Time and History in the Works of William of Malmesbury

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Abstract

This thesis offers the first systematic and in-depth study of the representation of time in the works of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman chronicler William of Malmesbury. Time was at the heart of how the past was understood in the medieval period. This shaped how history was recorded and written about. However, until recently, historical writing has been neglected as a source for uncovering medieval notions of time. By examining William of Malmesbury's representation of time through the narrative structure of his works, his depiction of prophecy, and his deployment of narrative imagery, this thesis will argue that William of Malmesbury's depiction of time was a significant factor in his works. This thesis identifies that notions of time shaped the content and interpretation of a text. Furthermore, this thesis will argue that by using the notion of time as a tool of historical analysis, we can achieve a deeper comprehension of William of Malmesbury's writings, and that it is possible to uncover deeper concerns that are otherwise difficult to unearth.

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List of Abbreviations

Bede, *DNR*	Bede, *De Natura Rerum,* PL 90, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris, 1950), cols 187-273.
Bede, *DT*	Bede, *De Temporibus*, ed. Charles W. Jones (Cambridge, MA, 1943)
Bede, *DTR*	Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, *The Reckoning of Time*. ed and trans Faith Wallis. Liverpool, 1988.
Bede, *HE*	Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica, The Ecclesiastical History*, Volume I, Books 1-3, ed. and trans J. E. King (Cambridge, MA, 1930)
Bede, *ONT*	Bede, *On the Nature of Things,* ed and trans Faith Wallis (Liverpool, 2010)
Bede, *OT*	Bede, *On Times,* ed. and trans Faith Wallis (Liverpool, 2010)
Eadmer, *HRE*	Eadmer of Canterbury, *History of Recent Events in England,* eds and trans R. W. Southern and Geoffrey Bosanque (London, 1964)
Eadmer, *HNA*	Eadmer of Canterbury, *Historia Novorum in Anglia,* ed. Martin Rule (Cambridge, 2012)
H. Hunt., *HA*	Henry of Huntingdon*, Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996)
Isidore, *DNR*	Isidore of Seville, *De Natura Rerum Liber*, ed. Gustavus Beckerm (Amsterdam, 1967)
Isidore, *ONT*	Isidore of Seville, *On the Nature of Things,* ed. and trans. Calvin B. Kendall (Liverpool, 2016)
O. Vit., *HE*	Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica, The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis* ed. and trans Marjorie Chibnall (5 vols.; Oxford, 1980-1987)
PL	*Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, ed. J-P Minge (221 vols.; Paris, 1844-64)

W. Malm., *AG*	William of Malmesbury, *The Early History of Glastonbury: An Edition, Translation and Study of William of Malmesbury's De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie*, ed. and trans John Scott (Woodbridge, 1981)
W. Malm., *GP*	William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, eds and trans R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (2 vols.; Oxford, 2007)
W. Malm., *GR*	William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, eds and trans R. M. T. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998)
W. Malm., *HN*	William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, ed. and trans Edmund King (Oxford, 1998)
W. Malm., *VD*	William of Malmesbury, *Vita Dunstani*, in *William of Malmesbury's Saints' Lives*, eds and trans R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 2002)
W. Malm., *VW*	William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani,* in *William of Malmesbury's Saints' Lives*, eds and trans R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 2002)

Introduction

This thesis seeks to engage with the representation of time in the historical writing of the twelfth-century chronicler William of Malmesbury. Time was an important consideration for writing history. By its very nature, writing about the past engaged with ideas and concepts about time itself: the relationship between the past, the present, and the future; the sequence and passage of time; the relationship of cause and effect between events that had passed. Emerging scholarship has displayed a growing interest in researching the monastic experience of time in the medieval period.[1] This thesis forms part of that emerging scholarship and aims to offer deeper insight into conceptions of time in early twelfth-century England. However, no major study has focused on a close textual reading of an early twelfth-century Anglo-Latin chronicle or piece of historical writing with the aim of uncovering and analysing the representations and conceptions of time present in the text. This is most curious as the literature of the twelfth century contains much that would illustrate how time was represented and understood. This research will focus on the Anglo-Norman era of twelfth-century England for two reasons. Firstly, during this period there was a flourishing of Latin historical writing. Not since Bede had any attempt been made to narrate, outside of Annals, the events of the past. Also, this period saw a wide range of historical works being composed, from long chronicles charting the distant political past, to contemporary history, biography and saints'

[1] An example of this is the research network: 'Monastic Experience of Time'. I am grateful to Charles C. Rozier and Laura Cleaver for my inclusion and also to other members for their stimulating engagement: Sebastian Falk, Sarah Griffin, Katherine Weikert, Megan McNamee and Giles Gasper.

lives. Secondly, this period follows one of the most crucial periods in English history: the Norman Conquest. Whilst many scholars have recognised that the Conquest was seen as a turning-point in English history, none have considered the potential effects of this event on conceptions of time or its representation in narrative.[2] Therefore, this thesis will address three central research questions: how did William of Malmesbury represent time in his historical writing, what purpose did those representations serve within the text, and finally what do those representations reveal about William's broader concerns beyond his texts?

One of the reasons why scholars have not engaged in exploring representations of time in William's works so far may be that neither William, nor any of his contemporary historical authors, directly and overtly discuss the concept of time. Unlike Augustine and Bede, William did not produce any writings that attempted to unravel the notion of time. However, developments in the study of medieval written sources illustrate how such ideas can be uncovered. The 'linguistic turn' in the 1980s sparked the trend for considering the study of medieval written documents from the approach of literary criticism.[3] Gabrielle Spiegel proposes that medieval historical works should be considered principally as literary compositions that reveal the ideas, agendas, and concerns of the world in which the text was created, an approach Spiegel terms the 'social logic of the text'.[4] Robert M. Stein

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[2] An excellent summary of the debate considering whether the Norman Conquest was a turning-point can be found in Monika Otter, '1066: The Moment of Transition in Two Narratives of the Norman Conquest', *Speculum* 74: 3 (1999), pp. 565–569.
[3] John Toew, 'Intellectual History after the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience', *The American Historical Review*, 92:4 (1987), pp. 879-907.
[4] Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum* 65:1 (1990), pp. 59-86; reprinted in Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past As Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), pp. 3-28.

similarly expounds the value of using literary analytical techniques.[5] He argues that the developments of the linguistic turn have become an 'indispensable part of any historical investigator's toolbox' and that language is a key mode of disseminating meaning.[6] He concludes that the question 'how to find the [medieval] world and understand the people in it?' can be answered by literary analysis:

> As we investigate the properties of representation, we discover that by taking into account not merely the things that are being said by our documents... but also the linguistic mechanisms that allow them to be said and said in the particular way that they are... we discover that the reality we are engaged in understanding becomes thicker, less rarefied, more nuanced and multidimensional.[7]

The use of literary analysis in relation to Anglo-Norman historical writing has become a well-established practise. This thesis will deploy such analysis in order to discover William of Malmesbury's ideas about time.

The examination of time as part of literary analysis has been shown to uncover a greater understanding of the work to which it is applied. It has brought insight into how the narrative is fashioned, how the story is shaped, and how deeper meaning is conveyed within the text. Analysts of narrative theory have previously established that the construction of time and temporality within narration affect both the pacing and location in a narrative, and the interpretation of that story by the audience.[8] Paul Ricoeur argues that time is an integral part of narrative, one that has been overlooked by literary criticism and by philosophers who analyse the concept

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[5] Robert M. Stein, 'Literary Criticism and the Evidence for History' in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. Nancy Partner (New York, NY, 2005), pp. 67-87.
[6] Stein, 'Literary Criticism and the Evidence for History', pp. 67-68.
[7] Stein, 'Literary Criticism and the Evidence for History', pp. 80-81.
[8] For instance: Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* 2 vols (London, 1984); Mieke Ball, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, (Second Edition, Toronto, 1988).

of time.[9] This thesis will join together the fields of Anglo-Norman historiography and literary criticism by using textual analysis to discover how William represented time and what purpose those representations fulfilled within the text. Questions about how William used certain narrative techniques such as a temporally complex narrative structure and the deployment of metaphor and imagery, will be addressed in order to understand how William's sense of time can be unearthed, and the effect this had on his writings. How did William's narrative structure construct a particular sense of temporality within the text? What does this suggest about how William perceived the structure of time? How did William deploy other narrative strategies to manipulate the sense of time in the narrative and how did this inform how the audience received the narrative? By understanding how William represented time and how those representations worked within the text, we can achieve a deeper comprehension of his work.

No scholar has attempted to undertake a close textual analysis of any of William's writings that focuses on his representation of time. However, that is not to suggest that the extent of this thesis' contribution is to explore one topic that has been overlooked. Exploring the rhetorical depictions of time can not only allow greater insight into the texts themselves, but can also contribute to a deeper understanding of how William saw the world. Time is a window into a worldview, it is part of the fabric of reality. As the historical anthropologist Aaron Gurevich succinctly elucidates:

> Few factors in a culture express the essential nature of its world picture so clearly as its way of reckoning time: for this has a

[9] Paul Ricoeur, 'Narrative Time', *Critical Inquiry*, 7:1 (1980), pp. 170-172.

> determining influence on the way people behave, the way they think, the rhythm of their lives, and the relationship between them and things.[10]

Anthropologists have often turned to the topic of time as a tool for studying deep-rooted ideas inherent in societies both past and present.[11] I contend that by analysing William's notions of time, it is possible to uncover deeper concerns that are otherwise difficult to unearth. Time, as this thesis will demonstrate, can be successfully used as a tool of historical analysis.

This introduction will first address the key subject of this study: William of Malmesbury. As time is a complex and multifaceted topic, it was decided that this thesis should focus on one chronicler, so as to reach a greater depth of understanding. William's impressive collection of works provides an extensive basis from which to glean his conception of time. The research undertaken on William of Malmesbury will be reviewed in order to establish that what thesis contributes to scholarship on this important author. I propose that by examining William's representation of time we attain a deeper understanding of his work. Furthermore, by exploring his representation of time we can also address other questions that historians have asked about William that do not directly connect to his understanding of time. Subsequently, the time-related scholarship undertaken which is pertinent to this study will be surveyed. Principally, research on time in medieval

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[10] Aaron J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture* (London, 1985, originally published as *Kategorii srednevekovoi kultury*, Moscow, 1972), p. 94.

[11] The scholarship is extensive, the following are a few illustrative examples of the field with thanks to Professor Richard Rathbone for his guidance and advice: Kirkusmo Pharo, *The Ritual Practice of Time* (Leiden, 2014); Ross Hassig, *Time, History and Belief in Aztec and colonial Mexico* (Austin, 2001); T. C. McCaskie, 'Time and the Calendar in Nineteenth Century Asante: an Exploratory Essay', *History in Africa 7* (1980), pp. 179-200; Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other* (Columbia, 1983); Alfred Gell, *The Anthropology of Time: Cultural Constructions of Temporal Maps and Images* (London, 1992).

England will be examined. There has been an extensive and sustained academic interest in how people of the medieval period experienced and perceived time, and these studies formed a significant aspect of the field of medieval mentalities initially propagated by the Annales School. These studies demonstrate how useful examining time is for attaining a glimpse into how the world was understood. However, these scholars have overlooked the early twelfth century as a subject area: much of the scholarship conducted centres on the early or late medieval period, and Anglo-Norman historiography has not been considered as a source for ideas on time. Secondly, studies concerning historiography and the awareness of the past will be examined. Historical writing had ideas of the past at its core: this has been long established and much work has been done to explore how historiography engages with concepts of the past. However, as will be shown, that scholarship does not take into account how concepts and ideas about time in general shaped how authors understood and wrote about the past. Finally, the texts which will form the foundation of this study will be outlined, as will the framework of enquiry.

William of Malmesbury

A Benedictine monk of the abbey of Malmesbury, William is considered one of the foremost writers of the twelfth century. The little biographical information we have about William presents a seemingly straightforward picture but belies a more

complicated matrix of identity.[12] Born of English and Norman parents, he entered the monastery as a child oblate. Under the guidance of Godfrey of Jumiège, he undertook an extensive programme of study. By 1120 he had gained the role of cantor, a role he held until his death in 1143. He is known to contemporary scholars as the author of an extensive oeuvre. From ancient history to commentary on recent events, to hagiography, biblical commentary and miracle compilations, he produced an impressive collection. This has drawn the attention of scholars for decades. Scholarly approaches to William can be summarised as follows:

> Describing William of Malmesbury, scholars have often found it appropriate to draw upon superlatives: he was one of England's finest men of letters, among the most learned historians of twelfth-century Europe, and, some would argue, the greatest historian of England since Bede.[13]

No one word encapsulates the man who was William of Malmesbury: monk, cantor, librarian, historian, theologian, political commentator, recorder of current affairs, avid reader of classical Latin. His interests were eclectic and diverse. In the recent volume dedicated to examining William of Malmesbury, the range of subjects discussed is extensive.[14] This breadth is further borne out by the sheer number of studies conducted on his works. Scholars have attempted for decades to unravel the many threads that weave throughout William's writings.

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[12] Excellent summaries of William of Malmesbury's life and career can be found in: R. M. Thomson, 'Malmesbury, William of (b. c. 1090, d. in or after 1142)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/29461 accessed 06/04/2020; A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550–c.1307* (London, 1974), pp. 141-157.

[13] Emily Winkler and Emily Dolmans, 'Discovering William of Malmesbury: The Man and his Works' in *Discovering William of Malmesbury,* eds Rodney M. Thomson, Emily Dolmans, and Emily A. Winkler (Woodbridge, 2017), p. 1.

[14] *Discovering William of Malmesbury*.

One of the key areas on which scholarship has focused is William's reasons for writing history. Rodney Thomson produced one of the most comprehensive and convincing studies on the topic. He distils William's motives for writing into three core motivations: moral instruction, pleasure, and historical value.[15] He suggests that William's primary incentive was the belief that history served a didactic function for society: illustrating models of good behaviour to emulate and poor behaviour to avoid. Sigbjørn Sønnesyn develops this argument further by suggesting that the ultimate moral purpose for writing history is situated in William's adaption of classical philosophy and ethics to Christian theology.[16]

Others have delved into his intellectual background. Most recently, work has focused on William's education and how it was borne out in his writings. Thomson illustrated how extensive William's reading was. The sheer range of texts he had access to made him, in Thomson's words, an 'omnivorous reader' and one of the most well-read persons of his age. [17] William's study of classical rhetorical tradition consisting of Cicero, Quintillian, and others has been shown to have had a deep

[15] Rodney Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 5.
[16] See: Sigbjørn Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History* (Woodbridge, 2012).
[17] Thompson, *William of Malmesbury,* p. 76, and especially 'Appendix II: List of Works Known to William at First Hand', pp. 202-214.

influence on how he wrote his work.[18] These scholars have extended on previous work examining William's preoccupation with the Roman past.[19]

More still have sought to extract and piece together his seemingly complex political affinities. Björn Weiler, Emily Winkler and Ryan Kemp have studied William's attitudes towards kingship and the political machinations of key figures. [20] However, some of the greatest and most contested debates stem from attempts to uncover William's position on one specific event: the Norman Conquest. On the one hand, it revitalised the dwindling fervour of the church which had begun to decline in the tenth century. On the other, it caused a major change in the political landscape and resulted in devastation in several regions, most extensively in the north. John

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[18] Neil Wright, 'The 12th-century Renaissance in Anglo-Norman England: William of Malmesbury and Joseph of Exeter' in *Latin in Medieval Britain*, eds Richard Ashdowne and Carolinne White (Oxford, 2017), pp. 73-84; Rodney M. Thomson, 'Satire, Irony and Humour in William of Malmesbury' in *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West 1100-1540: Essays in Honour of John O. Ward*, eds Constant J. Mews, Cary J. Nederman and Rodney M. Thomson (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 115-127; Joan Gluckauf Haahr, 'William of Malmesbury's Roman models: Suetonius and Lucan' in *The Classics in the Middle Ages: Papers of the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies*, eds Aldo S. Bernardo and Saul Levin (Binghamton, N.Y, 1990), pp. 165-73; Michael Winterbottom, 'The language of William of Malmesbury', in *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West 1100-1540,* pp. 129-47; Paul Antony Hayward, 'The Importance of Being Ambiguous: Innuendo and Legerdemain in William of Malmesbury's Gesta Regum and Gesta Pontificum Anglorum', *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXIII, Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2010,* ed. C. P. Lewis (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 75-102, especially pp. 97-101; Rodney M. Thomson, 'The "scriptorium" of William of Malmesbury' in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N.R. Ker*, eds M.B. Parkes and Andrew G. Watson (London, 1978), pp. 117-142; Rodney M. Thomson, 'More manuscripts from the "Scriptorium" of William of Malmesbury', *Scriptorium*, 35:1 (1981), pp. 48-54; Rodney M. Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury and the Latin classics revisited', *Proceedings of the British Academy,* 129 (2005), pp. 383-93; Rodney M. Thomson, 'William Malmesbury and the Classics: New Evidence' in *Manuscripts of the Latin Classics 800-1200*, ed. E Kwakkel (Leiden, 2015), pp. 169-186.

[19] William Kynan-Wilson, 'Roman Identity in William of Malmesbury's Historical Writings' in *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, pp. 81-91.

[20] Björn Weiler, 'William of Malmesbury, King Henry I, and the Gesta regum Anglorum' in *Anglo-Norman Studies, XXXI Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2008*, ed. Chris P. Lewis, (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 157-176; Björn Weiler, 'William of Malmesbury on Kingship', *History*, 90, (2005) pp. 3-22; Emily Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing* (Oxford, 2017); Ryan Kemp, 'Advising the King: Kingship, Bishops, and Saints in the Works of William of Malmesbury' in *Discovering William of Malmesbury,* pp. 65-80; see also: Joan Gluckauf Haahr, 'The concept of kingship in William of Malmesbury's Gesta regum and Historia novella', *Mediaeval Studies*, 38 (1976), pp. 351-371; John Gillingham, 'The ironies of history: William of Malmesbury's views of William II and Henry I' in *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, pp. 37-48.

Gillingham has argued that William perceived the Norman invaders as a 'civilising' force, drawing on his compliments of their discipline before the battle of Hastings compared to the conduct of the Anglo-Saxons.[21] He argues that the Anglo-Saxons are presented as 'less humane' than the English of William's own time.[22] Furthermore, Gillingham relies on the absence of any discussion of Norman oppression and English suffering in the *Historia Novella*.[23] Conversely, Thomson has argued that William's opinion changed over time, from admiring the Normans in his early works to regarding them with disdain in his later life.[24] By analysing William's representation of time, this study will demonstrate that his seemingly contradictory attitude to the Norman Conquest was not as complex as some scholars have contended.

Despite such extensive research on William, one area has not been covered: how he understood time and how that understanding was articulated. William's works present a rich opportunity to fill this gap. He lived surrounded by the echoes of the past. As Charles Rozier put it: 'the experience of everyday life in the monastery was saturated by contact with the past'.[25] Not only was William's environment conducive to turning his mind to considering time, his role as a cantor required him

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[21] John Gillingham, '1066 and the introduction of chivalry into England' in his *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 209-231.
[22] Gillingham, '1066 and the introduction of chivalry into England', p. 228.
[23] John Gillingham, 'Henry of Huntingdon and the twelfth-century revival of the English nation' in his *The English in the Twelfth Century*, pp. 123-144.
[24] Rodney M. Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury's Diatribe against the Normans' in *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past*, eds Martin Brett and David A. Woodman (Farnham, 2015), pp. 113-121.
[25] Charlies C. Rozier, 'The Importance of Writing Institutional History in the Anglo-Norman Realm, c.1060-c.1142, with special reference to Eadmer's Historia Novorum, Symeon of Durham's Libellus de exordio, and the Historia Ecclesiastica of Orderic Vitalis.', Unpublished PhD Thesis, Durham University (2014), p. 245.

to do so. William read the works of those who had gone before him, he arranged for the memorialisation of the dead, he participated in and then as cantor organised the performance of the liturgy. The past ordered his daily life: meaning was derived from the liturgical services in which he participated, re-enacting the past year on year. He was fascinated by ruins, by the deeds of saints and kings, and looked back to an age when England existed in the time of the English. His studies as a cantor resulted in him actively thinking about, and engaging with, the concept of time. Recent work on twelfth-century Anglo-Latin historiography has turned towards individuals who were known to be cantors. Theresa Webber, Lauren Whitnah, Charles Rozier, Paul Hayward, Sigbjørn Sønnesyn and A. Kraebel have analysed the influence of the role for writers of history in twelfth-century England.[26] Their research has focused on cantors' involvement with the liturgy and the collecting of books. Many of those who participated in the flourishing development of historical writing in England were cantors. That role and the urge to produce historical works coincided for good reason. The cantor's role was central to the successful operation of a monastery and yet we have several cantors across England engaging in historical writing projects at the same time. Whilst consideration of this concurrence is beyond the scope of this thesis, one question which will be considered is: to what

[26] Theresa Webber, 'Cantor, Sacrist or Prior? The Provision of Books in Anglo-Norman England' in *Medieval Cantors and their Craft: Music, Liturgy and the Shaping of History, 800-1500*, eds Katie Anne-Marie Bugyis, A.B. Kraebel and Margot E. Fassler (York, 2017), pp. 172-189; Charles Rozier, 'Symeon of Durham as Cantor and Historian at Durham Cathedral Priory c. 1090-1129' in *Medieval Cantors and their Craft,* pp. 190-206; Lauren L. Whitnah, 'Reshaping History in the Cult of Æbbe of Coldingham' in *Medieval Cantors and their Craft,* pp. 207-221; Paul Anthony Hayward, 'William of Malmesbury as Cantor-Historian' in *Medieval Cantors and their Craft,* pp. 222-239; Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn, 'Lex orandi, lex scribendi? The Role of Historiography in the Liturgical Life of William of Malmesbury' in *Medieval Cantors and their Craft,* pp. 240-254; A. B. Kraebel, 'Of the Making of Little Books: The Minor Works of William of Newburgh' in *Medieval Cantors and their Craft,* pp. 255-276.

extent did the cantor's engagement with notions of time influence their narrative historical works? Such a question has not yet been fully considered by academics.

Only three scholars have examined William in the context of his role as cantor. Sønnesyn's research argues that the basic principles of the liturgy and of history were the same: they shared the ultimate aim of 'the supreme good for human beings', they relied on the same didactic values.[27] Thus, William's role as a cantor and the *lex orandi* that governed it also directed his historiographical practise.[28] Paul Hayward has likewise examined William's works in the context of his being a 'cantor-historian'.[29] In contrast to Sønnesyn , he argues that William's role of cantor had little to no influence on his narrative writing because William rarely referred to the liturgy. He concludes that William wrote his histories 'during periods in his career when his concerns as a cantor had to be set aside'.[30] His study of computus and time-related sciences is a significant factor. Anne Lawrence-Mathers has explored William's computus material and his reaction to the 'chronological controversy' sparked by Marianus Scotus.[31] However, she has not explored what this could reveal about William's broader considerations of time. William's writing presents a rich source for understanding his concepts of time beyond whether it displays any influence from his role as a cantor. This thesis will demonstrate that William's role as a cantor shaped how he wrote about the past.

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[27] Sønnesyn, 'Lex orandi, lex scribendi? The Role of Historiography in the Liturgical Life of William of Malmesbury', pp. 253-254.
[28] Sønnesyn, 'Lex orandi, lex scribendi? The Role of Historiography in the Liturgical Life of William of Malmesbury', p. 254.
[29] Hayward, 'William as Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian'.
[30] Hayward, 'William as Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian', p. 238.
[31] Anne Lawrence-Mathers, 'William of Malmesbury and the Chronological Controversy' in *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, pp. 93-106.

Telling the Time in Medieval England

Now that we have considered the focus and historical context of this thesis, we shall turn to the scholarship on time in medieval England. First, we shall briefly explore how exactly time was 'told'. In order to study representations of time, we must first understand what means were available to reckon it. Two different types of devices were available: those that told the time, and those that measured duration.[32] Examples of the former included sundials, astrolabes, and church bells.[33] It was not until around 1250, over a century after William of Malmesbury's death, that the mechanical clock was developed. Candles, the water clock, and the sand clock could measure duration. Many of these means of time measurement had been available since antiquity, or the early Middle Ages at least. Alfred the Great was known to carry candles of exact length to measure time; Charlemagne was given a water clock as a gift from the Caliph of Baghdad; and Jocelyn de Brakelond notes that a fire in the abbey of Bury St Edmunds had to be fought using the reservoir of water in their water clock.[34] However, Joseph Duggan details the challenges that could arise from using these devices.[35] Water clocks, sundials and astrolabes were reliant on weather and atmospheric conditions. Sundials and astrolabes required clear skies whilst water clocks would freeze if temperatures went below zero degrees Celsius. This

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[32] Ken Mondschein, 'The medieval experience of time: Aristotle, universals, and technologies' in *Can these Bones Come to Life? Insights from Reconstruction, Reenactment, and Re-Creation, I: Historical European Martial Arts*, ed. Ken Mondschein (Wheaton, Ill, 2014), p. 32.
[33] J. J. Duggan, 'The Experience of Time as a fundamental Element of the Stock of Knowledge in Medieval Society' in *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters: La litterature historiographique des origines a 1500, XI:I,* eds Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, Ursula Link Heer, Peter Michael Spangenberg (Heilbelberg, 1986), p. 127.
[34] Duggan, 'The Experience of Time', pp. 127-128.
[35] Duggan, 'The Experience of Time', pp. 127-128.

obviously caused problems. Candles and sand clocks did not have the same limitations. However, wax was expensive, and over time sand clocks would be worn down and the calibration would need to be adjusted accordingly. Whilst earlier historians focused on the imprecise nature of medieval time-keeping, more recent scholarship has emphasised the prominence of duration and thus, the relative nature of time.[36] There was no single set means of, in modern terms, 'accurately' reckoning time.

Not only was time calculated on a day to day basis, but also across the year. The liturgical calendar and the seasons shaped how life was ordered. Marc Bloch connected the medieval experience of time to the cycles of nature, and in particular emphasised that the modern concept of accuracy in time-keeping 'remained profoundly alien to the minds of even the leading men of that age'.[37] A significant proportion of established scholarship has focused on the predominance of the natural cycles of the seasons and years. With greater emphasis on the environment for producing food and the limited means of producing artificial light, life - especially rural life - was ordered by these cycles. The repetitive cycle of seasons, agricultural tasks and festivals is perceived by scholars as being of the foremost importance to most people.[38] However, others have analysed the importance of the ecclesiastical year, in which Christian history was imitated through the liturgy of Incarnation and Redemption, which brought the past into the present and thus

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[36] Mondschein, 'The Medieval Experience of Time', p. 35.
[37] Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (London, 1989, originally published as *La Société Féodale*, Paris, 1939), pp. 73-75.
[38] Duggan, 'The Experience of Time', p. 132.

represented a repetitive cycle.[39] This cycle also connected medieval churchmen to the eternal presence of God. The events of the Christian calendar were remembered, repeated, and celebrated in a cycle of services and days throughout the year. The time in the monastery was governed and ordered by the daily services which occurred at set hours and days and months were determined by the liturgical calendar. However, that is not to suggest that William of Malmesbury, or indeed any of his contemporaries, possessed a purely cyclical sense of time. Christianity possessed many linear elements. It was a historical religion based on events that occurred in the distant past. These events form key markers in time. The life and death of Christ marks a divide which distinguishes between events before and after his life (BC Before Christ, AD Anno Domini). Time was continuing towards the Last Judgement at which point the world, and time, would end. Medieval writers, as Harald Kleinschmidt illustrates, possessed an idea of the world aging.[40] Historians studying the medieval period have also explored writings on the apocalypse and the end of days.[41] Furthermore, the history that William narrated included several linear

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[39] Jean LeClercq, 'The Experience and Interpretation of Time in the Early Middle *Ages,' Studies in Medieval Culture V* (1974), p. 11.
[40] Harald Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages: The Transformation of Ideas and Attitudes in the Medieval World* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 15.
[41] For example: Jay Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: The Crusades, Apocalyptic Prophecy, and the End of History* (Oxford, 2018); Brett Whalen, 'Joachim of Fiore, apocalyptic conversion, and the "persecuting society"', *History Compass*, 8:7 (2010), pp. 682-691; Robert Markus, 'Living within Sight of the End' in *Time in the Medieval World*, eds Chris Humphrey and W.M. Ormrod (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 23-34; Richard Landes, 'Lest the Millennium be fulfilled: apocalyptic expectations and the pattern of western chronography 100-800 CE' in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, eds Werner Verbeke, Daniel Verhelst and Andries Welkenhuysen, *Mediaevalia Lovaniensia* (Leuven, 1988), pp. 137-211.

features. The rise and fall of empires, the passages of kingships, and other secular events were certainly viewed as linear.[42]

As cantor, William deployed both cyclical and linear notions of time. The majority of time-reckoning was based on observing natural phenomena, often with the aid of a device. A significant part of William's role was to reckon time for his monastery. He decided the correct time for performing the offices, which would have involved calculating the time by using the means described above. Alongside the means of reckoning time for daily use, there were broader frameworks from ecclesiastical calendars, the rotation of the seasons, to reigns of kings which ordered the years. Those structures encompassed ideas of linear and cyclical notions of time. There were multiple levels of time with multiple means of reckoning it. Most significantly, how time was reckoned informed the ways in which William represented time. Observations of nature such as the stars and the seasons were then used as narrative imagery. The broader frameworks informed the structure of the narrative. How time was reckoned informed how time was represented in the text and the functions of those representations on the level of the text.

Time and Medieval Scholarship

Some of the earliest forays into studying Christian notions of time and history date to the 1940s and can be traced to three authors: the theologian Oscar Cullmann with

[42] Goetz, 'The Concept of Time in the Historiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries' in *Medieval concepts of the past: ritual, memory, historiography,* eds Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary (Cambridge, 2002), p. 140.

his *Christ and Time*; the historian Karl Löwith's *The Meaning of History*; and the anthropologist Mircea Eliade's *Cosmos and History: Myth of the Eternal Return*.[43] As Anne Higgins demonstrates, all three draw the conclusion that Christian time was inherently and solely linear, which they subsequently, erroneously, applied to medieval Christian time.[44] The issue is more complex. Over the last sixty years, time has been a topic of extensive scholarship in the field of medieval studies. Research has covered a wide range of geographical and thematic areas.[45] Among the most recent publications on the subject is *Time in the Medieval World*, edited by Christopher Humphrey and W. M. Ormrod. [46] The volume covers an extensive chronological and thematic range related to time. However, even a brief glance highlights a glaring gap: the central middle ages in general and the twelfth century in particular have

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[43] Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History* (Louisville, KY, 1950); Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (Chicago, IL, 1949); Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: Myth of the Eternal Return* (Abingdon, 1955); The significance of these works is outlined in Anne Higgins, 'Medieval Notions of the Structure of Time', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 19:2 (1989), pp. 228-229.
[44] Higgins, 'Medieval Notions of the Structure of Time', p. 228.
[45] The quantity and latitude of scholarship is immense, the following consists of an illustrative example: Hilário Franco Júnior, 'Concepts of Time in Medieval Portugal: Temporalities and Simultaneities in the *Contes de Amaro*', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* (2010), pp. 51-76; Albrecht Classen, 'The Experience of and Attitude Toward Time in Medieval German Literature from the Early Middle Ages to the Fifteenth Centuries', *Neohelicon XXVI/2* (1999), pp. 135-154; Miriam Czock and Anja Rathmann-Lutz, 'ZeitenWelten -- auf der Suche nach den Vorstellungen von Zeit im Mittelalter. Eine Einleitung' in *ZeitenWelten: Zur Verschränkung von Weltdeutung und Zeitwahrnehmung, 750-1350*, Miriam Czock and Anja Rathmann-Lutz eds (Köln, Böhlau, 2016), pp. 9-37; Anja Rathmann-Lutz, 'Monastische Zeit -- höfische Zeit. Zeitregimes zwischen St.-Denis and kapetingischem Hof im 12. Jahrhundert' in *ZeitenWelten: Zur Verschränkung von Weltdeutung und Zeitwahrnehmung, 750-1350*, Miriam Czock and Anja Rathmann-Lutz eds (Köln, Böhlau, 2016), pp. 235-251; Sándor Kiss, 'Deux perceptions du temps: chronique latine et roman courtois' in *Byzance et l'Occident II: Tradition, transmission, traduction,* ed. Emese Egedi-Kovács (Budapest, 2015), pp. 75-83; Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'L'imaginaire du temps dans l'histoire chrétienne', *PRIS-MA*, 25 (2009), pp. 135-159; Aleksander Gieysztor, 'Time and Historical Consciousness in Medieval Poland', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 3 (1979), pp. 285-295; Hans-Werner Goetz, *Geschichtsschreibung und Geschichtsbewusstsein im hohen Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1999); Matthew S. Champion, *The Fullness of Time: Temporalities of the Fifteenth-Century Low Countries* (Chicago, IL, 2017); Orlanda S.H. Lie 'The Concept of Time in the Medieval World View' in *Janus at the millennium*, eds Thomas F. Shannon and Johan P. Snapper (Lanham, MD, 2004), pp. 201-209.
[46] *Time in the Medieval World*, eds Chris Humphrey and W.M. Ormrod (Woodbridge, 2001).

been broadly overlooked. For studies on time in England, historians have focused on Anglo-Saxon perceptions of time, especially eschatology.[47] Meanwhile, much scholarship centres on the later middle ages. Jacques Le Goff is one of the most prominent medieval scholars to show how valuable the analysis of notions of time is to medieval studies. His seminal essay 'Merchant's Time and Church's Time in the Middle Ages', revealed the complex nature of time in the middle ages.[48] His analysis of the differing and interacting concepts of time, alongside the question of who controlled time through the intellectual and technological advancements of the later middle ages, developed the field of both mentalities and concepts of time. Time, as Jean Leclercq argues, is central to the 'fundamental realities' of both human experience and mentalities.[49]

However, as Ken Mondschein argues, the aim of seeking the beginnings of the idea of the equal hour, and thus the 'roots of modern time-keeping', was predominant in Le Goff's approach.[50] This resulted in modern preconceptions of

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[47] A salient selection: Catherine Cubitt, 'Apocalyptic and eschatological thought in England around the year 1000', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 25* (2015) pp. 27-52; David Scott and Mike Cowham, *Time reckoning in the medieval world : a study of Anglo-Saxon and early Norman sundials* (London, 2010); Wesley M. Stevens, *Cycles of time and scientific learning in medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1995); R. M. Liuzza, 'The Sense of Time in Anglo-Saxon England', *Bulletin John Rylands Library* (2013), pp. 131-153; Máirín MacCarron, *Bede and Time: Computus, Theology and History in the Early Medieval World* (Abingdon, 2019); Rolf H. Bremmer, 'The final countdown: apocalyptic expectations in Anglo-Saxon charters' in *Time and Eternity: The Medieval Discourse*, eds Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riaño (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 501-514; Wesley M. Stevens, 'Sidereal time in Anglo-Saxon England' in *Voyage to the Other World: The Legacy of Sutton Hoo*, eds by Calvin B. Kendall and Peter S. Wells, (Minneapolis, 1992), pp. 125-152; Malcolm R. Godden, 'New Year's Day in late Anglo-Saxon England', *Notes and Queries*, 39:2 (1992), pp. 148-150; A. M. Wallace, 'As if it never were: The Construct and Poetics of Time in Anglo-Saxon Literature', Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Sydney (2014).
[48] Jacques Le Goff, 'Merchant's Time and Church's Time in the Middle Ages' in his *Time, work, and culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, IL, 1980), pp. 29-43, originally published as 'Au moyen age: temps de l'eglise et temps du marchand', *Annales: Economies. Sociétiés. Civilisations* (1960), pp. 417-433.
[49] Jean Leclercq, 'The Experience and Interpretation of Time in the Early Middle *Ages*' , p. 9.
[50] Mondschein, 'The Medieval Experience of Time', p. 30.

time veiling and distorting those of the Middle Ages.[51] By focusing on the similarities between modern and medieval notions of time, Le Goff put the modern at the forefront of his analysis. Ideas of time in the medieval period were complex and, crucially, different from our modern perceptions. This thesis does not attempt to find the beginnings of modern perceptions of time. Rather, it will focus on examining how William perceived time and how that manifests itself in his works.

Aron Gurevich took Le Goff's approach further, by attempting to encapsulate the medieval 'world-view' by researching cultural and 'historical anthropology', especially focusing on 'historical psychology' with an attention to semiotics and symbolic language.[52] His 'Concepts of Time in Medieval Europe', draws on an array of European sources from across the Middle Ages, utilising epic literature, hagiography, letters, and legal documents to investigate the linguistic categories of time.[53] A key aspect of his work is his distinction between 'elite' and 'mass' culture, as well as his emphasis on the 'emotional' paradigm of medieval mentalities. Gurevich further explored the concept of chronotopos i.e. the interdependent connection between time (chronos) and space (topos), which was introduced in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin.[54] Central to his method was the avoidance of transposing

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[51] Jacques Le Goff, 'Labor Time in the "Crisis" of the Fourteenth Century: From Medieval Time to Modern Time' in his *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, IL, 1980), originally published as 'Le temps du travail dans la 'crise' du XIVe siècle: du temps médiéval au temps moderne', *Le Moyen Age*, 69 (1963), pp. 43-52.

[52] Aron Gurevich, *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages* (Chicago, IL, 1992); Roger Markwick, 'A. Ia. Gurevich's Contribution to Soviet and Russian Historiography: From Social-Psychology to Historical Anthropology' in *Saluting Aron Gurevich essays in history, literature and other related subjects,* eds Yelena Mazour-Matusevich, and Alexandra Shecket Korros (Leiden, 2010), p. 52-53.

[53] Aron Gurevich, 'Predstavleniia o vremeni v srednekovoi Evrope' [Concepts of Time in Medieval Europe] in *Istoriia i Psikhologiia,* eds B. F. Porshnev and L. I. Antsyfero- va, (Moscow, 1971), pp. 159-198.

[54] Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, pp. 93-152; Yelena Mazour-Matusevich, 'Writing Medieval History: An Interview with Aron Gurevich' in *Saluting Aron Gurevich essays in history, literature and*

modern conceptions of time, and not indulging in the vain attempt to discover the origins of contemporary time perception.[55] Gurevich's work demonstrates how notions of time can be gleaned from the rich array of written sources. However, his pan-European approach and attempt to discern broader trends resulted in Gurevich's conclusions being rather generalised. His concept of a 'medieval consciousness' negates the nuance and complexity that notions of time encompassed. Individual context is very important for gaining a deeper insight. Only once these contexts are taken into account can broader trends by discerned.

The notion that in the medieval period people considered time in a purely cyclical manner, connected with the rotating cycle of agriculture or religious festivals, can no longer be seen as accurate. Nor can texts be divided into those considering solely the past, the present, or the future. Indeed, it is possible to discern multiple concepts of time existing simultaneously even within the same narrative. Among the principal recent historians to understand medieval notions of time in this way is Anne Higgins.[56] In her 'Medieval Notions of the Structure of Time', Higgins surveys intellectual traditions about time by arranging them into three structures: 'Time as Line and Cursus', 'Periodizations of Time', and 'Figura and Time'. The first deals with ideas of time as either linear or cyclical (i.e as a progression or as a recursive repetition of events). The second continues with a discussion of linear and cyclical time through medieval use of periodization. The final idea draws on Erich Auerbach's concept of understanding time through figural interpretation. According

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other related subjects, eds Yelena Mazour-Matusevich, and Alexandra Shecket Korros (Leiden, 2010), p. 335.

[55] Markwick, 'Soviet and Russian Historiography', p. 53.

[56] Higgins, 'Medieval Notions of the Structure of Time', pp. 227-250.

to Auerbach, figura is 'something real and historical which announces something else that is also real and historical. The relation between the two events is revealed by an accord or similarity'.[57] A historical event could be connected to, and invoke meaning for, another event, regardless of the temporal distance between them. Higgins concludes that 'the figural method allows each person who contemplates the pattern and meaning of time to enter a dynamic framework of responsibility and grace, in which he may meditate his own place in history, and prospects of eternity'.[58] This model connected time and history to meaning.

Giles Constable has engaged with perceptions of time in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[59] His broad survey of many works from across Europe outlines the various ways that time was discussed and understood, from the notions of world ages, to the concept of 'modernity'.[60] Whilst his work, like that of Higgins, sets out many of the general premises that shaped conceptions of time, he does not engage in any detailed analysis. His approach brings together many of the broader trends in perceiving the past and understanding time, but does not provide a case study in order to understand how an individual author would apply those models to their written work.

Scholars engaging in literary criticism have also turned their attention to the portrayal and representation of time. A common example is the positioning of

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[57] Erich Auerbach 'Figura' in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature,* eds Erich Auerbach and Paolo Valesio (Minneapolis, 1984), p. 29; Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature,* trans. Willard R Trask (Princeton, 2003, originally published as *Mimesis: Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur, Berlin, 1946*), p. 734.
[58] Higgins, 'Medieval Notions of the Structure of Time', p. 249.
[59] Giles Constable, 'Past and Present in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries. Perceptions of Time and Change' in *L'Europa dei secoli XI et XIIfra novità e tradizione: Sviluppi di una cultura* (Milan, 1989), pp. 135-170.
[60] Constable, 'Past and Present in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries'.

supernatural occurrences at night; darkness is associated with evil both in modern perception and medieval mentalities. Deborah Youngs and Simon Harris explore this phenomenon and conclude that, 'there is sufficient evidence to suggest that medieval society had fed, internalised and built upon the church's teachings on the night's association with darkness and evil'.[61] Furthermore, Ad Putter in 'In Search of Lost Time: Missing Days in Sir Cleges and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' analyses a selection of events within Middle English poetry. Putter solves the mystery of the missing day in the chronology of the two chosen poems, by situating the respective narratives in 'Church time'. The 'missing day' is found by using the calendar of *festa ferianda*.[62] On the other hand, Richard Howard Lock uses a selection of vernacular texts to explore how time is structured, with the intention of closing the gap between oral and literary culture.[63] Also, Isobel Davies draws on the conception of time as 'stretchy' in an attempt to demonstrate that the portrayal of skin in medieval drama was deployed as a metaphor for time.[64] Katalin Halász analyses the Prose *Tristan*, focusing on the use of reoccurring images – which first appear in dream sequences – to explore how time is used to foreshadow episodes which will occur later in the narrative. By exploring how the sensory experience of time is presented in an account, it becomes possible to gain an understanding of both unconsciously applied conventions, and of narrative technique.

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[61] D. Youngs and S. Harris, 'Demonizing the Night in Medieval Europe: A Temporal Monstrosity?' in *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, eds Bildhauer and Mills (Toronto, 2003), p. 140.
[62] Ad Putter, 'In Search of Lost Time: Missing Days in Sir Cleges and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' in *Time in the Medieval World*, p. 136.
[63] Richard Howard Lock, *Aspects of Time in Medieval Literature* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1981).
[64] Isabel Davis, 'Cutaneous Time in the Late Medieval Literary Imagination' in *Reading Skin in Medieval Literature and Culture*, ed. Katie L. Walker (London, 2013), pp. 99-118.

The Medieval Perception of the Past

Concepts of the past in medieval historiography have been extensively studied by historians. In her article 'Structures of Time in Medieval Historiography', Gabrielle Spiegel contends that in their approach to temporality the similarities between medieval and postmodern historiography are greater than has been previously acknowledged.[65] She argues for three interconnecting forms of temporality which can be found in medieval texts: a series of causally unconnected events, a cyclical perception of history, and the view that 'the past itself persisted in the present, and governed the future'.[66] This layering of temporalities and the extent to which they were rooted within historical writings is at the centre of Spiegel's proposition that medieval and postmodern perception are very similar. However, her conclusion that history and the past were seen as a means of providing *exempla* for moral behaviour, and for understanding what may come to pass in the future, reveals that her analysis does not depart far from what has been argued by other scholars. Indeed, it has been long established that history formed a key basis for drawing on examples of behaviour to be both emulated, and avoided.[67] And as such, scholars have drawn attention to the phenomenon of the past as being, not a detached entity veiled in the mists of time, but a living concept which was highly relevant to the present. Whilst this is certainly the case for William, Spiegel's application of postmodern notions of the past to medieval historiography places those ideas of the past into restrictive

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[65] Gabrielle Spiegel, 'Structures of Time in Medieval Historiography', *The Medieval History Journal*, 19:1 (2016), pp. 21-33.
[66] Spiegel, 'Structures of Time in Medieval Historiography', pp. 21-24.
[67] For instance, see works within *Medieval concepts of the past: ritual, memory, historiography*.

categories. By employing a close textual analysis of William's work, this thesis will explore the multiple, complex, and interconnected ways in which William represents time, avoiding the need to condense those representations into a few categories.

A significant proportion of the research on medieval perceptions of the past has focused on the understanding of medieval memory. Connections between ideas of the past and its place in medieval literary culture are explored in the pioneering scholarship of Mary Carruthers. In her *The Book of Memory* Carruthers outlines not only the complex principles surrounding medieval *memoria*, but also the foundational role memory played as part of the experience of reading. Not only did the act of reading itself necessitate the use of memory, but the writing of text also served as a means of supporting collective memory by preserving detail which may otherwise have been lost in time.[68] Elisabeth van Houts further contributes to the study of memory by engaging with both male and female experiences. She particularly focuses on the importance of the female role of preserving family memory and further demonstrates why memory is a significant factor for the study of women in the Middle Ages. [69] She also considers women's roles in the sphere of prophecy, taking Adeliza of Louvain as her case study.[70] Similarly, in her *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past,* Janet Coleman makes the

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[68] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990); Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: the Medieval Experience of Reading* (Collegeville, MN, 2011), p .xiv; Monika Schausten, 'Orality, literacy, and/or Ekphrasis? Narrative techniques of visualization and the poetics of late medieval romance: Johann von Würzburg's Wilhelm von Österreich' in *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and its Consequences in Honour of D. H. Green*, eds M. Chinca and C. Young (Leiden 2005), p. 183.
[69] Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Toronto, 1999).
[70] Elisabeth van Houts, 'Gender, memories, and Prophecy in Medieval Europe' in *Medieval Narrative sources: a gateway into the medieval mind*, eds Werner Verbeke, Ludo Milis, and Jean Goossens (Leuven, 2005), pp. 21-36.

same connection between written culture and the preservation of the past. She concludes that the theories of memory developed during the Renaissance of the twelfth century and the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century influenced the ways in which medieval writers perceived the past. Coleman analyses a vast array of ancient and medieval thinkers, whose theories endure to this day. Memory formed a central aspect of perceptions of the past and by extension of time. In her consideration of the twelfth century, Coleman argues that writers were closely concerned with 'a timeless edification', not only with 'the pastness of the past'.[71] Thus, memory did not simply concern the remembrance of the past, but the use of that past as a means of moral improvement and instruction. A similar argument could be and has been made for the interpretation of medieval historiography. The preservation of the past by the present for the edification of the future will be a key consideration in this thesis. The wish to address the 'gaps' in recorded history and preserve that record from oblivion is a theme that runs throughout William's works. The prominence of this topic across his oeuvre raises questions regarding William's notions of the interconnection between the past, present, and future, and the fragility of the past, which will be explored in Chapter Three.

The perception of the past in conceptions of time is explored in scholarship concerning historical culture defined by Peter Lambert and Björn Weiler as the 'means and media by which societies, groups and individuals engaged with the past and expressed their understanding of it'.[72] Whilst many scholars have been

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[71] Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 294, p. 324.
[72] Peter Lambert and Björn Weiler, 'Introduction' in *How the Past Was Used: historical cultures, c. 700 – c. 2000, Proceedings of the British* Academy, eds Peter Lambert and Björn Weiler (Oxford, 2017), p. 1.

concerned with the accuracy of historical depictions, Lambert and Weiler view this as an opportunity to consider what engagement with the past can reveal about the cultural and intellectual context in which these engagements took place.[73] Arguing that modern scholarship has placed too great an emphasis on academic engagements with the past, they highlight the rich and diverse means by which societies both engaged with their past and with their own present through the space of the past.[74] Indeed, material and oral culture, myths and fictions, literature, and buildings are but a few means named by which representations of the past were expressed.[75] Further, the fact that a society possessed a past was perceived as necessary and desirable. In his consideration of the twelfth-century historian Henry of Huntingdon, Weiler highlights that Henry distinguished humanity from animals and brutes due to the fact that animals had no knowledge of their communal past.[76] Thus, it was considered that a central aspect of both humanity and civilization was a knowledge of their past. By extension, a sense of time was also a central aspect of humanity. Further, Weiler considers those who engaged with the past. Whilst many scholars have disproportionately emphasised the importance of academic historians, Weiler asserts that 'those engaging with the past were rarely just historians'.[77] They were also audiences to representations of the past.[78] They read and reinterpreted the sense of the past portrayed by both their peers and their predecessors and their interpretations were influenced and affected by these readings. 'Historical narratives

[73] Lambert and Weiler, 'Introduction', p. 1.
[74] Lambert and Weiler, 'Introduction', p. 4.
[75] Lambert, 'Introduction I: what is historical culture?', p. 9.
[76] Weiler, 'Introduction II Themes in historical culture', p. 20.
[77] Weiler, 'Introduction II Themes in historical culture', p. 43.
[78] Weiler, 'Introduction II Themes in historical culture', p. 53.

could influence literary interpretations of the past' and likewise literary narratives could influence historical narratives.[79] Lambert and Weiler demonstrate the wider concerns that examining ideas about the past can uncover. Representations of the past were connected to an author's consideration of the world he inhabited. Likewise, examining broader notions of time can clarify how William understood the past, and his own connection to it.

Research has also been conducted that considers the historical consciousness of time, with some reference to the twelfth century. According to Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Historiography and historical consciousness were determined by time'.[80] This concept of *Geschichtsbewußtsein*, as deployed by Goetz, considers how medieval writers conceptualised time and the centrality of it when constructing historical narratives.[81] In his discussion of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Goetz concludes that medieval historiographers perceived that history, in the sequence of events, revealed God's intention and as such, the 're-presentation' of the past was applicable to the present. Such a technique, as highlighted by Goetz, was the medieval practise of deploying allusions to classical and biblical texts when describing an event. Frequently, they will quote from or allude to a classical text, for instance when describing a battle. Not only did this use of authorities invoke connotations from the text itself, it also detached the event described from its precise moment in time. Goetz uses the depiction of Augustus, Charlemagne, and Otto I in the Jenu manuscript of Otto of Freising's chronicle as an example.[82] That all three figures are

[79] Weiler, 'Introduction II Themes in historical culture', p. 41.
[80] Goetz, 'The Concept of Time in the Historiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', p. 144.
[81] Goetz, 'The Concept of Time in the Historiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', p. 139.
[82] Goetz, 'The Concept of Time in the Historiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', p. 155.

dressed in contemporary garments and adorned with contemporary regal paraphernalia suggests that the past was perceived as being timeless and detached from precise chronology, and yet still as relevant to the present. Indeed, in Goetz's thesis, detaching events from their chronological context and deploying them to understand the present and predict the future was central to the medieval conception of time. Goetz has demonstrated the complexity of representations of time in historiography, in a German context. This thesis aims to present a more substantial discussion of similar questions, but in an English context.

Sigbjørn Sønnesyn also acknowledges the importance of the past in twelfth-century historiography as a means of determining God's plan.[83] Indeed, Sønnesyn interprets this concern as evidence for the influence of the theological concept of typology on the historiography of the twelfth century.[84] Sønnesyn connects this to a concern for truthfulness. As history could reveal God's plan, those events must be recorded faithfully. Weiler also discusses concern for the truth. He highlights certain 'stylistic markers' which texts deployed in order to convey that their narratives were trustworthy.[85] Amongst those which could be applied to medieval writings are the use of Latin, and the use of prose as opposed to verse.[86] However, broader questions of what stylistic temporal markers were used in the actual construction of a narrative episode, potentially for the reason of conveying an episode as realistic or truthful, have not been fully considered. Research has explored the temporal situations used

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[83] Sigbjørn Sønnesyn, 'Eternity in Time, Unity in Particularity: The theological basis of typological interpretations in twelfth-century historiography' in *Typologie Biblique Comme Forme De Pensee Dans L'Historiographie Medievale*, ed. Marek Thue Kretschmer (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 77-96.
[84] Sønnesyn, 'Eternity in Time', p. 92.
[85] Weiler, 'Introduction II: Themes in historical culture', p. 41.
[86] Weiler, 'Introduction II: Themes in historical culture', p. 41.

in narratives describing supernatural events, specifically the fact that the majority are situated at night. However, other temporal markers, and the broader use of those markers in narratives, have not been considered, especially in texts which are not vernacular. Consideration of time in an English context is not present in either Goetz's or Sønnesyn's work.

Established scholarship has demonstrated the value of analysing medieval conceptions of time. Literary scholars have demonstrated that by analysing representations of time in writings, a deeper understanding of the text can be obtained, and by extension greater knowledge of the world that writer inhabited. Those who have conducted close textual analysis have not focused their efforts on Anglo-Latin historiography. Historians who have considered twelfth-century notions of time have either produced broad survey works which attempt to decipher broader trends, or have studied the perception of the past without taking into consideration how ideas of time shaped representations of the past. None have conducted an in-depth extended analysis of one author in order to examine how ideas of time shaped their narratives about the past, or what the representation of time reveals about thoughts of the events narrated. This thesis will examine William of Malmesbury's notions of time in depth by analysing how they are represented in his works, how those representations shape the narrative, and what they reveal about William's broader concerns beyond his writings.

William of Malmesbury's Writings

This thesis will focus on William's historical writings. This will consist of*: Gesta Regum Anglorum*, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, *Vita Dunstani*, *De Antiquitate Ecclesie Glastonie*, *Vita Wulfstani*, and *Historia Novella*.[87] Due to the 'fluid nature of medieval historiography', this thesis will include William's hagiographical works within the category of historical writing.[88] His commentary *On Lamentations of Jeremiah* and *De Miraculis Beatae Virginis Mariae* will therefore not be the subject of analysis in this study. William's writing career can be divided into two phases. The first was in the 1120s, during which he wrote the *Gesta Regum* and *Gesta Pontificum*. As Sønnesyn notes, this would have been impressive for any entire writing career, but it constituted only one phase.[89] After a break, William picked up his pen once more. During the period 1135-1143, he received two commissions from ecclesiastical institutions: the *Vita Wulfstani* for Worcester; the *Vita Dunstani* and *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie* for Glastonbury. For his final work, he returned to writing history of his own time in the *Historia Novella*. What follows is a brief summary of each of these works.

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[87] The following editions will be used: *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2 vols, eds and trans R. M. T. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998); *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, eds and trans R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 2007); 'Vita Sancti Dunstani' and 'Vita Sancti Wulfstani' in *William of Malmesbury's Saints' Lives*, eds and trans R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 2002); *The Early History of Glastonbury: An Edition, Translation and Study of William of Malmesbury's De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie*, ed. and trans John Scott (Woodbridge, 1981); *Historia Novella*, ed. and trans Edmund King (Oxford, 1998).

[88] Anne E. Bailey, 'Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: history or hagiography?' *in Discovering William of Malmesbury,* p. 13

[89] Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History,* p. 5.

Gesta Regum Anglorum

The first of William's works, completed in 1125, is arguably his best known and most studied text. It chronicles the political history of England from the invasion of Saxons and Angles to the reign of Henry I. The first two books chart the development of Anglo-Saxon England, whereas the remaining three focus on the reigns of William I, William II, and Henry I respectively. It is William's longest work by far (800 pages in the modern edition compared to the *Gesta Pontificum's* 669 pages, William's next largest work). William was commissioned to write it by Henry I's first wife, Queen Matilda.[90] The *Gesta* enjoyed a wide circulation, and presentation copies of the work were given to Robert of Gloucester, Matilda and David of Scotland.[91] It was a significant piece of historical writing: William consciously fashioned it as the first full history of England since Bede.[92] Its narrative structure and discussion of key political events presents an important example of how William represented time whilst narrating the distant past.

Gesta Pontificum Anglorum

Written shortly after the *Gesta Regum* and completed in 1126, the *Gesta Pontificum* chronicles the deeds of the English bishops from Augustine's mission to England to William's day. Described by Antonia Gransden as 'virtually a gazetteer of Ecclesiastical England', it organises its contents geographically.[93] Each book focuses on an ecclesiastical diocese. Its unusual narrative construction, as well as its detailed

[90] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 18.
[91] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 2-13.
[92] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 14-17.
[93] Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 174.

descriptions of landscape and historical evidence such as ruins, makes the *Gesta Pontificum* a unique text.

Vita Sancti Dunstani

The life of the great English Saint Dunstan was written as part of a commission of a series of works by the monks of Glastonbury in 1129.[94] William based this work on two possible sources: Osbern's eleventh-century *Vita*, and Eadmer of Canterbury's *Vita,* written around 1120.[95] William had narrated some episodes of Dunstan's life in the *Gesta Pontificum*, and the *Vita* included those episodes, often expanding them. Unlike many Saints' Lives, the *Vita* included a significant number of dates and was presented in a linear chronology.

