

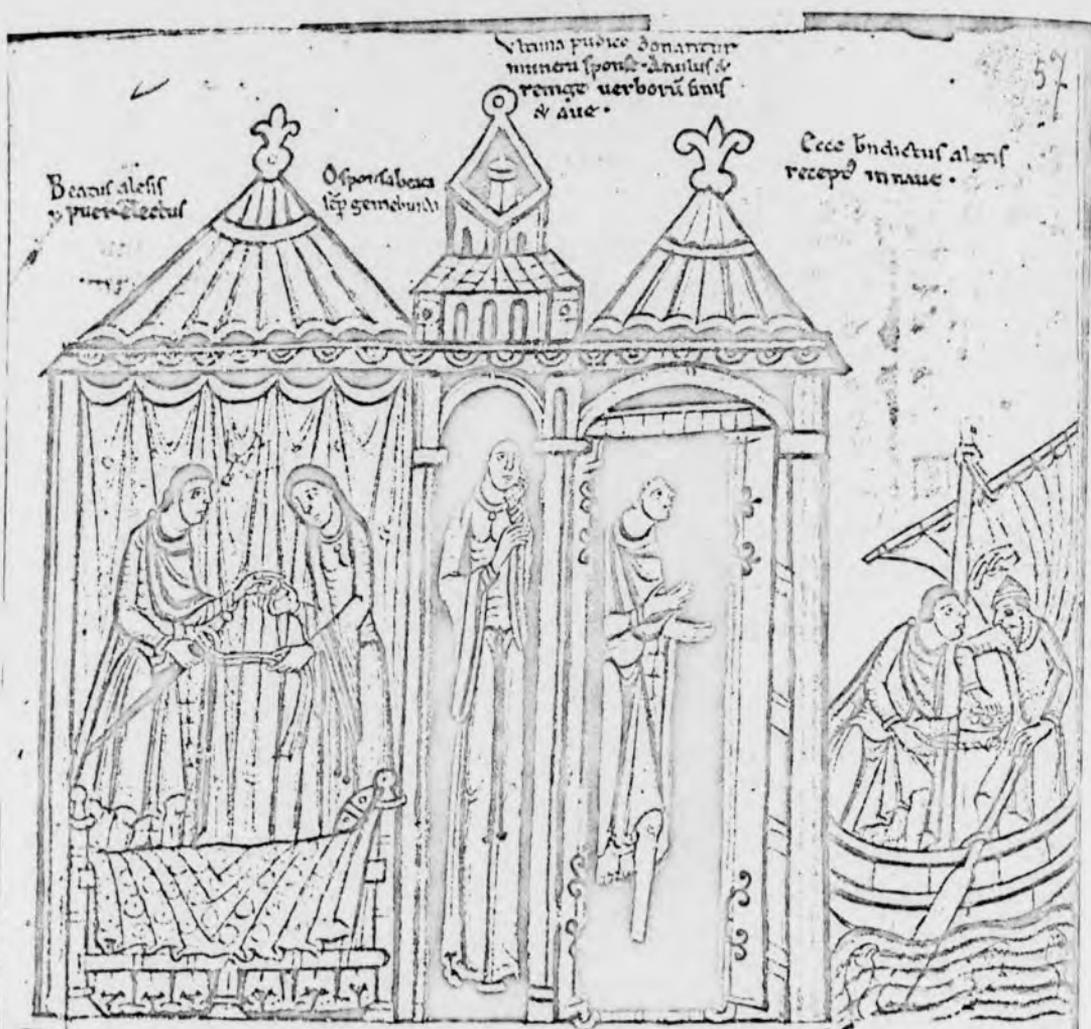
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 purement. sulme castet. e dignement sei delitent
 esgoies del ciel & es noes uirgines.

BULLINGTON, RACHEL MCGILL. The Prologue to the Old French Vie de St. Alexis: A Linguistic Study (with Considerations of its Prosodic and Conceptual Features). (1971)
Directed by: Dr. James C. Atkinson. Pp. 144

This thesis represents a three-fold analysis of the prologue to the Old French Vie de St. Alexis as found in its principal manuscript, that of the St. Albans psalter, commonly denoted "L" manuscript. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether or not the illustrator and scribe of this document may be the author of the prologue as well as of the poem. This former text has not previously received more than cursory attention from linguistic scholars. Questions of authorship, date, and place of composition for Alexis were raised earlier by Otto Pächt, art historian of the St. Albans psalter, who suggests that the Anglo-Norman L ms. may constitute the original form of the Old French poem. He has pointed out that a linguistic study of the prologue, which occurs only in L ms., may yield information toward establishing the date and time of the poem's composition. Heretofore, scholars have generally accepted the findings of Gaston Paris, who maintained that L ms. harked back to a lost original, composed in France ca. 1050. Paris was inclined to believe that the prologue as well originated in France, as part of the original "Q."

Using the established methods of linguistic analysis and the model of Paris' critical study of the Alexis text, we have studied the language of the prologue, concentrating on its own peculiarities of phonology and morphology. We

have catalogued and evaluated these features and have found that they compare more closely with 12th-century Anglo-Norman than with 11th-century Old French, as found in the poem.

We have subsequently reviewed the prosodic, semantic, and conceptual characteristics of the prologue and have deduced that all of these differ from the corresponding features in the poem.

Our final conclusion is that the prologue constitutes a composition separate from and later than the poem Alexis.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE OLD FRENCH VIE DE ST. ALEXIS:

A LINGUISTIC STUDY

With Considerations of its Prosodic
and Conceptual Features

by

Rachel McGill Bullington

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INSPIRARE QUAM ERUDIRE:

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

"Il ouvre dignement l'histoire de la poésie nationale." Thus Gaston Paris characterizes La Vie de St. Alexis, the first major literary work to be couched in the Old French language.¹ Philologists generally concede the chronological precedence of the Alexis on the basis of linguistic comparison with the Roland. The literary merit of the Alexis is commonly attributed to its "conceptual architecture" and to the inherent pleasingness of its building material. Arranged in 125 assonanced strophes of five decasyllabic lines each, the poem is acclaimed for the artistry of its design and the grace of its execution; literary scholars agree that it possesses that proportion of structure, that unity of purpose and that fitness of expression required for esthetic excellence.² On the basis of its linguistic interest, its

¹ Gaston Paris, ed., La Vie de Saint Alexis, Poème du XI^e Siècle, Bibliothèque de l'école des hautes études, 7^e fascicule, Paris, 1872.

² The intricate design of the poem's structure has been analyzed by these scholars: E. R. Curtius, "Zur Interpretation des Alexiusliedes," ZRPh, LVI (1937), 85-93; Anna Granville Hatcher, "The Old-French St. Alexis Poem: A Mathematical Demonstration," Traditio, VIII (1952), 111-158; Eleanor W. Bulatkin, "The Arithmetical Structure of the O. F. Vie de St. Alexis," PMLA, LXXIV (1959), 495-502.

historical priority and its inherent artistry, La Vie de St. Alexis merits the wealth of study and tribute long accorded by discerning scholars.

The legend of Saint Alexis has been exceedingly popular from its inception (ca. 5th C.) through the Middle Ages and, with H. Ghéon's Le Pauvre sous l'escalier (1920), up to this century. J. -M. Meunier, one of the major Alexis scholars, has demonstrated the legend's wide dissemination. In his critical edition of the poem (1933), he cites ancient texts in Syrian, Greek, Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopian and Arabic, and medieval versions in Old French, Provençal, Italian, Spanish, German and Scandinavian.

The origin of the legend is unknown, as is the dividing-line between fact and fiction. Arthur Amiaud (fl. 1888-) heads one of the two major schools of thought concerning the legend's genesis. His is the traditional view recorded by Meunier, Christopher Storey and other Alexis scholars. Here is Amiaud's reconstruction of the legend and its development:³

In Edessa, Syria, during the time of Bishop Rabula (ca. 425), there lived an un-named ascete. Only the sacristan of the church knew that this was a rich young ruler who had forsaken all that he had, his native land, and a waiting bride to take up the beggar's bowl. After years of the utmost piety and the tenderest charity, this "man of God" dies quite as obscurely as he had lived,

³ Arthur Amiaud, La Légende syrienne de St. Alexis, l'homme de Dieu (Paris, 1889).

and his body is placed in the common burial ditch. At the intercession of the sacristan, Bishop Rabula directs that the body be re-claimed and given a more honorable burial. The grave is opened, but only the miserable rags of the holy man remain: his body has presumably been claimed by God himself. The veneration of this saintly man, known as "Mars Riscia," naturally ensues.

Transported to Greece (ca. 8th C.) this Syrian legend became fused with the similar life story of St. John the Calybite, a young Roman who had abandoned his luxurious home for a monastery in Constantinople and a life of poverty and humility. A heavenly voice instructs this good man to return to his parents and receive their benediction before dying. Appearing as a beggar, St. John is not recognized by his family. He obtains permission to live in a hut on the premises; here he pursues his life of self-denial and piety and preserves his anonymity until the moment of death. So moved are the Romans by this worthy example that they erect a church at the site of John's hovel, and revere him as St. John the Calybite (from the Greek for "hut"). This legend was combined with that of the Syrian "Mars Riscia" by a Greek narrator, who augmented his composite story with the name of Alexis for the saint, and of Euphemien and Aglaë for the parents.

The legend in this expanded form was probably brought to Rome about 977 by an Archbishop Sergius of Damascus. Re-stationed at St. Boniface on the Aventine, Sergius cited this church as the repository of the saint's relics.

This composite legend, of Syrian, Greek and Roman elements, is recorded as BHL 286 and reproduced in its entirety in the annals of the Bollandists, Acta Sanctorum, Mensis Iulii, Tomus IV. It is this prose Latin Vita which Amiaud regards as the ultimate source for the Old French poem.

Another major Alexis scholar, Margarethe Rösler (fl. 1905-45), offers a different view of the legend's genesis and progress. Her 1941 discovery of a Spanish Alexis MS. (ca. 925) leads her to believe that the legend existed in the West prior to the time of Sergius. On the

basis of this and other (historical) evidence, Professor Rösler posits a Byzantine origin. From Greece and Rome, as she traces it, the legend probably passed to Syria, there received additional material, and returned to Rome in its enriched form. Rösler has grouped the different legends of Alexis into four families according to their common elements and probable sources.

Whatever the course of the legend--whether from Syria to Greece and Rome, or from Greece to Syria and Rome--scholars as a whole agree that a Latin source lies behind the Old French poem. One of the following AA. SS. Vitae is usually suggested as the source:

BHL 286: (Official Life of the Roman Church, this has been the commonly-accepted source since the time of 18th-C. scholar, Jean Pien. It is Amiaud's choice.)

BHL 292: (Rösler's preference.)

BHL 293: (Vita metrica favored by Alexis scholar L. Herrmann, who suggests Tedbalt of Vernon, 11th C. cleric, as the author of this rhymed life.)

BHL 296: ("Admont" version, recently proposed as source by Otto Pächt, eminent art historian and ⁴ editor of the St. Albans psalter [1960].)

Aside from its uniqueness of style, form and arrangement, the Old French Life contains some original narrative details. It parallels very closely, however, the basic

⁴ Pächt also offers the possibility that the Old French Life may rather be the source of the "Admont" version. This interpretation has been explored by French literary scholars C. A. Robson and Bernhard Bischoff, as acknowledged by Pächt, The St. Albans Psalter (London, 1960), p. 129 et passim.

story in its two-part form as told in the Latin texts.

This is the story as offered by the Old French poem:

There once lived in Rome a rich and powerful nobleman named Eufemien. Yearning for a son, Eufemien and his wife pray tirelessly for this favor, and pledge that their child will belong to God:

"E! reis celeste, par ton cumandement
Amfant nus done ki seit a tun talent!"

God grants their request and sends them a son. The child is named Alexis at his Christian baptism, is tenderly nurtured and given an education fitting him to serve in the Emperor's retinue. Wishing to assure and to see the continuation of his lineage, Eufemien arranges for the marriage of his son to a well-born maiden. Alexis, so far the epitome of filial obedience, submits docilely enough to the wedding ceremony and to his father's admonition to enter the bridal chamber. Once inside the room, however, the sight of the marriage bed reminds him of an all-eclipsing duty to his Heavenly Father. Thereupon, he commends his bride to a spiritual union with the supreme Bridegroom:

"Oz mei, pulcele! celui tien ad espus
Ki nus raens(t) de sun sanc precius.
An ices(t) secle nen at parfit' amor;
La vithe est fraisle, n'i ad durable honur;
Cesta lethece revert a grant tristur."

Handing over his sword-buckler and a ring, Alexis flees the house and its earthly bonds. He rushes out to a ship lying in port and engages the boatman to bear him away. Guided by divine purpose, the ship lands at Lalice, where Alexis begins a life of thralldom to his Heavenly Lord. After an unspecified time, he leaves Lalice for Alsis, site of an image of the Virgin. In this Syrian city, Alexis divests himself of all his earthly possessions, distributing them among the poor, and assumes the life of a beggar. Of the alms he receives, he suffices himself with only enough to hold body and soul together, dispensing the surplus among the other paupers, for

Pur nul aver ne volt estra ancumbret.

In Rome, meanwhile, the parents and wife of Alexis lament his absence, and Eufemien sends out his best

servants in search of the missing son. They encounter him in Alsis, but so changed has Alexis become in appearance that they do not know him. Alexis receives their alms, praising God that his identity is concealed and that he is now subservient to his servants:

Danz Alexis an lothet Deu del ciel
 D'icez sons sers qui il est provenders;
 Il fut lur sire, or est lur almosners;
 Ne vus sai dire cum il s'en firet liez.

After seventeen years, Alexis' sojourn in Alsis is abruptly ended when the image of the Virgin miraculously summons the "man of God." The supernatural Voice speaks three times before the humble almsman is identified as "l'ume Deu." Again, Alexis flees the honor and homage of this world, seeing them as worthless baggage:

"Certes," dist il "n'i ai mais ad ester,
 D'icest honur nem revoil ancumbrier."

Again he boards a ship and sets sail for Tarsus, but heavenly intervention causes his landing at a port close to Rome. Alexis, dreading lest his family recognize him and burden him with worldly impedimenta, beseeches God that his identity again be concealed. His prayer is once more answered: Alexis is unrecognized by Eufemien and his retinue upon their meeting in the street. Alexis asks shelter of Eufemien in God's name and

"Empur tun filz dunt tu as tel dolur ..."

Eufemien, strangely moved to the point of weeping, grants this request:

"Por amor Deu e pur mun cher ami,
 Tut te durai, boens hom, quanque m'as quis,
 Lit ed ostel e pain e carn e vin."

At Eufemien's request for the attendance of a servant, whom he promises to 'make free,' one of his men steps out immediately to join the pilgrim in ignominious lodging beneath the stairs.

For seventeen more years Alexis continues his life of austerity. Christ-like, he endures the reviling of jeering servants, and asks that God forgive them 'by his mercy, for they know not what they do.' Like his Master, he attends the festivals and services of the church and hearkens to the Scriptures for counsel. Of

the table scraps which constitute his diet, Alexis partakes sparingly, giving the remainder to the poor; he does not wish even his body to lay up earthly treasure in the form of fleshiness. Gradually, the flesh becomes weak as the spirit of Alexis turns more and more to God.

Sensing that the time is imminent when 'the corruptible shall become incorruptible,' Alexis obtains pen, ink and parchment and records the story of his life. He conceals the document upon his body and, in a continuous renunciation of the carnal, ceases more and more to speak.

As Alexis moves closer to 'shuffling off (his) mortal coil,' once more a Voice is heard in the city; it warns that the 'man of God' must be summoned to ward off the destruction of Rome. The people turn in terror to Pope Innocent and to the emperors Arcadius and Honorius. All beseech God to point out this unknown holy man, by whom their salvation may be purchased. The Voice, in its third discourse, directs them to the house of Eufemien, where, at the good servant's suggestion, they find the mortal remains of Alexis under the staircase. Eufemien wishes to read the parchment clutched by the dead pilgrim, but the document will yield only to the hand of the Pope, who remits it in turn to a learned clerk.

To an audience of two emperors and pope, the three family members of Alexis, and the assorted clergy and populace, the clerk reads the life-story of this pauper who was Lord Alexis.

When the parents and wife learn that this man of God is the long-lost son of Eufemien, each utters an impassioned lamentation. Eufemien mourns the defection of his inheritor; the mother bewails the loss of her son. Only the wife of Alexis seems somewhat perceptive of his greater significance; she ends her plaint by committing herself to the service of God:

"Or sui jo vedve, sire," dist la pulcela,
 "Ja mais ledece n'avrai, quar ne pot estra,
 Ne ja mais hume n'avrai an tute terre.
 Deu servirei, le rei ki tot guvernet:
 Il nem faldrat, s'il veit que jo lui serve."

In a scene which recalls the angel's remonstrations at Jesus' tomb, the Pope rebukes this blind grieving:

"Seignors que faites?" co dist li apostolie.
 "Que valt cist crit, cist dols ne cesta noise?"

Chi chi se doilet, a nostr'os est il goie,
 Quar par cestui avrum boen adjutorie;
 Si li preiuns que de tuz mals nos tolget."

The authorities seek to bear away the body of Alexis, but the people refuse to be parted from their saviour. Not even the dazzle of gold and silver, flung into the streets by the rich and powerful, can divert the masses from this 'celestial gem.' Pressing about the body of Alexis, the people of Rome receive miraculous cures for their divers diseases.

At last the body is borne away to the church of St. Boniface, where it lies in state for seven days; then, as befits a precious jewel, it is lovingly embedded in the earth. The family of Alexis, the pope and emperors, the clergy and the people all draw strength and grace from the example of this son of God.

So may we, avers the poet, receive benefit from Alexis, who, now in Heaven together with his wife, can make intercession for us. By his righteousness, we can obtain peace and joy in this life, and eternal glory in the one to come. Thereupon, we are invited to join in the Pater Noster:

Aiuns, seignors, cel saint home en memorie,
 Si li preiuns que de toz mals nos tolget.
 En icest siecle nus acat pais e goie,
 Ed en cel altra la plus durable glorie!
 En ipse verbe sin dimes: Pater noster.

Amen.

There are some seventeen extant manuscripts which preserve, in whole or fragmentary form, the Old French version of St. Alexis' Life. Those of major importance remain the four which Gaston Paris, venerable scholar of Old French, examines in his 1872 critical edition of the poem.⁵ These are the four primary MSS. as he describes them:

⁵ The 12th-C. Vatican ms. (V), discovered after Paris' death and published by Pio Rajna in 1929, offers only the last 200 ll. and no important new readings, as demonstrated by Storey, La Vie de St. Alexis (Geneva, 1968), p. 29.

1. L (for Lamspringe) ms. is part of the St. Albans psalter, executed at the Benedictine abbey of that name in England, 12th C. It was brought to Lamspringe Abbey, Germany, by English monks, ca. 1643. The St. Albans psalter is now the property of St. Godehard's church, Hildesheim, where it presumably passed when nearby Lamspringe Abbey was suppressed (ca. 1803).

2. A for (Ashburnam-Place) ms. also appears to be of 12th-century English provenance. The Life of Alexis appears in this ms. among the Lives of St. Brandan and St. Catherine and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. This ms. is inferior to L in quality, Paris judges, as well as in quantity (by 21 strophes and 32 single lines).

3. P (for Paris) ms. is likewise judged to be of English extraction, ca. 13th century. More complete in content than A, it also offers better readings. Konrad Hofmann has studied this ms. in depth, utilizing it in his 1868 critical edition of St. Alexius. (Included in P ms. are sermons on the Pater Noster and St. John I.)

4. S is a 13th-century French ms. The poem as it here appears has been greatly augmented and altered in comparison with its above counterparts.

Launching his celebrated method for the establishment of texts in his 1872 edition of Alexis, Paris demonstrates the linguistic precedence and textual superiority of L manuscript.⁶ It is this manuscript which serves as the text for our study, as it does for all basic editions of Alexis.

The St. Albans psalter, in which L ms. appears, is a handsomely-decorated work of 418 pages (209 folios) on vellum; the remains of its medieval binding (pigskin over wooden boards) show considerable mending. The psalter

⁶ Hans Sckommodau, however, maintains that the language of L ms. is falsely archaic, and that A should receive editorial preference ("Zum altfr. Alexiuslied," ZRPh, 70 [1954], 161-203.)

comprises the following elements in order, as described by art scholar Francis Wormald:⁷

1. Inscriptions of fly-leaf (17th, 18th-C. additions).
2. Calendar and Computistical Tables
3. 40 full-page miniatures. The first two are of Adam and Eve; 3-35 are Christological; 36, 37 depict St. Thomas (the doubter) and St. Martin; 38, 39 are of the Ascension and Pentecost; the last shows David as a musician.
4. Chançon of St. Alexis, preceded by preface.⁸
Above the préface is a tinted-drawing miniature illustrating three scenes from the life of St. Alexis; three tituli are above the scenes:
 - a) Beatus alexis puer electus
 - b) O sponsa beata semper gemebunda
 - c) Ecce benedictus alexis receptus in nave.

At the top of this same page is the following titulus

Ultima pudice donantur munera sponse.
Anulus & Remge verborum finis & ave.

On this page and the following one, on which begins the poem, the lines are written alternately in red and blue. (The preface, tituli and poem are all written in prose-line form.)

5. A letter of St. Gregory in defense of religious art; it appears first in Latin, "(E)cce responsum sancti gregorii. secundino incluso rationem de picturis interroganti," beg. "Aliud est picturam adorare. aliud per picture historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere ..."

6. Old French translation of the Gregorian letter, "(I)ste uis le respuns saint gregorie a secundin le reclus cum il demandout raison des peintures," beg. "Altra cose est aurier la peinture e altra cose est par le historie de la peinture aprendre que la cose seit adaurier ..."

7. Full-page miniature of Christ and disciples on Emmaus road. Account of incident written in background.

8. Christ breaking bread at Emmaus (miniature).

9. Christ disappearing from table at Emmaus.

10. Beginning of Psalms, with famed Beatus Vir historiated initial. In the margin of this page and the preceding one is a dissertation on spiritual battle (in Latin).

