THE RESURRECTION AND AFTERLIFE OF AN ARCHAIC METRE: BEDE, THE CAROLINGIANS AND THE TROCHAIC SEPTENARIUS

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Summary: The Venerable Bede's eighth-century treatise *De arte metrica* contains the first description of the trochaic septenarius, an archaic metre best-known from early Roman comedy but also adopted by Christian hymnodists. Although Bede's presentation was partly flawed, it became a guideline for Carolingian poets who often followed it to the letter, demonstrating the artificiality of their verse technique and their dependence on metrical theory.

INTRODUCTION

The trochaic septenarius, the vernacular or Plautine form of the trochaic tetrameter catalectic, is the sole representative of the archaic forms of iambo-trochaic verse discussed in Bede's *De arte metrica*, and of all the quantitative metres covered by Bede, it underwent the most dramatic overhaul in the author's hands. The particular fate of this metre owes largely to its long and varied history, its deficient analysis in the works of the late antique grammarians as well as its still persistent popularity in the Christian literature of late antiquity. Bede's description of the metre is based on the structure of the hymn *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*, with which he chose as its illustration,[1] but in this particular case, Bede's inductive approach was further necessitated by the fact that, in the works of previous grammarians, the discus-

[1] Ed. Kendall 1975, *CCSL* 123A: 137.

sion of the trochaic tetrameter catalectic, and its archaic form in particular, is generally off-hand and frequently misleading: as, in the classical and post-classical periods, the trochaic septenarius was regarded primarily as either an outdated or a colloquial form of verse, the grammarians, steeped in the Greek metrical tradition, did not consider its distinct nature worthy of serious academic study, and lacked a theoretical framework for its analytical presentation.

As both the classical trochaic tetrameter and the archaic septenarius were embraced by the hymnodists of late antiquity, Bede observably saw this as something that needed to be remedied, and his attempt to codify the trochaic septenarius must be regarded as ambitious, deficient though it may be. Bede had to rely, rather uncomfortably, on the descriptions of the trochaic tetrameter in the grammarians and the metrical structure of a poem that obviously did not correspond with them. In his eagerness to harmonise the poetic form he described, Bede either over-generalised or allowed his account to be contaminated by the grammarians, who essentially discussed a different poetic metre. Despite its partial inaccuracy, Bede's description of the trochaic septenarius won a surprisingly wide popularity among the Carolingian poets who, for better or worse, deferred to Bede's authority, and it is in their use of this very metre that Bede's influence is the most palpable and easily recognised.

The originality of Bede's definition of the trochaic septenarius has been recognised by several authors,[2] and its impact on early medieval verse has been discussed, to some extent, in the works of Wilhelm Meyer and Dag Norberg. The purpose of this paper is to shed some more light on the historical background of Bede's analysis of the metre, as well as to revisit a number of early medieval hymns which show a clear indebtedness to his description. A number of these poems have been analysed in the works of Meyer and Norberg, especially those which correspond most closely with Bede's partly mistaken presentation, but I will also undertake to observe a number of hymns where Bede's influence is less evident to point out his elemental role in the survival of the trochaic septenarius into the Carolingian period as a kind of living fossil. My particular focus will be on the discrepancies between Bede and the earlier grammarians and the ways in which

[2] Meyer 1905: 348-49; Norberg 1958: 76-77; Klopsch 1972: 97; Luiselli 1976: 173-175; Coronati 1981-82: 53-62; Norberg 1988: 88-89.

they left their mark on the composition of early medieval poetry in the absence of a comprehensive theory of the archaic and classical iambo-trochaic systems. It will be evident that not only the survival of the trochaic septenarius but also its metrical form in the Early Middle Ages are, ultimately, Bede's achievement.

THE TROCHAIC TETRAMETER CATALECTIC AND THE TROCHAIC SEPTENARIUS

The trochaic tetrameter catalectic is the most common of the trochaic metres employed by Greek and Latin poets. It consists of four trochaic metra of two trochaic 'feet' (– u), the last one of them being catalectic (docked of its last syllable). In the trochaic metron, the second foot may end in a long element, or, in other words, be substituted with a spondee (– –). The classical form of the trochaic tetrameter, as employed by the Greeks and the more literary of its Latin users, can be presented as follows:

– u– x | – u– x || – u– x | – u x

The middle of the line has, invariably, a strong break (diaeresis). The long elements of the metre as well as the *syllabae ancipites* at the end of each metron may be resolved into two short syllables, but syllable resolution is employed sparingly, as far as the classical form of the metre is concerned, and long sequences of short syllables are uncommon. The trochaic tetrameter catalectic was by nature perceived as a spoken metre, and it is universally thought to have been the original metre of spoken dialogue in Greek drama,[3] only later supplanted by the iambic trimeter.

The popular or archaic Roman form of the trochaic tetrameter catalectic is known as the trochaic septenarius, having, as it does, seven full feet. It mainly differs from its classical Greek model in having a *syllaba anceps* as the second element of each foot, with the exception of the penultimate position, where a short syllable is compulsory:

[3] Raven 1965: 74; Sicking 1993: 106. The trochaic tetrameter is relatively common in Aeschylus but much less so in Sophocles and early Euripides. In Euripides' later works the metre is employed in an archaising manner, and it is apparent that the author considered the metre old-fashioned.

– x – x | – x – x || – x – x | – u –

This structure allows, at least in theory, long sequences of either long or short syllables, as both the long element and the *syllaba anceps* may be resolved into a double-short. At times, especially in the early comic authors, this results in lines where the metrical structure is barely recognisable. It is worthy of note that resolution of the *anceps* is far more common in trochaic Latin verse, even of the classical variety, than in its Greek models,[4] and the substitution of dactyls for trochees can be considered the parallel of the substitution of anapaests for iambs in Latin iambic verse.[5] It may be concluded that in Latin poetry both the classical trochaic tetrameter and its popular counterpart, the septenarius, exhibit metrical liberties that are almost non-existent in Greek verse, and sometimes close analysis is needed to determine which form of the metre we are dealing with. On the whole, however, the trochaic septenarius, which is ubiquitous in early drama as well as in occasional popular verse, was by far the more common of the two, although ill represented in grammatical literature prior to Bede's *De arte metrica.*

The trochaic septenarius was employed by the early Latin dramatists in much the same way as its model was on the Greek stage. It is obvious that the metre was, from the start, perceived to resemble everyday speech and it is telling that the septenarius, rather than the iambic senarius, was Plautus's favoured metre of dialogue.[6] This is largely due to the high ratio of accent-ictus coincidence in the Latin septenarius, unparalleled by any other Latin metre: as each trochaic foot begins with a long syllable (unless syllable resolution takes place), and word-breaks between feet are favoured, the accents of most words Latin words fall inevitably on the first element of the trochaic foot. In addition to the all but compulsory central diaeresis, many trochaic septenarii also have breaks after the second and sixth feet, which usually ensures perfect coincidence of accent and ictus:

[4] Sicking 1963: 109. Resolution of the *syllaba anceps* is non-existent in Greek tragedy, and even in comedy extremely rare and generally limited to the second half of the line.

[5] Raven 1965: 76-77.

[6] Sedgwick 1932: 98. Luque Moreno 2009 (47-60) has suggested that the septenarius may be an autochthonous Italic verse type, only cosmetically graecisised. Coleman 1998 (1089) also asserts that it was 'in origin likely to be independent of the quantitative trochaic tetrameter imported from Greek drama.'

ósse fíni | dèdolábo | àssulátim | uíscera (Plaut. *Men.* 858)

The tendency for accent-ictus coincidence was enhanced by other limitations which were imposed on word-order in the trochaic septenarius. From the earliest days, Latin poets show an inclination to avoid placing two-syllable words at the end of the line,[7] and by the end of antiquity, monosyllabic words were banned before the by-then compulsory central diaeresis. Wilhelm Meyer has also noted a general avoidance of spondaic words (or words that end in a spondee) before the fourth and twelfth element of each line (such constructions would cause the word-accent to fall on the final syllables of the first and fifth feet, respectively). This rule, which Meyer called the *Dipodiengesetz* but in recent literature is known as Meyer's law, is attributable to the concept of two-foot dipodies which lingered on in the structure of the Latin iambo-trochaic verse, and it is still observed by the Christian hymnodists of late antiquity.[8] In effect, the archaic forms of Latin iambo-trochaic verse are best understood as aural imitations of their Greek models, and both syllable quantity and accent play a part in their structure. In trochaic verse this also served as a curb on the use of long syllables: spondees are allowed in the odd feet of the line, but generally only if the second element is unaccentuated. Another limitation on word-breaks and syllable prosody, known after its discoverers as Bentley-Luchs's law,[9] governs the end of the line: if the final syllable of a polysyllabic word occupies the penultimate long element, the preceding element must be long (i.e. the sixth foot of a septenarius must be a spondee), so as to prevent the creation of a false cadence.[10] – Bentley-Luchs's law, however, became largely irrelevant with the gradual disappearance of word-final disyllables from Late Latin iambo-trochaic verse.

[7] A similar limitation was imposed on the iambic trimeter/senarius.

[8] Meyer 1905: 343; see Nougaret 1927: 71; Soubiran 1988: 27-39 and 340; Fortson 2008: 34. It is also worthy of note that, among others, the beginning of the legionaries' chant *Urbáni seruate uxores*, recorded by Suetonius (*Iul.* 51) violates this rule.

[9] Fortson 2008: 34-35; Morgan 2010: 116.

[10] This means that both the iambic senarius and the trochaic septenarius shun cadences of the type *uĭrōs bonos*. This rule, however, is less consistently observed even in archaic verse. See Questa 1978: 136; Soubiran 1988: 388-89.

