

Richard III's Books:

VIII. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* with *The Prophecy of the Eagle* and Commentary

2. The Prophecy and Commentary (continued)

**ANNE F. SUTTON AND
LIVIA VISSER-FUCHS**

The Text of *The Prophecy of the Eagle* and its Commentary

*The Prophecy of the Eagle*¹ is not readily accessible,² but since a full Latin text would be out of place in the present journal it has been decided to provide a translation only. It is an extraordinary text, confused, confusing and obscure, but as such prophecies appear to have been part of almost every educated person's library in Richard III's time, it is interesting to get at least an impression of what such texts are like. Richard may have been as impatient of this particularly corrupt copy as the present authors, or he may never have read it, but, as will be seen in the concluding essay on the Leningrad manuscripts, he and his house were as preoccupied with the prophetic view of history and the propaganda aspect of prophecies as their predecessors and successors, including Charles I and Cromwell.

The translation given here on the whole follows the Leningrad manuscript, but in some places its text makes no sense at all and a compromise has had to be reached after studying other copies (see the manuscripts listed in note 1). Translating the corrupt text has been a task comparable to Hercules' cleansing of the Augean Stables because of the layers of accumulated errors, and perhaps unsuccessful. Particular thanks are due to the twelfth-century author of the Welsh version and J. J. Parry, his modern translator, and to Geoffrey of Monmouth and his translator, Lewis Thorpe.

The text is headed, in the middle of a three-line blank space: *Hic incipit prophecia aquile* (Here begins . . .) and it has a two-line initial. There is one paragraph mark in the prophecy itself, preceding the words *Tenebrosus draco*. The rest of the text is written continuously with rather arbitrary punctuation and capitalisation.

Wording and contents of the *Vision of King Edward* changed considerably in the course of time. The 'green tree' (*arbor viridis*) became a 'fruitful tree' (*arbor fertilis*)³ and other words were lost or altered. In many manuscripts the rubric reads: 'a prophecy of Merlin Silvester revealed to Edward by two holy men'.

The next section appears to be the remains of what has been called a 'legal note' in a corrupt form. Its contents are incomprehensible and elude definitive translation. Its inclusion may be due to its once having been part of a commentary which does not survive. Its association with the *Vision* may be based on the three *iugera* (acres) mentioned in both texts.⁴

Parts of the *Three Dragons* section that follows were known to Gerald of Wales. The difference between his text and the present copy (and those of the other manuscripts studied) is slight and merely due to successive scribal errors.

The *White King* appears to have been composed as one unit. Apparently none of it was known to Gerald of Wales, but it may have been written before or during his lifetime. In other manuscripts these sections occur on their own or in combination with one or either of the others.

The Commentary follows immediately after the *Prophecy* itself. In the left margin is written *hic incipit arbor aquile chefton* (here begins the tree of the eagle [of Shaftesbury]). Bits of the prophecy text are repeated and, at first, written in large capitals. The spelling, and even the wording, of the copied passages frequently differs from that in the continuous text. At the beginning of the *Three Dragons* section and the long lists of names representing the three peoples, British, Anglo-Saxon and Norman, the text is in columns. On folios 83 and 83b the text is again written in one column. The repeated parts of the *Prophecy* are no longer written in capitals or large letters but merely introduced by a paragraph mark.

Editorial Procedure

For the sake of clarity the sections have been given titles; these do not occur in the manuscript. All editorial comments and textual additions are in square brackets. The textual additions are taken from other copies of the *Prophecy of the Eagle* and from Geoffrey's *Historia* which the Commentator followed very closely. The sentences in italics represent the sections known to Gerald of Wales. Pointed brackets mark the *Here Prophecy*. The lines repeated from the *Prophecy* by the Commentator are in capitals and only their first and last few words are given. Other details are explained in the notes.

Translation of *The Prophecy of the Eagle* and its Commentary

[The Vision of Edward the Confessor].⁵

A fruitful tree cut off from its original trunk will be separated from its own root by a space of three acres. Without force of human hand and without any command it is returned to its trunk, that is to Kambrus and Kambria.⁶ When it has restored itself to its own root and regained its sap, it will flourish again and bear fruit: then a remedy can be hoped for to this trouble.

[A 'legal note'; this text has proved untranslatable; it reads:]

Qui cum unum iugerum solum pro indiviso habuerit et tradiderit secundum

omnium sententias non totum dominium transibit. Sed partem dimidii iugerii [sic] quemadmodum si trium ad fundum similiter dedisset.

[The Three Dragons].

