

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Tabernacle and Theophany in Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Enchiridion* and *Computus*

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Abstract

In a puzzling passage from his computistical handbook, Byrhtferth of Ramsey asks his students to imagine the Venerable Bede sitting in Moses' tabernacle and teaching them about the calculation of time. This article considers how Bede was portrayed as a mediator of divine wisdom about computus in Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* and *Epilogus*, culminating in Bede's elevation to the eternal space of the tabernacle. Building on Mary Carruthers' 'machines of meditation' and Faith Wallis' work on Byrhtferth's diagrams as 'visual exegesis', it argues that a collection of riddling references to the tabernacle across Byrhtferth's canon amount to a cosmography in which the tabernacle is conceived as an exegetical model for God's presence in time and space.

Keywords: Computus; Monastic meditation; Visual exegesis

Byrhtferth of Ramsey's great computistical handbook, the *Enchiridion*, contains a challenging lesson about the irregularities in the lunar calendar. Byrhtferth – a Benedictine monk who was active c. 988–1016 – seems to have had some difficulty understanding the *saltus lunae* ('moon's leap') as part of the complex series of corrections necessary to calculate a lunar year.¹ In the middle of the lesson, he therefore quotes a long excerpt from Bede's *De temporum ratione* in Latin to explain the finer points of the *saltus lunae*, and then repeats it in Old

¹ The *saltus lunae* is the practice of dropping one day from the end of a lunar month every nineteen years to correct for imprecision in the measurement of the Metonic lunar calendar; see P. S. Baker and M. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion* (Oxford, 1995), pp. xxxvii–xxxviii, with notes on Byrhtferth's confusion about the *saltus lunae* at p. 287. For Byrhtferth's career and writings, see *ibid.*, pp. xxv–xxxiv; P. S. Baker, 'The Old English Canon of Byrhtferth of Ramsey', *Speculum* 55 (1980), 22–37; M. Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-Century Anglo-Latin Literature', *ASE* 4 (1975), 67–111.

English.² Immediately before the inserted text, Byrhtferth pauses and asks his students to engage in an imaginative exercise. He instructs them to pretend that Bede is sitting in Moses' tabernacle, where he is teaching the wonders of the natural world to them. The passage begins with an apparently defective line before invoking Bede's presence:

Kynewyrðe ræde hyt ys gepuht and trumlic þæt we binnan þissum cafertune onmang þisre spræce*** Hyt wæs wundorlic Moyses geteldgehlī<w>ung þæt Beda se æglæca lareow mæge to gebungan and gesyttan fægere gebols-trod and us glædum mode geswutelian þa þing þe him cuðe synt. We lætað þæt se getiddusta wer her sitte, nu we his gewritu smeagað. He cwæð on þære boc þe he gesette be gerimcræfte, and hig *De temporibus* genemde.³

In this passage filled with obscure language, Byrhtferth brings his students into the presence of the great teacher. The classroom becomes the transcendent space of the tabernacle, where the wonders of created cosmos might be unfolded for them.

This prompt to visualise Bede in the tabernacle occurs in the second book of the *Enchiridion*, a bilingual handbook composed by Byrhtferth in c. 1010–12 as part of his role as schoolmaster of Ramsey Abbey in the remote East Anglian fens. It is filled with interjections addressed to clerics (often of a derogatory nature) and young monks, like the one in the *saltus lunae* lesson. As Rebecca Stephenson has argued, these serve as part of the text's 'epideictic rhetoric', designed to encourage his monastic students by comparing their disciplined studiousness to that of *imperiti* ('ignorant') and *decides* ('lazy') clerics.⁴ The *Enchiridion* is preserved in its entirety uniquely in a manuscript from the middle of the eleventh century.⁵ Nearly a century ago, the philologist Heinrich Henel observed that the contents of the *Enchiridion* correspond to a group of twelfth-century manuscripts containing copies of an earlier collection of computistical material (tables, diagrams, and a

² Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* ii. 1, lines 179–88, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, p. 66. Byrhtferth quotes from Bede, *De temporum ratione* xlii, lines 9–18, ed. C. W. Jones, CCSL 123B (Turnhout, 1977), pp. 407–8.

³ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* ii. 1, lines 172–9, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 66, with notes on pp. 286–7: 'It seems a royal and sound plan that we in this courtyard, amidst this discourse*** It was Moses's wonderful tabernacle that Bede, the marvellous teacher, may enter and sit in, fairly couched with pillows, and joyfully reveal to us the things that are known to him. We shall pretend that that most learned man is sitting here, now that we are examining his writings. He spoke thus in the book he wrote about computus and called *De temporibus* [the medieval title for *De temporum ratione*]. Baker and Lapidge comment that the *lacuna* was probably a few 'highly ornamental' words about the works of Bede.

⁴ R. Stephenson, *The Politics of Language: Byrhtferth, Ælfric, and the Multilingual Identity of the Benedictine Reform* (Toronto, 2015), pp. 39–102, and her 'Scapegoating the Secular Clergy: the Hermeneutic Style as a Form of Monastic Self-Definition', *ASE* 38 (2009), 101–35. Text quoted from Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* i. 3, line 2, and i. 4, line 3, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, pp. 46 and 52; see also Stephenson, 'Scapegoating', pp. 112–20.

⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 328 (s. xi^{med}). Small sections of the *Enchiridion* are also preserved in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 421 (s. xi¹) and Cambridge, University Library, Kk. 5.32 (s. xi^{ex}). See S. J. Crawford, 'Byrhtferth's Manual, Part 2' (unpubl. DPhil dissertation, Univ. of Oxford, 1930), pp. 1–2; N. R. Ker, 'Two Notes on MS Ashmole 328 (*Byrhtferth's Manual*)', *ME* 4 (1935), 16–19; Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, pp. xxvi–xxviii.

metrical calendar), which is attributed to Byrhtferth and called his *Computus*.⁶ This is best preserved in a manuscript made at Thorney Abbey in c. 1110.⁷ The *Enchiridion* and the *Computus* were designed to facilitate the reckoning of key dates in the liturgical calendar (above all Easter), either in a classroom context or in individual study.⁸ Both texts are filled with numerological and cosmographical information to illustrate the underlying principles of God's creation.

While Byrhtferth's unusual description of Bede in the *saltus lunae* lesson has been the subject of longstanding debate among philologists, the wider significance of this imaginative exercise remains unexplained. This article considers the *saltus lunae* interpolation in three parts. The first section assesses Bede's posthumous reputation in late Anglo-Saxon England and in Byrhtferth's preface to the *Computus* (the so-called *Epilogus*). It also suggests a reason for the Northumbrian monk's imagined presence in Moses' tabernacle. The second section considers *Moyses geteldgehlung* as a teaching aid in the lesson. It uses Mary Carruthers' concept of 'machine of meditation' to argue that the imagined tabernacle was placed in the lesson to draw the student into deeper meditation on the underlying harmony of the cosmos, as described by Bede.⁹ Finally, the third section turns to the wider study of computus and builds on Faith Wallis' work on diagrams as a form of 'visual exegesis'.¹⁰ It proposes that Byrhtferth's imagined tabernacle is a sacred mystery underlying his cosmography, which he alluded to across his writings and diagrams as a visual enigma on the nature of the divine.

I. Bede's Posthumous Reputation and Afterlife

Bede's posthumous reputation can broadly be divided between his status as a saint and his reception as an authority on computus, exegesis, and history. In the

⁶ H. Henel, *Studien Zum Altenglischen Computus*, Beiträge zur englischen Philologie 26 (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 5–35. For the relationship between the *Computus* and the *Enchiridion*, see also André van de Vyver, 'Les œuvres inédites d'Abbon de Fleury', *RB* 47 (1935), 125–69, at 144–5; C. R. Hart, 'Byrhtferth and His Manual', *MÆ* 41 (1972), 95–109; P. S. Baker, 'Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* and the *Computus* in Oxford, St John's College 17', *ASE* 10 (1981), 123–42.

⁷ Oxford, St John's College 17, 6r–41r. The manuscript is digitized with commentary by Faith Wallis at *The Calendar and the Cloister: Oxford, St John's College MS 17* (Montreal, 2007), <http://digital.libra.ry.mcgill.ca/ms-17>, accessed 22 July 2024. The other important twelfth-century manuscript witnesses to the *Computus* are the 'Peterborough *Computus*', now London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius C. I, fols. 2–17 + Harley 3667 (Peterborough, c. 1122–35), and the 'Winchcombe *Computus*', now London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius E. IV (Winchcombe, s. xii). Baker and Lapidge's proposed reconstruction of the *Computus* from these three manuscripts is edited in *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, pp. 373–427, with introduction at pp. lii–lx.

⁸ Rebecca Stephenson suggests that they may have been used as 'rudimentary lecture notes' for a teacher in a monastic classroom; as a reference book to guide a student while they studied the *Computus*; or, as an independent study text (sections of the *Enchiridion* do not relate directly to the *Computus*); Stephenson, *Politics*, pp. 40–1.

⁹ M. Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric and the Making of Images*, 400–1200 (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 1–10 and 22–4.

¹⁰ F. Wallis, 'Byrhtferth's Diagram', *The Calendar and the Cloister*, and 'What a Medieval Diagram Shows: a Case Study of "Computus"', *Stud. in Iconography* 36 (2015), 1–40.

eighth century, efforts by Jarrow monks to create a cult of Bede had not prospered, and no successful cult was established in England until after the Norman Conquest.¹¹ There are some signs that a cult of Bede was emerging in the 1020s and 30s, when the early medieval date of his feast (26 May; shared with Augustine of Canterbury) was included in two kalendars made at New Minster at Winchester.¹² But this was a limited phenomenon: he was not included in the list of saints' resting places which was copied into the New Minster's *Liber Vitae* in c. 1035, nor was his feast included in the anonymous metrical calendar from Ramsey (preserved uniquely in Byrhtferth's *Computus*).¹³ A real surge in interest in Bede's cult did not take place until the 1060s, when Wulfstan II, bishop of Worcester (1062–95), dedicated a church to the Northumbrian monk in his first act as bishop.¹⁴ In the following decade, the Worcestershire abbeys sponsored the re-establishment of monasticism in Northumbria, inspired by Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*.¹⁵

While Bede was probably not viewed as a saint in the early eleventh century, his reputation as a scholar was exceptionally high. His computistical and historiographical writings were read widely in England in this period (although the real surge in interest in his historical writings occurred in the next century).¹⁶ This was especially the case among monastic reformers, who held Bede's homiletic, computistical, and historiographical authority in extremely high regard. For example, Ælfric, abbot of Eynsham (c. 950–c. 1010) listed Bede among his primary homiletic sources: 'Hos namque auctores in hac explanatione sumus sequuti, videlicet Augustinum Hipponensem, Hieronimum, Bedam, Gregorium, Smaragdum, et aliquando Haymonem'.¹⁷ Ælfric also relied on Bede's computistical writing and made an abridged English translation of *De temporum ratione*, combined

¹¹ On Bede's cult, see R. H. C. Davis, 'Bede after Bede', *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. Allen Brown*, ed. C. Harper-Bill, C. Houldsworth, and J. L. Nelson (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 103–16; D. W. Rollason, 'The Cult of Bede', *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. S. DeGregorio (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 193–200; Z. Burford, 'After Oswald: Cults and Community among the Benedictine Monasteries of Eleventh-Century Mercia' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of York, 2018), pp. 65–125.

¹² The relevant kalendars are London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xxvii, 3r–8v and Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 15. 32, pp. 15–26. Part of the reason that Bede's liturgical cult did not prosper was likely that his feast occurred on the same day as that of St Augustine of Canterbury. For other eleventh-century kalendars that include Bede, see R. Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*, Henry Bradshaw Soc. 117 (Woodbridge, 2008), table v. See also Burford, 'After Oswald', pp. 65–125.

¹³ *Secgan be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande ærost reston*, ed. F. Liebermann, *Die Heiligen Englands* (Hanover, 1889), pp. 9–19; see D. W. Rollason, 'Lists of Saints' Resting-Places in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 7 (1978), 61–93. M. Lapidge, 'A Tenth-Century Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', *RB* 94 (1984), 326–69, at 369. See also Rollason, 'Cult of Bede'; Burford, 'After Oswald', pp. 108–14.

¹⁴ William of Malmesbury, *Vita S. Wulfstani* i. 14, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury, Saints' Lives: Lives of SS. Wulfstan, Dunstan, Patrick, Benignus and Indract* (Oxford, 2002), p. 50.

¹⁵ See L. G. D. Baker, 'The Desert in the North', *NH* 5 (1970), 1–11; Davis, 'Bede after Bede'.

¹⁶ Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, pp. lxxxvi–lxxxviii; A. Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', *JEH* 32 (1981), 397–425; S. M. Rowley, 'Bede in Later Anglo-Saxon England', *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. S. DeGregorio (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 216–28; G. H. Brown and F. M. Biggs, *Bede, Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 2017–18).

¹⁷ Ælfric, First Letter to Sigeric, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies. The First Series: Text*, ed. P. Clemoes, EETS, ss 17 (Oxford, 1997), 173: 'For I have followed these authors in this explanation: namely, Augustine of Hippo, Jerome [of Stridon], Bede, Gregory [the Great], Smaragdus, and sometimes Haymo' (my translation).

with excerpts from *De temporibus* and *De natura rerum*, in which he called Bede ‘se snotera lareow’.¹⁸ As well as an exegete and a computist, Bede was also remembered as an historian. In a discussion of ecclesiastical tradition in the distribution of pallia, Wulfstan II, archbishop of York (d. 1023), explained his rejection of the journey to Rome for a pallium based on Bede’s history: ‘sicut legimus in historiis Anglorum, scribente Beda, historiographo et laudabili doctore nostro’.¹⁹ This interest in the ecclesiastical practices of the seventh and eighth centuries is significant because Bede’s monastic life at Jarrow – as described in his *Historia ecclesiastica* and *Historia abbatum* – inspired Bishop Æthelwold and some of the later monastic reformers.²⁰

Byrhtferth far outstripped his contemporaries in his use and praise for Bede’s computistical and historiographical writings, referring directly to the Northumbrian on twenty-eight occasions across his writing. Byrhtferth describes him as a venerable computist, truthful historian, and holy man (see Table 1).²¹ He also frequently associates Bede’s writings with light, through variations on either *luce clarius* or *luculenter*.²² The one exception to Bede’s glowing posthumous reputation is Byrhtferth’s use of the word *æglæca* (‘marvellous’ in Baker and Lapidge’s translation) to qualify his role as a teacher in the *saltus lunae* lesson. This has long been recognised as exceptional because it is the unique adjectival use of the noun *æglæca* (‘awesome opponent, ferocious fighter’) in Old English.²³ A word found

¹⁸ Ælfric, *De temporibus anni*, ed. and trans. M. Blake (Cambridge, 2009), p. 76: ‘the learned teacher’.

¹⁹ Letter of Protest, *Councils & Synods with other Documents Relating to the English Church*, I: A.D. 871–1204, ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett, and C. N. L. Brooke, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1981) I, 445: ‘as we read in the History of the English, written by Bede, our historian and most notable doctor’ (my translation).

²⁰ See P. Wormald, ‘Æthelwold and his Continental Counterparts: Contact, Comparison, Contrast’, *Bishop Æthelwold: his Career and Influence*, ed. B. Yorke (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 13–42, at 37–42; for a contrary position, see A. Hudson, *Bishop Æthelwold, His Followers, and Saints’ Cults in Early Medieval England: Power, Belief, and Religious Reform* (Woodbridge, 2022), pp. 37–57. See also, E. Clarke, ‘Perceptions of the Past in Late Anglo-Saxon England: Historiographical and Antiquarian Practice, c. 960–1020’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Cambridge, 2025).

²¹ In *Enchiridion* i. 3 (Ashmole 328, pp. 36–7 and 39), M. Breann Leake has noted that Bede’s name is capitalised with a red letter, arguing that these red capitals ‘repeatedly draw the reader’s attention to his name and by extension his reputation as educator, spiritual leader, author, and computist’. Although note that in each instance Bede’s name is the first word in the section, which the scribe typically marks in red or green capitals. The rubrication is therefore likely a section break, rather than highlighting Bede’s name (neither his name, nor any other personal name, are specially marked at any other point in the manuscript). See Leake, ‘Phylacteries, the Archive, and Byrhtferth’s *Enchiridion*’, *JEGP* 119 (2020), 327–52, at 349.