Because of its simple and regular rhythm, the trochaic septenarius, also known as *versus quadratus*, became what may have been the preferred metre of occasional verse, such as 'riddles, proverbs, games and Fescennine verses'.[11] As far as we can ascertain from their extant fragments, the early tragic authors such as Livius, Naevius and Ennius employed the popular septenarius quite in the same way as the comic authors did, as Lucilius also appears have done in his early satire before his adoption of the dactylic hexameter.[12] The children's verse, spells, proverbs and riddles cited by classical authors also belong to this archaic type (such quotations show no pretence of passing for 'literature'):

> Qui de nobis? Longe uenio, late uenio: solve me[13]
> – – – – | – – ⏑̂ u – | – – ⏑̂ u – | – u –

> Habeat scabiem quisquis ad me uenerit nouissimus[14]
> ⏑̂ u – ⏑̂ u – | – u – – | – u – u | – u –

In the classical age, when the hexameter and the pentameter underwent major renovation in the hands of the late republican and early imperial poets, efforts were inevitably made to restore the iambo-trochaic metres to something closer to their Greek models. For the trochaic tetrameter, this mainly meant limiting *syllabae ancipites* to the final element of the metron; similarly, resolution of long syllables and especially the metron-final *syllaba anceps* was curtailed,[15] although particularly Seneca still employed both freely in his dramatic verse. Apart from Seneca, the classical (or newly classicised) trochaic tetrameter also won the favour of the second-century archaists like Florus, who exhibited a general fondness for simple, short and quasi-archaic verse-

[11] Sedgwick 1932: 99.

[12] Lucil. 589-93. See Sedgwick 1932: 97; Miller 2005: 111.

[13] Petr. 58.

[14] Paraphrased in Hor. *Ars* 417 as 'occupet extremum scabies', reconstructed by the scholiast Porphyrio. Several other quotations and paraphrases from popular verse in Horace, adapted to his classical metres, have been discovered or suggested. A particularly telling example is *Carm.* 4.2.46-47, where, in his description of Augustus's triumph, Horace has placed the words 'o sol / pulcher, o laudande', identical with the first half of a septenarius, across the break of two Sapphic lines. - Fraenkel 1957: 439; Morgan 2010: 235-36.

[15] Meyer 1905: 343-44.

forms. A late representative of this school is Terentianus Maurus's *De syllabis,* a substantial portion of which has been composed in the trochaic tetrameter catalectic. But it also appears that a tradition of popular verse in the classical trochaic tetrameter may have existed alongside the septenarius, if we are to trust the quotations of triumphal songs recorded by Suetonius. As we can see, some of them are in the archaic septenarius, as the following, heavily spondaic lines, the second of which also has syllable resolution in the *anceps* of the third foot:

urbani, seruat(e) uxores, moechum calu(um) adducimus
– – – – | – – – – | – – – – | – u –

aur(um) in Galli(a) eff**utu**isti, hic sumpsisti mutuum (Suet. *Iul.* 51)
– u – u | – **u͡u** – – | – – – – | – u –

On the other hand, we have the following chant where all the odd feet are trochees and which corresponds wholly with the structure of the classical trochaic tetrameter:

Gallias Caesar subegit, Nicomedes Caesarem
– u – – | – u – – | – u – – | – u –

ecce Caesar nunc triumphat, qui subegit Gallias
– u – – | – u – – | – u – – | – u –

Nicomedes non triumphat, qui subegit Caesarem (Suet. *Iul.* 49)
– u – – | – u – – | – u – – | – u –

The material recorded by Suetonius is too meagre to be wholly reliable: the classical structure of the latter example may be coincidental, or the lines may have undergone editing in Suetonius's hands (moreover, the soldiers chanting these lines were certainly ignorant of such prosodic refinements). Nevertheless, they do suggest that a more rigid, classical tetrameter led at least a kind of shadow life in popular Latin verse, although, even for most contemporary readers, the distinction may have appeared merely technical.

It is therefore understandable that when it comes to these two variants of the trochaic tetrameter, an almost ageless confusion seems to prevail in met-

rical literature. Late antique grammarians are content to describe the classical form of the metre (which, for the majority of them, is simply *the* trochaic metre), although sometimes their descriptions have become contaminated by features of the popular septenarius.[16] This is understandable if we bear in mind that the models of the grammarians and their writings on metre were primarily Greek: in the iambo-trochaic metres, more than anywhere else, the discrepancy between traditional metrical nomenclature and contemporary metrical practice was blatant.

THE TROCHAIC TETRAMETER AND SEPTENARIUS IN EARLY CHRISTIAN HYMNODY

The Christian poets adopted the trochaic tetrameter/septenarius enthusiastically, and alongside the iambic dimeter of Ambrose and Sedulius, it became one of the most popular metres of Christian hymnody. A number of reasons made this metre particularly adaptable for ecclesiastical music: firstly, the metre has a high ratio of ictus-accent coincidence, in the case of the septenarius further enhanced by the archaic rules of word division. Secondly, in the classical and post-classical age, syllable resolution in the metre had also decreased markedly and is utterly absent, among others, in the post-classical or late antique *Pervigilum Veneris*. The long and heterogeneous history of the metre is manifest in the surprisingly wide structural variation in the trochaic verse of late antiquity, and it is apparent that the Christian hymnodists drew on a variety of traditions and models for their newly created genre.

Some authors opted for the classical and more 'literary' form of the trochaic tetrameter catalectic. The foremost representative of these quasi-classical hymnodists is Prudentius in his *Peristephanon* and *Cathemerinon*. Many Christian poets followed suit, including Ennodius, Dracontius and several poets of Visigothic Spain as well as Venantius Fortunatus in his *Pange, lingua, gloriosi*. In opposition to 'classicists' like Prudentius, most notably St Hilary in his *Adae carnis gloriosae,* and the author of the anonymous

[16] e.g. Diom. *Gramm.* 1.504.20-29; Mall. Theod. *Gramm.* 6.594.28-595.3; see Luque Moreno 1994-95 passim.

Hymnum dicat turba fratrum, earlier also attributed to Hilary, opted for the archaic septenarius. The practices of these and other Christian poets vary also when it comes to the rules of word division, and the secondary diaeresis (the word break after the second foot) in particular. Prudentius, whose verse in general shows no attempt at regularisation of word accents,[17] did not bother with the secondary diaeresis in his classicising tetrameters, where it is frequently neglected, as it is in the verse of the Visigothic poets Eugenius and Quiricus. Venantius's *Pange lingua, gloriosi* adopts a middle course: the overwhelming majority (21 out of 30) of the lines have the secondary diaeresis.[18] This demonstrates an increasing tendency for regularity of accentuation in Christian trochaic verse, although in the case of individual poets, their adherence to their literary models, above all Prudentius, caused some variation. Prudentius also freely allowed two-syllable words in line-endings, a liberty which his followers including Ennodius, Dracontius, Venantius Fortunatus and Eugenius of Toledo did not adopt. On the other hand, in the archaising septenarii of Hilary and *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*, Meyer's law is still observed: word-breaks in the middle of the second and sixth are strenuously avoided after words that end in a spondee,[19] a finesse which was already lost to several poets of the Carolingian age.

THE DISCUSSION OF TROCHAIC METRES IN LATE LATIN GRAMMAR

The prosodic nature of archaic iambo-trochaic verse seems to have already been lost to many authors of the late republican and early imperial periods, as testified by the rather disparaging remarks made by Cicero and Quintilian who failed to find regular metrical structure in the verse of Plautus and Terence.[20] The main problem seems to have been their frequent use of syllable

[17] Norberg 1988: 91.
[18] ibid.
[19] Meyer 1905: 347.
[20] e.g. Cic. *Or.* 184: *At comicorum senarii propter similitudinem sermonis sic saepe sunt abiecti, ut non numquam vix in eis numerus et versus intellegi possit.* ('But the senarii of the comic authors are cast in the likeness of speech to such an extent that one can often discern no metre or verse in them.')

resolution, which was regarded as the hallmark of archaic verse in discussions of iambo-trochaic metres even by the grammarians.

The extant metrical literature of late antiquity displays its indebtedness to the rather theoretical-minded Hellenistic scholars whose aim had been a comprehensive theory of poetic metres; consequently, their theoretical framework made their presentations overly abstract and excessively reliant on Greek metrical practices. A particularly influential school, which had its origins in Pergamum but is better known through the works of its later-day Roman exponents, postulated a system later dubbed *metra derivativa*: its central concept was that ultimately all poetic metres can be derived from two principal lengths, namely the dactylic hexameter and the iambic trimeter.[21] The adherents of this school include Varro and Terentianus Maurus, who in his *De syllabis* lays particular stress on the process of constituting new metres from bits and pieces of others. Ultimately, in the presentations of trochaic metres, this meant that the grammarians explained them as derivatives of iambic lengths: not infrequently, the trochaic metron is presented as something rather like the iambic metron, only 'the other way around'.[22] The similarity of the second half of the trochaic tetrameter (– u – x | – u –) to the latter part of an iambic trimeter (the portion following the caesura of the third foot) had also been observed early on, exemplified, among others, by Terentianus Maurus who showed how an iambic trimeter could be expanded into a trochaic tetrameter by inserting a cretic word in the beginning of the line, using a typically outrageous example: 'Socrates, beatus ille, qui procul negotiis'.[23]

When explaining the structure of the trochaic tetrameter, grammarians generally followed the procedure of listing all the possible feet and then specifying which places they may occupy in the metre. These presentations are almost uniformly descriptions of the classical or classicising form of the length, and generally ignore the archaic form of the septenarius. There are, however, some obviously flawed descriptions of the classicising trochaic te-

[21] Leonhardt 1989: passim.

[22] e.g. Mall. Theod. *Gramm.* 6.594.28-595.1.

