

# Textual Criticism and the Recensions of *Historia Brittonum*

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## *Introduction*

*Historia Brittonum* remains a fundamental text for our understanding of early medieval Britain and Ireland. It is the earliest surviving source for almost everything that it says. For us, this makes it the first point of departure for a host of significant subjects: medieval Welsh literature, the Arthurian legend, and the British ‘heroic age’ prominent among them. Yet basic questions about the text remain unanswered. The best recent treatments of the content tend to assume that we know what the text said when it was composed in 829/30.<sup>1</sup> The typical premise is that the well-known Harleian recension *is* the original text; by contrast, the other Latin and Irish recensions of *Historia Brittonum* are perceived to be derivative in some sense: interesting, but not relevant for understanding the original composition. This approach is not critically sound. Although there is much to support the view that the Harleian recension is the best surviving *approximation* to the original text, it does not follow that any particular aspect of it need reproduce the original text.<sup>2</sup> In truth, the only methodologically rigorous way to

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<sup>1</sup> For example, T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 437–40; Rebecca Thomas, *History and Identity in Early Medieval Wales* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2022), 10.

<sup>2</sup> This issue has led even such a careful commentator as Thomas Charles-Edwards astray: Charles-Edwards has recently claimed that the character *Albanus* in the *Historia Brittonum*’s version of the Frankish Table of Nations cannot represent the Scottish kingdom ‘Alba’, ‘since the latter was only current from *c.*900’, after the composition of *Historia Brittonum*. However, both Nicholas Evans and Patrick Wadden have shown that the reading *Albanus* is absent from the other recensions and is a later innovation that arose during the transmission of the Harleian recension, and thus may well have been intended to represent the kingdom of Alba. See T. M. Charles-Edwards, ‘Origin Legends in Ireland and Celtic Britain’, in Lindy Brady and Patrick Wadden (eds), *Origin Legends in Early Medieval Western Europe*

build up a picture of the original text is to compare all the surviving evidence together on the basis of an established framework for understanding the textual relationships. But no such framework has ever been securely established.

In what follows, I attempt to review the existing corpus of evidence that underlies the current understanding of the textual relationships between the recensions of *Historia Brittonum*, before then proceeding to introduce a quantity of new evidence to the debate. This evidence is unapologetically stemmatic in nature: too often, in the past, discussion of the recensions of *Historia Brittonum* has revolved around preconceived ideas about when certain sections of text were added to, or removed from, the tradition, but this is no basis for the critical establishment of textual relationships. Instead, we need to return to basics, and ask ourselves which recensions share demonstrable textual innovations with others, and which do not. A necessary preliminary to this is a clear set of definitions as to what exactly is meant by the various recension labels, and so this is the first point of departure below. I also consider the merits of some recent work on this issue. It is my hope that this article will provide a secure basis for future discussion of this important but very knotty problem.

My work on this topic has been stimulated by ongoing efforts to produce a new edition of the Harleian and Chartres recensions of *Historia Brittonum*, which will be published in due course by Boydell.<sup>3</sup> Although it is not the intention of that edition to reconstruct the original text, it has nonetheless been necessary to form a working understanding of the relationships between the recensions, established from first principles. In doing so, I build upon, and modify, the conclusions of the late and great Professor David Dumville, who first earned his

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(Leiden: Brill, 2022), 46–74 (64); Nicholas J. Evans, ‘Cultural Contacts and Ethnic Origins in Viking Age Wales and Northern Britain: The Case of Albanus, Britain’s First Inhabitant and Scottish Ancestor’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 41 (2015), 131–54; Patrick Wadden, ‘The Frankish Table of Nations in Insular Historiography’, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 72 (Winter 2016), 1–31 (12–13).

<sup>3</sup> Ben Guy (ed. and trans.), *Historia Brittonum, attributed to Nennius: The Harleian and Chartres Recensions* (Woodbridge: Boydell, forthcoming).

scholarly reputation in a string of weighty articles on this topic in the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> It will be seen below that I sometimes have cause to diverge substantially from Dumville's views on certain issues; yet it remains equally true that, without his contributions, particularly in the area of palaeography and manuscripts, the present article simply would not have been possible.

It is well-known that Dumville promised to publish a ten-volume edition of *Historia Brittonum*, but only ever published the third volume in the set, namely the volume concerning the Vatican recension.<sup>5</sup> This deficit is partly made up by Dumville's 1975 PhD thesis, which he undertook in Edinburgh with Professor Kenneth Jackson.<sup>6</sup> While working on another article concerning *Historia Brittonum*, about ten years ago, I paid for Edinburgh University Library to make a private scan of this thesis for me; an unintended but felicitous consequence of this action was that the scan of the thesis was then made freely available online on the 'Edinburgh Research Archive'.<sup>7</sup> This thesis contains Dumville's editions of the Harleian, Chartres, Vatican and Sawley recensions, in addition to a survey of the manuscripts of the Gildasian recension and various other studies on aspects of *Historia Brittonum*'s textual tradition, some of which were later published as discrete articles. Consequently, the thesis, supported by Dumville's other publications, must be the starting point for further investigation of this topic. On occasion, I have also considered it helpful to refer to Mommsen's labyrinthine variorum edition of 1898, due to its sheer comprehensiveness, but I have not referred to earlier editions of the text.<sup>8</sup> I also refer occasionally to Lot's edition of

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<sup>4</sup> The most important of these papers are gathered together in David N. Dumville, *Histories and Pseudo-histories of the Insular Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1990). I refer to the original publication details of these papers below.

<sup>5</sup> David N. Dumville, *The Historia Brittonum 3: The 'Vatican' Recension* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985). He listed the ten projected volumes on page viii of this edition.

<sup>6</sup> David N. Dumville, 'The Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1975.

<sup>7</sup> The URI is <http://hdl.handle.net/1842/8972>, accessed 1 April 2025. At the time, the £40 fee seemed like a bargain for a 951-page thesis! The article is Ben Guy, 'The Origins of the Compilation of Welsh Historical Texts in Harley 3859', *Studia Celtica*, 49 (2015), 21–56.

<sup>8</sup> Theodor Mommsen (ed.), *Chronica minora saec. IV. V. VI. VII*, vol. 3, *Auctorum antiquissimorum* 13 (Berlin: apud Weidmannos, 1898), 111–222. As Lot put it, 'Il en est résulté un appareil copieux, trop copieux ... un fouillis inextricable': Ferdinand Lot (ed.),

1934, which is underused in Anglophone scholarship, even though its introduction remains very valuable.<sup>9</sup>

### *Defining the recensions*

Since the purpose of this discussion is to identify and discuss the evidence for the textual relationships between the surviving independent recensions of *Historia Brittonum*, it is necessary to have a precise working definition for each recension, along with a clear mode of reference for them in the absence of ideal editions. There are six texts to be considered here: five in Latin and one in Middle Irish. Each of these is represented by one or more extant manuscripts. Where there are multiple manuscripts for a recension, these may of course differ between themselves, but not as substantially or significantly as the recensions differ from one another. It is not the purpose of this section to list all manuscript witnesses for each recension exhaustively, though it is helpful to draw attention to key witnesses, especially those on which editions have been based. Details of all manuscript witnesses to *Historia Brittonum* that are mentioned in this article may be found in the appendix below.

#### *The Harleian recension*

This recension is by far the best known, primarily because it was published in a cheap and accessible paperback version, accompanied by a translation, in 1980, three years after the death of its editor, John Morris.<sup>10</sup> Most modern commentators would accept the long-established view that this recension, overall, represents the original text most closely.<sup>11</sup> This is also my view, and the study below ultimately supports this position, though with significant caveats as regards the details.

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*Nennius et l'Historia Brittonum*, 2 vols (Paris: H. Champion, 1934), I, 5. I abbreviate Mommsen's edition as *MGH HB*. Other abbreviations are as follows: *BBCS* = *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*; BL = London, British Library; BN = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale; CUL = Cambridge, University Library.

<sup>9</sup> Lot, *Nennius*.

<sup>10</sup> John Morris (ed. and trans.), *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals* (London: Phillimore, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> The nature of the relationship between the Harleian recension and the archetypal text is well characterized in Lot, *Nennius*, I, 16–19.

There are two full manuscript witnesses to this recension: BL Harley 3859 (c.1100)<sup>12</sup> and BL Cotton Vespasian D. xxi (s. xii<sup>1</sup>).<sup>13</sup> The former is the most famous manuscript of *Historia Brittonum*, and is often wrongly said to be the earliest or best.<sup>14</sup> There are also several partial witnesses to the Harleian recension, which can sometimes help to clarify or correct the readings of the two full witnesses.<sup>15</sup> Below, I define the ‘Harleian recension’, denoted by *Harl.*, as the common exemplar of Harley 3859 and Cotton Vespasian D. xxi.

The best published edition of the Harleian recension to date is that by Edmond Faral, based on Harley 3859 but with some emendations drawn from Cotton Vespasian D. xxi.<sup>16</sup> Faral’s text was the basis of Morris’s edition, but Morris dispensed with Faral’s *apparatus criticus* (rendering Faral’s emendations invisible) and introduced various other changes silently, including the addition of entire passages from other recensions. Morris’s edition is quite unscholarly and an unsuitable basis for academic study.

Dumville’s edition of the Harleian recension, accompanied by a translation and full textual notes, is a significant advance on anything that came before. While it remains unpublished, it

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<sup>12</sup> ‘H’ in editions by Mommsen, Dumville, and myself.

<sup>13</sup> ‘K’ in Mommsen’s edition, ‘R’ in editions by Dumville and myself.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed description of Harley 3859, and consideration of its Welsh contents, see Ben Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy: An Introduction and Textual Study* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2020), 53–60.

<sup>15</sup> These partial witnesses are listed in David N. Dumville, ‘The *Liber Floridus* of Lambert of Saint-Omer and the *Historia Brittonum*’, *BBCS*, 26 (1974–6), 103–22 (103–9) (repr. *Histories*, chap. XII). For manuscript details, see the Appendix below. Three of these four partial witnesses are available in printed editions: L in Dumville, ‘*Liber Floridus*’; A in David N. Dumville, ‘A Paraphrase of the *Historia Brittonum*: Two Fragments’, *BBCS*, 25 (1972–4), 101–5 (repr. *Histories*, chap. XIII); F in Peter S. Baker, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, vol. 8: *MS F* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2000), 2. For a concordance of the fourth (I) with the Harleian recension, see Dumville, ‘Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*’, 827.

<sup>16</sup> Edmond Faral, *La Légende arthurienne: études et documents*, 3 vols (Paris: H. Champion, 1929), III, 2–62.

can be accessed in his 1975 PhD thesis.<sup>17</sup> Dumville's edition is the first to use the various partial witnesses to the recension. He also gives full variant readings for three manuscripts that descend from Cotton Vespasian D. xxi, much inflating the apparatus: these are useful for understanding the full extent of variation within the recension, but they are not relevant for reconstructing the recension's archetype.

In the following discussion, I use my own edition of the Harleian recension, which is at an advanced stage of preparation. In this edition, any instances where the two main witnesses to the Harleian recension disagree have been checked against the other recensions, which usually provide a clear indication of which of the variant Harleian readings derives from the archetype of the Harleian recension. Nonetheless, any significant variation between the two main witnesses to the Harleian recension is noted below whenever relevant. My edition has been produced through an independent collation of the witnesses, though I have naturally been informed by Dumville's edition. In this context, it is worth highlighting two ways in which my edition differs from Dumville's: (1) no variants from the manuscripts that derive from Cotton Vespasian D. xxi have been included in the apparatus; and (2) I have followed the traditional section numbering, unlike Dumville who introduced new section divisions based on the paragraphs used in Harley 3859 itself.<sup>18</sup>

### *The Gildasian recension*

This recension is closely related to the Harleian recension, as discussed below. Witnesses to the Gildasian recension are characterized by an introductory colophon that anachronistically attributes the composition of the text to the sixth-century polemicist Gildas. Despite its status as the version of *Historia Brittonum* that was most frequently copied and read between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, no edition of it has ever been published. The only substantial discussion of the recension is that in Dumville's thesis, which begins with four pages of introductory remarks before proceeding to describe each of the manuscript witnesses in turn, often, though not systematically, suggesting their relationships with each other.<sup>19</sup> No-one has

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<sup>17</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 30–157 (introduction), 158–295 (edition with translation and indices) and 669–712 (variant readings and textual notes).

<sup>18</sup> For example, see Dumville's concordance table in '*Vatican*' Recension, 56.

<sup>19</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 504–86.

ever published a *stemma codicum* of the recension, though it is possible to deduce an incomplete one on the basis of Dumville's manuscript notes. Dumville grouped the manuscripts into three textually distinct subgroups. Happily, the three manuscripts of the Gildasian recension that Mommsen collated in full in his edition of *Historia Brittonum* each belong to one of the three subgroups, as follows:<sup>20</sup>

- Subgroup I: Durham, Cathedral Library, B.II.35, part ii (*Historia Brittonum* probably added to the manuscript *s. xii*<sup>2/4</sup>): Mommsen's D<sup>1</sup>, Dumville's D.
- Subgroup II: BL Cotton Caligula A. viii (late 12th century): Mommsen's P, Dumville's G.
- Subgroup III: BL Cotton Nero D. viii, part i (*s. xiii*<sup>1</sup>): Mommsen's Q, Dumville's N.

Dumville was able to show that the first and third of these manuscripts probably derive from other extant copies: Durham B.II.35 is a direct copy of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 163, part ii (*s. xii*<sup>1/4</sup>), and Cotton Nero D. viii probably derives from Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 20, part ii (*s. xii*<sup>med</sup>).<sup>21</sup>

Bodley 163 has a special place in the textual history of the Gildasian recension.<sup>22</sup> Having been written in the first quarter of the twelfth century (perhaps 1116×*c.*1125), it is among the earliest extant manuscripts of any recension of *Historia Brittonum*. According to Dumville's discussion, most extant manuscripts of the first subgroup of the Gildasian recension can be shown to derive ultimately from Bodley 163. His comments about its place in the Gildasian recension as a whole, however, are somewhat cryptic:<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> For Mommsen's description of the manuscripts of the Gildasian recension, see *MGH HB*, 121–2; cf. Lot, *Nennius*, I, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 522–3 and 574 respectively.

<sup>22</sup> Bodley 163 is 'Spec. 11' in Mommsen's edition, collated only for chapters 1–7: *MGH HB*, 112.

<sup>23</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 515–16.

It is the oldest witness both to the subgroup to which it belongs and to the ‘Gildasian’ version as a whole; in fact it stands textually at the head of its subgroup. However, it has received series of alterations at a very early stage, which are reflected to different extents in the two copies which, it can be demonstrated, are taken directly from this manuscript [...] It is tempting to speculate about the status of the first stratum of alterations to our manuscript. B [= Bodley 163] stands at the head of the surviving tradition of the Gildasian recension of the *Historia Brittonum*. On the basis of the ‘Gildasian’ manuscripts it is therefore impossible to probe behind this first stratum of alterations in B.

The precise meaning of these statements is never clarified further. The suggestion seems to be that the entire recension, including all three subgroups, derives ultimately from Bodley 163, reflecting the successive alterations that were made to its text (a confusing scenario given that Dumville included Bodley 163 as a member of subgroup I). But the evidence for this is never discussed directly. No additional explanation for this understanding is given in Dumville’s account of the second subgroup, while of the third subgroup he claims only that ‘It certainly derives from the first subgroup, and does not appear likely to have originated before the 1130s’.<sup>24</sup> Judging by Dumville’s comments, then, we should not assume that his three subgroups are textually independent of one another.

It is to be hoped that a full study of the textual tradition of the Gildasian recension will, one day, provide clarity on all this and delineate the exact importance of Bodley 163 in the textual tradition. In the meantime, for the purpose of the present study, and with Dumville’s comments in mind, I have used the underlying text of Bodley 163 as my representative text of the Gildasian recension, denoted by *Gild*.<sup>25</sup> I have punctuated my transcriptions in accordance with the modern norms employed in my edition of *Harl*. My experience with using Bodley 163 to supplement my edition of the Harleian recension has shown that it is a highly important witness to *Historia Brittonum*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Dumville, ‘Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*’, 567.