De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie

The *De Antiquitate* was another work commissioned by Glastonbury. Written after William completed the *Vita Dunstani*, it charts the establishment of the church and its development through time, including specific details of bequests and its connections to significant figures such as King Arthur. It was written to confirm the prestige of Glastonbury and secure its place as one of the most prominent institutions in England.

Vita Wulfstani

Commissioned by the monks of Worcester c. 1130, an intellectual centre in its own right, this *Vita* chronicles the life of another prominent saint. Written at Worcester

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[94] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 7.
[95] Kirsten A. Fenton, *Gender, Nation, and Conquest in the Works of William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 111.

over a period of six weeks, it is based on Colman's now lost Anglo-Saxon life. Whilst William mostly adheres to his model, there is evidence that he interfered with the text beyond his claim of only translating it from vernacular to Latin.

Historia Novella

William returned to contemporary events for his last work. Commissioned by Robert of Gloucester, illegitimate son of Henry I, it discusses the contemporary events of the civil war between Stephen and Mathilda. The first two books were written in 1141, with the third written as events continued to unfold. It abruptly ends in 1143 because of William's death. This text demonstrates how William's notions of time adapted and changed according to the events he was experiencing as he narrated them

William of Malmebury's oeuvre offers an opportunity to explore the ways in which he represented time. His *Gesta Regum*, *Gesta Pontificum*, and *De Antiquitate* reveal how William's notion of time shaped how he narrated the distant past. The Saints' Lives can be used to explore how the temporally privileged state of saints, especially their ability to bestow prophecy, shaped how time was represented. The *Historia Novella* shows how William's articulation of time shifted and changed in reaction to the developing events he was writing about. Furthermore, this corpus represents a collection of different genres, shaped by different purposes. By conducting a textual analysis of these works, we can determine how William's representation of time was influenced by the context in which he was writing, and discern what those representations reveal about William's broader concerns, for

instance his reaction to the civil war and the continuing repercussions of the Norman Conquest.

Framework of Enquiry

Whilst many historical writers would have been exposed to works which explicitly discussed time, such as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies*, Augustine's *Confessions* and *City of God*, and Bede's *On Time* and *On the Reckoning of Time*, they did not discuss the concept of time directly. Neither did they quote passages about time from these texts. Therefore, to get at their notions of time, we need to examine how its passing was represented, either overtly or indirectly, within their narratives. There were a multitude of ways in which time could be represented. This thesis will explore those employed by William. Chapter One will establish William of Malmesbury's particular importance as a case study. He was a cantor and therefore trained in the methods of reckoning time and familiar with the relevant texts on the matter. The chapter will consist of a survey of the materials to which William had access and which could have framed his thinking on time. The monastery at Malmesbury had an extensive library and many other works could be accessed through networks of communication, and institutions which William visited during his travels. Most significantly, the chapter will examine William's collection of time-related works: Bodleian MS Auct. F. 3. 14.

Chapter Two will analyse how structure and chronology are organised in William's works, how this organisation affects the reading of the text and what it suggests about his notions of time and his ability to adapt narrative time in his work. By examining narrative structure and use of chronology, it will be revealed that William adapted how he constructed temporality in his works depending on its contents or purpose.

Chapter Three will adopt a narrower focus by examining what William's deployment of prophecy reveals about his understanding of time. Prophecy was a temporally privileged phenomenon and it could be used in narrative to supersede the restrictions and limitations that a chronology could impose. The past was intricately connected to the present and the future. By including prophecy in his historical writing, William was demonstrating that events in the present were not single, unconnected instances, but part of a wider pattern of time.

Finally, Chapter Four will have an even more specific focus. It will examine in detail William of Malmesbury's representation of time through a close analysis of specific time-related imagery in his writing. These examples will be used to provide a more nuanced and complex interpretation of the event and narrative in question.

Chapter One

Reading Time: William of Malmesbury and his Sources

In order to explore William of Malmesbury's ideas about time and history in his own works, we must first understand what he had read. As has been previously discussed, William was an active participant in what has been termed the 'twelfth-century renaissance'. Malmesbury Abbey possessed an extensive library and scholarship has revealed that William extensively engaged with its collection.[96] His historical writings are filled with quotations from, and allusions to, an impressively large number of texts from classical antiquity and patristic authority, as well as the Bible. Many texts influenced how William articulated time, and their specific influences will be revealed in later chapters. However, this chapter will focus on the texts that directly discussed the topic of time and to which we know that William of Malmesbury had first-hand access. This chapter will first outline the foundational authors whose discussion of time was central to the intellectual environment of the twelfth century and copies of whose work were in the Malmesbury library: Augustine, Plato, Macrobius and Isidore of Seville.[97] Whilst we cannot state for certain that William of Malmesbury directly applied the ideas on time in these works to his texts, as he did not incorporate direct relevant quotation in his own writings, he would almost certainly have read them. They formed part of the intellectual

[96] See Introduction
[97] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, Appendix II 'List of Works Known to William at First Hand', pp. 202-214.

environment in which William and his contemporaries participated. The ideas in these works shaped those of the twelfth century and echoes of them can be found in William's historical writing.

Significant Works

Of primary importance to Christian notions of time is the work of Augustine, especially his *De Civitas Dei* and *Confessiones*. As has been outlined previously, much of the scholarship on Augustine has focused on his discourse concerning the nature of time and eternity.[98] The well-known phrase from the *Confessiones* summarises Augustine's attempts to unravel such a complex concept: 'What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know'.[99] Augustine's approach to understanding time, in short, is that time is psychological. Paul Ricoeur defined this theory as 'subjective time'.[100] The perception of the passage of time occurs internally within the soul. It was experienced in the mind and thus was a subjective mental entity, rather than an objective feature of the world.[101] Indeed, Augustine states that 'it is in you, O my

[98] See Introduction.
[99] Augustine, *Confessions, Volume II: Books 9–13*, ed. and trans Carolyn J.-B. Hammond (Cambridge, MA, 2016), pp. 238-239: 'Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio'.
[100] Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, volume I (Chicago, 1984), pp. 5-30.
[101] Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Chicago, 2006), p. 29; Eunsoo Kim, *Time, Eternity, and the Trinity: A Trinitarian Analogical Understanding of Time and Eternity* (Eugene, OR, 2010), p. 80; Genevieve Lloyd, 'Augustine and the "Problem" of Time' in *The Augustinian Tradition*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews (Berkley, CA, 1999), p. 39.

mind, that I measure time'.[102] For example, Augustine discusses the present in more detail:

> Not even one day is entirely present. All the hours of the day add up to twenty-four. The first of them has the others in the future, the last has them in the past. [. . .] A single hour is itself constituted of fugitive moments. [. . .] If we can think of some bit of time which cannot be divided into even the smallest instantaneous moment, that alone is what we call "present." And this time flies by so quickly from the future into the past that it is an interval of no duration. Any duration is divisible into past and future. The present occupies no space.[103]

The ability to comprehend time is based on experiencing its passing in the mind: to be aware of time by memorizing experienced durations and evaluating them in the mind.[104] In short, we measure our mind's response to the passage of things, not the passing of things themselves.[105] Augustine asserts that the past and the future do not exist as past and future, but as the present. However, the past and future exist in the mind: the past exists as memory, and the future as anticipation. Likewise, the distant past exists in the mind as a long memory, and the distant future exists as long expectation.[106] Yet the mind could not comprehend the present, for as soon as the mind considers it, it has become the past.

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[102] Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 238-239: 'in te, anime meus, tempora metior'.
[103] Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 222-223, Full passage: 'Ecce praesens tempus quod solum inveniebamus longum appellandum, vix ad unius diei spatium contractum est. Sed discutiamus etiam ipsum, quia nec unus dies totus est praesens. Noctumis enim et diurnis horis omnibus viginti quatuor expletur, quarum prima caeteras futuras habet, novissima praeteritas; aliqua vero interjectarum ante se praeteritas, post se futuras. Et ipsa una hora fugitivis particulis agitur; quidquid eius avolavit, praeteritum est; quidquid ei restat, futurum. Si quid intelligitur temporis, quod in nullas iam vel in minutissimas momentorum partes dividi possit, id solum est quod praesens dicatur. Quod tamen ita raptim a futuro in praeteritum transvolat, ut nulla morula extendatur. Nam si extenditur, dividitur in praeteritum et futurum: praesens autem nullum habet spatium'.
[104] Simo Knuuttila, 'Time and Creation in Augustine' in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds David Vincent Meconi and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge, 2014), p. 94.
[105] Roy Liuzza, 'The Sense of Time in Anglo-Saxon England', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 89:2 (2013), p. 135; Augustine, *Confessions*, pp. 222-223.
[106] Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum*, p. 30.

Augustine establishes a paradox. It could be suggested that, despite his best efforts, Augustine was unable to completely untangle the web of ideas concerning what time is. However, perhaps that was not his intent. As Simo Knuuttila argues:

> Contrary to what had often been maintained, Augustine does not offer any philosophical or theological definition of time in Book XI of the *Confessions*. He tries to explain how we are aware of time and how its existence could be explained from the psychological point of view.[107]

Augustine does offer a solution to this paradox by using the psychological view. Augustine discusses the existence of the past, present, and future later in Book XI:

> What is now clear and unmistakable is that neither things past nor things future have any existence, and that it is inaccurate to say "there are three tenses or times: past, present, and future", though it might be properly said "there are three tenses or times: the present of things past, the present of present things, and the present of future things". These are three realities of the mind, but nowhere else as far as I can see, for the present of past things is memory, the present of present things is attention, and the present of future things is expectation.[108]

Augustine rectifies the paradox on the existence of time by treating it as three separate mental states: the past, the present, and the future.[109] As they are three *separate* states, they could all exist in the mind simultaneously. Time could be 'frozen' for examination because it was all available in the mind at the same time.[110]

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[107] Knuuttila, 'Time and Creation', p. 94.
[108] Augustine *Confessions*, pp. 252-253: 'Quod autem nunc liquet et claret, nec futura sunt, nec praeterita. Nec proprie dicitur Tempora sunt tria: praeteritum, praesens et futurum: sed fortasse proprie diceretur, Tempora sunt tria; praesens de praeteritis, praesens de praesentibus, praesens de futuris. Sunt enim haec in anima tria quandam, et alibi ea non video; praesesens de praeteritis memoria, praesens de praesentibus contuitus, praesens de futuris exspectatio'.
[109] Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum*, p. 29.
[110] Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum*, p. 30.

Time, in essence, was a distention of the mind: it extended outward from the present and into the past and the future through memory and anticipation.[111].

The works of Augustine were prevalent throughout twelfth-century England. Augustine's contemplation of time even made it into popular culture. Anne Higgins highlights that the famed phrase 'What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know' was satirised by writer and courtier Walter Map.[112] Map subverts the subject of this phrase to mock Henry II's court in his *De Nugis Curialium:*

> 'In time I exist, and of time I speak' said Augustine: and added 'what time is I know not'. In a like spirit of perplexity I may say that in the court I exist and of the court I speak, and what the court is, God knows, I know not. I do know however that the court is not time; but temporal it is, changeable and various, space-bound and wandering, never continuing in one state.[113]

William of Malmesbury's familiarity with Augustine's writings was extensive, he knew and cited from most of his works.[114] Whilst William does not refer to or cite from Book XI specifically, it is highly likely he would have read it.

Plato's *Timaeus*, on the other hand, defined time as a moving image of eternity.[115] When discussing the creation of the universe Plato contends: '[the Demiurge] began to think of making a moving image of eternity: at the same time as he brought order to the universe, he would make an eternal image, moving

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[111] Andrea Nightingale, *Once Out of Nature: Augustine on Time and the Body* (Chicago, 2011), p. 8.
[112] Anne Higgins, 'Medieval Notions of the Structure of Time', pp. 228-229.
[113] Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, ed. and trans. M. R. James, C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B Mynors (Oxford, 1983), pp. 2-3 '"In tempore sum et de termpore loquor" ait Augustinus, et adiecit: "nescio quid sit tempus." Ego simili possum admiracione dicere quod in curia sum, et de curia loquor, et nescio, Deus scit, quid sit curia. Scio tamen quod curia non est tempus : temporalis quidem est, mutabilis et uaria, localis et erratica, nunquam in eodem statu permanens'.
[114] Thompson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 204-205.
[115] John Sallis, *Chorology: On Beginning in Plato's Timaeus* (Bloomington, IN, 1999) p. 78-79.

according to number, of eternity remaining in unity. This, of course, is what we call "time'.[116] Furthermore, Plato envisaged time as the movement of celestial bodies: '[The Demiurge] brought into being the Sun, the Moon, and five other stars, for the begetting of time. These are called "wanderers" [planêta], and they stand guard over the numbers of time. … And so people are all but ignorant of the fact that time really is the wanderings of these bodies'.[117] As Sigbjørn Sønnesyn has revealed, William of Malmesbury engaged with Plato through Calcidius's and Cicero's translations.[118] Whilst Sønnesyn's discussion focuses on William's description of the soul, the passages that discuss time were known in the twelfth century.[119] If, as Sønnesyn argues, William had access to the Latin translations of the *Timaeus*, then he would have known of Plato's characterisation of time.

Similarly, Macrobius characterised time within an astronomical framework. Macrobius, a fifth-century Roman writer, wrote two highly influential texts, the *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis* (Commentaries on the Dream of Scipio) and the *Saturnalia* –a detailed discussion of the rituals surrounding the holiday of Saturnalia. According to Simona Cohen, 'Movement and change, traditionally linked to the concept of time, were manifest, according to Macrobius, in the image of the solar chariot, for *Sol temporis auctor* (the sun is the cause or creator of time)'.[120] The

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[116] Plato, *Timaeus*, trans Benjamin Jowett, http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/timaeus.html accessed 29/11/2019; Calcidius, *On Plato's Timaeus*, ed. and trans John Magee (Cambridge, MA, 2016), pp. 62-63.
[117] Plato, Timaeus; Calcidius, *On Plato's Timaeus*, pp. 314-317.
[118] Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, p. 48.
[119] Sønnesyn *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, p. 47-49; Tullio Gregory, 'The Platonic Inheritance' in *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy,* ed. Peter Dronke (Cambridge, 1992), p. 55; David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: the European scientific tradition in philosophical, religious, and institutional context, 600 B.C.to A.D.1450* (Chicago, 2010), pp. 254-255.
[120] Simona Cohen, *Transformations of Time and Temporality in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Leiden, 2011), p. 28; Macrobius, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, trans. William Stahl (New York, NY, 1952).

Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis outlines a detailed description of the cosmos, describing the associations between certain constellations and certain times of the year, the sequence of day and night, seasons of the year and the motions of the stars and planets.[121] Macrobius illustrates the ordered cycles of celestial movement and their connection to the passage of time. In another of his works, the *Saturnalia,* Macrobius illustrates the tripartite nature of time: past, present and future. It has been established that William of Malmesbury did have access to a copy of the *Saturnalia*. He used it as a source of historiographical knowledge and quoted from it frequently in his texts.[122] Book I of the *Saturnalia* includes a detailed discussion of the nature of time by depicting it as a three-headed animal:

> The lion's head, then, points to the present time, poised for action, powerful and urgent, between the past and the future, while the wolf's head signifies time past, because the memory of bygone events is snatched up and carried off; similarly, the image of the fawning dog represents future events, which hope—uncertain though it is—presents to us with winning aspect.[123]

On the other hand, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae* provides the connection between measuring time, and the writing of history. Saint Isidore of Seville was the last of the Church Fathers. Born around 560AD, he was made bishop in 600AD after obtaining a monastic education. He was a prolific scholar, engaging in biblical

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[121] Bruce Eastwood, *Ordering the Heavens: Roman Astronomy and Cosmology in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 31-32.
[122] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 60 f.n. 144.
[123] Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, Volume I: Books 1-2, ed. and trans. Robert A. Kaster (Cambridge, MA, 2011), pp. 274-277: 'Ergo leonis capite monstratur praesens tempus, quia conditio eius inter praeteritum futurumque actu praesenti valida fervensque est: sed et praeteritum tempus lupi capite signatur, quod memoria rerum transactarum rapitur et aufertur: item canis blandientis effigies futuri temporis designat eventum, de quo nobis spes, licet incerta, blanditur'; for further analysis of this passage see: Debra Hawhee, *Rhetoric in Tooth and Claw: Animals, Language, Sensation* (Chicago, IL, 2017), pp. 165-167.

exegesis, and wrote several chronicles as well as his other treatises. However, he is most famous for his 'encyclopaedic' writings. These were also among the most influential and widely dispersed texts during the twelfth century; the popularity of his *Eytmologiae* was akin to that of Augustine, Boethius, and Cicero.[124]

The *Etymologiae* collated information and provided definitions of concepts ranging from grammar and rhetoric, the cosmos, buildings, and languages. Each book has an overarching theme, and each contains subsections explaining the definitions and origins of terms relating to the subject. Close to a thousand medieval manuscripts of the *Etymologiae* survive, and its influence is difficult to overestimate.[125] Isidore discusses time in detail in Book V on Laws and Time. First, he defines the word 'chronicle', which is immediately followed by a discussion of moments and hours, the day, months, seasons, years, the lunar year, eras, and the ages. Isidore goes into detail about the etymology of specific words, for instance detailing why each day of the week was so called. This is followed by a 'description of time', in which Isidore lists the events of each age up to Isidore's present.[126] Isidore's treatment of time commences with the smallest unit of time, and then each type is discussed in ascending order of duration, concluding with the ages.

However, whilst the foundational writings of Augustine, Plato, and Isidore were significant to the understanding of time in the twelfth century, it can be argued

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[124] F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (London, 2012), p. 22.
[125] Winston Black, 'The Quadrivium and the Natural Sciences' in *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature,* Volume 1, ed. Rita Copeland (Oxford, 2016), p. 79; Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, and J. A. Beach, 'Introduction' in *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, eds Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge 2006), p. 24.
[126] 'descriptione temporum'.

that another series of texts was more significant for William of Malmesbury. Of the surviving manuscripts that William of Malmesbury's hand has been identified in, one is a computus manuscript. As will be discussed below, these compilations were crucial for understanding time: the texts within them were all related to the reckoning and discussion of time. William of Malmesbury's involvement in the creation of such a manuscript suggests that he was engaging with the texts within the manuscript and actively thinking about time.

Malmesbury Abbey's Computus Codex: Bodleian Library Auct F. 3. 14

We will turn to a codex to which we know William contributed and which centred on knowledge about time: Bodleian Library Auct F. 3. 14, a computus manuscript. Computus manuscripts are compilations of texts focusing on the reckoning of time and related subjects. Faith Wallis uses the term 'science albums' to convey the wide range of subjects these codices could contain.[127] Tracts on the use of an astrolabe, medical texts, diagrams of constellations, Paschal tables, calendars, chronicles, and texts explaining the nature of things, could all be found in a computus codex. According to Wesley M. Stevens, more than 9,000 medieval manuscripts containing computus works survive.[128] Around nineteen manuscripts with a substantial amount

[127] Faith Wallis, 'Albums of Science in Twelfth-Century England', *Peritia* 28 (2017), p. 195.
[128] Stevens, *Cycles of Time and Scientific Learning in Medieval Europe*, p. 46.

of computus material originate from England between 1066 and the end of the twelfth century.[129]

For what reason would William of Malmesbury be associated with a computus manuscript? They were composed for the use of the monastery's cantor. According to William's contemporary, Robert of Cricklade, William held that position at Malmesbury. Robert, whilst praising William's *On Lamentations of Jeremiah* and *Miracles of the Virgin Mary*, describes him as a 'monk and cantor':

> I have read whatever writings of the venerable abbot of Clairvaux that have come into my hands; and the brilliant work that the man of supreme learning, William, monk and cantor of Malmesbury, compiled on the Lamentations of Jeremiah I not only read, but even caused to be copied for our church.[130]

The role of cantor, also known as a precantor or armarius, is first mentioned in the Rule of St Benedict in relation to singing the liturgy.[131] The role then developed to include an increasing number of responsibilities. [132] By the twelfth century, it encompassed several previously separate roles, including that of librarian. According to Archbishop Lanfranc's *Monastic Constitutions*, the role of cantor entailed organising the singing of the liturgy and ensuring that services went smoothly: 'it is the cantor's business to watch carefully at all times, so that no

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[129] The Calendar and the Cloister: Oxford, St John's College MS17. 2007. McGill University Library. Digital Collections Program. http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17/apparatus.php?page=related_manuscripts, accessed 12/02/2019.
[130] Robert of Cricklade, *De connubio Patriarche Iacob II*, 22; Bodl Laud. misc. 725. fl, 129v. Quoted in Sigbjørn Sønnesyn, 'Lex orandi, lex scribendi? The Role of Historiography in the Liturgical Life of William of Malmesbury', p. 240: 'Nam et que in manus nostras venerunt scripta venerabilis abbatis Clarisvallensis legi; et viri summe eruditionis Guillelmi Meldunensis ecclesie monachi et cantoris preclarum opus quod super Lamentationes Ieremie compilavit non tantum legi, verum ut et in nostra ecclesia scriptum haberetur exegi'.
[131] Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, ed. and trans. Bruce L. Venarde (Cambridge, MA, 2011), pp. 58-59.
[132] Katie Anne-Marie Bugyis, A. B. Kraebel and Margot E. Fassler 'Introduction' in *Medieval Cantors and their Craft,* p. 2.

negligence occurs in any service in the monastery'.[133] However, there were other aspects to this office:

> It also pertains to his office to supervise the letters sent out to ask for prayers for the dead brethren, and to *keep count of the weeks and months. He takes care of all the books of the house, and has them in his keeping,* if his interests and learning are such as to fit him for keeping them.[134]

For this study, two of these tasks are the most significant; the reckoning of time, and the keeping of the monastery's library. The first was one of the most technical and important tasks in monastic life. A cantor had to calculate the dates of movable feasts, including Easter. He also had to read and engage with many complex texts on the science of time-reckoning which other monks would not have read. Furthermore, being in charge of the library, the cantor had access to a significant intellectual resource and also shaped that library with his own interests. Additionally, the requirements for the role of cantor meant that William of Malmesbury had to directly engage with ideas about time. It also meant that he came into contact with, and read, many texts that directly discussed time. According to Margot Fassler, subjects and reading associated with the role of cantor 'loom larger than might be expected in historical writings'.[135] She suggests that the 'typical profile' for those who wrote extensive histories and hagiography were the people who "managed time"' in their institution. It is not surprising that several of the key historical writers

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[133] Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. and trans. Dom David Knowles and Christopher N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 2002), pp. 118-119: 'ipsius est omni hora sollicite prouidere, ne eueniat neglegentia in quocunque obsequio quod fit in monasterio.' My own emphasis.
[134] Lanfranc, *Monastic Constitutions*, pp. 122-123: 'Cura breuium, qui foras mitti solent pro defunctis fratribus, et *cura numerandi tricenaria, et septenaria, ad eum pertinet. De uniuersis monasterii libris curam gerat, et eos in custodia sua habeat*, si eius studii et scientie sit, ut eorum custodia ei commendari debeat' my own emphasis.
[135] Margot E. Fassler, 'Shaping the Historical Dunstan: Many Lives and a Musical Office' in *Medieval Cantors and their Craft*, p. 135.

of the early twelfth century fitted this profile, including William of Malmesbury, Eadmer of Canterbury, John of Worchester, and Symeon of Durham. They were cantors.

On the other hand, Paul Hayward argues that William of Malmesbury's role as a cantor had very little to do with his historical writing.[136] He suggests that William's historical work being full of the rhetorical devices of a classical historian, reflects a lack of interest in the liturgy.[137] Hayward concludes, '[William of Malmesbury's] histories were written during periods in his career when his concerns as a cantor had to be set aside', whereas his 'monastic works' (those written between 1134-43) reflect the proper concerns of a cantor.[138] Hayward correctly surmises that monasteries were 'enabling environments that could help broaden their [the cantors] minds'. [139] Alongside his education, this environment resulted in William of Malmesbury developing an agile mind which could 'move from one way of processing ideas and observations to another as the needs of the moment required'.[140] Yet, this does not mean that William set aside his role of cantor when writing his histories. Indeed, Hayward's argument for the irrelevance of the role of cantor relies on the fact that William did not refer to himself as a cantor in any of his works, instead opting for the title of *bibliothecarius Malmesberie*, 'librarian of Malmesbury' in the prologue of the *Historia Novella*.[141] However, this suggestion is unconvincing as none of the cantor-historians of the twelfth century named

[136] Hayward, 'William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian', p. 228.
[137] Hayward, 'William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian', p. 229.
[138] Hayward, 'William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian', p. 238.
[139] Hayward, 'William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian', p. 238.
[140] Hayward, 'William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian', p. 238.
[141] Hayward, 'William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian', p. 222.

themselves as cantors in their writings. Evidence of Symeon of Durham, Orderic Vitalis, and Eadmer of Canterbury's position as cantors is derived from comments made by other writers just as with William of Malmesbury.[142]

Hayward suggests that we should not presume that cantors possessed a particular mentality which defined their way of thinking about the past. But I contend that the role of cantor enabled William to be able to develop his mind and facilitated the mental agility that Hayward admires. His access to a breadth of reading material allowed him to explore and develop his ideas. And his role as cantor was certainly not set aside whilst he was writing his histories. The role of cantor was multifaceted and even if he was not actively including references to the liturgy, there were other areas where his work and study as a cantor would have had a significant impact such as in his understanding of time. Charles Rozier has convincingly argued that cantors had to engage with a level of computus theory which would have been just as compatible with their work as historians as with their role of cantor.[143] Indeed, the term 'history-maker' has been applied by modern historians to define the medieval cantor.[144] Whilst it cannot be confirmed that the role of cantor inevitably led to the writing of historical works, it is highly suggestive that there is a connection between the need to write history, and the mindset of the cantor.

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[142] Charles Rozier, 'Orderic Vitalis as Librarian and Cantor' in *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works and Interpretations*, eds Charles Rozier, Daniel Roach, Giles Gasper and Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge, 2016), p. 72.
[143] Rozier, 'Orderic Vitalis as Librarian and Cantor', p. 71.
[144] Bugyis, Kraebel and Fassler, 'Introduction', p. 5.

William of Malmesbury's manuscript survives in its entirety. Whilst it is difficult to pinpoint a precise date of composition, Thomson has convincingly argued that it was compiled early in William's career. Combining palaeographical analysis of the hands found in the manuscript with William's comments on Marianus Scotus in the *Gesta Pontificum* – reasoning that the spelling of Marianus' name in the *Gesta* was derived from the manuscript – Thomson states that the manuscript was completed before 1125, the year that William wrote the *Gesta Pontificum*.[145] From this analysis, combined with the comments from Robert of Cricklade in the mid-1130s, we can conclude that William was Cantor of Malmesbury throughout his entire writing career. It is unlikely that the proximity of the assumed dates for the creation of Auct F. 3. 14 and William's first work of history is simply coincidence. William's interest in the reckoning of time corresponds with the first major wave of his historical endeavours. Whether his interest in time was the spark that ignited his work as a historian is unknowable, but the timing leaves little room to doubt that William's study of time and history were closely intertwined. In order to explore how his ideas of time influenced his writings, we need to discuss further the texts and sources William had at his disposal, which formulated his notions of time, primarily those found in his computus manuscript.

Compiled at Malmesbury Abbey, the manuscript is an octavo sized book, 10 ¼ x 7 ¼ inches, iii foliations of 161 leaves. The parchment appears to be of a high, if not the highest, quality. For most of the manuscript it is white and smooth, with the

[145] Thomson, 'The 'Scriptorium' of William of Malmesbury', p. 128; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 82-85.

script clear English Caroline miniscule. It is not splendid in its decoration, but does include Isidorian diagrams of the seasons, the phases of the moon, and the 'T-O' World Map in multiple colours of ink.[146] There is also a line drawing of Helios in red, green and brown ink. Thomson describes the manuscripts associated with William of Malmesbury (including the computus codex) as 'workmanlike'.[147] He believes that 'its parchment is of poor quality and ill prepared… decoration is minimal'. [148] This is not an entirely accurate assessment. It is true that several of the pages have small holes, and there are no fabulous illuminations in gold ink as can be found in some twelfth-century computus manuscripts (Bodley MS 614 is such an example). However, it is not a poor quality manuscript by any means. It is not elaborate, but it is neat and carefully written on good quality parchment; some care has obviously been taken when constructing this manuscript. The care taken to construct the manuscript, the incorporation of some decoration, and the quality of the parchment suggest that this manuscript was intended to be a significant addition to the Malmesbury Library, not just a manuscript intended for personal use. Further evidence to this effect is a verse inscription found on a flyleaf in William's own hand:

> This church's book of many materials
> Like a field of various delights
> Will make the name of William famous after his death.[149]

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[146] For more discussion the rotae diagrams see: Cohen, *Transformations of Time,* pp. 56-57; Eastwood, *Ordering the Heavens*, pp. 409-12; Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought: The Hereford Paradigm* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 20-7.
[147] Thomson, 'The Scriptorium' of William of Malmesbury', p. 127.
[148] Thomson, 'The Scriptorium' of William of Malmesbury', p. 127.
[149] Bodleian Library Auct F. 3. 14 f. iiv: 'Ecclesiae codex multarum materiarum/Sicut ager plenus variarum delitiarum/Willelmi nomen faciet post funera clarum'. Translation my own.

The phrase 'a field of various delights' may refer to the genre of florilegium, in which extracts of important works were compiled. Most significantly, the verse states that this computus work 'will make the name of William famous'. William had included a verse identifying himself as the copier on the flyleaf in a copy of the works of St Anselm, Lambeth Palace MS 224.[150] However, that verse does not state that it will make William's name famous. This verse, combined with the quality of parchment and presentation reveals that William believed this manuscript was of some importance. It must be noted that William did not make any similar claims in his historical writing. The computus manuscript's modest size and lack of decoration does not diminish its value. Indeed, there were different kinds of roles which a manuscript could fulfil. Whether the manuscript was expected to be used for display, or for teaching or frequent consultation, it contributed to the education and intellectual culture of the monastery.

The intended role of a manuscript determined the choices made when constructing a computus manuscript, as can be demonstrated by St John's College MS 17, a computus codex contemporaneous to the Malmesbury manuscript. Faith Wallis argues that:

> the [large] size of MS 17 plays an important role in its overall codicological character. It resonates with the fine parchment, the script, decoration and lay-out to create a striking impression of beauty and dignity. The Thorney scriptorium *deliberately* set out to

[150] N. R. Ker, 'William of Malmesbury's Handwriting' in his *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in Medieval Heritage*, ed. A. G. Watson (London, 1985), p. 62; Lambeth Palace 224 fo ii: 'Disputat anselmus presul cantorberiensis/Scribit Willelmus monachus malmesberiensis/Ambos gratifice complectere lector amice'.

> present computus in ceremonial dress, and in so doing, revealed something of the value they placed on this subject.[151]

Such choice in presentation can also be attributed to the Malmesbury computus. The size, ornamentation, and quality of parchment were chosen because of the intended function of the manuscript by the community. Therefore, it is possible to deduce the purpose of the manuscript from its physical construction. The smaller size of MS Auct. F. 3. 14 suggests that it was intended to be frequently consulted. A manuscript of modest size would be easy to lift and transport. The computus manuscript compiled by William's contemporary and fellow cantor-historian Symeon of Durham also survives, and Charles Rozier suggests that this manuscript was intended for personal use.[152] Dean and Chapter Library MS 100 (also known as Hunter 100) is one of the smallest computus manuscripts surviving from the twelfth century, measuring only 6 3/5 x 4 4/5 inches. It would have been very easy to transport. This manuscript is also of high quality with several diagrams and illuminations.

Neil Ker has argued that very few computus manuscripts exceeded 11 x 7 7/10 inches in size. Few manuscripts apart from Great Bibles exceeded 11 4/5 x 7 1/2.[153] However, sizes could vary. Appendix I: 'Sizes of Post-Conquest Twelfth-Century English Computus Manuscripts' shows that eight of nineteen extant twelfth-century English computus manuscripts exceed Ker's standard format for the genre and four of them exceed even the general format he postulated. The

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[151] Faith Wallis, "St John's 17: Material and Structure, 1. Size." The Calendar and the Cloister: Oxford, St John's College MS17. 2007. McGill University Library. Digital Collections Program. http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17. accessed 16/02/2019.
[152] Rozier, 'Symeon of Durham as Cantor and Historian', pp. 190-206.
[153] N. R. Ker, *English Manuscripts in the Century After the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 40-41.

manuscripts range from approximately 6 x 4 inches to 15 x 11 inches, a notably wide range of difference.[154] Such variation suggests that frequency of use played a role in a decision about size; some computus books had a practical function whilst others were used primarily as display pieces. A large book, such as St John's MS 17, would have been impressive for display, but would have been physically difficult to use on a regular basis. The variation in purpose for these manuscripts suggests that the subject of computus held a similar level of status to that of Biblical or Patristic study. It was significant enough to warrant the creation of large, ornate, and expensive manuscripts that would be displayed to demonstrate the prestige of the institution. On the other hand, it was a subject which was important to the function of the monastery and cantors needed to consult these works. The Malmesbury manuscript falls within the middle of the size range. Therefore, it is conceivable that William of Malmesbury intended his manuscript to be for practical use by himself and his community. William would have read this manuscript often, perhaps even on a daily basis. Furthermore, there is evidence that William engaged directly with the texts in this manuscript. Whilst he did not copy any of the texts himself, his hand has been found in several of the corrections and marginal annotations.[155] The hands of several Malmesbury scribes have been identified in the copies of the texts. [156] The position of cantor resulted in William reading and engaging with scientific texts on the subject of the reckoning of time.

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[154] See: Appendix I: 'Sizes of Post-Conquest Twelfth-Century English Computus Manuscripts'.
[155] Thomson, 'The Scriptorium' of William of Malmesbury'.
[156] Thomson, 'The Scriptorium' of William of Malmesbury'.

The Texts

The contents of the manuscript are listed in the table below:[157]

Contents of Bodl Auct F.3.14 (SC 2186)

Item	Text	Folios
1	Isidore of Seville, *De natura rerum*	1r-19v
2	Bede, *De natura rerum*	20r-27v
3	Bede, *De temporibus liber primus*	27v-33r
4	Bede, *Episola ad Wicthedum de pascha celebratione*	33r-35v
5	Bede, *De temporibus liber secundus* [i.e *De temporum ratione*]	35v-102r
6	Helperic of Granvel, *De calculatioria arte* [i.e *De computo*]	102r-114r
7	Proterius of Alexandria, *Epistola ad papam Leonem primum de ratione pasche*	114r-115v
8	Paschasinus of Lilybeum, *Epistola ad papam Leonem de ratione pasche*	115v-116v
9	Dionysius Exiguus, *Epistola ad Petronum episcopum de ciclo quingentorum .xxxii. annorum*	116v-118v
10	Dionysius Exiguus, *Epistola de eodem ad Bonifatium primicerium*	118v-120ar
11	[*Argumenta titulorum paschalium*]	120av
12	[*Magnus cyclus paschalis cum annales*]	120av-132v
13	Robert de Losinga, *Exceptio[nes] de chronica Mariniani* [i.e *Mariani Scoti*]	133r-148v
14	*Liber Igini de spera celesti*	148v-153r
15	*Regule de astrolabio*	153r-157v

[157] Table from Hayward, 'William of Malmesbury as a Cantor-Historian', p. 224.

It has been suggested that there is no evidence of conscious ordering of these texts within the codex.[158] They were written separately and each hand stops at the end of a quire or text section, suggesting that William requested these texts and monks were separately assigned a text to copy out before it was bounded together.[159] It is possible that William did not intend this codex to be read cover to cover in the order in which it appears. Rather, it may have been meant as a reference book to be consulted as and when necessary. However, Anne Lawrence-Mathers argues that there is a logic to the placement of texts. She contends that:

> There appears to be a deliberate progression in the texts' arrangement, from material things [Isidore of Seville's and Bede's *De Natura Rerum*], to time and dating of fundamental events of the Christian Era [Bede's *De Temporibus* and *De Temporum Ratione*, Helperic's *Liber de computo*, the Dionysius letters, the Paschal tables, and Robert of Hereford's recension of Marianus Scotus' chronicle], and finally to the heavenly sphere and the tool with which it may be observed and analysed [the tracts on the philosophy of the spheres and the treatise on the astrolabes].[160]

There appears to be an even more deliberate placement of the texts in the volume. The Paschal tables are sandwiched between the Dionysian letters and Robert of Hereford's recension. As will be detailed below, both of these authors deal with how to calculate dating and they give contradictory information. The tables belong solely to Marianus Scotus and use recalculated dating: the date of the birth of Christ was calculated as twenty-two years earlier than the standard set by Dionysius. Yet these tables are not directly identified as Marianus' and, it would seem, are left deliberately ambiguous. No author is named for the tables and the

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[158] Thomson, 'The 'Scriptorium' of William of Malmesbury', p. 127.
[159] Thomson, 'The 'Scriptorium' of William of Malmesbury', p. 127.
[160] Lawrence-Mathers, 'William of Malmesbury and the Chronological Controversy', p. 99.

succeeding recension by Robert of Hereford is described as concerning 'annus Domini'. Lawrence-Mathers argues that as the tables immediately follow Dionysius' letters it would be assumed that these tables belonged to Dionysius and not Marianus Scotus.[161] She implies that William left the authorship of these tables ambiguous so as to encourage students to use Marianus' recalculated dating. Whilst William might not have clarified the provenance of the tables for this reason, the sequence of the texts and tables suggests an additional purpose. It may be argued that William placed the texts in the order that he did to show the progress of scholarship on dating the Christian era, with the Dionysian letters being the foundation upon which Marianus built to create his revised dating. Both texts deserved a place in the codex.

Before we examine the individual works themselves, we should place the compilation within the broader context of computus manuscripts. This is made more difficult by the many differences between individual manuscripts. First of all, it should be noted that the contents could vary between codices. No two computus manuscripts were identical in their contents. The contents depended on the interests of the cantor in charge of compiling it. As has already been mentioned, topics ranging from medicine to mathematics could appear in a single codex. Extracts could sit alongside writings copied in their entirety. As for William of Malmesbury's codex, several of the chosen works are very common in other computus manuscripts from twelfth-century England. Thus, it can be argued that the ones he chose to include were used to study computus at numerous institutions. However, it must be

[161] Lawrence-Mathers, 'William of Malmesbury and the Chronological Controversy', pp. 98-99.

remembered that many of the computus codices include a plethora of other materials and many do not include all the writings that are in the Malmesbury codex. Indeed, there was no single work which is found in every computus codex.

In short, there does not appear to be a single standard according to which these manuscripts were created. There were endless variations in both the physical artefacts and in the contents. Since William was cantor and supervised the compilation of this codex, the selection and order of texts was his choice and thus reflects his thoughts about what was required in order to study and reckon time for his role as a cantor. I will now move on to consider the materials themselves in more depth. Whilst there is not space here to discuss all of them in detail, we will explore those which are frequently found in computus manuscripts across England: Isidore, Bede, Dionysius, Helperic, Dionysius, and Marianus Scotus. This will illustrate the range of source material with which William of Malmesbury was engaging directly, and the broader intellectual environment in which he participated.

The Texts in Depth

The manuscript opens with Isidore of Seville's *De Natura Rerum*, or *On the Nature of Things*. Isidore begins by discussing the day, a move which he justifies in the preface: 'I begin with the day, the creation of which appears nearly first in the order of visible

things'.[162] He then continues to increase the size of the temporal unit before concluding with the solstice and equinox. Most unusually, he included two sections on the night; the first as Chapter Two after the day and the second as Chapter Twenty Eight, which succeeds the discussion on whether stars have a soul and is followed by an analysis of thunder. According to Wallis, this second chapter formed a 'bridge' between the previous section outlining celestial cosmography and the final third describing purely natural, earthy, phenomena.[163] The rest of the text follows a structure that reflects the 'vertical axis of the universe', beginning with the heavens at the top and descending down to the earth at the bottom.[164] Focusing on the origin and meaning of the words used to describe phenomena, the *De Natura Rerum* follows the same method as the *Etymologiae*. For example, Isidore details that 'night (*nox*) derives from harming (*noceo*), because it is harmful to the eyes'.[165] He also explained the figurative meaning associated with time: 'Mystically, moreover, the day bears the image of the law. For just as the splendour of the day illuminates the obscurity of the darkness, so likewise the law, pointing out the law of life, dispels the darkness of errors' and 'in a prophetic sense, day signifies knowledge of the divine Law, and night the blindness of ignorance'.[166]

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[162] Isidore of Seville, *On the Nature of Things,* ed. and trans. Calvin B. Kendall (Liverpool, 2016), p. 108, full passage: 'Ego autem satisfacere studio animoque tou decursis priorum monumentis non demoror expedire aliqua ex parte rationem dierum ac mensium…'
[163] Faith Wallis, 'Commentary' in *On the Nature of Things,* ed. and trans Calvin B. Kendall (Liverpool, 2016), p. 229.
[164] Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, 'Introduction' in *ONT,* p. 13.
[165] Isidore, *ONT*, p. 114.
[166] Isidore, *ONT* p.; Isidori Hispalensis, *De Natura Rerum Liber,* ed. Gustavus Beckerm (Amsterdam, 1967), 'Mystice quoque dies imaginem legis portat. Sicut enim diei claritas obscura tenebrarum inluminat, ita et lex uiam uitae demonstrans depellit tenebras errorum, lucem declarat uirtutum et iniquorum peccata arguens bonos ad meliora perducit'. and 'Prophetice autem dies scientiam diuinae legis significat, nox uero ignorantiae'.

Isidore's *De Natura Rerum* was a text often found in computus anthologies. Modelled on classical cosmological treatises, the *De Natura Rerum* sought to dispel the superstition associated with natural phenomena by explaining the material world.[167] Isidore's technique combining pagan classical learning with biblical symbolism reflected the desire to draw on the richness of the classical past without it being tainted by any association with pagan culture.[168] In that sense it is similar to the *Etymologiae*, both in preserving classical knowledge and the aim to remove superstition. This is evident when Isidore distinguishes between using stars for reckoning time and 'reading' the stars to learn the future:

> Therefore, observations of the stars, or horoscopes, or other superstitions that attach themselves to the study of the stars, that is, for the sake of knowing the fates – these are undoubtedly contrary to our faith, and ought to be so completely ignored by Christians that it seems that they have not been written about. But some people, enticed by the beauty and clarity of the constellations, have rushed headlong into error with respect to the stars, their minds blinded, so that they attempt to be able to foretell the results of things by means of harmful computations, which is called 'astrology.[169]

Not only did Isidore survey time, but he also discussed the universe and weather phenomena and included all three in one work. Faith Wallis and Calvin Kendell note that this structure was 'actually a rather innovative one on Isidore's part'.[170] Isidore

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[167] Wallis and Kendall, 'Introduction', p. 11; Wallis, 'Isidore of Seville and Science', pp. 190-197
[168] Wallis and Kendall, 'Introduction', p. 12; Wallis, 'Isidore of Seville and Science', pp. 198-199
[169] Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, eds Stephen A. Barney et al. (Cambridge 2006), p. 106; Isidori Hispalensis Eepiscopi Eytmologiarum Sive Originum Liber III, http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/isidore/3.shtml accessed 10/02/2019: 'Horum igitur signorum observationes, vel geneses, vel cetera superstitiosa, quae se ad cognitionem siderum coniungunt, id est ad notitiam fatorum, et fidei nostrae sine dubitatione contraria sunt, sic ignorari debent a Christianis, ut nec scripta esse videantur. Sed nonnulli siderum pulcritudine et claritate perlecti in lapsus stellarum caecatis mentibus conruerunt, ita ut per subputationes noxias, quae mathesis dicitur, eventus rerum praescire posse conentur'.
[170] Wallis and Kendall, 'Introduction', p. 14.

himself justified this structure in his preface, quoting the Bible which defined 'true knowledge of the things that are' as: 'the disposition of the heavens and the virtues of the elements…the alterations of the courses, and the changes of the seasons, the revolutions of the years, and the dispositions of the stars'.[171] To know the 'things that are', one needs to understand all three of the components that Isidore surveyed. One possible explanation for the entire text's inclusion in computus compendia (including William of Malmesbury's) is that the compilers did not view time as an entity separated from the world but as an integral part of 'things that are'. Likewise, it would have been difficult to understand how to reckon time correctly without taking into account the role of time within the universe and its relation to natural phenomena.

Isidore also discussed how different peoples interpreted time. The chapter on the years describes the customs of the Romans, Hebrews, Greeks, and Egyptians.[172] Unlike in the *Etymologiae*, Isidore inserted several diagrams, including one of the months, and one of the seasons. These were copied in varying detail. For instance, Auct F. 3. 14 includes most of the known diagrams, some more complete than others. The manuscript's diagram of the months is not complete, whilst that of the year is.[173]

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[171] Isidore, *ONT*, p. 107; full passage: 'Carnalibus uero ut minus peritis scandalum nasci tempore martyria beatus et lumen noster Isidorus in rerum naturae libro euidenti eloquio et apta figura stellae cuiusdam horione nuntiat'.
[172] Isidore, *ONT*, p. 121.
[173] For more detail on Isidore of Seville's formative influence on the study of computus see: Immo Warntjes 'Isidore of Seville and the Formation of Medieval Computus', in *A Companion to Isidore of Seville*, eds Andrew Fear, Jamie Wood (Leiden, 2019), pp. 457-523.

The next four texts in the manuscript were authored by Bede. Extensive scholarship exists on his impact on twelfth-century historiography.[174] However, almost all of it has focused on Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. This is hardly surprising. The *Historia* served as both a source for and a model of history. For those writing in the wake of the Norman Conquest, the *Historia* was the only narrative source, aside from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, available for the pre-conquest past. Bede's value and authority was well established among medieval writers, many of whom explicitly voiced their admiration. Indeed, William of Malmesbury named himself as the direct successor to Bede, borrowing from his chronicle, and establishing his own efforts as its continuation. In the *Gesta Regum*, William states that 'I have set in order the unbroken course of English history*, I am since Bede the only man to do so, or at any rate the first*'.[175] He was not alone in invoking Bede. Henry of Huntingdon states in his prologue that he had 'followed the Venerable Bede's Ecclesiastical History where I could'; a statement borne out by the fact that twenty-five percent of the content of Henry's *Historia* came from Bede.[176] Whilst William's contemporary Eadmer does not name Bede directly, even so, the preface to his *Vita Sancti Dunstani* bears clear similarities to Bede's *Historia*, and his handling of conflicting evidence follows Bede's

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[174] Some key examples are: Antonia Gransden, *Legends, Tradition and History in Medieval England* (London, 2010) pp. 1-30; Gransden, *Historical Writing in England,* p. 136 and pp. 153-155; N. J. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in Context* (London, 2006), pp. 27-8; Allen J. Frantzen, 'The Englishness of Bede, from Then to Now' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bede,* ed. Scott Degregorio (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 229–242.

[175] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 796-797: 'quod continuam anglorum historiam ordinauerim post Bedam uel solus uel primus'.

[176] Henry of Huntingdon*, Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996) pp. 6-7: 'bede uenerabilius ecclesiasticam qua potui secutus historiam'; Diana Greenway, 'Henry of Huntingdon and Bede' in *L'Historiographie medievale en Europe*, ed. J.-P. Genet (Paris, 1991), p. 43.

method.[177] Many scholars, including Antonia Gransden, Rodney Thomson, Sigbjørn Sønnesyn, and Emily Ward have explored the significant impact that Bede's *Historia* had on William's historical writing.[178] Indeed, as subsequent chapters will explore, Bede's representation of time in the *Historia* may have shaped William's approach.

Immediately succeeding Isidore of Seville's *De Natura Rerum* was Bede's *De Natura Rerum*, *De Temporibus*, *Epistola ad Wicthedum*, and finally the *De Temporum Ratione*. After the tables of contents for Bede's *De Natura Rerum* there is another Latin verse which introduces the Bedean texts.

> I Bede, the servant of God, have sketched in rapid paragraphs the natures of things and the vast periods of time which glide in various ways. You who read this, I implore you to contemplate the everlasting God above the fixed stars.[179]

This verse highlights the complementary nature of studying the world and studying time. The reference to the 'fixed stars', 'fixa…astra', reinforces this. God is outside of the world and outside of time. The 'fixed stars' were a key means of calculating the passage of time. The reference illustrates the connection between understanding time and understanding the right order of the world. The fact that William chose to include it suggests that he believed this relationship needed to be reinforced.

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[177] Mark Philpott, 'Eadmer, his Archbishops and the English State' in *Medieval State: Essays Presented to James Campbell*, ed John Maddicott (London, 2000), p. 103; James Campbell 'Some Twelfth-Century Views of the Anglo-Saxon Past' in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1995), pp. 213–214.
[178] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 17, pp. 25-6, pp. 39-41; Gransden, *Historical Writing in England,* pp. 143-7; Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, pp. 125-7; Emily Joan Ward, 'Verax Historicus Beda: William of Malmesbury, Bede and Historia' in *Discovering William of Malmesbury,* pp. 175–187.
[179] Auct F. 3. 14 ms fol. 20r translation is my own with thanks to Prof. Robert Ireland for his assistance: 'Naturas rerum varie labentis et aevi/ Perstrinxi titulis tempora latas citis/ Beda dei famulus. Tu fixa obsecro perhennem./Qui legis astra super mente tuere deum'.

Bede's computistical works were crucial textbooks for outlining computus. The universality of the Church would be jeopardized if feasts and offices were not performed on the correct day and at the correct time. This premise permeated the works of Bede. He adopted and supported the Roman calendar (amidst the Easter controversy of the eighth century) because it advanced this notion of unity. The harmony of the church through the correct reckoning of time is also evident in twelfth-century writing. Bede's popularity meant that this concept of universality through time was passed down to the twelfth century.

The *De Natura Rerum*, an inventory of the material universe, was very similar to, and was, in fact, largely based on Isidore's work of the same title though with some key differences. First, Bede split Isidore's work into two separate texts, with the time-related content placed in *De Temporibus*. Second, Bede did not ascribe any allegorical meanings to phenomena, unlike Isidore. And finally, whilst the information is the same as in Isidore, the presentation is innovative. Isidore used a Greco-Roman model of the universe – discussing the earth as a globe and the heavens as a sphere - whilst Bede placed the material universe firmly within a Christian framework by structuring his work with the order in which the world was created in Genesis.[180]

Next, we have Bede's *De Temporibus*. Intended as a short guide for Bede's students on the topic of reckoning time it is based on Isidore of Seville, and was

[180] Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of Time* (Abingdon, 2012), p. 98; Wesley M. Stevens, 'The Figure of the Earth in Isidore's 'De natura rerum', *Isis*, Vol. 71:2 (1980), p. 268; Faith Wallis, 'Bede and science' in *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 116-119.

intended as a companion to the *De Natura Rerum*. The first chapter described the smallest of time units, a moment and the hours. Each subsequent chapter progressed to a larger unit of time until the final chapters discussed the ages of the world, concluding with the sixth age: the division of history into six world eras (*aetates mundi*) was a significant concept for organising the past. According to this model, the world was, by Bede's time, in the final age before the end of the world and the Last Judgement.[181] Bede emphasised that this was a summary work, made accessible to students who were not familiar with the complexities of computus; 'Some time ago I wrote two short books in a summary style which were, I judged, necessary for my students; these concerned the nature of things, and the reckoning of time'.[182] Following this work is the *Epistola ad Wicthedum*, a letter frequently added as an 'appendix' to *De Temporibus*. It discussed the correct means of dating the Spring Equinox, which was required in order to calculate the date of Easter, a topic to which Bede returns in his second work on time.[183]

De Temporum Ratione, on the other hand, is a significantly longer and more detailed work. It consists of seventy-one chapters compared to *De Temporibus*' twenty-two. Many of the topics Bede discussed in *De Temporibus* are expanded upon. For instance, in Chapter Two Bede recounted in detail the three ways in which time can be reckoned:

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[181] For discussion of the concept of world ages see: Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 24-8.
[182] Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, *The Reckoning of Time*, ed. and trans Faith Wallis (Liverpool, 1988) p. 3: 'De natura rerum, et ratione temporum, duos quondam stricto sermone libellos discentibus, ut rebar, neccessarios composui'.
[183] José Antonio González Marrero, 'La epistola ad Wichtedum un apéndice del De temporum ratione de Beda' in *Estudios de Latín Medieval Hispánico: Actas del V Congreson Internacional de Latín Medieval Hispánico, Barcelona, 7-10 de septiembre de 2009*, eds José Martinez Gázquez, Óscar de la Cruz Palma and Cándida Ferrero Hernández (Firenz, 2011), pp. 579-588.

> Times (*tempora*) take their name from ''measure'' (*temperamentum*), either because every unit of time is separately measured (*temperatum*), or because all the courses of mortal life are measured (*temperentur*) in moments, hours, days, months, years, ages and epochs…First, we point out to the reader that there are three kinds of time reckoning: it operates either according to nature, or according to custom, or according to authority.[184]

Correct reckoning of time meant following the signs God created as 'this Nature was created by the one true God when He commanded that the stars which He had set in the heavens should be the signs of seasons, days and years'.[185] Custom, or specifically human custom, referred to the systems devised by man, principally calendars, to organise time, even though this often did not match the reckoning of time according to nature. For example, 'Now it is by human custom that the month is considered as having 30 days, even though this does not match the course of either the Sun or the Moon'.[186] Finally, authority was defined as established precedent with origins in the distant past. This was divided into two further categories: human authority - such as holding the Olympics once every four years – and divine authority such as keeping the Sabbath on the seventh day.[187] Time could be measured through a combination of these means.

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[184] Bede, *DTR*, p. 13: 'Tempora igitur a temperando nomen accipiunt, sive quod unumquodque illorum spatium separatim temperatum sit: seu quod momentis, horis, diebus, mensibus, annis, seculisque et aetatibus omnia mortalis vitae curri cula temperentur. De quibus singulis, prout Dominus dederit, expositurí, primo Lectorem admonemus, trimoda ratione computum temporis esse discretum. Aut enim natura, aut consuetudine, aut certe auctoritate decurrit.'

[185] Bede, *DTR* p. 14: 'Sed et errantia sidera suis quaeque spatiis zodiaco circumferri, quae natura non juxta ethnicorum dementiam dea creatrix una de pluribus, sed ab uno vero deo creata est, quando sideribus cœlo inditis prae cepit, ut sint in signa, et tempora, et dies et annos'

[186] Bede, *DTR,* p. 13: 'Consuetudine vero humana firmatum est, ut mensis XXX diebus computaretur, cum hoc nec solis, nec lunae cursui conveniat.'

[187] Bede, *DTR*, p. 13: 'humana videlicet, ut Olympiadas quatuor annorum' and 'Divina autem, ut septima die sabbatum agi'.

One of the most significant aspects of Bede's work was his connection of computus to history. Two of Bede's prominent themes are the notions of sequence and of order. The connection is found within both of Bede's treatises, especially in the 'world chronicles' which he attached to each. In his 'world chronicle' (chapters 66-70 of the *De Temporum Ratione*) Bede 'solemnize[d] the link between chronology and computus. In his hands, chronology became applied computus'.[188] And so, Bede solemnized the link between computus and history. The construction of narrative history was intertwined with knowledge and decisions based on chronology. Of course, computus was seen as a key part of ecclesiastical education. Computus structured all of past time. In his discussion of the Great Paschal Cycle, Bede explained that the cycle allowed the reader to organise both the past and the future: 'whoever reads them can, with unerring gaze, not only look forward to the present and future, but can also look back at each and every date of Easter in the past'.[189] By extension, computus could be used to both look to the future and to 'plot' past time. In a way, computus served a similar function to that of writing history.

