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The *Apocalypse of Thomas* in Old English¹

Mary Swan

Introduction

The end of the world is a common concern of Old English homilists. The *Apocalypse of Thomas* is one of a number of texts, several of them apocryphal, which are used as source material for ideas and narrative related to this theme.² Studies on the *Apocalypse* to date have discussed its relationship to surviving Latin texts and the general didactic topics which it is used to support,³ whilst work on traditions of the end of the world in Old English literature has made only passing reference to its influence. The aim of this article is to provide a thorough reassessment of the transformation and recontextualization of the Latin *Apocalypse of Thomas* in Old English, with particular reference to the sorts of Latin versions of the tradition available to Anglo-Saxon authors, and to the ways in which the narrative and thematic contents of the *Apocalypse* are combined with familiar elements of Anglo-Saxon representations of the Last Days of this world. The re-use of material from the *Apocalypse of Thomas* in Anglo-Saxon England within the vernacular tradition is a striking example of the complexities of transmission of texts and themes in the Middle Ages, and these complexities are clearest when one compares unpublished manuscript versions of Latin source texts with vernacular adaptations.

The Latin *Apocalypse of Thomas*, which is used in four anonymous Old English homilies, presents the signs of the Last Days as Christ describes them to Thomas, and scholars have identified two recensions of it: the shorter and the interpolated. Milton Gatch suggests that the *Apocalypse* was originally written in Greek between the second and fourth centuries.⁴ It subsequently acquired an interpolation at the beginning which alludes to early fifth-century events and people, including Theodosius I, Arcadius and Honorius, as contemporary: Gatch believes that the *Apocalypse* acquired this interpolation in either Greek or Latin, and that it circulated quite widely in North West Europe. No Latin version of the *Apocalypse of*

Thomas survives from Anglo-Saxon England although, on the evidence of texts which clearly draw upon the *Apocalypse*, versions were available by the mid-tenth century at the latest.

Förster and Gatch identify four Old English homilies which make use of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*: Blickling Homily 7;⁵ the 'Corpus-Hatton' text in Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 162 Homily 39⁶ and Oxford Bodleian MS Hatton 116 Homily 3;⁷ Vercelli Homily 15;⁸ and homily 3 of MS Cambridge Corpus Christi College 41 (generally known as the 'Exeter' text).⁹ The Blickling and Corpus-Hatton versions make use only of the signs of the Last Days from the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, whilst the Vercelli and Exeter versions draw extensively upon the Thomas apocryphon, almost in the manner of direct translations.

From his analysis of the material from the *Apocalypse of Thomas* which these Old English homilists use, Förster has suggested that the four anonymous Old English homilies represent independent translations from several Latin texts.¹⁰ On comparing the Old English homilies with the copies of the Latin *Apocalypse* which have been edited, he could find 'no trace of the interpolation . . . in the Old English of Corpus-Hatton',¹¹ but believed that the Blickling homily contained 'a few general statements taken from [the interpolation]'.¹² In his later study, Gatch states that the Blickling and Exeter versions make use of the interpolated Latin. He gives no evidence of use of the interpolation in the Vercelli or Corpus-Hatton versions, although his statement on the latter – that it 'adapts primarily the cosmological, or uninterpolated, portions of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*'¹³ – might be seen to imply the possibility that the Corpus-Hatton version does use the interpolated Latin to some extent. In fact, as will be seen, the Corpus-Hatton version's only clear resemblance is to the shorter Latin *Apocalypse*.

