

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A New Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript of Cædmon's Hymn: Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Vitt. Em. 1452, 122v

Elisabetta Magnanti and Mark Faulkner

School of English, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

**Corresponding author:** Elisabetta Magnanti; Email: [magnante@tcd.ie](mailto:magnante@tcd.ie)

(Received 15 August 2025; revised 05 December 2025; accepted 08 December 2025)

## Abstract

This article describes Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Vitt. Em. 1452 + Durham (North Carolina), Duke University, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Lat. 140, a copy of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* made at Nonantola, north-central Italy, in the first third of the ninth century. The manuscript's complex provenance history has meant its existence has only fleetingly been acknowledged in scholarship on the *Historia ecclesiastica*, which has failed to recognise it contains a copy of the Old English version of Cædmon's Hymn, the third oldest, after those in the Moore and Leningrad Bedes, and the earliest surviving text of the Northumbrian *eorðu* recension. The article presents a diplomatic transcription of this new text of the Hymn, as well as a new critical edition, stemma, and history of the *eorðu* recension. We also discuss its likely punctuation, which, uniquely for Old English, seems to have consisted in interword interpuncts.

**Keywords:** Old English Poetry; Caedmon's Hymn; Bede; *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*; England and the Continent; Punctuation

'There is no such manuscript.'

(K. W. Humphreys and A. S. C. Ross, 'Further Manuscripts of Bede's "Historia Ecclesiastica", of the "Epistola Cuthberti de Obitu Bedae", and Further Anglo-Saxon Texts of "Cædmon's Hymn" and "Bede's Death Song"', *N&Q* 22.2 (1975), 50–5, at 53.)

## 1. Introduction

Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale 'Vittorio Emanuele II', Vitt. Em. 1452 + Durham (North Carolina), Duke University, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Lat. 140 is a copy of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis*

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*Anglorum*, the Pseudo-Augustinian *Sermo 160*, and Jerome's *Epistula ad Evangelum Presbyterum de Melchisedech* (Ep. 73), produced at Nonantola, in north-central Italy, in the first third of the ninth century. While the manuscript was mentioned (twice, as both doubtful and untraced) in Laistner and King's *Hand-List of Bede Manuscripts* (1943),<sup>1</sup> and its whereabouts were known to Colgrave and Mynors in 1969<sup>2</sup> (only for the Director of the Library which subsequently acquired it in 1972 to categorically deny its existence to Humphreys and Ross in 1975), its complex provenance history, elucidated below, means it has never been recognised that it contains a copy of the Old English version of Cædmon's *Hymn* (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup>

The manuscript is important as one of the earliest surviving texts of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, written within a century of his completion of it in 731, and offering further evidence of its early Continental transmission. Its principal interest here is as: (i) the third earliest vernacular text of Cædmon's *Hymn*, after those in the Moore and Leningrad Bedes; (ii) the earliest witness to the Northumbrian *eordu* recension, of which it offers a much higher quality text than any of the three other known witnesses; and (iii) the earliest copy of the *Hymn* to be embedded directly in Bede's Latin. Additionally, it contains the second earliest copy of the so-called 'Moore Annals', a set of four annals covering the years 731–734 named after the Moore Bede,<sup>4</sup> in which they were entered by the main scribe after the *explicit* of the *Historia ecclesiastica* (Cambridge, University Library, Kk. 5. 16, 128r).<sup>5</sup>

In what follows, we discuss first the history of the manuscript and its rediscovery (§2), as well as details of its production at Nonantola (§3). We then provide a diplomatic version of its text of Cædmon's *Hymn* (§4.1), a new edition of the Northumbrian *eordu* recension that takes the evidence of this new manuscript into account (§4.2), and a philological commentary (§4.3), along with an account of the unique punctuation of this witness and, putatively, of the *eordu* recension (§4.4).

## 2. The History of the Manuscript

As we discuss in §3, the manuscript with which this article is concerned was copied in the first third of the ninth century at the Benedictine Abbey of St

<sup>1</sup> M. L. W. Laistner and H. H. King, *A Hand-List of Bede Manuscripts* (New York, 1943), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), pp. lxix–xx (hereafter *HE*).

<sup>3</sup> Hence the manuscript is not mentioned by P. Wuest, 'Zwei neue Handschriften von Caedmons Hymnus', *ZDA* 48 (1906), 205–26; E. V. K. Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Cædmon's Hymn and Bede's Death Song: with a Critical Text of the Epistola Cuthberti de obitu Bedæ*, Columbia Univ. Stud. in Eng. and Comparative Lit. 128 (New York, 1937); D. P. O'Donnell, 'A Northumbrian Version of "Cædmon's Hymn" (*eordu* recension) in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale MS 8245-57 ff. 62r2–v1: Identification, Edition and Filiation', *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk and Northumbrian*, eds. L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald, *Mediaevalia Groningana* 19 (Groningen, 1996), 139–65; P. Cavill, 'The Manuscripts of Caedmon's Hymn', *Anglia* 118.4 (2001): 499–530; D. P. O'Donnell, *Cædmon's Hymn: a Multimedia Study, Archive and Edition*, SEENET A.8 (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> For a transcription see *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1896) I, 361 and Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, p. 572.

<sup>5</sup> As such, it is one of at least eleven unnoticed manuscripts of these annals, evidence Magnanti will survey in a forthcoming publication.