⁷ The St. Albans Psalter, O. Pächt, C. R. Dodwell, F. Wormald (London, 1960), pp. 3-22.

⁸ A reproduced copy of this sheet serves as the frontispiece for this monograph.

11. Latin Psalter, Gallican version. Historiated initials before each psalm and at intervals of some psalms.
12. Canticles.
13. Lord's Prayer.
14. Apostles' Creed.
15. Gloria in excelsis.
16. Nicene Creed.
17. Athanasian Creed (beg. Qui cunque vult . . .)
18. The Litany.
19. Prayers in Latin.
20. Two full-page miniatures: The martyrdom of St. Alban and David and his musicians.

There are three main hands discernible in the writing of this psalter. They are responsible for the following gatherings:

1. Calendar and computistical tables.
2. Psalter, Canticles, Litany and Prayers.
3. St. Alexis chancon, Gregory reply, the account of the meeting on the Emmaus road, the description of spiritual battle, inscriptions attached to each psalm, canticle, etc., and the obit of Roger, the hermit.

Pächt states (p. 49) that the same hand is responsible for both script and art work for group 3 above, as well as for the forty-page Biblical cycle; this is the work of the "Alexis master":

But it is true that the four gatherings in question, although constituting a rather miscellaneous lot, a set of christological pictures, a French 'chanson spirituel,' an appendix to the pictorial cycle and a semi-decorative Psalter opening, form genetically a unity, distinguishable from the other parts of the Psalter. We have in them the main contribution by the leading artist of the St. Alban's scriptorium in the early 12th century whom we shall henceforth call the Alexis master.⁹

⁹ Pächt is expanding on the findings of Adolph Goldschmidt, earlier scholar of the psalter. See A. Goldschmidt, Der Albanipsalter in Hildesheim (Berlin, 1895).

We shall discuss later the order which we find in this "miscellaneous lot"; within the larger framework of the psalter, we trace a basic ternary design utilizing these three main elements:

- 1) the 40-page Biblical cycle.
- 2) Alexis, appearing as conceptual center.
- 3) the historiated Psalter.

It is the short text commonly called the prologue, preceding the poem proper, which serves as the basis for our study. Pächt has designated it as the scribal work of the Alexis master; he suggests that it may also be his literary creation.

Gaston Paris, on the other hand, is inclined to believe that the prologue derives from one which preceded an hypothesized archetype poem, "O", which he dates ca. 1050 and characterizes as of continental French origin. Paris ascribes a date of 1150 to the text of the poem as found in L ms. He infers that the original was composed in France, transported in perhaps another intermediary version to England during the Norman invasion or subsequent period, and copied by an Anglo-Norman scribe.

But Pächt and his colleagues, Dodwell and Wormald, deduce an earlier date, ca. 1120, for the St. Albans psalter and its L ms., on the basis of internal and related historical evidence.

Pächt challenges, moreover, the very existence of an archetype version. He theorizes that the original Old French Vie de St. Alexis may indeed be L manuscript, composed and executed in England. Pächt offers indisputable evidence for a possible Anglican genesis, examining Latin sources of the poem then available in England, citing Italian influences in this and other English art of the period, and presenting a transplanted Frenchman, Geoffrey of Maine, who had both the ability and the rationale to write such a poem. The schoolmaster and later abbot Geoffrey was the spiritual adviser of Christina of Markyate, who, like Alexis, had fled a forced marriage for the ascetic and celibate life; it was for her, artistic evidence indicates, that the St. Albans psalter was composed. It is Pächt's provocative suggestion that a linguistic study of the prologue and a comparison of its "Zeitstil" with that of the poem may offer valid information as to the date and provenance of the Old French poem:

If . . . there are no objections from the linguistic side to dating the French original as late as 1120-- i.e. not much earlier than the date at which it was written down at St. Albans--there would be a strong case for regarding St. Albans, towards which we have a unique combination of circumstances converging at this time, as the birth-place of the Alexis poem in Old French. . . . One test has to my knowledge never been made: since the preamble as well as the translation from Pope Gregory's letter is supposed to be the work of the scribe who copied the 'chanson' in the St. Albans Psalter it ought to be possible to ascertain whether the 'Zeitstil' of its language is the same as that of the poem or not.¹⁰

¹⁰Pächt, p. 143, 143 n.

Indeed, since the 1845 discovery of the L ms. by Wilhelm Müller, the text of the poem has been the object of assiduous linguistic and literary study. The legend of St. Alexis and the Latin sources of the poem have also received diligent scholarship.¹¹ The St. Albans psalter has benefitted from the careful attention of Goldschmidt, Pächt and other art scholars. However, the study of the St. Albans psalter has not yet been fully correlated with findings in Old French philology.

We propose to study the prologue of St. Alexis, which is unique to the L ms., as an integral part of the St. Albans psalter. We shall undertake a linguistic analysis of this text,¹² to the extent that conclusions may be drawn and consideration made of the Old French work's genesis and role within the framework of the psalter. Perhaps this will furnish a key to open new possibilities for the provenance of L manuscript.

¹¹ For a summary of Alexis scholarship--legend and text--see the excellent survey of Karl D. Uitti, Romance Philology, Vol. 20, 1966, pp. 263-295.

¹² This text offers the prime linguistic style of the scribe, representing his natural language; The Gregorian translation is more bound to Latin forms and syntax. Refer to Appendix B for this latter text and our summary of its language.

CHAPTER II
LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Preceding the (untitled) Life of Saint Alexis in the St. Albans psalter is one full page (Plate 35) divided between the Alexis miniatures, with Latin supratitles, and the twelve-line prologue.

The text of this prologue serves as the basis for our linguistic study. It is printed below in its original form, with only these emendations: enclitic forms have been separated ("lauie" is registered as "la vie," for instance); the abbreviated form "&" is expanded to the "ed" which it is generally understood to represent; the graphies v, i, and f have been changed to the u, j, and s of modern orthography.

Ici cumencet amiable cancun e spiritel raisun d iceol
noble barun eufemien par num. e de la vie de sum filz
boneuret del quel nus avum oit lire e canter. par le
divine volentet. il desirables icel sul filz angendrat.
Apres le naisance co fut emfes de deu methime amet.
e de pere e de mere par grant certet nurrit. la sue
juvente fut honeste e spiritel. par l amistet del
surerain pietet la sue spuse juvene cumandat al spus
vif de veritet Ki est un sul faitur e regnet an trinitiet.
Icesta istorie est amiable grace e suverain consulaciun
a cascun memorie spiritel. les quels vivent purement
sulunc castethet. e dignement sei delitent es goies
del ciel ed es noces virginels.

(Here beginneth the pleasing song and spiritual discourse of this noble baron, Eufemien by name. and of the life of his blessed son of whom we have heard in word and song (read and sung, lit.). by the Divine Purpose. he desirous begat this only son. After the birth this was

a child loved of God Himself. and by father and mother most lovingly nurtured. his youth was worthy and spirituel. by the love of the Sovereign Piety he commended his young spouse to the truly living bridegroom Who is one sole creator and reigns in trinity. This story is loving grace and sovereign consolation to each spiritual memory. those who live purely according to chastity. and worthily delight themselves in the joys of heaven and in virginal nuptials.)

In studying this text, we are aware of the artificiality implicit in any visible recording of language, an arbitrary device whose written characters can only approximate the sounds which they represent. As Paris states in his study of Alexis' text:

Toute étude phonétique qui s'attache uniquement aux transformations des lettres isolées est dupe de l'apparence; les lettres ne sont que signes,--pas même les signes, les symboles,--des sons qui constituent la vraie matière du langage. Mais si on voulait à propos d'un texte étudier la phonétique dans son essence intime, on serait obligé de faire chaque fois l'analyse complète de la langue. On ne permettra donc, dans cette étude, de traiter la question orthographique, la seule à laquelle un editeur ne puisse se soustraire ...¹

There are available, however, certain points of reference. We may assume a general consistency, within a text, in the use of a particular graphy for a certain sound. We may compare the orthography of a word with that of its modern survivor, and with its other contemporary appearances, both intra- and extra-textually. When assonance or rhyme figures in a text, we have a valuable indication as to which sounds were equivalent.

¹Paris, ed., p. 84.

Additional phonological evidence may be available in the case of Anglo-Norman texts, whose spelling is often more phonetic than etymological, according to Professor Mildred K. Pope, a foremost scholar in this field. Separated from the regulating tradition of the mother-country, and exposed to the influence of another language and culture, this dialect was most susceptible to changes in phonology and morphology, and its scribes were--accordingly--less restrained in recording them. This accounts in part for the numerous orthographic variations in Anglo-Norman MSS., whether as copied or original works.

In addition, however, to those Anglo-Norman texts showing highly phonetic spelling, there also exist those which conform--with more or less consistency--to traditional Latin orthography and Old French (=Continental) forms: these represent the work of scribes whose Latin bases and continental influences were stronger and more enduring.

Indeed, while showing a general pattern toward simplification of forms, and possessing certain of these forms in common, Anglo-Norman texts preserve their respective autonomies; each manuscript reveals the individual peculiarities--of speech, education and tradition--of its scribe. Louis Menger, another astute scholar of the French of England, has well described this factor, which he terms "this personal equation, this independence of each individual author . . .":

. . . our writers had no stable usage of the language in England from which to draw; the only check on licenses they took with the idiom was . . . their greater or less acquaintance with French of the continent, and we must expect the usage of each writer to vary according to his knowledge of that French, and his communication with France.²

These Anglo-Norman considerations are pertinent to our study because of the established English provenance of L manuscript. Just so, Gaston Paris, while maintaining a continental origin for Alexis, finds the explanation for many of the poem's forms in England: 'an Anglo-Norman trait'; 'language of the scribe'; 'substitution by the copyist,' etc. Thus we take Anglo-Norman into account, not through a preconceived opinion as to Anglo-Norman authorship, but simply because we know our text was recorded in England.

Our linguistic analysis of the prologue will, then, be based on the words as they appear in the text, and as they compare with the forms in the poem, as edited by Storey.

It is the pattern of the master--so Menger unqualifyingly calls Paris--which will serve as the model for our phonological study. In this system, the language of the text is analyzed according to the classifications of Vowels, Diphthongs, Nasals, and Consonants. We shall depart from the procedure of Paris and consider peculiarities of morphology along with our phonological study, rather than

² Louis Emil Menger, The Anglo-Norman Dialect, A Manual of its Phonology and Morphology (New York, 1904), p. 3.

in a separate category. Following our study of the forms in our text, we shall draw available conclusions as to the nature and general character of the language of the prologue.

I. VOWELS

A

The main sources of this vowel are Latin atonic a and tonic a in a checked position (Latin or Gallo-Roman). Where it appears in our text, this letter is consistent with expected Old French forms, with only three exceptions (icesta, an, angendrat), the last two to be discussed with Nasals. It is the replacement of a by e, in certain cases, which is significant in the prologue, as we shall see later. Let us examine a, first in its regular survivals, then in its more unusual appearances.

1. a < atonic a:

amistet < amicitatem
 apres < ad pressum
 barun < baronem
 canter < cantare
 cascum < catunum ≠ quisque unum

2. a < tonic checked a

angendrat < ingeneravit
 cumandat < cumandavit
 desirrâbles < desiderabilis

3. Less commonly, Old French a derives from Latin e preceding a liquid consonant. This is shown by par (<per), which appears four times in our text.

The weakened Latin feminine ending, for which no character existed in Latin orthography, is varyingly represented by a and by e in early Old French texts; hesitation between the two forms is noted in both Eulalie and the Strasbourg Oaths, for instance. In Anglo-Norman manuscripts of the early period, as Professor Pope has shown, the spelling is usually phonetically-oriented. Thus, a high incidence of the graphy -e for Latin -a may indicate a weakened value for this post-tonic vowel. Our text offers valuable clues as to the stage of a's development, as outlined below.

4. -a for GR final feminine e:

icesta < *iceste (fem. s., acc. & nom.) < ecce ista

Icesta is remarkable as the unique example in the prologue of an -a feminine ending; all other feminine adjectives of the Latin -a class show either the newer-appearing -e ending or complete effacement. The possibility of scribal error seems remote; there are no a's in the words adjacent to or above icesta.

Moreover, this form of the feminine demonstrative adjective is itself unusual in comparison with the prevailing Old French form, *iceste. Apparently, our text's substitution of -a for -e represents a re-formation of the Old French form on the model of feminine adjectives ending in -a (bona, bella, etc.). This reconstruction may be compared with a later Old French development resulting in

such forms as grande, tele, forte (< grandis, talis, fortis) by analogy with such feminine adjectives as bone bele, etc.

Professor Pope has shown (1244) that free use of analogical forms is characteristic of early Anglo-Norman; they appear, well in advance of continental French usage, in Brendan and in the works of Philippe de Thaon (ca. 1119). The form grande appears once in Alexis (l. 610), as perhaps the earliest example in Old French literature. However, this case is atypical: the older feminine forms of this adjective are regularly used elsewhere in the poem (24 times). In this isolated instance, we surmise that grande is engendered by poetic licence to conform to the feminine assonance structure of the strophe (dutance/ angeles/ estrange/ anames/ grande).

Likewise, the atypical icesta of the prologue may well be due to poetic liberties, as we shall discuss later. If only for reasons of euphony, the stronger vowel, -a, is better-suited to precede istorie, and to differentiate between two highly similar words.

Unlike the prologue, the poem shows an abundance of -a feminine endings along with the newer-appearing -e, in approximately a 1:1 ratio. Accordingly, we find both icesta and iceste, altra and altre, anema and aneme, pulcela and pulcele, etc. Gaston Paris judges that the -a

ending is most likely the spelling of the (hypothesized) original poem;³ the forms in -e probably represent the language (or orthography) of the scribe.

5. Similarly, the prologue shows no use of the graphy a (for é) in support of a consonant cluster; pere, mere, etc., are its forms rather than pedra, medra, etc., which appear in the poem alongside the forms pedre, medre, perë, etc.

Thus, the almost total lack of -a endings in the prologue marks its language as newer in this respect. The sole use of -a, in the word icesta, suggests a certain freedom in re-formation which also attaches to a later stage of Old French, or to Anglo-Norman, if not to the creative temperament.

6. la and le as feminine definite articles:

le < la < illa

In three instances in our text, the feminine definite article is registered as le, comparing with three instances of la. The weakening of a in atonic position is a noted Anglo-Norman development.

In Alexis proper, le is twice used as a feminine article (once with mere!), as against 96 instances of the more regular la. Storey attributes the poem's two cases of

³ And, notes Paris, L ms. offers the last appearance of the shift in notation from -a to -e. He detects a pattern in the use of -a, finding that it usually follows two consonants (Lat. or O.F.).

feminine le to scribal error, occasioned by immediately-preceding masculine nouns and articles.

In the prologue, however, the equal use of feminine le and la suggests that either form was allowable in the eye of its writer. There may be a certain pattern in the use of these alternate forms: le appears before polysyllabic words (divine, naisance, suverain, surerain);⁴ la is used only before monosyllabic words (sue, twice, vie). We may deduce that the stronger form, la, is used to satisfy rhythmic requirements, or, simply that it survives due to greater syntactic stress. Similarly, le appears where less stress--metrical or syntactic--occurs. At any rate, we find again, as with icesta, freer use of varying forms, and typically Anglo-Norman weakening of the atonic vowel.

There is, of course, the possibility that the scribe was confused as to the gender of nouns in question: this hesitation, as well, overwhelmingly pertains to the Anglo-Norman. As Menger notes:

. . . in Anglo-Norman, we must not expect a masculine or feminine noun to be preceded or followed consistently by the corresponding masculine or feminine form of the adjective or participle.⁵

The adjectives modifying the nouns in question offer little

⁴ It seems obvious that surerain is a scribal error for suverain, the first r anticipating the second.

⁵ Menger, p. 112.

help. One (divine) appears feminine; one (spiritel) may be masculine or feminine, being indeclinable as to gender; the third (suverain, surerain) appears masculine, although twice preceding feminine nouns (pietet, consulaciun). In the last case, however, the absence of flexional e may represent the Anglo-Norman tendency to efface this post-tonic vowel (a later development). Whether this represents phonetic spelling or disintegration of declension is a fine point: we are inclined to believe that morphology and orthography follow phonology, which reflects the physical and psychological conditions of a people.

7. _____<a:

casunc* cascuna < cata una ≠ quisque una

The effacement of the -e flexional ending is again apparent in casunc, used as a feminine adjective modifying memorie.⁶ This effacement may be seen as a breakdown in declension or as phonological weakening of the final vowel.

As we know, the vowels u and i were the last to nasalize. We infer that there was apparently little difference in the pronunciation of casunc and casunc for the scribe, especially with the added consideration of final

⁶ Louis Kukenheim, student of the language, lists memorie as masculine in Old French (Grammaire historique de la langue française, footnote, p. 10); he gives no textual evidence. Other linguists regard it as feminine in Old French; Paris, for instance, corrects casunc to c(h)ascune in his edition of the Alexis prologue.

n's off-glide. Thus final flexional -e would be in extremely weak position. For a scribe who sometimes spells phonetically, and who exemplifies no great fidelity to Old French declension, the omission of this e might seem permissible.

In summary, we find that tonic and counter-tonic a generally derive from their expected Latin sources: being in stronger position, they are more stable. Final a, whether representing the Latin feminine ending, or a consonant-support vowel, is registered as e, and perhaps sometimes effaced (cascun, suverain); a phonological weakening is indicated. The one exception to this pattern (icesta) suggests analogical re-formation, a characteristic of Anglo-Norman. There is a seeming disregard (or ignorance) of the Old French declension system, resulting in a free and debonair use of Old French forms.

All of these features have been associated with Anglo-Norman usage of the early period. Though present to some degree in the poem, they do not appear with the consistency which marks their use in the prologue. With this consideration in view, we find that the language of the prologue appears newer, and of more natural Anglo-Norman flavor, than that of the poem.

E

This vowel derives from four different Latin sources, as follows: 1) e < Latin tonic free a, and, exceptionally,

from tonic free e; 2) e < Latin tonic checked ɣ and e;
 3) mute e < Latin feminine ending in a; and 4) mute e in
 support of a consonant cluster. (N.B. We have replaced
 Gaston Paris' system of notation, "é" and "è", with the
 now-prevalent markings, "e" and "e", below the letter.)⁷

The above four e's represented as many separate sounds
 for the author of the poem, according to Paris. He surmises
 that the pronunciation of the two mute e's differed only
 slightly, the e deriving from the a feminine ending being
 more elongated than the e evolving for consonant support.
 As mute vowels, their importance in final assonance is
 slight, and so their precise quality cannot be determined.
 The open e and closed e, however, constitute two distinct
 sounds in the assonance structure of Old French poetry,
 where their differentiation is of paramount importance.
 Paris states this unequivocally:

Dans tous les poèmes du moyen-âge, où les rimes ou
 assonances en é [=e] et en è [=e] sont si nombreuses
 et si riches, elles ne sont jamais confondues; je ne
 crois pas qu'on puisse citer dans une chanson de geste
 une seule exception à cette règle: jamais e, venant
 de a, ne rime avec e, venant de e ou de i in position ...
 [11] faudrait ne pas s'écarter de la règle qu'on peut

⁷ Menger notes (p. 38) that OF e < a "was neither open
 nor closed in the sense that e < e or e was closed or open."
 Scholars have not established the exact nature of the sound,
 but agree that it assonates only with itself or with e in
 loan words, such as De (=Deum). With this understanding,
 we use the closed e symbol for purposes of differentiation.

résumer ainse: tout e venant d'a est fermé--tout e venant d'e ou i en position est ouvert.⁸

Not only is e (< a) separate in quality from e, it is also different from ie, according to continental rules, never forming rhyme or assonance with this diphthong, as Paris notes.

This careful distinction of e's was not observed by Anglo-Norman scribes. Confusing e with ie as well as with the diphthong ei (< e), they used the three graphies interchangeably, regardless of Latin sources. This confusion appears in the earliest texts copied in England, and, considering the phonetic basis of Anglo-Norman orthography, suggests a corresponding equating of the three sounds. In the case of e:ie, Menger has suggested that the Anglo-Norman speaker stressed the second vowel e to the exclusion of the first, i, and thereafter equated the e resulting from this monophthongization with the e normally deriving from Latin sources. This is in line with the general Anglo-Norman tendency toward simplification and leveling of forms; early monophthongization is generally attributed to the insular dialect.⁹

⁸ Paris, p. 50.

⁹ Menger summarizes and enlightens the scholarship on this point (p. 38 *et passim*), including a different explanation by Uhlemann for the assonating of e (< a) and ie. Professor Uhlemann posits an open quality for the e, resulting from the early diphthongal form, ae, for Latin a. Suchier's counterarguments for the close quality of e < a are also cited.

That the equating of e and ie is more than orthographic confusion is substantiated by the rhyme schemes of early Anglo-Norman poetry. This further establishes the coalescing of these sounds in post-Conquest England. Aside from the deterioration natural to a language detached from its homeland, this development also reveals the influence of Middle English in both spelling and pronunciation, as demonstrated by Pope (1212, 1213, 1223).

The text of the prologue furnishes examples of e deriving from all the sources listed above, including two words which demonstrate the apparent interchange of e and ie. At a later point we shall consider what phonological values e and e may have in our text. Here are the words in which the letter e is used.

1. e < a (tonic and free).

amistet < amicitatem

certet < caritatem

cantere < cantare

volentet < voluntatem¹⁰

mere < matrem

pere < patrem

While the last five examples (certet, canter, volentet, mere, pere) demonstrate the regular survival of Latin a as e, the first, amistet, may or may not reflect the scribe's equating of e and ie. Both amistet and amistiet are found in early texts, sometimes in rhymes with e, sometimes with ie, sometimes with both (ex. Gui de Bourgogne), as Paris records.

¹⁰ Volentet, rather than volontet, was the prevailing O.F. form according to Godefroy, -un and -on sometimes becoming -en and -an.