<sup>25</sup> In quotations from *Gild*., I use superscript to represent additions or alterations that were made as Bodley 163 was revised.

<sup>26</sup> Although Bodley 163 is currently inaccessible outside the Bodleian Library, its earliest copy, Durham B.II.35, ff. 129<sup>r</sup>–136<sup>r</sup> has been digitized and is available at

### *The Chartres recension*

This recension existed only in a single manuscript: Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, 98. This manuscript, along with the rest of the Chartres library, was sadly destroyed by American bombing on 26 May 1944.<sup>27</sup> Fortunately, the folios containing *Historia Brittonum* had been photographed prior to the destruction of the manuscript, and these have now been made available online.<sup>28</sup> On the same website it is also possible to view 108 images of fragments from the original manuscript that have been painstakingly identified during a project to salvage the remains of the Chartres library.<sup>29</sup>

The date of the copy of *Historia Brittonum* in Chartres 98 has been misunderstood in the past.<sup>30</sup> The main part of the manuscript was written in the second half of the ninth century, and it mostly comprises a copy of Hrabanus Maurus' *Expositio siue Commentarium in*

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<https://iiif.durham.ac.uk/index.html?manifest=t1mth83kz326>, accessed 1 April 2025. Note too that a 16th-century transcript of Bodley 163 (omitting the *Mirabilia*), made for Archbishop Matthew Parker, survives in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 101, pp. 169–85, which has also been digitized: <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/fp397bs1880>, accessed 1 April 2025.

<sup>27</sup> Note that Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 301, misquotes the date as 26 June 1944.

<sup>28</sup> <https://arca.irht.cnrs.fr/ark:/63955/md54kk91j424>, accessed 1 April 2025.

<sup>29</sup> See the entry for Chartres 98 on the project website:

<https://chartres.irht.cnrs.fr/fr/manuscrits/chartres-bm-ms-98>, accessed 1 April 2025.

Fitzpatrick-Matthews misleadingly states that the manuscript was only 'badly damaged' by the bombing, and claims that Dumville was wrong to say in 1975 that it had been wholly destroyed: Keith J. Fitzpatrick-Matthews, 'Genealogia Brittonum: Revisiting the Textual Tradition of the *Historia Brittonum*', *Studia Celtica*, 54 (2020), 45–73 (46). In fact, Dumville, writing before the salvage work on the Chartres library, was correct, and even today only mere fragments of the manuscript are known.

<sup>30</sup> For example, in Mommsen, *MGH HB*, 119, where the whole manuscript is dated 'saec. IX/X'.

*Mattheum*.<sup>31</sup> However, flyleaves were subsequently added to the beginning and end of the volume, later foliated as folios 1–5 and 167–8. These flyleaves contain the Chartres recension of *Historia Brittonum*, now folios 2<sup>v</sup>, 3<sup>r</sup>, 3<sup>v</sup>, 5<sup>v</sup>, 167<sup>r</sup>, 167<sup>v</sup> and 168<sup>r</sup>. The script of the flyleaves is aberrant, but Bernhard Bischoff was inclined to date the hand to the first half of the eleventh century and place it in Brittany.<sup>32</sup> The text itself is incomplete: it stops, mid-sentence, in a section equivalent to *Harl.* §37, about a third of the way down folio 168<sup>r</sup>, the remainder of which was originally left blank.

The Chartres recension has been published on three prior occasions: initially by Duchesne in 1894, again by Faral in 1929 in parallel with the Harleian recension, and a third time by Lot in 1934.<sup>33</sup> Dumville re-edited the text in his PhD thesis, and this is presently the best edition, which I follow below.<sup>34</sup> I denote it as *Chart*.

#### *The Vatican recension*

The earliest, and best, manuscript of this recension is BN Latin 9768 + Rome, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Reginensibus Lat. 1964. *Historia Brittonum* occurs on folios 47–93 of the Vatican part of the manuscript; these folios have been dated to the second half of the

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<sup>31</sup> Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts (mit Ausnahme der wisigotischen)*, 3 vols (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998–2014), I, 194 no. 889.

<sup>32</sup> Bischoff in Dumville, ‘Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*’, 304–5; David N. Dumville, ‘An Irish Idiom Latinised’, *Éigse*, 16 (1975–6), 183–6 (183); cf. David N. Dumville, ‘Writers, Scribes and Readers in Brittany, A.D. 800–1100: The Evidence of Manuscripts’, in Helen Fulton (ed.), *Medieval Celtic Literature and Society* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2005), 49–64 (62). See too Jacopo Bisagni’s entry for the manuscript on the website of *A Descriptive Handlist of Breton Manuscripts, c. AD 780–1100*: <https://ircabritt.nuigalway.ie/handlist/catalogue/43>, accessed 1 April 2025.

<sup>33</sup> L. Duchesne, ‘Nennius retractatus’, *Revue celtique*, 15 (1894), 174–97; Faral, *Légende arthurienne*, III, 4–28; Lot, *Nennius*, I, 227–31.

<sup>34</sup> Dumville, ‘Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*’, 300–25 (introduction), 326–44 (text with indices) and 713–19 (textual notes). I am currently editing and translating the text for my new edition. My edition will follow the section numbers established by Dumville.

eleventh century and attributed to Saint-Médard de Soissons in France.<sup>35</sup> Dumville based his published edition of the Vatican recension on the Vatican manuscript, corrected against the recension's three other full witnesses (and occasionally various partial witnesses).<sup>36</sup> Only two of these four witnesses were known to Mommsen: his manuscript M was the Vatican manuscript (Dumville's R), while his manuscript N was BN Latin 11108, part i (s. xii<sup>2</sup>; Dumville's J).<sup>37</sup> The other two full witnesses were unknown to Mommsen: these are BN Latin 8048, Section C (s. xiii, Dumville's P) and BL Add. 11702 (early s. xiv; Dumville's A). References to the Vatican recension below (denoted by *Vat.*) are based on the main text of Dumville's edition; only occasionally has it been necessary to distinguish between the readings of different witnesses to the recension.

### *The Nennian recension*

This independent Latin recension does not survive as a full text. It is attested only partially by a series of additions and alterations made to a copy of subgroup II of the Gildasian recension: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 139 (main text written around the mid-1160s; hereafter abbreviated as CCCC 139).<sup>38</sup> As many as nine separate hands engaged with the text of *Historia Brittonum* in CCCC 139 after it was initially written: the identification of these hands rests on Dumville's fundamental palaeographical work.<sup>39</sup>

Dumville asserted that a firm distinction should be made between two groups of hands. The first group, encompassing his hands C<sup>1</sup>, C<sup>2</sup> and C<sup>3</sup>, collated their Gildasian base-text

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<sup>35</sup> Dumville, *'Vatican' Recension*, 26–7. The date is Bischoff's.

<sup>36</sup> Dumville, *'Vatican' Recension*, 40–3 and 55.

<sup>37</sup> Mommsen, *MGH HB*, 119–20.

<sup>38</sup> For the dating of the main text, see David N. Dumville, 'The Corpus Christi "Nennius"', *BBCS*, 25 (1972–4), 369–80 (370–3) (repr. *Histories*, chap. IX); Derek Baker, 'Scissors and Paste: Corpus Christi, Cambridge, MS 139 Again', in Derek Baker (ed.), *The Material Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History* (Oxford: Blackwell, for the Ecclesiastical History Society, 1975), 83–123 (94–8).

<sup>39</sup> Dumville, 'Corpus Christi "Nennius" '. I am grateful to Nicholas Evans for sharing with me his ongoing work on the identification of scribal hands in CCCC 139. In Evans's view, some scribal attributions are more ambiguous than Dumville allowed. Nonetheless, this does not alter the overall argument offered below.

against the lost copy of the Nennian recension.<sup>40</sup> This had been done within a year or two of the writing of CCCC 139's base-text, since the collations of these scribes were, in 1166, copied from CCCC 139 into Durham B.II.35 (mentioned above as a witness to subgroup I of the Gildasian recension and a direct copy of Bodley 163). Subsequent scribes, numbered C<sup>4</sup> to C<sup>9</sup>, were thought by Dumville to have worked a generation later. In his opinion, they did not collate the text against the Nennian recension, but rather expanded and commented on the text in various ways, sometimes drawing on sources of separate origin.<sup>41</sup> It was this fully expanded text that was then copied into a further manuscript, which Dumville would date to the beginning of the thirteenth century, and which now exists in two divided parts: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 66 + CUL Ff.1.27, pp. 1–40 and 73–252 (the copy of *Historia Brittonum* is now in CUL Ff.1.27, pp. 14–40).<sup>42</sup> Several of the scribes that engaged with CCCC 139 after 1166 can also be found in this latter manuscript (C<sup>4</sup>, C<sup>8</sup>, C<sup>9</sup>). CUL Ff.1.27 therefore effectively preserves a fair copy of a new recension of *Historia Brittonum*, which Dumville dubbed the 'Sawley' recension, because both CCCC 139 and CCCC 66/CUL Ff.1.27 bear *ex libris* inscriptions from the Cistercian abbey of Sawley in Lancashire, and Dumville believed that both manuscripts had been written there (despite CCCC 139 having been used in Durham in 1166 for the collation of Durham B.II.35). Dumville provided an edition of the Sawley recension, based on CUL Ff.1.27, in his PhD thesis.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Dumville's discussion of the Nennian recension is therefore based on the work of these three scribes, and in particular their major additions: see David N. Dumville, '“Nennius” and the *Historia Brittonum*', *Studia Celtica*, 10/11 (1975/6), 78–95 (repr. *Histories*, chap. X).

<sup>41</sup> These expansions and comments are the subject of David N. Dumville, 'Celtic-Latin Texts in Northern England, c. 1150–c. 1250', *Celtica*, 12 (1977), 19–49 (repr. *Histories*, chap. XI).

<sup>42</sup> For the division of this manuscript in the 16th century, see David N. Dumville, 'The Sixteenth-Century History of Two Cambridge Books from Sawley', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 7 (1980), 427–44 (433–7) (repr. *Histories*, chap. VIII).

<sup>43</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 587–613 (introduction), 614–66 (text) and 768–807 (textual notes and variant readings).

However, subsequent work has undermined several aspects of Dumville's understanding of these manuscripts.<sup>44</sup> There are two important conclusions for our purposes. One is that the copy of *Historia Brittonum* in CUL Ff.1.27 was written in the late twelfth century, probably around 1188, rather than in the early thirteenth century as Dumville had thought. This has significant implications for Dumville's reconstruction of the scribal activity in CCCC 139, since there is no longer any need to postulate two chronologically discrete phases of glossing activity, one belonging to the year or two up to 1166 and the other to the early thirteenth century. Rather, the work of scribes C<sup>4</sup> to C<sup>9</sup> must have taken place between 1166, when CCCC 139 was used to annotate Durham B.II.35, and c.1188, when CUL Ff.1.27 was copied from CCCC 139. Within this time frame, it is easier to imagine that all the hands were contributing to a sporadic but continuous effort to annotate and improve CCCC 139's copy of *Historia Brittonum*. This tighter revised chronology actually helps lend credence to Dumville's view that hands C<sup>1</sup>, C<sup>7</sup> and C<sup>9</sup> belonged to the same scribe, even though it simultaneously undermines his strict separation of the activity of his two strata of annotating hands. This is discussed in more depth below.

The other relevant conclusion arising from the subsequent work on these manuscripts is that all the manuscripts concerned, including CCCC 139 and CUL Ff.1.27, were probably written in Durham Cathedral Priory rather than Sawley Abbey. There is thus no need to postulate that CCCC 139 was briefly sent to Durham for it to be copied into Durham B.II.25 before being sent back to Sawley again to provide the exemplar for CUL Ff.1.27.<sup>45</sup> Instead, we need only envisage that CCCC 139 and CUL Ff.1.27 were acquired by Sawley by around

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<sup>44</sup> The key contributions are Baker, 'Scissors and Paste'; Bernard Meehan, 'Durham Twelfth-Century Manuscripts in Cistercian Houses', in David Rollason, Margaret Harvey and Michael Prestwich (eds), *Anglo-Norman Durham, 1093–1193* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994), 439–49; and especially Christopher Norton, 'History, Wisdom and Illumination', in David Rollason (ed.), *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 1998), 61–105. For the political context of CCCC 139, see Simon MacLean, 'Recycling the Franks in Twelfth-Century England: Regino of Prüm, the Monks of Durham, and the Alexandrine Schism', *Speculum*, 87 (2012), 649–81.

<sup>45</sup> As in Dumville, 'Corpus Christi "Nennius"', 373.

1200, which is when they each received a Sawley *ex-libris*.<sup>46</sup> Dumville's 'Sawley' recension might thus more properly be termed the 'Durham' recension.<sup>47</sup>

When citing the Nennian recension below (denoted by *Nenn.*), I reproduce the text as found in CCCC 139, using ordinary type for the base-text and superscript for the alterations. It is therefore the superscript text that could have been taken from the lost Nennian recension. The hands to which readings are attributed below are those responsible for altering the base-text; hand identifications follow Dumville, as found primarily in the apparatus to his edition of the Sawley recension.

### *Lebor Bretnach*

Finally, we turn to *Lebor Bretnach*, the eleventh-century Middle Irish translation of *Historia Brittonum*. This is certainly the most neglected version of the text.<sup>48</sup> Although many of the sections have been abbreviated, it contains almost every section found in the main Latin recensions. Some sections have been rearranged or expanded, while in each of the two main branches of the textual tradition the text has been associated with major additional material, notably concerning the Picts.

There are six key witnesses to *Lebor Bretnach* spread across five different manuscripts. The earliest manuscript is *Lebor na hUidre* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 E 25), written around the end of the eleventh century, but unfortunately only one leaf of this manuscript's

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<sup>46</sup> Norton, 'History', 61–2 and 101. Dumville, 'Sixteenth-Century History', 427, dated the *ex libris* inscriptions to 'within a quarter-century of 1200': MacLean, 'Recycling the Franks', 680, suggested that CCCC 139 was sent to Sawley because its contents had ceased to be politically relevant in Durham.

<sup>47</sup> In Dumville's projected ten-volume edition of *Historia Brittonum*, volume 7 was to be called 'The Sawley and Durham recensions': Dumville, '*Vatican*' Recension, viii. However, to my knowledge, Dumville never explained what he understood to be the 'Durham' recension, or how he saw it as distinct from his 'Sawley' recension. Perhaps he considered the text of Durham B.II.25 to be the 'Durham recension'.

<sup>48</sup> For an admirable recent exception to this rule, see Lindy Brady, *The Origin Legends of Early Medieval Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: CUP, 2022), esp. 58–60, 124–7, 170–6 and 179–81.

text of *Lebor Bretnach* has survived, comprising §§36–43. The other manuscripts belong to the fourteenth century or later. In 1932, Van Hamel published a variorum edition of *Lebor Bretnach* that gives readings from all these manuscripts.<sup>49</sup> However, his edition is marred by his mistaken theory that the shorter of the two versions of the text preserved in the Great Book of Lecan<sup>50</sup> (designated L<sup>1</sup>) is the sole witness to the earliest recoverable text of *Historia Brittonum*, predating even the extant Latin recensions.<sup>51</sup> This led him to use L<sup>1</sup> as the base-text for all the sections that are preserved in that version. However, this idea was soon undermined by Ferdinand Lot, and Dumville’s later discussion of the interrelationships of the witnesses to *Lebor Bretnach* affirmed that L<sup>1</sup> (Dumville’s La) was, rather, a later abridgement of the text.<sup>52</sup>

There is, therefore, still some value in the much earlier edition of *Lebor Bretnach* published by J. H. Todd in 1848.<sup>53</sup> Not only does he provide a useful translation, but he also consistently used Dublin, Trinity College, 1336 (H. 3. 17), section 6.1 (?s. xv or xvi) as his base-text.<sup>54</sup> This manuscript, ‘D’ for Todd and Van Hamel but ‘H’ for Dumville, is one of the

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<sup>49</sup> A. G. Van Hamel (ed.), *Lebor Bretnach: The Irish Version of the Historia Brittonum Ascribed to Nennius* (Dublin: The Stationary Office, 1932).

<sup>50</sup> Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 P 2 (535) + Dublin, Trinity College, 1319 (H. 2. 17), vol. 2, pp. 172–87, 192–4, written s. xv<sup>in</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Van Hamel, *Lebor Bretnach*, xix–xxiv.

