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THE SCRIPT OF THE *VORAUER ALEXANDER*.  
SOME REMARKS

The Vorau manuscript, the most prominent poetic miscellany of the Early Middle High German period, contains a version of the *Alexanderlied* (a text also preserved in the Strasbourg and Basel manuscripts). Historical and literary reasons have been provided to ascertain the poem's birthplace(s), conjecturally placed in Cologne or Trier. The script, however, is hard to classify in grammatical terms and no univocal dialectal identity emerges from the analysis. This paper, based on the first-hand collation of the Vorau manuscript, will test the editions' efficiency as collectors of linguistic data, and compare dialectological interpretations with scribal features of both the *Vorauer* and the *Straßburger Alexander*. Renewed attention will be devoted to the late Caroline hand of the Vorau codex and to its inconsistent readings, atomised regionalisms and impenetrable features, which do not allow a unique unquestionable regional attribution. The scrutiny eventually aims at pointing out the hybrid linguistic character of the whole Vorau poem, evidencing methodical troubles in normalising its spellings.

1. *Preliminaries*

The German section of the Vorau manuscript (Vorau, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 276) is the most complete verse collection of the Early Middle High German period.<sup>1</sup> Along with twenty-one minor poems of scriptural subject, it includes the Bavarian *Kaiserchronik*<sup>2</sup> and a 'historical' *liet* on Alexander

<sup>1</sup> Kurt Gärtner, "Vorauer Handschrift", in *Die Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, X, hg. von Kurt Ruh *et al.*, Berlin / New York 1999, cols 516–521. The Latin part (ff. 136–183) transmits Otto of Freising's *Gesta Friderici imperatoris* (on the manuscript structure, see Adele Cipolla, *Hystoria de Alexandro Magno (Vorauer Alexander). Studi sulla costituzione del testo*, Verona 2013, pp. 89–98).

<sup>2</sup> The exceptional tradition of the *Kaiserchronik* numbers tens of complete and fragmentary items from the 12th to the 15th century, and its manuscripts transmit the text alone or within larger historical compilations (see *Handschriftencensus. Eine Bestandsaufnahme der handschriftlichen Überlieferung deutschsprachiger Texte des Mittelalters*, <<http://www.handschriftencensus.de/werke/189>> [accessed 21.10.2015]). The Vorau codex is the earliest entire manuscript and preserves an uncommon conclusion (Conrad III's

the Great's youth adventures (*Vorauer Alexander*, henceforth V).<sup>3</sup> The ascertainment of its origins through linguistic analysis would prove a promising outcome for textual criticism. With regard to the script of the codex, however, it turns out that an attempt at grouping its features on a dialectological basis does not lead to incontrovertible conclusions.

According to Waag, the manuscript is made of a number of geographically different handwritten models.<sup>4</sup> The scholar tried to classify forms and spellings of each poem (as sets of phonological and morphological features which could be listed according to their grammatical description), in order to determine their regional provenance. Nevertheless, Waag was forced to add non-specific categories (*einzelwörter*, *varia*) to his inventories, in order to embrace occurrences of doubtful or 'multiple' classification. Consider, for example, *heden* 'heathen' (f. 113rb12: V 1003) and *kaiben* '(they) gave' (f. 115ra18: V 1403), which appear once each, while the standard forms *heiden* and *gaben* (= *gâben*) occur frequently in the text. Those spellings have been acknowledged as involuntary mistakes and thus revealing of the regional origin of the manuscript from which the *Vorauer Alexander* had been copied,<sup>5</sup> though it remains uncertain whether they should be considered on a scribal or a dialectal level. Both forms (*heden* and *kaiben*) adhere to MHG consonant rules (the latter to Upper German), while the vowels should correspond to the phonological system of Middle Franconian. Omission or addition of *i* in a handwritten sequence is, however, the most common among scribal errors, and single cases of *ai* in lieu of *a*, and of *e* in lieu of *ei*, do not result persuasive enough to prove a regional affinity (hence, the readings *heiden* and *kâben*, in

departure for the Crusade in 1147); see Albert Waag, "Die zusammensetzung der Vorauer handschrift", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 11 (1886), pp. 77–158, at pp. 91–92.

<sup>3</sup> Vorau manuscript, ff. 109r–115vb. Two facsimile editions have been devoted to the German poems in the collection: *Die Kaiserchronik des regul. Chorherrenstiftes Vorau in der Steiermark (Hs. 276/1): Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe der Steiermärkischen Landesbibliothek*, [...] hg. von Pius Fank, Graz 1953, and *Die deutschen Gedichte der Vorauer Handschrift (Kodex 276-2. Teil): Faksimile-Ausgabe des Chorherrenstiftes Vorau*, hg. von Karl K. Polheim, Graz 1958.

<sup>4</sup> Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", pp. 155–157.

<sup>5</sup> *Lamprechts Alexander, nach den drei Texten; mit dem Fragment des Alberic von Besançon und den lateinischen Quellen*, hg. und erkl. von Karl Kinzel, Halle a. S. 1884, pp. li–liii; Paul Herrmann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik*, 25. Aufl. besorgt von T. Klein und I. Reiffenstein, Tübingen 2007, p. 26.

both Kinzel's and Lienert's editions).<sup>6</sup> Yet, other editorial decisions have not always been as cautious as in the examples above.

Antiquated claims of a supraregional *hochdeutsche Dichtersprache*, launched by Karl Lachmann in 1820,<sup>7</sup> have gradually been outdone by increasingly manuscript-oriented criticism and scholarly practice on never-before edited manuscripts.<sup>8</sup> The languages of poetic discourse in early handwritten documents should be considered socially bound functiolects rather than dialects. These do not represent standardised High German of the courtly usage, nor the transposition of the scribe's mother tongue, nor the dialect spoken in the area where the manuscript was copied. Nevertheless, they comply with sets of stylistic rules, which, though locally rooted (in different episcopal towns and monastic environments) intentionally overcome dialectal boundaries. The most relevant of those rules is the preference for neutral rhymes (avoiding regionalisms) within the structure of epic couplets.<sup>9</sup> Poets aimed at supraregional popularity and their audience (found within urban congregations of reformed monastic orders and aristocratic groups with interests beyond regional land ownership) increasingly circulated their poetry. Nevertheless, the identification of sets of regionally attributable features would be crucial to the *recensio* of early literary works, in order to draw, if not a univocal linguistic identity, at least a clear picture of the various features which characterise their hybrid language.

I will give examples of *Vorauer Alexander's* script and the most common editorial approaches, and I will consider dialectological interpretations against scribal peculiarities. According to certain details found in the *Vorau*

<sup>6</sup> *Lamprechts Alexander...*, pp. 122 and 164; *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman*, mittelhochdeutsch-neuhochdeutsch, hg., übers. und komm. von Elisabeth Lienert, Stuttgart 2007, pp. 122 and 144.

<sup>7</sup> Karl Lachmann, *Auswahl aus den hochdeutschen Dichtern des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1820.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Thomas Klein, "Niederdeutsch und Hochdeutsch in mittelhochdeutscher Zeit", in *Die deutsche Schriftsprache und die Regionen. Entstehungsgeschichtliche Fragen in neuer Sicht*, hg. von Raphael Berthele, Berlin / New York 2003, pp. 203–229, at p. 203. Kinzel, in the *Einleitung* to his synoptic edition (*Lamprechts Alexander...*, p. vi), claimed that he had faithfully reproduced the manuscript, only emending "grobe Schreibwillkürlichkeiten" in accord to Middle German; see also *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman...*, p. 34. On Early MHG written variants, see *Historische Schreibsprachen – Internetbibliographie*, <<http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/gaeste/Schreibsprachen/index.html>> and *Schreibsprachen im Spätmittelalter [Projekt]*, Universität Bielefeld, <<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/lili/forschung/projekte/brs/>> (both accessed 21.10.2015).

<sup>9</sup> On *neutraler Reim* and on the preference that northern poets accorded to it, see Herrmann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik...*, pp. 13–14 and 16.

poem and in related texts, as well as to the conjectural biography of Lambrecht, the *Alexanderlied* manuscript tradition spread in a relatively short period of time (c. 1150–1200), shifting from the north-western episcopal cities (the *riparische* Cologne or the *moselfränkische* Trier), along the boundary to the Romance regions (where several versions of an old-fashioned epic on the subject had been circulating since 1130–1140 c.), towards the outmost south-eastern German fringe.

