Caesar 4. 253-59	Account of invasion & campaigns of J.Caesar greatly reduced. Date of King Lucius's death and place of burial Omitted.
5.	Exiles to Constantine 5.156-62 Mauricus to Maximianus 5.220-21 Mauricus To Maximianus 5.245-49 Conanus 5.258-60 Mauricus 5.262-68 Caradocus to King Octavius 5.276-93 Maximianus to Conanus 5.318-328	

2.2. *Historia,* book five.

Four main categories of divergence from the *HRB* are found in book five of the *Historia.* These are: 1. Narrative omissions. 2. Reductions and moderations in reporting numbers and scale. 3. Differences in geographic description. 4. Literary and stylistic differences.

2.2.1. Narrative omissions

Omissions of *HRB* material are so prevalent that they required classification in sub categories of which seven are proposed. A. Speeches, conversations and letters. B. Secret thoughts and motives. C. Material related to Merlin. D. Material related to Arthur. E. Material critical of the Saxons. F. Names of kings or other prominent characters in the plot. G. Miscellaneous items of interest.

2.2.1. A. Speeches, conversations and letters.

Of the eighty-five invented speeches, conversations and letters in the text of the *HRB* which Alfred abridges in book five – to the donation by Gormundus of Loegria to the Saxons - all but eleven are omitted – and two of the retained speeches are greatly pruned.[229] Omissions include:

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[229] Those of Arthur, *HRB* IX 448-75 and Hoelus, *HRB* IX 480-501.

- Archbishop Guithelinus to Romans. *HRB* 6. 29-49

- Archbishop Guithelinus to Aldroenus king of Brittany. *HRB* 6. 93-107

- Aldroenus' reply to Guithelinus. *HRB* 6. 109-26

- Guithelinus to Constantinus. *HRB* 6. 129-31

- Vortigern to the monk Constans. *HRB* 6.154-58

- Constans to Vortigern. *HRB* 6.192-93

- Vortigern to Constans. *HRB* 6.195-200

- Picts singing Vortigerns's praises. *HRB* 6. 211-12

- Picts' conversations before murdering Constans. *HRB* 6. 221-24

- Hengist to Vortigern. *HRB* 6. 259-74

- Hengist to Vortigern *HRB.* 6. 277-83

- Vortigern to Hengist. *HRB* 6. 285-90

- Hengist to Vortigen *HRB* 6. 304-09

- Vortigern's reply *HRB* 6. 311-12

- Hengist's reply *HRB* 6. 314-318

- Vortigern's reply *HRB* 6. 320 -24

- Hengist's reply *HRB* 6. 325-328

- Ronwein and Vortigern. *HRB* 6. 346; 351-2

- Hengist to Vortigern *HRB* 6. 378-83

- Dinabutius to Merlin *HRB* 6. 517-19

- Conversation between Vortigern and Merlin Ambrosius. *HRB* 6. 552-74

- Aurelius Ambrosius to Duke Eldol of Gloucester. *HRB* 8. 36-52

- Eldol to Aurelius Ambrosius. *HRB* 8. 95-102

- Eldol on defeat of Hengist *HRB* 8. 144-6

- Eldadus bishop of Gloucester condemning Hengist. *HRB* 8.162-66

- Eldadus pronounces judgement on Octa. *HRB* 8.182-86

- Tremorinus archbishop of Caerleon to Aurelius Ambrosius. *HRB* 8. 217-21

- Merlin refusing to prophesy to Aurelius Ambrosius. *HRB* 8. 227-30

- Merlin recommends bringing the Giant's Ring from Ireland. *HRB* 8. 233-38

- Merlin describes the origin of the magic stones to Aurelius Ambrosius. *HRB* 8. 242-49

- Gillomanius to his companions in Ireland. *HRB* 8. 260-65

- Merlin to his men on dismantling the Giants Ring. HRB 8. 271-2

- Conversation between Pascentius and Eopa on killing Ambrosius Aurelius. *HRB* 8. 322-34

- Gorlois duke of Cornwall battle plan. *HRB* 8. 420-28

- Uther to Ulfin of Ridcaradoc on his love for Igerna. *HRB* 8. 477 - 80

- Ulfin to Uther advising to look for the help of Merlin. *HRB* 8. 482-87

- Merlin's speech to King Uther about transforming his appearance to that of Duke Gorlois. *HRB* 8. 493-8

- Uther to Igerna in disguise of Gorlois. *HRB* 8. 526-530

- Uther to his companions. *HRB* 8. 590-93

- Letter of Lucius Hiberius to Arthur. *HRB* 9.415-31

- Cador duke of Cornwall *HRB* 9. 437-45

- Auguselus king of Scotland *HRB* 9. 504-18

- Helana's Nurse on Mount St Michael's. *HRB* 10. 55-67

- Boso to his companions *HRB* 10. 167-72

- Battlefield address of Arthur *HRB* 10. 267-89

- Lucius Hiberius's speech to his troops. *HRB* 10. 295-316

- 2nd Battlefield speech of Arthur *HRB* 10. 423-8

2.2.1. B. Secret thoughts and motives.

- The Pict's pretext for killing king Constantinus. *HRB* 6.145-47
- The motive for the Britons abandoning Vortigern that he preferred pagans to Christians, and that he loved his pagan wife Ronwein more than the Christians. *HRB* 6. 390-400
- Saxon leaders' thinking it was beneath their dignity to fight the half dead King Uther at St Albans. *HRB* 8. 565

2.2.1. C. Material related to Merlin.

- Merlin's explanation for the collapsing stone tower of Vortigern

  and the two sleeping dragons sleeping underneath it in the pool. *HRB* 6. 550-77
- Prophecies of Merlin - Alfred remarks they are 'too long to be included here.' *HAB* 5.1452. *HRB* 7. 25-304

- Merlin's refusal to prophesy to Aurelius Ambrosius and the episode of the transportation of the Giants' Ring of stones from Ireland and the erection of the stones at Stonehenge as a monument to the Britons slain by the Saxons. *HRB* 8. 228- 98

- Much of the circumstance and detail of how Uther tricked Ugerna, wife of Gorlois Duke of Cornwall, into sleeping with him using Merlin's powers of illusion and Geoffrey's claim that Arthur was conceived on that very night of deception. *HRB* 8. 450-536

2.2.1. D. Material related to Arthur.

- Arthur's conception at Titangel as a result of Merlin's powers of illusion. King Uther's transformation into the appearance of Duke Gorlois. *HRB* 8. 440-511

- How Arthur's sword, Caliburn, was forged on the island of Avallon. *HRB* 9.110-11

- How Arthur subdued all of Ireland after capturing King Gillomanus. *HRB* 9. 218-19

- Expansion and improvements to Arthur's court arousing continental suspicions and the reasons for his continental campaign against Rome and its allies. *HRB* 9. 225-36

- Description and details of Arthur's Pentecostal celebration at Caerleon reduced to a very brief summary. *HRB* 9. 306-411

- Arthur retiring to the giants' tower above his gateway at Caerleon to consider Lucius Hiberius's letter. *HRB* 9. 433

- Arthur's claim that Belinus, aided by his brother Brennius once hung twenty- four Roman nobles in forum. *HRB* 9.470-72

- Arthur's visionary dream on the sea journey from Southampton to Harfleur of the fight between the dragon and the bear which is interpreted in different ways by Arthur and his followers. *HRB* 10.16-29

- Abduction of Helena, neice of duke Hoelus by the giant from Spain. Arthur's battle with and slaying of the giant on mount St Michael's. Details of Ritho, the other giant Arthur had killed. *HRB* 10. 33-109.

- The word ' letaliter' describing Arthur's wounds on being taken to Avallon.*HRB* 11.81

2.2.1. E. Material explicitly or implicitly critical of the Saxons.

- Remarks about the inhospitable part of the island north of the Humber where only uncivilized '*aliengensis*' including Saxons lived, bent on destruction. *HRB* 8. 64-77

- Description of the destruction of churches in York and London by Hengist and the Saxons. *HRB* 8.191-96

- Geoffrey's description and explanation for the erection of the giants' stone ring, as a memorial and burial site for the British nobles betrayed and murdered by Hengist. *HRB* 8. 203-1

2.2.1. F. Names of kings, royal family members and prominent personages.

- Ronwein, Hengist's daughter. *HRB* 6. 338-68
- Names of Kings of Gotland and the Orkney's, Doldauius and Gunuasius. *HRB* 9. 221

2.2.1. G. Miscellaneous items of interest.

- Most of the extensive account of the circumstances of the Saxons arrival in England, the landing in three ships by Hengist and Horsa in Kent, their religious practices and genealogy. *HRB* 6.248-337
- Details of the Saxons fighting alongside the Britons against the Picts in the north. *HRB* 6. 291-5
- King Vortigern fighting with Saxons against his son Vortimer. *HRB* 6. 405-12
- Details of Vortigern's infatuation with Hengist's daughter Ronwein. *HRB* 6.338-68
- Hengist being given the province of Kent after giving his daughter to Vortigern in marriage. *HRB* 6.364
- Leaving the sick King Hoelus in Dumbarton. *HRB*.9.86
- Modred's promise to donate all Britain north of the Humber to Cheldric the Saxon leader and as much land in Kent as was possessed by Hengist and Horsa in Vortigern's time for his support in the battle against Arthur. *HRB* 11.10-15
- Geoffrey's comment that David bishop of Caerleon was buried in the city of Menevia -St David's- because he loved it more than all other monasteries as it had been founded by St Patrick, who had foretold David's birth. *HRB*.11. 90-93

- Post Carecius narrative to the death of Cadwaladr and return of Ivor and Yni to Britain. HRB 9. 187-607

2.2.2. Reductions and moderation of numbers and scale.

In the text of the *Historia* as presented in Hearne's text, when describing the size of armies or army components, those fallen in battle and fleet sizes, Alfred's numbers are regularly found to be more modest than those found in the *HRB*, and on occasions are omitted:

- 1000 troops sent by King Aldroenus of Armorica with Constantinus not 2000. *HAB* 5.1316; *HRB* 6.121
- 360 British nobles killed by Hengist, not 460. *HAB* 5.1441; *HRB*.6.470
- Aurelius Ambrosius and his brother landing in Britain with 10,000 knights is omitted. *HAB* 5.1485; *HRB* 8.22
- Lucius Hiberius's army is 40,160 strong not 460,100. *HAB* 5.1800; *HRB*.10.10
- Arthur draws up his army in formations consisting of 5,055 men instead of 7 groups of 5,555 men. *HAB* 5.1861; *HRB* 10. 245-47
- 2000 men killed alongside earl of Treguier omitted. *HAB* 5.1914; *HRB* 10.389-90
- Gormundus lands from Ireland with 60,000 African soldiers not 160,000. *HAB* 5.1997; *HRB* 11.125-26

2.2.3. Differences in and omissions of geographic descriptive material.

- Cirencester is found instead of Silchester on three occasions.[230] *HAB* 5. 1319, 1609, 1754; *HRB* 6.137; 9. 2; 9. 409
- Mount Snowdon as the location of Vortigern's tower is not described. *HAB* 5. 1446; *HRB* 6. 502

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[230] This difference it is suspected may be a variant reading of the *HRB* text.

- Details of region in Wales and name of the castle where Vortigern flees to escape Aurelius Ambrosius is not described. *HAB* 5.1487.; *HRB* 8. 30-35

- St David's in Wales is not described as the location of battle between Uther Pendragon and the Saxons. *HAB* 5.1573; *HRB* 8. 374

- Topographical detail of Lincoln and its name in British, Kaerluidcoit are omitted. *HAB* 5.1634; *HRB* 9. 60

- Location of Battle between Arthur and Modred at the Devon river, Camblan, is omitted. *HAB* 5.1964; *HRB* 11.44

- Cheldricus killed on the island of Thanet. *HAB* 5.1675; *HRB* 9.145-7

- Loch Lomond as the place of Arthur's siege and the description of its sixty islands fed by sixty rivers and sixty crags in which eagles nest and who foretell marvels. *HAB* 5.1683; *HRB* 9.151-7

- The second wonderous lake in Scotland near Loch Lomond and a third, in Wales near Linligwan. *HAB* 5. 1680; *HRB* 9.176-91

2.2.4. Literary and stylistic differences.

Based on a comparison of the texts of the printed editions of the *Historia* and *HRB* only, changes in choice of vocabulary and syntax are frequently observed in Alfred's abbreviation. [231] Alternative compound verbs are regularly used and tense and mood are varied. These changes are assumed to reflect Alfred's stated intention to produce an abbreviation both concise and elegantly written, to give pleasure to his readers '*et legentem delectarent'* (*HAB* Prologue 60). Sixty-seven instances in book five of the *Historia* where this has been observed are listed below.

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[231] *Geoffrey of Monmouth, The History of the Kings of Britain* ed. Michael D.Reeve and trans. Neil Wright (Woodbridge, 2007). This edition was based on a full collation of 11 manuscripts of the *HRB* and 6 in part (*HRB* pp. xi-xii) and is assumed to provide a true representation of the original *HRB* text. The text of the *Historia* presents a consistent pattern of stylistic changes from the *HRB* text, suggesting the authorial hand at work, rather than the text reflecting variant readings of the *HRB.*

Fig. 12. *Historia*. Differences in vocabulary and syntax to that found in *HRB*.

Historia Bk 5	Location (Line)	HRB Original	location in HRB
docente S. Germano	1420	Iubente S.Germano	6.414
taliter (added)	1447		6.500
deosculatus est	1458	deosculabatur	6.535
apparebat	1460	comparebat	6.537
generacionem	1464	procreationem	6.545
ista	1467	ipsa	6.550
conclusum	1473	inclusum	8.10
illucente	1485	illuxit	8.21
divertit	1486	convertit	8.31
conantur	1488	nituntur	8.53
reverteretur	1493	potiretur	8.76
hanc	1502	nos et	8.176
restauracionem	1512	reformationem	8.201
reformavit	1586	renovavit	8.442
disposuit	1587	deposuit	8.443
militi strenuo	1595	miles strenuissimus	8.546
tumulaverunt convenientibus	1595	humaverunt convenerunt proceres	8.612
Britonum proceribus	1609	Britonum	9.1
petivit a supradictis paganis obsessam	1621 1634	petunt a paganis quos supra memoravi obsessam	9.58 9.58
venientes	1636	venerunt	9.65
denegaretur	1638	abnegaretur	9.70
permissi sunt	1640	sinerentur	9.74
servans	1650	conservans	9.90
clamavit	1654	exclamavit	9.95
pro fratribus	1657	pro confratribus	9.100
suscipit	1658	inierit	9.101
si quis	1659	si aliquis	9.103
absolucio	1660	ablutio	9.104
exhylarati	1661	hilarati	9. 106
ortam	1693	editam	9.210
cunctis prospere succedere (added)	1703		9.235
dedignati	1705	indignati	9.239
sed	1713	at	9.239
coepit	1711	incepit	9.251
affuit	1714	venit	9.262
laborasset	1715	doluisset	9.264
intulisset	1727	induxisset	9.286
responderet	1762	disponi deberent	9.434
impletum est	1774	adimpleta sunt	9.494

iturum	1779	aditurum	9.536
repeteret	1779	appeteret	9.537
intravit	1783	adivit	10.15
cognovisset	1803	nuntiatum est	10.112
regreditur	1810	digreditur	10.128
stravit	1812	postravit	10.133
caperet	1814	retinere	10.138
conversus	1815	reversus	10.138
persequerentur	1817	insequerentur	10.146
docebat	1826	edocebat	10.164
satagerent	1837	perstarent	10.200
ad servandum	1841	ad conservandum	10.211
praeposuerunt	1843	praeponuntur	10.212
ingrediens	1860	ingreditur	10.242
disposuit	1860	disponere	10.243
resumpta	1873	revocata	10.293
monuit	1887	submonuit	10.337
reverterentur	1887	reverti conarentur	10.337
audenter irruit	1890	audacter irruit	10.341
segregare	1891	disgregare	10.342
periit	1895	corruit	10.352
meliori audacia	1927	maiorem audatiam	10.437
extiterunt	1934	habuerunt	10.455
disposuit	1962	disponit	11.40
vulneratus est	1977	letaliter vulneratus est	11.81
urbe	2001	civitate	11.134
fugerunt	2011	diffugierunt	11.163

3. Issues of historical interest arising from Alfred's abbreviation of the *HRB*.

3.1. Alfred's collations.

Alfred stated in the prologue that he would collate Geoffrey's account of British history against other histories, noting their points of similarity and difference for by doing so, 'it would strengthen the truth of the historical account' (*HAB* Prologue, 61). Alfred's collations have attracted some comment in historical scholarship, but their important function in the *Historia* has not been fully appreciated. Antonia Gransden commented unenthusiastically on Alfred's collations in her influential article on Bede's influence on twelfth-century Insular historiography, remarking 'that he (Alfred) made no systematic attempt to evaluate the relative reliability of his sources.'

Alfred's sources, identified below, were, however, the standard authorities of the time and their reliability was not in question. Nor did Alfred have to hand other sources with which to measure the reliability of these authorities against.

Fig. 13. Collating the *HRB* with other historical authorities.

Location in *Historia*	Authority compared with.
1.432-33	Roman History (Eutropius)
1.470	H.Huntingdon
2.713-16	Bede, Orosius
2.742-45	Suetonius, Roman History
2.776	Bede, Orosius
2.791	Suetonius
2.799	Roman History
2.808	Roman History
3.862	Bede
3.913	Bede
3.929	Roman History
3.943-44 (Discrepancy noted for Bassianus's death)	Roman History
3.958	Bede, Orosius
3.970	Bede, Orosius
3.971	Roman History
3.1003	Bede
3.1025	Bede
3.1030	Eutropius in Roman History
3.1063	Eutropius
3.1075-77	Bede, Roman History
3.1102	Roman History
3.1115	Bede
3.1116	Vita S.Martin
4.1176	Bede
4.1276-78	Roman History
5.1386	Roman History
5.1398	Bede, Roman History
5.1422	Vita St.Germanus
5.1536	Bede, Eutropius
5.2014	Bede

Alfred's collations, of which there are thirty, serve two purposes in the *Historia*. First, they were the means of testing the basic veracity of Geoffrey's account, as the words prefacing the collations, on occasion, make very clear:

> 'Operae precium est huic narracioni conferre ea quae de Orosio excerpta Beda in sua posuit historia, ut constet veritatis habere fundamentum quae de Caesare leguntur secundum Britannicum.'

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[232] Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation', p. 19.

HAB 2.713-16

'It is worth the effort to match what Bede has extracted from Orosius and included in his History with this account so that the basic truth of these things which are read about Caesar, according to the **Briton**, can be agreed.'

Second, the collations provide the narrative framework for the first five books of the *Historia.* Alfred's five '*status*'; the five historical 'states' into which Geoffrey's continuous account is repackaged in the *Historia*, is created by Alfred out of his readings of the histories of the authorities used in the collations: Bede, Eutropius, Orosius and Suetonius. Alfred's stated objective in undertaking these collations; to set out for the reader the points of similarity and difference between the accounts of Geoffrey and standard authorities, understates their full function in the narrative. They provide the chronological framework into which Geoffrey's newly-revealed British history can be fitted.

In the collations Alfred occasionally identifies inconsistency between Geoffrey's account and those of standard authority, but it does not prevent him using it:

'Discrepat a morte Bassiani, et de loco mortis, Romam Hystoria. 'Defuncto est,' inquid, 'in Hosdroena apud Edissam, moliens adversus Parthos expedicione.'

HAB 3.943-45

'There is a discrepancy on the place and the circumstances of Bassianus' death. The Roman History says 'He died in Osdroena near Edessa engaged in an expedition against the Parthians.'

3.2   Reconfiguring the *HRB* narrative in the *Historia.*

3.2.1. The five *status* of the rule of the British kings.

Alfred's reworking of Geoffrey's continuous narrative account of British history presented *HRB* into five periods or *status*, each given its own book or chapter in the *Historia*, was discussed earlier (pp.101-102) when considering the influence of Henry of Huntingdon on the *Historia*. In modern editions of the

HRB, its text is presented in a series of books and chapters although this appears to have little textual or manuscript justification. Lewis Thorpe commented that the subdivision of Geoffrey's text into books and chapters was unlikely to have been made by Geoffrey himself [233] and he also observed that Geoffrey intended his work for the solitary reader; 'not to be declaimed aloud in serial form and listened to with less than half an ear by inattentive audiences who come and go.'[234] Geoffrey's continuous narrative structure was adopted, it appears, because that is how he wished the work to be read; clearly therefore of quite different intent to Alfred, whose narrative is arranged in self –contained chapters or books, to be read serially.

The five *status* into which Alfred fits Geoffrey's narrative are based on known chronology and Alfred's thirty collations act as the markers of the framework. Book / *status* one, Britain before the Roman expeditions of Julius Caesar, is almost entirely based on the *HRB.* [235] Alfred has virtually no alternative testimony available to set against Geoffrey's account. The only non-Galfridian material of significance found, from the opening of the historical account proper to the death of King Lud (*HAB* I. 258-558), is a passage from the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon on the four royal roads, inserted immediately after Geoffrey's account of Dunwallo Molmutius's road-building programme (*HAB* I.471-84). This initial block of history Alfred designates as Britain in a state of 'felix libertate continua' 'continuous happy freedom' (*HAB* I.560), is counterbalanced by the next *status,* where Britain has been conquered by Julius Caesar and is forced to pay tribute and consequently is no longer free - a fact attested by historical authority. Books two, three and four witness the main effort to weave Geoffrey's narrative into a known history with substantial borrowings from controlling authorities. From the coming of Julius Caesar to the arrival of Constantinus in Britain from Brittany, standard sources are more

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[233] Lewis Thorpe, trans. *Geoffrey of Monmouth. The History of the Kings of Britain* (London, 1976), p. 35.
[234] Ibid., p. 25.
[235] 95% of the text – 3247 words out of 3404 – is taken from the *HRB*. A significant amount of book 1 is taken up with prologue and introductory geo-historical survey, before the narrative account from the arrival of Brutus commences which explains the difference between Fig. 4, which gives 50 % of book 1 as borrowed from the *HRB*.

frequently used than Geoffrey. Indeed in book/*status* four, Britain defenceless after its abandonment by the Romans, Alfred uses Bede's *HE* and Eutropius's *Roman History* almost exclusively. The *HRB,* other than two brief sentences, is set aside. Where Alfred has standard historical authority to draw on, he much prefers to use it.

3.2.2. The omission of post-Carecian material in the *HRB.*

Book five concludes with a striking example of Alfred editing the Galfridian narrative in order to fit it into a conventional historical framework; a reworking of Geoffrey's account which was examined in detail by R.William Leckie in his important 1981 study, *The Passage of Dominion* and whose findings in relation to Alfred will be further discussed below

Alfred's reworking of Geoffrey's account involves the premature abandoning of the *HRB*, effectively dropping nearly a century of seventh century British history. Alfred concludes book five and ends his account of the rule of the British kings at the point where the British king Carecius [236] is defeated by Gormundus, king of the Africans, and retreats into Wales. Loegria, the heartland of the island, is then donated to the Saxons by Gormundus. In the *HRB* these events take place at about the time of Augustine's mission to Britain in 597 but they mark only a temporary loss of dominion of the British kings. Another near century of momentous events is then described. There is political instability in Saxon and British held territories, the relations of the Augustine mission with the British church are described as is the massacre of British monks at Chester by Edilfridus king of Northumbria. The British kings regain sovereignty on the mainland south of the Humber under King Caduan. A forty-eight year rule of the British king Cadualla is then described. In the *HRB* it is only with the death of Cadwaladr in 689 that the dominion of the British kings on the island finally ends. At this point Britain loses its name and identity and the territorial dominion of the Anglo-Saxon kings commences. Alfred's premature ending of his abbreviation also means that a significant prophetic episode, with political overtones, is avoided. This is Geoffrey's

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[236] *Kareticus* in the *HRB* vulgate text. The first variant version of the *HRB* also has the name form Carecius.

account of the prophetic angelic voice ordering Cadwaladr to abort his plans to recover Britain because God no longer wishes the Britons to rule Britain 'until the time came which Merlin had foretold to Arthur.' The angelic voice prophesies that the Britons would one day recover the island and announces the conditions for this event to take place. In the *HRB* Cadwaladr seeks the advice of King Alanus of Brittany, who, consulting the books of prophecies, advises Cadwaladr to follow the advice of the angelic voice.

To draw book five of the *Historia* to a close Alfred therefore performs quite radical re-editing of the *HRB* text. Narrative used by Geoffrey to conclude the *HRB* in AD 689 is interwoven in Alfred's conclusion in c. AD 597. Such narrative includes the description of the Britons' loss of name and identity; the Britons being re-named Welsh after their Queen Galaes and the description of the Saxons living more harmoniously and productively than the Britons. Geoffrey had described how the English united the realm under King Athelstan in his conclusion, but Alfred is alert enough an historian to realize that this would make little sense in his own, late sixth-century ending, so the reference to Athelstan is dropped, only to be used early in book six, in a more credible historical context. Alfred's ending of book five of the *Historia* is managed in such a way that a near century of Geoffrey's account is lost, but is hardly noticed. Book six of the *Historia* then opens with the brief statement 'ˋ*Finito regno Britonum, Britanniae regnum ad Anglos est translatum*' 'ˋ*With the rule of the Britons having ended, the kingdom of Britain passed to the English*' (*HAB* 6. 2078) and the opening paragraph ends with the words, '*et de uno regno Britanniae vii. regna constituerunt*' 'ˋ*Instead of one kingdom of Britain, seven kingdoms were established*' (*HAB* 6.2091).

This historical sleight- of -hand by Alfred was illuminatingly analysed by William Leckie Jnr in his 1981 study of the reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* in twelfth-century Anglo-Norman historical literature. Leckie's discussion of Alfred, although concerned only with Alfred's reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth, represents perhaps the most detailed scholarly attention the *Historia* has yet received. [237] In its consideration of Alfred of

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[237] In particular see Leckie, *Passage,* pp. 45-46, 86-92, 104-5.

Beverley however the study concentrates on highly selective passages from the *Historia* and further elements of Alfred's treatment of Geoffrey's account may profitably be considered. Leckie's analysis merits brief review and comment, therefore, in the present discussion.

Leckie contended that the early reception of the *HRB* (c. mid 1130s to c. mid 1150s) was markedly less reverential than that encountered in the historical literature of the later twelfth century and beyond. Drawing on evidence from writers and redactors who used material from the *HRB* contemporary with Geoffrey including Geoffrey Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis*, Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, Robert de Torigni, *Chronicle*, Alfred of Beverley*,* the first variant redaction of the *HRB* and *Wace's Roman de Brut*, Leckie discussed their more critical reaction to the Galfridian material than that found, for example, in later works; for example in those of Gervase of Canterbury, *Gesta Regum* (c. 1190-1210) and Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum* (c.1204-34)[238]

Leckie argued that Alfred omitted the post Carecius account in the *HRB*, describing events occurring mostly in the seventh century, because he understood that this would have assigned to the British kings history which on the authority of Bede belonged to the Anglo-Saxons. Bede, Leckie contended, served as Alfred's essential control over Geoffrey's account of Insular history of the time.[239] Leckie's discussion then focused on the opening passages of book six of the *Historia*, narrating the transition from British to Anglo-Saxon rule. Leckie noted that Alfred uses Henry of Huntingdon's heptarchy model to signal the commencement of Anglo-Saxon history, but only in a very general and obfuscatory way which he did, argued Leckie, to minimise the tensions inherent in narrating two different versions of fifth and sixth century Insular history. These two versions were a story of British dominion of a unitary kingdom until the later sixth century, described in the *HRB*, and a story of

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[238] For the reaction of Gervase see Leckie, *Passage*, pp. 93-95 and for Roger of Wendover, pp. 98-100. Both Gervase and Roger of Wendover epitomise Geoffrey's post Arthurian account to Cadwaladr without any appreciation of the chronological conflict this posed with their accounts of seventh century Anglo-Saxon history.
[239] Fig.13 attests the frequency that Bede is collated in the *HAB*.

seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms gradually growing in power from the middle of the fifth, described in the *HE* of Bede. This is why, suggested Leckie, Alfred supressed important dates which would serve to draw attention to the contradictions, such as the date of the arrival of Hengist and Horsa in 449 AD, which Alfred almost certainly knew from both Bede (*HE* I.15) and Henry of Huntingdon's accounts (*HA* II.1).[240]

Leckie is surely correct in his view that Alfred was aware of the tensions between the Galfridian and the Bedan versions of fourth to seventh–century history and that the omission of the post Carecius British history was deliberate. It simply would not have been possible to bring the dominion of a single British king in mainland Britain south of the Humber down to AD 689, as described in the *HRB*. He is also correct to point to Alfred's manipulation of narrative material from his sources to ensure the least awkward transition between both histories. Indeed, had Leckie's analysis of the *Historia* been less narrowly focussed on the end passages of book five and the opening passages of book six, and he had considered the broader text, he surely would have been able to develop this point further. The early sections of book five see Alfred omitting considerable material describing the establishment of a Saxon kingdom in Kent from the middle of the fifth century, most of them listed in section 2.2.1.G of the divergences catalogued above. Alfred, for example, omits all material connecting Hengist to early rulership in Kent. This includes the landing of Hengist and Horsa in Kent in three ships, Vortigern's frequent visits to Canterbury, Hengist being granted the province of Kent on Vortigern's marriage to his daughter Ronwein, mention of Earl Gorangorus ruler of Kent and Mordred's offer to Cheldricus of all the land in Kent held by Hengist and Horsa in Vortigern's day for his help against Arthur.

Leckie's contention that the post Carecian material was omitted by Alfred because it conflicted with the authority of Bede does not paint the complete picture however. There is also the conflict with the authority of Henry of Huntingdon, from whom several short passages are borrowed in book six's

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[240] Leckie, *Passage,* p. 89.

opening survey [241] and, more importantly, with a new source, John of Worcester, whom Alfred turns to in book six of the *Historia.* Leckie's narrow focus on small segments of the *Historia* (*HAB* 5. 2035–6.2097) results in important content being overlooked. The remainder of book six, for example, is not considered. [242] Commencing at (*HAB* 6.2091), Alfred provides accounts of the establishment of the seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms where evidence from Bede plays only a supporting role. [243] Here Alfred does indeed provide the date, A.D.455, when Hengist began to reign in Kent (*HAB* 6. 2147). John of Worcester's dynastic accounts and genealogies of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, inserted in the preliminary material to the Worcester chronicle proper, becomes Alfred's guiding source. In managing the transition between British and Anglo-Saxon history there are therefore three controlling sources over Geoffrey's material; Bede, Henry of Huntingdon and John of Worcester, a point overlooked in Leckie's discussion.

3.3. Merlin and the prophecies of Merlin.

In the *Historia,* Merlin is presented in a more moderate and realistic light than in the *HRB.* Passages describing his acts of wizardy are either removed altogether or have their details reduced to a minimum. The prophecies of Merlin are omitted. Merlin's other prophetic interventions are reduced in number. Alfred's editing of material relating to Merlin appears motivated by the needs brevity, discretion as well as credibility.

The main 'prophecies of Merlin' are omitted, but are the subject of comment. Alfred describes them as prophecies relating 'to the future of the kingdom', indicating that he clearly understood their political significance. Then, for the only time in the *Historian*, Alfred tells us why he omits Galfridian material. The prophecies are, he says, 'too long to be included here.'

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[241] *HAB* 6.2091-2105. The passages are extracted from *HA* II.4; II.8; II.16; II.19
[242] In Hearne's edition the passages discussed by Leckie are found on pp. 77-79. From *HAB* 6.2140 onwards Alfred makes extensive use of the preliminary materials in the chronicle of John of Worcester.
[243] Middle of page 79 in Hearne's edition of the *Historia*.

'Cumque juvenis hujusmodi quaereretur, inventus est vates Merlinus, qui cum matre sua coram rege adductus, causam rei manifestavit, et multa ei futura de regno Britanniae prophetavit, quae hic inserere longum est. Hujus vatis generacionem percunctani regi mater ejus ita exposuit.'

HAB 5.1450-53

'As a result of looking for a young man in this way the soothsayer Merlin was discovered. He was brought with his mother before the king, explained the cause to the king and prophesied many things about the future of the kingdom which are too long to be included here. Then the mother explained to the king the circumstances of the birth of the soothsayer.'

Two of Alfred's close contemporaries, Henry of Huntingdon and Wace, also omitted Merlin's prophecies. Henry, as earlier noted, referred neither to Merlin or his prophecies in the *EAW*. Wace in his *Roman de Brut* (1155) avoided translating the prophecies and he, as Alfred, gave his reasons why.[244] He did not understand them and did not wish to translate them in case what he said did not come to pass. Jean Blacker has discussed Wace's omission of the prophecies arguing that they carried too great a political risk to include for a career minded poet such as Wace, whose prospects for advancement depended on royal favour.[245] Alfred, as far as we know, had no association with the royal court and fear of losing royal favour was unlikely to have been a factor in his omission of the prophecies. But as we have seen in chapter three, Alfred wrote in a charged political atmosphere. From the charters he attested (Fig 1) it has been observed that amongst his co-witnesses were many career minded clerks and members of the local aristocracy to whom royal favour would have mattered. Simple discretion is therefore likely to have played its part in Alfred's omission of the prophecies. Caution and discretion will later be observed to be a marked feature of his reproduction of material contained in the Durham *Historia Regum* (chapter 4.4).

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[244] *Wace's Roman de Brut. A History of the British* ed. and trans. J. Weiss (Exeter, 2002), lines 7539-543, p. 190.

[245] Discussed by Jean Blacker, in '"Ne Vuil Sun Livre Translater", Wace's Omission of Merlin's Prophecies from the Roman de Brut', *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays*, ed. Ian Short, *Anglo-Norman Text Society* (London, 1993), pp. 49-59.

The omission of the prophecies in the *Historia* is unlikely to have been made on the grounds of Alfred's principle of only abbreviating credible material.The Merlinian prophecies were widely known and taken with great seriousness; accorded the reverence almost of sacred scripture. [246] Prophecies were studied closely by the most learned and bishops feature amongst Merlin's most prominent students. The prophecies within the *HRB* were dedicated to Alexander bishop of Lincoln (1123-48).[247] The *Prophetia Merlini*, circulated as a separate text before the appearance of the *HRB* as shown by Orderic Vitalis's commentary on them before the end of 1135. [248] Geoffrey's *Vita Merlini* was dedicated to Alexander's successor bishop of Lincoln, Robert de Chesney (1148-66). [249] One of the most learned men of the day, John of Salisbury, attempted to interpret events in Brittany against a sentence from Merlin about the eagle of the broken covenant. When he felt unable to provide an adequate answer, he referred his correspondent to Master Alexander of Wales, a specialist in the subject, for a more expert opinion. [250]

The importance attached to Merlinian prophecy is also attested by the frequency that they were cited by the chroniclers of the time. Ralph Diceto,[251] Roger of Howden, [252] Gerald of Wales [253] Ralf de Coggeshall [254] all quote passages from the prophecies in commenting on events of the day.

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[246] For the partiality of the episcopacy of the time to Merlinian prophecy see Julia Crick, 'Geoffrey and the Prophetic Tradition' in *The Arthur of Medieval Latin Literature,* pp. 67-84. Bishops and churchmen of the time who cited Merlin's prophecies included Arnulf, bishop of Lisieux (1141-81), Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury (1162-70) and Gilbert Foliot, bishop of London (1163-87).

[247] *HRB* §§ 109-10.

[248] *OV,* vi, 12, pp. 380-389.

[249] Crick, 'Prophetic Tradition', p. 69.

[250] Cited by R.W.Southern in 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy' in *TRHS*, 5TH series, 22 (1972), pp.159-180, at p. 168.

[251] *Diceto* I, p. 384. In the *Ymagines Historiarum* Diceto refers to the capture of the king of Scots in 1184 as fulfilling a prophecy of Merlin, *Dabitur maxillis ejus fraenum quod in Armorico sinu fabricatibur* (*HRB* 114. 92).

[252] *R.Howden* II, p. 47. Howden quotes the prophecies of Merlin describing the rise of the nobles against Henry II.

[253] *Expugnatio Hibernica. The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. and trans. A.B.Scott and F.X. Martin (Dublin, 1978), I. 33. p. 96; 2. 28. p. 208; 2. 31. p. 218.

Alfred moreover is not inimical to prophecy in the *Historia*. He retains from the *HRB* Brutus's prayer to the Goddess Diana and her answer, the prophetic mandate to Brutus to voyage to the island of giants, west of Gaul, and create there the new Troy (*HAB* I.278-93). This is the only one of twenty-seven invented speeches in the *HRB*, before the coming of Julius Caesar, which Alfred retains. Two further Merlinian prophecies contained in the *HRB* are also retained. The first is Merlin's revelatory speech to Vortigern, prophesying his fate at the hands of the sons of King Constantine concluding with his prophecy that the boar of Cornwall will devour Vortigern's offspring (*HAB* 5.1470-84). The second is Merlin's explanation of the meaning of the comet in the shape of a fiery dragon, with two rays extending from its mouth over Gaul and Ireland, to Uther Pendragon Here, a series of momentous events is prophesied by Merlin including the death of Aurelius, the accession of Uther, the coming of a son who will in turn rule over Gaul and of a daughter whose offspring will rule over the kingdom of Britain in turn (*HAB* 5.1563-70).

A number of prophetic episodes from the *HRB* are however omitted by Alfred. Amongst these are the speech of Tremorinus, archbishop of Caerleon, advising Aurelius Ambrosius to seek out Vortigern's prophet Merlin, 'distinguished in foretelling the future' for advice on building a suitable monument for the British nobles slain by Hengist; Aurelius's request to Merlin to prophesy for him and Merlin's refusal; Merlin's explanation of the causes of the collapsing stone tower and the pool underneath preventing the tower from standing firm, with the two sleeping dragons beneath the pool. Finally, as discussed above, the angelic counsel to Cadwaladr, where Cadwaladr is reminded of Merlin's prophecy to Arthur about the recovery of British dominion of the island is omitted.

Alfred moderates the semi-demonic character of Merlin in the *Historia* by selective omission (see divergences 2.2.1.C above). He retains the speech of Merlin's mother, where she tells Vortigern how she came to be with child

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[254] Radulphi de Coggeshall *Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J.Stevenson, RS 66 (London, 1875), p. 146.

through the visitations and affection of the incubus (*HAB* 5.1454-62). Merlin's semi-supernatural conception is therefore recorded. But the main instances where Merlin exercises semi-magical powers are either omitted or greatly reduced. Merlin's involvement in the transportation of the Giant's Ring from Ireland and its erection in Stonehenge, is omitted. The story of Uther's seduction of Yegerna, the wife of Gorlois Duke of Cornwall using Merlin's powers of illusion is reduced from an elaborate drama-filled account to the briefest mention, where Merlin is merely described as practicing 'an amazing illusion.' In this incident Merlin had changed the appearance of Uther Pendragon, by means of special potions, to that of Yegerna's husband, thus enabling the king to deceive and seduce her. Merlin had also changed his own appearance to that of a man called Britahel, to help Uther carry out the unsavoury plan. This entire drama-filled incident is compressed into one brief sentence:

> 'Postea mortuo Gorlois, duce Cornubiae, sponsam ejus Ugernam, quam eciam vivente Gorlois miro Merlini vatis praestigio cognoverat, duxit uxorem, genuitque ex ea filium et filiam.'

> *HAB* 5.1589-91

> 'After the death of Gorlois Duke of Cornwall, Uther married his wife Ugernabut whom, even while the Duke was living, Uther had known by means of an amazing illusion of the seer Merlin and by her had a son and daughter.'

This incident also bears on Alfred's portrayal of Arthur. In Geoffrey's account, Arthur is conceived on the night of the magical deception (*HRB* 8.510-12). In Alfred's account, that detail, with its ambivalent ramifications, is omitted. As a whole, therefore, Alfred provides in the *Historia* a more credible description of Merlin, where he is presented more as a royal counsellor with prophetic powers, rather than as the semi-demonic creature portrayed by Geoffrey.

3.4. Arthur

The ambivalent implications of Arthur's conception are therefore avoided in the *Historia* by the expedient of omission and Arthur's death is demystified in a similar manner. In Geoffrey's account, Arthur is mortally wounded at the battle of Camblan, but is then taken to the island of Avallon to have his wounds tended. In the *Historia* on the other hand, Arthur is described only as '*vulneratus est.*' The word *'letaliter'* is removed and so, therefore, is a significant source of mystery surrounding Arthur's passing. Arthur is simply wounded in battle and abdicates (*HAB* 5.1977).

Arthur's military campaigns occupy just over half of book five of the *Historia* [255] and the greater part of the Galfridian description of Arthur's political and military accomplishments is retained in abbreviated form. However, a number of important omissions (divergences 2.2.1.D above) appear to be have been made by Alfred on his stated grounds of excerpting only those matters '*quae fidem non excederent.*' Arthur's giant killing exploits are omitted; both the episode of the slaying the monster of St Michel and Ritho of mount Aravius, the other giant whom Arthur had vanquished and who turned the beards of the kings he had slain into cloaks (*HRB* 10.33-103). Alfred's baulking at tales of giant-killing had earlier been suggested by the omission of the incident of Corineus's fight with Goegmagog (Fig.11). Alfred makes only passing reference only to the Trojans driving off giants when they arrived in Britain (*HAB* I. 307).

Arthur's visionary dream of the battle between bear and the dragon whilst at sea on his way to Gaul to do battle with the Roman army is also omitted. His fellow soldiers had told Arthur this was a portent of a coming encounter with a monster, but he interpreted it as foretelling his battle with the emperor (*HRB* 10.16-29).

Alfred's abbreviation of Arthur's battlefield exploits condense, but retain, most of the dramatic content of Geoffrey's narrative. There are however instances

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[255] The account of Arthur extends over 5.1591-1979. At 4421 words of text it represents approximately 55% of book five.

when the improbable content is moderated. [256] We first see Arthur in heroic action in campaigns against the Saxon invaders at the forest of Colidon and then at the lifting of the siege of Bath (*HAB* 5.1661-73). Here Alfred has the description of Arthur the warrior king, with his magnificent leather jacket and crown, his shield Pridwen upon which is painted the image of the Virgin Mary, his sword Caliburn and in his right hand his spear, Ron. That Caliburn was forged on island of Avallon is however omitted. In the same battle of Bath, Arthur charges into the thick of the action and despatches four hundred and seventy men but Alfred omits the detail that Arthur fells each with at a single stroke of his sword Caliburn.

Alfred is more severe on matters touching on life, dress and civilized behaviour at the court of King Arthur. He omits Geoffrey's description of the fame, bearing and attire of Arthur's knights inspiring the noblest from distant kingdoms to want to dress and behave like them (*HAB* 5.1704). [257] Arthur's Pentecostal celebrations at Caerleon are also largely passed over. Alfred first notes that the source for the event is the *Historia Britonum (HAB 5*.1743) and then removes the greater part of Geoffrey's extravagant description. Omitted are all details of the festivities, music and games, the lavish description of courtly protocol, the long and detailed list of kings, princes and nobles invited and the geographic location of the celebrations. Alfred tells us it takes place near the city of Legions, but not that it was on the river Usk in Glamorgan. Nor does he include the statement that it was the third metropolitan see of Britain and that its archbishop, Dubricius, was the primate of Britain and papal legate. Omitted too is Geoffrey's claims that the city had a school two hundred trained astronomers computing and prophesying coming prodigies for Arthur, two famous churches dedicated to the martyrs Julius and Aaron the latter of which having a monastery of canons and royal palaces whose golden- painted gables of its roofs made the city a match for Rome.

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[256] For example that found at *HAB* 5.1814-16 where we see Gawain cleaving Marcellus Mutius from head to chest whilst bidding him pass on a message in hell to Gaius Quintilianus, about the prowess of the Britons.
[257] *HRB* 9.225-35.