Helperic's *Liber de Computo* is next in the manuscript. Helperic of Auxerre and Grandval, was a monk at St Gall and composed his work c.900.[190] Over eighty copies survive, and it appears in eleven English manuscripts from between 1066 and the end of the twelfth century. [191] Building on the system of Dionysius, *De Computo*

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[188] Faith Wallis, 'Commentary', in *The Reckoning of Time*, ed and trans Faith Wallis (Liverpool, 1988), p. 353.
[189] Bede, *DTR*, p. 156: 'quatenus legentes quique non solum praesentem vel futurum prospicere, sed et praeteritum omnem paschalis statum temporis inenarrabili possent intuitu respicere'
[190] C. Philipp E. Nothaft, *Scandalous Error: Calendar Reform and Calendrical Astronomy in Medieval Europe* (Oxford 2018), p. 33
[191] Nothaft, *Scandalous Error*, p. 34.

supplemented existing computus frameworks, rather than creating a new system.[192] The text is divided into two parts: the first concerning lunar and solar reckoning of time, the second Paschal computation with tables.[193]

In many computus manuscripts, including the Malmesbury one, Helperic's work directly follows on from Bede's, suggesting that it was viewed as an abbreviated version of *De Temporum Ratione*.[194] Certainly, Helperic echoes, for instance, Bede's explanation of the relationship between the seasons and the calendar when discussing the calculation of leap-years. Helperic explains, 'If this day is overlooked, it will come to pass after a number of years that the summer months will fall in winter, and the winter months, on the other hand, in summer'.[195] Bede similarly warns that:

> should any computist neglect to make [this intercalation], and think that all years ought to have only 365 days, he will subsequently discover that a great shortfall occurs in the course of the year; after a certain number of years have come and gone, the erring computist will be aghast to encounter spring time in the summer months,

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[192] Nothaft, *Scandalous Error*, p. 1.
[193] Faith Wallis, "10. Helperic, De Computo" The Calendar and the Cloister: Oxford, St John's College MS17. 2007. McGill University Library. Digital Collections Program. http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17 accessed 18/02/2019.
Faith. [194] Wallis, "10. Helperic, De Computo".
[195] Full Quote trans. Faith Wallis in "10. Helperic, De Computo": 'If this day is overlooked, it will come to pass after a number of years that the summer months will fall in winter, and the winter months, on the other hand, in summer. For in the course of 364 years the reckoning will fall behind to such an extent that the equinoxes will come on the dates of the solstices, and the solstices on the dates of the equinoxes: that is, when you state that it is the 12th kalends of July, which is the summer solstice, the spring equinox will be taking place, and when you state that it is the 12th kalends of April, which ought to be the spring equinox, the winter solstice will take place, which is on the 12th kalends of January. This will happen to all the days of the year in the same way. In order to avoid this mistake, a leap year is intercalated every fourth year'; Helperic, *Liber de Computo*, PL137, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris, 1851), col. 23A: 'Qui dies si negligatur. eueniet post aliquantulos annos ut hiemae aestiui. et econtra aestate hiberni menses occurrant. Nam per CCCLXIIIIor annos tantum calculatio regradabitur. ut in kalendariis solstitiorum aequinoctia. et econtra in equinoctiorum solstitia id est cum XIImo kalendas iulii pronuntiaueris quod est solstitium aestiuum. occurrat equinoctium uernale: quod esse debet XIImo kalendas aprilis. Cumque pronuntiaueris XII kalendas aprilis et debeat esse equinoctium uernale. appeat solstitium brumale. quod est XIImo kalendas ianuarii: sicque in ceteris eueniet anni diebus. Ad hunc euitandum errorem bissectilis dies IIIIto anno semper interkalatur'.

> winter in the spring months, autumn in the winter months, and summer in the autumn months.[196]

Indeed, the text concludes that those who wish to learn more of Paschal reckoning should turn to the 'book of Bede' for more information.[197]

Whilst Helperic's work relied heavily on Bede's *De Temporum Ratione*, he did incorporate several of his own ideas. For instance, he emphasised the concept of 'horological proof', observing the passage of time, for instance, through charting the course of the sun, and using that empirical and observational information in his computistical work in order to ensure its accuracy.[198] He argued that in order to track the direction and movement of the sun's rising point accurately, one should use an upstairs eastward facing room so that the sun's light would reflect onto the west wall.[199] Helperic's textbook was a concise and useful addition to any computus codex.

Following from *De Computo* are two letters which summarise the discussions and outcome of the Council of Chalcedon in 451AD. This council sought to confirm the calculation of the date of Easter and enforce a unified approach for the Church in the West and in the East. These letters were commonly found in twelfth-century computus manuscripts. The next major works to appear in the Malmesbury manuscript are the letters of Dionysius Exiguus. Dionysuis Exiguus was one of the

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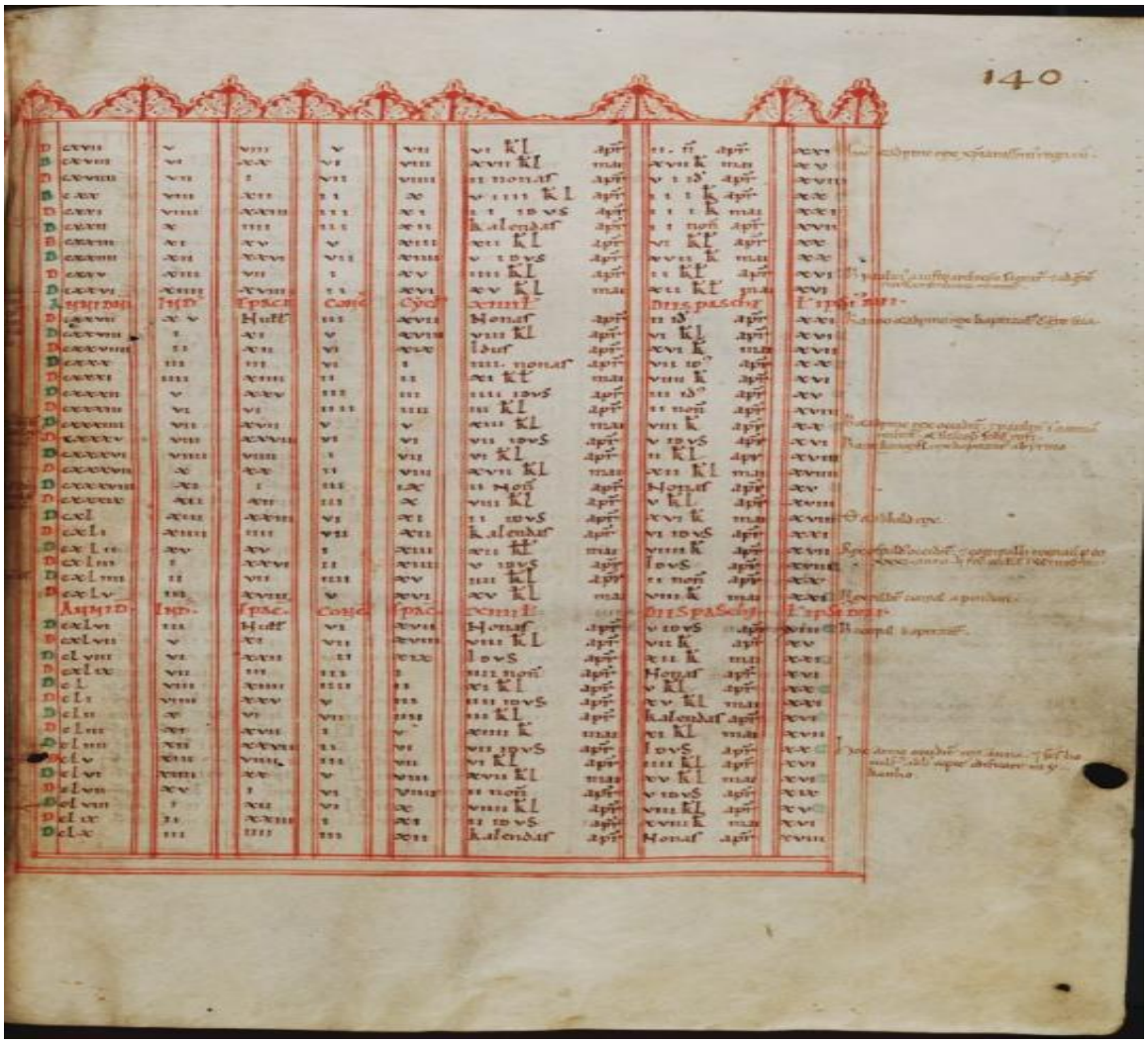
[196] Wallis, "10. Helperic, De Computo": 'Quod si qui calculatorum facere negligens CCC solum ac LXV diebus omnes se annos agere debere putauerit, magnum sibi mox inueniet annui circuitus occurrisse dispendium ita ut, post aliquot annorum uertentium curricula, aestiuis mensibus uernum tempus, uernis brumale, brumalibus autumnale, autumnalibus aestiuum se offendisse peruersus computator horrescat'.
[197] Helperic, *De Computo*, col. 48B. '… vel de omnibus as Paschae rationem pertinentibus, qui nosse plenius desidersat librum venerabilis Bedae de his eleganter editum sedulo perlegat'.
[198] Nothaft, *Scandalous Error,* p. 33.
[199] Nothaft, *Scandalous Error,* p. 33; Helperic, *De Computo*, cols 40D-1B.

most important chronographers of the Middle Ages. Active in the sixth century, the monk from Scythia Minor created what is known as the 'Dionysian cycle', a 19-year repeatable table which could be used to project the date of Easter for 532 years. This cycle was extremely important for computus, as it was used to project and organise the dates of various liturgical feasts. Below is an example of a Dionysian Paschal calendar from St John's College, Cambridge MS 17.[200]



[200] St John's College, Cambridge MS 17 fol. 140r.

Dionysius corrected what he believed to be a discrepancy between the celebration of Easter in Rome, and the celebration in Alexandria. In order to create a table which projected the future dates of Easter, he used a combination of the number of years in the Alexandrian and Julian calendars, and a combination of solar and lunar cycles. Accompanying the tables are two letters which explain the computation and use of his tables. In his letter to Bishop Petronius, Dionysius states that Easter should be celebrated on:

> the fourteenth day of the Paschal lunation, as it regularly returns each nineteenth year, which is a stable cycle...but no structure can endure without a solid foundation, and since they are not willing to accept the exact calculation of the lunation and Easter Sunday, many mistakes were made, resulting in varied and conflicting ways of celebrating this exceptional feast.[201]

It was of great concern to Dionysius that the calculation of the date of Easter be accurate so that the feast could be celebrated by all of Christendom at the same, correct, time and in the same way. This became the primary system which the Church used to calculate the date of Easter, and to organise its other major feasts. Bede's calculations were based on Dionysius' computus, and he excerpted much of the letters in his own work. Bede's *De Temporum Ratione* was, in part, an attempt to transmit and disseminate the Dionysian cycle.[202] This system was still the primary one used in the early twelfth century, and Dionysius' treatises were included in

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[201] Gustav Teres, 'Time Computations and Dionysius Exiguus' *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 15:3 (1984) pp. 178; Dionysius Exiguus*, Epistola de eodem ad Bonifatium primicerium,*, PL 67, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris, 1848), col. 485: '…qui quartas decimas lunas paschalis obervanitae, per novemdecim annorum redeuntem semper in se circulum, stabiles immotasque tixerunt… Et quia sine fundamenti solidate non potest structuraulla consistere, longe aliter in quibusdam annis dominicum Pascha et lunae computum praefigere maluerunt, inordinatos circulos ordinantes; qui non solum nullam recursus stabilitatem, verum etiam cursum praefectunt errore notabilem'.

[202] Stevens, *Cycles of Time and Scientific Learning in Medieval Europe*, p. 66; Wallis, 'Bede and Science', p. 121.

many computus anthologies. Of the nineteen twelfth-century manuscripts, six include the works of Dionysius. As Faith Wallis illustrates, the Malmesbury manuscript follows an exclusively English pattern in that the Dionysian letters were placed next to the works of Helperic and Bede.[203] This close association between Bede, Dionysius, and Helperic and the inclusion of all three in the same codex is not found outside English computus manuscripts.[204]

Further, Dionysius was also the 'inventor' of the AD dating method. Whilst he did not utilise this model to date any historical events, he did use it to date liturgical events both in the Gregorian and Julian calendars. Alden Mosshammer suggests that Dionysius sought to replace the Diocletian and Anno Mundi systems with Incarnation dating because the former calendars predicted the Last Judgement as occurring much sooner.[205] However, Incarnation dating would not become popular as a dating system for historical events until Bede utilised it in his *Ecclesiastic History*. By the twelfth century, AD dating was the primary means of dating, and spanned different genres of historical writing. Indeed, across the various genres in which he engaged, Incarnation dating can be found in all of William of Malmesbury's works.

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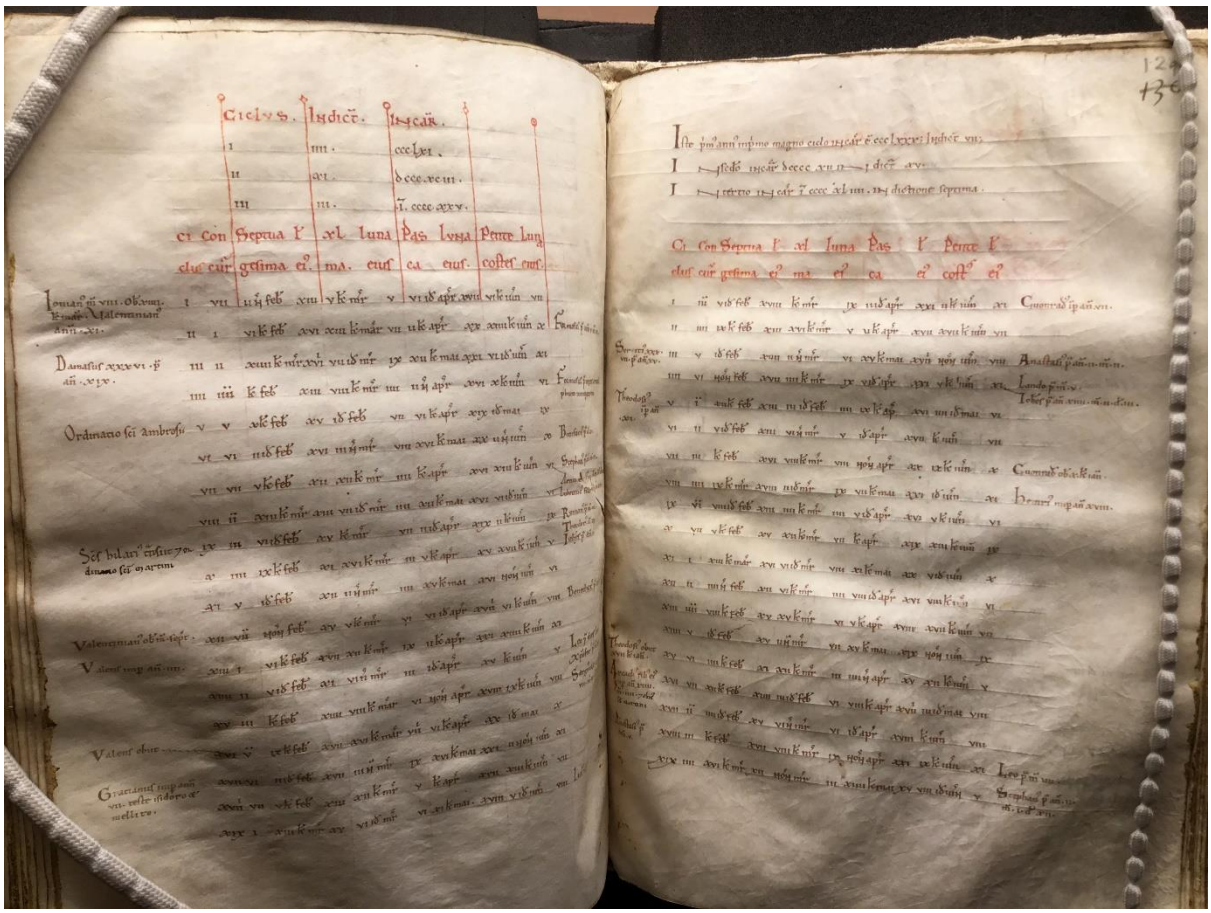
[203] Faith Wallis, "11. Paschal Tables and Their Explanatory Materials: 1. Dionysius Exiguus: Two Tracts on Paschal Reckoning" The Calendar and the Cloister: Oxford, St John's College MS17. 2007. McGill University Library. Digital Collections Program. http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17 accessed 19/02/2019; St Johns MS 17, follows the same placement of texts as the Malmesbury manuscript, whilst Cambridge St Johns I.15 has them between Bede and Helperic, the Winchcombe Computus has them between Bede, and Abbo's astronomica and Helperic.
[204] Wallis, "11. Paschal Tables and Their Explanatory Materials: 1. Dionysius Exiguus: Two Tracts on Paschal Reckoning".
[205] Alden A Mosshammer, *The Easter Computus and the Origins of the Christian Era* (Oxford, 2009), p. 270.

Following on from the Dionysian letters in the Malmesbury manuscript, one would expect the twenty-eight Paschal tables to be of the Dionysian cycles. They are not. The tables are instead the work of Marianus Scotus.[206]



Marianus Scotus was an eleventh-century chronicler, spending most of his life in the monasteries of Cologne, Fulda, and Mainz. He is notable in relation to this thesis for his *Chronicon;* a universal history from creation to 1082 (the year of Marianus' death). Marianus' primary concern was not with details, but rather with ordering all the events into an accurate chronological and computistical framework.[207] This fits in with the general emphasis shared by early universal chronicles: the harmonisation of

[206] Image below from Bodleian Auct F. 3. 14 fol. 128v – 129r. My own image.
[207] Peter Verbist, 'Reconstructing the Past: The Chronicle of Marianus Scottus', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland,* 16 (2002), p. 287.

classical tradition and Biblical history.[208] The *correct* placing of human history in time was the foremost concern of universal chronicles. [209] The majority of universal chronicle writers stuck to the system of history established by Eusebius and Jerome. However, Marianus made a series of corrections to this model. Additionally, he revised many of the computistical calculations proposed by Dionysius. Primarily, he changed the date of creation to 4183 BC and the date of the birth of Christ to twenty-two years earlier than Dionysius.[210] Indeed, he was not the first to draw attention to the inconsistencies between Dionysius' computistical calculations and the historical details disseminated through Scripture. Abbo of Fleury, Heriger of Lobbes, and Gerland of Bescançon all made additions and corrections to Dionysius, from Abbo's changing the year of Christ's crucifixion in his new Paschal table for 1064-1594, to Gerland and Heriger's changing the years of Christ's birth and death by seven years.[211] Brought to England by Robert of Lotheringia, Bishop of Hereford, Marianus' calculations had a significant impact. John of Worcester based a significant proportion of his own chronicle on that of Scotus, and Henry of Huntingdon used the chronicle for his narrative of 741BC (reign of Constantine V of the Holy Roman Empire) to 1056AD (reign of Henry IV).[212]

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[208] Wojciech Baran-Kozłowski, 'Chronicon by Marianus Scotus -- between Computistic and Historiography. World Chronicles and the Search for a Suitable Chronology of History,' *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae,* 13 (2008), p. 313.
[209] Baran-Kozłowski, 'Chronicon by Marianus Scotus,' pp. 313-314; for more on the concerns of universal chronicles see: Andrew Marsham, 'Universal Histories in Christendom and the Islamic World, c. 700-c. 1400' in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing,* Volume 2 400-1400, eds Sarah Foot and Chase F. Robinson (Oxford, 2012), pp. 431-456.
[210] Baran-Kozłowski, Chronicon by Marianus Scotus,' p. 316.
[211] Baran-Kozłowski, 'Chronicon by Marianus Scotus,' pp. 315–316; for more on these computists see Peter Verbist, *Duelling with the Past: Medieval Authors and the Problem of the Christian Era (*c. 990-1135) (Turnhout, 2010).
[212] John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 3 vols, ed. and trans Patrick McGurk (Oxford, 1998); H. Hunt., *HA*.

Robert of Hereford was well known as a scholar of computus. His knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, the abacus, and computus were admired by William of Malmesbury. In the *Gesta Pontificum*, he describes Robert as 'highly skilled in all the liberal arts, and in particular had gone into the abacus, the reckoning of time by the moon, and the course of the stars in the sky'.[213] William also describes how Robert discovered Marianus Scotus, and consequently brought his work over to England:

> At that time there was at Mainz an enclosed monk called Marinianus. In his long seclusion he had had the leisure to study the chronographers, and he was the first or only man to notice the discrepancy of the cycle of Dionysius Exiguus as compared with the gospel truth. He therefore went over the years from the beginning of the era, one by one, and added the twenty-two years lacking in the Dionysian cycles; he then proceeded to compose a long and worldly chronicle. Robert admired this book beyond all others, marvellously rivalled it, and had it brought to England. In the end, captivated by Marinianus' genius, he produced a compendium of what he had written on such a large scale, so finely that the abbreviation is counted more valuable than the original gigantic tome.[214]

This recension (the original chronicle being over 150 pages in length compared to thirty pages in Auct F. 3. 14) which William mentioned had a wide circulation. Six of the nineteen twelfth-century English computus manuscripts include Robert of Hereford's recension, a significant number. Thus Marianus' calculations had an influence which was particularly prevalent in England.

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[213] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 458-459: 'Omnium liberalium atrium pertissimus, abacum precipue et lunarem compotum et caelestium cursum astrorum rimatus'.

[214] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 458-459: 'Erat tunc temporis Marinianus monachus apud Mogontiam inclusus, qui longo solitudinis otio chronographos scrutatus, dissonantiam ciclorum Dionisii Exigui contra euangelicam ueritatem uel primus uel solus animaduertit. Itaque, ab initio seculi annos singulos recensens, uiginti duos annos, qui circulis predictis deerant superaddidit magnam et diffusissimam cronicam facere adortus. Eum librum Rotbertus miratus unice, emulatus mirifice, Angliae inuehendum curauit. Denique captus Marimani ingenio, quicquid ille largius dixerat in artum contrahens, deflorauit adeo splendide ut magis ualere uideatur defloratio quam ingentis illius uoluminis diffusio'.

Whilst William of Malmesbury had Dionysius' treatise in the manuscript, he based his Easter table on Marianus Scotus' calculations. This suggests that, whilst William agreed with the latter, he also wished to include the former. William of Malmesbury, it appears, highly respected Marianus as a chronographer. According to Thompson, based on his analysis of Auct F. 3.14, it was William of Malmesbury's decision to include Robert of Hereford's abbreviation of Marianus' work and include Marianus' Paschal tables.[215] However, despite his admiration for Marianus, William did not adopt Marianus' redating of the Christian era. It appears that only John of Worcester did so.[216] Indeed, William directly discusses the fact that Marianus' re-dating was not universally adopted in his *Gesta Regum*. He repeats that Marianus was the first to realise the twenty-two year difference between the Dionysian cycles and the gospel truth:

> but he found few or none to follow his argument… Such is our devotion to the familiar and the habitual; so true is it that almost no one accords to new discoveries, however plausible, the unimpassioned acceptance they deserve. With all our efforts we go plodding along after the opinions of the Ancients, and everything new is undervalued; and thus, since public credit is wit's only nursing-mother, where credit is slow in coming, sleep reigns supreme.[217]

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[215] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 83–85.
[216] Lawrence-Mathers, 'William of Malmesbury and the Chronological Controversy', pp. 53.
[217] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 524-527, Full passage: 'Sub isto imperatore regnante floruit Marianus scotus, qui primo Fuldensis monachus post apud Magontiacum inclusus, contemptu praesentis vitae, gratiam futurae demerebatur. Is, longo vitae otio chronographos scrutatus, dissonantiam cyclorum Dionysii exigui ab evangelica veritate deprehendit; itaque, ab initio seculi annos singulos recensens, viginti duos annos qui circulis praedictis deerant superaddidit, sed paucos aut nullos sententiae suae sectatores habuit. Quare saepe mirari soleo cur nostri temporis doctos hoc respergat infortunium, ut in tanto numero discentium, in tam tristi pallore lucubrantium, vix aliquis plenam scientiae laudem referat. Adeo inveteratus usus placet; adeo fere nullus novis, licet probabiliter inventis, serenitatem assensus pro merito indulget; totis conatibus in sententiam veterum reptatur, omne recens sordet: ita, quia solus favor alit ingenia, cessante favore obtorpuerunt omnia'.

Whilst William of Malmesbury, and others, accepted it as correct and tried to encourage the use of the system by including it in their computus manuscripts, in the end, Marianus' recalculations did not gain the traction needed to be accepted as common knowledge and so disappeared by the end of the twelfth century.[218]

The final two anonymous works are both on the practical topics of using the stars and the heavens to chart the passage of time. The first, *Liber Igini de Spera Celesti*, details the composition of the heavens, the position of the planets and the stars. The other, *Regule de Astrolabio,* is a treatise on the practical use of an astrolabe, a device used for reckoning time by charting the position of the stars. Both of these texts would have been of fundamental importance to the role of a cantor. William would have needed to know how to reckon time by the position of the stars to perform correctly monastic services such as compline, midnight office, and matins which all occurred during the night. Furthermore, the reckoning of movable feasts including Easter was based on solar and lunar phases. Materials concerning astronomy and observation of the heavens were frequently found in computus manuscripts of this period. Their presence in the Malmesbury manuscript is unsurprising. They also conform to the theme of many of the previous works in the manuscript which discussed using natural phenomena and observation, especially of the heavens, to reckon time correctly.

The texts in the Malmesbury manuscript share several themes. Many are practical guides giving instructions on how to reckon time through observation.

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[218] Northaft, *Scandelous Error*, pp. 106-115.

Others are concerned with organising all events of time into one chronological framework. All, to some degree, illustrate the connection between time and the natural world. Thus, by understanding time one could understand the right order of the world. For our insight into William and his intellectual environment, this manuscript is crucial. The majority of the materials are found in other computus codices from that time period, suggesting that William was engaging with an intellectual discourse shared by his fellow cantor-historians. The information contained was necessary to the performance of his role as cantor. His position meant that he had to read and absorb these rather technical works. If he had not held the position of cantor then he would not necessarily have engaged with this discourse at all. Further, he was exposed to an extensive number of often contradictory notions. As this chapter has shown, there was a wide range of disparate literature on the nature and reckoning of time. However, I contend that William of Malmesbury confronted this labyrinth of ideas and forged his own path to create his own understanding of time. The subsequent chapters of this thesis will show how William adapted the various established models to construct his own representation of time in his historical writings.

William of Malmesbury and the Twelfth-Century Intellectual Environment

William of Malmesbury read an extensive range of materials on the science of reckoning time. The works found in Auct F. 3. 14 (apart from the anonymous

astronomical texts) are all found in numerous other computus manuscripts. Whilst his manuscript does not include some of the auxiliary topics that tend to appear including medicine or geometry, the Malmesbury manuscript, in essence, reflects the intellectual environment within which William operated. However, the question remains: do William of Malmesbury's efforts to copy and collect computus materials reflect a broader cultural trend? To what extent do those efforts reflect what was occurring across England? Certainly, a significant number of the computus manuscripts from the twelfth century were compiled early in the century. Nine of the nineteen existing manuscripts can be precisely dated to the first half of the twelfth century, and seven of those are from the first quarter (c.1100-1125).[219] Thus, the early part of the century, during which William of Malmesbury was interested both in time and in history, saw a significant increase in the gathering of time-related material. Furthermore, this increase coincides with Robert of Hereford bringing over Marianus Scotus's chronicle to England and the dissemination of its recension. As noted above, this chronicle attempted to tackle a chronologically controversial question over the correct dating of the birth of Christ. It was also around this time that the first flourishing of historical writing in the twelfth century occurred. Lawrence-Mathers has suggested that this debate was present in the historical writing of this period:

[219] Those manuscripts are: from c.1100-1125: Oxford, Bodleian Library Act. F. 3. 14. Cambridge, University Library Kk.5.32 fols. 1-49, Oxford. Bodleian Library Laud Misc. 364, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland Adv. 18.6.12 and 18.7.8, Durham, Dean and Chapter Library 100, Glasgow, University Library, Hunter 85 (T.4.2), Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. F.5.19; from 1126-1150: Cambridge, St John's College A.22 (22), London, British Library Cotton Tiberius C.I fols. 2-17+ Harley 3667 ("Peterborough Computus").

> several scholars attempted to find solutions to the problem, and one of the most influential was that propounded by Marianus Scotus… there are, however, traces of the arguments posed and the solutions offered in the works of chroniclers from the leading centres of Anglo-Norman historical writing.[220]

This debate was very much in the minds of those who engaged with historical writing. The leaders of the revitalisation of historical writing – Eadmer of Canterbury, John of Worcester, Symeon of Durham, Orderic Vitalis, and William of Malmesbury – were cantors. All, except Eadmer, had access to either Marianus Scotus' full chronicle (John of Worcester, Orderic Vitalis) or Robert of Hereford's recension (William of Malmesbury, Symeon of Durham) and from their works it is evident that they had read and engaged with Marianus' work before writing their own histories. John of Worcester uses Marianus' redating for his own chronicle, William, Orderic, and Symeon refer to Marianus by name at least once in their respective works.[221] Intellectual networks existed between the historical centres of Durham, Worcester, Canterbury, and Malmesbury. [222] It is a distinct possibility that the chronological controversy and exposure to Marianus' work triggered the historical endeavours of these cantor-historians.

The intellectual problem of chronology was not the only challenge to the order of time that these writers had encountered, and indeed Eadmer, the first cantor-historian appears not to have been influenced by Marianus' work. The

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[220] Anne Lawrence-Mathers 'Computus and chronology in Anglo-Norman England' in *Writing History in the Anglo-Norman World: Manuscripts, Makers and Readers, c1066-c1250,* eds Laura Cleaver and Andrea Worm (Woodbridge, 2018), p. 53.
[221] Patrick McGurk, 'Introduction' in *The Chronicle of John of Worcester: The annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester interpolations and the continuation to 1141,* Volume III (Oxford, 1995), p. xviii.
[222] Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 254.

Norman Conquest of 1066 constituted a significant change for England, and in the early part of the twelfth century, scholars were still dealing with the aftermath. Eadmer of Canterbury's work was certainly created in response to the Conquest. The same could be applied to William of Malmesbury and his contemporaries. In short, twelfth-century cantors faced unprecedented challenges to their comprehension of time. The compilation of computus manuscripts, and the unprecedented surge in historical output, could be seen as a response to those challenges. The interest and engagement with time rose during the early twelfth century and William of Malmesbury was at the heart of this development. The chaos of the conquest and the debates surrounding the dating of the Christian universe sparked an intellectual interest in the construction of time. In addition to this, the spark of historical writing could have been an attempt by cantors to solve these problems by writing chronicles of their own. As this thesis contends, William of Malmesbury engaged in his historical projects in order to navigate these challenges to the order of time. Whilst he read many texts which were foundational to the study of computus and were prevalent components of the intellectual milieu, how he articulated that understanding through his historical writing reveals his individual sophistication and distinctiveness as a twelfth-century scholar engaging with the elusive topic of time.

Chapter Two

Constructing Time: Chronology and Narrative Structure

Imposing a sense of order onto the shifting sands of time was of concern to writers of both history and computus. Through the practice of computus, the past could be ordered and that order could be given meaning associated with the form of computus used. This relationship could be applied to history in general, and how that history was written. This meaning gained from computus added further plausible connotations to the events themselves, which in turn influenced how those events were narrated, and how they were read. Faith Wallis highlights the importance of order to the motivation behind the development of computus:

> Computus time was an artifice, the deliberate imposition of a regulatory diagram upon what Bede called the 'fleeting and shifting passage of time'… hence for Bede computus is not so much a science through which one studies time as an art by which one imposes a rational and human order upon time.[223]

Order and stability enabled time and the past to be understood as a pattern. The imposition of a pattern facilitated interpretation of the past so that it had meaning. The employment of computus enabled symbolic importance to be attached to the 'patterning' of time: 'computus gave meaning to time by patterning it, diagramming it into coherence; in this respect it resembled nothing less than revelation itself, transmuting the chaos of events into the providential history of salvation'.[224] This concern is encapsulated in the final chapter of the *De Temporum Ratione,* in which

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[223] Faith Wallis, 'Images of Order in the Medieval Computus' in *ACTA XIV: Ideas of Order in the Middle Ages*, ed. Warren Ginsberg (Binghamton, NY, 1990), p. 62.
[224] Wallis, 'Images of Order', p. 62.

Bede ends the text with the declaration: 'And so our little book concerning the fleeting and wave-tossed course of time comes to a fitting end in eternal stability and stable eternity'.[225] Through computus, time could be made 'stable', or at least echo the stability that would come with the end of time.

William of Malmesbury's training in computus would have made him aware of the ways in which order could be imposed on time and how this order made it possible to give meaning to the past. Like computus, the narrative structure of historical writing gave shape to the past. The framework used could vary between authors, and even within the same work. A text could commence with a linear structure, with events described in sequence as they occurred, for that to be broken up with the inclusion of digressions, references to earlier events, or hints to ones yet to occur. The structure used could have a significant impact on the reading and interpretation of the narrative. For instance, recounting two events with one immediately following the other, could suggest that the second occurred soon after the first, and further implies a sense of connection between them, potentially even that of cause and effect. Or, by grouping events together not because they occurred chronologically close to each other, but because they discuss a similar theme, the writer could intimate connections between them.

Narrative structure accentuates the meaning of the narrative because it influences the reader. Meaning could be created by placing certain events together or revealing the fruition of a prophecy without adhering to chronological order. Story-

[225] Bede, *DTR,* p. 249: 'Ergo noster libellus de volubili ac fluctivago temporum lapsu descriptus, opportunum de aeterna stabilitate, ac stabili aeternitate habeat finem'.

time, the temporality within the narrative, is highly fluid.[226] The arrangement of episodes in a narrative creates the sense of time and order. This framework becomes a lens through which the reader is invited to understand and interpret an account. The use of narrative devices including analepsis (flashbacks), prolepsis (flashforwards), and complex timelines can create a sense of temporal distortion which affects how the reader understands the episode in question and its place in the wider narrative.

One method used in twelfth-century historical writing to create a sense of temporality within the narrative, and which constituted a fundamental aspect of structure, was dating. By using, or not using, dates and by manipulating the order in which events appeared, William used temporality to make political points. Indeed, the use of dating and structure were particularly significant when William discussed one especially important event: the Norman Conquest.

Dating and Chronology

The most recognisable presentation of time in medieval historical writing is the dating of events. A pertinent question to consider is how William of Malmesbury chose which dating systems to employ. Dates form a reference-point which places an event within a timeline, contextualising it by placing it in relation to and defining it

[226] H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Second Edition, Cambridge, 2008), pp. 16-17.

as part of a sequence of events.[227] However, Aaron Gurevich generalises that the people of the Middle Ages were 'unconcerned about the exact measurement of time'.[228] Some more recent historians such as Emily Winkler have argued that dates were important not to medieval historians like William of Malmesbury, but to their modern successors.[229] However, Diana Greenway has disputed this by showing how important they are when considering historical writing.[230] Greenway contends that the ability to place events in order within a timeline was, and still is, 'deeply rooted in human consciousness': the need to relate an event to a wider chronology is a key part of memory.[231] Whilst some scholars such as Greenway have recognised the importance of dates in historical writing beyond merely giving the information of when an event occurred, none have conducted a detailed study into how dates influenced the temporal experience of the reader.

Dates are used to locate an event within a temporal framework or timeline. The most common system in the medieval west was Incarnation dating. Also known as Anno Domini, it counts the years from the birth of Christ. This system was consistently used by William of Malmesbury, who began Book I of the *Gesta Regum* with 'in the year of our Lord 449, the Angles and Saxons arrived in Britain'.[232] Indeed, whilst William used many dating systems across his oeuvre, sometimes

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[227] Diane Greenway, 'Dates in History: Chronology and Memory', *Historical Memory*, Vol 72 (1999), p. 127.
[228] Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, p. 109.
[229] Emily Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing*, pp. 20-21.
[230] An overview of dating systems used can be found in: R. D. Ware, `Medieval chronology: theory and practice', in *Medieval Studies: an Introduction, ed. J. M. Powell* (2nd edn., Syracuse, 1992), pp. 252-277; Diane Greenway surveys dating in historical writing from antiquity to the middles ages, see: Greenway, 'Dates in History: Chronology and Memory'.
[231] Greenway, 'Dates in History', pp. 138-139.
[232] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 16-17: 'Anno ab incarnatione Domini quadringentesimo quadragesimo nono uenere Angli et Saxones Britanniam'.

multiple systems within the same work, incarnation dating is the only one that appears in every single work. A range of systems was at William's disposal. Alongside Incarnation, William frequently used regnal dating. The latter located an event with reference to a ruler's regnal years. For instance, concerning the birth of Dunstan, William wrote: 'So the first year of King Aethelstan brought into the world the child Dunstan'.[233] Regnal dating was used most frequently in the *Gesta Regum*, but it can be found with varying frequency across most of his works. This system of dating by office or person is what Greenway calls 'relative chronology', which William also used for popes and prelates.[234]

In addition to the systems listed above, there is also indiction dating. First used in 312AD in Byzantine Egypt, it was constructed of fifteen-year cycles and was commonly used in documentation such as charters, especially in the early medieval period.[235] Unlike many other dating systems, indiction necessitates the use of an additional form of dating. As it is cyclical, but the cycles themselves are not numbered, another identifier must be added. According to R. Dean Ware, 'the importance of the indiction in the ordinary dating clause is that it provides a check by its agreement or not with the other elements and sometimes it permits greater precision'.[236] For example, William gives the date for the Clovesho synod of 747, one of the most important church councils in the Anglo-Saxon church, in a multitude of

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[233] W. Malm., *VD*, p. 170-171: 'Annis igitur regis Ethelstani primus produxit in mundum puerum Dunstanum'.
[234] Greenway, 'Dates in History', p. 128.
[235] Ware, `Medieval chronology: theory and practice', p. 264-268; Christopher Bishop, *Texts and Transmission in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 105-106; Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis 'Year-dates in the Early Middle Ages' in *Time in the Medieval World*, pp. 7-11.
[236] Ware, `Medieval chronology: theory and practice', p. 266.

forms: 'in the year of our Lord 747, the fifteenth indiction, in the thirty-third year of the reign of Æthelbald, king of the Mercians, who was present at that occasion with his princes and dukes'.[237] Whilst indiction dating is not connected to a political regime, it is related to the ecclesiastical sphere and the *Gesta Pontificum* is the only text in which William used this form of dating.

Finally, there is liturgical dating which locates an event by its proximity to a significant feast day. The liturgical calendar was one of the most significant frameworks for structuring lives in a monastic institution.[238] The activities of the day, the services read, and even the diet were determined by it. A significant part of the calendar was universal throughout Christendom. On the major feast days such as Candlemas, Christmas and Easter, the entirety of Christendom would be united by celebrating on the same day. Alongside this universal foundation, the calendar was tailored towards the needs of each institution. Each institution celebrated the saints' days associated with that monastery or church.[239] The liturgical calendar would play a key role in formulating the identity and character of the institution. These dates were then used in historical writing in order to date religious and secular events.

Conversely, there is a system that William did not use: Marianus Scotus' recalculated dating. As was discussed in Chapter One, William admired and agreed

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[237] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 10-11: 'anno [10] Dominicae incarnationis septingentesimo quadragesimo septimo indictione quinta decima anno autem regni Edelbaldi regis Mertiorum, qui tunc aderat cum suis principibus ac ducibus tricesimo tertio'; for the significance of the Clovesho councils see: A. E. Redgate, *Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 800-1066* (Abingdon, 2014), pp. 101-103.
[238] Richard W. Pfaff, 'The Liturgy' in *Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge, 2009); Nicholas Bell, 'Liturgy' in *The Routledge History of Medieval Christianity 1050-1500,* ed. R. N. Swanson (London, 2015), pp. 123-124.
[239] James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2014), p. 98.

with Marianus' recalculation.[240] The Paschal tables in Auct F. 3. 14. were those of Marianus Scotus, not Dionysius. He lamented that the redating would not be used because no one would accept a new dating, preferring to follow what was familiar.[241] Why, then, does it appear that William repeated the pattern of those he criticises? He did not use recalculated dating in any work which he wrote, though he clearly knew of it when he wrote the *Gesta Regum* and the *Gesta Pontificum,* as he commented on it. In this hesitant approach, William was not alone. John of Worcester was the only chronicler of the early twelfth century to use Marianus' redating. However, it is possible that accepting and agreeing with the redating, and yet not using it, was not intellectually incompatible to William. The date had to be acceptable to the reader. As William stated in the *Gesta Regum*, Marianus' redating was not accepted by his contemporaries and was not likely to be for the foreseeable future.[242] If he had used it, then his work might have been perceived as erroneous. William would have possibly risked his work being unread and thus lost to oblivion; no attempt might have been made to preserve it and the history it contained.

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[240] See Chapter One.

[241] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 524-527, Full passage: 'he [Marianus] found few or none to follow his argument… Such is our devotion to the familiar and the habitual; so true is it that almost no one accords to new discoveries, however plausible, the unimpassioned acceptance they deserve. With all our efforts we go plodding along after the opinions of the Ancients, and everything new is undervalued; and thus, since public credit is wit's only nursing-mother, where credit is slow in coming, sleep reigns supreme, 'Sub isto imperatore regnante floruit Marianus scotus, qui primo Fuldensis monachus post apud Magontiacum inclusus, contemptu praesentis vitae, gratiam futurae demerebatur. Is, longo vitae otio chronographos scrutatus, dissonantiam cyclorum Dionysii exigui ab evangelica veritate deprehendit; itaque, ab initio seculi annos singulos recensens, viginti duos annos qui circulis praedictis deerant superaddidit, sed paucos aut nullos sententiae suae sectatores habuit. Quare saepe mirari soleo cur nostri temporis doctos hoc respergat infortunium, ut in tanto numero discentium, in tam tristi pallore lucubrantium, vix aliquis plenam scientiae laudem referat. Adeo inveteratus usus placet; adeo fere nullus novis, licet probabiliter inventis, serenitatem assensus pro merito indulget; totis conatibus in sententiam veterum reptatur, omne recens sordet: ita, quia solus favor alit ingenia, cessante favore obtorpuerunt omnia.'

[242] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 526-527.

Plausibility was a key factor in rhetoric.[243] William was well aware of the tension caused between writing 'truthful' history, and writing a narrative that is acceptable to the reader. In the prologue to Book IV of the *Gesta Regum*, he addresses this very conflict:

> Most people, I know, will think it unwise to have turned my pen to the history of the kings of my own time; they will say that in works of this character truth is often disastrous and falsehood profitable, for in the writing of contemporaries it is dangerous to criticise, while praise is sure of a welcome. Thus it is, they maintain, that with everything nowadays tending to the worse rather than the better, an author will pass over the evils that meet him on every hand, to be on the safe side, and as for good actions, if he cannot find any, he will invent them to secure a good reputation.[244]

If a narrative was not perceived as plausible then the audience would be less inclined to accept the arguments made. William would have been in danger of failing in one of the key motivations behind writing his work: for history to be used for the reader's edification.

Moreover, the established dating was not necessarily wrong. Dionysius was an authoritative text. When dating was recalculated, the previous calculation was not 'removed' as such, but the new version was added to the understanding of time.[245] To suggest that all previous dating calculations were false would risk a key authoritative text being perceived as erroneous. Marianus Scotus' redating was not a

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[243] Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History 400-1500* (Manchester, 2011), p. 315, p. 426 and p. 538.

[244] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 540-541: 'Scio plerisque ineptum uideri quod gestis nostri temporis regum scribendis stilum applicuerim, dicentibus quod in eiusmodi scriptis sepe naufragatur ueritas et suffragatur falsitas; quippe presentium mala periculose, bona plausibiliter dicuntur. Eo fit, inquiunt, ut, quia modo omnia magis ad peius quam ad melius sunt procliuia, scriptor obuia mala propter metum pretereat et bona, si non sunt, propter plausum confingat'.

[245] Peter Verbist, 'Over chronologie en intellectuele geschiedenis. Middeleeuwse auteurs en hun correcties op de christlijke jaartelling (circa 990-1135)', *Madoc*, 17:4 (2003), pp. 208-214. With thanks to Ms Kiri Kolt for assistance in translation.

case of correct versus incorrect but about creating a better version. This did not disqualify Dionysius' system as a legitimate one to use. Indeed, William's inclusion of both Dionysius' letters and Marianus' tables in the computus manuscript next to each other supports as much. By including both, William acknowledged that Dionysius was an important and legitimate author for the knowledge of computus. He would not have included it, if he thought it had been made obsolete by Marianus.

There was also a warning example of what happened when authorities were challenged or discounted. Bede suffered the accusation of heresy after his *De Temporibus* had been circulated. He had gone against convention and changed the year of Incarnation.[246] Bede refuted his critics in the *Epistola ad Pleguinam* in c.708.[247] Indeed, scholars have argued that the accusation, at least in part, prompted Bede to write his second work on computus: *De Temporum Ratione*.[248] However, there Bede did not directly address the accusation. Rather, in chapter 66, he summarized the system of dating biblical events used in his World Chronicle. There is a possibility that William knew of Bede's *Epistola ad Pleguinam*. Whilst it is not included in the Malmesbury computus manuscript, a copy could have existed in the Malmesbury Library. Peter Darby argues that there is evidence of direct communication between the monasteries of Jarrow and Malmesbury in the early eighth century.[249] Even if William did not have access to the letter, Bede provided an exemplar of accepting the possibility of two systems of dating in the preface to the *De Temporum Ratione*.

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[246] Wallis, *ORT*, 'commentary', pp. 252-254 .
[247] Wallis, *ORT*, 'commentary', pp. 252-254.
[248] Wallis, *ORT*, 'commentary', pp. 252-254.
[249] Darby, *Bede and End of Time*, p. 62.

Bede defended his biblical dating system by using the Vulgate Bible's 'Hebrew Truth':

> Lest anyone be shocked that in this work I have preferred to follow the Hebrew Truth rather than the version of the Seventy Translators as to the sequence of the unfolding ages, I have introduced it in every instance where there seemed to be a discrepancy, so that the reader, whoever he might be, *could see both [versions] at the same time and select whichever he thinks preferable to follow.* But it is my firm judgment (which I dare say is not countered by any of the wise) that, just as the most reverend translator of this same Hebrew Truth said to those who cavilled at his work, *I neither condemn nor reprove the Seventy, but I prefer the Apostles to all of them, so also shall I proceed with confidence. For I do not reprove the old chronographers* who sometimes followed the translation of the Seventy and sometimes disregarded it, as their fancy took them (this will be demonstrated in this little work of ours), but I prefer to all of these the integral purity of the Hebrew Truth…[250]

Here, Bede states that two systems existed. He justifies using one claiming that he was offering the reader both and that he left the choice to him. Additionally, Bede insisted, twice, that he did not condemn those who followed the 'Seventy Translators' or the 'Old Chronographers'. This precedent might explain why William was able to contemplate using Dionysian dating whilst agreeing with Marianus Scotus', and why he included both Dionysius and Marianus in his computus manuscript. Each new dating system broadened understanding of temporality: no systems were replaced or removed.[251] Thus, it was still acceptable to

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[250] Bede, *DTR,* p. 3: 'In quo uidelicet opere, ne quem forte offenderet, quod Hebraicam magis ueritatem, quam LXX translatorum editionem in seculi praecedentis serie sectus sim: et illam quoque per omnia quoties discrepare videbatur inserui, ut legens quisque simul utrumque conspiciat, et quod ampulis sequendum putat eligat. Fixa autem stat mihi sentenia, quam a nullo prudentium redarguendam autumo, ut sicut reverendissimus eiusdem Hebraicae veritatis interpres obtrectatoribus sui operis: non damno, inquit, non reprehendo LXX, sed omnibus his Apostolos praefero: ita et ego confidenter profiteor, quia non reprehendo veteres Chronographos: translationem LXX interpretum modo secuti esse, modo prout libuit probantur habuisse contemptui, sicuit etiam in processu huiusce opusculi nostri monstrabitur, sed omnibus his Hebraicae veritatis integram praefero puritatem…'Emphasis in the English translation my own.

[251] Verbist, 'Over chronologie en intellectuele geschiedenis', pp. 208-214.

revert to an established method if the author believed that deploying the most developed system would obstruct the reception of his work.

William did not just use one single type to temporally locate an episode. Frequently, two, three or even more could be used to date a single event. Nowhere is this clustering used so consistently as when recording the death of a saint. William thus reported Saint Wulfstan's death in the following manner:

> He died on 20th January, shortly after Saturday midnight. The year was AD 1087, the tenth of King William the younger; it was 34 years, four months and thirteen days since he [Wulfstan] took up his bishopric. He was 84 years old.[252]

Here, William used the Roman calendar, weekday and hour of death, regnal year, years in office, and the deceased's age. This clustering of dating gives the event a very specific, and very precise, point in multiple chronological frameworks. William was not alone in taking this approach. Symeon of Durham, another cantor-historian writing contemporaneously to William, when discussing the foundation of the ecclesiastical community at Durham dates this event as follows:

> In the year of our Lord's Incarnation 1083, the 397th year from the death of father Cuthbert, the eighty-ninth from when Bishop Ealdhun brought the undecayed body of the same father to Durham, that is the eighteenth year of King William, the tenth since Aldwin came into the province of the Northumbrians with two companions, the third year of William's episcopate, on Friday 26th May the aforementioned bishop joined together as one community the monks of two monasteries of the apostles Peter and Paul, respectively at Wearmouth and Jarrow, and brought them, twenty-three in number, to Durham.[253]

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[252] W. Malm., *VW,* pp. 140-143: 'Supremum efflauit tertio decimo kalendas Februarii, paulo post mediam noctem sabbati. Annus erat incarnationis Dominicae millesimus octogesimus septimus, regni Willelmi iunoris decimus, post annos suscepti episcopatus triginta quattuor, menses quattuor, dies tredecim, anno aetatis circiter octogesimo septimo'.

[253] Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de exordio*, ed. David Rollason (Oxford, 2000), pp. 228-231:'Anno ab Incarnatione Domini millesimo octogesimo tercio, a transit uero patris Cuthberti trecentesimo

Throughout William of Malmesbury's writings this clustering of dating systems was used. Chronology and the application of dates was widely acknowledged as a means of guaranteeing historical accuracy and truth.[254] Hugh of Fleury, William's older contemporary and whose *Historia Ecclesiastica* William had copied in his own hand, asserted in his prologue that, 'an event not attributable to a specific time cannot be accepted as history, but must be dismissed as an old-wives tale'.[255] However, there were those who questioned the necessity for such a plethora of systems. Gervase of Canterbury, aware of the contention between Dionysius and Marianus Scotus, and the disagreements over 'correct' dates, did not believe that deploying multiple systems was an effective way of ensuring accuracy. [256] He argued that the array of dating forms being used in an attempt to ensure truth only obfuscated that truth; selectiveness would guarantee accuracy.[257] Whilst the above examples were writing later than William, in the late twelfth century, these concerns were no less relevant earlier in the century. The 'chronological controversy' sparked by Marianus Scotus brought the issue into prominence. William had to navigate these issues when choosing what system of dating, and how many, he would use.

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nonagesimo septimo, ex quo autem ab Aldhuno episcopo incorruptum euisdem patris corpus in Dunhelmum est perlatum octogesimo nono, qui est annus regni Willelmi duodeuicesimo, ex quo autem Aldwinus cum duobus sociis in prouinciam Northanhymbrorum uenerat decimus, episcopatus uero Willelmi tercius septimas Kalendas Iunii, feria sexta, memoriatus episcopus monachos ex supradictis duobus monasteriis, uidelicet apostolorum Petri et Pauli in Wiramuthe et in Gyruum, simul congregatos numero uiginti tres in Dunhelmum perduxit'. With thanks to Dr Charles C. Rozier for the reference.

[254] Keagan Brewer, *Wonder and Scepticism in the Middle Ages* (London, 2016) p. 158

[255] Hugh of Fleury, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, PL 163, ed. Jacques Paul Migne, (Paris, 1854), col. 833: 'Res gestae quae nulla regum ac temporum certitudine commendantur non pro hystoria recipiuntur; sed inter aniles fabulas deputantur'; for William's access to Hugh of Fleury see: Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 67.

[256] Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p.89.

[257] Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p.89; Gervase of Canterbury, *Chronica,* ed. William Stubbs, *Opera Historica* (London, 1879), p. 89.

However, ensuring accuracy may not have been the only reason for using multiple dates. The use of multiple different systems relates the event in question to different ways of seeing the world, different 'spheres'. Each dating system had a long and established pedigree, each with a series of connotations and associated meanings. [258] Johanna Dale made a similar point in the context of dating royal inaugurations: 'dates that to modern eyes do not appear significant were actually imbued with meaning.'[259] Thus, the solemnity and significance of that event was increased by connecting it to more 'spheres'. We can see that William was aware of this from an emerging pattern that can be detected throughout his works. He tailored his dating systems depending on the subject matter at hand, whether that be the protagonist involved or the location of the event. In other words, the date used depended on the 'sphere' that was relevant. This pattern explains why regnal dating is the most common in the *Gesta Regum*, and indiction dating can only be found in the *Gesta Pontificum*. The manner in which time is identified varied according to the subject matter at hand, and the broader point that William was attempting to make. Dating is applied in a particularly striking fashion in the *Vita Sancti Dunstani*. The *Vita* used a large number of dates. This was somewhat unusual as Vitae tended not to include many, if any, chronological indicators.[260] Whilst William of Malmesbury mainly used incarnation dating, once the narrative began to chronicle the events whilst Dunstan was at the royal court, he switched primarily to regnal dating. Thus,

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[258] Johanna Dale 'Royal Inauguration and the Liturgical Calendar in England, France and the Empire c. 1050-c.1250' in *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXVII*: *Proceedings of the Battle Conferences 2014,* ed. Elizabeth van Houts (Woodbridge, 2015), p. 84.
[259] Dale, 'Royal Inauguration and the Liturgical Calendar', p. 84.
[260] Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?* (Oxford, 2013), p. 518.

William chose which system to use, and how many to use in one instance, based on a combination of factors: the subject of the narrative, the location of the event, the actors most relevant to the overall narrative involved, as well as whichever date William knew.

Nowhere is the significance of William's choice of dating more clear than in the *Historia Novella*. As he was writing a contemporary history primarily focusing on secular events, it is unsurprising that regnal dating and Incarnation dating are the two main systems employed. How they are used is highly suggestive of a specific agenda. William began with a summary of the later part of Henry I's reign before the proper events of the civil war. During this summary he used Incarnation and regnal dating both interchangeably and simultaneously. Thus, he opened Book I with 'In the twenty-sixth year of Henry, king of England, which was in the year of the Lord's incarnation 1126'.[261] However, once he moved on to discussing King Stephen's reign, regnal dating ceased completely. Every single event during Stephen's reign, including the date of his coronation, was dated by Incarnation dating alone.

Whilst this may not seem to be significant to modern scholars, the omission would likely have been significant to a medieval reader. By not using regnal dating for Stephen, William was showing his political allegiance. As William clearly knew the date of Stephen's coronation, he would have been able to calculate the regnal years with ease. William chose not to. William was a supporter of Matilda's claim,

[261] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 4-5: 'Anno Henrici regis Anglorum uicesimo sexto, qui fuit incarnationis Dominice millesimus centesimus uicesimus sextus'.

and her half-brother Robert of Gloucester was William's patron.[262] Refusing to use regnal dating for the events of Stephen's reign demonstrates that William did not perceive Stephen as a legitimate king, and therefore did not orientate or locate the events of the civil war within the political temporal framework of a king's reign. Temporality was used by William to convey a political point. There was no legitimate political authority after the death of Henry I. This set him apart from his contemporaries. Orderic Vitalis used regnal dating sparingly throughout his entire chronicle, instead employing mostly indiction and Incarnation years. He deployed the same approach with each king. Henry of Huntingdon narrates Stephen's reign in an annalistic manner: each section commences with the regnal year and narrates the events of each year in sequence.[263] This differed from how Henry narrated the reigns of previous kings. A possible explanation for this change may be that, as Henry was writing contemporaneously to the events of Stephen's reign, he recorded those events year by year rather than attempting to write a cohesive narrative as with previous kings. John of Worcester's chronicle used regnal dating consistently, whilst the anonymous *Gesta Stephani* used little to no dating of any kind.[264] William of Malmesbury was the only Anglo-Norman chronicler of his day to alter his dating system in response to King Stephen's reign. Thus, William was the only chronicler to express his opposition to Stephen's rule through his deployment of dating systems.

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[262] For William's support of Robert of Gloucester see: R. B. Patterson, 'William of Malemsbury's Robert of Gloucester: A Re-evaluation of the Historia Novella, *American Historical Review*, 70 (1964), pp. 983-997; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 34-36; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 159; J. W. Leedom, 'William of Malmesbury and Robert of Gloucester Reconsidered', *Albion*, 6 (1974), pp. 251-262.

[263] H. Hunt., HA, pp. 706-7: 'in the first year of his reign', 'primo anno regni sui', pp. 708-709: 'anno secundo', pp. 710-711: 'tercio anno', pp. 722-723: 'quinto anno'.

[264] John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, Volume III, ed. and trans. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998); *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. K. R. Potter (Oxford 1976).

The writers mentioned above either supported Stephen (Orderic, anonymous author of the *Gesta Stephani*) or kept their political stance neutral by retaining the same dating method used for previous kings (Henry of Huntingdon, John of Worcester).