As the White Dragon⁷ expelled the Red Dragon so a Dark Dragon will throw out the White Dragon. The Dark Dragon, fierce and terrible, will come flying and burn up the whole island with the flaming fire of its mouth: From its loins will come forth a ram with a fine fleece who will strike⁸ with its horns in the east. A little king of venomous aspect will also come forth and under his gaze faith and religion will quake. A lion will also come forth and succeed the kinglet when he has been struck by lightning, and under its rule the rigor of justice will be made impartial. A crab from the sea will succeed the lion and under him liberty will disappear from liberty when mattocks have been made into lances. A tusked boar will succeed the crab and, making his den in thick thorn-bushes,⁹ it will whet its tusks on the forces of the kingdom. From the lust of the boar will issue cubs¹⁰ who will turn on their father and bite like dogs. The injustice of the father will bring low the sons, of whom the first will climb to the summit of the kingdom, but also suddenly wither away¹¹ like a spring flower before it has borne fruit. *Because of the sins of the father the sons will sin against the father and the sin that was first will be the cause of the sins that follow. The sons will rise against the father and the bowels will conspire against the belly in revenge. Against the man of blood, blood will rise and the strife will be terrible.*¹² *There will come from the east*¹³ *a strong whirlwind rushing upon the west, overturning all the forces*¹⁴ *of Ireland. Princes will fall down*¹⁵ *in its presence and they will win its love by a dark treaty.*¹⁶ *Grief will be turned to joy when they kill the father in the womb of the mother.*¹⁷ A lynx descending from the seed of the lion will succeed, and its sharpness will pierce both the strength of iron and stone and by its attack Normandy will lose both islands, and in its time by a miraculous change¹⁸ the sword will be separated from the sceptre, and because of fraternal discord one who is unlooked for will reign. The four-horse chariot of the fifth will be turned round in a square and when twice two couples have been taken away the remaining two-horse chariot will trample the kingdoms.¹⁹ In the last days of the white dragon its seed will be scattered in three parts: (one will draw towards Apulia and will be made rich by the treasure from the east, the second will go down to Ireland and will take delight in the temperance of the west, the third, however, will remain in the country and will be found worthless and empty.)²⁰ *A fiery ball arising*²¹ *in the east will circle and devour Brittany. The birds of the island will fly to its light and the greater birds of prey*²² *will fall*²³ *into captivity. Out of this fire a spark will be born, for fear of which the islanders will tremble.*²⁴ *The one that is absent will appear greater than the one that is present,*²⁵ *the second expedition will be stronger than the first.*²⁶

[The White King].

When the lion of justice is dead²⁷ a white and noble king will rise up in Britain, first flying, then riding and then going down, and in this same going down²⁸ he will be snared. Then he will be led through Britain [and he will be pointed at with the finger and it will be said]: where is the [white] and noble king.²⁹ Then his followers will band together and dispossess people on his behalf³⁰ and men will be sold³¹ like horses and cattle, and reform will be sought, but none will be found, except a

head for a head, and then one will go where the sun rises and the other where the sun sets. After that it will be said throughout Britain: he is king and he is not king. After that he will lift up his head and show that he is king with many deeds³² but not with healing. And then it will be the age of the stronger men,³³ and whatever a man seizes he will hold as his own.³⁴ Behold the greed and effusion of blood and how many churches become furnaces; what [one sows³⁵] another will reap and death of miserable life will prevail; the love of few men will remain entire; and what is agreed in the evening will be violated in the morning. After that a chick of the eagle³⁶ will come from the south on wooden horses over the foaming flood of the sea, sail to Britain and reach it. Then immediately there will be a thirst for³⁷ another house of the eagle and Mercury³⁸ will be worthless. But everyone will be careful to guard what is his and get what is someone else's. Then the white and weak³⁹ king will go to the west and to the old place beside the running water. Then his enemies will come running from all sides and the army of his enemies will be shaped like a shield. Then he will be attacked as much [from] the front as on both sides: Then the white and noble king will slide into death.⁴⁰ Then the eagle's chick will build a nest on the highest point of all Britain and he will not be killed as a young man, nor will he live to old age. Then common goodness⁴¹ of heart will not suffer injury to him who goes to the peaceful kingdom.⁴²

[Here follows the Commentary; the text commented on is given in capitals:]

A FRUITFUL TREE . . . THREE ACRES. The fruitful tree must be interpreted as the race of Brutus. Cut off from its trunk, that is from the loins of Brutus who was the original trunk. He came to Albion with the Trojans, defeated the giants and founded Trinovantum⁴³ and other cities, and he knew Ignogen, his wife, and fathered three famous [sons]: Locrinus, Kambrus and Albanactus, and he divided the island among these three in such a way that [each] part was named after its prince: the part given to Locrinus is called Loegria after his name, now England, and that given to Kambrus, Kambria, now Wales,⁴⁴ and that given to Albanactus, Albania, now Scotland; and [though divided] in three parts it is one, Great Britain, and that is why is said 'three acres'.

SEPARATED FROM ITS OWN ROOT. The whole progeny of Brutus is driven out of Loegria, its proper inheritance, by famine, as is found in the prophecies and histories.⁴⁵ In the histories, however, there was a second disaster [during] the life of King Cadwallader, because a terrible and long-remembered famine afflicted the people [and there was no food] except what the huntsman's skill could provide. And this famine killed off [so many people] that they could not bury [the dead].⁴⁶ Because of the terrible famine and the mortality that ensued the surviving Britons left kingdom and crown and retired to the parts of Kambria, in the west of the kingdom, where they still remain.⁴⁷

WITHOUT FORCE . . . IN KAMBRIA. This is proved in the history of Brutus⁴⁸ by the lament of Cadwallader who said: 'Woe to us sinners for our cowardly sins with which we never failed to offend God when we had time for repentance. The vengeance of His might⁴⁹ lies heavy upon us and uproots⁵⁰ us from our native soil, we whom in the past neither the Romans, such as Julius Caesar, nor the Scots and the Picts, nor Wanius and Melga,⁵¹ nor the cunning and treacherous Saxons were able⁵² to exterminate.' Because of the anger and indignation of God they were

uprooted from their own lands and returned to a distant region, that is Kambria, where they remain in sorrow.