It is clear that the few edited versions of surviving Latin texts of the *Apocalypse* do not in fact provide an accurate guide to the state in which the text might have been available to Anglo-Saxon authors, and that Förster and Gatch's model of two versions of the Latin text – the shorter and the interpolated – is oversimplified. Close examination of Old English homilies which make use of the *Apocalypse* implies strongly that by the time of their composition, the shorter and interpolated versions of the *Apocalypse* had evolved into a wider range of variants, some of which mixed the contents of these two versions. A recently-identified manuscript fragment, which I discuss below, bears out the implication that the Latin textual tradition is more complex than scholarship on the *Apocalypse* has so far assumed. An exploration of Old English texts other than the four homilies Förster and Gatch identify which make use of the *Apocalypse*, and of the ways in which material drawn from it is

knitted into a network of themes and images, will show that our perception of the Old English *Apocalypse of Thomas* tradition should also be modified and made more complex. The discussion which follows opens with descriptions and comparisons of Latin and Old English versions of the *Apocalypse*, and then moves on to consider the transmission of the tradition in Anglo-Saxon England, and its links with other common motifs.

Published Latin Versions of the Apocalypse of Thomas

The Shorter Latin Apocalypse of Thomas: a summary

The earlier, shorter *Apocalypse of Thomas* opens with Christ describing to Thomas the signs of the end of the world.¹⁴ After listing general portents, including division among kings, famine, pestilence, captivity and violent death, the *Apocalypse* gives Christ's account of the signs of the last seven days, when 'uirtutes caelorum mouebuntur'.¹⁵ On the first day at the third hour a great voice will come from heaven, and a bloody cloud, thunder, lightning and bloody rain will appear. On the second, a voice will come from heaven, the earth will be moved, the gates of heaven will open, smoke will come out of them to cover the earth and there will be fear and terror in the world. The third day will also be marked by a heavenly voice which will speak at the third hour; the abysses of the earth will roar, heaven will open, the air will be filled with smoke and stench until the tenth hour and people will declare that their destruction is approaching. At the first hour of the fourth day the abyss will melt and roar from the east; there will be an earthquake, and heathen idols and buildings will fall. At the sixth hour on the fifth day there will be thunder and darkness, with no sun, moon or stars, and people will despise their earthly life. A voice will come from heaven at the fourth hour of the sixth day, heaven will split from east to west and angels and people will look upon each other, with people fleeing from the angels and asking the earth to swallow them up. Christ will come, the fence of fire around Paradise will disappear and the earth will be consumed; spirits will come to earth from Paradise and find their bodies, which will be changed into angels, and the united souls and bodies will go to heaven with God and the angels. Voices will come from heaven at the eighth hour of the seventh day, there will be war among the angels and people will see their approaching destruction. On the eighth day at the sixth hour a tender voice will be heard from heaven and the highest angel will appear, the chosen people will be delivered to God by the angels and there will be rejoicing at the destruction of the world.

The Interpolated Latin Apocalypse of Thomas: a summary

The later, interpolated version of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*,¹⁶ presented as the sayings of the Lord to Thomas, describes the features of the coming Last Times, including famine, war, earthquakes, cold weather, drought, disputes, blasphemy, pride, deceit and covetousness among priests and the abandonment and corruption of churches. Following this more general list of portents, which has no exact equivalent in the shorter version, comes the interpolation which gives this version its name: an account of the successive rulers of the Last Times. The first will be a lover of the law who, after a short reign, will leave two sons, Arcadius and Honorius; two princes will then oppress the people, and there will be famine, war and exile in the east. The next king will have a golden image of Caesar worshipped in the house of God, and martyrdoms will result; God's servants will regain their faith and suffer, some becoming saints. Following this a good king will come from the east, helping widows, the needy and priests, and there will be abundance in the world; a king from the south will then rule for a short time, and Roman soldiers' wages will cause the treasury to fail. Corn, wine and oil will then be abundant, but money scarce; the sea will rise and prevent travel, no one will speak freely and the young will age. The next king will be evil, and people will die from the east to Babylon; there will be death, violence and famine in Chanaan; fountains and wells will boil and turn to blood, heaven will be moved, the stars fall, and the sun and moon will be cut in half. In these days Antichrist will draw near. There follows a lamentation for all those who live, build, toil, marry and beget children, join houses or land or do not attempt to make amends and do good in these days.

