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ST. MARY OF EGYPT IN BL MS COTTON OTHO B. X: NEW TEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR AN OLD ENGLISH SAINT'S LIFE

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

ST. MARY OF EGYPT IN BL MS COTTON OTHO B. X:
NEW TEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR AN OLD ENGLISH SAINT'S LIFE

Scholarship of the anonymous Old English prose *Life of St. Mary of Egypt* ranges from source studies and linguistic analyses to explorations of Anglo-Saxon female sexuality and comparisons to saints' lives translated by the monk Ælfric, but all of these studies have been based on either the text extant in BL MS Cotton Julius E. vii or on W. W. Skeat's edition of the Julius manuscript, Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* (1881-1900). There is, however, an as yet unedited fragmentary copy of the Old English *Mary of Egypt* in BL MS Cotton Otho B. x, a manuscript severely damaged by fire in 1731. Digital imaging of damaged manuscripts in concert with ultraviolet fluorescence and other special lighting techniques has been shown to be effective for restoring the legibility of previously inaccessible texts. By means of such digital facsimiles I have transcribed the text of *Mary of Egypt* in Otho B. x, have collated this text with Skeat's edition, and have discovered that Otho B. x contains textual evidence not found in Julius E. vii. In this thesis, I present my findings and discuss the significance of this new textual evidence for the Old English *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*.

Keywords: Mary of Egypt, Saint; British Library. Mss. (Cottonian Otho B. x); English Prose--Old English, ca. 450-1100; Manuscripts, English (Old)--Facsimiles; English Language--Old English, ca. 450-1100; English Literature--Criticism, Textual.

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ST. MARY OF EGYPT IN BL MS COTTON OTHO B. X:
NEW TEXTUAL EVIDENCE FOR AN OLD ENGLISH SAINT'S LIFE

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Kentucky

By

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Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Kevin Kiernan, Professor of English

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

After Christianity became the official religion of the Holy Roman Empire in the fourth century, "the deserts of Egypt, Palestine, Arabia and Persia were peopled by...the first Christian hermits, who abandoned the cities of the pagan world to live in solitude" (Merton 3). Collectively known as the Desert Fathers, these desert ascetics included "Desert Mothers" too. In the sixth century, Sophronius, Bishop of Jerusalem, documented in Greek the life of one of these Desert Mothers, a repentant prostitute known as Mary of Egypt. Sophronius's account was translated into Latin in the eighth century by Paul the Deacon, a monk at Monte Casino near Naples. This version was known widely throughout Europe as well as in Anglo-Saxon England. Although translated into nearly every western language, the anonymous Old English version is the oldest vernacular translation (Magennis 1996, 99).

Three incomplete copies of the Old English version survive, yet scholarship of the story, ranging from source studies and linguistic analyses to comparisons to saints' lives translated by the monk Ælfric and explorations of Anglo-Saxon female sexuality, is based exclusively on either the most complete version found in BL MS Cotton Julius E. vii or on Walter W. Skeat's late nineteenth-century edition of this manuscript, Ælfric's Lives of Saints. There is, however, an as yet unedited fragmentary copy of the Old English Mary of Egypt in BL MS Cotton Otho B. x, a manuscript severely damaged in the famous Cotton Library fire in 1731. Although Otho B. x is routinely cited as a source of the text (Scragg 1979, 263; Nicholls 55), few scholars have examined it.

That Cotton Otho B. x has been almost totally overlooked by Anglo-Saxon textual scholars is not surprising. In normal light, the text of many of the fragmentary leaves is illegible as a result of heat and water damage and distortion, fissures and cracks in the vellum, and applications of conservation materials such as gauze, glue, and paper tape that mask extant text, or paper frames that preserve brittle edges but cover surviving letters or parts of letters. To complicate matters further, when the fragments of Otho B. x were rediscovered in a garret of the British Museum in the mid-nineteenth-century and were subsequently restored and reassembled, the leaves were frequently rebound in the wrong order and in some instances, even placed upside down and backwards (Prescott 1997b, 408, 429, 453n315). Mary of Egypt, for example, comprises folios 26vr (upside down and back-to-front), 56rv, 16rv, 17rv, 15rv, and 59rv. Based on Hugh Magennis's count of about 8,185 words in the Julius E. vii version (Magennis 1986, 327), the text surviving in Otho B. x comprises approximately one-third of the complete story.

Kevin Kiernan's application of computer technology to the Beowulf manuscript, BL MS Vitellius A. xv, illustrates that digital imaging of damaged manuscripts in concert with ultraviolet fluorescence and other special lighting techniques is effective for restoring the legibility of previously inaccessible texts. Based on the exemplary results achieved with the Beowulf manuscript, Kiernan is now applying advanced digital technology to the restoration of other British Library manuscripts particularly devastated by the Cotton Library fire, including Otho B. x.

Working first with images scanned from grayscale microfilm, then with digital images captured under both normal light and ultraviolet fluorescence, I have transcribed the text of Mary of Egypt in Otho B. x. By collating this text with Skeat's edition, I have discovered in the Otho B. x version many readings that differ from the version in Cotton Julius E. vii. In addition to orthographic variants, the Otho B. x version includes differences in vocabulary, including totally alternate phrases, as well as differences in syntax. Although
Skeat collated three of the surviving six leaves, I have discovered his collation is sometimes inaccurate and incomplete. I have found words neither documented in the *Dictionary of Old English* nor accessible through a search of the online *Old English Corpus.*[11] I have also experienced the frustration of not being able to decipher text too damaged to be identified with certainty.

Following a brief textual history (Part One) and a review of current scholarship of the Old English *Life of St. Mary of Egypt* (Part Two), I discuss a selection of my findings, comparing and contrasting readings from Otho B. x to Skeat's edition of the version in Cotton Julius E. vii (Part Three). I conclude by suggesting potential directions for future research this new textual evidence might inspire.
The Life of Mary of Egypt is the story of the desert encounter of an erudite monk named Zosimus with a repentant harlot turned ascetic known as Mary of Egypt. After living an exemplary life of monastic spirituality for more than fifty years, Zosimus becomes troubled by the notion that he has achieved perfection. He is visited by an angel who assures him no man is perfect. The angel directs him to leave the security of the monastery that has been his home since childhood for a more austere religious community near the Jordanian desert, telling him that there he will know and understand *hu micce synd hælo wegas* ("how many are the ways to salvation") (26(56)r7:60).[12]

Zosimus follows the angel's advice, and soon after arriving at his new monastery, ventures into the desert on an obligatory Lenten retreat, praying to meet a spiritual guide who can teach him something he does not already know. His prayer is answered in the form of a naked and sun-blackened old woman. At his urging, she tells him the story of her life, namely, that afflicted by insatiable sexual desire, she willingly prostituted herself to any man who would have her from the time she left her home in Egypt at the age of twelve until her repentance seventeen years later. Through the intervention of the Virgin Mary, she tells him, she acknowledged the severity of her sin and for the past forty-seven years has lived alone in the desert, serving a life of severe penance without food, clothing, or shelter. Awestruck by her miraculous powers (she addresses him by name, levitates in prayer, and walks on water), Zosimus calls her personal testimony a *halwendre gerecedynysse* ("sanctifying narrative").

At the woman's request, Zosimus returns the following year, bringing with him the Holy Eucharist. When he returns the third year, however, he finds her dead, an inscription in the sand instructing him to bury the body of Mary. With the assistance of a docile lion he complies with Mary's request, then returns to his monastery where he relates her story to his abbot and fellow monks, and goes on to serve God another hundred years.

It is uncertain when the story was first introduced into England. The earliest extant copy of the Latin *vita* known to be in England because it contains Old English glosses (Ker 176-177) is found in BL MS Cotton Claudius A. i, a manuscript written on the Continent in the mid-tenth century (Magennis 1996, 99-100; Stevenson 42-3).[13] However, the inclusion of Mary of Egypt in ninth-century Anglo-Saxon calendars of saints indicates the existence of an earlier cult of devotion to the repentant prostitute (Magennis 1996, 99),[14] and circumstantial evidence has led some to speculate such a cult may have existed as early as the late seventh century (Lavery 113).

For example, in 669, following the deaths of the archbishop of Canterbury as well as his chosen successor, Wigheard (Colgrave 329), the pope sent to Britain to assume the bishopric of Canterbury a Greek-speaking monk from Naples named Theodore and commanded a Neopolitan abbot named Hadrian to accompany him (Lapidge 1986, 45). Theodore and Hadrian established a school at Canterbury where "they attracted a crowd of students into whose minds they daily poured the streams of wholesome learning" (Lapidge 1986, 46; Colgrave 335). Veronica Ortenberg observes that "Naples was a centre from which a variety of devotions particularly popular in the Greek world found their way into England," and speculates that since Theodore and Hadrian were most likely familiar with the Greek *Mary of Egypt*, it is possible they introduced it to
England. Both Ortenberg and Simon Lavery point out that in twelve Anglo-Saxon calendars that include Mary of Egypt, her feastday is commemorated on 9 April, the date usually observed in the Orthodox East, whereas only two record her date as 2 April, the date usually observed in the Latin West, suggesting the Greek influence of Theodore and Hadrian (Ortenberg 115, Lavery 113).

Pádraig Ó Riain, however, proposes that early knowledge of Mary of Egypt in England was due to the arrival in Northumbria in the late seventh century of John the Arch-Chanter, precentor of St. Peter's in Rome (1). According to Bede, following the instructions of the pope, John "taught the cantors of the monastery [at Jarrow] the order and manner of singing and reading aloud and also committed to writing all things necessary for the celebration of festal days throughout the whole year" (Colgrave 389). Ó Riain argues that John the Arch-Chanter brought with him to Northumbria a copy of the *Hironymian Martyrology*, a sixth-century compilation written in northern Italian. The *Hironymian Martyrology* was one of Bede's literary sources (Ó Riain 2) and was also, most likely, the exemplar for the *Martyrology of Tallaght*, a ninth-century Irish collection of saints' lives of Northumbrian provenance. Although missing from the *Martyrology of Tallaght*, Mary of Egypt's feast day is recorded in three other redactions of the *Hironymian Martyrology* as 28 March (Ó Riain 19n103).

