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AELFRIC'S LATIN VOCABULARY

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When Ælfric appended to his Latin grammar in Old English a classified Latin-Old English vocabulary he produced the first attempt at a bilingual dictionary of Old English and one which has been thoroughly exploited by later English lexicography. The choice of Latin terms which he chose to include, and so commend to his students as useful and necessary, it not undeserving of some attention also. While the great majority of these words is naturally of classical origin there is a considerable element that is characteristically medieval, and it is this portion that is worth exploring in some detail as it does not seem to have been so fully incorporated in the dictionaries.

First there is a large group belonging to general Christian or ecclesiastical Latin, Biblical and patristic, a good many of which have their origins in Greek. Such are: *abbas* 299.8,¹ *alba* 314.11, *anachorita* 299.13, *angelus* 297.6, *apostolus* 299.6, *archangelus* 297.6, *archidiaconus* 299.11, *bruchus* 'locust'² 307.13, *cartallum* 'basket' 320.11, *castellum* in the Biblical sense of 'village' 318.9, *cathedra* 313.16, *cattus* 309.10 (a popular word according to Isidore³ 12.2.38 *hunc vulgus cattum a captura vocant*), *cauma* 'heat' 306.15, *cimentarius* 'mason' 319.8 (for *caem-*), *clericus* 299.10, *clibanus* 'oven' 316.14, *cynomia* 'dog-flea' 308.1 (for *cynomyia*), *diaconus* 299.10, *elemosina* 320.8 (for *eleemosyna*), *energuminus* 'demoniac' 305.3 (for *-menus*), *eremita* 299.13, *femoralia* 'breeches, drawers' 315.1, *focus* 'fire' 316.3 (as an alternative to classical *ignis*; cited in W-L⁴ from c.1000, but already in Bede, and Biblical), *framea* 317.18 (synonymous with *gladius*, *machaera*, *spata*, as in Isidore's definition *gladius ex utraque parte acutus, quam vulgo spatam vocant* 18.6.3, not 'spear' as in classical Latin); *fundibulum* 'sling' 318.6, *fascinula* 'fork' 316.6 (for *fusc-*), *gazofilacium* 'treasury' 321.7 (for *-phyl-*), *hipochrita* 319.11 (for *hypocrita*), *laicus* 299.15, *levita* (an Old Testament alternative to *diaconus*) 299.10, *monachus*, *monacha* 299.11-12, *naucclerus* 'skipper' 302.13, *nonna* 299.13, *paraclytus* 304.19 (for *-cletus*), *patriarcha* 299.6, *perizomata* 315.1 (the 'aprons' of Genesis 3.7, which Isidore defines as *subcinctorium quo tantum genitalia conteguntur* 19.22.5, like *campestria* below properly a term from the world of athletics), *presbiter* 299.9 (for *-byt-*), *phitonissa* 'prophetess' 303.10 (for *pytho-*), *primas* 300.16, *scinifes* 'gnat' 308.2 (Isidore spells *sciniphes* in Lindsay's text 12.8.14 - *muscae minutissimae sunt, aculeis permolestae* - but *-f-* in some of the manuscripts; W-L lists under *cinyphes*), *sicera* 315.15 (in the Biblical sense 'strong drink', also adopted by Nennius; W-L 'cider' c.1200), *sindo* 'fine linen' 314.18, *stola* 314.12, *superhumerales* 'ephod' 314.12, and *unicornis*

308.13.

According to W-L others make their first appearance in Britain between the sixth and tenth centuries. In the sixth: *ambro* 321.9 ('spendthrift, glutton', and this may well be correct as Ælfric places it between *edax* and *gulosus*, but it is not clear that this is the sense in which Nennius applies it to the Saxons), *artavus* 315.16 ('knife, dagger', another Nennian word), *athleta* 300.18 (a synonym for *miles* in a religious context), *campana* 'large bell' 314.10, *clocca* 'bell' 314.9 (used by Adomnan), *fico* 'shoe' 314.14 (also Nennius); possibly also *peplum* 315.5, but the pairing with *tela* shows that the meaning is 'fabric, woven material' rather than Isidore's 'dress', *matronale pallium ex purpura signatum* 19.25.1 (cf. too Virgil, *Aen.* 1.480, though that example is not very illuminating).

