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INTRODUCTION

A Family of Names

INTRODUCTION

The alphabet is a house of learning. That statement could be left as the metaphor it is intended to be – or it could be dissected to expose the sources of its imagery. This thesis is concerned with the dissection of imagery and starts with the imagery attaching to the letters of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin alphabets. Its principal focus, however, is on the imagery that has been associated with two quite different scripts derived from one or other of those alphabets, namely the series of runic characters that has come to be known as the *fupark*, and the series of characters found carved on standing stones, mainly in Ireland, and known as ‘ogam’.¹

I prefer to use the word ‘alphabet’ only for lists of characters arranged in alphabetical order, including Hebrew, Greek and Latin alphabets as well as medieval lists of runes and ogam characters in alphabetical order. Initially, when listed in sequence, runic and ogam characters were arranged in quite a different order to alphabets in this sense, as is illustrated in the examples given in the frontispiece Figures A and B. The earliest sequences of runes have come to be known as *fuparks* from the first six runes in the lists. The sequence illustrated in the frontispiece, however, is that of a revised version of the early *fupark* as used in Anglo-Saxon England. This Anglo-Saxon version has come to be known as a *fuporc*, the fourth rune having changed from an ‘a’ to an ‘o’, while the sixth rune in England was traditionally transcribed as the Latin letter ‘c’.² In Scandinavia, the fourth rune is usually transcribed as an ‘a’, so that the Nordic sequence of runes is usually called a *fupark*. The Irish ogam sequence may be called *beithe-luis*, from the names of its first two characters, or *beithe-luis-nin* (the reason for the *nin* being in dispute). The term ‘letter’ I reserve for the characters of the Mediterranean alphabets, and refer to runic and ogam characters as ‘runes’ and ‘ogam characters’.

It is now almost unanimously accepted that the runic script, first found on artefacts and in epigraphical inscriptions in pre-Christian northern Europe, had its origin in one or other Mediterranean alphabet – Latin, Etruscan or Greek. Similarly, it is generally accepted that the ogam script, which first appears on standing stones in south-western Ireland from the fourth century AD onwards, was also based on a Mediterranean alphabet – Latin or Greek. I have contributed elsewhere to the discussion on the origins of these scripts.³ My concern now turns to the names that I were given to the individual characters making up the runic and ogam scripts, as recorded in various manuscripts, like those given in the frontispiece figures A and C. Currently, there is no unanimity about the inspiration for these names. The proposition I seek to defend is that, like the scripts themselves, the names, too, had their origins in one or other of the Mediterranean alphabets – Latin, Greek or, in this instance in particular, Hebrew.

¹ The term ‘ogam’ is also spelled ‘ogom’, ‘ogum’ and ‘ogham’.

² In his catalogue, Wanley (1705: 192) refers to the *fuporc* accompanying the *Rune Poem* as an *Alphabetum Runicum*, but I find that it is clearer to maintain a distinction between, on the one hand, rune-series in which the runes are listed in the *fupark* or *fuporc* order and, on the other, ‘runic alphabets’, in which the runes are listed in alphabetical order.

³ Griffiths 1999: 164–210.


A family of names

The names brought together on the following pages are a motley crowd, but they are all, so to speak, family. They are the names of the letters of the alphabet, particularly the Hebrew alphabet; the names given to the characters comprising the ogam script, developed mainly in Ireland; and the names of the runes, used in Anglo-Saxon England and in Scandinavia. I see them as family members who, over the years, have drifted apart, and in reconvening them, I hope that old acquaintanceships may be renewed.

This imagery of a family of names implies that I do not subscribe to the idea that the Irish and Germanic participants at this reunion belong to autonomous, indigenous families in their own right. The idea that ogam-names and rune-names were Irish and German creations independent of the mainstream development of Mediterranean alphabets has led to their being exploited as evidence of early Irish and German cultural identities distinct from the literary culture that evolved in the Mediterranean. Admittedly, the invention of distinctive ogam and runic scripts and the assignment of indigenous names to the characters of these scripts effectively created separate identities alongside Mediterranean traditions, and partly in competition with them. But those apparent declarations of independence should not blind us to the fact that the inventors of both the scripts and the names were, as I hope to demonstrate, leaning heavily on established Hebrew, Greek and Latin traditions.

Meaningful names (1)

A feature that distinguishes the names of letters in the Hebrew alphabet from those in the Greek and Latin alphabets is that they all appear to be the names of familiar objects and concepts in everyday language, such as ‘house’, ‘palm of the hand’, ‘sign’, whereas Greek and Latin letter-names are meaningless. It is a feature that the Hebrew alphabet shares with the Germanic runic and Irish ogam scripts, nearly all of whose characters have names with recognizable meanings in their respective dialects. How much of a coincidence is this similarity between otherwise discrete scripts? That is the question at the root of this thesis.

The process by which alphabet letter-names developed might be summarized as follows.⁴ The origin of the Semitic writing systems, including the Phoenician and Hebrew, can be traced back to Egyptian hieroglyphs, which were stylized representations of objects (i.e. signs) with names.⁵ The Egyptian names were translated into the Semitic dialect in which the alphabet was created, e.g. the name of the Egyptian hieroglyph , *per* [house], became West Semitic *baytu/betu*. The initial of the (Semitic) name was then used as an abbreviation to refer to the (Egyptian) sign and thus became the sound-value associated with the sign:

⁴ I do not intend to give a description of the theoretical background to alphabet formation, for which see the useful summary, with literature, provided by Nowak 2003: 33–42. I focus here on aspects relating to letter-names. A more recent discussion of the Semitic and Greek letter-names, listed letter-by-letter, is given by Krebernik 2007: 148–61.

⁵ Healey 1990: 18–19.

hieroglyph	Egyptian name	Semitic translation	initial letter	sound-value
𐀀	<i>per</i>	<i>baytu/betu</i>	B	/b/.

When the Greeks took over this Semitic system, they probably no longer recognized the signs as representing objects, nor did they recognize the Semitic names as meaning anything in Greek. However, they did adhere to what is known as the acrophonic principle, whereby the initial letter of the (to them now meaningless) name corresponded to the (to them now abstract, non-representational) sign. The name was given a form that could be pronounced in Greek, in many cases with a suffix *-a*. It has been suggested that this form may indicate an Aramaic source.⁶ In any case, the connexion between recognizable object and meaningful name was broken in Greek, even though the acrophonic principle was preserved:

sign	meaningless name	initial letter	sound-value
B	<i>beta</i>	B	/b/.

In the Latin alphabet (and probably the Etruscan, too, though Etruscan letter-names are not attested), the Semitic names seem to have been abandoned and new names appear to have been formed as ‘phonetic’ creations based on the sound-values, with eventually a distinction between mutes and semivowels, as well as vowels:⁷

sign	sound-value	meaningless ‘phonetic’ name
B	/b/	<i>bē</i>
F	/f/	<i>ef</i> .

Both the runic and the ogam scripts were based on one or other of the Mediterranean alphabets and, like Greek and Latin letters, runic and ogam characters were not representational in the way that Egyptian hieroglyphs and the early Semitic scripts were. The names of runic and ogam characters were thus not the names of stylized objects-cum-signs, as in the West Semitic alphabets. But nor were they inherited, debased forms, as in the case of the Greek alphabets. Like Latin letter-names, they were added to an, in origin, foreign system. Unlike either Greek or Latin names, however, they were meaningful in the languages for which the scripts were used:

	sign	sound-value	initial letter for a name	name
Runes	ᚷ	/b/	B	<i>beorc</i> ⁸ [birch]
Ogam	ᚠ	/b/	B	<i>beithe</i> [birch].

Are the Germanic and Irish systems of meaningful vernacular names purely home-grown? Is any observable similarity between them and the system of Hebrew letter-names a coincidence? Is it a matter of independent cultures independently resorting to a general principle of meaningful names for the characters of their scripts? Or are there similarities in the details of the

⁶ Diringer (1968: 167): ‘[T]he Aramaic language having a preference for the emphatic form which ends in a vowel and drops the vowel of the preceding syllable; others consider the terminal vocalization of the Greek letters as being more in agreement with Greek speech.’ See also Healey 1990: 38. But see Krebernik 2007: 146 for an alternative view.

⁷ See below §1.2.2.

⁸ I use the Old English form of the name as typical.

chosen systems that might indicate a connexion between them? These are the questions I seek to address in my thesis.

Genesis of a thesis

The meaningfulness of names is not in itself sufficient reason to consider that there might be some relation between the names of alphabet letters, ogam characters and runes. There have been numerous attempts in the past to demonstrate that the ogam and runic scripts were based on Greek, Latin, North-Italian or Etruscan prototypes.⁹ My own interest in ogam and runic scripts stems from a study of the development of writing systems in general, largely inspired by David Diringer's work.¹⁰ When I eventually came to investigate the origins of ogam and runes in particular, the names of the characters were very much a side issue. I was sceptical not only of the ideas of, for example, Schneider, Krause and Elliott, on the names of the runes,¹¹ but also of Vendryes's espousal of the idea that all the names of ogam characters were the names of trees, forming a specifically Irish tree-alphabet.¹² That scepticism was reinforced by the extravagances of Robert Graves's suggestion in *The White Goddess* that the tree-alphabet formed the basis of a tree calendar.¹³ However, one of the features of ogam that Graves highlighted, but never pursued in detail, was the superficial similarity between some ogam-names and the names of equivalent letters in the Hebrew alphabet, such as *ailm* \approx *aleph*, *beithe* \approx *beth*, *nion* or *nin* \approx *nun*.¹⁴ It was my curiosity about apparent parallels like these, spiced by scepticism of earlier ideas about the nomenclature of runic and ogam characters, that triggered the present study of possible connexions between the names of letters of the alphabet and ogam-names and rune-names. I wanted to determine whether the apparent similarities are purely coincidental, or whether they reveal a closer relationship between the scripts than speculation about a purely native origin for the Irish and Germanic names allowed for.