<sup>52</sup> Lot, *Nennius*, I, 135–42; David N. Dumville, ‘The Textual History of “Lebor Bretnach”’: A Preliminary Study’, *Éigse*, 16.4 (1976), 255–73.

<sup>53</sup> James Henthorn Todd (ed. and trans.), *Leabhar Breathnach annso sis / The Irish Version of the Historia Brittonum of Nennius* (Dublin: printed for the Archaeological Society, 1848).

<sup>54</sup> The date of this manuscript is uncertain. The text of *Lebor Bretnach* (cols 806–23) was written by the same scribe as cols 710–19, of which Abbott said ‘The writing appears to belong to the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century’: T. K. Abbott and E. J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, & Co., 1921), 133; for the scribes, see 357. On the other hand, Gwynn commented that ‘Probably no part of this MS. was written earlier than the sixteenth century’, *Catalogue of the Irish Manuscripts*, 355. Van Hamel suggested that this copy of *Lebor Bretnach* was written ‘in a hand of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century’, but Dumville noted that ‘the date is not, however, firmly established’: Van Hamel, *Lebor*

two main witnesses to ‘Version II’ of *Lebor Bretnach*, which Dumville judged to be, overall, closer to the archetype than the other main version, ‘Version III’.<sup>55</sup> Although the readings of D can be reconstructed using Van Hamel’s apparatus, it can also be helpful to see the continuous text of D in Todd’s edition.

Citations of *Lebor Bretnach* below (designated *Leb. Bret.*) refer by necessity to Van Hamel’s edition and section numbering in the first instance. Additional references to Todd are sometimes supplied for clarity, or when quoting his translation. Readings are attributed to ‘*Leb. Bret.*’ alone if they do not vary significantly across the tradition; otherwise, readings are provided for individual manuscripts of *Leb. Bret.*, taken from Van Hamel’s *apparatus criticus*.

#### *Recent work on Historia Brittonum*

Only rarely have the textual relationships between the recensions of *Historia Brittonum* been a subject for sustained investigation, despite the intrinsic importance of this subject for our understanding of *Historia Brittonum* and textual culture in early medieval Wales more generally. Dumville was more concerned with the relationships between the manuscript witnesses to individual recensions. As is examined in detail below, he briefly explained his reasons for pairing the Harleian and Gildasian recensions, the Nennian recension and *Lebor Bretnach*, and the Chartres and Vatican recensions, but he never explicitly examined the evidence for the relationships between his three textual groupings. He simply represented them as three independent branches of the tradition by means of a tripartite stemma.<sup>56</sup>

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*Bretnach*, viii; Dumville, ‘Textual History of “Lebor Bretnach” ’, 263. More recently, Sharon Arbuthnot has commented, in relation to this part of the manuscript, that it ‘seems to be of fifteenth- or, perhaps more likely, sixteenth-century date’: Sharon Arbuthnot, *Cóir Anmann: A Late Middle Irish Treatise on Personal Names*, 2 parts, Irish Texts Society 59–60 (London: Irish Texts Society, 2005–7), I, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Dumville, ‘Textual History of “Lebor Bretnach” ’, 266–7 and 270.

<sup>56</sup> Dumville, ‘Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*’, 18; cf. Guy, ‘Origins’, 48.

In a more recent article, published in this journal in 2020, Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews tackled this question directly.<sup>57</sup> It is refreshing to read Fitzpatrick-Matthews's discussion of the textual complexities and uncertainties of *Historia Brittonum*, since many other modern scholars, more interested in the text's contents than its development, have ignored this side of the topic. Fitzpatrick-Matthews has clearly developed a detailed knowledge of the recensions of *Historia Brittonum* and the existing scholarship on the question. However, his approach to textual criticism is unsatisfactory. This requires some detailed discussion.

Fitzpatrick-Matthews attempts to discern the textual relationships between the recensions using two novel methods. These methods are reminiscent of the well-established processes of stemmatic textual criticism, but they should not be mistaken for it.<sup>58</sup> He calls the first method 'cladistics'. This is a term borrowed from evolutionary biology for a process by which the evolutionary relationships between species are determined by reference to certain shared characteristics. To some extent, this is similar to stemmatic textual criticism, even though texts do not evolve in the same way as living organisms. In relation to *Historia Brittonum*, Fitzpatrick-Matthews applies this methodology by constructing two 'cladograms' for the recensions. These cladograms provide visual representations of two idealized premises. The first premise is that *Historia Brittonum* evolved as a text only through the accretion of new sections of text, such that the brief and fragmentary Chartres recension is naturally at the top of the diagram, while the lengthier 'Sawley' recension is at the bottom. The second premise is exactly the opposite: that *Historia Brittonum* evolved as a text only through the removal of pre-existing sections of text.

However, neither premise reflects the reality of the text's transmission. Like any medieval text that invited intervention during its transmission, sections of text were both added and removed from different recensions of *Historia Brittonum* as it was transmitted. For example,

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<sup>57</sup> Fitzpatrick-Matthews, 'Genealogia Brittonum'.

<sup>58</sup> A classic exposition on this process is Paul Maas, *Textual Criticism*, trans. Barbara Flower (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958). For a thorough and engaging recent treatment, see Paolo Trovato, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lachmann's Method: A Non-Standard Handbook of Genealogical Textual Criticism in the Age of Post-Structuralism, Cladistics, and Copy-Text*, trans. Federico Poole (Padova: Libreriauniversitaria.it edizioni, 2014).

we can see both processes in action in the surviving fragments of the Nennian recension in CCC 139. On the one hand, a new genealogy of *Britus exosus* ('Britus the hateful') has been added, which, according to a redactor of the text, was not found in any book, but was rather *in scriptione mentis scriptoris* ('in the writing of the writer's mind').<sup>59</sup> According to *Lebor Bretnach* (§9), which reproduces the same genealogy, the person responsible for it was a certain Guanach. On the other hand, a comment in another fragment of the Nennian recension, written by the same redactor, explains that he has omitted *genealogie Saxonum et aliarum genealogie gentium* ('the genealogies of the Saxons and the genealogies of other peoples') because they were judged *inutiles* ('useless') by his master.<sup>60</sup> Processes of textual addition *and* subtraction clearly informed the redaction of the Nennian recension, just as they no doubt did for the other recensions too at various stages. No model based on such simplistic premises can explain a complex textual tradition at a stroke; the two cladograms should not be mistaken for *stemmata codicum* based on textual evidence.

The second novel method that Fitzpatrick-Matthews applies to the text leads him to construct what he calls 'a dissimilarity matrix of the principal recensions'.<sup>61</sup> The resulting table appears to offer percentage ratios for how 'dissimilar' each recension is to every other recension. There is only minimal discussion about how the figures were produced: essentially, it appears that the 'dissimilarity' figures show what percentage of text in one recension is *not* shared with the text of another recension, with the sample size determined by the surviving remains of the Chartres recension.<sup>62</sup> Later, the same data is represented as a 'dendrogram', which, like the 'cladograms', carries the latent danger that it could be misinterpreted as a *stemma codicum*. There are two major problems with this as an approach to textual criticism. Firstly, it is impossible to compare like with like in some cases. This is particularly an issue with the Nennian and 'Sawley' recensions, both of which are included in the 'dissimilarity matrix' without further explanation. The Nennian recension does not survive as a full text, but rather in isolated additions and changes to the underlying Gildasian text in CCC 139. The 'Sawley' recension is effectively the Gildasian recension augmented

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<sup>59</sup> Dumville, 'Nennius', 83.

<sup>60</sup> Dumville, 'Nennius', 82; Lot, *Nennius*, I, 11–12.

<sup>61</sup> Fitzpatrick-Matthews, 'Genealogia Brittonum', 53.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Fitzpatrick-Matthews, 'Genealogia Brittonum', 53 and 69–71.

by the fragments of the Nennian recension plus other additions. How can one meaningfully compare the ‘dissimilarity’ of such texts to the other recensions?

Secondly, and more fundamentally, ‘similarity’ and ‘dissimilarity’ tell us nothing about textual relationships. Consider hypothetical witnesses A, B and C to text Z: A and B are more similar to one another than either is to C. Does this mean that A and B must be more closely related? No. There are at least two possible interpretations, depending on where we think the *innovation* has occurred. If the similarities between A and B are the result of textual innovations that occurred in a shared hyparchetype of A and B, then A and B are indeed more closely related to each other than either is to C (figure 1). But if the innovations have occurred in C, the apparent similarity of A and B does *not* mean that they share a hyparchetype: rather, we need assume only that A and B both faithfully reproduce the archetype, whereas C has deviated from that archetype (figure 2). In this scenario, and in the absence of any further evidence (such as might indicate that A or B was copied from the other), A, B and C should be understood as having descended from the archetype independently, and each should bear equal stemmatic value when editing the text.

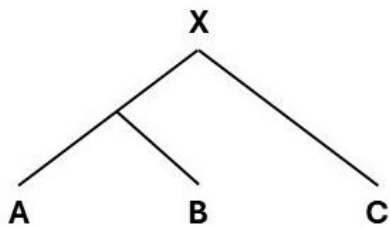


Figure 1

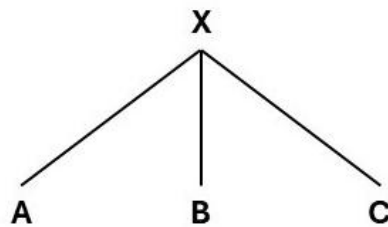


Figure 2

Two hypothetical *stemmata codicum*

Fitzpatrick-Matthews pursues a method closer to typical stemmatic criticism in his ‘analysis of spelling’, though again the evidence presented, and the interpretations offered, are weak and unsatisfactory. For instance, he uses variations in the spelling of ‘Thanet’ to construct three further diagrams: two ‘cladograms’ based on the same two dubious premises outlined above, and a further ‘dissimilarity dendrogram’. Again, there are several reasons why these diagrams tell us nothing about the textual relationships between the recensions. In addition to what has been said above, we have the added factor here that ‘Thanet’ was a well-

known place-name, and thus unreliable evidence for stemmatic textual criticism: unlike in the analogous scenario in evolutionary biology, for which the ‘cladistic’ method has been designed, scribes could easily correct spellings of Thanet if they had been corrupted. For example, the careless scribe of the Chartres manuscript has written *canet*, showing trivial *c/t* confusion, but this could readily have been corrected by a further scribe who knew the famous story of Hengist and Horsa. Fitzpatrick-Matthews does not acknowledge that different spellings of Thanet were current in medieval Welsh and Old English: in Welsh texts up to 1400, *Danet* is the most common form, alongside four instances of *Thanet*, whereas the typical Old English form is *Tenet*.<sup>63</sup> We might suppose that this is why the Vatican recension, redacted in tenth-century England, has *Tenet*. This is the reading that Dumville privileges in his edition of that recension, and for that reason, one supposes, it is the reading that Fitzpatrick-Matthews attributes to the Vatican recension in his analysis. However, Fitzpatrick-Matthews does not mention that there is actually considerable minor variation in these spellings within the manuscripts of some of the recensions. Thus, while he reports *Tenet* as the reading of the Vatican recension, this reading only appears, in fact, in manuscript R of the Vatican recension; otherwise there is *Teneth* in A, *Tanet* in J, and *Tanech* in P.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps, then, it is more likely that the archetype of the recension had J’s *Tanet*, which preserves the first vowel *-a-* of the typical Welsh spelling, while the other witnesses favour the English form in *-e-*. The change to the English form need only have happened once: according to Dumville, R, A and P share a hyparchetype that was copied in England before 1000.<sup>65</sup> Fitzpatrick-Matthews also claims that *Tanech* is the reading of the Nennian recension, but this is simply wrong: there is no gloss on this word in CCCC 139 that could have been taken from the Nennian recension, meaning that we have no direct knowledge of what the Nennian recension read here. *Tanech* is just the reading of the CCCC 139’s Gildasian base-text.

I have deliberately dwelled on Fitzpatrick-Matthews’s article at some length, partly to justify why it does not form the basis of the analysis below, and partly because casual

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<sup>63</sup> This has been helpfully discussed by Rebecca Thomas and David Callander, ‘Reading Asser in Early Medieval Wales: The Evidence of *Armes Prydein Vawr*’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 46 (2017), 115–45 (124).

<sup>64</sup> Dumville, ‘*Vatican*’ Recension, 83 n. 22.

<sup>65</sup> Dumville, ‘*Vatican*’ Recension, 40–2.

references to it by other scholars could potentially suggest that it can bear weight.<sup>66</sup> The argument developed below will show why it offers an unhelpful and misleading way to approach the text. Furthermore, some of the article's factual statements are not reliable. For example, it suggests that the Nennian and 'Sawley' recensions should be grouped with the Gildasian and Harleian because they contain the 857 dating clause, but this is quite misguided.<sup>67</sup> The *base-text* of CCCC 139, and thus its copy CUL Ff.1.27 (the 'Sawley' recension), has that dating clause, but that is because the base-text is a version of the Gildasian recension; there is no alteration to the text in CCCC 139 such as would suggest that the annotators of CCCC 139 were drawing on the lost Nennian recension at this point.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, *Lebor Bretnach* is largely ignored in the discussion, even though it effectively disproves the idea that the Patrician section and the *Mirabilia* were accretions in the 857 version (the one underlying the Harleian and Gildasian recensions), since versions of those sections are found in *Lebor Bretnach*.<sup>69</sup>

Setting aside Fitzpatrick-Matthews's article, we may proceed on a more positive note. The first stage is to analyse the three recensional groupings that have become established in scholarship: (1) the Harleian and Gildasian recensions; (2) the Nennian recension and *Lebor Bretnach*; and (3) the Chartres and Vatican recensions. This will clear the ground for the presentation of fresh textual evidence, which will lead to a reconfigured understanding of these relationships.

### *Grouping the recensions*

#### *The Harleian and Gildasian recensions*

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<sup>66</sup> For example, Nicholas J. Higham, 'Remembering the Romans in Early-Ninth-Century Wales', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 81 (Summer 2021), 43–58 (43).

<sup>67</sup> Fitzpatrick-Matthews, '*Genealogia Brittonum*', 64. Fitzpatrick-Matthews also wrongly claims that this dating clause refers to the year 859.

<sup>68</sup> The only two later scribal interventions in this passage are trivial: hand C<sup>2</sup> added *sancti* before *Patricii*, and hand C<sup>7</sup> added *annorum* after a numeral: Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 634 and 777. Neither of these added words is found in the Harleian version of this section.

<sup>69</sup> Fitzpatrick-Matthews, '*Genealogia Brittonum*', 60.

The textual pairing of the Harleian and Gildasian recensions is well understood. The best-known piece of evidence is that these two recensions alone share an additional dating clause, added to *Harl.* §16, which dates itself to the year 857.<sup>70</sup> These two recensions therefore share a common textual history at least up to that year. There are further textual innovations that these two recensions share. For example, the phrase *et ab illicita coniunctione se separaret* ('and separate himself from the immoral union'), which clearly should occur at the end of the first sentence in *Harl.* §47, is found copied incorrectly at the end of the previous sentence in *Harl.* and *Gild.* By contrast, it is correctly positioned in *Vat.* and *Leb. Bret.*, and the annotations on CCC 139 from *Nenn.* (in hand C<sup>8</sup>) restore the phrase to its correct position, emending CCC 139's *Gild.* base text.<sup>71</sup> The displacement of the phrase in *Harl.* and *Gild.* to the end of the previous sentence may also be related to the omission that *Harl.* and *Gild.* share at the end of that same sentence. The other recensions list the provinces given to the Saxons by Vortigern as Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex, but *Harl.* and *Gild.* omit Middlesex, instead reproducing the misplaced phrase:

*Harl.* §46: *Et ipse solus captus et catenatus est, et regiones plurimas pro redemptione animę suę illis tribuit: id est Estsaxum, Sutsaxum, et ab illicita coniunctione se separaret.* ('And he alone was captured and chained up, and he granted them very many territories in order to ransom his life: that is, Essex and Sussex ...')