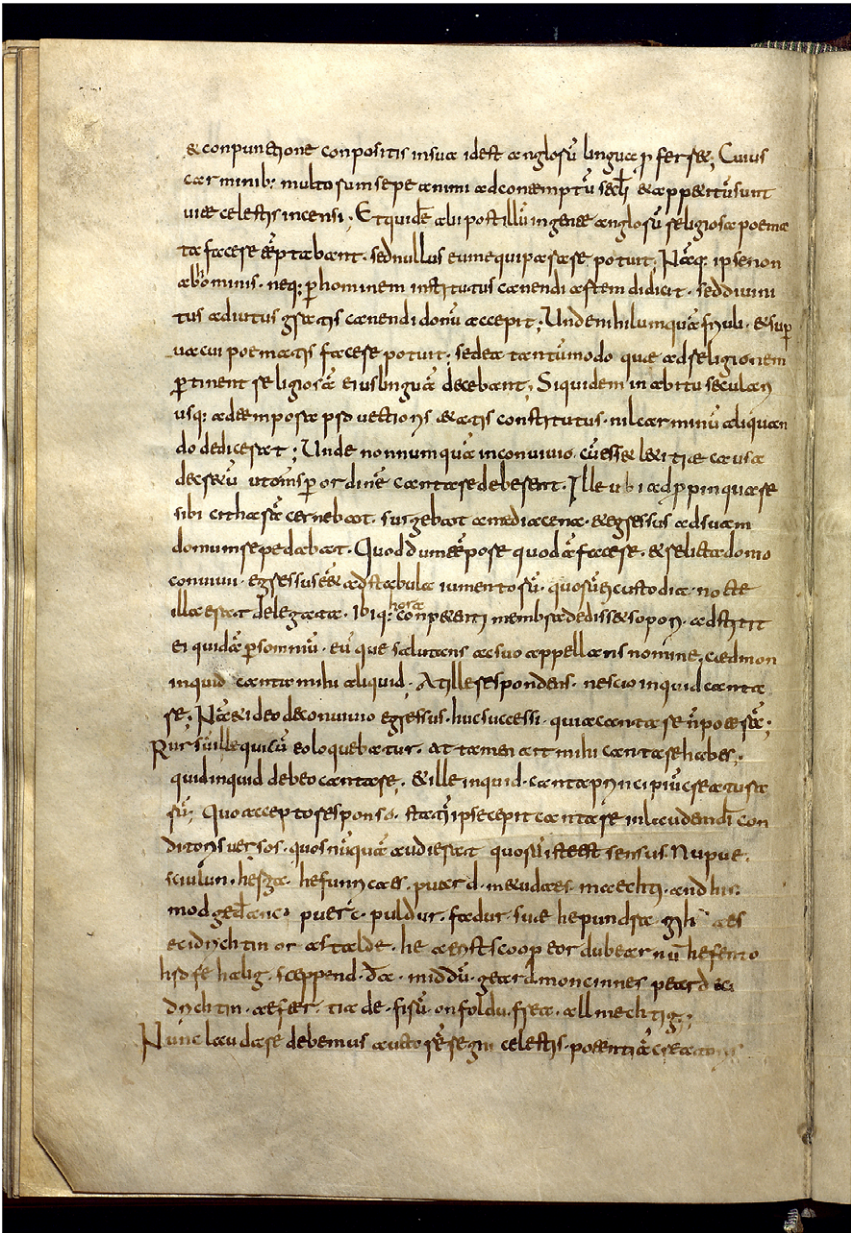


Figure 1. Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale 'Vittorio Emanuele II', Vitt. Em. 1452, 122v. Courtesy of Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale 'Vittorio Emanuele II'.

Silvester in Nonantola, in north-central Italy. It is evident it remained there until the late fifteenth century, as the abbey's medieval catalogues show, listing it as no. 60 in the 1166 catalogue;<sup>6</sup> no. 96 in the 1331 catalogue;<sup>7</sup> no. 83 in the 1464 catalogue;<sup>8</sup> and no. 136 in that of 1464–90.<sup>9</sup> By 1650, the codex had passed to the Cistercian monastery of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome, located on the site of the Basilica Sessoriana in the Palatium Sessorianum, the former imperial complex that had housed the residence of Empress Helena, mother to Constantine. At Santa Croce, Abbot Ilarione Rancati (1594–1663) established the original nucleus of the Biblioteca Sessoriana, assembling a total of 171 codices from various monastic sites, principally Nonantola.<sup>10</sup> The manuscript was recorded as item number 5 in the catalogue of Santa Croce compiled in 1664 by Abbot Franco Ferrari (c. 1635–1711):<sup>11</sup> this was the first systematic inventory of the monastery's holdings, commissioned by Pope Alexander VII following the death of Rancati, with the explicit intention – in Ferrari's words – 'to distinctly determine whether any were singular, rare, or had never been printed ... amidst the obscurity of so many ancient manuscripts'.<sup>12</sup> The manuscript remained in the monastery until the late eighteenth century, figuring as item number 107 in the inventory compiled around 1742 by Cardinal Gioacchino Besozzi (1679–1755)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> 'Istoria Anglorum Beda; volumen uno' (Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Sess. 31, 63v). See G. Gullotta, *Gli antichi cataloghi e i codici della abbazia di Nonantola*, Studi e testi 182 (Vatican City, 1955), 35 and 65–6; J. Ruyschaert, *Les manuscrits de l'abbaye de Nonantola*, Studi e testi 182bis (Vatican City, 1955), 27 (B. 60).

<sup>7</sup> 'Item Ystoria Anglorum, et inc.: «Gloriosissimo Regi» et finit: «corpori valetudini»' (Nonantola, Archivio Storico Abbaziale, Inventari, 1331, 7r). See Gullotta, *Gli antichi cataloghi*, pp. 82 and 159; Ruyschaert, *Les manuscrits*, p. 34 (C. 96).

<sup>8</sup> 'Item unus liber, qui intitulatur: Ystoria Angelorum [sic], qui inc.: «Gloriosissimo regi Coliulfo» et finit, in penultima carta: «partem accepisse pontificis»' (Nonantola, Archivio Storico Abbaziale, Pergamene, Extra 2, 5, col. 3a). See Gullotta, *Gli antichi cataloghi*, pp. 255 and 293; Ruyschaert, *Les manuscrits*, p. 46 (D. 83).

<sup>9</sup> 'Item unus liber Bede de Gestis Anglorum seu Istoria, copertus de corio albo. Prima carta inc.: «Gloriosissimo» et finit: «extiterit»; ultima inc.: «pontificis» et finit: «valitudini»' (Nonantola, Archivio Storico Abbaziale, Inventari, 1464–90, 8r). See Gullotta, *Gli antichi cataloghi*, pp. 369 and 447; Ruyschaert, *Les manuscrits*, p. 55 (E. 136).

<sup>10</sup> M. Palma, *Sessoriana: materiali per la storia dei manoscritti appartenuti alla biblioteca romana di S. Croce Gerusalemme*, Sussidi Eruditi 32 (Rome, 1980), ixx and xxvi; V. Jemolo and M. Palma, *Sessoriana dispersi: contributo all'identificazione di codici provenienti dalla Biblioteca Romana di S. Croce in Gerusalemme*, Sussidi Eruditi 39 (Rome, 1984), 10.

<sup>11</sup> 'In folio parvo perg. Bedae libri quinque Historiae gentis Anglorum, ut in impressis. In hoc codice quilibet liber praemittit etiam indicem capitulorum et unus vel alter etiam prologum, quod in impressis non fit. Anno 1166 fuit monasterii Nonantulae. Habet fol. 205' (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chig.R.II.64, 12r–71v). This is Ferrari's autograph, presented to Pope Alexander VII. See Palma, *Sessoriana*, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> 'L'intention del papa fu di sapere distintamente le varie materie contenute in questi codici, e fra esse se ve n'erano de singolari, rare e che non fossero mai state stampate, onde nell'oscurità di tanti volumi antichi manuscritti ...' (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B 256 suss., 195v–196r). See Palma, *Sessoriana*, p. xxvi. This and all subsequent translations are ours, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>13</sup> G. Besozzi, *Notae centum quadraginta duo in Sessorianos Codices* (Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Sess. 488, 1r–203v, at 140v–142r). Palma, *Sessoriana*, p. xx, n. 8.

and as number 103 in an anonymous index prepared in the late eighteenth century, under the heading *codices antiquiores et pretiosiores*.<sup>14</sup>

In 1810, amid the upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars, a collection of 440 manuscripts was transferred from Santa Croce in Gerusalemme to the Vatican Library for safekeeping. The codices remained there for seven years, until 8 March 1817, when they were returned to the Cistercians and temporarily relocated to the monastery of San Bernardo alle Terme, which had been repurposed as a hospice under the French occupation.<sup>15</sup> It was presumably from San Bernardo alle Terme that the manuscript vanished sometime before 1821, along with many other *Sessoriani* codices, abstracted and sold into private hands.<sup>16</sup> Of the ‘countless and outstanding books’ that were stolen,<sup>17</sup> Alberico Amatori (1811–75), custodian of the library at Santa Croce between 1834 and 1849, was able to identify thirty-five *deperditi* manuscripts, among which ours is listed as number 24.<sup>18</sup>

The manuscript resurfaced a few years later, in 1827, as number 2701 in the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps,<sup>19</sup> who likely acquired it from the London antiquarians Payne and Foss, known to have purchased several Nonantolan codices from the Roman bookseller Giovan Battista Petrucci,<sup>20</sup> some others of which eventually also passed into Phillipps’s ownership.<sup>21</sup> Already in possession of another copy of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, dating to the final third of the ninth

<sup>14</sup> ‘Ejusdem [Bede] Libri 5 Historia Anglicana 103’ (Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Sess. 490, 174r), and ‘Codex CIII: membranaceus in folio parvo. Sæculi IX caractere Langobardico. Exaratus vide 15 E’ (Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Sess. 490, 211r–214v, at 212v). Palma, *Sessoriana*, p. xx, n. 10; Jemolo and Palma, *Sessoriani dispersi*, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> Palma, *Sessoriana*, pp. xx–xxii.