A striking instance of a name that has echoes in the Hebrew, Irish and Germanic scripts is that of the letter B, used as an example above. The Hebrew name for B is *beth*, while the Greek is a phonetically similar *beta*. The Irish ogam-name is *beithe*, which is phonetically similar to both the Hebrew and Greek names. There is no connexion between the supposed meanings of the names: as already mentioned, Hebrew *beth* was traditionally related to *bayith*, meaning 'house', whereas Greek *beta* had no meaningful interpretation. Irish *beithe*, on the other hand, was interpreted as meaning 'birch-tree', and this is precisely the meaning of the Old English name assigned to the **b**-rune, *beorc*. From these similarities it might be speculated that, if there was any connexion between the different systems, then Irish *beithe* could have been modelled on Hebrew *beth* or Greek *beta*, and Old English *beorc* was a translation of the Irish. Such speculation, however,

⁹ I have discussed this subject in Griffiths 1999.

¹⁰ See, in particular, Diringer 1968.

¹¹ Schneider 1956; Krause 1970: 25–34; Elliott 1989: 45–61.

¹² The term *alphabet végétal* is attributable to Vendryes (1941: 85). Roderic O'Flaherty had taken the tradition of a tree alphabet at face value in his *Ogygia: seu Rerum Hibernicarum Chronologia & etc.* (1685), and the idea that all ogam-names were the names of trees or plants was prevalent enough for Charles Graves to find it necessary to deny it as a fiction (1876: 458).

¹³ Robert Graves 1971: 165–204.

¹⁴ Graves 1971: 235–6.

encounters enormous chronological and geographical problems: when and where could there possibly have been contact between the Hebrew, or Greek, and Irish and Germanic systems? When Damian McManus considered the possibility of borrowings between runic and ogam schemes, he concluded that ‘there are no compelling reasons for assuming borrowing in either direction.’¹⁵ This conclusion, however, must be seen against the background of his thesis, reflecting the opinion long professed by ogam scholars, that ogam-names were indigenous Irish creations¹⁶ – a thesis similar to the opinion long professed by runologists in relation to rune-names, which they have held to be indigenous Germanic creations.¹⁷

The preliminary evidence for a connexion between Hebrew, Irish and Germanic names for the characters of their respective scripts is more substantial than that presented by Robert Graves. A comparison between the names can be made on the basis of (a) names with similar sounding forms, and (b) names with a similar meaning. The latter category can be subdivided into (ba) names with a similar meaning and referring to equivalent characters, and (bb) names with a similar meaning but referring to different characters.

Examples of similarities between Hebrew and ogam names are:

(a) Names with similar sounding forms		(ba) Names with similar meaning and referring to equivalent characters		(bb) Names with similar meaning but referring to different characters	
Hebrew	ogam	Hebrew	ogam	Hebrew	ogam
<i>aleph</i>	<i>ailm</i>	<i>chet</i> [fear]	<i>úath</i> [fear]	–	–
<i>beth</i>	<i>beithe</i>	(Ambrose <i>chet</i> as <i>pavor</i> glosses [fear])			
<i>lamed</i>	<i>lem</i> ¹⁸				
<i>nun</i>	<i>nin, nion</i>				
<i>ain</i>	<i>onn</i>				
<i>resh</i> (* <i>rosh</i>) ¹⁹	<i>ruis</i>				

For Hebrew and runic names, similarities include:

(a) Names with similar sounding forms		(ba) Names with similar meaning and referring to equivalent characters		(bb) Names with similar meaning but referring to different characters	
Hebrew	runic	Hebrew	runic	Hebrew	runic
-	-	<i>tav</i> [sign]	<i>tīr</i> [?sign] ²⁰	<i>mem</i> [water]	<i>lagu</i> [water]
				<i>peh</i> [mouth]	<i>ōs</i> [mouth]
				<i>aleph</i> [cattle]	<i>feoh</i> [cattle, wealth]

¹⁵ McManus 1991: 35, and 3. n. 26, where he is primarily concerned with Marstrander’s view (1928: 139–41; 182–3) that runic *peorð/pertra* and *cweorð/quertra* are related to Celtic forms.

¹⁶ McManus 1991: 31–9; also 1986, 1988 and 1989.

¹⁷ See Page 2003a: 66–8, with references there.

¹⁸ An alternative form beside *luis*.

¹⁹ Reconstructed from Greek *rho*.

²⁰ Anglo-Saxon *Rune Poem* describes *tīr* as *tacn* [sign].

For ogam and runic names, similarities include:²¹

(a) Names with similar sounding forms		(ba) Names with similar meaning and referring to equivalent characters		(bb) Names with similar meaning but referring to different characters	
ogam	runic	ogam	runic	ogam	runic
<i>úr</i>	<i>ūr</i>	<i>beithe</i> [birch]	<i>beorc</i> [birch]	<i>úr</i> [cold earth]	<i>eār</i> [earth, grave]
<i>muin</i>	<i>man</i>	<i>idad</i> [yew]	<i>eōh, ih</i> [yew]	<i>duir</i> [oak]	<i>āc</i> [oak]
		<i>gort</i> [cornfield, harvest] ²²	<i>ger</i> [year, harvest]	<i>úath</i> (glossed as <i>scé</i> [thorn])	<i>þorn</i> [thorn]
				<i>gétal</i> (glossed as <i>gilcach</i> [reed])	<i>eolhsecg</i> (<i>secg</i> [sedge, reed])

Tenuous though this evidence may be, it suggested to me that the names of ogam and runic characters might not be independent, indigenous inventions and led to the following thesis:

The ogam script appears to have been created in southern Ireland, maybe as early as the fourth century A.D., when there were already Christians in the country. The characters may have had some names even at this early stage, but probably only phonetic names like those attached to letters of the Latin alphabet. From the fifth century onwards, however, the increasing activity of Christian missionaries will have brought users of ogam into contact with the names of the Hebrew letters which were cited, in particular, in connexion with the acrostic Psalms.²³ As a result, names were created for ogam characters in imitation of the Hebrew alphabet. Prime movers in this process will probably have been Irish scholars seeking to give respectability to ogam as a native Irish script on a par with the three sacred alphabets, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, but especially with Hebrew. The process was pursued further in northern England in relation to runes, probably under the influence of Irish missionaries, who were largely responsible for Christianizing that part of the country after the Anglian immigrations. Before the arrival of the Irish missionaries, runes may have had some local names, but there appears to have been a fairly extensive revision of the runic system in Anglo-Saxon England coinciding with the activities of the Irish missionaries in Northumbria, which provided an impetus to create a systematic set of rune-names under the influence of Irish ogam-names. From England this runic nomenclature was exported to Scandinavia, where some of the names were cloaked in an archaic guise to serve propagandistic purposes. In

²¹ I use here the rune-names given in the Anglo-Saxon *Rune Poem*.

²² *Gort* is glossed as *seges* [cornfield, crop] (i.e. the content of a field); *ger* is described as a ‘good year’ (i.e. harvest).

²³ The most important acrostic Psalm is Ps. CXVIII (according to the Vulgate numbering). In addition, there are twelve other acrostic passages in the Old Testament: Lam. I, II, III, IV, Ps. IX, XXIV, XXXIII, XXXVI, CX, CXI, CXLIV, and Pro. XXX: 10-31. All passages have one verse per letter except Lam. III, which has three, Ps. IX and XXXVI, which have two, Ps. CXVIII, which has eight, and Ps. CX and CXI, which have two letters per verse.

Germany, the name-forms were introduced by missionaries from England and Ireland, and were further adapted, this time to provide names (no longer meaningful) for an invented native Germanic alphabet, based on runes, which could be ranked alongside the alphabets of the ancient world.

This thesis challenges the views that have generally been favoured by most scholars up to now, namely that the invention of names for both ogam and runic characters was coeval, or virtually coeval, with the creation of the scripts themselves, and that ogam-names were independent, indigenous Irish inventions, while rune-names were independent, indigenous inventions of continental Germans and were imported into England along with the script. By emphasizing a continuation of alphabet tradition for the names in both scripts, I am also at odds with what most scholars have seen as the motivation for inventing native names.

In the case of ogam, I have already referred to the idea of a ‘tree’ alphabet, promoted by Roderic O’Flaherty (1685), criticized by Charles Graves (1876), but espoused by Vendryes (1941), and ultimately elaborated into a ‘tree’ calendar by Robert Graves (1971). Meroney (1949) dismissed the idea of a ‘tree’ alphabet and proposed possible connexions between some ogam-names and their runic counterparts but did not pursue this line of thought systematically. McManus (1988) developed Meroney’s ideas further but came to the conclusion that any parallel with rune-names was coincidental (1989). In particular, he was concerned to point out that the invention of ogam-names was more or less coeval with the creation of the script and that some of the names were later cosmetic inventions (1986).