As with Merlin, Alfred's abridgement of Arthurian material involves a redrawing of Geoffrey's account. Whilst it preserves the core elements, it abandons the improbable in an attempt to present a more credible view.

3.5 Acknowledging Geoffrey of Monmouth and the *HRB* in the *Historia.*

Alfred acknowledges Geoffrey's history on eleven occasions and names its author seven times in the *Historia*; a total therefore of eighteen references to the work in the *Historia* (Fig.14). This is far more frequent acknowledgement than found in the other abbreviations of the *HRB* of the period; those of Henry of Huntingdon's *EAW* or in the chronicle of Robert de Torigni. It is also noteworthy, given that Alfred acknowledges none of his other contemporary sources in the *Historia*. His frequent references to the *HRB* therefore tell us that his abbreviation of the *HRB* was being undertaken with a different cast of mind to his excerpting from these other sources. A different cast of mind is also indicated by the modesty topos with which Alfred draws book five of the *Historia* to a conclusion. Nowhere else in the *Historia* does Alfred offer a similar intervention in the text, dedicated to a source text. It appears that by closing the text of the *HRB*, Alfred feels an important milestone has been reached in his compilation:

> 'Itaque a prima habitacione Britanniae usque ad desolacionem, quae sub Carecio facta est, totam naracionem in quinque particulas secans, quinque status regni breviter distinxi. Unde lectorem exoratum esse volo, ut quod michi meique similibus qui ad alta aspirare non possumus, utcumque elaboravi, si sibi minus gratum judicat, saltem parvulos & idiotas ab ejus le ccione derogando non abigat.'

> *HAB* 5.2064-71

> 'Thus from the first inhabitation of Britain until its abandonment, which took place under Carecius, and dividing the entire history into five parts, I briefly distinguished five epochs/ states of the kingdom. And I would like the reader to be assured that because to me and my kind who are not able to aspire to the heights, however much I tried, that even if this work is less than pleasing

to him, that it should not detract from the reading of simple and uneductated readers.'

In the *Historia* Alfred refers to the *HRB* as the *Historia Brittonum* and its author is always named as *Britannicus.* The phrase *Nunc ad Britannicum revertamur* is used to link narrative passages. When Alfred wants to draw attention to a singular event or episode in the narrative he says *Haec secundum Britannicum.* Nowhere does Alfred refer to Geoffrey by name, only by ethnicity. In the literature of the time Geoffrey is generally referred to by name. Henry of Huntingdon in the *EAW* names him *Galfridus Arturus.* Robert of Torigni refers to him in his chronicle under the year 1152 as '*Gaufridus Artur, qui transtulerat historiam de regibus Britonum de Britannico in Latinum'* and adds that he was made bishop of St Asaph in North Wales, '*fit episcopus Sancti Asaph in Norgualis*'. [258] William of Newburgh calls him *Gaufridus.* [259] Gervase of Canterbury refers to Geoffrey as *Gaufridum legat Monemutensis* and *Gaufridus Britonum Historiographus.* [260] Gerald of Wales names him *Galfrido Arthuro* [261] and also refers to the history as *Britannicam Historia.*[262]

How do we interpret Alfred's references to Geoffrey the author in so consistently impersonal a manner? It cannot be that Alfred did not know of Geoffrey by name. From the *EAW* he would have known *Galfridus Arturus.* The Beverley literary milieu which Alfred described in the prologue, where the popularity of Geoffrey's history was vividly described, suggests that its author would have been talked of and named. Alfred's range of contacts, wide reading and learning also suggests that he would have been familiar with Geoffrey by his name and his position. Does his impersonal manner of references to the *Britannicus, the Briton / Welshman,* imply a measure of disrespect; further evidence of distrust of elements of Geoffrey's history?

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[258] *The Chronicle of Robert Torigni* in *Chron.Steph* IV, p. 168, and see Crick, *Dissemination*, p. 5.
[259] WN *HRA* I, p.12.
[260] *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols., RS. 73 (London, 1879-80), ii, pp. 23, 334.
[261] Giraldus Cambrensis *Opera*, ed. J.S.Brewer, J.F.Dimock and G.F.Warner, 8 vols., RS, 21 (London, 1861-91), vi, p.58.
[262] Ibid., p. 80.

Does his naming of Geoffrey by ethnicitiy carry cultural or racial overtones? Elsewhere in the *Historia* there are few signs of pejorative ethnic attitudes, rather the opposite. Later, in book nine of the *Historia* when abbreviating the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham in the *Historia,* Alfred describes the Scots in a more sympathetic manner than does his source. Alfred's naming of the author of the *HRB* as 'The Briton / The Welshman' may or may not carry significance. It is a feature of the *Historia* however, worthy of note.

Fig. 14. Naming the *HRB* and its author in the *Historia.*

References to Geoffrey the person	Location	References to *HRB*	Location
Ut in Britannico legitur	I.199	Historia Britonum	I.39
		Historia Britonum	I.65
Quod singular..mihi haber Britannicum	2.652	Historia Britonum	I.398
		Non solum Britonum …testatur historia	2.679
Secundum Britannicum	2.716	Historia Britonum	2.742
		Tam Britonum ….	3.1004
Nunc ad Britannicum revertamur	5.1431	Tam Britonum…	4.1167
Haec secundum Britannicum	5.1518	Ex Britonum…	4.1294
Refert autem Britannicum	5.1546	Secundum historiam Britonum	5.1398
		Historia Britonum refert	5.1743
Haec secundum Britannicum	5.2013	Ista de Britonum historia excepere curavi	5.2062

Geoffrey of Monmouth. Summary and conclusions.

Alfred's incorporation of Geoffrey's history into the *Historia* is the most extensive Latin abridgement of the *HRB* of the period and provides the fullest and perhaps the best surviving evidence for how Geoffrey's history was received in Geoffrey's lifetime. In Alfred's abridgement we can see the doubts which a critical reader of the time held about the authenticity of   parts of Geoffrey's history. To Alfred's several open expressions of doubt in the *Historia* can be added a considerable pattern of omission which tells us about the material which Alfred considered 'beyond belief' in the *HRB.* These

included, amongst others, Arthurian battles with giants and battlefield exploits, visionary dreams and portents, acts of Merlianic magic and illusion, lavish Pentecostal ceremonies at Carleon in the presence of the assembled kings of the world. Alfred's abbreviation also provides a revealing example of the process by which a reader's initial incredulity at the account is suspended and Geoffrey is given the benefit of the doubt. Such an example is provided in Alfred's discussion of the historicity of Aurelius Ambrosius (*HAB* 5. 1546-56). Nevertheless it is clear from the extensive catalogue of divergences identified in this chapter, that Alfred considered the *HRB* to contain much Galfridian exaggeration and in his epitomization he attempted not just to produce an abbreviation the *HRB*, but to render a more credible version of it.

The reworking of the Galfridian narrative, in both structure and content, makes it also clear that Alfred saw serious contradictions between Geoffrey's account of fifth to seventh century Insular history and Bede's in the *HE*; a work which Alfred knew so intimately than he was able to name Bede's sources for many of its passages. Alfred omits nearly a century of Galfridian narrative from c.597 AD to 689 AD in an effort to resolve this contradiction. On a larger historical scale, Alfred also invents the model of the five *status* to try and fit Geoffrey's two thousand year history into a chronology based on the standard historical authorities of the time. Alfred's thirty collations of Geoffrey's account against these authorities provide the framework for these five historical 'states' of the British kings.

The frequency and manner of Alfred's acknowledgements of Geoffrey of Monmouth and his history in the *Historia* indicate a markedly different relationship or engagement with that text than with the other contemporary texts used in the compilation, which Alfred never names. The modesty topos with which Alfred draws book five to a close also suggests the different cast of mind with which the *HRB* was treated. No such remarks are made in relation to other source texts in the *Historia*. The concluding modesty topos also points to Alfred's acute awareness of audience expectations and sets his historical enterprise in its social context. Alfred was not engaged in a solitary act but was writing for an interested public; that group of Galfridian enthusiasts talked about so vividly in the prologue.

Addendum.

Alfred's abbreviation was taken from a vulgate version of the *HRB*.

Collation of the *Historia* text with the textual differences between the vulgate and first variant versions of the *HRB*, set out by Neil Wright in his edition of first variant version of the *HRB*, provides evidence that the *Historia* contains material which is only found in the vulgate text.[263] It also indicates that no material which is unique to the first variant version of the *HRB* is contained in the *Historia*.[264]

Fig.15. *Historia* abbreviated from the vulgate version of the *HRB*.

Material unique to vulgate version of *HRB*	Location in *Historia*
Reference to Gildas's account of the Molmutine law	*HAB* I.469
Lud's argument with Nennius about the naming of London	*HAB* I.550
Description of Arviragus and Juvenal quotation	*HAB* 2.774
Construction of a litter for Uther Pendragon	*HAB* 5.1597
Dubritius's speech at Badon	*HAB* 5.1654-61
Battle dispostions at Camblan	*HAB* 5.1962-72

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[263] *HRB First Variant*, pp.xvii-xix, xxxix-xl.
[264] *HRB First Variant*, Categories I and J (Table I, p.xviii) present the material unique to the first variant version and are listed on pp.xlii-xlix.

4.3. The chronicle of John of Worcester in the *Historia*

Introduction

Book six of the *Historia* narrates the establishment of the seven English kingdoms after the ending of the rule of the British kings and reproduces material which is found in texts dating from earlier in the twelfth century than the *Historia* (c.1148- c.1151 x 1154).[265] These texts are the Worcester chronicle, compiled during the period c.1095 - c.1140 [266] and the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (*GRA*) of William of Malmesbury, which first appeared in c.1125 - c.1126.[267] Towards the end of book six, the *Historia* reproduces material common to both the Worcester chronicle and the *Historia Regum* (*HR*) attributed to Symeon of Durham, a text believed to have been completed c.1129.[268] Examining the evidence for Alfred's use of these texts and the manner of his use is therefore the objective of this chapter. The *Historia* text has been collated against the printed editions of the *GRA*, [269] the chronicle of John of Worcester, [270] and the Rolls Series edition of the *HR*.[271] For the chronicle of John of Worcester, collation has also been made against the edition of H.Petrie, in *Monumenta Historica Britannica* (London, 1848), pp. 522-644. The first volume of the OMT series edition, which will contain an edition of the preliminary material of the chronicle, including accounts of the establishment of the English kingdoms and the genealogical trees of their founder kings, where Alfred's text is found replicated, has not yet been published. Of the available editions of the preliminary content of the

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[265] The dating evidence for the *Historia* has been discussed in chapter 3. For the *terminus post* and *ante quem* of 1148 and 1154 respectively, see pp. 84-87.

[266] JW *Chron.* II, p.xix.

[267] *GRA* II, pp. xvii-xxxv. This discusses the various stages of the making of the *GRA* over the period 1124 to 1126.

[268] 'Observations', p.117.

[269] *GRA* I, II.

[270] JW *Chron.* II.

[271] *HR.* See abbreviation list.

Worcester chronicle, that of Petrie is considered in scholarly opinion to be the most useful. [272]

A summary of narrative content common to book six of the *Historia,* the Worcester chronicle dynastic accounts and William of Malmesbury's *GRA* is supplied below. Some twenty-seven instances of common narrative have been identified.

Fig. 16. Common content in book 6 *Historia*, *GRA* and Worcester chronicle.

WM GRA	*Alfred Historia*	JW *Accounts / Chronicle*	Subject Material
I.2	6.2165	MHB p.635	Emma daughter of king of Franks.
I.97	6.2208	MHB.p.636	Account of East Anglian kings.
I.97	6.2235	MHB.p.636	Phrase *Anna, filius Eni fratris Reodwaldi.*
II.207	6.2256	MHB.p.636	*St Wihtburg, 4th daughter of King Anna.*
I.97	6.2241	MHB.p.636	2 sons of Æthelhere, Aldwulf and Alfwold.
I.86,97	6.2246	MHB.p.636	Offa king of Mercia's treachery.
I.98	6.2273-75	MHB.p.637	East Saxon succession of Sigeberht.
I.98	6.2292-95	MHB.p.637	King Sigher ending life as a monk in Rome.
I.74	6.2311-14	MHB.p.637	King Penda slays 5 kings.
I.74	6.2314-16	MHB.p.637	King Penda's childen by Cyneswith.
I.75	6.2321	MHB p.637	Peada killed treacherously in Ist year.
I.76	6.2326-28	MHB p.638	Eormenhild, daughter of Eorcenberht k. of Kent, marries Wulfhere, son of Penda.
1.76	6.2329 -32	MHB P.638	Family of Merewald and Eormenburg, described. WOM adds detail of 2 of daughters' resting places.
I.76	6.2334-5	MHB.p.638	Queen Kineburg, becomes a nun.
1.77	6.2341	MHB.p.638	Ceolred son of Osthryth and Æthelred.

[272] See the comments of the editor of the OMT edition of the Chronicle of John of Worcester on the value and usefulness of Petrie's edition in *JW* Chron. II, pp.lxxxii-lxxxiv. Petrie's edition of the chronicle from 450 -1066 AD, includes as an appendix to the main chronicle (pp. 616-44) the dynastic accounts and the royal genealogies with valuable footnotes, not present in B. Thorpe's standard *English Historical Society* , 1848-9 edition. On the deficiencies of Thorpe's edition see M. Brett, 'John of Worcester and his Contemporaries' in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages*, eds., R.H.C.Davis and J.M.Wallace Hadrill (Oxford,1981), p.105 note 2, and p. 111 note 2. See also Gransden *HWE* I, p.143 note 50. A translation of the preliminary materials is available in *The Church Historians of England*, vol. II, I, ed. and trans. J. Stevenson (London, 1853), pp. 374-402.

1.77, 78	6.2341-42	MHB.p.638	K. Æthelred abdicates takes tonsure in 30th year.
1.79	6.2344	MHB.p.638	Ceolred succeeds his uncle Æthelred.
1.79	6.2345	MHB.p.638	Æthelbald, son of King Penda's brother.
1.95	6.2355-56	MHB.p.638	Kenelm, son of Cenwulf, murdered by his sister.
II.212	6.2363	MHB.p.638	St Wigstan, buried in Repton. *Tunc temporis famoso monasterio.*
II.212	6.2368-70	MHB.p.638	Miraculous light at St Wigstan's shrine.
II.108	6.2566	Chron.AD 837	Naming of Æthelwulf son of Ecgberht as Athulfus.
II.109	6.2573	Chron.AD 855	Æthelwulf goes to Rome stays one year.
II.117	6.2579	Chron.AD 855	Æthelbald marries father's widow.
II.117	6.2581	Chron.AD 860	Æthelbald dies, buried in Sherborne.
II.124	6.2599	Chron.AD 901	Alfred's burial in the new monastery in Winchester.
II.125	6.2599-60	Chron.AD 901	Description of Edward the Elder.

Collation of the text of book six of the *Historia* against both the Worcester chronicle and the *GRA* reveals a far closer match with the text of the Worcester chronicle than with William of Malmesbury's *GRA.* Large portions of book six of the *Historia* reproduce the text as it appears in the Worcester chronicle accounts. The descent trees of the seven founder kings of the English kingdoms, supplied in book six of the *Historia*, match almost exactly the descents presented in the Worcester genealogical trees. William of Malmesbury does not supply similar descent trees in the *GRA*. As we have good historical evidence that the *Historia* was compiled during the years c.1148 – c.1151 x 1154 and therefore later in the twelfth century than the Worcester chronicle, the direction of the borrowings appears beyond doubt. There are good grounds to believe, therefore, that Alfred had available to him at Beverley a version of the Worcester chronicle which, for the requirements of book six of the *Historia,* he quarried extensively.

The preliminary material of the Worcester chronicle.

The preliminary material of John of Worcester's chronicle includes lists of consular tables, lists of Hebrew prophets, kings and bishops, lists of popes, kings of France and dukes of Normandy all based on those contained in the Marianus chronicle which the Worcester chronicle expanded. Grafted on are

similar items of English historical interest including lists of the English bishoprics and bishops, with notes as well as the descents and genealogies of the English dynasties and accounts of the establishment and histories of the kingdoms. The genealogical trees were set down first on the page and the accounts of the kingdoms written around them on the page. [273] Plate 4 provides an example of the West Saxon genealogical tree from Cerdic to Aedward II and account of the kingdom, contained in Oxford, Corpus Christi College MS 157, a manuscript which John himself worked on and revised extensively, ending in 1140.[274] These dynastic genealogies and accounts are considerably more detailed than the consular tables of Marianus and bespeak a 'living English tradition of genealogies, regnal lengths and annals.'[275] The dynastic accounts and genealogies are generally considered to represent an early stage in the elaboration of the Worcester chronicle which may have begun during the lifetime of Bishop Wulfstan (d.1095).[276] The internal dating limit for the accounts is 1100 and the accession of Henry I.[277] They are believed to have existed as separate physical entities and to have circulated independently prior to 1131.[278] Scholarly opinion on the precise relationship of the preliminary dynastic accounts and genealogies and the main annals of the Worcester chronicle, however, is by no means determined and the first volume of the OMT edition of the chronicle of John of Worcester, it is expected, will address this issue in further detail.[279]

Material in the Worcester chronicle reproduced in book six of the *Historia.*

The preliminary material of the Worcester chronicle supplies royal descent trees and dynastic accounts of seven English kingdoms in the following order: Kent, East Angles, East Saxons, Mercia, Bernicia, Deira and West Saxons and Alfred maintains this same narrative order of kingdoms in the *Historia*. He

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[273] JW *Chron*. II, p.lxxv.
[274] Ibid., p.xxi.
[275] Ibid., p. lxxv.
[276] Ibid., p. xix.
[277] Ibid., p.lxxvi.
[278] Brett, 'John of Worcester', p. 115.
[279] JW *Chron*. III, preface.

adds, however, an additional account; that of the South Saxon kingdom, which is inserted between the accounts of the kingdoms of Kent and the East Angles. The Worcester chronicle provides no dynastic account or descent tree for the South Saxon kingdom. Alfred here bases his account from material borrowed from the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon and the South Saxon dynastic account is the only one in book six of the *Historia* which supplies no genealogical tree.[280] For the accounts of the kingdoms of Kent, East Angles, East Saxons, and Mercia however, Alfred reproduces, largely verbatim, the text found in the Worcester chronicle dynastic accounts. The account of Northumbria is narrated in the same order as in the Worcester chronicle: first Bernicia, then Deira; but the account is expanded with borrowings from the *HE* of Bede (*HAB* 6.2407-21; 2445-53; 2461-72). The account of the West Saxon kingdom, concluding book six of the *Historia*, contains another borrowing from the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon; a long passage describing the establishment of the thirty-five shires and eighteen bishoprics of England, which is added to Worcester chronicle textual stock (*HAB* 6. 2616-38). Alfred concludes each dynastic account with his customary recapitulated list of kings, described as forming the *status* of that kingdom.

In his account of the kingdoms Kent, East Angles, East Saxons, Mercia, Bernicia, Deira and the West Saxons, Alfred traces the descent of its founder king from Woden and in doing so appears to have followed the genealogical tables of the Worcester chronicle. His descent trees match those found in the Worcester chronicle with the exception of the West Saxon cycle, where Baeldeag and Brand, the two immediate descendants of Woden, are omitted. The presence of these detailed descent trees in the *Historia* is compelling evidence for Alfred's dependence on the Worcester chronicle rather than William of Malmesbury for William in the *GRA* does not supply detailed descent trees of these founder kings and could not, therefore, have been Alfred's source. William describes Cerdic, Raedwald, Penda, Sledd (father of Saehbert) and Ida in the *GRA* only as '*a Wodenio decimus*', '*tenth from Woden,*' and indeed expresses distaste for enumerating lines of royal

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[280] *HA* II.V, note. 57. No genealogy for the South Saxon royal house survives.

descent. For example, in tracing the line of royal descent of the West Saxon King Æthelwulf to Noah, which he drew from the 'English Chronicles', (*ASC* for AD 855) William first apologises to his readers for any offence caused by listing the uncouth barbarous names (*GRA* I. 115). He made the same remark about the discordant sounding of the names earlier in the *GRA* when noting that the kings of Kent, East Angles, Mercia, West Saxons and Northumbrians all claimed descent from the three sons of Woden: Waeldaeg, Wihtlaeg and Baeldaeg (*GRA* I.44).

The extent of material reproduced from the Worcester chronicle dynastic accounts in the *Historia* book six, is summarised in Fig. 17 following:

Fig.17. Material in John of Worcester's accounts and genealogies reproduced in book 6 of the *Historia*.

Historia account of kingdom	*JW Accounts*	*JW Genealogies*
Kent (6.2139-96)	369 words of the 402 in the passage in *Historia* found in JW.	Æthelberht. Exact match with JW.
South Saxons (6.2197-2207)	No dynastic account supplied	No genealogy supplied
East Anglia (6.2208-68)	434 words of the 578 in passage in *Historia* found in JW.	Raedwald. Exact match with JW.
East Saxons (6.2269-2307)	380 of the 401 words in passage in *Historia* found in JW.	Saeberht. Exact match with JW.
Mercia (6.2308-89)	758 words of the 789 in passage in *Historia* found in JW.	Penda. Exact match with JW.
Northumbria (6.2390-2539)	962 words of the 1476 in passage in *Historia* found in JW.	Ida. Exact match with JW Aelle. Exact match with JW.
West Saxons (6.2540-2645)	650 words of the 840 in passage in *Historia* found in JW.	Cerdic. 8 king cycle; misses 2 kings.

Some eighty percent [281] of the text of Alfred's account of the establishment of the kingdoms of Kent, East Anglia, East Saxons, Mercia, Bernicia, Deira and

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[281] 3533 out of 4486 words.

West Saxons is therefore found in John of Worcester's dynastic accounts and genealogies.[282]

Comparison of passages

Three example passages from the *Historia,* containing material found in both William of Malmesbuy's *GRA* and the Worcester chronicle are now examined to consider textual affinity.

Passage 1

Alfred of Beverley *HAB 6. 2208-14* *East Angles*	Worcester chronicle *JW Accounts p.636* *East Angles.*	William of Malmesbury *GRA I.97* *East Angles*
Regno posterius Cantuariorum et prius regno Occidentalium Saxonum exortum est regnum Orientalium Anglorum, cui praefuerunt reges potentes, sed Reodwaldus illis omnibus extitit potencior. Omnes enim australes Anglorum et Saxonum provinciae suis cum regibus ad confinium usque Humbre fluminis ei subjectae erant. 'Qui eciam,' ut Beda refert,' vivente Edelberto eidem genti suae ducatum praebebat. Qui Edelfridum regem Deirorum et Berniciorum in bello occidit, et Edwinum Ellae filium ut in regnum perveniret adjuvit.	Regno posterius Cantuariorum, et prius regno Occidentalium Saxonum, exortum est regnum Orientalium Anglorum. Cui praefuerunt reges potentes; sed Redwaldus illis omnibus extitit potentior. Omnes enim australes Anglorum et Saxonum provinciae cum suis regibus, ad confinium usque Humbrae fluminis, ei subjectae erant. Qui Æthelfridum regem Deirorum et Berniciorum in bello*, quo ejus filius Reinherus peremptus est,* occidit; et Eadwinum Aelle filium, ut in regnum perveniret adjuvit.	Sed quia quattuor potentissima regna huc usque non exiliter, ut arbitror, quantum lectio maiorum suggessit, peraravit stilus, nunc, ut in proemio dixi, Orientalium Anglorum et Orientalium Saxonum principatum idem post aliorum terga percurret. Namque posterius regno Cantuaritarum sed prius Westsaxonum pullulavit regnum Orientalium Anglorum. Primus ergo, idemque maximus, apud Orientales Anglos rex fuit Redwaldus, a Wodenio, ut scribunt, decimum genu nactus: omnes quippe australes Anglorum et Saxonum provintiae citra Humbram fluvium cum suis regibus eius nutum spectabant. Hic est ille quem superior relatio non tacuit Ethelfridum regem Northanimbrorum pro Eduini fauore trucidasse.
After the kingdom of Kent, but before that of the West Saxons, arose the Kingdom of the East Angles. It was led by powerful kings but Raedwald stood out as the strongest of them all. All the southern provinces of the Angles and Saxons with their kings up to the confines of the river Humber were subject to	The kingdom of the East Angles arose later than the Kentish kingdom but before the West-Saxon kingdom. It was governed by several powerful kings, but Raedwald was more powerful than any: for all the southern provinces of the Angles and Saxons, with their kings, to the confines of the	Hitherto I have described, in some fullness I think, as far as the study of my predecessors allowed, the four most powerful kingdoms, and now, as I said in my preface, I will, to bring up the rear, review the princedoms of the East Angles and East Saxons; for the kingdom of the East Angles grew up later than the kingdom of Kent, but

[282] The *Historia's* textual borrowings from the Worcester chronicle are identified by the apparatus of Slevin*, Annotated Transcription,* lines 2078-2645.

him. As Bede says 'even when Æthelberht was alive he (Raedwald) was gaining the leadership for his own race.' It was Raedwald who killed Edelfrid king of the Deirans and the Bernicians and helped Edwin son of Aelle to obtain his crown.	river Humber, were subject to him. He slew Æthelfrid, king of the Deiri and Bernicians, in a battle in which his son Reinher was killed: and helped Eadwin, the son of Aelle, to obtain the kingdom.[283]	earlier than that of the West Saxons. The first and greatest king, then, amongst the East Angles was Raedwald, who is recorded as being tenth in descent from Woden; for all the southern provinces of the Angles and Saxons on this side of the Humber, with their kings, looked to him as overlord. It was he who, as I have already recounted, killed Æthelfrith, king of the Northumbrians for Edwin's benefit.[284]

The underlined words in the passage from Alfred's *Historia* are found in the Worcester account, comprising eighty-two percent of its content. The passage from William of Malmesbury's *GRA* contains eighteen words also found in Alfred's text (twenty-five percent). Alfred's account therefore bears much closer textual affinity to the Worcester chronicle than to William's in the *GRA*. Alfred adds a brief quotation from Bede and omits the phrase *in which his son Reinher was killed.* Supplementary details of family history, frequently found in the Worcester dynastic accounts, are regularly omitted by Alfred, possibly for reasons of producing a more concise abbreviation.

Passage 2

Alfred of Beverley *HAB* 6.2314-16 Offspring of Penda	Worcester chronicle *JW Accounts* p. 637 Offspring of Penda.	William of Malmesbury *GRA* I.74 Offspring of Penda
<u>Cui regina sua Kineswida v. filios, Weadam scilicet, Wlferum, Sanctum Edelredum, Sanctum Merewoldum, Sanctum Mercelinum, et duas filias, Sanctam Kineburgam et Sanctam Kinewidam, peperit. Regnavit autem annis XXX. non plene.</u>	Cui regina sua Kineswitha quinque filios, Peadam videlicet, Wulferum, sanctum Æthelredum, Sanctum Merewaldum, sanctum Mercelmum, et duas filias, sanctam Kineburgam et sanctam Kineswitham, peperit. Regnavit autem annis XXX. non plene.	Habuit ex regina Kineswida filios quinque, Wedam, Wlferium, Ethelredum, Merewaldum, Mercelinum; filias duas, Kineburgam et Kineswidam, ambas sancta continentia precellentes.
His queen Cyneswith bore him five sons; namely Peada, Wulfer, St. Æthelred, St. Merewald, St. Mercelin and two daughters, St. Cyneburh and St. Cyneswith. He reigned for not fully thirty years.	His queen Cyneswith bore him five sons, namely Peada, Wulfer, St. Æthelred, St. Merewald, St. Mercelm and two daughters, namely St. Cyneburh and St . Cyneswith. He reigned nearly thirty years.	He had by his queen Cyneswith five sons, Peada, Wulfhere, Æthelred, Merewald and Merchelm, and two daughters, Cyneburh and Cyneswith, both saintly virgins of repute.[285]

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[283] Translation of JW *Account*s is supplied by Stevenson, *Church Historians*, p. 393.

[284] Translation supplied by *GRA* I, pp.141-3.

[285] Translation supplied by *GRA* I, p.111.

In passage two, Alfred's reproduces verbatim (underlined text) the Worcester account of Penda's offspring. William's account exhibits much textual similarity to the Worcester account, but contains some variations. It does not mention the length of Penda's reign and adds a comment on the saintliness of Penda's daughters.

Passage 3

Alfred of Beverley *HAB* 6. 2326-36 Mercia The family tree of Wulfhere	Worcester Chronicle JW Accounts p.637-8 **Mercia** **The family tree of Wulfhere**	William of Malmesbury *GRA* I. 76 The family tree of Wulfhere
Hic primus Merciorum lavacrum regeneracionis suscepit, et filiam Erconberti regis Cantuariorum ac reginae illius Sanctae Sexburgae, Sanctam Ermenildam in conjugem accepit, et ex illa genuit Cenredum et Wereburgam virginem sanctissimam. Germanus vero ipsius Westanhetanorum rex Sanctus Merewoldus filiam Hermenredi regis, fratris ejusdem Erconberti regis, Sanctam Ermenburbam matrimonio sibi copulavit, et ex ea tres filias, Sanctam videlicet Milburgam, Sanctam Mildridam, Sanctam Mildgidam, et unum filium Sanctum Mereuvinum genuit. Quo mortuo, regnavit pro eo Mercelinus frater illius. Quorum sororem Kineburgam rex Nordhumbrorum Alfrid duxit uxorem. Quae connubio carnalis copulae pro dei amore relicto, in monasterio, quod fratres sui Wlferus et Edeldredus construxerunt, et ab ipsius nomine Kineburgae castrum vocatur, sanctimonialis efficitur. In quo eciam soror sua Kineswida sanctimonialem suscepit habitum.	Hic primus regum Merciorum lavacrum regenerationis suscepit, et filiam Erconberti regis Cantuariorum ac reginae illius sanctae Sexburgae, sanctam Ermenildam in conjugem accepit, et ex illa genuit Kenredum et Wereburgam virginem sanctissimam. Germanus vero ipsius, Westan-Hecanorum rex, sanctus Merewaldus filiam Eremenredi reguli fratris ejusdem Ercomberti regis, sanctam Ermenbergam, matrimonio sibi copulavit, et ex ea tres filias, sanctam videlicet Milburgam, sanctam Mildritham, sanctam Mildgitham, et unum filium sanctum Merefinnum, genuit. Quo mortuo, regnavit pro eo Mercelinus frater illius. Quorum sororem Kineburgam rex Northimbrorum Alfridus duxit uxorem. Quae connubio carnalis copulae pro Dei amore relicto, in monasterio quod fratres sui Wulferus ac Athelredus ei construxerant, et ab ipsius nomine 'Kineburgae castrum' vocatur, sanctimonialis efficitur; in quo etiam soror sua Kineswitha sanctimonialium suscepit habitum	Habuit in matrimonio filiam Ercomberhti regis Cantuariorum, Ermenhildam; et ex ea genuit Kenredum, et Werburgam, virginem sanctissimam, quae Cestrae iacet. Frater eius Merewaldus Ermenburgam, filiam Ermenredi fratris eiusdem Ercomberhti, uxorem habuit, suscepitque ex ea filias Milburgam, quae Weneloch, et Mildritham, quae Cantiae in monasterio sancti Augustini requiescunt, et Mildritham, et filium Merefinnum. Kineburgam, Pendae filiam, Alfridus rex Northanimbrorum duxit uxorem: quae postmodum, carnali copula fastidita, sanctimonialem habitum suscepit in monasterio quod fratres sui Wlferius et Ethelredus construxerant. `
He (Wulfhere) was the first of the Mercians to accept the bath of rebirth . He married St Eormenhild daughter of Eorconberht king of Kent and his queen, St Sexhburgh and with her he fathered Kenred and the most holy virgin Werberga. His brother St Merewald, king of the West Hacanas, married St Eormenberg daughter of King Eormenred, brother of the same King Eorconberht, and fathered three daughters, that is to say St Milburg, St Mildrid and St Mildgid and one son St Merevin. When he died, his brother Mercelinus ruled in his place.		He married Eormenhild, daughter of Earconberht king of Kent, and by her had Cenred, and Waerburh, the most holy virgin who reposes at Chester. His brother Merewald married Eormenburh, daughter of Eormenred brother of the Earconberht, just mentioned and by her had three daughters, Mildburh who lies buried at Wenloch, Mildred who lies in Canterbury in the monastery of St Augustine and Mildred and a son Merefin. Cyneburh, Penda's daughter, became the wife of Aldfrith, king of the Northumbrians; but later she

Alfrid king of the Northumbrians married their sister Kineburg but, for the love of God, she gave up the marriage of earthly flesh and became a nun in the monastery which her brothers Wulfer and Æthelred founded for her and from her name is called the castle of Cyneburh. Her sister Cyneswith also became a nun in the same monastery	wearied of this union of the flesh, and took the nun's habit in a monastery which her brother's Wulfhere and Æthelred had founded.

In this third passage, other than the omission of the word *regum* in the opening sentence and the styling of Eormenred as *rex* rather than *regulus*, Alfred's is a verbatim reproduction of the Worcester account. In William's account some forty-one words are common to the passage from Alfred, thirty-five percent of its content. William supplies additional information, not found in the equivalent passage in the *Historia* however. This includes information on the resting places of Waerburh daughter of King Wulfhere (Chester), and her daughters Mildburh (Wenloch) and Mildred (Canterbury, St Augustine's).

Comment

The closeness of textual match in the accounts of the seven kingdoms found in the *Historia* and in the Worcester chronicle, the equivalent order in which the accounts of the seven kingdoms have been narrated, the matching genealogical trees supplied in both the *Historia* and the Worcester chronicle, all indicate a much closer textual affinity between Alfred's *Historia* and the Worcester chronicle accounts and genealogical tables than with the *GRA* of William of Malmesbury. William's more discursive narrative style is never reproduced in the *Historia* nor is any new information which he provides included by Alfred in the *Historia;* for example, that observed in passage three above*.* As the Worcester chronicle dates from considerably earlier in the twelfth century than the *Historia,* there are good historical grounds to conclude that Alfred had available to him at Beverley a version of the Worcester chronicle, which he made extensive use of in book six of the *Historia.* Equally, the parallel content of the Worcester chronicle and the *GRA* revealed in this analysis, bespeaks a close relationship between those two texts, either by

inter-borrowing, the direction of which is not yet fully understood, or by both borrowing from a common source.[286]

Use of the Worcester chronicle annals in the *Historia.*

There are therefore strong grounds to believe that Alfred made use of the dynastic accounts and genealogies from the preliminary material of the Worcester chronicle, but is there evidence that he knew the main annals of the Worcester chronicle? Martin Brett, in his seminal article 'John of Worcester and his contemporaries' (1981), argued that the descents of the kings were amongst the earliest dateable elements of the Worcester chronicle, compiled in c. 1114-15 for Ernulf of Rochester, and that these circulated independently of the chronicle before 1131; in for example Bury and Malmesbury.[287] It is conceivable therefore that Alfred had access to sets of the royal tables, with accompanying written-up dynastic accounts, but not to the main annals of the chronicle. In considering this question, eight instances in book six of the *Historia* have been identified where Alfred uses material from the main annals of the Worcester chronicle which is not found in the dynastic accounts. These all occur in the final dynastic account narrated in book six, that of the West Saxon kingdom:

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[286] JW *Chron.* II, p.lxxvi. See also Brett, 'John of Worcester', pp.113-117 for his discussion of the relationship between John of Worcester and William of Malmesbury in their historical writing and enterprises and his view that both William and John used a common stock of materials, adapting it to their individual needs.

[287] Brett, 'John of Worcester', p. 115, note 4. Brett suggests that in the descent tables some of the distinctive work of Florence of Worcester is to be found.

Fig. 18. Book 6 *Historia*. Reproduction of material found in Worcester chronicle main annals, not in the dynastic accounts.

	Historia location	Content	JW *Chron*	Where found in other sources
I	6. 2541-42	A quo et tota illius provinciae gens Gewissae dicta est.	AD 849	*HA* III.37, *HR* § 66 AD 849 and § 88 AD 848, Asser *LKA*[288] I.17
2	6.2572-73	Deinde Romam perrexit, et anno integro ibi moratus est	AD 855	*GRA* II.109. *HA* V.3, *HR* § 90, ASC 855
3	6. 2579-80	Edelbaldus filius ejus successit, qui thorum patris sui ascendens Juditham supradictam in matrimonium duxit	AD 855	*GRA* II.117, *HR* § 90
4	6.2581-82	Frater suus Edelbertus succedens, Canceam, Sudreiam, et Suthsexam suo dominio subjunxit.	AD 860	*HR* § 90
5	6.2595-97	Anno nonogentesimo primo Aluredus XXIX. annis, VI. que mensibus expletis in regno obiit et Wintoniae in novo monasterio sepultus est.	AD 901	*GRA* II.124, *HR* § 103
6	6.2597-2600	suus Edwardus cognomento Senior litterarum cultu patre inferior, sed dignitate, potencia et gloria superior	AD 901	*GRA* II.125, *HR* § 103
7	6.2598-2608	Siquidem …..Sictrictus (*laud of Edward the Elder*)	AD 901	*GRA* II.125, § *HR* 103
8	6.2608-10.	Ipse vero rex Edwardus post multas res egregie gestas regni sui anno XXIIII. obiit. Cujus corpus de Farenduna Wintoniam delatum, in novo monasterio regio more sepelitur.	AD 924	*HR* § 106, *GRA* II.133, *HA* V.17, *ASC*

In each of these eight instances the material is found in a variety of sources in addition to the Worcester chronicle but one source is of particular interest. This is the Durham *Historia Regum HR* which, in its annals from 849 to 1129, is highly dependent on John of Worcester's chronicle.[289] Alfred's words are found exactly replicated in the *HR* as the Worcester annals have been

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[288] *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. W.H.Stevenson (Oxford, 1959), p. 2.
[289] JW *Chron.* II, p. lxxi-lxxii.

recycled verbatim by the compiler of the *HR*. On the basis of just these eight cases therefore, it is not possible to be certain if the source of Alfred's borrowings at this point is the Worcester chronicle main annals or the Durham *HR*. In the notice of the death of King Alfred (no. 5), Alfred's account appears closer to the Worcester chronicle. Alfred records the death in the year 901, as does the Worcester chronicle. In the *HR,* in its annals for 848-1118, Alfred's death is recorded as occurring in the year 899 (*HR* § 103). In a rare instance where the *HR* compiler adds further detail to John of Worcester's annal entry; for example when he names Judith as the daughter of the Emperor Charles in the laudatory passage on the death of Edward the Elder (Fig. 18 no 7) (*HR* § 103), Alfred omits this material in his abbreviation, and therefore the opportunity to provide clearer evidence of which text he was consulting*.* In the same passage, Alfred uses the word *devotam,* which is found in *HR* § 103, whereas the word *devotissimam* is found in the Worcester annal for 901, suggesting knowledge of the *HR*.

The account of the West Saxon kingdom therefore contains evidence that Alfred may have turned to a new source in the compiling of the *Historia*, the Durham *HR*, but the evidence is not conclusive and it might equally indicate Alfred's use of the main Worcester annals. This question will be examined in detail in the next chapter of this study, where the character and content of books seven to nine of the *Historia* are considered.

The chronicle of John of Worcester. Summary and conclusions.

Book six of the *Historia* narrates the establishment of the seven English kingdoms after the ending of the sovereignty of the British kings on the island and contains two of the major historical landmarks in Alfred's chronicle. The first is the transfer of power from the monarchy of a unified British kingdom to the fragmented rule of the English kings. Alfred employs Henry of Huntingdon's heptarchy model in the opening paragraph of the book to seamlessly narrate the transition from one historical era to another, 'et *de uno regno Britanniae vii. regna constituerunt'* (*HAB* 6.2090-91). The book

concludes with a second historical landmark; the re-establishment of a unitary kingdom under the monarchy of the West Saxon kings:

> 'Iste fuit status regni Occidentalium Saxonum a primo eorum Cerdico usque ad finem Edwardi Senioris, sub regibus XXIIII. per annos circiter quadringentos LIIII. Qui strenue fines suos dilatantes et vicina regna sibi fortiter subjugantes in tantum creverunt, ut posteritas illorum tocius Angliae monarchiam obtinuerit, totamque terram per XXXV.provincias diviserit' (*HAB* 6. 2610-16)

> 'This then was the 'state / era' of the kingdom of the West Saxons from the first of their kings Cerdic until the last, Edward the Elder under twenty-four kings and (lasting) for approximately four hundred and fifty-four years. In vigorously expanding their boundaries and powerfully subjecting their neighbouring kingdoms, they grew a great deal so that in the future it (the kingdom of Wessex) gained the monarchy of all England and divided the country into thirty-five shires.'

Alfred opens book six with borrowings taken from sources used previously in the *Historia*; the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon and Bede's *HE*. However, to narrate the accounts of the seven heptarchic kingdoms, Alfred turns to a new source, the dynastic accounts and genealogies of the English kingdoms, preserved in the preliminary material of the Worcester chronicle. In the concluding account of the West Saxon kingdom, there is evidence that Alfred may have consulted a further new source, the Durham *Historia Regum*. However, because the text in question is also contained in the main annals of the Worcester chronicle, it is not possible to determine which text has been used on the evidence of book six alone. This question will be examined in detail in the following chapter of this study, which considers books seven to nine of the *Historia*.

An important feature of book six of the *Historia* therefore is the manner in which Alfred works with multiple texts concurrently in compiling his account. Henry of Huntingdon is used at both the start and conclusion of the book. The

heptarchy model is used to facilitate the opening passages of the book and a passage from Henry's prefatory description of Britain is used to narrate the passage of dominion to the monarchy of the West Saxon kings in England. The Worcester chronicle dynastic accounts and genealogies supply the main body of narrative content in the book, supported by selective borrowings from Bede's *HE*. The Durham *Historia Regum* appears as if it also, might have been quarried. Alfred's borrowings from these texts bring their interrelatedness into sharp focus. The book ends with the parallel content of the Worcester chronicle main annals and the *Historia Regum* much in evidence and parallel content in the Worcester dynastic accounts and William of Malmesbury's *GRA* has been much in evidence (Fig 16). Alfred's knowledge of William's *GRA* has required close consideration because of the presence of material in the *Historia* also found in the *GRA* but textual examination indicates that Alfred took his readings from the Worcester chronicle accounts and genealogies, not from the *GRA*. Alfred therefore does not appear to have known William's history, or if he did, he chose not to use it and given Alfred's eclectic use of sources in the *Historia*, this would appear to be out of character. For example, Alfred chose to quarry the accounts and genealogies of the Worcester chronicle to describe the foundation and emergence of the heptarchic kingdoms when he might easily have used books two and four of the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon, one of his most trusted sources, to provide much the same historical data. Alfred's lack of knowledge of the *GRA* of William of Malmesbury at Beverley at the time he was compiling the *Historia* is noteworthy. He had available to him late versions of the Henry's *HA,* and ready access to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* which circulated from the late 1130's. Why then not a text from Malmesbury circuLating from the mid 1120's? Alfred's borrowings in book six of the *Historia* therefore provide valuable evidence for the dissemination of some of the twelfth-century's most important historical texts; the dynastic accounts and genealogical tables of the Worcester chronicle, the Worcester main annals, William of Malmesbury's *GRA* and, as has been discussed, possibly also the Durham *Historia Regum*, now to be considered in detail.

Plate 4. Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 157, p. 53.
West Saxon genealogical tree and dynastic account.