In the seventh century: *claustrum* 'cloister' W-L 316.2, but also a more general word as Isidore *fores et valvae claustra sunt. claustra ab eo quod claudantur dicta* 15.7.4-5, and also Biblical in this sense, Micah 7.5; *discifer* 'steward' 315.10, *monoptalmus* 'one-eyed' 304.17 (for *-phth-*, a Greek synonym of *luscus*), *muriceps* 'mouser' 309.10 (a poetical synonym for *feles* which does not occur here), *refectorium* 315.8, *suptularis* 'shoe' 314.15 (for *subtalaris* W-L, marked as glossary word only, and explained by Isidore as *subtolares, quod sub talo sint, quasi subtalares* 19.34.7), *taxo* 'badger' 309.6 (paired with classical *melus*, more correctly *meles*).

In the eighth: *casula* 'chasuble' 314.11 (explained by Isidore as *vestis cucullata, dicta per diminutionem e casa quod totum hominem tegat quasi minor casa*), *colobium* 'tabard' 315.3 (explained by Isidore, *longum est et sine manicis* 19.22.24), *comedia* 316.6 (presumably the 'songs sung at banquets' quoted from Alcuin, for which the explanation appears in Isidore's second (Latin) etymology: *Comoedi appellati sive a loco, quia circum pagos agebant, quos Graeci κωμῶς vocant, sive a comisatione. Solebant enim post cibum homines ad eos audiendos venire* 8.7.6), *complex* 'accomplice' 321.3 (the moral colouring is explained by Isidore: *Complex, quia uno peccato vel crimine alteri est adplicatus ad malum; ad bonum vero numquam dicimus conpllicem* 10.50), *flasco* 'bottle' 320.9 (also *flasca*, as Isidore 20.6.2), *lichinus* 'wick' 314.7 (but *lychnus* 'lamp' is classical; Isidore *licinius quasi lucinius; est enim cicindela lucernae* 20.10.2), *manuterium* 'handtowel' 315.16 (for *-tergium*; Isidore *facietergium et manitergium a tergendō faciem vel manus vocatum* 19.26.7), *planeta* 'chasuble' 314.13 (the homonymy with 'planet' is explained by Isidore, *sic et Graece planetas, dicta quia oris errantibus evagantur. Vnde et stellae planetae, id est vagae, eo quod vago sui errore motuque discurrunt* 19.24.17), *tapeta* 'tapestry, carpet' 315.9 (Greek and classical Latin *tapes*, but with some variety of declension; Isidore *tapeta dicta quod pedibus primum strarentur, quasi tapedia* 19.26.5), *ysicius* 'salmon' 308.4 (paired with *salmo*; apparently a derivative of classical *esox*, borrowed from Gaulish, cf. Isidore *isocem piscem quendam dictum, ex quo primum isicia facta sunt; et quamvis ex alio genere piscium fiant, initium tamen piscis vocabulum dedit* 20.2.30).

In the ninth century: *assura* 316.7 (if for *arsura* and with the

sense 'fire'; placed between *veru* and *sartago* it leads us to expect either a cooking implement or perhaps a term for 'roast meat', cf. the W-L under *assatio* and classical *assum*; as the vocabulary also includes *arsura/ustulatio* 302.16 without assimilation of -rs- the 'roast' sense is the more probable), *monialis* 'nun' 299.12 (paired with *monacha*), *pellicia* 'leather garment' 315.3, *scabro* 'beetle' 307.13 (W-L s.v. *scarabo*, cf. Isidore, *scabrones vocati a cabo, id est a caballo, quod ex eis creentur. Sicut autem scabrones nascuntur de equorum carnibus putridis, ita ex his iterum saepe nascuntur scarabaei* 12.8.4).