At this point the interpolation ends and, after what M. R. James describes as a 'break'¹⁷ – presumably a lacuna – in the text, God is presented, introducing the Last Days with references to coming famine, pestilence, distress, captivity and death by the sword. The signs of the first and second days are very similar to those of the shorter version, but the interpolated version's account of the third day includes heaven being folded up like a book and vanishing.¹⁸ The fourth and fifth days' signs are again very similar in the two Latin versions, but the heavenly voice is omitted from the interpolated version's signs of the sixth day. James notes that, after mentioning people fleeing on the sixth day, the interpolated text 'ends abruptly',¹⁹ so no comparison with the last two days of the shorter version is possible.

The Four Old English Homilies

When compared with the two Latin versions, the Old English anonymous homilies seem at first to fall into two pairs: Vercelli with Exeter and Blickling with Corpus-Hatton, each pair sharing features which do not appear in the other homilies. The Vercelli homily contains the largest amount of preliminary material – that which precedes the account of the Last Days – related to the *Apocalypse of Thomas*. The Exeter homily includes a shorter account of some of the preliminary material used by the Vercelli homilist, but omits many details. By contrast, the openings of the Blickling and Corpus-Hatton homilies, on Easter and the Ascension respectively, have few links with the Thomas Apocalypse, although certain themes and images common to other of the four Old English homilies are introduced, as will be shown later.

The Vercelli Homily

The Vercelli homily is presented as Christ's answer to Thomas's question about when Antichrist will come, and has many similarities to the interpolated Latin version, including references to Antichrist, the kings in the Last Times, the lamentation for those who build, bear children, strive on earth and fail to show repentance, and the account of heaven being folded up like a book on the third day. The signs of the fifth day in both the interpolated and shorter Latin versions are, however, omitted in the Vercelli homily, which instead gives as its fifth day (Friday) the account of the Latin sixth day.²⁰ The angels' battle, sign of the sixth day in Vercelli, corresponds to the seventh day in the shorter Latin only, as no version of the interpolated Latin survives beyond the sixth day. The Vercelli codex has a missing folio just after the opening account of Sunday's signs,²¹ and in consequence not enough survives to compare them with the shorter Latin account. Unlike either of the Latin versions, after its account of the signs of the seventh day the Vercelli homily describes the Virgin Mary, Saint Michael and Saint Peter each interceding on behalf of one third of the damned. The account of God summoning the good and the bad after the seven days' signs in the Vercelli homily also has no parallel in the surviving Latin texts, but it is closely paralleled by the Corpus-Hatton account, which gives God's words in Latin and Old English, and by the Exeter homily, which gives the speech in Old English only.²²

The Exeter Homily

Like the Vercelli account, the Exeter homily presents the signs of the seven

last days as the words of Christ, and has a strong resemblance to the interpolated Latin version. The Exeter account of the general portents of the Last Days is, however, much shorter than that in the Vercelli homily, and lacks the specific details of individual rulers. The Exeter lamentation passage also reflects the interpolated Latin, although it is not as close or detailed in its similarities as is the same passage in the Vercelli homily. Another similarity to the Vercelli and interpolated Latin versions is the Exeter description of heaven being folded like a book on day three but, unlike Vercelli, days five and six of the Exeter account correspond with both Latin versions. The Exeter homily reference to the angels' fight on day seven follows the shorter Latin version.