*Gild.*: *ipseque solus captus et catenatus est, ac regiones plurimas pro redemptione animę suę tribuit illis: id est Eastsaxa,<sup>72</sup> Suthsexe, ut ab illicita coniunctione se separaret.* (Bodley 163, f. 238<sup>v</sup>)

*Vat.* §26 *rex autem captiuitati subditus est. Pro sua siquidem liberatione tradidit illis rex tres prouintias – Eastseaxan, Suðseaxan, Middelseaxan – cum reliquis regionibus quas ipsi eligentes nominauerunt.* ('But the king was put in captivity. Indeed, in return for his freedom, the king gave them three

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<sup>70</sup> See Molly Miller, 'Consular Years in the *Historia Brittonum*', *BBCS*, 29 (1980–2), 17–34 (21–2).

<sup>71</sup> Lot, *Nennius*, I, 7–8, mischaracterizes the relevance of this piece of evidence, since he thought that *Vat.* originally had the same error; cf. Mommsen, *MGH HB*, 133 and 190.

<sup>72</sup> *saxa* glossed *uel sexe* in the left margin.

provinces – Essex, Sussex, Middlesex – along with the other territories which they chose and named.’)

*Leb. Bret.* §40 7 *rochenglatar Gorthigern* 7 *dorat trian a feraind dar cend a anma .i. Alsaxum* 7 *Sutsaxum* 7 *Nitilsaxum*. (‘and they fettered Gortigern, and he gave the one-third of his land for the sparing of his life, viz., All-Saxan, and Sut-Saxan, and Mitil-Saxan’ [trans. Todd, §XXI])

*Nenn.:* *ipseque solus captus et catenatus est, ac regiones plurimas pro redemptione anime sue tribuit illis: id est Eastsexe, Suthsexe et Midelsexe* (CCCC 139, f. 173<sup>vb</sup>, hand C<sup>8</sup> in rasura)

Similarly, there is evidence that the hyparchetype of *Harl.* and *Gild.* contained additional glosses that were absent from the original text. One such gloss (*ipse est Deus deorum* in *Harl.* §31) reveals itself because it was copied into *Harl.* and *Gild.* in different ways, while it is absent from *Chart.* altogether. Unfortunately, the relevant sentence has been reworded in *Vat.* and omitted from *Leb. Bret.*, so one cannot be certain that this gloss is an innovation that separates *Harl.* and *Gild.* from those recensions. Here is the relevant sentence:

*Harl.* §31: *Non – ipse est Deus deorum, amen! – Deus exercituum, sed unus est ab idolis eorum quod ipsi colebant.* (‘He is not the God of hosts – he is God of gods, amen! – but one of their idols that they used to worship.’)

*Gild.:* *Nunquid ipse est Deus exercituum uel Deus deorum, sed unus est ab idolis eorum quod ipsi colebant.* (‘Surely he is not the God of hosts or the God of gods, rather he is one of their idols that they used to worship’.) (Bodley 163, ff. 233<sup>v</sup>–234<sup>r</sup>)

*Chart.* §14: *non Deus exercituum set unus ex idolis que ipsi colebant.* (‘not the God of hosts but one of the idols that they used to worship.’)

*Vat.* §20: *non ueri nec omnipotentis Dei et domini nostril Iesu Christi – qui ante tempora seculorum permanens Patri et Spiritui Sancto coaeternus et consubstantialis in fine seculorum et mortalitatis nostrae formam non dedignatus est induere seruillem – sed alicuius ex idolis eorum quem, ab ipso daemone caecati, more gentili pro deo colebant.* (‘not of the true and omnipotent God and of our lord Jesus Christ –who, existing before worldly time, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit at the end of ages, did not disdain to assume the lowly form of our mortality – but

of one of their idols which they, blinded by that demon, used to worship as a god in a heathen manner.’)

Arguably, the phrase *ipse est Deus deorum* was added as a gloss above *Deus exercituum* in the common exemplar of *Harl.* and *Gild.*, and this later came to be incorporated into the main text in a different way in each recension.

Another such gloss appears in *Harl.* §49, at the beginning of the genealogy of rulers whose lineage could be traced back to Vortigern.<sup>73</sup> Comparison between the four main recensions available at this point suggests that a gloss identifying Tewdwr as king of Buellt was added in the common exemplar of *Harl.* and *Gild.*, and that *Harl.* then went a step further by adding Buellt to the title of Tewdwr’s son Ffernfael too. Notice that in *Harl.*, the gloss has been added after the second mention of Tewdwr, whereas in *Gild.*, it has been added after the first (ignoring the subsequent insertion of a third instance of the name by an annotator of Bodley 163, shown in superscript):

*Harl.* §49: *Fernmail – ipse est qui regit modo in regionibus duabus Buelt et Guorthigirniaun – filius Teudubir, Teudubir – ipse est rex buelitię regionis – filius Pascent ...* (‘Ffernfael – it is he who now rules in the two territories of Buellt and Gwrtheyrnion – son of Tewdwr, Tewdwr – he is king of the territory of Buellt – son of Pasgen’)

*Gild.*: *Fernmail – ipse est qui regit<sup>nat</sup> modo in regione Guortigirniaun – filius Theudubr – et ipse Theudubr est rex Buelt regionis. Teudubr filius Pasc<sup>h</sup>ent<sup>h</sup> ...* (Bodley 163, f. 239<sup>r</sup>)

*Vat.* §26: *Fernmail, qui regnavit in regione Guorthegirnaim, filius Teudor; Teudor filius Pascent ...*

*Leb. Bret.* §41: *Fermael fil innosa for ferund Gorthigern mac Teudubri meic Pascent ...* (‘Fearmael, who is now chief over the lands of Gortigern, is the son of Tedubre, son of Paistcenn ...’ [trans. Todd, §XXII])

The textual histories of the Harleian and Gildasian recensions probably diverged during a stage of the transmission when the text was still in Wales. This is indicated by the fact that

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<sup>73</sup> For this genealogy, see Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 154–6.

both *Harl.* and *Gild.* preserve different, but equally linguistically valid, spellings for Old Welsh vernacular words. The most striking is that *Gild.* has *fontaun* in *Harl.* §70 where *Harl.* has *finnaun*. The form *finnaun* is what one might call the ‘standard’ Old Welsh spelling of the word meaning ‘spring, fountain’, derived from Latin *fontāna*. On the other hand, *Gild.*’s form *fontaun* seems more archaic, in two respects: it preserves an etymological spelling of the first vowel, and it does not spell the nasalization of the voiceless stop *-t-* in the central *-nt-* cluster.<sup>74</sup> There are two possible interpretations: either *Gild.* preserves the form closest to that in the hyparchetype, and *Harl.* has updated the spelling, presumably before the ancestor of *Harl.* left Wales in the second half of the tenth century;<sup>75</sup> or, conceivably, *Harl.* preserves the form closest to that in the hyparchetype, and *Gild.* has altered the spelling on the basis of the Latin source word *fons, font-*. The key point is that, either way, the orthographical change must have been made by someone literate in Welsh, meaning that the two recensions must have diverged while the text was being transmitted within Wales, at some point after 857. The same conclusion is implied by another aspect of vernacular orthography in the two recensions, namely *Harl.*’s greater use of <y> in diphthongs than is found in *Gild.*: e.g. *Harl.*’s *Guoyrancgono* / *Gild.*’s *Guoirancgono* (*Harl.* §37); *Loygare* / *Loigere* (§53); *coyt* / *coit* (§66a); *Loyngarth* / *Loingarth* (§71); *Troynt* / *Troit* (§73, for ‘Trwyd’, the alternative name for Twrch Trwyth).<sup>76</sup> In all these cases, *Gild.* preserves the *-oi-* spelling that was ubiquitous in ninth-century Old Welsh, whereas *Harl.* has the *-oy-* spelling that is found in Welsh only from the first half of the tenth century.<sup>77</sup> Presumably these spellings in *Harl.* were

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<sup>74</sup> Examples quoted by Jackson show that, although this process of nasalization was already underway in the 8th century, this cluster could be spelled with either conservative *-nt-* or innovative *-nn-* during the 9th and 10th centuries: Kenneth Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain: A Chronological Survey of the Brittonic Languages, First to Twelfth Century A.D.* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1953), 502–6.

<sup>75</sup> Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 54–60.

<sup>76</sup> The spellings from *Harl.* are common to both of the major witnesses to the recension (H and R). The spellings from *Gild.* can be found respectively in Bodley 163, ff. 235<sup>v</sup>, 239<sup>v</sup>, 241<sup>r</sup>, 241<sup>v</sup>, 242<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Ben Guy, ‘Misunderstanding Old Welsh Orthography and Insular Script in the Jesus College 20 Genealogies’, *Celtica*, 33 (2021), 59–96 (83 nn. 125 and 128); Patrick Sims-Williams, ‘“Dark” and “Clear” y in Medieval Welsh Orthography: Caligula versus Teilo’, *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 119 (2021), 1–39 (4–5).

updated while *Harl.* was being transmitted in Wales in the tenth century, after it had diverged from *Gild.* but before it was taken to England.

### *The Nennian recension and Lebor Bretnach*

It has long been clear that *Lebor Bretnach* was translated from a Latin text that was very similar to the Nennian recension, itself known only through the annotations on CCCC 139. Thomas Clancy has argued cogently that both the Nennian recension and *Lebor Bretnach* were produced in the second half of the eleventh century in the same ecclesiastical centre in Scotland: plausibly the monastery of Abernethy in eastern Perthshire.<sup>78</sup> In his edition of *Lebor Bretnach*, Van Hamel provided a list of correspondences between what he called ‘P’ (effectively the common archetype of *Lebor Bretnach*) and the ‘Cantabrian group of Latin MSS.’, by which he meant CCCC 139 and related manuscripts, comparing these correspondences with the readings of *Harl.* and *Vat.*<sup>79</sup> His list is very helpful, though also a little misleading, since he misreports the readings of *Vat.* in two instances.<sup>80</sup> Dumville provides a similar list in his article on ‘Nennius’, though he does not compare the other recensions as systematically.<sup>81</sup> The commonalities include substantial passages that are overt innovations, such as the new genealogy of *Britus exosus*, as mentioned above.<sup>82</sup> Since most of the other major commonalities between *Lebor Bretnach* and the lost Nennian recension are well established and form a coherent argument for their textual relationship, there is no need to discuss them in further detail here.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, ‘Scotland, the “Nennian” Recension of the *Historia Brittonum*, and the *Lebor Bretnach*’, in Simon Taylor (ed.), *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland 500–1297: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson on the Occasion of her Ninetieth Birthday* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2000), 87–107.

<sup>79</sup> Van Hamel, *Lebor Bretnach*, xvii–xviii.

<sup>80</sup> Firstly in his §8, since *Vat.* §4 actually reads *Ascanius* in that sentence, as do *Gild.* and *Leb. Bret.* (the reading *Æneas* is an error in *Harl.* (§10), as correctly noted by Mommsen: *MGH HB*, 150, n. to l. 5; cf. Lot, *Nennius*, I, 17–19); and secondly in his §40, since *Vat.* §26 does correctly preserve the reading *Middelseaxan*, as discussed above.

<sup>81</sup> Dumville, ‘“Nennius”’, 88–9.

<sup>82</sup> For discussion, see Dumville, ‘“Nennius”’, 83.

<sup>83</sup> Two other minor correspondences that are not mentioned by Van Hamel or Dumville are (1) the description of Jerome as *interpres catholicus* (‘orthodox interpreter’) at *Harl.* §29 in

*The Chartres and Vatican recensions?*

Thirdly we come to a textual pairing that is less well grounded in published evidence. Mommsen grouped the Chartres manuscript with the manuscripts of the Vatican recension in his edition, and Dumville opted to follow his lead by arguing that the Chartres recension was an early offshoot of the line of transmission that led to the Vatican recension.<sup>84</sup> Lot, on the other hand, dissented from Mommsen's view, pointing out (presciently, as transpires below) that the Chartres recension more often shares readings with the Harleian recension than the Vatican recension.<sup>85</sup> In Dumville's edition of the Vatican recension, he did not set out his evidence for the textual pairing of the Chartres and Vatican recensions in full, since he intended for that to be discussed in his edition of the Chartres recension, which was never published.<sup>86</sup> However, his evidence is listed in the relevant section of his PhD thesis.<sup>87</sup> There are two considerations. The first is that the Chartres and Vatican recensions share a section (beginning *De Romanis uero et Grecis trahunt ethimologiam*) that is not found in any other recension. However, as Dumville noted, this is not, on its own, decisive: 'The use of this by Chartres is an interesting and substantial point of connexion between Chartres and Vat. but, without further evidence, their employment of this section could be described as independent use of a pre-existing and relevant source'.<sup>88</sup> One might add that special caution should be exercised in this respect in light of the claim in the rubric to the Chartres text that it was constituted from various 'excerpts' concerning the origin and genealogy of the Britons.<sup>89</sup> The

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an addition by hand C<sup>3</sup> to CCCC 139, f. 170<sup>r</sup>, left column, corresponding to *in t-eitircheartaig cathilacda* in *Leb. Bret.* §20 [trans. Todd, §XIII]; and (2) the repetition of the names Horsa and Hengist at the beginning of the Kentish genealogy at *Harl.* §31 in an addition also by hand C<sup>3</sup> to CCCC 139, f. 170<sup>v</sup>, left margin, corresponding to *Leb. Bret.* §26 [trans. Todd, §XV].

<sup>84</sup> Mommsen, *MGH HB*, 119–20; Dumville, 'Vatican' Recension, 48 and 53.

<sup>85</sup> Lot, *Nennius*, I, 34.

<sup>86</sup> Dumville, 'Vatican' Recension, 48 and n. 7.

<sup>87</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 314–24, esp. 316–17.

<sup>88</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 316.

<sup>89</sup> Assuming that the manuscript's *exberta* has been emended correctly to *excerpta*: e.g. Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 326 and 714.

second consideration is therefore vital. Dumville proceeded to list a series of nineteen instances where the Chartres and Vatican recensions agree with each other against the Harleian recension. Let us consider this list in full. (Unlike Dumville, I will note the standard section numbers of *Harl.*, for ease of reference.)

1. *Harl.* §17: orbem terre *Chart.*, *Vat.*; orbem *Harl.*
2. *Harl.* §17: fili<i> Ethath fili<i> Ethieth *Chart.* [closer to *Vat.* than *Harl.*]
3. *Harl.* §20: consul *Chart.*, *Vat.*; proconsul *Harl.*<sup>90</sup>
4. *Harl.* §31: eorum *Chart.*, *Vat.*; illorum *Harl.*
5. *Harl.* §32: illo *Chart.*, *Vat.*; illius *Harl.*
6. *Harl.* §32: multis uirtutibus *Chart.*, *Vat.*; in multis uirtutibus *Harl.*
7. *Harl.* §32: portam *Chart.*, *Vat.*; hostium *Harl.*
8. *Harl.* §32: responsum *Chart.*, *Vat.*; sermonem *Harl.*
9. *Harl.* §33: ciuitatis uel artis *Chart.*; ciuitatis *Vat.* (*MSS AP*); arcis *Harl.*; urbis *Vat.* (*MSS JR*)<sup>91</sup>
10. *Harl.* §33: occurreb<at> *Chart.*, *Vat.*; currebat *Harl.*
11. *Harl.* §33: uertice capitis *Chart.*, *Vat.*; uertice *Harl.*
12. *Harl.* §33: usque ad *Chart.*, *Vat.*; ad *Harl.*
13. *Harl.* §33: Sanctam Trinitatem *Chart.*, *Vat.*; Sancta Trinitate *Harl.*
14. *Harl.* §33: ille *Chart.*, *Vat.*; illis *Harl.* (*MS H*); illi *Harl.* (*MS R*)
15. *Harl.* §34: ne ullus *Chart.*; cf. ut nullus *Vat.*; ne unus *Harl.*

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. *Leb. Bret.* §15: *erconsul* (L<sup>1</sup>); *pairconsain* (D); *arcoinsin* (H); *ardchonsol* (L<sup>2</sup>); *erconsal* (B). This supports the possibility that *Harl.*'s *proconsul* was the archetypal reading. However, it does not follow that *consul* in *Chart.* and *Vat.* must be a shared innovation; *consul* was a much more common term than *proconsul*, and so it could have resulted from two independent alterations. Cf. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (2015), s.vv. *consul* and *proconsul*, at <https://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/Default.aspx>, accessed 1 April 2025.