WHEN IT HAS RESTORED . . . TO THIS TROUBLE. This concerns the remedy which is spoken of in the life of Cadwallader⁵³ by the Angelic Voice which announced to him that he should go to Rome, to Pope Sergius, and that there, when he had completed his penance, he would be numbered among the blessed, and that the island would be regained in the future [by the British people], as soon as the appointed moment comes, as the prophet testifies. The blessed king prepared a ship for himself, and he will be numbered among the blessed in the hall of the twelve. In trouble and anxiety they remain in the rocky places. Remaining there in sorrow, as the prophet testifies; their little gardens will be stocked again with foreign seed and the Red Dragon will pine away at the far end of the pool. They languish sorrowfully in exile.

WHEN/WHO [part of the legal note] . . . SO A DARK DRAGON WILL THROW OUT THE WHITE DRAGON.⁵⁴ The red dragon represents the people of the Britons and their expulsion from the kingdom by famine and by the mortality caused by the famine. They held the diadem of the kingdom for fifteen hundred years reigning so foolishly [?]

Brut. loclin. magda
malu. mempris. mumis.
Ebrac et Brut
. . . [68 names *in toto*] . . .
morvid. bonasal
corboniam. artigal

The Dark Dragon represents the Duke of the Normans who defeated [?] King Harold and the English in battle, at the time when the names that follow possessed this land. Towards the year 1065 [?] . . . of the English . . . flames . . . a comet.⁵⁵

[Here follows the remainder of the list of British kings.]⁵⁶

Graciam. constantin
Connstans. vortiger
. . . [22 names *in toto*] . . .
osuuod. caduualeder
yvor et yni

This said race held the land for 1500 years and then lost the land through famine, as can be found in the life of Cadwallader.⁵⁷ The White Dragon signifies the people of the English and their overthrow by the Normans. They held the land in turmoil and subjection for 150 years; for 300 years more they held it under the following rulers[?].⁵⁸

alfrith. Eldrich
suich et sirh
ulfrih et veirh
. . . [53 names *in toto*] . . .
knort. hardeknort
harold harofot

The said race held the land for 150 years by tribute and at will. They ruled for 300 years and more. Through the Duke of the Normans, William the Bastard, they lost the land.⁵⁹ The Duke of the Normans crossed the sea, defeated Harold.⁶⁰ The year of the incarnation of our lord one thousand and sixty-six the Duke of

Normandy crossed the sea and defeated Harold and he defeated him by means of these men.⁶¹

[Here follows a list of the reputed companions of William the Conqueror]

mandeville et dadeville
servile et setheville
Onfraville et dustrenville
... [250 names *in toto*] ...
ponis et pont de large
Stanges et savalge.

By means of these knights⁶² named above William the Bastard conquered the realm of England on the kin⁶³ of King Harold. Those that issued of the blood of Saint Edward of Westminster⁶⁴ are named hereafter.

Symont filz Adam
Thomas fiz William
... [22 names *in toto*] ...
Bottone et Banttone
Balbecbri et balbetone

The aforesaid were born of the blood of Saint Edward of Westminster. Their souls be commended to God.⁶⁵

THE DARK DRAGON . . . ITS MOUTH.⁶⁶ This is William the Bastard whom we have mentioned above.

FROM ITS LOINS . . . IN THE EAST. This is Robert Curthose⁶⁷ who took Antioch and Jerusalem with his companions. In Jerusalem fire came down from heaven and lit his candle,⁶⁸ but he ignored it and put it out. He was later captured by his brother Henry⁶⁹ and deprived of his possessions.

A LITTLE KING . . . WILL QUAKE. This is William Rufus who destroyed thirty churches in the New Forest and did many other things against the will of God and [was killed] there by a knight of his at the instigation of the devil.⁷⁰

A LION . . . MADE IMPARTIAL. This is Henry I who founded Reading Abbey and died without offspring of his own, because William his son with many nobles died at sea and their bodies were never found. One daughter remained to the said Henry, called Matilda the Empress.⁷¹

A CRAB . . . INTO LANCES. This is Stephen of Blois who was at war during the whole of his reign and was captured in the neighbourhood of Lincoln by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, brother of the Empress Matilda and that is why the Eagle says liberty will disappear from liberty.⁷²

A TUSKED BOAR . . . WILL BE TERRIBLE. A TUSKED BOAR ETC.⁷³ Henry II was the son of Matilda the Empress and born of Geoffrey, Count of Anjou,⁷⁴ as it is said. This Henry took the wife of his lord, Louis, King of the Franks, and begot four sons on her in adultery of whom these are the names: Henry, Richard, Geoffrey and John. These all [turned against] their own father as the Eagle testifies: from the lust of the boar will be born cubs who will turn on their father biting like dogs.