[23] Ter. Maur. 641. The interpretation of the trochaic tetrameter as an expansion of the iambic trimeter was traditionally attributed to Archilochus. - see e.g. Mar. Victorin. (= Aphthonius) *Gramm.* 6.135.14-17.

trameter which may have been contaminated by the practices of the septenarius, as the following by Diomedes:

> Trochaicum metrum recipit pedes quinque, dactylum spondeum anapaestum tribrachyn trochaeum, a quo nominatur. In triplicem autem feritur dipodian, et uni cuique sine dubio pedes tam praeponuntur hi, trochaeus dactylus tribrachys, quam subiungitur qui libet de supra memoratis quinque pedibus. Catalexin facit aut in amphimacro aut in epitrito quarto. Hoc autem metrum ab iambico distat, quod in illo conbinatis pedibus, id est singulis conbinationibus, praeponitur qui libet pes de supra memoratis quinque pedibus et subiungitur unus de tribus qui ex breui constant, in trochaico uero uersa uice trinae conbinationi praeponitur unus de tribus et item subiungitur qui libet de quinque pedibus. [24]
>
> [The trochaic metre takes five feet, the dactyl, the spondee, the anapest, the tribrach and the trochee, from which it receives its name. It is divided into three dipodies, and each one of them begins with the following feet: the trochee, the dactyl and the tribrach, and it is followed by any one of the aforementioned five feet. The catalexis takes either the cretic or the fourth epitrite. This metre differs from the iambic metre in the respect that each iambic dipody begins with any one of the aforementioned five feet and ends with one of the three which consist of a short; in the trochaic, vice versa, one of the three is placed first in each of the three dipodies and then followed by any one of the five feet.]

As we can see, for Diomedes, the trochaic tetrameter is simply *the* trochaic metre: he does not even acknowledge the existence of other forms of trochaic verse. His presentation of the analogy of trochaic and iambic verse is characteristically tortuous and muddled, but it is evident that he still operates within the classical system of two-foot metra. Where he commits an unexpected error is in his assertion that the first foot of the trochaic metron can be a dactyl, a structure that is plainly impossible in the classical form of the torchaic tetrameter: a dactyl in trochaic verse can occur only as a result of resolution in the metron-final syllaba anceps. It is difficult to say whether

[24] *Gramm* 1.504.20-29.

Diomedes's error is a simple lapse or whether his sense of metric had been influenced by the popular septenarius.

The same observation also appears in the extremely condensed discussion of trochaic verse in Servius's *De centum metris*:

> Metra trochaica locis inparibus hos recipiunt pedes, trochaeum tribrachum et non numquam dactylum, locis uero paribus cum his quos memoraui spondeum et anapaestum.[25]
> [Trochaic metres take these feet in the odd positions: the trochee, the tribrach and sometimes the dactyl, in the even feet, as we mentioned, also the spondee and the anapaest.]

Notably, Servius no longer discusses the two-foot metron or dipody as the building block of iambo-trochaic verse. However, he recognises the differences between odd and even feet but still commits the error of allowing a dactyl in the odd foot of trochaic verse, ad mittedly with the reservation *et non numquqam dactylum* – possibly implying that such a construction is unusual.

The examples with which the grammarians illustrate their descriptions are remarkably scant and often entirely artificial, certainly owing to their overly analytical approach to metrics but probably also to the absence of well-established Latin classics in the trochaic metres. There exists a whole family of derivatives of Hor. *Epod.* 2.1.1 (*beatus ille, qui procul negotiis*)[26] in Terentianus Maurus, where the beginning of the line has been expanded with *Socrates* (line 2364), *Diogenes* (2364), *Demophile* (2366) and *quod agis, age* (2368),[27] so as to illustrate different types of syllable resolution, but even Augustine in his *De musica* contributed to this tradition with *optimus beatus ille, qui procul negotio*[28]. Other favourite sources of synthetic trochaic lines include Catull. 4. 1 (*phaselus ille, quem videtis, hospites*), expanded

[25] *Gramm.* 4.459.5-7.

[26] The influence of the grammarians is apparent in the anonymous medieval trochaic hymn *Est locus beatus ille Corneli sanctissimae* (*PLAC* IV, 237-239), where the opening line has *beatus ille* embedded in the very same place.

[27] Ter. Maur. 2364-2368.

[28] Aug. *Mus.* 5.9.18. - Another one of Augustine's examples of trochaic verse, apparently his own coinage, betrays its artificiality by ignoring the central diaeresis of the line: 'veritas novat manens, mo|ventur et noventur haec' (Aug. *Mus.* 4.5.7).

with *est celer* by Terentianus[29] and also quoted by Aphthonius.[30] In turn, the beginning of the sapphic line in Hor. *Carm.* 2.1.1 (*iam satis terris*) was extended into a trochaic tetrameter by several grammarians, including Bassus (with the ending *magisque genibus haerebo tuis*),[31] Diomedes (*virente secta pinus in Crago*)[32] and Aphthonius (*dedere largum imbrem hospites*).[33]This whole selection of derivative and inauthentic trochaic lines employed by the grammarians illustrates their thoroughly non-empirical approach to metre: the metrical rules prescribe the structure of a line of verse, and the grammarian's preoccupation must be with the structure rather than with verse itself.

In addition to these obviously artificial examples, grammarians also use a number of trochaic tetrameter lines of unknown or uncertain authorship, and it is often difficult to ascertain whether or not they have been coined by the grammarian himself.[34] Here again, they exemplify specific and often unusual metrical structures. As an example we may cite the line *pastor ille saepe mane dulce carmen insonat*, which Mallius Theodorus uses as an example of a trochaic line with no spondaic feet at all.[35] Of the grammarians, Mallius also presents the most thorough evaluation of different kinds of metrical structures in trochaic verse, taking a firm stand against what he regards as excessive use of syllable resolution and perhaps demonstrating that the phenomenon was already on its way out. It may also be regarded as an implicit rejection of the archaic models of iambo-trochaic verse:

> Fit etiam trochaicum metrum ita, ut in eo assiduum tribrachys obtineat locum, ut est illud apud Iubam: 'qualis aquila cita celeribus auida pinnis transuolat'. Sed offendet aures sine ulla syllabae longae interiectione et breuium syllabarum prolixa coniunctione. Nobis autem propositum est a metrica disciplina procul omnia repellere, quae ab auditorum de-

[29] Ter. Maur. 2283
[30] *Gramm.* 6.134.6.
[31] *Gramm.* 6.267.5.
[32] *Gramm.* 1.507.23.
[33] *Gramm.* 6.162.8.
[34] Luque Moreno 1994-1995: 232-33.
[35] *gramm.* 6.595.14. Also cited by Julian of Toledo (Maestre Yenes 1973: 234.7). Julian follows Mallius's presentation of the trochaic tetrameter, albeit without his aesthetic assessment of different metrical structures.

> lectatione discrepent, quamuis ea pedum rationem recipiant; atque idcirco in hoc metro et tribrachys et dactylus et anapaestus non nisi quam parcissime et consultis prius auribus admittendi sunt. Quod etiam in iambico metro seruari uidemus....
> [The trochaic metre can also be constructed in such a way that a tribrach occurs constantly, as in Iuba: 'qualis aquila cita celeribus auida pinnis transuolat'. But this offends our ears through the excessive conjunction of short syllables without intervening long ones. It is our intention to reject from the metrical art everything that interferes with the enjoyment of listeners, even if it follows metrical rules, and therefore, in this metre, the tribrach, dactyl and anapaest should be allowed only very sparingly and after first consulting our ears, something which, as we can see, is observed also in iambic verse…][36]

Apart from some minor lapses, the trochaic tetrameter described by the Late Latin grammarians belongs consistently to the classical type, and they generally do not attempt anything approaching an accurate presentation of the archaic septenarius. Some isolated lines that obviously belong to the archaic type occur as examples as in the *Fragmentum Bobbiense*, where the author presents a line which he attibutes to the Greek poet Cratinus (the line is obviously a Latin paraphrase):

> …comicum, quod praecipue dactylos et anapaestos admittat, ut est apud Cratinum 'super aquosis fontibus ipsa sederat ales Ceycis'.[37]
> […the comic trochaic tetrameter, which allows dactyls and anapaests in particular, as in Cratinus: 'super aquosis fontibus ipsa sederat ales Ceycis'.]

The line has the telltale dactyls in the third and fifth feet (*fontibus*, *sederat*), a construction which the classical tetrameter does not allow. The author does not, however, show any analytical understanding of the archaic septe-

[36] *Gramm.* 6.595.12-21. Juba of Mauretania was a second-century grammarian whose treatise on metre has not survived, but Mallius's quotation would imply that his examples were quite as artificial as those of the extant grammarians.

[37] *Gramm.* 6.622.12-14.

narius apart from the general statement that 'comic' trochaic tetrameters allow syllable resolution more generously.

Some discussions of early comedy, and Terence in particular, indicate that their respective authors had some grasp of the fundamental nature of archaic iambo-trochaic verse. The main drawback of these presentations is that they focus primarily on the iambic senarius and only mention the trochaic septenarius in passing, if at all.[38] Although the main objection of these authors is the 'indifferent' placement of feet in all positions of the iambic line – which can implicitly be taken to refer to trochaic verse as well - they remain single-mindedly focused on the excessive number of syllables as the defining feature of archaic iambo-trochaic verse.[39]

It is telling that Sacerdos, who also wrote extensively on metre, has preserved the popular line on the death of Crassus (*postquam Crassus Carbo factus, Carbo Crassus factus est*), but he presents it not as an example of a metre but of a rhetorical trope.[40]

THE TROCHAIC SEPTENARIUS IN BEDE'S *DE ARTE METRICA*.

Bede's approach to metre in general was far more empirical and pragmatic than that of his Late Latin predecessors, as the structure of his treatise on metre reveals. As the first representative of the medieval *artes metricae* it effectively incorporated the issues of prosody into its presentation of poetic metres and poetic style. Bede showed little propensity to discuss metre in

[38] E.g. Donatus in his commentary on Terence's *Euanthus*, where he implicitly acknowledges the 'improper' use of spondees in the even feet of the iambic dimeter; however, even his main objection seems to be the early comic authors' profuse syllable resolution: *Veteres etsi ipsi quoque in metris neglegentius egerunt, iambici uersus dumtaxat in secundo et quarto loco, tamen a Terentio uincuntur resolutione huius metri quantum potest comminuti ad imaginem prosae orationis.* ('Although the ancient authors were also more negligent when it comes to metre, at least in the second and fourth feet of the iambic line, they are surpassed by Terence who uses resolution in this metre to such an extent that it resembles prose.') - Don. *Ter. Euanth. praef.* 2.3.