<sup>91</sup> Even on its own terms this does not support Dumville's point. Presumably *Chart.* best preserves the reading of the archetype, in which *uel arcis* may have originated as a gloss, and then *Vat.* (AP) and *Harl.* reproduced respectively the original text and the gloss. Despite the correspondence of manuscripts AP with *Chart.*, Dumville printed the reading *urbis* from manuscripts JR in the main text of his edition (*Vat.* §23, at 85 n. 6).

16. *Harl.* §34: eduxit *Chart.*, *Vat.*; deduxit *Harl.*
17. *Harl.* §35: in aeternum *Chart.*; cf. usque in sempiternum *Vat.*; om. *Harl.*
18. *Harl.* §35: uerbum *Chart.*, *Vat.*; uerba *Harl.*
19. *Harl.* §35: Pausorum *Chart.*, *Vat.* (*MS J*); Pouoisorum<sup>Pausorum</sup> *Vat.* (*MS R*);  
Pouoisorum *Harl.*<sup>92</sup>

Dumville concludes this list by noting that most of the readings are not significant, but cumulatively present a case for a relationship between the Chartres and Vatican recensions. He goes on to specify the reasoning for this conclusion: ‘By comparison with *Harl.*, these readings in Chartres represent alterations to the original work’. But this relies on a false premise, which is a recurring problem in Dumville’s textual work on *Historia Brittonum*, as we will encounter again below: he sometimes takes the Harleian recension to be an *exact* reproduction of the original. While I agree generally that, among the surviving recensions, *Harl.* is the best overall representative of the shape of the original text, nevertheless there is no reason to assume that it necessarily preserves the original readings in every case. Indeed, in none of these nineteen cases is it obvious which of the variant readings, if either, belongs to the archetype of the tradition. If the Harleian recension preserves the original readings, then the readings shared by the Chartres and Vatican recensions are shared innovations, and suggest that those two recensions are textually related. On the other hand, if the Chartres and Vatican recensions preserve the original readings, then the readings in *Harl.* are merely minor innovations that have arisen during the transmission of that recension, and tell us nothing about the relationship between the three recensions. Indeed, a comparison of these nineteen readings with the Gildasian recension, which Dumville did not do, reveals that readings 2, 12, 13 and 14 *must* be innovations in *Harl.*, because *Gild.* agrees with *Chart.* and *Vat.*<sup>93</sup> In most

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<sup>92</sup> As in the previous note, this does not provide much support for Dumville’s point. *Vat.* manuscript R (as also P and A) shows that *Pausorum* must have existed as a gloss on *Pouoisorum* in at least a common hyparchetype of *Chart.* and *Vat.*; it could equally have existed as a gloss in the archetype of all three recensions, if the gloss was lost during the transmission of *Harl.* (and *Gild.*, and thus presumably in the common hyparchetype of *Harl.* and *Gild.*).

<sup>93</sup> This is especially clear for reading 2, the pedigree of Alanius, since *Chart.*, *Vat.* and *Gild.* agree with the Irish tradition of this pedigree in giving *Ethach* (thus in *Gild.*) as the father of *Mair*. By contrast, *Harl.* has omitted *Ethach*, as it has also omitted *Ethach*’s

of the other cases, *Gild.* agrees with *Harl.*, leaving us in the dark: either *Gild.* and *Harl.* happen to preserve the archetypal readings, or these were innovations in their common hyparchetype.<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, beyond their inclusion of the section beginning *De Romanis uero et Grecis trahunt ethimologiam*, the significance of which is debatable, there is no pattern of shared readings common to the Chartres and Vatican recensions that are demonstrable innovations. In the absence of such readings, there is no case for a close textual relationship between these two recensions.

#### *Innovations in the Harleian, Gildasian and Vatican recensions*

On the other hand, there are several identifiable innovations that are common to the Harleian, Gildasian and Vatican recensions, suggesting that the Vatican recension is textually related to the other two, which, as discussed above, form an established textual pair. Consider the following five cases.

##### 1. *Eleuther vs Euaristus*

In *Harl.* §22, we are told that the British king Lucius received baptism after an embassy had been sent by the emperors of Rome and Pope *Euaristo*.<sup>95</sup> This is a rendition of Bede's story about King Lucius and Pope *Eleuther*, which derives from the *Liber Pontificalis*.<sup>96</sup> It is clear

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grandfather *Ecthect* (again thus in *Gild.*), who does not appear in the Irish pedigrees but who is found in all other versions of *Historia Brittonum* (*Chart.*, *Vat.*, *Gild.*, *Leb. Bret.*). *Chart.* has made its own, separate errors in this pedigree, including the omission of *Aurthach*, the father of *Ethach*. For the Irish versions of this pedigree, see Guy, *Medieval Welsh Genealogy*, 236 n. 19.

<sup>94</sup> The exceptions are readings 9 and 15, because the relevant passages have been reworded in *Gild.* and do not show agreement with any of the other recensions.

<sup>95</sup> This is the reading of manuscript R; in H it has been rationalized as *Eucharisto*. The other recensions show that R preserves the reading of *Harl.*'s archetype.

<sup>96</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), 24–5 and 562–3 (i.4 and v.24); L. Duchesne (ed.), *Liber Pontificalis*, §xiii, 3 vols (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1886–92), I, 136; trans. Raymond

that the strange reading *Euaristo* is an idiosyncratic error, and yet it is also found in *Vat.* §10 and *Gild.* (Bodley 163, f. 232<sup>r</sup>). The section is lacking from *Chart.* However, the correct reading is preserved in *Leb. Bret.* §16, whose manuscripts read *Euletrius* [L<sup>1</sup>], *Euliutherius* [D], *Euiliutheirius* [H], *Beleterius* [L<sup>2</sup>], *Euletherius* [B]. One could argue that the reading in *Leb. Bret.* could have been corrected against Bede, and yet it may be telling that this was not done in any of the Latin manuscripts of *Historia Brittonum* known to me.<sup>97</sup> More probably, *Euaristo* is an error shared by the Harleian, Gildasian and Vatican recensions.

## 2. *Equitius* vs *Equatius*

In *Harl.* §31, a date is given for Vortigern's acceptance of the Saxons with reference to the joint consulship of Gratian and *Equantius* in 374. The latter name, however, is an error for *Equitius*, who shared the consulships with Gratian in the relevant year.<sup>98</sup> The same error is found in *Vat.* §20, yet the correct name appears in both *Chart.* §15 (which has *Equicio*) and *Leb. Bret.* §26 (whose manuscripts read *Aequit* [DH], *Equit* [B], *Eigeth* [L<sup>1</sup>]).<sup>99</sup> The name is unfortunately omitted from the Gildasian recension. Dumville was aware that this argued against his configuration of the stemma, and so commented that it 'could be a case of independent correction [by *Chart.*] by reference to a Victorian *cursus*'.<sup>100</sup> True, and yet this was not done in any of the four manuscripts of the Vatican recension, or the four main manuscripts of the Harleian recension.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, it does not explain how *Lebor Bretnach* came to have the correct reading as well. It is much more straightforward to see this as an innovation in the common archetype of the Vatican and Harleian recensions (and thus also the Gildasian, considering its close relationship with the Harleian).

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Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715*, 3rd ed. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 6.

<sup>97</sup> Note that, in two manuscripts of *Lebor Bretnach*, the text has been appended with translated excerpts from Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, but the excerpts do not include Pope Eleuther: *Leb. Bret.* §§54–8.

<sup>98</sup> Guy, 'Origins', 41.

<sup>99</sup> The latter, poorest reading is printed in the main text by Van Hamel.

<sup>100</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 321.

<sup>101</sup> Dumville, '*Vatican*' Recension, 83 n. 25; Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 199 and 683 (Harleian recension).

### 3. *Catell Durnluc*

In *Harl.* §35, the statement *ipse est Catell Durnluc* interrupts a speech by St Germanus. The same statement is found interjected into the speech in *Gild.* and *Vat.* §23, but it is absent from *Chart.* §18 and *Leb. Bret.* §28 (although the latter has been abbreviated). This may be readily observed by comparing the four Latin texts:

*Harl.* §35:        ‘*Non deficiet rex de semine tuo,*’ – *ipse est Catell Durnluc* – ‘*et tu solus rex eris ab hodierna die.*’ (‘ “No king of your line will fail,” – he is Cadell Durnluc – “and you alone will be king from this day.” ’)

*Gild.*:            ‘*Non deficiet de semine tuo* <sup>*qui uiuat in longitudinem dierum*</sup>’ – *ipse est Ketel Durnluc* – ‘*dux, et tu eris* <sup>*ait Germanus*</sup> *rex ab hodierno die.*’ (Bodley 163, f. 235<sup>v</sup>)

*Vat.* §23:        ‘*Rex non deficiet de semine tuo usque in sempiternum*’ – *ipse est Catel Drunluc* – ‘*et tu ipse rex eris ab hodierna die omnibus diebus uitae tuae.*’

*Chart.* §18:       ‘*Non deficiet rex de semine tuo in aeternum, et rex eris ab hodierno die.*’

Given that the relevant statement has the shape of an explanatory gloss and interrupts direct speech, it seems likely that it originated as a gloss, probably on *tuo*, in the common exemplar of *Harl.*, *Gild.* and *Vat.*, but not in the line of transmission of *Chart.*

### 4. *Angeln*

In *Harl.* §38, *Vat.*, *Harl.* and *Gild.* seem to share an error whereby the men that Hengist summons are made to go *to* rather than *from* their point of origin in Angeln. We are introduced to Angeln in the previous section, where it is specified that Hengist’s elders had come with him from *insula Oghgul* (where *insula* may mean ‘peninsula’). Later, in *Harl.* §38, Hengist is said to summon more ships:

*Harl.* §38:        *Et Hencgistus semper ciulas ad se paulatim inuitauit, ita ut insulas ad quas uenerant absque habitatore relinquerent.* (‘And Hengist continued to summon ships to himself, little by little, so that consequently they were leaving the islands to which they had come without an inhabitant.’)

*Gild.*:            (as above)

*Vat.* §24:        *Hencgistus autem inuitabat paulatim ceolas suae regionis ad se ita ut insulas ad quas uenerant absque habitatore relinquerent.*

Nenn.: *et Hengistus semper chiulas ad se paulatim inuitauit ita ut insulas ~~quas~~  
habitabant* *de quibus uenerant absque habitore habitatore* *relinquerent.* (CCCC 139, f.  
171<sup>vb</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>)

It is very likely that this sentence is supposed to refer to the depopulation of Angeln, which Bede also mentions.<sup>102</sup> *Harl.*, *Gild.* and *Vat.* all oddly read *ad quas*, as if the text is referring to *insulas* that were being depopulated in Britain as a consequence of the new arrivals, despite the pluperfect tense of the verb *uenerant*. This oddity has been disguised in the Gildasian base-text of CCCC 139, which has also removed the implication that any depopulation has taken place. But strikingly, the original reading of CCCC 139 has been replaced by a phrase that matches the other recensions, with the exception that *de quibus* appears in the place of *ad quas*, giving the appropriate sense that it is the Saxons' point of origin that was being depopulated as a consequence of Hengist's summons. It is possible that this was an independent correction, perhaps based on knowledge of Bede; but it is notable that such a correction was not implemented elsewhere, even in *Vat.*, which was created in tenth-century England. The alternative possibility is that this addition to CCCC 139, probably from the Nennian recension, preserves the original reading, while *Harl.*, *Gild.* and *Vat.* share an error.

##### 5. *The seven Roman emperors*

This fifth point concerns the structure of the texts. In *Harl.* §§20–7, there is a list of the seven Roman emperors who reigned in Britain, *in ueteri traditione seniorum nostrorum* ('in the old tradition of our elders'). But then a further two emperors are added, because *Romani autem dicunt nouem* ('the Romans say there were nine'). The text presents these additional two emperors as a digression: after they have been described (*Harl.* §§27–28), the text begins the next section (§29) *Iterum repetendus est sermo de Maximiano tiranno* ('The account of Maximianus the tyrant shall be resumed again'). The name form *Maximianus* links the following passage to the seventh emperor, *Maximianus*, though the content relates to the historical emperor Maximus, who is named as the sixth emperor, and indeed later in §29 he is

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<sup>102</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, i.15, ed. and trans. Colgrave and Mynors, 50–1.

called *Maximus*.<sup>103</sup> This arrangement, with the self-conscious digression, is also found in *Gild.* and *Vat.* §§15–18. However, in *Leb. Bret.* §§19–22, there is no digression, since the passages about Maximus and Maximianus are linked together, and the two additional emperors, according to the Romans, are placed afterwards. Some arrangement like this seems to lie behind the summary given in *Chart.* §6, which briefly lists the seven Roman emperors. In this list, Maximus is the sixth emperor, as in *Harl.*, while the seventh, curiously, is *Gracianus, Ualentiniანი filius, qui in Romam a Britannia exiit et ibi a Maximo occisus est* (‘Gratian, son of Valentinian, who went from Britain to Rome and was killed there by Maximus’). This is a misunderstanding of a passage like the following in *Harl.* §29:

Dum Gratianus imperium regebat in toto mundo, in Britannia per seditionem militum Maximus imperator factus est. Qui mox dum in Gallias transfretaret, Gratianus Parassis Meroblaudis magistri militum proditione superatus est, et fugiens Lugdonni captus atque occisus est.

‘While Gratian was ruling the empire in the whole world, Maximus was made emperor in Britain through the treachery of soldiers. A little later, when Maximus was crossing over to the provinces of Gaul, Gratian was defeated at Paris due to the betrayal of Meroblaudes, the *magister militum*, and while fleeing to Lyons he was captured and killed.’

If one were to take *Gratianus*, rather than *Maximus*, as the subject of *transfretaret* in the second sentence, implying that it was Gratian who crossed from Britain to Gaul, one could see how the mistake in *Chart.* §6 could have arisen. But this would only have given rise to an erroneous seventh emperor if the paragraph at *Harl.* §29 stood adjacent to the list of seven emperors in the text from which *Chart.* was drawing excerpts. This is exactly the arrangement in *Leb. Bret.*, but not in *Harl.*, *Gild.* or *Vat.* on account of the digression. This suggests that *Chart.* and *Leb. Bret.* derive from a text with a more natural order for these emperors, while *Harl.*, *Gild.* and *Vat.* derive from a text that deliberately disrupted the natural

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<sup>103</sup> Cf. Ben Guy, ‘Constantine, Helena, Maximus: On the Appropriation of Roman History in Medieval Wales, 800–1250’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 44 (2018), 381–405 (387 and n. 30).

order by interposing the account of the two additional emperors into the account of Maximus/Maximianus.

Further confirmation that *Harl.* §29 is not positioned naturally in *Harl.*, *Gild.* and *Vat.*, where it immediately follows the digression, comes from consideration of the sections on either side of it. It is preceded by the descriptions of the eighth and ninth emperors (*Harl.* §27), which concludes with a brief explanation that the Romans stopped attempting to impose their rule on Britain *quia duces illorum Brittones occiderant* ('because the Britons had killed their leaders', *Harl.* §28). Compare this with the first sentence of *Harl.* §30, which looks like a direct continuation of *Harl.* §28: *Tribus uicibus occisi sunt duces Romanorum a Brittannis* ('Three times were the leaders of the Romans killed by the Britons'). Indeed, in *Leb. Bret.* §22, passages equivalent to *Harl.* §§28 and 30 follow one another directly. This adds weight to the suggestion that the account of Maximianus/Maximus and Gratian (*Harl.* §29) originally occurred at the end of the list of seven emperors (*Harl.* §27), while the passages on eighth and ninth emperors according to the Romans (*Harl.* §§27–8) occurred afterwards, immediately preceding *Harl.* §30. If so, the positioning of the eighth and ninth emperors (*Harl.* §§27–8) in *Harl.*, *Gild.* and *Vat.* is a shared innovation, whereas the original arrangement is visible in the extracts that comprise *Chart.* and in the abbreviated and reworked translation found in *Leb. Bret.*

If the five cases discussed above amount to an argument for *Harl.*, *Gild.* and *Vat.* sharing a common archetype characterized by specific innovations and errors, certain other patterns of textual distribution can be explained more readily. For instance, consider the following sentence in *Harl.*, *Vat.*, *Chart.* and *Leb. Bret.* (the section is lacking in *Gild.*):

*Harl.* §17: *Tres filii Noe diuiserunt orbem in tres partes post diluuium: Sem in Asia, Cham in Affrica, Iafeth in Europa dilatauerunt terminos suos.* ('The three sons of Noah divided the world into three parts after the Flood: Shem expanded his territories in Asia, Ham in Africa, Japheth in Europe.')