THERE WILL COME . . . THE MOTHER.⁷⁵ This was King John who went to Ireland and subjugated the people there.

A LYNX⁷⁶ . . . WILL REIGN. Henry III⁷⁷ destroyed the strength of the Kingdom and lost what remained in Normandy [for] England and Ireland forever. This Henry gave away on behalf of himself and his heirs all the rights and claims he had to the Dukedom of Normandy forever. Thus his seal was broken and

changed: where he once held a sword as sceptre he now holds a staff. This sword derived from the conquest of Duke William the Bastard and that is why the Eagle says: by a miraculous change⁷⁸ the sword will be separated from the sceptre. THE FOUR-HORSE CHARIOT . . . THE KINGDOMS. It was the said Henry III who in the fourth place was deprived of the ancient dignity.⁷⁹ IN THE LAST DAYS . . . WORTHLESS AND EMPTY. The end. Thanks be to God.⁸⁰

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The present article needs to be read in conjunction with the previous one in *The Ricardian*, vol. 8, no. 107, (1989), pp.290-304. — So far the present authors have found copies of the whole or one or two sections of the *Prophecy of the Eagle* in the following mss.:

British Library Mss.:

Add. 6924. ff.164 ff., nineteenth-century copy from Mss. Cotton Claudius B vii and Nero A iv; see H. L. D. Ward, ed., *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 1883, vol. 1, p.304. Contains the *Three Dragons* and the *White King*.

Add. 40007. ff.40-42b. late 12th c.; not in Ward. Contains merely the *Vision of King Edward*, following on the *Prophecies of Merlin*. The *Vision* is ascribed to Merlin Silvester, but there is a second rubric which mentions Edward and the two holy men by whose 'testimony' this prophecy of Merlin was revealed to the King.

Arundel 66. f.291b. c.1490: Ward, pp.301-2. Contains the *Vision* and the *Three Dragons*. The rubric of the former ascribes it to Merlin Silvester and mentions the two holy men (see preceding ms.).

Arundel 409. ff.23-23b. early 13th c.; Ward, p.233. Follows immediately after a mutilated *Historia Regum Brianniae*: contains the *Three Dragons* and the *White King* and is headed *Prophetia merlini silvestris*.

Cotton Tiberius A ix. ff.2-5b. 13th c.; Ward, pp.295-6. Contains the *Vision* including the 'legal passage', the *Three Dragons* and the *White King*.

Cotton Nero A iv. ff.63-64b. early 14th c.; Ward, pp.297-8. Contains the *Three Dragons* with a running commentary inserted after each sentence, probably datable to the end of the reign of Henry III; and the *White King* without glosses. See Ward for the rubric ascribing the text to the Eagle of Shaftesbury and other details.

Cotton Nero D viii. f.175. 14th-c. addition; Ward, p.250. Contains the *Three Dragons*, headed *Quidam prophetia merlini silvestris de regno Anglorum*.

Cotton Vespasian E vii. f.93 and f.111b; c.1460-80; Ward, pp.320-4. Folio 93 has the *White King*, headed *Item prophetia merlini. de eodem sexto H*, relating the text to Henry VI. On folio 111b is the *Vision*, headed *Sanctus Edwardus Rex Anglie confessor*, and followed by an explanatory text. The two items are part of a collection of 56 prophecies, perhaps made for a member or a connection of the Percy family.

Cotton Faustina A viii. ff.115-116. c.1240; Ward, pp.292-5. Contains the *Vision*, with a rubric stating that it was Merlin Silvester's and revealed to Edward by the testimony of two holy men and through the Holy Spirit (? compare Arundel 66 above). The 'legal note' here precedes the *Vision*, which is followed by the *Three Dragons* and the *White King* as separate texts but both also ascribed to Silvester.

Cotton Appendix iv. f.102b. 15th c.; Ward, p.315. Contains the *Vision* and the *Three Dragons*. The latter is ascribed to Merlin Silvester and is incomplete.

Harley 1717. f.250b. 13th c.; Ward, p.312. Contains the *Three Dragons* and the *White King*, added to the ms. at a later date but in the 13th c.

Harley 7353. picture 10. temp. Edward IV. not in Ward; a roll containing pictorial and genealogical propaganda for Edward IV. One of the ten pictures shows Edward's flight to Calais in 1459; part of the *Vision* text is written on a small scroll underneath, relating it to Edward's return (illustrated in C. Ross, *Edward IV*, London 1974, pl.3; the scroll is not visible).

Harley Roll C5. temp. Henry V and Edward IV. Contains a genealogy from Noe to Henry IV and his sons. Opposite Edward the Confessor the *Vision* is recorded, with an *expositio* that appears to have been made in Henry I's time. Its wording is reminiscent of Aelred of Rievaulx's interpretation in his *Life of King Edward*. The root or trunk of the tree here is Alfred the Great.

Royal 5 F xv, f.3b, 13th c.; Ward, p.313. Contains only the *White King*, with a longer ending referring to London and its walls.

Royal 8 D iii, f.163, 13th c.; Ward, p. 297. Contains only the *White King*, with a longer ending referring to London and its walls.