In the tenth: *agalma* 'image' 304.11 (from Greek, paired with *imago*), *antela* 'front peak of the saddle' 317.15 (cf. Isidore's explanation *quasi antesella, sicut et postela, quasi postsella* 20.16.4), *celea* 'ale' 315.13 (Isidore *caelia a calefaciendo appellata; est enim potio ex suco tritici per artem confecta* 20.3.18, W-L *celia*, paired with *cervisia*), *clito* 'prince' 300.15, *cosmus* 'world' 297.8 (paired with *mundus*), *fulcra* 'bedding' 315.1 (defined by Isidore as *ornamenta lectorum, dicta quod in his fulcimur, id est sustinemur, vel quod toros fulciant sive caput* 19.26.3), *interulum* 'shirt' 315.3 (W-L *interula*, paired with *colobium*, eighth century, above), *staurus* 'cross' 313.15 (paired with *crux*).

The pairing of *bellum* and *pugna* 317.19 may suggest influence from Celtic Latin in which *bellum* is regularly used for 'battle'; and *provincia/paga* 313.1, with the feminine form of the latter (as used by Asser) instead of classical *pagus*, may point in the same direction, in view of the feminine gender of Welsh *pau*, which is derived from it.

Some rather recondite terms also occur: *hasta/quiris* 318.3, where *quiris* occurs only once, in Ovid (cf. Isidore, *hasta . . . quae Sabinorum lingua curis dicitur* 9.2.84), *perizomata/campestria* 315.1-2, the latter preserved by Horace (cf. Isidore, *haec [sc. perizomata] et campestria nuncupantur, pro eo quod eisdem iuvenes, qui nudi exercentur in campo, pudenda operiunt* 19.22.5), *allox* 'big toe' 299.5 (for *allex*), found once, in Plautus, *trapezeta* 'money-changer' 302.1, another Plautine word (paired with *nummularius* which is the Biblical term) more correctly *trapezita*, *proreta* 'look-out' 302.13, also Plautine, *falsidicus* 'lying' 305.16 (Plautus yet again, who is also the source of the synonym *falsiloquus*, which is Biblical), *acus* 'chaff' 316.15, *cinctorium* 'belt' 314.14 (paired with *cingulum* and *zona*), *falarica* 317.20 (paired with *lancea*, described by Isidore as *telum ingens torno factum, habens ferrum cubitale et rotunditatem de plumbo in modum sphaerae. In ipsa summitate dicitur etiam et ignem habere adfixum* 18.7.8), *basterna* 320.5 (paired with *currus* and *essedum* and defined by Isidore as *vehiculum, quasi viae sternax, mollibus stramentis composita, a duobus animalibus deportata* 20.12.5), *bogia* 321.2 (for pl. *boiae*, described by Isidore, *est torques damnatorum, quasi iugum in bove ex genere vinculorum est* 5.27.12, another Plautine word), *malagma* 'poultice' 302.18, *magalis* 'gelded boar' 309.16 (for *maialis*), *limax* 'snail' 310.4 (cf. Isidore 12.5.7), *eruca* 'caterpillar' 310.5 (cf. Isidore 12.5.9), *titio* 'firebrand' 316.4 (cf. Isidore 17.6.27), *sartago* 'frying-pan', *frixorium* 'ditto' 316.8, *caccabus* 'cooking-pot'

316.5 (cf. Isidore 20.8.3, 5), and *nebris* 'fawnskin' 321.4.

Not all the remainder of Ælfric's post-classical vocabulary, however, appears in the W-L with the date 'c.1000' which would imply that this collection of words was the source. The W-L has a particular siglum to mark entries attested only in glossaries, and some caution in taking such evidence at its face value may fairly be justified in general, but Ælfric's vocabulary, while formally in this category, ought surely to be regarded with less suspicion. Its purpose was presumably to provide his students with a basic vocabulary adapted to their everyday monastic existence, and it is therefore hardly likely to contain anything, leaving aside a few harmless pedantries, often given only as alternatives to more usual words, that was not in use at the time, even if, because of changes in usage, or the delay in recording the names of objects beneath the notice of literature, there may be a gap of a couple of centuries before the next attestation.