²² See Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* i. 3, lines 14–15 and 34–6; iv. 1, line 327, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, pp. 46, 48, and 222; Byrhtferth, *Historia regum* [hereafter *HR*] i. 1; ii. 15, ed. and trans. Lapidge, pp. 2 and 42. For *luce clarius* as part of Byrhtferth’s idiolect, see M. Lapidge, ‘Byrhtferth of Ramsey and the Early Sections of the *Historia regum* Attributed to Symeon of Durham’, *ASE* 10 (1981), 97–122, at 104. As Lapidge points out, Byrhtferth probably borrowed the phrase from Aldhelm, *Prosa de virginitate* iii–vi, ed. R. Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, MGH Auct. antiq. 15 (Berlin, 1919), 230–4. Bede himself often described saints in terms of light; see for example, Bede, *Vita Metrica S. Cudberti* 1–7, ed. and trans. Lapidge, *Bede’s Latin Poetry*, pp. 187–9.

²³ See s.v. ‘Aglæca’, *Dictionary of Old English: A to Le Online*, ed. A. Cameron, A. C. Amos, A. D. Healey et al. (Toronto, 2024). Alistair Campbell suggested the emendation to *ægleawa* (‘learned in law, especially in the Mosaic law’); A. Campbell, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda* (Oxford, 1972), p. 2. For a summary of scholarship on *æglæca*, see A. Bammesberger, ‘Eight Notes on the *Beowulf* Text’, *Inside Old English: Essays in Honour of Bruce Mitchell*, ed. J. Walmsley (Oxford, 2006), pp. 19–37, at 26–9.

Table 1. Byrhtferth's Descriptions of Bede

	Source	Text	Translation (from Baker and Lapidge)
1.	<i>Enchiridion</i> i. 3, line 14	Beda [...] astrologus uenerandus	Bede, the venerable astronomer
2.	<i>Enchiridion</i> i. 3, line 34	Beda [...] se arwurða rimcræftiga	Bede, the venerable computist
3.	<i>Enchiridion</i> i. 3, line 57	Beda [...] gumena se getyddusta	Bede, most learned of men
4.	<i>Enchiridion</i> i. 3, line 79	Se foresprecena lareow	The aforementioned teacher
5.	<i>Enchiridion</i> ii. 1, line 149	þonne ræde he þæs eadigan weres getingnyssa Bedan þæs æðelan boceres oððe Rabanes	The [the curious student] should read the eloquence of the blessed man and noble scholar Bede, or that of Hrabanus
6.	<i>Enchiridion</i> ii. 1, line 174	Beda se æglæca lareow	Bede the marvellous teacher
7.	<i>Enchiridion</i> ii. 1, line 189	se eadiga wer	the blessed man
8.	<i>Enchiridion</i> ii. 3, line 243	and Bedan gesetnysse þæs arwurðan boceres	and the compositions of Bede the venerable writer
9.	<i>Enchiridion</i> iii. 2, line 134	gumena se getiddusta on Angelcynne	most learned man among the English
10.	<i>Enchiridion</i> iii. 3, line 132	se arwurða Beda	the venerable Bede
11.	<i>Enchiridion</i> iv. 1, line 327	aperiat librum reuerentissimi Bede quem <i>De temporibus</i> pretitulauit	let him open the book of the Venerable Bede which is entitled <i>De Temporibus</i>
12.	<i>Historia regum</i> i. 1	ut Beda luculento describit sermone	as Bede describes in limpid prose
13.	<i>Historia regum</i> ii. 1	post obitum reuerentissimi sacerdotis Bedae	after the death of Bede, the most reverent priest
14.	<i>Historia regum</i> ii. 2	Huic Beda historiographus Anglorum historiam destinauit	The historian Bede dedicated his history of the English to him
15.	<i>Historia regum</i> ii. 3	ueriloquus Beda	the reliable Bede
16.	<i>Historia regum</i> ii. 3	ut ait Beda	as Bede says
17.	<i>Historia regum</i> ii. 15	ex dictis beatissimi Bedae [...] reminiscences memoriam sanctitatis eius	from the writings of the blessed Bede [...] recalling the reputation of his holiness
18.	<i>Historia regum</i> ii. 15 (dedicatory verses)	Beda sacer	the holy Bede

(Continued)

Table I. (Continued)

Source	Text	Translation (from Baker and Lapidge)
19. <i>Historia regum</i> ii. 16 (rubric to <i>De die iudicii</i>)	Lamentatio Bedae presbyteri	<i>Lamentations of Bede the Priest</i>
20. <i>Historia regum</i> ii. 17	beatus et ueriloquus Beda	the blessed and eloquent Bede
21. <i>Historia regum</i> ii. 20	ex dictis beatissimi Bedae sacerdotis et historiae huius gentis scriptoris	from the writings of [the most blessed] Bede, the priest and author of the history of this people
22. <i>Historia regum</i> iii. 1	Beda [...] ueridicus	the truthful Bede
23. <i>Historia regum</i> iii. 4	Beda doctor	Bede the teacher
24. <i>Historia regum</i> iii. 7	quod priusquam Beda suam historiam explicuisset	before Bede had finished his <i>Historia</i>
25. <i>Historia regum</i> iii. 11	Beda historiographus ueridicus	Bede the truthful historian
26. <i>Historia regum</i> iii. 15	Beda historiographus huius gentis	Bede, the historian of this people
27. <i>Historia regum</i> iii. 22	ut Beda testatur	as Bede says
28. <i>Vita S. Oswaldi</i> iv. 8	dignissimus Beda doctor	the distinguished scholar Bede

exclusively in verse, *aglæca* was often used for monstrous or superhuman creatures, as in the poem *Beowulf*. This proximity to monstrosity is surprising, as Bede was otherwise always portrayed in terms of his holiness and intellectual authority. In light of this, Alex Nicholls has suggested that Byrhtferth used *æglæca* in the sense of ‘awe-inspiring’, perhaps to capture the meaning of Bede’s Latin epithet *uenerabilis*.²⁴ To date, this is the most plausible explanation for the appearance of the word in this context, affirming the depth of Byrhtferth’s admiration for Bede.

Cumulatively, these references to Bede across Byrhtferth’s corpus indicate that he was a uniquely significant authority as a historian, exegete, and computist. But by far the best example of Bede’s importance to Byrhtferth comes from a short text in his *Computus*, which also provides a possible explanation for Bede’s imagined presence in a tabernacle.

Byrhtferth’s Epilogus

The rubric to the short text – called the *Epilogus* – at the beginning of Byrhtferth’s *Computus* reads: ‘PROEMIUM BRIHTFERTHI RAMESIENSIS CENOBII MONACHI

²⁴ A. Nicholls, ‘Bede “Awe-Inspiring” not “Monstrous”: Some Problems with Old English *aglæca*’, *N&Q* 38 (1991), 147–8.

SVPER BEDAM DE TEMPORIBVS'.²⁵ While the rubric suggests that this text is a preface to Bede's *De temporum ratione* (using its medieval title), in the text itself Byrhtferth referred to it as the *epilogus* ('epilogue') to the *liber* ('book'). He also mentions that the *liber* will be followed by writing by Abbo of Fleury and Helperic of Auxerre:

Post huius denique epilogi descriptionem libet articulum flectere ad totius libri recapitulationem, quia post huius terminationem constant Abbonis sophistę dicta, alumni Benedicti patris, per cuius beniuolentiam percepimus huius rei intelligentiam necnon aliarum rerum peritiam. Dissertissimi uiri itaque Heririci expositiones ultima pars huius codicis concludit honestissime.²⁶

Lapidge partly resolved the confusion around whether this was intended as a preface or an epilogue by pointing out that Byrhtferth regularly used the word *epilogus* to mean preface.²⁷ Despite the rubric, the *Epilogus* is not really an introduction to Bede's *De temporum ratione* or Byrhtferth's *Computus*, but is principally an account of Bede's life and writings – it might even be a sort of 'eulogy of Bede' as Henel suggested.²⁸

The *Epilogus* begins with an account of how the breath of the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles, and subsequently the Church Fathers. Byrhtferth mentions Jerome of Stridon, Augustine of Hippo, and Gregory the Great, who he says were endowed with great wisdom about chronography and orthography.²⁹ He then explains that the next great scholar to emerge after the Fathers was Bede. There is a sense of real pride here in Bede's origins as an English scholar who 'nostratis extitit'.³⁰ Later in the *Epilogus*, Byrhtferth emphasizes this again, stating that: 'Anglis uero suis depromsit sectandam glorię sempiternatit uiam, per quam

²⁵ Oxford, St John's College 17, 12v: 'The preface of Byrhtferth, monk of Ramsey Abbey, concerning Bede's "De Temporibus"' (my translation).

²⁶ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus*, lines 83–8, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 379: 'Finally, after the copying of this *epilogus*, it is fitting to direct my pen to a summary of the entire book, since after its conclusion you have some writings of the scholar Abbo, an alumnus of St Benedict [i.e. of Fleury], through whose kindness I received my understanding of this subject [the *computus*] as well as my knowledge of other things. The final part of this manuscript is brought fittingly to a close by the expositions of the learned man Heiric [i.e. Helperic]'.

²⁷ H. Henel, 'Byrhtferth's Preface: the Epilogue of his *Manual*?', *Speculum* 18 (1943), 288–302; M. Lapidge, 'Byrhtferth and the *Vita S. Ecgwini*', *Med. Stud.* 41 (1979), 331–53, at 337, n. 32; Wallis, 'Byrhtferth's *Proemium*', *The Calendar and the Cloister*.

²⁸ Henel, 'Byrhtferth's Preface', p. 289. Faith Wallis has argued that Oxford, St John's College 17 is devoted to the celebration of Bede's works; Wallis, 'Computus, Crusade, and Construction: Writing England's Monastic Past and Future in Oxford, St John's College, MS 17', *New Med. Lit.* 13 (2011), 221–38, at 227.

²⁹ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus*, lines 5–6, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 375: 'sacra sophia [...] chronograforum ortographorumque' ('the sacred wisdom of the chronographers and orthographers')

³⁰ *Ibid.*, line 18, p. 376: 'emerged from our people'. This placement of Bede within the patristic tradition is very similar to the list of sources cited by Ælfric of Eynsham; Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies: the First Series Text*, ed. P. Clemoes, EETS 17 (Oxford, 1997), 173.

gradientes capere ualent brauium superne hereditatis'.³¹ This is an example of what Wilhelm Busse describes as 'the "genealogy" of teachers', writing that 'in their function as instructor, teacher or master, the reformers [notably Ælfric and Wulfstan] saw themselves as *æftergengan*, as the spiritual descendants of Christ's disciples, and as such they claimed pre-eminence'.³² In other words, Byrhtferth paints Bede as part of a spiritual lineage of teachers stretching back to the Church Fathers, the apostles, and ultimately the Holy Spirit, a chain of descent through which he and his students gained their authority as spiritual teachers.

Part of what made Bede a key figure in the genealogical lineage of the English priestly teachers was his exemplary life of monastic discipline and learning. Byrhtferth states that Bede rejected a secular life in his early adolescence, and devoted himself to meditating on scripture:

Qui, abdicatis practice huius uite discrimen<ibus>, uenustam exercuit uitam, desudans in diuina lege diebus ac noctibus. Is, ut delectet letabundis faucibus dulcibusque preconiiis carptim glorificari, dindima prisc<e> legis mysteria <similiter atque> rudis suaui meditatione intellexit, eaque subtili indagatione tyrunculis aecclesie ceu limpidissimus cenobialis militie contemplator propinauit.³³

Byrhtferth also notes that Bede had spent his life 'lectitando uel docendo, meditando'.³⁴ This is a freely paraphrased version of the phrase 'semper aut discere aut docere aut scribere' from Bede's short autobiography, from the end of his *Historia ecclesiastica*.³⁵ It is interesting that Byrhtferth should have used the verb *meditari* in the place of *scribere* for, as we will see, meditation was central to Byrhtferth's ideal of monastic wisdom.³⁶ Byrhtferth was very familiar with Bede's autobiography, as he had copied it almost verbatim (only a few lines are omitted for brevity) into the second book of his *Historia regum*.³⁷ Evidently, he thought that Bede's monasticism was central to his holiness and scholarship.

³¹ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus*, lines 32–3, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 376: 'For his own English peoples he set out the pathway to be followed to eternal glory; by advancing on this path they can win the prize of heavenly inheritance'.

³² W. Busse, 'Sua gað ða lareowas beforan ðæm folce, & ðæt folc æfter: the Self-Understanding of the Reformers as Teachers in Late Tenth-Century England', *Schriftlichkeit im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. U. Schaefer, ScriptOralia 53 (Tübingen, 1993), 59–106 (at 64–5, with n. 21).

³³ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus*, lines 23–4, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 376: 'Having rejected the dangers of the secular world, he lived a pleasurable life, poring over the divine law by day and night. In order that he might give pleasure by everywhere praising this law from his joyous throat and in delightful publications, this man mastered the secret mysteries of the Old Testament and likewise of the New with sweet meditation, and like the most clear-sighted observer of the monastic army he passed them on to the raw recruits of the Church through perceptive investigation'.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, line 38, p. 377: 'by reading, teaching, or meditating'.

³⁵ Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* [hereafter *HE*] v. 24, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969), p. 566: 'always either to learn or to teach or to write'.

³⁶ See also references to Bede meditating at lines 23 and 40 of the *Epilogus*.

³⁷ Byrhtferth, *HR* ii. 20, ed. and trans. Lapidge, pp. 54–6.

The middle part of the *Epilogus* is concerned with Bede's wisdom as a computist and exegete. Byrhtferth mentions that Bede wrote gospel commentaries, although he does not specify on which gospels.³⁸ He then describes the contents of *De temporum ratione*. To convey the magnitude of Bede's understanding of divine knowledge, Byrhtferth quotes repeatedly from the book of Wisdom:

Sequuntur in eodem loco uerba quae non incongrue ex persona huius esse possunt prolat<a>: 'Ipse dedit mihi, [...] ut sciam dispositionem orbis terrarum et uirtutes elementorum, initium et consumationem et medietatem temporum' [Wisdom VII.17–18]. Et infra: 'Anni cursum et stellarum dispositionis' [Wisdom VIII.19].³⁹

Byrhtferth portrays Bede as an authoritative source: knowledge of the elements, the stars, and time are accessible through his writings. He frames inquiry into the nature of the cosmos and time as part of one discipline of understanding the will of God.⁴⁰ This is reminiscent of a similar passage in the *Enchiridion*, where Byrhtferth describes computus as a *deopan cræft* ('profound craft') and explicitly links it to the study of theology: 'Hesterna die, dum serenius iubar aurei solis tenebras depullisset cordis interioris antri, theologia exorsa est (id est sermo de Deo) de inceptione compoti et post hec de diebus solaris anni'.⁴¹ According to Byrhtferth, wisdom is acquired through the quantification of the visible world, through which one might begin to approach the invisible order of heaven.⁴² After this description of Bede's holy life and works, the *Epilogus* concludes with Bede's death and ascension to heaven:

³⁸ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus*, lines 25–6, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 377.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, lines 46–50, p. 377: 'In the same source there follow words which can be applied not inappropriately to Bede's learning: "For he hath given me [...] to know the disposition of the whole world, and the virtues of the elements, the beginning, and ending, and midst of times" [Wisdom VII.17–18]. And further on: "The revolutions of the year, and the dispositions of the stars" [Wisdom VII.19]'.
⁴⁰ On Bede's framing of computus and history as signs through which the observer might interpret God, see A. Rabin, 'Historical Re-Collections: Rewriting the World Chronicle in Bede's *De temporum ratione*', *Viator* 36 (2005), 23–39.

⁴¹ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* i. 1, lines 148–50 and 164–6, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 16: 'Yesterday, when the serene light of the golden sun had expelled the shadows from the innermost recesses of the mind, theology (that is, language concerning God) spoke concerning the enterprise of computus, and thereafter concerning the days of the solar year'.