Ó Riain notes that although the feast of St. Mary Magdalene, "probably the most popular saint (after the Virgin Mary) in all of medieval Europe" (Karras 4), is almost always celebrated on 22 July, in the *Martyrology of Tallaght* she also appears on 28 March. He interprets the substitution of Magadelene for Mary of Egypt as "the editor's obvious preference" (19), but it also exemplifies a phenomenon repeated over and over again throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, that is, the conflation of the lives of Mary of Egypt and Mary Magdalene. Although no full-length Old English life of Mary Magdalene survives, the *Old English Martyrology*, a ninth century compilation of "'epitomes' or 'notices' on saints in the liturgical calendar" (Cross 1994, 414), includes an entry for Mary Magdalene. It has been suggested that the end of the entry, which relates Magdalene's last thirty years as a desert recluse, is directly derived from the *Life of Mary of Egypt* (Cross 1978, 16-17n9; Mycoff 6; Karras 29).

Three copies of the anonymously translated Old English version of the *Life of Mary of Egypt* are extant, all written early in the eleventh century.[15] Three leaves of the text survive in Gloucester Cathedral 35, a collection of fragments from bindings now kept in a portfolio (Ker 154). In 1861, John Earle, Rawlinson Chair of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, published a photozincographic facsimile of one of these folios (6 recto) along with a transcription of all three leaves and brief textual notes.[16] The most complete copy is in BL MS Cotton Julius E. vii. Associated with the monk Ælfric because it contains a collection of his homilies on saints' lives, preceived by his Latin and Old English prefaces and a contemporary table of contents (Ker 206), it also contains four saints' lives not ascribed to Ælfric, including the *Life of Mary of Egypt*. A third fragmentary copy is found in BL MS Cotton Otho B. x., a collection of prose saints' lives, penitential and confessional texts, and homilies once owned by the seventeenth-century antiquarian Sir Robert Cotton. The manuscript was reduced to "burnt lumps and crusts" (Prescott 1997b, 417) by a great fire that swept through the Cotton Library in 1731, but was restored in 1863 under the direction of Frederic Madden, Keeper of Manuscripts of the British Museum (Prescott 1997b, 453n.312, 429).

The only edition of the Old English *Life of Mary of Egypt* is W. W. Skeat's *De Transitu Mariae Aegyptiacae in Ælfric's Lives of Saints*. Using the version in Julius E. vii as his base text, Skeat footnotes variant readings from Earle's transcription of the Gloucester fragments and from three of the six leaves of Otho B. x (folios 16, 17, and 15). Although Otho B. x ff. 56 and 59 are badly damaged and virtually unreadable in normal light, ff. 26, 16, 17, and 15 are quite legible, yet when Skeat collated Otho B. x with Julius E. vii, he somehow missed folio 26 altogether. Skeat calls Otho B. x "so imperfect as to be nearly useless," yet he acknowledges "it supplies some various readings...and it is worth notice that these readings are frequently
more correct than those in A [Julius E. vii]" (2:446). In instances where Skeat finds a reading in Otho B. x "more correct than" the one in Julius E. vii, in his edition he replaces the Julius reading with the Otho reading, enclosing the substituted text from Otho in square brackets.

Skeat's edition of *Mary of Egypt* was published more than a century ago in the third of the four volumes of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* issued by the Early English Text Society (EETS), an organization founded in 1864 by Frederick J. Furnivall. In support of the Philology Society's decision in 1857 to write the *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, a dictionary that eventually became what is now the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the role of the EETS was to transcribe, mimmically edit, and publish the texts of all known English manuscripts in order to collect the words necessary to write the dictionary (Aarsleff 262-63; Greetham 330; Pearsall 127). The EETS never had "any proclaimed editorial policy, either concerning the works to be published...or concerning method of edition" (Hudson 37; Pearsall 131). Nevertheless, it produced a major number of editions of Old English texts still in use by scholars today,[18] including Skeat's edition of *Mary of Egypt*, in spite of widespread acknowledgement that his readings are frequently inaccurate and incomplete.[19]

Clearly, there are valid reasons for re-editing older editions. Fred Robinson notes that the *Microfiche Concordance of Old English*, the original word list compiled by the editors of the *Dictionary of Old English* in preparation for writing the dictionary, "records only the standard editions of texts. It does not record variant readings, and it does not reference manuscript readings which modern editors have emended."[20] He observes "wistfully" that perhaps Angus Cameron, the initial editor of the *Dictionary of Old English*, was right when he "proposed early in the history of the *Dictionary of Old English* that we should consider concording the manuscripts rather than modern editions" (Robinson 1985, 253). As Kiernan states, "by returning to the manuscript foundations of our discipline with the same intensity and persistence...applied to the modern texts and editions derived from them...we are bound to discover things our predecessors overlooked or missaw" (Kiernan 1990, 48). As my discussion in Part Three illustrates, digital facsimiles make it possible to examine previously inaccessible texts as well as to cast new light on older editions.
PART TWO

Current Scholarship of the Old English *Mary of Egypt*

The survival of three manuscript witnesses to the Old English *Life of Mary of Egypt* suggests this anonymous prose life of a repentant prostitute-turned-saint was received favorably in Anglo-Saxon England, yet few scholars have researched or written about it. Publications on the Old English *Mary of Egypt* represent the work of both textual and literary scholars and comprise source studies, linguistic analyses, and literary interpretations, with comparison and contrast to the saints' lives of Ælfric a primary focus of researchers in both textual and literary fields. All of these studies have been based on either the text of Cotton Julius E. vii or on Skeat's edition of the Julius version, with occasional references to Otho B. x coming from Skeat's apparatus. Although textual scholars will most immediately benefit from the new textual evidence I have discovered in Otho B. x, literary scholars will indirectly gain new insights as well.

**Source Studies**

In his essay, "On the Sources of Non-Ælfrician Lives in the Old English *Lives of Saints*, with Reference to the Cotton-Corpus Legendary," Hugh Magennis attempts to determine which Latin manuscript may have been the source of the anonymous saints' lives in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, including *Mary of Egypt*. Basing his study on Patrick Zettel's landmark argument for the Cotton-Corpus Legendary as the major Latin source used by Ælfric, he compares the two copies of the Cotton-Corpus version of *Mary of Egypt* as well as two additional Latin versions and two early printed versions of Paul the Deacon's Latin text to Skeat's edition of the Old English version in Cotton Julius E. vii. Noting that the two printed versions differ in the first several pages because they are based on different translations of the Greek original, he skips over the first 282 lines of Skeat's edition (294). The readings cited by Magennis that occur in both Old English manuscripts are virtually identical, so it is unfortunate he elects to ignore Skeat 1-99, lines corresponding to Otho B. x ff. 25(26) and 26(56), two folios not collated in Skeat's edition. The results of his study are accordingly incomplete.

A theoretical approach to source study is presented by Colin Chase in "Source Study as a Trick with Mirrors: Annihilation of Meaning in the Old English 'Mary of Egypt'." Chase contends that "the radically post-Gutenberg concept of the source or primary text" is not as useful in the analysis and interpretation of medieval texts as is "comparison of what [he] prefer[s] to call variant versions" (23-24). To supports his argument that comparison of "variant versions...yields insights...more likely to derive from recognition of contrasts than of congruence"(24), he compares lines from the Old English *Mary of Egypt* to parallel lines in the Greek and Latin versions. The Old English text he compares is Skeat 49-50: *hé nanre maran lare bysene ne beporfte on his mode* ("he needed not in his mind the example of any more teaching"). Chase prefaces his comparison of versions by stating that "the culture within which even traditional texts are repeated becomes implicit in their meaning, offering to later generations an invaluable key to understanding" (29). Chase then translates the seventh-century Greek as "not at all needing the teaching of another," the seventh-century Latin as "I don't need the teaching of anyone else very much," and the ninth-century Latin as "not requiring another's teaching in anything" (29). Chase points out that the addition in the Old English of *bysene* ("example") "has given a slightly different sense to spiritual discipleship in the Old English Mary story than it had in the earlier versions"(29). He notes that,
The semantic net that constitutes a text extends beyond its physical boundaries to include the whole culture of which it is a part. The disturbing element is that this net is impossibly complex and even subject to variation according to the way a given text might be understood in different places at the same period. Demonstration of an exclusive reading of a text becomes as impossible as the establishment of the text itself (30).

Chase concludes his essay by recommending that scholars "edit scribal versions -- not diplomatic texts, but readable versions which recognize the radical connection of a text with its culture" (32). Chase would, I suspect, have been pleased to learn that Otho B. x preserves a different, albeit somewhat problematic, version of the lines he uses as his example, and would have quite possibly modified his argument to encompass not only multi-generational variants, but different contemporary interpretations as well.[24]

**Comparisons to Ælfric**

As his title implies, in "Contrasting Features in the Non-Ælfrician Lives in the Old English *Lives of Saints*," Magennis presents a study of Ælfric's style and usage in his saints' lives in comparison to and contrast with that of the anonymous saints' lives in Julius E. vii. In his analysis of *Mary of Egypt*, he frequently refers to the "literary mediocrity" of the translation, basing his criticism on its contrasts with Ælfric's style (333) and its "Latinate nature" (334), characterized by "a high degree of dependence on participial constructions" and a "frequent resort to absolute phrases" (333). Although many of the examples of vocabulary and usage he includes were destroyed in Otho B. x, the few examples that do survive are identical in both manuscripts.[25] Magennis characterizes the translation as "much inferior to the lives by Ælfric" (336), and concludes his analysis by declaring "it is not the work of an experienced translator."

Magennis devotes an entire essay to the content of the story in "St. Mary of Egypt and Ælfric: Unlikely Bedfellows in Cotton Julius E. vii?" Contrasting Ælfric's active, communal approach to monasticism with the ascetic, contemplative focus of *Mary of Egypt*, Magennis observes that the inclusion of this anonymous life in Julius E. vii, a manuscript primarily devoted to saints' lives by Ælfric, "reflects something of the variety of hagiographical material in circulation in late Anglo-Saxon England (material which scholarly preoccupation with Ælfric tends to overlook)" (111). It also, he notes, suggests "a more eclectic tradition of transmission of vernacular Christian writing than that associated with Ælfric himself" by its inclusion in both Julius E. vii and Otho B. x (110).