In the case of runes, an excellent survey of the literature on rune-names has been provided by Nedoma.²⁴ Suffice it to mention here the principal proponents of the various theories over the last century. For instance, the traditional, non-alphabetic ordering of the runes in what is known as the *fupark* from the first six runes in the series, prompted Arntz (1944) to propose that the scheme and its names had their origin in magic. Seebold (1993) has also suggested a magic-mantic origin, based on the pairing of names. Von der Leyen (1931, 1957) and Jungandreas (1935, 1974) had earlier put forward the idea of name-pairs. A complete cult system was presented by Schneider (1956), as well as by Agrell (1928), who linked the system to the cult of Mithras, and by Marstrander (1928), who suggested a scheme of deities. Less integrated have been the categorizations presented by Krause (1948, 1970), who divided the names into seven categories,²⁵ and by Elliott (1989) and Polomé (1991), who reduced Krause’s categories to three.²⁶ Nedoma himself has reserved judgment on whether the invention of the names was coeval with the creation of the *fupark*, but is clearly sceptical of investing the names with religious or magical qualities, concluding that ‘die Runennamen des älteren Fupark spiegeln jedenfalls kein abgeschlossenes urgermanisches kosmologisches System wider’ [in any

²⁴ Nedoma 2003: 556–62, in particular 561–2, with references.

²⁵ Krause’s categories were: 1. gods and demons (**a þ t m ŋ**); 2. animals (**u z e**); 3. plants (**i p b l**); 4. astronomical and weather phenomena (**h i j s d**); 5. negative powers (**k n**); 6. cult concepts (**r g**); 7. non-cult concepts (**f o**); and one uncertain (**w**).

²⁶ The world of gods, the world of nature, and the world of man.

case, the rune-names of the elder *futhorc* do not reflect a self-contained *urgermanisch* cosmological system].²⁷

My own proposal for the tradition of naming alphabet letters being passed on to the naming of ogam characters and runes removes the discussion from the realm of cult and magic and sets it down firmly in Irish and English scriptoria, some time after the creation of the scripts.

Historical context (1)

The ogam script appears to have originated in south-west Ireland in the fourth century. Where and when the runic script originated, however, is unknown; the earliest examples of runes have been found in southern Scandinavia and date from the second half of the first century. My thesis would place the coining of names for the ogam script in the fifth to seventh centuries and those for the runic script in England in the seventh to eighth centuries. It is not possible to pinpoint specific ecclesiastical and political events during this period that will have had a direct influence on the creation of the names, but the progress of Christianity in Ireland and Irish influence in the Anglian kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia may have been crucial. For example:²⁸

- In fifth-century Ireland, the most significant ecclesiastical developments were probably the missions of Palladius and Patrick.
- By the middle of the seventh century, works by Isidore of Seville on grammar and the alphabet had already reached Ireland.
- Several early Old Irish glossaries contain evidence of some knowledge of Hebrew in Irish scriptoria, probably derived from Jerome's writings. The earliest of these glossaries, O'Mulconry's glossary, is dated to the mid-seventh to mid-eighth centuries.²⁹
- Columba (Columcille) founded his community on Iona, traditionally in 563, and from there proceeded to Christianize the Irish colonists of Dalriada (Dál Riata) on the west coast of Scotland, as well as the Picts further north. He died in 597.
- Anglo-Saxon scribes probably learnt to write in the Latin script from the Irish. Old English orthography shows strong evidence of Irish influence.³⁰
- Eadwine (Anglian king of Northumbrian Deira and Bernicia, 616–33) married Aethelburh, a Christian princess from Kent, and was converted to Christianity in 627 or 628. On Eadwine's death at Hatfield in 633, Aethelburh and Bishop Paulinus, who had come north with her, fled south again. However, Eadwine's successor Oswald (king of Deira and Bernicia, 634–42), who had been exiled to Dalriada and may have visited Iona, invited Irish clergy from Iona, among them Aidan, to minister to the Northumbrians. Oswald is said to have been fluent enough in Irish to act as Aidan's interpreter. Oswald's brother

²⁷ Nedoma 2003: 561.

²⁸ For details of the kings of Deira and Berenicia in the seventh century, see Kirby 2000: 55–93 and 118–22.

²⁹ For a recent discussion of this material, see Moran 2010: 1–21, who gives extensive references. For a draft text of this glossary see <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/texts.php?versionID=10> (accessed February 2013).

³⁰ O'Neill (2009: 3–22) reviews the literature on the subject and puts his own case for Irish influence. See §1.5.2 (d) for details.

Oswiu, who had also been exiled, lived in Ireland from the age of 18 and had a liaison with Fín(a) of the Uí Néill clan. Oswiu became king of Bernicia in 642 and of both Bernicia and Deira from 655–70. His son by Fín(a), Aldfrith, known to the Irish by his Irish name Flann Fína mac Ossu,³¹ lived for a time in the Western Isles and on Iona before becoming king of Bernicia and Deira from 685–704. It not only seems that Aldfrith was a learned and wise man, well versed in Irish,³² but his mother may even have been a cousin of Cenn Fáelad,³³ the author of one of the books on the origins of the Irish language and ogam which are quoted in the *Auraicept na nÉces* [Student's Primer], as discussed below. Aldfrith's dates are c. 630–704; the author Cenn Fáelad died in 679.³⁴

- During Oswiu's reign, the defeat of the Irish position regarding the date of Easter at the synod of Whitby (664) resulted in the leading Irish clergy in Northumbria returning via Iona to Ireland, along with a group of Anglo-Saxon followers.³⁵ Nevertheless, large numbers of Irish clergy remained behind and continued their ministry in English churches without hindrance.

In this brief summary, I emphasize not only the movement of Christian missionaries, but also the Irish influence in northern Britain in the seventh century. Specifically, in the course of my discussion, I will argue that four rune-names in particular – *īs*, *cēn*, *lagu* and *man* – were probably based on a Christian text that is thought to have originated in Ireland in the late seventh century, namely the pseudo-Jerome *Expositio quattuor evangeliorum*.³⁶ If this attribution is correct, then the late seventh century would represent a *terminus post quem* for the origin of these names in particular, and probably the origin of all the names in general.

A *terminus ante quem* would be represented by the lists of runes and rune-names that begin to be found in manuscripts on continental Europe, mainly the Frankish empire, from the late eighth century onwards.³⁷ These lists are often accompanied by lists of letters and letter-names from Hebrew, Greek and Latin as well as a number of esoteric alphabets, and are not infrequently associated with tracts on aspects of grammar. The motivation for compiling lists of this nature may have been purely an encyclopedic interest on the part of the monks in the scriptoria, but it is worth noting the ambition of Charlemagne and his successors to extend literacy to the laity, via monastic establishments, in order to provide their governments with a civil service. The runes in the lists were initially Anglo-Saxon in origin,

³¹ On the Irish genealogies of Aldfrith, see Ireland 1991: 64–78.

³² While in Ireland, he is said to have written a poem of 96 verses on Ireland in Irish (O'Reilly 1820: xlviij). Ireland (1999) has published a series of 'wise sayings' in Irish that are attributed to Aldfrith.

³³ Ireland 1991: 68–69. According to the genealogies, it appears that a certain Cenn Fáelad was indeed a cousin of Fín(a), but it has not been proved that this Cenn Fáelad was the same person as the author.

³⁴ Calder 1917: xxvii.

³⁵ On the two English monasteries established in Ireland following from the exodus after Whitby, namely Rathmelsigi and Mayo, see Ní Mhaonaigh (2009: 411–9). It was from Rathmelsigi that Willibrord departed for Frisia.

³⁶ PL XXX: 549–51; Bischoff 1976: 108–9.

³⁷ Details are given in Tables 27–30. Derolez (1954) treats these manuscripts in detail.

imported by Anglo-Saxon missionaries,³⁸ but with names that were in many cases adapted by German scribes to local dialects. An early example of such a manuscript is Berne, Burgerbibliothek, 207, of which Derolez says:³⁹

The manuscript is written in a rare ‘Irish Continental’ script, dated variously from saec. VIII to IX/X.⁴⁰ Allowing a safety margin on account of the rarity of the script, I believe saec. VIII/IX is as good a date as any, with perhaps the stress on VIII in view of the decennovennial table for A.D. 779–797; there is a red dot by the side of 792, but it may be accidental. At least two scribes worked at the manuscript; there are some later additions. E.K. Rand⁴¹ and others have considered the manuscript as a product of the Fleury scriptorium, and, as far as I know, no objection has been raised against this assumption.

The significance of the Berne manuscript in the present context is the attribution to Fleury, which was one of the monasteries of which Theodulf (750/60–821), bishop of Orléans (798–818), was abbot. Theodulf was one of Charlemagne’s favoured theologians alongside Alcuin and was in part responsible for the boom in public schools which were built beside monastic lands or adjacent to the local churches.⁴² Apart from various grammatical tracts, the codex contains a folio (264v) listing runic and pseudo-runic alphabets with rune-names along with Greek, Hebrew and other esoteric alphabets, and another folio (257r) with a series of ogam characters and an ogam syllabary together with further runes and the characters of other esoteric alphabets.

On folio 112r of the Berne manuscript is a text *De littera*, recounting the origin of the alphabet, part of which is reflected in the *Ars grammatica* of Clemens Scotus, the Irish master of Charlemagne’s palace school in Paris (775–c. 818); this text was eventually combined with passages from Donatus’s *Ars maior* and Isidore’s *Etymologiae* to create a treatise that has become known as *De inventione linguarum* or *litterarum*.⁴³ I do not intend to enter the debate about the authorship of this treatise,⁴⁴ but I would stress the

³⁸ Seebold (2000: 27) suggests that the rune-lists may have been initially introduced on the continent by Irish rather than Anglo-Saxon missionaries, since the earliest manuscripts with Anglo-Saxon *futhorcs* were compiled in northern France (Bern 207, Fleury, and Vienna 795, St. Amand), where the Irish were mainly active.

³⁹ Derolez 1954: 175.

⁴⁰ Hagen (1875: 255): s. ix–x; Lindsay (1923: 61): ix (?); Homburger (1962, fol. 19): viii^{ex}.

⁴¹ Rand 1922: 268.

⁴² On Theodulf, see Baunard 1860.