⁴² The book of Wisdom was one of Byrhtferth's favourite sources of Old Testament biblical quotation, and is replete with verses which defend the study of the natural world as a means to perceiving God (e.g. Byrhtferth, *Vita S. Oswaldi* [hereafter *VSO*] ii. 1 and iv. 11, ed. and trans. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: the Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgbine*, pp. 1–203, at 32 and 120). In the *Enchiridion*, Byrhtferth quoted the standard medieval defence of computistical study from Wisdom XI.21, noting that 'omnia in mensura et in numero et pondere creauit' ('He created all things in measure, and number, and weight'); *Enchiridion* iv. 1, lines 19–20, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 196. This verse is standard in medieval justifications of computistical study, beginning with Augustine, *De civitate Dei* xi. 30 and xii. 19, ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb, CCL 48 (Turnhout, 1955), 350 and 375. Byrhtferth might have known it from Abbo of Fleury, *Quaestiones grammaticales* 48, ed. A. Guerreau-Jalabert (Paris, 1982), p. 273. See discussion in Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, pp. lxxvii–lxxiv; B. Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things: Science and Eschatology in Early Medieval Art* (Regensburg, 2003), pp. 87–93.

Credendum est, ut is, qui <dum> circumuallatus fuerat oppressione corpor<al>i Deumque inuisibilem perspicere meruit in oromate spiritus, multo magis iam glomeratus meritorum lucris mereatur gratulabundus cernere 'Deum deorum in Syon' [Ps. LXXXIII.8], quae mystica interpretatione 'speculatio' dicitur. Enimvero gratuit<a>m Dei gratiam flagitemus non eneruiter, ut qui tot eum ineffabilibus donis ditauit, nobis saltem in ualle huius patriae degentibus prebeat caelestis desideria dulcedinem, ut fontem ueri luminis, qui Deus est, finetenus pudica tuitione cernere ualeamus.⁴³

This final image is of Bede on Mount Sion (i.e. heaven), eternally contemplating God. Byrhtferth prays that he and his students might also receive the same *ineffabilia dona* as Bede, so that they too might see God in heaven. The claim that Bede was granted a vision of God while still alive is puzzling, as he did not report having personally experienced visions in his lifetime. Perhaps Byrhtferth had in mind Cuthbert's 'Epistola de Obitu Bedae', where Bede is said to have expressed his desire to see God by loosely quoting Isaiah XXXIII.17 ('etenim anima mei desiderat Regem meum Christum in decore suo uidere').⁴⁴ Whatever he meant about the pre-death vision, Byrhtferth is clear that Bede had been elected to heaven where he experienced perpetual theophany.

Bede was evidently an important authority on theological and computistical matters in late Anglo-Saxon England. The *Epilogus* and the huge number of references to Bede across Byrhtferth's corpus stand out as exceptional, far exceeding any of his contemporaries in appeals to Bede's computistical authority and his depiction as the key figure in the genealogy of English priestly monks. The *Epilogus* reveals that Byrhtferth thought of Bede as the font of wisdom about the divinely created universe. It is also an encomium of Bede's pious childhood, monastic life, and eternal life in heaven. It is surely significant that this sketch of Bede's life should have been written within a few decades of the first appearance of his feast in liturgical calendars, and within half a century of the beginnings of his cult.⁴⁵ Monastic reformers had a great enthusiasm for early English history

⁴³ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus*, lines 74–82, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 379: 'It is to be believed that this man, who while he was besieged by the body's assault was found worthy to see the invisible God in a spiritual vision, should deserve – all the more so, now that he is gathered up through the wealth of his merits – to see "the God of gods in Sion" [Ps. LXXXIII.8], which through symbolic interpretation means "observation". But let us vigorously beseech the freely-given Grace of God, so that He who enriched him with inexpressible gifts may at least offer to us living here in the vale of this homeland [cf. Ps. LXXXIII.7] the sweetness of celestial longing, so that in the end we may be able to see with our modest gaze the fountain of true light, which is God'.

⁴⁴ 'Epistola de Obitu Bedae', ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, *HE*, pp. 580–6, at 584: 'and my soul longs to see Christ my King in all His beauty'. Although note that there are no pre-Conquest English copies of the letter; E. V. K. Dobbie, 'The Manuscripts and Text of Cedmon's Hymn', *The Manuscripts of Cædmon's Hymn and Bede's Death Song: with a Critical Text of the Epistola Cuthberti De Obitu Bedae* (New York, 1937).

⁴⁵ Ramsey Abbey was closely linked to the Worcestershire monasteries through their common (re-)foundations by Oswald, bishop of Worcester (961–92) and archbishop of York (972–92), and their shared liturgical and hagiographical interests. Given these enduring links, which stretch from the late tenth century to the early twelfth, it is difficult to separate the rise in admiration for Bede's scholarship and holiness among Benedictine reformers from the development of his cult in the latter half of the eleventh century; see Burford, 'After Oswald'.

and a special interest in the example of monastic life and wisdom set out by their own English forefather. But the *Epilogus* does not account for the imagined presence of Bede within the *Moyses geteldgehlwung* in the *Enchiridion*. Why should students envision Bede in this Old Testament setting, far removed from eighth-century Northumbria and unconnected from any known biographical details of his life? A close reading of both the *Enchiridion* and the *Epilogus* in the following section provides a possible solution.

Bede in the Geteldgehlwung: Sion, the Tabernacle-Temple, and Theophany

There are very few clues about the meaning of the *geteldgehlwung* in the *Enchiridion*. Byrhtferth describes Bede as seated and *gebolstroð* ('couched with pillows'), perhaps indicating that he is in an elevated position or special seat. He also uses the word *cafertun* ('courtyard') in the first, defective sentence of the passage. This was commonly used to gloss the *atria* of the tabernacle in the psalms. It therefore seems likely that the defective sentence provided a longer description of the material structure of the tabernacle.⁴⁶ By far the best indication of the meaning of this passages comes from the word *geteldgehlwung* (literally 'shelter-tent'), which is a hapax legomenon and may have been Byrhtferth's own invention.⁴⁷ In Old English, a biblical *tabernaculum* ('tabernacle') was usually translated as a *geteld* or *eardung* ('tent'), although a wider range of translations were also available, especially in verse.⁴⁸ Instead of employing one of these more standard terms, Byrhtferth chose to qualify the nature of Moses' tabernacle by adding the noun *hlwung* ('shelter'), emphasizing the refuge offered within the tent. Patrizia Lendinara drew attention to how this compound might have been an attempt to render the Greek word *σκηνή* ('tabernacle'), which is derived from *σκιά* ('shade').⁴⁹ Whether or not Byrhtferth was attempting to capture the Greek, he was evidently at pains to

⁴⁶ See s.v. 'Cafer-tün', *Dictionary of Old English*.

⁴⁷ See P. Lendinara, 'The Old English Renderings of Latin *tabernaculum* and *tentorium*', *Anglo-Saxonica. Beiträge Zur Vor- Und Frühgeschichte Der Englischen Sprache Und Zur Altenglischen Literatur. Festschrift Für Hans Schabram Zum 65*, ed. K. R. Grinda and C.-D. Wetzel (Munich, 1993), pp. 289–325, at 298–9.

⁴⁸ For a detailed analysis of all of the Old English renderings of *tabernaculum* and *tentorium*, see *ibid.*, pp. 289–323.

⁴⁹ Lendinara highlights a parallel in the Gothic translation of the Bible, where **hlija* (cognate with Old English *hleow*) is used to translate the Greek *σκηνή*; Lendinara, 'Old English Renderings', p. 298, n. 44. If Byrhtferth was attempting to capture the etymology of *σκηνή*, a likely source for this information is Bede's *Expositio actuum apostolorum*, where Bede wrote: 'σκήναι αὐτὴν Γραεκε tabernacula dicuntur, aethimologiam ab obumbrando ducentia, apud quos umbra σκιά dicitur. σκήναι uero uel σκηνώματα quasi umbracula sonant, quae sagis laneis uel lineis aut cilicinis siue ex arborum frondibus aut uirgultis ueteres componebant' ('Now in Greek tents are called σκήναι, which is etymologically derived from "the giving of shade". Among them [the Greeks], shade is called σκιά. σκήναι or σκηνώματα denote a kind of shady covering, which the ancients constructed from woollen, linen, or haircloth curtains, or from branches or cuttings from trees'); Bede, *Expositio actuum apostolorum* xviii. 3, lines 10–14, ed. M. L. W. Laistner, CCSL 121 (Turnhout, 1983), 3–99, at 74; trans. L. T. Martin, *The Venerable Bede: Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Cistercian Stud. Ser. 117 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1989), 149. For knowledge of the text in later Anglo-Saxon England, see Brown and Biggs, *Bede II*, 127–32. Miranda Wilcox has argued that the Bedan etymology of *tabernaculum* was well-known in late Anglo-Saxon England, and influenced the tent motif in Old English *Exodus*; Wilcox, 'Creating the Cloud-Tent-Ship Conceit in Exodus', *ASE* 40 (2011), 103–50, at 118–23.

convey that this was a significant, even sacred, place of refuge. Through the compound *geteldgehlwung*, Byrhtferth evoked a space that was explicitly linked to Moses' tabernacle, and at the same time captures the numinous and multifaceted symbolism of the tabernacle across the Bible.

Because the tabernacle and temple were understood typologically in medieval exegesis, their material structures could be imagined through a variety of sacred architecture which served as the earthly dwelling places of God. These structures include the tabernacle of Moses (Ex. XXV–XXVII and XXXV–XL), the account of the First Temple as built by Solomon (1 Kings VI), Ezekiel's account of an angel measuring a fantastical temple (Ezek. XL–XLII), and the description of New Jerusalem with the arrival of New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. XXI). This hybrid of architectural features formed what Mary Carruthers has labelled as a 'Tabernacle-Temple', a term which I have adopted here to indicate a typological amalgamation of the dwelling places of God in the Old and New Testaments.⁵⁰ It is possible that Byrhtferth's ideas about the spiritual meanings of the Tabernacle-Temple were influenced by Bede, who wrote the three most comprehensive early medieval treatises on the topic (*De tabernaculo*, *In Ezram et Neemiam*, and *De templo*).⁵¹ Byrhtferth probably did not have access to these commentaries, but it is likely that he knew Bede's brief exegetical interpretation in *De schematibus et tropis* (which was an important source for the *Enchiridion*), where the temple of Solomon is used to illustrate fourfold exegesis:⁵²

[T]emplum Domini, iuxta historiam domus quam fecit Salomon; iuxta allegoriam corpus Dominicum de quo ait: 'Soluite templum hoc, et in tribus diebus excitabo illud' [John II.19], siue ecclesia eius, cui dicitur: 'templum enim Dei sanctum est, quod estis uos' [1 Cor. III.17]; per tropologiam quisque fidelium, quibus dicitur: 'An nescitis quia corpora uestra templum est Spiritus sancti qui in vobis est' [1 Cor. III.16]; per anagogen supernae gaudia mansionis, cui suspirabat qui ait: 'Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine, in saeculum saeculi laudabunt te' [Ps. LXXXIII.4].⁵³

⁵⁰ Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 80 and 221–76. See also B. Kühnel, 'Jewish Symbolism of the Temple and the Tabernacle and Christian Symbolism of the Holy Sepulchre and the Heavenly Tabernacle: a Study of their Relationship in Late Antique and Early Medieval Art and Thought', *Jnl of Jewish Art* 12/13 (1986), 147–68.

⁵¹ Bede, *De tabernaculo et vasis eius ac vestibis sacerdotum*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A (Turnhout, 1969), 1–139; trans. A. G. Holder, *Bede: On the Tabernacle* (Liverpool, 1994). Bede, *In Ezram et Neemiam*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A, 235–392; trans. S. DeGregorio, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah* (Liverpool, 2006). Bede, *De templo*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A, 141–234; trans. S. Connolly, *Bede: On the Temple* (Liverpool, 1995). There was at least one copy of *De tabernaculo* circulating in England at the turn of the millennium, as Ælfric of Eynsham used it as a source for the preface to his translation of Genesis; see Brown and Biggs, *Bede II*, 50–2.

⁵² For Byrhtferth's knowledge of *De schematibus et tropis*, see *Enchiridion* iii. 1, lines 129–41; Brown and Biggs, *Bede I*, 74–9.

⁵³ Bede, *De schematibus et tropis* ii. 2, lines 265–73, ed. C. W. Jones, CCSL 123A (Turnhout, 1975), 142–71, at 168–9; trans. G. H. Tanenhaus, 'Bede's de Schematibus et Tropis – a Translation', *Quarterly Jnl of Speech* 48 (1962), 237–57, at 252: 'According to the historical fact the temple of Lord is the house which Solomon built; allegorically, it is the body of the Lord, about which He said: "Destroy this temple; and in three days I will raise it up" [John II.19]. Or it is his Church, which was addressed as follows: "For the

In this reading, the temple of Solomon is not just a historical building, but an allegorical precursor of the body of Christ and the Church, a tropological lesson about the inner divinity of the faithful Christians, and an anagogical figure of heaven.

It is this fourth sense – the Tabernacle-Temple as heaven, reinforced by Psalm LXXXIII – that fits best with Bede's imagined presence in the *geteldgehlung*. In the final image of the *Epilogus*, where Bede gazes eternally on God on Mount Sion, Byrhtferth quotes from a psalm to describe the fate of Bede's soul (Ps. LXXXIII.8: 'the God of gods shall be seen in Sion'). The earlier verses of the psalm make clear that this is not the literal Mount Sion in Jerusalem, but the heavenly city where souls go to reunite with God (Ps. LXXXIII.2–5: 'How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! [...] Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord: they shall praise thee for ever and ever'). The idea that holy souls would live in the city of heaven – which is in the form of a tabernacle, according to the description of New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation – was a common medieval trope.⁵⁴ In his historical and hagiographical writing, Byrhtferth's accounts of the deaths of holy people are also filled with images of them ascending to the city of heaven (which is described either as Jerusalem, Mount Sion, or the tabernacle).⁵⁵ In Byrhtferth's life of St Oswald of Worcester, he notes that the saint had always desired to see God, and had sung psalms before his death, so that he might climb Mount Sion and look on God forever ('desiderans magnopere gradus ascendere montis Sion et de profundis ad Deum istius uite proclamare, qualiter "celsitudinem posset diuine maiestatis intueri" in eterna beatitudine').⁵⁶ After Oswald's death, Byrhtferth records that the saint attained the holy city ('factus est concuius Hierosolime beatissime ciuitatis') and stands on Mount Sion ('[n]unc super Sion montis culmen stat').⁵⁷ In a strikingly similar account of St Ecgbwine's death in the early eighth century, Byrhtferth records that the saint ascended into the tabernacle of God ('festinauit quantocius in tabernaculum domus Dei ascendere, quo

temple of God is holy, which you are" [1 Cor. III.17]. Through the tropological interpretation it signifies some one of the faithful, who are addressed as follows: "know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" [1 Cor. III.16] Through the anagogical interpretation it signifies the joys of the heavenly dwelling for which that man longed who said: "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord, they shall praise thee for ever and ever" [Ps. LXXXIII.4]. See C. O'Brien, *Bede's Temple: an Image and its Interpretation* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 27–8.

⁵⁴ Rev. XXI.2–3: 'And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them'. On Mount Sion as the place of Judgement, see T. N. Hall, 'Medieval Traditions about the Site of Judgement', *Essays in Med. Stud.* 10 (1994), 79–98; F. M. Biggs, 'The Fourfold Division of Souls: the Old English "Christ III" and the Insular Homiletic Tradition', *Traditio* 45 (1990), 35–51.

⁵⁵ See T. D. Hill, 'The "Variegated Obit" as an Historiographic Motif in Old English Poetry and Anglo-Latin Historical Literature', *Traditio* 44 (1988), 101–24.

⁵⁶ Byrhtferth, VSO v. 16, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 188: 'hoping greatly thereby to ascend the slopes of M[oun]t Sion and to call out to God from the depths of this life, so that he could "gaze on the glory of the divine majesty" in eternal bliss'. Lapidge suggests that the line in quotation marks is derived from Bede's *Homeliarum euangelii* i. 16, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 122 (Turnhout, 1955), 112.

⁵⁷ Byrhtferth, VSO v. 19, at p. 196: '[Oswald] was made a citizen of heavenly Jerusalem' and '[n]ow he stands on the summit of Mt Sion'.

triumphum percepturus esset supernum').⁵⁸ Here the tabernacle is no longer the historical tent erected by Moses as an earthly dwelling place for God, but a figure of the heavenly kingdom.