When preceded by a palatalizing element, tonic free a usually developed into ie: chier, laissier, aidier derive from carum, laxare, adjutare, for instance (Pope, 414).

On this basis, amistiet would be the more expected development from amicitatem (> amij̄etate) (s developing from a late retention of unstressed vowel). This is the form in Roland, Paris notes, in substituting it for amistet in his edition of Alexis; in the latter it appears but once, and, unfortunately, does not figure in the strophe's assonance.

That amistet may indeed represent a confusion of e and ie in our text is suggested by another example, trinitiet (< trinitatem), in which there is no etymological reason for the diphthong. Similarly, the poem yields citiet and cited (< civitatis).

This apparent interchange of ie and e again stamps our text with an Anglo-Norman hallmark, whether reflecting phonological simplification or scribal confusion.

2. e < ě (Latin ě, free, exceptionally.)

Our text furnishes one example of the early undiphthongized Deu (< Deum). Pope attributes the preservation of this form to its being a loan word; Paris thinks it survived because of the idea which it represents. Would the more plausible explanation not be its frequency of use in the Mass, and its corresponding high incidence of comprehension? (Thus the "Gloria Patri" survives today, even

among the Southern Baptists.) Deu, along with eret (< erat),
 assonates with e < a in Alexis (str. 18, 34, etc.), as well
 as in other OF poetry.

Two monosyllabic words in the prologue show a similar
 survival of Latin e as Old French e, because of their weak
 syntactic positions.

e, ed < et
 es < en les

The second sound, e, resulted from different Latin
 sources, as shown below.

3. e < Latin checked y, e.

apres < ad pressum
cumencet < cum + initiat
emfes < infans
icesta < *iceste < ecce ista
honeste < honesta

These examples show normal use of the graphy e. The
 Latin ecce ille, normally developing into icel, appears in
 our text as iceol. Though probably not a true diphthong, it
 will be discussed in that section for the sake of consis-
 tency.

The mute or weakened e appearing in our text derives
 as expected from the following two sources:

4. e < a (Latin feminine ending).

spuse < sponsam
vie < vitam
juvente < iuventa
memorie < memoriam
naisance < nascentiam

As we have discussed earlier, this form of the feminine
 ending overwhelmingly prevails in the prologue, with only

the unusual icesta showing the a ending. The poem, as has been seen, shows a high incidence of final feminine a, though this letter is generally understood to represent a weakened vowel sound of indeterminate quality. (Accordingly, Menger lists this a of Alexis as an orthographic variant of e.)

5. e following a consonant group:

In similar fashion, the text of the poem uses both -a and -e for the vowel-sound supporting a consonant cluster. The prologue invariably shows the -e ending, as exemplified by the following words from its text:

pere < pedre < patrem
 mere < medre < matrem
 methime < medepsme < metipsimum.

In general, we find that e survives in its expected forms, excepting its rendition as ie and eo, as noted above. The habitual use of e for the post-tonic mute vowel sound marks the language of the prologue as newer than that of the poem.

i

The letter i is a relatively stable one in Old French. Its Latin sources are i, and tonic free e followed by an epenthetic i. There are no noteworthy deviations in the prologue, as shown by the following examples:

trinitiet < trinitatem
 vif < vivum

lire < legere
 delitent < delectant
 methime < metipsimum < met^uipsimum ≠ illi

The prosthetic vowel of (i)cesta and (i)cel appears frequently in both Norman and Anglo-Norman texts. It may be an on-glide, or, as Kukenheim notes, the residue of either ecce or hic (cf. ici).¹¹

o

The graphy o derives, under certain conditions, from two main Latin sources: (1) ō and ū, and (2) ō and au. The first of these yielded o; the second, o; like e and e, these o's represent distinct sounds, assonating separately in Old French versification.¹² For purposes of later comparison, we shall review the development of both o and o.

1. o < ō, ū.

In tonic and atonic position, o remains undiphthongized when followed by a nasal or by a checking element. Otherwise it usually becomes ou, and continues to eu, if tonic and free.

The sound of the undiphthongized o lay somewhere between ou (= Latin u) and ô, Paris theorizes. And herein lay the

¹¹Louis Kukenheim, Grammaire historique de la langue française (Leiden, 1967), p. 54.

¹²Except: When followed by n, closed o opened, approaching o(n); this o (< o + n) might assonate either with oral o or with o + n. See Gaston Paris, pp. 59, 60. In Anglo-Norman, as well, as Menger shows (p. 69), no distinction exists between either o, free or checked, when followed by a nasal.

perplexity of medieval scribes. The digraph ou was unknown in traditional Latin orthography (its appearance in Eulalie, bellezour, soue are considered isolated cases); and there were available only two conventional graphies, o and u for the recording of three O.F. sounds, /o/, /ou/, and /ü/. For the words pur (< purus), pour (< pro), and port (< portus), only por and pur (either of them misleading for pour), were the options, as Paris shows. Thus, in the earliest texts, we find both o and u as the characters representing o, both forms often appearing in the same work.¹³ This is superbly demonstrated in the Passion poem, where the opening lines show one form and the echoing counterpart, the other:

Hora vos dic vera raizon
de Jesu Christi passium ...

Alques vos ai d eit de raizon
que Jesus fez per passion ... (ll. 445, 446)

From this free interchange of o and u, there evolved a certain consistency (though never uniform) in the use of one or the other according to dialect, Paris finds. As he traces it, the use of o became increasingly more prevalent among scribes of continental origin (esp. Bourguignon, Picard, Normand, Francien), culminating in the almost constant utilization of o (or ou, eu) by 13th C. It will

¹³ It should be noted that the replacement of o by u occurred as early as 8th C., as shown in the Cassel glosses; auciun, mantun, tutti, etc. We are indebted to Diez via Paris for this information.

be noted that this form adheres more closely to the original Latin o. Conversely, the use of u (for /o/) became standard in texts of Anglo-Norman origin; in addition, continental texts copied in England show frequent replacement of o by u, the form further removed, in appearance if not more, from the original o.

That the Anglo-Norman use of u instead of continental o attaches to a difference of pronunciation as well as of notation seems certain. First, there is the consideration of the phonetic orthography of (early) Anglo-Norman texts, as substantiated by Pope (1222). Second, there is the evidence of poetry; Suchier¹⁴ has listed some nine Anglo-Norman texts in which u (< o) rhymes with ü (< ü), balanced by nine others in which he finds the two u's kept separate. We are not here concerned with the precise sound of Anglo-Norman u, except to draw the obvious inference that it differed from continental French, in whose versification ü and u (< o) are not equated; and, when deriving from Latin o, Anglo-Norman u was probably closer to the u sound than to the o.

Now this raises an interesting question: could this pronunciation represent a change in stress in an earlier diphthongized o, /ou/ ? The continental notation of o would, on this line of reasoning, reflect a falling diphthong, /ou/;

¹⁴ Cited by Menger, p. 67.

the Anglo-Norman u, a rising one, /ou/; thus each notation would represent a reduction of the 'diphthong,' never fully developed, of course, due to checks, to the vowel sound more stressed. This is quite in keeping with Anglo-Norman phonology: Menger has shown that the equating of e and ie probably attaches to a similar monophthongization, likely due to a change in stress. He also theorizes that Anglo-Norman u for o may result from the reduction of the falling diphthong ue. Any hypotheses about Anglo-Norman diphthongs must remain, of course, in the nebulous zone; as Menger notes, the stress varied according to periods of the language, individual scribes, and, we would add, the particular dialect to which the individual Anglo-Norman was exposed, William's army containing all elements.

The poem and the prologue of Alexis offer rich material for our study of o; as will be seen, the two texts differ in their treatment of this vowel.

Throughout the text of the poem, we find both o and u used to represent this sound. As in earlier texts (viz. Passion, above), both forms exist for the same word, as shown by these examples from the poem, Alexis:

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| comandethe | cumandet |
| home | hume |
| onorer | (h)onurer |
| maison | maisun |
| son, ton | sun, tun |
| longe | lunges |
| nos, vos | nus, vus. |

In ten of the twelve strophes assonating in o, the final vowel is recorded with both graphies. Strophe 44 furnishes a typical example: hom/maison/grabatum/dolur/amor.

The appearances of o, according to Gaston Paris, represent the spelling of the original poem, while the use of u attaches to a later period of the language, and, especially, to the pronunciation of the Anglo-Norman scribe. Thus, in his edition of Alexis, Paris 'restores' o wherever this vowel represents o, and relegates u to Anglo-Norman inkpots. Barring its inclusion as a purposeful archaism,¹⁵ this use of o in the poem provides sound evidence for the early and continental archetype envisaged by Paris.

On the same basis of reasoning, the prologue, however, reveals itself as Anglo-Norman through and through: there, the preference is always for u. In the few cases in which o (< o) appears, the reasons are consistent with Anglo-Norman usage; the forms showing u, even if somewhat irregularly, are typical of the insular dialect. Moreover, whereas the poem shows erratic uses of o and u under the same phonological conditions, yea, for the same words, the prologue is remarkable for the consistency of its inconsistency: u appears almost invariably under the same set of conditions, which are not always the same as those existing in continental French. An examination of our text's words

¹⁵ Sckommodau has suggested this as a possibility for L ms.

in which o survives as o or as u, will demonstrate that the prologue is more Anglo than Norman in this respect:

Tonic o

avum < habemus ≠ sumus
 barun < baronem
 cancun < cantionem
 raisun < rationem
 num < nomen
 consulaciun < consolationem
 sulunc < *sublungum > solonc

faitur < factorem
 juvene < juvenem
 nus < nos
 sul < solus
 spus < sponsum
 spuse < sponsam

co < ico < eccoc < ecce hōc
 noble < nobilem
 nocēs < *nūptias < nūptias

Atonic o

consulaciun < consolationem
 bōneuret < bona+hōrātem
 cumēncet < cum+initiat
 cumandat < cum+mandavit
 nurrit < *nūtrivit < nūtrivit.

First, we note the overwhelming preference for u over o: contrary to the poem, there is no "comandethe," "nom," "nos," "sol," etc. Of the sixteen examples of tonic o, thirteen show the use of u, three are registered as o.

In the first seven words, we find u (=o) for the stressed vowel followed by a nasal. The use of -un for -on is perhaps the most cited of Anglo-Norman peculiarities; Menger shows that this spelling prevailed even for the rare Anglo-Norman writer (Angier, for instance) who elsewhere used o.

The following six words, again showing u for o in tonic position, include two which are spelled with o in the poem: sul, nus, vs. sole (l. 448), and nos (ll. 505, 622). Once more we find a preference for Anglo-Norman forms in the prologue.

In only three words does tonic o survive as o; there, the o form seems to be the only option, as we shall see.

Co preserves this vowel probably because of Latin influence (< hōc) and by dint of being an emphatic form. This, and its variant, ceo, is the prevailing Old French form, though diphthongization did occur in Picard, Walloon and Norman (see Pope, 848).

The checking influence of the -bl consonant group normally preserves the o of noble (cf. table < tabulam).

The third example of tonic o's preservation is furnished by noces. In this word, we may attribute the retention of o to the checking power of -pt + yod. (Or perhaps our Anglo-Norman cleric-scribe rejected the alternate spelling, nuces, because of the idea which it represents.)

Counter-tonic o + n is normally preserved, as we see in consulaciun. In final position, o + n weakens to -un, and the unsupported atonic o is registered as u in sulunc, juvente, cumandat, and cumencet. We note especially the form sulunc as a typical Anglo-Norman archaism, so characterized by Pope (1109). By 12th C. this counter-tonic o (u) had

dissimilated < selonc in continental French. (Philippe's Cumpoz also shows this Anglo-Norman form, sulunc.) Along with nurrit, all of these atonic forms demonstrate our text's proclivity for u vs. o wherever this development is possible.

The form boneuret appears unusual if the eu is regarded as a diphthongization of intertonic o: as Menger notes, the cases of eu in Anglo-Norman are so isolated that each one must be studied separately. As with iceol, cf. above, we do not consider this -eu a diphthong, but shall study it in that grouping for the sake of consistency.

In summary, these are the characteristics of o in our text:

1. There are no examples of ou in the prologue. This digraph was not in general use until the thirteenth century, but it appears, if as an isolated case, in the poem Alexis (dous, ou < ubi, eight times).
2. In our text, the graphy u is the prevailing choice for closed o, whereas both o and u are used in the poem. The use of u for o is noted as an Anglo-Norman characteristic dating from the earliest texts. On the continent, u was used for o only before a nasal. In Anglo-Norman, it appears before any consonant.
3. There is reason to believe that this spelling reflects a pronunciation different from that of continental French, as we have shown. In view of the Anglo-Norman tendency to reduce diphthongs, we have posited that this u may represent the vestige of an early diphthong, of rising nature.
4. In our text, o survives only when strongly checked: either as the tonic vowel in paroxytons, and checked by -bl or -pt + yod; or as a counter-tonic followed by a nasal.

On the above evidence, we find that the prologue differs greatly from the poem in its treatment of o: our text consistently shows Anglo-Norman forms for this vowel. Additional evidence may be suggested by the modern English pronunciation of the cognates for which our text's barun, cumence(t), cumand(at), consulaciun, raisun, nurrit and noble are the phonetic equivalents.

2. o < ø, au.

The history of this vowel may be summarized as follows. Tonic free o diphthongized to ou, then to ue, and finally to the eu of modern French; when checked or atonic, o normally survives as o or ou. A nasal following o may or may not check the vowel's diphthongization: forms such as buons, cuens, etc., may have existed only as dialectal variations according to Ewert.

The Latin diphthong au was reduced to o, though this monophthongization was later than that of ae and oe; the o deriving from au usually remained undiphthongized (except for isolated early forms, such as queue < coda < GK cauda).

Contrary to its abundance of o examples, our text yields only seven words containing the vowel o. In at least five of these cases weak position or checking influences would normally prevent diphthongization, thus depriving us of an important source for comparison. Only the two (possible) exceptions provide some material for our study. Here are the appearances of o in the prologue:

memorie < memoriam
 istorie < historia
 honeste < honesta

goies < gaudias (< GR ^g dzoie)
 oit < auditum

volentet < voluntatem
 boneuret < bona horatem.

In the words memorie and istorie, we find o preserved by the following r + ie. These forms survived in Anglo-Norman as late as Adam (ca. 1150), and in Gaimar's "Lestorie des Engles" (victorie, glorie). In view of the modern English pronunciation of such words, and of the oft-cited Anglican fondness for monophthongization, one wonders if such a pronunciation of the final syllable (/istōrē/, etc.) might already have been effected for our scribe. The reduction of /ye/ to /e/ would tend even more to preserve the open vowel intact. Thus, there would be no Anglo-Norman u for o, no coalescing of the vowels surrounding r to the oi of slightly-later French (cf. gloire, memoire of Adam).

Counter-tonic o is normally preserved by the following n in honeste.

The next two examples, goies and oit, show the regular retention of o deriving from Latin au; in the latter case, loss of an intervocalic d brought a following i into hiatus with the o; in the former the d + yod generated an epenthetic i.

All of the above examples represent regular phonological preservation of o

In the last two examples, boneuret and volentet, variant forms did exist for this vowel in other Old French texts.

Volentet elsewhere appears with ou for counter-tonic o, voulentet. Thus u would have been a possible spelling especially in Anglo-Norman, where, and only where, u was sometimes employed for o. That our scribe preserved the o spelling is possibly due to his familiarity with the Latin word as found in the Vulgate (Rom. xii, 2, for instance). We note this more Latinized spelling in the Cambridge and Oxford psalters, whose scribes were also, presumably, strongly influenced by the Biblical text. Phonologically, the o may owe its preservation to the lowering influence of the following l, as cited by Pope (582b).

The o of boneuret, though counter-tonic, appears in a variety of unusual forms in other texts, as shown below:

beoneuret, boneüred, bunewred: Cambridge Psalter;
beneurez: Oxford Psalter; and as Menger notes,
bounourez: Arundel Psalter.

The word does not appear in Alexis proper, but a similar one, oneuret, is like our text in preserving the undiphthongized o (as well as in the use of eu intertonically). As with volentet, we attribute the more Latinized spelling to our scribe's apparent familiarity with this semi-learned abstract word, of which category our text offers numerous examples.

From the few appearances of o in our text, we may make only limited conclusions. First, we note the lack of the digraph ou for o in the two cases where it might conceivably have occurred. Second, we note that o is preserved where expected, and is not registered as u. That o and o (= u) are not confused suggests a certain familiarity with Latin originals, as well as an appreciable difference in sound quality for our writer.

This adherence to Latin forms, in the face of Anglo-Norman aberrations for o, etc., is just what one might expect of an Anglo-Norman cleric who is under double influence. On the one hand, he is exposed to Latin, in its written form, with the more learned O.F. cognates under his eyes; on the other, he hears the spoken dialect, detached from its source and often developed to precocious forms. There is, as well, the influence of a third language, Middle English, with its current tendency toward the reduction of diphthongs (Pope, 1110).

Thus, the seeming contradictions of our text's use of o are easily understood. Phonetic u is almost invariably used for o, showing an Anglo-Norman pronunciation of this vowel (and especially for commonplace words). Open o survives where it normally does for phonological reasons, and remains as undiphthongized o, and not as u, thanks to the learning of our ecclesiastical writer.

The poem is rich in diphthongized forms for o (duel, doel, boens, iluec, iloec, puet, etc.), but we can make no real comparison with the prologue's language in this respect, since our text furnishes no examples (i.e. tonic free o) where diphthongization would certainly occur. The appearances of o, however, differ greatly between prologue and poem. As we have shown, the overwhelming use of u, with no renditions of o or ou as found in the poem, characterize the prologue's language as undeniably Anglo-Norman in this respect.

U.

The final vowel, u, derives from Latin ū. Not being subject to diphthongization, this vowel presents few problems as a written graphy; phonological questions center about its changing quality--i.e. its palatalization in Old French.¹⁶

In Alexis, u < ū assonates only with itself, usually; there is no equation of this u with the u representing closed o, and discussed above. In one strophe, however, u appears

¹⁶That this process was a complex one, with many questions still unanswered, is apparent in the many-faceted derivation of o, ou, u, ū from Latin u, o. GP has mentioned these words as a launching pad for such a study: (L) ultra, dulcis, auscultat, turba, fluctus, muttum, nuptia, gorges, ulmus, viburna. We have noted that the vowel appears especially prone to irregular sound changes following n. Consider these words:

| | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------|
| nūtrio | nourrir; Eng.: nourish, nurture, nutrient, nurse. |
| nuntio | Eng.: (an)nounce; Fr.: annoncer. |
| nūdus | Eng.: nude (= <u>ū</u>). |
| nūptias | Eng.: nuptials; Fr.: noces. |
| nūmero | Eng.: nūmeral, number; Fr.: numéro. |

in assonance with i: menude/ cure/apar(e)ude/bailide/ aiude (strophe 107). This anomaly is generally attributed to the L ms. scribe, for whom u and i apparently formed acceptable assonance. Similarly, Menger notes¹⁷ the rhyming of u and i in Cumpoz, Vie Gregoire, and other Anglo-Norman texts, where, by Vising's estimate, it indicates scribal confusion of the unfamiliar French u and i. Along the same line, Anglo-Norman texts sometimes substitute ui, o for u (josque, chescone, etc.).

In our text, there is no such confusion of u with i, o, or ui. U appears normally in these four examples:

cascun < quisque unum ≠ catunum
 fut < fuit
 un < unum
 purement < pura + mente.

Even viewing the prologue as a rhymed text, there is no guide as to the pronunciation of this u, which always appears within the 'line.' A possible clue may be offered in the use of the masculine form, cascun, for cascune (memorie): this may indicate that the u was still un-nasalized, but offers no information as to the quality of the vowel.

We may sum up the appearances of u in our text as follows:

1. This graphy is used to record both o (< ō, ū) and u (< ū).
2. As the graphy for ū, it appears regularly, with no Anglo-Norman confusion with i, as occurs in the poem, nor with o, ui, as occurs in other insular texts.

¹⁷ Menger, pp. 79, 80.

3. Due to its limited appearances in the prologue, we can not form definite conclusions as to the phonetic value of u. The consistent use of this graphy, in expected O.F. forms, may simply be due to the high level of usage of these four words.

II. DIPHTHONGS

In contrast to the poem, where diphthongs abound, and triphthongs are far from rare, the prologue is remarkable for its simple monophthongal forms. While the cases of actual monophthongization may be few, the paucity of diphthongized forms is such as to suggest that they were alien to the writer of this text, and therefore unused, if not avoided. As discussed earlier, the preference for monophthongs is a marked feature of the insular speech pattern, as shown by the early simplification of Old French, as well as Middle English, diphthongs. Thus an Anglo-Norman flavor is suggested by the abundance of simple vowels in the prologue.

In this text we find five diphthongs demonstrated: ai, ei, eu, ie, and eo. We shall discuss them in that order. (The reader will recall that some of these forms are mere digraphs but are included here for consistency.)

AI

This diphthong regularly results when an epenthetic i replaces either a checking velar or an intervocalic t + yod,

when either follows the vowel a. These are the examples furnished by our text:

faitur < factorem
 naisance < nascentiam
 raisun < rationem

ai also derives from tonic free a followed by a nasal, as shown in our text's suverain (also faultily rendered surerain), coming from Latin superanum.

That this digraph represents a true diphthong, ái, for the poet of Alexis is indicated by the assonance scheme of strophe 117: candelabres/capes/marbre/lermes (= lairmes, G.P.)/desevrassent; in the many strophes of é assonance, there is no instance of ai assonating with open e. In Roland, on the other hand, ai figures in assonance both with a (sunjat/Ais/mais/leupars ...LVIII) and with é (serel/cerf/osbere/frait/guaret/sai ... XIV): as Paris shows, the development of ai to é was in transition at the time of Roland's composition. This sound development appears fairly standard in Anglo-Norman from early twelfth century onwards; as early as Philippe de Thaun, we find the rhyming of ai:e. The spellings of lermes, egua in the poem of L ms. indicate to Storey that ai had already accomplished its monophthongization to e for the Anglo-Norman scribe of Alexis.