In addition to its different approach to monasticism, the *Life of Mary of Egypt*, Magennis observes, also contrasts with Ælfric's attitude toward sexuality. Whereas Ælfric's female saints are asexual virgins who frequently defy civilian male authority, Mary not only is sexually experienced but assumes an authoritative role over Zosimus by virtue of her dramatic turning from a life of sinfulness to a life of sanctity. Magennis cites a phrase from Sk 523, *þe bryne þære flæsclican gehwyrfednysse* ("the burning of fleshly inclination"), as an example of "an attitude of disapproval" of sexuality in *Mary of Egypt*, yet states that the writer considers Mary "particularly admirable because she has come so far, from the enslavement of sexual appetite to spiritual perfection" (109).[26]

Mary Clayton develops the theme of contemplative monasticism in *Mary of Egypt* further in "Hermits and the Contemplative Life in Anglo-Saxon England." Following a history of the importance of the eremitic life
in early Western Europe and Anglo-Saxon England through the eighth century,[27] she discusses literary sources that explicate Ælfric's elevation of the active over the contemplative life as a preferred model. Noting that Ælfric "seems to have deliberately refrained from presenting the life of the contemplative hermit as an ideal" (162), she observes that although available in the sources known to him, the Life of Mary of Egypt was ignored by Ælfric, primarily because it celebrates asceticism as an ideal means of achieving spiritual perfection.[28] Clayton also notes that in spite of official disapproval of eremitic practice during the period of the Benedictine reform, the "life of Mary of Egypt...was considered of sufficient importance to be translated into Anglo-Saxon and incorporated in the principal surviving manuscript of the Lives of Saints" (162).[29] Her emphasis on the inclusion of Mary of Egypt in the Julius E. vii manuscript overlooks the fact that the version surviving in Otho B. x provides additional evidence for her argument.

**Anglo-Saxon Female Sexuality**

In "Chastity and Charity: Ælfric, Women, and the Female Saints," Clare Lees writes about Mary of Egypt in the context of the relationship between female hagiography and Anglo-Saxon sexuality. As she observes,

Female saints confront and overcome the deadliness of their bodies and the deadliness of their sexuality time and again. In representing the desire to transform the pleasures of the sexed body into those of the spirit, Anglo-Saxon Christianity demonstrates an intimate acquaintance with the problems of the flesh, its desires and vicissitudes...[t]he transformation of sexuality into the gift of chastity is the prime component of the female saint's life. Women have sexuality where men don't, and women who become saints redirect it toward God (147).

The passages she quotes do not survive in Otho B. x. The first addresses the danger of "looking at the saint" (Skeat 204-20)(149), the second uses Mary's inscription in the sand of instructions to Zosimus concerning her burial (Skeat 748-54) as an example of how "[f]emale desire is transformed into spiritual discourse"(150).[30] Lees's equation of Mary's denial of her once obsessive sexuality with the unblemished virginity of Ælfric's female saints presents a convincing interpretation of the unique relationship between female sexuality and sanctity in Anglo-Saxon England.

In "Holy Harlots: Prostitute Saints in Medieval Legend," Ruth Mazo Karras focuses on the paradox of the sanctified prostitute as an embodiment of "the message that confession, contrition, and penance could wipe away the worst of sin" (3). Although her study is not exclusive to the Old English Mary of Egypt, providing examples from Continental as well as English versions of the story throughout the entire Middle Ages, Karras observes that the earliest vernacular versions, based on the Latin translation of Sophronius's Greek version, depict Mary as especially promiscuous because she "refused to accept payment for sex, out of fear that a charge would stand in the way of her gratification" (9). Echoing Lees, Karras observes that "the prostitute saints could only expiate their past through the strictest asceticism, total denial not only of sexuality but even of femininity, or through death" (31).

**Narrative Structure**

In "Bodies and Boundaries in the Old English Life of St. Mary of Egypt," Andrew Scheil claims to present "an analysis of the vita's narrative structure that explores the enduring attraction of Mary and Zosimus" (138), but his thesis is complicated by a preoccupation with a "dialectic" of opposing dichotomies, "known and unknown, sacred and profane," "the masculine ascetic body and the feminine sexual body" (138), which, he states, "is a hermeneutic strategy used to explore the meaning of masculine bodily experience"
Scheil's erratic web of unconvincing arguments is further entangled by frequent misrepresentations of the story, despite the fact that more than half his essay comprises direct quotes of Skeat's edition and translation. For example, in the first paragraph, he writes, "Zosimus encounters an exotic woman with black skin and long white hair" (135), yet the Old English of Skeat's edition (176-177) states *þa loccas hire heades wæron swa hwite swa wull and þa ná siddran þonne op þone swuran* ("the locks of her head were as white as wool, and they [reached] no farther than to the neck"). His characterization of the emaciated septogenarian Mary as "exotic" may simply mean she is "strange" or "uncouth," but he later remarks that "[a]t many points...the text suggests...sexual desire and tensions running underneath the surface of Mary and Zosimus' relationship" (144). Although Zosimus recognizes Mary as his spiritual superior, Scheil credits the monk with "interrogating" Mary into "final mastery over her polluted flesh" (149). Somewhat like a medieval misogynist, Scheil concludes his essay by defining Mary as "an aged, but exotic and erotic Egyptian woman representing all the fantasies, both of pleasure and of nightmare, in the unknown limits of the masculine imagination" (152).

**Summary**

As the preceding review of current scholarship of the Old English *Mary of Egypt* illustrates, this anonymous prose life has received scant attention. Brief mention of the text in other publications usually focuses on the codicological issues surrounding its belated inclusion in the Julius E. vii manuscript. For example, according to Joyce Hill,

> The non-Ælfrician *Mary of Egypt* (122v-36r, Skeat XXIIIB)...was added after the main scribe drew up the table of contents on fol. 4v, because it is not listed. Additionally, there is evidence of insertion at the point where the text occurs. The writing of *Mary of Egypt* is more compressed than elsewhere, and *Mary of Egypt* ends part way down 136r, with the rest of the recto and all of the verso blank, the blank space completing a four-leaved quire before the next item begins on 137r (Hill 236).

To accommodate *Mary of Egypt's* omission from the table of contents of Julius E. vii, in his edition Skeat assigns the text the supplementary number XXIIIB and states,

> This Homily does not really belong to the set. It will be observed that it is not recognized in the Table of Contents...Moreover, the style varies so much from that of the other Homilies, that it clearly was not written by Ælfric. Nevertheless, it is printed here because, though it does not belong to the set, it belongs to the MS., into which it was thrust by the scribe who wrote it (2:446).[31]

The *Life of Mary of Egypt* may have been "thrust" into Julius E. vii "by the scribe who wrote it," but no evidence suggests it was a late addition to Otho B. x. However, my transcription and collation with Skeat's edition of the text in Otho B. x does indicate the Otho scribe preserves a subtly different representation of the text than that of the Julius E. vii scribe. Although interest in *Mary of Egypt* has been minimal, the new textual evidence from Otho B. may inspire future research on this neglected Old English saint's life. Following my presentation of this textual evidence in Part Three, I discuss in the Conclusion potential directions for new research this evidence may inspire.
Scholars who have written about the Old English *Life of St. Mary of Egypt* have presumed the fragmentary copy in Otho B. x is merely a mostly destroyed version of the copy surviving in Julius E. vii. I have discovered the Otho B. x version is, in many respects, quite different from the Julius E. vii version as documented in Skeat's edition. David Yerkes has observed that "Old English scribes routinely respelled their exemplars, occasionally substituted one word for another, but seldom recast syntax" (Yerkes 9). Nevertheless, in addition to orthographic variants the Otho B. x version includes differences in vocabulary, including totally alternate phrases, as well as differences in syntax. Although Late West Saxon is acknowledged as the "official and literary language" of the early eleventh century (Sisam 153), this does not imply a "standard English" existed, although some schools of writing, most notably the school at Winchester, may have been attempting to establish such a standard. The variants between the two texts can most likely be attributed to individual dialects, to scriptorium guidelines, or simply to the personal practices and preferences of the different scribes.

In the following discussion of selected variant readings I have discovered, I have organized the readings into variant groups. Although this will inevitably result in some overlap -- orthographic variants may occur within differences of inflection or in alternate phrases, for example -- my primary aim is to present the variants in a logical and objective manner. My purpose is neither to declare one version superior to the other nor to propose a composite text derived from both versions. Rather, I present this new textual evidence from Otho B. x to stimulate a re-evaluation of the Old English *Life of St. Mary of Egypt* by Anglo-Saxon textual scholars and to illustrate the value of examining damaged manuscripts and re-editing older editions.

**VARIANT GROUP 1: ORTHOGRAPHIC VARIANTS**

Alistair Campbell attributes the "great diversity of spelling in Old English" not to "inconsistency in the values of the symbols, but from diversity of sound" (§48). Based on his observations of perceived changes in pronunciation, he notes that by the eleventh century Old English spelling had stabilized (§329). Kemp Malone, however, illustrates that "a distinct tendency to level the vowels of final unstressed syllables," a tendency regarded by Sweet as characteristic of the transition from Old English to Middle English, could already be documented in four major manuscripts dated to the second half of the tenth century (Malone 110, 117). D. G. Scragg observes, "[h]owever poorly spelling variation charts development in eleventh-century phonology, it gives ample evidence of scribal habits, manuscript relations, scriptorium practices and the development of a formal written language" (1992, 348).

**Vowels**

There are more than one hundred vowel variants between the parallel sections of the two texts. Some of these variants illustrate late Old English leveling of vowels in unaccented syllables, while others demonstrate a trend toward monophthongization of diphthongs (Campbell §329.2). Both scribes show a preference for -eo-, particularly the Otho scribe. At 29(15)v2, the Otho scribe writes *latteowestran* where the Julius scribe has *lættewestran* (Sk 508); at 25(26v)r5 Otho has *þeawes* where Julius uses *þeawes* (Sk..."
14); and at 29(15)v4 Otho has andweordan where Julius has andweardan (Sk 510). On three occasions, Otho uses -eo- instead of Julius's -i-: fifteogoðe at 25(26)v18 for fiftigðe (Sk 47), heos at 26(56)r10 for his (Sk 63), and geofþod at 30(59)r9 for gífæð (Sk 617); at 27(16)r18, the Otho scribe uses geofum where the Julius scribe has gyfum (Sk 335). Exceptions to the Otho scribe's preference for -eo- are him (26(56)v16 and 27(16)v23) for the Julius scribe's heom (Sk 90 and 356), hira (28(17)r2) for heora (Sk 361), and hyra (27(16)r11, 28(17)r18, and 27(16)r11) for heora (Sk 326, 372, 377). There are also three instances of the word ætywe in the Otho text (26(56)r4, 30(59)r1, and 30(59)v17) where the Julius text has æteowe (Sk 58 and 611) or æteowde (Sk 646).

Campbell notes in West-Saxon texts an increasing tendency for vowels between w and r to "fall together in wur" (§320-324). The Otho scribe demonstrates a preference for -weor- (geweorðe at 25(26)v9, weorþunge at 27(16)v15, and deorweordan 28(17)v25), whereas the Julius scribe most frequently uses -wur- (gewurðe at Sk 17, wurðunga at Sk 350, and deorwurðan at Sk 399). In one instance, the Otho scribe has efithweorfende (30(59)r4) where the Julius scribe has efithwyrfende (Sk 613), while in another instance the Otho scribe has licwyrþe (28(17)r15-16) where the Julius scribe has licwurðe (Sk 371).