Royal 5 E ix, ff.27-27b, c.1400; Ward, p.314. Contains the *Three Dragons* and the *White King* and the rubric — but not the text — of the *Vision*. It is ascribed to Silvester and followed by Thomas Becket's dream of the Holy Oil.

Royal 13 E x, f.267b, 15th c.; not in Ward. Contains only the *White King* headed *De quibusdam in [. . . ?] Anglico* in a later hand.

Royal 15 C xvi, ff.183b-184, 14th c.; Ward, pp.239 and 313. This ms. is very similar to the Leningrad one discussed here in that it contains Guido delle Colonne's *Historia Troiae*, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* and the whole of the *Prophecy of the Eagle*.

Sloane 289, f.129b, 15th c.; Ward, p.250. Contains an incomplete text of the *Vision*.

Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College Ms. 249/277, f.217b, 1464. This ms. contains Higden's *Polychronicon*, Geoffrey's *Historia*, works by Cicero and many prophetic texts, the *Prophecy of the Eagle* among them, headed *Hec prophesia Merlinii Silvestris Anglorum Regi Edwardo sancto huius nominis tertio revelata fuit*, see M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Gonville and Caius College*, Cambridge 1907, pp.300-5.

Cambridge, St. John's College Ms. G 16 ff.112b-115b, 14th c.; see M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of St. John's College*, Cambridge, Cambridge 1913, pp.217-22. This ms. contains the whole of the *Prophecy of the Eagle* and the Commentary. The similarity of this text to Richard III's copy is surprising considering the much earlier date of production and the confusion and corruption of the contents. Capitals, punctuation, paragraph signs and even errors show little difference, only the spelling of the names in the lists caused their own problems. The *Prophecy* is headed *Hic incipit prophetia aquile scheflonie* and the Commentary ends *Explicit distinctio seheston*. Some details concerning this copy will be given in the notes to the translation below.

Dublin, Trinity College Ms. 514, ff.78-79, 13th/14th c. Contains the whole of the *Prophecy of the Eagle* with contemporary marginal and interlinear glosses on the *Vision*, the *Three Dragons* and on the first passage of the *White King*. At the end of the greater part of Aelred of Rievaulx's interpretation of the *Vision* is quoted as part of the main text of the ms. on a new page (f.79) and in the hand of the scribe. The ms. also has Dares' *Story of Troy*, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* (Second Variant Version), commentaries on the *Prophecies of Merlin* and many other prophetic and didactic items. We are indebted to the Librarian of Trinity College for photocopies and a detailed description of the ms. See also T. K. Abbott, ed., *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin*, Dublin/London 1900, pp.77-8.

Dublin, Trinity College Ms. 515, ff.3-3b, second half 13th c. Contains the *Three Dragons* and the *White King*. The ms. also has the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*, Dares' *Story of Troy*, Geoffrey's *Historia* and two genealogies, Adam to Cadwallader and Cyprius to Brutus. References the same as for the preceding ms.

Leiden, University Library Ms. Vossius Lat. F 77, ff.122-122b, after 1282. Has the whole of the *Prophecy of the Eagle*, following immediately after Geoffrey's *Historia*. It is headed *Aquila prophetizans de anglia* and has interlinear and marginal glosses. Full description of the ms. in E. M. C. van Houts, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Ph.D. thesis, Groningen 1982, pp.237-8.

A roll in Latin containing a summary genealogical history from Adam; it has much Welsh material, both narrative and lists of princes. The *Vision* and its interpretation are evidently taken from Aelred's *Life*. Printed in T. Wright, *Feudal manuals of English history, a series of popular sketches of our national history . . . from the thirteenth century to the fifteenth for the use of the feudal gentry and nobility*, London 1872, pp.xviii-xix, 136-8.

Other mss. contain prophecies that are ascribed to Merlin Silvester but have different contents (e.g. Mss. Royal 12 C xii and 13 A iii, Cotton Claudius E viii). There are also other prophecies ascribed to eagles and copies of the *Prophecies of Merlin* are very numerous. Only the British Library mss. and those at Leiden, Dublin and St. John's College, Cambridge, have been studied in detail. We are grateful to Julia Crick for informing us of the existence and similarity of the St. John's College copy and to the librarian of the college for arranging for us to have a microfilm. We are indebted to Margaret Kekewich for the references to BL, Harl. 7353 and Harley Roll C 5.