By permission of the President and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

4. 4. The Durham *Historia Regum* in the *Historia.*

Introduction

Book six of the *Historia* concludes with indications that Alfred may have begun to supplement borrowings from the Worcester chronicle with material reproduced from the *Historia Regum* (*HR*) attributed to Symeon of Durham (Fig.18). An objective of this chapter is therefore to examine Alfred's use of sources in the remaining three books of the *Historia* (books 7-9) and, in particular, to consider the evidence for his use of the Durham *HR*. Alfred's dependence on the *HR* has previously been commented on by scholars such as H.Petrie [290] and H.S.Offler [291] but evidence for Alfred's use of the text has never been examined or presented at any degree of detail.

If it is established that Alfred knew and made use of the *HR,* an objective of this chapter will then be to consider the evidence which Alfred's use of the text provides for the twelfth-century transmission of the *HR*. Compiled during the years c.1148 - c.1151 x 1154, the *Historia* predates the sole surviving copy of the *HR*, contained in the Cambridge manuscript, Corpus Christi College, MS 139 (hereafter CCCC 139), which is widely believed to have been compiled c.1164 – c.1175 and whose dating is discussed below. Whilst a number of twelfth-century chronicles which reproduced material from the *HR* have been considered for evidence they supply on the transmission of the *HR* between its completion in Durham in c.1129 and its appearance in CCCC 139, Alfred's *Historia* has not. The *Historia* might, therefore, provide further information to help advance understanding of this subject. [292]

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[290] H. Petrie, *MHB* p. 28.

[291] H.S Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, vol. II (1970), p. 61, notes 41 and 43. Offler mentions Alfred's use of Symeon only in the endnotes and does not offer any detailed explanation nor discuss Alfred in the body of the article.

[292] For a detailed discussion on the twelfth-century text history of the *HR* see in particular Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*' and Peter Hunter Blair, 'Some observations on the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham' in *Celt and Saxon. Studies in the Early British Border* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 63-118.

The contents of the *HR* and its manuscript setting will be discussed first, before considering the evidence for Alfred's use of it.

The contents of the *Historia Regum*

The *HR* occupies folios 51 v – 129 v of CCCC 139, enclosed within an eight line opening and a three line closing rubric. It is these rubrics alone which attach the name Symeon to the work. The introductory rubric begins with the words; *Incipit historia sancte et suavis memorie Symeonis monachi et precentoris ecclesie sancti Cuthberti Dunelmi de regibus anglorum*…..It ends with the words *post obitum venerabilis Bede presbyteri fere usque ad obitum regis primi Henrici filii Willelmi nothi qui angliam adquisivit id est cccc. xxix annorum et iiii mensium.* The concluding rubric reads *explicit historia suavis et sancte memorie Symeonis monachi et precentoris ecclesie sancti Cuthberti Dunelmi annorum cccc.xxix et mensium quattuor.* The title *Historia Regum* is found in neither the rubrics nor within the text itself. Peter Hunter Blair, in his still important 1963 study of the *HR*, described this as no more than a 'handy title' which generations of scholars have attached to the work.[293] The information contained in the opening and closing rubrics of the *HR* suggests that the date that the rubrics were written was September 1164, that being 429 years and 4 months from the date of Bede's death in 735. The fact that Henry is described as 'Henry the First' also suggests that the rubrics were written after the accession of Henry II in 1154. The *HR* rubrics and other internal evidence from CCCC 139, indicates a date of c.1170 when the book as a whole is likely to have been compiled.[294]

Hunter Blair's study of the *HR* text showed it to be a highly composite text consisting of three main divisions and nine separate parts, its opening and closing rubrics giving the text an appearance of unity far from justified from

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[293] 'Observations', pp. 63, 76.

[294] 'Observations', p. 70. Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', p. 51, Derek Baker, 'Scissors and Paste: Corpus Christi Cambridge, MS 139 Again', *Studies in Church History* 11 (1975), pp. 83-123 at pp. 97-8. Baker considered the manuscript to have been compiled sectionally; its various parts written at different dates, but combined into a single volume between 1164 and 1175.

its contents. Fig.19 below lists the component parts of the *HR* identified by Hunter Blair in his analysis. To facilitate cross referencing with the printed text, the corresponding chapters and pages in the Rolls Series printed edition are also listed.

Fig. 19. Peter Hunter Blair's analysis of the the composition of the *Historia Regum*.

HR division	*HR* component	Chapter and page reference in printed text. [295]
SDI	1. Legends of Kentish saints 2. List of early Northumbrian Kings 3. Material from Bede 4. Chronicle from 732 - 802 5. Chronicle from 849 – 887, derived mainly from Asser	§§ 1-10 pp. 3-13 §§ 11-12 pp. 13-15 §§ 14-30 pp. 15-30 §§ 31-63 pp. 30-66 §§ 64-80 pp. 66-91
SD2	6. A Chronicle from 888-957 7. Extracts from William of Malmesbury	§§ 80-85 pp. 91-95 §§ 86-87 pp. 95-98
SD 3	8. A chronicle from 848- 1118 9. A chronicle from 1119 - 1129	§§ 88-196 pp.98-252 §§196-214 pp.252-283

Hunter Blair identified SD1, consisting of five parts, as being the work of one author-compiler using sources no later than the beginning of the tenth century. This author-compiler has since been identified by Michael Lapidge as Byrthferth of Ramsey (c.970-c.1020). [296] SD 2, Hunter Blair considered to be a chronicle of probable eleventh century and northern origin, containing valuable information on the Norse rulers of York. Only SD 3 had any reasonable claim to be connected with Symeon of Durham, known to have been alive in 1104 and 1126. [297] This chronicle was identified as almost certainly compiled in Durham in the twelfth century and, in its original parts (1119 -1129), most closely linked to Symeon of Durham. An issue which remains to be understood about the miscellany entitled the *HR* is when and where all its various parts were joined up.

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[295] *HR*, vol. II.

[296] Michael Lapidge, 'Byrhtferth of Ramsey and the early sections of the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 10 (1981), pp. 97-122.

[297] 'Observations', p. 117.

Was the joining up done at the time and place that CCCC 139 was compiled ? Or was it already in this state prior to the compilation of CCCC 139 ? If Alfred does make use of the *HR*, his borrowings may cast valuable light on this question.

The *Historia Regum* and CCCC 139.

CCCC 139 is a manuscript of 182 folios containing some twenty-six items [298] of which the *HR* occupies the greater part (folios 51 v – 129 v). Both modern (nineteenth century) printed editions of the *HR* are based on this manuscript.[299] CCCC 139 bears on folio 2 r the erased *ex-libris* mark of the Cistercian abbey of Sawley, Lancashire; formerly Yorkshire, West Riding. Other than the *HR*, the manuscript contains a number of unique historical texts including a continuation of the *HR*, Prior John of Hexham's (d. before 1209) *Historia Johannis prioris haugustaldensis ecclesie xxv annorum*, covering the years 1130-1153. It is this unique chronicle which has provided much of the evidence describing the circumstances in the church of Yorkshire which gave rise to Alfred's history, discussed in chapter three of this study.

Amongst other texts in CCCC 139 are the only surviving copy of Richard prior of Hexham's (d.c.1155 x 1167) *de gestis regis Stephani et de bello Standardii*, works of Ailred of Rievaulx, a letter purportedly of Symeon of Durham to dean Hugh of York, *De archiepiscopis eboraci*, the Cambro-Latin *Historia Brittonum* and the *Vita Gilde* of Caradoc of Llancarfan.

A second and related Sawley volume, now divided between Cambridge manuscripts, CCCC MS 66 and CUL, Ff. 1. 27 and of slightly later date than CCCC 139, contains complementary matter of historical and geographical interest in the North. Between them, the two Sawley manuscripts preserve a large part of the surviving evidence for the history of Northumbria for the period from the death of Bede to the Norman

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[298] Baker, 'Scissors and Paste', pp. 106-107.

[299] *HR,* pp. 3-283 and J. Hodgson Hinde, *Symeonis Dunelmensis Opera et Collectanea*, SS, 51 (1868). The *HR* was first printed by Twysden in *Decem Scriptores* in 1652.

Conquest.[300] Christopher Norton described the manuscripts as 'crucial pieces of evidence for any assessment of historical writing generally in the north of England during the twelfth century.'[301] Whilst their importance is recognised, their provenance has been the subject of long and divided scholarly debate. In the eyes of some, Sawley ownership of the volumes did not necessarily mean compilation there. Thomas Arnold, the Rolls Series editor of the *HR*, swayed by the presence of considerable Hexham related content in CCCC 139, thought the volume compiled at Hexham. [302] In modern scholarship its compilation, or elements of it, has variously been attributed to Hexham, [303] Sawley, [304] Fountains, [305] and most recently strong arguments for Durham as the original source of CCCC 139 have been put forward. [306]

The text of the *HR* preserved in CCCC 139 has long been thought to depart from its original c.1129 state, as it bears the signs of rehandling and interpolation. Lengthy interpolations in the *HR* annals for 740 and 781 describing the translations of the relics of two eighth-century bishops of Hexham, Acca and Alchmund, are written in a markedly different style to the surrounding text. [307] An historical survey of the earls who ruled Northumbria from the time of Eric, the last of its kings, expelled in c. 949, to Robert de Mowbray, is found at the year 1072 but this looks originally to

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[300] 'Observations ', p. 74.

[301] Christopher Norton, 'History, Wisdom and Illumination' in D. Rollason, ed. *Symeon of Durham, Historian of Durham and the North* (Stamford, 1998), p. 73.

[302] *HR,* p. x.

[303] Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', p. 53.

[304] Proponents of Sawley include: Hunter Blair, 'Observations', p. 116. D. N. Dumville, 'Celtic-Latin Texts in Northern England, c.1150 - c.1250.' *Celtica* 12 (1977), p. 19. Lapidge, 'Byrhtferth of Ramsey', p. 97.

[305] Baker, 'Scissors and Paste', pp. 99-103, argued that section 5 of CCCC 139 was compiled at Fountains, before being passed to Sawley.

[306] B. Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts in Cistercian Houses' in *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093 -1193* eds., David Rollason, Margaret Harvey, Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge, 1994), pp. 439-49, at pp. 440-42. Norton, 'History, Wisdom and Illumination', pp. 61-105, at p. 101.

[307] 'Observations', p. 90.

have been located earlier than 1070.[308] The 740 and 781 interpolations betray Hexham propagandistic interest, suggesting Hexham intervention, but the extent of Hexham involvement in the interpolations has been a matter of scholarly debate. [309]

In order to help determine the original form of the *HR,* three chronicles which have used the *HR* as a source have been considered for the evidence they provide about the text history of the *HR*. These are 1. Paris, BnF. Lat. 392, a late twelfth - century chronicle of Scottish provenance, containing a '*Liber de gestis Anglorum*' made up of abbreviated extracts of the *HR*. This manuscript also contains John of Hexham's continuation chronicle almost as it appears in CCCC 139. 2. The *Historia Post Bedam* (hereafter *HPB*) a Durham chronicle extending from 734 to1148 and written, it is believed, before 1161.[310] The *HPB* draws on the *HR* extensively down to 1121 and also makes selective use of Henry of Huntingdon's *HA*. The *HPB* was taken over almost in its entirely by Roger of Howden, to form the first part of his chronicle (732-1148). 3. The first part (732 -1171) of the chronicle of Melrose abbey, first compiled c. 1173 x 74.[311]

Evidence for Alfred's use of the *HR* in the *Historia*

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[308] First discussed by the RS editor, T. Arnold. See *HR,* pp. 196 -97.

[309] 'Observations', p. 115. Hunter Blair argued that it was by no means certain that the interpolations in the *HR* were made at Hexham. Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*,' suggested it was likely that Hexham reshaped the text of the *HR* in the decade after 1055 and before it reached Sawley. See pp. 53-57.

[310] A valuable description of the *HPB* remains that of William Stubbs in W. Stubbs, ed. *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houdene*, 4 vols., RS 51 (London, 1868-71), i, pp. xxvi-xl. For the date of the *HPB* see p. xxvi. The text at 1074 states that the present abbot of St Mary's York is Severinus *qui et in praesenti*. Severinus lived until 1161. Two manuscripts of this chronicle exist: Oxford, St John's College, MS 97 and BL, MS Royal 13 A.VI.

[311] Broun and Harrison, *The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey*, p. 29. The chronicle drew on English sources in its early parts including the *HR*, the *HPB* and the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon, pp. 49- 52.

Section 3 item 8 of the *HR*, in Hunter Blair's analysis (Fig.19), the chronicle from 848 -1118, is taken almost entirely from John of Worcester's chronicle.[312] From 1069, whilst continuing to reproduce material from the Worcester chronicle, it begins to introduce original matter [313] and from the midway point of the annal for 1118, it makes no more use of the Worcester chronicle. [314] The author becomes more of an original source, but with borrowings also taken from Eadmer's *Historia Novorum*. An analysis of the text of books seven and eight of Alfred's *Historia* shows that, for its greater part, it reproduces text found in both the Worcester chronicle and the *HR*. [315] Given Alfred's extensive use of the Worcester chronicle dynastic accounts and genealogical trees in book six of the *Historia*, discussed in the previous section of this study, it might be supposed that Alfred would have taken this material from its original source, rather than from a Worcester dependent source such as the *HR*. Textual analysis of books seven and eight however, reveals numerous cases where Alfred's use of the *HR*, rather than the Worcester chronicle, is indicated. Twenty examples from books seven and eight of the *Historia,* where there are good grounds to believe the material has been reproduced from the *HR*, not from the Worcester chronicle, are set out in Figs. 20 and 21 following, with evidence supporting this conclusion provided. The text locations in the *Historia* and their source in the *HR*, both in the printed edition and against Hunter Blair's sectional analysis of the text as presented in CCCC 139, are also given.

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[312] 'Observations', p. 107. Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', p. 54.

[313] *HR,* p. 186, note c.

[314] Ibid., p. 253, note b.

[315] Material in books 7 and 8 of the *Historia* found in both the Worcester chronicle and the Durham *HR* is identified in Slevin, *Annotated transcription,* pp. 99-124.

Fig. 20. Book 7 *Historia*. Material reproduced from *HR*.

	Historia location	*HR* § in RS	PHB Analysis	Material taken from *HR*. Either not found in Worcester chronicle or matches *HR* text more closely.
1.	2677-80	56	SD I. 4	Annal for 793. Portents and prodigies not in JW *Chron. Historia* text adds the word *Nordhumbrorum* to that of *HR* and *portendebant* replaces *demonstravere.* The words *Scilicet signa* and *pessimam atque inedicibilem* are missing. Recorded as year 813 in *Historia.*
2.	2680-85	56	SD I. 4	Danish attack on Lindisfarne in 793 is not recorded in JW *Chron.* A number of words and phrases in *HR* are omitted in Alfred's abbreviation. These include *ut aculeate crabones, hac illacque ut dirissimi lupi discurrentes praedantes, mordents, interficientes, veniunt ut praefati sumus.*
3.	2686-98	57	SD I. 4	Annal for 794. Danish plunderers suffer defeat. Not recorded in JW *Chron.* Omitted phrase includes *Sed sanctus Cuthbertus non sine punitione eos sinebat abire.*
4.	2700-03	66 and 88	SD I. 5 Or SD 3.8	Annal for 851. Matches the text of *HR* closer than JW *Chron* as London is not mentioned as it is in JW *Chron.* Passage is found in both SD I. 5, and SD 3. 8. SD 3. 8 might be indicated as Alfred used the same annal formula as found there: *anno ab incarnatione Domini.* In SD I. 5 it is *Anno Dominicae incarnationis.*
5.	2709-14	89, 90	SD 3.8	Annal for 854. Alfred's entry matches most closely SD 3.8. Only here is the meaning of Sheppey given: *id est in insula ovium.* The events are recorded in JW *Chron* in the annal for 853 as also in SD I. 5.
6.	2714-19	90	SD 3.8	In JW *Chron* AD 861 and HR § 68, but closest match is *HR* § 90, SD 3.8. The words *victoriam adepti sunt* replace *loco funeris dominati sunt* found in *HR.*
7.	2727	91	SD 3.8	Duplicated in SD I.5 and SD 3.8 but Alfred's words match SD 3.8 more closely. The words ..*non parcens viris vel feminis…* are not found in JW *Chron.* Alfred embroiders the entry with material from JW *Accounts.* He does not use *Danubia as* found in CCCC 139 *HR.* His text makes it clear the pagans were Danes.
8.	2737-8	92	SD 3.8	The statement in annal for 867 *Hoc factum est xii. Kal.Aprilis feria vi.ante Dominicam Palmarum* is not found in JW *Chron* and is only found in SD 3.8.
9.	2738	92	SD 3.8	Statement *Egbertus vero regnavit super Nordhimbros ultra amnem Tinae VI annis* is not found in JW *Chron* only in *HR* SD 3.8.
10.	2757	72	SD I.5	The words *adepti sunt* are only found in § 72, SD I.5 in describing the battle of Englefield in 871.
11.	2830-31	75 or 96	SD I.5 or SD 3.8	The apparition of St Cuthbert to King Alfred at Chippenham in 877 is not found in JW *Chron.* AB's sole source is *HR.* Either SD I.5 § 75, or SD 3.8 § 96, the words do not make it sufficiently clear.
12.	2839-41	76 or 96	SD I.5 or SD 3.8	The battle of Edington taking place on the third day after meeting the men of Somerset, Wiltshire and Hamphsire at Ecgberth's Stone in Selwood is found in *HR* § 76, SD I.5 and in § 96, SD 3.8, not in JW *Chron.*
13.	2849-53	97	SD 3.8	For 879 the words *paganorum exercitus a Cirecestria egressus ad Orientales accessit Anglos* found only in *HR* SD 3.8.
14.	2862-68	100	SD 3.8	Annal 885. Verbatim extract of account given in *HR* SD 3.8. The account in JW *Chron* is distinct, as is that of *HR* SD I.5.

Fig. 21. Book 8 *Historia*.   Material reproduced from *HR.*

	Historia location	*HR* § in RS	PHB schematic	Material taken from *HR*. Either not found in Worcester chronicle or matches *HR* text more closely.
1.	2991	108	SD 3 .8	AD 946. *'Cui Edredus frater suus in regnum successit.'* These words are found only in *HR* and not in JW *Chron* II.
2.	3139	127	SD 3 .8	Words *innocentis* and *ignominiosa* found only in *HR* and not in JW *Chron*.II for 1016.
3.	3192-93	130	SD 3 .8	The words '*et ex ea Ardeknutum genuit'* are found in *HR* but not in JW *Chron*. II In Arnold's edition these words are printed in large typeface.
4.	3199-40	132	SD 3 .8	1031 Cnut's visit to Rome. The words '*vitaeque suae et morum emendacionem ante sepulchrum apostolorum deo vovit'* found in *HR* and not in JW *Chron*.II.
5.	3314	147	SD 3 .8	AD 1065. JW *Chron*. II does not record that King Edward ordered that Morkar be elected earl of Northunbria. Alfred uses the words *pro quo rex Nordhimbris Morcatum comitem dedit. In HR it is* '*et jussu regis Morkarus Northumbris est praeelectus comes.'*
6.	3322	148	SD 3 .8	AD 1066. Alfred uses the word *principibus*. In JW *Chron* II it is *primatibus*. In *HR* it is *principibus* and is marked in large typeface by the RS editor.

Comment

1. In these twenty instances in Figs. 20 and 21, Alfred has reproduced material which is either found only in the *HR*, or is much closer textually to the *HR* than it is to the Worcester chronicle. This suggests that Alfred is primarily working with the *HR* at this point in the compilation, not the Worcester chronicle.

2. By mapping Alfred's borrowings from the *HR* against Hunter Blair's analysis of the different component parts of the *HR* (Fig. 19), the degree to which Alfred reproduces material from a version of the *HR* similar to that contained in CCCC 139 can be observed. As can be seen from Figs. 20 and 21, borrowings have been made by Alfred from a number of Hunter-Blair's divisions of the *HR text* as found in CCCC 139. Three borrowings have been taken from SD I.4. Three borrowings appear as if they may have been taken from from SD I.5. Material is reproduced most frequently in the *Historia* from SD 3.8. No borrowings

have been taken from SD 2, consisting of item 6, the brief annals from 888 to 957 and item 7, extracts from the *GRA* of William of Malmesbury.

3. The pattern of Alfred's borrowings in books seven and eight of the *Historia* therefore suggests that the version of the *HR* he had to hand at Beverley was similar to that contained in CCCC 139, in that at least the divisions SD I and SD 3 of the *HR* were joined up.[316] SD 2 may also have been contained in the version of the *HR* Alfred had to hand. He may simply not have used the limited material it contains – the information required being available elsewhere in the manuscript. Alfred's borrowing therefore tells us is that he worked with a composite text of the *HR*, some fifteen years before CCCC 139 is believed to have been compiled. The joining up of, at a minimum, the two main divisions which comprise the *HR,* SD I and SD 3, must then have occurred prior to c.1148 – c. 1151 x 1154.

The *HR* in book nine of the *Historia.*

As noted above [317] the content of the *HR* becomes less dependent on the Worcester chronicle from 1069, when it begins to introduce original narrative. Alfred reproduces extensive amounts of this original narrative from the *HR* in book nine of the *Historia* and this establishes his dependence on the *HR* beyond doubt. Examples of material recycled from the *HR* include a survey of the earls of Northumbria from Osulf to Roger de Mowbray (*HAB* 9.3609-53), the explanation for Duke William's invasion and conquest of England and the reasons for its success (*HAB* 9. 3404-51), extracts from the account of William I's Harrying of the North (*HAB* 9. 3511-26), the five invasions of Malcolm III of Scotland and his death (*HAB* 9. 3818-48), earl Gospatric's purchasing of the earldom of Northumbria from William I (*HAB* 9. 3636-37). From 1119 to its conclusion in 1129 the *Historia* is comprised entirely of

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[316] Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', p. 61, note 41, notes that Alfred appeared to have used a version of the *HR* similar to that of CCCC 139, without providing any supporting evidence.
[317] Footnotes 313 and 314.

borrowings made from the *HR*. The final words of the text of the *Historia*, as presented in the Hearne edition, *a rege acceperat*, form the concluding words of the penultimate paragraph of the *HR* (*HAB* 9.4200).

Two of the passages which Alfred has reproduced from the *HR* in book nine of the *Historia* are now examined in more detail. Following this, Alfred's manner of selection and omission of material from the *HR* in the *Historia* will be considered for the evidence that it provides of Alfred's interests, outlook and authorial intent in the *Historia.* Issues discussed are how Alfred's selection and arrangement of narrative material from the *HR* suggests a distinctly secular and non-parochial outlook. Alfred's cautious and discrete editorial approach will also be discussed and contrasted with the more freely expressed content of the *HR*. Frequent critical comments and judgements on people and events found in the *HR* have been filtered out in Alfred's reworking of the material in the *Historia*.

In the first passage to be considered, Alfred has reproduced narrative material from the *HR* which has been the subject of considerable scholarly discussion. This relates to the evidence it supplies reLating the transmission of the *HR* from its original state leaving Durham in c.1129 and its appearance in CCCC 139 in c.1170.

The rule of the earls of Northumbria from Osulf to Robert de Mowbray.

The *HR* annal for 1072, after narrating how William I had deprived earl Gospatric of Northumbria of his earldom, contains a unique survey of the earls who ruled in Northumbria since the last of its kings, Eric, who was expelled in c. 949 by Eadred, king of the West Saxons. This passage Alfred reproduces in considerable measure (*HAB* 9.3609-53). Alfred locates this survey in the year 1072, expressed as the sixth regnal year of William I, *Anno VI Willielmus*. The *HR* survey ends with the last of the earls, Robert de Mowbray, being taken prisoner and William Rufus holding Northumbria in his own hand, and the compiler concludes with the statement, *hodieque rex Henricus Northymbriam in sua tenet manu*, thus providing an important clue to the date

of the *HR* compilation. The fact that the compiler refers to King Henry without describing him as King Henry the *first* is consistent with a text written c.1129 and is to be contrasted with the description in the introductory rubric of the *HR* in CCCC 139, which refers to the work as extending nearly to the death of King Henry the first, *ad obitum regis primi Henrici filii Willelmi.* Alfred reproduces the Durham compiler's statement, in reworked form, and in so doing, provides a *terminus ante quem* for the *Historia* itself (discussed pp.85-6).

It has long been considered that this passage in the *HR* was not located in the annal for 1072 in the text of the *HR* which left Durham in c.1129. Thomas Arnold, the editor of the Rolls Series edition of the *HR*, argued that the survey of the earls of Northumbria was originally located at the year 952, but during handling of the *HR* text at Hexham, where its continuation was compiled by John prior of Hexham, interpolators had caused the survey's removal to the year 1072. [318] Arnold pointed to evidence for a disruption in the CCCC 139 text. In the annal for 1070 it describes earl Gospatric, *ut supradictum est, as earlier stated*, purchasing the earldom of Northumbria from William the Conqueror for money. But this episode is described only in the1072 survey of the earls. The 1070 statement would only make sense if the survey of the earls had originally been located earlier than 1070. Peter Hunter Blair supported the view that a relocation of the passage had occurred, suggesting that it was originally placed at a point before 1070, but rejected the argument that Hexham as the source of the relocation in the *HR* text.[319]

Evidence from two of the three chronicles which drew on the *HR* supports the view that a relocation of the survey of the earls of Northumbria has taken place. The *HPB* has the survey of the earls at the year 953. In the *Chronicle of Melrose Abbey* (first compiled c.1173 -74) which drew on the *HR* for the annals from 732-1171, the survey appears at the year 950.[320] Alfred's location in the *Historia* of the survey at year 1072 indicates that his witness of

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[318] *HR,* pp. 196 -7 note a.
[319] 'Observations', p. 111.
[320] Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', p. 56.

the *HR* was similar to that of CCCC 139. The later twelfth-century Paris manuscript, containing the '*Liber de gestis Anglorum*', also has the survey at 1072. The *Historia* therefore provides the important information that, if there was a rearrangement of the *HR* text involving this survey, it must have occurred before c.1148 –c.1151 x 1154 and could not have been made at Sawley.

Explaining the causes and success of the Norman Conquest.

The opening passage of book nine of the *Historia* provides another example of Alfred's use of material from the *HR*. It also illustrates how a compiler-editor, such as Alfred, was able to put an individual narrative stamp on his compilation despite dependence on almost completely recycled material. Book eight of the *Historia* ends with the death of King Harold and the victory of Duke William at Hastings. The book concludes with a summary of the rule of the English kings on the island and lists the thirteen kings from Athelstan to Harold, comprising its *status*. Book nine then opens with a reflective commentary on the causes of Duke William's invasion, and the reasons for its success which begins as follows:

> '<u>Primo ostendenda</u> est origo causae, qua Willielmus dux   Normannorum Angliam bello appe<u>c</u>iit, et <u>deinceps ad eorum gesta in Angliae monarchia veniendum.</u> Orto inter regem Edwardum et comitem   Godwinum   gravi discidio, exul ab Anglia cum suis   omnibus comes   expellitur.   Cui postmodum graciam regis requirenti, <u>datis   obsidibus,</u>   S.Wlfnoto filio suo et Hacum filio Suani filii sui,   <u>concessum est</u> ei repatriare. <u>Rex vero eos   in Normanniam Willielmo comiti</u> custodiendos destinavit. Mortuo Godwino comite, Haroldus filius ejus   peciit a rege licenciam Normanniam   ire, et fratrem suum atque nepotem liberatos secum reducere. Cui rex 'Hoc' inquit, 'non fiet per me. Verum ne videar te velle impedire, permitto ut experiaris quid possis. Praesencio tamen, te in detrimentum, tocius Angliae tendere.'

(*HAB* 9. 3404-3451)

'First the origin of the cause which propelled William Duke of the Normans to war in England must be made clear and then we need to return to the deeds of the monarchy in England. A grievous disunion having arisen between King Edward and Earl Godwine, the earl, along with all his men, were banished from England. When later he, Earl Godwine, asked the king's pardon, and with hostages given; that is, Wulnoth his son and Hacun, the son of his son Swein, he was allowed to return. The king in fact consigned them to the custody of earl William in Normandy. When earl Godwine died his son Harold begged the king's permission to go to Normandy and bring back his brother and his nephew in freedom with him. 'That', said the king to him, 'shall not be done through me…'

The reflective commentary occupies the first two pages of book nine of the *Historia* (*HAB* 9. 3404-51). The passage is embroidered with selective words and phrases of Alfred, underlined in the Latin passage above, but almost the entire passage has been reproduced verbatim from the *HR*;[321] narrative which the compiler of the *HR* had himself recycled from Eadmer's *Historia Novorum*.[322] Such a reflection on the causes of the Norman invasion and reasons for its success is not found in the Worcester chronicle. The selection of this particular passage from the *HR* to open book nine of the *Historia* is much in keeping with Alfred's editorial approach throughout the compilation. Each of the *Historia's* books, with the exception of the conclusion of book nine, begins and ends with linking explanatory commentary before the historical narrative proper recommences. This passage illustrates Alfred's compilatory skill, excerpting narrative from one context in a source text and adapting it to his own narrative plan; here to begin the account of the *status* of the Norman kings in England with an appropriate explanatory passage. Worthy of note also is that a generation after Symeon reused the material and, more than eighty years after the Conquest, an Anglo-Norman writer would still feel the need to provide an explanation for the ending of the Anglo-Saxon royal line in England which Alfred's deliberate selection and use of this passage from Symeon's account, demonstrates.

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[321] *HR*, § 151 pp. 182-83.

[322] Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, ed. M.Rule, RS 81 (London, 1884), pp. 5-9.

Alfred's secular and non-parochial outlook.

A striking feature of the abridgement of the *HR* in the final three books of the *Historia* is the manner in which Alfred filters out much of the *HR*'s matter of ecclesiastical interest. Notices of the deaths and successions of senior clergy, bishops and abbots are mostly passed over. Reports of the foundations of churches and monastic communities are regularly omitted. Matters of ecclesiastical politics; for example the church reform programme of King Edgar (957- 975) where secular clergy and married priests were removed from leading monasteries and replaced by monks living under a rule, or the papal-inspired reform movement of the later eleventh and early twelfth century and the conciliar legislation which ensued, which forms a considerable part of the Durham compilation, are overlooked. To illustrate this, summaries of the major ecclesiastical content which Alfred has omitted in the course of his epitomisation of the *HR* are now provided. Fig. 22 lists omitted matter from the reign of King Edgar in the *HR*.

Fig. 22.   Book 8. Reign of King Edgar. Ecclesiastical matter in *HR* omitted in *Historia*.

Historia Bk.8	HR §	Ecclesiastical matter omitted	Topic
3019	110	957.Death of Cenwald bishop of Worcester. Succession of Abbot Dunstan.	Clerical succession
	110	958.Death of Odo archbishop of Canterbury and succession of Ælfsige bishop of Winchester. Brihthelm consecrated bishop of Winchester.	Clerical succession
	111	959. Ælfsige dies in Alps on his way to Rome to receive the pallium. Brihthelm succeeds as archbishop of Canterbury, but resigns. Dunstan appointed his successor.	Metropolitan succession
		959. Edgar founds 40 monasteries.	Monastic foundation
		960. Archbishop Dunstan goes to Rome to receive pallium from Pope John XII.	Visit to papacy, Rome
		960. Oswald appointed bishop of Worcester	Clerical appointment
		963. Æthelwold appointed bishop of Winchester	Clerical appointment
	112	963. Expulsion of secular, married clergy, replacement by monks	Church reform
		967. Edgar establishes nuns in monastery of Romsey. Merewenna made abbess.	Clerical appointment
		968. Death of bishop Ealdred of Chester-le-Street, succession of Ælfsige	Clerical succession
		969. Removal of secular clergy from greater monasteries of Mercia, supervised by archbishop Dunstan, and bishops Oswald and Æthelwold .	Church reform
		970. Translation of relics of St. Swithun.	Translation of saint
		972. Consecration of New Minster at Winchester.	Church foundation
	113	972. Oswald, bishop of Worcester succeeds as archbishop of York after death of archbishop Osketel.	Metropolitan succession
		973 Archbishop Oswald receives the pallium from Pope Stephen	Papal privilege
3056		975. Ejection of monks and reintroduction of married clerks into monasteries after the death of King Edgar by Ælfhere, ruler of the Mercians.	Church reforms abandoned.

In the *Historia* book eight Alfred presents an account of the reign of Edgar which concentrates on its political content, at the expense of the very extensive ecclesiastical matter reported by the Durham compiler. All the *HR*'s notices of clerical deaths, successions and appointments between 959 and 975 are omitted. Edgar's church foundations and his church reform programme, implemented by Archbishop Dunstan and bishops Aethelwold and Oswald, are ignored. The material reproduced from the *HR* consists of the following: Edgar's election at the expense of his brother Eadwig in 957 by the Mercians and Northumbrians to rule north of the Thames, his recall of the exiled Dunstan, his election as king of all the Angles on the death of Eadwig in 959 at the age of sixteen, five hundred and ten years after the coming of the English and three hundred and sixty-three years after the coming of St Augustine, his imperial consecration at Bath in 973, his sea voyage to Chester and his being rowed by the eight sub-kings of Britain on the river Dee, the concluding panegyric of King Edgar.

Whilst Alfred appears to be primarily interested in providing an account of the secular aspects of Edgar's rule he does not overlook Edgar's ecclesiastical achievements entirely. He concludes his account of the reign of Edgar by reverting to borrowing from Henry of Huntingdon's *HA*. He inserts a passage where Henry describes Edgar's monastic foundations in the area of Ely, as follows:

> ' Iste eciam Edgarus rex monitu Sancti Adewoldi Wintoniensis episcopi construxit abbaciam Glastinbire, abbaciam Abbedune super Tamisam, abbaciam apud Burc prope Stanfordam, abbaciam apud Torneie. Agelwinus quoque consul regis ejusdem episcopi consilio abbaciam Rameseia in insula pulcherima intra easdem fixit paludes. Ubi sunt eciam ecclesia Eliensis, abbacia Tateric, abbacia Crulande: juxta quas sunt abbacia Burc, abbacia Spalioge, ecclesia Sancti Yvonis super Usam fluvium Huntendune, ecclesia Sancti Aegidii super Grentam fluvium Cantebrigae, ecclesia Sanctae Trinitatis in Tedford ' [323]

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[323] Extracted from *HA* V.25.

(*HAB 8 3056-6*)

'The same King Edgar, on the advice of St Aethelwold, bishop of Winchester, founded the abbey of Glastonbury, built the abbey of Abingdon on the Thames, the abbey of Peterborough near Stamford, the abbey of Thorney. On the advice of the same bishop, Aethelwine, the king's ealdorman, founded the abbey of Ramsey on a very beautiful site in the middle of the fens. There were also in this area the church of Ely, the abbey of Thorney, the abbey of Crowland and on its edge are the abbey of Peterborough, the abbey of Spalding, the church of St Ives on the river Ouse at Huntingdon, the church of St Giles on the river Granta at Cambridge and the church of the Holy Trinity at Thetford.'

Alfred's abrupt reversion to borrowing from Henry of Huntingdon to describe Edgar's ecclesiastical achievements is revealing. The interest of the *HR* account is focussed on Edgar's support for church reform and the degradation of married clerks and their replacement by monks whilst Henry's describes the foundation of monasteries by Edgar which enriched the landscape. That Alfred puts down the *HR* and returns to the *HA* at this point in the narrative indicates it served his purposes better than did the *HR* narrative. As a married clerk, serving a secular church, Alfred appears more comfortable with Henry's description of Edgar. Alfred recognises the importance of Edgar's ecclesiastical achievements and the need to pay tribute to them, but chooses another source, more in line with his and, by implication his readers' interests, to do this.

The practice of omitting matters of ecclesiastical interest is even most evident in book nine of the *Historia,* which narrates the period from William I to 1129. Fig. 23 catalogues all Alfred's very considerable omission of ecclesiastical matter in his abbreviation of the *HR*. Amongst matter omitted are notices of clerical deaths and successions, church foundations and translations of saints. Ecclesiastical politics are avoided including the papal reform movement initiated by Gregory VII and continued by successor popes and matters concerning the investiture controversy are avoided. All notices of church councils both papal and Insular and the ensuing legislation are omitted

Fig. 23. Book nine. 1066-1129, ecclesiastical matter in *HR* omitted in *Historia.*

HAB	HR §	Matter omitted	Topic
		Insular ecclesiastic content	
3585	158	Appointment of Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury 1070	Clerical appointment
3585	158	Appointment of Archbishop Thomas I of York 1070	Clerical appointment
3585	158	York dispute with Worcester 1070	Clerical dispute
3594	158	Appointment of bishop Walcher of Durham 1071	Clerical appointment
3651	161	Restoration of monastic life in north 1074	Monastic foundations
3651	162	York dispute with bishop of St Andrews 1074	Clerical dispute
3692	165	Foundation of St Mary's abbey, York 1078	Monastic foundation
3696	165	Appointment of Robert bishop of Hereford 1079	Clerical appointment
3697	166	Most details of death of bishop Walcher of Durham 1080	Clerical death
3701	167	Succession of William of St Calais b. of Durham	Clerical appointment
3702	167	Dispute in the church of Glastonbury 1083	Clerical dispute
3703	168	Death of Pope Gregory VII 1084	Papal death
3769	171	Death of Archbishop Lanfranc 1089	Clerical death
3813	173	Appointment of Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury 1093	Clerical appointment
3813	173	Appointment of Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln 1093	Clerical appointment
3871	176	Death of bishop Wulfstan of Worcester 1095	Clerical death
3892	178	Death of bishop William of St Calais of Durham 1096	Clerical death
3905	179	Dispute between William II and Anselm 1097, Anselm's visit to Pope Urban II in Rome	Church and state dispute
3922	180	Translation of the bones of St Cnut 1098	Translation of saint
3922	180	Consecration of Ralph, b. of Durham by Archbishop Thomas of York 1099	Clerical appointment
3922	181	Death of Pope Urban II 1099	Papal death
3922	181	Dedication of the church of Gloucester 1100	Church foundation
3922	181	Death of Pope Clement III, antipope, 1100	Papal death
3963	182	Death of Archbishop Thomas I of York 1100	Clerical death
3993	184	Investiture dispute between Henry I and Anselm 1103 and Anselm's visit to Rome	Church and state dispute
4004	185	Translation of the body of St Cuthbert 1104	Translation of saint
4023	187	Deaths of seven leading churchman 1107	Clerical deaths
4023	187	Death of Gundulf, b. of Rochester 1108	Clerical death
4037	188	Death of Archbishop Gerard of York and Appointment of Thomas, provost of Beverley, as archbishop of York 1108	Clerical death & succession
4037	189	Death of Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury 1109	Clerical death
4043	193	Archbishop Thomas II Hexham places regular canons in Hexham 1112	Church reform
4043	193	Coming of the monks of Tiron 1113	Monastic settlement
4043	193	Death of Archbishop Thomas II of York 1114 with eulogy	Clerical death
4043	193	Appointment of Ralph archbishop of Canterbury 1114	Clerical appointment
4043	193	Appointment of Thurstan archbishop of York 1114	Clerical appointment
4047	194	The dispute between York and Canterbury at Salisbury assembly in 1116	York –Cant. dispute
4050	195	Death of Pope Paschal and election of Pope Gelasius 1118	Papal succession
4052	197	Death of Pope Gelasius 1119	Papal death
4089	201	Dispute between York chapter and monks of Durham 1121	Church dispute
4089	202	Pope Calixtus II threatens interdict at Canterbury unless Archbishop Thurstan admitted to his see by Henry. Letter of Calixtus. 1121	York –Cant. dispute
4094	203	Thurstan demands subjection of bishop of Glasgow 1122	Church dispute
4098	205	Monks of Savigny arrive in Lancashire 1123	Monastic settlement
4098	205	Death of Ralph archbishop of Canterbury 1122	Clerical death
4104	205	Deaths of bishops of Bath and Lincoln 1123	Clerical deaths

4104	206	Dispute on election of Canterbury primate between secular and regular clergy 1123	Church dispute
4104	206	William of Corbeil elected archbishop of Canterbury 1123	Clerical appointment
4104	206	Archbishops William and Thurstan journey to Rome after Lateran council 1123 to plead their case on primacy issue	York-Cant. dispute
		Insular councils and statutes	
3585	157	Legatine council Winchester, Easter 1070	Clerical degradations
3585	157	Windsor May 1070	Clerical appointments and degradations
3703	168	Council of Gloucester 1085	Clerical appointments
3963	182	Council of London 1101	
3993	184	Council of Westminster 1102	Clerical appointments
4023	187	Council of Westminster on Investitures. 5 bishops consecrated, submission of archbishop Gerard of York to Anselm 1107	York-Canterbury dispute
4037	188	Council of London and statutes 1108	Clerical celibacy.
4089	200	Council at Windsor, ecclesiastical matters 1121.	Clerical appointments
4134	211	Legatine visit of John of Cremona 1125	Letters of Pope Honorius II
4134	212	Legatine council of Westminster and 17 statutes. Sept 1125 in SD	Church legislation
		International ecclesiastical content	
3651	160	1074 Synod and decrees of Pope Gregory VII	Church reform
3701	167	1080 Emperor Henry IV deposes Pope Gregory VII	Church-state dispute
3701	167	1083 Emperor Henry IV occupies Rome. Pope in exile.	Church-state dispute
3807	172	1091 Two popes, Urban II and Clement II	Church schism
3896	178	1096 Pope Urban II preaches crusade at Claremont	Crusades
3905	179	1097 Monastery of Citeaux founded	Monastic foundation
3922	180	1098 Antioch taken by Christians	Crusades
3922	180	1099 Council of Pope Urban II in Rome on investitures	Church reform
3922	181	1099 Jerusalem taken by Christians	Crusades
4039	190	1111 Emperor Henry V. Pope Paschal II yields to emperor. & details of agreement.	Church-state disputes
4041	192	1112 Council of Pope Paschal II in Rome	Church reform
4052	197	1119 Council of Pope Calixtus II Rheims. Archbishop Thurstan attends. Its decrees.	Church reform and York- Canterbury dispute
4104	207	1123 Lateran council Rome of Pope Calixtus II. Its 11 decrees.	Church reform

Alfred avoids all mention of the York-Canterbury dispute and takes no interest in affairs outside of Britain; for example he reproduces none of the notices of the crusades. As the historical narrative enters the period of Alfred's lifetime, no change in his editorial approach is observed. Notices in the *HR* involving senior members of the church of York whom Alfred may have known personally are not treated in different manner and spared omission. For example, the appointment of Thomas, provost of Beverley, as archbishop of York in 1108 is not reported.The *HR* reports Thomas's death in 1114 and provides the archbishop a brief eulogy which Alfred overlooks (*HR* §193), yet

Alfred was a co-witness of the reconfirmation of Thomas's grants of alms to Bridlington priory in c.1143. [324] Even more striking is that Alfred fails to record anything of the career of Archbishop Thurstan of York (1114-40), a contemporary of Alfred, of international prestige and a man who had promoted the interests of the town and church of Beverley.[325] As in the case of Archbishop Thomas, Alfred had attested a reconfirmation by Archbishop William fitzHerbert of a grant of free burgage to the town of Beverley by Thurstan.[326]

Moderating critical judgements and comments in the *HR*

Alfred moderates harsh judgements on people and their motives which the compiler of the *HR* frequently makes, particularly in its post-conquest narrative. Ten instances where critical comments on the Normans, Malcolm III of Scotland, William Rufus and William of Eu have been moderated in Alfred's reworking of the material are listed below. In the *HR's* description of King Malcolm, Alfred reproduces much of its content but a number of the bitterest comments on Malcolm and the Scots are removed. The *HR* contains a graphic account of Malcolm's 1070 invasion of the north and his violent reaction to earl Gospatric's attacks on Cumberland, then in Malcolm's possession (*HAB* 9.3571-79). However, Alfred omits the comment, '*the Scots were more savage than wild beasts, delighting in their cruelty'* and also the *HR*'s statement that Malcolm was impervious to appeals for mercy and only encouraged his troops to even greater efforts to enslave the local populace, blaming Malcolm directly for the excesses of the campaign (*HR* §156). Later, describing Malcolm's death in 1093 and his five invasions of the north, the *HR* comments that Malcolm's invasions were instigated by greed *avaritia stimulante consuevit.* Alfred reproduces the passage on the five invasions almost verbatim, but omits the judgemental comment. Symeon then adds that in Malcolm's death the justice of an avenging God was plainly manifested,

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[324] *EYC*, I, no. 104.
[325] Nichol, 'Thurstan', p.99. *EYC*, I. no. 95.
[326] See Fig 1. pp. 33-34.