And yet the prologue shows the traditional ai in every case: there is no substitution of a, e, or ei for ai as occurs in the poem (fare, lermes, paleis). And, as vouchsafed by Pächt, the same scribe wrote both texts.

What, then, is the explanation of this archaic retention of ai in our text, as opposed to its phonetic simplifications in the poem? Several possibilities suggest themselves.

First, the nature of the words may offer the key: all four of our examples, faitur, naisance, raisun, suverain, are fairly learned words, probably with written precedents in creed and code. It seems likely that they form part of our scribe's reading/writing vocabulary. The monophthongized forms of the poem, on the other hand, are for more commonly-used words, such as might belong to one's speaking vocabulary. Similarly, the neologisms of the prologue are mainly for words of the everyday functional vocabulary: vie, pere, mere, oit, etc.

Secondly, if we hypothesize this text as an original, separate in creation from the poem, we can imagine how awesomely its authorship would impress itself upon the writer: consider the prestigious and precious psalter in which the prologue occupies a valuable spot; and fancy having to 'bring on' St. Alexis. Hence, the almost self-conscious use of impressive words (amiable, spiritel, suverain, dignement, boneuret, etc.) and the constant strain toward a style noble of tone. Thus, the carefully-gleaned learned words would be painstakingly preserved in their more archaic forms, while the language natural to the writer would creep in with all its newness and blemishes intact.

(We may mis-spell alright, but our inchoate and monophthongization will be duly correct--if pompous.)

EI

The source for this diphthong is tonic free ē. In the case of the reflexive pronoun, sē, only the stressed form normally diphthongized to sei. In our text, we find the stressed form, sei, used in weak position: sei delitent. This is the only appearance of this diphthong in our text.

This irregularity may represent scribal confusion of e, ei, and ie (cf. trinitiet, citiet, etc.). Another possibility is that se was elongated to sei for rhythmic purposes, which we shall consider later. Finally, we should note that the use of the tonic, instead of atonic, pronoun is an Anglo-Norman trait, as noted by Vising.¹⁸

EU

This diphthong occurs in three words in the prologue: Eufemien, Deu and boneuret. The first two of these are the expected forms. Eufemien harks directly to the Latin source of the poem, and its form, for this Greek word. The Latin Deum is preserved in its usual Old French form, as we have discussed earlier. It is the third example, boneuret, which offers interesting questions for our study.

¹⁸ Johan Vising, Anglo-Norman Language & Literature (London, 1923), p. 30.

boneuret < bona + hora + atum

The diphthong eu for pre-tonic o is very unusual in Old French phonology: this vowel normally survives as simple o, or is weakened to e. Perhaps the diphthongization of this o is explained by the compound-formation of boneuret: each of its elements, as separate words, could conceivably have retained some degree of tonic stress and consequent sound change. In the examples earlier cited from Anglo-Norman psalters, we have seen similar "diphthongization" of the pre-tonic o, as well as that of the counter-tonic in cases from other texts: beoneuret, boneured, unewred, bounourez.

Another possibility is that the eu of our text is not a true diphthong, but rather the juxtaposition of mute e (< bona) and u (< hora). This seems to be Pope's view (1132); she lists bonurez (from QLR) as an example of the Anglo-Norman effacement of mute e in hiatus with a following tonic vowel. Miss Pope dates this as a later development, that is, during the second half of the twelfth century; our text's form would, then, be in keeping with early Anglo-Norman usage. Considering our text's lack of this digraph except in proper nouns, it seems most likely that the eu of boneuret does indeed represent a weakened e followed by inter-tonic u (= o).

A counterpart to this word is seen in the poem's oneuret (l. 542), with the same unorthodox 'diphthong' for

pre-tonic o. Gaston Paris replaces this form with onoret, finding this to represent the true spelling of the original. He sees oneuret as a bizarre scribal aberration: " ... on ne peut guère admettre ici la diphthongue eu, inconnue à notre texte pour o; l'une des lettres est superflue, c'est sans doute e: je lis onurer [sic], c'est-à-dire honorer."¹⁹ Storey, as well, finds this form completely irregular, and occasioned probably by the e assonance of the preceding line.

Perhaps, rather, the poem's oneuret owes its "diphthong" to our text's boneuret. The ideas represented are certainly closely akin, thus making their analogy quite natural for our scribe.

We note no e neighboring boneuret in our manuscript, and causing the insertion of e, via lapsus calami.

It seems most probable, then, that boneuret is the Anglo-Norman form of this word.

IE (1)

The normal Latin sources for this diphthong are tonic free e, ae, and tonic free a preceded by a velar or a palatalizing element. The normal Old French survival of ae as ie is demonstrated in our text's ciel < cel < caelum.

¹⁹ Paris, p. 67.

As noted earlier, a more unusual ie appears in the word trinitiet < trinitatem: e < tonic free a does not ordinarily diphthongize. On the other hand, ie does not appear, as would be expected, in our text's amistet, whose source, amicitatem, contains the elements ordinarily forming the diphthong. Here again is apparent evidence of our writer's equating of e and ie; here again, Anglo-Norman is indicated, whether representing phonological reduction of ie to e or a general confusion of these forms. As Paris notes:

La substitution de e à ie ... est un trait anglo-normand, et si bien anglo-normand que dès les plus anciens ouvrages composés par des anglo-normands nous voyons ie rimer avec e, ce qui n'a pas lieu en français.²⁰

That this rhyming may occur in our text will be discussed at a later point. In any event, the orthographic use of ie/e in our text is typically Anglo-Norman.

IE (2)

This digraph also represents the survival of Latin -ia following a liquid consonant. These two words from our text demonstrate this survival:

memorie < memoriam
istorie < historia.

As late as Jeu d'Adam (ca. 1150-70), we find this form existing, along with the later memoire, gloire; in one case (ll. 347-8), the two forms, -oire and -orie, rhyme together.

²⁰ Paris, p. 80.

As in the prologue, only the older form, -ie, is found in Alexis proper, there represented in sacrarie and palie. Gaston Paris, in his discussion of these words, maintains that i here represents the consonantal y sound, which combines with the following e in pronunciation (yé) to form one syllable in the versification of the poem. Paris distinguishes this ie from the true diphthong ie, terming the former 'half-vowel, half-consonant.'

Although the Latinized spelling of memorie, istorie (learned words) exists in the prologue, it does not necessarily indicate a continental Old French pronunciation. In view of our text's many peculiar forms and its decided Anglo-Norman flavor, we should consider the possibility of an alternate pronunciation for these words. The reduction of ie to y /i/ in English loan-words (history, memory, glory, victory, etc.) suggests a different Anglo-Norman value for ie. Perhaps it was originally a falling diphthong, ie, later reduced to its first element. This pronunciation seems suggested by the rhymes of Gaimar (ca. 1150): oscis/
fist/victorie/glorie/demis/oscis, etc. (Lestorie des Engleis, ll. 5231-36). Perhaps one or the other elements of "ye" was weakened to i, as seemingly occurred in Anglo-Norman chevalirs, premir, Olivirs, etc. (cf. mod. Engl. pronunciation of cavalier), if we may regard this spelling as phonetic.

In our study of the prologue's prosodic features, we shall consider this as a possible Anglo-Norman pronunciation for these words in our text.

As regards their orthography, we have seen that the -orie forms persisted, at least in Anglo-Norman, as late as 1150. (Miss Pope [1105] cites the late survival of -arie, -erie, -orie in Anglo-Norman, giving rise to English contrary, mystery, history, etc.)

EO

The word iceol, irregular for (i)cel (< ecce illum), offers the only appearance of eo for e in prologue or poem. Considering our text's general lack of diphthongs, this form appears completely out of character in this passage. Orthodox Old French phonology, in which checked e does not normally diphthongize, shows no such vowel combination for e, even in irregular forms: the ciel (for cel), tiemps, etc. of Leger are the more usual continental variations.

It is in Middle English that we find the probable explanation for this irregularity. There, eo survived from an Old English diphthong, and, of special significance for us, in the demonstrative sēo (fem.). That our writer was subject to the influence of English vocabulary is thus a distinct possibility. This is in line with Brunot's findings for a dialect:

... le vocabulaire ... garde d'une part un caractère archaïque par rapport à celui de la mère patrie, et en même temps emprunte aux langues avec lesquelles il se trouve en contact des éléments étrangers. On a relevé archaïsmes et anglicismes dans l'anglo-normand. ²¹

Though eo for e is alien to Old French phonology, it occurs with considerable frequency in the Anglo-Norman dialect, under the influence of Middle English. As Pope shows (1115), the leveling of the Middle English diphthong eo, first to ö, then to e, and the rounding of the Old French ue, eu to ö brought about confusion in orthographical forms: all five forms (eo, e, o, ue, eu) were rather wantonly interchanged. As a result, eo was equated with etymological eu, as seen in English jeopardy < jeu parti, and with e, as exemplified in our text's iceol. Menger shows that the substitution of eo for e was more apt to occur before l, as in iceol, and r, as shown in the feorm (and iceols) of the Cambridge Psalter. He suggests the added phonological factor of e's pre-liquid glide, which seems to be the case in Brandon's iceals.

In view of these precedents, it seems most logical to classify iceol as a uniquely Anglo-Norman irregularity. Since it occurs only in our text, and there at the very beginning, where a scribe would most likely be his freshest and most conscientious, we judge this to be the writer's

²¹ Ferdinand Brunot, Histoire de la langue française, des origines à 1900, Tome I (Paris, 1924), p. 320.

own language. The irregularity thus appears psychological or phonological rather than mechanical, as might be suggested by the anticipatory influence of noble, the word which follows iceol.

Once more we find that the language of the prologue aligns more with Anglo-Norman than with continental French.

Reviewing our study of diphthongs, this is what we have observed in our text:

1. Compared with the poem, there are few cases of diphthongs (or digraphs) in the prologue.

2. Of these, the majority are in question as true diphthongs:

a. Ai exists only in four learned words. In the poem, ai is interchanged with ei, indicating a coalescence of these sounds for the scribe. The rhyming of ai:e in Anglo-Norman texts of the period suggests that ai's monophthongization may have been in force for our scribe and ai in use as an orthographic convention.

b. Ei occurs only once, and there irregularly for e (sei for se). This may be due to poetic license, to Anglo-Norman confusion of e, ei, or to Anglo-Norman use of tonic for atonic pronouns.

c. Eu appears only once (except in two proper nouns) in the irregular boneuret; this form has its counterparts in other Anglo-Norman texts.

d. The diphthong ie appears regularly once in ciel, a word in frequent ecclesiastical usage. In trinitiet, the ie is irregular, for the same possible reasons as ei's irregular use (see above).

The other ie ("half-consonant, half-vowel"), of istorie, memorie has both Latin and Anglo-Norman rapports.

e. Eo probably owes its existence to English influence, and obviously represents the e sound; it is uniquely Anglo-Norman.

The obvious conclusion is that the diphthongal forms in our text mark it as of decided Anglo-Norman nature.

III. NASALS

The prologue yields two main groups of nasals for our study: (1) an (am), en, and (2) un (um).

1. The first, an, en, appears in the following examples:

grant < grandem
 cumandat < commandavit < (cum + mandare)
 cancun < cantionem
 volentet < voluntatem
 emfes < infans

an < in
 angendrat < ingeneravit.

We see the regular survival of tonic or atonic an in grant, cumandat and cancun. The en of volentet is the common Old French form of this nasal, as Littré shows. Likewise, emfes is the expected Old French derivation from the nominative case; the replacement of n by m before f, p, b and v is common in Anglo-Norman MSS (cf. English comfort, Fr. confort, etc.).

The last two examples, an and angendrat, are somewhat irregular: the more normal etymological forms would be en and engendrat. A like transcription occurs in the poem's ancenser, ancombrer, anditet, etc., alongside the more regular encumbrer, enclodit, enfodir. Gaston Paris finds a certain consistency in the scribe's sometime substitution of an for en; he judges that this occurs only when the

nasal is in atonic position. This observation holds true for the examples in the prologue: angendrat but emfes.

By a careful analysis of the poem's assonances, Paris also establishes that an, en had accomplished nasalization at the time of the poem's composition: there, these sounds do not assonate with oral a, e, as they do in the Clermont poems (c. 1000). In Alexis, however, they still represent different sounds between themselves, an never assonating with en (cf. strophes 2, 8, 23 etc. and strophes 5, 10, 28, etc.). The assonance of an and en does occur in Roland (rent/nient/cenz/pesant/Rollanz/guarant, Laisse CXIX, for example), indicating the equating of these nasals, and, consequently, a composition date posterior to that of Alexis. This observation alone lends valuable evidence to Paris' judgment that the poem, Alexis, was composed much earlier than it was copied in L ms.

What, then, shall we make of the use of an for en in our text? Are we to consider them equivalent for our scribe? Here are some items for our consideration:

1. Anglo-Norman is noted for its late distinction between en and an. Early English loan words gentle, defend, as listed by Pope, demonstrate the late retention of en.

2. However, en eventually merged with an in Anglo-Norman, as shown in later English loan words pansy, dandelion (Pope's examples), and by their interchange in insular texts (beginning ca. 1150).

3. The English lowering tendency ultimately resulted in an < aun in later Anglo-Norman (ca. Fantosme), yielding such forms as chaunter and surviving in modern

English aunt, launch, etc.; and in one case, en > aun, gentil > jaunty. The general pattern, it will be seen, is of a continued lowering for en.

In the face of its substitution of an for en, the prologue shows no case of en for an. While an is possibly dictated by the preceding c in cancun, canter (to give c a certain value), en would be possible in grant, if an and en were equal (cf. dedenz, senz, QLR).

In our text, an appears for en only when the syllable is atonic, and understandably prone to weakening. In the case of angendrat, the an assumes almost the nature of a prefix; as a preposition, it is even weaker. In stronger syllabic position, en appears as expected: cumencet, angendrat, dignement, etc. Likewise, the text of the poem shows no substitution of an (am) for tonic en (em) excepting esample (l. 182), which Suchier has suggested shows the influence of the word ample. (We note the occurrence of these two words (ensample: ample, in adjacent rhyming lines in Brandon [ca. 1122].)

Menger has noted an Anglo-Norman fondness for a in pre-tonic position (cf. amfant); this orthographic peculiarity may well indicate a phonological lowering in the case of en.

With these considerations in mind, we find that an for en in our text suggests an early Anglo-Norman coalescing of an with en in weak atonic position. Otherwise, we find the traditional distinction between the two.

2. un, um (= om, on); un < ūn

For the author of the poem, on (recorded by the scribe as un) still represented an oral vowel sound, as revealed by its assonance with oral o ("u") in strophes 40, 43, 44 etc. Christopher Storey reasons that o (= u) was fully-nasalized, however, at the time the poem was copied, since this nasalization took place shortly after that of an and en.²²

If we consider that our text is rhymed, the use of -un:-um (cancun:raisun:num) suggests that o (= u) was nasalized, causing a lack of distinction in -m and -n. However, the rhyming of -um:-un is very old in Anglo-Norman, there appearing in the earliest texts. (Perhaps these early appearances represent assonance on its way to rhyme.)

Any consideration of -un's nasalization in an Anglo-Norman text should be weighed with the opinion of certain linguistic scholars that un never accomplished full nasalization in England, and that it was a late development (13th C.) on the Continent.

The question of u's nasalization is, therefore, a moot one, opinions varying among scholars. In our text, -un assonates or rhymes with itself (assuming a prosodic nature for the prologue), whether as an oral or a nasal vowel. There is not sufficient data for any further conclusion.

²² Christopher Storey, La Vie de Saint Alexis, Texte du Manuscrit de Hildesheim (L) (Genève, 1968), p. 38.

Whether oral or nasal, this sound has a high incidence in our text, as shown by the following examples:

un (on):
 canun < cantionem
 raisun < rationem
 barun < baronem
 num < nominem
 sum < sum
 avum < habemus
 consulaciun < consolationem
 sulunc < sublungum (> *solonc)

un (< ūn)
 un < unum
 cascun < quisque unum ≠ catanum

Except for the aforementioned Anglo-Norman exchange of un for on, there are no etymological problems with this nasal in our text. We note varying survivals for intervocalic t + yod in the words raisun and consolaciun. The first is a more regular phonological development; the second is clearly a learned borrowing, which naturally underwent less change.

The invariable use of -um, -un, the Anglo-Norman (if Norman, as well) form avum (no etymological -s), the peculiarly Anglo-Norman sulunc, the absence of flexional endings for un and sul (whether as phonological or morphological lapses), may all be mentioned here as additional evidence of the insular dialect. In each of these cases, the poem shows continental forms, as well as Anglo-Normanisms generally attributed to the scribe. In this respect, the language of the prologue appears distinctively

Anglo-Norman, and, as such, distinct from the language of the poem.

IV. CONSONANTS

While assonance and versification provide some assistance in the study of vowels, no such phonetic guide is available for consonants, as Paris demurs in his analysis of Alexis. To reconstruct the sounds of consonants, our only means is to compare their forms within the text, with appearances in other contemporary texts, and with the modern spoken language; our final recourse is to that order natural to any evolution, as Paris states:

Elle ne peut s'appuyer que ... sur cette logique inflexible qui dirige tous les développements des phénomènes naturels à quelque ordre qu'ils appartiennent.²³

There seems to be a logical basis for some of the prologue's consonantal forms; others seem almost capricious in their appearances. We shall group the consonants according to their respective families and compare their individual forms as they appear in this text.

Velars

C, K, Qu.

Latin c /k/ persists in modern French as ch /ʃ/, c /s/ and c /k/; the development into these various sounds

²³ Paris, p. 84.

was both gradual and diversified as to dialects. Our essential problem is to deduce what stage of phonological development may be represented in our text by the graphies c, k, and qu; any information so derived would be helpful in characterizing the language as to dialect.

This quest is stymied from the start by the lack of conventional signs (ch graphy, cedilla, diaeresis), in our text, for differentiation of c; k, c, or qu are the only graphies here employed by our scribe. In the poem, on the other hand, conventional signs do appear, if somewhat erratically: co, cartra, cher are used as well as co, cambra, kers, ki and chi.

Here are the appearances this velar makes in our text:

before i, e: c, k, qu.
 before a: c.
 before ū (= o): c.
 before u (< ū): c.

We shall discuss them in that order.

1. c before i, e.

The Latin sources of this letter are c /k/ + i, e, and initial t + yod. These are demonstrated in these examples from our text:

ciel < *cel < caelum
 iceol < *icel < ecce illum
 ici < ecce hic
 icesta < *iceste < ecce ista

grace < gratia (learned)
 naisance < nascentiam
 noces < *nuptias < nuptias
 cumencet < cum + initiat.

This c may indicate the Old French affricate sound /tʃ/, which was well-established by 1050. On the other hand, considering the origin of our manuscript, c may here represent the Anglo-Norman /tʃ/ pronunciation cited by Pope, and demonstrated by her loan-word examples: chive, cherries, fashion (cf. Eng. launch vs. Fr. lancer).

In our text, the scribe is faithful in recording this sound, whether /tʃ/ or /tʃ/, as c in the expected cases, that is, before Latin e, i. The sound represented by the c of certet may have had either value. To indicate what is apparently a velarized pronunciation for c preceding e, i, the graphies k and qu are utilized.

In the word certet, Paris and Storey see the use of c as exceptional, and seemingly occasioned by the following e's provenance from Latin a: the /tʃ/ sound ordinarily represented by c + e, i, is clearly untenable for the derivative of caritatem. But, if we posit the Anglo-Norman pronunciation /tʃ/ for c + e, i, the velar graphies in our text conform to a perfect pattern: every c + e, i, and possibly a, as we shall consider below, represents /tʃ/; every k, qu + e, i indicates the velarized /k/. This would explain the lack of ch, ç, and ç in our text: such distinctions would seem superfluous to an Anglo-Norman who pronounced any c + e, (a?) as /tʃ/.

2. k, qu before e, i.

These graphies, rather than c, are evidently used before i, e in our text to indicate the velarized sound /k/. Both derive from Latin qu, which survives as the Old French spelling in quel, quels, etc. In the pronoun ki, we note reduction of the qu form to k. (Cf. reduction of text's *spiritwel (< spiritualis) to spiritel.) The spelling ki for earlier kui is dated as a later Anglo-Norman form (late 11th C.) by Pope; thus, our text's ki appears as newer than the qui of the poem.

Another later development is suggested by the use of the relative pronoun with the article, in declinable form: "sum fils ... del quel nus avum oit lire e canter"; "a cascun memorie spiritel/lesquels vivent purement ...". Brunot lists this as a twelfth-century development, as does Kukenheim, who cites its appearance in Roland as a first. That lesquels represents a still further development, the use of accusative form in nominative construction, is possible if memorie is construed as masculine (as Kukenheim says): masculine nominative plural would dictate liquels. Storey lists lesquels as feminine plural, indicating that he considers memoire, the antecedent, as feminine. In any case, these two uses of the declinable relative pronoun, with article, cast our text as later than that of the poem, where this form does not occur.

3. c before a

This velar had long since palatalized to the /tʃ/ sound in Old French, as attested by Dauzat, Brunot, etc.; it is registered as ch as early as the Clermont poems (ca. 1000). This seems to have been the favored pronunciation in Anglo-Norman, to judge from the early use of the graphy ch (Brandon, Cumpoz, Camb. Psalt., as Menger notes), and from English loan words chancel, chapter, chant, chastity (all eccl.). The velarized articulation of initial c as /k/ also "appears to have had some vogue," Pope notes, listing cark, cart, cat, cancel, and pluck as demonstrative of this pronunciation, attributed to Northern influence. As we know, Anglo-Norman pronunciation was of motley nature, showing the influence of the many dialects represented in William's army and by the post-Conquest immigrants. The lack of the ch graphy in our text does not rule out a pre-palatal /tʃ/ pronunciation for Latin c + a: the earliest Anglo-Norman texts (Domesday Book, Brandon, etc.) also show c + a for what Menger, for one, considers a /tʃ/ sound.