2. A Welsh text, and a Latin text (collated from BL Mss. Cotton Faustina A viii, Nero D viii and Arundel 409) are printed in J. J. Parry, *Brut y Brenhinedd*, Cambridge, Mass., 1937, pp.225-6. His English translation, pp.30-3, is of the Welsh version. Welsh text (and notes in Welsh) also in H. Lewis, *Proffwydoliath yr eryr*, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, vol. 9, pt. 2 (1938), pp.112-5.
3. Comparison of the mss. suggests that the change from *viridis* to *fertilis* took place at the end of the twelfth century. Some fifteenth-century mss. have *viridi(s)* but they are clearly copies from very early exemplars. *Sterilis* also occurs.
4. This section was called 'a legal note, relative to the transfer of land' by Ward (see note 1), p.293. The text is very corrupt and varies. The present authors have not been able to trace its origins or translate it to their satisfaction; the Latin text is given below. In other mss., e.g. the Leiden one (see n.1), its beginning reads: *Qui cum trium iugerum*.
5. This text is very corrupt. The Latin reads: *Arbor fertilis a primo trunco decisa, ad spacium trium iugerum a radice propria separabitur nulla hominis manu cogenie nulla auctoritate que ad suum truncum reversa est, scilicet ad kambrum et kambrum in antiquam radicem cum se suscepit receptio que succo reversum floruerit et fructum fecerit tunc sperandum est in hac tribulatione remedium*. Successive interpreters so altered the text that it eventually only resembled the prophecy as found in the Anonymous *Life of Edward*.
6. The words *scilicet ad kambrum et kambriflam* also occur as a marginal addition in BL, Ms. Royal 15 C xvi, f.183b (see n.1); they are a gloss which became part of the text.
7. The Latin of this section begins *Sicut ruheum draconem* . . . Some words and phrases in this section clearly derive from the *Prophecies of Merlin*.
8. The Leningrad ms. (henceforth L) has *cenus*, monster, whale, this should probably read *ictus*, blows.
9. L has *denitis infruocetis* [sic, ?]; for the translation the *denitis fructicetis* of other copies has been used.
10. L has *cacisii*, the Commentary *catuli* which is probably correct.
11. L has *emarasset*, the Commentary *emarasset*; this should read *emarascet*, as in other copies.
12. The lines in italics were known to Gerald of Wales (*Expugnatio Hibernica*, bk.1, ch.45) and ascribed to Merlin Silvester. Gerald's quotation continues 'until Scotland will bewail the penitence of the pilgrim'; many copies of the *Prophecy* have this and its omission is probably a scribal error.
13. L reads *ab euro* here and in the Commentary; other copies have *ab aurora*, from the dawn.
14. *Robora*, this could also mean 'oaks'.
15. L and some other copies have *precedent*; this should probably be *procedent*.
16. These lines in italics were known to Gerald of Wales (*Expugnatio Hibernica*, bk.1, chs.30 and 33) and ascribed by him to St. Moling (died 697, festival day 17 June, author of prophetic poems); he quotes them in two parts. See A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin, eds., *The Conquest of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*, Dublin 1978 (text and trans.), p.301, and R. Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England*, New York 1911, pp.81-2.
17. This sentence in italics was known to Gerald of Wales (*Expugnatio Hibernica*, bk.1, ch.20), but he adds 'the sons' as the killers and his quotation is followed immediately by sentences that do not occur in any copy of the *Prophecy of the Eagle*; he ascribed the whole of his version to Merlin Silvester.
18. See note 78 below.
19. In the present commentary these lines are the last to be explained.
20. These lines in pointed brackets are the *Here Prophecy* (see *The Ricardian*, vol. 8, no. 107 (1989), p.294). The Commentary repeats but does not interpret them.
21. L appears to have *ascendens*: most copies — and Gerald of Wales, to whom these lines in italics were known — have *ascender*, will arise.
22. L has *maiores milvi*; some copies and Gerald have *maiores in illis*, the greater among them.
23. L has *convenerunt*, have come together; most copies and Gerald have *corruent*.
24. L has *concremasset*, will consume with fire, sg.; most copies and Gerald have *contremiscant*, they will tremble.
25. *Major presente absens videatur*; most texts have *videbitur*. Parry (see n.2) has *indebitur*, which is probably an error.
26. L has *potior quia priore fiet secundus excessus* (*quia* seems untranslatable; most texts have . . . *potiorque*). All these lines in italics were known to Gerald; he quotes the first two sentences separately. *Expugnatio Hibernica*, bk.1, chs.30 and 33, and the entire passage again in book 2, ch.32.
27. The text begins *Mortuo leone iustitie* and can easily be identified by these opening words. The present text has no commentary on this section. The 'lion of justice' probably derives from Merlin's prophecies.
28. L has *in eodem cessu*; most copies have *in eo descensu*, in this going down.