The Blickling Homily

The Blickling homily's closest resemblance is to the shorter Latin *Apocalypse*. The signs of the Last Days are introduced in the context of Christ's suffering and resurrection; the homilist urges the congregation to do good in order to repay its debt to Christ before the coming Judgement. The Blickling and the Corpus-Hatton homilies have a number of features in common, and differ from the Vercelli, Exeter and both Latin versions in leading in to their discussion of the Last Days with an authorial description of the terrors of Doomsday, whereas the Vercelli and both Latin versions frame the description of the Last Days as a communication from Christ to Thomas and the Exeter version has the description of the Last Days spoken by Christ, although it omits Thomas's role. The description of the general portents of Doomsday in the Blickling homily contains none of the specific echoes of the interpolated Latin *Apocalypse* found in Vercelli and Exeter, but rather lists such general portents as the failure of the sun, moon and stars. Other features of the Blickling homily which resemble the shorter Latin version are found in the description of Antichrist's quest to take earthly souls (the theme of the reunion of souls and bodies of the good features in the latter part of day six in the shorter Latin *Apocalypse*) and day seven of the Blickling homily, which casts Saint Michael as the leader of the heavenly host in the battle against evil, and also shows the saint commanding the resurrection of the dead. In the shorter Latin version, angels seek out the elect on the seventh day and deliver them on the eighth, and in the Corpus-Hatton account the elect are summoned by trumpets on day seven. One feature of the Blickling homily which resembles the interpolated Latin, Vercelli and Exeter accounts is the image of heaven being folded like a book, which, as we have seen, does not occur in the shorter Latin version. The folding of heaven appears at a different point of the Blickling homily, however: in the preliminary section of the treatment of the Last Days, and not on day three as in the

other accounts. To bring the Blickling homily into line with the interpolated Latin version, Förster does not propose moving this, but rather emending a reading in day two of the Blickling homily, 'seo heofon biþ gefeallen [. . .]', to 'seo heofon biþ gefealden [. . .]'.²³ Such an emendation would still, however, not make the Blickling account match the interpolated Latin, Vercelli and Exeter accounts, in which this is one of the signs of the third day. Days one to four of the Blickling account correspond in the main with the two Latin, Vercelli and Exeter versions, with the exception of the omission of the folding of heaven on day three, as mentioned above. The material in day six of the Blickling homily has no direct equivalent in any of the other versions, and in contrast with the Vercelli homilist's detailed description of the intercession of Saints Mary, Michael and Peter, the end of the Blickling account contains a clear statement that no one will be able to intercede for others on Judgement Day.

The Corpus-Hatton Homily

The Corpus-Hatton homily is also closer to the shorter Latin version, and shares a range of features with the Blickling homily, as already noted. It opens with reminders to the congregation of Christ's ascension, with an exhortation to pray for protection against evil. As in the Blickling homily, Judgement Day is introduced as an awesome event for which the best preparation is a life of good deeds on earth. Like the shorter Latin and the Blickling accounts, the Corpus-Hatton homily lacks the historical references of the interpolated Latin, listing instead general portents. Other points of similarity with the shorter Latin *Apocalypse* include the Corpus-Hatton description of Judgement Day as 'gewrixla dæg lichaman 7 sawla',²⁴ which reflects the theme of bodies and souls found also in day six of the shorter Latin and the Blickling accounts and the omission of the folding up of heaven from the signs of the third day. As in the Blickling homily, this sign appears in a different place in the Corpus-Hatton homily: in day seven. Finally, in common with the Blickling homilist, the author of the Corpus-Hatton homily states that no one on earth will be able to help others at the Last Judgement; additionally, the Judgement scene on day seven of the Corpus-Hatton account has much in common with the same scene in the Blickling homily.²⁵

Gatch shows how the signs of the Last Days are used in the early part of the Corpus-Hatton homily to add urgency to the Doomsday scene, and indeed the lengthy catalogue of coming miseries, 'Pæt is yrmþe dæg 7 gnornunge dæg [. . .]'²⁶ is a powerful introduction to the fearful events to come. The Corpus-Hatton homily moves from the signs of the seven days into a detailed and vivid description of Judgement. God's demand, given in direct speech, to know what people have done on

earth, features in none of the other accounts, but God's summoning and dividing of the good and bad is here reported in Latin and Old English,²⁷ as in the Vercelli account. In common with the Vercelli and Blickling accounts, the Corpus-Hatton homily presents Saint Michael as having a role and influence on Judgement Day, and its author parallels the Blickling homilist in indicating the seven Last Days by number, not by the names of the days of the week.