[39] E.g. Mar. Victorin. (= Aphthonius) *Gramm.* 6.78.30-79.1. The same objection is quoted verbatim in Rufinus's *Commentarium in metra Terentiana* (*Gramm.* 6.557.10-13).

[40] *Gramm.* 6.461, 27.

the abstract, and especially the end of his treatise, which discusses the lyric lengths employed in Christian hymns, is emphatically inductive: the poems which Bede cites are more than merely the illustrations of metrical rules. They are often much longer than the theoretical explanations which accompany them, and frequently the presentation of a particular metre is best understood as the description of the poem at hand. Bede often quotes or paraphrases his late antique forerunners, but in many places he has undertaken reformulations of his own to make the theory match the verse which he seeks to illustrate. This is the diametrical opposite of the earlier grammarians' approach of first presenting the rules and then trying to make up a line of verse that corresponds with them.

When presenting the trochaic septenarius (or, in his own words, tetrameter) Bede faced a significant problem. The material which he used in his presentation of the lyric metres was usually garnered from the most central representatives of the metre in Christian literature. As the hendecasyllable, the Sapphic strophe and the iambic dimeter and trimeter, as manifested in the works of the Christian authors, were by and large classical, Bede could comfortably rely on the grammarians with little or no rephrasing. When it came to the trochaic septenarius, on the other hand, he had little or nothing to go on, as the hymn which he discusses (*Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*) was composed in the archaic form of the metre, of which no analytical presentation existed in previous literature (the presentations of the classical tetrameter in the works of the grammarians were plainly of no use).

Hymnum dicat turba fratrum[41] has, probably falsely, been attributed to St Hilary in the four earliest manuscripts containing it,[42] and it does show notable similarities with his *Adae carnis gloriosae*: they have both been composed in the trochaic septenarius, and are certainly among the last representatives of a long living tradition of archaic iambo-trochaic verse. Furthermore, they exhibit many lexical similarities, and it is probable that the composer of the hymn had been influenced by Hilary.[43] The hymn has been preserved in the *Antiphonary of Bangor* and appears to have enjoyed an

[41] Edited by Blume in *AH* LI, 269-271; also in Walpole 1922: 5-15, and Bulst 1956: 133-35. Walpole includes four spurious and metrically inferior lines that are not in Blume's edition.

[42] Walpole 1922: 1.

[43] Norberg 1988: 88.

immense popularity in Ireland, which has led, among others, Wilhelm Meyer to describe it as an 'Irish hymn',[44] which is certainly improbable: there is little evidence that the early Irish versifiers had any command of syllable quantity.[45]. The hymn is definitely metrical, despite some typical Late Latin prosodic flaws. As the manuscripts of the hymn are in places corrupt – understandably, they have been made by scribes without the author's metrical erudition – several attempts have been made to restore the hymn to a metrically more congruous form.[46] The poem exhibits a number of post-classical prosodic liberties which mainly consist in lengthened final syllables, but they number only four in a poem of 70 lines.[47] Elision is scarce, taking place only seven times,[48] and there are no certain instances of hiatus,[49] apart from the opening line, where it occurs at the central diaeresis (*fratrum / hymnus*).[50] Unlike in Hilary's *Adae carnis gloriosae*, resolution of long syllables is non-existent, effectively making the poem isosyllabic.[51] The hymn follows the scheme of the archaic septenarius quite unambiguously: of the positions where a short syllable is mandatory in the classical tetrameter, the second syllable is long 13 times, the sixth one 10 times and the tenth one 29 times.[52] The figures would be even higher if the anonymous author had not followed Meyer's law, which forbids words with a spondaic ending before the third

[44] Meyer 1905: 346; also Curran 1984, 22-34.

[45] Roger 1905: 267-268; Bolton 1967: 42-43; Lapidge 1999: 373.

[46] E.g. Meyer 1905: 347-348.

[47] E.g. line 2.1, *tu viā tu veritas*; 17.1, *discutīt obiecta*; 19.1, *scanderē crucem*; 27.2, *nuntiāt apostolis*. Meyer has interpreted these as instances of metrical rather than prosodic unorthodoxy: 'Von den 490 Hebungen sind nur 4 kurz.' - Meyer 1905: 346.

[48] Norberg 1988: 88. Meyer (1905: 346) counts six certain cases.

[49] Meyer 1905: 346; Norberg 1988: 88. The apparent hiatus in most manuscript readings of line 34, 1 (*maiestatemque immensam*) can be emended by inverting the words (*immensamque maiestatem*), as Meyer suggests and both Blume and Walpole have done.

[50] Bede considers hiatus legitimate when and only when a word-final *m* is followed by an *h*; see *CCSL* 123A: 120; Heikkinen 2012a: 39; Heikkinen 2012b. As Bede also regards the central diaeresis of the trochaic septenarius as a line-break, the line does not violate the metrical principles delineated in Bede's *De arte metrica*; see *CCSL* 123A: 137.

[51] Norberg 1988: 88. Line 14.2 admittedly begins *duodecim uiros* (⏑⏑ ∪ –∪ –), but a monosyllabic reading of *duo*, by way of synizesis, is conceivable. - Heikkinen 2012a: 182.

[52] Norberg 1988: 88. Meyer 1905: 346 has the figures 13, 9 and 34, respectively.

and twelfth elements of the line,[53] but the fact that he did also shows that he was a representative of a still unbroken archaic iambo-trochaic tradition. The secondary caesura after the second foot is observed in a slight majority of the lines.[54] There are seven lines that end with two syllables, but three times they are preceded by a monosyllable, so as to form a 'metrical word' and preclude clash of accent and ictus.[55] There can be no question that we are dealing with a poem in the archaic septenarius, pure and simple.

It is obvious that the hymn differs so markedly from the trochaic tetrameter described by the grammarians that mere rephrasing of his predecessors would not do for Bede. In trying to describe the poem, he was left to his own devices. The results were surprising and far-reaching. Bede's presentation of what he calls the trochaic tetrameter reads as follows:

> Metrum trochaicum tetrametrum, quod a poetis Graecis et Latinis frequentissime ponitur, recipit locis omnibus trocheum, spondeum omnibus praeter tertium. Currit autem alternis uersiculis, ita ut prior habeat pedes quattuor, posterior pedes tres et syllabam.[56]
> [The trochaic tetrameter, which is most frequently employed by the Greek and Latin poets, takes the trochee in every foot and the spondee in every one but the third. It is formed of two lines so that the first has four feet and the second three feet and a syllable.]

The description is a remarkable departure from previous metrical tradition. If we forego a discussion of Bede's arguable exaggeration in stating that the trochaic tetrameter was employed 'most frequently' (this may have been caused by the proliferation of inauthentic trochaic verse in the grammarians), the most striking features of this wholly original definition are the following:

[53] Meyer has, among others, noted line 10, where the poet writes *quae păter nasci iubet*, although he could have written *quae nāsci pater iubet*, which would violate Meyer's law. - Meyer 1905: 347.

[54] Meyer 1905: 346.

[55] Norberg 1988: 88; line 3.1, *tú lapis*; 5.1, *tú maris*, 9.2, *quó fluit*. In four cases (line 5.2, *nasci iubet*; 13.1, *aquam iubet*; 32.2, *factos Dei*; 34.1, *sentit diem*) there is clash between accent and ictus; *ăquam iubet* also violates Bentley-Luchs's law. On metrical words, see e.g. Norberg 1985: 47.

[56] *CCSL* 123A: 137.

Firstly, Bede has construed the (compulsory) central diaeresis of the line as a line-break and effectively redefined the trochaic septenarius as a couplet of a four-foot line and a shorter catalectic unit of three feet and one syllable. He still employs the term 'tetrameter', perhaps out of adherence to earlier grammarians but more probably because he thinks of iambo-trochaic verse in terms of feet rather than two-foot metra. For him, both 'lines' of the septenarius are 'tetrameters', one acatalectic and the other catalectic.[57]

Secondly, Bede has precluded all discussion of syllable resolution from his definition of the metre, simply because the hymn on which it is based has none. But the most surprising feature is Bede's assertion that every foot but the third may take a spondee: in effect, he prescribes trochees for the third and seventh feet of the line. This is also patent nonsense, as there are altogether ten instances in the line where the third foot is a spondee. Bede has obviously observed this, too, as there is a partial retraction after his quotation from the opening lines of the hymn:

> …in quo aliquando et tertio loco prioris uersiculi spondeum reperies, ut: 'factor caeli, terrae factor'; et: 'uerbis purgat leprae morbos'.[58]
> [...where you will sometimes find a spondee also in the third foot of the first line, as in 'factor caeli, terrae factor' and 'uerbis purgat leprae morbos'.]

Bede's lapse and his half-hearted attempt to put it right has rightly been an object of some bafflement among scholars. Wilhelm Meyer questions whether Bede had studied the poem at all,[59] as the number of spondaic third feet in it nearly equals that of spondaic first feet. But he ignores the fact that Bede was describing a metre without any reliable secondary sources and had to come up with a whole new analysis of his own. It is obvious that his metrical examination of the hymn is, by and large, cautious, but it also betrays his propensity to impose additional restrictions on poetic metres and his willingness to see regularity where none exists. This is perhaps analogous

[57] This is analogous to his definition of the iambic dimeter as a 'tetrameter' (*CCSL* 123A: 135-136) and the iambic trimeter as a 'hexameter' (*CCSL* 123A: 135) on the basis of their number of feet.
[58] *CCSL* 123A: 137.
[59] Meyer 1905: 348.

to his explicit and tortuously documented ban on spondaic hexameter lines and, in a more subdued form, his special commendation of iambic verse where all the odd feet are spondees.