Lambrecht (whose popularity among the Stauffer court is attested by Rudolf von Ems, who mocks him in his *Alexander*, c. 1240) is mentioned as the German translator of a *walhisk* poem in the prologue shared by V and the *Straßburger Alexander* (henceforth S), ll. 3–4.<sup>10</sup> Three centuries later, the historical compilation in the Basel manuscript (henceforth B), which represents the third manuscript of the *Alexanderlied*, along with V and S, recasts the beginning of the text (following a complementary source of the huge multilingual corpus on Alexander) and the author's name disappeared.<sup>11</sup> In the *Alexanderlied*'s scholarship gradually prevailed the reconstruction of a two-branched tree,<sup>12</sup> so that in 1985 Werner Schröder could affirm that “Das Stemma [...] ist prinzipiell nicht mehr strittig, birgt aber noch immer kontrovers beurteilte Fragen”.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the tree pattern does not suit the poor growth of the *Alexanderlied* tradition, where tree shoots, V, S and B, bloom from a unique rhizome in horizontal equivalence instead of the hierarchical verticality and genealogical development of a traditional *stemma codicum*.<sup>14</sup> This

<sup>10</sup> The lost Strasbourg manuscript (Straßburg, Stadtbibliothek, C.V. 16.6. 4°, ff. 13va–29ra, after 1187.

<sup>11</sup> Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. E VI 26, 14 (ff. 22vb–67va), c. 1420–1430.

<sup>12</sup> In Kinzel's schema (*Lamprechts Alexander...*, p. xv), two branches spread from the original, L<sub>1</sub> (= V) and L<sub>2</sub> (= S and B). This *stemma* was presented again in Gustav Ehrismann, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 2. Teil: *Die mittelhochdeutsche Literatur*; I. *Frühmittelhochdeutsche Zeit*, München 1922, pp. 253–255. Ehrismann put forward the *interpositi* x (= S and B) and y (= S), growing from each other and credited with content expansions (with more sources integrated into the plot). Kinzel and Ehrismann claimed that S and B derived from the same sub-branch, while another branch was documented in V. Rainer M. Werner claimed instead more strict affinity between V and B (*Die Basler Bearbeitung von Lamprechts Alexander*, hg. von Rainer M. Werner, Tübingen 1881, p. 2).

<sup>13</sup> Werner Schröder, “Der Pfaffe Lambrecht”, in *Die Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, V, hg. von Kurt Ruh *et al.*, Berlin / New York 1985, cols 494–510, at col. 498.

<sup>14</sup> For the recent German debate on classical editing and its prerequisites (in the scholar's words, *Autor – Redaktor – Schreiber*), see Martin Baisch, *Textkritik als Problem der Kultur-*

paper will deal with some controversial aspects in the relationships among the codices (in the context of their scribal features and of the “material text”, “the union of linguistic text and document”<sup>15</sup>), preliminarily hinting at a general problem concerning the poem’s *Überlieferung* and its interpretations, since the three witnesses V, S and B suit Bumke’s definition of *Fassungen*, where “Umfang, Wortlaut und Abfolge” change, without diminishing the “Identität des Textes”<sup>16</sup>.

A certain Lambrecht, held as the same person, appears in the proemial lines of *Tobias*, an early poem with a strongly clerical flavour. Here, an allusion to Trier (within a vernacular rendering of the multifaceted myth of the *translatio imperii*) earned the city the role of birthplace of both the work and the poet. *Tobias* is documented (along with parts of Eilhart von Oberg’s *Tristrant*) only by a few parchment scraps, the so-called *Stargarder* fragments (dated from the beginning of the 13th century),<sup>17</sup> to which Thomas Klein attributed Middle or Low German origins.<sup>18</sup>

A reference to St Pantaleon’s martyrdom in Nicomedia (V 594–595, in a passage lost in both S and B) was taken as a proof of the connection with Cologne, since the church entitled to the Byzantine thaumaturge in this town marks the earliest western evidence of the Saint’s cult. St Pantaleon’s church dates back to the 10th century and its Benedictine monastery was a renowned centre of historical writing.<sup>19</sup>

*wissenschaft: Tristan-Lektüren*, Berlin 2006, pp. 1–53; see also Klaus Grubmüller, “Überlieferung – Text – Autor. Zum Literaturverständnis des Mittelalters”, in *Die Präsenz des Mittelalters in seinen Handschriften*, Ergebnisse der Berliner Tagung [...] 6.–8. April 2000, hg. von H.-J. Schiewer und K. Stackmann, Tübingen 2002, pp. 5–17.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Shillingsburg, *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Construction of Meaning*, Ann Arbor (MI) 1997, p. 73.

<sup>16</sup> Joachim Bumke, “Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der höfischen Epik im 13. Jahrhundert. Die Herbolt-Fragmente in Skokloster. Mit einem Exkurs zur Textkritik der höfischen Romane”, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 120 (1991), pp. 257–304, at p. 303.

<sup>17</sup> Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Berol. mgq 1418.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Klein, “Ermittlung, Darstellung und Deutung von Verbreitungstypen in der Handschriftenüberlieferung mittelhochdeutscher Epik”, in *Deutsche Handschriften 1100–1400*, Oxforder Kolloquium 1985, hg. von V. Honemann und N. F. Palmer, Tübingen 1988, pp. 110–167, at p. 134; and *Id.*, “Niederdeutsch und Hochdeutsch...”, p. 206 and fn. 5. One Eilhardus is documented as a *ministerialis* of the Saxon ducal pair of Henry the Lion of Welfen and Margaret of England in Brunswick.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. T. Klein / R. Peters, “Niederdeutsche Schreiber, Gottfried Hagen und die Anfänge der deutschsprachigen Urkunde in Köln”, in *Regiolekt, Funktiolekt, Idiolekt: Die Stadt und*

The association with Cologne was supported by scholars who claimed that S was the closest to the author's original. The Strasbourg version ends with a German adaptation of the *Iter ad paradisum* and a textual branch of the Latin *Iter* stemmed from Cologne.<sup>20</sup> The *Annales Scti Pantaleonis* (c. 1177, Michaelsberg Abbey in Siegburg, then in Cologne) record jointly the foundation of the basilica (in 964, the year of Emperor Otto II's crowning) and the ill-fated expedition against Calabria (a. 975), to reclaim Empress's Theophanu estates.<sup>21</sup> This could be a clue to the initial moves of Alexander's expeditions, cryptically coupling the faraway Nicomedia and Calabria (V 592–595: *Ze Kalabre er enpoht | daz sim hulfen zuo der noth. | Ein stat heizet Nicomedias, | da sancte Pantaleon gemartereht was*).<sup>22</sup>

The S version of the *Alexanderlied* was the first to be identified by scholars.<sup>23</sup> S gathers different sources, starting with a poem on Alexander's youth patently related to V, with which it shares the prologue and the attribution to Lambrecht. After the travels in India (which follow the *Epistola ad Aristotelem*), S closes with the verse adaptation of the *Iter ad paradisum* and Alex-

*ihre Sprachen*, Akten der 31. Tagung des Int. Arbeitskreises Historische Stadtsprachenforschung. Bonn, 29. Sept.–2. Okt. 2013, hg. von Anna Karin *et al.*, Göttingen 2015, pp. 25–66.

<sup>20</sup> Jürgen Schulz-Grobert, "Höfischer Glanz und Gönnerdämmerung. Zur Diskussion um die literaturwissenschaftliche Bedeutung des Mäzenatentums im 12. Jahrhundert", *Wolfram-Studien* 16 (2000), pp. 175–191.

<sup>21</sup> *Chronica regia Coloniensis (Annales maximi Colonienses) cum continuationibus in monasterio S. Pantaleonis scriptis aliisque Coloniensis monumentis partim ex monumentis Germaniae historicis recusa*, rec. Georgius Waitz, Hannover 1880, pp. 740–741. The *Annales Scti Pantaleonis* are a kind of Latin *Kaiserchronik* (cf. Manfred Groten, "Klösterliche Geschichtsschreibung: Siegburg und die Kölner Königschronik", *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 61 (1997), pp. 50–78).