The following items are recorded for a later date and sometimes in a modified form or spelling in the W-L: *abra* 'maidservant' 301.4 (paired with *ancilla* and *serva*, W-L c.1440); *andena* 'andiron' 316.4 (W-L 3. *andena* 1390, *andera* c.1290); *archangelica* 'white deadnettle' 311.4 (W-L 14c.); *arsura* 302.16 (W-L 1192, paired with *ustulatio*; from its appearance in a group of medical terms it seems likely that the sense is 'cauterisation'; in a more general sense, 'fire, blaze', c.870); *artemisias* 'mugwort' 311.10 (W-L *artemesias* a 1250); *betonica* 'betony' 310.14 (W-L *vettonica* 14c., this spelling a 1200); *bratium* 'malt' 316.15 (W-L *brasium* 1086, but the Celtic forms show that the correct spelling is *bracium*); *cappa* 315.2 (if 'cap' is the meaning then W-L 1390, though 'cape, cope' for which W-L prefers *capa* is as old as 690); *capum* 'hawk' 307.11 (W-L *capus* c.1180); *cippus* 'stocks' 321.1 (paired with *compes*, W-L c.1100); *circulus* 'hoop' of a barrel or wheel 304.3 (paired with *circus*, from its position perhaps an item of the equipment of a plough-team, W-L 1196); *clausura* 'lock' 314.3 (W-L 1378 in this sense, which is confirmed by the following *clavis*, *sera*, though 'enclosed space' dates from 1203, and 'monastic precincts' from 1182); *cleta* 'hurdle' 315.8 (W-L *clata* 1209, *cleta* c.1115); *cloccarium* 'belfry' 314.9 (paired with *lucar*, W-L a.1120); *cresco* 'cress' 311.9 (W-L *cresso* a.1250); *falcastrum* 'bill-hook' 318.18 (W-L s.v. *falcatio*, a.1300, but much older, cf. Isidore, *falcastrum a similitudine falcis vocatum: est autem ferramentum curvum cum manubrio longo, ad densitatem veprium succidendam*, 20.14.5); *filiaster*, -stra 'step-son, -daughter' 299.5 (W-L male c.1130, female 1204; the gloss shows that the female was intended); *fossorium* 'spade' 318.17 (paired with *vanga*, W-L a.1135, *ferramentum fossorium* c.1090, but cf. Isidore, *alii generaliter fossorium vocant, quod foveam faciat*, 20.14.7); *hermodactula* 'colchicum' 311.13 (W-L s.v. *Hermula*, *hermodactylus* a.1250); *hyricius* 'hedgehog' 309.11 (paired with *erinacius*, W-L *hericius* c.1325, but in a transferred sense 'stockade' 1167, which is also classical Latin); *indicatorium* 'book-mark' 314.5 (W-L only adj. *indicatorius* 1552 s.v. *index*); *luceus* 'pike' 308.9 (W-L c.1170); *mantele* 315.16 (paired with *manuter(g)ium*, and explained by Isidore, *mantelia nunc pro operiendis mensis sunt; quae, ut nomen ipsud indicat, olim tergendis manibus praebebantur* 19.26.6; W-L *mantile* 'altar-cloth' c.1190); *medo* 'mead' 315.14 (W-L

meda 1130, cf. Isidore, *medus*, quasi melus, quia ex melle fit 20.3.13); *mulsum* 'mead' 315.14 (paired with *ydromellum* and glossed 'beer', W-L s.v. *mulcedo*, 13c., Isidore, *mulsum ex melle mixtum; est enim potio ex aqua et melle* 20.3.10); *pedula* 'shoe' 315.4 (W-L, s.v. *pes*, *pedule*, *pedulis* c.1200, *pedulus* c.1250); *polipedium*, a plant-name, 310.12 (W-L a.1250, Isidore *polypodion* 17.9.62); *postela* 'crupper' 317.16 (W-L *postella* c.1200, though its counterpart *antela* is recorded as c.1000); *rocea* 'roach' 308.7 (W-L *rochia* c.1200, *rocea* a.1275); *sabina* 'savin' 312.9 (W-L *sabina* 14c, *savina* c.1200); *scansile* 'stirrup' 317.14 (W-L a.1180, s.v. *scansio*, a meaning not yet known to Isidore 20.11.8); *solarium* 'upper room' 317.2 (W-L c.1125, s.v. *sol*); *sottus* 'sot' 305.15 (W-L c.1125); *tanicetum* 'tansy' 311.1 (W-L a.1250, s.v. *athanasia*); *toral* 'coverlet' 315.4 (W-L 1144, s.v. *torus*, cf. Isidore 19.26.6, and classical); *tractorium* 'windlass' 314.15 (W-L 15c., s.v. *tractio*); *vanga* 'spade' 318.16 (paired with *fossorium*, W-L 1276); *ustulatio* 302.17 (paired with *arsura*, q.v., W-L 12c., s.v. *ustio*); and *ydromellum* 315.14 (paired with *mulsum*, W-L c.1100, s.v. *hydriola*, but cf. Isidore, *hydromelum, quod fiat ex aqua et malis Matianis* 20.3.11, which suggests rather a kind of cider).