Bede's slip may also have to do with his analysis of the trochaic septenarius as a couplet: it is probable that he has extended the rule that the last full foot of the line (or, in his analysis, the third foot of the second line) must be a trochee to the first half of the line. A faulty and artificial analogy between the halves of the trochaic septenarius is the apparent root and cause of Bede's ostensibly strange claim.[60] Wilhelm Meyer's reliance on statistics to show that, in the hymn, spondaic first feet are hardly any more common than spondaic third feet carries weight only statistically:[61] as the hymn actually begins with a spondee, Bede could of course not prescribe a trochee for the first foot of the line. It must also be borne in mind that all of Bede's sources describe the classical trochaic tetrameter. Bede was probably not aware of the full distinction between the classical and archaic forms of the metre, and he may have entertained some lingering doubts regarding the appropriateness of spondaic odd feet. Although he chose not to present the classical trochaic tetrameter at all, he, all the same, made a last and half-hearted effort to curtail the use of spondees in trochaic verse. The addendum of a spondee 'sometimes' taking the third foot of the line is probably symptomatic of the author's confusion in the face of a poem that did not correspond with the metrical literature at his disposal.

Bede's description of the trochaic septenarius is remarkable, as it is in effect a pioneering effort to describe a poetic form that was, in Bede's time, nine hundred years old. Its faults are the direct result of earlier grammarians' reliance on Greek authors and a tradition of scholarship that had neglected archaic and popular verse. If we take into account Bede's addendum that the third foot of the line may sometimes be a spondee and disregard his division of the line into a couplet, there is nothing inherently wrong with his description. Bede does not discuss word-division, unless his innovation of presenting the septenarius as a couplet is to be construed as an effort to enforce the central diaeresis of the line in a roundabout way – which, from a didactic perspective, is plausible. On the other hand, it may also reflect the practices of sung hymnody. Meyer's law was, of course, only described in

[60] Meyer 1905: 348-349.
[61] Meyer 1905: 347.

the modern age, and there is no reason to expect Bede to discuss it: even in his description of hexameter caesurae Bede relies on the grammarians to such an extent that it does not describe even Bede's own verse accurately or exhaustively.[62] From this point of view, it is natural that Bede only describes the placement of metrical feet within the trochaic septenarius.

Perhaps exaggeratedly, Wilhelm Meyer has introduced into his presentation of trochaic verse what he calls either *der Beda'ische Septenarius*, or a 'half-pure' (*halbrein*) septenarius, based on Bede's initial presentation of the metre without taking into account his comment on the occasional use of spondees in the third foot. Meyer presents this as a hybrid of the 'pure' (*rein*) classical tetrameter and the 'impure' (*unrein*) archaic septenarius.[63] Meyer's taxonomy may appear artificial, but it is arguably useful, as several of the Carolingian poets followed Bede's presentation with exaggerated zeal, excluding spondaic third feet from their verse altogether. This effectively demonstrates the complete break which had taken place in the tradition of archaic iambo-trochaic Latin verse: that the poets had to construct their verse on the strength of a few lines in Bede's treatise shows the extent to which their trochaic verse is synthetic. What is generally typical of Bede's followers is that they follow his admonition to use trochaic third feet and at the same time ignore Meyer's law, which results in accent-patterns which the archaic model of the septenarius does not allow. The combination of these features is a central characteristic of the reconstructed early medieval septenarius. On the following pages I will venture to revisit a number of poems which Meyer classified as representatives of 'the Bedan septenarius' so as to shed some light on the true extent of Bede's influence, as well as some other poems which may reflect some aspects of Bedan metrics which have previously gone ignored.

APPAREBUNT ANTE SUMMUM

Wilhelm Meyer's prime example of 'the Bedan septenarius' is an anonymous early medieval poem with strongly eschatological content. Michael Lapidge

[62] *CCSL* 123A: 116-18; Heikkinen 2012a: 97-108.
[63] Meyer 1905: 350-353.

has presented strong evidence that would indicate that the author of the hymn may have been Bede himself. The evidence is based not only on metrical features but the content and phraseology of the poem.[64] We know that Bede was profoundly interested in eschatology, which is corroborated by his exegetical *Expositio Apocalypseo*s, the hexameter hymn *De die iudicii*[65] as well as the so-called 'Bede's Death Song' which the scholar recited on his death bed according to his former pupil Cuthbert.[66]

The hymn, also known by its title *De Enoch et Haeliae*,[67] is a haunting description of the Last Judgement and presents an extensive portrayal of the Antichrist. The poem shows considerable parallels with the rhythmic abecedary hymn *Apparebit repentina*,[68] presented by Bede in his *De arte metrica* as an example of non-quantitative verse composed *ad formam metri trochaici*.[69] In addition to the similarity of content (both hymns describe the End of Days), the opening of the poem, with its future form of *appareo*, calls to mind the rhythmic hymn. In addition, both have a similar structure of two trochaic lines followed by a refrain which does not correspond with any metrical model. In *Apparebit repentina* we have *in tremendo die iudicii* (not quoted by Bede), but the idea seems to have been developed further in *Apparebunt ante summum*: the first twelve strophes have the prosodically similar *imminente die iudicii*, strophes 13–26 have *in pavendo die iudicii* and the nine concluding strophes *in perennis die sabbati*. Despite these stylistic and structural similarities, *Apparebunt ante summum* has not been cast in the by-then established rhythmic form of the trochaic septenarius; rather, it follows the structure of the archaic septenarius as used in *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*, or more precisely, Bede's presentation of the hymn. If both of these

[64] Lapidge (forthcoming). The phrase *imminente die iudicii*, cited several times in the refrain, does, as such, not appear before Bede, who uses twice in his *In epistulas catholicas* (ed. Hurst 1983: 295). Lapidge has also pointed out the contaminated pluperfect form *pupunxerat* (from the reduplicated preterite stem *pupug-* and the less usual sigmatig *punx-* normally only used in compounds); the stem *pupunx-* seems restricted to the works of Bede (*Commentarius in Lucam*, ed. Hurst 1960: 419; *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Gryson 2001: 247). The poem also closely follows the structural layout of the depiction of the Last Judgement in Bede's *De temporum ratione* (ed. Jones 1977: 538-44).

[65] Ed. Fraipoint 1955: 439-44.

[66] Ed. Colgrave & Mynors 1969: 579-587.

[67] *PLAC* IV: 491-495.

[68] *PLAC* IV: 507-510.

[69] *CCSL* 123A: 139.

poems are by Bede, as would strongly appear, they can be viewed as a kind of *opus geminatum* where the same material has been worked in two distinctly different prosodic forms.

The poem is certainly metrical despite some typically medieval prosodic licences.[70] That the archaic septenarius has been intended is manifest in the relatively high ratio of spondaic odd feet. Of the seventy lines, 37 have spondaic first feet, 53 have spondaic fifth feet and 32 have both; the spondaic fifth foot seems to predominate noticeably.[71] The third foot, however, is spondaic only once, in line 22.1 (*qua terrae tribus lugebunt*), a clear indication of Bede's ruling on third feet, and even this line can easily be corrected to *tribus dolebunt*, as Michael Lapidge has suggested.[72] Any statistics on the poem, however, must be partly inconclusive as the intended syllable lengths are often open to question.[73]

The poem has nine elisions. Hiatus occurs five times, but only at the central diaeresis, indicating that it is really understood as a line-break (5.1, *superbo / antichristus*; 8.2, *forte / electorum*; 11.1, *Hebrei / ore*; 20.2, *laeti / obuiam* and 25.1, *decore / una*). The coincidence of accent and ictus in line-endings is almost consistent. Most lines end with trisyllables, although words of four or five syllables are also conspicuously frequent. Disyllables are almost uniformly preceded by a monosyllable (2.2, *in polum*; 6.1, *ac duces*; 18.1, *et pii*; 25.1, *et duces*; 30.1, *ut iubar*) with one exception, 33.2, *praefulgebunt solis instar in sui regno patris*, which, however, is paraphrase of Matth. 13:43 (*tum iusti fulgebunt sicut sol in regno patris*); the frequency of metrical

[70] Initial *h* creates a position in 1.2 (*ēt Heliae)* and 11.1 (*ēt Hebrei),* a practice that is relatively common in Late Latin verse (see Norberg 1958: 3) and that was sanctioned by several grammarians, including Bede (CCSL 123A: 89).

[71] Wilhelm Meyer's figures differ from mine, but they are based on Dümmler's 1881 edition in his *Rhytmorum ecclesiasticorum aevi Carolini specimen*, 11-13. Some of the emendations suggested by Meyer have been made by Strecker in *PLAC* IV: 491-495.

[72] Both Meyer and Norberg have overlooked the line.

[73] Dümmler's edition also has 4, 1 *tum repente* ***serpens*** *ater*, emended in *PLAC* IV: 508, apparently at Meyer's suggestion, to *tum sérpens ater repente*, which follows the Bedan ruling on third feet but violates Meyer's law. Bede's influence not only on medieval poets but also on modern editors is striking. - Meyer 1905: 354; Norberg 1988: 87 questions the validity of the correction.

and prosodic liberties in biblical quotations and names in Late Latin and medieval verse has been well noted, and it was condoned by Bede himself.[74]

There is no ostensible attempt to observe the secondary diaeresis, as it is present in only 38 of the lines. Meyer's law is violated with surprising frequency, with rather uncouth-sounding results. Fifteen lines have a spondaic word-ending before the fourth element (e.g. 4.1, *tum sérpens*; 5.1, *et Chrístum*; 7.1, *torméntis*; 14.1, *e cáelo*) and five lines before the twelfth (e.g. 2.1, *convértunt in filios*; 2.2, *iustórum prudentia*). In other words, the author is no longer in any connection at all with archaic iambo-trochaic practice; rather, the whole poem comes across as a deliberate exercise in archaism of a most synthetic kind. The author has been content to reproduce, on a massive scale, the archaic septenarius as understood in Bede's *De arte metrica*. This is above all apparent in the author's (misguided) avoidance of third-foot spondees and his treatment of the central diaeresis as a line-break, but when it comes to those features of the archaic septenarius not covered by Bede, he shows no understanding of previous tradition.

WALAHFRID STRABO

That Bede's partially misleading definition of the trochaic septenarius served as a theoretical model for a number of Carolingian poets still does not mean that their approach to the metre was uniform. Rather, their efforts range from the almost classical to the crudely spondaic. What is surprising is that, for all their differences, they adhere to Bede's prescription of trochaic third feet in the trochaic septenarius. A study of the poems which Wilhelm Meyer has classified as representatives of *der Beda'ische Septenarius* may shed some light on the different approaches taken by their respective authors.