<sup>16</sup> G. Bottino, *De Bibliotheca Sessoriana Synopsis Historica*, edited in Palma, *Sessoriana*, p. 105. On the theft from San Bernardo alle Terme, see Palma, *Sessoriana*, pp. xxx–xxxii and 115–8; Jemolo and Palma, *Sessoriani dispersi*, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Libri enim pene innumeri et praestantiores ...’, G. Bottino, *Synopsis Historica* in Palma, *Sessoriana*, p. 105.

<sup>18</sup> ‘24. N<sup>o</sup>. 107. Historia Gentis Anglorum S. Bedae Presbyteri Venerabilij 2<sup>o</sup>. Epistula S. Hieronymi ad Evagium [sic]. Saeculi IX’ (Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Sess. 534, pp. 565–9, at 568). The number 107 refers to Besozzi’s catalogue.

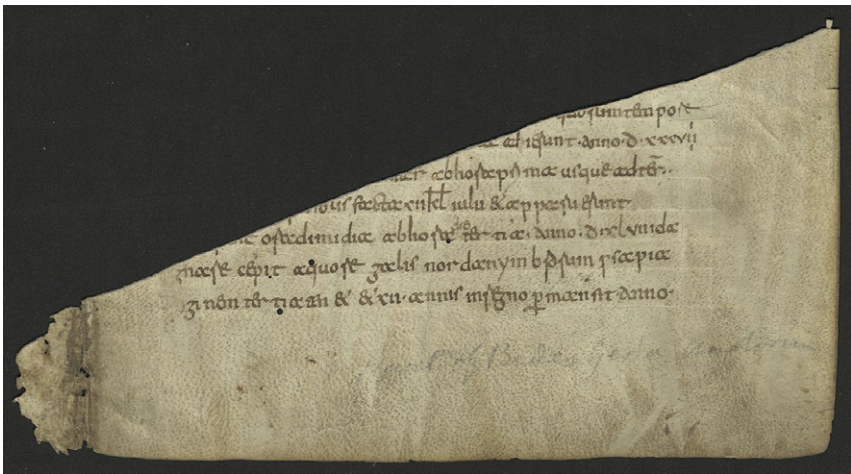
<sup>19</sup> ‘Beda de Gestis Anglorum. vel. saec. xiv [sic]’. See *Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum in Bibliotheca D. Thomæ Phillipps Bart.* (Middle Hill, 1837), p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Although it might later have been erroneously recorded by Phillipps himself as an acquisition from Thomas Thorpe. See A. L. N. Munby, *The Formation of the Phillipps Library up to the Year 1840*, *Phillipps Studies* 3 (Cambridge, 1954), 43–6 and 149; Palma, *Sessoriana*, p. xxii, n. 18.

<sup>21</sup> Other Nonantola manuscripts acquired by Phillipps from Payne and Foss, currently in the National Central Library of Rome, include: Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Sess. 590 (Phillipps 12263, E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, 12 vols. (Oxford, 1934–71) IV, no. 427, I. Giorgi, *Catalogo dei manoscritti Sessoriani* II, 529–30); Vitt. Em. 1006 (Phillipps 12260, *CLA* IV, no. 428, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Roma, *Catalogo dei manoscritti Vittorio Emanuele* II, 332–3); Vitt. Em. 1190 (Phillipps 8400, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 35–50); Vitt. Em. 1347 (Phillipps 12262, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 250–1); Vitt. Em. 1325 (Phillipps 12266, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 219–22); Vitt. Em. 1326 (Phillipps 12275, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 222–3); Vitt. Em. 1347 (Phillipps 12262, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 250–1); Vitt. Em. 1348 (Phillipps 6546, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 251–3); Vitt. Em. 1357 (Phillipps 12264, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 256–9); Vitt. Em. 1408 (Phillipps 12298, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 278–80); Vitt. Em. 1443 (Phillipps 12265, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* III, 326–30); Vitt. Em. 1472 (Phillipps 12268, *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele* IV, 34–6). For a complete list of Nonantola manuscripts in Phillipps’s collection, see Palma, *Sessoriana*, p. 126.

century (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Phill. 1873),<sup>22</sup> Phillipps undertook a collation of the two manuscripts, noting in pencil in the margins of the Berlin copy beside the Latin of Cædmon's *Hymn*: 'In codice Langobardico, ... linguae Saxonicae' (81r). Further evidence that this note was referring to our copy is provided by Phillipps's transcription of the Rome text of the Moore Annals in the margins of the relevant folios of the Berlin codex (113v–114r). The manuscript, along with almost all of Phillipps's collection, was acquired after his death by William H. Robinson Ltd. in 1872, and in due course sold in London in 1948 as 'A *Supremely Important Manuscript of Bede's History*. ... One of the very few almost contemporary manuscripts now remaining to us', thus entering the collection of Martin Bodmer in Cologny, Switzerland.<sup>23</sup>

It was likely during its passage through successive hands that a fragment of a detached leaf containing a portion of the *Recapitulatio* (V.xxiv), already loose during its time in Phillipps's possession – as evidenced by his pencil inscriptions, 'Part of Bede's Gesta Anglorum' on the leaf itself (fig. 2) and 'caret uno folio' on the Rome volume (164r) – became separated from the manuscript. The fragment was auctioned at Sotheby's, London, in 1976,<sup>24</sup> where it was acquired by the London dealer Winifred Myers on behalf of Duke University.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 2.** Durham (North Carolina), Duke University, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Lat. 140, recto. Courtesy of David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

<sup>22</sup> B. Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts: mit Ausnahme der wisigotischen*, 4 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1998–2014) I, 93, no. 440.

<sup>23</sup> W. H. Robinson, *Catalogue 77: a Selection of Extremely Rare and Important Printed Books and Ancient Manuscripts for sale by William H. Robinson Ltd.* (London, 1948), pp. 98–9, at 98. Lot no. 93.

<sup>24</sup> Sotheby & Co., *Catalogue of Manuscripts of Papyrus Vellum and Paper of the 7th Century to the 18th Century*, Bibliotheca Phillippica: Med. Manuscripts ns 11 (London, 1976), 4. Lot no. 853.

<sup>25</sup> Personal communication from J. Andrew Armacost, Curator of Collections & Head, Collection Development Department, Duke University, 13 August 2025.

Hardy was not aware of these ownership transfers when, in 1862, compiling a list of manuscripts of the *Historia ecclesiastica* for his *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, he classified the codex as “MS. Bibl. S. Crucis in Jerusalem, Romæ, 5”, relying on Ferrari’s 1664 catalogue, despite it having been in Phillipps’s possession for about thirty-five years by that time.<sup>26</sup> Nor were Laistner and King when, in 1949, they identified it as ‘a doubtful copy’ of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, supposedly housed in the *Sessoriana* collection at the National Central Library in Rome, when it had entered Bodmer’s collection the year before; also separately listing the codex Phillipps 2701 as ‘untraced’.<sup>27</sup> Our manuscript (but not its copies of Cædmon’s *Hymn* or the Moore Annals) was known to Colgrave and Mynors to be part of Bodmer’s collection,<sup>28</sup> where it remained until 1970, when it was purchased by the Austrian-born book dealer H. P. Kraus, by then based in New York.<sup>29</sup> From Kraus, the manuscript was acquired two years later by the Italian Ministry of Public Education and was subsequently gifted by the Italian Government to the National Central Library of Rome in 1972,<sup>30</sup> where it is currently housed under the shelfmark Vittorio Emanuele 1452.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, when in 1975, as part of their research into further copies of Cædmon’s *Hymn* – which ultimately led to the discovery of four additional copies<sup>32</sup> – Humphreys and Ross contacted the National Central Library to verify Laistner’s report of a doubtful copy of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* in its holdings, the library’s head at the time categorically denied that any such manuscript existed.<sup>33</sup> Following our enquiry in February 2025, the National Central Library of Rome digitized the manuscript in full and made its catalogue description available online in May of the same year.<sup>34</sup>

### 3. The Manuscript

The Rome manuscript consists of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* (1r–28r10, 29v23–165v12), with Pseudo-Augustine’s *Sermo* 160 (28r11–29v20)

<sup>26</sup> T. D. Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland to the End of the Reign of Henry VII*, 3 vols. (London, 1862–71) I pt. 1, 441.