The Julius scribe sometimes shows a preference for a -u ending. At Sk 502, for example, Julius has ansynu ("face"), for feminine accusative singular of ansyn, while Otho has ansyne (28(15)r23). At Sk 650, Julius has gebroþru ("the brothers"), for masculine nominative plural of gebroþor, while Otho has gebroþra (30(59)v22).

Campbell notes, "IN IW-S...the pronominal accusatives þone, hwone are often affected by the change of unaccented o > a, appearing as pane, hwane" (§380). Although the Julius scribe uses only þone (Sk 331, 494, 51, 523), the Otho scribe uses both þone and pane (27(16)r18, 29(15)r13, 29(15)v3, and 29(15)v20).

Consonants

The Otho scribe uses the word þing ("thing") (30(59)v4, 27(16)r7) exclusively whereas the Julius scribe prefers þincg (Sk 635, 323), using þing in oblique forms only (for example, 26(56)r18:69 þyngum: þingum). There is also one instance at 29(15)v19 where Otho has lenga ("length, height") [Figure 3.1] but Julius has lencgu (Sk 522). Skeat inaccurately records the reading in Otho as lengo (Skeat 2:36).

![lengga.png](attachment:lengga.png)

Figure 3.1: f. 29(15)v lenga

According to Campbell, the pre-literary sound ch (as in Scottish loch) disappeared in all Germanic languages before the letters l, n, r and w, "and h is written in OE as a diacritic to indicate this" (§461). Although both scribes use the words hreowsunga (27(17)v11:389: "repentance, sorrow, penitence") and hraidlice (29(59)v6:637: "hastily, quickly, forthwith"), on at least two occasions the Otho scribe omits the h preceding r, once at 27(16)r17 in rapor ("quick") for Julius's hrador (Sk 331), and again at 28(17)r25 in reowan ("to go by water, row, sail") for Julius's hreowan (Sk 378). Both scribes, however, consistently retain the voiceless h before l. [34]
In his essay, "Initial H in Old English," Scragg states that "comparatively few words with h omitted or inserted unhistorically are to be found in early eleventh century MSS, products of the West Saxon scribal tradition. This is perhaps due to progressively greater standardisation of the orthography after c. 1000" (1970, 182). Scragg's study "is confined to the use of h initially before a vowel, or when preceded by an unstressed initial syllable as in ge-hyran" (1970, 167). The Otho B. x version of Mary of Egypt includes at least one example of an "inorganic" use of h at 27(16)r26 where the Otho scribe writes onhæled (past participle of the verb onælan: "heated, inflamed, consumed") [Figure 3.2] but the Julius scribe writes onæled (Sk 337).

Figure 3.2: f. 27(16)r onhæled

Scragg notes that this spelling of the word onhæled also occurs in the Exeter Book poem "Judgement Day I," line 9 (1970, 175-76). In the Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records (ASPR) edition, Krapp and Dobbie emend to onæled, documenting in a footnote, "onæled] onhæled" (Krapp 212). The emendation is displayed in angle brackets in the Old English Corpus edition, that is, "<onæled>" (A3.24, 0005-9). In his edition of the Exeter Book, Bernard J. Muir retains the manuscript reading onhæled (1:335) and writes in his commentary,

onæled] The MS has onhæled for onæled, another example of "unstable h" in the MS...other editors normalize here (2:628).

In his footnote, Skeat documents the variant with a disbelieving exclamation point (2:23).

Interchange of -i with -ig

By the late tenth to early eleventh centuries, the letterforms -i and -ig were pronounced identically and frequently used interchangeably (Campbell § 267). The Otho B. x version includes a higher frequency of words spelled with -i rather than -ig than the Julius E. vii version. At least six examples are found in the surviving fragments of Mary of Egypt:

25(26r)v19:47-48 drohtniende: drohtnigende
28(17)v1:381 syngienne: syngigenne
28(17)v5:385 wundrije: wundrigge
28(17)v21:396 ælðeodie: ælðeodige
28(17)v23:397 gegaderiende: gegadrigende
30(59)v8:639 wuldriende: wuldrigende

Although there are twenty instances in the surviving Otho B. x text of words that contain the -ig spelling (twelve with -ige, seven with -igende, and one with -igenne), there are thirty-seven such instances in the parallel passages of Julius E. vii (twenty-six with -ige, ten with -igende, and one with -igenne): only two instances of verbs with the -iende form are found in the entire Julius E. vii version.
Metathesis

There are two instances of metathesis in the Otho B. x version that do not appear in the Julius E. vii version. The first, at 25(26r)v20 [Figure 3.3], is *gecynssæd*, past participle of the verb *gecnyssan* ("to overcome, trouble") where Julius has *gecnyssed* (Sk 48). The only other documented instance of this form is a present participle, *cynsende*, in Homily XXII of the *Vercelli Book*. Fred Robinson notes,

> Sometimes words containing an *s* show metathesis of other sounds...*cynsende* for *cnyssende* occurs in Förster's edition of the *Vercelli Homilies*. It is noteworthy in [this] word that the *ss* of *cnyssende* is simplified when metathesis results in the awkward consonant cluster *nss*. This phonological accommodation of the change suggests that this is no mere scribal slip but a genuine phonological change...the proximity of *s* to the transposition of sounds (and the fact that *s*-metathesis itself is so common) leads one to wonder whether *s* doesn't tend to destabilize consonant sequences in Old English (1985, 256).

As Figure 3.3 above illustrates, the word *gecynssæd* survives on the bottom edge of a split in the vellum and is covered by conservation onionskin. The letter following *gecyn-* is illegible, appearing as dark smudge. The larger than usual space between *gecyn* and *-sed* suggests that the scribe may have erased a letter, perhaps the second *s* Mitchell observes is omitted from *cynsende*.

In his edition of Vercelli Homily XXII, Paul Szarmach emends *cynsende* to *cnyssende*. He prints "*cnyssende*" in the text (line 133) and states in a note, "*cnyssende: cynsende A; emendation proposed by Förster 1913b" (1981, 95). In D. G. Scragg's edition, the word is printed in the text as "c[nys]sende" (line 168), with a footnote stating, "168 cnyssende (Förster 1913) cynsende" (1992, 376). In his glossary, Scragg includes a cross-reference from *cynsende* to *cnyssan*, with a siglum indicating "a form which, in the editor's opinion is erroneous, even though it appears in the manuscript (and may be a perfectly acceptable Old English word)" (1992, 406). Under *cnyssan*, he marks *cnyssende* with a siglum indicating the word has been emended, and in his introductory notes states, "*cynsende* for *cnyssende* XXII.168 is presumably a scribe's misunderstanding of the sense" (1992, lviii). Nevertheless, the word *cynsende* appears in the *Old English Corpus* electronic version of Scragg's edition [35] and is included in Fascicle C of the Dictionary of
Old English as a variant of *cnyssan* in HomU 7 (Fasc. C1.3, 718). The word *cnyssan*, or a form of it, appears three more times in Skeat's edition (lines 428, 542, and 549), but these passages do not survive in Otho B. x so comparison cannot be made.

The second instance of metathesis, an orthographic rather than phonological example, is the word *forhygcan* ("to disdain, despise, reject") at 27(16)r11 [Figure 3.4], recorded as *forhycgan* in Julius (Sk 326).[36]

![Figure 3.4: f. 27(16)r *forhygcan*](image)

This form only appears twice in the OEC, once as *forhygcan* in Rudolph Brotnak's edition of *Dedication of a Church* [37] and once as *forhygcanne* in a gloss to the *Book of John* in Skeat's edition of the *The Four Gospels in Anglo-Saxon, Northumbrian, and Old Mercian Versions*.[38]

**VARIANT GROUP 2: VARIANTS OF VOCABULARY**

I have subgrouped the variants of vocabulary into four categories: variant forms of words, different words with synonymous meanings, different words with different meanings, and variant phrases.

**Variant Forms of Words**

The Otho scribe frequently uses a variant form of a word used in Julius E. vii. For example, at 25(26v)r3, the Otho scribe uses *forswugige* (first person singular present tense of *forswigian*: "pass over in silence, suppress, keep silent, conceal"), where the Julius scribe (Sk 12-13) uses *forsuwige* (from *forsuwian*: "pass over in silence, keep silent"). Similarly, at 25(26r)v13-14 the Otho scribe has *mid þurhwacelum mode* (from the adjective *þurhwæcel*) where the Julius scribe (Sk 43-44) has *mid þurhwæccendlican mode* (from *þurhwæccendlic*). Both phrases mean "with very vigilant spirit," the Otho scribe using strong declension, the Julius scribe using weak declension.[39]

Another example is found at 28(17)v8 [Figure 3.5]. Mary tells Zosimus that her actions were so repugnant she was surprised *seo eorpe hire muð ne ontynde 7 me cwucuwe on helle ne besencte* ("the earth did not open its mouth and plunge me alive into hell"). The word *cwucuwe* is a variant accusative singular form of the adjective *cwic* ("quick, living, alive"). The Julius scribe conveys the same sentiment, but uses *swa cwycce* (Sk 387), literally, "thus alive," which Skeat translates as "all alive." Although Skeat documents

![Figure 3.5: f. 28(17)v8 *cwucuwe on helle*](image)
this variant in his notes, cwucuwe does not appear as a variant spelling in the Dictionary of Old English entry for cwic (Fasc. C1.4, 1199-1209).

Different Words with Synonymous Meanings

There are many cases where the Otho scribe uses a different word with the same or a similar meaning to the one found in Julius. For example, at 25(26v)r6 the Otho scribe uses sceat (coin, money of account) where the Julius scribe (Sk 15) uses talent ("talent, money of account"), a loanword from Latin. As Fred Robinson notes, "in the course of copying vernacular texts Anglo-Saxon scribes not infrequently used Latin forms to represent Old English words" (1982, 395). If the Otho exemplar included talent, it is possible the scribe, knowing the vernacular equivalent, substituted sceat while the Junius scribe, recognizing the word talent or not, simply copied from the exemplar verbatim. A search of the OEC for talent produces thirty-five matches: all but seven are instances where the word is used within a Latin context.