Alfred includes the statement, but not the word *avenging*, *judicantis.* In removing this one word, Alfred renders the statement more neutral in tone.

The same reluctance to reproduce matter of 'judgemental' nature in the *HR* is exhibited in Alfred's account of William Rufus. In the annal for 1093 the *HR* describes William as refusing to meet King Malcolm at Gloucester '*prae nimia superbia et potentia'* because of his 'excessive *pride and power*.' Alfred reports the event, but not this comment. In describing William's military campaign in Wales in 1097 William is said to have set out 'ut *omnes masculini sexus internecioni daret'* '*with the intention of killing all the male inhabitants*.' Alfred reports William's campaign, but does not include the comment on William's murderous intentions. Earlier in the *HR* account   William was described unflatteringly as 'greatest corruptor' *seductor maxiimus*; Alfred, again, omits the comment.

The *HR*'s description of the Normans as 'foreigners', *alienigenae*; as people of foreign custom and tongue, or its comments on God passing judgement on the Normans for their wicked deeds are comments which Alfred also noticeably omits in his abbreviation.

Fig. 24. Critical judgements in the *HR* omitted in book 9 of *Historia*.

Historia	*HR* §	Critical judgements in *HR* omitted by Alfred.
3492	153	1069. The Northumbrian resistance to Robert Cumin as their appointed earl was because they did not want to submit to a foreign lord. The phrase *ne alienigenae dominio subderentur* is omitted.
3504-11	153	1069. September. The slaughter of Norman garrison 3000 soldiers of York was an act of divine vengeance. That it was an act of divine vengeance is omitted.
3562-64	154	1070. The ransacking of the kingdom's monasteries, ordered by William I was due to his 'rapacity and harshness.' The phrase *propter illius austeritatem et depopulationem* is omitted.
3564	155	1070. Passage describing Bishop Æthelwine of Durham contempLating escape because he could not support the heavy rule of a foreign nation whose language and customs he did not know is overlooked.
3571-79	156	1070. The account of King Malcolm III's cruel campaign in the north is retained but moderated. The description of the Scots as more savage than wild beasts is omitted; so too is that of Malcolm's implacable cruelty and encouraging greater enslavement.
3585	157	1070 Degradation of several English abbots and replacement by Normans by William I and the comment that as many as possible of the English senior clergy should be deprived of their rank to help establish his newly acquired kingdom is omitted.

3824	173	1093. William Rufus refused to see Malcolm of Scotland at Gloucester because of 'excessive pride and power.' The phrase *prae nimia superbia et potentia* is omitted.
3829-48	174	1093. In the description of King Malcolm's death in Northumbria as the act of an 'avenging' God, the word avenging is omitted. The statement that his five invasions of the north 'were inspired by avarice' *avaritia stimulante consuevit* is also omitted.
3857	175	1093. William of Eu's defection from Robert Duke of Normandy, his natural lord, to William Rufus is more neutrally described than in *HR*. The phrase 'overcome by a lust for gold' *auri ingenti victus cupiditate* is dropped. So too is William Rufus described as 'greatest corruptor.' *seductor maximus*,
3913	179	1097. William Rufus setting out with a second army to Wales with the intention of killing all male inhabitants is moderated. The campaign is reported. Its intention is not.

The Durham *Historia Regum* in the *Historia*. Summary and conclusions.

Alfred reproduces material found in both the Worcester chronicle main annals and the Durham *HR* from the concluding stages of book six onwards in the *Historia*, but close textual comparison reveals twenty instances in books seven and eight when the material appears to have been taken from the *HR* (Figs. 20, 21). From book nine of the *Historia*, when the *HR* becomes more original in content, Alfred's reproduction of matter unique to the *HR* becomes clear and therefore puts his dependence on the Durham text beyond doubt. Indeed from 1119 to its conclusion in 1129, the *Historia* can justly be described as an epitome of the *HR*, albeit one which omits much matter of historical interest. There appears to be no material used in the *Historia* which is found only in the Worcester chronicle main annals and which would therefore indicate Alfred's use of that text. There are good grounds to conclude therefore that Alfred had access at Beverley to the dynastic accounts and genealogical tables of the Worcester chronicle and also to a text of the *HR* and from these two texts, he compiled most of books six to nine of the *Historia*. Other than selective borrowings from Henry of Huntingdon in book seven and Alfred's own additions and summarising passages, the greater part of the fourteen thousand four hundred words of text contained in the final three books of the *Historia* has been compiled from borrowings from the *HR*. This represents approximately one third of the content of the *Historia*, its largest single source.

The *Historia*, compiled during the period c.1148 - c.1151 x 1154 represents possibly the earliest twelfth-century witness to the *HR.* The *Historia Post*

Bedam dates from a similar period, but has been assigned a somewhat wider dating range, c.1148 - c.1161 than is now possible to assign to the *Historia*. The version of the *HR* which Alfred used appears similar to that contained in the Sawley-owned manuscript, CCCC 139 (c.1164 x c.1175), as Alfred's borrowings can be shown to have been taken from a text consisting of the same joined up disparate sections which comprise the *HR* as represented in CCCC 139. Borrowings have been taken from the different component parts of the *HR,* SD I.4, SD 3.8 and also possibly from SD I.5 (Figs. 20, 21). A further similarity which the *Historia* shares with CCCC 139 is the location of the account of the earls of Northumbria at the year 1072, believed to have been originally located before 1070 in the *HR*. Alfred's use of the *HR* attests that the re-handling of that text must have taken place before 1148 and the joined up nature of the miscellany which is the *HR*, as represented in CCCC 139, already existed before 1148 and clearly was not compiled at Sawley.

Whilst the *Historia* is highly dependent on the *HR*, it presents an account markedly different in tone and outlook. The *Historia* reworks the annal entries of the *HR* into three books, each with its own historical theme: book seven the era of the Scandinavian invasions – which Alfred refers to as the pagan invasions- book eight, the rule of the English kings from Athelstan to Harold and book nine the rule of the Norman kings. In book seven, at the outset of Alfred's use the *HR*, the narrative is arranged in annular format: for the years 813, 851, 854, 864, 866, 869, 870, 879, 886, 894, 896, 897. However, in books eight and nine this practice is discontinued and the chronological structure of the narrative is based on dating by regnal years following a fixed date supplied at the outset of each book.   Book eight, for example, commences at the death of Edward the elder in 924 and Athelstan's elevation to the crown. The next notice supplied is the marriage of Athelstan's sister to King Sihtric of Northumbria, given in the second year of his rule, '*Qui anno regni sui secundo sororem suam Nordhimbrorum regi Sitrico Danica stirpe progenito, cum magna gloria in matrimonium dedit* ' (*HAB* 8. 2936-38).

In reworking material from the *HR*, Alfred has rebalanced the narrative from one where reporting of ecclesiastical and political events run in parallel to one

where the interest is single-mindedly secular. Alfred's focus is in narrating the *gesta* and movements of kings in securing, defending and maintaining control of their kingdom. If Alfred filters out much of the ecclesiastical reporting found in the *HR*; the deaths and appointments of senior clergy, monastic or church foundations, papal and Insular councils and their legislation, he rarely overlooks dramatic events involving kings and princes which the *HR* also reports. Examples of such narrative story-telling include the episode of King Edgar rowed up the river Dee by Britain's eight sub-kings as an act of homage (*HAB* 8. 3025-33), the death of the tyrant Swein killed by the ghost of St Edmund (*HAB* 8. 3105-3112), the capture and death of Alfred, brother of Edward the Confessor by Earl Godwine (*HAB* 8. 3206-21), the loss of Prince William and other children of Henry I in the shipwreck of 1120 (*HAB* 9. 4075-89). Episodes involving prophecy are retained; for example Dunstan's prophecies both at the birth of King Edgar – forecasting a time of peace (*HAB* 8. 2983-88) and at the consecration of King Æthelred - predicting the loss of the kingdom to a foreign power (*HAB* 8. 3136-47).

The reworking of narrative material from the *HR* in the *Historia* provides much evidence which helps us better understand Alfred's outlook and the character of his historical writing. Matters of dispute and controversy are avoided. There is no reporting of the York-Canterbury dispute (Fig. 23). The investiture dispute is omitted (Fig. 23). The issue of clerical marriage is avoided (Figs. 22, 23). Alfred is reluctant to reproduce matters of a critical or judgemental nature. When the *HR* compiler comments pejoratively on the actions or motives of an individual in the *HR* (Fig. 24), Alfred invariably omits the comment. Alfred's guardedness contrasts sharply with the openness of expression exhibited in the *HR*. Caution is perhaps a result of the politically charged environment in which the *Historia* was compiled, discussed in chapter three. Whereas Alfred's was a work written in and for reception in a secular and more public environment, the *HR's* openness of expression bespeaks compilation in a monastic environment where forthright opinions might be more freely expressed, because of their privacy. The marked lack of parochial interest which characterises the *Historia* perhaps also reflects the desire for neutrality in the compilation. Other than the excursus on St John of

Beverley's protection of the Beverley community during William I's harrying of the north, there is little in the final books of the *Historia* to suggest the writer was a member of the Beverley or indeed Yorkshire church. The failure to include anything of Archbishops Thomas II, ex provost of Beverley, and Thurstan archbishop of York in the *Historia,* personages of national importance and prominently reported in the *HR,* are just two examples of this.

In the three final books of the *Historia* the character of Alfred's compilation therefore comes more clearly into focus and the text's purpose is more strongly suggested. Secular in perspective, cautious and non-controversial in its description of people and events, exhibiting no local interest, the narrative providing concise explanation and information on the main themes of the island history but nevertheless laced with good narrative story-telling, the *Historia* appears to be a text written both to inform and to entertain. In the words of Nancy Partner, the *Historia* appears to be a work of serious entertainment. A pedagogical approach guides the narrative. Each of books seven, eight and nine, begin with brief explanations on what is to be covered in the book and why. Books seven and eight end with summarising conclusions. Book nine ends abruptly at the year 1129, as does the *HR*. Neither summarising conclusion, nor recapitulated list of the kings forming the *status* of the line of kings is found, as in every other book of the *Historia.* This suggests that either the work was left unfinished by Alfred or that the manuscript that Hearne's 1716 edition was based on was incomplete. The latter looks probable because, as identified in this study, two medieval manuscripts of earlier date than MS Rawlinson B 200 and one later fifteenth-century manuscript (NLW MS Peniarth 384) take Alfred's history down to 1135, but all the manuscripts indicate a work brought prematurely to a close.

4.5. Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum* in the *Historia.*

Gildas

Alfred refers to Gildas as an authority on seven occasions in the *Historia* and, as the *De Excidio Britanniae* (*DEB)* is a text believed to have enjoyed only limited circulation in the twelfth century, it would be important to examine the evidence for Alfred's direct knowledge of it. [327] Among Anglo-Norman historians of the period only Geoffrey of Monmouth shows intimate knowledge of Gildas's *DEB*.[328] William of Malmesbury, a historian of the widest scholarship and reading, [329] whilst referring approvingly to Gildas in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (c.1125) as '*necque insulsus neque infacetus historicus*', '*a historian neither boring or coarse*', nowhere quotes Gildas directly.[330] William appears to have known Gildas only at second hand, through, for example, the writings of Bede or Alcuin*.* [331] Henry of Huntingdon, as noted, associated Gildas with the *Historia Brittonum.* In the later twelfth century the *DEB* was a text known to both William of Newburgh [332] and Gerald of Wales. [333] It would be important, therefore, to establish whether Alfred had direct knowledge of the *DEB* at Beverley in c.1150.

Fig. 25. References to Gildas in the *Historia.*

	Historia	Reference	Source
1	1.416-18	Statuit siquidem inter cetera, quae multo post tempore beatus Gildas scripsit**,** ut templa deorum et civitates talem dignitatem haberent…	*HRB* II. 305-37.
2	1.468-70	Si quis autem scire voluerit omnia quae de ipsis statuerit, legat Molmutinas leges quas Gildas	*HRB* III. 75-

[327] For the limited circulation of Gildas's *DEB* see N. Wright, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gildas' in *Arthurian Literature* II (Woodbridge, 1982), pp. 1-40 at pp. 2 - 3. Also id., 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gildas revisited', *Arthurian Literature* IV (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 155- 163.

[328] Wright, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth', pp. 3-4.

[329] Rodney Thompson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 7. William knew at first hand some four hundred works of two hundred authors.

[330] Wright, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth', p. 2.

[331] *GRA* I. 70, p. 105, note 4. William's reference to Gildas here appears to have been taken from Alcuin's *De Dialectia*, Epistle 17.

[332] W. Newb. *HRA* I, p.11.

[333] *Descriptio Cambriae, praef,* ed. J.F.Dimock, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, RS (London, 1868), VI, p. 158.

		historiographus de Britannico in Latinum, rex vero Alfridus de Latino in Anglicum sermonem transtulit.	91.
3	1.551-52	Quam contencionem Gildas hystoriographus, satis prolixe tractavit.	*HRB* III. 345-66.
4	2.663-66	Sed nec *Gildas sapiens* Britonum, nec Beda in hiis antiquitatibus, qui prae ceteris calamitates Britonum deplorant, aliquid de eis in suis scriptis commemorant.	Alfred
5	3.883-84	Eorum nomina et actus in libro reperiuntur quem Gildas de victoria Aurelii Ambrosii inscripsit.	*HRB* IV. 426-30
6	5.1418-19	Multa enim per eos miracula ostendit deus quae Gildas hystoricus luculento dictamine peroravit.	*HRB* VI.375
7	5. 2039-40	..sicut Gildas et Beda restantur, omnibus humanae naturae viciis subjacerent.	*HE* I XIV, XXII

Five of these references (Fig. 25 no's 1, 2, 3, 5, 6) have been copied directly from the *HRB*. It is an irony that, although Geoffrey of Monmouth owed a considerable debt to the *DEB* as a source for literary imitation, on the seven occasions that he names and appeals to Gildas as an historical authority in the *HRB,* five are fraudulent, where he quotes material nowhere to be found in the *DEB.* [334] Alfred recycles all five of these spurious quotations from Gildas in the *Historia*, without adding material which actually is from the *DEB.* Had Alfred independent knowledge of the *DEB* he surely would have collated Geoffrey's account with it, noting the points of difference, as he so frequently with did with other authorities (Fig.13).

The two remaining references to Gildas in the *Historia* (Fig 25 no's 4, 7) are both made in conjunction with Bede and provide no evidence of direct knowledge of the *DEB*. The description *Gildas Sapiens* (Fig 25 no. 4) is found in Henry of Huntingdon's *HA*, a source familiar to Alfred, in book nine, *The Miracles of the English*, when referring the miracles of St Germanus. [335] Otherwise Bede's *HE* provides the most obvious source. Alfred quarries chapters twelve to twenty-two of book one of the *HE* extensively to corroborate Geoffrey's narrative account at this point in the *Historia* (Fig.13)

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[334] Wright, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gildas' p.22.

[335] *HA* IX. 3, p. 626. The reference to St Germanus made here by Henry and to consult the book of Gildas *cognominatur sapiens* to learn more about St Germanus, appears as if it might have been borrowed from *HRB* VI. 375.

and he was familiar with Bede's statement that Gildas, the historian of the Britons, had himself described the crimes of the Britons '*quae historicus eorum Gildas flebili sermone describit'* (*HE* I.XXII). Alfred's evident lack of familiarity with the text of the *DEB,* demonstrated by his acceptance of the five spurious references to Gildas taken from the *HRB*, strengthens the view that these two remaining references to Gildas in the *Historia* have been appropriated from his readings from Bede and from Henry of Huntingdon. The evidence from the *Historia* is therefore that, in common with the majority of Anglo-Norman historians of the period, Alfred had no direct knowledge of the *DEB.*

2. The *Historia Brittonum*

Amongst the content of Alfred's introductory descriptive survey of Britain is a list of the marvels and wonders of Britain. The first four of these marvels (*HAB* I. 148-57) Alfred has copied verbatim from Henry of Huntingdon's *HA*.[336] The remaining eight *mirabilia,* however, are all found in identical form in the *Historia Brittonum* (hereafter *HB*) which, in its longer versions, including the 'Harleian' recension,[337] contains a list of fourteen marvels of Britain. The eight additional *mirabilia* are as follows:

Fig. 26. *Mirabilia* from the *HB* reproduced in the *Historia.*

	Historia I. 157-91	*Sourced from HB §§ 67-74*
1	Est in ea stagnum in quo sunt LX. insulae, & ibi habitant homines, & LX. rupibus ambitur, & nidus alquilae in unaquaque rupe, & LX. flumina fluunt in eo, & nullum eorum praeter unum vadit ad mare.	There is a lake there in which there are sixty islands and men live there and it is surrounded by sixty rocks and there is an eagle's nest on each and every rock and sixty rivers flow into it and none except one of them flows into the sea.
2	Est in ea eciam aliud stagnum calidum quod muro ambitur ex latere & lapide facto, & in eo per omne tempus lavantur homines, et sicut unicuique placuerit lavacrum, fiet sibi secundum voluntatem	And there is even a warm lake there surrounded by a wall made of brick and stone and men are washed there at any time and each can have the type of bath he pleases whether he wishes it to be either hot or cold.

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[336] *HA* I.7, p. 22.

[337] The Harleian recension of the *HB* best represents the original Cambro-Latin text (c. 829/30) and also the fullest. BL MS Harley 3859 (c.1000) is the earliest and best text of this group of manuscripts. The Vatican recension of the *HB* (an English reworking of c. 943-5) is, amongst the various different recensions of the *HB*, that which departs most extensively from the original. It conveys a shorter text, omitting the marvels, the old English genealogies and the chronological data of chapters 65-66.

	suam sive calidum sive frigidum.	
3	Sunt eciam in ea fontes de salo, quorum aqua per totam ebdomadam salsa est usque ad horam sabbati nonam, & postea dulcis usque ad diem lunae. A quibus fontibus aqua extracta usque ad sal decoquitur, & est sal candidissimum & subtile & non sunt propre mare, sed de terra emergunt.	There are also salt springs there whose water is sour for all the week until the noon of the Sabbath and then sweet until Monday. From the water taken from these springs salt is boiled and it is a most white (shining) and fine salt and the springs are not near the sea but rise from the ground.
4	Est in ea quoddam stagnum, cujus aqua tantam vim habet, ut si exercitus tocius regionis in qua est fuerit juxta & direxerit faciem contra undam, exercitum trahit unda per vim, humore repletis vestibus. Similiter & equi trahuntur. Si autem exercitus terga verterit ad eam, non nocet ei unda.	There is also there a certain lake whose water has so much strength that if the army of the whole country where it is should stand in front of the wave, the power of the wave would drag down the army, its clothing filled with water. The horses would also be dragged down. But if the army should turn its back to it, the wave does not harm it.
5	Est eciam in ea fons, & non fluit rivus in eo, neque ex eo, & piscantur in eo homines, & capiunt ex omni parte pisces, & inveniuntur in eo quatuor genera piscium. Mirum est pisces in fonte inveniri, dum flumen non fluit in eo, nec ex eo, cum non sit magnus neque profundus.XX. enim pedes habet in longitudine & latitudine. Profundus est usque ad genua. Ripas altas habet ex omni parte.	There is also a spring there and no stream flows into or out of it and men fish there and they draw fish from all parts, and four kinds of fish are found there. It is wonderful that fish are to be found in the springs although no stream flows into or out of it and it is of no great depth or size. It is twenty feet in length and breadth and it is as deep as a knee and it has high banks all around
6	In regione quae dicitur Went est fovea, a qua ventus fiat sine intermissione, & ita fiat ut nemo possit sustinere ante foveae profunditatem.	In the country which is called Gwent there is a cleft, from which a wind blows continuously and it is such that no one is able to stand in front of the depth of the cleft.
7	Est in ea stagnum quod facit lignum arescere & in lapides durescere. Homines autem ligna fingunt, & postquam formaverint proiciunt in stagno, & manet in eo usque ad caput anni, & tunc lapis invenitur.	There is there a lake which dries and hardens wood to stone. Men take the wood and after they have shaped it, they throw it in the lake. It remains in the lake until the end of the year and then it is found to be stone.
8	Est eciam in cacumine cujusdan montis sepulcrum. Quicunque venerit ad id, & extenderit se iuxta id, quamvis brevis vel longus fuerit, in una longitudine invenitur sepulcrum & homo. Iuxta staturam uniuscujusque hominis sic tumulus invenitur, & si peregrinus vel taediosus genu flexerit ad id, non illico sentit laborem nec taedium'	There is even a mountain with a tomb at its summit. Whoever comes to it and lies down next to it, however tall or short he may be, both man and tomb are found to be the same size, and if the traveller or the weary kneel down in front of it, he feels neither tired or wearied.

Description of nature's wonders was a popular part of encyclopaedic compilations of geographic and topographical knowledge at the time and lists of wonders, circuLating as separate texts, are in evidence from the time of Alfred. Five of the surviving manuscripts of the *HRB*, for example, contain lists of *Mirabilia* as a separate text.[338] It is possible therefore that Alfred obtained

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[338] Crick, *Dissemination*, pp. 59-60.

his list of wonders from a list of *mirabilia* independently circuLating and not directly from the *HB.* Furthermore, Alfred never acknowledges the *HB* as a source in the *Historia*. Is there evidence elsewhere in the text of the *Historia* indicating Alfred's knowledge of the *HB*?

Such evidence may be provided in Alfred's description of St Martin and St Germanus in the *Historia*. There are grounds to believe that Alfred's description and account of both saints has been informed by material contained in the *HB.* The accounts in question are the description of St Martin's conversation with the tyrant emperor Maximus (c.335-388) (*HAB* 3.1116 -1135) and the citation of a life of St *Germanus* and the naming of its author, Constantius (*HAB* 5.1422-1424).

St Martin's conversation with the emperor Maximus

St Martin is described in two chapters of the *HB* (chapters twenty-six and twenty-nine). In *HB,* chapter twenty-six, a brief account of a conversation between St Martin and the Emperor Maximus is reported:

> 'Sextus Maximus imperator regnavit in Brittania. A tempore illius consules esse coeperunt et Caesares nunquam appellati sunt postea. Et sanctus Martinus in tempore illius claruit in virtutibus et signis, et cum eo locutus est.

> 'The sixth emperor to reign in Britain was Maximus. From his time the consuls began, and they were never again called Caesars. In his time too the powers and miracles of St Martin flowered and Martin spoke with Maximus.

In book three of the *Historia*, whilst abbreviating Geoffrey of Monmouth's long and fabulous account of the career of the tyrant emperor Maximianus (Maximus) who emptied Britain of its Roman garrison in order to futher his imperial ambitions on the continent, Alfred corroborates Geoffrey's account with those of Bede and Eutropius. He also turns to Sulpicius Severus's *Life of St. Martin* for information on the emperor Maximus and he extracts from the

Life the full account of the conversation between St Martin and Maximus which it contains: [339]

HAB 3.1116-35

'De hoc imperatore Maximo in vita Sancti Martini sic legitur, quod cum ipse Sanctum Martinum frequentes rogaret, ut convivio ejus sicut et ceteri pontifices interessent, Sanctus Martinus respondit, dicens se mensae ejus participem esse non posse, qui imperatores unum regno, alterum vita expulisset. Sed cum Maximus se non sponte sumpsisse imperium affirmaret, sed impositam sibi a militibus divino nutu regni necessitatem armis defendere tandem vel racione vel precibus victus ad convivium venit. Inter convivas summi et illustres viri erant, comites duo summa potestate praediti, frater Regis et patruus. Medius inter eos Martini presbiter accubuit, ipse autem sellula juxta regem posita consederat. Ut moris est, pateram regi minister obtulit. Ille Sancto episcopo pocius dari jubet, ambiens ut ab illius dextera poculum sumeret. Martinus ubi ebibit, pateram presbitero suo tradidit. Quod factum imperator, omnesque qui secum aderant, ita admirati sunt, ut hoc ipsum, in quo contempti fuerant, eis placeret. Huic imperatori Maximo Sanctus Martinus futurum praedixit, ut si ad Ytaliam pergere, quo ire cupiebat, bellum Valentiniano imperatori inferens, sciret se primo impetu esse victorem, postea esse interiturum. Quod ita contigit, sicut superius comprehensum est.'

None of Alfred's principal sources; Bede, Orosius and Eutropius / Paul the Deacon, *Historia Romana*, report St Martin's conversation with Maximus. Indeed no other Anglo-Norman historian uses Sulpicius Severus's *Life of St Martin* as a source for imperial history at all. Unless Alfred happened to have independently known Sulpicius's *Life* and remembered the conversation between both St Martin and Maximus - possible, but unlikely- the implication must be that Alfred read about the conversation in the *HB* and then sought out a copy of St Martin's *Life* to add further detail to his account. If this is so, and it looks quite possible, it would provide a valuable insight into Alfred's approach to gathering historical information. Here we see him absorbing information from one source and expanding it by recourse to another. A similar 'accretive'

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[339] *Vita S. Martini* in *Sulpicii Severus Libri Qui Supersunt*, ed. K. Halm, CSEL (Vindobonae, 1866), pp. 129-30.

approach will later be observed with Alfred's handling of two further sources, Aethicus Ister and Hegesippus, discussed in chapter five.

St. Germanus

A brief notice of St Germanus found in the *HB* also appears to have been developed further by Alfred in the *Historia*. Alfred makes a special point of telling his readers that there exists an informative biography of St Germanus and he both names and describes its author:

> Huic relacioni de Sancto Germano astipulatur illustris vir Constancius, qui vitam ejusdem Sancti viri mirabilem et virtutibus plenam luculentissime describit.
>
> *HAB* (5.1422-24)
>
> This account of St Germanus is supported by the distinguished man Constantius who describes most shiningly the life of the saintly man full of marvel and virtues.

At this point in the narrative of the *Historia,* Alfred is abbreviating Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, collated closely with readings from the *HE* of Bede (*HAB* 5.1411- 24). Bede had quarried Constantius's *Life of St Germanus* (c.480) extensively in the *HE* for information on St Germanus, but did so without informing his readers of a biography of St Germanus or by naming its author. [340] Geoffrey of Monmouth, in describing the visit to Britain of Bishops Germanus and Lupus to preach against the Pelagian heresy, had informed his readers that *Gildas in tractatu suo* had described the many miracles of Germanus and Lupus of Troyes, a claim which, as earlier noted, was fraudulent (Fig. 25 no.6) and which Alfred had recycled, omitting, noticeably, the words *in tractatu suo*. The spurious reference to Gildas from Geoffrey as a source for the life of St Germanus immediately precedes the authentic reference to the biography of St Germanus by Constantius. How can we explain this anomalous juxtaposition of accounts? Alfred has taken Geoffrey's claim at face value, but has sought and obtained further information of St

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[340] *HE* I. Chapters 17-21. For Bede's use of the *Life of St Germanus* written by Constantius at the request of Bishop Patiens of Lyons, see HE, xvii, p. 54 note 2.

Germanus from another source. This, again, looks as if it may have been inspired by the *HB* which contains, in its longer versions including the Harleian recension, nine chapters devoted to St Germanus. In chapter forty -seven the author states that in writing about the end of King Vortigern, he obtained his information 'in *the book of the Blessed Germanus'* '*ut in Libro beati Germani reperii.'* The *HB* pointedly informs its readers that a Life of St Germanus exists, precisely what Alfred does in the *Historia*. No other of Alfred's sources report that a biography of St Germanus exists, and therefore it looks possible that Alfred learned of the biography of St Germanus in the *HB*. As has been seen with St Martin, to expand and improve his account he has provided additional detail; here providing the name of St Germanus's fifth-century biographer, Constantius.[341] In doing so, Alfred gives another example of his manner of reading and using his source texts.

Version of the *HB* known or used

The presence of the eight *mirabilia* from the *HB* and the descriptions of St Martin and St Germanus, informed, it appears, by readings taken from *HB,* are grounds to believe that the *HB* was an important source for Alfred in the *Historia*. But is there evidence for which of the many versions of the *HB* he might have used? Alfred's borrowings provisionally suggest that he may have used a Harleian related version of the text as this contains all three items which Alfred borrowed: the *mirabilia*, the reference to St Martin's conversation with Maximus and the reference to the biography of St Germanus. Unlike Henry of Huntingdon in the *HA*, there is no suggestion in the *Historia* that Alfred associates Gildas (or Nennius) with the work. [342] This suggests that Alfred's was an anonymous text; a further argument in favour of his use of a Harleian related version, which was an anonymous text.

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[341] The reference to the book of St Germanus in the *HB* may have been to the versified life of St Germanus by Heiric of Auxerre (c.876) rather than to Constantius's *Life*. See *Nenii Historia Britonum,* ed. J.Stevenson (London, 1838)*,* pp. xiii –xv for brief discussion of Heiric's Life, dedicated to the emperor Charles the Bald.

[342] Diana Greenway discusses Henry of Huntingdon's association of Gildas with the *HB* in *HA* pp. xc-xci.

Although the version of the work used by Alfred may have been anonymous, a question of interest is why did Alfred's fail to refer to such an ancient text in the *Historia?* William of Malmesbury, for example, uses the *HB* in the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and acknowledges it by saying, '*ut in gestis Brittonum legitur.*'[343] Henry of Huntingdon, when describing King Arthur's battles, refers to the *HB* as '*the writing of the ancients, scriptis veterum*' [344] or '*quidam historiographus, one historian.*'[345]

Alfred's custom in the *Historia* is to name antique authorities, but not contemporary ones, Geoffrey of Monmouth apart, and he surely appreciated the antiquity of the *HB,* as did Henry of Huntingdon.[346] Why therefore does Alfred not similarly acknowledge the *HB?* Might this reflect some misgivings about British-related material and sources? In his abridgement of the *HRB* it has been observed that Alfred omits British-related material; for example geographic detail supplied by Geoffrey which might usefully have been retained such as the names of castles, rivers and mountains. Alfred omits the name and location of Vortigern's castle of Genoriu in Hergign where Vortigern had taken refuge when fleeing from Aurelius Ambrosius (*HAB* 5.1487). He fails to mention the location of Vortigern's Tower at mount Snowdon (*HAB* 5. 1446-49). In the final battle of Arthur and Modred, Alfred omits its location by the river Camblan (*HAB* 5. 1962-64). These are all details which Alfred might have retained to add colour to his account. Here, when reproducing the *mirabilia* of the *HB*, both Arthurian marvels are overlooked: the mound of stones in *Carn Cafal* with the footprint of Arthur's hound impressed on the top stone (*HB* § 73) and the tomb at *Llygad Amr* where Arthur's son was supposedly buried (*HB* § 73). The omission of these two *mirabilia* might be coincidence, but it is consistent with Alfred's general questioning reception of the Arthurian material previously noted in the *Historia.*

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[343] *GRA* I. I. 4. p.20. Comment on William's usage of the *HB* is given in *GRA* II, pp. 465-66.

[344] *HA* I.10, p. 26.

[345] *HA* II.18, p.100.

[346] Alfred names, for example: Bede, Gildas, Pompeius Trogus, Suetonius, Eutropius, Solinus, Orosius, Aethicus Ister. Geoffrey of Monmouth is named *Britannicus.* Not named are Henry of Huntingdon, John of Worcester, Symeon of Durham, but are alluded to in the prologue and Hegesippus is quoted without acknowledgement.

Gildas and the *Historia Brittonum* in the *Historia*. Summary and conclusions.

Whilst Alfred names Gildas seven times in the *Historia* he shows no direct knowledge of the *DEB* in the text. Five of his citations are reproduced from the *HRB* and all these five are Galfridian 'inventions' of material not found in the *DEB.* Had Alfred independent access to the *DEB*, given his practice of colLating Geoffrey's material against historical authorities whenever possible, he surely would have noted the inconsistencies? The other references to Gildas appear to have been taken from Bede and Henry of Huntingdon. Alfred does, however, show direct knowledge of the *HB*. In his prefatory descriptive survey of Britain (discussed in chapter five), Alfred reproduces eight of the *mirabilia* from the fourteen which are contained in versions of the *HB*. By the manner in which information on St Martin and St Germanus in the *HB* has been developed and expanded in the *Historia* Alfred indicates that these *mirabilia* were taken from a full version of the *HB*, and not from an independently circuLating book of the *mirabilia.* The version of the *HB* to which Alfred had access appears likely to have been the 'Harleian.' This version of the *HB* contains the list of Britain's *mirabilia*, the biography of St Germanus with its reference to another book of St Germanus and to St Martin's conversation with the emperor Maximus and was an anonymous text. As Alfred does not associate Gildas with the *HB* this suggests his text of the *HB* may have been one which carried no authorial name rather than the 'Gildesian' version of the text which circulated in the twelfth-century. An issue raised by Alfred's use of the *HB* in the *Historia* is his failure to acknowledge it as a historical source, as did chroniclers such as Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury. Alfred's custom in the *Historia* is to acknowledge ancient sources, but not contemporary ones, and his failure to acknowledge this ancient source is noteworthy. A question which this raises is a possible degree of mistrust on Alfred's part of British-related sources. It was noted that his abbreviation of the *HRB* provided examples of this, and his failure to incude the two 'Arthurian' related *mirabilia* from the *HB*'s list of mirabilia also hints at a degree of mistrust also.`

4.6. Narrative story-telling from unattested sources.

Introduction

On two occasions in the *Historia* Alfred introduces story-telling narrative from an unattested source. The first involves an elaborated version of the story of the death of Earl Godwine in 1053; a story also found the *HA* of Henry of Huntingdon and the *Historia Regum* (*HR*), two of Alfred's main sources. The second is an account of a miraculous intervention of St John of Beverley, protecting Beverley sanctuary-seekers from soldiers of William I, during the Harrying of the North in 1069-70. Alfred's version of the first of these stories, the death of Earl Godwine, has gone unnoticed in historical scholarship. [347] The second narrative provides an interesting example of medieval 'intertextuality': where a text Alfred was quarrying provoked Alfred into disrupting his narrative routine and to the creation of new narrative in the *Historia*.

1. The death of Earl Godwine.

The story of the death of Earl Godwine has an extensive literature which extends from the middle of the eleventh century- it is reported in versions C, D, and E of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (*ASC*) - to Ailred of Rievaulx's *Vita Ædwardi*, written in c.1162-3. Amongst Latin chroniclers of the first half of the twelfth century the story is reported by William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, John of Worcester, Symeon of Durham and Alfred of Beverley. After 1150, in addition to Ailred's *Vita Ædwardi*, an extensive variant version of the story is found in the *Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle*, dating from c.1157. [348] In Anglo- French literature, the story is found in both Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* and Wace's *Roman de Rou*. The death of Godwine is therefore reported in a very wide cross section of twelfth-century historical literature; Latin and vernacular, secular and monastic. That the story grew

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[347] The elaboration of the story of Earl Godwine's death is discussed by C.E.Wright, *The Cultivation of Saga in Anglo-Saxon England* (Edinburgh, 1939), pp. 233-236 and 296-8. Alfred's version of the story is unknown.

[348] *The Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth M.C.van Houts and Rosalind C.Love (Oxford, 2013), pp. xix-xx.

more elaborate the further removed it became from the actual event of 1053 can be seen from Fig. 27 below, where summaries of four of the twelfth – century accounts, including Alfred's, are set out.

Alfred's account *(HAB* 8. 3283-92) is in part based on the *Historia Regum* (§ 140) which is itself a reproduction of John of Worcester's account. John's choice of words to describe Godwine's death, '…*Wintoniam Godwino Comite solito regi ad mensam assidenti suprema evenit calamitas'*, therefore finds its way into the *Historia* through Alfred's dependence on the *HR*. The Worcester account of Earl Godwine's death in turn closely follows that of ASC C, the fullest of the three ASC versions. This version reports how Earl Godwine collapsed whilst dining with King Edward on Easter Monday at Winchester, accompanied by his sons Tostig and Harold. After his collapse the earl was taken to the king's chamber to recover but he remained speechless and powerless until his death the following Thursday (15 April) and was buried in the old Minster. To this, John of Worcester adds that Godwin's third son, Girth was also present and that his three sons carried Godwin to the king's chamber in the hope that he would recover.

Alfred's version provides these details but then elaborates, introduced by the words '*Quidam dicunt'*, *'Some say.'* Alfred is careful to let his readers know that he is now reporting hearsay, indicating an oral tradition of the story, the first part of the account having been transmitted textually. In this hearsay version, during the course of the meal the conversation had turned to the king's dead brother Alfred, at which point the king became sad. Seeing this, Earl Godwine attempted to exculpate himself from any part in Alfred's death, offering to prove his innocence by ordeal- by- bread (*cornsæd)*:

> 'Quidam dicunt quod cum mensa sederent, et de fratre regis Aluredo sermo incidisset, et ideo rex subtristior esset, Godwinus ait: 'Scio' inquit 'Domine rex, quod mors eius mihi imputatur. Sed ita possim hunc morsum cum salute traicere, sicut ego sum innocens a sanguine ejus.' Quod cum rex annuisset, ille assumpta buccella, in degluciendo strangulatus est'

> *HAB* 8. 3286-92

> 'Some people say that while they were sitting at the table, and when the conversation turned to Alfred, the king's brother, and for that reason the king becoming sad, Godwine said, ' I know', he said, 'my Lord king that his death has been blamed on me. But if thus I am able to safely swallow this mouthful, then by his blood I am an innocent man. ' When the king had assented to this, Godwine picked up a small piece of bread, and whilst swallowing it, was choked .'

The story of Godwine's death from his ordeal- by- bread is found in Henry of Huntingdon (*HA* vi. 23), a source with which Alfred was familiar. But Alfred's version of the story bears little resemblance to Henry's. In Henry's account the meal takes place in Windsor, not Winchester. Godwine is described as *proditor* traitor and *gener* father-in-law of Edward; details not found in the *Historia*. The discussion between Godwine and King Edward concerns Godwine's disloyalty to the king, not Godwine's responsibility for Alfred's death. Godwine's offer to Edward of ordeal by bread is described differently by Henry. In Henry's account it is, 'let God not let this bread pass my throat if I ever thought of betraying you.' In Alfred's there is no appeal to God as judge and the offer is put positively: 'If I am able to safely swallow this morsel then I am innocent.'

William of Malmesbury (*GRA* ii. 197) supplies a version of the story similar in its 'oral' elements to Alfred's. In William's account it is when the conversation turns to Alfred and the king becomes sad that Godwine to offer to prove his innocence by ordeal by bread and thus chokes to death. William's account however is otherwise much generalised. The event contains lacks the 'textual' details of Alfred's account: date, location, presence of earl's sons, Tostig and Gyrth, removal of Earl Godwine to the king's chamber to recover, his living until Thursday.

Alfred's opening words '*quidam dicunt'* suggest he is reporting a story in common circulation. A northern tradition of the story is also attested by Ailred's *Vita Ædwardi* extensive variant version of the story.

Fig. 27. Twelfth–century evolution of the story of Earl Godwine's death.

William of Malmesbury *GRA* I. II.197 c.1125	Alfred of Beverley *HAB* 8.3283-92 c.1148-51	Ailred of Rievaulx *Vita Ædwardi* *PL* 195, col 767 c. 1162-3	Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle 5. p.12 c. late 1150s
Nam cum post piraticas rapinas, unde dicemus inferius, priori gratiae redditus esset, et in convivio cum rege discumberet, orto sermone de Elfredo regis frater, 'Tu,' inquit,'rex, ad omnem memoriam germani rugato me vultu video quod aspitias; sed non patiatur Deus ut istam offam transglutiam, si fui conscius alicuius rei quae spectaret ad eius periculum vel tuum incommodum.' Hoc dicto, offa quam in os miserat suffocatus, oculos ad mortem invertit. Inde ab ipso filio Haroldo, qui regi astabat, sub mensa extractus, in episcopatu Wintoniae sepultus est.	Nec multo post secunda feria Paschae apud Wintoniam Godwino comite solito regi ad mensam assidenti suprema evenit calamitas. Gravi etenim morbo ex inproviso percussus mutus in ipsa sede declinavit. Quod filii ejus comes Haroldus, Tosti, Girth videntes illum in regis cameram asportaverunt, et feria v^ta. vita decessit, et in veteri monasterio sepultus est. Quidam dicunt quod cum mensa sederent, et de fratre regis Aluredo sermo incidisset, et ideo rex subtristior esset, Godwinus ait: 'Scio inquit 'Domine rex, quod mors eius mibi imputatur. Sed ita possim hunc morsum cum salute traicere, sicut ego sum innocens a sanguine ejus.' Quod cum rex annuisset, ille assumpta buccella, in degluciendo stragulatus est.	Ad hanc vocem Godwinus expavit, et tristem admodum praeferens vultum; 'scio, ait, o rex, scio, adhuc de mortis tui tuus me accusat animus, nec adhuc eis aestimas discredendum, qui me vel ejus, vel tuum vocant proditorem; sed secretorum omnium conscius Deus judicet, et sic bucellam hanc quam manu tenco guttur meum faciat pertransire et me servet illaesum, sicut nec tuae proditionis reus, nec de fratris tui nece mihi conscius existo. Dixerat, et buccellam inferens ori, usque in gutturis medium protraxit. Tentat interius trahere, nec valuit; tentat emittere, sed haesit firmius. Mox meatus quibus ducebatur spiritus occluduntur, evertuntur oculi, brachia rigescunt. Intuetur rex infeliciter morientem, et ultionem sentiens in eum processisse divinam, astantes alloquitur: ' Extrahite, inquiens, canem istum' Occurrunt filii, protractumque de sub mensa thalamis inferunt, ubi post modicum debitum proditori sortitus est finem.	Denique quodam sancto die Pasche dum cum eodem rege in ecclesia apud Lundoniam divinis misteriis audiendis astaret, nullo cogente, sed ipso rege um principibus vehementer admirante, audacter ad altare accessit, calicemque ipsum in quo celestia consecrata fuerant misteria manibus arripuit, cunctisque audientibus inaudito se iuramento constrincsit quod in nece Aluredi germani regis particeps minime exstitit. Quid plura ? Ventum est ad prandium ubi cum iuxta regem assideret, bucellam manu arripuit, conversusque ad regem ait: Domine mi Rex, hec bucella hodie vite mihi fiat interitus si in nece fratris tui auctor vel conscius.' Hec dicens bucellam ori inpositam urgente eum divino iudicio nec glutire potuit nec revertere, sed in amenciam versus terribiliter cepit exspirare. Quod videns Haroldus filius suus, qui servitoris officio regi astabat, desub mensa inclinans se per crura patrem a latere regis extraxit, et iam extremum spiritum trahentem foras asportavit.
When the pirate- raids, of which I will speak below, were over, and when he had resumed his former position in the king's favour, he was sitting with the king at dinner, and the conversation turned on the king's brother Alfred. 'I notice, your majesty,' he said, 'that at every mention of your brother, you look at me with a frown on your brow: may God not permit me to swallow this mouthful, if I was ever aware of having done anything designed to endanger him or hurt you.' With these words, he was choked by the food he had just put into his mouth, and turned up his eyes in death. Then his son Harold, who was standing by the king, pulled him with his own hands from beneath the table, and he was buried in Winchester cathedral.[349]	Not much later than Easter Monday, in Winchester, the ultimate calamity befell Earl Godwine as he sat in his usual place at the king's table. Struck down by a sudden and unexpected illness he collapsed speechless into his chair. His sons earl Harold, Tosti and Gyrth seeing this, carried him into the king's chamber. The following Thursday he died and was buried in the Old Minster. Some say that while they were sitting at the table, and when the conversation turned to Alfred, the king's brother, and for that reason the king becoming very sad, Godwine said ' I know' he said 'my Lord king, that his death has been blamed on me. But I were capable of that, let this piece of bread pass safely, just so I am innocent of his blood' . When he declared this he picked up a small piece of bread, and whilst swallowing it, was choked/ strangled	Godwine was afraid when he heard this and showed a sad enough face. 'I know, I know that you still accuse me of your brother's death, and you do not yet disbelieve those who call me a traitor to him and to you; but God knows all secrets and will judge. Let him make this morsel which I hold in my hand pass down my throat and leave me unharmed if I am innocent, responsible for neither betraying you, nor for your brother's murder.' He said this, placed the morsel in his mouth and swallowed it halfway down his throat. He tried to swallow it further but was unable; he tried to reject it but it stuck firm. Soon the passage of his lungs was blocked, his eyes turned up, his limbs stiffened. The king watched him die in misery and realizing that divine judgement had come upon him, called to the bystanders: 'Take this dog out', he said. Godwine's sons ran in, removed him from under the table and brought him to a bedroom, where soon after he made an end fitting for such a traitor.[350]	Then, one Easter Day, while he was attending Mass with the king in a church in London, without any prompting, but to the great amazement of the king himself and the magnates, he boldly went up to the altar, seized with both hands the chalice in which the heavenly mysteries had been consecrated and, with everyone listening, he committed himself with an unheard-of oath, that he had not in the least been involved in the killing of Alfred, the king's brother. What more need be said? They came to the meal, where, as he was sitting beside the king, he picked up a morsel of bread in his hand and, turning to the king, said: 'My lord king, may this morsel be the death of me today, if I was the initiator of your brother's murder or if I had known of it.' As he was saying these words, having put the piece of bread in his mouth, with divine judgement bearing down upon him, he could neither swallow it or spit it out, and driven to the point of madness, he began to choke in a quite terrible way. Seeing this, his son Harold, who was present in the office of royal steward, bent under the table and pulled his father's legs from the king's side and carried him, now drawing his last breath, outside.[351]

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[349] Translation supplied by *GRA* I. II. 197, p. 355.