We may begin by taking as an example the salutary hymn *Ecce uotis apta* which Walahfrid Strabo (ca. 808–849) dedicated to the arrival of Charles the Bald in 829.[75] This simple poem consists of ten strophes of two septenarii, each concluded with the refrain *Salue, regum sancta proles, care Christo Carole*. Typically, the poem is a short example of occasional verse. In the

[74] *CCSL* 123A: 129. That the line follows Bentley-Luchs's law is certainly a pure coincidence.

[75] *PLAC* II: 406.

unusual choice of his metre, the poet has probably been influenced by the role of the trochaic tetrameter/septenarius as a vehicle for processional hymns, itself possibly a carryover from the legionary chants of antiquity and best manifested by Venantius's *Pange linqua gloriosi*. Structurally, however, the hymn does not correspond with Venantius's classicising model of the tetrameter.

The correspondence of the hymn with Bede's description of the septenarius is striking and has been duly noted by both Wilhelm Meyer and Dag Norberg.[76] The poem exhibits no cases of syllable resolution, which in itself is a tell-tale sign; nevertheless, it is entirely metrical. That it is not modelled after the classicising tetrameters of Prudentius or his followers, or anything prescribed by the late antique grammarians, is betrayed by the relatively high ratio of spondaic odd feet. These are, however, restricted to the first and fifth feet of each line. Strikingly, however, it is the first foot of the line that, by a narrow margin, is more often spondaic of the two: in twenty-two lines (including the refrain), the poem has eight spondaic first feet[77] and five spondaic fifth feet, in opposition to, e.g., *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*, where the spondaic fifth foot dominates. More remarkable is the complete absence of third-foot spondees, which is probably the direct result of Bede's influence.[78] Nevertheless, the poem still has numerous verses which correspond with the classicising trochaic tetrameter and have spondees only in the even feet.

The poem shows some tendency to observe the secondary diaeresis before the second foot: it is present in fourteen lines altogether; however, Strabo has obviously not strived for any consistency in this respect. That the poem is a synthetic recreation of an earlier type of verse is hinted at by Strabo's treatment of word division. In most cases, Meyer's law is observed and there are no spondaic word-endings before the fourth our twelfth elements of the line, apart from two jarring examples in the first line of strophe 3 (*Anna uatem, Sarra risum / non fúdit libentius*) and the second line of strophe 10 (*quae te sanum uexit istuc / Francórum per regmina*). That the rule is followed elsewhere suggests that Strabo was following earlier models 'by ear'

[76] Meyer 1905: 354; Norberg 1988: 89.

[77] Seven, by Norberg's calculations.

[78] Norberg contends that 'la sixième [syllabe] est toujours brève à une exception près'; I, however, have not discovered the purported exception.

but without a full grasp of their structure apart from the distribution of trochees and spondees, and here, too, the poet's exaggerated reliance on Bede as his only theoretically reliable source is manifest. As we know, Walahfrid also composed in the classical trochaic tetrameter,[79] which may account for the crisp, light and generally trochaic style of *Ecce uobis apta*. It seems that he has simply perceived the trochaic septenarius, as described by Bede, as a 'looser' form of trochaic tetrameter which allows *some* spondaic odd feet but been under Bede's sway to such an extent that he did not venture to place them in the third foot.

That the author has clearly understood the septenarius as a verse couplet rather than a single line with a central diaeresis is evident in three cases where there is a hiatus after the fourth foot (3.2, *digne / ut*; 6.1, *tibiasque / organum* and 6.2, *pulsu / arte*). This, again would imply that he was using Bede's definition as his outline.[80]

HINCMAR OF REIMS

Compared to Walahfrid's verse, the septenarii of Hincmar of Reims (806–882) come across as even further divorced from their Late Antique predecessors. The most striking feature of Hincmar's fourteen-line poem from the fragmentary *Ferculum Salomonis*,[81] also addressed to Charles the Bald, is its heavy, archaising spondaicity. The poem does not have a single line that corresponds with the structure of the classicising trochaic tetrameter, as every line has a spondee either in the first or the fifth foot of the line (thirteen and eleven times, respectively), and an overwhelming majority, ten lines altogether, have both. However, not a single line has a spondaic third foot.

[79] The hymn of salutation addressed to Charles's brother Lothar in *PLAC* II: 405. Wilhelm Meyer expresses incredulity at the concept that the same author is responsible for both poems and suggests that if this is indeed the case, it must be due to the different dates of the respective poems. - Meyer 1905: 354.

[80] Hiatus in the diaeresis of the trochaic septenarius is a common feature in Plautus (though not in Terence), but this, of course, is a feature not discussed by the grammarians. See Soubiran 1988: 93.

[81] *PLAC* III: 415. *Ferculum Salomonis*, which is supposed to have been an image-poem, was composed 853-56. See Ernst 1991: 350-51.

Hincmar has apparently followed Bede's description of the metre to the letter, without taking into account his addendum that a spondaic third foot is 'sometimes' possible. As a result, the poem boasts several lines where every foot except the third and seventh are spondees:

Prompsit uobis sana, princeps, per doctorum fercula (line 4)

Supra quaedam nempe de his explanavi largius (line 7)

Vivat clarus semper almo sanctor(um) in consortio (line 14)

– – – – | – u – – |– – – – | – u –

It is obvious that an occasional respite from such heaviness is necessary, and here, arguably, the regularly trochaic third foot serves a purpose; as a matter of fact, it seems to have become something like the pivotal point of the whole line. What exists in Bede's presentation of the trochaic septenarius as a reserved suggestion has been formulated in Hincmar's hands into the guiding structural principle of the metre. The foursquareness of the poem is underlined by the almost-regularly observed diaeresis after the second foot (twelve times); however, Hincmar has violated Meyer's law in two consecutive lines (5–6: *quae pléno sermone* and *et prósa diserta*). Syllable resolution is entirely absent, as might be expected, and there are two instances of elision. Hincmar has twice resorted to hiatus,[82] but both times it takes place before the letter *h*, a late antique practice that is ubiquitous in the works of several medieval authors and that was also partially sanctioned by Bede.[83] All in all, Hincmar seems to be even more slavishly indebted to Bede's treatise than Walahfrid: the poet follows Bede's rulings obsessively but has, nevertheless, managed to craft the archaic septenarius into a thing of startling eccentricity: his overwhelmingly spondaic style actually serves to highlight the trochee of the third foot.

[82] Line 7, *supra quaedam nempe de / his*, and line 12, *sensu uerbo / haec*.

[83] *CCSL* 123A: 120. Bede approves of hiatus before *h* with the reservation that the preceding syllable should end with *m* rather than a vowel. - Heikkinen 2012a: 39-40.

HRABANUS MAURUS

The polymetrist Hrabanus Maurus (780–856) took a keen interest in both metrical and rhythmic verse, which is reflected also in his use of the trochaic septenarius. Hrabanus composed several hymns in the rhythmic replication of the septenarius,[84] a poetic form that was on the rise, having been eagerly adopted by many hymnodists and received the patronage of Bede himself, but as what seems a deliberately archaising gesture, he also created two extant hymns in the metrical form, which was already on its way out. In the case of Hrabanus Maurus's metrical septenarii, their indebtedness to Bede's *De arte metrica* has been disputed. Wilhelm Meyer considers Hrabanus a typical representative of the 'Bedan septenarius',[85] but Norberg opines that Meyer may have overestimated Bede's influence.[86] Certainly, when it comes to third- foot structure, Hrabanus's hymn to the martyrs Marcellinus and Peter, *Claras laudes ac salubres*[87] does not follow Bede's description of the trochaic septenarius quite as fanatically as does the verse of Walahfrid and Hincmar in the same metre, but this does not mean the absence of Bede's influence altogether.

This hymn consists of thirteen strophes of two lines, each followed by the refrain *O uictores gloriosi his ouate laudibus*. It is plainly apparent that the archaic septenarius has been intended, as the poem is nearly as heavily spondaic as Hincmar's, with an overwhelming majority of first- and fifth-foot spondees. In a poem of 27 lines (I have counted the refrain as one line), twenty-two have a spondaic first foot, twenty-three have a spondaic fifth foot, and twenty have both. What is surprising is that trochees are actually more common in the second feet of the line, a position that would allow spondees even in the classical form of the metre. The second foot of the line is trochaic in eight cases, and seven lines have the opening of spondee and trochee that is practically the opposite of the classical trochaic metron:

quas proferre cogit apte nunc sanctorum Gloria (line 1, 2)

[84] E.g. hymns XIII and XIV in *PLAC* II: 252-54.
[85] Meyer 1905: 353.
[86] Norberg 1988: 89. Meyer has clearly miscounted the number of third-foot spondees in the two poems.
[87] *PLAC* II: 235-36.

– – – u | – u – – |– – – – | – u –

quot uirtute regis almi fortes uidi martyres
Marcellinus atque Petrus iam uicerunt saeculum (lines 2, 1–2)
– – – u | – u – – |– – – – | – u –

This is yet another example of the idiomatic approaches to the trochaic septenarius taken by Carolingian poets. In Hrabanus's poem, the third foot is spondaic only four or five times, which still indicates a tendency to avoid such a structure and does not make Bede's influence improbable despite Norberg's misgivings. We must bear in mind Bede's addendum that the third foot of the line may 'sometimes' be a spondee, which Hrabanus may have taken to heart, unlike Strabo and Hincmar who went overboard in their observance of Bede's metrical rules. The certain cases of third-foot spondees appear in lines 3.1 (*quos arx orbis* ***et re****gina*), 5.2 (*ex insanis* ***foras*** *arcent*), 6.1 (*qui torquentur* ***caesi*** *flagris*) and 11.2 (*ut in silua* ***tracti*** *foras*).[88] A dubious case is line 8.1 (*illi laudes ualde dignas*), where *ualdĕ* may have been intended.[89]

The poem displays several unclassical quantities (*fōras*, *ūt*, *nām*), but they are of a type that had already become established in late antique verse. Once, the poet has tampered with word prosody in the cadence of the line (11, 2 *festĭnant*). The poem has a few cases of initial *h* blocking elision (in the refrain *o uictores gloriosi / his ouate laudibus*, where the hiatus also coincides with the central diaeresis; 5.1, *uim / horrendam*; 6.2, *uinci tetro / hi catenis*) and two cases of hiatus after an *m* before an initial vowel (5.1, *uerbo curant ac medelam / aegris*, where the hiatus coincides with the diaeresis, and 7.1, *nam / in cippo*); hiatus between vowels does not occur. In this poem, Hrabanus's hiatuses are, in other words, of a Late Latin type partially sanctioned by Bede[90] and surprisingly frequent in Aldhelm's verse.[91] There is only one case of elision (11.1, *uald(e) iratus*).