<sup>22</sup> 'He ordered the people of Calabria | to help him in his troubles. | A town was called Nicomedias, | there St Pantaleon was martyred'. All translations are of my own. In the transcription from the Vorau codex above (in italics), the characters which are not typographically reproducible have been replaced by more common characters; Roman types have been introduced to indicate abbreviations and superscripts; punctuation marks have been added and uppercase initials have been used for proper names.

<sup>23</sup> It was announced and published by Heinrich Schreiber in "Nachricht von einer (vielleicht der frühesten) altdeutschen Alexandreis, mit einigen Auszügen aus derselben", *Charis. Blätter für Kunst, Literatur und Alterthum* 6-9 (1824), pp. 23–24, 26–28, 31–32, and 35–36; Eberhard G. Graff included excerpts of it in *Diutiska. Denkmäler deutscher Sprache und Literatur aus alten Handschriften*. Zum 1. Male theils hg. von Eberhard G. Graff, theils nachgewiesen und beschrieben, Stuttgart 1826, and it was eventually republished by Hans F. Massmann in *Denkmäler deutscher Sprache und Literatur aus Handschriften des 8. bis 16. Jahrhunderts*, I, hg. von Hans F. Massmann, München 1828, pp. 16–75.

ander's death, recounting his entire biography and the *conversio* of a princely layman. Due to its arrangement, S was initially argued to be the 'complete' original, and the 19th-century *Mundartforschung* confidently placed Lambrecht's dialect in Cologne.<sup>24</sup>

Conversely, after *Vorauer Alexander's* rediscovery in 1841 and publication in 1849,<sup>25</sup> the version transmitted in the Vorau manuscript was considered to be a torso and its rough epic conclusion was said to be the work of an unskilled Bavarian compiler. Nevertheless, the unprecedented beheading of Darius with Alexander's sword, without the Wonders of India, was suitable for the plan of the Vorau manuscript (where Alexander embodies the meeting point between the Persian and Greek empires, in the progression of the eschatological Four Kingdoms alluded to in the minor poems). An up-to-date analysis of forms in the doubtful last episode (V 1480–1515), however, showed the same coexistence of contrasting dialectal features, as elsewhere in the *Vorauer Alexander*.<sup>26</sup>

In recent years, the reappraisal of manuscript writing systems and arrangements has reinforced the testimonial value of chirographic artefacts against assumed linguistic and stylistic norms. The hybrid status of poetic languages crossing regional borders through manuscript production and circulation is now an acknowledged phenomenon.<sup>27</sup> Scholarly statements of ideal norms of genre also invite reassessment. The assumed convention of epic completeness (in the shape of individual or cyclical biographies, as in *Alexanderlied* and *Kaiserchronik* respectively) did not always fit either the practice of poetic

<sup>24</sup> On Cologne's dialect in V, see Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", pp. 128–129. Willy Krogmann identified S with the original, and his article "Lambrecht, Pfaffe", in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, III, hg. von W. Stammer und K. Langosch, Berlin 1937, cols 4–17, disseminated his assumptions among non-specialist scholars.

<sup>25</sup> *Deutsche Gedichte des XI. und XII. Jahrhunderts*. Aufgefunden im regulierten Chorherrenstifte zu Vorau in der Steiermark und zum ersten Male mit einer Einleitung und Anmerkungen hg. von Joseph Diemer, Wien 1849.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Jan Cölln, "Zur sprachlichen Herkunft des in der Vorauer Handschrift überlieferten Schlusses von Lamprechts 'Alexander'. Ludger Grenzmann zum 65. Geburtstag", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 126 (2004), pp. 23–35. Previous scholars were not unaware of the hybrid status of the *Vorauer Alexander's* conclusion (Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", p. 123). The line numeration diverges in different editions: I follow that of Lienert (*Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman*,..., p. 35); Cölln, "Zur sprachlichen Herkunft...", follows instead that of Kinzel (*Lamprechts Alexander*...).

<sup>27</sup> Klein, "Niederdeutsch und Hochdeutsch...", p. 205, refers to Low German authors using High German: our example shows a similar set of circumstances.

performance in the 12th century or the act of textual production in the design of specific handwritten books.<sup>28</sup> Rather than being an accident which forced the textual prototype to debase and diverge from the avenue prescribed by the prime creator, the variability of work arrangements in manuscripts seems, at that stage of German codicology, a normal condition in the interaction between poetic creation, performative execution, and handwritten output.<sup>29</sup> This impacts dialectological hypotheses, which risk being grounded on insufficiently scrutinised and univocal criteria. In our case, the hints at a well-known rhymmer (*Lambert / Lambrecht*) in the French and German poems on Alexander weaken the cogency of the biographical argument to dialectological conjecturing. Across the French-German linguistic border, epic verses on Alexander the Great were assigned to the authorship of either Lambert or Lambrecht, diminishing the reliability of the assumed biographies of both poets.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. 'Interpositus' and copy: scribal evidences

The Vorau manuscript owed its *Sitz im Leben* to the missionary foundations encouraged by the archbishopric of Salzburg: the regular calligraphic late Caroline hand of the Vorau codex and similarly lavish layouts were in use in the *schola Salisburgensis*.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, the script of the *Vorauer Alexander* appears difficult to categorise in phonological terms, while the closeness of its graphemes with either Franconian or Austro-Bavarian descriptions is doubtful. It displays atomised regionalisms and impenetrable features scattered throughout the whole poem, so that conventional dialectology fails to explain

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Peter Strohschneider, "Höfische Romane in Kurzfassungen. Stichworte zu einem unbeachteten Aufgabenfeld", *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 120 (1991), pp. 419–439, at p. 437.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Jürgen Wolf, *Buch und Text: Literatur- und kulturhistorische Untersuchungen zur volkssprachigen Schriftlichkeit im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 2008, pp. 10–17.

<sup>30</sup> Cipolla, *Hystoria de Alexandro Magno...*, pp. 63–64.

<sup>31</sup> See Karin Schneider, *Gotische Schriften in deutscher Sprache, 1: Vom späten 12. Jahrhundert bis um 1300, I: Textband*, Wiesbaden 1987, pp. 37–40, und *Ead., Paläographie und Handschriftenkunde für Germanisten. Eine Einführung*, Tübingen 1999, p. 26. Here Schneider recognizes in this hand (which was employed from the late 11th to the 13th century in the southern German-speaking areas, mainly in Bavaria and Austria) a new "Schreibstil der Karolingischen Minuskel" (the so-called *schrägogaler Stil*). On German late-Caroline and protogothic book hands, see also Albert Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books: From the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 47–70.



graphemic issues such as the reversibility of diphthongs (either in expanded forms or abbreviations), or the inconsistent use of *h* (merging with the similarly inconsistent spelling of consonant clusters, *sch* ahead). The Vorau *liet* shows strange rhymes, while the corresponding readings of S display regular couplets.

Historical phonology and philology, which maintained that ‘regular’ (or even ‘original’) lines are deducible from a known metric pattern, did not achieve expected outcomes in our case, producing instead circular reasoning. On one occasion, during the account of the siege of Tyre, V and S reverse the lines within the same distich, changing *Reimbindung* into *Reimbrechung* and producing a reversal of the general meaning of each version, while trivialising Alexander’s weird and cruel disregard for his own men’s pains (V 939–940) into the conventional and expected violence against enemies (S 1329–1330).

V 939–940

wande die burgere brachen si durch  
unde wichen aber wider in die burch.  
Da verlos er manegen duren chent [= chneht]:  
Alexander teht in groz unreht.