Other examples include: gegaderode (past participle of gegaderian: "gathered, united, assembled") at 28(17)r13 for Julius's gesamnode (past participle of gesamnian: "assembled, joined, gathered together") at Sk 369, [40] and gepohtum (masculine dative plural of gepoht: "thoughts, ideas") at 25(26r)v20 for Julius's geþancum (masculine dative plural of gelanc: "thoughts, ideas") at Sk 48. At 28(17)v6-7, Otho has unrihtwislican (masculine accusative plural of the adjective unrihtwislic: "unrighteous, wrong, unjust") for Julius (Sk 386) unrihtlican (masculine accusative plural of the adjective unrihtlic: "unrighteous, wrongful, wicked").[41]

At 27(16)r21-22, Otho has geondfor (preterite first person singular of the verb geondfaran: "went through, pervaded, traversed"):

\[
\text{Mildsa me, abbud, eac on seofantyne wintran ic openlice folca mænigo geondfor on ðan bryne forliges licgende.}
\]

("Pity me, abbot, likewise for seventeen years I unreservedly perverted many people yielding to the passion of fornication.")

Here, Julius (Sk 333-34) has geondferde (preterite first person singular of the verb geondferan: "went through, traversed"): 

\[
\text{ac miltsa me abbud eac on xvii wintrum ic openlice folca meniu geondferde on þam bryne forligeres licgende.}
\]

("But pity me, abbot; even for seventeen years I openly surpassed a number of people, continuing in the desire of fornication.")

Bosworth-Toller defines geondfaran as "to go through, pervade" (425), while Clark Hall provides "to traverse, to pervade" (152), neither of which quite fits the context. However, the Oxford English Dictionary includes a definition for traverse, "[t]o turn away, to divert; fig. to pervert. Obs. rare," which fits quite well. Clark Hall also gives "surpass" as a definition for geondferan, but does so by citing Skeat's translation in Mary of Egypt![42]

Other examples of synonymous variants include leodscepes (masculine genitive singular: "of nation, people") at 25(26v)r20-21 for Julius (Sk 25-26) peowtscepes (masculine genitive singular: "of fellowship, people");[43] wisan (feminine accusative plural of wise: "thing") at 29(15)v22 for Julius (Sk 524) dineg
(neuter accusative plural: "thing");[44] lufode (preterite first person singular of lufian: "lived, delighted in, practiced") at 27(16)v8 for Julius (Sk 345) leofode (preterite first person singular of libban: "lived, experienced"); and maerian (infinitive: "to celebrate, honor, exalt") at 27(16)v16 for Julius (Sk 350) wurðian (infinitive: "to esteem, honour, celebrate, exalt"). In his notes for line 350, Skeat states, "O. inserts æfter þæt before wurðian" (Skeat 2:24), but the phrase is actually æfter þam maersian [Figure 3.6] ("after that to celebrate").

![Figure 3.6: f. 27(16)v æfter þam maersian](image)

**Different Words with Different Meanings**

In some instances, the Otho scribe uses a word that gives a phrase or sentence a different meaning than the one conveyed by the Julius scribe. For example, at 25(26v)r18-20, the Otho scribe uses hæfinysse (feminine genitive singular: "of captivity, subjection") and æfæs[tre]sta [Figures 3.7 and 3.8] (superlative of the adjective æfaest: "most upright, pious, devout") where the Julius scribe (Sk 23-24) uses forhæfednysse (feminine genitive singular: "of restraint, continence, abstinence") and afandedesta (superlative of the past participle for afandan: "most approved, most excellent"). The context of the Otho passage is:

7 he wæs on hæfinysse weorcum se æfæs[tre]sta geworden on eallum þam munuclicum regolum...

("and he had become the most devout in works of subjection to all the monastic rules.")

The context of the Julius version is:

and he wæs on forhæfednysse weorcum se afandedesta geworden on eallum þam munuclicum regolum

("and he had become the most approved in works of self-denial, and in all the monastic rules.")

The Julius scribe uses hæfinysse again at Sk 31-32, stating that monks from faraway places sought out Zosimus þære onhyringe his forhæfednysse hi underðeoeddun ("to subject themselves to the imitation of his
The Otho scribe, however, uses the word *geferrednysse* (feminine dative singular of *geferrednys*: "fellowship, society"), writing at 25(26)r28 that they sought Zosimus *his geferrednysse hi underþeodon* ("to subject themselves to his fellowship"). The Julius scribe's focus on Zosimus's self-restraint, rather than on his personal charisma, as seems to be the focus of the Otho scribe, prepares the reader for the monk's encounter with Mary, the epitome of lack of restraint.

When Zosimus presses Mary to tell him her story, in Otho B. x she prefaces her confession (27(16)r12-14) using the word *gemyndgianne* (inflected infinitive of *gemyndgian*: "to remember, be mindful of"): *Ac me scamað nu to gemyndgianne hu ic on þam fruman ærest minne fæmnhad besmat...* ("But it causes me shame to call to mind how I at the first defiled my virginity..."). On the other hand, in Julius E. vii (Sk 327-328) Mary expresses shame in the telling, not in the remembering, of her youthful misdeeds: *Ac mé sceamað nu to gereccenne hu ic on þam fruman ærest minne fæmnhád besmát...* ("But I am ashamed to recount now how at the outset I first polluted my virginity...""). The Julius scribe's word *gereccenne* (inflected infinitive of *gereccan*: "to relate, express, explain") is echoed by both scribes at 27(16)r17:330 where Mary states, *ðis [Sk þis] is nu witodlice scortlice to areccanne* ("this now indeed may be related").[45] However, the Otho scribe's earlier use of *gemyndgianne* foreshadows Mary's later remark (29(15)v22-28:524-528) that she dreads recalling her past misdeeds because she fears (*ondræde*) a return of the *unrihtwislicra geþohta* (29(15)v25-26: "unrighteous thoughts") (here Julius at Sk 526 has *unwislicra geþanca*: "foolish thoughts")[46] she endured during the first seventeen years of her self-exile in the desert.[47]

The Otho scribe's more personal focus continues in the next lines (27(16)r18-21), where Mary states:

\[ ac ic nu swabeah rapor gecyþe þæt þu mæge oncnawan ðane *unfylledan* bryne minra leathra þe ic hæfde on þære lufan forgeligres \]

("but now however I will more quickly relate [how I lost my virginity] that you might understand the *unfulfilled* fervor of my offense which I had in the love of fornication").

The Julius scribe (Sk 331) uses the word *únalyfedan* ("unlawful, illicit") for Otho's *unfylledan* [Figure 3.9] ("dissatisfied, unfulfilled, incomplete"), emphasizing the legal wrongs of Mary's actions rather than the personal turmoil that led her to commit them. This judgmental tone is reemphasized in two additional passages. At 27(16)v1-6:340-343, Mary insists she did not prostitute herself for money, but on the contrary, lived in poverty and filth in order to seek gratification of her *unafyllendlice gewilnunge* ("unfulfilled desires"). The Julius scribe then writes, *and þæt me wæs to yrmdôe* ("and that was misery to me"), but the Otho scribe writes, *7 þæt me wæs to myrcôe* ("and that was pleasure to me").[48]
One more example further illustrates this difference in perspective of the two versions. Following Mary's initial testimony at 29(15)v18-21 [Figure 3.10] the Otho scribe writes:

![Fig. 3.10: 29(15)v18-21](image)

Zosimus hire to cwæð, "And mihtest þu swa manigra tida oferfaran þæt þu ne gefreode þane brine þære færlican gehwyrfednysse?"

("Zosimus said to her, 'And might you pass over such a great length of time that you did not liberate the passion by the sudden conversion?'")

Here the Julius scribe writes (Sk 521-523):

Zosimus hire to cwæð ; And mihtst þu swa manegra tída lencgu oferfaran . þæt þu ne freode þone bryne þære flæsclican gehwyrfednysse?

("Zosimus said to her: 'And couldst thou pass through the length of so many seasons without loving the burning of fleshly inclination?'")

In the Julius version the scribe uses *flæsclican* ("fleshly, corporal, carnal") whereas the Otho scribe uses *færlican* ("sudden, unexpected") [Figure 3.11]. Skeat translates *ne freode* as "without loving" (but literally, "loved not") and *gehwyrfednysse* as "inclination," implying

![Figure 3.11: f. 29(15)v fær-](image)

Zosimus questions Mary's ability to overcome her obsession, in spite of living alone in the desert for forty-seven years! Since the verb *freogan* can also mean "to free, liberate," and *gehwyrfednysse* can also mean "conversion," the Otho scribe's *færlican gehwyrfednysse* ("sudden conversion"), read in the context of a different translation of *freode*, suggests Zosimus is genuinely interested in knowing how Mary succeeded in overcoming her previous obsession, not, as the Julius version suggests, expressing doubt concerning the truthfulness of her testimony.
Two additional examples of variants in vocabulary that produce changes in the meaning of the text include:

27(16)v17 wast þu (from witan: "do you know") for Sk 351 wenst þu (from wenan: "do you think").

Mary tells Zosimus that after she has lived promiscuously for seventeen years, she sees a miccle menigeo of Affricana 7 of Egypta ("great multitude of Africans and of Egyptians") running to the sea. Learning they are about to embark on a pilgrimage from Alexandria to Jerusalem, she asks one of them (in Otho B. x), wast þu hwæðer hi willen me underfon gif ic mid him faran wille ("do you know whether they will accept me if I wish to go with them"). In the Julius version, however, Mary asks not "do you know..." (wast þu) but "do you think...

29(15)r17 ic earnode (first person singular preterite of earnian: "I got, I merited") for Sk 497 ic gegyrnode (first person singular preterite of gegyrnan: "I desired, I sought").

The account of the events leading to Mary's turning point -- her inability to enter the temple to witness the Exaltation of the Cross due to a supernatural force, her repentance to a statue of the Virgin Mary and subsequent forgiveness which allow her to enter the temple unhindered -- were destroyed in Otho B. x. The story resumes on folio 29(15)r as the now-reformed prostitute leaves the temple and departs for the desert. She tells Zosimus that when she arrives at the Jordan River, (29(15)r16-20):

Witodlice þæs dæges wæs underntid þa þa ic earnode þa halgan rode geseon, 7 sunne hi to setle ahylde þa ic becom to Sanctes Iohannes cyrcan þæs fulluhteres wið Iordanen gesette.

("Indeed it was the morning of the day when I got to see the holy cross, and the sun inclined to set itself when I came to the Church of St. John the Baptist established near the Jordan.")

In the Julius version, Mary uses the word gegyrnode, curiously measuring the time it has taken to arrive at her destination from the event preceding her repentance (when she "desired" to see the cross). In the Otho version, Mary uses the word earnode, acknowledging that through her repentance she not only has earned the right to see the cross but has merited the opportunity to begin a new life.