For Byrhtferth, it is not just that Bede has gone to the heavenly Tabernacle-Temple, but that he has gone there to see God. In the description of Bede's afterlife, he glosses Sion as *speculatio* ('observation').⁵⁹ Byrhtferth also prays that God gives him and his readers the same spiritual gifts which he gave to Bede, including a longing for heaven: 'ut fontem ueri luminis, qui Deus est, finetenus pudica tuitione cernere ualeamus'.⁶⁰ The focus on posthumous visions of God can be understood through a numerological passage in the *Enchiridion*, where Byrhtferth explains the Eighth Age of the world, when the saints will join God on Mount Sion:

et, peracto iudicio, cum fuerit celum nouum et terra noua ipse erit, ut prephati sumus, sempiternus [...] Quales ad istam uenire possint, ipsa ueritas uera et uita nostra, Iesus, ostendit cum dicit: "Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum uidebunt" [Matt. V.8].⁶¹

Here Byrhtferth links the arrival of New Heaven and New Earth on Judgement Day with the Sixth Beatitude, which promises that the pure of heart will see God. This passage may have been influenced by the closing lines of *De temporum ratione*, which address the same subject. There Bede connected the coming of the Eighth Age, the nature of the Tabernacle-Temple as described in Psalm LXXXIII, and the promise of the Sixth Beatitude that the pure of heart will see God.⁶² Whether or not Byrhtferth was consciously following Bede, he evidently believed

⁵⁸ Byrhtferth, *Vita S. Ecgwini* [hereafter VSE] iv. 5, ed. and trans. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: the Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine*, pp. 204–304, at 276: 'he hastened quickly to ascend to the tabernacle of the house of God, where he was to receive his heavenly reward'.

⁵⁹ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus*, line 78, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 379. Byrhtferth's source for the Sion etymology is Isidore, *Etymologiae* viii. 1 and xv. 1, ed. W. M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi: Etymologiarum Sive Originum*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911) I, 304, and II, 149. Byrhtferth also believed that the word Israel meant 'uidens Deus' ('seeing God'); Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, iii. 1, lines 30–31, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 122.

⁶⁰ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus* lines 81–2, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 379: 'so that in the end we may be able to see with our modest gaze the fountain of true light, which is God'.

⁶¹ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, iv. 1, lines 200–5, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 212: 'and, as we have said, it [the Eighth Age] will be eternal following the day of judgement, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth [...] Jesus, who is truth itself and is our life, reveals what kind of people can obtain that life, when he says, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God" [Matt. V.8]'.

⁶² Bede, *De temporum ratione* lxxi, lines 80–91, ed. Jones, p. 544; trans. F. Wallis, *Bede: On the Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool, 1988), p. 249: 'Quae uitae dies in se quidem ipsa mansit semper, manet et manebit aeterna; sed nobis tunc incipiet, cum ad eam uidendam meruerimus intrare, ubi quo actu occupentur sancti, perfecta spiritus et carnis immortalitate renouati, testatur psalmista, qui Deo per laudem amoris canit: Beati qui habitant in domo tua, in saeculum saeculi laudabunt te. Quo uisu delectentur, idem consequenter exponit: etenim benedictionem dabit, qui legem dedit, ambulant de uirtute in uirtutem, uidebitur Deus deorum in Sion. Quales ad hanc uenire possint, ipse qui est uia, ueritas et uita, testatur Dominus, Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum uidebunt' ('But for us it [the Eighth Age of eternal rest] will begin when we deserve to enter into it in order to see it, where the saints, renewed in the blessed immortality of flesh and spirit, are occupied in doing what the Psalmist

that these passages of scripture were essential for understanding the nature of heaven and the afterlife as a perpetual theophany. In short, Byrhtferth imagines Bede in the *geteldgehlwung* because it is a model for heaven, the celestial Tabernacle-Temple where the pure of heart gaze eternally on God.

II. Mediators And Meditation on the Tabernacle-Temple

The image of Bede in the heavenly Tabernacle-Temple of Mount Sion is appropriate in the context of Bede's afterlife at the end of the *Epilogus*, but why invoke it in the *saltus lunae* lesson? Byrhtferth's instruction to pretend that Bede is with them in a *geteldgehlwung* raises the possibility that the Tabernacle-Temple had a further practical purpose, as a means of drawing students into deeper meditation on the computistical lesson as divine knowledge.

The Tabernacle-Temple is a numinous space where priests and mediators come face to face with God and imbibe divine wisdom. In the Old Testament, the purified High Priest entered the presence of God in the *sanctum sanctorum* once a year to atone for the sins of the Israelites, after being ritually purified and offering sacrifices (Lev. XVI). In the New Testament, Christ's Incarnation and Crucifixion transcends the barrier of the veil of the Tabernacle-Temple, making the presence of God directly available to Christians (Heb. VIII.6, IX.15). Byrhtferth makes a handful of references to Moses which illuminate the role of the mediator. In his *Vita S. Ecgwini*, Byrhtferth cites Moses as an archetypal example of the human capacity for visions of God in partial theophany. He wrote that St Ecgwine had used the biblical precedent set by Moses' experiences on Mount Sinai (Ex. XXXIII–XXXIV) to give credence to a swineherd's Marian vision: 'recordans uisionem quam Moyses in montem cernere promeruit – ne forte et huic aliquid secreti reuelare sit dignatus auctor omnium rerum'.⁶³ In his numerological section of the *Enchiridion*, Byrhtferth assigned a patriarch, apostle, or saint to represent each of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. Isa. XI.2). For example, Abraham exemplifies 'spiritus sapientiae', Oswald of Worcester illustrates 'spiritus timoris Domini', and Moses signifies 'gratia intellectus'.⁶⁴ Byrhtferth provides no

invokes, who sings to God in praise of His love: "Blessed are they who inhabit your house; they shall praise you, world without end" [Ps. LXXXIII.4]. He then tells of the vision which shall delight them; for "He who gave the law will give blessing, and they will go from strength to strength, and the God of Gods will be seen in Sion" [Ps. LXXXIII.7]. The Lord himself, who is "the way, the truth and the life" [John XIV.6] declares what sort of men will be able to come thither: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" [Matt. V.8]). On Bede's interest in theophany, see J. O'Reilly, 'Bede on Seeing the God of Gods in Zion', *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. A. Minnis and J. Roberts (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 3–29.

⁶³ Byrhtferth, *VSE* ii. 12, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 250: 'recollecting the vision which Moses had been found deserving to see on the mountain – in case the Creator of all things might have deigned to reveal something secret to this man [the swineherd]'.

⁶⁴ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* iv. 1, lines 25–8, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 208: 'the spirit of wisdom', 'the spirit of the fear of the Lord', and 'the grace of understanding'. In earlier Hiberno-Latin texts on the Seven Gifts, Moses is associated with the gift of piety; see Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, p. 351, notes to lines 169–73. For Byrhtferth's other references to the Seven Gifts, see Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* iv. 1, lines 161–73, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 122; Byrhtferth, *VSO* i. 1, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 8; Byrhtferth, *HR* i. 2, ed. and trans. Lapidge, pp. 4–6.

justification for his choice of these individuals as the embodiment of each gift.⁶⁵ In patristic commentaries, *intellectus* was a gift of spiritual perception and the penultimate sixth step before the attainment of true wisdom.⁶⁶ Possibly Moses' *intellectus* relates to the knowledge given to him on Mount Sinai about the cosmographical nature of the tabernacle, which is a 'shadow of heavenly things' (Heb. VIII.5).⁶⁷

By imagining Bede in *Moyses geteldgehlwung*, Byrhtferth implies that Bede is also a kind of mediator of divine knowledge, like Moses and Christ. He is an example of understanding and wisdom, acquired through deep learning and meditation, to be emulated by Byrhtferth's students. As mediators between God and man, monks and priests in Anglo-Saxon England would have regularly practised a form of meditative reading (*lectio divina*) and private prayer.⁶⁸ They might have followed Gregory I's instructions in the *Regula pastoralis*, where he describes the obligation of priests to reflect and consult on difficult matters with God, following the example set by Moses when he retreated into the tabernacle:

Hinc Moyses crebro tabernaculum intrat et exit [...] Intus Dei arcana considerat, foris onera carnalium portat. Qui de rebus quoque dubiis semper ad tabernaculum recurrit, coram testamenti arca Dominum consulit: exemplum proculdubio rectoribus praebens, ut cum foris ambigunt quid disponent, ad mentem semper quasi ad tabernaculum redeant; et velut coram testamenti arca Dominum consultant.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ There is a possible clue to the association between Moses and *gratia intellectus* in the numerical analysis of the number ten. Byrhtferth writes that the figure is unique because it is the number of the Ten Commandments, comparing them to the parable of the Ten Talents in Matt. XXV.14–30; *Enchiridion*. iv. 1, lines 224–9, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 214. Baker and Lapidge note that Byrhtferth is following Gregory here, where the One Talent (*intellectus*) is added to the Five Talents (the Five Senses) so that their bearer might understand both the external and internal nature of things; Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, p. 355, n. 227; see Gregory, *Homiliae in euangelia* i. 9, ed. R. Étaix, CCSL 141 (Turnhout, 1999), 58 and 62.

⁶⁶ Gregory explains the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as a pilgrimage up the steps of the visionary Temple of Ezekiel culminating in the gift of wisdom – in his allegory, *intellectus* is the penultimate step; Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Hiezechielem prophetam* II vii, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 142 (Turnhout, 1971), 320–2. Augustine notes that *gratia intellectus* accords with the Sixth Beatitude; Augustine, *De sermone Domini in monte* I iv. 11, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, CCSL 35 (Turnhout, 1967), 10. See Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 80–1 and 241–3; O'Reilly, 'Bede on Seeing the God of Gods in Zion', pp. 71–3.

⁶⁷ On Moses' significance in Anglo-Saxon England, see G. Wieland, 'Legifer, Dux, Scriptor: Moses in Anglo-Saxon Literature', *Illuminating Moses: a History of Reception from Exodus to the Renaissance*, ed. J. Beal (Leiden, 2014), pp. 185–209.

⁶⁸ On *lectio diuina*, see J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* (New York, 1961), pp. 18–22; M. B. Parkes, 'Rædan, areccan, smeagan: How the Anglo-Saxons Read', *ASE* 26 (1997), 1–22.

⁶⁹ Gregory the Great, *Regula pastoralis* ii. 5, ed. B. Judic and F. Rommel, *Régle pastorale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1992) I, 179; trans. H. Davis, *Pastoral Care*, Ancient Christian Writers 11 (Westminster, MD, 1950), 57–8: 'Thus Moses frequently goes in and out of the Tabernacle [...] Inwardly he considers the hidden things of God, outwardly he bears the burdens of carnal men. In doubtful matters, too, he always returns to the Tabernacle to consult the Lord in front of the Ark of the Covenant. He thus, no doubt, sets an example to rulers, that when they are uncertain what dispositions to make in secular matters, they should always return to reflection, as though to the Tabernacle, and there, as it were, standing before the Ark of the Covenant, should consult the Lord'. On the widespread knowledge of the *Regula pastoralis*, see M. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford, 2005), Appendix E.

According to Gregory, priests had to be constantly purifying their souls and retreating inwardly in contemplation of the *arca Domini*. Like this analogy of Moses retiring to his tabernacle, the Tabernacle-Temple may have been placed in the *saltus lunae* lesson as a prompt to deeper inner contemplation. It might therefore be a kind of ‘machine of meditation’ or ‘mnemnotechnical device’ (in Mary Carruthers’ terminology): a mental image used as a tool for memorisation and deep reflection during *lectio diuina*.⁷⁰

The simplest and most common medieval meditation technique involved visualising information stored in an *arca*, a word which evokes Noah’s Ark, the Ark of the Covenant, and any number of other enclosed strongboxes, chests, archives, or libraries.⁷¹ While a visualised *arca* is a static vessel for storing information, Mary Carruthers has shown that medieval monks used more complex, dynamic ‘machines’ to focus their minds in meditation and generate new interpretations of a text.⁷² She especially focuses on the Tabernacle-Temple as a common ‘machine of meditation’, finding examples in the writings of twelfth-century monks and clerics, including Peter of Celle, Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh of St Victor, and Adam of Dryburgh. Carruthers argues that such uses of the Tabernacle-Temple originated in Augustine’s commentary on Psalm XLI, where he described meditation as the mental movement through a tabernacle.⁷³ By imagining themselves moving through the architectural structure of the Tabernacle-Temple – using the joined rhetorical devices of *ductus* (‘movement’) and *enargeia* (‘vividness’) – monks could more effectively focus their minds on a remembered text and generate a series of exegetical meanings.⁷⁴ Through this process, they moved slowly towards an ever deepening spiritual understanding of divine knowledge, and ultimately theophany.⁷⁵ The Tabernacle-Temple is therefore at once a static *arca* in which to ‘store’ a memorised text (in the case of the *Enchiridion*, this would be the *saltus lunae* lesson as explained in Bede’s *De temporum ratione*), and a dynamic machine used to discover new spiritual interpretations of scripture and wisdom writings.

Evidence that this kind of meditation was practised is very limited for Anglo-Saxon England. Beyond Byrhtferth’s *geteldgehlwung*, I am aware of only one pre-twelfth-century example. This is the description of the tabernacle found in Goscelin of Saint-Bertin’s *Liber confortatorius* (written c. 1080–2), which used the figure to instruct the text’s recipient – an anchoress named Eve – in the art of meditation.⁷⁶ In Goscelin’s description, the tabernacle is the historical tent of Moses, but it is also transformed into a vivid and quasi-cosmographical space,

⁷⁰ Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, pp. 162–7, and *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 1–10.

⁷¹ Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, pp. 51–5, and *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 42; O’Reilly, ‘The Library of Scripture’, pp. 16–24.

⁷² Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 1–10 and 22–4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 251–4. See Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos I–L* XLI.8–9, ed. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont, CCL 38 (Turnhout, 1956), 465–6.

⁷⁴ Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 130–3 and 77–81.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 221–76.

⁷⁶ Goscelin, *Liber confortatorius* iii, lines 5–16, ed. C. H. Talbot, ‘The *Liber confortatorius* of Goscelin of Saint Bertin’, *Analecta Monastica: Textes et études sur la vie des moines au moyen age*, ed. M. M. Lebreton, J. Leclercq, and C. H. Talbot, 3rd ser. (Rome, 1955), pp. 1–117, at 69; trans. M. Otter, *Goscelin of St Bertin: the Book of Encouragement and Consolation* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 80. For Goscelin’s tabernacle in relation

decorated '[u]t celum sideribus, terra floribus' and evoking '[t]erras et maria, ipsumque ornatum mundi'.⁷⁷ Goscelin encourages Eve to use her scriptural knowledge to paint it in her mind, filled with the images of saints ('cum sanctorum exemplorum multimodo decore').⁷⁸ Goscelin's description, especially the presence of saints in the Tabernacle-Temple, is strikingly similar to Byrhtferth's envisioning of Bede in *Moyses geteldgehlwung*. If these are indeed intended as 'machines of meditation', they would be very early examples of the Tabernacle-Temple being used to structure contemplation, suggesting that the practice was already developing in England by the eleventh century.⁷⁹

M. Breann Leake has recently shown that there is an example of a simple 'mnemotechnical device' in the surviving manuscript of Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion*. It is worth briefly reiterating her main points here, as they persuasively show that Byrhtferth did use sacred biblical objects as metaphors for the process of memorisation and meditation. Leake draws attention to a set of computistical verses in the *Enchiridion*, which Byrhtferth erroneously believed were composed by Bede.⁸⁰ In Ashmole 328, decorative borders in red and green ink were drawn around the introduction to the verses, where they are attributed to Bede.⁸¹ Immediately before this box, Byrhtferth had broken into a complaint about the ignorance of clerics who neglect their phylacteries, exclaiming: 'Exterminant huius modi mensuras nonnulli clerici imperiti (heu, pro dolor!) qui non habere desiderant phylacteria sua'.⁸² This is a reference to Christ's admonishment of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who displayed their *phylacteria* ('phylacteries/tefillin') but did not obey the spirit of the law contained within them.⁸³ For medieval Christians, phylacteries were emblematic of externalized

to Carruthers' 'machines of meditation', see L. M. Diener, 'Entering the Bedchamber of Your Soul: How Religious Women Learned the Art of Monastic Meditation', *A Companion to Pastoral Care in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. R. Stansbury (Leiden, 2010), pp. 339–61; S. Harris, 'Structures of Prayer in Goscelin of Saint-Bertin's *Liber Confortatorius*', *Nottingham Med. Stud.* 60 (2016), 31–58; H. Powell, 'Behold! The Voices of Angels: Narrative, Audience and Affect in Eadmer of Canterbury's *Breviloquium Vita Sancti Wilfridi*', *Visions and Voice-Hearing in Medieval and Early Modern Contexts*, ed. H. Powell and C. Saunders (Cham, 2021), pp. 15–44. I am grateful to Alexandra Zhirnova for bringing the *Liber confortatorius* tabernacle to my attention.