Sources and Connections

Another version of the Latin Apocalypse

As the above descriptions show, the Vercelli and Exeter homilies appear to have more in common with the interpolated Latin, and the Blickling and Corpus-Hatton homilies with the shorter Latin *Apocalypse*. Textual evidence does not point to Förster's belief that the Blickling homily draws from the interpolated Latin, except in the detail of heaven being folded. It would appear, then, that the sources of the Vercelli and Exeter homilies are two different versions of the Latin *Apocalypse* which share some of the elements of, but are not identical with, the published text of the interpolated version, and that the source or sources of the Blickling and Corpus-Hatton homilies are closer to the published text of the shorter version, but not identical with it.

Evidence for the development of the Latin *Apocalypse* beyond the two versions identified by Förster and Gatch is provided by a recently-identified manuscript fragment: University of Toronto, Fisher Rare Books Library, MS 45, fragment 24-25. MS 45 is a group of two folios of which fol. 24r contains the beginning of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, fol. 24v the rest of the *Apocalypse*, and the title 'INITIA SANCTI GREGORI'; fol. 25r fragments of an unidentified Judgement homily and of Augustine on the psalms; and fol. 25v a fragment of Alcuin's *Disputatio Puerorum*. Both folios are from a single manuscript, but they were presumably not originally adjacent; their original order is not clear, and their text is cropped at the top and damaged in places. Claudine Conan believes that the folios may have been written in the ninth century, possibly in North-Eastern France.²⁸

The Fisher fragment *Apocalypse of Thomas* conforms to the model of neither the shorter nor the interpolated version. It opens with a speaker (presumably Christ) commanding Thomas to listen to what will happen in the Last Days. Eight days are numbered and described, and the text ends after the account of the eighth day. The end of the text is complete in the Fisher version, since it is followed by the words 'INITIA

SANCTI GREGORI',²⁹ the opening of the next item. The opening of the Fisher *Apocalypse of Thomas* was presumably at the top of the surviving fol. 24r, which is cut, or on the now-lost preceding folio, but since the text as it survives moves straight from the speaker commanding Thomas to listen, into the account of the first day, it is reasonable to assume that the Fisher version never included either the historical interpolation, which in the interpolated version falls between the command to listen and the account of the first day, or the shorter version's summary of the features of the Last Days which is given at this point. In this respect the Fisher fragment matches neither the shorter nor the interpolated version of the *Apocalypse*. On one occasion its reading matches the shorter version, not the interpolated,³⁰ but others of its features correspond more closely to the interpolated version: at six points, including its description of the folding of heaven on day three, it agrees with the interpolated version against the shorter version. Unlike both the interpolated and shorter Latin versions, however, the Fisher fragment omits the summary statement 'these are the signs of the [. . .] day' at the end of each day described.

The Fisher fragment of the Latin *Apocalypse* is an important indication of the complexities of transmission of many popular apocryphal texts in the Middle Ages, and of the dangers of relying on published versions of some of those copies which happen to have survived. Its contents imply that, at least by the ninth century, the two early versions of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* had mixed and evolved into other, hybrid versions, some of which may well have been available to Anglo-Saxon authors. Transmission of one influential text to Anglo-Saxon England from North-Eastern Francia has already been identified in the form of the 'Cotton-Corpus Legendary', a collection of saints' lives probably compiled in Northern France or Flanders, a version of which forms the main source text for Ælfric's saints' lives.³¹