⁴³ In an appendix, Derolez (1954) conveniently assembles a selection of the treatises that appear to have been used in the compilation of the treatise: Isidore, pp. 378–9; Donatus, pp. 379–80; Bern 207, pp. 380–1; and Clemens Scotus, pp. 381–2. At least two distinct versions of the treatise can be identified (see Derolez 1954: 349–54). It seems to have been Goldast who first used the title *De inventione linguarum ab Hebraea usque ad Theodiscam, & notis antiquis*, in the 1606 edition of his *Alamannicarum rerum scriptores aliquot vetusti* (vol. ii, pp. 91–3). Derolez (1954: 285) preferred the title *De inventione litterarum*

⁴⁴ Goldast (see previous note) attributed the treatise to Hrabanus Maurus. Baesecke (1941–2: 76–90) thought that there were two distinct authors, one of them Hrabanus, who was responsible for Germanizing the Anglo-Saxon forms of the rune-names from his source. Krause (Platzmann and Krause 1943: 175) thought that Hrabanus probably compiled the tract during his period at Fulda, where he was in charge of the school from c. 803–c. 815. The mainly Anglo-Saxon forms of the runes also, in Krause’s view, pointed to the influence of Alcuin, under whom Hrabanus studied at Tour from 802–4. Derolez (1954: xlix, 279–81, 374–8) doubts the attribution to

following observations:

- In the *De inventione* treatise's passage on the runic alphabet, runes are said to have been used by the Marcomanni, or 'Northmen', for charms, incantations and divination.⁴⁵ No more weight need be given to such remarks than to similar pieces of alphabet folklore in the treatise's passages on the Hebrew alphabet (it was invented by Moses or Enoch), Greek alphabet (Phoenician letters were brought to Greece by Cadmus), or Latin alphabet (the nymph Carmentis was responsible for inventing Latin letters, which her son Evander brought to Italy). The rune-names in the alphabets are German name-forms like *asc* and *gilc(h)*, or *kilc*, based on Anglo-Saxon forms *æsc* and *calc*, from sources comprising late additions to the original complement of rune-names (see §1.5.2 (d)) – *calc* being found only in northern England.⁴⁶
- Several of the alphabet rune-forms may appear to have been borrowed from a Scandinavian source. The alphabet rune for C, for instance, resembles the Nordic rune for **k**, \mathfrak{C} , rather than the Anglo-Saxon **c**, \mathfrak{C} . However, although the author of the treatise could have been familiar with Danish runes (see below), it seems that the rune-forms in the runic alphabet underwent a certain rationalization. A rune for Q, for instance, will not have occurred in any Nordic sequence, but a rune-form \mathfrak{Q} for Q is found in the runic alphabet which resembles the letter Q, \mathfrak{Q} , in the 'Gothic' alphabet on folio 20v of the much discussed manuscript Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 795 (see Table 38). This form in turn resembles an alternative form of the Greek letter ϙ, *koppa*, i.e. \mathfrak{Q} . The runic alphabet's \mathfrak{Q} , \mathfrak{U} , and C, \mathfrak{C} , were possibly designed to form a pair, as may be indicated by their names, *chen* and *chon* – *chen* being based on Anglo-Saxon *cēn*, while *chon* was intended to pair with the Germanic form *chen* rather than being modelled on Nordic rune-name for **k**, *kaun*. Other velar consonants also appear to have been rationalized, namely G, \mathfrak{G} , and K, \mathfrak{K} , these having been modelled on Anglo-Saxon **j**, \mathfrak{J} , rather than Nordic **h**, \mathfrak{H} . (The alphabet rune for H is \mathfrak{H} , which compares with Anglo-Saxon \mathfrak{X} for the **g**-rune.)

The author of the *De inventione* treatise could possibly have been familiar with Scandinavian runes, but then in a context in which Nordic and Anglo-Saxon runes were compared. This comparison was made in another manuscript, St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 878, which was probably copied c. 830 in Fulda and Reichenau and contained a series of Danish runes in a rudimentary poem entitled *Abecedarium Nord(mannicum)* (see Table 40). During the eighth century, there had been a revival of interest in runes in Denmark, with new rune-forms as exemplified by the inscription on the Gørlev stone (ninth century, DR239).⁴⁷ The *Abecedarium Nord(mannicum)* reproduced these new runes together with rune-names which appear to have

Hrabanus.

⁴⁵ Derolez (1954: 356) connects the 'Marcomanni' with Denmark.

⁴⁶ Page 2003a: 46–7, 76.

⁴⁷ Bauer (2003a: 66 and 237) rightly emphasizes the comparison of the manuscript runes with the Gørlev inscription (see Figure 1.M in §1.5.2 (b)). The DR numbers are the reference numbers listed in Jakobsen and Moltke 1941–2.

been culled from different Germanic dialects, including some Scandinavian forms. The manuscript seems to have served as a form of *Vademecum*.⁴⁸ However, the inclusion of Danish runes and some Scandinavian names may also have had a political or economic motive, since it is probably no coincidence that, around the date that the manuscript was compiled, the church was being urged by the Frankish emperor, Louis the Pious, to prepare missions to be sent into Denmark. The first recorded mission to Denmark had been by Willibrord sometime between 710 and 718. Willibrord had little success, but he was permitted to bring thirty young men back with him to Frisia for training in a seminary. It is possible that it was this group that brought with them the knowledge of runes found in the *Abecedarium Nord(mannicum)*. However, all efforts to Christianize Denmark at this stage were in vain. At the same time, an interest in Danish runes might reflect an attempt to accommodate vernacular customs on a par with the acculturation policy put forward earlier by Gregory the Great in his advice to those involved in the missions to England. In other words, the *Abecedarium* was not a straightforward record of an ancient Danish tradition, but an exercise in aligning Danish runes with the format that had already been devised for the names of the Anglo-Saxon runes. Support for this idea is provided by the manuscript's comparison of some of the Danish runes with their Anglo-Saxon counterparts (see Table 40), and also by the mixture of dialects represented by the name-forms incorporated in the poem.⁴⁹ Rather than confirming an established tradition of Scandinavian names, distorted by an ignorant scribe, this mixture suggests a broad-brush search for 'Germanic' forms to match the Anglo-Saxon names, similar to the Germanic forms for the names listed in the runic alphabets.

Although the *De inventione* treatise identifies the runes with the Marcomanni, or 'Northmen', there is little or no sense of ethnic pride in the attribution. Rather, the Northmen's use of runes is associated with pagan practices which will have been frowned upon in ecclesiastical circles. This appreciation of runes and a possible northern ethnic identity changed radically over the following centuries as Scandinavian countries developed their national identities. The Carolingian attitude to runes, however, appears to have been one of inclusiveness, including diversity, rather than seeking exclusivity, and seems to have been quite different from that found in the folklore surrounding the invention of ogam, which tended to point up the superiority of the Irish language compared to the three sacred languages.

The creation of ogam is linked in Irish texts to the 'invention' of the Irish language. Several accounts of this invention are given in the *Auraicept na nÉces*, assembled from four different books, namely those of Cenn Fáelad (the author mentioned above in connexion with Aldfrith), Ferchertne, Amairgen and Fenius.⁵⁰ The most detailed account of the origins of Irish is that of Cenn Fáelad, who relates how Fenius Farsaid, one of the three sages

⁴⁸ See Bischoff 1981: 221.

⁴⁹ An example of the *Abecedarium*'s mixed roots is the use of *oboro* in connexion with the name *os*. The word *oboro* is attested in Old Saxon and is cognate with OHG *obaro/oberōra* [the upper], OE *yfera* [upper, higher], ON *efri* [upper, later]. In the *Abecedarium*, *oboro* alliterates with *os* and could be a translation of *efri*, which would also alliterate with *os* and, in the sense of 'later', would be more appropriate than 'upper'. However, the rune-name *os* is a form not generally attested in Old Norse before the twelfth century and, in a ninth-century context, is almost certainly West rather than North Germanic, if not a direct borrowing of OE *ōs*. See Bauer 2003a: 73.

at the building of the Tower of Nimrod (i. e. Babel), sent out seventy-two poets to discover the perfect language. The three sages represented the three sacred languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, on the inscription placed above Christ on the cross, and the seventy-two poets represented the seventy-two other languages then in existence. The result of the investigations, after ten years, was to identify the ‘selected language’ (*berla tobaide*) as being Gaedel, i. e. Gaelic, the name of which was said to be derived from the name of another of the three sages, Gaedel mac Ether, and included the epithet *ealg* [noble]. At the end of Cenn Fáelad’s account, the names of the ogam characters are given as the names of the twenty-five noblest disciples of Fenius. It is then noted that other authors attributed the invention of ogam to Amergen, son of Mil. The book said to be by Amairgen is a shorter version of Cenn Fáelad’s, while the Book of Ferchertne concentrates on the forms of the ogam characters, and the book of Fenius gives a complete list of ogam-names based on the names of trees.

The emphasis given here to the distinctiveness of the Irish language contrasts with the encyclopedic, universalist approach in the *De inventione* treatise, which appears to have been intent on assimilating Germanic runes into the family of alphabets. The assimilative attitude towards runes, however, changed with the search for ethnic and national identities, as will be described below. But one other feature that distinguishes the Irish from the Carolingian texts needs to be considered first, namely, that the Irish texts included interpretations beside the ogam-names, whereas many of the Carolingian texts give the rune-names as such, but no interpretations. This means that it is necessary to look elsewhere in order to determine the meanings of rune-names.