In the text of the poem, we find numerous examples of the graphy ch for Latin c + a, alongside simple c: chef, cher, chevals, pechet, riches appear along with cambra, acatet, carn, buce, colcer, etc. A manuscript, generally considered to be L's close contemporary, also contains both forms. Gaston Paris surmises that the ch graphy reverts to the hypothesized archetype Q, and that

the scribes of L and A MSS, disdaining ch as alien to traditional Latin orthography, replaced it with c, though not faithfully, throughout their texts. Perhaps ch was rejected because of its association with the k sound of Christus; the prevalence of this word in medieval texts caused the adoption of the ch graphy for the k sound, as Pope notes (cf. chi for qui [ki]).

Our prologue is consistent, as we have seen, in adhering to the use of c before Latin a. Whether this represents a fidelity to the original Latin, or that /ts/ (< c + a) was a well-established Anglo-Norman pronunciation, this consistency, alongside the poem's inconsistency, suggests that the prologue is not bound to the archetypical form, and may be an original creation.

4. c before u (= o)

In our text, Latin c is maintained as the graphy representing the /k/ sound preceding o; in two exceptions, discussed below, it undoubtedly indicated a /ts/ pronunciation. In contrast, the poem uses the qu graphy, as well as c, to register c /k/ + o: there, quer, quons appear as well as cors, cons, etc.

These are the examples furnished by the prologue, in which, it will be remembered, u is the equivalent of o:

cumencet < *comentiat (> *commencet)
cumandat < comandavit
consulaciun < consolationem

C before (Latin) ū appears only in cascun, a common OF form.

In two cases, the c preceding o (u) indicates the affricate sound /tʃs/; this is etymologically explainable for each.

co < ecce hoc
cancun < cantionem.

Co apparently retains its sibilancy by dint of e's influence in the earlier form, ecce hoc. Cancun represents one of the cases in which Latin initial t + yod becomes /tʃs/, as also occurs in the poem's following words:

penitence < penitentia (Eccl.)
nuncat < nuntiavit
lincol < linteolum.

G

This letter appears in only three words in our text; in each case, it is initial to the word or syllable.

1. g + e, i, was pronounced /dʒ/ (as in budget) as early as Gallo-Roman, according to Brunot, who traces its phonological development as follows:
L. g > dy > dj. We would expect this pronunciation for these examples from our text:

virginels < virginalis
angendrat < ingeneravit.

2. g + o (au). The same /dʒ/ pronunciation is possible for goies, though the graphy i was more frequently used preceding o to indicate this sound, the graphy j not yet being in general use.

In the poem, the words goie, goiuse show the use of the g graphy; i, i also precede o in io (= "je"). Both

prologue and poem use i in the words iuvene, iuvente (< *iovene, etc.). In view of the fact that i usually serves to register the /dʒ/ sound before o, Storey thinks it possible that the g of goies preserves the velarized Latin pronunciation. This retention of the Latin g sometimes occurred in Anglo-Norman, as noted by Pope (1091).

Menger and Vising judge that g represents /dʒ/ in Anglo-Norman pronunciation, giving goie (+ mangue, gambe) as exemplary.

There seems to be no valid way to decide which of these pronunciations is represented by g. The development of both dʒ and g from Latin g + o, a is attested in these English (via French < Latin) derivations:

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| joy | gaudy, gew-gaw |
| jaundice | gaunt |
| jargon | gargle |
| jamb (of a door) | gambit |

Perhaps the best deduction is that our scribe shows his knowledge of Latin in retaining its original g, thereby avoiding the confusing appearance of four vowels in succession (ioies), a visual horror for a hater of diphthongs.

In summary, we have found that c, qu, k and g seem to conform to some pattern as used in our text, though we can not always be sure of the sounds they represent. Here is how these velars appear in the prologue:

C, K, QU

1. c + i, e = either /tʃ/ or /tʃs/.
2. k, qu + i, e = /k/ (kw).
3. c + a (incl. a > e) = either /tʃ/ or /k/.
4. c + u, o = k.
5. c (< Latin ce or init. tj) + o = tʃs.

G

1. g + e = dʒ
2. g + o (< au) = dʒ or g.

The poem shows no such consistency, and, in addition, includes conventional signs (cedilla, diaeresis) and graphies (ch) unused in our text. Again our text seems distinct in nature from the text of the poem and more recent.

H

Initial Latin h, mute in spoken Latin, was likewise never pronounced in French, according to Paris, who bases his conclusion on the observation that it never prevented elision in poetry. Other linguists disagree, finding that this graphy serves some phonological purpose. In Anglo-Norman, h was often employed arbitrarily to preserve vowels in hiatus.

In our text's two examples, initial Latin h is once written (honeste) and once omitted (istorie). The words preceding honeste and istorie may offer a clue: the de-itched form follows a vowel (icesta istorie),²⁴ the preserved h follows a consonant (fut honeste). This is somewhat at variance with our scribe's usual practice of employing a consonant between vowels wherever possible: cf. e de la vie and ed es noces. Our only recourse is the usual one: was this a visual notation for rhythmic purposes? We shall consider this later.

²⁴ Istorie may have been influenced by the icesta preceding.

Dentals

The degree to which Latin dentals are preserved, weakened or suppressed offers prime evidence as to the zeitstil of a text. Thus, the Strasbourg oaths show only slight weakening of the intervocalic dental (cadhuna) and preservation of the final ones (dunat, fazet), while in Jeu d'Adam we see the fall of both intervocalic and final dentals (feeil, formé). The prologue of Alexis, by the multiformity of its dentals, offers provocative questions for our linguistic consideration.

We shall waive any discussion of dentals initial to the word or syllable; these remain largely unchanged (trinitiet, volentet, etc.), barring the influence of a following yod (cumencet < cum initiat). Our study will be confined to (1) intervocalic and (2) final dentals.

1) Intervocalic. With one exception, the intervocalic dentals, subject to extinction (by virtue of weak position or the influence of certain consonants), are conspicuously absent in this text. Among these are two words which underwent early dental-attrition, according to Brunot and Paris:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| goie(s) < gaudia (> gauya) | |
| desirrables < desiderabilis | (cf. L. arripāre < ad ripāre, and O. F. consirrer < considerare.) |

On the other hand, the t of *nutrire was preserved as nodrir in St. Leger; this is the form Paris restores,

along with fredre, emperedre, etc. in the poem. In our text, this word appears in the weakened form, nurrit. Along with this are four more words which show the complete loss of the intervocalic dental:

oit < auditum (cf. odir, Roland)
 mere < matrem
 pere < patrem
 vie < vitam.

Of these four words, only the first, oit, appears in this, its later, form in the poem; the other three are written either preponderantly (in the ratio of 44:1 for pedre, medre vs. perë) or exclusively with the dental, sometimes in its weakened form (vide, vithe).

The intervocalic dental appears in its most-weakened form, th, in two words in the prologue. Gaston Paris regards the th spelling as a borrowing from Saxon orthography, and representing the ð ("that") pronunciation. He notes that this graphy is peculiar to manuscripts executed in England. Vising, as well, lists the use of th for intervocalic ("seldom final") t as characteristic of Anglo-Norman phonology and orthography.²⁵

There are two instances of th (< Latin t) in our text. In both these cases, th derives from intervocalic t; in this unsupported position it is especially prone to weakening:

²⁵ Vising, p. 30.

methime < metipsimum (> *medipsme)
 castethet < castetatem.

The second example, castethet, is remarkably similar to the English hybrid form ("French root with English prefix or suffix") chasthed, which was assimilated into English prior to 1250, according to Albert C. Baugh, historian of the English language.²⁶ Baugh notes the high incidence of English ecclesiastical words owing their origin to the Normans, indicating the interrelationship of the two languages.

From the above study, we see that intervocalic dentals are either lost (7/9 cases) or greatly weakened (2/9) in the prologue; the use of th for the two weakened forms is typical of Anglo-Norman. In the poem, on the other hand, the intervocalic dental is usually preserved as d, occasionally as th, and only rarely effaced. Once more we see that the language of the prologue is newer, and/or more Anglo-Norman, than is that of the poem.

2) Final dentals.

In our text, primary and secondary final dentals are preserved as t, when deriving from these sources: nouns in -atem; past participles in -atum; perfect tenses in -avit, -ivit; or present forms in -at, -ant. The following list shows the consistency of this survival in the prologue:

²⁶ Albert C. Baugh, History of the English Language (New York, 1935), p. 220.

Nouns

amistet < amicitatem
 certet < caritatem
 pietet < pietatem
 trinitiet < trinitatem
 veritet < veritatem
 volentet < voluntatem

Adjectives and Past Participles

amet < amatum
 nurrit < nutritum
 oit < auditum
 boneuret < bona + (h)oratum
 grant < grandem

Verbs

Present tense

cumencet < *cumencet (< cum + initiat)
 delitent < delieitent (< delectant)
 est < est
 regnet < regnat
 vivent < *vivent

Perfect tense:

angendrat < ingeneravit
 cumandat < *comandavit
 fut < fúit.

The poem also preserves this final Latin t as such, except for one appearance of cityed, and four cases in which fud, typically Anglo-Norman, replaces the more frequent fut. Paris considers this weakened form to be a scribal replacement of the original's fut: he notes that the tendency to soften t to d was prevalent in England, and judges that the weakened form originated there.

It is then surprising to find the archaic -t ending in every one of the above forms: if this dental had indeed weakened to d for the scribe, who so rendered it sometimes

in the poem, how do we account for the consistent use of t in our text? The use of the Latinized ending is especially remarkable in the word fut, which appears as fud with high frequency in Anglo-Norman texts, including, as we have seen, the poem Alexis. In this case, the reason may lie in the initial vowel-sounds of the words following fut: emfes, (h)oneste. In all the other examples, the retention of final -t must owe its explanation to the Latin orientation of the scribe and a closer adherence to the original forms in certain cases. Pope has noted Anglo-Norman restoration, under Latin influence, of letters representing effaced sounds (saincte, corps, sept are some of her examples).

Exceptions to the retention of final -t occur only in the conjunction < Lat. et and the preposition < Lat. ad. We find only e, ed, (&) as the forms for Lat. et in our text. As in the poem, e is used before consonants, ed before vowels.* Similarly, we find only a (including its enclitic form al) representing Latin ad in the prologue

*This conjunction appears an astonishing number of times in the short prologue, counting for 10 of the 48 words. Storey has remarked its high incidence in the poem. Kukenheim, noting (p. 155) its frequent use in (all) Old French literature as a narrative device, describes it as "et biblique" because of its frequent appearance in translations of the Bible. His example: "Lorsque Dieu commença de créer les cieux et la terre, La terre était informe et vide. Et ténèbres étaient par-dessus l'abîme. Et l'esprit de Dieu reposait sur les eaux. Et Dieu dit: Lumière soit Et lumière fut. Et Dieu vit que la lumière était bonne. Et Dieu sépara" (Gen. 1, 1-4).

where it occurs only before consonants. In the poem, both a and ad appear as the form surviving Latin ad.

As we have seen in the above discussion, the dentals of the prologue appear both in their archaic and in their more developed forms, seemingly in a contradictory way. However, some explanation may be offered by the nature of the words in question. If we group the words according to their dental retention or attrition, a pattern becomes apparent: the archaic forms usually persist for learned or ecclesiastical borrowings,²⁷ while common, everyday words show the more evolved phonology. Abstract nouns and verb forms retain their final dentals; functional words (mots outils) show greatest development. The following list will demonstrate this bifurcation:

Dentals Preserved

amistet
angendrat
amet, regnet, vivent, delitent
boneuret
cumencet
certet
cumandat
oit
pietet
trinitiet
veritet
volentet
fut

Dentals Weakened or Lost

a (<ad, prep.)
apres
e, ed
pere
mere
methime
nurrit (<nutritum)
oit
vie
castethet

Only the final word of each list seems generically misplaced; each can be explained by reason of euphony

²⁷ Brunot's list of words coming from the Vulgate includes caritet, trinitet, veritet, virginitet (Histoire de la langue française, p. 294).

("fut honeste") or as a lapse into the scribe's own pronunciation (castethet). In the other examples, there seems to be uncontested filiation of meaning or usage. (The tendency to preserve final dentals in Anglo-Norman is noted by Pope, for -nd words--lend, pound, etc.)

In this respect, the language of the prologue seems newer and more natural to the writer, than that of the poem.

Labials

In general, the labials in our text are in their expected Old French forms. As initial consonants, they survive normally as b, v, f. We shall discuss the intervocalic forms which are of some interest.

Latin (h)abilem preserves its -ble ending in amiable and desirables, as is expected for these supported consonants. Habemus shows the normal development of -b- to v in avum. (The absence of a final s on this form is characteristic of both Norman and Anglo-Norman. The occurrence of both sigmatic and asigmatic forms in the poem is seen by Storey as an Anglo-Norman peculiarity.)

We note the loss of the intervocalic labial in angendrat < ingeneravit; this was occasioned by the loss of the post-tonic vowel and consequent reduction of v't to t. The fall of the v of perfect forms precedes the Old French period: Kukenheim notes calcai, probai from the grammarian Probus (1st C.), and the form fumat in Priscian's works.

The intervocalic labial is retained in three words from our text: suverain, juvente, juvene. The first two examples are the common Old French forms; the third, juvene, appears more regularly as jovne, juvne. Perhaps the inorganic e is used as a convention to indicate that the second of the two "u's" is, rather, a v, the two being identical in scribal writing. More likely, there is again a close adherence to the Latin original.

Liquids

Among the liquids, only the l of filz requires comment. Because fil is invariably followed by z rather than s in the poem, Paris infers that a palatalized pronunciation may thereby be indicated; he finds evidence of this in English proper names such as Fitzhugh, etc. Paris has shown how the poem's text often employs z to follow Latin l + yod (velz, melz, etc.), from which developed l mouillée; s follows l, Paris finds, where we would expect a liquid sound for l.

Our text corresponds to the poem in this respect: we find filz (< filius) but virginels (< virginalis), conforming to the pattern noted by Paris. The usage of l varies so erratically in Anglo-Norman, as Menger notes, that we shall not attempt to draw conclusions from these two lone examples, except to note that final l + a consonant had apparently not vocalized.

The normal use of r, l, and v, with no "Anglo-Norman" interchange of r and l, is revealed in these examples from our text:

lire < l^ug^uere
 delitent < delectant
 sulunc < *solonc < sublungum

raison < rationem
 barun < baronem
 par < per

juvente < *jovente < juventa
 vivent < vivant
 vif < vivum

Again we find evidence that our scribe is well-instructed in Latin forms, to which he adheres closely, and thereby, correctly.

S

S survives normally in our text in initial and final position, as seen in sum (< suum), desirrables (< desiderabilis), and emfes (< *enfas). It serves to represent the plural, in its expected Old French forms, in es (< en les), les quels (< illas quales), goies (< gaudias), and as a nominative singular flexional ending in desirrables.

The history of internal s + consonant is complex. The Anglo-Norman development is especially interesting, presenting such paradoxical survivals as blame and feast, male and honest, defeat and forest. As Paris has established, the cases of s + cons. divide into two groups: one in which s is voiced (+ voiced consonants and f), and one in which s is

voiceless (+ voiceless consonants except f). Our text offers an example of both the voiced and voiceless categories in (1) methime (< metipsimum; cf. poem's medisme) and (2) honeste (< honesta), amistet (< *amifetate), est and icesta (< ecce ista). The retention of s in cascun shows a typical Anglo-Norman form for this word. Menger gives us the best summary of the fall of s before consonants. Briefly, there are three stages for this development:

- Pre-Conquest: fall of s before s-voiced group consonants, except l and n.
- Conquest: quiescence of s before l, n in progress.
- Post-Conquest: fall of s before t: a slow development as shown by instances of -st- as late as early fourteenth century.

Accepting this dating, we find that our examples would conform to a period after the Conquest, when s before m was effaced (methime) and s before t retained (honeste). The poem's forms such as aproismet, batesma, esguarethe, medisme indicate that its language is older than that of the prologue. The prologue's retention of s before t is in line both with our chronological chart, and with the Anglo-Norman (and Walloon, as well) favoring of this consonant group cited by Paris.

The lack of s before f in two word groups raises morphological as well as phonological questions. These are the lines involved:

"Il desirrables icel sul filz angendrat."

"Ki est un sul faitur ... "

In the first line, the use of z /=ts/ casts this word in nominative construction, where accusative would be more expected (hence, fil). There are several explanations for this use of the nominative form of filius. First, Paris suggests that the nominative case, with z for /=ts/, was purposely, if irregularly, used in order to indicate that l was mouillée in this word (p. 101, fn. 2). Second, various scholars of the language have affirmed that the nominative case of this word prevailed over the accusative, because of the frequent use of the vocative construction. Third, our scribe, though well-versed in Latin spelling, is far from faithful to the 'correct' Old French declension system. We have seen his use of le for la, his casting of feminine nouns as masculine ("suverain consulaciun"), whether as a phonological effacement of post-tonic e, or as breakdown in declension, his use of an analogical form (icesta). In the next line, we see the use of accusative forms in nominative construction: un sul faitur for uns suls faitre. With so many irregularities in view, it is quite possible that the use of filz may be another mistake in declension or an indication of the reduction of the two-case system. We must bear in mind, however, that our scribe makes it a habit in the poem to omit s before f, s, as occurs in both these lines.

We judge that the text hereby shows that disintegration of declension and that shift to accusative construction which accompany both Anglo-Norman usage and a later period of the language. (In the case of faitur, we find a probable influence of the Nicene Creed, of which our line is almost a paraphrase:)

Credo in unum Deum . . . factorem coeli.

Geu crei en Deu lo pere qui tot poot, faitor de ciel ...²⁸
(Credo, ms. Charleville 202.)

Flechisums nod genuilz devant la face Deu, nostre faitur.
(Liv. des Ps., Cambridge Ps.)

Iceste lumiere est al faitur de la parmenable lumiere.
(Ms. Brit. Mus., Egerton 613.)

Ki del ciel est creatur ...²⁹

Cf.:

Ki est un sul faitur ...
(Prologue, Alexis.)

We find another use of accusative forms in nominative construction in our text's predicate adjectives amet and nurrit:

Co fut emfes de deu methime amet.

E de pere e de mere par grant certet nurrit.

In both these cases, the nominative construction would be indicated in the (two-case) OF system, thus amez (< amets) and nurriz (< nurrits < nutritus).

²⁸ These Old French examples are furnished by Godefroy.

²⁹ Nancy Iseley, ed., De Passione Judas. Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures (Chapel Hill, 1941), p. 33.

Paris has remarked on the prevalence of this irregular usage in Anglo-Norman texts; he suspects a possible Germanic influence:

J'en conclus que la destruction de la déclinaison est ici [i.e. in the poem] le fait du copiste et non de l'auteur, et cette différence évidente entre l'emploi de l'adjectif comme prédicat et comme attribut me semble dénoncer l'influence d'une langue germanique sur ce copiste: nous reconnaissons ici les traits du dialecte spécialement anglo-normand.

Menger states the case equally strongly: "The origin of the reduction of the declension from two cases (nominative and accusative) to one (accusative) is usually associated with Anglo-Norman . . ." (p. 110).

Thus the omission of the nominative -s, and the substitution of accusative forms (faitur, amet, nurrit) for nominative stamp our text once more with the Anglo-Norman hallmark.

The forms spus, spuse are of interest by dint of their lack of prosthetic e preceding the initial s. These forms should be compared with the poem's escole, espusethe, etc., as well as its spuse (perhaps caused by elision). The forms of our text are closer both to the original Latin forms (sponsum, sponsa) and to modern English derivatives spouse, school, etc. Pope has shown that prosthetic e was still an unstable element in eleventh-century French and that this hesitation between forms carried over into Early Anglo-Norman. She specifies twelfth century as the date of e's becoming a fixed element of the word.

In this respect, our text shows the use of an archaic-- or of an Anglican--form. The juxtaposition of archaisms and neologisms is considered characteristic of Anglo-Norman, whether as spoken language or copied text.

Geminates

Paris has found a faithful pattern in the use of the doubled consonants of the poem: only s and r are doubled, the former, to indicate phonetic s, the latter, by analogy with some older form. Storey, on the other hand, notes a state of confusion for the geminates in Alexis, judging that single or double consonants are indiscriminately used: dirre and dire, anceisurs and cesset, etc. Modern scholarship is in a state of flux concerning the phonological value of doubled consonants in Anglo-Norman. Menger notes that Anglo-Norman writers used s, ss interchangeably.

In our text, only r appears in its doubled form, in two words showing their expected Old French spellings, desirrables and nurrit. In each case, the first r replaces an earlier dental (Lat. desiderabilis, nutritum).

Single s appears where we would expect the geminate form in naisance (< nascentiam). This has its counterpart in the poem's laisas, eisit, douses, etc. The existence of these forms, alongside laissent, eissit, dousses leads Storey to believe that single and double consonants are equal in the poem's text, and attributable to the Anglo-Norman scribe.

Since we have only one example of -s for -ss, we can not make any comparison of sounds.

We note finally no use of doubled consonants for single ones, a common occurrence in Anglo-Norman texts (see dirre, above). Our scribe's choice seems consistently in favor of the simplest form, within the wider limits of Latin orthography.

CONCLUSION

Our study of the language of the prologue has yielded these general observations.

The text is characterized throughout by archaisms and neologisms of phonology and morphology. We have found 'later' forms with no counterparts in the text of the poem; correspondingly, the poem possesses archaic forms unknown to the prologue. Certain forms peculiar to the Anglo-Norman dialect (iceol, sulunc) occur only in the prologue, never in the poem. The text of the prologue, unlike that of the poem, shows a certain consistency of usage, if for less regular forms.

Gaston Paris' recasting of the prologue will serve well to show the many differences between 'standard' 11th century French and the language of this text. We have underlined the changes which Paris makes in his effort to reconstruct the language of the original Old French Alexis, the hypothesized O archetype.