<sup>27</sup> Laistner and King, *A Hand-List*, p. 103. Cf. also p. 93, where Laistner states: ‘The codex reputed to be in the library of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome should be among the other *codices Sessoriani* in the Biblioteca nazionale Vittorio Emanuele, but I have been unable to ascertain whether it still exists.’ In 1955, Gullotta, unaware that the manuscript had entered Bodmer’s collection a few years earlier, regarded it as lost: ‘Il cod., ora perduto ...’, see Gullotta, *Gli antichi cataloghi*, p. 447.

<sup>28</sup> Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. lxix–xx.

<sup>29</sup> H. P. Kraus, *A Rare Book Saga: the Autobiography of H. P. Kraus* (New York, 1978), pp. 282–4.

<sup>30</sup> *Catalogo Vittorio Emanuele IV*, 18–20, at 20.

<sup>31</sup> Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts* III, 279, no. 5346.

<sup>32</sup> Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 8245–57, 62r2–62v1 (dated 1489); San Marino, Huntingtondon Library, HM 35300, 82r (s. xv med); †Tournai, Bibliothèque Municipale, 134, 78v (s. xii); London, College of Arms, M.6, 86v (s. xii). See Humphreys and Ross, ‘Further Manuscripts’, p. 53.

<sup>33</sup> Humphreys and Ross, ‘Further Manuscripts’, p. 53 and n. 16.

<sup>34</sup> ManusOnline, ‘Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale ‘Vittorio Emanuele II’, Vitt.Em.1452’, <https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/cnmd/0000068990>, accessed 30 March 2026.

intercalated between the end of Book I and the *Capitula* of Book II,<sup>35</sup> followed by Jerome's *Epistula ad Evangelum Presbyterum de Melchisedech* (Ep. 73) (165v13–168v).<sup>36</sup> According to the library's catalogue, the leaves measure approximately 285 × 195 mm, with a written space of about 230 × 150–60 mm. The text, written in long lines and ruled with a hard point, is arranged in twenty-eight lines per page, occasionally fewer. The current binding dates to 1828, shortly after Philipps acquired it, and is the work of Charles Lewis (1786–1836), a bookbinder active in London in the early nineteenth century, as recorded by a pencil inscription on the front pastedown. The codex consists of twenty-three quires: eight quaternions, six ternions, six quinternions, and two quires of four, arranged as follows: i<sup>6</sup> (fols. 1–6), ii–vii<sup>8</sup> (fols. 7–54), viii–ix<sup>10</sup> (fols. 55–74), x<sup>6</sup> (fols. 75–80), xi<sup>8</sup> (fols. 81–8), xii<sup>6</sup> (fols. 89–94), xiii<sup>10</sup> (fols. 95–104), xiv<sup>4</sup> (fols. 105–8), xv<sup>10</sup> (fols. 109–18), xvi<sup>8</sup> (fols. 119–26), xvii<sup>10</sup> (fols. 127–36), xviii<sup>6</sup> (fols. 137–42), xix<sup>10</sup> (fols. 143–52), xx–xxi<sup>6</sup> (fols. 153–64), xxii<sup>4</sup> (fols. 165–8).<sup>37</sup>

The manuscript constitutes 'a remarkable example of the pre-Caroline Nonantolan style of the first third of the ninth century'.<sup>38</sup> Copied by numerous scribes, with occasional additions and corrections by contemporary hands, it is characterised by a very strong ductus, pronounced long *r*-ligatures with upturned shoulder-stroke, *ct* and *st* ligatures, consistent use of *oc*-shaped *a* with uncial *a* used as a capital to mark the beginning of paragraphs; alternate use of uncial *d* and straight-backed *d*; and capital *q* with the right-hand curve extended below the baseline and terminating in a horizontal flourish.<sup>39</sup> The number four is indicated by Roman numerals arranged in the form of a cross, following Nonantolan use (95v, 102v, 109v, 132r, 151v and 164v).<sup>40</sup> Initials are occasionally outlined by red dots (16r, 18r, 23v, 27r, 28r, 30v, 40r, 42r, 51v, 53r, 54r, 56r, 59r, 61r: see fig. 3), 'a decorative motif borrowed from the insular tradition',<sup>41</sup> and are touched with yellow, blue, green and orange; more rarely, the manuscript has initials characterised by interlacing foliage (2r and 132r). The currency of possible Insular affiliations at Nonantola has been tentatively attributed by Bischoff to the presence of scribes or exemplars that the centre received from Bobbio in the decades immediately following the monastery's foundation, in the second half of the eighth century,<sup>42</sup> which may have led to

<sup>35</sup> Augustine, *Sermones*, ed. J.-P. Migne, PL 39 (Paris, 1865), col. 2059–62; D. Ozimic, *Der pseudo-augustinische Sermo CLX* (Graz, 1979), pp. 19–35.

<sup>36</sup> Jerome, *Epistolae*, ed. J.-P. Migne, PL 22 (Paris, 1845), col. 676–81; *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae Pars II: Epistulae LXXI–CXX*, ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 55 (Vienna, 1912), 13–23.

<sup>37</sup> M. Morelli and P. Palma, 'Indagine su alcuni aspetti materiali della produzione libraria a Nonantola nel secolo IX', *Scrittura e civiltà* 6 (1982), 23–98, at 49–50.