*Vat.* §7: *Tres filii Noae diuiserunt orbem terrae in tres partes post diluuium – Sem in Asia, Cam in Africa, Iafeth in Europa – et dilatauerunt terminos suos.*

*Chart.* §9: *.III<sup>es</sup>. filii Noe diuiserunt orbem terre in .iii<sup>es</sup>. partes post diluuium: Sem in Asia, Cham in Africa, Iafeth in Europha.*

*Leb. Bret.* §5: *Iar ndilinn tra rorandad in doman i tri itir maccu Nae .i. Euraip ⁊ Affricc ⁊ Assia. Sem i n-Assia, Cam i n-Affraic, Iathfeth i n-Eoraip.* (‘Now after the deluge the world was divided into three parts; between the three sons of Noe, viz.: Eoraip, Affraic and Asia. Sem was in Asia; Cam in Affraic; Jafeth in Eoraip’ [trans. Todd, §IV])

As discussed above in relation to Dumville’s list of readings shared by *Chart.* and *Vat.*, shared readings that cannot be safely characterized as innovations are of limited use for indicating textual relationships outside of an established textual framework. Thus, in isolation, the phrase *dilatauerunt terminos suos* tells us little: it could either be an innovation, grouping *Harl.* and *Vat.* together, or its omission could be the innovation, grouping *Chart.* and *Leb. Bret.* together. However, in the context of the argument above, and in the absence of any similar indications that *Chart.* and *Leb. Bret.* share innovations more generally, the natural assumption would be that *dilatauerunt terminos suos* was an innovation added to the common hyparchetype of *Harl.* and *Vat.* There are numerous comparable cases that arise through a consideration of the fragments of the Nennian recension known from the annotations on CCC 139, which can be compared with the other Latin recension more closely than is possible with *Leb. Bret.* To my knowledge, these connections have not previously been discussed.

#### *The nature of the Nennian recension*

In his discussion of the textual affinities of the Nennian recension, Dumville took the same problematic approach to the Harleian recension that we have observed above, conceptually conflating it with the original text. After printing a series of readings from the Nennian recension that agree with the Harleian recension, he claimed that ‘all these readings leave no room for doubt that the recension attributed to Ninnius was essentially of the Harleian type’.<sup>104</sup> But this statement is misleading; while it is true that, in general, the annotations from the Nennian recension often show an affinity with the readings of the Harleian recension, Dumville did not attempt to show that the Nennian recension was closer to the Harleian recension *than to other recensions*. There is no sustained comparison with the other recensions. In fact, such a comparison shows, very strikingly, that the fragmentary remains of

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<sup>104</sup> Dumville, ‘“Nennius”’, 80–1. Note that Lot, *Nennius*, I, 7, made the same point in a very similar way:.

the Nennian recension often have a remarkable affinity with the Chartres recension, and to a lesser extent the Vatican recension, insofar as these can all be compared.

What follows is a list of all forty readings where the annotations on the text of *Historia Brittonum* in CCCC 139, in any hand, agree significantly with one or more other recensions against the remainder. All annotations are interlinear unless otherwise specified. I have ignored minor variation of the kind that is not strong evidence for textual relationships (e.g. the presence or absence of *in* before ablative nouns). I have also ignored (1) annotations that clearly agree with all the other recensions that preserve the relevant sections of text, since annotations of that kind are merely corrections of the innovations or errors in the version of *Gild.* that served as the base-text of CCCC 139; and (2) annotations that do not agree with any other recensions, since they may well be innovations that arose during the transmission of *Nenn.*, and tell us nothing about textual relationships. The standard section numbering from *Harl.* is provided for ease of reference. In each case, I note which annotating hand was responsible for the relevant reading in CCCC 139, following Dumville's scribal attributions.

1. *Harl.* §7: contra *armonicas*<sup>uel -ricos [hand C1] gentes [hand C2]</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 167<sup>rb</sup>);<sup>105</sup> contra *armoricas gentes Chart.*; contra *armoricas Vat., Harl. (MS R), Gild.* (Bodley 163, 228<sup>v</sup>); contra *armonicas Harl. (MSS HL)*; contra *armoricos Harl. (MSS AF)*

There is minor variation in the spelling of *armoricas* across the tradition, but the most significant point is that the gloss in hand C<sup>2</sup> adds the word *gentes*, which is otherwise found only in *Chart.*

2. *Harl.* §10: *Lauiniam filiam Latini regis Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 167<sup>rb</sup>, hand unidentified); *Labinam filiam Latini regis Italiae Vat.*; *Lauiniam filiam Latini Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 228<sup>v</sup>); *Lauina ingen Laitin Leb. Bret.*

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<sup>105</sup> Dumville's note seems to imply that *uel -ricos* is also in hand C<sup>2</sup> ('Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 773, II.5n), but it is not; compare instead *uel -runt* on fol. 168<sup>ra</sup>, which Dumville attributes to an 'unidentified hand' (776, VII.2n). Nicholas Evans kindly informs me that he would attribute the gloss *uel -ricos* to hand C<sup>1</sup>.

There is no version of this section in *Chart.*, which therefore cannot be compared directly. The reading *regis* is only otherwise found directly in *Vat.*; it is absent from *Harl.* and *Gild.* There is no equivalent in *Leb. Bret.* to *regis* in the same sentence, but in the following sentence *inn rig* is added to the second mention of Latinus (*iar n-eg Laitin meic Puin inn rig*), unlike in any of the Latin recensions. This suggests that *regis* was present in the Latin exemplar of *Leb. Bret.*, as the gloss on CCCC 139 would imply. It is most straightforward to assume that the omission of *regis* was an innovation in the hyparchetype of *Harl.* and *Gild.*

3. *Harl.* §10: regnum obtinuit Romanorum <sup>uel Latinorum</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 167<sup>va</sup>, hand C<sup>8</sup>); regnum obtinuit Romanorum *Vat.*; regnum obtinuit Romanorum uel Latinorum *Harl.*; regnum optinuit Romanorum *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 228<sup>v</sup>); Rogab Aenias rigi Ladiandai *Leb. Bret. (D)*

Again, there is no version of this section in *Chart.*, which cannot be compared directly. The gloss in *Nenn.* is only otherwise preserved in *Harl.*, though it also probably appeared in the Latin exemplar of *Leb. Bret.* The phrase may have originated as a gloss on the archetype, which could have been omitted independently in *Vat.* and *Gild.*

4. *Harl.* §15: deinde tribuni plebis ac dictatores ~~et consules~~ <sup>Et postea consules rursus</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 168<sup>va</sup>, left margin, hand C<sup>3</sup>); deinde tribuni plebis ac dictatores et consules *Vat.*, *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 230<sup>v</sup>); deinde tribuni plebis ac dictatores et consules rursus *Harl.*

There is no version of this section in *Chart.*, and the relevant section of *Leb. Bret.* has been reworked. Only *Harl.* shares the variant *rursus* with the gloss from the Nennian recension.

5. *Harl.* §19: fractis<sup>que</sup> nauibus *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 169<sup>rb</sup>, hand C<sup>6</sup>); fractisque manibus *Chart.*; fractisque nauibus *Vat.*; et fractis nauibus *Harl.*; fractis nauibus *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 231<sup>v</sup>)

The gloss from *Nenn.* aligns with *Chart.* and *Vat.* against *Harl.* and *Gild.* Perhaps the enclitic *-que* was omitted in the hyparchetype of *Harl.* and *Gild.*

6. *Harl.* §23: et non multo post ~~eboraci moritur intra Britanniam~~<sup>intra britanniam reuersus, apud Eboracum cum suis ducibus occiditur.</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 169<sup>va</sup>, left margin, hand C<sup>3</sup>); Et post multum tempus Seuerus intra Bryttanniam Eboraci moritur *Vat.*; Et non multo post intra Britanniam Seuerus moritur *Harl.*; et non multo post <sup>dolo britannorum</sup> eboraci moritur intra Britanniam *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 232<sup>r</sup>); 7 dorochair som iarsein la Breatnu cona toiseachaib *Leb. Bret.*

The extract from *Nenn.* agrees with *Vat.* and *Gild.* by specifying that Severus died at York, implying that the omission of *Eboraci* is a unique innovation in *Harl.* The phrase *cum suis ducibus* in *Nenn.* is matched only by *con a toiseachaib* in *Leb. Bret.*; this was presumably an addition in their common hyparchetype.

7. *Harl.* §24: ~~qui<sup>a</sup> propterea tyrannus fuit~~ pro occisione Seueri *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 169<sup>va</sup>, deletion by 1166 after hand C<sup>1</sup> altered *qui* to *quia*); quia iratus pro occisione Seueri *Vat.*; quia propterea tyrannus fuit pro occisione Seueri *Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 232<sup>r</sup>)

This one is more difficult to judge. *Harl.* and *Gild.* both have the text that was deleted in CCCC 139. Presumably it was deleted in the latter because it was absent from *Nenn.* Perhaps it is relevant that *Vat.* similarly lacks the phrase *propterea tyrannus fuit*; on the other hand, *Vat.* may have independently revised an exemplar closer to *Harl.* and *Gild.*

8. *Harl.* §27: In ueteri traditione <sup>seniorum nostrorum uti legimus</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 170<sup>ra</sup>, hand C<sup>1</sup>); Traditione uero seniorum *Vat.*; In ueteri traditione seniorum nostrorum *Harl.*; In uetera tradicione seniorum nostrorum *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 232<sup>v</sup>); Is amlaid sin indisit arsan tai na mBreatan *Leb. Bret.*

The addition agrees with *Harl.* and *Gild.*, but this is a case where *Vat.* and *Leb. Bret.* have clearly each innovated independently due to their respective English and Irish perspectives.

9. *Harl.* §29: Maximianus Victorem filium suum consortem regni fecit *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 170<sup>rb</sup>, right margin, hand C<sup>3</sup>); Maximus Uictorem filium suum consortem regni fecit *Vat.*; Maximus Uictorem filium suum consortem facit *Harl.*; *om. Gild.*; Maximin 7 a mac .i. Uictor i comrigi *Leb. Bret.*

Here, a sentence is added to CCCC 139 from *Nenn.* to restore text that had been lost from *Gild.* The appearance of the form *Maximianus* in *Nenn.* is not significant, as there is variation between the names *Maximianus* and *Maximus* in this section across all recensions. The key point is that *Nenn.* agrees with *Vat.*, against *Harl.*, in reading *regni fecit* rather than simply *facit*.

10. *Harl.* §29: in tercio ab uirileisa lapide *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 170<sup>rb</sup>, hand C<sup>1</sup>); *om. Vat.*; in tercio ab Auuileua lapide *Harl.*; in tercio abuuileua lapide *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 233<sup>r</sup>); isin tres lic on chathraig Eigila *Leb. Bret.*

Here, hand C<sup>1</sup> makes up for a defect in the exemplar of CCCC 139 through the addition of a phrase. The main scribe of CCCC 139 knew that his exemplar was defective here and left a blank space of about a line for this phrase. Hand C<sup>1</sup> added the phrase noted, and then, later, hand C<sup>7</sup> added *miliario* after *tercio* and hand C<sup>6</sup> added *.i. Aquileia* above *uirileisa*. The same omission is found in another copy of *Gild.* that derives from the same exemplar as CCCC 139, suggesting that there may have been a physical defect in the common exemplar.<sup>106</sup> Since the phrase is found in Bodley 163, its omission in CCCC 139 and its sister copy does not reflect the archetype of *Gild.* It is therefore probably a coincidence that *Vat.*, which is attested in the eleventh century before *Gild.* came into being, omits the same phrase; perhaps the motivation for its omission in *Vat.* was the corrupt state of the place-name, rendering it unintelligible. It seems very improbable that *Vat.* exercised some type of textual influence on subgroup

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<sup>106</sup> Dumville, ‘Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*’, 783. The other manuscript is Liège, Bibliothèque de l’Université de Liège, 369C: see J. de Caluwé-Dor, ‘L’importance de la version liégeoise (Bibl. Univ. ms. 369c, ff. 130–142) dans la tradition manuscrite de l’*Historia Brittonum*’, in *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune, Professeur à l’Université de Liège*, 2 vols (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1969), I, 5–12 (7 and 8 no. 11); cf. Dumville, ‘Corpus Christi “Nennius” ’, 374 and n. 4.

II of the Gildasian recension, to which CCCC 139 and its sister copy belong, leaving no other trace other than this isolated omission.

11. *Harl.* §30: et portabant magna munera secum <sup>consulibus</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 170<sup>rb</sup>, hand C<sup>3</sup>); et portabant magna munera *Vat.*; et portabant magna munera secum consulibus Romanorum *Harl.*; et portabant magna munera secum *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 233<sup>v</sup>); 7 co setaib imdaib *Leb. Bret.*

The addition *consulibus* agrees only with *Harl.* It is possible that the phrase was deliberately omitted from *Vat.*, which also omits *secum*; the latter is found in *Harl.* and *Gild.* and is probably reflected by the variant *leo* found in *Leb. Bret.* manuscripts L<sup>2</sup>B after *imdaib*.

12. *Harl.* §32: que per illum <sup>Dominus</sup> fecit *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 170<sup>va</sup>, hand C<sup>7</sup> *in rasura*); que per illum fecit Dominus *Chart.*; quae per illum fecit Deus *Vat., Harl.*; que per illum Deus fecit *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 234<sup>r</sup>)

The addition *Dominus* agrees with *Chart.* against *Deus* in *Vat., Harl.* and *Gild.*

13. *Harl.* §32: ad hostium <sup>uel portam</sup> urbis *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 170<sup>vb</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>); ad portam urbis *Chart., Vat.*; ad hostium urbis *Harl.*; ad ostium urbis *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 234<sup>r</sup>)

The addition agrees with *Chart.* and *Vat.* against *Harl.* and *Gild.*

14. *Harl.* §32: ad caput <sup>uel finem</sup> anni *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 170<sup>vb</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>); ad finem anni *Chart.*; per istius anni spatium *Vat.*; ad caput anni *Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 234<sup>r</sup>)

The addition agrees with *Chart.* against *Harl.* and *Gild.* Since *caput anni* is a non-standard Latin phrase that probably calques the Welsh word for head (*pen(n)*), which can also refer to the end of a time period,<sup>107</sup> it seems likely that *Harl.* and *Gild.* preserve the archetypal reading here; however, for the same reason, *caput* could have been replaced by *finem* on more than one occasion during the transmission of the text,

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<sup>107</sup> As seen by Lot, *Nennius*, I, 32.

meaning that the appearance of *finem* in both *Nenn.* and *Chart.* is not necessarily evidence for a textual relationship. The phrase has been reworded in *Vat.*

15. *Harl.* §32: *in hostio portę mee arcis* *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 170<sup>b</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>); *in urbem istam* *Chart.*; *iuxta portam ciuitatis meae* *Vat.*; *in medio urbis meę* *Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 234<sup>r</sup>); *in ndorais in dunaid* *Leb. Bret.*

This phrase was omitted from the main text of CCCC 139, but did appear in *Gild.* in the same form as in *Harl.* In *Leb. Bret.*, the direct speech has been rendered as indirect speech, and consequently there are no first-person pronouns. The significant point is that *Nenn.* agrees with *Vat.* and *Leb. Bret.* against *Chart., Harl.* and *Gild.* with respect to its mention of the entrance of the fortress, *Nenn.* sharing with *Vat.* the word *porta*. It is also notable that *Chart.* does not agree with *Harl.* and *Gild.*, and may have been simplified independently.

16. *Harl.* §33: *a uertice* <sup>*capitis*</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 171<sup>ra</sup>, hand C<sup>8</sup>); *a uertice capitis* *Chart., Vat.*; *a uertice* *Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 234<sup>v</sup>); *o h-ind* *Leb. Bret.*

The addition agrees with *Chart.* and *Vat.* against *Harl.* and *Gild.* The *Leb. Bret.* reading could have been translated from either version, though perhaps the version without *capitis* is most likely.