Moreover, in the *Historia* William's use of dates also shows how he manipulated the dynamic between notions of linear and cyclical time. Isidore of Seville's definition of a 'chronicle' presents a linear notion of time. He describes it as a 'succession of times' (*temporum series*), providing an etymological connection between time and history.[265] Isidore also presents cyclical time in the *Etymologiae*. Cyclical time, by contrast, postulates the perpetual repetition of events. The same event, or pattern of events, is repeated over and over in a perpetual cycle. The notion of time as cyclical is demonstrated in Isidore's definition of the year, the seasons, and an age:

> It is called a year because it wheels back upon itself with the recurring months – hence also a ring (*anulus*) is so called, as if it were annuus, that is, a circle, because it returns upon itself. So Vergil (Geo.2.402): And the year (*annus*) wheels back upon itself along its own tracks…The seasons are also called circuits (*curriculum*) because they do not stand still, but 'run a course' (*currere*)… An 'age' commonly means either one year, as in the annals, or seven, as one of the ages of a human, or a hundred – or any period. Hence an age is also a time composed of many centuries. And an age (*aetas*) is so called as if it were aevitas, that is, something similar to an aeon (*aevum*). For an aeon is a perpetual age, whose beginning or end is unknown.[266]

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[265] Isidore, *Etymologies*, p. 125; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber V: 'De Chronicae Vocabulo. Chronica Graece dicitur quae Latine *temporum series* appellatur, qualem apud Graecos Eusebius Caesariensis episcopus edidit, et Hieronymus presbyter in Latinam linguam convertit. Chronos enim Graece, Latine tempus interpretatur'.

[266] Isidore, *Etymologies*, pp. 129-130; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber III: 'Annus est solis anfractus, cum peractis trecentis sexaginta quinque diebus ad eadem loca siderum redit. Annus autem dictus quia mensibus in se recurrentibus volvitur. Vnde et anulus [dicitur], quasi annuus, id est circulus, quod in se redeat; [ut] Vergilius (Georg. 2,402): Atque in se sua per vestigia volvitur annus… Haec et curricula dicuntur, quia non stant, sed currunt... Aetas plerumque dicitur et

Isidore defined the key measurements of time as cyclical in nature as can be seen in summarizing his hermerology – the connection of success or failure based on auspicious or unfavourable days of the calendar – in the *De Natura Rerum*:

> the year is regulated by the cycle of the sun and the months. The seasons unfold by a succession of changes. The months are produced by the waxing and the waning of the moon. The week is bound by a period of seven days. The day and the night are renewed by the alternating successions of reoccurring light and darkness. The hour is made up of certain intervals and moments.[267]

Linear time and cyclical time were not incompatible with each other. In fact, they could interact with each other to create a complex and nuanced pattern of time. Through historical writing, the chaos of the past was transformed into a pattern and that pattern consisted of the interweaving of linear and cyclical time. An author could work with this interaction to create a suggestive dynamic that enhanced the meaning of the narrative. In other words, the interweaving of linear and cyclical time could be manipulated to imply cause and effect. This dynamic of interaction is particularly discernible in Book I of the *Historia Novella* where William was discussing Henry's final return to Normandy in 1135:

> Having completed the thirty-second year of his reign the day before, Henry sailed to Normandy on the fifth of August, the day on which he had once received the supreme dignity of the crown at Westminster. That was the king's last crossing and the one that brought him to his doom. God' providence jested strangely then with human affairs, that he should go on board, never to come back again, on the day when he had been crowned in the distant past to

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pro uno anno, ut in annalibus, et pro septem, ut hominis, et pro centum, et pro quovis tempore. Vnde et aetas tempus, quod de multis saeculis instruitur. Et dicta aetas, quasi aevitas, id est similitudo aevi. Nam aevum est aetas perpetua, cuius neque initium neque extremum noscitur'.

[267] Isidore, *ONT*, p. 126.

> reign so long and so happily. It was, as I have said, on the fifth of August, and a Wednesday.[268]

First, William stated that Henry sailed to Normandy on the anniversary of the day on which he had been crowned, both stating that he had completed the 32nd year of his reign the day before and also giving the exact date as 5th August. This sentence invokes the notion of cyclical time. Henry had completed that one and was about to start a new year, giving a sense of repetition by emphasising the dates and that he received his crown on a date when he crossed the channel. However, the next sentence brings that idea of the repeating cycle to an abrupt halt by stating that it was the 'King's last crossing and the one that brought him to his doom'. [269] The use of *fatalisque* reinforces the idea of ending, of finality. This sentence emphasises the idea of linear time. Linear and cyclical time are then brought together: 'God's providence jested strangely then with human affairs that he should go on board never to return alive on the day when he had been crowned in the distant past to reign so long and so happy'.[270] The phrase 'Numquam viuus reversurus' emphasises this notion of linear and cyclical time. *Reversurus* can mean return and emphasise ideas of repetition and recalling. The cycle of years of this king's reign now comes to an end. By combining linear and cyclical time William created dramatic narrative effect. By emphasising that Henry I departed from England on the very day that he

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[268] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 22-23: 'Anno tricesimo secundo regni pridie transacto, Henricus nonis Augusti, quo die quondam apud Westmonasterium coronae culmen acceperat, Normanniam nauigauit. Vltimus ille fatalisque regi transitus fuit. Mira tunc prorsus prouidentia Deitatis rebus allusit humanis, ut eo die nauem ascenderet numquam uiuus reuersurus, quo dudum coronatus fuerat, tam diu et tam feliciter regnaturus. Erant tunc, ut dixi, nonae Augusti et feria quarta'.
[269] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 22-23: 'Vltimus ille fatalisque regi transitus fuit.
[270] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 22-23: Mira tunc prorsus prouidentia Deitatis rebus allusit humanis, ut eo die nauem ascenderet numquam uiuus reuersurus, quo dudum coronatus fuerat, tam diu et tam feliciter regnaturus.

had been crowned all those years ago brings into focus the idea of predominantly linear time because William emphasised the cyclical aspect to a king's reign but simultaneously conveyed that this was the end of Henry's reign and of the peace, prosperity, and happiness that characterised it. William continued to describe how on the same day that Henry crossed the channel there was an eclipse and a few days later an earthquake.[271] This use of omens signalled that something was ending and foreshadowed what was to come. The final sentence compounds the use of linear and cyclical time with devastating finality: 'there were many expectations of his return to England, but all, by a kind of fate or by divine will, were disappointed'.[272] With this final line William emphasised that people were expecting Henry to return and for his reign to continue. The final blow was landed when William emphasised that this period of time had finally come to an end.

Dating was a crucial aspect of historical writing. It added a further layer of meaning. Previously, scholars focused on mining historiographical texts for 'facts' have seized upon the dates given, translated them into modern usage, and utilised them to construct a sequence of events. Alternatively, they compared the dates used by the author to the 'actual date' of an event and then argued for their accuracy or inaccuracy, all with the intention of uncovering the true sequence of events. More recently, scholars such as Greenway have taken a closer analytical look at the use of dating in historical writing, and others including Anne Lawrence-Mathers have assessed the implications for the chronological controversy. Whilst such scholarship

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[271] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 22-23.
[272] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 22-23: 'Opiniones reditus eius in Angliam multe; siue fato quodam, siue diuina uoluntate, omnes frustrate'.

is important, there has been no systematic study of why certain dating systems were deployed and how that influenced the meaning generated by the narrative. Moreover, the system, or systems, that an author chose were not picked at random. Rather, each possessed specific connotations and values.[273] How time was located added nuances and meaning. Furthermore, the dating system was chosen to be acceptable to the audience. If it was not, the veracity of the narrative could be called into question. Dates and chronology had more implications for the narrative than to simply note when an event occurred. The decision of which system to use, or whether to use a date at all, was fraught with implications regarding what addition layers of meaning the author wished to impose onto the narrative.

Periodization

Another way in which time could become laden with political meaning was through the use of periodization: dividing time into a series of segments or blocks.[274] The concept of defining a stretch of time as a distinct period is an old one. Augustine divided time into six ages: From Adam to the Flood; from the Flood to Abraham; from Abraham to David; from David to the Exile in Babylon; from Babylonian exile to the birth of Christ; and from Christ to the end of the world.[275] In the *Etymologiae*,

[273] Johanna Dale has made a similar point in the context of dating royal inaugurations: 'dates that to modern eyes do not appear significant were actually imbued with meaning', 'Royal Inauguration and the Liturgical Calendar in England, France and the Empire c. 1050-c.1250', p. 84.
[274] For an overview of periodization in history see: William A. Green, 'Periodization in European and World History', *Journal of World History*, Vol. 3:1 (1992), pp. 13-53.
[275] Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, pp. 22-24.

Isidore defined periods and ages thus: 'Saecula consist of generations, and hence the term saeculum, because they 'follow' (*sequi*) one after another, for when some pass away, others take their place'.[276]

William of Malmesbury's training as a cantor would have left him very familiar with the foundation and implications of categorising events within periods. Periodization was not only applied to the large expanses of time such as ages, but was also used for shorter periods. It also helped structure William's writings. An example from the *Vita Wulfstani* categorises time into the 'time of the English' and the 'time of the Normans':

> Since I have reached the Norman period, let this be the halting place for my first book. For it seems neater if I separate out what the holy man did in the time of the English and what in the time of the Normans.[277]

Similarly, the *Gesta Pontificum* describes the destruction of the northern monasteries as occurring 'in the time of the Danes'.[278] The formula William typically used consists of the singular *tempore* with a genitive descriptor, for instance, 'the time of the Normans' (*tempore Normannorum*) or 'the time of King Henry' (*tempore regis Henrici*).

William's choice of grammatical construction is striking. When referring to the time of the Normans, William denoted time in the singular: not once in his entire

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[276] Isidore, *Etymologies*, p. 130; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber III: 'Saecula generationibus constant; et inde saecula, quod se sequantur: abeuntibus enim aliis alia succedunt.'
[277] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 58-59: 'Quorum quoniam attigimus tempora, hic primo libello statuatur meta. Ita enim concinnius fieri posse puto, si quid sanctissimus uir Anglorum tempore, quid Normannorum fecerit enucleate digressero'.
[278] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 386-387: 'nam iam olim tempore Danorum monasteria per totam prouintiam uice siderum micantia pessumierant'.

oeuvre did he use the plural form *tempora.* Yet his contemporary Eadmer did use the plural form. Appealing to pre-Conquest memory in his *Vita Sancti Dunstani*, Eadmer urges that those monks who lived at Glastonbury 'ante ista Normannorum tempora' should be questioned concerning the chronology of the abbey.[279] William had access to and read Eadmer's account of Saint Dunstan, so would have seen this form used. William also used the singular form when discussing the Danish Conquest (*tempore Danorum)* and when discussing his own time (*nostra tempore)*.[280] This distinctive feature raises questions as to why William would refer to the Norman period in the singular. A possible explanation is that William intended to make sure that the time-period in question would be framed and defined by one single element. By using the singular *tempore*, William was unequivocally pointing towards one element which defined time with no space for any other. It draws attention to that one event and its effect on that period of time: the consequences of Norman Conquest were so all-encompassing that it unilaterally defined that time. This contrasts with William's use of dating systems. Where he would use a particular system or systems to reflect the 'sphere' that the event touched upon, *tempore* embraces all of those spheres as a single entity.

An illustrative example can be found in the *Gesta Pontificum* when William describes the destruction of monasteries during the Viking invasions: 'as for the monasteries that had shone like stars throughout the province, they had been destroyed long before this, in the time of the Danes. A few walls still stand in ruins,

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[279] As cited by Christopher Baswell, 'Latinitas' in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge, 2002), p. 127.
[280] For instance: in W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 368-369.

no pleasure to the eye, but a reminder of past sorrows'.[281] William situated the devastation of the monasteries within the temporal sphere of the Danish invasions, and a causal relationship between that time and the destruction is implied. Again, he used the singular *tempore* to define the period of invasion: its consequences were so grave that it defined the entire period of time. Those consequences were indeed significant. Ecclesiastical communities were interested in this element of the invasions for its place in monastic heritage, and the notion that it was a turning-point in the development of medieval English monasticism.[282] Julia Barrow argues that the Viking destruction was viewed by writers as the crossroads after which the fervour of Anglo-Saxon monasticism deteriorated in the early tenth century.[283] The Danish destruction is also brought into and made a part of that chronology.

Periodization divided events into temporal categories, defining the events placed within that period. The episodes located within the 'Time of the Danes' were associated with the devastation and violence that those times signified, even if the event depicted did not directly refer to the Danish invasions. Placing an episode within a period was a significant form of chronology that William had at his disposal. He could, and did, deploy it in instances where William wanted to invoke the connection to wider events, conveying that the repercussions of those wider events had some bearing on the incident at hand. However, chronology was but a part, even if a significant one, of the wider narrative construction. William had

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[281] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 386-387: 'nam iam olim tempore Danorum monasteria per totam prouintiam uice siderum micantia pessumierant. Stant adhuc semiruti parietes, qui sint non delectationi oculo sed tristitiae monumento'.
[282] Julia Barrow, 'Danish Ferocity and Abandoned Monasteries' in *The Long Twelfth-Century View of the Anglo-Saxon Past,* eds Martin Brett and David A. Woodman (Abingdon, 2015), p. 92.
[283] Barrow, 'Danish Ferocity and Abandoned Monasteries', p. 92.

further means at his disposal to add further meaning: through manipulating his narrative structure.

Narrative Structure

Time and narrative structure work hand-in-hand. The structure of a narrative creates a sense of temporality. According to literary theorists, the temporal dimension of narrative structure significantly affects how that text is read and received by the audience.[284] If readers follow the narrative from the beginning and progress in a linear manner with no deviation from the established timeline, then they would have a very different experience and understanding of events than, say, if the reader dives into a text *in medias res* and the plot of the story is disjointed and there is no direct pattern of causality.[285] The narrative construction of medieval chronicles is highly varied and complex. Antonia Gransden remarks:

> The twelfth century was remarkable for the elaborate ways used to construct histories. Traditionally historiography in England was annalistic, but particularly in the twelfth century a few writers broke away from the strictly chronological arrangement. Instead they gave their works unity by other kinds of structure and by overriding themes.[286]

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[284] See: Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative,* especially pp. 52- 76; David Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History* (Bloomington, IN, 1986), pp. 45-73.
[285] Patrick O'Neill, 'Narrative Structure' in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Narrative Theory,* eds David Herman, Manfred Jahn annd Marie-Laure Ryan (Suffolk, 2010), pp. 366-370.
[286] Antonia Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England', in her *Legends, Tradition and History in Medieval* England (London, 2010), p. 146.

Aside from annals such as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, chronicles are not always straightforwardly linear. However, the consequences of non-linear structure for the reader's temporal experience have not been fully appreciated. William of Malmesbury's construction of the narrative certainly influenced the reader: his texts used a diverse range of structures even within the same text.

Discussion of the *ordo* of narrative was a significant part of rhetorical handbooks, which William was familiar with. Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* devotes an entire book to the discussion of arrangement, detailing why correct order is so crucial:

> But just as it is not enough erecting a building simply to collect stone and timber and other building materials, unless the hands of craftsmen are put to work to dispose and assemble them, so also in speaking, however rich the material, it will be nothing but a random accumulation unless Disposition organizes it, links it all up, and binds it together … Some hold that the universe itself depends on order, and that if this is disturbed everything will perish; I do not think that they are wrong. Similarly, if oratory lacks this virtue, it is bound to be in turmoil, drifting without a pilot, incoherent, repetitive, incomplete, wandering in the dark, as it were, in unknown places, with no fixed beginning or end, and guided by chance rather than by design.[287]

Having the constituent parts of a narrative, the events themselves, was not enough. In order for the narrative to have an impact on the audience and to make sense, how it was arranged mattered. Its structure depended upon various factors including the subject matter, and the agenda and arguments of the author, which guided the

[287] Quintillian, *The Orator's Education*, Books 6-8, vol III, ed. and trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA, 2001), pp. 150-153: 'sed ut opera extreuentibus satis non est saxa atque materiam et cetera aedificanti utilia conger nisi disponendis eis conlocandisque artificium manus adhibeatur, sic in dicendo quamlibet abundans rerum copia cumulum tantum habeat atque congestum nisi illas eadem dispositio in ordinem digestas atque inter se commissas devinxerit… Nec mihi videntur errare qui ipsam rerum naturam stare odrine putant, quo confuse peritura sint omnia. Sic oratio carens hac virtute tummultuetur necesse est et sine rectore fluitet nec cohaereat sibi, multa repetat, multa transeat, velut nocte in ignotis locis errans, nec initio nec fine propositio casum potius quam consilium sequatur'.

author to choose which model would be most appropriate.[288] Rhetorical rules allowed for flexibility and eschewing the 'natural' order of narrating events chronologically could always be justified.[289] As Matthew Kempshall notes, 'chronological selectivity could be used to make a particular political point'.[290] The main consideration was that, whatever structure or order was chosen, the one used had to be the most advantageous to the writer's agenda.

Gérard Genette defines this consideration of temporal narrative structure as 'order', divided into two basic story types: unerring linear succession of events and complex order that includes 'anachronies' which distort temporality within the narrative.[291] These 'anachronies' consist of either analepsis (flashbacks) or prolepsis (flashforwards).[292] Thus, the narrative includes deviations from a linear chronology to discuss events which occurred in the past, or to allude to those which will after the main event has taken place. How William used time and chronology in his historical writing fits into these two categories. Generally, William's narrative structure is quite linear, somewhat following the traditionally chronological form of historical writing. However, there are also instances where he combined linear chronology with complex order. He manipulated the structure of time in order to guide the interpretation of the events narrated.

There are three texts in which William deploys an unerringly linear narrative structure: The *Vita Sancti Dunstani*, the *De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesi*e, and books I

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[288] Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p. 299.
[289] Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p. 300.
[290] Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p. 302.
[291] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithica, NY, 1983), pp. 35-36.
[292] Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 40-48.

and II of the *Historia Novella*. The *Vita Dunstani* and *De Antiquitate* were both written together c.1129, as William stated in the prologue of the *De Antiquitate*:

> I laboured to commit to eternal memory the life of the blessed Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury and later archbishop of Canterbury, and have now completed, with scrupulous regard for the truth, the two books about him for which the brethren of Glastonbury…had asked.[293]

Written as part of a commission from the monks of Glastonbury, the *Vita* chronicles the life and miracles of Saint Dunstan, a tenth-century Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastic who was Abbot of Glastonbury, Bishop of Worcester, Bishop of London, and finally Archbishop of Canterbury. He was also an influential courtier and advisor to several kings. The *Vita* commences with a pre-natal miracle indicating Dunstan's future sanctity. Continuing to narrate his childhood and early years, the *Vita* then discusses Dunstan's time at court and his actions as Archbishop of Canterbury. The narrative concludes with Dunstan's death and the fulfilment of a prophecy which foretold the attacks by the Danes. Whilst the content of the *Vita* appears consistent with that found in other saints' lives, the narrative structure is more unusual. Whilst many Vitae followed the course of their protagonist's life and deeds, they did not always adhere to strict chronology in doing so. The structure of the *Vita,* on the other hand, progresses as one episode follows another in clear chronological sequence. Whilst both of William's Vitae have an unusually historical nature – they include more references to key events than is typical, it is clear that there are notable differences between the *Vita Dunstani* and the *Vita Sancti Wulfstani*.

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[293] W. Malm., *AG*, p. 40-41, Full quote: 'Unde sicut estimo non contempnende stilum dedi opera, qui beati Dunstani prius Glastoniensis abbatis, deinde archiepiscopi Cantuariensis uitam labore meo eterne mandaui memorie duosque libros de hoc uolentibus Glastonie fratribus, filiis uestris, dominis et sociis meis, dudum integra rerum ueritate abolui'.

Whilst the *Vita Wulfstani* has a broadly chronological structure, William used the more common Vita narrative technique of grouping together miracles by theme, not chronological sequence. Following his source, William clarified that 'he [Coleman] thought it appropriate to bring together on the same page events that though separated in time were equal in importance'.[294] Whilst William framed his justification in terms of following Coleman's example, this explanation also illustrates that William's audience might assume events to be narrated in chronological order, thus necessitating an explanation when they were not. This may provide more information regarding the audience's expectation of William himself than it does about expectations of the genre specifically. William's previous work had all been histories. Thus, his audience may have expected him to adhere to a more linear structure than was typical of the genre, warranting an explanation when it did not. Furthermore, the *Vita Dunstani* uses a significant amount of dating, which is highly unusual for a saint's life. Whilst the *Vita Wulfstani* uses some dating, it was not used to the same extent as it was in the *Vita Dunstani*. Precise dating in some texts is relatively subordinate to the narration of saintly deeds. As Robert Bartlett argues, the coherence of the Vita was derived from its purpose, not its structure.[295] An explanation is possible. As will be demonstrated below, William was capable of jumping between genre and narrative structure conventions even in the same text. Therefore, it can be suggested that William's differing approach to writing his Vitae reflects his skill in adapting established models and forms to convey his point.

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[294] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 78-79.
[295] Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, p. 518.

The *De Antiquitate*, by contrast, notes from the outset that the text will proceed in a strictly linear fashion. Whilst it cannot be established for certain that the intended title was 'De Antiquitate Glastonie Ecclesie' as the extant manuscripts stem from the thirteenth century, the prologue nonetheless indicates that William of Malmesbury's main aim was to establish, beyond any doubt, the community's antiquity and ancient lineage.[296] The text begins with William outlining his approach: 'I will begin this book by going back to the origins of your church and will unfold its progress since those earliest beginnings'.[297] The phrasing William used is illuminative. *Processum* refers to a process and one possible meaning of *pandam* is spreading or laying out. Thus William aimed to lay out, in full, the process of the development of Glastonbury as an institution. An alternative expression which William could have used would be *temporum series*, as Isidore of Seville did to refer to a series of events. [298] However, William intended more than to merely narrate the events that occurred at Glastonbury. Rather, he intended to establish unequivocally the process which led to Glastonbury becoming the institution it was in his own time.

The prologue also addresses 'detractors' who contest the antiquity of Glastonbury.[299] In the final sentence of the prologue, William brought together suspicions about Glastonbury's age and the explanation that he aimed to rebut these by narrating its history: 'So attend, if it please your heart, and give heed while I try

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[296] William Wells Newell, 'William of Malmesbury on the Antiquity of Glastonbury', *PMLA*, Vol. 18:4 (1903), p. 459.
[297] W. Malm., *AG*, pp. 40-41: 'eiusdem ecclesie uestre rudimentum et processum in huius libri auspicio repetens ab origine pandam'.
[298] Isidore, *The Etymologies*, p. 125.
[299] W. Malm., *AG,* pp. 42-43: 'nam ut cum obtrectatore'.

to rescue from suspicion the antiquity of your church, arranged according to the succession of its prelates…'.[300] This history was written in a strict chronological sequence. For instance, William was keen to record bequests to Glastonbury, giving detailed accounts and numbers of value.[301] He also repeatedly referred to Glastonbury's *antiquitas.* In fact, *De Antiquitate's* structure was used to emphasise this feature. The text first narrates the events concerning Glastonbury in a very linear manner. It then divides into a brief listing of first the saints, and then the kings associated with Glastonbury, again in strict chronological sequence half-way through the narrative.[302] This divergence occurs after the description of the two ancient 'pyramids'. Immediately afterwards the text returns to the historical narrative. William acknowledges the digression and justifies it by stating that he deviated in order to further establish the antiquity of Glastonbury and will 'return to the historical sequence'.[303] This accentuates, rather than impedes, the linearity of the structure. Whilst the linear sequence is suspended, the interruption serves to reinforce the continuity of the past. Antiquity was important to the prestige of a monastery: the older the institution, the higher its status.[304] And Glastonbury was in need of prestige. Whilst its importance as a holy site was acknowledged, it was at a disadvantage because its origins were 'veiled in the mists of time'. Hence it could not claim a direct connection to particular royal patrons, as Westminster could with

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[300] W. Malm., *AG*, pp. 42-43: 'Adestote igitur, si amino placet, et attendite, dum per successionum seriem antiquitatem ecclesie temptabo suspicionibus eruere quantum ex strue monimentorum uestrorum potui corradere'.
[301] For instance: W. Malm., *AG*, pp. 58-59, pp. 83-85, pp. 90-91, pp. 94-99, pp. 103-117.
[302] W. Malm., *AG,* pp. 86-87. The digression only covers one page of the modern edition.
[303] W. Malm., *AG,* p. 152-153: 'ordinem historie redeundum'.
[304] Antonia Gransden, 'The Growth of Glastonbury Traditions and Legends in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiatical History* 27 (1976), p. 337.

Edward the Confessor, nor to any of the major English saints as Durham could with Saint Cuthbert.[305] Saints brought pilgrims, which in turn brought revenue and prestige.[306] Thus, they were in need of hagiographic writing which connected them to a major saint and securely established their ancient foundations, and hence William's commission for *De Antiquitate* and the *Vita Sancti Dunstani*. Also, the lack of written record left Glastonbury without a reliable narrative that presented the customs and legends of the community in an accessible manner. Non-linear techniques could be, and were, used by William to stress links to the past, as will be discussed later in this chapter. However, in this case, William chose a strictly linear structure, but for the digressions mentioned which were themselves structured in a linear way. An explanation can be found in the circumstances that prompted William's commission.

The need to produce these works lay in the rivalry between the abbey of Glastonbury, and the community at Canterbury Cathedral. Both claimed to be in possession of Dunstan's relics and both claimed him as their patron saint. In 1120, Eadmer of Canterbury wrote a letter to the community of Glastonbury, the *Epistola ad Glastonienses*, in which he reprimanded them and ridiculed their explanation of how Dunstan's relics arrived at Glastonbury.[307] Eadmer made a two-pronged attack: on Glastonbury's lack of written evidence, and lack of an oral tradition. He demanded: 'pray, have you any writings to prove this is so?' and stated that their claim had not been voiced until now, despite nearly a century passing since the relics

[305] Gransden, 'The Growth of Glastonbury Traditions' p. 338.
[306] Gransden, 'The Growth of Glastonbury Traditions' p. 338.
[307] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Epistola ad Glastonienses*, in *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, ed. William Stubbs (London, 1874), pp. 412-422.

had supposedly arrived in Glastonbury.[308] Eadmer then goaded the community to seek out those members who were there before the Norman Conquest to confirm the story of Dunstan's remains.[309] It was likely in this context that William was commissioned to write the *Vita Dunstani* to establish and reinforce Glastonbury's connection to Saint Dunstan, and *De Antiquitate Glastonie* to highlight its antiquity.

Eadmer's attack centred on one crucial element. Glastonbury lacked any written record to validate their claims. Many twelfth-century authors, including William of Malmesbury, explained that one of the reasons for writing history was to create a record to preserve the past.[310] Orderic Vitalis likewise elucidates what becomes of the past when there is no record:

> with the loss of books the deeds of men of old pass into oblivion, and can in no way be recovered by those of our generation, for the admonitions of the ancients pass away from the memory of modern men with the changing world, as hail or snow melt in the waters of a swift river, swept away by the current never to return.[311]

In his *Historia*, Eadmer also comments on the need for written accounts of the past. He argues that without 'written documentation', events of the past became 'buried in oblivion'.[312] This notion of preserving the past for the benefit of the future is one

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[308] Eadmer, *Epistola*, p. 416: 'Habetis quaeso aliqua litterarum monimenta, quae haec ita habuisse probent?' Translation my own; Eadmer, *Epistola*, p. 420.
[309] Eadmer, *Epistola*, pp. 420-421.
[310] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 14-17; *GP,* pp. 2-5; *HN*, pp. 2-3.
[311] O. Vit., *HE*, Vol III, pp. 284-5: 'Codicibus autem perditis antiquorum res gestae obliuioni traditae sunt, quae a modernis qualibet arte recuperari non possunt, quia ueterum monimenta cum modo praetereunte a memoria presentium deficient, quaesi grando vel nix in undis cum rapido flumine irremeabiliter defluunt'.
[312] Eadmer of Canterbury, *History of Recent Events in England*, eds and trans R. W. Southern and Geoffrey Bosanque (London, 1964), p. 1; Eadmer of Canterbury, *Eadmeri Historia Novorum in Anglia: Et, Opuscula Duo de Vita Sancti Anselmi Et Quibusdam Miraculis Ejus* ed. Martin Rule (Cambridge, 2012), p. 1, Full passage: 'cum presentis aetatis viros diversis casibus subactos intueor acta praecedentium anxie investigare, cupientes videlicet in eis unde se consolentur et muniant invenire, nec tamen ad hoc pro voto posse pertingere, quoniam scriptorum inopia fugax ea delevit oblivio,

commonly found throughout prologues of twelfth-century historical writing.[313] The concern with preserving memory and the risk of it passing into oblivion was not new or unique to twelfth-century historians. The same sentiments were expressed by Boethius, a major source for twelfth-century writers including William of Malmesbury: 'how many men famous in their own time are now completely forgotten, for want of written record?'[314] Eadmer's statement that without 'written documentation' the events of the past would be 'buried in oblivion' shows a key link between passage of time, events, and memory. Without producing a record of events, the past would fall from all memory.[315] Eadmer expresses this concern when expounding the purpose behind writing the *Historia:*

> my story will also include a number of other occurrences which took place in England before, during and after the matters already mentioned, occurrences of which we do not think it right that those who come after us should be deprived of all knowledge.[316]

William of Malmesbury voiced similar sentiments in the prologues of the *Gesta Regum* and the *Historia Novella.*[317] He clarified his position as the successor of Bede by stating that Eadmer's *Historia* left out a large portion of time: 'he [Eadmer] thus omits two hundred and twenty three years after Bede…and in that interval limps

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videor mihi videre magnum quid posteris praestitisse, qui suis gesta temporibus, futurorum utilitati studentes, litterarum memoriae tradidere'.

[313] Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England', p. 135; Justin Lake, 'Introduction' in *Prologues to Ancient and Medieval Historiography: A Reader*, ed. Justin Lake (Toronto, 2013), pp. xi-xviii.

[314] Boethius, *Theological Tracts: The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, S. J. Tester (Cambridge, MA, 1973), pp. 218-219: 'quam multos clarissimos suis temporibus viros scriptorum inops delevit oblivio'.

[315] Eadmer, *HRE*, p. 1; Eadmer, *HNA*, p. 1: 'quoniam scriptorum inopia fugax ea delevit oblivio'.

[316] Eadmer, *HRE*, p. 2; Eadmer, *HNA*, p. 2: 'Describentur etiam alia nonnulla quae et ante et inter et post haec in Anglia provenerunt, quorum scientia illos qui nos secuturi sunt penitus defraudandos pro nostro posse rati non sumus'.

[317] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 2-3; *GR,* pp. 14-17.

along with no support from literature.'[318] William's wish to 'mend the broken chain of our history' is illustrative of how he envisioned the passage of time and memory.[319] The passage of time was constructed as a sequence of events which proceed from one point in time, chronologically, towards another, with each event in the chain forming part of the construction of the passage of time. Without memory, events and deeds would recede so far that they would be forgotten. They no longer provided building blocks with which the passage of time could be traced and reconstructed. Without record, connections cannot be made between each event and the series of time is incomplete. This was especially important for Glastonbury, and is borne out in the narrative itself. Alongside the strictly linear chronology, it is filled with records of bequests of land and gifts, including their monetary value.[320] None of William's other historical writing includes this type of information with the same frequency or detail. Eadmer's letter was an attack on Glastonbury's foundation, and William's response was to construct a linear chronology which could not be disputed.

It is highly probable that Eadmer's letter to the monks of Glastonbury contributed to William's commission to write a life of Dunstan, one to rival those composed by monks of Canterbury including Eadmer. The prologue of *De Antiquitates* specifically states that it was written, in part, to support the case of Dunstan and Glastonbury: 'the honour of the church rebounds to Dunstan and praise of him to the church. For she fostered Dunstan at her maternal breast until

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[318] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 14-15: 'Ita pretermissis a tempore Bedae ducentis et uiginti tribus annis, quos iste nulla memoria dignatus est, absque litterarum patrocini claudicat cursus temporum in media.
[319] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 14-15: 'fuit interruptam temporum seriem sarcire… ut res ordinatius procedat'.
[320] W. Malm., *AG*, pp. 84-85, pp. 88-107, pp. 110-121, pp. 128-31, pp. 138-145.

manhood and he added greatly to his mother's splendour'.[321] However, crucially, William did not include the purported episode in which the relics of Dunstan were translated to Glastonbury. There is a strong likelihood that William, who frequently claimed that he would only include in his works what he believed to be true, was not convinced that the episode had in fact happened.

Therefore, by writing the *Vita* and the *De Antiquitate* with a strict linear chronology, William attempted to establish beyond doubt Glastonbury's heritage and the strength of its connection to Dunstan. That structure made it easier to see the links between each successive event and person, and to trace them back to a definitive point of origin. This undermined the ability of 'detractors' to question Glastonbury's heritage, as *De Antiquitate* lays out that heritage in a clear sequence and the development of that institution is made certain and unquestionable. The linearity of time's passing was therefore irrefutable.

The *Historia Novella* also follows a strict linear structure, at least for the first two books. It was William's final work, written between 1140 and his death in 1143. The *Historia* follows on from the events recounted in his earlier histories the *Gesta Pontificum* and the *Gesta Regum* and covers the years 1125-1142. Its central topic is the civil war between Stephen and Mathilda. The first two books were written around 1140-41 and narrate events leading up to victory over and the capture of King Stephen in 1140. However, in the third book, written in 1142, William changed course. Instead of building a narrative up to the victory of his hero Robert of

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[321] W. Malm., *AG*, pp. 40-41: '… cum honor ecclesie in Dunstanum et laus Dunstani ad ecclesiam redundet. Nam et illa Dunstanum materno gremio in uirum confouit, et ipse matri plurimum splendoris adiecit'.

Gloucester, he instead tried to untangle the chaotic events resulting from their defeat.

In the first two books William was using time in a strictly linear sense. In order to show the causes of victory and to reinforce the credit due to Robert of Gloucester, William deployed a precise, linear, chronological structure. Each event became part of a sequence that built up towards and resulted in the capture of Stephen. Towards the end of the prologue, William explained that instead of beginning with the civil war, he would begin his narrative during the reign of Henry I: 'since I am bidden to do this by the service of my pen I think the history may be related in more orderly sequence if I go a little further back and open my annals with the Empress's return to England after her husband's death'.[322] He did this in order to put events into a proper order. This is established by the use of the adverb *ordinatius*. He was not merely suggesting that he would put events into a sequence, a phrase which is used elsewhere in the *Historia,* but into an established order. *Ordinatius* is derived from *ordo*, which denotes succession and hierarchy, as well as order. William thus showed that events are narrated and organised in a strict, linear, order. This order reflected, as far as William was concerned, the right and just order of the world as events directly developed into the culmination of Stephen's defeat. As Kempshall illustrates, William chose not to record history in an annalistic style because he wanted to impose a sense of order and causality onto the events of the

[322] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 2-3: 'Quod quia officio stili mei preceptum est fieri, ordinatius puto posse historiam transigi, si Paulo altius repetens a reditu imperatricis in Angliam post uiri sui decessum seriem annorum contexam'.

past.[323] This order created a clear chain of cause and effect which revealed the true meaning of events: Stephen's illegitimacy as king.

But in the third book everything changed. The representation of time shifts from being strictly linear to complex and non-linear. The change is underlined when setting the prologue to the first book is compared to the prologue of the third book.[324] Events change from an order to 'a trackless maze', through which William is leading the reader.[325] Orosius, an author familiar to William, employed similar imagery when he wrote that he had:

> woven together an inextricable lattice-work of muddled history and I have henceforth entwined in words the uncertain cycles of wars which were conducted here and there with senseless fury, for the more I kept to the order of events, the more, as I see it, I wrote in a disorderly fashion.[326]

The *Historiae Adversus Paganos* orders the past into a distinct pattern; suggesting that there were four successive 'universal empires', culminating in the Roman one.[327]

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[323] Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p. 88.
[324] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 2-3 and pp. 80-81.
[325] W. Malm., *HN,* pp. 80-81, full passage: In the eleven hundred and forty-second year of the Lord's Incarnation, I am undertaking to unravel the trackless maze of events and occurrences that befell in England, with the aim that posterity should not be ignorant of these matters through our lack of care, it being worthwhile to learn the changefulness of fortune and the mutability of the human lot, by God's permission or bidding. Therefore, as men of the present day severely and rightly blame our predecessors, who since Bede have left no record of themselves and their doings, I, who have set myself to remove this disgrace from us, may fairly claim the kindly favour of my readers if they judge aright' 'Anno incarnationis Dominice millesimo centesimo quadragesimo secundo, inextricabilem labyrinthum rerum et negotiorum quae acciderunt in Anglia, aggredior evolvere; ea causa, ne per nostram incuriam lateat posteros, cum sit operae precium, cognoscere volubilitatem fortunae, statusque humani mutabilitatem, Deo duntaxat permittente vel jubente. Itaque quia moderni non mediocriter et merito reprehendunt pradecessores nostros, qui nec sui nec suorum post Bedam ullam reliquerunt memoriam, ego, quia nobis hanc proposui summovere infamiam, debeo apud lectores bonam, si recte judicabunt, pacisci gratiam'.
[326] Orosius, *Seven Books of History,* III.2, ed. and trans A. T. Fear (Liverpool, 2010), p. 83: Contexui indigestae historiae inextricabilem cratem atque incertos bellorum orbes huc et illuc lymphatico furore gestorum uerbis e uestigio secutus inplicui, quoniam tanto, ut uideo, inordinatius scripsi, quanto magis ordinem custodiui; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 212.
[327] Michael A. Faletra, *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination: The Matters of Britain in the Twelfth Century* (London, 2014), pp. 38-39.

Similarly to the first two books of William's *Historia*, Orosius deployed a linear structure that attempted to order all of history into one overarching narrative that revealed its true meaning: in this case the importance of the instability of the Roman Empire to salvation history.[328]

However, even Orosius had to deploy a non-linear structure when history did not present a discernible sequence or pattern to follow. William possessed a full version of Orosius' *Historiae*, which could well have served as a model for his articulation of time.[329] When the series of events occurred in a disordered manner William, like Orosius, turned to a non-linear structure to present meaning. Brian FitzGerald discusses the distinction between 'natural order' and 'artificial order': 'the writing of *historia* was generally equated with natural order, and if a historian could not produce a clearly ordered narrative, that might be due to an inability to attain a properly clear perspective on chaotic times'.[330] By invoking the idea of an inextricable labyrinth, William is showing that he is not only navigating and untangling the turbulent incidents which were occurring as he was writing, but he was also following the pattern of events and attempting to decipher meaning. This 'trackless maze' is borne out by the structure of Book III. Unlike Book I and Book II it features many digressions and contains very few dates. Not being able to locate an event specifically in the chronology and the frequent deviations and backtracking to

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[328] Faletra, *Wales and the Medieval Colonial Imagination,* pp. 39-41.
[329] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 140; The full text of William of Malmesbury's copy of Orosius' *Historiae Adversus Paganos* is found in Bodleian Library MS. Arch. Selden B. 16 ff. 11-71.
[330] Brian FitzGerald, *Inspiration and Authority in the Middle Ages: Prophets and Their Critics from Scholasticism to Humanism* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 57-58.

previous events gives the impression of a narrative as in flux. The narrative becomes itself a maze through which William had begun to lay some tracks.

Why did William's representation of time shift? He was now navigating the political tempest of the civil war without knowing how it would end. Furthermore, unlike books I and II, Book III includes a crucial deployment of cyclical time, which fitted into the non-linear structure. When discussing Matilda's son Henry, William stated that 'the boy is called Henry, recalling his grandfather's name, would he may someday recall his prosperity and his power'.[331] Crucially, William used the word *relaturus*. *Relaturus* conveys ideas of return, bringing back, and repetition. The sense of cyclicality and repetition is further reinforced throughout the book by the increase of the use of *fortuna*. Fortuna refers to the concept of the rise and fall of prosperity, commonly symbolised by the 'Wheel of Fortune'. Recent scholarship has examined William's use of *fortuna*.[332] Sverre Bagge has argued that he deployed the term in Book III in order to explain how Robert and Matilda could be defeated whilst on the cusp of victory.[333] He contends that William turned to 'fickle fortune' to explain why God's providence did not provide the expected victory. Virtue and noble behaviour were reward enough for his hero Robert of Gloucester.[334] I contend that the use of

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[331] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 126-127: 'Henricus vocatur puer, nomen aui referens utiam felicitatem et potentiam quandoque relaturus'.
[332] Sverre Bagge, 'Ethics, Politics, and Providence in William of Malmesbury's *Historia Novella*', *Viator* 41 (2010), pp. 113-132; Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, p. 257; Thomson, 'Satire, Irony and Humour in William of Malmesbury',p. 125; Tom Stephen Forster, 'William of Malmesbury and *Fortuna*', *Journal of Medieval History* (2017), pp. 21-38; T. M. S. Lehtonen, 'History, Tragedy and Fortune in Twelfth-Century Historiography with Special Reference to Otto of Freising's Chronica' in *Historia: The Concept and Genres in the Middle Ages*, eds T. M. S. Lehtonen and P. Mehtonen (Helsinki, 2000), pp. 29-49.
[333] Sverre Bagge, *Kings, Politics, and the Right Order of the World in German Historiography c. 950-1150* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 396-397.
[334] Sverre Bagge, 'Ethics, Politics, and Providence in William of Malmesbury's *Historia Novella*', pp. 113-132.

fortuna, and its associations with cyclical time, served another purpose. It is possible to connect the employment of *fortuna* and the temporal structure of the narrative. In the case of the *Historia*, the frequency of the use of the word *fortuna* increases significantly in Book III, compared to books I and II, which coincided with the structural shift from linear to non-linear.[335] Furthermore, the prologue to Book III explains that one of William's aims was to reveal 'the changefulness of fortune and the mutability of the human lot'.[336] The dispersal of cyclical elements of time within a non-linear structure suggests that alongside William's attempt to navigate and order the chaotic events of war, he was trying to find hope. William wished that the wheel of fortune would turn again and that the peace and prosperity that defined Henry I's reign would be restored. Therefore, by incorporating cyclical elements, and using a non-linear narrative structure, William showed that the cycle would continue and the turmoil of the Civil War would end: the events that England was experiencing were part of a repeating rotation of the rise and fall of fortunes. William's representation of time in Book III of the *Historia* reveals his reaction to, and attempts to impose order on, the unrest and war that he was experiencing in his own time.

The text with the most unusual temporal structure is the *Gesta Pontificum*. Unlike most chronicles for the early twelfth century, William's included, it is arranged geographically, specifically adhering to the conventions of ecclesiastical geography. Each book centres on the area of an archbishopric, with each chapter

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[335] See: 'Appendix III: Frequency of Fortuna in the *Historia Novella*', p. 250.
[336] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 80-81: 'cognoscere volubilitatem fortunae, statusque humani mutabilitatem'.

narrating the affairs of the individual dioceses. The structure of the English church frames the structure of the text. There is also a focus of discussing the deeds and miracles of England's various saints. Kirsten Fenton suggests that the *Gesta Pontificum's* 'overall structure allows the work to embark on a "tour" of England… suggesting not only that William travelled widely but also that he had a keen geographical sense of England as a place and as a physical entity'.[337] The unity and coherence of the text stems from its topographical organisation, crucially, not from its chronological arrangement. The approach lends *Gesta Pontificum* a quality that transcends temporal boundaries. Readers are unable to follow events across the entire text in a purely chronological manner. Only the individual chapters are narrated with any sense of linearity. Whilst reading, they would move around temporally from chapter to chapter and book to book. Therefore the reader's temporal experience would seem to be in flux, not following a typical chronological framework. This sense of temporal flux is most evident when attempting to chart the actions of certain ecclesiastically important characters. For instance, the deeds of Saint Dunstan are not only narrated in the section which deals with the archbishopric of Canterbury. They are spread out across the entire text. Dunstan's birth and prenatal miracle are detailed towards the end of the *Gesta*, his ordination as a monk at Glastonbury around half-way through, the majority of his life including his death early in Book I.[338] Other episodes involving Dunstan are scattered throughout. The reader would return to the time and life of Dunstan multiple times throughout the *Gesta*. Thus, the chronology was not united by a temporally

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[337] Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest*, p. 13.
[338] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 607-611, pp. 260-261, pp. 30-41.

constructed pattern, unlike William's other texts. Furthermore, William provided few elements which could anchor the events described to a single unifying chronology. Unlike in the *Gesta Regum*, in which William clearly marks the shift in time caused by the Norman Conquest, as will be discussed below, he does not refer to the Conquest. Most significantly, he does not once refer to a time period as 'time of the English' or 'time of the Normans' whereas these phrases are used in the *Gesta Regum* to define time on either side of 1066.[339] Thus, time in the *Gesta* could not be anchored to a strict linear chronology due to its narrative structure. This boundary-transcending quality also creates a sense of temporal unity, reflecting the English Church, which itself transcended temporal boundaries. The ebb and flow of worldly events was the principal way in which medieval chronicles saw historical change.[340] Nevertheless, the church continued, its progress connected to and yet distinct from that of the secular sphere. Even one of the most consequential events of England's history did not impede on the unity of the church.

Moreover, this temporally complex structure allowed for the *Gesta Pontificum* to connect the distant past to the present. Anne Bailey has argued that the *Gesta Pontifcum* combines historiography and hagiography and by embedding stories of miracles and saints within the narrative, connected those events to the present.[341] The deeds of saints in particular were able to reach the imagination of those in the present.[342] Indeed, 'history can be both hagiographical and historical…for William [of Malmesbury], hagiography was one way of accessing chronologically remote

[339] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 137-150.
[340] Goetz, 'The Concept of Time in the Historiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', p. 154.
[341] Bailey '*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*: History or Hagiography?', p. 25.
[342] Bailey, '*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*: History or Hagiography?', p. 25.

events' and reclaiming the heritage of the Anglo-Saxon past.[343] Time could be malleable if not anchored to a strict, single, unifying linear chronology. Temporal distance mattered when considering the impact of narratives of saints. In the *Vita Wulfstani*, William comments on how the temporal proximity of Wulfstan to the present made him an excellent model:

> For though he lived so close to our own time, he resembled the fathers of old in virtue… while he [the reader] looks up to Wulfstan no less than to the ancients because of the splendid miracles he performs, he can feel closer to him because of his recent date, and strike to follow his example with an emulous foot.[344]

The *Gesta Pontificum's* structure contributes to William's aim of reclaiming the past for the present. The temporal complexity enabled the perceived remoteness of the past to be reduced, and for the examples presented in the narrative to seem achievable in the same way that Wulfstan's could be.

Likewise, the *Gesta Regum* illustrates how time could be manipulated. The first two books have a particularly linear structure derived from Bede and his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, narrating events up to the Norman Conquest. However, the structure of books III, IV and V differs significantly. Indeed, William signalled this structural change in his prologue to Book I:

> my second book will extend the history of the kingdom to the Norman Conquest. The three remaining books will tell of the three Norman kings, together with such events as befell in their time in

[343] Bailey, '*Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*: History or Hagiography?', p. 26.
[344] W. Malm., *VW,* pp. 12-13: 'Fuit enim uir ut nostris temporibus affinis, ita priorum patrum uirtuti non absimilis. Quapropter benigno lectori grande paciscor commodum, ut quamquam eum non minus quam priscos pro miraculorum gloria suspitiat, familiariter tamen pro recenti aetate mores eius emulo exercitii pede sequi contendat'.

> other countries and which exhibit their renowned celebrity through the renown of their deeds.[345]

Instead of using a chronological linear structure similar to that of the first two books, William embraced a Suetonian narrative model. Suetonius developed a biographical formula which he deployed in his *Vita xii Caesarum*, organising events by topic including character and appearance (mores), private life, imperial acts, and family.[346] The subject's character is the focal point of discussion, so events are included when they relate to a particular characteristic which is being discussed. Therefore, events were not necessarily chronicled in chronological order. Indeed, Suetonius, in his *Vita Augustis* explained why he rejected arrangement by chronology: 'Having given as it were a summary of his life, I shall now take up its various phases one by one, not in chronological order (*per tempora*), but by classes (*per species*), to make the account clearer and more intelligible'.[347] Marie Schütt was the first to establish that books III, IV and V follow Suetonius' example: focusing on the individual's character and arranging episodes not by chronology but by clustering events which demonstrate those characteristic traits.[348]

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[345] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 16-17: 'secundus liber ad aduentum Normannorum producet lineam regalium temporum. Tres religui in gestis trium regum uersabuntur, his adiectis quae diebus illorum alibi acciderunt et celebrem sui notitiam celebritate gestorum exigunt'.
[346] Haahr, 'William of Malmesbury's Roman Models', p. 167.
[347] Suetonius, *The Deified Augustus*, ed. and trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA, 1964), pp. 132-133: 'Proposita vitae eius vault summa partes singillatim neque per tempora sed per species exsequar, quo distinctius demonstrari cognoscique possint'; Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History* (Baltimore, MD, 1999), pp. 547-548; Marie Schütt 'The Literary Form of William of Malmesbury's Gesta Regum' *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 46 (1931), pp. 255-260 and recently developed by Sigbjørn Sønnesyn in his *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, p. 98.
[348] Schütt, 'The Literary Form of William of Malmesbury's Gesta Regum', pp. 255-260.

Suetonius' model had been used and adapted before. Einhard's *Vita Magni Caroli* followed it as did Asser in his *Vita Aelfredi*.[349] William had read Suetonius as he quotes from it extensively in the *Gesta Regum* and once in the *Gesta Pontificum*.[350] He was also familiar with Einhard and possibly with Asser.[351] William had access to both the original classical model and those medieval works that had adapted it. He followed the Suetonian precedent closely in books IV and V. For instance, he did not commence Book IV with the coronation of William Rufus. Rather, he began with Rufus' genealogy.[352] The life of Rufus and that of Henry I were organised topically, using the same categories as Suetonius. Book III, however, seems to be a mixture of Suetonian biography and linear chronology. Joan Gluuckauf Haahr praises Book III as 'far more coherent than its successors, [and as] an example of medieval history writing at its best'.[353] Its 'coherence' derives from the fact that it narrates events in a more chronological order. Rather than organising all the events into topics, William narrated the struggles of William the Conqueror chronologically. However, interspersed were extensive sections discussing the Conqueror's childhood, early career, and towards the end of the book, an account of his character and private life, succeeded by the account of the king's final days and death. The goal here was not

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[349] Einhard, 'The Life of Charlemagne', in *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, ed. and trans. David Ganz (London, 2013); Asser, 'The Life of Alfred' in *The Medieval Life of Alfred the Great: A Translation and Commentary on the text attributed to Asser*, ed. and trans, A. Smyth (London, 2001); for the manuscript dissemination of Einhard see Matthais M. Tischler, *Einharts 'Vita Karoli', Studien zur Entstehung, Überlieferung und Rezeption*, Schriften der Momumenta Germaniae Historica, 48 (2 vols, Stuttgart, 2001).
[350] W. Malm., *GR,* vol II, ed. and trans Rodney Thomson and Michael Winterbottom, pp. 461–462 for list of the many references. There is only one reference in *Gesta Pontoficum*: Calig. i. 2: *GP,* pp. 296-297.
[351] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, pp. 57-69.
[352] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 540-543.
[353] Haahr, 'William of Malmesbury's Roman Models', p.168.

simply to give a 'Roman polish' to the history of England.[354] Political arguments could be made by deploying these models.[355] By using the Suetonian narrative structure, William was connecting the Norman dynasty to the Roman imperial rulers. The age of the Normans became a new age of Caesars, thus invoking a sense of return and cyclicality to the reader's temporal experience. The impression of repetition was not limited to the narrative structure. For instance, William compared Julius Caesar's battle tactics to those of William the Conqueror, and the 'soul of Julius Caesar pass[ed] into King William [Rufus]'.[356] The accounts of the Norman kings abound with classical allusion, with quotations and references to Suetonius' text deployed with similar frequency to those of Virgil or Ovid. The rise and fall of the Roman Empire is thus evoked and used to pattern the events of the modern age. This adds a layer of meaning to the narrative. The structure would remind the reader of Suetonius' work, creating a distinct contrast to the earlier books whilst also reinforcing the connection between the Norman kings and the Romans.

That is not to say that William did not deviate from the linear chronology in the first two books. For instance, he stated that relating the reign of King Alfred in chronological sequence would cause confusion to the reader: 'His [Alfred's] labours form an impenetrable labyrinth, which it is not my purpose to thread in detail, for to recount all his achievements year by year might somewhat confuse my reader'.[357]

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[354] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 14-15: 'Romano sale'.
[355] Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, p. 298; the influence of William's interest in the Romans on his representation of time will be explored further in Chapter Four.
[356] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 450-451, pp. 470-471 and pp. 556-557: 'quod anima Iulii Cesaris transierit in regem Willelmum'.
[357] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 180-181: 'Laborumeius inextricabiles laberinthos singillatim euoluere non fuit consilium, propterea quod sit legentium quaedam confusio gestorum per omnes annos recensitio…'

Thus, in the *Gesta Regum* William shifted and changed the narrative structure in order to guide the reader or to make a point. The narrative structure informed the temporal experience of the reader. Whether by deploying linear chronology, cyclical elements, or a complex entwining of both, the structure placed a pattern of causality and connection on an otherwise chaotic past. The resulting pattern could then be used to gain meaning from the past. It formed an impression of continuation where the past may be broken, or it could signal a shift in ages. Both are true of the *Gesta Regum*. Whilst the connection to the Romans created a sense of continuity with an ancient regime, the structural change between Book II and Book III was still distinct. And the event which caused this change was the Norman Conquest.

The Norman Conquest

When considering time in historical narrative, the idea of 'rupture' is apparent: specific actions that cause such cataclysmic shifts that they are considered breaks in the continuum. These events cause a significant change in the progression of the history of a particular group, nation or even individual. They are of such consequence that they interrupt the flow of the past. These ruptures could be considered good or bad. The alteration could promulgate a new era in which the calamitous actions of the past could be ended and virtue prevail, or they could herald the end of a golden age and the beginning of turmoil and disorder.

There was one date and one event which was unequivocally perceived as a rupture by William of Malmesbury, his contemporaries, and the historians who followed generations later: 1066 and the Norman Conquest. Scholars such as R. W. Southern have argued that the Conquest was the spark which lit the fire of historical output in the early twelfth century.[358] Indeed, it is clear that the next generation of writers did view the Conquest as a watershed moment. The ruler of England had changed from the Anglo-Saxon dynasty – albeit with some temporary disruption caused by Sven Forkbeard and Cnut in the early eleventh century – the Norman one; the ruling nobility had been wiped out and replaced with Norman aristocracy; the clergy had also faced a similar fate. Whilst recent scholarship has questioned the extent to which the changes in the wake of the Conquest were major innovations, others have since highlighted that the practical effects, and the perception of change, differed.[359] The changes to institutions such as the church may not have been objectively substantial, but to those who were writing two generations after the Conquest, they constituted a significant transformation. Many scholars have shown that 1066 was regarded as a 'major dividing line' in recent history.[360] William of Malmesbury used narrative structure to show this divide explicitly in *the Gesta Regum*, and the *Vita Wulfstani.*

As discussed above, the structure of the *Gesta Regum* shifts for the final three books; 1066 was the moment from which William chose to initiate this change in

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[358] R W. Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing 4. The Sense of the Past', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (1972), pp. 243-263.
[359] The scholar to most convincingly prove the difference between the actual changes and the perception of those changes is Jay Rubenstein in 'Liturgy against History: The Competing Visions of Lanfranc and Eadmer of Canterbury', *Speculum* 74:2 (1999), pp. 279-309.
[360] Otter, '1066: The Moment of Transition', p. 566.

structure and temporal construction. It also serves as a temporal division in the *Vita Wulfstani*. Its first book concludes with the following remark: 'since I have reached the Norman period, let this be the halting place for my first book. For it seems neater if I separate out what the holy man did in the time of the English and what in the time of the Normans'.[361] As has been discussed above, this use of periodization defines time by political regime. William described the Norman period as a 'boundary' or a 'limit'; *meta* is used elsewhere in the *Gesta Regum* and the *Historia Novella* with the same meaning.[362] William was separating the events of pre- and post- Conquest England temporally. This separation is further enhanced by the Conquest acting as a structural divide between books I and II. However, this rendition of Wulfstan's life as divided by the Norman Conquest differs significantly from William's depiction of Wulfstan in the *Gesta Pontificum*. There, William did not make a single reference to the Norman Conquest. As to why this is the case, it can be suggested that William did not perceive a pre- and post-Conquest divide for the affairs of the Church as an entity.

The *Vita Wulfstani* was derived from a single eleventh-century life by Coleman, which no longer survives. That makes the prominence given to 1066 all the more striking. William went beyond his source. William acknowledged as much when he explained that he had not followed his source's structure (where the first book had ended with Wulfstan's election as bishop of London): 'it is true that

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[361] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 58-59: 'Quorum quoniam attigimus tempora, hic primo libello statuatur meta. Ita enim concinnius fieri posse puto, si quid sanctissimus uir Anglorum tempore, quid Normannorum fecerit enucleate digessero'.
[362] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 514-515, pp. 570-571; *HN*, pp. 62-63.