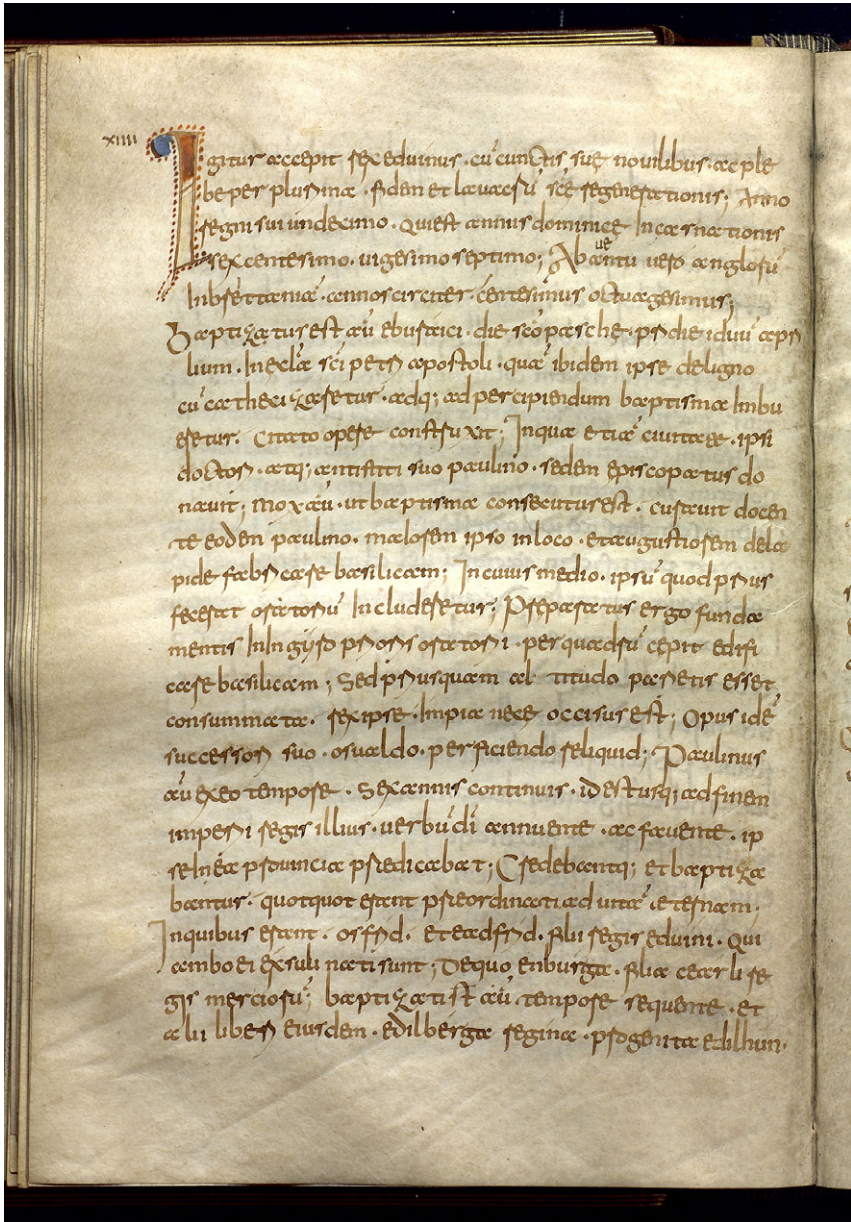
<sup>38</sup> B. Bischoff, 'Manoscritti Nonantolani dispersi dell'epoca Carolingia', *Bibliofilia* 85.2 (1983), 99–124, at 100.

<sup>39</sup> G. Cencetti, 'Scriptoria e scritture nel monachesimo benedettino', *Il monachesimo nell'alto medioevo e la formazione della civiltà occidentale*, ed. G. Ermini, *SettSpol* 4 (Spoleto, 1957), 187–220, at 201–8; Bischoff, 'Manoscritti Nonantolani', pp. 99–100; M. Branchi, *Lo scriptorium e la biblioteca di Nonantola* (Modena, 2011), p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> Branchi, *Lo scriptorium e la biblioteca di Nonantola*, pp. 160–3, at 161.

<sup>41</sup> Bischoff, 'Manoscritti Nonantolani', p. 105.

<sup>42</sup> Bischoff, 'Manoscritti Nonantolani', pp. 103–4.

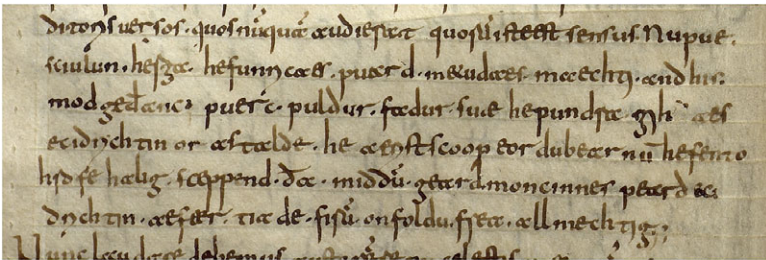


**Figure 3.** Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale 'Vittorio Emanuele II', Vitt. Em. 1452, 51v. Courtesy of Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale 'Vittorio Emanuele II'.

the adoption, among other features, of ‘the Anglo-Saxon style of initials in the pre-Caroline period’ and its combination ‘with native traditions’.<sup>43</sup>

The version of the *Historia ecclesiastica* surviving in the Rome manuscript is almost complete: the text is acephalous (with the *Preface* starting at ‘diligenter a fratribus monasterii, quod ab ipsis conditum’) and lacunose at two points due to the loss of leaves. The first lacuna occurs in Book I, likely resulting from the loss of a single folio between fols. 6 and 7, and encompasses the text following Book I.vii (‘quem lateribus longe lateque deductum’ ...) as far as Book I.ix (‘atque in Italiam transire meditatem’). Of the leaf that contained the text between Book V.xxii (‘octogesimo quinto, dominicae autem incarnationis anno dccxxxi’ ...) and the *Recapitulatio* in Book V.xxiv (‘Theodoro, utillima x capitulorum’) only the triangular Duke fragment survives (115 × 200 mm), with annals from the *Recapitulatio* covering the period 449 to 565 on the recto and 633 to 673 on the verso. The remaining part of this leaf must have been missing since at least the first decade of the nineteenth century, as indicated by the supplementation of the text in the hand of Leandro De Corrieri (163v–164r), librarian of Santa Croce from 1801 to 1834.

In consideration of the five criteria which Plummer identified to distinguish *m*- and *c*-type manuscripts of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, the Rome Bede can be asserted to belong to the former, as corroborated by its agreement with all five readings distinctive of the *m*-recension.<sup>44</sup> Strikingly, however, with regard to the additional discrepancy mentioned by Plummer, where the *c*-class refers at the end of Book IV.xxviii to a single miracle of St Cuthbert rather than more than one (*unum quod* in the *c*-redaction in lieu of *quaedam quae* in the *m*-redaction), our manuscript follows the *c*-type reading (130r7).<sup>45</sup> Of the three additional criteria identified by Lapidge as distinctive of the two redactions, our manuscript once again conforms in its entirety to the readings of the



**Figure 4:** Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale ‘Vittorio Emanuele II’, Vitt. Em. 1452, 122v22–27 (detail). Courtesy of Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale ‘Vittorio Emanuele II’.

<sup>43</sup> B. Bischoff, *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, transl. M. Gorman (Cambridge, 1994), 49. See also G. L. Micheli, *L’enluminure du haut Moyen Âge et les influences irlandaises* (Brussels, 1939), p. 105; L. Schiaparelli, *Influenze straniere nella scrittura italiana dei secoli VIII e IX*, Studi e Testi 49 (Vatican City, 1957), 15–23.

<sup>44</sup> Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica* I, xciv–v; Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, p. xli.

<sup>45</sup> Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica* I, xcvi.

*m*-type.<sup>46</sup> Its status within the *m*-class appears therefore consistent, notwithstanding this isolated agreement with the *c*-class.<sup>47</sup>

#### 4. The Text of Cædmon's Hymn

Cædmon's Hymn is found on 122v22–27 of the Rome manuscript (fig. 4), as part of Book IV.xxii of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, inserted between Bede's introduction to his Latin paraphrase of the Hymn 'quorum iste est sensus' and that paraphrase, beginning 'nunc laudare debemus'. There is no indication that the scribe perceived it to be a linguistically or textually alien insertion in the text.

##### 4.1. The Text of Rm

We begin by offering a diplomatic transcription of Rome's text of Cædmon's Hymn. Word division, capitalization, and punctuation have been preserved, and a forward slash is used to indicate manuscript line breaks:

Nupue. / sciulun. herga. hefunricaes. puard.  
metudaes. maechti. and his. / mod geðanc.  
puerc. puldur. fadur. suæ hepundra gih[ ]aes<sup>48</sup> /  
ecidrichtin or astalde.