[350] Translation supplied by Fr. Jermome Betram, *The Life of Saint Edward, King and Confessor, by Blessed Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx* (St Austin Press, 1997), pp.74-75.

[351] Translation supplied by Van Houts and Love, eds., *Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle*, p.13.

St.John of Beverley and William I, 1069-70.

Alfred's is the earliest known version of the story of St John of Beverley's miraculous intervention, protecting Beverley sanctuary-seekers during William I's Harrying of the North; his campaign suppressing the northern rebellion of winter 1069-70. It was noted in chapter one that an extended version of this story is found in a St John of Beverley's miracle-story collection contained in a late twelfth-century manuscript from Holm Cultram Abbey, recently described as 'the ultimate border abbey.' [352]

Of greatest interest in this miracle story is less its content and more the manner in which the narrative passage arises in the *Historia.* The passage digresses and interrupts the steady pattern of Alfred's narrative and arises as follows. Alfred is reLating the events of the years 1069 and 1070, relying exclusively on the *Historia Regum* (*HR)* as his source. The compiler of the *HR* is at this point painting a graphic picture of the ravages and destruction of William's northern campaign. A nine year period of 'solitude' in the region between York and Durham is described. Because the land was rendered uncultivable by the Normans, starvation had resulted and people resorted to eating cats, dogs and human flesh. The dead remained unburied, left to rot on the roadside (*HR* §§ 153-4). Alfred omits many of the more graphic of these details but captures briefly the essence of the dramatic results of William's campaign (*HAB* 9. 3511-26). However just at the point where the *HR* compiler describes how bishop Agelwyn of Durham and his community flee from William's forces taking with them the body St Cuthbert, embarking on a perilous odyssey for their safety and that of their saint, Alfred abandons his abbreviation of the *HR*. As related in the *HR*, the Durham community journey with their saint first to Jarrow, then Bedlington, then Tughall and finally reach the sanctuary of Holy Island with the aid of a miraculous intervention of St Cuthbert.

[352] Emilia Jamroziak, 'Holm Cultram Abbey: a story of success?' *Northern History*, xlv, I (2008), pp.27-36. Holm Cultram was founded in 1150 by Prince Henry, son of King David I of Scotland and was a daughter house of Melrose out of Rievaulx.

Alfred omits this narrative, switching scene from the north-east to the East Riding and relates the story of the miracle of St John of Beverley.
But although the *HR* account has been put to one side, its underlying sense has been maintained. The account of the odyssey of the Cuthbertine community captures the depth of the bond between the Durham community and their patron saint and the power of that saint to reciprocate and to provide them protection and this is what Alfred describes with his surrogate story of St John of Beverley. It is the single instance in the *Historia* of Beverley and its community entering the narrative. Alfred has been provoked into an expression of pride in his patron saint and community by his reaction to another text.

The story Alfred relates describes St John punishing Thurstan, a soldier of King William, for attempting to rob an elderly sanctuary-seeker and preventing him from entering the safety of the church, thus vioLating the sanctuary of Beverley. The real moral of the story is that even great kings such as William have to respect the power of great saints. The story lays claim, on Alfred's authority, to William having confirmed ancient royal privileges of Beverley and having granted new ones when he has witnessed the power of St John: [353]

> 'Nec vero solum in Nordhimbria, sed eciam per totam Austridmd regis ulcio desaevit. Nam ab homine usque ad pecus periit, quicumque repertus est ab Eboraco usque ad mare orientale, praeter illos qui ad ecclesiam gloriosi Confessoris beatissimi Johannis archiepiscopi Beverlacum quasi ad unicum asilum confugerant. Cum autem in exercitu regis qui a Beverlaco fere VII. miliariis tentoria fixerant, divulgatum esset, omnem illius regionis populum ad pacem Sancti venisse, et omnia preciosa sua secum detulisse, quidam milites rapinis assueti Beverlacum armati pecierunt. Ingressique villam cum neminem resistentem invenirent, ad septa cimiterii, quo territa tocius populi multitudo confluxerat, ausu temerario progrediuntur. Quorum primicernus Turctinus cum vidisset quendam veteranum preciosius indutum, auream in

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[353] *RRAN. The Acta of William I (1066-1087)*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998). Charters nos 31, 32 are of William I in favour of the church of St John of Beverley, confirming rights given in the time of Edward the Confessor. William's charters date from the period 1066-69, probably before the death in 1069 of Archbishop Ealdred.

brachio armillam ferentem, prosperancius ad ecclesiam tendentem, extracto quo erat praecintus gladio, per medium plebis attonitae super emissarium furiens senem insequitur. Sed quod eum extra ecclesiam comprehendere non potuit, non dedit honorem Deo, sed infra valvas ecclesiae jam pene fugiendo extinctum insequitur, cum ecce equus in quo sederat fracto collo corruit, et ipse facie jam deformi post tergum versa manibus pedibusque retortis velut monstrum informe omnium in se mirancium ora convertit. Stupefacti et exterriti socii ejus, projectis armis et deposita ferocitate ad impetrandam Sancti Johannis misericordiam convertuntur. Deinde revertentes ad regem, omnia ei ex ordine pandunt. Qui audita virtute gloriosi confessoris, verensque similem ulcionem de ceteris accersitis ad se majoribus ecclesiae, quaecunque priorum regum vel principum libertate eidem ecclesiae fuerat collata, regia auctoritate et sigilli sui munimine confirmavit. Et ne ipse praedecessorum suorum munificensiis esset impar, praefatam ecclesiam preciosis donis decoravit et possessionibus ampliavit, et ne exercitus sui vicinitate pax ecclesiae ab eo firmata dissolveretur, sonantibus per exercitum classicis statim a loco recessit, et valde procul inde tentoria figi praecepit.'

HAB 9. 3526-99

'Nor was it only in Northumbria but indeed throughout the entire East Riding that the vengeance of the king raged. For whatever was found between the Eastern sea and York, from man to beast, died, except those who had taken refuge at the church of the glorious Confessor, the most Blessed John the archbishop, at Beverley, almost the only sanctuary. When it became known to the army of the king, camped scarcely seven miles from Beverley, that all the population of that region had come to the peace of the saint and had brought with them all their valuables, certain soldiers, habituated to robbery, made armed for Beverley. Since they found no resistance they entered the town and made their way with reckless daring to the enclosure of the churchyard where all the terrified multitude had gathered. Their leader, Thurstan, when he saw an old man expensively clothed and wearing a gold bracelet on his arm hurrying to the church in safety, unsheathed the sword with which he was girded and chased the old man, as a thief, on his stallion through the middle of astonished people. But because he was not able to detain him outside the church, he did not give honour to God, pursuing the doomed person by now almost escaping through the church doors. But behold, the horse on which he

was seated collapsed, its neck broken, and he himself with his face now misshapen, twisted behind his back, and his hands and feet bent back, just like an ugly monster, whilst everyone's expression turned to amazement at him. Stupified and terrified, his friends threw down their arms. Their fierceness abandoned, they were converted to beseeching the mercy of St John. Then returning to the king, they related everything to him as it had happened. When the king heard about the virtue of the glorious confessor, fearing similar retribution for the others he summoned to him the leaders of the church, and whatever had been obtained from earlier kings and princes concerning the liberty and sanctuary of that church he confirmed by royal authority and with his seal. And so that he himself would not be unequal to his predecessors in generosity, he adorned the aforementioned church with valuable gifts, and extended her possessions; and so that the peace of the church signed by him was not destroyed by his neighbouring army, with the sounding of the trumpets through the army, it withdrew immediately from that place, and he ordered camp to be pitched a great distance away'

Chapter 5. Alfred's prefatory 'Description of Britain.'

Introduction

At the conclusion of the *Historia's* prologue, in which Alfred explained the circumstances and purpose of the *Historia*, Alfred inaugurates his historical narrative with a geo-historical survey of Britain. This excursus of over fifteen hundred words (*HAB* I. 80 - 257) provides further evidence of Henry of Huntingdon's important influence on the *Historia.* Henry had opened his history with a similar lengthy descriptive survey of Britain and in his opening survey, Alfred borrows freely from it. Henry's survey had itself been greatly influenced by Bede's opening chapter in the *HE* and therefore, in character and content, Alfred's survey is substantially derivative. Nevertheless, Alfred's description of Britain was later to enjoy widespread and lasting historiographical influence. The fourteenth-century chronicler Ranulf Higden quoted Alfred frequently as an authority on the historical geography of Britain in his influential *Polychronicon* (c.1327-c.1350). One of William Caxton's earliest and most popular printed books in English, the *Descripcion of Brytayne* (August 1480, Plate 7), reproduced largely from John Trevisa's 1387 English translation of the *Polychronicon*, was to quote Alfred frequently as an authority for geographic descriptive material. Caxton's *Descripcion* helped to transmit Alfred's history to Tudor and Elizabethan chroniclers and topographers such as Robert Fabyan (d.1513), William Harrison (d.1593), John Stow (d.1605) and William Camden (d.1623). Their interest in the *Historia* is examined in chapter seven of this study.

Whilst derivative, Alfred's survey contains elements of originality and interest and draws on new sources for geographic descriptive material. The aims of this chapter therefore are to explore the most important features of Alfred's description of Britain, identify the sources drawn on and examine how these sources are used. Alfred's motives for opening the *Historia* and its role within the *Historia will* be considered. To provide a historiographical context for the survey, the chapter begins with a summary survey of the practice of opening Christian historical compilations with introductory geo-historical surveys and of geo-historical descriptive writing in twelfth-century Anglo-Norman historical

literature. It then identifies the main elements of Alfred's survey, as also the Insular tradition from which Alfred borrowed. Specific issues which will be discussed in the chapter are Alfred's 'accretive' approach in compiling the survey, his explanation for undertaking the survey, his use of Hegesippus as a source, the description of the five peoples of Britain and the evidence this provides for Alfred's geographic perspective, Alfred's comments on the Flemings as a nascent sixth 'people' of Britain, the description of the four royal highways of Britain and its shires and dioceses.

The introductory geo-historical survey in historical writing.

Orosius's *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem* (hereafter *HAP*) written c. 417 as a compendium to Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* (c. 413-25) established the convention in Christian historiography of opening historical narratives with geographical and chorographical surveys.[354] The *HAP* opens with a description of the world, surrounded by an ocean periphery and divided into three continents, Africa, Asia and Europe, which Orosius suggested rather might be seen as a bipartite division, Europe arguably being joined with Africa; a view which endured throughout the Middle Ages. Orosius's work became virtual canon for the narrators of the history of the post Roman kingdoms of the West for geographic narrative. Jordanes writing his *De Origine Actibusque Getarum* (*Getica*) in Constantinople in the mid sixth century provided an introductory survey of the migratory routes of the Goths from the frozen Scandinavian north to the civilized Mediterranean which established a Gothic foundation myth. Isidore of Seville in the early seventh century included an account of the Iberian penisula as a preface to the longer recension of his *Historia Gothorum, Wandalorum, Sueborum* and Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum* (c. 780) contains a geographic excursus at its beginning. In the sixth century (c.540) Gildas, after his prologue, opens the *De Excidio Britanniae* (hereafter *DEB*) with a short but cleverly constructed

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[354] See A.H.Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2005), pp.1-4, 35-39. In classical historical writing, geographic descriptions are found in Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum,* Julius Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* and Appian's *Historia Romana.*

topographical survey of Britain which much influenced Bede's much longer opening geographic survey in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (c.731). The ninth century *HB* opens in similar vein, with a description of the size and location of Britain, its cities, islands, rivers and forts before telling of its peoples and from where they originated.

Geo–historical descriptive writing in twelfth-century England.

By the time Alfred compiled the *Historia* in the middle of the twelfth century historical writing with a strong topographical interest was widespread in England. Indeed, Antonia Gransden remarked that 'until the literary developments of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the twelfth century was pre-eminent for descriptive writing' with a focus on 'realistic observation.'[355] Such descriptive writing might merit the term literary *genre*, as it encompassed a wide variety of literary executions including historical chronicle, Latin and vernacular poetry, biography, local history, monastic and cathedral surveys and description of journeys and itineraries. In the first half of the twelfth century in addition to Henry of Huntingdon, a geo-historical survey inaugurates the *HRB* of Geoffrey of Monmouth and is inserted into Robert of Torigni's *Chronicle* at the year 1100; where Robert continues the chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux. In Latin verse, a class of Latin rhetorical poetry with strong chorographical interest - *De Laudibus Urbium*- was popular on the continent amongst the Loire poets and in England, Henry of Huntingdon, through his Angevin teacher Albinus of Angers, was a prominent exponent.[356] Henry includes such a poem in praise of Britain and its towns in the introductory geo-historical survey of the *HA*. Two extracts of his poem survive, taken up with praise of some sixteen of England's cities. In vernacular literature, the Anglo-Norman *Description of England,* a two hundred and sixty line poem in octosyllabic couplets, composed soon after c.1139 and before

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[355] Antonia Gransden, 'Realistic Observation in Twelfth-Century England' in *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England*' (London, 1992), p.176.
[356] *HA* p.cix. Henry's poem is found in *HA*, I. 6, p.20.

1200, maps out the historical landscape of England from the viewpoint of one of the 'Franceis.' [357]

In biography and local history, descriptive writing flourished. Shortly after the death of Thomas Becket in 1170, William fitzStephen (d.1191) wrote a biography of the archbishop, the *Vita Sancti Thomae* which he prefaced with a lengthy laudatory description of London, the *Descriptio Nobilissimae Civitatis Londoniae.* [358] In addition to explaining with pride the origins and antiquity of London – for example William states that Brutus founded London before Romulus and Remus founded Rome - William provides a descriptive survey of great detail. He describes London's eight gates and its fortified walls and towers, the river Thames teeming with fish, the fertile pastures and woodlands abounding with wildlife which surround it and he remarks on the city's wells and clear water supplies. He describes the churches and schools of the city. A similar *laus urbium* is provided for the city of Chester in c.1195, by Lucian, monk of the Benedictine abbey of St Werburgh in Chester, whose *Liber Luciani de Laude Cestrie*, marries homily to chorographical observation. [359]

Praise of cities, regions and topographical description of Britain characterise the two main historical compilations of Ralph Diceto, deacon of St Paul's London, dating from the 1180s. [360] The *Abbreviationes Chronicorum* is a compilation of extracts from the writings of the authorities – Ralph provides a list of forty-seven authorities used, referred to as *de viris illustribus quo tempore scripserint* – of which only Gildas and Bede were Insular- to provide a form of encyclopaedia of knowledge, both historical and geographical,

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[357] Leslie Johnson, 'The Anglo-Norman Description of England: An Introduction' in *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays* ed. I. Short*, Anglo-Norman Text Society, Occasional Publications*, Series 2 (London, 1993), pp.11-30 at p.12. This article provides an excellent survey of geo-historical writing in twelfth-century England but does not note Alfred's survey.
[358] *Materials For The History of St Thomas Becket*, ed. J.C.Robertson and J.B.Sheppard, RS 7 vols (London, 1875-85), III, pp.1-13.
[359] *Liber Luciani de Laude Cestrie*, ed. M.V.Taylor, *Lancashire and Cheshire Record Series*, 64 (1912).
[360] Ralph Diceto's historical writing is discussed in Gransden, *HWE* I, pp. 230-36 and 'Realistic Observation', pp.193-4.

covering the period from the creation down to 1148. The *Ymagines Historiarum* covers the period 1148 – 1200. To 1171-1183 it draws from Robert of Torigni's chronicle, but from that point contains original material mainly related to St Pauls.[361] The *Abbreviationes* begins with a geographical survey of the provinces and cities of the world, provides an account of Ireland and its early inhabitants, a *Commendatio Britanniae* and then an account of the wonders of Britain. In the *Ymagines*, Ralph provides a *Laus* of the city of Angers - a miniature version of the tracts of Lucian of Chester and William fitz Stephen - and also a topographical survey of Aquitaine.

Two further examples of descriptive writing blending historical enquiry with topographical observation are the monastic survey and the descriptive itinerary. Examples of these are William of Malmesbury's *Historia Pontificum* (c.1125) described by Antonia Gransden as virtually a 'gazetteer of ecclesiastical England'[362] and from the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Gervase of Canterbury's mappa *mundi*. This work surveyed over four hundred and thirty eight monasteries of England, providing a detailed threefold classification of the monastic universe in England. The survey classified monasteries by ecclesiastical dignity (archiepiscopal, episcopal, abbatial or prioral), by location, patron saint and by religious order. The *mappa mundi*, so described although not a map in the cartographic sense, begins with a prefatory geo-historical description of England similar to that of Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey and Robert of Torigni. [363] Finally, with of Gerald of Wales, the fusion of historical and chorographical descriptive writing reached perhaps its most celebrated point in the twelfth century. The *Topographia* and *Expugnatio Hibernica were* written c.1187 and the *Descriptio* and *Itinerarium Kambriae,* were written soon after Gerald returned

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[361] Gransden, *HWE* I, p. 232.
[362] Gransden, 'Realistic Observation', p. 180.
[363] The *Mappa Mundi* is printed in *Gervase Historical Works*, II, pp. 414 and is discussed in D. Knowles, 'The Mappa Mundi of Gervase of Canterbury', *Downside Review*, 48 (1930), pp. 237-247.

from his tour of Wales with Archbishop Baldwin in order to preach the crusade in 1188.[364]

Alfred's description of Britain

Alfred's introductory survey of Britain describes Britain's geographical position and size, its natural resources and climate, its rivers, islands and cities, its marvels and wonders. In describing the origins of the peoples who inhabit the island and the threefold naming of the island over the course of its history; from its original name of Albion, then Britain and finally Anglia, it also provides a summary account and verbal map of the island's cultural and historical identity. The survey is comprised of some eighteen descriptive elements, many of which are reproduced from earlier prefatory descriptive surveys but Alfred also adds new material and adopts new approaches. The main components of Alfred's descriptive survey with their sources are set out in Fig. 28 below. Items marked in heavy type represent new sources introduced by Alfred or points of particular interest to be discussed:

Fig. 28. Alfred's prefatory geo-historical survey. Descriptive elements and their sources.

	Descriptive element	Source
1	*Britain as 'alter orbis' ended by the Roman Conquest*	*Hegesippus (Jewish War)*
2	*Justification for the opening geo-historical survey*	Alfred
3	Britain's oceanic island position	Orosius / Bede/ *Aethicus Ister (Cosmography)*
4	Its size and measurement	Bede / H.Huntingdon
5	Its original name of Albion	Bede / H.Huntingdon
6	The three islands which it rules: Orkney, Man, Wight	H.Huntingdon
7	Its mineral resources: gold, silver, copper	*Aethicus Ister* / Bede/ H. Huntingdon
8	Its crops, trees and vineyards	Solinus / Bede / H.Huntingdon
9	Its birds, beasts and fruitful seas	Bede / H.Huntingdon

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[364] Gransden, *HWE* I, pp. 244-45.

10	**Its 12 marvels**	H. Huntingdon/ *Pseudo-Nennius HB*
11	Its principal rivers *marking the three political divisions*	G.Monmouth / H.Huntingdon
12	Its original peoples. First giants, then Britons	G. Monmouth
13	Its castles and 28 towns guarded by walls, towers and gates with locks predating the Romans	Bede / H.Huntingdon/ G.Monmouth
14	The names of the 28 ancient cities in the British tongue	H. Huntingdon
15	Account of the origins of the Scots, Picts and Saxons	Bede / H. Huntingdon
16	Account of 2 passages of dominion: from the Britons to Saxons, from the Saxons to the Normans	Bede / H. Huntingdon/ G.Monmouth
17	Account of the present 5 races/peoples of Britain: Picts in northern region, Scots in Albany, Britons in Wales, the English and Normans sharing the mainland	Alfred
18	*Account of nascent sixth race, the Flemings emerging in Britain*	Alfred

Alfred's accretive approach

In borrowing material from previous authority and then adding to it, Alfred adopts a similar 'accretive' approach to the earlier surveyors of Britain's historical geography. How material has been absorbed, reworked and added to by these writers is illustrated in Fig. 29 where the principal elements of the opening descriptive surveys of Gildas (*DEB*), Bede (*HE*), Pseudo-Nennius (*HB*), Henry of Huntingdon (*HA*), and Geoffrey of Monmouth (*HRB*) are set out in summary form. Items marked in italic type represent new material added by each later surveyor.

It can be seen from Fig. 29 that Bede's introductory survey absorbs all the elements of Gildas's survey - other than the description of Britain's two principal rivers, the Thames and the Severn - and then adds considerable detail. Bede describes the products of Britain: the whelks which produce a beautiful scarlet-coloured die which never fades but improves with age, the

vines and fowl, the mussels with the different-coloured pearls, the salt and hot springs and Britain's marine and freshwater fish, most of which are his own

Fig. 29. The prefatory geo-historical surveys of Britain in the Insular chronicles.

Gildas, *DEB* 6c	Bede, *HE* 8c	Nennius, *HB* 9c	Henry of Huntingdon, *HA* c.1129	Geoffrey of Monmouth, HRB c.1139
Britain lies virtually at the end of the world, towards the west and north-west.	*Briton once called Albion.*	*The 6 ages of the world.*	The topography of Britain. Its marine life; dolphins, whales, herring, mussels, oysters. Its springs and water, crops. Minerals, jet.	Britain best of islands.
It extends from South west to north poleand is 800 miles long 200 wide.	An island in the ocean. Lies to the n.west, *opposite Germany, Gaul, Spain.*	Name of Britain derives from its founder, *Brutus.*	The naming of the island. First Albion, then Britain, now England. It geographic location, size, closeness to Gaul and Normandy. The islands it controls, Orkneys, Isles of Wight & Man.	Lies in western ocean between France and Ireland. 800 miles long and 200 wide.
Surrounded by an impassable ring of sea except to the south to Belgic Gaul.	800 miles long, 200 wide except where promontories stretch out further. *Counting these, the coastline covers 4875 miles.*	800 miles long and 200 miles wide. It has 28 cities and innumerable stone forts.		Supplies all needs with boundless productivity.
It has 2 splendid rivers, the Thames and Severn along which luxuries from abroad arrive.	*To south lies Belgic Gaul. Crossing of 50 miles from Richborough to Boulogne.*	4 nations live on it. The Irish, the Scots, the Britons and the Saxons.	The list of 28 cities with their names in *British tongue taken from the Historia Brittonum.*	Rich in metals. Pastures and hills for agriculture. Rich soil for various crops.
Ornamented by 28 cities and a number of castles well-fortified by walls, towers, strong roofs.	*Behind Island lie the Orkney islands.* Island is rich in crops and trees. Good pasturage for cattle and beasts. *Has vines and fowl. Rivers abound with fish, particularly salmon and eel. Seals, dolphins and even whales are caught.*	*It has 3 large islands; Isle of Wight, Man and Orkney situated at the extreme edge of the world of Britain, beyond the Picts.*	*The 35 shires, 17 bishoprics, 3 bishoprics of Wales, 7 kingdoms of England named.*	All kinds of wild beasts in the forests. Grasses good for pasture rotation.
Decorated by wide plains and agreeably set hills excellent for vigorous agriculture and mountains suited to varying the pasture for animals.	*Shellfish- mussels with pearls of every colour. Abundance of whelks from which scarlet- coloured die is made which does not fade.*	*So the old saying runs ' He ruled Britain with its three islands*	*The five plagues or invasions as divine punishments – Romans, Picts and Scots, English, Danes, Normans. The Saxons, once they had dominion, created 7 kingdoms, and created 35 shires and bishoprics.*	Flowers which attract bees for honey. Green meadows below lofty mountains. Clear streams which murmur offering gentle sleep to those on their banks.
Flowers to delight.	*Land has salt springs and hot springs for bathing and rich veins of minerals; copper, iron lead and silver, jet which when burned drives away serpents.*	It has many rivers but two excel the Thames and the Severn.	Its two main rivers. *The dress and elegance of natives when travelling abroad. Its agreeable climate. Its variable hours of night and day days due to its northerly position.*	Watered by lakes and streams full of fish.
Clear fountains of water.	Island once famous for its 28 noble cities as well as forts guarded by walls and towers, gates and locks.	*The Trojan origin of Britain and the Brutus foundation account*	*The 4 main wonders of Britain including a description of Stonehenge's structure and design.*	*Three* noble rivers which receive goods from abroad Thames, *Humber* and Severn.
Pebbles white as snow, rivers which glide with gentle murmur guaranteeing sweet sleep for those who lie on their banks.	*As Britain lies near North Pole it has short nights in summer, and long in winter.*		*Its 4 main highways.*	Graced by 28 cities some deserted some still thriving containing holy churches with high towers full of Christian communities.
Lakes flowing over with a cold rush of living water.	*At the present time there are five languages, just as there are five books of divine law. English, British, Irish, Pictish and Latin languages, Latin in use by all.*		*The poem in praise of Britain.*	Inhabited by five peoples. Normans, Britons, Saxons, Picts and Scots.
	Originally all the inhabitants of the island were Britons who came from Armorica. The Picts came from Scythia first to Ireland and then settled in north, with wives given by the Irish. Then came Scots from Ireland and won land among the Picts by friendly treaty or by the sword, under their leader Reuda. The Irish settled north of the wide arm of the sea which runs into the land from the west and which originally separated the Irish from the Britons. Here to this day the Britons have a strongly fortified town, Alcluith (Dumbarton).		The 5 languages spoken. Britons, English, the Scots, Picts and the Latins. *Picts however now annihilated and their language destroyed* (contradicted by HH, HA I.9).	*Britons once owned it all till their pride got the better of them and they gave way to the Picts and the Saxons.*
	Description of Ireland.		The origins of the Britons and the account of the arrival of Brutus taken from the *Historia Brittonum.*	
			This is what the ancient writers have told us of the arrival of the Britons and Picts in the island. How Irish (Scotti) under Reuda have settled and taken over settlements in the Pictish areas. Called Dalreudini.	
			Description of Ireland. Ireland first inhabited in the fourth age of the world (Britain in third).Irish arrived from Spain. From Ireland they came to Britain to add a third race alongside the Picts and the Britons. Irish still in Spain still use the same language and are called Navarri.	

contributions. [365] Bede borrows extensively from classical and late antique authorities such as Pliny, Solinus, Orosius to create his influential survey and [366] Isidore of Seville was also a source. [367] This supplementary detail aided by his own personal observation, allows Bede to add detail and depth to Gildas' brief, but subtle, description of Britain. Henry of Huntingdon's opening survey similarly absorbs most of Bede's, but then develops it. In one example, he takes Bede's description of Britain's twenty-eight ancient cities, but uses another source, the *HB*, to provide details of the ancient names of the cities in the British tongue.

Two examples serve to illustrate Alfred's accretive approach. He borrows Henry of Huntingdon's list of the four wonders of Britain (*HAB* I 147-57) and then uses a further source, the *HB,* to expand the description. Henry's *mirabilia* consisted of the wind which emits with such force from the caves at the Peak that it drives back clothes thrown at it, the hanging stones which Henry had named Stonehenge, the endless underground cavern at Cheddar Gorge, the rain which rises up the mountainside and which falls on the plain. Alfred adds a further eight marvels (*HAB* I 157-91) taken from the *HB* (Fig.26). A second example is the introduction of a new source, the *Cosmography* of Aethicus Ister, to expand the description of Britain's mineral resources:

> 'Heticus phylosophus gentem Britannicam imperitissimam appellavit, horroris nimii, sectantem artes multas ex ingenio maximo. Terrarum metalla ibi inveniri narrat auri et argenti, et auricalci, et stagni magnitudinem ac ferri, multasque alias adinvenciones quae investigabiles sunt aliis gentibus.'

> *HAB* I. 132-139.

> 'The philosopher Aethicus called the British people most unskilled and coarseness abounded. They pursue many arts out of the greatest natural

[365] *HE*, p. 14, note 1.

[366] Merrills, *History and Geography*, pp. 249-254, provides a detailed analysis of Bede's introductory geographic survey and his principal sources.

[367] *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, Stephen A. Barney et al (Cambridge, 2006), XIV.VI. 2, p. 294. Isidore, drawing on Solinus, had noted that Britain had many great rivers, hot springs, a great abundance of metals and was rich in jet and pearls.

ability. He tells of the metals of the earth to be discovered there; of a great quantity of gold and silver, of mountain copper and tin and iron and many other deposits, not known to other peoples.'

This quotation is taken from the eighth-century *Cosmography* - a pseudonymous work purporting to be that of St Jerome transLating, editing and commenting on a book of a pagan Scythian philosopher, Aethicus. [368] The *Cosmography* was described by its recent editor as 'a farrago of science fiction, travel adventure, literary criticism and prophecy, with just a dash of historical detail and scientific investigation.' [369] The text appears to have been relatively scarce in twelfth century Britain. It was not used by Henry of Huntingdon and appears to have been unknown to William of Malmesbury.[370] It is a work listed in few surviving library catalogues from the period. It is found in a late twelfth-century catalogue from the Benedictine abbey of Bury St Edmunds and John Leland noted its presence (c.1536-40) at Colchester abbey and Worcester Cathedral priory; also Benedictine houses. [371] Other than Alfred, Ralf Diceto, in *Abbreviationes Chronicorum* (c.1180) cites and uses the *Cosmography* which he does to quote the story of how Alexander captured and imprisoned the two giants, Gog and Magog. [372] Alfred therefore appears to have been the first chronicler of the period to use the *Cosmography* as a source for geographical description and his usage raises the issue of where he might have consulted such a scarce text? It seems improbable that it would have been available to him at Beverley and this

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[368]*The Cosmography of Aethicus Ister. Edition, Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. M. W.Herren, *Publications of the Journal of Medieval Latin* 8 (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 24-26. Hearne's edition of the *Historia* has a number of textual variances to the text supplied in the recent edition of the *Cosmography*: these include *ex* for *et, auricalci* for *oricalco* the verb *narrat* is added in *Historia.*
[369] Herren, *Cosmography,* p.xi.
[370]*William of Malmesbur*y, R.M.Thomson (Woodbridge, 1987).The *Cosmography* is not listed in the 'Handlist of Works known to William at first hand', pp. 197- 207.
[371] *English Benedictine Libraries. The Shorter Catalogue*, ed. R.Sharpe et al, CBMLC (London, 1996). Bury St Edmunds, B13. 49, p.59. Colchester abbey, B22.3, p.108. Worcester cathedral priory, B 118.10, p.675.
[372] Diceto, *Abbreviationes*, p. 48.

suggests that Alfred went to some length to obtain new material to supplement his standard sources such as Bede, Orosius and Henry of

Explaining the survey.

Alfred begins his survey with two statements, the first of which is a quotation taken from the late fourth century *Hegesippus*. The second is a short explanation for introducing the *Historia* with a geo-historical survey:

> 'Verum antequam narrandi ordinem aggrediar pauca, quae ad rerum noticiam utiliter pertinent, braeviter praenotanda sunt, videlicet de situ Britanniae & ejus magnitudine, et cum ipsa insula sit, quae famosae insulae suae dicioni memorantur pertinere: de mirabilibus ejus, de fertilitate ejus, de famosis fluminibus ejus quae tres ejus principales discriminant provincias, de antiquis civitatibus ejus, de ejus incolis priscis et modernis.'

> *HAB* I. 89-96.

> 'Before undertaking the history, it will be useful to briefly note a few things which will usefully add to our knowledge; namely concerning the geographic location of Britain and her size and of what the island consists, what famous islands are subject to her authority, of her wonders, her fertility, of her famous rivers, of which there are three which mark out her provinces, and of her ancient communities and of her inhabitants both old and new.'

An explanatory statement of this kind is found in no earlier introductory descriptive survey. It is not found in Robert of Torigni's opening survey, or in those later of Ralph Diceto and Gervase of Canterbury. Alfred appears to recognise that there is an important relationship between the narrating of events – '*before undertaking the history*'- and the physical context in which the events take place. He suggests that knowledge of the latter will increase an understanding - '*usefully add to our knowledge*'- of the historical events to be narrated. The introductory surveys of Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Robert Torigni, all inserted without explanation, suggest that the introductory geographic survey, the *mappa mundi* as Gervase of

Canterbury was later to call it, was a conventional opening to a serious literary-historical compilation. [373] Alfred's survey meets the requirement of this literary convention, but his explaining its purpose is novel and it reveals both an authorial perspective and a reflection on his role as a historian.

The interrelationship, in historical writing, between the narration of events over time and the space in which the events take place, is the central theme of A.H.Merill's recent study. Alfred's brief remark, prefacing his description of Britain, provides a rare example of an author of the time overtly expressing the need to combine both spatial and temporal narrative in historical writing for a full and comprehensive historical account to be achieved.

Alfred's use of Hegesippus.

Inserted just before his explanatory statement and therefore forming the opening words of the *Historia*, is the following passage:

> 'Haec insula Britannia extra orbem est posita, sed Romanorum virtute in orbem est redacta. Quos aetas ignoravit superior, didicit Romanarum victoria. Serviunt et ipsi, qui quid esset servitus ignorabant. Soli sibi noti semperque liberi, quia a scienciorum potencia interfuso occeano secreti, metuere non poterant quod nesciebant.'

> *HAB* I. 80-83.

> 'The island of Britain was situated beyond the world, but by the courage of the Romans, brought within it. Their victory discovered a people unknown to previous ages. Now even the Britons are slaves though they used to have no idea what slavery meant. Because the power of knowledge was kept from them by an intervening ocean, they were made free by the limited things they knew. They could not fear what they did not know.'

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[373] R.R.Davies, *The First English Empire. Power and Identities in the British Isles 1093-1343* (Oxford, 2000), 'Island Mythologies', pp.35-6 discusses the powerful hold the idea of Britain had over the medieval mind and refers to the introductory geographic pen portrait as a *topos*. He notes a number of examples, but not Alfred of Beverley's.

Alfred has taken this passage, without attribution, from the late fourth- century *Hegesippus*,[374] a Latin translation of Josephus's *Jewish War* and a text described by an eminent medievalist as a 'must' for medieval libraries; used by scholars as an adjunct to their Old Testament.[375] The great influence of Hegesippus on Anglo-Norman historians has recently been the subject of an article by Neil Wright, where this same passage of Alfred of Beverley is discussed. Wright compares Alfred's use of Hegesippus with that of Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth and William of Malmesbury; somewhat unfavourably. [376] Before addressing Wright's comments on Alfred, two aspects of Alfred's use of the passage require discussion.

The first concerns the location of the quotation in the text. At first sight inserting the quotation before providing the explanatory statement seems awkward. It might have been expected to have first given the reasons for the description of Britain and then to have opened the survey with a pertinent classical reference. Why did Alfred not do this? A number of reasons seem possible. First, Alfred may have felt it editorially important to open his history with a literary flourish. His sensitivity to the requirements of literary accomplishment is evident from his admission in the prologue of his fear of being labelled a *rusticus* for not knowing the details of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB*:

> 'Ferebantur tunc temporis per ora multorum narraciones de hystoria Britonum, notamque rusticitatis incurrebat, qui talium narracionum scienciam non habebat'
>
> *HAB* I.38-40.

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[374] *Hegesippus*, II.9.1 p.150.The underlined words in the quotation are variant readings from the text of *Hegesippus* found in the *CSEL* edition of V.Ussaini, which has *nati* and *superiorum*.

[375] Beryl Smalley, *Historians of the Middle Ages* (London, 1974), p. 38.

[376] Neil Wright, 'Twelfth-Century Receptions of a Text: Anglo-Norman Historians and Hegesippus', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 31 (2010), pp.177-95, at pp.178-82.

At that time stories of the History of the Britons were being much talked about by different people, and anyone who had no knowledge of such stories acquired the label of being an ignoramus.

A second reason might result from Alfred's accretive approach – expanding the material of his sources - and here Henry of Huntingdon's influence is again to be suspected. Alfred has reproduced some twelve of Henry's descriptive elements in his opening survey (Fig. 28) but three further descriptive innovations of Henry are also used by Alfred, later in the *Historia*. These are the accounts of the four royal roads of Britain, the establishment of the seven Saxon kingdoms and the thirty-five shires and the bishoprics of England. [377] Classical quotations from Juvenal and Solinus adorn the opening paragraphs of Henry's survey and Alfred copies Henry's quotation from Solinus verbatim:

'Unde Solinus ait: "Ita pabulosa quibusdam in locis est Britannia, ut pecudes nihi interdum a pastibus arceantur ad periculum agat sacietas'

HAB I.140-42.

'As Solinus says 'In some places Britain is so rich in grazing that unless the cattle are sometimes held back from the pastures, there is a danger that they will eat to excess.'

Alfred trusted Henry to the extent that he thought it unnecessary to collate the quotation with its source, as for example he so frequently did with Geoffrey of Monmouth, for this would have informed him that the quotation was inaccurate; Solinus was here describing *Hibernia*, not *Britannia*. [378] Henry's prefatory survey appears therefore to have exercised a powerful influence on Alfred. Opening the *Historia* with a quotation from a prestigious classical source might well be seen as another example of Alfred following the geo-historical survey model set by Henry in the opening chapters of the *HA*.

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[377] The four royal roads are described by Alfred at *HAB* I. 471-84, the heptarchy at *HAB* 6.2091 and the shires and bishoprics at *HAB* 6.2616-38.
[378] Solinus *CRM,* 22.2, p.100.

The choice of classical authority and the passage selected however sees Alfred repeating what he did with Aethicus Ister for the description of Britain's mineral resources. He has sought a new source to add ballast to an old theme. Britain as *alter orbis* is one of the strongest ideas in medieval geographic description of Britain – in both textual and cartographic expression – and stretches back to classical geography and literature.[379] Solinus in *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* (c.200 AD) had described Britain in the following terms:

> 'Finis erat orbis ora Gallici litoris, nisi Britannia insula non qualibet amplitudine nomen paene orbis alterius mereretur' [380]

> 'The limit of the world was the boundary of the shores of Gaul, except for the island of Britain, which by her size almost deserved to be called another world'

Orosius later had described how beyond Britain lay only the Orcades, the limitless ocean and the island of Thule. [381] The *DEB* of Gildas opens with the words '*Britannia insula in extreme ferme orbis limite circium occidente versus divina'*, '*The island of Britain lies virtually at the end of the world, towards the west and north- west'* and Bede, drawing on both Gildas and Orosius, opens his introductory survey by describing Britain's oceanic island position in the north-west.

Contemporary views of Britain situated at the edge of the civilized world are found in the literature and maps of the time. Eadmer reported that when Pope Urban II introduced archbishop Anselm to the Roman curia in1098 he did so with the words ' as one who is almost our equal, being as it were Pope and

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[379] For a survey and bibliography of imperial geography and its views of Britain see Merrills, *History and Geography*, Introduction and Chapter I pp.1-99.
[380] Solinus *CRM*, 22.I. pp. 99-100.
[381] Orosius *HAP*, 76 -78, pp. 28-29.

Patriarch of the *alter orbis.*[382] William of Malmesbury expresses the view when writing in praise of Bede in the *GRA*:

> 'He was a man more easily admired than praised as he deserves for he who dazzled all countries by the brilliance of his learning was born in the furthest corner of the world. For even Britain, called another world by some because, cut off as it is by the ocean, to many geographers has remained unknown..'
> [383]

Neil Wright suggests that Alfred's attention might have been drawn to this passage from Hegesippus by Geoffrey of Monmouth's use of it in the *HRB* (*HRB* IIII. 1-39). The passage is taken from a speech of the Jewish king Agrippa II where he exhorts his countrymen to abandon their attempts to resist Rome. Agrippa uses the example of the conquest of a remote Britain by the Romans to demonstrate the futility of resistance. Agrippa argues that the Romans' courage, unlike that of Alexander the Great and the Greeks, inspired them to overcome even the barrier of the ocean. In the *HRB* Geoffrey converts Agrippa's set-piece speech into an exchange of letters between Julius Caesar and the British king, Cassibellaunus and Agrippa's speech is turned on its head. In the *HRB*, Caesar is described as viewing Britain as peopled by descendants from the same Trojan stock as the Romans but ignorant of warfare and ripe for conquest and subjugation. Cassibellaunus, replying to Caesar's demands, tells him that Britons will resist Roman greed: as Britain has always lived in freedom, never knowing the yoke of servitude, it will resist Roman aggression.

Wright compares Geoffrey's sophisticated use of Hegesippus to Alfred's, which he describes as one of 'unmodified excerption.'[384] In Alfred's usage the original context of the Agrippa speech has been completely lost, whereas

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[382] R. W. Southern, *St Anselm and his biographer* (Cambridge, 1966), p.129.

[383] *GRA* I.I.54, p.83. See *GRA* II, pp. 67-68 for further discussion and sources for the issue of Britain as 'alter orbis'. Still useful comments are also to be found in *Venerabilis Bedae Historiam Ecclesiasticam*, 2 vols., ed. C.Plummer (Oxford, 1896), i, notes, pp. 4-5.

[384] Wright, 'Twelfth-Century Receptions', p. 179.

Geoffrey has retained the Hegesippian context of resistance to Rome, simply inverting the line of argument. The judgement appears somewhat harsh on Alfred in that Wright's discussion omits to address the context and reasons for Alfred's choice of quotation in the *Historia*. Alfred sought a new and authoritative source to articulate Britain's remote island position, in order to both add force to his descriptive survey and to open the *Historia* with a literary flourish. Hegesippus's phrase, *'Haec insula Britannia extra orbem est posita'*, perfectly fitted Alfred's literary needs.