Coleman made his first break at the point where Wulfstan was elected bishop'.[363] However, this deviation contradicts William's statement in the prologue that his work would be 'in no way disturbing his [Coleman's] order'.[364] Why would William do this, given that, otherwise, he was quite willing to follow Coleman's example? One explanation presents itself. To Coleman, the decisive temporal break was Wulfstan's transition from priest to prelate. Time was divided into the years before and those following his promotion to a bishopric. To William, by contrast, the cataclysm of 1066 appeared as more decisive. There has been extensive debate as to how far William adhered to Coleman's *Vita*. Andy Orchard argues that William was faithful to it, copying the text closely and neither altering the order of the events nor modifying the narrative.[365] Orchard's conclusion is based on the amount of unnecessary 'incidental detail' which is still included in William's rendering, and the style difference in general compared to his other writings.[366] However, the fact remains that William diverges from the structure of Coleman's *Vita,* and even draws attention to this divergence. At no other point did he admit to departing from his source. To William, 1066 did mark a clear temporal break.

Otter argues that dividing books I and II at this point conveys Wulfstan's role as 'an important contemporary figure as a bridge across the crisis of the Norman Conquest'.[367] Wulfstan is a figure of transition and endurance during a period of

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[363] W. Malm., *VW,* pp. 58-59: 'Colemannus enim in episcopatus eius electione decisionem primam fecit'.
[364] W. Malm., *VW,* pp. 10-11, full passage: 'Huius ego ut uoluistis insistens scriptis nichil turbaui de rerum ordine'.
[365] Andy Orchard, 'Parallel Lives: Wulfstan, William, Coleman and Christ' in *St Wulfstan and his World*, eds Julia Barrow and Nicholas Brookes (Farnham, 2005), p. 45.
[366] Orchard, 'Parallel Lives', p. 50.
[367] Otter, '1066 Moment of Transition', p. 585.

crisis and rupture. The structuring of the *Vita* lends itself to viewing Wulfstan as a bridge between two cultures and two ages. However, this argument could be developed still further. Rather than acting as a 'bridge', Wulfstan could be seen as acting as a unifier. Indeed, William's depiction of Wulfstan as simultaneously adhering to the customs of both the English and the Normans, whilst maintaining a holy life, paints him as a figure that brings together and unifies the age of the English and the age of the Normans.[368] In the *Gesta Pontificum*, whilst discussing the Norman Archbishop of Canterbury, William of Corbeil, William explicitly equates a change in time with a change in *mores*: 'now we have another age, and other manners to suit the age'.[369] Thus, whilst on one level, the Norman Conquest was a rupture in time, on another individuals such as Wulfstan represented figures of unification and continuity.

In the prologue to Book III of the *Gesta Regum*, William revealed that he had 'the blood of both peoples in my veins'.[370] Thus, he identified with both the Normans and the English. Still, his approach to the Conquest could be seen as ambivalent. Michael Winterbottom has argued that there is an 'enduring feeling of Englishness' throughout William's work.[371] However, William explicitly commented on his loyalty to the Normans when stating that the Conquest was the will of God: 'In so saying I make no reflections on the valour of the Normans; they have my

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[368] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 426-427.
[369] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 234-235: 'nunc aliud tempus alii pro tempore mores'.
[370] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 424-425: 'quia utriusque entis sanguinem traho'.
[371] Michael Winterbottom, 'The Language of William of Malmesbury' in *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West 1100-1540: Essays in Honour of John O. Ward*, eds Constant Mews, Cary Nederman, and Rodney Thomson (Turnout, 2003), p. 129.

loyalty, both for my own origins and for what I owe them'.[372] As will be discussed in Chapter Four, William believed that the Conquest had reignited the spark of religious fervour which had died after the Danish invasions began in the tenth century.[373] However, Thomson has argued that William displayed a sense of bitterness and unease about the Conquest and the influx of Normans.[374] He claims that this is most visible in William's commentary *On Lamentations* in which he explicitly stated that the Normans were inferior to the English as the English were 'superior to many in learning and courtesy'.[375] An added complication is that William revised his work. Four distinct versions of the *Gesta Regum* can be detected from the thirty-seven surviving manuscripts.[376] Thomson argues that many of the revisions to the *Gesta Regum* and the *Gesta Pontificum* were William's toning down of his criticism of the Normans.[377]

Emily Winkler has perceptively noted a key difference between William's discussion on the Danish invasion of 1016 and the Norman Conquest. In the context of discussing the concept of providence and royal responsibility to explain the invasion, Winkler suggests that William's depiction of the Norman Conquest expresses a sense of scale and finality, whereas the Danish invasion was reversed in 1042 with the ascension of Edward the Confessor.[378] However, I contend that this difference is evident beyond William's use of a providential framework, and is

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[372] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 422-423: 'Nec hoc dicens uirtuti Normannorum derogo, quibus cum pro genere tum pro benefitiis fidem habeo'.
[373] See Chapter Four.
[374] Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury's Diatribe against the Normans', pp. 118-121.
[375] Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury's Diatribe against the Normans', pp. 117-118.
[376] Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest,* p. 15.
[377] Thomsom, 'William of Malmesbury's Diatribe against the Normans', p. 119-120.
[378] Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing*, p. 121.

distilled in how he represented the place of these invasions in the flow of time. Whilst the Danish invasion was a significant event for the progress of the English Church, it did not instigate the end of an age.[379] Despite his occasionally contradictory statements on the Norman Conquest, William consistently framed it as marking a shift in time: the end of one age and the beginning of another. This then informed how William deployed narrative structure: using the Conquest as an event that marked the end of a book, twice.

Thus, the Conquest marked a major shift in time, all efforts to convey a sense of continuity notwithstanding. As Sigbjørn Sønnesyn states: 'the invasion and its consequences were momentous events for William. It is not hard to imagine that the fact that it could happen at all was something that needed to be explained in William's political and moral paradigm.'[380] It was also something that had to be explained through his temporal paradigm. That William used the break of books in both the *Gesta Regum* and *Vita Wulfstani* is striking. As Goetz explains: 'a division into books created a division into temporal caesuras and "periodizations"'.[381] Thus, book divisions served a similar purpose to using periodization such as *tempore Normanorum*.[382] By using the book structure in this way, William communicated that the Conquest was a catalyst for a new stage in the history of England. This differed from how William portrayed the Danish invasions in the *Gesta Regum*. Those narratives were woven into the structure of Book II, as part of the story of one age

[379] The impact of the invasion of the progress of the Church and its implication for the flow of time are discussed extensively in Chapter Four.
[380] Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, p. 192.
[381] Goetz, 'The Concept of Time in the Historiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries'', p. 147.
[382] Green, 'Periodization in European and World History', p. 14.

which was temporally interrupted and then restored with the accession of Edward the Confessor. The start of William the Conqueror's reign and the age of the Normans was marked by the start of a new book. The structure could express what words could not – the feeling that the Conquest, for good or ill, had created a gulf between England's past and the present. One age had ended and another had begun. Time may have continued to flow, but England was no longer in the age of the English.

To conclude, structure and dating were used by William of Malmesbury in order to make political statements and generate meaning. A skilled author who had sophisticated notions of time and narrative could use temporality within a text to add another dimension of meaning to the narrative. These implications have not been fully explored by scholars and have not been systematically considered by those studying twelfth-century historical writing. For instance, no scholar has explored why William ceased using regnal dating when relating the events of Stephen's reign, despite the fact that it forms an important part of his narrative strategy. The strict linear chronology of the *De Antiquitate* and first two books of the *Historia Novella* was deployed in response to political circumstance: the former to deflect criticism by another ecclesiastic institution, the latter to establish the legitimacy and justice of Robert of Gloucester's and Empress Matilda's cause. However, in other works he employed a more complex structure, depending on the content and meaning he wished to generate. Structure and dating constructed an intricate temporal pattern within the text. This pattern was used to understand

challenges to the order of time. The seeming chaos of the past could be ordered in such a way as to be understood and generate another dimension of meaning.

Chapter Three

Foreseeing Time: Prophecy and the Future

'Historians have strange relationships with the future'.[383] Jean-Claude Schmitt's statement is as accurate for the writers of the past as for those of today. When considering the past, some may assume that thoughts of the future were unnecessary and did not come into consideration for those who engaged with historical writing in the twelfth century. However, this is not the case. Ideas and concerns about the future were very much a part of historical writing; references to the reader were understood as addressing the future. Authors projected hopes and expectations that their work would be well received by future audiences, hopes that their actions now would ensure that the past would not pass into oblivion and could be used to serve future generations.

Furthermore, ideas of the future are integrated within the concept of prophecy. This temporally privileged phenomenon allowed those chosen a glimpse into a realm of knowledge that was beyond human observation. Prophecy, as Richard Southern illustrates, was a key part of historical narrative; 'it provided some of the most important facts of history, disclosed the meaning of many more, and set them all within a systematic shape'. [384] As a writer of historical narrative, William of Malmesbury had ideas of the future at the heart of his concept of time. Scholarship

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[383] Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'Appropriating the Future' in *Medieval Futures: Attitudes to the Future in the Middle Ages*, eds. J. A. Barrow and Ian P. Wei (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 3.
[384] R. W. Southern, 'Presidential Address: Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 22 (1972), pp. 159–160.

on conceptions of the future in twelfth-century England has principally focused on the second half of the century, especially Geoffrey of Monmouth and his prophecies of Merlin.[385] The most recent scholarship has illustrated how prophecy was used for a multitude of complex reasons: whether as part of political discourse or for understanding the past.[386] However, scholarship has not considered the broader questions of how the future fitted into the framework of historical thought and how prophecy was used to shape the representation of time in historical writing. Prophecy could be used to illuminate the past. This chapter will address these wider concerns with regard to William of Malmesbury. The first part will explore how William's conception of the future shaped his motivation for writing his works and how it was shaped by his role and study as a Cantor. The second part will study William's approach to prophecy and omens, how they appear throughout his works,

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[385] The bibliography is extensive but see these notable contributions: Julia Crick, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth, Prophecy and History', *Journal of Medieval History,* 18:4 (1992), pp. 357–371; Jennifer Farrell, 'History, Prophecy and the Arthur of the Normans: The Question of Audience and Motivation behind Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae' in *Anglo-Norman Studies, XXXVII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference,* ed. Elisabeth van Houts (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 99–114; Géraldine Veysseyre and Clara Wille, 'Les Commentaires Latins et Français Aux Prophetie Merlini de Geoffroy de Monmouth', *Médiévales: Langue, Textes, Histoire* 55 (2008), pp. 93–114; Jan M. Ziolkowski, 'The Nature of Prophecy in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Vita Merlini' in *Poetry and Prophecy: The Beginnings of a Literary Tradition,* ed. James L. Kugel, (Ithaca, 1990), pp. 151–162, pp. 240–244; Geoffrey Ashe, 'The Prophecies of Merlin: Their Originality and Importance' in *Magistra Doctissima: Essays in Honor of Bonnie Wheeler,* ed. Dorsey Armstrong (Kalamazoo, MI, 2013), pp. 71–79; Catherine Daniel, 'L'audience Des Prophéties de Merlin Entre Rumeurs Populaires et Textes Savants', *Médiévales: Langue, Textes, Histoire* 57 (2009), pp. 33–52; Catherine Daniel, 'Les Prophéties de Merlin: Une Arme de Propagande Des XIIe-XIIIe Siècles' in *Convaincre et Persuader: Communication et Propagande Aux XIIe et XIIIe Siècles,* ed. Martin Aurell (Poitiers, 2007), pp. 211–233; Peter Ihring, 'Merlin Und Die Literarische Sinnbildung. Zur Erzählstrukturellen Funktion Prophetischer Rede in Der Artusdichtung Zwischen Mittelalter Und Renaissance' in *Erzählstrukturen Der Artusliteratur: Forschungsgeschichte Und Neue Ansätze,* ed. Friedrich Wolfzettel (Tübingen, 1999), pp. 47–65.

[386] See: Alheydis Plassmann, 'Prophezeiungen in Der Englischen Historiographie Des 12. Jahrhunderts', *Archiv Für Kulturgeschichte,* 90:1 (2008), pp. 19–49; Robert Bartlett, 'Political Prophecy in Gerald of Wales', in *Culture Politique Des Plantagenêt (1154-1224). Actes Du Colloque Tenu à Poitiers Du 2 Au 5 Mai 2002,* ed. Martin Aurell, (Poitiers, 2003), pp. 303–311; Lesley Coote, 'Prophecy, Genealogy, and History in Medieval English Political Discourse' in *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Medieval Britain and France,* ed. Raluca L Radulescu (Turnhout, 2008), pp. 27–44; For the thirteenth century see: Björn Weiler, 'History, Prophecy and the Apocalypse in the Chronicles of Matthew Paris', *The English Historical Review* (2018) pp. 253-283.

and discover what these representations reveal about William's conception of the future, and the past.

Thinking of the Future

Whilst William's focus was on narrating the events of the past, his texts betray a concern for the future. Although William did not directly refer to it in the main body of his work, he frequently did refer to it in his prologues. A common topos found in William's prefaces, and indeed one which was common to the openings of historical works in the twelfth century, was the claim that the author was writing for posterity and for the edification of future generations.[387] This concern for preserving the past for the generations yet to come, and its purpose as a source of didactic examples, is found throughout William's works. On multiple occasions he refers to 'posterity', whether that be consideration of their credence in the truth of his narrative, apprehension over boring his future readers, or the transmission of the past for the future's benefit.[388] In the letter to Empress Matilda, which accompanied a copy of the *Gesta Regum*, he acknowledges the established use of history books written as providing models and exempla for kings and queens so that they could 'provide them with a sort of pattern for their own lives, from which they could learn to follow

[387] The topoi of prologues has been extensively studied by Antonia Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England', p. 126; Gertrund Simon, 'Undersuchingen zur Topik der Widmungsbriefe mittel-alterlicher Geschichsschreiber bis zum Ende des 12 Jahrunderts', *Archiv für Diplomatik* (1958), pp. 52-119; for examples see Justin Lake ed., *Prologues to Ancient and Medieval History: A Reader* (Toronto, 2013).
[388] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 709-708 and pp. 807-808; *GP,* pp. 222-223, *VW* pp. 8-9; *HN* pp. 2-3, *AG* pp. 98-99.

some men's successes, while avoiding the misfortunes of others, to imitate the wisdom of some and to look down on the foolishness of others'.[389] In the *Historia Novella*, William asks rhetorically 'what is more pleasant than consigning to historical record the deeds of brave men, so that following their example the others may cast off cowardice and arm themselves to defend their country?'[390] Thus, in multiple addresses to various secular patrons, William advocates the usefulness of historical record for future generations: it served as a model of behaviour both to emulate and to avoid. In the *Gesta Pontificum*, he laments that when embarking on the task of writing the history of the church in England, 'here I am devoid of almost all help. I grope my way through a dense fog of ignorance, and no lantern of history goes before to direct my path'.[391] His concern for transmitting the past for the benefit of posterity is found in every one of his historical works.

These iterations of the value of recording history for the benefit of future readers appear in both works of a secular focus and in his Saints' Lives. William's understanding of time and the future is illustrated by the prologue of the *Vita Wulfstani*. William justified writing a life of Wulfstan as he was an excellent model:

> For though he lived so close to our own time, he resembled the fathers of old in virtue… while he [the reader] looks up to Wulfstan no less than to the ancients because of the splendid miracles he performs, he can feel closer to him because of his recent date, and strike to follow his example with an emulous foot.[392]

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[389] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 6-9: '… ut quasi ad uitae suae exemplum eis instruerentur aliorum prosequi triumphos, aliorum uitare miserias, aliorum imitari sapientiam, aliorum contempnere stultitiam'.
[390] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 2-3: 'Quid porro iocundius quam fortium facta uirorum monimentis tradere litterarum, quorum exemplo ceteri exuant ignauiam, et ad defendendam armentur patriam?'
[391] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 2-5: 'Hic autem, pene omni destitutus solatio, crassas ignorantiae tenebras palpo, nec ulla lucerna historiae preuia semitam dirigo'.
[392] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 12-13: 'Fuit enim uir ut nostris temporibus affinis, ita priorum patrum uirtuti non absimilis. Quapropter benigno lectori grande paciscor commodum, ut quamquam eum non

William believed that Wulfstan's temporal proximity to the current readership would result in his example being followed most ardently. However, Wulfstan's resemblance to the 'fathers of old' conferred the necessary confidence in Wulfstan as a model. That Wulfstan embodied the virtues of the 'fathers of old' and that the reader would admire him as much as the 'ancients' was key to his appeal. In order for readers to admire Wulfstan's example, the sense of his being part of antiquity was essential. The fact that William had to justify recording the deeds of Wulfstan, when he did not for any other saint, suggests a concern for the perceived value of Wulfstan by his own age, a perception that would have repercussions for future generations.

William used the adjective *priscus*, which denotes something old or ancient. It is the only time that the word appears in the entirety of his oeuvre. He normally preferred *antiquus* or *vetustas*.[393] Of course, it is possible that William used *priscus* so that he could deploy *variatio,* a rhetorical technique which made the narrative more attractive by varying its rhythm or word choice.[394] However, there is a fine distinction between *priscus* and *antiquus*.[395] *Antiquus* defines a former time or age.[396] *Priscus* specifically denotes something belonging to a former time. Thus, it appears that William chose to use *priscus* with a purpose: its meaning corresponds with 'he

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minus quam priscos pro miraculorum gloria suspitiat, familiariter tanem pro recenti aetate mores eius emulo exercitii pede sequi contendat'.

[393] For instance: W. Malm., *GP* pp. 20-21, pp. 98-99, pp. 465-466; *VD* pp. 172-173, pp. 186-187; *AG,* pp. 42-3, pp. 50-51, pp. 63-64, pp. 67-68, pp. 79-80.

[394] For examples and explanation use of this technique in classical literature see: Harold C. Gotoff, *Cicero's Ceasarian Speeches: A Stylistic Commentary*, (Chapel Hill, NC, 1993), p. 284; James Masters, *Poetry and Civil war in Lucan's Bella civile* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 189.

[395] Thanks to Professor Robert Ireland for his assistance in explaining this distinction.

[396] William Smith and John Lockwood, *Chambers Murrey Latin-English Dictionary* (London, 1933), p. 51.

resembled the fathers of old in virtue'.[397] Wulfstan belonged to antiquity, reflecting the simple, unspoiled virtue of the forefathers, as opposed to the more sophisticated world of the present.[398] Thus it would be beneficial for the reader not merely to admire Wulfstan, as the saints of remote antiquity are admired, for his miracles, but also to imitate his character, so far as one can in the modern world.[399]

The key emphasis of this passage is to convince the reader of Wulfstan's immediate value as an example.[400] The community of Worcester – immediate readership of the *Vita* – would be encouraged to follow in Wulfstan's footsteps because he combined both the virtues of the ancients and a temporal proximity. Throughout William's works, he suggested that the present age was one of scepticism: the miracles of the past were assured but those which occurred in their 'own day' were doubted. For instance, when introducing one of Wulfstan's miracles in the *Vita Wulfstani,* William informs the reader that; 'I now come to a miracle that almost beggars belief, because it happened in our own day'.[401] This statement demonstrates the twelfth-century attitude that the 'age of miracles' had passed, exemplified by Orderic Vitalis' claim: 'Now is that time in which love grows cold…Miracles, the indications of sanctity, cease'.[402] This scepticism was dangerous. It suggests that the present age was tainted by disbelief and the pervading mistrust of modern saints. Only those saints who were already well known and existed in the

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[397] 'priorum patrum uirtuti'; *Chambers Murrey Latin-English Dictionary*, p. 577.
[398] 'nostris temporibus'.
[399] 'pro recenti aetate'.
[400] Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, pp. 90-91.
[401] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 98-99: 'veniam ad illud miraculum quod, quia nostris temporibus est factum, pene sibi fidem abrogat'.
[402] Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, p. 341; O. Vit., *HE,* Vol III, p. 8-9.

distant past were valued. This is why the *De Antiqtuitate* placed such emphasis on Glastonbury's antiquity.[403] However, this leads to one important question: if the miracles of the modern age were dismissed and not recorded, how would the future generations, who would perceive them as ancient, know of their existence? Saints could not attain the modern qualification of being ancient if all knowledge of them and their deeds was lost due to the scepticism of their own time. William expressed his indignation at this attitude when discussing Wulfstan in his *Gesta Pontificum*:

> If the easy ways of the ancients lived on, Wulfstan would long ago have been raised on high and proclaimed a saint. But our age's lack of belief, which decks itself under the cover of caution, refuses to give credence to miracles even when they are seen or touched. As for myself, I was afraid that I should be accused of supressing facts if I consigned to oblivion things known on excellent authority. [404]

When it came to writing his own life of Wulfstan, William was keen to convince his readership that Wulfstan already possessed the sense of antiquity that he despairingly believed his readers demanded in order to accept Wulfstan's sanctity. Wulfstan's embodiment of the old fathers secured his place as a venerated saint. In the future Wulfstan might be regarded an ancient and his sanctity accepted, but this depended on knowledge of Wulfstan being preserved. Once enough time had passed, Wulfstan's sanctity would not be doubted. However, crucially, knowledge of Wulfstan had to be transmitted to posterity in order for his example to survive.

In order for the text to endure, the contemporary readers had to be convinced of its value, that would ensure its reception and would shape knowledge of St

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[403] See discussion in Chapter Two,

[404] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 438-439: 'Et profecto, si facilitas antiquorum hominum aduiueret, iam dudam elatus in altum sanctus predicaretur. Sed nostrorum incredincredulitas, quae se cautelae umbraculo exornat, non uult miraculis adhibere fidem etiam si conspicetur oculo, etiam si palpet digio. Ego me reum silentii timui fore si rectis auctoribus cognita taciturnitati addicerem.'

Wulfstan in the future. Historical writing had to be 'profitable for our own day and of interest to later generations'.[405] This future was a crucial driving force behind William's historical writings. The past was a treasure hoard of examples, both wicked and virtuous, which served as morally didactic tools. The past shaped the future and thought for the future meant that the past was preserved. The change in attitude from William's comments in the *Gesta Pontificum* to the *Vita Wulfstani* reveals that William had realised in the ten years between writing the *Gesta* and then the *Vita* that merely lamenting how the present would not accept Wulfstan despite the authority (*auctoritas*) that supported Wulfstan's sanctity was not enough. Whilst a life of Wulfstan existed in Coleman's work, which William praised for ensuring that the deeds of Wulfstan did not 'flit away and be lost', he wrote another in Latin to ensure that the deeds and miracles of Wulfstan survived for posterity.[406] Ultimately, the past and the future were connected to the action of the present. This concern for endurance is also evident in Bodleian MS Auct F. 3. 14. As discussed in Chapter One, on the flyleaf, William expressed in his own hand the hope that the creation of the manuscript 'Will make the name of William famous after his death'.[407] William wanted his own name to live on in posterity through the work he created in the present, be that historical narrative or supervising the construction of a computus manuscript.

This concern for the past's use by successive generations also provides some clues as to how William conceptualised the future. The purpose of the past as a

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[405] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 424-425, full quote: 'Itaque de illo talia narrabo libenter et morose quae sint inertibus incotamento, promptis exemplo, usui presentibus, iocunditati sequentibus'.
[406] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 10-11: 'ne gestorum auolaret memoria'.
[407] Bodleian Library, Auct F. 3. 14 f. iiv: 'Willelmi nomine faciet post funera clarum'. See Chapter One.

model for those who will follow implies that William perceived the future as something which could be influenced and guided from a temporal distance. On multiple occasions, William expressed the hope that the reader would follow in the footsteps of those who came before.[408] The past offered a 'pattern' for the present and the future to shape their lives. [409] By recovering the past for which there was little to no record, succeeding generations could avoid repeating the mistakes of the past. If the future had examples to follow, and the consequences of previous examples were known, then when faced with the reoccurrence of situations and choices, they were more likely to make the correct choice. The past, present, and future were not separate and distinct. They were closely interrelated, and this relationship is distilled through historical writing. The recovery and preservation of the past for the benefit of the future is only possible through the actions of those in the present.

Computus, Astronomy, and the Future

Preserving the past was not the only topic that would have steered William's attention towards those who would succeed him. His study as a cantor would have sparked thought about the future. The science of computus was, in essence, an exercise in ordering the future. The central component of computus was calculating forthcoming dates. Movable feasts, based on several calendars including the lunar

[408] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 2-3; *VW*, pp. 12-13.
[409] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 6-7.

cycle, meant that one had to calculate accurately when that feast would fall in years to come. In the *De Temporum Ratione*, Bede explains that the Paschal tables of Dionysius meant that any Cantor '[who] reads them can, with unerring gaze, not only look forward to the present and future, but can also look back at each and every date of Easter in the past'.[410] Therefore, using computus, a cantor could order time both in the past and in ages yet to come. A cantor could project stability onto the 'unmeasured tracts of future time' which could extend into the future ad infinitum.[411]

Other means of forecasting the future are discussed in the *De Temporum Ratione.* In Chapter Three, on the division of time, Bede refers to the art of astrology. Bede seeks to discredit astrologers' attempts to use the 'atom', the smallest division of time:

> In exploring the nativities of men, astrologers likewise claim to arrive at the atom when they divide the zodiacal circle into 12 signs, each sign into 30 partes, each pars into 12 puncti, each punctus into 40 momenta, and each momentum into ostenta, so that by carefully observing the position of the stars they might learn, virtually without error, the fate of the newborn. Let us see to it that these things are avoided, because such observance is futile and alien to our faith.[412]

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[410] Bede, *ORT*, p. 156; Bede *DTR* p. 270: 'quatenus legentes quique non solum praesentem vel futurum prospicere, praeteritum omnem paschalis statum temporis inenarrabili possent intuit respicere…agnoscat.'
[411] Wallis, 'Introduction', *ORT*, p. xxxii.
[412] Bede, *ORT*, pp. 15-16; Bede *DTR* p. 147: 'Attamen Mathematici in explorandis hominum genituris, ad attomum usque pervenire contendunt, dum Zodiacum circulum in XII signa, signa singular in partes XXX, partes item singulas in punctos XII, punctos singulos in momenta XL, momenta singular in ostenta LX distribuunt, ut considerate diligentis positione stellarum, fatum eius qui nascitur quasi absque errore deprehendant. Quae quia vana, et a nostra fide aliena est observatio, neglecta ea videamus potius quo'

The fact that Bede discussed the folly of astrology in a section outlining the division of time, suggests that he was concerned that computus methods were, or could be, used for prediction. Bede was against any suggestion of using astrology or any other means to foretell the future.[413] Indeed, in order to avoid any suggestion that time-reckoning might be used to predict the future, Bede concluded the *De Temporibus* with the proclamation that 'the rest of the sixth age is known to God alone'.[414] Such distaste for prognostic practices was rooted in key authorities. Isidore of Seville discussed in depth the distinction between astronomy – observation of the movement of the heavens - and astrology:

> There is a certain distinction between astronomy and astrology. For astronomy concerns the turning of the heavens, the rising, setting and motion of the planets, or from what cause this can be defined. Astrology is partly a natural science and partly superstitious. The natural part explains the courses of the sun and the moon, or certain positions of the stars and of the seasons. The superstitious part is that which diviners follow, who make auguries from the stars, and also associate the twelve celestial signs with all parts of the body and soul, and attempt to predict the births and customs of people from the course of the stars.[415]

As both Bede and Isidore state, there is a distinct line between using computus to forecast the date of Easter and using time-reckoning knowledge to foretell the future. Augustine also discussed the practise of astrology and using the stars to divine the

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[413] Darby, *Bede and the End of Time*, p. 35.
[414] Bede, *OT*, p. 131; *DT* p. 138 : 'Reliquum sextae aetatis Deo soli patet'.
[415] Isidore, *Etymologies*, p. 99; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi *Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber III:* 'Inter Astronomiam autem et Astrologiam aliquid differt. Nam Astronomia caeli conversionem, ortus, obitus motusque siderum continet, vel qua ex causa ita vocentur. Astrologia vero partim naturalis, partim superstitiosa est. Naturalis, dum exequitur solis et lunae cursus, vel stellarum certas temporum stationes. Superstitiosa vero est illa quam mathematici sequuntur, qui in stellis auguriantur, quique etiam duodecim caeli signa per singula animae vel corporis membra disponunt, siderumque cursu nativitates hominum et mores praedicare conantur'.

future in his *De Civitas Dei*.[416] He devoted seven chapters of Book V to refuting the view that the position of the stars was connected to predetermined events. His argument centred on contesting contemporary opinion that the Roman Empire was destined to fall. He further disputed that natal horoscopes (the position of the stars at the time of a person's birth) could accurately predict their future. He used the example of twins who were born under the same horoscope but trod very different paths through life. The crux of Augustine's argument was that the stars do not determine the action of those on earth and that to suggest otherwise violated the concept of free will. Augustine condemns attempts at astrology elsewhere, stating that they 'must be classed among those contracts and agreements made with devils'.[417] It is clear that multiple authorities with which William was very familiar condemned the practice of astrology.

The same knowledge that was used to reckon time could be used to foretell the future. Both involved the use of astronomy. Of the nineteen post-conquest English computus manuscripts, ten included astronomical texts. Charting the position of the stars was, as discussed in Chapter One, a central means of reckoning time. Astronomy and computus were closely associated subjects. However, knowledge of astronomy could be employed to predict the future. Later in the twelfth century, John of Salisbury believed that some people were so misguided that:

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[416] Augustine, *City of God,* Volume II: Books 4-7, ed. and trans William M. Green (Cambridge, MA, 1963); Augustine*, Confessions,* pp. 184-231; *De Doctrina Christiana*, PL 34, cols 51-52: 'Superstitio mathmaticorum'.

[417] Augustine, *De Doctrina*, cols. 96-97, full quote: 'Quare istae quoque opiniones quibusdam rerum signis humana praesumptione institutis ad eadem illa quasi quaedam cum daemonibus pacta et conventa referendae sunt'.

> they say that it is possible to form an image under the position of certain constellations, and which might be formed ... so that it would receive the spirit of life at the nod of the stars and will reveal the secrets of hidden truth.[418]

Much of the hostility expressed by these authorities was directed towards divining the future through observing the heavens. Observation of the stars and planets was also a key part of computus. Analysing the movement of the stars was a common way to reckon time for many areas of monastic life, including the time of Divine Offices held after sunset (Matins, Vespers, and Compline). It could also be used to determine the time of year. As the movement of stars were fixed and moved on a fixed rotation, they could be used reliably. The philosopher Boethius regarded the undeviating motion of the stars as a sign of God's order and of the seasons.[419] They were a stable, unfluctuating means of reckoning time. William of Malmesbury's computus manuscript, contains two texts that deal specifically with the heavenly sphere: *Liber Igini de Spera Celesti* (*On the Philosophy of the Spheres*) and *Regule de Astrolabio* (*Rules of the Astrolabe*).[420] William would frequently have observed the motion of the stars. The nature of the course of the stars as a fixed movement also meant that a cantor could use those movements to forecast the positions of the stars and the planets in the future. The line between using the stars to calculate time, and using them to forecast the future was clear. But, as key authorities thought it necessary to condemn the practice, it was a line that could be crossed. The fact that

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[418] John of Salisbury, *Policraticus, sive nugis curialium et vestigiis pbilosophorum*, Libri VIII 2.19, ed. C. Webb, 2 vols (Oxford, 1909).
[419] Boethius, *Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy*. Trans H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, S. J. Tester (Cambridge, MA, 1973), pp. 1m6.16-19; Stephen C. McCluskey 'Boethius's Astronomy and Cosmology' in *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages,* eds. Noel Harold Kaylor and Philip Edward Phillips (Leiden, 2012), pp. 53-54.
[420] Bodleian MS Auct F. 3. 14.

Bede explicitly discussed the practice and discounted it in a work on the science of reckoning time, strongly suggests that such knowledge could, and was, being used to attempt divination. William himself refers to the practise of creating horoscopes in the *Gesta Pontificum* and describes it as 'a deep and dark art'.[421]

Thomson has illustrated that William had first-hand access to several texts on the subject of the planets and the stars. The first is Pliny's *Natural History*. William had copied substantial extracts into his *Polyhistor*. Pliny's encyclopaedic text was widely disseminated across Europe from the early medieval period and included a significant amount of astronomical material.[422] Of the thirty-seven books, William had copied mostly books I-VI. Within these extracts are many from Book II which was on the topic of 'the World, the Elements, and the Heavenly Bodies', in other words, on astronomy and geography.[423] It includes discussion on the nature of the stars, of the movement of the planets and instruction on observing the heavens and explanations of unusual phenomena such as comets.[424] The extracts in the *Polyhistor* focus on the celestial sphere. Many describe phenomena such as comets, the appearance of many suns and moons, the nature of the planets, the inventions of men to observe the heavens, the movement of the stars and the nature of stars.[425] Another text copied by William was Martianus Capella's *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*. It uses the allegory of a marriage between Philology and Mercury to

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[421] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 516-517: 'ars opaca et profunda'.
[422] Eastwood, *Ordering the Heavens,* p. 95.
[423] William of Malmesbury, *Polyhistor,* ed. Helen Testroet Ouellette (Binghamton, NY, 1982), pp. 45-67: Pliny, *Historia Naturalis,* Book II extracts pp. 45-47; Pliny, *Natural History, Volume I: Books 1-2*, Trans. H. Rackham, (Cambridge, MA, 1938).
[424] Pliny, *Historia Naturalis.*
[425] William of Malmesbury, *Polyhistor*, pp. 45-46.

represent the combination of the physical and spiritual cosmos.[426] In Bruce Eastwood's words when discussing the study of *De Nuputiis* on the Carolingian world:

> what made the whole allegory a compelling body for study in the Carolingian world was its combination of elaborate detail about the contents and interrelations of the parts of the physical and spiritual cosmos along with its suggestion that full knowledge of the seven arts, or disciplines, was an essential basis for a rational, philosophical understanding of the divine world, that is, for the human mind's understanding of God.[427]

However, Book VIII, The Astronomia, gives a detailed account of astronomy particularly focusing on the five spherical layers of the universe.[428] We know that William possessed a full version of the work because a surviving manuscript contains William's own hand.[429] Finally, William also had access to the writings of Macrobius. Thomson has shown that William had copied extensively from the *Saturnalia* for historical information, while Sigbjørn Sønnesyn has revealed that William incorporated concepts directly from Macrobius' commentary on *The Dream of Scipio*.[430] The Commentary was an extremely popular book on medieval science and its popularity reached its peak in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[431] It contains many astronomical descriptions including the movement and attributes of the planets.[432] The Commentary also discusses five categories of dream experience, three of which are prognostic. The first two, *insomnium* and *visum,* were dreams

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[426] Eastwood, *Ordering the Heavens*, p. 182.
[427] Eastwood, *Ordering the Heavens*, p. 182.
[428] Eastwood, *Ordering the Heavens*, p. 183.
[429] Corpus Christi College Cambridge, MS 330.
[430] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury,* p. 60; Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, p. 49.
[431] Marion Dolan, *Astronomical Knowledge Transmission Through Illustrated Aratea Manuscripts* (New York, NY, 2017), p. 113.
[432] Dolan, *Astronomical Knowledge Transmission*, pp. 113-114.

which 'had no prophetic significance'. On the other hand, *oraculum*, *visio*, and *somnium,* are truthful prophetic visions.[433] Macrobius' commentary contains discussion of both astronomy and prognostic experiences.

William was also undertaking his historical writing at a time when Peter Alfonsi and Adelard of Bath were active in England and engaged in translating and transmitting astronomical works based on Arabic and Aristotelian texts.[434] Anne Lawrence-Mathers refers to a group of 'scientists' based in the west of England: members of communities at Hereford, Great Malvern, and Worcester all studied astronomy. [435] Geographically, these centres were within reasonable travel distance from Malmesbury. We know that William had strong connections to Worcester and it is highly likely that William was engaged with the community at Hereford.[436] This study was fairly new. Knowledge of the use of the astrolabe does not appear to have reached England until the early twelfth century. William's interest in astronomical texts and his putative connections to the centres at the forefront of developments in astronomy suggests that he was keen to attain knowledge of the most recent developments in this area. His knowledge of computus combined with his knowledge of astronomy gives William's consideration of divining the future

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[433] Steven Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 22-24.
[434] A. G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066-1422* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 31-32.
[435] Anne Lawrence-Mathers, 'John of Worchester and the Science of History, *Journal of Medieval History*, 39:3 (2013), p. 270; The work conducted at these centres has been discussed at length in R.W. Southern, 'The Place of England in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance' in his *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies*, (Oxford, 1970) and Burnett, 'Mathematics and Astronomy in Hereford and its Region in the Twelfth Century' in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology at Hereford, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions XV* ed. D. Whitehead (1995), pp. 50-59; also see: Josiah C. Russell, 'Herford and Arabic Science in England about 1175–1200', *Isis,* 18:1 (1932), pp. 14-25, 'The Arabic Inheritance' in *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy* ed. Peter Dronke (Cambridge, 1988) pp. 113-150, Winthrop Wetherbee 'Philosophy, Cosmology, and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance' in Peter Dronke, *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy,* pp. 21-53.
[436] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 71-73.

through observing the stars an additional dimension. This dimension and thus his consideration of the future are brought into focus in his *Gesta Regum*, in which he discusses the 'Black legend' of Gerbert of Aurillac. It is to this episode that we now turn our attention.

'The Black Legend'

William's understanding of the connection between time reckoning and predicting the future is brought to the fore in his retelling of the story of Pope Sylvester II, or Gerbert Aurillac (946 – 1003), who was Pope from c.999-1003. From the eleventh century, his encouragement of the study of Arabic and Greco-Roman sciences including mathematics and astronomy led to the development of legends surrounding him. These centre on his engagement with demonic forces to create a brass 'talking head' which would tell him the future. With its aid, Gerbert rose to power. The legend concludes that one day, Gerbert asked the head if he would die before he gave mass in Jerusalem, to which it said no. However, that day Gerbert celebrated Mass in a small church in Rome which was nicknamed 'Jerusalem'. He died shortly after mass was completed. William included a version of the tale in his *Gesta Regum*. After entering the Cluniac abbey of Saint-Geraud as an oblate, Gerbert left the monastery:

> A native of Gaul, he grew up from boyhood as a monk at Fleury; but after reaching Pythagoras's parting of the ways, he either grew tired of the monastic life or was taken with a thirst for reputation, and made his escape one night to Spain, his chief intention being to

> learn astrology and other such arts from the Saracens… There he surpassed Ptolemy in knowledge of the astrolabe, Alhandreus in that of the relative positions of the stars, Julius Firmicus in judicial astrology. There he learnt to interpret the song and flights of birds, to summon ghostly forms from the nether regions, everything in short, whether harmful or healthful, that had been discovered by human curiosity; for of the permitted arts, arithmetic, music, astronomy, and geometry, I need say nothing – by the way he absorbed them he made them look beneath the level of his intelligence, and re-established in Gaul through his untiring efforts subjects that had long been completely lost.[437]

William's discussion of Gerbert's curriculum includes reference to the quadrivium. That encompasses the four areas of advanced learning: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy, which are pursued after the study of the trivium; grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Together, they constitute the seven liberal arts, essential training for the study of philosophy and theology. The fact that William does not mention the arts of the trivium implies that those had already been attained by Gerbert before he travelled to Spain, or that he could attain them so effortlessly that he did not need to study them.

However, the discussion of topics aside from the quadrivium is intriguing. He began by listing two arts specifically related to computus and the reckoning of time: knowledge of the astrolabe and the position of the stars. Then, the subjects take a darker turn with judicial astrology, before descending to augury (portents of bird flight and song) and finally necromancy. This progression suggests that William

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[437] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 280-281: 'Ex Gallia natus, monachus a puero apud Floriacum adoleuit. Mox cum Pitagoricum biuium attigisset, seu tedio monachatus seu gloriae cupiditate captus, nocte profugit Hispaniam, animo precipue intendens ut astrologiam et ceteras id genus artes Saracenis edisceret… Ibi vicit scientia Ptholomeum in astrolabio, Alhandreum in astrorum interstitio, Iulium Firmicum in fato. Ibi quid cantus et uolatus auium portendat didicit, ibi excire tenues ex inferno figuras, ibi postremo quicquid uel noxiu uel salubre curiositas humana deprehendit; nam de licitis artibus, arithmetica música et astronomía et geometría, nichil attinet dicere, qua sita ebibit ut inferiores ingenio suo ostenderet, et magna industria reuocaret in Galliam omnino ibi iam pridem obsoletas'.

believed it to be a possible path that could be followed from the study of time reckoning. William explains that it was astrology which drew Gerbert to leave the monastery. Thus, Gerbert's motivation, and the first arts beyond the quadrivium that he studied, were directly related to the reckoning of time. All of the four arts listed are means to predict the future. Whilst Gerbert's primary interest was astrology, and thus from the outset his aim was the study of the future, the study of the future began with time reckoning. William was aware of how these 'astral sciences' were connected to computus and time reckoning. It also shows that William was aware of how the study of these 'astral sciences' could be used for either computus or to attain forbidden knowledge. Thus, William used the narration of the life of Gerbert to illustrate not only the importance and power of time reckoning, but also to demonstrate the clear line between telling the time and foretelling the future. This was a line that Gerbert crossed.

Gerbert ultimately did so when he made his brass talking head:

> After close inspection of heavenly bodies (at a time, that is, when all the planets were proposing to begin their courses afresh), he cast for himself the head of a statue which could speak, though only if spoken to, but would utter the truth in the form of either Yes or No.[438]

This connection between time reckoning and foretelling the future is further compounded in William's depiction of the creation of the talking head. William frames the creation of the head solely within the science of astronomy and time reckoning. The head was created 'when all the planets were beginning their pass

[438] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 292-295: 'fudisse sibi statuae caput certa inspectione siderum, cum uidelicet omnes planetae exordia cursus sui meditarentur, quod non nisi interrogatum loqueretur, sed uerum uel affirmatiue uel negatiue pronuntiaret'.

again'. Gerbert created the head using his knowledge of astronomy and created it at a specific time under a specific planetary alignment in order to endow the head with the power of divination.

William's narration of the Gerbert story is different from other, earlier, accounts. Beno's eleventh-century version connects Gerbert's attempts to divine the future to diabolical magic. Gerbert was able to divine the future with the aid of demons.[439] Sigebert of Gembloux, whose account William could conceivably have read, contends that Gerbert did not acquire his knowledge of sciences through the proper means.[440] Both narratives frame Gerbert's prophetic abilities as a result of demonic magic. William's contemporary Orderic Vitalis praises Gerbert as a highly skilled scholar, but also includes the legend that Gerbert interacted with demons in order to acquire knowledge of the future.[441] William's account differs from all of these versions. As E. R. Truitt has illustrated, William was the first to connect Gerbert's abilities to tell the future to his knowledge of astral science.[442] Truitt claims this illustrates that a change in thinking about divination had occurred: 'the tale of Gerbert's talking head in the *Gesta* signals a shift in thinking about divination and its place within the quadrivium among the scholars of the West Country of England in the early twelfth century'.[443] He further states that this development marked a move away from considering divination as wholly negative towards considering it

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[439] E. R. Truitt, 'Celestial Divination and Arabic Science in Twelfth-Century England: The History of Gerbert of Aurillac's Talking Head', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 73:2 (2012), p. 221.
[440] Truitt, 'Celestial Divination', p. 221; Sigebert of Gembloux, *Chronologium*, PL 160, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris, 1854), pp. 196-197.
[441] O. Vit., *HE*, Vol I, p. 15.
[442] Truitt, 'Celestial Divination', p. 221.
[443] Truitt, 'Celestial Divination', p. 221.

acceptable.[444] Marie Carolina Escobar Vargas contends that William did not condemn the practice outright, but rather expressed concern.[445] Vargas explained that William's 'passing knowledge' of recent developments meant that he was able to distinguish between the lawful use of judicial astrology and necromancy.[446] Thus William's judgement of Gerbert was not a negative one, but did offer some sort of warning or caution for those who wish to engage in those practices.

Both of these arguments are flawed. Truitt's claim that William perceived the use of astrology to predict the future as a positive activity is not substantiated by the Gerbert story. It is clear from William's description that the possibility of learning astrology tempted Gerbert to leave the monastery. From the outset, Gerbert's aim was to learn how to see the future. William's description of the activities of the Saracens (whose knowledge Gerbert sought) as 'witchcraft and divination' confirms William's negative opinion of the motivation behind Gerbert's study.[447] The comment that Gerbert attempted every form of learning - whether 'harmful or helpful' – suggests that Gerbert was not even attempting to differentiate between the improved paths of knowledge and those which were forbidden and dangerous.[448] Vargas' argument is based on the view that William was not an expert in these practices.[449] However, William was more closely engaged with the study of stars and

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[444] Truit, 'Celestial Divination'.
[445] Marie Carolina Escobar Vargas, 'The Construction of Spanish Necromancy in Twelfth-Century Astrology and the Case of Gerbert of Aurillac' https://www.academia.edu/17957922/The_construction_of_Spanish_necromancy_twelfth-century_astrology_and_the_case_of_Gerbert_of_Aurillac accessed 15/06/2019, p. 2.
[446] Vargas, 'The Construction of Spanish Necromancy,' p. 10.
[447] 'diuinationibus et incantationibus'.
[448] 'noxiu uel salubre'.
[449] Vargas, 'The Construction of Spanish Necromancy', p. 10.

planets than Vargas suggests. Vargas incorrectly attributes manuscript Auct. F. 3. 14 to Worcester and suggests that William was only aware of these astronomical developments because he may have been exposed to this volume when he visited Worcester in the 1130s to complete his life of Saint Wulfstan commissioned by the monks and written at the cathedral.[450] As demonstrated in Chapter One, William supervised the creation of that manuscript for Malmesbury Abbey.[451] Vargas also suggested that the treatise on the astrolabe included in the manuscript was attributed to Gerbert.[452] However, there is no means of confirming this as Gerbert's name does not appear in the manuscript and it is possible that William may not have known of, or that William predated, its connection to Gerbert. Vargas concludes that 'even though William had no expert knowledge on the subject [of astral sciences] he was definitely well-informed and had access to its possible lawful applications'.[453] The argument that William accepted that there would be possible lawful applications for the use of astrology is not evident in his account of Gerbert's story.

William's knowledge of astral sciences combined with his knowledge of computus and his role as a cantor would explain why he deviated from the other versions of the Gerbert story. By travelling the route of forbidden knowledge, Gerbert twisted the legitimate knowledge of time-related sciences to create the brazen head. William demonstrated the power that time-related sciences could hold, and that they could be used for good or for ill. He reveals the importance of his own role as cantor and the dangers that lay in acquiring higher knowledge without

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[450] Vargas, 'The Construction of Spanish Necromancy,' p. 11-12.
[451] See Chapter One.
[452] Vargas, 'The Construction of Spanish Necromancy', p. 12.
[453] Vargas, 'The Construction of Spanish Necromancy,' p. 13.

virtuous intent. Finally, the account highlights William's wariness of the latest developments in scientific thought. William was connected to, and likely knew those in, intellectual circles that witnessed Arabic sciences entering England. And as is demonstrated in William's account of Gerbert, it was Arabic knowledge which attracted Gerbert and fed his ambition, which then turned into his study of forbidden arts. Ultimately, William used this story of Gerbert to illustrate the potential of time -related sciences. Whilst he may have been wary of the new sciences, he was more overtly concerned for those who would study the art of time reckoning if their objective was to predict the future. Computus and its associated sciences could open the door to the means of foretelling the future, but that did not necessarily make it advisable that that one should pass through it.[454] This knowledge of the relationship between time-related sciences and the future affected how William approached the writing of prophecy.

Prophecy

In the twelfth century, prophecy was a complicated business. The previous century's focus on prognostication had shifted.[455] In her study of prophecy in twelfth-century historiography, Alheydis Plassmann made the point that prophecy was no longer

[454] I am reminded of the popular internet meme which describes the relationship between the sciences and the humanities: 'Science can tell you how to clone a Tyrannosaurus Rex, humanities can tell you why this might be a bad idea'. Clearly, this sentiment is not new and William of Malmesbury was expressing something similar.
[455] See László Sándor Chardonnens, *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics, 900-1100: Study and Texts* (Leiden, 2007).

interpreted solely through biblical, apocalyptic and salvation history, though these were still significant.[456] Rather, prophecy was imbued with political meaning and applied to assess contemporary events. Plassmann uses Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi* to show the 'old style' of prophecy before this turn to the political: only used in a hagiographical context and thus focused on the glorification of the sacred. Whilst the extent to which Eadmer's use of prophecy was not political is debatable, as will be discussed below, it is arguable that William was caught halfway between this shift. On the one hand, it is evident that prophecy occurs with much greater concentration in William's Vitae than in his 'secular' works.[457] Ten references to prophets or prophecy (*prophetia*) can be found in the *Gesta Regum*, nine in *the Gesta Pontificum*, and none in the *Historia Novella*.[458] Meanwhile, thirteen can be found across both of William's Vitae.[459] It must be remembered that the Vitae are both significantly shorter than the Gestas. Other words which are similar include *predixerit*, *predicta* and *vaticinius*, and of these there are eleven references combined across the *Gesta Regum* and *Gesta Pontificum* and none in the *Historia*.[460] Furthermore, many of the references in the secular works are to saints, Dunstan and Wulfstan being the main focus. Indeed, *prophetia* is almost solely used in conjunction with the saints whilst the

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[456] Alheydis Plassmann, 'Prophezeiungen in der Englischen Historiographie des 12. Jahrhunderts', p. 19.
[457] Whilst using 'secular' and 'ecclesiastic' to categorise William's texts is not straightforward or helpful in general, in this case it allows to demonstrate what is a distinct difference due to the content and topics of the texts.
[458] W. Malm., *GR* pp. 130-131, pp. 254-255, pp. 286-287,pp. 340-341, pp. 404-405, pp. 412-413, pp. 414-415, pp. 486-487, pp. 626-627, pp. 770-771; *GP* pp. 36-37, pp. 38-39, pp. 42-43, pp. 70-71, pp. 112-113, pp. 258-259, pp. 260-261, pp. 364-365, pp. 434-435.
[459] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 40-41, pp. 54-55, pp. 58-59, pp. 60-61, pp. 106-107; *VD*, pp. 186-187, pp. 212-213, pp. 242-243, pp. 254-255, pp. 264-265, pp. 266-267, pp. 300-301.
[460] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 268-269, pp. 270-271, pp. 300-301, pp. 402-403, pp. 572-573, pp. 752-753, pp. 792-793; *GP*, pp. 298-299, pp. 476-477, pp. 556-557, pp. 590-591.

other terms are deployed in the context of a prophecy made by a secular character. However, there are accounts involving visions which William did not define explicitly as prophecy, but which were prophetic in nature. In these instances, he deployed Macrobius' categories. *Oraculum* appears eight times in the *Gesta Pontificum*, and six times in the Vitae, whereas the *Gesta Regum* has five references and the *Historia Novella* none.[461] Likewise, *visio* occurs fourteen times in the *Gesta Pontificum* and eleven times in the Vitae, in contrast to nine in the *Gesta Regum* and none in the *Historia Novella*.[462] These two categories, especially *visio*, are more closely related to the abilities of saints. However, in the case of *somnium* the trend is reversed. Predictive dreams occur with greater frequency in the secular writings, and less so in those concerning saints. The *Gesta Regum* includes seventeen instances and the *Gesta Pontificum* includes seven, and even the *Historia Novella* has one case.[463] On the other hand, the Vitae include ten between them.[464] It can be suggested that William was on firmer ground when discussing overtly defined prophecy in the context of saints and hagiography than in a secular context. Dream-based predictions were equally likely to occur in, and be relevant to, a secular context as

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[461] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 72-73, pp. 238-239, pp. 402-403, pp. 488-489, pp. 572-573; *GP*, pp. 36-37, pp. 214-215, pp. 262-263, pp. 268-269, pp. 298-299, pp. 476-477, pp. 562-563, pp. 622-623; *VW*, pp. 30-31, pp. 44-45, pp. 66-67; *VD*, pp. 206-207, pp. 222-223, 276-277.
[462] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 162-163, pp. 170-171, pp. 294-295, pp. 346-347, pp. 388-389; pp. 402-403; pp. 414-415, pp. 496-497, pp. 624-625; *GP*, pp. 104-105, pp. 198-199, pp. 262-263, pp. 264-265, pp. 286-287, pp. 298-299, pp. 362-363, pp. 458-459, pp. 474-475, pp. 476-477, pp. 484-485, pp. 572-573, pp. 632-633, pp. 642-643; *VW*, pp. 36-37, pp. 38-39, pp. 80-81, pp. 112-113, pp. 152-153; *VD*, pp. 174-175, pp. 192-193, pp. 242-243, pp. 244-245, pp. 276-277, pp. 288-289.
[463] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 224-225, pp. 228-229, pp. 402-403, pp. 406-407, pp. 408-409, pp. 426-427, pp. 570-571, pp. 572-573, pp. 574-575, pp. 604-605, pp. 622-623, pp. 636-637, pp. 746-747; *GP*, pp. 200-201, pp. 246-247, pp. 262-263, pp. 274-275, pp. 298-299, pp. 312-313, pp. 594-595; *HN*, pp. 10-11.
[464] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 74-75, pp. 80-81, pp. 98-99, pp. 106-107, pp. 150-151; *VD*, pp. 180-181, pp. 206-207, pp. 212-213, pp. 240-241, pp. 276-277.

much as a saintly one. The following discussion will primarily focus on the episodes which William defined as prophetic.

When William did include prophecy in his secular histories, his selection of examples, and how he incorporated them into the narrative, were subtle, and differed from several of his peers. The greatest difference between William and two near contemporaries was how prophecy was positioned in the narrative structure. Eadmer and Henry of Huntingdon both used prophecy to frame their entire accounts. Eadmer's *Historia Novorum* opens not with Anselm's birth, as the *Vita Anselmi* does, but with a brief outline of the previous century before Anselm became archbishop. Eadmer explained his narrative plan in the conclusion of the prologue:

> we should, we think, begin by going a little further back and tracing in brief outline what was, so to speak, the actual planting of the seed which grew the developments which we are to record. This should be our starting point.[465]

Monika Otter argues that Eadmer began the narrative with the Norman Conquest, when in fact he began with a prophecy.[466] Commencing with the reign of King Edgar and his relationship with Archbishop Dunstan, Eadmer narrates Edgar's murder by Aethelred, and Dunstan's prophecy:

> This Aethelred, because he had grasped the throne by the shedding of his brother's blood, was sternly denounced by Dunstan who declared that Aethelred himself would live in blood, that he would suffer invasion of foreign foes and all their horrible oppression and that the Kingdom itself to be worn again and again by bloody devastations.[467]

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[465] Eadmer, *HRE*, p. 2; Eadmer, *HNA* p. 2: 'Caeterum narrandi ordinem aggredientes paulo altius ordiendum patamus, et ab ipsa, ut ita dixcrim, radices propagine de qua corum quae dicenda sunt germen excrevit brevi relatu progrediendum'.
[466] Monika Otter, '1066: The Moment of Transition', p. 565 fn. 1.
[467] Eadmer, *HRE*, pp. 3–4; Eadmer, *HNA*, p. 3: 'Cui, quia per songuinem fratris ad regnum aspiravit, gravi invectione praefatus antistes comminatus est, quod ipse videlicet in sanguine victurus, quod

Following the description of Dunstan's death, Eadmer swiftly describes the turmoil faced by Christ Church Canterbury and Archbishop Elphage. Eadmer then justifies the necessity of including this information before moving on to the narrative proper:

> …these events I have briefly mentioned, not as though I were composing a history of those times, but rather bringing them to the notice of those who care to know how true was the prophecy of Father Dunstan when he foretold the evils which would come upon England.[468]

Of the various events that Eadmer could have picked, he chose to use Dunstan and his prophecy, suggesting that the subsequent main narrative should be interpreted through the lens of this prophecy. Indeed, this specific function of the prophecy is revealed by Eadmer:

> How true proved this prophecy of the man of God can be too easily seen both in the chronicles by those who care to read them *and in our own affliction* by those who know how to discern them, not to mention *the happenings which the course of this present work will in their proper places portray, as truth shall dictate*.[469]

Eadmer made the direct connection between the prophecy and the events of the main narrative, anchoring the latter in the context of Dunstan's prophecy. Once Eadmer justified his inclusion of the prophecy, he continued to describe the 'evils' which occurred after the time of Dunstan, clearly implying that these were also evidence of the prophecy: 'Nor did the evils end there. After this other monstrous wrongs were done which every year by year increased and grew worse and worse,

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barbarorum incursus atroci oppressione passurus, quod ipsum quoque regnum innumeris atque cruentis vastationibus conterendum foret edicit'.

[468] Eadmer, *HRE*, p. 5; Eadmer, *HNA*, p. 5: 'Haec paucis commemoraverim, non historiam texens, sed quam veridico vaticinio pater Dunstanus mala Angliae ventura praedixerit scire volentium intellectui pandens'.