5 he aeristscoop eor dubearnū  
hefento / hrofe halig. sceppend.  
ðā. middū. gearð. moncinnes pearð  
eci / drichtin. aefter. tia de.  
firū. on foldu. frea. allmechtig;<sup>49</sup>

Some unusual word division and the erroneous use of <p> for <p> apart, this is clearly a very good text of Cædmon's Hymn, even though the Nonantolan scribe does not seem to have been familiar with English orthography. The reading 'eor du' in 5b means Rm's text is part of the *eordu* recension, hitherto believed to be attested in just three manuscripts: Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 574, 59v col. 2 [Di] (s. xii<sup>3/4</sup>, Cîteaux);<sup>50</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 5237, 72v [Pa] (c. 1430, Cologne);<sup>51</sup> and Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 8245-57, 62rv

<sup>46</sup> Bede, *Storia Degli Inglesi*, ed. M. Lapidge, transl. P. Chiesa, 2 vols. (Milan, 2008) I, xciv.

<sup>47</sup> We are currently investigating the textual affiliations of the text of the *Historia ecclesiastica* of the Rome Bede.

<sup>48</sup> [ ] represent an erased letter.

<sup>49</sup> There is an additional stroke below the line after the first point, but the ink is significantly lighter than that of the preceding words.

<sup>50</sup> N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957), Appendix, no. 8; *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, Départements* (Paris, 1889) V, 142; Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Cædmon's 'Hymn'*, pp. 17–19; Wuest, 'Zwei neue Handschriften', pp. 206–12.

<sup>51</sup> *Catalogus Codicum MSS Bibliothecae Regiae IV* pt. 3 (Paris, 1754), 57; Wuest, 'Zwei neue Handschriften', pp. 212–5; Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Cædmon's Hymn*, pp. 19–22.

[Br] (dated 1489, Priory of Corsendonk).<sup>52</sup> The stemmata of Cavill and O'Donnell for the *eordu* group are accordingly based on just these three manuscripts.<sup>53</sup> Wuest and Dobbie did not take account of Br, which was only discovered by Humphreys and Ross in 1975.<sup>54</sup>

#### 4.2. A New Edition and Stemma of the Eordu Recension

Accordingly, we now present a new edition of the *eordu* recension, based on Rm, with variants from Di, Pa and Br, using the punctuation from the most recent critical edition, by O'Donnell:

- Nu pue<sup>[1]</sup> sciulun<sup>[2]</sup> herga<sup>[3]</sup> hefunricaes<sup>[4]</sup> puard,<sup>[5]</sup>  
 metudaes<sup>[6]</sup> maechti,<sup>[7]</sup> and his modgeðanc,<sup>[8]</sup>  
 puerc<sup>[9]</sup> puldurfadur<sup>[10]</sup>— suæ<sup>[11]</sup> he<sup>[12]</sup> pundra gihuaes,<sup>[13]</sup>  
 eci drichtin, or astalde!
- 5 He aerist<sup>[14]</sup> scoop eordu bearnum<sup>[15]</sup>  
 hefen<sup>[16]</sup> to hrofe, halig sceppend;  
 ða<sup>[17]</sup> middumgeard,<sup>[18]</sup> moncinnes<sup>[19]</sup> peard,  
 eci<sup>[20]</sup> drichtin,<sup>[21]</sup> , aefter<sup>[22]</sup> tiade<sup>[23]</sup>  
 firum on<sup>[24]</sup> foldu, frea<sup>[25]</sup> allmechtig.

- <sup>[1]</sup> pue] puc Pa Br  
<sup>[2]</sup> sciulun] sciulin Pa, scinlun Br  
<sup>[3]</sup> herga] horga Br  
<sup>[4]</sup> hefunricaes] hesimruicaes Pa, hesunruicaes Br  
<sup>[5]</sup> puard] pueard Di Pa Br  
<sup>[6]</sup> metudaes] metundaes Pa Br  
<sup>[7]</sup> maechti] mechti Di Pa Br  
<sup>[8]</sup> modgeðanc] modgedeanc Di Pa, modgedanc Br  
<sup>[9]</sup> puerc] puere Pa Br  
<sup>[10]</sup> puldurfadur] puldurfudur Di, puldur Pa Br  
<sup>[11]</sup> suæ] suae Di Pa Br  
<sup>[12]</sup> he] hae Di  
<sup>[13]</sup> gihuaes] gihnaes Br  
<sup>[14]</sup> aerist] aerst Di, raeirst Pa  
<sup>[15]</sup> bearnum] pearnum Pa Br  
<sup>[16]</sup> hefen] efen Di Pa  
<sup>[17]</sup> ða] da Di, dā Pa  
<sup>[18]</sup> geard] gaerd Br  
<sup>[19]</sup> moncinnes] moneinnes Br

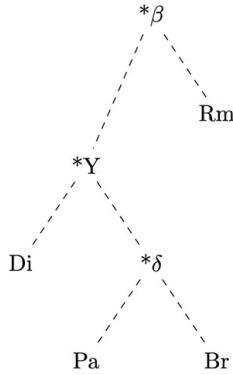
<sup>52</sup> J. van den Gheyn, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique* (Bruxelles 1906), V, 40–2; Cavill, 'The Manuscripts of Caedmon's Hymn', pp. 512–15.

<sup>53</sup> Cavill, 'The Manuscripts of Caedmon's Hymn', pp. 514 and 518–22; O'Donnell, *Caedmon's Hymn*, §4.11.

<sup>54</sup> Wuest, 'Zwei neue Handschriften', p. 225; Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Caedmon's Hymn*, p. 48; Humphreys and Ross, 'Further Manuscripts', pp. 52–3.

- [20] *eci*] *eei* Pa Br  
 [21] *drichtin*] *drintinc* Di, *drichtim* Pa  
 [22] *aefter*] *efter* Di  
 [23] *tiade*] *ciade* Br  
 [24] *on*] *ol* Pa Br  
 [25] *frea*] *fre* Br

These variant readings suggest the stemma in fig. 5.



**Figure 5:** New stemma of the *eordu* recension.

Starting at the base of the stemma, Pa and Br share numerous (mis) readings (e.g. ‘puc’ for ‘pue’ (1a), ‘s’ for ‘f’ in ‘hefunricaes’ (1b), the intrusive ‘n’ in ‘metundaes’ (2b)), and are clearly closely related. Both, however, also contain independent errors, Pa reading ‘raerist’ for ‘aerist’ (5a) and ‘drichtim’ for ‘drichtin’ (8a), and Br *inter alia* ‘horga’ for ‘herga’ (1a), ‘gihnaes’ for ‘gihuaes’ (3b), and ‘fre’ for ‘frea’ (9b). This suggests both derive directly or indirectly from the same exemplar (here labelled \* $\delta$ , following Cavill). Di, nonetheless, contains several independent readings, including ‘hae’ for ‘he’ (3b), ‘aerst’ for ‘aerist’ (5a), and ‘drintinc’ for ‘drichtin’ (8a), suggesting it did not derive from \* $\delta$ .

Di, Pa, and Br do, however, share readings not in Rm, including ‘pueard’ for ‘puard’ (1b), ‘mechti’ for ‘maechti’ (2a), and ‘modgedanc’ for ‘modgeðanc’ (2b). This suggests that Di, Pa and Br shared a common ancestor distinct from Rm (here labelled \*Y, following Wuest). The <ea> they share in ‘pueard’ is unlikely to have been a chance mistake and seems to indicate breaking: as such, it is a variant much more likely to have arisen in an English-speaking area than on the Continent. This seems to suggest that \*Y was produced in England after the creation of Rm’s exemplar.<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, \*Y is represented lower on the stemma than Rm. Placing \*Y and Rm in separate branches of the stemma requires that Rm and \*Y’s descendants independently substituted <p> for <β>, since \*Y itself (being putatively

<sup>55</sup> O’Donnell suggests \*Y was insular: see his ‘A Northumbrian Version of Cædmon’s Hymn’, p. 155.

written in England) is unlikely to have contained such an error. However, it is not so improbable that two Continental scribes, unfamiliar with the conventions for writing English, confronted with <p>, both transcribed it as <p>.