Ici comencet amiable chancon e spiritel raison d'icel
noble baron, Eufemien par non, e de la vide de son fil__

boneuret, del quel nos avons odit lire e chanter. Par la divine volentet il desirables icel sol fil engendrat. Apres la naissance co fut enfes de Deu medisme amez e de pedre e de medre par grant chiertet nodriz. La soe jovente fut honeste e spiritel. Par l'amistiet del souverain pedre (for pietet) la soe espose jovene comandat al espos vif de veritet qui est uns sols faitre e regnet en trinitet. Ceste historie est amiable grace e souveraine consolacion a chascune memorie spiritel, les quels vivent purement selonc chastedet e dignement sei delitent es goies del ciel et es noces virginels.

The discrepancies between langue and langage have been the subject of our study above, where most of Paris' variant forms have been discussed. Now we shall list the peculiarities of our text, grouping them according to their relative conservatism or degeneration, or, where this is the distinctive feature, their Anglo-Norman nature. Such categorizing involves overlapping by its very nature. In some cases (spus, juvene, etc.), the form's archaic appearance may rather represent a development further removed from Old French, bringing the form full-circle. Where conclusive scholarly evidence is lacking we shall place such examples both with the newer and with the more traditional forms, indicating this procedure by means of parentheses. We list examples, by no means exclusive, for each peculiarity noted in our text.

PHONOLOGY

Neologisms

e for /é/ (< a) throughout: juvente
e for /ê/ (in support of cons. cluster): pere
 loss of intervocalic dentals: vie
e, ed for et
 loss of s before m: methime
 loss of intertonic vowel: certet
ki for qui; -tel for -twel: spiritel
an for en (atonic)
 paucity of diphthongs

(c for ch: cancun)
 (absence of prosthetic e: spus)
 (use of prosthetic i: icesta)
 (absence of initial Lat. h: istorie)
 (insertion [?] of intertonic vowel: juvene)

Conservatisms:

retention of -orie: historie
 retention of enclitic forms: al spus (no vocalization of l)
fut, not fud
 retention of final dentals
 retention of ai orthography: raisun
 retention of s before t: honeste
 retention of intertonic e: boneuret
 no en- for an-: grand

(c for ch: canter)
 (lack of prosthetic e: spus)
 (retention of initial Latin h: honeste)

Anglo-Normanisms

th for ð or -: methime
u for o: nus, sul
ie for e, e for ie: trinitiet, amistet
m for n before f: sum filz
iceol for icel
sulunc for selunc
avum for avons (Norman influence?)
s for ss: naisance
g for j: goies

MORPHOLOGY:

Neologisms

effacement of flexional s: un, sul
 effacement of flexional e: suverain (consulaciun),
casun
 analogical feminine form: icesta
 use of tonic for atonic reflexive pronoun: sei
 use of relative pronoun + article: les quels
 accusative forms in nominative construction: faitur
 confusion of gender: volentet, naisance, pietet, memorie

Conservatism

correct nominative form of adjective, desirrables
 feminine adjective grant in older form, without
 analogical e

Anglo-Normanisms

le for la
 accusative for nominative: faitur, etc.
 accusative forms of predicate adjectives: nurrit, amet
 masculine adjectives with feminine nouns: suverain
consulaciun
 apparent confusion as to gender (article and adjective in
 wrong form)

Some of these characteristics are shared by the Norman
 and Anglo-Norman dialects, the distinguishing factor being
 their earlier and fuller development in England, as Vising
 notes (p. 28). These features are among those common to the
 two dialects, according to his tabulation:

Phonology: o or u for ou, eu
 distinction of an and en
ie for e
 fall of pretonic e
ca (beside cha)
ga (beside ja): goie, Oxf. Ps.

Morphology: accusative for nominative
-om, -on (-um, -un) for -oms, -ons in verbs.

We have seen that our text employs these variants in a precocious way.

In addition to those traits common to both Norman and Anglo-Norman, there are characteristics which probably pertain particularly to the insular dialect. These are some of those traits, as itemized by Vising (pp. 28, 29):

Phonology

e for ie, from middle of 12th century.
 fall of post-tonic e in rhymes of second half, 12th cent.
th for intervocalic (seldom final) t in earliest MSS.
 final d for t: fud, etc.

Morphology

fall of s in adjectives (and article) before substantive.
 ending -et for -ez.

Syntax

use of tonic, instead of atonic, personal pronouns.
 accusative after intransitive verbs with estre.

We have noted cases of each of these peculiarities in our text, all of them imputed to the Anglo-Norman dialect by linguistic scholars. We have deduced a certain pattern in the use of archaisms versus neologisms: ecclesiastical and learned borrowings conform closer to the Latin originals; everyday words appear in their more developed forms.

Since the archaisms appear to be conscious and artificial, i.e. for literary or authenticating purposes, and the natural language of the writer seems preponderantly modern in comparison with that of the poem, the indication is that the prologue was written later than the poem. (Many of the forms

are closer to those of A ms., or of Roland, than to those of L ms. Alexis.)

The undeniable Anglo-Norman flavor of the language strongly suggests an author of this background: phonological forms are highly-developed, morphological disintegration abounds. The degree to which this latter occurs is a telling clue. Paris has noted (p. 105) this tendency as characteristically Anglo-Norman:

Avant d'aborder les cas spéciaux, il faut résoudre la question générale: ces irrégularités dans la déclinaison sont-elles le fait de l'auteur ou du copiste? Il n'y a pas à hésiter un instant; c'est au copiste qu'en revient la responsabilité. Dès les plus anciens temps de la littérature anglo-normande, nous voyons les scribes de ce pays négliger les règles de la déclinaison: il ne pouvait en être autrement, car la déclinaison s'était altérée très-rapidement dans la langue elle-même. Le contact habituel d'un peuple avec un autre a toujours pour conséquence la destruction des formes grammaticales dans l'idiome qui sert le plus souvent d'intermédiaire
...

The language of the prologue, then, seems to us to indicate that this text was written in England at a date later than the poem's composition.

There is, of course, the possibility that the newer language represents updating of an archetype prologue by an Anglo-Norman scribe, as is Paris' belief. If we accept this theory, we must explain the scribe's failure to modernize the poem more extensively: did his interest and intent wane after the first page of his text? or did the poem seem more sacrosanct than the prologue--if so, how do we account for the rejuvenation of the poem's form where this occurs?

Perhaps the very nature of a prologue invites a more informal treatment, its purpose being to engender interest and attention to the sterner stuff which follows (if so, why the imposing parade of abstract terms?).

We would concede the authorship of the prologue to be an open question, were it not for other evidence which seems to suggest that this text was carefully composed in this its extant form.

Part of this evidence concerns an artistic intent for the prologue. Along with Konrad Hofmann, noted linguistic scholar and an early editor of Alexis (1868), we find the prologue to possess prosodic features, though certainly not to the degree nor with the artistry demonstrated in Alexis (an important difference in itself). Paris has conceded the rhythmic lilt of this amiable chanson:

"M. Hofmann a fait remarquer avec raison qu'il y a dans ce morceau, ... une sorte de prose rythmée et rimée" (p. 177).

Its rhythm and rhyme having received only a sweeping glance from Hofmann, the prologue is due a more careful consideration of its prosodic features. As Menger notes (p. 7), rhymes furnish the best means for distinguishing between the language of a scribe and that of an author. Laying aside considerations of linguistic forms, let us read the prologue with an ear for its characteristics of sound and content, allowing for its own existence as an artistic cameo.

CHAPTER III
PROSODIC FEATURES

Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child
on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.
(Midsummer Night's Dream V,1)

As early as the first lines of the prologue, the reader is struck by the regular occurrence of apparently-rhyming words. His esthetic sensibilities thus alerted, he seeks to fit syllables into a pattern of rhythm, only to find that the naïve and lilting cadence nimbly eludes the yardstick of meter.

Alexis scholars, acknowledging a rhyme-frequency which may be more than coincidental, have commented but briefly on this aspect of the prologue. Conrad Hofmann was probably the first to remark on the text's 'rhythmic and rhyming' nature. By means of some ingenious retouching--shifting of word-positions and recasting of tenses--he was able to perceive rhyming (to his satisfaction) throughout. This re-formation was, however, soundly trounced by Gaston Paris because of its failure to conform to standards of Old French versification. Paris, being 'inclined to believe' that the prologue is as old as the poem, judges that an Anglo-Norman scribe rejuvenated the shorter text, to its disadvantage. Particularly objectionable to Paris is the consideration of

rhyme between ciêl (< cel < caelum) and virginéls (< vir-
ginalis), completely inadmissible for a continental Old
French poet.

In this refusal to regard these as rhymes, Paris seems illogically bound by his own hypothesis: that the prologue and poem share a common author, possibly one Tedbalt of Rouen, certainly an eleventh-century Continental poet. Paris himself points out, however, the assonating of ie with e by the earliest Anglo-Norman writers:

La substitution de e a ie ... est un trait anglo-normand, et si bien anglo-normand que dès les plus anciens ouvrages composés par des anglo-normands nous voyons ie rimer avec e, ce qui n'a pas lieu en français.

Since, as Paris acknowledges, ie and e formed acceptable assonance for Anglo-Norman poets, and since the authorship as well as the prosodic nature of the prologue are open to question, we shall consider the prologue as a free-standing entity, not limited by arbitrary rules applying to a pre-conceived author. We also waive any premature classification of the text as poetry or prose, leaving the 'ear of the heart,' the "aure cordis" of the Benedictine Rule, open to hearken and receive.

Like the poem, the prologue is recorded in paragraph form. The location of periods and capital letters, aside from their syntactic function, may also serve as an indication of esthetic structure. Allowing for this possibility, and assuming the right of basic aural intuition, we arrive

at a three-part arrangement, as will be seen below. It is true that an alternate division into four sections is possible if Alexis is considered as the sole subject of the prologue. In this case, a miniature Vita would emerge as follows:

- I Introduction, Birth (through angendrat).
- II Childhood and Youth (-- spiritel).
- III Maturity, Assuming of Saint's Role (--trinitiet).
- IV Exhortation to audience (-- virginels).

Our reading of the text does not suggest this to be the case however. In the first place, Alexis is unnamed: his identity centers about his filial relationship to Eufemien (so called, "par num"), and his spousehood to the young wife.¹ Further, we note, Alexis is the perpetual recipient of the plot's action (on the part of father, mother, God and hearer), only once serving as the initiator, and then with assistance from above:

Par l'amistet del suverain pietet
La sue spuse juvene cumandat ...

Even here, Alexis remains unnamed, without even a personal pronoun, and with the wife receiving syntactic preference. So much anonymity must be significant;² while it may

¹ In this emphasizing of the Father, the prologue parallels the poem's beginning; there, too, the story begins with Eufemien in order to introduce Alexis (by name) in Strophe 7.

² Cf. the "specific anonymity" of the bride, as discussed by Karl Uitti: "The Old French Vie de St. Alexis," Romance Philology, Vol. 20, pp. 263-295. Uitti sees this

pertain to the humility of the saint-character, or to the docility of the obedient son, it seems more likely that the identification of Alexis with Christ (also conspicuously unnamed) is hereby effected. If this be the case, then the Father (Deu, Eufemien) would naturally precede the Son (un sul filz, spus vif de veritet); ultimately, however, the two being "the same in substance, equal in power and in glory," would share equal prominence, along with the Spirit (suverain consulaciun, cascun memorie spiritel).

With so much emphasis on the Father, and probable allusions to the Spirit, then, we feel that a three-part form is more in keeping with the thematic emphases of the prologue. These three parts treat of

- I the Father (Eufemien, God).
- II the Son (Alexis, Christ: Son and Bridegroom).
- III the Spirit (the holy Comforter, the spiritually-minded reader, hearer or local example).

In the light of the accepted medieval interweaving of sacred and profane, this tripleness of form and subject, on two levels, may surely be viewed as symbolizing the Trinity for the illuminati.³ Possibly even the three uses of the

as a means of making the bride the representative of the Christian community.

³ See Anna Granville Hatcher, "The O. F. Alexis Poem: A Mathematical Demonstration," Traditio, VIII (1952), for an interesting study of the poem's use of 2, 3, and 5 in organizational and thematic combination.

word spiritel (spiritel raisun, juvente spiritel, memorie spiritel) may be explained as a Triune reference. Indeed the author's trinitarianism vigorously affirms itself in the climactic line:

Ki est un sul faitur e regnet an trinitiet.

This line suggests the conviction of a Credo, with its overtones of the Verbum dogma: Christ present at the Creation, now, and reigning forever more in the Trinity.

Granted this underlying rationale, we find the following three-part division feasible: (We have sometimes phoneticized the spelling, in accordance with our phonological findings, for a better appreciation of the text's rhythm. Ai is è in raison, suverain, etc. It will be noted that the rhythmic stress sometimes differs from the ordinary tonic stress--ici, juvene, for example. This is explainable by poetic license.)

I

Íci cuméncet am-yáble cancún
e spír'tel raisún di cel nóble barún
Eufémien par núm.

é de la vie de sum fílz boneurét
del qué'l nus avúm oït líre e cantér.
par l' divíne volentét.

(il desirrábles 'cel sul fílz angendrát.)⁴

⁴ The parenthesized lines, breaking the rhythmic pattern as they do, may represent the non-musical response in an antiphony of sung and spoken (lire e canter) dialogue, as noted below.

II

Aprés le naisánce co fut émfes
de déu methíme amét.
é de pére e de mère
(nurrít) par gránt certét.

(la sue juvénte fut honéste e spíritél.)

Par l'amístet del súv'rain piétet
la sue spúsë juvéne cumádat
al spús vif de véritét

(Kí est un súl faitúr e régnét an trínitiét.)

III

(I)césta ístorí(e) est ámiáble gráce
e súv'rain cónsuláciun a cascún memorí(e) spirifel.
les quéls vivent púrement sulúnc castethét
e dígnement sé-i delítent
es góies del ciél ed es nóces virgíñels.

(The transposition of nurrít is our only major change in the reading of the text: it seems quite probable that this word might have been skipped originally by the scribe, then added to the end of the line. It is not essential that our change be made: the rhyme-scheme is irregular, only calling for some textual closeness of similar sounds, it would appear.)

The organization of our text into sections of unequal length has a parallel in that of the chansons de geste, whose laissez also vary in length, their subjects and assonances determining strophic division. This characteristic seems bound up in the oral nature of the chanson: a listener would be less aware of such an irregularity than would be a reader. The varying lengths of lines would also seem to be more acceptable to the ear than to the eye.

The possibility of our text's being sung to a fixed tune, with longer lines of emotional intensity being chanted, may also explain the metrical irregularity of the passage. Professor M. Dominica Legge, specialist in Anglo-Norman literature, has suggested that this may account for the peculiarities of Brendan's versification.

By contrast, the poem Alexis is remarkable for the careful symmetry of its design. Its versification approaches mathematical perfection⁵ in a flawless arrangement of five decasyllabic lines per assonanced strophe; internally, the lines themselves regularly follow a pattern of four + six (masculine or feminine) syllables.⁶ Were it not for the use of assonance (commonly associated with oral delivery) instead of rhyme (attached to written texts, or associated with the laity), one might argue for a purely visual purpose for Alexis.⁷

In the prologue, on the other hand, the unequal length of lines and 'laissez' suggests that this text has a rhythm and design all its own. As we have noted, such a rhythm

⁵ See Hatcher, "The O. F. Alexis poem."

⁶ Sckommodau argues for a 5 + 5 syllabic division; he appears to be alone in harking to this different drumbeat.

⁷ As a matter of fact, in one milieu, oral and visual merged: Jean Le Clerq, OSB, specialist in medieval religious literature, emphasizes the obligation of the Benedictine in his 'silent' readings to engage lip, ear, and heart.

does not conform to the regular and exact meter of Old French syllable count. While the first two 'laissez' show a similarity of proportion in their long/long/short lines, this pattern is subsequently lacking. The remainder of the poem proceeds more at whimsical gait than precise meter; 12, 9, 6, 6, 6, 12, 10, 10, 7, 14, 12, 17, 11, 8, 12 constitute the approximate syllable count. It seems clear that our text cannot be conceived of as a poem, if measured by the Old French yardstick of versification, which served so well for the poet of Alexis.

Leaving aside this criterion of meter, we resort to a sounding out of our text through appeal to the ear, which figures prominently in texts for both Anglo-Norman and monastic usage. Doing so suggests a rhythm whose prevailing features are pulsating stress and beat, as opposed to the limpidity of regular syllabic versification. This difference has long been accepted as the dividing line between Germanic and French poetry in general: the former is characterized by the alternation of strong and weak beats, which often serve as the unit of measure, the latter conforms to principles of syllabic count. Thus the requirements of stress, in Germanic poetry, engender the use of the flexible syllable. Accordingly, our text's peculiar forms may sometimes be explained by this rhythmic necessity: we find the syllable stretched in trinitiet, icesta, sei, and compressed in am-yable, spir'tel, par l', etc.

Other features of our text which have their rapports in Germanic and Anglo-Norman poetry, as established by Legge, Vising and others are as follows:

- 1) alternate use of rising and falling meters among laisses: Ici; Aprés; (I)césta.

This was a stylistic device also employed by Philippe in Bestiaire, as he states:

Or voil jeo mun metre muer
Pur ma raisun mielz ordener. (ll. 2889-90)

- 2) tendency toward internal rhyme, assonance, alliteration:
cancun/raisun, barun/num.
vie, fils/oit, lire/divine.
dignement, delitent.
- 3) use of tail-rhyme (half-lines):
Eufemien par num.
par grant certet. (This consideration requires that this line be in final position, as part of the tail-rhyme pattern.)
- 4) recurring use of same rhyme: -un, -e(t, r) are the only two utilized in our text.
- 5) use of longer line for emotional stress:
"il desirables icel sul filz angendrat."
"la sue juvente fut honeste e spiritel."
"Ki est un sul faitur e regnet an trinitiet."
"e souverain consulaciun a cascun memorie spiritel."
- 6) variable length of lines.
- 7) rhyming of ie and e:
castethet/ciel, virginels.

This last characteristic, ie:e, is especially associated with early Anglo-Norman texts. Pope has shown (1146) that Anglo-Norman greatly preceded west French in lowering e

(< tonic free a) to e, when the consonant l followed; this resulting e assonated with regular open e in the earliest Anglo-Norman texts. While this rhyme is not essential to our end-rhyme scheme, the above-noted tendency toward internal rhyme suggests that these sounds were paired by our writer: proof again that our text's French sounds were different from the poem's.

All of the above characteristics may be applied to the prologue: they may not be applied to the poem. Such a difference in poetic devices must surely imply a difference in origin and originator.

Our study of the prologue's prosodic features has been, of necessity, brief; the superficial view and summary generalization which attend brevity may serve, however, to give a certain overall perspective. These are the main observations which our study has yielded:

1. The prologue undeniably possesses prosodic features: rhyme, rhythm, as conceded by Paris, are certainly present. Textual organization as to theme and meter, alliteration, internal rhyme, etc. are most probably intended.

2. These features are in no way comparable to those of the poem, Alexis. The irregularity of organization and meter, the non-Continental rhyming of e and ie are among the traits inconceivable for the master-loomsman of Alexis.

3. It is extremely unlikely that a poet of the stature of Alexis' author would slip into the naive irregularities of the prologue's meter and rhyme, if he were attempting poetry.

4. It is also unthinkable that the Alexis poet would write prose which represents an abortive attempt at poetry.

5. The prosodic peculiarities of our text have their counterparts in Germanic, and especially Anglo-Norman poetry.

On the basis of these considerations, we conclude that the prologue appears to have been written by an Anglo-Norman. This opinion is shared by Meunier, Storey and Hofmann. Professor Hofmann notes as well the writer's unfamiliarity with the French language ("suverain pietet, souverain consulaciun [sic]").

As to the exact nature of the prologue--whether properly called verse or rhymed prose--there can be no neat categorization. Unfortunately for us, our writer had not heard that "ce qui n'est pas vers est prose; ce qui n'est pas prose est vers." He simply wrote, with apparent freedom from any fixed rules, about certain highlights in Alexis' Life, arranging his words into pleasing sounds. In so doing, he composed prose 'on its way to becoming verse'; apparently well on its way.

The selection of matière represented in our text suggests further contrasts between poem and prologue. We shall have a brief look at how remarkably these texts differ in theme, tone, and vocabulary in our next section.

Following this discussion, we shall draw available conclusions from our phonological, prosodic and conceptual studies.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROLOGUE AND THE ST. ALBANS PSALTER:

SEMANTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Is this a prologue, or the posy of a ring?
(Hamlet III,ii)

En tête du poème, dans le seul ms. L, on trouve le prologue suivant, dont je n'ai pas tenu compte dans l'Introduction, parce qu'on peut le regarder comme l'oeuvre propre du copiste. C'est, à ce qu'il me semble, l'avis de M. Hofmann, bien qu'il ne s'explique pas clairement sur ce point ... je suis plus porté, pour ma part, à croire que ce prologue précédait déjà le texte original de notre poème; en tout cas il devait se trouver dans le manuscrit que l'auteur de L a eu sous les yeux. Il est important en ce qu'il montre bien la destination du poème; il me semble du moins que la phrase "del quel nos avons odit lire e chanter" indique que cette amiable chanson se disait dans l'Eglise, le jour de la fête du Saint, après que l'office latin était terminé. Le poème prend ainsi un caractère, sinon liturgique, au moins ecclésiastique.--La langue du prologue est la même que celle du poème, à en juger par certaines formes archaïques qui s'y sont maintenues (methime, castethe [sic]), mais elle a été beaucoup plus rajeunie, sans doute par le copiste de a, et beaucoup plus maltraitée par le copiste de L ... ¹

As Paris says, only L ms., among the major Alexis MSS, contains the additional text commonly called the prologue. This preface, as we have seen, shares a page with three tinted drawings, the Alexis miniatures. The location of a prologue, only in the St. Albans psalter, raises interesting questions for our consideration.

¹ Paris, p. 177.