Meaningful names (2)

The meanings of names given to ogam characters were indicated at a fairly early date in several separate series of metaphorical descriptions, each comprising a two-word *bríatharogam* [word-ogam] or kenning,⁵¹ arranged in alliterative sequence. The two most important of these series, said to have been devised by Morann mac Moín and Mac ind Óc, respectively, are recorded in a text known as *In Lebor Ogaim* [The Book of Ogams].⁵² On linguistic grounds, McManus dates them to the Old Irish period, before 800,⁵³ while Charles Graves pointed out that *In Lebor Ogaim* cannot be earlier than the beginning of the eighth century or later than the beginning of the tenth century.⁵⁴ The meanings of the kennings, however, were evidently not universally understood and had to be interpreted in glosses added by different scribes at different times. Even with these glosses, the meanings of

⁵⁰ In Calder’s edition of the Book of Ballymote’s transcript of the *Auricept* (1917), with translation, Cenn Fáelad’s version is given at lines 100–25, Ferchertne’s at 943–1029, Amairgen’s at 1028–57, and Fenius’s at 1102–98. The Yellow Book of Lecan’s transcript, also given by Calder, without translation, differs slightly.

⁵¹ A *bríatharogam* is not a kenning in the strict sense used in Norse literature (see footnotes 296 and 297), but I follow most scholars in using the term kenning in the present context.

⁵² Details are given in §1.4.1.

⁵³ McManus 1988: 131. A summary of the chronology of linguistic development from Primitive Irish (the term usually used to refer to the language of the ogam inscriptions) to Classical Old Irish is given in Table 26.

⁵⁴ Graves 1876: 449.

some of the names remain obscure and continue to be annotated up to the present day. This persisting obscurity has led, in several instances, to the enlistment of etymology as a tool for determining a possible earlier form and meaning that a name may have had when initially chosen for a character. As a consequence, even the sound-value of a character has been redefined. Typical examples where such an approach has been considered appropriate are the names *gétal* (or *ngétal*) and *straif*. With my premise that that ogam-names were probably based on the names of letters in the Hebrew, Greek or Latin alphabets, reconstruction of a name's etymology becomes less important than reconstructing the process of transmission of forms and meanings from one language to another.

The meanings of some of the names attached to runes are similarly obscure. Many names, like *man* [man], *dæg* [day] or *hægl* [hail], belong to the everyday vocabulary of Old English or Old Norse. But even if the meanings of these names are perfectly clear, it is still not clear why such a name would be attached to a particular rune. In other cases, such as *ūr*, *tīr* or *sigel*, the meanings themselves are opaque. The lists of rune-names mentioned above do not help in clarifying meaning. As a consequence, recourse has to be made to a series of poems – Anglo-Saxon, Norwegian, Icelandic and Swedish – that function in a way similar to the kennings and glosses for ogam-names. As with the ogam kennings and glosses, however, interpretation of the poems on rune-names is sometimes uncertain, while the age and transmission of the poems are unclear.

In a recent study, Alessia Bauer has come to the general conclusion that the rune-poems all go back to a common oral tradition involving rhyming techniques designed to help in learning the rune-names and their meanings; however, their metric forms are, in her opinion, too divergent to have derived from a common archetype, although the Norwegian and Icelandic poems share a kenning-like style, with a preponderance of periphrases in common.⁵⁵ Some evidence of a common oral tradition is provided by a Norwegian runic inscription (A104), datable to c. 1200, on the wooden frame of a repository in the church at Bø in Telemark, Norway.⁵⁶ This inscription gives a series of two-word kenning-like periphrases which are similar to those used in the Icelandic rune-poem. Each phrase can be understood as indicating a rune-name, which in turn indicates a rune. As a result, when the inscription ends with the challenge, 'You must guess (who I am)', it is fairly simple to spell out the name **kuprun**, i. e. Gudrun.⁵⁷ Not only does this example illustrate the use of the 'kennings' to provide a riddle for hiding a name, it also suggests that riddles of this nature may have been the source of the rune-poems themselves.⁵⁸ Moreover, the similarity with the Icelandic poem, rather than the Norwegian equivalent, in a location far removed from Iceland and dated far earlier than the manuscript version of the Icelandic poem, is seen as an indication that there was an oral tradition independent of the manuscript versions of the poems.⁵⁹ However, this surmise ignores the possibility that the author of the inscription may herself

⁵⁵ Bauer 2003a, especially 234–9.

⁵⁶ Knirk 1986: 71–81. Bauer 2003a: 192–3.

⁵⁷ Louis-Jensen (1994: 35–52) suggested this solution to the riddle.

⁵⁸ Ole Worm, in his exposition of runes (1636: 183–7), gives an example of this technique, using his own name.

⁵⁹ Louis-Jensen 1994: 42; Bauer 2003a: 193. Page (2003b: 559, n. 13; 565) cites Lindroth's suggestion (1913: 257–75) that there may have been an Icelandic version of the Norwegian rune-poem.

have been an Icelander living in Norway. On the other hand, what the example does at least indicate is that a series of phrases similar to those in the Icelandic rune-poem were already current around 1200.

A major difference between the Norwegian and Icelandic poems is that the Norwegian stanzas are virtually all rhyming couplets, a form characteristic of later Latin verse and absent from the Icelandic poem. The Anglo-Saxon poem, though totally different in style, without end-rhyme, also shares up to half of its imagery with the Nordic poems, with a degree of synonymic variation. A major difference between the Anglo-Saxon poem and its Nordic counterparts is the significant Christian influence evident in the Anglo-Saxon version, there being considerably less in the Norwegian, and almost none in the Icelandic poem. On this particular aspect, Bauer reiterates the *communis opinio* that the Christian influence is the result of revision of an earlier pagan version of the poem in England, and to a lesser extent in Norway. In the Norwegian poem, she sees evidence of syncretism between pagan and Christian imagery,⁶⁰ but suggests that the pagan mythology has been largely reduced to a literary device.⁶¹

Within the context of my thesis on the origin of the rune-names, I suggest a scenario for the rune-poems that runs counter to the *communis opinio* while accepting some of the ideas expressed by Bauer. Rather than see the Christian imagery in the Anglo-Saxon poem as a revision of an earlier pagan version, I will present evidence that the poem was probably a Christian composition from its inception, intended to present a description of names drawn from learned Christian sources some time in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries. I also suggest that the Nordic poems will subsequently have been inspired by the Anglo-Saxon version, which will have been conveyed by missionaries to Norway during the conversion of that country to Christianity from the tenth century onwards. The tendency in Scandinavia was initially to mix Christian with pagan themes and to rely on a poetic tradition which was not only different from the Anglo-Saxon metrically, but which also made greater use of kenning-like periphrases and of pagan mythology as a literary device. As a result, some of the Christian elements in the Anglo-Saxon composition gave way to imagery from pagan sources rather than *vice versa*. The Icelandic poem, in particular, shows evidence of a revival of pagan themes.

This scenario of a Christian Anglo-Saxon poem being adapted to Scandinavian circumstances needs to be put in a historical context, as does the motivation for the counter-proposition that Christian elements in the rune-poems were the result of a revision of previous pagan versions.

⁶⁰ Bauer (2003a: 135–6) says of the Norwegian poem: ‘Wegen der skaldischen Versform und der Darstellung heidnischer und christlicher Motive wird es zum Ausdruck des Synkretismus und kann als “Mischdichtung” bezeichnet werden.’ [In view of the skaldic verse-form and the presentation of pagan and Christian motifs, it becomes an expression of syncretism and can be described as ‘mixed poetry’.]

⁶¹ Bauer (2003a: 135, footnote 252) notes that, from the thirteenth century on, one can see systematic moves in Scandinavia, and in particular in Iceland, to record pre-Christian tradition. At the same time, she cites Lange’s view (1958: 163–5) that a distinction needs to be drawn between mythological representation and religious experience, religion being a question of cult and mythology the matter of poetry. Being seen as art, Nordic mythology and the old traditions represented no threat to Christian beliefs.

Historical context (2)

As indicated above, I suggest the late seventh century as a *terminus post quem* for the creation of the Anglo-Saxon rune-names, as well as significant Irish input in that process. The Anglo-Saxon *Rune Poem* will therefore not have been composed before then, but it could have been written down any time between then and the tenth century, which is the latest that most scholars date the poem on philological grounds.⁶² Since the Nordic rune-names *ís*, *lǫgr* and *maðr*, among other names, are directly linked to the Anglo-Saxon names *īs*, *lagu* and *man*, which I trace to a seventh-century pseudo-Jerome text, the Nordic rune-poems also must be later than the Anglo-Saxon poem. The Christian allusions in the Norwegian poem are different from those in the Anglo-Saxon version and thus autonomous introductions into the text, which in turn suggests that the Norwegian poem was composed during or after the conversion of Norway to Christianity.

As mentioned above, the first recorded Christian mission to a Scandinavian country was that of Willibrord between 710 and 718.⁶³ No further missions are recorded until Ansgar's missions to the Danes in 826–8, when Ansgar accompanied the newly baptized King Harald Klak back to Denmark after his exile. In this connexion, von Padberg comments:

Die Missionare standen zu ihrem großen Erstaunen nämlich einer Gesellschaft gegenüber, die individuelle Entscheidungen bevorzugte. So war man durchaus willens, Christus anzunehmen, allerdings nur als einen Gott unter anderen und unter der Voraussetzung, daß seine Nützlichkeit garantiert war. [To their amazement, the missionaries encountered a society which preferred individual decisions. Thus, people were generally willing to accept Christ, but only as one god among others, and on condition that his usefulness was guaranteed.]⁶⁴

Consequently, the mixing of pagan and Christian motifs will not have been unusual in a society where, from the earliest attempts at conversion, Christ appears to have been accepted as one of many gods. Ansgar's mission met with little success at this stage but again, as was the case with Willibrord, he managed to convince the king to allow a group of young Danes to be trained with the intention that they should assist in the conversion of their countrymen. Conversion, however, proceeded very slowly.⁶⁵ Danish presence in northern England from 866 on will have ensured substantial interaction with a Christian culture, but it was not until the middle of the tenth century that bishoprics were set up in Denmark. As elsewhere, a major influence on the rate and scale of conversion was the attitude of the ruling families.⁶⁶ For instance, the strong resistance to Christianity by King Gorm

⁶² See Bauer 2003a: 92–3, and my own discussion below, §1.5.1.