The suggestion that Alfred's knowledge of the passage might have derived from Geoffrey is also open to some doubt. As an attentive abridger of the *HRB* Alfred knew the text well – although this particular section of the *HRB*, describing the exchanges between Caesar and Cassibellaunus, is omitted in the *Historia*. Later in the *Historia*, Alfred again quotes Hegesippus to describe King Æthelred's attempts to bribe the Danes by payment of the Danegeld, suggesting he had familiarity with Hegesippus, independent of Geoffrey: [385]

> 'Adversus quos quotiens rex Agelredus dimicaturus erat, totiens Angli aut ducum suorum, qui ex paterno genere Dani erant, dolis circumventi, aut aliquo infortunio impediti, hostibus victoriam dederunt. Unde rex Agelredus quos ferro nequibat, eos argento repellere temptavit'

> *HAB* 8.3080-84.

> 'As often as Æthelred was ready to fight them, so many times the English or his nobles of Danish stock, frustrated him with tricks or obstructed him with other misfortune, and gave victory to the enemy. Since King Æthelred was unable with the sword, he tried to repel them with money.'

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[385] Wright 'Twelfth- Century Receptions', pp.190-192 discusses William of Malmesbury's fondness for using this same phrase from Hegesippus *'Reppulit Hyrcanus auro quem ferro nequibat',* but did not note Alfred's use of it in the *Historia*. The similarity of Alfred's use of the phrase to William's in the *GRA* is a rare instance in the *Historia* where Alfred's knowledge of William of Malmesbury's works might be suspected.

An important observation which Wright however does make in regard to Alfred's use of this particular passage is the contradiction it introduces at the outset of the *Historia.* The first five books of the *Historia* abridges Geoffrey's British history and narrates an account of a glorious pre Roman British past and this is inconsistent with the statement that before the Romans, Britain was cut off from the world and lived in a state of ignorance. By his choice of opening the *Historia* with this particular quotation from Hegesippus, Alfred, perhaps unconsciously, encapsulates the tension between two contrasting versions of Insular history which his abridgement and incorporation of the *HRB* in the *Historia* tries its best to resolve.

The five peoples of Britain.

Alfred ends his introductory description of Britain with an account of the five 'peoples' inhabiting the island of Britain: the Britons, the Picts, the Scots, the English and the Normans:

> 'Itaque Britannia in praesenti quinque gentibus inhabitatur, id est Britonibus in Gualliis, in septentrionalibus partibus Pictis, in Albania Scotis, principaliter vero per totam insulam Normannis mixtim et Anglis.'
>
> *HAB.* I. 245-49.
>
> 'Thus now Britain is inhabited by five peoples, that is the Britons in Wales, the Picts in the northern regions, the Scots in Albany, and the rest of the island by the Normans and English together.'

Alfred's description here differs from that of Henry of Huntingdon who had described the five languages in use on the island; those of the Britons, the English, the Scots, the Picts and the Latins; Latin being a language common to all. Henry here had copied almost verbatim Bede's account (*HE* I.I) and in doing so had overlooked French, the language of the Normans. Henry also stated that the Picts 'appear to have been annihilated and their language utterly destroyed' (*HA* I. 8) and in so doing, contradicted himself, as in the

very next chapter he comments that the Picts chose their kings from the female rather than the male royal line, a custom observed amongst the Picts 'to the present day' (*HA* I.9).

Geoffrey of Monmouth, as Alfred, had described the five peoples of Britain in his brief introductory survey (Fig. 29). Alfred however adds geographic precision to these accounts by describing the territory inhabited by each of the five ethnicities. Three of the different peoples, the Welsh, Scots and Picts, live in separate regions of the island, whilst the English and the Normans live side by side in the remaining area. Alfred accepts the existence of the Picts as a people presently inhabiting the island – unlike Henry of Huntingdon – locating them in the remote northern extremity of the island. This is the traditional view of the location of the Picts on the island. It is expressed for example by Bede (*HE* I.I) in the *HB* (§ 12) and also in Henry of Huntingdon's *HA* when he describes how the Picts arrived on the island from Ireland having originated in Scythia (*HA* I.9). Henry, drawing on the *HB* and on Bede, says the Picts settled in the northern parts of the island, because the Britons had occupied the southern parts. Alfred describes the Scots as living in *Albania*, a separate region to the Picts, a name which Alfred takes from the *HRB*.[386] In the first five books of the *Historia* variations of the term *Albania*, to describe Scotland or Scots, are used on eighteen occasions, all reproduced from the *HRB*.[387] After book five, the abbreviation of the *HRB* concluded, *Albania* is never again used. Alfred uses *Scotia*, or Latin forms thereof, on sixteen occasions, ten from book six of the History onwards.[388] When not abridging the *HRB*, Alfred

[386] Geoffrey names the son of Brutus who inherited Scotland as *Albanactus* (*HRB* II.1-5) and who named his kingdom eponymously, *Albania. Alba* was the Gaelic name for Scotland, in common use in the twelfth century and men of Alba were known as the *Albanaig*. See Broun, *Scottish Independence,* p. 7. The Gaelic naming may have been known to Geoffrey through south Welsh usage, which might explain the creation of the character of *Albanactus*.

[387] *HAB* I, 247, 337, 338, 367, 387, 414. 2, 810, 818, 878, 903, 905. 3, 1088. 5,1580, 1593, 1676, 1786, 1861, 1957.

[388] *HAB* I, 337, 481. 3, 902. 5, 1339, 1504, 1890. 8, 2970. 9, 3578, 3579, 3580, 3589, 3595, 3597, 3702, 3798, 3799.

conforms to the general practice of the English chronicles of the time, using the term *Scotia* to describe Scotland.[389]

In abridging the *HRB* Alfred on occasions reproduces Geoffrey's geographic ambiguities. We find in the *Historia* the description of the river Humber marking the dividing line of the kingdom of Loegria from Deira and Albania, incorporating Geoffrey's implausible Scottish-Deiran border (*HAB* 2, 879).[390] This contrasts with Alfred's earlier more precise description of the three main rivers of Britain in his introductory survey where the rivers Thames, Severn and the Humber mark the political boundaries of Loegria, Cambria and Northumbria (*HAB* I.191-98). Alfred also recycles Geoffrey's description of the building by the Roman senator Severus of a rampart from sea to sea between Deira and Albania to keep the rebel Britons led by Fulgenius at bay (*HAB* 3. 904-6). On one occasion however, Alfred modifies Geoffrey's description, providing a more informed view of northern geography. Alfred is describing the campaign of Severus to quell unrest on the island of Britain after the death of King Lucius:

> 'Postquam vero auditum est Romae, quod Lucio defuncto absque herede discidium inter Britones esset ortum, & Romana potestas infirmata, legaverunt Severum senatorem, duasque legiones cum illo, ut patria potestati suae restitueretur. Qui ut apulsus fuit, mox proelia cum Britonibus commisit, magnamque partem insulae sibi subjugavit, rebelles vero duris debellacionibus trans Scociam in Albaniam fugavit.'
>
> *HAB* 3. 898-903.
>
> 'When it was learned at Rome that Lucius had died leaving no heir and that unrest had arisen amongst the Britons and Roman power was weakened, they sent Severus, a member of the senate, with two legions to restore the

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[389] One chronicler, the author of the *Gesta Stephani* however notes *Albania* as the alternative name for Scotland, '*est autem Scotia, quae et Albania dicitur*', *Gesta Steph*. p. 36, but otherwise the term is rarely found to describe Scotland.

[390] Geoffrey's lack of knowledge of northern geography and his general negative view of the Scots for their cultural backwardness is discussed by Tatlock, *Legendary History*, pp. 9-17.

island to Roman control. When he landed he soon fought with the Britons and subjected a great part of the island to his control, and with a harsh decisive campaign he drove the rebels across Scotland into Albany.'

In Geoffrey's account the passage ends differently, with Severus driving the rebels across Deira into Albania, the Anglo-Scottish border falling at Deira.

'Qui ut appulsus fuit, proelium commisit cum Britonibus partemque sibi submisit, partem vero illam quam subiugare nequibat diris debellationibus infestare laboravit ita ut eam trans Deiram in Albaniam fugaret.'

HRB V.11-16.

Alfred's reworking removes the inaccuracy of a Deira-Scottish border and proposes a new geography for Scotland. The rebels are driven northwards across *Scotia* and into *Albania*. Given that Alfred has described the Picts as living in the very northernmost parts of the island, then from his perspective the region from Northumbria to its northern geographic extremity comprises three geographic regions; first *Scotia* then *Albania* and finally the territory of the Picts. The first of these*, Scotia,* the southernmost of the three regions and bordering Northumbria, Alfred appears to conceive as comprising the areas of Lothian, and perhaps Cumbria and Galloway. Lothian, as G.W.S.Barrow noted, was a term which English and Scottish writers of the twelfth-century habitually used to describe the territory between with Tweed and the Forth.[391] Alfred's placing of *Albania* as the second country, located between *Scotia* and the northern lands of the Picts, broadly coincides with what scholarly opinion today considers *Scotia* to have comprised territorially in the mid twelfth century; that is, 'a country north of the Forth, south of Moray and east of Argyll'[392]. Alfred, attempting to give more precision to Geoffrey's vague geographic description, attaches Geoffrey's name *Albania* to this middle Scottish kingdom, north of the Forth–Clyde line. As the then Gaelic name for *Scotia* was *Alba* and common currency at the time with Gaelic speakers, to

[391] G.W.S. Barrow, 'The Scots and the North of England' in *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign,* ed. Edmund King (Oxford, 1994), p. 237.
[392] Broun, *Scottish Independence,* p.11.

name the more distant middle kingdom Albania made sense. Alfred's description of Scotland is a more accurate representation of twelfth-century Scotland than Geoffrey's and not that far removed from what is now considered to be the multi- country reality of Scotland at the time. As Dauvit Broun has recently remarked, 'the realm of the King of Scots was regarded as consisting of more than one country: not only 'Scotland', but Lothian, Cumbria and Galloway in the south.'[393] To this we might add Moray in the north and Argyll, which place-name evidence suggests did not consider itself to be a part of *Alba*.[394]

The Flemings as a nascent sixth people of Britain.

Alfred concludes his description of the peoples of Britain by commenting on the Flemings as a sixth 'people' inhabiting the island of Britain:

> 'Additur hiis et nostro tempore sexta nacio, id est Flandrenses, qui de patria sua venientes, in regione Mailros in confinio Gualiarum jubente rege Henrico habitacionem acceperunt. Qui hoc usque in insulam catervatim confluentes, nec minus quam indigenae armis et milicia potentes, magnam sibi iam in ea partem sub Normannis militantes adquisierunt. Quorum crebra in insulam confluencia et inter Normannos cohabitacio quousque procedat sequens aetas videbit.'

> HAB I. 249-57.

> 'In addition to these and in our own time, is a sixth people, that is the Flemings, who coming from their native land received a home in the region of Rhos in Dyfed in Wales at King Henry's command. Until this they were disorderly squads roaming the island, of equal strength to the native troops and soldiery, but now they have acquired a large portion of land there and are soldiers under the Normans. Gathering quickly in the island and living among the Normans the next generation will see how this people will advance.'

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[393] Ibid., p. 9. See also the discussion on the multiple identities comprising twelfth-century Scotland in Davies, *The First English Empire*, pp. 55-6.
[394] Broun, *Scottish Independence*, p. 7.

The forcible settlement by Henry I of the Flemings of England in Rhos, South Pembrokeshire, is reported by several of the earlier twelfth-century Anglo-Norman chroniclers including John of Worcester, William of Malmesbury, and Orderic Vitalis. The event is reported also in Welsh sources such as the *Brut y Tywysogyon* under 1108 and *Annales Cambriae* in the year 1107. [395] Symeon of Durham (*HR* § 191) copies verbatim John of Worcester's notice for the year 1111 in his own annal for that year, noting that the Flemings who were resettled came from Northumbria. Alfred is most likely to have learned of the Welsh resettlement through the *HR* but he does not state that the Flemings were relocated from Northumbria.

Alfred's comment on the existence of squads of disorderly Flemings at large in the country presents a negative of view the Flemings; a view repeated in a number of the narrative sources of the time; for example in the writing of William of Malmesbury, Orderic Vitalis and the author of the *Gesta Stephani*. His suggestion of a normalization in their behaviour after receiving lands and a home in south Wales, on the other hand, is not. William of Malmesbury's comments on the Flemings are spread over a period of time. In the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (1125) William had described the extent of their settlement in England during the time of King Henry's father, relying for their reception and protection on their kinship with his mother. William describes the Flemings as 'headstrong and barbarous.' Lying low in the country, they had become a 'burden on the realm itself.' [396] King Henry, according to William, had killed two birds with one stone by transplanting the Flemings to the Welsh province of Rhos. He had put a brake on Welsh hostilities and at the same time had purged his kingdom of a growing social problem. Some twenty later, in the *Historia Novella* (c.1140 x c.1143) William's comments on the Flemings are shaped by the circumstances of Stephen's reign and he talks about how Fleming foreign mercenaries were attracted by the easy pickings of Stephen's day and the king's spendthrift ways, which he then compares unfavourably to the times of King Henry:

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[395] *JW* Chron. III, p.126 note 7 provides a detailed guide to the English and Welsh sources for the resettlement of the Flemings by Henry I.
[396] *GRA* V.401 p. 727.

'Sub Stephano plures ex Flandria et Britannia, rapto vivere assueti, spe
magnarum predarum Angliam involabant'

(*HN* II.36)

'Under Stephen many from Flanders and Brittany, who were want to live by
plunder, flew to England in the hope of great booty.'

Orderic Vitalis reported that having been settled in Wales, the Flemings
hunted down the Britons in their hiding places where they were 'pitilessly
slaughtered like dogs.'[397] The author of the *Gesta Stephani* is even more
extreme in his comments. Writing of the brothers Henry and Ralph de Caldret
who had left Flanders to serve as mercenaries in England, he describes them
as 'martial men, very active in the toils of war' and 'utterly steeped in craft and
treachery, very ready to set pillage and strife on foot everywhere, most eager
to commit crime and sacrilege.' [398] That mercenary violence in the disorders
of Stephen's reign was associated with the Flemings is shown by one of the
first measures enacted by Henry II, announced in his coronation assembly in
December 1154, to expel the Flemish mercenaries from England. [399] Even
twenty years after Alfred's time the Flemings were used in literature as a
metaphor for warlike aggressiveness. Jordane of Fantosme's Anglo-Norman
verse chronicle of the wars between the Scots and the English of 1173-4
labels the Flemings as 'martial' men and in general presents them
unfavourably. Jordane is sympathetic to King William and Earl David of
Scotland and blames the French and Fleming mercenaries for the chaos
caused by the war in Northumbria.[400]

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[397] *OV HE* VI. p. 442.
[398] *Gesta Steph.* 96, p.188.
[399] T.N.Bisson, 'The Lure of Stephen's England: Tenserie, Flemings and a Crisis of
Circumstance' in Dalton and White, eds., *King Stephen's Reign,* pp.171-181 at p.177.
[400] *Jordane Fantosme's Chronicle*, ed. and trans. R.C.Johnston (Oxford, 1981). See the
negative light in which the Flemings are portrayed for example at §103, §104, §105,
p. 76. §107, p. 79. §118, p. 87.

Alfred's view of the Flemings as more socially integrated after the Rhos settlement therefore presents the Flemings in a somewhat different light to other twelfth-century chronicle sources. His comments on their potential to become a sixth 'people' of Britain - a rare example of an Alfredian personal opinion expressed in the *Historia* - is also quite distinct and casts interesting light on what would appear to have been an issue of the day. If Alfred held these views about the Flemings, it is reasonable to believe that so too did others. Alfred's comments suggest also a familiarity with, and closeness to, Flemings and good evidence for the presence of Flemings in Beverley and the East Riding of Yorkshire at the time exists. The political, social and economic influence of the Flemings and the relationship of Flanders with Anglo-Norman Britain has been the subject of an important recent study by Eljas Oksanen and within this, Flemish settlement, commercial activity and land ownership in Northumbria and south eastern Yorkshire is highlighted. [401]

The influence and settlement of Flemings in the north of England is evident from a variety of sources. In the immediate post-Conquest period substantial military forces from the Low Countries accompanied the Flemish barons Robert of Comines (d.1069) and Gilbert of Ghent (d.c.1095) to Durham and York respectively as part of William I's campaign to extend his control over the region. [402] A charter of William I to Archbishop Ealdred of York (c.1066-69) promised compensation for those wronged by any person be they 'French or Flemish or English'.[403] William despatched Flemish craftsmen in 1069 to build the castle of Durham.[404] In 1080, Bishop Walcher of Durham, originally from Liège, had a hundred-strong entourage of Frenchmen and Flemings.[405] At the level of the landowning aristocracy, Domesday Book reveals that tenants-in-chief from the Low Countries represented a significant minority of the new Anglo-Norman landed class. Flemings controlled some 760 out of 9500

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[401] E. Oksanen, *Flanders and the Anglo-Norman World 1066-1216* (Cambridge, 2012). See in particular pp.188-93.
[402] Ibid., p. 183. Based on the chronicle evidence (ASC, D, E, 1068), Symeon of Durham *HR*, pp. 186-7, the author estimates forces several hundred strong.
[403] *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I (1066-1087),* ed. D.Bates (Oxford, 1998), no.351, p. 1002.
[404] Oksanen, *Flanders*, p.184.
[405] Ibid., p.184.

estates in 1086 and in south eastern Yorkshire and neighbouring Lincolnshire, Flemish land ownership was particularly marked, with eight Flemish tenants-in chief and some ninety Flemish estates held by Flemish sub-tenants.[406] The three chief Flemish landowners in the north were Gilbert of Ghent, Rainier of Brimeaux and Drogo of Beuvière from south-central Flanders. Between them, they held some 155 manors in the region as tenants-in-chief of the king.[407] Amongst these Flemish émigré families of the time of the Conquest, the Gant family, established by Gilbert de Ghent, was to become a leading family of the Anglo-Norman ruling elite during the the course of the twelfth century and active in the ecclesiastical politics of the Yorkshire church.

In Beverley itself, a community of Flemings at the time is indicated by the existence of a street named *Flammengaria* – later known as 'Flemingate'. Reference to the street '*Flammengaria*' in Beverley is made in a donation of a stone house in the street to the Cistercian abbey of Rievaulx by one John fitz John, the vinter, dating from the later 1150s. [408] The charter is witnessed by two early canons of Beverley, Peter of Carcassonne and Philip Morin. Philip had been a co-witness with Alfred himself in an *acta* of Archbishop Henry Murdac, confirming a gift of William de Roumare, earl of Lincoln, to Warter Priory, dating from the period 1148-1151 (Fig 1, no. 4). [409] John the vintner's gift to Rievaulx was, interestingly, co-witnessed by one *Boidino Flandrensi*. The location of Flemingate within Beverley is also pertinent. It is a street connecting the Minster eastwards to Beverley Beck, a watercourse of less than a mile in length leading to the river Hull, itself flowing into the Humber estuary and which may have been navigable since the time of Archbishop

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[406] Ibid., pp. 185, 192.

[407] Ibid., pp. 190-191, Table 3 lists the 760 manors held by Fleming tenants-in-chief in 1086.

[408] *Cartularium Abbathiae de Rievalle Ordinis Cisternciensis, Fundatae anno MCXXXII*, ed. J. Atkinson, SS (Durham, 1889), no.135, p. 84, '*Johannes filius Johannis Vinitoris de Beverlaco. Sciatis me dedisse…. totam domum meam lapideam de Beverlaco in Flammengaria, quae sita est juxta viam in feudo Benedicti Sculecotes*..' The charter is dated to the period 1154-59 by McDermid, *BMF*, p. 14.

[409] McDermid, *BMF*, p.14 provides the evidence for both these early Beverley canons.

Thurstan.[410] Flemingate was therefore ideally located to serve medieval Beverley's commercial and trading enterprises, amongst them the export of raw wool to the cloth towns of the Low Countries being of particular importance. [411] As well as being a regional entrepot for the trading of raw wool produced in the Yorkshire region, Beverley was a producer of cloth in its own right. An 1163 charter of Henry II to York noted that Beverley weavers were amongst those permitted to make rayed and dyed cloth.[412] In the thirteenth century, Beverley had gained a national reputation for high quality cloth, with Henry III making regular purchases of burnets, coloureds and blues.[413] At the time of Alfred, therefore, *Flammengaria* was a commercial and trading zone amongst which wool merchants and artisans involved in cloth production: spinners and carders, weavers, fullers and dyers, congregated and as suggested by its name, Flemings would have been to the fore. That Rievaulx abbey, some forty-seven miles distant from Beverley in the North Riding of Yorkshire, possessed a substantial property in the *Flammengaria* area in the mid twelfth-century provides evidence; circumstantial but nevertheless compelling, that the abbey's wool production is likely to have been traded there at that time, some of which, it may be supposed, being destined to supply the cloth industry of the Low Countries.[414]

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[410] The canalization of Beverley Beck has in some sources been assigned to the time of Archbishop Thurstan of York (d.1140) and a navigable link to the river Hull, effectively making Beverley a port, is likely to have existed by the 1160s. *VCH Bev Horrox*, p.35.

[411] *VCH Bev Horrox,* pp. 34-42.

[412] Ibid., p. 39. Charter printed in *E.Y.C.* I, p. 263.

[413] Ibid., p. 40.

[414] For Rievaulx's involvement in the wool market see Emilia Jamroziak, 'Rievaulx Abbey as a wool producer in the late thirteenth century: Cistercians, sheep and debts', *Northern History,* 40, 2 (September, 2003), pp.197-218. Jamroziak suggests that Rievaulx's first entrance into the wool market was likely to have been made in conjunction with Flemings, p. 200. Janet Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire* 1069-1215 (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 269-270 surveys the involvement of Yorkshire monastic houses in the wool trade at the time and argues that the fragmentary nature of twelfth-century documentary evidence masks an established and thriving twelfth-century trade.

Alfred's view of the Flemings as a nascent sixth 'people' on the island therefore underlines both their influence and importance at the time and their distinctive identity. His view that their once lawlessness had been laid aside may reflect the day-to-day reality of the Flemings in Beverley and the East Riding at the time; a community more involved in economic activity; trade, commerce and estate management, than in warfare. Alfred's comments on the Flemings' potential to emerge as a 'sixth people' also suggest a view of a society still in the process of being moulded, uncertain of its final shape. The ecclesiastical and political circumstances in Yorkshire which gave rise to the *Historia*, discussed in chapter three, where political boundaries and baronial and ecclesiastical allegiances were in a state of constant tension and change, reflect this uncertainty. In the words of R.R.Davies, the north was 'a land of regional supremacies, frontier outposts, raids and counter raids and deep uncertainties.'[415]

The four royal highways of Britain.

In book one of the *Historia* Alfred reproduces Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of two of the most outstanding of the early British kings: the lawgiver king, Dunwallo Molmutius and his son, Belinus. Dunwallo, on securing control of the kingdom, first made himself a golden crown and then introduced new laws among the Britons. These, stated Geoffrey, 'are still renowned even today amongst the English.' [416] The laws provided sanctuary for fugitives in cities and temples, royal protection for travellers on the roads leading to these locations and protection for the ploughs of husbandmen. Dunwallo's son Belinus later reinforced the laws of his father. To remove all uncertainty about protection on roads and to end disputes arising 'from their boundaries being unclear' - a suggestion perhaps that this was a contemporary issue of law which Geoffrey had in mind – Belinus built four great highways, in stone and cement, linking the four corners of the kingdom and its chief towns. One of these roads ran east-west across the country from St David's in Wales to

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[415] Davies, *The First English Empire.* p. 55.
[416] *HRB* II, 327-8.

Southampton. The four roads were placed by Belinus under royal protection. If anyone wanted further detail on the law in respect of the roads they should consult the Molmutine Laws which St Gildas had translated into Latin and which King Alfred had then translated into English. The implication of this account was that English laws of sanctuary and protection on royal roads was of British origin: King Alfred had merely made pre-existing British laws accessible to the English inhabitants of the island.

Alfred reproduces this Galfridian version of events verbatim in the *Historia* (*HAB* I.413-29, 457-70). However, for Britain's royal roads, Alfred had an alternative account available; that provided by Henry of Huntingdon in his introductory survey (*HA* I.7) which Alfred inserts immediately following that of Geoffrey:

> 'De hiis viis alibi sic legimus: ' Tantae autem graciae inhabitantibus fuit Britannia, quod IIII. in ea calles a fine in finem construerent, regia sublimatos auctoritate, ne aliquis in eis inimicus invadere auderet. Primus est ab oriente in occidentem et vocatur Ycenild; secundus est ab austro in aquilonem, et vocatur Hermingestrete; tercius est ex transverso a Dorobernia in Cestrum, scilicet, ab Euro austro in Zephyrum Septemtrionalem, et vocatur Wadingestrete; quartus major ceteris incipit in Katenes et desinit in Totey, scilicet a principio Cornubiae, usque in finem Scociae, et hic callis vidit ex transverso a Zaphyro australi in Eurum septemtrionalem, et vocatur Fossa, tenditque per Lincolniam.' Hii sunt IIII. principalles calles Angliae, multum quidem spaciosi, sed non minus speciosi, sanciti edictis regum, scriptisque verendis legum.'

> HAB I.470-84

> 'About these roads we read elsewhere 'Britain was so dear to its inhabitants that they constructed four highways on it, from one end to the other, built by royal authority, so that no one would dare to attack an enemy on them. The first is from east to west, and is called the Icknield Way. The second runs from south to north, and is called Ermine Street. The third goes across from Dover to Chester, that is, from the southeast to the northwest and is called

Watling Street. The fourth, longer than the others, begins in Caithness and ends in Totnes, that is from the beginning of Cornwall to the end of Scotland. This road, which is called the Fosse Way, takes a diagonal route from southwest to northeast, and passes through Lincoln.' These are the four principal highways of England, which are very broad as well as splendid, protected by the edicts and by venerable law codes'

No comment is passed by Alfred on the inconsistency of the accounts. Alfred does not draw attention to the fact that Henry's version does not describe a road from St Davids to Southampton nor state that the venerable law codes protecting the roads were the British Molmutine laws. But the fact that he has taken Henry's description of the four roads from its original context – the *HA*'s introductory survey – deploying it at this particular point in the narrative rather than include it in his own introductory survey, shows Alfred' s capacity to manage his sources critically. Alfred purpose is surely here to collate Geoffrey's historical account against other authority; the first of numerous examples in the *Historia* (Fig.13). Here, because of his unwillingness to name Henry of Huntingdon as his authority, the collation is a silent one. Alfred's words, 'about these roads we read elsewhere', invite the reader to form his own judgement on the relative merits of the two accounts.

The shires and dioceses of Britain

Book six contains two of the most important historical transitions in Alfred's *Historia.* The book opens with the concise statement，'*Finito regno Britonum, Britanniae regnum ad Anglos est translatum*', marking the passage of dominion from the British to the English kings on the island. The book ends with a second transfer of power. A heptarchy of English sub-kingdoms is replaced by the West Saxon kings gaining 'the monarchy of all England':

> 'Iste fuit status regni Occidentalium Saxonum a primo eorum Cerdico usque ad finem Edwardi Senioris, sub regibus XXIIII. per annos circiter quadringentos LIIII. Qui strenue fines suos dilatantes et vicina regna sibi

fortiter subjugantes in tantum creverunt, ut posteritas illorum tocius Angliae monarchiam obtinuerit, totamque terram per XXXV.provincias diviserit.'

HAB 6. 2610-16

'This then was the era of the kingdom of the West Saxons from the first of their kings Cerdic until the last, Edward the Elder under twenty-four kings and (lasting) for approximately four hundred and fifty-four years. In vigorously expanding their boundaries and powerfully subjecting their neighbouring kingdoms, they (the West Saxon kings) grew a great deal so that in the future it (the kingdom of Wessex) gained the monarchy of all England and divided the country into thirty-five provinces/shires.'

Just as in the account of the four royal roads, Alfred here performs an act of adroit editing. He takes material from Henry of Huntingdon's introductory survey and uses it at a point in the narrative which better suits his purposes. In his introductory survey Henry describes the establishment of the shires and bishoprics as the first administrative act of the West Saxon kings once they had prevailed on the island. [417] Alfred absorbs this Henrican idea, but rather than include the material in his own introductory survey, he saves it for use at the conclusion of book six and at the point of the *Historia* where the West Saxon kings assume the monarchy of all England.

Alfred's prefatory 'Description of Britain.' Summary and conclusions.

Alfred's 'Description of Britain' provides one of the most comprehensive examples of the introductory *mappa mundi* in a Latin Chronicle of the period. Whilst highly accretive - it borrows freely from the prior surveys and expands them - it contains innovative features. These include the explanation for opening his history with a geographical survey and the use of new sources to develop old themes; for example the use of Aethicus Ister to describe Britain's mineral resources and Hegesippus to describe the island's once remoteness from the civilized world, ended by the Roman conquest. The survey provides

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[417] Alfred states 18 bishoprics. It is 17 in Henry's account. One *HA* manuscript however has 16, see *HA* p.18 note f. Alfred omits the phrase 'in which is the bishopric of Salisbury', describing the shire of Wiltshire.

new perspectives on the island's geography. For example the political divisions of Loegria, Northumbria and Cambria formed by the island's three main rivers, the Thames, Severn and Humber and the three Scottish kingdoms, those of the Picts, Scots and Albania. It contains the revealing comment about the Flemings as a sixth people on the island, presenting a somewhat different view of their 'reformed' character than that found in most other texts of the period. Alfred's comment on the Flemings also provides a rare example of a personal opinion intruded into the *Historia* but is all the more valuable for this: for the state of mind it reveals; suggesting a view of a society in the process of construction in a changing and uncertain world.

The description of Britain provides a good view of Alfred's methods as a historical writer. An impressive range of sources is drawn on and an energetic approach to obtaining information is suggested. Some of Alfred's texts are rare which suggests he may well have needed to travel to libraries outside Beverley to consult them. His creative use of source material is demonstrated by his capacity to take passages from his sources, adapting them for quite different purposes in his compilation. Henry of Huntingdon's opening survey is much in evidence in Alfred's description of Britain – to the point where it might be considered as having acted as Alfred's literary model. However, Alfred's 'Description of Britain' was to have a lasting historical legacy in its own right which will now be explored with the fourteenth century chronicler, Ranulf Higden.

Chapter 6. The Afterlife of Alfred of Beverley I. Ranulf Higden.

Introduction

The chapter explores the reception of Alfred of Beverley's *Historia* in the fourteenth century universal chronicle of Ranulf Higden, monk of the Benedictine abbey of St Werburgh in Chester, the *Polychronicon.* The first version of the *Polychronicon* appeared c.1327 [418] but Higden worked on the chronicle throughout his life and a number of versions were produced before his death in 1364. The chronicle survives in some one hundred and twenty manuscripts attesting to its wide dissemination in the later medieval period. Alongside the chronicle of Furness Abbey, compiled c.1298 - c.1300, the *Polychronicon* represents the earliest evidence for the transmission of Alfred's *Historia.* Higden's use of the *Historia* is very different to that of the Furness chronicler however. The Cistercian scribe simply copied large portions of Alfred's text without attribution, but for Higden, Alfred served as one of the main authorities both quarried and named in compiling his encyclopaedic enterprise. Alfred is named, with material attributed to him, on at least forty-four occasions in the text (Fig 30 below).[419] The frequency of acknowledgement, in a work which was to prove as successful and influential as the *Polychronicon,* served to establish Alfred's reputation as a historian in the later Middle Ages and beyond and is further discussed in chapter seven of this study. The aim of the present chapter is to examine the reception of the *Historia* in the *Polychronicon*, exploring the manner in which Alfred's text influenced Higden. The chapter begins by briefly reviewing the importance of the *Polychronicon* in later medieval historiography. It then considers Higden's general use of sources and discusses a number of problems attendant on his manner of quoting these sources. The evidence for Higden's knowledge of Alfred's *Historia* will be presented and issues then discussed will include the

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[418] John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford, 1966), p. 96.
[419] The text as printed in *Polychronicon Ranulfi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*, eds., C.Babington and J.R.Lumby, 9 vols., RS 41 (London, 1865-86). Many further references to Alfred are identified in the apparatus of the RS edition, found in the various manuscript readings.

extensive use of material from Alfred's 'Description of Britain' in the *Polychronicon* and Higden's recycling of Alfred's periodization of Britain's history in his chronicle. Finally the chapter discusses the manner in which the *Historia* exerted a decisive influence on Higden's reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*HRB*) in the *Polychronicon.*

The influence of the *Polychronicon.*

The *Polychronicon*, a universal chronicle in seven books, recounts the history of the world from creation down to Higden's own days and exists in three versions. The first version brought the text down to 1327. Higden revised and updated the chronicle as his reading extended and new material became available to him and an intermediate version, the text ending in the 1340's, and a fuller version, the text extending to 1352, also exist.[420] The first book, entitled the *Mappa Mundi*, provides a geographic description of the world and the remaining six books deal with the history of mankind. Book one was particularly popular and in the later recensions of the chronicle, Higden added a map. Eight surviving manuscripts of the *Polychronicon* contain maps, the most detailed of which is BL MS Royal 14. C. ix.[421]

The large number of surviving copies of the *Polychronicon* from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – there are extant some one hundred and nineteen full, and eight part copies of the *Polychronicon* from that time [422]- indicates that many hundreds of copies once circulated across a wide cross-section of late medieval ecclesiastical society, both regular and secular.[423] Monastic communities, cathedral and parish churches and the Oxford and Cambridge colleges owned copies of the chronicle. [424] Copies were also owned by

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[420] The development of the text of the *Polychronicon* is described in Taylor, *Universal Chronicle,* pp. 89-109.

[421] Taylor, *Universal Chronicle,* pp. 66-67.

[422] Ibid., pp. 152-159, lists the surviving manuscripts and their provenance.

[423] Ibid., p.16.

[424] Gransden, *HWE* II, p. 55 gives the following list of surviving copies owned by institutions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, based on John Taylor's list. Benedictine houses of Chester, Christ Church and St Augustine's Canterbury,

members of the lay aristocracy and wealthy merchant class. [425] The *Polychronicon* achieved such widespread popularity in the fourteenth century that John Taylor claimed it effectively 'ended the demand for copies of the early histories.'[426] Historiographically, it was important for its 'seminal potential.' [427] Copies distributed amongst the religious communities became the starting points for important new chronicles. During the reign of Richard II (1377-99) these included the chronicles of Thomas Walsingham, Henry Knighton and Adam of Usk. An anonymous monk of Westminster wrote a continuation of the *Polychronicon* from 1377-94. In the middle of the fourteenth century the early version of the *Polychronicon* had strongly influenced John of Tynemouth's *Historia Aurea,* a universal chronicle containing a history of Britain down to 1347 and some seven times longer than the *Polychronicon.* [428] From the same period the chronicle of John of Brompton, abbot of Jervaulx, an account of English history from the coming of St Augustine down to the death of Richard I was produced which drew on the *Polychronicon* and in the 1360s a monk of Malmesbury wrote a universal chronicle, the *Eulogium Historiarum* which leant heavily on Higden's work.

The *Polychronicon* reached an even wider lay audience with its translation into English by John Trevisa in 1387. Trevisa retained Higden's authorial citations including those of Alfred, ensuring Alfred's name and reputation reached a new audience. Between c.1432 and c.1450 a second and

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Westminster, Norwich, Gloucester, Glastonbury, Ely, Abingdon, Hyde. The Carthusian house of Sheen in the fourteenth and Witham in the fifteenth century. Fifteenth century copies were owned by the Cistercian houses of Fountains and Whalley and by the Fransiscans of London. The Augustinian canons of Gloucester, Dunstable, Barnwell, Keynsham and Llanthony owned copies. The cathedrals of Lincoln, Exeter and Bath and Wells and the hospitals of St John's Cambridge, St John's Exeter, St Thomas's London and the churches of St Peter's Cornhill and St Sepulchre, Newgate.

[425] John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1987), p. 56 note 87.
[426] Taylor, *Universal Chronicle*, p. 28.
[427] Gransden *HWE* II, p.55.
[428] Taylor, *Historical Literature*, pp. 103-4.

anonymous translation was produced. [429] Trevisa's translation expanded Higden's text by adding his own comments and observations: the anonymous fifteenth-century translator, however, abbreviated and shortened the text, but retained the authorial acknowledgements.

Alfred of Beverley in Higden's prefatory list of authorities.

Higden lists some thirty-nine authorities from whom he has compiled his work at the beginning of the chronicle and Alfred is named twenty-eighth. Insular authorities named in the list include: Bede, Gildas, Marianus Scotus, William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Walter archdeacon of Oxford, Alfred of Beverley, Geoffrey of Monmouth, William of Rievaulx,[430] Gerald of Wales, John of Salisbury. A twelfth author, John of Worcester, is separated from the previous eleven authors and is the last named in the introductory list. John Taylor suggests that this is because Higden only came to know and use John of Worcester's chronicle after he had written the first version of his history.[431] Higden's introductory list of authorities is, however, only an unreliable guide to the true extent of his sources and borrowings. In the text, authors are frequently named with material attributed to them who are not on the introductory list. In the first two books of the *Polychronicon*, this includes such authors as Ptolemy, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Juvenal and Fathers of the church such as Gregory Nazianzen and Gregory the Great. [432] Higden also quotes important Insular authorities such as Ailred of Rievaulx, [433] Roger of Howden and Ralph Diceto [434] who are not named in his introductory list. The list also has to be treated with caution because it varies across the manuscript

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[429] Taylor, *Universal Chronicle,* p.139. Both English translations are printed alongside the Latin text in the RS edition of the *Polychronicon*. In this chapter footnote references to the RS edition are given in the following order: RS volume, book, chapter, and page. It needs to be noted that the RS volumes do not coincide with Higden's books of the *Polychronicon*.

[430] Sharpe, *Handlist,* p. 803 entry 2156, states that William of Rievaulx is the 'ghost' of William of Newburgh.

[431] Taylor, *Universal Chronicle,* p.103.

[432] *Polychronicon.* I, p. xx note 2.

[433] *Polychronicon*, VIII, VII, 39, p.274.

[434] *Polychronicon*, VII, VI, 28, p.226.

readings of the *Polychronicon*. The critical apparatus of the Rolls Series
printed edition of the *Polychronicon* notes some of these variances; for
example, manuscripts C and D contain three additional authorities:
Herodotus, Quintilian and *Aulus Gellius.*[435]

Fig. 30. Acknowledgements of Alfred of Beverley in the *Polychronicon*.

	Where found In *Poly.**	Form of citation	Summary of material attributed to Alfred (Given in Latin or English as most appropriate)	Found or not found in *Historia*
1	II. I. 39	Alfridus	'Anglia Britannica alter orbis appellatur.'	Implied, but words 'alter *orbis*' not found. *HAB* I.80
		Alfridus	Quam olim Carolus Magnus ….cameram suam vocavit.	Not found
2	II. I .39	Alfridus	'Et dicta est insula ….. tundatur.	Not found
3	II. I. 40	Alfridus	*Hoc est a loco qui Penwihtistert dicitur xv leugis … Northfolchia.*	Not found
4	II. I. 41	Alfridus	Ceterum Britannia omni materia….. deficit.	Touched on loosely *HAB* I.132-48
5	II. I.41	Item Alfridus	Illa quidem longe celebri splendore beata….. Octavianus opes.	Not found. (H. Hunt poem?)
6	II 1.42	Alfridus	Cum Britannia in se plura contineat mirabilia ….miranda...	Found *HAB* I.147-8
7	II. 1.46.	Alfridus	Tria per Britanniam fluunt famosa flumina ….Northimbriam.	Found *HAB* I .191-98
8	II. I.47	Alfridus	Civitatum nomina haec erant.	Found *HAB* I.215-226
9	II. I. 49	Alfridus	Notandum quod Anglia continet triginta duas shiras … insulis.	Found *HAB* 6.2616-30
10	II. I.51	Alfridus	Inconcussa stetit apud Britones insulae monarchia, a primo scilicet Bruto usque ad Julium Caesarem a quo Julio usque ad Severum haec insula Romanis fuit vectigalis et subacta…	Found *HAB*. Follows the outlines of Alfred's periodization.
11	II. I.51.	Alfridus	Primum regnum fuit Cantuariorum.	Found *HAB* 6. 2091
12	II. I.51	Item in chronicis Henrici et Alfridi habetur	Quod rex Edwardus senior firmavit ….Mersee.	Not found
13	II.I.52	Alfridus	Sedes archiepiscoporum in Britannia tres fuerunt.	Found *HAB* 3.873
14	II.I.58	Alfridus	…sed et Flandrenses tempore regis Henrici in magna copia juxta Mailros ad orientalem Angliae plagam habitationem … septimam in insula gentem fecerunt.	Found *HAB* I.249-57 Higden counts Danes as a seventh people
	II.II.27	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Brutus's arrival and founding of Britain.	Found *HAB* I 258-318
16	III.II.29	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Mempricus.	Found *HAB* I 348-53
17	III.II.29	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Ebrancus.	Found *HAB* I 353-71
18	III.II.29	Secundum Gaufridum et Alfridum	Account of Bladud.	Found *HAB* I 353-71
19	III.III.17	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Belinus.	Found *HAB* I 430-93
20		Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Belinus.	Found *HAB* I 430-93
21	III.III.21	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Gurguntius.	Found *HAB* I 494-501
22	IV.III.31	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Morvidus.	Found *HAB* I 518-20
23	IV.III.42	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Death of Cassibellaunus.	Found *HAB* 2.749

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[435] *Polychronicon*, I. p. xx-xxi, note 2 (3).

24	IV.III.44	*Gaufridus et Alfridus*	*Account of Kymbelinus.*	*Found HAB 2. 752-4*
25	IV.IV.8	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Guider refuses Roman tribute and Claudius invades.	Found HAB 2.754-5
26	IV.IV.9	Gaufridus et Alfridus et Willelmus de Regibus	Account of naming of Westmorland eponymously.	Found HAB 2 809-18
27	IV.IV.19	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Carausius.	Found HAB 3.939-60
28	V.IV.26	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Constantine.	Found HAB 3. 1023-51
29	*IV.IV.30*	*Gaufridus et Alfridus*	*Octavius king of Britain invites Maximus to marry his daughter Helen.[436]*	*Found HAB 3.1050-1*
30	V.IV.30.	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Conanus duke of Armorica.	Found HAB 3. 1078-84
31	V.IV.33.	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Guetelinus archbishop of London.	Found HAB 5 1312-15
32	V.V.I	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Vortigern giving land to Hengest in Lindsey.	Found HAB 5. 1373
33	V.V.I	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of Vortigern repudiating his lawful wife and marrying daughter of Hengest.	Found HAB 5. 1376
34	V.V.I	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of desertion of Vortigern by his subjects	Found HAB 5. 1402-3
35	V.V.I	Gaufridus et Alfridus	Account of 4 battles fought by Vortimer against the Saxons.	Found HAB 5. 1405-10
36	*V.V.I*	*Gaufridus et Alfridus*	*Death of Vortimern and restitution of Vortigern.*	*Found HAB 5 .1432-34*
37	V.V.I	Alfridus	In the 10th year of Brithric fiery dragons seen in sky.	Not found
38	VI.VI.6	Alfridus	King Athelstan gives his sister to Sithric of Northumbria.	Found HAB 8. 2937
39	VI.VI.7	Tradit Alfridus et Marianus	King Edmund killed in 7h year of his reign at Pulkirk.	Found HAB 8.2988-91
40	VII.VI.17	Marianus et Alfridus	Account of Ealdorman Eric's treachery in battle.	Found HAB 8.3153-63
41	VII.VI.17	Alfridus	*Aldhelm bishop of Lindisfarne dies*	*Not found*
42	VII.VI.29	Alfridus	On death of King Harold, Edwin and Morcar attempt to persuade Londoners to crown one of them.	Not found
43	VII.VII.I.	Alfridus	Post haec imminente hieme rex Willielmus Angliam rediit.	Found in HAB 9.3477
44	VII.VII.4	Alfridus	Hoc anno Dani dominum suum Canutum ….occiderunt.	Not found (Found in William of Malmesbury GRA

*Location in *Polychronicon* in RS printed edition given as volume, book and chapter.