Rm is presumably not the archetype of the *eordu* recension, since the variant 'eordu' (for 'ælda', the reading of the Moore and Leningrad copies of the *Hymn*) is semantically meaningful and the scribe of the version of Cædmon's *Hymn* in Rm seems not to have understood English. Accordingly, we place \* $\beta$  (chosen to denote the archetype of the *eordu* recension to respect the conventional use of \* $\alpha$  to represent the overall archetype of the *Hymn*) at the top of the stemma, with both Rm and \*Y descending (directly or indirectly) from it. However, there seems nothing to disqualify Rm from having been copied directly from \* $\beta$ .

While this stemma accounts for the variants in the text of the *Hymn*, it is somewhat complicated by broader considerations. Rm, Pa, and Br all contain the Moore Annals,<sup>56</sup> suggesting it is likely \*Y (and \* $\beta$ ) also included them. Yet Di does not.<sup>57</sup> Two possible explanations suggest themselves for this: first, Di (or its immediate exemplar) chose to omit the Moore Annals; second, Di (directly or indirectly) took the text of the *Hymn* from a different exemplar, having copied the bulk of the *Historia ecclesiastica* from a manuscript that did not have the Annals. The first option seems unlikely, since in each of Rm, Pa and Br, the Moore Annals are embedded directly in the *Recapitulatio* in Book V.xxiii, and the scribe of Di (or its exemplar) presumably had no indication they were otherwise different from the other annals. It therefore seems likely that Di (or its exemplar) might be underpinned by exemplars from different textual traditions, a hypothesis which may be supported by the crosses that demark the beginning and end of text of the *Hymn* in Di.<sup>58</sup>

To allow for the copying of Rm, \* $\beta$ , or a copy of it, must have reached Northern Italy by the early ninth century. As argued above, the reading 'pueard' suggest \*Y originated in England a little later than this. \*Y, or a copy of it, had reached Cîteaux by the mid-twelfth century to serve as the exemplar of Di. When precisely it migrated to France is unknown, but it is conceivable its acquisition was arranged by Stephen Harding, English by birth and initially a monk of Sherborne, who became abbot of Cîteaux in 1109.<sup>59</sup> We discuss the linguistic evidence for the possible date and origin of \* $\beta$  (or Rm's direct exemplar) in the section that follows.

<sup>56</sup> On the presence of the Moore Annals in Pa and Br see J. A. Westgard, 'Dissemination and Reception of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* in Germany, c. 731–1500: The Manuscript Evidence' (unpubl. PhD diss., Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2005), pp. 40–2.

<sup>57</sup> In addition, as Wuest noted, in the Latin paraphrase of the *Hymn* Pa and Br share the transposition of 'miraculorum' between 'primo' and 'filiis', reading 'omnium auctor extitit, qui primo miraculorum filiis hominum...' in lieu of 'omnium miraculorum auctor extitit, qui primo filiis hominum...'. However, Di omits the word 'miraculorum' altogether. Rm agrees with Pa and Br. See Wuest, 'Zwei neue Handschriften', pp. 218–19 and O'Donnell, 'A Northumbrian Version of Cædmon's *Hymn*', pp. 152–3.

<sup>58</sup> Wuest, 'Zwei neue Handschriften', p. 212.

<sup>59</sup> As suggested by Wuest, 'Zwei neue Handschriften', pp. 222–3 and Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Cædmon's Hymn*, p. 18.

### 4.3. The Language of Rm and the Origin of the Eordū Recension

Even though it was copied on the Continent, the Rome Bede faithfully preserves many features of early Northumbrian. Many of these features are also found in Pa, Br and Di, suggesting \* $\beta$ , and thus the *eordū* recension, may itself also have been of such an origin. There are also some hints that the origins of Rm (and \* $\beta$ ) were somewhat more southerly than Northumbria, perhaps North Mercian. Citations in this section refer to the new edition of the *eordū* recension offered in §4.2 and based on Rm, with – where relevant – variant readings from Di, Pa and Br noted in parenthesis.

Orthographical indicators of the earliness of this text of Cædmon's *Hymn* include the frequency with which /æ(:)/ is spelled <æ>, for instance in 'maechti' (2a: 'mechti' Di Pa Br), 'aerist' (5a), 'aefter' (8b: 'efter' Di), with <æ>, the graphy that according to Hogg had prevailed by c. 800, only found in 'suæ' (3b: 'suae' Di Pa Br, perhaps the reading of \* $\beta$ ).<sup>60</sup> The spelling <ch> for [x], found in 'maechti' (2a) and 'drichtin' (8a: 'drintinc' Di) is another early feature, not preserved in either the Moore or Leningrad versions of the *Hymn*, which have 'maecti' and 'mehti' respectively for the former.<sup>61</sup> The representation of [ð] as <d>, seen in 'eordū' (5b), is also common in early texts,<sup>62</sup> as are geminate spellings for long vowels, like the <oo> in 'scoop' (5a).<sup>63</sup> The spelling of /w/ as <pu> (presumably in error for <pw>), for instance in 'pue' (1a), is generally seen as 'late Northumbrian', but this version of the *Hymn* with its *terminus ante quem* of c. 830 may suggest its earlier currency.<sup>64</sup>

Phonological features also point to an early date. 'Hefunricaes' (1b) is lacking in back umlaut, a sound change already found in the earliest Northumbrian texts.<sup>65</sup> In unstressed positions, /æ/, /u/ and /i/ are on occasion preserved, hence 'eci' (4a), 'hefun' (1b: 'hesim' Pa, beside 'hefen' (6a)) and 'suæ' (3). For Hogg, the merger of /æ/ with /a/, the earliest of these changes, was completed before the end of the eighth century.<sup>66</sup>

Somewhat later features are, however, on occasion apparent: 'sciulun' (1a) shows back umlaut, absent from both the Moore and Leningrad copies, and from the very earliest Mercian and Northumbrian texts.<sup>67</sup> Our copy also lacks archaic forms like the Moore Bede's 'heben', with <b> for /v/. All these features seem consistent with the Rome manuscript preserving a very early text of Cædmon's *Hymn* (in its <ch> spellings, preserving at least one feature more

<sup>60</sup> R. M. Hogg, *A Grammar of Old English, 1: Phonology* (Oxford, 1992), §2.12, n. 1. The scribe uses <æ> in Latin (e.g. in 'hæc', fol. 122r21), so <æ> in Cædmon's *Hymn* presumably reflects the usage of the exemplar.

<sup>61</sup> Hogg, *Grammar*, §2.60, n. 1: 'The spelling <ch>, simplified to <c> most often before <t> but occasionally elsewhere, is found in very early mss., especially [the Moore] Bede ... and persists in L [iber] V[itae] D[unelmensis]'. The <ch> spellings in the Rome manuscript may suggest we should also reconstruct <ch> for the archetype.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* §2.59.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* §2.4.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* §2.77, n. 3.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* §5.105 (3).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* §6.49 (and, on /i/ and /u/, §6.53, 6.56 respectively).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* §5.104 (3) (alongside §5.68).

archaic than the Moore and Leningrad versions), but also in some ways updated to reflect developments from the second half of the eighth century.