S 1329–1330

doh brâchen di Tyrêre durh  
und wichen wider in di burch.  
Alexander tet in unreht.  
er verlôs dâ manigen tûren kneht.<sup>32</sup>

I will examine some odd couplets of the *Vorauer Alexander* (reading them from the manuscript’s facsimile) on the range of the poor tradition of the *Alexanderlied*, in order to clarify internal relations (mostly focusing on *interpositi*) and to tease out the rationale behind unreliable readings. Textual relationships do not permit conclusive arguments in the matter of explaining *Vorauer Alexander*’s spellings and rhymes. V and S have a textual skeleton in common, from the prologue to the final battle against the Persian army (V 1–1515, S 1–2035), before Darius’s execution (on which V diverges from S/B). B transmits the shared text from the taming of *Bucival* onwards (B 588–1622). After the Vorau poem’s conclusion, S and B follow a common source to the Indian *continuatio* (Ehrismann’s sub-archetype x), while only S contains the

<sup>32</sup> V 939–40: ‘since the inhabitants made irruption outside, | but soon after turn back inside the walls. | Then Alexander lost many of [his] brave soldiers: | he was quite disloyal against them [= his own soldiers].’; S 1329–1330: ‘however the Tyrians made irruption outside | and soon turn back inside the wall: | Alexander was quite unfair against them [= the Tyrians]. | In this occasion, he lost many [of his] brave soldiers.’. On text normalisation, see fn. 22 above.

*Blumenmädchen* episode and closes with the *Iter* and Alexander's pious death (sub-archetype y).<sup>33</sup>

A scribal note on f. 136r assigns the Latin part of the Voral manuscript to the patronage of Abbot Bernhardus I, indicating a time span from 1185 to 1202 (the range of the abbot's office until his death). Nevertheless, Bernhardus's patronage cannot be automatically extended to the German part of the codex, the chronology of which is in uncertain relation with the Latin one. The Voral manuscript belongs to the Salzburg scribal school and to its uniform book production (which is principally comprised of Latin liturgical volumes). It was copied within a reformed cloister of the Salzburg-Seckau area, c. 1150–1200, by a single calligraphic hand.<sup>34</sup> A similarly late monastic Caroline appears in the unique fragment of the French hypotext (assigned to the authorship of *Alberich von Bisinzo*: V, S 13).<sup>35</sup> Voral was founded by the monks of Seckau in 1163:<sup>36</sup> if the German booklets belonged to the legacy of the mother house (in existence from 1142), they might have been copied in between, close to Lambrecht's original (c. 1150, perhaps in the Rhine area) and to the French model (c. 1130–1140, perhaps in Burgundy).

<sup>33</sup> Ernst Hellgardt, "Frühmittelhochdeutsche Literatur", in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft. Neubearb. des Reallexikons der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, I, hg. von Klaus Weimar *et al.*, Berlin / New York 1997, cols 636–640.

<sup>34</sup> Later minor hands will re-write damaged pages (some tens of years after the compilation of the manuscript) and add *marginalia* (in 13th and 15th centuries): Schneider, *Gotische Schriften...*, p. 40. Grubmüller assigns the whole of Voral manuscript to the Voral scriptorium (which should have begun its task at the very beginning of the monastery's life): Klaus Grubmüller, "Die Voraler Handschrift und ihr *Alexander*. Die kodikologischen Befunde: Bestandsaufnahme und Kritik", in *Alexanderdichtungen im Mittelalter: Kulturelle Selbstbestimmung im Kontext literarischer Beziehungen*, hg. von Jan Cölln *et al.*, Göttingen 2000, pp. 208–221, at pp. 209–213. For an updated reassessment of the question, see G. Schaffelhofer / M. Schubert, "Voral", in *Schreiborte des deutschen Mittelalters: Skriptorien, Werke, Mäzene*, hg. von Martin Schubert, Berlin / Boston 2013, pp. 513–536.

<sup>35</sup> Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. LXIV. 35. The French torso was inserted (in the 12th century) in a Carolingian codex of Curtius Rufus, to fill textual gaps in the historian's account (which is defective since all witnesses depend on a defective Carolingian archetype).

<sup>36</sup> The *scriptorium* in Seckau produced relevant manuscripts and some of its books match Latin and vernacular texts with noticeable cycles of illustrations on biblical subject: Ernst Hellgardt, "Seckauer Handschriften als Träger frühmittelhochdeutscher Texte", in *Die mittelalterliche Literatur der Steiermark*, Akten des Int. Symposions Schloß Seggau bei Leibnitz 1984, hg. von Alfred Ebenbauer *et al.*, Bern *et al.*, 1988 (Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik, Reihe A: Kongressberichte, 23), pp. 103–130.

Despite the care with which he has reproduced the elegant layout, the scribe displays the greatest variability in *Alexanderlied*. Spelling inconsistencies in the Vorau codex could be due, in principle, to the several *Vorlagen* or, to use a more technical term, to the several antigraphs of different regional derivation it was arranged from.<sup>37</sup> Current dialectal attributions to the claimed *Vorlagen* have been established matching linguistic, historical, literary and codicological data, but need to be reassessed. The less questionable evidence of the change of antigraph within the Vorau manuscript are blank spaces left between a handwritten model and the following one.<sup>38</sup> The distribution and carefulness of emendations have also been employed to deduce the number and characteristics of the *interpositi*.<sup>39</sup> In reconstructing *Vorauer Alexander*'s verse, however, the editorial conjecturing is not corroborated by manuscript indications, and instances of patently irregular lines are correctly enclosed within metric marks, leading scholars to impute any textual aberration in *V* to its handwritten model.<sup>40</sup>

Some of the poems (*Genesis, Joseph, Moses / Exodus, Sündenklage* and *Himmlisches Jerusalem*) are also contained in the Bavarian anthologies of Wien and Millstatt.<sup>41</sup> The textual structure shared by the Vienna and Millstatt manuscripts (recalling the template of a *Bible moralisée*) was enlarged in the Vorau manuscript with the addition of historical texts (the *Kaiserchronik* and *Alexanderlied*) in place of the *Physiologus*, so redefining its historical

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Wilhelm Scherer, *Geistliche Poeten der deutschen Kaiserzeit. Studien: Drei Sammlungen geistlicher Gedichte*, II, Strassburg 1875, pp. 28–90; on *Alexanderlied*, pp. 60–64; see also Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, pp. 155–156, and Grubmüller, “Die Vorauer Handschrift...”, pp. 212 and 215–220.

<sup>38</sup> Blank spaces are to be found at the bottom of f. 73vb (after the *Kaiserchronik*), at the bottom of *Die Wahrheit* (f. 96vb) and of the *Jüngere Judith* (f. 108vb), this latter evidencing the relevance of the ensuing *Alexanderlied*.

<sup>39</sup> Grubmüller, “Die Vorauer Handschrift...”, pp. 215–220.

<sup>40</sup> In the first lacuna (f. 109ra32–33, V 33–34), two defective lines are enclosed within two metrical points as they were a single regular line ( . *unt ich ne wilich uol uarn* . ). Joachim Kuhnt, “*Lamprechts Alexander: Lautlehre und Untersuchung der Verfasserfrage nach den Reimen*”, Diss. Greifswald 1915, scrutinised the rhymes of *V* in order to support dialectal attribution.

<sup>41</sup> Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2721 (*Wiener Handschrift*), and Klagenfurt, Kärntner Landesarchiv, Cod. GV 6 /19 (*Millstätter Handschrift*). The most recent edition of the Early MHG *Genesis* is *Die frühmittelhochdeutsche Genesis. Synoptische Ausgabe nach der Wiener, Millstätter und Vorauer Handschrift*, hg. von Akihiro Hamano, Berlin / Boston 2016. On a hypothetical Franconian substrate in the *Sündenklage*, see Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 138.

and imperial purpose.<sup>42</sup> The *Gesta Friderici*, whenever added to the German manuscript, represents an improvement on its plan. A variant reading of the *Vorauer Alexander* concurs with the imperial character of the book, entitling the hero with a *reht* ('legitimate') *cheiserslahte* ('imperial lineage': V 76) rather than the *kuningslahte* of *Straßburger Alexander* 88.

The Vorau manuscript conforms to the *mise en page* of some early historical compilations.<sup>43</sup> As items within the *Kaiserchronik* tradition show, the increased number of columns and text subdivisions through larger and smaller capital letters (coloured with different pigments) in such books, offered an efficient tool to learned people and historians (while visually graspable pericopes facilitated the reading aloud of handwritten books). In the Vienna and Millstatt manuscripts the layout (one column, with pen drawings representing chapters of *Genesis* and the didactic *Physiologus*) complies better with the needs of catechistical teaching.