Higden's method of naming and quoting sources in the text.

Higden's manner of quoting his sources in the text poses a number of difficulties in both identifying and checking the accuracy of the passages quoted. These difficulties need first to be considered before Higden's use of Alfred's *Historia* can be fully appraised. Higden's method involves first naming an authority and then inserting a passage of text supposedly taken from that authority. Normally, an authority is cited, for example '*Alfridus*' followed by a quoted passage (Fig 30 no. I). Frequently, more than one author is named

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[436] Entries 29, 36, 41 in italics are when Alfred is named as the source in the two English translations and in the apparatus to the Latin text of the RS edition, but not in the main Latin text.

followed by quoted material. For example, '*secundum Gaufridum et Alfridum*' (Fig 30 no.18), or '*item in chronicis Henrici et Alfridi habetur*' (Fig 30 no.12), or '*tradit Afridus et Marianus'* (Fig 30 no.39). For certain authorities, Higden often gives more precise source information; for example '*Beda, libro primo capitulo undecimo',*[437] or '*Willelmus de Pontificibus libro tertio.'*[438]

Of the forty-four acknowledgements of Alfred in the text he is named individually on nineteen occasions, and in combination with other authorities in twenty-five instances. As can be seen, Alfred is named most frequently with Geoffrey of Monmouth:

- 'Alfridus' -19
- 'Gaufridus et Alfridus' -21
- 'Marianus et Alfridus' -2
- 'Henricus et Alfridus' - 1
- 'Gaufridus, Alfridus, Willelmus de Regibus' -1

For the passages of text taken purportedly from the named authority, Higden adopts a very free manner of paraphrasing. Rarely is the material inserted verbatim, or closely abbreviated from the original text but is rewritten very freely in Higden's own words. Higden appears to write from his memory of a text or of texts previously read rather than abbreviate directly from his source texts, a quite distinct manner of working to Alfred of Beverley who abbreviates by rendering passages more concisely, whilst retaining many of the original words. Nine of the forty-four attributions to Alfred contain material not found in the text of the *Historia* - as we have it today (Fig 30 no's. 1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 37, 38, 42, 44). In some of these cases, Higden's attribution to Alfred appears to be simply a slip in the memory of a very widely-read man. For example in Fig 30 no. 37, where Higden attributes to Alfred the statement that in the tenth year of King Brihtric of the West Saxons fiery dragons were seen flying through the air, the material is from Henry of Huntingdon (*HA,* IV. 26) not Alfred. In the case of Fig 30 no. 44 the attribution to Alfred that King

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[437] *Polychronicon*, II.I.40, p. 8.
[438] *Polychronicon,* II.I.41, p.12.

Cnut IV was murdered by his own people in a church this is from William of Malmesbury (*GRA,* III. 261) not from Alfred.

In many cases where material is attributed to Alfred of Beverley, Higden's free paraphrasing renders it difficult to be certain that he has taken the material from Alfred rather than from other sources. As Alfred had recycled most of his material from authors also known and used by Higden in the *Polychronicon*; for example John of Worcester, Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth, it is only possible to be sure when a very close textual match is found and a good number of the quotations of Alfred fall into the unproven, though possible, category. However on at least six occasions in the *Polychronicon* (Fig 30 nos. 6, 7, 8, 14, 33, 43) the quoted material contains material either very close or unique to that found in the *Historia*, providing concrete evidence that Higden knew and used Alfred's text directly.

One such example is provided in Higden's description of the removal of the Flemings by Henry I to Rhos and his description of them as the 'seventh' people to have inhabited the island of Britain (Fig 30 no.14) which he attributed to Alfred. The removal of the Flemings to Wales by Henry I is reported by another of Higden's important sources, John of Worcester, but only Alfred describes them as a separate and 'sixth' people to have inhabited Britain. Higden took the information from Alfred but, by adding the Danes to the list of separate peoples, changed the number from sixth to seventh people.

Fig 30 item no.33 provides a second example. Higden cites '*Gaufridus et Alfridus'* and quotes a passage describing how King Vortigern had cast off his wife in favour of the beautiful daughter of the Saxon leader Hengist. When Alfred had abbreviated this passage from the *HRB* he added the words that Vortigern had cast off his *legitimate wife*, words found neither in the vulgate or variant versions of the *HRB,* but found recycled in the *Polychronicon*:

> *Gaufridus et Alfridus*, 'Celebratis his nuptiis rex <u>uxorem legitimam</u> repudiat, ex qua tres inclitos juvenes procreaverat' *Polychronicon* V.V.I.

'Deinde Wortigernus abjecta uxore legittima, ex qua iii.filios genuerat, id est Wortimerium, Kartigernum et Pascencium, filiam Hengisti paganam duxit uxorem' *HAB* 5. 1376-79

'Nupsit itaque rex eadem nocte paganae quae ultra modum placuit ei: unde in inimicitiam procerum et filiorum suorum citissime incidit. Generaverat namque filios primitus, quibus errant nomina Vortimer, Katigern, Paschent' *HRB* VI.365-68

Higden's manner of working with his sources changed over the course of his life. The Rolls Series editors made the important observation that Higden's quoting of sources deviated much more from the original text in the later versions of the *Polychronicon* than it did in its earlier versions.[439] As the printed edition has generally followed readings from a late and full version of the *Polychronicon* [440] bringing the text down to 1352, this implies that the present printed edition is not the best guide to identify Higden's sources with precision. This would be better served by consulting the early type C and D type manuscripts.[441]

Two further problems posed by Higden's use of sources require brief discussion. First is his frequent use of borrowed material without acknowledgement. In volume one of the printed edition, Isidore of Seville is named some fifty times but is also often used without acknowledgement.[442] Alfred of Beverley is also similarly used. In the chapter '*de legibus legumque vocabulis'* (*Polychronicon* I.I.50) no authority is named, but Higden's use of Alfred's *Historia* is probable.[443] Moreover a feature of Higden's use sources which renders their verification difficult is his frequent use of medieval

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[439] *Polychronicon*, I, p. xli, note 1.
[440] *Polychronicon*, II, p. lii, note 2. This is manuscript E, CUL MS Ii.III.I. The manuscripts used to prepare the RS edition are discussed in Taylor, *Universal Chronicle*, pp. 89-92.
[441] In the RS edition, manuscript C is Oxford, Magdalene College, MS 181 and manuscript D is Cambridge, St John's College, MS 12 (D).
[442] *Polychronicon*, I, p. xxi note I
[443] *Polychronicon*, II, p. xiii.

'*florilegia*' and encyclopaedias to quote authorities. Much of the material on the Greek philosophers in the *Polychronicon* is taken from the thirteenth century *Compendiloquium* of the Franciscan, John of Wales, who also may have provided Higden with his introduction to John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*.[444] From the *De Proprietatibus Rerum* of the Dominican, Bartholomaeus Anglicus, Higden took large amounts of descriptive material: on Asia Minor, Germany, Flanders and Picardy, all unacknowledged.[445]

The second problem is Higden's failure to demarcate when quoted material ends and his own narrative resumes. Distinguishing between material purportedly from an authority and Higden's own words is often a precarious undertaking.

A good example of a misreading resulting from unclear textual 'demarcation' of the type described, is afforded in an attribution to Alfred of Beverley in the text. This comes in the chapter *Polychronicon* '*de provinciis et comitatibus'* (Fig 30 no. 9). The chapter begins with '*Alfridus*', and describes the shires and provinces of England. For the most part it follows Alfred's account (*HAB* 6.2616-38). At the midway point of the chapter however, Higden introduces material not found in Alfred describing the nature of wapentakes and hundreds. The additions blend seamlessly into the narrative with no further source attribution made by Higden. The chapter concludes with a passage describing William I's Domesday survey. This is part-based on Alfred but contains mostly new material, including the statement that England contained 52,080 '*villae'*, vills or townships; 45,002 '*ecclesiae parochiales'*, parishes; 60,015, '*feoda militum'*, enfeoffed knights, 28,015 of whom 'the church has enfeoffed':

> 'Quas omnes fecit Willelmus Conquaestor describi, et per hydas seu carucatas dimetiri, et inventi sunt comitatus triginta sex et dimidium, villae vero quinquaginta duo milia et octoginta, ecclesiae parochiales quadraginta quinque milia duo, feoda militum 60,015 de quibus religiosi habent 28,015

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[444] Taylor, *Universal Chronicle,* pp. 74 and 79.
[445] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

feoda: sed, hodie, nemoribus succisis novalibusque procisis, multo plures
sunt hidae et villae quam tunc erant.'
Polychronicon II.I.49.

Alfred of Beverley's description of the Domesday survey is the following:

'Interjecto perparvo tempore <u>rex Willielmus</u> <u>fecit describi</u> <u>omnem</u> Angliam
quantum terrae quisque baronum possidebat, quot feudatos milites, quot
carucatas, quot villanos, quot animalia, ymmo quantum vivae peccuniae
quisque possidebat in omni regno suo a maximo usque ad minimum et
quantum redditus quaeque possessio reddere poterat et vexata est terra
multis cladibus inde procedentibus.'
HAB 9. 3706-10

'Very shortly afterwards King William had a record of the whole of England
made; how much land each of his barons possessed, how many enfeoffed
knights, how many ploughs, villeins, animals, indeed how much livestock
each man owned in his whole kingdom, from the greatest to the lowest and
how much each estate was able to render, and the country was harassed
with much loss resulting from this (record).'

The underlined phrase '*fecit describi rex Willelmi'* is all that is taken from in
Alfred of Beverley; the other details are Higden's additions taken from other
sources. Because the chapter had commenced with '*Alfridus*' and continues
without interruption this suggests that Alfred was the source of everything in
the chapter, and this indeed is how the chapter has recently been read by a
modern scholar. For example, in discussing Higden's '*Descriptio*' of Britain in
the *Polychronicon*, C.Given-Wilson discusses how the myth that Britain
contained 45,000 parishes was popularised by Ranulf Higden.[446] So influential
was the chronicle that the 1371 Parliament decided to grant Edward III a
parish- by-parish tax of £50,000 calculated at approximately £1 per parish.
When the returns came in the government discovered there were only 8,600
parishes, and each parish was then asked to contribute £5 16s. Given Wilson

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[446] C. Given- Wilson, *Chronicles. The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London,
2004), p. 242, note 81.

wrote 'Where Higden got his figure from is far from clear: he claimed he derived the material for this chapter from the mid twelfth-century chronicle from Alfred of Beverley, but this particular figure is not mentioned there.' [447]

It is doubtful that in opening the chapter with '*Alfridus*' Higden had intended to suggest that everything contained in chapter was to be attributed to Alfred of Beverley, only that a part of it was. Where that part ends, is not at all clear. Higden's manner of acknowledging and using his sources is therefore challenging and the text in the printed edition, representing Higden's later and more freely paraphrased writing, exacerbates the problem. Quoting the Rolls Series editor, Churchill Babington, 'I am compelled to say of his (Higden's) quotations and references generally, *Caveat lector.*' [448]

Higden's use of the *Historia* in the *Polychronicon*

Of Insular authorities only William of Malmesbury, Bede and Gerald of Wales are named and quoted significantly more frequently than Alfred in the *Polychronicon*.

- William of Malmesbury   166
- Bede   135
- Gerald of Wales   66
- Henry of Huntingdon   49
- Geoffrey of Monmouth   46
- Alfred of Beverley   44
- John of Worcester   39

Most frequent quotation of Alfred occurs in book I of the *Polychronicon*, the '*Mappa Mundi*', of which twenty-two chapters out of sixty are devoted to a geo-historical description of Britain. This was a section of his chronicle which

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[447] Ibid.
[448] *Polychronicon*, II. p. vii note 2.

later was of particular interest to medieval readers.[449] Alfred and material from the *Historia* is quoted by Higden across the seven books of the *Polychronicon* in the following manner:

Fig. 31. Distribution of citations of Alfred in the *Polychronicon*

Bk I Mappa Mundi and description of Ireland, Wales Scotland, Britain.	Bk 2 Foundation of Britain by Brutus and early British history.	Bk 3 Early British History, Belinus, Brennius, Dunwallo Molmutio.	Bk 4 British history to the end of Roman rule on island.	Bk 5. Vortigern, the Saxons to the, invasions of Danes.	Bk 6 King Alfred to the coming of the Normans	Bk 7 William I to Edward III
14	4	6	7	6	5	2

For his geo-historical description of Britain Higden's sources included Alfred of Beverley, Bede, Gerald of Wales, William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Henry of Huntingdon with material also taken from John of Salisbury, Marianus Scotus, Pliny, Solinus, Orosius and Isidore of Seville. However examination of Higden's use of these sources in compiling the survey of Britain reveals Alfred's particular importance. Some nineteen constituent elements of Higden's survey of Britain have been identified, from the naming of Britain as 'alter orbis', to the distinct periods in its history and for each one, the authority to whom Higden has called on for information is noted. In fifteen cases, considerably more than any other authority, Alfred is a quoted source. In seven of these cases, he is the principal authority quoted.

Fig. 32. Higden's 'Description of Britain.' Sources used for each constituent element.

	Descriptive Element	Bede	W. of Malm.	Henry of Hunt.	Geoffrey of Mon.	Alfred of Bev.	Gerald of Wales
1	Naming of Britain and island as 'alter orbis'	√				√	
2	Foundation of Britain by Brutus				√	√	
3	Position, shape and measurement	√				√	√
4	Minerals and resources	√	√	√ (poem)		√ (Poem)	√

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[449] Taylor, *Universal Chronicle,* p.58.

5	Marvels and *Mirabilia*		√			√	√
6	Three famous rivers		√			√	
7	Royal roads				√	√	
8	Shires and provinces	√				√	
9	Islands	√					√
10	Cities	√	√		√	√	√
11	Laws of Britain				Geoffrey used but not named	Alfred used but not named	
12	Episcopal sees		√			√	√
13	Bishops	√	√				
14	Origins of its peoples	√			√	√	√
15	Languages		√				
16	Manners of the peoples	√		√			√
17	Establishment of the seven English kingdoms					√	
18	Its seven peoples include the Flemings					√	
19	Periods of Britain's history			√		√	
	TOTAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND QUOTATIONS	9	7	3	5	15	8

The seven instances where Alfred is the main authority include the marvels and *mirabilia* of Britain, its famous rivers, its shires and provinces, the periods of its history, the establishment of the seven Saxon kingdoms, its bishoprics, its seven peoples including the Flemings. In an eighth, the description of Britain's cities, whilst Higden quotes Bede first, it is to Alfred that Higden turns to supply the names of the cities. These eight descriptive elements are of central interest for an understanding of Britain's historical geography, and it is Alfred of Beverley to whom Higden attributes authority.

How Higden has absorbed ideas from the *Historia* can be also be seen from his description of the periods of Britain's history, provided in chapter fifty-one of book one of the *Polychronicon, 'De Regnis regnorumque limitibus'* [450] The chapter, in which Alfred is quoted three times (Fig 30.. no's. 10, 11, 12) describes the distinctive periods Britain's history, from its foundation by Brutus to Higden's day and examination of the content shows its dependence on Alfred of Beverley's periodization in the *Historia* (as outlined for example in Fig. 6). The chapter opens with a summary survey of the island's historical periods and then continues with an account of the establishment of the seven Saxon kingdoms, eventually unified under the dominion of Athelstan. For both the summary survey and the account of the establishment of the heptarchy, *'Alfridus'* is the main authority quoted and an analysis of the text indicates direct borrowing from the text of the *Historia.* Higden's summary survey is given in translation first and then its representation in historical periods, and their closeness to Alfred's in the *Historia* is noted:

Polychronicon II.I.51

'From Brutus in the beginning until Julius Caesar, the monarchy of the island of the Britons stood unshaken and then from Julius until Severus it was conquered and subjected to tribute by the Romans. It had, nevertheless, its own kings until, from Severus to finally Gratian Municeps, with the succession of the Britons having failed, the Romans ruled on the island. Finally because of the long journeys of the Romans and unavoidable occupations elsewhere, they ceased to rule and the Picts and Irish severely afflicted Britain, which was emptied of all armed force; commandeered by the tyrant Maximus. Finally the Saxons, invited by the Britons [to fight] against the Picts, and the Britons themselves with their king Careticus, expelled Gormund, king of the Irish with his Pictish allies from Loegria and drove them into Wales. And thus the Saxons emerged the victors, and whatever province was the stronger made its own kings and they divided the land of England into seven kingdoms which however later succeeded, or they united, into one kingdom under prince Athelstan. The Danes however, from the days of Æthelwulf, father of

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[450] *Polychronicon* II.I.51.p.97. The anonymous fifteenth century translation is given as *'of the realms and merkes of theyme'*.

Alfred , to the time of St Edward the third, for nearly one hundred and seventy years constantly harassed the land, where they reigned continuously for thirty years. After the Danes, St Edward the third reigned twenty three years and a little more and after him Harold held the kingdom for nine months. After which the Normans have ruled on the island to the present day'

This summary comprises the nine distinct periods, set out in Fig. 33 below. The Latin text is supplied for each of the periods. Underlined words are those found in Alfred's *Historia*:

Fig. 33. Ranulf Higden's periodization of Britain's history (*Poly*.II.I.51)

	Historical Period	Description
1	Brutus to Julius Caesar. Rule of British kings uncontested.	Inconcussa stetit apud Britones insulae monarchia, a primo scilicet Bruto usque ad Julium Caesarem
2	J. Caesar to Severus. Britain under tribute to Rome but with its own Kings	A quo Julio usque ad Severum haec insula Romanis fuit vectigalis et subacta. Reges tamen habuit ex seipsa a Severo
3	From Severus to Gratian Municeps Britain, its line of kings ended, is ruled by Romans	quoque usque ad ultimum municipem Gratianum deficiente Britonum successione, Romani in ea regnaverunt
4	Romans depart & Britons left defenceless by tyrant Maximus. Island is subject to Irish and Pictish raids	Romanis tandem propter itineris longitudinem seu propter inevitabiles aliunde occupationes regnare desistentibus, Scoti et Picti Britanniam, omni armato milite per abductionem Maximi tyranni vacuatam, diutius afflixerunt
5	Saxons invited in to protect Britons and the Irish king Gormund and the Picts are driven into Wales	quousque Saxones a Britonibus invitati contra Pictos regem Hibernicum Gurmundum cum Pictis suis et ipsos Britones cum Caretico rege suo de Loegria expulsos usque ad Cambriam profugassent
6	Saxons gain power and seven kingdoms formed, finally united under King Athelstan	Sicque Saxones victores effecti, prout quaeque provincia potentior erat, reges proprios sibi constituentes, terram Angliae in septem regna diviserunt, quae tamen postmodum successive in unam monarchiam sub principe Adelstano coierunt.
7	Period of Danish attacks until time of St Edward III	Dani tamen a diebus Adelwolfi, patris Aluredi, usque ad tempora Sancti Edwardi tertii per centum septuaginta circiter annos terram hanc jugiter infestaverunt, sed per triginta annos in ea continue regnaverunt.

8	Rule of St Edward III and Harold	Post Danos vero Sanctus Edwardus tertius viginti tribus annis et paulo plus et post eum Haroldus novem mensibus regnum tenuit
9	Rule of Normans until the present day	Post quos Normanni in ea usque hodie praesedurunt,.

The passages from the *Historia* from where Higden has borrowed material are as follows:

> 'Hactenus secundus Britannici regni status descriptus sit, qui a Cassibellauno incipiens, in Lucio desiit. In quo statu Britannia per Caesarem <u>vectigalis</u> est effecta, quae a primo rege Bruto usque ad eundem Cassibellaunum <u>stetit libertate continua</u>.'
> *HAB* 2. 826-30

> 'To this point, the second 'state' of the kingdom of the British has been described, beginning with Cassibellaunus and ending with Lucius. In this period Britain was subjected to tribute by Caesar, as from the first King Brutus until Cassibellaunus it had enjoyed continuous freedom.'

> 'Unde paulo superius est repetendum, et diligenti consideracione intuendum, quod sicut, <u>deficiente post regem Lucium regali prosapia Britannici generis</u>, mutandus erat in regno Britanniae status dominacionis, ita per ejusdem regis industriam reprobato cultu paginacae supersticionis, ibidem mutatus sit cum cultu eciam ritus religionis.'
> *HAB* 3. 848-54

> A little of the earlier account needs to be repeated and careful consideration given as to how, with the royal stock of the British race ending after Lucius, and the era of their mastery in the kingdom of Britain had passed, by the efforts of that king (Lucius) the practice of pagan superstition was condemed and it was replaced by the worship of the rights of religion.

> Defuncto rege Lucio, Romani in Britannia regnare coeperunt. Quamvis enim antea sub potestate Romana per Julium Caesarem redacta esset insula,

tamen usque ad praedictum regem Lucium Britones reddendo tributum
<u>regnaverunt in ea.</u>
HAB 3. 895-8

On the death of King Lucius, the Romans began to rule in Britain. Although
the island had been earlier brought under Roman control by Julius Caesar,
nevertheless the Britons had ruled in the island whilst rendering tribute until
the time of the above named+ King Lucius.

In primordio enim regni Anglorum non unum erat inter eos regnum, sed, ut
<u>quaeque provincia potencior erat</u>, <u>proprium sibi regem</u> constituebat. Isque
status in Anglia multo tempore cucurrit, donec potentissimus <u>rex Edelstanus</u>
<u>tocius Angliae monarchium primus Anglorum optinuit.</u>
HAB 6. 2127-32

At first, therefore, there was not one royal authority among them in the
kingdom of England; whatever province was stronger, established its own
king. And this state of affairs continued for a long period in Anglia until the
most powerful king Athelstan became the first of the Angles (English) to
obtain the monarchy of all Anglia (England).

Higden has not only quarried Alfred textually but his divisions of Britain's
history, for the seven periods down to the rule of the Norman kings, closely
match the periodization adopted by Alfred in the *Historia* .

The remainder of chapter fifty-one narrates the establishment of the seven
English kingdoms. It cites Alfred as its sole authority but draws on further
sources. Knowledge of John of Worcester's dynastic accounts and
genealogies, amongst the preliminary material of the Worcester chronicle, is
suggested by Higden's occasional quotation of Dionysian chronology, for
example, '*In Bernicia coepit primus regnare Ida, anno gratiae, secundum
Dionysium DXLVII*[O.]' Higden supplies additional geographic observation when
discussing Northumbria, for example he refers to the river Mersey. But
Higden's indebtedness to Alfred is attested by textual borrowings. Describing
Northumbria Higden writes, '*Hoc autem regnum Northimbrorum primitus*

divisum fuit in duas provincias; in Deiram ad austrum, et in Berniciam ad aquilonem' which is very closely matched in *Historia* book six : '*Regnum Northumbrorum primum in duas provincias divisum fuit, in Berniciam et Deiram* (*HAB* 6. 2390-91).

Alfred's influence on Higden's reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* in the *Polychronicon*

Alfred's influence on Ranulf Higden's reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB* is manifested in the *Polychronicon* by the frequency with which Higden acknowledges Alfred alongside Geoffrey as the authority for material originating in the *HRB*. Of the forty-six instances when Higden quotes '*Gaufridus*' in the *Polychronicon*, on twenty-one occasions he acknowledges him jointly with Alfred; '*Gaufridus et Alfridus.'* Moreover, on at least one occasion when Higden cites '*Gaufridus et Alfridus'*, he has taken his reading from Alfred's *Historia,* not from the *HRB*. This is the account of Vortigern casting off his legitimate wife in favour of the daughter of Hengist (Fig 30 no. 33).[451] In the *Polychronicon* therefore, Alfred appears to have been regularly deployed by Higden as a witness to the veracity of Geoffrey's account of early British history.

That Higden did have concerns about the veracity of elements of the *HRB* is made clear in two passages in the *Polychronicon* where Higden openly raises concerns about the credibility of Geoffrey's account. Both passages use very similar lines of argument to those expressed by Alfred in the *Historia*:

> Passage I
> 'Caeterum quae de stagno, de duobus draconibus albo et rubeo, de caduca Vortigerni structura, de fantastica Merlini genitura, de prophetia ejusdem tam

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[451] But for the problems posed by Higden's very free paraphrasing and narrating from memory, discussed above, and given the frequency of joint acknowledgement, it is possible that further instances of Higden taking his readings from Alfred, whilst naming *Gaufridus* remain to be observed.

obscura, in solo Britannico libro continentur, praesenti historiae addidissem, si ea veritate suffulta <u>credidissem.</u>' *Polychronicon.* V.V.I

' Of the other things about the lake, of the two dragons white and red, of the collapsing tower of Vortigern, of Merlin's fantastic birth and of his prophecies so mysterious and which are contained only in the British book, I would have included them in the present history, if I had believed them to be true.'

Alfred had promised in his prologue to include in the *Historia* only those things that did not exceed the bounds of faith, '*quae fidem non excederent'* and, amongst the considerable material which he omitted, are two of the points mentioned here by Higden; the account of the white and red sleeping dragons and the prophecies of Merlin, although Alfred had retained the description of Merlin's semi-demonic birth and the account of Vortigern's collapsing tower. The points of doubt and Higden use of the word '*credidissem*', therefore directly recall the concerns and comments made by Alfred about Geoffrey's account in the *Historia*:

> Passage 2
> 'Ceterum de isto Arthuro, quem inter omnes chronographos solus Gaufridus sic extollit, mirantur multi quomodo veritatem sapere possint quae de eo praedicantur, pro eo quod si Arthurus, sicut scribit Gaufridus terdena regna acquisivit, si regem Francorum subjugavit, si Lucium procuratorem reipublicae apud Italiam interfecit, cur omnes historici Romani, Franci, Saxonici tot insignia de tanto viro omiserunt, qui de minoribus viris tot minora retulerunt.' *Polychronicon.* V.V.6

> 'About this Arthur, whom amongst all the chroniclers only Geoffrey so extolls and many men marvel how the things that are said about could be true. For if he had gained thirty kingdoms, as Geoffrey writes, and if he had conquered the king of France and if he had killed Lucius the Roman procurator in Italy why did all the Roman, French and German historians overlook so many great deeds of such a great man while recounting so many minor deeds of lesser men ?'

Higden's challenge is deeper and sharper than Alfred's, but he builds his attack on the same points raised at the conclusion to book five of the *Historia*. Why are the continental deeds of Arthur only reported in Geoffrey's book and not mentioned by the historians of the countries affected by these Arthurian deeds, in the Roman, French and German histories?

Higden challenges Geoffrey's Arthurian account more vigorously than Alfred, perhaps because he had read William of Newburgh's *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* (c. 1196 x 1198) and its prefatory denunciation of Geoffrey's 'mendacious fictions.' A '*Wilhelmus Rievallensis*' is one of Higden's prefatory authorities and this is believed to be William of Newburgh.[452] Higden's criticism of Geoffrey in book five, chapter six of the *Polychronicon*, '*De imperatoribus et de Arthuro rege Britannico'*, reproduces a good deal of William's line of argument. Geoffrey's chronological impossibilities are highlighted, although Higden points to different inconsistencies than had William. Higden, for example, points out that Arthur was not a contemporary with the emperor Leo but with the emperor Justinian, five emperors later. He points out that there was no Roman procurator Lucius Hiberius at the time of the emperor Leo. William had shown that if Arthur was fourth British king in succession to Vortigern, as so described in the *HRB*, that would make him a contemporary of King Æthelberht of Kent, converted by St Augustine. On the authority of Bede, it was historically impossible to have had Arthur as the king of a unitary British kingdom, ruling a continental empire at the time of the Augustine mission. Other points of William's attack on Geoffrey also appear in Higden's challenge: Arthur conquering thirty kingdoms, the reference to Alexander the Great and William's observation that Geoffrey's work was simply an attempt to please and extoll the deeds of the Britons. Although Ranulf's criticisms go further than Alfred's, there can be little question of Alfred's influence; both in terms of the line of argument and the open intervention in the text.

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[452] See note 430 p. 244.

In their reception of Geoffrey's history, both Alfred and Ranulf Higden reflect a similar capacity to compartmentalise their views. Both express doubt and misgivings at the Arthurian content, but then accept much of Geoffrey's account as historical. Scepticism about one part of the history does not undermine belief in the other, as it did in the case of William of Newburgh. Higden defends Geoffrey on occasion. Twice in the *Polychronicon* he comments on errors made by William of Malmesbury because he had not read Geoffrey's history. First is William's statement in the *Historia Pontificum* that it was Julius Caesar who discovered the hot springs of Bath, not Bladud, as Geoffrey had it, with the remark, ' *Forsan Willelmus qui Britannicum librum non viderat, ista exaliorum relatu aut ex propria conjectura, sicut et quaedam alia'*…..[453] '*Perhaps William, who had not seen the British book, got this from the accounts of others, or from his own conjecture, as in certain other things.*' Second he observes that William's contention that the name of Westmorland derived from the Roman consul Marius, rather than the British king Marius, was a mistake which occurred because he had not read Geoffrey's history; ' *sicut testator Gaufridus in suo libro Britannico, quem Willielmus Malmesburiensis nusquam viderat'*,[454] '*As attests Geoffrey in his British book which William of Malmesbury never saw.'* The impression, therefore, that Higden's reception of Geoffrey of Monmouth's history in the *Polychronicon* leaves is that was considerably influenced by Alfred of Beverley*.* Higden appears to have taken Alfred's reception of the *HRB* in the *Historia* as a model guiding his own.

The afterlife of Alfred I. Ranulf Higden. Summary and conclusions.

In important parts of Ranulf Higden's account of Britain's history in the *Polychronicon,* Alfred of Beverley's *Historia* was a highly influential text. In his '*Mappa Mundi*' in book one of the *Polychronicon*, in the geographic description of Britain - that part of the *Polychronicon* which perhaps

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[453] *Polychronicon* II.I.47, p.58.
[454] *Polychronicon* II.I.48, p.70.

contributed most to its lasting appeal - Alfred's *Historia* was seminal. Alfred was the most frequently quoted authority for geo-historic descriptive material for Britain and the main source quoted for several of its most important constituent elements. Ranulf Higden's summary of the periodization of Britain's history, *De Regnis regnorumque limitibus'*, appears to have been shaped by Alfred's *Historia*. Some hundred and seventy years after Alfred had singled out the Flemings as an emergent sixth people of Britain, Ranulf recycled the idea and comment, naming the Flemings as the seventh of the island's peoples, as he had added the Danes to Alfred's list. And finally in the reception of the Galfridian material in the *Polychronicon*, Alfred's influence is very marked; both in Higden's frequent use of Alfred as an authority supporting *Gaufridus* in the text and in Higden's direct interventions to question the historicity of elements of Geoffrey's accounts which appear modelled on Alfred's own interventions in the *Historia*. Without question, it is the platform which the *Polychronicon* provided for Alfred , which propelled him to a position of considerable importance in the historiography of the period from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, now to be discussed.

Chapter 7. The afterlife of Alfred of Beverley II. c.1350 – c.1605.

Introduction

After the appearance of the *Polychronicon* in c.1327, acknowledgements of Alfred of Beverley, with material attributed to him, begin to appear with regularity in the historical, topographical and literary sources. In order to gain a fuller understanding of the place of Alfred and the *Historia* in the historiography of the period, a preliminary catalogue of citations of Alfred as an historical authority and usage of material attributed to him in the historical literature of the period has been compiled. Many of the more important historical compilations of the period have been surveyed including unpublished as well as printed works. The catalogue is preliminary and indicative; a fully comprehensive survey would be beyond the scope of the present study. The extent of acknowledgement of Alfred found in the sources surveyed clearly indicates that he was considered an authority of importance to the historians, scholars and antiquarians of the late medieval and early modern period.

Fourteenth Century

1. John of Tynemouth (fl.c.1350). *Historia Aurea.*

The *Historia Aurea* of John of Tynemouth, a universal chronicle covering the period from the creation of the world to 1347, written c. 1350, [455] and indebted to the early short version of the *Polychronicon* for its account of British history up to the Norman Conquest, cites Alfred as an authority. The work, some seven times the length of the *Polychronicon,* [456] has never been printed. It survives in three principal copies: from Durham, Bury St Edmunds and St Albans. The St Albans copy, now in the Parker Library of Corpus

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[455] Taylor, *Universal Chronicle,* p.101 and see also John Taylor, 'Tynemouth, John (*fl*.c.1350)', *ODNB*, 55 (Oxford, 2004), pp. 795-6.
[456] Taylor, *Universal Chronicle,* p.144.

Christi College Cambridge, was made for the abbey (c. 1420) by William Wyntershulle, Almoner, when John Whethampstede became abbot.[457]

The St Alban's *Historia Aurea* consists of two volumes, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 5 and MS 6, written in two hands. C.C.C.C. MS 5 contains a description of the world in book I. For the description of Britain, *Alfridus* is cited several times in the margins of the book as follows: fol. 23 [r] (thrice), fol. 23 [v] (twice), and once each on folios 24 [r], 24 [v] and 25 [r]. Material attributed to Alfred in these marginal references includes passages on Britain as an '*alter orbis*', verses on *Anglia,* the marvels and rivers of Britain and its shires and counties. The citations and quotations of Alfred in the *Historia Aurea* bear the hallmarks of having been taken from Higden's *Polychronico*n, not directly from the *Historia*, as they recyle Higden's incorrect attributions of material to Alfred, as for example in Fig. 30 items 1 and 5.

Plate 6. John of Tynemouth *Historia Aurea*, fol 25 [r]

Alfred cited for the statement of Ranulf Higden (Fig. 30 no.10).
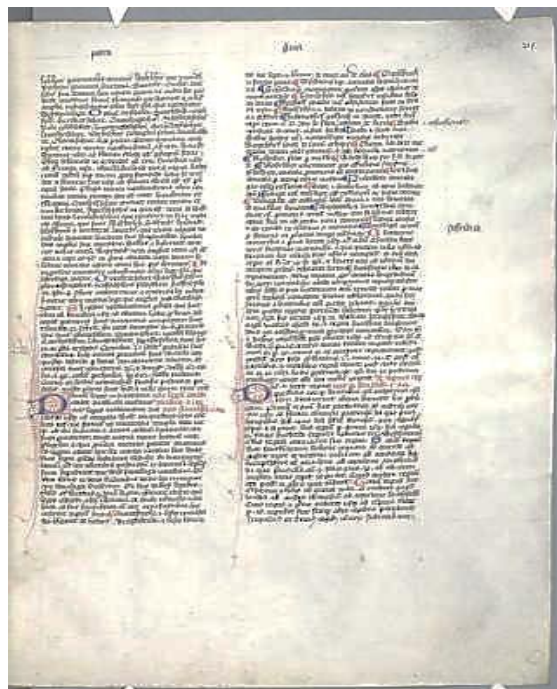
Reproduced with the kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College Cambridge.

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[457] M.R.James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912), p.14.

2. John of Brompton (fl.1436-c.1464).Chronicle.

The chronicle of John of Brompton, abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Jervaulx
(1436- c.1464) covers the period from the coming of St Augustine in 588 until
the death of Richard I in 1199 and is printed in *Twysden's Historiae
Anglicanae Scriptores Decem* of 1652. [458] To Alfred of Beverley the compiler
attributes the description of the murder of King Edmund I, son of Edward the
Elder and Eadgifu, in Pucklechurch, Gloucestershire May 946 and later buried
at Glastonbury:

> ' et demum cum ferme septem annis regnasset et omnia ei prospere
> contigissent, ita quod solus rex in Anglia diceretur, ut *Alfridus
> Beverlacensis thesaurius narrat*, dum iste Edmundus dapiserum suum
> de manibus aemulorum eripere vellet, interjectus est ab eisdem in
> regia villa de Pulcrechirche et apud Glastoniam delatus, a beati
> Dunstano, tunc ibidem abate honorifice tumulatus'[459]

That the compiler took this quotation directly from the *Historia* is uncertain.
Higden's *Polychronicon* describes this episode, citing *Alfridus et Marianus*
(Fig 30 no.40).

3. Malmesbury Abbey (c.1360).The anonymous *Eulogium Historiarum.*

Compiled at the request of the then abbot of Malmesbury, the *Eulogium* is a
world history written in five books, the final book dealing with British History
from Brutus down to 1366. [460] The work is believed to have been completed
in the 1360s.[461] The work is indebted to Higden's *Polychronicon* and provides
a prefatory list of authorities used to in the compilation. Alfred is named

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[458] *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores Decem*, ed. R.Twysden (London, 1652), cols. 726-
1284, at col. 858.

[459] Ibid., Lines 10-17.

[460] *Eulogium. Historiarum sive Temporis.Chronicon ab Orbe Condito usque AD 1346*,
ed. F.S.Haydon, RS 9, 3 vols (London, 1858-63).

[461] Taylor, *Historical Literature*, p.106.

twenty-fourth of twenty-six authorities. No other use or reference to Alfred is made in the compilation.

4. John Trevisa (born c.1342, died before 1402). Middle English translation of the *Polychronicon.*

The appeal of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* is attested by the demand for vernacular versions of his work, the most prominent being John Trevisa's translation, completed in 1387.Trevisa's translation survives in at least fourteen complete manuscripts, which considering the wide availability of the Latin original and the expense of producing such a large work, indicates the interest and demand which must have existed for it.[462]

Trevisa, a Cornishman, translated the *Polychronicon* under the patronage of Lord Thomas Berkeley, for whom he became family chaplain c.1379. In the 1370s, Trevisa had been Fellow of Queen's College Oxford, then associated with the Wycliffite circle and the Lollard movement. Nicholas Hereford, a translator of the Lollard bible, was a Fellow of Queen's at the same time as Trevisa. Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon* is, however, believed to have been encouraged by Lord Berkeley more out of a general interest in extending areas of learning to a wider lay constituency than from Lollard sympathy.[463] That said, the *Polychronicon* was a text which was used by the Lollards and John Wycliffe quarried it in his writings, borrowing particularly from Book IV dealing with early Christianity and Book VII, dealing with post Conquest Insular history. [464]

A characteristic of Trevisa's translation of the *Polychronicon* is his occasional interjection of forthright personal opinion. Alfred of Beverley incurs Trevisa's displeasure for failing to include Cornwall in his list of the thirty-five shires of

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[462] Edwards, 'The Influence', p. 113. For the list of manuscripts see note 2, p.117.
[463] Discussed in Taylor, *Universal Chronicle*, pp.134-138, and see also Ronald Waldron, 'Trevisa, John (b.c.1342, d.in or before 1402)', *ODNB*, 55 (Oxford, 2004), pp.353-4.
[464] Edwards, 'The Influence', p.114.

England. Trevisa adds an extensive gloss to his translation pointing out the reasons why Cornwall is a shire of England ending with the comment '*If Alfrede saith nay in pat, he wot nougt what he maketh.*'

Fifteenth Century

5*.* The Chronicle of Thomas Rudborne (fl. 1447-1454).

Thomas Rudborne's *Historia Major Ecclesiae Wintoniensis - The History of the Church of Winchester-* is a Latin history covering the period AD 164 - 1138, completed in 1454.[465]   The chronicle is for the greater part arranged in chapters devoted to the reigns of kings. [466] Rudborne was widely acquainted with the chronicles and histories of England and the antiquary John Rous described him, for example, as 'the most learned man of his times in the chronicles of the English.'[467] Rudborne quotes Alfred of Beverley when listing the cities of Britain in chapter II of the chronicle:

> 'Regio Britanniae quondam erat civitatibus nobilissimis XXVIII insignita, praetor castella innumera, quae et ipsa muris, turribus, portis ac feris erant instructa firmissimsi. *Sic Alfredus'* [468]

Rudborne's quotation of Alfred appears almost certainly taken from Higden's *Polychronicon* not from Alfred's History. Higden opens his chapter *De antiquis urbibus* (II.I.47) with exactly Rudborne's words, followed by citing *Alfridus* in similar vein to Rudborne and then naming twenty British cities. Rudborne names twenty-three cities and his list of cities bears far closer resemblance to Higden's than to Alfred's.

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[465] Alexander R. Rumble, 'Rudborne, Thomas (fl.1447-1454), *ODNB*, 74 (Oxford, 2004), p.74.
[466] Rudborne's chronicle is printed in *Anglia Sacra* I ed. Henry Wharton (London, 1691), pp. 179-286.
[467] Gransden, *HWE* II, p.322.
[468] *Anglia Sacra*, p.181.

6. The cartulary chronicle of Hyde Abbey (c.1400 - c.1450).

Occupying folios 22-237 of London, BL Cotton Domit. A.xiv is a combined
cartularly and chronicle of England from the settlement of the Saxons to the
reign of King Cnut (1023), written in a hand of the first half of the fifteenth
century.[469] The work was edited and printed in the Rolls Series in 1866.[470]
The anonymous compiler quotes Alfred when narrating the establishment of
the East Saxon kingdom *ut scibit Alfridus in sua Chronica.*[471] He quotes Alfred
a second time in reporting the birth of St Dunstan and saying of Dunstan
*'cujus vita tota, ab ortu ad exitum, virtutibus et miraculis coruscavit, ut scribit
Alfredus Beverlacensis thesaurarius in Chronica sua.'*[472] Alfred is quoted a
third time in conjunction with *Marianus* in reporting the murder of King
Edmund I in the seventh year of his reign at Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire
(946).[473] The attributions of material to Alfred are not accurate and, for
example, the third quotation citing *Alfredus* et *Marianus* indicates that the
anymous compiler of Hyde Abbey was almost certainly taking his readings of
Alfred from the *Polychronicon* (Fig 30 no.40).

7. John Rous *Historia Regum Angliae* (c.1420-1492).

The Warwickshire scholar, antiquary and topographer John Rous left a
collection of literature on the town of Warwick, the bishops of Worcester, the
chantry of Guy's Cliffe, the earls of Warwick, Cambridge University and a tract
which was seen, with notes taken, by John Leland in c.1540. Rous's Historia
Regum Angliae began life as a research project for an Oxford colleague, John
Seymour, and expanded into a general history of England. [474] In the *Historia*
Rous refers to a tract which he had earlier written on giants. The *Historia* was

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[469] *The Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle*, p.xiv. note 2.
[470] *Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, ed. E. Edwards, RS 45 (London, 1866).
[471] Ibid., p. 9.
[472] Ibid., p.117.
[473] Ibid., p.137.
[474] *Joannis Rossi Antiquarii Warwicensis Historia Regum Angliae*, ed. T. Hearne
(Oxford, 1745).

completed towards the end of his life, in 1486. [475] Rous quotes Alfred alongside Geoffrey of Monmouth for the details of Brutus's origins. No other reference or quotation of Alfred is found elsewhere in the work:

> 'Brutus de nobili stirpe Trojanorum, *secundum Galfridum ac Alfridum*, ac multos alios historiographos de gestis Britonum scribentes..'[476]

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8. William Caxton (c.1415 x 1424-1492) The *Descripcion of Brytayne* and the *Polychronicon.*

Amongst William Caxton's first printed works in English after his return to England from the continent in c.1476 were books of history and historical geography. In 1480 he printed *The Chronicles of England* - a version of the *Brut* - and in August of that year he published a twenty-nine chapter geographical - historical survey of the British Isles, the *Descripcion of Brytayne.* The *Descripcion* consisted of selected passages of Trevisa's 1385 translation of the geographic material contained in book one of the *Polychronicon.* In 1482 Caxton printed the complete *Polychronicon*, where he considerably modernised Trevisa's 1385 English text.