29. There are many errors in this sentence (which also occur in St. John's Ms. G 16, see n.1). The additions in square brackets are conjectural and collated from other copies.
30. The Latin reads: *et namum pro eo capies[ur]*.
31. Reading *mercatio*, selling; some texts continue *hominum*, of men.
32. Reading *multis faturis*, when much will have been done (?); other copies have *multis fracturis*, when much will have been broken (?).
33. L has *tempus meliorum*, the time of the better or stronger men; other copies have *ius* or *tempus milvorum*, the 'right' or the 'time' of the birds of prey. One commentary (Dublin, Trinity College Ms. 514, see n.1) explains *tempus milvorum* as 'time of war'.
34. L has *et quisque rapuerit*: this should be *et quod quisque rapuerit*.
35. *Alius seret*, omitted by L.
36. Originally meant to be Henry II, it was later applied to Henry IV, according to Taylor (see n.16), p.92.
37. L has *siticiens*, but this is clearly an error. Other copies have *faciet*, *sciet* or *seisiet*. It is not clear which word is 'original' or what is meant, perhaps 'he shall seize another house'.
38. L and most other copies have *mercurius*, money (?); some have *incurius*.
39. L has *dehilis* as have many copies; it may be a scribal error for *nobilis*.
40. L has *in aurum*, into gold, as have other copies; perhaps in *aurum*, into the air, was meant (see the translation of the Welsh version, Parry (see n.2), p.33). The Dublin commentator (Trinity College Ms. 415, see n.1) adds: 'that is, death, air'.
41. L has *generalis probitas*, other copies *probitas generosa*, generous goodness (?).
42. As the commentator in Dublin, Trinity College Ms. 514 (see n.1) wrote: 'that is, he dies'.
43. In the margin is written *londonium*.
44. The text reads *wallium*: 'wales' is written in the margin.
45. The commentator means books seven and twelve of Geoffrey's *Historia*.
46. This passage, like several that follow is very close to Geoffrey's *Historia*; see N. Wright, ed., *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth I*, Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS. 568, Cambridge 1985, p.144, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe, Harmondsworth 1966, pp.280-1.
47. This interpretation of the *Vision of Edward the Confessor* is different from most others, especially the late ones which all relate it to English kings of their own period. Here it is taken to refer to the Britons only, and the land of exile appears to be Wales. The non-interference of a human hand is here applied to the *separation* of the tree from its trunk (the going into exile because of their *own* sins), and no remedy has yet been found: the Britons (Welsh) had not yet returned or been restored to power in the commentator's view.
48. The 'history of Brutus' is Geoffrey's *Historia*. For the passage that follows, see Wright, *Bern* (see n.46), p.145, and Thorpe (see n.46), p.281.
49. The text of L has *illius peccatis ultio*; since the rest of the sentence is taken verbatim from the *Historia*, *illius potestatis ultio* has been translated: see Wright, *Bern* (see n.46), p.145, and Thorpe (see n.46), p.281.
50. L and St. John's College Ms. G 16 have *exciptat*, this should be *extirpat* (?).
51. The text reads *Cuanus* and *Malga*, but Wanius and Melga, 'the leaders of the abominable Picts and Huns' from Geoffrey's *Historia* must be meant: see Wright, *Bern* (see n.46), p.57, and Thorpe (see n.46), pp.142-3.
52. L has *conuiverunt* (?); Wright, *Bern*, (see n.46), p.145, *quiverunt*: at some stage 'q' must have been read as a *con-* abbreviation.
53. For the whole of this passage see the last book of the *Historia* (Wright, *Bern* (see n.46), p.146, and Thorpe (see n.46), pp.282-3) and the *Prophecies of Merlin* (Wright, *Bern*, p.75, items 5 and 6, and Thorpe, p.173). The commentator forgot to change from the future tense of the *Prophecies* to the past tense of his own explanation, and there are many scribal errors, eg. *feromitate* for *extremitate*.
54. The commentator completely (and understandably) ignored the 'legal note' and goes on to explain the Red Dragon: he again uses a phrase from the *Prophecies*. L has *degenerationem* or *degradationem*, which a 15th c. marginal note explains as *deiectionem*, expulsion, and *idimomate* (sic), corrected to *idiomate*, foolishly. The identification of the dragons presented no problems to any of the commentators studied: they all agree. The long lists used by the present commentator to give substance to the dragons are, in contrast, unique (see below).
55. This heading that purports to explain the next list is obviously out of place here. The text is very corrupt. It refers no doubt to the comet seen in the skies of Western Europe in 1066 and depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry: see e.g. D. C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, London 1964, p.181, and references given there.
56. Why this is so is explained in the section on the lists, see the previous article (see n.1).

