



Homiletics

ENG240Y Old English / Fri 4 Mar 2011

Definitions

- precise usage: an exposition on the pericope (a Gospel episode read during mass)
- broader usage: a sermon (general religious exhortation)
- cf. *saint's life*: saintly biography (and reflection)

To different degrees, all may be used either in mass or for private reading.

Named authors

- **Ælfric of Eynsham** (c. 955–c. 1010)
 - educated at Winchester
 - monk and teacher at Cerne Abbey
 - abbot at Eynsham Abbey

homiletic writings:

- Catholic Homilies: I (40 items), II (45 items)
- Lives of Saints (37 items)
- miscellaneous homilies (42 items)

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total ~164 items (~120 without the saints' lives)

Named authors

- **Wulfstan II, Archbishop of York (d. 1023)**
 - Bishop of London 996–1002
 - Bishop of Worcester 1002–1016
 - Archbishop of York 1002–1023

homiletic writings in Old English:

- 5 items on eschatology
- 7 items on the Christian faith (sacraments etc.)
- 6 items on the duties of a bishop
- 3 items on the punishment of sins
- 15–17 items of disputed authorship

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total 21 items in Old English confidently ascribed

Anonymous homilies

- **The Blickling homilies**

- 19 items
- manuscript from the later tenth century

- **The Vercelli homilies**

- 23 items
- manuscript from the later tenth century
- texts composed between late ninth and late tenth centuries

- ~80 miscellaneous items

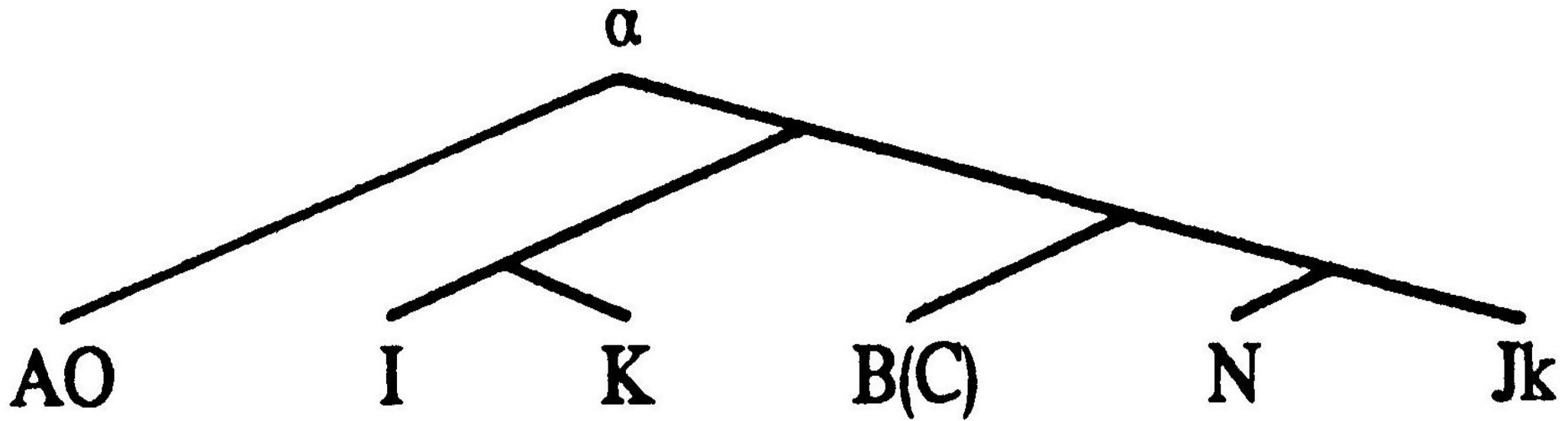
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total ~120 items in Old English

Textual tradition

Vercelli X: “This item [...] survives in whole or in part in nine copies. It is a well-wrought homily in which principal divisions, defined by the major sources, were utilised by some later writers who wished to reproduce only part of the original piece. The whole homily is in AKN and was also in B, from which the greater part has now disappeared because of the loss of a quire. In C only the conclusion now survives because of loss of leaves. In J and in a second item in K (= k) the latter part of the sermon (lines 122–end) is preserved as an independent piece, and in I the concluding section (lines 200–end) is added to material from a different source to create a new compilation. In A alone the homily opens with a preamble (lines 1–8) on the spiritual value of reading and listening to the Gospel, a message found in similar wording elsewhere in Old English. Finally, the compilation Napier XXX (in O) includes a few sentences from the latter part of homily X.” (Scragg 191)