A Fifth Old English Homily: CCCC 41 article 13 and CCCC 303 article 16

Evidence for the complexity and fluidity of the re-use of elements from the *Apocalypse of Thomas* in Old English is greatly strengthened by a fifth homily, which immediately follows the Exeter text in the margins of CCCC 41 and also survives in CCCC 303.³² This text is categorized by Antonette di Paolo Healey under re-uses of the *Gospel of Nicodemus* in Anglo-Saxon England but, as she notes, its latter half 'takes up material from the *Apocalypse of Thomas*' which is not smoothly linked with its earlier portion,³³ and it is, therefore, a witness to the broader applications of *Apocalypse of Thomas* material in the Old English homiletic corpus. The main topic of CCCC 41 article 13 is the Harrowing of Hell, which is compared with the time when Christ will return at Judgement. Unlike the Latin and Old English

Apocalypse of Thomas texts discussed, it does not make any attempt to structure its description of the end of the world in terms of numbers or names of days. It does, however, include several distinctive elements of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* tradition in both the shorter and interpolated Latin versions: in the course of the latter part of the text, the homilist announces that when Christ comes again the sun and moon will darken, as is described in the shorter Latin *Apocalypse*; and the interpolated Latin's announcements that stars will fall to the earth and the heavens will be folded like a book are also found in CCC 41 article 13. The development of the theme of the fate of the soul and body at Judgement, which is referred to in the shorter Latin version, is taken up by the author of CCC 41 article 13 and in others of the Old English homilies, as will be discussed below. Two further ways in which CCC 41 article 13's development of its subject-matter shows characteristics of a specifically Old English nature are its account of how the Virgin Mary, Saint Michael and Saint Peter will each intercede on behalf of one third of damned souls, which parallels that in the Vercelli homily, and its reference to Christ showing his cross and wounds at Judgement.

The writing of the Exeter version of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* and this homily one after the other into the margins of CCC 41 is very striking. As mentioned above, the contents of this manuscript imply an interest in apocryphal material on the part of its writer or commissioner. Healey speculates that the reason for the juxtaposition of items 12 and 13 may be their shared use of *Apocalypse of Thomas* material,³⁴ but since the *Apocalypse* is not named in either homily, and since their use of it is so different, this is difficult to substantiate. Perhaps by the time CCC 41 was written, the *Apocalypse of Thomas* had become so integrated into the Anglo-Saxon tradition that two different versions of it were coincidentally used in these two homilies.³⁵

Shared themes in Old English

The use of elements of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* in the range of Old English texts discussed above shows the flexibility of its basic format as a source-text. The five Old English homilies which draw on the *Apocalypse of Thomas* share a number of themes with each other and with the wider corpus of Old English literature on Judgement. These links are significant for what they reveal about the ways in which material from the Latin *Apocalypse of Thomas* is exploited in Old English Judgement texts, and also about the intricate network of themes associated with Judgement narratives in Anglo-Saxon England.

The theme of the fate of the soul on Judgement Day features in the shorter Latin *Apocalypse*, and is also treated in a variety of ways in the Corpus-Hatton and the Blickling homilies and CCC 41 article 13. Christ's cross and wounds do not feature in the Latin versions of the *Apocalypse*, but the cross is mentioned in the Exeter homily, the wounds in the Vercelli homily and in CCC 41 article 13, and both the cross and wounds in the Blickling and Corpus-Hatton homilies. Lists of manners of death, which have no parallel in the Latin versions, are added to the Blickling and Corpus-Hatton homilies. All of these themes and motifs have wider currency in Old English poetry and prose, and their incorporation in the five Old English homilies described above is an example of the ways in which elements of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* are recontextualized by Old English homilists in the framework of other Judgement traditions popular in Anglo-Saxon England.