⁶³ Documentation of the social and political situation in Denmark before 800 is largely archaeological. A useful survey for the period 400–800, with references, is provided by Wickham 2006: 364–76.

⁶⁴ Von Padberg 1998: 113 (my translation).

⁶⁵ A useful review of the role of Anglo-Saxons in the Christianization of Scandinavia is given by Abrams 1995: 213–49.

⁶⁶ Von Padberg (1998: 134): 'Nicht omsonst verehrten Dänemark, Norwegen und Schweden jeweils einen ihrer Herrscher als ersten Landesheiligen. Sie wußten die Kirche auch für ihre politischen Pläne zu nutzen, dabei unbefangen an ihre früheren Rolle im polytheistischen Opferkult anknüpfend.' [It was not for nothing that Denmark, Norway and Sweden each honoured one of its rulers as its first national saint. They were able also to exploit the church for their political purposes,

(c. 900–c. 940) was reversed as a consequence of the baptism, c. 960, of his son Harald Bluetooth (c. 940–c. 985). Subsequently, Harald’s son Sven Forkbeard (986/8–1014) appears to have opened the door to Anglo-Saxon missionaries, arguably against the wishes of the German see of Hamburg-Bremen, while the role of the church as a unifying force was exploited under Canute the Great’s rule of England, Denmark and Norway (1014/18–35).

A similar role in the process of conversion was played by the ruling families of Norway. Hákon, son of Harald Fairhair, the first ruler of all Norway, was educated in England at the court of Æthelstan, who is said to have fostered him.⁶⁷ When he returned to Norway as king in c. 930, he tried to convert his people but was obliged to respect their polytheistic customs, for which he gained their respect and was accorded the title of Hákon the Good.⁶⁸ More success with conversion was achieved by Olaf Trygvason (995–999/1000) and by Olaf Haraldsson, later St Olaf (1015–30). Before taking the Norwegian throne, the former Olaf had been a Viking pirate and is said to have been bought off by the Anglo-Saxon King Æthelred the Unready. As part of the bargain, Olaf was confirmed as a Christian, with the king as sponsor, and was prevailed upon to leave England, the implication being that he was to return to Norway to convert his countrymen.⁶⁹ Olaf’s methods of conversion were characterized by Snorri Sturluson as ‘robust’, presenting people with a choice of baptism or death.⁷⁰ Snorri’s account may have been the stuff of sagas, as were probably the allegedly similar activities of Olaf Haraldsson. Both Olafs, however, were successful, and both appear to have had the support of missionaries from England.

In Iceland, there were a number of Christians amongst the earliest immigrants from 870 on, but conflicts between pagans and Christians threatened social stability, especially after the interventions of the missionary priest Pangbrandr sent by Olaf Trygvason to convert all Icelanders. It was to neutralize such conflict that the Alþingi, the Icelandic parliament, officially endorsed Christianity for the whole population in 1000. The decision was thus more practical – aimed at social cohesion – than inspired by conviction. It allowed for the continuation of certain pagan practices such as the eating of horse-meat as well as ritual sacrifice provided the sacrifice was performed in private, but it imposed serious penalties if the sacrifice was performed before witnesses. It was above all an exercise in compromise and tolerance and opened the way to a more relaxed attitude towards the ‘old religion’.

This synopsis of the context in which I consider ogam-names and rune-names to have been transmitted is admittedly skewed towards the progress of Christianity in northern Europe. The reason for this bias is that, like Bauer, I cannot see the Anglo-Saxon *Rune Poem* or its Nordic counterparts as being isolated from Christian tradition.⁷¹ Even staunch advocates of a pre-Christian origin for these poems acknowledge the likely influence of Christian sentiment and imagery on the texts as recorded in the manuscripts. If, as I will seek to demonstrate, the subject of the poems, i. e. the rune-

uninhibitedly continuing their previous role in the polytheistic sacrificial cult.]

⁶⁷ See Abrams 1995: 217 on the possibility that Hákon may have been a hostage at Æthelstan’s court.

⁶⁸ Hákon’s effort to convert his people is related by Snorri Sturluson in *Heimskringla, Hákonar saga góða*, ch. 16–19.

⁶⁹ Abrams 1995: 221.

⁷⁰ Abrams 1995: 220.

⁷¹ Bauer 2003a: 135.

names, also owe their existence to Christian inspiration, then all three poems will have been composed after the introduction of Christian ideas. Whereas the likely date of the Anglo-Saxon poem is some time late in the seventh or in the eighth century, the evidence of the *Abecedarium Nordmannicum* suggests that it may have been composed as a result of contacts between Denmark and the Carolingian court which could have been connected with the missionary activity in Scandinavia in the late eighth or ninth century described above.⁷² However, the Scandinavian independence of mind in absorbing Christian ‘imports’ may not only have resulted in the mingling of Christian and pagan elements but may also have delayed the composition of the Norwegian and Icelandic poems in their present form until a more confident acceptance of Christianity in the tenth and eleventh centuries allowed a concomitantly relaxed exploitation of the ‘old religion’ and its mythology in the poems’ imagery. The alternative idea that both rune-names and rune-poems belong to an era before the advent of Christianity – an idea developed particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – can probably be traced back to ecclesiastical and national politics in Scandinavia from the fifteenth century on.

Perceived ethnicity and national identity

In the development of national consciousness as part of the creation of national statehood, the mythology of an *origo gentis* [origin of a nation] has often played an important role in the assertion of superiority or precedence over other nations. In Sweden, the origins of the Gothic nation, together with the origin of the runic script, certainly played a role at various stages in the development of Swedish national consciousness. Swedes probably started to become aware of the Gothic narrative in relation to their national identity through Jordanes’s account of the Goths, *De origine actibus Getarum*,⁷³ written in Constantinople about 551, which was based on a now lost work by Cassiodorus – an association between the Goths and Sweden being inferred from the similarity of names like *Getae*, *Gothones*, *Gothini*, *Getar*, *Gettar*, *Jettar*, *Jottar*, *Gautar*, and *Gotar*.⁷⁴ The association was exploited by the Archbishop of Uppsala, Nils Ragvaldsson (c. 1380–1448), at the Council of Basel in 1434, when he claimed that the Swedish delegation deserved senior rank since the Swedish king was a successor to the Gothic kings. The Spanish delegation responded with a similar claim for Spain on account of the Spanish connexion with the Visigoths, as narrated by Isidore of Seville. This encounter at Basel was recorded by Johan Månson (Johannes Magnus, 1488–1544) in his *Historia de omnibus gothorum sueonumque regibus* [History of all Kings of Goths and Swedes], published posthumously in 1554. In this account, the author claimed that the Nordic *fupark* was used by the Goths as an alphabet some two millenia BC. The idea held sway well into the seventeenth century and was repeated by Carolus Lundius, president of the Swedish Academy of Sciences in his dissertation on ‘Zamolxis – first legislator of the Getae’, published in 1687.⁷⁵ Moreover, it probably played a part in fuelling the competition that developed in the seventeenth century

⁷² See also Bauer 2003a: 67; and Derolez 1965: 32.

⁷³ Latin text accessible on line at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/iordanes1.html#L>.

⁷⁴ The Geats (Old English *Geatas*, Old Norse *Gautar*, Swedish *Götar*) inhabited what is now Götaland.

⁷⁵ Accessible on line in English translation at <http://dacia.org/lundius/clundius-eng.html>.

between Swedes and Danes over the collection of Icelandic manuscripts, whose contents were seen as underlining the greatness of the Geats, i. e. Goths, in their conquest of the Roman Empire – a conquest with contemporary echoes in the contest between the Protestant Swedish King Gustavus Adolfus (1594–1672) and the armies of the Catholic Holy Roman Empire.

The link made between runes, rune-poems and the Gothic language in this period is exemplified in the publications of Bonaventura Vulcanius (1538–1611) and Nicolaus Andreae Granius (1569–1631). In 1597, Vulcanius, professor of Greek and Latin at Leiden University, published a commentary on Jordanes's history under the title *De Getarum sive Gothorum Origine* and a treatise on the history of the language of the Goths (i.e. Swedes), *De Literis et Lingua Getarum*, in which he pointed to the similarity of the letters of the Gothic alphabet to runes. It appears that in response the Swedish scholar Granius wrote Vulcanius a letter in which he included the names of the runes of the Nordic *fubark* and a Swedish version of a poem similar to the Norwegian and Icelandic rune-poems.⁷⁶ Granius's letter is dated 1600 and pre-dates the first publication of the Norwegian rune-poem by the Dane Ole Worm in 1636 on pages 105–7 of his *Runic seu Danica Literatura Antiquissima*. Granius describes himself as *Suecus ac prope Gothus* [a Swede and almost a Goth] and writes that he is sending Vulcanius the material on the runes because Johannes Magnus and his brother Olaus had not themselves published it in their work. He obtained his information, he says, *a senibus rusticis* [from old country-folk], but Bauer suggests that his immediate interlocutor may have been his fellow Swede and rune enthusiast Johannes Bureus (1568–1652), who had published a rune-calendar in 1599 with the names of the runes and periphrastic descriptions.⁷⁷ Both Bauer and Quak consider the text of the Swedish poem as presented by Granius and Bureus to be too corrupted to allow it to be traced to a medieval source.⁷⁸ Worm's version of the Norwegian rune-poem is also considered unreliable, as is his second edition of 1651 and the version published that same year by Runólfur Jónsson in his dissertation *Lingvæ septentrionalis elementa tribus assortmentibus adstructa*. More reliable, in the opinion of Bauer and Page,⁷⁹ are the two, almost identical, transcriptions of the Icelanders Jón Eggertsson and Arni Magnússon in manuscripts compiled in the mid-1680s in Copenhagen.⁸⁰ The forms of the runes in both transcripts are of the type found in Norway from the eleventh century on, while the text of the poems has been dated on linguistic and orthographic grounds to somewhere between 1200 and 1337 (see further §1.5.1 (b)).⁸¹

In the case of the Icelandic rune-poem, catalogues list up to sixty manuscripts dealing with runes, many still not researched.⁸² The two manuscripts used by Bauer and Page for their editions⁸³ are the sixteenth-

⁷⁶ The letter (Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Vulcanius 106¹) and the runic material are discussed in detail by Quak 1987: 81–92. The rune-poem is also dealt with by Bauer 2003a: 209–33. The provenance of the runic alphabets in Vulcanius's *De Literis* is explored in detail by Dekker 2010: 411–53.