Apart from the *Alexanderlied*, the assumed Franconian poems of the Vorau manuscript are considered to have come from at least three further *interpositi* (1: *Summa theologiae* + *Lob Salomons* + *Ältere Judith*; 2: *Jüngere Judith*; 3: *Ezzolied*),<sup>44</sup> all concerning biblical history. In copying the *Alexanderlied*, however, the unique scribe reveals how its model must have displayed "die wenigsten consequenz unter allen der vorlagen der Vorauer hs."<sup>45</sup>

### 3. Scribal aberrations and editors

Inextricably mixed with tenets of locally variable usage (akin to Notker's *Anlautgesetz*)<sup>46</sup> and disturbed by scribal oddities, indisputable regionalisms

<sup>42</sup> See Hellgardt, "Frühmittelhochdeutsche Literatur"... For the relationships between the poems' redactions in V and those transmitted by the Vienna and Millstatt manuscripts, see Hugo Kuhn, "Frühmittelhochdeutsche Literatur" in *Reallexikon der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*, 2. Aufl., I, hg. von W. Kohlschmidt und W. Mohr, Berlin 1958, pp. 494–507, at pp. 497–500.

<sup>43</sup> The manuscript Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cpg 361 (13th century, probably of Hessian provenance), for example, displays more columns, with larger and smaller coloured capitals (to distinguish chapters and paragraphs, as also the Vorau manuscript does) and line division (which it does not yet follow).

<sup>44</sup> Grubmüller, "Die Vorauer Handschrift...", p. 220.

<sup>45</sup> Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", p. 123.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Page, "Notker's Anlautgesetz and the neutralization of contrasts", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 135 (2013), pp. 515–534. Similar canons look at work in Arnolt's *Siebenzahl* (Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", pp. 131 and 143).

in the *Vorauer Alexander* are scarce, and *Lautverschiebung* mainly conforms to Bavarian features.<sup>47</sup> Before the destruction of the Strasbourg codex by fire, a transcript had been realised by Hans Roth to Weismann's edition of 1850:<sup>48</sup> this has recently been made public by Christoph Mackert, allowing us to collate the actual layout of the opening stanzas in both codices.<sup>49</sup> For the shared proemial verse (ll. 1–18), the transcripts demonstrate a subdivision into two *laissez* of different lengths, since the *litterae longobardae* are differently laid out (and highlight the contents differently).

Each codex employs peculiar graphemes: the script of the *Vorauer Alexander* uses the Caroline shape of *d* almost exclusively (while other sections of the *Vorauer Handschrift* use *d rotunda*, as also S does) and, mainly in middle and final positions, the so called *h-Zet* (a tailed *z* that looks like an *h*, so that they are liable to be confused), which is, however, not peculiar to V.<sup>50</sup> The occurrences of *h-Zet* in the Vorau manuscript would deserve closer investigation, since they are variously represented by the unique hand, a possible clue to the *Vorlagen* it was made of: the *Siebenzahl* (ff. 129vb43–133vb2), where the script shares some of *Vorauer Alexander*'s *Schreibwillkürlichkeiten*, misreads the graph *h-Zet* repeatedly, writing *h* instead.<sup>51</sup>

In the prologue of V the allographs *wurchen*, *merchen* vs *S wirken*, *merken* (ll. 2–3), and *phaffe* vs *paffe* (l. 4) seem to represent the dialectal opposition between Upper and Middle German, in V and S respectively.<sup>52</sup> Gmc. \*/p/ also occurs in the *Vorauer Alexander*, uniquely in the adverb *erhapte* (f. 111va31: V 619), a backward shift of the normal Early MHG suffix *-haft*. In addition,

<sup>47</sup> *Lamprechts Alexander...*, p. li: “im allgemeinen einen oberdeutschen character”.

<sup>48</sup> Weismann's annotated copy (*Alexander, Gedicht des zwölften Jahrhunderts, vom Pfaffen Lamprecht*, Urtext und Übersetzung nebst geschichtlichen und sprachlichen Erläuterungen [...], hg. von Heinrich Weismann, Frankfurt am Main 1850) is housed in Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire, Ms 2.379.

<sup>49</sup> Christoph Mackert, “Eine Schriftprobe aus der verbrannten Straßburg-Molsheimer Handschrift”, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* 130 (2001), pp. 143–165, page out of numeration.

<sup>50</sup> Schneider, *Paläographie und Handschriftenkunde...*, p. 26.

<sup>51</sup> Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 145.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Peter Wiesinger, “Mundart und Geschichte in der Steiermark. Ein Beitrag zur Dialektgeographie eines österreichisches Bundeslandes”, in *Beiträge zur oberdeutschen Dialektologie. Festschrift für Eberhard Kranzmeyer zum 70. Geburtstag*, hg. von Ludwig E. Schmitt, Marburg 1967, pp. 81–184, and *Id.*, “Regionale und überregionale Sprachausformungen im Deutschen vom 12. bis 15. Jahrhundert unter dem Aspekt der Nationsbildung”, in *Ansätze und Diskontinuität deutscher Nationsbildung im Mittelalter*, hg. von Joachim Ehlers, Sigmaringen 1989, pp. 321–343.

unshifted voiceless dental obstruent is witnessed in *enfaht* (= *ensat*, within the couplet *stat* : *ensat*, f. 110va20–21: V 376–377). It has been argued that in these slips a Middle German substrate became prominent, even if *satte* / *gesat* were present in southern Franconian and Alemannic documents.

For *enfaht*, a misreading of the standard spelling *ensazt* cannot be ruled out (\*⟨zt⟩ read as ⟨ht⟩), since only a left-oriented high loop distinguishes *h-Zet* from ⟨h⟩). The spelling *enfaht* occurs within a questionable sequence (perhaps a *saut du même au même*), since in the following line the required verb *faht* ‘fought’ results from the erasure of *fazt*. Moreover, S 448–449 reads the parallel couplet as *stat* : *ensazt*, confirming a rhyme in which two subsequent regional degrees of dental consonants are matched together.<sup>53</sup> In the light of this, it is clear that scribal and stylistic choices are more convincing explanations for unshifted \*/p/ and \*/t/ than regional peculiarities.

As far as /k/ is concerned – according to Upper German –, it appears in V mostly as ⟨ch⟩. Nonetheless, /kr/ is rendered as ⟨gr⟩ in *grifpe* (f. 109va9: V 130; S 154: *crisp*) and *grahp* (f. 112ra37: V 743; S 1009: *craft*). In *grifpe*, the atypical spelling might descend from the rendering of Lat. /k-/ (*crispus*) in borrowings.<sup>54</sup> In *grahp*, the backward shift of /kr/ represented as ⟨gr⟩ coexists with the reversal of ⟨ph⟩ as ⟨hp⟩ and the apocope of /-t/.<sup>55</sup> Waag considers both *grahp* – in lieu of *craft* – and *scaph* (f. 114vb28: V 1361) – in lieu of *schaft* – as Middle German apocope. Kinzel and Lienert, nonetheless, edit them differently, accepting *scaph* while rejecting *grahp*. Both editors normalise this latter as *crapht*, which corresponds to the later prevailing *kraft* (witnessed in S). The Vorau version also witnesses the earlier Upper German allograph ⟨ch⟩ (in V 240: *chraft* and 841: *chrefte*).<sup>56</sup>

A further consonant peculiarity (West Gmc. \*/b/ noted as ⟨v⟩), in *heuen* (f. 109va45: V 182) and *auer* (f. 112vb39: V 927),<sup>57</sup> could be recognised as typically Franconian: nevertheless, S in the first case uses the normal form *heben* (l. 212).<sup>58</sup> Despite its Middle German flavour, the spelling *heuen* appears once in the Bavarian *Siebenzahl*.<sup>59</sup> Phenomena of metathesis of /r/ also occur: in

<sup>53</sup> V 388–389 (f. 110va30–31): *hete* : *fa3the*.

<sup>54</sup> Herrmann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik...*, p. 20, § 36,2.

<sup>55</sup> Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 126.

<sup>56</sup> The variant *scaph* concurs with one occurrence of the regular *schaft* (V 1221).

<sup>57</sup> This latter form occurs within a defective line, reducing its value in dialectal examination.

<sup>58</sup> Herrmann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik...*, p. 48.