**Variant Phrases**

In addition to variants in vocabulary, the Otho B. x version includes phrases completely different than or absent from the Julius E. vii version. In some instances, the difference is simply a rearrangement of word order. In others, however, subject and verb are changed or additional words are added or subtracted, uniquely altering the content of the narrative. For example, at Sk 12-13 the narrator,[49] explaining why he is obligated to relate pas halgan gerecednesse ("these holy narratives"), states in the Julius version, se me gecydde þet ic on gefealle... ("he hath made known to me that I may fall..."). Instead, the Otho scribe writes (25(26v)r4), þæt ic hi ne cyde þy les þe ic gefealle... ("that I relate them not lest I fall..."). Here, the Julius scribe uses the substantive subject se ("the one," that is, "God") with gecydde, a third person singular preterite form of the verb gecydan ("he made know, he proclaimed"). The Otho scribe's subject is ic ("I"), used with a negative adverb (ne: "not") and the first person singular present tense cyde (from cyðan: "I relate or tell"). The Otho scribe also adds the adverbial phrase þy les þe ("lest"). Although this phrase appears fairly frequently as þe les ðe or þy les þe, particularly in Ælfric's homilies and in biblical works, the use of les [50] for las in the phrase is documented in only two other texts: Liebermann's edition of the Laws of King Æthelred [51] and Cox's edition of the Distichs of Cato.[52]
The phrase is repeated at 25(26v)r9-11 [Figure 3.12] where the Otho scribe writes:

ne geweorðe hit, la næfre, þæt ic on þam halgum gerecednessum wæge oððe ic þas spræce formirðrige by les þe ic wið god gesyngige...

("May it not happen, lo never, that I should falsify in those holy narratives or should utterly destroy this discourse lest I should sin against God...")

The word formirðrige (present subjunctive first person singular of formyrðrian: "should destroy utterly, kill") [Figure 3.13] is used figuratively in the sense of "killing" a story.

Elsewhere, the word is found in Fowler's edition of Handbook for the Use of a Confessor [53] where it refers to the penance to be served by a woman who has killed her child in the womb (Gif wif hyre cild formyrðrige innan hire).

Less dramatically, the Julius scribe writes (Sk 17-18):

ne gewurðe hit þæt ic on þam halgum gerecednyssum wæge oppe ic þa spræce forsuwige.

("may it not happen that I should falsify the holy narratives or conceal by silence the discourse.")[54]
Another example of multiple variants is found at 28(17)r20-22. [Figure 3.14] The Otho scribe writes:

**Figure 3.14: f. 28(17)r20-22**

*And hi ealle sona to þam manfullum leahtrum 7 bysmerceahhettungum astyrode wurdon*

("And they all soon became aroused to the wicked vices and shameful jestings")

Here the Julius scribe writes (Sk 374-375):

*And ic hi þa ealle sona to þam manfullum leahtrum and ceahhetungum bysmerlicum astyrede*

("And I soon excited them all to wicked vices and shameful jestings")

The Otho scribe's subject is *hi* ("they"), with the auxiliary verb form *wurdon* (preterite third person plural: "they became") supporting the masculine nominative plural past participle *astyrode* (from *astyrian*: "stirred up, excited, aroused"). The Julius scribe's subject is *ic* ("I") with the preterite first person singular form of the verb, *astyrede* ("I aroused"). In his footnote, Skeat records *bysmer* and *ceahhtungum* as two separate words, but since *bysmer* is a noun ("disgrace, scandal, shame"), not an adjective, it would seem the scribe meant to compound the two words into the more descriptive feminine dative plural noun *bysmerceahhettungum* [Figure 3.15], a compound not documented in the *Dictionary of Old English*. A similar compound word occurs at 27(17)r9 in the phrase *bysmorgleow minra worda* ("shameful lust of my words"). The Julius version (Sk 366) has only *bysmor minra worda* ("shamefulness of my words"); Skeat's documentation of this variant does appear in the *Dictionary of Old English* [Fasc. B 1.9, 2665].

The Otho version sometimes adds or omits a phrase. For example, at 28(17)r7-8, after Zosimus has encouraged Mary to continue her narrative, the Otho scribe writes *Heo þa togeyete þere ærran cyðnysse* ("She then added to the preceding testimony"), but the Julius scribe writes only *and þus cwæð* ("and thus..."
Conversely, at 29(15)r18 the Otho scribe writes that *sunne hi to setle ahylde* ("the sun inclined itself to set") when Mary reached the Jordan River; here the Julius scribe adds (Sk 498-499) and *þære æfenrepsunge genealæhte* ("and the eventide approached").

**VARIANT GROUP 3: SYNTACTIC VARIANTS**

**Nouns**

Both scribes provide examples of inconsistent usage of weak and strong noun declensions, a typical instability found in late West Saxon texts. Campbell notes, "W-S has always n.s. *lufu*, but often weak inflexions" (§619.4). His observation is illustrated by the Otho scribe's preference for weak declensions of this noun (meaning "love"): feminine accusative singular, *lufan* at 27(16)r11 for Julius's strong *lufu* at Sk 326; feminine dative singular, *lufan* at 27(16)r20-21 for Julius's strong *lufe* at Sk 332; and feminine dative singular, *lufe* at 25(56)v24 for Julius's strong feminine accusative singular *lufu* at Sk 95. Both scribes, however, use the strong declension *lufu* at 25(56)v1:79 for feminine nominative singular.

Both texts are illustrative too of the typical West Saxon weakening of inflections. As Campbell writes,

> In W-S *-um* of the d.p. of nouns and adjs....appears very frequently as *-on, -an*...The dat. pl. ending appears as *-an, -on*, in W-S, perhaps developed from *-um* through eW-S *-u* (§378, §572).

For example, at 29(15)r24, Otho has *liffæstum* where Julius (Sk 503) has *liffestan* ("living, life-giving"), both neuter dative plural; and at 29(15)r1, Otho has *for minon þingon* where Julius (Sk 485) has *for minum þingum* (neuter dative plural: literally, "for my things" but the phrase is used to mean "for my sake").

Other variants in nouns are relatively rare. At 28(17)r16, the Otho scribe uses a plural noun in the phrase *to mines lichaman lustum* ("to the desires of my body") where the Julius scribe uses the singular noun *luste* (Sk 371). At 28(17)v22, the Otho scribe uses *ceasterwaran* ("citizens"), masculine accusative plural, where Julius uses *ceastergewarena* (Sk 397) ("of the citizens"), masculine genitive plural.

**Verbs**

In his analysis of *Mary of Egypt* in Julius E. vii, Hugh Magennis notes the Old English translation exhibits "a high degree of dependence on participial constructions" (1986, 333). The Otho version also includes many participial constructions, but their use varies in comparison with their use in the Julius version. In two instances, the Otho scribe uses a participial construction where the Julius scribe does not:

Otho B. x 25(26v)r16-18: *Des witodlice, swa ic ær cwæð, on anum Palestina mynstre wæs fram frymðe drohtniende.*

("This one truly, as I said before, was from the beginning, *living* in a monastery of Palestine.")

Julius E. vii (Sk 22-23): *Des witodlice, swa ic ær cwæð on ánum palestína mynstre fram frympe drohtnode.*

("This man verily, as I said before, *lived* from the beginning in a minster in Palestine.")

Otho B. x 28(17)r8-10: *Se geongling þa soðlice gehyrende þæt bysmorgleow minra worda, hlyhhende me fram gewat.*
("The youth truly hearing the shameful lust of my words, departed from me laughing.")

Julius E. vii (Sk 366): Se geonglincg gehyrde sona þæt bysmor minra worda and llihhende me fram gewát.

("The young man soon heard the shamefulness of my words, and departed from me, laughing.")

There are four instances, however, where the Julius scribe uses a participial construction but the Otho scribe does not:

Otho B. x 25(26v)r15: 7 his nama [was] Zosimus[56]
("his name was Zosimus")
Julius E. vii (Sk 21-22): se was geháten Zosimus
("he was called Zosimus")

Otho B. x 25(26v)r29: þas wisan ealle hæfde on him
("he kept all these customs in himself")
Julius E. vii (Sk 32-33): Ðás wisan he ealle on him hæbbende was
("He was keeping all these customs in himself")[57]

Otho B. x 26(56)r29: he...God to gewytan hæbbe
("he should have God for a witness")
Julius E. vii (Sk 78): he...god to gewitan hæbbende
("he...having God for a witness")

Otho B. x 29(15)r2-4: ic wepende spræc 7...eft clypode
("I weeping spoke and...again implored")
Julius E. vi (Sk 485-487): Ic wepende spræc and ...eft clypigende
("I weeping spoke and...again imploring")[58]

There are two instances where one version uses a present participle in the nominative case while the other uses the dative case, with one example of each in both versions. In the first example, found at 25(26r)v29-26(56)r1, the Otho version uses the nominative form pencende while the Julius version (Sk 55) uses the dative form pencendum of the verb pencan ("thinking"):  

Otho B. x: þas on pisum gelycum him pencende
("thinking these [things] to himself on these similar [things]"")

Julius E. vii: Ðas and þysum gelícum him pencendum
("These [things] and [on] similar [things] thinking to himself")[59]

In the second example, the Otho version uses the masculine dative plural form ofergeotendum of the verb ofergeotan ("pouring upon, suffusing, flooding") to modify the noun tearum ("tears"), while the Julius version has ofergeotende, the masculine nominative singular form, modifying Zosimus:

Otho B. x 28(17)r3-5: Zosimus witodlice ða on eorpan mid tearum ofergeotendum hire to cwæð...
Zosimus indeed then with tears overflowing onto the earth, said to her...

Julius E. vii 362-363: Zosimus soðlice þa eorðan mid tearum ofergeotende hire to cwæð...

("Zosimus, indeed, bedewing the earth with his tears, said to her...")

Other Parts of Speech

The two scribes sometimes vary in their repetition of prepositions or their use of antecedent nouns and pronouns, the Julius scribe more frequently repeating words that the Otho scribe omits. For example, at 25(26v)r26-27, the Otho scribe writes:

oft manega munecas of feor stowum 7 mynstrum coman þæt hy to his bysenum 7 larum hi gewriðen 7 to his geferrednyse hi underþeodan.

("very often many monks from distant places and minsters came that they might bind themselves to his examples and learnings and subject themselves to his fellowship.")

Here the Julius scribe writes (Sk 29-32):

wél oft munecas of feorrum stowum and of mynnstrum to him cómon þæt hi to his bysne and to his lárum hi gewriðon and to þære onhyringe his forhæfednysse hi underðeoddon.