[469] Eadmer, *HRE*, p. 4; Eadmer, *HNA*, pp. 3–4, 'Quae prophetia viri Dei quam vera extiterit, et in chronicis qui legere volunt, et in nostris tribulationibus qui advertere sciunt, videre facillime possunt, ne dicam in iis quae istius operis series per loca, veritate dictante, demonstrabit'.

which predominately included the destruction of monastic houses'.[470] He then skipped ahead to Edward the Confessor's reign and described, at great length, the build-up to and events of the Norman Conquest. Eadmer summarized a chronological distance of nearly one hundred years in one sentence: 'Transierunt in istis anni plures'.[471] Thus, Eadmer used the placement of the prophecy at the beginning of the *Historia*, to anchor Dunstan's prophecy to the events of the main narrative. It added another layer of meaning to the narrative.

Henry of Huntingdon used the pattern established by a biblical prophecy in the Old Testament and applied it to England:

> From the very beginning down to the present time, the divine vengeance has sent five plagues into Britain, punishing the faithful as well as unbelievers. The first was through the Romans, who overcame Britain but who later withdrew. The second was through the Picts and the Scots, who grievously beleaguered the land with battles but did not conquer it. The third was through the English, who overcame and occupied it. The fourth was through the Danes, who conquered it by warfare, but afterwards they perished. The fifth was through the Normans, who conquered it and have dominion over the English people at the present time.[472]

The biblical prophecy alluded to is the 'Plagues of Egypt': a series of devastations wrought on the people of Egypt.[473] Henry was associating the events of England's past in the framework of God's divine plan and his vengeance for the sins of the

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[470] Eadmer, *HRE*, p. 5; Eadmer, *HNA*, p. 5: 'Nec hic malorum finis extitit. Acta sunt enim post haec et alia per Angliam ingentia mala, ac pluribus annis semper fuerunt sibiipsis in deterius aucta'.
[471] Eadmer, *HRE*, p. 5; Eadmer, *HNA*, p. 5.
[472] H. Hunt., *HA,* pp. 14-15: 'Quinque autem plagas ab exordio usque ad presens immisit diuina ultio. Britannie, que non solum uisitat fideles, sed etiam diiudicat infideles. Primam per Romanos, qui Britanniam expugnauerunt sed postea recesserunt. Secundum per Pictos et Scotos, qui grauissime eam bellis uexauerunt, nec tamen optinuerunt. Terciam per Anglicos, qui eam debellauerunt et optinent. Quartam per Dacos, qui eam bellis optinuerunt, sed postea deperierunt. Quintam per Normannos, qui eam deuicerunt et Anglis inpresentiarum dominatur'.
[473] Biblical plagues of Egypt: Genesis 12:17, Leviticus 26:21, 28, Punishment on Chosen People Deuteronomy 8, Leviticus 26, Jerome 14:17, 2 Kings 17; also see Gransden, 'Prologues in the Historiography of Twelfth-Century England', pp. 77-78.

English people.[474] There has been much scholarly discussion as to the implications of this prophecy for Henry of Huntingdon's consideration of the Norman Conquest as God's vengeance on the English people. [475] By beginning his narrative by transposing the framework of this prophecy onto the course of English history, Henry was not only using it to explain why the English suffered from devastation, but was also framing his entire narrative through scriptural prophecy. The pattern gave additional meaning to the interpretation of events. Henry alluded to this biblical prophecy and associated it with the events of history several times throughout his chronicle to further reinforce it as an overall framing device.[476] Thus, Henry was using biblical prophecy to comment politically on the events of English history. Eadmer, by using Dunstan's prophecy, was doing the same thing. Prophecy became the lens through which the events of English history were interpreted.

William's approach was different. In fact, he appeared to be very careful in terms of when he used prophecy. This caution could explain, for instance, why his work is devoid of any references to the Apocalypse. Even his account of the First Crusade has been purged of any such echoes as he might have found in his sources.[477] Furthermore, he avoided using statements similar to Henry's and Eadmer's: he did not imply that any prophecy had overarching implications for the

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[474] Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing*, pp. 120-121; Nancy Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1977), pp. 22-24.
[475] See: John Gillingham, 'Henry of Huntingdon and the Twelfth-Century Revival of the English Nation' in his *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 123–144; Diana E. Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation in Henry of Huntingdon's Historia Anglorum' in A*nglo-Norman Studies, XVIII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference, 1995,* ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, (Woodbridge, 1996), pp. 105–121 especially p. 110.
[476] H. Hunt., *HA*, pp. 14-15, developed in pp. 74-75, pp. 98-99, pp. 122-123, pp. 254-255, pp. 264-265, pp. 273-274, pp. 343-344; see also Nancy Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, pp. 22-25.
[477] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 592-701; for discussion of Apocalypse and the Crusades see Jay Rubenstein, *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream: The Crusades, Apocalyptic Prophecy, and the End of History* (Oxford, 2018).

entire narrative. When he did narrate a prophecy such as Dunstan's of the coming of the Vikings and Edward the Confessor's on his deathbed (see below), he only conveyed the specific implications of that prophecy once its outcome had in fact occurred. What is more interesting is that William had read Eadmer's *Historia* and would have been aware of the use of prophecy as a framing device. However, William chose not to follow suit. He was, in effect, limiting the interpretive reach of the prophecy to specific events and instances. The prophecy in question could not be applied to an event unless William directed the reader's attention to it. This suggests a very sophisticated approach: William was very careful and precise, which ensured that he was able to guide the reader's interpretation of the narrative to the greatest effect.

All of the prophecies that William reported had been recorded in an earlier source. None of them were used to predict the future. Each prophecy was recounted, with its fulfilment recorded at a later stage. Julia Crick, discussing Orderic Vitalis' interpretation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's prophecies of Merlin, describes the concept of 'spent' and 'live' prophecies.[478] A 'spent' prophecy was a 'cipher for insular history from remote antiquity to the present' whereas a 'live' prediction was 'a potential resource for men in power; to those living in daily jeopardy, whether political or personal, or carrying immense responsibilities and taking decisions without the comfort of hindsight, the prophecies could promise enlightenment'.[479] Every prophecy that William included in his works was 'spent', its truthfulness

[478] Crick, 'Geoffrey and the Prophetic tradition', p. 68.
[479] Crick, 'Geoffrey and the Prophetic tradition', p. 68.

validated because it had already come true. Nor did he include any which had not already been discussed in other sources. This suggests that William was wary of attempting to predict the future by including a prophecy that was yet to be fulfilled and the veracity of which was as yet unproven. However, the fact that it had already been 'spent' did not mean that a prophecy could not be fulfilled again. As Orderic Vitalis's discussion of the prophecies of Merlin illustrates, prophecies could be both 'spent' and 'live'.[480] They could be repeated or fulfilled on multiple occasions across time. No prophecy was ever fully 'spent'.

The most famous of the prophecies recorded by William occurred on King Edward the Confessor's deathbed:

> He had lain for two days speechless; waking on the third day, he said, sighing heavily and deeply: 'Almighty God, if what I have seen is not a baseless illusion but a truthful vision, give me the power of telling it to those who stand around; or the reverse'. So his speech soon cleared, and he began: 'I saw just now two monks standing by me, whom as a young man long ago in Normandy I had seen living most holy lives and dying Christian deaths. They announced that they had been sent from God, and gave me the following message: "since the leading men in England, earls, bishops, and abbots, are servants not of God but of the Devil, God has given this kingdom after your death for a year and a day into the hand of the enemy, and demons will roam at large over the whole of this land".[481]

When Edward asked when these disasters would end, the monks replied:

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[480] Crick, 'Geoffrey and the prophetic tradition', p. 68; O. Vit., *HE,* Vol III, VI.386-8.

[481] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 414-415: 'Cum enim biduo elinguis iacuisset, die tertio post soporem grauiter et profunde suspirans 'Deus' inquit 'omnipotens, si non est fantastica illusio sed uerax uisio quam uidi, da michi facultatem eam astantibux exponendi, aut e conuerso'. Ita mox expedita loquela 'Deus' inquit 'modo monachos uidi michi assistere, quos adlescens olim in Normannia uideram religiosissime uixisse et Christianissime obisse. Hi, se Dei nuntios prefati, talia ingressere: "Quoniam primores Angliae, duces episcopi et abbates, non sunt ministri Dei sed diaboli, tradidit Deus hoc regnum post obitum tuum anno uno et die uno in mau inimici, peruagabunturque demones totam hanc terram".

> 'it will be… as though a green tree were cut through the middle of the trunk and the part cut off carried away for the space of three furlongs: when without support of any kind that part is again joined to its trunk and begins to bloom and produce fruit, as the sap of each runs together with the affection there was of old between them, then and not till then will it be possible to hope for an end to such evils'.[482]

William's version closely echoed that in the anonymous eleventh-century *Vita Aedwardi*.[483] It reveals certain elements about William's concept of time and exemplifies how he used prophecy. First, it is recounted in detail, and then William confirms that it was truthful:

> the truth of this [prophecy], I say, we now experience, now that England has become a dwelling place of foreigners and a play-ground for lords of alien blood. No Englishman today is an earl, a bishop, or an abbot; new faces everywhere enjoy England's riches and gnaw her vitals, nor is there any hope of ending this miserable state of affairs.[484]

The truthfulness of the prophecy appears to have been of great concern to William. This was significant since Edward did not have the established authority of a saint: William does not at any point refer to Edward as a saint. He used representations of time to add further plausibility and meaning. William reported the days of Edward's illness as a linear progression and then recorded the prophecy: 'He had lain for two days speechless; waking on the third day…'.[485] The passing of three days before the vision is foretold echoes Jesus' resurrection on the third day. The number three

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[482] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 414-415: "Tunc" inquiunt "quasi si arbor uiridis succidatur in media, et pars abscisa deportetur a stipite trium iugerum spatio, cum sine quolibet amminiculo suo iterum conexa trunco ceperit et floribus pubescere et fructus protrudere ex coalescentis suci amore pristino, tunc demum poterit sperari talium malorum remisso'.
[483] *Vita* Aedwardi, *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow (Oxford 1992): *Vita Aedwardi,* pp. 116-119.
[484] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 414-415: 'Huius uaticinii ueritatem… huius ergo uaticinii ueritatem nos experimur, quod scilicet Anglia exterorum facta est habitatio et alienigenarum dominatio…'.
[485] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 414-415: 'Cum enim bido elinguis iacuisset, die tertio post soporem grauiter et profounde suspirans "Deus" inquit "omnipotens, si non est fantastica illusio sed uerax uisio quam uidi, da michi facultatem eam astantibus exponendi, aut e conuerso" Ita mox expedita loquela…'

carried powerful theological significance: the three-fold nature of the Trinity; three gifts of the three Magi; three temptations of Christ; and the three days between the death and resurrection of Christ.[486] Thus, Edward's deathbed was typologically similar to the temporal sequence of the resurrection of Christ. However, the specifics as to how long it took for the prophecy to occur cannot be found in any earlier version. William's inclusion of this detail was deliberate. The utilisation of time further heightens the significance of this episode. It is feasible that William sought to highlight and enhance Edward's authority as voicing truthful divine prophecy. Furthermore, he utilised the prophecy politically. By stating that the fulfilment of the prophecy could be seen in the consequences of the Norman Conquest, William suggested that the aftermath of the Conquest was akin to the devastation foretold in the prophecy.

Thomson argued that William's bitterness towards the Norman Conquest was evident in his account of the green tree prophecy.[487] William himself forlornly declared that there was '[not] any hope of ending this miserable state of affairs'.[488] However, the prophecy had only been partially fulfilled. The tree had not yet been brought back together. William refers to the prophecy only once more in the *Gesta Regum*, in the context of Henry I's son and heir, Prince William:

> In him it was supposed King Edward's prophecy was to be fulfilled: the hope of England, it was thought, once cut down like a tree, was in the person of that young prince again to blossom and bear fruit, so that one might hope the evil times were coming to an end. But

[486] Vincent Foster Hopper, *Medieval Number Symbolism: Its Sources, Meaning and Influences on Thought and Expression* (New York, 1938).
[487] Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury's Diatribe against the Normans', p. 120.
[488] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 414-417: 'nec ulla spes est finiendae miseriae'.

> God had other plans: these expectations went down the wind, for the day was already at hand when he must fulfil his fate.[489]

Most significantly, William used the verb *compleo*. The modern edition translates this as 'fulfil', however a closer translation is 'completed' or 'finished'. Not only was it believed that Prince William would fulfil the latter part of the prophecy, but also that he would bring the consequences, the evils which befell England, to a permanent end. The prophecy would no longer be 'live', removing the possibility that it could be fulfilled again in the future. However, as William illustrates, that hope was foolish. It is significant that William used this verb here as it does not appear in any other text discussing a prophecy, not even the Vitae. In other prophecies, including in the *Gesta Regum*, William describes the prophecy's fruition through stating that it was truthful or that it came to pass. This is the only instance in which it is suggested that a prophecy would be finished. Although William attributes this foolish hope to others, he himself does not state that the prophecy would be completed. The fact that it had not been fulfilled, merely that it was 'supposed' (*spectabant*) that it would be finished through Prince William, contains a warning. In no other instance did William imply or state that a prophecy would no longer be 'live' once it was fulfilled; to suggest as such was to presuppose knowledge of future, a prospect, as explained above, William would not have contemplated. Thus, the belief that the prophecy would be ended and complete through Prince William before the prophecy had actually been fulfilled was foolish. As William stated, those expectations would turn into despair as God had other plans and Prince William had

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[489] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 758-759: 'putabaturque regis Eduardi uaticinium in eo complendum; ferebaturque spes Angliae, modo arboris succisa, in illo iuuenculo iterum floribus. Deo aliter uisum; huiuscemodi enim opinionem tulerunt aurae, quod eum proxima dies urgebat fato satisfacere'.

an alternative fate. This reference back to the Green Tree illustrates William's concept of prophecy: any attempt to predict the 'how and when' of the fulfilment of a prophecy before it had come to pass was foolish at best and presumed a knowledge of the future and of God's plan. As William had stated in the *Vita Dunstani*, 'man can have no knowledge of the future'.[490]

William made more frequent use of prophecy in his Saints' Lives. For a saint to have visions and to be able foretell the future was a common but important quality. As Bartlett elucidates:

> Dead saints could communicate with the living through visions and dream-visions. Living saints were able to speak directly, and one of the things they sometimes imparted was the privileged information that they had, for saints had knowledge of hidden things and future things. The saints' spirit of prophecy told them many things: the fate of kingdoms and of individuals; hidden sins; distant disasters; the date of their own and other's deaths. Some were especially renowned for their spirit of prophecy.[491]

Saints existed on the edge of time: they walked the border between the flow of time in the world, and the eternity of God. Their status meant that they were the chosen ones for whom God drew back the veil and allowed them to glimpse beyond what ordinary men could observe and comprehend. Saint Dunstan was the main character in William's work to use prophecy and predict the future in ways both large and small. Dunstan's prophecies appear in both the 'secular' and hagiographical works. Kirsten Fenton argues that, through the act of prophecy, he was given a special role and relationship within England, by William.[492] Through his writings William 'thus

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[490] W. Malm., *VD*, pp. 226-227: 'Enimuero tunc, sicut est ignara futuri mens hominum'.
[491] Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things*?, p. 373.
[492] Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest*, p. 132.

underlines Dunstan's prophecies as having consequences for the English nation and people'.[493] According to Fenton, Dunstan's prophecies functioned as his method of protecting England and the English people, similar to the 'secular activity' of violence.[494] In any case, these were significant for the entirety of England.

For instance, several of Dunstan's prophecies as recorded in the *Gesta Regum* concerned the devastation of England. The first was voiced during the baptism of Æthelred:

> His worthlessness had already been foretold by Dunstan, warned by a filthy token of it: when as a baby he was being plunged in the font at his christening with the bishops standing round, he interrupted the sacrament by opening his bowels, at which Dunstan was much concerned – 'By God and His Mother' he said, 'he will be a wastrel when he is a man'.[495]

The thrust of Dunstan's earlier prediction was then taken up again at the coronation of Æthelred in 979:

> as he [Dunstan] put the crown on his [Æthelred's] head he could not restrain himself, and poured out in a loud voice the spirit of prophecy with which his own heart was full… 'there shall come upon the people of England such evils as they have not suffered from the time when they came to England until then'.[496]

Three years later, Viking ships arrived and attacked Southampton. Towards the end of his life, Dunstan warned Æthelred that: 'there shall come rapidly upon you evils of which the Lord has spoken; but this will not happen in my lifetime, for this too the

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[493] Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest*, p. 132.
[494] Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest*, p. 112.
[495] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 268-269: 'Ignauiam eius predixerat Dunstanus, fedo exemplo ammonitus: nam cum pusiolus in fontem baptismi mergeretur, circumstantibus espiscopis alui profluuio sacramenta interpolauit, qua re ille turbatus 'Per Deum' inquit' et Matrem eius, ignauus homo erit!'.
[496] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 268-269: 'Iam uero diadema componens non se continuit quin spiritum propheticum totis medullis haustum ore pleno effunderet…'uenient super gentem Anglorum mala qualia non passa est ex quo Angliam uenit usque ad tempus illud'.

Lord told me'.[497] This prophecy repeated the one delivered at Æthelred's coronation. Shortly after recounting the archbishop's death, William commented that 'these prophecies were quick to be fulfilled and what he foretold hastened to come to pass'.[498] The episode is also reported in the *Vita Dunstani*.[499] However, here, William used the realisation of this prediction as evidence of Dunstan's sanctity and of his prognostic prowess. Dunstan's blessedness enabled him to 'put off until his own death the collapse of a land which had been tottering for so long. For – to show briefly and without boredom to the reader how great was the effect of the prophecy directed by Dunstan at Æthelred – the Danes came to England immediately after his death'.[500] The use of *statim* is significant as it invokes a sense of immediacy. William conveyed Dunstan's sanctity was so powerful, that immediately upon his death, his prophecy was fulfilled. Not only did the fruition of the prophecy prove the strength of his saintly ability, but also the loss of the archbishop resulted in England being plunged into chaos and devastation.

However, there is a key difference between the accounts in the *Gesta Regum* and the *Vita Dunstani*. Whilst William uses Dunstan's speeches in the *Gesta* without comment, in the *Vita*, he states both times that he cannot be certain of exactly what was said. William uses the same speech in both, and in the *Vita* emphasises the truthfulness of the prophecy explaining its fulfilment. The express urge to validate

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[497] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 270-271: 'uelociter uenient super te mala quae loctus est Dominus. Sed haec me uiuente non fient, quia et haec locutus est Dominus'.
[498] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 270-271: 'properant impleri predicta, festiant consummari prenuntiata'.
[499] W. Malm., *VD*, pp. 274-275, pp. 294-297.
[500] W. Malm., *VD,* pp. 294-297: 'quia patriae iam dui nutantis ruinam ad suum exitum distulerit. Nam ut sine fastidio legentium breuiter ostendam quantam Dunstani uaticinium in Egelredum intortum habuit efficatiam, statim post obitum eius, qui decimo anno regis fuit, dani uenerunt in angliam'.

visions and prophecies is one which does appear several times in the *Vita*. For instance, William recounts one of Dunstan's dreams, the veracity of which Dunstan himself questions. After the death of his friend named Wulfstan, he:

> appeared to his friend one night, looking as he had always looked, and easy to recognise. In the dream he went over Dunstan's future in detail, fluently predicting good as well as ill. Dunstan had learned to be cautious and careful in everything, and so he did not leap up at once in joyful belief. Even in his dreaming state, you could get an idea of his good sense. 'What you promise is very fine' he answered, 'but what sign is there to make me trust promises?'. [501]

Still in the dream, Wulfstan leads Dunstan to a spot in the churchyard and states that a priest would be buried there in three days, which would 'confirm the truth of the vision'.[502] And so it happens. Perhaps the reason why William expressed his uncertainty as to the precise wording of the speeches recorded was to reinforce the truthfulness of the prophecy. William demonstrated his trustworthiness as an author by stating that he was not certain of Dunstan's precise words, but then reinforced the truthfulness of the prophecy – and proved his carefulness as a researcher – by showing that Dunstan's prediction had in fact come true.

In the prophecies given by Dunstan and by Edward the Confessor, the devastation that England would face, is described in strikingly similar terms. Both discuss the evils which would befall the realm. William used the same word, 'mala', to define that evil. The *Vita Aedwardi* explained how demons would roam the earth

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[501] W. Malm., *VD*, pp. 190-193: ' Hic post paucum decessus sui tempus amico apparuit nocte, familiari qua cognosceretur spetie. Tum usius futurae uitae seriem ad unguem exponere, aduersa et prospera iuxta et incunctanter predicere. Nec tamen ad audita Dunstanus credulo statim exiliuit gaudio, doctus in omnibus apponere cautelam, adhibere diligentiam. Quapropter, ut etiam in somniantis animo, contempleris sapientiam, uisus est talia referre: 'Pulchra sunt' inquit 'quae promittis, sed quo inditio habeam fidem promissis?'.

[502] W. Malm., *VD*, pp. 192-193: 'ad uerae uisionis inditium'.

and the kingdom would be delivered into the hands of the enemy but does not refer to the 'end of evils', rather it refers to the 'havoc of war'.[503] Considering how similar the version in the *Gesta* is to that of the *Vita Aedwardi*, this difference appears to be significant. By using such similar imagery, William suggested that the prophecies were linked. It could be argued that Edward's prophecy was a repetition of Dunstan's: the evils that were visited upon England in Dunstan's premonition were linked to those foretold by Edward's. In the former case the evil in question was the Vikings, in the latter the Normans. A careful reader would not have missed the similarity between the prophecies and how they had come true. It can be suggested that William perceived prophecy as having a complicated relationship with time. The duplication of the same details in the fulfilment of Dunstan's prophecies and the partial fulfilment of Edward's implies a cyclical pattern across time. The pattern of prophecy then devastation occurred once with Dunstan and then returned, repeated, with Edward. This similarity could be interpreted as a repetition and re-fulfilment of the same prophecy. This re-fulfilment is expressed by William's contemporary Eadmer. In his *Historia Novorum*, Dunstan's prophecy is fulfilled immediately after his death by the invasion of the Vikings. Eadmer's subsequent condensing of time, skipping nearly a century, suggests that Eadmer used the narrative structure of the *Historia* to demonstrate that Dunstan's prophecy was continuing to manifest itself in his day. It was still 'live'. Whilst William did not employ the same technique, his use of imagery could nonetheless suggest that he attempted to convey something similar. However, William's use of prophecies is somewhat more complicated.

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[503] *Vita Aedwardi*, p. 116-117: 'depredatione hostili'.

Eadmer omitted to include Edward's premonition in his writings and as such Dunstan's was the only one to be used to attempt to explain the consequences of the Norman Conquest. In contrast, William depicted Dunstan's prognostications as distinct and historically contingent events. And Edward's prophecy was only partially fulfilled, its veracity was as yet uncertain. Thus, they were not the same prophecy. Despite this, William fashioned a connection between Dunstan, Edward and the Conquest. The echo of Dunstan's prophecy is evident in Edward's. It is possible that William borrowed details from the former to enhance the veracity of the latter. William believed that Edward's prophecy was true, hence its inclusion. However, unlike Dunstan's, it had not been completely fulfilled. Using the same details established a link between the two and suggests that if Dunstan's was true, then so might Edward's be. On a deeper level, the echoing of one prophecy in another, despite them being distinct events separated by over a century, suggests that William was responding to a broader crisis of uncertainty. England was undergoing yet another devastation which was prophesised in a similar way and William was attempting to find connections in order to comprehend why. He was generating a pattern in the text so that chaotic events were given meaning and coherence. This pattern repaired disruption to the order of time. In consequence, the fulfilment of Dunstan's prophecy gives hope that the latter part of Edward's prophecy would similarly be fulfilled: the Green Tree would return to its former bloom and end the chaos engulfing England.

A similar attempt to generate a pattern to explain chaotic events is evident when comparing two prophecies found in the *Vita Wulfstani* and the *Historia Novella*.

The *Historia* includes a curious interlude which describes a knight's dream.[504] In this dream, the knight is strangled with his long, effeminate hair. Upon waking, he promptly cuts it, and so do the rest of the court. However, within a year everyone was once again growing their hair to 'unreasonable' lengths. Whilst William does not explicitly refer to the dream as a prophecy, he deployed *somnium* which is one of Macrobius' categories for truthful prognostic visions. On the other hand, a similar prophecy is made by Wulfstan in the *Vita Wulfstani*, where it is explicitly framed as a prophecy. William states that Wulfstan's sanctity was such that 'as a prophet he rarely failed in a prophecy'.[505] In his attempts to curtail the effeminate fashion Wulfstan foretold that men who 'let their hair flow like a woman, would be no more use than a woman in defence of their country against the foreigner'.[506] William connects this prophecy to the Conquest: 'no one would deny that this was shown to be very true that same year when the Normans came'.[507] The dream in the *Historia* echoes that of Wulfstan. Its inclusion implies that the civil war was echoing the chaos of the Conquest, and William may have been attempting to understand the cause behind the civil war by echoing a prophecy that predicted the coming of the Normans.

The presentation of one prophecy as an echo of another can also be seen in the *Vita Dunstani*. The episode in question concerns the pre-natal miracle revealing

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[504] W. Malm., *HN,* pp. 10-13.
[505] W. Malm., *VW,* pp. 58-59 full quote: 'nec facile umquam uel prudentem homniem coniectura uel uatem prophetia fellit'.
[506] W. Malm., *VW,* pp. 58-59: 'non plusquam feminae ualerent ad defensandam patriam contra gentes transmarinas'.
[507] W. Malm., *VW,* pp. 58-59: 'quod in aduentu Normannorum eodem anno claruisse quis eat in infitias?'

Dunstan's future greatness. While pregnant, Dunstan's mother, a notably pious woman, entered the church of Glastonbury to celebrate the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, known now as Candlemas, a significant date in the liturgical calendar. Marking the end of Christmastide, Candlemas is one of the four feasts of the year in which the community participates in the procession, and it is the day on which the parish's candles are blessed for the year. In the middle of the service, each of the lighted candles which the attendees held, instantly and unexpectedly went out. The people were confused and uncertain of what this meant, until a shaft of light fell on Dunstan's mother and lit her candle. William remarks:

> A miracle indeed! It fitted in with what was past, and made a prelude to what was to come. For it was on the same day that the blessed Mother of God, the ever virgin Mary, carried to the Temple of God her son, God's word. The old man [Simeon], clutching him in loving arms, proclaimed that it was He who would make bright to the eyes of all peoples the light of eternity that had once been lost through Adam. But now the happy woman, who held in her womb one who was by God's grace to be a light of England, was able by sharing her candle to restore to the whole company the light they had lost.[508]

The foreshadowing of Dunstan's coming greatness as a saint is the central message behind this episode. Its placement as the first event narrated in the first book of the *Vita* reinforces this function. The miracle was a prophecy. Furthermore, it framed the remainder of the narrative. It signposted what was to come, and confirmed

[508] W. Malm., *VD,* pp. 171-172: 'Venerabile miraculum quod et antiquis respondit et futuris prelusit! Ipsa enim quondam die beata Dei genitrix et perpetua uirgo Maria tulit ad templum Dei Dei Verbum, filium suum: quem senilis deuotio benignis astringens complexibus ipsum predicauit esse qui lumen aeternitatis, quondam per Adam amissum, decleraret oculis omnium popularum. Nunc autem beata mulier, iubar Angliae per Dei gratiam futurum aluo continens, collatione cerei sui dampna perditae lucis toti reparauit agmini'.

William's previous claim in the prologue that Dunstan would become 'patron saint of all England'.[509]

The passage reveals much about William's perception of time and prophecy. By describing how the miracle fitted in with both 'past' and 'future', William placed it within a linear temporal sequence of the past, implied present, and future. It responded to what was past and indicated what was to come. Additionally, *respondit* and *prelusit* are perfect verbs. That is, William considered both of these actions to have been complete in the past at the time of writing. They also suggest that the miracle was perfectly situated within the temporal sequence. As an event, it harmonised with the entirety of time and was fashioned as a piece which fitted into a grand pattern. In contrast to the previous sentence, the second commences by invoking a cyclical image of time. As a non-comparable adjective, *quondam* conveys that the day of the miracle and the day of the described biblical event were exactly the same day of the year – not surprisingly, as Candlemas was a fixed feast (2nd February).

As *quondam die* placed emphasis on the original event which the feast celebrates, a repetitive concept of time was established, and simultaneously the liturgical cycle was conjured. This placed the miracle within the special cycle of the Christian religious calendar, and within the reoccurring celebration of the life of Christ. An important motif in the medieval hagiographic tradition is that of *imitatio christi* – imitating the life of Christ. Thomas Heffernan argues that the 'repetition of

[509] W. Malm., *VD*, pp. 170-171: 'totius angliae patronum futurum'.

actions from scripture or earlier saints' lives… ensured the authenticity of the subject's sanctity'.[510] The comparison authenticates Dunstan as a saint, but it also places William's narrative within a wider body of writing about saints. The final sentence swiftly brought the reader into the present. *Nunc* was used to denote the immediate present, as in our own time. It being the first word of the sentence, the reader was sharply brought into the present after a sentence discussing the biblical past. Consequently, the connection to the immediate present drew attention to the nature of the present. In particular, *nunc* emphasises the belief that the present was a time in which miracles occurred and was part of both the sequence and cycles of time.

There are four versions of this miracle with which William would have been familiar. The first is the 'B' text which was written by one of Dunstan's contemporaries.[511] The second is Osbern's eleventh-century *Vita*.[512] The third is Eadmer of Canterbury's *Vita Dunstani*. [513] The fourth is William's previous account of the miracle in his *Gesta Pontificum*.[514] This miracle does not occur at all in the 'B' text but it is in both Osbern's and Eadmer's Vitae, and is described in William's *Gesta Pontificum*. The main substance of the miracle is the same across all four versions: i.e. the description of the miracle, its connection to the biblical event of Jesus entering

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[510] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1992), p. 6.
[511] 'Vita Dunstani', *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, eds. Michael Winterbottom and Michael Lapidge, (Oxford, 2011).
[512] Osbern, 'Vita Dunstani', *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, eds. Michael Winterbottom and Michael Lapidge, (Oxford, 2011).
[513] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Vita Sancti Dunstani, Eadmer of Canterbury: Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald* (Oxford, 2006) pp. 44-214.
[514] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 36-37.

the temple, and the observation that it foreshadows Dunstan's future sanctity. However, there are several features original to William's *Vita*, and that do not even occur in his description of the miracle in the *Gesta Pontificum*. The first of these is the reference to the biblical event as *quondam die* – that same day. The other texts use a variant of *qua die* – that day, and as such do not evoke the perception of cyclical time as strongly as the *Vita* does. Most significantly, these other versions do not include the phrase 'Venerabile miraculum quod et antiquis respondit et futuris prelusit!'. Nor do they construct such a sharp contrast between the past and the immediate present.

The *Vita's* account also differs from that in the *Gesta Pontificum*. The *Gesta Pontificum* version did not state that the miracle occurred on the exact same day as the presentation of Christ. Nor does it use the phrase 'It fitted in with what was past, and made a prelude to what was to come'.[515] One way to explain this differing depiction of time would be to look at the *Vita*'s potential purpose as part of the liturgy. It was not uncommon for extracts of Saints' lives to be used in this way.[516] And there is evidence that another version of this miracle by Osbern was used as a reading. In the manuscript Worcester F. 160, compiled c.1230, it is listed as the first reading for the first nocturn.[517] As part of his role as Cantor, William was responsible for choosing the readings for the liturgy. He may thus have anticipated that this miracle would be used in the liturgy at Glastonbury when composing his text.

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[515] 'antiquis respondit et futuris prelusit'
[516] Pfaff, 'The Liturgy', p. 127.
[517] Bernard Muir and Andrew Turner 'Introduction' in Eadmer of Canterbury, *Eadmer of Canterbury: Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald* (Oxford, 2006) cxxii; *The Early Lives of St Dunstan;* Worcester Cathedral, MS F 160.

This episode reveals how prophecy is connected to the structure of time generated by William within his writing. First, the temporal structure of the miracle's narration - first Dunstan, then Christ, then the immediate present - displays a layering of time. These moments existed simultaneously. As each event occurred, it was added to the moment until, once the present was reached, there were several layers in one moment. As time progresses, events of the past are connected to events of the future, which then become part of the past. There is the original moment of the presentation of Christ at the time which the feast celebrates, then the miracle of Dunstan occurring in that moment during the feast's celebration in Dunstan's own time, and finally, the monks of Glastonbury celebrating both events during Candlemas. The present time of those reading the narrative and those celebrating the mass, is then connected to this miracle which is then linked to Christ. Time is presented as a cyclical tower; layers are added as time progresses and those new layers are supported and reinforced by those which preceded it. Furthermore, this connection between events invokes a sense of cyclicality. There is a repetition, or at least a resonance, between these events. The possibility of past, present, and future existing concurrently is expressed by William in connection to the saints: 'he [Anselm] reflected one night on how God could have enabled the prophets to see past, present, and future in a single moment, this very gift was conferred upon him'.[518]

[518] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 112-113: 'cogitanti nocte quomodo deus potuisset prophetis uno momento ostendere preterita, presentia, et futura, idem munus collatum'.

This presentation of time and prophecy was connected to the function of the liturgy. The liturgical cycle consisted of offices which celebrated and observed figures and events. William would have been very aware of the role of time in an office. Celebrating an event, for example Candlemas, not only commemorated the event, but in some way made the celebrants present, bringing the past, present and future into one action. If, as I contend, the reading of this miracle would have been used by the community of Glastonbury during a liturgical service, possibly even during Candlemas, then those celebrants would be sharing a moment in time with Saint Dunstan, and with Christ. By observing these offices, the memory of the past was reinforced by its commemoration, and the office in the present gained significance from the fact that it was observing a past event. This reinforcing relationship between the past and the present has been observed by Mircea Eliade in *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. Eliade contends that the mythic system of ritual found in various cultures demonstrates an 'ontological conception: an object or an act becomes real only insofar as it imitates or repeats an archetype. Thus, reality is acquired solely through repetition or participation'.[519] A similar attitude can be observed in William's approach to Dunstan's prenatal prophecy. The notion that the past and the present strengthen and reinforce each other points to a liturgically influenced conception of time. And this has particular significance for the reading of Dunstan's miracle, specifically for the community at Glastonbury, for two reasons. By emphasising that the miracle took place within a service for a feast, Dunstan was re-living the life of Christ, going back to the idea of *imitatio Christi*. Equally, the use

[519] Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, p. 34.

of an immediate 'now' brings the miracle into the present of the reader. Therefore, by either reading the miracle independently, or as part of an office, the monks themselves would have simultaneously relived the life of the saint, who was a key part of their community's heritage and identity, and the life of Christ.

Prophecy allowed these layers to be made visible. The veil was parted and the reader could see how these layers functioned, how time accumulated. Also, accounts of prophecy reveal the complex interplay of linear and cyclical ideas of time inherent in William's understanding of prophecy. Prophecy is linear in that it is given and then it is fulfilled. However, it is also cyclical in that those predictions can be echoed perhaps centuries later. Christian theology enabled the complex interweaving of linear and cyclical time, which can be seen in the complexity of prophecy as depicted in the Dunstan pre-natal prophecy. Prophecy revealed a pattern, one in which the past could be used to explain the present and possibly the future. It was through prophecy that insight into God's plan could be determined.[520] However, only those who were chosen by God would be privileged with this insight. William directly referred to this when discussing Anselm, another Saint who was gifted with the power of prophecy: 'I [Anselm] can tell what will happen in the future from what has happened in the past'.[521]

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[520] Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing*, p. 120-121; Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, pp. 64-81.
[521] W. Malm., GP, pp. 138-139: 'Quamquam ex preteritis futura non nesciam'.

The Pattern of Time

Dunstan's prophecy reveals how William of Malmesbury conceptualised time. It was a continuous building of accumulating layers. Events of the past were connected to events of the present. Similar events would re-occur and through the liturgy would be re-experienced. This also implies that this pattern would continue in the future. In the *Historia Novella* William appears to have been especially invested in this idea of a repetitive pattern. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the first two books of the *Historia* followed a distinctly linear narrative structure. By contrast, the final book adopted a temporally complex approach. This change is particularly prominent when comparing the prologue to Book I to that of Book III. The former describes the narrative as in strict order.[522] In the latter, events are no longer an order, they are a trackless maze:

> I am undertaking to unravel the trackless maze of events and occurrences that befell in England, with the aim that posterity should not be ignorant of these matters through our lack of care, it being worthwhile to learn the changefulness of fortune and the mutability of the human lot.[523]

The image of a maze or labyrinth is intricate. Labyrinths were inherently chaotic and seemingly impenetrable.[524] However they were also used as metaphors of learning and undertaking a difficult process.[525] Throughout the high medieval period many

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[522] See Chapter Two.
[523] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 80-81: 'inextracabilem laberinthum rerum et negotiorum quae acciderunt in Anglia eggredior euoluere; ea causa, ner per nostram incuriam lateat posteros, cum sit opere pretium cognoscere uolubilitatem fortunae ststusque humani mutabilitatem'.
[524] For the tradition of the labyrinth in Antiquity and patristic thought see: Penelope Reed Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity through the Middle Ages* (Cornell, IT, 1992), pp. 79-82.
[525] Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth,* pp. 83-90.

cathedrals, the most famous being Chartres, had labyrinths on the floor for pilgrims to follow, representing a spiritual journey.[526] It could be simultaneously a perplexing tangle and a path to follow. By invoking the idea of a labyrinth, William was showing that he was not only navigating and untangling the chaotic events which were occurring, but that he was also laying the pattern that the reader could follow to gain greater understanding.

This 'trackless maze' is borne out by the structure of Book III. Unlike Book I and Book II, which had a very strict linear chronology, there are a plethora of both digressions and backtracking to earlier events. Furthermore, William used very little dating in Book III, whereas he had used it frequently in books I and II. The impression of not being able to locate an event specifically in the chronology and the frequent turning back to previous events, makes the narrative appear to be in flux and not in linear, ordered, sequence. In Book III there are no anchors to a linear temporal structure. This raises the question as to why William's representation of time shifts from linear to complex. It must be remembered that in Book III William was no longer narrating events whilst knowing the final outcome and showing how that outcome came to pass. By representing time as complex with cyclical elements, the events that England was experiencing were part of a repeating cycle of the rise and fall of fortunes.

However, this temporal complexity also meant that William had grounds for hope. When discussing Matilda's son Henry in Book III, William stated that 'the boy

[526] Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth,* pp. 117-133.

is called Henry, recalling his grandfather's name, would he may someday recall his prosperity and his power'.[527] Most profoundly, William used the word *relaturus* to connect Prince Henry to his grandfather. The reference to 'bringing back' invokes a sense of cyclical time. William was hoping that the cycle would turn again and that the peace and prosperity of Henry I's reign would return through his grandson. Therefore, by representing time as cyclic, William was showing that the cycle was going to return once more. All hope was not lost. The civil war would not last. Peace and prosperity would return. The night would end and a new day dawn. Wishing that the prince may relive the fortunes of his grandfather is the closest William gets to anticipating future events. It was not a prediction exactly, but rather it was a somewhat desperate expression of hope in an age of anarchy and war. There was a pattern in English history, highlighted by William, of bad kings who were succeeded by good kings who were then followed by bad kings and so on.[528] Following the abysmal reign of Stephen, it would not be unreasonable to assume that Young Henry would restore the tranquillity and order that were features of his grandfather's reign. Here, William was projecting a pattern of time onto the future in order to grasp the hope that the peace and prosperity of the past would return. Unfortunately, William would not see this return; he died in 1143, over a decade before Henry II came to the throne.

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[527] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 126-127: 'Henricus vocatur puer, nomen aui referens utiam felicitatem et potentiam quandoque relaturus'.
[528] Björn Weiler, 'William of Malmesbury on Kingship', *History* (2005), pp. 3-22.

Omens and Portents

It was not only through prophecy that William engaged with ideas about the future. Omens played a significant role throughout his oeuvre. Signs or portents were occurrences which acted as a sign from God, signalling that something was about to happen. Isidore of Seville defined portents thus:

> Portents are also called signs, omens, and prodigies, because they are seen to portend and display, indicate and predict future events. The term 'portent' (*portentum*) is said to be derived from foreshadowing (*portendere*), that is, from 'showing beforehand' (*praeostendere*). 'Signs' (*ostentum*), because they seem to show (*ostendere*) a future event. Prodigies (*prodigium*) are so called, because they 'speak hereafter' (*porro dicere*), that is, they predict the future. But omens (*monstrum*) derive their name from admonition (*monitus*), because in giving a sign they indicate (*demonstrare*) something, or else because they instantly show (*monstrare*) what may appear; and this is its proper meaning, even though it has frequently been corrupted by the improper use of writers. Some portents seem to have been created as indications of future events, for God sometimes wants to indicate what is to come through some defects in newborns, and also through dreams and oracles, by which he may foreshadow and indicate future calamity for certain peoples or individuals, as is indeed proved by abundant experience.[529]

[529] Isidore, *Etymologies*, pp. 243-244; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi *Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber XI* https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/isidore/11.shtml: 'Portenta esse Varro ait quae contra naturam nata videntur: sed non sunt contra naturam, quia divina voluntate fiunt, cum voluntas Creatoris cuiusque conditae rei natura sit. Vnde et ipsi gentiles Deum modo Naturam, modo Deum appellant. Portentum ergo fit non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura. Portenta autem et ostenta, monstra atque prodigia ideo nuncupantur, quod portendere atque ostendere, monstrare ac praedicare aliqua futura videntur. Nam portenta dicta perhibent a portendendo, id est praeostendendo. Ostenta autem, quod ostendere quidquam futurum videantur. Prodigia, quod porro dicant, id est futura praedicant. Monstra vero a monitu dicta, quod aliquid significando demonstrent, sive quod statim monstrent quid appareat; et hoc proprietatis est, abusione tamen scriptorum plerumque corrumpitur. Quaedam autem portentorum creaciones in significationibus futuris constituta videntur. Vult enim deus interdum ventura significare per aliqua nascentium noxia, sicut et per somnos et per oracula, qua praemoneat et significet quibusdam vel gentibus vel hominibus futuram cladem; quod plurimis etiam experimentis probatum est'.

Carl Watkins argues that:

> this more circumscribed sense of the divine in the world had ramifications for perceptions and signa because the sense of a patterned, ordered nature threw signs into sharper relief and ensured that anomalies in the course of nature, especially those in the heavens, excited wonder and attracted much attention.[530]

Ultimately, they acted as signs or hints of future events. However, unlike the instances of prophecy narrated by William, omens were very vague. Prophecies were recorded because they proved true. Omens and portents might indicate the future, but the link was not always certain. The same phenomenon such as a comet could herald good or ill tidings. Portent interpretation was often guided by Scripture. Robert of Lewes, William of Malmesbury's contemporary and possibly, it has been suggested, author of the *Gesta Stephani*, likened the portents of his own time to those of the Old Testament to guide interpretation of those omens.[531] Unlike many prophecies, omens did not offer nearly the same level of detail and information. Often, it remained unclear how to interpret them. This uncertainty meant that a chronicler could be freer in using them to add an extra layer of meaning onto the narrative of the past. The omens with which William predominantly engages can be divided into two categories: celestial singularities and unnatural phenomena. This section will demonstrate that William was more willing to make political use of portents than of prophecies.

First, how William deployed omens differed across his texts. For instance, those described in the *Gesta Pontiificum* are noted as auspicious and connected to the

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[530] Carl Watkins, *History and the Supernatural in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 47.
[531] Watkins, *History and the Supernatural*, p. 47.

deeds of the saints, as are those in the *Vita Wulfstani, Vita Dunstani*, and *De Antiquitates Glastonie*. However, in the *Gesta Regum* and *Historia Novella*, portents are significantly more oblique and more clearly linked to political agendas. Therefore, omens reflected the themes of the narrative in which they were deployed. These political signs will be the focus of the following discussion.

Signs in the Sky

A multitude of unusual occurrences in the sky could be interpreted as portents. Among these were comets and meteors, eclipses, blood moons, and shooting stars. They could easily be woven into a political narrative.[532] Comets were perceived as closely connected to political regimes. William of Malmesbury's Norman contemporary William of Jumièges believed that a comet signalled the transition between two different regimes.[533] Sigebert of Gembloux made a point of recording the occurrences of comets and then interpreted them as omens by connecting them to political events.[534] William's *Polyhistor* contained many extracts from Pliny's *Natural History* on matters as diverse as 'strange colours of the sky',' heavenly flame',

[532] Watkins, *History and the Supernatural*, p. 48.
[533] William of Jumieges, *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumiege, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni,* ed. and trans Elisabeth van Houts, 2 vols (Oxford, 1992-5), vol II, pp. 160-161.
[534] Sigebert of Gebloux, *Chronica,* 'Appendix I Text and Translation of the *Chroinca*' in Brian A Toye, 'A Historian and his Craft: Sigebert of Gembloux De Tempore Moderno', unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Minnesota (2011), http://hdl.handle.net/11299/109233, p. 126, p. 132, p. 147, p. 165.

'comets blazing stars and celestial prodigies', many suns and many moons, and 'running of stars in the sky'.[535] It also includes the following observation on eclipses:

> Eclipses of the sun also take place which are portentous and unusually long, such as occurred when Caesar the Dictator was slain, and in the war against Antony, the sun remained dim for almost a whole year.[536]

William's other writings also represent comets, as well as many other celestial phenomena, as omens. The most famous is the discussion in the *Gesta Regum* of Halley's comet on the eve of the Norman Conquest:

> …A comet, portending (they say) a change in governments, appeared trailing its long flaming hair through the empty sky: concerning which there was a fine saying of a monk of our monastery called Eilmer. Crouching in terror at the sight of the gleaming star, 'You've come have you?' he said 'You've come, you source of tears for many mothers. It is long since I saw you: but as I see you now much more terrible, for I see you brandishing the downfall of my mother-country'.[537]

William was not alone in recording the occurrence of Halley's comet and assigning political significance to its appearance. However, there are some differences between William's account and those of his contemporaries. William states the interpretation of a comet's appearance to be a change in kingdoms, connecting it to the political

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[535] William of Malmesbury, *Polyhistor*, pp. 45-47.

[536] William of Malmesbury, *Polyhistor*, p. 46: 'Prodigiosus fuit solis defectus, occasio Casaere et Antoniano bello, totius pene anni pallore continuo'; Pliny *Natural History* pp. 240-241 full quote: 'Cernuntur et stellae cum sole totis diebus, plerumque et circa solis orbem ceu speiceae coronae et versicolores circuli, qualiter Augusto Caesare in prima iuventa urbem intrante post obitum patris ad nomen ingens capessendum. existunt eaedem coronae circa lunam et circa nobilia astra caeloque inhaerentia. circa solem arcus adparuit L. Opimio Q. Fabio cos., orbis C. Porcio M'. Acilio, circulus rubri coloris L. Iulio P. Rutilio cos. *Fiunt prodigiosi et longiores solis defectus, qualis occiso dictatore Caesare et Antoniano bello totius paene anni pallore continuo'.*

[537] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 412-413: 'cometes stella, ut ferunt, mutationem regnorum pretendens longos et flammeos crines per inane ducens apparuit; unde pulchre quidam nostri monasterii monachus, Eielmerus nomine, uiso coruscantis astri terrore conquiniscens, 'uenisti' inquit, 'uenistri, multis matribus lugende. Dudum est quod te uidi, sed nunc multo terribiliorem te intueor, patriae huius excidium uibrantem'; For Halley's comet as an ill omen see Thomson, *GR,* vol II, p. 212; Edward Augustus Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest,* vol III (Oxofrd, 1867) pp. 70-73, pp. 345-350.

regime. This in itself was not unusual and echoes William of Jumièges. However, William's inclusion of Eilmer's words 'I have seen thee before; but now I behold thee much more terrible…' raises interesting questions with regards to William's conception of omens and the future. Lynn White has questioned whether the previous comet Eilmer refers to was Halley's comet or even if that previous comet was believed to be a harbinger of doom.[538] There were two occurrences of comets which Eilmer could have seen, one in 1006 and another, which was indeed Halley's comet, in 989.[539] However, it is improbable that the event of a comet would not have been connected to political turmoil as during the early eleventh century, England was suffering the chaos of continuous Danish invasions, one wave of which commenced, after a period of peace, in 989. Regardless of whether the earlier comet had been perceived as a harbinger of turmoil, William of Malmesbury implied that a comet was a reoccurring portent. William's contemporaries concurred that the comet of 1066 foretold great change, but none mentioned it as the return of a previous comet. This reoccurrence echoes those found in William's descriptions of prophecies. However, with the inclusion of the second comet foretelling events 'much more terrible' than the previous comet, not only have the comet and omen returned, but also they are now said to foretell greater turmoil.

Furthermore, celestial signs also occur in the *Historia Novella*. Despite the fact that the *Historia* does not contain any prophecies, there are an abundance of omens. All surround the death of Henry I and the ascension of King Stephen. One example

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[538] Lynn White, Jr, 'Eilmer of Malmesbury, an Eleventh Century Aviator: A Case Study of Technological Innovation, Its Context and Tradition', *Technology and Culture,* 2:2 (1961), p. 99.
[539] White, 'Eilmer of Malmesbury', p. 99.

is the eclipse heralding Henry I's death. In his account of Henry I's voyage to England as discussed in Chapter Two, we can see William's use of omens at work:

> the elements accompanied with their sorrow the last crossing of so great a prince. For on that very day the sun, at the sixth hour, covered its shining head with rust, as the poets are wont to say, agitating men's minds by its eclipse…In the eclipse I myself saw stars round the sun.[540]

According to R. R. Newton, this was the best recorded eclipse of the Middle Ages.[541] As discussed in Chapter Two, William's timing of the crossing on the same day as Henry's coronation invokes a sense of cyclical time. The ominous impression of this passage is further reinforced by the omen: 'the sun covered in rust, as the poets are wont to say, agitating men's minds by its eclipse'.[542] The image of the sun covered in rust is an allusion to Virgil's *Georgics*: 'Even when Caesar was killed it [the sun] pitied Rome, when it covered its shining head with a dull rust and the impious ages feared eternal night'.[543] By referring to Virgil, reinforcing the allusion by referring to Virgil (alluded to as 'the poets'), William likened the omens surrounding the death of Caesar to the imminent death of Henry I. Furthermore, the sense of foreboding felt by those who observed the eclipse was implicitly the same: that the sun might not rise again and the world descend into eternal night. The description of this omen has an almost allegorical function. According to Michael Staunton, the concept of kings being associated with the sun, and their deaths or troubles associated with an

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[540] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 22-23: 'Prosecuta sunt elementa dolore suo extremum tanti principis transitum. Nam et sol ipsa die hora sexta tetra ferrugine, ut poeta solent dicere, nitidum caput obtexit, mentes hominum eclipsi sua concutiens… vidi ego et in eclipsi stellas circa solem'.
[541] R. R. Newton, *Medieval Chronicles and the Rotation of the Earth* (Baltimore, 1972) pp. 99, pp. 160-163
[542] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 22-23: 'ut poeta solent dicere, nitidum caput obtexit, mentes hominum eclipsi sua concutiens'.
[543] Virgil, *Eclogues. Georgics. Aeneid: Books 1-6*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, revised by G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA, 1916), pp. 130-131 i.466-468: 'Ille etiam exstincto miseratus Caesare Romam'cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit/impiaque aeternam timuerunt saecula noctem'.

eclipse, was widespread.[544] William was no exception. The image of the sun is universally connected to time. The rising and the setting of the sun marked the beginning and the end of a reign.[545] William signalled that the eclipse foretold the end of Henry I's reign in England and that it marked the beginning of political turmoil. William reinforced the veracity of the eclipse by stating that he had witnessed it personally.

However, this was not the only eclipse in the *Historia Novella*. William described another, occurring in 1140:

> That year in Lent, on 20 March, at the ninth hour on a Wednesday, there was an eclipse, all over England, I have heard. With us certainly and all our neighbours the sun was so notably absent that the first men sitting at table, as they mostly were at that time, feared the primeval chaos, then hearing what it was, they went out and saw the stars around the sun. It was thought and said by many, nor were they wrong, that the king would not survive the year in office.[546]

Both eclipses of 1132 and 1140 are described as featuring stars visible around the sun. However, this omen is described even more explicitly as foretelling political events. Stephen's reign would end within the year. The image of the eclipse as foretelling an ending is reinforced by the reaction to the eclipse: those who witnessed it 'feared the primeval chaos'. Here, William alluded to Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*. The 'ancient chaos' in the *Metamorphosis*

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[544] Michael Staunton, *The Historians of Angevin England* (Oxford, 2017), p. 125.
[545] The concept of time-related imagery and its implications for narrative interpretation will be further explored in Chapter Four.
[546] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 74-75: 'Eo anno in Quadragesima, tertiodecimo kalendas Aprilis hora nona feria quarta, fuit eclipsis, per totam Angliam ut accepi. Apud nos certe, et apud omnes uicinos nostros, ita notabiliter solis deliquium fuit, ut homines, quod tunc fere ubique accidit, mensis assidentes, primum antiquum chaos timerent; mox, re cognita, progredientes, stellas circa solem cernerent. Cogitatum et dictum est a multis, non falso, regem non perannaturum in regno'.

described the complete destruction of the earth: 'If the sea and land and sky are lost, we are hurled into the ancient chaos'.[547] In the *Pharsalia*, Lucan repeated Ovid's description of destruction and return to instability.[548] However, as James Masters has argued, Lucan frames civil war as similar to returning to the 'ancient chaos', or more accurately, that the 'ancient chaos' was actually preferable to civil war.[549] Lucan influenced William's work significantly, especially in the *Historia Novella*.[550] Indeed, by referring to the ancient chaos, William may have been invoking the Lucanian comparison between the chaos and civil war. As William was narrating the events of England's own civil war, the similarity would have been acute. Within this omen, William was revealing the tenuous hope that the civil war would end with the end of Stephen's reign, even if the price of that end was a return to the 'primeval chaos'.

Unusual Phenomena

William not only assigned political significance to celestial singularities but also to natural phenomena. Alongside celestial singularities are unusual natural phenomena. These include storms, lightning, earthquakes, plague and other abnormal occurrences.[551] William of Malmesbury's computus manuscript includes two texts on the *Nature of Things* by Isidore and by Bede. Rather than assigning

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[547] Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1-8*. Trans. Frank Justus Miller, Revised by G. P. Goold (Cambridge, MA, 1916) ii. 299, pp. 80-81 'si freta, si terrae pereunt, si regia caeli/in chaos antiquum confundimur!'
[548] Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia),* trans. J. D. Duff (Cambridge, MA, 1928), 1.74 pp. 8-9.
[549] James Masters, *Poetry and Civil war in Lucan's Bella civile,* pp. 63-65.
[550] Haar, 'William of Malmesbury's Roman Models: Suetonius and Lucan'.
[551] Watkins, *History and the Supernatural*, p. 48.

supernatural explanations, these texts sought to explain phenomena like earthquakes scientifically.[552] That did not mean that they were not regarded as omens. William's description of the eclipse when Henry I left England for the final time also included a description of an earthquake:

> and on the following Friday at dawn, the earth quaked so terribly that that it seemed to sink to the depths, and a dreadful noise was heard under the earth… in the earthquake the wall of the house in which I sat I saw lifted up by two shocks and settling down at a third. The king was then in Normandy for three years on end.[553]

William acknowledges that the earthquake did not occur at the same time as the eclipse. Still, its inclusion within the same passage and immediately after the eclipse implies that he intended both occurrences to be considered with the same implications. The coincidence of the number of shocks and the number of years Henry I was in Normandy appears to be deliberate. Stephen Church noted that William appeared to have miscalculated the year in which Henry crossed and thus had to add an additional year to Henry I's stay in order to correct it.[554] Considering William's skill in computus, this seems unlikely. It is possible that the miscalculation was deliberate in order to give the omen a further layer of meaning. The eclipse marked the end of Henry's reign in England, and the earthquake heralded the number of years that Henry would remain in Normandy. William appears to have been manipulating time in order to construct this political meaning, to great effect.

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[552] See Chapter One.
[553] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 22-23: 'et ferria sexta promixa primo mane tantus terrae motus fuit et penitus subsidere uideretur, horrifico sono sub terris ante audito… in terrae motu paretem domus in qua sedebam bifario impetu eleuatum tertio resedisse.Fuit ergo rex in Normannia triennio continuo'.
[554] W. Malm., *HN,* pp. 22-23, discussed in the critical apparatus fn 68.