<sup>59</sup> *Deutsche Gedichte...*, p. 357, 12: *Vorauer Handschrift*, f. 133va43; Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 144.

the *Vorauer Alexander*, r-metathesis affects the clusters /rn/ (f. 109ra37: V 48: *irchron* = *irchorn*), /vr/ (f. 114rb15: V 1227: *uurmeclich* = *vrumeclich*) and the prefix *er-* (repeatedly spelt *re-* as in the *Siebenzahl*).<sup>60</sup>

The ending *-g* is represented as *-ch* throughout V (as in *chunich*, V's typical variant among those for 'king').<sup>61</sup> however, up to *Buzival*'s taming (V 235) it is almost exclusively rendered as *-c* (while the Strasbourg hand regularises all occurrences as *-ch*).<sup>62</sup> In the Vorau manuscript, the *Jüngere Judith*, Ava's poems, the *Ezzolied*, and *Priester Arnolt's Siebenzahl* all show similar distribution of *-ch* and *-c*.<sup>63</sup> According to current reconstructions, the above mentioned poems are of assorted provenance. Ava and Arnolt have been identified with authors mentioned in Bavarian documents dating from the early 12th century, while for the *Jüngere Judith* and *Ezzolied* Franconian or Alemannic milieux have been suggested, so that the opposition ⟨c⟩/⟨ch⟩ does not confirm a different regional provenance for these poems. The shift from /g/ to *-ch*, though corresponding to a Middle German regionalism (the realisation of each West Gmc. \*/g/ as a fricative), was generalised in Bavarian hands (where the early shift concerns only final position).<sup>64</sup> The exclusiveness of the allograph *-c* in the initial episodes of the *Vorauer Alexander* would be worthy of closer scrutiny. Nevertheless, one should also consider how such phenomenon overlaps with the most self-evident oddity in V's script, namely its idiographic and peculiarly free usage of ⟨h⟩ (arbitrarily omitted or added), which can only be partially explained in terms of regional features and phonology.<sup>65</sup>

Bewilderingly, ⟨h⟩ is irregularly inserted or removed even at the beginning of words.<sup>66</sup> For no apparently etymological reason it is often included

<sup>60</sup> Herrmann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik...*, p. 52, § 106; Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", p. 145.

<sup>61</sup> S reads *kuning-*, as in Franconian dialects, where the type [kuniŋ] prevails; cf. *Rheinisches Wörterbuch*, I–IX, hg. von Josef Müller, ab Bd. VII von K. Meisen *et al.*, Bonn / Berlin 1928–1971, IV, col. 1186. The *Ältere Judith* (presumably copied from a manuscript from the Rhine area; see Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", p. 118), conforms to V's spelling.

<sup>62</sup> The occurrences of *-c* are: *manec* (V 8, 9, 41, 52), *louc* (V 18), *influc* (V 19), *ledec* (V 27), *genuc* (V 35), *kunic* (V 42, 68, 87), *creftuc* (V 51), *gewaltuc* (V 52, 80), *truc* (V 85, 90), *manic* (V 86), *uolc wic* (V 89, 167).

<sup>63</sup> Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", pp. 121, 132, 140, and 144.

<sup>64</sup> See Herrmann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik...*, p. 47 (for the Franconian feature), p. 36, § 3 (for the Bavarian feature).

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50, § 103.

<sup>66</sup> F. 112vb17 (= V 900–901): *ir hetelcher* for *ir etelich her*; f. 113rb24–25 (= V 1019): *er wt - | der* for *herwider*; f. 114ra41 (= V 1201): *ħahten* for *ahten* (the misspelling in this case

within sonorant and tenuis consonants, like \*/nt/, \*/nk/: V 264 (*gesanht*), 893 (*sprunhc*), and so on. Sometimes ⟨h⟩ is moved outside its usual position or totally omitted from a graphic sequence, as in the frequent word ending *-ch* (V 627: *chunhc*), and in ⟨sch / sh⟩.<sup>67</sup> This cluster is produced inconsistently, with *c* and *h* often omitted:

- f. 109rb45, V 115: *freffiht* (= *freiscit ich*);<sup>68</sup>
- f. 109va38, V 172: *crheichiffen* (= *chriechisc*);<sup>69</sup>
- f. 109vb14, V 199: *filte* (= *scilte*);
- f. 110ra2, V 240: *gefephte* (= *gescephte*);
- f. 110vb18, V 428: *freifte* (= *freiscte*);
- f. 111vb39–40, V 688: *udeis* (= *judeisch*);
- f. 112va17, V 842: *fephf* (= *sceph*).<sup>70</sup>

In the prologue, however, this cluster is represented by the ligature *fk*: f. 109ra11 and 12 (V 15–16), *inwalhfken* and *indûtfken*. This peculiarity occurs twice more: f. 109va7, V 127 (*uifke*) and f. 114va30, V 1306 (*zewifken*).

Irregular consonants characterise every part of V, as is shown, for example, in its representation of dental obstruents in the anomalous verb *tuon*. Along with countless regular occurrences, we find certain noticeable variants scattered throughout the whole poem:<sup>71</sup>

Present Indicative – Singular 3rd (Normalised MHG: *tet*)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. V 123 (f. 109va4) <i>têht</i> ( <i>toet</i> K, L) : <i>fiēt</i> | S 147 <i>deit</i> : <i>steit</i> , B <i>om.</i> |
| 2. V 286 (f. 110va41) <i>dêht</i> ( <i>det</i> K, L) : <i>fiēt</i> | S <i>om.</i> , B 598 <i>tût</i> : <i>mût</i>    |
| 3. V 511 (f. 111ra46) <i>reht</i> : <i>deht</i> ( <i>det</i> K, L) | S lacuna / B <i>om.</i>                         |

was noticed by the reviser); f. 114va12 (= V 1281): *huuch* for *iuch*; f. 115ra9 (= V 1393): *ulfim* for *hulfim*; f. 115ra46 (= V 1438): *arte* for *harte*. Similar misspellings occur in the *Siebenzahl* (Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 145).

<sup>67</sup> Variability in this cluster characterises the whole German manuscript (Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 79).

<sup>68</sup> Crossed with ⟨e⟩ = /ei/ (Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 123).

<sup>69</sup> Crossed with ⟨ei⟩ = /ie/, /i:/ (Waag, *ibid.*: “Ob man in diesem ei jenes fürs md. vindicierter wandlung von ie > ei [...] oder nur verschreibung sehen will, wird fraglich sein”).

<sup>70</sup> The *e* spelling for *scif*, listed in grammars among Franconian isoglosses, characterises the complete manuscript, including supposed Bavarian texts (Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 80).

<sup>71</sup> K = *Lamprechts Alexander...* (Kinzel); L = *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman...* (Lienert).



4. V 1086 (f. 113va34) *iêt* (*toet* K, L) : *uer fiet* S *om.*  
 5. V 1386 (f. 115ra3) *deth* (*tût* K, *duot* L) : *ubermût* S 1928 *tût* : *ubirmût*, B *om.*

Preterite Indicative – Singular 3rd (Normalised MHG: *tete*)

6. V 353 (f. 110va1) *det* (*det* L) S 425: *hîz*, B 670: *hies*  
 7. V 771 (f. 112rb12) S 1081: *hîz*, B 1070: *hies*  
 V 985 (f. 112vb45) *thede* (*thede* K, *tede* L) S 1390: *hîz*, B 1254: *hies*

Preterite Indicative – Plural 3rd (Normalised MHG: *tâten*)

8. V 741 (f. 112ra35) *thadin* (*thâdin* K, *tâdin* L) : *fersmaten* S 1007 *tâten* : *versmâten*  
 9. V 747 (f. 112ra40) *thaden* (*thâden* K, *tâden* L) S, B *om.*  
 10. V 1438 (f. 114ra46) *daten* (*dâten* K, L) S, B *om.*

Preterite Subjunctive – Singular 3rd (Normalised MHG: *tæte*)

11. V 1056 (f. 113va10) *daeter* (*dêter* K, *daeter* L) S 1486: *tâte*, B *om.*

As a causative verb (V 353, 751, 895), *tuon* is replaced in S and B by *heizz-* / *heissen*, while in absolute usage they do never conform to the spellings of V. The editors, in turn, treat these cases one by one, sometimes regularising vowels, while preserving consonants better, if not absolutely. Though partially sharing common premises,<sup>72</sup> Kinzel and Lienert do not always agree in consonantal representation: both editors eliminate occurrences of redundant ⟨h⟩, but, while Lienert removes them at all, Kinzel retains the unetymological ⟨th⟩, probably because of its presence in the classicising German orthography of his epoch.