Why does a prologue precede only the L ms.? Is it perhaps only a space-filler (but on valuable parchment!) between the miniatures and the poem proper? If, as Paris believes, an archetype prologue existed in O, why do we not see some vestige of its survival in A or P manuscripts?² Was the prologue perhaps planned as an integral part of the St. Albans psalter, or is it really the work of the Alexis poet, with language badly-rejuvenated by a and L scribes? (But we have found abundant phonological proof that the language is not the same.)

We have also deduced that there is no comparison between the prosodic features of the poem and those of the prologue. Now we propose to study the text itself, its theme

² S version, 13th century, begins with a preface incorporated into its text. Though unlike our prologue in many other respects, this preface begins with the same -on assonance: could our text have inspired it? Léon Pannier, pupil of Paris and editor of this version, attributes the 9-line prologue of S to the jongleur, and his need to obtain the silence and attention of an audience. Here are the first 10 lines of this version:

C'EST LI ROUMANS DE SAINT ALESSIN

Signour et dames, entendés un sermon
 D'un saintisme home qui Alessis ot non,
 Et d'une feme que il prist a oissor,
 Que il guerpi pour Diu son Creatour,
 Caste pucele et gloriouse flour,
 Qui ains a li nen ot convercion;
 Pour Diu le fist, s'en a bon guerredon:
 Saulve en est l'ame el ciel nostre signour,
 Li cors en gist a Rome a grant hounor.
 Bons fu li siécles au tans ancienour
 (ed. Pannier)

and subjects, its vocabulary, its underlying philosophy and cultural basis in an attempt to determine the purpose and provenance of the prologue.

Our study of the prosodic features of the text has suggested that this is a planned composition. We have found evidence of a pleasing arrangement of sounds and of a symbolic arrangement of themes; these suggest an artistic intention on the part of the author. Had his purpose been purely practical--a clarifying title page--the following information would have sufficed, and would be more in keeping with other didactic prologues:

This is the life of Alexis: (incipit vita Alexis.)
 (Yet the name of the saint is absent from the prologue's text, occurring only in the Latin tituli above the miniatures. While this omission may be standard in Latin lives, it is hardly to be expected in this O. F. text.)

He was the son of Eufemien. He renounced his wife for God, his worldly wealth for the poor, and thereby received everlasting love and riches. This is a worthy example for us all. Let us imitate his life and implore his intercession for our sins. May God bless us all. Amen.

We may contrast this with the standard material covered by Philippe de Thaon in his Cumpoz. Following a twelve-line dedication, this author devotes 214 lines to a prologue, divided according to these rubrics: 'Salutatio ad patrem'; 'Reprehensio allegorice per proverbia'; 'Redargutiones per proverbia'; 'Exhortatio auctoris.'

Our text does not follow this rhetorical device, nor does it introduce the author, through a falsely-modest apology,

though this material sometimes occurs in medieval epilogues as well as in prologues. (Often the self-introduction was attached to venerable names and examples, to protect the author from punishment for his attention to profane subjects, as Legge shows.) Here are some typical prologues from medieval texts demonstrating these themes:

Prologus

Philippes de Thaün
 At fait une raisun
 Pur pruveires guarnir
 De la lei maintenir.
 A sun uncle l'enveiet,
 Que amender la deiet,
 Se rien i at mesdit
 En fait u en escrit,
 A Hunfrei de Thaün,
 Le chapelain Yun
 E seneschal le rei:
 Ico vus di par mei.

Salutatio Ad Patrem

Or oez sun sermun
 Cum le met a raisun.
 Icil Deus ki tut fist,
 E ki tuz jurz veir dist,
 Il quart l'anme de tei,
 18 Que il n'i ait desrei

27 Kar mult est necessaire
 Cele ovre que voil faire;
 E mult plusur cleric sunt
 Ki grant busuin en ent,
 Ki pur mei preierunt
 E m'anme beneistrunt.
 E sainz Augustins dit
 La u fait sun escrit,
 U numet le librarie
 Ki mult est necessaire
 As pruveires guarnir
 De la lei maintenir ...
 (Cumpoz)

Ki ben vont estre enqueranz
 Entendet dunc a cest Romanz
 Que al loenge Damne De
 E a s'enor at translate
 Sanson de Nantuil, ki sovient
 De sa dame qu'il aime e creient
 (Proverbs of Solomon)

En ceste manere recitom
 La seinte resureccion ...
 (Paris prologue)

Si vus avez devociun
 De la seinte resurrectiun
 En l'onur Deu representer
 E devant le puple reciter ...
 (Canterbury prologue).

(Resurrection play, 12th C.)

Oez, seygnur, oez, oez,
 Escoutez tant cum wus poez
 Fetes place e ten'us coy

(Fragment, prologue to 13th C.
 play.)

Our prologue fills none of these functions: it does not identify the subject of the poem; it does not introduce the author; it does not offer authenticating credentials; it does not appeal to any worldly potentate (ecclesiastical or temporal); it does not directly address itself to the faithful or to a benefactor; it does not request the silence and attention of listeners. This does not necessarily imply that it was unplanned, but rather suggests that, for our author, the esthetic outweighs the practical.

So he seems to compose his own miniature in verse, glossing the pictures above, presaging the imposing Life which follows. The result is a truncated micro-vita, beginning,

as the poem, with the saint's parents, continuing with a rapid résumé of his childhood, and climaxing with the reference to his bestowal of the bride to Christ, and a tribute to the Son as Creator and Eternal Ruler. Following this is a gentle affirmation of this story's worth, and an enigmatic recommendation a cascun memorie spiritel, les quels vivent purement; but "grace" and "consolation" are offered as objectives, rather than the more conventional aims of atonement and spiritual fortification. The traditional highlights of the Saint's life (Alexis' included)--renunciation, poverty, asceticism, passion, death and apotheosis--are not mentioned: this saint remains the eternal Bridegroom.

This emphasis on Christ/Alexis as bridegroom would have special significance for two persons: the Benedictine monk, whose life represented preparation for a tryst with the Sponsus of Canticles and Revelations; and Christina of Markyate, who fled her husband and the marriage bed for a life of solitude and piety. It is probably for this 12th century English recluse (and, later, abbess) that the St. Albans psalter was composed. The choice of the poem Alexis, with its theme of celibacy and asceticism, and the selection of matière in the prologue, would certainly apply to either the Benedictine monk or to Christina. The use of the Old French vernacular, instead of the monk's Lingua Dei, weighs heavily in favor of the lady.

We have seen that the prologue does not follow the usual conventions for its genre and that it does not simply condense the story of the poem but rather selects what may very likely have been evocative episodes. Aside from its limiting the subject, we find that the general philosophy of the prologue also differs from that of the poem.

The most obvious contrast is in tone. Whereas the poem elevates the most somber elements of asceticism, holds everything temporal in contempt, views the carnal with distaste, and represents the body as a necessary evil serving to transport the soul from the inferior world to the perfection of Heaven, this atmosphere is nowhere evoked in the prologue. Instead of an act of abandonment, a process of dépouillement, and a savoured dying, our text takes a robust delight in the human, the living and the positive. There is no negative aspect involved in theme, subject or image. Alexis does not flee his wife, nor abandon her, he commends her to a fuller joy. The chaste readers of this text do not have to die in order to live happily ever after; they are already delighting themselves in the joys of heaven and in unfettering nuptials. The theological implications align our poet with those who know they shall not die: through Christ, they have already passed from death (of the Old Man) into Life Eternal, which they are even now living. There is a certain dualism involved, in that the spiritual joys are more delectable than the physical ones;

but our writer seems to be at home both in his body and in his Lord. The linear concept of time and passage toward perfection does not here exist: past, present and future have been melded in the warming circle of the Infinite. Communion among the saints (living) is hereby possible; the solitary life of the recluse is simply ignored.

These differences between the ethos of prologue and that of poem may be compared to the (essentially) two different kinds of mysticism. These have been effectively described by Arthur McGiffert, professor of theology, as follows:

There have been current within the Christian church two forms of mysticism, related and yet distinct, the one ontological . . . the other epistemological. The former which appeared more or less crudely in the mystery-cults and of which Paul was the first great exponent among the Christians . . . means the absorption of the human by the divine, or such a union between the two that the former is deified The roots of this mysticism . . . commonly lie in the realm of the sub-conscious. There floods the conscious being a mysterious sense of exaltation, enlargement, or power, and he interprets it as the influx of the divine

The second or epistemological form of mysticism involves the belief that man may know God directly; that he need not depend on tradition or on the evidence of his reason . . . , but may come into the divine presence and enjoy an immediate vision of God even here and now.³

Elsewhere, McGiffert notes that in the first type of mysticism, the supreme merging of the human with the divine

³ Arthur C. McGiffert, A History of Christian Thought (London, 1947), I, 28, 29.

occurs at death: only then is the complete identification of the human with Christ effected. Having been spiritualized upon the assumption of his new life, the saint/mystic becomes truly deified with the end of his finite life and the death of his physical body. This type of mysticism compares closely with that of the poem: through stages of de-personalization, suffering and death, Alexis becomes united with the person of Christ.

Our prologue, on the other hand, exemplifies the mysticism which delights in the immediate rapture of the Beatific Vision. Its choice of words demonstrates the blithesomeness of our author. Consider these examples from our text: amiable (twice), boneuret, amet, nurrit, amistet, vif, grace, consulaciun, goies, delitent, certet, desirrables certainly have joyful connotations; (amiable) cancun, noble, vie, canter, divine, volentet, naisance, juvente, honeste, spiritel, pietet, veritet, regnet generally represent pleasant associations. Conspicuously absent from our text is any form of the negative: there is no ne, nul, ja, etc. In fact, the only word which may be considered at all restrictive is sul (filz, creatur); in its appearances, it offers rather the positive idea of the Supreme and Unique.

Not only does the poem abound in doleful words (thirty uses of dol, alone), it differs from our text in its choice of happy ones. Lethece, for instance, appears in one of its

forms eleven times; goie, goiuse only twice. Desireux is the poem's form; desirrables, the prologue's.

More significant, of the forty-eight words in the prologue, thirty-three are peculiar to its text, not appearing in the poem. Among these words are many of our "happy" ones, such as amiable, boneuret, cancun, castethet, certet, consulaciun, delitent, desirrables, dignement, divine, grace, honeste, juvene, naisance, noces, purement, spiritel, suverain, vif and virginels. Again we find evidence that our writer spoke a different language, conceptually, from that of the poem.

Along with these marked contrasts between poem and prologue, there is one technique shared by both. Within the tripartite scheme of the prologue, as in the poem, a fugal interplay of the human and divine adds the dimension of duality. Not only is this suggested by the counterposing of the earthly and the heavenly Fathers and Sons, and by the underlying comparison of spiritual and carnal marriages, but by stylistic use of parallel word groups in the prologue:

chanson/raison

lire/canter

de deu amet/de pere e de mere nurrit

honeste-spiritel

grace/consulaciun

purement/dignement

goies/noces.

This duality is also effected by the doubled appearance of key words:

amiable cancun; amiable grace

suverain pietet; suverain consulaciun

sul filz; sul faitur

Certain words in our text fall strangely on modern ears, seeming to appear out of context amidst the prevailingly simple language. Among these expressions are spiritel raisun, divine volentet, suverain pietet, suverain consulaciun, memorie spiritel, noble barun (which seems redundant). By their lofty and imposing dignity, they appear as alien intruders in a simple text.

Their presence may be explained by ignoring lexicographical meanings and thinking of these words' peripheral connotations for the twelfth-century monk. Jean Leclercq has shown that in monastic circles such words burgeoned with overtones, linking Old Testament prophecy, New Testament fulfillment and the present; the Garden of Eden, the Eternal City and the cloister; the Songs of Solomon and of Bernard and the Magnificat of Mary. Thus, for the initiate, the word "memorie" might suggest not only the usual idea of recollection, but a full rainbow of images: of Solomon ("Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth"); of Jesus and the Last Supper ("This do in remembrance of me"); and of Paul ("I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day"). All of these ideas fused in the language of the

Mass and linked themselves with the monk's own recalling of his assumption of a new life and his contemplation of its heavenly continuance.

A further explanation of certain expressions in our text may lie in the realm of semantics. Sister Lucy Tinsley, writer of French Expressions of Spirituality and Devotion, has there traced the evolution in the meanings of such words as spiritel, pietet/pitiet, amistet, consulaciun, etc. Her findings on the first two of these words will serve to demonstrate that their early ecclesiastical connotations were both different from and richer than today's more precise and restricted meanings.

Spiritel was one of the favored words in early Church usage, as shown by Sister Lucy. Deriving from the Greek word for 'breath of life,' spiritel soon departed from this suggestion of the physical to represent its very opposite: that which is not carnal (charnel) or bound to the human. We see this contrast of spiritual and carnal throughout medieval texts, as exemplified by these verses gleaned by Sister Lucy:⁴

Mariage esperituel
 Est quant dames font uns veus tel
 qu'elles renonchent plainement
 Pour dieu a tous delis carnal
 Et laissent vie corporel
 Pour vivre celestievement, (Poème en l'hon.
 de la Vièrge).

⁴ Sister Lucy Tinsley, The French Expressions for Spirituality and Devotion: A Semantic Study (Washington, 1953), p. 86.

This meaning was extended to apply to the divine, as demonstrated by Sister Lucy:

A phrase which one meets everywhere in popular literature of the Middle Ages is: 'le pere ESPERITABLE,' or 'Dieu l'ESPIRITAL,' etc. As Sister Marianna Gildea has shown, 'Espiritual frequently occurs in expressions of apposition or metonymy, which represent God as the giver of force or of other spiritual or moral qualities.' It is a conventionalized use, similar to 'Dieu li glorieus,' or to the modern French 'le bon Dieu', the English 'almighty God,' etc. Somewhat in the manner of a title, this avoids the blunt use of the name of God alone, and is understood by custom to cover all of the divine attributes [this] passage will suffice to illustrate:

En non de Dieu l'ESPERITÉ⁵
Qui treibles est en unité.

Thus our text's triple use of spiritel emphasizes the idea of the Divine and of the supreme in human endeavor.

The doublets pietet/pitiet figure prominently in Tinsley's study. Deriving from Classical Latin pietatem, the older pietet denoted the ideas of God's merciful love and paternal concern for humanity. A reciprocal feeling on the part of his children is implicit in the use of pietet as an equivalent for 'filial love'; the devotion growing out of human gratitude was earliest known as pietet. Eventually the older form, pietet, became restricted to the exercises of faithful devotion, and pitiet, the more developed form, was reserved for the ideas of mercy and sympathy. In early Old French texts, however, we should more correctly think of pietet in its double meaning of divine love and providence.

⁵ Tinsley, p. 87.

Thus, "the Supreme Carer" may best translate suverain pietet, surely an epithet for God. Gaston Paris felt, perhaps intuitively, that this is what the word means in our text; he substitutes the word pedre for pietet, though on linguistic grounds (le suverain suggested only a masculine noun to Paris). If we think of this expression as applying to a person, God, the Father, rather than to an abstract virtue, we can see a psychological explanation for our writer's use of the masculine article. Similarly, suverain consulaciun can best be understood as an epithet for the Supreme (Holy) Comforter, the Spiritus Sanctus who effects the decrees and works of God in this world, according to traditional theology.

All of these considerations suggest that our writer was well-versed in Scripture and in medieval theology, and that he would be quite at home in a Benedictine abbey, of which St. Albans was an outstanding twelfth-century example, as we know. There, as well, the prevailing emphasis would be on the joys of spiritual fellowship and the contemplation of the Beatific Vision.

The prologue's emphasis on happiness--human and individual--and love as opposed to the poem's stressing of atonement, expiation, endurance and souffrance demands an author whose philosophy, theology and personality are accordingly positive and optimistic, one who was infected with St. Augustine's "pernicious blithesomeness." This joie de vivre leaves no room for a preoccupation with death. Perhaps this explains the subject of the miniatures illustrating Alexis in this manuscript. Pächt has suggested that one and

the same hand--that of the Alexis Master--may be responsible for the creation of both pictures and prologue.⁶

The scenes of the miniatures depict Alexis as the bridegroom, taking leave of his wife, and embarking for higher happiness. This is at variance with the usual art which accompanies Alexis texts; more commonly, the scenes are of Alexis' reunion with Eufemien, his death under the staircase, and his entombment. With the considerations of a topical purpose for this manuscript (Christina), and the personality of our writer, it seems quite possible that he may indeed have selected such scenes himself. Within the overall makeup of the psalter, we find further evidence that this page was carefully planned.

Though we cannot now fully discuss all the factors which have led us to this belief, the following important points may be mentioned.

We find that the general design of the St. Albans psalter is that of the triptych. Aside from the purely functional computistical tables and canticles, the makeup is as follows:

- I Forty-page pictorial cycle ("Christological").
- II Alexis
- III Psalms

⁶ He also wonders if the poem may also have originated with this man. As we have seen, it does not seem likely that the author of the prologue could have written the poem.

All of these are unified in the theme of the Old Adam and the New Adam: Alexis, appearing between the two, may be seen as a second Adam and, like David, a Christ-figure. The choice of subjects in the "Christological" cycle bears this out: preceding the illustrations of Christ's life are three miniatures depicting Adam and Eve in the garden, the expulsion from Paradise, and the couple's reluctant back-glance at their Eden.⁷ Thus, we have a perfect foil to the Alexis miniatures, with an accompanying reversal of material. Whereas Alexis hands to his wife the symbols of earthly thralldom, Eve presents to Adam the apple of the Fall; while Adam peers longingly at his one-time home, Alexis presses eagerly toward his new Life.

The scenes from Christ's life may also be seen as prefiguring and glossing the life of Alexis. Especially significant, and unexplainable to art historians, is the omission of the scene of the Crucifixion, the dominant event in the life of Christ. Instead, the artist has emphasized the Descent from the Cross, especially directing the viewer's eye to the mourning family and friends. This may be compared to the solitary death of Alexis, the discovery of his body and the anguished laments of his family (the latter unique to the Old French Life).

The famous Beatus Vir historiated initial contains, like the Alexis miniatures, a Spirit-symbolizing bird, and

⁷ A reproduction of these miniatures is included as Figure I in the Appendix.

its marginal text, describing the spiritual battle, contains words which also figure prominently in our prologue's text:

" ... et magna jocunditas cum angelis in celo"; " ... versus qui erit scriptus in nomine celestis amoris et in honore spiritualis belli"; " ... Qui sanguis sanctorum martyrum et digna virginitas illuminant librum vite et precedunt amorem celestem." Pächt has commented that these words make little sense if applied to the Beatus Vir psalm; they do make sense in a larger context, when considering David as a Christ-figure, like Alexis.

Finally, an architectual conception may be seen in the interweaving of picture and text, French and Latin, sacred and profane, within the three main sections of the psalter. Flanked by pictorial cycle and scriptural text, the Alexis segment appears as a triptych in itself, with additional interlacing of the human and divine. The Alexis poem would occupy the center panel of this smaller tryptych; forming counterparts to each other, and flanking the poem would be (I) the illustrated prologue; (II) a letter in defense of religious art, from Pope Gregory the Great, appearing first in the original Latin, then in an Old French translation. Both left and right panels may be seen as pièces justificatives, the one of profane text, the other of religious art.

Further evidence that the prologue was a carefully-planned unit of the psalter may be seen in our text's

beginning words: "Ici cumencet ... ". This beginning may well be compared to the opening lines of two Biblical texts, both of which enjoyed special significance and frequent usage in the medieval liturgy. These references are as follows:

I Au commencement Dieu créa les cieux et la terre. Or la terre était informe et vide, et les ténèbres étaient à la surface de l'abîme, et l'Esprit de Dieu se mouvait sur les eaux. Et Dieu dit: Que la lumière soit; et la lumière fut ... (Genesis 1: 1-4)

(In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram, etc.)
(Genesis 1, 1)

II La Parole était au commencement, la Parole était avec Dieu, et cette Parole était Dieu Toutes choses ont été faites par elle ... C'est en elle qu'était la vie, et la vie était la lumière des hommes. Et la lumière luit dans les ténèbres ... (Jean 1:1-5)

(In principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat verbum, etc.) (John 1:1)

These two Geneses form traditional counterparts in theology, the one being called upon, by the earliest Church Fathers, for full exegesis of the other.

Considering that our prologue starts with a beginning (cumencet) and that the poem ends with the Latin reference "in ipsum verbum," it seems highly probable that these Biblical texts furnish the hovering overtones for Alexis, prologue and poem. The reading of John 1 at the end of the Mass (thus before that of Alexis) has been vouched for by Meunier; thus, there would be immediate aural comparison of the Biblical and the secular texts.

Within the prologue, we infer an emphasis on Christ as Verbum, the second Person of the Godhead, eternally existing before the Incarnation. We have noted the creed-like line, "Ki est un sul faitur e regnet an trinitiet."

The history of this dogma, and its stormy passage to acceptance, first in the Nicene Creed, then in the general canon, is not our subject here, except as its affirmation in our text may indicate propagation of an idea which still needed to be championed. The final triumph of Trinitarianism (outgrowth of the Filioque/Verbum dogma) was a relatively late one.

These considerations of Biblical rapports indicate that the prologue forms part of a conceptual tri-logue; itself a little Genesis, it is centered between the pictorial Old Testament Genesis and the Beginning of the Psalms. Within the Old French segment of the St. Albans psalter, there appear to be allusions to the "New Testament Genesis," John 1. The marginal text of the first Psalm (Beatus Vir) seems to find its exegesis in Alexis, especially in its prologue. Hence, we see more than haphazard insertion of the prologue in this psalter: it is structurally and conceptually necessary for the overall theme and design.

Our study of the prologue's style, philosophy and vocabulary have borne out, then, that it is a 'thorough-composed' chanson, that is, originating for the very purpose of inclusion

in the psalter. Thus, while we are willing to admit that the Alexis poem probably originated elsewhere, we find that the prologue most certainly came into being for the purpose of inclusion in the St. Albans psalter. Whether its 'recommendation' was for Christina or for a body of religieux, we are not now prepared to say. Its function may even have been that of a true dramatic prologue, introducing the dramatis personae who would then mime the action of Alexis: the performance of a saint's life had been effected in England at this very time, and by a Geoffrey of Maine who later became abbot and the spiritual protégé of Christina.