A phenomenon with associations of calamity occurs again once Stephen steps on English soil with the intention of claiming the crown:

> it is certainly established that on the day when Stephen landed in England, at dawn there was, contrary to the nature of winter in our part of the world a terrible sound of thunder accompanied by fearful lightening, so that it was almost thought to be the end of the world.[555]

Whilst a storm may be viewed as a natural occurrence and with no additional meaning, William treats this one as an omen. First William uses *illo die* to confirm that the event happened on the same day that Stephen landed in England, linking the storm to Stephen's return to England. Then, the storm occurred at dawn (*summo mane*), or more accurately the earliest part of the morning. William's placement of the storm at dawn has implications for its interpretation as an omen. The previous portents discussed are timed as occurring at hours of monastic offices (nones and sext). The earthquake foretelling the doom of Henry I's reign took place at dawn. However, the specific words William used were slightly different and is significant. The earthquake is described as occurring during the early morning (*primo mane*). On the other hand, the storm strikes at the earliest light of dawn (*summon mane*). *Primo mane* and *summo mane* could be used interchangeably and a possible argument for the difference is that William was practising *varietas* –employing a varied vocabulary to maintain the interest of his readers. However, considering that there was a distance between these two events temporally (three years) and narratively (eight pages in the modern edition) this explanation seems unlikely. Given William's

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[555] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 26-29: 'Constat sane illo die quo Stephanus appulsus est Angliam, summo mane, contra naturam hiemis in regionibus nostris, terricrepum sonum tonitrui cum horrendo fulgure fuisse, ut paulominus mundus solui estimaretur'.

careful use of language, it is still unlikely that the parallels were mere coincidence. The event occurred at the very earliest part of dawn; the edge of the temporal boundary between night and day. Considering that this event occurred at the very beginning of Stephen's rule of England, the storm heralded the beginning of a new day, a new reign, and a new age of political tribulation and turmoil.

Finally, the storm was described as contrary to nature, specifically to the time of year, suggesting that it was an omen. The fundamental criteria for a phenomenon to be perceived as a portent was that it was out of the ordinary, and might carry meaning because of that. Thus, by stating that the storm was against nature, a phrase not used elsewhere in the *Historia*, William was showing without explicitly stating it that this storm was an omen. The storm and Stephen's landing in England to take the crown were heralded as against the right order of the world. Its function as an omen was clearly defined by the fact that the event occurred at dawn on the day Stephen arrived: the unnatural beginning of the day paralleled the unnatural commencement of Stephen's rule. Furthermore, no other contemporary chronicle mentions an unnatural storm on that day. This omission suggests that either it was not popularly assumed to be an omen or, more probably, it was William's invention. This raises the question of why William deployed it in the first place. He was portraying this storm as an omen without explicitly stating that it was one in order to serve his political agenda. All the common aspects of an omen are present as well as the suggestion of what it foretold. In contrast to the other omens depicted, this one guided the reader through suggestion and loaded imagery to reach the conclusion on their own. This was perhaps a more rhetorically effective technique

than explicitly stating that it was an omen. The nature of portents as inherently ambiguous meant that phenomena could be assigned meaning and a skilled writer could turn a storm into an omen for narrative purposes. This episode reveals that William was able to deftly use omens for political ends. It also reveals that omens were more malleable than prophecies. When greater detail and more information were included, as was common in prophecies, the less room remained for multiple interpretations and the less scope for an author to guide that interpretation to make a political point. With omens, the range of interpretative possibilities was greater.

What's Past is Prophecy

William's depiction of the future reveals how complicated and sophisticated his understanding of time was. It was malleable. Prophecies could be deployed to generate a pattern within a narrative to suggest causality and explain seemingly chaotic events. Omen-like events could be depicted so that they could only be interpreted as the author intended. The future could be transposed onto the past, and the past could be used to understand the future. Ultimately, the future was unknown. Attempts to predict or control it were fraught with moral dangers and were a sure route to disappointment. Only the chosen few could see beyond the veil. Saints like Dunstan, Wulfstan, and Anselm gained greater understanding of God's plan. Those not chosen could only hope for a brighter future. However, on the level of the narrative, the idea of the future was used to understand the past. A pattern could be created that brought coherence to the past. To William, the past and the

future were not separate, disconnected entities. Nor was the progress from past to future linear, a strict progression of cause and effect.[556] Rather, time was like a tapestry. Cyclical patterns of repetition and reoccurrence were interlaced with threads of linear progression. Writing history meant picking a single thread and following it through the ages. In its course it crossed other threads which were in the future, or the past. At several points those threads overlapped and the past, present, and future could exist in a single moment. From these crossings, time gained meaning, creating a picture through its different layers and patterns. And a sophisticated writer, such as William of Malmesbury, could use time and its pattern of meanings for his own purposes. He used prophecy and omens to generate echoes across time, to create connections between the past and the present. By doing so, he was addressing the sense that time itself had become disjointed. The past did connect to the present, and the present was connected to the future. William was using the narrative and historical record to create that sense of connection across time.

[556] The best explanation I have come across which illustrates this complexity is from the popular TV programme 'Doctor Who': "People assume that time is a strict progression of cause to effect, but actually from a non-linear, non-subjective viewpoint, it's more like a big ball of wibbly-wobbly,timey-wimey stuff."

Chapter Four

Imagining Time: Narrative Imagery

This final chapter will delve deeper into William of Malmesbury's representation of time by analysing specific uses of time-related imagery. It will seek to address the following questions: what temporal imagery was William deploying; when and why did he use this imagery, and how did it influence meaning and interpretation on the narrative level? This chapter will consider four principal forms of time-related metaphors used by William: seasons and life cycle, plant and vegetative imagery, ruins and architecture, and stars and astral imagery. It will conclude with a detailed analysis of one passage from the *Gesta Pontificum* which truly displays the sophistication of William's rhetorical depiction of time. These examples will illustrate that these images render a deeper, more nuanced and complex interpretation of the event and narrative in question by demonstrating how the choice of wording and allusion lends a deeper meaning to what is being said on the surface. Metaphors could be, and were, used for representing time. Bede employed a nautical metaphor to characterise the chaotic and turbulent passage of time as 'the fleeting and wave tossed course of time'.[557] However, these metaphors were not always explicit or accompanied by an extensive explanation. This was also the case for William of Malmesbury. As this chapter will reveal, he deployed time-related

[557] Bede, *ORT,* p. 239, 'volubili ac fluctiuago temporum lapsu'.

metaphors to inform and enhance his historical writing. They were used to build layers of meaning onto his narrative that the audience would have been able to interpret.

Metaphors were a common device in medieval literature. Ernst Curtius identified five categories: nautical, personal, alimentary, corporal and theatrical.[558] Curtius illustrates the large range of sources from which these metaphors derive, principally classical and patristic writers. Similarly, Constable explains that the Bible was a cornucopia for metaphors.[559] Gregory the Great was another such source, and drew on imagery derived from storms, farming, music, the sea, military life, architecture, mirrors and the human body to name but a few.[560] Medieval writers frequently deployed a series of metaphors that enabled the reader to understand and comprehend the concepts discussed. They anchored the idea to reality. According to Constable, they are particularly useful to modern scholars for exploring an author's understandings of complex notions which defined the fabric of their world:

> Metaphors hold up a shifting mirror, as it were, to the outer and the inner worlds of medieval men and women, and they were a constant reminder of the nature of the world and society and of the ambiguous position of mankind, caught between the real and the ideal.[561]

For a metaphor to be effective, it was imperative that the audience understood the image and how it related to the concept it was used to illustrate. 'What defines a mental image' Mary Carruthers suggests, 'is not its pictorial qualities but whether its

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[558] Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, 'Metaphorics' pp. 128-144.
[559] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p.4.
[560] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 5.
[561] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 19.

user understands it to represent a certain thing'.[562] And thus the metaphor is a word, term or phrase that represents a concept by deploying imagery.[563] Constable in his study on 'Medieval Latin Metaphors' refers to Gregory the Great's letter to Bishop Natalis of Salona to demonstrate this function in practice: 'if by drawing an example from exterior things you penetrate to the interior, you fill the stomach of the mind as if it were filled with game of the field'.[564] As will be explored later in this chapter, William of Malmesbury used metaphors to 'penetrate to the interior', enhancing his narrative by layering meaning onto the text. However, before we analyse William's writings, we must first consider the rhetorical tradition that William was familiar with and which shaped how and why he used such metaphors.

Rhetoric and the Mind's Eye

For the concept to be understood, it must be seen in the mind's eye. Evoking mental imagery was a common and powerful rhetorical technique that William was familiar with. Quintillian, one of the rhetoricians he studied, wrote that:

> It is a great virtue to express our subject clearly and in such a way that it seems to be actually seen. A speech does not adequately fulfil its purpose or attain the total domination it should have if it goes no further than the ears, and the judge feels that he is merely being told the story of the matters he has to decide, without their being brought out and displayed to his mind's eye.[565]

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[562] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 26.
[563] Carruthers, *The Book of Memory,* p. 27.
[564] Giles Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', *Viator* 38:2 (2007), p. 3.
[565] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* Volume III, Books 6-8, ed. and trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA, 2002), pp. 374-375: 'Magna virtus res de quibus loquimur clare atque ut cerni

For Quintilian, *evidentia* was central to effective rhetorical manipulation.[566] It was not enough to describe the event: in order to attain the audience's emotional engagement, they must be able to picture the event in their minds. He uses the example of describing a murder to illustrate the power of rhetoric to influence audience reception:

> There are certain experiences which the Greeks call φαντασίαι, and the Romans visions, whereby things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes… I am complaining that a man has been murdered. Shall I not bring before my eyes all the circumstances which it is reasonable to imagine must have occurred in such a connexion? Shall I not see the assassin burst suddenly from his hiding-place, the victim tremble, cry for help, beg for mercy, or turn to run? Shall I not see the fatal blow delivered and the stricken body fall? Will not the blood, the deathly pallor, the groan of agony, the death-rattle, be indelibly impressed upon my mind? From such impressions arises that ἐνάργεια which Cicero calls illumination and actuality, which makes us seem not so much to narrate as to exhibit the actual scene, while our emotions will be no less actively stirred than if we were present at the actual occurrence.[567]

These rhetorical techniques were not limited to speeches. William of Malmesbury applied them to his own writing. There are instances throughout his oeuvre in which he goes beyond merely describing the basic facts of an event. In these cases, he

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videantur enuntiare. Non enim satis efficit neque, ut debet, plene dominatur oratio si usque ad aures valet, atque ea sibi iudex de quibus cognoscit narrari credit, non exprimi et oculis mentis ostendi.'

[566] Walter S. Melion and Lee Palmer Wandel, 'Introduction' in *Image and Incarnation: The Early Modern Doctrine of the Pictorial Image*, eds Walter S. Melion and Lee Palmer Wandel (Leiden, 2014), p. 2.

[567] Quintilian, *The Orator's Education* Volume III, pp. 58-61: 'Neque enim sunt motus in nostra potestate. Temptabo etiam de hoc dicere. Quas phantasias Graeci vocant (nos sane visiones appellemus),per quas imagines rerum absentium ita repraesentantur animo ut eas cernere oculis ac praesentes habere videamur, has quisquis bene ceperit is erit in adfectibus potentissimus… Hominem occisum queror: non omnia quae in re praesenti accidisse credibile est in oculis habebo? non percussor ille subitus erumpet? non expavescet circumventus, exclamabit vel rogabit vel fugiet? non ferientem, non concidenten videbo? non animo sanguis et pallor et gemitus, extremus denique exspirantis hiatus insident? Insequentur enargeia, quae a Cicerone inlustratio et evidentia nominatur, quae non tam dicere videtur quam ostendere, et adfectus non aliter quam si rebus ipsis intersimus sequentur'.

included additional details that allowed the audience to picture in their minds the event or place depicted. These images are conveyed through use of metaphor and simile. However, they are not merely decorative. They are used in daily life to understand concepts such as purpose, state, change, causation, and indeed, time.[568] Metaphors bring an image to mind which is then used to explain an abstract concept such as time. Isidore of Seville explained in detail how metaphors work:

> Metaphor (*metaphora*) is an adopted transference of some word, as when we say "cornfields ripple," "the vines put forth gems," although we do not find waves and gems in these things; in these phrases, terms have been transferred from elsewhere. But these expressions, and others that also use tropes, are veiled in figural garb with respect to what should be understood, so that they may exercise the reader's understanding, and lest the subjects grow common from being stripped bare and obvious. And metaphors occur in four ways: from animate to animate, as: He mounted winged horses; speaking metaphorically it associates the wings of a bird with a quadruped. Also: With what running (i.e. with what flight) she (i.e. Philomela transformed into a bird) sought deserted places; this associates the running of a quadruped with a winged creature. From the inanimate to the inanimate, as: The pine-wood plows the sea, the lofty keel cuts a furrow; this associates the use of land with water, since plowing and cutting a furrow have to do with the land, not the sea. From inanimate to animate, as "blooming youth"; this associates inanimate flowers with youth, which is living. From animate to inanimate, as: You, father Neptune, whose white temples, wreathed with crashing brine, resound; to whom the great Ocean flows forth as your eternal beard, and in whose hair rivers wander. For 'beard,' 'temples,' and 'hair' pertain not to the Ocean but to men. In this way, some terms for things are transferred very elegantly from one kind to another for the sake of beauty, so that the speech may be greatly adorned. Metaphor is either of one direction, as 'the cornfields are rippling' – for you cannot say 'the ripples are cornfielding' – or it is an antistropha, that is reciprocal, as remigium alarum ("oarage of wings". We can speak of both wings (i.e. oars) of ships and oarages (i.e. beatings) of wings.[569]

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[568] George Lakoff, 'The contemporary theory of metaphor' in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony (Cambridge, 1993), p. 237.

[569] Isidore, *Etymologies*, p. 60-61; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi *Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber I:* 'DE TROPIS. Tropos Graeco nomine Grammatici vocant, qui Latine modi locutionum interpretantur.

Metaphors 'transferred' meaning between two similar concepts.[570] Cicero also discussed the topic, stressing the necessity of the metaphor or simile being easily imagined by the audience in order to have its intended impact:

> Care is next to be taken that the simile be not too far-fetched; as, for 'the Syrtis of his patrimony,' I should rather have said, 'the rock;' for 'the Charybdis of his possessions,' rather 'the gulf:' for the eyes of the mind are more easily directed to those objects which we have seen, than to those of which we have only heard. And since it is the greatest merit in a metaphorical word, that what is metaphorical should strike the senses, all offensiveness is to be avoided in those objects to which the comparison must naturally draw the minds of the audience.[571]

Metaphors, similes, and other related rhetorical techniques use imagery. This imagery contained multiple meanings and associations for the author and the reader.

Fiunt autem a propria significatione ad non propriam similitudinem. Quorum omnium nomina difficillimum est adnotare, sed ex omnibus Donatus tredecim usui tradenda conscripsit. Metaphora est verbi alicuius usurpata translatio, sicut cum dicimus "fluctuare segetes" "gemmare vites" dum in his rebus fluctus et gemmas non invenimus, in quibus haec verba aliunde transferuntur. Sed hac atque aliae tropicae locutiones ad ea, quae intellegenda sunt, propterea figuratis amictibus obteguntur, ut sensus legentis exerceant, et ne nuda atque in promptu vilescant. Fiunt autem metaphorae modis quattuor: ab animali ad animate, ut: Aligeros conscendit equos. Metaphorice loquens miscuit quadrupedi alas avis, et (Virg. Ecl. 6,80): Quo cursu deserta petiverit; miscuit volatili cursum quadrupedis. Ab inanimali ad inanimale, ut Pontum pinus arat, sulcum premit alta carina. Miscuit usum terrae aquis, dum arare et sulcum premere ad terram pertineat, non ad mare. Ab inanimali ad animale, ut "florida iuventus': miscuit flores inanimales iuventuti, quae animam habet. Ab animali ad inanimale, ut: Tu, Neptune pater, cui tempora cana crepanti cincta salo resonant, magnus cui perpete mento profluit Oceanus, et flumina crinibus errant. Mentum enim, tempora et crines non ad Oceanum pertinent, sed ad homines. Sic et alia rerum nomina de alio genere in aliud genus decentissime decoris gratia transferuntur, ut oratio perornetur. Metaphora autem aut partis unius est, ut "fluctuare segetes' (non potes dicere "segetare fluctus'), aut antistropha est, id est reciproca, ut "remigium alarum" Nam et alae navium et alarum remigia dicuntur'.

[570] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 2.

[571] Cicero, *On the Orator*, eds and trans E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA, 1942), pp. 126-127:'…aptatum, quod ante dixerat,"dum licet." Deinde videndum est ne longe simile sit ductum:"Syrti m" patrimoni,"scopulum" libentius dixerim;"Charybdim" bonorum,"voraginem" potius; facilius enim ad ea, quae visa, quam ad illa, quae audita sunt, mentis oculi feruntur; "et quoniam haec vel summa laus est in verbis transferendis, ut sensum feriat id, quod translatum sit, fugienda est omnis turpitudo earum rerum, ad quas eorum animos, qui audient, trahet similitudo'.

Symbolist Mentality

The use of images drawn from nature was especially characteristic of the twelfth century. In *Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century* Marie-Dominique Chenu discusses the importance of symbol, metaphor and figurative expression in twelfth-century thought. He argues that medieval scholars relied on symbols to illustrate intangible concepts.[572] Citing Hugh of St Victor who explained that 'a symbol is a juxtaposition, that is, a coaptation of visible forms brought forth to demonstrate some invisible matter', Chenu demonstrates that elements of the physical world were used to represent things spiritual, especially in theology.[573] Indeed, in his own words 'the theology of the twelfth century was saturated with symbol and metaphor'; it enabled the union of the material and the spiritual in one thought.[574] Any area of nature could be taken and used as metaphor. For instance, there was a plethora of objects that could be deployed as symbols of human virtue: 'earth, rock, soil, and of course light, shadows, and stars; so grass, the spike of grain, and seed; so the lion, the wild ass, the sparrow and the scorpion'.[575] Natural objects whether terrestrial (physical, vegetal or animal) or astral (the heavens, planets, stars, the sun and moon) represented the power and the order of God.[576] History also represented this order and reflected the divine. According to Chenu, there was a coherence to

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[572] M-D Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality' in his *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, eds and trans Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Toronto, 1977), p. 103.
[573] Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality', p. 103 and p. 114.
[574] Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality', p. 114.
[575] Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality', p. 104.
[576] Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality', p. 115.

history which revealed the design imposed by God. Previous chapters of this thesis have already touched upon this subject. Ultimately, history itself could be deployed as a symbol. It is not unreasonable then to suggest that imagery deployed through metaphor in a narrative text could be used as a symbol and thus laden with meaning. These symbols could be woven throughout a text, deployed in circumstances which would enhance the meaning of the narrative and guide the audience's interpretation of the events depicted. The fact that these images were used to express more complicated, deeper meanings, on many occasions embedded within a text without explicit explanation, was not unknown to twelfth-century writers. In his *De Doctrina Christiana* Augustine discusses both the advantage of using representation for understanding and how pleasure derived from uncovering these meanings: 'no one doubts that things are more readily understood through similitudes and that they are discovered with much more delight when they have been hunted out with difficulty'.[577] Thus, embedding deeper layers of meaning within an image or metaphor was considered good scholarly practise which was beneficial to the reader. However, these different layers of meaning could be intended for different audiences. Alan of Lille, for instance, expressly stated that the multifaceted layers of meaning in his *Anticlaudianus* were intended for different audiences, referring to three of the four senses: literal sense (young boys), moral instruction (those seeking to enhance their minds), and allegory (those of an advanced intellect).[578] Some of William's works were intended for a wider

[577] Augustine, *De Doctrinia,* p. 39: 'nemo ambigit, et per similitudines libentius quaeque cognosci, et cum aliqua difficultate quaesita multo gratius inveniri'; Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality', p. 121.
[578] Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus, or the Good and Perfect Man*, trans. James J. Sheridan (Toronto, 1973), pp. 40-1.

readership than others, the *Gesta Pontificum*, *Gesta Regum*, and *Historia Novella* especially. Whilst several of the time-related images William used shared a more universal meaning across spheres of society (plant imagery), the meanings of others, stars imagery in particular, were specific to an ecclesiastically educated audience.

Medieval readers were expected to find deeper meaning beyond the literal. Theologian Henri de Lubac argued that medieval Christian tradition assumed that the reading of Scripture should involve searching for deeper layers of meaning by penetrating beyond the surface of the text.[579] A reader could find an endless supply of connotations within a text.[580] The Bible served as a case in point: the Old Testament was seen as possessing layers which related to the revelations in the New Testament.[581] Augustine's study of symbolism in the Bible made clear the possibility of multiple simultaneous meanings, and this possibility was recognised in the twelfth century.[582] Indeed, it was acknowledged that there were 'levels' of meaning to a text, especially in the Bible. The literal meaning was not a text's only meaning.[583] However, that does not signify that multiple meanings could not exist simultaneously without convoluting or overcomplicating the meaning of the

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[579] For an excellent analysis of Henri de Lubac's arguments of the 'Spiritual Senses' and interpretation of scripture see Joseph S. Flipper, *Between Apocalypse and Eschaton: History and Eternity in Henri de Lubac* (Minneapolis, MN, 2015), especially pp. 93- 100.
[580] David R. Olson, 'Knowledge and its Artefacts' in *History of Science, History of Text,* ed. Karine Chemla (Dordrecht, 2004), p. 233.
[581] Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality' p. 121; Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading*, pp. 38-71.
[582] Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality', p. 121; Robert Stuart Sturges, *Medieval Interpretation: Modes of Reading in Literary Narrative, 1100-1500* (Edwardsville, IL, 1991), pp. 13-14; Robert A. Harris, 'Twelfth-Century Exegetes and the Invention of Literature' *in The Multiple Meaning of Scripture: The Role of Exegesis in Early-Christian and Medieval Culture*, ed. Ineke van 't Spijker (Leiden, 2009), pp. 311- 330.
[583] Scholarship on the levels of meaning see: Robert McMahon, *Understanding the Medieval Meditative Ascent: Augustine, Anselm, Boethius and Dante* (Washington D.C, 2006), p. 57; Alexandre Leupin, *Fiction and Incarnation: Rhetoric, Theology, and Literature in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, 2003), p. 115; Sturges, *Medieval Interpretation: Models of Reading in Literary Narrative,* p. 14, pp. 64-68; Philippe Buc, *Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton, NJ, 2001).

narrative. The context in which the image was used, and the other images with which it was used, shaped and clarified meaning. William of Malmesbury would have been familiar with interpreting the deeper levels of meaning hidden within a text. Several of the authorities that discuss interpretive meanings for writings, especially Augustine, were known to William. He deployed allegorical interpretation of works himself in his *On Lamentations* commentary. Paul Hayward has argued that the *Gesta Pontificum* and the *Gesta Regum* need to be read in the classical rhetoric tradition in order to uncover meaning hidden in the text, what he defines as William's 'studied ambiguity'.[584]

Characterising Time

Time was imbued with a variety of characteristics. Typifying time with a series of qualities was common and can be seen in Antiquity and the Bible. Often in the latter, time is defined by purpose, as Ecclesiastes demonstrates:

> For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose. A time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew. A time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A

[584] Hayward, 'The Importance of Being Ambiguous', pp. 75-102, especially pp. 97-101.

> time of love, and a time of hatred. A time of war, and a time of peace.[585]

Time was part of God's Creation of the world as depicted in Genesis. The events of the Bible provided the basis on which much of the ecclesiastical calendar was constructed.

On the other hand, in classical antiquity, time was personified through anthropomorphic entities including the god Chronos.[586] William was aware of the classical anthropomorphic personification of entities such as the sun. His copy of Isidore of Seville's *De Natura Rerum* includes an illustration of the sun god Helios in his chariot below a section of the text describing the movement of the sun.[587] Perhaps the best known classical passage on anthropomorphic image of time can be found in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, discussed previously.[588] To return to the detailed description of time from Book I, which included the characterisation of the past and the present as animals:

> The lion's head, then, points to the present time, poised for action, powerful and urgent, between the past and the future, while the wolf's head signifies time past, because the memory of bygone events is snatched up and carried off; similarly, the image of the fawning dog represents future events, which hope—uncertain though it is—presents to us with winning aspect.[589]

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[585] Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: 'omnia tempus habent et suis spatiis transeunt universa sub caelo ; tempus nascendi et tempus moriendi tempus plantandi et tempus evellendi quod plantatum est ; tempus occidendi et tempus sanandi tempus destruendi et tempus aedificandi ; tempus flendi et tempus ridendi tempus plangendi et tempus saltandi; tempus spargendi lapides et tempus colligendi tempus amplexandi et tempus longe fieri a conplexibus; tempus adquirendi et tempus perdendi tempus custodiendi et tempus abiciendi; tempus scindendi et tempus consuendi tempus tacendi et tempus loquendi; tempus dilectionis et tempus odii tempus belli et tempus pacis'.
[586] For more on the classical personification of time see: Simona Cohen, *Transformations of Time,* pp. 13-38.
[587] Bodleian Library MS Auct. F.3.14 f. 9r.
[588] See Chapter One.
[589] Macrobius *Saturnalia,* Volume I: Books 1-2, ed. and trans. Robert A. Kaster (Cambridge, MA, 2011), pp. 274-7: 'Ergo leonis capite monstratur praesens tempus, quia conditio eius inter praeteritum

Bede also deployed an animal to characterise time. In one of the most famous passages of Bede's work, the flight of a sparrow through a hall is used to represent the passage of time:

> He says, 'to me, o king, the present life of men in this earth in comparison with that time which is uncertain to us seems such as when you are sitting at a feast with your ealdormen and servants during the winter time—certainly a fire is burning in the middle and the hall is made warm—but outside the storms of winter rain and snow rage altogether. A single sparrow comes into the home and quickly flies through; it enters through one door and immediately exits through another. Certainly in that very time in which it is inside, it is not touched by the storm of winter; but nevertheless with that very brief instance of serenity passing in a single moment, the sparrow, immediately returning from winter into winter, slips before your eyes. Thus this life of men appears for a moment; but of what follows, or of what has preceded, we are utterly ignorant. Thence, if this new teaching has brought something more certain, for good reason it seems that it should be followed'.[590]

Bede skilfully used the image of the sparrow to illustrate the fleeting passage of a lifetime within the wider scope of time and eternity.[591] William knew that time could be given characteristics or represented as some kind of physical entity. He attributed human features to time, discussing time as 'envious' or 'injurious', a force which

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futurumque actu praesenti valida fervensque est: sed et praeteritum tempus lupi capite signatur, quod memoria rerum transactarum rapitur et aufertur: item canis blandientis effigies futuri temporis designat eventum, de quo nobis spes, licet incerta, blanditur'; for analysis of this passage see: Debra Hawhee, *Rhetoric in Tooth and Claw: Animals, Language, Sensation* (Chicago, IL, 2017) pp. 165-7.

[590] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, Volume I, Books 1-3, ed and trans. J. E. King (Cambridge, MA, 1930), pp. 282-283: 'Talis' inquiens 'mihi uidetur, rex, uita hominum praesens in terris, ad conparationem eius quod nobis incertum est temporis, quale cum te residente ad caenam cum ducibus ac ministris tuis tempore brumali, accenso quidem foco in medio et calido effecto cenaculo, furentibus autem foris per omnia turbinibus hiemalium pluuiarum uel niuium, adueniens unus passerum domum citissime peruolauerit; qui cum per unum ostium ingrediens mox per aliud exierit, ipso quidem tempore quo intus est hiemis tempestate non tangitur, sed tamen paruissimo spatio serenitatis ad momentum excurso, mox de hieme in hiemem regrediens, tuis oculis elabitur. Ita haec uita hominum ad modicum apparet; quid autem sequatur, quidue praecesserit, prorsus ignoramus. Vnde, si haec noua doctrina certius aliquid attulit, merito esse sequenda uidetur.'

[591] For further analysis of this passage see: Tristan Major, '1 Corinthians 15:52 as a Source for the Old English Version of Bede's Simile of the Sparrow', *Notes and Queries*, 54:1 (2007), pp. 11–12; Mary Faith Schuster, 'Bede and the Sparrow Simile', *The American Benedictine Review 8* (1957), pp. 47-50.

ravages the world.[592] He was also aware of the use of animals to symbolise the passing of time. William would have been familiar with the concept of time being represented by an image, a description which would be visualised in the mind's eye. Presenting time though imagery aided the reader's ability to conceptualise and understand time. Furthermore, it enabled the author to add layers of meaning through the specific images he chose to use.

Circle of Life

Time could be visualized through life cycles: the stages of a life, the passage of a day or the seasons. William opened his commentary *On Lamentations* by discussing his age:

> I am forty today; I have come to the mid point of the course that the divine psalmist appoints for the life of man, when he says: The days of our years in them are threescore and ten years. But if in the strong they be fourscore years: and what is more of them is labour and sorrow.[593]

The biblical passage that William cited is Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses to God:

> All our days pass away under your wrath;
> we finish our years with a moan.
> Our days may come to seventy years,

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[592] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 464-465: 'all traces of the past had been obliterated by violent enemies or injurious time' 'omnibus uidelicet uetustatis monimentis uiolentia hostium et temporum deletis'; *GP* pp. 578-579: '…have all been buried deep in oblivion by envious Time' 'quo toto tempore quae miracula exhibuerit, quae nec parua nec fuisse crediderim, omnia speliuit, omnia supressit emula obliuio'.

[593] William of Malmesbury, *On Lamentations*, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Medaeualis 244, eds Rodney Thomson and Michael Winterbottom, trans Michael Winterbottom (Leiden, 2013) p. 35: Quadragenarius sum hodie, admouique pedam ad medietatem matae quam diuinus psalmista ponit hominum uitae, dicens: Si autem in potentatibus octoginta anni, et amplius eorum labor et dolor.

> or eighty, if our strength endures;
> yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow,
> for they quickly pass, and we fly away.[594]

William cited another passage from this psalm in *On Lamentations*. He discussed the brevity of life, using the metaphor of the passage of the day to describe the passage of a lifetime: 'In the morning let him pass like grass (in childhood); in the afternoon flourish and pass by (in youth): in the evening (old age) fall (in death); grow hard (as a corpse) and grow dry (as dust)'.[595] This passage echoes more of the above Psalm:

> thousand years in your sight
> are like a day that has just gone by,
> or like a watch in the night.
> Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—
> they are like the new grass of the morning:
> In the morning it springs up new,
> but by evening it is dry and withered.[596]

The course of time was at the heart of this imagery. Readers could associate the milestones of life (childhood, youth, old age and death) with the temporal units of the day (morning and evening). A phase of life was a division of time, the same as the divisions of the day. 'An age of life' Elizabeth Sears argues, 'is a division of time, part of a microcosmic cycle believed to correspond to cycles in the macrocosm'.[597] In other words, the depiction of smaller units of time, such as the phases of the day, could represent larger units of time, such as those of a lifetime, or of historical

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[594] Psalm 90 9-12: 'omnes enim dies nostri transierunt in furore tuo consumpsimus annos nostros quasi sermonem loquens. dies annorum nostrorum in ipsis septuaginta anni si autem multum octoginta anni et quod amplius est labor et dolor quoniam transivimus cito et avolavimus.
[595] William of Malmesbury, *On Lamentations*, p. 56: '*Mane sicut herba transeat* (id est in pueritia); *mane floreat et transeat* (id est in iuuentute); *uespere* (id est senectute*) decidat* (in morte), *induret,* (in cadauere), *arescat* (in puluere).
[596] Psalm 90 4-6: 'quia mille anni in oculis tuis sicut dies hesterna quae pertransiit et vigilia nocturna. percutiente te eos somnium erunt. mane quasi herba pertransiens mane floruit et abiit ad vesperam conteretur atque siccabitur.
[597] Elizabeth Sears, *The Ages of Man: Medieval Interpretations of the Life Cycle* (Princeton, 2019), p. 31.

epochs. Most metaphors deployed in this period use images which convey the 'microcosm' that extends to the 'macrocosm', and these images created a chain of associations. This is certainly the case for the time-related metaphors used by William of Malmesbury. The daily succession of morning, noon and night is twinned with the progress of the seasons, which in turn equated to the progression of childhood, adulthood and old age.[598] These were then used to metaphorically represent life and time itself.

Principal among the metaphors associated with the course of time were those relating to the seasons.[599] They involved imagery such as snow, summer heat, blooming flowers and fallen leaves. They were often used to illustrate another time-related descriptor: age. Frequently, William would use the word 'green' for denoting youth and 'snow' or 'white' for age. One discussion of Saint Wulfstan uses an extended season-age metaphor:

> he never indulged in food by day until he had signed the children, whatever their number, who were brought from all around. This is what he did, from dawn to dusk, and not only in the winter but in the heat of summer too… and not only in his youth, when green age and the very delight of good works led him to work hard, but even when the shining white sprinkled his head with snow.[600]

Several images of time are at work. First, William showed Wulfstan's commitment to blessing the children by expressing that Wulfstan did this all day 'from dawn to

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[598] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', pp. 9–10.
[599] For discussion on the seasons in medieval literature see: P. S. Langeslag, *Seasons in the Literatures of the Medieval North* (Woodbridge, 2015).
[600] W. Malm., *VW,* pp. 86-87: 'numquam uictui die indulsit quoadusque quanticumque numeri pueros undecumque aduectos consignasser. Hoc a primo solis ortu ad lucem occiduam actitabat, non solum diebus hibernis sed et solibus aestiuis… hoc non modo in iuuentute, cum et uiridis aetas et ipsa bene fatiendi uoluptas ad laborem uocaret, uerum etiam cum iam gemma canities niue caput aspergeret.'

dusk' and in all seasons, 'not only in winter but in the heat of summer too'. William began with a smaller unit of time, the day, and then extended it to the year. His description of those units of time is very visual. The day is 'from first light to the western light', the year is from 'winter to the heat of summer'. In the mind's eye, it is possible to visualise the passage of time. This dedication is then extended to a lifetime. This lifetime is described using seasonal imagery. Wulfstan's youth is described as 'green age' which invokes images of spring: not only does it convey a sense of youth but also of vitality. In contrast, his later years are characterised as winter: 'the shining white sprinkled his head with snow'. In the spring of his life and career Wulfstan performed this act with ease, whilst towards the end of his life, the 'winter' of age made the task more difficult, but he performed it all the same. The contrast between spring and winter and its respective associations with youth and age also conveys the passage of time. These parallels between spring and youth, and winter and old age, were used elsewhere in William's work. Discussing the anticipation of beginning the journey on the First Crusade, William wrote: 'the time came when the longed-for month of March arrived, when the world, sloughing off the old age of winter and clothing itself in youth and spring, summoned those who were making the journey to the East'.[601] The passage of the seasons represented the passage of a life. The changes of nature on earth through the seasons personified the

[601] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 608-609: 'Iamque aduenerat desiderantibus mensis Martius, quando senecta brumali deposita mundus, uernali uestitus iuuenta, in plagam Orientis ituros inuitabat'.

progress of time.[602] Nature could easily be visualised and imagined by readers, as they were surrounded by it.[603]

Colours were also used to denote the seasons. The chain of association is developed further through colour symbolism. 'Green' represents spring and therefore youth and 'white' winter, and thus old age. 'Among all the realities of nature' Chenu explains, 'colour has always been a suitable vehicle for some supraphysical meaning out on the spiritual borderline.'[604] Therefore, colour was a powerful tool for enhancing the narrative. Diagrams found in computus manuscripts used colour to denote the seasons, as illustrated by the four-fold microcosm and macrocosm diagram found in Byrhtferth of Ramsey's computus text the *Enchiridion*.[605] It interlaces the months, seasons, elements, four ages of man and the Zodiac together to show the harmony of the universe.[606] Specifically, it uses colours to denote the elements (air, earth, fire, water) and these elements were used to characterise the seasons.[607] William of Malmesbury's contemporary Hugh of St Victor discusses the connection between colours and the seasons. In the *Didascalicon* he states that green was the colour of spring.[608] Whilst there is no evidence of William reading Hugh's work, they were contemporaries, engaged with many of the same subjects and took very similar approaches.[609] Thus, William deployed imagery

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[602] Colum Hourihane, 'Introduction' in *Time in the Medieval World: Occupations of the Months and Signs of the Zodiac in the Index of Christian Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton, 2007), p. xlviii.
[603] Hourihane, 'Introduction', p. xlviii.
[604] Chenu, 'The Symbolist Mentality', p. 106.
[605] The 'Ramsey Computus', Oxford, St John's College, MS 17 f.7v.
[606] Sears, *The Ages of Man*, p. 34.
[607] Sears, *The Ages of Man*, p. 34.
[608] Hugh of St Victor, *Didascalicon*, PL, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Paris, 1854), col. 82i.
[609] Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 33.

to articulate the passage of time, which in turn conveyed additional layers of meaning beyond the surface of the narrative. Rather than plainly stating that Wulfstan continued to bless the children throughout his lifetime, William instead uses seasonal imagery to emphasize the continuity of Wulfstan's humility throughout the changes of his life. Instead of merely commenting that the crusaders journeyed East in March, he invoked the associations of age and seasons to suggest the vigour and excitement that bloomed with the commencement of the Crusade. Time-related imagery was deployed to enhance the meaning of the narrative.

Plant Imagery

Imagery drawn from biology, concerning life, death and renewal was found throughout medieval literature.[610] Flowers, plants, gardens, trees, seeds and fields were all deployed as metaphors. They were also deployed as verbs conjuring images including flourishing, blooming and growing. Constable subsumes these varying forms of image under the term 'vegetative and horticultural metaphors'.[611] They could be used to express ideas of time. William of Malmesbury's near contemporary Bernard of Clairvaux most clearly demonstrates this connection in his *Sermon super cantica canticorum*, in which he describes sacred history itself as a garden.[612] The three stages of planting, growth and harvest ran parallel to the creation (at the beginning

[610] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 9.
[611] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 9.
[612] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 10.

of time), reconciliation (during the seven ages) and reparation of man (at the last judgement).[613] Once the fullness of time had been reached, at the end of time, and the garden had grown, the good and bad produce would be separated and stored.[614] The works of Bernard of Clairvaux contain abundant vegetative imagery and metaphors.[615] Whilst there is no evidence that William of Malmesbury had access to Bernard of Clairvaux's works, the similarities between Bernard's commentaries and William's own work, especially *On Lamentations,* show that they both expressed ideas that were characteristic of those accepted at the time.[616] Gerhart Ladner summarizes these metaphors as 'variant reflections of hopes for renewal, rebirth, and regrowth'.[617] Plants in their nature encompassed the passage of time. The growth, decay and renewal of the plant life cycle symbolised the seasons which were connected to those phases, which in turn paralleled the phases of life, and then the rise and fall of the ages across time.[618] The close symbolic association between plants, seasons, and age made it a vivid metaphor for the passage of time.

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[613] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 10.
[614] This passage is discussed in depth in: M. B. Pranger, *Bernard of Clairvaux and the Shape of Monastic Thought: Broken Dreams* (Leiden, 1994), p. 61.
[615] See: Virginie Minet-Mahy 'Étude des métaphores végétales dans trois commentaires sur la Cantique des cantiques (Origène, Apponius,Bernard de Clairvaux)' *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 46 (2003), pp. 159-189.
[616] Sønnesyn, *William of Malmesbury and the Ethics of History*, p. 60; Hugh Farmer, 'William of Malmesbury's Commentary On Lamentations' in *Studio Monastica*, iv (1962), p. 298.
[617] Gerhart B. Ladner, 'Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of Renaissance', *Images and Ideas in the Middle Ages: Selected Studies in History and Art* (Ed. di Storia e Letteratura, 1983), p. 744.
[618] Constable, 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 10.

The Flower of Youth

William made prolific use of vegetative metaphors, especially to describe or emphasise the youth or inexperience of characters. The most common image used was the flower. For instance, William described many a character as being in 'the flower of his youth'.[619] Youthful beauty was also classified in this way. In the *Gesta Regum*, when asked to choose between the Emperor Charles and his son, Eadburga chose the son for 'his blooming beauty'.[620] One of Dunstan's predictions in both the *Vita Dunstani* and the *Gesta Pontificum* concerning the death of Edith of Wilton makes further use of these metaphors. The woman is described as a 'blooming rose' in both accounts.[621] However, Dunstan predicted that she would die within six weeks. He stated that 'soon this blooming rose will fade…'.[622] The metaphor enhances the tragic nature of the passage. Just as the beautiful rose fades, the young woman withers away. William used an extended vegetative metaphor when describing the life and career of Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Leicester:

> In previous reigns, as his ambitions gradually blossomed (*pullulo*), he was making his way to the front; but in this reign he flourished (*effloresco*) exceedingly, and his opinion was regarded as the utterance of an oracle.[623]

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[619] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 28-29, pp. 480-1; *GR*, pp. 144-5: 'aetatis floridae'.
[620] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 172-173: 'uirdis pulchritudinis'.
[621] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 298-299: 'pedicta die citra iuuentae terminum efflauit, cum esset annorum uiginto trium…florida rosa'; *VD*, pp. 276-277.
[622] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 298-299: 'Cito…hec florida rosa marcescet…'
[623] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 736-737: 'Qui cum superiorum regum tempore, spe sensim pullulante, in gloriam procederet, huius aetate summo prouectu effloruit, habebaturque eius consilium quasi quis diuinum consuluisset sacrarium'.

The metaphor of hope as a budding plant or flower, which then gains full bloom and ripens into maturity, and that hope is realised, was a suggestive image of his skill and prominence which were hinted at earlier, and which reached full bloom with maturity.

On the other hand, the image of youth unexpectedly cut down in its prime occurs with some frequency. Mathilda's husband Emperor Henry of the Holy Roman Empire 'died in the very bloom of his life and of his conquest'.[624] William the Conqueror's son Richard 'afforded his noble father hopes of his future greatness; a fine youth and of aspiring disposition, considering his age: but an untimely death quickly withered the bud of this promising flower'.[625] A similar use of the metaphor was applied to the casualties of war. One battle in 1012 'mowed down the whole flower of the province', whilst at Ashingdon in 1016 'On that field Canute destroyed a kingdom, there England's glory fell, there the whole flower of our country withered'.[626] It heralded the end of the age of the Angles. Also, it encompassed the sense of mourning that the promise those 'flowers' held were so brutally cut down, never to be part of the growth and glory of the kingdom.

Whilst the sorrow associated with the unexpected ending of life is tangible, William also shows how a political dynasty could bloom at the wrong time, ensuring its demise:

> Thus the principate of the Mercians, having burst into sudden blossom through the vaunting madness of an heroic pagan, now

[624] W. Malm., *HN*, pp. 4-5: 'in ipso aetatis et uictoriarum flore obiit'.
[625] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 502-505: 'sed tantam primeui floris indolem mors acerba cita depasta corrupit…'
[626] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 274-275: 'in bello quod omnem florem prouintiae dessuit'; *GR* pp. 316-317 'Ibi Cnuto regnum expugnauit, ibi omne decus Angliae occubuit, ibi flos patriae totus emarcuit'.

> withered and died through the pitiful weakness of a king who was less than a man, in the year of our Lord 875.[627]

A plant or flower cannot grow and develop into full ripeness if it is cut down prematurely, nor can a plant survive if it blooms at the wrong time. Such ideas were applied to understanding and explaining political history.

Plants and Institutions

Plant-based imagery was not confined to describing characters or the consequences of war. It was also used to portray the historical development of Christianity and of institutions. According to Constable: 'the metaphors of vegetation… expressed the sense of both renewal and degeneration, and applied particularly to the history of institutions, which were born, grew, declined and died in spite of occasional recoveries'.[628] Indeed, they were especially used in the eleventh and twelfth centuries to characterise the resurgence of monasticism.[629] Orderic Vitalis described the ploughed fields of Normandy as 'the vine [that] put forth shoots here and there and bore for God an abundant harvest of men dwelling in holiness.' [630] William praised Lanfranc's efforts to restore English monasticism through vegetative imagery: 'so freely did his [Lanfranc's] energy make monasticism flower'.[631] Much of

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[627] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 140-141: 'Ita principatus Mertiorum, qui per tumidam gentillis uiri insaniam subito effloruit, tunc per miseram semiuiri regis ignauiam omnino emarcuit, anno Dominicae incarnationis octingentesimo septuagesimo quinto'.
[628] Constable 'Medieval Latin Metaphors', p. 19.
[629] Giles Constable, 'Metaphors for Religious Life in the Middle Ages', *Revue Mabillon* 19 (2008), p. 239.
[630] O. Vit., *HE*, Vol. II, pp. 4–5:''…laborantibus colonis sparsim suas propagines emisit, et multiplicem fructum hominum in sanctitate permanentium Deo obtulit'.
[631] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 496-497: 'ita ipsus industria monasticum germen effloruit'.

the language used revolved around the image of a seed. On several occasions in the *Gesta Pontificum*, William referred to the 'seeds of belief' and 'seeds of the word of God'.[632] The spread and development of Christianity across England was described by William in terms of planting or sowing seeds, and William used these metaphors throughout his works. This image was also used more broadly to encompass the development of good and evil: 'wherever he […] uprooted evil growths he at once sowed the seeds of good'.[633] A seed is planted and over the course of time, will grow and ripen. William's use of the seed metaphor encompasses this sense of development over the course of time. Furthermore, this use of seed-related imagery reveals William's understanding of the pattern of history as a series of causes and effects. Seeds of good or discord could be sown, and their results reaped after time had passed. Eadmer used similar language to clarify the narrative plan of the *Historia Novorum*: 'we should, we think, begin by going a little further back and tracing in brief outline what was, so to speak, the actual planting of the seed which grew the developments which we are to record. This should be our starting point'.[634] The 'seeds' of the events of the main narrative were found in the Anglo-Saxon past and they developed into the events which were recorded. For Eadmer, the turmoil faced by Anselm was the fruition of seeds sown in the distant past. William of Malmesbury shared a similar approach to considering the events of the past, and the effects of those events later in time.

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[632] W. Malm., *GP,* p. 79: 'semia uerbi Dei olim uenerabiliter iacta in terra Anglorum cepistis renouare…', p. 251: 'ibi credulitatis saturus semia ubi…'
[633] W. Malm., *GP* p. 105 'et undecumque malorum extirpabat plantaria continuo ibi bonorum iaciebat semina'.
[634] Eadmer, *HRE*, p. 2, '…radicis propagine de qua eorum quse dicenda sunt germen excrevit brevi relatu progrediendum'.

Trees, Plants, and Politics

The tree was perhaps the most common and evocative plant-based image used in historical writing. It was prominent in the Bible.[635] It was used to discuss theological points (such as the parable of the fig tree), or appeared as symbols in dreams and visions. In medieval literature, trees were connected to prophecy, not least the famous death-bed prophecy of the Green Tree, found in the eleventh-century *Vita Aedwardi*. As discussed in Chapter Three, it appears in William's work.[636] To return to his account:

> it will be… as though a green tree were cut through the middle of the trunk and the part cut off carried away for the space of three furlongs: when without support of any kind that part is again joined to its trunk and begins to bloom and produce fruit, as the sap of each runs together with the affection there was of old between them, then and not till then will it be possible to hope for an end to such evils.[637]

England is the tree that is split down the middle; unable to produce fruit or bloom in flower. In short, it was unable to grow or develop as it should over the course of the year. It was not part of the progress of time as the 'split trunk' prevented it from continuing the cycle of growth and renewal. The 'evils' would only cease once the tree was made whole and began to 'bloom and produce fruit' once more: when the 'tree' of England re-entered the cycle of growth, decay and renewal. William repeats

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[635] Leviticus 19:23; Daniel 4; Matthew 24:32-35, Mark 13:28-31, and Luke 21:29-33; song of Solomon 2:11-13.
[636] See Chapter Three.
[637] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 414-415: "Tunc" inquiunt "quasi si arbor uiridis succidatur in media, et pars abscisa deportetur a stipite trium iugerum spatio, cum sine quolibet amminiculo suo iterum conexa trunco ceperit et floribus pubescere et fructus protrudere ex coalescentis suci amore pristino, tunc demum poterit sperari talium malorum remisso'.

the same imagery when discussing the dashed hopes of the nation in the person of Prince William:

> In him it was supposed King Edward's prophecy was to be fulfilled: the hope of England, it was thought, once cut down like a tree, was in the person of that young prince again to blossom and bear fruit, so that one might hope the evil times were coming to an end.[638]

However, the hope remained that the prophecy would be fulfilled, and progress of the kingdom would recommence. This was not the only prophecy in the *Gesta Regum* to use the image of the tree to represent the politics of a kingdom. During a hunt, King Edgar experienced a vision, part of which involved him looking into the foliage of a tree above him, and witnessing one apple, and then a second, fall into the river below. Edgar's mother Elfgiva, a trusted interpreter of visions, deciphered his as follows:

> As for the fact that a second apple followed the first, in such a way that from the collision between the two you seemed to hear a voice saying 'Wel is the', this indicates that from you, who overshadow all of England like a tree, there shall come two sons. The supporters of the second shall do away with the first…[639]

The king is characterised as the tree whose branches shaded, and thus protected, all of England. However, the 'fruit' of this tree would fall, one destroying the other. The image was not only used in the context of prophecy. For instance, William discussed the kingdom of 'Germany' in the fifth century to explain the invasion of England by the Saxons:

> For almost all the country lying to the north of the British ocean, though divided into many provinces, is justly denominated

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[638] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 758-759: 'putabaturque regis Eduardi uaticinium in eo complendum; ferebaturque spes Angliae, modo arboris succisa, in illo iuuenculo iterum floribus'.
[639] W. Malm., *GR* pp. 250-253, full quote: 'sane quod unum pomum secutum est alterum, ita ut ex collisione secundi in prius uideretur uox sonnuisse "wel is the!", hoc innuit, quod ex te, qui modo arboris totam inumbras Angliam, duo procedent filii. Fautores secundi extinguent primum...'

> Germany, from its *germinating* so many men. And as *the pruner cuts off the more luxuriant branches of the tree to impart a livelier vigour to the remainder*, so the inhabitants of this country assist their common parent by the expulsion of a part of their members, lest she should perish by giving sustenance to too numerous an offspring; but in order to obviate discontent, they cast lots who shall be compelled to migrate. Hence the men of this country have made a virtue of necessity, and, when driven from their native soil, they have gained foreign settlements by force of arms…[640]

In this case, the entire country is characterised as a tree, which was 'pruned' of excess branches (people) so that it could continue to grow and flourish. The tree of the kingdom could still develop because problems which could possibly stunt its growth were removed. The image of the tree is intrinsically connected to the passage of time. It symbolised both the linear and cyclical sense of time. Trees grow over the course of the years until their death, and they undergo cycles of bloom, decay, and renewal. The same could be applied to kingdoms, political events, and dynastic lineages. They underwent phases of development over the centuries. One king continued the dynasty by bearing fruit, producing children, who would replace him. They also underwent periods where that progress was interrupted. Development could be halted. Times of chaos and turmoil stopped the tree from growing.

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[640] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 22-23: 'omnis enim fere terra quae trans oceanum Britannicum sub septembrionali axe iacet, quia tantum hominum germinat, non iniuria Germania uocatur licet multis, prouintiarum limitibus distincta. Quapropter, sicut hi quibus id muneris est lasciuientes arboris ramos solent succidere, ut reliquorum uitae suco suo possit sufficere, sic incolaw aliquorum expulione matrum alleuiant ne tam numerosae prolis pastu exhausta succumbat; sed faci minuant inuidiam, sorte ducunt eliminandos. Inde est quod illius terrae homines inuenerunt sibi ex necessitate uirtutem, ut natali solo eiecti peregrinas sede armis... '

Lingering Legacy of the Past: Ruins

One of the most evocative time-related images that appear in chronicles are ruins. Buildings and architecture appear throughout twelfth-century Anglo-Norman historical writing. Orderic Vitalis, Henry of Huntingdon, Eadmer of Canterbury and William himself include descriptions of architecture, including ruins. Leonie Hicks argues that buildings were integral to the narrative fabric of twelfth-century historical writing. They were the backdrop against which past events were staged, and their inclusion was driven by current affairs.[641] Ruins acted as a bridge between the past and the present.[642] They were also used as evidence of the past where a lack of documentary evidence existed. They would be used to confirm anecdotes or witness testimony.[643] Eadmer of Canterbury ensured that a detailed description of the old church at Christ Church Canterbury, that was burned in 1067, was included in his tract on the relics of St Audeon. Eadmer gave his reasoning thus:

> …we have described [the Anglo-Saxon church] here in a few words so that when men both in the present and in the future, hear the writings about it and find nothing to match what they hear, they might know the old things that have passed and the new things that have been made.[644]

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[641] Leonie Hicks,'Coming and Going: The Use of Outdoor Space in Norman and Anglo-Norman Chronicles', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 32 (2010), p. 46.
[642] Hicks, 'Coming and Going: The Use of Outdoor Space in Norman and Anglo-Norman Chronicles', p. 46.
[643] István Pieter Bejczy *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages: A Study in Moral Thought from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (Leiden, 2011), p. 115.
[644] Eadmer of Canterbury, *De reliquiis S. Audoeni*, trans. in Jay Rubenstein 'Liturgy against History', p. 299: 'Hic situs fuerat aecclesiae cantuariensis. Quam ea re hic ita paucis descripsimus, ut, cum praesentis aetatis homines et futurae antiquorum de hoc scripta audierint, nec iuxta relationem illorum quicquam inuenerint, sciant illa uetera transisse et omnis noua facta esse'.

Buildings were used as a metaphor. Gregory the Great made use of architectural metaphors to illustrate the Cardinal Virtues, a practise which was emulated and continued in the twelfth century.[645] Ruins could be used in a similar manner. Serving as monuments to an age since passed, they reminded viewers of their own place in time and connected them to a past only tangible through what few ruins remained behind. They visually embody the past and the passage of time.

William of Malmesbury was a connoisseur of ruins, to the extent that scholars have labelled William as an 'antiquarian' with a keen eye for observing archaeological remains.[646] Such descriptions surface throughout his writings, and William illustrates how the past can be 'read' from these buildings. The tallest of the pyramids near Glastonbury is vividly described as 'twenty-eight feet high and has five stories: this, though threatening ruin from its extreme age, possesses nevertheless *some traces of antiquity*, *which may be clearly read* though not perfectly understood'.[647] The ancient past could be read from its physical remains. William's interest in ruins was particularly evident when discussing those of the Roman Empire. William claimed that the ruins of the Romans provides proof as to how highly esteemed the island of Britain was to the empire: 'That Britain, compelled by Julius Caesar to submit to the Roman power, was held in high estimation by that people, may be collected from their history, and be seen also in the ruins of their

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[645] David Cowling, *Building the Text: Architecture as Metaphor in Late Medieval and Early Modern France* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 142-143.
[646] Gransden, 'Realistic Observation in Twelfth-Century England', p. 186; William Kynan-Wilson, 'Mira Romanorum artifitia: William of Malmesbury and the Romano-British remains at Carlisle', *Essays in Medieval Studies 28* (2012), pp. 35-46; Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, p. 32.
[647] W. Malm., *AG,* pp. 84-85 : 'Procerior sane et propinquior ecclesie habet quinque tabulatus, et altitudinem XXVI pedum. Hec, pre nimia uetustate esti ruinam minetur, habet tanem antiquitatis non nulla spectacula, que plane possunt legi, licet non plene possint intelligi'. My own emphasis.

ancient buildings'.[648] When discussing the northern provinces in the *Gesta Pontificum*, he included extensive descriptions of the Roman ruins which were scattered across the landscape. In the first sentence of the prologue to Book III of the *Gesta Pontificum*, in which he introduced the diocese of York, he opened discussion by describing York as 'a large metropolitan city, showing signs of the taste of the Romans'.[649] As the continuing discussion reveals, those 'signs' are the ruins of Roman architecture. Further on in the prologue William included a notably detailed passage on the Roman ruins at Carlisle:

> In some of the ruined buildings, though, whose walls were not completely destroyed, you may see remarkable Roman work: for example, at Carlisle a triclinium vaulted in stone that no violence of the elements, or even the intentional setting alight of timbers piled up against it, has succeeded in destroying.[650]

William marvelled at these ruins, describing them as 'wonderous artifices of the Romans'.[651] His inclusion of Hildebert of Lavardin's *Par tibi Roma nihil*, a poetic lament of the city of Rome, reflects William's nostalgia for this previous golden age which could be tantalisingly glimpsed through its ruins:

> In ruins all, yet still beyond compare/How great thy prime, thou provest overthrown./Age hath undone thy pride: see, weltering there/Heaven's temples, Caesar's palace quite, quite down./Down is the masterpiece (Araxes dire/Feared while it stood, yet grieved to see it fall),/… The City's fallen, whose greatness you would measure/ 'Rome once stood here' is all that can be said/Yet not the

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[648] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 16-17: 'Romani Britanniam, per Iulium Cesarem in Latias leges iurare compulsam, magna dignatione coluere, ut et in annalibus legere et in ueterum edifitiorum uestigiis est uidere'.
[649] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 324-325: 'urbs ampla et metropolis alegantiae Romanae preferens inditium'.
[650] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 324-325: 'In aliquibus tamen parietum ruinis, qui semiruti remansere, uideas mira Romanorum artifitia: ut est in Lugubalia ciuitate triclinium lapideis fornicibus concameratum, quod nulla umquam tempestatum contumelia, quin etiam nec appositis ex industria lignis et succensis, ualuit labefactari'; William Kynan-Wilson discussed this passage at length in 'Mira Romanorum artifitia: William of Malmesbury and the Romano-British remains at Carlisle'.
[651] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 324-325: 'mira Romanorum artifitia'.