⁷⁷ Bauer 2003a: 210, with illustration on page 267.

⁷⁸ See footnote 76.

⁷⁹ Page 2003b: 553–66, whose edition I mostly follow in Table 30.

⁸⁰ See Table 5.

⁸¹ See also the discussion in Bauer 2003: 131–3.

⁸² Bauer 2003a: 163.

⁸³ Page 1998: 1–32; Bauer 2003a: 164–71.

century Reykjavik, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, AM 687d 4to (c. 1500) and Reykjavik, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, AM 461 12mo (1539–58). Bauer also uses a series of seventeenth-century versions which were collected as a result of the politically motivated drive described above (see Table 5). An important point, stressed by Bauer, is that many of the later manuscripts contain extended lists of periphrases to describe each rune-name, which could be exploited to create riddles for guessing the name of a person as described above in connexion with the early thirteenth-century inscription at Bø. These periphrases, described as *málrúnir* [speech-runes], are highly reminiscent of the Irish *briatharogam* [word-ogam] used to define ogam-names: compare, for instance, the ogam kennings and glosses given in Table 20 with, say, the Icelandic *málrúnir* cited by Bauer for the rune-name *ár*:

ár er gumna gjæði, gott-sumar, og algroin akur. Himna skeinjing, Haukr skýja, jarðar grooði, ... etc. [(A good) year is a blessing for men, good summer and flourishing field, gift of heaven, hawk in the clouds, earth's fruitfulness, ... etc.]⁸⁴

The transcript of the Anglo-Saxon *Rune Poem* would at first sight appear to be devoid of the political motivation that led to the publication of the Icelandic, Norwegian and Swedish poems. Bauer concludes:

Rein philologisches Interesse, und keine politische Propaganda, liegt der späten Überlieferung des Runengedichtes zugrunde, die im Kontext einer gedruckten grammatischen Abhandlung aus dem 18. Jh. erfolgte. [Pure philological interest, and no political propaganda, lies behind the late attestation of the rune-poem, in the context of a grammatical treatise printed in the eighteenth century.]⁸⁵

In reaching this conclusion, however, Bauer appears to have overlooked that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century revival of interest in the Anglo-Saxon period in England, which the *Rune Poem* attests to, was largely politically motivated. Paradoxically, the Dissolution of the Monasteries during the reign of Henry VIII, which led to the break-up of monastic libraries in the 1530s, also had the effect of encouraging collectors to re-assemble manuscripts in private libraries. One such collector was Matthew Parker (1504–75), who was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in 1559 and who had a particular interest in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. His interest was partly motivated by his desire to secure the stability of the state under Queen Elizabeth as well as the Church of England.⁸⁶ In this connexion, an important theme was the freedom of the pre-Conquest church in England from rigorous papal control, and Parker was especially engaged in gathering together evidence for this freedom in the documents that had been dispersed at the Dissolution. His quest was given added stimulus by a message sent to Queen Elizabeth in 1560 by the Magdeburg Centuriators, requesting material available in England concerning church history and church councils. The aim of the Centuriators, a group of Lutheran scholars led by Matthias Flacius (Vlacich) Illyricus (1520–75), was to write a century-by-century account of the church designed to show the errors of the Roman church and justify the doctrines of the Lutherans. With the aid of John Bale (1495–1563), prebendary of Canterbury, and of his chaplain and secretary, John Joscelyn (1529–1603), Parker provided the Centuriators with considerable material.

⁸⁴ Bauer 2003a: 186 (my English translation), quoting from, among other manuscripts, Copenhagen, Arnamagnæanske Samling 413 fol (1752).

⁸⁵ Bauer 2003a: 235 (my English translation).

⁸⁶ On this aspect of Parker's career and related documents, including his contacts with the Centuriators, see Graham and Watson 1998: 1–5.

Another collector of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, who was active slightly earlier than Parker, was Robert Talbot (c. 1505–58). Talbot is known to have been interested in runic material: at one time, he owned the manuscript now designated Oxford, St John’s College 17, of which folio 5v contains, among other lists, two Nordic *fubarks*, two English *fuborcs* and a runic alphabet – all, except the alphabet, with rune-names and sound-values.⁸⁷ It is also thought that Talbot may have annotated the Nordic rune alphabet that is now pasted as a strip onto folio 10r of London, British Library, Cotton, Domitian A. ix, as well as the leaf that now forms folio 11 of the same manuscript. The verso of the latter folio contains a *fuborc*, with rune-names dating from the late eleventh or twelfth century, which George Hickes copied on page 136 of his *Thesaurus* (see Table 32 (b)) and may have used to provide the rune-forms and names which he added to the left of the *Rune Poem* on the previous page 135 (see frontispiece A and Table 30 (a)).

In compiling his *Thesaurus*, Hickes, aided by a circle of scholars known as the ‘Oxford Saxonists’, was at pains to distinguish ‘pure Saxon’ from later, adulterated forms of the language. But his interests were not limited to language. Like Parker, he was interested in preserving the independence of the Anglican Church and the example of independence provided by the pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxon church. This motivation is clear from the addition to his 1687 sermon, *An Apologetical Vindication of the Church of England*, of ‘a section from the *Capitula* of Theodulf of Orléans, which indicated that the early English church had functioned without a pope. This inclusion, while small, demonstrates that Hickes intended to use his studies to further his political agenda.’⁸⁸ The section Hickes quotes from had been translated into Old English and it seems that he was unaware that the passage was not Anglo-Saxon in origin. Nevertheless, his antagonism to the Roman church is apparent in his remarks concerning the church’s veneration of the Virgin Mary.⁸⁹

In Chapters 20 to 22 of the *Thesaurus*, Hickes divides Saxon into ‘Pure Saxon’, ‘British-Saxon’ and ‘Dano-Saxon’ or ‘Semi-Saxon’, considering the Danish intrusions into the language as adulterations. The *Rune Poem* is presented in Chapter 22 as an example of ‘Dano-Saxon’. It is therefore ironic that a treatise aimed against the adulteration of the English language should ultimately have been responsible for preserving the only copy of the poem which Hickes saw as an example of an adulteration of ‘Pure Saxon’.

Reviving the tradition

In the light of the national influences at play in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries, it is hardly surprising that a national bias persisted in the work of philologists through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as summarized earlier, finding extreme expression in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s. A sense of national pride is also evident early on in the treatment of ogam. For example, Roderic O’Flaherty, who was roughly contemporary with George Hickes, Jón Eggertsson and Arni Magnússon, was proud to record that the future Northumbrian kings Oswald and Oswiu were educated in Ireland and that the Anglo-Saxon people were taught letters – presumably the insular

⁸⁷ Graham 1997: 295–316.

⁸⁸ McCabe 2010: 18.

⁸⁹ McCabe 2010: 205–6, quoting from Hickes 1705: 210–11.

script – by the Irish. At the same time, he emphasizes the uniquely Irish nature of the ogam script and its nomenclature.⁹⁰

Essentially, the aim of this thesis is to delve beneath the accretion of nationalist veneer that has tended to overlay the discussion of runes, and to a certain extent ogam, and to revert to the pre-Carolingian situation where scholars and scribes, inspired by the universalist view of the Christian church, were still assimilating local traditions, as encouraged by Pope Gregory, rather than parading ethnic disparity. As expressions of local culture, ogam and runes could be converted along with the people using the scripts. That conversion – that acculturation – included providing the characters of these local scripts with names on a par with the names given to the letters of the alphabets of the three sacred languages: Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

Layout of the text and tables

To demonstrate the interrelationship between the names of alphabet letters, ogam characters and runes, I have assembled various lists of name-forms and their interpretations drawn from manuscripts ranging from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries. I emphasize the documentary nature of this evidence because I find it unnecessary to follow the practice that has become customary among runologists,⁹¹ as well as in some discussions of ogam-names,⁹² whereby early name-forms are reconstructed in an attempt to derive an ‘original’ list of indigenous names. If my thesis is correct, there is no need to consider name-forms and interpretations other than those documented.