⁷⁷ Goscelin, *Liber confortatorius* iii, ed. Talbot, p. 69; trans. Otter, p. 80: 'as the sky with stars, the earth is with flowers' and 'all the lands and all the seas and all the beauties of the world'.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 'with the manifold decorations of the examples of the saints'.

⁷⁹ For the possible use of Anglo-Saxon churches as machines of meditation (especially through the peripatetic liturgy at Candlemas and Palm Sunday), see H. Gittos, *Liturgy, Architecture, and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 257–74.

⁸⁰ Leake, 'Phylacteries'.

⁸¹ Ashmole 328, p. 36. Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* i. 3, lines 34–5, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 46: 'Beda cwæð, se arwurða rimcræftiga, betwux þam oðrum þingum þe he beorhtlice gedihhte, þas þing he to gerihte and mid leoðlicum metre be þam monðum þus giddode' ('Bede spoke, the worthy computist, among other things which he brilliantly composed, elucidated these things and sang through poetic meter about the months').

⁸² Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* i. 3, lines 2–3, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 46: 'Some ignorant clerics, alas, who do not want to keep their phylacteries with them, make a mess of calculations of this sort'. For Byrhtferth's interpolations on clerics, see Stephenson, 'Scapegoating'.

⁸³ Cf. Matt. XXIII.5–6 ('Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness'). On the inner phylactery as a symbol of monastic identity, education, and discipline, see

knowledge of the letter of the law, without internalizing the spirit of the law into one's heart.⁸⁴ In other words, they appeared outwardly pious, but their inner souls were not filled with a disciplined study and worship of God. To avoid hypocrisy, Byrhtferth advises that a student 'animum suum debet seruituti subicere, implendo alabastrum pretioso unguento, hoc est intus esse diatim debet, diuinis legibus obtemperando (et) monitis redemptoris'.⁸⁵ Leake argues that the 'pretiosum unguentum' which Byrhtferth urges his students to store within themselves are Bede's computistical verses, which follow on from the admonishment.

As Leake points out (building on the work of Rebecca Stephenson), Byrhtferth was deeply interested in phylacteries as they related to a legend about the divine origins of computus.⁸⁶ In both the *Computus* and the *Enchiridion*, he tells the story of St Pachomius, a fourth-century desert monk who received the mnemonic *Nonae Aprilis* verses on the date of Easter from the hands of angels. In his story, the angels descended from heaven with the verses enclosed in a phylactery, which they gave to Pachomius.⁸⁷ In the *Enchiridion*-manuscript, the *Nonae Aprilis* verses are set within a decorative box, reminiscent of the phylactery of the Pachomius story.⁸⁸ Given this close association between computistical verses and phylacteries, Leake argues that the decorative box placed around the incipit to the 'Bedan' verses in Ashmole 328 functions as a visual phylactery: 'By setting Bede apart on the page and placing him within these borders, we are left with an archival image of Bede and his verses placed within the drawing of a strongbox – a phylactery that [...] tells us not only what to memorize but also how to learn it by heart'.⁸⁹ Here the divine knowledge contained within Bede's writings is akin to the most sacred texts – the laws and the Easter tables – which are stored in an *arca*. Leake shows that Byrhtferth did use the ritual objects of the Old Testament

Stephenson, 'Scapegoating', pp. 130–4, and her 'Saint Who? Building Monastic Identity through Computistical Inquiry in Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Ecgwini*', *Latinity and Identity in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. R. Stephenson and E. V. Thornbury (Toronto, 2018), pp. 118–37, at 130–3. Wright connects the phylactery with the tradition of Saint Pachomius and Easter tables; C. D. Wright, 'Jewish Magic and Christian Miracle the Old English *Andreas*', *Imagining the Jew in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture*, ed. S. Zacher (Toronto, 2016), pp. 167–96, at 172–4.

⁸⁴ Cf. 2 Cor. III.6; Jerome, *Commentariorum in Matheum libri IV* iv, ed. D. Hurst and M. Adriaen, CCL 77 (Turnhout 1969), 212–13; Wright, 'Jewish Magic and Christian Miracle', pp. 171–5; Leake, 'Phylacteries', pp. 337–9. Byrhtferth remarks in his numerological treatise that time is divided into three ages: the time of the patriarchs before the law, the age of the prophets under the law, and the age of grace under Christ; Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* iv. 1, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 198. See also Scheil, *The Footsteps of Israel*, pp. 35–50.

⁸⁵ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* i. 3, lines 9–11, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 46: 'ought to subject his spirit to servitude, thus filling the alabaster box with precious ointment, that is, he ought daily to dwell within himself, obeying the divine laws and the admonitions of the redeemer'.

⁸⁶ Leake, 'Phylacteries', pp. 335–7; Stephenson, 'Saint Who?', pp. 130–3 and *Politics*, pp. 96–100.

⁸⁷ Byrhtferth used the word *philacterium* in the *Computus*, but not in the *Enchiridion*, where he notes instead that the *Nonae Aprilis* verses were 'mid gyldenum stafum awritene' ('written with golden letters'); *Enchiridion*, iii. 2, line 41, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 138, and Appendix 29, p. 420. For the legend of Pachomius, see C. W. Jones, 'A Legend of St Pachomius', *Speculum* 18 (1943), 198–210.

⁸⁸ Ashmole 328, p. 152.

⁸⁹ Leake, 'Phylacteries', p. 350.

as metaphors for meditation, making it far more likely that the image of Bede in the Tabernacle-Temple was also intended to function as a prompt to inner reflection.

The emphasis on the memorisation of Bede's computistical writings placed them at the heart of monastic education, knowledge to be stored internally and returned to constantly. But the image of Bede in the Tabernacle-Temple in the *saltus lunae* lesson is more complex than just an image to structure recall of an important text. It positions him typologically as a mediator like Moses and Christ, existing in a heavenly, numinous space from where he makes divine knowledge available to his readers. By entering into the Tabernacle-Temple with Bede and using it as a 'machine of meditation' on the underlying significance of *De temporum ratione*, students were intended to reflect deeply on the order of time and space. Bede's computistical writings on the underlying harmonious design of the calendar and cosmos therefore approached the status of the most sacred Christian texts, stored in an inner *arca*. Indeed, Bede supersedes Moses in the ritual objects of the Old Testament, his teaching about the calculation of Easter surpassing what Moses taught about Passover (cf. *Enchiridion* iii. 1).⁹⁰ By regularly retreating inwardly to gaze on the *arca Domini* in the Tabernacle-Temple, containing sacred knowledge, monks were brought closer to an understanding of God and theophany in heaven.

III. Byrhtferth's Diagrams and the Tabernacle-Temple

The meditative function of the Tabernacle-Temple in the *saltus lunae* lesson raises the question of whether Byrhtferth used 'machines of meditation' elsewhere in his writings. The diagrams in Byrhtferth's *Computus* – the computistical collection prefaced by the *Epilogus* and accompanied by the *Enchiridion* – provide some possible examples. Rather than focusing exclusively on Bede's writings, these are concerned with communicating general computistical and numerological information. They are part of a long tradition combining astronomical, arithmetic information, and Christian symbolism.⁹¹ The models used by Byrhtferth derived ultimately from the *rotae* in Isidore of Seville's *De natura rerum* or

⁹⁰ On the medieval interpretation of Passover, see D. Anlezark, 'Jewish Promise and Christian Fulfilment', *Imagining the Jew in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture*, ed. S. Zacher (Toronto, 2016), pp. 131–55.

⁹¹ The combination of astronomical and arithmetic information was in part derived from Plato's *Timaeus*, by way of Calcidius and Macrobius; Plato, *Timaeus a Calcidio translatus commentarioque instructus*, ed. J. H. Waszink (Leiden, 1962); Macrobius, *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, ed. J. Willis (Leipzig, 1963). See Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, pp. lxi–lxxiv; A. von Euw, 'Die Maiestas-Domini-Bilder Der Ottonischen Kölner Malerschule Im Licht Des Platonischen Weltbildes. Codex 192 Der Kölner Dombibliothek', *Kaiserin Theophanu. Begegnung Des Ostens Und Westens Um Die Wende Des Ersten Jahrtausends. Gedenkschrift Des Kölner Schnütgen-Museums Zum 1000. Todesjahr Der Kaiserin*, ed. A. von Euw and P. Schreiner, 2 vols. (Cologne, 1991) I, 379–400; W. M. Stevens, *Cycles of Time and Scientific Learning in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1995); B. Eastwood, *Ordering the Heavens: Roman Astronomy and Cosmology in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2007); E. M. Ramírez-Weaver, *A Saving Science: Capturing the Heavens in Carolingian Manuscripts* (Philadelphia, 2017).

from Abbo of Fleury.⁹² Many of these medieval diagrams are concerned not only with explaining how to reckon time, but also with gesturing towards the underlying divine structure of the cosmos.⁹³ Indeed, the ability to perceive the invisible divine was a major concern of early medieval theologians and computists.⁹⁴ Madeline Caviness describes how ‘diagrams created a syntax for various means, including the representational, of expressing divinity’.⁹⁵ Similarly, Faith Wallis has argued that many of Byrhtferth’s diagrams function as a form of ‘visual exegesis’.⁹⁶ Because they have a visual ‘syntax’, diagrams can be read and exegetically decoded as part of a practice of *lectio diuina*.⁹⁷

Like rhetorical ‘machines of meditation’, diagrams can be used as tools for drawing nearer to God. The viewer is invited to unravel the layers of the diagram, a process through which the divine becomes partially intelligible. The following section considers how some of Byrhtferth’s diagrams on the symbolism of the numbers four and twelve were intended to be used as tools for approaching theophany.

Byrhtferth’s Diagram on the Harmony of Fours

Byrhtferth’s *Computus* contains his well-known diagram, *De concordia mensium atque elementum* (‘On the harmony of the months and elements’).⁹⁸ This diagram interlinks time and space through the correspondence of the quaternities, or the ‘harmony of fours’, a medieval theory of numerological cosmic congruity which recurs across Byrhtferth’s writings. It depicts the interrelation of the cardinal directions, the seasons, the elements, the ages of man, the winds, months, and the astrological signs of the zodiac (see Fig. 1). The diagram is built around a rhomboid figure with a series of interlinking nodes, framed by a ‘figure-eight’ mandorla. Located at its centre is a circular ogham wheel, above which there is

⁹² Baker and Lapidge comment on the sources of individual diagrams in *Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion*, Appendix A, pp. 373–427.

⁹³ Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things*; Wallis, ‘What a Medieval Diagram Shows’; M. H. Caviness, ‘Images of Divine Order and the Third Mode of Seeing’, *Gesta* 22 (1983), 99–120; von Euw, ‘Die Maestas-Domini-Bilder Der Ottonischen Kölner Malerschule’.

⁹⁴ H. L. Kessler, ‘Hoc Visibile Imaginatum Figuratur Illud Invisibile Verum: Imagining God in Pictures of Christ’, *Seeing the Invisible in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Papers from ‘Verbal and Pictorial Imaging: Representing and Accessing Experience of the Invisible, 400–1000’ (Utrecht, 11–13 December 2003)*, ed. G. De Nie, K. F. Morrison, and M. Mostert (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 291–325; Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God’s Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia, 2000); O’Reilly, ‘Bede on Seeing the God of Gods in Zion’, pp. 3–29.

⁹⁵ Caviness, ‘Images of Divine Order’, p. 103.

⁹⁶ Wallis, ‘Byrhtferth’s Diagram’. For ‘visual exegesis’, see A. Esmeijer, *Divina Quaternitas: a Preliminary Study in the Method and Application of Visual Exegesis* (Assen, 1978), p. ix; Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things*, pp. 13–22.

⁹⁷ For the use role of memory and mnemonic diagrams in education, see Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, pp. 153–94.

⁹⁸ Oxford, St John’s College 17, 7v, ed. Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion*, p. 374. Another version of the diagram is in the ‘Peterborough Computus’ (London, British Library, Harley 3667, 8r). For discussion of this diagram, see Wallis, ‘Byrhtferth’s Diagram’; C. Singer and D. Singer, ‘A Restoration: Byrhtferth of Ramsey’s Diagram of the Physical and Physiological Fours’, *Bodleian Quarterly Record* 2 (1919), 47–51.

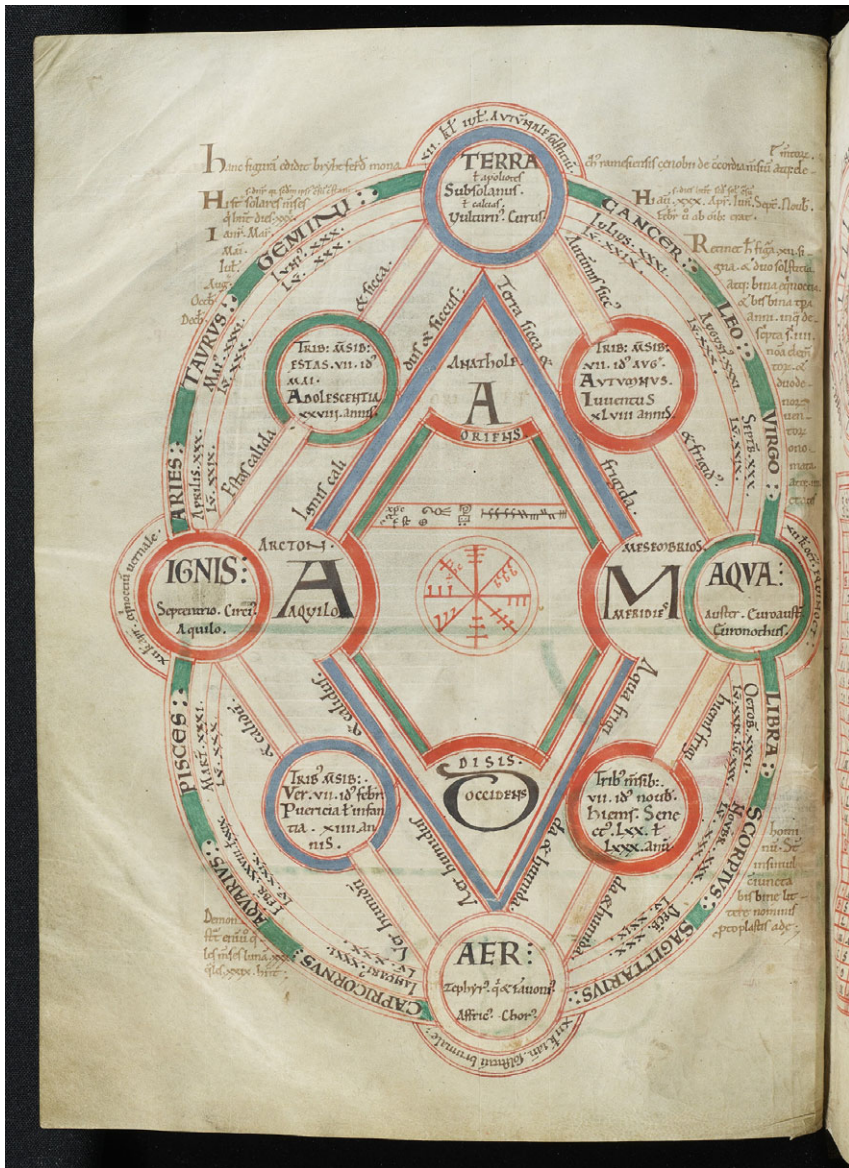


Figure 1. Oxford, St John's College 17, 7v. By permission of the President and Fellows of St John's College, Oxford.

an as-yet un-decoded cipher made up of ogham and a series of pictograms.⁹⁹ The ogham wheel has eight spokes, with a 'χρς' inscription on top-left spoke; its shape

⁹⁹ For a suggested (although not widely accepted) interpretation of the ogham, see P. Sims-Williams, 'Byrhtferth's Ogam Signature', *Studies on Celtic Languages Before the Year 1000*, ed. P. Sims-Williams (Aberystwyth, 2007), pp. 169–77. The version of the diagram in the 'Peterborough Computus' contains no ogham and an empty circle at its centre.

suggests a Chi-Rho, with the horizontal spoke in the place of the Alpha and Omega. Although these symbols in the centre of the diagram remain undeciphered, the presence of the $\chi\rho\varsigma$ on the wheel makes a meaning invoking the presence of Christ likely.