17. *Harl.* §35: *de semine tuo* <sup>*in eternum*</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 171<sup>rb</sup>, possibly hand C<sup>8</sup>); *de semine tuo in aeternum* *Chart.*; *de semine tuo usque in sempiternum* *Vat.*; *de semine tuo* *Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 235<sup>r</sup>)

The addition agrees precisely with *Chart.* and in sentiment with *Vat.*, though the latter has been reworded. It is absent from *Harl.* and *Gild.* In *Leb. Bret.*, the section has been somewhat abbreviated, removing the first-person speech in which this phrase occurs.

18. *Harl.* §36: *rex supradictus* <sup>*Guotigern*</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 171<sup>rb</sup>, right margin, hand C<sup>9</sup>); *rex supradictus* *Chart., Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 235<sup>r</sup>); *rex supradictus Gurthegirrus* *Vat.*; *Gortigern* *Leb. Bret.*

The addition corresponds with *Vat.* only, but it is probably not significant: the phrase would *rex supradictus* invite such glossing, and hand C<sup>9</sup> cannot otherwise be observed collating the base text of CCCC 139 with another copy of *Historia Brittonum*.<sup>108</sup>

19. *Harl.* §36: ~~inde~~ <sup>quia</sup> auxilio uestro non indigemus *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 171<sup>tb</sup>, hand unidentified); non de auxilio uestro indigemus *Chart.*; Adiutorio uestro non indigemus *Vat.*; quia auxilio uestro non indigemus *Harl.*; inde auxilio uestro non indigemus *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 235<sup>r</sup>)

This addition agrees only with *Harl.*, though note that the speech has been rearranged in *Vat.* Again, *Leb. Bret.* has paraphrased using indirect speech.

From this point onwards, *Chart.* is no longer available for comparison. In several of the following cases, it is likely that the additions agree with the other recensions against *Vat.* because *Vat.* has innovated in its phraseology.

20. *Harl.* §37: Unum consilium <sup>illis</sup> omnibus fuit *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 171<sup>va</sup>, hand C<sup>1</sup>); Unum consilium cum illis omnibus fuit *Harl.*; Vnum consilium omnibus illis fuit *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 235<sup>v</sup>)

This passage has been reworked in *Vat.* and the relevant phrase omitted. The passage has also been abbreviated in *Leb. Bret.* As it stands, the addition agrees more closely with *Harl.* in its placement, but with *Gild.* in its omission of *cum*.

21. *Harl.* §37: ~~in terram autem~~ <sup>in nostra autem lingua</sup> Chent *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 171<sup>va-b</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>); bryttannice autem Ceint *Vat.*; in nostra autem Cent *Harl.*; in nostra autem Chent *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 235<sup>v</sup>); Cein iṁ. isin berla Brit *Leb. Bret.*

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<sup>108</sup> Though note Dumville's comment, 'Corpus Christi "Nennius"', 378: 'C<sup>9</sup> occurs only three times. It is a vast but faint hand, very likely identical with C<sup>7</sup>. These glosses occur also in the same hand in Ff.1.27.' Hand C<sup>7</sup> is responsible for addition 12 above, which agrees with *Chart.* against the other Latin recensions.

The addition agrees with *Harl.* and *Gild.* aside from its repetition of *lingua* from earlier in the sentence. The phrase has been reworded in both *Vat.* and *Leb. Bret.* due to their respective English and Irish perspectives.

22. *Harl.* §39: Mox ut audiuit puer <sup>obediuit uerbo senioris sancti</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 172<sup>ra</sup>, left margin, hand C<sup>2</sup>); Et infans sancto obediuit Germano *Vat.*; Et obaudiuit puer *Harl.*; Mox ut audiuit puer *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 236<sup>r</sup>)

The addition agrees with *Vat.* against *Harl.* and *Gild.* in specifying that the boy obeyed the saint. The passage is abbreviated in *Leb. Bret.*

23. *Harl.* §39: et omni concilio <sup>Brittonum</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 172<sup>ra</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>); et ab omni sinodali conuentu *Vat.*; et omni Brittonum concilio *Harl.*; et omni concilio *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 236<sup>r</sup>)

The addition agrees with *Harl.* against *Vat.* and *Gild.* in specifying that the council was ‘of the Britons’. However, this is the type of detail that *Vat.* tends to remove.

24. *Harl.* §40: Tunc magos suos <sup>ad se</sup> accersiuit *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 172<sup>rb</sup>, possibly hand C<sup>6</sup>); At ille, accersitis ad se magis *Vat.*; Et magos arcessiuit *Harl.*; Tunc magos suos arcersiuit *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 236<sup>v</sup>)

The addition agrees with *Vat.* against *Harl.* and *Gild.*, though it is reasonably trivial.

25. *Harl.* §40: Nisi infantem sine patre ~~quesieris~~ <sup>inueneris</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 172<sup>rb</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>); Nisi inueneris infantem sine patre *Vat.*; Nisi infantem sine patre inuenies *Harl.*; Nisi infantem sine patre queşieris *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 236<sup>v</sup>)

The addition replaces the verb inherited from *Gild.* The tense of the addition agrees with *Vat.* rather than *Harl.*

26. *Harl.* §41: Qui legati secum <sup>eum</sup> duxere *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 172<sup>va</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>); Duxerunt igitur puerum secum *Vat.*; Et illi eum secum duxere *Harl.*; Qui legati secum duxere *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 236<sup>v</sup>)

The addition agrees with *Harl.* rather than *Vat.* in adding *eum* as the object of the verb.

27. *Harl.* §42: ~~Man~~<sup>o</sup>do<sup>[hand C1]</sup> tibi enucleabo <sup>id est ostendam [hand C1]</sup> rex, et in ueritate tibi<sup>[hand C2]</sup> omnia pandam; sed ~~ad~~<sup>[uncertain hand]</sup> magos tuos percunctor, quid in pauimento istius loci est? Placet enim <sup>mihi [probably hand C6]</sup> ut tibi ostendant quid sub pauimento habetur *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 172<sup>va</sup>)

Modo tibi rex in ueritate omnia enucleando narrabo. Sed a magis tuis interrogando scire uolo, quid sit in pauimento loci istius; etenim congruum mihi uidetur ut tibi ostendant quid sub pauimento habeatur *Vat.*

Modo tibi, o rex, eulucubrabo et in ueritate tibi omnia satagam. Sed magos tuos percunctor, quid in pauimento istius loci est? Placet enim michi ut ostendant tibi quid sub pauimento habetur. *Harl.*

Modo tibi enucleabo rex et in ueritate omnia pandam; sed ad magos tuos percunctor, quid in pauimento istius loci est? Placet enim ut tibi ostendant quid sub pauimento habetur *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 237<sup>r</sup>)

With the exception of the gloss *id est ostendam*, all the alterations to CCCC 139, by all the hands (C<sup>1</sup>, C<sup>2</sup>, C<sup>6</sup> and an unknown hand), act to bring the text into conformity with *Harl.* By contrast, only the first alteration, which makes the obvious correction of *mando* to *modo*, concurs with *Vat.*

28. *Harl.* §42: <sup>foderunt itaque et sic inuenerunt ut puer predixerat</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 172<sup>va</sup>, left margin, hand C<sup>8</sup>); Uenerunt atque foderunt, stagnumque inuenerunt *Vat.*; Venerunt et foderunt, et ruit *Harl.*; *om.* *Gild.*

The addition makes up for a loss in *Gild.* The addition is closer to *Vat.* than *Harl.*, since it specifies that they found the pool.

29. *Harl.* §42: Duo uasa <sup>conclusa</sup> sunt <sup>in eo</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 172<sup>vb</sup>, right margin and interlineally, hand C<sup>2</sup>); Duo uasa sunt ipsa sibi conclusa in stagno *Vat.*; Duo uasa sunt *Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 237<sup>r</sup>)

Both additions agree with *Vat.* rather than *Harl.* and *Gild.* One suspects that the statement has been abbreviated in the hyparchetype of *Harl.* and *Gild.*

30. *Harl.* §42: Embreis Gluetic esse uidebatur <sup>uel ipse est</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 173<sup>ra</sup>, hand C<sup>1</sup>); quod est bryttanice Embres Guletic *Vat.*; Id est Embreis Guletic ipse uidebatur *Harl.*; Embreis Gleutic esse uidebatur *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 237<sup>v</sup>)

This is a clear instance of *Vat.* having revised the original text. The exact reading of archetypal text underlying the other three versions is uncertain, though it is likely that *Nenn.* and *Harl.* preserve the word *ipse* from the archetype, which has been omitted in *Gild.*

31. *Harl.* §43: bellatorum uirorum<sup>[marked for transposition]</sup> *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 173<sup>rb</sup>, uncertain hand); uirorum bellatorum *Vat.*; bellatorum uirorum *Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 237<sup>v</sup>)

The transposition causes the text to align with *Vat.* rather than *Harl.* and *Gild.*

32. *Harl.* §46: (We noted above, p. 000, that an addition to CCCC 139, 173<sup>vb</sup> by hand C<sup>8</sup> preserves the reference to Middlesex, as in *Vat.* and *Leb. Bret.*, which has been lost from *Harl.* and *Gild.*)

33. *Harl.* §47: (We noted above, p. 000. that the phrase *et ab illicita coniunctione se separaret* is restored to its correct position in CCCC 139, 173<sup>vb</sup> by hand C<sup>8</sup>, as found in *Vat.* and *Leb. Bret.*, whereas the phrase has been displaced in *Harl.* and *Gild.*)

34. *Harl.* §48: Faustini *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 174<sup>ra</sup>, uncertain hand); Faustini *Vat.*; Fausti *Harl., Gild.* (Bodley 163, 239<sup>r</sup>)

This deletion appears to align the text with *Harl.* and *Gild.* rather than *Vat.* However, the form *Faustus* is found just a couple of sentences before in all versions, so it would

be an obvious correction to make. Either *Vat.* and the version of *Gild.* forming the base-text of CCCC 139 made the same error independently, or, more probably, they preserve the original reading, which was variously corrected during the transmission of the text. *Leb. Bret.* lacks this final sentence about Faustus' mother.

35. *Harl.* §49: map Gloui. Bonus, Paul<sup>us</sup>, Mauron, tres <sup>fratres</sup> fuerunt, filii Gloui, qui edificauit *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 174<sup>rb</sup>, hands C<sup>1</sup> and C<sup>2</sup> respectively); filius Gloiu Da; Gloiu Da filius Paul Merion. Ipse autem Gloiu Da aedificauit *Vat.*; filii Gloiu. Bonus, Paul, Mauron, Guotolin, quattuor fratres fuerunt filii Gloiu, qui edificauit *Harl.*; map Gloiu. Bonus, Paul, Mauron, tres fratres fuerunt, filii Gloiu, qui edificauit *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 239<sup>r</sup>)

The addition *fratres* agrees with *Harl.* and *Gild.* against *Vat.* However, I have quoted this portion of text at length to show that the disagreement with *Vat.* is due to a misunderstanding that arose during the transmission of *Vat.*, whereby *bonus* was rendered into Welsh as *da* and taken to be Gloyw's epithet, and an extra *filius* was inserted before *Paul Merion* as if these names represented a single person who was Gloyw's father.

36. *Harl.* §49: Satis dictus est de Gortingirno et de regno suo et de genere eius *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 174<sup>rb</sup>, right margin, hand C<sup>3</sup>); De Guorthegirno nunc satis est *Vat.*; Satis dictum est de Guorthigirno et de genere suo *Harl.*; *om. Gild., Leb. Bret.*

The addition makes up for a loss in *Gild.* It is closer to *Harl.* than *Vat.*, although *Harl.* does not have the phrase *et de regno suo*.

37. *Harl.* §51: ad ~~quendam hominem mirabilem summum episcopis a Matheo rege~~ episcopum Amatheum regem *Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 174<sup>rb</sup>, hand C<sup>2</sup>); ad quen<dam> grandeuum laudandumque senem episcopum et ad regem, Matheum nomine *Vat.*; ad quendam hominem mirabilem summum episcopum Amatheam regem *Harl.*; ad quendam hominem mirabilem <sup>episcopum</sup> summum episcopis<sup>um</sup> Amatheo rege *Gild.* (Bodley 163, 239<sup>v</sup>)

The addition itself agrees most closely with *Harl.* However, versions of the deleted text are found in all other extant recensions, including *Harl.* Presumably this text was absent from *Nenn. Leb. Bret.* has drastically abbreviated the Patrician section and does not have text corresponding to this.

38. *Harl.* §54: *delebitur aqua Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 174<sup>vb</sup>, hand C<sup>1</sup>); *superrogetur aquis Vat.*; *delebuntur Harl.*; *delebitur Gild.* (Bodley 163, 240<sup>r</sup>)

The addition, which specifies that it will be water that will destroy the Irish seven years before Judgement Day, agrees only with *Vat.*, even though *Vat.* has rearranged the sentence. Again, *Leb. Bret.* does not include these details. This is a substantive point of connection between *Nenn.* and *Vat.*, though it is not immediately clear whether the reference to ‘water’ stems from the archetype.

39. *Harl.* §55: *Primo id est angelo sibi colloquente Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 174<sup>vb</sup>, hand C<sup>7</sup> *in rasura*); *uno modo angelo illi colloquente Vat.*; *id est angelo colloquente Harl.*; *id est angelo sibi colloquente Gild.* (Bodley 163, 240<sup>r</sup>)

The addition agrees most closely with *Gild.*, although *primo* corresponds to *uno modo* in *Vat.* This raises the possibility that C<sup>7</sup> has erased and rewritten the Gildasian base-text at this point in CCCC 139, perhaps because the original text had become obscured.

40. *Harl.* §56: *et in omnibus bellis uictor exstitit Nenn.* (CCCC 139, 175<sup>rb</sup>, right margin, hand C<sup>2</sup>); *In omnibus autem supradictis bellis protestantur semper eum fuisse uictorem Vat.*; *Et in omnibus bellis uictor extitit Harl.*; *om. Gild.*

This addition makes up for a loss in *Gild.* It agrees precisely with *Harl.*, but it is likely that *Vat.* has been reworded.

*Vat.* ends after the Patrician and Arthurian sections, meaning that the only Latin recensions that can be compared with the additions to CCCC 139 thereafter are *Harl.* and *Gild.*, which are closely related to each other; the exercise of comparison therefore becomes less instructive from a textual point of view.

There are few cases above where it is possible to construct a convincing argument about which of the textual groups is most likely to preserve the archetypal reading, and which have innovated. It is thus the repeated patterning of the textual groupings that becomes significant. There are a few key points. One is that the evidence overwhelmingly contradicts Dumville's claim that 'the recension attributed to Ninnius was essentially of the Harleian type', insofar as 'Harleian type' means 'Harleian recension'. In fact, in comparison with the other fuller Latin recensions, *Nenn.* agrees sometimes with *Vat.*, sometimes with *Harl.* (often alongside *Gild.*). It seems likely that those agreements reveal the archetypal readings, from which the disagreeing recensions have deviated. Another key point is that there are several striking agreements between *Nenn.* and *Chart.* against *Vat.*, *Harl.* and *Gild.* (see 1 and 12,<sup>109</sup> and cf. 14<sup>110</sup>). Since there are no certainly identified innovations shared by *Nenn.* (or *Leb. Bret.*) and *Chart.*, whereas there are several arguable innovations shared by *Vat.*, *Harl.* and *Gild.* (as discussed above), it is most probable that these agreements between *Nenn.* and *Chart.* preserve the archetypal readings, while the readings shared by *Vat.*, *Harl.* and *Gild.* are innovations. If so, those readings shared by *Nenn.*, *Chart.* and *Vat.* (5, 13, 16 and 17,<sup>111</sup> and cf. 15<sup>112</sup>), or just by *Nenn.* and *Vat.* in the absence of *Chart.* (2, 9, 22, 24, 25, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33 and 38<sup>113</sup>), probably also preserve the archetypal readings, in instances where the hyparchetype of *Harl.* and *Gild.* had innovated.