On the basis of its conceptual uniqueness alone, we do feel that we can safely conclude that our prologue originated in St. Albans, England, and not in far-away and long-ago France.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: RACE, MOMENT, MILIEU?

Our study of the prologue has indicated that its language, prosodic features, style, emphasis and theology are highly dissimilar to those existing in the poem. We may summarize these differences as follows:

1. Phonological and Morphological

The forms of the prologue's text are, on the whole, newer than those of the poem. While archaisms do exist, they are apparently purposeful, serving to lend authenticity and to preserve venerable Latin forms. The many neologisms are such as to suggest a period and a place where weakening of sounds and simplification of forms were rampant. The nature of this conservatism and modernity and their coexistence in the same text are thoroughly consistent with the Anglo-Norman dialect as seen in texts of the early twelfth century.

There is ample proof of disintegration of the declension system, and of substitution of the accusative case for the nominative. The Anglican origin of this development is an accepted fact for philologists. It is most charmingly admitted by Catherine, Nun of Barking, and author of a Life of Edward, the Confessor, as follows:

Si joe l'ordre des cas ne gart
 Ne ne juigne part a sa part,
 Certes n'en dei estre reprise,
 Ke nel puis faire en nule guise.
 Qu'en latin est nominatif,
 Co frai romanz accusatif.
 Ün faus franceis sai d'Angletere,
 Ke ne l'alai ailurs quere.
 Mais vus ki ailurs apris l'avez,
 La u mester iert, l'amendez. (1-10)

2. Prosodic

We have found a high incidence of similar sounds, so situated as to suggest that they formed agreeable rhymes for the writer. These rhymes were nowhere utilized in the poem, which, instead, faithfully conforms to the practices of Continental French versification of an earlier period.

The irregularity of meter and variation of line and laisse length in the prologue are incomparable with the mathematical perfection of the poem's versification.

Such irregularities of meter commonly attach to a time and setting which had not yet developed a prosodic tradition of its own, such as post-Conquest England. They may be compared to the freedom--and irregularity--of early musical texts (plainsong, etc.), which, if it knew not 'the tyranny of the bar line,' neither was sustained by the security of measured time.¹

The thematic organization of the prologue further suggests that artistic intention lay behind its composition.

¹ A metrical notation of the prologue appears as Appendix A, p. 132.

3. Explication du texte: Style, Tone, Philosophy, Purpose

All of the contrasts listed above find their culmination in the prevailing tone of the prologue. Not only is the subject of the prologue different in scope from that of the poem, but the poem seems to have its own built-in prologue, differing from that of our text, and preserving the psychological advantage of buildup and dramatic intensity.

The poem emphasizes the life of austerity, and the joys of the future life; the prologue exults in the delights of the here and now.

The choice of words in the prologue differs markedly from that in the poem. The high incidence of words associated with pleasure, and their uniqueness to the prologue, are especially noteworthy.

The location and arrangement of the prologue within the St. Albans psalter indicate that our text forms part of an overall plan linking art and texts in one grand design.

We know that the art-work and the handwriting belong to the scriptorium of St. Albans. It seems most likely that our prologue originated here, for the very purpose of inclusion in the psalter.

Conclusion

All of the above data combine to point to an Anglo-Norman, of the post-Conquest period, of artistic and clerical background, as the originator of the prologue. His selection

of the Continental Old French Life of Saint Alexis may suggest that he was choosing for a lady, for whom the vernacular was more understandable than would be an available Latin Life (even of a female saint). In choosing and preserving this text, he left testimony of his own good taste (palatum cordis), and a priceless treasure of medieval Romance literature.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

A Metrical Notation of the Alexis prologue (L.ms.)

I-ci cu-men-cet l'a-mia-ble car-cun
 E spir'-tel nai-sun di ce'l no-ble ba-run
 Eu-fe-mien par num.

E de la vie de sum filz bo-niu-ret
 Del quel nus a-vum o-it lire e can-ter.
 Par le di-vine volen-tet.

()

(Il desi-rrables i-cel sul filz an-gendrat.

A-pres le nai-sance co fut em-fes
 de de-u me-thim-e amet
 e de pere e de mere
 nu-rrit par grant certet.

()

(la sue ju-ven-te fut ho-neste e spi-ri-tel.)

Par l'a-mis-tet del suv'-rain pi-e-tet
 la sue spu-se juven-e cu-man-dat
 al spus vif de ve-ri-tet

()

(Ki est un sul faitur e reg-net an tri-ni-ti-et.)

I-ces-ta his-to-rie est a-mi-able grace
 E su-ve-rain con-su-la-ciun a cas-cun me-mo-rie,
 Les quels vi-vent pure-ment su-lune cas-te-tet ^{spi-ri-tel.}
 e digne-ment se-i deli-tent
 es goies del ci-el ed es noces vir-gi-nels.

APPENDIX B

THE GREGORIAN LETTER (L MS.)

(Latin original)¹

[E]cce responsũ sēi gregorií secundino incluso rationē
de pict^uis int'roganti.

Aliud est picturam adorare. aliud per picture
historiã quid sit adorandũ addiscere. Nam quod legentib;
scriptura hoc ignotis prestat pictura. q̄a in ipsa ignorantes
uident quid sequi debeant. In ipsa legunt qui litteras
nesciunt. unde & precipue gentibus pro lectione pictura
est. Quod magnopere tu qui inter gentes habitas adtendere
debueras. ne dum recto zelo incaute succenderis. ferocibus
animis scandalum generares. Frangi ^og non debuit quod non
ad adorandum in eccliis. set ad instruendas solummodo
mentes nescientium constat collocatũ. & quia in locis
uenerabilib; sēorum depingi historias non sine ratione
uetustas admisit. si zelum discrecione condisses  .
sine dubio et ea que intende bas salubrit obtinere &
collectum gregem non disperdere. set pocius poteras
congregare. ut pastoris intemeratum uomen excelleret.
non culpa dispsoris incumberet.

¹ Both the Latin original and the Old French translation
of the Gregorian letter are here printed according to the
reproduction of W. Forster and E. Koschwitz, Altfranzö-
sisches Übungsbuch, Leipzig, 1915, pp. 163, 164.

GREGORIAN LETTER (Old French translation)

Este uus le respuns saint gregorie asecundin lereclus cum
il demandout raison des paintures.

Altra cóse est aúrier lapainture ealtra cose est par
le historie de lapainture aþndre quela cóse seit a aúrier.
Kar ico que lascripture aprestet as lisanz. íco aprestet
lapainture asignoranz. Kar anicele veient les ignoranz
quet il deivent siúre. An icele lisent icels ki letres ne
sevent. ampur laquele cóse maismement lapeinture est pur
leceun as genz. Laquele cóse tu q' habites entra les genz
deuses antendra. que tu nangendrasses scandale de crueles
curages dementiers que tues  praseras nient cuintement par
dreit amvidie. Geres nient ne d^e, ut estra fruissiet ícó que
nient ne parmaint ad  aúrier en eglises. mais ad anstruire
sulement les penses desnient savans. E ampur ícó que lan-
cienetiet nient sens raisun cumandat les hystories estra
depaint eshonurables lius des sainz. se tu se feisses
amvidie pardiscrecion. senz dutanz poeies saluablem̃t purtenir
les cóses que tu attendeles & e nient depdra la cuileita folc.
mais maisment asēblier que le nient fraint num depastur
excellist. e nient anioust laculpa del depdethur.

Linguistic Considerations

The Old French translation of the Gregorian letter is notable for its high incidence of archaisms alongside neologisms in phonology and morphology. This coexistence of conservative and modern forms is typical of Anglo-Norman, as we have noted in our study of the prologue.

In general, we find older forms retained to a higher degree than in the prologue. This conservatism is perhaps to be expected in a translation directly from a Latin text. Some archaisms, however, appear to be purposeful and anachronistic, of the quaintly antique variety. Typical of what appears to be studied antiquity is the use of a for final weakened e in certain words, and the use of the old word ampur.

In other respects, the language of the Gregorian letter appears more developed than that of the prologue. The confusion of an/en, ain/ein may be cited as an example of later Old French, for which Anglo-Norman was often the precursor.

The following summary, while far from inclusive, will serve to demonstrate some of the peculiarities of the language of the Gregorian letter translation.

1. a, e for final weakened e:
 altra, estra, entra, antendra, deperdra, cuileita.
 cose, peinture, scripture, letres.

This sound appears to be registered as a following the consonant group -tra, -dra, and as e following a single consonant. There are two exceptions to this pattern: cuileita and letres. In the case of cuileita, the use of a may have resulted from the influence of the immediately-preceding deperdra. In letres, the first e may have suggested the second, causing e instead of a to follow the -tr group.

2. le for la:

le historie.

The weakening of the feminine article into le is typical of Anglo-Norman phonology, and perhaps suggests a breakdown in declension. In this case, there is the added consideration that le is not elided before historie: might this indicate that h was aspirate? This would be consistent with the speech habits of a Germanic-influenced speaker.

3. ai for e:

maiment, maismement < metipsimum.

This word shows the exchange of ai for etymological e, the converse of the phonological reduction of the ai diphthong to e. This replacement indicates that the ai graphy represented only a monophthong for our writer. This simplification is a relatively late one in Old French, usually dated at about the time of Roland's composition. It occurred earlier in Anglo-Norman, where the two were assonated in

the oldest texts. Such a substitution does not occur in the prologue, as we have seen above (raisun, naisance, suverain, etc.). In this respect, the language of the Gregorian letter appears more developed than does that of the prologue.

4. an for en; en for an:

Like the poem and prologue, the Gregorian letter shows the substitution of an (am) for en (em) in atonic position as seen below:

an (< in), anstruire (twice), antendra, angendrasses, amvidie, anioust (= enjeust, "incumberet").

5. -ain for -ein:

paintures (five times) vs. peintures (one appearance).

This confusion has been cited by Vising (p. 28) as one of the oldest Anglo-Norman features, far preceding Continental development. It may be compared with the merging of ai and e as seen earlier in our text; both developments are later ones in 'standard' Old French.

6. ie for e:

aurier (twice), ancienetiet, asemblier, dementiers.

The interchange of e, ie and ei has long been noted as typical Anglo-Norman, as we have seen exemplified in the poem and prologue of Alexis. The examples above indicate the equation of e and ie for the scribe of the Gregorian letter.

7. analogical feminine e:

la quele

The addition of non-etymological feminine e aligns with later Anglo-Norman, and compares with the icesta of the prologue. In Continental Old French, this reformation attaches to a later period.

The form la quele cose, in which the article appears with the demonstrative, is itself a later development, again having a counterpart in the prologue's les quels.

8. u, o, eu for o:

sulement, ampur, raisun, cumandat, dutanz, pastur,
pur, curages, cuintement, culpa, etc.

raison.

leceun.

As in the prologue, the prevailing choice is for u, typical Anglo-Norman orthography. The one use of o in the Gregorian letter, raison, may be explained by this word's textual proximity to the Latin epistle and form (ratione). The eu of leceun should not be considered as a diphthongal form of o; the e is doubtlessly a graphic softening device for the preceding c.

9. Effacement of dentals:

cruelles, savans, maismement, aurier, as (< ad les)

Intervocalic and final dentals subject to effacement are absent in the above words, all in their more-developed forms.

A and ad appear in both forms in this text. The weakened form was early used preceding a consonant in Old French, as we see consistently in the poem. We note several exceptions to this pattern in the Gregorian letter: a aurier, asignoranz, vs. ad aurier, ad anstruire. Perhaps this inconsistency may be explained by the scribe's juxtaposition of Latin forms and personal pronunciation; the former would cause the retention of a final dental, the latter would be more prone to efface it.

Latin et survives in its weakened form, e, preceding both vowels (ealtra), and consonants (e nient).

10. Retention to l:

altra (twice), culpa

This is a more conservative form, showing preservation of l + consonant.

The loss of l in the enclitic forms as, des, es was an early one, according to Gaston Paris.

11. Velars:

The graphies used to register the various velars are more consistent among themselves than are those of the poem's text. In the Gregorian letter the scribe utilizes diacritical marks for some of these sounds, perhaps furnishing a clue as to their Anglo-Norman pronunciation. In general, the /k/ pronunciation is indicated by the use of k, qu, c before a, i, e, u. K and qu are used before a, i, e; kar, ki, quet; c appears before u: culpa, cuintement.

When c before o has a different value, the scribe sometimes indicates this by the use of / above one or more of the letters: éóse, íóó vs. cose, ico. We infer from this that this Anglo-Norman did not retain the Latinized /k/ sound for this letter, as sometimes occurred in the insular dialect (see Pope, 1091).

G appears only before the vowel e, usually with an obvious /dj/ pronunciation: genz, angendrasses, etc. The one exception is geres (= guères), for which we would expect the velar pronunciation. Perhaps the fact that the g occurs here as a capital letter discouraged the use of a diacritical mark by our scribe.

12. Vocabulary:

The choice of certain words by our translator offers interesting material for our consideration.

We have referred to the word ampur, appearing twice in our text, as an archaism. It appears also (as empur) in the poem, where it is seen as an unusual form by Gaston Paris. He notes that he remembers seeing it elsewhere only in the Oxford Psalter. Perhaps this may be explained as a purposeful Anglo-Norman archaism in the poem itself, giving some support to the view of Pächt and of Sckommodau that L manuscript is a later text (and possibly of English origin).

Another word with parallels in Anglo-Norman texts and in Alexis is the cuintement of our text. Paris, noting the

cointes of Alexis (str. 43b), cites the use of this word in the Oxford Psalter and in St. Thomas. An English influence may be seen in the choice of this word, whose English derivatives, quaint, acquaintance, adhere closely to the sound of cuinte(ment).

Similarly, the Germanic-sounding folc (tr. gregem) may have been engendered by English influence. In our passage, the metaphor of "sheep," (folc), shepherd (pastur) and "wolf" (dep[er]dethur) is well-effected by the choice of words. Perhaps the idea of flock (Mid. Eng. floc) may have suggested the similar folc (a Mid. Eng. form) to the translator.

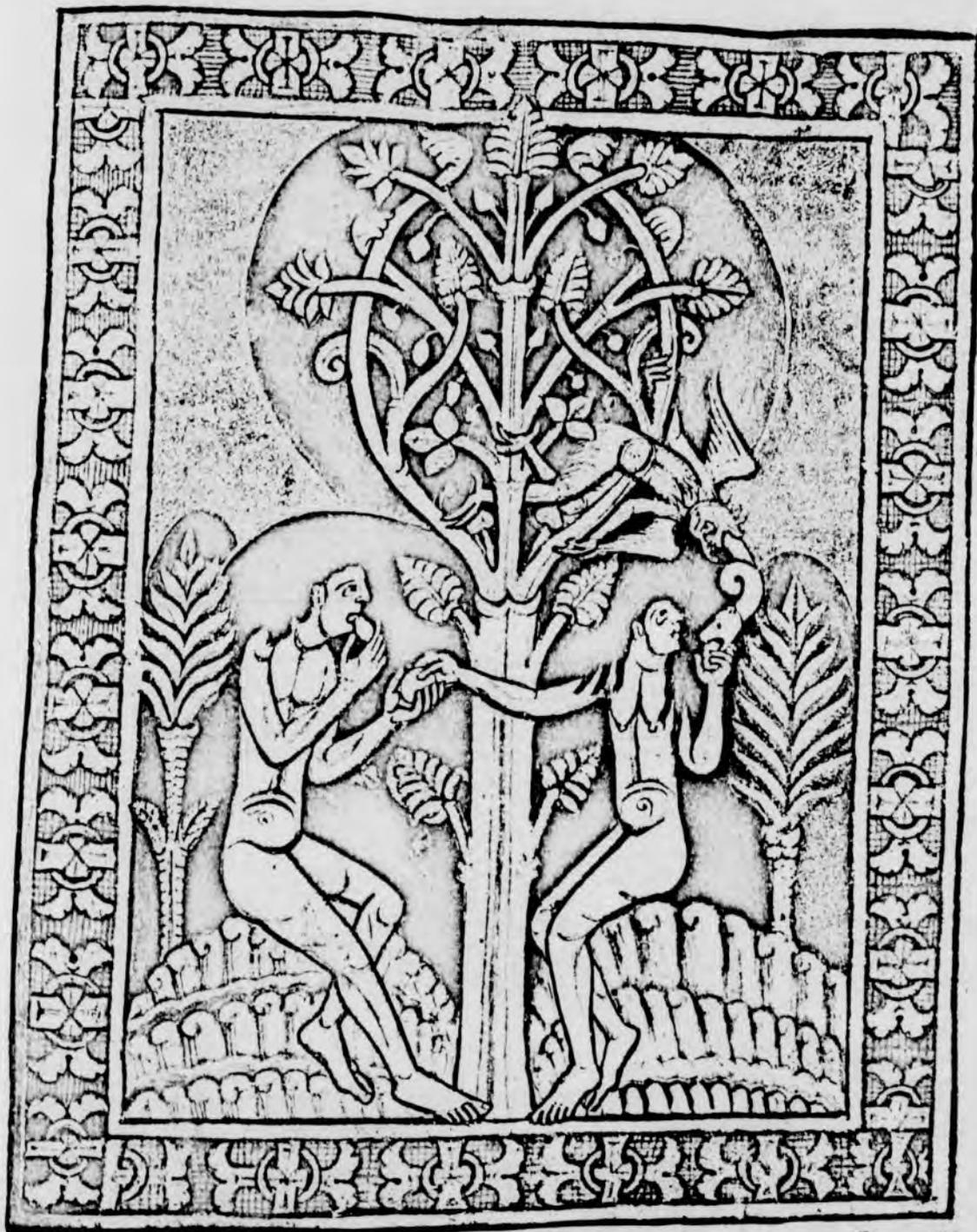
Two morphological peculiarities suggest themselves as Anglo-Norman, having counterparts in other texts of this dialect. The verb form demandout shows a typically Anglo-Norman ending, -out for -oit (see Kukenheim, Grammaire historique de la langue française). The lack of agreement between subject and predicate adjective so characteristic of Anglo-Norman appears in our text's depaint for depaintes, as also noted by Hofmann.

In summary, our brief survey has shown that our text utilizes archaisms and neologisms of a decided Anglo-Norman flavor. The archaisms do not have parallels in the prologue; the neologisms are in some cases comparable, in others they are more developed. Perhaps the anachronistic old forms, many of them similar to the poem's language, were

composed by analogy with the latter text; perhaps they are deliberately 'antique' in both passages, as Sckommodau would suggest.

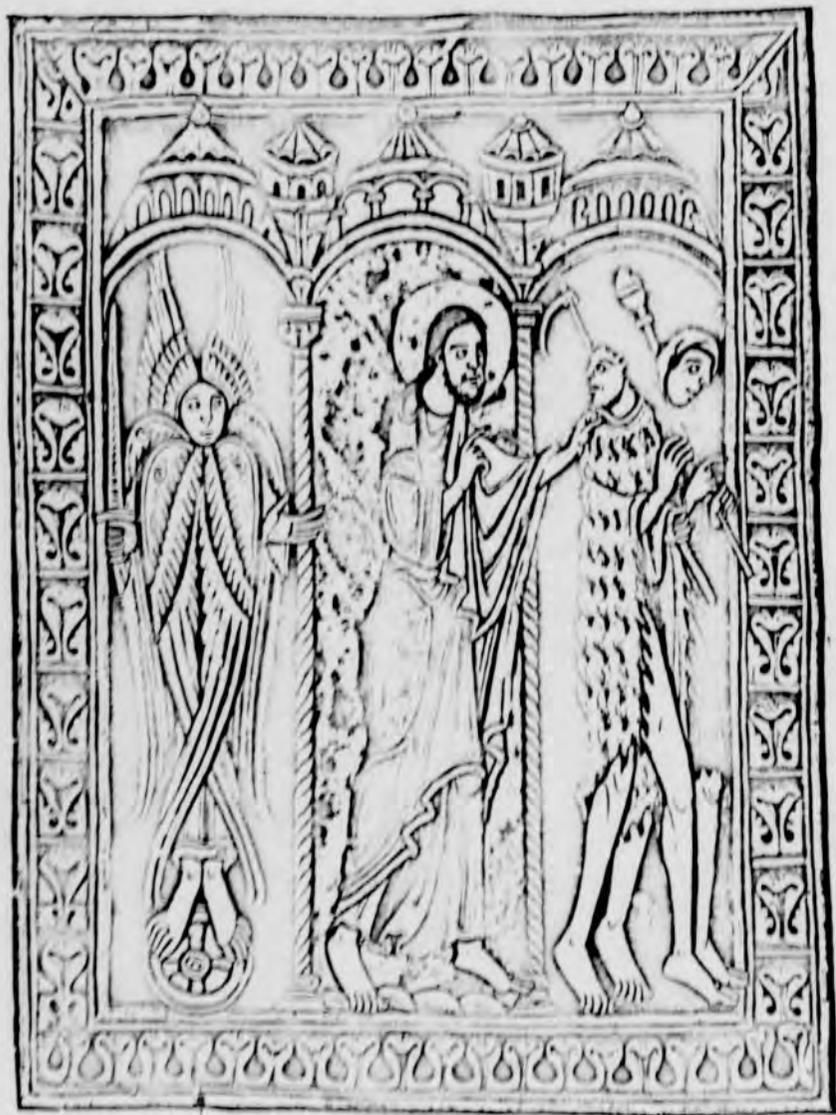
At any rate, the Old French language of the Gregorian letter seems, on the basis of a rapid survey, more of a conglomerate than that of the prologue. This latter text possesses more unity and more euphony, which we would expect of an independently-composed work; its Latinisms are those most naturally retained by an educated Anglo-Norman cleric. The Gregorian letter shows both late developments and seasoned archaisms. We attribute this to the fact that the translator was both bound by his Latin copy and swayed by his natural pronunciation and vocabulary.

a



p. 17. The Fall

Figure I
D



a.

p. 18. The Expulsion from Paradise



b.

p. 19. The Annunciation