The art historians Madeline Caviness and Bianca Kühnel have both discussed how the form of the diagram evokes a *maiestas Domini* (an image of Christ in majesty).¹⁰⁰ The use of a rhombus with a circular node, or *clipeus*, at each of its points is a feature of *maiestas Domini* images in Carolingian bibles, like the first Bible of Charles the Bald made at Tours in the ninth century. In that image, each corner of the outer frame is filled with an evangelist, each of the four nodes is filled with a major prophet, and each corner of the rhombus is filled by a beast of the tetramorph (the four 'living creatures' symbolizing the evangelists).¹⁰¹ The wheel of ogham in the middle of Byrhtferth's diagram is also reminiscent of the sphere, or *mundus*, which Christ uses as a footstool and/or holds in his right hand in the centre of the *maiestas Domini* (Isa. LXVI.1: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool: what is this house that you will build to me?').¹⁰² The 'figure-eight' mandorla of the diagram is also a common feature of Ottonian manuscripts (for example, in the eleventh-century Hitda Codex).¹⁰³ The points made by Caviness and Kühnel can be strengthened by Byrhtferth's numerological section of the *Enchiridion*. He states that the number four unites the cardinal virtues, the seasons, the equinoxes and solstices, the winds, the elements, and the ages of man, as well as the four evangelists and the four 'living creatures' witnessed by Ezekiel: 'Ornatur et doctrinis quattuor euangelistarum, qui quattuor animalia esse referuntur in libro Ezechielis eximii prophetae'.¹⁰⁴ Ezekiel's vision of the 'living creatures' is a key component of the *maiestas Domini*, with each of them depicted in a wheel and arranged around Christ to form a chariot of God (Ezek. I.4–28; Rev. IV.6–9). In the *Enchiridion*, Byrhtferth indicates that he is aware of the typological comparison which is inherent in *maiestas Domini* imagery, prefiguring the evangelists' missionary role in the Church, and its apotheosis when Christ comes to reign in majesty over New Heaven and New Earth.¹⁰⁵ By structuring his diagram using the visual syntax of a *maiestas Domini*, but no actual image of Christ, Byrhtferth seems to expect his students to

¹⁰⁰ Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things*, pp. 181–4; Caviness, 'Images of Divine Order', pp. 99–120. See also Wallis, 'What a Medieval Diagram Shows'.

¹⁰¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1, 329v (Tours, c. 845).

¹⁰² See H. L. Kessler, 'Medietas/Mediator and the Geometry of Incarnation', *Image and Incarnation: the Early Modern Doctrine of the Pictorial Image*, ed. W. S. Melion and L. P. Wandel (Leiden, 2015), pp. 15–75.

¹⁰³ Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, 1640, 7r (Cologne, s. xiⁱⁱⁱ). For the roots of the figure-eight mandorla in the writings of Plato, see H. Schade, 'Der "Himmlische Mensch": zur anthropologischen Struktur des biblischen Menschenbildes in der Kunst', *Christus und Maria: Menschensohn und Gottesmutter*, ed. V. H. Elbern (Berlin, 1980), pp. 18–58, at 25–7; von Euw, 'Die Maiestas-Domini-Bilder Der Ottonischen Kölner Malerschule Im Licht Des Platonischen Weltbildes', pp. 391–7; Kessler, 'Hoc Visibile Imaginatum Figuratur Illud Invisibile Verum', pp. 293–5.

¹⁰⁴ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* iv. 1, lines 41–3, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 200: 'It is also adorned by the teachings of the four evangelists, who in the book of Ezekiel the excellent prophet, are said to be four animals'.

¹⁰⁵ See A.-O. Poilpré, *Maiestas Domini: une image de l'Église en Occident (V^e–IX^e siècle)* (Paris, 2005), pp. 138–43; O'Reilly, 'The Library of Scripture', pp. 12–16.

contemplate the diagram deeply and to unriddle the hidden vision of Christ in majesty. As Wallis observes: 'on some level that the rubric does not specify, this *figura* is a theophany, or a making visible of the invisible divine'.¹⁰⁶

But the theophanic *maiestas Domini* is not the only spiritual information to be discerned from the diagram. The cardinal directions in Greek are written at each corner of the mandorla, acronymically spelling ADAM (Anatole, Dysis, Arcton, Mesembrion), with east (Anatole) located at the top of the folio. In the numerological section of the *Enchiridion*, Byrhtferth explains that the name ADAM is linked to DEUS because they are both made up of four letters: 'Constat reuerenter fulcitus iste quaternarius quattuor litteris nominis Christi, id est .D.E.U.S., pariterque et onomate protoplasti, hoc est .A.D.A.<M>'.¹⁰⁷ This was a favourite theme of Byrhtferth's: he mentions that both Adam and Deus have four letters in his discussion of the solstice and equinox and in his explanation of the AEIOU lunar table, accompanied by diagrams that place the letters around a *rota* or table in the form of a cross.¹⁰⁸ By comparing the name of Adam and Christ (Deus), Byrhtferth sets up a typological connection between the first Adam, and Christ as the second Adam (1 Cor XV.45). Effectively, they are both tetragrammata (four-letter names for God). As Faith Wallis has argued, the correspondence between the cruciform arrangement of the cardinal directions and the name of Adam implies that Christ is both micro- and macrocosm, his crucified human body stretching out across the four corners of the world.¹⁰⁹

This Christological aspect of the diagram is well-established, but the ADAM acronym contains a further and cosmographical meaning, which Byrhtferth implies in his numerological commentary in the *Enchiridion*:

Hae partes si considerentur, in nomine Adę inueniuntur secundum numerum Grecorum. Ipsi quoque orientem appellant anathole<n>, et occidentem disyn, et aquilonem arcton, et meridiem misymbion; oriens apud eos habet in exordio .A. lit<ter>am, et occidens .D., et septentrio iterum .A., et meridies .M. Si numeru<m> istarum litterarum quis altiori ingenio perscrutatus fuerit, dabit intellectum auditui. .A. in Greco numero significant unum, .D. quattuor, .A. iterum unum, .M. .xl.; h<e>c sunt .xlvi. Hoc in loco sufficient hec dicta. Inuestigatam diutissime hanc <reor> questionem a patrum dictis; libet ad alia celeriter properare.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Wallis, 'What a Medieval Diagram Shows', p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* iv. 1, lines 143–7, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge p. 200: 'This number four is reverently sustained by the four letter of the name of Christ that is D-E-U-S, and likewise by the name of the first-born man, that is, A-D-A-M'.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, ii. 1.3, lines 321–6, and. iii. 2, lines 165–7, pp. 74 and 146. Byrhtferth also used the geographical tetragrammaton for a rather tortured allegory of the walls of Babylon in VSE iv. 1, ed. and trans. Lapidge, pp. 268–76.

¹⁰⁹ Wallis, 'What a Medieval Diagram Shows' and 'Byrhtferth's Diagram'. See also K. Karasawa, 'Christ Embracing the World: Ælfric's Description of the Crucifixion in "De Passione Domini?"', *Ideas of the World in Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. M. Atherton, K. Karasawa, and F. Leneghan, (Turnhout, 2022), pp. 149–63.

¹¹⁰ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* iv. 1, lines 59–70, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 200: 'If these regions are carefully considered, they may be discovered in the name of Adam, using their Greek names. The Greeks also call the east *Anatole* and the west *Dysis* and the north *Arcton* and the south

Rather coyly, he refuses to explain the numerology of the name Adam further, on the grounds that the significance of this is evident in patristic literature. This is most likely in reference to Augustine's commentary on the gospel of John, which Byrhtferth perhaps knew second-hand from Hrabanus Maurus' *In honorem sanctae crucis*.¹¹¹ In both Augustine and Hrabanus Maurus' commentaries, the number forty-six is linked to Christ's statement that he is a sign of the Second Temple, which was built in forty-six years and will be reconstructed in three days (John II.18–22).¹¹² The argument here is temporal: the destruction of the Second Temple is symbolised by the Crucifixion and Resurrection. It also represents Christ's fulfilment of the Tabernacle-Temple through his own body, which is the Church. But the correspondence between the body of Christ and the Second Temple also has cosmographical implications. Microcosmically each person's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. VI.19), made in the image of God like Adam (Gen. I.27). Macrocosmically, the tabernacle is a shadow of the pattern of the heavens shown to Moses on Mount Sinai (Heb. VIII.8).¹¹³ For Byrhtferth,

Mesembrión. For the Greeks the east begins with A, the west with D, the north with another A, and the south with M. If someone with higher intelligence should investigate the numerical equivalents of these Greek letters, he will be able to understand what he has just heard. A in Greek stands for one, D for four, A for one again, and M for forty together these make forty-six. Let this discussion suffice for now. I think that the question has been investigated at length in patristic writings; we should quickly move on to other matters'.

¹¹¹ Augustine, *In Iohannis Euangelium* ix. 14 and x. 12, ed. D. R. Willems, CCSL 36 (Turnhout, 1954), 98 and 108; Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos LI–C* xcv. 15, ed. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipoint, CCSL 39 (Turnhout, 1956), 1352–3; Hrabanus Maurus, *In honorem sanctae crucis* xii, ed. M. Perrin, CCCM 100 (Turnhout, 1997), 100–5. At least two copies of *In honorem sanctae crucis* were in circulation in England in the tenth and eleventh centuries: Cambridge, Trinity College, B.16.3. (England, s. x^{med} or x^{2/4}) and Cambridge, University Library, Gg.5.35, 209v–225v (St Augustine's, Canterbury?, s. xi^{med}). It is unlikely that Byrhtferth's primary source here was the Insular tradition of Adam protoplast, because it does not include the numerological commentary on Adam's name (see the homily in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 326, pp. 135–6); D. Cerbelaud, 'Le nom d'Adam et les points cardinaux recherches sur un theme patristique', *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984), 285–301; M. Forster, 'Adams Erschaffung Und Namengebung', *Archiv Für Religionswissenschaft* 2 (1908), 477–529. See Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, pp. 342–3, note to lines 59–68.

¹¹² In Augustine's numerological explanation, forty-six is also said to be the number of days it took for the embryonic Christ to form fully in his mother's womb, and can be multiplied by six to calculate the length of a full-term pregnancy (276 days, or nine months and six days according to Augustine); Augustine, *De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus* lvi, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, CCSL 44A (Turnhout, 1975), 95–6. If Byrhtferth's source was Hrabanus Maurus, he would not have known this additional information. Bede also discussed the significance of the number forty-six, the embryonic Christ, and Adam's name, but not in one place: Bede, *In Ezram et Neemiam*, ed. D. Hurst, CCSL 119A, 300 (without Adam); Bede, *Homeliarum euangelii* ii. 1 and ii. 24, ed. Hurst, pp. 189 and 365 (without Adam); Bede, *In Genesim* ii. 5.2, lines 724–35, ed. C. W. Jones, CCSL 118A (Turnhout, 1967), 93 (without the number forty-six); see O'Brien, *Bede's Temple*, pp. 101–4. Bede, *In Ezram et Neemiam*, ed. Hurst, p. 300.

¹¹³ It is striking that a similar cosmographical interpretation of the tabernacle appears in the Codex Amiatinus, the great pandect made at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow during Bede's lifetime. The manuscript contains an illustration of Moses' tabernacle with the ADAM abbreviation for each direction (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1, 2v–3r). While Byrhtferth would never have seen the Codex Amiatinus, and would have been ignorant of the late antique ideas that influenced it, he nevertheless seems to have shared some of its understanding of the theological underpinnings of the cosmos. For the tabernacle page, see O'Brien, *Bede's Temple*, pp. 90–100; Kühnel, 'Jewish Symbolism', p. 166; J. O'Reilly, 'The Library of Scripture: Views from Vivarium and Wearmouth

Christ's body and the Tabernacle-Temple were both signs of the interrelation of heaven and earth, with the earthly tabernacle merely a reflection or shadow of the heavenly city.

The Tabernacle-Temple is not just an anagogical model for heaven, but a pattern of the whole cosmos. The layers of coded and symbolically organised information in the diagram force the student to study it closely, memorising its contents and picturing it in their minds as a 'machine of meditation', which yields a fourfold understanding of its visual exegesis.¹¹⁴ The ADAM tetragrammaton typologically links the human and divine bodies of Adam and Christ, representing the micro- and macrocosm of Creation. The *maiestas Domini* imagery tropologically illustrates the moral authority of the earthly Church which is signified by the body of Christ and the four wheels of evangelists, carrying the Ark of the Covenant out into the world. Both the *maiestas Domini* and the Adam numerology gesture anagogically towards the arrival of the Tabernacle-Temple of New Heaven and New Earth, and the final triumphant enthronement of Christ.

Byrhtferth's Diagrams on the Harmony of Twelves

The importance of the Tabernacle-Temple in Byrhtferth's cosmography is illustrated by three further diagrams (two rotas and a rectangular figure) on the exegetical meanings of the number twelve, found in the twelfth-century 'Peterborough Computus'.¹¹⁵ Peter Baker has convincingly attributed them to Byrhtferth on the basis of his 'perseverative turn of mind'.¹¹⁶ All three of the diagrams depict the divinely ordered cosmos. In the rotas, this is achieved through the cruciform arrangement of ADAM and ALFA. The ADAM rota has 'Ecclesiastica rota' written in its inner circle (fol. 5r); the ALFA rota has an Omega at the southern end of the cross and a blank inner circle (fol. 5v). The rectangular diagram of twelves (fol. 7v) invokes the presence of God through an empty mandorla, framed with quotations from Heb. I.8 and Psalm IX.5, which are rendered by Byrhtferth as 'Thronus tuus Deus in seculum seculi' and 'Deus qui sedes super thronum et iudicas equitatem' (Fig. 2).¹¹⁷ Like the diagram of fours,

Jarrow', *New Offerings, Ancient Treasures: Studies in Medieval Art for George Henderson*, ed. P. Binski and W. Noel (Stroud, 2001), pp. 3–39; P. Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus, and the Codex Amiatinus', *Speculum* 71 (1996), 827–83. A cosmological reading of the Tabernacle-Temple is also briefly stated in Bede, *De tabernaculo* ii, lines 1137 and 1150–7, ed. Hurst, p. 71.

¹¹⁴ For a comparable example, Mary Carruthers comments on the tabernacle page of the Codex Amiatinus as a 'machine of meditation', Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought*, pp. 234–7.

¹¹⁵ London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius C. I, fols. 2–17 + Harley 3667 (Peterborough, c. 1122–35); edited with commentary in Baker 'More Diagrams by Byrhtferth of Ramsey', *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. K. O'Brien O'Keefe and A. Orchard, 2 vols. (Toronto, 2016) II, 53–73.

¹¹⁶ Baker, 'More Diagrams', p. 64.

¹¹⁷ 'Your throne, O God, [is] forever and ever' and 'God, who sits on the throne and judges justice'. Baker points out that these quotations also appear together in Hrabanus Maurus' explanation of the nine orders of angels in the third poem of *In honorem sanctae crucis*, although he reserves judgement on whether this was Byrhtferth's source; Baker, 'More Diagrams', p. 59; Hrabanus Maurus, *In honorem sanctae crucis* iii, ed. Perrin, p. 4. Although there is no conclusive evidence that Byrhtferth knew of Hrabanus' picture-poems, it is interesting that they are also a possible source for Byrhtferth's discussion of the Adam numerology.