Conclusion

This examination of the sorts of versions of the *Apocalypse of Thomas* which may have been current in Anglo-Saxon England and of the way this tradition is reworked by Old English homilists reveals a number of things about the circumstances of its transmission and about the most fruitful ways for modern scholars to set about examining it. First, in order for it to be incorporated in such varied ways into the five Old English homilies discussed above, and worked in with other familiar themes, the basic *Apocalypse of Thomas* tradition of the events of the Last Days must have been firmly established in England by the mid-tenth century at the latest, and a variety of versions of it must have been available between the mid-tenth and early-twelfth century. Second, this exercise in studying versions of a Latin text and its Old English developments shows the necessity of working with as wide a range of surviving versions of a text as possible. The edited versions of many Latin texts from the early Middle Ages are far removed from the versions which would have been known in Anglo-Saxon England. Even when, as in the case of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, no surviving Latin versions of a text are known to come from England, consideration of as wide a range as possible of surviving continental European versions may point us more accurately in the direction of possible developments and transmission patterns. Further work on unedited versions of this and other apocryphal texts will certainly open up new perspectives on the transmission of narratives to Anglo-Saxon England, and on their adaptations by Old English authors.³⁶

NOTES

¹ This essay is a small token of my appreciation of Peter Meredith's support over the years we have worked together.

² For the fullest summary of the use of apocryphal material, see Antonette di Paolo Healey, 'Anglo-Saxon use of the Apocryphal Gospel', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Synthesis and Achievement*, ed. by J. Douglas Woods and David A. E. Pelteret (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1985), pp. 93-104.

³ See Max Förster, 'Bittwochen-Predigt aus Hatton 116', *Studien zur englischen Philologie*, 50 (1913), 128-37, and 'A New Version of the Apocalypse of Thomas in Old English', *Anglia*, 73 (1955), 6-35; and Milton McC. Gatch, 'Two Uses of Apocrypha in Old English Homilies', *Church History*, 33 (1964), 379-84.

⁴ Gatch, 'Two Uses of Apocrypha', p. 380.

⁵ Princeton University Library, William H. Scheide Collection MS 71, pp. 97-114, believed to have been composed before the mid-tenth century. The manuscript contains eighteen anonymous homilies. Its provenance is unknown. Unless otherwise stated, all details of manuscript provenance and date are taken from N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957; re-issued with supplement, 1990).

⁶ Pages 422-31, dated to the early eleventh century; this manuscript also contains a 'Sunday Letter' homily and a range of Ælfrician material.

⁷ Pages 382-95, from the early twelfth century; this manuscript has connections with the Worcester area, and contains a range of homilies, including many by Ælfric.

⁸ Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII, fols 80v-85v; dated to the second half of the tenth century. This manuscript contains a range of anonymous homilies and religious poems. Its provenance is unknown.

⁹ Pages 287-95. This manuscript was written at the beginning of the eleventh century, possibly in Exeter. It is a copy of the Old English Bede. Soon after this main text was written out, a range of texts in Old English and Latin, including several with apocryphal and Irish connections, were added to its margins and spaces.

¹⁰ Förster, 'A New Version', p. 13.

¹¹ Förster, 'A New Version', p. 12.

¹² Förster, 'A New Version', p. 12.

¹³ Gatch, 'Two Uses of Apocrypha', p. 381.

¹⁴ *The Apocryphal New Testament*, ed. by M. R. James (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), pp. 555-62, translates versions of the shorter *Apocalypse*. Manuscript versions of the shorter and interpolated versions, and details of editions, are given by Förster, 'A New Version of the Apocalypse', pp. 9-10.

¹⁵ D. P. Bihlmeyer, 'Un texte non interpolé de l'Apocalypse de Thomas', *Revue Bénédictine*, 28 (1911), 270-82 (p. 272, line 12), 'the powers of heaven shall be moved',

tr. by James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 560.

¹⁶ One manuscript copy of the interpolated Latin is edited by Friedrich Wilhelm, *Deutsche Legenden und Legendare* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1907), pp. 40*-42*. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 555-62, translates two versions of the interpolated Latin.

¹⁷ James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 558.

¹⁸ 'prjmm caelum plicabitur ut liber', Wilhelm, *Deutsche Legenden*, p. 42*, line 16.

¹⁹ James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 559.