In addition to the words entered in the W-L for later dates than Ælfric the following of reasonably certain meaning are not included: *aneta* 'duck' 307.5, possibly a feminine formation from classical *anas*; *cudo* 'smith' 301.13, paired with *faber*; *enula* 304.7, in a series of words connected with book production, taken by B-T, second supplement, as *pennula* misread *perula* (W-L 1240, s.v. *perla*), but the Cornish gloss is *baiol* which suggests that Old English *perl* is an error for *pægl*, and that a container for liquid is intended, cf. W-L *enum* 'pail' c.1200; the diminutive may perhaps be 'inkwell'; *fannus* 308.6, a fish name, perhaps 'roach'; *feruncus* 309.9, an animal variously interpreted as 'marten, polecat, ferret, weasel', presumably a diminutive from adj. *ferus*; *lucar* 314.9, paired with *cloccarium* 'belfry'; *manicae* 'handcuffs' 321.2, cf. Isidore, *manicae sunt vincula quibus manus capiuntur; licet et manicae tunicarum sunt* 5.27.10; *mento* 317.14, an item of saddlery, perhaps 'saddle-cloth'; *munctorium* 'tongs' 314.8, though the etymology would suggest rather 'snuffers'; *murilegulus* 'cat' 309.10, paired with *cattus* and *muriceps*, cf. W-L *murilegus* a.1142, of which this is presumably a diminutive, formed in ignorance of the existence of late Latin *murilegulus* 'fisher for murex' the purple dye fish; *musa* 302.5, glossed 'pipe or whistle', perhaps a specialisation of *Musa*; *parrax* 307.12, a bird name, glossed 'wren'; *taricus* 308.5, Greek *tarikhos* 'dried or smoked fish', here paired with *allec*, W-L 1086 'herring'; *ulcea* 317.14, another saddlery item, perhaps 'flaps'.

In view of the difficulties of identification it is less surprising that a number of plant-names have been omitted, though elsewhere such unidentified names are included and labelled 'bot.'. Such are, with tentative identifications based on the glosses: *adriaca* 'comfrey' 310.14; *avadonia* 'mullein, verbascum' 310.10; *camicula* 'argente' 311.6; *citsana* 'fleur-de-lys' 311.2; *dilla* 'dock' 310.8; *epicurium*, variously rendered, 311.1; *helena* 'elecampane' 311.8; *libestica* 'lovage' 310.8; *magudaris*, paired with *caula*, classical *caulis* 'colewort, cabbage', but the Greek word is defined

as 'stalk, juice, or root of laserpitium, source of assa foetida';
modera 'chickweed' 311.7; *sinitia* 'groundsel' 310.10; *slaregia*
'clary' 310.14; *tidolosa* 'crow-garlic' 311.13, paired with
hermodactula; *ulcia* 'holly' 321.8.

NOTES

- ¹ References are to page and line of J. Zupitza: *Elfrics Grammatik und Glossar* (Berlin, 1966, a reprint of the original edition of 1880).
- ² I gloss only Latin words which have not subsequently passed into English in approximately the form and sense which they have here.
- ³ *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, recognovit . . . W.M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911).
- ⁴ *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List*, ed. R.E. Latham (London, 1965), hereafter W-L.