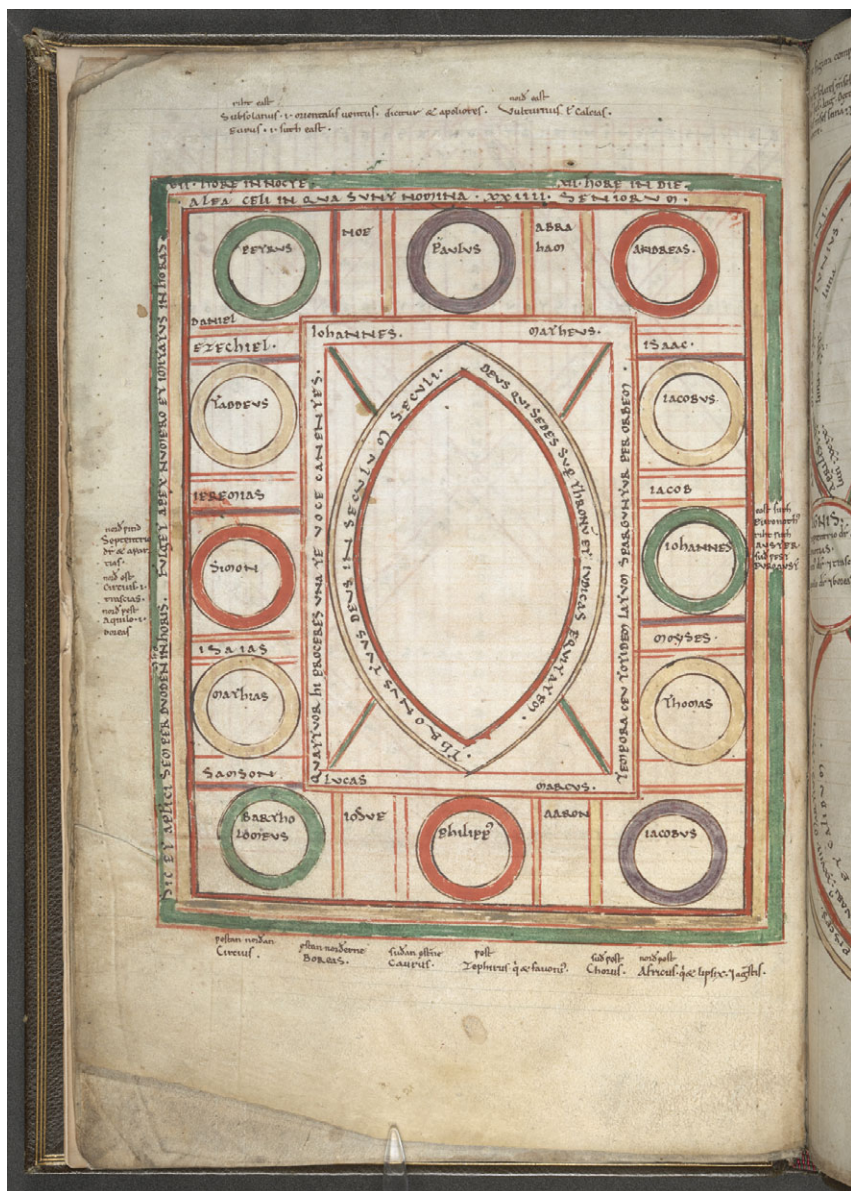


Figure 2. London, British Library, Harley MS 3667, 7v. From the British Library Collection.

this figure seems to allude to an invisible throne of God (or *maiestas Domini*) at its centre. The modern viewer's ability to decipher these diagrams is impeded by a missing folio from the numerological analysis of the number twelve in the

Enchiridion.¹¹⁸ However, there are some commonalities across the diagrams that make it possible to reconstruct a hypothetical list of harmonious connections. Each diagram is framed by sets of twelve biblical figures (patriarchs, prophets, and apostles), arranged in either a circle rota or rectangle around its outer frame. They also contain a selection of natural twelves, including the astrological signs of the zodiac, the winds, the hours in a day, and the months. These are shown to be divisible by the four elements, seasons, cardinal directions, and evangelists.

The rectangular diagram of twelves is the most complex of the three. It is labelled 'Alea celi in qva svnt nomina XXIII seniorvm'.¹¹⁹ The names of the twelve apostles and the twelve patriarchs are arranged around its outer frame in alternating roundels and boxes.¹²⁰ Wallis observes that 'the ALEA CELI rubric draws our attention to another dimension of the diagram's form: it is rectangular like a game board, and the apostles are arranged like counters in cells around the perimeter'.¹²¹ She argues that the diagram's self-description as the *Alea celi* invites the viewer to interact with it as a game board. Wallis links this to Byrhtferth's lamentation in the *Enchiridion* about how clerics are overly interested in dicing (described as *alea*) and neglect their meditation on the computus, which is the true means of interpreting the future ('cepi cordetenus ruminare pauca ex plurimis, quali medicamine possem clericis proficere ut alea ludos relaxarent et huius artis notitiam haberent').¹²² The viewer is intended to 'play', not by gambling or prognosticating, but by deciphering the diagram. Wallis provides a comprehensive interpretation of its possible hidden meanings:

The description of the Heavenly Jerusalem in the Apocalypse also invokes a double series of twelve: twelve foundations and twelve gates inscribed with the names of the patriarchs and the apostles [Rev. XXI.12–14]. On the ALEA CELI, the rectangular shape that accommodates the mandorla is really a square, with three apostles on each side, facing north, south, east and west [Rev. XXI.13]. Finally, the *alea* may be a reference to the lots hidden in the High Priest's rational [i.e. breastplate]. Bede compares twelve gems on the rational to the signs of the zodiac and the twelve months of the year,

¹¹⁸ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* iv. 1, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 220. Henel argued that some of this can be reconstructed from the text of Harley 3667; Henel, *Studien Zum Altenglischen Computus*, p. 1, n. 5.

¹¹⁹ The diagram is edited in Baker, 'More Diagrams', p. 68: 'The gameboard of heaven in which are the names of the twenty-four elders'.

¹²⁰ Byrhtferth was confused about which patriarchs were to be included around the perimeter of the tabernacle, choosing a different variety of venerable Old Testament figures for each of his three diagrams on the number twelve; Baker, 'More Diagrams', pp. 63–4.

¹²¹ Wallis, 'Byrhtferth's Diagram'. I am grateful to Prof. Wallis for giving me access to her forthcoming chapter on medieval games, which includes a discussion of this diagram; Wallis, 'Sortes Sanctorum and Alea Celi: Dicing and Divination in Some 12th Century Insular Computus Manuscripts', *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on the Science of Computus, National University of Ireland, Galway, 14 July 2012*, ed. I. Wartenjes and D. Ó Cróinín (Turnhout, forthcoming).

¹²² Wallis, 'Byrhtferth's Diagram'; Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* i. 4, lines 9–11, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 52: 'I began inwardly to ruminate on a few things among many, concerning what medicine I might apply to the clerics so they would ease up on the dice [*aleae*] and acquire some knowledge of this science'.

arranged in four seasons of three months each. The entire rational symbolizes the totality of world-history.¹²³

This exegetical analysis is surely correct: the arrangement of the prophets and patriarchs points backwards in time to the tabernacle of Moses and forward to the temple of New Jerusalem. It signals the unity of scripture and the constant presence of God in ordering time through the different incarnations of the Tabernacle-Temple.¹²⁴ Like the diagram on the harmony of four, Wallis argues that the *Alea celi* diagram is a *maiestas Domini*, as all of its exegetical signifiers point towards the Final Judgement and the enthronement of the Lamb, who is Christ. By ‘playing’ on the game board of heaven, the viewer is intended to see God at the beginning and end of time. Wallis’ examination of the typological and anagogical meaning of the diagram is persuasive, demonstrating the temporal argument at its heart. But there is also a cosmographical element to the Tabernacle-Temple, discernible through examination of Byrhtferth’s other writings on the number twelve.

As we saw in the diagram on fours, the Tabernacle-Temple is a constant in space as well as time, as a sign of the underlying harmony of the micro- and macrocosm. Byrhtferth’s understanding of the macrocosmic relationship between heaven and earth is explained in the *Enchiridion*:

Seo heofon beligð on hyre bosme ealne middaneard, and heo æfre tyrnð onbutan us; heo ys swyftre þonne ænig mylenhwiol, eall swa deop under þisre eorðan swa heo ys bufan. Eall heo ys synewealt and ansund and mid steorrum amet. Synd swa þeah ma heofena, swa swa se witega cwyð, ‘celi celorum’ [Ps. CXLVIII.4]. Þas heofena tacniað þa apostolas and þa witegan; be heom ys gecweden, ‘Celi enarrant gloriam Dei’ [Ps. XVIII.1].¹²⁵

The statement that the apostles and prophets are signified by the heavens is mysterious, suggesting literally the twelve quadrants of the zodiac. But if we read this passage with reference to the diagram of twelve, the interpretation would be that the twelve divisions of the heavens represent the twice twelve foundations and

¹²³ Wallis, ‘Byrhtferth’s Diagram’. She also notes that a cognate twelfth-century manuscript (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. brev. 128, 9v) on the number twelve seems to invoke the throne of the Lamb at its centre through a quotation from Prov. IX.1 (‘Wisdom hath built herself a house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars’). As Wallis puts it: ‘the artist is alluding to both the Lamb, and the Heavenly Jerusalem whose centre is the Temple which is God himself [Rev. XXI.22]’.

¹²⁴ The names of the apostles and patriarchs around the border of the ‘game board’ are reminiscent not only of Revelation XXI.12–14, but also of the arrangement of the twelve tribes of Israel depicted in the tabernacle diagram of the Codex Amiatinus, which is based on Num. II.3–31. See above, n. 119.

¹²⁵ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion*, ii. 1, lines 252–8, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 70: ‘Heaven encloses the whole earth in its bosom, and it is always turning about us; it is swifter than any mill-wheel, just as deep under this earth as it is far above. The other heavens above and beneath it [the earth] are invisible and inscrutable to men; yet there are more heavens, as the prophet says: “heavens of heavens” [Ps. CXLVIII.4]. The heavens signify the apostles and the prophets; of them it is said, “the heavens expound God’s glory” [Ps. XVIII.1]’.

gateways of New Jerusalem containing the patriarchs and apostles (Rev. XXI.14), and the twenty-four elders of the *maiestas Domini* (Rev. IV.4). Byrhtferth did not think that the earth or the heavens were literally rectangular like a tabernacle (his imagery of the circular, turning *mylenhwiol* in the above quotation is a case in point), but by identifying hidden signifiers of God's dwelling place in the cosmos, the viewer is called to recognise his active and palpable presence in the harmonious organization of time and space, with the pattern of the Tabernacle-Temple in the twelvefold stars, winds, directions, hours, and months.

Another *rota* by Byrhtferth – on the ‘monthly solar concurrents’ (the calculation of the weekday of the first day of each month in the twenty-eight-year solar cycle) – may also illustrate Byrhtferth's macrocosmic understanding of the Tabernacle-Temple. The *rota* has a seated, crowned figure holding a cup at its centre.¹²⁶ In an extensive discussion, Wallis argues that the figure at the centre of the *rota* is the embodiment of the sun in the solar cycle. She connects the image of the crowned and seated figure to Byrhtferth's description of the solar year, in which he writes in Latin and then in English about how six additional hours ‘grow’ each year to create a leap year: ‘sex horas perficit, ex quibus quadrans surgit atque procedit uelut rex a solio suo [...] Of þissum syx tidum wiht se quadrans swyðe wæwerðlice and forðstæpð wel orglice binnan feower wintrum, swylce hwylc cyng of his giftbure stæppe geglenged’.¹²⁷ Following Baker and Lapidge, Wallis notes that this image of a king arising from his throne or bridal chamber is a paraphrase of Psalm XVIII.6: ‘In [the heavens], He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber’.¹²⁸ Wallis concludes: ‘if Byrhtferth is behind this image, we have to take on board his reference to Psalm [XVIII], where the sun – the bridegroom coming from his chamber – is God's tabernacle. To put it another way, the king with the cup may be God himself, at once hidden and revealed under the *figura* of the sun’.¹²⁹ Wallis is principally concerned with how a straightforward set of computistical data could be reformulated to gesture towards the hidden presence of God, rather than focusing on the importance of the Tabernacle-Temple as a cosmographical figure in its own right. But these repeated references to the Tabernacle-Temple suggest that Byrhtferth was concerned with it as the organising principle of the cosmos. Interestingly, Psalm XVIII was also used by Byrhtferth to describe how the heavens are filled with the apostles and prophets proclaiming God's glory. This particularly cosmographical psalm may be a source of Byrhtferth's understanding of the created universe.

Returning to the *Alea celi* diagram, it is hard to identify any obvious micro-cosmic elements, as there is no equivalent to the four stages of the life of man or

¹²⁶ St John's College 17, 27v.

¹²⁷ Byrhtferth, *Enchiridion* i. 1, lines 34–5 and 63–5, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 4: ‘It yields six hours, from which the quadrant arises, and goes forth like a king from his throne [...] From these six hours the quadrant grows very beautifully and advances quite proudly over four years, as if some king came adorned from his bridal chamber’.

¹²⁸ See Wallis, ‘What a Medieval Diagram Shows’, pp. 29–32.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

the ADAM directions. But a comment in Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Ecgwini* illustrates how he understood the number twelve to relate to the human soul:

Nactus potestatem prioris dignitatis, fulgebat in eo diuini feruor amoris qui eum diuinis coniungebat mysteriis, ut simul in eo cernere posses et bis seniorum lapidum gloriam rutilantem et beatorum apostolorum ineffabilem traditionem. Sic 'ex auro, hiacincto purpuraque, bis tincto cocco siue uermiculo cum bisso retorto fulgescere' [cf. Ex. XXV.3–5] fecit acta bona sue castissime anime, ut digna fieret esse allecta in celesti curia.¹³⁰

The adornment of the saint's soul is a direct reference to the garments of the tabernacle's High Priest, who wears multicoloured robes and a breastplate embedded with twelve stones. These are put on as part of the ritual of purity necessary to enter the tabernacle. In Byrhtferth's example, the twelve jewels decorate Ecgwine's inner being, rather than being worn externally (a parallel to the distinction between the inner *arcae* of monks and the outwardly worn phylacteries of the Pharisees, discussed above). Byrhtferth also used contemporary vestments as symbols of the soul adorned through virtues. In his account of the death of Oswald, he quotes from the benedictional prayers on the archepiscopal pallium rite: 'Adpropinquat hora ut "honor pallii terrene uite sit ornamentum anime tue; et unde aduenit fastigium uisibile, inde crescat et maneat tue inuisibilis honor anime"'.¹³¹ In his understanding of internalised priestly vestments, Byrhtferth might have been drawing on either Gregory's *Regula pastoralis* or Bede's *De tabernaculo*, both of which interpret the vestments as symbolic of priestly meditation and virtues. Gregory's analysis is particularly relevant:

Apud semetipsos ergo quantum debeant mundari conspiciunt, qui ad aeternitatis templum uasa uiuentia in sinu propriae sponsonis portant [...] In quo etiam rationali uigilanter adiungitur, ut duodecim patriarcharum nomina describantur. Adscriptos etenim patres semper in pectore ferre est antiquorum uitam sine intermissione cogitare [...]¹³²

¹³⁰ Byrhtferth, VSE ii. 1, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 238: 'When Ecgwine regained the authority of his former status, the intensity of divine love shone in him, which united him with the holy mysteries, so that you could see in him both the shining glory of the twelve stones and the inexpressible teaching of the blessed apostles. Thus he made the good deeds of his pure soul "shine out with gold, hyacinth and purple, twice-dyed scarlet or vermilion, with twisted linen", so that his soul would be worthy to be led into the heavenly court'. The colours of the priestly garments and the curtains of the tabernacle originate in Ex. XXV.3–5 and XXVIII.6. However, Byrhtferth's immediate source here is Aldhelm, *Prosa de uirginitate* xv, lines 25–8, ed. Ehwald, p. 244; see Byrhtferth, VSE ii. 1, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 238, n. 3.