²⁰ It is interesting to note that the Vercelli homilist names the first day as Monday, not Sunday as might be expected in a Christian ordering of the week. In liturgical terminology, however, Monday is *Feria I*, and so the Vercelli ordering and numbering of the Last Days might be the result of confusion between counting days and counting *feria*. I am grateful to Joyce Hill for drawing this possibility to my attention, and for her most helpful comments on earlier versions of this essay.

²¹ *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. by D. G. Scragg, Early English Text Society, os 300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 250-65 (p. 259, line 140).

²² Corpus-Hatton in Max Förster, 'Bittwochen-Predigt aus Hatton 116', p. 135. Exeter in Förster, 'A New Version', p. 27.

²³ Blickling text from *The Blickling Homilies*, ed. by R. Morris, EETS, os 58, 63, 73 (London: Oxford University Press, 1874, 1876, 1880; reprinted as one volume 1967), p. 93, lines 4-5. This and all subsequent references are to the reprinted volume. See Förster, 'A New Version', pp. 15, 30.

²⁴ Förster, 'Bittwochen-Predigt aus Hatton 116', p. 130, lines 13-14.

²⁵ Förster, 'A New Version', p. 26, identifies the signs of day seven in the Corpus-Hatton homily as drawing on the *Apocalypse of John*.

²⁶ Förster, 'Bittwochen-Predigt aus Hatton 116', p. 130, line 10.

²⁷ Förster, 'Bittwochen-Predigt aus Hatton 116', p. 135.

²⁸ I am most grateful to Ms Conan, of the University of Toronto, who drew this fragment to my attention and communicated this possible dating and location of it to me in a private correspondence. From her examination of the folios, Ms Conan believes that this dating and localisation are tentative, since there is little evidence on which to base such assessment.

²⁹ Fisher MS 45, fragment 24-25, fol. 24v.

³⁰ On day three, the shorter and Fisher versions describe the abysses as trembling, whereas in the interpolated version they speak: shorter version 'mugebunt' (Bihlmeyer, 'Un texte non interpolé', p. 273, line 2), Fisher fragment 'mugebunt' (Fisher MS 45, fragment 24-25, fol. 24r), interpolated version 'dabunt . . . Uocem' (Wilhelm, *Deutsche Legenden*, p. 42*, lines 15-16).

³¹ For references to work on this collection, see Peter Jackson and Michael Lapidge, 'The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Collection', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old*

English Saints' Lives and Their Contexts, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 131-46.

³² The CCCC 41 version of this text is edited by William H. Hulme, 'The Old English Gospel of Nicodemus', *Modern Philology*, 1 (1903-04), 579-614 (pp. 610-14). CCCC 303 was written in the early twelfth century, probably at Rochester. It contains a range of homilies, many of which are by Ælfric.

³³ See Healey, 'Anglo-Saxon Use of the Apocryphal Gospel', pp. 99-100.

³⁴ Healey, 'Anglo-Saxon use of the Apocryphal Gospel', p. 100.

³⁵ Thomas Hall has recently described manuscript British Library Cotton Vespasian D. xiv fols 102r-103r as 'an Old English translation of the Fifteen Signs before Doomsday, taken from the *Apocalypse of Thomas*' (Thomas Hall, 'The *Evangelium Nichodemi* and *Vindicta saluatoris* in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Two Old English Apocrypha and their Manuscript Source*, ed. by J. E. Cross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 36-81 (p. 76, note 126)), but in fact the Vespasian D. xiv text has no overlap with the contents of the Latin or Old English versions of the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, and thus shows no signs of being derived from the *Apocalypse*. For discussions of the relationship between the *Quindecim signa* and the *Apocalypse of Thomas*, see Gatch, 'Two Uses of Apocrypha', p. 380 and Förster, 'A New Version of the Apocalypse', p. 16. The Vespasian D. xiv text does, however, testify to the coexistence of these two traditions in the twelfth-century Old English corpus, and thus to the appeal of organised and dramatic accounts of the Last Days of the world.

³⁶ For a striking recent example of such work, see Cross, *Two Old English Apocrypha*.