("very often monks came to him from distant places, and from [other] minsters, that they might bind themselves to his example and to his lore, and subject themselves to the imitation of his self-denial.")

Questionable Readings

Digital images, particularly those captured in concert with ultraviolet fluorescence, provide an optimal means of studying a damaged manuscript and frequently are preferable to working with the original document. A digital camera can capture more detail than the human eye alone can register, facilitating preservation of minute details that might easily be overlooked in the original manuscript. In addition, digital images captured at high resolution can be enlarged to many sizes greater than the original, making possible extremely close scrutiny of individual words and letters. Finally, because digital images can be stored to disk and studied wherever and whenever a researcher chooses, expensive and time-consuming trips to distant libraries can be minimized or in some circumstances, avoided altogether.

Nevertheless, caution must be exercised in the use of digital images. Particularly when working with digital facsimiles of a damaged manuscript, great care must be taken to avoid the temptation to see things that are not there. A textual scholar has an obligation to present manuscript evidence accurately and responsibly: it is far more prudent to err on the side of conservative transcription than to risk documenting as fact a reading which is, in truth, merely an optical illusion. With this caveat in mind, the following readings are inconclusive, requiring further investigation to either refute or confirm their accuracy.

At Sk 37, the Julius scribe writes Wel oft eac swilce þæs de hi rehton ("Very often also, afterward they explained").[60] The corresponding line of the Otho text (25(26r)v5) [Figure 3.16] is Wel oft eac swylce ðæs
be bi_rehton ("Very often also (they) afterward related"). The Otho scribe has written bi where Julius has hi ("they"), but the unusual amount of space between bi and rehton (preterite third person plural of reccan: "they explained, told, narrated") as well as a faint but indecipherable letterform immediately following bi suggest something has been erased here, possibly an e or an r or both. One possibility is that the scribe accidentally wrote ber rehton [Figure 3.17], intending to write berehto (from bereccan: "they related"), then attempted to erase the extra r but in the process erased part of the e as well, so left it as bi, a variant spelling of the prefix be-. Although the word birehto is not documented in the Dictionary of Old English, the infinitive bereccan or an oblique form of this word occurs five times in the Old English Corpus.\[61\]

At Sk 45-46, the Julius scribe writes:

witodlice swá hé sylf sæde Zosimus þæt hé sylf wære fram þam modorlicum beoðrum on þæt mynster befaest

("even as Zosimus himself said, he himself had been committed to the minster from his mother's womb")

The Otho reading (25(26r)v16-18) is uncertain here because the scribe has made a revision, writing be oðrum [Figure 3.18], followed by a larger than usual amount of

be oðrum
space between oðrum and the following on. It is possible the scribe became confused while making a correction and simply omitted the r between the o and the ð. Although it is preferable to avoid emendation whenever possible, sometimes an informed decision must be made and what appears to be a valid error should be corrected.[62] In this instance, it seems prudent to emend be oðrum to beordrum.

At Skeat 49-51, the Julius scribe writes:

he nanre maran lare bysene ne beþorfte on his mode; and he wæs þus sprecende...

("he needed not in his mind the example of any more teaching; and he was thus speaking...")

However, Otho B. x 25(26r)v21-23 [Figure 3.19] has:

Figure 3.19: f. 25(26r)v21-23

he nanre maran lare ne bysne ne beþorhte wæs on his mode þus sprecende

The word beþorhte [Figure 3.20] is an enigma; neither the Dictionary of Old English nor the OEC provides any clues. Its form indicates it is either a preterite present verb, as is Julius's beþorfte (preterite third person singular of beþurfan: "he needed"), or a weak verb of class one like beþencan ("to consider, take thought for; trust") for which the singular preterite form is beþohte. The variation in word order, the third singular preterite verb wæs ("was") preceding on his mode ("in his mind") with no conjunction or pronoun (and he: "and he") preceding þus sprecende ("thus speaking") as in the Julius version, suggests two possible readings.

In the preceding lines in both versions (25(26r)v19-21:48-49), the narrator states Zosimus wæs gecynsæd fram sumum gemphtum swa swa he were on eallum þingum fulfremed ("was troubled by some thoughts such that he was in all things fulfilled"). If the Otho scribe meant to write beþohte, the meaning of the line might be "he did not think no example of any more learning was in his mind, thus speaking..." Thinking he were on eallum þingum fulfremed ("he was in all things fulfilled"), he was convinced he had already learned everything he could possibly learn. On the other hand, if the scribe meant to write beþorfte, the meaning might be "he did not need no example of any more learning, was in his mind thus speaking." In
other words, troubled by the thought that he has achieved perfection and has nothing left to learn, he is pondering, that is, "speaking" on his mode ("in his mind"). To provide a readable text, I have elected to emend the h to f, although neither interpretation is entirely convincing.

Summary

Although the version of Mary of Egypt in Otho B. x is, in most instances, the same as the version in Julius E. vii, there are approximately 550 words and more than fifty phrases in the extant Otho B. x version that vary from the text of Julius E. vii. Since about one-third of the text survives in Otho B. x, this suggests there were more than 1500 words and 150 phrases in the Otho B. x version that varied from the text of Julius E. vii. While many of the surviving variant readings have no impact on the narrative itself, particularly orthographic differences or alterative usage of thorn; and ð or i and y, other variants indicate the two scribes independently recorded totally different words and phrases. In some instances the variant words are synonymous, but in other instances these variant words have completely different meanings. The work of contemporary scribes, the variant versions of the two texts, including orthographic and syntactic variants, are especially demonstrative of linguistic changes in progress in the written vernacular of early eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon England. They also illustrate the influence of individual dialects, of scriptorium guidelines, and of the personal practices and preferences of individual scribes.
CONCLUSION

The new textual evidence for the Old English *Life of Mary of Egypt* in Otho B. x suggests many potential directions for future research. Foremost for a discipline based on a finite corpus is the need to examine manuscripts considered too damaged to be edited. Even the most damaged Old English manuscripts contain evidence which, if accessed, can augment our knowledge of Old English language and literature, scribal practices, and representations of Anglo-Saxon culture and society.

The new textual evidence also supports the urgent need to re-edit older editions. Since the scholarship of humanists is necessarily grounded in the past, it is imperative that current scholarship be based on accurate and reliable primary sources. Nineteenth-century editors did not have the technological resources available to scholars today, so cannot be totally held responsible for misrepresenting the texts they edited. Because digital facsimiles, captured and processed by experienced practitioners, provide an optimal means of studying medieval manuscripts, scholars now have an unprecedented ability to re-exam texts within their manuscript contexts, texts otherwise available only in older editions.

Another potential area for future research is the study of scribal interpretation and editing of texts. Although some scholars write about scribes with disdain, accusing them of misrepresenting textual evidence through laziness and carelessness, others recognize the significant role scribes played in transmitting textual evidence to future generations.[63] The variant readings provided by the *Mary of Egypt* scribes raise interesting questions about the significance of variants, and support the re-examination of variants in other Old English prose texts surviving in multiple witnesses.

The new textual evidence for *Mary of Egypt* in Otho B. x also raises the issue first suggested by Cameron that not only editions but manuscripts themselves should be concorded. As indicated throughout Part Three, variant readings are not consistently or accurately documented in Skeat's apparatus for *Mary of Egypt*. Furthermore, editors are not infallible and even the most conscientious editor may sometimes fail to document all the manuscript readings emended in a modern edition. Flawed or not, the manuscript evidence is all scholars of Old English language and literature have to work with, so it follows that providing as complete a body of information as possible is crucial.

Other potential areas of research specific to saints' lives and particularly to *Mary of Egypt* should be considered as well. As discussed in Part Two, scholarship of the Old English *Mary of Egypt* frequently includes reference to the saints' lives of Ælfric. The *Life of Mary of Egypt* has been cited as a late addition to the Julius E. vii manuscript, along with three other anonymous saints' lives, in blatant disregard for Ælfric's injunction in his Preface,

\[gif hwa þas bóc awritan wille þæt he hi wél gerihte be þær bysne and þær namare betwux ne sette þonne we awendon.\]

("if any man desire to transcribe this book, that he correct it well according to the copy; and set down therein no more than we have translated.") (Skeat 1:6-7)

Although the Julius scribe obviously ignored Ælfric's request by including *Mary of Egypt*, an anonymous text, in a manuscript primarily devoted to Ælfric's saints' lives, one could argue that in his injunction Ælfric was referring only to the lives he had translated, not to the inclusion of his translations in a different
collection such as Otho B. x. Since both scribes copied anonymous saints' lives as well as saints' lives attributed to Ælfric, an interesting focus of research might be to determine whether the scribe who wrote *Mary of Egypt* in Otho B. x demonstrates as much diversity in the transmission of Ælfric's translations included in Otho B. x as is evident in this anonymous life.

Additional areas of research that might be pursued include further investigation into Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards female sexuality, new source studies that take into consideration the evidence of Otho B. x, and examination of other texts which include rare words discovered in *Mary of Egypt* to discern possible parallels between them.

By means of digital facsimiles, I have transcribed the text of a manuscript Skeat declared "so imperfect as to be nearly useless" (2:446). As the discussion in Part Three illustrates, although nearly two-thirds of the text of the Otho B. x version of the *Life of St. Mary of Egypt* was destroyed, the surviving fragments preserve variant readings not found in parallel passages of the copy in Julius E. vii. Nevertheless, since the text of the two versions is identical in most cases, the possibility of more than one translator is quite remote, yet it is probable that both scribes made deliberate changes to their exemplars. The diversity of variant readings between the Otho and Julius versions demonstrates that these Anglo-Saxon scribes were not mere copyists: the variants include differences of spelling, vocabulary, and syntax as well as, in some instances, totally different phrases. Although it is a great misfortune that so much of the text is gone, it is gratifying to have had the opportunity to both recover readings misrepresented in Skeat's collation and to uncover previously illegible readings from the unedited *Mary of Egypt* in BL MS Cotton Otho B. x.
NOTES

1. For a detailed account of the origins of Sophronius's Greek *uita* and of the Anglo-Latin versions of Paul the Deacon's Latin *vita*, see Stevenson, 19-50.

2. BL Cotton Julius E. vii, Gloucester Cathedral Library 35, and BL Cotton Otho B. x. Discussion of these manuscripts follows in Part One.


4. See Prescott 1997b and Smith.

5. At least one scholar has overlooked Otho B. x altogether. Veronica Ortenberg states that *Mary of Egypt's* "success in England is well attested by the existence of at least two *Lives* of the saint in the vernacular, one of the ninth century, and one of the late tenth-century, ascribed to Aelfric." In her footnote, Ortenberg cites John Earle's edition of the Gloucester fragments and Skeat's *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, apparently basing her appraisal of Anglo-Saxon appreciation of Mary's story solely on the existence of late nineteenth-century editions (115, 115n94).