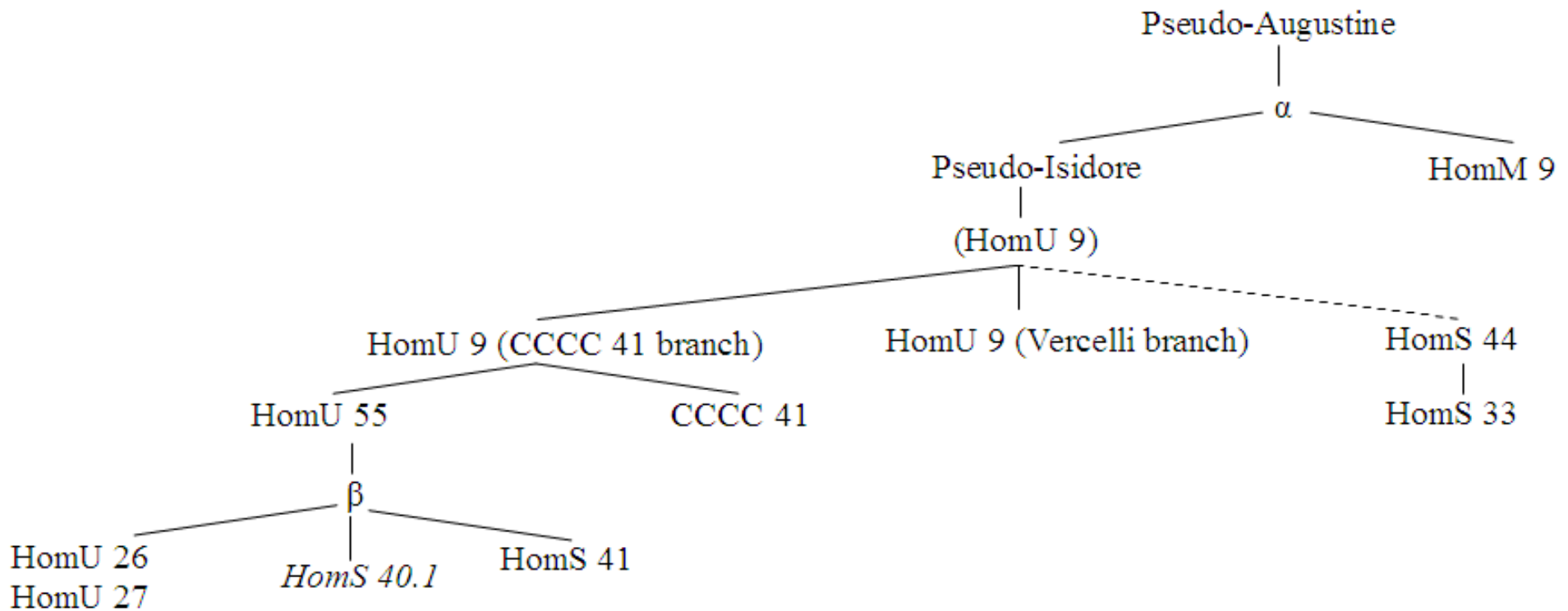
Textual tradition

Vercelli X



Textual tradition

“Þær þonne ne mæg se fæder helpan þam suna, ne [se] sunu þam fæder, ne nan mæg oðrum.”



The millennium

“Æfter þusend gearum bið Satanás unbunden. Þusend geara 7 eac ma is nu agan syððan Crist wæs mid mannum on menniscan hiwe, 7 nu syndon Satanases bendas swyðe toslovene, 7 Antecristes tima is wel gehende, 7 ðy hit is on worulde a swa leng swa wacre.” (Wulfstan, *Secundum Marcum*, following Revelation 20)

Divine retribution

- **Lamentations 4.22:** “The punishment of your iniquity has been completed, o daughter of Zion; he will exile you no longer. But he will punish your iniquity, o daughter of Edom; He will expose your sins!”
- **Gildas** (early c6): the Pictish, Scottish, and Germanic invasions are a punishment for the sins of the British
- **Bede** (~730): “This was ordained by the will of God so that evil might fall upon those miscreants.”
- **Wulfstan** (early c11): the Viking raids are a punishment for the sins of the Anglo-Saxons