Hrabanus's poem differs from those of Walahfrid and Hincmar not only in its looser observance of the third-foot rule but also when it comes to word

[88] Meyer has overlooked 3.1.
[89] Cf. Norberg 1958: 9.
[90] *CCSL* 123A: 120.
[91] Orchard 1994: 84; Heikkinen 2012b.

division and accentuation. Unlike his colleagues, Hrabanus observes the auxiliary caesura after the second foot rigorously; also, he follows Meyer's law unfailingly. This would suggest greater metrical sophistication in Hrabanus's trochaic verse – or at least a better understanding of the structural principles of his late antique models. Hrabanus has not constructed a synthetic replica of the septenarius from Bede's blueprint; rather, it still seems connected to a living tradition of archaic iambo-trochaic versification with its own, subtle but unwritten laws. Bede's overly theoretical presentation of the trochaic septenarius still seems to have exerted some influence on his verse technique.

Hrabanus Maurus's other hymn in the trochaic septenarius is his Christmas hymn *Ymnus de natali domini metro trochaico tetrametro scriptus*,[92] which consists of fifteen strophes. Owing to its theme, hymn exhibits some lexical similarities to the beginning of *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*, which may also account for some of its metrical characteristics. The stanzas have the same structure as those in his other hymn, each having two lines and the refrain *Christo nato rege magno totus orbis gaudeat*. Again, the structure of the poem is undeniably that of the archaic septenarius. Of its thirty-one lines (including the refrain) nearly all have spondaic odd feet. The first foot is spondaic twenty-four times, the fifth nineteen times, and sixteen lines have spondees in both the first and fifth feet. The tendency to avoid third-foot spondees is less marked than in the author's hymn to the martyrs Marcellinus and Peter but still recognisable: the third foot of the line is spondaic seven times, but a ready explanation can be found in line 7.1, which is a verbatim loan from *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*: *factor caeli, terrae factor*. What makes this especially significant is that Bede uses this very line as an example that the trochee may 'sometimes' take the third foot of the line. Hrabanus effectually demonstrates the legitimacy of this metrical liberty through both Bede's authority and that of the hymn which he quotes, while still limiting its use – that spondaic third feet are no metrical liberty but a normal feature of archaic trochaic verse has probably not entered his mind to such an extent that he would have disregarded Bede's ruling altogether. The other instances of spondaic third feet are 4.1 (*clarus ipsos* ***ad lae****tandum*), 6.1 (*o stupendum* ***miran****dumque*), 6.1 (*quod tonantem* ***supra*** *cuncta*), 11.1 (*o beata* ***mater*** *Christi*), 11.2 (*tu laus orbis* ***et re****gina*) and 13.1 (*ecce*

[92] *PLAC* II: 245-46.

sperant ***laeta****bunda*); in most cases the phrases are heavily formulaic, which would explain their use in spite of Bede's recommendation: the phrase *arx orbis et regina* appears in an identical position in *PLAC* II: 236, line 3.1. In line 3.1 (*hunc regalis* ***uirgo*** *mater*), the post-classical pronunciation *uirgŏ* is certainly intended, making the third foot trochaic. – It would seem that when it comes to Bede's influence on Hrabanus's verse, Meyer was right and Norberg overly cautious.

Yet there is another tell-tale sign of Bedan metrics which we must consider apart from the foot-structure of the poem: the poem has several cases of hiatus in the central diaeresis, which Bede reinterpreted as a line-break. In three cases, this takes place after the letter *m* (1.2 *orbem / umbras*; 4.2, *laetandum / exortatur*; 12.1, *piorum / omne*), but twice the same occurs between vowels (2.1, *propheta / olim*; 13.1, *laetabunda / angelorum*), a practice otherwise avoided by the author, which would indicate that, like Bede, he has in fact understood the trochaic septenarius as a verse couplet. There is only one case of hiatus within a half-line in 13.1 (*angelorum / agmina*), here again after the letter *m*.

When it comes to word-division, the poem corresponds closely with its earlier models, and is, if anything, more regular. The auxiliary caesura is observed consistently, and Meyer's law is not broken once. The word-accent coincides with the ictus in every line-ending. Most lines end with a three-syllable word, one with a four-syllable word (2.1, *praedixerat*), and one line with a two-syllable word, which, however is preceded by a monosyllable (4.1, *nám gregis*). Once, the author has apparently tampered with syllable quantity to make the word fit (11.2, *Māria*), but this is a practice sanctioned by Bede who in his treatise shows explicit understanding for the bending of prosodic rules, especially in biblical contexts.[93]

'NON-BEDAN' SEPTENARII?

Next we shall take a closer look at a number of Carolingian poems which, at least ostensively, have not been constructed after the Bedan blueprint. Sedulius Scottus (fl. 840-860) employed the trochaic tetrameter/septenarius

[93] *CCSL* 123A: 129.

in three poems,[94] which in Meyer's classification have been labelled as 'overpure' (*überrein*); in other words, they are supposed to represent a fourth subclass of trochaic verse, distinct from the 'pure' classicising tetrameter, the 'half-pure' form with its Bedan restrictions and the 'impure' archaic septenarius.[95] Sedulius Scottus's poems share the quirk of being composed almost entirely of trochees with the number of spondaic feet reduced to a minimum. The poet seems to have had no predecessors in this respect despite some obviously exaggerated testimonies in the grammarians.[96] The structure of Sedulius Scottus's poems seems hypercorrect and is best seen as a later-day parallel of the 'pure iambic trimeter' created by the exaggeratedly classicising poets of the Late Republic.[97] As any analysis of the poems will reveal, they are, however, not 'overpure' in the sense of following the classical definition of a trochaic tetrameter.

The three poems consist of sixteen, twenty-two and eight lines, respectively. In the majority of cases, spondaic feet are restricted to the end of the first half-line (fifteen altogether), implying that the poet really understood it as a line ending, making the final syllable of the fourth foot indifferent. The rest of the spondees are distributed more or less evenly across all the feet of the line, numbering sixteen if we follow the reading in Traube's edition, but for four of them, Meyer has suggested alternative scansions or readings.[98] Of the remaining twelve cases, none appear in the first foot (this is the only actually classical feature of Sedulius's septenarii), five appear in the second, two in the third, three in the fifth and two in the sixth feet. If we exclude the fourth foot of the line from our analysis, we can see that five out of twelve spondees in Sedulius's poems appear in positions not allowed in the

[94] *PLAC* III: 159, 165-66 and 218.

[95] Meyer 1905: 350-53.

[96] E.g. Mallius Theodorus, *Gramm.* VI, 595: *Trochaicum autem metrum a poetis Graecis et Latinis frequentatur, quod solum trochaeus ita efficere potest, ut citato et minuto quodam cursu feratur.* ('The Greek and Latin poets commonly use a trochaic line which may consist of only trochees, so as to give it an agitated and diminutive air.')

[97] Meyer 1905: 351 considers such innovations an over-elaborate joke: 'Allein als die Dichter Verskünstler wurden, machte sich mancher den Scherz, reine Reihen solcher Füße zu dichten, in denen sich absolut kein Spondeus befand.'

[98] Meyer 1905: 353; Meyer suggests the scansion *zélŏtes* for *PLAC* III: 165, line 9 (*ipse zelotes ut instat*), the reading *modestŭs* for *PLAC* III: 165, line 11 (*auribus modestīs ille*) and *mulcet* for *PLAC* III: 159, line 8 (*uisa mulcens omnium*) as well as *quem tremit superbă quaeque* for *PLAC* III: 159, line 13 (*quem tremit superbōrumque*).

classical trochaic tetrameter. The poet, in other words, has not followed the structure of the trochaic tetrameter, but, rather, written archaising septenarii with a heavily curtailed use of spondees. Norberg's characterisation of the poems is telling: '[Sedulius Scottus] a tenté de n'employer que des trochees meme au deuxiême et au sixiême pied, où les spondees étaient autorisés dans la forme classique.'[99] 'Tenté' is right: the legitimacy of Meyer's classification of Sedulius's septenarii as 'overpure' is at best dubious.

As Sedulius's poems are short and their number of spondees in general meagre, it is difficult to say to what extent he was influenced by Bede; at least, he does not seem to have taken particular care to avoid third-foot spondees. However, the high frequency of spondees in fourth feet of the line would indicate that he in fact viewed the central diaeresis of the septenarius as a line-break, itself a reflection of Bede's definition of the metre.

The hymn *Sume plectrum lingua metri,* by Smaragdus of St Mihiel (ca. 760–ca. 840),[100] clearly indebted to *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*,[101] consists of thirteen strophes of three lines each. Despite its sometimes embarrassing prosodic faults (*sālus*, *ēs*) it is definitely metrical, as the author professes in the opening line *sume plectrum, lingua metri, tange cordas trochei*. It is particularly telling that the author feels he needs to emphasise the metrical nature of the poem: this reflects the fact that the metrical trochaic tetrameter/septenarius was being superseded by its rhythmic variant. The hymn's inconsistent structure shows that the author may have been struggling with his chosen format especially in his use of spondees: six of the strophes have spondees only in the even feet and are consistent with the classical form of the trochaic septenarius. Elsewhere in the poem, the first and third foot are spondaic four times and the fifth foot, seven;[102] Meyer's law is broken once (6.1, *cunctárum uiuentium*). The author would seem to have had knowledge of the classical definition of the trochaic tetrameter but been unwilling to follow through with its implementation. It is natural to suppose that the influence of the archaic form of *Hymnum dicat* played a role in the mixed form of the metre. Elision, one of the hallmarks of metrical verse, is completely absent from the poem, but the hymn contains six cases

[99] Norberg 1958: 77.
[100] *PLAC* I: 619.
[101] Norberg 1988: 88.
[102] Norberg (1988: 88) has counted only three spondaic third feet.

of hiatus, five of which appear at the central diaeresis (1.3, *vita /et*; 2.2, *resolve / ut*; 10.1, *superna / Hierusalem*; 12.1, *angelorum / et*; 12.2, *patri / alleluia*), indicating that the author certainly saw the diaeresis as a line break.