Representing V 1386 *deht* as *tût* (Kinzel) and *duot* (Lienert), the editorial texts diverge in vowel and consonant rendition, though pursuing similar results. Kinzel swaps the manuscript spelling for the most frequent allograph, in order to respect the formula *tût* : *ubermût*. Lienert changes the vowel (⟨e⟩ read *uo*) while preserving the initial ⟨d⟩ from the manuscript, thereby creating a more hybrid unwitnessed form.<sup>73</sup> We may, therefore, question their editorial rationale, observing that in V 123 and 286 (which we will examine

<sup>72</sup> “Maßgeblich sind in erster Linie Textbestand und Wortlaut der einzigen Handschrift, denen wo immer sie Sinn ergeben, der Vorzug zu geben ist” (*Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman*,..., pp. 35); “Eine konsequente Umsetzung ins Lachmannsche Normalmittelhochdeutsch ist für frühmittelhochdeutsche Texte niemals üblich gewesen” (*ibid.*, p. 37).

<sup>73</sup> *Lamprechts Alexander*..., p. 162, and *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman*..., p. 144.

more closely below with regard to the superscripts) the editors behave differently, proposing to read *têht* and *dêht* (: *stêt*, in both cases) as *toet* and *det*, respectively.<sup>74</sup>

Vowel notation is characterised by the baffling and interchangeable usage of superscripts: ⟨û⟩, which mostly corresponds to etymological /uo/ (that is /u<sup>o</sup>/, /u:/), can also represent etymological /ou/ (that is /o<sup>u</sup>/), /o/, /u/;<sup>75</sup> in V 306 (f. 110rb12: *erblûte* = *erbluocte*) and 333 (f. 110rb31: *mût* = *muget*), the same sign indicates syllable contraction; ⟨ð⟩ corresponds either to etymological /ou/ (that is /o<sup>u</sup>/),<sup>76</sup> or to /o:/<sup>77</sup> and /o/.<sup>78</sup> The interchangeability of abbreviations for back vowels and diphthongs also extends to expanded forms, and ⟨ou⟩ can correspond to the phonologically reversed sequences /u<sup>o</sup>/: f. 112ra26 (V 730) *trovgen* (= *truogen*). All this weakens the testimonial value of occurrences as V 314 *zom*: f. 110rb19 (*vs* normal MHG *zoum*), which has been interpreted as a Middle Franconian feature (and read *zôm*).<sup>79</sup>

In V we do notice a peculiar increase in the usages of the literary language with assorted dialectal features of southern manuscripts, as described by Thomas Klein in 2003:<sup>80</sup> the *Kombinationsschreibungen* ⟨ð⟩ and ⟨û⟩ (inclusive and abstract graphemes, encompassing several degrees of back-vowel pronunciation within the wide area of the poems' circulation) are used to represent either /o/ or /u/, along with respective diphthongs and umlaut allographs.

A similar incoherence also affects front vowels and diphthongs, and etymological /ei/ sometimes is found either as ⟨e⟩, or as ⟨ae⟩:

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24, 50, and pp. 60, 72, respectively; only Kinzel records the actual spelling in the *apparatus criticus*.

<sup>75</sup> The spelling ⟨û⟩ represents /ou/ in V 233 (f. 109vb43: *gelûben* = *gelouben*), 325 (f. 110rb26: *frût* = *frouit*), 912 (f. 112vb27: *uer hûwen* = *verhouwen*), 1353 (f. 114vb20: *hûbet* = *houbet*); ⟨û⟩ represents /o/, /a/ in V 1025, 1497 (ff. 113rb30 and 115rb41: *mûhte*, *mûhten* = *mohte* / *mahte*, *mohten* / *mahten*, according to both variants of this modal preterite: Waag, "Die zusammensetzung...", p. 125); ⟨û⟩ represents /u/, /ü/ in V 218 (f. 109vb31: *gûnde* = *gunde*), 455 (f. 110vb29: *fûnf* = *funf*) and 1072 (f. 113va23: *frûmmich cheut* = *frummicheit*).

<sup>76</sup> V 117 (f. 109va1): *glöbeht* = *gloubet*; V 848 (f. 112va22): *pömmen* = *poumen*.

<sup>77</sup> V 554 (f. 111rb31): *wôs* = *wôhs* (crossed with the omission of ⟨h⟩); V 1224 (f. 114rb13): *brovtes* = *brôtes*.

<sup>78</sup> The form *möhte* is repeatedly used for *mohte* / *mahte*; in V 728 (f. 112ra24) *förten* means *forhten*, in V 817 (f. 112rb44) *mörngens* means *morgens*, in V 886 (f. 112vb6) *gölde* means *golde*, and in V 973 (f. 113ra33) *för* means *vor*.

<sup>79</sup> *Lamprechts Alexander...*, p. 52, and *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman...*, p. 72.

<sup>80</sup> Klein, "Niederdeutsch und Hochdeutsch...", pp. 210 and 217 (on *Stargarder* fragments).

- V 578: *telich* (= *teile ich*), f. 111va1  
 V 1003, *heden* (= *heiden*), f. 113rb12  
 V 843: *zwae* (= *zwei*), f. 112va17  
 V 857: *dechaenen* (= *dechainen*), f. 112va29  
 V 1030 and 1104, *aen* (= *ain*), ff. 113rb34 and 113vb2

On the other hand, /e/ is also represented as ⟨ei⟩:

- V 578: *leingiften* (= *lengisten*), f. 112va22  
 V 1112: *wolge zeim* (= *wol gezeme*), f. 113vb9

In these instances (as in *kaiben* for MHG *gâben*: f. 115ra18, V 1403), the digraph with *i* could indicate Middle German vowel lengthening. On the other side, *ei* could also represent /ie/, /i:/:

- V 400: *dei* (= *die* [here for *diu*]), f. 111va9<sup>81</sup>  
 V 1108: *mundeneft* (= *min dienst*), f. 113vb6.

Despite this, when normalising these scribal details, the editors were periodically overwhelmed by preconceived ideas of the texts' geographical origins.

According to the early-19th-century partial facsimile, in which the beginning of the first column is reproduced, S presents the reading *gevöge* (in lieu of the standardised spelling *gevuoge*),<sup>82</sup> paralleled in V by *geuüge* (f. 109ra2–3). The Strasbourg reading had been closely rendered and italicised by Massmann as “*geföve*”.<sup>83</sup> Ensuing editions, however, endeavoured to make its phonological value explicit.<sup>84</sup> Kinzel, for example, while recording the codex spelling in the apparatus, interprets the reading of S as *gevôge* (= /o:/), a Middle German feature, since central dialects pronounced

<sup>81</sup> The neuter plural nominative of the definite article is *diu*; its allograph *die* (which in V 400 is represented as *dei*) is a Middle German feature. On *dei ovgen* as possible dual, see Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, pp. 99 and 126.

<sup>82</sup> See G. F. Benecke / W. Müller / F. Zarncke, *Mittelhochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, 3 Bde. [in 4] und alphabetischer Index, Leipzig 1834–1856, III, col. 440a.

<sup>83</sup> “Ich gebe, da es zugleich meist Unica sind, möglichst treu Abdruck” – “Bei [...] *Alexanders Leben* habe ich nur die wenigen Abkürzungen der Handschrift aufgelöst [...] *uo* vertritt *û*, *ou* das *ö*.” (Massmann, in *Denkmäler deutscher Sprache*..., p. iv).