57. This sentence is written in French and in red. It obviously takes its information from Geoffrey's *Historia*.
58. For this last section compare Wright, *Bern* (see n.46), p.75, item 7; Thorpe (see n.46), p.173.
59. These last three sentences are written in French and in red. The text is not clear and the translation may be wrong. Part of it is a quotation from the *Prophecies* about the rule of the 'German Worm'. for references see preceding note.
60. This sentence is in Latin. It may be part of the heading concerning Harold's 'kin': see below in the section on the lists.
61. This last sentence is written in French and in red. The list of William the Conqueror's men fills the rest of this folio 82 and almost half of f.82b.
62. *hacheleze*.
63. *enfans*.
64. *saint esuard de vieumouscier*; this sentence and the preceding one are written in French and in red.
65. These two sentences are written in French and in red.
66. Here the commentator takes up the text of the prophecy again. The repeated sentences are no longer written in capitals, but only marked by a paragraph sign. They have been printed in capitals to make the text clearer. Opposite these lines in the right margin is written in red: *Guillelmus Bastardus*.
67. In the right margin, in red: *robertus curthose*.
68. L has *in suo cereo sero* [?] *ignis divinus descendebat*. According to an early tradition the incident referred to happened during the first crusade. When a king of Jerusalem was to be elected in the summer of 1099 all the princes present declined the honour. It was decided to 'seek divine guidance through the ancient miracle of the holy fire which was accustomed to descend at Jerusalem each year at Easter tide'. At midnight a wind arose inside the great church, the single burning candle went out and another was lit: some traditions say it was that of Geoffrey of Bouillon, who became king, others that it was Robert's. He refused the crown, however, and thus incurred God's displeasure, as became evident from his later misfortunes. See C. W. David, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy*, Cambridge, Mass., 1920, pp.197-200, and S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols., Harmondsworth 1965, pp.291-3 (from which the quotation is taken), and references given in both.
69. St. John's Ms. G 16 (see n.1) has *a fratre suo harrico clerico*.
70. In the right margin, in red: *guillelmus ruffus*. The ms. has *in viterdeo* [?] (presumably *invite deo*, against the will of God, was meant) and *insidiarie diabolo* (which should probably be the more usual *insanie diabolo*). St. John's Ms. G 16 (see n.1), f.115b, reads *a milite suo waltero tydiane diabolo* [sic], and a marginal note (partly lost by the cropping of the page) has *[ty]rel, nomine l [ins]tigante dyabolo l [s]ugitta*. It is likely that this annotator thought the lines corrupt and suspected that originally Walter Tyrel's name, the arrow (*sugitta*) with which Rufus was killed and the fact that Tyrel's deed was the work of the devil had all been part of the text.
William II's reputation of destroying churches and villages to clear New Forest and make it his hunting ground, appears to be tradition and not fact. His fate, too, like Robert's, was seen as divine retribution.
71. The commentator of Ms. Cotton Nero A iv (see n.1), interpreted the lion as King Arthur.
72. Stephen was captured at the battle of Lincoln 2 Feb. 1141. The ms. appears to have *in vvinis*, this should probably be *in viciniis*, in the neighbourhood. If there is any pun on the word 'liberty' in the Eagle's words it has escaped the present authors. To the commentator of Ms. Cotton Nero A iv (see n.1) the crab is Cadwallader.
73. Here the commentator covers such a long section of the *Prophecy* that he felt it was necessary to repeat the first words again. His interpretation is shared in outline by the commentaries of Mss. Cotton Nero A iv and Dublin. Trinity College 514 (see n.1). In the Dublin ms. the hour is William I but the explanation quickly passes on to Henry II and his sons. Part of this section was known to Gerald of Wales (see the sentences in italics in the text of the *Prophecy* above), who also related it to Henry and his sons.
74. Both L and St. John's Ms. G 16 (see n.1) have *ad agavere*, which should be *Andegavense*.
75. All commentators, including Gerald, apply the first two sentences to John and the conquest of Ireland (see Taylor, see n.16, p.82): the last is taken to refer to the martyrdom of Thomas Becket (the 'father') killed in his church (the 'womb of the mother'). The present commentary does not explain it, but this sentence and its relation to Becket was known, e.g. to the Flemish chronicler Baudouin of Ninove, c.1250 (Taylor, p.136).
76. The *lynx penetrans* is taken from Merlin's *Prophecies*, see Thorpe (see n.46), p.175. Mss. Dublin. Trinity College 514, Leiden, Vossius, and Cotton Nero A iv (see n.1) interpret the lynx as Henry III. It is an old tradition that the lynx is sharp-eyed. Medieval knowledge derived from Pliny's *Natural History*, 28, 122, and from Boethius, *De consolazione philosophiae*, 3, 8. The animal is often used by medieval writers to remind readers of the transitory nature of outward beauty: the lynx's eyes are able to see what is beneath the surface in

all its ugliness. The commentator of Cotton Nero A iv explains why the lynx stands for Henry III: 'a *lynx* is a bird (!) with such sharp sight that it appears to look through stone walls and Henry was compared to it because in his case the opposite was true — he looked with only one eye (*luscus erat*)'. This is a reference to Henry's drooping eyelid 'so that it hid part of his black pupil' (A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England* c.550 to c.1307, London 1974, p.506, quoting Nicholas Trevet's *Annales*). Elsewhere in the same ms. there is a drawing of a large bird looking at a tiny stone wall; *henricus rex* is written next to it. Matthew Paris says Henry III was the lynx of Merlin's prophecy because of his greed: there was not one purse in the kingdom he did not peer into and penetrate; *Muthael Parisiensis Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, 7 vols., Rolls Series, 1872-84, vol. 1, p.208; vol. 4, p.511; vol. 5, p.451.

77. *Henricus quartus* must be an error for Henry III; the only other known copy in St. John's College Ms. G 16 (see n.1) has the same mistake: it reads *henricus quartus* (f.115b) and *henricus marcus* [?] (f.116). Henry III is sometimes called 'the fourth' because Henry II's son, 'the young king', was crowned in his father's lifetime and died before his father. Henry III surrendered his claim to Normandy (and Maine, Anjou and Poitou) by the treaty of Paris, 1259. Normandy thus 'lost both islands', that is England and Ireland. For the treaty of Paris and the alteration to Henry's seal see: R. Chaplais, *The Making of the Treaty of Paris (1259) and the Royal style*, *English Historical Review*, vol. 47 (1952), pp.233-53, esp. 248-51.
78. L has *mirationis modo* here, but in the text of the *Prophecy* itself *mutationis modo*; most mss. have *miro mutationis modo*, which has been translated here.
79. Compare the *Prophecies of Merlin*: Wright, *Bern* (see n.46), p.77, item 18, and Thorpe (see n.46), p.175.
80. This last section of the *Prophecy of the Eagle*, though repeated, is not explained.