¹³¹ Byrhtferth, VSO v. 16, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 190: 'The hour approaches when "the dignity of the pall of earthly existence will be the adornment of your soul; and from where the source of your visible distinction lay, from there will the invisible glory of your soul increase and remain"'. Byrhtferth's source is probably from a liturgical book similar to the Dunstan Pontifical (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 943, with the pallium prayers at fols. 59–61), as he also quotes from an antiphon from the *Candlemas ordo* (see *ibid.*, fols 104–5) earlier in the same passage of the *Vita S. Oswaldi*. I intend to return to the sources of this passage on another occasion.

¹³² Gregory the Great, *Regula pastoralis* ii. 2, ed. Judic and Rommel, I, 176–8; trans. Davis, p. 46: 'Let these [priests], therefore, realise in their hearts how purified those ought to be, who carry in the bosom of their own personal responsibility living vessels to the eternal temple [...] It was also strictly

These examples of priestly vestments being used exegetically brings us back to Wallis' discussion of the *Alea celi* diagram (quoted above), where she argues that the variegated colours and twelvefold design are suggestive of the High Priest's breastplate, containing lots used for divination (the Urim and Thummim).¹³³ Under the New Covenant, the process of interpreting God's will becomes a meditative 'game'; instead of relying on lots, the priests must purify and decorate their souls through exegetical study and meditation. Through this practice, they convert it into a microcosmic Tabernacle-Temple, drawing themselves closer to the macrocosm of heaven.¹³⁴ Ecgwine's soul shines with jewels and variegated colours indicating that, like a High Priest, he has been deemed worthy to enter the heavenly Tabernacle-Temple.

There is a final comparable example in the *Vita S. Oswaldi*, where Byrhtferth used similar imagery to describe the reward of the pure soul in heaven. He records that when St Oswald visited Fleury, he blessed the monks for their observance of the Rule and proclaimed: 'quatinus cum tanto patrono fulgere ualeatis ceu bis seni lapides in astris, super quibus residet alto solio Sapientia pollens'.¹³⁵ The first part of this statement, about the monks gleaming like the twelve jewels in the stars, is reminiscent of the microcosmic description of St Ecgwine's jewel-studded soul. The second part of the sentence introduces the new concept of Wisdom sitting enthroned above the twelvefold stars. Lapidge suggests that this image is derived from the enthronement of Christ in Revelation XX.11.¹³⁶ However, the final section of Prudentius' *Psychomachia* provides a more immediate parallel, with a description of the enthronement of Wisdom in a temple of the human soul. Prudentius explicitly linked this throne of Wisdom to the temple of Solomon and the throne of Christ (who is the 'wisdom of God' in 1 Cor. I.24).¹³⁷ Byrhtferth was certainly familiar with the *Psychomachia*,

enjoined that on the breastplate the names of the twelve Patriarchs should be inscribed. To bear the names of the fathers registered on the breast, is to meditate unceasingly on the lives of those elders [...]. Cf. Bede, *De tabernaculo* iii. 3–10, ed. Hurst, esp. pp. 100–1; trans. Holder, pp. 115–16; A. Zhirnova, 'Cosmetic Theology in England, 605–1100: Aldhelm of Malmesbury, the Venerable Bede, Goscelin of St Bertin' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Cambridge, 2025), pp. 140–3. For the cosmological aspect of the tabernacle colours, see Bede's comments on the tabernacle veil: 'Velum hoc caelum interpretatur [...]. Quod autem idem uelum de hyacintho et purpura et cocco bis tincto et bysso retorta pulchra uarietate contextum est, quis non uideat etiam iuxta litteram pulchritudini caelestis congruere uisionis?' ('This curtain is interpreted as heaven [...] Now the same curtain was woven from blue, and purple, and scarlet twice dyed, and fine twisted linen with embroidery work. Who does not see that the literal meaning of this also corresponds with the beauty of the heavenly vision?'); Bede, *De tabernaculo* ii. 8, ed. Hurst, p. 71; trans. Holder, p. 79; see also O'Brien, *Bede's Temple*, p. 77.

¹³³ See above, pp. 29–30. The High Priest's vestments are described in Lev. XVI; Heb. IX.7.

¹³⁴ For an interesting parallel, see the portrayal of a soul as a *selegescot* ('tabernacle') in *Christ III* 1480–3, ed. G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, ASPR, 6 vols. (New York, 1931–42) III, 44.

¹³⁵ Byrhtferth, VSO ii. 5, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 42: 'so that with such a patron saint you may be able to gleam like twelve jewels in the stars, above which Wisdom resides on her lofty throne'.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, n. 42.

¹³⁷ Prudentius, *Psychomachia* 816–19, ed. and trans. H. J. Thompson, Loeb Classical Library 387 (Cambridge, MA, 1949), 336: 'nam quid terrigenas ferro pepulisse phalangas | Culparum prodest, hominis si Filius arce | aetheris inlapsus purgati corporis urbem | intret inornatam templi splendentis egenus?' ('For what does it profit to have driven back with the sword the earth-born regiments of the Sins, if the Son of Man coming down from high heaven and entering the city of the cleansed body finds it unadorned and lacks a shining temple?').

which was a favourite source for quotation and inspired his allegory of a spiritual battle Babylon in the *Vita S. Ecgwini*.¹³⁸ He may also have been familiar with an illustrated version of the text, which circulated widely in Anglo-Saxon England.¹³⁹ In the *Psychomachia*, the Virtues build a temple and embed its walls with twelve gemstones and twelve doors.¹⁴⁰ It is described as a microcosm of the human soul, because the Holy Spirit enters through the twelve apostolic doors and into the human heart throughout the four stages of man's life.¹⁴¹ The Virtues also build an inner chamber with seven pillars, where Wisdom is enthroned among the star-like jewels, like the seven pillars of the house of Wisdom in Proverbs IX.1.¹⁴² The enthronement of Wisdom above the jewels of human souls in the *Vita S. Oswaldi* is strikingly reminiscent of the imagery of the *Psychomachia*, reminding monks to make a Tabernacle-Temple of their own souls. Like the number four, twelve links the microcosmic soul and the macrocosmic heavens, demonstrating how to see God's throne and enter into the Tabernacle-Temple through transforming one's soul into a temple of Wisdom.

Conclusions

Read in isolation, Byrhtferth of Ramsey's invitation to imagine Bede in Moses' tabernacle is enigmatic. The obscure language conveys some significant but difficult-to-express ideas about monastic education and the underlying design of the cosmos. This peculiar scene is vital to how we think about the Benedictine classroom and cosmography, given that Byrhtferth is now recognised as one of the most prolific and significant writers of the English monastic reform.¹⁴³ Unfortunately, the defective line and the use of rare and esoteric diction in the passage obscure its meaning, so that the intended purpose of picturing Bede in a tabernacle is lost. Perhaps Byrhtferth would have explained it to his students in person, clarifying exactly how he intended them to contemplate Bede's role in teaching the *saltus lunae*. While we cannot listen in on his classroom, Byrhtferth's mind was obsessive and his interests were idiosyncratic. It has therefore been

¹³⁸ Byrhtferth, *VSO* i. 7 and ii. 7, ed. and trans. Lapidge, pp. 28 and 46–8; Byrhtferth, *VSE* i. 10, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 224.

¹³⁹ M. Atherton, 'The Image of the Temple in the "Psychomachia" and Late Anglo-Saxon Literature', *Bull. of the John Rylands Lib.* 79 (1997), 263–85.

¹⁴⁰ Prudentius, *Psychomachia* 826–9, 838–9, and 851–65, ed. and trans. Thompson, pp. 336–8.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 840–50, p. 338: 'Spiritus his titulis arcana recondita Mentis | ambit et electos vocat in praecordia Sensus; | quaque hominis natura viget, quam corpore toto | quadrua yis animat, trinis ingressibus aram | cordis adit castisque colit sacraria votis [...] ('With these inscriptions the Spirit encircles the unseen privacy of Soul, calling elect Sentiments into the heart; and at whatever side is man's life, whose bodily temper is given by a four-fold force, it approaches the altar in the heart by three avenues and with pure desires honours its sanctuary [...])

¹⁴² *Ibid.* 868, p. 72. In the *Vita S. Ecgwini*, Byrhtferth wrote that Ecgwine desired to be sustained 'columpnis quaternis ternisque' ('by sevenfold columns') like the 'domus uere sapientiae' ('house of true wisdom'); *VSE* i. 9, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 222. Byrhtferth was very fond of the image of the seven pillars of wisdom, connecting these with the seven liberal arts necessary for the development of wisdom; Byrhtferth, *VSE* i. 7, ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 218; Byrhtferth, *VSO* Prol., ed. and trans. Lapidge, p. 6.

¹⁴³ Baker and Lapidge, *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, pp. xxv–xxxiv; Baker, 'The Old English Canon of Byrhtferth of Ramsey'; Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style'; Stephenson, *Politics*, pp. 39–102.

possible to reconstruct his ideas about the cosmos from reading his *Enchiridion* alongside his other writings, notably the *Epilogus* and the *Computus* diagrams.

Taking together Byrhtferth's depiction of Bede in the *saltus lunae* lesson and the *Epilogus*, Bede emerges as his foremost authority on computus and knowledge concerning God (i.e. theology). Although Byrhtferth pre-dated the foundation of Bede's cult by more than half a century, he nevertheless called Bede *beatissimus* ('most blessed'), *reuerentissimus* ('most reverend'), *sacer* ('holy'), and *uenerandus* ('venerable') in Latin, and *eadig* ('blessed') and *æglæca* ('awe-inspiring') in vernacular prose. The *Epilogus* and the *Enchiridion* also depict Bede as passing his afterlife in heaven. He is to be imagined in *Moyses geteldgehlwung*, no longer the historical tabernacle, but an anagogical figure of the throne of God, the place where the 'pure of heart' (Matt. V.8) go to 'see the God of God in Sion' (Ps. LXXXIII.8) in perpetual theophany. Although a cult of Bede had not yet emerged, the writing of the *Epilogus* occurred within a few decades of the appearance of the first calendar entries for Bede's feast in the 1020s and 30s, suggesting that Bede was beginning to be seen as a holy man worthy of veneration. His disciplined monastic life and his role as teacher of the English made him an exceptionally important exemplar for young monks to emulate ('Anglis uero suis depromsit sectandam glorię sempiternatit uiam').¹⁴⁴ This was significant because many reformers were interested in finding precedents and a spiritual genealogy in the teachers of the monasticised Church in the seventh and eighth centuries, as described in the *Historia ecclesiastica*.¹⁴⁵ Bede's life, as related in the *Epilogus*, illustrates how young monks ought to spend their lives in 'reading, teaching, or meditating', so that they might achieve theophany in heaven.

By imagining Bede in a Tabernacle-Temple, Byrhtferth typologically linked him to the biblical mediators of sacred information. The Tabernacle-Temple is an earthly shadow of the heavens built by Moses, the divine dwelling place on earth, the body of Christ, and the throne of God in heaven. Through it, Bede communicates divine mysteries to mankind in the form of computistical theology, so that his students might spiritually discern the invisible, divine order of the harmonious cosmos. By retreating into the Tabernacle-Temple with Bede's *De temporum ratione*, students might meditate on the manifold meanings of his writings. The *saltus lunae* lesson is therefore a very early example of the figure of the Tabernacle-Temple used as a 'machine of meditation', a figure designed to produce new exegetical interpretations through frequent retreat and contemplation. I have argued here that this type of figurative meditation on the ordered cosmos was a feature of Byrhtferth's pedagogy, and can also be seen in his computistical diagrams. It is widely understood that many of his diagrams were intended to proclaim God as the prime mover of the universe by placing a referent to either God or Christ at their centres, and illustrating the numerological divine order of the universe.¹⁴⁶ Some of these diagrams contain encoded

¹⁴⁴ Byrhtferth, *Epilogus*, line 32, ed. and trans. Baker and Lapidge, p. 376: 'For his own English peoples he set out the pathway to be followed to eternal glory'.

¹⁴⁵ The example of the Monks of Wearmouth-Jarrow is the major topic of the second section of Byrhtferth's *Historia regum*; see Clarke, 'Perceptions of the Past', ch. 2.

¹⁴⁶ For example, Kühnel, *The End of Time in the Order of Things*, pp. 181–4; Caviness, 'Images of Divine Order', pp. 99–120; Wallis, 'What a Medieval Diagram Shows'.

allusions to the Tabernacle-Temple as the throne of Christ in *maiestas Domini* over the four-cornered microcosm of man's earthly body and the macrocosm of the heavens. By engaging in contemplative study of these mysteries, expressed in the diagrams, the viewer might transform their own souls into a microcosmic Tabernacle-Temple (also visualised as a bejewelled breastplate or throne of Wisdom) through which they might join the saints in eternal theophany. In meditatively deciphering the underlying structure of the diagrams, the student is called on to perceive the organising principle of God in the Tabernacle-Temple throughout the entirety of time and space.

The point of Byrhtferth's *Enchiridion* and *Computus* was to teach young monks to 'see' God at work in the cosmos, through computistical study and disciplined meditation. Given that the *Enchiridion* is overtly pedagogical, and claims to use the vernacular to facilitate learning, it is puzzling that Byrhtferth should have indulged in hidden references, numerological codes, and ciphers. Only a well-trained monk, learned in the interpretation of scripture, the writings of the Church Fathers, the computus, and exegesis, would have been able to approach the type of understanding necessary to unravel these divine mysteries. This perhaps speaks to the *Enchiridion*'s role in the classroom, reifying the distinctions between monks and clerics through language-switching, and making only the most necessary computistical information available in the vernacular (the numerological section is entirely in Latin, presumably accessible only to monks).¹⁴⁷ He seems to obscure the most important, sacred information in almost impenetrable codes and diagrams, gatekeeping it from clerics and perhaps reserving it only to himself and a select few monks.¹⁴⁸ The use of codes and riddles may also have been part of the process of training monks to understand the spiritual dimension of the world, teaching them from a young age to read textual and visual signs exegetically.¹⁴⁹ The monastic vocation required that they read and meditate constantly, avoiding interpretative error and discerning the invisible presence of God. As Wallis puts it, 'riddles and puzzles train the student to interpret the obscurities of scripture, where truth is veiled from the eyes of the unworthy beneath hard sayings and obscure symbols'.¹⁵⁰ Stephen Harris' work on ciphers in Anglo-Saxon England explains why this 'truth' had to be hidden in 'obscure symbols':

An interest in secrecy and ciphers also corresponds to a larger interest in the complexity of revealed creation [...] The Ptolemaic, neo-Platonic universe of concentric spheres which medieval and Renaissance writers inhabited was literally a sphere of seriated moral spaces. The moral space of secrecy is not earth-bound, but a higher sphere located above the multiplicity of earthly life and closer to divine unity. The 'divine mystery'

¹⁴⁷ Stephenson, *Politics*, pp. 39–102, and her 'Scapegoating'.

¹⁴⁸ For Byrhtferth's 'gatekeeping' of computistical knowledge, see chapter 3 of A. Harris, 'The "Lexis" of Medieval Computus in Selected Anglo-Latin and Old English Prose' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Cambridge, 2020), esp. pp. 278–82.

¹⁴⁹ See for example, W. Rudolf, 'Riddling and Reading', *Anglia - Zeitschrift für englische Philologie* 130 (2012), 499–525; A. Zhirnova, 'The Latin *Enigmata* and the Riddles of the Exeter Book: Textbooks for Biblical Exegetes?', *Parergon* (forthcoming).

¹⁵⁰ Wallis, 'Albums of Science in Twelfth-Century England', *Peritia* 28 (2017), 195–224, at 200.

which pertains to secrecy comprises a kind of knowledge, an inspired ability to read and to understand the fallen languages of man.¹⁵¹

The Tabernacle-Temple is an encoded mystery, in part to conceal it from the ignorant, but also because God can only be seen through contemplative exegesis. The art of deciphering through meditation could offer understanding of the divine, and ultimately eternal theophany in heaven. The Tabernacle-Temple as an expression of micro- and macrocosmic Creation is a kind of secret knowledge that must be encoded, exegetically unpuzzled, and meditatively stored in the *arca* of the heart. To lay it bare in plain language would be to remove it from the sphere of the divine.

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¹⁵¹ S. Harris, 'Anglo-Saxon Ciphers', *A Material History of Medieval and Early Modern Ciphers: Cryptography and the History of Literacy*, ed. K. Ellison and S. Kim (New York, 2017), pp. 65–79, at 73.

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