A more southerly, potentially North Mercian, phase in the transmission history of this version of the *Hymn* is suggested by several spellings. [ā] is spelled <a> not <o> in ‘and’ and ‘modgeðanc’ (both 2b: ‘modgedeanc’ Di Pa, beside ‘moncinnes’ (8b)). While <a> and <o> are both found in early texts, Anglian texts (including those in late Northumbrian) primarily used <o>, but the dialect of the portions of the gloss to the Rushworth Gospels written by Farman (Ru1), which may represent North Mercian, had <a>. <sup>68</sup> The <i> in the second element of ‘moncinnes’ (8b), though only bearing secondary stress, may also suggest a more southerly phase in the copying, since while <i> for /y/ is not found in early Northumbrian, it is evident in Mercian. <sup>69</sup> ‘Sceppend’ (6b) may show Mercian second fronting of an /æ/ unaffected by palatal diphthongisation. <sup>70</sup> Collectively, these hints suggest the version of Cædmon’s *Hymn* in the Rome manuscript may have come from further south than Wearmouth-Jarrow, conceivably southern Northumbria or northern Mercia.

Since the majority of the forms cited in the preceding paragraphs are preserved in all four *eordu* recension manuscripts – Rm, Di, Pa, and Br – the likelihood is that they indicate the origin of not just the exemplar of Rm, but also \*β. Instances where Di, Pa and Br have different readings are few, and mostly explicable through other considerations: ‘mehti’ (Di Pa Br) and ‘efer’ (Di) may reflect the general replacement of <æ, ae, e> with <e> in the writing of Latin in the twelfth century, while it is difficult to be sure how Di’s confused ‘drintinc’ originated. Beyond ‘pueard’ (1b), already offered as evidence for the development of \*Y in England after Rm’s exemplar went to Nonantola, none of the readings Di, Pa and Br share against Rm suggest \*Y had a linguistic stratum distinct to \*β. It thus seems likely that \*β, and putatively the *eordu* recension, originated in South Northumbria or North Mercia before c. 830 at the absolute latest (the *terminus ante quem* provided by Rm’s copying), if not earlier. The rediscovery of Rm is thus key to rebutting recent doubts about the earliness of the *eordu* recension. <sup>71</sup>

#### 4.4 The Punctuation of Rm

One other feature of Rm’s text of Cædmon’s *Hymn* that requires comment is the use of pointing and spacing to separate words. This is most evident at the beginning and end of the *Hymn*, where in the first three lines of the poem (as now lineated) we have *punctūs* after ‘pue’, ‘sciulun’, ‘herga’, ‘hefunricaes’, ‘puard’, ‘metudaes’, ‘maechti’, ‘his’, ‘modgeðanc’, ‘puerc’, ‘puldur’ and ‘fadur’, and in the last one and a half after ‘aefter’, ‘tiade’, ‘firum’, ‘foldum’, ‘frea’ and ‘allmechtig’. There is thus a *punctus* after almost all letter sequences we would now consider words (the unpunctuated exceptions are ‘Nu pue’, ‘and his’ and ‘on foldum’, suggesting that the separation

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* §5.5 notes <a> and <o> vary in early texts, but Anglian texts (including those in late Northumbrian) primarily use <o>, though the dialect of Ru1, which may represent North Mercian, has <a>.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* §5.174.

<sup>70</sup> As implied by Hogg, *Grammar*, §5.50, n. 2 (see also §5.90 on the geography of the change).

<sup>71</sup> Cavill, ‘The Manuscripts of Caedmon’s Hymn’, p. 521. O’Donnell, ‘A Northumbrian Version of Cædmon’s Hymn’, pp. 145–7.

of adverbs and conjunctions from personal pronouns and prepositions from the nouns they govern was not necessarily yet fully felt). On one occasion, what we would now regard as a compound, ‘middum. gearð’ (7a), is interpuncted.

No other surviving text of Cædmon’s *Hymn* is punctuated in this way. Of the *eordu* group manuscripts, Pa has no *punctūs*, Br just one (at the end of the *Hymn*), and Di five: one at the end of the *Hymn*, and the remaining four after ‘pueard’ (1b), ‘maechti’ (2a), ‘da’ (7a) and ‘firum’ (9a), all words followed by *punctūs* in Rm. While the first two of the points in Di occur at the end of a half-line, the last two are half-line internal. This suggests Di’s punctuation is not metrical and may be a residue of an exemplar with the kind of interpuncting found in Rm. This means that, if our stemma is correct, \*β (putatively the origin of the *eordu* recension) was punctuated with interpuncts.

This punctuation sharply distinguishes \*β from the two earlier copies of Cædmon’s *Hymn*. The Leningrad Bede contains only a single *punctus* at the end of the *Hymn*, while the Moore Bede also has only a single *punctus*, but this is located after ‘scepen’ (5b), and thus at the end of a verse line (and, perhaps more importantly, at the end of the first of the two sense units that comprise the *Hymn*). If the Moore and Leningrad Bedes represent the original punctuation of the *Hymn*, then \*β’s punctuation looks to be an innovation of the second half of the eighth or early ninth century.

Word division by interpuncting, such as we can posit for \*β, is unknown in manuscripts containing Old English.<sup>72</sup> It is, moreover, very rare in Latin manuscripts. Parkes suggested its use by Roman scribes ceased in the first century of the Christian Era, giving way to the use of *scriptio continua* undivided into words.<sup>73</sup> He does, however, note later uses of interpuncting in teaching books produced in Egypt in the fourth century.<sup>74</sup> Exactly what model \*β had for the use of interpuncts and spaces to divide Old English words is unclear, but worthy of further investigation. One possibility might be inscriptions incised on stone, which continued to use interpuncts much longer than manuscripts.

## 5. Conclusion

The discovery of this manuscript of Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* pushes back the *terminus ante quem* for the emergence of the *eordu* recension of Cædmon’s *Hymn* over three centuries, since to this point the earliest known manuscript was Di, from the third quarter of the twelfth century. The discovery of such an early copy of the *eordu* recension suggests it is possible the original reading of line 5b of the *Hymn* was not ‘aelða barnum’ but ‘eordu bearnum’, as O’Donnell suggested.<sup>75</sup> It also pushes back the *terminus ante quem* for the incorporation of the text of the *Hymn* in the text of manuscripts of the *Historia ecclesiastica* by two centuries, from the eleventh century, when Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 5. 22 was copied,

<sup>72</sup> Ker, *Catalogue*, pp. xxxiii–v.

<sup>73</sup> M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: an Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot, 1992), p. 10. See also E. O. Wingo, *Latin Punctuation in the Classical Age* (The Hague, 1972), pp. 14–17.

<sup>74</sup> Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 12.

<sup>75</sup> O’Donnell, *Cædmon’s Hymn*, §§ 5.22–32.

to the first third of the ninth, thus providing a possible model for its inclusion in the main text of the Old English Bede. The unparalleled punctuation of the text in the Rome manuscript, which appears to be the residue of an exemplar that included interword interpuncts, a practice otherwise unattested in Old English, is a powerful reminder that surviving Old English manuscripts are not necessarily representative of the entire population of such books produced in the Middle Ages: new discoveries are thus well worth pursuing because they have the potential to enrich the picture of the earliest phases of writing English in surprising ways.

**Acknowledgements.** We are grateful to Andrea Cappa and Valentina Longo from the National Central Library of Rome for the digitisation of the manuscript and related materials, as well as for their helpful advice; to J. Andrew Armacost and Neal Z. Shipe from Duke University for supplying images of the Duke fragment and answering our queries; and to Canon Riccardo Fangarezzi from the Abbey Archive of Nonantola for confirming the shelfmarks of the ancient Nonantola catalogues.

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**Cite this article:** Magnanti, Elisabetta, and Mark Faulkner. 2026. 'A New Early-Ninth-Century Manuscript of Cædmon's *Hymn*: Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Vitt. Em. 1452, 122v.' *Early Medieval England and its Neighbours* 52, e9, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ean.2025.10012>