Caxton's *Descripcion of Brytayne* attributes descriptive passages to Alfred in chapters I, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 12, 14. [477] Amongst this material is Britain as '*alter orbis*' and the description of Britain as 'Charlemagne's chamber' for its abundance of good things material attributed to Alfred by Ranulf Higden (Fig.30 item I), but not found in the *Historia* in the text as it appears in the Hearne edition. Other descriptive content   attributed to Alfred is Britain's length from Penwithstreet in Cornwall to Caithness, its natural resources, verses in praise of Anglia, its marvels and its ancient cities and shires. Chapter fourteen, on Britain's peoples, quotes Alfred for material on the

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[475] Nicholas Orme, 'Rous, John (c.1420-1492)' *ODNB*, 47 (Oxford, 2004), pp. 953-4. I am indebted to Professor Orme for having drawn my attention to this reference to Alfred of Beverley.

[476] *Rossi Historia Regum Angliae*, p. 18.

[477] For a modern English version of the *Descripcion* see, Marie Collins, *Caxton The Description of Britain, A Modern Rendering* (London, 1988).

Danish invasions between the time of King Ecgberht and Edward the Confessor. The *Descripcion* includes material ultimately deriving from Alfred, such as Higden's description of the Flemings as the seventh people of Britain (Fig 30 item 14). Another interesting absorption of Alfredian material in Caxton's *Description* is found in chapter twelve, '*Of kingdoms of boundaries and merkis between them.'* The chapter quotes Alfred in describing Kent as the first kingdom established after the Saxons had assumed control of the island, and opens by recycling Higden's summarising account of the island's history, which as earlier noted, Higden had largely absorbed from the *Historia* of Alfred of Beverley.

Eighteen copies of Caxton's printed *Description of Britain* and ninety-eight copies of the *Polychronicon* are known to exist, including fragments. [478] Caxton's choice of these books to be amongst his earliest to be printed indicates the appeal of the material and the printed works served as reference works for later historians and topographers.

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[478] Seymour de Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons* (Oxford, 1909), no. 35, pp. 44-46.

9. Robert Fabyan (d.1513) *New Chronicles of England and France.*

Robert Fabyan (d.1513) completed the vernacular *New Chronicles of England and France* and named by himself as the '*Concordances of Histories*', in 1504. [479] The chronicle provides parallel histories of England and France from Brutus down to 1485. From 1189 the English history becomes a London chronicle, with the annals arranged by civic authority and with the names of bailiffs, mayors or sheriffs. Fabyan's chronicle was later to exercise considerable influence on Tudor and Elizabethan historians and scholars such as John Stow and Raphael Holinshead.[480] Fabyan drew on a wide range of medieval authorities in compiling the chronicle which included Alfred of Beverley. Fabyan quotes Alfred, along with Bede, in describing the island being called '*another world.*'[481] He quotes Alfred along with Ranulf Higden in the chronicle when describing the '*Archeflamynys Bisshopes Constituted*' with the words: *firste of the Archeflamynys See, rule or Iurisdiccio was, as wytnessith Alfrede and Policronico, at London, the seconde at Yorke.*[482] Fabyan quotes Ranulf Higden repeatedly throughout the chronicle, attesting an intimate knowledge of the *Polichronicon.* His use of Alfred in the chronicle strongly suggests it was made indirectly through the *Polychronicon* rather than from direct knowledge of Alfred's History.

10. Henry Bradshaw (d.1513) *Life of St Werburgh.*

Henry Bradshaw, Benedictine monk of St Werburgh's abbey, Chester (d.1513) wrote a versified life of St Werburh, the seventh-century patron of Bradshaw's abbey, which incorporated a description of the kingdom of Mercia and an account of the foundation of the city of Chester. In the poem Henry pays tribute to his authorities, including Alfred of Beverley:

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[479] *The New Chronicles of England and France in Two Parts by Robert Fabyan, named by Himself the Concordances of Histories, Reprinted from Pyson's edition of 1516,* ed. Henry Ellis (London, 1811).
[480] Gransden, *HWE* II, p. 244.
[481] Fabyan, *New Chronicles*, p.7.
[482] Ibid., p.38.

'Unto this rude worke/ myne auctours these shalbe:

Fyrste the true legend / and the venerable Bede,

Mayster Alfrydus / and Wyllyam Maluysburye,

Gyrarde, Polycronycon, and other mo in deed'[483]

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century

11. John Leland (c.1503-1552).

Alfred of Beverley's history was known to John Leland, for at some point during the course of his topographical and bibliographical researches over the period 1533-47, he made notes and recorded extracts from it. These notes remained unpublished during his lifetime but were published in 1715 by Thomas Hearne in *Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea.*[484] The notes indicate that Leland had made a thorough reading of the *Historia.* Extracts from books six, seven, eight and nine are made and Leland correctly observed that books one to five of the History were mainly based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *HRB*:

'Omnia, quae fere scribit Aluredus de regibus Britan: usque ad Saxonum adventum, e Galfredi historia, suppressio tamen omnino ejus nomine, desumpta sunt' [485]

Leland noted that the *Historia* ended in the twenty-ninth year of Henry I's reign suggesting he may have consulted the volume which Thomas Hearne used for his 1716 edition of Alfred's History, originally made for John de Newton, Treasurer of York Minster (1393-1414) but as Leland does not tell us where he saw Alfred's History, this remains uncertain. Leland notes Alfred's questioning comment on the deeds of King Arthur, '*De quibus non parva parvitatem meam meditatio vexat quod de inclyto rege arturo nihil Romana*

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[483] *The Life of Saint Werburge of Chester by Henry Bradshaw*, ed. Carl Horstman, EETS (London, 1887), pp.13, 127-33.

[484] *Joannis Lelandi Antiquarii. De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne, 2nd edition, vi vols (London, 1770), iii, pp. 223-229.

[485] *Collectanea*, iii, p. 224.

nihil Anglorum historia meminerit.' [486] He comments favourably on Alfred's elegant Latin in describing the history of the Northumbrian earls. [487] He comments also on the similarity of Alfred's list of ancient British cities with Henry of Huntingdon's catalogue of cities which he thinks Henry has taken from Alfred:

> 'Nomina civitatum, quae Aluredus Britannice citat, adeo conspirant cum catalogo Henrici Huntingdunensis, ut verisimile sit, Henricum ab Aluredo mutuo sumpsisse.' [488]

Leland also noted the similarity of the accounts of Alfred and Roger of Howden for the history of the West Saxon kings and concludes that Howden took his material from Alfred:

> 'Nomina et numerus regum Westsaxonum fere conveniunt cum catalogo Hoveduni, qui multa in suam ex Aluredo historiam transtulit.' [489]

Leland, at the moment of taking the notes, did not therefore appreciate that Howden and Alfred were borrowing from a common source, the Durham *Historia Regum*. Further extracts from Alfred are found elsewhere in Hearne's *Collectanea* but here Leland appears to have taken them from the *Polychronicon*, not directly from the *Historia*. The first, a note discussing the length of Britain, is taken verbatim from Higden's *Polychronicon*. [490] Verses attributed to Alfred of Beverley are included which are also taken from the *Polychronicon*. [491]

Leland's only prose treatise published during his lifetime was the *Assertio Inclytissimi Arturi Regis Britannia*, printed by John Hertford in 1544 and dedicated to Henry VIII. Leland refers to Alfred in this work in the following

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[486] Ibid.
[487] Ibid., iii, p. 229
[488] Ibid., iii, p. 223.
[489] Ibid., iii, p. 228.
[490] Ibid., iii, p. 369.
[491] Ibid*., iii, p. 370.

terms '*Aluredus etiam fibroleganus historicus narrat*' (fol.3) and again, '*freti autoritate Galfredi, Aluredi, Henrici Venantodunesis*' (fol.18).

12. John Bale (1495-1563).

John Bale provides biographical notes for Alfred in his *Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris.. Catalogus* issued in 1548 in Wesel and in expanded form in Basle (1557-1559) and short extracts and *incipits* from a number of the books of the *Historia* are provided. Bale's autograph notebook – never intended for publication- was only published in 1902, as the *Index Britanniae Scriptorum.*[492] It is a more valuable historical source for Alfred as in it Bale identifies where he saw the texts he was cataloguing. Alfred is listed in the *Index* as, '*Alphredus Beverlacensis thesaurarius, scripsit Chronicon, De gestis regum Britannie'* and John Field and Nicholas Brigham are identified as the owners of the text from which Bale took his notes, briefly discussed below.

Bale's biographical notes for Alfred in the *Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris.. Catalogus* (pp. 187-88)[493] are unreliable and the extracts and incipits quoted from the *Historia* in his entry for Alfred are only partly accurate. '*Deflorationes Galfridi'* suggests indebtedness to Leland's comments on the first five books of the *Historia* noted above.[494] '*Finito regno Brytonnum, Britanniae*' is given as the incipit of book one of the *Historia*, when it is that of book six. The phrases '*In diebus silentii nostri*', '*Agressum sum laborem itaque mihi..*' are noted and do occur in the prologue. What Bale has as '*Lib 5, Brytannia maior, quae nunc Anglia*' is not from the *Historia. Vitam D.Ioannis archiepiscopi* is Folcard's not Alfred of Beverley's. John Bale also published in 1546 John Leland's *New Years Gift* to Henry VIII with commentary of his own, *The Laboryouse Journey*

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[492] *Index Britanniae Scriptorum,* ed. R.L.Poole and M. Bateson (Oxford, 1902). Now reissued as *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, *John Bale's Index of British and Other Writers*, ed. R.L.Poole and M. Bateson, *With an Introduction by Caroline Brett and James P.Carley* (Woodbridge, 1999).

[493] John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris Brytannie, quam nunc Angliam et Scotiam vocant, Catalogus* (Basle, 1559).

[494] Bale had access to Leland's commentaries and notes. Between 1548 and 1552 he made an epitome of Leland's *De Viris Illustribus.* See Carley and Brett, *Index*, pp. xii-xiv.

in which *Alphrede of Beverlay* is also named amongst the catalogue of authorities whose historical works have been consulted.[495]

13. Sir John Prise of Hereford (b.1501/2, d.1555) *Historicae Brytannicae Defensio.*

John Prise born in Brecon, educated Oxford and Cambridge was by 1530 in the service of Thomas Cromwell in London. In 1534 he was made registrar-general of ecclesiastical causes and in 1535 and in 1539 was appointed by Cromwell to visit monasteries. Prise was commissioner for the surrender of monasteries in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire in late 1539 and early 1540. It is as a collector of manuscripts and particularly those with an interest in Welsh history and hagiography that Prise is best remembered. He was one of a small group of collectors including Bale, Leland and Robert Talbot who dedicated themselves to preserving manuscripts of historical interest after the dispersal of the monastic library collections in 1539 and who 'filled up the gap between the Dissolution and Parker's group.'[496] In Prise's time the only works of medieval history in print were Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and Higden's *Polychronicon* and Sir John made a plea to his son Richard in his will to print the histories of William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon which were amongst his collection of manuscripts. Prise had made a similar plea in the *Historiae Brytannicae Defensio*, written before 1547 but not published until after his death in 1573. Here he expanded the list of works which he argued needed to be published, if needed 'at royal expense' and Alfred of Beverley's history is one of the select group of histories identified:

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[495] *The Laboryouse Journey and Search of John Leylande, for Englandes Antiquitees,* ed. W.A.Copinger, *Bibliographiani*, i (Manchester, 1895), p.100.

[496] N.R. Ker, 'Sir John Prise', in *Books, Collectors and Libraries. Studies in the Medieval Heritage* ed. A.G.Watson (London, 1985), pp. 471-495 at p. 471. Ker quotes the words from a letter from Dr Robin Flower to R.A.B. Mynors in January 1937.

'Opera inquam W.Malmesburiensis, H.Huntingdonensis, Aluredi, Ioannis Anglici Henrici (recte) Hovedensis, ipsiusque Giraldi, qui de rebus Hibernicis et Brytannicis plurima scripsit observanda..'[497]

In the *Defensio* Prise provides a list of cited authorities in his treatise on the final page of the preface (unnumbered in the 1573 edition). Aluredus is the third of nineteen authorities quoted. Prise again refers to Alfred on page thirty of the *Defensio* as follows, '*Deinde Alured, Hovedenus, Radulfphus Cestrensis, Ioannes Anglicus (john of Tynemouth) Gervasius et quotquot unquam in historia huius regions enarranda desfudarun*t.'

Prise never refers to Alfred by his full name and title and no detailed knowledge of the *Historia* is indicated in the *Defensio* suggesting that Prise was more aware of Alfred's History by reputation than by direct access to the text.

14. William Lambarde (1536-1601) *The Perambulation of Kent.*

William Lambarde was a lawyer of Lincoln's Inn and member of Archbishop Matthew Parker's circle of bibliophiles and antiquarians, with a close interest in Anglo-Saxon law as a foundation for the reformed church.[498] *Archaionomia*, a collection of Anglo-Saxon laws and treaties in Old English, was published in 1568, dedicated to Sir William Cordell. In 1576 Lambarde published *A Perambulation of Kent, Conteining the Description, Hystorie and Customes of that Shire* in which he quotes Alfred's account of the death of Earl Godwine in the *Historia.* Lambarde first quotes Ailred of Rievaulx's account of Godwine's death in his *vita Ædwardi* and then turns to Alfred:

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[497] *Historiae Brytannicae Defensio, Ioanne Priseo Equestris Ordinis Brytanno Authore* (London, 1573), p.129.
[498] For William Lambarde see May McKisack, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age* (Oxford, 1971), pp.133-37; T.Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (London 1950), pp. 139-40; Southern, ' The Sense of the Past', pp. 257-61. J.D.Alsop, 'Lambarde, William (1536-1601)', *ODNB,* 32 (Oxford, 2004), pp.287-290.

'But letting that and them passe, heare (I beseech you) what Alfred of Beverley (a learned man, that lived in the time of King Henrie the first, somwhat before this Abbat Ealred) saith, touching this matter: '' *Godwinus gravi morbo ex improviso percussus, ac Regi ad mensam Wintoniae assidens, mutus in ipsa sede declinavit, ac postea in cameram Regis a filiis deportatus, moritur. Quidam autem dicunt, &c.*"

Godwine, being suddenlie stricken with a greevous disease, as he sate at the table with the King at Winchester, fell downe from his stoole, and was carried by his sonnes into the Kings chamber, where he died: but some say that he was choked, &c. And to the same effect writeth Marianus the Scot. Simeon also, the Chanter of Durham, who lived about the time of this Alfred, or rather before him…'

Lambarde's notes taken from the *Historia* are preserved in BL, MS Cotton Vespasian A V (Fig. 2) and were taken from a copy owned by William Darrell, canon of Canterbury. The notes were taken from all books of the *Historia* and are dated 1568.

15. John Joscelyn (1529-1603) Catalogue of manuscripts in private hands.

John Joscelyn, Fellow of Queens' College Cambridge from 1549-1557, entered the service of Matthew Parker (1504-74) on Parker's appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1559. Head of Parker's writing office, Joscelyn was an important member of the archbishop's circle of scholars dedicated to recovering and cataloguing monastic books and manuscripts dispersed by the dissolution of the monasteries from c. 1535. Amongst Joscelyn's papers is a catalogue of English historians which he compiled which gives the names of present owners of certain works. The catalogue is titled,' *Nomina eorum, qui scripserunt historiam gentis Anglorum*' and is preserved in BL Cotton MS Nero C. iii, ff. 208 [b] - 212 [b].[499] Alfred of Beverley is eighth listed, after William of Malmesbury and before Henry of Huntingdon:

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[499] Joscelyn's catalogue of medieval historians has been most recently examined in *The Recovery of the Past in Early Elizabethan England,* ed. Timothy Graham and Andrew G. Watson (Cambridge, 1998). Joscelyn's entry for Alfred of Beverley is J2.38, pp.73-74. Joscelyn's list is also discussed by C.E.Wright, 'The Dispersal of the

'Alfredus Beverlacensis opus contexuit, quod vocabat, Deflorationes Galfridi, sic incipiens: *Britannia major, quae nunc Anglia.* Et de gestis Regum Angliae, quod incipit: *Finito Regno Britanniae.* Et de gestis Regnum Britanniae, quod incipit: *Aggressus sum laborem, itaque mihi.* Et historiam ampliorem, quod incipit: In diebus silentii nostril, occur. Claruit anno Christi.1136 sub Anglorum Rege Stephano; quo Annales finiebat. Habet Joannes Netleton.'

Joscelyn's entry for Alfred is extracted from John Bale's *Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris .. Catalogus*, noted above, but supplies the additional information that John Nettleton possessed a copy of the *Historia*, an owner further discussed below.

16. John Stow (1525-1605).

John Stow's numerous historical works include the *Summarie of English Chronicles* (1565), *The Chronicles of England* (1580), the *Annales of England* (1593) and his most famous work, *A Survey of London* (1598). Stow was one of the most industrious record collectors of the sixteenth century and well acquainted with all the major medieval chronicles. In the prefatory catalogue of source authorities of his *Survey of London*, Alfred of Beverley is the second authority named and in the *Annales*, Alfred is frequently cited in the margins as the authority for the particular passage quoted, for example, *Annales*, pp. 81, 83, 85, 86, 91, 94.[500]

Stow was a friend of many of the leading Elizabethan antiquarians with mutual interests in seeking out and conserving historical manuscripts including

northern book collectors such as William Claxton of Durham, bibliophile, discussed below. [501]

17. Raphael Holinshed (c.1525- 1580?) Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland.

Although Alfred of Beverley appears fourth on the prefatory list of authors '*from whome this history is collected'*, in Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1577) Holinshed makes no use of Alfred in his own introductory survey of English history from its foundation down to the Norman conquest. Holinshed's *Chronicles*, a collaborative historical compilation, begin with William Harrison's (1535-1593) *An Historical Description of the Island of Britain.*.' written in 1576. Alfred of Beverley is cited by Harrison in his description of the ancient roads of Britain, and the Fosse:

> 'From Cirnecester, it goeth by Chepingnorton to Coventrie, Leircester, Newarke, and so to Lincolne overthwart the Watlingstreet: where, by generall consent of all the writers (except Alfred of Beverlie, who extendeth it unto Caithnesse in Scotland) it is said to have an end'[502]

18. William Camden (1551-1623).

In 1605 William Camden published the *Remaines of a Greater Worke Concerning Britain*, a collection of historical, literary and topographical notes which had not found their way into Camden's most influential work*, Britannia* (1586) and its later editions. Camden quotes Alfred early in the text of the *Remains* as follows:

> '…and therfore I will bring you in some poets, to speak in this behalfe for mee and will beginne with olde *Alfred of Beverlie*, who made this for Britaine in general, which you must not read with a censorious eye: for it is, as the rest I

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[501] McKisack, 'Medieval History', p.149.
[502] *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 6 vols, (London, 1807), i, p. 190.

will cite, of the middle age, having heeretofore used all of more auntient and better times in another worke. But thus saide he of Britaine.

> Insula praedives quae toto vix eget orbe
>
> Et cuius totus indigent orbis ope.
>
> Insula praedives, cuius miretur, et optet,
>
> Delicias Salomon, Octavianus opes. [503]

These lines in praise of Britain are attributed in error to Alfred of Beverley by Ranulf Higden in the *Polychronicon* (Fig 30, no. 5), suggesting that William Camden may have known Alfred's work indirectly through the *Polychronicon.*

Some sixteenth century owners of Alfred of Beverley's *Historia*.

1. William Claxton (d.1596).

A.I. Doyle in a 1997 article reported correspondence between the northern bibliophile William Claxton of Wynyard, County Durham and John Stow from the 1580s where Claxton writes telling Stow:

> ' I have in store a fyne pece of worke of a frendes of myne in parchment of Lyffe of Edward the Confessour, the book is in folio…by venerable haildre Abott of Ryvallens… also conteyned in the same booke a preface of Mr Alured Beverlaye….An history of the Actes of the Kinges of Brittaine..unto the xxjth yere of Henry the first'[504]

William Claxton died in 1596 leaving in his will – preserved in the Durham Registry- all his books to Thomas Chaytor and John Richardson.[505]……..

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[503] *William Camden. The Remains Concerning Britain,* ed. R.D.Dunn (London, 1984), p. 9.

[504] A.I.Doyle, 'William Claxton and the Durham Chronicles' in *Books and Collectors 1200-1700. Essays presented to Andrew Watson,* eds., J. P.Carley and C.G.C.Tite (London, 1997), pp. 335-55 at p.337. The correspondence is preserved in BL, MS Harley 374, fol. 16.

[505] Printed in *Wills and Inventories from the Registry at Durham*, Part 2, SS 38 (Durham, 1860), pp. 272-3.

2. John Nettleton (d.1597).

John Nettleton, a catholic recusant from the East Riding of Yorkshire is an important figure in bibliographic history of the post dissolution period and in John Jocelyn's catalogue, said to be the owner of a copy of Alfred's History. [506] By the 1560's Nettleton the younger had acquired numerous medieval manuscripts from northern houses such as Fountains and Rievaulx and also York Minster. [507] After the dissolution of the monasteries Nettleton's father, John the elder, leased from the crown two rectories, Hutton Cranswick and Skerne in the East Riding. Both were formerly of the dissolved priory of Watton, a priory with medieval associations with Beverley.

3. Nicholas Brigham (d.1558)

John Bale's *Index* identifies Nicholas Brigham as the owner of a copy of Alfred's History. Brigham was a lawyer, teller of the Exchequer, and according to Bale, author of an historical treatise, *De Venationibus Rerum Memorabilium,* memoirs and poetry.[508] Brigham was also the owner of a copy of Ailred's Life of Edward the Confessor. As noted in chapter two, there are grounds to believe that Nicholas Brigham may have been the owner of NLW, MS Peniarth 384 (Fig.2. See note 76, page 48 and Plate 3).

The afterlife of Alfred II. c. 1350 - c.1605. Summary and conclusions.

This preliminary survey provides evidence that Alfred of Beverley was widely acknowledged and quoted in the historical and bibliographic sources of the period 1350-c.1600, and attests the considerable esteem in which he was

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[506] See Michael Hicks, 'John Nettleton, Henry Savile of Banke and the Post-Medieval Vicissitudes of Byland Abbey Library', *Northern History*, 26 (1990), pp. 213-17 and also Claire Cross, 'A Medieval Yorkshire Library', *Northern History*, 25 (1989), pp. 281- 290.

[507] Hicks, 'John Nettleton', p. 213.

[508] *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, eds., R.L.Poole and M.Bateson, with an introduction by Caroline Brett and James P.Carley (Woodbridge, 1999), p.xx.

held by historians, antiquarians and scholars of the time.[509] Alfred is one of the medieval authorities to whom the historians, antiquarians and topographers of the period looked for the recovery of Britain's past and for an understanding of the island's physical characteristics and identity. On the other hand, direct knowledge of the *Historia* appears to have been limited and Alfred's reputation appears largely to have been established through the platform provided by Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* which so frequently cited him for matters of intense interest and importance to readers of the period. In the eighteen sources discussed in this preliminary survey, at least nine appear to have taken material attributed to Alfred, either from the *Polychronicon* or from a source dependent on the *Polychronicon.* In these cases the material quoted is not to be found in the *Historia* whilst it reproduces Higden's inaccurate use of Alfred. Only two sources, John Leland and William Lambarde, show clear independent knowledge of the *Historia.* John Bale's extracts from the *Historia* in the *Catalogus* and *Index* are sufficiently inexact to suggest he also may have known Alfred only indirectly. His phrase, '*Deflorationes Galfridi'*, appears to be a reworking of John Leland's description of the first five books of the *Historia.* William Lambarde's notes from the *Historia*, which were taken from a copy owned by William Darrell, canon of Canterbury, are preserved in BL, MS Cotton Vespasian A V.His *Perambulation of Kent*, where he compares Alfred's account of Earl Godwine's death with that of Ailred of Rievaulx, also suggests he had made an independent reading of the text as Alfred's discussion of the death of Earl Godwine is not cited by Ranulf Higden in the *Polychronicon.*

The evidence of this preliminary survey indicates that Alfred's was a text which achieved only limited dissemination but was one which was known of and was sought after by scholars, book-collectors and antiquarians. William Claxton's letter to John Stow telling him that he had a book of Alfred and Ailred of Rievaulx in store for him reveals something of this antiquarian

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[509] Amongst historical works which do not appear to have known Alfred are Nicholas Trevet's Anglo-Norman *Chronicle* (c.1334) the vernacular versified *Chronicle of John Harding* (c.1457), William of Worcester's (1415-1482) *Annales Rerum Anglicarum* and John Capgrave's *Abbreviation of Chronicles* (c.1462-63).

enthusiasm. The interest in Alfred's History was sustained by an intense curiosity to map out the historical geography of Britain, for which Alfred had assumed the status of an authority, and also by the growing debate on the authenticity of Geoffrey of Monmouth's British history, where Alfred was perceived as offering important support for the Galfridian construct. Alfred's reputation was largely built on the shoulders of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* and its dependents such as William Caxton's *Descripcion of Brytayne*, and as was discussed in chapter five, his description of Britain was largely compiled out of borrowings from others, but he nevertheless enjoyed a reputation, and therefore a place, of considerable importance in the historical literature of the late Middle Ages, Tudor and Elizabethan period.

APPENDIX . Scholarly commentary on Alfred of Beverley, c.1680- 2010.

Dr Lloyd, Bishop of St Asaph's (1680-92). Letter No 26 to Thomas Price of Llanvyllen regarding Geoffrey of Monmouth's History. [510]

.'. Next for Alfred of Beverley, whom as I remember you took to be Treasurer of York, but indeed he was the Treasurer of the College of Beverley, of which College the proper title was the church of St John, Archbishop of York at Beverley; and so, as I remember, it is called in your collection. This Alfred writ two works of History, which you have in your Collection; the first is *De gestis regalibus regum Britanniae*; the second is *De gestis regulorum et regum Angliae*, which extends from the beginning of Hengist till the death of King *Hen*.I; which was in his 35th year, though the title promiseth till his 28 th year…..'

'… It was from the beginning of 1138 till towards the end of the year 1150, that the clergy and the people of that place were, as it were, kept upon the rack and torn with violence, between the King and his officers on the one hand, and the Archbishop backed up by the Pope on the other. At last the King was feign to submit. But that concerneth not the business in hand: I was only to shew you the time of those troubles which Alfred described in his preface; and that, I suppose, I have done to your satisfaction. I have shown that there was a council in London in the year 1143, by whose decree all those were to be excommunicated that should offer any violence to the clergy…..I have shewn that a multitude were excommunicated by the Archbishop of York, and that he published an interdict in his Province, upon which there was a cessation of divine offices in the Church. I have shewn that the king did exact upon those that obeyed the Archbishop, and that even at Beverley; where, though I have not read, that he drove away them that were pillars of that church, yet I read that he did this at York, and he had the same

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[510] Printed in *Collectanea Curiosa* ed. J.Glutch (Oxford, 1781), 253-69. Bishop Lloyd's letter is undated in Glutch's *Collectanea* but was written whilst William Lloyd was bishop of St Asaph's, during the years 1680-92.

reason to do it at Beverley. I have shewn that this miserable estate of that church continued long enough to have that doleful description in *Alfred*…

George Poulson.[511]

'Alredus, Alfredus, or Aluredus, an ancient English historian, was born at Beverley, and received his education at Cambridge…. Tanner in a note informs us that, for improvement he travelled through France and Italy, and that at Rome he became domestic chaplain to Othoboni… He intended at first no more than an abridgement of the history of the ancient Britons; but a desire of pursuing the thread of his story led him to add the Saxon and then the Norman history…. It is written in Latin in concise and elegant style, with great perspicuity, and a strict attention to dates and authorities. The author has not been improperly styled our English Florus; his plan and execution very much resembling that of the Roman historian…'

George Oliver.[512]

'His merits, both as a theologian and a disciplinarian, at length elevated him to the abbacy of Rievaulx; and here it was that he compiled his annals from Brutus to Henry 1; a work, which for elegance of style……. To Alured of Beverley a high rank amongst the ancient historians of Britain.'

Thomas Wright.[513]

'There cannot be the least doubt that Alfred refers to the troubles which arose in the diocese of York from the rivalry of the two archbishops, Henry and William, supported severally by the contending parties in the civil convulsions in the reign of Stephen….. Alfred, like Gaimar does not mention the name of Geoffrey of Monmouth as the author of the book he abridged, but he quotes it

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[511] G.Poulson, *Beverlac*, vol I (London, 1829), p. 479.
[512] G.Oliver, *The History and Antiquities of Beverley* (London, 1829), pp.440-41.
[513] *Biographia Britannica Literaria,* vol. II, *Anglo-Norman Period*, ed. T.Wright (London, 1846), pp.155-58.

by the title which Geoffrey gave to it, *Historia Britonum*…… Alfred goes on to inform us that having abridged the history of the Britons, he determined to abridge other historians , so as to continue his book through the Saxon and Norman times. We trace as having gone through this process, among others, Bede, Florence of Worcester, and the northern writer Symeon of Durham, which historian appears to have been the last he used, for Alfred's history closes in the same year of that of Symeon, AD 1129, the 29 [th] year of Henry I. …because his book is a *treasure* of history, which it certainly is not. His historical notices are extremely brief, and his style is that of the ordinary writers of his age.'

Henry Petrie.[514]

'This work <u>does not contain a single fact</u> which may not be found in Beda, Florence of Worcester, Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey of Monmouth and Simeon of Durham; but the chief sources are the two writers last mentioned. The manuscript used by Hearne seems to have been very faulty, especially in the proper names, which are strangely disfigured.'

T.D.Hardy.[515]

'Upon the whole, <u>this work is of no value,</u> as it does not, perhaps, <u>contain a single fact</u> which may not be found in the authors above mentioned.'

'The author appears to have made his compilation <u>soon after 1143</u>, as he states, that in consequence of the decrees of the Council of London the number of persons excommunicated was so great as to prevent the performance of divine service in his church..'

James Raine.[516]

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[514] *MHB*, p. 28.
[515] Hardy *DC* II, pp. 172-73.
[516] *HCY* I, p.liv.

'…He quotes Alured of Beverley whose chronicle was written circa A.D. 1150.'

Arthur Francis Leach. [517]

' But it would rather appear that Ketell was the original from which Alured copied; unless they both copied from a common original, <u>as Alured was the least original of all the writers of that age</u>. His history indeed professed to be <u>nothing more than an epitome of the recent work by Geoffrey of Monmouth</u>. It appeared around 1150.'

R.H.Fletcher.[518]

'The immense popularity which it almost immediately received is shown by a passage, also frequently quoted, in the preface which Alfred of Beverley, writing apparently about 1150, prefixed to his history. Alfred says that the *hystoria Britonum* (he never names Geoffrey) was such a universal subject for conversation that anyone who did not know its stories was regarded as a clown'
'Alfred's history is, in the earlier part, <u>practically a mere </u>condensation of Geoffrey.'
.
Sidney Lee.[519]

ALFRED of Beverley (fl.1143) 'The <u>chronicle is of no real use to the historical student,</u> since <u>it adds no new fact to the information to be found in well known earlier authorities</u>.'

Charles Gross.[520]

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[517] *BCA* I, p. xxi.
[518] R.H.Fletcher, *Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* Vol X, *The Arthurian Material in the Chronicles, Especially those of Great Britain and France* (Boston, 1906), p.116 and note 3.
[519] *Dictionary of National Biography*, eds., L.Stephen and Sidney Lee, 22 vols, I (Oxford, 1917), p.285.

' <u>A worthless compilation</u> taken mainly from Geoffrey of Monmouth and Symeon of Durham; written seemingly soon after 1143'

Jacob Hammer.[521]

' To quote Alfred himself would have been useless, as the first five books of the latter's <u>work are practically a condensed replica</u> of Geoffrey's *Historia*.'

' Since it is an acknowledged fact that <u>Alfred of Beverley practically copied Geoffrey</u> there is no need to attempt to distinguish what is original to Alfred in the *Recapitulatio* as distinct from Geoffrey's contribution.'

J.S.P.Tatlock.[522]

'As is familiar, Alfred of Beverley's <u>unimportant *Annales*</u> are half taken from Geoffrey's *Historia*' … ' This <u>dullard's caution</u> as to confirmation was not really so great'…. The date of Alfred's book is regarded by all, probably correctly, as determined by the opening passage (pp.1, 2). He says that because of present large numbers of excommunicated persons, according to the decree of the council of London, his church had ceased divine service; when the loneliness had driven him almost to despair (characteristic monastic accidia, tristitia, pigrizia) he began to devote the time saved from the canonical hours to reading in the new-found book. Of various church-councils in London during this generation the only one which at all fits was the legatine council under bishop Henry of Winchester in 1143, protecting the rights of the church against the evils of the anarchy and decreeing excommunication, to be

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[520] Charles Gross*, A Bibliography of English History to 1485*, ed. E.B.Graves (Oxford, 1975), p. 405.

[521]Jacob Hammer, 'Notes on a Manuscript of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae'*, *Philological Quarterly,* vol 12, 3 (July 1933), 225-234, at pp. 226, 228.

[522] J.S.P Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (Berkeley, 1950), pp. 210-11.

absolved only by the pope, against those who did violence to the clergy. The historian's account prepares one for no such far-reaching silencing of the church as in Alfred; but we must regard him as a unique authority for something like a brief local interdict in southeast Yorkshire owing to outrages by local lay-lords. Since the council must have been that of 1143, the Arthurian testimony dates from that year.'

J. Taylor.[523]

'The first Yorkshire chronicler after the Conquest was Alfred of Beverley, who wrote before the arrival of the Cistercians….. The work is, <u>in fact, little more than a recapitulation of parts of Geoffrey's history, though Alfred of Beverley does on occasion refer to Bede and other authorities</u>. Even Alfred, however, found the whole of Geoffrey's history hard to swallow and selected, he said, simply the parts that could be corroborated. Despite this, the *Annales* are not informative. Alfred's account of his own times is not full. One of the parts of his work which was used later is the description of British rivers and cities which Ranulf Higden in the fourteenth century quoted in his *Polychronicon.*'

Antonia Gransden.[524]

'The Historicity of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* was explicitly, if rather hesitantly, called in question by Alfred (or Alured) of Beverley. <u>He probably composed the *Annales* in 1143</u>: he explained that he wrote during a period of enforced idleness, when many people were under sentence of excommunication; this was probably a result of the legatine council held by Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester, in 1143'

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[523] J.Taylor, *Medieval Historical Writing in Yorkshire*, Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, *St Anthony's Hall Publications* 19 (York, 1961), p. 8.

[524] Antonia Gransden, 'Bede's reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', *Journal of Eccesiastical History*, 32 (1981), 397-425 and reprinted in id. *Legends Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), 1-29, at pp.19 -20.

Alfred copied extracts from standard histories and chronicles and arranged them in chronological order. He stated the source of each extract, and mentioned which other authorities agreed with it and in some cases cited an alternative account. …… More important, collation of sources combined with his common sense made him have doubts about some passages in the Historia *Regum Britanniae*. He noticed the anomaly that Trogus Pompeius, Suetonius and Orosius did not mention the British kings whose deeds Geoffrey extolled, 'neither do Gildas Sapiens nor Bede – all are equally silent.' And he admitted that he was uneasy about the historicity of King Arthur himself. 'Neither the Roman nor the English historians record anything about the illustrious King Arthur, although he did such remarkable deeds with such skill and valour, not only in Britain against pagans, but also in Gaul against the Romans.

Alfred was faced, therefore with a dilemma: on the one hand was his respect for authority (he stated he would not presume to question Geoffrey's veracity); and on the other hand was his doubt about the reliability of the *Historia Regum Britanniae*. His solution was to compromise. He decided, as he explained in the prologue, to borrow from the *HRB* 'only those passages which are not beyond belief.' The fact that he made fairly free use of it was the result not only of his respect for authority, but also, as he mentioned in the prologue, of his desire to please his readers; like many people, he recognised Geoffrey as a good read.

A generation later the <u>HRB found a more intelligent and uncompromising critic</u> than Alfred of Beverley….. William of Newburgh…'

R.William Leckie, Jr.[525]

'The first man to comment on the absence of supporting evidence is Alfred of Beverley. <u>Approximately half of his modest and highly derivative history</u> is

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[525] Leckie, *Passage,* pp.45, 86-7.

given over to a depiction of British rule. Geoffrey's regnal list provides the underlying framework, but Alfred is openly distrustful of his principal source.'

'At approximately the same time as Gaimar completed the *Estoire des Engleis*, Alfred embarked on his *Annales*. The work is the earliest surviving example of the incorporation of a substantial portion of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* into an overview of Insular history. Alfred's treatment of the pre-Saxon era makes up half of the account (Books1-5). Geoffrey's regnal list provides the underlying framework, but Alfred adheres to the *Historia* only down through the reign of Keredic. Gormund's invasion is depicted as triggering those events which brought the end of British rule.'

Marie Collins.[526]

'Alfred of Beverley is a far less well-known figure than the other figures who contributed to *The Description.* He was treasurer of Beverley Minster, an important ecclesiastical site which lies between Hull and York. Beverley is marked on the very early map of the area north of the Humber on page 58. His chronicle was copied primarily from the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth and is thus of little independent value. Clearly Ranulf Higden had a manuscript of Alfred's work to hand when he wrote the *Polychronicon* for Alfred of Beverley is fairly frequently cited, despite the lack of any real additional material in his work.'

Anne Lawrence-Mathers.[527]

'More sympathetic was Alfred, treasurer and sacrist of Beverley who was sufficiently interested in the current disputes about history to compose a history of England from the British period to 1129, working probably in the

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[526] Marie Collins, *Caxton.The Description of Britain. A Modern Rendering* (London, 1988), p. 21.
[527] Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp.258-59.

1140s. Like the monks of Durham, Rievaulx and Kirkstall, he had an early copy of Henry of Huntingdon's chronicle and he also made use of Bede and of Symeon of Durham. Alfred of Beverley states that Geoffrey's work was being widely read and talked about, but he was clearly uneasy about it. He quotes extensively from it, but says he only uses the passages which he found credible and he does his best to combine it with material from Bede and Symeon. More forceful and more scholarly is the Augustinian William of Newburgh.'

Dauvit Broun.[528]

'It was not long before this Welsh past was adopted and adapted by English historians and repackaged as England's ancient history. Within five years of its publication Geoffrey's vision had been <u>incorporated by Alfred of Beverley into his impressive survey of English history.</u> Alfred's work may itself have been of limited influence, but it was an important taste of better things to come.'

N.Wright.[529]

Alfred (or Alured), treasurer of Beverley minster in south-east Yorkshire, <u>began to compile his *Annales* probably in 1143</u>. He was one of the first to react to the problems raised by Geoffrey of Monmouth's audaciously inventive *Historia Regum Britanniae*, which appeared around 1138. In constructing a single coherent narrative from Brutus down to the twelfth-century, Alfred attempted, not always convincingly, to reconcile Geoffrey with other more conventional sources, such as Bede. Alfred's efforts show that he was by no means a man of limited reading. In addition to Geoffrey and Bede, the *Annales* show that he also knew Pompeius Trogus (in Justinus'epitome), Suetonius, Eutropius, Sulpicius Severus, Orosius, Gildas (by which he most

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[528] Broun, *Scottish Independence,* p. 42.
[529] Neil Wright, 'Twelfth-Century Receptions of a Text: Anglo-Norman Historians and Hegesippus', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 31 (2010), pp.177-195 at p.178.

probably meant the *Historia Brittonum*) and Henry of Huntingdon. To this list of his sources must now be added Hegesippus, from whom he borrows a passage near the beginning of the *Annales.*

Helen Birkett.[530]

'Following an interdict placed on Beverley Minster in the mid-twelfth century, Alfred rescued himself from the 'pit of despair' <u>by engaging in the creative editing of Geoffrey of Monmouth's masterpiece</u>, the *Historia Regum Britanniae.'*

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[530] Helen Birkett, *The Saints' Lives of Jocelin of Furness. Hagiography, Patronage and Ecclesiastical Patronage* (York, 2010), p. 255.

Conclusion

The objective of this study has been to provide a comprehensive evaluation of a long-neglected historical text, the *Historia* of Alfred of Beverley, to assess its historical value and place in Anglo-Norman historical writing and its later historiographical influence and reception. The fundamental questions addressed have been why was the text produced? For whom was the text intended? How was the text intended to be read? What were the circumstances of its production and when was it compiled? What are its main characteristics and features as an example of historical writing and in what way can it be distinguished from other historical texts of the period. ? What was its later historiographical influence? To answer these questions a critical analysis of the text has been undertaken, where Alfred's sources have been identified and his own contributions established. The manner of use of source material has been closely observed to understand Alfred's editorial strategies. The later dissemination of Alfred's history has been traced and a preliminary catalogue of usage of the *Historia* from c.1327 to c.1605 compiled.

The study finds Alfred's history to be of considerable interest and historical value and an important witness to 'secular' historical writing of the time. Alfred makes extensive use of the works of a number of the most important Anglo-Norman historical writers, for example Geoffrey of Monmouth, Henry of Huntingdon, John of Worcester, Symeon of Durham and his use of them extends our understanding of the influence and dissemination of these texts. Alfred's use of the ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* of the pseudo- Nennius in the *Historia* is also of historical interest. An important finding of this study is that Alfred, otherwise well-informed, did not know, or chose not to use, the works of William of Malmesbury at the time of writing. Alfred is most associated in scholarship with his reception of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, where he is often considered a mere copyist of that work, but this study has found Alfred's to be a critical reworking of the text. Geoffrey's British history is adapted to fit into a conventional account of the island's past, and in so doing Alfred demonstrates a critical awareness of the tensions between the Galfridian and Bedan account of post-Roman Insular history. In Alfred's abbreviation of the *HRB* it is clear that his relationship with

that text is distinct to his relationship with his other source texts. As he undertook his abbreviation, Alfred makes plain he harboured doubts about the authenticity of the account at important points. As the first Latin chronicler to incorporate Galfridian material in an integrated manner in a historical account, a task undertaken within Geoffrey's lifetime, Alfred's critical reception is therefore a matter of considerable historical interest.

Alfred's debt to Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* in the *Historia* is a marked feature of the work. The thematic approach and narrative structure of the *Historia* appears to have been closely modelled on Henry's history. Many of Henry's influential historical ideas are recycled by Alfred and Henry's introductory description of Britain has strongly influenced Alfred's prefatory *mappa mundi*, a section of the *Historia* which was to prove of considerable later historiographical influence. Alfred's reproduction of text from the *HA* indicates that he worked with a version of Henry's history which circulated only from c.1147 to c.1149. This, in addition to information which Alfred himself provides in his prologue, tells us that work on the *Historia* was almost certainly undertaken over the period c.1148 - c.1151, a period of schism in the Yorkshire church, set in train by the deposition of Archbishop William fitz Herbert in 1147. The year 1143 which has been frequently assigned as the date of the *Historia's* compilation, this study finds to be without historical foundation.

In its 'assimilative' character and its attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the island history from its foundation to present times Alfred's history shares common features with historical narratives of the first half of the twelfth century such as those of, amongst others, Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury. Alfred's history however, has its own distinct character. Concise, tightly organised, of more modest literary ambitions than these earlier works but nevertheless exhibiting high standards of Latinity and learning, the text has a pedagogic and scholastic character. The frequent collations of Geoffrey of Monmouth's account against authorities to test its veracity and Alfred's detailed knowledge of those authorities, recalls the practice of *accessus ad auctores*, taught in the schools at the time. Alfred's use of the term *status* to define and describe his historical periodization

throughout the *Historia* also suggests he was a man trained in biblical scholarship, as his title of magister (Fig I, no. 2) might indicate. The term *status* is encountered frequently in theological or exegetical works, as discussed in chapter 4.1 of this study, but rarely, if ever, in historical writing of the time.

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