Yet another hymn that paraphrases *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum,* spuriously attributed to Hartmann of St Gall (d. ca. 884), has been preserved in the *Sylloga codicis Sangallensis* and, tellingly, begins with the line *Iam fidelis turba fratrum uoce dulci consonet*.[103] The hymn consists of seven three-line strophes and follows its model closely: the first foot is spondaic eleven times, the third foot seven times[104] and fifth foot seven times. There is one instance of elision (line 6.1, *omnis atqu(e) apostolus*) and hiatus only appears at line 3.1, where it coincides with the central diaeresis (*beatum / in*) after a word-final *m*, a feature shared by its model. The nearly complete absence of classicising trochaic lines indicates that the poet was not influenced by literary presentations of the trochaic tetrameter/septenarius but relied solely on his literary model. This has nevertheless not prevented him from breaking Meyer's law on four occasions (2.2, *siluárum scrutando lustra*; 3.2, *auctórem patremque tanti*, 7.2, *uirtútis fiduciam*, 7.3, *captémus perennia*). The high frequency of third-foot spondees and the avoidance of hiatus even at the central diaeresis, however, leave the question of Bedan influence open.

A trochaic hymn in the *Sylloga codicis Sangallensis,* which has possibly spuriously been attributed to Ratbert of St Gall (ca. 855–911),[105] follows the structure of the archaising septenarius This processional anthem with the title *Ad descensum fontis* consists of eight two-line strophes[106] with the refrain *Rex sanctorum angelorum totum mundum adiuva* and is heavily spondaic throughout: the first foot is spondaic thirteen times, the third eight times and the fifth, nine times: there is no sign of avoiding third-foot spondees. Meyer's law is broken once (6.1, *sacrátum mysterium*). There are no elisions, but hiatus is conspicuous, appearing twice at the central diaeresis (1.2, *summi / ordines*; *protoplasmum / et genus*) and three times elsewhere,

[103] *PLAC* IV: 330-331; *AH* L, no. 194 (p. 259).

[104] Norberg has counted nine instances, probably scanning the gerunds *scrutando* (line 2.2) and *uolendo* (line 7.3) with a long *o*, although a short *o* is entirely plausible, in keeping with post-classical practice. - See Heikkinen 2012a: 55-56.

[105] *PLAC* IV: 324-325; *AH* L, no. 183 (p. 242); see Norberg 1988: 89.

[106] The alternative third strophe (*Sancte Galle, pater alme*), rather incongruously addressed to St Gall, is an interpolation and I have left it outside my analysis, as is the strophe 9 in *AH* L, p. 242 (*Ut laetetur mater sancta*).

including two instances in the refrain (*sanctorum / angelorum*, *mundum / adiuva*). There are no instances of elision. The use of rhyme is striking, as the two halves of the lines have a monosyllabic rhyme in all but four lines. Whatever the models of the hymn have been, it does not follow any literary definition of the trochaic tetrameter/septenarius closely. Nevertheless, it is remarkably consistent in its metrical structure.

The same cannot be said for the anonymous Carolingian *Audi iudex mortuorum*,[107] composed for the consecration of the Chrism. The hymn has eight two-line strophes with the refrain *O redemptor, sume carmen temet concinentium*. As Dreves has pointed out in his commentary, the first half of line 7. 1 (*corde natus ex parentis aluum implens uirginis*) has been borrowed from Prudentius's *Cathemerinon* 10.10. The anonymous author has nevertheless not decided to opt for Prudentius's classical form of the trochaic tetrameter, although a high number of the lines – seven altogether – are classical in structure, having no spondees in the odd feet. In the remaining lines, unclassical spondees are distributed fairly evenly in the first half of the line: six in the first foot and seven in the third foot. The fifth foot is spondaic only once (2.1, *saluatori saeculi*). The hymn has almost-regular monosyllabic rhyme. There are no elisions but hiatus occurs four times at the central diaeresis and twice elsewhere (2.1, *arbor feta / alma luce*, 3.1. *stans ad aram / immo supplex*). The poet's grasp of prosody obviously leaves something to be desired, and it is understandable that he has chosen not to compose his hymn in the strictly classical trochaic tetrameter. The legitimacy lent to the archaic septenarius by the authority of *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum* and its presentation in Bede has clearly presented him with an easy way out.

It is obvious that not all users of the archaic septenarius in the Carolingian era followed Bede's injunction to avoid third-foot spondees to the letter. However, the fact that the metre was used at all probably owes much to its presentation in Bede's slim corpus of lyric metres. This seems most apparent in those cases where the author has composed his hymn partly in the classical trochaic tetrameter, often with several consecutive strophes of the classical variety, and then clutched at the 'looser' septenarius when he could not. This feature is particularly conspicuous in the hymn of Smaragdus and the anonymous *Audi iudex mortuorum*. A central feature of Bede's presentation of the trochaic septenarius is also its definition as a verse couplet, although

[107] *AH* LI, no. 77 (p. 80).

the practices of sung hymnody may also have played a part in the metrical structure of the middle of the line: the strikingly common hiatus at the central diaeresis is a feature shared by virtually all Carolingian septenarii. This is all the more conspicuous, as the practice is not condoned by the example of *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*, and appears even in the metrically most meticulous poems where the 'proper' use of elision is otherwise consistently observed.

CONCLUSION

We have observed some examples of early medieval verse in the trochaic septenarius, which show the extent to which theory dictated practice in Late Latin and early medieval verse. In this particular case, the overly theoretical approach of their respective authors was complicated by the absence of an actual theory of archaic iambo-trochaic versification, apart from Bede's attempt to rectify a legacy of negligence and narrow-minded classicism in a grammatical tradition to which archaic metres were either alien or a thing of contempt. The tradition of archaic iambo-trochaic metre survived surprisingly long on the margins of literature, which is demonstrated by the hymn of Hilary and the anonymous *Hymnum dicat turba fratrum*, which still follow even the archaic rules of word-division meticulously. Seen in this light, Llewellyn Morgan's estimate that the rules of archaic iambo-trochaic verse were already lost by the age of Cicero[108] seems overly pessimistic. But no literary tradition can survive indefinitely if it is not supported by scholarship.

The relative popularity of the trochaic tetrameter/septenarius caused the metre to evolve in several, structurally quite different directions. On one hand, we have the classical form of the metre which the grammarians do discuss, albeit with varying success, on the other hand we can witness the emergence of rhythmic verse, a literary form easily accessible without extensive scholarship, and, finally, we have the rhythmic septenarius which also won the support of Bede.

The archaising septenarius was a quantitative verse form, the composition of which in the Middle Ages required the arduously-won knowledge of syl-

[108] Morgan 2012: 131.

lable quantity, but without support from the grammatical authorities. In this respect, its position as a poetic medium was shaky at best. It is probable that Bede's chapter on the metre played a role in its survival, and it is certainly Bede's authority which ensured a place for the septenarius in Carolingian literature, alongside the classical tetrameter and the newer and easier rhythmic variants of the length. The trochaic septenarius represented an uncomfortable middle ground between the classical tetrameter and the rhythmic septenarius, and Bede's presentation of the metre can be seen to have been influenced by the two other traditions: his limitation on spondaic third feet may reflect the practices of the classicising metre, whereas the reinterpretation of the septenarius as a couplet is essentially a feature of the rhythmic variant.

Bede's simple outline of the septenarius and his idiosyncratic attempt to curtail the use of spondaic third feet within the metre was emulated in various ways by early medieval poets: the examples we have range from the almost classical and highly trochaic verse of Walahfrid to the cumbersomely spondaic efforts of Hincmar. Similarly, there is considerable variation in the ways in which the poems adhere to the earlier metrical tradition. Hrabanus Maurus still seems to have a firm grasp of the archaic rules of word-division; they are observed in the majority of cases by Walahfrid and Hincmar but utterly disregarded by the author of *Apparebunt ante summum*, possibly Bede himself. Nevertheless, they all follow Bede's ruling about third-foot trochees which, apparently, they regarded as a defining feature of an otherwise loose metre. Hrabanus is less consistent about this feature of 'the Bedan septenarius', but apparently he has interpreted it as a recommendation rather than a fixed rule, something which Bede himself admits but Walahfrid and Hincmar ignored.

The poems also do not feature any cases of syllable resolution, an option which Bede does not discuss, and Bede's decision to present the septenarius not as one line but as two is reflected in the poets' tendency to treat the central diaeresis as a line-break. This is apparent in their use of hiatus: at the diaeresis, hiatus is common, even between vowels, although elsewhere in the poems it only takes place after an *m* or before an *h* – an unclassical practice which Bede, however, partially condoned. The concept of the trochaic septenarius as a couplet is also apparent in poems which otherwise do not closely follow Bede's formulation of the metre: Sedulius Scottus, who attempted to compose septenarii which only consist of trochees, clearly viewed the cen-

tral diaeresis as a line break and therefore exempt from all considerations of syllable length.

This 'afterlife' of the archaic septenarius did not prove to be enduring.[109] Subsequent generations of poets gradually gave up on the metre, adopting more consciously the classical metres and their own derivatives of older quantitative lengths, or the new and increasingly varied forms of rhythmic verse. The survival of the trochaic septenarius into the Middle Ages is arguably a marginal phenomenon, but its very existence shows the immense authority which Bede's treatise enjoyed in the world of Carolingian letters.

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AH = Analecta hymnica medii aevi.
CCSL = Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina.
PLAC = Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini.

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