For ease of reference, I have separated my discussion from the documentary material itself. The text of my discussion is presented in Volume 1, while the documentary material is given in tabular form in Volume 2. This division into two volumes is intended to enable the reader more easily to refer back and forth between the discussion in the text and the documentary evidence presented in the tables. Except for the listing of the manuscripts and sources of my material in Tables 1–5 in Volume 2, the themes of the discussion in Volume 1 and the tables in Volume 2 are arranged in tandem, although it will incidentally be necessary to refer across themes. The discussion is divided into two parts. In Part 1, I deal separately with (a) the lists of names and interpretations associated with the Hebrew alphabet (§1.1 and Tables 6–15) and the Greek and Latin alphabets (§1.2 and Tables 6–18), with a résumé (§1.3 and Table 19), (b) the descriptions and interpretations given in the manuscripts for the names of ogam characters (§1.4 and Tables 20–26), and (c) the names and interpretations given in manuscripts for runes in the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic runic sequences and rune-poems (§1.5 and Tables 27–40). In Part 2, I use the material presented in Part 1 to demonstrate my thesis on the relation of letter-names to the names of ogam and runic characters. First, I establish the correspondence of alphabet letters and characters in the ogam and runic sequences (§2.1).

⁹⁰ O’Flaherty 1685, available in English translation by J. Hely (1793: 72–103), also accessible at <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/digital-book-collection/digital-books-by-subject/history-of-ireland/oflaherty-ogygia/>.

⁹¹ The tables of rune-names given by Elliott (1989: 48–9) and Düwel (2008: 198–9) provide typical examples.

⁹² See, for example, the etymologies proposed for the ogam-names (*(h)úath*, *géal* and *straif* by, among others, McManus (1988: 153–4, 153–4 and 159–60).

Subsequently, some general principles are enumerated which appear to have been applied in the creation of names for ogam and runic characters (§2.2). Finally, I make the comparison, character by character, between the names attached to alphabet letters and those attached to ogam characters (§2.3) and runic characters (§2.4).

It is not my intention in Part 1 to present new editions of the material involved but to gather together existing versions of the disparate lists and texts in a form that I hope will facilitate comparisons across languages and disciplines. The sections on the Hebrew alphabets document Jerome's initial exploitation of the interpretations of Hebrew letter-names he took over from Eusebius and his later, more philologically directed approach, as well as Ambrose's didactic treatment of the same names in his homilies. A didactic approach to alphabet letter-names is evident in rabbinical literature, especially in *The Alphabet of Rabbi Aqiba*, which, though not known in its present form until its publication in Renaissance Italy, contains the seeds of the tradition propagated in patristic writings throughout the Middle Ages. The same tradition was also incidentally transferred to the letters of the Greek and Latin alphabets, while poems by Ausonius and two Carolingian poets on letter-names illustrate a form of the tradition to which the Anglo-Saxon *Rune Poem* may have belonged. Finally, Virgilius Maro Grammaticus's idiosyncratic names for letters of the Latin alphabet display an extreme development of the patristic tradition, perhaps based on Irish sources.

The sections in Part 1 on ogam-names and their interpretations are concerned in the first place with the content and characterization of the kenning-like descriptions of the names and the glosses on the kennings given in the *Auraicept na nÉces* [Students' Primer] and *In Lebor Ogaim* [The Book of Ogams]. My presentation of the Irish texts and English translations is almost exclusively based on McManus,⁹³ but in a different format, which I hope will assist in making comparisons across the texts (Table 20). I also include a series of kennings and glosses discussed by Meroney and not listed by McManus.⁹⁴ Two further questions that have been addressed in this context are: (a) whether the ogam system of names was originally a list of tree-names, and (b) whether the sound-values suggested for some of the ogam characters in the manuscripts – such as H, Z (or St), and NG (or GG) – can be regarded as authentic, or whether they were assigned by scribes who no longer knew precisely what sounds the characters originally represented.

Finally in Part 1, I list the rune-names from a wide selection of manuscript lists, as well as the interpretations given in the Anglo-Saxon, Norwegian and Icelandic rune-poems, which I tabulate side by side for ease of comparison. However, I take a sceptical view of rune-names deduced from the names attached to letters of the Gothic alphabet or reconstructed from early epigraphical inscriptions supposedly containing ideographs.⁹⁵ I am also sceptical of the theory that a rune and its name were so intimately

⁹³ McManus 1988: 127–68.

⁹⁴ Meroney 1949: 19–43.

⁹⁵ I follow Page (2003a: 78) in translating the German or Scandinavian terms *Begriffsrunen/begrepsruner* or *symbolruner* as 'ideographs', which are a single runes occurring in a context that can only be interpreted if the rune in question is taken to be an abbreviation representing its name. The apparent occurrence of ideographs in early epigraphical inscriptions is taken to provide evidence for the existence of meaningful rune-names long before they were documented in manuscripts.

related that any linguistic development in the name entailed an adjustment to the sound-value represented by the rune. Accordingly, the name was so bound up with the rune that its invention was almost certainly coeval with the creation of the rune itself. The example most often cited in this connexion is the name that is supposed to have been attached to the fourth rune in the *fupark* sequence, which is normally reconstructed as **ansuz*. The initial vowel of this name eventually evolved in Old English and Frisian into an *o-*, and as a result the fourth rune came to represent [o], leading to a reform of the Anglo-Saxon rune-sequence as a whole. Because I find this explanation unsatisfactory, I explore the possibility that rune-names did not exist before the sound-changes and the consequent reform of the rune-sequences, but were created after the sound-changes had led to the reform.

Part 2 of Volume 1 begins with an analysis of the *fupark* and ogam signary in relation to the Mediterranean alphabets, aimed at establishing which letter, and hence which letter-name, may originally have been paired with which ogam and runic character and name. For this purpose, I rely on my 1999 article, in which I examined the possible origin of the *fupark* and ogam signary on the basis of the sequence of characters in each scheme.⁹⁶ The main thrust of the argument I gave in that article is unchanged but some details have been refined. Taking this analysis as a basis, together with the principles for creating ogam- and rune-names, I present the detailed comparison of Mediterranean alphabet letter-names with ogam- and rune-names which underlies my thesis.

A NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTIONS, DIACRITICS AND TRANSLATIONS

Hebrew texts are given in square Hebrew without diacritics, as has been the convention in previous literature on the origins of Hebrew letter-names (see, for example, Wünsche 1909, Müller 1911, and Wutz 1914). Disambiguation of Hebrew without diacritics contributed to the ingenuity and creativity of both rabbinical and patristic interpretations, as described in the sections on *The Alphabet of Rabbi Aqiba* and Jerome's transcriptions (§1.1.2 and §1.1.3). Transcription in square Hebrew, however, is an anachronism, since early manuscripts in the West give transcriptions of Hebrew names and words in the Latin alphabet. The earliest letter-forms in Hebrew script, in a Samaritan form of the alphabet, date from the end of the eighth century. From the end of the ninth century letter-forms closer to the script introduced by Ezra after the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon, usually termed the 'Jewish alphabet', are recorded.⁹⁷ The transcriptions in square Hebrew are intended to provide a bridge between the Hebrew originals and the Latin versions.

Greek texts are given with diacritics, as recorded in the literature cited in Volume 2, Table 1. Latin texts, on the other hand, are given without any indication of vowel length, except where vowel length is critical to the interpretation. Runic inscriptions and single runes in roman script are transcribed in lower case bold, as **h** or **h**-rune. Latin inscriptions and ogam characters transcribed in roman script are given in upper case.

⁹⁶ Griffiths 1999: 164–210.

⁹⁷ See Singer 1928 (repr. 1953): 283–314; also Seebold 2000: 11–13 and 34–5.

The texts cited in Volume 2 are given in roman type font, with italics indicating expansion of abbreviations. Where needed, missing letters are supplied in parentheses. In the discussions in Volume 1, non-English texts other than quotations from modern books are cited in italics, with expansions in roman. In citations in Old English, Old Norse and Old Irish in Volume 2, vowel length is not indicated where it is not indicated in the original text. In the discussions in Volume 1, however, vowel-length indications have been added. Where necessary, phonemes are indicated between slashes, / /, phonetic pronunciation between square brackets, [], and graphic representation between angled brackets, < >.

Translations are given either between square brackets or in a footnote. English translations of Jerome's Vulgate Latin Bible are taken from the Douay-Rheims Version (indicated as D-R), because its rendering is based on the Vulgate; on occasion, however, I compare the D-R Version with the Authorized (i. e. King James) Version (indicated as AV), because the latter may be more familiar to English-speaking readers (and is closer to the Hebrew in some cases).⁹⁸

In my discussion of the Hebrew letter-names in Part 1, I devote a separate section to Jerome's transcription of the names (§1.1.3). Two specific problems in this connexion, however, should be mentioned here: (a) how the Hebrew letter *vav* is represented in Latin texts, and (b) how the Latin semivowel *u* is represented. Writers like Jerome and Ambrose, as well as medieval scholars, represented the Hebrew letter-name currently spelled *vav* as *uau* or *uaf*, while Jerome listed the letter in an alphabetical sequence as being equivalent to Latin *u* (see Table 8). In classical and medieval Latin, the letter *u* was used for both the vowel and the semivowel, but in recent times the general tendency has been to represent the semivowel as *v*, but this practice is not universal. In texts cited from modern printed books, I have followed the practice of the editors: in his *Onomastica sacra*, for instance, De Lagarde uses *u* for the semivowel, whereas Migne, in his *Patrologia Latina*, uses *v*. In my comparative lists of glosses in the tables in Volume 2, on the other hand, I have followed the practice of the manuscripts and used *u* throughout. This compromise is not entirely satisfactory, because it can lead to some conflict of spellings in the course of the discussion, e. g. *pauor* or *pavor* beside *pavimentum*. But taken in context, this ambivalence is, I hope, not disturbingly confusing.

⁹⁸ For D-R, see <http://www.drbo.org/>. For AV, see <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>.