<sup>84</sup> *Lamprechts Alexander*..., p. 27; *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman*..., p. 156.

the Upper German diphthong /u<sup>o</sup>/ as a monophthong.<sup>85</sup> Lienert agrees with Kinzel but does not quote the actual spelling in her scanty textual notes on the Strasbourg text. Both editors imposed a more coherent Middle German identity on the script of S than the one that the manuscript actually supported. Conversely, the above recorded *geuûge* in V, interpreted by Kinzel as ⟨û⟩, is rendered by Lienert as ⟨uo⟩, conveying the idea of an opposition between diphthong (in Bavarian V) and monophthong (in Franconian S), which is quite uncertain.<sup>86</sup>

Similarly, in the *Jüngere Judith* (presumably copied in the Vorau manuscript from a Middle German model, different from that of the *Vorauer Alexander*) ⟨ö⟩ represents either /o<sup>u</sup>/ (*uröwe* = *vrouwe*, *passim*), or /o:/ (*dö* = *dô*, *passim*) and /u<sup>o</sup>/, /u:/ (*getöt* = *ge-tuot*: f. 100vb2, *Jüngere Judith* l. 10), also complying with Thomas Klein's description. The form *getöt* appears in the couplet *mût* : *getöt*, which in the edition by Hiltgunt Monecke is rendered as *mût* : *getût* (ll. 9–10), according to a possible, but not exclusive, interpretation.<sup>87</sup> Since a similar distribution of back vowels and diphthongs has been noticed within Ava's poems,<sup>88</sup> those allographs turn out again to be unable to substantiate the dialectal origin of the *interpositi*.

The hand of V adds a number of other combined signs (to be understood as occasional variations of those already listed) to the inventory of superscripts presented above. In V 981 (f. 113ra41), for example, the combined sign ⟨w̃⟩ (in *w̃le*), is used to abbreviate *wole* 'well'. In the couplet V 1138–1139 (*Mit zorn er ûf fûr*, | *bî sînem rîche er swûr*),<sup>89</sup> the manuscript reads *fûr* twice.<sup>90</sup> In these latter instances, ⟨w̃⟩ corresponds functionally to ⟨û⟩ and does not convey any additional sound specification. The first occurrence of this grapheme is in V 657–660 (f. 111vb16–19), within weak and strong preterites of the verbal root *\*fara-*:

<sup>85</sup> Klein questioned a univocal dialectal attribution, since a similar monophthongisation appears in Upper German manuscripts; cf. Herrmann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik*..., p. 44.

<sup>86</sup> *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman*..., pp. 54 (V) and 156 (S).

<sup>87</sup> *Die Jüngere Judith aus der Vorauer Handschrift*, hg. von Hiltgunt Monecke, Tübingen 1964.

<sup>88</sup> Waag, "Die zusammensetzung..." p. 130.

<sup>89</sup> *Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman*..., p. 126.

<sup>90</sup> F. 113vb32–33: . mit zorn er uf fûr . mit sînem | rîche er fûr .

unde **fwr̥t** lie inegyptō  
 alleſamt . unde ſtīften da zeren ſines  
 namen . eine burch div wart nah im  
 genant . der er **fwr̥re** al div lant . er<sup>91</sup>

#### 4. *Conclusions: what should editors do with ‘tūt’?*

The forms of the verbs *gân*, *stân*, *tuon*, in the examples gathered from *Alexanderlied* manuscripts, are marked by unpredictable rather than dialectal variation: the spellings *geit*, *steit* and *deit* (reputedly significant Middle German features)<sup>92</sup> are occasionally used along with standard forms, and their occurrence in the different parts of the poem would be worthy of more scrutiny. Major variability affects the anomalous verb *tuon*, for which particular graphemes are also employed.

A combined sign, the superscript ⟨*ê*⟩, which seems to be exclusive to *Vorauer Alexander*’s script and has been deemed a decisive proof of dialectal affinity with Cologne, deserves particular attention here.<sup>93</sup> It appears only within the paradigm of *tuon* (and only in rhyme) and might be explained as an adjustment of other current superscripts (which elsewhere renders the aforesaid verb). In the treatment of these data sets, the *Alexanderlied* editions betray particular inconsistency: Kinzel and Lienert, for example, have *toet* for *têht* / *têt* (ll. 123 and 1086), but *det* for *dêht* (l. 286), despite the fact that the manuscript employs the same sign *ê* to render all three. The graph *ê* is uniquely used in V in *dêht* / *têht* / *têt*, when they rhyme with the corresponding form of *stân* (always spelt *stet*), within the formulaic pattern of a *comparatio*. The reason why this complementary symbol was added to the more usual graphic repertory is not phonologically discernible.

In S, the regional spelling variants *deit* and *steit* come about only in the common textual core, and in the first shared couplet V also displays more dialectal regularity, matching *mûzecheit* and *urſteit* (ll. 29–30):

<sup>91</sup> ‘He led them all in Egypt | and there, to honour his name, | they built a city, | which was named after him. | The man who travelled all around the world [...]’.

<sup>92</sup> Herrmann, *Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik...*, in the chapter on Middle Franconian, records the regionalisms *geit*, *steit* and the “bes[onders] rip[uarisch]” *deit* (p. 50; see also pp. 274–275).

<sup>93</sup> Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 127.

S 31–32: wande des mannis **mûzicheit** | zô dem lîbe noch zô der sêle nit ne **versteit**  
 V 29–30: wande des mannes **mûzecheit** . | ze dem lîbe noh zeder fele niht **urfte** - | **it** .

S 147–148: sô sach er also der wolf **deit**, | alser ubir sinem âze **steit**  
 V 123–124: fo fâher alfo der wof | **dêht** . fo er ober fineme e3zen **ftet** .

S 171–172: sîn bûch ne was ime nit ze lanc noh ze **breit**: | vil wol daz deme jungelinge  
**steit**

V 145–146: fin buch | nrwas ime zelanc noch **zebreiht** . âwie wole | dem ivngelinge  
 daz **ftet** .

In the *continuatio* of S, conversely, the normal forms *tût* and *stât* prevail. S employs *tût* in rhyme with *mût* (and its compounds) and, only once in each case, with *gût* and *nôt*.<sup>94</sup> Judging from Massmann's introductory note, *tût* in S should have been written *tut* or *tvt*.<sup>95</sup>

The 3rd-person singular of the present indicative, in V, is the most unstable form of *tuon* and, apart from ll. 29–30, the script shows univocal traces of the purported Franconian rhyme only twice: f. 110va46, ll. 408–409, *fmahet* : *tûht* [*< \*deit*], and f. 111ra45, ll. 510–511, *reht* : *deht* [*< \*deit*], both omitted in S, in which the lines have been rewritten.

As a consequence of all this, editorial work on texts appears more awkward and has produced more questionable results than what is usual in traditional MHG linguistic and philological scholarship, even with regard to the easiest tasks. Major difficulties arise when the *Alexanderlied* reports couplets hinting at regional peculiarities (as with variants of MHG *tût* in rhyme). The Strasbourg version usually recasts the most aberrant couplets and amplifies its own text, doubling the lines and removing the most troublesome dialectal rhymes, as *reit* : *deit*. S therefore admits both spellings *tût* and *deit*, coupling the former with *mût*, *gût*, *nôt*, the latter with either the Franconian form of *stât* (*steit*) or the singular preterite of strong verbs with root-/i:/ (*rîten* / *reit*), and with abstract nouns ending in *-heit*. In doing so, S too reassesses its own rhyme system, though for scribal and stylistic, rather than phonological and dialectological purposes.

<sup>94</sup> S 4518–4519 and 3590–3591 respectively.

<sup>95</sup> *Denkmäler deutscher Sprache...*, p. 15. Kinzel, who employed the transcript by Roth (1850) of the subsequently lost Strasbourg Manuscript, did not comment on those spellings.

In V, *tût* and its variants (*det* / *dêt* / *dêht* / *têht* etc.), on the contrary, are paired indiscriminately with either the present form of *stân* (allowing the reconstruction of the Middle Franconian couplet *\*deit* : *steit*, though the prevailing form of the latter is *stet* = *stêt*) or with *mût* and its compounds. In neither cases, however, does the script of the *Vorauer Alexander* offer an unambiguous dialectal identity, with fatal consequences to the conjecturing of its editors. V 1213–1214, for example, consist of a defective formula (f. 114rb5: *uf buzual er reiht . do flûger also der thoner* <...>),<sup>96</sup> which according to abstract rules of rhyme should be filled with Middle Franconian *\*deit*. Despite this, the lacuna in V cannot be adequately improved on a textual level. The manuscript admits the formula with both variants (*also* [\*\*\*] *deit* / *tût*) to be understood as highly abstract and inclusive complementary units (not yet regularised as in S), occurring because of scribal rather than dialectological reasons.

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