6. For a detailed description of the process used to inlay the Cotton manuscript folios in paper frames as part of a nineteenth-century restoration effort, see Kiernan 1996, 68-70.

7. Ker lists the surviving leaves of *Mary of Egypt* as ff. 27, 56; 16, 17; 15 (226). Kiernan notes that Ker misidentifies the first extant folio of *Mary of Egypt* as f. 27 instead of f. 26, and that he does not indicate that f. 26 is reversed or that both ff. 26 and 27 are upside down (Kiernan 1999). These two leaves are quite legible and Ker rarely made such a blatant error, so it is possible that f. 26 was reversed and ff. 26 and 27 were placed upside down when the manuscript was rebound in 1963, after Ker had examined the manuscript and published his description (Kiernan 2000). Although Ker accurately lists f. 59 between f. 15 (*Mary of Egypt*) and f. 53 (*The Seven Sleepers*), he does not otherwise identify it. In addition, while Ker normally gives in brackets "the probable number of each leaf of the manuscript in Wanley's time and
according to his foliation" (224), he does not provide Wanley's folio number for f. 59. In the upper right corner of the ultraviolet image of f. 59 recto, Wanley's number 91 is clearly legible [Fig. N-1]; examination of the text of the leaf identifies it as the last extant folio of Mary of Egypt (Cantara). For other examples of the misplacement of folios in Otho B. x, see Kiernan, Seales, and Griffioen.


10. For use in writing this thesis, Kiernan has given me privileged access to his digital facsimiles of the Otho B. x fragments of Mary of Egypt. The images will be included in his electronic edition in-progress of BL Cotton Otho B. x.

11. For nearly thirty years, the Dictionary of Old English Project (DOE) has been compiling a comprehensive dictionary based on all the words from all editions of manuscripts containing Old English. As new editions are published they are added to the Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form, (Healey et al. 2000), an electronic version of every edited Old English text, available on CD-ROM or via the World Wide Web by institutional license. Although originally created to facilitate collection of words for the DOE, the Old English Corpus (OEC) has become an indispensable aid to research and scholarship in Old English language and literature. Fascicle F of the DOE is to be published in 2001.

12. To facilitate correcting the order of the folios, Kiernan has devised an "electronic foliation" that incorporates the British Library folio numbers within a corrected numbering of the leaves. By this foliation, the folios of Mary of Egypt are: 25(26v)r, 25(26r)v, 26(56)r, 26(56)v, 27(16)r, 27(16)v, 28(17)r, 28(17)v, 29(15)r, 29(15)v, 30(59)r, and 30(59)v. Readings are cited by electronic folio name and folio line number, followed by a colon and Skeat's edition line number. Unless otherwise indicated, translations of Julius E. vii are from Skeat's edition, while translations of Otho B. x are my own.

13. For more on the Anglo-Latin versions of the story, see note 21 below.

14. See, for example, April 10, Oxford, Bodleian Library Digby MS 63, in Wormald 5.

15. See Ker nos. 117 (154), 158 (201), and 177 (224).


17. Full citation at note 3 above. Mary of Egypt is found in vol 2, 2-53.

18. According to Helmut Gneuss, "[b]y the turn of the century more than 200 volumes had been printed (in 1995 there are 444 volumes, of which 42 contain Old English texts)." (1996 48). The EETS continues to publish new editions of Old English texts; nevertheless, the majority of the Old English editions date from the nineteenth century.

19. For commentary on the inaccuracies of Skeat's Ælfric's Lives of Saints, see search results for "lives of saints" at the ANSAXNET Listserv Database.

20. The Dictionary of Old English, however, does pick up lexical variants as they are found reported in the
editions (Healey 2001), but see the discussion on the word cwucuwe in Part Three.

21. The Cotton-Corpus Legendary is a name assigned by Patrick Zettel to "a compilation of hagiographic texts representing 160 feasts of the church year, and forming what in Ker's words, 'appears to be the earliest large collection of lives of saints in use in England" (Zettel 18). The Cotton-Corpus texts of Mary of Egypt are found in MS Cotton Nero E. ii, Part I, ff. 179r-184v and Salisbury, Cathedral Library 221 (formerly Bodleian Library, MS Fell 4), ff. 195v-205v. For more on the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, see Zettel; Jackson and Lapidge; and Stevenson.

22. Cotton Claudius A. i, ff. 76v-84r (10th c.) and British Library MS Addit. 33518, ff. 155r-164v (12th c.).

23. H. Rosweydus, Vitae Patrum, Patriologia Latina 73, 571-90; and A. Lipomanus, Sanctorum Priscorum Patrum Vitae (Venice, 1553), ii. ff. 38v-91v. For a collated edition of the primary Latin sources, see Stevenson 51-79.

24. For a detailed discussion of the variant reading in Otho B. x of Sk 49-50, see Part Three below.

25. Magennis states "the interjection hwæt, which appears so regularly in Ælfric, does not occur in St. Mary of Egypt" (1986 334), but this is not correct: the word hwæt ("what") occurs in both manuscripts at 29(15)v12:517. For an explanation of citation numbers, see note 12 above.

26. For a detailed discussion of the variant reading in Otho B. x of Sk 523 see Part Three below.

27. Clayton notes there "is almost no evidence [during Alfred's time] for hermits in England, although this may be due to the shortage of evidence in general from the second half of the ninth and the first half of the tenth centuries" (1996 157).

28. Most likely, the fact that Zosimus, a monk widely known as a great teacher, is advised by an angel to abandon the intellectual sphere for the contemplative life so he might learn hu niccle synd hælo wegas ("how many are the ways to salvation") would also have met with Ælfric's disapproval.

29. Elsewhere, Clayton notes that Mary of Egypt was also important in the Anglo-Saxon cult of devotion to the Virgin Mary because it provided examples of prayer to the Virgin: "As models, these prayers were enormously influential and, although the main point of the homily is to celebrate Mary of Egypt, the text also obviously glorifies the Virgin" (1990 257-258).

30. Lees's theories are further supported by the variant vocabulary in the Otho B. x version. See, in particular, the discussions of yrmðe and myrcðe, and flæslican and færlican in Part Three below.

31. See also Nicholls 52; Scragg 1979, 257-258, and 1996, 217.

32. See Gneuss 1972, 63-83; and Hofstetter 139-161.

33. Although I found many variants in the usage of the letters i and y, and þ and ð, because Skeat was particularly unfaithful about documenting such variants, even in the base manuscript, I have not included these variant readings in the following discussion unless included as part of a multiple-word variant. I have, however, documented these discrepancies in my comprehensive record of all the variant readings.
34. The Julius text also includes examples of *hn* words such as *hnappode* (Sk 666) and *hnescan* (Sk 684, 723), lines lost to Otho B. x.

35. HomU 7, B3.4.7, 0098(167).

36. Skeat does not include this variant in his apparatus.

37. HomS 49, B3.2.49, 0019(61).

38. JnHeadGl (Li), C21.9, 0039(38).

39. Concerning the use of weak declension without a demonstrative pronoun, Bruce Mitchell notes there are "spasmodic examples of this combination in the prose of all periods" (§115).

40. Skeat notes: "369. O. hi gegaderade geseah" (2:25).

41. This variant is not noted by Skeat.

42. In the "Preliminary Notice" of *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, Skeat credits the modern English translations in his edition to "Miss Gunning, of Cambridge, and Miss Wilkinson, formerly of Dorking" (1:vii). Clare Lees observes, "[t]here is no study of the women who worked with the editors of the Early English Texts Society, who are otherwise acknowledged in the prefaces to various editions" (1997 168n9).

43. But *peowtscyppes* can also mean "rule, regulation, custom, mode of conduct."

44. This variant is not noted by Skeat.

45. Skeat translates: "It must now indeed be told briefly."

46. Skeat stopped reading Otho B. x f. 15v at line 27, so did not notice this variant.

47. This part of the story, Sk lines 530-581, is missing from Otho B. x.

48. Mary's admission in the Otho version that her life of promiscuity was a source of pleasure to her supports Lees's argument that "the transformation of sexuality into the gift of chastity is the prime component of the female saint's life" (1999 147).

49. Gordon Whatley notes that "[t]he prose lives of Mary of Egypt and of Guthlac...begin, not with a translator's apology, but with literal renderings of the Latin prefaces, even where these are in the first person, creating the illusion that one is reading the original itself, rather than the work of an intermediary" (450).

50. Bosworth-Toller cites *les* as an Old Saxon variant (612).

51. LawIIAtr, B14.21, [0034 (9.1)].

52. Anglia 90 (1972) 1-42; Prov 1 (Cox), B7.1, [0066 (1.61)].
53. Anglia 83 (1965), 1-34; Conf 4 (Fowler), B11.4.2, [0041 (21.148)].

54. Skeat translates as "may it never be that I should falsify the holy narratives or keep silence from speech."

55. In his note for line 365, Skeat documents: "For and þus cwæð O. has beo þa togeycte þære ærran cyðnysse (i.e. let those be added to the former exposition)" (2:25). The word he reads as beo is actually heo, written with a rubricated h [Figure N.2]:

![Figure N.2: f. 28(17)r Heo þa](image)

56. The scribe, probably through dittography, here writes his nama his [Figure N.3] instead of his nama wæs:

![Figure N.3: f. 25(26v)r 7 his nama his](image)

57. Skeat translates haebbende wæs as "he kept all these customs in himself."

58. Skeat translates as "I spake with weeping...and saying."

59. Skeat translates as "Thinking these [things], and others like to these within himself."

60. Skeat translates as "Very often also, according to what they said..."

61. Twice in King Alfred's Pastoral Care (CP B9.1.3, 32.209.23 and 35.239.8), once in Bede's Ecclesiastical History (Bede 5, B9.6.7, 17.460.25), once in the Laws of Alfred (LawAfEl, B14.4.3, 15), and once in the Laws of Æthelstan (LawVAs, B14.10.2, 1.1).

62. According to E. G. Stanley, "we in our subject have to remember with constant humility that though perhaps, not certainly, most scribes may not have been the equals in Old English of the best Old English poets, every one of them sleepy and careless as he may have been at times, knew his living Old English better than the best modern editor of Old English verse" (257). However, according to Lapidge, a knowledgeable editor has an obligation to freely emend the flawed work of the scribes who wrote the

63. See note 62 above.
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