This picture is complicated by readings where *Nenn.* agrees substantively with *Harl.* against *Vat.* In some of these cases, one can posit that *Vat.* has reworded the relevant passages, as it so often does, leaving *Nenn.* and *Harl.* to reveal the archetypal reading rather than a shared innovation (8, 10, 20, 21, 26, 27, 30, 35, 36, 37 and 40,<sup>114</sup> and cf. 19<sup>115</sup>). In certain instances, one can be confident that this is indeed what has occurred, as when *Vat.* alters any words that imply a British perspective. However, there is a small number of

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<sup>109</sup> Hands C<sup>2</sup> and C<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>110</sup> Hand C<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>111</sup> Hands C<sup>2</sup>, C<sup>6</sup> and C<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> Hand C<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>113</sup> Hands C<sup>1</sup>, C<sup>2</sup>, C<sup>3</sup>, C<sup>6</sup> and C<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>114</sup> Hands C<sup>1</sup>, C<sup>2</sup>, C<sup>3</sup> and C<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>115</sup> Hand unidentified.

instances where *Nenn.* and *Harl.* agree substantively against a reading shared by *Vat.* and *Gild.* (4 and 11,<sup>116</sup> and cf. 3 and 23<sup>117</sup>), seemingly contradicting the picture that emerges from the rest of the evidence discussed in this article. This is a slender basis on which to argue for a further textual relationship, but it does raise the possibility that CCCC 139 was collated against more than one copy of *Historia Brittonum* (or perhaps that there had been an act of conflation in the history of *Nenn.*).

A further piece of evidence may be relevant here. One of the most unstable sections in the textual history of *Historia Brittonum* is the account of Brutus' ancestry and Japheth's sons that begins *Brittones a Bruto* (*Harl.* §18). It is found in the same position in *Harl.* and *Vat.* In *Harl.*, but not in *Vat.*, it ends with an explicit, first-person admittance that the text has digressed: *Et redeam nunc ad id de quo digressus sum* ('And now let me return to that from which I digressed'). *Chart.* has full versions of the sections in *Harl.* and *Vat.* that are found either side of the *Brittones a Bruto* section (comprising *Chart.* §§9–10), but the *Brittones a Bruto* section itself is not found in this position, nor is the *redeam* statement. Instead, the *Brittones a Bruto* section occurs earlier in *Chart.*, before the excerpt of the section concerning Aeneas, which corresponds with *Harl.* §11 (= *Chart.* §8). The *Brittones a Bruto* section is absent from *Leb. Bret.* and was never added to CCCC 139, implying that it was also absent from *Nenn.* Confusingly, the section is also lacking from *Gild.* However, *Gild.* does include the *redeam* statement at the relevant point. Since the *redeam* statement seems to have been inserted in response to the *Brittones a Bruto* section during the transmission of *Harl.*, it seems likely that the *Brittones a Bruto* section was removed independently from *Gild.* The position is summarized in the following table:

<i>Harl.</i>	<i>Gild.</i>	<i>Vat.</i>	<i>Chart.</i>	<i>Leb. Bret.</i>
			<b>7 Brittones a Bruto</b>	
11 Quando regnabat Britto in Britannia	Britto in Britannia	5 Quando uero regnabat Bruto in Bryttannia	8 Quando regnabat Brito in Britannia	11 Britus i rrigi Inse Bretan
(12–16)	(ditto)	(5–6)		(11–15)
17 Aliud experimentum	Aliud experimentum	7 Aliud experimentum	9 .III <sup>es</sup> . filii Noe	(5 maccu Nae)

<sup>116</sup> Hands C<sup>2</sup> and C<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>117</sup> Hand C<sup>8</sup>.

inueni ... Tres filii Noe	inueni ... Tres filii Noę	didici ... Tres filii Noae		
<b>18 Brittones a Bruto</b>		<b>7 Bryttones a Bruto</b>		
<b>19 Et redeam</b>	<b>Sed redeam</b>			
19 Romani autem	Romani autem	8 Romani autem	10 Romani autem	15 Romain

Although no version of the *Brittones a Bruto* section was added to CCCC 139, a version of it was added to CUL Ff.1.27, a manuscript that was effectively a fair copy of CCCC 139 made in the 1180s, as explained above.<sup>118</sup> It has been established that Ff.1.27 was, like CCCC 139, written in Durham.<sup>119</sup> Dumville comments that the hand that wrote this section into Ff.1.27 also added one or two minor glosses to CCCC 139.<sup>120</sup> This scribe clearly used both manuscripts together. Dumville characterized the version of *Brittones a Bruto* that was added by this scribe to Ff.1.27 as an extract from the Vatican recension; indeed, he even collated it with the corresponding section of *Vat.* in his edition of the latter.<sup>121</sup> It is indeed the case that the text in Ff.1.27 is generally closer to *Vat.* than *Harl.* (or *Chart.*), primarily because its pedigree of Brutus repeats each name twice as it proceeds, like in *Vat.* (as in X son of Y, Y son of Z ...). However, Dumville's apparatus to *Vat.* does not mention that the version in Ff.1.27 ends with the statement *Et redeam nunc ad id unde egressus sum*. As the table shows, no version of this statement is found in *Vat.* or *Chart.*; it seems instead to have been added during the transmission of *Harl.* and *Gild.*, even though *Gild.* came to omit the *Brittones a Bruto* section that prompted it. Therefore, rather than being evidence that *Vat.* was belatedly available to the compilers of CCCC 139 and Ff.1.27, as Dumville maintained,<sup>122</sup> the *Brittones*

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<sup>118</sup> The text from CUL Ff.1.27 is printed in Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 635.

<sup>119</sup> See above.

<sup>120</sup> Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 778.

<sup>121</sup> Dumville, '*Vatican*' Recension, 36–7; cf. Dumville, 'Textual History of the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum*', 599 and 778.

<sup>122</sup> According to Dumville, the evidence provided by this section for the use of *Vat.* in Ff.1.27 confirms 'very tenuous indications supplied by a few of the later glosses in the closely related manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 139': '*Vatican*'

*a Bruto* section in Ff.1.27 may instead support the notion that a text closely related to, but not derived from, the extant manuscripts of *Harl.* became available in Durham after CCC 139 had been collated with the Nennian recension, as suggested especially by readings 4 and 11 above.<sup>123</sup>

Lastly, we need to consider the distribution of the evidence discussed above between the glossing hands in CCC 139, as identified by Dumville. In Dumville's view, only hands C<sup>1</sup>, C<sup>2</sup> and C<sup>3</sup> had access to the Nennian recension; their additions had been made by 1166, when they were copied into Durham B.II.35. A generation later, a separate group of scribes, including C<sup>4</sup>, C<sup>5</sup>, C<sup>6</sup>, C<sup>7</sup> (who may be the same as C<sup>1</sup>), C<sup>8</sup> (who reappears in Ff.1.27), and C<sup>9</sup> (who may be the same as C<sup>1</sup> = C<sup>7</sup>, and who reappears in Ff.1.27), annotated and emended the text but did not collate it with the Nennian recension.<sup>124</sup> However, we have seen that more recent scholarship has not supported Dumville's sharp differentiation between the dating of these two groups of scribes: the later group of scribes had already made their contributions by the time that Ff.1.27 was created in the 1180s.<sup>125</sup> Work on the text of *Historia Brittonum* may have continued intermittently over an extended period rather than being divided between two distinct stints. The textual evidence discussed in this section supports this position, and, moreover, is decisively against Dumville's reconstruction. From a textual perspective, there is no reason to differentiate between the collation activity of C<sup>1</sup>, C<sup>2</sup> and C<sup>3</sup> and the collation activity of the other scribes. It is perfectly clear that most of the later scribes were collating the text with at least one other version of *Historia Brittonum*, just as C<sup>1</sup>, C<sup>2</sup> and C<sup>3</sup> were. The character of the collations does not change in the work of the later scribes; there is no change in the pattern of agreement with other recensions. Thus, while it is perhaps true to say that the later scribes, overall, were devoted more 'to exegesis than to textual work',<sup>126</sup> there is every

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*Recension*, 37. This must refer to the many readings discussed above, which are not confined to the later glosses, and some of which are not at all tenuous.

<sup>123</sup> Note too that, in the *Brittones a Bruto* section, Ff.1.27 shares the unusual spelling *Gemer* for 'Gomer' with *Harl.* alone; *Vat.* and *Chart.* both have *Gomer*.

<sup>124</sup> Dumville, 'Corpus Christi "Nennius"', 378; Dumville, 'Celtic-Latin Texts', 19–21.

<sup>125</sup> See above.

<sup>126</sup> Dumville, 'Corpus Christi "Nennius"', 378. The 'exegesis' is explored in Dumville, 'Celtic-Latin Texts'.

reason to suppose that they still had access to a copy of the Nennian recension and continued to collate it with CCCC 139 after 1166.

### *Conclusion*

There are two new textual conclusions arising from this discussion:

1. There is no convincing evidence suggesting that the Chartres and Vatican recensions form a textual group.
2. By contrast, the Vatican recension shares several clear innovations with the Harleian and Gildasian recensions, suggesting that these three recensions form a textual group. Furthermore, the pattern of textual agreement between the surviving fragments of the Nennian recension, *Lebor Bretnach*, and the other Latin recensions reinforces the idea that the Vatican recension adheres textually to the Harleian and Gildasian recensions, as against the Chartres and Nennian recensions and *Lebor Bretnach*.

What we have not encountered are any demonstrable textual innovations that would suggest that the Chartres recension forms part of a textual group with any other recension. Thus, as things stand, there are three distinct textual groups descending from the archetype, as represented in Figure 3: (1) the Chartres recension; (2) the Vatican, Harleian and Gildasian recensions; and (3) the Nennian recension and *Lebor Bretnach*. In theory, therefore, the contents of the archetype should be revealed by the agreement of two out of the three groups. However, this is not to assert that there are *necessarily* three independent lines of transmission descending from the archetype; rather, it is more accurate to say that we currently lack convincing evidence that would serve to show that two of these three groups share a common hyparchetype.

The textual relationships arising from this discussion, as depicted on the stemma, indicate that the broad shape of the original text is revealed by the overall agreement between the content of the group 2 recensions and *Lebor Bretnach*. Thus, *Lebor Bretnach* emerges in this

discussion of a textual witness of considerable importance for understanding *Historia Brittonum*'s archetype. It deserves much greater attention than it has yet received.<sup>127</sup>

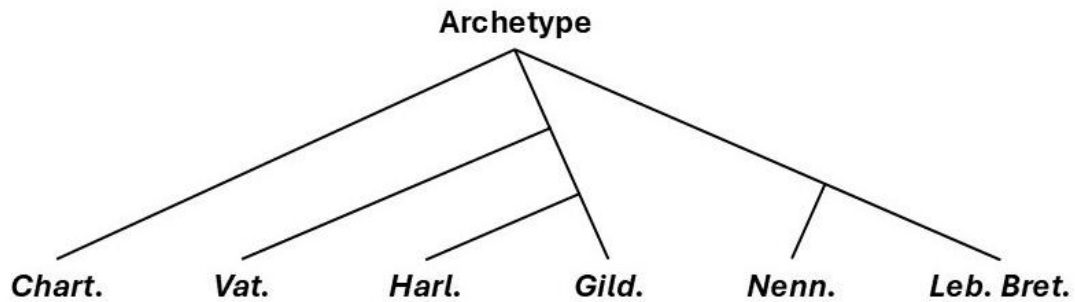


Figure 3: The proposed relationships between the recensions of *Historia Brittonum*]

*Appendix: List of manuscripts cited*

Within each sub-section of the table, manuscripts are ordered by approximate date. Note that this is not a comprehensive list of witnesses to *Historia Brittonum* and *Lebor Bretnach*.

<b>Mommsen</b>	<b>Dumville</b>	<b>Shelfmark</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Medieval provenance</b>
<i>Harleian recension, full witnesses</i>				
H	H	BL, Harley 3859, ff. 174 <sup>v</sup> –190 <sup>f</sup>	c.1100	
K	R	BL, Cotton Vespasian D. xxi, ff. 1 <sup>r</sup> –17 <sup>v</sup>	s. xii <sup>1</sup>	Rochester Cathedral Priory
<i>Harleian recension, partial witnesses</i>				
	F	BL, Cotton Domitian A. viii, f. 31 <sup>v</sup>	s. xi/xii	Christ Church, Canterbury
	L	Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 92, ff. 68 <sup>v</sup> –73 <sup>f</sup> , 75, 63 <sup>v</sup> –64 <sup>v</sup>	1121	Orig. Saint-Omer

<sup>127</sup> I am grateful to Paul Russell and Nicholas Evans for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

	I	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. Misc. d. 13 (S.C. 30572), ff. 25, 27, 30	s. xii <sup>1</sup>	Christ Church, Canterbury
	A	BL, Cotton Titus A. xxvii, ff. 87 and 185 <sup>v</sup> –186 <sup>v</sup>	s. xii/xiii	St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury
<i>Gildasian recension, subgroup I</i>				
Spec. 11	B	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 163, part ii	s. xii <sup>1/4</sup>	Peterborough Abbey
D <sup>1</sup>	D	Durham, Cathedral Library, B.II.35, part ii, ff. 129 <sup>r</sup> –136 <sup>r</sup>	<i>HB</i> added s. xii <sup>2/4</sup>	Durham Cathedral Priory
		Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 101, pp. 169–85	s. xvi	(Archbishop Matthew Parker)
<i>Gildasian recension, subgroup II</i>				
C	C	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 139, ff. 169 <sup>r</sup> –178 <sup>v</sup>	1160s	Sawley Abbey
	K	Liège, Bibliothèque de l'Université de Liège, 369C, ff. 130 <sup>r</sup> –142 <sup>r</sup>	s. xii <sup>med</sup>	Kirkstall Abbey
P	G	BL Cotton Caligula A. viii, ff. 44 <sup>r</sup> –58 <sup>v</sup>	Late s. xii	
<i>Gildasian recension, subgroup III</i>				
	L	Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 20, part ii, ff. 101 <sup>v</sup> –106 <sup>r</sup>	s. xii <sup>med</sup>	Le Bec Abbey
Q	N	BL Cotton Nero D. viii, part i, ff. 63 <sup>r</sup> –71 <sup>r</sup>	s. xii/xiii	
<i>Chartres recension</i>				
Z	C	Chartres, Bibliothèque municipale, 98, ff. 2 <sup>v</sup> , 3 <sup>r</sup> , 3 <sup>v</sup> , 5 <sup>v</sup> , 167 <sup>r</sup> , 167 <sup>v</sup> , 168 <sup>r</sup>	s. xi <sup>1</sup> (flyleaves)	Chartres Cathedral
<i>Vatican recension</i>				
M	R	BN Latin 9768 + Rome, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Reginensibus	s. xi <sup>2</sup>	Abbey of Saint-Médard de Soissons

		Lat. 1964, ff. 47–93, in the latter, ff. 47 <sup>r</sup> –58 <sup>r</sup>		
N	J	BN Latin 11108, part i, ff. 31 <sup>v</sup> –41 <sup>v</sup>	s. xii <sup>2</sup>	
	P	BN Latin 8048, Section C, ff. 48 <sup>v</sup> –55 <sup>v</sup>	s. xiii	
	A	BL Add. 11702, ff. 1 <sup>r</sup> –11 <sup>r</sup>	s. xiii/xiv	
<i>'Sawley' recension</i>				
L	F	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 66 + CUL Ff.1.27, pp. 1–40 and 73–252, at CUL Ff.1.27, pp. 14–40	c.1188	Sawley Abbey
<i>Lebor Bretnach</i>				
<i>Van Hamel</i>	<i>Dumville</i>			
U	U	Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 E 25 ( <i>Lebor na hUidre</i> ), pp. 3–4	s. xi/xii	Church of Clonmacnoise(?)
L <sup>1</sup>	La	Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 P 2 (535) + Dublin, Trinity College, 1319 (H. 2. 17), vol. 2, pp. 172–87, 192–4, at 23 P 2, ff. 139 <sup>r</sup> –140 <sup>v</sup>	s. xv <sup>in</sup>	Lecan (Castleforbes), Co. Sligo
D	H	Dublin, Trinity College, 1336 (H. 3. 17), section 6.1, ff. 232 <sup>r</sup> –236 <sup>r</sup> (cols 806–23)	?s. xv or s. xvi	