> circling years, not sword or fire/ this glorious work could utterly lay low/…[652]

William commented that the poem articulated both the former dignity of Rome's advantages and the majesty of its present ruin.[653] Despite the city no longer possessing its previous 'advantages', the ruins were a symbol and a reminder of its former times that echoed across the ages and could be seen in the present. This reminiscence of a previous golden age which was visible through ruins was replicated in his historical writing on England. Indeed, the ruins were a facilitator for William's discussion of the Roman era. As William Kynan-Wilson summarised:

> The ancient ruins were surely impressive, but equally compelling [for William] were the inseparable cultural associations of *romanitas*… He elaborated only briefly upon the actual physical remains and instead set about connecting the structure with his wider interests in ancient Roman history and culture.[654]

He turned the monument at Carlisle into a visual metaphor for the glory of the age of the Romans, a culture and history which raised the status of English history. The ruins were the proof that this culture had touched English history and was firmly part of England's past and its chronology.

William Kynan-Wilson identified not one but two 'golden ages' that concerned William of Malmesbury: the presence of the Romans, and the region's monastic learning which reached its peak in the eighth and ninth centuries.[655] Both

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[652] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 612-615: 'Par tibi, Roma, nihil cum sis prope tota ruina/quam magni fueris integra, fracta doces/longa tuos fastus etas destruxit, et arces/ Caesaris et superum templa palude iacent/ Ille labor, labor ille ruit quem dirus Araxes/ et sanem tremuit et cecidisse dolet/Vrbs cecidit de qua si quicquam dicere dignum/ moliar. Hoc potero dicere: 'Roma fuit'/ Non tamen annorum series, non flamma nec ensis/ ad plenum potuit hoc abolere decus…'
[653] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 614-615: 'Paruane sunt haec ad demonstrandam in tanta urbe uel olim bonorum dignitatem uel modo malorum maiestatem?'
[654] William Kynan-Wilson 'William of Malmesbury and the Romano-British remains at Carlisle', p. 44.
[655] Kynan-Wilson 'William of Malmesbury and the Romano-British remains at Carlisle', p. 40.

of these ages left their mark through the presence of ruins in the landscape. William discussed both of these ages through the image of ruins. Ruins thus were turned into a metaphor for these ages. They represented the glory of that specific time, and also its downfall and ruin over the passage of time. William Kynan-Wilson and Leonie Hicks recognise that William of Malmesbury's discussion of ruins, especially of the Roman period, represented past order. The legacy of Rome constituted an example of ordered rule that enabled the construction of such vestiges of power.[656] Kynan-Wilson suggests that William's description of the ruins in the North of England was included because it facilitated William's meditation on the decline of the Roman Empire: the north made a convincingly evocative settling for such meditation.[657] On the other hand, Hicks argued that rather than being a 'fixed point of order in an otherwise changing world', the Roman ruins instead highlighted the more contemporary issues such as the rise in lawlessness within cities, and the decline of papal authority.[658] I contend that both are possible. Ruins were a relic of a specific age. They brought into focus that the world had changed by remaining a monument to a specific time. They also held up a mirror to the contemporary and cast light on the decline of order that had existed in the Roman age. Ruins represented both the glory of the age to which they were a monument, and simultaneously the demise and fall of that age. By extension, ruins were a metaphor of rise and fall, and the progress of time. They were a symbol of an age that had passed, showing that time

[656] Hicks, 'Coming and Going: The Use of Outdoor Space in Norman and Anglo-Norman Chronicles', p. 47.
[657] Kynan-Wilson, William of Malmesbury and the Romano-British remains at Carlisle', p. 40.
[658] Hicks, 'Coming and Going: The Use of Outdoor Space in Norman and Anglo-Norman Chronicles', p. 47.

was marching forward and with it the inevitable change of the established order. As Leonie Hicks summarises, 'established orders were always changing whether slowly or quickly but each left its mark on the landscape'.[659] The history of a place could be read in its physical ruins, therefore they could represent the progress of history and the passage of time.

Among the Stars: Astral Imagery

Nature on Earth was not the only source that could be drawn on as metaphors for the passage of time. William also looked to the heavens for inspiration. Stars were part of time. Charting their movement was essential to the correct reckoning of time. Unlike the hours of daylight and night, or the signs of the seasons which could fluctuate, the movement of the stars was fixed. Bede discussed this in his *De Natura Rerum* and *De Temporum Ratione*, explaining that stars 'turn with the world and are fixed in one place'.[660] The only exceptions were the seven 'wandering stars', in other words, the planets. Eastwood succinctly explains this connection between the fixed stars and time reckoning:

> Just as a spherical earth implied the regular sequences of day and night, of the seasons of the year, and of climatic variation, so the surrounding concentric spheres and sidereal circles led a reader to understand as well the association of certain constellations with

[659] Hicks, 'Coming and Going: The Use of Outdoor Space in Norman and Anglo-Norman Chronicles', p. 47.
[660] Bede, *DTR* pp. 96-99, p. 243-244; Bede, *ONT* p. 80.

> certain times of the year and the separate paths of planets in orderly cycles of movement.[661]

William himself refers to the 'fixed stars'; in the verse on the flyleaf of the Malmesbury manuscript.[662]

There are, according to Isidore of Seville, three distinct terms for stars: *stellae*, *sidera*, and *astra*:

> The differences between stars, star clusters, and constellations (*De differentia stellarum, siderum, et astrorum).* Stars (*stellarum*), star clusters (*siderum*), and constellations (*astrorum*) are different from each other. Thus a star is any individual body, but star clusters are made up of several stars, such as the Hyades and the Pleiades. Constellations are large patterns of stars, such as Orion and Bootes. But writers confuse these terms, and use astrum instead of stella, and stella instead of sidus.[663]

Stellae denotes stars in general, *sidera* clusters of stars such as the Hyades and the Pleiades. Large patterns of stars including Orion were designated *astra*. Judging by the contexts in which William used these words, he was aware of the difference. He only used *stella* to describe stars which appeared during astral events like a comet and an eclipse.[664] *Sidera* occurs with greater frequency, typically when something, either a sound or a sight, was immense enough to 'reach the stars'.[665] It was further used to refer to the fixed course of the stars. In the *Gesta Regum* William used 'sidera' when recounting a speech given by Stephen Harding, discussing how God's reason

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[661] Eastwood, *Ordering the Heavens,* pp. 31-2.
[662] See Chapter One; 'fixa… astra'.
[663] Isidore, *Etymologies* p. 103, Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi *Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber III:* DE DIFFERENTIA STELLARVM, SIDERVM, ET ASTRORVM. Stellae et sidera et astra inter se differunt. Nam stella est quaelibet singularis. Sidera vero sunt stellis plurimis facta, ut Hyades, Pleiades. Astra autem stellae grandes, ut Orion, Bootes. Sed haec nomina scriptores confundunt, et astra pro stellis et stellas pro sideribus ponunt.
[664] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 570-571; *HN* pp. 22-23 and pp. 74-75.
[665] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 572-573: '…orbes etaim sidera lamberent'; *GP* pp. 552-553, pp. 492-493, pp. 622-623; *VW,* pp. 2-3.

ruled nature, including the course of the stars.[666] He also used *sidera* when noting Robert of Hereford's skill in science, specifically in observing the stars.[667] The only other use of *sidera* is as a simile for the monasteries of the north, which will be discussed in greater depth below.[668] *Astra* was used in a similar manner to *sidera*, to either refer to the science of the reckoning of time, the rotation of the heavens, or to refer to specific stars of Lucifer and Sirius.[669]

One use of star imagery throughout William's oeuvre was to convey the idea of permanence and endurance. The *De Antiquitate Glastonie* records a charter stating that its provisions would endure 'as long as the whirling of the heavens carries to land and the sea around the starry sky in regular motion'.[670] 'As long as the stars rotate' is a phrase used several times to mean the end of time. It suggests the idea of permanence and continuity beyond living memory. William uses a similar phrase to convey his confidence in the endurance of his *Vita Wulfstani*: 'I think the holy father [Wulfstan] will not lack for readers, so long as the sky turns and the stars go around'.[671] It is also used in the *Gesta Regum*. In an account of two clerks, one encounters the spirit of the other. The spirit states that he had been 'sentenced to eternal torment… [as] long as the starry heavens revolve, long as the waves beat on the shore'.[672] The metaphor is extended to the description of his torment: 'I shall be

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[666] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 578-579.
[667] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 474-475 : 'inspectione siderum'.
[668] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 385-386.
[669] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 8-9, pp. 70-71, pp. 458-459, pp. 198-199, pp. 312-313, pp. 572-573; *GR* pp. 442-443, pp. 786-787, pp. 70-71.
[670] W. Malm., *AG,* pp. 104-105: 'quamdiu uertigo poli terras atque equora circa ethera siderum iusso moderamine uoluet'.
[671] W. Malm., *VW*, pp. 12-13: 'Qua de causa pio patri lectores non defuturos arbitror dum polus rotabit sidera'.
[672] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 442-445: 'sententia sempiternis sim deputatus suplitiis…dum rotat astra polus, dum pulsat littora pontus'.

whirled around in recompense for my crimes. My doom remains fixed and immutable'.[673] The stars are fixed and immutable, as was his punishment.

Not only did William refer to stars in a broader context, he also named specific ones. In the *Gesta Pontificum*, he described a midsummer's day by referring to Cancer and Sirius: 'It was midsummer. The sun was scorching Cancer, the fields were dry and dusty, ranging Sirius was scorching the thirsty countryside'.[674] Stars took some of their meaning from the time of year with which they were associated. Classical sources linked Cancer to the summer solstice, the time when the sun reached its highest point and summer its peak. The rise of Sirius, the dog-star, was associated with heat and pestilence. According to Isidore of Seville:

> The Dog Star (*canicula stella*), which is also called Sirius, is in the centre of the sky during the summer months. When the sun ascends to it, and it is in conjunction with the sun, the sun's heat is doubled, and bodies are affected by the heat and weakened. Hence also the 'dog days' are named from this star, when purgings are harmful. It is called the 'Dog' (*canis*) Star because it afflicts the body with illness, or because of the brightness (*candor*) of its flame, because it is of a kind that seems to shine more brightly than the others. It is said they named Sirius so that people might recognize the constellation better.[675]

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[673] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 442-445: 'pro criminibus meis uoluar. Inflexibilis sententiae manet rigor, aeterna…'

[674] W. Malm., *GP,* p. 8-9: 'Cum enim media aestate Cancrum sol inureret, arua squalerent puluere, et furens Siruis sitientes scriberet argos'.

[675] Isidore, *Etymologies*, p. 105; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber III: 'Canicula stella, quae et Sirius dicitur, aestivis mensibus in medio centro caeli est: et dum sol ad eam ascenderit, coniuncta cum sole duplicatur calor ipsius, et dissolvuntur corpora et vaporantur. Vnde et ex ipsa stella dies caniculares dicuntur, quando et molestae sunt purgationes. Canis autem vocatur propter quod corpora morbo afficiat, vel propter flammae candorem, quod eiusmodi sit ut prae ceteris lucere videatur. Itaque quo magis eam cognoscerent, Sirion appellasse'.

However, William's reference appears to be derived specifically from Macrobius: 'the heat of Sirius, the star that rises bringing drought and pestilence to wretched morals and saddens the sky with ill-omened light'.[676]

Specific stars were also connected to individuals. Whilst discussing the revival of English monasticism, William mentioned several people driving it including Lanfranc: '…at Canterbury Lanfranc, of whom I have already spoken, who by God's grace dawned upon England '*as when the Daystar routs the fleeting stars and brings with blushing face the light of day*'.[677] Here, Lanfranc is personified as the morning star that heralded the first light of dawn. This sentence was derived from Seneca the Younger's *Apocolocyntosis*. The full passage of the text indicates the time-related meaning deployed by William in relation to Lanfranc:

> He'll bid the laws at length speak out that have been dumb so long/ Will give unto the weary world years prosperous and bright/ Like as the daystar from on high scatters the stars of night/ As, when the stars return again, clear Hesper brings his light/ Or as the ruddy dawn drives out the dark, and brings the day/ As the bright sun looks on the world, and speeds along its way…[678]

Lanfranc's arrival in England was characterised as driving away the 'night' of monastic decline and heralding a new day of revival. William signalled that before Lanfranc arrived, monasticism was kept suspended in darkness. Time itself, or

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[676] Macrobius, *Saturnalia* Volume II: Books 3-5, ed. and trans. Robert A. Kaster (Cambridge, MA, 2011), pp. 308-309: 'Ardet apex capiti, cristique ac vertice flamma , Funditur, et vastos umbo vomit aureus ignes. Non secus ac liquida si quando nocte cometae Sanguinei lugubre rubent, aut Sirius ardor: ille sitim morbosque ferens mortalibus aegris Nascitur, et laevo contristat lumine caelum'.
[677] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 496-497: 'in Cantia Lanfrancus, de quo supra dixi, qui talis Angliae Dei dono emicuit, 'Qualis discutiens fugientia Lucifer astra, cum roseo clarum prouehit ore diem' ita ipsius industria monasticum germen effloruit, ita eo uiuente uigor pontificalis induruit.'
[678] Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, trans. Michael Heseltine, W. H. D. Rouse, revised by E. H. Warmington (Cambridge, MA, 1913), pp. 444-447: 'Felicia lassis saecula praestabit legumque silentia rumpet. Qualis discutiens fugientia Lucifer astra aut qualis surgit redeuntibus Hesperus astris, qualis cum primum tenebris Aurora solutis induxit rubicunda diem, Sol aspicit orbem lucidus...'

rather the flow of time, was halted. With Lanfranc's revival of English monasticism, time resumed its flow. Night turned to day, and the progress of the English church continued.

Stars were also used to represent the church as a whole. In *On Lamentations*, William discussed the cycle of preaching and persecution that the Church experienced, and directly compared the sun to God, the moon to the church, and the stars to the learned men of the church.[679] He concluded the passage by commenting on the origin of this symbolic connotation of stars: '[that] by stars are meant teachers is taught by Daniel: *They that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity*'.[680] Stars and the heavens were allegorized to represent Christian teachings. Astral symbolism was prevalent in Christian thought. The progress of the church's teachings throughout the year as laid down in the ecclesiastical calendar was represented by the progress of the sun.[681] The figures of God, and Christ, were symbolised by the sun, as William's commentary explained. The image of the church as part of the astral movement of the heavens conveyed that the church belonged to the natural order of the world. It also symbolised the church's position as an institution in tandem with the steady continuation of time. As time progressed towards the final age and the end of time, so too did the church. As the stars in the sky continued on their path, marching on through day and night, the months and the seasons, so the church steadily

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[679] William of Malmesbury, *On Lamentations*, p. 240.
[680] William of Malmesbury, *On Lamentations,* p. 240, p. 195: 'Quod autem doctores per stellas intelligantur, Daniel docet: *Qui docti fuerint, fulgebunt sicut splendor firmamenti; et qui as iustitiam erudiunt multos, sicut stellae in perpetuas aeternitates*'.
[681] Stephen C. McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 39.

continued. The ecclesiastical calendar, based on the lunar-solar cycle, guided people through the year, and with each year the world came one year closer to the end of time. However, that progress was liable to interruption. Time could continue, but progress was prone to falling outside of time's flow.

The Ebb and Flow of Time

An episode in the *Gesta Pontificum* reveals William's sophisticated representation of time to layer meaning. The passage concerns the devastation wrought upon the North by William the Conqueror's orders after Archbishop Ealdred of York's death:

> The whole nobility of the land withered away, cut down by the sickle of war. As for the monasteries that had shone like stars throughout the province, they had been destroyed long before this, in the time of the Danes. A few walls still stand in ruins, no pleasure to the eye, but a reminder of past sorrows.[682]

This first part traverses four distinct temporal periods in the space of several sentences. First, there is the devastation of the north under William the Conqueror, then the Anglo-Saxon period before the Danish invasion, then the 'time of the Danes', and then with the final sentence a return to the present day. As discussed in Chapter Two, this manipulation of chronological sequence was an effective technique that William used throughout his works. Whilst discussing one geographical area, William referred to four temporal periods. Time is fragmented by

[682] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 386-387: 'Et tunc quidem omnis nobilitas emarcuit falce belli demessa; nam iam olim tempore Danorum monasteria per totam prouintiam uice siderum micantia pessumierant. Stant adhuc semiruti parietes, qui sint non delectationi oculo sed tristitiae monumento'.

being presented out of chronological sequence. However, this is by no means the only representation of time in this passage. It uses three of the time-related images discussed in this chapter: vegetative, astral, and architectural. First, the nobility of the land 'withered away' and was 'cut down' like plants in a field. This image echoes previous uses of the plant metaphor that lament the fall of the realm and the demise of the 'Angles'. As in previous cases, this use of the metaphor signals the end of an era: the 'Harrying of the North' was conducted in response to a major rebellion against Norman occupation. The resulting subjugation consolidated Norman rule and destroyed that region for generations afterwards. The consequences were still felt in William's day. Writers including Orderic Vitalis, Marianus Scotus, John of Worchester, Hugh the Chanter and Symeon of Durham commented on the devastation caused, especially the resulting famine and starvation of civilians.[683] William's account of the Harrying of the North in the prologue to Book III of the *Gesta Pontificum* recounts this destruction:

> Shaken by many a devastation, it was finally laid low by a disaster under King William. Enraged with the people of York… he first starved and then burned the city. He had the entire region, town and country alike, pillaged, and the crops and fruit ruined by fire or flood. Plunder, arson, and bloodshed thus hamstrung a province that had once been so fertile. For sixty and more miles around, cultivation ceased, and the soil is quite bare to this day. Cities once brilliant, towers lofty enough to threaten heaven itself, fields smiling with pasture and watered by rivers, are matter for lament to a stranger who sees them now, and an old inhabitant fails to recognise them.[684]

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[683] David Bates, *William the Conqueror* (New Haven, 2016), pp. 135-7.
[684] W. Malm., *GP*, pp. 325-326: 'Quapropter multis ruinis quassata ultima peste sub Willelmo rege concidit. Qui urbanis iratus… prius iedia mox flamma ciuitatem confecit. Regionis etiam totius uicos et argos corrumpi, fructus et fruges igne uel aqua labefactari iubet. Ita prouintiae quandam fertilis nerui preda incendio sanguine succisi. Humus per sexaginta et eo amplius milaria omnifariam inculta, nudum omnium solum ad hoc usque tempus. Vrbes olim preclaras, turres proceritate sua in

The North is depicted as a region associated with desolation and destruction throughout William's works.[685] William lamented the past glory of the North as:

> a district once fragrant with religious houses as a garden is with flowers, and brilliant with many cities of the Romans' building; but now made wretched by the ravages of the Danes of old or the Normans in our own day, it offers nothing that can much attract us.[686]

Of perhaps greater time-related interest are the similes comparing Anglo-Saxon monasteries to stars, and the description of those same monasteries as ruins in the present day. The comparison has a multitude of possible meanings. As discussed, the image of stars was often connected to the church and its members. On the surface, comparing monasteries to stars reinforces their status as beacons of the light of God. Indeed, William, used star-imagery in this manner in his discussion of Anselm's exile. The *Gesta Regum* discussed Anselm as 'England's brightest light' and in the same sentence described how the stars 'seemed to be emitting shafts of light at one another' at the same time as 'when England's brightest light, Anselm left the darkness and made his way to Rome'.[687] However, whilst the monasteries being 'beacons of light' is one credible interpretation, there is another beneath the surface.

William used the word *sidera* for the stars. According to Isidore of Seville's definition, this word specifically refers to constellations. Furthermore, the fact that

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caelum minantes, argos laetos pascuis, irriguos fluuiis, si quis modo uidet peregrinus, ingemit, si quis uetus incola, non agnoscit'.

[685] Keynan-Wilson 'William of Malmesbury and the Romano-British remains at Carlisle' p. 39; William E. Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and its Transformation 1000-1135* (London, 1979), pp. 117-119.

[686] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 82-83: 'Plaga, olim et suaue halantibus monasteriorum floribus dulcis et urbium a Romanis edifictarum frequentia renidens, nuc uel antiquo Danorum uel recenti Normannorum populatu lugubris, nichil quod animos multum allitiat pretendit'.

[687] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 570-571: 'apparuerunt et aliae stallae, quasi iacula inter se emittentes. Ille fuit annos quo Anselmus, lux Angliae, ultro tenebras erroneorum effugiens, Romam iuit'.

these star-like monasteries are described using the participle *micantia* reinforces the star-like image. In the Oxford Medieval Texts edition this is translated as 'shone', which would suggest a meaning closer to constantly burning beacons of light. However, a more accurate meaning would be 'twinkled' or 'glowed'. The participle is a descriptor more closely related to the image of a multitude of stars. Therefore, this image is not just conveying the idea of light, but the fact that they are stars. However, they are not ordinary stars, but constellations, identifiable clusters of stars. This passage is the only time that William used *sidera* in the *Gesta Pontificum*. In all other instances, he used *stellae*, to refer to stars. This suggests that the choice of word was deliberate. By invoking star imagery to convey the glory of Anglo-Saxon monasticism, William showed the lustre of, and expressed nostalgia for, that past and underlined the significance of monasteries in spreading God's word and maintaining the Christian faith in England. He also connected these monasteries to the passage of time. As the stars could be used to chart the progress of time, so could the monasteries be used to chart the progress of the church. Characterising the Northern monasteries as constellations conveyed that they were an integral part of the fabric of the church, as stars were for the universe.

Finally, William turned the image of the monasteries as stars on its head and transformed them into the ruins that existed in the present day. In contrast to stars, ruins represent both the passage of time and a specific marker of chronology. Ruins are relics of a particular time or event – in this case the Danish invasions. They stand outside the flow of time as they are no longer serve their original purpose. The emptiness of a ruined monastery is expressed elsewhere in the *Gesta Pontificum*,

when William contemplated another ruined monastery as 'now an empty shadow of its past.'[688] Furthermore, many of those which were ruined are 'hidden' from memory: 'some [monasteries] are hidden from our knowledge by the passage of time'.[689]

They were not only ruins but served as a 'monument' to the past. In other discussions of ruins in the *Gesta Pontificum*, William used the term *ruinis* or similar to convey the dilapidated state of buildings. This passage is the only instance in which he described a ruin or ruins as *monumentum*. Other uses of *monumentum* in his other works suggest that William deployed the term to convey evidence of a person's presence. The monks of Durham were a 'noble monument' to the work of Bishop William of Saint-Calais; Goscelin of Saint-Bertin who 'spent much time visiting cathedrals and abbeys, and in many places *left evidence* (*monimentum*) of his notable learning'.[690] Pope Urban's rousing speech igniting the First Crusade expressed outrage that the Saracens 'claim as theirs the Lord's sepulchre, that supreme monument of our faith'.[691] Thus, this expression encompassed a sense of remembrance and history. Isidore of Seville's Etymologies termed written histories monuments: '…whatever is worthy of remembrance is committed to writing. And for this reason, histories are called 'monuments' (*monumentum*), because they grant a remembrance (*memoria*) of deeds that have been done'.[692] William subscribed to this

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[688] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 266-267: 'tunc exiguum cenobium, nunc antiquitatis anane simulacrum'.
[689] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 386-387: 'Huc accedit quod quaedam nostre notitiae occulit memoriae uetustas… obscuritas'.
[690] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 416-417: 'suae industriae monimentum apud monachos habet'; *GR,* pp. 592-593.
[691] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 600-601: 'quid quod Dominicum monimentum, unicum fidei pignus, ditioni suae uendicant'.
[692] Isidore, *Etymologies* p. 67; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber I (full passage): 'De Historia. Historia est narratio rei gestae, per quan ea, quae in praeterito facta sunt,

meaning. His *Historia Novella* asked rhetorically 'what is more pleasant than consigning to historical record (*monumentis*) the deeds of brave men'.[693]

A monument also had associations with a tomb. When discussing sepulchres, Isidore further defined *monumentum*:

> A monument (*monumentum*) is so named because it 'admonishes the mind' (*mentem monere*) to remember the deceased person. Indeed, when you don't see a monument, it is as what is written (Psalm 30: 13 Vulgate): "I have slipped from the heart as one who is dead." But when you see it, it admonishes the mind and brings you back to mindfulness so that you remember the dead person. Thus both 'monument' and 'memory' (*memoria*) are so called from 'the admonition of the mind' (*mentis admonitio*).[694]

It existed outside the flow of time, no longer part of the onward development of the church. However, the ruins stand as a testament to what was considered a significant period in the development of the church in England.[695] Orderic Vitalis, for instance, commented briefly on the Danish destruction of monasteries in his account of the waning of the church in England prior to the Norman Conquest.[696] It was also a period which many monastics had sought to erase from the history. Very few commented in-depth on the destruction of churches, especially in historical writing

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dinoscuntur. Dicta autem Graece historia APO TOU ISTOREIN, id est a videre vel cognoscere. Apud veteres enim nemo conscribebat historiam, nisi is qui interfuisset, et ea quae conscribenda essent vidisset. Melius enim oculis quae fiunt deprehendimus, quam quae auditione colligimus. Quae enim videntur, sine mendacio proferuntur. Haec disciplina ad Grammaticam pertinet, quia quidquid dignum memoria est litteris mandatur. Historiae autem ideo monumenta dicuntur, eo quod memoriam tribuant rerum gestarum. Series autem dicta per translationem a sertis florum invicem conprehensarum'.

[693] W. Malm., *HN,* pp. 2-3: 'Quid porro jocundius quam fortium facta virorum monumentis tradere literarum…'

[694] Isidore, *Etymologies* p. 313; Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum Sive Originum Liber XV: 'Monumentum ideo nuncupatur eo quod mentem moneat ad defuncti memoriam. Cum enim non videris monumentum, illud est quod scriptum est (Psalm. 31,12): 'Excidi tamquam mortuus a corde.' Cum autem videris, monet mentem et ad memoriam te reducit ut mortuum recorderis. Monumenta itaque et memoriae pro mentis admonitione dictae'.

[695] This particular period is discussed in more depth in Chapter Two.

[696] O. Vit., *HE*, Vol II, pp. 360-367.

which centred on kings and secular politics.[697] By including it in his discussion of the history of York, William brought this period back into the chronology, and back into the progress of the church. However, there is a deeper meaning. This stark contrast between the imagery of the past monasteries within, and the image of the monasteries as ruins, outside of the course of time, reveals that William believed that time, and progress, had been disrupted. The cycle of development was broken by the Danish invasions, and these monasteries were no longer part of that functioning, continuing, Christendom. William of Malmesbury was using temporal imagery to make the simple but profound contrast between the Anglo-Saxon past and scars of the Danish invasion that still marked the present. It also brought this period of upheaval back into the chronology of English Christianity which many writers had sought to forget. William brought these monasteries back into the course of time, and into the progress of time. By classifying them as monuments, William was casting the ruins as an artefact, a remnant of the past that inspired remembrance. Causing people to remember the past in the present, they become part of the flow of time once more and the progress of the church. William's record of the ruins and the Danish devastation endowed these ruins with a new role in the present. He was attempting to put right the temporal disruption through his historical writing.

Hope was not lost. Those which fall out of the flow of time could re-join it. Immediately following the above passage, William continued to depict the revival of several Northern monasteries including Whitby:

[697] Barrow, 'Danish Ferocity and Abandoned Monasteries', pp. 77-78 and p. 90.

> There, once, was the monastery of Wearmouth, the splendid exercise ground for the talents of Bede and so many scholars. There too was Streneshalh, famous for its throng of holy virgins and for its tombs of saintly bishops and glorious kings; now, under the name of Whitby, it is rousing to life ashes half-asleep, thanks to the devoted energy of certain persons.[698]

Imagery of life revived from the ashes suggests that the foundation of faith was never lost, it was merely asleep. In his article on the Legend of the Seven Sleepers, Ron Liuzza argues that the sleepers displayed the idea that in sleep you 'lie outside the flow of time and allow it to pass by unnoticed'.[699] The legend is of particular significance for understanding the image of monasteries awakening from sleep. Whilst not directly cited in the above passage, it reveals how time and sleep would have been conceptualised. During the persecution of Christianity under the Romans, seven men retreated into a cave, in which they fell asleep. The Emperor Decius ordered the mouth of the cave to be sealed. Two hundred years later during the reign of Theodosius II, the seal was removed. After revealing the miracle to the world, they returned to the cave and fell into sleep once more, now until the end of time. William of Malmesbury was familiar with the Legend. In the *Gesta Regum*, he recounts how Edward the Confessor laughed unprovoked in the midst of a feast. When questioned as to the reasons why, he disclosed a vision he had just experienced:

> After much hesitation, he at length replied to their pressure with a strange tale. 'The Seven Sleepers on Mount Chailaion' he said 'have

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[698] W. Malm., *GP,* pp. 386-387: 'Ibi fuit olim apud Wiremuthe monasterium Bedae et multorum litteratorum uirorum nobile gimnasium. Ibi Streneshalh, sanctarum uirginum choro, beatorum antistitum et egregiorum regum mausoleis insigne, quod nunc Witebi dictum semisopitos cineres in uitam, quorundam idustria satagente, suscitat'.

[699] Ron Liuzza, 'The Future is a Foreign Country: The Legend of the Seven Sleepers and the Anglo-Saxon Sense of the Past' in *Medieval Science Fiction,* eds Carl Kears and James Paz (London, 2016), p. 63.

> now been resting on their right side for two hundred years, and at that moment, at the very instant when I laughed, they changed to their left side; in this way they will lie for seventy-four years, "a portent dire indeed for hapless men"… The evil hour approached with speed and made no delay.[700]

The sleepers were outside the flow of time. By using the image of monasteries rousing from sleep, William was demonstrating how the devastation wrought by the Vikings sent those monasteries to sleep. Therefore, whilst they were still *in time* (not outside of time as God was) they were outside the *flow* of time because in sleep, one cannot observe its passing. These monasteries were not part of the burgeoning development of monasticism that was occurring elsewhere in Europe. The progress of the church in England was disrupted, but only temporarily. However, the monasteries were now awakening. Roused from their slumber, they were returning to the flow of time, the progress of the church. The revival of English monasticism in the wake of the Conquest through the efforts of various ecclesiastical persons including Lanfranc was a central theme of the *Gesta Pontificum* and was shared by the *Gesta Regum.* The Norman Conquest brought English monasticism in line with the continent and restored Latin learning.

William was attempting to demonstrate through his use of temporal imagery that the religious fervour that characterised past English monasticism was returning in the present. It was waking from its slumber. The rupture of time caused by the Danish invasion was being healed. Time resumed its course. Even the ruins now served as monuments, reminding monks like William of what had occurred before.

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[700] W. Malm., *GR,* pp. 411-413: 'Ille, multum cunctatus, tandem instantibus mira respondit: septem dormientes in Celio monte requiescere, iam ducentis annis in dextro iacentes latere; sed tunc in ispa hora risus sui latus inuertisse sinistrum; futurum ut septuaginta quattuor annis ita iaceant, dirum nimirum miseris mortalibus omen… Nec moram festinatio malorum fecit'.

By combining the image of the stars, the ruins, and the notion of waking from sleep, William visualised the history of English monasticism.

Ultimately, the temporal imagery used throughout William of Malmesbury's works encompassed the course and flow of time. Time could flow and progress as expected, and it could ebb, the progress seemingly halting in the midst of chaos. William's use of this imagery reveals that even during periods of darkness, a glimmer of hope remained. As with the restoration of English monasticism, time could flow again, and return to its course. The progress of the kingdom and the church could be paused, but never stopped completely. The progress already secured in the past could not be lost, either. Once time began to flow once more, progress could continue, from the point at which it had paused. These pauses could be interpreted as challenges to the order of time whilst they were being experienced. However, as the course of history revealed, there was order in the chaos.

Conclusion

William's wish as expressed in Bodleian Auct F.3.14 was fulfilled: his name has lived on beyond his death. William's work has stood the test of time and endured to be one of the key sources of knowledge about twelfth-century England. For any scholar studying Anglo-Norman England, William's name is one that needs little introduction. This thesis sought to engage with William of Malmesbury's conception of time and how that was represented in his written works. Despite the burgeoning scholarship on time and twelfth-century chroniclers, and a long-established field in William of Malmesbury studies, little consideration is given to how William represented time in his works, what it reveals regarding his conception of time, and how its expression shaped the narrative. By conducting a close reading of William's historical works, it has been shown that William's understanding of time was distinctive and his use of it in his historical writing undeniably sophisticated.

Chapter One demonstrated that William had more reason than some to engage intellectually with the concept of time. His role as a cantor resulted in William closely studying a wide range of writings on time and related topics, as exhibited by the contents of Bodleian MS Auct F.3.14. Those texts demonstrate the sheer scope of approaches to conceptualising time with which William was familiar. Some, such as those expressed in Dionysius's and Marianus Scotus's works were contradictory. There was no single, set, way of understanding or thinking about time. This gave William ample opportunity to craft his own understanding, and this was borne out in how he represented time in his works. Such flexibility was

necessary. Twelfth-century cantors faced unprecedented challenges to their comprehension of time. The chronological controversy initiated by Marianus Scotus and the emergence of Arabic learning were reason enough to bring the topic of temporality into focus. There was, however, another greater challenge to the order of time that sparked the unprecedented surge in historical writing in the decades after 1100: the Norman Conquest.

The rupture in time caused by the Conquest is highlighted in Chapter Two. Scholars have long debated the extent to which the Conquest was perceived as significant by William and his contemporaries. However, having examined dating and narrative structure, there can be no question of its import. Chronology, dating, and narrative structure shaped how a sense of the passing of time was conveyed in the text. Structure imposed a pattern onto the seemingly chaotic sequence of events, whereas dating anchored an event to a timeline, positioning it in a sequence or a specific 'sphere' of the world. How these were deployed throughout his oeuvre highlights William's erudite narrative strategy. The configuration of time reveals the extent to which William believed that the Conquest was a rupture. It was used as a deliberate break between books on several occasions. In one example, the *Vita Wulfstani*, this even went against the source from which he was borrowing. The structure could vary considerably, from strictly linear to multi-layered complexity, within the same work. A seemingly jumbled structure which included multiple digressions and backtracking actually constituted a sophisticated and controlled arrangement. The past was an intricate puzzle that could be solved if the pieces were placed in the right order. William connected events that, whilst temporally

separated, held implications for events further in the future. A complex structure was always used with the purpose of enhancing understanding of events across time. Nevertheless, William mostly attempted to use a broadly linear chronology. The flow of time and its progress was maintained in the temporality of the narrative. On the other hand, the dating systems deployed revealed deeper ideas and concerns. Each date reference would have had associations based on its wider use by William's peers and the particular context of the precise event that it was employed to anchor in time. William's choices of dating systems reveals that time, and any disruptions, were associated with specific spheres of the world. One event may have significance for secular society, but little impact on the progress of the church. Another could be significant for multiple areas of society. For example, the reign of Stephen was a rupture in time for the temporal realm governed by kingship. The progress of the secular political realm was paused, with all the volatility of an interregnum: the cessation of regnal dating after the death of Henry I creates this sense of temporal disorder.

Analysis of prophecy and its narrative depiction revealed further depths to William's conception of time in Chapter Three. To William, the past and the future were not disconnected. Nor did they exist on a linear trajectory as a strict progression from cause to effect. Time was malleable. Prophecy could be deployed to generate a pattern within a narrative to suggest causality and explain seemingly chaotic events. William used prophecy and omens to generate echoes across time, to create connections between the past and the present. In this way, he countered the impression that time had become disjointed. Prophecy and omens show that the

concept of the future could be used to understand the past. The present, past and future were not separate entities; they were connected in an intricate pattern. Indeed, they could be layered together and exist in one single moment, as in Dunstan's prenatal miracle. While, superficially, time might appear disjointed, an underlying unity remained. There was a chance that any ruptures in the progress of time could be overcome.

Finally, the possibility of rectifying the course of time is revealed in William's use of temporal narrative imagery. Chapter Four discussed how imagery which possessed temporal associations could be deployed to add a further dimension of meaning to the text. These images were often included without any explicit explanation or allegorising clarification. It was for the audience(s) to decipher the layers of meaning. On a deeper level, these images revealed the extent to which William wove together the threads of time to bring the past into a coherent pattern. Ruins and stars could be used to visualise and understand the progress of the church, and of time. Progress could be halted, but never permanently. Those that fall outside of time's flow, whether as a result of war or weakening religious fervour, could always be brought back. The flame could dwindle to embers, but would never die completely. The possibility remained that it could be rekindled. William used the imagery of the stars and the ruined monasteries to articulate the belief that progress was never completely stable. Time could be ruptured, progress could be paused. But there was a means of understanding it as part of a broader pattern, if only one could find that pattern.

William represented time as a complex interplay between linear and cyclical patterns. They were well defined but not separated. When combined, they could be woven together to create an intricate pattern which was then used to shape how the past was presented. This pattern also showed the interaction between past, present, and future as a complex layering of time. The representation of time in historical writing, whether through structure, the type of dating used, the inclusion of prophecy and omens, or the deployment of temporal imagery, established links between events. It restored the connection between the past and the present, which benefited the present and the future. The chaos of time was placed into a meaningful pattern that could be followed and understood by the reader.

The pattern guided how the audience received and interpreted the narrative. It could be deployed and adapted in many different ways to suit the context or the argument William conveyed. Time was represented in such a way as to add further meaning which artfully supported William's narrative agenda, without overt explanation. The representation of time was not incidental, reducible to either decorative description or a simple tool for recording when something had happened. Its significance ran much deeper. It was used to weave together the many threads of the past, connecting events across time so that coherence and meaning could be found. These representations were imbued with meaning and were used to connect those events to the past beyond the scope of the narrative.

On a deeper level, the representation of time can be used to discern William's concerns beyond the narrative. Early twelfth-century England experienced many disconcerting challenges to the order of time. The repercussions of multiple

invasions, the merging of two realms, rebellion and later civil war, alongside the flourishing of ecclesiastical and intellectual life, not to mention the reconsideration of the dating of the Christian era caused seismic shifts in the established understanding of the world. Familiar foundations on which the understanding of the world had rested became unstable. The right order of the world was uncertain. When attempting to understand the chaotic and mercurial present, one often turns back to consider the past, with the hope of finding stability or at least a precedent for events occurring with a potential solution to be found. However, substantial consistent records of much of that past did not exist. The tapestry of time was incomplete. Not since Bede had there been writing which brought all the threads together: there was no order or harmony to it.

William may have wished to strengthen the fragile past by filling the gaps in historical record. This, I contend, significantly shaped how he wrote his works. The reasons William himself gave for each of his endeavours share no overarching theme. For example, the *Gesta Regum* and the *Gesta Pontificum* include ten prefaces between them: one for each book. Hayward has investigated these prologues and concluded that none give a full explanation as to his motivations, and each gives a different 'slant' on his project.[701] However, studying William's concept of time reinforces a theme that he highlighted in the *Gesta Regum*: his aim was to 'mend the broken chain of time'.[702] Far from being a throwaway comment or mere rhetorical posturing, it emerges as a consistent and significant impetus behind his large and

[701] Hayward, 'The Importance of Being Ambiguous', pp. 84-85.
[702] W. Malm., *GR*, pp. 14-15: 'interruptam temporum seriem sarcire'.

varied oeuvre. The ruptures of the past could be surmounted by engaging with the past through writing historical narrative.

Why would William use his representation of time in order to 'mend the broken chain' of the past? I contend that there are two reasons. First, William recognised the deeper consequences of the Conquest. As has been established, William very much believed that it was a rupture, a chasm in the progress of time. On a personal level, William himself straddled this divide. He was descended from a Norman and an English parent. There has been extensive debate regarding William's 'loyalties'. Scholars have attempted to find reason and consistency in William's seemingly contradictory treatment of the Norman Conquest. Hugh Thomas expresses his vexation: 'William of Malmesbury's view of the English and the relationship of their culture to that of the continent was clearly complex, even contradictory and confusing at times'.[703] His works are full of paradoxes and ultimately, he does not commit to a position.[704] It has been recently acknowledged that the binary approach of trying to identify William as either pro-English or Pro-Norman is not useful.[705] What is evident is the this matter was significant to William. It can seem as contradictory because William's own feelings towards it were complicated. It is conceivable that he was conflicted himself. On the one hand, he perceived himself as the direct successor of Bede, the inheritor and continuer of an intellectual culture from an age that had long gone. On the other hand, he was descended from a people who had ended the age of the English. The Norman

[703] H. M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans* (Oxford, 2003), p. 253.
[704] Hayward, 'The Importance of Being Ambiguous', p. 75.
[705] Winkler and Dolmans, 'Discovering William of Malmesbury: The Man and his Works', p. 4.

Conquest had rekindled the spark of religious fervour that had been in deep slumber since the Viking destructions in the tenth century. However, as perceived by William and many of his contemporaries, it had also caused deep changes to society. William was the child of two ages, one on either side of a rupture in time. Martin Brett has argued that historical writing was used to cultivate cultural integration between the Anglo-Saxon legacy and the new Norman regime.[706] For William, perhaps the aim was not integration exactly. Rather, he was attempting to reconfigure the disparate threads of the past into one single consistent pattern. He was able to acknowledge and come to terms with his own close connection to a previous age, and to the new one. William was part of an elaborate web of time past, present and future. Finding a single pattern allowed William to come to terms with his own mixed feelings and loyalties.

Second, William also reacted to his immediate present. It has long been recognised that the writing of history was undertaken at least in part as a response to the challenges and concerns of the present. Writing in the context of early medieval institutional history, Patrick Geary explains, 'the memory of the past was key to its [the institution's] ability to meet the challenges of the present'.[707] The case is no less true for William of Malmesbury. The usurpation of Malmesbury Abbey by Roger of Salisbury in 1118 meant that the stability of the abbey was thrown into doubt. Its very survival was at stake. The issue remained unresolved for an extensive period of

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[706] Martin Brett, 'John of Worcester and his Contemporaries' in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays presented to Richard William Southern.*, ed. R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1981), pp. 101-126; Martin Brett, 'The use of universal chronicle at Worcester' in *L'Historiographie médiévale en Europe: Actes du colloque organisé par la Fondation Européenne de la Science au Centre de Recherches Historiques et Juridiques de l'Université Paris I du 29 mars au 1er avril 1989.*, ed. Jean-Philippe Genet (Paris, 1991), pp. 277-285.
[707] Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance* (Princeton, NJ, 1996), p. 17.

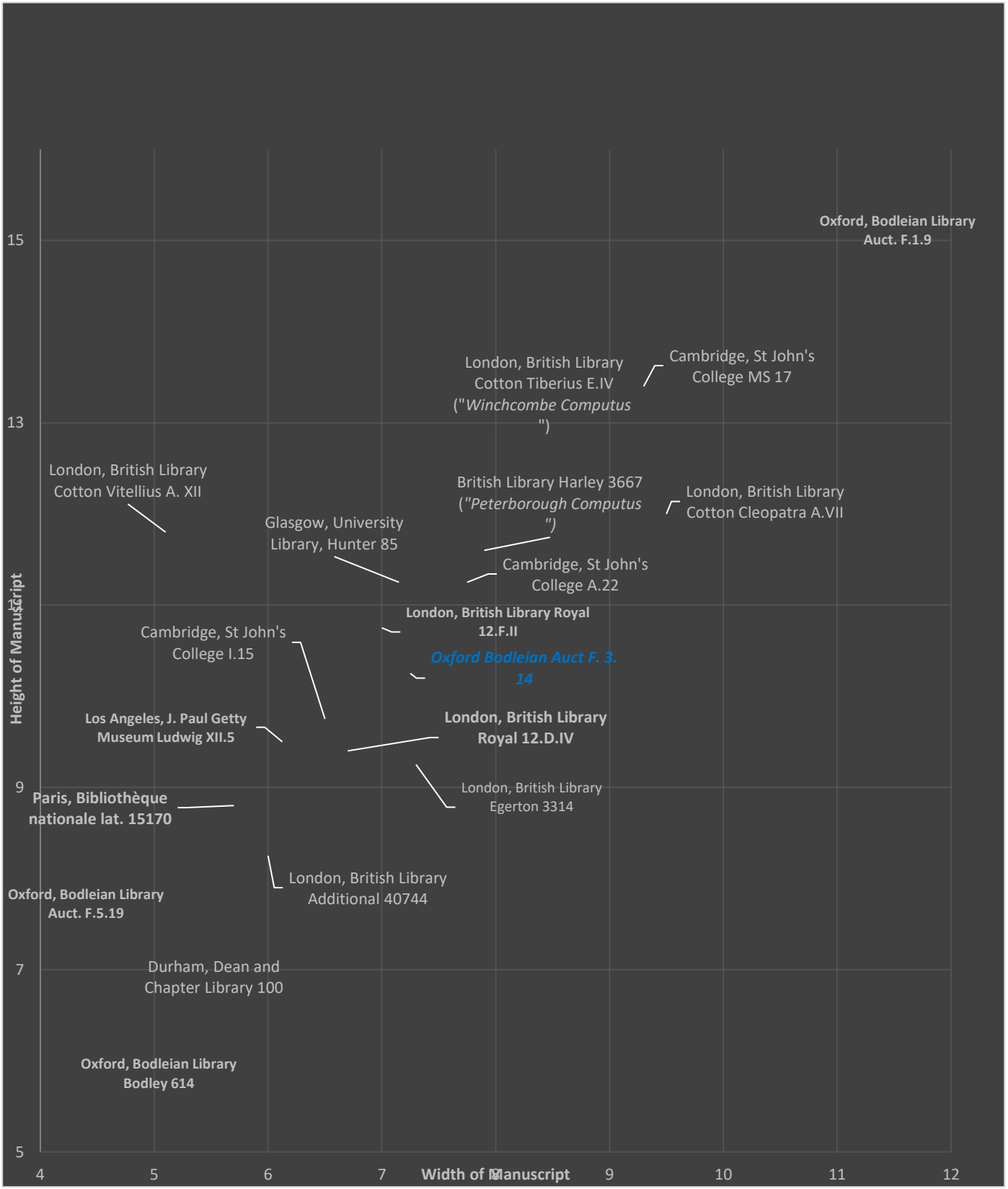
time, just when William embarked upon his writing projects. His works were authored at the behest of patrons or other institutions, with the support of his own community. However, his response to the present goes deeper than finding examples of the past or working out what went wrong to avoid mistakes being repeated. If the events of the past could not fit into a strictly linear chronology, then the creation of a pattern would give it order.

Furthermore, the civil war brought additional chaos and confusion to the present. The evidence of the *Historia Novella* illustrates that William's depiction of time was a direct reaction to the unfolding events. First he used the *Historia* to outline the sequence of events that resulted in Stephen's capture. Then he used the final book to lay a path of coherence through the tumultuous turns of fortune. Once the past was given a sense of coherence and order, it was possible to understand one's place in that pattern. Through the medium of historical writing, William was trying to reconcile himself, and those who would read his writings, to the world that he lived in, the legacy of the past that surrounded him, and the uncertainly of the future that lay before him.

This thesis offers an approach that could be used more generally. William was not the only writer of history at this time. Neither was he operating in this intellectual environment alone. Many of the texts William had access to were read by others. The political situation was experienced across the country. William was a part of a wider flourishing of historical writing that blossomed in the early twelfth century. Further study could utilise the methodology presented in this thesis to examine William's contemporary cantor-historians: Eadmer of Canterbury, John of

Worcester, Orderic Vitalis and Henry of Huntingdon. Their articulation of time in narratives could be similarly assessed and by doing so, deeper concerns could be unearthed and wider trends of how time was conceived could be examined. The representation of time can be used as a means to answer wider questions regarding early twelfth century understanding of history, the relationship between the past, present and future, and the meaning gained from their narratives. It can also be used as a lens though which we can understand how and why twelfth-century writers wrote and interpreted the past as they did. In order to truly understand how historians wrote the past, we need to understand how they understood time and how those ideas were woven into their work.

Appendix I: Sizes of Post-Conquest Twelfth-Century English Computus Manuscripts



Appendix II: List of English Twelfth-Century Computus Manuscripts[708]

Cambridge, St Johns College, MS 17

Cambridge, St John's College A.22 (22)

Cambridge, St John's College I.15 (221)

Cambridge, University Library Kk.5.32 fols. 1-49

Durham, Dean and Chapter Library 100

Glasgow, University Library, Hunter 85 (T.4.2)

London, British Library Additional 40744

London, British Library Cotton Caligula A.XV fols. 120-153 + Egerton 3314

London, British Library Cotton Cleopatra A.VII fol. 107-147

London, British Library Cotton Tiberius C.I fols. 2-17+ Harley 3667 ("Peterborough Computus")

London, British Library Cotton Tiberius E.IV ("Winchcombe Computus ")

London, British Library Cotton Vitellius A.XII

London, British Library Royal 12.F.II

Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum Ludwig XII.5

Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. F.1.9

Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. F.3.14

Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. F.5.19

Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley 614

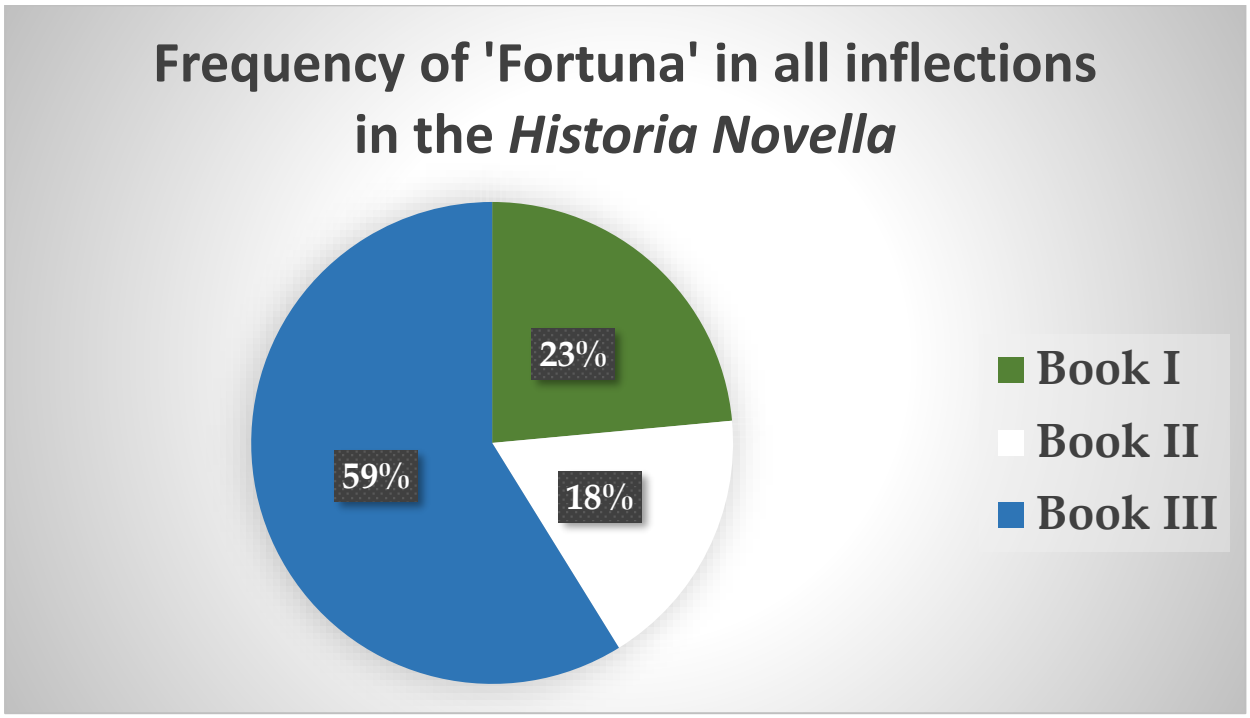
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale lat. 15170, fol. 126-162

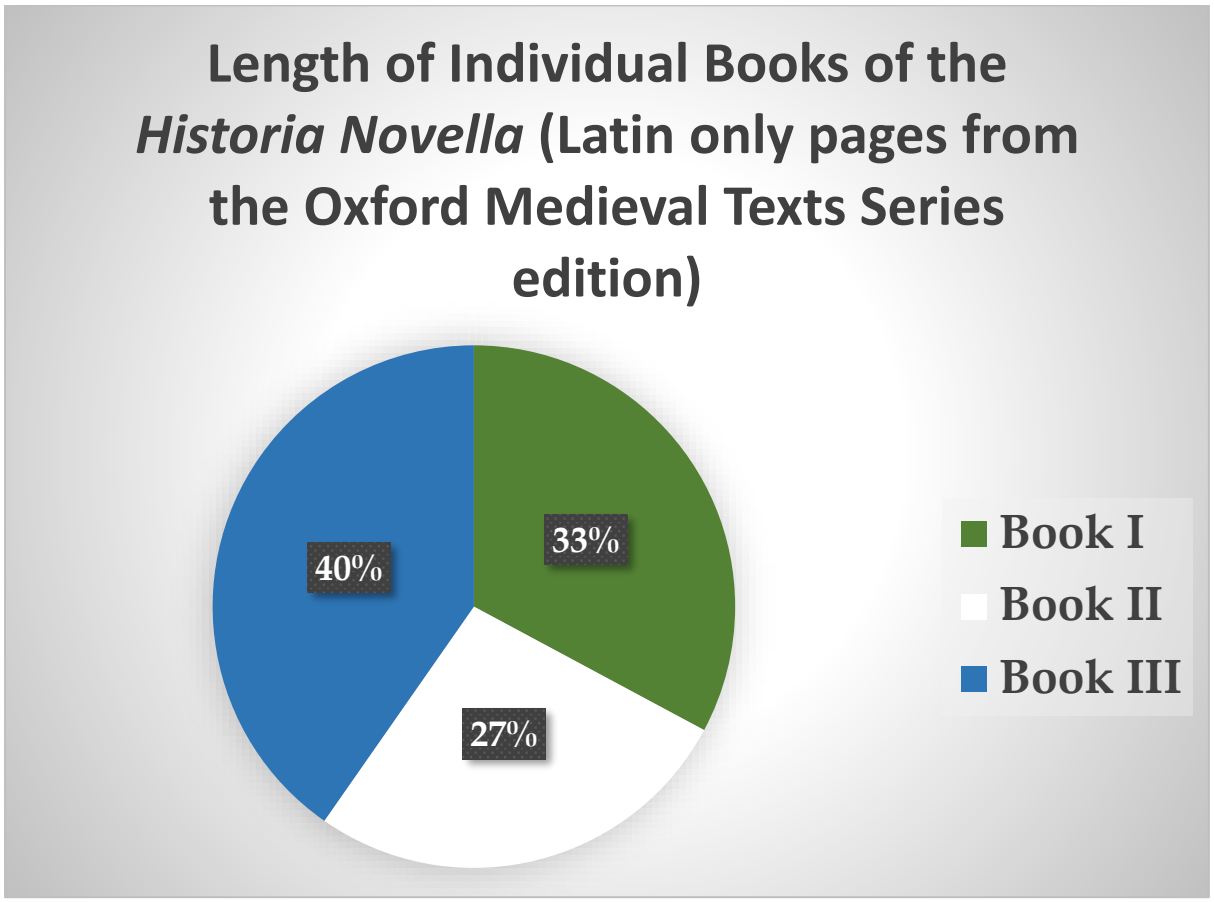
Total manuscripts: 19

[708] List from http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms17/apparatus.php?page=related_manuscripts#sec02

Author	Text(s)	Number of English Twelfth-Century Computus Manuscripts appearances
Helperic of Auxerre	*Liber De Computo*	11
Dionysius Exiguus	Various Epistola, argumenta, and Paschal tables	6
Isidore of Seville	Total Extracts from various works (including the works below) *Etymologiae* *De Natura Rerum*	6 2 1 3
Bede	Total Extracts from various works (including the works below) *De Tempore Ratione* *De Temporibus* *De Natura Rerum*	13 2 7 2 2
Robert of Hereford	Recension of Marianus Scotus' *Chronica* *Excerptio de chronica Mariani*	6
Hyginus		4
Abbo of Fleury	various ones	8

Appendix III: Frequency of Fortuna in the Historia Novella





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Durham, Dean and Chapter Library, MS 100.

Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 18.6.12.

Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 18.7.8.

Glasgow, University Library, Hunter 85 (T.4.2).

London, British Library, Additional 40744.

London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.XV.

London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra A.VII.

London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius C.I.

London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius E.IV.

London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A.XII.

London, British Library, Egerton 3314.

London, British Library, Harley 3667.

London, British Library, Royal 12.F.II.

London, Lambeth Palace, MS 224.

Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ludwig XII.5.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Arch. Selden B. 16.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F.1.9.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F.3.14.

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Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley, 614.

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